Speculative Facts

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An Introduction to Speculative Facts

"A fact, at its base, is a kind of social contract." Or so concluded one contemporary expert on facts—professional fact-checker Alex Carp. Reviewing factual claims by journalists on a daily basis for the *New York Times Magazine*, he saw cracks in the once-held belief in facts, as an objective, rock-solid ground on which our political, scientific and social reality can be built. To tease out this alleged social nature of facts, we asked Carp and his colleague Jamie Fisher to discuss their profession, which took place via an e-mail exchange. Weren't fact-checkers supposed to be the rational answer to irrational times? What can we learn about the politics of facts when such apparent guardians of truth flirt with post-truth ideas?

We observed that many artists and writers working with similar questions about the social nature of facts tend to a more speculative approach. By including contingency and the unknown, it becomes possible to construct alternative futures that are more emancipated than our current present. Yet as much as speculation is necessary for producing new political strategies and imaginaries, beyond Western-centrism and knowledge that suits the powerful, it also has the potential to erode even more trust in institutions, governments, and perhaps social life itself.

The Department started out of the neologism "Speculative Facts" to express our concern about this friction between two separate terms that seem both loaded and at times contradictory. Inspired by the other SF, or Science Fiction, we decided to think speculation through facts, and facts through speculation, by bringing them together in one concept. Firstly, we invited

four (performance) artists to re-write, re-perform, and re-design the e-mail exchange between the two fact-checkers. Triggered by the questions raised by their interventions, we continued by inviting writers, philosophers and artists to speculate on facts, to fact-check speculations, and look at forms of agreement or facticity, with the idea of finding new types of social contracts with which we can anchor ourselves.

As a ground to work from, we proposed the following working definition of what a speculative fact could be:

> **Speculative fact** | **1** A contract about proof with stakes in the futures it enables and the experiences it comes from. | **2** A non-anthropocentric fact, allowing for complex stories and collective types of causalities. | **3** The tension field between building trust, and stretching or questioning what is proved or taken to be true.

Facts

Before the notion of facts solidified into its modern meaning, the concept was shaped by many disciplines, functions, contingencies and inextricably linked to narrative practices and aesthetics. Up to the end of the 1700s the German word *Tatsache*, meaning "matter of fact," was still used to describe biblical miracles that might or might not have taken place. In their modern context, facts first emerged in law, which used many theatrical and narrative devices. The participatory ways of legal fact-finding by law jurors have played a significant role in the cultural division of the concept. This "unit of proof" was picked up from law by historians who started to focus more on document-oriented history and to prefer first-hand witnesses over citations to authority. Via travel reporting and historiography, in which things seen and experienced were described, facts also made their way into the news and, in the process, transformed from a category limited to human actions and deeds into one that included also non-human phenomena. It was only in the early seventeenth century that lawyer, historian and natural philosopher Francis Bacon brought the term

1
Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaka, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

2
Alex Carp, "History for a Post-Fact America," *The New York Review of Books* (19 October, 2018), https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/10/19/history-for-a-post-fact-america/

3
The phrase "alternative facts" was introduced by Kellyanne Conway in 2017 and then cultivated by Donald Trump as Fox News changed their slogan to "most watched, most trusted," seemingly suggesting that truth is determined by ratings.

4
Alex Carp, *History for a Post-Fact America*.

"fact" to the British scientific community where its meaning changed into a "theory-free" representation of empirical reality.[1]

Journalism provides many examples of how fact-construction is part of culture, one where aesthetics have always played a role. Early modern journalism blurred what we now call facts with love intrigues, fictions and satires. In the seventeenth century news could be sung or rhymed, and factual information was often transmitted through fiction. History and current events could be recounted by imaginary characters, famously in the eighteenth century by Mr. Spectator in London, who discussed news with other fictional archetypes like Sir Andrew Freeport and Captain Sentry. "Understanding the world through stories is as old as human civilization" Alex Carp wrote, "but building those stories from evidence, and building that evidence from facts, is a relatively recent development."[2]

Today we see again how the meaning of facts is being changed and questioned through the introduction of "alternative facts."[3] When "trolls" are faking online news and Baltic hacker communities, referring to themselves as "elves," have to gather to safeguard the truth, it feels like our present facts are in the hands of fairytale figures. Between 2014 and 2018, more than two fact-checking organizations were founded each month. Are they a way of working out a broader anxiety about the nature of our political, cultural, economic, social and ethical debates—we have too many facts, and still not enough—or a subconscious recognition that facts themselves have lost some of their power?[4] In his text on facts and trust in Forensic Architecture, which operates both in the artistic and legal arena, journalist Robert Trafford writes: "new rules of mass communication, born of new technological possibilities, have created a new political playing field, and in the process have laid bare the *constructedness* of facts, in ways that our existing social-political consensus has proved entirely unable to respond to."

