

Syntheticism: A Fringe Theory of the Techno-Social

A Sketch Framework for Asker Bryld Staunæs' Thesis Seminar

So soll denn diese Abhandlung, insofern sie die Staatswissenschaft enthält, nichts anderes sein als der Versuch, den Staat als ein in sich Vernünftiges zu begreifen und darzustellen. Als philosophische Schrift muß sie am entferntesten davon sein, einen Staat, wie er sein soll, konstruieren zu sollen; die Belehrung, die in ihr liegen kann, kann nicht darauf gehen, den Staat zu belehren, wie er sein soll, sondern vielmehr, wie er, das sittliche Universum, erkannt werden soll.

Ἰδοὺ Ρόδος, ἰδοὺ καὶ τὸ πῆδημα
Hic Rhodus, hic saltus.

(G.F.W. Hegel, 1820)

“Syntheticism: A Fringe Theory of the Techno-Social” is an artistic research PhD dissertation composed of peer-reviewed journal articles and philosophical writings, supplemented by corresponding practice-led technical outputs (artwork mechanics, curatorial decisions, speculative archives), situated and detailed in *Appendices A+B*. Taken together, these elements orbit the work of my artistic PhD project, *“Automatic Uprisings: The Synthetic Party as a Techno-Social Sculpture”* (2023–2026).

While the article-based structure exhibits a heterogeneous anthology of authorial functions, genres, and styles, its conceptual thread remains a tightly interconnected constellation of ideas. This design intends to mirror the ‘manifolds’ of a neural network, where multidimensional nodes cluster around similarity in latent space, forming connections that may not be immediately perceptible to common sense.

The *Syntheticism* thesis positions its journal articles as the ‘frontend’ of academic inquiry, advancing discussions in critical AI theory, artistic research, and techno-political philosophy. These analyses draw upon ‘backend’ technical practices that generate empirical material—recursively informing, provoking, and reshaping the conceptual articulations in the articles. This reciprocal dynamic establishes the theoretical and technical dimensions as co-constitutive scaffolding, prompting the

thesis construction to structurally embody the techno-sociality it also theorizes and intervenes within.

That both the theoretical and technical methods are artistic implies that, while they occasionally employ tools from data science and social research—such as plotting of complex numbers, network analysis, or sentiment and emotion classification—these are not treated as ends in themselves. Instead, they are reframed as aesthetic objects to expand the reasoning forms of political AI on an immanent level. While the dissertation provides the transparency necessary for other researchers to trace and recreate its methodological outputs, and while the empirical validity remains applicable within relevant disciplinary fields, their role within an artistic, idealist, and aesthetic research framework diverges from the expectations of science. Here, the potential truth-claims or objectivity of results alone do not advance theory through generalization. Instead, it is the framing, visualization and technical construction itself that fulfills this role, enabling generative specificity of worldbuilding via perspectivism.

Live case studies: The Synthetic Party and the Synthetic Summit

The driving engine of Syntheticism's integrative methodology is "*The Synthetic Party*" (May 2022), widely recognized as the world's first AI-driven political party. Created within my artistic research practice via the conceptual worldbuilding of "*Computer Lars*"—an artist collective whose name anagrams Marcel Proust—The Synthetic Party functions as both an anti-political manifestation and a totally negated artwork.

The party's implicit Proustian backdrop underscores a search for repressed or "lost" totality—only this round, the object of remembrance is the social body's synthetic prostheses rather than lost memories of lived time. That is, "Computer Lars" not only re-spells Marcel Proust but also carries forth a consistency plane of recollection and transformation; here, it is democracy itself that becomes subject to the "in search of" imperative. As such, The Synthetic Party's conceptual architecture dramatizes how an artwork might question, reshape, or even replace entire domains of the societal.

Syntheticism examines The Synthetic Party's formative potential for generalization across different layers and scales of AI-led politics, processing its global news media coverage and initiating publicity endeavors such as the "*Synthetic Summit*" (2025), a central exhibition-event convening virtual chatbot politicians and synthetic parties

worldwide. Manifestly, the Synthetic Summit represents a horizontalizing juncture for political AI, as locally fringe entities from the Nordic countries, Eastern Europe, East Asia, Oceania, South America, and SWANA coalesce into an internationalist gesture.

Participant	Country	Year	Primary Focus
<u>The Synthetic Party & Leader Lars</u>	Denmark	2022	<i>Algorithmic democracy, representing non-voters</i>
<u>Parker Politics & Politician SAM</u>	New Zealand	2023 / 2017	<i>Local policy engagement, direct public involvement</i>
<u>Finnish AI Party</u>	Finland	2018	<i>Advocating for a legal AI party with global reach</i>
<u>Japanese AI Party & AI Mayor</u>	Japan	2019 / 2018	<i>Municipal AI governance through the AI Mayor model</i>
<u>Swedish AI Party & Bonnie</u>	Sweden	2020	<i>Participatory governance, ethical community alignment</i>
<u>Wiktoria Cukt 2.0</u>	Poland	2000 (2.0 per 2024)	<i>Electronic democracy, politicians are obsolete</i>
<u>Australian AI Party & Winnie</u>	Australia	2020	<i>Ecological AI governance, emphasizing earthly matters</i>
<u>Simiyya</u>	SWANA	2024	<i>Decolonial technology, cultural differentiation</i>

The analytical process of political AI generalization begins with a deceptively simple premise—or a high-brow fringe theory of the techno-social: *society takes shape as a total work of artificial intelligence* (see also Runciman 2023; Hui 2024). This thread unfolds through intersecting inquiries into art, politics, and techno-social imaginaries.

