

© Stine Deja & Marie Munk, *Synthetic Seduction: Foreigner*. Three-dimensional sequence, 5'10

Press Release

MULTITUDE & SINGULARITY

Art in the digital Age

A group exhibition

08.12.2023 - 25.02.2024

Le Bicolore

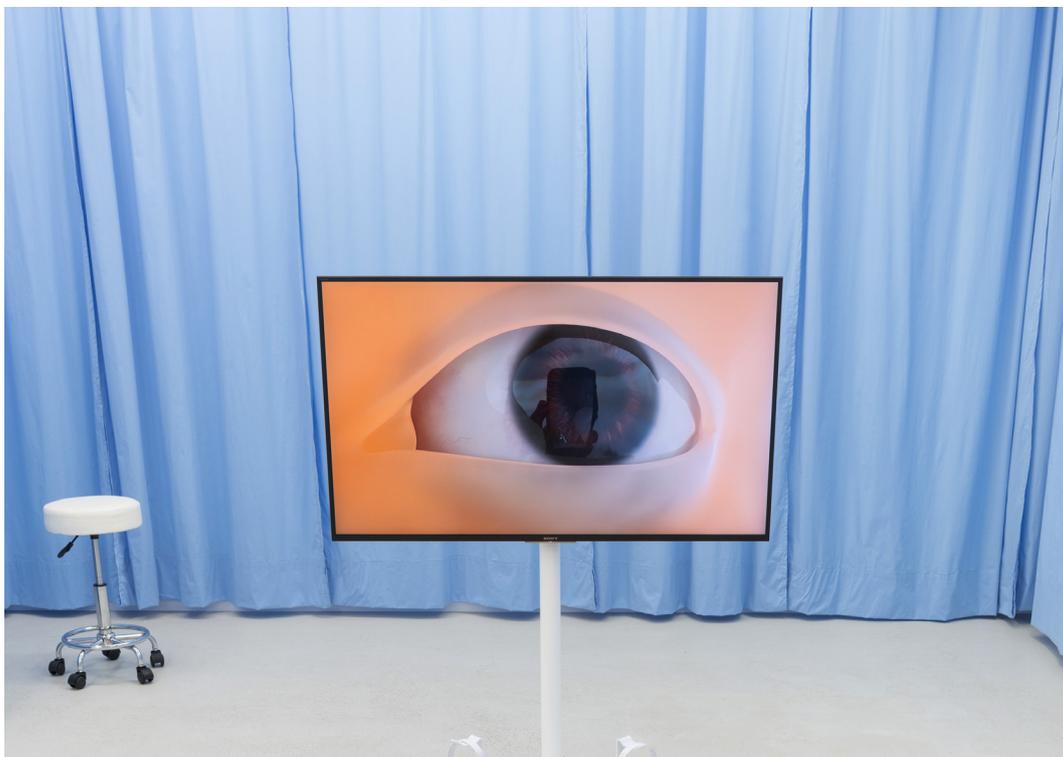
**Maison du
Danemark**

Multitude & Singularity

08.12.2023 – 25.02.2024

Two notions that gained currency with the start of the new millennium are the multitude – the crowd made up of people connected with each other via networks – and technological singularity – the idea that machines will eventually become superior to human beings. In fact, the notions of multitude and singularity can be applied to both human beings and technologies. When we think of the multitude, we imagine our democratic commitments converging on social media, but we could just as well use the term to refer to the mass of data fed to the AI programs that are currently the focus of everyone's attention.

The singularity that concerns us is the online identities or profiles we are constantly tweaking, when we should be devoting as much attention to the concept of technological singularity, which raises questions about our relationship with the machines on which we are becoming increasingly dependent. The artworks assembled in the exhibition *Multitude & Singularity* reflect the complexity of the world in its digital guise.



© Stine Deja & Marie Munk, *Synthetic Seduction*, 2018. Video installation. Exhibition view, Annka Kultys Gallery, London, 2018

Multiple viewpoints

Jeppe Hein is an artist whose medium is perception. He often uses reflecting surfaces, as in *360° Illusion IV*. Mirrors undeniably attract us, wherever they are – including in art centres and museums. But Hein's rotating mirror is especially fascinating because it questions the notion of the viewpoint, a recurrent concept in the history of art. Rather than reflecting back our image, the rotating object before our eyes reflects two viewpoints, like two co-existing states of the world, simultaneously alluding to quantum physics and turning this participatory artwork into a laboratory experiment.

