

ENGLISH
EXHIBITION
GUIDE



THE WORLD WITHOUT US

Narratives on the age of non-human actors

Curated by Inke Arns (HMKV)

27 JUNE - 27 AUGUST 2017

Match Gallery / Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana



1

SUZANNE TREISTER

HFT The Gardener

74 prints on Hahnemuhle paper, video, 2016

Courtesy the artist; Annelly Juda Fine Art, London; P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York

In *HFT The Gardener* Suzanne Treister examines the world of high-frequency traders, who today operate in the Stock Exchange primarily with help from special algorithms, so-called trading bots. In her work, she explores the complex inner universe of a fictional British high-frequency trader named Hillel Fischer Traumberg (b. 1982). While watching share prices flash across a screen at a rapid rate, HFT has a hallucinatory experience of pure pattern recognition. From that moment on he follows his calling investigating psychoactive substances that are supposed to help him merge his consciousness with algorithmic intelligence and see the world from the other side—from the perspective of an algorithm. In an unusual narrative consisting of a seven-work series and a video, Treister connects scientific, artistic, and shamanic practices with the politics of global financial constructs, botany, algorithms, and Outsider Art.

2

MARK LECKEY

GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction

video, 2010, 16:25 min.

Courtesy the artist; Cabinet Gallery, London & Galerie Buchholz, Berlin / Cologne / New York

In Mark Lecky's *GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction*, a monolithic black refrigerator stands in front of a green screen musing upon its own existence. Its monologue, spoken by the artist with a digitally distorted voice, seem to offer observers insights into its thoughts: The fridge describes its daily tasks, gives explanations of itself and its control panels, its outstanding (freezing) features, but also its cosmological connectedness with things, with the sun, the moon, and the stars. The monolog is based on passages from the Mayan holy book, *Popol Vuh*, and a treatise on Marcel Duchamp by Calvin Tomkins, as well as fragments from the technical description of the refrigerator. Through an image search, the household appliance attempts to find "friends"—objects that look similar to it. Its search leads it to images of black limousines, smartphones, game consoles, and computer cases but also to the Kaaba of Mecca. The more or less intelligent fridge offers an inkling of what awaits us in the Internet of Things.

3

IGNAS KRUNGLEVICIUS

Hard Body Trade

video, 2015, 5:02 min.

Courtesy the artist

The work of Ignas Krunglevičius shows a flight through panoramas of snowy mountains. The effect of the images is that of elaborately animated digital worlds in a computer game—except they are real. The artist created *Hard Body Trade* from a montage of so-called stock video footage of mountain landscapes. The soundtrack is a Rhythm & Blues song accompanied by a computer-generated voice, "We wear masks just like you. We are replacing things with math while your ideas are building up in your body like fat. [...] We are sorting algorithmic plugins for your specific age group. [...] We are performing your last cognitive upgrade." The sublime beauty of the images is counteracted by these statements. Suddenly, human viewers have to realize that they are observing a computer in its "idle time": the time in which it has nothing to do. Perhaps it fills the time with images it has processed during the day—pictures that remind us of footage that could previously be seen on television when stations were off-air.

4

PINAR YOLDAS

The Kitty AI, Artificial Intelligence for Governance

video, 2016, 12:40 min.

Courtesy the artist; Ceren Yoldas; Rob Tom Browning

In her work *Artificial Intelligence for Governance, the Kitty AI*, Pinar Yoldas imagines an artificial intelligence (AI) that has taken over the world. In a video, a 3D-animated cat talks about itself and its work as ruler of a megalopolis in the year 2039. The AI has the appearance of an adorable kitten so as to not frighten the people. It comments from the future on the unsolvability of past crises—the refugee crisis, climate change, and an ominous "p-crisis"—and the inability of humankind to manage gigantic infrastructure. Als like Kitty AI have, as a result, taken over the positions of politicians and other professional groups in this imagined future. In the logic of the AI, governmental form is a question of quantity: "Democracy was born in a polis—no surprise that it dies in a megalopolis."

