66. | Dead Memory





2019, black metal cabinet, 5 coils of 500 m of black antenna cable, 180 x 200 x 100 cm.
Exhibition view from The Process, Wilde Gallery, 2019, Geneva.
Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, Paris.
Ed. of 5 + 1 A.P.

L’installation « Dead Memory » est réalisée au moyen d'une armoire métallique noire, munie de tiroirs de rangement en façade, à l'arrière de laquelle s'échappent en boucles des centaines de mètres de sections de câbles d'antenne noir. Elle explore les rapports entre société, mémoire et technologies de l'information. « Dead Memory » a des allures de composant de data center - ces complexes de stockage de l'information numérique aux dimensions vertigineuses. Disséminés partout à travers le monde, ils sont les garants de la mémoire des entreprises, des gouvernements, des échanges boursiers, mais aussi des individus et de leurs informations privées.

Exposant son indéniable matérialité aux yeux du spectateur, l'installation exprime le paradoxe d'une société prônant la circulation des informations et la dématérialisation, et dont le fonctionnement exige pourtant des centres d'archivage bien physiques, de plus en plus tentaculaires, posant des problèmes d'espace, de consommation d'énergie et de coût environnemental. L'œuvre met également face à face mémoire artificielle - morte en quelque sorte - de la machine, et mémoire humaine. Elle pose la question du rapport du spectateur aux technologies de stockage de l'information et l'interroge au sujet de son rapport à sa propre mémoire. Sommes-nous prêts à abandonner une partie importante de ce qui constitue notre humanité à la machine ? Et avec quelles conséquences ? A moins que ce élément de stockage de la data ne soit finalement destinée à devenir en quelque sorte la « boîte noire » de notre vie sociale.

L'installation rend compte d'une hypertrophie technologique et mémorielle de nos sociétés. De nos jours tous nos faits et

The installation Dead Memory comprises a black metallic cabinet with drawers on the front, and out of its back, loops of hundreds of meters of black antenna cable stick out. It explores the relationships between society, memory and information technologies. Dead Memory resembles a data center server rack, those digital information storage facilities with impressive dimensions. Disseminated around the world, they are the keeper of the memory of businesses, governments, stock market transactions, but also of individuals and their private information.

By exposing its undeniable materiality before the eyes of the viewer, the installation expresses the paradox of a society extoling the circulation of information and dematerialization, yet whose functioning requires these sprawling physical storage centers that pose problems in terms of space, energy consumption and environmental footprint. The work also confronts the artificial memory – dead memory, as it were – of the machine, with human memory. It poses the question of the viewers’ relationship to information storage technologies and to their own memory. Are we ready to give up an important part of what makes up our humanity to the machine? With what consequences? Unless this data storage element is destined to becoming a sort of black box of our social existence.

The installation relates the technological and memorial hypertrophy of our societies. Today, every single thing we say and do is continuously recorded and archived in digital archiving centers. Despite the computing power to classify them, these massive archives make all that information indistinct and undifferentiated. The sheer volume of data is so

gestes sont enregistrés et archivés de manière continue dans des centres d'archives numériques. Malgré la capacité des puissances de calculs à classer, ces archives rendent les informations indistinctes et indifférenciées. Le volume est telle que seule la machine est encore capable d'un traitement adéquat des données - leur contrôle et leur nature même échappant de plus en plus aux individus, faisant apparaitre une science à part entière. Seuls les data Scientists utilisent l'intelligence artificielle pour pouvoir traiter cette masse d'informations afin d'en tirer une pertinence. L'installation nous oblige à nous arrêter pour se demander si cet élément de mémoire numérique témoigne de la grandeur ou de la décadence d'une civilisation? Cependant, aussi sophistiqué qu'il apparaisse aux yeux du spectateur, l'installation montre déjà un constat actuelle de technologie dépassée. « Dead memory » se défait difficilement de ses allures de totem et rend compte symboliquement des aspects fondamentaux d'une société quelque peu primitive, charriant son lot de croyances, de superstitions et d'angoisse : angoisse liée à la déshumanisation des rapports sociaux, à la perte du contrôle, de la mémoire, angoisse de l'obsolescence programmée de nos modes d'agir et de penser.

