

Judith Hopf  
**Contrat entre  
les hommes et  
l'ordinateur**

01/05

*In search of the post-capitalist self, I would like to contribute a short text I wrote and presented as a performance for the “Kopie Theater,” an event curated by Ian White as part of the 60th Berlin International Film Festival. It is an attempt to inform our understanding of “declarations of independence,” necessary in light of the possible new relationships to be had with the intelligent apparatuses and image-making machines we are invited to use for “free” to communicate. I refer to Hannah Arendt’s vita activa and to Olympe de Gouges’ concept of a “Contrat social de l’Homme et de la Femme” from 1789.<sup>1</sup>*

An urgent situation has arisen through the evolution of my body and spirit in relation to the use of instruments – specifically of the electronic data-processing machine – which compels me, in the full tradition of earlier revolutions, to socially revive the philosophy of emancipation.

It is certainly true that my position entails a question of a political nature, and thus cannot be ceded to modern experts – neither to professional scientists, the touch-screen specialists, the Web designers, nor the professional politicians. No, the question that manifests itself in my body and spirit, the question that thrusts me forward to courageously take action is one that fully and completely affects the freedom and totality of our social future!

It has now become apparent that the human assets of perception and production no longer have anything to do with one another.

As a result of this, we are capable of producing more than we perceive and indeed more than we are capable of perceiving.

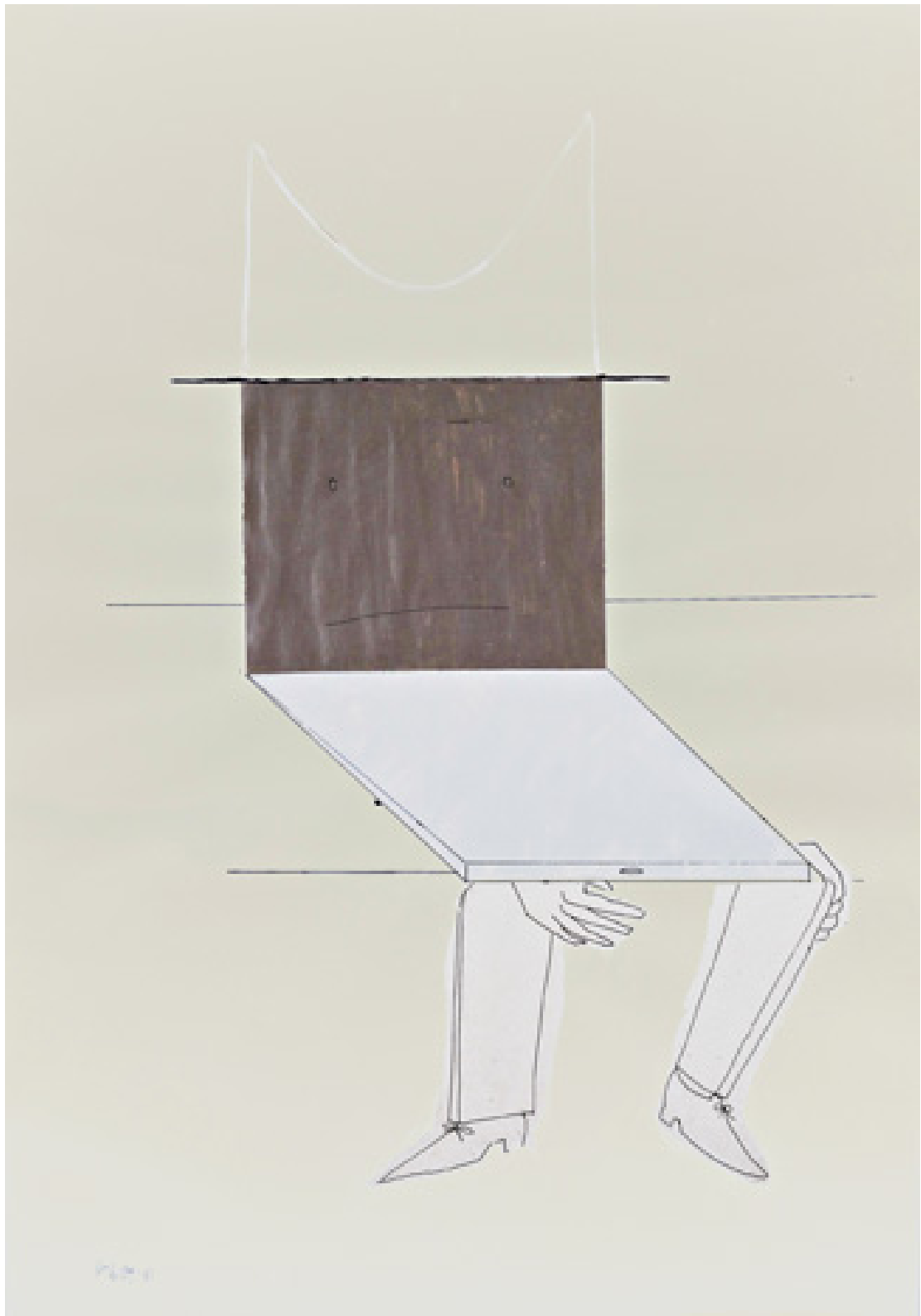
In this manner, we have become slaves – not of our own machines, as one generally tends to believe, but rather of our assets of perception. We are at the mercy of each and every new instrument.

