

TRUST

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KEHRER

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Mohammed Hanif, will be shot dead in easte

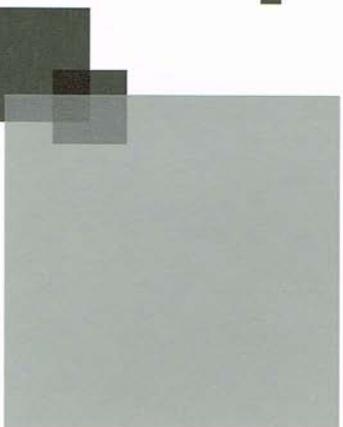


On a public display, a news ticker continuously shows news in scrolling text. The news items are, however, conjugated in the future tense: 'the NASDAQ will drop 4.3 points today,' 'A plane will crash in Madrid killing 153 people,' 'The Giants will crush the Red Socks 10–3'. Aside from the tense of the verbs, all the news is completely true... *TIME SLIP* is a visual artwork anchored in philosophical questionings about destiny, its potentially predetermined nature and its causal determinism. It is also a work about free will in a universe where time and causality can 'slip'. It confronts the spectator with the control of his or her own destiny. It is also a work engaging with the motifs of unpredictability and risk, which are increasingly central in the contemporary world.

TIME SLIP is based on custom-built software that feeds from official news agencies, changing the tense of selected news items from near past to near future. *TIME SLIP* is always current. It is a programmed generative artwork.

Auf einem öffentlichen Display wird kontinuierlich der Text durchlaufender Neuigkeiten eines Nachrichtentickers angezeigt. Die Nachrichten werden dabei jedoch in Ihrer Zukunftsform konjugiert: 'Der NASDAQ wird heute um 4,3 Punkte fallen', 'ein Flugzeugabsturz in Madrid wird 153 Todesopfer fordern', 'die Giants werden die Red Socks mit 10 zu 3 auseinandernehmen'. Außer der Zeit der Verben entsprechen alle Nachrichten vollständig der Wahrheit... *TIME SLIP* ist eine visuelle künstlerische Arbeit, die philosophischen Fragen über Schicksalhaftigkeit, deren potenziell vorherbestimmte Natur und ihre kausale Bestimmung nachgeht, und am Ende auch eine Arbeit über den freien Willen in einem Universum, in dem die Zeit und ihre Ursächlichkeit entgleiten können. Der Besucher wird dabei mit der Kontrolle über sein eigenes Schicksal konfrontiert. Es ist aber auch eine Arbeit über Motive wie Unvorhersagbarkeit und Risiko, die in der heutigen Welt eine immer zentralere Stellung einnehmen.

TIME SLIP basiert auf einer speziell angefertigten Software, die sich offizieller Nachrichten-Feeds von Agenturen bedient und die Zeiten ausgewählter Schlagzeilen von der Vergangenheits- in ihre Zukunftsform ändert. *TIME SLIP* ist immer aktuell. Es ist eine programmiertes generatives Kunstwerk.



Antoine, *TIME SLIP* pinpoints the desire to get the news and know the truth in advance. This is the genre of the old 'media' of astrologers, fortune-tellers and oracles. The news media have, by reducing the time between the event and the news broadcast to zero, created the illusion of an approximate ability to control these events and their outcomes – whether as happy endings, or as spectacular catastrophes. What role do the temporal aspects of 'live-ness' and 'realtime' play in your work, work that is based on such fast, digital transformation of news information? What is the desire that you are trying to spark with this piece?

When confronted with *TIME SLIP*, the reader of the news has two possibilities: either he already knows the news and he is then projected mentally into a past time where some oracle tells him a future that he knows to be true ('a bomb will kill 12 people in Moscow' – yes, this is true) – there is a feeling of time fuzziness. Or he or she does not know the news yet, and she is then confronted with an oracle that pretends to know the future and that bluntly and neutrally announces it – creating a feeling of anxiety or of perverted absolute power. In both cases, time is blurred, whether it is the near past or the near future. The fundamental equation that states that the past is past and that the future is unknown suddenly loses its solidity. This equation is the basis of one of the main forces that move us as humans: curiosity (and its opposite, fear). By deactivating this equation, *TIME SLIP* creates a feeling of deep unease. It stops us, giving us some time to question this powerful attraction to the future.



