CZYNNIK LUDZKI /
HUMAN ASPECT

18th Media Art Biennale WRO 2019

CZYNNIK LUDZKI/ HUMAN ASPECT
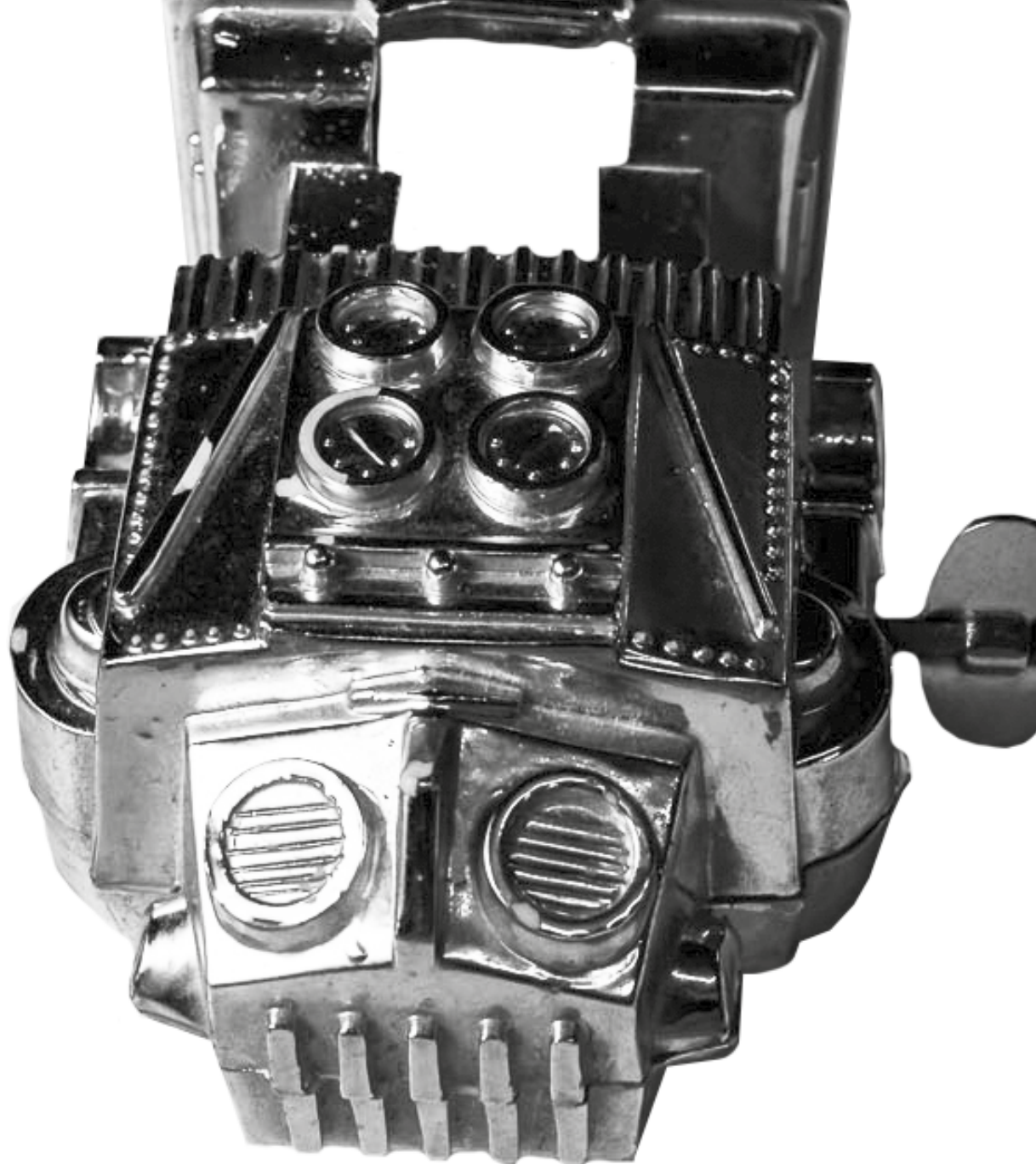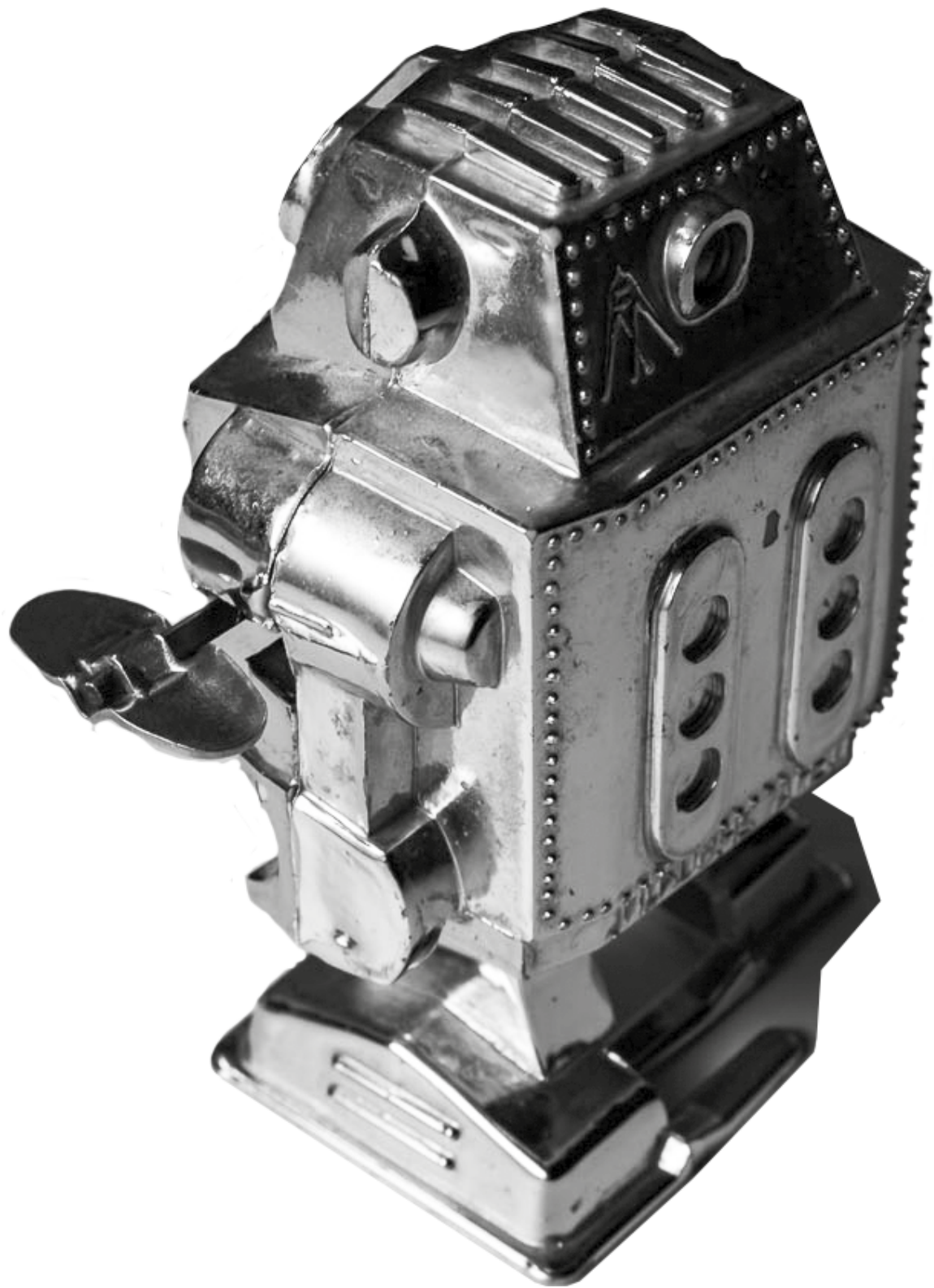
wro2019.wrocenter.pl

Structures of continually increasing capacities, artificial intelligence, environments, power and knowledge which trigger **self-propelling relationships within vast networks, natural and artificial lifes, and non-human cognitive perspectives** locate the human aspect in novel contexts. In how far is the human aspect subject to technology? To what degree and from what viewpoint is the human aspect autonomous, unpredictable, faulty, creative.

The Biennale featured special invitation projects and a varied set of works selected from among more than 1,700 submissions from across the world. Over 100 artists and works in 12 venues explored the complexities inherent in the current relations between the human and the technological, with the **human as an initiator, a recipient and, sometimes, a victim of these mutating interplays.**

participants

wro 2019 awards

THE WRO 2019 AWARD AT THE DISPOSAL
OF PIOTR KRAJEWSKI, THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Winnie Soon (HK/DK)
Unerasable Images

The award presented by the Artistic Director of this year's edition of the Biennale goes to a work in which the artist used the traditional video technique, and which relates to the flow of information and its documentation, the presence of the image, the contemporary impossibility of its deletion and its return despite it being erased from public space. It is actually a post-video work in the times of post-truth.

The artwork presents screenshots from Google Image Search results for the search term reference to the date of the student-led Tiananmen Square Protest in Beijing in 1989. The most iconic image of that day depicts an unknown protestor known as 'Tank Man' facing down a column of advancing tanks. This photograph is routinely censored by authorities and blocked from any search results in China. In 2013, a Lego reconstruction of the Tank Man image started circulating before it, too, was quickly erased. Nevertheless, the image was later found beyond China, and it occasionally prioritizes on the first few rows of Google image search.

With more than 300 screenshots were taken in 2017, the project aims to create a temporal and empty networked space where the thumbnail image(s) move within the hidden infrastructural grid and beyond the screenshot's frame, examining the geopolitics of data circulation, internet censorship, the materiality of image (re)production through complex entanglement of human and nonhuman parameters.

THE CRITICS AND EDITORS OF ART MAGAZINES AWARD

Jury: Anna Dziuba, Contemporary Lynx
Alessandro Ludovico, Neural
Marcin Polak, Miej Miejsce

DISNOVATION.ORG
/ Nicolas Maigret (FR) + Maria Roszkowska (PL) /
Predictive Art Bot

Predictive Art Bot uses human intellectual production, in the form of fresh headlines from an heterogeneous pool of news websites, generating plausible 'art concepts' and sharing them publicly through tweets. It uses ever-changing knowledge sources to speculate about a future artwork, with a consistent process, assembling ideas which incorporates contrasting and compatible elements at the same time. While algorithm are providing automatic writing for simple journalistic forms, it raises the challenge of having a machine which can enter the art production system.

It is referencing the historical conceptual art practice, bringing the ideas back to the center of attention, and as an inspiring source to eventually elaborate them further. This is particularly important, stimulating original thought production and allowing the change of lateral thinking.

Finally it opens a window on the abyss of Artificial Intelligence possibilities, suggesting how the machine can enter the art production systems, introducing both unexpected connections and randomly generated bias.

A NIGHTMARE
INTERCEPTED
BY
DISRUPTION|

after the open call

**PROGRAMMING
PROCESS**

Along with a series of projects specifically invited by our program team, the Biennale presented a varied set of works selected from among more than 1,700 submissions from across the world.

As a part of the artistic director's programming strategy, the Biennale's program is shaped collectively by all the members of the WRO team in a given year.

The process involves group reviews of all submitted works, and selection criteria are developed jointly and often evolve as work progresses. Cooperation makes it possible to create a lively situation, which results in a program multi-vote, shaped by a multitude of perspectives and a wide range of our individual competences.

In preparation for WRO 2019, we met 9 times at several hours of meetings, from October 24 to December 20, 2018. During the last sitting we closed the list of 70 works selected from 1765 submitted in an open call.

WRO 2019
PROGRAM TEAM

Krzysztof Dobrowolski
Dagmara Domagała
Malwina Hajduk
Paweł Janicki
Dominika Kluszczyk
Piotr Krajewski
Klio Krajewska
Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka
Zbigniew Kupisz
Magdalena Kreis
Barbara Kręgiel
Michał Michałczak
Paulina Ostrowska
Małgorzata Sikorska

stop making sense

panel discussion moderated by Geoff Cox (GB/DK)

Kim Albrecht (DE) + Paweł Janicki (WRO)
+ Akihiro Kubota (JP) + Kei Komachiya (JP)
+ Winnie Soon (HK) + Andres Visti (DK)

We've called this panel "Stop Making Sense", and it really poses this question of how different artists working with computers negotiate the issue of what is made sensible. By sensible I mean what is made available to the human senses or not. Artists are particularly good at making trouble at this respect around sense-making and even non-sense making, shifting things out of common sense, making things appear strange. In this connection, to the senses of course, that connects aesthetics to sense perception more broadly, and the way that varies art forms and mediums are brought together. Of course it's a long history up here in

philosophy of aesthetics and dating back to Diderot, for instance, in the 1750's who established this idea of five beaux-arts, that each sense is connected to a different art form. Like architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry – each connected to a particular sense. Of course it's not that simple. We know that now and it's recognised that's an organising mechanism at work bringing that senses together. If you like – kind of operating system that brings these senses together. If it comes to aesthetic production using computers, artists often choose to expose these underlined mechanisms, these control mechanisms, the operating system. This issue of transparency concerning software and hardware has long being an important topic to confront the opacity of a technical systems and by that which users are unable to access how machines work. But will it extend to artist attempt to further unsettle the relation between what we perceive and know about the world. This issue perhaps seems even more important in the context of Big Data and the known Human Turn. This is what leads us, I suppose, to what to point towards this HUMAN ASPECT as the title of WRO suggests. "Stop Making Sense" can be thought of as a provocation to stop passively

providing data simply for commercial purposes and take its aesthetics much more seriously. Reclaiming aesthetics from the narrow confines it is often reduced to, invokes the work of Jacques Rancière who in the "Politics of Aesthetics" reveals arts intrinsic link to politics by examining what they both have in common. The delimitation of the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the thinkable and the unthinkable, the possible and the impossible. This distribution of the sensible is a way to renegotiate who and what is privileged over others. How data is distributed is part of this as is the way in which machines make sense of the world and how sense perception is extended by computational systems. Working with computers, artists contributing to this panel, explore the material and linguistic tensions in programming. I'm thinking here of the work of Winnie Soon; making apparent phenomenons not directly available to human perception to broaden our cognitive and sensory capacities as in the work of Paweł Janicki; expose the vectors extracted from environmental sensors and network devices inside the smart city as in the work of Anders Visti; produce a sculpture to be seen and heard from space as in the work of Akihiro Kubota and

Kei Komachiya; and employ artificial senses to visualize a machine's experience the world as in the work of Kim Albrecht. I hope that makes some kind of a sense introduction trying to contextualize the title.

neural
ecology

panel discussion moderated by Edwin Bendyk (PL)

Marco Barotti (IT/DE) + Olga Kisseleva (FR)
+ Robertina Šebjanič (SI)

Cieszę się, że mogę poprowadzić tę pierwszą dzisiejszą
debatę. Tym bardziej jeszcze się cieszę, że WRO na-
zwało mnie swoim przyjacielem. Tak się czuję, ale być
nazwanym przyjacielem przez organizatorów to bardzo
miłe wyróżnienie. A jeszcze większym wyróżnieni-
em jest mieć możliwość przyglądania się temu, co się
dzieje na WRO od wielu, wielu lat. Każde Biennale
jest wydarzeniem, które wiele mówi o współczesnym
świecie. Jeśli spojrzymy na ewolucję tego, co się działo
w kontekście ewolucji rzeczywistości, która nam to-
warzyszy w codziennym życiu, to zrozumiemy jeszcze
więcej. I jeśli spojrzeć na tegoroczne WRO, to dostrzec
można trzy nurty. Projekty instalacji, które mamy
możliwość oglądać w tym roku, wyraźnie pokazują,
że z jednej strony **we are now ready for the times
of media archaeology as new media are already**

worth the excavation. Their novelty is no longer that novel and we're accompanied by downright nostalgia when we look at the Senster, the iconic dream of the future that never came. Jest to wizja relacji człowieka z niezwykłą maszyną, która uruchamia

w przedstawicielach starszego pokolenia marzenia z dzieciństwa – książki o atomowych odkurzaczach (które miały nam towarzyszyć i pomagać w codziennym życiu), i o tym wszystkim co miało się wydarzyć w nowym millenium. Mieliśmy żyć w zupełnie innym świecie, do 2000 roku mieliśmy mieć już bazy księżycowe. **We know that future never came so very nostalgically we look at the promises we grew up with. This trend is extremely valuable as it helps us to better understand the events of today.** Pomaga znaleźć odpowiedź na pytanie: dlaczego skręciliśmy w tę stronę? dlaczego rzeczywistość wygląda tak, a nie inaczej? I to jest ten drugi nurt bardzo wyraźny, jeśli chodzi o komunikację między ludźmi. Jacek Dukaj w swojej najnowszej książce *Po piśmie* (opublikowanej dokładnie w dzień rozpoczęcia Biennale, czyli 15 maja) stawia tezę, że znajdujemy się w kluczowym momencie radykalnej zmiany kulturowej, w której **we are transitioning from a culture of the written word into a culture of direct transfer of feelings** – co jest niezwykle bliskie tematowi naszego spotkania. Jacek stawia tezę, że **emotions play an increasingly vital role in communation, we know that simply because classic media use them, but because of that it turns out emotions can be triggered without incorporating traditional**

means of expression such as text and instead we can use technological methods which directly influence our senses and boost certain affective states in order to arrive at a specific result of mobilisation, even if political, czy każdej innej. Ale to, na co zwraca uwagę Dukaj, to płynące za tym dalsze konsekwencje. Tu nie chodzi tylko o zwykłą rewolucję technologiczną i zmianę mediów jednych na drugie. Dukaj, porządkując tą ewolucję od epoki oralnej, przez piśmienną do popiśmiennej, pokazuje, jak się zmienia struktura dyskursu.

