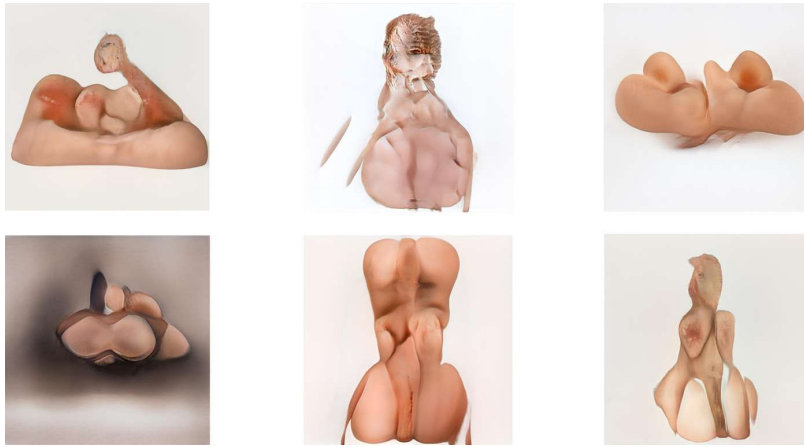# SUSANNE FAGERLUND

HOME   WORKS   CV   CONTACT   MFA-PROJECT:DEEPFAKES

ALL DOLLED UP DEEPFAKES (2021)
STILLS FROM DEEPFAKE VIDEOS

Monsters in contemporary culture, however, have become more humane than ever before. Monsters are strong, resilient, creative and sly creatures. Through their playful and invigorating energy they can be seen to disrupt and unsettle. They still cater to the appetite for horror, but they also encourage us to feel empathy. The encounter with a monster can enable us to stop, wonder and change our attitudes towards technology, our body and each other. [1]

ABOUT THE PROJECT: *ALL DOLLED UP DEEPFAKES*

In the project *All Dolled Up Deepfakes* I explore how virtual and human bodies are represented and manipulated in today's technology-driven societies. I am utilizing the controversial deepfake technology which, with the help of artificial intelligence (AI), creates realistic videos with manipulated faces and bodies. A recent report on deepfake videos shows that 96 percent of them are about simulating porn with women without their consent. [2] Mostly the videos are used for harassment, revenge porn and frauds.

I collaborate with AI that through machine learning attempts to create representations of whole bodies from fragmented images of sex dolls and sexbots. The project consists of artificial intelligence simulations, deepfake video installations, a diorama, a digital sculpture and an artist's book. In the diorama a text is on display where machine learning attempts to create poetry out of misogynistic promotional texts. The artist's book (ISBN: 978-91-985739-0-9) is in the format of cabinet cards as a reminiscent of photography - a technological artefact

enabling mass consumption of representations. Technology development has historically always been tightly entangled with a commodification of the human body.

TEXT FROM HDK—VALAND MFA IN FINE ARTS 2021 EXAM PUBLICATION

IMAGINING THE MONSTROUS

I have a background in the biotechnology industry. We utilized electroporation and nanotechnology to connect living cells with machines to screen pharmaceuticals more efficiently and without animal testing. The possibilities of technology are vast to make a better life for all things and for the planet, when used wisely.

As an artist, however, I'm more interested in researching the areas where humankind is using techno-science to preserve power balances. The science and technology scholar, Donna Haraway, talked about the possibilities of a technical revolution in her *A Cyborg Manifesto*. She claimed that technology can erase antagonistic dualism and "include the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender".[3] Now thirty-six years later, how has technology-driven cultures managed these opportunities? I agree with Haraway, technology has the capacity to challenge polarization.

In my artistic practice I work project-based and an event or phenomena in society often triggers my enquiry. My current project was sparked by a debate on sexbots as a possible solution to the increasing problems of "Incels". The involuntary celibate's movement is mainly an online community with misogynistic chat rooms. The debate on sexbots was substantially instigated when economics professor Robin Hanson's posted a statement on his blog in 2018 where he used the "Incel" movement-based mass murder in Canada as an example to advocate for sexual redistribution. On his Twitter he later mentions that this not necessarily means mass state-sanctioned rape.[4] Rather, he suggests that "individual cases may or may not be satisfied by sexbots or prostitutes."[5] This made me interested in examining the commodification of female bodies, specifically the promotional material that disclose much how manufacturers push products towards a specific target group.

THE DATA SET YOU PUT IN IS WHAT COMES OUT

It is valuable to study porn since stereotypes are so apparent. In my enquiry I've studied representation material and promotional texts for sex dolls and sexbots. I want to raise questions on what happens with behaviour and identities when sex dolls are marketed with promotional texts containing phrases like: "no limitations", "they never say no", "smack her face", "she's all yours" and "there are no rules".

The data you put into machines generates the data that comes out. Data sets are dependent upon the manufacturers creating them. The phrase data bias in machine learning is a type of error where a certain aspect is more represented than others due to the person programming the artificial intelligence. Machine learning is aiming to please the bias, the data set, with which it is created. I'm therefore more interested in the drivers behind the development of artefacts and not so much about the usage of them. The word *programmatic* is used in marketing where digital ads are purchased through a technical platform that optimizes the push of products to a specific target group. However, it is a seller that puts in the request into the tech-platform. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary "To program" can be:

"*a sequence of coded instructions that can be inserted into a mechanism (such as a computer)*"
or/and

"*the genes or sequences of DNA or RNA that are part of an organism or cell and encode or determine a process, trait, or behaviour*" [6]

As Feona Attwood, Professor of Cultural Studies, Communication and Media, implies that we are living in a society where sex drives new developments in technology. It is especially driven by economic interests and it becomes more and more vital to contextualize tech-mediated porn representations to not "drift towards the familiar, westernized, masculinized, heterosexual models which we have inherited".
[7]

[1] Sibylle Erle och Helen Hendry, "Monsters: Interdisciplinary Explorations in Monstrosity", Palgrave Communications 6, nr 1 (25 mars 2020): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0428-1.

[2] Katie Bishop, "AI in the Adult Industry: Porn May Soon Feature People Who Don't Exist", The Guardian, 07 februari 2020, avs. Life and style, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/feb/07/ai-in-the-adult-industry-porn-may-soon-feature-people-who-dont-exist.

[3] DONNA J. HARAWAY och CARY WOLFE, "A Cyborg Manifesto: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIALIST-FEMINISM IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY", i Manifestly Haraway (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 3–90, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1b7x5f6.4.

[4] "Robin Hanson på Twitter", Twitter, åtkomstdatum 11 oktober 2020, https://twitter.com/robinhanson/status/989535565895864320.

[5] Robin Hanson, "Overcoming Bias : Two Types of Envy", åtkomstdatum 11 oktober 2020,

https://www.overcomingbias.com/2018/04/two-types-of-envy.html.

[6] "Definition of PROGRAM", åtkomstdatum 07 november 2020, https://www.merriam-

webster.com/dictionary/program.

[7] Feona Attwood, "Sexed Up: Theorizing the Sexualization of Culture", Sexualities 9, nr 1 (februari

2006): 77–94, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706053336.