Philosopher Bruno Latour has been a prominent actor in the cultural meaning of facts, emphasizing their social construction. He shifted to studying the politics and sociology behind, and thus within, facts instead of facts themselves. How, where and by whom are facts created and accepted? Latour's theory is an important break with the idea that scientific facts are inevitable and "theory-free," which is one of many ways that the word had been defined throughout history.[5] At the same time, it is a risky and controversial flirt with post-modern and relativist ideas in which facts are completely undermined because everything is true from another perspective. Latour has responded to this critique by saying that he never intended to move *away* from facts, but only move *closer* to facts; not to fight empiricism but to renew it[6] by enlarging the concept of experience in order to escape from a purely anthropological definition. Every experience is saturated with interpretations and ideas, and relies on a network of human and non-human actors. Latour proposes a realism that doesn't focus on "matters of fact" but on "matters of concern"—how to make stories matter to such an extent that the topic at hand becomes an *issue* and triggers debate? What world are you helping to make possible through the ways in which you formulate and problematize facts? Does the fact that facts are constructed, never isolated and always political, mean that they cannot also be true?

Around the time the *New York Times Magazine* wrote an extensive article about Latour, whom in their headline they call "the post-truth philosopher"[7], the newspaper changed their slogan to "Truth. It's more important now than ever." It was at that moment that the Department of Speculative Facts invited the two fact-checkers from that same newspaper to start their shared e-mail reflection. The fact-checkers were very protective of the magazine's policies

Truth.
It's more important
now than ever.

5
S.J. Ten Hagen, "How 'Facts' Shaped Modern Disciplines: The Fluid Concept of Fact and the Common Origins of German Physics and Historiography," *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences*, Vol. 49, no. 3 (2019): 300–37.

6
Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry 30,* (2004): 225–48.

7
Alex Kofman, "Bruno Latour, The Post-Truth Philosopher, Mounts a Defense of Science," *The New York Times Magazine* (25 October, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/25/magazine/bruno-latour-post-truth-philosopher-science.html

on fact(checking). Therefore, their exchange became more of a personal portrait of their daily experiences and the way their jobs had changed, than an insight into the politics of fact-checking procedures. "As we both know from working on a certain philosopher's profile, there's something philosophical in the procedural elements of breaking the sentence down, a limited kind of philosophy that makes axioms but doesn't necessarily proceed to assemble greater truths," they write in one of their early emails. As Latour's name was never mentioned or confirmed by the two fact-checkers, this association remains entirely speculative.

Speculation

Latour is linked to a large range of new, or renewed, interests in speculative philosophical theories, within both academia and the art world, which acknowledge a world beyond a human-centered cognitive scope. These contemporary speculative philosophies claim that we already live in a speculative world, constructed through uncontrollable (financial and algorithmic) fictions and propositions. Enlightened, human-centered and post-modern forms of critique, in which critique becomes an end in itself, are insufficient to deal with this contingent world. Instead of inward and stagnating critical judgments, speculative philosophies put their focus on reinvesting in new grand narratives in which the human (experience) is not centered, and fictions are not the opposite of reality but the source of its creation. Tristan Garcia is one of those object-oriented philosophers who not only theorizes *about* non-human subjectivities, but who also negotiates the boundaries of his own human subjectivity by writing from the perspective of, for example, a chimpanzee, Jesus, or a robot. In the interview included in this publication, he discusses his position as a writer, from which he attempts to go beyond himself, while always failing to become something truly "other": "Writing literature confronts me with the limits of my own language and form of life, the way I perceive and experience the world."