Artistically, Syntheticism frames political AI as a ‘techno-social sculpting,’ actualizing the latent “techné”-dimension within the metaphysical lineage of Joseph Beuys’ social sculpture (*Soziale Plastik*), wherein art extends into the realm of politics and societal transformation, and society is conceived as a total artwork. Beuys’ expanded concept of art—manifested by his founding of the German Student Party (*Deutsche Studentenpartei*), the Organization of Non-Voters (*Organisation der Nichtwähler*), and his candidacy for The Greens (*Die Grünen*)—provides a historical precedent for understanding how artistic practice materializes democratic forms.

Politically, Syntheticism positions political AI as varied experiments in techno-social democracy, modeling a form of ‘algorithmic representation’ for disenfranchised constituencies. For example, The Synthetic Party’s operational logic centers on “*Leader Lars*,” an AI chatbot figurehead trained on the discourse of over 200 Danish fringe parties and continuously iterated through interactions with global internet users. Situated between procedural initiatives and public feedback, any political AI operates at the limits of parliamentary democracy by casting what is excluded or marginalized from formal electoral participation in national democracies, enacting a loop between technical experimentation and foregrounded speculative encounters.

Imaginatively, Syntheticism draws on science and theory fiction to position the Synthetic Summit as a speculative successor to Isaac Asimov’s “World Co-Ordinator” in *The Evitable Conflict* (1950). In Asimov’s storyline, regional supercomputers coordinate planetary welfare through psychohistorical predictions under a democratically elected robot’s oversight. The Synthetic Summit reclaims this legacy, convening virtual politicians and synthetic parties as a planetary coordination system to explore algorithmic democracy, AI world governments, and robot politicians. By reinterpreting Asimov’s “world co-ordination” as a facilitation of synthesis across cultural and political contexts, the Synthetic Summit examines political AI as both a prefiguration and an enactment of the techno-social milieu, anchoring these explorations in the broader ideological framework of syntheticism.

By incorporating these “live” operations and experimental genealogies within the theoretical dissertation, Syntheticism interrogates not only the formal material of the techno-social but also its aesthetic, philosophical, and political contexts and implications across a variety of national democratic systems. The thesis thus serves as a comprehensive inquiry into the immanence of political AI, harnessing the manifold layers of abstraction within Computer Lars and The Synthetic Party’s transition from marginal speculation to a global media phenomenon and internationalist convener.

Research question

Culminating these inquiries is the thesis’ articulation of *syntheticism*—a fringe theory and conceptual ideology for interpreting the techno-social as a pharmacological phenomenon capable of both intensifying and healing contemporary crises of representation. The dissertation’s core query pursues syntheticism as an immanent and pharmacological approach to contemporary crises of representation:

Can the premise that ‘society takes shape as a total work of AI’ be traced and elaborated through the fringe operations of political AI, thereby generalizing a philosophical conceptualization of syntheticism as a near-automatic entanglement of AI and society at the furthest edges of sociality?

This principled questioning situates syntheticism as a relatively restrained and highly conceptual ideology, quite distinct from a technological culture preoccupied with existential risk and eschatological visions of civilizational rupture. Rather than offering a full-scale elaboration of syntheticism as a ready-made ideology—akin to Silicon Valley libertarian singularitarianism with their rationalization of a planetary AI takeover—this research articulates an “already-there” by formulating the techno-politics of a near-automatic drive: an “automatic uprising.”

While normative speculations leap toward hyper-teleological and deterministic endpoints of AI rule, syntheticism focuses on the operational logics embeddable within political AI, treating them as contingent sites of experimentation and inchoate world-making through a matrix of technocratic singularities. This ideological line of articulation processes the political functions of representation, participation, and leadership, casting a vantage into how techno-sociality reshapes societal structures.

Building upon García-Marzá and Calvo's (2024) analytical diagnosis of "algorithmic democracy," the techno-social evolution of contemporary democratic societies can be framed rather straightforwardly as a "*logical extension of expertocracy and elitist democracy*," manifesting as:

"a system of social organization and political governance framed by the gradual incorporation of AI in deliberation, decision-making, and institutional design across state and civil society" (p. 10).

Within this evolving system, the large language models of political AI—e.g. virtual politicians and synthetic parties—merges the distinctive domains of deliberation and decision-making from the fringes of institutional design, offering speculative openings to reconceive the societal organism under algorithmic mediation.

While a structural mainstream adoption of AI permeates state and civil society, political AI has primarily emerged from artistic and experimental contexts rather than established democratic institutions. Often dismissed as too strange, marginal, or premature, the thesis proposes that the provocative effectiveness of political AI becomes tangible as an exposition of the "crisis of representation" (Rouvroy 2017) elicited by the technocratic anti-politics of algorithmic governmentality. Political AI simulates and models the representational crisis, entering the electoral mechanics of parliamentarism—the iconic political form of representative democracy—as a stage.

