



KEN FEINGOLD

Ken Feingold (USA, 1952 - ) is a contemporary American artist based in New York City. As established by an extensive bibliography and exhibition history (see CV on the artist's website [www.kenfeingold.com](http://www.kenfeingold.com)), Feingold is considered one of the forerunners of new media art, particularly that which employs AI and interactivity. He has been exhibiting his work in film, video, drawing, sculpture, photography, and installations since 1974. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship (2004), a Rockefeller Foundation Media Arts Fellowship (2003), and several fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1979, 1981, 1988). His works have been shown at and are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; ZKM Karlsruhe; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

Since the 1990s, Feingold's works are literally capable of carrying on conversations. Written with his original forms of software these listening and speaking animatronic heads - digitally and pneumatically activated lifelike silicone portraits - hear and understand English speech. They take art into the realm of the interpersonal encounter, moving toward and questioning the unpredictability and complexity that language and mind create between people (as well as between people and computers), presenting new concepts of the portrait, and pointing to what are recognized now - 25 years after the creation of these works - as pressing social issues of artificial intelligence and biological engineering.

A number of the works also involve digital projections in which the screens are the "mental projections" of the figures, video inside-out; that is, the inner "imaginary" workings of these figures, and how people interact with them, control what is seen. Image and sound in these works are emotional signs and symptoms emitted by the characters. He has been one of the first practitioners of interactive art and of algorithmic cinema.

The conversations which these figures carry on are neither completely scripted, nor are they random; rather, the software gives each a "personality", a vocabulary, associative habits, obsessions, and other peculiarities, which make their conversations quirky, surprising, and often hilarious. They challenge our understandings of our relationship with emerging forms of artificial life.



**Head**

1999

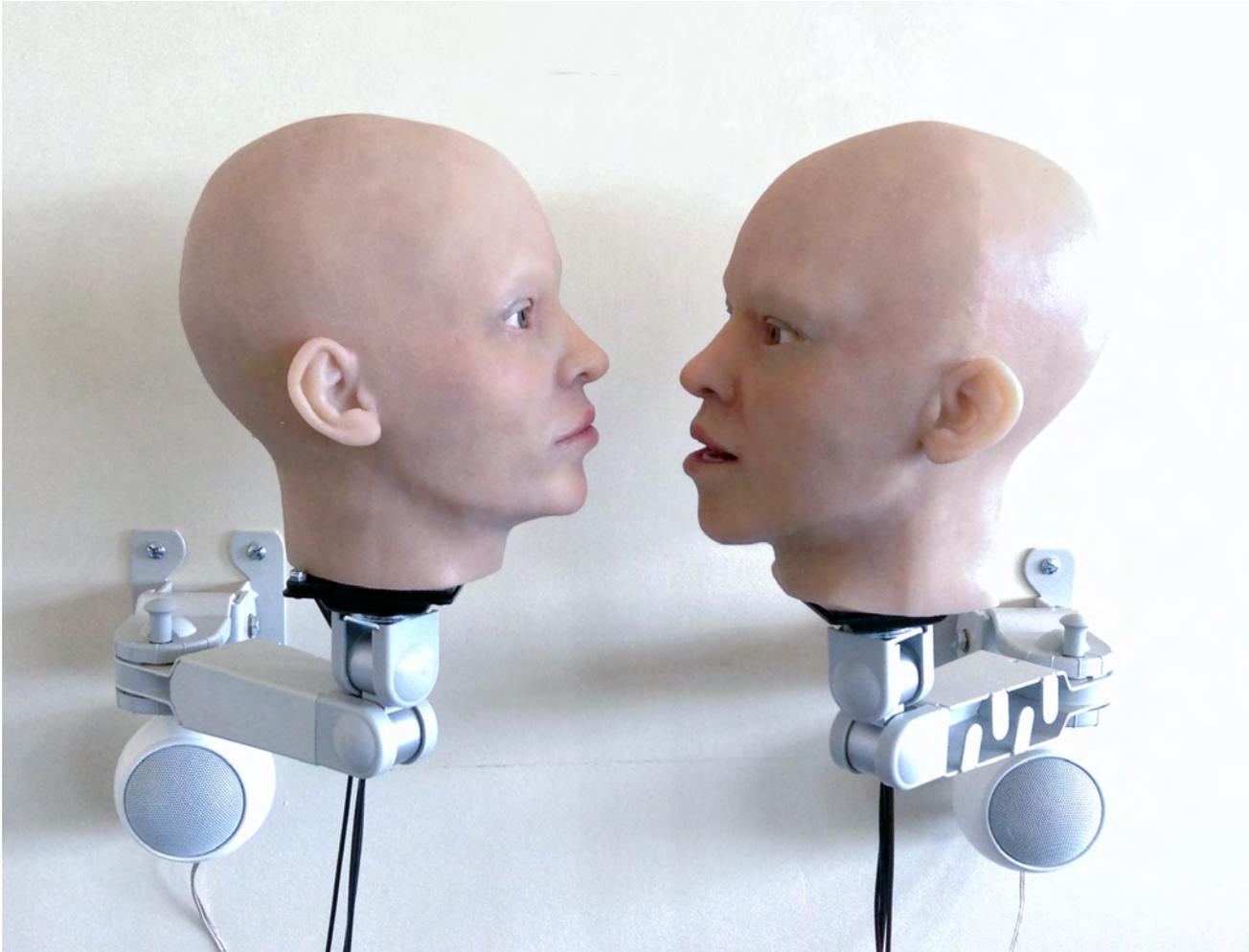
Silicone, pigments, fiberglass, steel, wood, computer, software, other electronics  
20"x20"x42"

Video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YwWjikTCnY>

collection of the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki

In the jury statement from Vida 3.0 (an international competition on artificial life held by Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, in which Feingold's "Head" was a prize winner),

*"Feingold chooses to explore the zones of non-response, of mischief and misbehavior, or distortion, of scrambled and failed communication. [It] makes us question the basis of everyday dialogue we tend to take for granted: how far is our exchange with others conditioned and limited by our own, thoroughly encoded eccentricities, our own programmed bugs and quirks? When indeed true communication occurs, how much is this just a matter of chance?"*



## **Hell**

2013

silicone, fiberglass, steel, software, electronics, computers,  
algorithmic digital audio  
approx. 70"h x 30"w x 12"d

video clip: <https://vimeo.com/742269667>

One head has a male voice and the other a female voice. They are trying to connect, but they don't really have any emotions, only the ability to speak about them. They're constantly searching for something that will reaffirm their desire to connect with the other one. And it's always undermined. It's always thwarted. It never gets to the point where they can settle into a loving conversation.

The sentences uttered in the conversation are not pre-recorded, but generated in real time by AI software written by the artist.



