CORPOREALITY OF CORPORATE REALITY

"The history of mining, like the devastation it leaves in its wake, is commonly overlooked in the strategic amnesia that accompanies stories of technological progress."

(Crawford 2021:26)

"Many aspects of modern life have been moved to "the cloud" with little consideration of these material costs."

(Crawford 2021:30)

'data is the new oil', you say
other times you present data as clouds
weightless,
distant,
lucid,
tucked away like forgotten memories that no one ever sees

but like oil, these clouds are extracted from the ground
mined,
carried,
refined,
eroding soils, and leaving them behind

"The caption "data is the new oil" shifts the notion of data that it is something personal, intimate and of individual ownership to something that is to be consumed, controlled, and harnessed"

(Crawford 2021:113)

Wallenborn, Johanna (2022): KI als fliegendes blaues Gehirn? Wie Metaphern unsere Vorstellung von KI beeinflussen.

When searching for "AI" online, most search results will show images of a human brain in blue colours. (Cave/Dihal 2020:693)

unless the oil you speak of is the oil that's
fracked,
stolen,
spilled,
personal data can't be another resource, for you to deplete

rare earths, minerals, and metals are used
to ASSEMBLE devices,
run servers,
train machines,
they FEED this ever-hungry AI, oblivious to our desires
and ignorant of our dreams

the visions of future now rendered
in cobalt blue and platinum white

the hopes of future seemingly endless
often stuck in a loop, infinitely referencing the past

"It has been rightly urged that a history of brain models is really a history of the literary and material technologies which are familiar to, and then used as metaphors by brain scientists. Their metaphorical menagerie exhibits mental clocks, logical pianos, barrel organisms, neural telegraphs and cerebral computer nets. How do specific technologies get into this zoo? Claims that certain systems can mimic, or even exhibit, intelligence are sustained by social hierarchies of head and hand. Minds are known because these social conventions are known. "

(Schaffer 2001F Pasquinelli 2023)

"The inverse uncanny valley is when you see yourself from the alien perspective and are a bit spooked"

(Bratton 2018)

you use my body to describe concepts that hide behind AI
mistaking my HANDS, ears, and eyes for something else
I become abstracted, an alien to myself

The Dark Cloud: The hidden costs of a digital world with Guillaume Pitron

my love spelled in emojis and stickers, it travels
over cables and conduits, it's fast

my love spelled in emojis and gifs, to reach her
needs to traverse the globe, unaware of physical paths

my love travels quietly somewhere deep   under the ocean ground
tracing former slave ship routes, unaware of the past

Tabita Rezaire, Deep Down Tidal

"Global north companies go to global south to claim ownership over labour and resources that are not theirs to have"

(Karen Hao in The Digital Deal Podcast)

well hidden under the ocean ground, my love gets buried
in rubber forests, now protecting the data from salty seas

Tully, John (2009): A Victorian Ecological Disaster: Imperialism, the Telegraph, and Gutta-Percha.

"Insulation of submarine cables relied on gutta-percha, a natural plastic related to rubber. „The gum was extracted by killing wild trees in the forests of Southeast Asia, and the scale of demand ensured that many millions of trees were destroyed. This industry brought about a Victorian ecological disaster that presaged the greater destruction of tropical rain forests occurring today."

(Tully 2009)

the data you speak of isn't endless
it's stories and labour
of tired BODIES that didn't get enough sleep

A testimony by 'a digital worker in a large German city':

"I became depressed. I had to go to therapy. I was prescribed medication. When I started there, my main job was to sieve through posts with sexually explicit content and so-called high priority cases, which usually had to do with suicide or self-harm. There were a lot of pictures of cutting. I had to analyse which were self-harm and which suicidal. The second month, I asked my team leader to put me in a different content workflow because I was feeling bad."

(Steyerl 2023)

the content we see is data touched by HANDS
forced to tag,
describe,
organise,
to be ready for you to consume, then deplete

the content we see has been sorted by eyes
that watch,
analyse,
delete,
these eyes forced to continue seeing even when they sleep

„As consumers, we have a right to know what ingredients and processes are in the AI that compiles our news and media content, in the same way that we should know what's in the food we feed our families. As citizens, we have a need to know where our information comes from. And, as human beings, we should always know when humans are at work, producing what we consume, whether physical or digital."

