



Unboxing e-Realities

GOETHE
INSTITUT

Unboxing e-Realities
Agency, Citizenship, Responsibility in the Digital Age

Friday, 27.09.2019

11.00–15.00 **Workshop with Lea Pfau**,
Open Knowledge Foundation

18.00–20.00 **Installations**
Varvara & Mar, Tactical Tech, Pinar Yoldas

19.30–21.00 **YOU ARE OUT THERE**
Theatre performance by doublelucky
productions & Idella Craddock

Saturday, 28.09.2019

10:00–21:00 **Doors open / Installations**

11.00–18.00 **SYMPOSIUM**
Moderated by Geraldine de Bastion

11.00 **Welcome** by Ulrich Ribbert,
Goethe-Institut Estland
Introduction by Christiane Kühl

11.30 **Inputs and Panel Discussion**
Christoph Engemann: **Who Owns Identity?**
Katrin Tiidenberg: **Stuck in the Attention
Machine**
Damiano Cerrone: **Digital Autarky**

13.15 Lunch

14.30 **Inputs and Table Discussions**
Varvara & Mar: **Colonization with LOVE**
Maren Mayer-Schwieger: **E-sthetics
of Nature**
Hans Block & Moritz Rieseewieck: **Countless
Shades of Grey in the Twilight Zone**

16.15 Coffee Break

16.30 Keynote
Evgeny Morozov: **Digital Power and
its Discontents**

17.30–18.00 **Closing Discussion and Conclusions**

19.30–21.00 **The Cleaners**
Documentary film by Hans Block
& Moritz Rieseewieck

Geraldine de Bastion is a political scientist and the founder of Konnektiv, an agency consulting and conducting cooperation projects around information and communication technology in international development. She founded the Global Innovation Gathering, a network of grassroots innovators, social entrepreneurs, hacker spaces and others. In addition she works with activists around the world on digital rights issues.

Hans Block is a theatre director, filmmaker and musician. He studied music at the University of Arts Berlin and directing at Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin. In 2014, he became resident director at the Box/Schauspiel Frankfurt. He is a member of Laokoon, a group of artists and scientists who collaborate to develop cross-media narration formats.

Damiano Cerrone is the director of SPIN Unit, an international urban agency that mediates the development process of cities and digital societies. He is Principal Researcher at TERREFORM CAUR New York and lecturer at Tampere University and Beijing University of Technology. Among other projects, SPIN advises the departments of Planning and Transportation in Tallinn.

Idella Craddock is a theatre maker and technologist. They have designed interactive objects and systems that are central to theatrical works of Jaha Koo, Johannes Paul Rather, The Agency and others. Idella's artistic research addresses false hopes and fears placed in technology by situating modern techno-philia in the context of present and historical pseudo-sciences.

doublelucky productions is interested in creating theatrical situations that make invisible infrastructures visible and experiential: from high frequency trading and smart phone monitoring to social media bots. The Berlin based performance company founded by Chris Kondek and Christiane Kühl has worked and toured nationally and internationally. In 2017 they created "Eritunnused" with Estonian artists at Vaba Lava.

Dr. Christoph Engemann is a lecturer for Society and Digitization at the faculty of media of the Bauhaus University in Weimar. Further research and teaching include Leuphana University Lüneburg and the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford Law School. His latest publications are on Machine Learning (2018) and The Digital Citizen (2016).

Christiane Kühl is a journalist, curator and co-founder of the performance group doublelucky productions. While all of her work is based on intensive research, she enjoys translating discoveries into different media in both factual and playful ways. She freelances for a manifold of newspapers, magazines, institutions and arts festivals.

Maren Mayer-Schwieger is a researcher and lecturer on the history, theory and practice of ecological knowledge as well as on Feminist Science Studies. She has been teaching at Ruhr Universität Bochum, Academy of Art and Design Basel, and the Academy of Visual Arts Vienna.

Evgeny Morozov is a writer and journalist reflecting on the political and social effects of digitalisation. His articles appear in The Guardian, The New York Times, The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, The New Republic, Slate, and others. He has been a fellow at Stanford University, Open Society Foundations, New America Foundation, and the American Academy in Berlin. Books include "The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom", "To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism" and "Freedom as a Service. The New Digital Feudalism and the Future of the City" (2020).

Lea Pfau has been working for the Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF) since 2017, focusing on governance and transparency. She also works with the European Youth Parliament, exploring the significance of media in political youth education. The OKF is an international NGO fighting for open knowledge and democratic participation by developing tools that strengthen civic society.

Moritz Rieseewieck is an essay author, scriptwriter, theater- and film director. He studied directing at Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin, as well as a few semesters of economics. His book "Digital Dirt Work" was published in 2017. He is a member of Laokoon, a group of artists and scientists who collaborate to develop cross-media narration formats.

Tactical Tech (Tactical Technology Collective) is an international NGO that engages with citizens and civil-society organisations to explore the impacts of technology on society. Informed by cross-disciplinary expertise in political engagement and technology, their methodology uses a design-based way of thinking, creating a loop between ideas, testing and development.

