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Uranocatharsis project, space debris as cloud-sculptures shading our planet

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Our title *Uranocatharsis* is an invented word from *Uranos* (“sky”) and *catharsis* (“cleansing”, “purgation”). This paper and our *in situ* installation will present our concept of clearing the sky from orbital debris, not by reentering them into our atmosphere, but by using them as clouds for shading our overheated planet. The idea of this paper derives from the famous dialogue between Alexander the Great and Diogenes the Cynic. “What favor would you want me to do for you?” asks the conqueror. And the philosopher gives him the legendary reply: “*apokótisón me*” “move a little bit aside because you hide me the sun”. Already, as we read this abstract, space debris is hiding part of the sunlight from us: two main debris fields are in space: first the ring of objects in geosynchronous orbit (GEO) then the cloud of objects in low earth orbit (LEO). If the removal of the debris is exorbitant and nobody wants to collect the junk left by others, then we risk completely hiding the sun from Earth... Nevertheless, what if instead of blaming others for the space debris, we collect this waste and we form some giant space sculptures having the forms of enormous clouds/parasols? Then we could place them over the most exposed to the sunlight areas of our planet. This discussion will be developed based on one of our artworks titled *hEarthH* created by using the space technology nanomaterial silica aerogel, the lightest solid on the world and the best known heat insulator.

Biography

Ioannis MICHALOUdiS had received his PhD in Visual Arts at the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne in 1998. His *aer()sculpture* project was started in 2001 while he realised his Art&Science research at MIT. The creation of sculptures using silica aerogel, this NASA's nanomaterial having the appearance of a fragment of sky, is the aim of MICHALOUdiS.

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