5

NICOLAS MAIGRET & MARIA ROSZKOWSKA

Predictive Art Bot

ventilators, software, twitter.com/predartbot, 2017

Courtesy the artists (Disnovation.org)

Nicolas Maigret and Maria Roszkowska's *Predictive Art Bot* is an algorithm that uses current discourse as a basis to create concepts for artistic projects and, at times, prophesize absurd future trajectories for art. Algorithms are now widely used in different fields to make predictions using data analysis, statistical analysis, and pattern recognition for applications including the purchasing behaviour of particular groups, global market developments and even potential crimes. In contrast, the *Predictive Art Bot* is a specialist in making art forecasts, published daily on Twitter (twitter.com/predartbot), which are meant to expand the limited human imagination with new, nonhuman perspectives. As a parody of transhumanist prophecies, the *Predictive Art Bot* liberates artists from the constraints of creativity and develops ideas not yet implemented or conceived of by humans.

6

YURI PATTISON

the ideal (v 3.0)

installation, shelves, AntMiner machine, video, 2015
Courtesy the artist; Helga Maria Klosterfelde Edition, Berlin

The installation explores Bitcoin, the still nascent digital currency, which is generated in so-called Bitcoin mines. The more Bitcoin mines one has, the more virtual money one can generate. The Chinese company HaoBTC, a Beijing-based start-up, owns a Bitcoin mine that is located next to a new hydroelectric dam in the province of Sichuan (occupied Tibet). *the ideal (v 3.0)* consists of an AntMiner, a smaller version of the hardware used in the HaoBTC mine. The water-based cooling system contains original stones from the riverbed, downstream from the hydroelectric dam. These stones were sent by Eric Mu, Chief Marketing Officer at HaoBTC, along with footage of HaoBTC's expanding operation that Mu shot for the artist.
<http://ideal.exchange/~txt.pdf>

7

EVA & FRANCO MATTES

Dark Content

installation, 3 desks, 3 monitors, 3 videos, since 2015
Courtesy the artists; Carroll / Fletcher Gallery, London

In *Dark Content* Eva and Franco Mattes are addressing so-called "content moderators", who remove objectionable content on Internet platforms on behalf of big companies. At work in the Philippines, Arizona or Bulgaria, miles away from the anonymous companies that hire them, filtering workers are employed to soak up the worst of humanity in order to protect the rest of us. Where do all the filtered images go after they disappear from the Internet? They may leak into the Darknet, but unfortunately they are also going to stick in the brains of an invisible army of moderators. Among offensive content that has been recently blacklisted – like porn, gore, racism and cyber bullying – are also gay kisses, Islamic preachers, breastfeeding mothers, Tibetan monks setting themselves on fire and, maybe even more surprising, Courbet's *L'origine du monde*. For this work Eva and Franco Mattes sought out several content moderators to discuss the most affecting images they have encountered and the implications of removing such content. Even if they left the job long ago, most workers can still recall the video that made them quit.

8

TIMO ARNALL

Robot Readable World

video, 2012, 5:09 min.
Courtesy the artist

How do the robots that are slowly but surely populating our environment see our streets, our cities and us, and what meaning do they derive from their observations? In his found footage video *Robot Readable World*, the Norwegian filmmaker and designer Timo Arnall attempts to determine whether the highly selective and excerpted perspective of the machines regarding their environment relate to the principles of human perception, or not. The excerpts from more than 30 sources show how humans, automobiles, microbes and other objects are recognised by machines and how direction and speed are interpreted, objects counted, traffic signs read, and individuals in crowds and faces identified. We become the eye of the machine and see what the algorithm sees: the perception of the machine still seems naive, almost like that of a child trying to make sense of events. The song "Cold Summer Landscape" from Blear Moon lends the images a poetic and dark undercurrent.

9

SIDSEL MEINECHE HANSEN

Proud To Be Your Own Boss, Proud To Be Busy

installation, IKEA bed base and bed cover, CGI & HD video Seroquel®, 2014, 8:00 min.
Commissioned by Cubitt Gallery
Courtesy the artist; Rodeo, London

The Danish artist Sidsel Meineche Hansen deals with the internal fissuring of the subject in society. In the process she examines the representation of the female body and the self in the context of societal and economic power structures. Her examination of the mechanisms of micropolitics expresses itself in a continuously growing complex of works in which she questions nervousness as a form of institutional critique and, related to this, the pharmaceuticals industry as a producer of subjectivity. The video *Seroquel®* (2014) utilises images from medical computer-based 3D visualisation, the functionalities within the body of which are used to

represent this. The psychotropic drug “Seroquel”, a female 3D figure in a virtual laboratory and a voiceover in this CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) animation, also reflect on themes of self-destruction, depression as a radical form of exhaustion and on an industry based on the systematic control of the self.

