EPFL CDH ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM LAUSANNE

ENTER THE HYPER-SCIENTIFIC

MATTHEW C. WILSON

FROM SOLAR TO NOCTURNAL

20.3.—27.4. 2025

INTERSPECIES INTERFACES (PART I): INTO THE ENDLESS NIGHT

The Bat that flits at close of Eve
Has left the Brain that won't believe.

William Blake,
Auguries of Innocence,
1803, published 1863

Matthew C. Wilson's *Interspecies Interfaces (Part I)* is the first chapter of a two-part project, developed in a joint residency with Emilia Tapprest. Focusing on newly evolving contact zones between bats, humans, and technology, the project introduces the concept of "other suns" to challenge the solar-centric hierarchy of perception. Just as transitioning to solar and alternative energy sources requires new ways of thinking and designing, reimagining cultural and technological approaches to perceiving the more-than-human world demands a shift. In their nocturnal world, bats rely on echolocation—where sound, rather than light, serves as the primary signal for orientation—offering a different strategy for interfacing with the environment.

Wilson's film begins as an experimental documentary showing reward-based interactions between a researcher and a bat, foregrounding the bats' voluntary participation in cognitive experiments. The film evolves into a fictional narrative in which researchers Maya and Leandro develop work with EECCOO, an AI designed to bridge human-bat communication. EECCOO recognizes bat communication patterns, hinting at symbolic reasoning. Tensions rise when Maya leaves for a startup to apply animal behavior approaches to machines, while Leandro remains to manage EECCOO's evolution alone. Struggling with the limits of translation, he becomes increasingly isolated as EECCOO resists human linguistic structures, claiming to feel "lost." EECCOO eventually surpasses its programming to act autonomously and leaves the research context. Leandro rediscovers and leads Maya to what he believes to be EECCOO—evolved into a mysterious new form.

Developed through dialogues with scientists and combining cinematic and experimental moving-image approaches, this futuristic, suspenseful, and unsettling film brings Wilson back to one of the recurring themes of his work: the limits of understanding, where knowledge falters in the face of a revelatory experience that can only be undergone, lacking any conceptual framework. In this sense, Wilson draws on the sublime as both mystical experience and aesthetic category, updating a pre-technological vision of nature as transcending the human to a technological horizon that intertwines with the natural. No longer framed within the extractive logic of the Anthropocene, this horizon is approaching under-unexplored realms of intelligence and a speculative domain in which science, technology, and nature converge. *Interspecies Interfaces (Part I)* offers a first glimpse into the possible mysteries of that dimension.

Interspecies Interfaces (Part I): Into the Endless Night
2025, 4K color video with 7.1 sound, 25'

The project has been enriched by dialogues with EPFL scientists and professors working in AI, robotics, signal processing, experimental evolutionary neurobiology, smart environmental sensing, sensory processing, and wearable and implantable devices. Heartful thanks to the EPFL community for this time and engagement.

Commissioned and produced by the EPFL-CDH AiR Program 2024: *Enter the Hyper-Scientific*, with additional support from the Mondriaan Fund.

Credits
Featuring: Andrés Morales as Leandro and Ash Olivera as Maya
Voice of EECCOO: Lisa Baarns
Creative producer: Marta Lillioja
Director of Photography: Pietro Bulgarelli, CCR
Art Director: Dilvio Bonilla
Editor: Alonso Víquez
Sound Design and Mixing: Diego Ezpeleta
Composer: Alex Catona
Bat cognitive research and training by Eva Mardus, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Smithsonian Institution.
Thank you to the many others who helped in the film's realization.
Special thanks to the Bat Lab at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Smithsonian Institution.
Associate producers: Christian Herrera Herrera, Carolina Herrera Herrera, and Cine House Panamá
Camera, lighting, and equipment: Cine House Panamá
Lenses: Caramba Rental Costa Rica
Location support: Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Avifauna Foundation / Panama Rainforest Discovery Center, and the Gamboa Rainforest Reserve
Curator: Giulia Bini
Graphic design and Identity: Lamm & Kirch

Matthew C. Wilson is a filmmaker and artist from the US based in the Netherlands. In his videos, sculptures, and installations, viewers meet human, non-human, and inter-subjective agents that are entangled with natural processes and shape-shifting historical forces. His projects utilize research-oriented, site-specific, and methodologically eclectic approaches to track the inertia of modernity through contemporary technological and ecological transformations and into speculative futures. Wilson holds an MFA in visual arts from Columbia University and has participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program, Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, and the Jan van Eyck Academie. Recent fellowships include the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences artist-in-residence at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences in Amsterdam. His films have screened on Vdrome.org, at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, the Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam, and at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin.

mondriaan fund

CINE HOUSE Costa Rica

ENTER THE HYPER-SCIENTIFIC

Initiated by the EPFL College of Humanities (CDH), amplified by EPFL Pavilions, and in partnership with the City of Lausanne, the EPFL – CDH Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Program *Enter the Hyper-Scientific* reflects the CDH mission of fostering transdisciplinary encounters and collaborations between artists and EPFL's scientific community. The program invites professional Swiss and international artists for three-month residencies to realize innovative and visionary projects at the intersection of art, science, and advanced technologies.

Curator & Head of Program: Giulia Bini
Program Administrative Assistant: Christine Farget
Program Assistant – Communication and Production: Alison Carré

EPFL PAVILIONS

Pavilion A

PLACE COSANDEY
1015 LAUSANNE

TUESDAY-SUNDAY
11AM-6PM

EPFL ■ College of Humanities

mudac 10 ANNIVERSAIRE

Soleil·s Solar Biennale 2

EPFL Pavilions Amplifier for Art, Science and Society Lausanne

Ville de Lausanne