Your work uses the sophisticated, yet 'simple,' artifice of reversing the grammatical tense of these headlines, turning quick and catchy news with a rather short half-life into solemn oracles of the future. The startling moment that may be experienced at the point of realising this time shift, or time slip, perhaps comes from the meeting of the familiarised form of these messages and the uncompromising authority of the prediction. Essential for the authority of a supposed contemporary oracle, however, would be the amount of trust put into the predictions. What significance, or weight, does trust have in *TIME SLIP*?

In the installation notes, I specify that *TIME SLIP* should be displayed in order to look official. The red LED version looks like a plain standard outdoor news ticker. This gives it a neutral, almost laconic quality, that added to the fact that the vocabulary and grammar of *TIME SLIP* exactly reflects those of the usual news, account for the fact that the information displayed by *TIME SLIP* is immediately recognized as news and is imbued with the quality of truthfulness in the viewer's mind. At that point, the viewer has lost – his mind is already caught up in the *TIME SLIP* trap. There is only one escape for the viewer, which is to realize the vanity of this system that pretends to know the future but that in fact, of course, does not know anything.

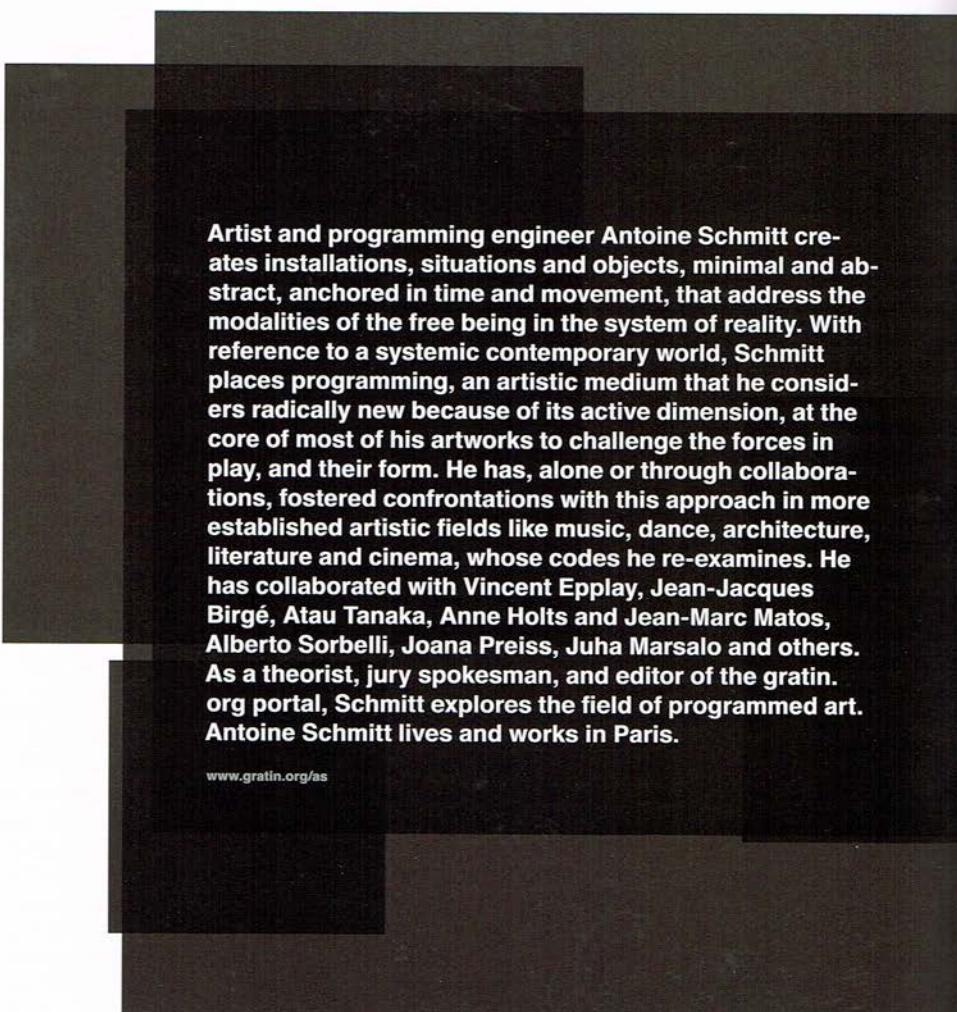
One question about generating, or rather conveying, the news is the position of the filter – the human and the machine one. Who decides what is a relevant news item and what is not? Similarly, the work feeds from a number of existing sources which needed to be decided upon. What motivated the choices of your sources?

