All Gone:
Invoking Climate Futures

21 April - 30 June 2022

FLOOR - Wibautstraat 3b

Visual Methodologies Collective | Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences | C●ECI | UvA GREEN OFFICE | ZIKZIRA

www.visualmethodologies.org/floor
info@visualmethodologies.org

All Gone **is an experiment in imagining our future climate, with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI). For** *All Gone,* **researchers and designers in the Visual Methodologies Collective (Visual Meth) at the Amsterdam University for Applied Sciences (AUAS) team up with AI to co-author climate future parables and co-design accompanying images. With audio stories, a tarot deck, and a wall tapestry,** *All Gone* **offers tools for reflection on the present and possible futures of living with climate change.**

All Gone is part of the larger program *Climate Futures: (Machine) learning from cli-fi*, in which researchers and designers from the Visual Methodologies Collective collaborate with algorithms to create new imaginaries for life with a changing climate.

A Crisis of Imagination

Writer Amitav Ghosh describes the climate crisis as a "crisis of imagination" in his 2016 book *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable,* calling on artists, writers, and designers among others to engage with the topic of climate crisis in their work. The artistic research program Climate Futures heeds that call by turning to science fiction – the genre best known to forecast futures. Already in 1958, political philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed to the "highly non-respectable literature of science fiction" as where ideas soon to be realized by science were buried. Using collections of climate novels ("cli-fi") where science fiction meets natural disaster, algorithms are trained to write their own.

These machine-generated cli-fi narratives are then edited, translated, and paired with illustrations and videos. The excerpts are recorded by a human voice (writer and editor Janine Armin) that sends back messages from imagined futures, like postcards from the post-Anthropocene.

We also work with another machine – the Attentional Generative Adversarial Network – to co-design landscapes and illustrations for our stories. This text-to-image model can synthesize fine-grained details of an image by paying attention to relevant words in a given description. The synthetic images made on the basis of the co-authored texts are the images for the Major Arcana, with each tarot card carrying its own machine-generated assemblage and accompanying audio story. The core Major Arcana image titled *All Gone*, was also rendered into a large wall tapestry by the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (AMFI) and the research group Fashion Research & Technology through digital 3D knitting technology at the Fieldlab 3Dknit.

Further, sound archaeologist Loma Doom (Femke Dekker) has done a deep dive into climate sound archives, producing a soundscape for the exhibition, while designer and researcher Carlo De Gaetano shares an early version of his exploration into *All Gone* through video. We are also delighted that Brazilian physical theater company Zikzira Teatro Físico has worked with AI to create a video performance of a text generated by the Visual Methodologies Collective with AI, excerpts of which are on view here in the exhibition designed by designer-researcher Andy Dockett.

All Gone has been presented at ARIAS-event Listening to AI in Amsterdam (2020), the conference Deep Cities 3 in Lausanne (2021), and GOGBOT Café in Eindhoven (2021), and in workshops as part of the exhibition Critical Zones: Observatories for Earthly Politics at ZKM Karlsruhe (2021). A performance adaptation is being developed by Zikzira Teatro Físico in Brazil.

All Gone: Invoking Climate Futures

Friday 22 April

It's cold outside. I coughed a bit, so took a hot shower and stood. The water felt different this time. It was yellow, so I'd never seen it before. I thought I was going to die. It really felt that way. The water was a little warmer, but it was the same everywhere. In the morning, there was a patch of grass and a few weeds. Not much of a smell – just mud and weeds. Who knows maybe there's a skater hidden under the truck. Who knows. Finally I broke the chain with some small jacksaw.

I lined up a few of the rocks I could see and then curled in a curl, hoping to catch a glimpse of the creek, but nothing came. I rubbed a hand on a rock as a pool of light formed and disappeared. It was no pool of light, it was a pile of rocks directly over the creek. I rubbed a hand on a rock as a pool of dark water formed and leaked.

At last I stood up. My chain was no longer on, but my feet were still laced with dirt. I walked across the dirt road and into the woods. The water was slightly less constant, but it was still there. I figured I'd die before the creek got too close. I rubbed a hand over the old drainage ditch that was just a few feet above treeline. I wiped the sweat off the dirt and dust from my face and then stepped back down and began to hike the stream to the house.

The old stove had gagged out of a drawbridge and into a fitting room. There was a metal grinder at the end of the stove, a metal kettle, and a stainless steel toilet. All of them were old and rusty. The toilet seat was a ratchet, and the other two seats in the galley were made of different materials, so it was a mess. I hauled up some old boxes and went to the kitchen and opened the door. I went straight to the stove and turned on the gas and water and left them sitting there for a

minute. Then I went to the laundry and came back and got the laundry rags and the sheets and towels and bedding. I put them in a plastic carrier bag and stuffed them into the pocket of my coat and carried the rags out to the porch. There was a metal door standing open in the porch and I took one of the sheets out and folded it and slid it over the outside of the door. I stepped down into the lower hall and looked around. The windows were boarded up. There was a raw damp mattress on the bunk and a small refrigerator with the door standing open. I went down the stairs and looked out the window.

I was up at the office in the morning and there was a steel ladder in the corner of the room. I went down it, checked the wardrobes, and then went up the ladder into the gloom. The boy was sitting on the mattress still wrapped in the sheet and I knew he was asleep. I went to the window and looked down at the city. The few miles they had left. Some weeks. It didn't seem possible that anyone could survive the winter. The boy was still sleeping. I went to the window and looked down at the city.

Empty towns.

That is what I thought as I followed the steel ladder down the steps into the dimness. There were half a dozen boards missing from the walls. The roof tiles were gone. The furniture was down everywhere, rustling and bouncing. I went to the boy and handed him the keys. To be right there with the first glimpse of the house I must have seen it all before. I think I'll stay and sleep on the mats tonight. Shh, he said.

As I reached the bottom of the ladder I looked up. The boy was awake. He was looking at me. I gave him the key. To the right of the ladder awning took another giant branch off the lintel. I picked it up and shook it. To the right of the ladderway awning was a step. I went up the slope to the highest deck.

The wood was about a hundred years different. But it was still there. I could still smell the fish. I lifted

the steps off the deck and walked across. The boy was standing in the doorway. He was shivering. He took one look at me and was already going back to bed.

It's starting.

I followed him down the steps and into the kitchen. The door was open, so I went through. He was sitting on the table with his legs spread in the room. On the table were a loaf of bread and a glass of water. He was looking at the bread. The water was in the glass.

The Visual Methodologies Collective

The Visual Methodologies Collective is a transdisciplinary research group specializing in visual, digital, and participatory research for social and ecological sustainability. Based at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Digital Media and Creative Industries, the research collective works on three overarching themes: climate futures, participatory data practices, and making methods.

For the Climate Futures program, the Visual Methodologies Collective works with students from the Master Digital Design, CO-CB Minor Impact Storytelling, and the Communication and Media Design program at Hogeschool van Amsterdam, and the University of Amsterdam Digital Methods Initiative. Climate Futures is kindly supported by CoECI, Centre of Expertise for Creative Innovation. The wall tapestry was made in collaboration with AMFI and research group Fashion Research & Technology at the Fieldlab 3D Knit.