

Press Release

# Hello, Robot Design between Human and Machine

An exhibition of the MAK, the Vitra Design  
Museum, and the Design museum Gent

Exhibition Venue

MAK Exhibition Hall  
MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna

Exhibition Dates

21 June – 1 October 2017

Opening Hours

Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Free admission on Tuesdays from 6–10 p.m.

The incursion into our daily lives of intelligent machines capable of acting independently has long been more than a fantastical utopia. A centerpiece of the *VIENNA BIENNALE 2017: Robots. Work. Our Future*, the comprehensive exhibition alliance *Hello, Robot. Design between Human and Machine* invites encounters with the always omnipresent species robot. More than 200 exhibition objects from the realms of art, design, and architecture, as well as examples from technology, film, literature, fashion, science, and pop culture examine the inexorable hype around intelligent machines and the crucial role played by design.

To some extent unheard and unseen, robotics—driven by Digital Modernity—has already fundamentally altered our work and daily lives. Yet people's relationship to new technologies is often ambivalent. As the first comprehensive exhibition about the opportunities and challenges surrounding robotics, *Hello, Robot. Design between Human and Machine* broadens its scope to include the ethical and political questions arising from these enormous technological advances.

Where robotics used to be a domain for engineers and computer experts, nowadays designers make an essential creative contribution and bridge seemingly insurmountable differences. Individual attitudes towards robots and artificial intelligence waver between enthusiasm and criticism, between utopia and dystopia, between hopes for a better, high-tech world and fear that humans will be marginalized. Drones, algorithms, intelligent sensors, and Industry 4.0 provide cause for euphoria and concern simultaneously. Going beyond purely structural concerns, the design field

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takes up sociopolitical responsibility and delivers concrete solutions for the human-motivated ingress of machines into our lives.

Subdivided into four chapters, *Hello, Robot* tells the story of a convergence, while deliberately being organized in an interdisciplinary fashion. Everyday objects are presented along with art installations, architectural models, drawings, sketches, illustrations, posters, books, comics, photographs, films, computer games, and web and interaction design. As an aid to orientation, a kind of taxonomy offers an overview of robots' manifold guises.

The introductory exhibition chapter "Science and Fiction" receives visitors in a sort of chamber of wonders, which comes at the robot in a classical manner typical of a museum: as a foreign species viewed through the lens of pop culture and cliché. In "Programmed for Work," the focus is on the areas where robots had their breakthrough: work, manufacturing, and industry. Essential questions such as whether we will still have work in the future leave no one unaffected. In the chapter "Friend and Helper," humans and robots meet at eye level as partners. Robots are presented as smart assistants, sensitive friends, and empathic helpers; as beings who care for and look after us, who live, love, and dream with us. "Becoming one," the last part of the exhibition, thematizes the fusion of human, environment, and machine, such as through prostheses, implants, or nanobots, smart cities, and artificial insects.

In addition to providing a leitmotif through the exhibition, 14 questions illuminate dealings with robotics. They invite visitors to reassess their own stance towards new technologies and convey that there is a fine line between opportunities and risks.

Participating artists (a selection):

Woody Allen, Archigram, Asmbl, automato.farm, Hanna Barbera, Philip Beesley, Wafaa Bilal, Francis Bitonti, Björk, Julius Breitenstein, Bureau d'études, Sander Burger, Edward Burtynsky, Dan Chen, Jan De Coster, Douglas Coupland, CurVoxels, Daft Punk, Disney/Pixar Animation Studios, Dunne & Raby, ECAL, Tal Erez, Flower Robotics, Vincent Fournier, Yves Gellie, Gramazio Kohler Research/ETH Zurich, Kevin Grennan, Vicente Guallart, Susanna Hertrich, Höweler + Yoon Architecture, Zan-Lun Huang, Ted Hunt/Luke Sturgeon/Hiroki Yokoyama, ICD University of Stuttgart, Interactive Architecture Lab, Alfredo Jaar, Spike Jonze, Joris Laarman Lab, Floris Kaayk, Frederick Kiesler, Elizabeth King/Richard Kizu-Blaire, Dirk Vander Kooij, Kraftwerk, KRAM/WEISSHAAR, Stanley Kubrick, George Lucas, Greg Lynn, Keiichi Matsuda, MIT Senseable City Lab, Shawn Maximo, Moth Collective, NASA, Next Nature Network, Christoph Niemann, Tatsuya Matsui, Gonçalo F Cardoso/Ruben Pater, Johanna Pichlbauer/Mia Meusburger, Eric Pickersgill, Joseph Popper, Gerard Ralló, Carlo Ratti, Alexander Reben, robotlab, Rafaél Rozendaal, Philipp

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Schmitt/Stephan Bogner/Jonas Voigt, Takanori Shibata, Masamune Shirow, Hajime Sorayama, Ismael Soto, Bruce Sterling/Sheldon Brown, Superflux, Jacques Tati, Kibwe Tavares, Osamu Tezuka, UCL, Anouk Wipprecht, i.a.

Curators: Amelie Klein (Vitra Design Museum), Thomas Geisler, Marlies Wirth (MAK), Fredo de Smet (Design museum Gent, curatorial advisor)

Curatorial Assistance:  
Erika Pinner (Vitra Design Museum)

The curators were supported by an international team of advisors: Bruce Sterling, Gesche Joost, Carlo Ratti, Sabine Himmelsbach and Paul Feigelfeld

Catalog  
Hello, Robot. Design between Human and Machine  
Edited by Mateo Kries, Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Amelie Klein; with contributions by Rosi Braidotti, Douglas Coupland, Anthony Dunne & Fiona Raby (Dunne & Raby), Christoph Engemann, Paul Feigelfeld, Gesche Joost, Amelie Klein, Carlo Ratti, Bruce Sterling, Marlies Wirth i.a.  
Cover illustration: Christoph Niemann  
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Exhibition on tour:  
11 February – 14 May 2017: Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein  
21 June – 1 October 2017: MAK, Vienna  
27 October 2017 – 14 April 2018: Design museum Gent  
12 May – 4 November 2018: Gewerbemuseum Winterthur  
Further venues are planned.

Press photos are available for download at MAK.at/en/press as well as in the press section of [www.viennabiennale.org/en](http://www.viennabiennale.org/en).

Supplemental Program at [viennabiennale.org/en/calendar](http://viennabiennale.org/en/calendar).



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