

Resurrect

[Press Release, May 31st, 2024.](#)

[Press Kit, with high-res photos and videos.](#)

Project's website: Resurrect-Mercenary.com

Artist's website: PaoloCirio.net/work/resurrect/

As an anti-militarist, anti-fascist, and anti-imperialist project, Paolo Cirio utilized AI to resurrect four historical war figures who haven't been brought to justice yet. Now these four mercenaries from the 1960s Congo neo-colonial wars voice their truths and regrets.

In the project Resurrect, Artificial Intelligence is used to appropriate the legacy of dead war figures, and by doing so, it repurposes history and infiltrates living cultural models. This project, as identity theft, tests AI's new freedom of speech challenges and the ethics of resurrecting dead individuals.

The four AI-cloned mercenaries from the Congo Crisis in the 1960s are still glorified in online communities, the media, and the military, despite their involvement in overthrowing democracy, massacres, and the killing of a Secretary-General of the United Nations. The mercenaries resurrected are a French fascist, a German nazi, a Belgian colonizer, and a Brit working for South Africa's Apartheid, respectively Bob Denard (1929-2007), Siegfried Müller (1920-1983), Jean Schramme (1929-1988), and Mike Hoare (1919-2020).

The project used AI to generate videos of the mercenaries with their original voices and faces. They confess on social media, revealing their true nature and guilt, expressing regret for their actions and roles. The conscience of these individuals is recreated with AI, and their subconscious speaks as never it could have when they were alive.

In the tactical action Resurrect, Artificial Intelligence is used as a counter war's propaganda tool. Generative AI infiltrates cultural myths and historical knowledge, meaning that AI can be also used to tell the truth, where other media and institutions have historically failed. With AI, the control over narratives will create social conflicts over new forms of censorship and manufacturing reality. In this project, AI refers to autonomous soldiers, weapons, and cyber warfare tactics for spreading sensitive information and propaganda.

Using archive photos and videos of the mercenaries, as well as their writing and biography, Cirio authored their new lives as resurrected soldiers. He used deep-fake technology to animate them, and Chat GPT to make them reflect on their lives and actions. The art installation reassembles physically the resurrected mercenaries by featuring their skulls, military insignia, and uniforms from the epoch. Four monitors mounted on tripods act as talking heads for each mercenary.

As an Internet performance, Cirio infiltrated online communities of war enthusiasts with the mercenaries' video monologues. The mercenaries make antimilitarist statements, regretting their complicity in crimes against humanity in the name of imperialism and colonialism. In particular they seek to reveal the truth regarding the assassination of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, in which they were linked, with the UK and US still withholding evidence in a recent investigation.

The mercenaries Mike Hoare, Siegfried Müller, Bob Denard, and Jean Schramme tell how they were part of an international plot by Western countries to maintain control over mineral-rich regions in Congo in the early 1960s. Some of these mercenaries later became warlords through involvement in other coups and military operations in the following decades, setting up companies to recruit more mercenaries. Despite everything, they are still considered war heroes by many, and their myths live in online communities, war movies, and history books. Cirio investigated these war figures using his historical research for experimental storytelling and creative forms of anti-war activism.

Moreover, this project also refers to the ongoing conflict in Congo, still driven by mercenary forces, resulting in millions of deaths, political assassinations, and fueled by colonial interests in the mining of rare minerals used in high-tech industries, including AI. In fact, Cirio's counter tales of wars for colonialism and western dominance relate to our current wars, militarism, and propaganda. As always, truth and accountability in war are hidden by biased history and justified by political dominance.

Ultimately, this project explores the ethics of bringing back dead individuals with Artificial Intelligence, appropriating their legacy and personal voices. It questions who can resurrect individuals, for what aims, and how they could really be themselves in the afterlife. These ethics of the future information society are explored with this project, using AI to resurrect figures that still haven't been brought to justice in the eyes of history.