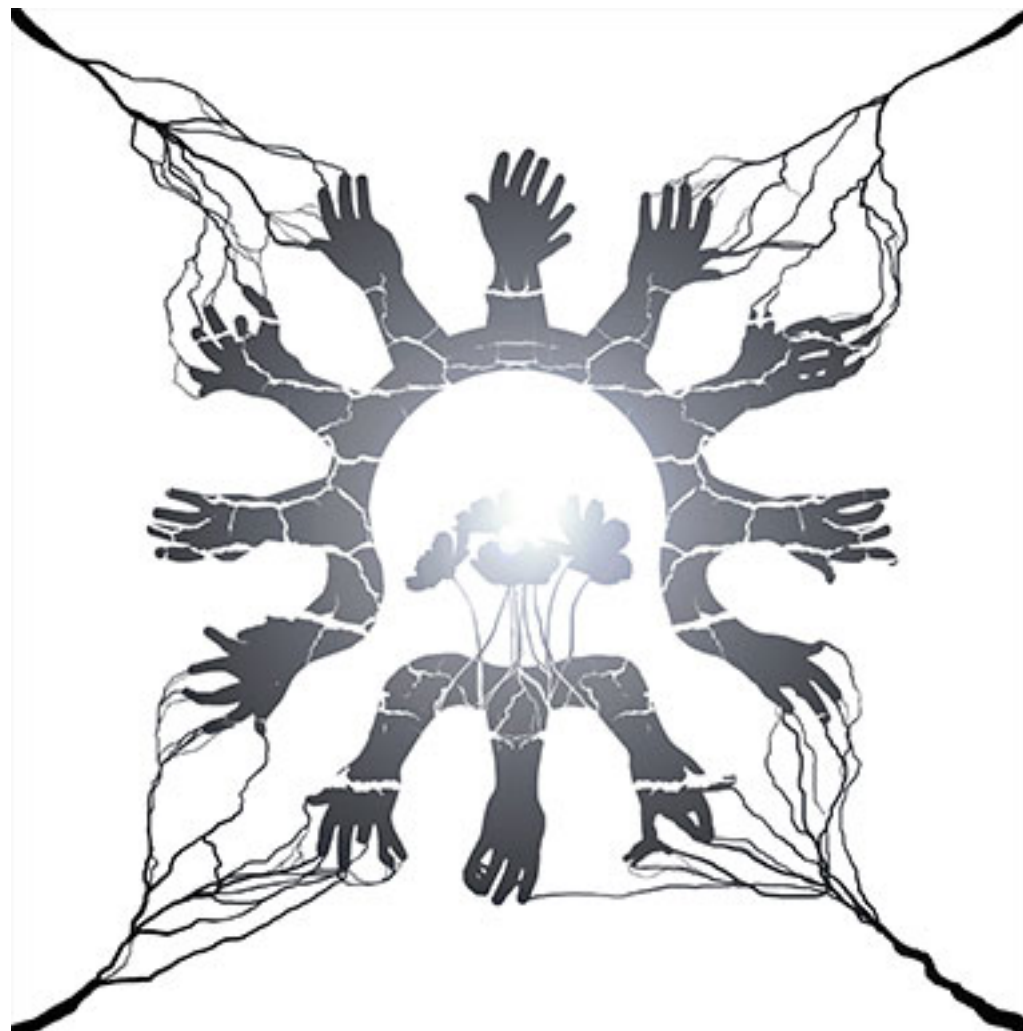
