

Press Release

HYSTERICAL MINING

An exhibition at Kunsthalles Wien

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| Exhibition Venue | Kunsthalles Wien Museumsquartier & Karlsplatz Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Vienna & TreitlstraÙe 2, 1040 Vienna |
| Exhibition Dates | 29 May – 6 October 2019 |
| Opening Hours | Tue–Sun 11 a.m.– 7 p.m., Thu 11 a.m.– 9 p.m. |

Hysterical Mining gathers artistic positions that use, appropriate and play with feminist methodologies to test the (sexist) breeding ground of technology, to decode as well as deconstruct the ideological terrain of supposedly objective, universal knowledge behind it, and to reinvent the relations between techno-sciences and gender.

In pursuit of ways to circumvent, subvert, hack and queer technology, the artists constantly reflect on its implications for contemporary and future forms of life. They envisage creative feminist technologies to analyse discriminations as well as to invent new rituals for a co-existence between species in the sense of an ontology of relation, rejecting any fixed essences and any naturalisation of technology. In this constellation, the participating artists collectively celebrate unknown and non-expert approaches as well as portray highly informed awareness of technological advancements and discourses.

The title *Hysterical Mining* functions on a stratum of different grounds. *Hysterical* ironically refers to so-called "pathologies" of hysteria, supposedly stirring women, first diagnosed in Vienna by Freud. Turning its common understanding upside down, the show envisages hysteria as a healthy reaction encapsulating the wider types of frustration laypeople experience with technology and above all as an intuitive way to sense problems. *Mining* first-off might evoke data mining as well as the extraction of rare earth minerals for the production of technological devices – hence referring to ideas of knowledge and value based on the accumulation of information or raw material. In the show, it first and foremost refers to the excavation of hidden or concealed mechanisms or meanings to bring them back to the surface. The dual title serves to push beyond the dualities, the reversal and/or (re)interpretation of each word, and their complex of intertwined connections that surpass binary assimilation.

What are the coded relations between gender & technology?

In western society, one fundamental way in which gender is expressed is (in fact) through technology. Technical skills and domains of proficiency are divided between and within the sexes, shaping masculinities and femininities and reinforcing gender binarities. The modern associations between technology and "masculinity" translate into everyday experiences

of gender, historical narratives, education, employment practices, the enterprise of new technologies and the corresponding distribution of power on a global scale – within which technology is seen as the driving force of progress. Technology appears to be the unequivocally “male” coded instrument for the rationalising domination of all bodies. Furthermore, of the entire earth. In reference to techno-feminist theories and speculations, *Hysterical Mining* maps and attempts to provide new routes for the fight against forms of discrimination in post-industrial societies.

What biases are influencing the production, use and access to technology and its political emancipatory potentialities?

Hysterical Mining fervently acknowledges the gendering, ethnicising and racialising biases inscribed and embedded in supposedly neutral technologies. The exhibition negotiates gender politics in an attempt to resist and counter traditional dichotomies: male/female, mind/body, objectivity/subjectivity, object/subject, human/machine, ratio/fiction – that are consequential of past and current constructions of knowledge serving capital interests.

Who is entitled to speak about technology and its problems?

Hysterical Mining resolutely sets out to privilege and cherish non-expert, intuitive, and heterogeneous approaches, from the side of the user(s), and the so-called “digitally illiterate”. The inclusion of these perspectives offer complementary positions to those of the “experts”, escaping some of the limitations that are implanted in contemporary conceptions and mechanisms of the technological, which have navigated and controlled the (re)production and rhetoric of technology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The exhibition therefore embraces everyday understandings and practices, while simultaneously seeking to address features of advanced innovation and science.

How do technology and gender reciprocally produce one another in changing formations?

The evolution of high-tech advancements and especially artificial intelligence have developed in parallel with and from innumerable problematic concepts and binaries based on the domination of a rationalising abstract thinking model, predominantly perceiving intelligence as universal, non-situated, disembodied, neutral, harmless – and entitled to dominate. The exhibition provides analyses of the material worlds created through technology and its role in shaping local and global configurations of power, identities and ways of living, drawing on radical feminist concepts from the 1970s until today that have consistently criticised (and continue to struggle against) the patriarchal performance and interpretation of technology and techno-science. The feminist approach ploughs toward the emancipation not only of women, but also of all marginalised people and species, by digging up and destabilising prevailing customs of dominance

(technocratic or male), decomposing essentialism to nourish and drive alternative social, political and cultural forces. The exhibition thus has a political as well as an intellectual agenda.

How can art help to develop and sustain a feminist technophile attitude?

The artistic contributions to *Hysterical Mining*, within the discursive context of technological change, cherish processes and forms of embodiment, situational and nomadic knowledge, and incompleteness, as well as the use of affects and emotions in opposition to the governing supposedly universal and barely instrumental abstraction. The dissolution of boundaries through fiction and imagination demarcates a space of speculation, performance and action between disciplines, bodies, gender, species and ecologies. The works on show (as well as the program of events) will bring to the fore, through various techniques of excavation, aspects that have long been hidden, disguised, or gone unannounced in order to critically address why such issues are buried from sight, and what impacts these have not only for today but for our future.

Artists (among others): Trisha Baga, Louise Drulhe, Veronika Eberhart, Judith Fegerl, Fabien Giraud & Raphaël Siboni, Katrin Hornek, Barbara Kapusta, Marlene Maier, Pratchaya Phinthong, Marlies Pöschl, Delphine Reist

Curators: Anne Faucheret, Vanessa Joan Müller

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For Change

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