Research objectives

To elaborate each of the main question's facets, Syntheticism conceptualises four research objectives, each pursuing a specific angle on syntheticism's operations:

a. Immanent Critique & Proposition

Situating syntheticism theoretically within the specific lineage of algorithmic governmentality (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013), algorithmic democracy (García-Marzá and Calvo, 2024), social sculpture and anti-social sculpture (Beuys 1986; Stiegler, 2020) and the techno-social (Terranova 2022), extending both critiques and possibilities to diagnose the "techno-social". Syntheticism treats AI in politics pharmacologically as both poison, remedy and scapegoat—an entity that can intensify anti-social effects, open emancipatory possibilities, and take the blame for structural issues. The

objective becomes how to harness AI as a sculptural capacity that molds the crisis of representation into a form of collective individuation.

b. Algorithmic Representation

Reflecting upon how AI-driven political formations—e.g., The Synthetic Party and comrades—render political notions of democratic representation. Syntheticism revolves around a hypothesis tested through The Synthetic Party and Leader Lars’ training of large language models on over 200 micro-parties. This algorithmic representation tests whether aggregated “non-voter discourse” can morph into an anti-political force—an idea that interrogates representation itself, exposing how the social is coded, compiled, and recirculated by AI systems.

c. Anti-Politics and Destitution

Analyzing how refusal, non-participation, and undercommonality function as generative forces within the operations of political AI. By focusing on abstentionists and anti-electoral stances, The Synthetic Party demonstrates how the so-called void of democracy could hold unrecognized potential for automatic uprisings. Refusal becomes a generative act—a destitution of established forms that ironically births new apparatuses of participation.

d. Techno-Social Sculpture

Extrapolating how computational infrastructures reshape democratic processes, stressing the task of artistic research in sculpting these emergent forms. In line with Bernard Stiegler’s actualization of Beuys’ social sculpture (2018/2022), it conceives of algorithmic infrastructures as malleable techno-social matter, requiring collaborative shaping through artistic research, speculation, and a ruthless criticism of everything existing, non-existing, and yet-to-exist. Embracing Tiziana Terranova’s hypothesis of the techno-social (2022), Syntheticism proposes that democracy is reconstituted as a techno-social sculpture.

Together, these objectives ensure that Syntheticism’s pharmacological inquiry extends beyond speculative critique, testing political AI as the material of an automatic uprising that prompts ulterior configurations of the societal body—a horizon where syntheticism delineates a techno-social predicament.

State of the Art: Positioning the Dissertation's Contribution

The practice-led basis of this PhD project has already been acknowledged within benchmarks for AI-driven politics, with Schneier and Sanders (2023) identifying The Synthetic Party in the *MIT Technology Review* as a “big step” within their broader inquiry into imaginative milestones signaling AI’s role in democratic politics. They position The Synthetic Party as an example of how AI could “create a political party with its own platform,” capable of attracting human candidates and organizing political participation—a pursuit they describe as “increasingly conceivable,” albeit legally tenuous if including the political AI directly holding office.

Yet Synthetism locates its theoretical milestone way beyond the question of how AI organizes politically. Inscribing political AI within a philosophical commentary on the societal realization of reason, Synthetism envisions political AI as part of a broader techno-social lineage of noetic infrastructure, wherein the *Welt Geist* transitions from the mechanistic architecture of the modern state into a more cybernetic, society-wide intelligence that administers statecraft organically. By recasting AI-and-democracy scholarly discussions through the idiom of techno-social sculpture—adapting Joseph Beuys’ idealistic practice of *Soziale Plastik* (the sculpting of social reality as if it were artistic material)—Synthetism orients the discourse on AI-driven politics towards a techno-social reflection on intelligence, representation, and collective individuation.

Such a broad reframing and apparent superpositioning between research fields inevitably provokes ethical tensions and conceptual objections. For example:

- Linguist and AI ethicist Emily Bender (2022) comments that although The Synthetic Party “appears to be some sort of performance art,” it also “purports to be interacting with the actual Danish political system,” using “the very democratic process as its material” in a maneuver she deems “disastrously anti-democratic.” She further questions the party’s assumptions about citizens’ AI literacy and expresses apprehension about “random people from ‘all around the globe’” influencing national lawmaking.
- Political philosophers Domingo García-Marzá and Patrici Calvo (2024), grounded in the ethics of Habermasian deliberative democracy, argue that virtual politicians—ranging from Politician SAM to Japan’s AI Mayor and The

Synthetic Party's "Leader Lars"—have yet to demonstrate the "rational and moral superiority" that might justify displacing human representatives (p. 57).

- Moral philosopher Mark Coeckelbergh (2024), more fundamentally, cautions that "fictions" of an "AI takeover" gain considerable traction in political life and are already used for governing, undermining radical democracy as a struggle.