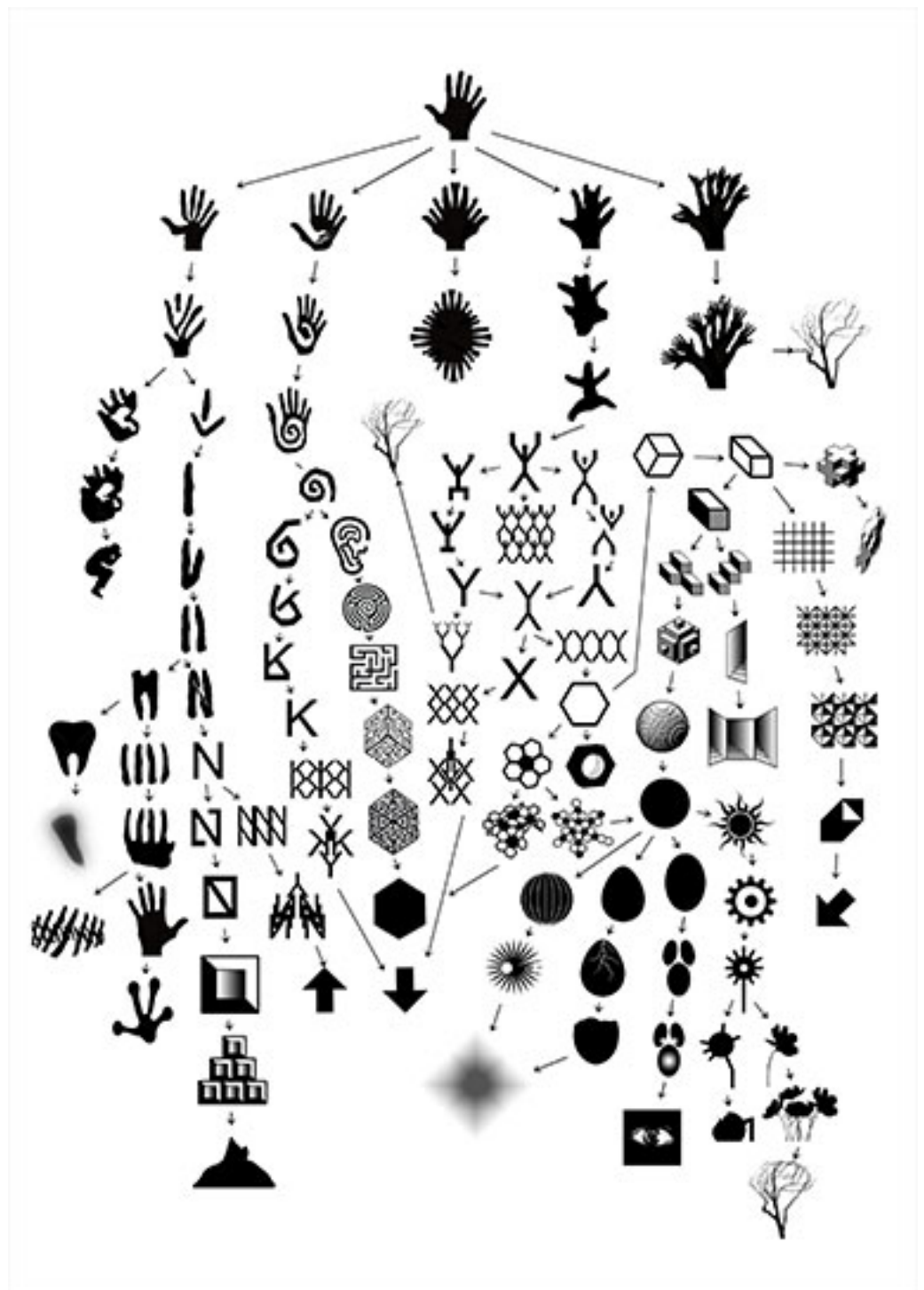


