

artist's statement

pepito matta

I started painting about ten years ago.

It's my guilty pleasure. The only exception. The blind spot.
Most of the time, I make a point of not producing anything «material».
No residue, the minimum of traces. Especially no objects, no fetishes.
At the time of the Anthropocene, it is a little indecent.

Painting has not been spared by this slightly hypocritical delicacy.
It has become digital. "Immaterial". No traces, less hassle.
What is the weight of a digital painting? A few pixels. Let's say it's okay.
Distancing makes wonders.

What we call, strangely enough,
«artificial intelligence»
remains strongly intriguing.
(one may prefer, as Midorikawa Yūtarō so well points out,
«natural intelligence»,
to avoid any renewal of the so destructive dualism nature/culture).
And perhaps a way of salvation (one will notice here the shift
of the author of the Gaia hypothesis)
for our species, so intelligent and so unwise.

In my painting practice, I have always come up against the subject.
What is really worth spending several hours painting?
You have to be a little crazy, a little scatterbrained.
But I have always loved collaboration,
which is central to my general practice (I never create alone).
Another of my tricks (you have to invent your own labyrinth,
with your own breadcrumb trail) is to always surround myself.
Living, dead, or fictional companions, it doesn't matter.
Another way to support the unbearable heaviness of being.

Metapeps is thought of as a dialogue with forms of artificial intelligence, or more precisely neural systems. Working on the principle of «text to image», this technology aims at generating images from textual instructions. The results are very realistic if we stay within the framework of simple and coherent sentences. I thought it would be interesting to test the limits of this new form of intelligence by urging it to produce images with textual inputs that go beyond its understanding. Based on this idea of «textual instructions», I explored mainly two registers.

The first - paradoxical - consisted in a process of lengthening of the sentence, which became diluvian, which stretched out until vertigo.

If the pearly skin of the being is hollowed out with a nebulous ocean, it is because the printed circuits, as reptilian as they are, are transformed into amorous matter, exclaims the suitor, with a tender look in the warm glow of this summer night that never stopped lengthening, as space contracted - just like my fragile heart on the horizon of separation.

While the other method consisted in a gesture of agglomeration - with a factor of composition, of montage. The instructions were parameters, and the words-images, incantations.

Ocean

Ocean Eye

Ocean Itchy Eye

Ocean Itchy Eye Contraction

Ocean Itchy Eye Contraction Shape

Ocean Itchy Eye Shapeless Contraction Matter

Ocean Itchy Eye Shapeless Contraction Matter Feeling

Ocean Itchy Eye Formless Contraction Matter Feeling Uneven

Ocean Itchy Eye Formless Contraction Matter Feeling Love

Ocean Eye Formless Contraction Uneven Feeling Desire

Ocean Eye Formless Contraction Uneven Feeling Desire

Degradation Matter

Ocean Eye Shapeless Contraction Feeling Uneven Desire

Degradation Texture

Ocean Eye Formless Elongation Feeling Uneven Desire

Degradation Love

Ocean Eye Elongation Formless Feeling Uneven Desire

Degradation Thirst Ethics

Ocean Eye Elongation Formless Feeling Uneven Degradation

Ethical Thirst Unsuspected

By playing on a more complex textual register, and on associations of ideas, the AI has produced astonishing results. These kinds of poetic glitches embody for me a kind of unconsciousness of the machine, in the manner of dreams or delusions. These creations show a continuity of the surrealist artistic practices: it is not a question any more of pathways inside oneself, but of a survey of the unconscious of this technical excrescence of the human that is the artificial intelligence. In the same way, there is an obvious link between the process of the automatic writing and the forms of generativity proper to the AI. They are some kind of ectoplasmic chimeras, psychological morphologies, straight out of - not artificial intelligence but - a natural unconscious (NU>AI). Forms of hypothetical beings that I collect to compose a community whose company I enjoy. A pet cafe.

Afterwards, I used the medium of digital painting to enhance these images. It is thus a collaboration in three steps with the AI/NU: a text is instructed, a dialogue from which the program will produce a visual, which I will repaint. This form of co-authorship is also synonymous with a play with generative chance and an overflow of my own subjectivity: I do not control what the machine will produce and let myself go to the glitch, to finally try to create from these bugs, to see in the stains and to embellish the rejects of the AI (who is the pet, in the end?). Digital painting also allows me to work on new scales and to highlight the global figures as well as more microscopic visions, to create regions and reliefs, like a sort of infra-metaverse.

These forms of life are also for me echoes of the surrealist visual creations (for example a Roberto Matta or a Victor Brauner - chosen very randomly, right?) but which take another tone nowadays: if the surrealists tried to open the world of the possible and to explore the dreamlands, these speculative forms are a little bit squeaky and monstrous, at the time of the generalized extinction of the biodiversity.

This series represents for me a given moment in human evolution where the possibility of hatching new forms of life (whether through advances in computational methods of creation or through biotechnology) coincides with the collapse of the already existing biodiversity. It is in this sense that I propose this series for the exhibition «Art after human», following the hypothesis that forms of artificial intelligence / natural unconscious could continue to produce images and art, outside our control or survival.

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for the exhibition of *Metapets* at the Museum Of
Contemporary Art Fukushima

on the invitation of Midorikawa Yutaro

published on 2023.03.11