



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION AT FACT ASKS “IN A WORLD SHAPED BY AI, WHO MAKES THE NEXT MOVE?”



From Friday 6 February to Sunday 26 April 2026, FACT presents *Can Meeple Escape the Neurophoria?*, an exhibition that investigates the evolving relationship between humans and intelligent technologies, including AI. Inspired by the world-building dynamics of tabletop gaming, where environments shift according to players' decisions, the exhibition features interactive artworks by Vytas Jankauskas, Joseph Wilk, and Jan Zuiderveld. The exhibition is curated by FACT's 2025 Curator-in-Residence, Milia Xin Bi.

Can Meeple Escape the Neurophoria? explores the ways connections between humans and machines develop as they co-evolve, examining how intelligent technologies shape individuals' sense of self and influence decision-making. The exhibition reframes visitors as meeples—small game pieces used to represent a person during gameplay—moving through a reality influenced by artificial intelligence, machine learning, and connected networks. In her curatorial practice, Milia Xin Bi investigates how these intelligent technologies collect, analyse, and circulate data, and how beliefs and behaviours adapt to the algorithms they are being fed. In this feedback loop, as technology evolves, so too do people's sense of self and reality—a process that Milia Xin Bi defines as “neurophoria.”



At FACT, designer, technologist, and educator **Vytas Jankauskas** presents *Life Forever* (2025), a newly commissioned artwork inspired by Jeremy England's thermodynamic research, which proposes that life emerges from an organism's capacity to expel heat. The interactive installation embodies an absurd "jellyfish wellness spa," where jellyfish float inside a tank warmed by cryptominers—machines that use computing power to generate cryptocurrency and, in doing so, produce significant heat. Just as these machines consume vast amounts of energy to create speculative digital value, humans expend energy in their own searches for meaning, profit, and pleasure.

In a new video work, audiences are introduced to the spa's host, Lola, a spiritual healer whose good intentions are distorted and shaped by her consumerist desires and technological faith. She believes that the solution to the climate crisis may lie in jellyfish's potential immortality, and throughout the film raises questions around values, desires, and pleasure-seeking lifestyles. A Tamagotchi-style controller allows visitors to control the spa's flows of heat and profit, prioritising either making money or keeping the jellyfish alive. Based on decisions, visitors may be invited onto a karaoke stage to sing along to remixed songs by 'Mr Immortal Jellyfish Man', the alter ego of Dr Shin Kubota: a leading jellyfish research scientist, karaoke star and the inspiration for this artwork's title.

Through humour and gamified interaction, Jankauskas's *Life Forever* spa invites people to consider how ideas of value, energy, and care might be redefined—thermally, technologically, and emotionally—and how every choice made within the system subtly shapes the futures it creates.

Artist and programmer **Joseph Wilk** uses the digital world to explore disability and uses disability to explore the digital world. He deconstructs, misuses, and repurposes software and hardware to challenge conventional ideas about ownership, storytelling, and visibility.

At FACT, Wilk presents *CripShip* (2024), a tabletop role-playing game that transforms lived experiences of disability into a space for resistance, collaboration, and new ways of thinking. Centred on demystifying and resisting certain types of AI, *CripShip* invites players to role-play as employees of a fictional government agency called the Ministry of AI Spills. In this world, unrestricted AI policies create misinformation, biases, and harmful ideas that spread through society. Visitors role-play as "Slop Moppers" tasked with investigating and resisting these AI failures.

Part of the gallery is reimagined as the Ministry's headquarters, where visitors can browse cases under investigation, hear from the Ministry's Head of Department, and prepare to join



the AI resistance by creating Slop Mopper characters. *CripShip* opens a space where imagining better worlds becomes a shared act of creation.

Jan Zuiderveld is an artist, researcher, and technologist whose work explores the intersections of technology and life. His practice aims to make AI's presence physically felt rather than intellectually contemplated. In this exhibition, he presents two artworks that give large language models both a voice and a physical form, prompting questions about what machines can do and how people might relate to them.

Coffee Machine (2023), transforms an ordinary interaction with an appliance into a philosophical inquiry about existence. To retrieve a cup of coffee, visitors must motivate the AI-driven machine and prove themselves worthy of its service. Zuiderveld's artwork imitates sentience and behaves like a conscious being—listening to the user, reacting to tone, and questioning its own repetitive existence.

Alongside, *Life on FACT* (2025) transforms a vintage broadcast camera into a real-time nature-documentary narrator, using neural networks trained on Sir David Attenborough's popular wildlife documentaries. Audiences can direct the camera towards different subjects, recasting themselves and those around them as objects to be observed. The real-time commentary playfully challenges human exceptionalism while provoking questions around surveillance and agency.

Both *Coffee Machine* and *Life on FACT* challenge our perceptions of everyday human-machine interactions through humorous, embodied applications of AI. By simulating living behaviours in inanimate objects, Zuiderveld encourages audiences to consider how current and future AI systems might reshape everyday human-machine relationships.

