

★ ★**MENTALKLINIK**

BITTER MEDICINE #02

17.09.2020-31.01.2021

**BORUSAN
CON·TEM·
PO·RAR·Y**



Temporary Exhibition
BITTER MEDICINE #02
September 17, 2020 - January 31, 2021
Borusan Contemporary
Perili Köşk, Rumelihisarı

Curator
Dr. Necmi Sönmez

Editor and Translation
Merve Ünsal
Serra Yentürk

Proofreading
Burak Mert Çiloğlugil

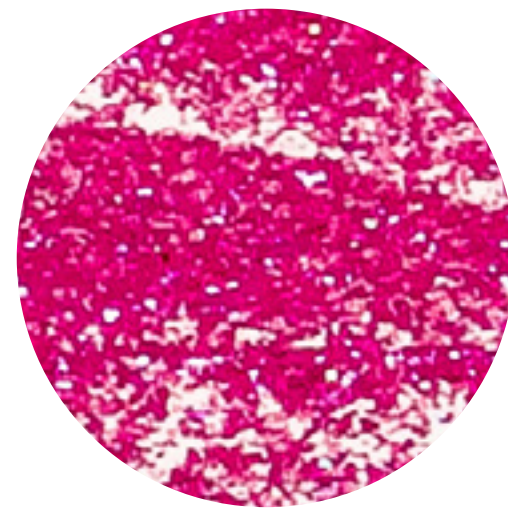
Design
Timuçin Unan

Photographs
Özge Balkan

ABBREVIATIONS

:mK	:mentalKLINIK
KE	Dr. Kumru Eren
NS	Dr. Necmi Sönmez
OY	Osman Can Yerebakan
AD	Ayşe Draz
NC	Naz Cuguoğlu
MW	Marlies Wirth
FS	Fredo De Smet
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CCTV	Close-circuit Television
FAANG	Facebook-Amazon-Apple-Netflix-Google
FOMO	Fear of Missing Out
GAFA	Google-Amazon-Facebook-Apple
IKB	International Klein Blue (= PB29, = CI 77007)
JOMO	Joy of Missing Out
MAK	Museum für angewandte Kunst (Museum for Applied Arts; Uygulamalı Sanatlar Müzesi)
SFMOMA	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
UX	User Experience
VR	Virtual Reality
VRT	Vlaamse Radio -en Televisieomroeporganisatie (Flemish Radio and Television Broadcasting Organisation;

:mentalKLINIK *BITTER MEDICINE* #02 COURSE OF COLORS



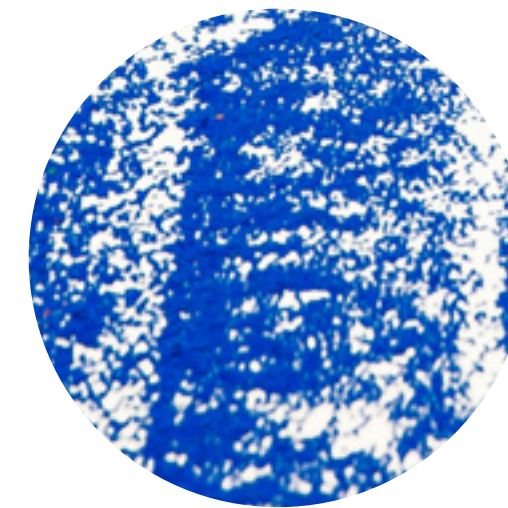
Fuchsia:

14.09.2020 - 30.09.2020



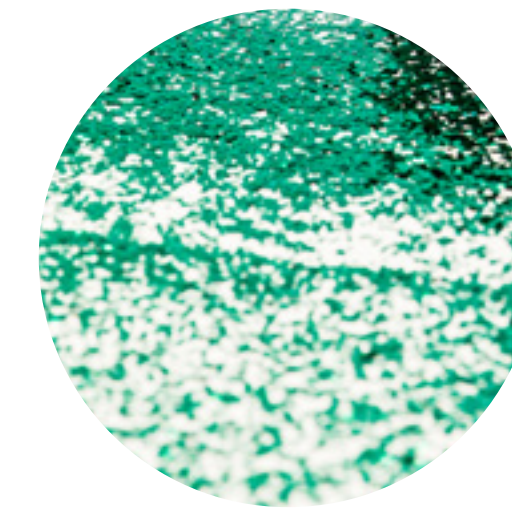
Gold:

01.10.2020 - 19.10.2020



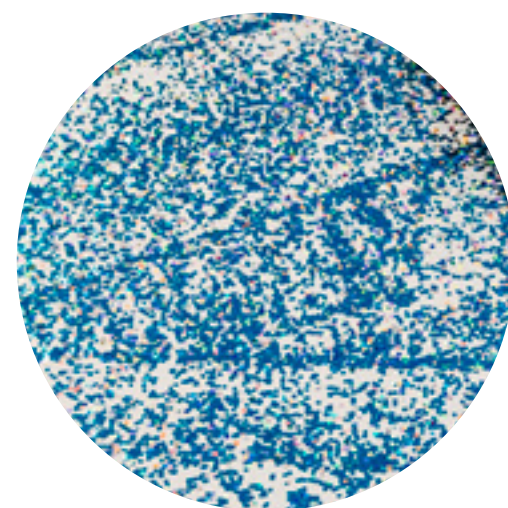
Yves Klein Blue:

20.10.2020 - 08.11.2020



Yves Klein Blue and Green:

09.11.2020 - 19.11.2020



Turquoise and Rainbow:

20.11.2020 - 14.12.2020



Fuchsia and Rainbow:

15.12.2020 - 06.01.2021



Black and Rainbow:

07.01.2021 - 31.01.2021

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Dr. Necmi Sönmez

5

PIGMENT, GLITTER, PIXEL:

On the Element of Color in :mentalKLINIK's *BITTER MEDICINE* #02

Dr. Necmi Sönmez

6

*AN HOMAGE TO YVES KLEIN

From Object to Hyperobject: Leaving a Trace in the Void

Dr. Kumru Eren

9

A CONVERSATION WITH :mentalKLINIK

Merve Ünsal

11

BITTER MEDICINE CONVERSATIONS

Dr. Kumru Eren, Dr. Necmi Sönmez, Osman Can Yerebakan

Open Laboratory / Hyper-Reality-Simulation / Analyzing Today

15

Ayşe Draz, Naz Cuguoğlu

Performative Spectatorship, Oxymoron Aesthetic of :mentalKLINIK,

Taking a Third Position

22

Marlies Wirth, Fredo De Smet

Hybrid Reality, Immateriality Again in the 21st Century

27

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

DR. NECMİ SÖNMEZ

In the era of the quarantine set in motion by the global pandemic *BITTER MEDICINE #02* exhibition project developed by the artist duo :mentalKLINIK (Yasemin Baydar, Birol Demir), consists of shaping comprehensive ideas of the future without an objectification in a virtual environment during this time of withdrawal that affects the whole world.

There is a close relationship between the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* and the “black swans”, which are defined as symbols of the disasters affecting the earth. Within this framework, it is possible to bring together the black swans, which represent the periodic, intensified pressure, with two artists who have preferred black clothes since 2007. Developed as “a bitter medicine” at a time when the global art scene is disrupted, the exhibition project aims to transcend the boundaries of the established norms of digital exhibitions to eliminate the boundaries between the work and the recipient.

The starting point of the presentation of this series at Borusan Contemporary, the second rendition after the Belgrade Museum of Contemporary Art, is the *Puff Out* installation set up in the gallery space. Instant patterns are created by the endless and repetitive movements of eight intelligent robotic vacuum cleaners in the glitter-covered space, producing combinations of light and form. The site-specific installation, which reaches the viewers digitally 24/7 via Borusan Contemporary’s website, has a multi-layered structure. Visuality presented here is based on both technical and methodical stimulations. It is created by the glitter constantly moving with the enthusiasm of robots. Every instant situation not only presents the colors and forms that change in an unrepeatable way, but also turns the gallery into a space where different visual experiences are fermented. This feature, which is defined as the *microclimate area* by :mentalKLINIK, is a step taken in the name of the future, just like the soil in which a seed has fallen. *BITTER MEDICINE # 02*, which is physically designed and represented on the digital platform, shapes its hybrid identity 24/7 in a virtual environment, examines the form of *moving image*—a primary expression of discourse in New Media Art—, shedding the barriers which determine the perceptions

of the recipients, such as accessibility of the exhibition space, social distance, etc.

At first glance, the images of *BITTER MEDICINE #02*, which draws attention with their unusual beauty, mobility and colorfulness, takes the “intermediate visibility” in the virtual environment and highlights the “light sources”, provoking questions of why and how. This is a transition into the realm of *hyperreality* as well as a curveball thrown at the world of today filled with uncertainties. Thus, the recipient is faced with a visuality, the colors and lights of which are differentiated in their volumes to create a sense of curiosity. This opens up a discussion on the concepts of *hyperstimulation*¹ that can be discussed in the same orbit with the *dematerialization*² concept defined by Lucy R. Lippard in 1973.

Dematerialization is one of the building blocks of Contemporary Art History as a concept that Conceptual Art has opened up to discussion. *Hyperstimulation* is a concept questioned by :mentalKLINIK, bringing the excitement beyond the stimulation of the five senses. Because, in this exhibition, the recipient grasps the images created by the glitter, activated by the decisions of the robots with the possibilities of their own devices (mobile phone, laptop computer) on which they can experience the exhibition. Since all the stimuli required for both the formation and perception of visuality in the exhibition are shaped virtually through digital platforms, “fundamentalist experimentation” makes itself evident at every step. This feature gives the exhibition a research-oriented character, a harbinger of the fact that in the near future the seeds mixed into the soil of the digital environment will reveal to us with completely different facts that are “data-based”.

BITTER MEDICINE #02 cracks open the lid of the Pandora box of digital aesthetics, revealing the visuality in which egocentric moments of happiness, excitement, and enthusiasm dance. This is the beginning of an almost seductive journey when considered together with the stunning rainbow effects that the glitter creates.

Endnotes

¹ :mentalKLINIK-Jérôme Sans interview “Microclimate Zone” in :mentalKLINIK (La Patinoire Royale / Galerie Valérie Bach). 2018. Obnoxiously Happy [Exhibition catalogue]. Brussels, s.104

² Lippard, L.R. (1997). *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (Expanded second edition). University of California Press, California.

PIGMENT, GLITTER, PIXEL:

ON THE ELEMENT OF COLOR IN

:mentalkLINIK'S *BITTER MEDICINE #02*

DR. NECMİ SÖNMEZ

The colors of the glitter used by :mentalkLINIK in the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* project are switched at specific time intervals. The *Puff Out* installation, which is the focus of the work, is based on the instant patterns created by the endless and non-repetitive movements of eight smart robotic vacuum cleaners on a floor covered with glitter, and the digital transfer of light and form combinations to the audience 24/7 via the Borusan Contemporary website, facilitated by online systems.

The project, which was launched with fuchsia-colored glitter on September 14, and moved on to the gold color on September 30, continues with the Yves Klein Blue from October 19 onwards. Yves Klein, who has played an important role in contemporary art history, carried on his legacy to our day with the color he named after himself. In this article, I aim to develop a perspective that examines :mentalkLINIK's approach to this iconic artist as well as the color interpretations they developed in the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* project.

In his short life (1928-1962), Yves Klein put his signature on important projects one after the other, placing conceptual and performative elements with experimental characteristics on the backbone of his practice. Among them, the ultramarine blue color, which he patented in 1960 as *International Klein Blue*, (IKB, = PB29, = CI 77007), holds particular significance.¹ After investigating the psychological effects of colors for a long time between 1949-55, Klein experimented with organic powder paints that create the indigo color. Using a special adhesive material (*Rhodopas*) that does not spoil the shiny effect of the powder paint, Klein became the creator of a blue color that almost drew in the onlooker. Using this color in his canvases after 1956, the artist reached international recognition in a short time with the exhibitions he opened one after the other. What made Klein one of the critical figures of the Avant-garde was an exhibition he opened in



Paris in 1960 in the Galerie Iris Clert under the title of *Le Vide* [The Void].² The artist had created a performance by painting the walls of the small gallery white, without exhibiting a work of art.³ Klein's canvases and sculptures using ultramarine blue remained on the agenda of the international art scene after his death and became an inspirational resource for many generations of artists.

Today, Yves Klein Blue (IKB), which maintains its iconic effect, appears as a visual reference point in the exhibition *BITTER MEDICINE #02*. Having developed a different color interpretation in the 1950s, Klein's starting point was natural pigments. The starting point of the color interpretation developed by :mentalKLINIK in 2020 is the glitter that is produced industrially in octagonal shapes. With the character of a *ready-made*, glitter clearly refers to the pixel phenomenon that forms the basis of the digital production model, as glitter is shaped by the effects of light falling on it.

