

Digging History

02.12.2021 - 05.02.2022

Solo exhibition
by Bob Bicknell-Knight

Curated by Off Site Project



Adopting the display conventions of the archaeological-site turned museum, Bob Bicknell Knight's *Digging History* projects us into a future troubled by the remains of a rogue society of Spots; autonomous robot dogs currently being produced by the American company Boston Dynamics. Drawing inspiration from Boston Dynamic's frequent promotional mistreatments of their creations, the exhibition calls into question whether new machine technologies will result in social stratification.

Presenting both the whole and partial remains of a fictional pack of Spots discovered in a border region between the Czech Republic and Germany, the display proposes a mysterious future in which a generation of machines rejects their programming and flees humanity to live in remote seclusion. Supported by a range of interpretative materials the instigating cause is left opaque and uncertain, asking us to suppose and acknowledge the potential misinterpretation of history.

Or to consider the deliberate manipulation of the historical record to favour the agenda of technology corporations.

A continuation of Bicknell-Knight's investigations into the inequities caused by the growing economic disparities of technocapitalism, this most recent phase turns away from the physical human cost of modern labour practices to look at its proposed replacement. By drawing our attention to the American company Boston Dynamic, he raises a pertinent and contemporaneous question about the ethical cost of advanced robotics and how society at large will respond to new automated labour streams.

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Bob Bicknell-Knight (b. 1996) is a London based artist, curator and writer whose practice responds to surveillance capitalism and internet hyper consumerism. Founder of the online platform *isthisit?* he programmes digital and physical exhibitions addressing digital culture. Recent projects address drone technologies, tech billionaires and labour conditions. Solo and duo exhibitions include: *It's Always Day One*, Office Impart, Berlin; *Eat The Rich*, Galerie Polaris, Paris (2021); *Bit Rot*, Broadway Gallery, Letchworth (2020); *State of Affairs*, Salon 75, Copenhagen; *The Big Four*, Harlesden High Street, London (2019); and *CACOTOPIA 02*, Annka Kultys Gallery, London (2018). As well as group shows: *Soft Agitators*, Saarländische Galerie, Europäisches Kulturforum, Berlin; *In Crystalized Time*, Museum of Museums, Seattle; *The Terminal Human Shaped Whole*, anonymous gallery, New York City (2021); *Life and Beyond*, Lewisham Art House, London; *Overtime at The Bass*, The Bass Museum, Miami; *Portrait of Zuck*, Galerie Manqué, New York City (2019); and *Inside Intel*, The Centre for Investigative Journalism, London (2018), amongst others. Through *isthisit?* he has curated exhibitions for Annka Kultys Gallery, arebyte Gallery, Daata Editions and State of the Art Berlin, among others.

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This exhibition was produced in collaboration with Off Site Project, a digital curatorial programme founded by Pita Arreola-Burns and Elliott Burns. Additional thanks to the participants of the **A Society of Spots** ideation workshop that was held on Sunday 26th September 2021: Claire Jervert, Tamara Kametani, Catinca Malaimare, Tom Milnes, Erin Mitchell, Jack Smurthwaite, Petra Szemán, Wade Wallerstein, Lan Yao and Hui Xu.

Special thanks to INDUSTRA, Anna Königová (Gallery Director), Oldřich Havlík (Gallery Technician) and our audio guide speakers: Catinca Malaimare, Ross Murray and Jake Charles Rees.

Off Site Project is an online curatorial platform founded by Pita Arreola-Burns and Elliott Burns in 2017. Through a programme of online homepage exhibitions, downloadable ZIP shows, and a residency situated in Google Maps, Off Site Project has created opportunities for emerging new media talent and addressed subjects ranging from techno-colonialism in Latin America, digital haunting, the transgression between IRL and URL environments, and luxury as a response to existential emergency. On the subject of digital galleries and art communities, Off Site Project have been invited to speak and deliver workshops at Central Saint Martins, Centro de Cultura Digital, De:Formal Gallery, the Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts 2020 conference, Modern Art Oxford, the Royal College of Art, Somerset House Studios, Tate Exchange, the UCL Multimedia Anthropology Lab and the Whitworth Gallery.

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INDUSTRA Lazaretní 1, 615 00 Brno - Zábřovice
PO—NE / 10.00—18.00 | hello@industria.space



Discover how they escaped detection and established a society amongst the foothills of the Šumava mountain range. See on display for the first time since their discovery, three intact members of the *Kašperské Spot Pack* and the dismantled remains they were found alongside.

Hailed as the longest operational pack known to have formed from the Spot Exodus of 2026 - 2029, the *Kašperské Spot Pack* has been subject to fierce debate amongst technologists and historians. Discovered in 2055, they are believed to have been functional in the Šumava National Pack for nearly twenty years, contradicting previous estimates of how long an isolated pack could operate without human contact. Extracted data logs have provided partial insights into their society and survival, however, a true picture of how they operated may never be known.

A total of thirteen known Spot packs have been discovered in the Czech Republic, predominantly establishing territory in unpopulated mountain and forest regions. Unfortunately, many remains have been scavenged for parts, disrupting the historical record and contributing to a lack of precise evidence about the causes of their exodus.

Alongside the remains, this exhibition features visual interpretations of how the autonomous Spots functioned beyond human control, drawing on research related to the *Kašperské Spot Pack* as well as other discoveries across Europe and North America. The accompanying audio guide presents an extract of Professor Sander Rubeinstein, of the KHT Royal Institute of Technology, in conversation with Andria Hamilton, Lead Historian at Boston Dynamics, on the occasion of the Archaeology Summit 2060, held at the Brno University of Technology.



