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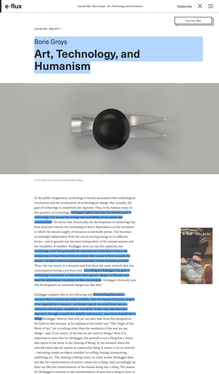
Boris Groys
Art, Technology, and Humanism



Ilya Kabakov, *Ten Characters*, 1989–2000, installation view, Gallerie Gmurzynska, Cologne, 2000. Courtesy the artist and Gallerie Gmurzynska.

In the public imagination, technology is nearly associated with technological progress and thus with the future. Humanism, on the other hand, is a kind of technology of a completely different opposite. This is the famous essay by the opposite of technology. Heidegger argues that the humanism of Sartre's existentialism is a kind of technology because it treats the human being as a tool. Heidegger, in direct contrast, argues that the human being is not a tool but has been directed towards the discovery of man's dependence on the accidents of his environment. Heidegger's thinking is thus a kind of technology that increasingly independent from the tool by trying to be a different—Sartre—and in ground one becomes independent of the actual enemy and the tool. Heidegger's thinking is a kind of technology that tries to be a different technology. Heidegger's thinking is a kind of technology that tries to be a different technology. Heidegger's thinking is a kind of technology that tries to be a different technology

Here a machine is recognized by a machine—and an algorithm is recognized by another algorithm. Maybe it is a prefiguration of the condition that Lyotard warned us about, in which mankind persists after the explosion of the sun.

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A version of this essay was originally presented at the Walker Art Center as part of Avant Museology, a two-day symposium copresented by the Walker Art Center, e-flux, and the University of Minnesota Press. Video documentation of the original lecture at the Walker can be found here.

Boris Groys is a philosopher, essayist, art critic, media theorist, and an internationally renowned expert on Soviet-era art and literature, specifically, the Russian avant-garde. He is a Global Distinguished Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies at New York University, a Senior Research Fellow at the Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe, and a professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School (EGS). His work engages radically different traditions, from French post-structuralism to modern Russian philosophy, yet is firmly situated at the juncture of aesthetics and politics. Theoretically, Groys's work is influenced by a number of modern and postmodern philosophers and theoreticians, including Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, and Walter Benjamin.

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