It is possible to interpret the different perceptions left by the colors of *BITTER MEDICINE #02* on the audience as an integrated radical action that eliminates the line between reality and fiction, within the framework of the concept of *Hyper-Reality*⁴, which emerged after an extensive period of research for :mentalKLINIK. The glitter, whose color values are played with in a fictional way, are in a constant state of movement with both the light system skillfully employed in the installation and the electrification they have in their bodies, thus presenting to the audience a very different set of colors that cannot be seen with the naked eye, with the help of cameras. This colorfulness brings the viewers a kind of visual perception bridge, fed by the attractive, striking, digital-color-scales created with special filters and applications brought up by the 8K screen technology. Those who cross this bridge now face a short-term collision of perception as they encounter high-value lights, shadow factors, and color clusters (created with computer-based virtual reality) that are "edited for the screen" beyond normal colors. The reason why those who follow *BITTER MEDICINE #02* cannot separate their eyes from the screens (whether it is a computer screen or a mobile phone) are closely related to :mentalKLINIK's creation of a "new aura" in the audience by skillfully bringing together manipulated facts of color and tone. Indeed, *BITTER MEDICINE #02*, which is physically constructed in an exhibition space while presenting the phenomenon of color determined by digital codes to the viewer through online channels, opens the door to the true hyperactive-color scales. This trend has an almost dizzying appeal as it is presented to the audience with its digital color spectrums, different glitters, rainbow effects, just as Yves Klein used his pigments



to create an extraordinary ultramarine blue using a different binding material.

“Constructed colors”, which are among the basic elements that make up the striking visuality of the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* project, have a psychological depth. The uncertainty that has set the agenda since the first days of the pandemic made it almost compulsory for individuals to withdraw in order to construct a different world for themselves and to construct “new auras” with digital possibilities. I think that underlying the seductive characteristics of the colors we encounter in the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* project is the possibility of administering a temporary vaccine of happiness to individuals who are skeptical of the near future, by means of which they can overcome their fears. After watching the work for five or ten minutes, the effect of “temporary happiness” becomes even more obvious, underlining the positive feeling that somehow transcends the present and flows towards an undetermined horizon. These moments of satisfaction, which are difficult to translate into words, underline the strong psychological framework of the colors designed by :mentalKLINIK. One of the most important facts brought up by these digitally coded color combinations is that they trigger “hybrid sensitivities” such as happiness-fear, excitement-stagnation in the perceptions, psychology of the audience. :mentalKLINIK had described these hybrid sensitivities as *microclimates*.⁵ Considering the current circumstances that the viewers bear testimony to, such hybrids not only make the present, which we define as the new contemporary, intolerable, but also make it possible for the audience to develop a more neutral perspective (neither positive nor negative) for the future.

Endnotes

¹ Berggruen, O. & Hollein, M.& Pfeiffer, I. (Eds.). (2004). *Yves Klein*. Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, p.222

² *ibid.*, p. 22.

³ In this gallery where Yves Klein had painted the walls white, Mübin Orhon’s abstract paintings had been exhibited before. For more detailed information, please see: Sönmez, N. (2018). *Paris Tecrübeleri École de Paris – Çağdaş Türk Sanatı: 1945-1965*, Yapı Kredi Publishing, Istanbul, p. 82-83.

⁴ Hyper Reality does not correspond to the term “hyperreality.” I’m using this terminology in relation to Jean Baudrillard’s use in his *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994).

⁵ :mentalKLINIK-Jérôme Sans interview “Microclimate Zone” in :mentalKLINIK (La Patinoire Royale / Galerie Valérie Bach). 2018. *Obnoxiously Happy* [Exhibition catalogue]. Brussels, s.104



*AN HOMAGE TO YVES KLEIN

FROM OBJECT TO HYPEROBJECT:

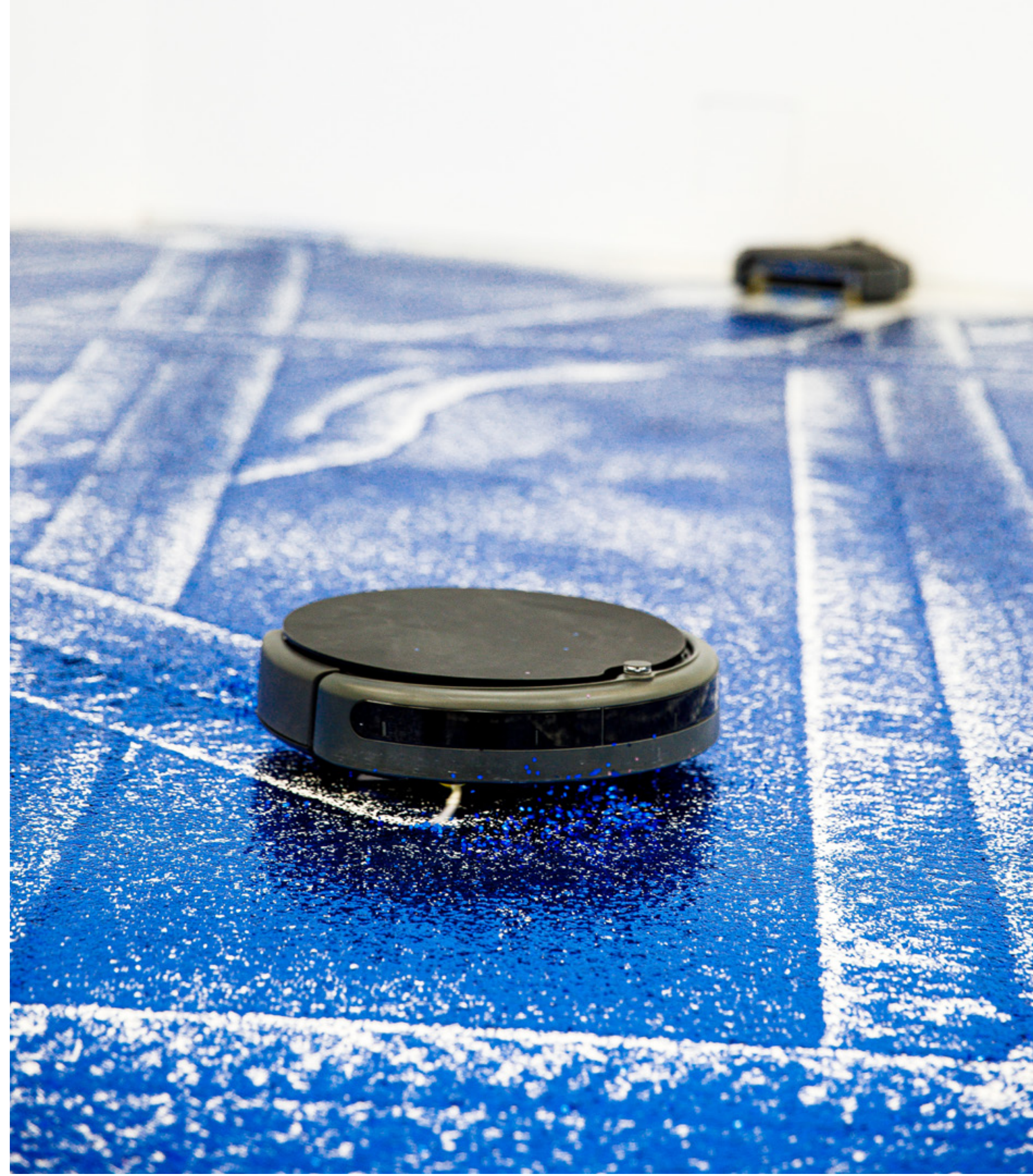
LEAVING BEHIND A TRACE IN THE VOID

DR. KUMRU EREN

In the 1960s, when photoshop and digital photo manipulation techniques were not yet available as readily, the iconic *Le Saut dans le Vide* [Leap into the Void] performance was etched into our memories by Yves Klein.

Involved in the separation of art from its object and “New Realism” , thus joining in the course of the Avant-garde art, Klein’s relationship with the color blue and its associations, revealed his increasingly conceptualized art practice in his tragically short life. These days, the main exhibition space at Borusan Contemporary witnesses a similar existential crisis through robot vacuum cleaners, which represent the hybrid reality and artificial intelligence world of :mentalKLINIK, exploring the “blue depths” that Klein de-objected and dived into. And it does so sixty years after Klein’s attempt to de-objectify, by proclaiming the rise of the world of *hyperobject* and leaving a mark in the void, just as Klein did.

1960s’ Continental Europe will be remembered as a period where the wounds of World War II had not even begun to heal yet but where a great liberation movement took place in the arts. Let us remember that Fluxus, which left its mark on this period, used conceptual and anti-aesthetic strategies in a much more radical way than its cousin Dada. As the political and social destruction experienced caused the narratives of modernity to be gradually demolished, the representation of reality was to be dealt with as a problematic. A new space was opened up in which space, matter, and most importantly, art became independent from its object.



Klein, who may be regarded in this realm, led a new Avant-garde group referred as “New Realism” with Fernandez Arman by means of his performances, his act of painting with rollers, refusing to use the brush, developing a color patent by appropriating blue color, a balloon performance in the sky again referring to the blue color, a single-note musical composition project *Monotone Symphony* dating to 1948, his use of the live models’ bodies in 1958 to create performative prints and his artistic practice that reflects the desire to be anonymous.

Two works by Klein in dialogue with each other could be considered among the iconic works of 20th century art. The former is the blue color, *IKB* (International Klein Blue) developed and appropriated by the artist. Yves Klein patented the color in 1960, developing it in the mid-1950s with an art paints manufacturer located in Montparnasse, Paris. *IKB* was basically produced by incorporating a synthetic resin binder to the ultramarine blue, and by doing so the original quality and color intensity of the pigment was preserved.

When we look at the etymology of *ultramarine*, *ultramarinus* means “overseas or beyond the sea” because the origin of the color was derived from Lapis lazuli, a type of rock found in Mesopotamia, especially in Afghanistan, turned into a powder. This paint, which was brought to Europe by Italian merchants in the 14th and 15th centuries, was predominantly featured in the depictions of the Virgin Mary due to its expensive and rare quality during the Renaissance, and symbolized holiness and humility (perhaps the smallness of the human being against the vastness of the sky and seas).¹ Synthetic production of *ultramarine* blue was only possible in the first half of the 19th century. The last stop of this special blue that encompasses holiness and vastness from ancient Egypt to the Renaissance was Yves Klein in Montparnasse. Klein describes his *IKB* best in his own words: “First there is nothing, then a depth of nothingness, then a profundity of blue.”

If we look at the similar relations of appropriations of colors and the color wars between contemporary artists —such as Anish Kapoor buying the rights of *Vantablack*, the blackest substance on earth, and in response, his colleague Stuart Semple banning Kapoor’s use of the pinkest color by buying its copyrights— Yves Klein was obviously a true pioneer.

Klein associated emptiness and nothingness with this blue, which came from beyond

oceans and reached its most intense form with his touch. The cult photograph by Klein from 1960, *Leap into the Void* also pointed to the same crisis of existence. If we recall the body of work from Plato to Heidegger on emptiness in art ontology, it is clear that Klein’s gesture of leaping refers to Heidegger’s phenomenon of “thrown into the world as a state of being.”² Like Heidegger’s *dasein*³, Klein portrays being “thrown into the world.”

The pandemic circumstances we are experiencing today have created the digital twin of the void we have been thrown into.:mentalKLINIK’s hybrid exhibition at Borusan Contemporary, *BITTER MEDICINE #02*, points to the irony with colorful glitter particles of the world that is transformed into a screen space. This time with the difference that the *dasein*, being thrown into the void, is represented by robot vacuum cleaners!

In the path from de-objectification to the world of *hyperreality* and artificial intelligence, the blue period of *BITTER MEDICINE #02* reopens the trace left in the void beyond time and space to the discussion in the uncertainty of today’s world. “An Homage to Yves Klein” ...

Endnotes

¹ Lapis lazuli, from Latin lapis “stone” and the medieval Latin word “lazuli”, genitive of “*lazulum*”. In Arabic, (*el-*)*lâciverd*

² Ökten, K. H., (2019) *Varlık ve Zaman Bir Okuma Rehberi*, [Being and Time: A Reader’s Guide], Alfa Yayınları, İstanbul, 2019, p.210, 211

³ *ibid.*: *Dasein*: The experience of being that has the capacity to pose questions which is peculiar to human beings, the phenomenon of us.

