

**ever elusive**  
thirty years of transmediale  
2 Feb – 5 Mar 2017  
HKW and various venues, Berlin



## “alien matter” artwork descriptions

### Aliens in Green

*Xenopolitics #1: Petro-bodies and Geopolitics of Hormones, 2017*

Exposure to synthetic chemicals interferes with human and nonhuman hormonal systems. Despite all the warnings about the toxic impacts of these endocrine disruptors, the lobbying of the petro-chemical, agricultural, and pharmaceutical industries continue to influence regulatory institutions. These actors can be viewed as xeno-powers that both regulate and pollute our bodies and environment. At the same time, terms like “abnormal” or “disruptor” are at the center of most environmental and critical discourses, focusing the main arguments on sex-panic, gender ambiguity, and threats to reproductive futurism. These arguments reinforce a politics of purity that reflects our prescribed eco-hetero-normative value system. What is “normal” and “natural”? Do queers and our alien kin have no future in our increasingly toxic landscape? The Aliens in Green want to generate “a crisis of the body” that leads to non-prescriptive subjectivities, offering a kind of alien resilience called *xeno-solidarity*.

### Morehshin Allahyari & Daniel Rourke

*The 3D Additivist Cookbook, 2016–17*

With *The 3D Additivist Cookbook* Morehshin Allahyari and Daniel Rourke created a handbook that brings together radical projects from over a hundred artists, activists, and theoreticians. Modeled on William Powell’s *Anarchist Cookbook* (1969) it includes speculative texts, plans, templates, (im)practical designs, and methodologies for life in highly paradoxical times. Three of these works have been realized as 3D prints for the “alien matter” exhibition. Just as Morehshin Allahyari and Daniel Rourke’s *3D Additivist Manifesto* (2015), which served as a worldwide call for submissions to *The 3D Additivist Cookbook*, the project is intended as an exploration of 3D printing for its revolutionary potential. The intention is to transform 3D printing into a tool for emancipation and activism, beyond the hype around DIY practices and maker culture, and simultaneously help develop speculative, provocative, and strange ideas between art, technology, and science.

Featuring the following artworks:

#### **Joey Holder, *The Evolution of the Spermalege, 2016***

A series of interspecific sexual organs designed using insect genitalia as prototypes.

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**Kuang-Yi Ku, *The Fellatio Modification Project*, 2015**

Physical modifications intended to increase sexual pleasure during oral sex.

**Ami Drach (1963-2012) & Dov Ganchrow, *Man Made*, 2014**

A contemporary adaptation of a prehistoric hand axe, emphasizing a particular function of the fundamentally multi-functional tool.

**Constant Dullaart**

*DullDream*, 2017

In his work *DullDream*, Constant Dullaart deals with Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN)—artificial neural networks that enable machine learning and pattern recognition through artificial intelligence. They are used for facial and speech recognition, and they can also determine objects in images based on their shape. Google’s Deep Dream exploits this capability: the program identifies specific elements based on form and then intensifies those elements in the image. Pattern recognition becomes pattern hallucination—the algorithm incorporates eyes or animals where there are none. Constant Dullaart’s software does the opposite: while Deep Dream highlights and intensifies patterns, *DullDream* reduces the specific characteristics of forms. Deep Dream becomes a *DullDream*. The program enables users to upload images of themselves and have them returned devoid of individual characteristics—an impressive statement against increasing regulation through pattern recognition.

**Ignas Krunglevičius**

*Hard Body Trade*, 2015

Ignas Krunglevičius’s work portrays a flight through snowy mountain panoramas. The images appear like elaborately animated digital worlds in a computer game—except they are real. The artist created *Hard Body Trade* from a montage of mountain landscape stock video footage. The Rhythm & Blues soundtrack accompanies a computer-generated voice stating, “We wear masks just like you. We are replacing things with math, while your ideas are building up in your body like fat. [...] Sorting algo plugs in, for your specific age group. [...] We are performing your last cognitive upgrade.” These statements counteract the sublime beauty of the images. Suddenly, human viewers realize that they are observing a computer in its “idle time”: the time it has nothing to do. Perhaps the computer fills time with images processed during the day—pictures reminiscent of television footage, previously shown when stations were off-air.