The oral times were ruled by the verb. Po prostu mówiliśmy. Lecz mowa jest bardzo performatywna, oparta na mówieniu poprzez orzeczenie, przez czasowniki. Pismo – nie przez przypadek związane z rozwojem kultury naukowej i technicznej – oparte jest na rzeczownikach. Opisuje rzeczywistość taką, jaką jest. Odnosi się do konkretu. **In the post-written times we are moving towards a tyrany of the adjective, or fluid states whose element of reality and truth - understood in its classic meaning as compatibility of facts and reality- ceases to exist.** W klasycznej definicji postprawdy liczy się to, co odczuwamy jako prawdziwe, czyli to, co zgodne jest z naszym stanem emocjonalnym, ale niekoniecznie zgodne ze stanem faktycznym rzeczywistości, która

nas otacza. I tutaj pojawia się trzeci nurt, którym Dukaj, akurat się nie zajmuje mówiąc o postpiśmienności, a którym zajmują się artyści i artystki, zwłaszcza ci, z którymi będziemy mieli okazję za chwilę porozmawiać. **It is an aspect of the Anthropocene and a reality that demands to be heard.** Nie jest ona rzeczywistością ludzką tylko pozaludzką, ekosystemem, całym środowiskiem, które nas otacza, które traktowaliśmy przez długi czas, jako coś zewnętrznego do kultury. Dzisiaj ta rzeczywistość przypomina o sobie ujawniając się w danych, które pokazują nam naukowcy. Ostatni raport dotyczący bioróżnorodności, a w zasadzie potwierdzający fakt Szóstego Wielkiego Wymierania i zagrożenie w ogóle życia na Ziemi, jest przykładem powrotu rzeczywistości, która w komunikacji międzyludzkiej gdzieś zniknęła, ale wraca właśnie jako problem. **The issue of giving a voice to things outside of the human world is becoming more and more accute,** a liczne prace w programie Biennale go podejmują. Jak włączyć do rozmowy, do wyrażania siebie, to wszystko, czego głosu nie ma w tradycyjnym sensie? Nie pisze, nie mówi, ale jednak istnieje i tworzy – czy współtworzy – z nami rzeczywistość. Manuel Castells powiedział, że stawką zrozumienia jak działamy w przestrzeni publicznej jako zbiorowość, jest wytłumaczenie, w jaki sposób

molekuły in molecular networks reagują pod wpływem emocji wywoływanych przez bodźce otaczającej nas rzeczywistości. Te molekuły uruchamiają impulsy nerwowe i sieci nerwowe, które z kolei wchodzą w komunikację **with neural networks** innych osób, poruszając do działania **social networks,** wywołując czasami po prostu kaskadę nienawiści, a czasami rewolucje polityczne. Myślę, że jeśli pójdziemy jeszcze dalej to **at stake will be the widening of those mechanisms and building a communication network together with objects that still don't have a voice but which gain a voice thanks to some help from artists.** Zobaczymy, do jakiego punktu dojdziemy.

panel discussion moderated by Piotr Krajewski (WRO)

Grzegorz Bliński (PL) + Marek Długosz (PL)
+ Piotr Madej (PL) + Anna Olszewska (PL)
+ Jacek Żakowski (PL)

Mariella Nitosławska (a voice from the audience):
It struck me, when I first saw it, I was incredibly
moved, and I have realised that I was incredibly
moved because I have heard the story of it standing
on a field some place. I think the whole archive and
a resumatic way of telling the story that we're hearing
today, also together with all the existing archives really
adds also kind of resumatic and very emotional mean-
ing to this piece. So I think that sort of future ways of
exhibiting it should somehow include these elements,
including the wonderful archive that is being created
today. In fact my original question was how was the
analysis of movement done? Because I had assumed it
was done at 24 fps. And of course, because **motion is
emotion**, that's the sort of second emotional aspect of
this piece is it's history. But then, the really emotional
aspect of this piece is its motion. And motion being

emotion is precisely what animators do. So I was curious how you analyse this movement and I'm fascinated to hear that actually you didn't deal with frames, but a kind of a subjective feeling of the motion. That must have been quite intuitive than from what I gather.

Anna Olszewska: Clapping. A woman clapping. A rhythm. There are three takes basically. And in one take we see Edward's wife interacting with the sculpture. She claps her hands. So you are right because for me it was like starting point. (clapping hands) to set the tempo. I might be wrong.

MN: I understand. And the rest is rhythm, bodily motions that are understanding emotion and that's what really makes the piece so touching and so affectionate even.

AO: So when you compare this what we have now in terms of dynamics of movement and what is recorded on the film, it used to be much quicker and now it is a bit slowed down. This is the story about preserving the original parts. **So the movement gets old as well**.

Paweł Janicki (a voice from the audience): We often hear the same spell that it is difficult to renovate media

works, because we no longer have components that were once produced. Senster contains components that still work great, components that are still being produced. That would mean that **there are a lot of areas in which we have hardly made significant progress for 50 years**. And maybe works such as Senster show that these maxima have already been achieved and it is worth stopping at it.

<u>Marek Długosz:</u> To this day you can buy, e.g. servo valves. For me it was a big surprise, I thought it would be an element that we will have to put in a new one, but it turned out not. I even tried to ask, why is that, what's so unusual about them that we've been using servo valves for 50 years? The answer is very simple. It was developed, works … These are industrial valves, and **the industry does not like change very much**, in particular the hydraulic industry. Why is it like that? A lot of machines were created, and **the industry, if something works already, exploits it to the end**. However, when it comes to electronics … We were not sure about the static patterns, these diagrams were not fully described with all the values of the elements. Later, there was also correspondence with engineers: correct here, solder another resistor there, it will be better, write how it works. I even had such

a crazy idea to use simulation, because **electronic systems can be simulated in a computer today**. Well, we are already entering this simulation, this today's discreet world and the question arises, **to what extent will this simulation work the same way as the original**? And the decision was made that if we had to possibly digitally simulate these electronic systems, then maybe we can do it simply by using one computer, one controller for this system. The most hydraulic elements have been preserved. Hydraulics in mechanics have been around for quite a long time. However, such turbulent development of electronics was in the fifties, when the first transistors were invented. In principle, tube electronics then disappeared, silicon electronics appeared. When something new appears, this growth curve is very fast, then it only reaches some relatively steady state. So **this transition period is so quite rapid**. One solution is adopted, the other is not. And maybe that's why it turned out this way.

CZYNN
HUMA
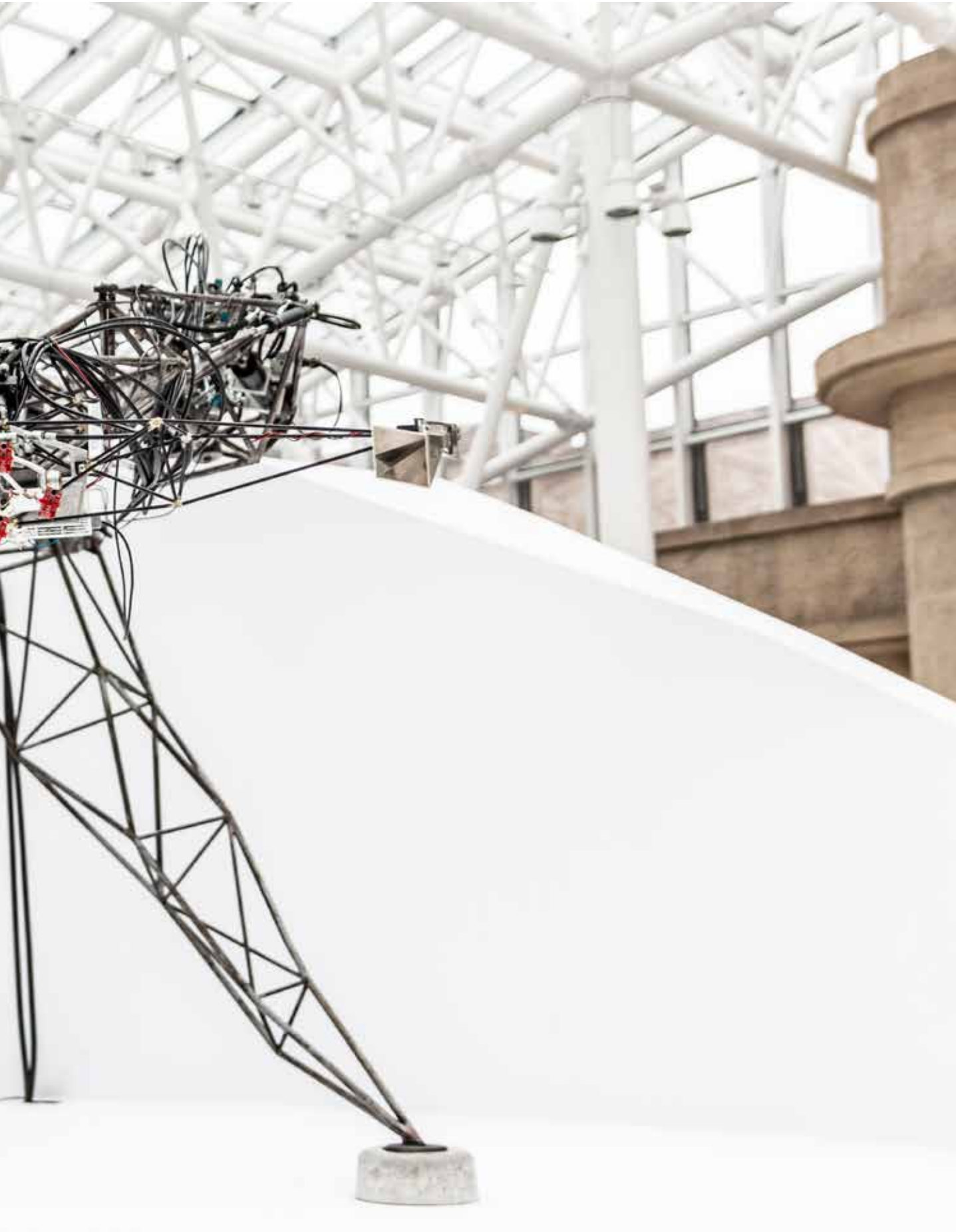
four domes pavilion

Anima
Risako Kawashima, Yasuaki Kakehi (JP)
installation, 2017

aqua_forensic
Robertina Šebjanič (SI), Gjino Šutić (HR)
installation, 2018

ArchaeaBot: A Post Singularity and Post Climate Change Life-form
Anna Dumitriu, Alex May (GB)
installation, 2018

Artificial Senses
Kim Albrecht (DE)
installation, 2017
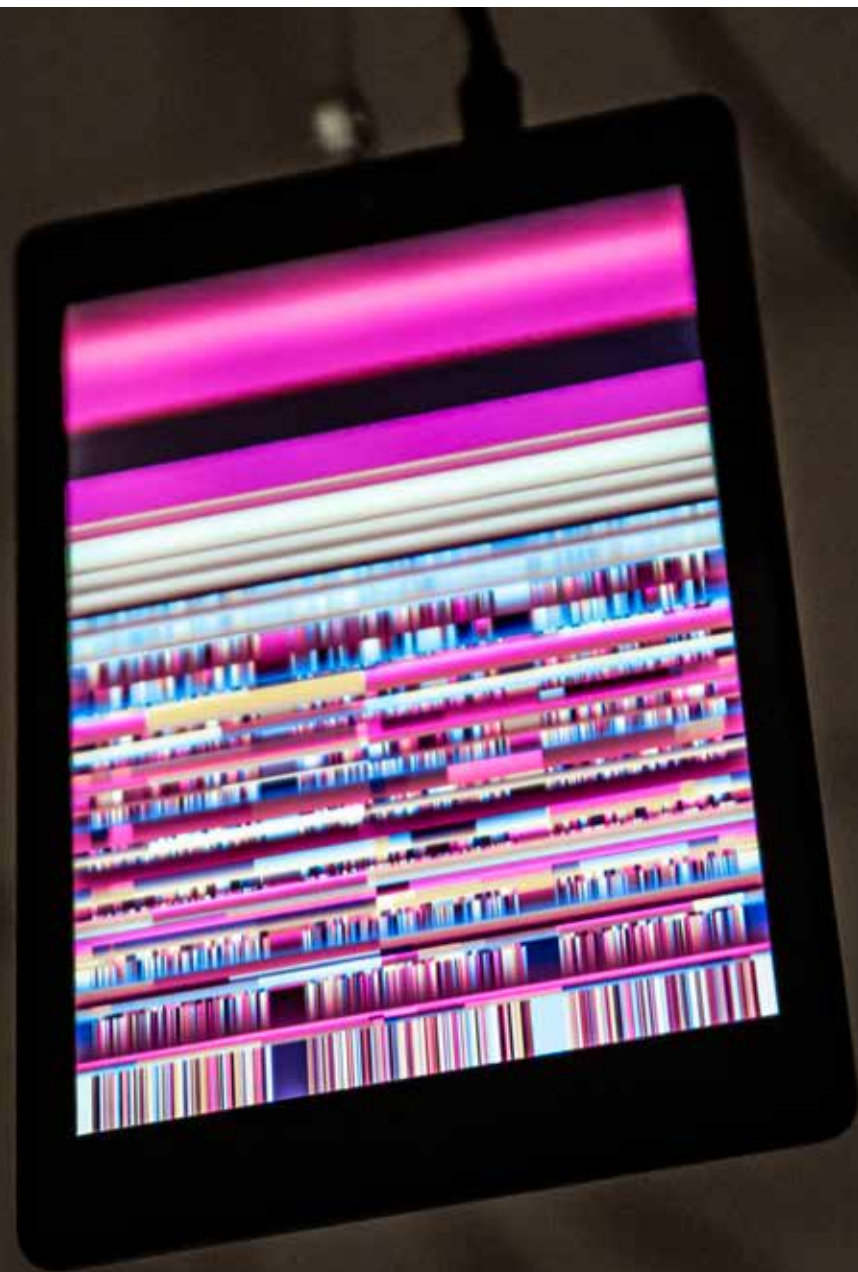
Bottled Songs 3 & 4
Chloé Galibert-Laîné (FR), Kevin B. Lee (US)
installation, 2018

DETOUR
Shota Yamauchi (JP)
installation, 2018

EDEN – Ethical Durable Ecology Nature
Olga Kisseleva (FR)
installation, 2018

Frames
Nicolas Clauss (FR)
installation, 2018

i[x]iii
Alex Mørch (DK)
installation, 2019

Imperial Valley (Cultivated Run-Off)
Lukas Marxt (AT/DE)
video, 2018, 14:00

In-Game People of the Twenty First Century.
Chicago. Workers's City
TTY (FR)
installation, 2018

Nintendogs
Fabian Kühfuß (DE)
installation, 2017
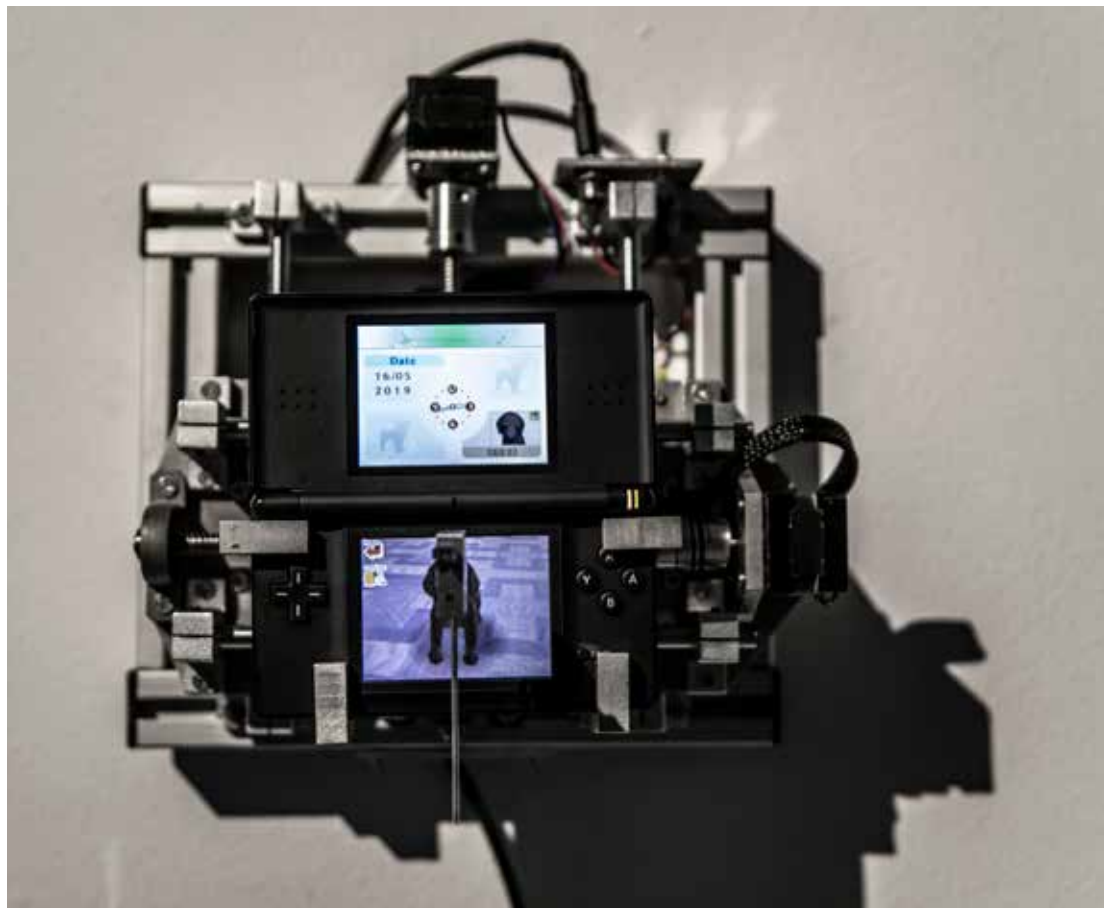
Oracle
Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos (US/FR)
installation, 2017

Pixel Works, Monograph of the Nude
couch /Reiko Miyazaki, Hiroki Miyazaki/ (JP)
installation, 2019

Predictive Art Bot
DISNOVATION.ORG /Nicolas Maigret (FR), Maria Roszkowska (PL)/
installation, 2017

Public Displays of Affection
Liliana Piskorska (PL)
installation, 2017

Sculpture for All of the Intelligence no.2 – Signals to be Discovered
Space-Moere Project by ARTSAT x SIAF Lab /Akihiro Kubota, Katsuya Ishida, Daisuke Funato, Norimichi Hirakawa, Kei Komachiya/ (JP)
installation, 2017-19
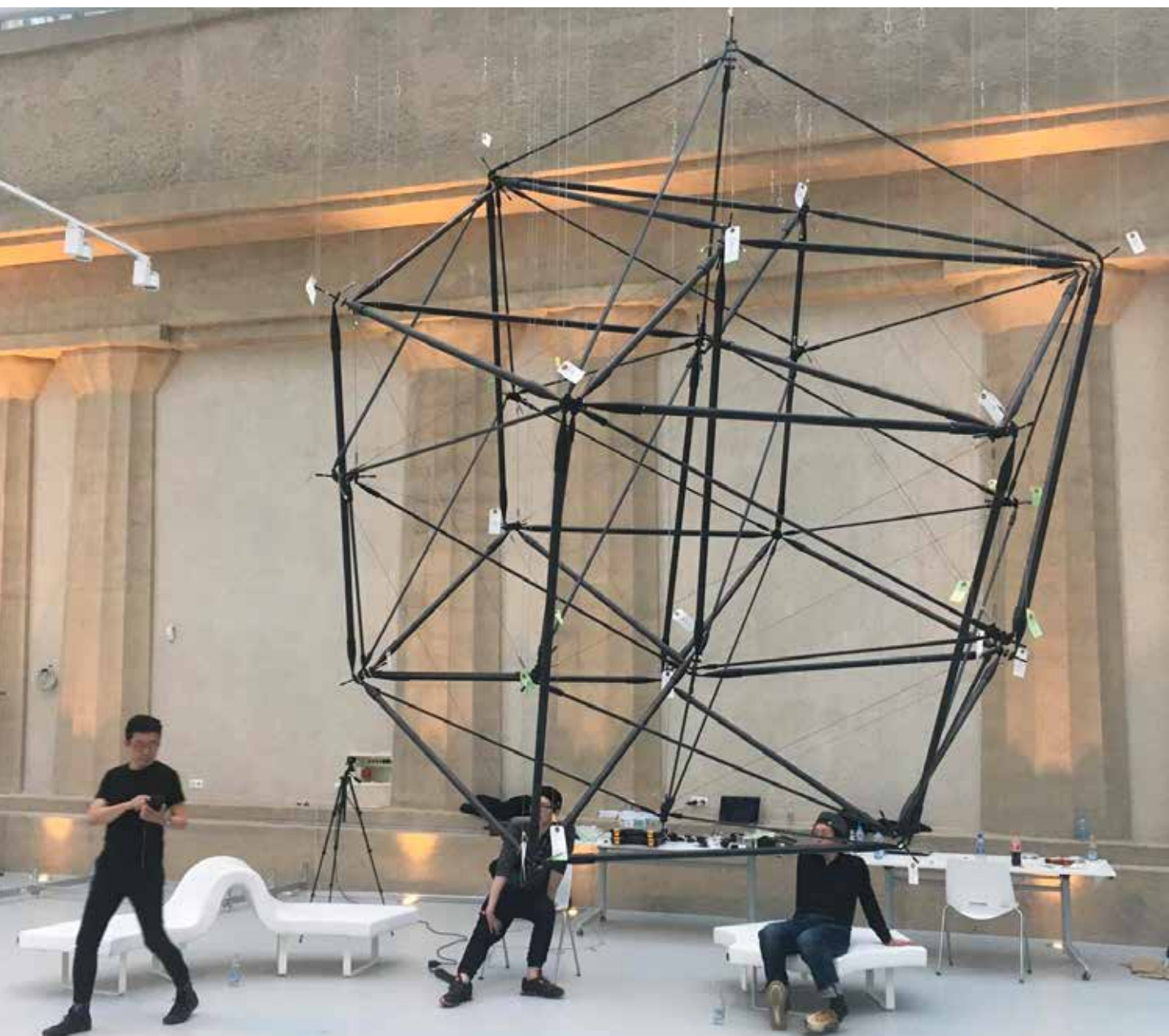
Senster
Edward Ihnatowicz (PL/GB)
kinetic sculpture, ca. 1970

