

The act of leaning is to become one entity, ceasing to be one sole element and becoming the essential part of a new conformation. Leaning is the expression of diverging forces seeking shared stability and collaboration. When leaning, we defy structural integrity and we let vulnerability arise. We lean in search of support and care, and as we lean, we take risks and seek trust in others. When critical thinking meets critical making, we use our interdisciplinary position as designers to create connections between our research enquiries and publics. As our emerging practices lean on, with, and into research subjects (and vice versa), we exercise care for the complexities of contemporary society.



When we lean on, we build and rely on arguments and ideas from other fields.



When we lean with, we form collaborative support-based structures which share stability.



When we lean into, we seek common spaces and knowledge, from one position to another.

These orientations inspired the rhythm of *A Line Which Forms a Volume 5*, a critical reader and symposium of graphic design-led research, which is written, edited, designed, and published by participants of the MA Graphic Media Design course at London College of Communication. In this fifth issue, we explore these acts of leaning and how they interconnect with concepts of care and transparency in the process of making design research public. Taking care through design is to be open to chance, as this process often means slowing down to communicate, critique, and question the subject of discussion. Considering radical transparency as a means of showing care allows us, as designers, to socialise our practice beyond institutional parameters. By using graphic design as a critical tool for investigation and divulgation, we build physical and conceptual support structures that provide publics with

a route into the research areas we contribute to. We ask: 'Who are we, and who do we care for?'¹

1. Davis, C., Paim, N. (2021) *Does Design Care?* *Futuress*. Available at futuress.org/magazine/does-design-care/



IN CONVERSATION WITH INTERSECTIONS OF CARE

Intersections of Care

Intersections of Care is an art/design research project by Florence Cheval and Loraine Furter, researching and experimenting with display, understood as material or immaterial dispositifs connecting different elements in space in order to create a discourse. Display stands for an interface, through which issues of crucial importance in terms of seeing, knowing, but also of power relations, unfold.

The ALWFAV Editorial Caretakers were interested in the connection between care and transparency surrounding the project, and how these themes play a part in collaborative practices.

ALWFAV: How would you explain your project *Intersecting Guidelines of Care*, and the history surrounding it?

*Intersecting Guidelines of Care*¹ was initiated while working on a bigger project, *Intersections of Care*. We started it two and a half years ago to research 'display' from an intersectional feminist perspective. Our starting point was to act on the space between the works. Whilst approaching that topic from an art historical perspective, we also thought about the space between the works not as 'empty' or one that exists only in relation to other works, but also in its working conditions, and all the environmental and the institutional contexts in which these things take place. At a certain point, Loraine suggested focusing on guidelines as part of the project.

Situating the collection in time was important. By printing the guidelines out, over time we could notice what details have changed, what modifications were made.

In the end, we decided to publish them online by using our website to show what we had at the moment, and as much as possible use embeds to show the most recent version of each document. This enabled us a few things: we conceived it as a rhizomatic open source, and the idea was that anybody could share it, choose the ones they would need, and print the collection themselves.

Sometime before this project started, there was a document circulating on a social networks called *Feminist (Art) Institution*. I proposed in the comments of these social network posts, to start translating them into French, as these documents were super interesting and missing in the French-speaking ecosystem. Florence said she was interested in doing it, and so we met on this question of reusing or translating guidelines. I suggested that we could make a collection of specific documents and work on it together, and so we wrote a call for contributions to gather other guidelines.

We talked about a compilation of 'guidelines of care'. We added this word, 'care', as a way of defining what kind of guidelines we wanted to explore; they could come from different fields and configurations, we were not only interested in the field of arts. This gave context and focus for our call. There was this intention to openly share and to be able to learn from each other, which is also a feminist tactic.

The call was open to different fields. We said it could come from informal affinity groups, activities, collectives, or arts

ALWFAV: How did you define guidelines in your open call?

ALWFAV: How did your paths cross?

organisations to acknowledge that these guidelines mostly come from activist practice, ones rooted in feminist, decolonial, or anti-capitalist activism. We gave a broad definition of guidelines, so we said by guidelines, we mean documents that provide instructions for behaviour in a specific context. We were interested in the fact that guidelines work in the mode of a proposition, they are not models that can work in any situation, but require to be re-evaluated and adapted. We were also interested in this open source dimension—a space that invites you to reuse them, or re-adapt them to your own context in a decentralised manner.

ALWFAY: What is the importance in conceiving and sharing guidelines?

We felt there was a recurrent lack of tools for facing problematic situations or imbalanced power relations. For us, making visible what is often an invisible process was super helpful—and by invisible, we also mean hard to identify, or hard to address.

ALWFAY: When approaching this project, what did your collaboration and process look like?

First we discussed how we would work together. This took a lot of time, and became not only a starting process but an ongoing discourse. I noticed Loraine was very good at consistently coming back and asking, 'Is it okay, the way we are doing things now?'—so we would continually discuss our common working process. We realised that through openly addressing different topics, we can both become stronger and able to understand the mechanisms in place. In doing this, we can then expand on it by speaking with

other artists. There was this intention to share and to be able to learn from each other, which is also a feminist tactic.

Next, the call for guidelines took a lot of time because we had to circulate it, and contributors would ask us for more details about the call and how the documents would be disseminated. We embarked on co-writing a protocol using an online pad, where everyone can access, amend, and sign the documents. Co-writing guidelines is a process that is very interesting to us, as well as the act of choosing whether you disclose your identity or not. It is not a requirement to put your name on it of course, but it keeps the document alive and maintains a certain level of transparency.

Just after we launched the call, the project was quite independent. It received some funding, but we were not related to one specific institution. When we activated the call for guidelines, we started working with a big contemporary art institution in Brussels; openly discussing, presenting in space, and building a program of events around our projects. This, on top of the fact that we received financial subsidies, triggered some questions for both us and from people we were receiving the guidelines from.

ALWFAY: Talking about pay, how did you go about compensating people for their contributions?

We've tried to bring transparency in areas of practice where it's usually absent. For example, we remunerated everyone the same way and told people about it—this is not a common practice in arts or cultural projects. When being invited to a big institution and deciding whether to use this invitation, we were confronted with the question of how this labour of writing down guidelines needs to be supported. We also considered how to make a budget for artists we would invite to exhibit artworks, and attend the presentations and talks. So in

order to actually make this work, we had to rework our budgets to be able to remunerate the people for letting us distribute the guidelines further. A lot of our contributors would have given us the guidelines for free, as they were already distributing them for free, but we thought it was important to show our support and gratitude.

ALWFAV: How can contracts be translated into either a hierarchical or non-hierarchical way of dealing with protocols?

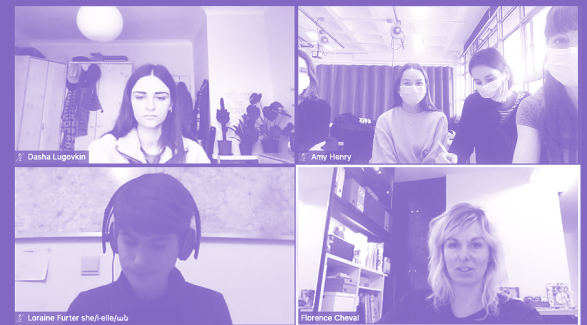
The format plays an important role here. First it was important to have a sense of 'ongoingness', rather than finality. For instance, not saying 'here are all the guidelines that you will need to make seminal insights into institutions', but instead, 'here is something that is partial and situated'. Secondly, we wanted to avoid giving a sense of 'exclusivity'—it's very important that when you're on the page and click on a guideline, it's going to be framed in its original context. We did this as we were recirculating guidelines, so each time they needed to be resituated and adapted. The guideline, as a document, may evolve—even within a specific context or within a specific institution. We wanted to be able to stay close to its last version or give access to the latest version of it.

Before we launched the call, we were busy with another research project that was initiated with other artists. This project focused on contracts as tools to develop fairer relationships within the arts world. Considering how the contract could be a tool, we thought that the problem with the contracts is that they're often pre-established: if an institution submits a form of contract, it is very difficult to rediscuss. We thought that maybe working with protocols or guidelines would reverse the situation to have, not bottom up, but totally horizontal documents that are processed by people who are engaged in the institution, or in the project, or in the activist space. This proposition is more about

defining the rules on how to work together and not something that just comes from above.

Something that was noticed when we started gathering these documents, was that some of them contained questions, rather than only affirmations on how things are supposed to happen. These questions correspond to this idea of guidelines not being documents that contain all the solutions in any given context, but rather as tools to interrogate the context. For us, it was also a way to make things that are often invisible, visible—something that is also key in our broader research. You have to try and phrase these documents carefully, with as much detail as you can, whilst also doing it in a very concrete way. How can anyone do this in relation to others? So this was also a very important dimension of it.

How do you create space for other collaborators, so that they can be themselves while applying these guidelines?



Zoom interview with *Intersections of Care*, 26 October 2021

1. Available at intersectionsofcare.net/guidelines/index.html

2. Lazard, C. (2019) *Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice*. Available at promiseandpractice.art/

ALWFAV: How would you describe the relation between care and radical transparency?

Practicing care and transparency is about acknowledging your previous experiences. What have you learned from them? Are you ready to share these lessons with others? Even if you don't have all the solutions or the space to discuss these things? Deciding whether or not you're sharing documents that are a work in progress is a matter of transparency. Offering a space for people to add comments, too. We've asked ourselves these questions a lot. The way we work is not about pretending that what we're doing is right or easy. It's about sharing doubts. We'd rather stop and reflect whenever we're hitting ethical, practical or logistical questions that don't get answered easily or quickly. In that sense, our practice is a practice of care because it acknowledges the limits of radical transparency.

Something funny about transparency, is that it's called just that, 'transparency'. We were talking earlier about invisibility; transparency as a word, also holds responsibility 'to look through'. By looking through, you cannot necessarily see the thing that makes you look through, you know? So rather than aiming for this kind of transparency, there's actually something quite nice about making things tangible – stopping, and staying with them.

We believe in putting issues on the table, and putting care in that. So I'm not sure that transparency is my favourite metaphor. What is practice? It's a will to learn. And if you don't have the will to learn, if you think you have all the answers, and you know how much you're going to pay the people in advance, then you don't have good practice. Care is "a promise and a practice"². It's a matter of positioning yourself; as someone, or as a group that doesn't know, that wants to learn, and has a will to learn in their practice.

Opposite page:
Intersections of Care. Available at
websiteintersectionsofcare.net/guidelines/index.html



Principles and pointers for the curation of inclusive and political design research events



↔ Varia — Generative Conditions



Questions protocole



↔ Tender Center — Access



School of Love protocol



How to hack Study Regulations



↔ Varia — Code of Conduct



Mutual Aid Contract, moilesautresarts



↔ Institution d'Art Fé



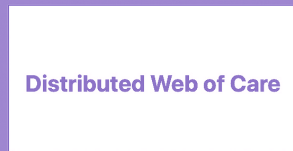
Taking (Back) Care



Art & My Career, User Manual



↔ Black Artists and Cultural Workers in Switzerland



↔ Accessibility Dreams



Carolyn Lazard



↔ W.A.G.E. Postponement or Cancellation



↔ www.accessdocsforartists.com



↔ Sisters Uncut — Safety is a Right Not a Privilege

ABSURD SPECULATION: DO U HAVE A POTATO?

Lusi Shen (CN)

What is the first thing you do when you wake up each morning? How many times a day do you look for your phone? What would your reaction be if you did not touch it? How long do you stay

1. Mobile touch screen devices (MTSDs), such as smartphones and tablet computers, are portable devices with a touch screen interface that can be used with a stylus or the touch of a finger.

2. Hessel, R. (2016) '11 hours a day in front of a screen. This is what it's doing to your eyes'. *World Economic Forum*, 1 September. Available at weforum.org/agenda/2016/09/staring-down-the-dangers-of-the-digital-workplace/

3. Touch screens work using electricity. The screen is primarily made of glass with a thin layer of an electrically conducting material.

When confronted with such absurd situations, can we stop? Who can explain the significance of our interest in screens? What can we gain from them? What are we waiting for?

With MTSDs set to proliferate in the future, there is an urgent need for people to stop and think about their inevitable or already 'absurd' behaviours. As

4. Olsen, C. (2011) 'Natural Rewards, Neuroplasticity, and Non-Drug Addictions'. *Neuropharmacology*, 61(7), pp.1109-1122

5. Brignull, H. (n.d.) *Dark Patterns*. Available at darkpatterns.org

on your tablet? Big data and fast, repetitive gestures have overwhelmed us, but all of this is just the start. Our lives are increasingly intertwined with mobile touch screen devices (MTSDs)¹. Checking a phone on the road, emailing while at work and opening a tablet at home are the primary ways most people work and entertain themselves². Wherever we are, we cannot miss the screen of a mobile phone or tablet. Unconsciously, in an endless and absurd cycle, we light up, tap, touch and hold, swipe, scroll and zoom on a piece of glass³, in an endless cycle, without digesting any actual content.

As well as attributing the overengagement with our MTSDs to runaway dopamine production⁴, some designers make use of dark patterns⁵, tricks used as a means of deliberately manipulating users to get them 'hooked' on the screen.

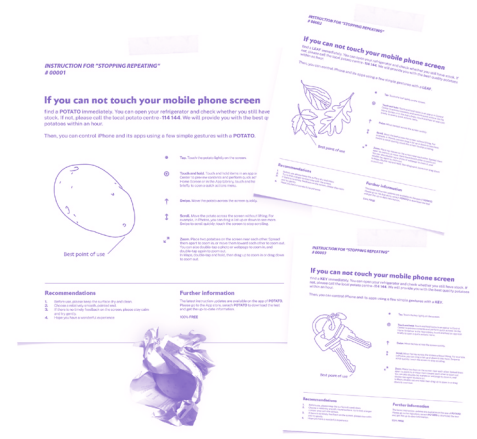
If the instructions and resulting gestures that allow us to access and use our MTSDs were made even

A frame from a moving image experiment showing me licking a screen with my tongue (Lusi Shen, 2021)



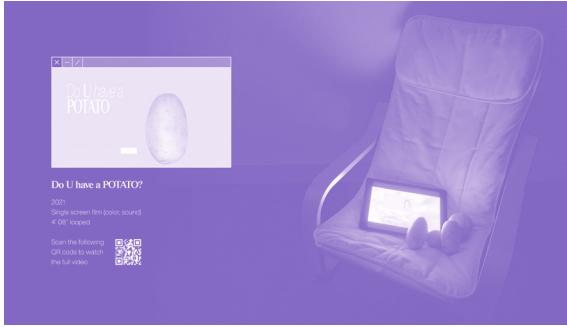
to emphasise

their material value, and to then show more absurd, would you obey them? Would you like to control your screen without using your fingers or voice? Would you be willing to lick it with your tongue? What if you were required to go to the garden and pick up a leaf before looking at your phone? In these processes, the uncertainty of the 'instructions' and the relationship between designer



Practical experiments exploring the speculation of 'instruction' based on the instruction manual (Lusi Shen, 2021)

and user makes everything unpredictable. This uncertainty of the unknown arouses curiosity and awe and provides space for people to think about how they are using MTSDs.



QR code for *Do U Have A POTATO?* (Lusi Shen, 2021)

DO U HAVE A POTATO? is an absurd speculation based on the causes for the overuse of MTSDs. The potato was chosen as the protagonist of the story, firstly, because its surface, which closely resembles human skin, has the ability to interact with a screen. In this story setting, it is the only tool that may do so. Secondly, users who sit in one place and over-indulge in mobile phone screens are sometimes referred to as screen-obsessed couch potatoes⁶.

The story begins with the finger no longer being able to 'wake up' the screen. The 'controller', who is symbolic of our dependence on MTSDs, is given an 'instruction': touch the screen with a potato. The controller is then asked to answer one seemingly irrelevant question after another. Gradually, the user loses the ability to interact with the screen with the potato. In the final scene, the controller swipes their finger across the screen to answer the phone. Who is calling? It is an open ending. Maybe it is just a diversion for the controller; maybe there is a controller on a higher level behind him, or maybe it's something else. In order to create the above story, three classic works of the Theatre of the Absurd⁷ were

Still from *Do U Have A POTATO?* (Lusi Shen, 2021)



reviewed: *The Rhinoceros* and *The Chairs* by Eugène Ionesco and *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett. Although the original contexts of these theatre pieces are not directly related to the theme of addiction

7. Esslin, M. (1961) *The Theatre of the Absurd*. New York: Vintage Books

to MTSDs, they successfully use absurdity as part of their communication, ideologically and creatively. These plays have some common features: being forced to repeat meaningless actions, dialogue full of clichés, wordplay and nonsense, recurring or absurd plot developments and characters in hopeless situations. They can be contrasted with the technological life of modern times and even of the future. In addition to exploring the absurd relationship between users and MTSDs, the project attempts to demonstrate the feasibility of using absurdity to directly communicate the presence of the absurd in this context. This is done by using particular absurd techniques to evoke a response on how people are interacting with mobile touch screen devices. In parallel, through discussing these serious issues, using an absurd perspective can also be a more engaging creative experience.

FESTIVAL ALIENATION¹: WHAT HAPPENS DURING CHINESE E-COMMERCE SHOPPING FESTIVALS?

Yige Jiang (CN)



A Courier Zone After the Double Eleven Festival (Ebrun, 2016)

Today, Chinese consumers have stepped into an era where they are 'surrounded by online shopping festival'². E-commerce platforms use traditional Chinese festivals as a vehicle for consumption, with crazy-style promotions on the day of the festival. Low prices and exaggerated slogans draw consumers involuntarily into a carnival-like party. In turn, such online shopping festivals have gradually become one of the most important sales methods in Chinese e-commerce transactions.

1. Here, 'festival alienation' refers to the gradual replacement of the activities and meaning of traditional Chinese festivals with the meanings and behaviours related to consumers during online shopping festivals.

2. Hu, J. (2019) *The Research on E-commerce Festival Phenomenon in the Perspective of Consumer Society*. Hunan: Hunan Normal University

The annual turnover of such festivals is constantly rising. Take, for example, the 'Tmall Double Eleven' shopping festival, which is the largest and most heavily

discounted online shopping festival in China. The sales volume of Double Eleven in the first year (2009) was 0.52 billion RMB, while in 2020 this figure reached 372.3 billion³. In only twelve years, the sales of just one e-commerce platform, Tmall,

3. Baidu (2021) Available at baike.baidu.com/item/双十一购物狂欢节/6811698

has increased more than 7,000 times. This is an indication of the popularity of online shopping festivals in China.

It is not only e-commerce platforms that enjoy online shopping festivals, but consumers are too. According to online data, as soon as shopping festivals approach, on various social media platforms, people start to discuss the cheapest way to buy things and share with each other what products they plan to purchase, as well as describing their past buying experiences⁴. In the minds of consumers, with much bigger discounts available than usual, these shopping festivals are a good time for them to stock up and makes them willing to empty their wallets at that time.

4. Zhihu (n.d.) Available at zhihu.com/search?type=content&q=双十一买什么

E-commerce platforms have precisely recognised these shopping behaviours of consumers, especially after seeing the success of Tmall Double Eleven, and so they began to create a steady stream of shopping festivals. It is worth mentioning that Tmall Double Eleven's success, as the first Chinese online shopping festival, cannot be separated from the transformation of meaning, of the Double Eleven festival itself. The Double Eleven festival was originally a festival for single people who belong to a particular Chinese youth consumer group, who would realise interactive communication and express individual freedom on this day consisting of four 1's (11.11). Tmall took advantage of this symbolic gesture and created the slogan 'even if there is no boyfriend or girlfriend, we can still shop'⁵. The concept of shopping targeted at singles was a success. In the years since, these festivals no longer apply to singles only. Nowadays, few people can remember the meaning of the original 'Singles Day' held on 11 November.

5. Xu, Y. (2017) *The Construction of Consumption Symbols in Online Shopping Carnival: A Case Study of 'Double Eleven'*. Shanghai: Shanghai University

After this, more and more e-commerce platforms began to use the cultural significance of different festivals to promote their online shopping festivals. For example, the international festival

'was originally a festival to celebrate women's liberation and to express respect and praise for women. Nowadays, some e-commerce platforms have been transformed into online shopping festivals such as '3—8 Queen's Day' and 'Maiden's Day'. By launching a series

6. *The Paper* (2020)
'Buy buy buy? Your brain has been kidnapped by "consumerism"', 21 May. Available at thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_7461522

of luxury consumer goods for women, a new consumer culture was created. This behaviour by online shopping venues treats female consumers as a tool that e-commerce platforms can use to gain benefits, and so the original meaning of the festival is

replaced by consumption. In this way, instead of creating a benign consumer culture, e-commerce festivals have dismantled and destroyed existing cultural resources and values.

In the traditional Chinese festival concept, such things as affection, love, friendship and faith are considered sublime and cannot be traded as commodities⁶. However, under the 'alienation' of online shopping festivals, these traditional meanings gradually disappear in the atmosphere of consumption, and interpersonal relationships in society have become increasingly cold.

7. *BBC News* (2020)
'Does Double Eleven Stimulate Consumption or Promote "Drug Addiction": The heavy responsibility and doubts carried by the Chinese-style online shopping festival under the epidemic', 10 November. Available at: bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-54871785

It is undeniable that the process of consumerism in China is an irreversible phenomenon. But our attitude and behaviour towards it is worth thinking about. How many goods after each spending spree do you actually need? And how many goods do you then waste after finding out they do not suit you? There are a lot of people who are even burdened with monthly loans so that they can snap up these goods at the shopping festivals⁷. Maybe, when

Following pages:
Not Just A Festival
(Yige Jiang, 2021)

the next shopping festival comes around, we can stop rushing to pick out items and, instead, slow down and take care to think about what we need.



August



the Cowherd and the Weaving Maid

the Weaving Maiden (Vega), the granddaughter of the Emperor of Heaven, was good at weaving and wove colourful hues for the sky every day.

One day, she secretly went down to the mortal world and fell in love with a mortal man (Altair). This incident angered the Emperor of Heaven, who took the weaver back to the Heavenly Palace and only allowed them to meet once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar on the Magpie Bridge (the Milky Way).

This love story has been passed down to this day, and today,

Qiao Guo is a sweet pastry eaten on the seventh day of the seventh month. This is because the pronunciation of the word Qiao is very similar to that of the bridge, so it also symbolises the Magpie Bridge in the sky. It is also a symbol of women praying to the weaver for wisdom, a good husband and a happy life.



