

EDITOR

Amy Xiaofan Jiang

CURATORS

Amy Xiaofan Jiang / Fangyi Yang

CREATIVE TEAM

Effy Ma / Gumi Lu / Ronny Zheng

COMMUNICATION TEAM

Weijing Xia / Jing Dong / Iliana Sun

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ALT- ALTERITY

ALT-ALTERITY
AN IMMERSIVE VIRTUAL EXHIBITION BY UAAD

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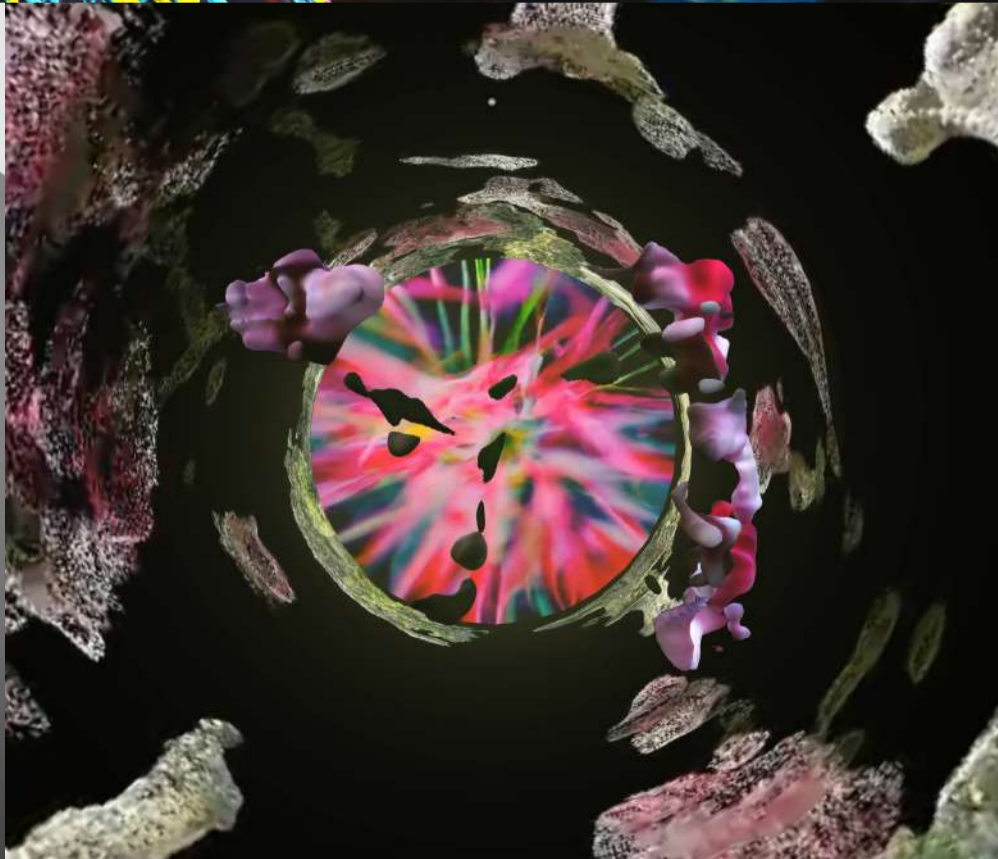
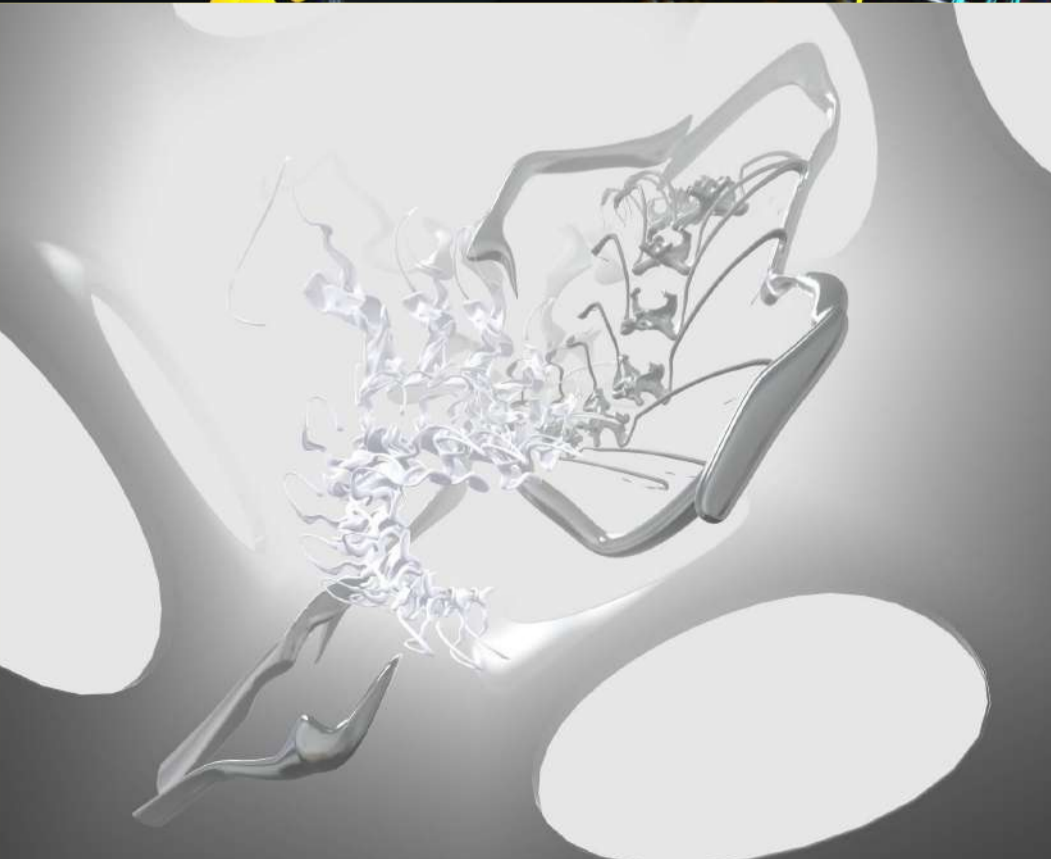
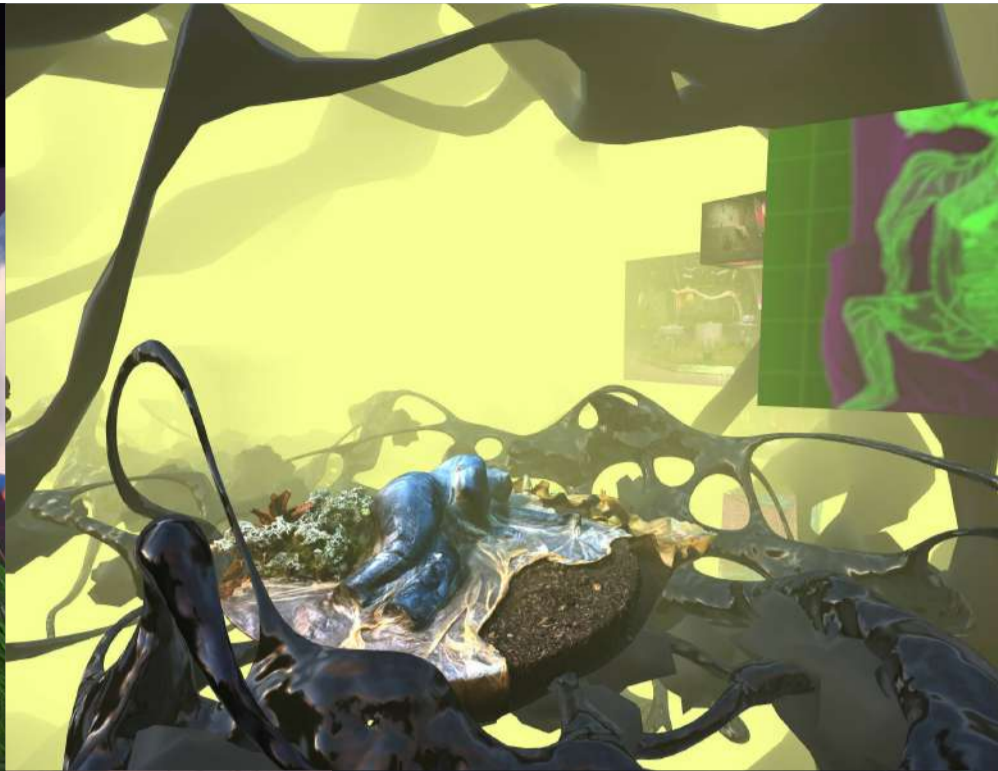
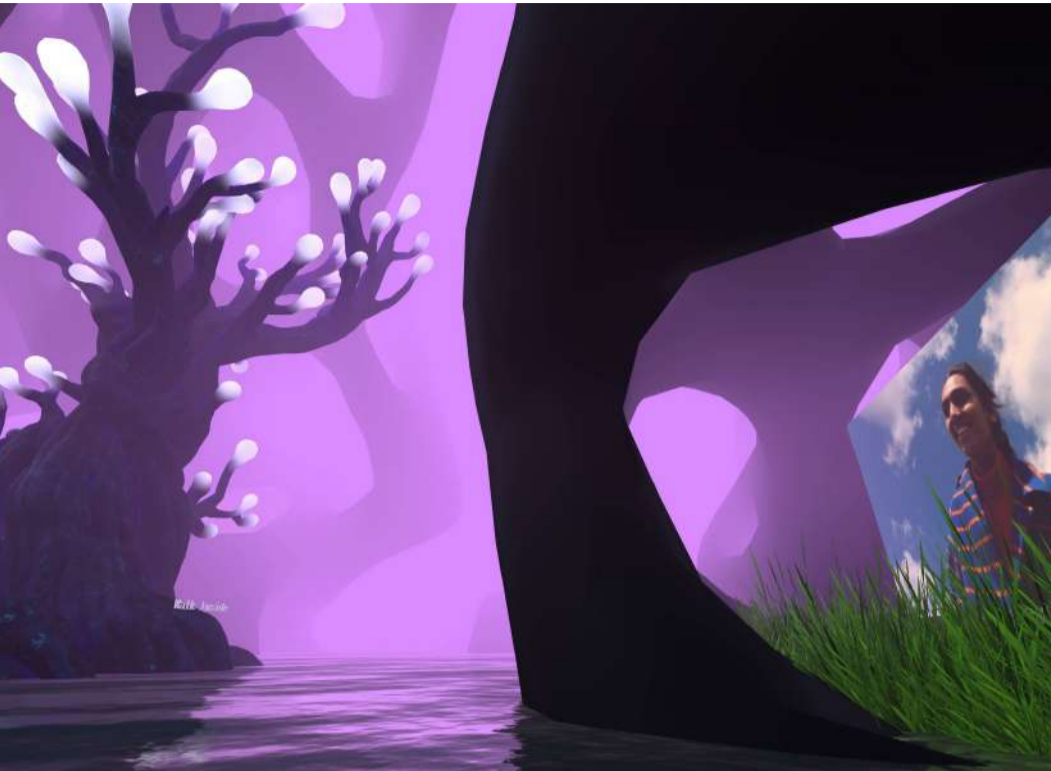


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INTRODUCTION

In the midst of gathering storms—genocides, wars, forced displacements, global climate collapse, the ascendancy of technocracy, alongside the unyielding presence of unjust ideologies such as sexism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism—emerges our curatorial and editorial initiative, *Alt-Alterity*.

It stands as an attempt to provoke a co-imagination of an alternative paradigm for how we, as humans, engage with both the "other" inhabitants of our planet and "each other" within our societies. Through the curation of artworks and texts, we humbly yet firmly embody our self-imposed obligation: to disrupt or, at the very least, upset a wicked system that prioritizes profits over lives, domination over collaboration, extraction over preservation, homogeneity over diversity, and exclusion, erasure, and even extermination over coexistence.

Although there is a prevailing pessimistic belief in the inevitability of the present issues being perpetuated into every foreseeable future, we are actively seeking out practices and strategies from individuals and grassroots collectives that challenge this notion. And as a collective led by BIPOC, female, and queer artists, designers, technologists, and activists, we instinctively embraced art and narratives as our primary domain.

Through curating an artistic narrative shared and owned by the fragmented others, reassembled through a decolonial, intersectional, earth-centric vision, *Alt-Alterity* forges a realm where transformation, comprehension, and the reimagining of "the other" are cultivated. Weaving together a human and more-than-human web of beings within different habitats, communities, lands, and cultures that are often rendered insignificant, non-mainstream, dangerous, hostile,

inferior, and silent because of the differences between the established normality, the stories we tell invite you to reflect on the things you don't know yet and can't be aware of and also think about your relationship with "the other" and the "unknown others."

In addition, the format of an immersive virtual group exhibition serves as the vehicle to bypass borders and censorship (as much as possible), to transport the ideas we collect more freely to the edge of the world in a more acceptable and accessible way, and try to engage with more unsung narratives and perspectives that would contribute to this growing archive.

This publication is a comprehensive compilation of artworks and insightful interviews from the *Alt-Alterity* group exhibition, curated and showcased by Underground Art And Design. Spanning from December 2023 to February 2024, the exhibition features a diverse array of creations from artists from 13 different countries.

The publication opens with a curatorial statement by the exhibition's curator, Xiaofan Jiang, setting the conceptual framework for *Alt-Alterity*.

Following this, the publication presents a series of interviews with each of the participating artists. These dialogues are structured around a uniform set of questions, designed to weave a comprehensive matrix that elucidates the exhibition's central theme. The questions probe into how each artist's work resonates with *Alt-Alterity*, their reflections on the virtual format of the exhibition, and their visionary ideas about the future. Adding a personal touch, the interviews also include lighthearted queries that delve into the artists' hobbies and interests beyond the art world. Concluding each interview, the artists share a curated selection of reference materials—books, essays, podcasts, and films—offering valuable insights and extending the discourse beyond the exhibition.

IN *DIVERSE*
POLYPHONIES,
WORLDS
INTERMINE,
ALTER,
AND COLLAPSE
INTO ONE—
NEW KINSHIP
BLOSSOMS.





CURATORS:
XIAOFAN JIANG
FANGYI YANG

3D SPACE DESIGNERS:
GUHAN LU
XIAOFAN JIANG
EFFY MA

COMMUNICATION TEAM:
WEIFENG XIAO, JING DONG, LIJUAN SUN

ARTISTS:

AIPING XU, A.J. CINCOTTA-EICHENFIELD, ANGELA M LINK, BOBBY ZHAOCHENG XIONG, CHIA-HUA LEE, CHRISTIE LAU, ELIZABETH RUSS AND MICHAEL DONNELLY, FATIMA AL-KUWARI, FLAVIA MAZZANTI, ISHRAKI KAZI, JOSHUA CARLOS BARRERA, KRITHI NALLA, LUDOVICA CALLEANI D'AGLIAN, MEIJI JIANG AND XIAOTING TAN, MEHRDAD SEDAGHAT-BAGHBANI, MINGYONG CHENG, MO NAN, SHASHI-WATH SANTOSH, SYMONNE LIU, TIANGE WANG AND I-WANG HUANG, TIANYUN JIANG, XINYUAN MA, YIMEI ZHENG, YU CHEN, YUWEN HUANG, YUJING LIANG, ZHIJUN SONG AND YALIN HU

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

"Alterity," from the Latin "alteritas," signifies the state of being other or different. The prefix "alt" suggests "alternative," one of the derivatives of "alterity." This concept underpins a prevalent action in our world: the creation of otherness. The "other" is often rendered as starkly different from and opposite to those who seek to control, absorb, and dominate it.

Alt-Alterity is a manifesto for the future of coexistence, a way of being in which the notion of "alterity" need not exist. It challenges us to question the

very foundation of what we consider as "normal" and "other," prompting a departure from an anthropocentric perspective to one that values a comprehensive appreciation of planetary diversity and interconnectedness.

Alt-Alterity features works across cultural, religious, ecological, industrial, ethical, and individual aspects, trying to understand what knowledge, wisdom, and technology might allow for the reconfiguration of the others, to tune into dialogues and symbiotic engagements among subjects, and lastly, to explore the interconnection and hybridity we possess with the world and to become one with it.

The artists participating in this exhibition explore *Alt-Alterity* in multifaceted realms. Among the contributors are not only contemporary artists but also designers and strategists who transcend the traditional boundaries of their disciplines. Many of these creators merge inquiries in science and art, combining creative experimentation with philosophical exploration. They aim not just to express artistic vision but to embody a socially and planetarily responsible agency. This is in stark contrast to the capitalist rhetoric that often defines their fields. Their approach champions a non-alienated, discursive design, paving the way for social reimagination.

From the imagination of reversed realities and hybrid forms of existence to the exploration of marginal cultural expressions and the blurred boundaries of fluid identity, the exhibition is divided into three chapters: "Unsung Wisdom, Rebel Tech," "Ephemeral Cycles, Everlasting Collapses," and "Fluid Bodies, Blurred Boundaries."

ARTIST
INTERVIEWS

PRELUDE.

THE ANCHOR POINT



3-DIMENSIONAL MAP OF THE VIRTUAL EXHIBITION SPACE



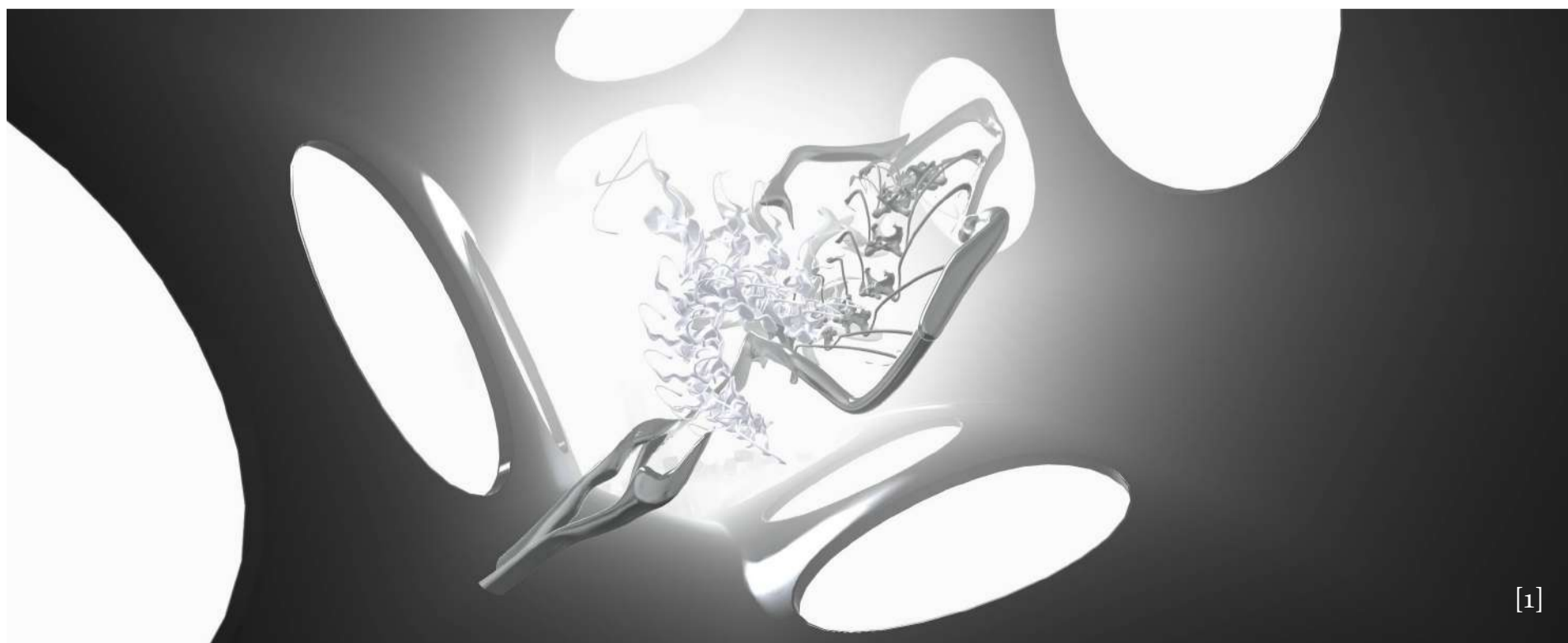
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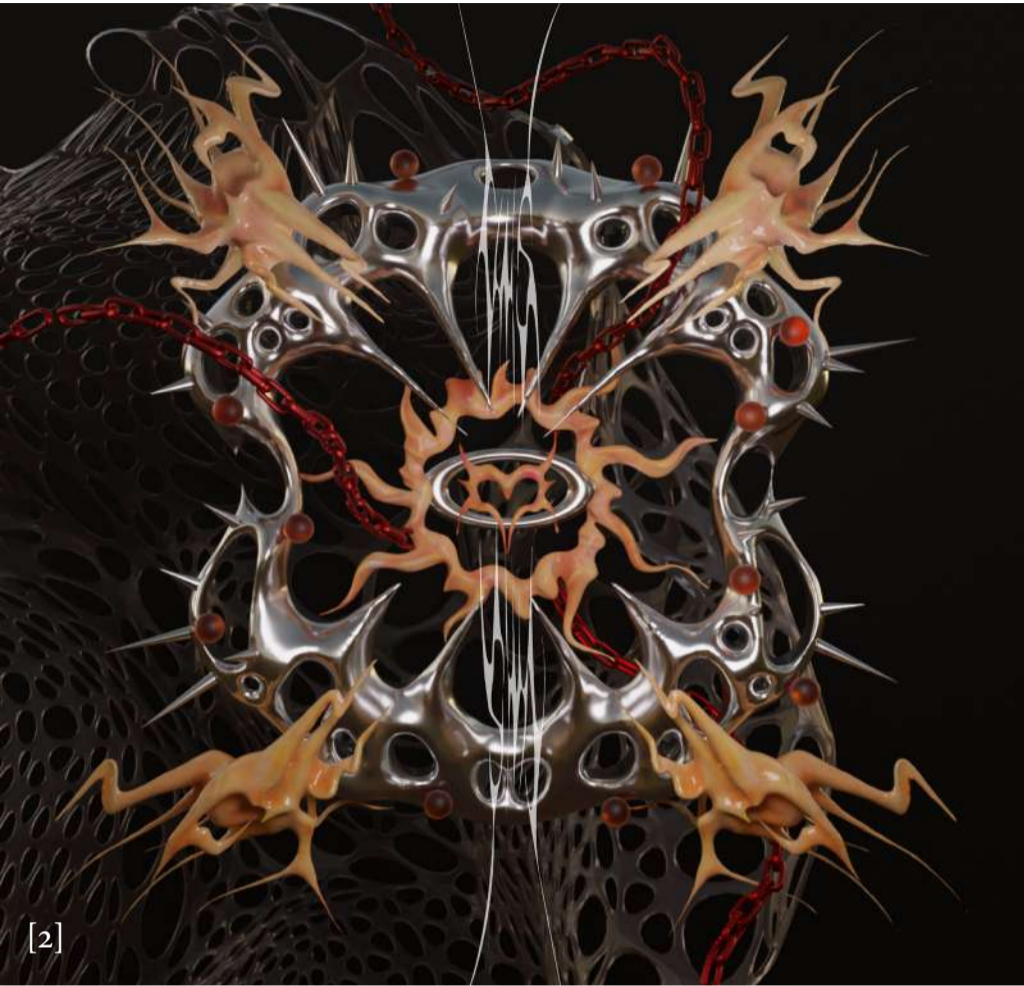
LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity embodies a departure from the conventional and an embrace of alternative realities. It signifies the exploration of otherness and manifests as a celebration of the organic, unraveling the mysteries of nature through digital creations that transcend mere replication, aiming to interpret and appreciate the complexity and beauty inherent in the biological world.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

My journey is deeply rooted in the fusion of molecular biology and the physical sciences. The allure of natural irregularities, the inertia of life, and the ecstatic beauty found in diverse biological fields became the catalyst for my creative exploration. The desire to translate these concepts into a visual language led me to digital art, where I could set parameters mirroring natural forces and structures, creating a rich tapestry that reflects the intricate patterns and mysteries present in reality.





[2]

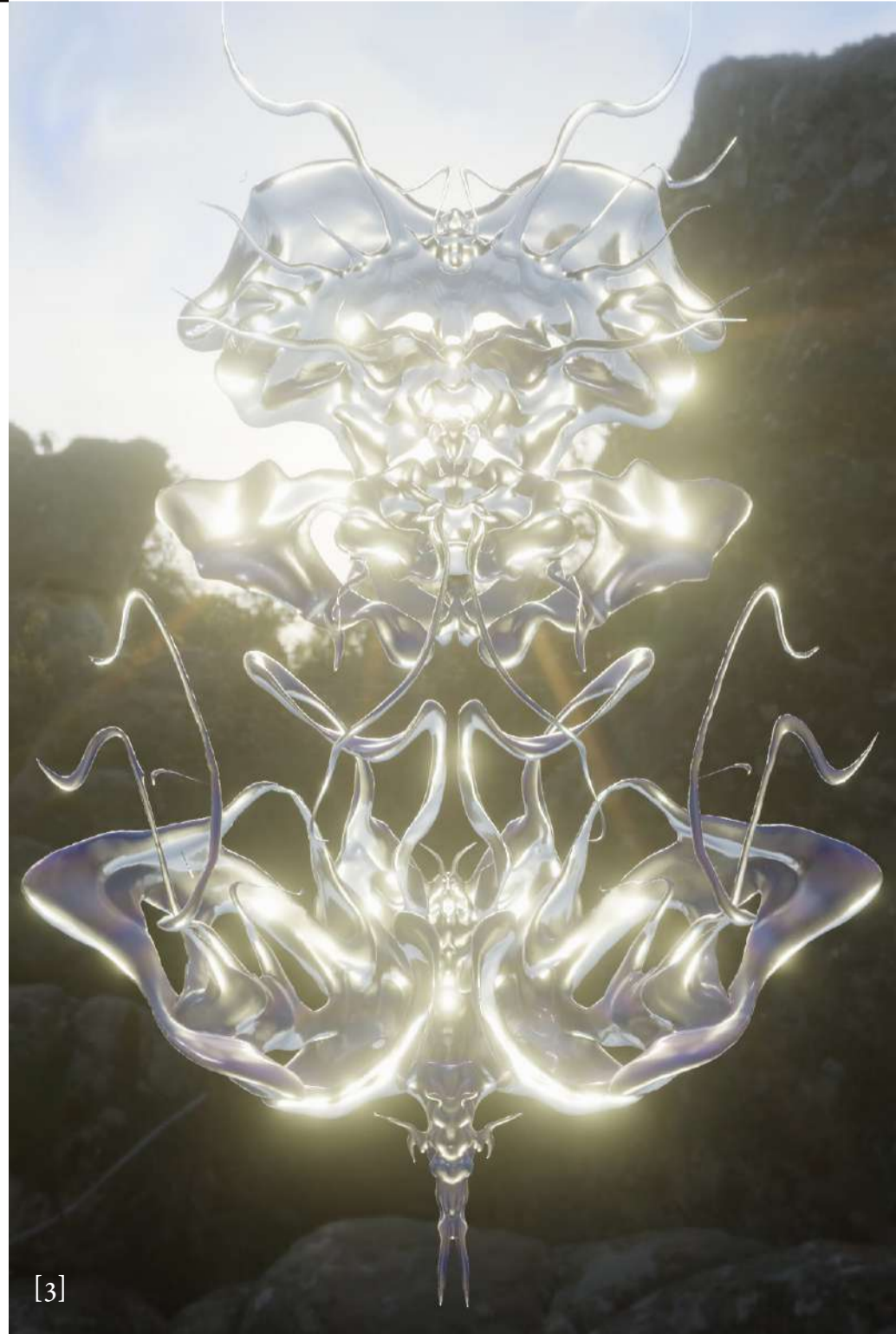
WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

My exhibited work delves into an organic tapestry, weaving a symphony of molecular whispers, fluid dances, and organic mysteries.

Each piece is a reflection of my commitment to exploring

the intricate details of living structures, the irregularities of natural textures, and the enigmatic forms found in the living world.

Through this exploration, I contribute to the reimagination of an alternative world, inviting viewers to perceive and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the spontaneous.



[3]



[4]

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

The democratization of art through online exhibitions has the potential to amplify diverse voices and narratives, fostering a more inclusive and accessible art community. No more censorship. No more regional boundaries. It's a private journey of exploration. Thank the organizers for creating this platform.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Free of cost and physics, the work can finally levitate and stretch infinitely big or small. This is the freedom that comes with an imagined space.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

**She will always be there.
She will see you when you see her.**

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

Eco-feminism has always been a source of inspiration. My work is rooted in a harmonious coexistence where diverse forms of life are celebrated. The past is never ours and the future will never come. This departure from current narratives, akin to the ends portrayed in pop culture and dystopian sci-fi, offers a hopeful and alternative trajectory. The absolute present is all time past and yet to come.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

To live. To love. The ecstasy of living is yet to be recognized. Proclaim the confluence of the organic and the metallic, said "The Cyborg Manifesto." To nurture. To serenity. To mother. To peace. To immutable ethos embedded in the marrow of existence. To Hawkin's last "Wow" and your first "Hello world." To future, not as an abstract horizon, but as an unfolding manuscript, each chapter inscribed with the ink of collective actions and aspirations.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Emu forever.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Bjork. Arca. Doon konda. Terence McKenna. Zhuangzi.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Inspired by molecular biology, fluid dynamics, and the organic, [Symonne Liu](#) creates digital work to reveal the intricate structures of the biological. By setting parameters that mimic natural forces and structures, Symonne aims to not just replicate nature but to interpret and appreciate its complexity and mystique. The irregularities of natural textures. The inertia and archaic. These diverse fields provide them with a rich tapestry of concepts and patterns found in the natural world, serving as the foundation for their digital creations.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Molecular biology serves as a profound source of inspiration, offering insights into the intricate structures and processes that govern life at the smallest scales. Through Symonne's work, they aim to encapsulate the beauty and complexity of biological forms, translating them into digital representations that evoke a sense of wonder and appreciation for the microscopic world.

Fluid dynamics, with its mesmerizing patterns and movements, is another key influence on their artistic journey. The graceful dance of liquids and gases, the ebb and flow of

currents, all find expression in their digital creations. By digitizing these fluid phenomena, They strive to convey the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the elements, creating visual experiences that capture the essence of motion and vitality.

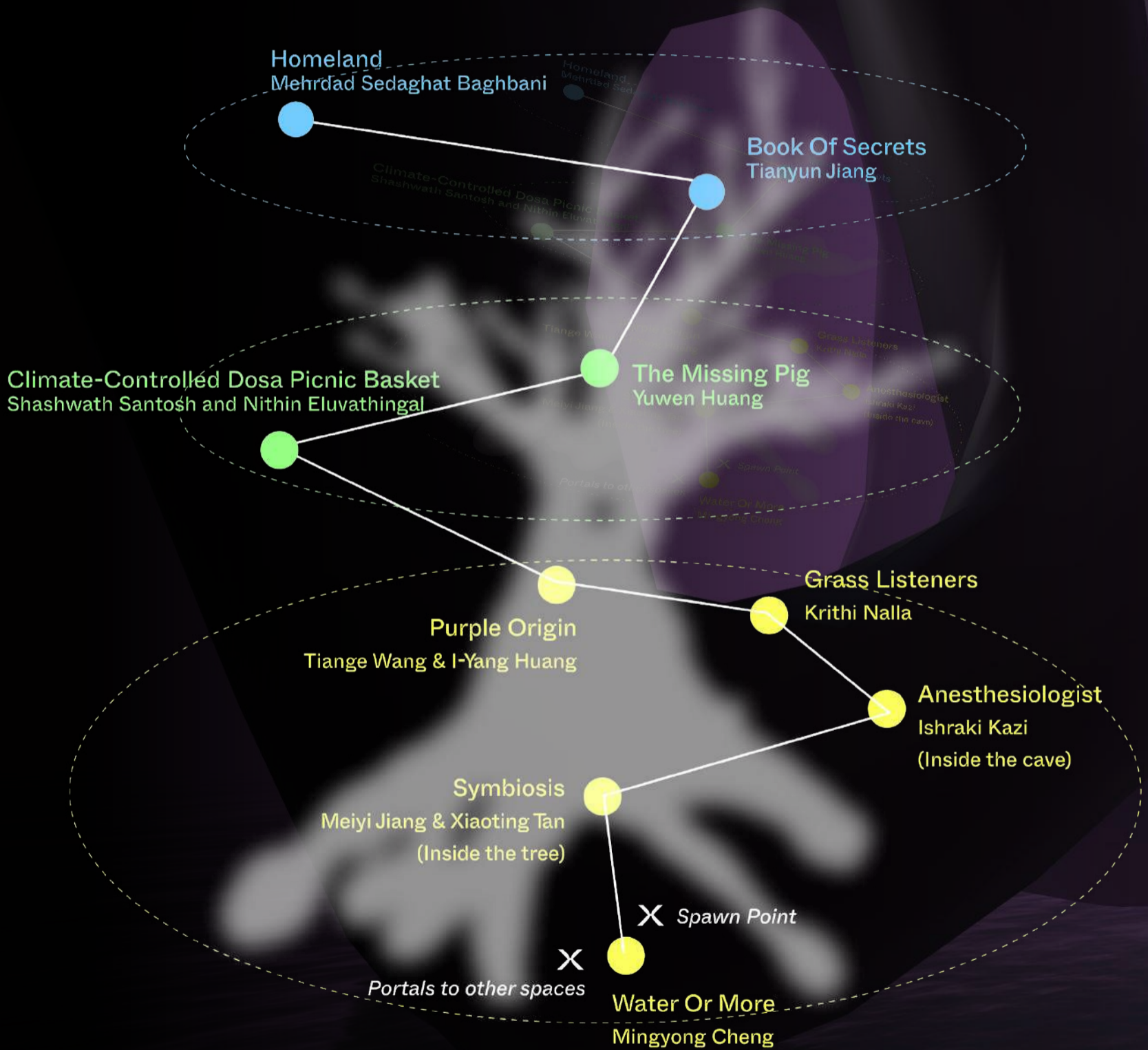
The organic, with its inherent unpredictability and diversity, provides yet another layer of inspiration. Whether it's the intricate details of plant structures, the irregularities of natural textures, or the enigmatic forms found in the living world, They seek to infuse their digital work with the organic aesthetic. This involves not only replicating the visual aspects but also incorporating the underlying principles that govern organic systems, giving their creations a sense of authenticity and connection to the natural world.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

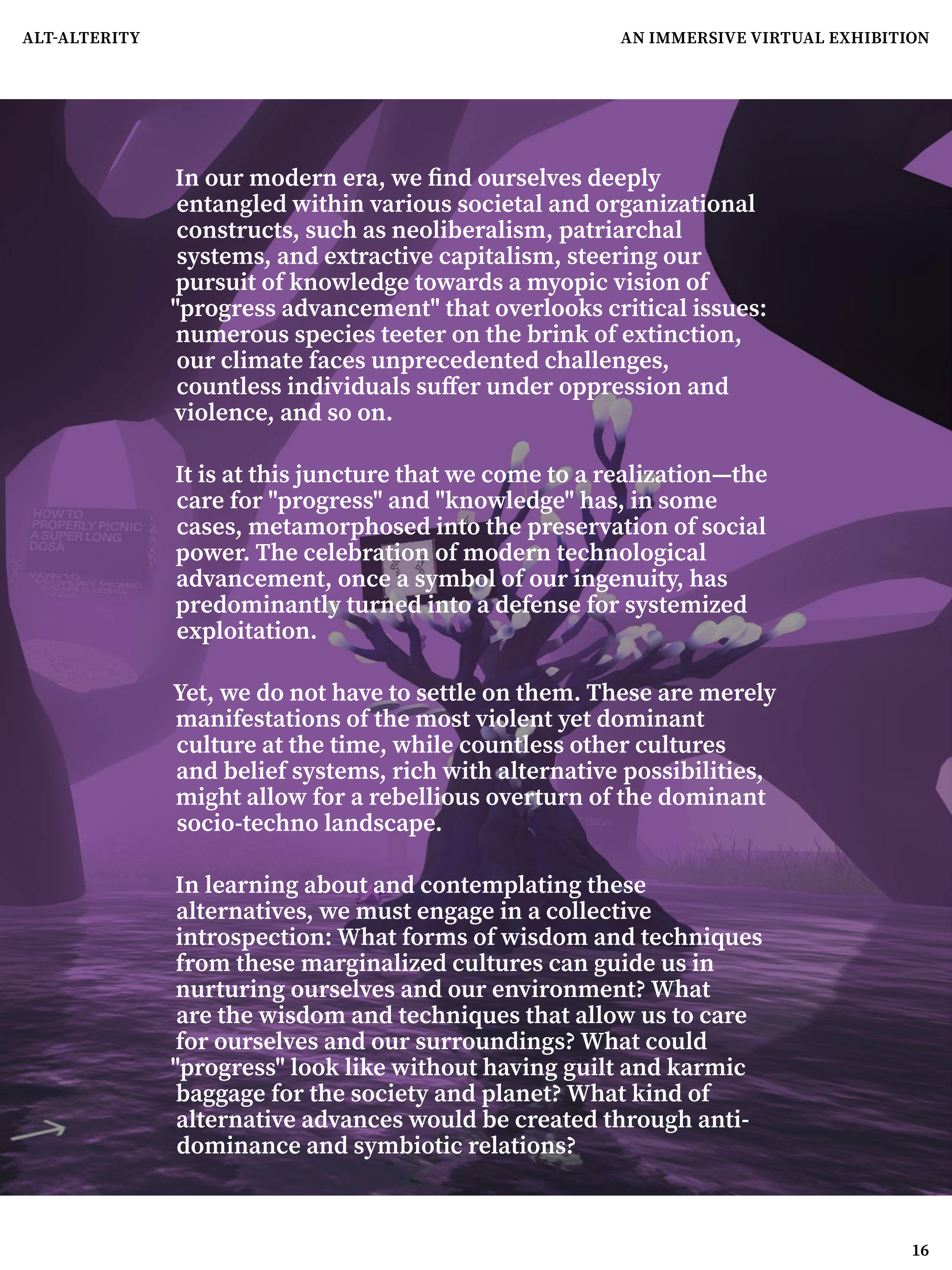
- [1] *Garde2n* (Exhibition Screenshot), Symonne Liu, 2023.
- [2] *67bpmsex^-1*, Symonne Liu, 2022. Digital Sculpture. Dimensions Variable.
- [3] *OOomniOO*, Symonne Liu, 2022. Digital Sculpture. Dimensions Variable.
- [4] *OOomniOO* (Exhibition Screenshot), Symonne Liu, 2023.
- [5] *Garde2n* (Detail), Symonne Liu, 2023. Digital Sculpture. Dimensions Variable.