I analysed many media sources, focusing on the ones that were strongly related to announcements of general interest (rather than discussions, or futile or specialised news): financial news, economic news, international news. There are also some technical constraints: the translation engine is rather simple so only phrases in which the engine finds and knows the verb are selected, transformed and displayed. Also all the phrases that were already in the future tense are dropped. This unnatural selection mechanism gives a sense of subjectivity to the system, which seems to select some news items and drop others, and gives it an added 'oracle' sense.

Next to the assumed, or at least temporary trust demanded by the respective messages, there is the latent distrust with the source being used in a manipulative way by different information lobbies. If one angle of *TIME SLIP* were about unmasking the suggestive manipulation of the news media, how big would the share of subversive energy in it be?

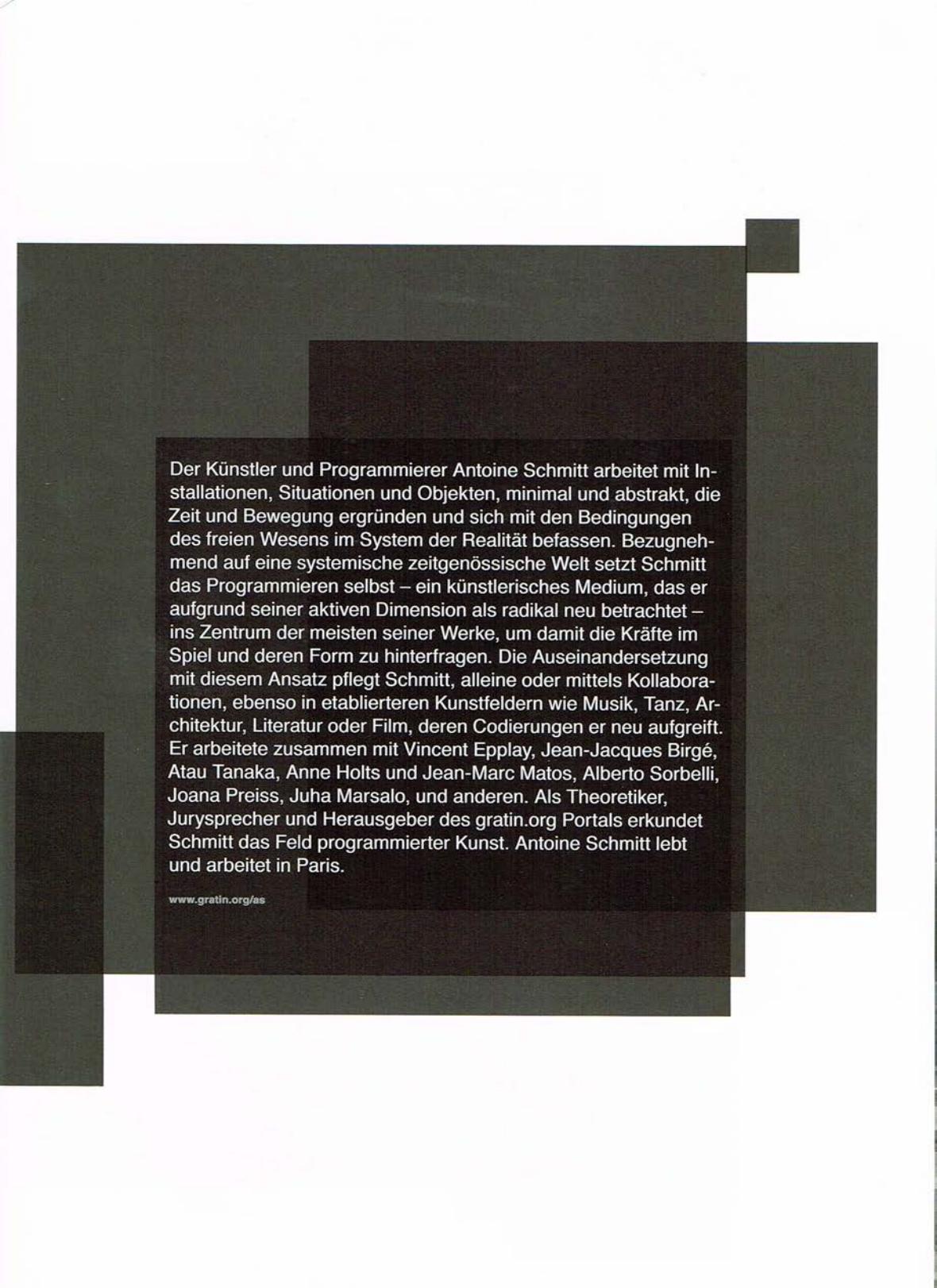
***TIME SLIP* is subversive on two levels: first, as outlined above, it deactivates and questions our own attraction to the unknown future. And secondly, by forcing us to distrust the supposed oracle with its ever so official look, it leads us to wonder how much trust can be put in the normal newsfeeds anyway.**

