Spy on Me

#2

Artistic Manoeuvres for the Digital Present 19.-29.3.2020



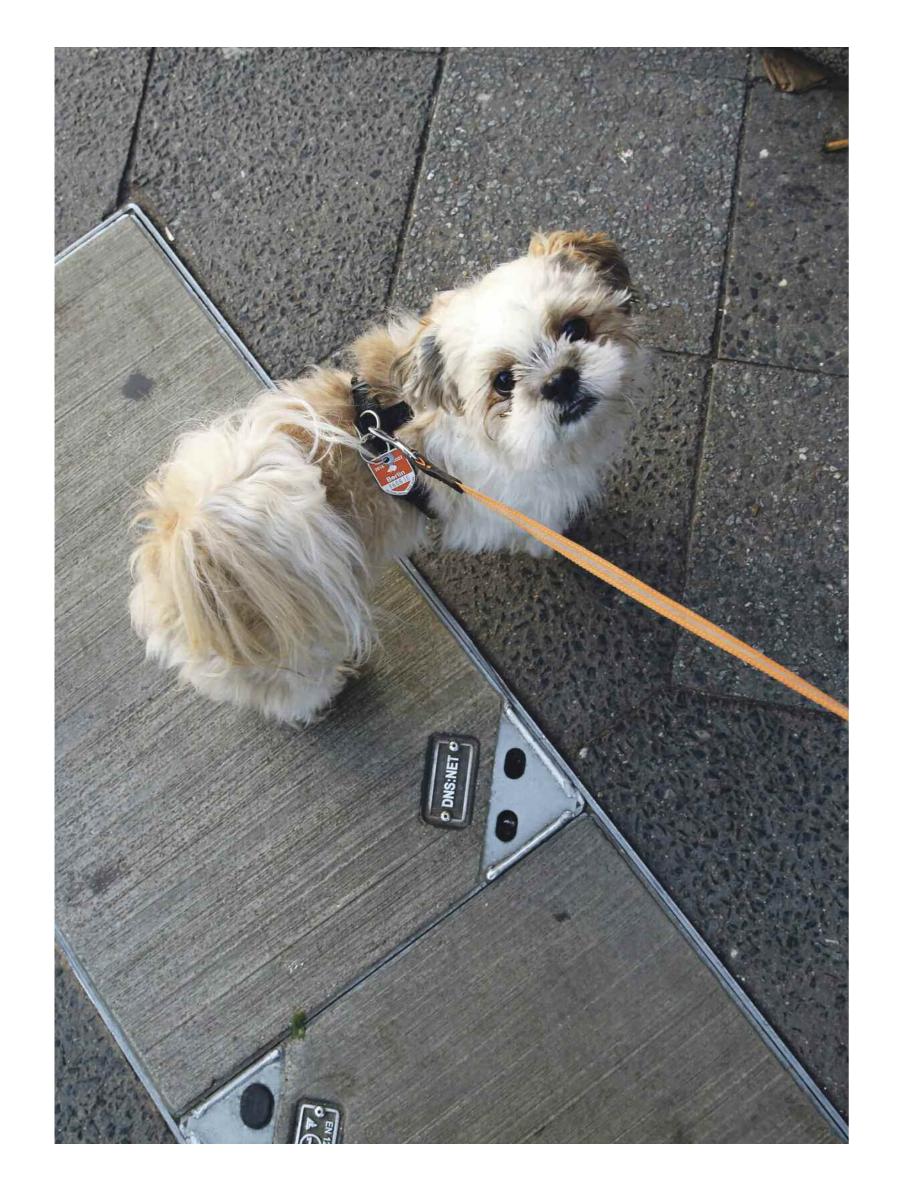


Spy on Me #2 Artistic Manoeuvres for the Digital Present 19.-29.3.2020 / HAU1, HAU2, HAU3

We have arrived in the reality of digital transformation. Life with screens, apps and algorithms influences our behaviour, our attention and desires. Meanwhile the idea of the public space and of democracy is being reorganized by digital means. The festival "Spy on Me" goes into its second round after 2018, searching for manoeuvres for the digital present together with Berlin-based and international artists. Performances, interactive spatial installations and discursive events examine the complex effects of the digital transformation of society. In theatre, where live encounters are the focus, we come close to the intermediate spaces of digital life, searching for ways out of feeling powerless and overwhelmed, as currently experienced by many users of internet-based technologies. For it is not just in some future digital utopia, but here, in the midst of this present, that we have to deal with the basic conditions of living together as a society and of planetary survival. Are we at the edge of a great digital darkness or at the decisive turning point of perspective?