Along similar lines, speculative realism argues that it is only possible to deal with this already speculative reality by developing a speculative approach to it—one that is nonetheless rooted in our cognitive capacities. Speculative realism is a rational project: by accepting that which exists outside of human

perception as "real," it becomes possible to inject the imaginary within our knowledge apparatus. In order to deal seriously with, for example, issues of privacy and data, we should learn to think in the contingent terms of algorithms; and a solution for the climate crisis should be as abstract, pluri-local, multi-systemic and trans-generational as the problem it wishes to address. Speculative discursive practices are not only able to map out the space of reason, but also negotiate its boundaries, pushing beyond its limits in the search for new ground.

Artist and curator Sepake Angiama attempts to collapse the linearity of space and time through collectively written science-fiction scenarios, some of which are included in this publication. She is inspired by writer Alexis Pauline Gumbs, who, in her story *Evidence*, receives letters from her future self living in a post-capitalist society. By taking newspaper headlines as a starting point, she uses journalistic facts to subsequently speculate upon their meaning, consequences and origins: facts not as the end but only the beginning. Hyperstitions, a trendy concept amongst speculative thinkers, are exactly this: fictions that cause the conditions that subsequently make them become real, coming *from* the future and retroactively changing both our present and past.

The risk with speculation is that anything goes; as it tries to go beyond criticality, it also escapes critical parameters to judge the speculations themselves. Many contemporary speculative philosophies then become abstract games, repeating the formalist modality of modernist critique they aim to move away from. When the philosopher Alfred N. Whitehead wrote that "philosophy can exclude nothing" he did not mean that speculative thinking should become so general that it could include everything indiscriminately. Speculative thinking

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Lietje Bauwens, "Nieuwe ecologieen voor de zintuigen, in gesprek met Didier Debaise," *nY42*, June 25, 2020, https://www.ny-web.be/artikels/introductie-ny42/

9
Isabelle Doucet, "Narrate, Speculate, Fabulate: Didier Debaise and Benedikte Zitouni in Conversation with Isabelle Doucet," in *Architectural Theory Review*, Vol. 22, no. 1 (March 2018): 1–15.

10
Didier Debaise and Isabelle Stengers, "The Insistence of Possibles: Towards a Speculative Pragmatism," originally published as "L'insistance des possibles. Pour un pragmatisme spéculatif," *Multitudes*, no. 65 (April 2016): 82–89. Translated by Angela Brewer, https://parsejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/PARSE_Issue6-TheInsistenceOfPossibility.pdf

must start *from* and then think *with* everything an experience implies, so that the experience itself creates constraints. Experience exceeds sense perception; it includes ideas, expectations, tendencies, legacies, theories, policy proposals, austerities, choices and alternatives; it consists of the immense web of things, relationships, tendencies, unrealized potentials, and futures that shape our present. Continuing the project of Whitehead, philosopher Didier Debaise proposes the terms "speculative pragmatism" and "speculative empiricism": speculation as an intensification and articulation of certain dimensions that would otherwise be denied, disqualified and inaudible, a strengthening of the minority dimensions within our experiences.[8] "What matters are situations, not facts. And situations are stuffed with different realities and potentialities. And *that* is the material we should be working with."[9]

When we complicate or criticize the construction of truth, how do we do so responsibly and in an inclusive way, without falling into relativism? Can we divide *good* speculative facts from *bad* ones by tracing their construction and context, their ways of seeing that produce a proof? Speculation is an eminently ethical and political matter and requires being open to the consequences. To quote Whitehead: "Whatever the reasons justifying it, no idea is innocent."[10]

Textual Gestures

In line with this necessary situatedness of speculative thinking, against speculation for the sake of speculation, we decided not to reflect *on* questions around speculative facts, but to work *with* them. We invited four (performance) artists who work with performativity in spoken and written language to each propose a workshop in response to the fact-checkers' e-mail exchange.

