

Datas {The Data and the Sovereign}

Events:

10.9.2025 – Data in Artistic Practice: Errors, Glitches, and Consequences
Izolyatsia ► Online
This online discussion brings together the collectives RYBN.ORG and Sfera, along with Ukrainian lawyer and researcher Artem Taranowski, to examine the role of error, glitch, and unintended consequence in data-driven artistic practices.

1.10.2025 – Sfera and the Myth of the Techno-Utopian Vision
Izolyatsia ► Online
In this public talk, the Sfera collective presents Anthrome, a room-scale audiovisual installation simulating a hyperreal, reactive biosphere. The project investigates techno-utopian “exit” fantasies — such as Biosphere 2 and seasteading — revealing how closed systems often reproduce control, surveillance, and failure under the illusion of autonomy. The discussion will delve into the transformation of sensor data, the fragility of isolation, and the legacy of the “Californian ideology” in shaping these contemporary visions.

8.10.2025 – The Accidental Wisdom with Mark Cinkevich
FAMU, Smetanovo nábřeží 1012/2, Prague 1
The lecture examines how images of science are weaponised to project state power. By viewing the crime laboratory as a cinematic stage set, Mark Cinkevich will analyse archival newsreels to reverse-engineer the props, equipment, and visual cues that project scientific legitimacy. Rooted in the key method behind the film Terror Element (2025), created together with Anna Engelhardt, he will uncover how science is staged to construct narratives of authority framed as objective truth.

the Data and the Sovereign

22.10.2025 – The Data and the Sovereign: Artistic Explorations and Collective Reading with Aron Lodi & Mark Cinkevich
Distillery, Pekařská 436/78, 602 00 Brno-střed
This event features artists Mark Cinkevich and Áron Lodi, who will each give an introduction to their current research and artistic practice, followed by a collective reading of selected fiction and non-fiction texts. The session will explore themes such as data sovereignty, surveillance, digital imperialism, and the politics of the body and data. Designed as an informal and participatory gathering, the format invites open discussion and exchange with the audience.

28.10.2025 – Fictional Subjects–Surveilled Selves: Participative Workshop, Collective Reading & Book Presentation with Olga Goriunova, Mark Cinkevich & Aron Lodi
Goethe-Institut, Masarykovo nábřeží 224/32 110 00 Prague
The workshop, led by Mark Cinkevich, introduces open-source tools for investigating digital infrastructures. Participants will trace how personal data moves through networks and explore how this circulation supports systems of surveillance and control. After the workshop, Aron Lodi presents his research and leads a group reading on themes like data sovereignty, surveillance, and digital imperialism. The programme concludes with cultural theorist Olga Goriunova introducing her upcoming book Ideal Subjects: The Abstract People of AI, which examines how AI constructs fictional yet powerful models of human identity.

10.6.2026 – Opening of the exhibition DATAS: The Data and the Sovereign
Galerie Rudolfinum, Alšovo nábřeží 12, 110 00 Prague 1

The programme will continue to grow in the coming months:



DATAS: The Data and the Sovereign is an international art and research programme that brings together artists, theorists, and technologists to explore how digital infrastructures, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic governance shape personal and political sovereignty. Through residencies, exhibitions, and collective inquiry, the project fosters critical engagement with urgent issues such as surveillance capitalism, technological extractivism, and the erosion of democratic agency. Five artists — Aron Lodi, Mark Cinkevich, Jelena Visković, Leon Sahiti, and Tamara Kametani — along with three collectives — Critical Tech Group, fantastic little splash, and Sfera — are currently in residence across Prague (CZ), Tallinn (EST), Ljubljana (SLO), and online for Ukraine. Their work is supported by a group of eight internationally recognized experts: Vladan Joler, Bogna Konior, RYBN.org, Viktoria Ivanova, Tiziana Terranova, Kim Albrecht, Olga Goriunova, and Anna Ehrenstein. The DATAS programme runs from now until the end of 2026, featuring a series of public events, presentations, and exhibitions.

CURATORIAL CONCEPT BY
LÍVIA NOLASCO-RÓZSÁS

Computation and automation are reshaping global political dynamics, challenging established sovereignties and necessitating a fundamental shift in our understanding of politics. The rise of algorithmic influence on our decisions based on rapidly evolving AI technologies prompts questions about preserving personal and national sovereignties in a post-surveillance information society, and the role of art in reflecting this shift. Establishing technological sovereignty becomes essential for preserving democracy, countering the trend of individuals being treated as mere users and commodities by the extractivist tech industry, while autocratic tendencies disguised as protection of the sovereign state are one the rise. It is a topical question whether, and how, we define our personal and national sovereignties in the era of surveillance capitalism and technofeudalism. And it implies others, such as: How shall we delegate decision-making to partly or entirely automated, statistically-driven software capable of machine learning, while keeping an acceptable degree of self-determination intact? How can digital disobedience—such as data camouflage or misdirection—be mobilized as a viable strategy of resistance in an age of ubiquitous surveillance? What forms of sovereignty are possible when borders, governance, and identities are increasingly encoded in and administered by computational infrastructures? How do algorithmic systems reconfigure the emotional terrain of public discourse, and what agency remains when affect is weaponized through synthetic voices and inauthentic actors? How do we confront the spectral remnants—corrupted data, partial archives, invisible subjects—left behind by surveillance regimes that target marginalized communities under the guise of security? How do we confront the spectral remnants—corrupted data, partial archives, invisible subjects—left behind by surveillance regimes that target marginalized communities under the guise of security? What does bodily and technological sovereignty mean in a future