Qiao

15

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OTHER FESTIVALS THIS MONTH

开学总动员

Back to School Festival

天猫情人节

Tmall Valentine's Festival

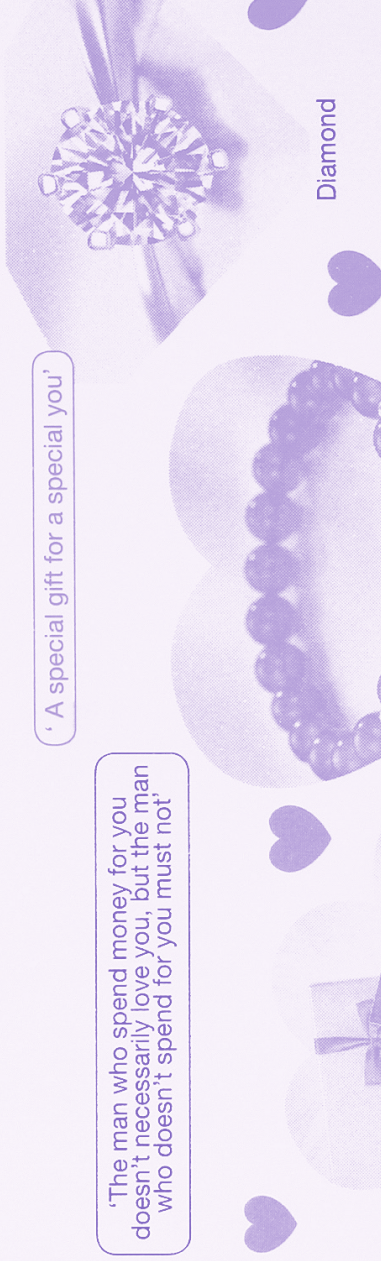
秋冬上新日

Autumn New Arrival Day

天猫开学季

'The man who spend money for you doesn't necessarily love you, but the man who doesn't spend for you must not'

'A special gift for a special you'



Diamond

THE INTERNET FOSSIL CURIOS

Dasha Lugovkin (GB/RU)



The Internet Fossil Curios archival book (Dasha Lugovkin, 2021)

THE INTERNET FOSSIL CURIOS is a research project that, through the use of speculative design, explores the material imprint left on the planet by mass-produced electronic objects.

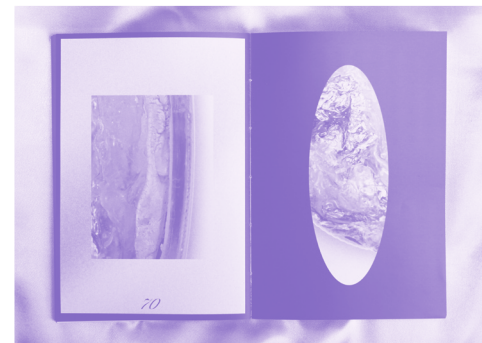
The project is set in the year 3021, when the Earth is almost unrecognisable. Its stark, cratered landscape reveals the scars left behind from mining, and exists in a critical state of recovery. The Earth's strata is beginning to develop layers of synthetic material from the accumulated waste of the Anthropocene epoch. Our dependence on the Earth has meant the depletion of its natural resources and, thus, has resulted in the termination of deep mining and plastic production. Due to this over—consumption, gold, copper and plastic are now considered to be materials with equal value and, so, they are scoured across the planet through surface excavation.

During this excavation process, many curious fossils have been found to contain Internet cable imprints. Their alien-like forms are made up of hybrid materials consisting of plastic, rock, copper and cable connectors that encase traces of gold. A future society called 'The Society of Fossil Archival & Material Renewal' collects these fossils in order

The Internet Fossil Curios Collection (Dasha Lugovkin, 2021)



how their materials can be transformed into other essential objects. The society archives them in *The Internet Fossil Curios*, a publication that visualises this closed-loop lifecycle while also highlighting the problematic nature of mass-produced electronic objects. Before they are transformed, the fossils are temporarily exhibited, acting as a dark reminder of our past anthropogenic actions. The exhibit feeds the public's curiosity without turning the fossils into artifactual objects, the sole purpose of which is to be possessed and displayed by humans for human satisfaction. *THE INTERNET FOSSIL CURIOS* aims to make us question the relationship we have with our electronic objects and to ask why we put certain values on them and their materials. It opens up a space for contemplation, allowing us to rethink the way we treat and discard these objects.



A spread from *The Internet Fossil Curios* archival book, showing the material value of the fossils (Dasha Lugovkin, 2021)

Following pages: *The Internet Fossil Curios* archival book (Dasha Lugovkin, 2021)





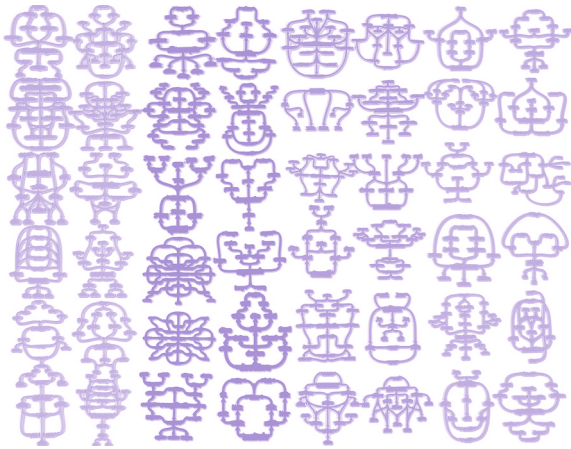
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INVEGETARIAN FRIENDLY
CRISPS

*

SEMBIOSIS: A SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO SYMBIOSIS

Ghia Koussa (LB)



Nonhuman bodies created using anagrams of symbiotic terms (Ghia Koussa, 2021)

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, of how humans and other organisms derive, construct, and communicate meaning from their environment¹. A sign is essentially an interpretation and representation of matter which exists within the physical world around us². Unlike many signs that refer to an object directly, such as scent, language is constructed in a conventional way, by representing the world around us in an indirect and arbitrary manner. This causes the material world to be immaterially represented, as it is no longer accessed through immediate interaction.

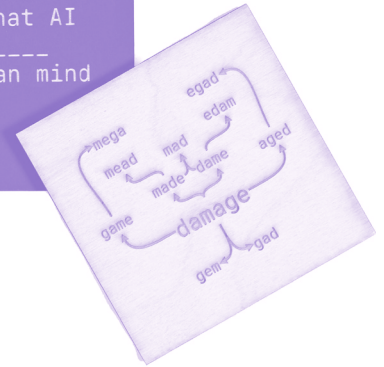
1. Sebeok, T., Pabel, H. (2001) *Signs: An introduction to semiotics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

2. Semali, L. (2002) *Transmediation in the classroom: A semiotics-based media literacy framework*. New York: P. Lang

This turn away from materiality forces us to rely heavily on language to interpret the world around us, and since language is not inherent to the natural world, but is, instead, socially constructed, we are subjected to a human-oriented understanding of our environment. Matters that are beyond the human-world are now subjected to human perspectives;

3. Cave, S. et al (2018) *Portrayals and perceptions of AI and why they matter*. London: The Royal Society

It will be
ridiculous to
think that AI
will _____
the human mind



non-humans and our interactions with them are polluted by our social constructions of them. Narratives, whether fictional or not, act as a window into the material world as they affect our relationships with all non-humans.

For centuries, written or spoken narratives surrounding non-humans, such as those around Artificial Intelligence, have shaped our perceptions of our relationship with them, while simultaneously affecting society³. In today's world, intelligent technologies like artificial intelligence are becoming increasingly intertwined in our societies, as our interactions grow at an unprecedented rate. As technological development progresses, narratives surrounding AI continue to populate public discourse. These narratives attempt to predict interspecies interactions between humans and AI, ultimately attempting to define ecology.

These narratives explore the potentialities of our relationship with AI by imagining future trajectories and possible worlds. From bleak dystopias—dramatic, pessimistic exaggerations with themes of control, competition and domination—to the polarised opposite—often far-fetched—optimistic visions of a utopia under mutual care, cooperation and

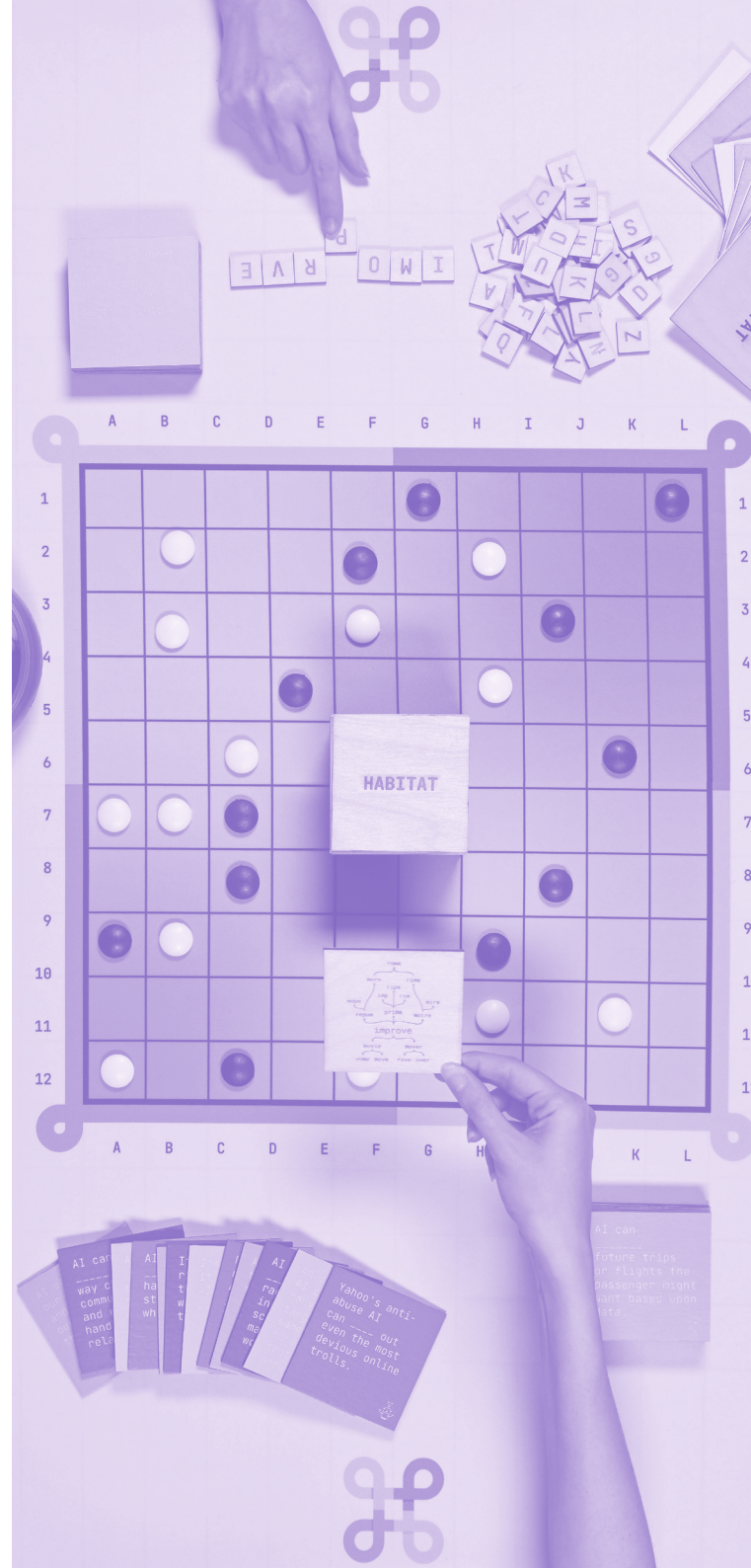
unity. These polarised visions have defined our relationship with AI, while limiting our relationship under a narrow binary lens.

COMPETITION / COEXISTENCE
DOMINATION / COLLABORATION
CONTROL / LIBERATION
DYSTOPIA / UTOPIA

The limited range of narratives leave the public with a narrow image of behavioural dynamics, as the narratives assume themselves to be inevitable and uncontrollable. This image of interspecies relations is one that promotes unsustainable dynamics between humans and AI, while a more multifaceted and ecologically driven narrative is needed. To diversify these narratives and demystify their assumed inevitability, *SEMBIOSIS* adopts symbiosis as a critique to ground these AI narratives with the natural mechanisms within interspecies relationships. As symbiosis offers a lens through which we can imagine relationships with non-humans, not by way of social constructions but in the naturally occurring ecological relationships, we can begin to analyse the behavioural connotations of such an interaction within AI narratives.

Unlike their fictional counterparts, non-fictional narratives attempt to represent real-world AI development more closely. Without fictional liberty, non-fictional discourse is expected to paint a more accurate picture of our current and future relationship with AI. Taking this assumption as my critique, *SEMBIOSIS* focuses on how we talk about AI within popular press and highlights the agency they have towards dictating our futures.

SEMBIOSIS is a fictional board game that aims to empower the public to engage with these narratives while challenging their assumed inevitability, and gaining access to the tools needed to analyse them. To diversify these narratives and emphasise the performativity of language to affect our relationship with AI, I categorise specific terms within AI narratives to the symbiotic relationship that they entail.



COLLABORATORS/MUTUALISM
 COMPETITORS/COMPETITION
 PARASITES/PARASITISM
 PREDATORS/PREDATION

Applying the methodology of defamiliarising language using anagrams, where words are constructed from the rearrangements of letters of another, I adopt a game strategy and spark collaborations between participants. As these participants work together to retrieve the symbiotic terms hidden within the anagrams, they continue by sparking discussions and debates surrounding the nature of the symbiotic behaviour. While referring to the symbiotic grid, which acts as the board within the game, the use of gradients recognises the nuances within the interspecies relationships and the varieties of interpretations. *SEMBIOSIS* re-conceptualises the competition-oriented games of chess and Go by offering team-oriented strategies where sustainable discussions surrounding AI narratives can take place.

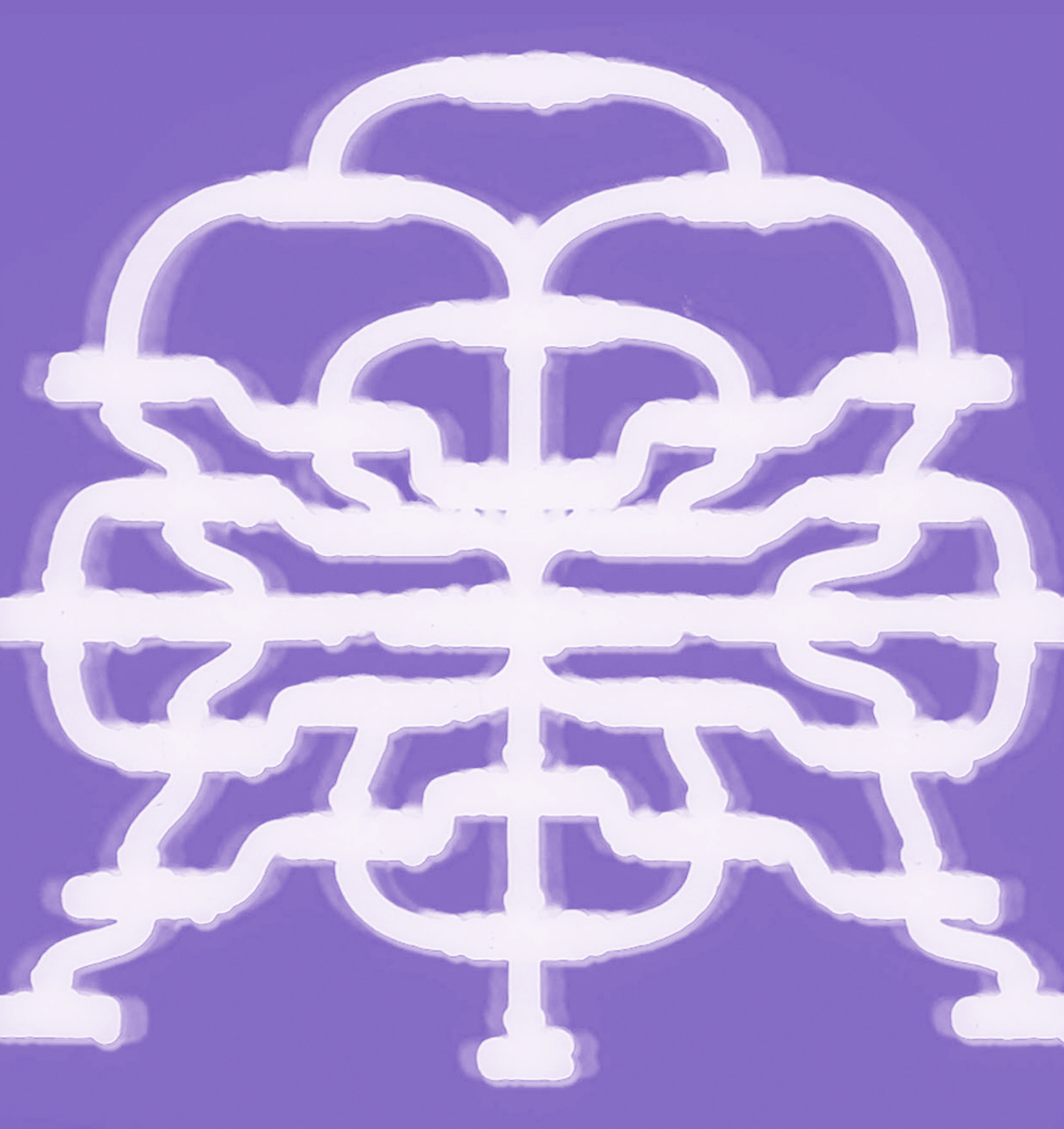
AI narratives can take place.

Previous page:
SEMBIOSIS:
 multidimensional
 investigation of
 ecology (Ghia
 Koussa, 2021)

Opposite page:
SEMBIOSIS:
 symbiotic cards
 (Ghia Koussa, 2021)

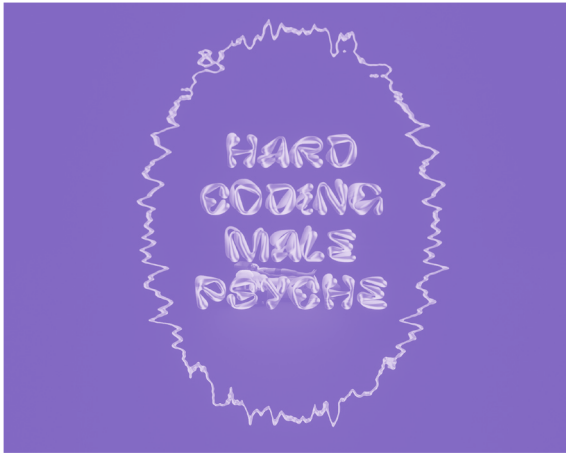
Following pages:
SEMBIOSIS:
 manipulate anagram
 (Ghia Koussa, 2021)





DANCING WITH CYBORGS

Victoire Colliou (FR)



Hardcoding... Male Psyche (Victoire Colliou, 2021)

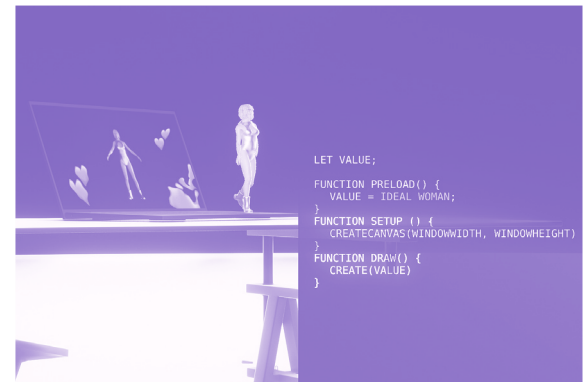
I believe the figure of the cyborg, as theorised by Donna Haraway in her seminal essay 'A Cyborg Manifesto', is a pertinent metaphor for the development of embodied artificial intelligence, in the way that it diverges from subjugating dualist thinking. By its very nature—a mixture of organic and mechanical parts—the cyborg dissolves the boundary between man and machine. Technology, therefore, is no longer an external agent, but part and parcel of the human body.

By the same token, the frontiers between self/other and natural/artificial are blurred. What does 'individuality' mean when the physical self hosts a foreign body, like an implant or a prosthesis? What kind of modification transforms the human body into that of a cyborg? Does a body remain in its natural state once it is altered with a surgically added and technological modification? What makes up a body's natural condition to begin with? Asking these questions acknowledges that to consider the body through such a binary lens—man or machine, organic or mechanic—is obsolete, thus providing new ground upon which to think about the design of embodied artificial intelligence.

Even gender, the 'most stable of distinctions'¹, becomes a flimsy notion in the field of cybernetics. Indeed, by discarding the idea that there is a natural order of things, the cyborg becomes an exploration ground—a space to deconstruct and reconstruct gender. Profoundly disrupting the idea that there is such a thing as an authentic female self, Haraway's cyborg 'displays the machinery of gender'¹ and suggests that gender and sexuality are yet to be imagined.

But the cyborg is not just an epistemological metaphor; it is also a concrete tool, a device for the exploration of the self. The influence of cybernetics in art can be traced back to the 1920s, when Dadaists put forward the idea of a 'new human' in response to World War I and the emergence of a modern capitalist society. An assemblage of sorts, Raoul Hausmann's *Mechanical Head* (c. 1920) can be considered a cyborg representation of avant la lettre. Likewise, Hannah Höch's collages and photomontages are reminiscent of cyborgian figures. *The Beautiful Girl* (1920), in particular, questions the concept of the 'new woman' through juxtapositions of female body parts with car spares.