Dr. Katrin Tiidenberg is an Associate Professor of Visual Culture and Social Media at the Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication Institute of Tallinn University. Her research interests focus on the intersections of (visual) self-presentation on social media and dominant normative ideologies. Recent book: "Selfies, why we love (and hate) them" (2018).

Varvara & Mar is an artist duo formed by Varvara Guljajeva and Mar Canet in 2009. They have exhibited in a number of international shows and festivals, among them the Barbican and V&A Museum London, Onassis Cultural Centre Athens, Ars Electronica Linz, and ZKM Karlsruhe.

Pinar Yoldas is an artist and researcher. Her work develops within biological sciences and digital technologies through architectural installations, kinetic sculpture, video and drawing with a focus on post-humanism and feminist techno-science. Shows at Polyteknikum Museum Moscow, National Art Museum of Beijing, Transmediale Berlin, Istanbul Biennial, among others.

Free admission (except for theatre performance)
Event Language: English
Venue: Vaba Lava, Telliskivi 60a, Tallinn
More info: goethe.de/Estland/unboxing



Damiano Cerrone / SPIN Unit

Unboxing e-Realities Agency, Citizenship, Responsibility in the Digital Age

Digitalisation has changed every single domain of our lives. Still, when we think of the digital world, we tend to think of smartphones, MacBooks, and very cool apps. So shiny! Or Google, Amazon, Facebook, Skype: so convenient! interconnected! in real time! Digitization has helped us defy the boundaries of space, time and self. Very cool indeed.

But behind every shiny interface there's the backend. Algorithms you do not see. A set of rules that defines a whole architecture of power which often and for many reasons is deliberately kept obscure. And on top of that, there is a "global backend" that we chose to ignore: digital waste dumps in Africa, and devastating working conditions for people assembling our devices in Asia, or lately Latin America, among others.

Digital technologies solve problems, they create problems, and we use them to address the situations they created. No matter whether you focus on utopian or dystopian scenarios: that everything is linked to data-driven technologies today – work, politics, the economy, the environment, social relations – is nothing short of a paradigm shift. This does not mean that we don't have say in it.

Estonia is a frontrunner in this digital world, especially in the political sphere. E-governance, e-residency and the whole idea of the e-state is sold as a model for all states fit for the future – well aware of the fact that at this point in history, this is an e-journey into the unknown. How will it change our understanding of democracy, if countries are run like start ups, citizens addressed as users, bots manipulating our behavior? Who writes the terms and conditions? What architectures of power are being built? Who has agency, who profits, who cares?

The artists and thinkers of this interdisciplinary symposium will address these questions and more: exploring the local and global histories of the state we're in, applying their creative imagination to visualize where the journey might take us. "Us" being the key word here – because after a decade of selfies, it is time to focus on our relationship to others, including nature and machines. Here are two days to rethink and envision models of community, agency and care in the digital sphere.



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THEATRE

YOU ARE OUT THERE

by doublelucky productions & Idella Craddock

The internet has long become the place that introduces us to the world: via Twitter, Facebook, personal websites and the various profiles we create on a daily basis. Our doubles are out there – and they are alive. Even worse is the fact that these digital doubles became friends with our old fashioned administrative doubles created by the state: birth certificates, passports, visas or biometric photos. As our ubiquitous self-portraits on social media are exploited by both state security systems and private corporations, they are gaining more and more control over our physical existence. Doubles are turning into doppelgängers, pursuing their own agenda, turning against us.

YOU ARE OUT THERE tells a classical doppelgänger story as multimedia data theatre. With experimental IT technology and the help of a sleazy magician, the scope of identity manipulation is explored in real time, turning the audience into accomplices of a virtual ghost story.

Performance in English
Tickets 5.50/10.50 € (via Piletilevi)

With/by Idella Craddock, Sarai Feuerherdt, Sonja Füstli, Phillip Hohenwarter, Chris Kondek, Christiane Köhl, Maria Rößler, Ruth Stofer, Hannes Strobl, Marc Zeuske. A production by Künstlerhaus Mousonturm Frankfurt and doublelucky productions. Co-produced by Münchner Kammerspiele, Schauspiel Leipzig and Gessnerallee Zurich within the framework of the Frankfurter Positionen festival 2017. The Performance in Tallinn is supported by Auswärtiges Amt.

WORKSHOP

Lea Pfau, Open Knowledge Foundation (German Section)

A theoretical and practical workshop on how to use public data effectively and at the same time keep control over our private data. We will explore practical encryption tools like Trace my shadow, and develop our own ideas and creative alternatives to standard solutions. For young adults, in German. (Registration closed.)

INSTALLATIONS

Kitty AI. Artificial Intelligence for Governance

Video by Pinar Yoldas

It is the year 2039. An artificial intelligence with the affective capacities of a kitten becomes the first non-human governor. She leads a politician-free zone with a network of other AI's. Highly efficient. Living in the mobile devices of the citizens, she can love up to 3 Million people at the same time.

