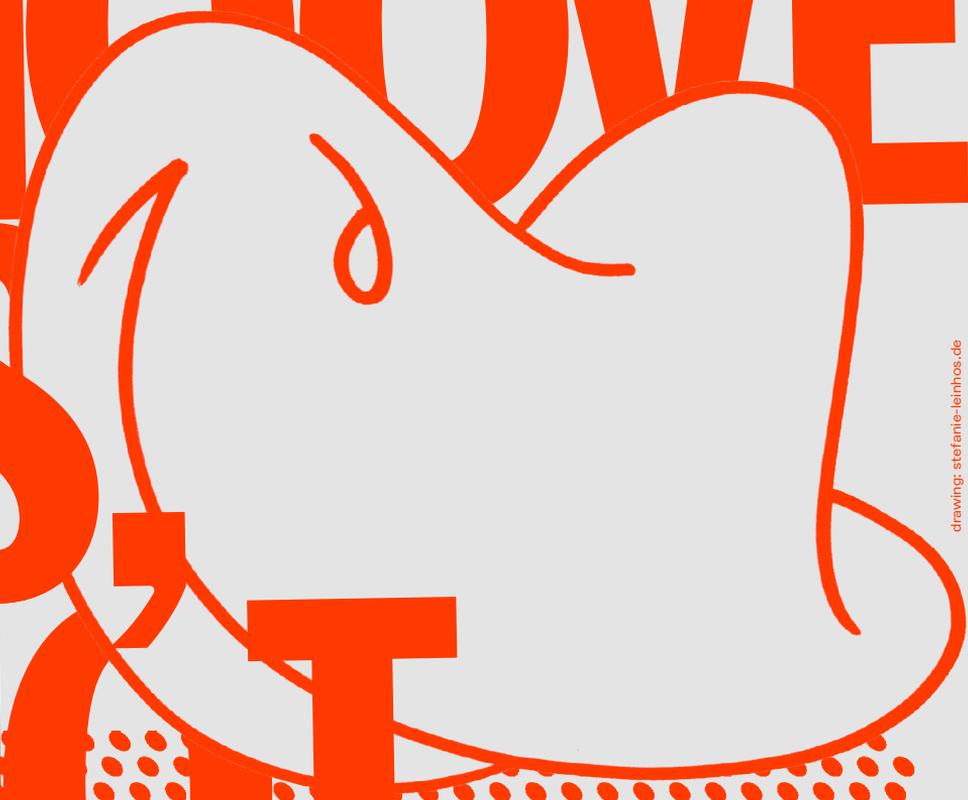




May 4th, 2018
Space Popular
Hoovers,
not hoomans

HOOVERS
DO NOT
HOOMAN



drawing: stefanie-leinhos.de

'Almost all workers are legally entitled to 5.6 weeks paid holiday per year (known as statutory leave entitlement or annual leave). An employer can include bank holidays as part of statutory annual leave.'

Intended for hoovers, not humans, this text from the Government's website on holiday entitlement was quoted by Tom Kelross, a student of Cardiff University, as he posted a humble facebook event for people to gather in Bute Park together with their Henry Hoovers for a picnic. 'When was the last time your Henry got even a single day break or chance to spend time outside?' Expecting about ten hoovers with their human owners, he did not think of applying for a permit but when forty thousand users registered their interest to attend, the picnic had to 'be re-organised for the summer in order to handle the massive amount of interest.'

design and architecture comes into question. We have seen Joaquin Phoenix fall in love with his intelligent OS in the 2013 movie HER, where Scarlett Johansson plays a bodiless role that brings about all sorts of emotionally charged, passion driven episodes in which the two can't seem to find a format for their relationship. But as Alexa entered our lives we have gotten to experience such issues first hand, as the creepiness of a #laughingalexa accumulates tweets and shares. Curiously, Spike Jonze – director of HER – has recently directed an ad for Apple in which FKA Twigs brings her apartment to life by dancing to the irresistible track chosen by Siri through her HomePod. The piece has been interpreted as a metaphor for the transformation of the home and, in turn, one's headspace through music; but we might also read it as a vision for the home embodying Siri and becoming an embracing and comforting companion. The question of whether creatures with a life should have a body is and will be one to answer; but even more import-

Stick two eyes and a mouth on a domestic machine, give it a name and life will magically be projected into it. It will be addressed with a gender specific personal pronoun instead of a neuter one like all other household objects. Since Henry's introduction in 1979, hoovers are now independently carrying out their own business as they roam our homes autonomously. But the Hoover is not the only emancipated appliance: speakers can read your emails and your car parks itself. Our homes, offices and public spaces are gradually but rapidly coming alive, mainly through technology but not without our pareidolic tendencies. We, humans, have an extremely low bar for anthropomorphising inanimate objects. Place two dots symmetrically on almost any object and you're ready to share a #iseefaces. More importantly, once you have seen it, you won't be able to unsee it. Soon it becomes a she or a he, and before you know it she's got a place in your heart. Kick a dog-like robot on youtube – even if it is for testing its balancing abilities – and you get the #ROBOT-RIGHTS #STOPROBOTABUSE community all over you. Show a humanoid to some Saudi delegates and you get #ROBOT_WITH_SAUDI_NATIONALITY, as Hong Kong based Hanson Robotics got when showcasing 'Sophia' in Riyadh last October, which resulted in debates about female robots having more rights than female humans and consequently #SOPHIA_CALLS_FOR_DROPPING_GUARDIANSHIP (never mind the millions of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia who linger stateless). The state of confusion about how we deal with the objects around us coming alive is at once startling, comical and daunting.

The first imagined orders of sapiens were likely based on animism, as not only other animals but rocks and rivers were projected with life. Yuval Noah Harari argues in his blockbuster 'Sapiens' that we lived with an inherent care for our environment as animistic foragers until the agricultural revolution and the subsequent formation of monotheistic religions, when even our pets got stripped of their souls. As animism is now forcing its way back into human culture – through the integration of technology into domestic objects and the home itself – the role of anthropomorphism in

ant for architecture is whether it, as a discipline, will embrace soon enough the open window for buildings to come alive by way of hooman imagination, powered by anthropomorphic design.

How I started hanging out with Home
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