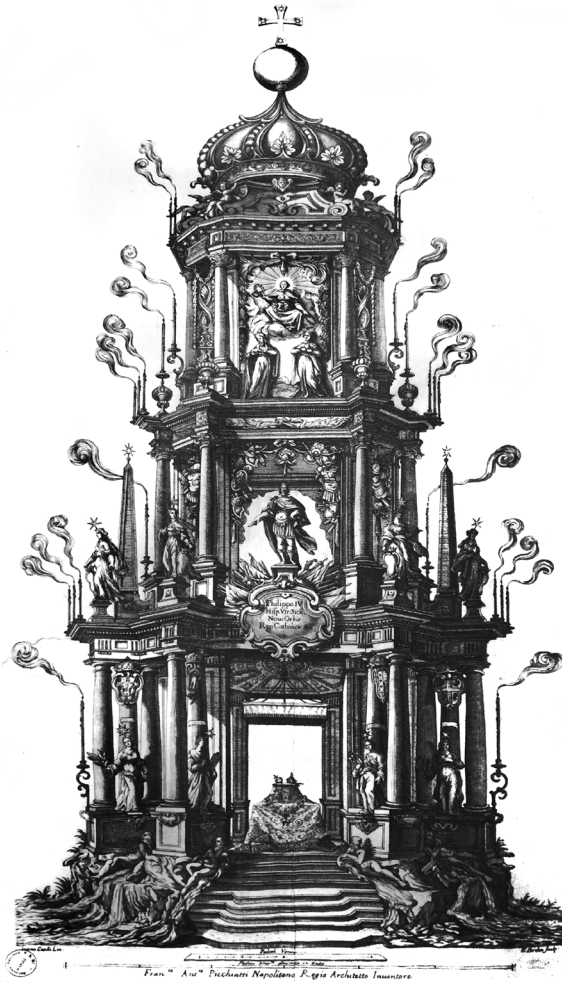


# Clients and Servers



# Common Accounts



## Clients and Servers, Common Accounts

Because life is online, so is death. Files, photos, profiles —*digital* remains— left behind by the deceased are newfound artifacts for mourning and memorial. Social media platforms and the infrastructures that house them have become cemeteries and funeral homes: hosts to both formal gatherings and casual remembrance. The near magical symbolism of the ‘cloud,’ resonant with notions of spiritual disembodiment and ascent to another realm, suggests an otherworldliness to online death akin to that proposed by religion and spirituality. This affirms the perceptual mysticism of novel technology, or what Mayte Gómez Molina describes as the “moment in which consciousness reaches its horizon and cannot see beyond it.”

*Clients and Servers* examines funerals, contemporary and historical, that rehearse the networked distribution of bereavement enabled by the online today. It identifies a proto-virtual exemplar in the 1665 funerary apparatus of Philip IV—the monarch of Spain whose demise coincides with the empire’s initial decline. His funeral was global in its reach and set in motion the construction of elaborate catafalques in the urban centers of the empire, including Madrid, Milan, Naples, Rome, Florence, Genoa, Mexico City, and Lima.

Baroque funeral apparati, from the Italian *apparecchio* for “instrument” or “set,” included architectural translations of the funeral pyre of antiquity. Often covered in candles, catafalques were tiered structures with biographic and mythic iconographic programs grounded in terrestrial symbols that gave way to the divine and cosmic in their upper registers.

*Clients and Servers* presents a 1:2 scale facsimile of Philip IV's Naples catafalque (designed in 1665 by royal engineer Francesco Antonio Picchiatti), accompanied by a read poem written by the London-based writer, publisher, and curator, Sarah Shin. The poem identifies twelve historical flashpoints that conceptually link contemporary cultures of online death and mourning to the coordinated, global funeral apparatus of Philip IV. What technologies have since emerged to augment the King's 17th century infrastructure to atomize memorial across material and virtual eco-systems? Shin's answers that question in a trans-historical constellatory narrative. Conscious of Philip IV's interest in the astrological and the cosmic—and in reference to the catafalque's iconographic program—each of the twelve episodes is given an astrological reading, with one house represented from its chart. It occasionally quotes *Life is a Dream*, a play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, who wrote under the patronage of Philip IV.

