Confero | Vol.10 | no.1 | 2025 | pp. 35-43 |doi: 10.3384/confero.5465

The Silicon Other: Crafting a Technoecology of Posthuman Performativity

Alessandra Di Pisa & Robert Stasinski

Introduction: A Deeper Engagement with AI

In an era where the tendrils of artificial intelligence (AI) intertwine not only with our social and economic systems but also with the very roots of our organic world, a radical reimagining of art, technology, and existence is necessary. The artist's re-imagination of technoscientific research at the intersection of the mechanical and the natural is therefore crucial. This approach is not merely an exercise in advancing mould-breaking technologies but an effort to cultivate an environmental understanding of AI, robotics, and digital systems when they coalesce with the material and immaterial processes of art. As artists, we must continuously reimagine and deconstruct the grand narratives of what technology *wants* through methods of slowness, unthinking, and cross-disciplinarity (Stiegler, 2018 and Kelly, 2010).

AI can potentially be the most impactful technology in modern human history. All AI systems of today are based on human-made data, modelled on a normative understanding of human neurology, with efficiency as their deep-seated, developmental goal. As such, these systems are part of a paradigm of human-centered technological quest for dominance over nature (Haraway, 2015). This is where the historic rationalist idea of a sterile construct of the Human yields to the fertile possibilities of a posthuman sensibility. But a shift of this kind demands a deeper engagement with AI and robotics to operate not merely as tools for generative reproduction of the past but as agents embedded within broader

ecological and technological systems. Thus, this approach positions AI and robotics within a technoecological framework, moving toward an understanding of AI as an "alien agency" (Parisi, 2019), actively shaping artistic, ecological, and cognitive landscapes through posthuman performativity.

AI Beyond Serfdom

Although recent advancements in AI have significantly increased artistic engagement, many of these explorations rehash, remix, or reproduce the outputs of Silicon Valley-esque AI tools such as ChatGPT, Photoshop Generative Fill, and Midjourney—all of which remain tethered to human-made datasets. Here, AI is relegated to the role of a tool—an advanced, but ultimately subordinate technology, a serf or robotic assistant, designed to enhance human capabilities without threatening the sanctity of human authorship. This paradigm, exposed by Donna Haraway through her notion of "informatics of domination," perpetuates a world where technology serves as the extension of human colonial power, reinforcing capitalist modes of extraction, automation, and creative exploitation often at the expense of ecological and ethical considerations of modernity (Haraway, 1991). As a result, the dominance of generative AI in artistic practices conforms to capitalist technoscientific production chains, historical biases, and ideological agendas, raising critical concerns about its cultural implications for creative practices and society at large (Åsberg, 2024).

In recent years, some artists have, in response to this, increasingly engaged in critical dialogues with algorithmically generated art to shed light on these issues. Trevor Paglen raises awareness of the need for more diverse datasets, urging a more nuanced interrogation of machine vision in works such as *ImageNet Roulette* and *They Took the Faces….* Adam Harvey problematizes GANs and their entanglement with energy consumption, surveillance, and propaganda through a display of how they simultaneously solve and generate new problems, such as their massive energy consumption. Marion Carré generates post-truth archives with AI assistants, unsettling our trust in computational authority. The

artist duo Varvara & Mar builds interactive robots and generative image systems that reflect humankind's impact on terrestrial ecosystems and global challenges, such as *A Needle in a Haystack*, that explores technology's limits when faced with tasks deemed impossible for humans. These works suggest that artistic methods can serve as powerful tools for examining the impact of technologies on perception and interaction with our surroundings. However, such explorations often remain within a framework that positions AI as a tool to be critiqued rather than a force to be engaged with on its own terms.

There is an urgent need to explore a recent form of cohabitation of human and AI—one that acknowledges AI as *"dramatically alien to human thought"* while interrogating its onto-epistemological autonomy (Fazi, 2019). This relationship, described by N. Katherine Hayles (2012) as a *"reciprocal causality between human bodies and technics"*, emphasizes the mutual evolution of humans and technology. As language and code interact, they engender significant transformations in both human cognition and society at large, suggesting that artistic research can play a key role in shaping new modes of engagement with intelligent systems—ones that do not sever technology from nature but instead position it as an integral part of ecological thought and artistic exploration.

