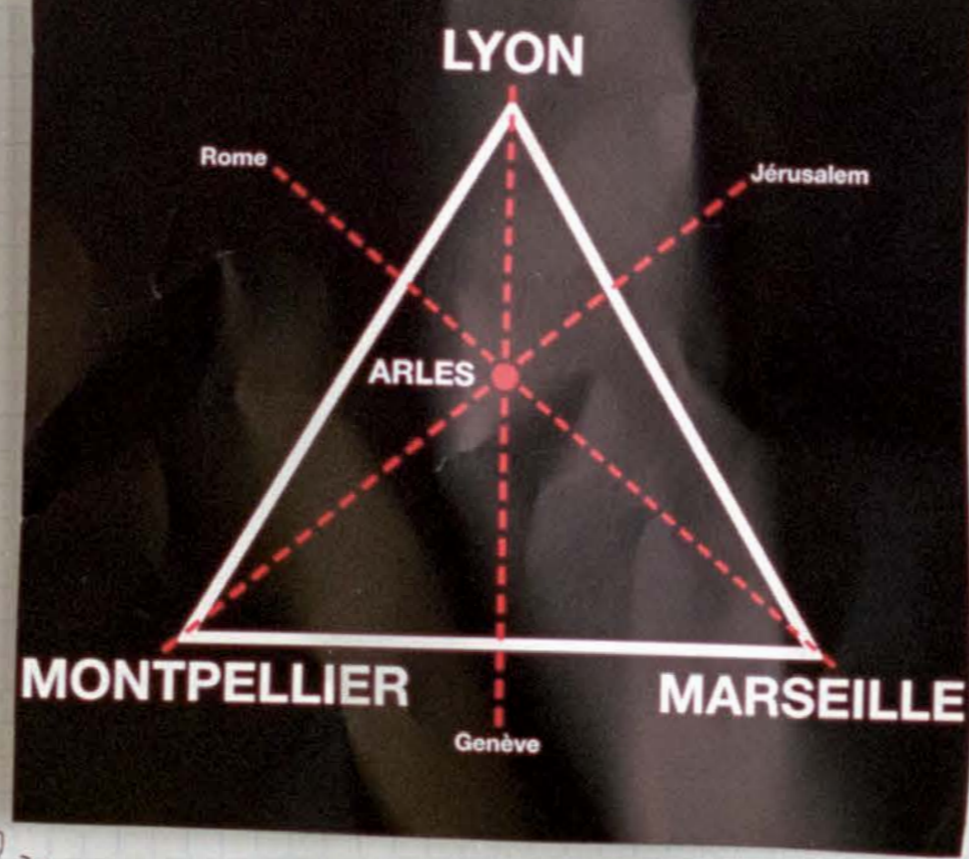
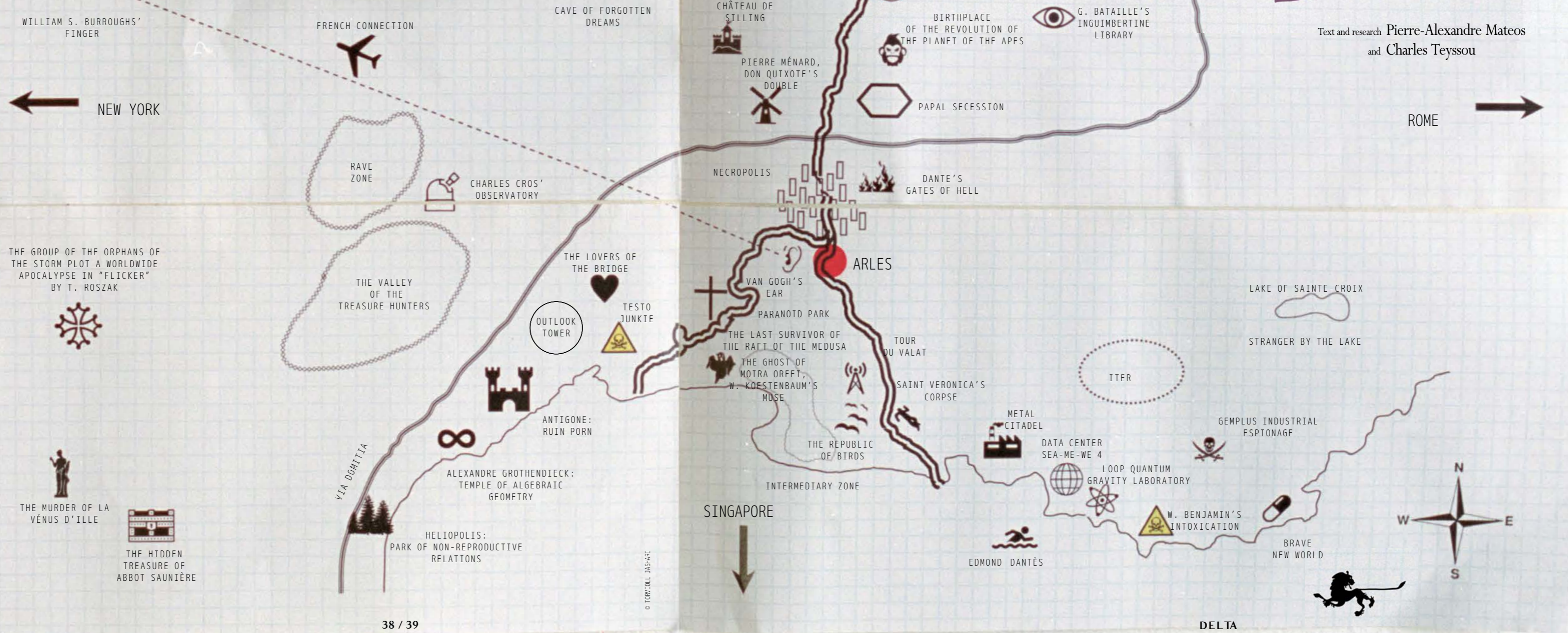


