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### Mechanisms

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These days, machines don't look much like machines. Many aren't even *called* machines. Heavy and greasy machinery is absent from the smooth surfaces of digital interfaces and the weightlessness of cloud computing. *Tool, appliance, device, apparatus, instrument, computer, hardware, software, program, server, processor, microchip, setting, algorithm, infrastructure, system, logistic, protocol, parameter*—the terms for today's machines accumulate, evolve, and overlap.

Machines are everywhere but seem to be nowhere. They are part of the air we breathe, overseeing our lives and our bodies, from the way we communicate and consume to how we trade and how we travel. Some are objects or devices, but others are systems and infrastructures—a machine can be a thing as well as a method for organizing things.

Machines, like all tools, have their agendas. They embody and enforce specific regimes. They have trained us to embrace and enjoy a life of seamless connectivity and complete flexibility. They have taught us to value efficiency and standardization. They live within the bloodstream of our subjectivities, our policies, and our politics.

Art can't stop the machine. Nothing can. Still, art can challenge the values that are favored by machines. The works in this exhibition test existing systems with inefficient mechanisms, impossible tools, and elaborate protocols that misalign outputs from their inputs.

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A second and expanded version of *Mechanisms* opens at the Secession, in Vienna, in the summer of 2018.

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