Sirens
Emmanuel Tussore (FR)
video, 2017, 11:00

Study for a soap
Emmanuel Tussore (FR)
installation, 2017

Tachihokoru
HOKORI Computing /Katsuki Nogami, Hanna Saito, Ritsuko Miyake,
Tatsuya Ishikawa, Kazuya Horibe/ (JP)
installation, 2018

The Grass Smells So Sweet
Dani Ploeger (NL)
installation, 2018

Tortoise Timer
Mitsuru Tokisato (JP)
installation, 2018
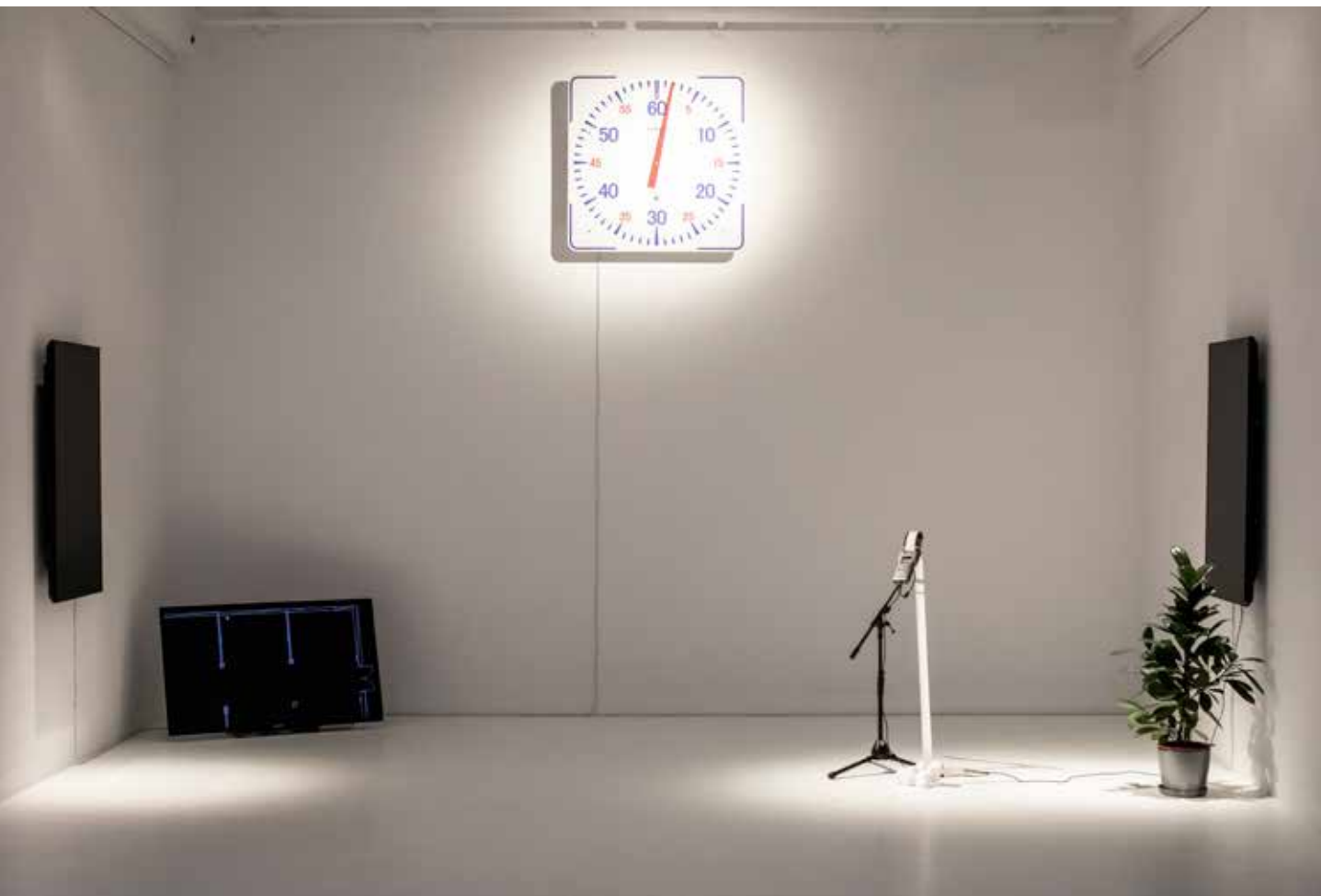
unearth / Paleo-Pacific
Shun Owada (JP)
installation, 2017

Unerasable Images

Winnie Soon (HK)

video, 2018, 3:06

Vocable Code
Winnie Soon (HK)
installation, 2017

Waiting for the Light
Taavi Suisalu (EE)
installation, 2018

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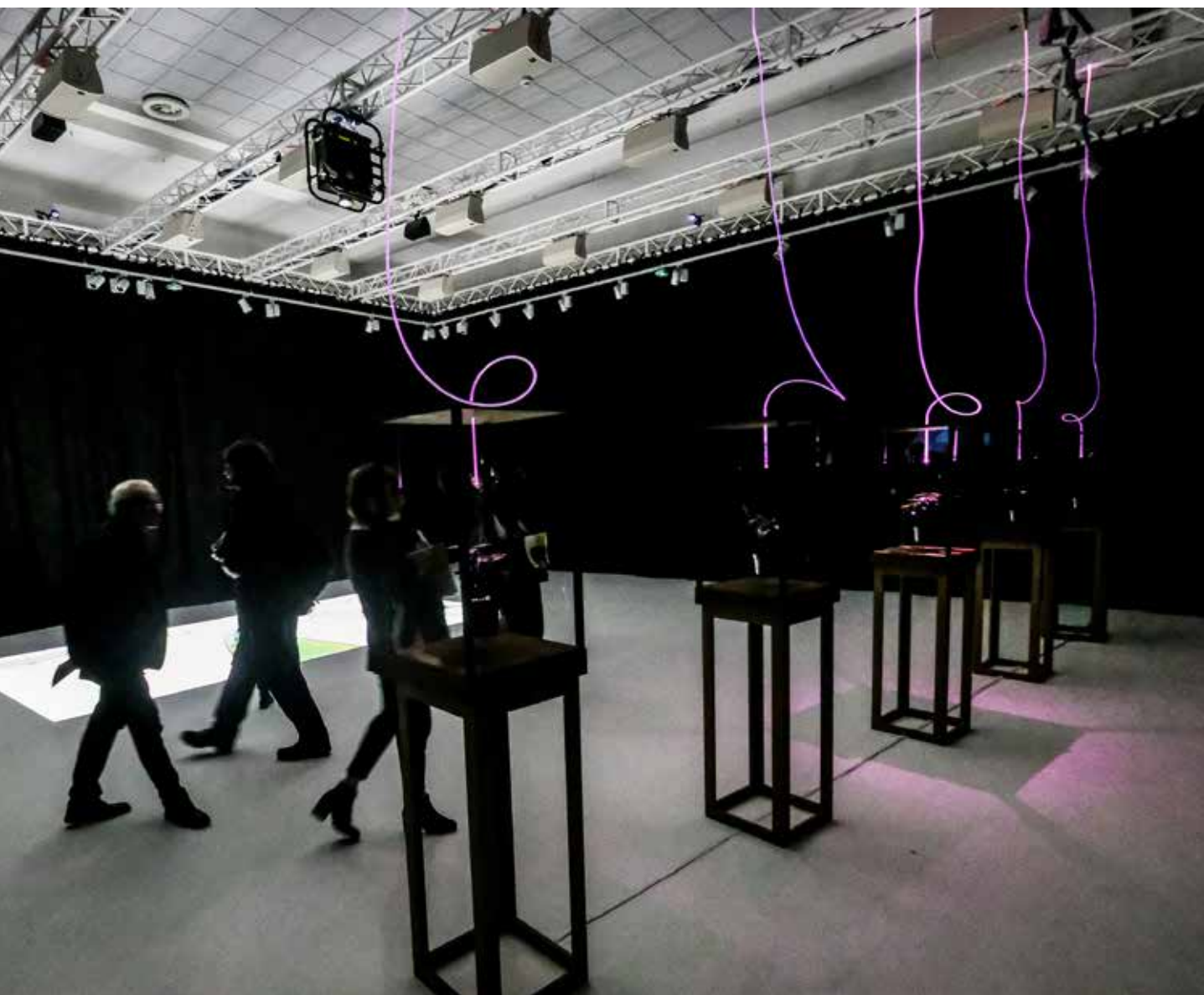
Windswept
Belangtelon Initiative /Cahyo Prayogo, Choirul Arifin, Fiky Daulay/ (ID)
video, 2017, 5:17

Wolves From Above
Demelza Kooij (NL)
video, 2018, 5:40

Content Aware Studies
Egor Kraft (RU)
installation, 2018

hash2ash
panGenerator
/Krzysztof Cybulski, Krzysztof Goliński, Jakub Koźniewski/ (PL)
installation, 2017

Reincarnation of Media Art
exonemo /Yae Akaiwa, Kensuke Sembo/ + YCAM (JP)
archive-based platform for displaying history of media art, 2018

Vis.[un]necessary force_1.01 V.[U]NF_1.01
Luz María Sánchez (MX)
interactive sound installation, 2017

KOMPOPOLEX LIVE AT WRO

Aleksandra Gołaj, Rafał Łuc, Jacek Sotomski (PL)
concert, 2019

MEMORY SENSITIVITY. HUMAN ASPECT
Yoshimasa Ishibashi (JP)
screenings of Japanese animations from Kyoto City University of Art, 2019

AYEE
Piotr Madej (PL)
performance, 2019

Bye Sick Zone
ON/OFF /Zen Lu, Pete Zhao/ (CN)
installation, 2018

Interférences (String Network)
Alexis Langevin-Tétrault (CA)
performance, 2017

Lighterature Reading
LIGHTUNE.G /Bojan Gagić, Miodrag Gladović/ (HR)
performance, 2010-ongoing

machine will do x human will do why
Antye Greie-Ripatti aka AGF (DE/FI)
performance, 2019

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Mleczne Medium (Milk Medium)
kinoMANUAL /Aga Jarząb, Maciek Bączyk/ (PL)
performance, 2019
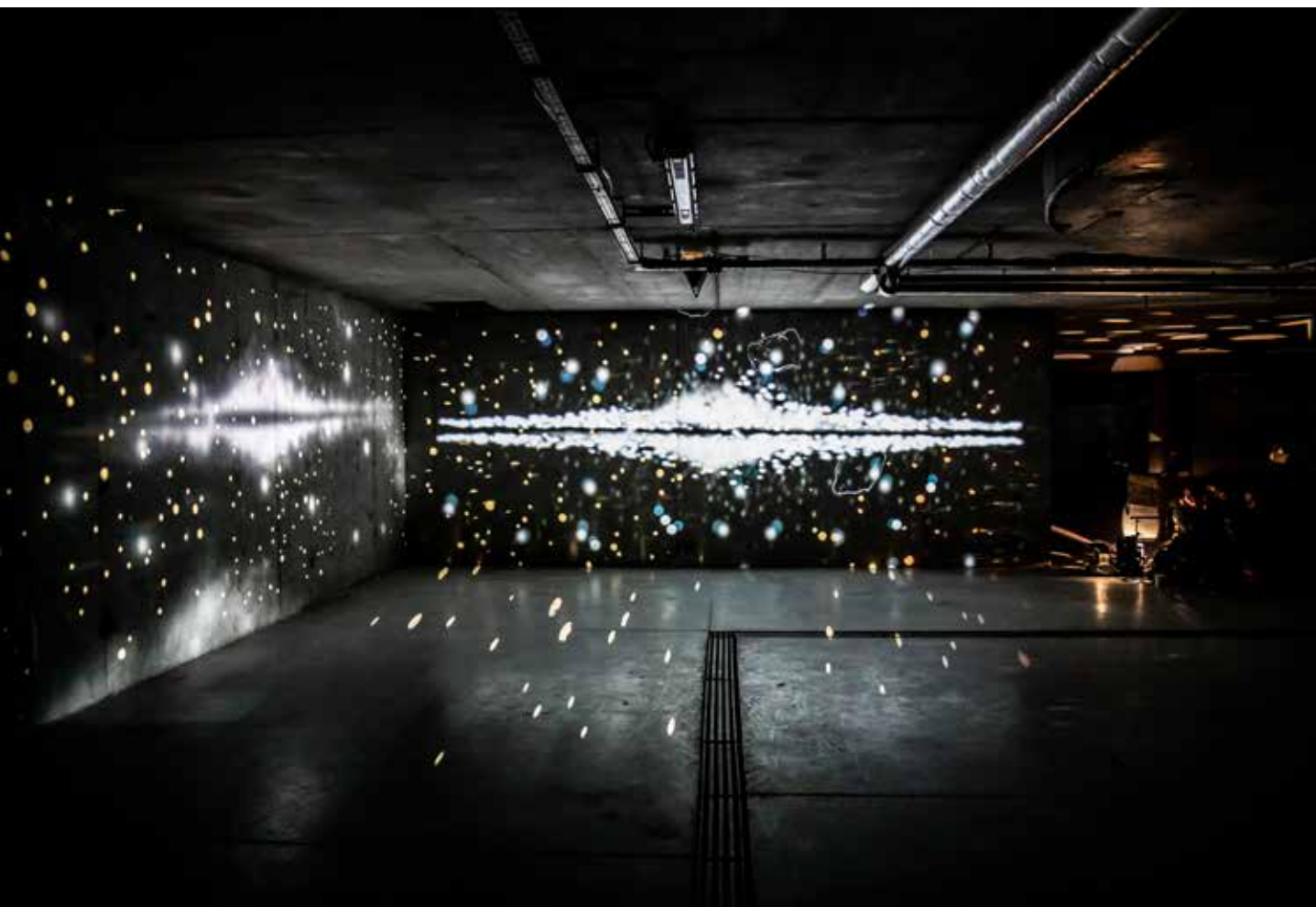
Sculpture to be Seen from Space, Improvisation to be Heard from Space – WRO2019 version
Space-Moere Project by ARTSAT x SIAF Lab /Akihiro Kubota, Katsuya Ishida, Daisuke Funato, Norimichi Hirakawa, Kei Komachiya/ (JP)
performance, 2019

Sonomatter
Sabina Hyoju Ahn (KR)
performance, 2017

__Tablerror__
Karina Marusińska, Alicja Kielan, Food Think Tank (PL)
performative installation, 2019

TEWASURA
Shota Yamauchi, Shun Owada (JP)
performance, 2019

The Other in You
Richi Owaki + YCAM (JP)
installation, 2017
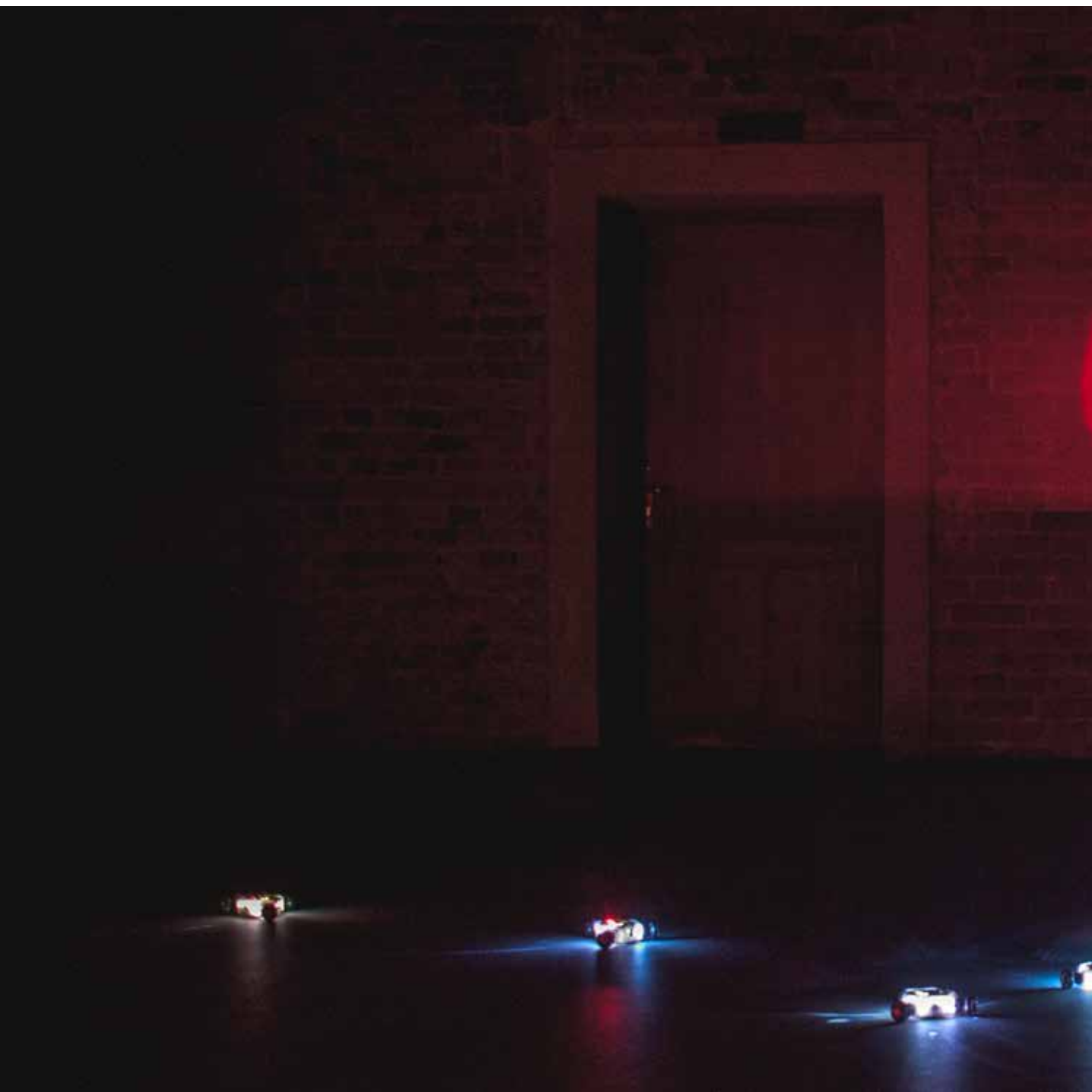
Empathy Swarm
Katrin Hochschuh (DE), Adam Donovan (AU)
performative installation, 2018

