

# Challenging Organisations and Society

reflective hybrids®

## **Beware of Art: ARTificial Intelligence Challenging Organizations and Society**

**Edited by Claudia Schnugg and Andrea Schueller**

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## Journal “Challenging Organisations and Society . reflective hybrids® (COS)”

COS is the first journal to be dedicated to the rapidly growing requirements of reflective hybrids in our complex 21st-century organisations and society. Its international and multidisciplinary approaches balance theory and practice and show a wide range of perspectives in and between organisations and society. Being global and diverse in thinking and acting outside the box are the targets for its authors and readers in management, consulting and science.

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*Sougwen Chung interviewed by Claudia Schnugg*

## **A reflection on Art, Artificial Intelligence and Robots in Society**

Sougwen Chung is an internationally renowned artist and a pioneer in the field of human-robot collaboration. In her work she artistically explores and researches ways to work with machines and the potential of artificial intelligence in creative cooperative processes. Chung has been artist-in-residence at distinguished organizations like Nokia Bell Labs, is a former research fellow at MIT's Media Lab and was selected as the Woman of the Year in Monaco in 2019 for achievement in the Arts & Sciences.

**Claudia Schnugg:** Hi Sougwen, it is a pleasure to chat with you. First of all, thanks for being available during this time of pandemic confinement, social – or better physical – distancing and huge insecurities in the cultural sector. Much of your work is about collaboration, exchange and interaction and involves many actors. Can you describe the role of interaction with human and non-human actors, in person and at a distance? How does the current situation affect your work?

**Sougwen Chung:** Hi, Claudia. It's my pleasure to chat with you – albeit a bit surreal at the present moment.

So many cultural sectors are navigating uncertainty simultaneously, forced to re-envision existing conventions while adapting to unprecedented circumstances. More broadly, it's been striking to witness these unprecedented shifts in our conception of normalcy.

There's undoubtedly been a shift in the conditions of my practice over the past few months, as many performances and projects have needed to adapt. As a result, I've been creating new works while sheltering in place, with a focus on telepresence and networked robotic agricultural systems.

**Schnugg:** In your artwork you collaborate with robots. Could you introduce your work, the fundamental ideas and processes?

**Chung:** My work explores the role of A.I. as collaborator, creative catalyst, and medium for collective authorship.

The practice engages the fields of art and research as components of a multi-modal process in which human, machine, and environment are implicated in feedback loops that explore different interaction models and concepts. My ongoing project Drawing Operations Unit: Generations 1-4 has focused on mimicry, memory, swarm intelligence, and biometrics feedback within the dynamic of collaboration.

I'm interested in developing methodologies of co-creation that expand upon traditional forms of making (drawing, music, poetry) with data science, physical computing and robotics, and machine learning.



Fig. 1: Sougwen Chung: Drawing Operations Duet (2018)



Fig. 2: Sougwen Chung: Drawing Operations Unit: Generation 2 (2016)

**Schnugg:** What is the role of A.I. in your work?

**Chung:** The role of AI in my work is centered on the possibilities of co-creation.

For me, co-creation operates as a conditional agent of change. Through the framing of collaboration with A.I., it offers researchers and artists alike the opportunity to reflect on the effects and outcomes of human and machine interaction. I define my robotic collaborators by taking an active role in the process of creating bespoke A.I. systems and working with personal datasets. When I do so, my work speculates on collaborative processes that work toward the co-evolution of both human and machine.

**Schnugg:** Let's talk a bit more about collaboration. Your work goes beyond collaborating with machines, as you also work closely with others in residencies and in the realization of your projects. Your projects imply a lot of interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange. Can you give us an insight into your

experiences in collaborating as an artist with organizations, technologists, engineers and scientists?

**Chung:** Interdisciplinary exchange is at the heart of my practice. It stems from a recognition of the fluidity of how we define our work. I have led teams at Nokia Bell Labs, MIT Media Lab and Pier 9 Autodesk with this in mind: involving groups of talented individuals who are open and generous with their abilities and share the belief that practice is porous in nature. I'm excited by what's possible when we break down conventional definitions of art vs. science, human vs. machine. I suspect that by doing so, we can move towards a more symbiotic, creative and adaptive future.



