



le pavillon

CAPTURE

#2

Digital
and visual
art in
Belgium

Exhibition
Namur
23.09.23
14.01.24

Visitor's guide

CAPTURE #2 is the second in a series of exhibitions designed to raise the profile of the digital arts scene in Belgium. The exhibition presents recent projects by almost 20 artists based in Wallonia, Brussels and Flanders, exploring digital media to capture and transcribe the world in their own way.

The title echoes both screen captures and the word “capture”, which among other things refers to the capture of images and data. The first facet of the exhibition plunges visitors into the world of computer vision algorithms and the limits of machine perception of reality. Can we trust their analysis and their ability to recognise their environment or a face? This is the question posed by the WIP collective through an increasingly altered vision of reality, and by artist Dries Depoorter, confronting us with the hallucinated vision of a machine that (im)precisely describes its environment. By highlighting the coldness and rigour of a computer that tirelessly counts and records faces, Pierre Coric also raises the question of the abuses of

facial recognition technologies, which enable their owners to acquire questionable power in our information society.

Like a link between these two worlds, Marc Buchy’s *Point de Fuite* installation bridges the gap between the world of the machine and the nature it tries to capture. This second part of the exhibition reflects the subtle entanglements between technology and nature, as in the work of Eva L’Hoest, whose compressed nuclear waste reminds us of geological time and space while questioning the role of humans at the centre of these complex relationships. Both Lawrence Mals-taf and Vivien Roubaud plunge us into the hypnotic beauty of nature’s simple design; from a dizzying whirlwind to the

hovering flight of a samara and the fascination of watching a salsify bloom. However, they also raise the question of gestures, of impacting the natural course of life. This second part focuses on our natural heritage and questions its preservation, undeniably raising the issue of climate change, the impact of human activity on planetary ecosystems and the challenges posed by the prevention of extinction. Examples include the islands featured in Stéphanie Roland's work, which are set to disappear as a result of rising sea levels, and the fragile balance of the Amazon River and the diversity of its forest, a veritable lung and a haven of incredible biodiversity. Lastly, in this world whose contours have narrowed, Claire Williams

summons humans and machines into another, parallel or juxtaposed, space, a spectral world made up of our materialised consciousnesses.

From this Belgian territory of plurality and compromise, the Capture #2 exhibition reveals more than ever an abundant, committed art scene, a territory definitively conducive to experimentation and the hybridisation of practices.

01

Pierre Coric

As We Continue, 2020

Seven-segment mechanical displays,
Raspberry pi, metal, wires.

As We Continue is a passively interactive installation. A machine coldly performing what it has been programmed for: knowing and remembering through time human presence or absence according to its computer brain.

Concretely, it is a really simple device. The piece is made out of two mechanical time counters mounted on top of each other, one of which is running as soon as the machine detects one's presence while the other is triggered by the absence of the observer.

As We Continue is an exploration of technology and time.

This work is a coproduction by Werktank (Leuven) and Recto-Verso (Quebec)

02

Dries Depoorter

Surveillance Speaker, 2018-2023

Rotating camera, computer, speaker,
artificial intelligence.

Surveillance Speaker is an installation about surveillance and artificial intelligence. The artwork showcases in a critical way the latest breakthroughs in computer vision software.

Surveillance Speaker exists out of a camera, computer and speaker. Through the speaker we hear what the camera sees. The machine then describes what is perceived in its field of vision. The installation begins its sentences with "I see..." and lets the audience hear how artificial intelligence perceives reality. The audience can interact in a playful way how a computer can see.

03

WIP Collective

Cascade, 2021

Aluminium structure, Raspberry, screens, photographic lenses.

Cascade questions the notion of capturing reality. Several cameras placed in a cascade effect each film what the previous one perceives, creating an increasingly altered vision of reality. Imperfections are amplified with each iteration, creating a moiré effect that produces colourful abstractions. By intensifying this distortion of reality, artists Jérôme Boulanger and Thibaut Drouillon recall the perception of reality that the medium will always offer.

With the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

04

Pierre Coric

Elle ne savait pas vraiment ce que c'était, mais elle l'a volé quand même, 2023

Textile installation, wool.

Artist Pierre Coric has built up a database of 8,242 portraits of visitors captured, without their knowledge, by the camera in his *As We Continue* installation. The cause was an overlooked line of code that went unnoticed among the machine's different functions.