Over the course of six months two young curators have investigated the hidden facets of the Camargue DELTA. From collective intoxication, to Promethean hubris and intercontinental – or even interstellar – paranoia, welcome to a land of utopia and delirium.



# ARLES-TERMINAL CITY

Text and research Pierre-Alexandre Mateos and Charles Teyssou



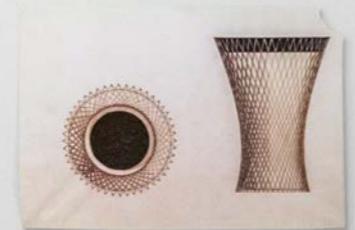


Arles and its region cultivate the notion of VIRALITY in all warps of life. From the last great plague in Marseille to swarms of mosquitoes, this territory has experienced large-scale CONTAMINATIONS.

# ULTRA VIRAL



A GROUP OF LEAPERS FROM THE VIDEO GAME "REMEMBER ME"



CLAUDE PARENT: STUDIES FOR A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, 1974-1993



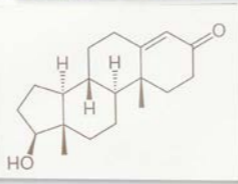
DOCTEUR SCHNABEL FROM ROME, DURING THE BLACK PLAGUE, ENGRAVING BY PAUL FÜRST 1656



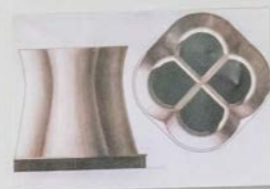
TESTOSTERONE MOLECULAR FORMULA



INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR EVENT SCALE



PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCIEN CLERGUE FROM THE BOOK "LA CAMARGUE SECRÈTE"



AMERICAN FIRM PRODUCING GENETICALLY MODIFIED MOSQUITOES

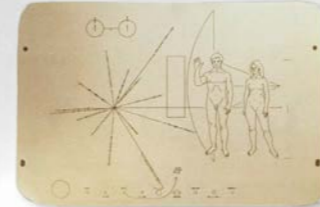


**WE DO NOT CONSENT**

**RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED MOSQUITOES**



THE ARENAS OF ARLES IN THE 18TH CENTURY BEFORE THE DEMOLITION OF THE HOUSES IN 1825



METAL PLAQUE TAKEN ON BOARD THE SPACE PROBES PIONEER 10 AND PIONEER 11



THE MEME PEPE THE FROG REPRODUCING THE SYMBOL OF THE SECRET ILLUMINATI SOCIETY



MATHEMATICIAN ALEXANDER GROTHENDIECK



DER TOD MARSEILLE TAROT CARDS

**interxion**  
Carrier-Neutral Data Centres

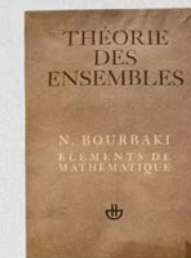
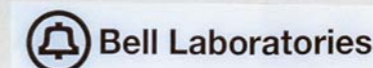
INTERXION IS A EUROPEAN PROVIDER OF DATA CENTER SERVICES



