



PRESS RELEASE

Yves Netzhammer - Theo Jansen - Takayuki Todo Empathic Systems

14.06.2019–08.09.2019

Press Preview: Thursday, June 13, 11 am

Opening: Thursday, June 13, 7 pm

From June 14 to September 8, 2019, the Frankfurter Kunstverein has invited Yves Netzhammer, Theo Jansen, and Takayuki Todo to present a selection of their works in solo shows, under the shared thematic title “Empathic Systems.”

The exhibition revolves around the complex emotional relationship between humans and technology. Communication processes no longer only happen from human to human, but between humans and technology. Digital technologies are also increasingly exchanging data solely between each other.

Netzhammer, Jansen und Todo work at the intersection of engineering and computer science with psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, and ethics. They bring together a variety of technical, artistic, and psychological principles. The works elicit a level of feeling in the human viewer that is not always linguistically graspable, but instead appeals to an empathic sensitivity. In a number of ways, their artificial apparatuses become mirrors viewers encounter and recognize themselves in: sometimes in their doubling, sometimes in their distortion.

Yves Netzhammer's artistic oeuvre offers an examination of the central issues of being human in the digital age. His humanoid figures are reminiscent of anatomical puppets, devoid of any individual traits or facial expressions. Through them, Netzhammer formulates metaphors that translate the spectrum of human emotions into images. His work occupies three floors of the Frankfurter Kunstverein with a selection of his digital animated films, graphic works, and new kinetic installations.

Theo Jansen creates expansive kinetic sculptures and describes them as a new form of non-biological life. He builds the sculptures from synthetic materials such as polyurethane tubes,

cable ties, and plastic bottles, constructing creatures that are set in motion by the wind. This creates flowing, insect-like movements that have an immediate effect on the viewer. The empathic relation to the creatures is not established by their face, anthropomorphic traits, or an expression, but rather their movements in space.

With his work “SEER,” **Takayuki Todo** explores the emotional effect of eye contact and facial expressions in the interaction between humans and technology. Using 3D printing modules, miniature motors, and facial recognition software, Todo has created an anthropomorphic head that seeks the viewer’s gaze, reciprocates it, and mirrors their facial expression. The minimal movements create an immediate synchronization of the gestures and facial expressions between human and humanoid, as well as an emotional reaction in the viewer.

The question concerning the meaning of emotions and the gaze of the other is one of the eternal human issues that have played a central role in all of cultural history. Recognizing things begins by grasping them sensorially. Humans experience and understand the world through their body and their sense organs. In doing so they create their interpretation of the world in the form of cognizance. The body is the medium for human being-in-the-world. It acts as the link between humans and the world, or between subject and object. It belongs to the ego and the world at the same time, it is subject and object in one. Humans and machines differ substantially in the sensory apparatuses they use to perceive and understand the world.

For the most part, human beings can only recognize emotional signals and signs on the basis of physical characteristics. Interdisciplinary research projects are investigating different methods of increasing the human emotional response to digital agents under the heading of “Affective Computing,” thus minimizing the difference between human feeling towards technology as opposed to other humans. Numerous industrial sectors have a great interest in recognizing emotional systems in order to use them for the development of machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Curator: Franziska Nori

Press Pictures can be downloaded here: <https://www.fkv.de/presse/>

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FRANKFURTER KUNSTVEREIN
Steinernes Haus am Römerberg
Markt 44, 60311 Frankfurt Main
www.fkv.de

PRESSEKONTAKT
Jutta Käthler
Telefon: +49 (0)69 219 314 - 30
E-Mail: presse@fkv.de