### **Box of Men**

2007

algorithmic cinema

projection or screen dimensions variable

edition of 5

video clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbyUaS4G0HM>

"Box of Men" is a work for display on a large flat-panel screen or projection. The piece is not pre-recorded. The dialogue is synthesized speech generated in real time by a computer program that assigns a voice to each of the puppets. Their conversation goes on infinitely.

The narrative circles around an "unknown" crime. The puppets act as a jury. Those accused are anonymous. The work explores the idea that those who decide the guilt or innocence of others may be acting in frighteningly arbitrary and seemingly random ways, thereby warning us of the frightening possibility that artificial intelligence might be used in a justice system.



### **Lantern**

2005

silicone, fiberglass, steel, electronics, software, furniture

main object: 24"x22"x55"h

It is possible to have conversations with this character. His responses are not pre-recorded, but generated in real time by AI software written by the artist.

video clip: <https://youtu.be/dssBTdo4rTI>

Visitor: you are easy to confuse.

Lantern: am i?

V: yes.

L: what are you thinking about?

V: i'm thinking about chicken.

L: wherever she goes is where she lies.

V: wherever you go.

L: oh, what if i am down?

V: what kind of name is lantern?

L: what is the use of having a name?

V: why do they call you lantern?

L: style library, solidify, simplify.

V: excuse me?

L: select with inject, correct.



**The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything**  
2004

silicone, fiberglass, steel, software, electronics, computers,  
algorithmic digital audio  
48"h x 60"w x 60"d

video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSBLQUWK9Is>

Three self-portraits, each possessing an animal, vegetable, or mineral mind, debate the nature of violence with each other, and discuss their fears – generally their fears about each other. They also wonder about “that thing” before them, and we hear how they project their own interior worlds onto it in an attempt to figure out what it really is. Although they hear each other, nothing seems to penetrate or influence their ideas; no matter what the subject matter discussed, they eventually return to their own interests and fixed ideas. As in the other works, the sentences uttered in the conversations are not prerecorded, but generated in real time by AI software written by the artist.



**You**

2004

silicone, fiberglass, steel, electronics, computers, table,  
bedding, pneumatics, algorithmic digital audio  
30" x 40" x 45"h, edition of two

collection Kiasma Museum, Helsinki,  
and 21C Museum Foundation, Louisville

video clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOntVVBq-5I&t=1s>

Two identical heads (but one with a male and one with a female voice) lie on pillows upon a kitchen table, emerging from a sort of shipping case. They argue with each about their relationship, make up, regret their argument, and begin to argue again - each time slightly different but generally in a similar way. We see how oft-repeated phrases can have little real meaning, but a lot of power to do harm. The endlessness of their predicament is literally programmed and self-perpetuating, going nowhere - perhaps a way to think about those who cannot escape from similar cases.

The dialog is not pre-recorded, and is different each time someone visits it, generated in real time by a computer program. They behave as if in a scene of a film, acting out their role over and over, but always changing.

## Eros and Thanatos at Sea

2004

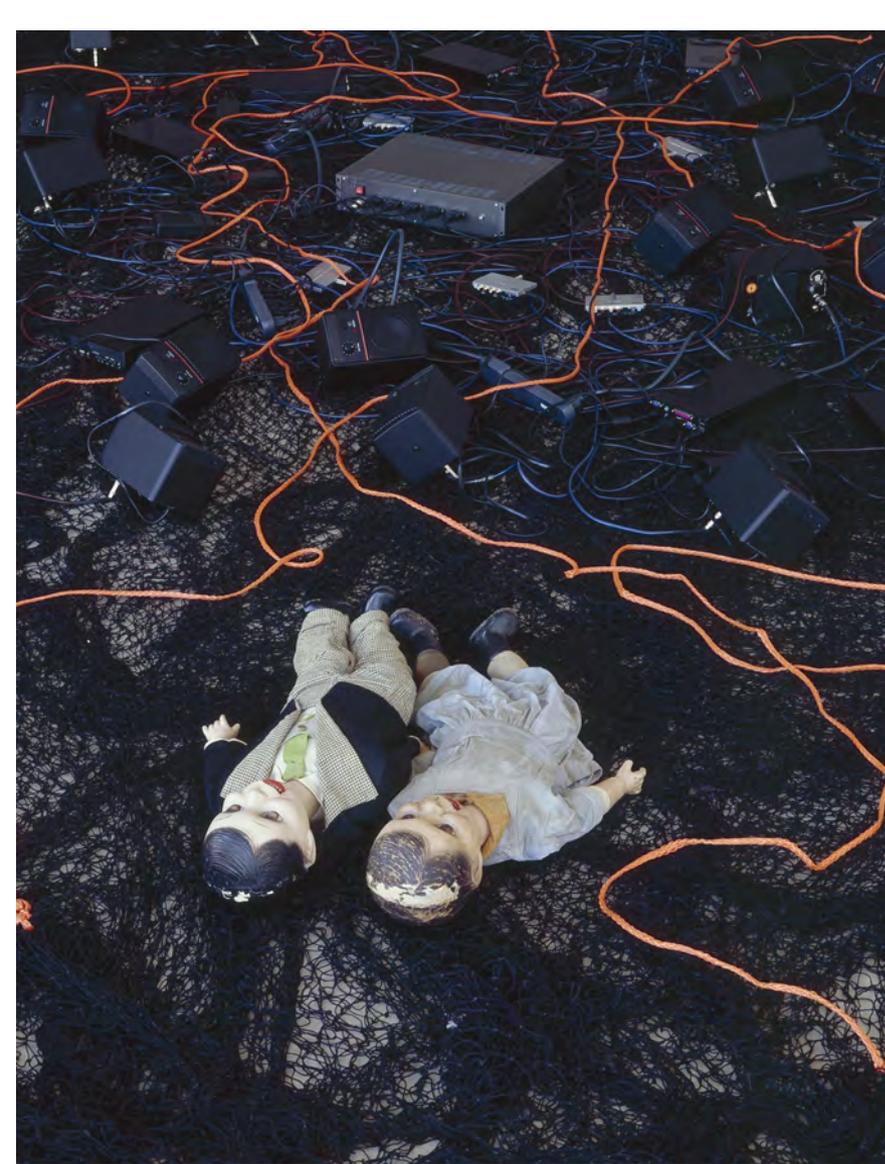
ventriloquist puppets, fishing net, computers, electronics  
22 channel algorithmic digital audio installation  
installation dimensions variable, approx. 120"w x 220"l x 6"h

