Algorithmic Bias
Curated by Bob Bicknell-Knight
Zach Blas, Joy Buolamwini , Bob Bicknell-Knight, Jacob Ciocci, Ami Clarke, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Stephanie Dinkins, Ben Grosser, Joel Holmberg, Esther Hovers, Claire Jervert, JODI and Lynn Hershman Leeson
30th September – 10th October 2021
[Senne], Rue de la Senne 19, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Algorithmic Bias is an exhibition concerned with the systems and structures embedded within the internet of things, many of which were and continue to be created with an in-built bias. Algorithms have become a common tool used in the framework of social media platforms, created by unknown coders, reinforcing social biases of race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. The works in the exhibition explore and critique the procedurally generated invisible rules that control our online and offline lives.

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In a newly built city, glittering in the early morning light of a dying sun, I weave in between crowds of tourists. Every day more of them appear, transfixed by the appearance of the citadel, an incredibly tall and thin building that stretches high into the sky.

The citadel was built over the course of a year, alongside the city that surrounded it. Its creation was swift, primarily made from concrete and, in doing so, quickly depleted the world's supply of sand.

Small, incredibly conspicuous, permanent surveillance towers had been built on every street. By some, they were seen as overt forms of hostile architecture, restricting any and all acts of rebellion. Others, who lived and worked in the citadel, believed in the towers and their embedded technologies, helping the city's civilians to live a happier, healthier lifestyle.

You see, each tower was equipped with high tech CCTV equipment, connected to a complex algorithm that detects abnormal behaviour within an observed environment. These vision-based surveillance techniques detect and classify intrusion, loitering, and violence, among other, more militant, behaviour.

I used to wonder what those terms actually meant, in the world of the real, detached from their original spawn points; overtly clinical board rooms and glass office spaces. I guess, a more important question might be who, then, is tasked with allocating examples of such behaviour? Examples that will train the algorithm to detect these occurrences quickly and swiftly on a regular basis, continuing to keep the city safe.

Algorithms, and the process of machine learning in particular, require a huge amount of data, labelled and tagged. To identify certain intrusive or violent behaviour, machines need to have their vision refined, being fed massive quantities of manually annotated imagery to efficiently identify patterns. For some time, low paid human beings have been used, crowdsourced through companies who employ a global workforce to annotate endless datasets. These growing collections of data are then used by companies in different platforms and programmes around the world.
Some of these temporary employees live on the outskirts of the city, housed in vast, hive like structures, buried beneath the ground. They, like you and I, live and work every day of their lives, toiling under the weight of the world whilst dreaming of avarice and the pure potentiality of what might have been.

Who then, can be trusted to teach the machines, when human beings are both born with, and taught to have, an in-built bias? We are intricate creatures, living highly charged, emotional lives. These workers are merely one layer of an increasingly complicated stack, filled with interlocking grids, connecting digital and physical beings to create a cohesive, evolving, cybernetic organism.

Generally, I keep my head down when near the citadel, afraid of what worlds reside within this fortress like apparition. It is, as they say, better to be a toad hidden under a stone than a butterfly crushed beneath it.