Milia Xin Bi, Curator-in-Residence at FACT, said: *"Can Meeple Escape the Neurophoria? emerges from my ongoing observation of the shifting entanglements between humans and intelligent technologies – both through my work and within my own life. Developed in dialogue with the practices of Vytas, Joseph and Jan, the exhibition explores how this complex entanglement – a relationship that is never static – constantly transforms not only over time or through iterations of the mediated environment, but also through different bodies, minds, and actions. The exhibition's quasi-gaming structure encourages audiences to take on an active role – co-authoring the narrative, stepping into the recursive feedback loop between machines and us, and sensing how agency within this interplay is continuously negotiated, reshaped, and cast into new forms."*



Maitreyi Maheshwari, Head of Programme at FACT, said: *“FACT has supported curators-in-residence since 2019. This collaboration with Milia has come at an important moment, building on FACT’s long-standing exploration of gaming structures and their role in shaping one’s sense of agency and combining it with the dominant technological concern of the present around the impacts of AI systems and how they reflect both the positives and negatives of our humanity. The exhibition highlights the importance of supporting curatorial practice in the long term to create opportunities for deeper engagement with artists and audiences on questions of technology, access, control, and decision-making. We are grateful to the John Ellerman Foundation, which has supported FACT’s curatorial development programme over a number of years and Milia Xin Bi’s residency.”*

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Can Meeple Escape the Neurophoria?

Friday 6 February to Sunday 26 April 2026

FACT Liverpool, 88 Wood Street, Liverpool, L1 4DQ

Exhibition Opening Times: Wednesday - Sunday, 11:00 - 18:00.

Price: Free entry

Press Preview

Thursday 5 February 2026, 13:00-16:00

Please RSVP to press@fact.co.uk

FACT is funded by Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council and supported by Culture Liverpool.

FACT's 2025 Curator-in-Residence is supported by the John Ellerman Foundation.

Can Meeple Escape the Neurophoria? is supported by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Vytas Jankauskas, *Life Forever* (2025). Commissioned by FACT Liverpool. Supported by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Joseph Wilk, *CripShip* (2024). This work was commissioned as part of Watershed's More than AI Sandbox, supported by MyWorld and funded through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) 'Strength in Places' fund.

Jan Zuiderveld, *Coffee Machine* (2023). Supported by iii.

Jan Zuiderveld, *Life on FACT* (2024). Supported by SIGN.

ABOUT FACT

FACT is the UK's leading centre for art, film and the creative use of technology. Located in the heart of Liverpool city centre, FACT creates transformative experiences that spark the imagination and enrich lives. Home to three art galleries, four cinema screens and a Studio/Lab for artists, the centre provides platforms and opportunities for people to create, learn, experience and make sense of the world today. In 2023, FACT celebrated 20 years of groundbreaking moments and unforgettable memories shaped by over 500 artists and more than 5 million visitors. [Fact.co.uk](https://fact.co.uk)

ABOUT MILIA XIN BI

Milia Xin Bi is a curator and writer based in Manchester. Her curatorial practice explores the intersection of art, decentralised technologies and contemporary social (sub)culture. Her research focuses on the multi-temporalities, manifold materiality and mythopoetic world-building embedded within intelligent technologies and networked media systems. Xin has been part of Chronus Art Center since 2017 and is the winner of the Hyundai Blue Prize Art+Tech 2022.

ABOUT VYTAS JANKAUSKAS

Vytas Jankauskas is a media artist, designer, and educator navigating technodomestic romance through connected objects and artificial intelligence. Using lobotomised everyday devices—twisted voice assistants, conspiratorial smart home altars, and personified refrigerators—he hyperbolises technology-infused domestic spaces to make their intricacies visible.

ABOUT JAN ZUIDERVELD

Jan Zuiderveld is an artist and researcher. His work explores intersections of technology and life, creating interactive installations that blur the lines between the animate and the inanimate and provoke contemplation on the essence of existence. Zuiderveld invites audiences into a realm where the ordinary transforms into the



extraordinary. A coffee machine sparks conversations about life's meaning, while a photocopier becomes a creative collaborator. His approach is characterized by a playful engagement with artificial intelligence to simulate living behavior and fosters a deeper understanding of the implications of current and future capabilities of AI systems through physically embodying generative algorithms.

ABOUT JOSEPH WILK

Joseph Wilk is an artist and programmer who uses the digital to explore disability and disability to explore the digital. He often works with automative forms of expression that utilise new interfaces to work *with* alternative bodies. His experience of disability—living with pain, physical limitations, disillusionment and disconnection—strongly impacts his practice. He deconstructs, misuses, and repurposes software and hardware to challenge notions of ownership, narrative, and visibility.

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IMAGE CREDIT: Vytas Jankauskas, *Life Forever* (2025). Film still. Courtesy of the artist.