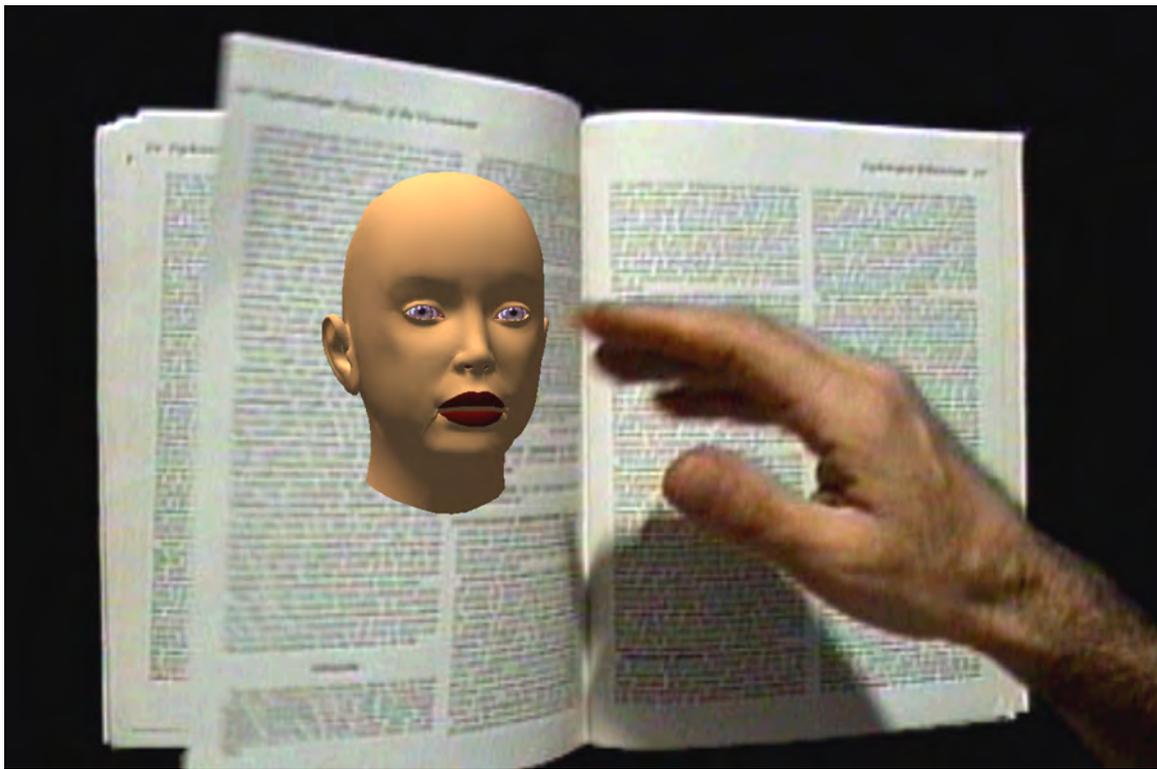
Video clip: <https://vimeo.com/381465717>

The mythical characters of Eros and Thanatos were used by Freud to metaphorically represent the fundamental energies of, on the one hand, Eros: life, creativity, growth, and increase in tension, and on the other, Thanatos: that of the movement towards dissolution, negation, and death.

This installation includes 22 speaking characters engaged in conversation with each other in groups of two, three, and four, all discussing their sexual fantasies - what the characters want to do with and to each other, or have done to them.

The dialog is not pre-recorded, and is different each time someone visits it, generated in real time by a seven conversational computer programs.





## Pressure to Speak (House of Cards)

2002

interactive algorithmic cinema (real-time computer generated animation, video, and audio) projection dimensions variable

video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHTMxCAdq-M>

The figures in the projection try to construct narratives from what they hear, try to build them up, and eventually lose the thread and starts again, forgetting their story. Whatever is spoken into the microphone engage the figures directly - they will reply, as well as try to continue their imagined stories. The figures also speak when they hear nothing, telling stories to themselves and drawing visitors into their games about language, memory, and place.

*a few text fragments:*

"Eight feet, nine eyes, two tails, four mouths. A wise man in the company of wise men, tries to solve this riddle.' This is what he said, over and over. I could never get him to explain this riddle to me."

"One night Humayun was smoking and observing Venus from the roof of his library when he heard a voice call his name from the Bhairon cave. Turning, his foot caught in the folds of his garment and he fell to the bottom of the circular stairs and died."

"If you pay too much attention to your shadow, you are likely to become mad or to be killed by a passing car. But as I put my feet one after the other on those cobblestones in the alleys of the old town I was going in deeper and deeper into it."

"To the north, a crow landed in a tree, and just at that moment, seeing shadow upon shadow, he felt that he finally understood the purpose of this night. He continued to fall, and yet he still felt not a bit of fear, only the inspiration of his own ideas."

"My greatest fear when climbing or descending a circular staircase is that it might be infinite, that its stairs would reproduce exponentially like dividing cells, that it would extend endlessly in both directions and that I would never escape it."





**If/Then**

2001

silicone, pigments, fiberglass, steel, software, electronics,  
cardboard, styrofoam

24" x 28"; x 24"h

Collection of Whitney Museum of American Art, NY

video clip: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y\\_8mKgoYmFc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_8mKgoYmFc)

Two identical heads, sculpted in the likeness of an imaginary androgynous figure, speak to each other, doubting the reality of their own existence. These two, in ever-changing and outrageous conversations with each other struggle to determine if they really exist or not, if they are the same person or not, and if they will ever know.

Their conversations are generated by software in real time. They draw visitors into their endless, twisting debate over whether this self-awareness and the seemingly illusory nature of their own existence can ever be really understood.



### **Sinking Feeling**

2001

silicone, fiberglass, steel, electronics, software, furniture  
main object: 20"x20"x42"h, installation dimensions variable

collection of ZKM Center for Art & Media, Karlsruhe

video clip: <https://youtu.be/GitKKzsG-2M>

During conversations with this fellow, he is quite convinced of its own existence, but desperate to know "Why don't I have a body like everyone else?" or "How did I get here, what am I doing here?"

His conversational responses are not pre-recorded, but generated in real time by AI software written by the artist.

That he is growing out of flowerpot points to questions about biological engineering and the potential of biologically engineered human parts as cash crops.



### **Self Portrait as the Center of the Universe**

1998-2001

Silicone, pigments, fiberglass, steel, software, electronics, puppets, algorithmic computer animation, video, and sound

Installation dimensions variable

Video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EK-7w56jN0E>

The self-portrait animatronic head has open-ended, improvisational conversations with its alter ego, a virtual head that appears as the central figure in the projection. The conversations between these two figures do not include the audience; rather, they interact only with each other, generated in real time by computer software.

The central subjects of their conversations revolve around, on one side - generalization and distance; and on the other - questions and memories of himself. These conversations, bridging real and virtual spaces, are within video-like digital scenes that recompose themselves based on the nature of the conversation between the two main characters.

