



# OPERATOR


ACT 2

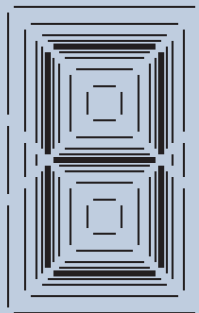
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An  
alphanumeric  
electroluminescent  
automata  
by

MIKKO HYNNINEN & DANIEL CANTY  
[composer] [librettist]

Lux Helsinki, Kaapelitehdas  
04.01.2014  
08.01.2014



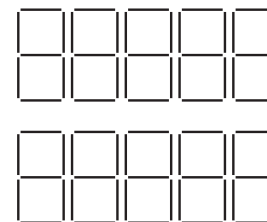


# OPERATOR

ACT 2



1  
6 7 2  
5 3  
4



1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 0

Lux Helsinki



ABC EFGHIJ L NOP S U YZ  
— D — K M — QR — T — VWX —  
abcde ghi no qr t  
— f — jklm — p — s — uvwxyz

# OPERATOR'S ALPHABET

# 1

Flicker

1

B L i N D  
O P E R A

L i G H T  
N O i S E

H E A R  
T H i S

H A L F  
L i F E

B E G i N  
A G A i N

IN WHICH OPERATOR AWAKENS  
TO ITS SURROUNDINGS.

**Blackout**

# 2

Samuel Morse, inventor of the single-wire telegraph, lobbied as early as 1842 for the laying of a transatlantic cable linking Britain and America. The scheme would only come to its first fragile fruition in 1858.

With Alfred Vail, Morse also developed the code of dits-and-dahs, or dots-and-dashes, that bears his name. Compositions of tones or lights, short and long, allow for the formulation of any alphanumeric message.

Together, the Morse code and telegraph are one of the earliest electrical engineering of a digital cipher. Operator's body and singsong idiom are their direct descendants.

IN WHICH OPERATOR RECALLS  
THE BIRTH OF THE MORSE CODE  
AND RELATES IT TO ITSELF.

2

D O T  
Z E R O

D A S H  
O N E

A N D  
O F F

A N D  
O N

i  
S i N G

A L O N G  
A L O N E

**Blackout**

# 3

The first transatlantic telegraph cable ran from Telegraph Field, Ireland to Heart's Content, Newfoundland. On August 16, 1858, the Queen saluted US President James Buchanan.

Messages which had taken ten days to reach their addressee by ship could now travel in a matter of minutes. Excessive voltage, applied in the hopes of fleetier communication, caused the ur-cable to cease functioning within three weeks. Eight years would pass before it could be replaced.

Operator knows that early transatlantic communication tells a tale of unfulfilled expectations.

IN WHICH OPERATOR SHUDDERS  
AT THE DISTANCES BRIDGED  
BY THE TRANSATLANTIC CABLE.

3

D E E P  
B L U E

C O D E  
L i N E

C O L D  
R E A C H

O F  
O N E

A N D  
N O N E

**Blackout**

# 4

Operator seems aware of its presence in the insular halls of electronic industry.

In 1912, as transatlantic communications was first becoming viable, engineer Arvid Wikstrom founded the country's first undersea telephonic cable company, Suomen Kaapelitehdas Oy. Business grew steadily. Between 1939 and 1954, Wikstrom's successor, Olympic wrestling champion Verner Weckman, presided over the construction of the Cable factory on a rocky island near Helsinki.

The success of this new venue would become intimately linked to the development of the country: in 1967, Kaapelitehdas Oy merged with Nokia Oy to become Finland's premiere communications company.

IN WHICH OPERATOR MEDITATES  
ON ITS SEASIDE VIGIL  
IN THE KAAPELITEHDAS.

4

C A B L E  
H O U S E  
  
F L O O D  
i N  
  
E B B  
O U T  
  
i  
S T A N D  
  
S H O R E  
B O U N D

Blackout

# 5

Operator's litany of a land long lost in which love is finally met recalls the lyrics of the classical Finnish tango *Satunmaa*, "The Fabled Land". Satu is also a common given name for girls.

5

O C E A N  
L O S T

T R U E  
O N E

A S i F  
i T i S

O H  
O N E

A N D  
G O N E

IN WHICH OPERATOR REVEALS  
ITS LONGING FOR A SOULMATE  
ACROSS THE SEA.

**Blackout**



# 6

Upon first activation, Operator appealed to the hearts of feminized artificial entities. They are the Eves of the digital era.

Siri and Lisa are recent digital voice confections. Although Operator never expressly mentions Eliza, a 1966 program mimicking human conversation, its name subtly resounds in the fourth strophe as Sireliza.

In the 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Daisy is the love interest of the schoolboy's ditty sung by HAL 9000 as he fades into silence

Greta is short for Faust's ill-fated Margarete.

