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On display in the Netherlands the dark side of the algorithms and artificial intelligence. But also new forms of resistance. Not surprisingly, in a former prison.



Diller + Scofidio, Laura Kurgan a.o, Exit, installation, 2013-2016

GET IN a prison is never nice.

But if instead of the inmates there are artists, changes everything. We are in Utrecht, in the Netherlands, the city of champions like Marco van Basten, Sylvia Kristel and Rutger Hauer, the replicant in "Blade Runner". The prison of Wolvenplein released two years ago. About the hard facade reads "1853", behind a bend in the channel, the margin North of the old town. Today we will enter for cultural tourism, preferably on a sunny day. The former penitentiary gives us a great view on new penis of free beings: "Hacking Habitat. Art of Control "(until June 5). The theme is of utmost topicality: the increasing dependence on technology, the risk of digital slavery, and the forms of resistance to the technocracy.

As the curator, Ine Gevers, Niet Normaal Foundation:"globally, more and more our daily lives are managed and monitored by the networking technologies, protocols and algorithms. We are witnessing a controlled society. Between systems of control, surveillance and recognition, we have portals that make us according to our tastes, Facebook who directs the our social lives, Google that drives future purchases ...». Out of this culture of control Gevers has invited more than 80 international artists to provide creative responses. And rarely do creators of our years have been able to intervene on reality so engag e, so arbitrary and political, alien to fashionable. But because many are

the videos, you must have patience: difficult to get by in under three hours, shooting between the cells and the rooms of Wolvenplein. The ideal is perhaps split your visit into two stages.

Follow us. That the matter is serious it can be seen as you enter. In the first corridor above the recorded sound of drones flying at low altitude (Syria? Iraq? Libya?). Soon after, above our heads Eduardo Basualdo hung a giant meteorite, presented as «poetic reflection on the superhighway of information. " And already the first cell, held by the English room, contains the "Nemesis Machine", a miniature city of towers and turrets composed of microprocessors assembled, where the lights pulsate according to data from smart city London, security cameras, info on traffic and pollution. Under the slogan, slightly unnerving, "From Metropolis to Megalopolis to Ecumenopolis".

If you have swallowed and resumed air we can immerse ourselves in the long arm (Wolvenplein has a cross plan Basilica). In each of the cells on the sides, where it survives the metal block washbasin-wc-mirror-light, there is a high prevalence of HIV, with audio-video installation. The Germans Mediengruppe Bitnik, witty, they created a fake e-catalog shopping on so-called Darknet, to understand the underground side of the Internet. On the screens, with prices in bitcoin, crypto-electronic currency, are selling a false passport Hungarian, a car Ta Visa Platinum, packs of Ecstasy pills and other amenities.

You understand now why the title mentions the concept of "hacker"? In the air hangs a spirited antagonist. The artist James Beckett, for example, presents "Voodoo Justice for people of finance". Pen portrays a series of emblematic capitalists, from Bernie Madoff to the elegant StraussKahn Christine Lagarde, and other ringleaders of Crédit Suisse, McKinsey, Bank of America; and underneath each portrait places a stone in their places of birth. Hence the invitation to cast stones at them with Voodoo technique ...

As you will learn from videos made by Eric Cadora and Laura Kurgan with researchers from Columbia University how much does society move and manage the inmates in the prison model Brooklyn, with data on areas of origin and ethnic or racial "», as they say in the us. You will hear a monologue with the philosopher phlegm radical Michael Hardt (Yes, him, the friend of Toni Negri coauthor of the famous essay "Empire") that talks about the lost words of capitalist technocracy as "politics of love". But even the most heart unmoved will experience a thrill of emotion in the corner overlooking the stanzona basketball convicts: there Susan Hiller has recreated a work already presented at the Documenta in Kassel, "thoughts are free", with a jukebox and texts on the walls that remind us of the famous anarchist songs, antifascist, anti-imperialist, from Woody Guthrie to "Chant des partisans", from Bob Marley to "Bella ciao". As if to say that the new resistance to technocracy cannot ignore the 20th century Resisters.

In the basement, where you continue, it is good to cover: the temperature drops a lot. Here, as a starter, the collective Buro Jansen has an installation on WikiLeaks: Besides

& Janssen 5500 reflected messages, including those relating to politics and Dutch institutions revealed in 2010. A boon for Wiki-fetishists. Changing scenario, looking to the future, the Turk Ali Kazma. The artist has American technicians in white coveralls movie Alcor, a company of "life extension" Cryo-preserved cadavers that Hibernate, cylindrical steel coffins. But the most unsettling is the Dutchman Paul Segers, who in a freezing underground room, called "Walking the Dog", has put into action a Zoomorphic military robot equipped with camera, than those used to probe dangerous terrain or minefields. The big dog robot films us visitors riproducendoci on monitor, while dancing on all fours on backing.

Among the biggest prison-emergency interventions, one is "Bonzenbunker" by Joseph Beuys, an old work that documents the fallout shelter of the Federal Government of Germany hidden among the vineyards of the Rhineland, and presented at the Festival Fluxus in Krefeld in 1981. The other is Forensic Architecture, London Group which uses radar and laser technologies to rebuild the structures of two famous concentration camps in the former Yugoslavia. But it is impossible to tell all: artists are 86.

The operation in Utrecht contains items, they said, of counterculture hacker, but pollinated by a seed neo resistance. Not everything gets around, sometimes there is rhetoric, sometimes a naïve radicalism; but very striking and remains imprinted in the minds of those who quit "Hacking Habitat". Because it's uncommon in today's society of the spectacle, an intersection so brave artistic expression and critical political thought.

The great final room, the work of South African William Kentridge, before wonder, then sobering. Is dedicated to the "waste of time" ("Refusal of Time") and one wonders why. Time is understood as rules, timetable, protocols, as an executive branch of Western capitalism imposed by force everywhere, even to non-Western world. And at this point, see on the big screen a young pair of black Africans who dances, flirts, laughs about ethnic music leads us away from the rough ratio of technocracy and its ruling classes. .But only for a few moments. Moments of dream, of love, of joy perhaps lost.