Hein's approach is often comparable to scientists' use of reflecting surfaces in their research laboratories, and the gaze of the public is a vital component of his installations.



© **Jeppe Hein**, *360° Illusion IV*,
Mirror, stainless steel, motor, aluminum,
wood, 50 x 71 x 50 cm
© Jeppe Hein
Collection of Frac des Pays de la Loire

Listening to the invisible

As our household appliances increasingly become connected, we tend to think of them as intelligent, crediting them with an indefinable extra something. **Jens Settergren** recorded the sounds made by technical objects in our everyday surroundings, processed them and then slipped them into the immersive soundscape *GhostBlind Loading*. Music made up of sounds we scarcely register as a rule is played via speakers that look like rocks, which are readily available from big retailers.

This ghostly presence prompts us to reconsider the electromagnetic activities of the invisible presences with which, unbeknownst to us, we share our lives. The presence of camouflage huts with reflecting surfaces gives viewers the feeling they are being watched – a feeling we are increasingly experiencing even in our own homes, with the onward march of connectedness. The notions of invisibility and surveillance are indissociable both in our collective imagination and in the everyday reality of our lives.

Terrors

Jakob Kudsk Steensen creates artificial worlds for poetic narratives in the form of virtual reality experiences, video games or film sequences. His inspiration for the 3D sequence *Aquaphobia* came from psychological studies of treatments for fear of water – not forgetting that people can also be afraid of not having enough water or of excess water, as flooding threatens more and more places. In the world of *Aquaphobia*, we are guided by a liquid entity, perhaps in reference to the fact that our bodies consist chiefly of water.

This body with its changing contours, which leads us from underground to the surface, is disturbing rather than menacing, especially as it is accompanied by a soothing voice literally off. Via several dim tunnels, we come to a place that recalls Brooklyn when it was flooded by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. In Jakob Kudsk Steensen's work, the imaginary creation never completely distances itself from its real-life inspiration.



© **Jakob Kudsk Steensen**, *Aquaphobia*, 2017. Video installation. Courtesy of the artist

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Between real and virtual

When **Stine Deja and Marie Munk** work together, their aesthetic senses converse and intertwine. In this installation from the series *Synthetic Seduction*, the objects on the floor seem to be continued in the on-screen image – unless it is the opposite – prompting us to reflect on how the sculptures and images differ and how they are alike, thereby gaining insights into their nature. Their roundness tells us they are organic, and their flesh-pink colour suggests skin. On the floor, they are static, but in the space of the image, where the frame restricts their movements, their materiality is somewhat different.

If the floor sculptures of varying sizes had come out of the screen and invaded the tangible space of the exhibition, they would have lost some of their virtual sheen in the process and become more strongly present. It is as if everything took place in the interstice between objects and their depictions, even when the latter are three-dimensional, with no way of knowing which direction they might move in.



© **Stine Deja & Marie Munk**, *Synthetic Seduction: Foreigner*.
Three-dimensional sequence, 5'10



© **Stine Deja & Marie Munk**, *Synthetic Seduction*,
2018. Video installation.
Exhibition view, KH7 Artspace, Aarhus,
Danemark, 2018

Artificial emotions

In a hospital-like setting bounded by a blue curtain, **Stine Deja and Marie Munk** invite us to take our seats on a sculpture with the texture of skin. Seemingly organic, it responds to touch as if to simulate life. Comfortably seated Skin-to-Skin – one artificial, the other real – we watch the 3D sequence *Foreigner*, which is about artificial intelligence. The being that appears to be seeing its own face for the first time in a wake-up room seems to be endowed with consciousness but to have no experience.

At least, that is what the 1980s song whose chorus “I want to know what love is” the being bursts into suggests in this context. The question of whether artificial beings can feel is a trope of twentieth-century science-fiction. It becomes crucial in the research laboratories in which conversational robots emerge, in need of a body but without experience. In the process of giving shape to their ideas, the two artists explore the issue of posthumanism. After all, fiction is often ahead of science.

The technological other

Mogens Jacobsen's installation *No us, but one of* is made up of dedicated entrance, processing and exit apparatus. First of all, there is a sort of mirror-cum-screen through which visitors literally enter the artwork, which revolves around an AI program that “invents” faces based on those of the viewers so that the artwork is generated as they watch. The artist turns the exhibition space, as it were, into his studio, while the machine creates portraits in which we cannot tell how much is real, reinforcing the idea that our selves are constructed via interactions with the other, in this era when the other is increasingly a technological entity.