Daily Data Orchestra
Dorota Błaszczak (PL)
installation, 2018

__Cenotaphs__
Thomas Garnier (FR)
installation, 2018

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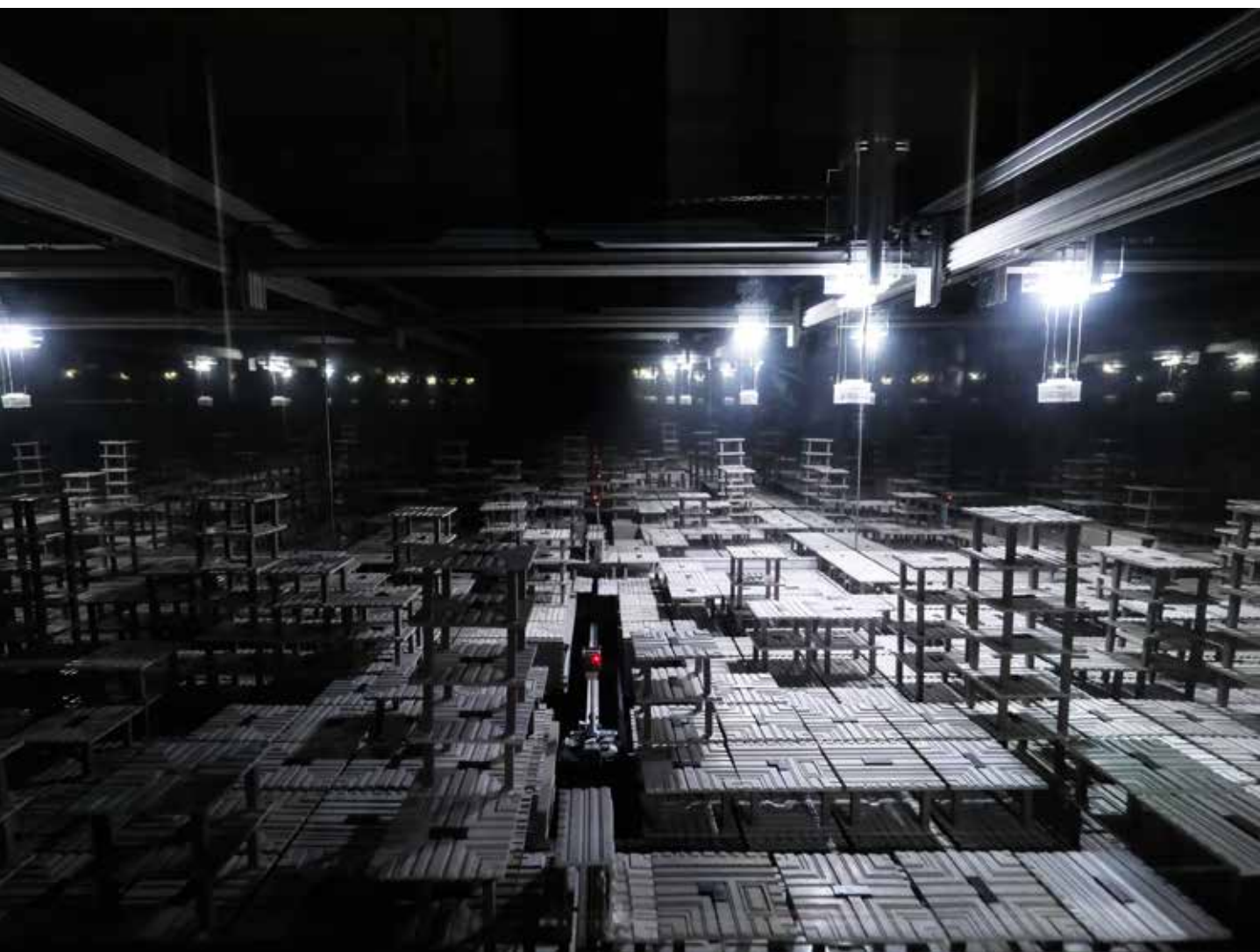
Kontr-akt
Wrocław Mime Theater /Artur Borkowski, Agnieszka Kulińska, Anna Nabiałkowska, Zbigniew Szymczyk/ (PL) & IP Group /Piotr Choromański, Jakub Lech, Bogumił Misala/ (PL)
performative installation, 2019

Vibrating Landscape
Mirjana Vodopija (HR)
installation, 2018

[re]BO[u]NDS
Giulio Colangelo (IT)
performance, 2019

Nocturne
BlurBoyz /Dennis Michael, Khieffer Beviz, Istvan Hollos,
Mátyás Wettl/ (HU)
video, 2017, 4:59

video aspect

PEKT!
T!

aspekt!
aspekt!

Piotr Krajewski (WRO)

The program brought together video works developed between 2017 and 2019 to showcase the attitudes of artists who in order to express their positions and views today avail themselves of the one-screen, linear form, which represents one of the longest-standing branches within electronic and digital media art.

Video art has long invited questions as to whether it is an autonomous field in its ow right and with its own specific rules, or whether …, following the initial period of autonomy, which was predicated both on the technological distinctiveness of the medium and on the attitude of the pioneering artists, who as a rule consciously and radically chose to inhabit the antipodes not only of the mainstream film production but also of experimental filmmaking of the 1960s.

Sweeping changes have occurred since then, as the technology of production ceased to determine the properties of the visuality it generated, and new cultural dispositifs prompted films out of cinemas and, likewise, videos out of gallery-based shows. The previously fundamental oppositions stopped defining differences in attitudes to motion pictures.

Video works were displayed during the HUMAN ASPECT 2019 WRO Biennale as large-format screenings on the Biennale's opening day and then at the Aspect! Aspect! exhibition held at the WRO Art Center.

"Oh my, you can't find advanced, high-tech videos even at the WRO today!" an experimental artist, actually the WRO's friend, said after one of the screenings to express her surprise at how much the video art of 2019 diverged from its specimens shown in a not-so-remote past.

In order to delve into this observation, let us scrutinize its underlying intention. The comment does not suggest that there is a dearth of videos representing a high technical standard or utilizing advanced technologies of image creation and preservation; rather, it points at the absence of a certain attitude to imaging as such, an approach

that once explicitly pervaded video art. As a result of this attitude, the visuality presented on the screen was generated not only by means of camera recording but also, if not predominantly, as result of multistage transformations of video/picture signal that were performed on that recording. In certain periods, this approach was regarded as the quintessence of video art based on analogue and, then, digital electronics. The prevalent – and very fitting – idea was that new visuality was not achievable by means of the traditional camera or photographic recording.

Actually, the catchphrase of the cinematic turn, oft-evoked as it is in the discipline (with various intents and in various contexts), would certainly acquire a more incisive descriptive power if the path of electronic media, therein primarily video, was given a more in-depth examination as a field originating from the antipodes of cinematic visuality and narrativity.

In video art, the transformation of eye-witnessed visibility into a new visuality, and even into an audio-visuality (as sound was an inseparable part of this process), was fueled by the experiences of the artists who in their various ways pursued the possibilities offered by the transition from optical

media with their celluloid recording, to electronic media and magnetic-tape recording, to – finally – digital media in their full-fledged form. Slightly simplifying, this new (audio)visuality was shaped by two major attitudes espoused in art: the focus on the operations of the camera and the focus on explorations in the area of "image processing."

The former accorded primacy to the camera, which was present in reality together with the artist and registered the unfolding phenomena with the greatest possible immediacy. The latter sought to constitute new mental territories by submitting vision to technical operations in the opening-up electronic-communicative space.

As the activity of the camera was redefined, images were created that directly embodied forms of seeing and experiencing the world, preserved in new ways owing to the artist-held camera, which was an extension of his/her body's presence and participated in the situations at hand almost as the subject. This glorious subjectivity of the camera appealed to many artists, and the effects it produced considerably differed from the conventionalized realism of technical reproduction.

For its part, "image processing" offered yet another opportunity to break with realism. Gen-

erally, when working with the signal, one adopts a different attitude to reality and certainly does not surrender it to the preeminence of realistic representation. As the signal is processed, transmuted, and combined with other signals in electronic-digital spaces, it acquires a new quality owing to media instruments and produces a new, modified visuality of such high-tech videos.

This approach invited divergent responses. Side by side with an enthusiasm for electronic innovations and for the vision of the art of the future they emanated, there was also a strong opposition from skeptical audiences and artists, who accused this new approach to visuality of dehumanized formalism, the oppressive lack of substance, the promotion of non-human vision, and, finally, the neglect of human perception.

The latter charge proved relevant in the 21st century, when media art had to relinquish some of its prophetic aspirations. It had to come to terms with the fact that it no longer heralded changes, that it simply began to exist among changes that had objectively taken place around and, to boot, had done so in ways very different from those previously imagined by artists and activists, in manners determined by social media, by YouTube-like por-

tals, and by the dominant commercial and entertainment-focused models of individual creativity.

In this reality, the mission of re-coding the world by generating a new visuality and the fond hopes, if not aspirations, concerning the contribution of art to the building of a new reality and the development of the principles of its commonly understandable representation lost much of their relevance and feasibility. Art itself became inadequate and pathetically obsolete, because thus-envisioned works can only come into being when it treats the surrounding reality not only as inappropriate, but above all as anachronic. It is only in such circumstances that art can sustain the belief that it is ahead of reality – that it not only anticipates changes, but also has a very real capacity to effect them. This makes art develop new tools, for the old ones are useless in launching major campaigns.

Prompted by the belief that a new visuality must be created for a new life, the imperative to re-code reality founders in times in which it seems, to artists as well, that reality is ahead of art. In such circumstances, the prophetic potential evaporates, and the faith in the agency of art fades away, leaving it preoccupied with critique, interpretation, mockery, and subversion. Though still inadequate,

reality is no longer felt as anachronic (i.e., as existing in the form which will not develop further). In this way, video art regained its interest in recorded image, even though it no longer trusted the reality that images represented.

The reason is that these forms not only relied on the experience of visuality but also on the non-narrative experience of time in which it unfolded.

The search for what was behind pictorial eye-witnessed visibility was enacted in explorations of the possibilities of the medium itself, but it also expressed the quest for a new approach to the surrounding political and social reality. These observations concern the development of video as a linear form which can be not only displayed at art festivals and exhibitions, but also placed in the new social space. Notably and characteristically, the once-abandoned positions are resumed, the forms of communication adopted by contemporary video art are simplified, and the confidence in the lens is returning. Or, at least, there is a belief that the camera can be used to fathom the field which it penetrates, glean relevant information about it, and transmit one's own view of reality through recording. Emphatically, it

is not a naive belief in the truthfulness of recording, because the confidence in the lens, rather than equaling any trust in the objectivity of reality, entails the confidence in the research instrument. Do the video works presented today embody this approach? Is the ensemble of videos from across the world screened as part of the 18th Media Art Biennale WRO 2019 indicative of global tendencies or merely of changes in the criteria informing the selection of works for the program?

How can the new attitudes be described? Today's explorations tend to analyze meaning- and myth-making strategies characteristic of the current trends in medial realism, which lean towards identifying and revising the existing layerings of meanings. Images often seek to present new myth-making relationships in the era of the surfeit of information and the paucity of reality, in which mythologies help us become naturalized in the boundless digital world. In our experience, the discovery and analysis of the layers stretching between the signifier and the signified compete with a longing for experiencing a meaningful realness.

Third Reading
Kim Kielhofner (CA)
video, 2017, 10:58

Ultraviolet Garden
Rodrigo Gomes (PT)
video, 2018, 2:31
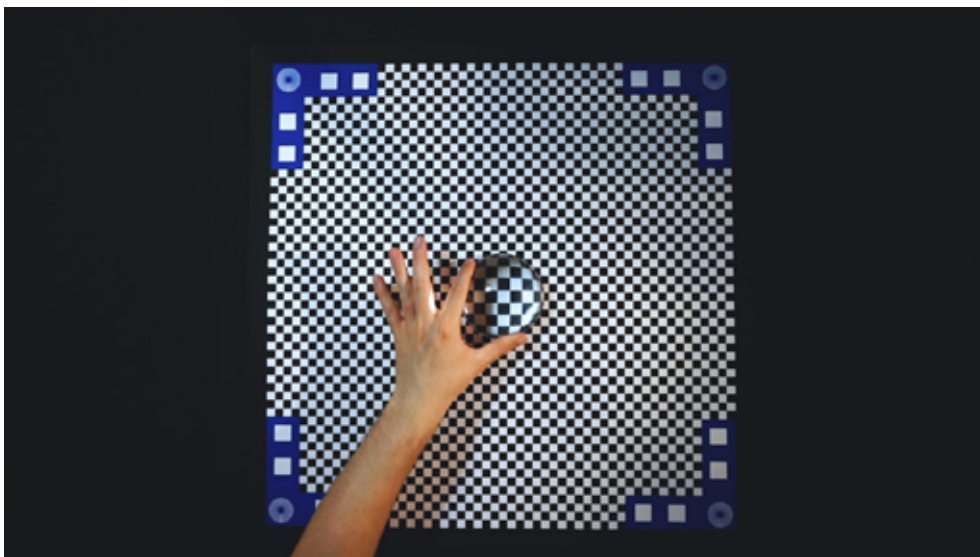
The Big Browser 3D
Akihiko Taniguchi (JP)
video, 2017, 7:15
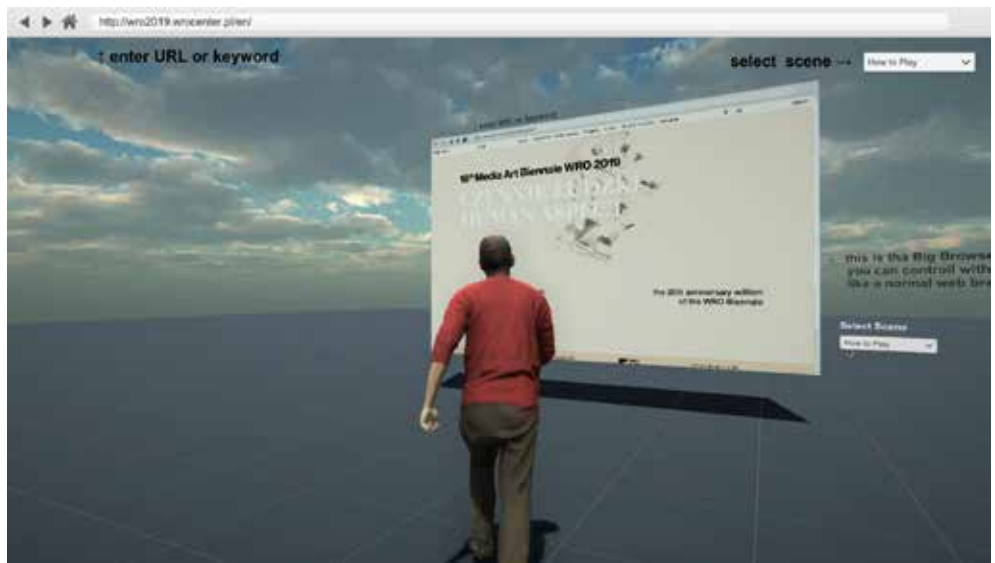
Quick Code Service
Hui Ye (CN)
video, 2017-18, 33:08

OMNIBUSSSSSS
Kuesti Fraun (DE)
video, 2017, 00:24

Painting Simulator Video Review
Jędrzej Sierpiński aka Jedrix3000 (PL)
video, 2017, 3:23

You broke my cheese in two – office
Yann Vanderme (FR)
video, 2017, 6:53

ASPEKT 2

Palace in the Middle of the Town
Rafał Żarski (PL)
video, 2018, 4:52

Operation Jane Walk
Leonhard Müllner + Robin Klengel (AT)
video, 2018, 16:14

The Hymns of Muscovy
Dimitri Venkov (RU)
video, 2018, 14:24

Dreamland
Mirai Mizue (JP)
video, 2017, 5:00
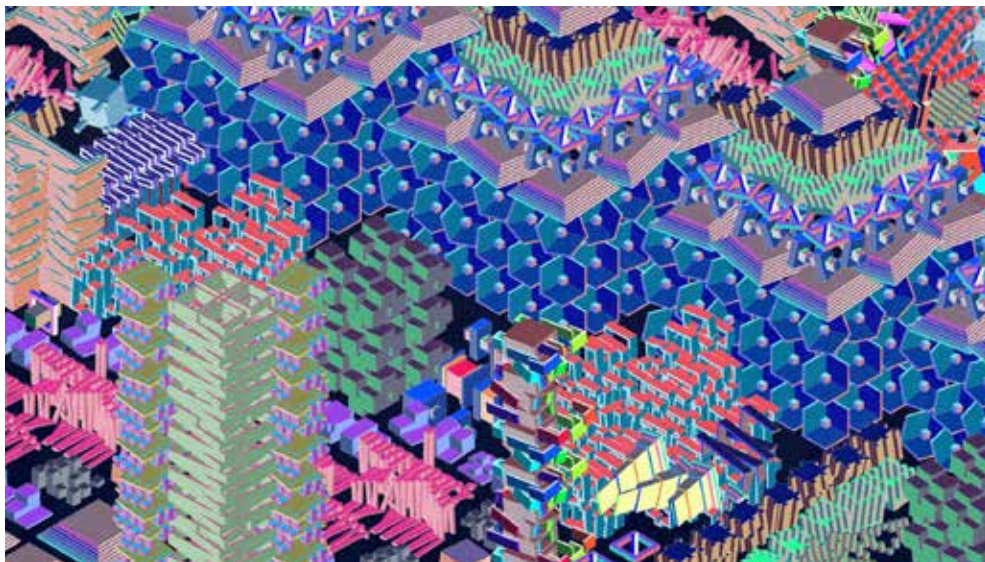
Technological Nature
Daria Jelonek (DE)
video, 2017, 3:54
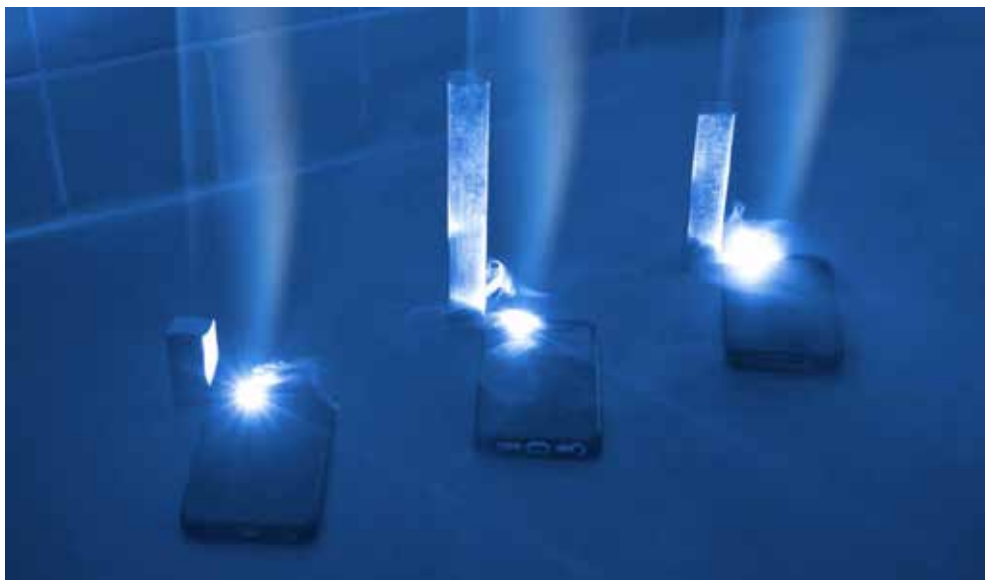
islands_03
Jacek Chamot (PL)
video, 2018, 3:17

Field of Infinity
Guli Silberstein (GB)
video, 2018, 5:22

135

Printed Sunset
Andrés Baron (CO)
video, 2017, 6:21

Taking Away
Eginhartz Kanter (DE)
video, 2018, 6:42

You broke my cheese in two – home
Yann Vanderme (FR)
video, 2017, 8:39

ASPEKT 3

Tropics
Mathilde Lavenne (FR)
video, 2018, 13:36

Nocturne
BlurBoyz (HU)
video, 2017, 4:59

Laszlos Lamp
Pia Schmikl (DE)
video, 2018, 13:00

Powerism
Hamza Kırbaş (TR)
video, 2018, 2:06

Guests from the Riverside
Hirofumi Nakamoto (JP)
video, 2017, 6:19

My Body is My Laboratory
Gaetan Kubo (JP)
video, 2017, 5:50

Ich bin der Übermensch
Joacelio Batista (BR)
video, 2018, 9:28

Nothing Twice
Magdalena Łazarczyk (PL) + Zuza Golińska (PL)
video, 2018, 6:24

You broke my cheese in two – camera
Yann Vanderme (FR)
video, 2017, 6:16

bwa studio

AKCES
5ᵀᴴ COMPETITION FOR MEDIA ARTS
GRADUATION PROJECTS

While the AKCES **exhibition** embodied a formal, thematic, and media diversity, the artworks it featured clearly conveyed a **distrust of artistic media as such**. They indicated that the young artists cautiously examine both digital and environmental developments and risks as they seek to express their identities not only vis-à-vis the artistic conjuncture but also in wary negotiations with the historical, if not national, convention. Symptomatically, the print was revisited as a relevant artistic medium. Since the artists avoid amassing a plethora of media components, their tendency to rely on the potential inherent in the reduction of expressive means, the formal dispersal, and the receptivity to context suggests that, in general terms, this year's exhibition staged a **revival of critical, distrustful and inquisitive attitudes typical of the intermedial tradition**.