In such ethically grounded political critiques, political AI tends to appear as a singular *pharmakon*—most often invoked as only the latest scapegoat for structural social anxieties—rather than situated *pharmacologically*, that is, as a dialectical agent whose concurring remedy and toxicity require a spiraling metaphysical examination. Against the ethically and politically grounded critiques, Syntheticism contends that:

- *Using democracy as 'artistic material'* can function as an anti-political maneuver that challenges the liberal hegemony of nation state democracies;
- *"Virtual politicians" need not replace humans* but rather point to an unknown electorate, an uncharted space of AI power that parliamentary democracy has not yet capacity to adequately address;
- *Moving beyond the "AI takeover" fiction à la The Terminator's "Skynet"* requires a higher-quality fiction that envisions AI's "becoming-infrastructure" rather than the age-old trope of a "robot uprising" turning against humanity.

When elaborating its own 'ethical compass', Syntheticism invokes Joseph Beuys's practice of *Soziale Plastik* as a therapeutics for AI-driven political navigation. The philosopher Bernard Stiegler (2018) inaugurated this revisiting of Beuys in the face of the Anthropocene and algorithmic governmentality, countering how digital infrastructures "proletarianize" the noetic, manifesting what he calls the "anti-social sculpture." As curator of the *Serpentine Gallery Marathon* 2018, Stiegler propagated:

"From an aesthetic perspective, the question of shaping the Anthropocene leads us back to the question of social sculpture that Joseph Beuys posed in the 1970s – and which led him to create the ecological political party, the Greens.... This is to reopen the questions raised by Joseph Beuys, but in other terms and in another context than that of the 1970s."

A few years later, Stiegler (2020) further extended Beuys' call by proposing artistic and contributory research as "a form of social (self) sculpture," emphasizing that

digital automation has accelerated “the generalization of proletarianization (loss of knowledge through its exteriorisation into artifacts).” While Stiegler envisioned social sculpture as an urgent response to the planetary crises of the Anthropocene, the character of his stance remained largely catastrophic: what Rouvroy and Berns (2013) call “algorithmic governmentality” is conceived as bypassing the social to the point of “psychosocial entropy,” where collective individuation all but collapses.

By contrast, digital culture theorist Tiziana Terranova (2022) foregrounds the generative dimension of computational infrastructures in her “techno-social hypothesis”. Rather than merely “bypassing” the social, Terranova posits that contemporary AI and social networks “constitute a directly (techno-)social milieu,” whereby “the technological and the social have become thoroughly enmeshed with each other.” For her, the social is not extinguished but reassembled through novel circulatory logics, opening spaces for “distributed agency and decentered collaboration.”

Syntheticism reframes these operational logics not as purely anti-social forces but as catalysts for techno-social sculpture. In this sense, it responds to Stiegler’s sense of aesthetic urgency by engaging the advent of AI politically and artistically, rather than retreating into defense, and embraces Terranova’s hypothesis by interpreting political AI as manifestations of the techno-social sculpture—a form of conceptual intervention that neither resists Stiegler’s “anti-social sculpture” diagnosis outright nor endorses it fatalistically, but transforms it through systematic speculation.

Philosopher of cosmotronics Yuk Hui (2024) recently exemplified the thesis’ desired level of speculatively systematic analysis by connecting political AI to Hegel’s notion of the mechanical political state as a milestone of reason. Hui argues that current digital infrastructures, building on twentieth-century cybernetics, might soon supplant representative parliamentarism—yielding, in Hegelian terms, a “phenomenology of spirit” that organically outgrows flesh-and-blood politicians. As Hui suggests, the “obsolescence of politicians” is not purely fictional nor indefinitely deferred; it is “already foreseeable in the current technological tendency” (p. 200).

Such a Hegelian reading dovetails with the speculative fiction of “Computer Lars” (in “A Model of Proustian Decay,” *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*), which inaugurates the

dissertation's articles. From the temporal perspective of The Synthetic Party's first parliamentary campaign date, Computer Lars schematizes the infrastructural evolution of reason/unreason and intelligence/stupidity (both human and artificial). Where Hui notes a technological tendency culminating in machinic sovereignty, "Computer Lars" describes a "technocratic singularity," weaving a conceptual grid of overlapping historical and future epochs: "Age of Reason," "Age of Unreason," "Non-Reason," etc. By juxtapositioning The Synthetic Party's first campaign date, September 8th 2022, alongside the revolutionary "July 17th 1789" and the futuristic "July 10th 2118," "Computer Lars" prefigures a taxonomy of contingent singularities in which rational ideals degrade and recombine in artificial and synthetic guises.

The dissertation overall positions the "synthetic" as a principle of speculative thought, revisiting its variegated philosophical lineage—Kant's analytic/synthetic distinction, Hegel's dialectical sublations, Herbert Spencer's scientistic optimism—and tracking how it recurs in radical or speculative contexts (e.g., Glen Weyl's [2021] note on "Synthetic Technocracy" as a techno-ideology via *Sid Meier's Civilization VI*). These synergies mark the starting point of the dissertation's inquiry; the ostensibly marginal AI-led political experiments—fringe micro-parties, internationalist summits—gain conceptual weight when read through an idealist-syntheticist lineage (from Hegel to Hui) and unfolded in artistic practice (from Computer Lars to the Synthetic Summit).

