

***From Cosmos to Commons  
Between Stars and Signals***

**21.6.–17.8.2025  
Kunsthau  
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Hamburg**

How do we navigate a world in which our actions have a planetary impact? In our post-global era, we cannot see ourselves merely as inhabitants of the Earth. Essentially, we are geological actors whose economic, ecological and political decisions leave profound marks on the globe. "The planetary" thus describes a new perspective in which the Earth is understood as a holistically networked and dynamic system. The term encompasses a critical view on global connections transcending national borders as well as cultural and political spheres of power. Based on this, the group exhibition *Between Stars and Signals* at Kunsthau  
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Hamburg spans an arc from humanity's early understanding of the world and its orientation on the stars all the way to the planetary paradigm and modern technologies such as GPS. This significant transition influences not only our understanding of space and time, but also our relationship to the Earth and the universe.

In ancient times, celestial bodies played a central role in navigating the globe. Sailors used constellations, the position of the sun, wind patterns and ocean currents in order to traverse vast distances on the oceans. Over time, the invention of precise astronomical calendars enabled predictions to be made about seasons and geographical positions. The sky showed the way and at the same time provided a cosmic order that determined life on Earth. More accurate instruments later permitted our predecessors to measure the world systematically, in particular by calculating longitudes. This also changed their relationship to space and time: the globe was measured and recorded in a metric grid.

Using the digital cartography and mapping technologies available today, we are able to examine and record every corner of the planet in detail. As a result, space and time are no longer absolute concepts; our relationship to both has become more abstract. While we used to explore places intuitively, we now increasingly rely on digital maps to show us the quickest route. As a result, orientation is no longer bound to natural phenomena but to invisible signals, algorithms and data streams. The smartphone obtains information from at least four satellites to determine its position with an accuracy of a few centimetres. GPS thus enables the seamless monitoring of movements, giving rise to new forms of control. Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) changes our sense of space even more when places no longer only exist physically but can also be experienced digitally. Time is less and less perceived as a sequence of past, present and future. Instead, we find ourselves in a permanent state of real time. Across the globe, we are communicating live and synchronized without delay. Occurrences are no longer lost, as data remains permanently stored, while algorithms draw on the past and also calculate probabilities for the future.

Consequently, our understanding of the world is evolving into a cosmic perspective: satellites provide high-resolution images of the Earth, contributing an enhanced awareness of climate change and environmental issues. Navigation systems such as the Deep Space Network enable missions to other planets, expanding our relationship with space to galactic scales.

*Between Stars and Signals* traces the development of navigation, which in turn reflects the transition of our worldview – from a spiritual, intuitive connection to the environment towards conceptions relying on data-driven, technological control. The participating artists have engaged in

the topic of physical movement through space and time along with its philosophical and social implications. Drawing on the starry sky and astrological concepts as well as digital innovations, they artistically enquire into our relationship with the universe. The exhibited works, spanning video, wall and spatial installations, reflect complex relationships between humans, nature and the cosmos – and make us think. For the question remains whether the digital transformation will lead to a deeper cosmic consciousness or whether it will distance us even further from our immediate experience of the world.

Curated by Anna Nowak

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*From the Cosmos to the Commons* marks the beginning of the programme conceived by City Curator Joanna Warsza. Since 2024, the project has been hosted by Kunsthaus Hamburg. Over the next five years, the City Curator holds summer exhibitions revolving around the five elements – cosmos, fire, air, earth and water – with the focus on one element each year. In 2025, the programme is dedicated to the cosmos and will consist of four parts: a recreation of Aby Warburg's *Image Collection on the History of Astrology and Astronomy* at the Planetarium Hamburg, curated by Uwe Fleckner, exhibitions of contemporary art at the Stadtpark, curated by Joanna Warsza, and the Kunsthaus Hamburg, curated by Anna Nowak, as well as a symposium at the Warburg-Haus.