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The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-first Century

Pablo Baler

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Pablo Baler : The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-first Century before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-first Century:

The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-first Century is a highly visual collection of essays about the future of art and the art of the future. This anthology brings together writings by world-renown theorists, artists, critics, novelists and philosophers, all of them engaged in current discussions about new and emerging artistic trends and sensibilities. From "post-human" installations, to transgenic experimentations, from tele-presence performance, to nano design,

digital-fiction, virtual urbanism or "guerilla art", new tendencies, are redefining both the boundaries of Meaning and what it means to be Human. The essays comprising *The Next Thing* identify the impact of these new trends and anticipate possible zeitgeists that will define our century. This anthology counts with contributions by Stelarc, Liliana Porter, Ana Tiscornia, Mieke Bal, Polona Tratnik, Hagi Kenaan, Sue "Johnny"; Golding, Pablo Baler, Mark Axelrod, Glenn Harper, Jan Garden Castro, Salima Hashmi, Rashid Rana, Huma Mulji, Ajsha Jatoi, Quddus Mirza, and Naazish Ata-Ullah. Like the artworks here discussed, the book itself is endowed with a transformative power and a subversive understanding of the limits of human identity. *The Next Thing* challenges perception, defies our imagination and pushes the boundaries of both ethics and aesthetics. For more information on *The Next Thing* and Pablo Baler, please visit: <http://www.pablobaler.com/>.

To the extent that art engages with our cognitive-affective understanding of the world and the value we confer upon its disparate particles and processes, the significance of this study is that it promotes critical discourse within the sciences and the humanities towards the preservation and enhancement of human life in an evolving universe. (Leonardo) *The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-first Century* represents the often subversive visions of contemporary literary and visual artists, critics, and philosophers on the experimental arts of the future. In search of a paradigm shift that takes art beyond modernism, structuralism, post-modernism and post-historical ideologies, these writers grapple with new possibilities as artists take their searches into scientific laboratories of biotechnology and challenge previous assumptions concerning the meaning of body, self, nature, and culture. (Curtis L. Carter, Professor of Aesthetics, Marquette University Department of Philosophy) The themes that permeate these essays and images — art as aesthetic fiction, the inseparability of art and life, the past as loss and the future as open, the intertwining temporal dimensions of works of art, the explosions of public access to art and the simultaneous shrinking of critical public writing, the critical art of the future, writing as a means of ascendancy, digitalization, the impact of physical locale and physicality, the centrality of affect, migratory aesthetics, objects as interactive subjects, axonometry, the destabilizing tensions between fiction and world, memes and micro-memes, non-materialist realities, alternate art realities — restart the conversation in the visual and performing arts that has been for too long silenced by the noise of instantaneity on the internet and functionalism in the creative arts. It is to be hoped that this book is a sign that the halcyon days of art and art makers lie ahead. (Dorothea Olkowski, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs) *The Next Thing* assays what Blanchot called *le livre à venir*, the book to come: a book on the real future, the unpredictable one, which is happening now. Traces of this future are already in every contemporary artwork, and this volume — against the search-and-destroy backdrop of neuroscience, ontological shifts, and drone surveillance — examines the unexpected transspecies we already are, from aesthetic fiction to becoming mouth-breast. It unearths the art of our species through the species of our art. (Matian Viegner, Artist, Author of "2500 Random Things About Me Too") This anthology performs the much-needed task of mapping the art of this new century. Pablo Baler covers a variety of critical and theoretical modalities of contemporary and future states of art, theory of art, cultural theory and science. His selection of essays offers a global and a transdisciplinary view between "today" and "tomorrow." This will be essential reading for artists, curators, art historians and cultural theorists. New and brave anthology. (Misko Suvakovic, Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Art, Belgrade) About the Author Pablo Baler is associate professor of Latin-American Literature at California State University, Los Angeles.