Hung about with screens animating a scenario from each episode and scrappily held together with packing tape, the cardboard catafalque alludes to the logistical ethic and ephemeral spirit of Philip IV's multi-national memorial program.

In these next pages you will find the transcript of the audio that was played in the exhibition space.

## Audio transcript

### Introduction by Common Accounts

This is a funeral for the planet king. He is dead. The king. The planet king is dead. A structure was built for his body. A catafalque in every corner. In every corner of the planet. Apparatuses were assembled. Devices to link the celestial and the elemental. Portals between the terrestrial and the political. Between the planetary and the cosmic. Structures were built to model the world. Structures were built to mark and remember. To stake a claim. Here. And there. And beyond. And beyond. Structures were built in Madrid. And Pamplona. And Milan. And Florence. And Genoa. And Rome. And Palermo. And Mexico City. And Lima. And Naples. A structure was built in Naples. In the year the king died, a structure was built in Naples. It was a memorial in mourning. It was a structure of portals. It was a structure of frames: to link here and there. Three tiers of frames to link here and there.

Its form was a model: of mountains, of rivers, of cities, and heavens. It was empire across earth, and oceans, and skies. It was a structure of frames, to beckon horizons. A structure of portals between clients and servers.

This is a requiem for the planet king.  
A narrative across time, told in twelve events.  
This is a hymn to the world of his making.  
It begins with his birth. Though he is now dead.

The planet king is dead.

**Astropoetry by Sarah Shin with fragments from *Life is a Dream* by  
Pedro Calderón de la Barca (in italics), translated by Roy Campbell.**

**April 8, 1605**

**Madrid**

**The Birth of Philip the Fourth**

A horoscope cast at his birth  
on viernes santo,  
looks at the influence of the stars,  
on man's destiny.

These are apocalyptic years:  
the prophecy of the nova, new star, in 1604,  
the prophecy of the eclipse, in 1605,  
portend, some say, the planet king.

Born in 1605, the same year as  
the errant knight, Sagittarius  
the archer, eternal seeker,  
is in the first house.  
Squaring Neptune,  
planet of illusion and dream,  
the ascendent presages  
the dissolution of the empire,  
its underworld riches  
inflated by Jupiter squaring Pluto.

With the sun and Pluto  
in Aries in the fifth,  
there is fire and shadow  
in the place of drama.  
The end is in the beginning.

*I walk in doubt between two darkneses  
I, pathless save only for the track  
The laws of destiny dictate for me*

**September 17, 1665**

**Madrid**

**The death of Philip the Fourth.**

In 1665, the planet king is dead.  
What's left? A yellow legacy of  
power from a desolate place.  
With Pluto in Gemini,  
the empire is exported in  
the iconography of chaos  
in a celestial hierarchy of frames,  
spread to the knotted chain.

The king, the body of the people;  
planet king, poet king, theatre king.  
*Since he must wake into the dream that's death:*  
a house for death is the set,  
a model of the universe,  
the theatre for mourning.

Uranus retrogrades through Aquarius  
revisiting old technologies,  
ephemeral temples,  
to distribute death  
across empire.

*Talking of eagles made you dream of empires,  
But even in your dreams it's good to honour  
Those who have cared for you... even in dreams...  
Nothing is lost by trying to do good.*

With Venus opposing Chiron,  
At the end, he says,  
'I'm sorry, Elisabeth.'  
'I'm sorry,' they say,  
waking into the dream that's life.



**October 1, 1804**

**Paris**

**Ledoux's Cemetery of the town of Chaux**

With Uranus in Libra,  
a vision of an imaginary city,  
dreamed in the revolution  
for equality and justice,  
yet published into a new empire.