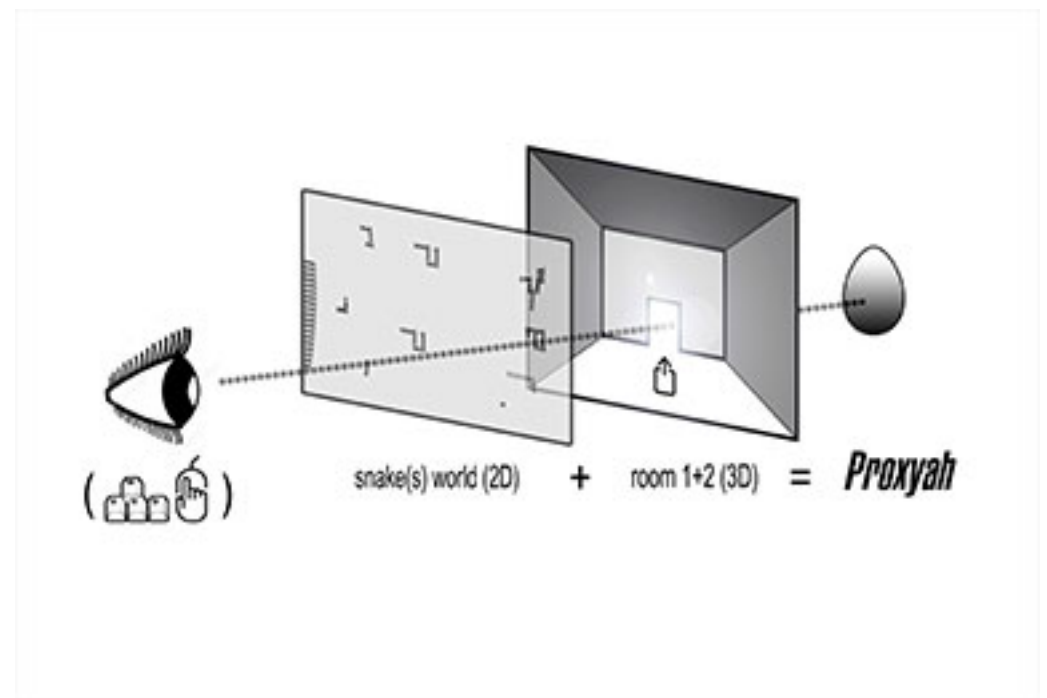




Viktor  
Timofeev  
is an artist  
who moves  
freely  
between  
states of  
mind,  
spiralling  
across  
maps and  
media.  
From  
digitally  
generated

















"THE "WORLDS" THAT  
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OR SLOWED DOWN"









installations to drawings with graphite, pencil and ink, to interactive games and rule-



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based performances, his practice engages with the breadth of art history. As do his influences, which span the distance between Russian constructivism and Kraftwerk. In his recent solo exhibition, S.T.A.T.E at Drawing Room, London, Timofeev presents a series of drawing and painting works that run parallel to his digital work and explore, amongst many things, various experiences of real and imagined states.

Time and space collapses into one another in S.T.A.T.E, as Timofeev's hand-drawn worlds interweave macro-scale structures with micro elements to create fictional spaces that border on unnerving reality. Constellations made up of recognisable yet reimagined life-forms depict abstracted states of possible utopia or dystopia. These paper versions play off worlds earlier created in Timofeev's CGI and video game work, such as Proxyah and Sazarus. We spoke with him about the importance of rules, the fragility of working on paper, and the possibility of the sublime.

POSTmatter: The name of your current exhibition S.T.A.T.E. is described as 'deliberately ambiguous' and is also the umbrella term you use for your drawing and painting work. Can you define what you mean by it in these various contexts, and what interests you about this ambiguity in particular?

Viktor Timofeev: I created this umbrella term around 2013, when I shifted to thinking about my work in terms of projects rather than a singular continuous stream of ideas. The name was a reflection on my personal motivations for making drawings and paintings in the first place – a kind of litmus test at a given time and space - state of mind, state of health, state of ... etc. It grew into something I started to regard as a monumental generative "seed" - kind of like a formula - hence the detour into pseudo-mathematical notation (stat(E)), followed by capitalization (STATE). This was later followed by a schism (S.T.A.T.E.) that resulted in a dismembered collection of potentially disparate ideas (the individual letters were free to stand for something new every time as long as they preserved their face (first letter)). There is a similar story in the evolution of the logo I use for the project, which grew out of a pictographic sun into a sunset-cog, into a ying-yang nut & bolt, into a collection of mutated arms before ending up where it is now.

PM: Architecture is a central part of your work. Where does this interest stem from?

VT: I wouldn't say that it is central, but I have a deep, hobbyist interest in history of architecture. Some of this is attached to specific "eras" which I find particularly special, such as Mannerism, Rococo, and Russian Constructivism, but there is also this relationship to playing god. For example, I think about a "reality threshold" - the point at which a simulation, or a fictional space might feel deeply real. This point stirs up the feeling that there exists a particular order at work that I might not be immediately privy to - like an invisible, procedural architect watching over and throwing curveballs. Call it immersion, faith, spirituality, the sublime, whatever. I find myself chasing this feeling when making work, be it drawings, recordings, or programs, trying to reproduce it for myself and for others.

