

### FILM LOUNGE WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES

In parallel to the exhibition

*(Artificial Intelligen) Digitale Demenz*

14 November 2015 – 06 March 2016

Curated by Inke Arns

Apart from these films, HMKV will present two brilliant surprise TV series dealing with future technologies.

#### PROJECTION

**Erik Bünger**

***The Girl Who Never Was***

Single-channel video, 2014, 59:07 min.

Starts every full hour

*The Girl Who Never Was* is the third and final part in a trilogy began with *A Lecture on Schizophonia* and continued in *The Third Man*. The project exists both as a lecture performance and as an independent video work.

In 2008 an American researcher rediscovers the lost traces of the first recorded voice ever: the 148-old voice of a little girl singing the French lullaby 'Au Clair de la Lune'. One year later another researcher experiments with the playback speed and manages to prove that what the fragment actually contains, is the voice of a full-grown man. This exact same lullaby is the song sung by the artificial intelligence HAL in the French version of Stanley Kubrick's '2001 A Space Odyssey'. As HAL dies his voice performs precisely the same glissando as the voice of the non-existent girl: a high-strung, insistent voice is gradually slowed down into a deep, sleepy and harmless one. The work uses these two voices as coordinates, and explores how a particular insistency, pertaining to the voice alone, makes it the vehicle for certain kinds of inexistencies, as they make their way into our world. The more we try to shut her voice out, the more persistent her song becomes.

*The Girl Who Never Was* is a coproduction with the Impakt Foundation, Utrecht within the framework of Impakt Works 2013 and has been made possible with the support of the City of Utrecht; the Mondriaan Foundation. (Erik Bünger)

#### MONITOR

**Mark Leckey**

***GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction***

HD-Video, 2010, 16:25 min., loop

Courtesy the artist and Cabinet, London

<https://youtu.be/8X1QkseVjIY> (part 1)

<https://youtu.be/xiSXtFK8G58> (part 2)

“A black Samsung stood on a green screen infinity cyc while I coaxed it into revealing its thoughts and actions.”(1) This is how Mark Leckey describes the video “GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction” (2010). In the work, a monolithic black Samsung refrigerator appears in the middle of a large green screen background, as it is used in film productions. The green screen allows various motifs to be set into the scene during post-production. What the blue box was for film is what the green screen is in the age of digital manipulation. A video on a Samsung monitor plays visualizations of the refrigerator’s possible thoughts and needs. In Leckey’s monologue, which features his digitally distorted voice, the viewer believes the appliance is speaking. For the refrigerator’s monologue, Leckey has compiled passages from the Popol Vuh (the sacred book of the Maya), excerpts from an essay by Calvin Tomkins on Marcel Duchamp’s “La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même” (1915–23), as well as text fragments from the user’s manual, formulated in the first person and arranged as a script. The refrigerator thus speaks to the viewer/user about its daily activities, its environment; it explains itself and its control panels, its dimensions and readings and its outstanding freezing properties. The “GreenScreenRefrigerator” is a smart refrigerator. It presents the viewer with images of lush green vegetables and the kitchen in which it might stand. It shows graphic simulations of its internal circuits of compressors and cooling coils, which turn the liquid into vapor and vapor into gas, to demonstrate how it operates. These simple animations, whose aesthetic is reminiscent of the schematic representations in instructional videos, are followed by pictures of arctic-fresh landscapes that were obviously taken from commercials. There are pictures of the sky, as well as of the surface of the moon and of the sun. The refrigerator says: “All the sky is clearing, converging with the Everywhere and the Everywhen. The Twin Serpent powers that uncoil from the earth and rise and fall like the Sun and Moon. [...] (Samsung) Sun and (Samsung) Moon.” The refrigerator thus alludes to both the network of its “product family” within the “brand universe” of Samsung, as well as with the entire universe.

The thought-images that surround the refrigerator are computer generated, artificially created and retouched surfaces that could complement the refrigerator for advertising purposes. A perfect kitchen, exquisite materials, crunchy vegetables. Like most materials in Leckey’s work, these come from the entertainment and advertising industries. Images that carry messages with the intention of permeating our perceptions and convincing us of our need for new products and the lifestyles associated with them. Describing the work, Leckey says, “Today we are surrounded by brands. They are our environment, part of our ecology, so we absorb them and we also act them out. So I don’t see them as something to be resisted in themselves; they are as natural as icebergs or pollen. As the Borg say: Resistance is futile.” (2) Yet, the work does not necessarily reflect the detached attitude of a technocritical and sociological approach. Rather, in his art Leckey wishes to show that man is increasingly becoming one with the world of technology. And this also applies to him as an artist – he is part of this development and can therefore argue only from the internal perspective.

But he not only shows that man is moving closer to the machine; conversely, in “GreenScreen-RefrigeratorAction” the machine becomes a quasi-anthropomorphic protagonist. Thus, in this work, Leckey refers in particular to the increasing technologicalization of our environment as an all-encompassing phenomenon while also referring to his inspiration from the Californian culture critic Erik Davis, who wrote in 1995: “We surround ourselves with an animated webwork of complex, powerful, and unseen forces that even the ‘experts’ cannot totally comprehend. Our technological environment may soon appear to be as strangely sentient as the caves, lakes, and forests in which the first magicians glimpsed the gods.”(3) Society is increasingly changing from a form of social life primarily characterized by our relationships with one another, into a society in which our relationships are increasingly with objects. We speak to our machines, and they speak to us.

(1) Mark Leckey’s YouTube channel, [youtu.be/8X1QkseVjIY](https://youtu.be/8X1QkseVjIY)

(2) Mark Leckey in Kari Rittenbach, “Chrome & Flesh. An Interview with Mark Leckey”, Rhizome, 12 December 2012, [rhizome.org/editorial/2012/dec/17/mark-leckey/](https://rhizome.org/editorial/2012/dec/17/mark-leckey/) (accessed April 21, 2014).

(3) Erik Davis, “Technopagans. May the astral plane be reborn in cyberspace”, in *Wired*, July 1995

(Source: Haus der Kunst, Munich: *Mark Leckey: Als ob*, 15 January – 31 May 2015)

### MONITOR

#### **University of Pennsylvania**

##### ***Robot Quadrotors Perform James Bond Theme***

Video, 2012, 1:39 min.

<https://youtu.be/sUeGC-8dyk>

Drones in flight formation collectively performing the James Bond theme on various instruments. Fascinating. And slightly threatening.

#### **Jibo**

##### ***Jibo: The World's First Social Robot for the Home***

Video, 2014, 3:13 min.

<https://youtu.be/3N1Q8oFpX1Y>

Commercial break: A friendly companion who really has everything under control.

#### **Realeyes**

##### ***Realeyes – Emotional Intelligence***

Video, 2014, 1:11 min.

<https://youtu.be/3WF4eG1s44U>

Commercial break: Artificial Intelligences learn to read human emotions.