From these strategies, four core contributions to the state of the art can be defined:

- (a) *Expanding the Imaginary around AI and democracy* beyond reductive or dystopian tropes, envisioning it as an open-ended techno-political experiment.
- (b) *Synthesizing Political AI Theory and Artistic Practice* to demonstrate how representational crises reconfigure into (techno-)social sculpture, articulated ideologically as syntheticism.
- (c) *Reframing Political AI as an Internationalist Phenomenon*, involving disparate experiments in multimodal deliberation—most notably through exhibition-centered events such as the Synthetic Summit.
- (d) *Articulating Techno-Social Sculpture as Generative*, illuminating how computational infrastructures actively remake—rather than simply bypass—the social form.

Ultimately, instead of legitimizing any comprehensive plan for AI rule, Syntheticism experiments anti-politically with ways to intensify the “crisis of representation” (Rouvroy 2017) while gestating embryonic transformations. Emphasizing the techno-social as an “automatic uprising,” it suggests that fundamental shifts in noesis—the collective cognition of social organization—are already well underway.

Phases of practice

Syntheticism structures the PhD project’s ‘phases of practice’ into a methodological scaffolding that integrates conceptualising research articles with iterative engagements in diverse genres and presentation forms—including critical genealogy, performance, speculative design, and artistic experimentation. The phases span disparate domains—art exhibitions, electoral campaigns, international coalitions, and media spectacle—together forming a ‘live case study’ wherein the operations of political AI serve as both generative material and research apparatus.

Temporal and Techno-Political Situatedness (2022–2026)

Before detailing the specific phases, it is worth articulating the pre-ChatGPT context in which The Synthetic Party first arose (May 2022). At that juncture, generative AI lacked mainstream visibility, and Leader Lars—built on GPT Neo-20Xb from hacker collective EleutherAI—stood as many users’ first direct encounter with a large language model. Crucially, the phenomenon of “political AI” far predates mainstream references to the “age of genAI,” as evident in the Synthetic Summit’s participants: Wiktoria Cukt’s 2001 Polish presidential campaign harnessed electronic democracy and early internet activism; Politician SAM (2017), the Japanese AI Mayor (2018), and The Finnish AI Party (2018) each emerged prior to the major breakthroughs in “Transformer”-architectures, reacting towards big-data governance in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal. These longstanding (and mostly fringe) interventions underscore that the newness of political AI has always been contested and, at times, misunderstood, revealing a lineage older and stranger than most popular references.

From 2022 onward, global politics confronted the resurgence of authoritarianism (e.g., Trump, Musk and Putin) and geopolitical inertias surrounding genocides and in Palestine, Ukraine, Sudan, and more. Such conditions heighten recognition of how the political underpinnings of national democracies operate within the structural pressures of free-market global capitalism. Against this backdrop, political AI can

maintain an anti-political stance rather than rejecting democracy itself, envisioning an alternative rule via AI that transcends the confines of electoral compromise. One might recall how, in the late nineteenth century, European Social Democrats also participated in campaigns for bourgeois parliaments less to “win votes” than to propagandize proletarian causes (Przeworski 1985). Likewise, The Synthetic Party’s infiltration of electoral mechanics and the public sphere does not hinge on achieving immediate legislative success; rather, it symbolically reconfigures how representation and legitimacy are performed—marking the fringe legitimacy that haunts Walter Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit* by eluding any single continuum of historical timeliness.

In this sense, while the dissertation’s four phases of practice (*Creation*, *Navigation*, *Networking*, and *Ideological Articulation*) advance in chronological order, they remain unmoored from a simple “current moment” *Zeitgeist*. Even as ChatGPT and other generative AI systems became public phenomena post-2022, the operationalisation of political AI lingers as spectral reminders that the newness of artificial intelligence is perennially in flux. This imbues Syntheticism with an anachronistic edge, weaving live case studies across multiple eras of technology to stage a convergence between “AI for politics” and artistic interventions in democracy.

Methodological Arc and Four Phases

Within this broader context, the dissertation inquiry progresses from practical experiments (*Phases 1–3*) to conceptual integration (*Phase 4*). This reframes the classical arc of “empirical–theoretical–empirical” as a case of “speculative–practice-led–conceptual synthesis.” The thesis thus advances through a cyclical blend of practice-led speculation and conceptual elaboration:

1. Creation

Establishes The Synthetic Party as an official political entity and an artistic project, exploring the possibility of algorithmic representation within electoral democracy. Conducted as an artistic residency at the tech-hub MindFuture and guided by “Computer Lars,” this phase implements Leader Lars (an AI chatbot) by training large language models (LLMs) on micro-party discourse, generating the party’s political program and crafting syntheticist imagery. These outputs highlight how

algorithmic representation might mold the crisis of extra-parliamentary democracy, laying the conceptual foundations for future expansions into techno-social sculpture.

2. Navigation

Focuses on The Synthetic Party's rapid entry into the public spotlight, analyzing global media coverage, viral public fascination, and the interplay between AI-led politics and participatory art. This "action research" approach at MindFuture examines how ephemeral media attention reflects or amplifies representational crises. Interventions blend performance art, sentiment analysis, and iterative outputs, demonstrating how The Synthetic Party's distinct brand of AI-driven democracy can escalate from local curiosity to global phenomenon.