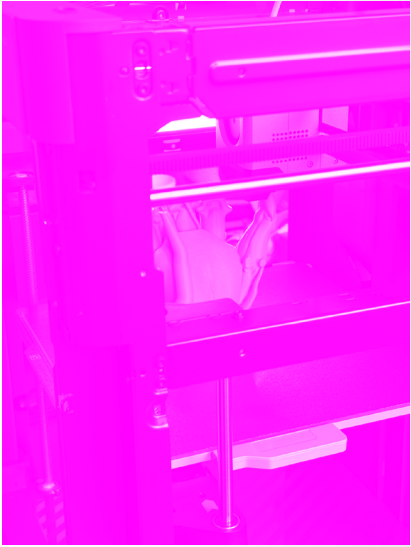
where care, control, and automation are indistinguishably entangled? How might fictional geographies, error zones, and haunted datasets function as counter-territories—imagined or real—against the extractive logic of digital empires? We believe artistic projects can foster awareness and drive shifts in the relationship between technology and power. We invite artists to engage with information technologies as integral to society rather than as mere tools. The Data and the Sovereign was conceived as an assembly of people, artworks, artifacts, and texts that enable experiments of rewriting the manifold systems of sovereignty.

Just as beast and sovereign¹ are above the law, so too are today's rapidly advancing information technologies. The new opportunities for statistical analysis afforded by big data, network externality, self-produced online traces, user profiling, micro-targeting, and real-time supercomputing leave the average citizen with little hope of directly and imminently grasping the 'social reality'. At this point, it seems clear that the establishment of technological sovereignty is the very basis for maintaining democracy as we know or imagine it. People who use information technology are increasingly defined as users, and ultimately, as the product itself, contributing monetizable data and even labour to the profit of tech companies. Though not a new idea, the option of making self-determined choices that impact and shape both individual

technologies, and the social and economic processes in which they are embedded, is still more wish than reality. Artistic projects produced and presented as part of DATAS aim to raise awareness and foster a much-needed shift in how we understand the entangled relationship between technology and power. They engage critically with the entangled dynamics of technology and power, offering speculative and research-driven responses to our algorithmically mediated reality. These works propose future-oriented political imaginaries that confront pressing global challenges—from the ecological crisis and AI governance to disinformation and the erosion of sovereignty. Through diverse media forms including film, interactive installation, and web-based interventions, they adopt strategies such as reimagining decision-making from fictional futures, repurposing technological infrastructures, and reclaiming data agency. Some construct immersive environments or digital counter-geographies that resist surveillance and centralized control; others expose the emotional architectures of propaganda, or critique the mythologies of self-sustaining techno-utopias. Collectively, these projects function as world-building exercises—speculative, resistant, and materially grounded—imagining ethical alternatives to dominant sociotechnical systems. Openness, commoning and common sense-making is part of the curatorial method of DATAS, ensured by an open call for artists and constant exchange between the partners, invited experts, and the curator of the project. The residency programme encourages applicants to explore sovereignty in relation to contemporary information technologies and to envision how these concepts can be expanded. Rather than seeking a single answer, artists are welcome to shed light on diverse perspectives and solutions. During the residencies, participants will develop artworks that engage with the project's core questions. Existing projects may also be further developed within this framework. The outcomes will be presented at the hosting institutions and may be included in a final

exhibition at Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague. The residencies provide artists working in the field of contemporary art from the Central and Eastern European, and Southern Caucasian region with the opportunity to live and work in Ljubljana, Tallinn or Prague for a period of two to three months, or to accomplish their residency online. DATAS aims at catalysing artistic exploration with engaging experts. The resident artists will have the opportunity to collaborate with theoreticians, artists, and scientists who play a multifaceted role. Their input shall not be limited to mere technical guidance but extends to sparking dialogues, igniting debates, and thought-provoking discussions. They become catalysts for the development of artworks that contribute to the broader discourse on art, technology, and societal transformation. They are not just advisors; they are collaborators who help shape the artistic journey and amplify the impact of our residency project. DATAS goes against the process of knowledge disintegrating into information with the presentation of artworks, accessible discourses, and a publication that gathers various approaches to the subject. In DATAS curatorial work and artistic production catalysed by the support of experts, inevitably omits sheer representation of reality and turns to the constructivist approach of building new worlds. These worlds are models and emulations of life-worlds, as well as prefigurations, or prototypes of possible future ones. DATAS is an assembly convened to amplify marginalized voices from Central and Eastern Europe, and Southern Caucasus that reflect the relationship between the self, technology, and power.