Studio Fatmi, Avril 2019.

great that only the machine is still capable of processing it – their control and their very nature is no longer in the hands of the individuals, leading to a new science in its own right. Data scientists alone can use artificial intelligence to process these large amounts of information and extract some form of relevance from it. The installation forces us to stop and ask ourselves whether this element of digital memory is a sign of greatness or decadence of a civilization. Yet, sophisticated as it may seem to the viewer, the installation also reflects an observation about an already outdated technology. Dead Memory sheds with difficulty its totemic properties and symbolically represents certain fundamental aspects of a somewhat primitive society, with its set of beliefs, superstitions and anxieties: an anxiety that has to do with the dehumanization of social connections, the loss of control and memory, the anxiety of the programmed obsolescence of our ways of acting and thinking.

Studio Fatmi, April 2019.

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Studio Fatmi, April 2019

exhibitions:

2019

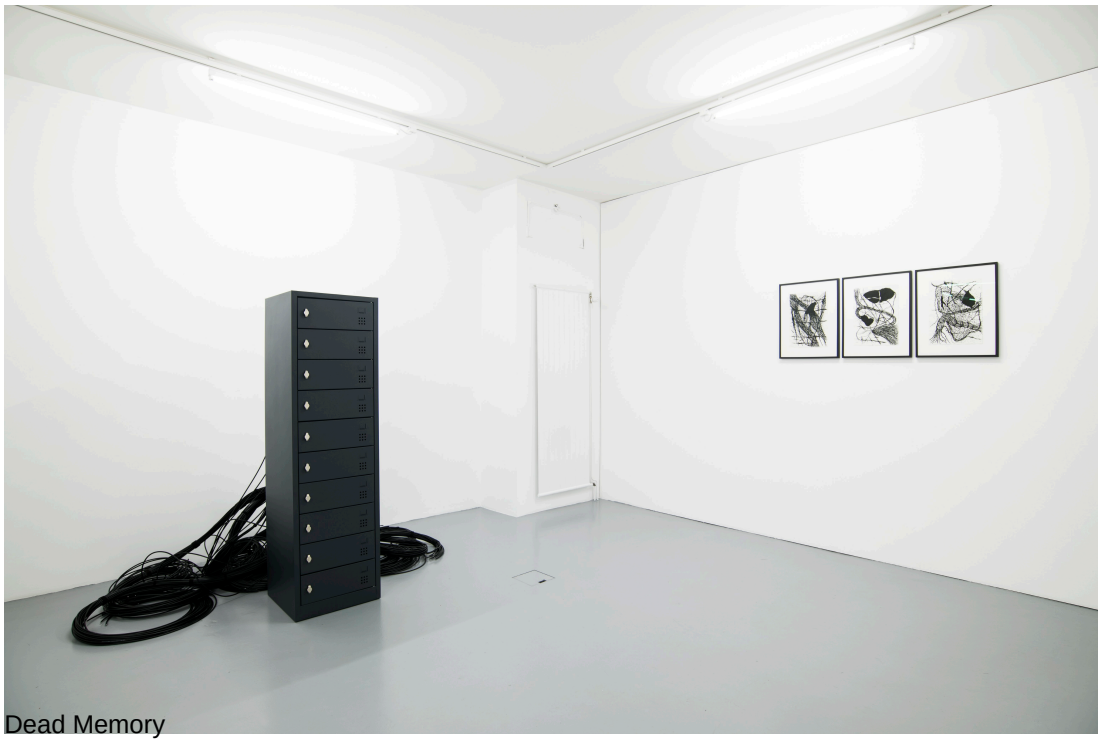
The Process - Wilde Gallery - Solo show



The Process, SF Publishing, Paris, 2019

No matter where and when we start: we are already in the middle of things.

Ludwik Fleck



Dead Memory

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