curated by

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CRONE Wien
Poetry Machine

Artists: Ramesch Daha, Carola Dertnig, Eckart Hahn, Raphael Hefti, Verena Issel, Anna Khodorkovskaya, Tomas Kleiner, Justine Otto, Franziska Reinbothe, Leszek Skurski, Heidi Specker, Rosemarie Trockel, Ricardo Valentim, Maja Vukoje

May Not the Soul Be as Balloons

The exhibition *May Not the Soul Be as Balloons* directly references Estelle Hoy's lead essay, which outlines and defines the content of this year's *Curated by* theme: *Comedy*. Hoy's text is captured verbatim and transformed into a curatorial concept on a semantic basis.

This is made possible with the help of the AI-based text generator and computer system Poetry Machine, which was invented, developed, and programmed by the artist and media theorist David Link.

Poetry Machine is capable of writing its own reflections, descriptions and texts. It is fed with four or five words and associatively picks out other suitable word and sentence components from the Internet, which it then assembles into complete texts.

This ability has now been used to curate the exhibition *May Not the Soul Be as Balloons*. 14 short sections from Estelle Hoy's main essay, mostly consisting of just a few words or sentences, were entered into the Poetry Machine. With the help of its algorithm, it autonomously generated 14 detailed descriptions of works.

On the basis of these work descriptions, 14 artists then created the paintings, sculptures and installations in the exhibition. Some transposed the Poetry Machine's texts almost verbatim, some were inspired by them and chose an associative approach, some understood the contents in a

classical curatorial sense and selected suitable works from their earlier output. But all of them entered into immediate resonance and direct dialogue with the poetic-machine thoughts of the Poetry Machine, which in this way became the curator of the exhibition in the best sense of the word.

In the gallery space, the works are arranged in the order in which Poetry Machine wrote the descriptions of the works. Via a sound installation, the visitor hears the texts read by the actress Mavie Hörbiger.

The artists whose works can be seen in the exhibition come from the most diverse fields of art: Ramesch Daha, Carola Dertnig, Verena Issel, Raphael Hefti, and Franziska Reinbothe are united by the conceptual and contextual approach to their work. Maja Vukoje, Tomas Kleiner, Rosemarie Trockel, and Anna Khodorkovskaya seek in their art the performative or visual realization of hybrid social conditions. Heidi Specker and Ricardo Valentim repeatedly deal with the medium of photography, while Eckart Hahn, Leszek Skurski, and Justine Otto have devoted themselves to figurative painting.

Poetry Machine was created by David Link in 2001 and has been further developed since then. It is best described as a text-generating computer system based on semantic networks that autonomously feeds itself from the Internet and generates huge, associative, never-ending streams of communication. Since its creation, Poetry Machine has already appeared in the context of numerous exhibitions, including at MAK Vienna, ZKM Karlsruhe, and Documenta 13 in Kassel. With *May Not the Soul Be as Balloons* Poetry Machine is now curating its own exhibition for the first time.