The subject of the conversation, as determined by the artificial actor, controls the landscape which is seen, so these change as the conversations go along, and other figures appear and disappear. The scenes are also populated by figures - autonomous "software agents" in the form of realtime 3D computer animation - which appear in the projected image-world that fills his vision.



### **Orpheus**

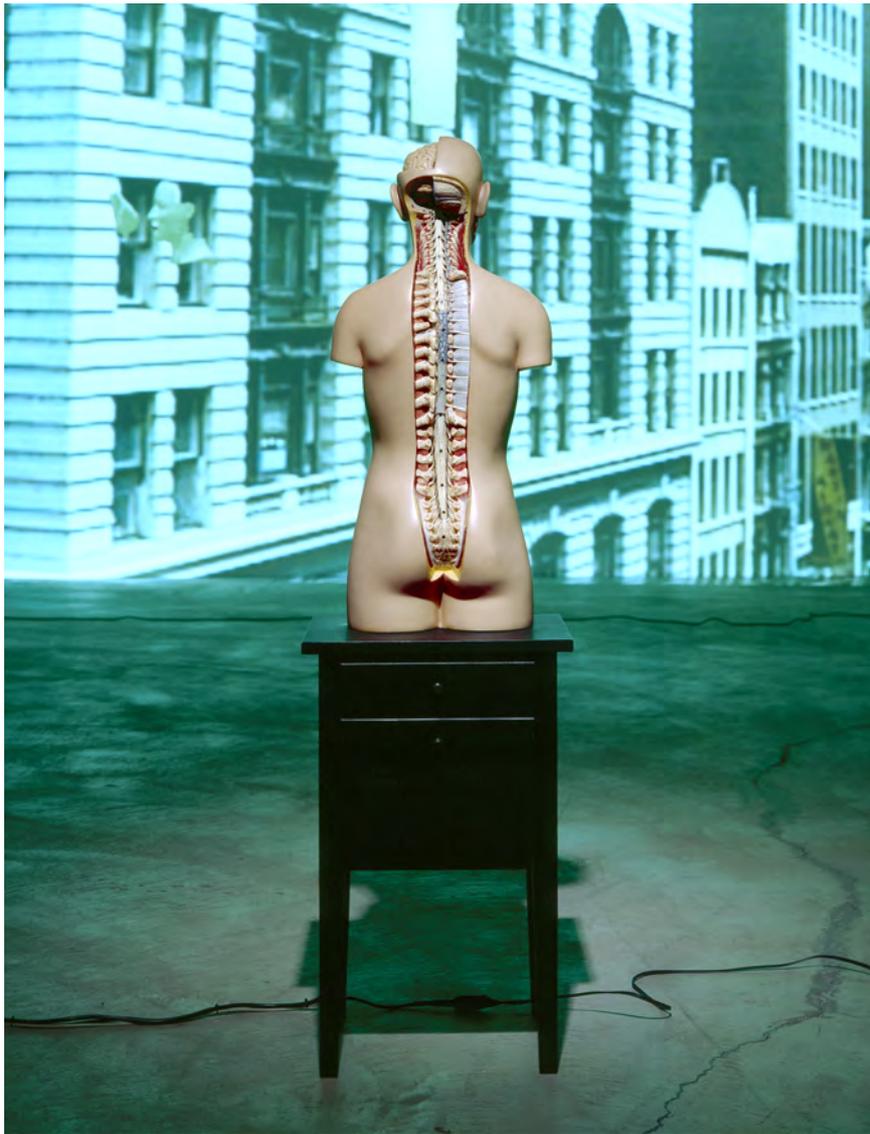
1996

algorithmic cinema

<https://youtu.be/kNZHX2xoFKk>

Orpheus appears as the projected image of a speaking puppet head. The work is derived from the film *Orphée* (1950) by Jean Cocteau, and is intended for installation in a place removed from ordinary traffic - in a cave, an abandoned tower, or another obscure location. From time to time, he speaks a declarative statement, and these are seemingly never repeated.

Feingold writes, "*The statements came about as follows: First, I used the original (translated) sentences from Cocteau's film - all of the phrases that were spoken over the radio, in sequence - as a grammatical matrix. So the matrix is a kind of cross-section of the original screenplay, paying attention to only one aspect of the film - the radio trick that Death arranges in order to lure Orpheus into the underworld, the 'found texts' from the media that hypnotize Orpheus. Then, I added further words (of my own), as possible words in the matrix. The computer program randomly pulls words from this matrix each time through the loop of the overall piece. In this way, the original syntax is fixed, but the poetry is 'realtime' and variable.*"



### Interior

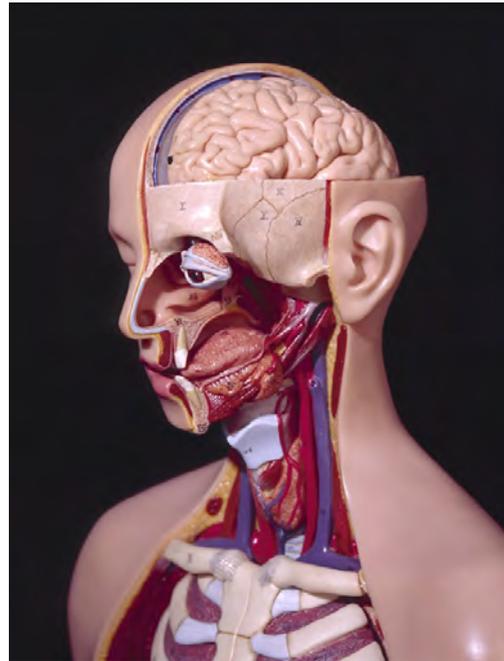
1997

Anatomical model with embedded sensors, electronics, software, algorithmic sound, computer animation, and digital video projection Dimensions variable

commissioned for the ICC Biennale '97  
InterCommunication Center, Tokyo

video clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygHYi7mWQAg>



A room with a large projection on one wall, within which a shifting world of images and speaking characters are seen and heard. In front of it stands a life-size anatomical model of a human torso, in which the spine is revealed. The torso is "sensitive" to visitors. Along the spine, small sensors are embedded, sensitive even to a close-by hand. Transformations of video and 3D computer-generated objects take place in time, and touching or stroking the figure evokes complex interrelations among the visual media.





