

PRESS INFO #1

# HYBRID TALES FOR HYBRID TIMES CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF MU

*We live in hybrid times. Everything moves and transforms, disciplines and practices merge, borders dissolve or harden. The world changes in front of you, and it is precisely at the edges of art that you see this taking shape in many ways. Almost intuitively, MU has put hybridity at the heart of its view of art from the very beginning, exactly 25 years ago. Not as an end in itself, but as a result of the open-mindedness with which we look at art. The programme that has unfolded since then offered a lively sequence of time images and artistic reflections in which hybridity has been held up to the light. Defining what is hybrid is not what MU does, we rather explore what can be hybrid.*

In Hybrid Tales For Hybrid Times, a large number of artists and designers from MU's widespread network will show a continuously changing collage of hybrid works during this summer. At the same time, we present the new hybrid online MU ArchiVe, which will unlock 25 years of MU in an interactive way. This ArchiVe is the first part of the new MU portal that will unfold in the coming year as the digital extension of the physical MU space with support from Fonds21 Extra.

*Welcome Hybrarian van Rogier Klomp* explores with a mix of graffiti, cartoons and mapping what it means to be hybrid. You're invited to wander through the map and find your way.

The map views hybrid as a temporary state where two things come together and it isn't yet defined what the mix will do. It's a state of possibilities. Whether it's a brew of two species or the merging of digital and physical or a cocktail of Artificial and Collective Intelligence, a new thing is in the making. We're still in the not-knowing, yet we are right in the middle of it. We live in hybrid bodies and move through hybrid spaces. We are Hybrarians at work thinking hybridly together. And we can only wonder about the hybrid species we are becoming. With your help this map will evolve further in the coming months.

#### About MU

MU Hybrid Art House is an investigative presentation platform that operates in a wide international network of creatives who define the liminal space between what art is and what art can be.

MU initiates, produces and presents preferably new works, and surrounds them with an extensive and interdisciplinary secondary programme targeted at a broad and predominantly young audience. MU prioritises the introduction to, understanding of, elaboration on, and hands-on experience of the creation of art.

MU is curious for talent, and challenges talents to be curious. MU provides a platform for artistic research & development by artists and designers, and contributes to their international visibility.

MU is located in a former Philips factory at StrijpS in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

**MU**

**DROP BY  
WE'RE OPEN  
TO ANYTHING**

***Melvin the Magical Mixed Media Machine by HeyHeydeHaas*** (or simply Melvin the Machine, 'born' at MU) can be described as a Rube Goldberg machine with a twist. Besides doing what Rube Goldberg's do best - performing a simple task as inefficiently as possible, often in the form of a chain reaction - Melvin has an identity. Actually, the only purpose of this machine is promoting its own identity.

Melvin the Mini Machine is specifically designed to travel the world conveniently built in two old suitcases. It's first trip was to Milan on invitation by MU. Each time Melvin fully completes a run, he 'signs' a postcard and sticks a stamp on it - making it ready to be sent. Like its bigger brother, Melvin the Mini Machine also has an online non-physical side which he uses to connect to the people he meets. To keep things truly mobile Melvin uses a smartphone for his online identity.

***Home Sweet Home from the Vis-à-Visa collective*** (Alexandre Humbert, Ali Riza Atakan Gür, Karma Hamed, Lucas Maassen, Metin Güzel, Min Kyung Seo, Shin-Hua Yang, Szu-Han Lin, Te-Yen Hsu) is an installation by designer collective Vis-à-Visa, a group of Design Academy Eindhoven alumni, who have united around residence permits for artists and designers who are not from the EU, but would like to work and reside there. To get an artist-visa for two years, you have to participate in at least x number of exhibitions at a state-recognised art institution. If you don't meet this requirement you need to leave. This raises the question of who decides what art is and how and when exactly you should make it?

The installation Home Sweet Home consists of the skeleton of a temporary house that will be covered with candy floss during the opening and four Sundays thereafter. When the house is fully wrapped in pink cotton candy and nothing more can be seen of the skeleton, the (art) work is complete. But as time passes, the candy floss melts due to humidity and heat. Every weekend, the house is rebuilt only to melt away again. This tragic cycle depicts the struggle, uncertainty and temporality of the situation the collective Vis-a-Visa faces on a daily basis. Besides building the candy floss house, the house acts as a place for dialogue around 'artist-visa'. Poems are written and recited by the group, a lawyer who specializes in artist visas will be invited, and there are conversations with people in the same situation.

***The Guangzhou Wedding of Things by MacGuffin & Alexandre Humbert*** depicts the intricate relationships between objects and citizens in the constantly changing urban environment of the Chinese city of Guangzhou. It was originally made for the sixth Guangzhou Triennial in 2019 on invitation by MU-director Angelique Spaninks who was one of the three curators.