The Rhythm of Heart

Interactive installation by Varvara & Mar

With the help of two Fitbits, the artists monitored their heart beats over the course of a year. The collected data was translated into the rhythm of two metronomes. Engaging with a small device, the viewer/listener can travel back in time and browse through the archive of the artist's hearts.

The Glass Room

Pop-up exhibition by Tactical Tech

The interactive exhibition explores how society is dealing with the growing dependency on data and technology, and the normalization of monitoring and surveillance. Set up by an international NGO, it encourages us to critically reflect on the mechanisms and companies that create this environment.

SYMPOSIUM

Unboxing e-Realities.

On the Future of the Digital Society

Free admission

Christoph Engemann: Who owns identity?

The history of identification is closely related to the development of modern states as the ability to identify asserts power. Digital identity – and the question who can provide it – is therefore one of the defining questions of the next decade. Currently platform companies factually own and exploit digital identities, and governments tap into that data. Digital currencies like Facebook's LIBRA will add yet another tool for identification: money. The talk will discuss the role of nation states and civil society when it comes to digital sovereignty.

Katrin Tiidenberg: Stuck in the Attention Machine

Social media started out as a space for connection, interaction, relationships and cat pictures. People loved it. Today, 3.5 billion people use social media globally, but 4 of the top 10 platforms are owned by Facebook and 3 by Tencent. We've built and fine tuned a perfectly functioning malleable and manipulable attention economy, and are only now realizing that it is governed by nothing but the corporate interest. How did we get here? What does it mean? And what on earth are we going to do now?

Maren Mayer-Schwieger: E-sthetics of Nature

The current epoch of the Anthropocene is characterized by ecological damage on a planetary scale. Humans and technology are described as the cause of it. Nevertheless,

Damiano Cerrone: Digital Autarky

While the digital network is open and globally accessible, the vital information produced is local and geographically bound. This gives cities the capacity to increase their attractiveness, economic performance, and social equity – and to gain decisional autonomy over other forms of governance. The talk will explore how the new dynamics of network and place shapes cities and societies, and how mastering digital content results in rebuilding medieval walls through data and revitalizing the role of cities as central societal players.

Varvara & Mar: Colonization with LOVE

Our relationships with technology run so deep that we have stopped being aware of them. Even more so, as the post-digital age comes along with soft colonialism: everything became a matter of data and I like. The artist duo Varvara & Mar has been investigating surveillance capitalism, collateral social change and audience post-participation for many years. In addition to their installation "The Rhythm of Heart" on display at Unboxing e-Realities, their talk will share insights on artistic approaches to the complexity of the technological world in a variety of their projects.

technology is also presented as the solution: sensor networks are increasingly used to produce ecological data. The talk wants to delineate this contradiction based on the myth of "green" digitality. At the same time, it wants to suggest that sensor technology opens up the possibility to perceive nature beyond the old human dominance scheme. It can generate a relational and responsible e-sthetics.

Hans Block & Moritz Rieseewick: Countless Shades of Grey in the Twilight Zone

In their documentary film "The Cleaners" Block and Rieseewick disclose a hidden industry of digital cleansing – content moderators in Manila, reviewing thousands of photos uploaded to Facebook or Twitter every day, deciding what to delete. In cases like child porn the decision seems clear. But for the majority of images contextual aspects – culture, religion, politics

FILM

The Cleaners

A documentary film by Hans Block and Moritz Rieseewick

Every day, millions and millions of images are posted on the web. Not all of them stay there. Who controls what we are seeing – and what is removed? "The Cleaners" enters the hidden shadow industry of digital cleaning, where the Internet rids itself of what it doesn't like.

At their inception, social media networks claimed to create a global community not limited by geographical or economic boundaries. More recently, however, they have faced a sinister challenge to this ideal: hate speech, fake news, terrorist propaganda. To censor controversial content, political institutions have established laws and guidelines. Yet Silicon Valley has its own rules: content moderators who curate the material posted on companies' sites. The global headquarter for content moderation is outsourced to the city of Manila. Here, thousands of people are hired to secretly rate thousands of deeply disturbing images and videos every day, often causing lasting psychological harm among them.

The film premiered 2018 at Sundance Festival (US), and won numerous awards since; among them at Moscow Film Festival, the Prix Europa and Grimme Preis 2019.

Original languages,
English subtitles
Free admission

– are key. The talk will stress the untenable conditions and extreme pressure under which low-wage earners in Manila have to make these highly complex decisions full of responsibility.

Evgeny Morozov: Digital Power and its Discontents

The collapse of collective political projects has left us with few options but to seek salvation in all sorts of private pursuits, supplied to us by corporations in whatever rhetorical camouflage: from "The Sharing Economy" to "Compassionate Capitalism" through "Freedom as a Service". The talk will uncover the mismatch between the optimistic picture of the future drawn by Big Tech and actual consequences of concentrating so much power in the hands of just a few companies. There is no one pre-given shape to the digital economy; it can as well be steered in a more solidaristic direction.



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