M A P Studio
architecture + design + media

The Topography of Chance …
A project by MAP Studio
Opens@ laBiennial, ECC Venice, Italy, Palazzo Bembo
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The Topography of Chance … *a* project of animated image sequences was created in collaboration with the emergent generative AI text-to-image processes, Stable Diffusion + DALL-E1. For a period of three months during the fall of 2022, MAP Studio chose one phrase culled from the digital fragments of whatever data happened to flash across their screens at noon each day - an amalgam of data points including email, twitter, instagram to podcasting - a random data set constructing each daily "prompt". **The Topography of Chance,** a composite of these images, representing fixed, iterative yet fleeting moments of MAP Studio's practice. It speaks to a rare experimental modality of impassioned energy generated by the Pavlovian immediacy of the AI process itself. As an ode to the "arbitrary", it proposes a position to the larger architectural field - one that is neither fixed nor predictable - rather one that emerges via momentary chance and contingency.

Following decades of skimming the surface of our collective imaginaries, the contested torrent of generative AI has now colonized our screens and mindsets worldwide. To date, no iterative "prompt" produces the exact same image. This speaks to the seduction of the infinitely generative, novel detonations of algorithmic imaginaries. As Daniel Spoeri noted in 1962 *" Debris, fragments, crumbs, odd and ends … these migrating objects which wash up in our homes have different histories, the consequences of the ebb and flow of daily life penetrating the imaginary. … The idea is to trap and map a chance assemblage of objects and fix them in time."*

The debris and fragments now flashing across our screens provoke a timeless interplay of enigmatic visual, (para) psychological and cultural narratives. The allure of losing track of time and losing track of oneself in "playing one's hand" is tantalizing … if not a perfect fantastical pursuit for those so inclined.

" AI art is a bit like a first trip to a casino…". @Sugar Subversive, April, 2023

While this world is predicated on the promise of open-source AI, the conceit of "open access" is leveraged by market forces and clichéd hoodie clad titans of tech. Within this frame, one seemingly does not have the agency to make AI interact with you, on your terms… or does one? Play your hand … throw the dice and rest is up to … chance.

MAP Studio is based in California and is directed by Katherine Lambert, Architect + Christiane Robbins, Media Director/Designer.