



Fotografiska
Berlin

Eli Cortiñas

The Machine Monologs – Part I: The Storm

Press Preview & Opening: 22 Aug 2024, 18:00

Runtime: 23 Aug – 1 Dec 2024

In a world shaped by war, political unrest, technological revolution and climate change, many experience a deeply unsettling feeling and lack of control. While most might aim to have a positive impact on the world, one question still lingers: what does being “human” mean nowadays? Who are we becoming, and how much agency do we have in the systems that surround and govern us?

The Machine Monologs – Part I: The Storm is the first part of a series of audio-visual installations by video artist Eli Cortiñas, opening 22 August 2024 at Fotografiska Berlin. At the center of this work, humanoid robots, avatars and chatbots engage in monologs about the troubles of our times. We listen to their thoughts and concerns, ranging from anthropocentric thinking and a growing disconnection from nature, to the impact of rampant technocapitalism, extractivism and autocratic regimes. But where do their words come from? Do they stem from our collective consciousness which inevitably runs through their engines? While scientists debate the presence of consciousness in A.I. and robotics, Cortiñas raises the question: are these beings capable of more humanity than humans?

The work explores how machines and contemporary technology have become integral to everyday life, influencing, designing and perhaps dominating human activities and behavior. At the same time, Cortiñas speaks to our human ability to share stories and to shift narratives toward new paths, offering a glimpse of critical hope amid a crisis of imagination.

Technology is far from neutral and thus needs to be critically challenged. *The Machine Monologs – Part I: The Storm* showcases different avatars that perform longstanding archetypes of femininity, prompting reflections on how current A.I. and robotics reinforce biases. We are welcomed in the exhibition by an avatar whose lips are synchronized with scripted lines spoken by a voice actress, creating an uncanny human-like illusion.



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We also encounter repetitive loops of drone footage, as well as references to on-demand services, apps and gig economy jobs, showing the growing use of automated systems that further disconnect humans from nature and social ties. It raises questions about how rupture and division define our daily lives, impacting how we work, live and learn – not least with the turn to search engines, chatbots and virtual A.I. assistants. Our search for knowledge is changing, but to what extent does A.I. reinforce a patriarchal construction of knowledge? And what would happen if we turned toward other forms of knowledge that we might find in nature and different cosmologies?

As with other works by Eli Cortiñas, *The Machine Monologs – Part I: The Storm* doesn't offer easy answers. Instead, the artist uses intricate montage, humor and joy as tools for dissent, critical reflection and resistance. She encourages us to rethink the material and virtual reality at the core of our existence, and the humanity that underlies it.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Eli Cortiñas is a video artist born in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. She has been a guest professor at the Academy of Art in Kassel and Mainz and has shared a professorship for Spatial Strategies with Candice Breitz at the University of Art Braunschweig. In 2022 she was appointed professor of Media Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig.

Cortiñas has received numerous grants and residencies, including the Botín Foundation, Kunstfonds, Villa Massimo, Berlin Senate Scholarship, Villa Sträuli, Goethe Institute, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Rupert and Karl Schmidt Rottluff. Her work is part of public collections such as the Museo Nacional Reina Sofía, the Collection Video-Forum – Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.), the Kunstsammlung des Landes NRW - Sammlung Aachen-Kornelimünster, the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, the Kunstmuseum Bonn and the YAKS Foundation, among others.

Eli Cortiñas' work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions in institutions such as the Museum Ludwig, Kunsthalle Budapest, CAC Vilnius, SCHIRN Kunsthalle, SAVVY Contemporary, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Museum Marta Herford, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Centre Georges Pompidou, Museum of Modern Art Moscow, Kunstmuseum Bonn and MUSAC et al, as well as in biennials and international festivals such as the Ural Industrial Biennial, the Riga Biennial, the Moscow International Biennial of Young Art, the Mardin Biennial, the Oberhausen International Festival, the Vila Do Conde International Festival, the Filmoteca Española and the Nashville Film Festival. She lives and works in Berlin.

CREDITS

The exhibition is curated by Marina Paulenka (Director of Exhibitions at Fotografiska Berlin).



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PRESS PREVIEW

On Thursday, 22 August 2024 at 18:00, we will open the exhibitions *Eli Cortiñas: The Machine Monologs. Part I: The Storm* and *Lukas Städler: Hain* to the press. You are invited to join a press and members tour with the artists at 18:00. Following the tour or the visit of the exhibitions, join the opening program in the Café Bar, starting at 19:30.

Please RSVP to immanuel.ayx@fotografiska.com and let us know if you would like to join the artist tour.

ABOUT FOTOGRAFISKA

Fotografiska is the contemporary museum of photography, art and culture. With locations in Stockholm, Berlin, New York, Tallinn and Shanghai, Fotografiska exhibits world renowned artists as well as local, emerging talent. Exhibitions change almost every month to continuously inspire new perspectives. From its restaurant and bars to its parties and talks, the museum offers a social and cultural experience – open late every day, from 10:00 to 23:00.

Fotografiska Berlin
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Opening daily from 10:00 to 23:00.

INSTAGRAM

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PRESS

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