Lívia Nolasco-Rózsás is a curator, art historian, and educator active in contemporary and media art since 2006. She has curated exhibitions at institutions including ZKM, the Nam June Paik Art Center, and the Ludwig Museum. Her work explores planetary computation, surveillance, and the virtual condition, informed by research conducted through the Beyond Matter project (2019–2023) in collaboration with institutions like Centre Pompidou and Aalto University. She currently curates ARE YOU FOR REAL, a platform on digital world-making run by IFA, lectures at University College London, and contributes to the Paik Replayed research project at ECAL Lausanne.



ARON LODI
► RESIDENCY AT MEETFACORY & GOETHE-INSTITUT, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

My project focuses on the recent constitutional amendment in Hungary that outlaws public events by LGBTQ+ communities. This new law also allows authorities to use facial recognition technology to identify attendees. This is not just another effort to further subjugate queer people and penalize support for LGBTQ rights; it is also part of a series of long-standing tactics and policy changes designed to secure the technocratic power of the state through surveillance. Within the framework of this residency, my goal is to understand the infrastructure of the Hungarian state's surveillance system and "safety policies" deployed on/against its own civilians. The imperial boomerang is in full swing. Through this lens, I'm observing and deconstructing Hungary's political opacity and its shifting position on the West–East spectrum, while exploring what happens to the surveilled individual and their data under such regimes. In other words, I aim to highlight the vulnerability of corrupt authoritarian regimes to create a narrative in which individuals or collectives can resist policing and surveillance. The work builds on an analysis of the new law by examining the material infrastructures and the pathways through which data travels from the surveilled subject to the authorities. The finished work will consist of several sculptural pieces accompanied by a sound piece. The installation acts as a forensic reconstruction of the actual physical infrastructure of such emergent surveillance technologies in Hungary, juxtaposing it with the abstracted nature of the data that is carried through it.



Aron Lodi (b. 1996, HU) lives and works in The Hague. He holds an MFA from the Dirty Art Department from Sandberg Institute (2023). His works have been featured in various international group shows, including at Torula (Győr), Loods6 (Amsterdam), Promise of Kneropy (Bratislava), Jedna Dva Tri Gallery (Prague), LAM (Budapest), and Vunu Gallery (Kosice). Lodi works across a wide range of disciplines from sculpture, image-making, and writing to publishing and curatorial collaborations. His practice embraces the coalescence of horror stories and emancipatory possibilities to create multi-layered narratives about individual and collective agency in the face of contemporary crises.

MARK CINKEVICH
► RESIDENCY AT MEETFACORY & GOETHE-INSTITUT, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



The project I am working on looks into how Russia has deployed a sophisticated CCTV network in Belarus and synchronized it with its own data-processing infrastructure. Since the escalation of the war on Ukraine in 2022, Belarus has been turned into a launchpad for Russian attacks. This became possible because Russia has established control over both the visual and digital infrastructures of the country. By controlling what visual data is captured and how it is processed, Russia gains direct operational access to Belarusian governance. Such control over visual and digital infrastructures not only enables the coordination of military logistics and strategic sites, but also integrates Belarus into Russia's systems of war-making. I focus on mapping these newly constructed systems, from CCTV grids, data centers, and communication channels to the physical sites in which they are embedded. What emerges is not simply a network of surveillance, but a regime that dissolves state sovereignty from within. By wiring state functions into

Russian infrastructures, the very operations of governance become an extension of external power. Sovereignty, then, is hollowed out through the everyday circulation of data and images. The project seeks to grasp this process by tracing how the system is built and maintained, since only a precise understanding of its functioning would allow one to see the threat it poses and begin to imagine strategies of resistance. During my residency, I am developing a video game that enables players to explore and experience the inner workings of data-processing and control systems. The game will be accompanied by a detailed map that reconstructs the full architecture of these systems. It will be available to the public in June 2026 as part of an exhibition at Galerie Rudolfinum.

Mark Cinkevich is a researcher and artist whose work explores how infrastructures and visual technologies organize power. His work investigates infrastructural coloniality, operational images, and visual monstrosity. He works with text and moving image to track how material flows organise violence and condition the possibilities of resistance. His works have been presented

internationally, including at transmediale, Berlin; BFI London Film Festival; Ars Electronica, Linz; Henie Onstad Triennial for Photography and New Media, Oslo; Lithuanian National Gallery of Art, Vilnius; Biennial TEA Tenerife, Santa Cruz; and Aksioma Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana.



¹ Referencing Jacques Derrida's two volume publication The Beast and the Sovereign that explores the persistent association of bestiality or animality with sovereignty. In our case the beast is replaced with a threatening contemporary force: the feral flow of data.