Unlike citizens of the city, tourists are permitted to come and go as they please, unobstructed by a complex social credit system that prevents many from leaving this concrete abyss. As a citizen everything you do is tracked and recorded, from the purchases you make to being reprimanded at work. The local government works with public and private companies to maintain a constantly shifting database. Residents are ranked on a varied scale, determining whether they're able to eat at certain restaurants, socialise in public, or travel outside of the city.
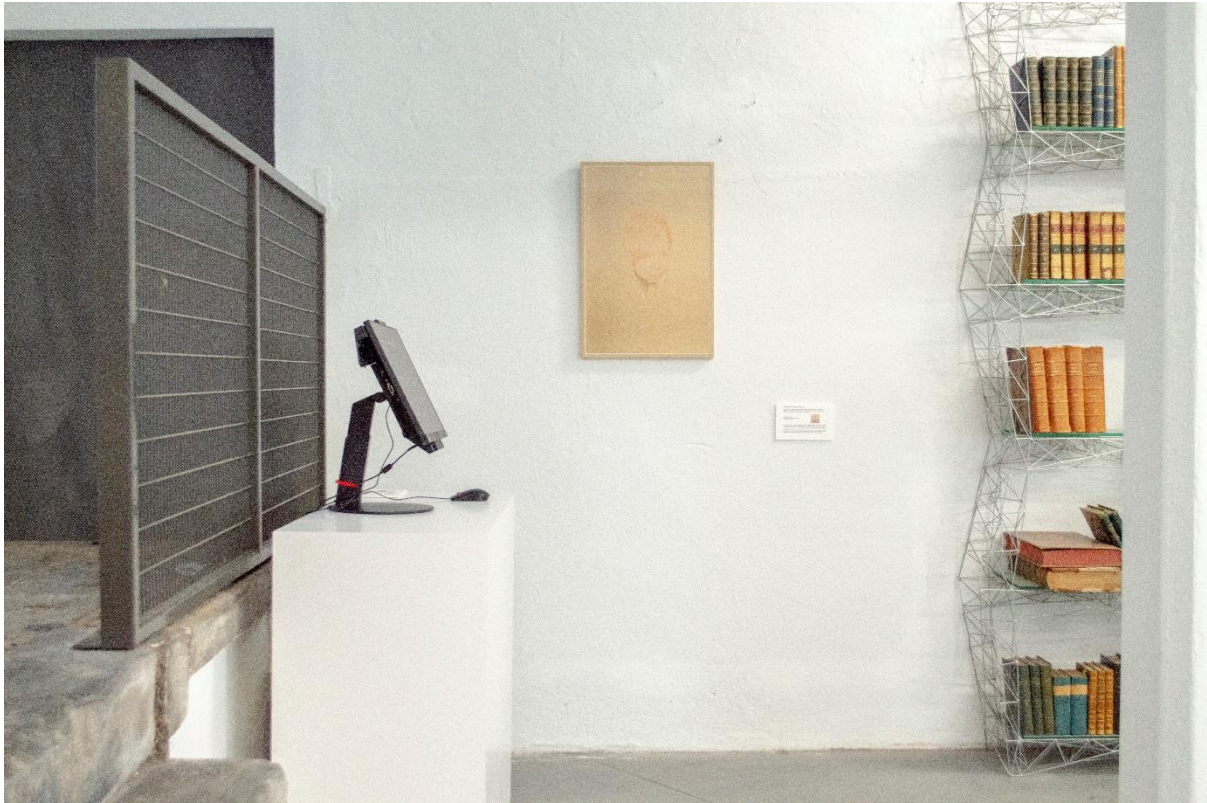
There have been times in the past where I've been flagged by the system, mistaken for someone else of similar age, stature, or race. It has affected my overall ranking, but if I continue to work hard, and prove that I'm a happy cog, I'll be able to up my score and escape this city.
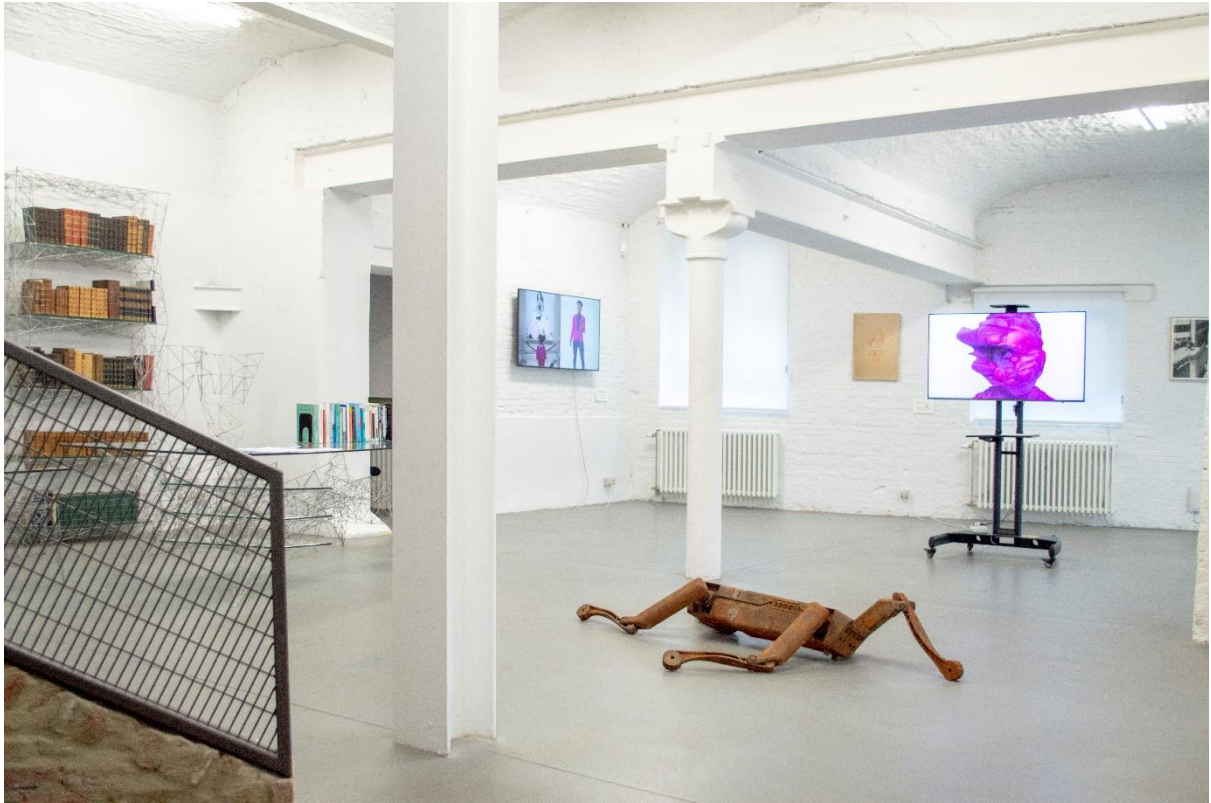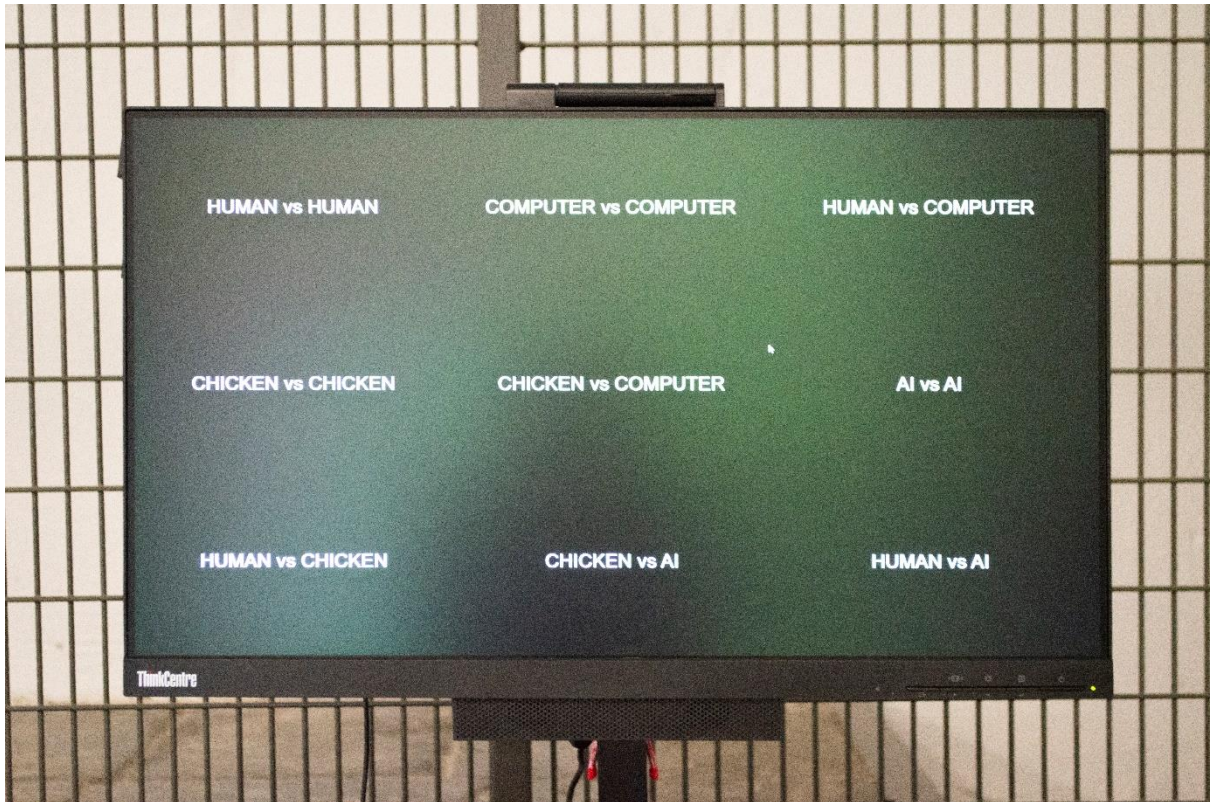
Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

