Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter I):

Warren Neidich. Paris, 2026

I.

Thomas McEvilley expressed the tyranny of Dry Conceptual Art in his 1984 *Artforum* article "I Think Therefore I Art": "It was the impasse of formalist hegemony in the early '60s, which had become virtually tyrannical in its exclusion of conceptual elements and of social reference, that caused conceptual art to be specified as a separate genre; this impasse also gave conceptual art its somewhat puritanical early form, which attempted to reject sensory elements as fiercely as formalism had attempted to reject conceptual elements." (1)

II.

The exhibition *Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter I)* is the latest episode in a series of exhibitions and symposia to establish the category of conceptual art, "Wet Conceptual Art." As there was no category of Wet Conceptual Art at the time of conceptual art's invention in 1965–1972, works that would be understood here to fulfill its criteria were either included in the canon of Conceptual Art, as a default gesture, or left out completely. The term Wet Conceptualism was coined in the 60th anniversary edition of *Artforum* in an ad I placed announcing a then hypothetical exhibition at the Opening Gallery in New York City. Dry Conceptualism, the expression which would replace the original term conceptual art, was created in conjunction with the invention of Wet Conceptualism as its opposite for reasons of clarity. For several reasons such as deep-seated systemic and structural sexism, racism, an anti-biographical stance, as well as a belief that white male artists represented the unsentimental, neutral universal subject, Wet Conceptualism was subsumed and made invisible by Dry Conceptualism. Its emergence would have to await the right entanglement of social, political, economic, and technological relations that characterize cognitive capitalism to emerge. Wet Conceptualism is not meant in a

derogatory sense to demean conceptual art but rather to hydrate it and make it more relevant to our times. (2)

III.

Dry Conceptual Art is the form of conceptual art that we are most familiar with, as it was elucidated in Lucy Lippard and John Chandler's essay "The Dematerialization of Art" and later delineated in her anthology published in 1972, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. (3) Dry Conceptual Art emerged from the readymade of Marcel Duchamp such as the *Bicycle Wheel* of 1913–1916, or the proto-minimalist paintings of Kazimir Malevich such as *Black Square*, 1913 as well as the Lettrism movement of Isidore Isou. Wet Conceptual Art emerged from the collective force of Francis Picabia (especially his work *The Cacodylic Eye*, 1921), the soft sculptures of Meret Oppenheim—especially *Fur Covered Teacup, Saucer and Spoon*, 1936—and the paintings of René Magritte such as *The Treachery of Images*. Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner were the strongest advocates of Dry Conceptualism. Artists like Adrian Piper, Yoko Ono, Mary Kelly, Martha Rosler, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, and Marcel Broodthaers were key players in the beginning of the evolution of Wet Conceptualism. Robert Filliou, usually considered a Dry Conceptual artist, finds his way as an exemplary Wet Conceptual artist. Contemporary artists like David Hammons, Glenn Ligon, Fred Wilson, Lauren Halsey, Andrea Bowers, Pierre Huyghe, Dan Leveson, Candice Lin, Rob Pruitt, and Tino Sehgal continue its legacy. These artists provided its base and superstructure upon which this forthcoming exhibition on *Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter I)* will be installed and expanded. Take, for instance, Martha Rosler's video documentation of her performance, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), where she uses an expressive dramaturgy, violently stabbing at the air with a knife during her performance, to articulate rage and frustration towards unpaid women's work and language's participation in it. Through humorous parody, she also distinguishes herself from the methods of television cooking personality Julia Child. Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document*, 1973–1979, employs a feminist artistic methodology, featuring her newborn's urine and fecal stains on gossamer nappy liners accompanied, in parallel, by diagrams and records, for instance, of her child's feeding

schedule. Her child's bodily fluids are stand-ins for paint and the gossamer nappies for canvas. As Kelly stated in her National Gallery of Art Talks in 2002, the analytic (dry) proposition of Kosuth needs to shift to a synthetic (flowing) mode which examines and interrogates the messiness of life itself.

IV.

Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter I) follows two previous interventions. *Wet Conceptualism* first opened at the Opening Gallery, New York City, in 2023. Artists and works included were Coleman Collins' *Sequential Shift* (2022); Constance DeJong's *Frequency Hopping #2* (2019); Jimmie Durham's *Articles 2 & 3 from the 1986, Pinkerton's Agency Man,* 1989; Charles Gaines' *Landscape: Assorted Trees with Regressions* (1981); Leslie Hewitt's *Untitled* (Dreambook or Axis of the Ellipse) (2019); Agnieszka Kurant's *Post Fordite* (2020); Olu Oguibe's *Shoes* (2020); Jimmy Raskin's *Cone Diagram (diptych)* (2011), Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975); Allen Ruppersberg's *Untitled*, 1978–2014; Chrysanne Stathacos' *Three Dakini Mirrors* (2021); and Carol Szymanski's *Revery 12 Tone Conversion Chart* (2022). The second intervention occurred as a program of the Saas-Fee Summer Institute of Art, Paris, in 2025 entitled "From Dry to Wet Conceptualism in Cognitive Capitalism." The school elucidated the theoretical, philosophical and art historical basis of Wet Conceptualism in contrast to the better-known Dry Conceptualism. Faculty included Saâdane Afif, Julieta Aranda, Mareike Dittmer, Nicolas Bourriaud, Gregory Sholette, Sara Wilson, Helen Hester, Ingrid Luquet-Gad, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Mathieu Copeland, Sozita Goudouna and others. The exhibition *Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter I)* opens October 31 at Levey Kwok, Brussels, followed by *Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter II)* in the spring. It examines Wet Conceptualism with a wide brushstroke aiming to expose all its multidisciplinary and multimedia forms. Artists include Haseeb Ahmed, Lyndon Barrois Jr., Alighiero Boetti, Marcel Broodthaers, Jimmie Durham, Claire Fontaine, Andrea Fraser, Jef Geys, Mauro Giaconi, Liam Gillick, Mark Manders, David Maroto, My Barbarian, Warren Neidich, Laure Prouvost, Rob Pruitt, Martha Rosler, TR Ericsson, Walter Swennen, Ria Verhaeghe, and Oriol Vilanova. The second event at the gallery slated for the spring of 2027 engages with its relation to AI, wetware,

collective intelligence, counterfactual histories, zero-human economies, exocapitalism, data colonialism and the recent neural digital entanglement in which digitality is engaged with the subsumption of the neural common referred to as neural capitalism or late-stage or neural cognitive capitalism. Artists include Hito Steyerl, Agnieszka Kurant, Gregory Chatonsky, Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, Nora Al-Badri, Nouf Aljowaysir, and Warren Neidich. A symposium of the same name will be held November 6th at Cloud Seven, Frédéric de Goldschmidt's collection in Brussels. Speakers include Ruth Anderwald, Nicolas Bourriaud, Jörg Heiser, Warren Neidich, Sarah Matia Pasqualetti, Alexandro Segade (My Barbarian), Dirk Snauwaert, Barbara Vanderlinden, and Pieter Vermeulen.

V.

What many misinterpreted as Conceptual Art's demise, in the mid-1970s, was the effect of its too rigid doctrine managed by its gatekeepers who regulated what in fact Conceptual Art was. Benjamin Buchloh expressed its demise in a different way: "Conceptual Art was distinguished, from its inception, by its acute and critical sense of discursive and institutional limitations, its self-imposed restrictions, its lack of totalizing vision, its critical devotion to the factual conditions of artistic production and reception without aspiring to overcome the mere facticity of these conditions…" (4) Its hermetic and impenetrable character made it in fact undemocratic, cumbersome, uncollectable. Rosalind Krauss implied that, like other art genres that had preceded it, it had its day and succumbed to patricidal displacement. (5) Whatever the cause or reasons for its passing, with time the grip of those gatekeepers in charge loosened and its strict definition eroded, allowing for different forms of conceptual art and different players to emerge.

VI.

Nowhere was the concept of what conceptual art was, especially in reference to it as image, text, or representation, confronted more acutely than in Jane Farver's *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* at the Queens Museum in 1999, and *Romantic Conceptualism* curated by Jörg Heiser and his team at the Kunsthalle Nuremberg

in 2007. *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* contained over 200 works by artists all over the world with the purpose of understanding conceptual art in its broader global context. As it states on the Queens Museum website, the show was meant to "question the hegemony of the object over ideas in art, critique the way art is institutionalized both in museums and in modern economies, and find a new role for art and the artist in society by involving art in social and political protest." (6) The first two parts of this description align well with definitions of Dry Conceptualism, its anti-object and anti-institutional stance. Wet Conceptualism embraces its third and final proclamation, understanding the importance of conceptual art in social and political protest. In cognitive capitalism, knowledge, information, and now intelligence and the brain have been redefined as spaces of political, social and cultural protest.