(Gray/Suri 2017)
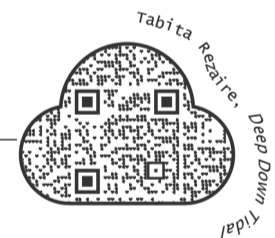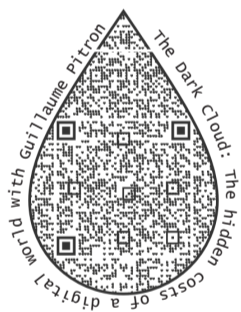
Martyna Marciniak & Nataša Vukajlović

"But can we also see the same sort of pattern in how our day-to-day is being treated, in terms of us providing our data: the day-to-day as the new frontier, the new space that's being colonized, whether it's going to the supermarket or whatever activity we do on a daily basis that seems insignificant, but somehow becomes part of this big data set?"

(Ana-Maria Carabelea in The Digital Deal Podcast)

In German workplaces, many people with a refugee status work as content managers. Migrant legislation is being used by the Euopean Union to justify cheap labourers that are being exploited by data companies.

(Hito Steyerl in The Digital Deal Podcast)

the resources you speak of are **BODIES**
but it's easier to think they're immaterial, online

they're **HANDS** that belong to people just like me
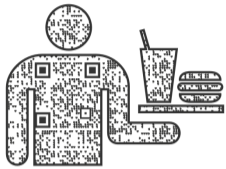doing the work that you continue to hide

they're **HANDS** that belong to people in real places
but it's easier to think they're immaterial, online

the hands of AI are my **HANDS**
they gesture repetitively, as would a machine

The Data Nutrition Project aims to create a standard label for interrogating datasets.

my **BODY** turns into data for you
this contract not built on equal terms

my identity reduced to a photo of my face
a datafied self made of vector fields, values, and weights

There is a disequilibrium: users make their self-produced data available to digital platforms they use, but the purpose often remains opaque. There is no real choice other than to accept the lenghty and incomprehensible terms of use.

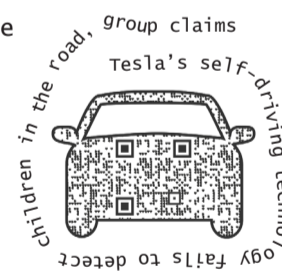Kevin Kelly wrote in a Wired article in October 2014:

"In the past, we would have said only a superintelligent AI could drive a car, or beat a human at Jeopardy! or chess. But once AI did each of those things, we considered that achievement obviously mechanical and hardly worth the label of true intelligence. Every success in AI redefines it."

'AI is the future of work', you say
implying a future so sweet
but the work of most won't be different
it will be ignored and labelled 'low-skilled'

ReCAPTCHA has been initially introduced with a double purpose - to separate people from bots, and to digitise NYT archives, and later after their acquisition of the technology by Google, to digitise books for Google Books. Nowadays the main purpose is to prevent bots from automatically visiting websites, filing out forms and spamming.

Many reCAPTCHA's don't test the precision/accuracy of the image-recognition, but instead they track the movement of he cursor (Even the most direct motion by a human has some amount of randomness on the microscopic level: tiny unconscious movements that bots can't easily mimic. If the cursor's movement contains some of this unpredictability, then the test decides that the user is probably legitimate. The reCAPTCHA also may assess the cookies stored by the browser on a user device and the device's history in order to tell if the user is likely to be a bot.)

Moravec wrote in 1988, "it is comparatively easy to make computers exhibit adult level performance on intelligence tests or playing checkers, and difficult or impossible to give them the skills of a one-year-old when it comes to perception and mobility".

the eyes of AI are my eyes
it's involuntary, when you're forced to see

the eyes of AI are also mine
they're eyes that belong to humans – now treated just like machines

having to prove our humanity to you
in a bizarre and unfair twist

having to prove our humanity to you
while you access our secrets for free

the real eyes of AI are not my eyes
the eyes of AI - they don't see

what AI considers seeing are just patterns
I argue - there is much more in the world to perceive

There are people who do annotation labour for self-driving cars in refugee camps in the Middle East who have an extreme limited mobility. They are being shown images from European cities and make the mobility of other people and self-driving cars possible while they are prevented by visa regulations from even leaving their country.