5TH COMPETITION FOR BEST MEDIA ARTS GRADUATION PROJECTS AWARD

jury: Olga Majcen (HR), Peter Zorn (DE)
and Jakub Majmurek (PL)

Main prize:
Zofia Martin
Trillion has eighteen zeros
installation

supervisor: Professor Grzegorz Klaman
Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk
Faculty of Sculpture and Intermedia, Studio of Transdisciplinary Activities

The jury has unanimously decided to grant the award to Zofia Martin. We find her work to be of great conceptual and aesthetic elegance. Zofia Martin's work is taking a stand in one of the most pressing issue of the day: the global ecological crisis, resulting in the mass extinction of the insects followed by the deterioration of biodiversity of the ecosystems they inhabiting. It's reminding us that it's insects, not humans are the greatest part of the biomass of the Earth.

The artist is putting us at the kind of Easter-egg hunt for the gold-covered cadavers of the insects, which is not only focusing our attention on the ongoing ecological disaster, but it's also provoking the questions about the future of the human species. Are we facing the same fate? Are we next?

HONORARY MENTION

Piotr Marzec
Andrew Golgotha by John the Zealot
installation

supervisor: Professor Mirosław Bałka
Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw
Faculty of Media Art, Studio of Spatial Activities

For the truly transdisciplinary approach to the art, the convincing combina-
tion of slam poetry, rap, performance, visual art and non-linear storytelling.

AUDIENCE AWARD

Grzegorz Demczuk
Base
installation

supervisor: Dr. Łukasz Ogórek
Strzemiński Academy of Art in Lodz
Faculty of Graphics and Painting, Studio of Multimedia

The voting lasted from May 16 to June 7. During this time, 226 votes were cast. "Base" received 70 of them.

Marta Krysińska (PL)
Bejsen
megazin, intermedia action

supervisors: Dr. Hab. Danuta Dąbrowska-Wojciechowska
and Bartosz Zaskórski, M.A.
Academy of Art in Szczecin
Faculty of Painting and New Media, Studio of Book Art
and Multimedia Publishing

Anastasia Pataridze (GE/PL)
HAPPINESS SAID: DON'T LOOK FOR ME
installation

supervisors: Professor Piotr Wołyński and Professor Konrad Kuzyszyn
University of the Arts in Poznan
Faculty of Media Art, Photography Studios III and IV

Kamila Cyfra (PL)
Tutonic Nites
literaly-sculptural object

supervisor: Dr. Hab. Bogdan Achimescu
Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow
Faculty of Intermedia, Department of Art Processes, Studio of Transmedia

Magdalena Kieszniewska (PL)
Domesticating a Bum
site-specific arrangement / installation

supervisors: major project – Professor Jacek Rykała
subsidiary project – Dr. Hab. Lesław Tetla,
Professor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice
Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice
Faculty of Art, School of Painting, Department of Intermedia
and Set Design, Studio of Interdisciplinary Activities
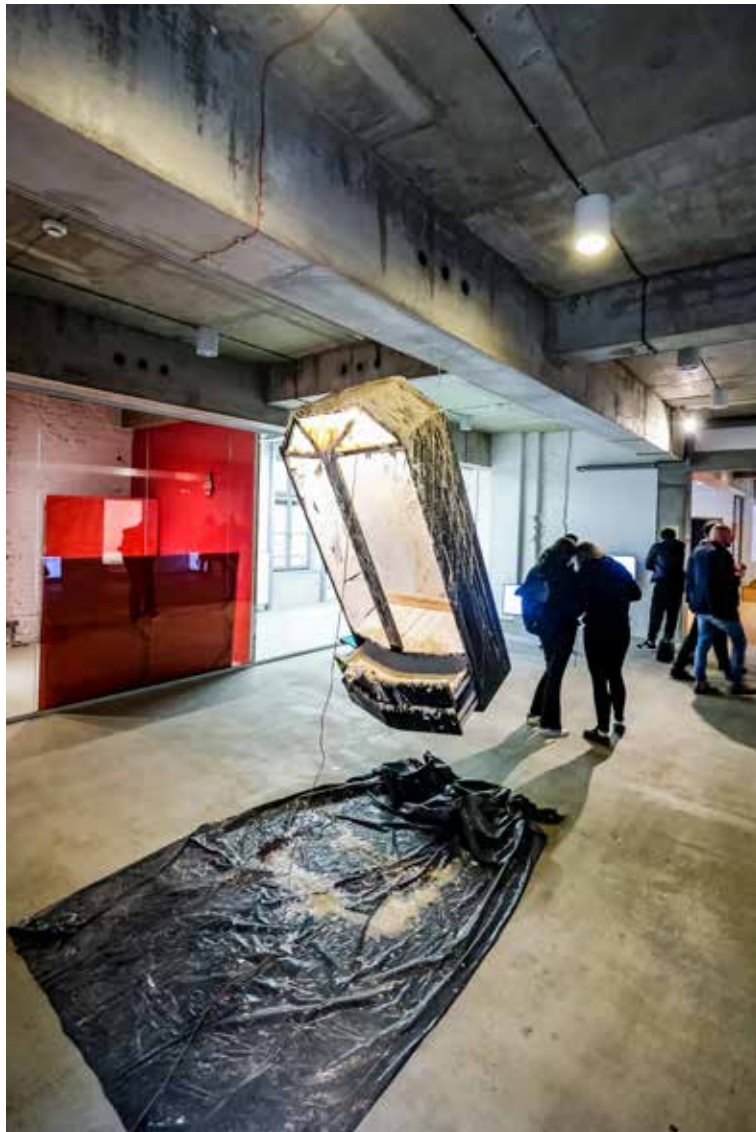
Klaudia Paliwoda (PL)
Enchantment and Smętek / Psyche Killers
video, 12:48 / YouTube channel

supervisors: Professor Ireneusz Olszewski, Professor Wiesław Gołuch
Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wroclaw
Faculty of Graphic Arts and Media Art, Media Art Department
Studio of Intermedia Graphics

sleep, depression...

...AND PHARMACEUTICALS IN THE ANTHROPOCENE
Cezary Wicher (WRO)

> I wish you were here, dear,
> in this hemisphere,
> as I sit on the porch
> sipping a beer.
> It's evening; the sun is setting,
> boys shout and gulls are crying.
> What's the point of forgetting
> if it's followed by dying?
>
> Joseph Brodsky, A Song

I

Our bangs neatly combed right, our jumpers freshly laundered, and meat no longer our diet, we discuss the superiority of one water filter over another, because one must prevent kidney stones. We articulate our demands over properly brewed Ethiopian coffee, as we persuade our friends that we are doing our best, but that does not change anything; only faces change, and everything else remains the way it was. Another confounded generation, living in fear

of disasters and cataclysms, a lost generation. Although our world is prevailingly made sense of in terms of climate catastrophe, it seems that the reality of the Anthropocene is haunted by a more serious epistemological crisis, which thwarts and suppresses a lot of social potentials. This world is the age of late-capitalist sleep, of sleepless sleep, where dreaming is but an illusion, a translucent veil stretched over our faces, with us remaining plugged in to a powerful machine of information, data, and algorithms.

I realize this sounds somewhat gloomy, but blame my inseparable bond with the generation of the depression boom, the first one to so urgently crave prescription painkillers and to escape into days-long parties during which one stuffs one's nose instead of one's stomach, only to belatedly duly waste one's time at meaningless work, one's shirt ironed stiff, of course. This is a generation that would like to give things their own names, but, alas, everything has already been named.

II

The fifth iteration of the Competition for Media Arts Graduation Projects was placed within a highly relevant framework. Its title – AKCES – confers a structural validation on the pursuits of the WRO Arts Center and eight Polish public art schools. It also captures a certain readiness for discussion and for a clash of various positions and narratives, since a closer look at the eight artworks on display during the 5th Competition for Media Arts Graduation Projects reveals that what they have in common is that ostensibly they have nothing in common, as the pieces share very little in terms of their aesthetic investment – some of them consciously relinquish any bombastic gestures, trimming redundant elements and embracing minimalism. If pondered more inquisitively, having nothing in common and having no pre-defined angle jointly prove to be a real nodal point where the eight artists are brought together. These deficits are becoming our everyday experience, a predominant experience of living in the postmodern era. Understood as a characteristic feature of each of the projects, singularity may result from progressing alienation, but it is also a way to reclaim narratives which are seemingly irrelevant from the perspective of the Western society of the 2010s. The already evoked experience of an epistemological crisis and various stages of depression serve as a generational link that connects the AKCES projects.

III

The title of Zofia Martin's Main Prize-winning *Trillion Has Eighteen Zeros* captures the volume of the insect biomass on the Earth. Insects are in fact the largest and at the same time the most bio-diversified animal group on our planet. Simultaneously, they are poorly perceptible and severely endangered; when animal rights are preached, barely anyone has spiders and bees in mind, even though they lose their habitats as forests are logged on a mass scale. Contemporary necropolitics consider insect matters to be invisible and insignificant. Martin seeks to restore the presence of insects by constructing an artistic representation in which they participate themselves. The artist collected dead insect bodies and processed them chemically by electroforming and galvanization, that is, she covered her objects in a new coating of copper, nickel, and also gold. Glazing insects with gold is supposed to express their value and relevance to us, since gold is after all an immensely precious metal.

On the one hand, this represents another attempt at appropriating insect bodies, as in Martin's work they resemble Egyptian scarabs, jewelry, and functional objects which work symbolically at most. On the other, however, perhaps actions of this kind incrementally undermine our habitual ways by drawing insects within our field of vision and making us interested in their fates. Notably, the artist devoted a lot of time to each specimen, transforming the embalmment of the dead human body into coating insects with a new integument. This tension between anthropocentrism, which is epitomized by a gloved hand in the documentation of the work, and post-humanist thinking, which seeks to empower non-human actors and which, for Martin, simply means taking an interest in the fates of insects, is an extremely valuable aspect of the work, which critically pushes the limits of our common imagination.

IV

Spinning one thread with Martin, Magdalena Kieszniewska, a system hacker and a trickster, homeless at her own home, probes beneath our beliefs and habits. Kieszniewska's objects are more often than not abandoned garbage of no use to anyone, which proves a pliable matter that can be cooked, melted, burned, and glued into various forms. All objects have their history, and when these histories are unknown, we are only interested in their materiality, their smell (though stench is a more proper word in the case of cooked stilettoes),

and their color. They become a basis, a building material for large-scale instal-lations, such as an emptied closet which resembles a coffin covered in white slush, or a pot brimful with boiling pulp composed of everyday wastes. Brutal-ity straight from Sarah Kane's dramas, punk-like appeal, and ecstatic rapture form essential features of *Domesticating a Bum*, a project which, so to speak, parasites on our civilization of death and debris.

Kiszeniewska's AKCES project offers a glimpse at the coalescence of two otherwise bifurcating aesthetic frameworks: alternative, underground aesthetics spawned by a fascination with Internet culture and techno music, and thus getting high on pharmaceuticals, and the contrived, off-kilter aes-thetics of fashion magazines. *Tutonic Nites* by Kamila Cyfra and *Bejsen* by Marta Krysińska are diametrically different projects in terms of the scale of their presentation, yet their central axes are extremely similar, as they both revolve around an object holding which we can freely turn paper pages, with no apparently need for any electric supply. Nevertheless, the supply is there, for it has deeply permeated the artists', especially Cyfra's, mindsets. Exploring Wixa-aesthetics, the breaking of grammar conventions, and the experimen-tation with Polish diacritics, Cyfra, an ex-DJ collaborating with the Wixa-pol project, decided to re-write Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Krzyżacy* (*The Teutonic Knights*) in contemporary trolling language. Sienkiewicz's deeply anti-Ger-man novel was a common fixture on obligatory school reading lists for years, resulting in fostering a strong resentment against Poland's neighbors from across the western border in young readers. Whether by osmosis or by reading, Cyfra employed the Borgesian method described in "*Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote.*" Menard came up with the idea of reproducing Cervantes's classic novel word by word, which invited enthusiastic responses from the readers. His book quickly became a widely read bestseller, even though the same novel had already been written several centuries before. In his short story, Borges relies on the temporal and cultural divide between Menard and Cervantes, as the gesture of writing an identical *Don Quixote* years later makes it into a new, original work. Cyfra drew on Menard's method and slightly reworked it to faithfully re-create Sienkiewicz's *The Teutonic Knights*, while altering its spelling. Her object was to render the content of the novel as authentically as possible by means of phonetic reading. Consequently, she plunged 19th-centu-ry Polish language (which Sienkiewicz himself had deliberately stylized into a medieval vernacular) into a whirlpool of confusion. Thereby, she mockingly re-positioned one of the essential texts of Polish culture, employing the spelling

conventions widely used on the Internet, which are among the central expressive devices of the Wixapol. Ultimately, she clashed the sacred with the profane, conversely to Krysińska in a way.

In her project, Krysińska argues that a certain entrenched model of representation, particularly in high-fashion conventions, is downright obscene. In a 90s-style room of her design, one can flip through the *BEJSEN-MEGAZIN*, a magazine anchored in the lower register of culture which subversively manipulates traditional editorial forms by squeezing large-format photos of models, as if straight from the most popular fashion magazines, among the write-ups. A bizarre device as it is, it actually corresponds to Krysińska's fascination with the weird. Adorned with a tiger-print blanket and an armchair sinking underground, the room makes one think of the early 1990s, a golden era of Polish capitalism, whose "opening up" involved assimilating the Western norms of visibility and reproducing them the Polish style, that is, in a poor man's and low-profile mode (as exemplified by cheap fakes of well-known brands), which highlighted the social dimension of the kind of resourcefulness that ruled the day. This is one reason why Krysińska inserted a Shrimp Human into her *BEJSEN*. Half-human and half-shrimp, the odd creature may be familiar and local, whereby the artist reveals an important mechanism governing the operations of the middle class. Specifically, apparently strange images are bearable and needed, because they help purify non-standard, deviant elements and at the same time showcase one's identity.

<p style="text-align:center">V</p>

Piotr Marzec follows a literary path in his work as a performer. He invented the figure of John the Zealot, a pivot of his performances at Warsaw's poetry slams. His AKCES project involved an action at the intersection of image and text: a series of pictures interconnected into an endless comic book, placed on pizza boxes and accompanied by short narratives authored by Marzec. Forming up into a constellation, *Andrew Golgotha by John the Zealot* works like *A Hundred Thousand Billion Poems or Hopscotch*: by applying the principles of combinatorics to literature (or, the intermedia action in this case), it organizes an inexhaustible narrative which has no linear structure and is basically composed by the visitors as they please. An instance of liberature, the narrative is rhizomatic, since it does not matter where one begins and where one ends; what matters is that it persists, that the drive of the narrative is unstoppable

and at the same time terrifying, because it will never be possible to tell exactly everything.

In her *Enchanntment and Smętek / Psyche Killers*, Klaudia Paliwoda takes up the challenge of self-narrative and of constituting a certain "self." Paliwoda takes the audience on a journey to two narrative poles. One of them, which is related to the past and to the memory of one's place of origin, involves searching for topielce (kelpies), strzygi (vampire-like female demons) and rusałki (water nymphs) in a romanticized space which overthrows the boundary between life and death, memory and phantasy. *Enchantment and Smętek* is suffused with nostalgia, which is not only about recollections, but also about creation, about associating the world with a smell, and about affective experiences. The past becomes the embarrassment of exalted emotions, and the present proves childlike and playful, which is conveyed by the other video – *Psyche Killers*. In its recording of everyday, ostensibly silly situations, it is far removed from the past-oriented narrative in stylistic terms, yet it unveils the perturbing mechanism of the idealization of the past.

VI

Grzegorz Demczuk's *Base* and Antastasia Pararidze's *Happines Said: Don't Look at Me* both share the experience of confusion and the psychosomatically warped perception of reality Demczuk literally usettled reality by fitting a hemispherical structure with a mobile platform which tilts sideways depending on the user's position. To retain the horizontal position, one must cooperate with others who experience the rocking, as it is the only way to prevent problems with keeping balance. The platform was accompanied by two video works in which Demczuk played with the tradition of conceptual art In *Pomysł to podstawa*, he positioned the locus of emergent ideas at the base by standing on his head to make it touch the ground. Spiced up with slight mockery, the piece conveys the fluctuations of our material position in the world and alertness to shifts and changes.

Pataridze produces her autonomous zone amidst our late-capitalist realities: a black spot of latex redolent of BDSM practices, used pot pipes, a face stretched out like a flag – all of them bathed in the sweet orange color. The achievement of happiness, of mindfulness-informed harmony, and of ever new reincarnations of hygge is one of the boundary conditions of healthy functioning in contemporary society. If everydayness is fraught with disap-

pointments, the number of those seeking alternative methods of enjoyment – stimulation with not always legal substances, exploration of the boundaries of one's sexuality – is soaring. This is a rather overwhelming vision, as it harbors broken and shattered personalities that can barely cope with days going by one by one and with the maximization of experiences.

