

Jan Nikolai Nelles



Job title: Multi-disciplinary artist

Organisation: Studio Nelles Al-Badri

Twitter: @nextnikolai

Abstract:

Title: The other Nefertiti - artists who “acquired” 3D-Scan of Nefertiti’s Bust

In times of the digitization fever inside the museum one better asks: Who owns the data? Who generates it? Who rules over the database? Who built its architecture? Like a *Datenkrake*, the museum has exclusive access to its collection and collects and collects. Yet there is not obligatino to act as a gatekeeper towards the information. If an AI is only as good as its database, probably the museum is only as good as its database, too. And “good” refers to ethics, biases and open access.

The artists will share and discuss their practice through three of their latest works: „The Other Nefertiti“ (2015-2017) which was mentioned in the media as „the most ethical art heist in art history“, where they released the data of the bust of queen Nefertiti on a public domain followed by thousands of remixes by the public amongst other things. The „NefertitiBot“ (2018-ongoing), a chatbot and artificial intelligence which seeks to take over the power of interpretational sovereignty from administrative and curatorial museums structures. And also „Fossil Futures“ (2017-ongoing) which deals with a re-imagination of a museum itself, a reclaiming of territories and the colonial continuities from the Natural History Museum in Berlin to land grabbing.

Questions of indigenous knowledge, narratives and construction of “The Ancient” and representation as well as of ownership of cultural data and technology as emancipatory tools are at the centre of their work and presentation.

Bio:

Jan Nikolai Nelles is a multi-disciplinary German artist born 1980 in Frankfurt/Main. He graduated from Offenbach University of Art and Design in 2011. In the past he founded an independent project space in Frankfurt/Main and co-founded a photography magazine. Since 2009 Jan Nikolai Nelles and Nora Al-Badri are working together. Their artistic practice oscillates between different fields such as visual and media art, documentary filmmaking and cultural activism. Their pieces deal with issues arising through hegemonic and neo-colonial power structures and representations between the Global South and North as well as with the various facets of war and its aftermath. Their artistic practice reflects on the absurdity of the human condition. The works interfere in social infrastructures by misbehavior performances or challenges institutions through civil disobedience aware of their artistic freedom. The collective pursues a critical re-evaluation of actual cultural commons, the power of representation through material objects of other cultures, their digital images as well as the concepts of heritage and identity politics schemes.