

Over three days in March this year, Cookies and Shimmer (@shimmer_rotterdam) got together with a group of friends and colleagues to discuss the possibility of a new type of cultural institution. We focused on three themes: The Foyer, The Password and The Fountain. Here are some extracts from these freewheeling conversations. It was a great opportunity to 'be' together and think how, as artists, curators and architects, we can facilitate the changes needed within traditional cultural institutions. These conversations will form the basis for further experiments and interventions in the vicinity of Shimmer in Rotterdam. It was also a great pleasure and fun to edit these conversations as they are full of little hidden gems. Many thanks to all the participants.

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Contemporary art is good at disintegrating into everyday life, even in a global pandemic. From the largest museums to the smallest artist-run spaces, we have all had to adapt quickly—going online, going outside, or finding new structures. Yet larger institutions are struggling to respond to the temporary restrictions brought on by the pandemic, as well as the inevitable changes brought on by the acceleration of digital culture. The promise of vaccines has reinforced the hope that things will go back to how they were before, a return to normality as our post-COVID future. The plastered-over cracks of our past-normal, however, are now structural

THE WORLD DISINTEGRATES AROUND ME

Cookies and Shimmer, online and in Rotterdam

PART 1

ROUNDTABLES

Fridays 12, 19 & 26 March 2021

issues

The World Disintegrates Around Me will imagine new museum structures to run alongside analogue and digital cultural spaces. We are not suggesting that museums should dismantle, but instead invest in exploring how they can continue to exist through new architectures. There is a need for proposals that acknowledge (post) COVID spatial limitations, modes of production, and distribution of art: We would like to ask how we, as artists and architects, can critically support museums display and conserve artworks today and in the future.

The World Disintegrates Around Me is a project being developed by Cookies and Shimmer with support from the Creative Industries Fund NL (Stimuleringsfonds). The goal is to ultimately develop prototype structures and exhibitions that respond to the questions outlined above. The first phase of the project will consist of three, online, expert roundtables discussing the way forward for museum architecture. The invited experts – architects, artists, coders, directors, technicians and theorists – will speculate on what it means to disintegrate the museum into everyday life: How can we work together with and in the digital realm to think of museums differently? How are practitioners already transcending the confines of the museum

walls? Can we embrace the new needs and supporting infrastructures of art while creating a radically different experience for the viewer? Does the museum need to be disintegrated into new shapes? Is the context of the museum only given by its physical presence? What spaces are required, recycled, needed?

The present moment of institutional crisis presents an opportunity to change the way one can view, share, and distribute art, opening up new possibilities of access and participation for groups of people that were previously excluded. Over the course of three sessions, we will explore a new type of architecture that contributes to redefining our new proximities and realities.

This project is organized together with Shimmer:

On the edge of Rotterdam's port, Shimmer is an exhibition space that operates with an ever-changing studio-like mentality, where knowledge arises through participation and experimentation. Alongside the expanded exhibition *World as Lover, World as Self*, their platforms include the events program *Sunday Mornings With*, the online reading-aloud program *Across The Way With*, and the online mixtape series *On the Waves With*. Shimmer was co-initiated by Eloise Sweetman and Jason Hendrik Hansma in February 2018.

The wet mind enjoys "pools and stains" of paint. "Paint" itself appears to be a kind of liquefaction. Such wet eyes love to look on melting, dissolving, soaking surfaces that give the illusion at times of tending toward a gaseousness, atomization or fogginess. This watery syntax is at times related to the "canvas support."

The world disintegrates around me.
Yvonne Rainer

—Robert Smithson, 1968, *A sedimentation of the mind: Earth Projects*

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