

#timebelongstoshamen #openingtointensivelife #chemistryofoceans #symbiontkin #discognition #thinklikeanavatar
#huntsindream #projectcolourandlight #vomitstreamsofwater #slipoutofyourpointofview #unfix
#makeotherformsvisible #radical #uncompressed #fluid #plastic #surplus #sometimesviolent #alwayscontingent
#creative #chaotic #random #porous #becomingtouch

MAGGIE ROBERTS (MER)

UNCANNY VALLEY, DIFFICULT KIN

5 APRIL - 23 JUNE 2019

PREVIEW: Thursday 4 April, 18.00hrs



Image: *Difficult Kin*, Maggie Roberts (2018.)

Aspex is delighted to present *Uncanny Valley, Difficult Kin*, a new exhibition from artist Maggie Roberts (aka Mer) - winner of its biennial international open submission competition, *EMERGENCY* (2016).

Uncanny Valley, is the term used in robotics to describe human responses of deep unease when interacting with the radical otherness of 'lifelike' robots. For this exhibition, its definition is extended to explore fictional relationships between human, animal and synthetic entities. Algorithmic intelligence, magic, plasticity, symbiotic hybrids and swamp demons all trigger an uncanny valley-like response. Thinking about *Difficult Kin*, Maggie is interested in the potential for an animistic engagement across material, virtual and nonhuman life to encourage perceptual shifts towards more entangled, abstract and porous being.

Uncanny Valley, Difficult Kin comprises multimedia artworks, including a Youtube ASMR inspired audio fiction, an ambient soundscape, HD videos and a wandering sculpture/ installation made of crystals, detritus, ocean flotsam, photographic collage, laser cut stencils and fabrics.

Human understanding of the fabric of reality is changing. Our categories and boundaries are now under immense pressure. They are cracking and leaking. Maggie's sensory web of image and sound is an attempt to inhabit a fluid complex uncertainty populated by entities on a continuum between the human and the non-human, a mix of the organic, the engineered and the synthetic.

The artist believes that it is urgently important now for specialists from different discourses to come together in order to co-produce fictions that imagine future political, aesthetic and mythical dimensions. She is currently collaborating with machine learning specialists, a design theorist and two marine biologists to inhabit an octopus' experience of distributed consciousness, hoping to explore the 'uncanny valley' of its radically alien otherness as a way in to communicating with evolving artificial intelligence.

Maggie Roberts (aka Mer) is a British artist whose practice involves excess, iteration and immersion, manifesting in feedback loops across image medium, content, rhythm and texture. She employs collage techniques across audiovisual, digital, sculptural and painterly mediums as a way of manifesting virtual frequencies that affect visible reality. These frequencies - such as expanding cosmic, geological, biotechnical and cultural time scales; animal becomings; climate crisis as the violence of excess and luxury; 'machine vision' and communication currents in matter - she sees as catalysts for change.

Roberts has participated internationally in over two decades of exhibitions, screenings and performance, both solo and as part of Orphan Drift (the collective she co-founded in 1994). She has exhibited most extensively in the UK, Europe, Canada and the States, including at the Cabinet Gallery and Tate Modern, London. More recent exhibitions include *Matter Fictions* at the Berardo Museum, Lisbon (2016); *Glimmer Breach*, IMT Gallery, London; *Miasma, Chrominance* at Res., London and *Feminisms, Gender and Resistance* at Nottingham Contemporary (all 2018). She has co-written the chapter *The Things That Knowledge Cannot Eat* for *Fiction as Method*, Sternberg Press (2017) and presented numerous papers, run workshops and seminars, collaborated on symposia exploring other worlds, climate change, uncertainty, algorithms and fictioning. In the most recent, *The Shaping of a Message*, she focused on the urgent importance of shamanic indigenous knowledge today.

Uncanny Valley, Difficult Kin forms part of **Aspex's** Spring season of exhibition and events, exploring the appropriation of digital across the arts. The exhibition is on show at until 23 June 2019, with a Preview on Thursday 4 April, 18.00hrs.

Ends

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