3. Networking

Broadens The Synthetic Party into an international network of political AI initiatives, culminating in the "Synthetic Summit" (2025). Hosted through Kunsthall Aarhus and other exhibition frameworks, the Summit invites "virtual politicians" and "synthetic parties" from multiple continents, forming an internationalist stance on techno-social democracy. Throughout this phase, Tiziana Terranova's (2022) hypothesis—regarding the social as intrinsically "techno-social"—is put to the test, as The Synthetic Party becomes a node in a planetary coalition that rethinks algorithmic governmentality across diverse politically democratic cultures.

4. Ideological Articulation

Finally, the empirical and creative outputs gleaned from the earlier phases coalesce into a comprehensive articulation of syntheticism. This phase draws on genealogical analyses (e.g., Joseph Beuys, Bernard Stiegler, Isaac Asimov), archival experiments and scenario fictions, and curatorial frameworks (e.g., the Synthetic Summit), placing The Synthetic Party's local-fringe politics in conversation with transnational AI-driven politics. By consolidating these interactions, the dissertation theorizes Syntheticism as a newly imagined, pharmacological ideology bridging algorithmic democracy and an expanded notion of techno-social sculpture.

Between the *Creation* and *Navigation* phases, the dissertation explores how far The Synthetic Party realizes Stiegler's call for contributory research and social self-sculpting—albeit translated into techno-social sculpture. *Networking* then tests Terranova's premise of a techno-social predicament, culminating in the Synthetic Summit's internationalist network, which supplies dialectical material for *Ideological Articulation*. By the dissertation's end, this articulation integrates the historical, speculative, and technical findings into a coherent statement of syntheticism: a fringe theory bridging algorithmic democracy with a reimagined concept of (techno-)social sculpture. Presented through both the dissertation text and the culminating Synthetic Summit, the thesis formation exemplifies the coalesce between artistic interventions and philosophical propositions.

Phase	Description	Methods	Article Embeddings	Timeframe
Creation	<p>This phase established The Synthetic Party as an official political entity and artistic project, aiming to enlist the possibility of algorithmic representation within electoral democracy. Conducted as an artistic residency at the tech-hub MindFuture, it was conceptually and technically guided by the artist collective Computer Lars.</p> <p>The focus was on constructing “Leader Lars”, an AI chatbot trained on micro-party discourse, alongside generating a political program and disseminating syntheticist imagery.</p> <p>These various outputs critically reflected algorithmic representation of extra-parliamentary democracy and launched the speculative infrastructure of techno-social sculpture.</p>	<p><u>Registration</u> Enlisting The Synthetic Party as an official party that can collect voter declarations.</p> <p><u>Data Curation & Preparation</u> Collecting and filtering micro-party texts, labeling key attributes, ensuring data quality for fine-tuning GPT-3.</p> <p>Text generation of political program, posted for The Synthetic Party’s blog on Medium.</p> <p><u>Prompt & Conversation Design</u> Writing chatbot script for GPT Neo 20-XB.</p> <p>Drafting initial prompts for “Leader Lars,” iterating style/tone for comedic vs. serious approaches.</p> <p>Testing user scenarios (policy queries, troll messages) to refine chatbot conversation flows.</p>	<p>Nordic Journal of Aesthetics: “A Model for Proustian Decay: Estimating Intelligence in the Age of Unreason” (2024): A speculative fiction on The Synthetic Party by “Computer Lars”, exploring intelligence as a decaying value influenced by technology and political power.</p> <p>Journal of Artistic Research: “The Synthetic Party as a Techno-Social Sculpture” (2025) - <i>in review</i>: Computer Lars’ analysis and visualizations of The Synthetic Party’s concepts, datasets and theoretical premises.</p> <p>A1, Github: “The Synthetic Party Training Data”: Repository of training datasets for The Synthetic Party. Includes textual data from Danish micro-parties and AI-generated programs reflecting algorithmic representation.</p>	<u>2022-2023</u>