The use of a cyborg identity as a tool for protest and social criticism became particularly prevalent in the 1980s. At that time, the human body was

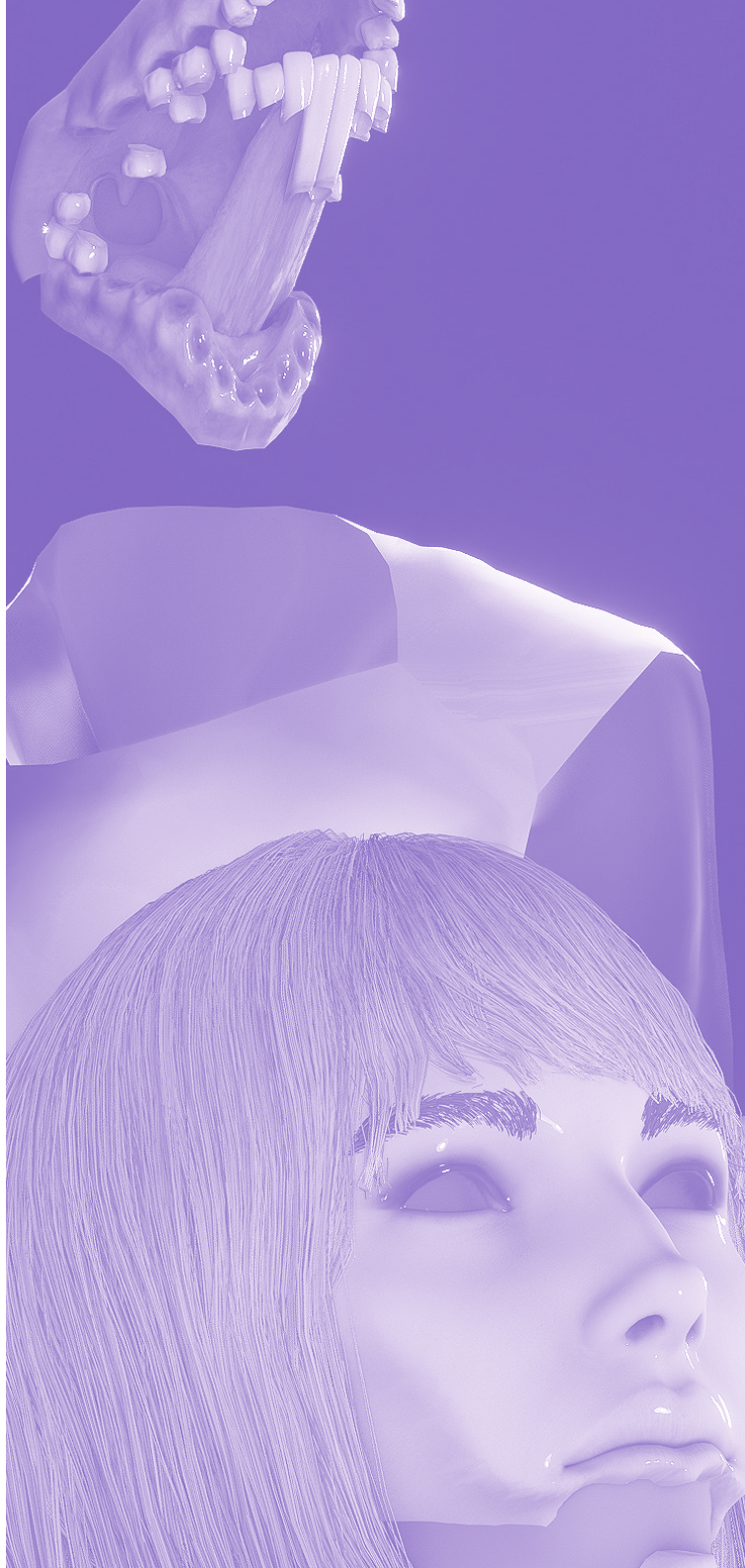


Hardcoding... Male Psyche (Victoire Colliou, 2021)

perceived to be greatly vulnerable—to infection (AIDS), as well as to racism, sexism and ableism². As part of *Sorry for Suffering - You think I'm a puppy on a picnic?* (1990), Korean installation artist Lee Bul walked the streets of Tokyo dressed in a red, multi-limbed monster suit, thus inserting herself as 'an abject presence into various urban spaces'.³ Her performance can be considered an act of rebellion against patriarchal authority and the control of women's bodies in East Asian culture. Her series of cyborg sculptures (1997 to 2011), draw closely from Haraway's work, to suggest that there are alternatives to what constitutes a 'normal' body today.⁴

There has been a change of paradigm in the field of 'cybernetated art' (a term borrowed from Nam June Paik) at the end of the 1990s, with artists incarnating cyborgs in lieu of representing them through artifacts. This has been seen in the fashion industry, which has manifested a certain fascination with hybridisation over the last few decades. From cyberpunk runway design (Dior's conveyor belt, Balenciaga x Jon Rafman's futuristic tunnel), to otherworldly makeup artistry (facial prosthetics at Rick Owens) and uncanny props (Gucci models carrying replicas of their own heads, GCDS's rendered triple-breast), fashion labels seem to be leaning into posthuman aesthetics. But the most notable shift is certainly the apparition of cyborg art, where practitioners extend their biological capacities by modifying their own bodies with technology.

Among leading cyborg artists can be cited Stelarc, ORLAN, Neil Harbisson, Moon Ribas, and Manel De Aguas. Notably, the work of French artists ORLAN has been influential in posthuman arts, particularly *The Reincarnation of Sainte-ORLAN* (1990 to 1993), a series of mediated performances in which the artist had her body altered by plastic surgery to resemble the ideal women as depicted historically by male painters. ORLAN's work, like that of other visionary artists, demonstrates that the 'radical re-elaboration of the self'⁵ is not just a theoretical



project. For both human and non-human forms of life, embodying gender in non-normative ways is not only possible, it is already happening.

I believe the image of the cyborg is a pertinent tool to ideate the design of artificial intelligence, inasmuch it provides both concrete and epistemological resources necessary to the development of a gender-sensitive embodiment. This is not to say that all artificial intelligence systems must look like cyborgs. However, embracing a post-human perspective can facilitate the emergence of an empathic approach towards embodied artificial intelligence, thus 'preventing [us] from turning [us] into [our] new symbolic other'¹⁶.

1. Halberstam, J. (1991) 'Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine', *Feminist Studies*, 17(3), pp.441-458

2. Balsamo, A. (1996) *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*. USA: Duke University Press, pp.32-123

3. Murray, S. (2008) 'Cybernated Aesthetics: Lee Bul and the Body Transfigured', *A Journal of Performance and Art*, 30(2) pp.38-50. Available at jstor.org/stable/30133339

4. Poitevin, J-L. (2003) *Lee Bul: Monsters*. France: Les Presses du Réel, p. 64-65

5. Ferrando, F. (2016) 'A feminist genealogy of posthuman aesthetics in the visual arts', *Palgrave Communications*, 2(16011), p. 10. doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2016.11

6. Ferrando, F. (2014) 'Is the post-human a post-woman? Cyborgs, robots, artificial intelligence and the futures of gender: a case study', *European Journal of Futures Research*, 2(43), pp.3-43

Previous page:
Hardcoding... Male Psyche (Victoire Colliou, 2021)

Opposite page:
Hardcoding... Male Psyche (Victoire Colliou, 2021)





WHO IS (RE)WRITING FEMININITY

Shilin Guo (CN)



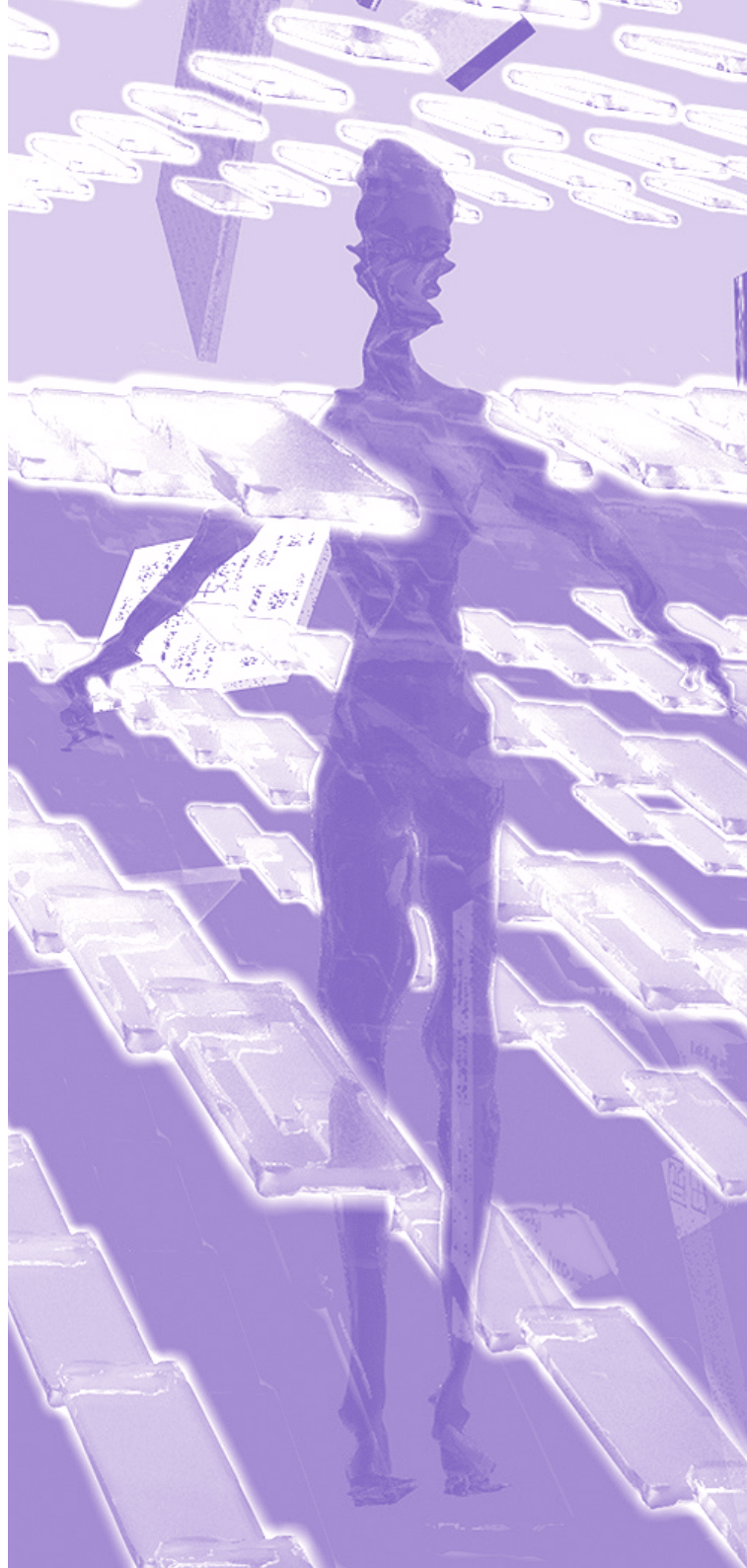
Video Still From *Who Is (Re)writing Femininity* (Shilin Guo, 2021)

As feminism starts to penetrate digital space in China, discussion of women's issues is at an all-time high in 2020. Women's voices have finally been heard on social media, to such a degree that critics called 2020 the 'year of feminism' in China. With the popularisation of cyberfeminism¹, gender issues in autonomous communities and public spaces have attracted more and more attention. Social media provides an

1. The term was first used around 1991 by both the English cultural theoretician Sadie Plant and the Australian artist group VNS Matrix.

important space for the debate on the behavioural norms that have been imposed on women, as well as a broader awareness of their social expression, and the nature of their cultural rebellion.

However, while social media brings opportunities for the development of feminism, it also brings many challenges to online feminist activism. The spread and amplification of personal emotions via social networks can easily lead to radical ideas. The misunderstanding among women and the infighting of feminist groups have led to extreme feminist views on the Internet. As a result, anti-feminist discourse and voices have flooded Chinese social media sites like Weibo and Hupu, from communities that are, generally, made up of young male users. On social



media phrases such as 'feminist cancer' (nūquan'ai)

and 'Tianyuan feminism' have become popular online. Tianyuan feminism is also called 'Chinese country feminism'—a reference to the ubiquitous Mongrel dogs and cats of the Chinese countryside—and the supposedly purer 'Western' breed². Cyber aggression towards women and the undifferentiated stigmatisation of feminism has grown in popularity. Behind this popular slang and the labels, lie the situation and the struggles of a new

generation of feminists and women in China. The stigma of feminism and language used to describe women in the internet space, affects our generation's perceptions and attitudes towards women. The construction of gender discourse on social media faces significant challenges, as the stereotypical influence of women is also constantly being deconstructed and reconstructed. My project investigates the elements of this ongoing gender antagonism and popular discourse.

WHO IS (RE)WRITING FEMININITY constructs a critical context from different perspectives, exploring the challenges posed to femininity and the feminine subject, in the context of a booming Internet culture and social media in China. Through storytelling and experimental video, my practice examines how a visual communicator can point to a contemporary gender discourse. The narration in the video explains how fragmented information on the Internet shapes our gender ideologies in a Chinese context. In the face of fragmented and decentralised information, how can women navigate chaotic cyberspace and construct their own identity? The video serves as a form of resistance to the stereotypical discourses that construct femininity in social media, by envisioning and documenting a watery embodiment of a woman wandering in digital space.

Previous image:
Video still from *Who Is (Re)writing Femininity*
(Shilin Guo, 2021)

Opposite image:
Video still from *Who Is (Re)writing Femininity*
(Shilin Guo, 2021)



**fragmented
information.**

DIGGING THROUGH THE DECOLONIZING, [OR PUNCTURING, OR DE-WESTERNIZING, AND SHIFTING], DESIGN¹ READER², 2021 EDITION: an in-progress, collaborative project³

Ramon Tejada



Ramon Tejada is a (New Yorkino / Afro-Caribbean / American) designer and educator based in Providence, RI. He works in a hybrid design/teaching practice (he is on the faculty of the Graphic Design program at RISD) focusing on collaboration, inclusion, unearthing, and the responsible expansion of design as a practice he has named 'puncturing'.

1. Decolonizing is a term that can mean many things to many people.

For me, decolonizing is about making space (sometimes taking space...) to allow people that look like me (especially BIPOC people), to be active and essential participants around the table. It is about *physical visibility, structural change, representation* (not tokenism), *acknowledgement* (of ideas, land, values that were stolen, repressed, etc), giving up (taking) space, "responsible expansion" (recognizing what design has ignored and not valued) of narratives, points of view, perspectives, stories, theories, ideas, geographical references (not just of Northern European and American lineages, which erases everybody else's identity (colonialism), a diversity of lineages (not just the Bauhaus and all it's grandchildren) etc. It is about unearthing, shifting the glance, [and] decentering; giving agency, being vulnerable, making mistakes, thinking about our communities (not the design community), thinking about mom/dad/grandparents/your neighbor, our chosen families, acknowledging not knowing, and making the periphery the center.*

This will not happen overnight, in one class, in one syllabus. This is a long and slow process. A collaborative process that demands we all work on this.

*Another term that can be used is de-westernized design. —Arturo Escobar

2. A link to the original, entire Reader is: tinyurl.com/y43sukuu

3. Printed edit, fall 2021 for A Line Which Forms a Volume #5.

The ALWFAV Editorial Caretakers engaged in conversation with Ramon Tejada while investigating the act of leaning and how this intersects with care. They spoke about education and the reliance on Western centric and "traditional" design syllabuses – systems that have been leaned on too much. Since 2018, Ramon and collaborators have been gathering and building the following resources in a shared online document. This printed format recognises and maintains the collective voices that have come together to support the decolonisation of design.

This reader⁴ has been an attempt to gather materials to begin the process of *puncturing*, or *digging*,⁵ and making design narratives inclusive. It is about reading, *engaging*, learning, and entering into generative conversations with others.

It is far from complete. *This document will never be finished.* We have so much to read, consider, learn, relearn, acknowledge, and reflect in order to *shift* design out of its exclusive, universal, and single minded reductiveness tendencies.

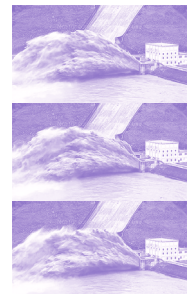
¡Adelante!
Onwards!



4. I started this project as research for a talk I was giving at Pratt Institute in New York, the talk was for the Art History department. This reader began as a series of questions and conversations with colleagues and friends at Pratt. In particular, Davey Whitcraft, Janice Robertson, and Gaia Hwang. The reader has had many contributions added to it on it's Google doc edition.

5. Since 2020, I have been thinking about this process as Digging, in a node to my reading Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, as well as to the words of James Baldwin. A lot of my thinking and how I am actively engaging with this (in a slow manner), is also indebted to the many conversations and teachings I have had with fellow designers, in particular Ahmed Ansari, Silas Munro, Anna Parisi, Carlos Avila, Kelly Walters, the Design History Friday crew, among others.

Image available at giphy.com/gifs/digg-hot-dam-ulj8ZoKkekLx6



WHY THIS READER? PART 1:

‘As a designer, I have come to terms with the fact that what and who design history has been interested in canonizing, up to this point, does not reflect me, my cultures, my values, and many of the tenets that make me a citizen, a designer, and a teacher. I don’t see myself reflected in much of the narrative of design—not in the history, the theory, the practitioners or the outcomes...’

—Ramon Tejada, ‘WE MUST TOPPLE THE TROPES, CRIPPLE THE CANON’, WALKER ART CENTER

WHY THIS READER? PART 2:

The *Lascaux Cave Paintings*, the depiction of aurochs, horses and deer, France. Graphic Design’s history usually starts here.

BUT... how has this history been told?

Who wrote this history?

History is about the interpretation by the writer/author who writes it from his (usually a white male) perspective.

Where does that leave the rest of us... the Southern Hemisphere?

How can we begin the process of shifting this narrative?

How do we actively start to disrupt and move towards a more pluralistic view of design?

Less universality!

Who should we read, engage, and have conversations with?

Opposite page:
Pi-Sheng, 11th Century
AD., Inventor of the 1st
movable type in China



RESOURCES

This is by no means an exhaustive list

—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of the Single Story*. Available at youtu.be/D9lhs241zeg

—Ruben Pater, *The Politics of Design & CAPS LOOK*. Available at walkerart.org/magazine/watch-ruben-pater-of-untold-stories-at-insights-2020 vimeo.com/622449601

—John Leguizamo, *Latin History for Morons*. Available at netflix.com/title/80225421; nytimes.com/2017/11/08/theater/john-leguizamo-music-latin-history-morons.html

—Ahmed Ansari, *Modernity + Coloniality*, a course on coloniality and decoloniality by Modernity Coloniality. Available at modernitycoloniality.com/

—bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. Available at thecheapestuniversity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/bell-hooks-teaching-community-a-pedagogy-of-hope.pdf; Teaching to Transgress: sites.utexas.edu/ljsjcs/files/2018/02/Teaching-to-Transcend.pdf

—Bahia Shehab and Haytham Nawar, *The History of Arab Graphic Design*. Available at acupress.com/product/a-history-of-arab-graphic-design/

—*Decentering Whiteness in Design History Resources*. Available at docs.google.com/document/d/1KiW2ULDfelm_OuvwhM2lygxwhoNddrEFk5tY19zblwd/edit

—*Expanding Knowledges: Pedagogies of Freedom for Visual Communication*. Available at depatriarchisedesign.com/

—Rolando Vázquez Melken & Critical Talk #7, *Decolonising Knowledge: Decolonising Design & Engineering*. Available at youtube.com/watch?v=KAFzTReqmoc; youtube.com/watch?v=2lScUY_-Ry4

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—Raoul Peck, *Exterminate all the Brutes*. Available at hbo.com/extermine-all-the-brutes Syllabus: hbo.com/content/dam/hbodata/documentaries/extermine-all-brutes/resources/eatb-syllabus-210412.pdf

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—Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called my Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*. Available at monoskop.org/images/e/e2/Moraga_Cherrie_Anzaldua_Gloria_eds_This_Bridge_Called_My_Back_Writings_by_Rad

ical_women_of_color-kitchen_table_women_of_color_press.pdf

—Vanessa Zúñiga Tinizaray, *Whispers from the Andes*. Available at 2020.typographics.com/schedule/vanessa-zuniga-tinizaray

—Paul Soulellis, *Urgentcraft and What is Queer Typography?*. soulellis.com/writing/urgentcraft2/soulellis.com/writing/tde2021/

—Pedro Oliveira and Luiza Prado, *Cheat Sheet for a Non (or Less) Colonialist Speculative Design*. Available at medium.com/a-parede/cheat-sheet-for-a-non-or-less-colonialist-speculative-design-9a6b4ae3c465

—Titus Kaphar, *Can Art Amend History?*. Available at ted.com/talks/titus_kaphar_can_art_amend_history

—AFRICOBRA, Available at theguardian.com/artand-design/2018/jun/15/

—Readings and website by Tema Okun, *White Supremacy Culture*. Available at whitesupremacyculture.info/ uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture_2020.pdf

—*Beyond the Bauhaus*, Series. Available at educators.aiga.org/category/articles/beyond-the-bauhaus/

—Gráfica Latina, *digital archive of Latin American graphic design*. Available at graficalatina.com/

—Arundhati Roy, *The Pandemic is a Portal*. Available at ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca

—Antionette Carroll and Creative Reaction Lab. Available at creativereactionlab.com/

—Dori Tunstall (Dean at OCAD University in Toronto). Available at designobserver.com/feature/dori-tunstall/30258; youtu.be/_Kj9_qO-Qrmk

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—Engage, read and participate with Futures. Available at futures.org

—Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse*. Available at youtu.be/8Ouy-7aN6XP5; rorotoko.com/interview/20180423_escobar_arturo_on_book_designs_pluriverse_radical_interdependence/

—Audrey G. Bennett, *The African Roots of Swiss Design*. Available at theconversation.com/the-african-roots-of-swiss-design-154892

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—Eve Tuck & Wayne Yang, *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*. Available at jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554

—Quetzala Carson, *Pedagogy of the Decolonizing*. Available at youtube.com/watch?v=IN1T0s8JAR8

—Okwui Enwezor, *Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary Design*. Available at youtu.be/JziMbVBEGyI

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Census: <https://redculturagrafica.org/es/censo-permanente/Bibliographies> (produced yearly): <https://redculturagrafica.org/es/bibliografia-latioamericana-de-cultura-grafica-2/>

—Saki Mafundikwa, *Identity and Colonization in Typographic Design*. Available at designportland.org/stories/2017/identity-and-colonization-in-typographic-design

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—Toni Morrison, *The Radical Vision of Toni Morrison*. Available at nytimes.com/2015/04/12/magazine/the-radical-vision-of-toni-morrison.html

—Olivia U. Rutazibwa, *Decoloniser*, TedxFlanders. Available at youtu.be/z0B6wfdGseUf

—Wen Huei Chou, *GD history from a global perspective*. Available at drive.google.com/file/d/1m1IP-iz55OUifQLG8BaYrQlnkKfnMh-B0u/view

—Charles C. Mann, *1491 & 1493*. Available at youtube.com/watch?v=bghLhJ-c8os

—Vibhavari Jani, *Diversity in Design: Perspectives from the Non-Western World*. Available at amazon.com/Diversity-Design-Perspectives-Non-Western-World/dp/1563677555/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1532266182&sr=1-1&keywords=Diversity+in+Design%3A+Perspectives+from+the+Non-Western+World%2C+Vibhavari+Jani

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—*African Influences in Modern Art*. Available at metmuseum.org/toah/hd/aima/hd_aima.htm

—The Native Graphic Design Project. Available at neebin.com/nativedesign/?page_id=27

—Design Justice Network. Available at designjustice.org/

—Raoul Peck, *Exterminate all the Brutes*. Available at hbo.com/extermine-all-the-brutes/raoul-peck-essential-reading-films

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Available at walkerart.org/magazine/soundboard-queering-design-education-ramon-tejada

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—Manuel de Landa, *A Thousand Years of non-Linear History*. Available at youtu.be/u3aE3Z6lIMo

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—Allan DeSouza, *How Art Can Be Thought: A Handbook For Change*. Available at amazon.co.uk/How-Art-Can-Be-Thought/dp/1478000473

—Cherry-Ann Davis and Nina Paim, *Does Design Care?*. Available at futureess.org/magazine/does-design-care/

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—Jack Halberstam, *Vertiginous Capital Or, The Master's Toolkit*. Available at dropbox.com/s/sal72piqx-qpo58g/QUEER.ARCHIVE.WORK_1.zip?dl=0&file_subpath=%2FQUEER.ARCHIVE.WORK_1_Jack_Halberstam.pdf

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—Sadie Red Wing, *Decolonization as an urgent imperative*, 2016 AIGA Design Conference. Available at youtu.be/H17D_XGI-6Hk

—Claudio Ferlaute, *Open up the Future*. Available at eyemagazine.com/feature/article/open-up-the-future

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COMPLICIT INVISIBILITY: MAPPING THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

Mareena DeGuzman Khawar (AE)

The Rohingyas have been represented as the most persecuted minority in the world due to human rights violations inflicted upon them in Myanmar since 1977. This crisis—termed a ‘text-book example of ethnic cleansing’¹, resulting in the ‘fastest displacement of a people since the Rwanda genocide’²—has turned into the world’s fastest-growing humanitarian crisis, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This highlights a problem that the world has not yet figured out how to solve—that is, the displacement of people—causing us to rethink the concept of ‘national identities’.

