

I Scared My Computer

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At the time of writing the UK has just set a new record for the two consecutively hottest days in February which has sparked equal amounts of delight and concern...

Although the hot weather is probably not, or at least only in part an effect of the increase in the atmosphere's overall temperature, the concerns are real and justified. Hang fire disasters and solutions on ice. The trigger has been pulled and while we wait to see when the projectile of our dreams and aspirations will (back)fire, we root around for a mobilizing narrative with the potential of bringing us together, even on some basic level, around caring for our immediate and future livelihoods. With recent environmentalist projects taking a turn away from preservation towards construction

in acknowledgement of our already-constructed images of nature and the natural, there is a need for thinking creatively about the terms of this construction without grabbing for the myopic universalisms of the past. If modernity's ignorance and optimism brought us into this sticky mess then information and complexity don't quite seem to be unsticking us. Questions about the environment we inhabit become mirrors held up to humanity; fields for battles fought over definitions of humanness and ethical concerns whose complexities and intensities are multiplying by a factor equal to the number of

emerging technologies proposing to solve the problems we are facing. Questions of identity have become inextricably entangled with questions of environment. Is it the best *idea*; the 'how do we preserve?' or its *origin*; the 'who is (p)reserving what and for whom?' that we should be referring to as our first navigational instrument? The line of questioning in the present exhibition of artworks and texts highlights the importance of continually interrogating our nature/culture constructions, be they assemblages of plants, words, hardwares or softwares.

The following four texts are written by researchers (staff and students) from the Royal College of Art in response to a double article by Iranian Philosopher Reza Negarestani, published in e-flux in 2014: "The Labor of the Inhuman, Part I: Human" and "The Labor of the Inhuman, Part II: The Inhuman" and has been produced in the context of an exhibition of current RCA PhD students' work taking place during 'Know Your Home'-week and as part of the Students' Unions' ongoing *SU Research Series* whose purpose is to create opportunities for researchers to present their work and strength-

en the research community by creating connections with other communities within and outside of the RCA. This year, the *SU Research Series* focuses on questions around Class, Sustainability and Self-care.

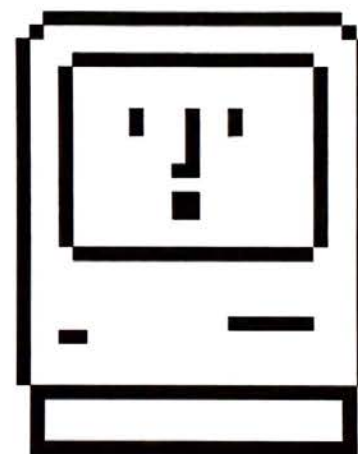
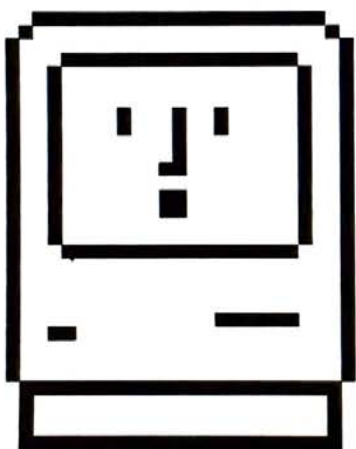
The exhibition which, following an open-call, has been curated in conjunction with this publication is organised in collaboration with The Westworks, the Royal College of Art and the RCA Students' Union, and presented in one of the yet unoccupied shopfront spaces of White City Place; neighbour to the RCA's temporary campus building in White City.

On the last pages you will find a list of the artists and their works, which they have generously brought to the exhibition.

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WHITE
CITY
PLACE



The Upper Ontology of the World

by Eleanor Dare

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Eleanor Dare has a PhD in Arts and Computational Technology from Goldsmiths (2007-2011). She is currently Acting Head of Programme for Digital Direction at the RCA, a 15-month masters course addressing the future of storytelling.

Who or what gets to be counted as human? This paper is a response to the questions raised by the idea of inhumanism, in particular, two papers in the e-flux Journal, editions #52 and #53, by the philosopher Reza Negarestani, respectively, *The Labor of the Inhuman, Part I* (Negarestani, 2014) and *Part II: The Inhuman* (Negarestani, 2014a). In Part I, Negarestani addresses the paradox of orienting ourselves between the cultural tropes of humanism and anti-humanism, of operating via 'consensus or dissensus' (Negarestani, 2014). In Part 2, Negarestani elaborates the commitment to a discursive inhumanism, one which requires rational agency to allow for the emergence of the human, albeit a speculative rationality which has the potential, (for Negarestani at least) to undergo a form of assimilation to an artificial, *general intelligence*, in which we 'only become rational agents once we acknowledge or develop a certain intervening attitude toward norms that renders them binding' (Negarestani, 2014a).