Through this incident, the artist assesses the simplicity and power of these algorithms, and what they can achieve when combined with sophisticated skills, a desire for surveillance and State resources. Extracting the individual from the crowd. Their face, their movements. The tools exist, and they are extremely rudimentary.

Through the medium of textiles, the artist installs in space the physical embodiment of the invisible as captured by machines, and allows faces to regain their anonymity by destroying information. This line of code has now been deleted.

This work is produced by KIKK with the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

05

Stéphanie Roland

Missing people - Inventio fortunate, 2023

Acrylic lenses for experimental etching,
metal structures, LED lamps.

Stéphanie Roland worked from a database archiving portraits of people reported missing in countries all over the world. Artificial intelligence used these faces to produce generic portraits of the missing, becoming a sum of their personal stories. These blurred portraits stem from the artist's indignation at certain military dictatorships, such as those of Pinochet in Chile and Videla in Argentina.

In these countries, it was common practice to make opponents of the regime disappear by throwing their bodies into the sea, leaving their families in interminable limbo, unable to find their missing loved ones and mourn their loss. It is in this state of latency, between memories and melancholy, that the artist transports us through strange portraits that are half-real, half-fictional.

With the support of the "Mondes nouveaux" programme of the French Ministry of Culture and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

06

Marc Buchy

Point de fuite, 2023

Installation. Metal structures, 140 sheets
of strong card 19,8 x 8,2 cm, perforations.

In his installation *Point de Fuite*, Marc Buchy creates a dialogue between different forms of knowledge. The first stems from the work of Charles Darwin and his book *The Power of Movement in Plants*, which recognised the intelligence of nature very early on. The second comes from the appearance of the first statistical machines, the forerunners of computer science and the premise of what is now artificial intelligence.

Struck by the simultaneous appearance of these two notions of "natural" and "machine" intelligence, the artist proposes bringing them together in an absurd and poetic way, by transferring all 140 of Darwin's readings onto punched cards from the first computing machines. While our technical and scientific futures seem to be darkening, *Point de fuite* suggests, on the contrary, the possibility of building alternative perspectives, based on new relationships with worlds and the intelligences that govern them.

This work is produced by KIKK with the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

07

Lawrence Malstaf

Nemo Observatorium 02002, 2002

PVC and steel cylinders, fans, polystyrene particles.

Styrofoam particles are blown around in a big transparent PVC cylinder by 5 strong fans. Visitors can take place one by one on the armchair in the middle of the whirlpool or observe from the outside. On the chair, in the eye of the storm it is calm and safe. Spectacular at first sight, this installation turns out to mesmerise as a kind of meditation machine. One can follow the seemingly cyclic patterns, focus on the different layers of 3D pixels or listen to its waterfall sound. One could call it a training device, challenging the visitor to stay centred and find peace in a fast changing environment. After a while the space seems to expand and one's sense of time deludes.

08

Caroline Le Méhauté

Négociation 109 - Croître en Silence, 2021

Normandy peat, okoume wood and acrylic binder.

Négociation 109 - Croître en Silence, takes the form of an obelisk with a wooden core and a peat body. What does this negotiation tell us? It is perhaps worth recalling that in ancient Egypt, the obelisk represented a ray of sunlight. Peat, on the other hand, is pure carbon, created through the action of photosynthesis over a long geological period. In this work, the artist creates a metaphor for the force of slenderness contained in the earth, which is the alliance of mineral, plant and animal in life. The force of slenderness could be considered the alpha of the living world. But why in silence? Absolute silence - the absence of any audible sound - is purely theoretical. Relative silence - the absence of undesirable sounds - is mostly inaccessible to us in the urbanised, mechanised terrestrial landscape. The human experience of the desert is the closest we can come to the music of the origins of life. Here, silence is perhaps a call to be silent in order to once again hear the symphony of the living world.

Produced with the support of the Centre
Wallonie Bruxelles in Paris

09

Vivien Roubaud

Samare stationnaire, 2023

Honeycomb, samara from the Brussels Region, wind tunnel, air boxes, micro-controller, stepper motor, butterfly valve, cocktail straws, 220 volts.

A samara is any seed or fruit with a wing-shaped bearing surface that enables it to be carried by the wind and travel long distances. When in motion, the samara describes a downward trajectory in a narrow corkscrew helix, turning on itself with the seed at the bottom and the wing tilted upwards. The axis of the helix is found around the samara's centre of gravity, where the seed is located.

Aeronautics specialists compare this type of device to an autogyro, a type of small aircraft with a horizontal propeller above that keeps it in the air but does not move it forward.