Another form of conceptualism was examined by Jörg Heiser and his team entitled *Romantic Conceptualism* at the Kunsthalle Nuremberg. Taking its cue from the early investigation of Boris Groys, entitled *Moscow Romantic Conceptualism*, who, writing about conceptual art in the Moscow scene, delineated what would become their mantra. "The general tenor of emotional life in Moscow, thus forming a lyrical and romantic blend, still stands opposed to the dryness of officialdom. And this climate is propitious to the phenomenon of romantic and lyrical conceptualism—a phenomenon rather clearly discernible in the emotional atmosphere of the capital." (7) Heiser and his team reach back to historical Romanticism, especially its connection with the emotional, and place it front and center. As an illustration of this connection, he references works by Bas Jan Ader. In his 16mm film *I'm Too Sad to Tell You* (1971), the artist weeps inconsolably throughout, and Heiser draws a link between it and Andy Warhol's film *Kiss* (1963). His *Farewell to Faraway Friends* (1971), in which a photograph of the artist is seen silhouetted against the orange glow of a beautiful sunset, takes this connection to Romanticism one step further. This latter work is a direct reference to Caspar David Friedrich's *Rückenfigur* images such as found in *The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, 1818. (8) Wet Conceptualism looks forward, not backward, and proposes a conceptualism relevant to our times, especially the

exhaustion of the production paradigm and its replacement by concepts of immaterial labor and affect as the source of new wealth.

VII.

In *Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter I)*, the idiosyncrasies of Belgian contemporary art history, its reliance on humor, use of absurdity, reliance on everyday objects as ideas rather than something physical, and interest in language, provide a unique set of conditions for its emergence. Artists like René Magritte and Marcel Broodthaers are fundamental. Magritte's painting *The Treachery of Images*, 1928, and later *La Clef des songes* (*The Key of Dreams*), 1930, deconstruct and rebuke the signifier-object relation. In the first case, a pipe becomes a means of negation and nihilism, and in the latter, inappropriate captions that have nothing to do with the objects depicted induce a feeling of mental discomfort. In these works, Dry Conceptualism's anti-formalist and anti-representational attributes are embraced but through approaches quite alien to it. Retinal painting shunned by Dry Conceptualism is highlighted here. In the case of Broodthaers' film *Pluie* (1969), a documentation of a performance of himself writing a text with an ink pen beneath a sign for the Département des Aigles is interrupted by an ostensible rain shower which dissolves his text work. On the one hand, the work engages the emotional aspect of tears, and on the other, it introduces his famous work of institutional critique and museological fiction, *Musée d'Art Moderne - Département des Aigles*. (Tears would again appear in Bas Jan Ader's *I'm Too Sad to Tell You* (1971).) Both these works are foundational references for local and international artists alike.

VIII.

We are fully immersed in what is referred to as cognitive capitalism, in which the brain and the mind constitute the new factories of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Since the 1970s, labor, especially at its contemporary digital margins, sequestered as it is

most significantly in Western Europe and Asia, has shifted from industrial production manned by proletariats to that of cognitive labor performed by, what Franco Berardi has labeled as, cognitariats or mental laborers. (9) In fact, it is fair to say that in Western Europe and parts of Asia in the early twenty-first century this cognitive labor has become predominant and has subsumed physical or bodily labor. One must also understand that cognitive capitalism is a form of bio-cognitive capitalism in which the mind, social relations and physical biology form continuous circuits of feedback and feedforward looping. In this regard, DNA genetic testing for ancestral relations and health information and biometric watches, which track vitality, together treat the body as a flexible asset in a liquid and networked economy. One must also consider the importance of self-care and wellness as important constituents of emotional capital. Emotional capital is indirectly tracked by social media, which datafies it and shares it with corporate, military and policing agencies. The new economy and the new labor it necessitates, both human and bot, tilted social, cultural and economic investment and its capital resources towards tertiary economic entities to track and promote its capacities. These include the Internet, software, and platform economies, computer companies like Google, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, Airbnb, Uber, and ServiceNow and analytic and generative AI. These entities placed new stresses upon human and machine intelligence and their entanglements, leading to exocapitalism. Exocapitalism is software capitalism in which the human participation is perfunctory.

IX.

