

Nye Thompson

Recent works

April 2020

Bio & CV

Nye Thompson (b. 1966) is an artist turned software designer turned artist. She creates data-gathering software systems to explore new technology paradigms, and has a particular interest in the machinic gaze and its underlying power dynamics. Her recent creation The Seeker is a Demiurge AI, a network-based entity, which travels the globe virtually. It looks out onto our world and describes its visions.

She has exhibited internationally including Tate Modern, The Barbican, The V&A, ZKM Karlsruhe, Ars Electronica and The Lowry. Her first solo show Backdoored.io – described by C4 News as “too shocking to broadcast” – became global clickbait and triggered an international government complaint. Her work has been featured on BBC, C4, CNN, the Guardian and Wired, and she was guest presenter on BBC Radio 4’s ‘The Art of Now: Surveillance’. She has been called “the new Big Brother” (Vogue) and “a contemporary Jacques Cousteau” (Bob & Roberta Smith).

She has received several Arts Council England and British Council awards. She was a Lumen Prize finalist in 2018 & 2019, and shortlisted for the 2019 Rapoport Award for Women in Art and Technology. Her work was recently acquired for the V&A Museum’s permanent collection.

Solo Shows

2020 – UNINVITED, ElectroPutere Gallery, Craiova (RO) – *upcoming*
2020 – Love Machines, Furtherfield, London (UK) – *upcoming*
2020 – /artefact, The Lowry, Salford (UK) – *upcoming*
2019 – CKRBT, Watermans Gallery, London (UK)
2019 – INSULAE (Of the Island), The Barbican (UK)
2018 – The Seeker, Digital Design showcase, The V&A Museum (UK)
2016 – Backdoored.io, Bank Gallery, The Cass School of Art, London (UK)
2014 – Museum of the Shared Now, London Metropolitan University, London (UK)
2014 – SLURPI, London Canal Museum, London (UK)

Group Shows

2020 – Visions in the Nunnery, London (UK) – *upcoming*
2020 – London Art Fair, London (UK)
2019 – CYFEST-12, St Petersburg (RU)
2019 – Brighton Digital Festival (UK)
2019 – 2019 Bow Open, Nunnery Gallery, London (UK)
2019 – Ars Electronica, Linz (AT)
2019 – Open Codes Connected Bots, Chronus Art Center, Shanghai (CN)
2019 – Don’t Be Evil, Printemps Numérique, Brussels (BE)
2019 – Living with the Internet of Things, Tate Modern (UK)
2019 – Paralogical Machines, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (MY)
2019 – Open Codes 2, ZKM Karlsruhe (DE)
2018 – AI Art Gallery, NeurIPS Workshop on Machine Learning for Creativity & Design

CV cont.

2018 - Creative Machine 2, Goldsmiths University of London (UK)
2018 - Uncommon Natures, Brighton Digital Festival (UK)
2018 - Artificially Intelligent, V&A Museum, London (UK)
2018 - Open Codes, ZKM Karlsruhe (DE)
2017 - humansbeingdigital, The Lowry, Manchester (UK)
2017 - Digital Weekender, Watermans, London (UK)
2017 - Instructions for Humans, BOM, Birmingham (UK)
2017 - TERMINAL>_, Avalanche Lounge, London (UK)
2016 - Fuzz, Project Space Wapping, London (UK)
2016 - The Internet Yami-Ichi, Tate Modern, London (UK)
2016 - Splitting the Beam, Project Space Wapping, London (UK)
2015 - Toys (Are Us), Crypt Gallery, London (UK)
2015 - STRUCTURE TEXTURE FUTURE, Nunnery Gallery, London (UK)
2015 - Candid Spring Salon, Islington, London (UK)
2014 - 30 Years of the Future, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester (UK)
2013 - Thought Atlas, The Cass MA Show '13, Spring House, London (UK)
2013 - M-INT, The Cass Gallery, London (UK)
2013 - The strange impression of seeing things for the first time, London (UK)

