



Materialising the Internet

6 October – 12 November 2017

The internet is privy to our desires and thoughts; it is interwoven with the world around us. We embrace the new possibilities it offers and effortlessly accept that the physical and digital are no longer separate spheres. But how does it affect our experience and how do we represent this complex, augmented reality?

These are the issues at stake in *Materialising the Internet*, in MU from 6 October to 12 November.

As a point of historical reference, the exhibition takes you to the stone age of the internet when new arrivals could create their own site on a free plot of 'land' in Geocities. This digital city was abolished in 2009, after fifteen years, but not before the Archive Team had documented large parts of it.



PRESS RELEASE

Opening

Friday 6 October from 20.00

Exhibition

6 October – 12 November 2017

Specials

DUTCH DESIGN WEEK

21 – 29 October 2017

Create Out Loud on *Materialising the Internet* and book launch

Meme tot Mainstream by

Nadine Roestenburg

Tuesday 24 October 18:00 – 20:00

For more info and updates please visit our [website](#).

IMAGE:
Clement Valla, Untitled (Still Life 3)

Richard Vijgen's *The Deleted City 3.0* allows you to virtually and physically roam the ruins of the early Digicene. A similar nostalgia for the days when the internet was still connected to websites and screens transpires from *Scrollbar Composition 2011* by Jan Robert Leegte that felicitously illustrates how the intangible is turned into solid matter. It finds itself in the good company of Jip de Beer's *Web Spaces* that translate the layered nature of virtual space into architectural 3D animations and precious 3D models of the most-visited websites in the world: those of Google, Facebook and YouTube.

Google's global mediation between physical space and virtual display – Earth, Maps, Street View – generates a stream of images that artists are all too happy to appropriate. MU is showing Clement Valla's famous *Postcards from Google Earth* for instance: screenshots of melting flyovers and bridges. The hallucinatory captures are an unintended but logical consequence of the way Google's software combines several sources into the illusion of a world where you're as free as a bird. In his recent work *Surface Proxy* Valla also investigates the construction of 3D models with pictures taken from different points of view. The value of individual images has become irrelevant, the only thing that matters now is the meta-data that can be abstracted from them: the basic principle of big data.

Joshua Citarella and Brad Troemel have their own unique way of creating value by combining existing images. In their *UV Production House* webstore they offer DIY concepts that were photoshopped from pictures of items in regular online stores. A purchased work will arrive in parts from separate suppliers and comes with a manual and a certificate of authentication. MU ordered several items, including the *Incense Fence*, a wire fence made of incense that will be lit at the opening. The smouldering work touches directly upon the fleetingness of the digital experience that Jeroen van Loon addresses head-on in *An Internet*. The intercontinental network of fibre optic cables is represented as an installation of glass tubes transporting digital smoke signals. Information is only created to evaporate – just like the internet itself is bound to become obsolete one day.

By now, over half the global population is online and they are joined by a million more users every day. To these fresh netizens a whole new world is opening up but to the early adapters and digital natives, using the net is no different from breathing. Their friendships, love and lust (► see next page) all thrive online, they work, shop and play in cyberspace – they think not taking their phone out during dinner amounts to an

About MU

MU is an adventurous guide in the suburbs of art of today and tomorrow, for a wide and mainly young audience.

MU offers breeding ground for hybrid talents. MU is an open and dynamic space. MU's program exudes the 21st-century practice of creative multidisciplinary collaboration.

extraordinary act of virtue. It's true. Since Apple introduced the iPhone in 2007, the smartphone has become an indispensable extension to billions of people. It all culminates in *The Cellular Aura* by Valerie van Zuijlen, an aura-reading technique that provides insight into the smartphone's soul – and that of its owner.

.....

► A special MU tip-off for the seasoned net-crawler out there: check the *Netflix & Chill Airbnb Room* by ART404 and Tom Galle that can only be booked during the exhibition – at Airbnb obviously.

.....

The impact of the internet on our personal lives is a recurring theme in the exhibition. Take *Life Needs Internet* for example, by Jeroen van Loon, who asked people around the world what the internet means to them. Or Dries Depoorter's *Get Popular Vending Machine* that lets you buy one-Euro scratch cards with a chance of winning up to 25,000 Twitter or Instagram followers. Lauren McCarthy pushes it even farther by acting as a digital assistant in people's households as *LAUREN*, a live version of Amazon's Echo. Would you give a complete stranger the same level of access to your life as those intelligent gizmos that hear and remember everything? And has it ever occurred to you that likeable, obliging Alexa is actually the voice of a multi-billion company out to optimise its control over your interaction with the world?

In 2011, MU already examined the relationship between reality and virtuality in the exhibition *After the Bit Rush: Design in a Post Digital Age* with cocurators Lucas Maassen and Unfold. Exploring how designers adapted to the advancing integration of the digital and the physical world, its main focus was on 3D production technology. Since then, 3D bioprinting has led to spectacular developments in medical science while another industrial revolution seems right around the corner. Only the creative applications of 3D printing haven't really met the expectations at the time. As a (self) critical update, MU now presents several contributions to *The 3D Additivist Cookbook* compiled by Moreshin Allahyari and Daniel Rourke. From Kuang-Yi Ku's *Fellatio Modification Project* to Matthew Hollings' *print_music* and Julien Deswaef & Matthew Plummer-Fernandez' *Shiv Integer Thingiverse* hack: plastic actually can be fantastic.

With Allahyari's own *Dead Drop Heads* we return to the ruins. Not to the devastation of the Digicene but to the Mosul Museum and Palmyra's antiquities, so viciously attacked by ISIS who triumphantly put their iconoclasm online for the world to see.

As an inadequate but better-than-nothing solution Allahyari allows visitors to the exhibition to download a printable 3D file of a demolished statue. This way the cultural heritage lives on – even when it has been lost for ever.

Materialising the Internet shows work of over twenty international artists and designers who see no contradictions in a digital reality. Intricate, critical, social or outrageous, the works have at least two things in common: an astute analysis of our time and the heart-wrenching momentariness of our imagination in the light of an inconceivable future.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Morehshin Allahyari, Jip de Beer, Dennis de Bel, Joshua Citarella, Dries Depoorter, Julien Deswaef, Antonio Esparza, Tom Galle & ART404, Mieke Gerritzen, Joey Holder, Matthew Hollings, Michelle Kasprzak, Kuang-Yi Ku, Jan Robert Leegte, Jeroen van Loon, Lauren McCarthy, Kyle McDonald, Brenna Murphy, Roel Roscam Abbing, Matthew Plummer-Fernandez, Daniel Rourke, Brad Troemel, Clement Valla, Richard Vijgen, Valerie van Zuijlen.

CURATORS

Nadine Roestenburg & Angelique Spaninks

Editor's note

For more information, digital images and interviews, please contact Nadine Roestenburg: nadine@mu.nl
+31 (0) 40 296 1663