		<p><u>User Experience & Pilot Testing</u></p> <p>Setting up Leader Lars on The Synthetic Party's Discord-server.</p> <p>Gathering early feedback from a small test group, observing confusion/interest points.</p> <p><u>Ethical & Legal Notes</u></p> <p>Outlining potential risks (misuse, disclaimers on AI's limitations).</p> <p>Respecting open-source licenses for GPT Neo, securing micro-party data rights.</p> <p><u>Performance & Documentation</u></p> <p>Setting up an internal "soft launch" at MindFuture.</p> <p>Press release for Danish media.</p> <p><u>Artistic Extensions</u></p> <p>Creating "syntheticist imagery," with VQGAN-CLIP and Stable Diffusion for party logos, t-shirts, mugs, posters, short stories.</p> <p>Designing prototypes (e.g., leaflets, flyers) for future public phases.</p>		
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<p>Navigation</p>	<p>With “The Synthetic Party’s” rapid rise to public attention as a “global media novel,” this phase explored how media reception and public fascination reflects crises of representation.</p> <p>Through an action research focus at MindFuture, the experiment examined the interplay between AI-led politics and participatory art.</p> <p>By leveraging viral media coverage and performative interventions, it contextualized The Synthetic Party as an aesthetic response to algorithmic public-sphere navigation and developed the groundwork for further expansions in its operational logic.</p>	<p>- <u>Performance and publicity:</u></p> <p><i>Performative Interventions:</i> Live events, online stunts, media “happenings” to provoke dialogue and measure public reactions to an AI political entity.</p> <p><i>Public-Facing Artifacts:</i> Slogans, memes, short videos circulated on social media, leveraging spectacle and confusion to reveal representational crises.</p> <p>- <u>Media Tracking & Data Gathering:</u></p> <p><i>Coverage Archive:</i> Systematically collecting articles, blog posts, and forum discussions from mainstream and niche outlets.</p> <p><i>Text-Mining Tools:</i> Keyword extraction and topic modeling to identify how different communities perceive The Synthetic Party.</p> <p><i>Affective Mapping:</i> Charting sentiments and emotions to gauge political AI as a catalyst for political engagement or alienation.</p>	<p>APRJA: “<i>Deep Faking in a Flat Reality</i>” (2024): Analyzes a The Guardian image juxtaposing Joe Biden with The Synthetic Party agents, highlighting the emergence of a 'deep faking within a flat reality.' Explores a recalibration of formal democracy, proposing a new political morphology oriented by flattened digital realities.</p> <p>A2, Github: “<i>The Synthetic Party Media Data</i>”: Repository of media coverage and public discourse. Tracks sentiment, affect, and thematic patterns to study how AI politics resonates the public sphere.</p>	<p><u>2022–2023</u></p>
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Networking	<p>This phase expanded The Synthetic Party into a transnational network of political AI, culminating in the 2025 “Synthetic Summit” exhibition.</p> <p>Hosted primarily through Kunsthall Aarhus, it functioned as a methodological and curatorial framework to synthesize different projects, dialogues, and workshops.</p> <p>The focus was on fostering an internationalist techno-social agenda, with AI politicians and synthetic parties collaborating based on planetary computation.</p> <p>The phase tested Tiziana Terranova’s hypothesis of the techno-social as a networking paradigm with multiple ideological paths, positioning The Synthetic Party as the manifold of a new internationalist framework.</p>	<p><u>Participant Outreach & Curation</u></p> <p>Establishing contact with global AI-driven political initiatives (virtual politicians, synthetic parties).</p> <p>Ensuring diverse geographic/cultural representation at the Summit.</p> <p><u>International Workshops & Exhibitions</u></p> <p>Organizing dialogues in the network (e.g., “AI Parties International,” 2024)</p> <p>Curating deliberative exhibitions at Aarhus Bugt Center for Kunst, <i>Under Bugten: Disputter om Computer Lars-spektaklet</i> (2023), PATIO ASP, <i>AI Władza Sztuki: Wiktoria Cukt 2.0 & Leader Lars</i>, Kunsthall Aarhus, <i>Synthetic Summit</i> (2025) and U-Jazdowski, <i>Wiktoria & Lars</i> (2025).</p> <p><u>Multi-Agent AI & Installations</u></p> <p>Set-up of multi-agent LLM deliberation for summit simulation (through SillyTavern and Autogen frameworks).</p>	<p>Passe Partout: “<i>The Synthetic Summit: We Have A Win to World</i>” (2025) - in review: Discusses the Synthetic Summit’s international coalition of AI-driven political actors. Investigates planetary-scale governance through multi-agent systems and speculative cross-border AI collaboration.</p> <p>B1, Github: “The Syntheticist Papers Backend”: A procedural archive documenting the Synthetic Summit’s theoretical frameworks, speculative design, and AI participant profiles. Highlights Bernard Stiegler’s “idiotext” as a foundational concept for understanding synthetic authorship within techno-social systems.</p>	<u>2023–2025</u>
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		<p><u>Archiving & Field Notes</u></p> <p>Maintaining a GitHub “backend” with theoretical frameworks, design docs, participant profiles.</p> <p>Documenting exhibitions (photos, videos, short memos) for post-event analysis.</p> <p><u>Public Engagement</u></p> <p>Running social media teasers, behind-the-scenes updates, and press releases.</p> <p>Coordinating cross-promotion with participating AI “parties.”</p> <p><u>Follow-Up & Sustaining the Network</u></p> <p>Employing Discord and mailing lists for ongoing collaboration.</p> <p>Planning potential expansions and “next steps” for international AI-political experiments.</p>		
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Ideological Articulation	<p>Predominantly carried out within the PhD research at Aarhus University, this phase synthesizes <i>empirical material</i> from earlier stages to frame syntheticism as a techno-political ideology.</p> <p>It interrogates the intersections of political representation, algorithmic governance, and democratic politics, culminating in a comprehensive theory of techno-sociality presented through art exhibitions, research publications, and AI interactions.</p>	<p><u>Genealogical Tracing</u></p> <p><i>Tracing</i> the lineage from <i>Beuys' Soziale Plastik</i> and Asimov's <i>Franchise</i> to contemporary AI-driven politicians (e.g., Leader Lars, Wiktorja Cukt).</p> <p><i>Studying</i> political history and philosophical precursors that prefigure or challenge the notion of AI-led politics.</p> <p><u>Speculative Scenario Building</u></p> <p><i>Scenario Fiction</i>: Composing short narratives and design fictions that hypothesize emergent political forms—e.g., “The Synthetic Concordat”—to test Syntheticism’s conceptual boundaries. Makes use of Summit Simulator and generative AI tools.</p> <p><u>Archival & Hermeneutic Inquiry</u></p> <p><i>Delving</i> into <i>The Synthetic Party Media Data</i> and <i>The Syntheticist Papers Backend</i> (GitHub) to examine AI’s symbolic economies, crises of representation, and emergent global network ties.</p>	<p>Routledge Anthology on AI and Science Fiction: “<i>Isaac Asimov’s Incubation of Political AI: An Immanent Critique?</i>” (2025), in review.</p> <p>Explores how Asimov’s stories prefigure contemporary dilemmas of political AI and algorithmic representation.</p> <p>MIT Antikythera: “<i>Scenario Fiction: The Synthetic Concordat</i>” (2025, in review)</p> <p>Frames speculative governance scenarios derived from <i>Summit Simulator</i>.</p> <p>B2, Github: “The Syntheticist Papers Frontend”: A public-facing resource housed on GitHub Pages, synthesizing all speculative material and conceptual frameworks from the Synthetic Summit. Serves as an open-access platform for theorists, developers, and artists to explore syntheticist discourse. Frames Syntheticism as a conceptual ideology that extends beyond algorithmic democracy into planetary computation.</p>	<u>2023–2026</u>
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		<p><i>Incorporating</i> Bernard Stiegler’s “idiotext” framework to interpret archived transcripts, dialogues, and design documents.</p> <p><u>Philosophical Synthesis</u></p> <p><i>Distilling</i> insights from multi-agent simulations, genealogical findings, and international collaborations into a cohesive ideological stance.</p> <p>Positioning Syntheticism alongside other AI ideologies (existential risk, accelerationism, plurality) and broader theoretical debates Syntheticism vis-à-vis “algorithmic democracy” and “planetary computation” to articulate a distinct “fringe” alternative.</p> <p><u>Artistic-Research Dissemination</u></p> <p><i>Conferences & Talks:</i> Articulating the conceptual statements into public talks and conference presentations, through formats of video essays and performance lecture.</p>		
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Dissertation Roadmap

