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**Mammoth futures: Fact/Fiction**

In Matthew Chrulew’s short story ‘The Mamontogist’s Tale’, we are introduced to a world in which animatronic metal mammoths run amok as part of a failed rewilding project in Arctic Siberia called Pleistocene Park. With civilisation having collapsed due to an unnamed event, the mammoths are now revered as gods by the hunter-gatherer society that has emerged from the wreckage of apocalypse. A century before, the geologist Vladimir Obruchev wrote his hollow Earth book *Plutonia*, in which an expedition to a mysterious hole in the Arctic finds the protagonists meeting (and more often than not, killing) mammoths, alongside a whole host of other prehistoric creatures as they descend deeper into the belly of the Earth. Mammoths capture our imagination as part of lost worlds and future worlds – charismatic beasts that might be gods.

The year is 2021. The Pleistocene Park has been welcoming animals for over two decades, and uses a Soviet era tank to mimic the mammoth’s tread and ability to mitigate the snowballing permafrost thaw of Northern Yakutia. Groups of men head into the tundra on the hunt for white gold – mammoth tusks! – which they can then sell to China for a hefty profit. And on the fringes of science, several laboratories across the world are working with mammoth DNA, sequencing genomes and perfecting cloning techniques. This is no longer science fiction. Mammoth de-extinction could be a reality before the end of this century.

In this presentation, I consider the future of the Arctic through the figure of the mammoth as science fiction protagonist and as planetary saviour, and how these roles increasingly converge to dismantle normative ideas of time, life and survival on an increasingly hostile planet.