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## Mark Leckey

*GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction*, 2010

In Mark Leckey's *GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction*, a monolithic black refrigerator stands in front of a green screen, musing upon its own existence. Its monologue, spoken by the artist with a digitally distorted voice, offers observers insights into its thoughts. The fridge describes its daily tasks, gives explanations of itself and its control panels, its outstanding (freezing) properties, and also its cosmological connectedness with things, with the sun, the moon, and the stars. The monologue is based on passages from the holy Mayan book, *Popol Vuh*, a treatise on Marcel Duchamp written by Calvin Tomkins, and fragments from the technical description of the refrigerator. Through an image search, the household appliance attempts to find "friends"—objects that look similar to it. Its search leads to images of black limousines, smartphones, game consoles, and computer cases, as well as the Kaaba of Mecca. The more or less intelligent fridge offers an inkling of what awaits us in the Internet of Things.

## Joep van Liefland

*Video Palace #44 – The Hidden Universe*, 2017

The outer wall of the massive sculpture *Video Palace #44 – The Hidden Universe* is made up of shelves filled with VHS tapes—dead media in black plastic with handwritten, stick-on labels. The sculpture is a media-archaeological monument highlighting the rapid obsolescence of storage media, which evokes the theme of *ever elusive – thirty years of transmediale*. Joep van Liefland began his ongoing *Video Palace* series in 2002. The sculptures were originally conceived as cheap-looking, fully operational video rental stores, a function that has been lost over the years. They now serve as resonance rooms for obsolete media. Behind a glass door covered with stickers advertising technical equipment, lays the hidden universe of *Video Palace #44*. The diffusely lit room creates the atmosphere of a dark bachelor machine and a memorial to VHS video culture of the 1980s.

## Jeroen van Loon

*An Internet*, 2015

What would the Internet look like if all the data were ephemeral? Bearing this question in mind, Jeroen van Loon's work, *An Internet*, develops a vision of a future Internet with a radically new type of data: smoke. *An Internet* consists of a system of glass tubes arranged according to the distribution of undersea Internet cables. The artist translates the names of all 280 cables—such as "TAT-14" running between Great Britain and North America (since 2001), or "WACS" running between South Africa, West Africa, Portugal and London (since 2012)—into binary smoke signals. These smoke signals are then directed into the network of glass tubes as temporary data. The tubes are filled with smoke until they start leaking—and the data disappears again from the Internet. *An Internet* represents the Internet at a particular historical stage, and also, paradoxically, shows a vision of a future Internet: a network in which data is no longer produced to be stored for future use, but to be instantly accessible and then lost forever.

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## Nicolas Maigret & Maria Roszkowska

*Predictive Art Bot*, 2017

Nicolas Maigret and Maria Roszkowska's *Predictive Art Bot* is an algorithm that uses current discourse as a basis to create concepts for artistic projects and, at times, prophesize absurd future trajectories for art. Algorithms are now widely used in different fields to make predictions using data analysis, statistical analysis, and pattern recognition for applications including the purchasing behavior of particular groups, global market developments and even potential crimes. In contrast, the *Predictive Art Bot* is a specialist in making art forecasts, published daily on Twitter ([twitter.com/predartbot](https://twitter.com/predartbot)), which are meant to expand the limited human imagination with new, nonhuman perspectives. The concept producing the most resonance on Twitter has been realized for "alien matter." As a parody of transhumanist prophecies, the Predictive Art Bot liberates artists from the constraints of creativity and develops ideas not yet implemented or conceived of by humans.

Featuring an artwork by Jonathan Beilin & Magnus Pind Bjerre.

