OUR MACHINES II

Our Machines presents a selection of artists that work with innovative media in a variety of ways to include digital video, celluloid film, noise, glitch, electronic voice processing, 3D video, scientific cloud data and a machine to enhance a life/work balance.

Edward Street Campus
3 Dorset Place
Brighton
BN2 1ST

Open 3rd September- 18th September
Thursday-Sunday only 12-5pm
Opening event Sunday 4th September 6-8pm

http://ourmachines.blogspot.co.uk/

Artists: Dara Birnbaum • David Blandy • Sebastian Buerkner • Emma Hart • Caleb Madden • Stephen Mallinder • Matthew Noel-Tod • Luke Pendrell • Vesna Petresin • Semiconductor • Paul Sermon & Charlotte Gould Steina Vesulka • Paulina Yurman, David Chatting, Jo-Anne Bichard & David Kirk. **Produced by Louise Colbourne**

above Sebastian Buerkner *Identity Slice* 2007 right Emma Hart *M20 Death Drives* (2012). Photo by Douglas Atfield.

DARA BIRNBAUM
TECHNOLOGY-TRANSFORMATION: WONDER WOMAN 1978
Explosive bursts of fire open Technology/Transformation, an incendiary deconstruction of the ideology embedded in television form and pop cultural iconography. Entrapped in her magical metamorphosis by Birnbaum's stuttering edits, Wonder Woman spins dizzily like a music-box doll. Through radical manipulation of this female Pop icon, she subverts its meaning within the television text. Arresting the flow of images through fragmentation and repetition, Birnbaum condenses the comic-book narrative.

DAVID BLANDY
HERCULES: ROUGH CUT 2012
Hercules: Rough Cut references the Greek myth, mutated and distorted by countless tellers over the centuries. His history of the city is related in a multitude of voices taken from across the ages. Overlaid fragmented images of London culture spin together with accounts from the Romans. Extracts from the writings of Thomas More, William Blake, 1950s beat poets and contemporary urban slang honouring the "mouse pushers" and "shift time shitters" of today's office culture.

EMMA HART
M20 DEATH DRIVES 2012
Extended wing mirrors reflect a concealed television playing a video describing a near-fatal motorway crash. A leatherette booth that looks a bit like a slashed, fat car seat conceals the screen. Protruding catering trays become service stations, serving up products from the traumatised places the video slips down to when the re-traced journey is broken by going into M20 service stations. One turns out to be a cocktail bar, but I can't get served. This is the most recognisable station; the others journey to weirder places, maybe inspired by a bad game of Dungeons and Dragons.

CALEB MADDEN
SIGN STACK MASTER 2016
Operating at the intersection of video, sound, light, movement and form to create experiential investigations into active and fluid modes of perception, Caleb Madden is currently exploring expanded notions of noise and its agency in making evident the ways that we classify our perceptions and experiences. He is interested in exploring how this process is pre-determined by ideological forces which can dictate our decisions, pleasures and fears.

STEPHEN MALLINDER
THE MACHINE 2016
'Shortly after being asked to participate in the *Our Machines* exhibition and series of events, Wrangler, the analogue electronic group I'm part of, had just completed a mix for a collection of electronic artists called The Duke Street Workshop.

The name of the track was *'The Machine'*. It seemed appropriate to build images, film clips and the sort of 'retro' aesthetic of the track into what I was doing for '*Our Machines*'. The idea was to expand the sense of movement and progression inherent in machines and lost idealism of technology, our often misplaced utopianism, that technology seems to infer'

MATTHEW NOEL-TOD
A SEASON IN HELL 2012
A Season in Hell explores the spectacle and its contemporary forms, from the whimsical innocence of childlike animation to the apocalyptic sci-fi blockbuster. The phrase is originally attributed to the behaviour of moths around fire, here the children are in constant movement, never landing, never leaving. Purgatory is overwritten by the ecstasy of the spectacle.

LUKE PENDRELL
RICTUS
Rictus inhabits a broken time populated with dislocated fragments of the digital Sargasso. Stuttering jpegs, feedback loops, glitches and fractures that thwart our navigation through a world choked with it's own detritus.