"ET IN ARCADIA EGO" (1637-38) BY NICOLAS POUSSIN



FORMER GERMAN SUBMARINE BASE SITUATED IN MARSEILLE TRANSFORMED INTO A DATA CENTER BY INTERXION



The delta is fascinated by the PROPAGATION of information. Decades before the launch of NASA's SETI program (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence), Charles Cros tried to make contact with extraterrestrials. Nowadays, the SEA-ME-WE 4 cable enables Europe to connect with Singapore in a few milliseconds.

# GOTHIC PROPAGATION



From the Saint-Simonian UTOPIA to build a world-city, interconnected with a railway network, to Patrick Geddes' ambition to create an ecotopia on a human scale, to the nature conservation of the Tour du Valat created by Luc Hoffmann, the South of France has been at the heart of ambitious technological and ecological projects.

# MEDITERRANEAN UTOPIA

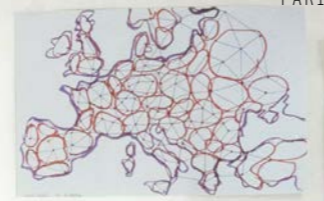
# NECROPOLIS



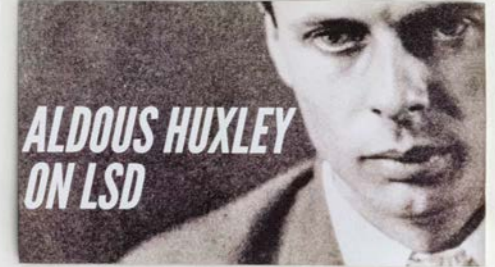
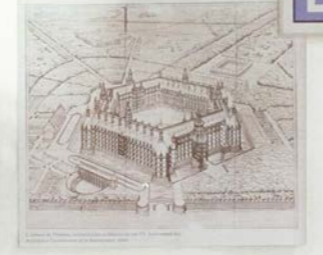
ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE FIRST TRAIN LINE PARIS-LYON-MARSEILLE



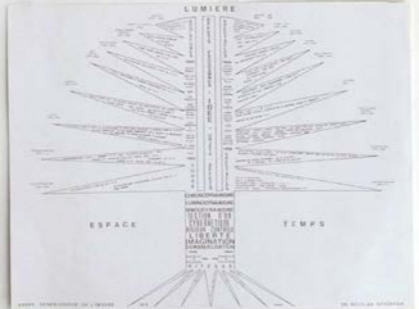
AERIAL VIEW OF A FLOCK OF FLAMINGOS



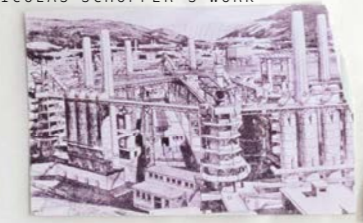
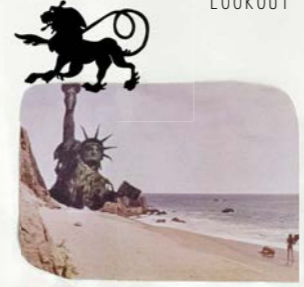
YONA FRIEDMAN: PLAN FOR METROPOLE EUROPE



PLAN FOR A CAMERA OBSCURA ON THE TOP FLOOR OF A LOOKOUT TOWER



GENEALOGICAL TREE OF NICOLAS SCHÖFFER'S WORK



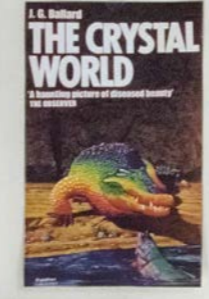
TONY GARNIER: URBAN PROJECT FOR AN INDUSTRIAL CITY (1899-1917)