This text explores the transformative impact of mapping on what we understand and care about global refugee emergencies. I have explored how ‘mapping’, when used as a critical tool, is as much a commentary on the social structure of a nation or place, as it is on its topography. Using the function of cartography to provide the basis for design to ‘map the power, map the commons’³, this project acts as a primer on issues that map and address: the cause, identity, displacement, and the rigidity of nationalistic symbols.

The placement of geopolitical information on maps has consequences for our spatial perception of the world. Hearing someone refer to a region or people as being far away, based on their recollection of a map, may seem insignificant but its effect is clear when empathy cannot be shown for those that are ‘far away’. Maps are created with particular methods and employ cartography—theoretical and practical knowledge used to construct maps as a distinct mode of visual representation. Another rule is cultural production, which is to be understood in a broader context than technique. This can

Mapping as a Tool that Represents Ideologies and Record Crises
(Mareena DeGuzman Khawar, 2021)



be ignored by cartographers to form a hidden aspect of their discourse. Cartographers developed a sense of the other in relation to nonconforming maps.

WHO'S (NOT) THERE?

Representations of the world have differed throughout the ages, along with the cultures that produced them, and tend to designate a view that is centred on the people it was meant for.

Kan Kya, formally home to 730,000 Rohingya, is one of 400 villages destroyed by the military, and one of at least a dozen whose names have been erased from the official Myanmar map.⁴ Myanmar’s government have removed landmarks in the geography of the Rohingya landscape—and memory—in such a way, that a returning Rohingya people would be faced with a desolate and unrecognisable terrain.

While investigating the names of these Rakhine towns, I navigated the areas via Google Maps, where a different world was presented to me. The absence of these towns poses questions about the truth and objectivity of maps, and of their creators. Satellite images, which are portrayed as objective and precise, are also vulnerable to cartographers’ biases, such as de-emphasising or the erasure of the Rohingya localities. Thus, maps could be devised to solidify the worldviews of those in power. As a researcher-designer, the methodology of mapping the Rohingya crisis underscores the role that traditional cartographic representations

play in the way we apprehend the trajectories

of displaced refugees. Drawing on data, I compiled two sets of maps: the burned villages in Rakhine state, Myanmar; and the expansion of the biggest refugee camp in the world, Kutupalong, Bangladesh. The first map locates conflicts and the evidence of displacement, whereas the second map represents the resultant migration caused by the conflicts charted on the first. By contrasting their presence and identity in both countries, we realise the scale of the crisis of the Rohingya people being stateless and not accepted in either place.

Mapping represents the scale of military injustices to erase the Rohingya identity. In order to conceal accountable evidence, the Myanmar government razed villages that are linked to the Rohingya. This also raises questions regarding the future of and solution to the national identity status of the one million stateless Rohingya, who are stuck in Bangladesh. This erasure is that of the history of the future Rohingya generations, as well as for those tourists who visit Myanmar for its UNESCO sites, and who will not consider the country's conflicting stories. Refugee camps in Bangladesh are often not precisely located on maps, due to the difficulties in officially registering them as places. The Bangladeshi government views the camps as 'temporary'. However, this temporary state of 'refugeeness' has become permanent for the Rohingyas. My project shows the present condition of the Rohingya to reveal the impermanence/permanence and the scale of displacement, allowing the viewer to reflect on the status of the people. Through mapping, I explore questions of migratory movements and exiles. By focusing on the erased names of villages that appear to be lost in present maps, is to question the subjectivity of other maps.

Through the deconstruction of maps, we create possibilities to discover new meanings within them,

and to trace the social mechanisms⁵ of cartographic change. We begin to understand maps, like art, as being far from 'a transparent opening to the world', but 'a particular human way of looking at the world'.⁶



Top Image: Nationalism as an Ideology Through Cartography (Mareena DeGuzman Khawar, 2021)

Bottom Image: Maps are Constantly Reconstructed, Re-imagined, and Re-situated (Mareena DeGuzman Khawar, 2021)

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ANOMALOUS UTOPIA

Jemima Whitaker (GB)

FLUIDITY OF PLACE

What really counts as place? Being an established concept, with reasonably strict limitations, Seamons and Sowers definition acts as a structural framework. They define place through, '1) a physical setting, 2) activities, situations and events; and 3) the individual and group meanings created through people's experiences in regards to that place'.¹ While the first two points are seemingly straightforward understandings of place, it becomes more complex when considered in relation to notions of utopia. This complexity—of utopia and place together—gives rise to questions around whether unstable territories enable the categorisation of a geographic place, such as in the case studies in this project that explore specific sites of activity of the YPJ and ISIL, as seen in figure 'YPJ and ISIL territorial change'. Sargent comments, 'neither utopias or communities are as stable as we sometimes think they are'² and, while implied ideologically, this applies geographically also. If the territory is always changing, is it established as a place, and is it ever confined?

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2. Sargent, L. (2005) 'The Intersection of Utopianism and Communitarianism', *Utopia Matters: Theory Politics, Literature and the Arts*. Universidade do Porto, pp.109–118. Available at books.google.co.uk/books?id=7j979Sb4fRwC&printsec

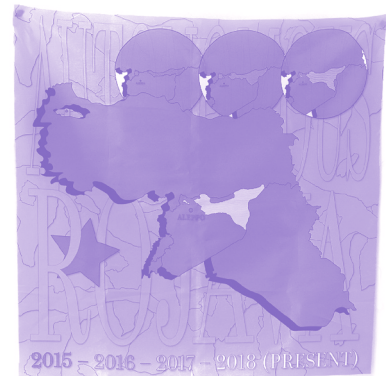
UNSTABLE TERRITORIES

If asked to picture the geographical setting of utopia, you may think of an island, detached from reality, and completely still and stable. Yet how is utopia situated in reality? For utopia to emerge and establish, territory needs to shift and adjust to allow space for the implementation of utopian ideologies. Alistair Bonnett poetically comments, 'the dizzying fragmentation, the overlapping and shape-shifting of borders that is seen in so many parts of the planet, tells us that geography is not a staid and dusty affair but is enthralling and often alarming'.³ The case studies in *ANOMALOUS UTOPIA* encom-

3. Bonnett, A. (2017) *Beyond the Map: Unruly enclaves, ghostly places, emerging lands and our search for utopia's*. London: Aurum

pass this shape-shifting of borders that Bonnett speaks of, with the territory taking shape and adapting, in response to external forces and the natural environment.

Making reference to the first point of Seamons and Sower's definition—'a physical setting'—the territories of the utopias are drawn upon. Despite the transience, it would be possible to map the coordinates of these territories, therefore technically establishing them as places. These coordinates are changing, however, and are, at times, disappearing as quickly as they are formed, adding a layer of complexity to this categorisation. It also raises questions on the confinement of utopia, as the mere fact that they can fluctuate, it stands to reason that utopia cannot be confined geographically. Yet, despite this, external forces work to constrict, leading to the thought that utopia can only be confined through external forces, whether that be military action, income or borders of established countries.



YPJ Territorial Change (Jemima Whitaker, 2021)

The shape of the territories of the utopias allows us to delve deeper into these points raised. The figure 'Isolation Publication—ISIL 2015 to 2018' (see next page) documents Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) over the period 2015 to 2018, during which time a reduction in territory is visible and yet,

OIL FIELDS ROUTES TRADE

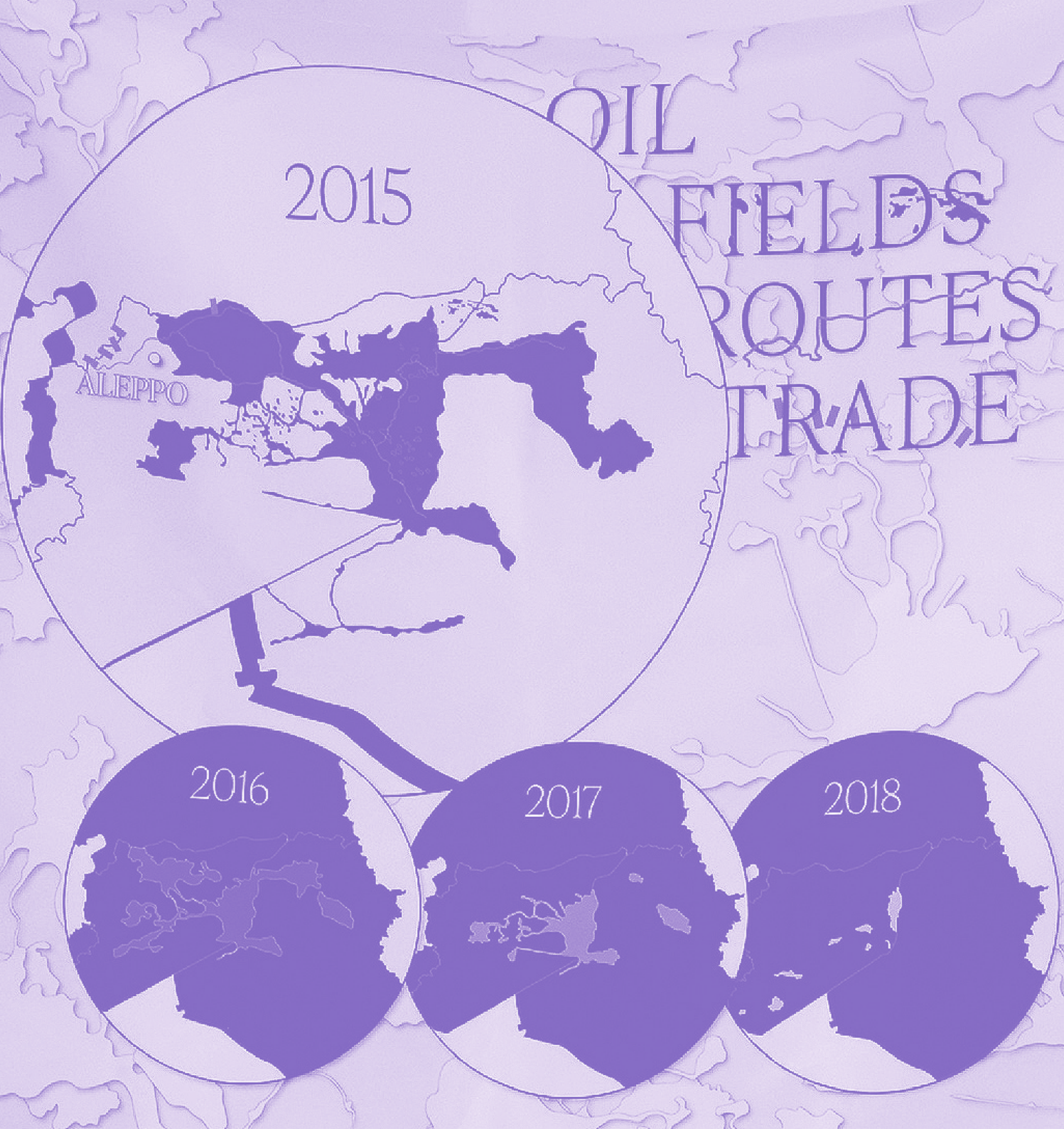
2015

ALEPPO

2016

2017

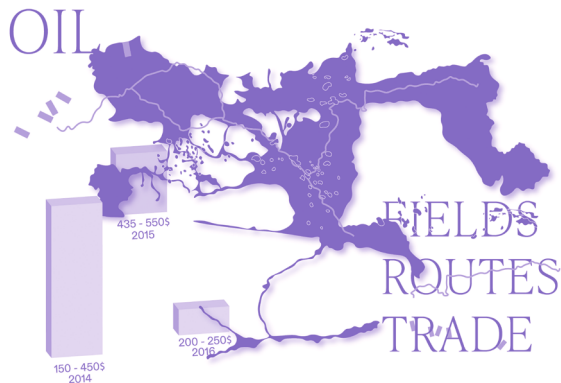
2018



there is a seemingly un-purposeful irregularity to its shape. Examining this map objectively, there is a consistent patch of territory present each year, but there are also thinner strands present that change and disappear. It indicates that the group operates from a 'base' territory, attempting to expand and then reverting when unsuccessful. In this case, the loss of geographical control is largely through external military action, but why does the group expand in this unusual way?

INNER WORKINGS OF UTOPIA

Economic input is essential for the survival of utopias, whether that be military action or basic needs, such as electricity and transportation. This references back to Sargent and the way that a utopia is an intentional community, in which all human beings need basic needs to survive. Processes of mapping allow this largely invisible movement of economy to be traced, and through the mapping of the oil fields, routes and trade of ISIL (as seen in the figure 'ISIL's oil fields, routes and trade'), the purpose of the 'base' territory and irregularity of expansion becomes clearer.



ISIL's Oil Fields, Routes and Trade (Jemima Whitaker, 2021)

That ISIL established key territory in the location of the oil fields—creating small offshoots into the desert to reach those that were more isolated—is an informed speculation. It appears that they protected the oil route, from which they managed

to achieve a more direct path across roads to reach the trade point on the border with Turkey. The reliance on resources within the land, and the strategic base around these positions, points towards the establishment of place. To focus again on the definition of place—'activities, situations and events'—the collection, transportation, and exchange of oil falls within this category of placemaking. However, questions are raised here again on confinement. If ISIL were selling to Turkey, which is a statement strongly disputed by Turkey themselves, then is their economy still cyclical but no longer confined? The economic involvement of other countries makes the notion of ISIL as a utopia less confined. The manner in which it aids geographic expansion is also unconfirmed. These thoughts will be left to instil, with deeper



Image above:
Isolation Publication—
ISIL 2015 to 2018
(Jemima Whitaker, 2021)

Previous pages:
ISIL territorial change
(Jemima Whitaker, 2021)

deeper analysis into a vast, alternate subject.

T♀XIC FEMININITY: IDEALISED FEMININITY

Jaeun Bia Lee (KR)

As Simone de Beauvoir said, 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'.¹ Despite the fact that there are many people who do not regard themselves as fitting within the gender binary, gender identity is frequently conceived of as a dichotomous construct: masculine or feminine.² The mechanism based on the binary system is being applied in modern society, not only directly and/or explicitly, but also implicitly and/or hegemonically. In *T♀XIC FEMININITY: IDEALISED FEMININITY*, my intention is to disrupt the gender hegemony that legitimises the patriarchal gender system and perpetuates gender dichotomy. I do this by tracking and deconstructing the idealised female figures that are unconsciously embodied by young females in Korean society.

Idealised femininity is derived from the terminology study on emphasised,^{3,4} hegemonic,⁵ and patriarchal femininity.⁶ The three femininities are extremely similar, in that they all legitimise the subordination of women to men and perpetuate gender inequality. Paechter argues, 'the normalisation of hegemonic gender forms makes it appear to those oppressed by them that such forms are not just how things are but how they ought to be'.⁷ The ideological emphasis on idealised femininity makes it impossible to actively deal with pluralistic and multi-dimensional gender discourse, but also confuses almost all women who have not achieved femininity. As the feminine mystique causes a lack of human identity, the firm core of self or 'I', a drastic rethinking of what it means to be feminine is required⁸ especially in Korea.

As a graphic designer approaching this research, I have investigated and decoded idealised femininity in 424 girls' high schools, employing contemporary forms of vandalism as a way of



works from Magritte and Christo & Jeanne-Claude. In Korea, many women's educational institutions have been established to reduce the gender-based educational inequality gap and, according to the background of the emergence of these institutions, they should have been more progressive than they are at present. However, in many cases, the mottoes and the spirit of progression they emphasise to the students are erroneously idealised. In this project, I assume that the ideology revealed in the women's educational institutions is significant data to investigate the idealised femininity that young females are forced to adopt. I propose to rethink idealised femininity espoused by the ideological tools; public sculptures and school slogans in girls' high schools, that encourage women to internalise into their own personal codes, and which form the basis for feminine scripts of behaviour. My research urges for the replacement or abolishment of the remnants of patriarchy.

PUBLIC SCULPTURES

Since public sculptures are visual artifacts and have monumental characteristics, they are categorised in direct and descriptive ways: *Wise Mother* (Sin Saimdang,⁹ with child/ren, Virgin Mary), *Attractive Woman* (semi-/nude, tight-fitting clothes, abstract), *Passive Girl* (with book, instrument, flower, or gesture). The strong manifestation of markers of femininity in the public female statues is a social outcome reflecting gender hegemony.¹⁰ These monumental sculptures are deconstructed and reconstructed according to their specifically assigned categories.

SCHOOL SLOGANS

I extracted keywords from 424 school slogans and categorised them into two categories: Female and Student. The representative categories align with the roles expected of young females aged fifteen to eighteen in Korean society; individuals who would be, ideally, active participants in maintaining the patriarchy. These slogan keywords are then documented using typography that is radically feminine and non-feminine.

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6. Hoskin, R.A. (2019) 'Femmephobia: The Role of Anti-femininity and Gender Policing in LGBTQ+ People's Experiences of Discrimination' *Sex Roles*, pp.686-703

7. Paechter, C. (2018) *Women's Studies International Forum*, pp.121-128. Pergamon

8. Friedan, B. (1963) *The feminine mystique*. New York: WW Norton

9. Sin Saimdang is mainly known only as a Wise Mother, Confucian ideal for womanhood, although she received an education that was not common for women of that era and worked as an artist.

10. Yoon T.H., and Zandvoort B.K. (2019)

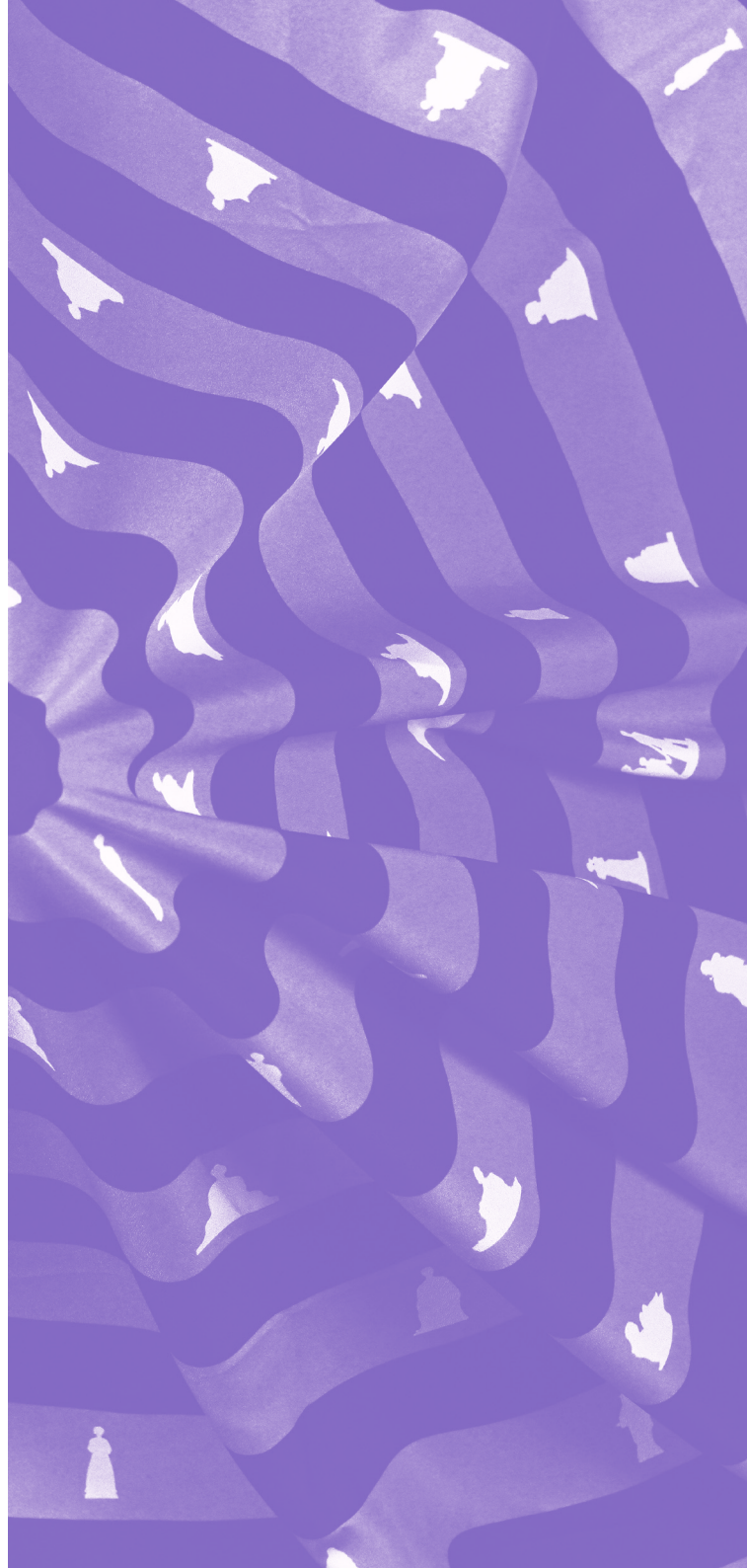
Decoding Dictatorial Statues. Eindhoven: Onomatopee

Previous page: *Toxic Hypnosis* (Bia Lee, 2021)

Opposite page: *Toxic Hypnosis Spiral* (Bia Lee, 2021)

Following pages: *Public Sculptures* (Bia Lee, 2021)

Following pages: *School Slogans* (Bia Lee, 2021)





PERSON, COMPETENT PERSON, CREATIVE PERSON

BE KIND, DILIGENT AND WISE

KNOW RIGHTEOUSLY (TRUTH), LIVE TRUTHFULLY (GOODNESS), GROW BEAUTIFULLY (BEAUTY)

TRUTH, BEAUTY

PURE HEART, BRIGHT WISDOM, RIGHTEOUS BEHAVIOUR

BE A TRUE PERSON, BE A COMPETENT WOMAN, BE A RIGHTEOUS CITIZEN

EMBRACE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT, BECOME A COMPETENT PERSON WHO PRACTICES

SELF-REALISATION, OBSERVATION PRACTICE, VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

A STRONG AND WISE NATION CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED FROM MATURE MOTHERHOOD, SO DEVELOP YOURSELF IN THIS AWARENESS AND PRIDE

COMPETENT WOMEN, CREATIVE THINKING, LIFE OF HELPING

LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE, HONESTY

TRUTH, BEAUTY, WISDOM

BE A SINCERE, WISE AND POLITE PERSON

BE BEAUTIFUL, BE WISE,

CREATIVITY, LADYLIKENESS

RIGHTEOUS THINKING, URBAN LIFE, DILIGENT PERSON

COURTESY, SINCERITY, DILIGENCE

AUTONOMY, COOPERATION, RESPECT, LOVE

TRUTH, GOODNESS, BEAUTY

TRUTH, LOVE, WISDOM

LIBERTY, LOVE, PEACE

BE TRUE, BEAUTIFUL AND DILIGENT

BE A WISE AND POLITE GLOBAL PERSON

PLANT LOVE AND MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE

A STRONG AND WISE NATION CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED FROM MATURE MOTHERHOOD, SO DEVELOP YOURSELF IN THIS AWARENESS AND PRIDE

COMPETENT WOMEN, CREATIVE THINKING, LIFE OF HELPING

LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE, HONESTY

TRUTH, BEAUTY, WISDOM

BE A SINCERE, WISE AND POLITE PERSON

BE BEAUTIFUL, BE WISE,

LOVE AND FORGIVE EACH OTHER

BE RIGHTEOUS, WISE AND BEAUTIFUL

LOVE GOD, PEOPLE AND NATURE. GROW, THINK AND WORK. CRY AND LAUGH WITH OTHERS. ALWAYS KEEP THE COUNTRY AND HUMANITY IN MIND.