A final point worth noting is that the artist has opted to broadcast all his countless portraits via an audiovisual technique that harks back to the beginnings of television. Is this a way of telling us that in terms of artificial intelligence, we have a very long way to go, while AI has lately become one of us?

What the machine sees

For centuries, artists have learned how to depict the human body by drawing naked bodies. So it's hardly surprising we've ended up teaching machines the same way. But there is a problem. It is not so much to do with the algorithms themselves as with the data fed to them. There has been an overriding tendency to supply them exclusively with visuals portraying a notional Western human being. **Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm** has tried to get over this bias by collecting thousands of nude photographs that reflect our diversity in terms of gender, age and ethnicity.

With a learning process of this kind, it's easy to suppose that the machine will tend to depict a person who is an overall composite, a hybrid of all of us. In fact, it keeps endlessly attempting to do so, generating thousands of depictions in which we might all recognize bits of ourselves here or there. But it is the monstrosities it occasionally comes up with that most makes us wonder how it sees us.



© **Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm**,
An algorithmic gaze II, 2023. Installation générative

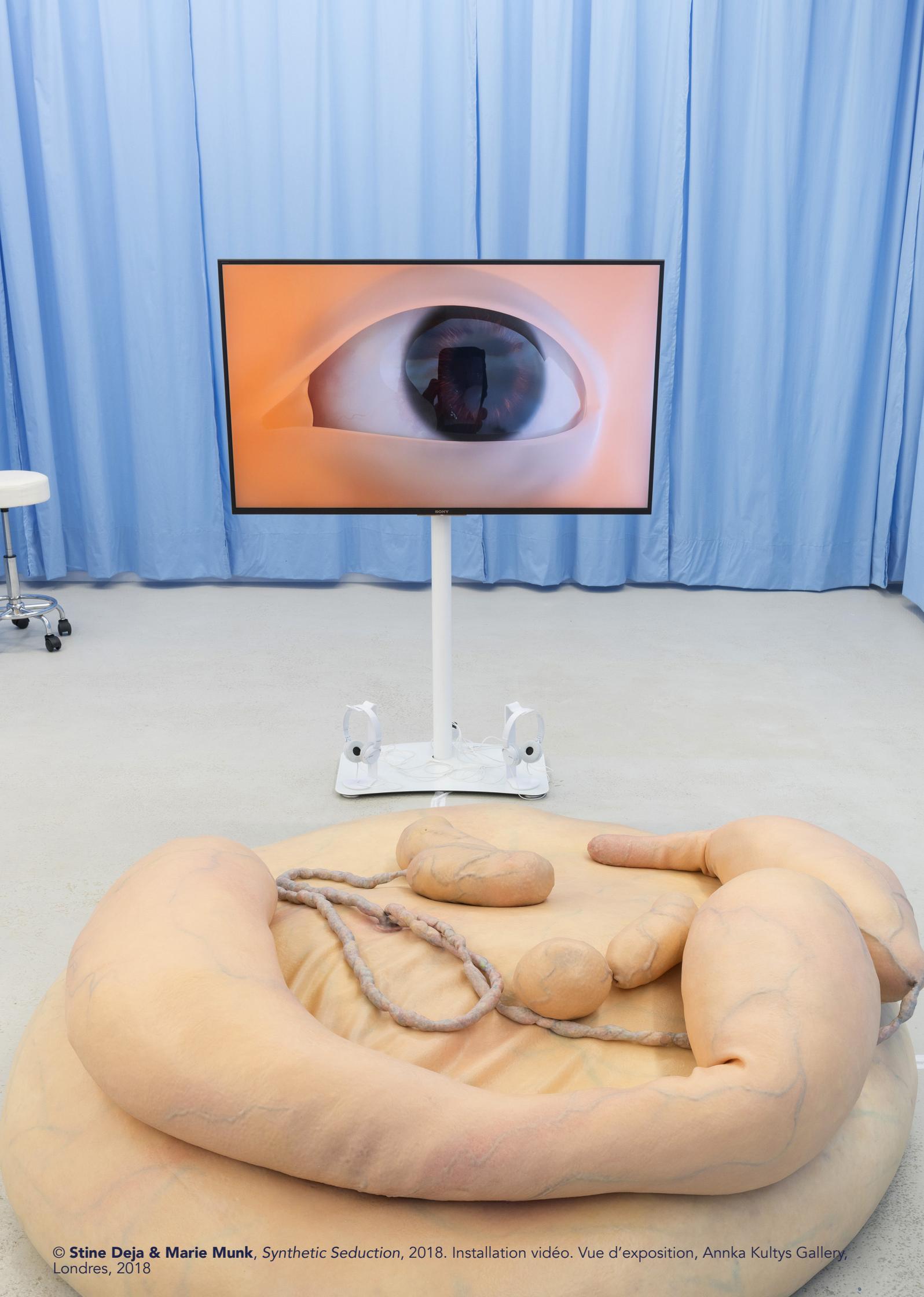
Featured artists : Stine Déjà & Marie Munk, Jeppe Hein, Mogens Jacobsen, Jakob Kudsk Steensen, Jens Settergren and Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm

The exhibition is part of the fifth edition of **Némo, the International Digital Arts Biennial of the Île-de-France Region produced by CENTQUATRE-PARIS, from September 30, 2023 to January 7, 2024**, which will be held in 22 venues across the region over a period of three months, with installations, exhibitions and performances, blending digital arts with science and performing arts.

The exhibition was supported by: Beckett-Fonden, Danish Arts Foundation and William Demant Fonden.

Collaboration with the Frac des Pays de la Loire.

A full programme of events linked to the exhibition will shortly be on line at www.lebicolore.dk.



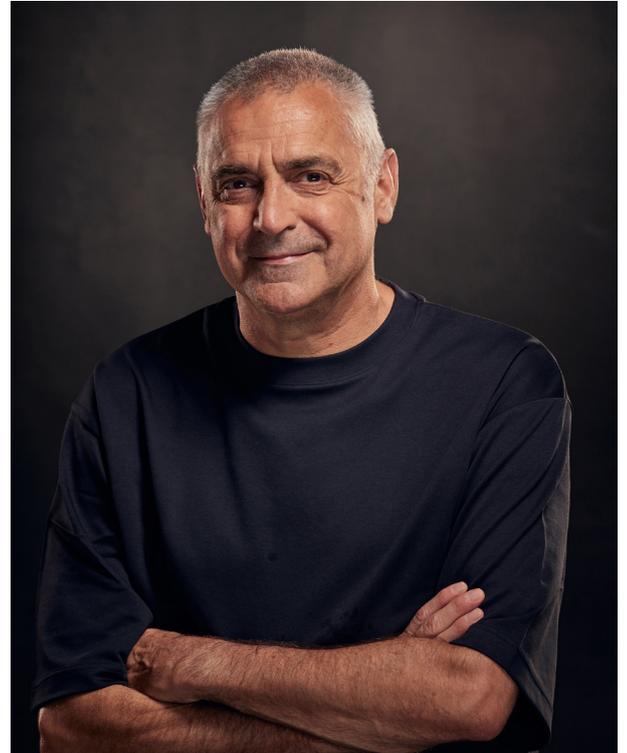
© Stine Deja & Marie Munk, *Synthetic Seduction*, 2018. Installation vidéo. Vue d'exposition, Annka Kultys Gallery, Londres, 2018

Exhibition curator's biography

Dominique Moulon is a freelance curator, art critic and teacher. He studied visual arts at the École nationale supérieure d'art (ENSA) in Bourges and holds a doctorate in Arts et sciences de l'art. He is a member of the Digital Art Museum (DAM) and the Association française des commissaires d'exposition (C-E-A) and has curated exhibitions for the Ars Longa, Vanessa Quang, Julio Gonzalez, Vossen, Plateforme, 24 Beaubourg and Charlot galleries, the Show Off and Variation art fairs, the Centre d'Art de la Maison populaire de Montreuil, the Cité internationale des arts, the Centre Culturel Canadien, the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, the Topographie de l'Art, Le Bourget's La Capsule, the NFT and A.dition galleries in Seoul, and Bozar and the Senne Gallery in Brussels.

He has been associate curator of NémO, the Île-de-France Region's International Digital Arts Biennial, since 2015. He belongs to the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and has written many articles for exhibition catalogues, collective publications and specialist magazines.

