



To the press

«The Darknet - From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration»

In cooperation with !Mediengruppe Bitnik and :digital brainstorming

With contributions from: Anonymous, Cory Arcangel, !Mediengruppe Bitnik, Aram Bartholl, Heath Bunting, Simon Denny, Eva and Franco Mattes, Seth Price, Robert Sakrowski, Hito Steyerl, Valentina Tanni

18 October 2014 – 11 January 2015

Press preview: Friday, 17 October 2014, 11 a.m.

Opening*: Friday, 17 October 2014, 6 p.m.

There is a parallel world beneath the surface of the Internet: the Darknet is an encrypted, invisible network that cannot be accessed by conventional browsers or search engines but is nevertheless used by millions. This digital territory is the impulse for cooperation between the artist collective !Mediengruppe Bitnik (Carmen Weisskopf and Domagoj Smoljo), the project :digital brainstorming from Migros-Kulturprozent and Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen. Forms of organisation, structures and communications systems which penetrate everyday life but which are largely unknown to the public will be examined with the help of other artists, theoreticians and hackers. The exhibition «The Darknet - From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration» will open Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen for interdisciplinary expeditions and encompass themes such as copyright, privacy, illegality and resistance.

Public awareness of the Darknet, also called Deep Web or Onionland, has increased as a result of recent events. It has a bad reputation: drugs, weapons, pornography, stolen data and forged documents can be bought there. However, Edward Snowden's revelations seem to have shifted this one-sided perception. The Darknet is an apparently power-free space with potential that is still little-known and even less used. The participants want to take this factor seriously as critical individuals and articulate its non-transparent mechanisms and systems. Some artistic contributions directly access data and visual worlds from the Deep Web. For example, !Mediengruppe Bitnik transports the Deep Web into the art space while *Emily's Video* by Eva and Franco Mattes compiles the reactions of people watching a mysterious video, which had been sourced from the Darknet, that was later destroyed. Cory Arcangel's work remains concealed from exhibition visitors. He is concerned with the visibility of the Kunst Halle on the World Wide Web. Other artists deal with Internet phenomena that also exist on the Surface Web and which are located in the tension-filled area between anonymity and commerce: Robert Sakrowski is curating YouTube films on the history of Anonymous, Valentina Tanni is making available her archive of memes and Simon Denny will provoke questions about business models, income and property in times of global data interchange. In contrast, Heath Bunting examines data storage in relation to identities. These are constructed by means of shopping cards, credit cards or mobile phones. The artist thus also broaches the subject of class systems. Conversely, an identity can also be deleted - as Seth Price demonstrates with *How to disappear in America*.

With this show the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen links the visible and the invisible which are interlocked - From Memes to Onionland. Aware of the uncertainties in this regard an approach from multiple perspectives is intended. It is an attempt to grasp this extremely controversial phenomenon of our times with artistic contributions, archive material, workshops and discussions. The format of the exhibition gives visitors access to the digital underground and questions familiar notions - Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen can now also be found in Onionland at <http://vtw7g7wcdsgxq4ru.onion/>

* with Book Launch «Hacking. Edition Digital Culture 2» (Christoph Merian Verlag Basel, 2014)

Biographical information:

!Mediengruppe Bitnik: Carmen Weisskopf: *1976 in Basel (CH), lives and works in Zurich; Domagoj Smoljo: *1979 in St. Gallen (CH), lives and works in Zurich
Cory Arcangel: *1978 in Buffalo (USA), lives and works in New York
Aram Bartholl: *1972 in Bremen (D), lives and works in Berlin
Heath Bunting: *1966 in London (UK), lives and works i.a. in Bristol
Simon Denny: *1982 in Auckland (NZ), lives and works in Berlin
Eva and Franco Mattes: *1976 in Brescia (I), live and work in New York
Seth Price: *1973 in Jerusalem (IL), lives and works in New York
Robert Sakrowski: *1966 in Berlin (D), lives and works in Berlin
Hito Steyerl: *1966 in Munich (D), lives and works in Berlin
Valentina Tanni: *1976 in Rome (I), lives and works in Rome

Events and Educational Program:

Saturday, 18 October 2014

Heath Bunting: Workshop «Status Project», registration at info@k9000.ch, 12 noon - 4 p.m.; Heath Bunting, Eva and Franco Mattes: Artist Talk, 4.30 p.m.

Thursday, 30 October 2014

Hannes Grassegger, Felix Stalder: Discussion «Digitale Leibeigenschaften», 8 p.m.

Saturday, 6 December 2014

«Here, but Invisible» i.a. with Aram Bartholl: Workshop «KillYourPhone», registration at info@k9000.ch; !Mediengruppe Bitnik: Artist Talk, 2 - 6 p.m.

Tuesday, 9 December 2014

Cory Arcangel: Film-Screening «Freshbuzz (www.subway.com)», 60 Min., Palace St.Gallen, 8.15 p.m.

Guided Tours

Tuesday, 21 October 2014, 6 p.m.
Sunday, 11 January 2015, 3 p.m.

Art Lunch

Thursday, 6 November 2014, 12 noon
Guest cooks: !Mediengruppe Bitnik and Raphael Rogenmoser of :digital brainstorming
Admission: CHF 25/members CHF 22; registration at info@k9000.ch

Workshops for School Classes

From 22 October we are offering workshops at the exhibition.
More information: www.k9000.ch (Art Education/Workshops for Schools)

Information about these and further events at www.k9000.ch

High-resolution images can be found in the press kit on our website (Information/Press). For further questions please contact Giovanni Carmine (carmine@k9000.ch) or Salome Hohl (hohl@k9000.ch).

The exhibition is a cooperation with the project :digital brainstorming of Migros-Kulturprozent. Special thanks to Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Jubiläumsstiftung der Schweizerischen Mobiliar Genossenschaft, Ortsbürgergemeinde St.Gallen and Fredy & Regula Lienhard-Stiftung for their generous support.

Special thanks go to Prof. Dr. Felix Stalder for exchanging ideas and knowledge and the cooperation. We also thank Dr. iur. Bruno Glaus for the help in legal matters.

The Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen is supported by St. Gallen City Council, Kulturförderung Kanton St.Gallen, Swisslos, Migros-Kulturprozent, Kulturförderung Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Martel AG, St. Galler Tagblatt. The educational program is made possible by Raiffeisen.

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<http://vtw7g7wcdsgxq4ru.onion/>

Opening times:
Tuesday to Friday 12 noon - 6 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

