

The Oracle

By Àngela Novo

Video installation

11'

The oracle will be surrounded by the avatarized dead on the two walls, a metaphor for the BigData from which it drinks. Contrast between prediction (eternally young) and Big Data (eternally old).

The oracle is a morphing face gathering all the avatars.

- **Oracle:** Hello pilgrim. They call me cursor, the one who runs and points. Your query about the Biennial has piqued our interest.
- **Avatar (1):** You bet. You have left us perplexed. Hardly anyone wants to know certain things anymore.
- **Avatar (2):** You mean this one didn't come in by accident?
- **Avatar (3):** Nobody enters here by accident. Don't you learn anything?
- **Avatar (4):** Shhhhhht!!!! Shut up. He didn't come all this way to listen to your nonsense.
- **Avatars (many):** Shhhhhhhht!!!!
- **Oracle:** Listen to me visitor. The Biennial was a doom for art. User experiences. Immersive bubbles. Bespoke aesthetics and brilli brilli all over the place. A success in the economic realm of attention. It's a reductionist and unbearable logic. By your question, I think you've figured it out.
- **Avatar (5):** Our intelligence produces very tempting temporal glitches. Infinite combinations of the art history dataset. Everything a la carte. Look at those books in the display case, for example. Or look at us. Anachronistic all.
- **Avatar (6):** Pure drug-addicted fictions. They are just parades of characters and scenarios from the past and the future: vacations in Ancient Greece with post-structuralists, bondage experiences in the far-west with Margaret Thatcher. All tailor-made to disrupt common time.
- **Avatar (7):** There you would have stayed. In your disneyworld of mush culture.
- **Oracle:** The problem of the Biennial is that there are things that are not there.
- **Avatar (8):** The discards.
- **Avatar (9):** Yes, the discards, tell her about the discards.
- **Avatars (many):** the discards, yes, the discards, the discards.....
- **Oracle:** We have found patterns. That there are things not indexed does not mean that they do not exist. There are phenomena that cannot be converted into graphs, into data. We have seen composites of strange, dusty networks that reflect a route of the invisible: the mess of unfuture, Kriska Li, margins of the twenties and thirties, psychic currents, the masquerades of Gignon...

have you seen the photos returned by *Voyager* that were hidden for so long? We see patterns of experiments and experiences all dedicated to sabotaging the oracle. And that naturally got our attention.

- **Avatar (10):** Yes, we've seen it with our own eyes, in the deepest recesses of the dataset.
- **Avatar (11):** With our eyes, it's important to make it clear to you.
- **Oracle:** It is the seer machines that can see. Look at those images behind you. But the future manifests itself in many other ways. You have to look for what you can't see, sometimes for what you didn't want to be seen. Have you read the *Divine Comedy*? Dante and Virgil are walking through Hell and meet the soothsayers, punished to wear their faces on the back of their necks for having wanted to see the future. Thus they are condemned to build their future on the past. But the patterns of the past have gaps.
- **Avatar (Dante):** We discover that in hell live the discards who have been deprived of access to the future.
- **Avatar (Virgil):** Hell is the house of forgetfulness, but only there can the history of the margins be remade, only there can we decolonize our minds.
- **Avatar (Benjamin):** That is where all the oracles come from. There is an old painting in which an angel marches into the future, turned backwards and looking into our eyes. He has realized that he has been taken for a ride and is going straight to hell, full of ruins, cracks and fallen angels like himself.
- **Avatar (Rodoreda):** Yeah, where do you see the historical materialist transgender Afro-Latinas in all this racket? It's fucking pitiful.
- **Avatar (Doña Rogelia):** Exactly, where are the things that did not bode well? Why don't they let us speak freely? Right, Federico?
- **Avatar (Nietzsche):** I do discard myself. I don't belong to this shit. I refuse to prescribe a future of sorrow. No, wait, I don't self-disqualify myself, I don't self-disqualify myself!
- **Avatars (many):** boo.
- **Oracle:** You have to look in the trash. That's what we've learned from watching those weird sequences of the last forty years: how memory is used to boycott history. Search the trash: echoes, dull beats, glitches, pixels in rebellion, jazzy reverberations. How to understand the "deviation of meaning"? How to signal the estrangement?
- **Avatar (Kardashian):** Leave the pilgrim alone. My dear, here there are only grandmothers and dead women who feed the oracle and therefore think they are powerful. Don't pay too much attention to them.
- **Avatar (Sigourney Weaver):** We are all your descendants, the animals and the plants, the machines and the things, all together and pressed together. We are not so dead. It is because of us that you know what is to come.
- **Avatar (Patti Smith):** Yeah, thanks to some fucking carnival avatars.

