

Close Reading

Ana Maria Caballero, Sara Ludy, Jonas Lund

25.01. - 09.02.2024

Text by Clara Che Wei Peh

To close read is to pay close attention to a text to produce an in-depth and considered analysis. It is to comprehend not only what is being said, but also how it is said, and to draw out what more it may suggest. Close reading asks us to go beyond the scanning of words and lines, to reject the default of taking things at face value, and to allow the nuance and subtleties to emerge. In many ways, the works of Ana María Caballero, Sara Ludy and Jonas Lund do exactly that—they are, and they evoke, close readings of our current technological conditions, especially in living and working with artificial intelligence (AI).

Ana María Caballero's *Being Borges* is a new series of work that extends her ongoing explorations of how language can be exhibited, experienced, and transacted. As a Colombian-American literary artist who engages intimately with both the Spanish and English language, *Being Borges* explores how AI interprets and visualises the two languages given their different and distinct signs and systems. Building on Jorge Luis Borges and Margarita Guerrero's *The Book of Imaginary Beings* and its 1970 English translation by Norman Thomas di Giovanni as the project's foundations, Caballero pens new poems recasting the original Spanish text. These three bodies of texts are taken as prompts to create AI-generated images, which become visual translations of the texts, drawing out layers of interpretations on top of what had been possible before. At the core of *Being Borges*, Caballero asks: what is at stake when language becomes literal via the visual?

In Sara Ludy's practice, she takes AI as a testing ground and collaborator. In her paintings, text-to-image generation allows her to experiment with imaginations and compositions at a faster rate. She then takes the digital explorations and builds them brush by brush, allowing the process, temporality and climate surrounding the painting to unfold onto the canvas. Shapes and forms emerge as layers and layers stack, reflecting light from the moon in the desert where she lives, and light from her screens. Informed by over 25 years of working digitally, she sees these painting to encompass a post-digital condition, where the ubiquity of the digital material has shaped and influenced the way we see. Along with her paintings, Ludy presents *Party Line*, a generative simulation responding to real-time solar wind data. The animation connects minimal forms and colours to the cosmos and is created with the use of ChatGPT.

The Future of Something continues Jonas Lund's astute reflections around the complex implications of living with AI, maintaining an honest yet humorous undertone present throughout his practice. Sequel to *The Future of Nothing*, this work comprises of seven short narratives of support groups that have gathered to discuss their fears, confusions, hesitations and more, in alternate realities, or perhaps, fast-approaching futures where the machine has taken over our lives. AI-generated animations morph and move through each vignette, as we hear about Patricia, whose kids have replaced her with AI, Karen, who finds herself overly attached to her robotic companion, and Veronica, who feels like she is drowning by simply trying to catch-up with it all.

The algorithm is spoken about as omnipresent and of a higher power. Somewhere in between, the humans become lost. We turn each other and offer comfort, companionship, or a special discount on a new subscription for how to tackle it all. We forget that it is humans that have built these machines after all. In addition, Lund will also present his new series, *JLT Futures*, an extension of his experimentations on contracts as art.

We often speak of our rapidly shifting technological condition in the abstract. Amorphous and all over, a horizon impossible to grasp. Yet, with curiosity, sensitivity, and careful wonder, these artists beckon us to look closer. If we pay attention, we just might see, between the pixels and poetry, contours of a present forming.

OFFICE IMPART
Waldenserstr. 2-4
10551 Berlin
www.officeimpart.com