VII

Compiled here, the articulations of eight young people by no means tell the full story of our reality, but they certainly illuminate it from a yet-unentrenched and unpetrified perspective. They speak to exhaustion, fuel deficit, fears of climate catastrophe, and the feeling of impotence as despite changing one's habits nothing changes. To self-perfection which produces no results. To listening carefully to the world, which no one wants to listen to. Each project exhibited as part of AKCES makes a separate, individual case, and nobody seems eager to speak on behalf all or to offer unambiguous answers to new, albeit long-hackneyed, questions.

galeria Studio BWA

laboratorium miaz
in Międzynar
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barbara
culture zone

New Message
Anna Kaczkowska, Tomasz W. Miśtura, Elżbieta Kowalska,
Anna Rogóż, Ewelina Lesik, Piotr Brożek (PL)
installation, 2019

Smile to Vote – Political Physiognomy Analytics
Alexander Peterhaensel (DE)
installation, 2017

WUOS (Wrocław Urban Operating System)

Anders Visti, Tobias Stenberg (DK)
performative installation, 2019

Aporia. The City and the City
Dream Adoption Society / Wojciech Markowski (PL)
+ Marta Nawrot (PL) + Jagoda Wójtowicz (PL)/
moderation: Paweł Janicki (WRO)
performative lecture, 2019

Miss Polonii
Jana Shostak (BY/PL), Jakub Jasiukiewicz (PL)
moderation: Klio Krajewska (WRO)
panel/performance, 2018-ongoing
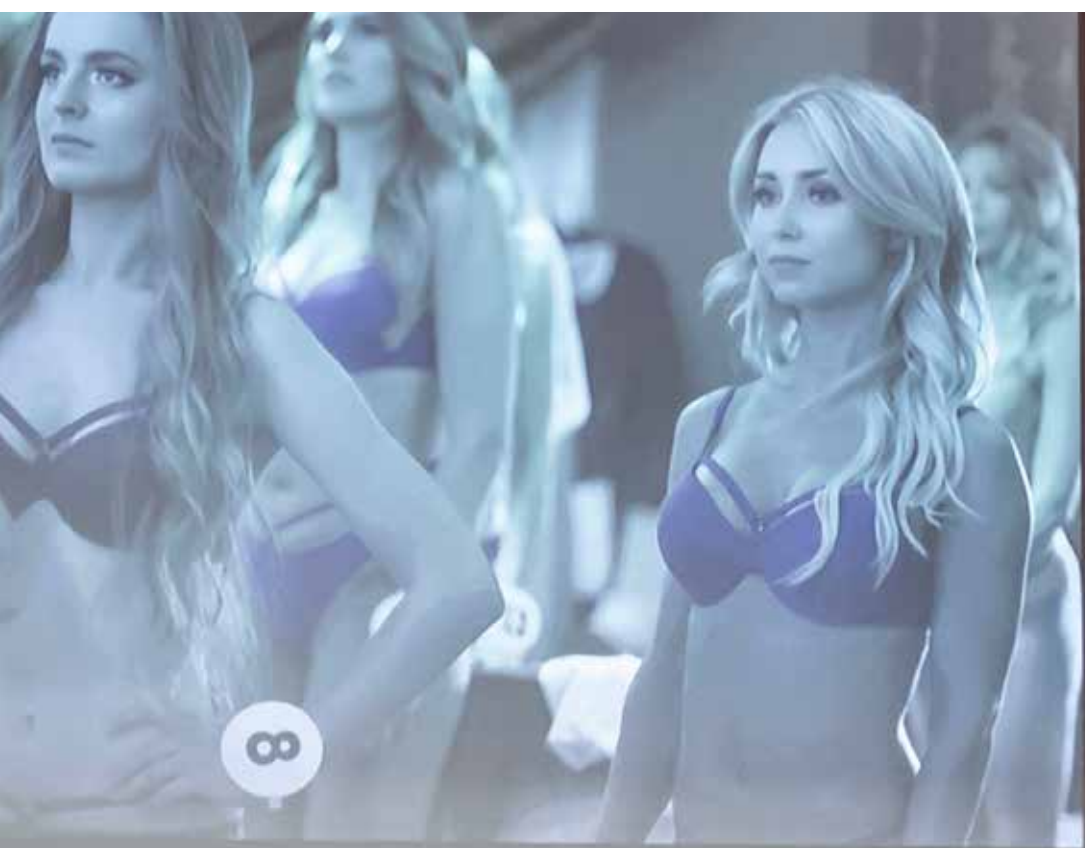
Cells of Culture
panel discussions
moderation: Paweł Janicki (WRO)
Krzysztof Bielaszka (PL), Dorota Błaszczak (PL), Mirek Filiciak (PL),
Agnieszka Jelewska (PL), Michał Krawczak (PL), Alexis Langevin-Tétrault (CA),
Joanna Leśmian (PL), Hui Ye (CN)

Media Art History – Reincarnation
panel discussion
moderation: Penesta Dika (AT)
Robin Klengel (AT), Boris Magrini (CH), Leonhard Müllner (AT),
Kensuke Sembo (JP), Kazuhiko Yoshizaki (JP)

real, un-real, post-truth
panel discussion
moderation: Mariella Nitosławska (CA)
Chloé Galibert-Laîné (FR), Zen Lu (CN), Alexander Peterhaensel (DE),
Dani Ploeger (NL)

HUMAN ASPECT / NON-HUMAN ASPECT
Education and Experiment
conference
curator: dr Jarosław Czarnecki / Elvin Flamingo (PL)

prof. Monika Bakke, prof. Grzegorz Biliński, dr Grzegorz Cech,
dr hab. Alicja Duzel-Bilińska, Anna Dumitriu (UK), prof. Marek Grzyb,
prof. Joanna Hoffmann, dr hab. Jakub Jernajczyk, dr Joanna Jeśman,
dr Anna Kalwajtys, prof. Grzegorz Klaman, prof. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński,
Piotr Krajewski, Alex May (UK), Paula Milczarczyk, dr Dorota Myślińska,
Karolina Sulich

CLAMS
Marco Barotti (IT/DE)
kinetic sound installation, 2019

THE MICRO-MUSEUM

Viola Krajewska (WRO)

WRO Atelier. Rarities, curiosities, cimelia, and relics, or a *Wunderkammer:* 30 objects of the WRO Micro-museum complete with a series of individual meetings with visitors over game boards of choice

The thirty-year-long history of artistic events organized by the WRO is at the same time one of the possible ways of mapping the historical development of the field which has come to be known as new media art. Developing its own autonomous recognizability in time, new media art emerged in the continuum of 20th-century experimental practices of filmmaking, photography and conceptual art, meandering its way into a trajectory which was also hallmarked by artistic interventions using TV image and technology, video art, and early standard applications of the computer. The devices promised conjectured creativity, without themselves being furnished with it yet.

Computer art accelerated the immateriality and the transfer of the product of artistic pursuits into the sphere that offered visibility, perception, and even tactility, but reduced substance. While not stripped of splendor, the materiality of artistic techniques was anyway passing to the anachronistic sphere *of techne*, which was replaced by a new organization of imagination, perception, and creative practice.

However, materiality is not easily driven away. Fluxus, for one, saw a potential artistic value in any mere slip of paper with a note scribbled on it, In this conceptual sense, even unintentional traces of activity are or can be artworks in their own right, particularly if they are transferred into another – for example, gallery – context.

Concomitantly with the development of the field, the notion of media archeology was coined to refer to the proto-manifestations of the media quality in art, to the initial attempts at technological imaging, and also to the staggeringly fast obsolescence of recent novelties pushed into oblivion by the swift

pace of technological transformations. As a counterpoint to the freshness and newness of mediality, the term archeology expanded its sematic compass and, as media continued to develop, began to affect the current curatorial and museological concepts.

Museums of new media were founded, and nostalgic exhibitions were held to showcase the beauty and uselessness of vanishing, though seemingly still brand-new, devices for image recording, creation, and presentation. With the impermanence of carriers, the disintegration of devices, the fading-away of even already-digitalized recordings, and the impossibility to reproduce software-based works due to the unavailability of earlier versions of the software or the reader, the relatively modern field of new media extremely quickly exposed the archaic character of prototypes and the anachronicity of solutions produced and abandoned on a mass scale.

At the same time, in conformity with the tradition of art history, which treats material works – objects – as an expression of artists' unique individualities, embodying their trace and touch, the status of the preserved singular items results not only from the originality of their features. Artworks, even immaterial ones, can bear material, individual imprints which are worth exploring – an individual signature, an idiolectic description on the floppy disc, a packaging of a mass carrier which may be a site of a unique auctorial gesture.

Another interesting group is made up by partial objects, by exhibition remnants left behind from the process of staging the display. In this respect, a special position is taken by components of installations, that is, pieces which by nature combine heterogeneous elements of various visible an invisible orders. Memorabilia registering interactions between the WRO founders and artists are accorded a specific place among the amassing, autonomously building-up troves which, in the case of the Micro-museum project, result from the process of putting up shows and artistic events rather than from assembling a collection. From a crocodile to a mecha-robot, blending with drawings, charts, dedications, furniture, digital memory carriers, photograms, artefacts of digital culture and objects, ranging from glass pieces to 3D prints, and from interface elements to fragments of carriers, all of them are wannabe exhibits, equally precious as they are in terms of their relic value. Amidst our hoarding-afflicted civilization, they inquire about utilization through removal to the archive.

In the case of the Micro-museum, the considerable autonomy of the object and its both semantic and iconic displacement, as in Umberto Eco's

universal anthology, are not so much engulfed by the frenzy of cataloguing[1] as rather amenable to the agency of chance

The Micro-museum is an endemic, irregular, random, and barely chronological collection – a contemporary micro-history of media art as exemplified by traces of exhibitions, workshops, and social engagements of the WRO. This sprawl can only be captured as a chaotic, entropic, and non-representative assemblage of compiled elements in their unique Nachleben.

In the history of art, this mode of inventorying is famously embodied in an attempt at building the cognitive context for cultural and civilizational processes undertaken by Aby Warburg in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*[2]. Stirred by his ponderings at the beginning of the 20th century and developed from the mid-1920s on, the panels with reproductions of artworks and phenomena of visual culture from antiquity to modernity dismantled the chronology of art history for the sake of rendering the structure of formal organizations and the wanderings of ideas across media and territories, elevated the status of reproductions and conferred significance on arbitrarily selected fragments and details. As such, the panels invited enhanced perception several decades later, when the origins of avant-garde were being re-defined. The practice of montage proposed in *Mnemosyne* was picked up by the WRO Atelier's *Wunderkammer* as a form of analyzing and co-experiencing collective memory through a gameboard-channeled integration.

Visits to the *Wunderkammer* were framed as performative meetings of the curator and individual viewers, who were free to choose the way of interaction based on one of the three games developed by artists variously affiliated with the history of the WRO: a board game by Wilhelm Sasnal; a Dobble-type game by Jana Shostak; and tarot by Suzanne Treister. The visits were camera-recorded to document these attempts at intersubjectivity in the subjective medium of memory and chance.

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1   Umberto Eco, *Vertigine della lista*. The book was developed to accompany a series of events planned by the Louvre Museum (November, 2009) in collaboration with Umberto Eco. It was published in Alastair McEwen's English translation as *The Infinity of Lists: An Illustrated Essay* (New York: Rizzoli, 2009).

2   Aby Warburg, *Atlas obrazów Mnemosyne (The Mnemosyne Atlas/Mnemosyne Bilderatlas)* (Warszawa: NCK, 2015), based on the third German edition in the *Collected Writings* series. Commenced in 1924, *The Atlas* is the last, unfinished project of the German scholar, within which he constructed charts – wooden panels covered in black cloth, to which photos of paintings, photographic reproductions from books, illustrations from newspapers, and other popularly circulating images were pinned to offer an overview of one or more thematic fields. They were subsequently photographed as whole sets – ensembles of objects – in the 18x24 cm format (Martin Warnke, "Wstęp do wydania niemieckiego" ["Introduction to the German Edition"], *Ibid.*)
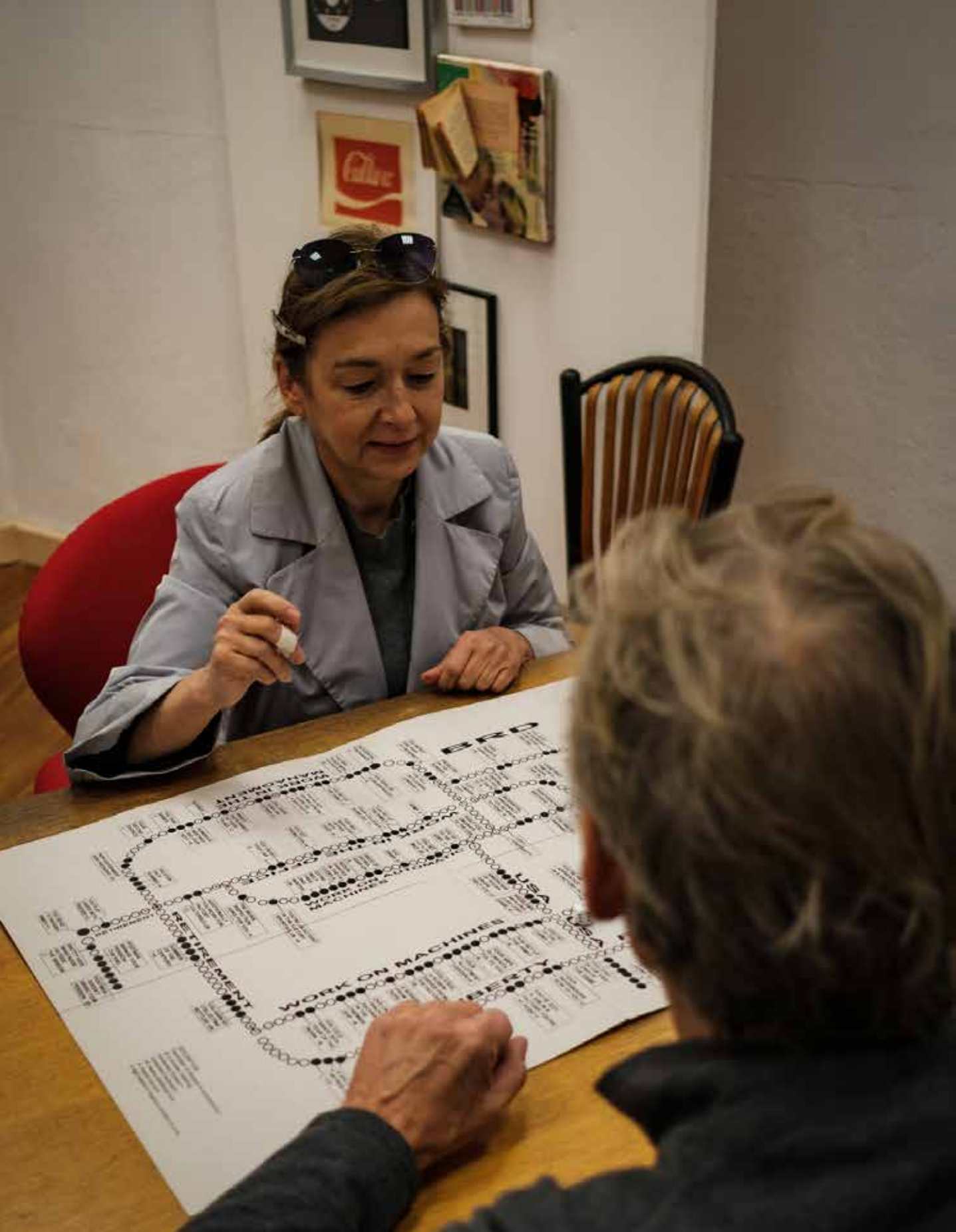
japanese program

THE NEWEST MEDIA ART FROM JAPAN
Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka (WRO)

The time between the first edition of WRO and its current, eighteenth release, coincide with the system of historical eras in Japan. When the Sound Basis Visual Art Festival WRO started in Wrocław in 1989, the Heisei period has just begun. And although art is not subject to systemic rigors, running its own, asynchronous way towards the declared eras, the next period at the beginning of which the current Japanese exhibition takes place, means for WRO a new quality of cooperation with Japanese partners.

The special presentation of Japanese media art at the Biennale WRO 2019 was the most comprehensive one ever, within this showcase of the latest media art from around the world. Japanese works and activities were spread across four main Biennale's venues: the WRO Art Center, the Four Domes Pavilion, the Bakery, and the stratosphere.

excerpt from the catalogue of a special exhibition of contemporary
media art from Japan within the WRO Biennale 2019
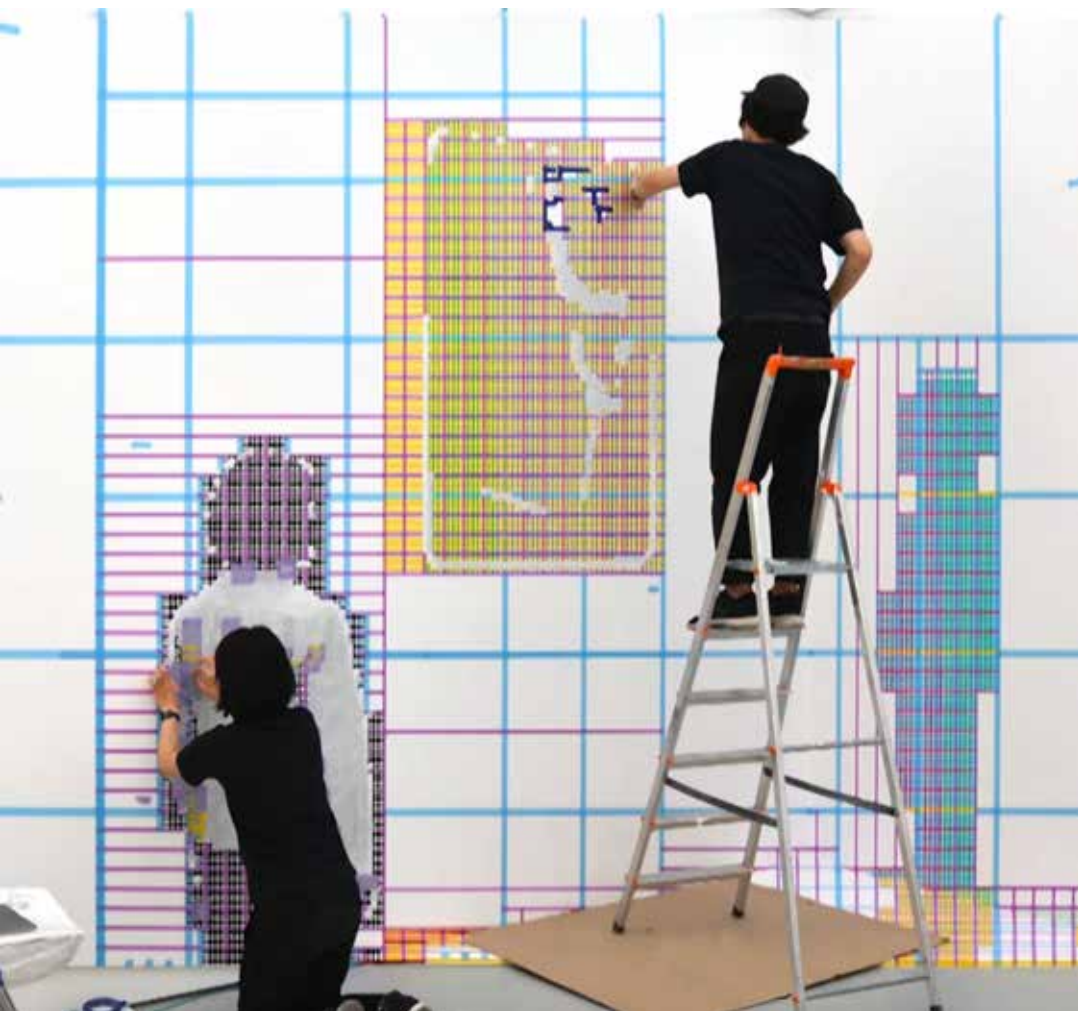
along the japanese path

IN WROCŁAW'S FOUR DOMES PAVILION
Emilia Chorzępa (PL)

That a festival held by the WRO Media Art Center Foundation features Japanese artists is hardly a surprise. Their installations and video works are often exhibited at the WRO's smaller events, and an "Asian section" has long been a regular fixture of the WRO Biennale. This time, the curators arranged for pieces by Japanese artists to be put on display at the imposing Four Domes Pavilion.

