

The Gift of Mutual Misunderstanding

Kristoffer Ørum

Bio

Kristoffer Ørum is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher and organizer based in Denmark. Through lectures, internet projects, exhibitions, interventions and teaching it is his goal to explore the many complex narratives of the everyday. He hopes to challenge existing systems of knowledge and technology through deliberate misunderstanding and misreading of these narratives. In this effort he draws equally from abundant sources of pseudo-scientific knowledge and established critical theory in an attempt to create new associations and narratives for familiar objects and phenomena, ranging from the complexity of the internet, or economic terms, to the labels of store bought products. see more at oerum.org

The gifts of mutual misunderstandings is a 3D rendered diagram of the relations between the separate but interconnected "lifeworlds" of programmers, algorithms and users. Based on the proposition that if communication can fail, it will, the diagram combines and misrepresents several theories of communication. It represents an attempt to undermine the perceived authority accorded to the arrows, boxes and pyramids found in so many of the diagrams used to explain the complexities of communication, technology and contemporary life to us.

Drawing inspiration from traditions of science fiction and the deliberate misreadings of early feminist practice, the diagram proposes a scenario where misunderstanding becomes a critical tool. The 3D rendered scenery exaggerates and distorts both the linguistic and the visual conventions of diagrammatic representation. The deliberately misunderstood and overly literal interpretation hopes to make latent visual and linguistic metaphors often found in diagrams visible: As the abstracted arrows of flow charts have become actual arrows shot from bows, and the metaphorical gifts of the title become actual giftwrapped gifts, undercurrents of interpretation become visible and malleable again.

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