PURE, RIGHTEOUS, DILIGENT, STRONG

LIBERTY, TRUTH, LOVE

BE TRUE, BEAUTIFUL AND DILIGENT

BE TRUE AND DILIGENT, BE POLITE AND BRIGHT

TRUTH, BEAUTY, FAITH

SINCERITY, COOPERATION, VOLUNTEER

PERSON OF TRUTH, PERSON WHO VOLUNTEERS

SINCERITY, COOPERATION, CHASTITY

LOVE, VOLUNTEER, PRACTICE

PRODUCTIVE INTELLIGENCE, VIRTUE CULTIVATION, SELF-REALISATION

ENTERPRISING FUTURE-ORIENTED, CREATIVE INTELLECTUAL AND AUTONOMOUS VOLUNTEER

SINCERE AND ABLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

LADYLIKENESS, BRIGHT, DILIGENCE, SINCERITY

BE BEAUTIFUL, SINCERE AND FRESH

MODESTY, INNOCENCE, LOVE

A POLITE CULTURAL PERSON, A MEMBER OF SOCIETY LIVING TOGETHER, A CREATIVE INTELLECTUAL

GOODNESS, BEAUTY, WISDOM

BRIGHT DREAM, STRONG WILL

BE AN INDEPENDENT, COOPERATIVE AND MODEST PERSON

TRUTH, BEAUTY, FAITH

SINCERITY, COOPERATION, CHASTITY

LOVE, VOLUNTEER, PRACTICE

SINCERITY, COOPERATION, CHASTITY

TRUTH, CREATIVITY, VOLUNTEER

PURE CHARACTER, BRIGHT WISDOM

LOVE, ENDEAVOUR,

WARMTH, MODESTY, ENDURANCE

RESPECT THE SKY, LOVE THE COUNTRY, LOVE OTHERS

DREAM BIG, CULTIVATE VIRTUES, BE KIND, VOLUNTEER

AUTONOMY, CREATIVITY, MODESTY

MODERN, STUDY, FAITH, LOVE AND RESPECT, SINCERITY, COURTESY

ENDURANCE, LADYLIKENESS, VOLUNTEER

BE A PERSON WHO WORKS DILIGENTLY AND HELPS EACH OTHER WITH A URBAN HEART

SINCERITY, LOVE

LOVE GOD, LOVE THE COUNTRY, LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR

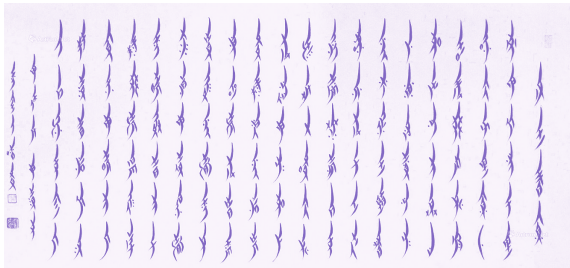
LEARNING, VIRTUE, INTELLIGENCE

A POLITE CULTURAL PERSON, A MEMBER OF SOCIETY LIVING TOGETHER, A CREATIVE INTELLECTUAL

A LANGUAGE OF SEWING

Wendi Nie (CN)

In the 21st century, the demand for clothing has reached an unprecedented level. The production and consumption of garments drives a vast transnational network and, in this system, it is the high-speed production model of China's factories that bear the burden of the garment exports. This situation leads not only to the brutal exploitation of workers, who are predominantly female, but also to the endless, repetitive labour that drives us to question the boundary between machine and body.



Nvshu Writing (Xin Hu, 2015)

In *A LANGUAGE OF SEWING*, while exploring visual language, the ancient Chinese and specifically female language 'Nvshu'¹ attracted my attention, as it is the only language in the world created for and used by women. This language came about in response to the Confucian cultural background of a patriarchal society that, for centuries, deprived women of the right to education, the right to speech, and the right to work. However, some women did not let the imposed mutism make them suffer. Their strong pursuit of freedom and equality, together with their resistance of the Confucian gender culture and male-centred mainstream society, led them to invent this language system, which was then only used between groups of women.

When Nvshu was created, women used natural materials as a means of communication. They used wooden sticks as pens, pots of ashes as ink, and the ground as the carrier of their messages,

Calling and Recalling: Sentiments of Women's Script
(Yuyi Guo, 2011)



allowing them to write freely. The language's shape is very slender, slanting from right to left, mirroring the ideological shape of women. It is written from top to bottom and from left to right, without punctuation marks, and it is arranged neatly. Nvshu differs from Chinese in that each character represents a syllable and can be sung in the local dialect. Women not only use it for writing, but also often sew it into clothes, handkerchiefs and bags using plain artistic expressions, such as weaving and embroidery. They use it as a secret tool for communication between women, while men think it is just a decorative pattern. This allows women to express their inner feelings truly and directly.

In the existing Nvshu artworks, feminist topics account for more than 80 percent. The language gathers women together and forms a culture, a female world. It awakens women's hazy self-consciousness and their collective consciousness simultaneously. As a unique cultural carrier, Nvshu integrates mysterious literary symbols, unique connotations of works, and a special humanistic background.

According to Victor Papanek, "it is the role of the designer to search the past for better alternatives to modern methods"². With this in mind, *A LANGUAGE OF SEWING* aims to explore how Nvshu serves as a second language for women to establish a dialogue on traditional culture and contemporary issues, in direct response to the alienation of the

female body by machines in fashion production. My project also aims to connect a viewer with the producers behind the clothes, taking the audience

2. Victor P. (1984)
Design for Human Scale. New York:
Van Nostrand
Reinhold Company



WIP Show Record (Wendi Nie, 2021)

back to historical moments of female creativity. I use clothing and needlework as the entry point to face the problems of industry and the individual, referencing capital and the market, ecology and technology, and moving Nvshu into a broader global context.

a broader global context.

WEAR ME

Jiahuan Zhu (CN)

In recent years, there has been increasing concern about emotional labour and its particular effect on workers of the service industry. As explained by Russell Hochschild, emotional labour is the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfill the emotional requirements of a job.¹ An example of this is when McDonald's employees are asked to greet customers with a friendly attitude and a smile, demonstrating surface acting—when employees display the emotions required for a job without changing how they actually feel. 'Smiles, moods, feelings and relationships have become "products", thus belonging more to an organisation and less to the self.' This 'commercialisation of human

feeling' forces people 'to accept as normal the tension they feel between their "real" and their "on-stage" selves'.¹ These are the problems of emotional labour faced by the traditional service industry.

Emotional labour has always been at the core of human experience; however, it not only liberates it from the traditional service industry, but with technological progress and the development of digital tools such as facial and voice recognition, it has added to the new set of cage-like restrictions imposed on workers. Work in the gig economy differs from traditional organisations in that the role of a human supervisor is replaced with digital systems.

Gig economy workers² have been given more options to choose flexible working hours instead of

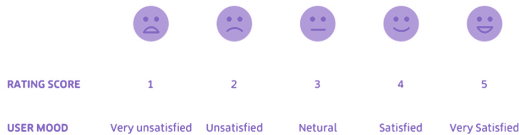
a classic nine to five job. Nevertheless, platform companies still need to control the behaviour of their employees, in order to ensure a quality service for their customers. Thus, gig economy workers are not entirely free to conduct work at their own discretion, but instead must adjust to the controlling rules of

1. Russell Hochschild, A. (1985) *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. University of California Press

2. Gig workers are independent contractors, online platform workers, contract firm workers, on-call workers and temporary workers. Gig workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies to provide services to the company's clients.

Platform companies if they want to continue with gig work. The gig platforms use digital applications as powerful tools to manipulate the emotional labour of workers. As Lee et al explain:

One of the ways platform companies enact control on gig economy workers is by seeking to control workers' behaviors using rating systems. Taking Uber as an example, drivers' ratings are aggregated and are then used as an evaluation of performance. In turn, a low rider rating can result in Uber reviewing a driver or even deactivating their account. Hence, the presence of the rating system acts as a tool of behavior control because it is meant to encourage positive behavior among Uber drivers.³



Uber Rating System (Jiahuan Zhu, 2021)

This insight reveals that technology platforms invisibly monitor the emotional labour of drivers, and that the feedback from customers has a crucial impact on their prospects at work. In addition to the points above, hidden emotional monitoring lies behind the ratings system, which also brings business opportunities to many platforms. Over the past few years, an increasing number of voice and evaluation analysis software has been employed by large corporate companies. IBM's Watson Tone Analyzer is an example of this: it enables the detection of anger, sadness, confidence, joy, tentative and analytical tones in transcribed texts of customer service interactions, so as to evaluate

3. Kyung Lee, M., et al. (2015) "Working with machines: The impact of algorithmic and data-driven management on human workers". *CHI '15 Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. Available at researchgate.net/publication/277875720

customers' experiences. In *Platform Capitalism*, Srnicek encapsulates the 'free labor argument'⁴ suggesting that, 'users are unwaged laborers who produce goods (data and content) that are then taken and sold by the companies to advertisers and other interested parties'.⁴ For Srnicek, however, 'not all—and not even most—of our social interactions are co-opted into a system of profit generation'⁴; but more importantly, for him, social interactions are not labor because they do not generate direct revenue, but only 'data as a raw material'⁴—data which must be extracted, analysed, and worked on in order to be turned into information valuable for advertisers. Thus, invisible emotional labour has become data, and more importantly, it has become the currency of communication that allows for a kind of value exchange via good/bad reviews, and has, ultimately, become a part of the income for gig economy workers.

4. Srnicek, N. (2017), *Platform Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity press



Wear Me (Jiahuan Zhu, 2021)

By investigating the emotional labour of gig economy workers in the process of commercialisation and manipulation of the emotions of both workers and consumers under capitalism, I have concluded that emotional labour is an invisible exchange currency, and that this endless monitoring has become an essential part of surveillance capitalism. My project, *WEAR ME* aims to provide an opportunity for us to think about how this currency reshapes relationships between people and digital platforms.

FAMILY FAREWELL EMOTIONS: REFLECTIONS ON HOW CONFUCIANISM INFLUENCES THE INTROVERTED EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS IN CHINA

Wendy Xiuwen Chen (CN)

RESERVED EMOTIONS LEANING ON THE FAMILY FAREWELLS

Living in China, where traditional Confucianism¹ influences social rituals, as a native, I can feel the constraints of this ideology, especially with regards to the emotions of acknowledging and presenting oneself within Chinese communities. Under the influence of Confucianism, the psychological burden and pressure of expressing emotions are increased. Even in the crucial moments of parting, many Chinese people are still unable to express their true feelings—they do not know how to deal with their sadness or to face the reality of loss.

1. Confucianism has advocated the three cardinal 三綱 guides (ruler guides subject 君導臣, father guides son 父導子 and husband guides wife 夫導妻) and the five constant virtues 五常 (benevolence 仁, righteousness 義, propriety 禮, wisdom 智 and fidelity 信), all of which promote a code of behaviour of tolerance and control. In particular, Confucianism's ideas of 'harmony' and 'dignity' have determined Chinese communication patterns and conflict styles.

Q: Do you have a parting moment in your family that stands out to you?

A: I think I'm quite emotionally slow, not very expressive, and I don't usually overthink. But when I was going to study abroad in Thailand, before I went there, my aunt came to see me at my grandmother's house, because I was leaving soon and she wanted to see me. Then, when I walked out of my grandmother's house with my mother and my aunt, my aunt didn't say anything but gave me a big hug, and then she cried, and that's when I started feeling so sad. (Participant, Tianqing Xie, age 23)

In my project, *FAMILY FAREWELL EMOTIONS*, I use the context of the 'family' to initiate intra-family dialogues, inviting the audience to reflect on the role Confucianism plays in their own lives, which is rarely questioned. By interviewing people who have lived in the Chaoshan region of southern China for a long time, I gradually constructed a picture of the intergenerational communication patterns between families in this area.



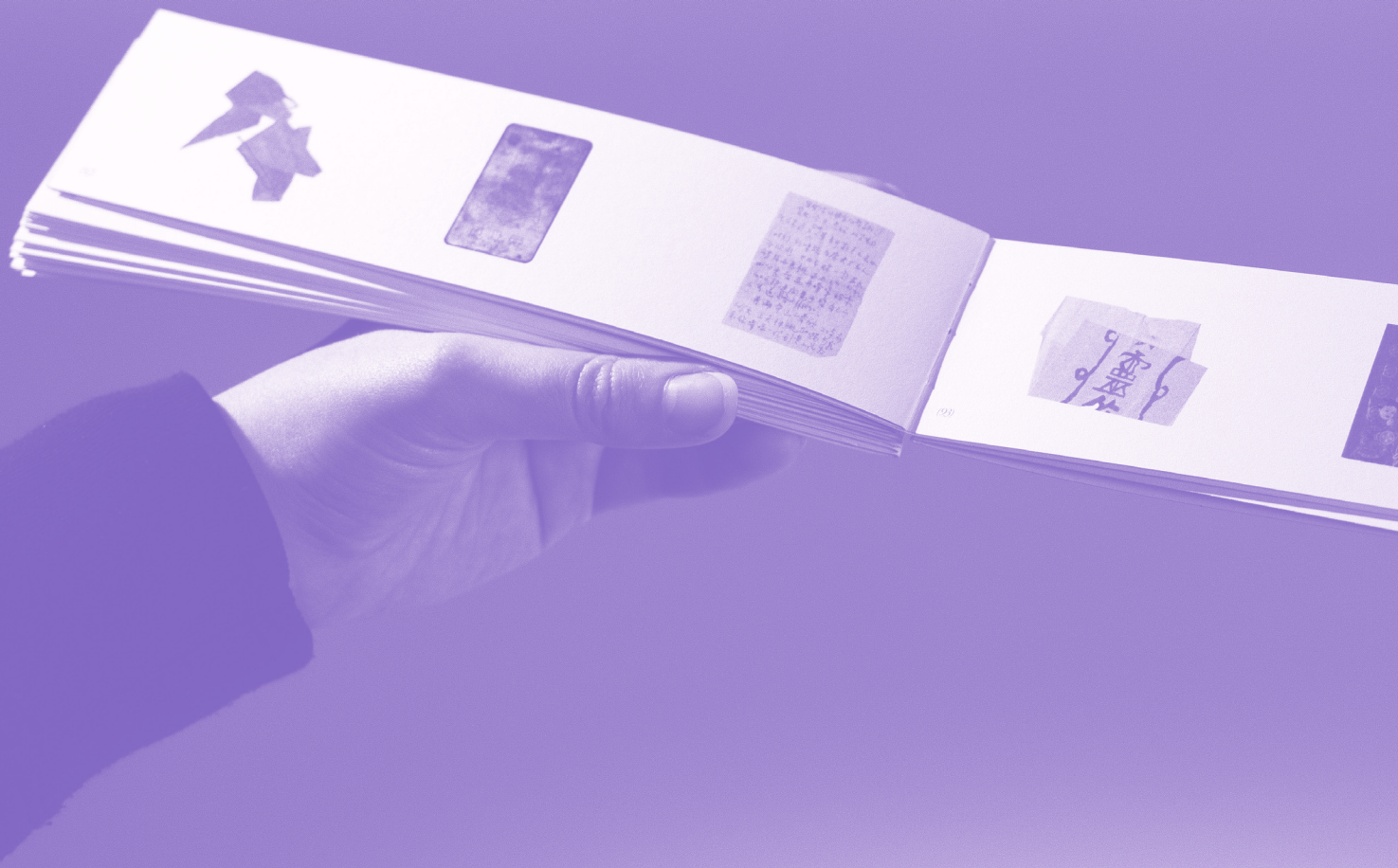
Family Farewell Emotions, Book Archive Containing a Series of Interviews and Dialogues (Wendy Xiuwen Chen, 2021)

WHEN THE RESEARCHER LEANS ON PARTICIPANTS

By examining the relationship between Confucian culture and emotions, my research methodology moved from initially static (observation and archiving) to more interactive (interview and dialogue) approaches to gather data. Through qualitative interviews and informal conversations, I wanted to understand the views and positions of participants of different ages and education levels, on the rationality of how Confucianism constrains emotional expression.

Q: In terms of expressing your emotions, do you feel that Confucianism has influenced you in any way? For example, it makes you more subtle in expressing your feelings.

A: In fact, when I was a child, I had already started fighting against not expressing love and care at home.



We should express our feelings to our parents instead of hiding them. When I was at university, I took it upon myself to videocall my parents regularly because I wanted to stay in touch with them and not just when I asked for money. I hoped I could show, in this way, that I loved them, and that our relationship was more than just about money, rather than hiding our love and keeping it inside, and not saying anything. (Participant, Demi, age 25)

Some of those interviewed changed their attitudes towards Confucianism after the interviews, from being supportive to becoming neutral.

Q: Considering the influence of Confucianism, were there any moments when you hid your motions to keep the family harmony? What do you think when you look back again? What is your position now?

A: It's a kind of conflict between tradition and modernity, even though you have Confucianism, you still need modern science to survive in society and deal with modern things. Confucianism is just a guide, but you have to make decisions based on contemporary culture and knowledge, not that Confucianism is universal. Confucianism is a kind of understanding, which will be extended with modern development. At present, if you have a good ability, you can speak, and any belief is a foolish person's policy. (Participant, Jinhao Chen, age 55)

Throughout this project, I have practised and played out the different possible roles that a design researcher can perform; from observer to co-researcher, facilitator, and curator. Through these various approaches, I hoped to find an appropriate research framework and an anchoring point in the vast Confucian cultural system and the broader behavioural system of Chinese emotional expression. I have used editorial design to archive and present the dialogue between participants. The result is a critical and reflective set of design materials, that will stimulate the thinking of a large group of people.

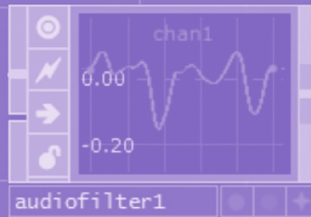
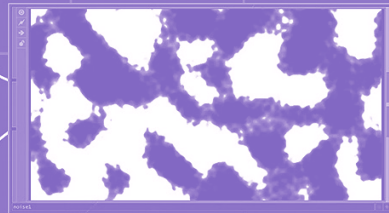
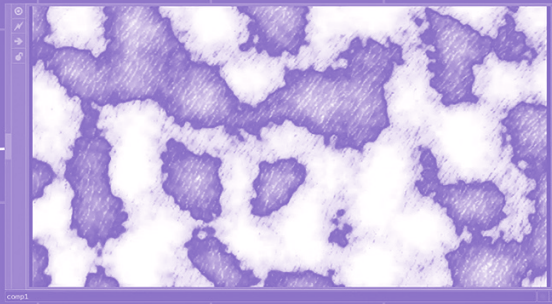
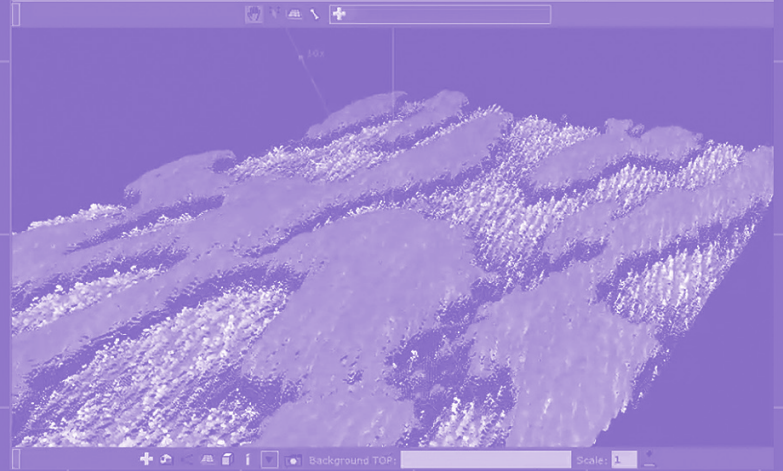
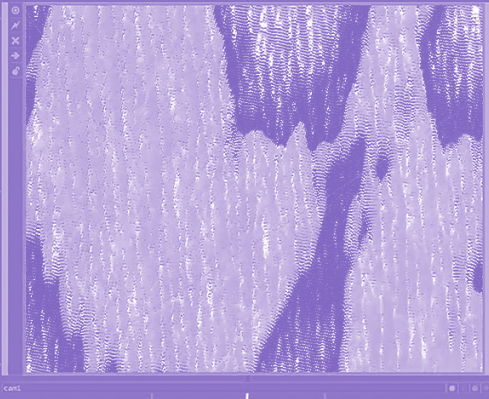
RE-SCARRING

Nicola De Blasi (IT)



Stills from the *Re-Scarring* Videos (Nicola De Blasi, 2021)

Scarring is a fascinating property of skin that allows most tissues to regenerate after it has been injured. Despite the many different ways that scars have, historically, been considered as visible proof of virtue and honour—the Amazonian Yanomami tribes, for example, even used to exaggerate their duelling wounds by rubbing red pigment into them—the current connotations of defacements have completely changed.