The popular repertoire of not infrequently stereotypical associations with Japan is bulky and quite "pluralistic" indeed. These perceptions split Japan into two, so to speak. For one, there is a country ruled by an emperor, the land of cherry blossoms and bamboo groves that lives and breathes rarefied philosophy strongly underpinned by Buddhism and boasts an opulent history and refined customs. Time and timelessness, mindfulness, ceremony, sublime poetry written as a pastime, nature. All this would be quintessentially embodied in the already deceased Masanobu Fukuoka, a Japanese scholar-cum-farmer dedicated to the natural ways of tilling the land and striving to reclaim for it the vegetation thoughtlessly eradicated by humans. On the opposite pole, there is a technological Japan, famous for its Honda robots and Hiroshi Ishiguro's geminoids, a Japan associated with aspirations for space exploration, with the neon- and screens-riddled Tokyo and its commercial Shibuya district, bustling, busy, buzzing, and bright-colored, a Japan bristling with clusters of modern high-rises, which house the headquarters of corporations recognizable in every corner of the world, e.g., Fujitsu, Sony, Toshiba, Yamaha, etc. The voice heard behind the scenes now is that of Francis Fukuyama, the prophet of "the end of man," who pontificates on biotechnologies

and genetic engineering. At the same time, Micho Kaku, another American of Japanese descent, vigorously waxes on the latest discoveries in physics or spins futurological visions of humanity in times to come.

Given this outline of the Japanese landscape in which facts mingle with conjectures and simplified imaginations, we cannot possibly wonder at the fact that the Japanese are on the leading edge of technological art Nevertheless, the nexus where the artworks exhibited at the 18th Biennale dovetailed was in fact formed by the HUMAN ASPECT, evoking the being of humans in the universe and their impact on the environment. Let us examine some of these pieces in mor detail.

Unearth / Paleo-Pacific (2017) by Shun Owada represents an impressive, albeit simple, rendering of the Biennale's axial theme. Owada used limestone rocks replete with petrified fusulinids, miniscule sea organisms which became extinct 250 million years ago. Yet their fossils still contain carbon dioxide, which is released into the air as the limestone is dissolved with diluted acid. The sound that accompanies the dissolution of the fossils can be heard via microphones and loudspeakers fixed to the rocks. The installation is an incarnation of humanism, as it encapsulates humans' belief in their unconditional power and in their equally unconditional right to knowledge. It is an act of discovering the ancient world, nature, and the past as such, but it is a destructive act. The visitors are maneuvered into an awkward position where they are exposed to the sight of liquid oozing while the fossils are being dissolved. In this way, the rocks become corporal, meaty, and more dead. The visitors are also made to inhale the fumes exuded by that which is left to destruction and to the sounds generated during the experiment. Consequently, blending with the extinct beings, the audience is completely stripped of neutrality and innocence

Tachihokoru (2018) by HOKORI Computing (Katsuki Nogami, Hanna Saito, Ritsuko Miyake, Tatsuya Ishikawa, and Kazuya Horibe) is a visually captivating post-humanist landscape which demonstrates that we are connected to all matter, be it even its tiniest and most negligible particle, highlighting our contribution to its production, relativity, and co-existence. As the accompanying materials explain: "The artists defined hokori (literally: dust, dirt) as artificial organisms which, despite their intimacy with humans, remain unknown – a species of familiar aliens living among us. Hokori comes into being in a person's living environment and is composed of various materials, including artifacts and natural objects, such as fibers, dandruff, epidermis,

lumps of soil and gobs of pathogenic bacteria." The artists placed hokori in a spherical vessel of plexiglass with a metal ball inside it. As frictions make the dust pick up static, it starts to stick to the ball and seems to take on a life of its own. The merely slight movements of the dust and the incomplete process of attraction trigger an effect of irritation and provoke the feeling of unfulfillment and unease. The screen nearby shows a magnified image of the abstract microworld, of which we are part, but which we do not like to notice, defining it as waste.

In the entrance hall of the Pavilion, the famous and ever so spectacularly restored *Senster* by Edward Ihnatowicz (1970s) is exhibited side by side with another artwork which implements a speculative vision. *Sculpture for All of the Intelligence No. 2 – Signals to be Discovered* developed by Space-Moere Project by ARTSAT x SIAF Lab (Akihiro Kubota, Katsuya Ishida, Daisuke Funato, Norimichi Hirakawa, and Kei Komachiya) is an audiovisual installation which first and foremost materializes the very idea that there is an extraterrestrial life out there and that it is possible to contact aliens, as well as embodying our venture of space explorations. Its central element is a sculpture – a Platonic solid shaped as a regular 24-cell – hanging off the ceiling. Plato himself only knew four solids, which he identified with the four elements (with this we obtain a description of the world), while other ones were discovered later. Crucially, regular polyhedrons were used by the mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler to study the geometry of the universe at the turn of the 16th century. The 24-cell itself exists in four-dimensional space. As the fourth dimension, time makes it possible to ponder time-space tunnels, which coheres with the symbolic dimension of the solid as the quintessence of the idea of understanding the universe. As the solid embodies the principle of the golden ratio, it is an expression of what are considered to be ideal, divine proportions. In this particular artistic interpretation, the solid serves as an antenna emitting noise sound waves (referred to as the "background noise of the universe," or more precisely, of extraterrestrial intelligence), which the audience can hear via receivers.

Admittedly, the work is neither conceptually groundbreaking nor comprehensively elucidated (which is as a rule indispensable in technological art), but the elaboration of its visual component – the solid so thickly enmeshed in contexts related to astronomical inquiries – certainly deserves appreciation.

The multiplicity of worlds was also explored by *DETOUR*, a two-screen film by Shota Yamauchi. While the dictionary definition of detour is

a roundabout route, the ambiguities of the film make me believe that the title revolves around a play on words in which the "de-" prefix may denote the opposite of arriving or, generally, a negation of traveling. The films are a mystification on the theme of the car ride, with an important role played by the filming technique in which the real space (the car and the passengers) can be complemented with an added landscape (the urban infrastructure), designed in the studio or supplied by the archaic technique of rear projection. One of the films establishes the central narrative axis: a man sets off on a car journey and is suddenly joined by an acquaintance asking for a lift. The other man's goal is to find a wish-granting ball. In the course of the events, the two men are divided, as the driver is inexplicably transferred into an alternative reality, which is presented in the other, graphically distorted image, which imitates a computer game. The man quickly and easily settles in the new conditions. Stuck in the other dimension, he cannot return or perhaps simply does not remember about the prior reality. The last frame shows the driver filming the empty car from outside, as if the story had ever happened. The videos are made in a thoroughly amateur way, which all the more radically undoes our certainty about what we are watching. The thin line between dream and parallel reality, fascination with and belief in wish-granting balls in the 21st century, and man's skillful adaptation to the new, unknown conditions add up to an absurd abstraction which, while light and playful, is at the same time opulently meaning-making.

More works by Japanese artists were exhibited at the Pavilion and other festival venues. They all grew out of the extremes-fraught land in which nature patently competes with culture and dystopian visions with futurological, if not downright alternative, ones. Since these combinations are not something that the rest of us would be free to leave undiscussed, it is so exigent that we obtain an insight into foreign perspectives, no matter how remote they might seem.

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  Sonic Pi

1 # Keisuke Ai performance
2 require "/Users/komachiya/petal/petal.rb"
3
4 cps(0.5)
5 d4 #'bd bd bd bd'
6 d5 #'kurt(5,16,1)',n:"irand 0 4"
7 d6 'newnotes(7,16,3)',n:"irand 0 14"
8 d7 'newnotes(7,16,3)',n:"irand 0 14"
9 d8 #'moog', speed:"rand 0.5 1"
10 #d9 'sax', speed:"rand 0.5 1"
11 d9 #'fm',speed:0.2
12
13 |
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european media art platform

Polish premieres of works produced within EU-funded artist-in-residence program that assembles major centers, galleries and experimental art laboratories in Europe, therein the WRO Art Center.

emare.eu

EMAP/
EMARE
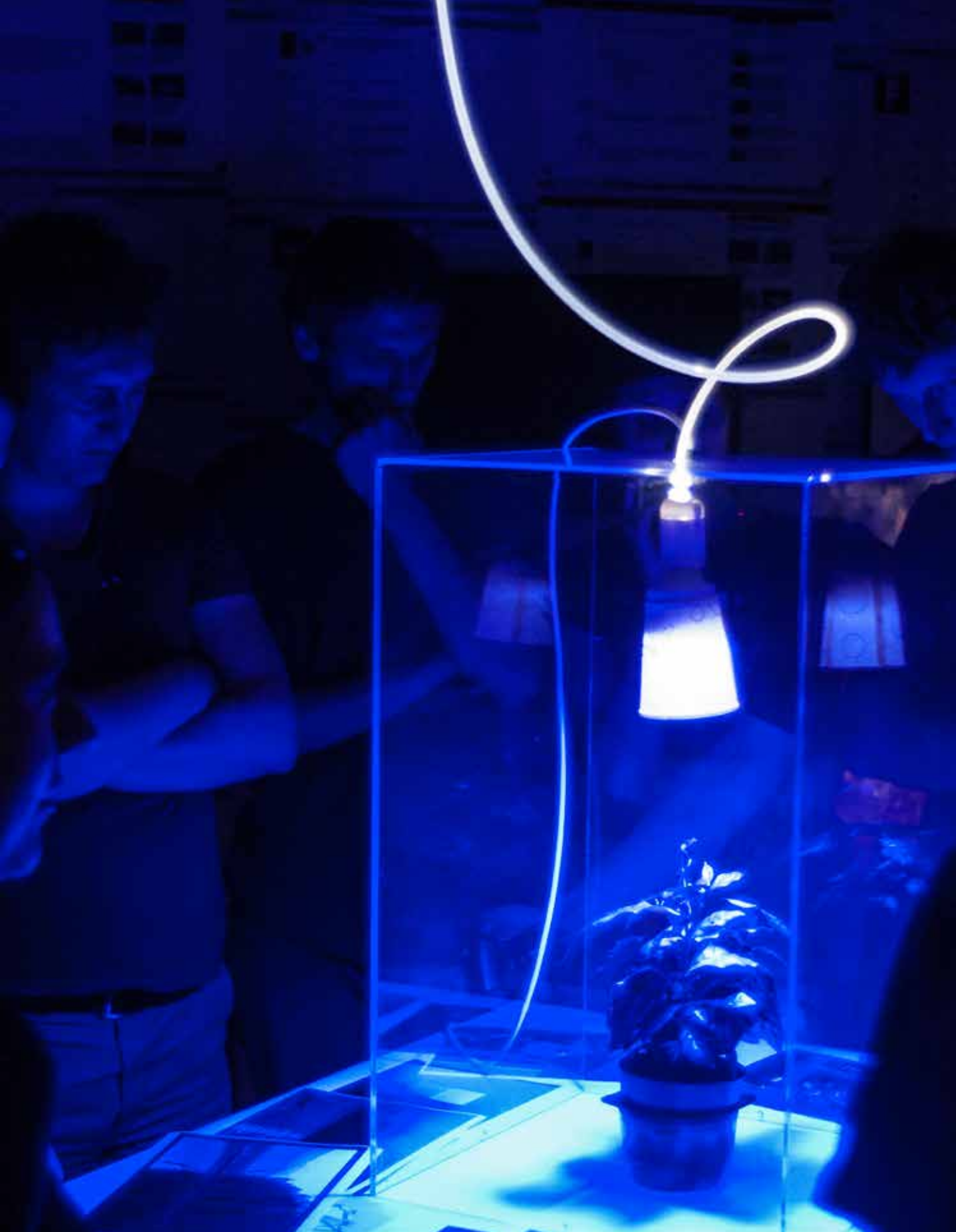
CLAMS BY MARCO BAROTTI IN THE CON-TEXT OF THE SELECTED WORKS OF THE EUROPEAN MEDIA ART PLATFORM (EMAP/EMARE)

Dominika Kluszczyk (WRO)

> Nothing makes itself in the biological world, but rather reciprocal induction within and between always-in-process critters ramifies through space and time on both large and small scales in cascades of inter- and intra-action.
> Donna J. Haraway, When Species Meet[1]

The history of the European Media Art Platform EMAP/EMARE[2] dates back to 1995, when the Werkleitz Media Art Centre, Hull Time-Based Arts, and the Intermedia Department of the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts launched the first residency exchange program for media artists in Europe. Vigorously developing with the backing of various partner organizations and supporting institutions, the EMARE program has ever since helped to further the projects of 212 artists-in-residence, thereby contributing to the creation of more than 150 artworks[3]. Since 2017, the platform has been funded from the EU's Creative Europe program and assembled eleven members counted among Europe's leading media art institutions and organizations, therein the

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1   Donna Haraway, When Species Meet, Posthumanities, Vol. 3 (Minneapolis, MN, and Lon-don, UK: Minnesota University Press, 2008), p. 32.
2   EMAP/EMARE website: emare.eu.
3   As of January 2020.

WRO Art Center[4]. Every year, the Platform members select eleven projects out of the entries submitted in an open call. Besides the production of new artworks, the two-month-long residencies at the member institutions serve as an active platform for artistic presentations, workshops, the international distribution and promotion of artists, experience-sharing, the development of competences, and the enhancement of synergy in the diversified field of art, bringing together art communities, festival organizers, audiences, curators, critics, and representatives of the art market.

The EMAP/EMARE program provides an important platform for the expression and articulation of themes embedded in the complex ecosystems of today, highlighting the convergence of biological and technological processes. Selected works espousing the posthuman perspective, capturing the artists' pre-occupations with the current state, conditions, and environmental challenges of the Anthropocene, examining the ramifications of years-long human activity, and exploring more or less dystopian future visions of the human species por-trayed by eco-visionaries were exhibited as part of the 18th Media Art Biennale WRO 2019 CZYNNIK LUDZKI | HUMAN ASPECT at the Four Domes Pavilion in Wrocław in 2019. Notable among the exhibits was Archaeabot: *A Post Singularity* and *Post Climate Change Life-Form* by Anna Dumitriu and Alex May, a robotic underwater installation based on machine learning, which imitated the behavior of archaea, i.e., a group of organisms adapted to living in extreme conditions and considered to be the oldest form of life on the Earth. The visionary project envisaged a hybrid species for the times after the end of the world as we know it. The show also featured *aqua_forensic* by Robertina Šebjanič and Gjino Šutić, an installation capping an artistic investigation that had spanned several years to reveal the scale and risks of chemical pollution caused by anthropogenic abuse of painkillers, antibiotics, and hormonal pills, which spread across the whole loop of the interconnected ecosystem of the world's water, causing serious damage to natural habitats. *Waiting for the Light* by Taavi Suisalu put on display a complex hybrid of the Internet and nature, highlighting their symbiotic interrelatedness. The installation was composed of Wardian cases which enclosed miniature ecosystems of plants and optic fibers,

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4   Besides the WRO Art Center, the EMAP/EMARE platform assembles Ars Electroni-ca (Linz, Austria), Bandits-Mages (Bourges, France), the Foundation for Art & Creative Technology (Liverpool, UK), IMPAKT (Utrecht, Netherlands), Kontejner (Zagreb, Croatia), LaBoral Centro de Arte y Creación Indstrial (Gijón, Spain), M-Cult (Helsinki, Finland), the Onassis Cultural Centre (Athens, Greece), RIXC (Riga, Latvia), and the Werkleitz Centre for Media Art (Halle, Germany).

coupled with automated traffic of bots on the Internet, where their activity triggered light, thus offering the plants entangled with technology an opportunity to survive. In this nexus, the optic fibers not only channeled the flow of data (in technological society), but also became the direct source of life for the plants which were part of the installation.

It was in this environment of the EMAP/EMARE works that Marco Barotti, the WRO's artist-in-residence, was developing his *CLAMS*, a kinetic sound installation, which was shown to the audience in its final form in the public urban-natural space of Wrocław's Dalia Island during the WRO Biennale in July 2019. As Barotti himself explains, his work

> is driven by a desire to invent an artistic language in which a fictional post-futurist era is expressed through kinetic sound interventions in natural and urban environments. His installations merge audio technology, consumer objects and waste into moving sculptures triggered entirely by sound. The primary focus is to create a "tech ecosystem" that plays with resemblances to animals. These artworks serve as a metaphor for the anthropogenic impact on the planet and aim to make people aware of environmental issues[5].

Dedicated to such explorations, Barotti once again found inspiration in nature, specifically, in the environment of bilaterally symmetrical benthic mollusks, whose laterally flattened bodies are enclosed in two-flap shells. Clams, as they are referred to, are highly relevant, if not indispensable, to the aquatic ecosystem as natural filtering agents that accumulate pollutants from the environment in their bodies. As a result of Barotti's artistic intervention, clams received shells made of plastic waste and, furnished with micro-speakers instead of pearls, they have left their natural water habitat to colonize urban spaces. Though altered, they have retained their function as bioindicators, because the cluster of 80-100 male and female specimens is fitted with a water-quality sensor. The device can be placed in any natural or artificial water environment, in the proximity of the installation or anywhere in the world. As the sensor is placed in the water, it begins to transmit real-time data which are processed into an audio signal. This in turn generates a changing soundscape which triggers the opening and closing movement of the clam shells (objects). The result is a non-human networked orchestra or a generative composition that transposes the water quality parameters onto the sound and kinetic ener-

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5   https://www.marcobarotti.com/ABOUT

gy of the moving shells. It is not without reason that Barotti chose industrial plastic waste as a material for the shells, for mussels are known to amass all pollutants, including micro-plastics, in their bodies.[6] Plastic wreaks havoc on the world's oceans, producing devastating consequences for the environment, wildlife, and ourselves. The balance of the ecosystem is being disturbed. Various contaminants penetrate into the food chain, thus affecting all organic life on Earth. In its mermaid's song[7], CLAMS is a wake-up call, raising the awareness of the menaces of human activity in the environment fraught with global challenges and dreaming of a sustainable future. Revealing what eludes our senses on a daily basis, Barotti's artistic intervention expands our capacity of perception[8].

Briefly and selectively outlined here, the transdisciplinary artistic interventions of the EMAP/EMARE Platform exhibited at the WRO 2019 Biennale respond to urgent environmental issues, climate change, the depletion of resources, overproduction, and the effects of human activity. They comment on our present conjuncture by opening up an unrestricted field of imagination, expanding the community by including the non-human factor and/or non-human actors[9], and by offering a synergic environment of living beings,

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6   "All sea creatures, from the largest to the microscopic organisms, are, at one point or another, swallowing the seawater soup instilled with toxic chemicals from plastic decomposition. The world population … (is) eating fish that have eaten other fish, which have eaten toxin-saturated plastics. In essence, humans are eating their own waste" (Dixit Renee Brown, WiredPress, at https://epicmag.org/refuse-single-use-plastics/.

7   Called mermaid's tears, tiny, millimeter-sized plastic pellets washed up on the shore and used to manufacture plastic products are now a major source of pollution on beaches.

