



MACHINE VIOLENCE

May 5 – 31, 2023

4 Bond Street NYC 10012
Opening reception Friday, May 5 6-8 pm

**Chando Ao
Damjanski**

Huntrezz

Gracelee Lawrence

Miltos Manetas

Eva and Franco Mattes

Jennifer and Kevin McCoy

Jen Catron and Paul Outlaw

Eddo Stern



Jennifer & Kevin McCoy, Horror Chase, 2002

Postmasters 5.0 is a moving target - our next exhibition will occupy a spectacular ground floor space on Bond Street in downtown Manhattan.

Machine Violence is a show for this moment, a visually stunning exhibition of topical relevance. It will bring together works in all media from software to painting. Several historic projects by digital pioneers (McCoys, Mattesses, Manetas) will be presented alongside current works of the new generation (Huntrezz, Damjanski).

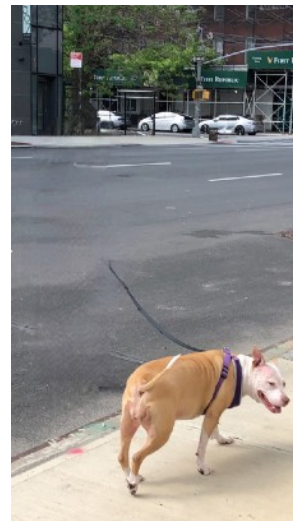
Machine violence invariably fosters fear and disruption on an individual or societal scale. As artworks in this exhibition attest, it is left to humans - artists, in this case - to redirect, subvert, and/or transcend the literal narrative.

Fitting the current moment of intense uncertainty along the art-technology axis, this show can potentially triangulate two significant museum exhibitions currently on view in New York: *Signals* at MoMA and *Refigured* at The Whitney Museum.

The exhibition location, a former carpentry shop with skylights, brick walls and a 20 foot-tall ceiling, will be cleaned but otherwise left “as is” - raw - freeing the artists’ projections, screens, sculptures, prints and paintings from the homogeneity of a white box. Art can survive anywhere. Joining a salient history of co-opting raw spaces for art: Gavin Brown’s Harlem space, Triple Candie, The Project, Sculpture Center - we will continue this countering flow at the moment of extreme showroom effect.



Eva & Franco Mattes, Biennale.PY, *Perpetual Self Dis/Infecting Machine* (2001-2003)



Damjanski, *Post Human Dog - Einstein*, 2020

Works in the show:

The exhibition centerpiece will be ***Horror Chase (2002)*** by **Jennifer and Kevin McCoy**, who have worked collaboratively since early 2000 (Kevin McCoy is also widely recognized for creating the first art NFT in 2014). Newly remastered into 4K, *Horror Chase* is based on the climactic chase sequence from the film, “*Evil Dead 2*”, re-enacted on a custom stage set. Each shot is digitized individually and processed by a custom computer program that selects clips randomly. The chase becomes a continuously variable incarnation of an endless - and futile - escape attempt. The images are projected on a cinematic scale, and the computer hardware is installed in a black briefcase which forms a part of the installation. Given the recent explosion of interest in generative art, the McCoy’s piece may be one of the earliest examples of algorithmically created cinematic footage - a software/hardware combination of object and projection.

Eva and Franco Mattes are the notorious Italian artist's team working with internet and digital media since the late 1990s. One of their most iconic works, ***Biennale.PY, Perpetual Self Dis/Infecting Machine (2001-2003)*** is an aesthetically alluring, customized computer encased in plexiglass, with all parts exposed. It only has two software programs installed: the virus that the artists made in 2001 for the *Venice Biennale*, and the “Norton Utilities” antivirus patch. The computer is in a perpetual mode of being infected, then disinfected, then rebooted; a machine locked forever in a fight between good and evil.

There will be three early key works of machinima in the show: **Miltos Manetas' *Flame* (1997)** of Lara Croft committing suicide; **Eddo Stern's** masterwork ***Vietnam Romance* (2003)** where key war scenes are recreated through video games like "Grand Theft Auto" and "MASH"; and **Eva and Franco Mattes' *Freedom* (2010)**, a haunting montage of death scenes from iconic first-person shooter games.

