

# HYPE

Marco Mendeni

Instead of wondering what the future will be, Marco Mendeni asks what the future is for, and who needs it. Algorithms and cybernetics, machines and apparatuses, video games and simulations are the raw material that he translates into new codes. The outcome is a uniquely computational way of seeing the world. And yet, in his wildly eclectic body of work, one can glimpse a peculiar nostalgia (*disenchantment?*) for the future, a sense of longing for a utopia that never materialized. In an age of widespread skepticism for Silicon Valley's betrayed promises of emancipation and empowerment, Mendeni invites us to reflect on the overt and implicit effects of technology. The etymology of the term hype can be traced back to the 1920s, when it was first used to indicate an extravagant, flashy or intensive publicity, exposure, and promotion. In other words, hype is a *form of deception*. Usage of the term skyrocketed in the 1950 during the Cold War and, in the 1990s, it became a staple of tech journalism. Hype is about fetishizing the *new* in new media but also acknowledging planned obsolescence as a standard production mode of late capitalism. But Mendeni is not a marketer. He's not a technological determinist either. He does not endorse, but rather explores the contemporary technoscapes like an archeologist from tomorrow. He investigates competing versions of the future, rejecting simple causality and instead highlighting correlations, unexpected situations, and unplanned outcomes. In his works, graphene and concrete, motion and stasis perfectly coexist. Hype is a dream, hype is a nightmare. Hype is a state of constant excitement but also deep anxiety. Hype is a condition of anticipation but also delayed gratification. Hype is now.

Matteo Bittanti