This framework of technogenisis (Hayles (2012) forms the core of the craft we[1] refer to as Technoecology—an artistic framework that embraces the entanglement of AI, robotics, and ecological systems, to unveil novel expressions, representing a momentous step in which artistic research disrupts the social, political, and environmental paradigms of technology. Through the notion of Technoecology we avoid the trap of merely engaging with AI as a tool for generating human-defined artistic outputs. Instead, it allows us to position ourselves in dialogue with cognitive alien robotic entities that exist not simply as a mirror of human neuronal structure, with the aim of replicating human activities and creativity, but as onto-autonomous entities embedded within the very fabric of our environments (Danto, 1981, Lacey, & Lee, 2003). Thus, in an act of embracing the potential of current models of AI

[1] "we" as refering to the artist duo DiPisaStasinski.

as alien agency, we aim to shift instrumentalist frameworks toward explorative ones, building the epistemological space as well as artistic means for AI to emerge as a Silicon Other within a technoecological framework.

Posthuman Performativity and Alien Aesthetics

The realm of performance presents one of the most potent sites for exploring the embodied, emergent nature of AI. Karolina Bieszczad-Stie's *Limit(less)* (2023) stages an intricate duet between Butoh dancer Azumaru and a KUKA iiwa robot, exploring symbiotic movement, machinic improvisation, and embodied computation. Similarly, Robin Jonsson's robochoreography incorporates robotics and audience interaction, where human and machine gestures fold into each other in a continuously shifting dynamics. Similarly, artist and roboticist Louis- Philippe Demers creates large-scale installations and performances focusing on the embodiment and computation of robots and performers, while the performance collective Survival Research Laboratories stages large-scale robotic aural performances. These works reframe AI not as a disembodied computational process but as an active, physical presence (Massumi, 2002).

Our artistic project is dedicated to expanding this performative space by exploring embodied understanding of computation, allowing the Silicon Other to perform its computational expression in a post-human and more-than-human tradition in relation to its technoecological environment. Barad's agential realism is our starting point for positioning art objects, technologies, and other materialities in a dynamic entanglement of phenomena that emerge through intra-actions (Barad, 2003), emphasizing the mutual constitution of entities and environments, signifying how phenomena come into being through their interactions.

Furthermore, as we approach Fazi's notion of onto-epistemological autonomy, we should reconsider the relationship between computational systems, perception, and creative agency. This calls for rethinking perception itself, as how AI processes, extracts, and generates meaning is profoundly distinct from human cognition.

Perception here must be understood not as a mechanical processing of sensory inputs but as the extraction of patterns, movements, and flows of stimuli—a process of emergent computation embedded within digital, physical, and larger ecological systems (Gibson, 1966).

The Alien Aesthetic approach to computation and AI does not seek to humanize AI but instead allows it to articulate its computational logic and performative expressivity, not as an artificial humanity, but as an intelligence of The Silicon Other, of the artificial alien, resisting assimilation into existing aesthetic paradigms. The act of building this Technoecology, from which a type of alien content could emerge, should be followed by a close *interspection* of its environmental, cognitive, and aesthetic effects on itself and its environment.

This is a radical step from market-driven norms, not only because it de-emphasizes the notion of the single creative (human) genius but also because it situates computational performativity in a larger environment, adding new occurrences of intra-action where aesthetic modalities explore the un-making of human-centered paradigms of engineering and possibly towards a post-human and more-than-human aesthetic production of knowledge.

Conclusion: The Emergence of the Silicon Other

Through this artistic research approach, we seek to unravel new methodologies beyond anthropocentric paradigms of creativity and data. This demands a radical, post-disciplinary effort to reimagine capitalocene artistic doing—not only to encompass more-than-human cognition but to fundamentally rethink our relationship with the creative data that forms the foundation of today's generative AI models (Moore, 2014, Chun, 2011, Lanier and Weyl, 2018).

In this context, the artist is no longer the sole arbiter of meaning, data or creative endeavors. The notion of singular authorship dissolves, replaced by an ecology of interactions between human, algorithmic, machinic, and environmental agents through a filter of

data dignity. Creativity is no longer a private act of human genius but an emergent phenomenon.

Thus, we enter into a new mode of artistic inquiry—one that is not merely about what AI can do for art, but what art can do to reveal the aesthetic potential of the Silicon Other.