By creating pedestals capable of producing an adequate air current of a sufficiently controlled geometry, the artist extends to infinity the flight of the seed falling from the height of its tree. During the exhibition, the samara will glide the equivalent of several thousand kilometres and may even germinate without touching the ground...

This work is produced by KIKK with the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

10

Vivien Roubaud

Salsifis douteux, 2023

Heating element, Pyrex glass reactor, hot air, pneumatic cylinder, pump, micro-controller, steel, blower, filter, vacuum-packed yellow salsify harvested in the Maastricht region, refrigeration system, 220 volts.

This interactive work invites visitors "themselves" to cause the natural phenomenon of a flower blooming in a supernatural temporality.

The first step is to take a previously harvested flower bud, still closed and vacuum-packed at four degrees, and place it on a small cap mounted on one of the pedestals. By heating parts of the bud very precisely, this cap instantly dehumidifies the plant and causes the salsify's pappus. The opening sequence takes just a few seconds (between 50 s and 1 min 10). The bud begins to bloom, followed by the unfolding of each achene (dry fruit) and pappus (bundle of florets), one after the other, with astonishing geometry, speed and fluidity. Lastly, the system stops and the closed bud has just bloomed.

Removed from its natural environment, in an organised setting, the phenomenon is presented to the visitor as an experience of exclusive beauty, but one that instantly questions the gesture of impacting the natural course of life.

11

Eva L'Hoest

Particles and Embers, 2023

3D scans - structured light, variable dimensions.

At the heart of her new sculptural work, Eva L'Hoest illuminates the impenetrable by revealing a compression of nuclear waste usually buried in the darkness of the secure warehouses of the company Belgo-Process in Belgium. These layers of waste come from the electronics, hospital and communications sectors. Thanks to extremely high-resolution digitisation, the organic asperities and enigmatic contours of the compressed material are meticulously preserved, revealing an unprecedented perspective of the barrel's interior. Offering a window onto the blind spots of our civilization, the *Particles and Embers* series of sculptures reflects the subtle intricacies between technology and nature, and the role of humans in this complex, intimate web.

This work is a co-production by KIKK and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

12

Els Viaene

The Mamori Expedition, 2012

Wood sculpture, stereo hydrophone, mobile listening set.

A wooden installation replicates the path that artist Els Viaene followed during an expedition through the Brazilian Amazon Forest in 2009. The three wooden arms of the sculpture are a scale model of the Amazon River and are filled with water. A headset and a hammer-like stick, the "hydrophone", allow you to "hear" the water. Once you insert the stick into the water and you move along the twists and turns of the sculpture, the sounds Viaene recorded during the expedition are reproduced. *The Mamori Expedition* catapults the viewer into the middle of the Amazon forest and invites the viewer to explore the river and its sounds in a very tactile way.

Concept, audio registration,
technical realisation: Els Viaene
Wooden model: Jeroen Verschuren
Microphone: Els Viaene

This artwork is a coproduction by Netwerk Aalst and Q-O2

With the support of the Flemish authorities.

13

Superbe

From0, 2023

Interactive installation, motors, LEDs, sound diffusion, microphones.

From0 installation highlights the versatile nature of the living world. The device postulates and underlines the instability of any equilibrium, which is destined to escape control. With *From0*, harmony slides from order to chaos and, conversely, chaos returns to its original form. Visitors are invited to record a word, a sound or a phrase, which is deconstructed before their eyes and ears and becomes intelligible again after 3 min 30. *From0* progressively deconstructs every signifier to offer it an escape from meaning, thus highlighting the distance between the concept and the material, musical nature of language. Repetition can give rise to knowledge and order. An understanding of this order therefore becomes accessible through this repetition, this repeated deconstruction.

Superbe is an artistic studio formed by artists Gaël Bertrand and Gaëtan Libertiaux.

This work is co-produced by KIKK and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

14

Michaël Verlinden

Digital Wool, 2016

Interactive installation, projectors, camera.

Digital Wool is like an interactive light carpet with psychedelic, poetic power. This playful, interactive carpet is a trompe-l'œil of imaginary wave-shaped perspectives. The audience is invited to play with its lines and gravitational forces. A physical reaction of mutual attraction is created, allowing the audience to interact with the animation virtually. *Digital Wool* offers a play space for interacting with other users.

15

Stéphanie Roland

Science-Fiction postcards, 2013

Sculptural installation. Thermochromic prints on cardboard, postcard display, heating screen. Variable dimensions.