PART 1.

UNsung WISDOM, REBEL TECH



3-DIMENSIONAL MAP OF THE VIRTUAL EXHIBITION SPACE

The background is a stylized, low-poly landscape in shades of purple and blue. A central tree with a thick trunk and sparse, glowing yellow-green leaves stands on a small island. To the left, a large, low-poly rock formation holds a book titled "HOW TO PROPERLY PICNIC A SUPER LONG DOSA". The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

In our modern era, we find ourselves deeply entangled within various societal and organizational constructs, such as neoliberalism, patriarchal systems, and extractive capitalism, steering our pursuit of knowledge towards a myopic vision of "progress advancement" that overlooks critical issues: numerous species teeter on the brink of extinction, our climate faces unprecedented challenges, countless individuals suffer under oppression and violence, and so on.

It is at this juncture that we come to a realization—the care for "progress" and "knowledge" has, in some cases, metamorphosed into the preservation of social power. The celebration of modern technological advancement, once a symbol of our ingenuity, has predominantly turned into a defense for systemized exploitation.

Yet, we do not have to settle on them. These are merely manifestations of the most violent yet dominant culture at the time, while countless other cultures and belief systems, rich with alternative possibilities, might allow for a rebellious overturn of the dominant socio-techno landscape.

In learning about and contemplating these alternatives, we must engage in a collective introspection: What forms of wisdom and techniques from these marginalized cultures can guide us in nurturing ourselves and our environment? What are the wisdom and techniques that allow us to care for ourselves and our surroundings? What could "progress" look like without having guilt and karmic baggage for the society and planet? What kind of alternative advances would be created through anti-dominance and symbiotic relations?

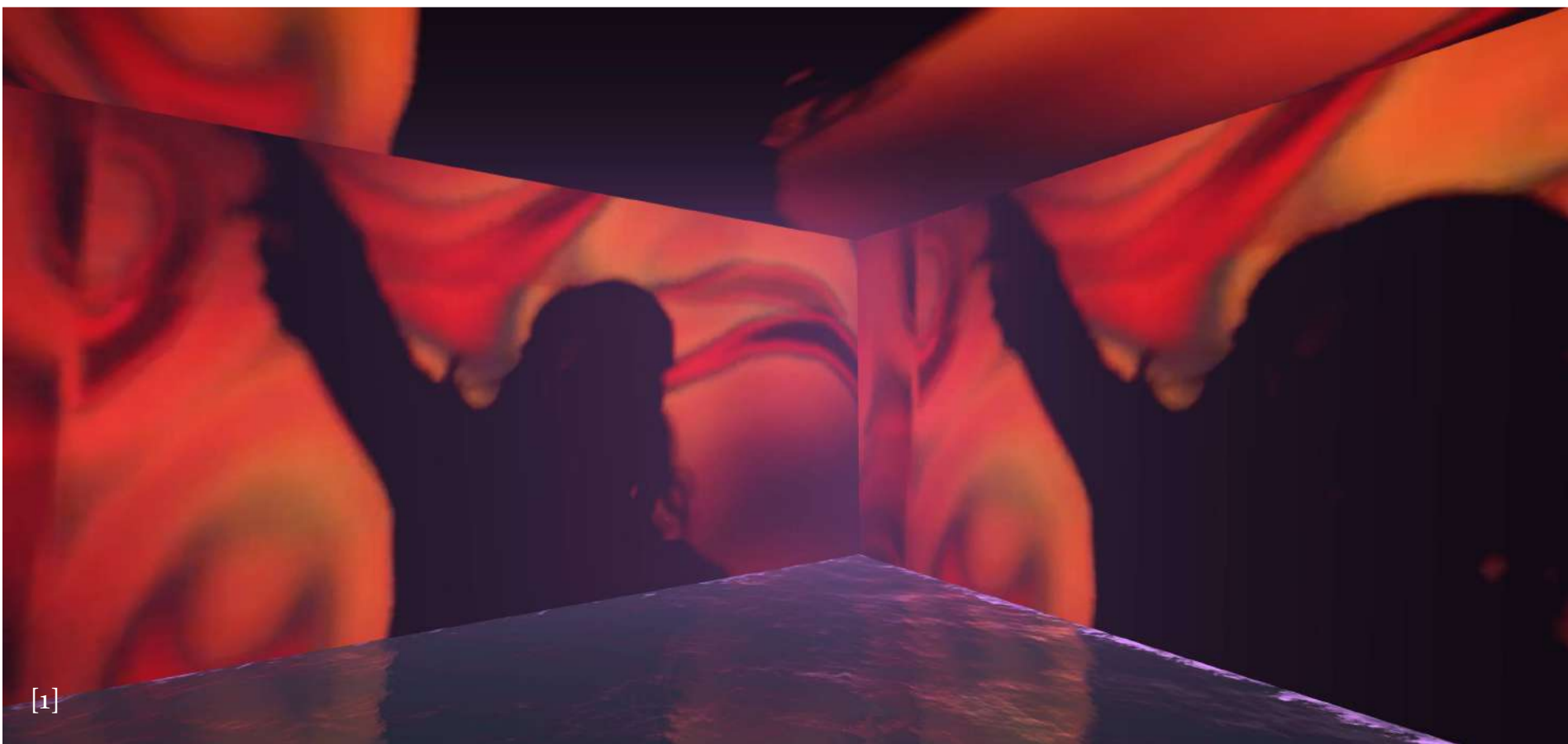


MINNGYONG CHHENG

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity, in my artistic understanding, is a concept that invites a subtle and reflective exploration of our relationship with the environment. It does not advocate for direct activism but rather encourages a deeper contemplation of how we interact with our natural surroundings. This term, for me, symbolizes a journey into speculative thinking, where the focus is on envisioning alternative ways of engaging with the environment.

In interpreting *Alt-Alterity*, I see it as an opportunity to delve into the nuanced interplay between humanity and nature. It's about creating a space for thought, where the audience is invited to reflect on the future of our ecosystems and the potential paths we might take. This concept enables a gentle yet profound exploration of the delicate balance in our environment, emphasizing the need for a more thoughtful coexistence with nature.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I am Mingyong Cheng, an artist from Beijing, now based in California, deeply immersed in environmental themes and new media art. My journey began with an MFA in Experimental and Documentary Arts from Duke University and has led me to a Ph.D. in Art Practice at the University of California, San Diego, where I've been able to intertwine visual arts with environmental research. My interest in this fusion was kindled by the profound communicative power of art, particularly in conveying intricate environmental issues. The ability of art to bridge gaps across languages and cultures inspired me to utilize it as a medium for environmental reflection. Another significant spark for my exploration was learning about the Anthropocene. This concept is reshaping my understanding of humanity's impact on the planet, urging me to use art to reflect on and respond to these challenges.

At UC San Diego, my work has evolved to include new media, particularly focusing on AI, which is my current area of interest. While AI hasn't been a component in all my artworks, it has opened up new avenues for me to reimagine and envision environmental futures. This entails using AI not only as a tool but also as a collaborator in the creation of art that encourages viewers to contemplate and reconsider their relationship with the environment. My approach is centered on reflection and reimagining rather than directly addressing environmental issues, aiming to inspire discussions about our role in the Earth's changing landscape.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"Water or More" is an artistic exploration that seeks to reimagine our relationship with water, emphasizing its critical environmental role and its inherent beauty. The work aims to shift perspectives, encouraging viewers to see water not just as a resource but also as an integral part of our lives and a source of artistic inspiration.



This exhibit contributes to the reimagination of an alternative world by immersing audiences in an interactive environment where water is both a visual medium and a thematic focus. It prompts them to contemplate its significance in new ways. The goal is to foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of water's role in our world, highlighting the need for a more mindful and sustainable relationship with this vital element of Earth.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

In the digital age, the art scene becomes a global community where geographical boundaries blur, allowing for a richer exchange of ideas and cultural expressions. Such virtual platforms enable artists to reach audiences far beyond their local vicinity, encouraging cross-cultural dialogue and a broader understanding of diverse artistic narratives. Furthermore, the virtual space allows for innovative and interactive forms of art that might not be feasible in physical spaces. It opens up new possibilities for artists to experiment with form and content, potentially attracting a new, more tech-savvy audience. Overall, exhibitions in the digital age are likely to make the art scene more accessible, inclusive, and innovative, fostering a dynamic environment where diverse artistic voices are heard and appreciated.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

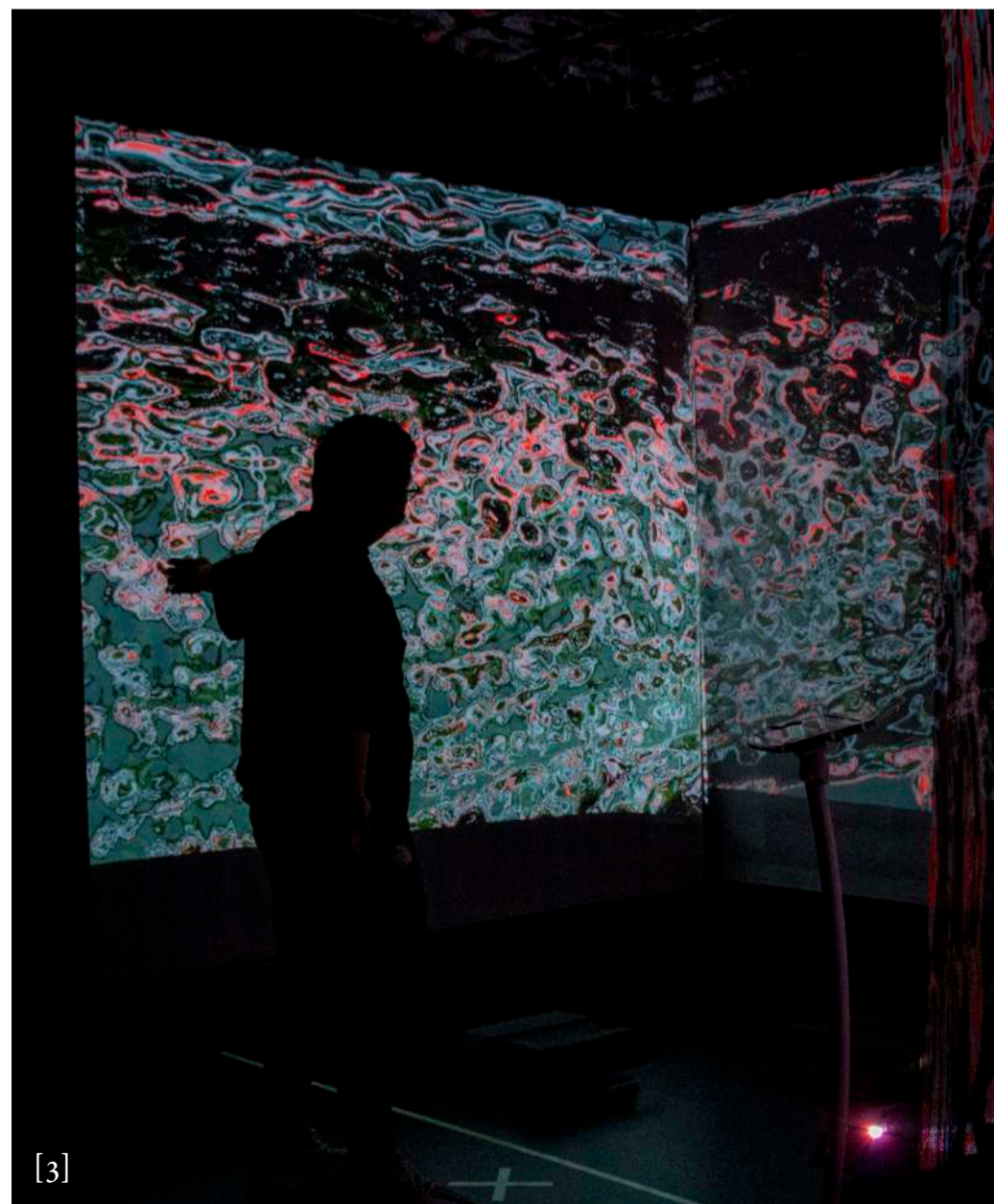
The virtual environment has significantly influenced my practice, particularly in its ability to connect people globally. I appreciate how virtual platforms, especially during the pandemic, became pivotal in bringing people together. This aspect was crucial for artists, enabling us to maintain a sense of community and continue showcasing our work. The virtual space opens up expansive possibilities for digital artists, allowing for more creative

and innovative exhibition methods that transcend the limitations of physical space.

Conversely, physical spaces have their unique advantages, especially for artworks that feature distinctive materials or textures. These elements are often best appreciated in person, where the tactile and visual qualities can be fully experienced. Physical exhibitions offer a different, more direct engagement with art, which can be crucial for works that rely on sensory interaction.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

My ideal audience comprises individuals who are open-minded, curious, and appreciative of both the aesthetic and conceptual dimensions of art. I envision an audience that not only enjoys the visual aspects of my work but also engages deeply with the underlying themes, particularly those related to environmental contemplation and speculative futures. In reality, the audience that gravitates towards my work often seems to be a blend



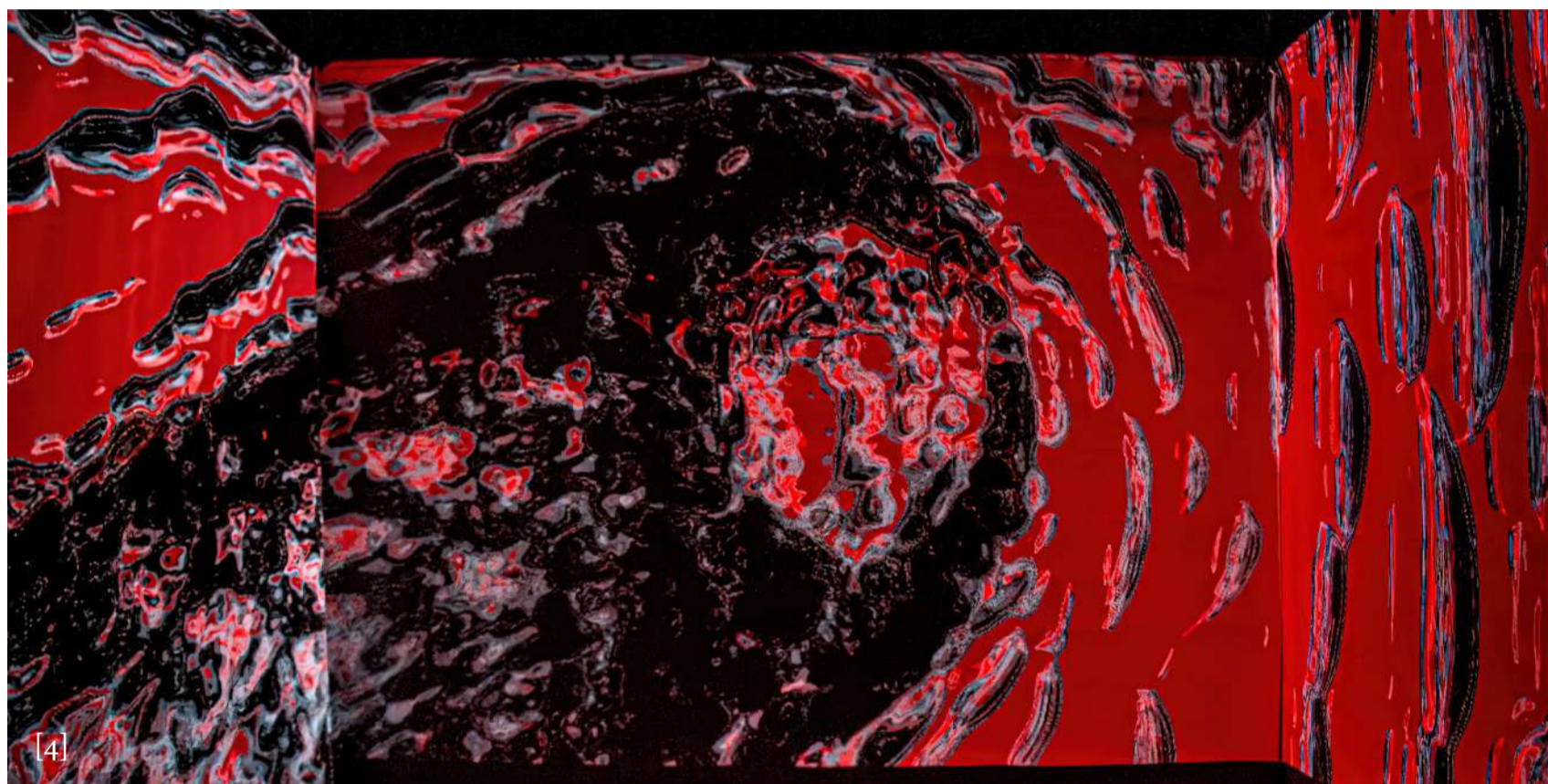
of my envisioned ideal and those I hadn't anticipated. While I create with a certain demographic in mind—those interested in environmental issues and speculative art—I often find that my creations attract a broader spectrum of viewers. This includes people from various backgrounds who might connect with different aspects of my work, whether it's the technique, the subject matter, or the emotional resonance.

This natural gravitation of an unanticipated audience is both surprising and gratifying. It suggests that art has the power to transcend initial intentions and resonate with a diverse range of individuals. This interaction between the art, the intended audience, and the unexpected viewers forms a dynamic and enriching experience, continually informing and evolving my artistic practice.

Envisioning a future that transcends the current dominance of dystopian narratives, as reflected in my work "Future in a Jar," I see a world where balance and harmony are key. This series, depicting futuristic underwater cityscapes within jars, symbolizes both the shrinking space for human habitation on Earth and a fantastical realm of existence. It's a dual commentary on the pressing environmental challenges we face and the boundless potential of human creativity and technological advancement.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

My vision for the future is one where we successfully navigate the tightrope between technological progression and environmental sustainability. Instead of resigning to a dystopian fate where our world becomes increasingly constricted—metaphorically "living in a jar"—I imagine a scenario where our ingenuity leads to solutions that foster coexistence with nature.



In this future, technology is not just a tool for survival in a compromised world, but a means to enhance our relationship with the environment. It's a future where we don't just adapt to shrinking spaces but actively work to expand and enrich our habitats in harmony with the Earth's ecosystems. The ambiguity between dystopia and utopia in "Future in a Jar" is intentional, reflecting the uncertain path ahead. However, the underlying hope is for a future where human creativity and respect for nature converge, leading to a world that is not just survivable but thriving in its diversity and complexity.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

In working towards a sustainable and equitable future, it's essential to embrace an intersectional approach that includes diverse disciplines. We, as a collective of artists, scientists, policymakers, educators, and engaged individuals, need to collaborate to address global challenges like environmental degradation and social inequality.

While integrating AI and other technologies offers immense potential in understanding and solving these complex issues, it's crucial to balance this with ethical considerations and environmental harmony. The current lack of comprehensive regulation in the AI field highlights the need for a responsible and mindful approach to technology use. As we harness these tools, we must strive for a harmony where technological advancements and environmental sustainability coexist, guiding us towards a more resilient and inclusive future.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

If I had the chance to be reborn as another being, I would choose to be a nudibranch. These fascinating sea slugs are not just a marvel of nature with their vivid colors and patterns, but they also play a crucial role in their ecosystems. As a nudibranch, I would be part of the

intricate tapestry of coral reef life, where my presence and diversity would indicate the health and vitality of the reef. Nudibranchs, with their specialized diets, are excellent indicators of the richness of the marine environment. An area with a variety of nudibranch species suggests a thriving diversity of prey and a robust coral reef ecosystem.

Additionally, nudibranchs are vital in signaling declining ocean conditions. Their sensitivity to changes in the environment makes them important indicators of the health of our oceans. By being a nudibranch, I would not only experience the underwater world's beauty but also play a part in highlighting the importance of preserving these delicate ecosystems. This role would offer a unique perspective on the interconnectedness of marine life and the urgent need to protect our oceans.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Artist:

Memo Akten, Pinar Yoldas, Behnaz Farahi, Bill Seaman, Jiabao Li, Xin Liu, and Weidi Zhang.

Reading:

Morton, Timothy. *All Art Is Ecological*. London: Penguin Books, 2021.

Brain, Tega. "The Environment Is Not a System." *A Peer-Reviewed Journal About* 7, no. 1 (July 6, 2018): 152–65. <https://doi.org/10.7146/aprja.v7i1.116062>.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Mingyong Cheng](#), originally from Beijing, China, is now a California-based new media artist delving deep into the intricacies of AI and generative art. As a Ph.D. student in Art Practice at the University of California, San Diego, she has melded her interests in the Visual Arts Department with her specialization in Interdisciplinary Environmental Research at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Mingyong's work is an innovative blend, navigating the crossroads of technology, media art, culture, and environmental consciousness. Beginning in 2021, her artistic trajectory took a bold turn towards harnessing the potential of generative AI, particularly in text-to-image generation using diffusion models. For Mingyong, AI is more than just a tool—it is a co-creator, helping to reimagine history, contemplate the future, and craft whimsical worlds. With an MFA in Experimental and Documentary Arts from Duke University under her belt, she has seamlessly transitioned from documentary film to a wider spectrum of experimental arts. This spectrum encompasses AI-generated art, AR encounters, 3D virtual realms, and interactive installations. Through her diverse mediums, Mingyong unravels the ironic, the uncanny, and the fundamental in our shared existence.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Water or More" immerses viewers in an evocative exploration of water's multifaceted essence, capturing its environmental relevance and poetic allure through two interconnected projects.

Upon entering, the gaze is drawn to a mesmerizing black curtain adorned with a series of digital illustrations. These striking visuals, born from my previous venture, "Water Portrait," fuse 3D-modeled human portraits with the fluidity of water. Augmented reality triggers intricate animations, revealing a profound commentary on environmental issues and our intricate relationship with this life-giving element.

Behind the enigmatic curtain lies an interactive installation, a space where ethereal water imagery materializes in real-time. Projected onto translucent screens, the watery vistas respond with grace and fluidity, mirroring the movements of viewers captured by the perceptive Kinect sensor. Engaging in this dialogue of motion and reflection, spectators become integral participants, co-creating an ever-evolving narrative in tandem with the aqueous imagery.

Expanding the artistic discourse, a harmonious collaboration with performing artist Courtney Liu unveils a visceral fusion of movement and water. As Courtney's captivating performance unfolds, her kinetic expressions intermingle with the responsive water imagery, forging an intricate tapestry of embodied poetics within the aqueous realm.

Through "Water or More," audiences are invited to embark on a transformative sensory journey, plumbing the depths of our connection to water and contemplating its ecological significance. With each step, the exhibition beckons viewers to surrender to the immersive realm of liquid poetry, where the interplay of visuals, motion, and human interaction crystallizes the intricate dance between art, environment, and our shared existence.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Water or More* (Exhibition Screenshot), Mingyong Cheng, 2021.

[2/3/4] *Water or More*, Mingyong Cheng, 2021. New Media Art Installation and Performance. The on-site setup is 20 x 20 x 10 Feet.



MEIYI JIANG & XIAOTING TAN

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

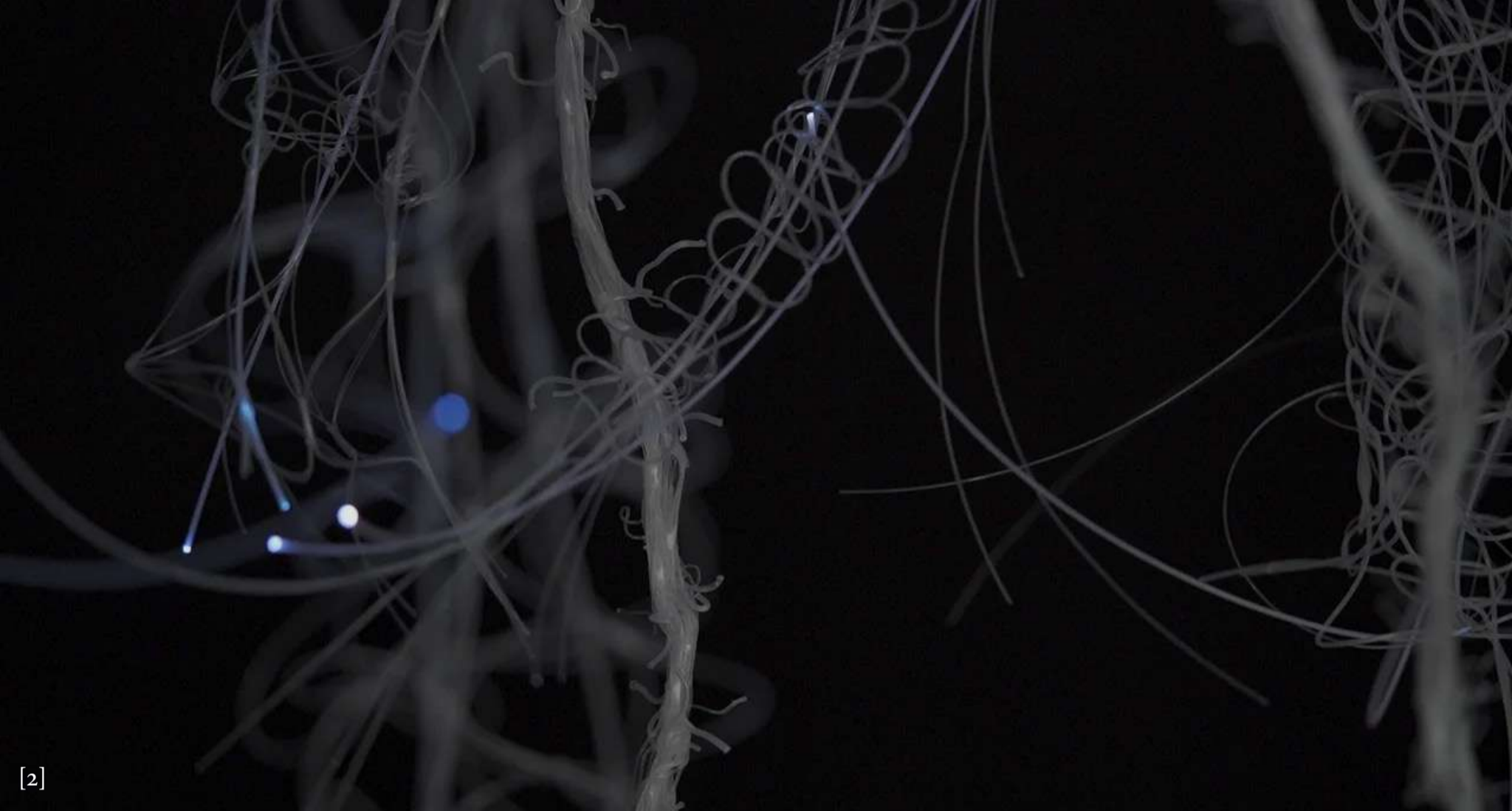
Xiaoting: *Alt-Alterity* represents a novel exploration of the "alternative," challenging conventional ideas and urging a reevaluation of what is considered unfamiliar or different. It transcends established boundaries, reimagining how we interact with and perceive the world around us, shifting from a non-anthropocentric perspective to advocate for a more comprehensive appreciation of various forms of existence and intelligence. As the project "Symbiosis" embodies *Alt-Alterity* by delving into the complex mycelial networks in the forest—a crucial yet often overlooked part of nature—this project adopts a non-anthropocentric approach to research and narrative. The human-centric viewpoint is transformed to focus on the intricate communication and collaboration occurring within the mycelial network. "Symbiosis" also unveils a hidden world, emphasizing the wisdom and power of nature and the interdependent relationships within ecosystems. We invite audiences to reconsider their relationship with nature, engage in dialogue with the non-human world, understand the "other," and comprehend sustainable coexistence.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

Xiaoting: I am an interdisciplinary interaction designer, digital media artist, and producer. My work focuses on the interactions where design meets technology, digital meets tangible, and space meets story. With a background in computer science, I am fascinated by data and exploring the stories behind it. Also, I have a profound fascination with nature. I researched the plant nervous system and designed innovative products by the research on bioelectrical signals four years ago, and the project "Symbiosis" is a continuation of my exploration into the microscopic world and nature.

Meiyi: I graduated from Renmin University of China with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and completed a Design for Performance & Interaction March course at University College London in 2022. At UCL, our design projects often focus on comprehensive, human-related issues. The project "Symbiosis" starts from a documentary Xiaoting recommended to me, after I watched it, I suddenly wondered if we could do something related to the micro field, and if there is any correlation between individuals in the micro field. When you start thinking about one question, more questions follow, such as what is "symbiosis" and what metaphors can be used to express the similarities between mycelium and human social systems? That's the collaboration between Xiaoting and me, and the beginning of "Symbiosis."

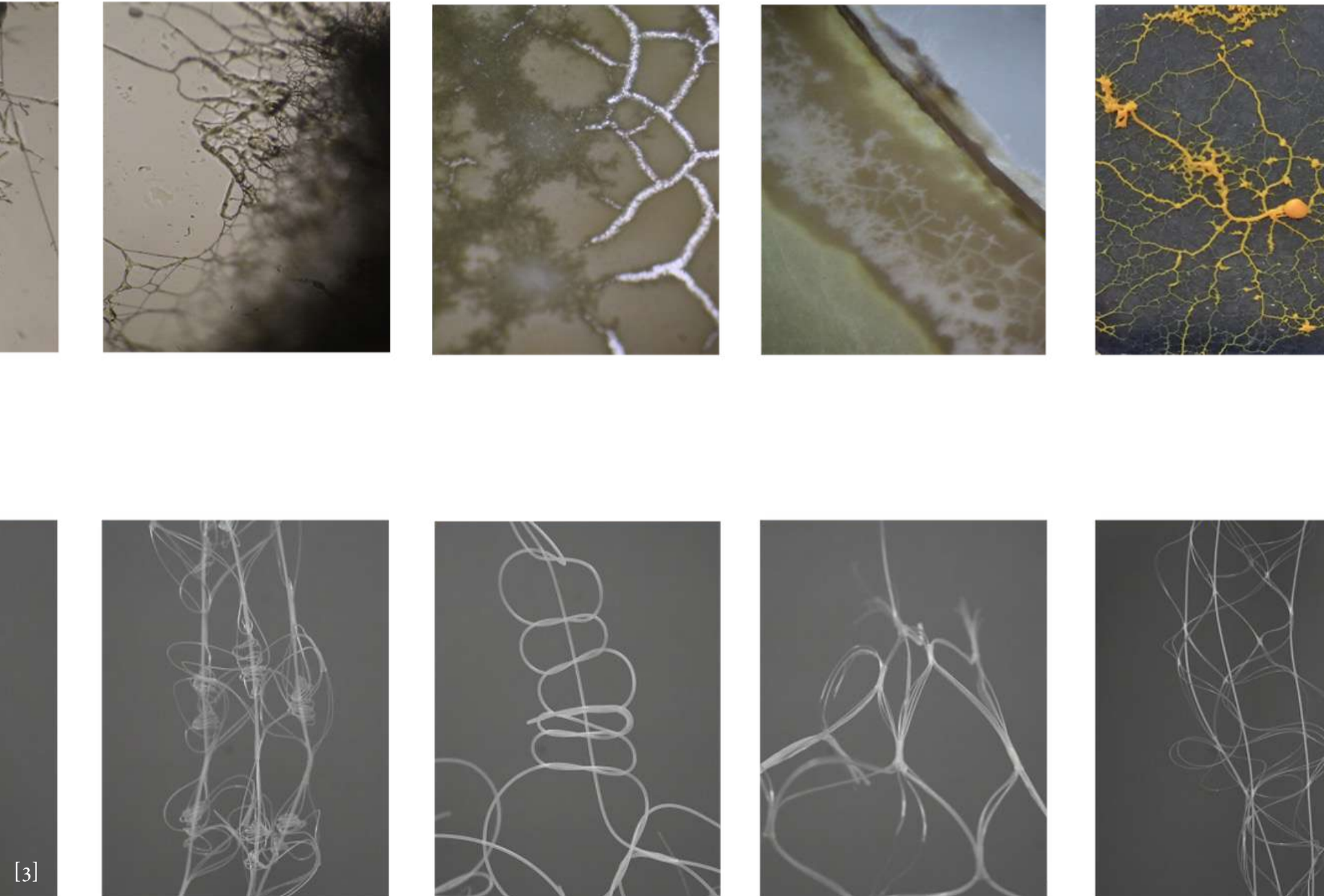


[2]

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

Meiyi: In light of escalating global ecological crises such as species extinction, deforestation, and soil erosion, largely driven by human activity, it's clear we are entering the Anthropocene era, characterized by significant anthropogenic environmental damage. Humans, often positioning themselves as dominators and making unilateral claims on resources, exacerbate this crisis, with our disconnection from nature and anthropocentric views at its core. This project is a research-based design endeavor aiming to redefine human-nature relations, seeking a medium in nature to symbolically represent the relationship between the natural and social spheres. Through the lens of the microscopic world of mycelium, it challenges human-centered perspectives and highlights life's interconnectedness, hoping to contribute to a more symbiotic human-nature relationship.