Fig. 3: Sougwen Chung: Omnia per Omnia (2018), residency at Nokia Bell Labs.

**Schnugg:** Your artistic practice is very much focused on the process, which can also be seen in your focus on human-machine collaboration. Why do you think the process is so important and which of its aspects are interesting to you?

**Chung:** The process is a way of recognizing uncertainty. For me, the projects that drive the best research involve questions that may never be answered but need continual asking.

Engaging with an expansive process, we can uncover opportunities for critical inquiry. The goal is to create research prompts that expand socio-technical knowledge, collective understanding data sets and the role of locality in the politics of A.I.

If technology is the answer, what is the question? In contemporary dialogs about the role of machines and creativity, there is a prevalence of narratives that overstate the role of the machine. The belief that machines have agency, are conscious, and hold intention misses the point. Engaging with machines as catalysts can facilitate alternative ways of thinking, through the demystification of A.I. In so doing we create opportunities for creative critical discourse that enable a multi-threaded tapestry in which situated views and knowledge come together. Personal, political, and philosophical investigative processes are paramount in avoiding the trappings of hegemonic approaches to technological development.

Models trained on personal, environmental, and ecological data are common, but bringing the simulated outputs into material contexts via robotics and performance is the bedrock of a contemporary art practice. Critical inquiry recognizes the reality of unconscious bias in data sets and their classification and is part of the catalytic potential of the approach. By recognizing the potentiality of uncovering bias within the system through foregrounding its subjectivity, it is possible to design activations that stimulate creative inquiry within physical space. By instantiating the system within the material reality of drawing, instrumentation and performance, we are able to demystify the authority of the simulation and explore fallibilities of both human and machine.

**Schnugg:** One last question – your work is especially relevant in the most recent developments around the globe during this pandemic: understanding

collaboration through digital technologies in situations of physical distance between the human actors, but also questions about what A.I. can really contribute nowadays in a crisis. What do you see happening and what do you recommend?

**Chung:** In July of 2020, at the time of this conversation, amidst geopolitical shifts and preparations for the second wave, meaningful predictions seem premature. I think our desire for predictions about the future stem from a very human desire for structure and certainty, like finding the eye of the storm.

Predictions aside, we've seen the ever-shifting limitations upon public and private gatherings imposed by social distancing regulations. While necessary, these shifts have contributed to the growing sense of collective uncertainty about the safety of co-located bodies. As a result, it necessitates a renegotiation of what it means to feel, construct, and participate in community, to gather without gathering.

Physical presence mediated through digital screens has become even more prominent in daily life. The screen becomes a layered tapestry through which social, professional, and political rituals were once conducted and information about the pandemic on a global scale is received. A forthcoming performance work I've been developing in lockdown, called *Mutations of Presence*, explores the potentialities of these interconnected awareness meditations on an interpersonal and interplanetary scale.

It's being developed as it's being performed, experienced as it is constructed. The work is still in flux – as it evolves, it shows the process of thinking and technical development. By allowing the work to evolve with the experience of lockdown, I want to capture the circumstances in which the performance is being created.

Like many artists and practitioners across all fields, I've been asking myself: What is the role of art in navigating increasing scarcity and systemic collapse? What do symbiotic ecologies look, feel, and behave like? How can we create and facilitate communal experiences of care and sanctuary without physical proximity?



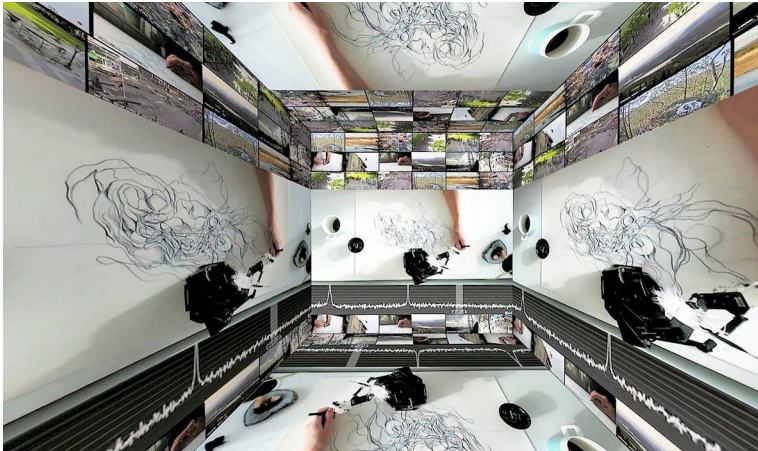


Fig. 4: Sougwen Chung: Mutations of Presence (2020)

