

# OVERGADEN.

Press release March 2016

## Linda Hilfling Ritasdatter: *Bugs in the War Room*

2 April – 29 May 2016

Opening: Friday 1 April 5-8 pm

Hacker culture, the millennium bug, Indian computer programmers forced to learn obsolete computer code, and a critical view of the relationship between technology and power fill the first floor gallery at Overgaden.

With *Bugs in the War Room* Overgaden proudly presents Linda Hilfling Ritasdatter's first major solo exhibition in Denmark. Central to the artist's work is her interest in the relationship between technology, social developments and the global economy. On the basis of her own knowledge of computer programming, she makes absurd, humorous links between aspects of everyday technology that the general public are rarely aware of. Ritasdatter has previously created an open network that automatically deletes all words registered with the Danish Patent and Trademark Office, given performative lectures on the history of the overhead projector, as well as hacking search engines to use spelling mistakes to counter algorithmic censorship.

Fascination with the speed of technological development and the ways our daily use of it covers a surprisingly complex reality form the basis of *Bugs in the War Room*. In 1999, when the world was panic-ridden by the so-called millennium bug that threatened to cause the collapse of technologies worldwide, the American, Christian journal *End Time* published a numerical system allegedly proving that the word 'computer' could be translated to 666 – the number of the Antichrist. In the exhibition, Ritasdatter accepts this combination of technophobia and doomsday prophecy at face value. She taught herself the extinct programming code COBOL in India, which despite being considered obsolete in the West still comprises a core element in the IT systems of banks and insurance companies. Using COBOL, the artist then coded a programme that continuously searches the internet for examples of 'the Devil's work', the results of which are published during the exhibition as the first volume of an infinite encyclopaedia on the end of the world.

During the exhibition visitors can also attend a slide projector lecture that exposes connections between the cybernetics of the 1960s, the global paranoia of the millennium bug, and India's outsourcing boom. Here a narrative emerges in which the efficient technological reality of the West turns out to be dependent on a complex mix of 'zombie programming languages', engineers in developing countries, and software that is far from politically neutral.

Linda Hilfling Ritasdatter (b. 1976) lives and works in Berlin. She is a graduate of the Piet Zwart Institute of the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, and is a researcher at K3 – School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University. Ritasdatter has exhibited widely internationally, including shows in Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and France.

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Contact: For more information about the exhibition contact Merete Jankowski at [mj@overgaden.org](mailto:mj@overgaden.org) or on +45 32 57 72 73. Press images can be downloaded from the press page on our website.

Overgaden is Copenhagen's innovative exhibition venue for Danish and international contemporary art. With varying exhibitions and events, including artist talks, lectures, performances and film screenings, Overgaden acts as a platform for the latest developments on the art scene, and as a forum for discussion and debate.

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Tue-Sun 1-5 pm, Thurs 1-8 pm. Free admission

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