Our experiment was based on the observation of a specific type of art practice that speculates with language. Within such practices, existing (theoretical) texts were not used as inspiration or justification only, but were also entrusted with the position of the protagonist, and subsequently developed further in (yet) unknown directions by using performative manipulations. Whereas today there may still be some suspense, or even (fertile) friction—for example in the relationship between languages, which enables an "erotics of translation"[11]

—in a few years time we may well have automatic translating devices that make every language barrier disappear. How can speculative experiments with text tackle the mechanical and uniform state of language that we might be headed towards? And how do we distinguish trivial bafflement from productive confusion within these intentionally created frictions and distortions between reader and text, and what does "productivity" mean in a speculative context? These questions were on the table while misreading, making up and pronouncing texts during the different exercises that Nicoline van Harskamp, Mette Edvardsen, Michael Portnoy, and Kate Briggs each proposed. The workshops took place at the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht and Onomatopee in Eindhoven, and are included in this publication as combined interviews and do-it, and question-it-yourself scripts. How far can you stretch a fact, what are the limits of speculation?

For her workshop, Mette Edvardsen turned the text (back) into raw material and invited the participants to create a new body of text without the impulse to create meaning or make sense. New, incomprehensible sentences were formed, yet the results often felt random and raised questions about its productivity and the relation between this new text and the old one. Yet, can, and should we, link experiments like this one and artistic research in general to such evaluation criteria?

The creation of neologisms was also part of the workshop that Michael Portnoy organized, which used absurdity as a productive force. In his exercise, Portnoy invited his participants to mine the fact-checkers text and create neologisms out of existing words; then to give them real content, by making up and performing their meaning. How do you play with this social contract of "taking as true," and what is the difference between funny randomness, and productive confusion?

Nicoline van Harskamp's first response to our invitation was to problematize the idea that "the truth speaks English." In her work, van Harskamp uses varieties of internationally spoken English to propose a future shaped by the ubiquity and constant evolution of the language, and its inevitable divergence from hegemonic norms. For her workshop, she focused on pronunciation and

11
Gayatri Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

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Luciana Parisi, "Conversation 2," in *Perhaps it is high time for a xeno-architecture to match*, ed. Armen Avanessian, Lietje Bauwens, Wouter De Raeve, Markus Miessen, and Alice Haddad (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017).

the politics within (misused) accents; how does what/how we hear, influence what/how we think? So-called "incorrect" English can just be noncompliance with English's capture in colonialist formats and standards.

Kate Briggs decided to question the dynamics between writing, (mis)reading, and thinking, referencing Edmund Burke Huey's book *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*. Her workshop for this publication, *Reading is a Throwing Forward*, is a continuation of a previous project in which she used an eye-tracker to see how much you actually see when you read, i.e. how much of our received meanings are made up. Just like Edvardsen, Briggs pulls apart existing texts—a news story and a poem—in order for a new one to appear. Unlike Edvardsen, Briggs does not so completely. Her exercise, in which she creates gaps within its meaning, relates to what Luciana Parisi called "blind spots": the conscious creation, and instrumentalization, of "unknown unknowns" to enlarge our cognitive horizon. "We do not think of transcendental or metaphysical indeterminacy—the blind spot—as some kind of limit to human knowledge, but instead we look at how it precisely demarcates the point of incomputability that is, or rather should be, part of our construction of imaginaries, theories, and aesthetic practices."[12] According to Parisi, the indeterminate unknown is a fertile zone, without which it is impossible for new propositions, theories and artistic projects to arise. But whereas Edvardsen turned the whole text into one big "blind spot," Briggs was precise in measuring the blind spots' size and therefore its relation to the existing text. A blind spot should mark a relational actuality between two different points for it to become a *productive* lived spatiotemporal actuality.

Speculative Facts in Stories

Creative practitioners have often adopted an anti-fact stance yet, in this publication, we want to shed light on different attitudes to facticity that have emerged in response to our times, exploring the possible meaning of "speculative facts," by inviting practices that can help us get there.

First, it's important to state that speculative facts aren't necessarily *good*. In his article, Robert Trafford quoted George W. Bush advisor Karl Rove. Rove called a reporter part of the "reality-based community" and that "while you're studying (that) reality, we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too." The old-fashioned, well-behaved fact-checker is always one step behind, subservient to the futures created by existing powers. Interacting with the legal field, Trafford's company Forensic Architecture looks at truth as something to be attained rather than deconstructed—a both new and oddly anachronistic goal for artists. Forensic Architecture has produced facts in court, according to legal definitions, but these investigations or ways of seeing cannot be contained by this one forum, there is an excess that needs to be shown in other platforms. Forensic Architecture's collective focus allowed for cross-referencing and building up knowledge and methodologies, against the usual market dictum that artists have to own and brand a unique area of inquiry. The term forensic means tracing what happened, but in methods for doing so they produce new types of (seeing) evidence and tracing causality, new simulations and narratives that we see as essentially speculative. Tort law is interesting in this regard. Unlike criminal law which is based on linear singular causality or responsibility, tort law allows for multiple relations, diffused causality, multiple and less direct responsibilities. This way of thinking therefore also approaches the notion of complicity in a different way: by diffusing accountability, it allows us to speak of structural violence, which makes it more fitting to deal with the abstractions, environmental destruction, scale and structures shaping our time.