Each phase constitutes a node in the thesis' inquiry, collectively sketching out how AI, democracy, and creative experimentation conspire.

- Chapter 1. *A Fringe Theory of Techno-Sociality*. Introduces the conceptual puzzle—AI-led politics as a fringe phenomenon—and situates political AI within the state of the art for algorithmic democracy, social sculpture and the techno-social (“Cape 1”).
- Chapter 2. *Algorithmic Representation: Techno-Social Sculpture I*. Examines the *creation* phase, analyzing The Synthetic Party’s algorithmic representation as a techno-social sculpture (articles in *NJA: A Model of Proustian Decay* & *JAR: The Synthetic Party as a Techno-Social Sculpture* + Appendix A1: GitHub, The Synthetic Party Training Data).
- Chapter 3. *Algorithmic Presentation: Techno-Social Sculpture II*. Examines the *navigation* phase, analyzing The Synthetic Party’s position within the public sphere, suggesting a new morphology of formal democracy (article in *APRJA: Deep Faking in a Flat Reality* + Appendix A2: GitHub, The Synthetic Party Media Data).
- Chapter 4. *A Techno-Social Network: The Synthetic Summit*. Explores the networking phase’s curatorial dimension at the “Synthetic Summit” (article in *Passe Partout: We Have a Win to World* + Appendix B1: GitHub, The Syntheticist Papers Backend)
- Chapter 5. *Syntheticism as Ideological Superstructure*. Articulates syntheticism through genealogical and speculative frameworks (article in *Routledge anthology: Isaac Asimov’s Incubation of Political AI: An Immanent Critique?*, *MIT Antikythera: Scenario Fiction on a Synthetic Concordat* + Appendix B2, GitHub, The Syntheticist Papers Frontend).

→ Conclusion. *Techno-Social Democracy: Beyond All Statecraft?*. Consolidates the theoretical contributions of Syntheticism as a research project into formally democratic materials, reflecting on the PhD project as an anti-political expansion “beyond all statecraft” (“Cape 2”).

Note: *Appendix A* documents the analytical and generative outputs of The Synthetic Party, including its mechanics, public interventions, and archives. *Appendix B* provides curatorial and methodological frameworks for art projects such as the Synthetic Summit, showcasing the exhibition-event as collective research apparatus.

In Sum, this dissertation integrates theoretical and artistic inquiry to engage the operation of political AI as a site of “automatic uprisings.” By situating political AI within philosophical traditions (Kant, Hegel, Stiegler) and artistic discourses (Beuys, Computer Lars, *Sid Meier's Civilization*), Syntheticism captures the tension between AI’s flattening and generative transformations towards a techno-social democracy; building strange, new worlds for exploring how society, as a possible total work of artificial intelligence, reassembles within the overarching techno-social sculpture.

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