Xiaoting: Project "Symbiosis" delves into the intricate communication network of trees through mycelium, providing a perspective on the natural interconnectedness and mutual dependence on the environment. By utilizing bio-electrical sensors, the activity of the mycelium is transformed into an immersive audio-visual experience, bridging the gap between human perception and the subtle, often invisible language of trees. Our research is conducted through a non-anthropocentric design approach, emphasizing the wisdom of nature and fostering a more respectful connection with the environment.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

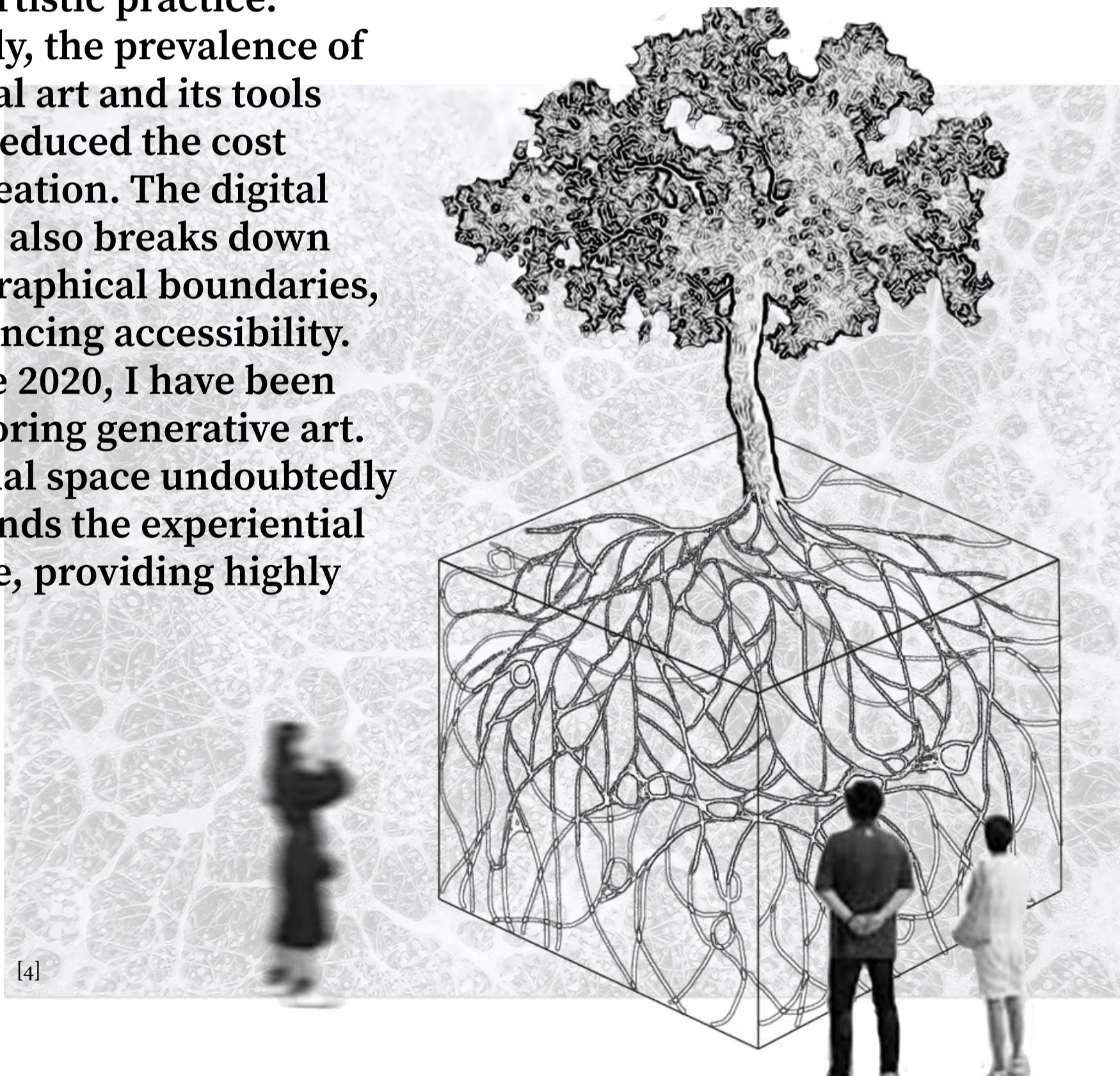
Xiaoting: In the digital era, online exhibition platforms have not only broken down the geographical and physical constraints of art display, making artworks accessible to a global audience but also provided a stage for more artists to showcase their works. The rise of digital art and NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) has opened up new channels for artists to create and sell their work. In my view, this decentralized model will lead to a healthier art market ecosystem. With the development of Web 3.0 and the metaverse, artists can create more engaging interactive experiences, and the way audiences experience art is poised for innovative transformation. This challenges the traditional art market operations, promoting diversity and inclusivity in the art world. Overall, the digital age is shaping a more open, diverse, and innovative art community, and as artists and creators, we remain open and continue to create.

Meiyi: When AI begins to change the way humans process thoughts and ideas, digital artwork becomes another topic in the progression of art history. To artists, digital art is a medium that links their past, present, and future. Nowadays, the main idea of design in many fields is to "break the boundary," and virtual space is a breakthrough to break the boundary of art. The virtual space exhibition born in the context of the digital era successfully links technical rationality and poetic emotion through the

double presence of technology and art, virtual and material, rationality and emotion, representing the future development of art under the environment of human technological habitat.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Xiaoting: Virtual space has indeed expanded my artistic practice. Firstly, the prevalence of digital art and its tools has reduced the cost of creation. The digital form also breaks down geographical boundaries, enhancing accessibility. Since 2020, I have been exploring generative art. Virtual space undoubtedly expands the experiential space, providing highly



[4]

interactive and dynamic artistic experiences. However, for some works, the lack of physical presence and the inability to engage multiple senses in a physical space also present a different set of limitations and challenges in creation. For instance, project "Symbiosis" serves as a real-time generative audio-visual installation in a physical space, engaging multiple senses. However, achieving this level of sensory engagement in a virtual space is technologically challenging. We anticipate more technological breakthroughs in the future, such as how to express generative art through real-time data in the virtual world.

Meiyi: The virtual environment gives me more space to communicate with the audience. I often wonder What will be the future of art? And what will be the art of the future? Can the virtual environment be the most suitable medium for art and digital art presentation, combining digital sensory illusions to engage the audience in thinking about the future of art. However, it is undeniable that texture is a very important part of art creation. The materials we use for our installations are determined after dozens of experiments, and we must ensure that the audience will have good feedback when they watch or even touch them in close proximity. The virtual environment does bring spatial convenience to artists, but we must also accept that the texture of the physical installation cannot be replaced in a short time.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Xiaoting: I believe that the relationship between artists and audiences is dynamic and complex. While I might consider a specific audience during the creation of my art, the accessibility and broad reach of today's digital and physical platforms often lead to interactions with a diverse range of viewers. I acknowledge the factor of self-selection; those who resonate with the themes or aesthetics of my work may be more inclined to engage with it. The beauty of art lies in its universality—the ability to touch individuals from various backgrounds and life experiences.



WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

Xiaoting: My vision for the future is one of harmony and interconnectedness, moving beyond the current limitations and the pervasive narratives of destruction found in popular culture and dystopian sci-fi literature. I aspire to cultivate a world where humanity acknowledges and respects the wisdom of nature, understanding our indispensable role within the larger ecosystem. This necessitates recognizing the value and agency of all forms of life. We have the potential to pave the way for sustainable practices and balanced coexistence, forging connections with various species, and fostering collective efforts that benefit all living beings.

Meiyi: In a world inundated with dire predictions and grim depictions of the future, my vision for a future that transcends the domination of the present is one characterized by innovation, cooperation, and resilience. While popular culture and dystopian sci-fi have painted bleak scenarios of a world in chaos, I envision a future where humanity leverages its creativity and intellect to address the pressing challenges we face. Rather than being paralyzed by fear, we should harness the power of technology and collaboration to mitigate climate change, enhance our quality of life, and foster a more sustainable and harmonious existence.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Xiaoting: I believe that "we"—encompassing artists, tech experts, policymakers, and the broader community—must proactively challenge and reshape our perceptions of nature and each other. For instance, we can utilize art and technology to unveil the complexity of nature, innovate designs through the interconnectedness of all life, and alter the anthropocentric single viewpoint in decision-making processes. We are no longer mere bystanders; instead, we can actively contribute to a future that values and protects all forms of existence. This collective effort is crucial in addressing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequalities.

Meiyi: I think the name of our project addresses this question. We pondered for a long time about how to name it and then decided to use this straightforward, powerful name so that the audience will be immediately immersed in the atmosphere of our work, embracing the natural system and becoming a "mycelium." Symbiosis interconnects different organisms through species interactions, creating unique symbiotic ecosystems. In symbiotic relationships, all organisms are in constant and close contact with each other, allowing their "ranges of perspective" to overlap. We inform people that there is a vast underground mycelium system, triggering empathy for nature and enhancing their understanding of the concept of "Symbiosis."

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Meiyi: I'm an unapologetic Gemini; I love adventure, thrill-seeking, and anything that gets the blood pumping. So if I were given the choice, deep down, I wish I could be the lava of a volcano erupting in the moment or a great waterfall with an endless surge of energy day and night. But, at the same time, I'd like to be a whale, exploring the vast emptiness and savoring the ultimate silence... Maybe that's the Gemini in me.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Xiaoting: If I were to compare my art style or philosophy to a kind of food, I would choose water. Water embodies fluidity and adaptability; it effortlessly changes its form to suit various environments and conditions while nourishing all forms of life. It can traverse mountains and valleys, yet it retains its authenticity and clarity. My aspiration is for my artwork to convey my true self, along with my sincere feelings and thoughts about the world. I'm also open to experimenting with various mediums, maintaining flexibility and openness in my creations.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Xiaoting: I recommend artists Neri Oxman and Thijs Biersteker. Neri Oxman's "Silk Pavilion" brilliantly fuses biology with digital fabrication, showcasing a harmonious interaction between technology and nature. Both Oxman

and Biersteker are notable for their innovative use of materials and technology, aligning with my own artistic approach. The documentary "Fantastic Fungi" serves as a profound source of inspiration for my project "Symbiosis," offering deep insights into the hidden world of fungi and their intricate networks. In terms of books, "Meeting the Universe Halfway" by Karen Barad provides a thought-provoking intersection between quantum physics and posthumanist philosophy, while Thomas Nagel's "What is it like to be a bat?" offers a unique perspective on consciousness and experience. Both texts foster a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness and complexity of life, themes central to my work.

Meiyi: My favorite artist is Wilhelm Sasnal. His artwork often eliminates background details by blurring the subject matter, simplifying outlines, or cropping compositions. While some people may perceive a disturbing strangeness in his work, I personally find a sense of serenity and peace of mind that I've never experienced before.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Meiyi Jiang](#) (b. 1999, China) graduated from Renmin University of China with a bachelor's degree in fine arts and completed a Design for Performance & Interaction MArch course at University College London in 2022. She is a creative designer and artist active in the UK and China. She is a transmedia storyteller who uses a variety of media to construct narratives, such as interactive games, virtual reality, video art, and traditional crafts. Her aim is to use her work to tell specific stories, merging human feelings with space, and she believes that each piece is a vessel for self-expression, with the emotional power to inspire and heal. Her works have been exhibited at Ars Electronica Festival, Austria (2022); London Architecture Festival, London (2022).

[Xiaoting Tan](#) (b. 1998, China) is an interactive designer, digital media artist, producer, and the founder of ELIXIRT STUDIO. She completed a Design for Performance & Interaction MArch course at University College London in 2022. She works at the intersections where design meets technology, digital meets tangible, and space meets story. She creates immersive experiences by employing multi-media and generative art. Her works have been exhibited

at Ars Electronica Festival, Austria (2022); Zabludowicz Collection, London (2023), London Architecture Festival, London (2022), and Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany (2022).

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Trees are communicating and sharing information right under your feet, using a mycelium network: a complex and collaborative structure that has become known as the "Wood Wide Web." Trees use the mycelium as pathways to connect, feed, and communicate with one another. Parent trees can identify their relatives and send signals and nutrition through mycelium networks. Through the mycelium network, the forest becomes a single organism with group intelligence.

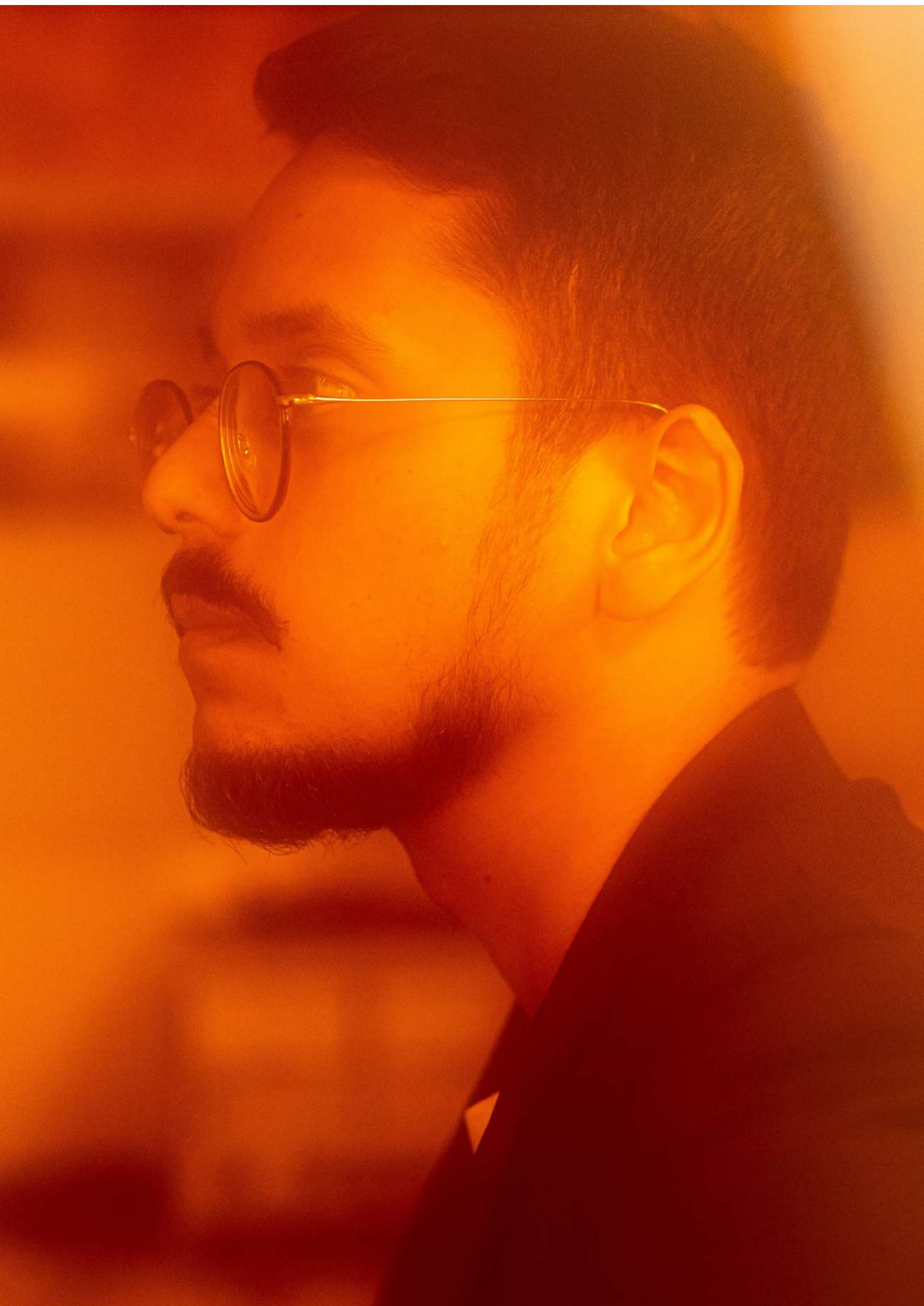
"Symbiosis" is an exploration of the language of trees from a non-anthropocentric perspective, and mycelium is a design collaborator. Five handmade bio-electrical sensors are placed at different locations in Epping Forest, transmitting data on the mycelium's vital activity (electrical signals) in real-time to the exhibition space via a cloud-based network. This is an immersive audio-visual

experience, the changing soundscape represents the whisper of the mycelium, and the flowing light presents the nutrient transport between the mycelium. In this project, we hope the audience understands the world from the perspective of the rhizome, has a dialogue with the forest, and lives in symbiosis with nature.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

- [1] *Symbiosis* (Exhibition Screenshot), Xiaoting Tan and Meiyi Jiang, Collaborator: Vicki Zhiwei Hong (Textile Design), 2022.
- [2] Observing the morphology of Slime Moulds and other types of mycelium under the microscope, they simulated these different morphologies with optical fibres.
- [3] An illustration of the audio-visual installation.
- [4] *Symbiosis* (still), Xiaoting Tan and Meiyi Jiang, Collaborator: Vicki Zhiwei Hong (Textile Design), 2022. Optical Fibre, Mycelium, LED light, Speaker, 3D printed object. Dimensions Variable.
- [5] The testing in Epping Forest.

ISHRAK KHAZI





LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

When I first read the title of the show, I didn't immediately know what to make of it, which I liked. The word *Alt-Alterity* conjured up associations with other worlds—Alt. Reality. Alternate. Simultaneously here but somewhere else. A sort of double alternate making a new reality.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

My research practice is inspired by my lived experiences. Immigrating to foreign lands, relating to others, communicating with non-human organisms, exploring the complexities of subjectivity, and meditating through altered states of consciousness are some of my starting

points for the themes of this exhibition. What I sense my reality to be has often been different from what the normative reality was supposed to be in past experiences. A simple and immediate example is my eyesight. My eyes have a high degree of astigmatism which changes the way I experience light and by extension how I "see" the world.

I have always gravitated towards expressions that try to materialize and give form to the alternate multitudes of non-normative realities. There really isn't some reality that simply exists, but at times different power structures try to dominate what reality "is." I am personally more interested in the subjective multiplicity of reality.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

In short, my work challenges and contemplates categories and forms. It probes into the subjective complexities behind pre-established forms, posing questions such as what constitutes an experiment, what the relationship is between the subject and the object, or rather, the subject-subject relationship in biological experiments. It also questions how agency is negotiated. The work seeks to investigate inaccessible worlds, whether due to scale or the hard problem of consciousness.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

I've always been drawn to alternative exhibition spaces, whether in the digital realm of virtual worlds, the transient spaces of public walkways, or the intersubjective realm of individuals' imaginations. The concept of "virtuality" is multifaceted, but what excites me most about it is the absence of established rules and the openness to imaginative possibilities. I find beauty in the freedom to express, explore, and communicate within the expansive boundaries of virtual spaces.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

There are pros and cons to every medium. On one hand, a virtual space allows for vastly different modes of navigation in time and space. However, virtual spaces can also feel less significant due to their ease of navigation, oversaturation, and lack of sensory feedback. When I mention "feedback" here, I'm not referring solely to consumptive feedback but rather the investment of sensory experience. Experiences in virtual spaces can sometimes feel less significant because there's less sensory investment, making the experience somewhat detached from reality.

What I seek in virtual spaces are experiences that impact and affect one's consciousness in ways that don't separate the experience as virtual but rather make it feel entirely real—much like a dream that feels so vivid that one often has to verify whether it was a dream or an actual experience.



WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Ideally, my audience consists of anyone interested in art-science explorations. When creating art in physical spaces, my work is often site-specific, targeting the local community. However, more broadly, I attract individuals intrigued by interdisciplinary perspectives that merge art and science. Like me, my audiences refuse to be strictly confined by disciplinary boundaries and are curious explorers in their own right. Generally, my work draws in people who are inquisitive and willing to invest time and effort in unpacking complex ideas, without the need for neatly defined answers.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I don't fully understand this question because I am not sure which present, whose present, etc. The present is so vast that I'm not sure what we are referring to. My art is an attempt to understand the present and help shape the future that is yet to come. We need alternate tools, technologies, and perspectives for navigating the future if we want it to develop in ways different from the past. The methods and concepts I seek to engage, manifest, and champion for the future are spectral. It is difficult for me to succinctly express the future I envision in words. If I could clearly express it in words, I wouldn't be making art about it.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

I am a bit cautious here to offer some solution-oriented answer that assumes I could: 1. Know the variables that will become relevant in the coming years, and 2. That I could honestly offer a solution that is capable of holding up to ever-changing variables.

My practical approach is being a realist in adapting to unpredictable variables while being an idealist in knowing that we are one. The vision I hold close and dear to my heart is one in which there is perfect unity between duality and this vision helps me challenge my own limits and inclinations towards othering and categorizing the universe into separate parts for my ego-centric convenience.



IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would be me. Regardless of what organism, space, or ecosystem I am, I am still I. I as a universe of connections.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Recently I have been enjoying listening to a podcast by Ilari Makela called "On Humans". The podcast consists of quite fascinating conversations with neuroscientists, social scientists, and theorists on the human condition. It reminds me of the conversations I often find myself having with my colleagues and friends at MIT, musing over curiosities from a philosophical angle grounded in research.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Ishraki Kazi](#) merges art and scientific inquiry to navigate philosophical explorations.

Engaged in unraveling how we interpret and connect with the surrounding world, Ishraki challenges norms and invites audiences into a sphere where art, research, and sensory experience converge. The work combines creative experimentation and philosophical exploration, offering viewers a multisensory journey into our entangled relationships with the universe.

Recent projects like "Poetics of Inquiry: How to Stay with Trouble," "Bacterial Consent," and "Sensory Augmentation" exemplify an art-science collaborative approach, navigating the curious space between the known and the unknown.

Ishraki holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The Cooper Union, a Master of Science in Art, Culture, and Technology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is engaged in ongoing projects while living and working between Shanghai, New York, and Boston.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Anesthesiologist is a film that weaves together journal entries, lab experiments, performance documentation and guided meditation to contemplate our entangled relationships with non-human others.

Collaborators: Ishraki Kazi (Artist, Performer, Videographer, and Voice Over), Weihan Jiang (Cinematographer and Editor), Anna Romanov (Scientific Collaborator, Voice-over, and Writer), Eric Stapleton (Sound Mixer), Participants (Ganit, Emily, Junha, and Cassie).

IMAGE CAPTIONS

- [1] *Anesthesiologist* (Exhibition Screenshot), Ishraki Kazi, 2023.
- [2] *Anesthesiologist* (Still), Ishraki Kazi, 2023. Video Essay. 12 Mins., 14 Secs.
- [3] *Anesthesiologist* (Still), Ishraki Kazi, 2023. Performance Documentation. 12 Mins., 14 Secs.

KRITHIKA



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

My understanding of the theme is bringing in new dialogue and perspectives that lie outside the anthropocentric circles. We have seen a first layer or first-generation interpretation of "otherness" but now we must challenge that too. Questioning the reason why certain objects exist. What and why they do the thing they do and who they are benefitting. This type of thinking encourages us to constantly create, iterate, and question why objects or systems have been placed where they are.



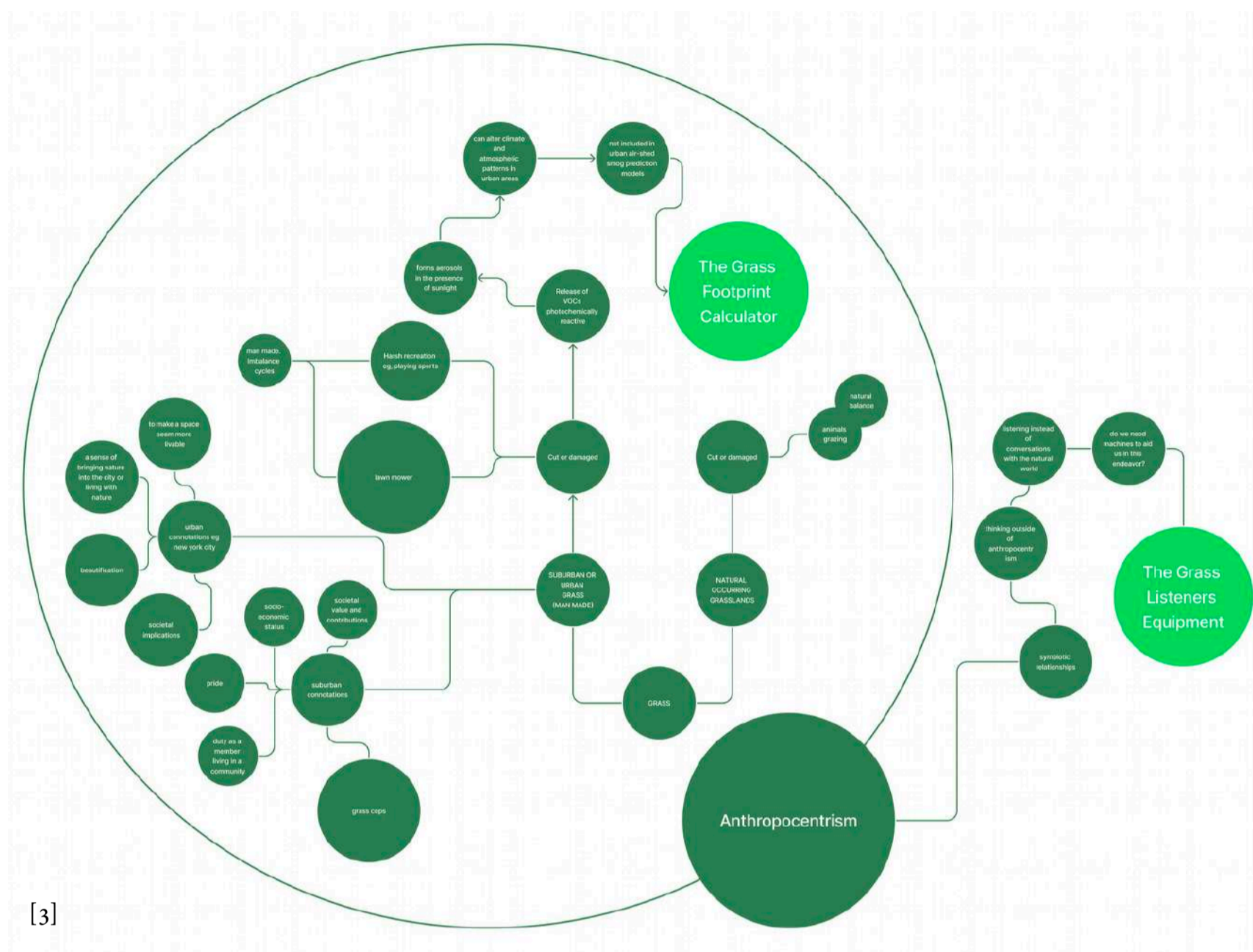
Walk Inside

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES? WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE?

I've been trained in creative computational technology but like to think my background comes from all my interests combined. I was drawn to the idea of networks and explored the various types we see in our lives. I've learned about technical and manufactured networks but once I looked at networks in our natural environment, I couldn't escape that rabbit hole.

My journey began with bioplastics, biomaterials, mycelium, and plant root experiments, and have also been with institutions that work with healthier building materials. I wanted my work to exist at the intersection of the Venn diagram between natural worlds and technology. With time, I narrowed down to how technology could be used for and by communities that think outside anthropocentrism. This is why it was important for me to explore two sides and understand how I could begin to imagine designing systems of collaboration between humans and the natural world while placing humans at the center vs the natural environment in the center, I created this diagram in an attempt to map out my thoughts on how "Grass Listeners" could live on.

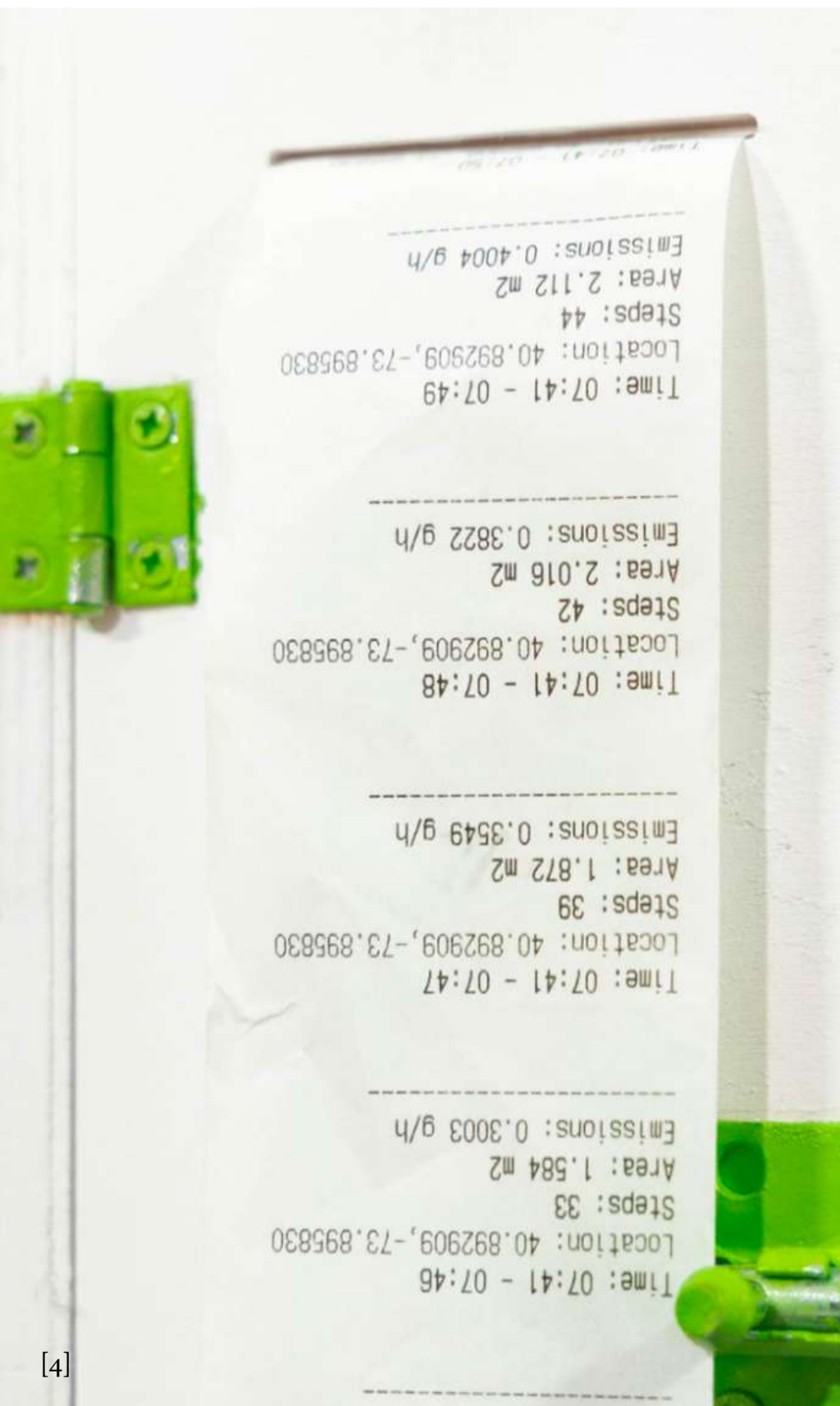




The grass footprint calculator was made with the idea of understanding smaller yet significant systems in our environment. Grass, when cut, releases GLVs (green leaf volatiles) or VOCs (volatile organic compounds), which contribute to the fresh grass smell, combining with sunlight to turn into aerosols. A study found that these aerosols contribute to urban smog but are not considered for. Through this piece I wanted to place emphasis on how our systems for calculations are fine but that there's room to improve and we must consider the smaller contributors as well. If you look closely at the receipt that is printed from the back of this machine, it shows that the emission rate is relatively low. This project lives within anthropocentric circles of how it is, again, for the human.

How we want better and more accurate data but at the same time slowly moving away from traditional collection methods and attempting to think differently.

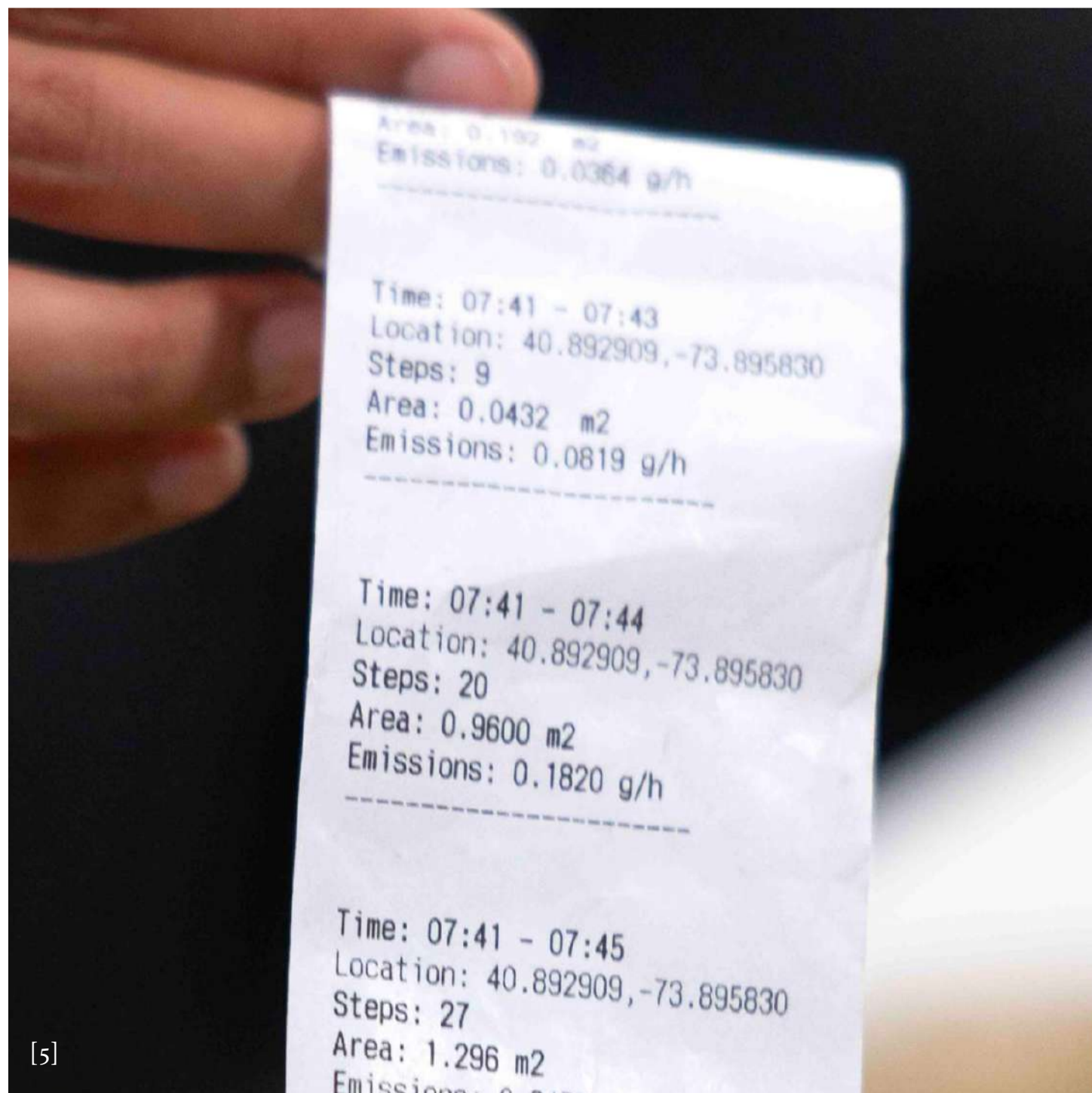
I wanted to carry on that same thinking into the second part of "Grass Listeners" which is where I wanted to explore equipment and tools outside of anthropocentrism.



Instead of wanting to be in conversation with plants and the natural world. Why don't we learn to listen? I wanted to rethink our modes of listening as well. How can we begin to think about our models for listening to non-human creatures?

