

**PRESS RELEASE,
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Hyphen-Labs: PushMi PullYu

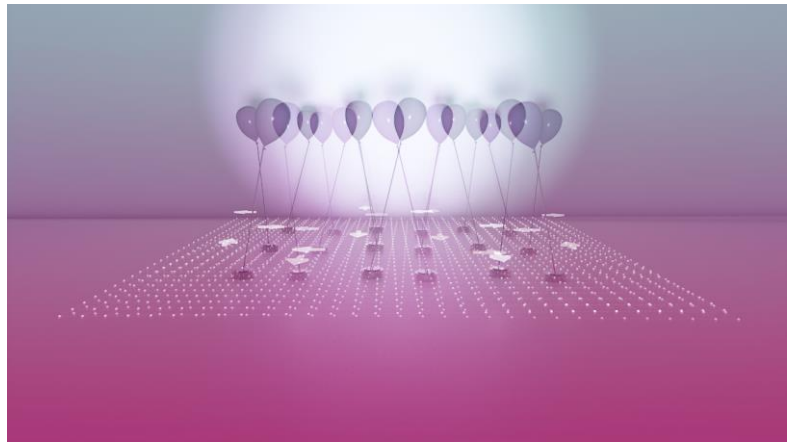
**Curated by
Christina Landbrecht and
Nele Heinevetter**

**Schering Stiftung ■ Unter
den Linden 32–34 ■ 10117
Berlin**

**Opening:
September 11, 2020,
12 noon–8 p.m.**

Duration: September 12–November 22, 2020

**Opening hours: Thursday and Friday, 1–7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.
Free admission**



How do we make decisions? And what role does our social environment play in this process? Through its solo exhibition “PushMi PullYu,” the international art and design studio Hyphen-Labs transforms the exhibition space of the Schering Stiftung into a place, where robots move freely as well as within set borders, sometimes even in the form of a shoal, and interact with one another and the visitors alike. In the installation, the way the robots move is on the one hand depending on the decisions the audience makes. On the other hand, they are responding to the behavior of the other robots. Thus, either independently or controlled by external forces the sensorimotor machines take over an exhibition space flooded with colored light.

The two Hyphen-Labs founders, Carmen Aguilar y Wedge and Ece Tankal, work at the intersection of technology, art, science, to respond to our past, explore our present condition, and speculate about our future. The intervention “PushMi PullYu” is inspired both by the swarm behavior observed in nature and by their dialogue with the neuroscientist John-Dylan Haynes, professor at the Berlin-based Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience. In 2008, Haynes’s experiments measured relevant brain signals already ten seconds before we make a conscious decision, thus giving a boost to proponents of determinism. In 2015, follow-up research by Haynes showed that these brain signals can be “overruled” by a conscious decision.

The exhibition navigates between the poles of free will and determinism, of individualism and collective behavior. Using Haynes’s studies as a backdrop, Hyphen-Labs collaborated with swarm intelligence researcher Dr. Mary Katherine Heinrich and creative technologists Kai Labs to re-program familiar housebound robots. Visitors are able to interact with these machines by activating either a red or blue light. This choice sends a message to the robots and alters their behavior. Ever-changing scenarios are created by means of human interventions and question the complex relations of body and mind, individual and group, man and machine.

Through “PushMi PullYu,” Hyphen-Labs invites us to take a contemporary look at the recurring question in science and philosophy of whether there is free will or whether our world is deterministic. How much leeway do individuals have when it comes to their actions, and how do individuals adapt their behavior to that of the group?

In addition to these questions, the installation “PushMi PullYu” also addresses the challenges we increasingly face due to the spread of machine learning: Intelligent machines exploit the predictability of human decision-making behavior in unexpected ways and, moreover, are already learning to develop novel ways of behavior – for example, by interacting with other intelligent machines.

Through “PushMi PullYu,” Hyphen-Labs invites the audience on a journey to the margins of consciousness and unconsciousness, of imagination and observation, and presents surprising insights into complex questions and issues.

Hyphen-Labs

Hyphen-Labs is an international studio working at the intersection of technology, art, science, and the future. Founded in 2014 by the Mexican-American engineer Carmen Aguilar y Wedge and the Turkish architect Ece Tankal, Hyphen-Labs collaborates with psychologists, programmers, artists, scientists, and professionals from all over the world. The studio uses its diverse expertise and the wide variety of cultural, critical, feminist, and scientific perspectives of its collaborators to develop works that engage with current social discourses and scientific issues and present technological innovations.

More information via:

www.scheringstiftung.de

The exhibition takes place in cooperation with Berlin Art Week.

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Rendering: Hyphen-Labs

Press pictures and inquiries:

Anna Papenburg
Project Manager, Art
Tel: 00 49.30.20 62 29 65
Fax: 00 49.30.20 62 29 61
papenburg@scheringstiftung.de