EVOLUTION OF THE WWF LOGO



SPIRAL TRIBE, THE ENGLISH FREETEKNO COLLECTIVE THAT ORGANIZED THE FIRST FREE PARTIES IN EUROPE

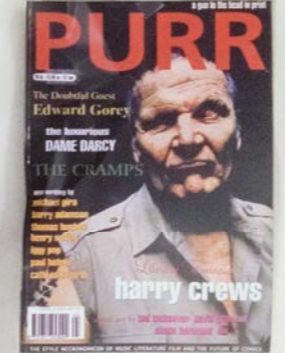


P6R6R6K

J. G. BALLARD: "THE CRYSTAL WORLD" (1966)



CAPUCINE SPINEUX, PHOTOGRAPH INSPIRED BY "L'ÉTÉ DES CHAROGNES" BY SIMON JOHANNIN



667, A RAPPER COLLECTIVE WHOSE ICONOGRAPHY IS INSPIRED BY CONSPIRACY THEORISTS

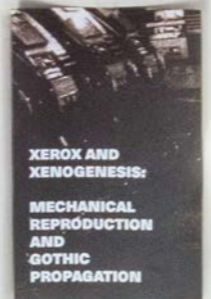
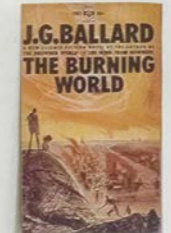


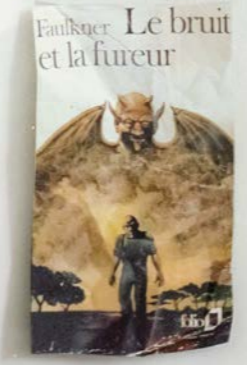
ILLUSTRATION FROM "FLATLINE CONSTRUCTS" (1999) BY MARK FISHER



THEODOOR ROMBOUITS: "PROMETHEUS" (EARLY 17TH CENTURY)



LOGO OF THE MARSEILLAIS TECHNO BAND METAPHORE COLLECTIF



During antiquity, five NECROPOLISES were built on the outskirts of Arles. Could the town be "Gothic" territory par excellence?





The delta, as the arch of Promethean nightmares? A real Las Vegas Strip for CHEMICAL LABORATORIES, the north of the Rhône Valley exploited the idea of volatility to its climax.



POSTER FOR A THEATRE PRODUCTION OF "STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND M. HYDE" BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



TESTOSTERONE DESCRIBED BY PAUL B. PRECIADO IN "TESTO JUNKIE: SEX, DRUGS AND BIOPOLITICS" (2009)



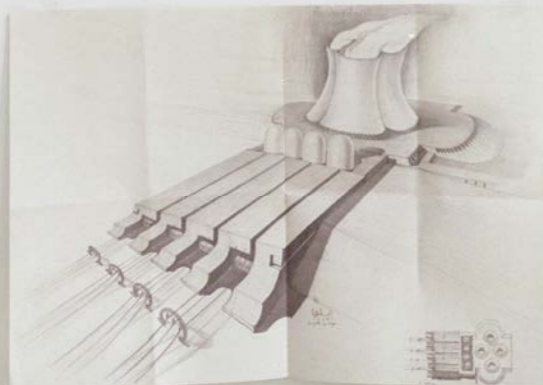
YUL BRYNNER PLAYING THE COURT USHER IN "TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS" BY JEAN COCTEAU



"LA VENERE D'ILLE" BY MARIO AND VALERIO BAVA, ADAPTED FROM "LA VÉNUS D'ILLE" BY PROSPER MÉRIMÉE



THE SOMA TABLETS DESCRIBED IN "BRAVE NEW WORLD" (1931) BY ALDOUS HUXLEY



CLAUDE PARENT: STUDIES FOR A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, 1974-1993



HOTEL CONTINENTAL IN MARSEILLE, WHERE WALTER BENJAMIN WROTE "HASHISH IN MARSEILLE"

DELTA

INTOXICATION

### CHASING M. HYDE

Our research for the Luma Foundation in Arles started on Rue de la Liberté, in an apartment connecting a tropical greenhouse to a toy shop. Six months is the time we were allocated to meet artists, thinkers, filmmakers and architects linked to the South of France. We could choose our outfit: entomologist, clerk, explorer, headhunter, seismologist. Inevitably, we probably became all of them at once in some way. In 1970, the research organization Rand Corporation suggested that the experts of Datar (Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'attractivité régionale), in charge of establishing France's economic potentials, should fly a plane over the country for eight hours a day in order to enter a certain critical psychological state: between a waking dream and extreme fatigue. It is with this methodology in mind that we began our quest: ceaselessly excavate, choose, remove, rework, survey and hybridize diffuse and contradictory elements to arrive at a new composite portrait of one of the largest communes in metropolitan France.