PM: Works in S.T.A.T.E. feature hands connected to wires, or seemingly part machine, and your geometric drawings of cities and spaces are noticeably devoid of humans or bodies. Why is this?

VT: Earlier drawings (pre 2010) were focused on the infinite expanse and worked diagrammatically on a macro-scale. Meaning the "spaces" could be cities, networks or constellations. During 2010-2015 there was a shift to the micro-scale - life-forms started to emerge in between some of the cracks. These entities were first "abstract" in that they camouflaged as amoeba-like blobs, or amorphous patches of cross hatchings. Occasionally, they took the form of "single-celled logos" or proto-gestures - pictogram-like residuals from a primordial written language. Through repetition and improvised guidance, some eventually some grew into more anthropomorphic objects that resembled among other things, the Latin alphabet and parts of the body, primarily those responsible for fine motor skills - hands, fingers, ears, eyes. They were modified in one way or another - multiplied, segmented, split, or re-imagined entirely. The S.T.A.T.E. exhibition guide maps the complete genealogical tree of all recurring forms' probable mutations and subconscious connections.

□

PM: With your diagrammatic and abstract architectural drawings you construct new worlds and alternative kind of space. This is also something that comes into your video game work P R O X Y A H. What draws you towards this?

VT: The "worlds" that recur in S.T.A.T.E. aren't new; they are distorted reflections of our own, just zoomed in or zoomed out, or sped up or slowed down. They aren't intended to



function as alternates, but instead as nested parallels. Their diagrammatic qualities come from my interest in playing with methods of abstracted representation – incorporating tree-charts, two-dimensional maps, explanatory bubbles – pushed in order to try to communicate something potentially ineffable. The guide that accompanies **Proxyah** for example, functions a little bit like a game in itself, hiding information in plain sight by embedding it within a labyrinthine framework that is more Kafka than Blizzard.

PM: How do you begin to design these immensely detailed worlds?

VT: It's a matter of following A to B to C to Z - building layers of logic on top of one another and seeing what holds. I find it really useful to start working within narrow parameters or rules, and open out once those parameters feel confining rather than productive. Otherwise, I tend to suffer from paralysis analysis, a kind of inability to function in the face of an infinity of options. For this reason a lot of my work is black and white, both on and off screen - to avoid getting caught in these fractal spirals of choices about hues, shades and tones.

PM: In previous exhibitions you have created interactive installations using CGI or video games. How do your drawing works tie in to your digital or computer based practice?

VT: It is just another arm on the monster. I try not to set up a hierarchy between media, for example as one might regarding drawings as a means to a greater end. I like the sparseness, directness (lack of interfaces), immediacy and fragility of working on paper or canvas – and I also appreciate the exact opposite characteristics of other media. These characteristics conjure up different responses and craft different “worlds”. But I see all of these arms of the monster as coexisting and therefore all projects as fluid - where an idea from a drawing might spill over, mutate and recur in a sound recording or a program, for example.

PM: What interests you about exploring alternate realities through digital technologies?

VT: When I first started experimenting again with digital media, it was the potential to craft simulations or invent protocol. I worked on a web-based puzzle game called **Selekthor** for minerpie.net in 2013, which turned into this chaotic organism spread

across twenty-two pages. The crux of it was an animated language, instruction-less puzzles, timers running on probabilities and interaction amidst self-play-ability. This project, though potentially incomprehensible, really set the stage for a lot of my more recent work such as Proxyah and Sazarus for example - I'm still unpacking some of those ideas.

PM: What future projects do you have lined up?

VT: I've been thinking about ways of "choreographing" performers to engage with programs I've been writing, to work as mediated interactions or literally just realtime embodied logic. It started with observing others observing someone interacting with Proxyah, and it felt like the natural next area of inquiry. This has opened a lot of new ground so I'm slowly testing it out. I'm also working on a new LP, a follow up to the "Palace of Peace and Reconciliation" concept album released in 2014. In terms of exhibitions I am working on something for Sydney, Sydney and for Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga in the coming year.

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S.T.A.T.E. by Viktor Timofeev is currently on show at Drawing Room, London. For more information on his work, click [here](#).

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### ABOUT

POSTmatter sits at the convergence of the digital and physical world. Through editorial, exhibitions and art commissions, it celebrates the people and projects that push boundaries.

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