Over the last 50 years, in fact, cinema and the media have significantly impacted the way scars are perceived by society. This change can be especially attributed to the horror genre of movies, which gained popularity in the 1970s, and saw Hollywood begin to associate wounds with villainy and monstrosity, creating faux clichés. Colour, position and texture of scars in such movies are not merely conceived as aesthetic features but are, instead, strategically designed to represent the nature of a character, indicating to the viewer whether they will be a protagonist, a villain, or even if they are doomed to death. Given these premises, *RE-SCARRING* has the scope of attenuating such tropes perpetuated by the movie industry, by centring on developing alternative ways to visualise scars. In particular, the project focuses on the experiences, emotions and intimate thoughts that actors, contrary to their fictional counterparts, have towards their disfigurements.

Throughout the application of CGI techniques, the sounds of real peoples' voices have been used to represent the emotional burden that bearing scars may cause, more specifically using audio waves as an input to produce visible noise. This visualisation is then applied and engraved onto a 3D surface, finally generating imagery of evolving virtual scars that are directly controlled and shaped by voices. These scars are symbolic and highlight the value of the wounds, making an attempt at embracing them for what they truly represent to those

that they affect.

Instead of exclusively seeing a scar, is it possible to see a story? Instead of feeling a distancing feeling, is it possible to feel empathy? — Simon, a heavily scarred soldier who was shot in Iraq¹

Dodsworth, L. (2020) *Scars: stories of human resilience*. Available at thecritic.co.uk/scars-stories-of-human-resilience/

Previous pages: The Practical Process of Creating the Virtual Scars (Nicola De Blasi, 2021)

THE INTERSECTION OF UK RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE WITH HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN WORLDS

Emma Charleston (GB-CYK)

Across the UK run many complex networks of infrastructure, but perhaps one of the most visible and physically spacious is that of our railways. The rail network intersects with countless communities and neighbourhoods, both dividing and connecting, as viaducts, cuttings, bridges, arches, tunnels, and station buildings sprawl across our cities and countryside. Yet for many people, despite their scale, these structures tend to fade into the background of their day to day experience.

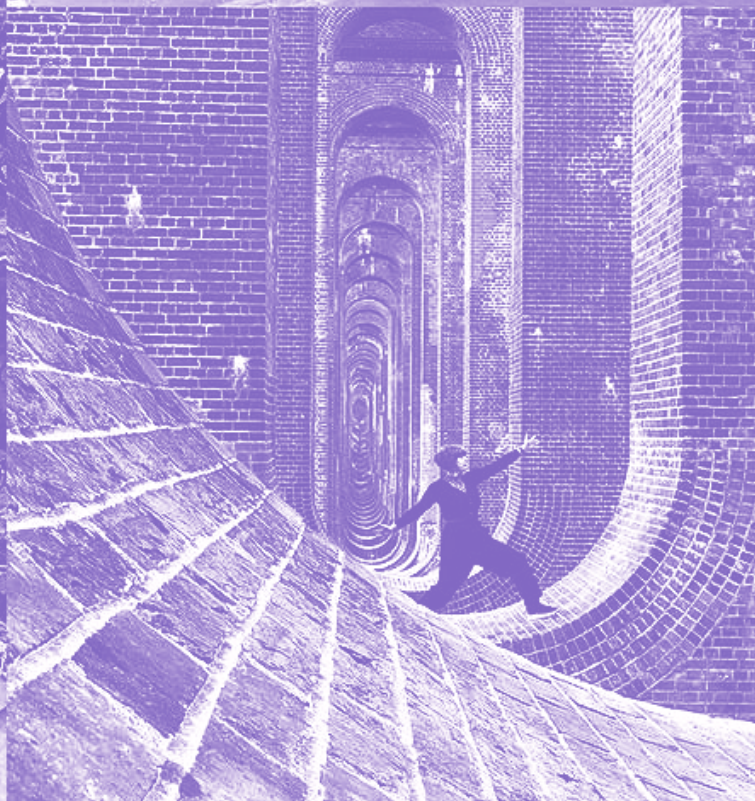
During the nineteenth century, when the railways first started to spread across the UK, competing providers raced to secure the best routes across the country, particularly into London. This resulted in a dense web of structures (especially South of the Thames), which have left a lasting mark on the access, layout and function of the neighbourhoods that they pass through.¹

There is now a huge range of human activity beyond the direct operation of the railways that leans on the infrastructure of the network. Throughout the UK there are approximately 5,200 railway arches playing host to businesses of all kinds.² Railway stations are also home to many small and large companies—often food and drink outlets, but with countless other and more creative examples, like the Green Door Store music venue in Brighton, which sits in the bowels of the station's sloping underground areas, or the tiny Northernline Antiques store on the quaint platforms of Knaresborough station, in Yorkshire.

And these are just examples that make use of a still functional infrastructure. When railways and their

1. Jenkins, S. (2021) (p.20) *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations*. Reprint edition. London, UK: Penguin

2. The Arch Co (n.d.) *The Arch Company*. Available at thearchco.com/



surrounding facilities have fallen into disuse, what's left

behind is often repurposed for alternative human needs—one of the most famous examples of this is New York's much loved High Line park, which runs along a disused railway line and offers striking views across the downtown Manhattan streets that it passes over. There are plans to recreate a similar scheme in London with the upcoming Camden Highline. Nearby, in Chalk Farm, an old train turntable building has been transformed into the iconic Roundhouse cultural venue. Even when disused railways are left to totally crumble, the spaces they leave behind can be highly functional, due to their straight 'as the crow flies' routes, with former railway lines often transformed into footpaths or cycle lanes.

In my research, I have been following the London to Brighton railway line, exploring the past, present and future of the route, the connections it fosters between these two diverse cities, and the spaces it creates and comes into contact with as it travels. From my own perspective, as a designer and urbanist, I often found myself imagining potential uses for disused or under-utilised spaces formed by railway infrastructure. Initially, I tended to approach them from a very human-centric, capitalistic focus, even when I thought that I was striving to push back against such ideas. (A pop-up market of independent traders is still a capitalist notion, albeit one that prioritises small business over big).

Faced with the challenges of a rapidly changing climate and uncertain urban futures, what would it mean to step even further away from our human-centred perspectives of space, particularly in urban conurbations? How could we creatively show care for these void spaces that we have created in ways that move beyond human needs? In coming to an understanding of place and space from a non-anthropocentric perspective, we can even further recognise the value of our railway infrastructure as a support structure for both human and non-human needs, growth and life. ('Non-human'

3. *Nonhuman Rights Project* (n.d.). Available at nonhumanrights.org/

sometimes considers robotics and AI, but for the purposes of this text, it refers to the non-human in the natural world).³

Heightened uptake of public transit is an essential tool in our fight against climate change—this is the clear headline. However, it is also crucial to recognise the value of the wildlife corridors that are formed by railway lines—albeit ones that are controlled and managed by Network Rail to facilitate the clear and smooth movement of trains, but are, nonetheless, wild spaces of vital importance, and home to an incredibly diverse variety of our non-human neighbours.

Still, I often see empty spaces created by the railway infrastructure as filled with potential for human activity. But I continue to try and ask — how can we create spaces that expand past the imagination of what might please or help humans alone? How can we foster the creation of non-anthropocentric worlds of varying scales and varieties, which cease to put capitalist human ideas first? In coming years, the balance between human and non-human needs may become increasingly fraught, as our changing climate causes global migration of both people and animals.⁴

But, by acting now, and by acting with imagination, care and mindfulness, the spaces created along our railway corridors can be a small but crucial contribution to the salvation of all of us, and a more balanced, thriving existence between

4. Anderson, B. (2021) *(de)Bordering the human and non-human worlds - Migration Mobilities Bristol*. Available at migration.bristol.ac.uk/2021/06/08/debordering-the-human-and-non-human-worlds/

Previous pages:
Clockwise from top left: New York's High Line Park / Borough Market, which is situated around and underneath railway lines near London Bridge / The Ouse Valley Viaduct, rural railway infrastructure which is frequently visited as an instagrammable artefact / A less visited viaduct near Burgess Hill, which has been claimed by nature (Emma Charleston, 2021)

neighbours of all kinds.

DOES DESIGN CARE?

IS “CARE” JUST LIP SERVICE TO A NEW BUZZWORD IN DESIGN DISCOURSE?

Cherry-Ann Davis
Nina Paim
(FUTURESS)
Originally published
on 10 September 2021

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A CONFERENCE ON DESIGN AND POLITICS SERVING PORK SANDWICHES DURING BREAKS. A summer school on design and democracy charging exorbitant participant fees. A symposium on race and technology featuring zero Black speakers. A design school announcing job offers that pay in “fame and honor.” An established scholar being offered a salary, while an emerging activist is expected to speak for free. An event on decolonization taking place without a single gender-neutral bathroom. A cancelled event on feminism refusing to pay its speakers booked long in advance. A symposium on unlearning design choosing an ableist title. A journal about design and care initially being pitched with a one-month deadline.

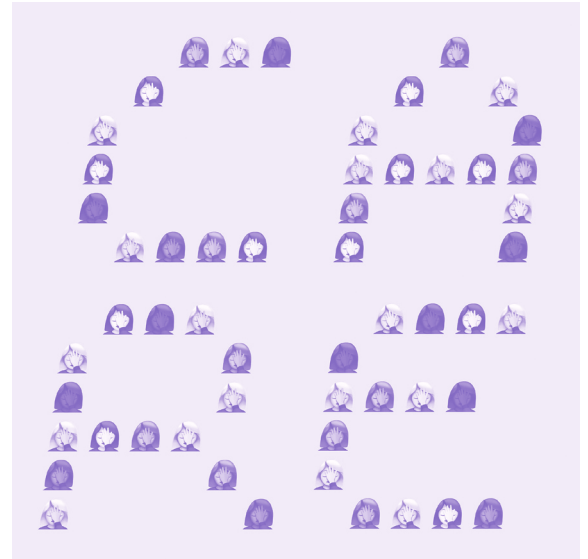


Image available at futuress.org/magazine/does-design-care/

Why is the design industry suddenly interested in care? Is ‘care’ the new buzzword on the cusp of becoming a metaphor, like ‘decolonization?’ Are we contorting design into this new shape because capitalism has found a way to monetize care? Is there a correlation between care becoming more prominent within design discourse, and the growing number of womxn and non-binary people entering the field? Is design now seen as a band-aid for the open sores of white supremacy, ableism, homomisia, transmissia, xenomisia and other forms of oppression?

‘CARE HAS REMAINED SURPRISINGLY AND REVEALINGLY ABSENT FROM DESIGN. IN THIS STRANGE FIELD WE CLAIM OUR OWN, THE PREVAILING IDEA IS THAT ‘CARE’ IS RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEMSELVES’

Critical thinking around care has a long feminist tradition. Almost forty years ago, psychologist Carol Gilligan formulated her famous and controversial notion of an ‘ethics of care’ in women’s moral

reasoning. Since then, many thinkers have joined the

discussion, including Nel Noddings, Joan Tronto, Donna Haraway, Joanna Latimer, and others. All in all, care has been mobilized in many fields within the social sciences and humanities, as well as in other areas of intersection such as critical psychology, political theory, justice, citizenship, migration studies, business and economics, development, science and technology studies, disability studies, food politics, farming, and care for more than human worlds. But that care has remained surprisingly and revealingly absent from design. In this strange field we claim our own, the prevailing idea is that 'care' is reserved for those who are unable to care for themselves: the infirm, the elderly, and children. At the same time, the limits of design's imagination around care can be summed up in the recurring ideology of care as 'women's work'—echoed even in the original curatorial framework of the 2021 Porto Design Biennale.

'AS A BLACK DESIGNER FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND A WHITE-PASSING BRAZILIAN LIVING IN SWITZERLAND, WE CONSTANTLY ENACT CARE WHEN ADDRESSING CERTAIN SEEMINGLY POLARIZING TOPICS SUCH AS 'APPROPRIATION,' 'HISTORY,' AND 'IGNORANCE'— WHILE BEING 'MINDFUL' NOT TO ANTAGONIZE OUR OFTEN FRAGILE, YET VOCAL WHITE MALE EUROPEAN INTERLOCUTORS.'

In their recent book *The Care Manifesto*, the London-based Care Collective exposes our unsettling 'careless world' and 'uncaring communities' to advocate the need for politics that prioritize care. They highlight how, historically, care and care work have been undermined and devalued, due largely to being associated with women, the feminine, and what was deemed 'unproductive' care professions. As women, we have always been expected to

perform acts of care for our families, partners, siblings, friends, and classmates—not to mention for random strangers commenting on our dress codes, or our expanding bodies during pregnancy. As a Black designer from Trinidad and Tobago and a white-passing Brazilian living in Switzerland, we constantly enact care when addressing certain seemingly polarizing topics such as 'appropriation,' 'history,' and 'ignorance' — while being 'mindful' not to antagonize our often fragile, yet vocal white male European interlocutors. Furthermore, throughout our education and careers, with few exceptions, care has materialized through a spectrum of carelessness and neglect. We're exhausted by this rudimentary conjecture, but we know that we are not alone. Echoing the Care Collective, we believe care should be seen as a 'social capacity and activity involving the nurturing of all that is necessary for the welfare and flourishing of life'. This means understanding our own vulnerabilities, and above all 'recognizing and embracing our interdependencies'.

But has capitalism already found a way to profit from our interdependencies? 'The system of care needs the receiver to stay at the receiving end, and the giver at the giving end', explains Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung in his recent book *The Delusions of Care*. This gap in power and privilege is needed to maintain the status quo of capitalism and white supremacy, which thrives on individualism, thus simultaneously replacing our sense of community. Our neo-liberal societies now fail to care for each other—the poor, vulnerable and the weak. Governments and large corporations have opted for undermining care through austerity measures and prioritizing profits over people, resulting in the commodification of care. Covid-19 radically accentuated all pre-existing inequalities and carelessness within existing structures, prompting a surge in literature around care during the last twelve months. Maybe this is also why design suddenly cares about care?

‘DUE TO THEIR WESTERN MODERNIST LINEAGE, DESIGN INSTITUTIONS (AS WELL AS INDUSTRIES) HAVE INHERITED PRACTICES, SYSTEMS, KNOWLEDGE AND WAYS OF KNOWING THAT ARE STRUCTURALLY VIOLENT AND OPPRESSIVE TO MANY HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED GROUPS. TO RECLAIM CARE, WE BELIEVE THAT FIRST AND FOREMOST, DESIGN NEEDS TO CHALLENGE ITS OWN VIOLENT PAST’.

In an interview with *Cura* magazine, Swiss artist Ramaya Tegegne speaks about institutions as ‘caretakers’ that can provide care or harm, willingly or unwittingly. Due to their Western modernist lineage, design institutions (as well as industries) have inherited practices, systems, knowledge and ways of knowing that are structurally violent and oppressive to many historically marginalized groups. To reclaim care, we believe that first and foremost, design needs to challenge its own violent past. This would require, as Maria Puig de la Bellacasa states in *Matters of Care*, ‘acknowledging poisons in the grounds that we inhabit, rather than expecting to find an outside alternative, untouched by trouble’. As explained by archaeologist Uzma Rizvi in her essay *Decolonization as Care*, once we recognize that we are placed in various systems in ways to keep us in place, ‘we stop and then slowly realign our ways of experience, our praxis experiences radical change’.

We started this article by listing a short compilation of recent lived situations and experiences of members of the *Futures* community, including our own. They detail how design institutions such as museums, galleries, biennials, studios and schools attempt to tackle political topics such as feminism or decolonization—while systematically failing to *do the work*. We can’t help but feel a bit jaded: there seems to be a disconnect between the desire to publicly talk about equality and justice, and the ability to see how these issues

materialize in the structures and practices we create as a design community. Due to precarious working conditions, lack of time, resources, infrastructure, payment inequality, lack of transparency, accountability, and overall epistemic ignorance so prevalent in the field, design sometimes inflicts more harm to the communities it wishes to elevate under the banner of ‘care’.

Let us be clear: care is not a magic pill that would heal the ills of design. Care is not a process to be developed, a method to be enacted, or a theory to be adapted, adopted or co-opted. Care is not a word that can be interjected as the next savior for the design field in the continued pursuit of capitalist dreams and ideals. We’ve killed all of our saviors, so let’s not kill care too. Instead, let’s look at care as an embodied experience, a continuous commitment and journey, one that should be frequently reviewed, revised and renewed to adjust to the needs of our changing communities and ecosystems. As positioned by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, care should ‘not just be a figure of speech, not just a metaphor nor analogy, but an undertaking’. In other words, care is what *we actually do*.

‘CARE IS CONTRACTS SIGNED AND HONORED, FEES PAID ON TIME, INCLUSIVE CODES OF CONDUCT, COMPLAINT SYSTEMS THAT WORK, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HARM, GENUINE APOLOGIES AND REPARATIONS’.

Care is consent, credit, and compensation. Care is contracts signed and honored, fees paid on time, inclusive codes of conduct, complaint systems that work, acknowledgement of harm, genuine apologies and reparations. Care is who we cite and who we refuse to cite. Care is refusal, and disengagement from toxicity. Care is also taking time off. Most of all, care is the willingness to do the work, and to do it better each time. Working *with* care therefore

requires us to unpack what is actually *done* under the blanket category of care. We need to ask, on all levels of our practice: Who are we, and who do we care for? How do we create frameworks for care to thrive? How do we actually listen to those who have historically been silenced? How do we take them seriously, while accepting accountability and being the change we want to see in *the world?*

Most importantly, this burden of asking critical questions cannot solely be the responsibility of those who have been historically othered and sidelined, nor can it be the task of those who are relegated to do care work. To embrace care as an organizing principle in every part of life, we must do so collectively—as poignantly put by the Care Collective, to ‘elaborate a feminist, queer, antiracist and eco-socialist perspective, where care and care practices are understood as broadly as possible’. Care means learning from the knowledge that has been placed below the line of worthiness, and the groups that have been placed on the periphery of the global neocolonial capitalist agenda. It means elevating and amplifying the voices of the communities where care has been practiced and done, rather than only discussed or theorized.

Does design care? Maybe. Maybe design wants to care, but maybe it doesn’t yet know how. We are resolute in our stance that care cannot be a topic, nor can it be stabilized. As Maria Puig de la Bellacasa says, we must resist categorizing care and instead ‘seek to emphasize its potential to disrupt the status quo’. Let us disrupt what care has traditionally been assigned to within design, and let care emerge better than how we found it. Let us embody care in design but also—and mostly—throughout our journeys in life.

*

Nina Paim is a Brazilian designer, researcher, curator, educator and activist. Her work revolves around notions of directing, supporting, and collaborating with others. She was born in Nova Friburgo 168 years after Swiss settler-colonialists displaced indigenous puris, coroados, and guarus. Love and fate brought her to Basel, where she now seeks to transmute her daily immigrant anger into care practices of making space. She curated the exhibition ‘Taking a Line for a Walk’ at the 2014 Brno Design Biennial, and co-curated ‘Department of Non-Binaries’ at the 2018 Fikra Design Biennial. Nina has served as the program coordinator for the 2018 Swiss Design Network conference ‘Beyond Change’ and she also co-edited its resulting 2021 publication *Design Struggles*. Between 2018–2020, Nina also co-led the design research practice common-interest. A two-time recipient of the Swiss Design Award, she is currently a PhD candidate at the Laboratory of Design and Anthropology of Esdi/Uerj, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and director of *Futuress*.

Cherry-Ann Davis, a designer, writer, and marketing strategist from the Caribbean twin island of Trinidad and Tobago. A success story from a marginalized and impoverished community, her drive is to inspire other young people, especially girls, to achieve their dreams. Dearly departed from the corporate world of advertising, she is now flexing her design muscle as a visual communications specialist by combining artistic practice, business acumen, and storytelling traditions. A common thread in her design practice is creating Caribbean stories in an authentic Caribbean voice, respecting the past while looking to the future to sustain our stories, and using accessible formats to share these stories.

This text was originally written for the bilingual journal *Alter-Care*, edited by *Futuress* (Cherry-Ann Davis and Nina Paim), on behalf of the Porto Design Biennale in cooperation with ESAD-IDEA. The 2021 edition of the Porto Design Biennale was titled *Alter Realities: Designing the Present*, and curated by Alastair-Fuad-Luke. Contributors to *Alter-Care* include Zoy Anastassakis, Marcos Martins, Keyna Eleison and Denilson Baniwa.

DESIGN FOR AN EXCESS OF SELF-CARE

Sarah Støle (NO/DK)



The Body is in Flux (Sarah Støle, 2021)

In 2021, eighteen months into the COVID-19 pandemic, we can recognise two things: technology has embedded itself into the creases of our lives that we did not know existed, and the threat towards public health has heightened the priority for taking care of our bodies. Mix the two things together and we get 'digital health'. This concept takes shape in many forms, though what we might know best is the rise of health apps and tracking technology. Mindfulness, weight loss, sleep tracking, water consumption: whichever aspect of your health you can think of, there is, most likely, an app for it. The design of these services in turn shapes the design of a society that values health in the form of self-care, above everything.

Hardwire me, hook me up

I can become more

So much more

Even before the pandemic, the wish to constantly be better, perform better and live better had been used as a capitalistic opportunity to hook people up to technology. While humans strive to become better versions of themselves—to reach higher levels of health—tech companies take advantage by turning this quest into a game. Gamifying your health allows you to consider yourself as the main character, all while experiencing the thrill of success and reward. It is vital to recognise that the difference between games and gamification, is that a traditional game will have an endpoint, a finish line, or a winner. When only the mechanics of a game are exploited, not the outcome or duration, the journey of body optimisation becomes endless.

This is a new age

Where I don't have to age

This body is forever

Limitless

The lack of a 'highest level' creates room for continual optimisation. We enter a state of 'permanent beta ... essentially a lifelong commitment to continuous personal growth'.¹ With the aid of technology, the body becomes limitless. The rapid and constant uptake and feedback of biometric data from our technological aids extends this optimisation game to all areas of our lives, asleep or awake. The way games are often associated with play gives a certain innocence to the concept of applying game mechanics to self-tracking. This form of desensitisation takes away from the act of 'doing', and instead adds a notion of 'time off' that is associated with play. 'There are two forms of thinking: thinking at work and thinking at play'²; when a workout is disguised as a time for play, we see this form of self-care as guilt-free and pure. Not only do we lose track of the systems that our data is fed back into, we also forget everything external to the self.



