



*IntuitionX* is a platform devoted to trans-disciplinary research, tackling the relationship between Modern and Contemporary Art, and the technological innovations that are bringing our species to the dawn of a new era.

## On Mythology & Science

Akim Monet

It is with a certain sense of anticipation that I open a new chapter in my 30 years foray into culture.

Through the *intuitionX* platform, I choose to make public the pursuit of my endeavour, taking as a springboard the program of my Berlin art gallery, where I have explored for six years to great personal satisfaction, and also to quite significant public acclaim, the relationship between Modern and Contemporary Art.

As my research 2.0, though, I posit that however contemporary art is, the moment it exists, it immediately enters the past. So essentially, the scope of my research so far has always been turned to times foregone.

By contrast, I've come to the realisation that we stand at a momentous point in the evolution of our species.

I have decided therefore to engage with the fascinating, although at times frightening developments in science, while at the same time examining the ways in which the realisation of our dreams might in fact be rooted in Antiquity.

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The year of my birth, 1968, mankind was still confined to a single planet. In fact it was only just a few years prior, in 1903, that the Wright Brothers gave us our first flight. Today, with the likelihood of SpaceX delivering on its promise, we are on the verge of becoming a multi-planetary species.

Whereas our first steps on the moon in 1969 were hailed as the conquest of a new frontier, the like of which we experienced with the discovery of America by

Christopher Columbus in 1492, or akin in spirit to our push west during the California gold rush of the 1850's, our motivations to colonise other planets are very different this time around.

In the mid-twentieth century with the atomic bomb, we acquired for the first time the means to physically annihilate our existence on Earth, and in the present century, we have laid the foundation for the development of Artificial Intelligence, which many pundits believe will most likely render our species obsolete, thereby increasing the chance of our extinction. Indeed, it appears that the question surrounding Artificial Intelligence is not whether or not it will surpass that of our species, but when.

The speed at which technology develops has greatly accelerated since the industrial revolution, and many believe that our species is just at the threshold of entering a new phase known as the *Singularity*, a moment when Artificial Intelligence will abruptly trigger runaway technological growth, resulting in unfathomable changes to human civilisation.

So, while in the past we conquered new frontiers with the certainty that our species was in control, the direction in which our development is taking us increasingly feels like a quest for salvation.

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Wrapping my mind around these momentous subjects, I came to muse upon the foundations of Western culture, and a moment not so distant, when our forefathers laid the intellectual grounds of our civilisation, a time inhabited still with the heroes of Greek mythology, a world in which humans and Gods interacted. As one of the early accounts of the genesis of the world, Greek mythology has had an extensive influence on the culture, arts, and literature of Western civilisation, therefore it should come as no surprise that certain aspects of the moment we are in seem like the realisation of ancient myths.

In this light, our relatively recent successful creation of the machine as a complement to humanity; as a partner of sorts; as an assistant or "friend" -call her *Siri* or *Cortana*, *Big Blue*, *AlphaGo* or *Watson*, recalls Ovid's re-visitation of an ancient Greek myth in which Pygmalion, a Cypriot sculptor who carved a woman out of ivory that was so beautiful and realistic, fell in love with her. When came Aphrodite's festival day, Pygmalion made offerings at her altar and he wished for a bride who would be the living likeness of his carved creation. When he returned home, he kissed his ivory statue, and found that its lips felt warm. He kissed it again, and found that the ivory had lost its hardness. Aphrodite had granted Pygmalion's wish.

Fascinated with antiquity the great sculptor Auguste Rodin, widely considered as the 'father of modern sculpture,' famously said:

*"Antiquity for me is supreme beauty: it is the initiation to the infinite splendour of things eternal."*

AUGUSTE RODIN

During the course of my thirty years in the art world, as a dealer, curator and artist, I have had the good fortune to be accompanied by the work of Auguste Rodin. In

addition to the various masterpieces he bequeathed us, we are discovering today, at a hundred years distance from his passing, that his genius resides in his capacity to incorporate the past into the present, thereby creating a new narrative born from the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate ideas, that joined together, manifest his quest to understand our condition, our origins, and our future.

Just as Rodin pondered over the shared responsibility of creation between Man and God in *The Hand of God*, or in many iterations of *Pygmalion et Galatée*, or even in *Galatée* on her own, he also focused on fauns and chimeras, as seen for example in *La Faunesse Zoubaloff*. Here again, the recent lifting of a moratorium by the National Institute of Health on the creation of human/animal hybrids, which are known as chimeras, echoes Rodin's exploration of an ancient myth.

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Whereas doomsayers see in human/animal hybridisation and Artificial Intelligence, agents for the possible extinction of humankind, certainly the impact of current scientific breakthroughs, and the ever-increasing speed at which these discoveries permeate all aspects of our lives, is starting to appear as a race between man and machine, with hybridisation a likely outcome.

So, taking as a springboard the program of my Berlin art gallery, where for six years I explored the relationship between Modern and Contemporary Art, and taking my queue from Rodin's contemplation of the past in order to discover eternity, I have decided to explore the relationship between the roots of our culture and the future of our species. This research will constitute the curatorial foundation of the forthcoming program of my art gallery. Taking Auguste Rodin's oeuvre as a walking stick, I will follow what started as only an intuition, but is quickly turning into a certainty. As it were, the word *Intuition* comes from "intuire", *contemplation* in Latin. Further investigation of this term has let me to discover that Plato, Spinoza, and many other preeminent thinkers, considered intuition to be the highest form of intelligence, a power that interestingly recalls our quest to attain universal knowledge, precisely through linking our brain to artificial intelligence.

I leave it to Ray Kurzweil to illuminate us on this fascinating topic, and to Elon Musk's Neuralink, to actually realise this feat, through the development of high bandwidth and safe brain-machine interfaces.

Akim Monet  
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*"Intuition is the source of scientific knowledge. Wise people have an inward sense of what is beautiful, and the highest wisdom is to trust this intuition and be guided by it."*

ARISTOTLE