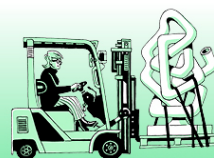




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# Flash Art



ENGLISH ONLINE, HOME

Data Garden / Kyriaki Goni by Tereza Záchová

25. 7. 2023



Cover of book *Data Garden*, Kyriaki Goni, Really Simple Syndication Press, 2023, photo: author's archive

Published in April this year, the compilation *Data Garden* sprung out of an exhibition with the same name by the artist Kyriaki Goni. Kyriaki Goni is a Greek multimedia artist, who has been exploring the conflicting relationships between biological and digital nature in transdisciplinary fields. This newly created publication presents her inquiry into alternative networks of relationships and speculative thinking with environmental aspects of technology.

The publication was created at the Really Simple Syndication Press, which is part of the SixtyEight Institute in Copenhagen. They are building onto their long-term collaboration with the above mentioned author and the curator Marianna Tsionki. Both of them presented the exhibition Networks of Trust in their gallery space at the SixtyEight Institute last year. It was only natural to continue working together and that resulted in the publication.

The publication looks back at the author's exhibition Data Garden, which she presented together with the British curator at the Blenheim Walk Gallery in Leeds earlier this year. This slim work comments on the project while it was being exhibited so that the audience does not forget that it had existed. We can see a curatorial text by Marianna Tsionki, photos from the exhibition as well as details from videos, drawings or a view of the actual installation. The publication is not just a better graphic treatment of the commentary for the exhibition, it also includes a newly published authentic essay Learning from the Narcissus by the writer Tom Jeffreys.

The first essay by Marianna Tsionki takes us into the project of the Greek artist Data Garden and we get to know two endemic plants. The first is Saxifraga depressa, which comes from the Dolomites, and the second is Micromeria actopolitana located in Athens, the author's hometown, in the rocky terrain of the Greek Acropolis. Fiction and scientific fact intertwine to suggest alternative futures and critically comment on the current state of our civilisation and data management. Data Garden is a new type of data infrastructure that should encourage the integration of people, ecosystems and technologies. The question is, however, whether that is even possible.

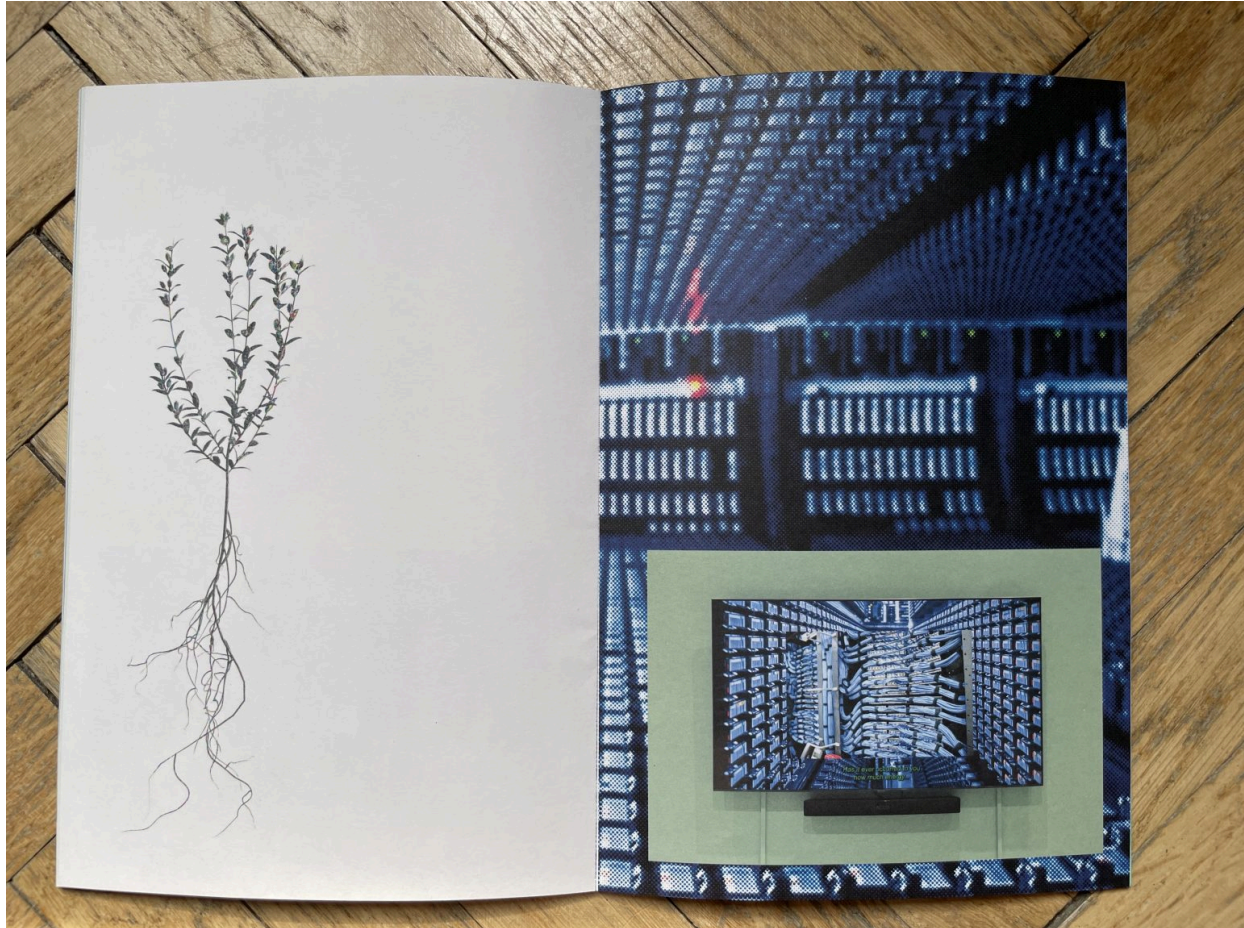
We can see from the photographs that the exhibition was most likely conceived as two sides, as two plants that can interact or comment on their specific origins – the artificial, digital side and the real, disappearing side. Unfortunately, the viewer who has not seen this project in person can't read much from the photos, and some of them do not even explain what exactly it is. It's therefore difficult to interpret the project in a better way; besides familiarising yourself with the work of the author, who always incorporates the digital world into her projects.

The second part by the already mentioned author Tom Jeffreys, who lives in Edinburgh and has been writing about art and environmentalism for a long time, presents 10 short essays, comments, texts that touch upon the writing about the work of Kyriaki Goni in a remarkable way and with interesting associations. One point of view is subjective and it deals with the way the author tries to come to terms with technology – he is asking whether it will exist and the hardware will work. The other one is based on personal experience in the national archive in Finland, where the columns remind him of the dominant Partheon. We also gradually find out how he gets to know Goni and what their common story is. All the little stories add up to create a coherent, unified view of the artist's work.

Kyriaki's project was based on a personal memory and perception of the atmosphere in her grandfather's garden. He took care of the small garden and gave it a lot of care while also talking to the plants. The author herself then asked



herself basic questions – what might our footprints be in the digital world and what effects would this have on the environment. Although the publication is only about one exhibition that took place, it offers a multi-layered project that is topical and will be on the front burner with the ever growing climate emergency, which addresses the increasing demand for data centres and maintaining our dependence on technology. The publication is freely available for download via the Leeds Arts University repository.



Publication Data Garden, Kyriaki Goni, Really Simple Syndication Press, 2023, photo: author's archive

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