

# THE DEEFAKE MANIFESTO

“Unfortunately my sickness was only a nightmare,  
and I, with great sorrow,  
come back to life”

~ Songs of Maldoror

Everyone agrees. It's about to explode.  
Already has? That's it, that's the question:  
what remains now of that donut hole of  
meaning? Emperor's Robe, yes.  
The Deepfake woke us up from the long  
overdue fever dream of reason.  
Facts, truth with the capital ,T'.  
And, however nightmarish the dream might be,  
it's the waking up that we fear most.

Still,  
with our eyes all rheumy and watery, we ask:  
What does the Deepfake really do?  
What does it do to that primal undercurrent  
that glues all things together?  
*'even us, even us'*  
What does it do to that cultivated rational thing  
that soberly proclaims: 'this is that', or  
'that is true and here are the facts'?

Nostalgically, we long for the time before Time;  
The 'then and there' where signs were still  
trusted the impossible task of standing in for  
real things, just starting to fall apart...

But we can no longer stay tucked in the  
cradle of Baudrillard's panic. Standing on the  
edge of the whole other abyss, we look back at  
the 'sign-referent' — and feel our faces warmed  
with a tender smile, a wind of romantic  
longing for *the good old days...*

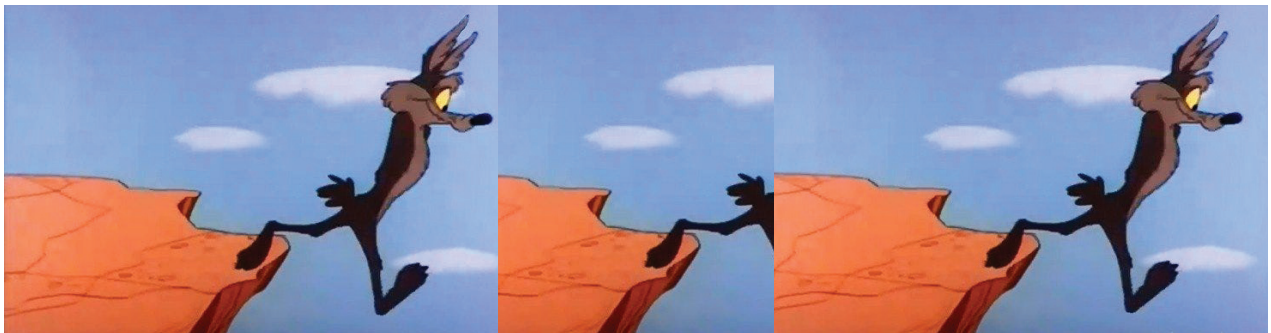
With the Deepfake, the ‘real thing’ becomes nothing more than a possibility, a rumor, an effect.

A distant echo of al-Ghaib —  
the unseen world beyond sense, whose veil cannot be lifted, only circled around [the Absence] of ever deceptive signs.

The Big Reveal, the clouds we’ve been walking on with such delusional confidence —  
like in early animations where the character strolls carelessly over the gap between two cliffs, until the moment he looks down and realises that there was no ground in the first place —  
looks into the camera, screams and falls.

And so we too scream.

Erratically searching for the camera’s eye to break the fourth wall: we over-document our every trace, overfeed the algorithm, overstimulate our own senses, bathe in the sweet, sticky fog of infinite self-referentiality.



Now, its time to find our own leg in this fall.

We scream, grabbing onto anything that comes at hand:  
Say, Onijah,  
say Koen Brams,  
say Anna Delvey,  
and Pable Katchadjan.  
Say, Ossian,  
say, Princess Caraboo,  
Han Van Meegeren,  
Tom Keating and Richard Pettibone.  
Say Walter Serner,  
Elmyr de Hory,  
say Eva Mattes,  
of course Carol and Andrew Dunchen (i.e. Cheryl Bernstein),  
and their good friend Gregory Battock.  
Say Tiqqun,  
say Bernadette (Corporation),  
and what the hell, say Vaginal Davis!  
Say Henry Dagger,  
Hildegard von Bingen,  
and definitely Isabelle Eberhart.

Yes, we are not alone in this terrain.

We are ready.

Ready to release our anxious grips on Truth,  
that pious little project — always moral, which is to say  
racial and classist — of transparency, representation, clarity.

We release:

no longer out of a forced sense of solidarity,  
nor in our will to power.

Here we are, ready to traffic in the forged coin,  
(our counterfeit desire).

In the roulette of signs, we go all in: with our own sense of  
coherence as playing chips.

So come, my timid animal of Truth. And have no fear.  
Shut your eyes and follow us back into the potent darkness  
of that cave. We have been waiting for you there all along.

Sincerely Yours,  
Guillotine Collective