JODI
OXO, 2018
Video, computer, monitor, mouse
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Claire Jervert
BINA48 2, 2015
Conte and chalk on Ingres paper
55 x 43 cm
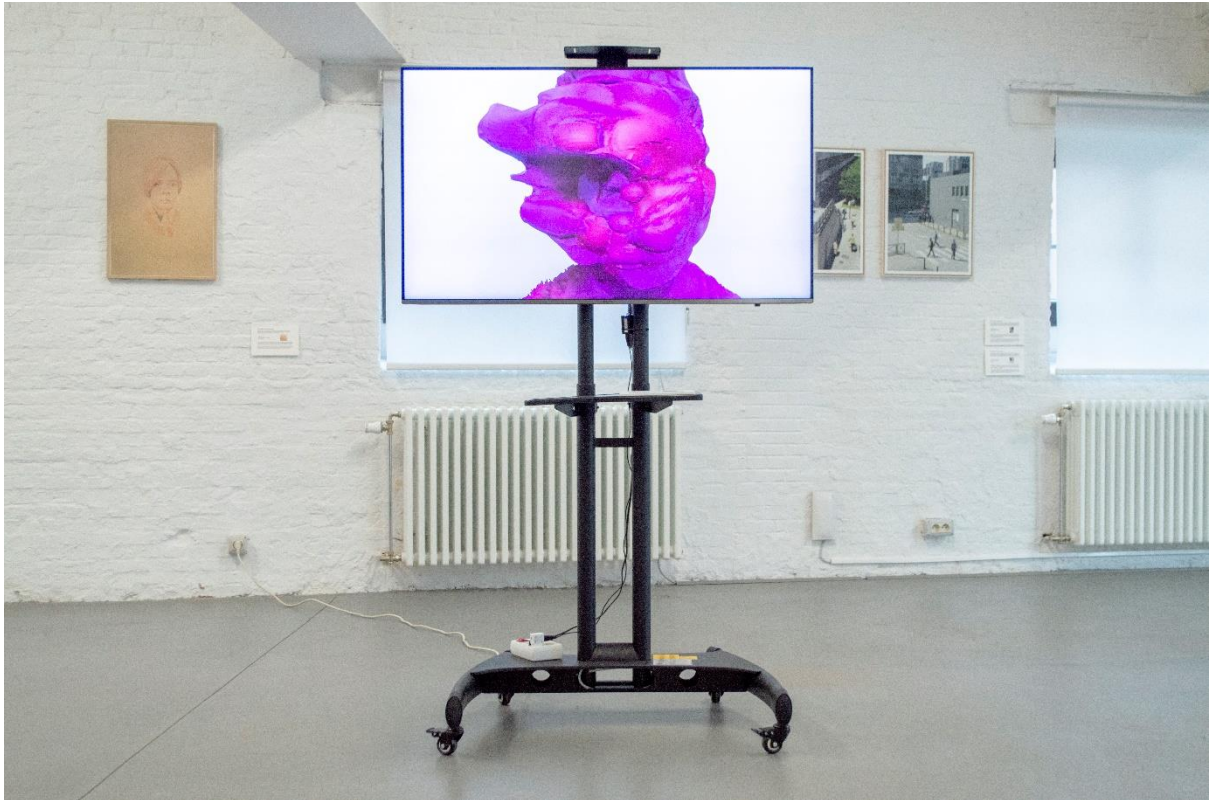Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Joy Buolamwini
AI, Ain't I A Woman?, 2018
Single channel video
3 min 32 sec
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Claire Jervert
BINA48 1, 2015
Conte and chalk on Ingres paper
55 x 43 cm
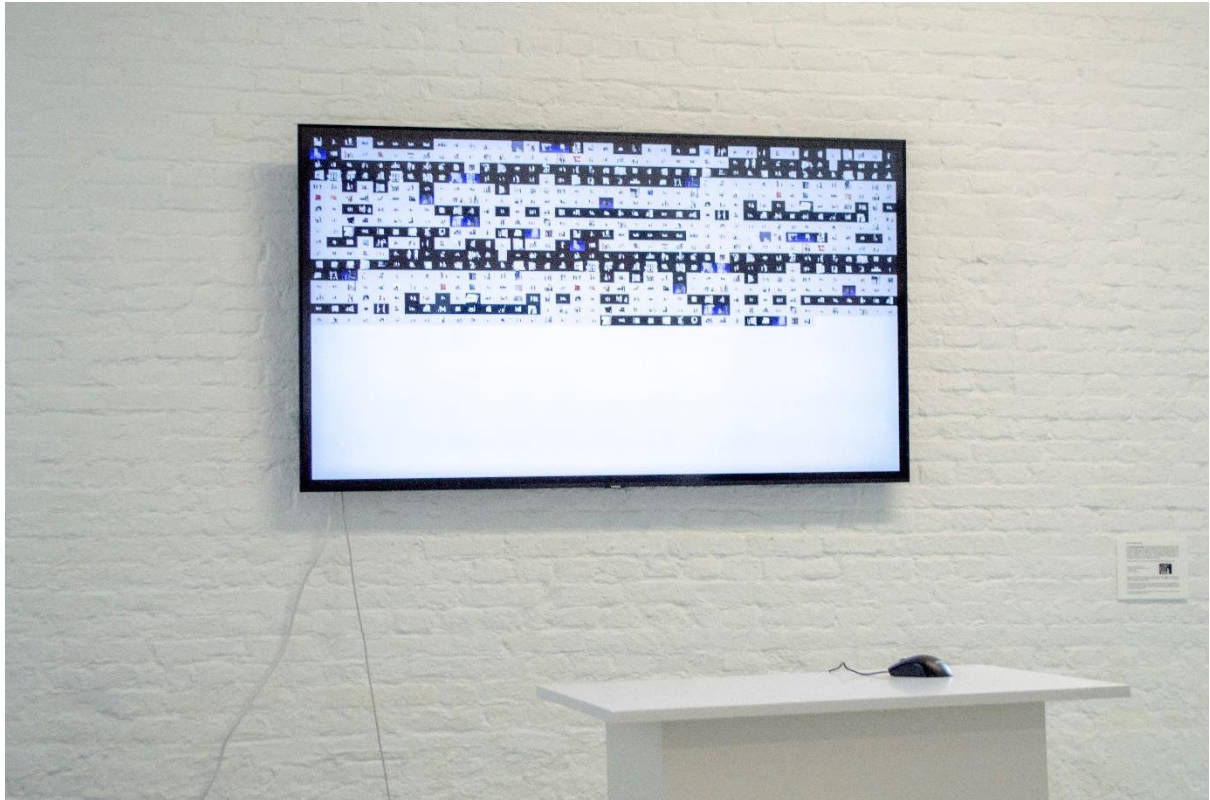Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Esther Hovers
False Positives, Overview G, 2015
Inkjet Print on Steinbach
55.5 x 42 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Esther Hovers
False Positives, Overview H, 2015
Inkjet Print on Steinbach
55.5 x 42 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Zach Blas
Facial Weaponization Communiqué: Fag Face , 2012
HD video
8 min 10 sec
Courtesy of the artist