Pluto retrogrades through Pisces,  
revisiting what's hidden  
in the collective unconscious.

A tomb for the cosmic dance,  
a seed library,  
for new orbits that could have been:  
an ideal burial in an ideal city.

To live in this strange world is to dream.  
*Each stone is a memorial to the dead,*  
*Each flower springs from a grave while every building*  
*Appears a mausoleum, and each soldier*  
*A premature and walking skeleton,*

In the eternal house,  
a language of ideal forms spells:  
'I was doing a reading for you.'

**September 12, 1870**

**Madrid**

**The founding of the National Geographic Institute of Spain**

The sun in Virgo inaugurates  
an institution of measurement:  
capture of geographic information,  
observation of topography,  
seismography, volcanic activity,  
and other earthly matters.

Pluto and Lilith in Taurus ground  
the colonial obsession:  
focus on land and domination.  
Nature as property.

In Gemini, Jupiter enlarges ratio,  
presages new techniques of media,  
new visions of the rope for the snake,  
the world's twin.

*Now I must go to him to disenchant him...  
because knowing all things, he may find  
Known perils are the easiest to conquer.*

**December 19, 1871**

**New York**

**Albert L. Jones patent for corrugated cardboard is published**

*The signs*

*Parade in blazing excellence...*

*My chiefest study all through my long years.*

*They are the volumes on whose adamantine*

*Pages, bound up in sapphire, heaven writes,*

*In lines of burnished gold and vivid letters,*

*All that is due to happen, whether adverse*

*Or else benign. I read them in a flash.*

A slip of paper falls from between the pages:

a patent sealed, with

Saturn in his own house,

gives structure, strength to

paper for packing,

not for hats.

*These men's clothes*

*Are an enigma,*

*not what they appear.*

Saturn, conjoining Mercury,

disciplines the head

raised to the heavens.

With Neptune in Aries:

the tree in the mind

gives rise to new imaginations,

great heroes of shipping,

departing on illusory adventures

going deeper into the fantasy of

the world of action.

**February 15, 1971**

**Basel**

**The invention of the Twisted Nematic LCD screen**

With the sun and north node  
conjoined in Aquarius,  
anyone can find their way to a shrine,  
no matter where they are.

Rituals for new technologies  
reach new heights of the visible,  
in the screen century.

Find your way to the hidden water:  
the crystal matrix ruled by  
the Lord of the Invisible Empire –  
Neptune squares the sun, sextiling Pluto.

Liquid crystals move imperceptibly,  
a heap of tubular molecules, vibrating.

*(Since life's so short) let's dream the dream anew!*

The way out is the way in,  
through the twisted screen,  
a new dream.

*... Do not awake me  
If I am dreaming! Do not let me fall  
Asleep if it is true!*

**November 2, 1971**

**Modena**

**Superstudio's entry to the San Cataldo Cemetery competition**

*To greet your excellent bright beams*

*As brilliant as a comet's rays,*

Read the sky:

the swirl,

an artefact of birth,

the whorl of the body,

the braided rope.

Do we not need to feel at home

in what may be a barren world

underneath it all?

The Sun, Mercury and Venus in Scorpio

intensifies depth and transformation.

The well allows the corpse to putrefy,

restoring its body into collective memory,

the earth keeps all time in the present.

*Tossed between life and death,*

*I cannot guess*

*Which is the greater evil or the less.*

The energy of the sun,

at the centre of the earth,

dissolves the corpse,

in the centre of darkness.

Scorpio signs transformation:

the scorpion becomes the eagle,

the eagle becomes the phoenix.

Death, the atomic reaction,

happens in a cosmic egg,

from which life emerges

again and again from death.

The moment "in which

consciousness reaches its horizon

and cannot see beyond it."

**February 22, 1978**

**Vandenberg**

**The launch of the first GPS satellite, Navstar 1**

To see an image of ourselves  
means  
to recognise,  
in its wholeness,  
the construction of the cosmos  
as identical to  
the epochal means  
through which it is conceived.

