Leiden University- The Ghost in the Machine

Today we give the floor to a new crop of curators and artists, with students from eight art academies and universities putting together a programme of new work, remixes of films or short historical avant-garde films from EYE's collection. Leiden University presents The Ghost in the Machine.

Researchlab
Language: English
60 min.

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for 17 Feb 2018 12:00

17 Feb 2018

12:00

general information

▸ opening hours

"The Ghost in The Machine"
By: Maxime Botz, Anastassia Dalcolmo, Melissa Delmée Maletras and Lauren Spencer

The film program "The Ghost In The Machine" tackles different aspects of the impact of machines – and technology – on our societies and the way we live our lives. Initially used as a critique of the Cartesian mind/body dualism, here it serves as an allegory for the way in which this dualism has evolved over the past decades. This raises new questions about the place that certain mediums have in our lives and societies. The reference to the 'ghost' as the mind, and the 'machine' as the body, is often invoked to indicate the split between a mechanical concept of the body and the mind as the animating spirit of the lifeless machine. Nowadays, our minds are literally inhabiting machines as our constant use of computers, social media and all the like, transfers our animated spirits into these new technological bodies.There is a displacement of our minds and mental presence into new technological skins. Our constant use of these

technologies makes them our new hosts. This relationship we have with the machines is deeply dialectic as we have a tendency to see our bodies as machines and machines as bodies.

The choice and programming of the films is not chronological as the exploration of our relation to machines is timeless and gives us particularly relevant insights in today's technologically-driven lives. For instance, the precursor of skype created in *Amour et Science* (1912) forces us to face how this obsession with the machines that seemed so foreign then, is now just a conventional component of our lives. The entire program explores an aspect of this dualistic and dialectic relation that we have to machines through allegories and hints. This program doesn't aim to provide any answers but simply opens up a discussion and reflection on this ever more invading and porous relationship.

1. **M.J. Roche,** *Amour et Science***, 1912, 14.04 mins.**

A scientist develops the very first video phone and is so preoccupied with his invention that it leaves his fiancee neglected. In order to draw him away from his obsession, she concocts a plan to make him jealous. A comical scenario sprung from the absence of human interaction and a genius insight into how people imagined technologies back in the early 20th century that are so reminiscent of our own.

2. **Raul Marroquin,** *Computers Chat***, 1984, 3.00 mins.**

Originally an installation which was then recorded on video, this short clip displays the extraordinary dialogue between two computers and its surprisingly human characteristics.

3. **Segundo de Chomón,** *Le Rêve des Marmitons***, 1908, 5.26 mins.**

A comical silent film taking place in a kitchen where a group of scullions performs the daily tasks until they begin to fall asleep one by one. Having drifted away into their dreams, their chores are magically completed on their own.

4. **Martha Colburn,** *What's On?***, 1997, 1.46 mins.**

A visual assault of images originating from American pop culture and mass media, anything from nudity to celebrities such as Lady Di and Oprah, and politicians including Ronald Reagan to gameshows. Colburn's film creates a montage of images that we are already bombarded with on a daily basis through our use of media.
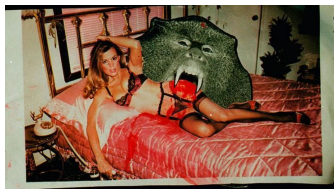
5. **Segundo de Chomón,** *Physique Diabolique***, 1912, 4.09 mins.**

A magnificent example of the so-called trick film, *Physique Diabolique* is a spectacle of special effects in early cinema showing the devil performing his magical powers. Some argue that de Chomón was an 'imitator' of Georges Méliès, using the same kind of special effects in his films.

6. **Ian Kerkhof, Frank Scheffer, Miriam Kruishoop, Rob Schröder and Alexander Oey,** *Sonic Fragment (extract: Sign of the Times: The End of Ego),* **2000, 2.10 mins.**

A digital montage with incorporation of technology, it consists of seven remixes of six short film and originally submitted for Sonic Fragment at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. The selected short film from the compilation featured in this programme will be *Sign of the Times: The End of Ego*.
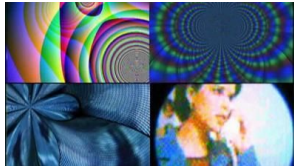
7. **Arianne Olthaar,** *Hotel Nachtclub***, 2011, 3.26 mins.**

Built in the seventies, the great luxurious hotels contained not only a restaurant, a hairdresser salon, a souvenir shop and a bar, but also a nightclub in the basement. Having visited the remaining hotels, filmmaker Arianne Olthaar juxtaposes an abandoned space with the sound of absent clubbers.

8. **Jean-Paul Vroom,** *Dinner***, 1969, 3.00 mins.**

A family sits at the dinner table without talking to one another with only the radio playing in the background and increasingly the awkward silence among the family members builds up to something unexpected.