A Festival by HAU Hebbel am Ufer. Funded by: Hauptstadtkulturfonds.





What is our relationship with alien consciousnesses?

As we build rivals to human intelligence, **James Bridle** looks at our relationship with the planet's other alien consciousnesses.

On 27 June 1835, two masters of the ancient Chinese game of Go faced off in a match which was the culmination of a years-long rivalry. The young prodigy Akaboshi Intetsu dominated the game early on using a secret move developed by his teachers. But a day

into the contest a number of ghosts appeared to his oppo-We have to nent, Hon'inbo - Jo - wa, and contend with showed him three critical inscrutable moves with which he was decisions made able to win back control of about jobs and the game. At the point when finances, healthit became clear that Akacare and road boshi would not be able to win the game, the young safety. challenger violently coughed

up blood onto the board. He was found dead a few days later. The match between Akaboshi and Jo - wa has passed into Go lore as the 'blood-vomiting game', and subsequent historians have attributed Akaboshi's decline to an undiagnosed pulmonary disease. They have been less forthcoming, however, on the matter of ghosts, which may still haunt the game to this day.

On 29 December 2016, a new player appeared on Tygem, a popular online Go server on which many senior Go professionals trained and tested out new moves. The player was called Master, and immediately they began a blazing winning streak: sixty victories in just seven days, and barely resting between games. Many of the victories were over world champion players. Master's moves often seemed wild, even impetuous, but they always resulted in a win. After the fifty-ninth game Master was revealed to be - as had been suspected not a human player, but an Artificial Intelligence. Master was the latest iteration of Deep-Mind and Google's AlphaGo programme, which had gained worldwide attention when it defeated Go master Lee Sedol six months ear-

That game had been clse, but the New Year games were already markedly different. When Go players tried to describe the Al's style of play, they struggled to reconcile it with anything known. One leading Go player said, 'they're how I imagine games from far in the future'. Another reported feeling that an 'alien intelligence' had landed among them. The machine's own creator, Demis Hassabis, said its moves seemed to emanate 'from another dimension'.

The last great revolution in human-machine competition occurred in 1997, when IBM's

DeepBlue defeated Garry Kasparov at chess, up to that point a game with Go-like status as a bastion of human imagination and mental superiority. But compared to AlphaGo, Deep-Blue might as well have belonged to the steam age; immensely powerful, IBM's ma-

> chine lacked anything we would call intelligence. It brute-forced Kasparov off the board, calculating games many moves ahead - but merely that: calculating. AlphaGo and its kind perform something more akin to imagination and intuition, and moreover they do so in mathematical realms the human mind cannot compre-

hend. While we can follow DeepBlue's line of thought, the thinking behind AlphaGo's decialien and otherworldly.

To call AlphaGo and systems like it an Artificial Intelligence is in some ways an exaggeration.

It is a very narrow form of intelligence directed at a particular task, based on one particular computational configuration - neural networks and a technique called reinforcement learning. These are pieces of software modelled loosely on parts of the human brain, which are trained on a reward system which encourages them to develop their own strategies. Despite this narrow focus, the benefits are generalisable; as well as learning other games, the techniques developed for

AlphaGo have been deployed by Google in analysis, to our own. everything from medical diagnoses to You-Tube recommendations.

'With Al comes the sense that we might not be the dominant actor for much longer ...'

Machine learning is being used by others to screen applicants for jobs, pilot self-driving cars and target military drones. Neural networks are live and connected to the stock market, to distribution systems, to transport infrastructure - to the very social, material, and economic bases of our daily existence. It's not just AlphaGo's 'god-like' moves we have to contend with, but inscrutable decisions made about jobs and finances, healthcare and road safety - and the sense of mystery, sur-

prise, strangeness and even horror that AlphaGo evokes will become a feature of more and more areas of our lives.

