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PRESS RELEASE | ONLINE EXHIBITION

DO OUR CHIMERAS MOST RESEMBLE US?

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Concluding a multi-year collaboration exploring the intersections between artistic creation and generative artificial intelligence, the Centre Pompidou and KADIST, non-profit contemporary art organization, present an online exhibition of video artworks.

"Do our chimeras most resemble us?" follows "L'avenir n'est plus ce qu'il était" and "Apophénies, interruptions : Artistes et intelligences artificielles au travail", organized in 2023 and 2024.

In *Les Misérables* (1862), Victor Hugo meditates on the contradictions of human nature, suggesting that, "Nos chimères sont ce qui nous ressemble le mieux" — our chimeras are what most resemble us. A mythological beast, the chimera is a composite creature stitched from desire, fear, fantasy, and contradiction. In Hugo's view, a figure for the inner life of humanity in modern society, for everything we project, suppress, and cannot quite name. For this exhibition, this character is revived as we attempt to understand the presence of large language models and generative AI systems as contemporary chimeras — monstrous hybrids assembled from billions of human traces, spliced archives, and the cold mathematics of pattern and prediction.

Like the ancient beast composed of incompatible bodies, these systems fuse fragments into something that persuades us of its coherence, its presence, its voice. They speak with our words, recombine our histories, mimic our affect — and in doing so, surface a disquieting possibility: that what appears synthesized may in fact be a vivid reflection of ourselves.

The works gathered here form a contemporary bestiary — not a catalogue of mythical creatures, but a survey of hybrid image-systems. Here, the monsters are procedural—made of datasets, of accumulation, of images begetting images. While not all of what's included in these works is generated, much of what circulates on the screen emerges from the vast archive of visual culture, recombined by systems trained on our collective image production. It resembles us because it is composed of images made by us, for us.

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