

*Describe an artificial, autonomous being or an autonomous machine from your everyday life and what it does. Describe your relationship to this being/artifact.*

My Home server may be a present and somehow autonomous artifact in my flat, alive at any time of day, but it is far from being the most influential “being” in my daily life. Because there is YouTube and its algorithms. It is by far not as tangible to me as the server, but it has a far-reaching influence on my daily life, as it decides what I will see from the outside world. Not only do I watch a lot of YouTube videos, but I also listen to music on YouTube. Without the algorithm, that adapts to me, it would be impossible to find new music and I would spend a lot of time creating playlists or conquering lists, tables, or CD shelves in the local music shop (or listen to the same 5 CDs my father gave me years ago). On the other hand, I tend to spend a lot of time watching suggested videos, that I would never search for, and I find myself realizing that quite late sometimes (after videos of laserdisc reviews, puking cats and the latest meme compilations). (And the one who benefits is usually not me, but a horrible, undemocratic company worth billions.)

*Describe an artistic work from the lecture with your own words:*

Autopoiesis + The Flock is an early artwork from Ken Rinaldo (remarkably interesting artist). It is a swarm of robotic arms (Flocks), build from natural and man-made materials. They react to the presence of the spectator and are able to communicate as a swarm via beep tones and modify their behavior in response to the spectator.

*What would you be interested in if you were to build an autonomous artifact?*

I am extremely interested in the debate on the moral questions of creation and control.

Do we have the right to play “God” (as an incapable, simple individual acting undemocratically on its own)? Up to what point do we have control over our algorithms and machines? Do not all human interventions in nature fail catastrophically because of the sheer complexity of our world?

How algorithmic controlled is our life at the moment and how will it be in the future? Will there be a new utopian mankind of commons or a dystopian, postdemocratic, Matrix like place of stupidity and slavery? Will we be able to combine the power of “real” life and artificial life?

To put these questions up for discussion I would build a device where a real life being, is in its behavior, controlled by a machine or algorithm, which on the other hand evolves over time. For this I found the GROWTH PATTERN installation quiet interesting as a starting point, but not quiet thought to the end (as I have understood it). I would like to see plants or other simple life forms, grow in shapes defined by an algorithm (without cutting something like they did in GROWTH PATTERN) and observe the evolution of these forms. Can the algorithm make the life forms “better” or will they lead them to death? Insects or simple swarms directed by algorithmic prediction would be also interesting.