Zach Blas
Facial Weaponization Communiqué: Fag Face , 2012
HD video
8 min 10 sec
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Esther Hovers
False Positives, Anomaly 8, 2015
Inkjet Print on Steinbach
22.5 x 16 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Esther Hovers
False Positives, Anomaly 6, 2015
Inkjet Print on Steinbach
22.5 x 16 cm
Courtesy of the artist
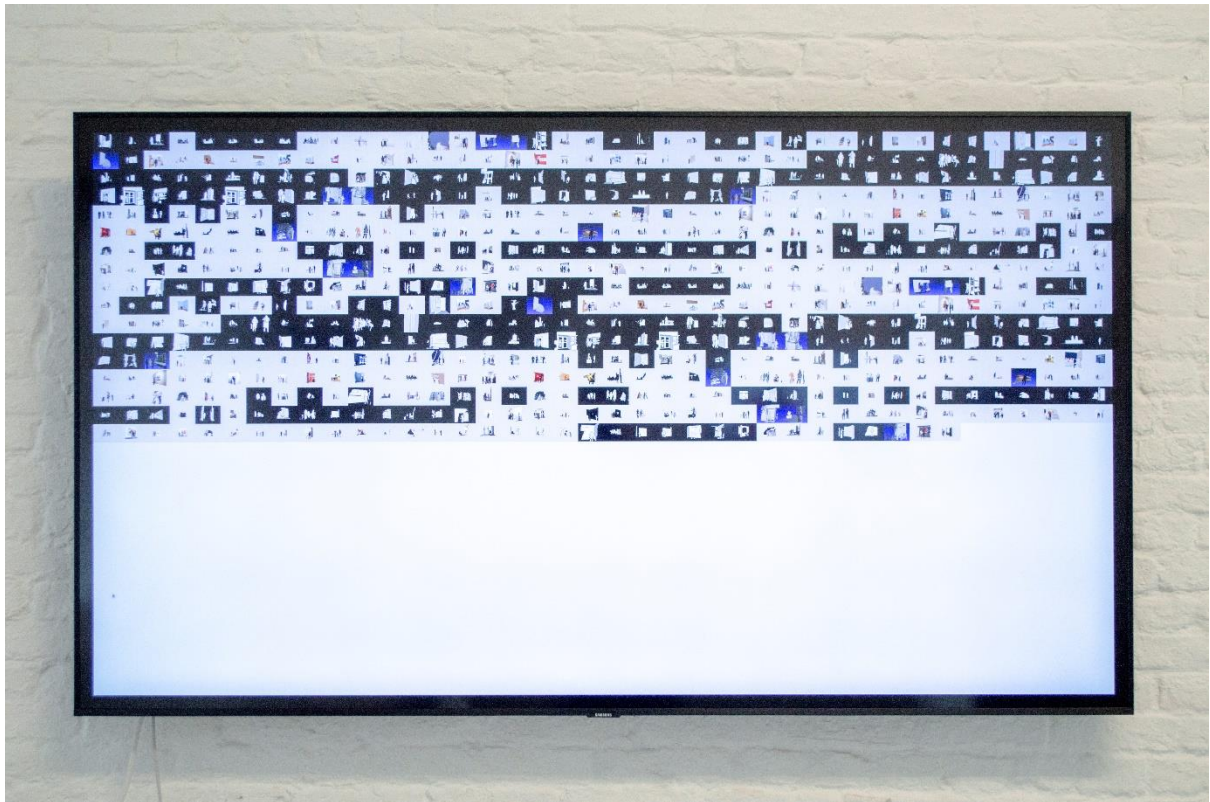
JODI (Dirk Paesmans)
And/Or Grid 3D Scans, 2018
3D scans on custom website, computer, monitor, mouse
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

JODI (Dirk Paesmans)
And/Or Grid 3D Scans, 2018
3D scans on custom website, computer, monitor, mouse
Dimensions variable
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Installation View, 2021