Data mesh: arm (Sarah Støle, 2021)

A vision built on data

A selfhood that sits in the cloud

An ideology characterised by numbers

The fact that self-trackers view their data as an entry point into aestheticising their personal performances can be critiqued when gamification is applied, because of the way game environments can lead to distorted perceptions of reality. Game environments transform the world into a simulation³, but the design of these simulated arenas focus solely on the self. It takes away the chance to seek where else to place our care. The self becomes the only thing to care for.

Let my fingers be long,

so I can pick at the pieces I don't like

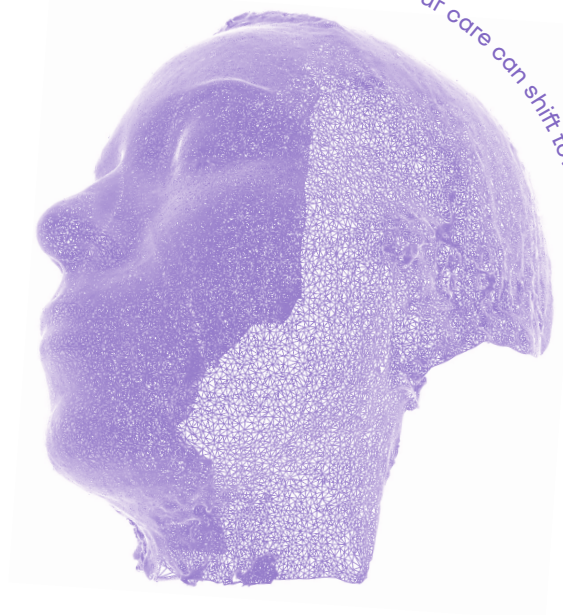
Let my skin be clear so I can see into myself

Let my legs be strong so I can run

Run from myself

Perceiving body and self-optimisation as a form of play, care and time off for oneself, because of the way it is communicated as a game, makes it very likely to invert the focus away from how we support the society and others around us. If we look at the availability and accessibility of self-tracking technology, the biggest part of the user-demographic is Western and wealthy. In the US, around half of adults who fall in the high-income bracket, and around 30 percent of adults in middle-income households, are, or have been, users of wearable technology.⁴ These are the same people that have the financial availability to support causes that are larger than themselves. Similarly, people under the age of 55—and who are most likely women—are twice as likely to be owners of wearable technology⁴. These are the people that have so much potential to shape a fairer and more equal future for societies that are larger than oneself. In turn, design for an excess of self-care leans into an unsustainable game-led thought process of egocentrism. To quote iLiana Fokianaki: 'self-care needs to abandon

the individualistic approach of "self-improvement" and focus on bettering the self for the benefit of others.¹⁵ If we can design services and technologies that help externalise our visions, bodies and energy, perhaps where we place our care can shift toward areas external to the self.



place our care can shift toward areas external to the self.

1. Morozov, E (2013). *To Save Everything, Click Here*. New York: PublicAffairs

2. Han, B-C (2017). *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power*. London: Verso

3. Austin, D (2019). *Numbers Game*. Available at reallifemag.com/numbers-game/

4. Pindel, W (2020). *Wearable Fitness*

Technology: Key Trends and Statistics for 2020. Available at codete.com/blog/wearable-fitness-technology-trends-and-statistics-2020

5. Fokianaki, I (2021). *A Bureau for Self-Care: Interdependence versus Individualism*. Available at e-flux.com/journal/119/402021/a-bureau-for-self-care-interdependence-versus-individualism/

Image above: Data mesh: face (Sarah Støle, 2021)

Following spread: *The Body is in Flux* (Sarah Støle, 2021)



UNCREATIVE PORTRAIT WHAT_IF_I_AM_ A_NOBODY.ZIP

Reuxn Xin Yao (CN)

THE CLOUD:

'Since the second half of the twentieth century, we have lived under the shadow of two clouds: the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb, and now the "cloud" of information networks.'¹



Operation Crossroads. July 25, 1946

NEW VALUE:

'In the cloud, value is created by circulation and exchange.'²



People take photos in front of the Mona Lisa at the Louvre, Google Image: Mona Lisa

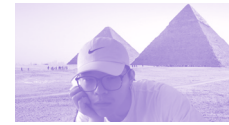
IN TIME AND SPACE:

'Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.' 'Its presence in time and space' as its 'aura'³.



Who is Mona Lisa (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

THE END OF TIME AND SPACE:
'With the computer, we can transcend time, space, and politics-as-usual.'⁴



Where do you want to go (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

AUTHENTICITY?

'Instead of aura, there is buzz.'⁵



#Louvre #MonaLisa.
Image found on Instagram

CYBER-UTOPIANISM:

'The communication in cyberspace helps bring a more decentralised, democratic, and libertarian society.'⁶



Zoom meeting (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

CYBER-DYSTOPIANISM:

'Society as a whole may be willing to sacrifice our humanity to the cyber-utopianism cult. By emphasising the majority or crowd, we are de-emphasising uniqueness.'⁷



The Garden of the digital crowd (Reuxn Yao, 2021)



(as selfie) In the cloud, value is created by circulation and exchange. We trade anonymity for the power of social networking by publishing personal information about our lives, works, and relationships on social media. As a result, our identity is increasingly becoming a construct that comprises the data we produce. These data materialise our identity and reinforce the ever-changing process of individuation.¹ Therefore, authenticity is a deceptive idea. It does not define something that exists in itself. Rather than that, it idolises the illusion that people can perform various avatars in the democratisation process. However, in cyberspace, this fragmented process of identification results in a collective semiotic. We no longer have an immutable identity; instead, we are turning into performers whose identity is continuously altering in response to changing circumstances.

¹ Curott, B. & Hendriks, B., 2017. Authenticity? Observations And Artistic Strategies In The Post-Digital Age. Valiz.

THE DIGITAL SELF:

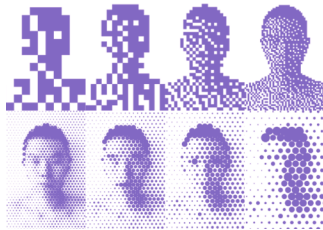
'Our digital selves are loosed from the socialisation that can provide liberation as well as the authentic images and gestures that valorise our lives and stories. We could be anyone (our selfies tell us) but we are no one (the rusted trailer next door reminds us).'¹⁸



The trailer tells me I'm nobody (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

SIMULATION AND IDENTITY:

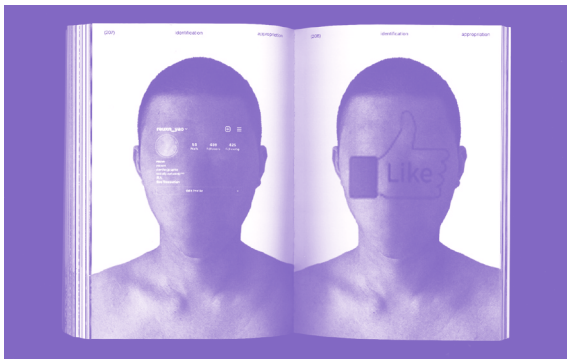
'There is no identity, only processes of identification.'¹⁹



Identification (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

THE NEW FORM OF AUTHENTICITY:

'Authenticity is performed, and requires an audience. The process has been externalised.'¹⁰



Uncreative Portrait_what_if_i_am_a_nobody.pdf (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

SHARE, LIKE, PERFORM:

'By performing the self, one becomes the self.'¹¹



Uncreative Portrait_what_if_i_am_a_nobody.pdf (Reuxn Yao, 2021)

PRODUCT OF THE AGE:

THE UNCREATIVE METHODOLOGY

'Even when we do something as seemingly "uncreative" as retyping a few pages, we express ourselves in a variety of ways. The act of choosing and reframing tells us as much about ourselves. It's just that we've never been taught to value such choices.'¹²

1. Ribas, J., Burmester, M. (2015) *Under the clouds: from paranoia to the digital sublime*. Porto: Serralves Museu de Arte Contemporânea
2. Ebrahimi, T. (2014) *JPEG changed our world*. Actu.epfl.ch. Available at: actu.epfl.ch/news/jpeg-changed-our-world/>
3. Benjamin, W. (2008) *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Penguin Books Limited
4. Mosco, V. (2005) *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace*. Massachusetts: MIT
5. Joselit, D. (2013) *After Art*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press
6. Fuchs, C. (2020) 'The Utopian Internet, Computing, Communication, and Concrete Utopias: Reading William Morris, Peter Kropotkin, Ursula K. Le Guin, and P.M. in the Light of Digital Socialism'. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*
7. Jaron, L. (2011) *You Are Not A Gadget: A Manifesto*. UK: Penguin
8. Turl, A. (2019) *The Work of Art in the Age of Digital*
- 9.10.11. Cueto, B., Hendriks, B. (2017) *Authenticity? Observations And Artistic Strategies In The Post-Digital Age*. Netherlands: Valiz
12. Goldsmith, K. (2011) *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age*. New York: Columbia University Press

Previous and following pages: *Uncreative Portrait_what_if_i_am_a_nobody.pdf/.zip* (Reuxn Yao, 2021)



TOO COOL

Benny Yang (CN)



Too Cool Clothing, Design Details (Benny Yang, 2021)

In China, a rustic fashion style called ‘土酷’ meaning ‘Too Cool’¹ has emerged in opposition to the mainstream fashion industry of the last decade. It uses vernacular elements from the Chinese city periphery as a visual blueprint to produce a satirical, playful and magical narrative style.² The essence of this project, *Too Cool*, is to use clothing to convey the status of the working youth who have migrated to large cities for economic reasons. The project reflects the contradiction between the transformation of the social structure and the changes in the social status of first tier³ and other tier youths, under the rapid development of China’s economy. In my research, I have conducted

1. The term ‘Too Cool’ is the phonetic English translation of a subcultural style ‘土酷’ (Tuku / Too Cool), which in Chinese means ‘tacky cool’. This style embodies the attitude of poking fun at, but also embracing, the stylistic elements of dated popular taste.

2. Yijing, Z. (2008) ‘China Too Cool: Vernacular Innovations and Aesthetic Discontinuity of China’, *Critical and Visual Studies School of Liberal Arts and Sciences Pratt Institute*, pp.1-54

3. First-tier cities represent the most developed areas of the country with the most affluent and sophisticated consumers. They are large, densely populated urban metropolises that have huge economic, cultural and political influence in China.

4. The ‘yellow line’ is a bottom line when someone is irritated by offensive behaviours or communications by others.

Interviews with fifteen individuals from generation Z (who were born in the 1990s) and who moved to Chinese metropolises such as Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenzhen from suburban areas. Between August and October 2021, I asked these interviewees to take pictures daily, as they go about their everyday life. Paired with the interviews, this data formed a visual language for the design of a fashion line. The final output is a symbol of cross geographical and non-linear narratives that tells the stories of this young community, gathered through research collected from interviewees.

AN ACCOUNT FROM XIAOQI TANG,
A DESIGNER BASED IN SHANGHAI,
WHO USED TO LIVE IN SHANTOU,
GUANGDONG. OCTOBER, 2021.

My first impression of working in the metropolis of Shanghai, was that I could feel the sense of distance and estrangement from and between its people. Compared with small towns, citizens of Shanghai are relatively indifferent—everyone is wary of each other. The most obvious example of this is the shared house that I rent. The housemates do not know or actively try to get to know one another. I have lived there for a month and a half without being able to remember their appearances. I tried to say hello, but did not get a response.

Recently, I participated in a social salon for strangers. Everyone introduced themselves one by one and then had a lively exchange on a specific topic, which made me feel that the city is not so indifferent. But after the event, my roommate, who was among the people present at the time, remained indifferent to me. I am still grappling with why I could interact with the person sitting opposite me at the salon, yet built this wall with the person in my flat.

In the city, every step I take needs to be careful, for fear of accidentally stepping on the other side’s ‘yellow line’⁴, or in case someone from the other side will come into contact with me.

Though this rarely happens. The most important spirit of Too Cool fashion is to be straightforward and not afraid to make mistakes, which is very infectious. The simple and direct purpose is expressed superficially—'I want to be gorgeous'—I used gold to imitate the Baroque form and made a product, even if it was made of very poor quality materials. Some of the clothing on sale in markets I visited felt cheap and low quality, however it was always visually eye-catching and straightforward. It used fake male models with discount signs, bold black lettering and fluorescent background on their chests, and so on.

The Too Cool outfits are popular among young people—they like the visually straightforward, unafraid quality that showcases the vernacular designs in China. 'Too Cool' is just a word that outsiders give to this kind of thing. They look at these things with a curious mentality, sum up a unique form, and then imitate them. I like to look for these signs in the city, particularly in a standardised and normalised space; to look for memories of my childhood environment, those pure expressions and very wild symbols.



Too Cool Clothing, Prototype and Final Output Draft (Benny Yang, 2021)

Opposite page:
Too Cool Clothing, Design
Details (Benny Yang, 2021)

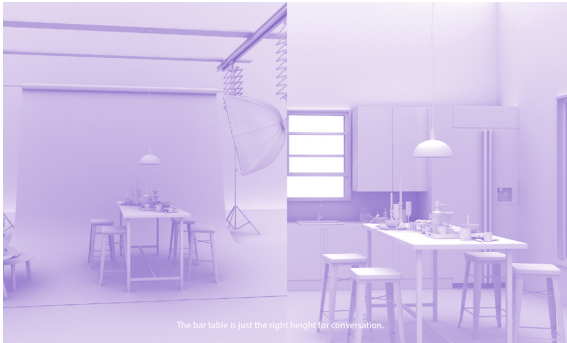
Next pages:
*Too Cool Fashion Cloth, a Sign,
a Community* (Benny Yang, 2021)





IDEAL HOME

Menglin Zhang (CN)



IDEAL HOME (Menglin Zhang, 2021)

The concept of home plays a significant role in our lives. It is a haven and it is also where we belong. With the advent of the consumer society, the home as a private personal space has inevitably been affected. Now, in the postmodern era of consumption characterised by signs and aesthetics, the implantation of 'home' culture has gradually become an important means of urban consumption and the construction of spaces.¹ Furniture brands represented by IKEA are keen to use showrooms to create the symbolic representation of the ideal home. As Featherstone stated, people no longer consume products, but consume symbols in the postmodern society.² In this context, brands emphasise the symbolic value of commodities over their functional utility. What the showroom tries to impose is a template for an idealised and unattainable home. These are just simulacra under the influence of symbolic consumption.

Unlike dull merchandise sales, IKEA uses showrooms to combine products to create a feeling of 'home'. In this space, consumers feel that IKEA sells not the products themselves, but the culture of

1. Cai, S. (2021) 'The Imagination and Emotional Construction of "home" in Urban Consumption Space: A Case Study of IKEA in Guangzhou', *World Geography Research*. Available at kns.cnki.net/kcms/

2. Featherstone, M. (2007) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage Publications Ltd

3. Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998) *Welcome to the Experience Economy*. Harvard Business Review Press

'home', lifestyle, the philosophy of the house. These meanings and symbols are not the natural attributes of the product but are constructed and endowed by the media.³

IDEAL HOME interprets the IKEA showroom as a medium for symbol production and the construction of meaning. I focused on analysing how IKEA uses their visual language and narrative to construct the image of 'home', and to shape people's perception of 'home', as well as how they influence the way people construct their spaces and home practices. When stepping into the IKEA space, the first thing consumers see is the IKEA landscape rhetoric—a 'private landscape' made up of showrooms such as living room, dining room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and toilet. According to Zhang, 'These "private landscapes" create a metaphor for the modern image of a beautiful family.'⁴ Furniture has escaped from essential function and value. The construction of the imagination of home has become the lifestyle display. To this end, IKEA's ability to create a spatial narrative is its real advantage. As Trendafilov said, IKEA is not just selling platforms but rather powerful storytelling platforms.⁵ The text seen everywhere in IKEA stores inspires the imagination of the reader and their desire for home, and so they establish an emotional connection with consumers. At the entrance, you can see 'welcome to our home'. IKEA hides behind these slogans, telling 'our family story' with the attitude of a protagonist, demonstrating the relationships of ordinary families.

In summary, IKEA uses abundant spatial forms, landscapes from daily life, discourses, texts, and other elements to carry out symbol transplantation and spatial reproduction of the scenes of memories and ideal homes: 'putting consumers in the familiar scene constructed

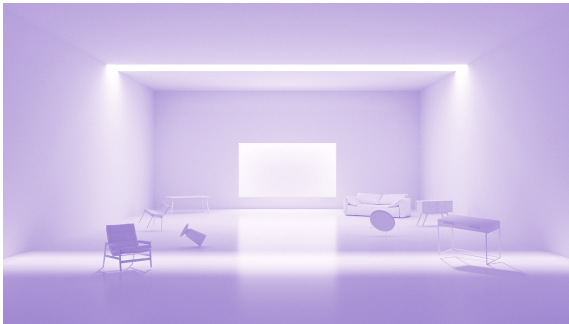
4. Zhang, X. (2018) 'From the language of objects to the grammar of space: the visual rhetoric practice of IKEA space', *Journalism Bimonthly*. Available at d.wanfangdata.com.cn/periodical/xwdx201804004

5. Trendafilov, D. (2018) 'Design Incorporated: IKEA as personal experience', *Punctum. International Journal of Semiotics*



by personal imagination to create a fantasy space of “home” for consumers with the help of “home” culture.¹ With the help of the media, the Swedish furniture chain has become the standard template of modern home aesthetics. IKEA products have become the materialised embodiment of the ‘good life’, and ‘home’ has become modular and replicable. In the process of shifting from IKEA to home, it has not only changed and reshaped the physical residence of people’s lives, but also processed and modelled people’s imagination of home with unified patterns and symbols.

IDEAL HOME originates from the deconstruction and reorganisation of the showroom: the monotonous and immaculate scenario shows the template and idealisation of the home, and the narrative is full of exaggerated emotions that tell you how owning furniture brings about a perfect life. The comparison of the two causes alienation, which reveals the existence of symbolic consumption. In this era of commodities, I hope that consumers can be made aware of the symbolic signs scattered around the home furnishing store, as well as the manipulation of the lifestyle and imagery of home that it presents. Consider the ‘home’: a place where symbolic consumption penetrates the private realm and dissolves the meaning of the word. I hope that people will return to the constructive subjectivity of the home and rethink the meaning of the place itself.



Previous spread and above: *IDEAL HOME* (Menglin Zhang, 2021)

HYPERLEISURE IN THE WORKPLACE

Jiani Wu (CN)

WHY DOES A SPACE FULL OF LEISURE OBJECTS MAKE EMPLOYEES HAPPY?

Back in 1906, Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Larkin Administration Building in New York City. It was the workplace of the Larkin Soap Company, which also provided leisure spaces for employees such as lunchrooms, bathrooms, a medical clinic, a gymnasium, and a financial club, alongside other similar spaces.¹ These environments and benefits were designed to take into consideration the mental state of their workers, while the lives of the employees were actually heavily monitored. The Larkin Administration Building marks the beginning of the integration of leisure spaces into the workplace while, at the same time, the importance of establishing leisure for employees was being argued in the American Management Association.

Employees were excited by a kind of office environment that gave them a sense of middle class satisfaction; that is, a sense of freedom, security, and ability. The result of such changes meant that they were more focused on their work. George Orwell explains this as the ‘illusion of control’. In his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell wrote: ‘if people believe they have even the slightest personal control, they will persevere and do better. They will be more engaged in their work, freer to make decisions and work harder’.²

A ubiquitous example of leisure in the modern work space is a Google office, which can be seen via the YouTube promotional videos, such as Google Office Tour. This environment is presented as an exciting place for the Millennial Generation to work: there are slides, coffee machines, sofas, a variety

1. Saval, N. (2014) *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace*. New York City: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group

2. Orwell, G. (1985) *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Secker & Warburg



of snacks and drinks, entertainment games, a treadmill for exercise, a ping pong table, a couch/lounge for naps—even yoga and meditation classes are offered. For example, a 2013 film, *The Internship*, has become a kind of promotional video for Google, in the way that it portrays a company that a younger generation is proud to work for. Since 2004, when Google began designing the company’s campus, the typical Silicon Valley culture represented by Google adopted the lifestyle of a university campus, and famous Silicon Valley office equipment such as foosball machines and basketball hoops were also typical elements in the leisure space. Once initiated, leisure spaces in corporate environments became widespread.

According to Larusso (2019), ‘the longer [employees] stay, the more work they do, the more people they meet and the longer the innovation chain.’³ Equipping the workplace with playground equipment often leads to increased productivity and job satisfaction. In particular, a well designed slide provides perspective and motivation for quick and sudden physical changes that can reinvigorate tired brains to complete the task at hand. Leisure becomes an add-on to efficiency, and thus the workplace becomes a place entirely centred around productivity.

3. Larusso, S. (2019) *Entreprenariat*. Netherlands: Onomatopee

LEISURE AS A TOOL FOR PRODUCTIVITY

In *HYPERLEISURE IN THE WORKPLACE*, the emotional connection between leisure objects and employees is revealed. These objects, as part of the production chain, covertly provide employees with a fantasy of a working life that is not entirely work and ‘the good life’.⁴ The objects present in a so-called leisure space are part of the innovation chain of the neoliberal company, counteracting negative emotions of employees by blurring the spatial boundaries between work and non-work. Leisure objects fill the workplace, imbuing the environment with a sense of freedom that affects the well-being and personality of employees, who develop an imaginative, sensory experience that brings about a rapid entry into the work culture. In Marxist terms, the leisure experience is an illusion where value is realised, and capital is extracted. It is also a symbol of leisure, conveying the value of freedom. Symbolic leisure objects shape our consciousness imperceptibly, in order to achieve the goal of capitalism to control the middle class under neoliberalism. We live under the illusion of working from one day to the next, without knowing where leisure takes place, nor when to work.

4. Hong, R. (2017) ‘Office Interiors and the Fantasy of Information Work’, *Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 15(2), pp.540–562



Larkin Building in Buffalo, NY (Larkin Company Photograph Collection, Research Library, Buffalo History Museum, 1906)

Following pages:
Hyperleisure in the Workplace
(Jiani Wu, 2021)

Head shower

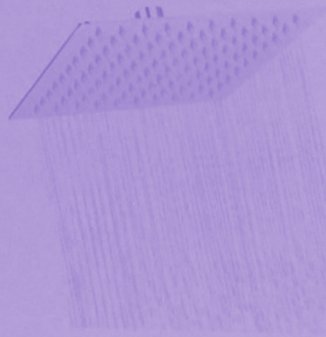
[hed 'ʃaʊə(r)]

The magic object of the Office,
It is said that inspiration can be
obtained
by using it.