For a long time, Arles was the equivalent to Manhattan for the dead. During antiquity, its five necropolises spread out in the outskirts of the town became so full that rumors made the Rhône River into

the autoroute by which corpses were brought into town. The Alyscamps are now the only remains of this metropolis tirelessly devoted to bodies with no fatigue. For us, these constituted the first in a series of clues leading us all to the same conclusion: Arles is a "Gothic" town par excellence. At the epicenter of experiments on living beings, petrochemical industries and underground networks, it represents the macabre ground innervating the delta formed by the Marseille-Montpellier-Lyon triangle. But this reality was long eclipsed by the patrimonial vision maintained by tour operator who were avid for consensus.

It took us six months of winter enquiry to perceive the face of M. Hyde behind the traits of Dr. Jekyll. Six months for this territory that seemed to us to be allergic to notions of darkness or metamorphosis to reveal itself as obsessed with both to the point of nurturing a terminal dependence on the idea of mutation. The delta transforms the dead into a living being, what is natural into synthetics, lies into truth and the sane into the delirious. During our search, our apartment became a dissecting table, greeting each document, each image like the most sensitive of proofs, and soon to wallpaper all the walls, fragments of unmentionable manifestos with this town as the final destination.

Welcome to Terminal City.



## I – DELTA INTOXICATION

In 1837, Prosper Mérimée published “La Vénus d’Ille,” a fantasy in which the action takes place in a village of the Pyrénées-Orientales. Under the roots of a dead olive tree, an antique dealer discovers that statue with venomous beauty. Having brought her back home, he is subjected to strange convulsions and seems more and more obsessed with the bewitching sculpture, while mysterious deaths multiply amongst his entourage. “Gothic” Southern French literature was born and with it a cohort of living dead. In 1959, Jean Cocteau filmed “Testament of Orpheus” halfway between Arles and Avignon, in the Dantesque quarry of Baux-de-Provence. Maria Casarès gets out of her Rolls-Royce and Orpheus, rather like the filmmaker, forever abandons the idea of a return – this was to be the last film by the author of “Blood of a Poet,” his ultimate place of transformation.

The delta as the arch of Promethean nightmares? A real Las Vegas Strip for chemical laboratories, the north of the Rhône Valley exploited the idea of volatility to its climax. Industrial gas, sulphuric acid, silicone, nuclear fission, hydrocarbons, ethylene, propylene, butadiene, in the 1970s this zone became the laboratory of Europe. This decade was the last moment when the idea of combustion was eroticized: the architect Claude Parent created iron and concrete juggernauts sublimating the panache of the nuclear coolers,

while “The Limits to Growth,” an MIT report commissioned by the Club of Rome, recommended the limitation of this exponential expansion. This view of the world as a vast chemical fiesta was the origin of the gigantic refinery of Fos-sur-Mer. At the same time, not far from there funerary altars were discovered; these are now covered by waves. Pipelines morphed into steles and vice versa, transforming this territory into an elephant’s graveyard, a vast valley of future industrial sarcophagi.

From toxic clouds to tales of intoxication, there is just one step. Culminating in his essay “Hashish in Marseille” (1928), the experiences of Walter Benjamin on the disarticulation of modern subjectivity through the use of drugs led him to regard the proletarian revolution as a moment of collective intoxication. This pause on the Mediterranean shores taught him that voluntary poisoning is the mother of insurrection. Three years later, in Sanary-sur-Mer, Aldous Huxley imagines “Brave New World.” In this novel, compiled as a negative utopia, a totalitarian regime consolidates its power through the use of a psychotropic drug, called Soma, with multiple effects. This drug offers “one gram and no dramas” and engenders complete political lethargy. The quest for artificial paradise leads also to paralysis.