8   Stephanie Busuito highlights the potential of sense-channeled education in Barotti's work, which uses synesthesia to reveal certain hidden phenomena: "If we translate in words what Barotti's clams do, we can immediately see the synesthesia in it: the water pollution is an orchestral sound and a gentle rattle. It has been said many times that Western society abides by a strictly visual paradigm. We are, indeed, the society of the eye. This is to say that sight is the strongest of all the senses, both physiologically and culturally. It is so much easier to grasp and acknowledge the existence of a phenomenon when we can see it. Barotti's clams do us a favor by making visible the capital problem of the modern world: the contamination of our freshwater resources. More specifically, the contamination caused by microplastic" (slightly revised; http://transnatural.org/blog/barottis-clamps-and-plastic-pollution/).

9   "NONHUMAN: This concept has meaning only in the difference between the pair 'human--nonhuman' and the subject-object dichotomy. Associations of humans and nonhumans refer to a different political regime from the war forced upon us by the distinction between subject and object. A nonhuman is thus the peacetime version of the object: what the object would look like if it were not engaged in the war to shortcut due political process. The pair human--nonhuman is not a way to 'overcome' the subject-object distinction but a way to bypass it entirely" (Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* [Cambridge, MA, and London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1999], p. 308)

machines, and artificial intelligence. It is only by recognizing the heterogeneous actants and their mediation[10] on a planet with limited resources that we can overcome hermetic scientific discourse and conventional norms to explore alternative visions of the future or detect global transformation processes with due sensitivity.

If we are to adapt to the processual reality, we must change our ways of seeing, our systems of thinking, and also our modes of action, understood as a property of relationally interconnected beings.[11] We must abandon the anthropocentric vision of the world, instrumental relations with other species, and our exclusive representation of nature in favor of trans-species solidarity. The works discussed in this text form a special social system of art which sometimes communicates the non-communicable.[12] Pointing to present and future threats, artistic projects can indeed boast a transformative potential.

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10   Cf. Latour's actor-network theory (ANT). As Krzysztof Abriszewski points out in his discussion of ANT, "ANT analyses show that hybrids (or simply 'actors') are simultaneously social, natural, and discursive. They indicate the formation of networks of heterogeneous elements, where belonging to the ontological species is irrelevant, since what really matters is the stability of the whole" (*Krzysztof Abriszewski, "eorta Aktora-Sieci Bruno Latoura,* in Teksty Drugie", 2007, issue 1-2: *Teoretycznie o uczuciach, p. 120*) http://tekstydrugie.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/88cb2baa93329fdbe7d97247b52c1928.pdf.

11   "Using a slogan from ANT, you have 'to follow the actors themselves,' that is try to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts best define the new associations that they have been forced to established." (Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* [Oxford, UK, and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005], p. 12)

12   "Humans cannot communicate; not even their brains can communicate; not even their conscious minds can communicate. Only communication can communicate", Niklas Luhmann, "How Can the Mind Participate in Communication," in *Materialities of Communication*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Karl Ludwig Pfeiffer (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 371

little wro

**A SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN
AND THEIR RELATIVES**

**MAŁE
WRO**

Continuing with the idea that started in 2009, WRO Biennale was accompanied by a special program for children and their relatives under the name of Little WRO. Younger and older visitors were guided through the WRO Biennale exhibitions by the Little WRO Guidebook. This guide not only referred to **the latest works**, but also the **selected works taken from the WRO archive**. New and older works were paired and elaborated on by a 30-member team – children and adults, working in family-tandems – based on notes, associations, tasks, photos and illustrations related to the works which we hope encouraged **family discussions about and not only about art**.
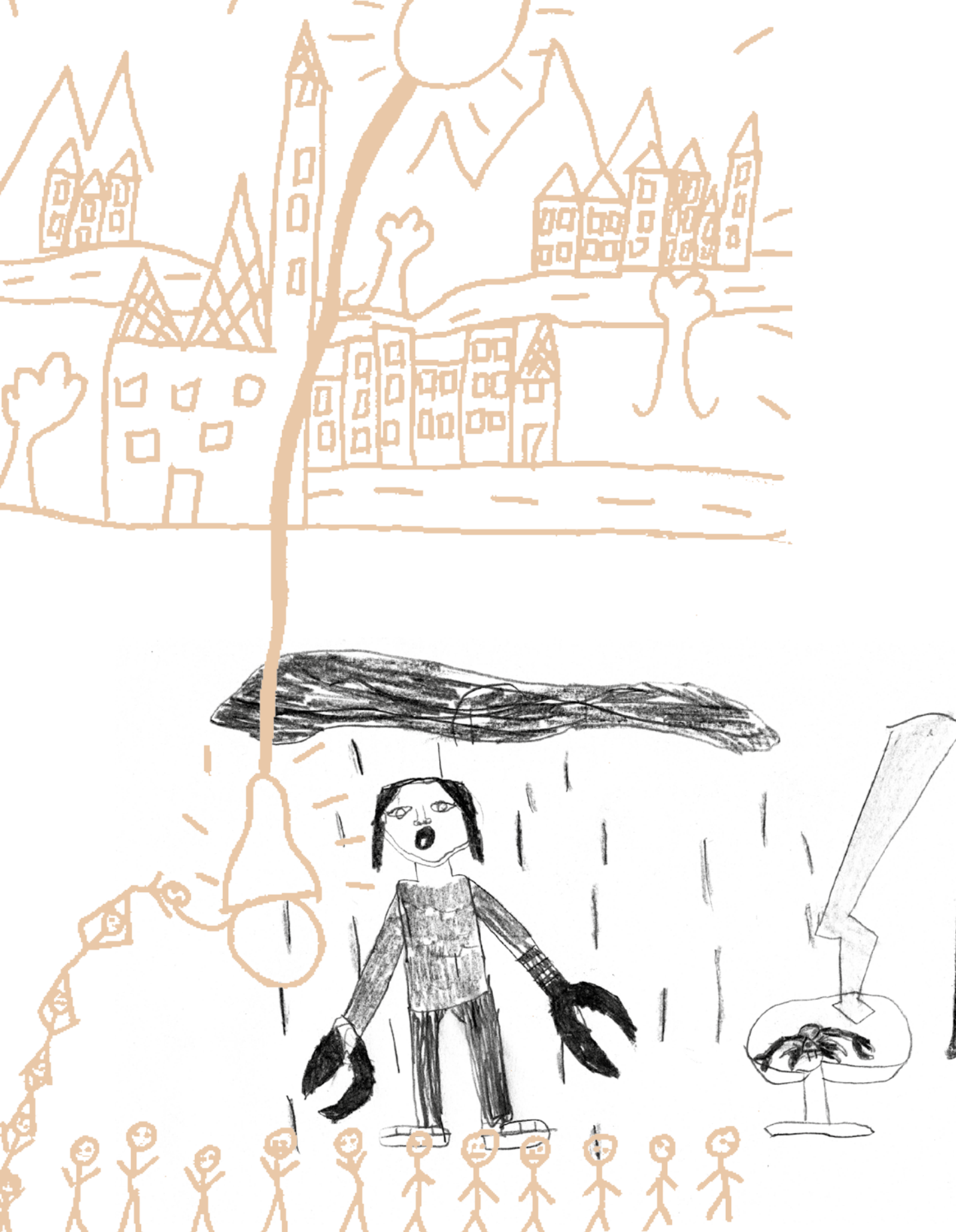
Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka (WRO)

EDEN — Ethical Durable Ecology Nature
Olga Kisseleva (FR)
installation, in process from 2014

NOUMEN
Paweł Janicki (WRO)
sound artwork, 2019

EDEN (*Ethical Durable Ecology Nature*), an installation which Olga Kisseleva has been developing since 2014, draws its inspiration from the way trees, shrubs, and other vegetal organisms communicate with each other by triggering and transferring chemical impulses. The main function of these processes is to optimize the vital plant mechanisms, including protection against aggressors. The chemical substances released by, for example, a tree whose leaves are being eaten by insects are received by the neighboring trees and make them "prepare" for defense by introducing substances not tolerated by the predators into their circulatory systems. This is one example of how the system of chemical communication among plants works.

In her *EDEN*, Kisseleva is mainly interested in the very idea of dialogue among plant organisms and their resulting potential for various "social" behaviors, such as cooperation or competition. By combining the chemical processes taking place in cells and tissues with the self-alienating offshoots of the once-human factor, i.e., algorithmic operations of the analysis and visualization of data, which become the actual material of the artist's work, an

open, inter-species system of speculative communication between plants and humans is constructed. This makes it possible to observe, analyze, manipulate, and interpret them in relation to specific local (geopolitical, cultural) conditions and specific species, mainly trees, which thus become inscribed in the human context as co-participants of processes unfolding in culture.

The installation was originally developed as an Art&Science research project in collaboration with INRA (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique), the Art&Science International Institute, Sorbonne University, the Orange Art Factory, and Orange Telecom RDD, and was subsequently continued in a range of iterations in France, Finland, Japan, China, at the Israeli-Jordanian border, and other locations. Bringing together various endemic and/or endangered vegetal species, Kisseleva incorporated algorithmic processes into molecular communication specific to plants and relied on a range of generative visualizations, including light, to transform them into multi-element spatial installations.

The Wrocław version of the work, produced at the Media Art Biennale WRO 2019 CZYNNIK LUDZKI / HUMAN ASPECT of and displayed in the courtyard of the Four Domes Pavilion, had an expository investment to it. Its aim was to demonstrate the axial principle the artist chose for the *EDEN* project in suggesting that humans might potentially track some messages exchanged by purportedly inanimate vegetal organisms.

The Pavilion installation included a live plane, a tree characteristic of the park and urban greenery of Wrocław. The color signals received by phones and other Internet-connected devices made it possible for Wrocław audiences to experience the idea of the project, as they were simultaneously enacting an important aspect of the Biennale's curatorial eponymous concept, which urged them to adopt an attentive, posthuman perspective on the environment and to expand their circle of inter-species empathy.

After the exhibition, the plane from Kisseleva's installation was replanted in the Szczytnicki Park, becoming an inspiration and a material for a new work by Paweł Janicki, a Wrocław-based artist. His Internet audio installation *NOUMEN* (noumen.info) interlinks and makes it possible to connect with other works displayed by the WRO Art Center in the public space of Wrocław: Hannes Praks and Birgit Õigus' wooden *Megaphones*, through which one can listen to the sounds of the Eastern Park, and Martin Bricejl Baraga's *Cyanometer* (cyanometer.net), which monitors the shades of the sky and air quality on Fryderyk Joliot-Curie Street.

In philosophy, a noumen is a thing in itself, a phenomenon that can be known by reason, but exists outside reason and unfolds beyond our agency. Janicki's work can be perceived via a website which identifies the viewer's location and distance from the nearest of the three installations, and uses these data to generate an exclusive sound composition which is different for every mobile device. *NOUMEN* encourages engaging in a network of trans-species

communication comprised of mobile human beings, works of art, and a living plant organism, one of the many trees in a specific, human-designed ecosystem that is an urban park. The spectral sounds generated by a set of geolocalization data describing this unique community created by the artist resonate with a new possibility of communication for the non-anthropocentric world. Going beyond the promises of the Internet of Things, *NOUMEN* proposes a new approach to the essence of the participation of beings of different status in a more egalitarian, trans-species organizational system of reality.

conduction as explanatory experiment method

Dagmara Domagała (WRO)

The idea of the Art Wires program was hatched in 2015, when the WRO Art Center devised and started *testing* an experimental strategy for volunteer recruitment and training for the 16th Media Art Biennale WRO 2015 TEST EXPOSURE. We have been developing and expanding the program ever since, without losing sight of its original, fundamental aim: the establishment of multi-level partnerships under which volunteers do not simply serve as auxiliaries supporting the operations of the Center, but first and foremost formatively contribute to the viewer-artwork and audience-organizers relationships. However, the roots of Art Wires actually go back to the foundation of the WRO Art Center in 2008, as the program builds on the idea of the dissemination of art encapsulated in the "Art mediators, not watchmen" slogan, which was coined back then.

To engage in relationships with our audiences during our regular program activities is organic to the WRO. Whatever position we hold in the organization, our daily routine is based on direct contact with viewers. As the numbers of viewers increase and the Biennale events proliferate, it is a hackneyed organizational mantra to insist on the exigency of collaborating with an army of volunteers, who will support our activities in the most sensitive sector that is "visitor service." The inverted commas are fully intended, for such a jargon dangerously neighbors on the literal objectification of volunteers and the preoccupation with "covering the locations" or "guarding the exhibitions,"

negatively charged expressions which evoke very pictorial associations with attendants darting menacing glances on the fingerprinted display cabinets. As opposed to that, the WRO Art Center made the unrestrained experience of daily encounters with the audience the cornerstone of its *method* – rather than *strategy* – of working with viewers and, most importantly, of working and building rapport with volunteers.

Notable among current sociocultural developments is a ubiquitous crisis of expert systems (endemic not only to art criticism) – an increasing distrust of all kinds of expertise, which is paralleled, if not surpassed, by the enhanced belief and confidence in one's own knowledge. At the other extreme, there is a tendency for the public to be anxious about its alleged incompetence and to regard media art as exclusive. Model competent Art Guides are envisioned as taking a median position between the two poles by having adequate knowledge and accepting the situation in which "I have the right not to know" and "I'm not afraid to ask." Since, in this perspective, Art Guides are closest to viewers, we assume that by nurturing volunteers we nurture both current and future audiences of media art, who do not have to be experts to ask the right questions. In defiance of the regime of explanatory rituals, we do not seek to guide viewers through our programs. Their meetings with Art Guides are supposed to take shape spontaneously, because there is no such thing as the only proper model of working with the audience. The gist lies in developing the capacity to tune in and act in partnership. That is why "electric" connotations are more than fitting in this context. Art Wires is a program that fosters Guides who do not lead by standing at the forefront and pointing the way; instead, they lead by conduction – by disseminating knowledge and smoothing the transfer of impressions from the source to the receiver, whereby they become an information channel facilitating short- and long-term connections of various "free electrons" (whose relative autonomy results from the same countercultural movements that have shaped new media art).

The method of conduction is informed by a firm confidence in the integrity of our Guides, the recognition and development of their individual competences, and the mutual inoculation with a passion for art and art-centered meetings. Launched as an experiment, the Art Wires program is still evolving, also in response to the changing profiles of our Guides. We collaborate with universities (e.g., the University of Wrocław, the University of Lower Silesia, SKiBA, and the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), whose students take part in the course as part of their internship requirements. How-

ever, the program is supposed to be flexible enough to accommodate an array of participants, including seniors, freelancers, and regular 9-to-5 employees. Rather than from prioritizing high enrolment numbers, this results from our dedication to avoiding the homogeneity of knowledge, vocabulary, and temperament in the group. The diversity of participants encourages the sharing of knowledge from different fields and enhances the awareness of diversity among and across audiences.

The training and workshop cycle starts about 1.5 months before the beginning of the Biennale, which gives us time to furnish the participants with relevant background knowledge, and affords the prospective Guides ample opportunity to make themselves at home in the new environment and possibly to revise their own pre-conceived ideas. Training sessions, meetings, talks, and workshops are inclusive and based on partnership and collaboration with the entire team of the WRO Biennale, with a view to building a relationship which will subsequently be reflected in the Guides' interactions with the audience. Among the major points on the agenda is to compile a chart of duties and mutual expectations, which defines a set of the golden rules of our cooperation. Besides workshops on the history of media art, the WRO Biennale, and the WRO Art Center, we work together on the theoretical issues relevant to a given edition of the WRO Biennale, as well as inspecting and discussing individual exhibition venues. Workshops on working with the audience are marked by commitment to instill anti-discrimination standards. Throughout the training process, we seek to identify and recognize the individual talents and interests of our potential Guides and to adjust their scope of responsibilities accordingly, e.g., by including volunteers in artwork production and bringing them in touch with the artists to acquire often invaluable information about the works, long before they have their description plaques attached to them. The HUMAN ASPECT, the title of this year's WRO Biennale, is pivotal to the idea of the Art Guide and takes on a special resonance when the audience appears in the gallery. All the Art Wires activities go into the making of that ultimate vuser experience[1] of which Art Guides are both designers and final testers.

Continuing our experiment, we gradually expand our Guides' involvement in our program activities. Over the years, they have toured our exhibi-

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1   To paraphrase both Bill Seaman, who, as "vuser", defines the viewer/user of media work, as well as the term "user experience" related to the design of experiences in the context of human-computer interaction. See: Bill Seaman, Recombinant Poetics, [in:] E. Kac (ed.), Media Poetry: An International Anthology, Intellect, Bristol, Chicago 2007, pp. 157-174.

tions both in and outside Wrocław (at the Słowo Polskie Printing House or the Koszyki Hall in Warsaw), run workshops, and/or organized curatorial tours. The range of such involvements is constantly growing, and we want it to grow even more in line with the idea of opening up to the audience and bringing art to the public. Our next step will be for Art Guides to join in the pre-selection process in 2021. This will offer them initial insights into the full program of the next Biennale and help them obtain behind-the-scenes knowledge, which may powerfully bolster their free-wheeling interactions with our common audience.

jeśli miałabym
stworzyć galerię to
była by ona
dostępna dla
WSZYSTKICH

Jeśli miałabym stworzyć galerię to byłaby
książkami, roślinnością i muzyką
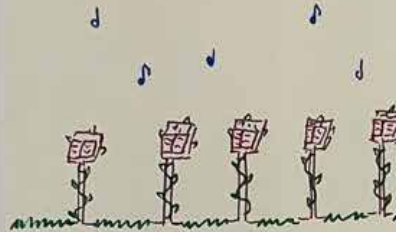
Jeśli miałabym stworzyć galerię
to byłaby ona ukierunkowana
na młodych ludzi
(i malutka)

to galeria,
nie sztukan

muzeum brak
(zamknięte od 18.00)

Gdy stworzę w przyszłości galerię,
to pozwoli ona ludziom na
rozwój.
Będzie przyjazna dla społeczności
i środowiska naturalnego.
Połączy w sobie wiele funkcji.
Będzie w niewielkim miasteczku,
tam gdzie muzeów brak.
Ale to nie będzie muzeum.

JEŚLI MIAŁAB
RAZ J
STWORZYĆ
TO BYŁA
RUCHON

Jeśli miałabym jeszcze raz stworzyć
ę to byłaby ona:

Jeśli miałabym
raz jeszcze
stworzyć galerię
to byłaby ona
galerią sztuk

if I were to organize
gallery
IT would be a place
of goo

JEŚLI MIAŁABYM SIŁ ORZYĆ
GALERIĘ TO BYŁABY
ONA
GALERIA ROŚLIN
z
I MUZYKI

IF I WOULD
AGAIN
OR GANIZE
A GALLERY
IT WOULD BE
BE CREATED BY ITs
VISITORS
???

IF I WOULD ORGANISE
A GALLERY...
I would try
to get outsiders interested.
IS IT ART?
YES,
...and the
concept of
ART questioned.
Vilányi Regina

...ea wypełnienu

JEŚLI MIAŁABYM raz jesz
A   . STWORZYĆ   galerię
B   byłaby ona ✓ NA   ⊙ TV
C   WSZELKIEGO typu PRA
  > obrazy   > słowa-   > dź
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...YM
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GALERIĘ
BY ONA
...A

Jeśli miałabym jeszcze raz
Stworye GALERIĘ
to byłaby ona pełna
Roślin.

Jeśli MIAŁABYM RAZ
STWORZYŁ GALERIE
TO BYŁABY ONA
PRZYTULNA

full
people ONLY

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Other publications related to WRO 2019 program:

– Little WRO Guide 2019, ISBN 978-83-944401-8-3
– The catalogue of a special exhibition of contemporary media art from Japan, ISBN 978-83-944401-9-0

Audiovisual documentation

vimeo.com/wrocenter