Uranus on the ascendant  
brings a new artefact of  
telemetric reason,  
scratching in the dark.  
In the oblique archive,  
the alien oceanic entity,  
mirrors the human image  
in Pisces, a house with the Sun,  
shared with Venus and Mercury.

Where knowledge falls short,  
leap from star to star.  
*As you require a fiction, with a fiction  
I shall reply.*

**August 6, 1991**

**Geneva**

**The invention of the World Wide Web**

Through the blue curtain,  
Pluto in Scorpio in the twelfth  
hides sacrifice in an illusory web.  
“Because life is online, so is death.”  
Wandering in and out of the body,  
you cannot have it both ways.

On the ascendent, Sagittarius brings faith,  
the hope of a whole earth,  
but *maya* is the rationaliser  
with Neptune and Uranus in Capricorn.

With Virgo, Venus and Mercury in the tenth,  
relationships network,  
yet the moon in the seventh,  
Gemini, the twins, want doubling.

Like you, they seek  
the hermetic gate,  
the mouth of prophecy.

And then, and then,  
and then,  
there are no ashes,  
no metamorphosis.  
Nothing and everything die,  
and all was serene.

*What is this life? A frenzy, an illusion,  
A shadow, a delirium, a fiction...  
This life is but a dream, and dreams are only dreams.*

**July 1, 2016**

**Pacific Standard Time Zone**

**The closure of the Planetside 1 Server**

The entrance to the game is  
through the book of dreams,  
from which an entry for water falls out:  
a dream of moving water,  
the movement from unconscious  
to conscious.

The ruler of the ascendant,  
Pluto in Capricorn,  
reveals the nature of hierarchies,  
in life and games.

The people  
*Discovered his design and knowing, now,*  
*They have a native king, will have no stranger.*

With the moon in Gemini in the eighth  
opposing Saturn and squaring Neptune,  
avatars build a catafalque  
a temple for their next lives.  
A new world is built,  
memories are exchanged,  
before the servers are turned off

At the end of the network,  
the king is dead.  
Long live the world!



**September 21, 2017**

**Bilbao**

**The first internet cable from Spain to the Americas,  
MAREA, goes online**

Carrying the weight of 34 blue whales  
from one world to another,  
yet eternity is nowhere,  
the subsea cable transmits  
across the Scorpio horizon.

Pluto, its ruler, in the third,  
transforms communication,  
navigating with a dark star,  
a coiled rope for a snake.

The Sun in Virgo in the eleventh house,  
with Mercury, Venus and Mars,  
charges a hypersea of data,  
all mourning surveilled  
in a trustless land.

Neptune in its own house,  
oceanic Pisces,  
welcomes the MAREA.  
copper lines to the moon  
raised by imperial tides.

Data flows  
in a great sea nerve,  
*Am I asleep or dreaming?*  
*To what end*  
*Do you imprison me?*

**April 26, 2025**

**Madrid**

**Clients and Servers**

Is the galaxy a relic,  
fossilised light?  
Is the twilight of our dreams  
the beginning of a new story?

Things make sense afterwards,  
or was it before:  
an irrelevant opposition,  
the forgotten king,  
breaks open the spell of time.

Neptune in Aries,  
Pluto in Aquarius,  
twist the rope again,  
dissolving old foundations.  
The end of one world  
begins another,  
mysteriously, like a magnet,  
the dream of the snake,  
transfigured.

In the future,  
as in the past,  
la vida es sueño.

We are they  
who have prepared this place  
for the awakening of death.  
*God! what things I have dreamed!*



## Clients and Servers, Common Accounts

**HYPER HOUSE, Madrid**

**26 April - 24 May, 2025**

An artwork by Common Accounts

Direction: Igor Bragado and Miles Gertler

Astropoetry by Sarah Shin with fragments from  
Life is a Dream by Pedro Calderón de la Barca,  
translated by Roy Campbell

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**MADRID**