Antoine Schmitt



Artist and programming engineer Antoine Schmitt creates installations, situations and objects, minimal and abstract, anchored in time and movement, that address the modalities of the free being in the system of reality. With reference to a systemic contemporary world, Schmitt places programming, an artistic medium that he considers radically new because of its active dimension, at the core of most of his artworks to challenge the forces in play, and their form. He has, alone or through collaborations, fostered confrontations with this approach in more established artistic fields like music, dance, architecture, literature and cinema, whose codes he re-examines. He has collaborated with Vincent Epplay, Jean-Jacques Birgé, Atau Tanaka, Anne Holts and Jean-Marc Matos, Alberto Sorbelli, Joana Preiss, Juha Marsalo and others. As a theorist, jury spokesman, and editor of the gratin.org portal, Schmitt explores the field of programmed art. Antoine Schmitt lives and works in Paris.

www.gratin.org/as



Der Künstler und Programmierer Antoine Schmitt arbeitet mit Installationen, Situationen und Objekten, minimal und abstrakt, die Zeit und Bewegung ergründen und sich mit den Bedingungen des freien Wesens im System der Realität befassen. Bezugnehmend auf eine systemische zeitgenössische Welt setzt Schmitt das Programmieren selbst – ein künstlerisches Medium, das er aufgrund seiner aktiven Dimension als radikal neu betrachtet – ins Zentrum der meisten seiner Werke, um damit die Kräfte im Spiel und deren Form zu hinterfragen. Die Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Ansatz pflegt Schmitt, alleine oder mittels Kollaborationen, ebenso in etablierteren Kunstmärkten wie Musik, Tanz, Architektur, Literatur oder Film, deren Codierungen er neu aufgreift. Er arbeitete zusammen mit Vincent Eplay, Jean-Jacques Birgé, Atau Tanaka, Anne Holts und Jean-Marc Matos, Alberto Sorbelli, Joana Preiss, Juha Marsalo, und anderen. Als Theoretiker, Jurysprecher und Herausgeber des gratin.org Portals erkundet Schmitt das Feld programmierter Kunst. Antoine Schmitt lebt und arbeitet in Paris.

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