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EXPO - Artists and robots at the Grand Palais, can the robot be an artist?

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© Faces in point clouds, 2017, © Ikam / Fléri © Adagp, Paris 2018

Impossible today to escape robots or artificial intelligence, especially in the entertainment. What about the world of art? This is what he wanted to explore the Grand Palais with his new exhibition *Artists and Robots* . Through some

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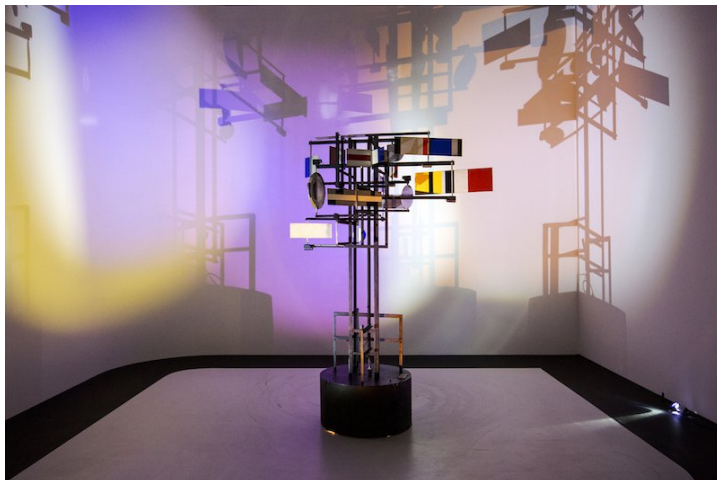
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forty works, some of which have been specially created for the occasion, the museum examines the evolution of the robot and its relation to the world of art. An exhibition between past, present and future that gives us pause on our world jostled by technology.

The robot: a machine to create

In its first part, the exhibition focuses first on the **elemental robot** , " *one who has no imagination, and who acts according to the will of the artist who operates them* " , explains the curator Laurence Bertrand Dorléac. The public is thus invited to discover the very first artistic robot created by Nicolas Schöffer in 1956. " *This robot is invented at the very moment when scientists are beginning to talk about artificial intelligence, ie all the theories and techniques aimed at achieving processes that simulate human intelligence* " , adds Laurence Bertrand Dorléac.

Nicolas Schöffer, considered one of the pioneers of the art of robotics, laid the foundations of this new era by declaring: " *From now on the artist no longer creates a work, he creates creation* " . The various works on display thus give us the opportunity to contemplate the mechanism of robots' creativity.



Nicolas Schöffer, *CYSP 1* , 1956 © Photo Aldo Paredes for the Rmn-Grand Palais, 2018 © Adagp,

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We discover the famous robot Nicolas Schöffer, *CYSP 1*, " *the first cybernetic sculpture in the history of art* ." This sculpture contains an electronic brain that responds to variations in sound, light intensity and color.

As for *Robot Art* realized in 2017 by Leonel Moura, it gives us to see a set of robots making large paintings. They have a "small" brain that executes algorithms by operating from simple rules copied from the behavior patterns observed in an ant colony.



Robot Art © Leonel Moura / photo Rmn-GP - Thomas Granovsky

The robot: a programmed work

Little by little, the robot disappears and gives way to forms generated by new techniques. The computer gives birth to forms, to images, which metamorphose according to their will - **thus questioning the authority of the artist** who delegates to the machine a part of its power.

Raquel Kogan's immersive *Reflexão # 2 is provocative* . Parallel light lines made of numbers move slowly across the floor of the space. Everyone can enter this digital space, and thus become part of the work of art.



Reflexão # 2 by Raquel Kogan © Photo by Aldo Paredes for Rmn-Grand Palais, 2018

Another work is particularly intriguing. For the exhibition, artist Jacopo Baboni Schilingi created *Argo*, a generative and interactive musical composition. The installation **reacts to the real-time breathing of the composer**, who has been wearing a breathing sensor since June 2017, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. His breathing is based on musical trajectories written by the composition and disturbs them. Every day the music is different and recomposes itself to infinity.



© *Untitled*, 2018, Peter Kloger, © Photo Aldo Paredes for the RMN-Grand Palais, 2018

Solicited throughout the exhibition, the visitor is also invited to cross **a computer-generated labyrinth** . This installation created by Peter Kloger for the Grand Palais allows us to reflect on the "*optical illusions and the hypnotic and manipulative qualities of the new hypercomplex technologies* " .

The robot: at the time of emancipation

" *Today we wonder if an artificial intelligence can create from scratch and even if it can have a conscience, even if it can give eternal life. This dream of seeing artificial creatures capable of surpassing or even replacing us is as old as the world. (...) Could the artist be doubled by the machine?* " , Asks Laurence Bertrand Dorléac in this third part.



The interactive video installation, *Portrait on the fly* by Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau shows for example **a swarm of virtual flies buzzing on a screen** and forming the silhouette of the viewers and viewers in real time, but the portrait never reaches a state stable. The artists here question the cult of the selfie in particular.

Another surprising work: a sci-fi short film devised by Oscar Scharp but written entirely by the artificial intelligence of a robot named Benjamin - who fed and shelled a dozen sci-fi scenarios to create a completely surrealistic story.

Can the robot supplant the artist? " *Until proven otherwise, no* ", chooses to respond Laurence Bertrand Dorléac. " *The artist is always on board and only delegates to his robot a part of his power. That his robot remains a slave* " .

An immersion that shows the importance of the robot as a co-author of the work. For all that, "*Will he make us more human, more artist or more robot?*". The question remains open.

Exhibition *Artists & Robots*

Grand Palais

From April 5 to July 9, 2018

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