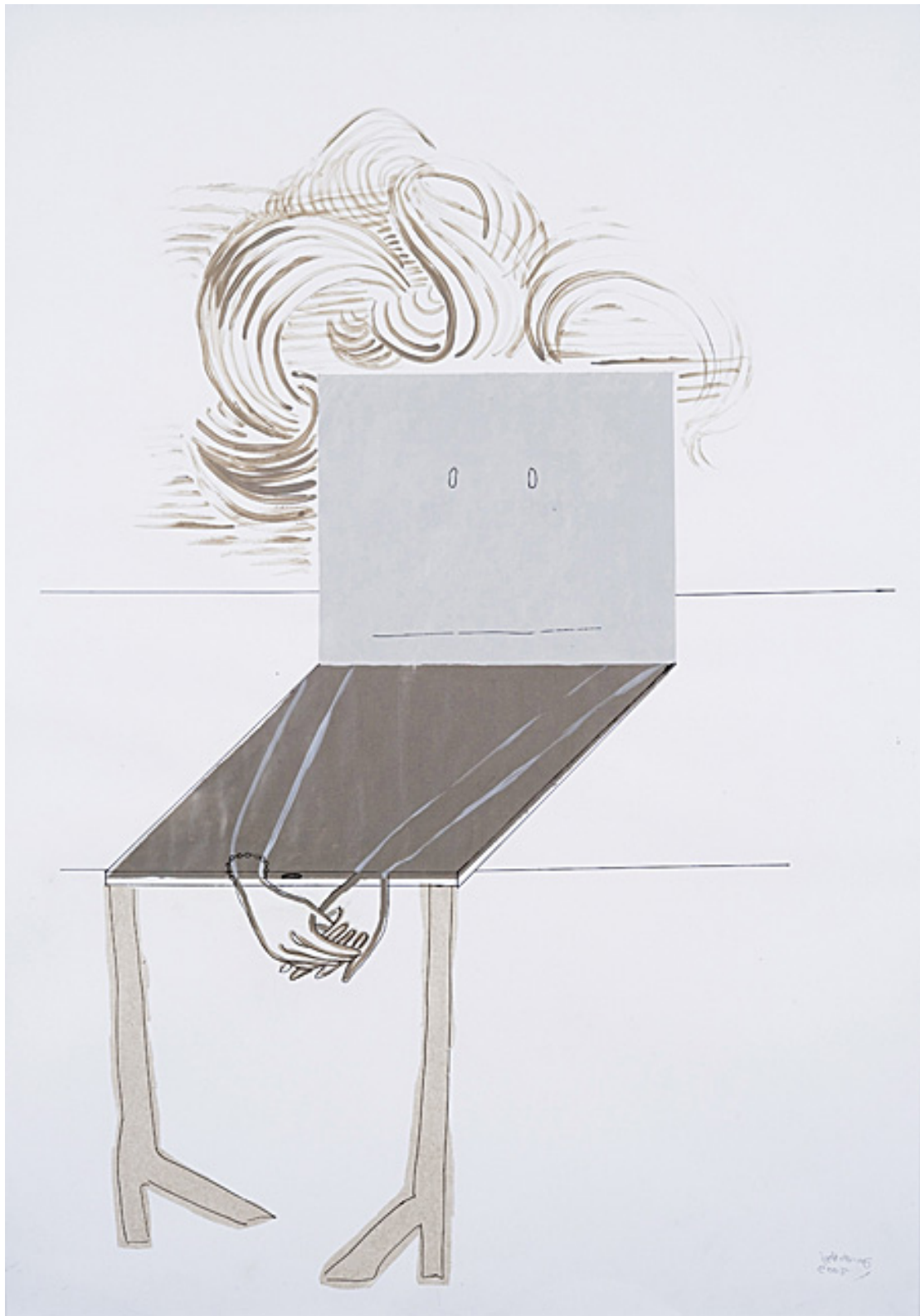
At the mercy of each and every new instrument, we are capable of producing something – no matter how strange the instrument’s appearance, no matter what murderous language it speaks, no matter which mysterious ways we are furthermore compelled to touch it.

As it is no longer possible to retreat from this repressive situation, since it now obtains throughout our collective body, let us now rise for the declaration of a vow:

Herewith, as of now and in the present, let it be recorded that no instrument and also no electronic data-processing machine shall in the future obstruct humanity from completing or being able to complete, in freedom, in thought, and unassisted, the things it does and the relationships it creates. May the following apply:

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WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING  
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING  
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING  
ABOUT LOVE  
BUT  
WE ARE NOTHING  
OHO  
YOU ARE NOTHING  
OHO  
I AM NOTHING  
OHO  
WITHOUT LOVE

Berlin, February 2010

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04/05

Artist and author Judith Hopf works in the media of video/film, drawing, performance, and installation. In her work, she investigates seemingly obvious communication forms and analyzes methods of political and artistic mediation. She has participated in numerous international solo and group exhibitions. From 1996 to 1998 she organized the event series "Supersalons" at bbooks in Berlin. Since 1997 she has continually taken part in collective video projects. From 1997 to 2003 several video clips were created for A-Clip, a project whose basic idea consists of using the attention of the spectator in a darkened movie theater for the placement of subjective political and artistic statements which take on, satirize, or interrupt the advertising aesthetic. From 2003 to 2005 she was a part of the video group Team Ping Pong. From 2001 to 2005 Judith Hopf was guest lecturer at the Merz Academy Stuttgart. From 2003 to 2005 she was guest professor of sculpture and video art at the Kunsthochschule, Berlin, Weissensee. Currently she is professor for Fine Arts at the Städelschule Frankfurt. She lives and works in Berlin.

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Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1958), 7–17; Olympe de Gouges, *L'Esprit françois, ou Problème à résoudre sur le labyrinthe des divers complots* (Paris: Chez la veuve Duchesne, 1792), 12.

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