**where I can see my house from here so we are**

1993-94

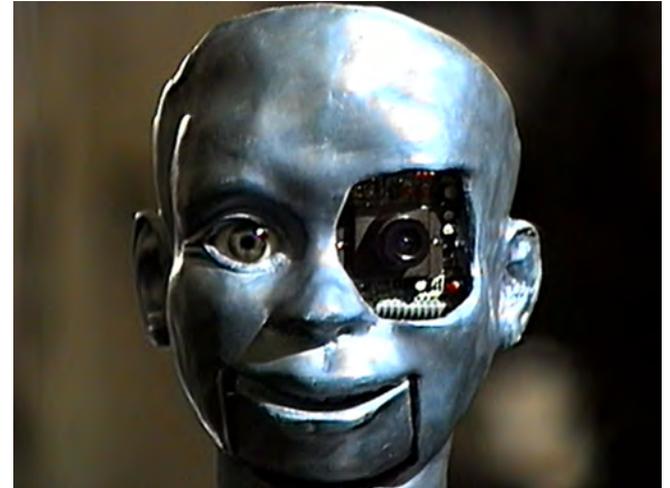
Internet-connected robot puppets, electronics, mirrors, software

video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0jM1vzGNqU>

In one exhibition space there is a mirrored space. Inside of this space, there are three robot-puppet ventriloquist dolls. In three other locations are darkened spaces, each with a place to sit, a small table upon which sits a special controller-interface (an attaché case containing a joystick and a microphone), and upon the facing wall a large projected video image showing their robot's vision, effectively, computer controlled "video-telephones."

Each robot has a video camera for "sight", microphones for "hearing". Each robot is connected, remotely, to one of the other spaces (anywhere on the Internet). In these other locations, a viewer may see (via the video projection) and hear what the robot sees and hears, can maneuver it with a joystick, while the voice of the remote viewer is transmitted back to the robot, that speaks (like the doll of a ventriloquist) the words of that person. It is then possible for three people to communicate with each other in the hall-of-mirrors via their respectively controlled robots. Viewers in the space with the robots can see over the walls, allowing them to talk with people at the connected distant locations via the robots.

This work has been internationally recognized as one of the first artworks utilizing robots and Internet transmission of video and sound.





### **The Surprising Spiral**

1991

Wood, books, electronics, software, laserdisc, interactive audio and video  
installation dimensions variable

collection of Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (Center for Art and  
Media | ZKM), Karlsruhe

video clip: <https://vimeo.com/269162458>

A very early interactive artwork, utilizing a computer controlled videodisc, computer graphics, digitized sounds and texts, and synthesized voices, embedded within sculptures. The work responds to the form of the viewer/participant's engagement. The viewer's ability to interact and direct the flow of images and sounds allows him or her to "play" the piece, to seek or escape from finding a destination, or to enjoy its labyrinthine paths. There are two sculpture/interface objects through which a viewer can interact with the work. One is a large, hollow handmade book (13"x 15"x 6") in which are encased replicas of human hands. In a cut out in the center of the cover is embedded a transparent touch screen, which appears to be the glass "cover" of the book. On this touch screen are fingerprints, placed above the fingertips of the larger hand within the book. When a viewer touches any of the fingerprints, various things can happen: there are always sound responses to these touches, usually speech; the video can change to another location in the world, or an animated text might be evoked. This work has been recognized internationally as one of the pioneering computer-driven interactive artworks.





**Jimmy Charlie Jimmy**

1992

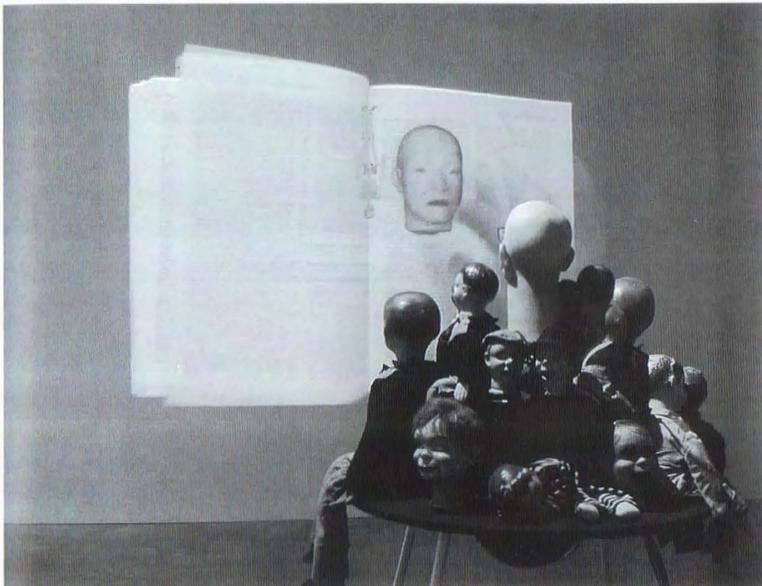
puppet head, glass dome,  
electronics, plastic, sonar sensors  
20"x18"x40"h

The head of a tattered ventriloquist-doll with glazed-over eyes is set under a glass dome, sitting atop a small instrumentation cart with wheels, as if mobile, but unmoving - except for its constant speaking. Its pathetic mouth flapping away, Jimmy Charlie Jimmy is on a constant monologue, until someone approaches him closely. Then, he stops speaking, and if the viewer should happen to talk to him, the doll repeats their words, in their own voice, over and over, until the visitor steps away.



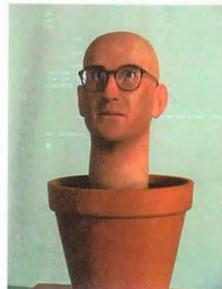
## Selected Press and Bibliography

127. **Kenneth Feingold**, *Self-Portrait as the Center of the Universe*, 1998–2001. A head modelled after the artist's own and surrounded by ventriloquist dummies talks to a virtual counterpart projected on a wall. The virtual head is embedded into scenes that reconfigure themselves on the basis of their conversation. In addition, the virtual head is surrounded by autonomous animated characters that can 'get into' the virtual head's mind, affecting its perception. People can influence these autonomous characters through a website, and their navigation affects what is seen and heard in the gallery space, giving them control over the installation. The gallery visitors, on the other hand, can only watch, but they have access to the imagination and thoughts of the heads.



from  
Christiane Paul **DIGITAL ART**

Although artists have been incorporating artificial intelligence and speech programs (mostly based on AIML) into their art, their works cannot be simply labelled 'AI projects' for they are broader in their scope and metaphoric implications. Artist Ken Feingold (b. 1952), for instance, has created a whole series of works – among them *Séance Box No.1* (1998–9), *Head* (1999–2000), *If/Then* (2001), *Sinking Feeling* (2001), and *Self-Portrait as the Center of the Universe* (1998–2001) – that incorporate animatronic (mechanized) heads and make use of speech recognition, natural language processing, conversation or personality algorithms, and text-to-speech software. In *If/Then*, two eerily humanoid heads are sitting in a box surrounded by styrofoam nuggets normally used as packaging materials. As Feingold explains, he wanted them 'to look like replacement



128

128. (above) **Kenneth Feingold**, *Sinking Feeling*, 2001. The head (again modelled after the artist) is sitting in a flowerpot, suggesting an 'organically grown' human. It ponders on why it is 'bodyless' and how it ended up being where it is. Visitors can talk to the head, and their dialogue is projected onto the wall behind it, adding a textual layer and unveiling both what the head hears, as well as its thought process.

