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# Call for papers:

# THE ATLAS OF THE IRREVERSE

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**Submission deadline:** Friday 2nd June 2023 at 23:59 in any timezone.

**Submissions to:** [the.irreverse@gmail.com](mailto:the.irreverse@gmail.com). **For more info:** [www.the-irreverse.zone](http://www.the-irreverse.zone)

The Irreverse is a world defined by the principle of irreversibility – the negation of the ability to go back, to undo, to rewind, to repair. The Irreverse is the world we live in; it is a world, which seems to be dramatically accelerating towards its irrevocable ends. Yet despite our experience that life passes irreversibly, we notice that for small systems, it is often possible to reverse, or undo, an action. Where is the source, or origin, of irreversibility? *The Atlas of the Irreverse* will be a transdisciplinary publication about irreversibility that will embrace contributions from a wide range of disciplines and feature, for example, artistic exploration, scientific pieces, political manifestos and philosophical discussions.

**We are looking for a variety of contributions that explore, observe and map the phenomena of irreversibility. We have three main classes of submission:**

## **[1] Text-based contribution.**

This includes but is not limited to: essay, dialogue, fiction, memoir, poetry.

- Maximum 30 000 characters including spaces.
- Reference Style: Chicago footnote. References should be placed as footnotes (not as a separate bibliography). No URLs. Eg: Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," in *Selected Essays*, ed. David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- If you use equations, only use displayed equations (no in-line equations).

## **[2] Image-based contribution.**

This could be, for example: photography, artwork, drawing, graphics, maps, cartoon.

- Minimum image size 25cm x 30cm with minimum resolution 300 dpi in TIFF or PNG.

## **[3] Free contribution.**

This is everything else, such as riddles, games, music scores, instructions, etc.

- Mixed-media (text/image) should not be longer than the equivalent of five A4 pages.

- The publication will have a magazine/catalogue style.
  - Texts should be aimed at a broad audience — no jargon or complicated technical terms.
  - Images must be sent separately and not embedded in files.
  - We accept multiple submissions from the same author but reserve the right to select.
  - We accept texts in all languages but we will not necessarily provide translations.
  - Published authors will receive five printed copies of the publication via post.
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## Call Description

Despite our experience that life passes irreversibly, we notice that for some systems, it is often possible to reverse, or undo, an action. For instance, this could be deleting a letter from a text on a screen, picking up an object from the floor or making peace after a fight. Each time, these little rewinds require a certain amount of work to be invested. But exactly how much work must be put in to reverse an action? If the item dropped on the floor is a glass, which shatters into hundreds of pieces, 'undoing' this event looks hopeless — it is too much work. Where is the tipping point that distinguishes our ability to undo our circumstances?

Puzzlingly, in quantum mechanics, the equations seem to suggest that in principle all actions are reversible. How long would it take to arrange the pieces of smashed glass back into their original shape? Here, the complexity of the task appears to prevent us from reversing it. Humans face irreversibility in their struggle against death, which appears to be the ultimate tipping point from where no coming back is possible. This experience of liminality is not only embarrassing to the aspiration for eternal youth, it also determines the structure of societies. The problem of irreversibility interlocks the need for conservation, retaliation, or redemption with the opportunity for forgiveness, destruction, abolition, and progress.

For eight years the artist Marcel Duchamp worked on his "Large Glass" until declaring it definitely unfinished in 1927. After its first exhibition, the glass was accidentally broken, and on seeing his installation in pieces, Duchamp decides to repair it. For Duchamp undoing the seemingly irreversible was not an insurmountable quantity of work, it was in fact his final touch to the piece.

*The Atlas of the Irreversible* is part of the project "The Grammar of Irreversibility: Philosophy and Quantum Physics on the Tipping-Point of Irreversibility" funded by the county of Styria and the Blaumann Foundation.