The increasing complexity of the world around us should be cause for political and social concern, as intelligent but unknowable software works its way through society. But it's also an opportunity to rethink our relationship with the wider world, and to reconsider our place in it. It seems significant that we are investing so much time and energy in building these toy versions of our own minds, just as our ability to control our own destiny and live on the planet sustainably appears to be failing. That failure is in part one of hubris: the belief that we can, as the planet's dominant species, continue to act selfishly, wastefully and without regard to the future. But with AI comes the sense that we might not be the dominant sions remain unknowable to us - and hence actor for much longer - and an attendant opportunity to really consider what it means to share the world with other, barely knowable intelligences.

> With AI comes the sense that we might not be the dominant actor for much longer - and an attendant opportunity to really consider what it means to share the world with other, barely knowable intelligences.

Because of course, we've shared the universe with other intelligences for a long time, and we've handled the situation pretty badly. We have consistently downgraded or reclassified forms of intelligence that do not resemble our own narrow definition, and as a result felt free to treat their possessors as lesser creatures, lower orders of beings, or not really as things at all. To ignore, consume, despoil and poison them, both to their detriment and in the final, devastating,

And yet the last few decades have also seen the slow murmurings of recognition of other ways of thinking and being in the world, which appears to us as a sudden flowering of forms of intelligence which differ radically from our own. More and more species are being admitted, grudgingly, to the community of those that really think, from orangutans to elephants, both of which have recently been granted legal personhood in court cases. As we recognise the differing forms of intelligence present in both AI and other species, the business of assigning rankings to other creatures begins to seem as stupid and violent as assigning them to different races. This too is only the beginning of what we might



recognise, only the beginning of another outnumber our own cells ten to one, has been strangeness of mere toy intelligences begins strangeness, if we choose to see intelligence as something that belongs not only to humans, and not only inside the human head.

recognise individual humans, and to prefer some to others, squirting water at those they dislike. Disliking brightness,

they squirt water at light We find ourselves bulbs above their tanks to standing upon extinguish them too: they are a ruined planet, not merely aware of their not smart enough environment, but seek to to save ourselves, manipulate it. But octopuses, unlike apes and elephants, and no longer by are also distinctly alien creaany stretch of the tures, separated from the imagination the mammals by millions of years smartest ones of evolution, with networks around. of neurons distributed throughout their entire bodies. And perhaps ours

microbiome, the 2kg of other species we carry romone clouds, much in the way that insect around with us – mostly in the gut – and which colonies do. Under such circumstances, the and as calls to humility and care.

shown to have measurable effects on our to pale. cognition.

'The centrality of human intelligence is on Octopuses in aquaria are now known to the point of being knocked violently aside by our own inventions...'

> At the other end of the scale, the largest organism in the world is a forest in Colorado, a hundred-acre expanse of cloned aspen sharing a single, 80,000 year-old interconnected root system. And like all forests it feels, processes, scholarship has revealed the social relationships and collective intelligence of trees, which share resources, form alliances, and recognise distress in others, sending both

too: the health and diversity of the human aid and warnings through tap roots and phe-

For a long time we have been as unheeding of these intelligences as we have been deaf to the frequency of electrons, and blind to the ultraviolet light that soaks the plants around us. But they have been here all along, and are becoming undeniable, just as the capacities of our own technologies threaten to supersede us. After wilfully ignoring the intelligences of others for so long, the centrality of human intelligence is on the point of being knocked violently aside by our own inventions. A new Copernican trauma looms, wherein we find ourselves standing upon a ruined planet, not and communicates. Recent smart enough to save ourselves, and no longer by any stretch of the imagination the smartest ones around. Any appeal to survival will have to be made both to technology and other non-human intelligences, and it will be possible only if we are prepared to accept the toy intelligences we're building not as yet more indications of our own superiority, but as intimations of our ultimate interdependence,

About James Bridle

James Bridle is an artist and writer working across technologies and disciplines. His artworks have been commissioned by galleries and institutions and exhibited worldwide and on the internet. His writing on literature, culture and networks has appeared in magazines and newspapers including Wired, Domus, Cabinet, the Atlantic, the New Statesman, the Guardian, the Observer and many others, in print and online. New Dark Age, his book about technology, knowledge, and the end of the future, was published by Verso (UK & US) in 2018.