The installation unites two different perspectives on the Guangzhou metropolis. On the one hand there is the so-called Chinese Dream, Xi Jinping's aspirations "to work assiduously to fulfil dreams and contribute to the revitalization of the nation". On the other hand there is the parallel reality of the thriving African immigrant community. These opposite worlds literally melt together in the mixed marriages between Chinese citizens and African traders; marriages that enable Chinese citizens with a rural background to climb the economic ladder and embody one of the counter cultural phenomena that are shaping Guangzhou today. According to MacGuffin's motto - The Life of Things - the presentation symbolizes these weddings by 'marrying' ten objects that represent the Chinese Dream to ten objects that play an important part in the lives of African immigrants in the region. In this way, the objects function as the MacGuffins in Hitchcock's films - telling the stories of African immigrants as well as those of Chinese brides and grooms.

**what hybrid is, or can be, constantly changes. It moves from within or reacts to what happens outside, but never stands still.**

***United Mental States by Emma Verhoeven*** questions what happens in the media-saturated heads of young people. It imagines how feelings, dreams, fears and concerns of an online generation come together in a physical landscape. Performance pressure, motivation, loneliness and happiness are continents which invite you to self-reflect in a playful way.

In 2020 Emma Verhoeven exhibited the work *Escape Here Now* in MU. This escape room allowed visitors to visually and spatially explore the self-help media chaos in Verhoeven's head. In the past year she investigated the therapeutic potential of this process with youngsters from Brabant. In workshops she invited students to imagine landscapes based on the chaos in their heads.

These sessions resulted in a series of islands in which the emotions and concerns of young people are literally given a place. These worlds not only visualize how young people feel, but also act as a film location for personal conversations about those feelings. World building as therapy.

***The Artificial Self from Lukas Völp and Eroliteracy from Nikola Scheibe*** look at questions such as: who am I? What do I like? What do I need? How do I feel? These existential questions have only become more complex in the individualistic reality of today's information society, governed by the algorithms of (social) media platforms. How do these artificially intelligent systems read us? And how do we perceive ourselves through the rational filters of their algorithmic gaze? Based on design research both artists aim to inspire their audience to engage more deeply with their own digital counterparts.

*The Artificial Self* transforms the consumed content from its user's media feeds into an algorithmically generated self-portrait, rendering the impact of viral trends and influential opinion makers directly onto the user's face.

In *Eroliteracy* a digital avatar, generated out of a collection of sensual movements performed by many bodies, seduces the audience to join in its sexy performance. Feeding on the virality of TikTok-challenges and the many bodies involved in their creation — as performers, as viewers — the project raises the question of how we read and treat bodies online and how this affects the perception of our own bodies.

***Full Body Smart Automatic Manipulator by Arvid & Marie*** unveils a stage for exploring the intimacy between technologies and their humans, using tactility as an uncharted medium for interaction and exchange with artificial intelligence. We touch our technologies but how often do they touch us back?

The experience begins at the moment of impact between a massage chair and its human visitor: a two-way discussion where unexpected behaviour punctuates every marked interaction. As the narrative develops, more is revealed about the motives of the machine and the constructed reality it is situated in. Or is the AI's reward system deviating the machine from its intended functionality? Navigating through the disembodied networks of decision trees, each interaction follows a unique path interwoven with narratives exposing the friction between control, automated labor, commercialized AI and intimacy.

**We celebrate our birthday  
this summer with four full  
months of Hybrid Tales For  
Hybrid Times: 25 years of  
*radical shapeshifting***

The fleshy body and augmented voice of the machine, enveloping its human counterpart, occupies an undefined intersect between organism and apparatus. Cognitively and corporeally it labors as every rotation of the massagers push against our assumptions of what it means to be artificially intelligent. The medium truly is the massage.

*Oeverloos* by *Hanan Faour* is an exploration through births, social media platforms and (alternative) birthdays. Click, read, listen and get lost in a labyrinth of stories that question what it is like to be twenty-five in a hybrid world in tension.

*MUMORIES* by *Sophia Boschat-Thorez, Simon Browne, Artemis Gryllaki, Margarita Osipian, Karl Moubarak, Carolina Pinto, Laurence Scherz and Angelique Spaninks* questions how the future of hybridity in the cultural field will evolve. Where will hybrid events take us, now that COVID-19 is all but over? And what are the best practices to avoid dying of Zoom fatigue? As part of the research project Going Hybrid MU zooms in on the question of how to make archives a living, breathing entity rather than a silent material collection of the past. The choice was made to develop an initial hybrid prototype around narrated memories of visitors, hence the name MUMORIES, an uncommon part of most cultural archives.

MUMORIES is constructed as a simple hybrid audio installation. Visitors are invited to share their memories by speaking them into an iPad. These memories are collected and form a living digital audio archive that can eventually be listened to on site but also online. The growing collection of MUMORIES made possible by this interface literally gives voice to the immaterial impact a cultural practice like MU's has on visitors. What words do they use to describe what they encountered? Which works stick with them and why? What did they experience in the exhibition?

MUMORIES is a collaboration of MU with The Hmm, Hackers & Designers and Varia as part of the Going Hybrid / Living Archives research project, a 24 month-long research project into the future of hybridity for the cultural field, from the Institute of Network Cultures and Willem de Kooning Academy/Piet Zwart Institute, generously supported by RAAK/SIA. More info: <https://networkcultures.org/goinghybrid/>

**HYBRID TALES FOR HYBRID TIMES**  
**So drop in for anything at any time so we can**  
**lay a foundation for the future together.**  
**MAY 5TH - AUGUST 27TH**