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The Mutant Screen

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The Mutant Screen emerges as a patchwork of forms in erratic sociotechnical interdependence, like creatures in perpetual transformation excavating late Francoist cinema, dislocating, rewriting and remediating it, transforming it into a coven of insurrections and disobedience to the ontological impositions of what counts as one (or not), what is accessible to the gaze or what is contorted as a body. The *fantaterror* of the 1970s and 1980s is no longer a two-dimensional gallery of monsters and dismembered bodies and has become a broken canvas where the queer and the trans*, the dissident and the oppressed, find cracks through which to seep, vectors through which to expand.

The screen is neither static nor impermeable; it mutates, breathes, folds and iterates over time, and its body becomes collage, cut-up, remix and resistance. The reborn entity decomposes and recombines surfaces, wrenching them from their lethargy and returning them to an imagined present where—with renewed breath—they respire. It is not purely an image operation, but rather a media manoeuvre; a process and medium, a modelling, training from the complex ecology of practices that constitute 'AI'. The visible emerges after twisting digital mechanics, subjecting them to the forced labour of other representations. As a result, the cinematic creature not only represents, but also embodies a technique taken to the limit: Pol Merchan presents it at its point of overflow.

Fifty years after censored images, this entity rises up as a hybrid, genderless and voluble organism whose 3D models hang from algorithms undoubtedly trained for a different kind of consistency; its pseudo-digital guts and not-quite-pixel skin try out an expansion of the possible. Its existence is set in a game between

control and escape: if in the past the scissors of State censorship decided what could be seen, today artificial intelligence imposes its own visual hegemony, importing obligatory aesthetics and excluding forbidden areas such as nipples or genitals; an accentuation of the modern cisheteropatriarchal operation of normalising bodies and disciplining gazes. A regime of visibility that is not new at all, but has indeed been rendered on the basis that it is now governed by a computational script. It continues to impose boundaries on what can be represented, although what it operates today more than censorship is a technical blindness, a totalitarian hallucination set in the innovation logic of software and hardware devices that are (almost) inevitably aligned with the logics of the contemporary technocratic regime. Therein lies the junction between tools dependent on global standards and late Francoist censorship: it is therefore not about hiding representation, but of constructing a logistical apparatus that determines the topologies between the possible, the plausible and the impossible.

In this sense, *The Mutant Screen* introduces a paradigmatic shift that links present tensions with past wounds. Although it does not allow itself to be domesticated: it constantly contests its image, subverts its limits, turns latency into action and archive into living flesh. Who decides which images are allowed to breathe? *The Mutant Screen* tears through celluloid, shatters generative linearity, activates portals for existences yet to be imagined; it is wounded cinema that bleeds and is reborn, a conspiracy of images embracing the darkness and dancing on the rubble of history with the promise of surprising futures. Because the queer, the trans*, and the monstrous never disappears: it breaks; it deforms, continuing to pulsate beyond the limits of the screen.



The historical cultural archive of *fantaterror* is not a dead repository of images, but rather a battlefield where the spectrum of the visible and the unintelligible implodes, and it is here that *The Mutant Screen* operates as queer visual archaeology that amasses the silenced and the trapped on the margins of official history. Between layers of celluloid and flashes of found footage resonate gestures that have escaped the control of a dictatorial aesthetic administration. They are incarnations of forbidden desires, of identities that resist to be fixed, and yet the figuration of Frankenstein vibrates —once again — like an echo. For in *his* time, electrical energy gave life to artificial creatures, and in *our* time, this is done by renderings and the digital production technopolitics of bodily representations. The question remains: who controls the creation of the semiotic and technical conditions through which bodies emerge, position themselves and relate to each other?

The synthetic image imposes its hegemony in our most mundane environments, reinforcing canons, discarding everything that distances itself from its world model, confining the flesh to its own digital standards of HD visibility. *The Mutant Screen* intervenes by provoking creatures that disrupt the binary matrix, entities that exist in interference, in the failure of industrialised representation, sabotaging contemporary tools as a method of identifying the limits of the screen itself and inserting into it recomposed fragments of what has been systematically excluded, extracted and exploited.

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