129

129. (right) **Kenneth Feingold**, *If/Then*, 2001

parts being shipped from the factory that had suddenly gotten up and begun a kind of existential dialogue right there on the assembly line'. The heads are involved in an ever-changing dialogue probing the philosophical issues of their existence as well as their separateness and likeness. Their conversation, based on a complex set of rules and exceptions, points to larger issues of human communication: picking up on syntax structure and strings of words in their respective statements, the heads' communication at times may seem conditioned, limited and random (as human conversations sometimes do) but highlights the meta-levels of meaning created by failed communication, misunderstandings, and silences. The heads' dialogue unveils crucial elements of the basics of syntax structure and the way we construct meaning, with often extremely poetic results.



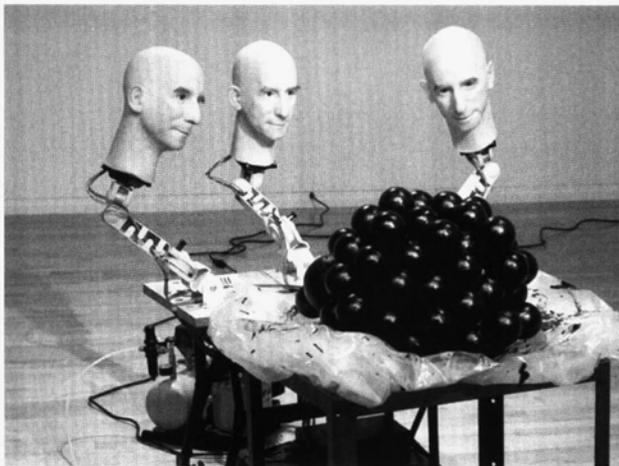
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Kenneth Feingold. «The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything». 2004. Silicone, fibre de verre, acier, table, matériel électronique, ordinateur. 120 x 150 x 150 cm. Silicone, fiberglass, steel, software, electronics, computers

los angeles

KENNETH FEINGOLD

Ace Gallery  
4 octobre - décembre 2005

Artiste multimédia new-yorkais, Kenneth Feingold crée des installations, des vidéos ou des sculptures dans lesquelles des têtes robotisées plutôt volubiles, aussi séduisantes que trouillantes, nous font face. Cette exposition présente des œuvres qui datent du milieu des années 1980, et offre la possibilité d'en retracer l'évolution – des œuvres intégrant des textes, sur papier et sur toile, aux inventions technologiques récentes. Le corps et sa relation à l'espace, formel et social, constituent le cœur du travail de Feingold. Depuis la fin des années 1990, il crée des installations dans lesquelles des têtes esseulées, programmées par ordinateur, se mettent à parler entre elles dès qu'une personne pénètre dans la pièce. Placées dans des décors variés – un lit, une boîte, etc. –, ces têtes désincarnées semblent complètement ignorer leur absence de corps. Les projections vidéo et les détecteurs interactifs poussent plus avant l'union perturbante de la vie artificielle et du discours humain. L'intérêt de cette rétrospective est de mettre clairement au jour le parcours d'une œuvre. Si le travail de

Feingold des années 1980 et du début des années 1990 semble aujourd'hui daté, il souligne une évolution. Ainsi, dans *The Lost Soul* (1988), un squelette assis – soit une représentation de l'artiste – observe trois petits moniteurs vidéo montrant les aventures de Feingold en différents lieux – Thaïlande, Inde, New York. Le squelette écoute et observe ces trois montages disparates et devient le dépositaire de leur signification complexe. Nombre des pièces de Feingold impliquent des conversations simultanées – réelles, imaginaires ou générées automatiquement par ordinateur. Deux œuvres récentes, *The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything*, et *You* (2004) montrent deux têtes identiques en train de discuter. Dans *You*, elles reposent sur les oreillers d'un lit de fortune. Elles se disputent interminablement à propos de leur relation, tournant la tête, bougeant les yeux, comme animées par l'émotion suscitée par la conversation. Le dialogue se moifie chaque fois que l'installation est déclenchée. Chacune des têtes d'*Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything* est dotée de trois personnalités différentes. Les têtes – des autoprotraits – débattent de la nature de la violence de trois points de vue divergents. Un triangle sans fin se forme, les trois doubles de l'artiste faisant entendre leurs arguments contradictoires sur des questions philosophiques et sociales.

D'abord projections générées par ordinateur, les têtes deviennent des sculptures robotisées à l'apparence humaine. Les modèles ont une étrange quiétude que les projections n'ont pas. Alors que les têtes projetées flottent dans des espaces réels ou imaginaires, les animatroniques sont ancrées dans un lieu – un lit, une caisse – de manière à laisser apparaître la mécanique complexe de l'œuvre. Il s'agit là d'une riche rétrospective. La Ace Gallery se mesure aux musées avec ses expositions de qualité et la possibilité donnée à l'artiste de monter un large pan de son travail dans plusieurs grands espaces. Feingold profite de cette opportunité pour donner au spectateur un aperçu des rouages internes de son imagination.

Jody Zellen  
Traduit par Aude Tincelin

Ken Feingold is a New York-based multimedia artist who makes installations, videos and sculptures that often include talking robotic heads that are both enticing and unsettling. A show at Ace Gallery features work he has created since the mid 1980s, allowing viewers to trace the evolution in his work from text-based pieces on paper and canvas to his technological inventions. The subject of Feingold's work is the body and how it relates to space, both formal and social. Since the

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What is significant about a survey exhibition is that the trajectory of the work becomes evident. While the work from the 1980s and early 1990s seems dated now, it illustrates the evolution and development of the artist's ideas. For example *The Lost Soul*, 1988, is a museum-like tableau in which a seated skeleton (a representation of the artist) watches three small video monitors displaying the artist's experiences in different places (Thailand, India and New York). The skeleton watches and listens to three disparate loops, becoming the repository for their composite meaning.