Whereas Forensic Architecture focusses on debunking and tackling state-fictions by speculatively rebuilding trust in facts, writers from Mary Poovey to György Lukács have traced modern facts to a quantification and disciplinarity demanded by growing capitalism and subject-object divisions in which Western ontology is transfixed.[13] Insofar as the focus on facticity can be

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We are largely working with a European definition of fact, yet there are precedents outside Western Modernity. Within some Australian Indigenous knowledges, people, ancestral beings and languages within a society are divided into complementary halves. When sacred knowledge is told, authorized speakers from one half perform it, and authorized people from the other half to verify it's done correctly. Media theorist and ethnographer Eric Michaels outlined this as a form of proto-fact-checking.

linked to a colonialist project, facts can be thought of as a means of control that suits the powerful. In his decolonial studies of Wikipedia, Achal Prabhala investigated the ways in which oral-based cultures had their "facts" erased. Prabhala's research tried to stretch the format of facts, including means such as "oral citations," but at the same time tried to avoid opening the floodgates to fake news and relativism. Ultimately, oral citations were not taken up by Wikipedia, and the format remained fixed.

Prabhala takes on the questions raised by the project, interviewing activists, academics and intellectuals on the African continent and asking where the contracts and institutions of facticity are colonialist or conservative, and where they should be held onto. Noko Makgato, who runs the organization Africa Check, explains the struggle of "sorting facts from fiction." Iolanda Pense and Heather Ford discuss how power that is exercised within the infrastructure of Wikipedia. The section ends with Ntone Edjabe, founder of *Chimurenga*, a platform whose publications include the *Chimurenga Chronic*—"a speculative, future-forward newspaper that travels back in time to re-imagine the present"—about experiences that refuse to be written in a straightforward journalistic way. The tension between the interviewees' positions is at the core of the book, on one hand safeguarding trust in existing truths and on the other hand the need for new stories and languages that allow contradictions and perspectives.

The disciplines that institute facts have long been of interest to Wolfgang Tillmans, an artist and photographer who "writes" by combining images and texts into a form of speculative narrative. In this publication, he makes associations between images as evidence in astrology, law and in medical and surveillance imagery. The grammar in Tillmans' language is that of both language's and photography's varied truth claims, which we read as sci-fi tales investigating truth without hegemony.

In line with an interest in speculative theories, it comes as no surprise that many philosophers and scholars are interested in (science-)fiction as a way to leave the beaten track of academic context and language. To remain faithful to the content of their point of departure, many speculative philosophers feel the need

to embrace experimental forms of knowledge production as a fundamental part of their theoretical research. "Theory-fiction is the simulating engine of philosophy," according to Reza Negarestani, who wrote *Cyclonopedia* (2008) in the genre of philosophic horror-science fiction, which can be found on the shelf with other philosophy books, not in the fictional literature section.

Tristan Garcia categorized the story he wrote for this publication as "theory fiction." When asked about this via e-mail, he responded that the story is "definitely grounded in some kind of true love for falsehood (and falsehood isn't something you should look for, when you're writing theory…)." This attitude towards theory, and the relationship between his inner realist philosopher and writer of fiction, comes forth in the interview included in this publication, in which he admits that he has always had a problem with the modernist belief that you have to reflect on the medium itself or experiment with the medium itself. "I want to go to the object, with and through the medium, to what I want to describe or experience." The idea of blind spots for imagination also comes to the fore when he speaks about his new trilogy *The History of Suffering*. For this epos about hidden histories, Garcia collaborated with many experts to sketch a map of facts about very specific events and locations. When filling in the gaps for imagination in between these scientific and historical facts, such as the gnomial facial recognition of Jesus, the writer and philosopher is thus limited by the restrictions of reality.

