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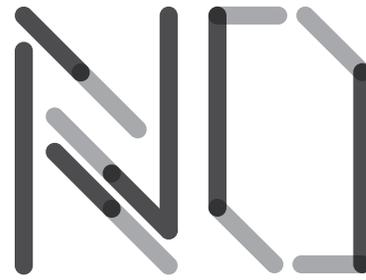


ART WORKS.

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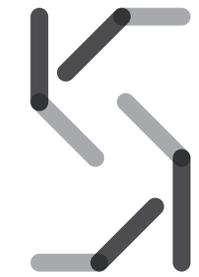
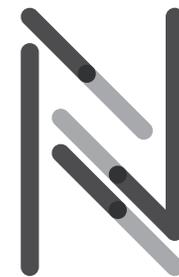
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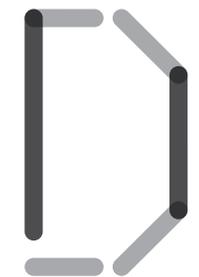
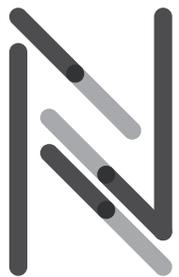
Lauren
Marie
Taylor



Gallery Hours
Tuesday - Saturday
12:00 - 6:00pm



May 22 -
June 6, 2015



No Man's Land Lauren Marie Taylor

May 22 – June 6, 2015

Opening Reception
Friday, May 22, 2015
7:00 – 9:00pm

Gallery Hours
Tuesday – Saturday
12:00 – 6:00pm

Gallery Closed
Saturday, May 23, 2015

Erik Davis on Philip K. Dick
Thursday, May 28, 2015
7:30 – 9:00pm

Erik Davis discusses humanoid robots and the work of Philip K. Dick. Davis is co-editor of the *Exegesis of Philip K. Dick* and author of *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information* and *Nomad Codes: Adventures in Modern Esoterica*.

Robot Afternoon
Saturday, June 6, 2015
2:00 – 4:00pm

Join robotics experts from Southern Exposure neighbor Other Labs in a discussion about their current explorations and the state of robotics today.

Amidst the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the United States commemorated the Civil War Centennial. At the same time Philip K. Dick, Ray Bradbury and Walt Disney each conceived of an Abraham Lincoln robot or animatronic figure. No Man's Land, Lauren Taylor's expansive multi-armed research project, examines the trope of the Lincoln robot, the climate in which it arose, and how this landscape has shifted. Taylor's dense network of cultural references illuminates the ways in which our machines reflect and embody our personal and national baggage.

Philip K. Dick imagined at least two Lincoln robots. In *We Can Build You*, written in 1962 and published in 1974, an Abraham Lincoln robot is built by an electric organ company, with the hope to re-enact moments of the Civil War. Instead he spends most of his time providing legal advice to his fabricating company regarding a conflict with a competitor, brooding and reading aloud from *Peter Pan*. In Dick's 1964 story *Martian Time Slip*, a Lincoln robot, along with other animatronic historical figures, acts as an American history teacher in a community on Mars. In 1964, Walt Disney's Lincoln automaton was unveiled at the World's Fair in New York, which inspired Ray Bradbury to write his 1969 story *Downwind from Gettysburg*, in which a mechanical Lincoln is assassinated by a publicity seeker named Booth. Within each narrative, the Lincoln-creator seeks to demonstrate his Frankensteinian capacity to bring the dead to life and to inspire with re-enacted moments from history, but the Lincoln robot instead serves to problematize the boundary between a fallible human authenticity and the artificial.

In research studies, the discomfort of observing the close-but-not-quite-human qualities of robots and dolls has been dubbed the "Uncanny Valley." Science-fictions, as useful reflections of our cultural anxieties and the ways in which we define ourselves vis-a-vis the non-normative subject, often fall into patterns focusing on this liminal "no-man's land" between the authentically human and the non-human. Fictional robots often play out these anxieties around authority, oppression, the military and technology, often playing the role of automatons who do not recognize human vulnerability or emotion, or of newly individuated subjects rebelling against their maker-oppressors, evoking a Frankensteinian human vs god or slave vs owner problematic. This dynamic is further complicated if the robot has the face of the most familiar, commonly accepted symbol of American integrity and egalitarianism, reaffirming the equation of an individuated subject and national identity.

As viewers of re-enactments of historical events, we can fall into a similar Uncanny Valley of uneasy reflection upon ourselves through past events. Overt disavowals of the evil racist of the distant past may provoke conversation but may also allow us to distance ourselves from discussions of contemporary racism. In the 1960s, while protesters were marching with signs declaring "I Am A Man," Americans were re-enacting scenes from the Civil War. In 2014, while Black Lives Matter rallies reacted to atrocities brought to light by the new ubiquity of recording technology, *Selma*, one of the most popular films of the year, reenacted scenes from Civil Rights Era struggles.

Taylor looks at our contemporary robotic helper figures and toys as well to consider the anxieties, attachments and anthropomorphized identities we project onto them, while alluding to real-life robotic production's ties to the military industrial complex. In her video *Crazy Army*, Robosapien Humanoid toy robots try and fail to fold a white flag together. They are paired with a drummer re-enacting a snare drum style that was performed as a call to Civil War troops, a form of analog military coding. In comparison, the robots' uncoordinated efforts are endearingly cute and pathetically helpless, again pointing to our blurry distinctions between the natural and the mechanized.

At this moment, when we're on the cusp of interacting with autonomous decision-making machines, Taylor considers how we perform and understand subjecthood and power. She draws connections between the histories we tell ourselves about past moments when the country redefined the legal rights of the individual and our fictional models of humanness. Her expansive hand-drawn network questions our personal and national narratives about authority, technology and the individual.