## Katja Novitskova

*Swoon Motion*, 2015

Katja Novitskova's sculpture *Swoon Motion* consists of the exposed frame of an electronic baby swing with additional objects attached. The swing can reproduce a mother's heartbeat and sing children's songs—and its movements seem uncannily human-like. Novitskova considers the role of service robots in the future that could accompany people from cradle to grave in the most literal sense. In *Swoon Motion*, themes of artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and plastic are brought together in a way that exemplifies the focus of the exhibition "alien matter." At the same time, this work which reflects Novitskova's current interest in robot aesthetics, makes reference to her earlier work: a computer-generated image of a protein model covering the swing alludes to the "circulationist" work using images from the Internet, which brought her to prominence as an artist.

## Sascha Pohflepp

*Recursion*, 2016

The central element of Sascha Pohflepp's work, *Recursion*, is a text about humankind, generated by an artificial intelligence (AI). The AI was primed with a wide range of texts from encyclopedic articles on human biology and societal forms to works on psychology, philosophy, and pop culture—including full Wikipedia articles on concepts of humanity, consciousness, economics, emotion, science, technology, the human body, and human behavior, and more specifically, Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Joni Mitchell's *California*, The Beatles' *Here Comes the Sun*, G.W.F. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger*, and Brian Eno's *Spider and I*. The AI was then instructed to compose a text beginning with the word "human," which is read aloud in the video by performance artist Erika Ostrander. In this way, Sascha Pohflepp creates a feedback loop between us and the artificial other. We cannot escape the question of whether or not, to quote Benjamin Bratton, "...the real uncanny valley [is] one in which we see ourselves through the eyes of an AI 'other.'"

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## Johannes Paul Raether

*Protekto.x.x. 5.5.5.1.pcp, 2017*

The lifelines of the WorldWideWitches, Protektoramae, investigate people's obsession with their smartphones. They address the relationship of the body to the screen, explore portable computer systems as body prosthetics, and address the materiality, manufacturing, and mines of information technologies. The figure central to the installation is one of the many fictional identities of artist Johannes Paul Raether, Protektorama. Protektorama became known to a wider audience in July 2016 when a performance in Berlin, in which gallium—a harmless metal—was liquefied in an Apple store, led to a police operation at Kurfürstendamm. In contrast to the shrill tabloid coverage, the performative work of the witch is based on complex research and visualizations, presented here for the first time in the form of a sculptural ensemble including original audio tracks from the performance. The figure of Protektorama stems from Raether's cyclical performance system *Systema identitekturae (Identitecture)*, which he has been developing since 2009.

## Evan Roth

*Burial Ceremony, 2015/17*

Evan Roth's work *Burial Ceremony* is a monumental sculpture consisting of two kilometers of fiber-optic cable. The quartz-glass-plastic mix cable is usually delivered on large-scale wooden spools and must be unrolled before being laid in the ground. To avoid torsion and pressure on the fibers, the cable is usually laid out in a figure eight—a form reminiscent of the infinity symbol. In the installation, a pyramid shape is created at the intersection of the cables, referenced in the title of the sculpture. The starting point of the work was Evan Roth's trip to the British county of Cornwall, the landing point of the first (functional) transatlantic telegraph cable between Europe and the US, in the fall of 2014. Today, it is also the location of undersea fiber-optic cables that transport 25% of the world's data traffic.

## Suzanne Treister

*HFT The Gardener, 2014–15*

In *HFT The Gardener* Suzanne Treister examines the world of high-frequency traders, who today operate in the Stock Exchange primarily with help from special algorithms, so-called trading bots. In her work, she explores the complex inner universe of a fictional British high-frequency trader named Hillel Fischer Traumberg (b. 1982). While watching share prices flash across a screen at a rapid rate, HFT has hallucinatory experiences of pure pattern recognition. From that moment on, he follows his calling investigating psychoactive substances that are supposed to help him merge his consciousness with algorithmic intelligence and see the world from the other side—from the perspective of an algorithm. In an unusual narrative consisting of a seven-work series and a video, Treister connects scientific, artistic, and shamanic practices with the politics of global financial constructs, botany, algorithms, and Outsider Art.