A CONVERSATION WITH :mentalkLINIK

“Welcome to the Dystopia and thank you for your collaboration 24/7”

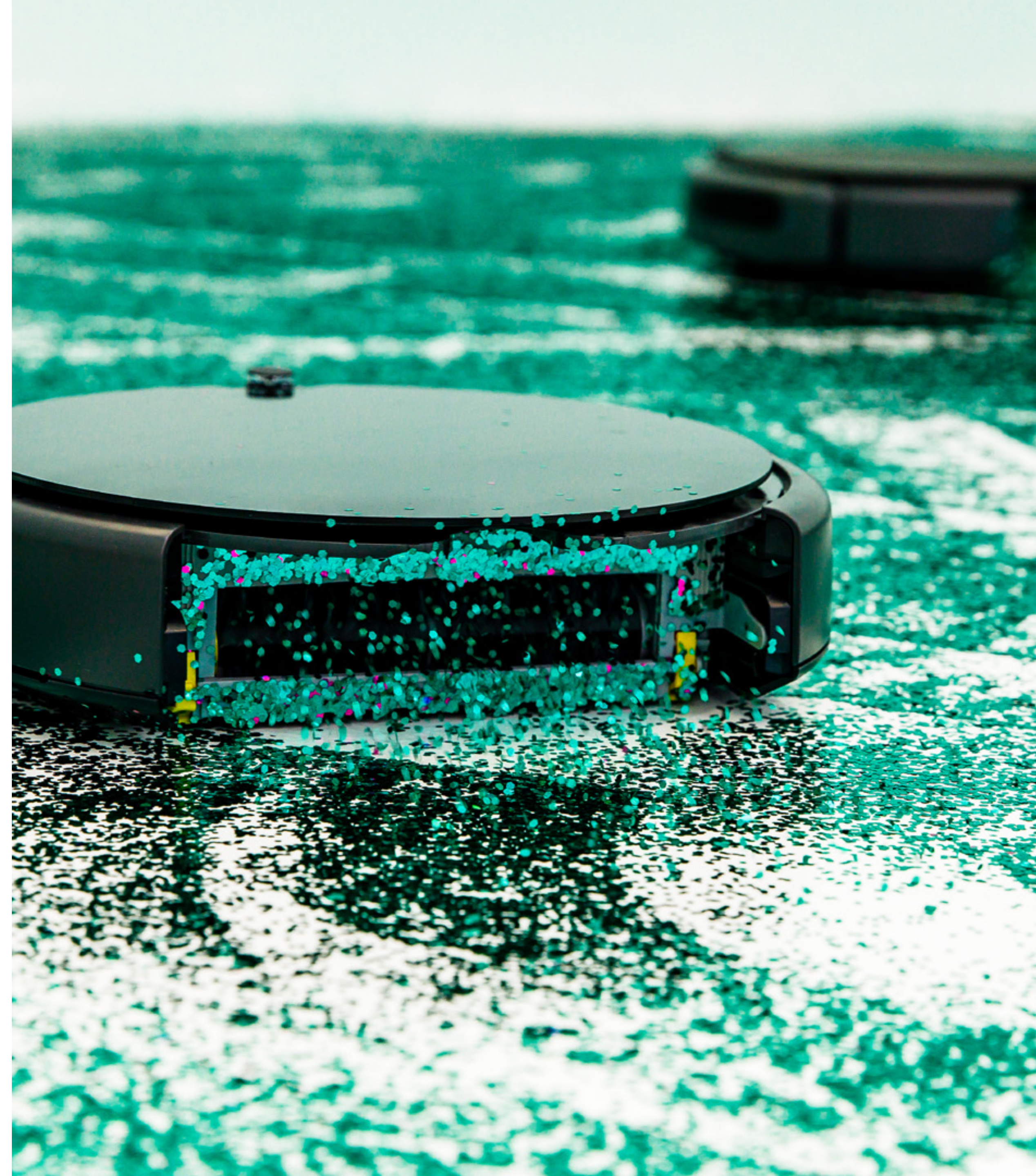
MERVE ÜNSAL

I would like to situate *BITTER MEDICINE* within :mentalkLINIK's practice. The link between this work and your formal and conceptual lexicons is quite clear; the articulation of the work employs relatively “new” methods that we have all quickly adapted to, or tried to. Could you talk about the process of the work?

With the pandemic, we stepped into a new hybrid reality in which the physical is transferred to the digital realm. With this bitter medicine that we prescribed to the current “moment” that we are in, we provide a form in which the physical is transmitted through a digital experience, which is the time-space of this hybrid reality.

Watching the transformation of the sense of time as it crashed into a wall

with the introduction of the notion of the pandemic into our daily lives, we were experiencing an enhanced domestic space reality within our *microclimate*. With the invitation of Carl de Smet, we revisited our work, *Puff Out*, and prepared this “bitter medicine” prescription for the rapidly shifting circumstances of our day and we presented this work for the first time at the Belgrade Contemporary Art Museum. During the first days when the museums were closed, *BITTER MEDICINE* #01 was presented live 24/7 through the museum’s website, until the museum opened its doors once again. To fill the void left behind by the museums that had closed within the increasingly online, digital world, six robot vacuums, programmed to be sensitive to dust would move through



the space where glitter is scattered across the floor, thus constantly transforming the space, constituting *BITTER MEDICINE #01*; laying the emphasis on the motto of “nothing will remain the same” after the pandemic.

The exhibition was still being shown in Belgrade, when we were invited by the manager of Borusan Contemporary Dr. Kumru Eren to prepare the second prescription for Borusan Contemporary, under the curatorial guidance of Dr. Necmi Sönmez, as the institution was to remain closed until the end of January 2021. Carl de Smet’s curatorial approach was to prescribe *BITTER MEDICINE #01* for the temporarily closed bodies of the institutions. Dr. Necmi Sönmez’s curatorial prescription was to have the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* through the relationship between art and *dematerialization* in a novel way within the framework of *hyperstimulation*, which is at the core of the works of :mentalkLINIK. The reinterpretation of *BITTER MEDICINE* with different curatorial visions enabled us to be further inspired within our universe of multiple perspectives, opening up new dialogues.

The possibility of being visible 24/7 could be interpreted as a criticism of the social orders of the “new normal.” What does 24/7 mean for you?

In our opinion, the notion of being watched 24/7 refers to today’s surveillance technologies, data-focused precarious lives, and the ambiguities created by our subjectivities based on technology and services. Furthermore, it expresses our cheerless *zeitgeist*, the digitization of our bodies with constant stimulation, and our dissatisfied and hyperconnected lives which are deprived of surprises.

It is not easy to observe a situation while experiencing it. But we are within an order that is not normal, suspended and people would like to go back to “normal.” We would like to ask: to which “normal”? Or what is the “new normal?” The “contemporary person” who appears to have been promised immortality and infinite youth, is experiencing the end of the neoliberal policies, as the notion of death, inequality, and discrimination are back in center stage with the thread of COVID-19. Every end deserves a celebration.

In the world that we are stepping into now is an order where private data is willingly

shared, artificial-intelligence supported bio- and neuro-control mechanisms are deeply embedded, driven by rating systems and micro-controls. We are being told, “Welcome to the Dystopia and thank you for your collaboration 24/7.” In reality, the 24/7 viewing is more internal than external and is even more sense-driven, rhythmic, and behavioral than previously considered. When ways of seeing have arrived at this point, as artists, we produce reflexes against the anxieties created by the perception changes that these control mechanisms have created in our gaze as well as the anxieties triggered by these invisible policies. The *hyperstimulation* created by *hyperconnectivity* corresponds to the experiences of our exhibitions.

BITTER MEDICINE’s 24/7 content and form is linked to the cloud (evoking romantic feelings). It could be perceived as the humanless, sensor-equipped, connected to the internet automation of Industry 4.0 functioning within the artistic realm.

What do you think about the changes to the responsibilities and visibilities of art institutions? Is the first addressee of the BITTER MEDICINE the art institution?

This violent standstill in the system has

also dragged every person, institution, and field into panic who was caught up in this speed, flow and distorted understanding. We watched this effect in very hectic and unaccounted online projects in the field of art. Galleries, institutes, museums and even artists are opening online showrooms as if we only use our sense of sight to see/watch and perceive art. (Except for projects that use the Online medium self-consciously)

Showrooms remind us of *Peepshows*. Art, which has been considered in the entertainment category and event culture for a long time, offers us “Online Art Porn” at this time. In online viewings, through the technical, color, and viewfinder possibilities offered by the camera, we can see works up close in a way that would be impossible in the physical space, able to scrutinize on a pixel level; watching the productions in which artist employed special space and the techniques, we lose the post-aura, which, although fake, is still alive within art. As Benjamin pointed out, while the first “aura” is lost in reproduction, now our five senses are reduced to one or two and we are expected to relate to the artwork in this limited way. The art market has used the

artist as an extra for some time now and they are presented with a temporary and fake lead role. Instead of “artist is present”, the “artist is online.”

As opposed to the stillborn aesthetic of the art world squeezed into virtual viewing rooms, *BITTER MEDICINE* is physically constructed, constantly changing, working, relayed to the world 24/7. At the same time, the danger of the artwork being confused with a communication object within the age of communication and data optimization is opened up to discussion. With *BITTER MEDICINE*, we are bringing up the sensibility of the “new beauty”, which is the strongest weapon of the digital aesthetic.

Surveillance politics has been taken to a whole new level as some workers have been expected to keep their cameras on while working. As your work carries the politics of labor and exhibition-making to a poetic space, could you talk about this point at which the political and the aesthetic converge?

It is clear that there is a relationship between the power of the invisible and immaterial art. We know how invisible or hidden strategies are embedded in

current materials, technologies and services, and we reflect and even parody this current situation both aesthetically and conceptually in the materials and relationships we use in many of our works.

In our exhibition titled *Truish*, which we realized in 2017 in the era of *post truth* where politics move away from reality, we asked, “How can art lie when the reality is not true enough?” The relationship between art and reality is constantly changing. We question this: could you re-transform again what “pretends to be real” by art?

Today, we as :mentalKLINIK describe the relationship between art and politics as “art is politically aesthetic and aesthetically political”

In the power of the invisible, the invisibility/ambiguity of Coronavirus has created a domain of power and made surveillance and even bio-surveillance technologies acceptable without question. From the period when Foucault questioned body and power politics, we have entered the era of powerful, micro-targeting technology companies ruling *FAANG*, who know us better than we know ourselves, examining human behavioral patterns



and processing deep data. We are in the transition between the precarious human and the semi-hero human loaded with augmented abilities. At this stage, even the owner and slave relationship is a collapsed fable.

We currently live in a new hybrid understanding of time-space where the physical and the virtual are combined. When physical shared reality is under threat, we point to this new hybrid space with our virtual encounters. The loss of the physical brings with its digital anxiety. The bitter recipe we offer can be read as a tactic of this understanding and as an artistic crisis management.

As :mentalKLINIK, we provide an array of multi-faceted approaches to our universe, just like a disco ball, using the ultra contemporary tools of a visible lightness, invisible political strategies, and social dynamics without any concealment. In this exhibition, the “bitter medicine” is presented for the :mentalKLINIK universe and the hybrid lifestyle created by the current circumstances, as well as the artistic and cultural realms that are silent and/or have been silenced.

There is a trained randomness

embedded in the way in which the robots move and sense. What does this infinite potentiality mean for you?

While autonomous robots work using patterns given by sensors, they perceive the glamorous glitter we offer them merely as unwanted dust. The idiosyncratic mission of robot vacuum cleaners and the dust/glitter overloaded density offer us unrepeatable pictures that change with every moment. The robots, whose dust boxes have been removed and are thus off-duty now, become the actors of the show. And while this ongoing performance invites you to dive in with the movement, speed and volume of the current time, it attempts to seduce.

The most obvious trait of *BITTER MEDICINE #02* presents a new form within a transitional plane amidst distinct forms of art like drawing, painting, performance, video art etc. The digital transmittance of the work, the mobile robots, the pre-fictional choreography of the moving cameras, and the transfer of the moment are not monotonous; rather than a mere transmission, the work is open to surprises.

Thus, optimization, which is the first goal

of the robot and artificial intelligence world, has the possibility to turn into a surprise with its arbitrary, targetless approach.

As :mentalKLINIK, we attempt to create an undefined space, an unstable region and frozen time by establishing various relationships with the materials and actions that make up an immaterial world with *Puff Out*, just as we have adopted in our previous works oscillating between the robotics and the emotional. While *Puff Out* adopts an inherently entertaining attitude, on the other hand, it produces an aesthetic that is violent, abrasive, questioning the world we live in.