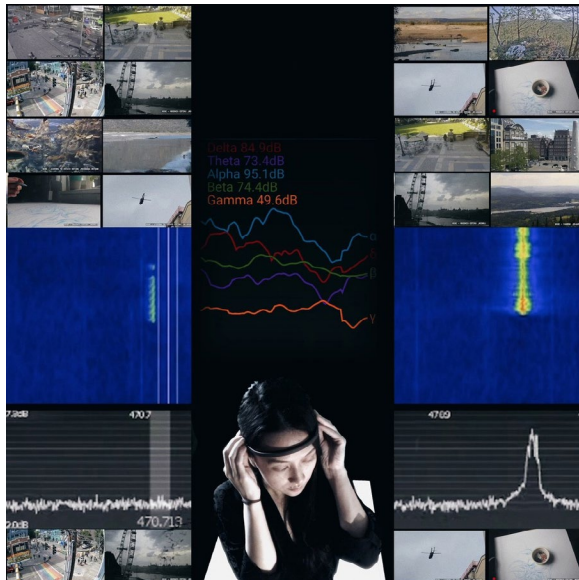


Fig. 5: Sougwen Chung: Mutations of Presence (2020)

## About the Authors

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**Sougwen Chung** is an internationally renowned artist and a pioneer in the field of human-robot collaboration. In her work she artistically explores and researches ways to work with machines and the potential of artificial intelligence in creative cooperative processes. Chung has been artist-in-residence at distinguished organizations like Nokia Bell Labs, is a former research fellow at MIT's Media Lab and was selected as the Woman of the Year in Monaco in 2019 for achievement in the Arts & Sciences.

**Elisabetta F. Jochim** is creative AI lead at Libre AI and co-founder at Cueva Gallery. She has a background in Arts and Humanities and extensive experience in project management working with heterogeneous teams in dynamic environments. Finding her passion in the intersection of technology and art, she explores how artificial intelligence can enhance human creativity. Her interests focus on digital aesthetics, human-computer interaction, human and machine creativity, and society.

**Paola Michela Mineo** is an Italian visual artist: her research is rooted in relational art, but she uses an interdisciplinary language that ranges from performance art to photography, from the purest sculpture to installations. She graduated in Architecture at the Polytechnic of Milan and Athens; she reinterprets the concept of human cast and fragment, transforming them from

an anatomical copy to a real pieces of personal identity portraits. She has exhibited her work in various museums, and is always committed to extracting beauty from the darkest social realities.

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**Elena Raviola** is Professor in Business and Design at the university of Gothenburg. She is recipient of the Tortsen and Wanja Söderberg Professorship in Design Management at the Academy of Design and Crafts Gothenburg and Director of the Business and Design Lab. Her research incorporates artificial intelligence and design, and its implications of work processes, most importantly on creative work. Her main research interest lies in understanding the role of technology and other material artifacts in organizing professional work, especially in news production. She was visiting researcher at Stanford, Bocconi University, Harvard, and Sciences Po, and worked at Jönköping International Business School and Copenhagen Business School.

**Claudia Schnugg** is independent researcher and curator in the field of art and science. Her work focuses on analyzing the effects of art in organizational and social settings, including change processes and new technologies. As advocate of artscience collaboration, she has been the catalyst for numerous projects. Claudia is working with leading scientific institutions, tech corporations and cultural partners. She researched at JKU in Linz, Copenhagen Business School, UCLA Art|Sci Center+Lab, and at European Southern Observatory, Chile. She headed the Ars Electronica Residency Network and was first Artistic Director of Science Gallery Venice. Her most recent book is “Creating ArtScience Collaboration” (2019).