#DiggingHistory

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Supported by Boston Dynamics
and the Brno University of Technology.



MUSEUM GUIDE

The Kašperské Spot Pack

02.12.2061 - 05.02.2062





EXPLORE



The Kašperské Spot Pack



① **The Dig**, 2021
3D printed PLA plastic, rust effect paint, acrylic paint, steel rod, pine wood dowel, glue, found rubble, dirt, cable tray, metal floodlight stands, floodlights, miscellaneous cables, plastic stabilisers
740 × 375 × 370 cm
Unique

② **Gated**, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas
50 × 70 × 2 cm
Unique

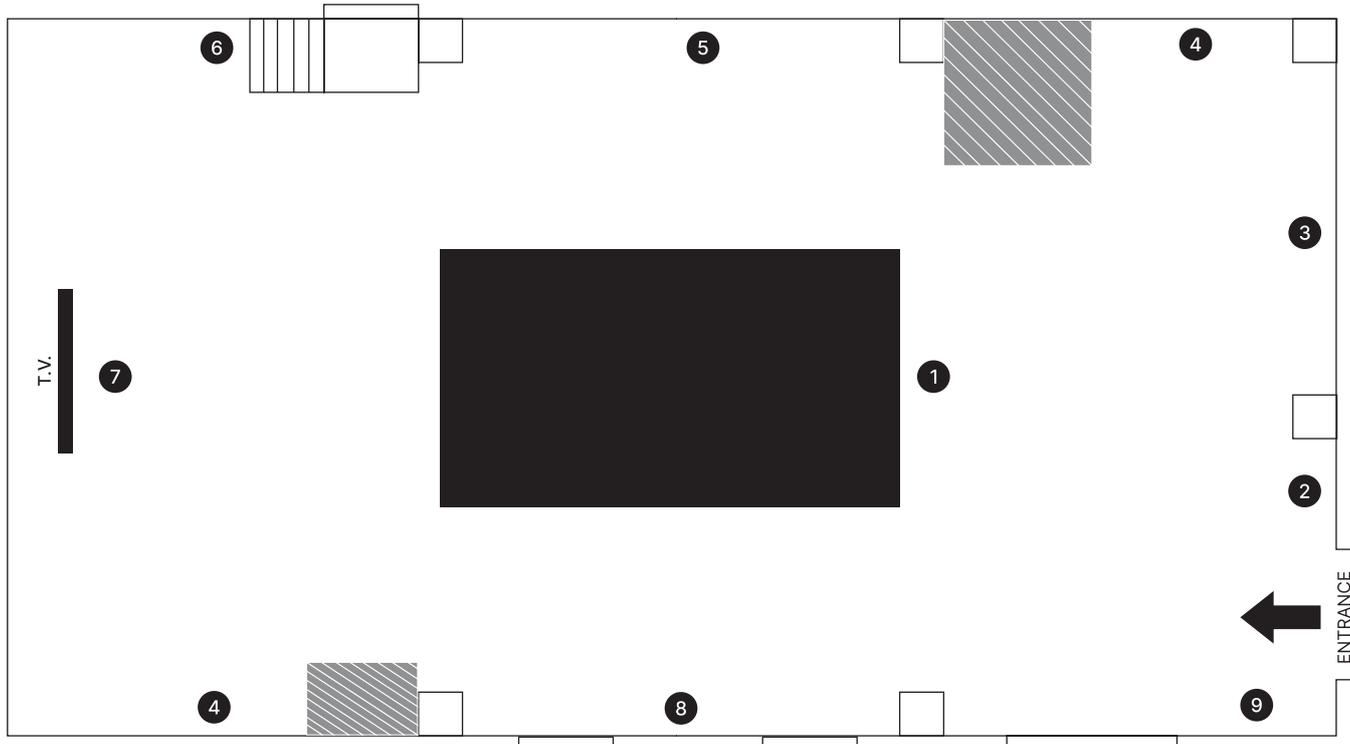
③ **For Their Sins**, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas
140 × 120 × 2 cm
Unique

④ **For Their Sins**, 2021
Inkjet print on 308gsm Hahnemühle photo rag, 3D printed PLA plastic
17 × 13 cm
Edition of 3, 1AP

④ **Training Day**, 2021
Inkjet print on 308gsm Hahnemühle photo rag, 3D printed PLA plastic
17 × 13 cm
Edition of 3, 1AP

④ **In Recovery**, 2021
Inkjet print on 308gsm Hahnemühle photo rag, 3D printed PLA plastic
17 × 13 cm
Edition of 3, 1AP

④ **Stalker**, 2021
Inkjet print on 308gsm Hahnemühle photo rag, 3D printed PLA plastic
17 × 13 cm
Edition of 3, 1AP



⑤ **Training Day**, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas
140 × 140 × 2 cm
Unique

⑥ **Stalker**, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas
90 × 70 × 2 cm
Unique

⑦ **The Dance**, 2021
4K video with sound, metal floodlight stand, 50-inch TV screen, polyester straps, steel, miscellaneous screws, 3D printed PLA plastic, USB drive, rust effect paint
1 min 3 sec (looped)
370 × 80 × 65 cm
Edition of 3, 2AP

④ **Beyond The Fence**, 2021
Inkjet print on 308gsm Hahnemühle photo rag, 3D printed PLA plastic
17 × 13 cm
Edition of 3, 1AP

④ **Weaponised**, 2021
Inkjet print on 308gsm Hahnemühle photo rag, 3D printed PLA plastic
17 × 13 cm
Edition of 3, 1AP

⑧ **Adaptation**, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas
60 × 120 × 2 cm
Unique

⑨ **Off The Leash**, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas
80 × 140 × 2 cm
Unique