Essay originally commissioned by Barbican Centre as part of their 2019 season Life Rewired.



New technologies, Old Discrimination

The utopia of cyber freedom is showing its darker side more and more clearly. Because the data that everyone generates every day is used in very different ways - depending, for example, on where you live and how much money you have at your disposal. Technological

In the imagination of the techno-utopians of the 1990s, the internet would create a bodiless space - a space that was both equalising and equally accessible to all. "We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or

As of October

population -

are online.

2019, more than

half of the world's

a staggering 4.48

billion people -

prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth," proclaimed John Perry Barlow in his 1996 manifesto A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace. Back in those early days of cyberlibertarian fantasy, much less was said about what would happen once you were

online, or how exactly people from around the world with different economic means would get online in the first place.

As of October 2019, more than half of the world's population - a staggering 4.48 billion people - are online. For many of these people, access to online spaces was made possible by cheap smartphones that bring low-cost internet to emerging markets. But inexpensive technologies often entail hidden costs. Many cheap phones get shipped with poor security and some even harvest people's data by design and by default. For instance, in 2018 the Wall Street Journal reported that a popular smartphone sold in Myanmar and Cambodia, the Chinese-made Singtech P10, comes with a pre-loaded app that cannot be deleted and that sends the owner's live location to an advertising firm in Taiwan. The hidden cost, therefore, is often access to people's data.

We are living in a world where almost everything we do automatically generates data, whether we are going somewhere, meeting someone, purchasing something or simply wasting time. Even aspects of human life that were formerly unsurveyed and unquantified are now turned into data points that are collected, aggregated and collated. We are all data, as John Cheney-Lippold has said, but this 'we' is not a uniform entity; it is characterised by both marginalising and privileging differences. One way in which this manifests itself is that data exploitation is often baked into the infrastructures and technologies that are disproportionately sold to those who are more likely to be adversely affected by its abuse: poorer people, and those who are new to the internet. Another manifestation is how surveillance systems are designed and deployed. If we look back at the history of

surveillance, we find that marginalised groups and those who were discriminated against were often watched more closely than others. In 18th century New York City, for example, the so-called lantern laws obliged

> black, mixed-race and indigenous enslaved people to carry candle lanterns with them when they walked about the city after sunset alone without a white person. Marginalised communities have also always been of special interest to the surveillance apparatus: the so-called Rosa Listen were

used by police departments in Germany even after homosexuality was decriminalised in 1969; while over in the U.S. the first Director of the FBI J. Edgar Hoover had the bureau keep extensive dossiers on social movements and political dissidents.

But with new technologies, old inequalities are reappearing in novel and unexpected forms. A good example of this is facial recognition. Most facial recognition systems still perform best at recognising the faces of white men. Joy Buolamwini, a researcher from the MIT Media Lab tested commercially released facial-analysis made by Microsoft, IBM, and the Chinese company Face+++, and found that all systems were very good at identifying the gender of lighter-skinned men. However, darker-skinned men were misclas-

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where everything is

sified six per cent of the time and darker-skinned women as often as 30.3 per cent of the time. In high-stakes areas such as law enforcement, misidentification could implicate people in crimes they did not commit. But even in seemingly mundane environments - such as football stadiums or concert halls surveillance is both Orwellian and Kafkaesque, as auto-

mated misidentification shifts the burden of proof on the falsely recognised individuals, who suddenly find themselves needing to prove that they are who they say they are and not whom a system says they are.

Recently, awareness for bias baked into the design of technology has been increasing and for the past two years, fixing in-built discrimination has become a key priority for technology companies and researchers alike.

But building systems that are better in terms of parity will not necessarily lead to greater justice or to less discrimination. Let us return to the example of facial recognition. In his essay "Against Black Inclusion in Facial Recognition", software developer Nabil Hassein states: "I have no reason to support the development or deployment of technology which makes it easier for the state to recognise and surveil members of my community." His point alerts us to the fact that discrimination and bias do not only happen while a technology is used—they also happen before and after its use. Systemic injustices as well as individuals' views and assumptions influence which products and services are designed and built, who builds them, how they are used and how their results are interpreted and applied. As the historian Melvin Kranzberg proclaimed in 1985 already: "technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral."

