

# **Interview with Kaweh Modiri (author of the essay *Graceful degradation*)**

## **#1. What are the possibilities of interaction between the viewers and the artwork (at the Cinekid Medialab) offer? Could it be possible that the narrative of a movie – or any other kind of artwork – change, after the interaction with the artwork?**

I think the relationship between viewers and artworks is already changing due to technological developments. As I emphasize in my essay, at the moment, the mainstream developments are not yet exploring the possibilities hereof. I think this will change. I don't think the stories we tell will necessarily change. Even centuries from now Oedipus, or variations thereof will still be relevant and say something about our human experiences. Yet, the way the stories are told are changing rapidly, and so is our understanding of the stories changing, as we can experience them in new fashion.

## **#2. Do you think the usage of Virtual 3D avatars help actors improve and hone their acting skills?**

I interviewed Daniel Ernst during my research. Daniel is a VR developer, and he told me that when he is creating his VR spaces, he enters the Vr world together with his programmer, so they can stand in the VR space. I found that very striking. It is of course also known for rocketeers and f1 drivers that they use simulations to prepare for the actual thing. So you could say that actors could use these tools too. On the other hand, you could wonder if there will be actors all together, in the future. Animation and VR are very well capable of taking over from real actors in the future. The only question is what will then happen to stardom, fame, and the worshipping of celebrities. The charismatic aspect here of is more solid and future-proof than the actual skills of acting, I believe.

## **#3. Where did you get introduced to the concept of Artificial Intelligence?**

We are surrounded by it, and thinking about it started even before I knew anything concrete about it. The introduction of it for me came through films. More recently, I have been dealing more and more with VR.

## **#4. Artificial Intelligence is already around us. How eager are you to interact with highly intelligent machines?**

I think the key question is what we expect from these highly intelligent machines. So far, we are focussed on using them as a human tool. And although this is very convenient for us humans, I do not think that this is the key development that we should expect from AI. I see AI as a step in our human evolution, that in the end might be a soft termination of our species as we know it. And that is not something to be afraid of. It won't happen overnight, it won't be an apocalypse or armageddon. It will be a gradual transcendence to a new species, I believe.

## **#5. Have you ever had a negative experience with Internet of Things?**

We all have had our experiences with machines that don't act according to our expectations. But as I said, I believe that this is due to a temporary and false misconception on our side, rather than the intelligent machines.

## **#6. Where do you see Internet of things in the near future?**

I think it will lead to a highly intelligent and connected species that will be mainly concerned with the preservation of the earth, and possibly reaching further than that.

## **Bio**

**Kaweh Modiri (1982)** is a Dutch visual artist, filmmaker and writer of Iranian origin. In 2010 he graduated from the Image & Language department of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy with the film *Mijn inbreker en ik* (*My Burglar and Me*). In April 2012 he published his debut novel, *Meneer Sadek en de Anderen* (*Mr. Sadek and Others*), published by Thomas Rap. His debut feature film *Bodkin Ras* had its world premiere at the Rotterdam International Film Festival and won the FIPRESCI international critics award.

## **Colophon**

This publication is part of the project "Cinekid Unfold", realized for the dutch new media festival Cinekid, and created in collaboration with PublishingLab (Amsterdam) and Domein voor Kunstkritiek. The PublishingLab team is composed of Fabiola Fortuna (IT), Janne van Hooff (NL), Latika Meelu (IN) and Thomas Walskaar (NO).