Voiceover: Lydia Lunch, Music tracks: Design A Wave (2014) and Alitrec (2013), 3D design & animation: Clifford Sage & James Stringer @ Werkflow, Editing & compositing: Matthew Stringer @ Werkflow

10

SASCHA POHFLEPP

Recursion

video, 2016, 2:00 min.

Courtesy the artist

The central element of Sascha Pohflepp's work, *Recursion*, is a text about humankind, generated by an artificial intelligence (AI). The AI was primed with a wide range of texts from encyclopedic articles on human biology and societal forms to works on psychology, philosophy, and pop culture—including full Wikipedia articles on concepts of humanity, consciousness, economics, emotion, science, technology, the human body, and human behaviour, and more specifically, Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Joni Mitchell's *California*, The Beatles' *Here Comes the Sun*, G.W.F. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger*, and Brian Eno's *Spider and I*. The AI was then instructed to compose a text beginning with the word “human,” which is read aloud in the video by performance artist Erika Ostrander. In this way, Sascha Pohflepp creates a feedback loop between us and the artificial other. We cannot escape the question of whether or not, to quote Benjamin Bratton, “...the real uncanny valley [is] one in which we see ourselves through the eyes of an AI ‘other.’”

11

MOREHSHIN ALLAHYARI & DANIEL ROURKE

The 3D Additivist Manifesto

video, 2015, 10:11 min., 3D printed object, 2016

#Additivism

Courtesy the artists

Almost 100 years after its publication, Morehshin Allahyari & Daniel Rourke are updating *The Futurist Manifesto* (1909) by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in a dark but appropriate way. In 2015 the two artists released *The 3D Additivist Manifesto* in which they proclaimed 3D printing as an overarching metaphor of our time. The video manifesto is a call to push the 3D printer and other creative technologies to their absolute limits and beyond into the realm of the speculative, the provocative and the weird. #Additivism is a portmanteau of additive and activism: a movement concerned with critiquing ‘radical’ new technologies in fablabs, workshops, and classrooms at social, ecological, and global scales. #Additivism questions whether it's possible to change the world without also changing ourselves, and what the implications are of taking a position. The manifesto can also be viewed online at additivism.org/manifesto.

12*

ADDIE WAGENKNECHT

Internet of Things No. 1

Roomba, white orchid, ceramic pot, WiFi jammer, 2016

Commissioned by MU, Eindhoven & Haus der elektronischen Künste Basel

14.6 x 10.7 x 10.7 in / 37 x 27 x 27 cm

Courtesy the artist & bitforms gallery, New York

Wagenknecht modified three Roomba robotic vacuum cleaners to function as a Wi-Fi hotspot, Tor Browser or signal jammer. Thanks to an algorithm that initiates the Roombas' cleaning function, an interaction arises from the original practical functionality that is dynamic but simultaneously disruptive: depending on the Roombas' distance from one another and also from mobile phones, laptops, or other wireless routers, the technology of these devices is influenced and their signals are amplified or suppressed. The *Internet of Things No. 1* comments on the unpredictability of objects' interactions in the net. In their random dance, the robots release themselves from their invisible mutual embrace and continue on their way, steered in other directions only in response to obstacles. The objects placed on the robots refer to the title, which is already a reality, and not only in our office spaces: the Internet of Things acts independently and communicates internally in our technological devices today.

* The artwork is mobile.

CREDITS

The World Without Us **Narratives on the age of non-human actors**

Curated by: Inke Arns (HMKV)

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Match Gallery
Trg francoske revolucije 7
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia

Head of production: Janez Janša
Producers: Marcela Okretič, Jani Pirnat
Executive producer: Sonja Grdina
Public relations: Alja Žorž, Janja Buzečan

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