Both low-cost smartphones and facial recognition systems are examples of how harms amplified by technologies tend to disproportionately affect those who are already marginalised. As such, technology policy is tightly intertwined with social and global justice issues - and it should be recognised as such on a policy level. Yet, there has been a strange tendency to treat the tech industry as fundamentally different to other sectors. It would never occur to us to regulate pharmaceutical companies through non-binding and

> unenforceable ethical guidelines. We do not expect oil companies to self-regulate when it comes to complying to environmental protection. And in hardly any sector do we place the same amount of the burden of responsibility on individuals to protect themselves. When we go to restaurants or buy food at the supermarkets, we do not come equipped with food-

safety testing kits - we trust that what we buy is safe.

Privacy creates the safe space within which we are not judged, assessed or categorised. It is the space in which we can develop our identity, change who we are and decide who we want to become. But what is at stake is more than individual privacy. In an increasingly automated world where everything is turned into data, what is at stake is the dis-

progress is thus taking place on the backs of people who are marginalised due to discrimination and fewer privileges. Frederike Kaltheuner and Nele Obermüller explain the damage that technologies can do in their essay.

tribution of power between people, the market and the state. That's why perhaps one of simply protect people's data: they also mitithe most pressing tasks of this decade - next gate some of the informational asymmetries

to the climate crisis and growing inequality - is to vigorously defend our rights, as well as the norms and rules that should govern powerful technologies, the companies that build them and the governments that deploy them. Governments - especially democratic ones - need to resist the temptation to undermine civil liberties in the name of safety and security. When it comes to

ask ourselves what kind of innovation and progress we as a society and as individual voters tion that benefits the few, or that benefits the many?

really want: innova-

We should perhaps

rely on. Binding laws and regulations are often cast as a threat to technological progress and innovation. Indeed, progress is taken to mean "moving fast and breaking early mottos declared, then they most definitely would.

But if the tech scandals of

that exist between people

and the technologies they

collectively. Instead of pitting regulation against innovation, we should perhaps ask ourselves what kind of innovation and progress we as a society and as individual voters really want: innovation that benefits the few, or that benefits the many? Do we want progress toward a world in which democracy and human rights can flourish, or progress toward a world in which they are under increasing duress? There are many truly exciting and ground-breaking possibilities that emerging technologies can enable. It is up to us to ensure that we are creating the things", as one of Facebook's right conditions for a better world to be pos-