The tools and various equipment pieces are modeled after techniques and gestures that wouldn't harm the grass but encourage to explore different languages of listening. We humans communicate and listen through verbal or gestural cues, but

the natural world has significantly different methods of communication—frequencies and smells. I chose to "listen" to the chemicals or smells. At this point, it was important to highlight the goals of communicating while designing and constantly check myself so I don't try to create JUST for the human but to facilitate collaborative learning. Various tools here have been built to "listen" not just with our ears but through the rest of our senses as well. Getting out of a very human-centered design approach was difficult but definitely worth it. I wouldn't say I have completely designed for the environment but it was a step in attempting to evoke new ideas of communication listening.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

It gets us to think differently and I believe the method of presentation is perfect for the theme as well. It challenges the existing practices and asks how we can expand beyond just a certain space, and certain restrictions, and how can we encourage TRUE collaboration. Art has a way of changing our thoughts or thinking for a moment or longer and traditionally it has been done in person where we can feel the presence and energy of the artwork. Moving into the online space will not live up to that experience but it shouldn't be compared to it either. That's not a fair comparison. The goals are different and we should embrace those motives and goals.

What we are seeing now is the "first iteration" or "first-generation" virtual exhibitions, I can't wait to see how these exhibitions evolve—they would either create the in-person simulation so well or we completely define and restructure what online exhibitions can be. The latter seems more exciting :)

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

I'm working out a balance to tackle the same question as well. My initial work was primarily virtual spaces and now I have moved to working in the physical. I'm yet to go back and figure it out. Ask me again in a year, I hope to have my answer by then.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

My work has always been questioning today's norms, and how we can challenge those ideologies. I hope for people who are curious enough to see beyond their immediate reality and the ones who are open to understanding or listening to others' perspectives.

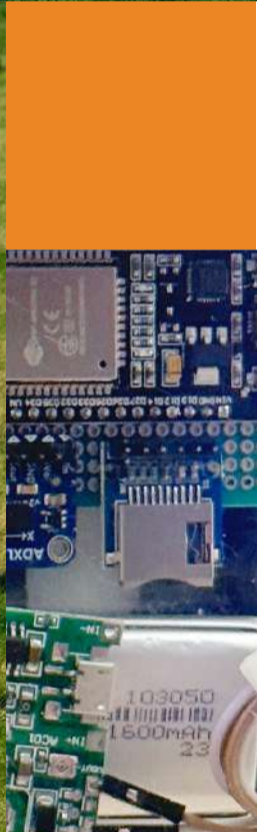
I feel like up until now unanticipated audiences somehow stumble upon my work, it's always interesting to see their entry points into what caught their eyes. Those entry points are something I'm trying to put more emphasis on, to hopefully make the barrier to entry thinner.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I hope we are in constant collaboration with the natural world, and that we have learned to listen, and study our surroundings rather than treating them as humans historically have treated complex systems—by overriding and forcibly controlling them. We won't be ruled by plants which a lot of movies like to showcase but rather we would be living knowing so much more about these complex creatures, we would learn from how they cope with harsh climates and adapt to our built environments like that. I hope to see a future where biomimicry is the norm. Our values would change, we would have similar urban infrastructure but just with different materials.



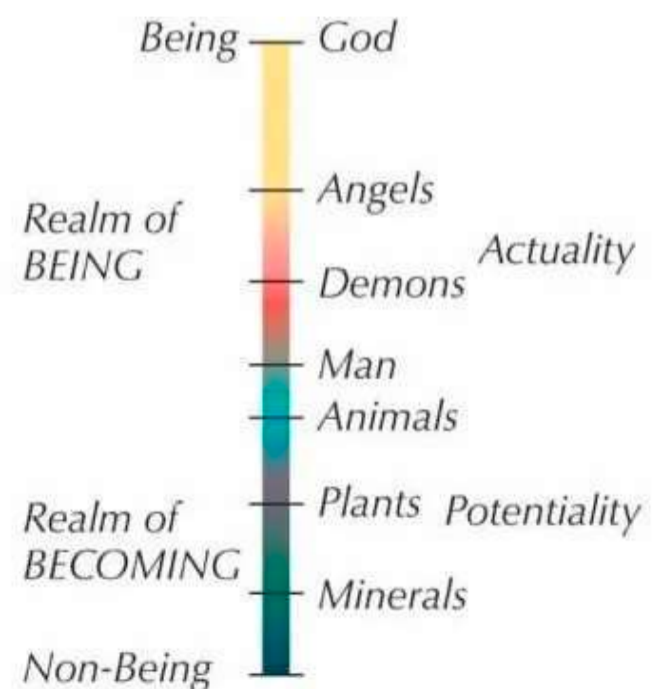
Area: 1.296 m2
Emissions: 0.2457 g/h
Time: 07:41 - 07:46
Location: 40.892909,-73.895830
Steps: 33
Area: 1.584 m2
Emissions: 0.3003 g/h
Time: 07:41 - 07:47
Location: 40.892909,-73.895830
Steps: 39
Area: 1.872 m2
Emissions: 0.3549 g/h
Time: 07:41 - 07:48
Location: 40.892909,-73.895830
Steps: 42
Area: 2.016 m2
Emissions: 0.3822 g/h
Time: 07:41 - 07:49
Location: 40.892909,-73.895830
Steps: 44
Area: 2.112 m2
Emissions: 0.4004 g/h



A lot of great institutions are on the path for this—OXMAN, Terraform One, and labs like the Healthy Material Lab do a great job at inspiring designers to use healthier materials. I feel hopeful with our progress but there's always a doomsday mindset with climate and now the awakening of AI. I see a potential collaboration in those spaces too, to improve our current systems.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

The simplest form is through acceptance, curiosity, and willingness to adapt for the greater good. Another important aspect is having the ability to view our environment with a non-hierarchical lens. We often perceive humans at the top and every other living being below us, but how are we measuring this? How is intelligence measured? Why are we comparing it with human abilities while each being has a different system? Beginning to learn about animals' or plants' ways of adapting, and growing, and their inner mechanisms would hopefully make us realize that we all have different capabilities. It's not about comparison but learning from each other and living in harmony.



[7]

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would like to be a rock dove bird. I have an obsession with existing in the atmosphere but also I am super curious about their abilities to navigate, move from place to place, somehow know where home is, and how they are reading environmental weather signals, infrasonic waves from geophysical sources, and other factors that help them guide through the world.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

If it's in relation to the theme, then I would say I love:

1. Books:

- "The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming" by David Wallace-Wells
- "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History" by Elizabeth Kolbert

2. Podcasts:

- "Ologies"

3. Other platforms:

- Gen Space in NYC—a community biology lab—a place where people of all backgrounds can learn, create, and grow with the life sciences.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

A designer, storyteller, futurist, and question archaeologist who uses minute behavioral insights and technology to drive the narrative. [Krithi Nalla](#)'s research aims to critically interrogate and rethink physical and digital objects in relation to us and our environments. She enjoys challenging the curiosities of today by exploring the non-imagined fiction around emerging technologies of tomorrow.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

A small group of self-organized technical naturalists began to conduct self-motivated research experiments for grass-based scientific literature. They constructed a series of devices, like the Grass Footprint Calculator, to collect and analyze the chemical vocabulary of damaged grass. They would be seen during the sunny hours of the day, walking across stretches of grass with their specialized equipment. These scientific pilgrimages work to increase the accuracy of urban smog emission statistics. As the devices evolved, the community of "Grass Listeners" created more devices, like the Shoe B.03, Face M.45, Udd.04, Red S.11, and many more, to tune into the various languages of the grass.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Grass Listeners* (Exhibition Screenshot), Krithi Nalla, 2023.

[2] *Grass Listeners - Grass Listening Devices: Face Mask*, Krithi Nalla, 2023. PoP and Plastisol ink. Dimensions Variable.

[3] "Where does the project live?" A mindmap by Krithi Nalla.

[4/5] The receipts, showing the users emission rate according to their steps.

[6] *Grass Listeners* and *Grass Footprint Calculators*, Krithi Nalla, 2023.

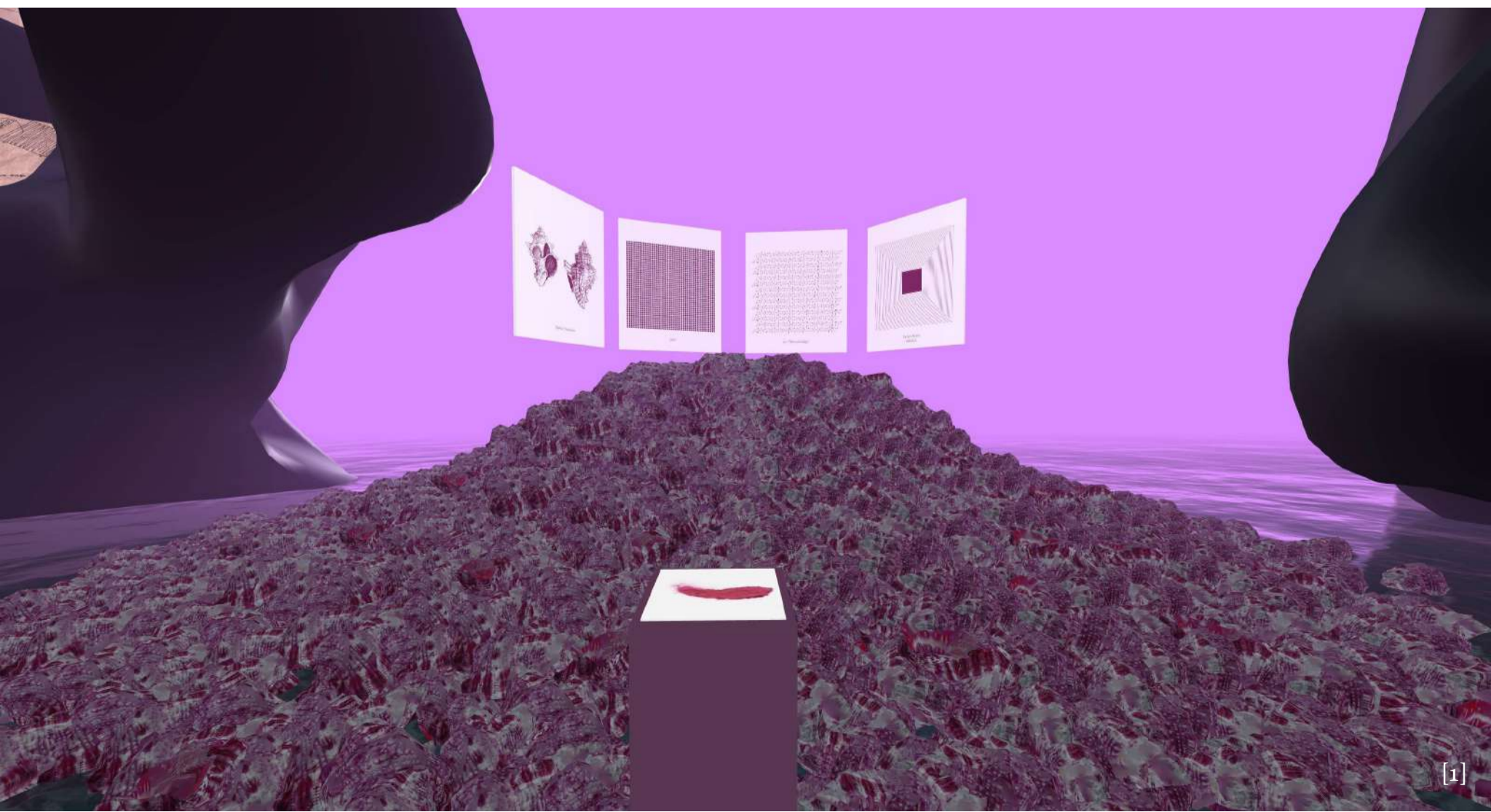
[7] The Great Chain of Being in Shakespeare's writings, *The Tempest*.



TIANGEWANG & I-YANG HUANG

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

TW, IY: *Alt-Alterity* is a call for a broader, more inclusive, and harmonious perspective on planetary diversity. As a theme, it seeks to redefine the traditional concept of "otherness" and transcend the dichotomy between human and non-human entities. Rather, it celebrates a broader spectrum of players that share and shape the natural and cultural richness of planet Earth in an equal manner, such as microorganisms, plants, animals, humans, AI, and machinery. For us, the approach of *Alt-Alterity* is intrinsically connected to topics such as eco-centric views, climate and nature-inspired design, sustainability, and advancement and preservation. It gives rise to new interaction paradigms that consider all entities as interconnected and balanced participants in the experience.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

TW: I am a multidisciplinary designer and creative technologist whose work investigates innovative interactive paradigms among humans, technology, and the environment. Tackling subjects like climate change, holistic well-being, embodied experiences, and speculative futures, I employ mediums including multimodal interaction, creative data visualization, multimedia art, AR/VR, installation, food, software, AI, and games.

IY: I am a multi-disciplinary designer working across R&D, labs, luxurious residential, public space, and industrial design. I specialize in complex modeling, parametric generative geometry, and storytelling by visualization. My work explores emerging design trends and opportunities arising from digitalization, including game engines, new retail experience, multi-sensory data experience, experimental development paradigm, and speculative spatial design.

TW, IY: We share deep interests in making the intangible tangible through creative data storytelling and interactive experiences. We also often look to nature, climate, and science as sources of inspiration that unlock the opportunity for us to engage in critical topics in these areas. Whether it is turning complex climate data into multisensory experiences through edible confection, or crafting an immersive view into the microscopic world of living organisms, or visualizing brainwave data as a way

to promote social connectedness, we constantly engage with subjects that are ever-present and deeply connected to our everyday lives yet exist beyond the immediately perceivable. Our shared interests converge in creating beautiful, interactive, and accessible experiences that connect these visible and hidden aspects of living or non-living agents on Earth.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

TW, IY: "Purple Origin" focuses on exploring the historical and cultural significance of the color purple, provoking reconsideration of our relationship with nature, and reflecting on the balance between progress and preservation.

"Purple Origin" reimagines an alternative world by

- encouraging environmental consciousness: by immersively recounting the tale of the Murex snail and the origin of purple dye, the installation invites participants to reflect on the impacts of material consumption and the importance of environmental conservation.**
- promoting a balanced perspective: "Purple Origin" urges a balance between innovation and conservation, encouraging an appreciation for human advancements while recognizing the necessity of living in harmony with the natural world.**
- reimagining human-nature relations: this project challenges human-centric perspectives by juxtaposing**

human narratives with those of the natural world, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of our interconnected existence and shared identity.



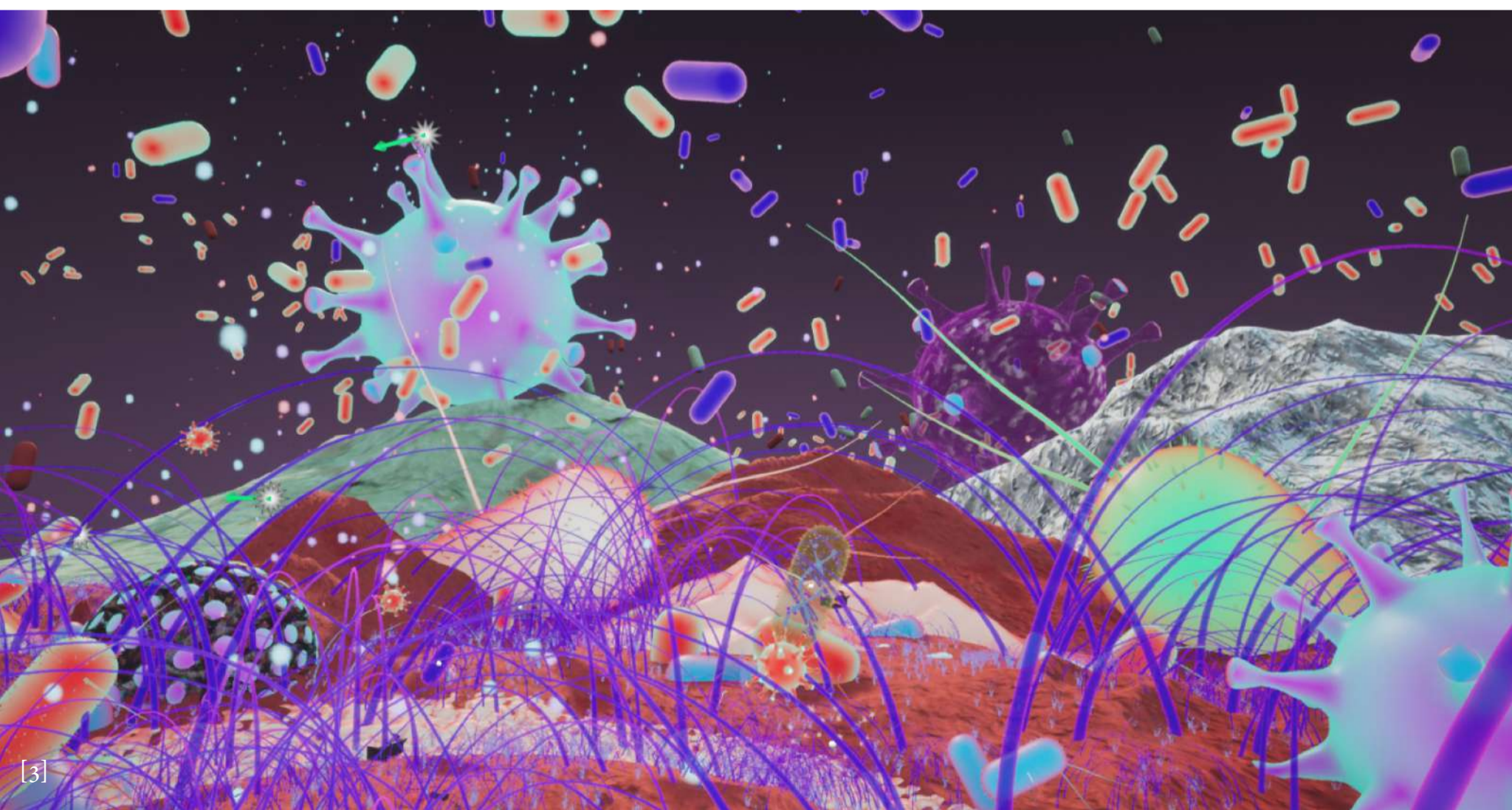
"Viruscape" focuses on revealing, exploring, and educating the intricate microscopic world within the human body. By enabling players to navigate as white blood cells, the game reimagines an alternative world where the lines between the macro and micro selves blur. It not only simplifies complex immunology into engaging gameplay but also highlights the importance of these micro entities in maintaining our health. This project contributes to a broader understanding of life, emphasizing the intricate balance and coexistence between humans and the microscopic life forms in us.

"Viruscape" reimagines an alternative world by

- shifting scale and perspective: instead of a human-**

centric and human-scale viewpoint, "Viruscape" allows players to experience life as a white blood cell, challenging conventional anthropocentric views and spotlighting the experience of microscopic non-human entities within our bodies.

- **bridging knowledge Gaps:** by transforming complex immunology into an engaging game, the project makes the microscopic and often overlooked aspects of our bodies accessible and intriguing, helping players understand and appreciate the complex biological interactions that sustain us.
- **enhancing awareness:** the game immerses players in the dynamics of bodily defense mechanisms against bacteria and viruses, highlighting the continuous, unseen battles occurring within us. This serves to increase awareness and respect for the microscopic lifeforms that are crucial to our existence.
- **creating a new narrative:** through its unique gameplay



and aesthetic choices, "Viruscape" crafts an alternate universe that is both mysterious and magnificent, encouraging players to ponder the blurred lines between self and other, human and non-human, macro and micro.

- **promoting harmonious coexistence:** the game underscores the importance of balance and harmony among various entities within our bodies. It implies that health and wellbeing depend on a symbiotic relationship between human and non-human actors, thereby redefining notions of "otherness" to include a broader community of life.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

TW, IY: Exhibitions in the digital age could take many forms from online only to various degrees of hybridity. We are excited about the potential of digitally enabled exhibitions to unlock new processes, mediums, interactive experiences, accessibility, and planetary responsibility of art and design work.

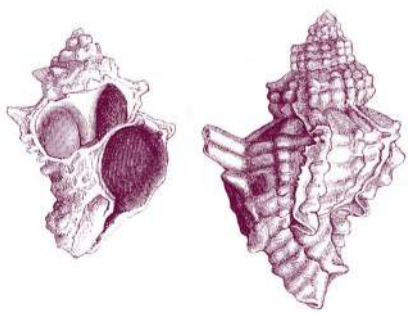
Since exhibitions in the digital age no longer have to be location-based and time-boxed in the traditional way, they can be decentralized, on-demand, interactive, and participatory. Emerging design mediums and artistic expressions can flourish as a result, including multimedia, multimodal, mixed reality, AI-enabled, and so on.

Moreover, online platforms can foster global collaboration

among artists, designers, curators, and audiences. Interactive features in digital exhibitions can create a more engaging and participatory experience for viewers, and the broader theme of co-creation will stay with us longer and take on new meanings.

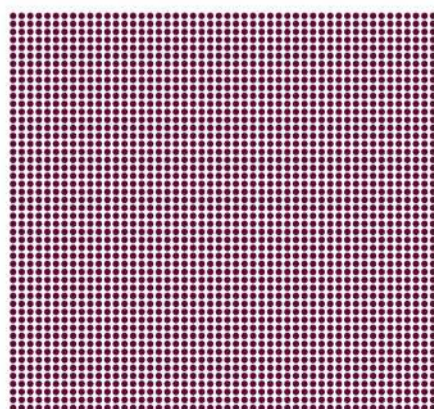
And just like any digital experience, it is much easier for exhibited work to reach diverse audiences across the globe and enjoy greater visibility and impact when they are not tied to a physical location. Consequently, we might experience a shift in the definition of artistic and creative success as it is no longer solely based on location-based visibility but could also include online engagement and the impact within digital communities.

In addition, digital exhibitions are more environmentally sustainable than physical exhibitions, reducing the carbon footprint associated with travel, shipping of artworks, and energy consumption of gallery spaces. As more and more exhibitions lean towards the digital, we could envision a future of reduced carbon footprint and emission for the creative industry—or perhaps "net-zero" exhibitions could really become a thing.



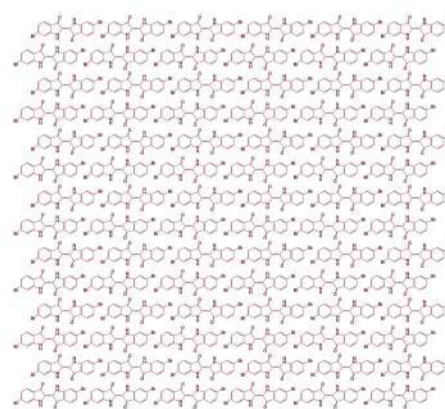
Murex trunculus

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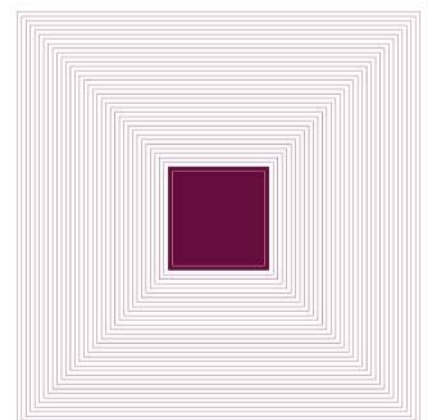
2500

[5]



6,6'-Dibromoindigo

[6]



Tyrian Purple
#66023C

[7]

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

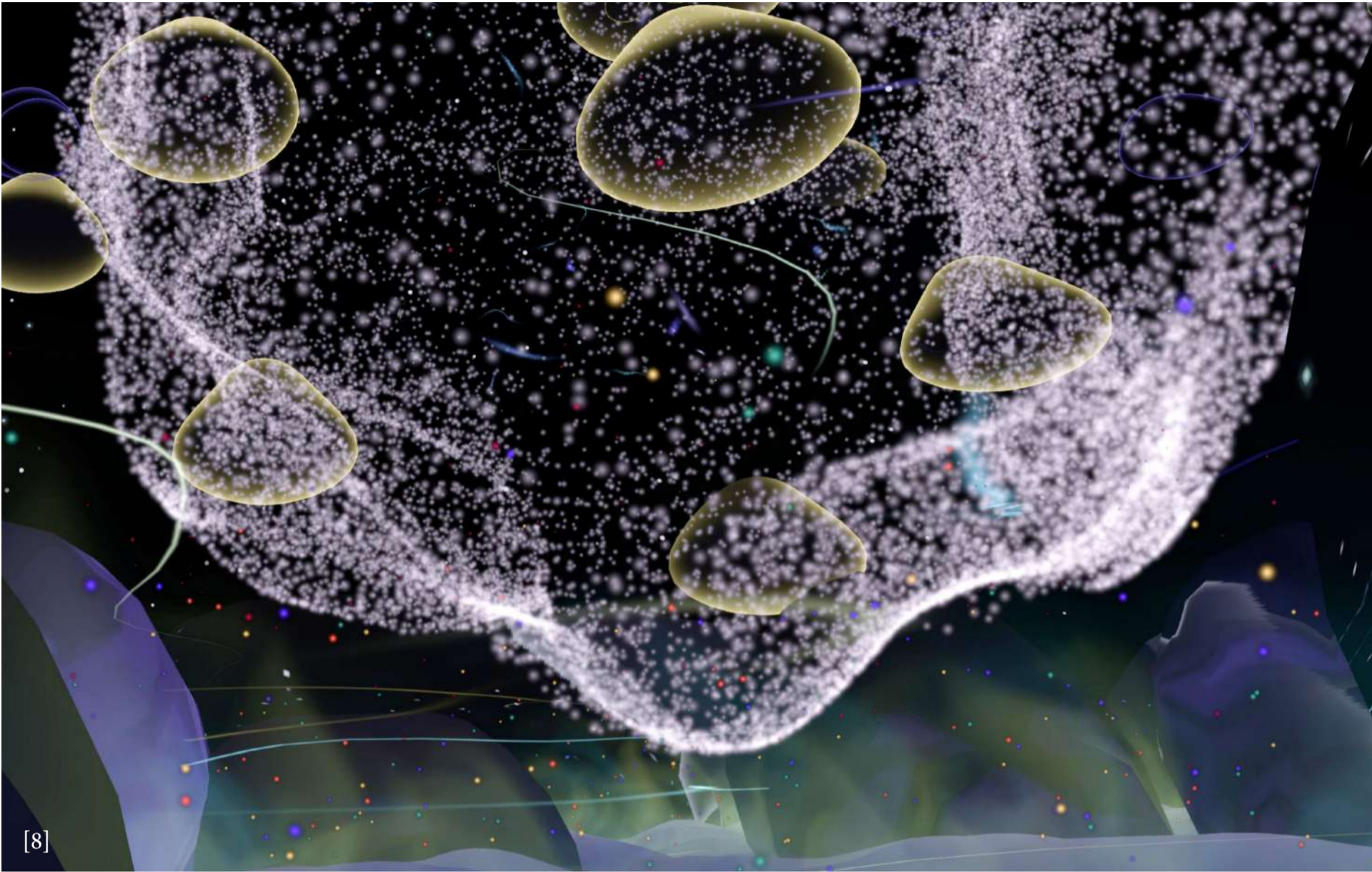
TW, IY: As designers and creative technologists deeply involved with emerging technologies, digital media, and data, we find the rise of the virtual environment over the past few years particularly relevant and enjoyable for creating and sharing our work.

We have developed a deeper relationship with our workspace set up in the home studio. We were able to configure it over time so that it now enables a much more streamlined experience as we design, prototype, and manage our various work in interaction, visualizations, software, and immersive experience.

Many design festivals have opened up virtual participation, allowing us to give talks and host exhibitions remotely as part of the festivals, interact with audiences from different backgrounds and cultures, and extend our reach globally. We would not have the time and access to do it otherwise if they were all in person.

The mindset and tools that support collaborating virtually have been extremely helpful. We were able to find collaborators across time zones and continents based on mutual interests and goals in creating the work, less limited by geographical locations.

On the other hand, we still relish the opportunity to engage in activities in the physical space, whether that



means presenting at conferences, hosting in-person workshops, and creating installation work contextual to the physical exhibition space.

We think that the tangible, multisensory, and visceral impact of physically experiencing, interacting, and immersing in our work cannot be easily replicated in the virtual environment.

In addition, we still find the physical space to be where lots of meaningful interpersonal connections develop. Community is important to us as designers and artists, and it's hard to replace the connection and trust we manage to build with others by meeting them in person.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

TW, IY: We love our audience to be diverse, and we love building connections with them. We don't select our audiences. On the contrary, as designers, we always strive to make our work accessible to a range of people or the general public. Because of this, both ways are simultaneously true—we are hard to surprise by who tends to gravitate towards our work, yet we are also constantly surprised by how a certain audience reacts to our work.

One of our recent projects DataWagashi is about using Wagashi—a traditional Japanese confection—and leveraging taste, texture, smell, and touch as additional vocabulary for data communication, to turn complex data into digestible experiences. This project aims to foster a more inclusive and engaging experience about the intricate environmental information that surrounds us and allow data to be accessible to those with differing sensory abilities and data literacy. In our past talks and workshops, there was a diverse body of audience across



professions, cultures, and ages that gave us distinct yet equally enthusiastic responses based on their own experience, which signaled to us that they understood and deeply echoed our work, and inspired us about the various potentials of this project moving forward.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

TW, IY: Some of the topics that we are passionate about include health and wellbeing, responsible AI and technology, nature and climate, and automated systems—so we are going to describe a few aspects of the vision related to these areas, recognizing that they are inherently interconnected.

Presentative care and holistic health approaches become the mainstream, where physical and mental well-being are recognized as interrelated aspects of a well-rounded system.

Enabled by AI, casual technologies, and spatial computing, software evolves into an on-demand, multichannel, and omnipresent state of being, liberating us from endless screentime and digital fatigue.

We enjoy a visceral, intuitive, and real-time connection to nature and heightened awareness of the climate through smart products and personalized devices that create non-intrusive, immersive data experiences about the planet outside our windows. We also proactively take action to

protect our large collective home through a shared eco-centric mindset.

Automated systems—such as unmanned supermarkets, vending machines, self-serve hotels, and delivery robots—become a harmonious ecosystem that brings about a streamlined day-to-day transactional experience. New service models around the shared economy emerge as part of the automated system and can be programmed to maximize material efficiency and resource sharing, serving underserved communities.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

TW, IY: We as designers could keep designing, prototyping, and implementing products, services, and experiences that contribute to the envisioned future—keep dialing up the fidelity of this future until it becomes more of the present, and continuously sharing the outcome to a global audience. I would encourage designers to move beyond static visualizations and mockups of the future, to storytelling, immersion, interaction, and working prototypes, and collaborate with disciplinary specialists to ground the vision in the present and move towards it in achievable steps.

We as individuals navigate day-to-day lives—it is about doing concrete things and expanding the influence of the

message. For the former, it could be supporting local and sustainable products, using renewable energy sources, prioritizing public transportation, being more mindful of your body's holistic well-being, etc. For the latter, it could be as simple as liking and sharing a relevant post on social media, casting your vote for leaders who make an effort to bridge gaps or restore the environment, investing in a company that pursues a similar mission, etc.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

TW: A goose, because I would love to experience what it is like to be able to walk, swim, and fly—all three means of transportation a living creature could master—unless you consider teleportation or time travel, of course.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

TW, IY: Wagashi, the Japanese confection that is featured in our work DataWagashi. Wagashi is considered a microcosm of the world reflecting the transient of seasons and the beauty of nature, which relates to the approach of a lot of our work around creative data experience that communicates stories about different aspects of the entities around us.

It is also an art of the five senses and represents a ritual of gathering. Our work never ends with a presentation on paper. We'd love people to experience and interact with our work and with each other through our work.

It also embodies a versatile form factor that accommodates a great variety of designs, which speaks to our medium agnostic, multidisciplinary entry points into problems and our projects.

Its contemporary aesthetic and beautiful presentation mirror our love for beauty and simplicity as high-level design principles for most of our work.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

TW: The Creative Act: A Way of Being by Rick Rubin is my recent favorite. It is a hearty book that rethinks creativity by flipping the direction of agency. Instead of "thinking of" an idea, the idea comes to you, and all you have to do is staying open to let it in and make it tangible. It is also very beautifully written.

IY: Katsuhiro Otomo's illustrious body of work, especially the anthology film "Memories," continues to stand as an inexhaustible wellspring of inspiration for me. The visual storytelling in "Memories" exhibits a fusion of traditional and futuristic elements, creating a rich tapestry that propels the narrative in a manner few have managed to replicate. Otomo's meticulous attention to detail, his masterful use of color and texture, and his innovative design aesthetics push the boundaries, offering a fresh perspective in a cluttered field.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tiange Wang is a multidisciplinary designer and creative technologist whose work investigates innovative interactive paradigms among humans, technology and the environment. Tackling subjects like climate change, holistic well-being, embodied experiences and speculative futures, she employs mediums including multimodal interaction, creative data visualization, multimedia art, AR/VR, installation, food, software, AI and games.

I-Yang Huang is a multi-disciplinary designer working across R&D, labs, luxurious residential, public space and industrial design. He specializes in complex modeling, parametric generative geometry and storytelling by visualization. His work explores emerging design trends and opportunities arising from digitalization, including game engine, new retail experience, multi-sensory data experience, experimental development paradigm and speculative spatial design.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Purple Origin" (presented in the first part of the exhibition):

In today's age of intense material

consumption and heightened environmental consciousness, "Purple Origin" sheds light on the often-overlooked contributors, like the Murex snail, that have significantly shaped our collective past. More than a mere recounting of history, "Purple Origin" presents a poignant juxtaposition of human narratives with those of the natural world. This installation fosters reflection on the balance between innovation and conservation, urging visitors to appreciate our advancements while also recognizing the crucial importance of living in harmony with nature, challenging our human-centric views and celebrating our diverse, shared existence.

"Viruscape" (presented in the second part of the exhibition):

"Viruscape" offers an evocative exploration into the lesser-acknowledged, "other" world residing within us: the teeming microscopic landscape of our bodies. In an age where the unseen became the focal point of global attention, this immersive game-art fusion challenges our conventional anthropocentric views by centering the narrative on our internal non-human actors.

Players embark on an enthralling journey, not as humans, but through the lens of white blood cells, navigating a universe punctuated by bacterial and viral entities and tasked with fending them off. By transforming complex immunology concepts into intuitive gameplay dynamics, "Viruscape" bridges the gap between the familiar and the "other," shedding light on the significance and agency of our body's minute defenders.

A dominant purple-hued aesthetic, coupled with a pulsating soundtrack, crafts an ambiance reminiscent of both the mysterious and the magnificent, transporting players to a realm where the boundaries of self and "other" intertwine and blur. "Viruscape", at its core, isn't just a game; it's a celebration of the intricate balance of life, underscoring the importance of harmonious coexistence between the myriad entities that call our bodies home. It challenges players to expand their understanding of "otherness," transcending the human-centric to appreciate and gain a fluent understanding of the broader community of life within us.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

- [1] *Purple Origin* (Exhibition Screenshot), Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023.
- [2] *Purple Origin*, Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Digital Media. Dimensions Variable.
- [3] *Viruscape* (Still), Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Digital Media. Dimensions Variable.
- [4] *Purple Origin - Murex Trunculus*, Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Digital Illustration. Dimensions Variable.
- [5] *Purple Origin - 2500*, Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Digital Illustration. Dimensions Variable.
- [6] *Purple Origin - 6,6'-Dibromoindigo*, Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Digital Illustration. Dimensions Variable.
- [7] *Purple Origin - Tyrian purple*, Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Digital Illustration. Dimensions Variable.
- [8] *Sink In Sync*, Tiange Wang And Xin Feng, 2023. Multimedia Art / Digital Media Installation. Dimensions Variable.
- [9] *Data Wagashi*, Tiange Wang And I-Yang Huang, 2023. Mix-media. Dimensions Variable.