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## **Addie Wagenknecht**

*Internet of Things, No. 1-3, 2016*

Wagenknecht modified three Roomba robotic vacuum cleaners to function as a Wi-Fi hotspot, Tor Browser or signal jammer. Thanks to an algorithm that initiates the Roombas' cleaning function, an interaction arises from the original practical functionality that is dynamic but simultaneously disruptive: depending on the Roombas' distance from one another and also from mobile phones, laptops, or other wireless routers, the technology of these devices is influenced and their signals are amplified or suppressed. *Internet of Things* comments on the unpredictability of objects' interactions in the net. In their random dance, the robots release themselves from their invisible mutual embrace and continue on their way, steered in other directions only in response to obstacles. The objects placed on the robots refer to the title, which is already a reality, and not only in our office spaces: the Internet of Things acts independently and communicates internally in our technological devices today.

*XXXX.XXX, 2014*

*XXXX.XXX* is a wall sculpture consisting of five circuit boards and hundreds of flashing green lights connected by a tangle of Ethernet cables. Addie Wagenknecht's work is a „packet sniffing sculpture“: the circuit boards tap into data streams on nearby Wi-Fi spots and analyze them. Every blink indicates this process at work. The data is processed but the sculpture does not share its findings. While post-Internet discourse primarily focuses on commercial web interfaces and endless image circulation, Wagenknecht is interested in the underlying and omnipresent, yet, invisible machine architecture. *XXXX.XXX* is a “passively interactive” sculpture, which emulates a server room. It is a bleak, severe homage to the “post-Snowden era” where surveillance, intrusion into systems, and data collection is ubiquitous.

## **YoHa**

*Plastic Raft of Lampedusa, 2016–17*

In their work *Plastic Raft of Lampedusa*, collaborative duo YoHa explore the circulation of economic, material, and human flows that have a mutual influence on one another. Matsuko Yokokoji and Graham Harwood are specifically concerned with a physical object currently associated with the migration of refugees across the Mediterranean and related political, social, and economic implications: the rubber boat. In their investigation, the boat represents a transversal space in which physical objects and human bodies merge and combine into new entities. The installation itself consists of a rubber raft disassembled into its individual parts. The accompanying video documents a workshop in which the raft was subject to forensic analysis. The first part of the project was realized in Shanghai in November 2016, where a similar boat was taken apart by the artists in cooperation with Chinese workshop participants.

The work is on view at Deutsches Architektur Zentrum – DAZ, Köpenicker Str. 48-49,  
10179 Berlin: 2–8 Feb 2017, daily 15:00–20:00  
<http://www.daz.de/en/>



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## **Pinar Yoldas**

*Artificial Intelligence for Governance, the Kitty AI, 2016*

In her work *Artificial Intelligence for Governance, the Kitty AI*, Pinar Yoldas imagines an artificial intelligence (AI) that has taken over the world. In the video, a 3D-animated cat talks about itself and its work as ruler of a megalopolis in the year 2039. The AI takes on the appearance of an adorable kitten to avoid frightening people. It speaks from the future about the unsolvability of past crises such as the refugee crisis, climate change, and an ominous “p-crisis,” as well as the inability of humankind to manage gigantic infrastructure. AIs like *Kitty AI* have, as a result, taken over the positions of politicians and other professional groups in this imagined future. According to the AI’s logic, governmental form is a question of quantity: “Democracy was born in a polis—no surprise that it dies in a megalopolis.”