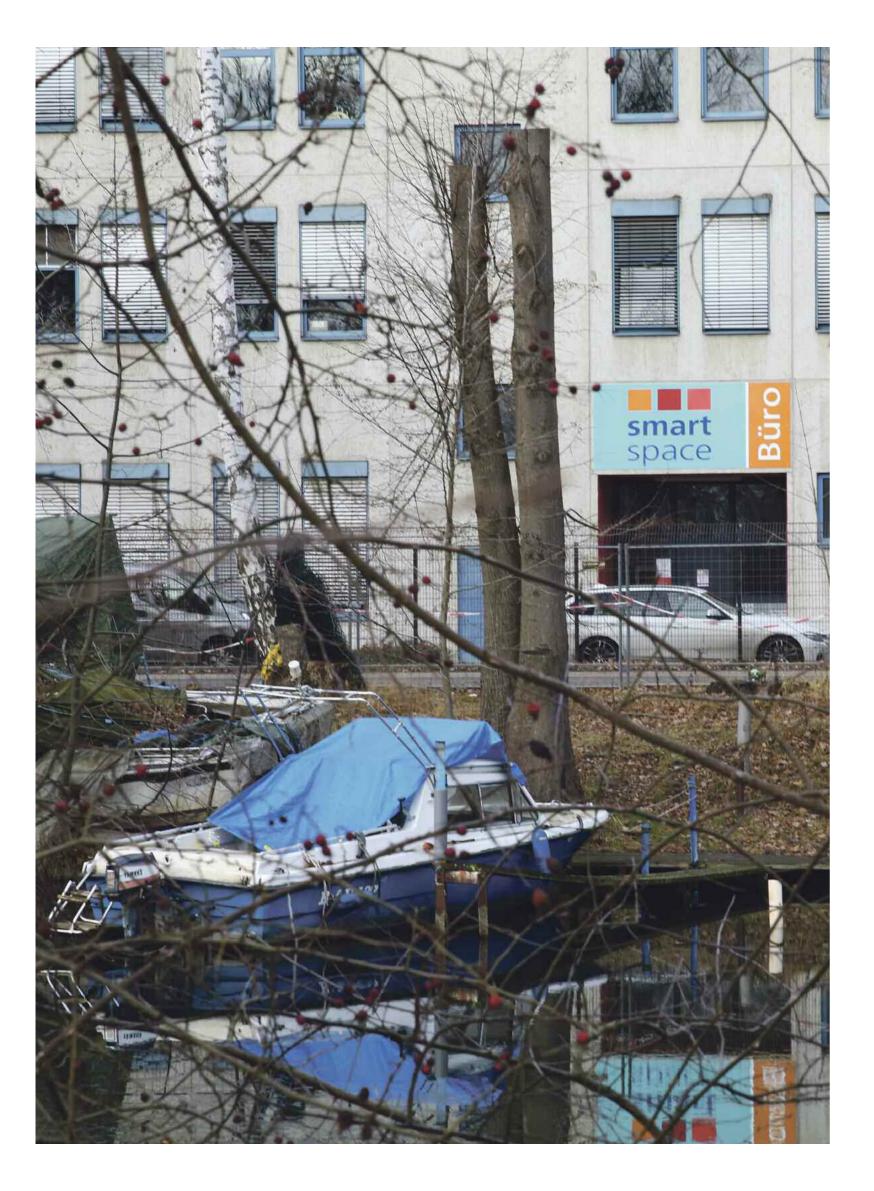
empowering individuals vis a vis technology the past three years have taught us anything, companies, the clearest way is through laws it is that breaking things comes with collateral and regulations. Rules that govern how data damage, the price of which we have to pay

Frederike Kaltheuner is a civil rights activist and works as a writer in London. Until 2019 she was head of the data abuse department of the international civil rights organisation Privacy International, based in London. Since 2019 she has been a Tech Policy Fellow of the Mozilla Foundation. She studied Internet Science in Oxford and Philosophy, Politics and Economics in Maastricht and Istanbul. As an expert witness, she has testified at hearings in the British and European Parliament on topics such as artificial intelligence and data ethics. As an expert on new technologies, Kaltheuner is a regular guest on numerous television formats, including "BBCNews" and "AlJazeera".

Nele Obermüller is an author and freelance journalist. She works in German and English. Her articles have appeared on Deutsche Welle, The Guardian, Food & and Vice, among others, and she has written for the UNHCR and the European Commission. Obermüller studied Criminology in Cambridge and Psychology, Philosophy and Cultural Studies in Sussex and Berlin. She has received several awards for her journalistic work, including the Guardian International Development Journalism Award. She lives in Berlin.

An earlier version of this text was published in German language in the book "Datengerechtigkeit" by Frederike Kaltheuner and Nele Obermüller (Nicolai Publishing & Intelligence GmbH, Berlin 2018).





Do 19.3.

18:00 / HAU2

Festivaleröffnung

Other Intelligences

Mit James Bridle / Moderation: Annemie Vanackere

STO Union & Carte Blanche

P.O.R.N. (Portrait of Restless Narcissism)

Fr 20.3.

18:00-22:00 / HAU3 / Premier

NewfrontEars & Oozing Gloop FEEEEEEED

19:00-00:00 / HAU2

dgtl fmnsm

HOT MESS / Live-Online-Performance #1

STO Union & Carte Blanche

P.O.R.N. (Portrait of Restless Narcissism)

Sa 21.3.