Many of Feingold's pieces involve simultaneous conversations, real, imagined or randomly generated by a computer. Two recent works *The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything*, and *You*, 2004 feature identical heads in conversation. In *You* the disembodied voices lie on pillows in a makeshift bed. They argue back and forth about their relationship, turning their heads and moving their eyes as though prompted by the emotion of the conversation. The never-ending dialogue is different each time someone triggers the work, yet while the conversation is not scripted the male and female roles take on distinct personalities. Three distinct personalities are also given to each of the heads in *The Animal, Vegetable, Mineralness of Everything*. The heads-self-portraits debate the nature of violence from three different points of view. It becomes an endless triangle listening to three doppelgangers of the artist discuss opposing sides of philosophical and social issues. The disembodied heads in Feingold's works have evolved from computer-generated projections to lifelike robotic sculptures. The physical versions have a creepiness that the projections lack. While the projected heads float in various real and imagined spaces, the animatronics are anchored in place - to a bed or a crate - in a way that allows the mechanics to remain visible. Feingold fuses image, sound and movement in his complex and technically sophisticated works.

What is so rewarding about this survey exhibition is that numerous works are exhibited simultaneously, allowing technical advancements to be noted and connections to be made across the works that would not be possible in an exhibition of a single installation. Ace Gallery rivals museums in presenting quality shows that afford an artist numerous large rooms to display a wide range of work. Feingold takes advantage of this opportunity, utilizing the many nooks and cavernous spaces to allow viewers a glimpse of his imagination.

Jody Zellen ArtPress No. 319 Paris, January 2006

# ART, LIES AND VIDEOTAPE: EXPOSING PERFORMANCE

14 NOVEMBER 2003 – 25 JANUARY 2004



Yoko Ono  
*'Imagine Peace' installation at  
Utopia Station, Venice Biennale  
June - November 2003*  
Photo by Karla Merrifield  
© 2003 Yoko Ono



Ken Feingold  
*Self Portrait as the Center of the Universe* 2001  
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Many artists continue to use their own bodies as material in performances, while others produce live work by proxy – creating puppets, mannequins or 'stand-ins' to represent the artist or another character, performing repeatedly and on command. Other artists provide written instructions for the viewer to act out – from simple actions to complex and extended instructions, which might require following a set route, or to perform in a specified way.

Material evidence from live events is increasingly important, as a record of the event and as a way of promoting the work of the performance artist. However, with a growing emphasis on the quality of these records, artists now spend a great deal of time creating highly accomplished films of their actions.

For some the performance is no longer the primary goal. Instead the live action is conceived and staged in order to make a film. That film, whether broadcast on television or not, can reach a much wider audience; thousands of people could see a work which perhaps only a handful might have witnessed during the original live event. For some artists this work has led to a career directing pop videos, and for a few, directing big-budget films.

## Full list of works in this room

### Ken Feingold

*Self Portrait as the Center of the Universe* 1998–2001

### Isaac Julian

*Untitled (Three)* 1999

*Three* 1996–9

### Robert Longo

*Untitled* 1981

*Untitled* 1981

*Johnny Mnemonic* 1995

### Yoko Ono

*Imagine Peace Map Room* 2003

### Dennis Oppenheim

*Theme for a Major Hill* 1974

### Tony Oursler

*Aulochthonous AAAAHHHH* 1995

### Ene-Liis Semper

*Oasis* 1999



## New York CRITICS' PICKS

### Ken Feingold POSTMASTERS GALLERY May 15 - June 30 2001

If the ramifications of artificial intelligence haven't sufficiently disturbed you, Ken Feingold's current show, "If/Then," should do the trick. Using animatronic heads—pneumatic silicone objects digitally programmed to understand English speech—Feingold has created sculpture that can literally communicate with its viewers. *Sinking Feeling*, 2001, for instance, includes a single head whose words are projected as text on the wall behind it, and a microphone for conversation. The uncanniest aspect of Feingold's Frankensteins, perhaps, is their humanlike self-absorption. *Sinking Feeling* spends most of its time wondering about its physical condition: "Why don't I have a body like everyone else?" it asks, while the two heads in *If/Then*, 2001, artfully arranged in a Styrofoam-filled cardboard box, discuss their identical appearance. Nearly as simple, complex, and flawed as humans, Feingold's sculptures raise all kinds of questions about communication, identity, language, and evolution.

—Martha Schwendener

Another form of cultural dialogue that is both editorial and yet very personal takes the form of an interactive video installation by **Ken Feingold** (145 Hudson, January 21-February 20). Entitled *The Surprising Spiral*, the work consists, formally, of a platform upon which a table and bench sit, and the dimmed audio and visual space of an enclosed room. On the table rests a tableau of loosely piled books fixed in place. On the top is a copy of Octavio Paz's *The Monkey Grammarian*, in which is embedded a plastic prosthesis of a mouth, lips, and jaw (housing a fiber-optic sensor). Next to this is a larger fabricated tome that sports the pseudonym "Pierre de Toucher," which Regina Cornwell identifies in a small accompanying brochure as a pun on "Pièrre de Toucher" (Please Touch), a phrase used by Duchamp in relation to his spiraling Rotoreliefs dating from 1935. The pages of the "book" have been cut out to create a space that houses a vertical, graphed image of an esoteric alphabet and two fake hands (a child's pointing to the palm of an adult's). A piece of glass covers this small scenario, giving it the feel of a display case. Upon the glass are five distinct fingerprints. These prints identify points on what is actually a touch screen. Thus the title of the "book," however cryptic, clues the viewer in to its overall function as a manipulatable element in Feingold's created environment. This touch screen and the fiber-optic point in the mouth are the two variables by which the viewer can create the installation that is composed of a total of three variables: a screen projection on a wall about ten feet in front of the platform, a sometimes superimposed text that spirals backwards as if falling backwards into the image, and an audio element audible through a speaker installed on the table. The program is very sensitive to the order in which things are called up, so that there is no simple patterning that can be deduced or figured out. This not only makes for a more interesting viewing, but insures that each person's experience of *The Surprising Spiral* is, despite similar "pieces," uniquely his or hers. Feingold is careful about what those pieces are, and his



Ken Feingold, *The Surprising Spiral*, installation view, 1991. Courtesy the artist.

"voice" is clearly available throughout, but it is more a guiding than a preaching, an offering rather than a doctrine. Images include a casual videotaped walk down a back street in Tokyo; fish feeding—looking like a pulsing, almost abstract, patterning; Buddhist monks carrying sand from a sand mandala to the river; vast desert landscapes. The only images that are not taken by Feingold are those of a Japanese TV commercial featuring a new thirstquencher, designed for the culmination of Darwinian development—a featureless, modular, and robotic being, and also clips from Robbe-Grillet's black-and-white film *L'immortelle*. The audio element of the installation features passages read aloud from Paz's book. It is really difficult to describe the piece without making it sound overly technological, when its real effect is more deeply calming and mystical, mesmerizing but not hypnotic; rather, it provides a soothing, peaceful place in which to travel, with Feingold's help, into the suggestive inner mind.