"OUR MACHINES ARE DISTURBINGLY LIVELY, AND WE OURSELVES FRIGHTENINGLY INERT." DONNA J. HARAWAY

above Audiomorph (still) by Vesna Petresin

VESNA PETRESIN
AUDIOMORPH 2011

Audiomorph (Can I Wear My Song) explores the topology, boundaries, immersion through embodiment, and the notion of gaze. It situates the space of the body in relation to its environment, and the sound of human voice in relation to technology. Particle fields informed by the body geometry interact with the space that surrounds the body; their transformation is driven by acoustic parameters of the piece of music performed by the artist. The pattern shaped by the body and the voice becomes a crystallised sonic pattern.

SEMICONDUCTOR
BAND 9 2015

Band 9 is an installation that considers nature within the framework of science. Nine light boxes show scientific cloud data, which have been captured from space by a remote sensing satellite, orbiting the Earth. Using optical sensors it collects reflected light in various wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum. By focusing on very thin slices of these, scientists can pinpoint individual phenomena such as the band we see here, which is designed to reveal high-altitude clouds called Cirrus.

CHARLOTTE GOULD AND PAUL SERMON
SCREEN MACHINE 2016

'Screen Machine' offers public audience participants the opportunity to co-create chance encounters and self direct spontaneous performances between two separate installation locations. These unique transitory events will rely entirely on the roles and performances the participants bring to these telepresent screens and the experiences they choose to live out. Inspired by our urban and cultural surroundings and re-contextualized in a diverse array of digital milieus, 'Screen Machine' aims to allow these public audiences the agency and control over the outcomes of this intervention, akin to a telepresent fluxus happening.

DAVID CHATTING, PAULINA YURMAN, JO-ANNE BICHARD & DAVID KIRK
FAMILY RITUALS 2.0 RITUAL MACHINE 'ANTICIPATION'

Bespoke technology has been designed and built a for Hywel and Jesper, to create moments of reflection for them; allowing a discussion about their work/life balance and their attitudes to working away from home. This was framed around the everyday rituals of the home, which are missed in this separation.

Their Ritual Machine counts down to a shared anticipated event, typically days or weeks away. Here the period is sped up for exhibition purposes. Hywel and Jesper's iPhones allow them to set the timer but only when they are together. They can see the machine's display on the app when they are away and interact by touches.

Developed at Open Lab, Newcastle University in collaboration with the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the Royal College of Art, as part of the Family Rituals 2.0 project funded by the EPSRC.

STEINA VASULKA WITH JOAN LA BARBARA
VOCALIZATIONS 1990

For Vocalizations, the singer Joan La Barbara created sounds whilst images of the US South west desert landscapes, were inter-cut and combined by her voice pattern. Steina added speed changes, directional variations, and additional electronic voice processing to the final collage.

This integration of sound and image, in which the singing voice produces energetic permutations in a grid of lines, is reminiscent of the musical staff of traditional music notation. The rifts, chants, and scat singing of La Barbara's voice become a visual dance in this electronic scape.

LISTASAFN ÍSLANDS
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

VASULKA STOFA
VASULKA CHAMBER

SEBASTIAN BUERKNER
THE TENANTS 2016

Test-bed commission for the Fabrica Gallery
Installation & performance 22nd September 2pm – 7pm
Fabrica Gallery, Duke Street, Brighton, BN1 1AG

The installation "The Tenants" portrays a visually murky impression of the internal sprawl of life within a tower block. Several projections of animated vignettes combine into a single light sculpture. Through the use of multiple layers of projection surfaces, the emitted visuals attain a holographic volume.

OUR MACHINES BY VESNA PETRESIN

Desire is the fuel of our lives. The thirst to be different from who we think we are, and things we think we have.

Invention propelled by desire, control and fear brought the myth of Technology, a quasi-religion of endless improvement that speaks through the prism of rituals of industry, its methods of production and mechanics of mass satisfaction. **Disappointment only fuels the dream.**

While Buckminster Fuller advocated the power of technology to promote social change, current condition observes the Modernist ideal of limitless progress in decay and reflects the power of technology generated control, terror and submission. The rise of fear and the return to fortress-building, barrier-erecting and militant polarising has marked a departure from principles of openess, transparency and clarity.