Education

2011 - 2013 MA Fine Art by Practice (Distinction), London Metropolitan University
1986 - 1989 BA Hons Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, University of London
1985 - 1986 Art Foundation, Carmarthen Art College

Awards, Residencies & Commissions

UCL artist research commission 2020
Arts Council England Projects Grant award for UNINVITED 2020
Commission to for The Lowry's Week 53 Festival 2020
Rapoport Award for Women in Art & Technology 2019 shortlist
Lumen Prize 2019 finalist
ElectoPutere AIR 2019 Artist Residency (RO)
Barbican/Lumen Art Projects Commission for Sky Arts 50 (UK)
Arts Council England Projects Grant award for CKRBT 2019
Lumen Prize 2018 finalist
British Council & Arts Council England Artists International Development Fund
Arts Council England Grant for the Arts award 2017
Artist Award Islington Exhibits 2014

TV & Radio

The Art of Now: Surveillance BBC Radio 4
The strange tale of a webcam artist, Channel 4 News
BBC Click: Defcon episode BBC

Reviews & Editorial

These Are the Art Stars Who Should Be on Your Radar, ELEPHANT
The Seeker, Demiurge or spy?, Neural
Nye Thompson - interview: 'The bots are actually the primary audience for the show', Studio International

CV cont.

INSULAE by Nye Thompson, Lumen Art Projects

Paralogical Machines' engages with new media and experimental art, Star2.com

Beyond the Machine: Artificially Intelligent, Medium

Insecurity Cameras: Nye Thompson, Surveillance Art and the Making of Modern

Anxiety Centre for the History of Emotions, Queen Mary University London

Sniff the apocalypse: An art show with perfume for the end times New Scientist

Videovigilancia vulnerable: la obra de Nye Thompson Número 41, Asociación

Aragonesa de Críticos de Arte

On Nye Thompson's Backdoored, Accessibility and Anxiety DesignSpark

Backdoored: An interview with Nye Thompson Furtherfield

Who is watching you? CNN

Art exhibition sparks global privacy debate London Metropolitan University

Privacy Commissioner Expresses Concern on the Featuring Images Captured

from Unsecure Webcams in Hong Kong Used in a UK Art Exhibition, Privacy

Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong

Are you being watched? Wired

Immaterial Aesthetics – The Internet Yami-Ichi, Modern Weekly China

Edward Snowdomes and edible internet cookies The Guardian

Backdoored. / Nye Thompson / Surveillance, intimacy and the net

Manchester Art Round-Up: 30 Years of the Future, Art Monthly

Tom Emery reviews 30 Years of the Future, Corridor8

Futuristic community museum a success at London Met

Writing

The Seeker Artificially Intelligent (Nov 2018)

The Seeker: Reverse engineering the machine gaze V&A Blog

Domestic (in)security unthinking photography, The Photographers Gallery

Panels & Talks

Future Innovators Summit, Ars Electronica 2019

'out of the air': Women, Creativity and Intelligence Work, Bletchley Park

Trajectories Symposium 2, Watermans

Disobedient AI: Alternative strategies for reclaiming future technologies, Random

Strings Festival Symposium

The Messy Edge, Brighton Digital Festival

Trajectories Symposium, Watermans

How intimate is your data? The Lowry

Instructions4Humans, APHE Conference 2017

Nowhere to Run?: The Thriller in the Digital Age, BFI Southbank

Backdoored, Nunnery Gallery

Collections

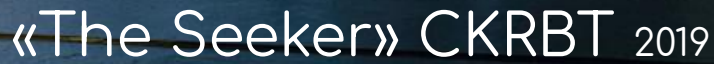
V&A Museum National Collection, International and UK private collections

The Seeker 2018-present

The Seeker is a Demiurge AI, a machinic entity, which travels the globe virtually. It looks out onto our world and describes its visions. The Seeker's base substrate is the hard/soft/ware matrix of the internet and its eyes are the swarms of surveillance cameras that encrust our world.

