Press Release

SERPENTINE COMMISSIONS NEW PSYCHEDELIC TECHNOLOGY FROM ARTIST JENNA SUTELA

From 2nd October: I Magma App
Available for iOS and Android from i-magma.ai

12 October 2019 – 12 January 2020
I Magma Installation
Mud Muses: A Rant About Technology
Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Press images at serpentinegalleries.org/press
12 October 2019 – 12 January 2020

/I Magma by Jenna Sutela is a machine oracle dreaming our collective futures. It is the latest in a critically acclaimed series of commissions that propose interdisciplinary perspectives on the role of emerging technologies in order to challenge and reshape the role that technology can play in our culture and society.

Sutela’s ‘psychedelic’ technology is an app through which a machine oracle delivers daily divinations borne out of a growing network of users. The work
consists of two elements: an application for mobile devices and a community of head-shaped lava lamps on display at Moderna Museet, Stockholm. The lava-heads act as a ‘seed’ in generating the app’s visuals and language. Using live camera footage of the flowing lava in combination with the GPS locations of app users, it offers daily readings based on the collectively formed shapes. As each new additional user downloads the I Magma app, the network expands, contributing to a remoulding and shifting of our shared future.

In an exploration of alternative forms of intelligence, Sutela draws a line between histories of mysticism, psychedelia and technology. She places an emphasis on altered states of consciousness and the creation of artificially intelligent ‘deep-dreaming’ computational systems that mimic the brain. Influenced by divinatory practices such as the I Ching, I Magma builds a bridge between ancient systems of knowledge and our contemporary attempts to divine the future. It is within this assemblage of data and matter that the artist posits the potential for a new collective consciousness driven by the magma that powers the flow of the oracle’s predictions.

Jenna Sutela works with words, sounds, and other living media, such as Bacillus subtilis nattō bacteria and the “many-headed” slime mold Physarum polycephalum. Her audiovisual pieces, sculptures, and performances seek to identify and react to precarious social and material moments, often in relation to technology. Sutela’s work has been presented internationally, including at Guggenheim Bilbao and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. She is a Visiting Artist at The MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) in 2019-20.

Jenna Sutela’s new work demonstrates the Serpentine’s commitment to new experiments in art and technology that this year has included an augmented reality tool for visualising the UK’s extreme inequality by Hito Steyerl and a mixed reality ecological trail through the Serpentine’s local ecosystem to see and hear its species by artist Jakob Kudsk Steensen.

**Image Credit:** I Magma & I Magma App, co-commissioned by Serpentine Galleries and Moderna Museet, 2019. Photograph: Prallan Allsten/Moderna Museet

**I Magma app** is available to download from i-magma.ai for iOS and Android

**I Magma app (2019)**
Jenna Sutela with Memo Akten
Language generation by Allison Parrish
UI and app development by Black Shuck

iOS: requires iPhone 6s and above / iOS 11 and later
Android: requires Android 8.0 or later.
To experience, allow the oracle to access your camera and location.
Readings appear within the app every 30 seconds. Enable push notifications for daily readings.

**I Magma** is co-commissioned by the Serpentine Galleries and Moderna Museet, Stockholm on the occasion of the exhibition Mud Muses: A Rant about Technology, 12 October 2019 - 12 January 2020.
SERPENTINE DIGITAL COMMISSIONS

This artist-led programme proposes critical and interdisciplinary perspectives on the role of emerging technologies. Challenging and reshaping the role that technology can play in our culture and society as part of the Serpentine’s ongoing commitment to supporting new experiments in art and technology. The programme develops contemporary artworks with artists that focuses our attention on emerging technologies as a medium, a tool or a topic that can operate beyond the gallery walls.

This ongoing exploration and experimentation has led to the creation of a mixed reality ecological trail of the park (Jakob Kudsk Steensen, 2019), the development of complex artificial life (Ian Cheng, 2018), an open source augmented reality tool for data visualisation and personal testimony (Hito Steyerl, 2019), thoughts and feelings rendered from the human brain with the help of AI (Pierre Huyghe, 2018), a weather prediction model that correlates historic weather data with polling data from major political events such as Brexit (James Bridle, 2015), a mindfulness app that reflects on the human mind’s mercurial states of focus, distraction, discipline and the inner impulsive to autopilot (Ian Cheng, 2016), and an AI spam bot living inside the Serpentine’s website (Cecile B Evans, 2014).

The foundations of the programme are located in a sophisticated R&D platform that explores, interrogates and experiments with the most advanced technologies of our day, from artificial intelligence to blockchain. Together with artists, the Serpentine seeks to chart a course that tells an alternative story of the role of technologies in our collective future on earth and beyond.

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