

RESEARCH ESSAY

Speculating in Dark Times

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Summary

When invited to contribute to this edition of *Mahkuscript*, artist Natasha Tontey and curator Sanne Oorthuizen decided to use this publication as a space for experimentation and learning, to actively do speculation (even though or perhaps just because this is grammatically incorrect), and to do so in the dark. This contribution, consisting of text, images, fiction, borrowed material, links (don't forget the links, they're everywhere!), takes Tontey's artwork entitled *The Manifesto of Tactile and Fanciful Tactics on how to build a Speculative Future through 1.0 list of an alternative and plausible cosmic solution* (2018), in particular *Point 0.8.* in the *Manifesto*, as its incantation and guide while exploring the Dark Web, calling out demons and speculating about other, alternative forms living and post-capitalist futures.

0.8. Demon, ghost, fiend, terror, dreams and fear are synonyms of future.

We fear the unknown.

The future is unknown.

Why do we fear the unknown?

Why do we fear a place called hell as well as the repression of chasing nirvana?

Am I forever wrong?

Is that all we have?

What if I said, that in our present condition, fear is fabricated by the one who has power?
fiction and speculation are the antidote of fearfulness.

Additional File

The additional file for this article can be found as follows:

- **Additional File.** DarkWeb. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/mjfar.56.s1>

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Authors Information

Sanne Oorthuizen is a curator, educator, translator and editor based between Yogyakarta and Amsterdam. With fellow curator Alec Steadman, they initiated the program platform 'Bodies of Power/Power for Bodies' (since 2018), working with art and cultural practitioners who are invested in rethinking the civic role of art, asking: 'How can we use cultural practices to speak to (bodies of) power, whilst at the same time exploring alternative models for supporting our individual and collective bodies?'. Previously, Sanne was Co-Chief Curator at Cemeti-Institute for Art and Society, Yogyakarta (2016–2019); member of the curatorial team for SONSBEK '16: *transACTION*, Arnhem (with ruangrupa, 2015–2016); curator at Casco Art Institute for the Commons, Utrecht (2012–2016) and co-tutor at the Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem with Casco and Fernando García-Dory (2014–2016). Sanne initiated and (co-)edited several publications, including the artist book 'INLAND Volume: Publishing Class V' (DAI/Casco, 2016) and the 'Karbon Arnhem Files' series (Sonsbeek, 2015–2016). She participated in de Appel Curatorial Programme, Amsterdam (2011–2012) and holds an MA

in Museum Curating from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (2012). Sanne is a member of Read-In, a feminist collective that experiments with the political, material, and physical implications of (collective) reading; and is Textwerker, a platform offering Dutch and English translations, editing and writing.

Natasha Tontey is an artist and graphic designer based in Yogyakarta. She is interested in exploring the concept of fiction as a method of speculative thinking. Through her artistic practice, she investigates the idea of how fear, horror, and terror could be manifested in order to control the public. Exploring the theme fiction, the fictional account of the history and myth surrounding 'manufactured fear' as a method of speculative fiction and how it determined the expectation for the future. Her works have been shown internationally in Next Wave Festival (2016), Australia, Koganecho Bazaar (2015), Japan, Jejak-芳迹 Tabi Exchange (2018), Indonesian Dance Festival 2018, Instrument Builder Project: Circulating Echo at Kyoto Art Centre (2018), Other Futures: Multispecies Experiment 2019 in Amsterdam and Polyphonic Social 2019 presented by Liquid Architecture. Her solo exhibition Almanak was held in 2018 at Cemeti – Institute for Art and Society, Indonesia. In 2019 she was awarded the Young Artist Award by ArtJog MMXIX.

<http://tontey.org>

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