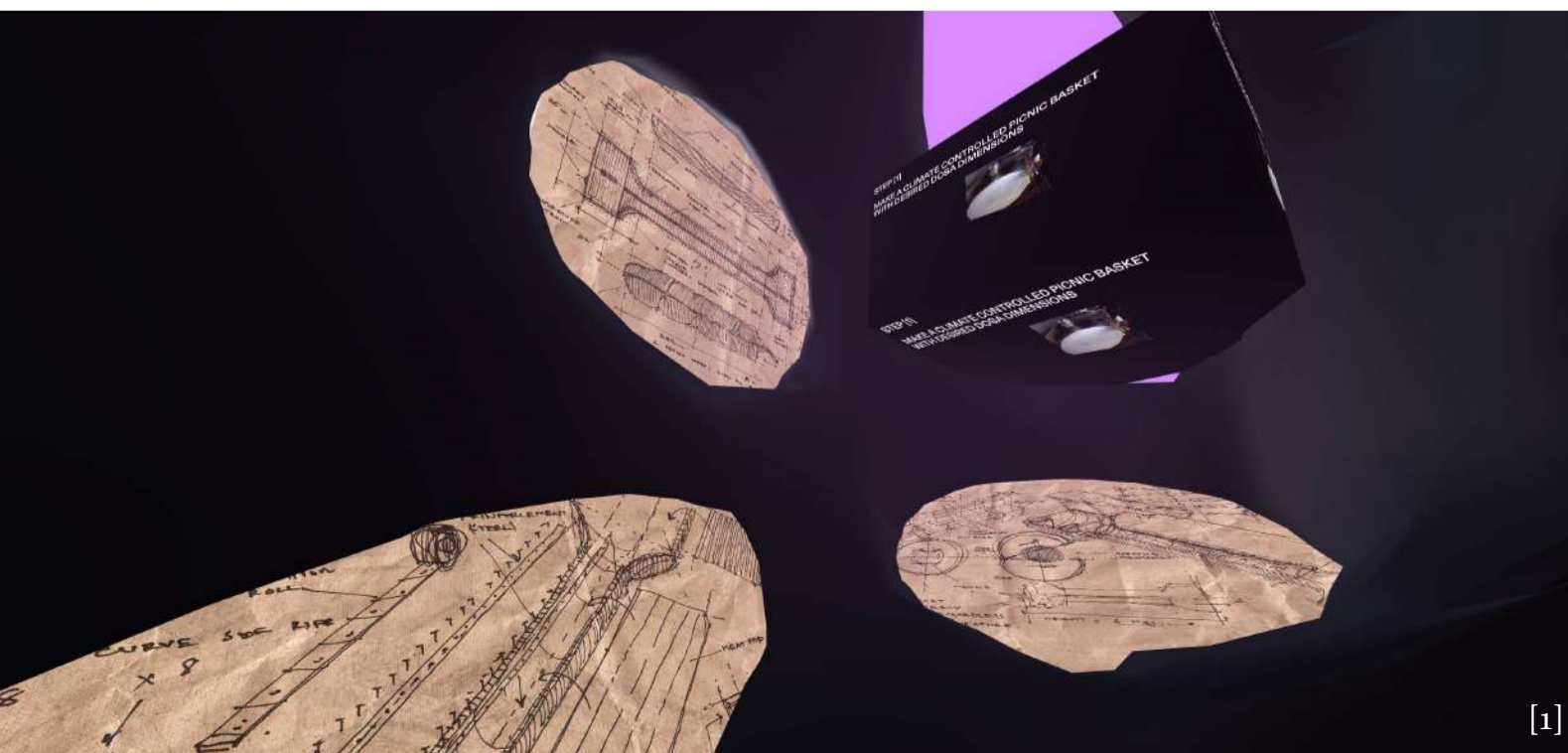


SHAASHWATHI SAINTHOSH

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

A lot of my work pushes us to think about other worlds, parallel realities, and alternate forms of existence. I read *Alt-Alterity* in the same vein. It's not just about mad scientist energy; it's about a passionate rebellion against the inertia of the familiar. Our imaginations are often constrained by the stories we tell ourselves. Continuously challenging our ideological comfort zones and pain points can lead us to reconsider whether we want to continue doing things the same way or not.

I think Design, with all its toolkits and traditions, makes a great conduit for experimentation outside the brick walls of our creative forts. What lies in the lands far away? To climb over the tall barricades and traverse across subjects of esoteric philosophy, natural sciences, manufacturing, policy, and politics, I think it takes a design alchemist and the heart of a rebel scientist to orchestrate the ebb and flow of what could be conceived as "normal." Only then can we truly choreograph the delicate dance between the mundane and the miraculous.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

Growing up, I had a fascination with what lay beneath the surface of everyday gadgets. The inner workings of electronics—the circuit boards, the leaky batteries, and wires tucked behind injection-molded plastic cases—were my playground. Taking apart anything I could get my hands on, from radios to Walkmans, became a ritual. I recall challenging myself to take them apart and put them back together without jeopardizing their functioning. I failed most times. But each time, I discovered a hidden order, a clean and secret realm, where clutter triumphed, and the invisible design details of engineering were laid bare.

These hidden interiors were like secret worlds, places where the usual rules of appearance didn't apply. Instead, these spaces celebrated what was often kept out of sight: the supports, the markings of manufacture, and the fundamental elements that made these objects work. It was a stark contrast to the outer facades we're so used to judging. This is one of the first alternate realities that I experienced.

This sparked my interest in the themes of other worlds and parallel realities that already exist cocooned inside our imaginations. I learned that perhaps to reach these other worlds, we don't need to start from scratch; instead, we should shift our perspective—to question and look beyond what we're accustomed to accepting as the absolute truth. We should push ourselves to remove the



covers of the reality we hold so firmly. I enjoy unscrewing the exterior and peering behind the curtains that we so readily accept as the ultimate truth. And this is challenging. Resisting the urge and nurturing curiosity can be difficult. However, I believe that sometimes it's not about designing and creating entirely new things; it's about remixing existing design paradigms to develop lenses and filters that allow us to perceive alternative realities within and beyond our immediate and accepted ones.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"The Climate Controlled Dosa Picnic Basket" is a collaboration with my long-term creative partner, Nithin Eluvathingal. Together, we run a humble studio practice called "Kinky Kashayam," focused on twisting the worlds of history, sciences, technology, socio-economics, critical fiction, and humor.

We consider ourselves researchers of human stories who are grappling with our Southern-Indian identities. We wondered what industrial design would look like if it grew within and amongst the belief systems of the part of the world we are from. What would the obvious objects look like and solve for? Since Dosa is notoriously difficult to transport due to its fragility, this machine finally puts a long Dosa on the menu for an outdoor picnic.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

I am a strong believer in the power of non-physical spaces as channels for creative equity. The magic of spaces we can't touch or see, like the internet or our imagination, where everyone has an equal chance to share their ideas. In these spaces, it doesn't matter where you come from or what you own; what's important are the ideas you bring to the table. It's like a vast, open field where everyone is invited to play, share, and create together. As these virtual spaces become more common, they may encourage a shift in how value and prestige are assigned in the art world. Success may no longer be tied solely to physical sales or exclusive exhibitions but could also be measured by the ability to spark conversations across cultures and continents. This is where fairness in sharing and creating can flourish, where stories and dreams from all over can intermingle and thrive.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Yes, I do miss certain aspects of a physical space. The intimate exchange between artist and beholder in the physical realm carries a magic all its own. To witness their reactions in real-time, their emotions flickering across their faces as they engage with your creation. Such moments are treasures and hold gravity in my heart. Yet, there is an equally wondrous facet to the sharing of

work in non-physical spaces. It sails across the vast virtual ocean, lands in places I've never set foot in, and speaks to souls I've never seen.

I believe this duality is a gift in our time—the tangible joy of local connection, paired with the boundless reach of global interaction. In this dance between the near and the far, the personal and the universal, creative sharing becomes an omnipresent force, simultaneously nestled in the nooks of intimate galleries and soaring through the endless skies of the internet.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Curious individuals, murky creative identities, and ambiguous disciplinary interests—I don't select my audience, nor do I try to ascribe my work to a specific group. I often find myself creating work that my 8-year-old self once conceived. I'm guided by the echoes of my childhood fantasies, paying homage to those unbothered daydreams, engaging in a conversation across time with the fantasies that have never faded. Each piece I create is an attempt to shake hands with my past, inviting the dreams of that wide-eyed energy into the realm of "serious" design today.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

We have entered the age of hyperstimuli, content for content's sake, minuscule attention spans, biased intelligence models, streaming actual wars online, post-privacy, and so on. However, we have also entered a world where large language models can describe the world to those who can't see it. These same models are capable of accelerating the discovery of safer natural materials. Additionally, there is high-speed internet access in remote parts of the world, affordable access to vaccines, highly capable open-source software, wiser urban planning methods, and a more diverse range of voices in global power dynamics. We've come a long way, and if we continue to share, care, and use these new tools wisely, there's no telling the remarkable places we can reach next. This is the story we are all currently crafting, and it can be quite fascinating.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

In the studio of tomorrow, let's continue to champion curiosity. I recall Yuval Harari's response to Lex Fridman when he was asked to expound on his thoughts about the existence of aliens. He claimed, "Intelligence is overrated" and went on to explain that high intelligence is the reason that we are destroying the planet, our home, for our selfish

reasons. But is it our sharp wit, and our soaring IQs, that have led us to the brink of our own undoing? Perhaps. Yet, here's a twist in the tale: what if our greatest tool isn't the ability to outthink, but to wonder?

Here is my response, I tend to agree. I add that I think curiosity is understated. Curiosity isn't a race to the finish line; it's a leisurely stroll through the universe's endless library. It teaches us to sit at the feet of the inanimate, the microscopic, and listen. Curiosity gives us the humility to accept that we don't know it all and it is worth looking to other forms of non-human intelligence like plants, animals, fungi, objects, materials, and bacteria, for inspiration to deal with the questions of climate breakdown, mass extinctions, financial collapse, global wars, populism, etc.

In this future studio, let's not merely gaze at our own reflections but look outward with the eyes of children discovering the world anew. Let's weave curiosity into our canvases as we face the shadows cast by climate change, extinction, upheaval, war, and division. For in this quiet humility, in this state of perpetual learning, we might just find the strokes to paint a path to harmony.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

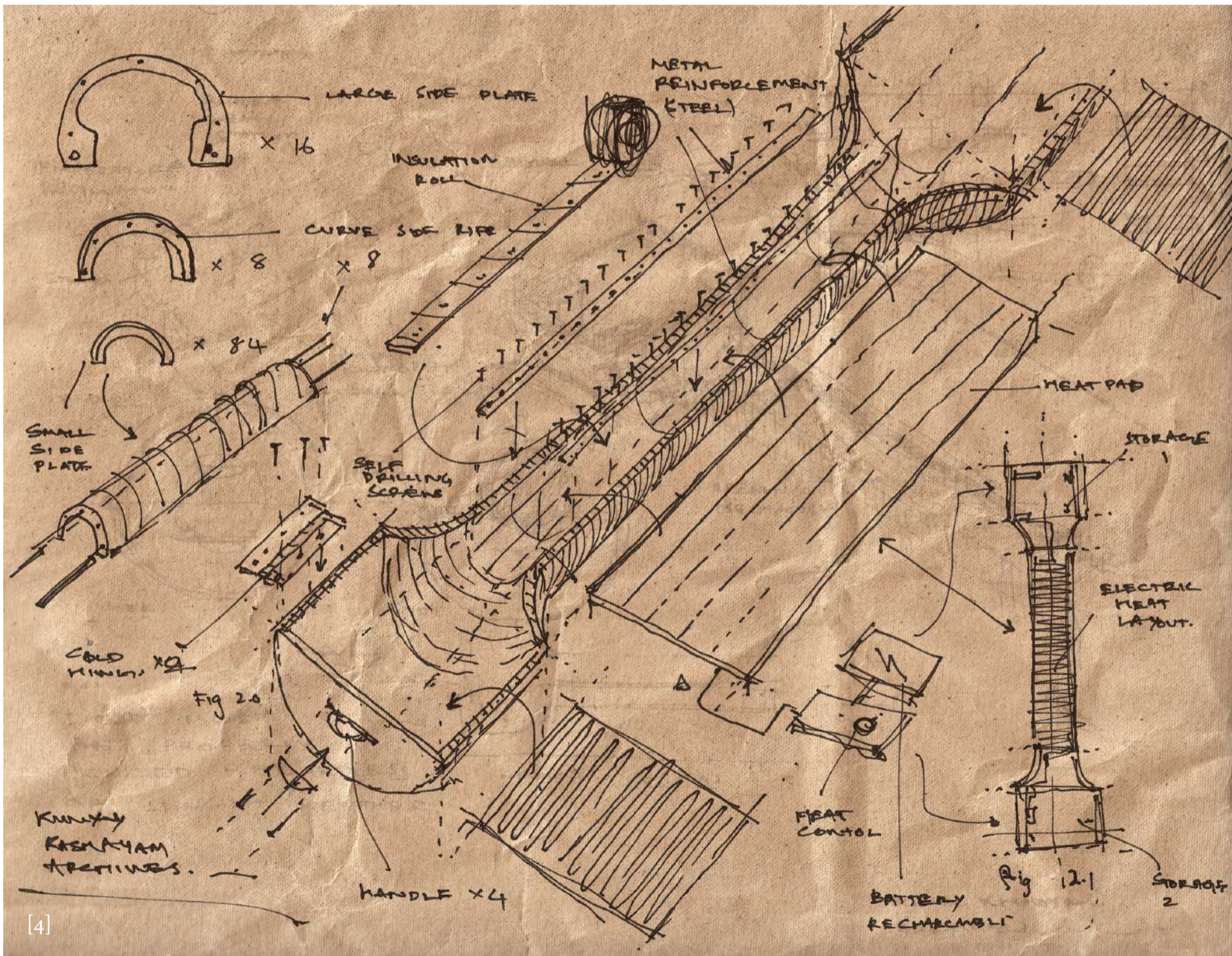
I have been recently getting into vintage patent archives from governments all over the world. Each page is either brimming with the sheer brilliance or laughable musings of designers before us. I've been enjoying looking at these to imagine (very possible) alternate worlds where some of

these inventions, were more than just ideas on paper and could have been taken seriously.

The mere thought that any one of these designs could have profoundly altered our present day is like contemplating the butterfly effect—a small flutter that could've steered history down an entirely different path.

Consider the ubiquitous keyboard: a forest of keys at which we type without a second thought. Among the many layouts that were once proposed, the QWERTY arrangement emerged victorious, not solely by design but perhaps by serendipity—the right idea in the right hands at the right moment. Had another layout prevailed, it would have changed our input systems for machines in ways that we can have a lot of fun speculating on.

This is why I love these old patent documents. They are not just relics of the past but invitations to dream of what could have been. For anyone with a curious mind and a love for history's hidden what-ifs, I highly recommend exploring patent archives.



[4]

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Shashwath Santosh](#) is a designer based in New York with a background in industrial design. After receiving a BFA in Product Design from Parsons School of Design, New York, he is currently experimenting with imagination and fiction around emerging technology at The Google Creative Lab, New York.

Independently, his studio work converges design with critical thought and speculation. He uses projects to pose questions and stretch his imagination; this has given him the opportunity to work with the likes of IBM Quantum, CRED Bank, The Times Square Alliance, and the Designed Realities Lab, New School.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

The Dosa, a traditional Indian dish beloved for its delicate and crispy texture, is notoriously difficult to transport due to its fragility. This machine finally puts a long Dosa on the menu for an outdoor picnic.

This is documentation of transporting a special order Dosa from Saravanah Bhavan, New York, to a picnic spot in Madison Square Park.

Featured in the Film:
Tarshaa Krishnaraj, Krithi Nalla,
Tanvi Mishra

IMAGE CAPTIONS

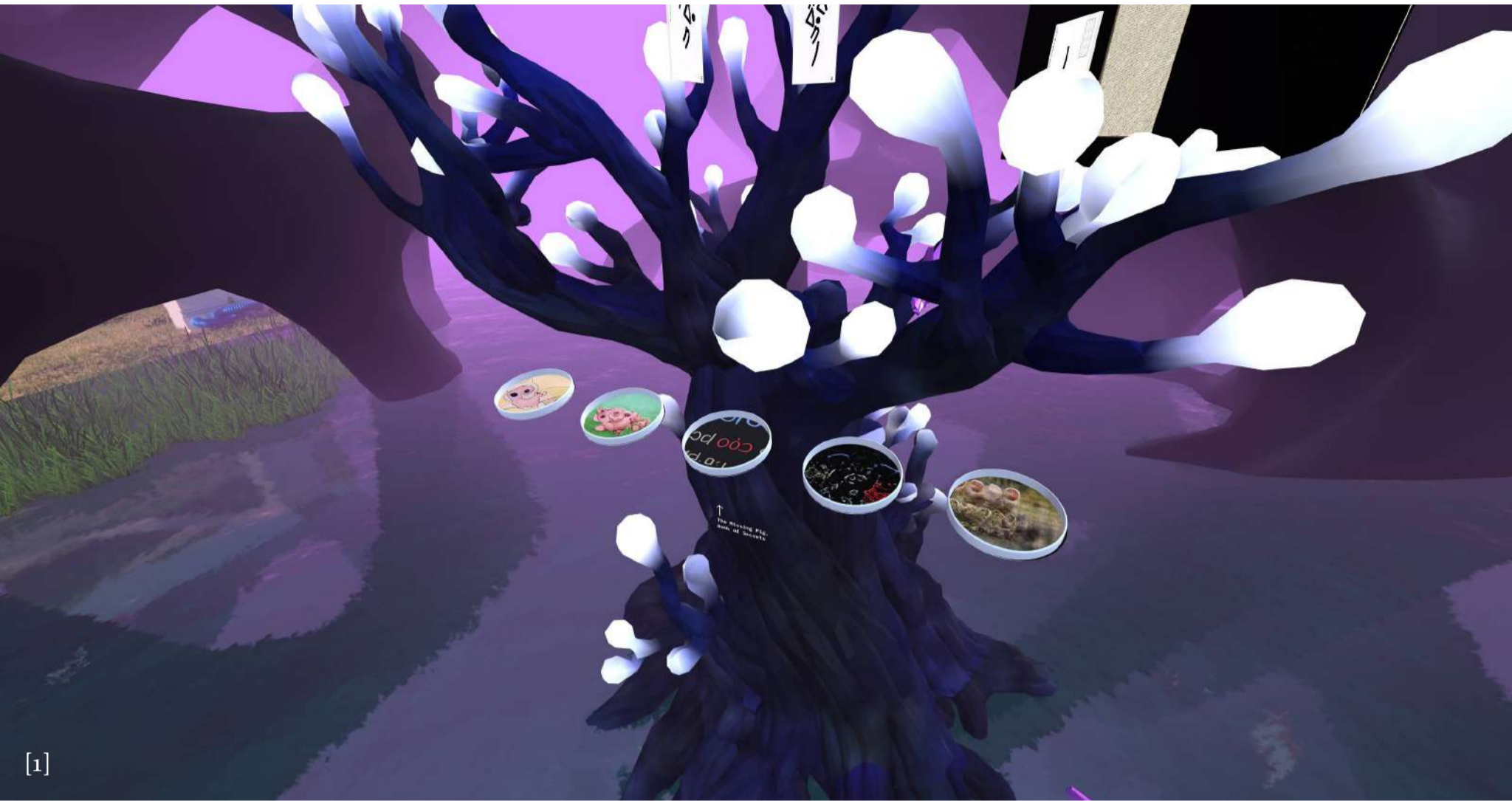
[1] *Climate-Controlled Dosa Picnic Basket* (Exhibition Screenshot), Shashwath Santosh and Nithin Eluvathingal (Studio Kinky Kashayam), 2022.

[2][3] *Climate-Controlled Dosa Picnic Basket* (Still), Shashwath Santosh and Nithin Eluvathingal (Studio Kinky Kashayam), 2022. CNC Plywood and Physical Computation. 4.5 x 1 x 1 Feet.

[4] The design sketch for the Dosa Picnic Basket.



YUJWEN HUANG



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

I believe the theme of the exhibition, *Alt-Alterity*, is about rebellion and challenge against anthropocentrism. This theme delves into everything beyond the human realm. The addition of "alt" as a prefix signifies a deeper exploration of the non-traditional differences among non-human entities. This exploration goes beyond mere biological distinctions such as species, gender, or the line between living and non-living things. Instead, it probes into the potential for alternative ways of existing within the intersections of various disciplines under the current virtuality media environment. The exhibition theme stimulates our imagination, inviting us to reflect on the environment we often take for granted.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I have a background in digital media art, currently pursuing an MFA in Art and Technology Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. My work generally explores themes of nature, history, and identity through the use of technology.

The piece I selected for this exhibition stemmed from a prolonged personal experience of physical discomfort after consuming pork. This incident prompted me to delve deeper into the essence of pork, contemplating not only the food itself but also its underlying phenomenon in society. I realized how detached I had become from the source of pork and began questioning its true nature, transcending it as being labeled as mere "food."

This reflection led to broader inquiries about our contemporary life. Nowadays, people are becoming increasingly distanced from the natural environment, sinking into a technological landscape. I began to ponder the extent of a non-human entity's presence, and how it is transformed by an advanced society. This is not only related to the entities' existential crisis but also to the erasure of their identity within the society's culture.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

My work focuses on the image and concept of the pig as a specific creature, exploring how technology, at the current level of scientific and technological development, influences and gradually erases its image and concept. I also explore the concept of lab-grown meat, incorporating Petri dishes in my work to reflect on the significance of biological life. Not only is its territory of existence threatened, but its conceptual context is also completely separated from its original identity, further resulting in its identity being expelled by technology.

Through the use of AI generation technology, my work encourages people to recode their image of a pig. It raises questions about whether the image of pigs in the future will become increasingly abstract and vague in our minds as nature and society become further separated. The AI-generated videos provide room for imagination, allowing viewers to consider possibilities rather than offering very specific and exact images.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

In general, I learn about other new media artists as well as about art festivals that are far from me via online platforms. So, I am heavily dependent on online platforms. I think the biggest advantage of a digital exhibition is that it breaks down geographical barriers, allowing art to be accessed globally and in turn, shaping new ways of seeing and experiencing art. Also, digital exhibitions contribute to the preservation and documentation of art.

However, this doesn't mean physical spaces are a thing of the past. More and more physical spaces are now including digital artworks. From my perspective, digital spaces as well as physical spaces both create room for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard in the digital age. While digital spaces offer a broader platform for artists to create and present their media artworks, physical spaces allow media artworks to create immersive ways for people to interact with and experience the world around them. Digital and physical art spaces each have pros and cons, but they have both brought about significant changes and contributed to the art world in the digital age.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

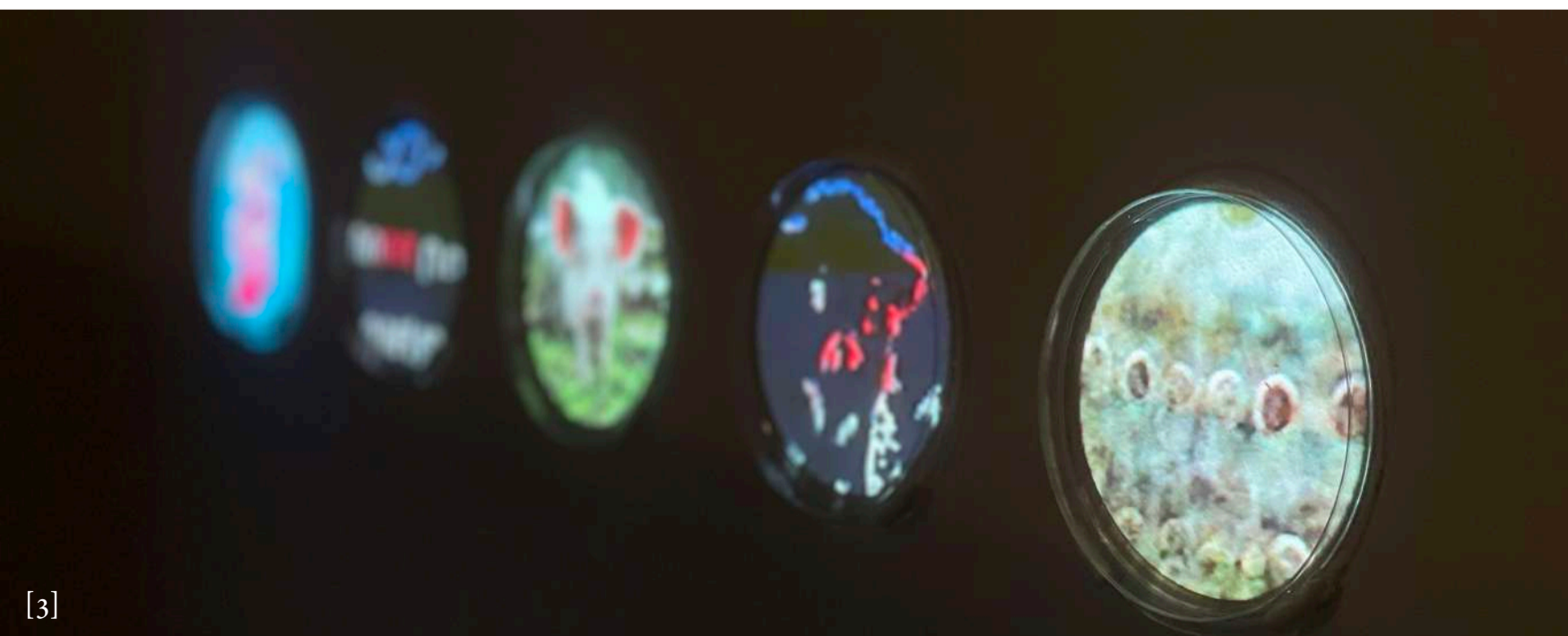
I have never thought particularly about the impact of the virtual environment on my creative approach because, as a digital native, most of my creations are made in the virtual environment. This is as natural to me as eating or holding chopsticks. Occasionally, I will create physical installations. It depends on the situation, especially when I need to place virtual works in a physical space. For example, my blockchain artworks outside of exhibitions are interactive pieces built on the Internet, more suitable for interactive operations in the virtual space and set within an online context. However, when I need to present the work in a physical space, it becomes mundane. What you see is only one monitor and a mouse in the physical space, which can be boring. To make online works more tangible and accessible to the public, I add physical installations and environments. This way, the window of the virtual world can be better connected to the real space.

But in another work of mine, "Random Walk Memory," I attempted to combine online platform technology with offline activities to create art. For instance, I used the pattern generated by an early basic programming language as a guide to navigating real spaces in the city. I then employed current fashionable Python technology to visually express the experiences and emotions related to these physical spaces. I don't see virtual and physical spaces as binary opposites; instead, I see how, at certain moments, they coexist and complement each other.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I think normally, I create for an audience that is interested in the characteristics of technology because my medium selection is usually based on its technical characteristics and incorporates these into the concept of my work. Such media attributes are part of the concept and require a certain threshold of understanding. Visual representation is a secondary consideration in my work, so sometimes my work cannot convey information to the audience very directly visually.

For example, in "The Missing Pig," I chose AI generation as a means of expression, based on the fact that it can abandon the original thing and generate new things based on human subjective selection. And in turn, this requires the audience to have a certain background understanding of how AI generation works. In a different work "To Be an In-Circle Artist," I chose blockchain technology to



explore the definition and boundaries of an artist, based on blockchain's utopian properties of decentralization, permanent record, and energy-consuming characteristics. There are no flashy visuals; the work was presented in a minimalist way. So, without any background in blockchain, the appearance of the work might not be fancy enough to catch people's eyes.

But naturally, every exhibition attracts unexpected audiences, and these experiences also enrich my understanding of my own work. So, I strive to balance between creating for the two. When it comes to unexpected audiences, my primary focus is usually on building a connection at a visual level.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

In my vision of the future, animals would cease to be the exclusive source of sustenance. Instead, a diverse range of alternatives is embraced, breaking us free from the traditional power structures, hierarchies, wealth disparities, and cultural beliefs ingrained in our food choices. Plant-based options, lab-grown proteins, and sustainable food sources would be commonplace, fostering a society where the chosen source of nourishment is no longer associated with social status or cultural identity. This future would promote equality and inclusivity, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, has access to nutritious and ethical

food choices. In turn, it would lead to a more harmonious relationship between humans, animals, and the environment.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Humans desire meat due to the historical and cultural significance it holds for them. The pursuit and domination of animals in pursuit of meat turned meat into a symbol of masculinity, strength, and wealth, originating from the early cultures of hunting and farming. Plant-based meat, while it holds great potential for conserving environmental resources, has been under-appreciated, partly due to the cultural meanings historically ascribed to meat. However, lab-grown meat presents a new alternative that has the potential to reshape our perceptions of meat and in turn of animals. It exists in the middle ground, between traditional meat and plants, and offers ambiguity. This option not only conserves resources but also has the potential to alleviate social inequalities that were perpetuated by previous meat-eating societies.

I believe that the concept of "otherness" gains profound meaning within this context. The moving image of pigs in my works reflecting lab-grown meat introduces a new meaning to the idea of "otherness" for our future. Lab-grown meat shows us how "othering" can apply to more than humans, but it applies to more than non-humans as

well. I believe our efforts can begin with how we perceive our food and our eating habits, which significantly influences our impact on animals and our expansion of the concept of "otherness." Lab-grown meat, as an epitome of "otherness," plays a significant role in our future life. It liberates animals from the historical symbols imposed upon them. This represents a genuine form of "otherness," one that technology has created.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

The first thing that comes to my mind is water. Water is incredibly adaptable. It can take the shape of any container it is put in and seamlessly integrate with other elements. It is also colorless and odorless, and it can take on any color and flavor when combined with other substances. This philosophy extends to my approach to life, emphasizing the importance of enjoying and adapting to life's changes. Additionally, while seemingly transparent and unassuming, water holds immeasurable depth and significance. Similarly, my art may appear simple on the surface, but it carries layers of meaning and intention beneath. It challenges viewers to look beyond the obvious, inviting them to explore the concepts and ideas embedded within the artwork.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Some interesting books, as references related to my artwork:

- **Lestel, Dominique. Eat This Book : a Carnivore's Manifesto. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.**
- **Adams, Carol J. The Sexual Politics of Meat : a Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory. Bloomsbury Revelations edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2015.**
- **Koert van Mensvoort and Hendrik-Jan Grievink. The In Vitro Meat Cook Book. Laurence King Publishing, 2014.**

Other Book recommendations: Domenico Quaranta, Surfing with Satoshi Art, Blockchain and NFTs, 2022.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Yuwen Huang](#) (b. 1997) is a conceptual media artist, currently pursuing an MFA in the Art and Technology department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Her practice focuses on Virtuality through different mediums such as video, net, installation, gan-generated images and videos, blockchain, and creative writing. Influenced by Eastern philosophies such as I-Ching and spiritual Cultivation, Eastern spiritual thinking and Western research-based methods are both important in her process of creation. As she is interested in the interconnectedness of all things and their connection to our inner experiences, her conceptual-based art explores how technology extends our perception and expands our understanding of the things around us. Common themes in her works include nature, history, and identity as they relate to technology. In 2019, she received a Bachelor of Arts in Intermedia Art from the China Academy of Art (CAA in Hangzhou, China), and her work was selected for the Lumen Prize Longlist in the Crypto category in 2023.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Datasets were collected from different kinds of pictures of pigs online and terms for pigs in different languages. Those images online have been selected and filtered many times by human desire. In the experiment, the algorithm creates new images and a new language for pigs. Similar to LGM (lab-grown meat), it was created by technology without the presence of any animals, and it separates the concept of the pig from the context of meat. This work discusses the erasure of pigs physically and their absence in our psychological minds.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *The Missing Pig* (Exhibition Screenshot), Yuwen Huang, 2022.

[2/3] *The Missing Pig*, Yuwen Huang, 2022. Gan-generated Videos on 90 x 15 mm Petri Dishes.