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Ami Clarke
Alexa, Google, 23andMe, 2018
Amazon Alexa, Echo dot, Respeaker, wall mounts, 2 x Google home mini speakers, speaker wall mounts, raspberry pi, router
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Claire Jervert
Geminoid DK, 2014
Conte and chalk on Ingres paper
25 x 20 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Claire Jervert
Cubo, 2014
Conte and chalk on Ingres paper
25 x 20 cm
Courtesy of the artist
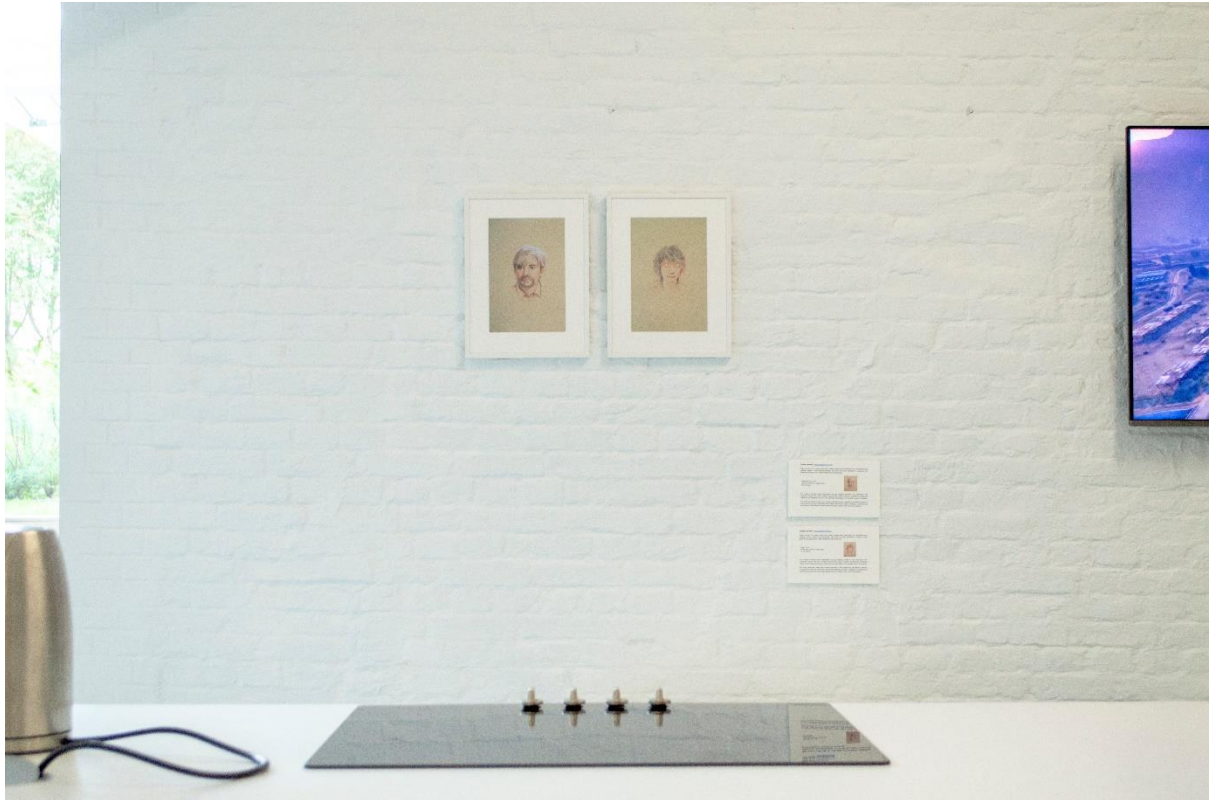
Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Bob Bicknell-Knight
I Wish I'd Been Born A Balloon, 2020
HD video with sound
9 min 45 sec
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021
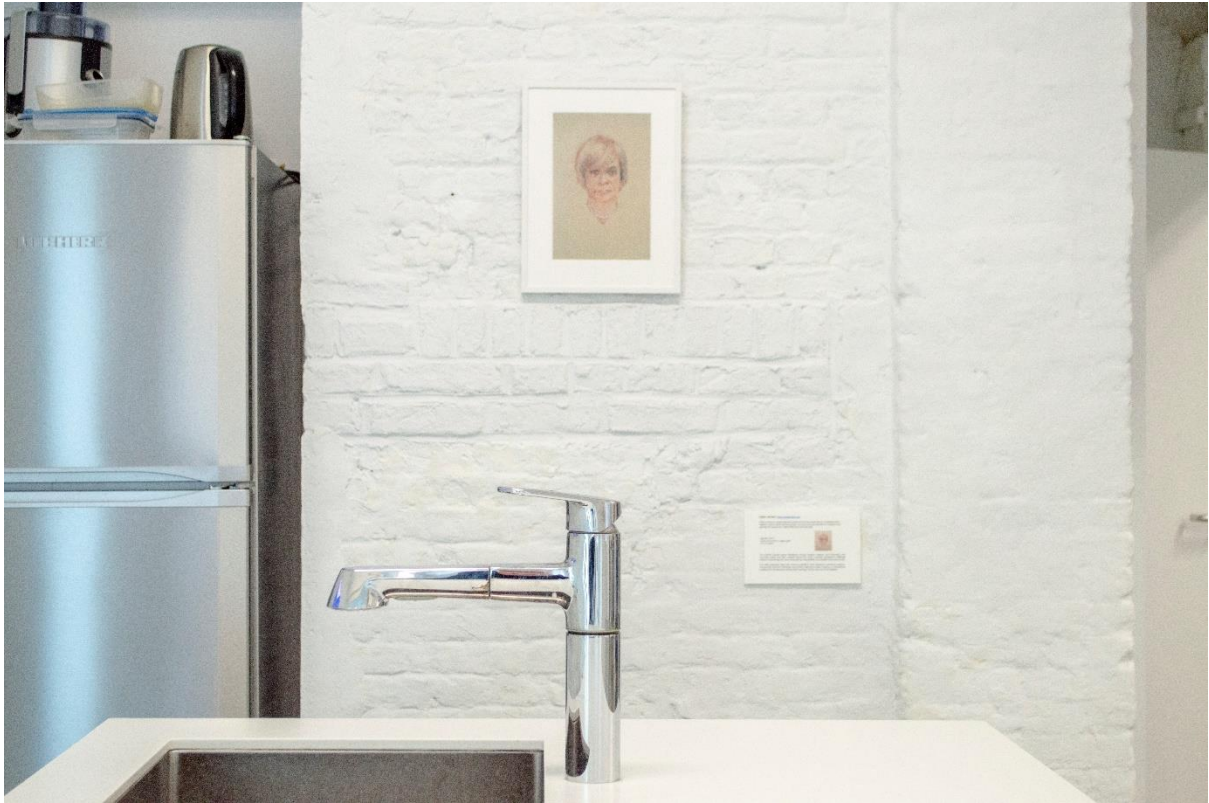
Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Claire Jervert
BINA48, 2014
Conte and chalk on Ingres paper
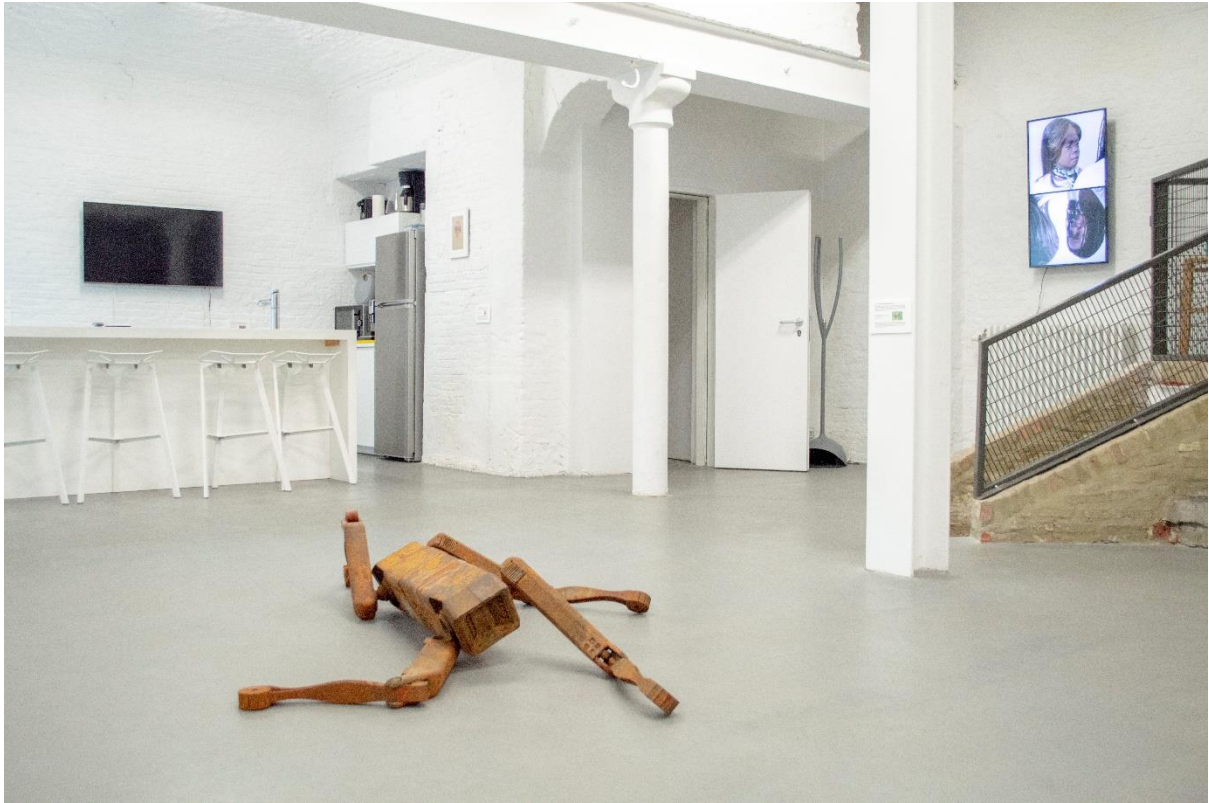25 x 20 cm
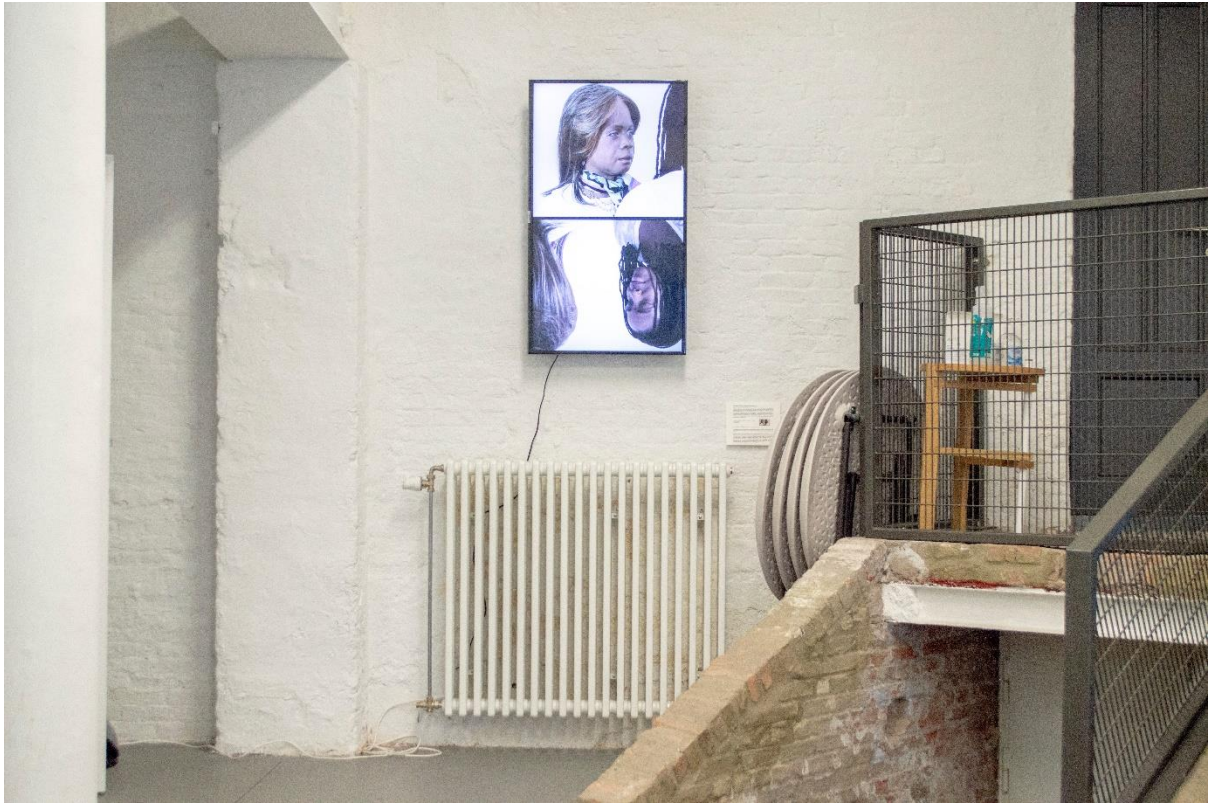Courtesy of the artist