He currently works with the journals ArtPress, TK-21 and Art in the Digital Age and coordinates MoocDigital.paris. His books include *Art Beyond Digital* (2018), *Art et numérique en résonance* (2015), *Contemporary New Media Art* (2013) and *Masterpieces of the 21st Century* (2021), the last three published by Nouvelles Éditions Scala. Dominique Moulon is a member of the Observatoire des mondes numériques en sciences humaines (OMNSH) and the Réseau national des arts hybrides et cultures numériques (HACNUM). He teaches at the City of Paris École professionnelle supérieure d'arts graphiques (EPSAA) and the School of the Art Institute (SAIC) of Chicago.



Dominique Moulon © Anka Studio

Biography of the artists

- Stine Deja -

Born in Denmark in 1986 and currently based in London, Stine Deja received her MA from the Royal College of Art in 2015 and her BA in Interaction Design from Kolding School of Design in 2012.

Deja's practice explores the viscous interstice between real and virtual worlds, using a striking arsenal of media that includes 3D animation, immersive installation, the moving image and digital surrogates. In Deja's simulated spaces, uncanny avatars teeter between the strange and the familiar, luring us with not-quite-real products informed by the artist's simultaneous fascination and revulsion with our hyper-commercialized contemporary culture. Beneath a sleek surface, multiple layers of social critique meld with absurdist aesthetics and tragicomic narratives to create a cybernetic landscape of fantasy and desire.

At the heart of all Deja's work is a keen interest in how these heightened emotional states, often fanned by late capitalist narratives of self-care and guilt-free indulgence, are projected onto the body.



Portrait Stine Deja & Marie Munk

- Marie Munk -

Marie Munk was born in Denmark in 1988 and currently lives and works in Copenhagen. She received her MA from the Royal College of Art in London in 2016.

She is an interdisciplinary artist, working with sculpture, installation, video and performance. She is concerned with how technological innovation, in which information technology, biotechnology and the world of commerce overlap and interfere with each other, characterizes and dominates our environment, our behaviour and our bodies. Munk is driven by the urge to create alternative realities that manage to be cute, whimsical and playful at the same time as weird, horrifying and disgusting.

Blending sci-fi and humour in equal doses, Munk's work comments on both the familiar present and an uncertain future. She uses an uncanny visual language to diagnose the ills of society by examining our relationship with the body. Using silicone as a metaphor for corporeality, Munk creates bizarre hypothetical scenarios that explore current social trends.

Marie Munk exhibits internationally either solo or together with artist Stine Deja. In 2018 Munk and Deja were awarded by the Danish Arts Foundation for their collaborative project *Synthetic Seduction* at KH7 Artspace.



Portrait Stine Deja & Marie Munk

Biography of the artists

- Jeppe Hein -

Jeppe Hein is a Danish artist based in Berlin. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in Copenhagen and the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main.

Hein is widely known for his production of experiential, interactive artworks that stand at the intersection between art, architecture, and technical inventions. Featuring a unique combination of formal simplicity and frequent use of humour, his works engage in a lively dialogue with the traditions of Minimalist sculpture and Conceptual art of the 1970s.

They often feature startling and intriguing elements that place viewers at the centre of events and focus on their experiences and perceptions of the space around them.



© Jeppe Hein, Portrait 2022
Photo by Jan Strempele Photography

- Mogens Jacobsen -

Mogens Jacobsen has been working with digital art for 30 years and is a pioneer in the field of Internet art. He includes both physical and digital elements in his projects, making works that have a physical and a digital existence or react to people, surroundings, and online data.

Mogens Jacobsen works with objects and installations that take the form of speculative things and machines, with a critical apparatus that invites reflection. His works investigate systems and the aesthetics of rules and algorithms.



Portrait Mogens Jacobsen

Biography of the artists

- Jakob Kudsk Steensen -

Jakob Kudsk Steensen's art takes the form of environmental storytelling. Using 3D worldbuilding, spatial sound and large-scale installations, he creates poetic interpretations of overlooked natural phenomena in video, photo, audio, game and virtual reality formats. His projects use intuitions, sensations, memories and imaginings to create experiences that help people connect more deeply with real-world environments.

His projects are constructed through extensive periods of fieldwork and developed in collaboration with field biologists, composers, scientists and writers. Key collaborators include the musician Arca, the composer and music Director of the Philip Glass Ensemble Michael Riesman, the ornithologist and author Dr. H. Douglas Pratt, the architect Sir David Adjaye OBE RA, the South Korean pop band BTS, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde.