13:00-18:00 / HAU2

dgtl fmnsm

HOT MESS / Workspace: Center for Speculation

18:00-23:00 / HAU3

NewfrontEars & Oozing Gloop FEEEEEEED

STO Union & Carte Blanche

P.O.R.N. (Portrait of Restless Narcissism)

Im Anschluss: Artist Talk

20:30 / HAU2 / Deutsche Premiere

Thomas Ryckewaert

Move 37

So 22.3.

16:00-20:00 / HAU3

NewfrontEars & Oozing Gloop FEEEEEEED

17:00 / HAU2 **Thomas Ryckewaert**

Move 37

Mo 23.3.

Making Sense of the Digital Society
Justice in the Datafield Society Mit Lina Dencik

Im Anschluss: Gespräch mit Jonas Staal

Moderation: Tobi Müller

(Anmeldung bis 22.3. unter hiig.de/digitalsociety)

Mi 25.3.

18:00-22:00 / HAU3 Houseclub / Premier

doublelucky productions

Garden of Tangled Data

Do 26.3.

18:00 / HAU3

Houseclub präsentiert:

Kareth Schaffer Emojiland!

18:00-22:00 / Houseclub

doublelucky productions

Garden of Tangled Data

19:00 / HAU3 / Wiederaufnahme Kat Válastur / HAU

Rasp Your Soul

20:00 / HAU1 / Prem

Jonas Staal & Jan Fermon

Collectivize Facebook

Fr 27.3.

11:00 / HAU3

Houseclub präsentiert:

Kareth Schaffer Emojiland!

18:00-01:00 / HAU2

dgtl fmnsm

HOT MESS / Live-Online-Performance #2

19:00 / HAU3

Kat Válastur / HAU

Rasp Your Soul

20:30 / HAU2 / Deutsche Premiere

Mette Ingvartsen

Moving in Concert

Sa 28.3.

doublelucky productions

Garden of Tangled Data

19:00 / HAU3

Kat Válastur / HAU

Rasp Your Soul

20:30 / HAU2

Mette Ingvartsen

Moving in Concert

22:00 / HALI2

Gudrun Gut Konzert / Einlass: 21:30

Im Anschluss: Vladimir Ivkovic (DJ-Set)

So 29.3.

doublelucky productions **Garden of Tangled Data**

17:00 / HAU2

Mette Ingvartsen

Moving in Concert

19:00 / HAU2

Burning Futures: On Ecologies of Existence

#3 On Techno-Organic Bodies and Planetary Politics

Mit Mette Ingvartsen und Patricia Reed

Moderation: Margarita Tsomou, Maximilian Haas

Installationen

19.-22.3., 27.-29.3., jeweils ab eine Stunde vor und bis eine Stunde nach Veranstaltur

James Bridle

Se ti sabir UK 2019, 19min

19.3., 21.+22.3., 28.+29.3., jeweils ab eine Stunde vor und bis eine Stunde nach Veranstaltungen

dgtl fmnsm HOT MESS

Kombiticket "Spy on Me #2": 3 Veranstaltungen für 35,00 €, ermäßigt 20,00 € (frei wählbar 19.-29.3.)

Konzept "Spy on Me #2 – Künstlerische Manöver für die digitale Gegenwart": Annemie Vanackere in Zusammenarbeit mit Sarah Reimann / Programm: Annemie Vanackere, Tobias Schurig (Musik), Margarita Tsomou (Diskurs), Volkan Türeli (Houseclub) / Dramaturgie: Sarah Reimann / Dramaturgische Mitarbeit: Maria Rößler / Redaktion: Lisa Maria Ahrens, Annika Frahm, Sarah Reimann, Maria Rößler / Korrektorat: Iris Weißenböck / Gestaltung: Jürgen Fehrmann / Fotos: Jürgen Fehrmann, Dorothea Tuch / Recherche Bildstrecke: Christian Grauvogel, Tim Nebert / Comic: Julia Schneider, Lena Kadriye Ziyal, weneedtotalk.ai, Creative Commons BY-NC-SA-4.0 / Hrsg: HAU Hebbel am Ufer, 2020 / Intendanz & Geschäftsführung: Annemie Vanackere

HAU1 - Stresemannstraße 29, 10963 Berlin HAU2 - Hallesches Ufer 32, 10963 Berlin HAU3 - Tempelhofer Ufer 10, 10963 Berlin

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