Plura bella, borrowed from Joyce's night language, conflates the missing belles of Operator's longing and their multifaceted beauty.

6  
O H  
D E A R  
D E A R  
S A T U  
S i R i  
L i S A  
D A i S Y  
G R E T A  
P L U R A  
B E L L A  
O H  
N O N E  
N E A R  
O N E

IN WHICH OPERATOR BEMOANS  
AN UNREQUITED NEARNESS.

Blackout

# 7

Operator nods to Gertrude Stein's famous quip about Oakland, the city of her birth, in *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937): "there is no there there".

The ambiguity of I and 1 in Operator's language also allows us to read an intimation of Ithaca, lost homeland of Odysseus, in the Isle of I.

IN WHICH OPERATOR VOICES  
HIS CONCERN OVER EVER  
REACHING THE ISLE OF ONE.

7

F A B L E  
F A R

C L E A R  
S H O R E

i S  
T H E R E

N O  
T H E R E

T O  
Y O U R

i S L E  
O F i

**Blackout**

8

8

L E A P  
Y E A R S

G O  
B Y

G O  
O N

D E E P  
P U L S E

L I G H T  
O U T

F A R  
C R Y

D O E S  
N O T

S P E L L  
A L L

IN WHICH OPERATOR CONTEMPLATES  
YEARS LOST IN VAIN DESIRE.

**Blackout**

9

9

S T A R S  
F L O A T

B I R D S  
H A N G

F I S H  
F L I T

U N D E R  
N E A T H

T H I S  
C L E A R

C O N S C  
I E N C E

O C E A N  
I C

o P e r a  
t o r

B E G i N  
A G A i N

A  
D R I F T

IN WHICH OPERATOR ABANDONS  
HIS WILL TO THE OCEAN.

Flicker

0

0  
1 0  
1 2 9 0  
1 2 3 8 9 0  
1 2 3 4 7 8 9 0  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0  
8 8 8 8 8  
8 8 8 8 8  
i i i i i  
i i i i i

**Blackout**

**Go to 1**

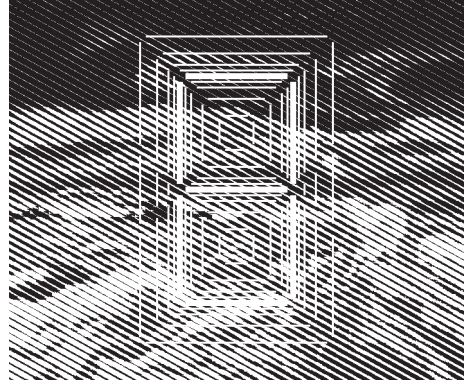
DROWNING INTO OPERATOR'S  
DRIFTING CONSCIOUSNESS.

**OPERATOR is a light and sound installation delivering minimalist narratives in public space. A number of units assembled from fluorescent tubes emulate the right-angled 8-shaped seven-segment displays made familiar by pocket calculators and other archaic digital devices. Contact microphones amplify the electrical flux at the core of the array, musically sounding out Operator's internal states as it spells out poetic messages by using the limited alphanumeric possibilities of its lexicon.**

**The array's constrained language harks back to some of the earliest technologies of digital representation while evoking our dreams of emergent artificial intelligence. Operator illuminates and gives voice to our hopes and fears for the soul of the machine, reminding us that they remain, after all, current; it sings of what we, and our counterparts, are.**

**OPERATOR was publicly activated in the windows of the Musiikitalo between December 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 and January 9<sup>th</sup> 2012. Melding into the architecture, it engaged passersby with its luminous, stuttering singsong, delivering a lovelorn tale of disembodied longing.**

**For its second activation in the halls of the Kaapelitehdas, Helsinki's oldest telephonic cable factory, Operator delves into the oceanic depths and distances bridged by undersea wires. Like strange phosphorescent fish, his landbound thoughts race under the Atlantic night, dreaming of a clear shore where his desire would at last be answered.**



Operator's filigree appears through a marine painting by Jean-Gabriel Daragnès from the artist book *Terres Chaudes* (1940).

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MIKKO HYNNINEN & DANIEL CANTY  
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was reactivated at Lux Helsinki,  
in the halls of the Kaapelitehdas (Cable Factory)  
between January 4<sup>th</sup> and January 8<sup>th</sup> 2014.



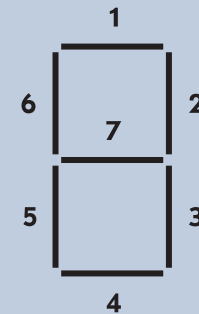
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T H I S  
C L E A R

C O N S C  
I E N C E

O C E A N  
I C

o P e r a  
t o r