

apexart

291 church street new york, ny 10013
t: 212.431.5270
info@apexart.org www.apexart.org

apexart is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization and does not engage in sales or sales-related activities.
apexart is a registered trademark.

apexart's programs are supported in part by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Buhl Foundation, the Degenstein Foundation, Lambert Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., Affirmation Arts Fund, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Fifth Floor Foundation, and with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

You can support what we do at apexart.org/support.php

apexart © 2016
ISBN: 978-1-933347-95-0

cover image: **Robin Arnott, SoundSelf, 2016, Virtual reality game, Approximate play time 20 minutes**

Youniverse

Organized by hannes bend

November 3 - December 17, 2016

apexart nyc



La Vonne Natasha Caesar, *MantraTea and The Hu(e)man Circle*

Youniverse is written with a capital 'Y' (spoken 'Why') to open up a dialogue about purpose and you. Why is now and here happening for you, me, and all of us? What is awareness and consciousness?

Youniverse offers the opportunity to further experience the human ability to explore the reality of nature and consciousness. It merges insights from ancient and contemporary contemplative practices, art, technology, and science, with a focus on fun, non-dualistic, non-judgmental, loving togetherness.

In this Oh sweet life we are coming in from the cold
Come we go burn
Dead can dance
Oh, now, I see
A spider web, and it's me in the middle,
So I twist and turn,
But here am I in my little bubble,
Calm your nerves I want you to
Recognize that life is a dream, and I dream lucid
Burnin' all illusion tonight
I will be right here with you,
You'll be right here with me
And I never meant to do you wrong,
There is no right or wrong only this song
They spun a web for me
Have no fear, have no sorrow, yeah!
Have faith in the wise of heart
Whatever happens, happens
Let it all work out
I am all in
All is full of Love



Interspecifics Collective, *Geobacter Micropulse*, 2016, Microbial fuel cells, microcontroller, 8-channel relay, fluorescent light fixtures, dimensions variable

Today's technological interconnectedness allows for an unprecedented time in human history to come together. What can be automated will be automated. What cannot be reduced and automated seems to be aware. Consciousness is also defined as human awareness to both internal and external stimuli. "Awareness is all you really have... And all you really need." – Gino Yu

The fascinating human mindbody and consciousness can be investigated experientially, creatively, and scientifically as never before.

How can we experience or increase consciousness, if possible?
How can we go beyond binary and dual judgments?

Current Western psychology still favors behaviorism since psychologist John Watson banned 'consciousness' in 1913. Until today, the attention model (1990) of psychologists Michael Posner and Steven Petersen has been used in psychology and accounts only for external stimuli. Is this model the only territory?

Twentieth century studies of the atomic and subatomic worlds have revealed the limits of traditional science, and instead suggested a radical revision of many of our most basic concepts, including matter, space, time, and cause and effect. These concepts are prevalent in everyday Western life and are widely considered fundamental to our outlook on the world. Physicist Andrei Linde (1998) stated that avoiding the concept of consciousness constitutes an artificial narrowing of one's outlook. He highlighted that our knowledge of the world begins not with matter but with perceptions. Quantum theorists have come to see the universe as an interconnected web of physical and mental relations whose parts are only defined through their connections to the whole. They have



Katie Down, *sound meditation practices*

abolished the notion of fundamentally separated objects, have introduced the concept of the participator to replace that of the observer, and have even found it necessary to include human consciousness in their description of the world. Maybe one day science will discover love as a unifying conscious force?

Sigmund Freud divided human consciousness into three levels of awareness: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. An international group of artists, researchers, technologists, scholars, and scientists, among them peers from Transformative Technologies and the Science of Consciousness, offer guidance to reach nonjudgmental awareness and enacted love through awakening experiences. The description of their levels of awareness can be explained in three levels as well. The first level consists of concepts and stories with a degree of inaccuracy embedded in the daily life of gossip and subjective judgments. The second level is the realization that the (inter-)subjective experience in the moment is all there actually is. Quantum Bayesian Christopher Fuchs (2015) stated that a single objective reality is an illusion. Fuchs suggests "to make all of our personal gambling attitudes internally consistent by focusing on internal awareness and experience. Similarly, cognitive scientist Donald Hoffmann (Quanta Magazine, 2016) postulate conscious experiences as the most basic ingredients of the world, the ultimate nature of reality.

The third level is the dynamic interaction with a potentially intelligent universe. Can we communicate with the universe? In Buddhism, the "mind" denotes an internal sense organ which interacts with sense objects that include impressions,

feelings, perceptions, and volition. It is possible to observe thoughts.

