

# FRIEZE

Matthew Angero Harrison: "An Ambitious Group Exhibition Makes the Case for Optimism"

By Giovanna Monzotti

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*Nicola L, Sun & Moon Giant Pénétrables, 1996, installation view. Courtesy: Alison Jacques, London and Nicola L. Collection and Archive; photograph: Makenzie L. Goodman*

## At Museion, Bolzano, 'HOPE' aims to stimulate individual and collective imaginations

Conceived as anthropomorphic sculptures that reflect on the physical boundaries between the self and the world, Nicola L.'s series of interactive and wearable works, 'Sun & Moon Giant Pénétrables' (c.1996), are a fitting lens through which to view 'HOPE', the third instalment of 'TECHNO HUMANITIES', a three-year multidisciplinary research project launched by Museion in 2021. Aiming to turn the institution 'into a production site of wonder, merging science and fiction to evoke hope through individual and collective imaginations', according to the press materials, the show posits that it is only through such experiments in speculative worldbuilding that we can 're-enchant the world' and take back our future.



'HOPE', exhibition view, 2023-24, Museion, Bolzano. Courtesy: the artists and Museion, Bolzano; Photograph: Luca Guadagnini

**JESSICA  
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108  
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

Curated by Bart van der Heide and Leonie Radine, in collaboration with DeForrest Brown, Jr., 'HOPE' brings together works by a cross-generational group of more than 30 artists split into four thematic sections: 'Observatory', 'Arcade', 'Third Earth Archive' and 'Wormholes'. Designed by Diogo Passarinho Studio, the exhibition architecture subverts the museum's normal access routes by inviting visitors to ascend directly to the top floor in a lift playing Ulrike Bernard and Caroline Profanter's sound installation of cable car noises, *AUI OI* (2013). Here, amongst works by Sophia Al-Maria, Ei Arakawa and Matthew Angelo Harrison, Suzanne Treister's contributions are arguably the most radical. In 1995, before the dawn of the app era, Treister created a digital platform for encounters with Rosalind Brodsky (1970–2058), her alter ego whose series of 'Electronic Time Travelling Costumes' (1995–97) enabled her to journey through the 20th century in virtual space. Displayed on mannequins, these outfits resonate with adjacent paintings in which Treister envisions future museums dedicated to 'machine telepathy' (e.g. *SURVIVOR (F)/Fashion designs for space travel/Rainbow Spaceship Dress 03*, 2016–19).



Suzanne Treister, *SURVIVOR (F)/Fashion designs for space travel/Rainbow Spaceship Dress 03*, 2016–19, watercolour.  
Courtesy: the artist and Annelly Juda Fine Art, London

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Treister's techno-visionary practice anticipates the immersive nature of the works on the floor below, which explore AI, machine learning, the metaverse and three-dimensional, computer-generated worlds. YuYang's *Electromagnetic Brainology* (2017), for instance, is a hyper stimulating, five-channel video installation that incorporates manga and anime into the aesthetics of gaming, with influences from religion, neurology and the relationship between the body and the four elements of fire, water, earth and wind.



YuYang, *Electromagnetic Brainology*, 2017, installation view. Courtesy: the artist

On the next level down, Brown invites the audience to explore a new, alternative universe through images and sounds that recount the Afrofuturist myth of the underwater realm of Drexciya, home to the descendants of enslaved people thrown from slave ships. Featuring an archive of maps, infographics, timelines, books, vinyl, Detroit techno album covers and untitled digital paintings printed on Alu-Dibond by AbuQadim Haqq, this section offers the first in-depth, intuitional look at this form of historiography.

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SILVERMAN**

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jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508



AbuQadim Haqq, Leo Rodrigues and Hector Rubilar, *Timeline of the Black Technology*, 2021, digital painting. Courtesy: the artists

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SILVERMAN**

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jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

The show concludes in the Museion Passage on floor zero with works – both new commissions and pieces from the museum’s collection – that investigate the logic of wormholes. These include Tacita Dean’s *Jukebox II* (2000), a console produced for the Millennium Dome in London, and Allora & Calzadilla’s *Sediments Sentiments (Figures of Speech)* (2007), an amorphous, mixed-media installation, in which the most significant speeches of the 20th century are explored as potential politico-historical ‘traces’ and light-speed journeys between time and space in our society.



'HOPE', exhibition view, 2023–24, Museion, Bolzano. Courtesy: the artists and Museion, Bolzano; photograph: Luca Guadagnini

Travel – whether virtual or imaginary – is a central theme in all these works, transporting us between science and fiction, myth-reconstruction and experimental worldbuilding. As an incubator for imagining and creating 'worlds beyond the projection of alternative futures', to quote the forthcoming exhibition reader, 'HOPE' – and, more broadly, the museum itself – can be seen as a 'landing platform' for works that enable us to re-read shifting histories and encourage us to embark on a personal and collective quest for new forms of optimism and belonging.

*'HOPE' is on view at Museion, Bolzano, until 25 February 2024.*

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SILVERMAN**

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