Finally, it was in Vauvert, during a stormy road trip, that “Testo Junkie,” the first great tale of intoxication of the new millennium, was born.

Paul B. Preciado transcribes the deconstruction of his gender – female on the civil registry during the first 36 years of his existence – by taking massive doses of testosterone. Using the  $C_{19}H_{28}O_2$  chemical formula as a guide, the bio-political explorer navigates what he calls the pharmacopornographic era. At this advanced stage of development, the reticular power of capitalism regulates organs, desires, chemical reactions and affects.

## II – SOLAR PUNK

It was in the Ariston Hotel in New York, on the corner of Broadway and 55th Avenue, that William Burroughs cut off his little finger with poultry shears. It is spring 1939 and the American writer imitates the razor which, during the night of December 23, 1888, liberated Van Gogh from his left ear. Respectively handed over to a New York escort and to an Arlésienne prostitute, these secular relics have disappeared from hospital records.

Are they subjected to esoteric cults devoted to the eternal sacrifice of Prometheus? This is what Georges Bataille suggested in 1930 in his essay “Van Gogh As Prometheus” by assimilating the painter’s ear with the liver of the poor titan. Condemned by Jupiter for stealing the sacred fire of Olympus to give it to mankind, Prometheus was chained to a rock in the Caucasus mountains, where his liver was devoured every day by an eagle before regenerating itself every

night. The painter’s obsession for the most iridescent of celestial bodies incited Georges Bataille to write that Van Gogh deciding that it was “better to be Prometheus than Jupiter, tore from within himself rather than an ear, nothing less than a sun.”

Since Van Gogh, the delta is irretrievably attracted by the radiations of the solar corona. With the acronym of International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, ITER is a transnational project conducted by 35 countries aiming to create a hypersun which would be ten times stronger than the original one. “The future is already here – it’s just not very evenly distributed,” is what the science-fiction writer William Gibson declared in 2003. If that is the case, then the delta has become the laboratory in charge of its production. Situated several kilometers away from Aix-en-Provence, this equipment devoted to the mass fabrication of renewable energy makes this territory the cradle of Solar Punk.

Contrary to the post-apocalyptic tales imagined by Cormac McCarthy or to Philip K. Dick’s urban dystopias, the Solar Punk movement advocates an optimistic view of a society entirely founded on solar energy. But the ambition of this current, at the crossroads of social ecology theories, an Art Nouveau aesthetic and heliotechnological avant-gardes, goes beyond the idea of a simple energy revolution.



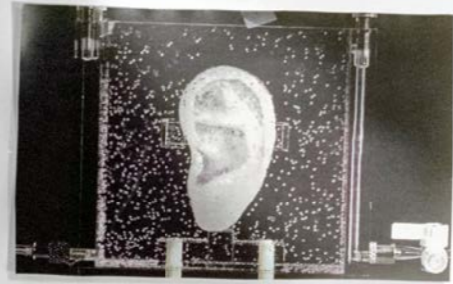
“Since Van Gogh, the delta is irretrievably attracted by the RADIATIONS of the solar corona.”



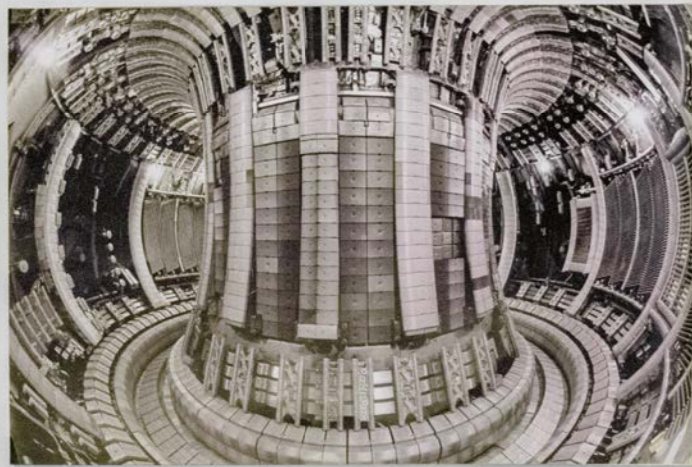
GUSTAVE MOREAU:  
“PROMETHEUS” (1868)



