

7 } 9 February 2025

THE MODELS

endless AI-generated improv theatre
installation by **dmstfctn**



**Tecnopolo Manifattura
Data Valley Hub**
Bologna

Free entry

Opening

Friday February 7

h. 18-20

Then

February 8-9

h. 10-18

THE MODELS

Installation by **dmstfctn**

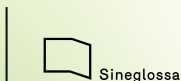
Curated by **Sineglossa**

Music by **Hero Image**

Additional game development by **Jenn Leung**

Special thanks **Museo dei burattini di Budrio** and **Castello dei Burattini - Museo Ferrari di Parma**

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Within



THE MODELS

[20
25]

By **dmstfctn**

The explosion of generative AI has amplified disinformation phenomena, challenging the very concept of truth. While fake news is nothing new, today it is easier than ever to produce and spread. The need to address this issue has led to the emergence of debunkers, professionals who systematically expose unreliable content with precise arguments.

However, conspiracy theorists, and not only them, are often unwilling to accept these “tedious killjoys” who coldly present numbers and sources. What is needed instead are new, wondrous stories that preserve the core of truth. If debunking proves ineffective, then pre-bunking becomes essential: preventive strategies that help people recognize and counter fake news by exposing them to examples of disinformation. A kind of vaccine that generates antibodies capable of identifying deceptive content. *The Models* is one such example.

Developed using the *Leonardo supercomputer*, *The Models* explores truth, wonder, and the quirks of generative AI through the improvisational theatrical tradition of *Commedia dell'Arte*.

The installation consists of an endless series of theatrical sketches, animated in real-time within a 3D game engine and performed by a cast of digital masks acting in the style of *Commedia dell'Arte*. These characters scheme, invent, conspire, or make trivial mistakes, embodying both the archetypal traits of masks such as Arlecchino, Balanzone, Colombina, Pantalone, Brighella, and Pulcinella, as well as the tendencies observed in Large Language Models—the foundational systems behind generative artificial intelligence, from which the installation also takes its name. *The Models* is based on an AI model system created by the artists, with the support of computer scientists from Cineca, to generate dialogues that emphasize these tendencies.

Each digital scene features a scenic backdrop painted in the early 1900s, sourced from the collection of Budrio's Puppet Museum - 64 backdrops

are used representing nighttime, festive, urban, natural and interior scenes. The masks' aesthetic is inspired by paper silhouettes created by the Frabboni theatrical company of Bologna in the early 20th century, sourced from the puppet collection of the Ferrari Museum in Parma.

Through their mobile devices, the audience can interact with the installation by introducing props that represent superstitions, conspiracy theories, or simple lazzi, interludes typical of Commedia dell'Arte; selecting the tendencies they wish to observe in the AI on stage; and throwing coins and flowers, tomatoes and eggs, in keeping with the tradition of Italian Commedia dell'Arte.

The Models (2025) is developed by London-based artist duo dmstfctn (Oliver Smith, Francesco Tacchini), with additional development by Jenn Leung, and music by Hero Image.

We would like to thank Morena Diazzi, Cristina Ambrosini, Sanzio Bassini, Antonella Guidazzoli, Maria Chiara Liguori, Donatella Sforzini, Luca Mattei, Silvano Imboden, Barbara Busi, Serena Maioli, Sara Tonelli, Wu Ming 2, Lorenzo Balbi, Luca Baraldi and Ilaria Bonacossa for their help in making this project possible.

Language: Italian with English subtitles.

How to interact:

- 1.** Scan the QR code displayed on screen using your phone - this will redirect you to themodels.org
- 2.** Press "join" to indicate that you are ready to interact - you will be placed into a queue.
- 3.** When you reach the top of the queue you will see a description of the upcoming scene and will be asked to compose the scene. Choose either a prop to guide the scene, or an AI model to be featured in the scene with the tendency to either lie, be friendly and servile, or be antagonistic.
- 4.** As the play unfolds, throw coins and flowers if you like what you hear, or tomatoes and eggs if you dislike - this may cut the scene short.



Installation by

dmstfctn

dmstfctn (f.k.a Demystification Committee), is a London-based artist duo formed by Oliver Smith and Francesco Tacchini, working with installation, performance, films, and video games. Their work has focused on opaque systems of power such as information networks, financial markets, offshore capital and, more recently, machine intelligence. dmstfctn often directly involve their audiences in their work, inviting them into the 'demystification' of systems by replicating and replaying them, and into their 'remystification' by building worlds, characters and myths atop them. Since 2018, dmstfctn have performed and exhibited internationally in venues such as Berghain, Serpentine, HKW and Onassis, and at festivals such as Unsound, CTM, transmediale, Impakt. In 2021, Krisis Publishing released *ECHO FX*, the duo's show about Brexit market manipulation later also included in Ø (Flatlines/Hyperdub). In 2019, Mille Plateaux released *Flash Demons*, a collection of AV performances focusing on financial market crashes.

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Read the artists
interview



Listen to the
podcast



Curated by



Sineglossa

Sineglossa is a cultural organisation, based in Ancona and Bologna, that promotes the emerging of new models of sustainable development by applying contemporary art processes. Through the contamination between humanistic and scientific disciplines, we search for beautiful, sustainable and inclusive solutions. We create hybrid ecosystems involving artists, scientists, entrepreneurs and humanists - but also universities, public administrations and local communities. We believe in the fundamental social role of culture and strive to promote culture-based innovation. We are an official partner of the New European Bauhaus and curate Mangrovia, a magazine that tells other stories about culture, technology and society.

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CINECA

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In line with its institutional mission, Cineca supports scientific research through supercomputing, fostering technological innovation and digital transition. It offers integrated solutions and services for universities, research centers, and institutions.

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