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Installation View, 2021
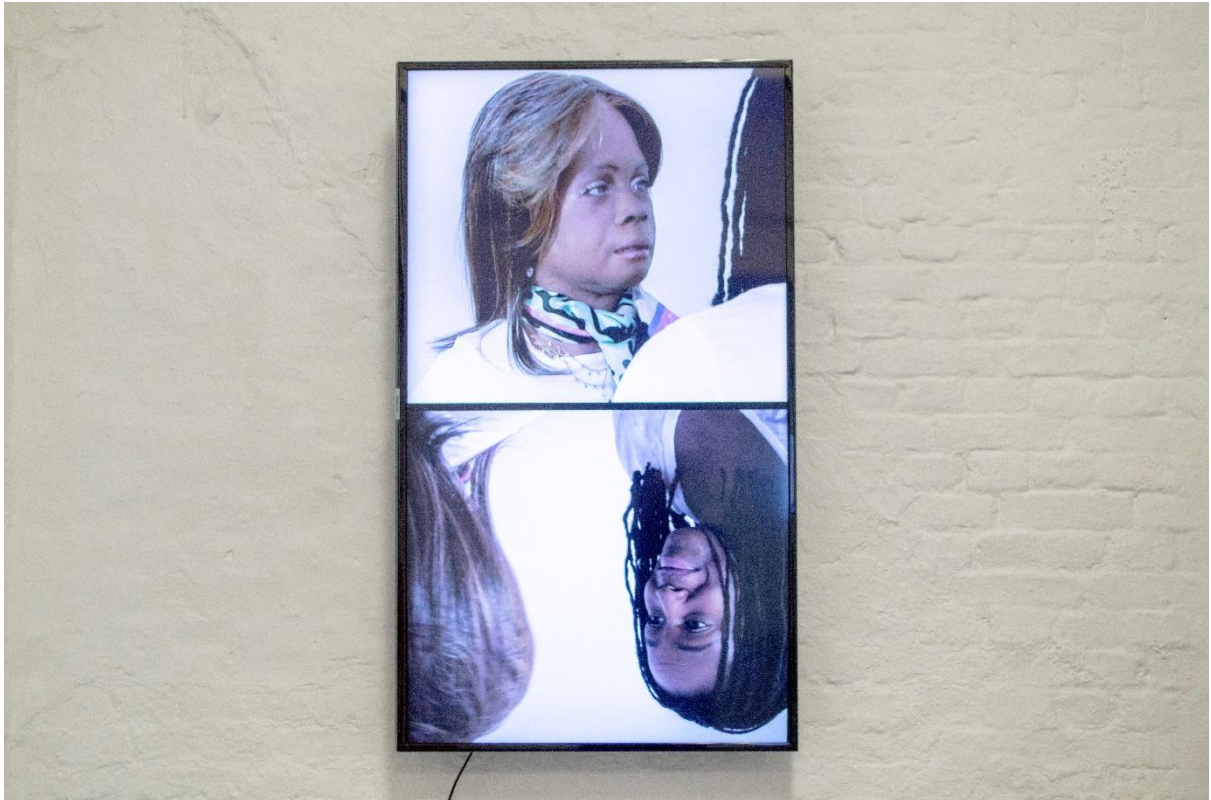
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Installation View, 2021
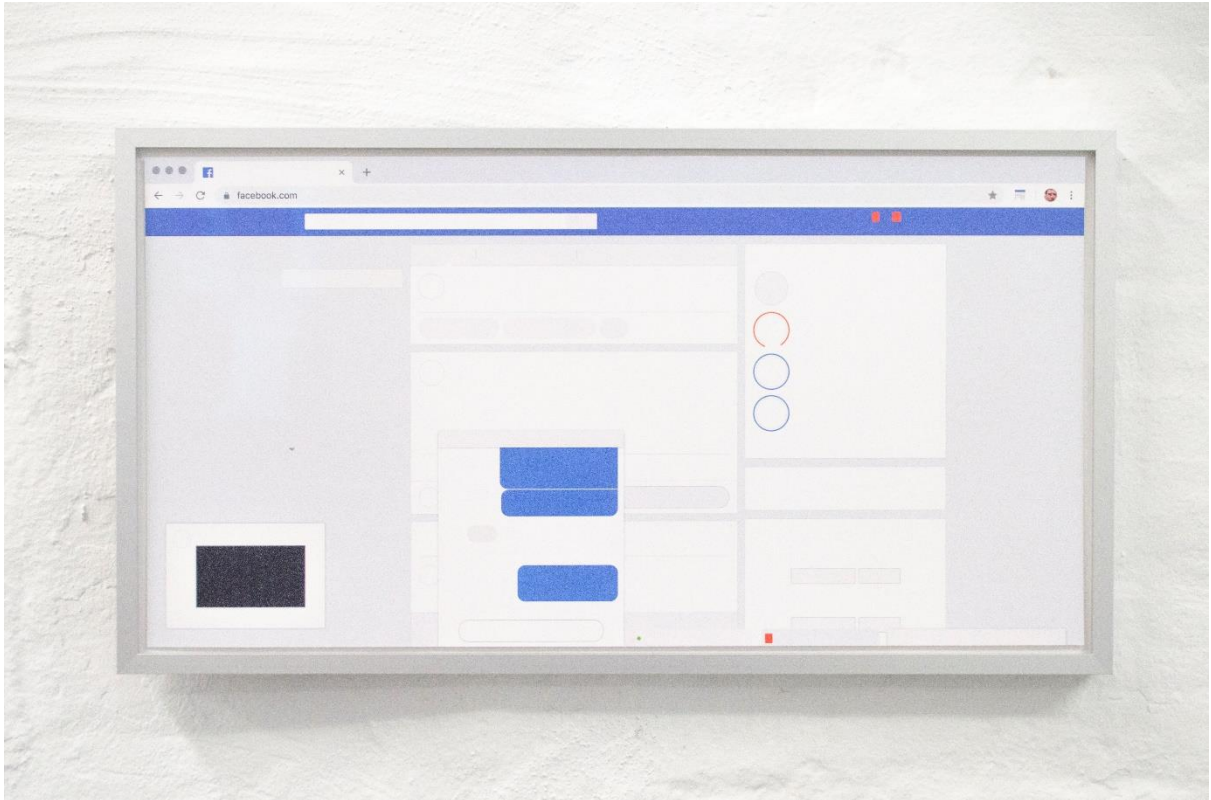
Ben Grosser
Safebook, 2018
Web plugin
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Stephanie Dinkins
Conversations with Bina48: Fragment 11, Fourth Mirror, 2018
2 min 45 sec
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Bob Bicknell-Knight
Second Variety, 2021
3D printed PLA plastic, pine wood dowel, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Bob Bicknell-Knight
Second Variety, 2021
3D printed PLA plastic, pine wood dowel, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Bob Bicknell-Knight
Second Variety, 2021
3D printed PLA plastic, pine wood dowel, acrylic paint
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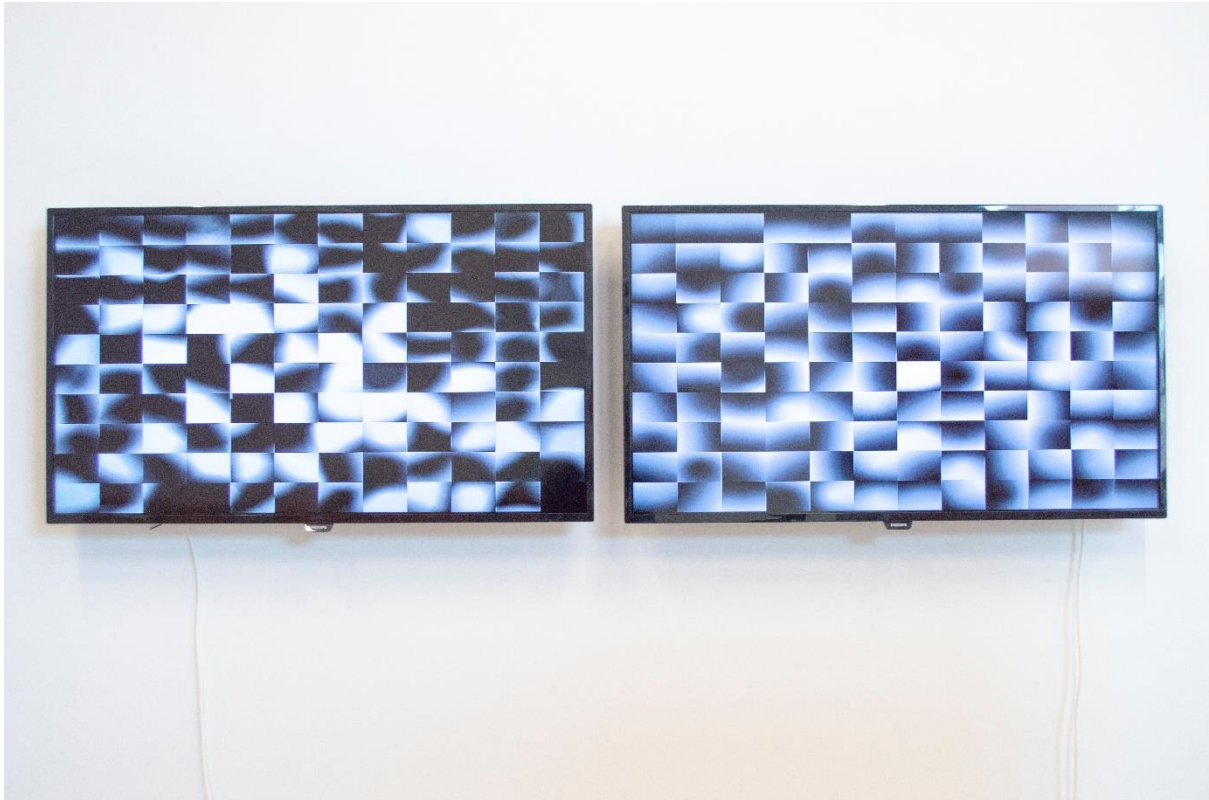Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

