

PRESS RELEASE UK/USA

L'Atelier Melusine

86290. France

'Dolls – Pupa'

Artifice; from Pandora to the Daughters of Frankenstein.

March 23 – May 04 2019

'Dolls – Pupa' the Atelier Melusine, La Trimouille, France from 24 March – 04 May 2019, allows an intimate and complex look at the concept of 'the doll' both inanimate and artificially animated through the medium of text. The gallery sent out a short written text asking for thinkers, artists, writers, historians and scientists to respond using the written word as the primary medium. Submissions in the form of essays, prose and poetry have been emailed, printed and then installed as a site specific work across the four levels of the space around selected items, cinematic and web based elements as well as exhibits from the Melusine's own collection which, includes original pieces by Dan Hillier and Tess Jaray. The responses have been highly personal and exceeded the original format introducing film such as 'Rice Harvester' by Katarzyna Borelowska, books, handmade papers as well as instruction manuals; the 'Ultra-Low Voltage Survival Kit' (Mindaugus Gapsevicius) and a piece of futurist theatre 'Monde 2.0' by the Nigerian artist Waliya Yohanna Joseph.

Many myths about the origin of humanity whether Grecian Promethean or Biblical Hebrew predominantly allege that mankind is made by gods and demi-urges rather than evolved, as generally, but not unilaterally, believed in the 21st century, and that we subsequently were/are at the mercy and manipulation of these gods. Gods are almost all immortal or supernatural powers; they are not governed by the inter-relational ties of mortals with our short lifespans, nor victims of the fragilities and embarrassments of age and illness, they are, in many ways, less feeling and perhaps less noble because they cannot die. In turn, humanity, past recorded memory, has tried to mimic, approximate or replicate itself, from abstracted but ritually potent figurines such as Venus of Willendorf (approximately 30,000 years old) to high tech (but easily broken) 'Samantha' the abused sex-robot or 'Sophia', who wants to converse, but also 'destroy the world'. It seems that as a species we are obsessed with the idea of creating in our own image with the making of 'dolls'. Despite the sophisticated artifices and bio-mimetic skills we now have to make the outer shells it is perhaps the uncanny or absent interiority of the idols we make which is problematic, or rather the lack of it. The animating life 'spark', the ability to use language, meta-representation and therefore true communication with and understanding of others is currently missing from our clever facsimiles. This impacts on all potential forms of A.I., doll replicants, and transhuman-hybrids as well as the ethical and moral dilemmas around consent which have not changed since Pandora came out of her jar (it was not a box).

The exhibition concept from the outset is that the artworks must be digital, can all be emailed and that the ideas and the thinking processes involved are most important. They too are facsimiles. We have installed the work as a sequenced narrative and the printed works will be scaled in three standard paper sizes - A5 A4 A3 - in the different gallery spaces, with accompanying projections and sound pieces. The site specific nature of the overall show means that the works will be presented in various ways and some will be interactive and available for handling by the general public. An e-catalogue will be available at end of the show documenting the process, installation as well as the final works. The weblog and catalogue will be packed full of live links to help the audience to dive into the source material as well as exploring the artists websites further. The nature of this particular project is to gather and use current and therefore sometimes ephemeral technologies to create a living piece of art and of art as inquiry or research.

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Please find the poster and invitation to the private viewing attached.

Private View. Saturday 23 March 2019 18.00 – 21.00



Image above; John Thomson and his moving automaton piece with turned wooden marionettes. Still from the video *'Reign'* 2015 by *Prinzhorn Dance School*. Photography Dean Chalkley. Courtesy of DFA Records.

About L'Atelier Melusine.

Atelier Melusine is an artist-led space in the Vienne region of SW France showing contemporary multi-disciplinary artwork across all media. It has a specialist interest in the intersection between the arts, sciences and humanities with a focus on gender, health and environmental issues. The Atelier is a working studio, gallery and has residential workspace. It is directed by Sally Annett a UK-born artist producer now based in Europe.

For more information, high resolution images or interview requests, please contact Sally Annett:

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