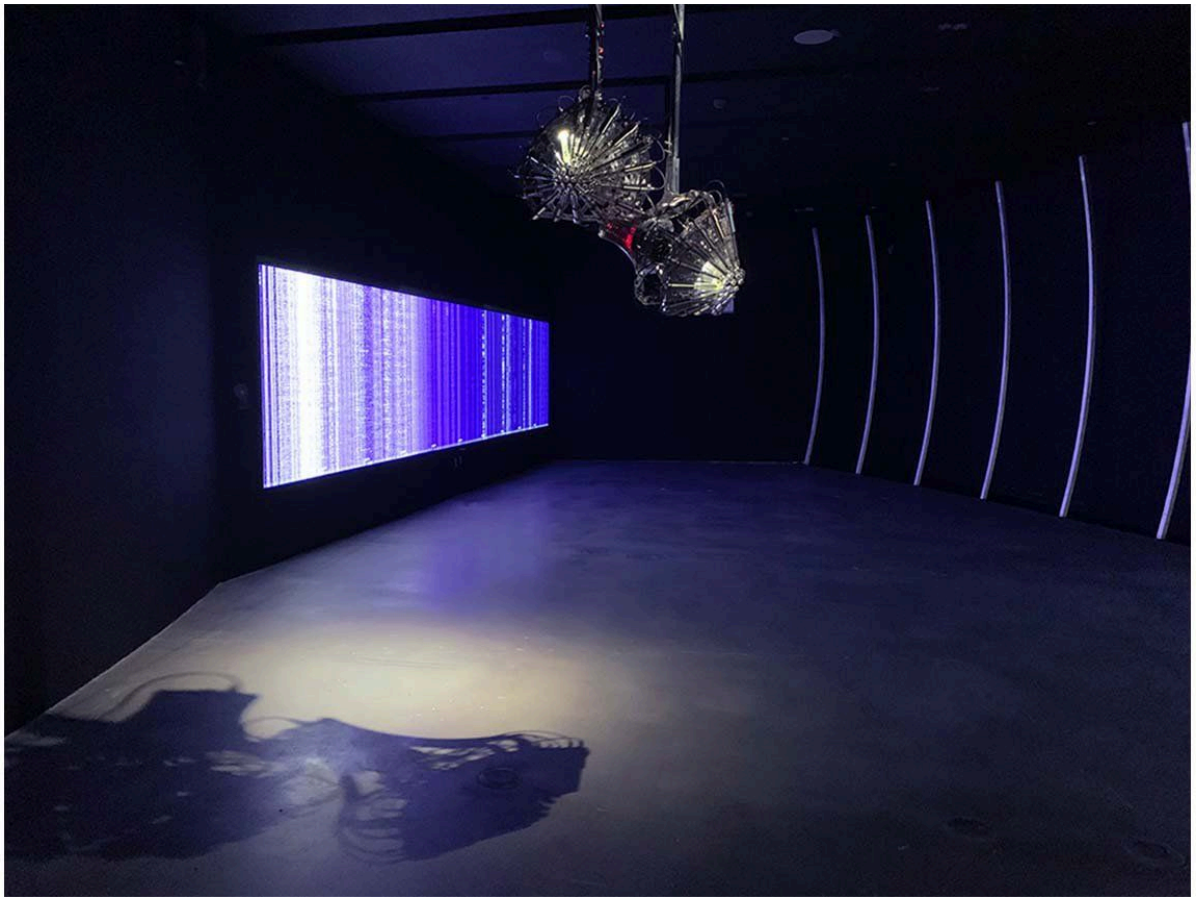
GALLERIES WEST

Indivisible

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Artists make visible the unseen world of stardust, radio waves and magnetic fields.

The dynamic relationship between the visible world and its natural yet unseen workings is revealed in *Indivisible*, the current show at the New Media Gallery in Metro Vancouver. Four artists – Korea's Yunchul Kim, the Netherlands' Richard Vijgen, Germany's Ralf Baeker and the British artist duo Semiconductor – explore what could be described as hidden dimensions, the organizational drifts of undetectable matter that escape human recognition but no less contribute to the pulse of the living world.

In this show, on view until Aug. 14 in the New Westminster gallery, technology provides a fascinating extension to our senses, making palpable stardust, radio waves, the magnetic pull from the deep earth, and the collision of matter and antimatter. As objects of science, there is much to observe, but as artworks, we are reminded that our bodies are the first – and most sensitive – site of knowledge, involving us as minor participants within the cosmos.

Kim's installation, *Argos,* is composed of two flashing apparatuses suspended from the ceiling. They are cosmic ray detectors made of clustered Geiger-Muller tubes set up like starbursts. The tubes sense ionizing radiation, the presence of muons, an elementary particle made when cosmic rays collide with the atoms in our atmosphere. Muons are the only particles from space that land on Earth, yet their presence is fleeting. They exist for only 2.2 microseconds – two millionths of a second – before decaying into electrons. The *Argos* heads flicker feverishly, almost sparkling, responding as muons land in the room, wane and transform. The work makes visible these rapid cycles of arrival, decay and reformation, revealing how even an enclosed room is open to galactic effects.

Semiconductor's duo, Ruth Jarman and Joe Gerhardt, present *Through the AEgIS*, which aestheticizes similar cycles of annihilation and rebirth, animating on single-channel video the time-lapse collision of pions, protons, and nuclear fragments. These micro-particles are filmed in photographic emulsion at an ultra-shallow depth of field. As matter and antimatter collide, multiple brilliant miniature explosions happen again and again, creating a speckled landscape. In the still image that accompanies the piece, these bursts resemble the night sky. The constellations they form are a small aspect of vast space.

The works in this show are surprise offerings to the landscape genre. Baeker's *Mirage* generates an illuminated moving landscape created by data perceived through a fluxgate magnetometer. This tool reads the magnetic field of the Earth's core, feeding data into unsupervised artificial intelligence that channels it into oscillating muscle wires, thin strands of a nickel-titanium alloy, refracting the light of a laser against the wall in a quivering 3-D image. Bafflingly, the landscape is not pure data, but an aesthetic side-effect of these moving parts working in vibration together. I had to resist humanizing the motions on the wall, as much as I had to resist reading a scientific effect in their flow. The image is powered by the rhythm in the strings; the strings are moved by the algorithm interpreting the magnetic impulse.

Vijgen's *Hertzian Landscapes,* like Kim's piece, provides a live visual of the radio spectrum inside the gallery. A digital receiver scans the room and shows simultaneous signals in the electromagnetic landscape, almost in real time. Viewers moving along the panorama function like human radio tuners, noisily brushing against signals and static. As I moved end-to-end along the spectrum where weather satellites compete with navigation and digital television, I found myself seeking quiet pockets – spaces of slower moving data. On screen, the passage of weather balloon information and pager waves accompany this gentler flow. The air is thick with information. It's easy to feel overwhelmed. ■

Indivisible **at the New Media Gallery in New Westminster, B.C., from June 5 to Aug. 14, 2022.**

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