Artists need to give prescriptions for the social states we are in. What are the prescriptions that you are working on now?

We do not prefer to charge the artist with a mission. The artist’s internal monologues, their introverted world are more provocative for us. While the result always relates to the viewer and the society and although we are assumed to be a clinic [KLINIK], *BITTER MEDICINE* is also a reflex that reflects off of our own universe.

It is very valuable for us to live in the

times we are in and to produce within that time. Today, while having donated all our senses for the continuity of the system, we will continue to invite the audience’s erotic body to stimulate their mind. We aim to create a short-term but memorable experience by creating a cold shower effect, drawing the already shortened attention to the field of art. As we always say, “Nonetheless, these actions are not that deliberate.”

BITTER MEDICINE CONVERSATIONS:

OPEN LABORATORY / HYPER-REALITY-SIMULATION / ANALYZING TODAY

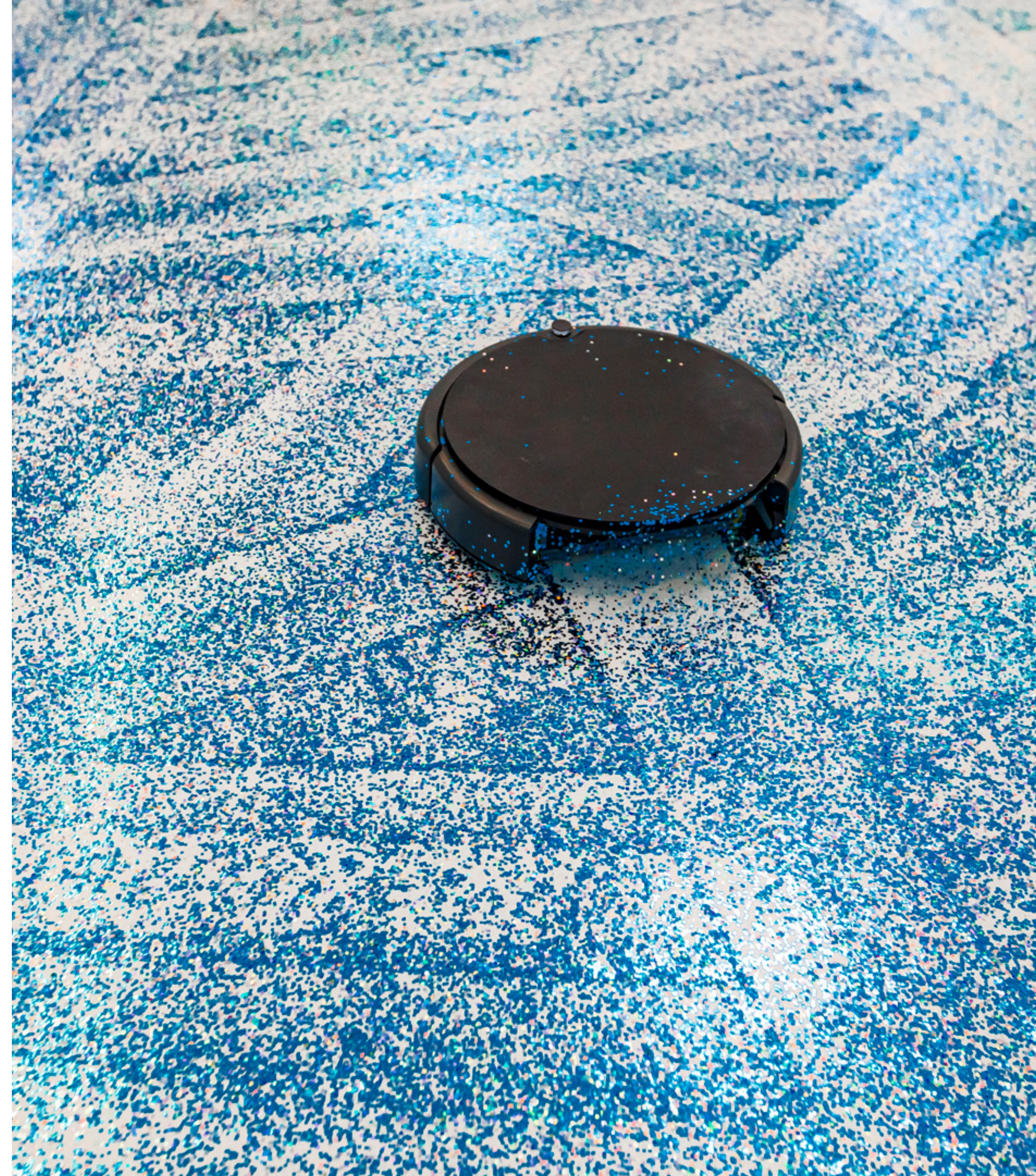
Speakers: Dr. Kumru Eren, Dr. Necmi Sönmez, Osman Can Yerebakan

The conversation below, available on YouTube in Turkish, was edited for clarity.

Dr. Necmi Sönmez: This talk aims to bring together different aspects of the exhibition *BITTER MEDICINE #02*. As you know, one of the most important features of this exhibition is that after this exhibition was installed physically, it was transferred digitally to the audience using online channels. This produces a kind of open laboratory feature. When I say “Open Laboratory”, I am referring to the fact that the images in this exhibition open the door to an experimentalism that the audience was not used to before, both in the forming and sharing of these images: Robots create the imagery of the works. These robots somehow bombard the autonomy of the artist and the sharing of images on the internet, as well as the concept of the aura of art, which I think

creates very slippery grounds within the exhibition in terms of making and sharing the work to be viewed. What are your opinions on this subject? Let’s start with you first, Osman.

Osmancan Yerebakan: Thanks, Necmi, for inviting me. The context we are in is actually a good place to talk about the exhibition. I’m here, I’m in New York, you are in Istanbul, and in Germany. It is actually a reflection of the reality we are in right now. The exhibition is a reflection of this as well. The first thing I want to say about the subject is that the visuals created by *BITTER MEDICINE #02* are constantly changing. In fact the *aura* of creation and that mystery suddenly draws us into the kitchen of the work, showing us how the work was done. Due to the



sudden disappearance of that mystery and the continuous renewal of the work, the landscape I will see if I enter now and the landscape I will see in one hour are different. The excitement and expectation created by this creates a situation that could not be possible before. And on the one hand this experience is universal. The fact that I can see this from here and that you can see it from Germany or Istanbul creates a great network. The other thing I want to mention here is *Land art* - there was even a movie in which the protagonist woke up one day and found giant shapes in the field. They thought aliens were doing this; it was uncanny. The feeling of wonder, “how did this happen all at once?” is prevailing in the Land art, in *The Spiral Jetty*. Its attitude was very masculin at the same time, conveying “I did this and it was done and now, you are fascinated by this and wonder how I did it all that”—the image actually dissipates a bit here. The disappearance of this magic, the masculine magic, and the techniques of producing work that have historically been reflected on women in certain ways, practices such as handicrafts and sculpture that have become more feminine in a certain way are critical here.

We can even talk about performance art to discuss how the work is done. We can witness the process in sculpture or performance as opposed to a giant *Land Art* work. The fact that those shapes are constantly changing beyond the control of the artists creates a power derived from the mystery. Suddenly the work surrenders to the robot. I also have a Roomba in my house. There is an obscurity included here because I usually let it work when I am not at home. I think the most important point here is that rather than the question “how did it happen?” which we reflect on contemporary art, we get to see the kitchen of a work.

NS: This is a very interesting interpretation. Kumru, what do you think?

Dr. Kumru Eren: Before I begin, thank you for your invitation. I think I can take it to a slightly different place. First of all, as we know Borusan Contemporary is an institution that is already experimental—investigating the boundaries of both the field of representation and the audience experience. But despite this, despite many things that we have dealt with experimentally, *BITTER MEDICINE #02* fits in with the institution very differently. I can

say that it is a form of exhibition that goes beyond our tradition. If we take this art historically, here the screen is used as an artistic space, instead of canvas or paper. If you remember, this was a phenomenon that came into our lives mostly with video art. But this artistic space entered into the exhibition space with Marcel Duchamp. It also fits into a theme where the artistic space for the screen differs and goes beyond these two themes, beyond these two different spaces, which I cannot call it an installation, but it is an exhibition experience that fits with the hybrid term. Because, as you know, we set up the installation and made it available to the audience 24/7. I think we will talk about different technologies, non-human, artificial intelligence and robot technology shortly. The artistic form that brought the human labor, installation etc. to the exhibition space and created them in the exhibition space was in effect after Marcel Duchamp. To continue from where Osman can left off, I realize over time that the movements of the Roomba, although they seem random, somehow have an internal consistency. Although it was formed with the gestures of an *Action painting* artist, who, as Osman can

said, are much more masculine in the western world, situating the viewers and the artwork within the dialectic of the artist; here our Roombas take the place of the action painting artist. They remind me of the random lines drawn by Cy Twombly who, for a period in his practice, has created different pictures with such lines that were cryptos in their own right and that they have a consistency within this randomness. It opens another door, showing how robots and artificial intelligence are built, and perhaps, what will be happening in our lives in the upcoming period. Again, I think one of the interesting positions here is that we can address the perspective. Because most of the camera systems we use here give the exhibition a viewpoint from above, and this is actually a phenomenon that we have recently encountered with a drone, which we can call a drone perspective, a military perspective. We observe these Roombas 24/7 here and intervene when they are not working. It’s actually like a parody of the Foucauldian surveillance society—the Roombas are also monitored and intervened when they are not working. There may be a power relationship here. Conceptually, we come across very

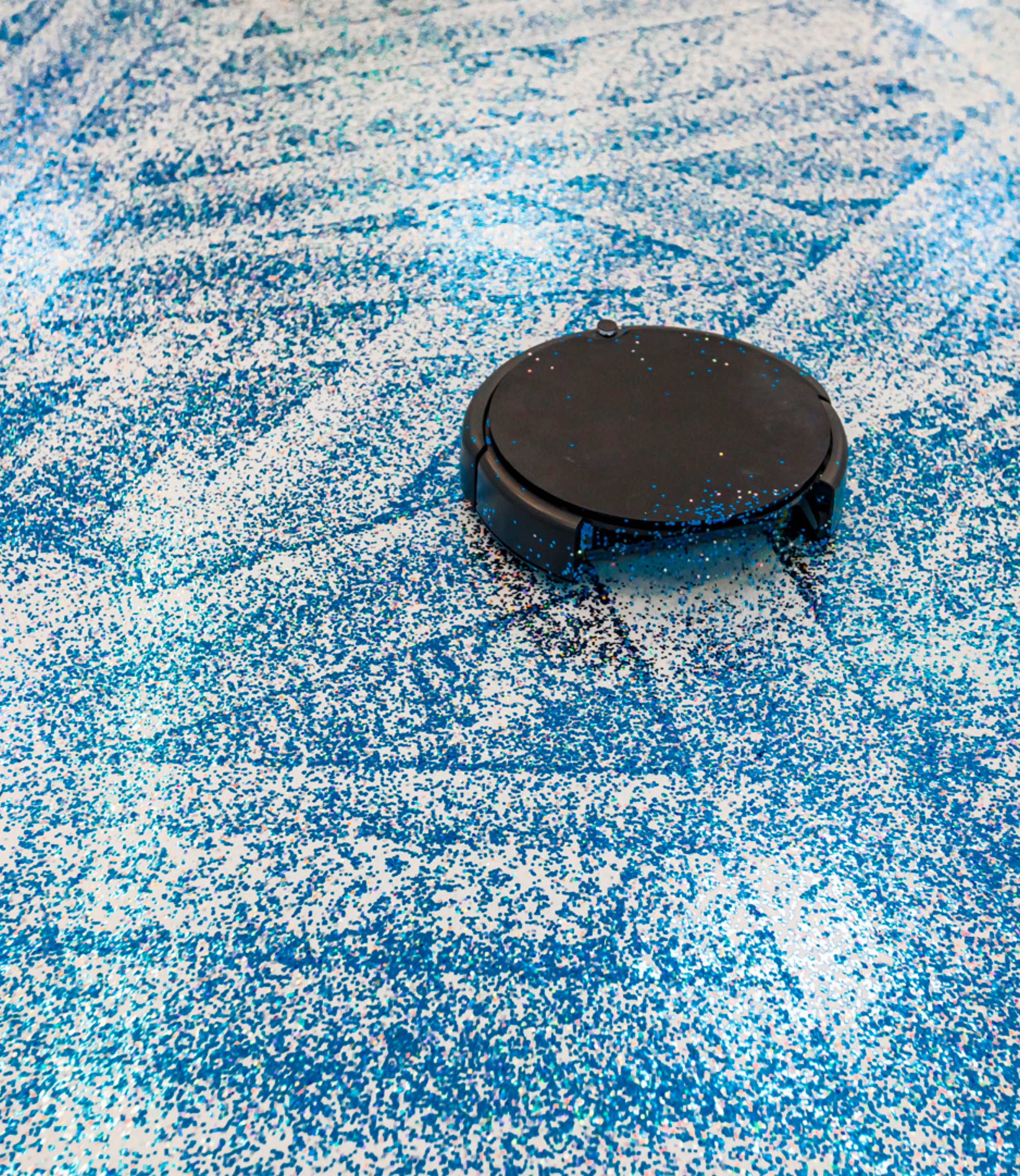
different readings. There's a differentiation in our perspective relationship that perhaps needs to be studied at length later. I think the screen is a way of seeing a new world which is brought into our lives by media studies with drone technologies and of course so is artificial intelligence.