(Hito Steyerl in The Digital Deal Podcast)

you claim to do things yourself
you assume my abilities are low-skilled
you send beams of LiDAR and receive them
but the calculations of distances don't see

many of your devices entertain us
they divert our attention away
from those eyes that perceive bodies
as targets, systems, and threats

In one of the chapters of 'Eye of the Master' Pasquinelli refers to importance of reassessing the logical form and limits that twenty-first century AI has inherited from the (mis)interpretation of the mechanisms of perception and sense-making:

"In a peculiar twist of fate, it is the mechanisation of perception as pattern recognition that has come to be traded as the mechanisation of cognition, or artificial intelligence. (...) Nevertheless, despite its origins in the automation of vision, the use of anthropomorphic metaphors of perception to describe the operations of artificial neural networks, as well as today's deep learning is misleading. As is often repeated, machine vision see' nothing: what an algorithm sees' - that is, calculates - are topological relations among numerical values of a two-dimensional matrix."

children in the road, group claims Tesla's self-driving technology fails to detect
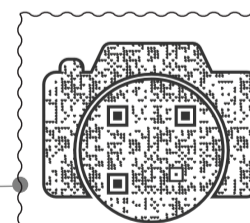
"According to six Israeli intelligence officers, who have all served in the army during the current war on the Gaza Strip and had first-hand involvement with the use of AI to generate targets for assassination, Lavender has played a central role in the unprecedented bombing of Palestinians, especially during the early stages of the war. In fact, according to the sources, its influence on the military's operations was such that they essentially treated the outputs of the AI machine "as if it were a human decision."

(Abrahaml 2024)

Transformer model architecture, on which most natural language processing as well as image generation is built, is based on the idea of 'attention'. While successful and a breakthrough in AI technology several years ago, attention mechanisms may exhibit biases towards certain patterns or features in the input data, leading to overfitting or poor generalization performance, especially when trained on biased or unrepresentative datasets. These biases can affect the model's ability to generalize to unseen data and may result in unreliable predictions or recommendations.

from this seeing that is shaped by blindness
I seek to make sense of what's not just here
from this seeing that carves out paths uneven
not attending to increasingly growing fields

Martyna Marciniak & Nataša Vukajlović

you claim to do things yourself
you seem to do magic, you sell us tricks

but the **HANDS** of AI are my hands
they gesture repetitively, as would a machine

Julia Kloiber: on CASH, innovation and visions for the future
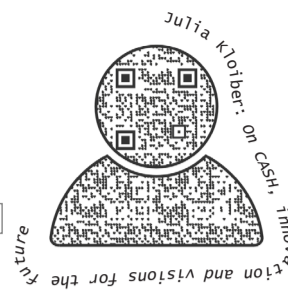
Automation still needs people to calibrate and train what is automated. The invisible labour of humans-in-the-loop makes AI function.

(Irani 2016)

you think using my **LABOUR** is a fair trade
for the illusion you offer for free

The phrase: 'if you're not paying then you're the product' can now be changed into:
'if you're not getting paid then youre the producer'.

(Hito Steyerl in The Digital Deal Podcast)

if AI is the future of work
how would it change for me?

the eyes of AI are my eyes
it's involuntary, when you're forced to see

the eyes of AI are also mine
they're eyes that belong to humans – now treated just like machines

my eyes perceive strangeness
and weirdness and horror and glee

my eyes perceive hesitation
they capture recklessness and aggression - they see

the machinic vision you surveil with
identifies my **PROPORTIONS**, my stride

Movements, monitored through surveillance cameras; pictures, uploaded to various social media platforms; or terms, searched for - all those are being captured and fed to AI databases to find patterns and make assessments.

(Crawford 2021:119)

my **BODY** reduced to patterns
set up to feed your biased eyes

"While we often think of terms such as "big data" and "algorithms" as being benign, neutral, or objective they are anything but." (Noble 2018). By training machines with factors deriving from our (still) unequal, racist, violent reality the algorithmic bias manifests in different forms: Google's discriminatory autosuggestions, decision-making processes concerning financial/insurance services or the health sector, amongst others."

there are people who fed those biases
an unequal, racist, violent legacy is what they see
a broken reality is what we have to offer:
to learn,
think,
be...

Looking for workers within the AI industry is sort of a canary in the coalmine for helping us understand what technology will develop from this process and how would that technology affect all of us.

(Karen Hao in The Digital Deal Podcast)

you let your greed assume that
my skills are low and therefore they should be free
the eyes of AI are nothing like my eyes
mine perceive fear, and joy, they see

'welcome to the age of AI super assistants', you say
the assistants you offer collect my whispers, confessions and shrieks

the assistants you offer, can't hear me
my accent too foreign and weird

"You can't talk to Siri or Bixby or Google Assistant in an indigenous language. Out of 7,000 languages, AI currently only serves languages that are similar to Mandarin, Hindi and English. Any languages that do not fall within those categories just don't work. And this has been proven scientifically."

(Running 2024)

"On another note, popular AI assistants require users to speak specific versions of English, Hindi, German, or French that the AI can understand, erasing not only indigenous languages but also dialects from modern technology. So what happens is that people are conforming their linguistic cultures/patterns to the limitations of AI."