Damjanski will present his app, ***Bye, Bye Camera* (2020)**, the AI-powered camera for the post-human era, which automatically removes people from any picture someone takes. The tool digitally detects and erases body shapes, but keeps human traces like shadows. The app will be shown along with photographic prints of ***Post Human Dog* (2020)**, his pandemic-time series of dogs with no owners.

Gracelee Lawrence will present two large scale, 3D-printed sculptures of fragmented, battered bodies.

Jen Catron and Paul Outlaw are making a lamp, a huge, functioning, fruit flies - killing zapper encased in plexiglass.

Chando Ao's kinetic sculpture in the show will be a computer driven chair/cradle for grownups that belies its mean and ominous torture device look, to soothingly rock the sitter.

Huntrezz will show - as either AR or video - a series of Instagram filters that recast the user as a series of armored, warrior-like characters.

Also on view will be **Miltos Manetas** still life paintings of computer components from 1998-2010. A mid-show performance is planned where Manetas will, via WhatsApp and a local assistant, paint a still life remotely from Bogotá.

Bonus content:

Today, the lightning-speed development of machine learning models, text-to-image generators and sophisticated, data-scraping AI bots create an extreme mix of reactions, from radiant techno-optimism to alarmist visions of the end of humanity.

We prompted ChatGBT to write a short essay about machine violence in visual arts. We got a passable but pedestrian text that could've been written by a diligent high schooler, complete with several predictable references. There are holes in computational intelligence. To quote Nick Cave: "AI has nothing to transcend".

AI essay about machine violence in visual arts:

The relationship between humans and machines has been a topic of fascination for artists for centuries. In recent years, the concept of machine violence has emerged as a popular theme in visual arts. This refers to the depiction of machines or technology as violent or aggressive, often with a sense of danger or menace. The use of machines and technology in this way raises important questions about the nature of human-machine interaction and the potential impact of technological advancements on society.

*One example of the use of machine violence in visual arts is in the genre of science fiction. In films such as *The Terminator* and *The Matrix*, machines are portrayed as having the ability to dominate and control humans, often leading to violent confrontations between man and machine. In these films, machines are depicted as cold, unfeeling entities that lack empathy and are driven solely by their programming. This creates a sense of unease and fear in the viewer, as they contemplate the potential consequences of developing technology that could one day turn against us.*

*Another example of the use of machine violence in visual arts is in the realm of video games. In games such as *Grand Theft Auto* and *Call of Duty*, players are often required to engage in violent acts using a range of weapons and machines, from guns to tanks and aircraft. While these games are often seen as harmless entertainment, they raise important questions about the desensitization of violence in our society and the potential for technology to be used as a tool for aggression.*

However, not all depictions of machine violence in visual arts are negative. Some artists have explored the theme in a more nuanced way, highlighting the complex relationship between humans and machines. For example, in the work

of artist Theo Jansen, machines are portrayed as beautiful, graceful creatures that move in a way that mimics the natural world. These machines, known as Strandbeests, are constructed from simple materials such as plastic tubing and are powered by wind, rather than electricity. Jansen's work invites us to contemplate the relationship between technology and nature, and to consider the potential for machines to enhance, rather than dominate, our lives.

In conclusion, the theme of machine violence in visual arts is a complex and multifaceted one, reflecting both our fascination with and our fear of the power of technology. While some depictions of machine violence may be seen as cautionary tales, warning us of the potential consequences of unchecked technological advancement, others offer a more nuanced view of the relationship between humans and machines. Ultimately, the role of visual arts in exploring this theme is to encourage us to consider the impact of technology on our lives and to engage in a broader conversation about the ethical implications of technological advancement.



4 Bond street



Office at 4 Bond street

After 38 years in East Village, Soho, Chelsea and Tribeca, Postmasters Gallery closed our Tribeca space in August 2022 and entered a nomadic model of a roving gallery.

We find locations to fit particular exhibition, in New York City and beyond (two shows are planned for Los Angeles in the fall). This is our third show as Postmasters 5.0.