Information age has brought back an architecture of suspicion. **By creating a new interface between the self, the other and the world beyond, information technology takes part in constructing and controlling our reality.**

But what if reality is artifice?
Time-based media such as moving images are by definition illusory, non-existent – the projections of our perceptive apparatus, the architecture of our minds. They are instrumental in activating the viewer into questioning the world as we see it. Ambiguous structures, the shifting multiple views of a configuration in a single representation best demonstrate a reality in a state of flux. Here, what we perceive oscillates between two equally valid interpretations; none of them exists as a real object. No order or interpretation is privileged, and there is no ultimate overview-only the complexity of multiple reference points and connections. In Lacanian terminology, it is by suturing off the real that the reality of individuals remains a coherent illusion and also prevents them from "falling prey" to the Real. However, the very lack of the reference point and closure represents a denial that protects the individual from confronting the trauma of human finitude; because there is no ultimate irreversible point, the multiple universe always offers alternative realities. It allows for an endlessly repeated reenactment of an impossible Real to overcome the trauma. Multiple perspectives encircle an impossible Real.

Where does Body enter Technology?
The omnipotence of technology reflects a world gone global, replacing the symbolic and mythical structure of past paradigms. Universalism was characterised by the concepts of transcendence, subjectivity, conceptualisation, reality and representation. The global culture of Flow on the other hand relies on screens, networks, immanence, numbers and a space-time continuum. The global techno-structure eradicates of all forms of differentiation, aiming at establishing a world where reference to the natural must disappear. The ideology of technological progress brings a promise of freedom,

prosperity and release from body, birth, death and desire. The mechanistic cosmology of ancient Greece, with Heron's automata and architecture of war machines, prepared the philosophical ground for Descartes and the belief that engineering excellence can manifest a better future. The Bible's call to conquer nature, the Protestant work ethic and the apocalyptic vision of a New Jerusalem similarly propel the myth of an engineered utopia. Calvinism, American Christian workaholicism along with techno-utopianism and perfectionism all share **a belief in a world of limitless potential for improvement.** Modernity is partly defined by the conceptual barrier erected between nature and culture. Latour sees the beginning of the split between nature and culture in the Enlightenment, when Descartes' mechanistic thought invaded natural philosophy. Nature is considered as an objective world 'out there' whose hidden mechanisms are unlocked by detached scientific gentlemen using technical instruments to amplify their perceptions. Thus, technology becomes a tool, a passive extension of the human being that reinforces our creative powers by amputating our natural ones.

The Myth of the Machine insists on the authority of technical and scientific elites and in the intrinsic value of efficiency, material progress, control and unrestrained technological development, of economic and territorial expansion.

In the industrial age when electrical current was transformed into a communication medium, the grandeur that Romanticism attached to nature shifted to technology as energy mutated into information. In the information economy that transcends rather than extends its material predecessors - the agricultural and industrial economies **- matter has been overthrown by mind.**

Technology and ideology thrive on dreams of mobility, power and omnipresence; this is in part an enactment of the denial of death, an open-ended system, a chance to start over, replay and event and try a different resolution.

Zizek situates the technological utopia of virtual space between perversion and trauma, fuelled by the desire to reach perfection. The virtual ultimately generates a proto-psychotic immersion into an imaginary universe unconstrained by symbolic Law or Real. Fantastic, Futurist, utopian, virtual space or a space of mechanistic dreams is a space without closure and reality of human finitude, constrained only by its self-imposed rules. The reality of utopia is a fantasmatic "passionate attachment", a traumatic scene that never really took place. Real is the traumatic essence of the Same against whose threat we escape through the virtual, fantastic and symbolic universes. Resisting symbolisation and dialectical mediation can bring a release from the myth of the power of technology. The belief in technology is a way to play omnipresent god, to possess multiple identities, and to escape the trauma of our own mortality. But it is merely a false liberation from the constraints of the social space in which our existence is caught.

Our bodies are made of the same particles as the known universe. *We are the music that shapes the world.*