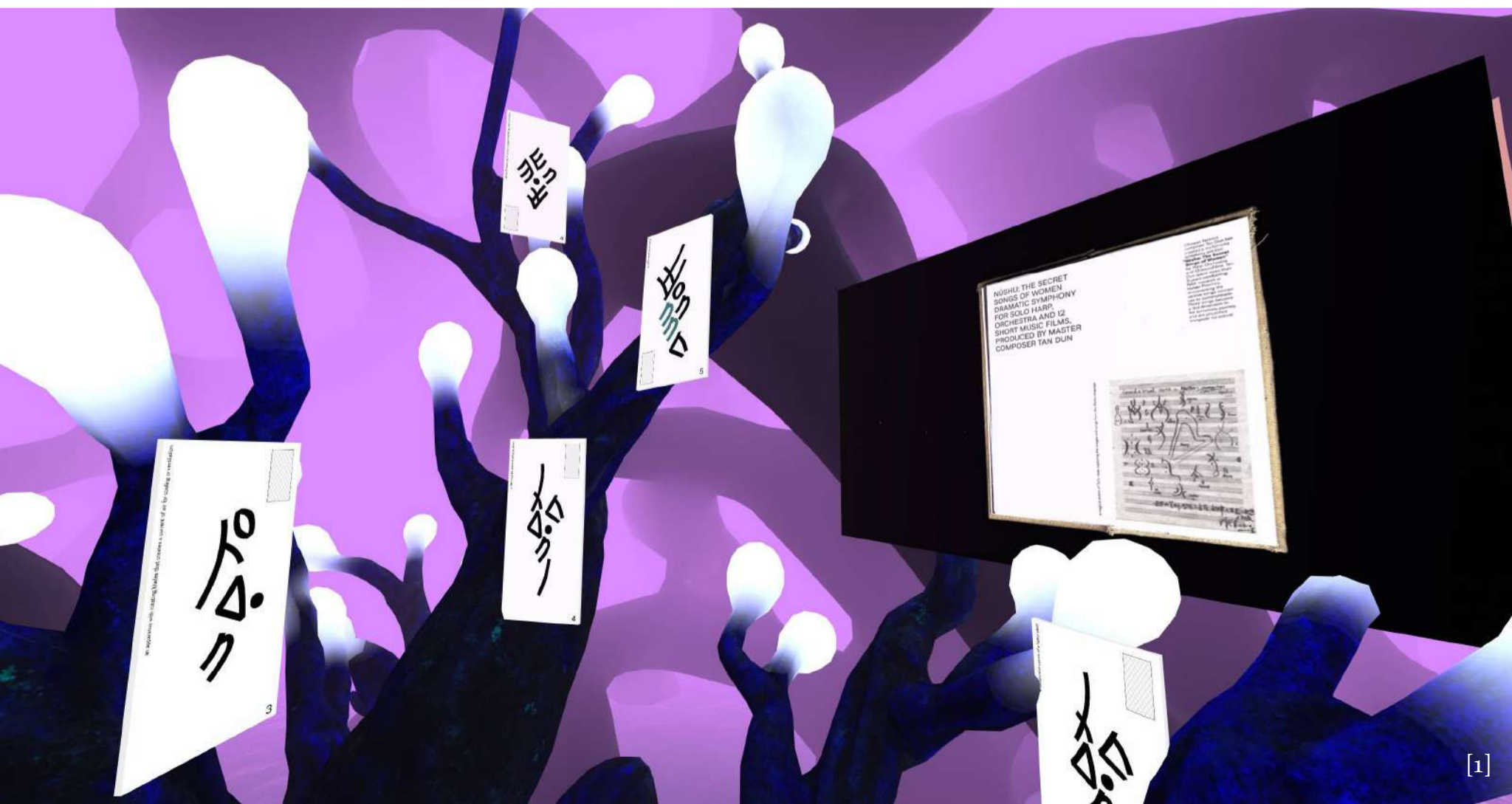
TIANNYUN JIANG

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity refers to a concept that explores alternative forms of cultural or linguistic expression, often emerging from marginalized or underrepresented communities. In the context of my project inspired by Nüshu, *Alt-Alterity* signifies a departure from conventional modes of communication, as it delves into the unique and historically significant gender-specific language invented by Chinese women in the 19th century. This theme invites us to reevaluate established norms and to appreciate the richness of diverse linguistic and cultural practices.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

With a "multi-cultural" background and professional experience in both industrial and graphic design, my



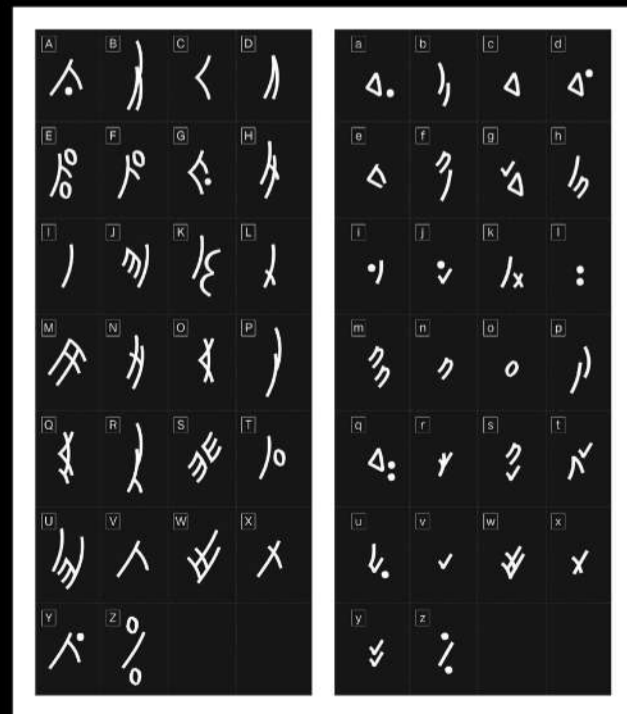
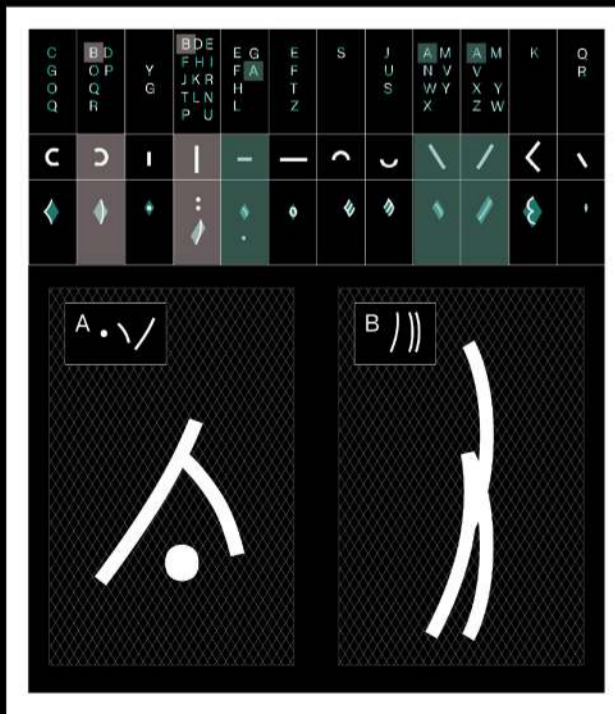
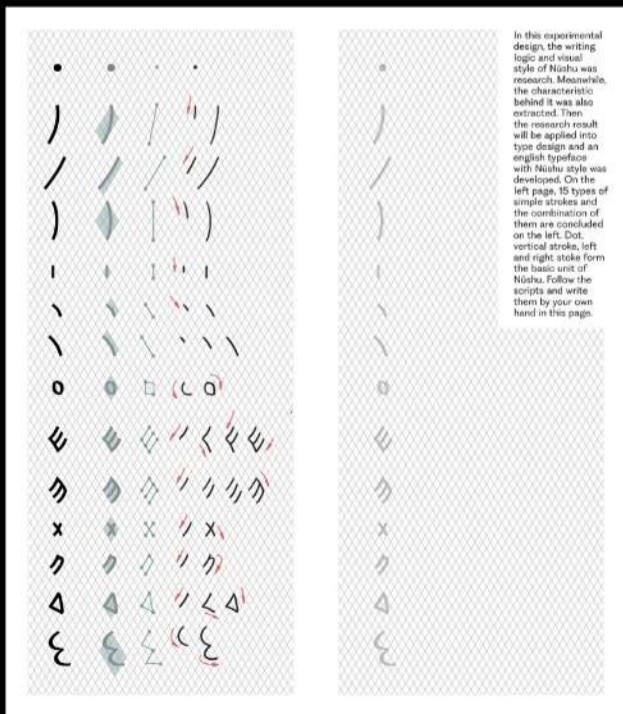
creative journey has been shaped by a diverse range of influences. It was during this time that I became captivated by the potential of design to convey cultural narratives and challenge conventional modes of expression. This led me to explore themes related to cultural diversity, inclusivity, and the reimagining of traditional forms of communication. The Nüshu-inspired project, for example, emerged from a deep appreciation for the ingenuity of Chinese women who created this unique language, as well as a desire to extend its legacy into new creative realms.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

My exhibited work revolves around the exploration and reinterpretation of Nüshu, a unique gender-specific language invented by Chinese women in the 19th century. During that era, being a woman often meant facing harsh realities like foot binding and little educational opportunities. In Jiangyong Province, China, women reacted to this situation by creating their own written language, Nüshu, secretly handed down from mother to daughter and used only between women. In this context, *Alt-Alterity* signifies a departure from conventional modes of communication—not just an alternative method of communication, but also a subtle act of defiance against the societal norms that restricted women's freedoms and opportunities.

The project takes the form of an experimental type design,

drawing inspiration from Nüshu's distinct visual elements. These elements are characterized by long-diamond-shaped characters with fine and uniform strokes, often resembling mosquitoes or ants. By incorporating these features into the design, my aim is to pay homage to the ingenuity of the women who created Nüshu and extend its possibilities beyond its original cultural context. This project serves as a visual representation of a world where women's voices and expressions, historically constrained, discover new forms of empowerment and artistic expression through the medium of Nüshu-inspired type.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Digital exhibitions break down boundaries, making art globally accessible. They provide a platform for underrepresented voices, foster innovative presentation, and reduce environmental impact. They also enhance interactivity and engagement and offer data analytics for better outreach and understanding of the audience.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

The virtual environment expands my creative possibilities. It allows for immersive experiences and innovative presentations that may not be feasible in physical spaces. However, it also requires a different approach to engagement. In a virtual context, interactivity and user experience design play a crucial role. Balancing these aspects is essential for a successful transition between virtual and physical spaces.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

My ideal audience comprises individuals with a profound appreciation for the intricate interplay between cultural expressions and design innovation. Specifically, I hope



[3]

to resonate with those who recognize the transformative power of art in giving voice to marginalized communities. Women, in particular, hold a special place in the narrative that inspires my work.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

My vision for a future that transcends current challenges draws from a blend of resilience, innovation, and collective action. It envisions a world where diverse cultures harmoniously coexist, drawing strength from their unique narratives. In this future, technology and design serve as tools for empowerment, fostering inclusivity, and breaking down barriers. Ultimately, my vision for the future transcends the limitations of the present by embracing a collective commitment to progress, inclusivity, and the enduring power of creativity and cultural exchange. It is a future where the diverse tapestry of human experience is celebrated, and where innovation is harnessed for the betterment of all.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

My vision requires a collective effort from all of us. When I say "us," I'm referring to individuals, communities, and societies at large. From my perspective, embracing sustainable practices in our daily lives is a tangible way to make a difference. This includes reducing waste, conserving energy, supporting eco-conscious businesses, and advocating for sustainable policies. Furthermore, fostering collaboration between diverse communities, disciplines, and industries is crucial. Tackling complex challenges like climate change and social injustice requires collective effort and expertise.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would liken it to a fusion dish. Much like how fusion cuisine combines elements from different culinary traditions, my work draws inspiration from diverse cultural and artistic influences. It blends elements of traditional and contemporary design, creating a harmonious synthesis of form and meaning. This fusion approach allows for the creation of something entirely new and unexpected, much like how my work seeks to reimagine and extend the possibilities of Nüshu.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I would like to recommend "The Tuning of the World" by R. Murray Schafer. It prompts us to look beyond conventional modes of expression and perception, resonating with the concept of *Alt-Alterity*. It highlights the richness and significance of alternative forms of communication. Together, they challenge us to broaden our understanding of how we engage with the world around us and the diverse modes of expression that shape our experiences.

THE SECRETS IS ABOUT TO UNVEIL. FIGURE OUT THE RIGHT WORDS WRITTEN IN THE NEW TYPE. THE HINT ON THE LEFT UP CORNER IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD, AND HINT ON THE RIGHT DOWN CORNER IS THE NUMBERS OF LETTERS IT CONTAINS.

an adult female human being

atmosphere water vapor frozen into ice crystals and falling in light white flakes

an apparatus with rotating blades that creates a current of air for cooling or ventilation

breath as needed in physical exertion or in speech

a flattened structure of a higher plant

hint: the meaning of the word

hint: the number of letter

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Hailing from China and now based in New York City, [Tianyun Jiang](#) is an industrial designer, graphic designer, and illustrator. Her design approach centers on deriving inspiration from everyday human experiences. She possesses a keen ability to distill narratives from tangible and sensory encounters, resulting in designs that resonate on a deeply human level. With a multidisciplinary skill set and a global perspective, she creates solutions that seamlessly merge form and function, transcending cultural boundaries. Tianyun's work is characterized by a commitment to pushing the boundaries of design innovation, aiming to leave an indelible mark on the creative landscape.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Nüshu, conceived by Chinese women in the 19th century, stands as a unique gender-specific language. This experimental design venture draws inspiration from Nüshu, following its distinctive typographic style. The characters often take the form of elongated diamond shapes, characterized by precise and consistent strokes, resembling either mosquitoes or ants.

Guidelines are established based

on thorough research, ensuring that corresponding strokes in English types mirror those in Nüshu.

The objective of this endeavor is to further explore the aesthetic potential of Nüshu and push its boundaries. Consequently, more ambitious experiments are undertaken. The devised typefaces are arranged in the diamond configuration, mirroring the original Nüshu, to articulate English words such as "Flower" and "Women."

Within this specialized type, English poems are penned. Additionally, there exist editorial layouts for the expanded campaign which is the Nüshu Book Design Project: "Book of Secrets." The origins of Nüshu are told in book side A. The experimental English-type design inspired by Nüshu is presented in book side B. On the left-hand pages of side B, one encounters poems, while the right-hand pages provide room for the audience to decipher the meaning of the verse.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Book of Secrets* (Exhibition Screenshot), Tianyun Jiang, 2022.

[2-4] *Book of Secrets*, Tianyun Jiang, 2022. Prints. 3.5 x 7 Inches each. [5] *Book of Secrets - Word Puzzles*, Tianyun Jiang, 2022. Figure out the right words written in the new type. The hint on the left up corner is the meaning of the word, and hint on the right down corner is the numbers of letters it contains.



MEHRDAD SEDAGHAT BAGHBANI

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

As an immigrant navigating the complexities of life between two cultures and societies, I've gained a profound understanding of the concept of "difference" and its profound impact on individuals and communities. Moving to the United States from Iran has opened my eyes to the nuances of "othering" and the systems that perpetuate it. In a world where certain races, genders, or nationalities are deemed "less than" by oppressive political and social structures, "difference" becomes a tool of marginalization. As an immigrant or person of color, these systems permeate our daily lives, often subtly, influencing our experiences and opportunities. The "otherness" imposed upon us can be a constant struggle, a battle to maintain and build our identities in the face of societal pressures.

The current political climate further exacerbates these challenges. The rise of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment has created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty for many marginalized groups. Navigating this landscape requires resilience, self-awareness, and a commitment to challenging the systems that perpetuate injustice. Despite the obstacles, I believe that embracing our "difference" is a source of strength. Our unique experiences and perspectives enrich the tapestry of human diversity, offering valuable insights into the complexities of our world. By sharing our stories and advocating for change, we can help dismantle the barriers that divide us and foster a more inclusive society.

Our journey as immigrants and people of color is a testament to our resilience and our unwavering belief in the power of human connection. Through our struggles and triumphs, we redefine the concept of "difference," transforming it from a mark of exclusion into a badge of honor, a symbol of our unique contributions to the world.



[1]

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

My artistic path emerges from the intersection of identity, technology, and the delicate interweaving of art and design. Rooted in Iran and confronted by the complexities of a new life in the United States, I found myself grappling with a fragmented sense of identity—a defining moment that ignited my creative exploration. Instead of ignoring the challenges inherent in cultural conflicts, I embraced them, assuming the roles of both artist-citizen and design educator. Through interactive installations, I seamlessly blend analog and digital elements, uniting hybrid aesthetics with machine vision. At its core, my work delves into the intricate nuances of human differences and cultural identity, particularly those encountered by individuals navigating diverse worlds. Living and creating at the crossroads of two distinct cultures, my art serves as a bridge, fostering resilience, adaptation, and cross-cultural understanding—a journey intricately intertwined with the theme of *Alt-Alterity*.

Currently, I hold the position of Assistant Professor in Graphic Design in the Department of Visual Arts and Art History at Florida Atlantic University, where I strive to prepare students not only for careers as professional practitioners but also with a heightened understanding of design as a social practice. I believe that design has the power to shape our world, and I am committed to empowering students to use their design skills to make a positive impact on society.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

Through the use of typography and artificial intelligence, "Homeland" aims to examine concepts such as belonging, the feeling of "otherness," and the invasion of privacy—an all-too-common experience for immigrants before and after being granted any sort of visa to enter the U.S. "Homeland" utilizes personal storytelling and poetic speculations to challenge assumed, invisible, or often unspoken struggles encountered by immigrants/POC when entering spaces not designed for them. This work employs reverse engineering and the shifting of power dynamics to guide the audience through a series of experiences, each designed to communicate a specific emotion or story. Instead of fixating on the apparent idea



[2]

Don't worry;
I have taken all the things...

The orange pullover,
You gave me on my birthday,
ticket's stub of movies we saw together,
My big gloves are a memory of your small hands,
The shoes that came with us all the way from Tajrish* to Vanak*
And Pink Floyd was singing in our ears,

As I told you, I have taken everything with me,
But now my baggage is too heavy
and the aircraft can not take off from the runway.

* two famous squares in Tehran

[3]

of "bridging" as a connecting point, my goal is to fill gaps by honoring "differences," perhaps through a method more akin to building a tunnel. The audience is given the choice of participation or denial as they enter the space. This project also criticizes the role of artificial intelligence trained by data collected for commercial purposes on the internet and particularly on social media. It explores how this AI contributes to the creation of an "othering" image on one side and represents an inauthentic image of host societies to immigrants on the other side.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

The virtual environment offers a unique canvas for art projects." The digital space allows for interactive and immersive experiences that may not be achievable in a traditional gallery setting. However, considerations must be made for the potential loss of physicality and direct engagement. "Homeland" leverages the virtual space to amplify the impact of its message, providing an accessible platform for a global audience to engage with the narrative.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Embracing the digital realm has profoundly transformed my artistic practices. The virtual canvas offers boundless freedom to explore a spectrum of mediums and styles, surpassing the limitations of physical space. This digital journey unveils a global stage where my artistic creations can connect with a diverse audience, fostering a shared artistic experience. However, the virtual realm presents unique challenges. In a world saturated with distractions, capturing viewer attention is paramount. To overcome this, I meticulously craft visually captivating and intellectually stimulating artworks, captivating the imagination and evoking profound emotions. Additionally, I embrace the power of immersive technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, to create interactive experiences that seamlessly blend the physical and virtual worlds. Despite the inherent challenges, I remain steadfast in my commitment to navigating the ever-

evolving digital landscape with unwavering innovation. I am determined to harness the boundless potential of this new medium, pushing the boundaries of artistic expression and fostering a global community of creative explorers. As I embark on this digital journey, I am filled with anticipation, eager to discover the boundless possibilities that await me in the virtual realm.

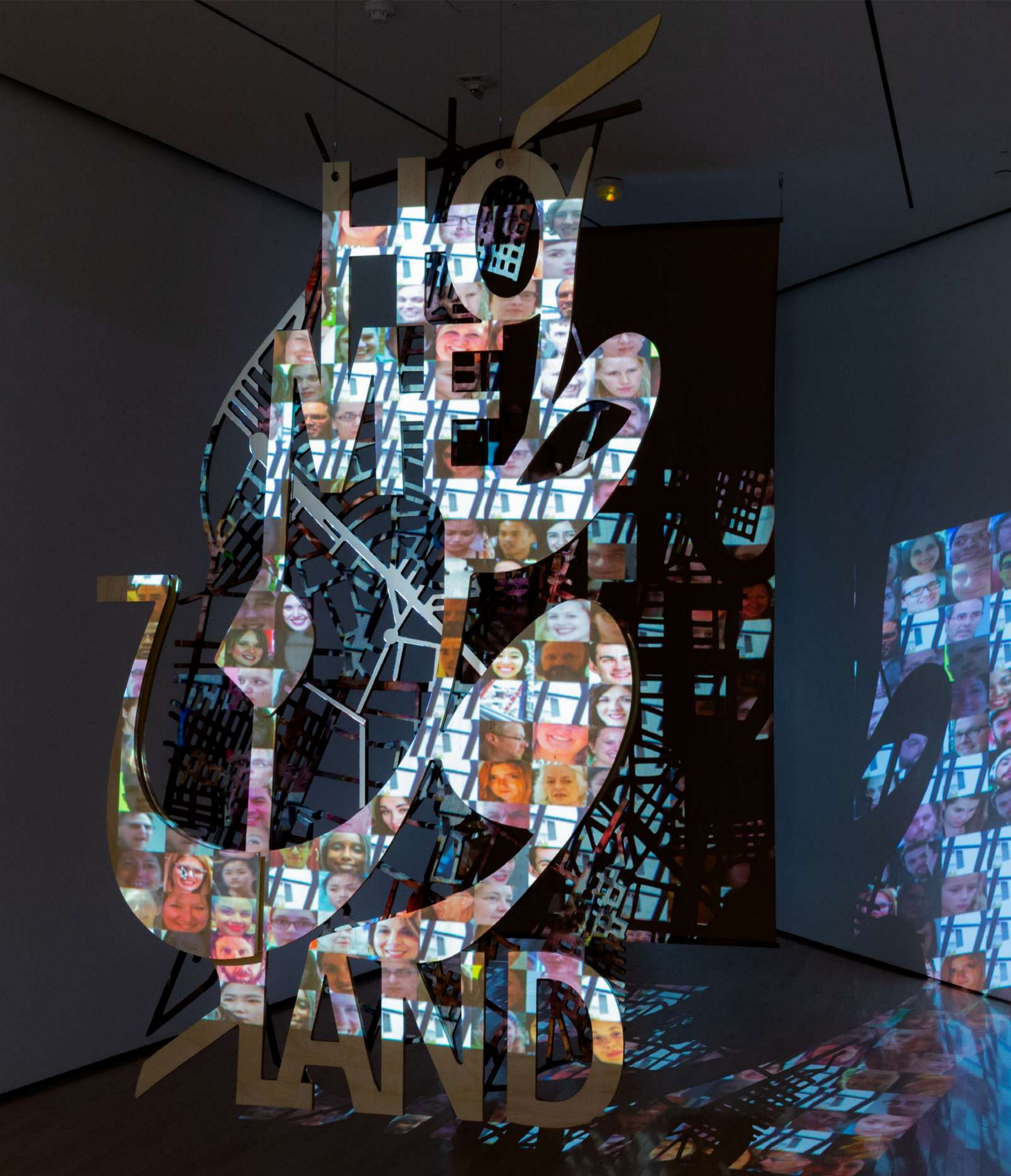
WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

In crafting my artistic vision, I identify a specific demographic as my ideal audience. However, the dynamic nature of art ensures its accessibility to an unexpectedly diverse viewership, particularly within the expansive realm of digital and virtual exhibitions. As an artist, designer, and citizen dreamer, my creative expressions are a deliberate response to my concerns, generating an immersive and progressive energy that takes the form of images, ideas, or conversations. This energy naturally gravitates towards curious minds, whether they share similar concerns or find themselves on a trajectory where these challenges align with their lifestyle and experiences. While "Homeland" and similar projects are conceived with a specific purpose, their immersive and thought-provoking nature extends their appeal to a broad spectrum of audiences, making awareness accessible to fresh minds and fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized communities.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

The vision for a future that transcends the domination of the present lies in recognizing that the future is neither predetermined nor fixed. Instead, it is continually shaped by the decisions we make in each moment, underscoring the potential for change at any given time. To construct a better future, a developed awareness, knowledge, and consciousness are essential guides for decision-making. Through increased practice in informed decision-making, we can actively contribute to the creation of a more favorable future. Inevitable technological advancements will usher in widespread changes in our perception and interaction with the surrounding world in the not-so-distant future. Rather than resisting these changes, a more constructive approach is to anticipate and proactively contribute to their formation. As Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum eloquently puts it in Dubai's Museum of the Future, "The future belongs to those who can imagine it, design it, and execute it. It isn't something you await but rather create." This mindset encourages a proactive approach to shaping the future, emphasizing the transformative power of imagination, design, and execution in creating a future that surpasses the constraints of the present.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?



Somehow, I addressed this in my answer to the previous question, but achieving the envisioned future involves adopting a collective future-thinking mindset. "We" refers to individuals, communities, and societies who recognize the dynamic nature of the future and understand their role in shaping it. To move beyond being bystanders in the ongoing processes of othering, exclusion, and the resultant global challenges, such as climate breakdown, mass extinctions, financial collapse, global wars, and populism, it's crucial to embrace practical practices that promote awareness and proactive engagement. Encouraging active decision-making in every moment, fostering consciousness about the consequences of our actions, and adopting sustainable practices on both small and large scales are key. Additionally, fostering a culture of collaboration, empathy, and inclusivity is essential for addressing systemic issues. By cultivating a shared commitment to responsible decision-making, sustainable practices, and social cohesion, we can collectively work towards a future that transcends present challenges and fosters a more inclusive, sustainable, and harmonious world.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

My art style and philosophy can be likened to a daily homemade meal. Much like the familiar and comforting nature of a home-cooked dish, my creations may not boast the extravagance of restaurant cuisine or the instant appeal of fast food. Instead, they reflect the essence of

daily life—simple, authentic, and crafted with care. Just as one navigates the everyday challenges of preparing a homemade meal, my art is a reflection of the constant effort and dedication poured into my daily routine. It draws inspiration from routine struggles, occasional quests for unique experiences, and the persistent, meticulous attention required for its creation. Just like a homemade meal shapes one's diet, health, and overall well-being, my work is an integral part of me, embodying my daily life, concerns, and challenges.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

In this age of information overload, where we have unprecedented access to a vast array of artists, podcasts, books, and platforms, I'd like to offer a different recommendation. Instead of adding more content to your already extensive library, I encourage you to dedicate more time to the most important person in your life—yourself. In a world where we often skim through paragraphs or speed up videos to consume content faster, taking the time to know yourself better is a valuable investment. Explore who you are, understand your genuine needs and desires, and actively choose your identity rather than passively accepting what has been assigned to you. This introspective journey can be a powerful and transformative experience, fostering personal growth and a deeper understanding of your authentic self.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Mehrddad Sedaghat](#) is an Iranian artist, designer, and educator. In 2016, he moved to the U.S. to pursue his MFA degree at Michigan State University. His professional experiences in Iran include a wide range of design practices, teaching, and community outreach. He was a Visiting Professor at the University of Applied Science and Technology in Mashhad, director for several festivals and cultural events, art director and graphic designer for the Istgah Azadi publication and Felesh advertising agency, and principal organizer for the Day of Design in Mashhad City.

Mehrddad's research and projects focus on hybrid visual culture and its relationship to global politics in the Middle East and the United States. Born out of his life experience spanning two cultures, Mehrddad's work critically and creatively focuses on human interactions. In doing so he hopes to enlighten individuals beyond what is commonly available in mainstream media, create opportunities for discourse, and ultimately bring people together where politics has failed.

Mehrddad's work has been presented in solo and group exhibitions, internationally and nationally at numerous venues including the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum,

East Lansing; MI, Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, MI; Radin Art Gallery, Mashhad, Iran; and Iranian Artists Forum, Tehran, Iran. He is also the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships including the Summer College Research Abroad Monies Award and the Selma & Stanley Hollander Fellowship while at MSU.

Mehrddad is an Assistant Professor in Graphic Design in the Department of Visual Arts and Art History at Florida Atlantic University, where he hopes to prepare students not only for careers as professional practitioners but also with a heightened understanding of design as a social practice.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Moving to the United States from Iran as a recent immigrant, especially in the current political malaise, has shaped my experience of understanding "difference" in significant ways. Differences can cause "othering," especially in situations where certain races, gender, or nationality of humans are treated as "less than" by political and social systems that oppress them. As immigrants and/or people of color, these systems are embedded and influential in our daily lives in ways that are often

invisible and unnoticed to those who don't experience the same kind of "otherness" and injustice because of their nationality or color of skin.

Through the use of typography and artificial intelligence, "Homeland" aims to examine concepts such as belonging, othering/feeling "othered," and the invasion of privacy (one of the most common experiences of an immigrant before and after being granted any sort of visa to enter the U.S.). "Homeland" uses personal storytelling and poetic speculations to challenge the assumed, invisible, or often unspoken struggles that one can encounter when entering spaces and experiences that are not designed or built for us (the immigrants/POC in this case). Through reverse engineering and the shifting of these power dynamics, this work walks the audience through a series of experiences, each designed as a way to communicate a specific emotion or story. How can we fill in gaps without being obsessed with one apparent idea, which is "bridging" as a connecting point? My goal is to fill in gaps by honoring "differences," perhaps through a method that is more of building a tunnel; while giving the audience the choice for participation or denial as they enter the space.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

- [1] *Homeland* (Exhibition Screenshot), Yuwen Huang, 2022.
- [2] *Homeland*, Mehrdad Sedaghat Baghbani, 2019. Signage. Dimensions Variable.
- [3] *Homeland*, Mehrdad Sedaghat Baghbani, 2019. Craft Paper, Literature. 108 x 61 Inches.
- [4] *Homeland*, Mehrdad Sedaghat Baghbani, 2019. Spatial Typography, Wood, Projection. 112 x 67 Inches.

PART 2.

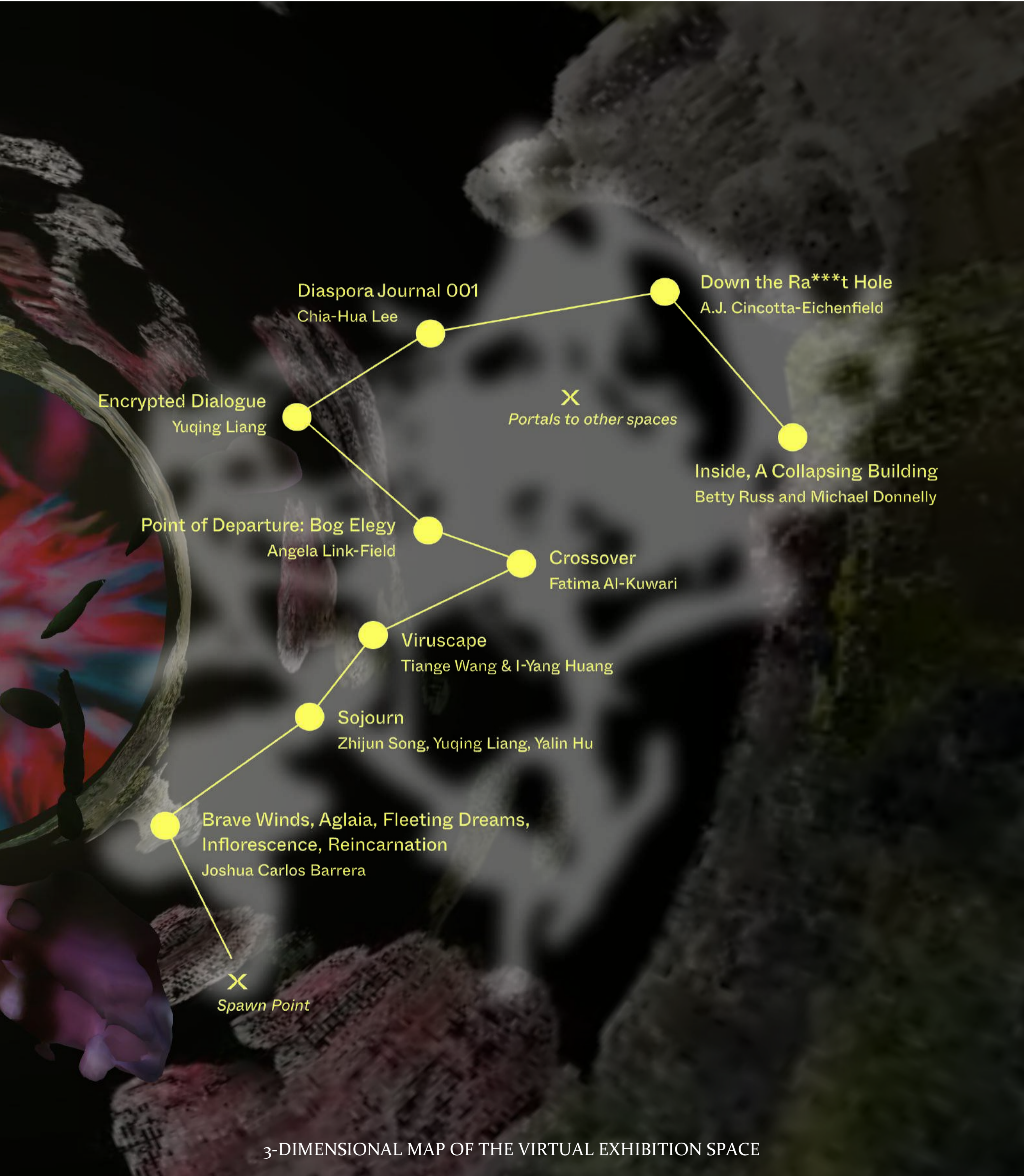
EPHEMERAL CYCLES, EVERLASTING COLLAPSES

We find ourselves in a world dominated by the spectacle of "ephemeral cycles," characterized by fleeting imageries, rapidly evolving social trends, short-lived product lifecycles, planned obsolescence, etc.

These cycles, driven by the boom of media and technology, divert our senses from the natural rhythms and processes of life, among which decay, collapse, and dissolution are pivotal yet are often misinterpreted as failures and relics of the past.

Despite the false perception, they are, in fact, an intrinsic part of our existence. From our own bodies undergoing change and self-identity shifts to the ebb and flow of broader societal systems, the processes of collapsing and re-emerging are ever-present elements of our human world. These perpetual cycles mirror the natural world, where ecosystems evolve through periods of growth, maturation, and eventual breakdown, only to give rise to new forms of life and structures.

But, this is not a call to celebrate the collapses—as the underlying logic of this act still follows the logic of opposing duality and hierarchy. Instead, we must seek paths toward adaptation, coexistence, and the cultivation of kinships in a world persistently marred by collapses, intensified by indiscriminate human disruption and dominance of the natural system.



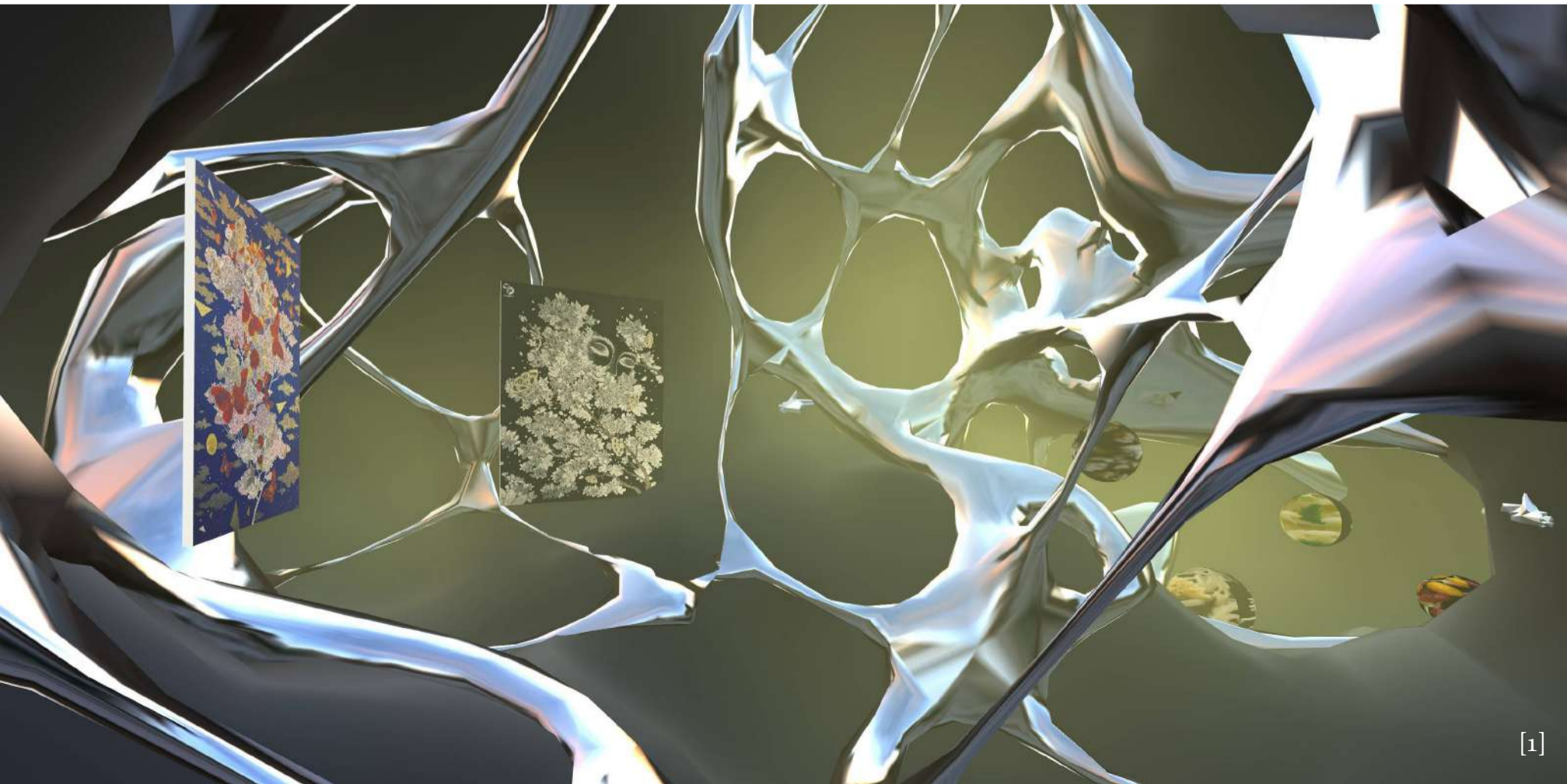


JOSHUA CARLOS BARRERA

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

To me, *Alt-Alterity* is about understanding the "otherness" of what we may already define as "other" or "otherworldly" around us. It is a hidden plane of ideas and constructs that when examined and uncovered, reveal patterns in the way the world transforms over time.

As our perceptions are bound by shared values learned from our communities and natural environments, there are beliefs and experiences that are often overlooked, ignored, not recognized, or not considered the norm. Yet, when it comes to individual and/or collective efforts in seeking out answers to inquiries in our world, it is through acknowledging and incorporating this "otherness" that humanity can better understand the variables enacting change. Thus, it is shaping the world both known and unknown to us.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I am of Filipino, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese heritage, and grew up in the Philippines which has a multifaceted culture due to its history of trading and colonization. Having traveled around the world my entire life, and been raised in a family where my parents and grandparents had their fair share of living abroad until settling back in Manila, I was always interested in the contentions of ideals shared within people. I was also always curious about where each culture or heritage can integrate. That spilled into my art—to seek out unheard voices, to piece together the bigger picture of things while equally valuing its parts. My greatest inspirations come from traveling, folklore, and video games—all of which involve creative immersion.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

I am fascinated with subjects of fleeting beauty constituting both sentimentality and risk. By these, I do not only wish to freeze time in life's momentous chapters, but to look upon its forces of change often linked to transformations in culture, nature, and one's own identity. The "risk" I refer to is the challenge to vividly capture what is fast-vanishing. Such is the case of traditions, folktales, and dreams within communities whose voices are unheard in the bigger picture of society.

