

PRESS RELEASE
Robots and Avatars
16 March 2011 – 27 May 2012

Co-curated by FACT and interdisciplinary design collective body>data>space, *Robots and Avatars* is a major new exhibition showcasing the most exciting visions and innovations from international artists, designers and architects, and exploring their impact on the future of work and play.

Exploring the increasing overlap of the virtual and physical world, and our own steady assimilation of new technologies, this playful group show offers immersive experiences - from physical limbs rendered into pixels through the act of touch, collaborative landscapes stretching beyond the confines of popular gaming, to wearable and interactive technologies that guide and confound.

Robots and Avatars departs from pop culture imagery and re-imagines these technologies for a new reality: how do we envisage our future relationships with robotic and avatar colleagues and playmates, and at what point does this evolution cross our personal boundaries of what it is to be a living, feeling human being?

Michael Takeo Magruder - *Visions of Our Communal Dreams* (commission). UK/US
Visions of Our Communal Dreams is a mixed-reality art installation blending virtual, physical and networked space that explores issues of hybridity, embodiment and collective creativity made possible through the use of avatars and virtual worlds. Artist Michael Takeo Magruder will run a set of workshops in which young participants from Liverpool will learn skills relating to virtual worlds customisation and collaborative content creation that will feed back into both the artwork and its underlying creative processes.

Karina Smigla Bobinski – *ADA*. Poland/Germany
Nominated for Prix Ars Electronica 2012, Polish artist Karina Smigla Bobinski's *ADA* is a giant interactive analogue installation with the appearance of a membrane-like globe that floats freely in the gallery space. Constructed to have her own will, *ADA* does not follow programmes or commands but is an autonomous artwork enhanced by the people's reaction to her.

Alastair Eilbeck – *MeYouandUs*. UK
MeYouandUs is a series of three interactive plasma-screens that encourages passers-by to interact with them, allowing each participant to create their own narrative. Each installation requires different levels of involvement - from an instant reaction to a gradual response.

Lawrence Malstaf – *Compass*. Belgium
Situated somewhere between art and theatre, the 'living' installations of Belgian visual artist require visitors to bring them to life. Like *Shrink*, the artwork shown at Abandon Normal Devices festival in Manchester 2010, *Compass* is an individual performance experience. Wearing a machine around the waist, the visitor can either resist the forces it exerts, or allow themselves to be taken on a tangible but immaterial journey across an invisible map.

Chris Sugrue – *Base 8*. Spain/Slovenia/US
An artist and programmer developing interactive installations, audio-visual performances and experimental interfaces, Chris Sugrue makes work that investigates topics such as artificial life, eye-tracking and optical illusions. Inspired by a 19th century theatre trick called "Pepper's Ghost",

Base 8 explores the negative spaces and movements between fingers, hands and arms, hinting towards an holographic illusion of a world floating in air.

Matthieu Cherubini - *Rep.licants.org*. Switzerland

An online work by Swiss artist Matthieu Cherubini, *replicants.org* is an online service allowing people to install a bot on their Facebook and/or Twitter account that can build a greater social reputation for the user. *Rep.licants.org* explores the reality of who is really who on social networks and examines the potential extensions of our social interactions on the social networks.

More works TBC., please check: <http://www.robotsandavatars.net/exhibition/>

The Robots and Avatars exhibition is co-produced in the UK by body>data>space (London) and FACT (Liverpool) in collaboration with the National Theatre (London). European co-organisers are KIBLA (Maribor/Slovenia) and AltArt (Cluj Napoca/Romania). With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union, this project was conceived by lead producer body>data>space in association with NESTA.

Full information can be found here: <http://www.robotsandavatars.net/exhibition/>

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Notes to Editors

- 16 March 2011 – 27 May 2012 FACT, Wood Street Liverpool www.fact.co.uk. FREE Entry
- **body>>data>>space** is an East London design collective creating innovative connections between performance, architecture, virtual worlds and new media. We work to share and extend future scenarios of virtual / physical blended space. We produce action-research projects, commissions, exhibitions, debates, conferences, learning experiences and websites with a wide range of sectors. www.bodydataspace.net
- **FACT** (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) has been leading the UK video, film and new media arts scene for more than 20 years with groundbreaking exhibitions, education and research projects. It aims to pioneer new forms of artistic and social interaction with individuals and communities.
- *Visions of Our Communal Dreams* by Michael Takeo Magruder with Drew Baker, Erik Fleming and David Steele, 2012. Commissioned by body>data>space and the Royal National Theatre in association with FACT and King's College London for the "Robots and Avatars" project. supported by the EU Culture programme.