

Neumeister Bar-Am

Harm van den Dorpel – Death Imitates Language
26.11.2016 – 04.02.2017

Neumeister Bar-Am is pleased to announce Harm van den Dorpel's second solo exhibition with the gallery. This is the Berlin debut of his ongoing project 'Death Imitates Language', in which the artist closely collaborates with a self designed artificial intelligence.

Van den Dorpel extracted recurring elements from the art that shaped his sense of aesthetics while growing up (mostly early 20th century European collage works), and analysed the intuitive decision making he employed (and grew dissatisfied with) over the past five years while creating his own two-dimensional collage work.

He abstracted these findings into "organs" and described their appearance by encoding into a 'binary chromosome'. Similar to the way human DNA functions as a blueprint for the growth and development of a human being, he devised a 'genetic algorithm' to generate two-dimensional images from a chromosome, all happening in software.

The benefit of having a chromosome, is that any two works from the population can form a pair and mate. Their chromosomes are aligned and – using crossover – children are created who share characteristics of both their parents. The artist can therefore breed the work most to his liking by selecting the most "fit" specimen, and eliminate unwanted features. This process is similar to how dogs or other organisms are artificially selected and bred, to emphasize particular traits.

The decisions as to which works are selected to breed with each other, which works can remain in the population, and which will be 'frozen' and manufactured, are taken by the artist in the form of micro-feedback he gives to the system. This is similar to how many seemingly insignificant like-clicks aid for example Facebook in reconstructing a more sophisticated profile of their users.

Five works from the population, all in unique edition, will be exhibited along with an overview of the entire breeding process and population as software on a large monitor. Additionally, two older pieces from 2014 that can be regarded as predecessors will be shown.

Neumeister Bar-Am and the artist would like to thank Museum Kurhaus Kleve for their support in production and exhibition.

The growth of the population can be followed live on <http://death.imitates.org>.

Further reading:

Art in America article by Nora N. Khan

<http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/family-function-harm-van-den-dorpels-algorithmic-art/>

Catalogue text by William Kherbek

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2smd6Uixc6-S0d1aE1XeXdxenpqMXdKbC1kTTcyT0R3R3J3/view>