At first sight, these postcards seem black and opaque. Yet, when touched or if they are placed near a heat source, an image appears. These are satellite views of islands that, according to scientific forecast, are bound to disappear over the next centuries as a result of rising water levels. Subsequently, in the absence of heat, the postcards return to their initial black state. On the reverse side, one finds the name of the islands, their geographical coordinates and the century in which they are bound to disappear. Their postmark situates their mailing date in a distant future.

Technical expertise: Nicolas Belayew,
Cambyse Naddaf
With the support of Frans Masereel Centrum

16

Laura Colmenares Guerra

Ríos Trilogy, 2021-2022

Multiple installations.

The *Ríos Trilogy* results from a 5-year-long artistic research project focused on the territory of the Amazon basin, a vast territory covering 44% of South America, spanning over 7.8 million km². The region is not only home to millions of people and a wide variety of species but also plays a vital role in mitigating climate change. It helps maintain climate balance, facilitates rainfall distribution, and is a significant carbon dioxide (CO²) sink. However, there exists an unfortunate and persistent view of Amazonia as a remote land full of infinite natural resources, open to new forms of agriculture and extractive colonisation, which has only become more complicated over the last 50 years with the integration of the region into national and international economies.

The three chapters that complete the *Ríos Trilogy* offer distinct approaches to comprehending the meanings and definitions attributed to this territory. The trilogy sheds light on the history of colonisation and how it has impacted Amazonia, providing insights into the region's current environmental and social threats.

17

Maxime Van Roy

Nuées, 2019

Nitrile, epoxy, nylon, water, 12V solenoid.

In this single-use installation, each drop becomes a container, the packaging of a resource that becomes a product. This semblance of rain, which may evoke the abundance, profusion and opulence of a resource that is nevertheless becoming increasingly scarce, raises questions about both our use of water and our use of plastic. Motors keep the drops in motion, but in a jerky, almost mechanical movement reminiscent of the artificial nature of the installation.

18

Claire Williams

Les Télépathes, 2022

Electro-mechanical installation. Glass, magnets, copper, light, electronics.

Les Télépathes is based on the question of how human beings, in states of drowsiness, hypnosis and coma, navigate stretched space-time like that of dreams. It questions the materiality of our consciousness. The artist worked with Liège University Hospital and the Coma Science Group, coordinated by Steven Laureys. She was able to retrieve data from the neural activities of deep coma patients and transform them into light pulses and mechanical sounds.

With *Les Télépathes*, Claire Williams creates a «telepathic device» where the electrical activity of states radiates and navigates in the form of waves and sounds. She imagines a kind of parallel collective consciousness, a spectral world made up of our electromagnetic and mental activities.

Produced by Plateforme CHRONIQUES CRÉATIONS, with the support of the Région Sud, the city of Marseille, the Institut français in Paris, the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (digital arts) and the Fondation Vasarely. With the collaboration of Coma Science Group, GIGA Consciousness, the Lycée Dorian scientific glass workshop, code by Baptiste de La Gorce.

19

Ief Spincemaille

Nightfall, 2022

Wood, metal, plexi, water and electronics.

An hourglass is filled with dark colored water. When turned upside down, the water slowly fades out the light of the lamp beneath.

Nightfall simulates nightfall in an indoor space and creates an artificial experience of an everyday natural phenomenon: nightfall. By isolating the concept of “darkening” and simulating it in the space of a museum, a collective experience is created where a group of people spend time together and slowly lose sight of each other.

Concept & realisation: Ief Spincemaille

Production: Werktank

With the support of the Flemish authorities

20

Dewi Brunet

Plantoid, 2023

Paper folding, paper crumpling, robotic.

Plants are often considered as decorative objects or resources, emotionless like machines. Yet more and more scientists discover the multiple intelligence and sensitivity they have. Meanwhile, the growing development of robots, especially biomimetic ones seem to shift our feelings towards technology. Between idolatry or enigmatic fear, the boundaries between living beings and machines is nowadays to be reconsidered. *Plantoid* invites visitors in an immersive experience through this large-scale installation made entirely of paper and folded robots inspired by plants.

Robot created in collaboration with INRIA's DEFROST laboratory

Sound creation by Léo Sauda

This work was supported as part of the “Imagining Ecological Futures” residency organised by the KIKK and the Centre Culturel de Namur/Les Abattoirs de Bomel. With the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (digital arts)

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Le Pavillon
Esplanade de la Citadelle
Route Merveilleuse, 65
5000 Namur

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