

PRESS RELEASE**The Origin of Life**

by

Dean Kenning**Exhibition: 20 March–28 April 2019****Open Wednesday-Sunday 11-5pm****Dean Kenning's Stuck Machines: the artist in conversation with Emma Hart
Saturday 27 April at 4pm***In the beginning was the machine...*

Dean Kenning explores political and philosophical material through kinetic sculptures, videos and diagrams. For this new Beaconsfield commission, the artist brings the historic, creaking floor of the former Ragged School into play with an interactive sound installation, including 22 singular sculptures, where flaccid rubber 'fingers' concoct random symphonies, uncannily triggered by the movement of visitors.

The title of the project is taken from a Soviet book by the same name, wherein an account of Charles Darwin's work of scientific theory, *The Origin of the Species* (1859), is given through the prism of the Communist philosophy of Friedrich Engels (1820-1895).

Kenning's creative gesture is realised as a joke: he connects this collection of automated sculptures with the non-mechanistic philosophy of vitalism, whereby things come to life by being plugged in, rather than through an unknowable life-force and the visceral is only alluded to through the use of fetishistic silicon rubber. By presenting sculptures that confront the viewer as agitated living 'things', the artist's aim is to portray an uncanny vitalism through simple mechanical means that troubles ideas of life and non-life.

In the Lower space, Kenning shows two video works of political intent; *Luxury Zone* (silent 8:56) and *Meltdown Economics* (4:07). These works utilise crude, DIY special effects to affectively heighten contemporary socio-political concerns. The two expressions of Kenning's art are bridged by a recent series of diagrammatic Risographs.

With special thanks to Lee Holden, George Meadows, Carla Reyes, Joey Ryken, Nick Ferguson and Rose Siderfin-Cockett.

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Dean Kenning's previous solo exhibitions have taken place at Piper Keys, Five Years and Space Station Sixty-Five and he has exhibited internationally in group shows including at the ICA, Greene Naftali and BAK. He is a member of the Capital Drawing Group and the Social Morphologies Research Unit. He has published articles in journals such as Third Text, Art Monthly and Mute, including on the politics of art and art education. He is a Researcher at Kingston School of Art and also teaches Fine Art at Central St Martins.