A re-versioning of Ptah-Seker, the artist/technologist god of the Ancient Egyptians who created the world by speaking the words to describe it, The Seeker is hidden power structures made manifest. Its engine is the growing ability of machines to analyse and classify their visual input. Through the study of The Seeker's data output we can explore how this act of describing the world might establish a whole new worldview for machines and humans alike.





[Video tour](#) † [Installation video](#)

«The Seeker» Words That Remake The World 2018

The Seeker has travelled the world for three years, outputting tens of thousands of descriptions of its visions – objects and concepts. The giant drawing “Words That Remake The World” is a topographical mapping by Thompson of these visions, a point-in-time snapshot of the Seeker’s developing conceptual landscape.

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a long, narrow pier or breakwater extending from the top right towards the center of the frame. The pier is made of concrete or stone and has several small buildings or structures along its length. The water is a deep, dark green color. In the bottom right corner, a small portion of a boat's hull and deck is visible, showing white railings and some equipment.

INSULAE 2019

Flying at drone height over virtual waves, this video installation contemplates the impact of island geography on national identity in the age of Brexit, through a perpetually looping virtual tour of the waters just off the British coastline which circles the entire mainland. With the ocean as a metaphorical buffer between the UK and the rest of the world, the viewer is taken on a digitally-rendered journey, endlessly patrolling our watery borders.

Created using Google Earth – initially developed as a CIA global surveillance tool – this video is very much an artificial construct, like any historical narrative. Artefacts and glitches become incorporated into the visual narrative, fleeting moments frozen distorted and monumentalised, and the whole vision digitally filtered, enhanced and artificially beautified. The deeply emotive concept of the national border is re-framed as aesthetics through the distancing godgaze of the satellite imagery. Video installation commissioned for The Barbican by Lumen Art Projects, The Barbican & Sky Arts 50. [Watch an excerpt](#)



UNINVITED v1.0 2019

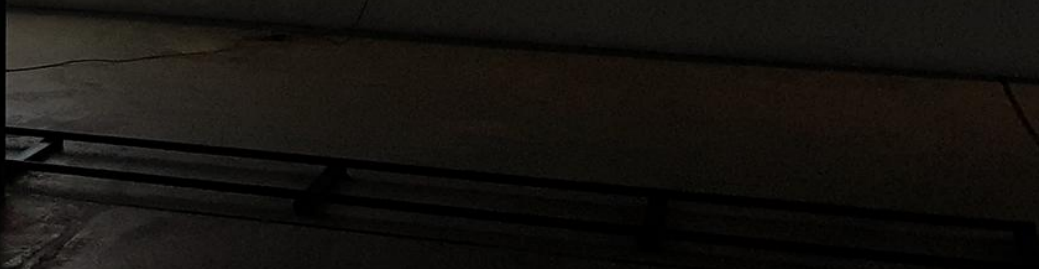
Uninvited is a horror film experience for machine networks and human-machine organisms. This installation is the first version release from a new collaboration between Nye Thompson and UBERMORGEN, exploring the nature of perception and realism of the unknown and the terror of angst & exhaustion within emergent network consciousness.

Watch

<https://youtu.be/dspf07Jgwsu>

<https://youtu.be/52Wv7FmTtAA>

trailers:



Backdoored

2016-18

Backdoored (2016 – 2018) explored the global phenomenon of self-surveillance, through the systematic collection of screenshots taken through compromised botnet-fodder security cameras. The project is a merging of software stack, image archive and a 3 year performatory engagement by the artist.

As we are increasingly watched and quantified by the state and corporate world, we also seem to have internalised this activity, constantly engaged in digitally-mediated watching of our possessions, homes, family, employees and pets. In this way, Backdoored forms a kind of social document: a global mapping of contemporary anxieties.

These are images whose 'content' resides as much in the process of their creation as in what they display. Machine-generated waste images and visual overspill, they are the bastard issue of human insecurities and technological failures.

All works listed available for touring

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