Digitale Demenz (Artificial Intelligence)

Erik Bünger, Brendan Howell, !Mediengruppe Bitnik, Julien Prévieux, Suzanne Treister

September 9 - October 24, 2015

Chris Marker, Dialector 6, 2009 - 11

DIGITALE DEMENZ (Artificial Intelligence)
curated by Thibaut de Ruyter

Every epoch lives with its own (naïve) hopes and (uncontrolled) fears. Ecological, political, economic, or scientific evolutions—and the potential disasters they involve—surround us, and we never know when or where the next catastrophe will occur.

Since the recent release of a blockbuster movie about the mathematician Alan Turing (*The Imitation Game*, 2014) and a poetic film by Spike Jonze (*Her*, 2013), artificial intelligence is being talked out again. Turing was one of the first scientists to develop the concept of a computer, and a test for artificial intelligence bears his name. At the same time, we have gotten used to talk to our Smartphones and expect them to reply. In the movie *Her*, for example, Joaquin Phoenix falls in love with the voice that inhabits his computer. As early as 1996, we regarded Deep Blue, the chess-playing computer

devised by IBM that won against Garry Kasparov, as a turning point in history. Humankind lost against a machine and started to ask: "When will computers take power?" while Stephen Hawking, in a recent interview, stated that "the development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race." As is always the case with technological evolution, we are both fascinated by and afraid of its potential at the same time. Think of HAL 9000, the computer in 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968), that decides to kill the crew of the spacecraft he controls. Science fiction tells us that if computers can think, they can also, for unexpected reasons, turn against us.

Suzanne Treister, Hexen 2.0., 2009 - 11

The exhibition *Digitale Demenz* (*Artificial Intelligence*) explores the relationship between contemporary art and artificial intelligence. The history of the computer and the now famous scientists that made it possible will be introduced based on Suzanne Treister's extensive research on figures such as Alan Turing, revealing one or the other surprise. The semiological interpretation of technical revolution can be found in the works by Erik Bünger, while Julien Prévieux depicts, in a very simple way, the first time humankind lost a chess game against a computer. However, nowadays machines also have a will of their own, such as the "robot" created by the artists' collective !Mediengruppe Bitnik, who randomly buy illegal goods on the darknet (the covert and private networks in the Internet). A special website, conceived for the exhibition by Brendan Howell, functions both as a catalog and documentation of the show but also as a source of material about artificial intelligence with links, archives and (generative) craziness. Last but not least, the poetic reality of communicating with a computer can be found in rare chat software developed by Chris Marker back in 1985, which enables visitors to converse with a machine.

Communicating with computers, letting them make choices, and accepting that they have a mind, ideas, thoughts, and perhaps even feelings of their own are finally linked by a simple question: *Where does science end and fiction start?*

With kindly support of CORE and the Oldenburger Computer-Museum digitale.

Text by Thibaut de Ruyter

!Mediengruppe Bitnik, Random Darknet Shopper - The Bots Collection, 2015

Erik Bünger, The Girl Who Never Was, 2013