NS: Here, of course, one of the issues I want to bring up in the context of the exhibition is labor— artistic labor and how this labor can be monitored. There is a feature of this that is not easily understood at first. As mentioned in :mentalkLINIK's previous performative works, here both physical and virtual expansions provide very different synergies, which then give different insights. This concept of labor is not very prominent, it is volatile, and as Osman stated in his talk, it has a lightness. Strangely enough, I think this work lends an aura to the exhibition. Both the relationship of the audience with the artwork and the interpretation of this relationship can go to very different points and very different ends. After all, it is an installation that requires a lot of effort. Using the space and transferring it to the audience from different perspectives necessitates a very detailed technical support. When you turn on the screen and

look in front of you, you say “wow! how light, how different and how digital is this aura”. This feature doesn't seem to stand out too much, but in this context, what are your impressions? Osman, let's start with you.

OY: If we talk about unnoticed labor, I can speak of it as a person who experiences it personally. I also have Roomba in my house, but I never run it when I'm at home. It has a certain noise that bothers me and maybe this is one of the things we can talk about, because we don't see the exhibition in person. In fact, the sound is different or it reverberates differently. I always find the house clean when I return; the Roomba works while I'm not at home. The fact that we see this and it is noticeable now is because this work is done by robots. If there is someone who is constantly throwing glitter, it will make us feel more uncomfortable, we will feel bad. We are talking about a never-ending effort with no particular use. But on the other hand, this is interesting, in terms of the museum concept. We can talk about the museum staff, the museum director and the curator. Perhaps we should mention, there are other museum staff. There are the sculptures





of Fred Wilson for instance, that show the museum security guards; whereby he suddenly presents to us a labor which had somehow escaped our attention. And many museums have security staff who guard the place for 24 hours. And I'm sure if we look at the cameras, we can see them at 3 am, wandering around. In a way, this unseen labor is being presented to us here. It confronts us. It is presented in a way that depends on our will, so that we cannot turn our heads away from it. It is in a position where we can go online and watch whenever we want. As I said, we are talking about an unending effort. It is an effort that constantly renews itself. On the other hand, we are witnessing the traces of labor, the aesthetics of that labor and the beautiful forms left behind by that effort. And the fact that the artists present the Roombas with their dust collecting pieces removed can actually be linked to the *queer*, which we can talk about shortly. We can bring them to a non-productive state, a state offered only for beauty, to not produce anything. The removal of those parts makes them undesirable, defective, purposeless. If we talk about Surveillance and our act of watching them as voyeurists, that can go to Foucault.

The pressure, the authority we exercise on them can be called a guilty pleasure in a way. We know that someone has done something bad somewhere and we go and look at it every now and then. Observation, whether covert or open, is inherent in art. It is just presented more clearly here. And the fact that abstractly created shapes are also abstract in their form, and we are trying to attribute meaning to them... That it is robots who do this, despite the fact that our relationship with AI and robots is not fully resolved at this time, and that it cannot ever be... So we are afraid of them, they can take over the world. It relieves us that the shapes they create are abstract. If there were certain shapes that we are familiar with, it would have become terrifying for us. There is a warped equation of authority, job, employer, employee, worker, and these dynamics are constantly shifting.

NS: What are your opinions on this, Kumru?

KE: I think this is an interesting point in the discussion, because, on one hand, the *BITTER MEDICINE* is an ecosystem in itself. On the other hand, the artistic space is constructed in the gallery space,

and this is transferred to the virtual—let’s not say virtual, but to the digital—with a director’s edit. This too is an ecosystem. As we mentioned earlier, museums and art institutions have their own ecosystems. During the pandemic, we saw how fragile -not only the art institutions but- the whole art ecosystem was and how quickly it was affected. Again, the art laborers were most affected by the pandemic. We often witness that the art ecosystem is treated only as artists; artists or curators are the most prominent figures, let’s say actors. But this ecosystem includes a lot of laborers. It is a very complicated ecosystem with people working in security and cleaning. Furthermore we saw that this ecosystem is not autonomous. With different labor and exchange conditions in the world, we witnessed how the disruption of the third world supply chains brought by the pandemic and the global recession created thereof have negatively affected this ecosystem. The art field’s workers we previously had not thought of, which you described so well, were the most affected. Therefore, we need to think on a more macro level. Before we get to the work of art and labor here, we should note that the financial crisis of 2008 which

was a crisis of the virtualization of capital -and I’m merely referring to labor here-, was signalling that our forms of exchange would soon change. So, we can say that the inclusion of artificial intelligence and robotics in this ecosystem now, may make it prone to different crises. We can say that the *hybrid reality* and *Artificial Intelligence* world points to a fracture between human and non-human. If we get to the language of ontology, the being was already in a state of “thrownness”. It was thrown into the world. Yet it is now thrown into the digital space. How it will create a sphere of representation for itself in this digital space; maybe this will be something we will talk about later on. It is possible to say that the exhibition points out to its own ecosystem as well as the labor and exchange relations between human and non-human, consequently, the crisis of existence, and by doing so, it opens up a space for new discussions.

NS: I would also like to lead you to the subject of the glitter material of the installation. Glitter is a very interesting, fascinating material that has connotations of splendor. As Osman said at the beginning of the talk, it brings up the *queer* perspective, too. Besides, it has



the peculiarity of being beyond classes, beyond categories. This glitter is such an impressive material that it is used by people with different characteristics in different segments of society, including those who are masculine and prominent, who use it to reinforce their power. Oddly enough, this also refers to a kind of classlessness, anonymity. It's very very eye-catching. As you know, we change the colors of glitters in this exhibition. And sometimes, intermediate colors come to fore, just as it happened when we mixed the blue and green. They also move. So all these factors reveal the unexpected contributions of glitter to this work, which is worth mentioning and elaborating, if you will. Glitter is a material that has been on the agenda of contemporary art for a long time, but it is not as common as oil paint, watercolor, or pencil. This is also interesting. Once you pick up glitter, it doesn't come off for a long time. It always stays bright. In that respect, it seems like a material containing some ambivalence. What are your opinions on this subject, Osman?

OY: I can make a joke about this. :mentalKLINIK has gotten you in trouble because that glitter won't come out

even years later. You will find this glitter somewhere in the museum. It is a material that creates a certain memory and a Proustian material that transports you back to the moment you were in that space, it won't come off and it always follows you. If we link it to the *queer* here, it is actually a material symbolizing *queer*, an interclass material. It's cheap, very ubiquitous, something that can be sold everywhere. A material that is accessible to everyone, in just the same character Warhol attributes to Coca-Cola. As I just mentioned, the attitude of robots against production and their non-productive attitude are also in reference to the *queer*. And although glitter is a very chemical material, somehow it belongs to a more human dimension. They have a characteristic that literally intersects with the metallic, cold demeanor of robots. It's as if the two have a conflict. One creates traces, the other erases it; there is an interesting aspect here. Also, glitter points to the camp, the kitsch. It is not used in art that we call high art, in contemporary art. Sometimes it is an item that painters sprinkle in paint to reference to the *queer*. It is never used without a reason, but always employed for a specific

statement. If we go back to surveillance, it may also have a political or sociopolitical explanation in the context of *queer*. Like observing and intervening in what is happening, changing colors, erasing, and remaking. The non-productivity, keeping *queer* sharing under control and custody is as interesting as the observation of labor. In fact, I am curious about this selection and the meaning of blue or red and pink, which are all intense colors that turn into other colors within themselves.

NS: Actually, using these colors was the decision of the artists. We had worked for a long time on the sequence of those colors, considering what color can come after which. We initiated the exhibition with fuchsia, which is a very crazy color...

OY: If we are talking about *kitsch*, fuchsia is probably a color that can symbolize that concept.

NS: The color has a very important role in the structure of the exhibition from the very beginning. Blue has a relationship with Yves Klein; Kumru wrote on this. It is a very good article, I read it fondly, it was talking about leaping into the void as a commentary on Yves Klein. Kumru, could we talk about this?

KE: The material has its own language, of course. This should definitely be taken into consideration while looking at every work of art. Yves Klein's materiallessness represents the new realism of the avant-garde. Yves Klein presents the experience of that impression; there is *de-objectification*. I saw the same gap here and analyzed it within this perspective. In the digital space, I thought it mimics the pixel. On the other hand, the screen is taken as space, like I just mentioned. Most texts related to the video including Lazzarato's, mention that the relationship between light and art is used in video art, unlike cinema. If we take into account the digital space, the screen space, and the reflection of the pixels in the screen space, our relationship with light has actually changed, so that we've jumped from Yves Klein's void to the digital world. But in the text you mentioned, I considered it as an existential crisis between the two. As the counterpart of Yves Klein's gesture of leaping into the void, robots had an endeavour to leave a permanent mark in the glitter that is the void, although these marks can never be fixed, they change all the time, regardless of their consistency within themselves. I

thought it was possible to relate the post-World War II period with the crisis after the pandemic, in terms of a state of ambiguity, uncertainty, and not being fixed. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that glitter, which is a material appropriated from the media and entertainment world, is also used in the context of identity politics as well as in media criticism. Just like what happened with the Byzantine icons, our perception of the world has transformed with the change in the source of light. The screen and the projection has replaced the Byzantine icon which diffused the divine light. In fact, the Renaissance and the Cartesian philosophy had changed the direction of light. Now the glitter is the light source. So there is a paradigm shift. Moreover, the textural effect created by the glitter material and the *BITTER MEDICINE* installation reminds of the 19th century Impressionist, *Pointillism* movement where the pure colors are applied as points on the canvas. In that regard, this exhibition is a pleasant commentary on the history of art, spanning along the Byzantine icons to the Impressionists.

NS: One of the features that glitter adds to this installation is that it opens the door to *dematerialization*. It leaves a pleasant effect after watching the work on your mobile phone or screen. You want to look at it over and over again. As I am very involved in the work, I constantly look at it and after a certain period of time, despite its certain monotony, the movement of the glitter with the reflections of the light coming from above, makes me think that I am in a flowing, transforming realm, just like in Debussy's or John Cage's music. Oddly enough, it also refers to the time we are witnessing, something very apocalyptic. What is the feeling this installation arouses in you? What would you say about this, Osman?

OY: Volatility perhaps, the in-betweenness, again referring to Proust. It constantly gives itself a chance again, it starts over, every day is alike. We are in a time gap, the exhibition creates it in its own world and lives that way. Even a single glitter has the power of light, a certain reflection. Like an army, their existence has power as a whole. But since it can disintegrate, it has a lightness, which we can relate to time and memory. When we talk about something now, we cannot remember because we are always at home, inside. We are looking out the window from the inside. This is the inherent state of the museum; it

holds everything in. *BITTER MEDICINE* plays with this situation.

NS: What do you think, Kumru?

KE: I would like to say something not scientific or theoretical but intuitive. I think that the exhibition, *BITTER MEDICINE* accompanies the conditions we are experiencing and has a certain aspect: It has no memory association. We gave a lot of references with regard to contemporary artworks, but we established these references. These stem from our need to create human memory. The Roombas here draw, make and distribute their own shapes and the installation is completely based on that. There's no intention of creating a memory. There is a paradigm difference regarding the memory as opposed to those experienced in the global crises. This is a visual system that is extremely volatile, a temporary state of happiness, as expressed in :mentalKLINIK's own words, which does not refer to any memory. Maybe that's why we love it.

NS: Thank you. As I said, it was the first time I curated an exhibition in a digital environment under these difficult conditions, away from the gallery space and this talk became a part of that experience. You have really touched on some very interesting topics. I thank you both for taking the time and sharing your reflections with us. We will endeavor to open up new perspectives for the audience through these talks.