Dry Conceptualism was a reaction to and a form of resistance against the alienation of abstracted, physical, Fordist labor and its pervasive materiality; the then dominant political-economic form at the time. Its solution was the dematerialized object in which the idea behind the work took precedence over its production, thus reducing its commodity value in a market dependent on the supply and demand of the fetishized thing. In other words, whereas Dry Conceptualism responded to the massification of things and commodities in industrial capitalism with strategies of aesthetic resistance based upon their dematerialization, thus making them untenable for the then burgeoning art market, Wet Conceptualism is a reaction to what we have discovered to be the stifling, mentally

extractive, and despotic effects of pervasive immateriality. Key here are the important concepts of de-noetization and proletarianization. Digital technologies, especially those here now and on the horizon, are extractive technologies in which contemplation, understanding, and the narratology of the mind's eye are at stake. They have accelerated what Bernard Stiegler called de-noetization: the offloading of knowledge, memory, and creativity from the intracranial brain to external machines, especially those developed through cybernetics over the last seventy years. The result is a process of intellectual deskilling leading to proletarianization—what Stiegler bluntly described as a condition that is making us stupid. (10) Wet Conceptualism is a reaction to this proletarianization and creates works of art that challenge the intellect and that change the architecture of the brain from one which is anthropocenogenically sculpted to one which is eco-planetary. This leads to the process of de-proletarianization. The anthropocenogenic sapien is subject to the stultifying effects of transhumanism and the dopamine industrial complex, while the eco-planetary sapien is the result of the emancipatory effects of the Serotonergic Counter Eco-planetary Heterogeny.

X.

Today, in cognitive capitalism, a new form of labor labeled immaterial labor has emerged. Immaterial labor, according to Maurizio Lazzarato, "produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity." (11) Especially important is the intertwining of culture and immaterial labor. In his book, *Immaterial Labor and Cultural Production: The Dialectic of Late Capitalism*, Sílvio Camargo states that the category of immaterial labor is "something central to the processes of capitalist wealth production and capital accumulation, which have characterized world capitalism over approximately the last three decades." (12) Furthermore, "that capitalism in its current stage has been constituting forms of domination and sociability characterized by the junction and the intertwining, between culture and immaterial labor, which is the current dialectic of late capitalism." (13)

XI.

Crucial to any understanding of immaterial labor is Silvia Federici's notion of immaterial labor as precarious labor and reproductive work. Arguing against Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's framework of the multitude in which divisions within the working class have dissolved and lost relevancy, she suggests that in fact their theory bypasses the role of unpaid reproductive labor as a source of capitalist accumulation. Important here is the role of housework as work, not as an assumed and invisible form of personal service but as a source of labor power. Federici also defined reproductive labor in two ways. First, as mentioned above, as unpaid housework, but then as women's role in sexual reproduction and the socialization of their children.

"The ability to say that sexuality for women has been work has lead to a whole new way of thinking about sexual relationships, including gay relations. Because of the feminist movement and the gay movement we have begun to think about the ways in which capitalism has exploited our sexuality, and made it 'productive.'" (14)

Andrea Fraser's participatory performative video work *Untitled* (2003) also engages and reacts with performative and immaterial gestures to frame and resist the unseen but omnipresent structural and institutional relations of the finances that undergird the art world. With the help of the gallerist Friedrich Petzel the artist created and signed a legal contract to have a recorded sexual liaison with an anonymous collector at the Royalton Hotel in New York City for 20,000 dollars, for which the collector would receive sex and the first of an edition of five recorded videos. Important for Wet Conceptualism is how fetishistic commodity relations diffuse beyond their transactional boundaries and invade the network of social and cultural relations in which subjectification and art production are also engaged. The work crystallizes and lays bare these relations in an act of de-reification. Instead of being cogs in the wheel of the capitalist system the female artist takes control of the system to reduce the alienating effects of the sexism and commodification that haunt the artist-dealer-collector relationship and turn them on their head.

XII.

Wet Conceptualism is a reaction to the conditions of the new economy defined by knowledge and information in which intangible assets dominate, digital tools share information 24/7, precarity rules, and constant learning is required to keep up with new innovations as well as self-improvement. In the past twenty years, the pressures of the new economy and new forms of labor have accelerated. In fact, it is fair to say that in Western Europe and parts of Asia in the early twenty-first century this cognitive labor has subsumed physical labor and represents that sector of the economy where the preponderance of capital resources is now being invested in Internet, software, computer, and AI companies like Google, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, Tencent, Alibaba, Huawei, Baidu, SoftBank, OpenAI, and Anthropic. The tools and emancipatory apparatuses geared to the emancipation of biopolitics that defined Fordist labor and Dry Conceptualism are no match for the insidious, invisible, extractive relations of digitality and neuropolitics. A new form of conceptual art needs to be realized to deal with the new conditions of the knowledge and informational economy. That new form of conceptual art is Wet Conceptualism.