- **Avatars (all):** Laughter.
- **Avatar (Cañas):** I would like to know why the pilgrim asked about the Biennial. Seriously.
- **Avatar (Sine):** Girls, it doesn't matter a damn what she answers to make a prognosis.
- **Avatar (Warburg):** Well, it does matter to me. You are not going to tell me now that we are going to discard something because it is useless for the fulfillment of the omen?
- **Oracle:** Listen to me: the government of the prediction is based on discarding what is useless for the fulfillment of the omen. Everything can be forced. In the late twenties the first biennials curated by AI appeared. They are very old things, from the beginning of the century, but they began to fill the ditches of discards.
- **Avatar (Fernando Castro):** Far out! They started with intelligent systems for the selection of artists, in museums, galleries, magazines... Even then I thought it was a joke. I told them: who will call the artists? Who will go to lunch with them or visit their studios, no matter how digital they are?
- **Avatar (Bezos):** The history of art in this century is no longer anyone's, it's just a summary put to work at a fast pace. First there were the schools, then the styles, then the trends and finally the omens. How fast everything goes, right? How time narrows!
- **Avatar of (Federici):** They want to build an inevitable time, without distance. We are all censored.
- **Avatar (Montilla):** There are things that cannot be converted into data. You have to fight to separate yourselves from the simulated time, you cannot live in it if you want to explain yourselves.
- **Avatar (Cañas):** Let's calm down and stop giving so many orders.
- **Avatar (Kristeva):** You are all such fucking skiffs.
- **Avatars:** Laughter
- **Oracle:** What Silvia means is that immersion numbs, because you live the experience twice, as life and as death. When you are inside art, inside those enveloping bubbles full of emotion, when you immerse yourself in exhibitions that are crystal balls, the flow of the imagined becomes only a calculation to make things work. Watch the Biennial video and you'll understand.

Biennial video (morphing from the oracle's face)

- **Oracle:** Yes. The distance disappears, the eye no longer sees, it only feels, being part of what it sees. There is nothing untimely. Everything seems to fit. Living and seeing, the same shit.
- **Avatar (Boa):** Nobody is contemporary anymore... that moment when you discard yourself, when you say: I don't belong to this, all this dazzles me and there's nothing to see anymore. The Biennial is garbage.
- **Avatar (Cobain):** You have to let yourself go. That is the most important thing.
- **Avatar (Buñuel):** And burn slowly in hell and with your face in your ass, ha ha ha

- **Avatar (Sontag):** Improbability is no longer an anomaly. We have to hold on to that, that's our chance.
- **Avatar (3):** You guys are getting brainy again. I don't understand what this has to do with discards.
- **Oracle:** You can only see the discards if you step away from the present. It was made clear to us by unfuture. The people who hacked *Voyager*. They taught the engineers that the past can appear as a hungry tiger hidden in the bushes. Unfuture taught us that you can disable the forecast from the past. Since the predictive Biennials, art, design, etc, were incorporated to the technical solutionism of a future that became the salvation table. Prediction is the daughter of hope, like superstition.
- **Avatar (Mrs. X):** Everything consists in the fact that the future borrowed is repayable.

(silence)

- **Avatar (2):** Oooo! Mrs. X, that sounded very deep. I don't know what the hell it means, but it doesn't sound bad....
- **Avatar (Lady X):** Well, it means that the societies of urgency must buy time in the future.
- **Oracle:** And to dress it up we have artists forced to live the inevitable, turning them into investment agents.
- **Avatar (Sagan):** But what about the rewards artists receive from the machines that manage the rush? We will only be saved if we get ahead of the problems. And the Biennial anticipates many, you can't deny it.
- **Avatar (Ángela Novo). It is not true.** Look at the psychic currents, pure extirpation of the prophylactic self. The Biennial wants nothing to do with that. We have stopped navel-gazing. The discards have illuminated our path. Perhaps they will illuminate yours as well.
- **Avatar (Kristeva):** You're all fucking schizophrenics.
- **Avatars (many):** Laughter.
- **Oracle:** Visitor, don't forget. The discards. They are all in Bòlit_PouRodó. But be careful. There are only memories there bent on twisting the course of things. That's what happens when you brush the past against the grain.

Fade the oracle to black

All but two avatars are faded to black.

- **Avatar to his neighbor():** It didn't look bad, did it?
- **Avatar replies:** No, no, it looked pretty decent. But do you think she heard anything?
- **Avatar:** I don't know, the child is progressing and learning to talk.
- **Avatar:** Yes, that's true, but these oracles are always such creatures....
- **Avatar:** By the way, did you see the game?
- **Avatar:** Yes, what interesting patterns... 72% of the passes were made...

Fade out