



Michael Rakowitz, Joe Heywood's paraSITE shelter, 2000.
Battery Park City, Manhattan.
Plastic bags, polyethylene tubing, hooks, tape.

Machines for Future From Counterproductive to Protest Machines

VK @ eLab

Communication Guerilla / Communication Machines / Protest Machines / Error Machines / Adbusting / Reclaim the data / Technoshamanism / Culture Jamming / Low Tech Retro Communication Machines

Prof. Julian Adenauer

Prof. Barbara Junge

Begleitung:

Elena Falomo

Hauptstudium, WS 2019/20

Quest

Meanwhile, the Greens are ahead of the CDU in polls. Pushed forward by Fridays for Future, the citizens seem far ahead of politics. Driving diesel is the new smoking, a new protest culture is emerging. Protest movements have always been an important civic contribution to political participation and thus to the transformation of cultural and value systems.

We think this is great and we don't want to stand idly by. We would like to try to throw sand into the gears. We are interested in inventing new tools on the border between art and activism for networking, communication and protest. These can be new ways to make problems interactively visible and understandable, data collecting bots or new communication machines (physical or virtual) to actively interfere in public space. The medium – but also the theme – of our protest are hardware and software machines: Physical Computing or networked Apps.

We are planning an exhibition in April where we want to present the results.

Machine culture

When the ancient Greeks spoke about “techne”—they did not differentiate between art and technology. While design under contemporary conditions has become omnipresent (and has mostly the function of aestheticization) machines have always been ambivalent. They relieve us of work and they take away our work. They store enormous knowledge and amputate us at the same time. AI reproduces our thought structures and thus unnoticed our prejudices. Due to the polished interface surfaces, errors & manipulations become less and less verifiable - an almost religious belief in data and technological progress remains. What was once promised to us as a happy, networked world has brought a seemingly incompatible social division into the various filter bubbles and, moreover, a loss of self-determination and human dignity. The enormous computing capacities are being used to waste resources instead of using them profitably. So... is it time for a new wave of machine breakers, like it was the idea of the Luddites, english textile workers in the 19th century?

Protest culture

Protest is a multi-faceted social phenomenon that not only manifests itself in the form of social movements and political organizations, but also in personal initiative, grassroots activism and new forms of artistic expression. It is an independent cultural domain whose aesthetics, practices and narratives are themselves regularly re-used and counteracted by the media, advertisers and even political actors.

We are interested in subversive and innovative forms of protest, such as communication guerrilla, in which information or disinformation is specifically used to achieve goals. For example the „Google bomb“ came up in 1999 when the search term „more evil than satan himself“ was used to refer to Microsoft’s website. In culture jamming, strategies from conventional product advertising are adopted, caricatured and sometimes led to absurdity, e.g. the magazine Adbusters (adbusters.org) tries to use attention as the main resource of the media society to rebel against the terror of the consumer society. However, we are also interested in concrete tools that can be reproduced, copied and further developed by activists themselves.

Workflow + technical Support

At the beginning of the Semester we are planning a **physical Computing Intro** by Elena Falomo. Here the first hurdles of the design with sensors and actuators & programming are to be taken. Elena will continue to accompany the course for the critical development of the results. Additionally Julian Adenauer will hold an Intro into **Bot Programming** – datadriven Programming with APIs for screenbased and networked Websites or Apps.

Time + Place

Monday 10 o’clock:

weekly fixed meeting date (normally until about 15h, but pls block the whole day),

group or individual consultations

Wednesday 10 – 13 o’clock: if required

Grades

In the timetable you find some Milestones. These Milestones (in form of a Presentation and a PDF) beside a final documentation, are mandatory for getting the grade for this project.

Timetable

Project Machines for Future

Monday fixed meeting date, Wednesday as needed

Oct	14.–18.	x	Mon, 14 Oct 12h General Assembly VK Enrolment Projects + Courses Fr 18 Oct: MA + BA final presentations Courses: 15.10. - 25.10. Mandatory for VK students	
	21.–25.	x	Courses: 15.10. – 25.10. Mandatory for VK students	
	28.–01.	1	Mon, 28 Oct First meeting 10h , Location C102 Input, Brainstorming about Topics, Distribution Short Lectures (Derivation from Brainstorming) Ideenlabor Designthinking Sprint (enquired) Rest of the week: Elena Falomo: Intro Robots (Physical Computing) @eLab (Check Transmediale Tickets for Early Bird)	
Nov	04.–08.	2	Mon, 4 Oct. 10h Short presentations and 1st Sprint for Ideas Rest of the week: Julian Adenauer - Intro Bots (Coding for Screen)	
	11.–15.	3	Mon, 11 Nov. Elaboration of the Idea, as required individual consultation (please arrange appointments with us) 13 Nov 10h Milestone 1 Presentation + submission as PDF in Incom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic (short text) • Research on the topic, context, examples of artworks in the field • 3 sketched variants for implementation 	
	18.–22.	4	Wed 20th Nov: Q&A Elena Falomo (please arrange appointments with her)	
	25.–29.	5	Wed 27th Nov: Q&A Elena Falomo	
	Dec	02.–06.	6	2nd Nov. 10h – project internal intermediate pre-presentation Milestone 2 Presentation + submission as PDF in Incom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic (short text) • Decision for a variant • first simulation • First technical prototypes (testing for technical problems)
09.–13.		7	Dec 9 – 12, Workshop in Sauen („Kurzzeitprojekt“) Mandatory for VK students, led by Weishaupt + Hübner	
16.–20.		8	16/17 Dec - VK Intermediate Presentations (Department VK) Milestone 3 Presentation + submission as PDF in Incom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic (short text) • finished Simulation 	
23.–27.		x	Christmas break	
30.–03.		x	Christmas break	
Jan		06.–10.	9	Start of implementation
		13.–17.	10	Wednesday: Q&A Elena Falomo
	20.–24.	11	Wednesday: Q&A Elena Falomo	
	27.–31.	12	Wednesday: Q&A Elena Falomo 28 Jan – 01 Mar Transmediale	
Feb	03.–07.	13	03. February 10h: Internal pre-presentation	
	10.–14.	14	10.+11. Feb Final Presentations (Department VK)	
	17.–21.	x	(BA Qualification Test)	
until April	x	Semesterbreak: finishing projects + prepare documentation		
April		Exhibition		