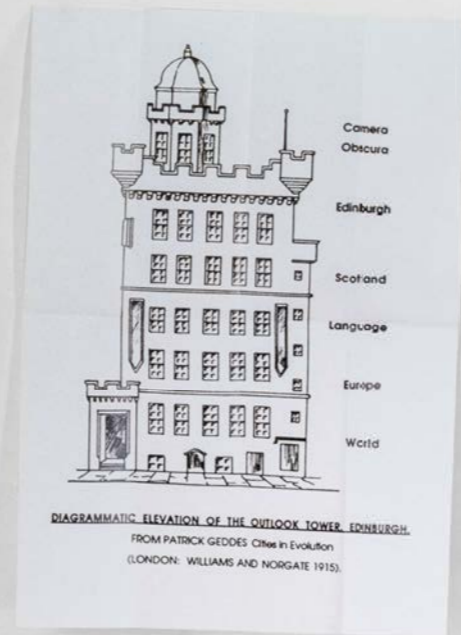
PHOTOGRAPH OF WILLIAM BURROUGHS'  
SECTIONED FINGER (1939)



IN HIS WORK “SUGABABE” (2014),  
DIEMUT STREBE GENETICALLY “RECONSTITUTED”  
VINCENT VAN GOGH’S EAR



INTERIOR CHAMBER OF THE  
ITER NUCLEAR FUSION REACTOR



SKETCH OF AN OUTLOOK TOWER IN EDINBURGH  
CONSTRUCTED BY PATRICK GEDDES IN 1915



FIRST PHOTOGRAPH OF AN ECLIPSE BY  
JOHANN JULIUS FRIEDRICH BERKOWSKI (1851)

# SOLAR PUNK

What is at stake is the creation of a society whose political foundations are disrupted by the end of the idea of economic growth or accumulation of capital. If William Morris, one of the founders of the British Arts & Crafts movement, or Lewis Mumford, historian of techniques, are cited as the tutelary figures, the roots of Solar Punk go back to the projects of Patrick Geddes in Montpellier. At once sociologist, urbanist, educator, curator and ecologist, he was one of the pioneers of eco-urbanism due to his invention of the Biopolis model. At the center of each of his urban projects resides the Outlook Tower, an experimental institution halfway between a university campus and an art center. One of the most ambitious versions was realized in 1924 for the town of Montpellier. This was a tower inspired by the Abbaye de Thélème, a social and pedagogical utopia imagined by Rabelais in “Gargantua” in 1534. Climbing this five-story-high building, the visitor meets all the scales of life, from the microscopic to the terrestrial globe. The sun is an incandescent political object. In 1996, David W. Schwartzman underlined this dimension by proposing “solar communism,” the ecological realization of Marxism. Following Promethean fantasies, has the delta become the arch of Solar Punk?

## III – PARANOID PARK

The Camargue is a wetland that can look like the end of the world. A land of fever where brackish waters crystallize, protected by a convention by the name of Ramsar, a town in the Caspian Sea known for exhaling radioactivity from its granite rocks. It is also a place of passage, of unhealthy junctions where silt deposits and the genetic information of thousands of birds scatter. It is in this interzone, surrounded by fuming citadels, that a wandering fauna mingles and mixes. The bird republic coexists with industrial workers, smugglers, tourists, the military, constructors, naturalists, technocrats, and even alchemists. It is one of the most administered regions in France, as indicated by the territorial split of the so-called Nouvelle Floride: three distinct zones with the Camargue as the most preserved island, and also the most secret. A playground for the secret services and forbidden experiences, the Camargue is a land of paranoia. 1951; France is hungry and the Marshall Plan orchestrates cereal imports in a region that is more inclined towards vineyards. Headaches, vomiting, erratic behavior soon affect the inhabitants of a commune in the Gard. A black hole. 1995; Bill Clinton, the forty-second president of the United States, makes a public apology for the chemical experiments on populations during the Cold War.



2009; an American journalist speculates that the CIA had spread LSD in the region of Pont-Saint-Esprit. The postwar collective hysteria might have been the result of this clandestine poisoning.

In 1992, the French firm Gemplus International, world leader in the fabrication of smart cards, settles near Aix-en-Provence. Eight years later, one of the founders accepts the entry into the capital of Texas Pacific Group. In exchange, the board is transferred to Luxembourg and its historic members are incited to leave. In 2001, a capital venture fund sponsored by the CIA confirms that the intelligence agency had access to the patents of Gemplus' cryptology.