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## List of artworks

### Aliens in Green

#### *Xenopolitics #1: Petro-bodies and Geopolitics of Hormones, 2017*

Workshop, installation  
Courtesy: Aliens in Green

### Morehshin Allahyari & Daniel Rourke

#### *The 3D Additivist Cookbook, 2016–17*

3D PDF publication, 3D prints  
Courtesy: Morehshin Allahyari & Daniel Rourke

### Constant Dullaart

#### *DullDream, 2017*

Neural Network Application  
In collaboration with Adam Harvey  
Thanks to the Creative Industries Fund NL  
Courtesy: Constant Dullaart, Carroll / Fletcher, London, Future Gallery, Berlin & Upstream  
Gallery, Amsterdam

### Ignas Krunglevičius

#### *Hard Body Trade, 2015*

Video, 5:02 min.  
Courtesy: Ignas Krunglevičius

### Mark Leckey

#### *GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction, 2010*

Video, 16:25 min.  
Courtesy: Mark Leckey, Cabinet Gallery, London & Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New  
York



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**Joep van Liefland**

***Video Palace #44 – The Hidden Universe, 2017***

Wooden shelves, approx. 20,000 VHS tapes, neon tubes i.a. (immersive sculpture)  
Thanks to the Creative Industries Fund NL  
Courtesy: Joep van Liefland & Galerie Gebr. Lehmann, Dresden

**Jeroen van Loon**

***An Internet, 2015***

Laboratory test tubes, fog machine, Raspberry Pi, motion detector  
Thanks to the Creative Industries Fund NL  
Courtesy: Jeroen van Loon

**Nicolas Maigret & Maria Roszkowska**

***Predictive Art Bot, 2017***

Ventilators, software, implemented bot concept  
Courtesy: Nicolas Maigret & Maria Roszkowska (DISNOVATION.ORG)

**Katja Novitskova**

***Swoon Motion, 2015***

Electronic baby swing, polyurethane resin, cable binders, display clips, brain stress  
relievers, mirrored glass drops, downpipe filters, protein model render, power magnets  
Halke Collection  
Courtesy: Katja Novitskova & Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin

**Sascha Pohflepp**

***Recursion, 2016***

Video, 2:00 min.  
Courtesy: Sascha Pohflepp

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**Johannes Paul Raether**

***Protekto.x.x. 5.5.5.1.pcp, 2017***

Installation based on the performance *Protektoramae Forking Horizon 5.5.5.1.*, 2016  
Courtesy: Johannes Paul Raether

**Evan Roth**

***Burial Ceremony, 2015/17***

2 km of LWL direct bury fiber-optic cable  
Courtesy: Evan Roth & Caroll / Fletcher Gallery, London

**Suzanne Treister**

***HFT The Gardener, 2014–15***

Archival giclée prints, wallpaper, video (11:55 min.)  
Courtesy: Suzanne Treister, Annely Juda Fine Art, London & P.P.O.W., New York

**Addie Wagenknecht**

***Internet of Things, No. 1-3, 2016***

3 robotic vacuum cleaners (Roomba), Tor router, Wi-Fi jammer, signal booster, orchid,  
paper cup, crystal  
Commissioned by MU, Eindhoven & Haus der elektronischen Künste Basel  
Courtesy: Addie Wagenknecht & bitforms gallery, New York

**Addie Wagenknecht**

***XXXX.XXX, 2014***

5 custom printed circuit boards, ethernet patch cables, 80/20 aluminium  
Courtesy: Addie Wagenknecht & bitforms gallery, New York

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## **YoHa**

### ***Plastic Raft of Lampedusa, 2016–17***

Workshop, installation (dismantled inflatable boat), 2 video documentations of the workshop at Deutsches Architektur Zentrum, Berlin, 2017, and a workshop at the 11th Shanghai Biennale, 2016, 1 PDF of the boat safety standards  
Courtesy: YoHa

## **Pinar Yoldas**

### ***Artificial Intelligence for Governance, the Kitty AI, 2016***

Video, 12:40 min.  
Courtesy: Pinar Yoldas