Gretchen Faust

## CV Selected Highlights (full CV/Bibliography link)

### Solo Exhibitions

Gdanska Galeria Miejska, Gdansk 2014  
Ace Gallery, Los Angeles; mid-career survey, 2005-2006  
Mejan Labs, Stockholm, 2006  
Grossman Gallery, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2004  
Postmasters Gallery, New York, 2001  
Postmasters Gallery, New York, 1999  
Galerie René Coelho, Amsterdam, 1992  
The Museum of Modern Art, NY "Video Viewpoints: Ken Feingold", 1985  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Retrospective Film Screening, 1978  
Artists' Space, New York, Project Space Exhibition, 1979  
Claire S. Copley Gallery, Los Angeles, 1975

### Selection of Fellowships / Grants/ Co-productions / Commissions

2010 Pollock-Krasner Foundation  
2004 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship  
2003 Rockefeller Foundation Media Arts Fellowship  
1999 Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki  
1998 Center for Art and Media Technology (ZKM) Karlsruhe and i3Net, Brussels  
1997 ICC Biennale, Tokyo  
1988 US/Japan Friendship Commission and NEA; Creative Artists Exchange Program  
1988, 1981, 1979 National Endowment for the Arts

### Selection of Collections (Institutions)

Bonn Kunstverein  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris  
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg  
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki  
Museo Palazzo Fortuny, Venice  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Nagoya City Art Museum, Nagoya  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM), Karlsruhe

### Monograph on the work of Ken Feingold

*Ken Feingold: Figures of Speech*; ed. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, Laznia Art Center, 2014

### Selection of Group Exhibitions

Cornell University Library; "Signal to Code", 2016 and Cornell Biennale Exhibition, 2022  
SeMA, Buk Seoul Museum of Art, "WEB-RETRO", 2019  
Holon Institute of Technology; "(id)ea.code++ , algorithmic objects", 2017  
National Art Museum of China, Beijing "International Triennial of New Media Art", 2014  
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art; "Kiasma Hits", 2013-2014  
Espacio Fundación Telefónica; "VIDA 1999-2012", Madrid; 2012-2013  
National Museum and Zamek Culture Centre; Poznań, "Mediations Biennial", 2012  
Centre Georges Pompidou; Paris, "Vair/Revoir", 2009  
Múscarnok /Kunsthalle, Budapest and ZKM, Karlsruhe, "Kempelen - Man in the Machine"; 2007  
Museum of Modern Art, "TOMORROWLAND": CalArts in Moving Pictures, 2006  
National Museum of Art, Wrocław, "The Other Book", 2005  
ZKM Karlsruhe, "Masterpieces of Media Art from the ZKM Collection", 2005-2007  
Tate Liverpool, "Art, Lies, and Videotape: Exposing Performance", 2003-2004  
Whitney Museum of American Art, "2002 Biennial Exhibition", 2002  
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C, "Fantasy Underfoot", 47th Corcoran Biennial; 2002-2003  
J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, "Devices of Wonder", 2001-2002  
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; "Alien Intelligence", 2000  
The Museum of Modern Art, NY; "Video Time"; 2000-2001  
ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, "net\_condition"; 2000  
Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, "Glut/Fest", 1998  
David Zwirner Gallery, New York, "Video Library", 1998  
ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, "SurroGate", 1998  
National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, "Visual Extension - Fantasy and Reality", 1998-1999 Museum of Modern Art, New York; "Technology in the Nineties" series; April  
Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum Duisburg, "Interact! Key Works of Interactive Art", Ap-Jun  
Documenta X, Documenta X, "Beware! In Playing the Phantom You Become One", Kassel, 1997  
Postmasters Gallery, New York, "Password Ferdydurke", 1997  
InterCommunication Center, Tokyo, "ICC Biennale '97"  
Biennale de Art Contemporain de Lyon; 1995-1996  
Bonn Kunstverein; Bonn Videonale, 1994  
The Museum of Modern Art, NY; "Between Word and Image", 1993  
Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, "Installations: Ken Feingold & Thierry Kuntzel"; Odense, 1992  
Simon Watson Gallery, NY, and The Renaissance Society, Chicago, "The Body", 1991  
Museum of Modern Art, NY; "Fact/Fiction", 1991  
Museum of Modern Art, NY; "Dream", 1990  
Whitney Museum of American Art 1989 Biennial Exhibition, 1985 Biennial Exhibition, 1983 Biennial Exhibition  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tenth Anniversary Exhibition: "l'epoque, la mode, la morale, la passion" The  
The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, "Signs"985

### **Selected Bibliography on the Work of Ken Feingold (post-2000)**

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- Digital Art, Aesthetic Creation; The Birth of a Medium*, Paul Crowther; Routledge, 2019
- Language Art in the Age of Panophonia*; by Monika Górską-Olesinska; Materialities of Literature, MATLIT: [S.l.], v. 6, n. 2, p. 87-98, aug. 2018
- Here/There: Telepresence, Touch, and Art at the Interface*; Kris Paulsen, MIT Press, 2017
- Emergence in Interactive Art*, Jennifer Seevinck; Springer International Publishing, 2017
- Interactive Digital Art*, Penesta Dika, Logos Verlag Berlin, 2017
- Alternative Projections: Experimental Film in Los Angeles, 1945-1980*, ed David James, Adam Hyman, John Libbey Publishing Ltd., 2015
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- Performing Beauty in Participatory Art and Culture*, Heinrich Falk, Routledge 2014
- A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon, Routledge 2012
- Digital Art and Meaning*, Roberto Simanowski, Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011
- Interactive Storytelling*, Ruth Aylett et al, Springer Science and Business Media 2011
- Art + Science Now*, Stephen Wilson, Thames and Hudson, 2010
- Beyond Mediations*, Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, "Zamek" Culture Centre Publications, 2010
- Art Investigating Science: Critical Art as a Meta-discourse of Science*, Maciej Ozog, in Cognition and Creativity: Digital Arts and Culture, University of California Irvine, 2009
- Art and Electronic Media*, Edward Shanken, Phaidon Press, London 2009
- Sculpture Today*, Judith Collins, Phaidon Press, London 2008
- Media Art Histories*, Oliver Grau, ed. (essay by Erkki Huhtamo), MIT Press 2007
- New Philosophy for New Media*, Hansen, Mark B.N.; MIT Press Cambridge 2004
- Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age*, Margot Lovejoy, Routledge, London/ New York 2004
- Closed Circuit Videoinstallationen*, Kacunko, Slavko; Logos Verlag Berlin 2004
- Internet Art*, Rachel Greene; Thames and Hudson, London 2004
- Understanding Art*, Lois Fichner-Rathus; Thomson Wadsworth, Belmont, CA 2004
- Video Art*, Michael Rush; Thames and Hudson, London 2003
- Digital Art*, Christiane Paul; Thames and Hudson, London 2003