**Andrea Schueller** is an independent business consultant, executive coach and lecturer at various universities specializing in generative change and transformation, organizational design, systemic identity, social innovation, creative emergence. Over the years she has qualified in various fields and applies her work shapeshifting in different contexts pursuing the red line of fostering embodied consciousness development through fresh presence and

holistic working designs. She is teaching trainer for Group Dynamics with the OEGGO (Austrian Association of Group Dynamics & Organization Consulting) which she chaired and served as a Board Member (2012-2018). She is a co-founder of COS Collective.

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**Liselotte Zvacek** is management consultant, leadership coach and lecturer at different universities in Austria; teaching trainer (train the trainer) of OEGGO (Austrian Society of Group Dynamics and Organisational Development) and member of the board of OEGGO (2000-02 and 2012-18); facilitator at the Graduate School of Business of Stanford University (USA) 2011-15; member of the faculty of the Hernstein Institute; member of NTL (National Training Laboratories Institute, USA), photographer. She is a co-founder of COS Collective.

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## **Next New Action**

(3d)

*Assess your creative potential for leadership and consulting*

## **COS Curriculum Creators for Organisations & Society**

25 days & 1d/8h coaching for master's piece

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## **Creating my Master's piece**

Writers space \*

Photography & Film \*

Freestyle \*

\* choose one – or more (optional)

*Craft your ideas and developments and bring them into the world. Act!*

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## **Group in collective flow**

(5d)

*Deep dive generative group dynamics*

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## **Flow peer group**

(3 x 1d)

*Your homebase for orientation, integration & individual learning*

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## **COS Conference active participation**

(2,5d)

*Engage on stage, show your intention and action for organisations & society*

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## **Integrating somatic intelligence in high performance teams**

(4d)

*Awaken somatic intelligence for generative change*

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## **Whole System:**

**Co-Creating new structures for collaboration**

(2,5d)

*Futuring, working with large groups and networks for transformational change*

## The COS-Certified Curriculum “Creating Organisations & Society”

**New Creations** in Organisations & Society originate in the undivided source of sensing, feeling, thinking. Acting from there we make a difference. In this curriculum you will touch the source, develop your inner world and come out with new resources for action in the outer world. It’s challenging for you and others!

We designed the curriculum for **mindful people** who:

- Wish to live and work closer to their calling and aspiration.
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**Craft and manifest:** During your learning journey you are continuously crafting your own masters’ piece. This artistic, scientific or freestyle „piece

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**Your calling** triggers and shapes your learning journey throughout all modules. We support you in making a pearl-chain, your intentional learning process is the pearl string. – Beautiful!

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## **Become a Friend & Member of COS!**

Join the COS movement and become a Friend&Member of COS! COS is a home for reflective hybrids and a growing platform for co-creation of meaningful, innovative forms of working & living in and for organizations and society, between and beyond theory and practice. We invite you to become an active member of COS.

Being a part of COS you have access to our products and happenings. As a Friend&Member, you carry forward the COS intention of co-creating generative systems through mindful, fresh mind-body action. Let's connect in and for novel ways around the globe!

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- Development & transformation at COS-Creations Seminars
- Creative scientific publishing & reading between and beyond theory and practice
- COS LinkedIn Virtual Community
- And more ...

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## Join COS, a Home for Reflective Hybrids

The future is an unknown garment that invites us to weave our lives into it. How these garments will fit, cover, colour, connect and suit us lies in our (collective) hands. Many garments from the past have become too tight, too grey, too something...and the call for new shapes and textures is acknowledged by many. Yet changing clothes leaves one naked, half dressed in between. Let's connect in this creative, vulnerable space and cut, weave and stitch together.

Our target group is reflective hybrids – leaders, scientists, consultants, and researchers from all over the world who dare to be and act complex. Multi-layered topics require multidimensional approaches that are, on the one hand, interdisciplinary and, on the other hand, linked to theory and practice, making the various truths and perspectives mutually useful.

If you feel you are a reflective hybrid you are very welcome to join our COS movement, for instance by:

- Visiting our website: [www.cos-collective.com](http://www.cos-collective.com)
- Getting in touch with COS-Creations. A space for personal & collective development, transformation and learning. Visit our website: [www.cos-collective.com](http://www.cos-collective.com)
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- Becoming a member of our LinkedIn group: go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and type in "Challenging Organisations and Society.reflective hybrids" or contact Tonnie van der Zouwen: [office@cos-collective.com](mailto:office@cos-collective.com)

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