Negarestani describes an augmented rationality which inhabits 'the "area of maximum risk" — not risk to humanity per se, but to commitments which have not yet been updated, because they

conform to a portrait of human that has not been revised' (Negarestani, 2014a). The obvious question we are left with is whether the division between the human and the non-human is sustainable, and in asking this question, do we naturalise an ontology which always foregrounds humanism, even if it is filtered through an anti-humanist lens? For Reza Negarestani, inhumanism is a constructivist strategy to counter the infinite regress of the humanism-anti-humanism binary, in 2014, he wrote: 'Inhumanism is exactly the activation of the revisionary program of reason against the self-portrait of humanity' (Negarestani, 2014a). But it is imperative to remember that who gets to count as human has always been ideological, likewise the form of logic invoked by rational discourse is also always political, implicated with a colonial continuum. 185 years since the abolition of slavery in the UK, the stability (or otherwise) of our ontological status as homo-sapiens, is still contingent, and arguably an issue of ever more palpable cultural and political urgency, with rising nationalisms and far-right politics, the question of who gets to count as human, agential and 'rational' has not gone away.

Aside from the resurgence of racist populisms which deny the humanity and equality of all people, the ontology of humanism is also threatened, it would seem, by emerging forms of materiality, by the putative breakdown of separations between computers and humans, between, for example, communication networks and the spaces we inhabit, by the proposed accord of 'human' rights to artificially intelligent entities, or, by the longstand-

Contributing Artists

Be Andr

The Hair of a Crying Artist, 2019
Oil on canvas, 125 cm x 200 cm

Be Andr (1978, Oslo, Norway) is an artist that lives and works in London, UK. Andr studied Fine Art at The Florence Academy of Art, Italy, the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL and currently doing his PhD at Royal College of Art. He has exhibited internationally most recently with exhibitions at La Posta Foundation, Spain; Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel; CCA Andratx Art Centre, Spain; Post Box Gallery, London; Scaramouche, NYC and Sexauer, Berlin.

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Karen Bosy

Water Drawing, 2018
Video on two monitors (4min 56sec)

Karen Boley is an artist and researcher based in London, UK. Her documentarist (diarist) site exploration work, using dispersal as a technique, draws on experience with moving image, still photography, zines, drawing, lithography, sound and born-digital artwork. Currently a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art, Boley is developing a project exploring daydreaming, intimacy and the experience of using satellite (GPS) technology in relation to site-based and landscape-based dispersal.

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Seungjo Jeong

Interface V, 2018
Acrylic on linen, 66 x 66 (cm)

Seungjo Jeong was born in South Korea, where he worked as a software engineer before he decided to change his career to art. He began the journey at the SAIC in Chicago, juggling with painting, photography and animation. He then received a MA in Painting from the RCA, where he is now completing a Ph.D. in Arts and Humanities.

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Anna Nazo

Fractal Lymph, 2019
Video (15 min.)

Performance for Data Loam exhibition, Angewandte Innovation Laboratory, Vienna, Austria. 25th February 2019. An exhibition in cooperation with the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the Royal College of Art in London, RIAT Vienna and the Master Programme Arts & Science. Data Loam is a PEEK project supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and has also been made possible by the generous support of the AIL - Angewandte Innovation Laboratory.

feel, 2.1000.6235.5235, 2019
Live performance. Duration: 15 min.
14th March, 6.30pm, 7.30pm, 8.30pm

Anna Nazo is a performance artist and PhD Researcher working at the intersection of art, science, philosophy and computing technologies, with particular focus on brainwaves CGI, AI poetry, drones and new materialities. Within live digital-physical performance Anna's work addresses questions of artificial or ana-radical forms of intelligence and liveness.

cargocollective.com/annanazo | @annanazo

Gareth Proskourine-Barnett

Conc(re)te, 2019

Digital print onto carpet (128cm x 128cm), 3D printed concrete fragment, looped video on Raspberry Pi

Gareth Proskourine-Barnett is an artist, researcher and educator. His current research adopts an essayistic approach (combining film, text and performance) alongside archaeological and archival methods to challenge the historic and social narratives around Brutalism. Past projects have been exhibited at museums and galleries across the UK, as well as in Denmark, Russia, India and Thailand.

www.g-p-b.net | www.concrete.rip | instagram: @tombstone_press

Adam J B Walker

Our Skins Are Porous Too, 2019

Online artwork and curatorial project incorporating works by Timothy Cape, Naomi Ellis, Olga Fedorova, Alessandra Ferrini, Eliot Jones, Bogdan Moroz, Shir Raz & Name Surname.

Adam J B Walker's artworks are fragmented constellations of engagement with the public sphere, sometimes coalescing into contingent counter-narratives to the presumed way of being within contemporary late capitalism. Working principally with text as both form and concept in its broadest sense, he seeks to critique, subvert and undermine dominant conceptions of the body-identity-affect relationship.

www.adamjwalker.co.uk | twitter: @adamjwalker

Frances Young

Please Review The Setting, 2019

2-channel HD Video (for 2 monitors), dimensions variable, looped, colour / b&w, silent.

Frances Young is a UK-based artist who has been working with moving image for around fifteen years. She has exhibited and screened work nationally and internationally, and is currently a research student at the Royal College of Art (London), undertaking a practice-based PhD in Fine Art. Her work is in the collections of David Roberts Art Foundation (London, UK); Gemeentemuseum, Helmond (Netherlands); University of the Arts London (UK); and private collections in the UK and USA.

vimeo.com/francesyoung | francesyoungmovingimages.wordpress.com | rca.ac.uk/students/frances-young