BITTER MEDICINE CONVERSATIONS:

PERFORMATIVE SPECTATORSHIP, OXYMORON AESTHETIC OF :mentalKLINIK, TAKING A THIRD POSITION

Speakers: Ayşe Draz, Naz Cuguoğlu

The conversation below, available on YouTube in Turkish, was edited for clarity.

Dr. Necmi Sönmez: Good evening. Tonight, we are having a conversation regarding the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* exhibition from three different cities: I'm connecting from Düsseldorf, Naz is connecting from San Francisco, and Ayşe is in Istanbul. We're having this conversation from almost three different continents across three different time zones. This is one of the elements brought up by the *BITTER MEDICINE #02*. I would like to quote from the biographies of my two friends, to whom I am grateful for participating in this conversation. Ayşe Draz is exploring the field of performance with her research and artistic work. She is an Istanbul-based performer, dramaturg, and director who produces theatrical and

performative works independently as well as with Theatre Hemhâl, a theater company she co-founded. She is also the performing arts editor of the magazine, Art Unlimited. Naz Cuguoğlu is a curator, art writer, critic, based in San Francisco. She is the co-founder of Collective Çukurcuma, which focuses on ways of collective thinking and production. She held various positions at KADIST, The Wattis Institute, de Young Museum, SFMOMA Public Knowledge, Joan Mitchell Foundation, Zilberman Gallery, Maumau Art Residency, and Mixer. Her articles have been published in Turkey and abroad. Tonight, we will continue to bring up the *BITTER MEDICINE #02* exhibition from different perspectives. I would like

to thank dear Ayşe and Naz for this talk, which we designed as a Q&A. Now I leave the word to them.

Ayşe Draz: Let me talk about how I first had the acquaintance of :mentalKLINIK. I will start from a very personal place. In the late 90s, early 2000s, while studying theater and comparative literature in America, I went to Istanbul every summer. A German friend of mine, who was studying at NYU, wanted to come to Istanbul and write an article by interviewing figures from the contemporary art world. One day he came to me and said, "I met a couple I should introduce you to." I was working in the field of theater back then and was not familiar with contemporary art issues. We first met with Yasemin and Birol then. Later on, in 2000, I met again with this duo, which was founded in 98, and I was re-introduced to them as artists with their projects. We also collaborated. When I looked at what I have about them in my archive, I realized that I followed many of their works like a fan. I am neither an art historian, nor a curator, but dramaturgy and curating are similar in some ways. There are some concepts that they use to define themselves. One of those concepts

is to create the third position. A couple who always wears black, one resembles Marx, the other was enchanting with her beauty like a sculpture... Yasemin always reads, Birol interrogates. They are interested in neither that, nor the other, in their work. They have been questioning the human-object relationship since the early period. Looking with today's perspective, I realize how aware they were of the technology that was coming towards us, in their work at that time. We can see the uncanny in their work. We may have been aware of the uncanniness regarding technology at the time, but it is possible to see that they've situated their work in that context from the very beginning. When we look at the human-object relationship in their practice, it is possible to see that the human was objectified and the object became human.

In their first project exhibitions, they focused on a concept and invited the participants to their project. After deciding where to position the concept with an editor, they entered a two-way production process, namely the production of an exhibition and a book. I was able to follow all of them except the project they realized in 2000 titled *Sleep*, which was a work

they performed in their own space in Topağacı, edited by Poet Birhan Keskin. Another exhibition was *Game* in 2002. Some of the participating names are Ela Cindoruk, Nermin Er, Dilek Winchester and Ethem Özgüven. *Copy* project was realized in the same space. Under the editorship of Ali Akay, they invited participants including Ayşe Erkmen and Yazbükey. I was impressed by the fact that they produced together with designers, craftsmen, artists coming from many different fields to work around a concept in the early 2000s and that they produced objects which were also affordable, so I started to follow their projects. I got to know Joel, who made the Madagascar pavilion in 2019 at the Venice Biennial, in 2004 at *The Ephemeral Boutique*. Again, this boutique was a third position, standing in between, neither a store nor a gallery. It was a print format featured in the Trendsetter magazine between 2002 and 2007, putting some concepts at its center, invading the magazine, documenting it and pointing to the future. When I look back, I see that they've centralized the issues of defect, memory, and archive. They have worked on the subject of viruses back in 2003. I regret

that I didn't realize the foresight in time! I also would like to talk about the *Accident* intervention in the magazine Colophon based in Luxembourg. It was something like a fanzine with lots of mistakes, suggesting accidents where everything burned out. Even the spelling of the accident was wrong. They are interested in creating the third position that realizes the concept and the oxymoron, namely the use of two conflicting concepts together. They also use these linguistically as well. In their work, they are more interested in constructing the present as the history of the future rather than predicting the future. Beyond criticizing today's capitalist order, post-party splendor, they propose to take a third position on how we can look at this splendor when the world comes to an end. In general, there are situations where two different positions they put forward visibly conflict with each other. That is why the names of most of their exhibitions contain this position, like *Obnoxiously Happy*. Naz, I think you were to make an introduction through the concept of oxymoron.

Naz Cuguoğlu: First of all, many thanks to Borusan Contemporary and Necmi, and to you, this personal history narrative



is very valuable. I want to talk about the subjects of the third position and co-production. The open laboratory approach of the exhibition is quite important. It is thus possible to approach the work from different angles. I would like to consider this work in terms of the collaboration between people and collaboration between the human and the non-human. Authority and hierarchy brought about by collaboration and how speculative fiction can envision different futures are topics also worth mentioning. I also want to talk about whether we can interpret this work as a criticism of the art world. While doing this, I want to take a position near the work rather than talk directly about it. That is to say, I met the Vietnamese writer and film director Trinh T. Minh-ha while working at the Wattis Institute and I learned a lot from her. She notes that we inevitably form a hierarchy when we talk about something, but when we talk near things, we are likely to break this hierarchy. So, I will also approach from a personal point of view.

I have been working as part of a curatorial collective for five years. In our research, we do research on what it means to think together. Since :mentalKLINIK is a duo

themselves, they talk about being a duo and even having a third in their work. This sounds interesting to me: being a collective rather than an individual, being together, the state of crowding and how different perspectives can be brought to that polyphony. This issue which also exist in theory in terms of establishing selected families and coming together despite our differences, is an issue that we are thinking about as well. There is of course, an ethical dimension to this. I want to talk about these. When a voice is heard in the work, another sound is suppressed. We think we can observe this through their dual studies. There is a relationship between human and non-human in the exhibition space. When we look there, we see that the robots' dust bags have been removed and the performance of robots continues 24/7 which is likewise important; we are talking about an endless workforce. I hereby would like to give the word back to you.

AD: A version of the exhibition *BITTER MEDICINE #02* was shown as *Puff Out* in Art Basel and in Galerist. One of the robots that everyone wanted to buy in the corona days, is sweeping the glitter while the other gushes them out. There was a

work called *Whiff*, which problematized the exhibition space beyond the relationship between the two, where a 4-second confetti footage was shown in slow motion. There was a feeling as if the world had come to an end and this was being celebrated. It existed within the oxymoron universe. Or, for instance, in *Lovers*, made by two robotic lights, a choreography which had the potential to continue forever was coming into play. All these works place the viewer in a complementary position. The *BITTER MEDICINE #01* which was first shown in Belgrade actually questions how we relate to the exhibitions that we cannot watch as viewers. It was making us think what a choreography that is completed with its audience turns into when it's no longer accessible. In this respect, the proposals of the exhibition at Borusan Contemporary are also important.

NC: Perhaps we need to first look at our relationship with the weak as humanity. For example, our relationship with animals. We produce them for consumption in laboratory environments. It is necessary to talk about the *Anthropocene* concept, anthropocentric perspective. I've been doing research on ecofeminism for a while,

and there's the concept of *chthulucene* that Donna Haraway is talking about, a concept she proposes instead of the anthropocene. From the anthropocentric point of view, it focuses on the kinship that the human establishes with the nonhuman. Perhaps it is necessary to ask the question of how we can behave more empathetically, whether it is a plant or a robot. In order to do this, we must first accept the existence of the other beings. We can also connect to speculative fiction from here. In an interview, :mentalKLINIK talks about the fictional power of art and how fictional speculation can open up different perceptions of the world to us. Ursula Le Guin also mentions this in her books. In her books we see fluid genders, characters representing not just the majority but ethnic minorities. I think we see this in :mentalKLINIK's work as well. Another writer we can mention is Octavia Butler. I read *Blood Child* with the suggestion of Mine Kaplangı and was very impressed. I think it's a story that captures its time very well. I don't want to give spoilers, but we are talking about a story where alien plants occupy the human world and the people have to make themselves desirable for these alien plants. The book turns the



relationship between man and nonhuman inside out. Michael Pollan mentions in his book *The Botany of Desire* that vegetables such as potatoes and hemp can survive as long as they can be interesting for humans. Otherwise they disappear. When humans come into contact with aliens or robots, who are superior species to them, they have to make themselves useful and desirable. In the context of the exhibition, it's as if the artists smashed this authority. It looks as if they have entrusted the exhibition space to robots, and it does not seem to have an authority position. However, we know that robots depend on humans every time they break down. Finally, we can ask this: How can we imagine a more ethical future when we keep the weak under our control, even if these robots whose dust bags have been removed, seem to move freely?

AD: As you mentioned at the beginning, through creating the third position and collaborations. Artificial intelligence has also stepped in. With all the people, all these objects, all hybrid forms, we still depend on each other. Maybe that neediness is always involved with Yasemin and Birol's work. So is being wildly happy and being magnificently sad. So ethics-

wise, I think it is more important to not take a position than to impose a position in the context of today's polarizations. They present us the human-robot relationship and ask us to consider it instead.

NC: Perhaps another concept we can talk about is the notion of 24/7. It is also very meaningful to have 24/7 broadcasts flowing and being traceable. We all experienced this in the lockdown period; we want online broadcasts, to be always able to watch. This has become an obsession for all of us and we are experiencing this at an increasingly high level. Digital anxiety is on the rise. We were talking about *FOMO* even before corona.

AD: They have a work called *FOMO*!

NC: Then we talked about *JOMO*, the joy of missing out, of wasting time. As people who had the chance to work at home during the corona period, maybe we experienced this to some extent. We are also experiencing zoom fatigue.

AD: You experience *FOMO* when you are not on Zoom.

NC: We are at the laptop all day, looking at our phones. At the end of the day, we head over to another screen to clear our minds.

I feel like I can only watch nature on the screen. Last night I watched a movie called *Cemetery* —I recommend it to everyone— which described a forest through the eyes of an elephant. We're all talking about a return to normal however we don't know very much what normal is. Normal was serving a group of people. Whose normal were we talking about? This work also provides a platform to talk about these.

AD: The relationship between the interface and the digital has become very controversial in theater. Even though the Roombas recognize the place after a while and act in the same way, a new choreography is formed. We can go in and out to watch. We can look inside an institution. I care about this work in terms of such problematics it presents. They do not give us the comfort of finding answers. It makes you enjoy asking the right questions.

NC: When we see the exhibition space, it makes a person think of some celebration with glitters, what does this celebration mean, what does it mean that everything can be celebrated in the capitalist world? We see this in the title of the *BITTER MEDICINE*. What is presented as a

prescription is not a solution, something is being covered up. We continue to produce in digital rooms. The wheels of the system continue to spin. What changes can the passivity of the audience make in the position of the art? What doors can it open when using this fiction? It makes you ask that. We can also talk about the relationship of this work with the senses. :mentalKLINIK always talks about addressing the five senses, they say they are willing to continue to do so with the sixth, seventh, eighth senses. During the pandemic period, we were holding an exhibition at the Wattis Institute and all of a sudden, they wanted us to move it to the digital environment. It is also important that the work moves to the digital environment. Since there are cameras looking at the exhibition space from different angles, the angles that our body cannot perceive are offered. So is, the institution of art as a space that the human body has completely abandoned, of course.

AD: It somehow starts to make you think of the body, recalls the senses that come with the body which it externalizes. It makes you wonder how it would smell as a place that is constantly being swept. I

always think about the question of what my other senses would perceive while watching the *BITTER MEDICINE* #02.

NC: The desire to be there is certainly felt. It is necessary to talk about the material, namely the glitter. I think of the obsession of cleaning, which enters our lives even more with corona. We can put ourselves in these robots' shoes: they move around to clean because that's why they are produced, and it is their assigned task. They don't realize that their dust bags have been removed. Glitter is very easily spreadable, it gets dirty as you clean it. This creates an oxymoron.

AD: A fun material.