Buddhists and Taoists speak of a net of concepts, and extend the idea of the interconnected web to the realm of the intellect. Artistic, contemplative, and embodied practices offer to merge diverse perspectives of mind and matter. Thus, they contribute to a more peaceful and aligned planet, not self-centered, but serving.

One of the main goals of one of the main industries driving the dynamics of everyday – the tech industry – is to reduce and simplify the human work load, and to potentially replace human with automated robotic labor.

Youiverse addresses how a life without work can be lived – now and to come. As a self- and unified exploration of existence.

When work is not necessary, nor the essence of one's life – what is our purpose? How can we live a happier and healthier life for ourselves, in harmony with each other and all beings and the planet? How can we emphasize and enact only love and unity?

Youiverse investigates how peers in art, contemplative practices, and science perceive the accuracy and limits of the current probabilistic and empirical methodologies in science. Mindfulness is defined as momentary presence and awareness without judgments (Jon Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Similarly, the experiences of *Youiverse* enable visitors to become nonjudgmentally engaged and consciously present in the moment. Contributors offer embodied modalities to acquire novel experiential knowledge, for instance through movement by Debbie Attias (Fun Heals Everything/Dancorcism), sound baths calming the nervous system by Katie Down, connecting beyond language by Moving Star, conscious communication with whales through music by David Rothenberg, virtual reality (VR) games of the sense of self with biofeedback by Robin Arnott (SoundSelf), VR meditation with Jack Kornfield, group insight meditation with Dharma Punx, magical laughter gatherings by Lisa Levine, increased internal exploration through hypnosis workshops by UNLIMITED, and human-machine interaction through Transformative Technologies. Today art is primarily a somatically non-functional entity, existing often to offer aesthetic and intellectual pleasure. *Youiverse* reclaims other functions of art within society: as an aid to increase mindfulness, presence and awakening, to encourage social cohesion and cooperation, and to provide a gateway to self-transcendence and unification.



Antonia Wright, *Be*, 2013, Single channel video, 2:49 min

Youiverse reflects today's unprecedented potential to learn global creative and contemplative practices for improved awareness of being mindful and alive. The mind often tries to seek and explore. How can embodied and experiential phenomenological awareness of the practices create a heightened here? The wonder of life is in the details of here, the grace of god or the universe, the beauty of the world, miracle of existence and innate joy of being.

Youiverse is structured as both an exhibition with artistic, contemplative somatic, and technological practices, and dynamic and engaged offerings from the contributors to work with the audience in groups or one-on-one sessions.

How can we dance and learning how to dance with the universe?

The practice below is comprised of exercises inspired by Vipassana meditation, positive psychology, Tibetan Tummo meditation, and the Wim Hof Method. Clinically or neuroscientifically studied benefits of them seem to be:

- stress-reduction and relaxation
- consciously control the core body temperature
- voluntarily activate the sympathetic nervous system
- improve positive mindsets
- neuroplasticity
- fight e.coli bacteria
- increase adrenaline production
- greater feeling of interconnectedness

Sense yourself here now –
Please be in the most comfortable position

Make sure you can expand your lungs freely without feeling any constriction.

Now –
On the inhale...
Inhale through the nose or mouth deeply, as powerfully as possible.
And exhale by letting gravity do the work, just let the diaphragm and belly drop.
Just let go.
With the long deep inhale, imagine your body expanding.
Exhale by letting go. Let gravity take over.
Keep a steady pace.
Take 50 of these breaths.
And smile.
The inhale is expansion.
Exhale by just letting go.
Try to go faster and deeper with every breath.
Keep smiling.
(Symptoms could be lightheadedness, tingling sensations in the body, electrical surges of energy.)
After the 50 breath cycles, draw the breath in once more fully.
Then – after the last breath – let the air out fully, and hold the breath.
Hold the breath on empty lungs without force.
And smile.
Try not to think as it consumes energy. Sense your body, bring awareness to different body parts.
Hold the breath until the gasp reflex.
Then, take a deep breath in. Hold the inhale breath for as long as possible.
Smile.
Repeat this breathing sequence a few times.
You can probably hold your breath longer with more inhales, and less thoughts.
Just be relaxed during breathing.
Be relaxed while holding your breath.
Become spacious. Become luminous. Become warm.
Breath.
Breath in.
Breath out.
Be
Smile
)
Love

hannes bend © 2016

for a full list of participants and the calendar of events:
<https://apexart.org/exhibitions/bend.php>