

### Facing up to the apocalypse – new ritual forms

The world has been forced to its knees: wars, climate catastrophes, genocide, plus artificial intelligence with the power to annihilate mankind, all speak of the end of civilisation as we know it. Yet despite the apocalyptic mood, there is a growing interest in transcendence and community, in non-rational experiential spaces and ritual practices which, since time immemorial, have offered communion, identity and healing. Just how this phenomenon finds expression in art is demonstrated by *Neue Rituale (für das Ende der Welt)* / *New Rituals (for the End of the World)* published by Christoph Merian Verlag and presenting current positions by artists, authors and theorists. The instructive contributions describe and show ideas and works related to the potential of new ritual actions in our apocalyptic times.

If the prevailing multi-crisis marks the collapse of the world in its current form, then we need tools to cope with the situation. Such transition techniques are being discovered in new rituals that take the form of actions and embodied stories. The aim is to resist the apocalyptic mood without denying it, to survive and to discover who we want to be 'the day after'.

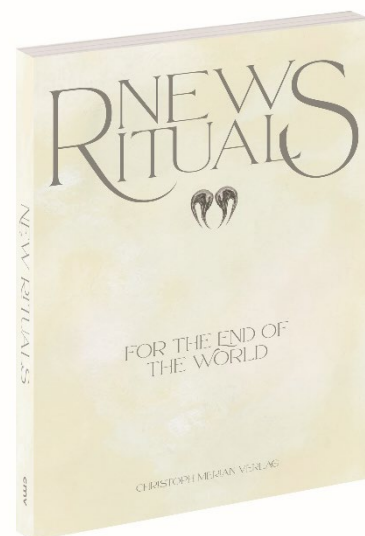
There is an enormous disparity between the elevation of AI to the status of an omniscient, indeed divine oracle, on the one hand, and the anticipation of doomsday as a consequence of AI on the other. Here Silicon Valley's faith in technology, there the counter-culture that critically confronts the technology sector's delusions of grandeur.

Currently, however, the world of art is devising new ritual forms by linking digital technology, of all things, and spirituality. Instead of optimisation algorithms, the objective here is a culture of sharing and benevolence, imagination and post-colonial and indigenous positions.

The contributions and approaches by the 16 artists presented here are situated in this thematic field. The inspiring publication, enriched with specially developed rituals of its own, expands on a topic that is quite up-to-the-minute.

With texts by, among others, Anan Fries, Jenny Stümer, Audrey Tang, Marlene Wenger, Günseli Yalsinkaya

**Exhibition at the HEK (Haus der Elektronischen Künste) in Basel from 9 May to 9 August 2026.**



HEK (Haus der Elektronischen Künste)

Sabine Himmelsbach, Marlene Wenger (Hg.)

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