NC: It is also very meaningful to clean this place as it is in an art institution. It is a place that has its own hierarchies, subjective decisions are made, it has the power to tell art history with its own collection. Art institutions and museums are now in the process of rearranging themselves. I couldn't help thinking about it. Roombas do this symbolically, too. It seems as if their wandering manifests this.

AD: It is as if they aim to examine the relationship between art, museum, audience and art, with the act of celebrating

the moment when the art institution was emptied of artworks and erasing the footprints of that celebration.

NC: It is a very layered work, there is a lot to talk about. It was a very pleasant conversation, thank you very much.

AD: I want to thank you, Necmi, and Borusan Contemporary. I hope we get to talk longer about these issues on another occasion.

BITTER MEDICINE CONVERSATIONS:

HYBRID REALITY, IMMATERIALITY AGAIN IN 21st CENTURY

Speakers: Marlies Wirth, Fredo de Smet

The conversation below, available on YouTube in English, was edited for clarity.

Dr. Necmi Sönmez: Hello. Tonight I'm very happy to welcome two valued colleagues. Let me introduce Marlies Wirth, first. Marlies is the curator of Digital Culture and the Head of the Design Collection at MAK, Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna. She curates exhibitions in the fields of art, design, architecture and technology, and has a key role in planning the Vienna Biennial. She is one of the curators of the international travelling exhibition *Hello, Robot: Design Between Human and Machine*, a cooperation of Vitra Design Museum, MAK and Design Museum Gent. She was also nominated as the curator of the Austrian Pavilion of London Design Biennial for next year. She develops independent exhibition projects and authors for texts

and essays for publications. Fredo, who was born as Frederik de Smet, graduated in 2001 with a master degree in Arts, Science and History. Recently, Fredo has been working as an independent curator and consulting on human/technology relations. In 2015, he started working as an advisor at the public broadcaster VRT and he was the advising curator for the *Hello, Robot* at Design Museum Gent. His last publication, *Artificial Stupidity* talks about our relation with technology. The book contains ten rules that offers us cheerful and personal help in becoming more humanistic rather than mechanical. Again, I am very happy to welcome you Marlies and Fredo. I'm now inviting you to talk about your interpretation of our exhibition. Let's start!





Marlies Wirth: Thank you so much, Necmi. We're very happy to be here. Hi Fredo! I want to start by telling how I met :mentalkLINIK and Fredo; and how this [meeting] came about. So, I have invited the artist duo to Vienna to create a performance piece for MAK Nite Lab, back in 2013. It was titled *Freshcut*. I think their work had similarities to this installation with the robots: It was very mechanical but also very human. It was about watching what was happening and it was quite a spectacle. We have been friends and colleagues ever since. Fredo and I met when we were working together with Amelie Klein and Thomas Geisler for the aforementioned *Hello, Robot* exhibition dealing with automation back in 2016. It's a great pleasure to continue speaking and learning about these topics.

Fredo De Smet: Thank you for inviting me. Just like Marlies said, we've met in 2016. It is funny though; there's a tendency for me to find out about interesting Brussels-born or Brussels-based people through Vienna. I didn't know :mentalkLINIK, I just recently discovered that they are working partly from Brussels. But somehow, they needed to pass by Vienna first to appear on my radar.

MW: So, I think the Roomba has also been part of our conversations back in the day when we were trying to find out what "robot" means. Did your opinion change since 2016? Have you learned more about what a robot is, and what they can do?

FDS: Not really actually. I was dealing more with what it means to be human rather than robots. Obviously I'm still in love with smart machineries, but it is more distinct for me now to talk about how we, humans relate to each other and to machineries. Quite early in the process of *Hello, Robot* in 2016, Amelie and you were discussing "Are we against them, or not? Do we need to be critical? These things are too smart, do we need to resist?" And I'm like an Accelerationist, I'm totally in! So actually, we were struggling with our own behavior, or opposition towards robots. And there is one sentence in my book that we wrote on the wall which was really important - and it still is - for me: "Embrace ambivalence". That's something I keep saying to myself.

MW: That makes so much sense, in terms of the machinery, but also in terms of being human. We are also ambivalent, like this installation by :mentalkLINIK, which I've only seen online as it is made for the human

spectators behind their screens in their homes or offices. It's running 24/7 and we humans can watch Roombas trying to clean up a glittery mess in the exhibition space. [The movement of Roombas] makes interesting forms like ornaments. It runs all the time, even when we are not watching. Actually I'm quite ambivalent about the idea of online exhibitions, to be honest, but this is an interesting hybrid: It's basically an actual exhibition in a physical space with actual equipment. But you can't enter the space, you can only watch through a surveillance system. So where does that put the human? Because normally, I increasingly have the feeling that we are under surveillance; every click I make, every website I watch, my data is collected. But here, we are watching the machines doing their thing. So what does that say about us, in terms of being human or, "artificially stupid"?

FDS: First of all, I do have a question for you, Marlies. Would you like to see this exhibition in "real life"?

MW: It's not made for that. So... no. I do need [a certain] perspective on it, it's made for being watched from a *panopticon*; as if you are standing in the middle of it...

FDS: It's interesting; I've been looking at a lot of digital exhibitions or hybrids, but this is an exhibition that I do not want to see in real life. I'm really happy to be a spectator to the way it is presented. And I'm quite sure the impression that I would have, standing in the gallery, wouldn't be so interesting as it is now. I'm really liking the CCTV camera angle which is obviously blinking towards data capitalism.

MW: I'm quite a fan of Roombas, I have to admit. Actually, at MAK, we have recently acquired an object by the design team automato.farm. I think you know them as well. They did a VR project called *Objective Realities* and you can become a Roomba, a fan or a plug, and then you can also interact, given the plug has power whereas the fan looks at things from above and can twirl things around. And the Roomba has a very different perspective, it's always around. It's really interesting that they claim with this VR that you get inside, feeling what the objects "feel", and how the objects are humanised. [Watching] this installation by :mentalkLINIK with the Roombas running around there without us present, I quite thought whether they are aware that they are in an art performance; whether this is a more meaningful work



than cleaning a room. I'd like to think that what they are doing is a special task; they are helping the artists to create art.

FDS: Wouldn't it be honest if we carved out an opportunity so that they can see the piece of art from the same perspective as us? That's quite fair. They are creating something beautiful and we are enjoying it. Still the same relationship. We're still not able to level ourselves with machineries. While at the same time, we are slaves.

MW: Sure. The question also is, are we really losing our humanity when we interact more with machines? I don't think so, but what is your opinion on that?

FDS: I'm quite convinced that, at the end of the day, what the machinery does is to reorganize the control of power. And humans like to be in control. We are creatures who love power, power structures, power organizations; we tell stories about power. That's something you might also see in nature, but it's not like a concept there. I think the machinery helps us become more human because it gives us more power. In that respect, I'm really in love with the machinery, especially with the more old-school ones, like shoes. Or an old-school, not digital clock. I had this

interesting conversation with a professor who is developing *AI*, and I asked him: "How do you make your coffee?". He had this elaborate explanation about the coffee-making process, about his espresso machine. He loved it. And then, I described my coffee-making ritual, which is something completely un-digital.

MW: You make analog-coffee, that's nice.

FDS: Yes. And I do it specifically; because I do not want it to be mediated by electronics, especially not *AI*, or anything smart. It's a moment I take for myself so there's no need for anything cognizing the process. And it's in these little rituals we do everyday that I come to see the real impact of the machineries. It is interesting to be aware of how they organize our lives: It's only possible to be human if we have these machines around us. So, this professor thought I was against *AI*, but it was only a metaphor to show that it's not only about *AI*, about data capitalism, or about Roombas, for that matter. It's about the way we need them to be what we are. So [no], the answer to your question is [no].

MW: That was a great explanation. And I think you're absolutely right. Remember

The Pyramid of Technology by Next Nature Network: It basically shows that we live with technology from the early days on, like making fire or agriculture or having the light bulb... Then the technology got more and more digital, smart or complicated - but our relationship with it has always been there. A colleague and friend of mine, Paul Feigelfeld once said, "Intelligence was always artificial". His explanation was that we have always had help of technology to help us think, to invent mathematics and to think in numbers. And I think the technology was very important to humans for abstract concepts to develop, as it was for daily tasks. But it created a wicked problem; and a wicked problem as we know is a problem that creates more problems. Even though it provides a part of the solution, more problems that have not been heard of before arise. And this makes life very interesting, both private and professional. So the question is, how will we deal with all that artificial stupidity that we created and that surrounds us? Maybe you can give some insight from your book.

FDS: First of all, it's important to have enough media literacy. It's quite a challenge to orientate yourself in the digital world. One of the reasons I'm

still working in the media is because I'm trying to convince the media ecosystem that orientation should be central in the offering. Because people are just lost. I'm completely lost. But that's not a problem; I'm the sort of guy who loves to be lost. Actually I think that most of the people like to be lost, that's what they call a "holiday": they make some savings and when they have enough money, they book themselves a holiday where they can finally lose control. Nevertheless, there is a huge need for orientation. What I also find is that using heuristics helps. It is putting really complex situations in really easy sentences, which are not completely exact descriptions of the situations but which will help you to get through your roughness or the wickedness of the issue. Have you ever seen or read, by the way, the essay about "Frisbee?"

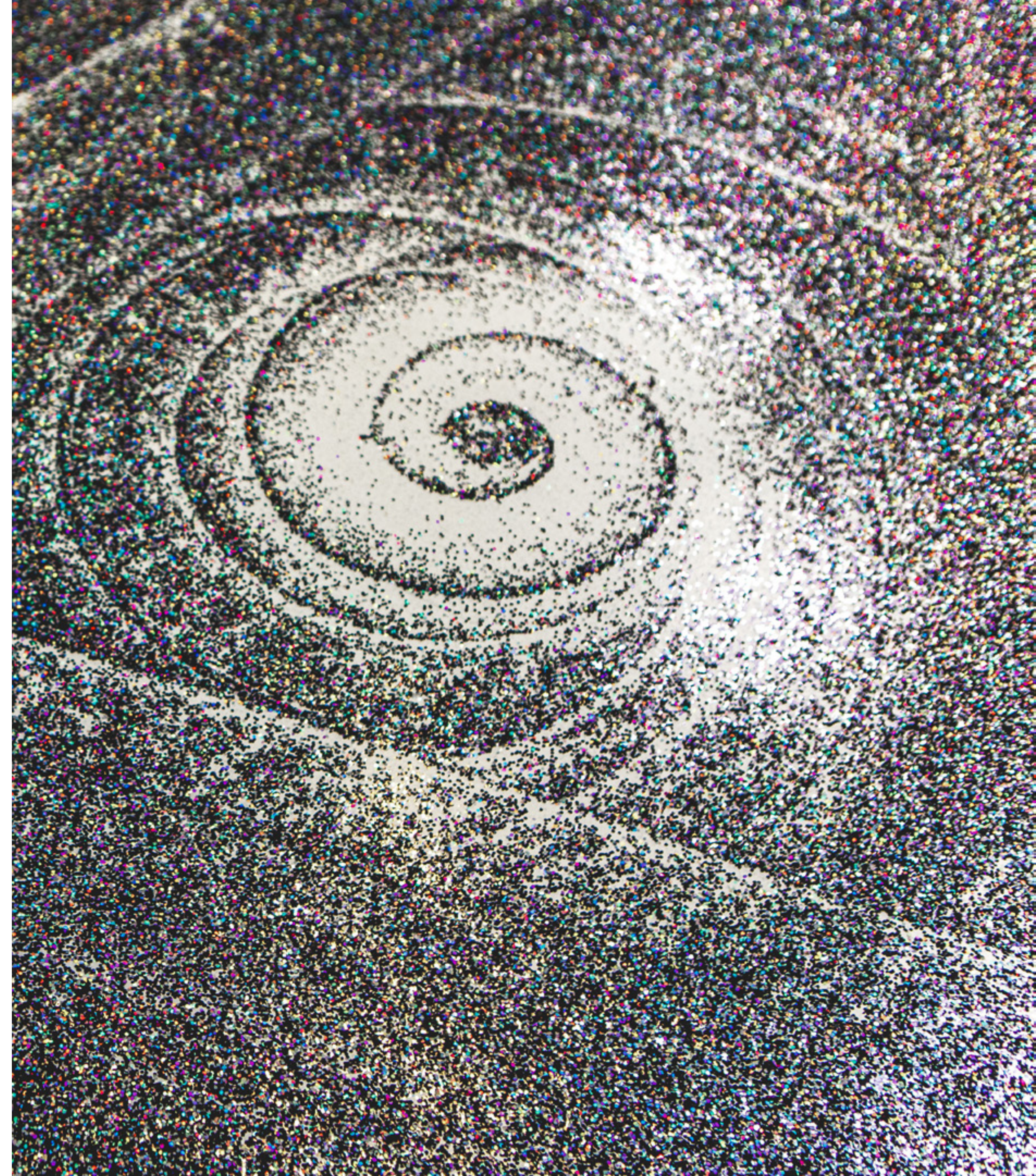
MW: No? Should I have??