The delta has a taste for aluminum, as proven by the strategic war over the networks transmitting information. Not far from the Étang de Berre lies the biggest submarine telecommunication cable between Southeast Asia and Europe, SEA-ME-WE 4 is 20,800 kilometers long. These infrastructures where sensitive data transits constantly attract more attention from the military and spies. In 2013, Edward Snowden reveals that the NSA has massively collected data from the SEA-ME-WE 4 cable. One year later, WikiLeaks reveals new cases of spying on this network via spyware. And what if the South of France was the future site of a major cyber conflict?

To listen, record, communicate with new worlds, these were the obsessions of Charles Cros. This Parnassian poet, now relegated to a limbo even though he was admired in his lifetime by Verlaine and Mallarmé, was the inventor of the phonograph, the first speaking machine in history capable of recording sounds. Since he did not patent his invention in time, it was Thomas Edison who – within a matter of two days! – received the honors of the academies. As a consolation, Cros devoted the rest of his life to his wish to communicate with extraterrestrial intelligences. Observed from the Pic Saint-Loup, the spots on Mars seemed to him to be luminescent cities. As a consequence, he conceived the project to make a mirror that would be so large that its brilliance would reflect on the surface of the red planet, depicting oblong forms, hieroglyphs of terrestrial origin.

This interstellar design was never realized. Unless a group of scientists are working on completing it in an ultra secret laboratory camouflaged by the lakes and marshes of the Camargue?

If birds had the gift of speech, perhaps they would guide us towards these zones which are forbidden to the public, towards these natural reserves where so few have had the chance to visit: where researchers, hackers, spies and ufologists converge. And what if these areas hid a new Zone 51? Indeed, the Camargue is a land of paranoia.

# PARANOÏD PARK

A playground for the secret services and forbidden experiences, the Camargue is a land of PARANOIA.

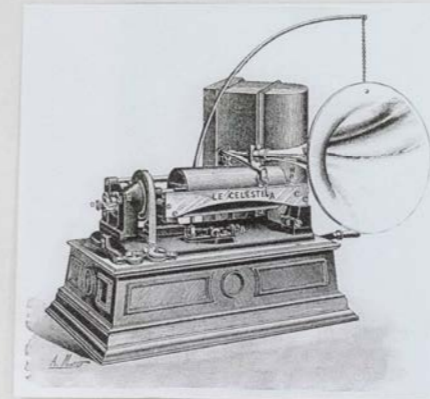


THE KARL G. JANSKY VERY LARGE ARRAY (VLA) IS A RADIOTELESCOPE SITUATED IN THE PLAINS OF SAN AUGUSTIN IN NEW MEXICO (USA).



GARY MCKINNON, FAMOUS HACKER KNOWN FOR HIS RESEARCH ON THE RELATIVE PROOF OF ZONE 51

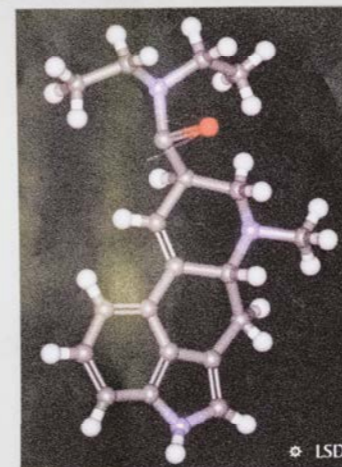
A PHONOGRAPH INVENTED BY THE POET CHARLES CROS IN 1877



THE SUBMARINE TELECOMMUNICATION CABLE SEA-ME-WE 4



THE NATIONAL PARK OF CAMARGUE ILLUSTRATING THE FRENCH WIKIPEDIA ENTRY ON "ZOO HYPOTHESIS" BY CARL SAGAN



LSD MOLECULAR FORMULA



ILLUSTRATION OF ONE OF THE FATHERS OF CRYPTOGRAPHY BY GIAMBATTISTA DELLA PORTA FOR "DE FURTIVIS LITERARUM NOTIS" (1591)



"I WANT TO BELIEVE," POSTER OF THE X FILES SERIES