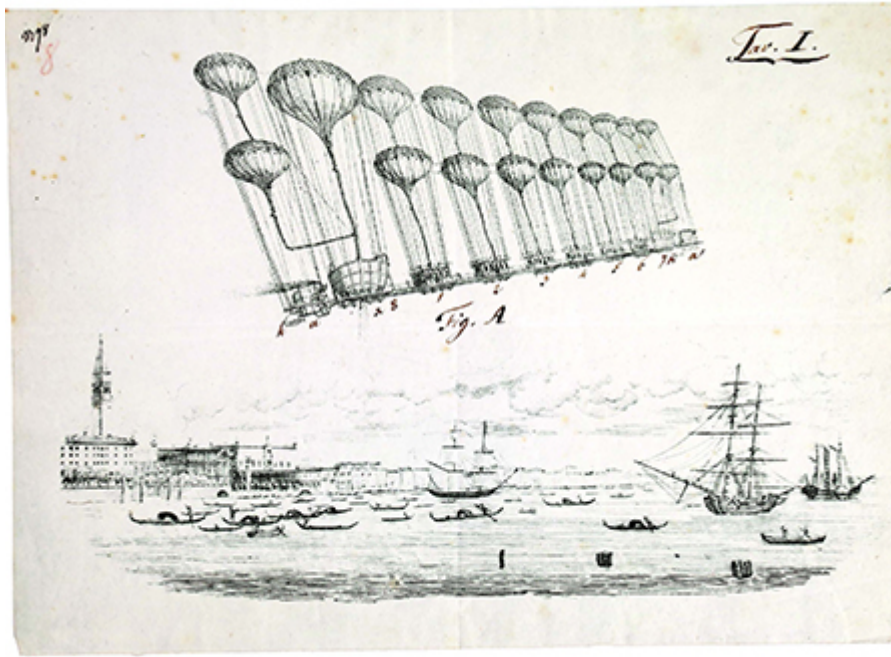


Speculative Technologies



Speculative Technologies (deadline: July 5, 2024),
guest editors: Anna Kotomina and Colin Milburn.

It is a distinctive feature of human language that we can refer to things that aren't there - to events in the future or the past and even to things that will never exist. Does this hold for technology as well? Can machines and other technical schemes refer to impossibilities? Can they invite us to engage in hypothetical thinking about alternate worlds? And where do they come from, what is the cultural or socio-technical milieu for their conception? Astronomical clocks invoke ideas of the cosmic order, a perpetuum mobile reflects the human ambition to conquer physical limits, von Kempelen's chess player challenges humans to question human and machine intelligence, prototypes herald an imagined future, envisioned carbon reduction technologies enter into calculations of climate futures - and a machine that is standing still holds the secret to that machine in motion. There is a long tradition of wish-fulfilment machines (quantum computers, fusion reactors), and a long tradition of difference engines with different settings for various contingencies. We invite historical reconstructions, philosophical reflections, and cultural technology assessments on this range of subjects.