Such forms of resistance were exposed in a recent exhibition at the Jeu de Paume in Paris called *The World Through AI* and will play an important role in *Wet Conceptualism (Brussels - Chapter II)* at Levey Kwok in the spring. Artists' use of AI in artistic interventions took many forms, two of which are relevant here. First, to counter what Ulises A. Mejias and Nick Couldry call data colonialism. (15) An example, analyzed by Hito Steyerl in her artwork *Mechanical Kurds* (2025), created for the first time for this exhibition, is how data collected from these laborers in Kurdish refugee camps is used to build data sets for machine vision systems that ultimately find their way into algorithms used to guide drone attacks against themselves. In this installation, spectators sit in structures that resemble bounding boxes, that these micro-laborers used for their click work tasks, implying that we are all digital workers participating in the gig economy whether we realize it or not. (3) Second is the role of Wet Conceptualism in the production of counterfactual histories in the work of Gregory Chatonsky, Nora Al-Badri, Nouf Aljowaysir and others, which were used to heal and

reconstitute archives as well as, in the case of Chatonsky, to understand a new form of future memory.

XIII.

Both Dry and Wet Conceptual Art stressed the importance of indexicality above and beyond representation, but their modes of presentation differed, since Dry Conceptualism was usually presented as black letters on a white background or its opposite, white letters on a black background echoing the authoritative presentation one finds in a dictionary, while Wet Conceptualism was polychromatic and musical. Both forms considered consumer society's misuse of language as a call to arms. However, Wet Conceptualism went one step further in understanding language's innate complicity with patriarchy, racism, and sexism. Joseph Kosuth's *Titled [Art as Idea (as Idea)] [SquareWet]* (1968) and his *Titled [Art as Idea (as Idea)] The Word Definition* (1966–1968) are some examples of Dry Conceptualism. Adrian Piper's *Catalysis III*, in which the artist walked around New York City confronting the public wearing a shirt emblazoned with the words "wet paint," Allen Ruppersberg's five polychromatic posters *Untitled*, 1978–2014, and John Giorno's colorful, exotic word work *Big Bunch of One Thousand Red Roses* (2007) are examples of text-based works of Wet Conceptualism. Dry Conceptual Art was withdrawn, restrained, unemotional, and cold, while Wet Conceptualism is engaged, hot, emotional, and vital.

XIV.

Dry Conceptualism stressed an economy of means as a reductive attitude which was connected to Minimalism and systems theory with its emphasis on simple rules, sharp boundaries, structural primitives and prioritization of interfaces over components with which to produce emergent behaviors. Wet Conceptualism engaged with more maximalist and anarchic approaches to everyday life emphasizing feedforward and feedback loops which would become important apparatuses in the architecture of Large Language Models. Dry Conceptualism stressed formal subsumption, autopoiesis and restrained navel-gazing within art systems, while Wet Conceptualism stressed real subsumption, allopoiesis in which life itself became work, producing information outside of itself. Dry Conceptualism

abhorred what it referred to as “stupid painting” because of its retinality: the assumption, based on many statements of Marcel Duchamp’s, that painting was absorbed with the sensual rather than the rational, which pertained to the gray matter of the brain. However, the notion of the brain and information processes that were his models was very different at the beginning of the twentieth century in comparison to today. Perception in action, the enactive and embodied approach, has overtaken passive models of perception. Active perception and Gibson’s affordance models stress opportunities for action rather than simple colors and forms, leading to what are called perception action cycles and predictive processing. These are especially political and form the basis of, on the one hand, distributions and redistributions of affordances, which replace in importance the better-known distributions and redistributions of sensibility. The importance of the brain as part of sensibility has recently become apparent as the visual cortex and temporal cortex play an important role in object recognition as well as serving as a model for AI convolutional neural networks.

XV.