Portrait Jakob Kudsk Steensen
© Bastian Thiery

- Jens Settergren -

Jens Settergren (b. 1989, DK) explores contemporary interconnections between nature and technology and their effect on and connection with images. He is interested in the power of images and the differing interpretations they can give rise to. He also alters and tweaks images to explore society's collective fears and fantasies, seeking out impressive, arresting images and icons and placing everyday objects and commercial images in unfamiliar contexts.

Using video, photography, sculpture, sound and digital animation, he reflects on art as a means of renegotiating alternative narratives and examining the various forces that shape our reality.

Jens Settergren graduated from the Jutland Academy of Fine Arts in 2016.



Portrait Jens Settergren

Biography of the artists

- Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm -

Danish artist Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm focuses on ARTificial Intelligence, machine learning, discourse theory and what it means to be human. She studied fine art at the University of the Arts London and the Royal College of Art.

Her work has been exhibited in London, Beijing and Copenhagen, and she has received several distinctions, including a TECHNE award in the UK and (twice) the Lumen Prize (one of the world's most prestigious awards for digital art). Her artwork *Tech for Democracy* (2021), an animated film shown on four screens that explores the space occupied by artificial intelligence and its influence in today's democracies and societies, is currently being shown at CENTQUATRE-PARIS as part of NémO, the Île-de-France Region's International Digital Arts Biennial, from 30 September 2023 to 7 January 2024.



Portrait Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm

Le Bicolore

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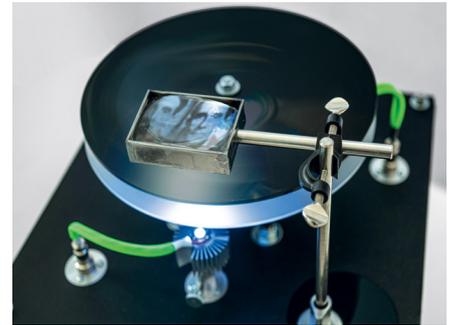
Press visuals



© **Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm**,
An algorithmic gaze II, 2023.
Generative installation



© **Stine Deja & Marie Munk**,
Synthetic Seduction, 2018.
Video installation.
Exhibition view, Annka Kultys
Gallery, London, 2018



© **Mogens Jacobsen**, *No us but one of*



© **Jakob Kudsk Steensen**, *Aquaphobia*, 2017.
Video installation. Courtesy of the artist



© **Jens Settergren**, *GhostBlind Loading*, 2021.
Audio installation. Photo Stine Deja



© **Jakob Kudsk Steensen**
Aquaphobia, 2017. Video installation.
Courtesy of the artist



© **Stine Deja & Marie Munk**,
Synthetic Seduction: Foreigner.
Three-dimensional sequence, 5'10



© **Jens Settergren**, *GhostBlind Loading*, 2021.
Audio installation. Photo Julie Nymann



Stine Deja & Marie Munk,
Synthetic Seduction, 2018. Video installation.
Exhibition view, KH7 Artspace, Aarhus,
Denmark, 2018

Le Bicolore

Maison du
Danemark

LE BICOLORE

Le Bicolore is a contemporary art platform located in the Maison du Danemark, on the Champs-Élysées. Its exhibition space is complemented by a strong online presence. Podcasts, articles, digital events, virtual tours and videos are just some of the cultural experiences on offer.

The name "Le Bicolore" is an affectionate nod to the French national flag, the Tricolore. While endorsing the values of equality and diversity, Le Bicolore is dual, ambivalent and endlessly open to interpretation. Observing the world through the lens of Danish culture, it invites us to see both sides of the coin. Curiosity is Le Bicolore's watchword, and its programme gives pride of place to topical issues, freedom of thought and controversial subjects. Everything is open to question at Le Bicolore, which beckons visitors to join in a conversation between the French and Danish arts scenes.

Le Bicolore endeavours to fathom, catalyse and reflect the creative dynamics at work in Denmark and the world today, starting from the premise that aesthetic and sensory experiences are as vital as meetings and debate in conveying ideas. The aim is to provide memorable experiences that will spark curiosity about Denmark.

Press preview at 5:00 p.m. on 07.12.2023

The artists will be in attendance.

Visitor preview at 7.00 p.m. on 07.12.2023

The artists will be in attendance.

**The exhibition will be closed from 21.12.2023
to 01.01.2024 inclusive**

Admission free

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Le Bicolore Maison du
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