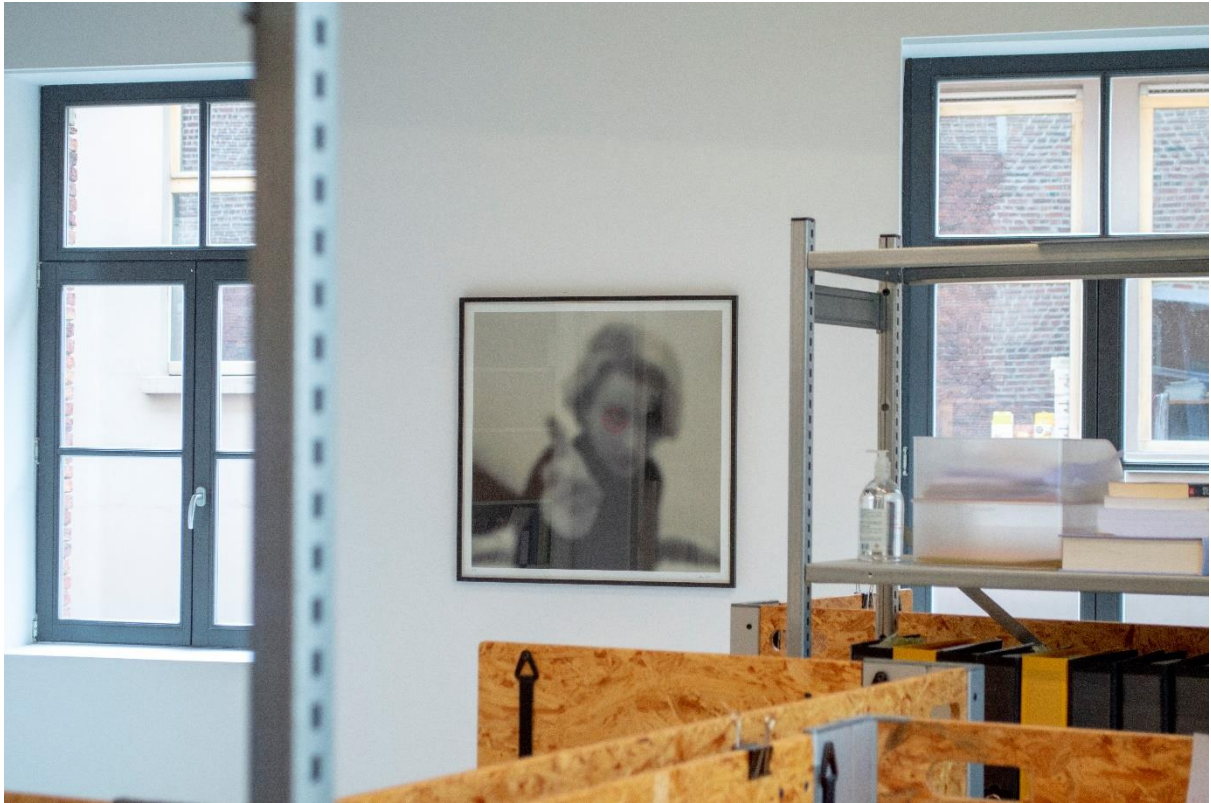Algorithmic Bias
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Heather Dewey-Hagborg
How do you see me? (film still, face detection), 2019
Two-channel video installation
6 min 3 sec
Courtesy of the artist and Fridman Gallery