(Running 2024)

it wasnt built for my voice
the ears of AI cannot hear

leaving me to adapt, once again
to perform,
repeat,
scream,
but the ears of AI do not want to hear, they collect my stories
not realising how much they mean

"[There is] a historical and ongoing preoccupation with outsourcing 'women's work' (and racialized or undervalued labor) to an electronic, automated, and robotic workforce."

(Strengers/Kennedy 2021)

the assistants you offer are female
for you female work is low-skilled

the assistants you give me are broken
which AI future is it, they want me to believe?

The UNESCO report "I'd blush if I could" (2019) points out that feminized voice assistant's reinforce gender biases which remains unchanged since the technology's wide release in 2011.

Martyna Marciniak & Nataša Vukajlović

having to prove our humanity to you
in a bizarre and unfair twist

having to prove our humanity to you
while you access our secrets for free

the assistants you claim to have created
are often human, just like me

unable to be certain of their humanity
I look at them with alien eyes

having to prove our humanity to you
in a bizarre and unfair twist

having no proof of their humanity
I begin to speak to humans as if they are chat gpt

you use my BODY to describe concepts that hide behind AI
mistaking my hands, ears, and eyes for something else
my body becomes abstracted, an alien to myself

living next to machines of loving grace
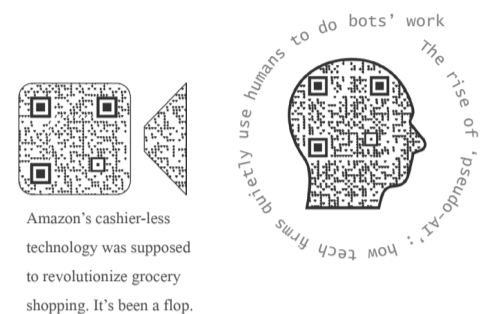is a future I would like to see

not blinded by the vision of jeff, elon, and sam
not rendered in cobalt blue and platinum white

I want to live next to machines that can fade away, shed, shrivel or disappear
leaving the world without fear

I want to live next to machines that blossom in pink, iridescent and bright
whatever they want to be

-with thanks to Arsita, Brooke, Ed, M. and Rojia

In "Conversations with Bina48", artist Stephanie Dinkins discovered that the robot's (Bina48) understanding of its humanity, or lack thereof, is muddled, making for thought-provoking dialogue. Dinkins tries to explore what it means for humans to partner with technology by connecting with Bina48 on a deeper level.

Amazon's cashier-less technology was supposed to revolutionize grocery shopping. It's been a flop.

tech firms quietly use humans to do bots' work The rise of 'pseudo-AI': how

refers to the 1967 Poem by Richard Brautigan
"All Watched Over
By Machines Of Loving Grace"

Martyna Marciniak is a Polish, Berlin-based artist and researcher. Her work uses spatial storytelling, speculative fictions and 3D reconstruction to question how design and technology reflect and influence ideologies and social biases. She is a fellow at the *Akademie Schloss Solitude* and is currently developing a video-installation as part of the upcoming 'What's New's' residency at *Ars Electronica*, exploring how visual technologies paired with military optics, news flair, and disaster fiction shape our imaginations and perceptions, in turn making us prone to accepting visual disinformation as fact. She has worked with media outlets including CNN and BBC, as well as NGOs including *Forensic Architecture, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch*. Her co-established research group *Border Emergency Collective* investigated and documented stories of migrating people at the Polish-Belarusian border. Her work was exhibited in the *Warsaw Biennale, Kinema Icon in Bucharest, Haus Gropius in Dessau and deTour Festival* in Hong Kong, among others.
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Nataša Vukajlović's interdisciplinary background is shaped by her work intersecting production, curation, and communication of artistic and scientific projects. Currently, Nataša is a fellow at *Akademie Schloss Solitude* where she creates programmes in the fields of arts, culture, and digitality. She is passionate about exploring how technology shapes our contemporary society. Currently, Nataša is part of the *Track's curatorial team of re:publica*. She was a curatorial assistant for the exhibition Broken Machines and Wild Imaginings at the *JUNGE AKADEMIE of Akademie der Künste* (2022-2023), and coordinated the AI Anarchies fellowship, working on ten artistic projects exploring social, cultural, and political realities driven by technological change. Previously, Nataša led the monthly discussion series *Digitaler Salon* on the impact of digitalization on society at t*he Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society* (2019–2021).
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Stuttgart, 2024