Maryam Monalisa Ghavary similarly rewrites history in-between facts. She is the author of *American Letters*; several telegrams about immigrating Americans that are entirely speculative but rooted in historical facts. For this publication, she fact-checked her own letters and added in footnotes. Here Ghavari works with footnotes. Growing from their early days as *signe de renvoi* in medieval texts, footnotes have had multiple uses—including informing the church about who to burn—to their current use in situating a texts' references, one that has become so crucial in producing facticity.

Federico Campagna searches for the structures beneath belief. For many critics, that would be ideology. For Campagna, underneath ideology there is yet another structuring system at play: Metaphysics. Here he sketches out one possible metaphysics, a cosmology full of angels and intuitions, devils and demons (figures that were needed to produce Descartes and Maxwell's theories) opening up an intensely aesthetic approach to the underlying structures in the making of truth.

Ingo Niermann writes of knowledge as an active thing, something in which we can achieve freedom through drills that encompass habit, learning, and thinking about how we choose to make truths.

Like the performative practices many theorists, artists and writers have adopted, graphic design can also be a drill, adding pressure and stretching our habitual methodologies when we read and make meaning. Design sets the scene like architecture, orientating the readers before the text is even read. Are we at an academic lecture, or a basement sit-in, or at our mailbox receiving a letter from the government? And is the visual social contract to suspend disbelief or invest belief? A mis-oriented reader can easily read conspiracies as news, for example. How much authority do we give to the look of words, and how do the organizations that produce facts present their work? We've included a few in this book: a *New York Times* slogan, logos for Bellingcat and WikiAfrica. (Wikipedia, by the way, uses the font Arial, therefore we use it too.) In Michael Portnoy and Tristan Garcia's texts fictional books and new concepts are produced. To these we add visual typographic identities. We thought of the identities like TV shows, building an imaginary studio space around the ideas. Some were produced with a logo generator, where you pick visual stereotypes that situate a reader quickly, though our choice of style is not always straightforward. Fake news, despite its sometimes speculative quality relies on fast language and a low degree of ambiguity, while productive confusion proposes an unknown type of reading experience.

In one of the workshops, the idea of "desirable difficulty" in typography emerged. It sounded familiar to us. Difficult Times is this book's major typeface, developed by Ronja Andersen, which intervenes in the classic Times font. Parts of the font are swapped, mirrored and turned upside down. The shapes trigger one's memory. It looks like Times—the reliable design staple that delivers our news—but also not. This familiarity and estrangement creates

a space to reconsider how you produce meaning when reading. The design starts off with a tightly designed system of rules, and as the book progresses it mutates and produces stranger iterations. In stages of performance, transcription, editing and design, existing logics and lines of causality are overthrown, scripts for future scenographies are made. These layers add mutation, interference, or obscuration, depending on how you see it.

The Department of Speculative Facts connects two seemingly contradictory fields of thought: what happens when we think a fact *through* and *with* speculation, and speculation *through* facts? The neologism "speculative facts" gained meaning through the reactions it provoked, in a series of stages that each drew on the last. As such, the project itself functioned as a hyperstition, or speculative fact. The Department of Speculative Facts became invested in the experiences and cultural conditions from where facts originate, and the futures they enabled. From this perspective, no idea, book or position is innocent. We have been searching for a balance between speculative proposals and positions that would (re)build trust in facts from the ground, between critically evaluating alternative scenarios and languages and letting go of a (fake) sense of control. This publication is a next step in that trajectory.

The Department of Speculative Facts connects two seemingly contradictory approaches: Speculation which attempts to think and act beyond existing knowledge and structures, and fact-checkers in search for a solid consensus on which our reality can be built. When stretching knowledge and speculating with fiction, what sense of responsibility is needed in times of democratized opinions and fake news? Learning from the other SF—Science Fiction—we think of speculation through facts, and facts through speculation, to situate truth culturally.

The backbone of this book is an e-mail exchange between two fact-checkers from the *New York Times Magazine*, which we handed over to artists to re-write, re-perform, and re-design. The publication includes the original letters, workshop scripts, as well as additional texts by philosophers, journalists, writers, and artists looking at new social contracts, with which we can anchor ourselves in the present.

Do SF

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