The brain is not a crystallized entity composed of a genetically determined population of neural elements confined within the bony skull arranged in modular fixed structures as it once was. This model of the brain was subject to such false practices as phrenology in the nineteenth century. I refer to this model as the Brain with Organs. It has recently been subjected to extractive apparatuses of AI-digital normalization and quantification carried out by PET scans, fMRI, Google Analytics, social media tracking and neural consumerism. Rather, it is a situated, rhizomatic, transgenerational, collective, intracranial-extracranial complex or continuum (IC/EC-C) in flux, and neural plasticity gives it agency. The material brain coevolves with the social, political, technological and cultural relations to which it is tethered undergoing constant change. Expanding the theories of Leroi-Gourhan, Bernard Stiegler called this process of coevolution maieutics, in which humans and technologies, artistic and cultural ones especially shape each other. Wet Conceptualism embraces this new becoming expanded brain model (IC/EC-C) and understands artistic works as evolving technologies, what Stiegler, building on Husserl, would call tertiary retentions, involved in

this epigenetic trans-historical choreography. (16) Painting's wet surface membrane becomes a palimpsest of registers in time much like Stiegler's notion of primary, secondary and tertiary retentions. For instance, a melody is a form of primary retention and its memory is an example of a secondary retention. The vinyl record where the melody is stored for posterity is the tertiary retention. Accordingly, a maieutics or mirroring between the evolving conditions of the tertiary retentions (besides the vinyl, it could be the surface of architecture or a painting) and the material brain takes place in time. In other words, Wet Conceptualism is a new methodology of artistic hermeneutics or interpretation conceived for its time, which leaves traces on the material brain. Dry Conceptualism is about a binary dichotomous viewpoint and stresses Gestalt psychology, while Wet Conceptualism is more non-binary, embodied, enacted and engaged with perception in action or what are called affordances. Wet Conceptual Art is also linked to the concept of wetware used to describe neural-based computational systems with which human beings are engaged. The advent of Artificial Intelligence has put stress on what was formerly understood as intelligence and human domination of it. Machine intelligence is now vying for dominance over human intelligence and must be considered in any framework of conceptual art. Wet Conceptualism's realization and acceptance of the importance of these other forms of intelligence has opened the way for readily accepting non-human intelligences in all their forms, animal and plant, as real and of consequence. Collective intelligence does not merely refer to populations of human brains and minds in concerted action to solve problems but rather to an assemblage of human, non-human and artificial intelligences organized to form a planetary consortium of intelligences or an earthling consciousness.

XVI.

Beyond the widely recognized negative ecological consequences of the Anthropocene, such as climate change, it has generated another less visible outcome: the emergence of a phylum of noetic technologies or a noetic organology. The word noetic finds its roots in the

Greek word noēsis/noētikos that means inner wisdom, direct knowing, intuition, or implicit understanding. These technologies have accelerated what Bernard Stiegler called de-noetization: the offloading of knowledge, memory, and creativity from the intracranial brain to external machines, especially those developed through cybernetics over the last seventy years. (17) It is related to the question of hypomnesis what later Michel Foucault called a generalized hypomnemata and delineates the process through which organic memories are externalized or displaced to inorganic cognitive technologies through which they can be controlled and manipulated. This leads to what Stiegler calls the process of the deprivation of knowledge or proletarianization. (18) This process of proletarianization is understood as a process by which automation will capture and retain individual reason and knowledge, in the end making us stupid. Following Heidegger, Stiegler describes a process of extraction and externalization by retentional technical media as an ontology of loss which begins in the nineteenth century in the industrial revolution with the forfeiture of work knowledge, the how to make, or savoir-faire. In the industrial revolution, management techniques such as Taylorism reduced handcrafted and made labor into a series of regulated automatic movements regulated by the assembly line. It is this labor and the massification of homogenous and neutral objects it produced and still produces that become the source of Marcel Duchamp's readymade. In the next epoch, hyperindustrialization, in which industrial, service and digital economies merge, it is life knowledge, savoir vivre or cultural knowledge, that is at stake. As Stiegler writes in *Anamnesis and Hypomnesis, Ars Industrialis*, "We exteriorize in contemporary mnemotechnical equipment more and more cognitive functions, and correlatively we are losing more and more knowledge which is then delegated to equipment, but also to *service industries* which can network them, control them, formalize them, model them, and perhaps destroy them – for these knowledges, escaping our grasp, induce an 'obsolescence of the human.'" (19) In the age of generative AI and Artificial General Intelligence, we are on the verge of another transition in which cognitive and creative knowledge, savoir theorizer is under threat. Important in this later phase is the concept of protention through which the analysis of data can lead to what Yuk Hui calls "algorithmic anticipation" and "future orientation." (20) This is the key to

understanding another element of the phylum or genre of Wet Conceptualism which was engaged with in a recent exhibition, *The World Through AI*, at the Jeu de Paume in which artists engaging with artificial intelligence push back against the archive, both historically and looking into the future.

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