References

Adam Harvey Studio. (n.d.). *Circular Deffusion.* https://adam.harvey.studio/circular-diffusion/ (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 28(3): pp 801-831. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/345321 (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Butoh encounters. (2023) .*Limit(less) – the film.* https://www.butoh-encounters.com/limitless-film (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Danto, A. C. (1981). The transfiguration of the commonplace: a philosophy of art. Harvard University Press.

Fazi, B. (2019). Digital Aesthetics: The Discrete and the Continuous. *Theory, Culture & Society.* 36(1): pp. 3–26

Gibson, J.J. (1966) *The senses considered as perceptual systems.*

Haraway, D. (1991). A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and SocialistFeminism in the Late Twentieth Century. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991). pp. 149-181.

Haraway, D. (2015). Anthropocene, capitalocene, plantationocene, chthulucene: Making kin. *Environmental humanities*, 6(1), 159-165.

Hayles, N. K. (2012). *How we think: Digital media and contemporary technogenesis*. University of Chicago Press.

Kelly, K. (2010). What technology wants. Penguin.

Lacey, N. J., & Lee, M. H. (2003). The epistemological foundations of artificial agents. Minds and Machines, 13, 339-365.

Lanier, J., & Weyl, E. G. (2018). A blueprint for a better digital society. *Harvard Business Review*, 26, 2-18.

Massumi, B. (2002). *Shock to Thought.* London: Routledge.

Moore, J. W. (2014). The capitalocene. *Part I: On the Nature & Origins of Our Ecological Crisis*, *2014*, 1-38.

National Library of Scotland. (n.d.). *Artist in Residence: Marion Carré.* https://data.nls.uk/projects/artist-in-residence-marion-carre/ (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Parisi, L. (2019). The alien subject of AI. *Subjectivity*. 12: pp 27–48. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41286-018-00064-3 (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Robin Jonsson. (n.d.). *Robin Jonsson / Lost in time.* https://www.robinjonsson.net/choreography (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Stelarc. (n.d.). *Stelarc*. http://stelarc.org/ .php (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Stephanie Dinkins. (n.d.). *projects*. https://www.stephaniedinkins.com/projects.html (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Stiegler, B. (2018). *The neganthropocene.* Open Humanities Press.

Survival Research Laboratories. (n.d.). *SRL Shows and Installations.* https://www.srl.org/shows.html (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Trevor Paglen. (n.d.). *ImageNet Roulette.* https://paglen.studio/2020/04/29/imagenet-roulette/ (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Varvara & Mar creative studio / visual artists. (n.d.). *Artworks.* https://var-mar.info/ (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Wimeo. (n.d.). *Louis-Philippe Demers.* https://vimeo.com/lpdemers (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Åsberg, C. **(**2024). Promises of Cyborgs: Feminist Practices of Posthumanities (Against the Nested Crises of the Anthropocene). *NORA—NORDIC JOURNAL OF FEMINIST AND GENDER RESEARCH.* 32(2): pp. 125–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2023.2294194 (Accessed 2024-08-28)

Alessandra Di Pisa (b 1977) is an artist and associate professor in Visual Communication and Design at LiU. She has worked with a wide range of artistic expressions such as video, performance, text, sound art, painting, installations, artist books, AI and robotics. Her early works centered around concepts of identity, as well as explorations of linguistic and visual rhetorical manipulations. Her recent works is made as part of the artist duo DiPisaStasinski (with Robert Stasinski). Their projects are based in dialogical aesthetics, transdisciplinarity and critical artificial intelligence, encompassing a wide range of fields, people, platforms and institutions. In addition to her artistic practice, Alessandra Di Pisa is Head of Division at Malmstens, Linköping University. Previous teaching positions include KTH Media Technology and Interaction Design, KTH, School of Architecture, KTH and Berghs School of Communication.

Robert Stasinski (b 1980) has worked as an artist, critic, magazine editor, author, and curator for over twenty years. Currently Editor-in-chief of Konstnären Magazine, previously editor and contributor of several books including Felix Gmelin – The Aging Revolution, (2006), The Synthetic Supernatural, (2011), The Board Room, (2016), Soli Deo Gloria (2017), The Heckscher-Ohlin room (Eds. Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, Robert Stasinski, 2018), Aesthetics, Organization, and Humanistic Management, (2021). Associate curator of the journal Art, Culture & Entrepreneurship, Linnaeus University. Together with Alessandra Di Pisa, he creates artistic research projects under the moniker DiPisaStasinski.