

THE CULTURE OF FALLING KILLS

An anti-post-humanist view

The works in the exhibition constitute an artistic enquiry around war, not as a solely historical or political event but also as a manifestation of violence as a phenomenon of man's inner aberration.

These allegorical creations, which allude to decorative porcelain objects, attempt a photographic rendering of an anatomy of the psychology of humans who, mainly at moments of fear, resort to violence or even killing in order to prevail, to survive, to vanquish, to win, to justify, to succeed. These are the ego's traits and aims which emerge in humans, in a distorted form, every time they are overwhelmed by a loss of the meaning of existence.

Tin soldiers, children's dolls, shop-window mannequins, the crocodile of Lacoste, toy guns, sheep and Barbie dolls—as selected items of mass culture—but also first-aid kits or military medication boxes built between 1950 and 1980 (and many of them presumably used in wars) make up the vocabulary of my visual idiom; each of these carries semantic connotations which expand as the items are sculpturally reworked. Symbols of violence, of innocence, of the tangible and the intangible, of truth and falsehood.

The way they are put together suggests a war where the vanquished is the easy-to-manage person whose fragile youthful innocence did not evolve into conscience but turned into passivity through a system which distorted him in exchange for convenience and sham happiness.

In our time, the power system—*surveillance capitalism*, as it is aptly called by Shoshana Zuboff—"...claims human experience".¹

Subjugation to the feudal system in Europe and beyond was never forgotten. In the current age power has changed form and is imposed through the manipulation of mass media and mass culture, which it tries to turn into its new weapons.

War is no longer waged with shots alone; it is waged through data, surveillance systems and algorithmic decisions that determine man's course just as much as a gun pointed at a face.

Our contemporary civilisation, as it increasingly forfeits the values on which it was originally founded, has uncritically adopted everything that promises false hopes.

Today's post-humanist philosophy promises some enticing and scientifically plausible answers to human problems as long as technology becomes part of the self, i.e. provided that man and machine are integrated.

The attempt now is for man to turn from creator of the machine to a component. Technology, which emerged as an extension of human creativity, now gradually becomes the new dominant mechanism—not just in practical terms but existentially, too. The body, the mind and our will are beginning to function in line with external norms.

"...Death is a technical problem that we can and should solve", writes Yuval Noah Harari, the contemporary exponent of post-humanist philosophical theory, in *Homo Deus*.²

If death is a mere technical problem, life is also degraded into a technical problem. Aside from the utopian expectations behind this narrative, the attempt is to refute the uniqueness of human nature and turn man into a "commodity".

At the other end of this approach there are major figures who claim that conscience can never be possessed by machines, and thus they demonstrate the limits of what is called Artificial General Intelligence. Roger Penrose,³ the 2020 Nobel Laureate in Physics for his Spacetime Singularity Theorem, opposes what is known as Strong AI or Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), which is clearly distinguished from the specialised or applied kind of Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI).

The tendency to deify Strong AI reminds us of the time when the then-latest technological achievements—baking earth into bricks and joining them with tar—led to a loss of the sense of measure and promoted the conviction that man could reach the sky with the aid of a technological project, the Tower of Babel—a venture which has since remained as a symbol of human vanity.

The future of humankind is entirely unpredictable and not subject to any planned objectives. Yet "...the past is [also] entirely unpredictable", according to French historian Laure Murat;⁴ many of the historical aphorisms and ideologies which are now seen as incontestable and have determined the present of contemporary humans may well be refuted in the future.

Contemporary humans have surrendered to this culture that wears them down on an existential level. They are full of traumas, visible or invisible. There is a dire need for some form of true healing, for an inner transformation.

Our civilisation seems to be calling out for help.

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1. "Sur-veil-lance Cap-i-tal-ism, *n.* (1). A new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction, and sales; (2). A parasitic economic logic in which the production of goods and services is subordinated to a new global architecture of behavioral modification; (3). A rogue mutation of capitalism marked by concentrations of wealth, knowledge, and power unprecedented in human history; (4). The foundational framework of a surveillance economy; (5). As significant a threat to human nature in the twenty-first century as industrial capitalism was to the natural world in the nineteenth and twentieth; (6). The origin of a new instrumentarian power that asserts dominance over society and presents startling challenges to market democracy; (7). A movement that aims to impose a new collective order based on total certainty; (8). An expropriation of critical human rights that is best understood as a coup from above: an overthrow of the people's sovereignty." In Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism; The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, <https://www.eecis.udel.edu/~mlm/teaching/Computing-For-Social-Good-s23/docs/The-Age-Of-Surveillance-Capitalism-Zuboff.pdf> - retrieved on 13.01.2026. Zuboff is a professor emerita at Harvard Business School.
2. Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, London: Random House, 2016.
3. Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
4. Laure Murat, *Qui annule quoi? sur la cancel culture*, Paris: Seuil, 2022. Murat is a French historian and professor of French Culture at UCLA.