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Lynn Hershman Leeson
Cyborg 9, 1998
Iris print
Courtesy of the artist

Lynn Hershman Leeson
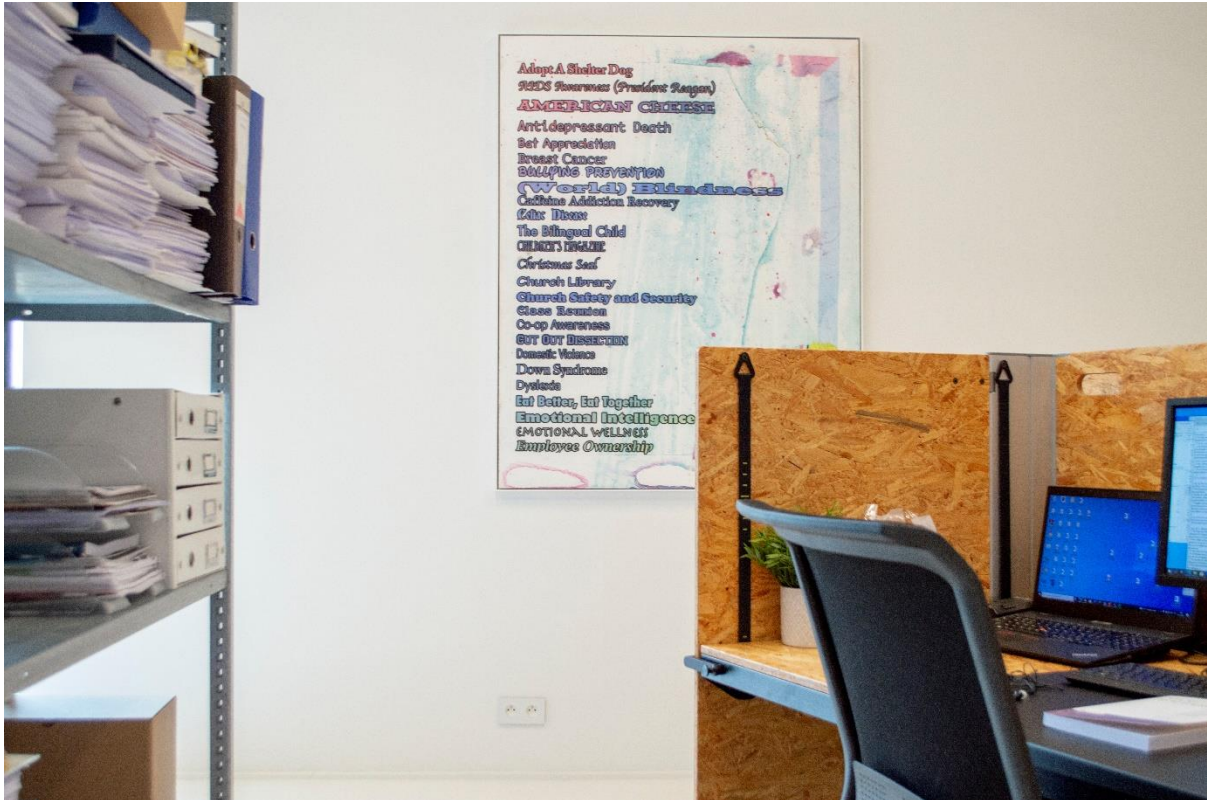Cyborg 9, 1998
Iris print
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Joel Holmberg
World maps without borders, 2016
Acrylic and oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Algorithmic Bias
Installation View, 2021

Jacob Ciocci
Adopt a shelter dog, 2015
UV print on birch plywood
154.94 x 124.46 x 2.54 cm
Courtesy of the artist