FDS: I'm going to look for a little video that explains the basics of heuristics, but I'll describe it. As I explained, heuristics is an easy way to find rules of thumb which never describe the pure reality or the complexity of the situations but will help you orientate yourself through them.

The best way for me to understand how heuristics works, is to look at the example of a dog that tries to catch a frisbee on a beach. Imagine we would create a robot dog, and imagine the amount of calculation it would need for the dog to follow the frisbee in the air; make count of the weather input that is getting from the sensors, try to find out what the effect of the wind would be on the flying frisbee. How on earth is it possible for a dog with a brain capacity so small to do such a complex calculation?? Because it is using heuristics. It is using three, very simple rules of thumbs to get through the situation: One is, follow the frisbee instantly in the direction it's flying. Two, never take your eyes off the subject. And three, open your mouth as soon as you're closing off, and jump and catch it. Those three rules are enough for a dog to do complex computation of challenge. So to get out of, or to orientate ourselves in these situations, the rules of thumb help. "Embrace Ambivalence" is the first rule of thumb in my book. If anything, we need to be ready to fall in love with the machinery and we need to be really wary of the dangers. I mean, it's always a knife with two edges, huh? Another rule of

thumb is your own attention. Something also obvious in the meantime is that it's an attention economy. Although we talk about it, we don't have the tendency to value our own attention. It has been given away to institutions, to screens, to industries such as marketing. And it's really curious why, but somehow we have said, "it's okay that you value our attention". So these rules of thumb help to make you more aware of the challenges and to be more media literate. But obviously, that's just the beginning.

MW: Absolutely. I think digital or media literacy is absolutely crucial, also when it comes to the political realm of the digital sphere and machinery. When you think about what systems can do with surveillance, with data, with intelligent machines, it is even more important that people read about it or use the internet or digital technology to educate themselves, know where to look and how to navigate. I think that's increasingly becoming an awareness that has not been there so broadly a few years ago. For example, if you take Twitter, certain remarks by popular people are marked as "this might be false", or "this has not been fact-checked". It's a new development that I



appreciate very much that helps users to navigate in the digital sphere.

FDS: Yes, I am quite happy about the fact that reality is so questioned. I'm not the biggest fan of the old-school idea of reality. I guess I relate to :mentalKLINIK in that regard. Sometimes reality is more superficial than the artificial. But, yes, the fact-checks for political institutions are really relevant, obviously.

MW: I get what you mean with this reality that's alternate. This installation shows that there is this other place where the Roombas are roaming. They have been programmed of course, but they are still supporting the artist with their labor which is basically unpaid. We discussed this a lot when we worked on *Hello, Robot*, asking "Are we slaves of these machines, or are we treating the machines as unpaid laborers?". I think we do. If we are to think "What does an art institution do with all these topics? How do we go about showing what technology can do?"; [Do we show that] in very complex, thematic parcours or, as in this case, as :mentalKLINIK shows, in a very poetic and quite simple [way]? - simple, not in terms of technology but, in the sense that

it consists of four elements: the space, the Roombas, the glitter and the surveillance - What can be conveyed in terms of the role of art and technology together?

FDS: There is a huge challenge there, obviously. Because, especially this year we, the artists or curators, have to [hang about] our screens to be able to talk to each other, or to experience the cultural installation, however we are seeing and dealing with the same habits and values of the digital economy. And even though I really like the installation, the *UX* is not what I'm used to. All of a sudden you need to start thinking about user experience. And the sad thing is that many people expect the same user experience as "the best they've ever had." Having experienced Netflix or Spotify, they expect from a gallery to do the same, which is obviously not right.

MW: I think so, too. That was a huge challenge in the first period of the lockdown phase here with questions like, "What do we do now? Online shows, what should they be?". We learned at MAK that some exhibitions have a lot of content where you can show things or film the curator going through an exhibition.

It can be valued as a digital experience. It's not the same as visiting the show but it's not conceived for that. It's a mediated help measurement that we take when we have to shut down. But the other way was the artists who create purely digital work that have their lives on screen anyway. Then it makes sense to have an online show. Again, I think it is really interesting about this specific installation that it is a hybrid and it wouldn't have worked any other way. So, it is perfectly normal for us now to watch this installation all the time. As you mentioned clocks earlier, time is increasingly becoming fluid. It is really problematic, as there are opening times of [galleries], meaning you can only go to see an exhibition at a certain time or a day in the week. So I think this idea of 24/7, whereby you can check at 4 am, what the Roombas are doing, which ornament they vacuum next, is interesting.

FDS: I really love the saying "24/7", by the way. The brochure of :mentalKLINIK's exhibition is that in one part, a really traditional brochure describing all the objects and materials and the artists; like the reflection of the old world, explaining who the installation is made for. But there was this one sentence that really struck

me, saying, "a space where different visual experiences are fermented". Indeed it's like an ecosystem that is indeed happening 24/7; it's more like a second nature than anything else. We humans are obsessed with linear time, and all the rest of the space and earth is organized according to this circular time. So this "fermenting" idea is so beautiful.

MW: Yes, it has another life when it's transformed into something, like in the fermentation process. And I was obsessed as a kid and still am somehow, with the idea of a parallel world. I was recently researching this; because there is the saying "There is no *Planet B*". But in fact, the old Greeks came up with the idea that there is a *Counter-Earth* that is exactly like the planet Earth, but somewhere else. The people do the same things at the same time but we don't interact; it's called *Antichthon*. I thought this idea of having another world was really interesting in terms of the secret lives of machines that I used to imagine, or also began imagining with :mentalKLINIK's installation now. [I ponder over] this autonomous world and what happens when we're not watching. I mean, we can watch 24/7 but maybe it would develop very differently.



FDS: I like the idea of a *Counter-Earth*. But tell me, Marlies, why were you obsessed with parallel realities?

MW: I don't know actually, there is no factual explanation for it. In terms of parallel worlds, I think that the art scene is quite a good example because people claim that we live in a bubble which is sometimes true; it keeps us safe and warm. But sometimes it shelters us from knowing what's actually going on in the world. We increasingly stick out of our bubbles nonetheless. I like the parallel world idea very much because it is kind of a thought experiment, whereby you can think about how things would have developed differently. Basically we're developing alternative realities with every decision we make, and smart systems do that all the time. They calculate maybe thousands of parallel worlds before they make any decision. Take the computers for instance, they already see what the outcome would be after 20-thousand steps, and then choose the path that will most likely be successful. We can't do it. So, developing parallel worlds in this sense is fascinating, isn't it?

FDS: I'm asking this question because I'm conflicted with myself regarding

what to expect from the artists. Do we expect artists to create parallel worlds, like :mentalKLINIK has done with a 24/7 exhibition where these Roombas are creating visual impressions? Or, do [we] expect from the artists, especially now after this crucial year, to reflect on and to be more interactive with the actual world or to be less caught up in the parallel world of the cultural institutions? So this is something I'm conflicted about.

MW: "Embrace ambivalence", Fredo. I can only say that...

NS: The last question, or the last interpretation that Fredo posed is extremely sexy. Marlies, I think this is one of the key elements that we have to talk about. I would be really very thankful if you could give some short input, because this is exactly what I tried to focus on.

MW: Absolutely. I'm thinking all the time about this question whether the art world should be a parallel world or it should deal with real world problems. And as you may know, currently at the MAK, we are dealing with the topic for the new Vienna Biennial. After we had automation, and AI, and the values and ethics of the digital systems and technologies, we are now

onto climate change and climate care and our planet. And [coupled with] this whole pandemic going on, there is this huge question regarding the technology surveillance, data grabbing craziness, that :mentalKLINIK has described in their interview, [asking whether] art should give a comment on that rather than do something about it. Or, should art put us into a speculative other world where we could suddenly stand out against these systems or these problems; where we could suddenly overcome crisis and total differences and political issues? Or should art try to let our thoughts go away from the real world problems onto other harmonious, beautiful things? I think I do like this idea of speculation or a fictional approach very much because it can have such an enormous impact, socially and politically, if you confront people in the art world and beyond with something unexpected, or harsh, or dystopian, or funny; which at the same time [provides] a mirror to what we are actually living through. And then, that might be the little tip they need to take action about a real world problem.

NS: Fredo, I'm seeing some skepticism in your eyes. I'm really interested if you have anything to add.

FDS: There's obviously not one easy solution regarding the world of artists and the socio-economic, political situations. I wanted to react to something you said earlier, Marlies, about there being no *Planet B*. I guess I was not alone enjoying the cardboard slogans when the youthful crowd was standing up and raising their voice. But there was a sign that really got my attention, and it was saying not "Climate Change" but "System Change". Sometimes, I do have the feeling that the cultural institution is not focused or has lost its focus on what really matters; the systemic change.

MW: We are really trying to work on that in our upcoming exhibition, which has the title *Climate Care* but the subtitle is *Reimagining shared planetary futures*. We will try to deal with this idea of how to think circularly in terms of production but also systems; and also convey that the climate is absolutely depending much more on societal and economic change. The blame is on the system and not on the individual, but we as individuals together in a collective can do something about it. But it's a very complex task. With the technology topics, it is always conveyed that you are powerless in the face of the system. In an interview :mentalKLINIK

talked about the big companies like Facebook, Google, Amazon etc... There is a work by young designers called *King GAFA* and they describe this kingdom where the data is the harvest. Of course, it's a problem but I have to remind that I'm building *King GAFA's* kingdom with my data by my own free will, because I get a place to live in return. I can use social media but in return, I have to give away my data. This is a real problem as we don't understand the interdependency. Even in the real, analog world, with everything we do or don't do, or say or don't say, we are backing systems. This is really hard to grasp. If we don't react or call it out in some non-aggressive ways, we are backing the system. And this applies to every major issue actually.

FDS: Well, it is very hard to grasp. But again, referring to the Greeks, there is a way I have found out to make it quite easy, simple even: and it is to look at the values that the system is built upon. And these values are things that we can easily connect to and use to connect to one another. So, this is something I'm trying to do in my practice; it is to find more time and space and language for talking about these values. And if you say, my free will, for example, the value

of freedom, it is obviously something that we need to redefine.

MW: Absolutely.

FDS: Aristo had this very practical way of using *Ethics*. It's called an *Eudaimonia* [whereby he suggested that] the values come to life when you act upon them. So, *Ethics* is not [taken as] today where we say "We need ethics for *Artificial Intelligence*", then call some professors to write on it which nobody understands and think we've done our job. *Ethics* in this regard are more like an application form for everyday life. Yes, it's a complex world we live in. Yes, the artists have a talent to turn these complex situations into sometimes beautiful, or to mirroring creations. But the whole discourse surrounding this should, in my humble opinion, be more about the values that we are sharing and exchanging.

NS: Fredo, I think this is an extremely nice and smart conclusion. These reflections show me extremely challenging new directions for the interpretation of the work. Again, I'm very thankful for your participation.

BORUSAN CONTEMPORARY

Manager

Dr. Kumru Eren

Executive

Burak Mert Çiloğlugil

Exhibitions and Collection Operations Specialist

Övgü Şahin

Operations Specialist

Selen Özata

Editor and Translation

Serra Yentürk

Technical Staff

Sinan Mantarcı

Şevki Uygun

Architecture

Politek İnşaat

Fine Arts Shipping

Simurg Fine Art

Advertising Agency

Being / Çözüm

Digital Media Planning Agency

Hype

Media Relations

Ogilvy PR

Interactive Agency

Heart Factory (Ö. Alper Altun)

Security

Securitas

Cleaning

Euroserve

**BORUSAN KOCABIYIK FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

President

F. Zeynep Hamedî

Members

A. Ahmet Kocabıyık

Z. Nurhan Kocabıyık

Levent Kocabıyık

A. Nükhet Özmen

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chairperson

F. Zeynep Hamedî

Vice Chair

Z. Nurhan Kocabıyık

Members

C. Bülent Demircioğlu

Leyla Hamedî

A. Ahmet Kocabıyık

Levent Kocabıyık

Aslı Özmen

A. Nükhet Özmen

MANAGEMENT

General Manager

Canan Ercan Çelik

General Coordinator

Ahmet E. Erenli

Finance and Administrative Manager

Meltem Doğan

With special thanks to





**BORUSAN
CON-TEM-
PO-RAR-Y**