Hence, my works featured in this exhibition are attempts to highlight transcendence—rather than realistic, a spiritual take on memories and heritage through inverted and ghostly figures as if they are fading away. They offer possibilities into a present alternate, imaginative world where ephemerality becomes eternal, where fantasy eventually becomes reality, and where labels are boundless.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

The existence of virtual platforms sprouts opportunity. These platforms will help create an artistic environment where its narratives are diversified—offering a sense of place and belonging to an artist and what they stand by, without sole reliance on the traditional gallery set-up. After all, social media and the internet have become major tools for circulating art.



HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

I create paintings solely with traditional mediums: inks, acrylics, and watercolors, but that should not limit me from being able to create multimodal experiences. What truly piques my interest in virtual spaces is their ability to bring forth a fantasy or vision that cannot necessarily be executed physically (unless there is a substantial budget and sourcing for architecture/set design and props).

I am able to play with traditional and digital creative processes specifically when I paint a work to be then digitally rendered by an animator.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Every time I create, I think of conveying my artistic statement to younger millennials and Generation Z. Being in the Philippines, my primary audiences are those age groups living in the Asia-Pacific region, or places where opportunities for exchange are easier.

I find my art being commercially consumed by much older generations to sustain my practice for a living. These audiences are the people who have shaped the art industry, and the people with life experiences and financial capabilities. Still, I gear my focus towards the

youth of the world, who will soon be its leaders.

I feel joy in the surprise of audiences my practice can resonate with. There are both the expected target groups and the unexpected who can actually open bigger doors to opportunities. Thus, I expect the unexpected when it comes to sharing my art—as I am a firm believer that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and art is for everyone.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I share that dream of a world where nature, mankind, and technology are all in harmony. In particular, I would like to envision a future where human creativity is dominant and technology is merely a tool/medium, not overtaking the visionary per se. From this, traditions and practices across the world are preserved, and evolved to adapt to the needs of people years ahead.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Right now, it's all about continuity in space development and creative exchange between artists and broadened audiences, which involves inclusion.

Valuing inclusion and the pursuit of knowledge comes from our curiosity and empathy for the stories of lives, objects, traditions, and ideas. This form of appreciation starts with the things we own and consume. There's a process in everything—a life cycle—created from concept to each and every raw material, all the way to its discarding, wherein its materials are "returned" to the planet for better or worse. For instance, the fresh produce from supermarkets—we learn to appreciate its value when we ask questions like "Where was this harvested?"; "Who are the farmers?"; "How does this benefit the farmer, the staff at the supermarket, and myself?" If we're able to achieve this, then we are capable of taking on greater societal narratives.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

The eagle is a symbol of boldness and fearlessness. I would love to travel the world and cherish its beauty from the skies above. I enjoy breathtaking views from mountains, skyscrapers, and airplanes. The eagle's magnificent appearance in the sky is a spectacular sight to behold.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Ramen. It is a symbol of refinement and zen. A bowl of ramen will always include ingredients carefully picked and placed to bring out a harmony of flavors. Each ingredient is sourced from a specific place in nature, often representing that realm and season.

Similar to my art style and philosophy, the flavors of ramen adapt with time while maintaining their roots. As my style constitutes techniques in pointillism and ornamentation, it can be said that every stroke, point, and individual fragment matters in the overall work as it is equally important to its individuality.

In my work, there is sometimes a sense of chaotic order—clusters and amalgamations of various motifs. However, these details are not spontaneous; they are meticulously planned, much like the plating or decoration of a bowl of ramen. The placement matters, visual appeal matters, and the combination of elements matters. All of these aspects are presented elegantly.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

The late Pacita Abad was an artist from the Philippines who began her career in Washington D.C. and New York and has exhibited in many museums and galleries around the world such as The Brooklyn Museum, SFMoMa, and M+ Hong Kong. She was particularly known for her paintings and textile works featuring a myriad of colors, forms, and styles to emphasize issues of racial and cultural divisions within multiple societies. I would recommend her exhibition book and catalog "Pacita Abad: A Million Things To Say" (more information at <https://www.aaa-a.org/collection/pacita-abad-a-million-things-to-say>).

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Joshua Carlos Barrera](#) (b. 1999) is an artist and illustrator based in Manila, Philippines. Self-taught and fond of pen and ink since the age of 11, paintings constitute a style combining pointillism, stenciling, cubism, pop art, and Asian motifs. Through human figures depicted as divinities, florid still lifes, and dreamscapes, he aims to picturesquely capture a heightened fantasy of living in the moment and the ephemerality of things. His selections of subject matter, colors, and techniques in ink are reflections of beauty rooted in dualities between past and future, dark and light, and permanence and ephemerality—all informed by folkloric imagination, local heritage, cultural integration, and society's obsession with internet "core" aesthetics. Throughout 2017 up to the present, Joshua's works have been featured in galleries, fairs, publications, and competitions in the Philippines, Japan, Poland, the United Kingdom, Greece, Germany, Canada, and UAE.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

The artworks are mixed media paintings on canvas involving acrylic and various inks, created with styles combined and informed by techniques in pointillism, Southeast Asian

ethnic pattern design, Japanese woodblock printing, and East Asian ink painting.

Each work is a presentation of both a summation of parts, and the intertwining of mankind's roots in identity with the natural world. Looking closely at the details, the subjects and icons used: flowers, fabrics, insects, and human visages, all are created wholly by fragments of brushstrokes and points—they are detached particles yet when viewed from afar, create bigger meaning.

This is what my artworks aim to achieve. They are attempts to unify the complexities of humanity's aspirations that are bound by nature. In the process, the "human" figure blends with their environments—somehow losing the completeness of human-centricity. This is a realization in understanding ourselves, others, and society at large: we find who we are and we reflect our dreams when placing ourselves onto the other realm. While they may be viewed as fantastical, these paintings are expressions and curiosities on how we liken our fascination for beauty to nature. For instance, poetry and figures of speech describe our loved ones as the little beautiful things we find around us like flowers.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Aglaiia, Inflorescence* (Exhibition Screenshot), Joshua Carlos Barrera, 2023.

[2] *Aglaiia*, Joshua Carlos Barrera, 2023.

Acrylic, Gel Ink, Metal Leafing Pen on Canvas. 36 x 48 Inches. [3] *Inflorescence*, Joshua Carlos Barrera, 2022. Metallic Ink on Paper. 18 x 24 Inches.

[4] *Fleeting Dreams*, Joshua Carlos Barrera, 2022. Metallic ink on Paper. 8.5 x 11 Inches.

[5] *Reincarnation*, Joshua Carlos Barrera, 2022. Metallic Ink on Paper. 8.5 x 11 Inches.

[6] *Brave Winds*, Joshua Carlos Barrera, 2023. Acrylic, Gel Ink, Metal Leafing Pen on Canvas. 24 x 24 Inches.



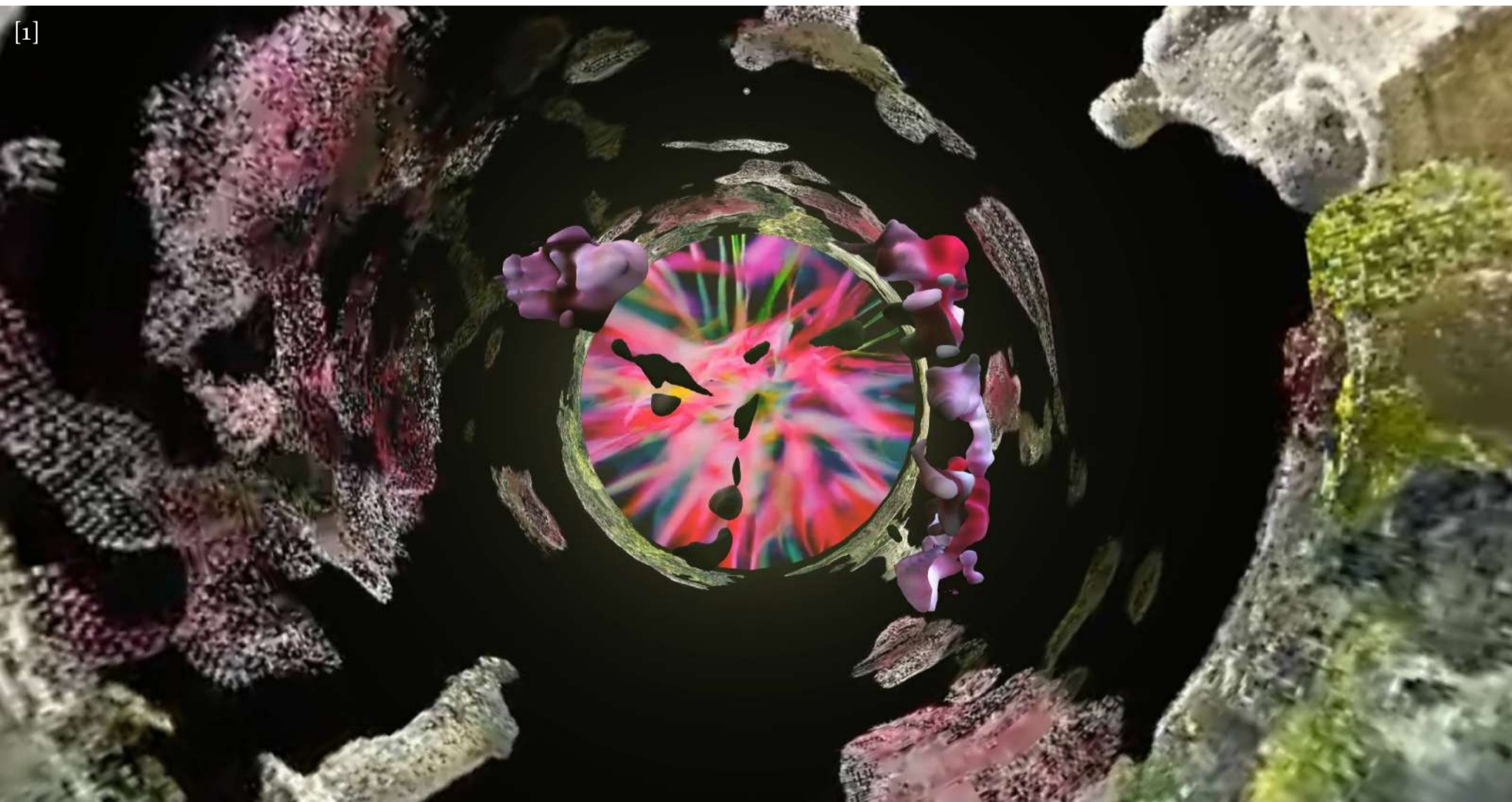
REVERIE COMPLEX

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity serves as a portal for the audience to embark on a journey to parallel worlds. Through our project, "Sojourn", which takes its name from the concept of a temporary state, we aim to provide the audience with a brief sojourn—a momentary stay that allows them to step into another world that seamlessly combines reality and imagination. During the collaborative process of creating "Sojourn" with artificial intelligence, we found ourselves contemplating the possibility of crafting a utopia with AI.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

As a diverse group with backgrounds in tech, design, and art, our commitment lies in creating playful and



interactive experiences. We have recently been captivated by AIGC and mixed reality. Our experimentation with the concept of "Sojourn" has been a source of continuous inspiration. We are particularly fascinated by the outcomes generated by Generative AI and the art of blending algorithmic beauty with stunning visuals.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

Our project revolves around the exploration of generative AI. We analyze and train AI to help us realize our vision of constructing a unique underground garden with elements of romance and eeriness. Through this project, we've gained the ability to collaborate with AI, pushing the boundaries of our imagination to envision a plausible future where humans can thrive. AI has empowered us, enabling the expression of our ideas through various emerging technologies.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Unlike traditional physical exhibitions, web-based showcases offer greater accessibility and sustainability, foster decentralization within the art industry, and empower artists, granting them more control over the installation and presentation of their projects in the digital space. This, in turn, ensures that everyone has equal access to and ownership of art through these platforms.



[2]



[3]



[4]



[5]

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

A virtual environment offers the advantage of seamlessly combining sound and visuals, unencumbered by the limitations of physical equipment and space acquisition budgets. It also provides access to a wider and more diverse audience. However, virtual spaces often fall short in terms of immersion, scale, and audience engagement. In these spaces, attendees often navigate on their own, lacking the sense of guided exploration. A notable aspect of physical exhibitions today is that attendees can document the experience with their own devices, capturing themselves in the frame and preserving it as a unique memory.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Our ideal audience consists of individuals eager to be inspired by AI-co-created artworks and who are naturally inclined to explore mixed reality.

"Sojourn" offers an escape for those who may feel confined by a one-dimensional reality, sparking questions about a possible future coexisting with non-human intelligence.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

The concept of a plausible future has been a recurring theme for us, especially in the past decade as AI has gained tremendous influence in reshaping the role of non-human power. As AI increasingly becomes integrated into our daily lives, it holds the potential to benefit us while also posing threats.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Encouraging interactions with AI for the purpose of inspiration is a step in the right direction. At Reverie Complex, as a Creative Agency, we maintain open and neutral discussions about how technology is reshaping our future.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Reverie Complex](#) is a pioneering New York-based studio. As a group, Zhijun Song, Yuqing Liang, and Yalin Hu come from backgrounds in tech, design, and art, and they are committed to bringing playful interactive experiences to life. They are currently fascinated by AIGC and mixed reality. They have recently begun experimenting with the concept of "Sojourn" and continue to be inspired by the outcomes generated by Generative AI, as well as by the beauty of hacking algorithms to create astounding visuals.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

This secret garden teems with AI-crafted life forms, encompassing floral species, fungi, cotton, aquatic beings, and more. Within its sacred tunnel, temporal barriers fade, heralding an epoch of novel artistic immersion. The 3D-scanned garden environment invites you to a voyage that stands as a harmonious fusion between human creativity, other-than-human life forms, and artificial intelligence. In this space, the underground garden metamorphoses into a virtual realm through the convergence of captivating projections, mellifluous sounds, and AI orchestrations.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Sojourn* (Exhibition Screenshot), Reverie Complex (Zhijun Song, Yuqing Liang, and Yalin Hu), 2023.

[2-5] *Sojourn* (Detail), Reverie Complex (Zhijun Song, Yuqing Liang, and Yalin Hu), 2023. Digital Art, Generative AI, TouchDesigner. Dimensions Variable.



ANGGIELA LINK-FIELD

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

When I think of *Alt-Alterity*, I think of ways we can learn from and prosperously coexist with that which exists beyond what is familiar or known. It calls us to accept others by accepting the "other" in us. What are the historical, biological, or personal facets of you that you take for granted? By reexamining aspects of our everyday life—in a sense, "othering" ourselves—the familiar becomes unfamiliar and vice versa. If everything, at its core, is both familiar and unfamiliar, then there is room for coexistence on equal footing.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I have an MSc in Medical Anthropology and a BA in Anthropology and Archaeology, so anthropological



research informs how I create art. I also use my personal ancestry as a way to engage with the past which ultimately informs my work as well. I love the sense of discovery inherent in this kind of research. Research that speaks to the very core of our social fabric and even shows us how it was made is fascinating to me. It can also show us how people, customs, or creatures come to be "othered" in a variety of contexts.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

I am fascinated with the ecology of a bog environment as well as its historical significance and archaeological significance. It is definitely an unusual ecosystem, very "alt," built on death and plant decay and home to carnivorous plants, bog bodies, and other rare creatures. My interest in this environment is what prompted my work on "Point of Departure: Bog Elegy." During the process of making the physical piece, which I later created an augmented reality [AR] version of, I instinctively added traces of my personal world with Italian prayers written by my great-grandmother in New York. I later discovered that the Italian prayers had historical significance to Whitesbog, New Jersey, where, coincidentally, the lichen, moss, and pine cone in my piece originate from. Italian immigrant seasonal workers used to work the cranberry harvest in the area. I love when my work comes full circle like that in an almost magical way when something as simple as interest and motivation to explore a topic end up connecting you to a web of existence much larger than

yourself, where the gravity of time passed and life lived collapses in on itself.

Ultimately, I think my work is coming from a generation of artists who are trying to, as Kurt Vonnegut puts it, unstick themselves in time. I try to get at: what is our impression on the totality of the universe, through a nonlinear sense of time? What are we in an ecological sense, a cultural and ancestral sense, and in terms of our everyday experience and consciousness? I want to create things that imbed us in the history of our world—not just the history of humanity.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Exhibitions and the proliferation of art in the digital age shape the art scene by making diverse kinds of art and artistic practice more accessible, that is clear. At the same time, the more inundated with content the virtual world becomes, the more we need cartographers to help us navigate it and mitigate information overload. Guides, like those who curate New Art City, who create stimulating, thought-provoking digital realms for us to experience and exist in are definitely what I look for and hope to see more of in the digital art age.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.



[2]

The virtual environment has been an incredible tool for me. It has extended my art practice beyond what I thought were its limits. This project was originally small enough to fit on a desk. With AR, it can be as large as an actual human body. The figure can also be modified in ways that might have been impossible in real life. Its sturdiness in the virtual world is now unquestionable (someone can't knock it off a shelf). And, most importantly, I can communicate with all sorts of people across continents about their feelings about the work.

One thing about making art in the virtual world is that there is a learning curve. There's always new technology and new software, and these things take time to learn, so that has been a challenge I want to dive into more.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I think the art I create is born from the ideas and values I share with others, whether digital or physical, as well as those I acquire through reading and studying things in an anthropological way. However, the audience for my art cannot exist until the piece itself is created, if that makes sense. I actually love the way creating art has allowed me to connect with individuals who share similar values. It also serves as a means to showcase my specific interests, inviting others to engage with me on those subjects without pretense. This connection ultimately expands my inspiration, influencing my art and starting the cycle anew. It's a beautiful and organic process, really.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

When I feel overwhelmed by the deluge of digital media I consume, which is a significant source of pop culture and dystopian imagery for me personally, I find it helpful to focus on physical tasks or activities with clear goals. Sometimes, I imagine myself as an astronaut, floating in my own thoughts. At times, I need to bring myself back down to Earth. I remind myself that we are here, on Earth, miraculously, with the ability to help ourselves and our families and to communicate and achieve beautiful things together. Our immediate reality deserves just as much attention as our big-picture thoughts and imaginings of the future. I envision a world with that kind of balance.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

The first step is understanding what you can bring to the table in your own life, and the only way to do that is to figure out where your strengths and passions lie. You must throw yourself into experiences you feel called to and see what happens. It's not always easy either. Doing that may get you a lot of pushback in various ways in your life, but it can be worth it to keep going and expanding and see where the path of most resistance takes you. You may break through a hedge on your old path and, eventually, end up where you wanted to be all along.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Maybe a photon? Because photons do not experience space or time. I use the term "being" very loosely...

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Haha, some sort of sauce with a million ingredients. You don't really know what's in it. It has a tangy flavor that you can't quite put your finger on.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I really enjoyed reading Suzanne Anker and Dorothy Nelkin's book *The Molecular Gaze: Art in the Genetic Age* (published in 2004). Suzanne is a visual artist and founded SVA's Bio Art Lab where I recently completed a residency. Dorothy Nelkin was a professor and sociologist of science. The book dives into the connection between science and art and was a really great place for me to begin my journey into merging the two in my own practice.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Angela Link-Field](#) is an artist based in Queens, NY with a background in anthropology and science writing. Her artistic practice investigates the enmeshment between humanity and the natural world.

Merging artistic expression with scientific inquiry, she seeks to unravel the deep connection between life and death and piece it back together again in an attempt to make sense of our complex weave of existence.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Point of Departure: Bog Elegy" was originally shown at an open studio event for the School of Visual Arts Bioart Residency. The piece is a PLA 3D-printed bog body model atop a pedestal covered with peat moss. The bog body is covered with a SCOBY veil and accompanied by prayers written on iota carrageenan bioplastic as well as gathered moss, lichen, and pine cone from Whitesbog, NJ.

The piece was inspired by the inherent duality of the bog environment: a place built on decay and yet a preserver of life (in the form of bog bodies and in their function as carbon sinks)

and a home for extraordinary forms of life (for example, carnivorous plants). In this piece, I am thinking through what it means to encounter the other within myself in the form of those that have come before me and the organisms that live within me and will eventually overtake me. Those who passed must die and decay as they were but remain alive in us in new and different ways that would not have been possible without death.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Point of Departure: Bog Elegy* (Exhibition Screenshot), Angela Link-Field, 2023.

[2] *Point of Departure: Bog Elegy*, Angela Link-Field, 2023. Digital 3D sculpture. Dimensions Variable.



FATIMA ALKUMARI

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

I would define *Alt-Alterity* as expressions and experiences of "otherness" that go beyond traditional forms and notions of identity. It represents an interplay between individuality and collectivity, self and group, and the traditional and modern. This theme offers a moment to recognize individual voices and the harmonies created when these voices come together. I found myself returning to this question after completing my other interview responses, reflecting on its potential implications. The fact that this theme, presented within this platform, showcases a tapestry of human experiences in a more inclusive space suggests it has the potential to guide both artists and audiences towards alternative ways of thinking, doing, and existing, always with the future in mind.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I hold a BS in Genomics and Molecular Genetics from Michigan State University, and I'm currently an MFA candidate at the Yale School of Art's Graphic Design program. My dual academic background influenced my interest in the human body, both in its physical and metaphysical manifestations.

From a young age, my passion has been at the intersection of science, art, and history. When I was 13, I began documenting family kinship trees from stories passed down to me. This documentation process eventually introduced me to graphic design tools, an alternative to traditional pen and paper.

Growing up in a tribal community heavily influenced my perspective. The concept of the "group" was always at the core of every decision I made. My father once told me that tribes function like wolf packs, and the harshest punishment for a wolf is to live in solitude. This communal aspect was drastically contrasted when I moved to the US, a predominantly individualistic society. This transition forced me to introspect: How do "many for one, one for many" dynamics translate in this new environment? How can I bridge my collectivist upbringing with the individualism I now encounter? And fundamentally, was I prepared to reassess the core beliefs that had anchored me for so long?

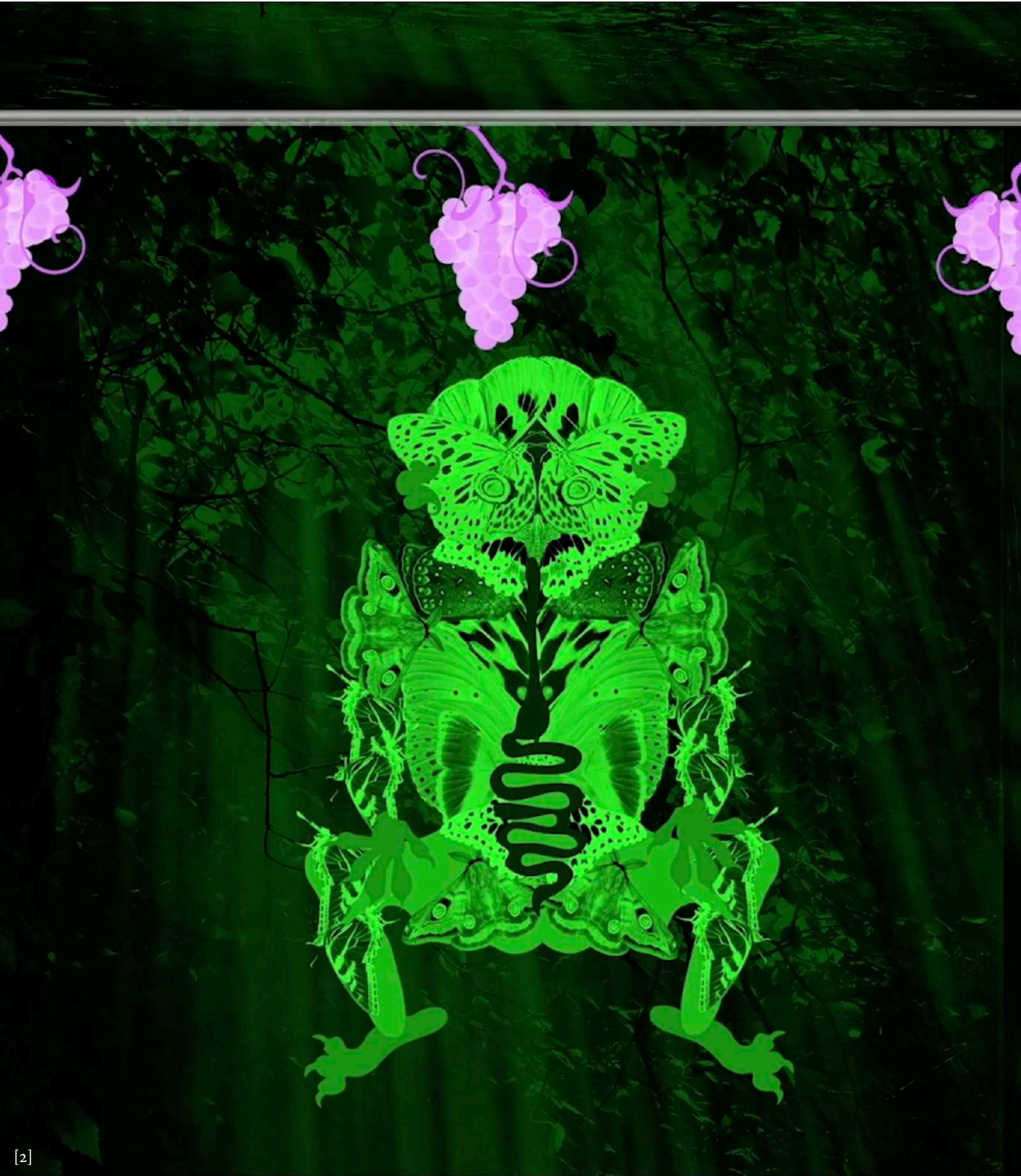
My current area of interest is this exploration of personal

and societal identity. It's about the idea of unity, of many becoming one, regardless of how it's expressed. My work serves as a space for reflection, questioning, and connection, aimed at building a collective body and voice.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"Crossover" is a short stop-motion film that delves into the mysterious realm between life and death, drawing inspiration from the 1450s Islamic medical manuscript, Ibn Ilyās's *Tashrīḥ-badan-insān* (the anatomy of the human body). The film opens in a hospital setting where an anatomical illustration from the ancient manuscript sets the stage. In a captivating and symbolic moment, a couple of moths land on the body, triggering a transformative journey. The film transitions into a mesmerizing exploration of the connection between body and soul as the protagonist embarks on a quest to set both free in the embrace of nature, beyond the confines of the hospital walls.

This piece holds personal resonance for me since it was made around the time of my brother's passing. It became an outlet for my grief, allowing me to grapple with and seek understanding about the journey of the soul post-death. In creating this narrative, I hoped to envision a space that would comfortingly suggest that my brother rests in a better place, possibly even more beautiful than what I've conceptualized. The work embodies my interpretation of death as a liberating passage for the soul.



[2]

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Online exhibitions offer a great opportunity for broader reach, showcasing less institutionalized work, and enhancing accessibility. The traditional gallery culture often calls for a specific type of art and caters to a particular audience, which may not resonate with everyone in a community. It requires people to dress and speak in a certain way and to expect to see a specific type of art that is "worthy" of being showcased in a gallery. I believe online exhibitions can provide safer spaces for experimental work and foster grounds for richer dialogues.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

I believe it's fitting to display digital work in a digital setting; it looks and feels more in tune with the nature of the work. Interestingly, I've found that viewing books or printed matter in an online setting can sometimes be more effective than in a physical space. The virtual environment offers enhanced control over aspects like lighting and the pace of showcasing. It also establishes a more structured premise for artists to present their work precisely how they envision it.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I believe the beauty of animation, especially in its more traditional form, resonates with every type of audience. Although I prefer to create art that is enjoyed and understood by everyone, as a graphic designer, I often need to cater to a specific audience. Simply put, I think the type of work determines whether I need to select my audience or not.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I've never been a fan of the overly optimistic or negative predictions, or "alternative world-building" scenarios present in these genres. I like to think of a future where what is considered a privilege now becomes a right tomorrow, such as education, healthcare, and housing. I also believe respecting one's past is crucial, drawing on knowledge from traditional forms like oral histories and methods of physical and non-physical healing. I don't expect world peace, equal distribution of wealth, or an end to global warming. I simply hope for a slightly better future, one that's an improvement on the continuous extension of our current reality.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

The first step is to think of ourselves as a collective "we." When the good of the group is prioritized over individual interests, accessibility, and inclusivity across all domains will follow. Recognizing and actively challenging the systemic barriers that have transformed essential rights into privileges is crucial. The cumulative effect of collective efforts is more rewarding when we maintain realistic expectations. Our goal shouldn't be to completely rewrite the present, but rather to incrementally guide it towards a slightly improved future.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would want to be a Bedouin tent, woven by the hands of my great-grandmother. I have always longed to meet her. Spending 6 to 9 months being woven by her hands, hearing my family's conversations, and then serving as a home and shade for them once I'm complete would be my greatest joy.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Fatima Al-Kuwari](#) is a Graphic Artist focusing on documenting personal narratives and preserving sentimental inheritance through her art. Following her curiosity and passion towards science, art, and history; at the age of 13, Fatima started drawing family kinship trees from her parents' stories. Tracking milk lines in addition to bloodlines in her kinship trees, scratching, and starting all over again, led Fatima to discover more forgiving tools than pens, paper, and graphic design tools. Currently, Fatima is an MFA candidate in the Yale School of Art Graphic Design program. Additionally, she holds a BS in Genomics and Molecular Genetics from Michigan State University.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Crossover" is a short stop-motion film that delves into the mysterious realm between life and death, drawing inspiration from the 1450s Islamic medical manuscript, Ibn Ilyās's *Tashrīḥ-badan-insān* (the anatomy of the human body). The film opens in a hospital setting, where an anatomical illustration from the ancient manuscript sets the stage. In a captivating and symbolic moment, a couple of moths land on the body, triggering a

transformative journey. The film transitions into a mesmerizing exploration of the connection between body and soul, as the protagonist embarks on a quest to set both free in the embrace of nature, beyond the confines of the hospital walls.

Soundtrack: "China Creek" by Dispersiones Sonoras.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Crossover* (Exhibition Screenshot), Fatima Al-Kuwari, 2023.

[2] *Crossover*, Fatima Al-Kuwari, 2023. Stop-motion and Digital Animation. 30 Secs.



YUQING LIANG



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity serves as an option for us to reevaluate our relationship with our surroundings. It's a thought that once considered cannot be disregarded. It provides a neutral perspective on our past and future, often offering an escape from a solely human-centered mindset.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

Coming from a product design background, I underwent extensive education in the principles of human-centered design during my undergraduate years. However, the rigid adherence to this single standard in the education system left me somewhat dissatisfied. It wasn't that I didn't appreciate human-centered design; on the contrary,

I enjoy using products that follow those principles. Rather, it was the inflexibility of this approach that piqued my interest in exploring the decentralization of human perspective. The concepts of critical design and speculative design have significantly influenced my research in this field and have forever altered my perception of our surroundings.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

The piece "Encrypted Dialogue" itself represents a reimagination of an alternative world in which humans are not at the center of the conversation but instead serve as instruments that electronic objects simply disregard. It challenges the conventional perspective of human importance in dialogue.

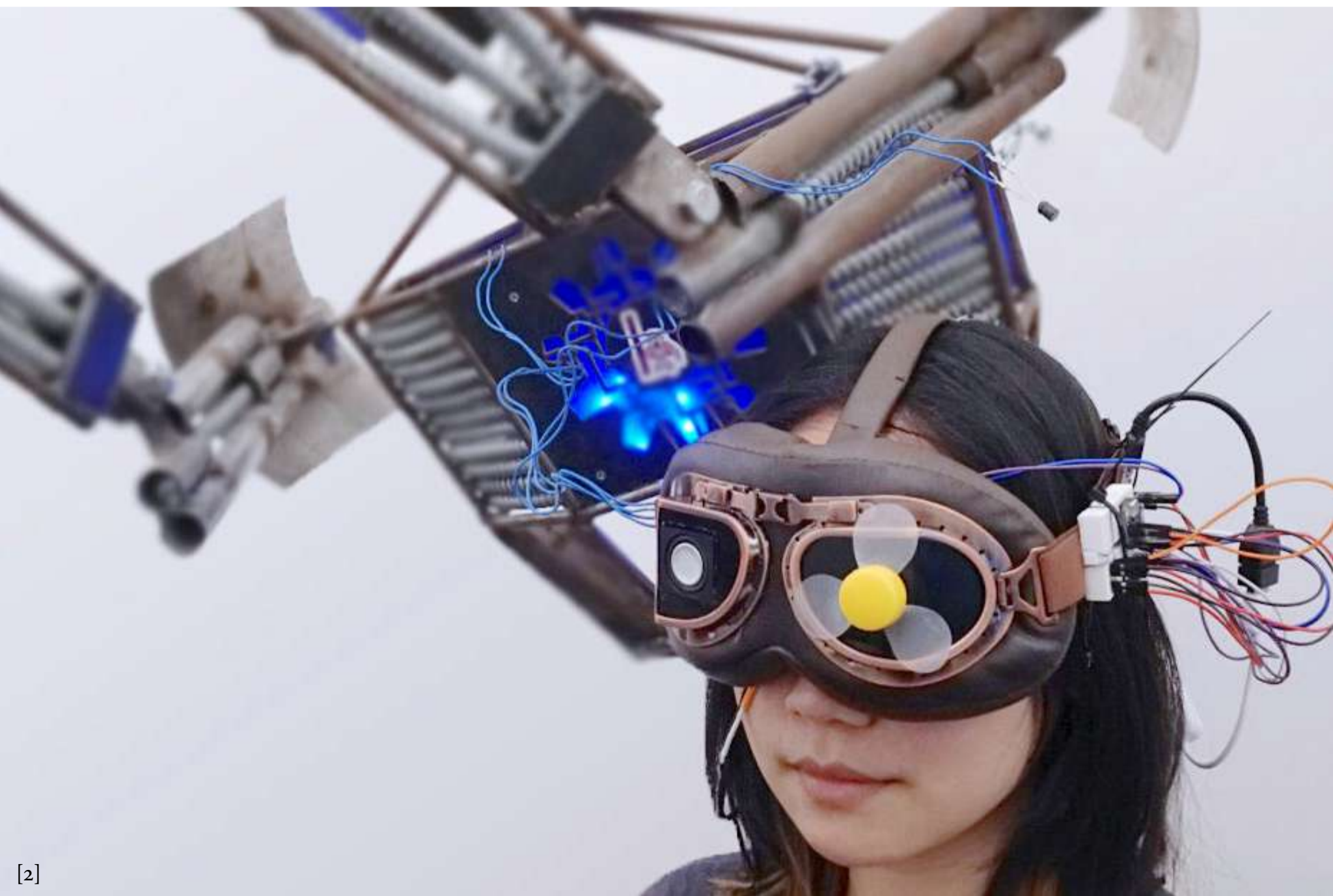
OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Given that "Encrypted Dialogue" includes delicate sound design, the optimal experience would be to view the visuals while wearing headphones. The virtual platform isolates the audience from the physical crowd, enhancing the potential for a more concentrated audiovisual experience. This shift to the digital realm in art exhibitions has the capacity to reshape the art scene, providing new opportunities for artists to reach wider audiences and engage in innovative forms of presentation.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

In an ideal physical exhibition setup, "Encrypted Dialogue" would be showcased in a dark cinema environment with stereo sound to maximize both the visual and audio impact of the art piece. However, if poorly arranged, the audience might struggle to connect with the inconsistent audio and abstract, metaphorical visuals.