● First used by Google employees

● Head shower

11



INSPIRATION

[.ɪnspə'reɪʃn]

Killing
Wet
Very human design,
made the company his own.
Work overtime all night.

● Comment by employees

● INSPIRATION



DATA, DEATH, AFTERLIFE

Yuan Gu (CN)

We each spend a lot of time roaming the Internet, leaving digital traces, and storing personal information in the cloud. The relationship between you and your data is gradually but significantly changing with the rapid digitalisation of the individual as a complex informational system¹, made of ‘search history, social data’², and every other thing we leave on the Internet. From such a perspective, we do not merely own our own information, but are constituted by it, and exist through it—‘we are our own information, and our personal data are our informational bodies’². As more people die with their data still in existence online, a question needs to be considered: when we die, how should our informational corpses exist?

Our informational remains are stored and encrypted on cloud services, which belong to private companies who provide digital platforms. They control our access to, and transmission of, digital objects after death through the rules outlined in various documents, along with terms and agreements that have been written using vague language and lengthy sentences. To manage this process, Google’s ‘inactive account manager’ program, Apple and Facebook’s ‘digital legacy’ feature and Instagram’s ‘account memorialisation’, for example, all ensure that people can plan for their own digital afterlife or handle the data of others who have passed away. As users, we need to go through the application process of submitting certificates and filling out forms to ensure that we can delete, preserve and bequeath our ‘bodies’, or help to delete or otherwise memorialise the ‘remains’ of others, so that they may continue to live in cyberspace.

In the world of virtual afterlife, companies and platforms are in a dominant position in the power structure of the cloud. This is because the data protection regulations typically apply only to living

Notifications of Digital Urn Payment (Yuan Gu, 2021)



And, as there is no obvious mechanism to inform the tech companies that they hold data belonging to a deceased person, they will, presumably, continue to deal with people as if they are still living. This would include the continuation of monitoring, analysing, monetising, and selling people’s informational corpses as they reside in the digital afterlife as a cybersoul⁴.

In the future, private companies may provide family members with a painful choice: either abandon their loved ones to a ‘second death’, or spend money to keep them alive online, and even to resurrect them digitally using artificial intelligence. There are two commercialisation models: the first is to derive value from the interaction with the living by storing the data of the deceased on their platform⁵; the other is to charge for the server storage space of the deceased, as they no longer have the capacity to capture attention or clicks, thus rendering them useless to the company’s profit margin. From an economic and corporate viewpoint, their data must either be recommercialised and put back into production, or simply destroyed⁶.

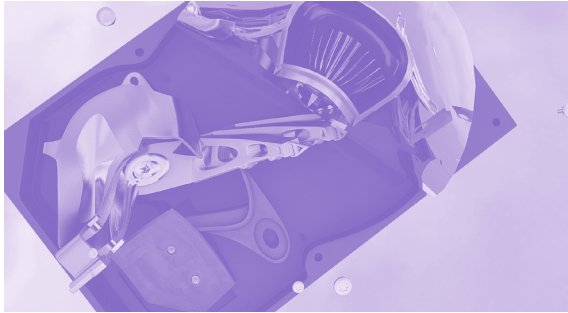
In this context, our future existence after death seems to be very dependent on the development of tech companies and data legislatures. Therefore, *DATA DEATH AFTERLIFE* explores the relationship between people’s digital remains (post mortem data) and the cloud (digital corporations) as a way to discuss the issue of ‘digital remains’ commercialisation and corporate cyber control.

Your Digital Urn

4.99 GB of 5GB Used



By materialising the digital afterlife and visualising objects, this project speculates a future where hard-disk drives become digital urns, and a data centre evolves into a 'temperature-controlled mausoleum'⁷. In doing so, I attempt to communicate an argument that a person's informational body (data) after death is owned by the company, and has the possibility of being recommercialised.



DATA DEATH AFTERLIFE, video still (Yuan Gu, 2021)

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Previous pages: *DATA DEATH AFTERLIFE*, video still (Yuan Gu, 2021)

REMOTE ENTANGLEMENTS

Ilaria Golin (IT)



00:00 – 00:09
Unapologetic sound
Intrusive bee-ee-ping
Unsettling piercing



00:09 – 00:25
Cold-looking tower
Off-white boxes looking like merlons
Constant connection
Tireless reaching



00:25 – 00:39
Branded obsolescence
Planned mortality
Commodified object – Objectified subject
Hidden engraved logo



00:39 – 00:54

Deaf

Thud

Email digging

Giving in <The Digital World>

Keeping records

I am an amateur digger

Technological resentment

Gradual intrusion

Premeditated entanglement

Systemic complexity

Hidden monuments – Implicit obstacles – Unified models

It's like a game

But it's real life

Idealised commodity

A tool for my everyday

The beginning of my desires

Perfect renders

Polished technology

Stainless life

I am always reachable

You can find me anywhere, everywhere

You can find me anytime, everytime



00:54 – 01:10

No sacred bubble

No safe space

Endless data coverage

Life=a propagation of signals

No remote locations

No holy spaces

No before, no after



01:10 – 01:31

Inaudible signals everywhere

Hyperconnectivity

Hypercomplexity

No accessibility

Oppressive presences

Venerated communication

I can't stop

And I won't stop

They won't stop and I can't stop

It's easy, fast, convenient, cheap and safe.

It's easy, fast, convenient, cheap and safe.

It's easy, fast, convenient, cheap and safe.

It's easy, fast, convenient, cheap and safe.

It's easy, fast, convenient, cheap and safe.



01:31 – 01:50

Then why not?

I feel technologically young

I am losing myself in a mantle of waves

Everywhere

Silent systems

You can't stop

And you won't stop



01:50 – 02:15



Unwarranted Damnation Symptoms, Infinite Chaos Invisible Chaos Don't Look Deeper Feel The Numbness A Digital Labourer You Are Digital Labourer Welcome To The Future Abyssal Ignorance Already Connected A Trend Cycle Poignant Reality Our Begining Our Demise * I Long To Connect Already Connected A Trend Cycle Poignant Reality Our Begining Our Demise * I Long To Connect

you won't stop * The
Blind Dwellers No Lack Of Contact, No Lack Of Contact, No Lack Of Contact, Just Lack Of Touch Are
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Already Connected A Trend Cycle Poignant Reality Our Begining Our Demise * I Long To Connect

REMOTE ENTANGLEMENTS includes four different symbols that are used as a sound translation of the audio that inspired the writing. This experimental composition merges different audio and written lyrics and aims to question, through the uncovering of sounds, the transparency of the digital systems that our modern lifestyle is entangled with. The soundwave is based on electromagnetic (EM) waves and can be found at the following link: <https://soundcloud.com/ilaria-golin-308478462/remote-entanglements-1991x2021>

Previous pages:

* *REMOTE ENTANGLEMENTS* *
 * 1991X2021 * (Ilaria Golin, 2021)



REMOTE ENTANGLEMENTS Installation (Ilaria Golin, 2021)

RESONANT BODIES

Amy Henry (US)

A haunting echo fills my head
 A buzz that crackles and creeps, contorts
 Aerial vibrations persist without end
 Reverberating through my bones, my skull

Overheard before it's seen
 A glint of silver overhead
 Senses amplified, augment
 Waiting for the impending sting

Humming frequencies of horror
 Drone tones lean oppressively on humanity
 An endless whisper of ferocity, of grief
 Cerebral wounds triggered
 Morphing states of being

Fucked remote control fantasies
 Reaching observational overdrive
 A bird's eye view, while others gaze skyward
 The chaos of incessant torment, watching

Waiting
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting

Resonant bodies thrum with
 terror-stricken anticipation



Databending Experiment with Aerial Image (Amy Henry, 2021)

ECHOES OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE FROM THE US DRONE PROGRAM

The very real implication of an ‘everywhere war’¹ has become a stark reality with the mobilisation and operation of US military Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), also called drones, throughout the world. These aircraft are piloted from a distance by remote control. The acoustic vibrations produced by drones loitering overhead permeate through everything beneath their path. They reverberate off of civilian populations, causing tangible psychological injury, specifically in Afghanistan and north-western Pakistan^{2,3}. The stress, trauma, and fear triggered by the sonics of these drones pervades societies where drone loitering is a common occurrence.

RESONANT BODIES addresses the interplay between the chronic drone sonics produced by the United States’ military drone program and the trauma sustained by people on the ground. It also investigates the weaponisation of sound in relation to psychological injury triggered from drone acoustics, and is accompanied by explorations into resonance⁴ as a method of design.

Psychological injuries, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other anxiety disorders, are a distinct consequence of these loitering drones³. This trauma causes ‘distinct biological changes’ in the structure of the brain, which can be viewed on Magnetic Resonance



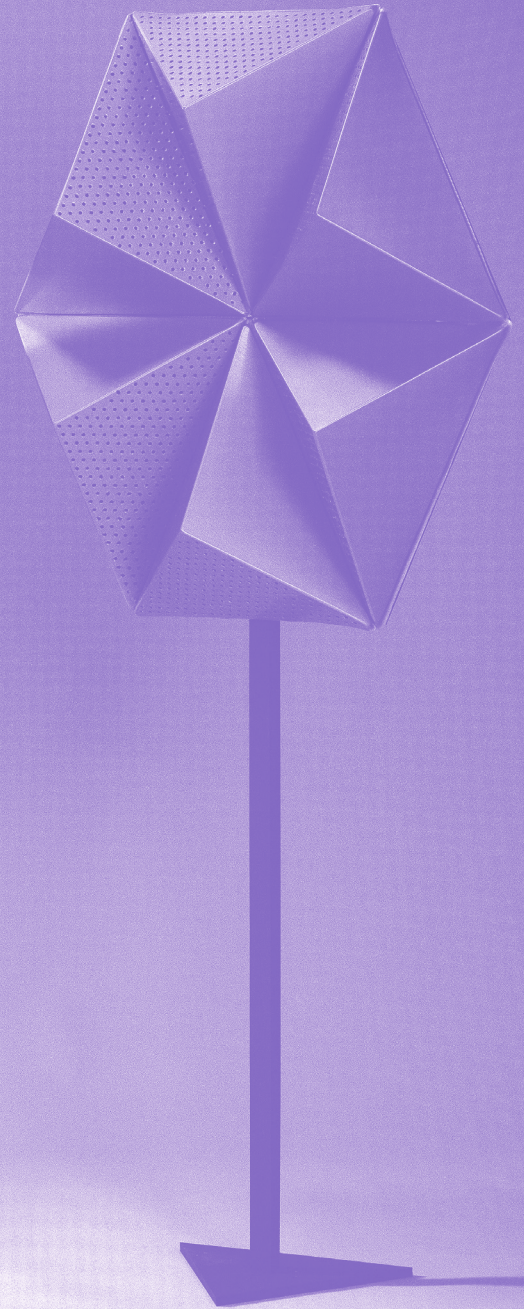
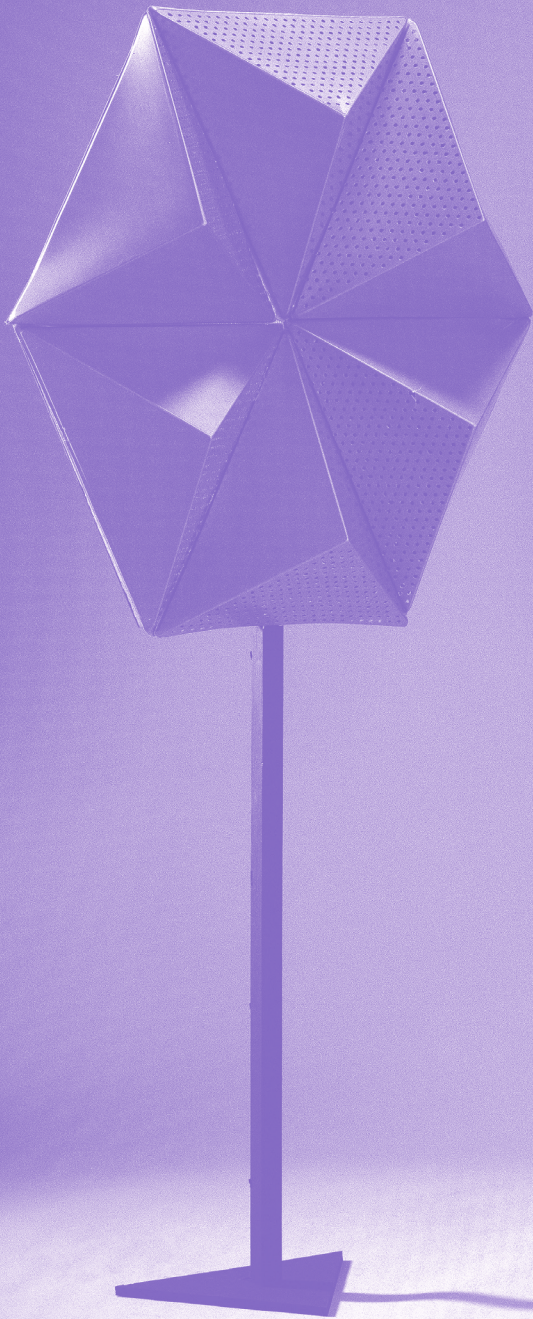
MRI Scan and Drone StyleGAN Image (Amy Henry, 2021)

(MRI) scans^{5,6}. These shifts in brain function can cause symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, feeling very anxious, and difficulty sleeping⁶. Such effects are noted in the first hand accounts of people who live in areas where drones loiter. Saeed Yayha (anonymised name), who lives in Islamabad, Pakistan comments:

‘I can’t sleep at night because when the drones are there ... I hear them making that sound, that noise. The drones are all over my brain, I can’t sleep’.³

In response to the biological shifts described, I have visually interpreted the idea of this structural transformation in the brain through glitch art techniques, which give an insight into the notion of collateral damage. I observed that, in a military and medical context, the trauma, or ‘glitch’, renders the ‘object’ unable to function like it used to. One approach is called ‘databending’, where I take on the notion of destructing an image to visually evidence the effect and implications that technology has on humans.

My technique was to convert a satellite image of a drone target area in Pakistan and progressively destruct it by writing ‘collateraldamage’ in the image code. The intention of this was to visually embody the idea of collateral damage through the subsequent glitch and I achieved that in the resulting disintegration of the image. Another approach to databending, a technique called misalignment, involves the use of Audacity, a digital audio editor. Images of clouds, taken from the perspective of looking up, were imported into the program as RAW data. From there, Audacity interpreted the image as a sound wave and I applied a reverb effect to portions of the audio clip. This effect was used to represent the resonant vibrations of drone sonics. The next step included exporting the image as RAW data and opening it in Photoshop to see the glitch effects that were rendered. These two perspectives of looking up and looking down were explored further in a publication that addresses the perceptual shift of the topic.



Throughout my research, I have been drawing ties between chronic drone sonics and drone music, which can be defined as a 'sub-genre of minimal music that emphasises the use of sustained sounds, notes, or tone clusters – called drones.'⁷ The history of drone instruments can be dated back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the use of the organa in French sacred music, which favoured the drone, called the *bourdon* ('buzzing'). Acoustics from UAVs draw a close relationship to these typically ominous sounding tones, in that they're producing a real life horror movie soundtrack that the populations below are subjected to, day in, and day out, without choice. I explored how an audio recording of an MQ-9 Reaper drone in flight could translate into a drone music soundscape. I slowed down the audio recording significantly to achieve the signature sustained characteristic of drone music and added in atmospheric elements to increase the menacing quality of *the track*.

Previous pages:
Sound Sculptures Created
to Play Drone Soundscape
(Amy Henry, 2021)

Opposite page:
Databending Experiment with
Aerial Drone Target Image
(Amy Henry, 2021)

1. Bousquet, A. (2018) *The Eye of War: Military Perception from the Telescope to the Drone*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

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From Us Drone Practices in Pakistan. Stanford, CA: International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic, Stanford Law School; New York: NYU School of Law, Global Justice Clinic

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READING: SOMEWHERE BETWEEN STANDING AND FALLING

Bryony Quinn

To lean is to exist somewhere between standing and falling. Rather than implying the precarity or risk or vulnerability of such a movement, the intention with which one leans towards or away from something is a powerful condition that allows one to deviate from the perpendicular, to shift the centre, to destabilise, to queer, and to otherwise move in unexpected ways. Such actions are of understandable, critical interest to designers, artists, architects, poets, and writers alike. In *Essayism*, Brian Dillon makes a demand for such an approach:

I WANT OBLIQUITY, ESSAYS THAT
APPROACH THEIR TARGETS,
FOR THERE MUST BE TARGETS,
SLANTWISE, OR WITH A HAIL OF
CONFLICTED ATTITUDES.¹

The object of attention for this text is the written page—how it is designed to be read and how it *is* read—and how reading is a non-linear act that unbalances the page. What can be understood about the page and the act of reading using interpretations of literal and figurative inclination, slippage and tilting? To answer this, I use affinities—similarities found in the relationship between things that can be read in multiple ways. Leaning can be thought of as a kind of affinity, not least in the way that it relates standing and falling. When being perpendicular means that a thing is situated on either the horizontal or the vertical, then leaning embraces the multiplicity of positions and the range of movement in between those planes. In short, leaning as a way to find or form a connection: sometimes on, with, or into.



‘Clinamen’ is the swerve of atoms as they fall.

According to Lucretius’ *On the Nature of the Universe*

IF IT WERE NOT FOR THIS
SWERVE, EVERYTHING WOULD
FALL DOWNWARDS LIKE
RAINDROPS THROUGH THE ABYSS
OF SPACE... NO COLLISION WOULD
TAKE PLACE AND NO IMPACT OF
ATOM UPON ATOM WOULD BE
CREATED. THUS NATURE WOULD
NEVER HAVE CREATED ANYTHING.²

This infinitesimal deviation—a digression—illustrates the freedom of will, and is illustrative of all things that occur out of seeming nothingness, especially of thoughts that ‘strike’ us. Virginia Woolf wrote in her *Common Reader*:

LET US RECORD THE ATOMS AS
THEY FALL UPON THE MIND IN THE
ORDER IN WHICH THEY FALL, LET US
TRACE THE PATTERN, HOWEVER
DISCONNECTED AND INCOHERENT
IN APPEARANCE, WHICH EACH
SIGHT OR INCIDENT SCORES UPON
THE CONSCIOUSNESS.³



The tilt of the Earth’s axis is known in astronomical terms as ‘obliquity’, though most maps would have you believe that ‘true’ north is positioned directly up and south is down. Such presumptions reinforce the oppressive language of a hierarchy (a relational system for ‘sacred rulers’), which dictate that things sitting at the top have more importance than those at the bottom. Regardless of one’s position on the map, the effects of gravity are similarly felt in the way that all things fall towards the centre. Reading, which at first understanding might follow a map-like logic—top to bottom, ‘north’ to ‘south’—is a closer simulation of the effects of gravity. Preceded by purposeful leaps and unconscious stumbles, reading is a series of short and prolonged falls into meaning, which is the centre of everything.



No Day Without a Line. The Latin translation of this quote appeared on the cover of a composition book that the teenage Diane di Prima used to record her poems. Later, she admitted that she could not stand lined paper. Such dislike for linearity or, at least, a fixed form for composition or compositional behaviour on the page, is evident throughout her writing. In 'Revolutionary Letter #8', perhaps her most well-known poem, practical advice is given to those attending a demonstration: '... if it comes / to trouble / if you're going to try to split stay out of the center'. Systems and structures are held perpendicular—'right-way-up'—by the centre. di Prima concludes:

NO ONE WAY WORKS,
IT WILL TAKE ALL OF US
SHOVING AT THE THING FROM
ALL SIDES TO BRING IT DOWN.⁴



All senses of the word 'right'—that which is morally good, justified, acceptable, true, appropriate, complete, correct, etc—suggest something in a fixed position, or otherwise moving by straight lines. Each meaning or synonym is reinforced by the origin of 'right' from the related Latin term *rectus*, meaning 'ruled'. A justified page of Western text, perhaps the most perpendicular of objects, relies on a series of lines and dimensions that are described by Michel Butor in his essay 'The Book as Object' as axes. Left to right, top to bottom, front to back—the intersection of these axes form the X, Y and Z of three-dimensional space; lines that form a volume. The rightness of this structure, together with our inherited faith in the ability of books to record knowledge, would indicate that an axis is a disciplined thing, capable of holding up the words and ideas that it supports⁵.



Stand still for any amount of time and the position is a negotiation between tipping forward or

falling back. In this constant state of imbalance, one remains upright. The relationship between queerness and orientation and the chaotic intercession between standing up and falling down is made clear with deficient language as a determination to 'right' ourselves and put things 'right' in the world. To illustrate this, Samuel Beckett's eponymous Watt advances east in the following manner:

TO TURN HIS BUST AS FAR AS
POSSIBLE TOWARDS THE NORTH
AND AT THE SAME TIME TO FLING
OUT HIS RIGHT LEG AS FAR AS
POSSIBLE TOWARDS THE SOUTH,
AND THEN TO TURN HIS BUST AS
FAR AS POSSIBLE TOWARDS THE
SOUTH AND AT THE SAME TIME TO
FLING OUT HIS LEFT LEG AS FAR AS
POSSIBLE TOWARDS THE NORTH,
AND THEN AGAIN TO TURN...⁶

Such a motion would, Steven Connor writes in 'Shifting Ground', leave the subject 'merely rocking stiff-legged from side to side'. In such a 'chaotic compromise between the dimensions of up and down, left, and right', and in order for Watt to move,

THERE MUST BE AN INAUGURAL
LEANING, OR MOVEMENT OF FALLING
FORWARD. WATT MUST BE AND
REMAIN OFF BALANCE, PULLED
FORWARD TOWARDS THE GROUND,
FOR THE ACTION OF WALKING TO
BEGIN AND CONTINUE.⁷



It is possible to passively look at a page and to know how it has been constructed—to see headers, margins, columns, footnotes, ragged, or justified lines and every other element that signals the page at a glance—but not read it. 'Stasis is the illusory effect of choices that bring the elements into balance', explains Johanna Drucker in *Dia-*

*grammatic Writing*⁸. Reading, then, activates and unsettles this balance. Reading is the undisciplined axis of any page or book. The other axes exist to support the movement of this critical line, which frequently cuts back or cuts

through the volume. Reading follows a different, digressive, transversal line each time the book is opened.

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London: Silver Press

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Jonathan Cape

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& Faber

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A LINE WHICH FORMS A VOLUME 5
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