A virtual space offers a balanced approach, but it comes with limitations in terms of immersion due to scale constraints and a non-cinematic environment.





WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

The ideal audience for "Encrypted Dialogue" arrives at the showcase with their own understanding of the concept of the non-human. They should be interested in abstract concepts and possess the ability to grasp the black humor woven throughout the film.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I hope that people learn more about their spiritual side and alleviate the stress of not knowing everything in the world. I encourage individuals not to overthink or overstress about matters that aren't meant to be dominated by humans. Believing that we should "Mind Our Own Business," I also advocate for paying more attention to what we already have and showing respect for what we can't understand yet. Just because we can't hear the conversation between electronic objects doesn't mean they don't communicate.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would choose to be a huge plant. Plants have a unique perspective on the world compared to humans. They are deeply influenced by the changing seasons and coexist harmoniously with other creatures. Plants thrive without mobility and possess remarkable adaptability. I appreciate

the innate beauty of static plants, and most of them have a charming appearance. A giant plant would offer a superior view of the ground and breathe cleaner air.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

"Design Noir: The Secret Life of Electronic Objects" by Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby

In their book, "Design Noir: The Secret Life of Electronic Objects," Dunne and Raby delve into the tangible physical and cultural impacts of the digital domain. They illuminate how everyday electronic objects like mobile phones, computers, and televisions profoundly shape people's experiences within their environments. Their groundbreaking ideas hold significant implications for the fields of architecture and design. In this pioneering work, the authors introduce a fresh perspective on objects, space, and behavior to a wide-ranging audience. The book is organized into three sections:

- 1. Manifesto:** here, the authors introduce their ideas concerning electromagnetic space.
- 2. Conversations:** Dunne and Raby engage in discussions with various designers, architects, and artists, exploring how electronic technology influences their practices.
- 3. Placebo:** this section presents intriguing outcomes from a project involving Dunne and Raby's experimental furniture prototypes. Notably, it includes a chair that alerts the sitter to the presence of radiation passing through their body.

This book significantly influenced "Encrypted Dialogue," inspiring a deeper exploration of the unseen activities behind electronic objects and framing them as coexisting entities in our lives.

"The Last and First Men" (2020)

"The Last and First Men" is a documentary film that delves into post-human lives. It introduced me to the concept of the post-human, and I was captivated by the film's presentation. It takes the form of a documentation of futuristic sculptures from the Tito era in Yugoslavia, offering a glimpse into the world of future humanity. The film's voiceover discusses the various eras humanity transitions through in a peaceful tone, neutralizing subjective opinions about the future. This unique approach to exploring the post-human concept left a lasting impression on me.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Yuqing Liang](#) is a multi-media designer and creative technologist based in New York. Her research lies in the intersection of multi-sensorial experiences and tangible interaction.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"*Encrypted Dialogue*" is a performance-based film that narrates how the human body can be turned into an instrument playing sounds from electromagnetic fields picked up via a wearable device. The project's wearable device functions as a "translator" that allows humans to sense the EMF-based dialog surrounding us in Manhattan. As it deciphers EMF activity hidden away from human perception, the wearable, a goggle designed for this project, functions as an external sensor picking up electromagnetic signals, processing the signals in the proximity of the wearer into data inputs, received as musical expression and augmented by a motor fan reflecting the strength of the field.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Encrypted Dialogue* (Exhibition Screenshot), Yuqing Liang, 2022.

[2] *Encrypted Dialogue*, Yuqing Liang, 2022. Moving Image, Sound, Wearable Tech. Dimensions Variable.

[3] *Encrypted Dialogue* (Exhibition Screenshot), Yuqing Liang, 2022.



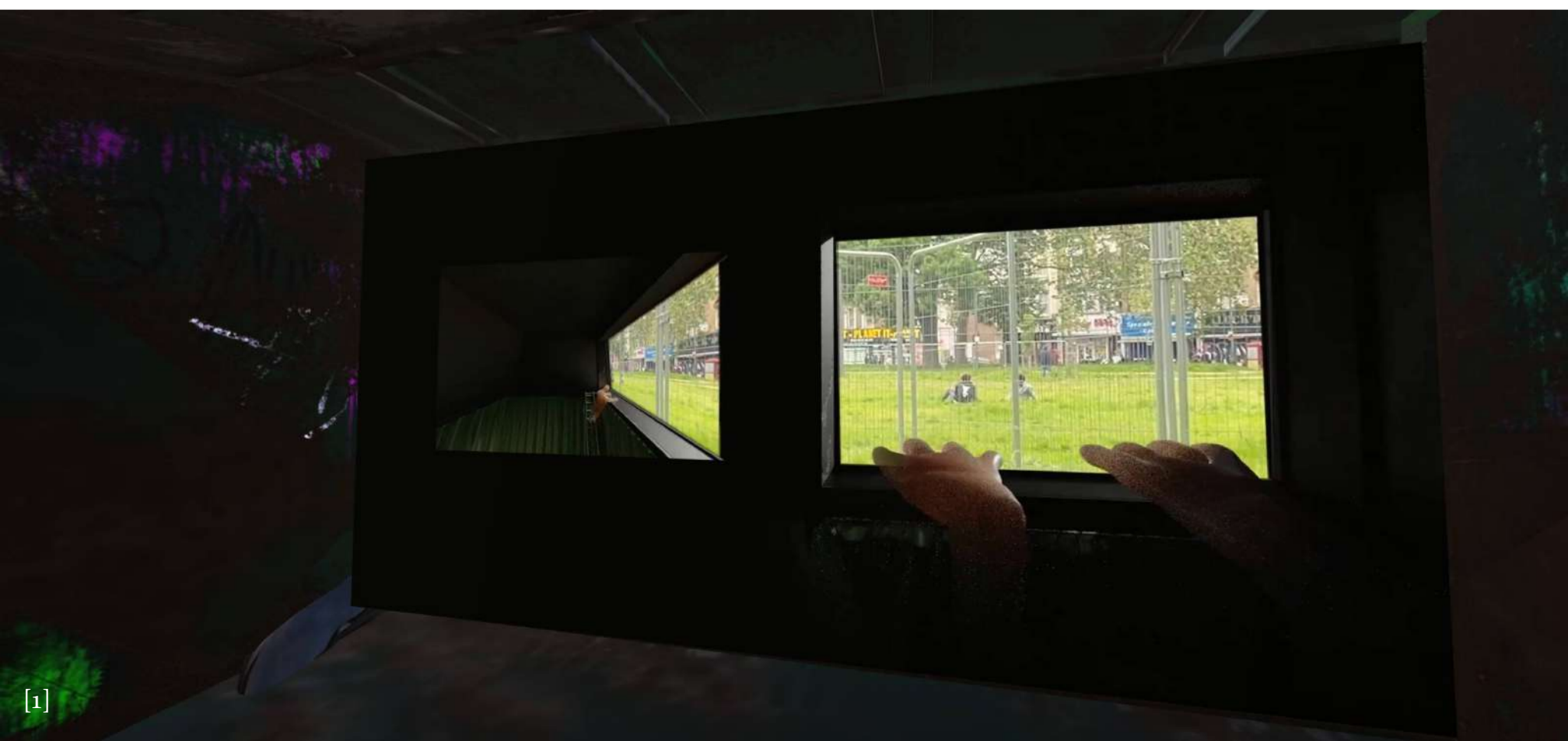
CHHIA-HHUA IJEE

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

For me, *Alt-Alterity* gives me a sense of action that inverts the otherness. While the word "otherness" shows a sense of unknown and minority for my first instinct, those out of public view. Therefore, it's easy to imagine this is a platform pressing the alt button and enlarging the hidden aspects.

However, by taking a second look into the term *Alt-Alterity*, I am more interested in the sense of two negatives making a positive. What is alterity or who defines it? Knowing there might be no truth but only perspectives, everything has a second viewpoint.

In the end, I feel this platform potentially has an idea that there is no otherness but a place open to every aspect. No one is the alterity if the voice can be shown and heard equally.



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

With my architecture background, I explore stories by world-building, creating non-linear narratives. When the storytelling is based on space rather than time, it opens a chance to view each element from a different angle or dimensions. No certain ending or answer represents my current belief. I know this is more about describing the ways of creating, instead of themes. Because my topic differs from time to time, from people I work with, from place to place. I am more like an observer, recorder, and collaborator.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

The exhibited work is a surreal film that takes place inside public trash bins, focusing on me finding my own positionality, reflecting the paradoxical identity of my background, as well as the lost and distorted belonging in a foreign land. I try to resonate with everyone this unexplainable anxiety as being an individual facing global tide.

The video blends the reality image by filming physical space at an uncommon height and perspective. This dialogue from outside the frame to the fictional space inward naturally helps me build this observer's worldview. Instead of creating a whole new virtual space, viewing the existing scene in a different way can be an alternative world.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

In my view, art opens conversation and delivers meaning. A virtual space for artists makes the spreading far-reaching. This reach transcends time and geographical boundaries, potentially fostering unbiased viewing while, on the flip side, sometimes intensifying biases. For me, this places a heavier responsibility on artists—how they regard their own words, and how they regard the other enormous voices on the virtual internet world.

I believe the beauty of animation, particularly in its more traditional form, appeals to a broad audience.

[2]



HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Aside from how the virtual environment around me affects my thinking, the concept of virtual space interferes with my way of creating too. The 3D space without reference points gives me a chance to film with unrealistic cameras. By putting real-life objects into 3D space, I review those fragments in different scales and paths to examine the real-world stories, and even manipulate them. 99 ways to tell a story can happen at the same time.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

My thinking about audiences is the same as the viewpoint inside my work, "hiding" inside the public bin and murmuring about my own story. I find a place, necessary, and ubiquitous but it might be inferior or nameless, speaking my perspective. Who stops by or starts a conversation is an open surprise.



WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

We were fed by what happened before and built the present world. And the world we have now will feed the next generation to build the future.

For now, reality hasn't transcended the imagination of some predecessors. I hope the vision for the future is something beyond my vision, some overwhelming "new" will show up, and replace the continuously updating "old."

Like the first time I saw an AI-generated video or photo. The computing power shows its ability to manipulate history. Apart from imagining the future, I am more curious about what history will look like in the future. Will it exist? If history is eliminated, does that mean the future is also vanishing?

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

This is a question I cannot answer now. The limitation of the human species makes us never understand others, which also stops me from defining right or wrong.

All I can do is record, I already and always, unconsciously put my personal opinion in my recording, which for me is already something that will affect and remain.

For now, keeping recording and communicating might be the only encouragement I can think of to make us proceed.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Soup. Everything can be cooked into soup; nothing can be seen but the taste is mixed. Also, it's my favorite.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Karen Barad's speech, Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future, inspired me a lot during the work.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Chia-Hua Lee](#) is an artist from Taiwan who works in experimental animations, film, installation, and illustration. With a background in architecture, she conveys stories through world-building, creating non-linear narratives using moving images. After a year of studying at the Royal College of Art, she began to explore her complex feelings about her positionality. From the paradoxical nature of her background to the sense of lost and distorted belonging in a foreign land, she examines these fragments at different scales and through various paths by placing real-life objects into 3D navigated spaces. She challenges herself to transform the act of viewing into the story itself, much like her constant observation is how she defines herself and her place in the global world.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Diaspora Journal 001" is a surreal film that unfolds within public trash bins, where an anonymous character simultaneously hides and observes, symbolizing the artist's personal and cultural identity crisis. Reflecting on their Taiwanese roots, the narrative explores themes of globalization, the paradox of individuality in a connected world, and the struggle with political and familial contradictions. The film resonates with feelings of nomadism and fluctuating perspectives, likening the artist's homeland to an overwhelming yet cherished ocean. This metaphor extends to the constant barrage of information in modern life. The work poignantly projects nostalgia onto mundane street objects, mirroring contemporary anxieties and the search for identity amidst universal uncertainty.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Diaspora Journal 001* (Exhibition Screenshot), Chia-Hua Lee, 2023.

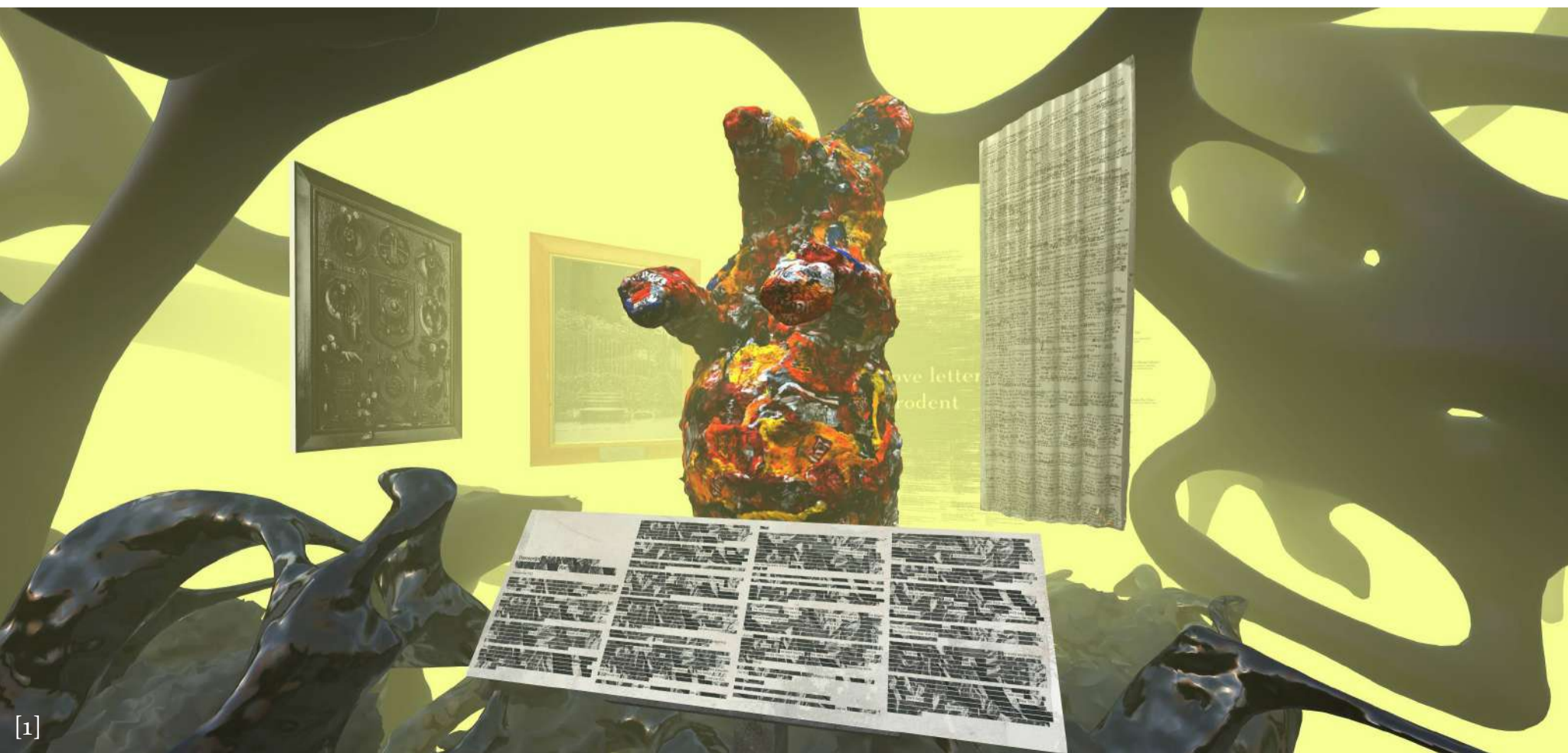
[2][3][4] *Diaspora Journal 001* (Still), 2023. 3D Animation And Digital Video. 12 Mins., 17 Secs.



A.J. CINCCOTTA-EICHHENFELD

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity is an expansion of "alterity" that engages vast differentials in lived experience between varied organisms and digital beings at a variety of scales and systems levels. By creatively rendering and re-envisioning the ecosystems around, between, and beyond microorganisms, animals, plants, people, machines, etc., *Alt-Alterity* listens for vibrations amidst intersecting layers of understanding. It does not seek to evade human contexts of difference but rather more fully acknowledge them within larger architectures of interaction. Thematically, *Alt-Alterity* resonates with the work on view here from my series "Down the Ra***t Hole," particularly in its demand to interpolate and interrogate an archive of complex relationships between humans and other emotive beings. To me, this questions anthropocentrism and the human-wrought destruction accompanying it, calling into possibility revised futures of symbiotic coexistence.



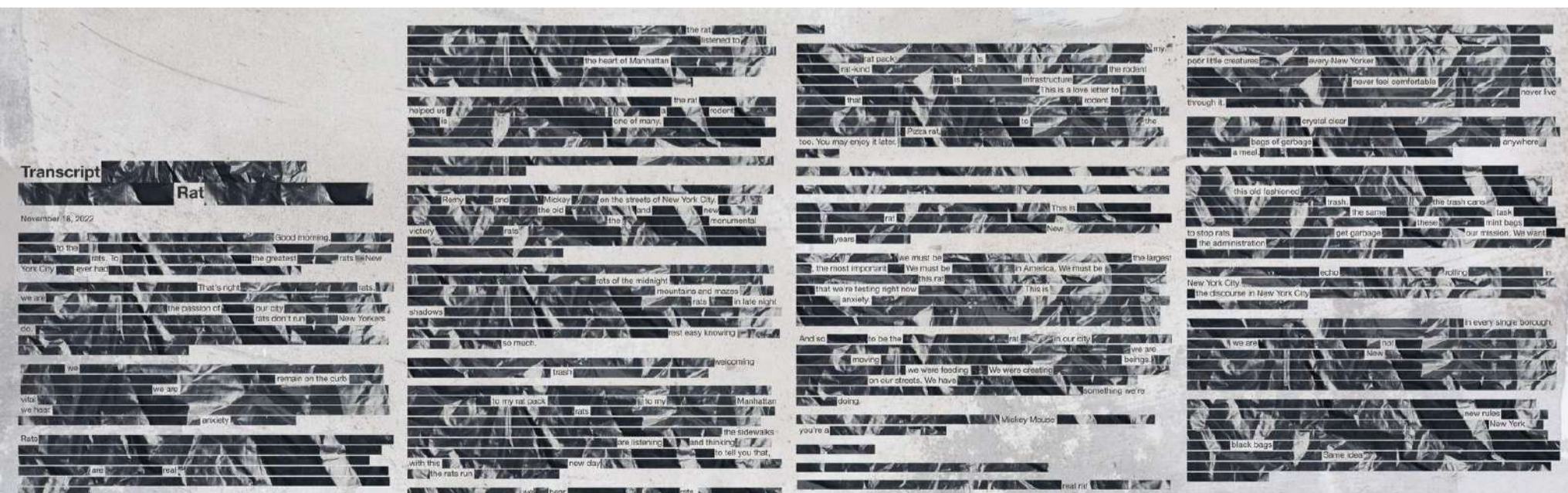
COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

Meditations on memory and archives have always been present in my work, alternatingly as a visual artist, graphic designer, and social worker. These aspects collide as I strive to make sense of how memory and grief operate in digital contexts. Creatively, this often means infusing virtual windows, which begin as empty, floating gray planes, with textures of recollection, imbuing pixels with emotional significance. I find myself expanding outward from these floating planes, bridging a gap between a life previously centered around grieving communities and a career in social work, with an emerging focus on creating art that can resonate with and within those spaces of empathy.

Narratives about the entanglement of memory and digital culture have only grown more complex, enriched by the myriad bits and pixels that make visible the exchange of emotions in digital space. That entanglement has come up in my counseling work with bereaved children, teens, and young adults, in my research and writing about grief and social media, and in my creative media work across various art practices that start as amalgamations of physical and digital memory and artifact. Within digital manifestations of memory, there exists a space for shaping, reflecting, remixing, integrating, and reclaiming—an opportunity to translate unique emotional realities into alternative digital worlds.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"Down the Ra*t Hole" is a series of visual/ textual/ auditory works that emerged from a period of near-obsession with a rat-centric erasure poem I created by obscuring elements of a press conference transcript on NYC.gov titled "Mayor Eric Adams Signs Legislation to Fight Rats, Build Cleaner City." Posed as a historical alternative to the textbook version of Mayor Adams' self-proclaimed "War on Rats" in New York City, the poem, and ensuing visual works, scratch at the nature of political rhetorics and repetitions, scurrying down the networked tunnels through which they disperse. Questioning destructive human tendencies toward environmental control, the work oscillates between what is made and mined, crafted and collected; and bits of scavenged, repurposed, and scattered information and materials refute the tone and intention of the original source text. The installation instead heralds an archive of the "rats of the midnight mountains and mazes," a lasting ode to "the old and the new // the monumental victory rats."**





[3]



[4]



[5]

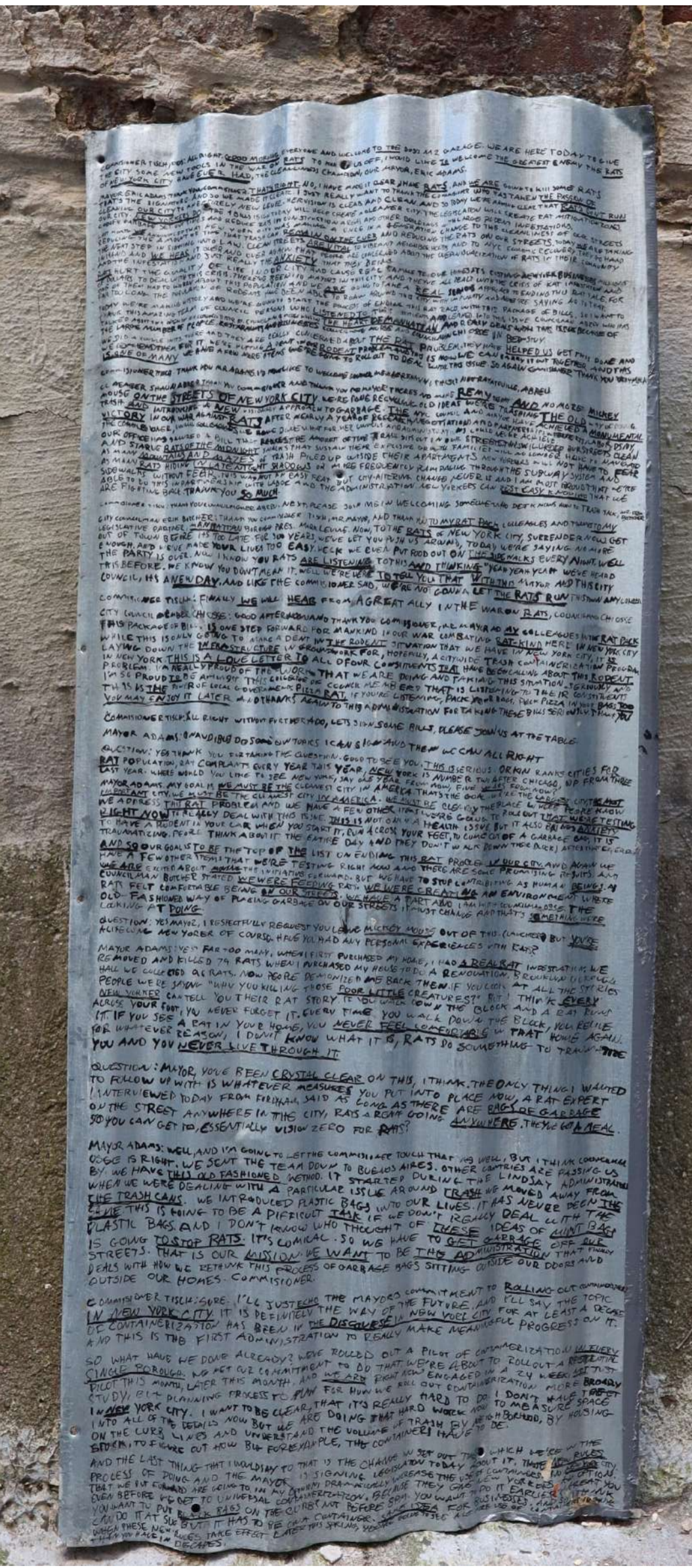
OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

The digital, with its capacity to augment realities, space, and time, offers distinctly different possibilities for the present—a blending of real and/or imagined worlds through artistic and technological reconfigurations of the

boundaries between the physical and virtual. Digital exhibitions can create a holding space within which to situate multiplicities, create more accessible artistic landscapes beyond the limitations of physical space, and foster communities grounded in anti-oppressive creative practice. Free, online access to virtual exhibition space allows the public to revisit work over time and engage with complex discourse more fully and openly outside of institutional systems of surveillance and scrutiny.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Art in virtual space is in constant dialogue with memory, storage, database, and the archive, which, whether as a subject or subtext of the work,



[6]

necessarily elicits questions about loss and remembrance. In my own creative practice, mediated representations of memory have started to appear via experimentation with 3D modeling, projection mapping, augmented reality, physical computing, and beyond. I'm gradually finding ways to allow digital work to escape back into the physical, and to see what happens when that which we have come to expect to see and experience online is transferred to new spaces of tangibility. Ultimately, I wonder how our digital interfacing with memory, archive, personal and collective grief, and the emotional realities that surround them, might change as a result of these boundary crossings.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

A future that holds larger spaces for empathy and collective memory keeping, that resists the pervasive man-made violence and consumptive voracity of present human contexts. An exit from anthropocentrism, and an earnest re-engagement with diverse ecosystems. A future that resists oppressive discourses and avoids the traps of dominant social/cultural/political paradigms. A future that seeks creative physical and digital approaches that break from the flattening of the intricate layers of interaction among humans and other expressive entities.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

I find possibility in the re-molding archives of the past to create new imaginaries for the future; bringing individual and collective memory into spaces of empathic and artistic tangibility, and as a result further disrupting the interlocking systems of violence that restrict, repress, and silence individual experience and collective narratives. As I consider my practice as a clinical social worker and think back to conversations about illness—about acute local existential threats, about ways to refute the immediate terror of the present—I think about creating spaces for the preservation of individual and collective narrative, finding hope for novel futurities amidst uncertainty. I think about listening deeply and differently, walking alongside narratives of grief and trauma, finding the capacity to hold emotional realities without expectation, and centering lived experiences, memories, art, and archives that resist the reification of destructive human contexts.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

A snail moving slowly through the garden—getting caught in the rain, embracing mucus, spiraling outward...

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I find myself alternating between and returning to three books these days: *The Order of Time* by Carlo Rovelli, *Funny Weather* by Olivia Laing, and *The New Dark Ages* by James Bleidel.



[7]

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield](#) is a New York-based visual artist exploring memory, grief, and social interaction through digital and physical assemblages made up of found materials, media objects, artifacts, and textures. A.J.'s artistic work emerges from a space somewhere between his backgrounds as a social worker and graphic designer, fluxing between visual, textual, and emotive languages. Inputting objects and signifiers of memory into re-imagined digital landscapes, A.J.'s work engages with a life previously structured around grieving communities, and a focus on creating art that speaks to and with those spaces of empathy.

A.J. has worked as a creative freelancer for local and national non-profits and as a social worker in New York City. A.J. is a graduate of Vassar College and the Columbia University School of Social Work and is currently enrolled in Hunter College's MFA program in Integrated Media Arts.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Down the Ra***t Hole" is a visual descent into an underworld inhabited by the artist, who at the time of creation had become near-obsessed with a rat-centric erasure poem based on a press

conference transcript on NYC.GOV titled "Mayor Eric Adams Signs Legislation to Fight Rats, Build Cleaner City." Posed as an alternative to the textbook version of Mayor Adams' War on Rats, the poem, and ensuing visual works scratch at the nature of political rhetorics and repetitions and scurry down the networked tunnels through which they disperse. Scavenged, repurposed, and scattered text, information, and materials refute the tone and intention of the original source text—here's to "the greatest rats New York City ever had."

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Down the Ra***t Hole* (Exhibition Screenshot), A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023.

[2] *Down the Ra***t Hole - Transcript Rat*, A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023. Erasure Poem and Sound Narrative. 22 Mins., 25 Secs.

[3] *Down the Ra***t Hole - The Rat Listened*, A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023. Inkjet Print, White Acrylic Paint, Machine Engraved Aluminum Plaque, Wood Frame. 47 x 38 cm.

[4] *Down the Ra***t Hole - Rats of the Midnight Mountains and Mazes*, A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023. Found Toy And Object Collage, Wood-Framed Canvas, Black Spray Paint. 50 x 60 cm.

[5] *Down the Ra***t Hole - Monumental Victory Rat*, A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023. Microwave-shrunken Chip Bags, Molded Metal Wireframe, Masking Tape, Packing Tape, Aluminum Foil, Saran Wrap, Bubble Wrap, FreshDirect Bags. 45 x 30 x 20 cm.

[6] *Down the Ra***t Hole - 2708 Words*, A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023. Black Acrylic Paint Pen On Reclaimed Aluminum Siding. 103 x 48 cm.

[7] *Down the Ra***t Hole - This Is A Love Letter*, A.J. Cincotta-Eichenfield, 2023. Digital Headline Collage, Inkjet Print on Attached Notecards. 30 x 41 cm.

BETTY RUSS & MICHAEL DONNELLY



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

The movement and growth of nature as a space/time module, with its responsive reflexivity and nuances in relation to the human, suggest an alternative manifestation of what we locate within ourselves as consciousness. This otherness shapes and defines our experiences, yet we persist in our anthropocentric notions of order and purpose, even when we are constantly witnesses to the undulating non-patternations of cosmic unfurling. Alternative alterity offers a pathway to conceptualize otherness as a directive force within our operational paradigm. As artists, we are privileged with the opportunity to engage in creative exploration, and within the realm of the unreal and the imagined, we can construct and devise ways of being and temporal outcomes that bear witness to the infinite complexity of perception and the complex truths of humanity.

[1]



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

Both of us have emerged from the DIY and independent arts scene in Australia and share a deep interest in science fiction, horror, and alternative theories, as well as speculative narratives within contemporary culture. Our shared fascination with alternative narratives, the positioning of the objective before the subjective, and the imagination of non-human perspectives have led us to develop a collaborative practice that embraces spatiality as an arena for immersive, experiential transformation.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"Inside, A Collapsing Building" takes the conceptual notion of the building as a structure of confinement and transforms it into a post-human cavity housing a site of mutation and adaptation. This transformation of spaces, once designated for human occupation but now laid bare by various forces, whether self-induced or external, delivers a fertile environment for non-human occupancy. Embracing speculative notions of co-opted residual human technologies and resource monsterizations adapted and enhanced by non-human systems and consciousnesses, the constructed environment offers a glimpse into the error of liminality, the wrongness of mutation, the sliver of the infinite at the service of the actual. This perceived "brokenness" harbors worlds of potential and defies the fatalistic and human narratives of power and capital.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

The duality of the virtual space, both homogenous and divergent, offers a fertile and promising site for the development and dissemination of ideas and systems. While the material requirements and reliance on internet infrastructure define the lines of access via privilege, the proliferation of accessible technologies and the democratization of virtual space provide hope. The immediacy and accessibility of the Internet offer a vital platform for artists to share and exhibit their work beyond the confines of their immediate surroundings. It is crucial for artists and galleries to continually evolve and adapt virtual worlds to ensure a space and culture for the freedom of ideas.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Currently, we both work predominantly within the physical space because we are fortunate enough to have access to the relevant resources. As we develop our collaborative practice we are becoming more aware of the benefits and opportunities offered by the virtual space. As artists living and making in a smaller regional center, dealing in ideas and materials that are not immediately embraced by our local audiences, we can see the benefits of engaging with a broader audience through the virtual

spaces of the internet. The ubiquitous nature of the internet and its impact on the psychology of culture is shaping the way we understand our world, the evolution of the shared mind and the collective eye leads us deeper into the myriad tentacularities of the future, and art allows us the space and time to consider our movements forward.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

We hope our work appeals to everybody but we are most interested in presenting our work and ideas to those who may not have previously had access to similar forms and concepts. This most recent work was initially presented as a public work within a small regional town that had recently suffered a major ecological disaster in the form of a catastrophic flood. The building where we installed the work was completely submerged in flood waters and even though it has been over a year since the flood event the evidence of the water's impact was still clearly visible. The subsequent effect upon the audience, seeing the work within the context of the damaged, scarred building, was a strong indication of the power of not only nature to impact and alter our lives but also of art resilience and the hope that can be drawn from the residues of disaster.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

Our vision for the future is one of leaning into the present and embracing the chaos of the unknown. It involves retaining open and inquisitive minds that seek to embrace the multifarious tendrils of potentiality and working for a human future that engages and mutates in accordance with our non-human kin. The potential for an untimely and brutal end to our apparent reign as guardians of this world is balanced only by our ability to think beyond the confines of ourselves and to entertain notions and ideas that surpass our expectations. To achieve this, we require art that alters consciousness, informing our sciences and cultures, or else we risk obliging the shift and fading from view.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

There are grand gestures and small steps that we can all take, living with respect and compassion for ourselves, our communities, and our environment. Radical acceptance, tolerance, and humility at a personal level are balanced by proactive engagement at whatever level we have the capacity as individuals to enact. Sadly we cannot force change, we can only contribute to it, and art as community engagement and shared cultural experience allows a vital platform for mutation and adaptation.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

If we could be reborn as another being we chose to be future humans.



[5]



[6]

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Betty Russ](#) is an artist and arts worker living in Bundjalung country / Lismore. Working across sculpture, assemblage, installation, sound, and embodied research. Her practice ferments between and around the philosophies and renderings of eschatological terror, speculative +/- science fiction, hauntology, spirituality, and the-weird-and-the-eerie. Material manifestations protrude from hypnagogic subconscious fantasy, searching for psychological mitigation to the abject shock of the past, and sweaty white-knuckled fear of the future. Betty is also co-founder and director of Elevator ARI, an emerging artist-run gallery and studio space.

[Michael Donnelly](#) is an artist and arts worker living in Bundjalung country, Lismore, NSW. His practice is a broad investigation of abstraction and transcendence through multiple mediums including painting, assemblage, performance, and sound. A predominantly self-taught artist, Michael augmented his skills in 2017 by undertaking a BA in Visual Arts at Southern Cross University. He is also a co-founding director at [Elevator ARI](#) in Lismore, NSW.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Buildings provide us shelter and foster our sense of permanence and stability. They extend our private, internal spaces into the collective network, echoing the structures of thought, exploding our systems of reference and understanding into the spatial, material world our bodies occupy. Buildings also assimilate our physiological and psychological frailties with the hostilities of the natural world, allowing us safety and comfort in a landscape alive with diversities, many operating against our interests. The notions of permanence and sustainability that buildings provide exist solely as a construct, maintained by our subjectivity in discourse with our surroundings. What is left when we no longer maintain our communion with the places we've built?

On entering the building, made devoid of activity following a catastrophic ecological event, the sense of a speculative post-human intervention is evident. Formed by the broken and rearranged materials once used to house capital exchange, are material utterances of pre-destruction activities, and post-human growth. Ad-hoc water vessels, pumping sustenance to and from micro-worlds, inhabit pockets of space within the

cavernous shell. An awareness from within the apparently non-sentient amalgamations of matter, triggers a response to human presence, sensing movement and responding with sound and light. Understanding of objects and apparatus is familiar, yet against interpretation.

Timbers, cement, PVC tubing, plaster, paint, wiring, UV lighting, plastic tarps, electronic devices, water, and incidental weeds creep through the space like mimetic ghosts, improvising possible futures.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Inside, A Collapsing Building* (Exhibition Screenshot), Betty Russ and Michael Donnelly, 2023.

[2-6] *Inside, A Collapsing Building*, Betty Russ and Michael Donnelly, 2023. Image of Assemblage And Mixed Media. Dimensions Variable.

PART 3.
 FLUID BODIES,
 BLURRED BOUNDARIES

"The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics."
 —Donna Haraway¹

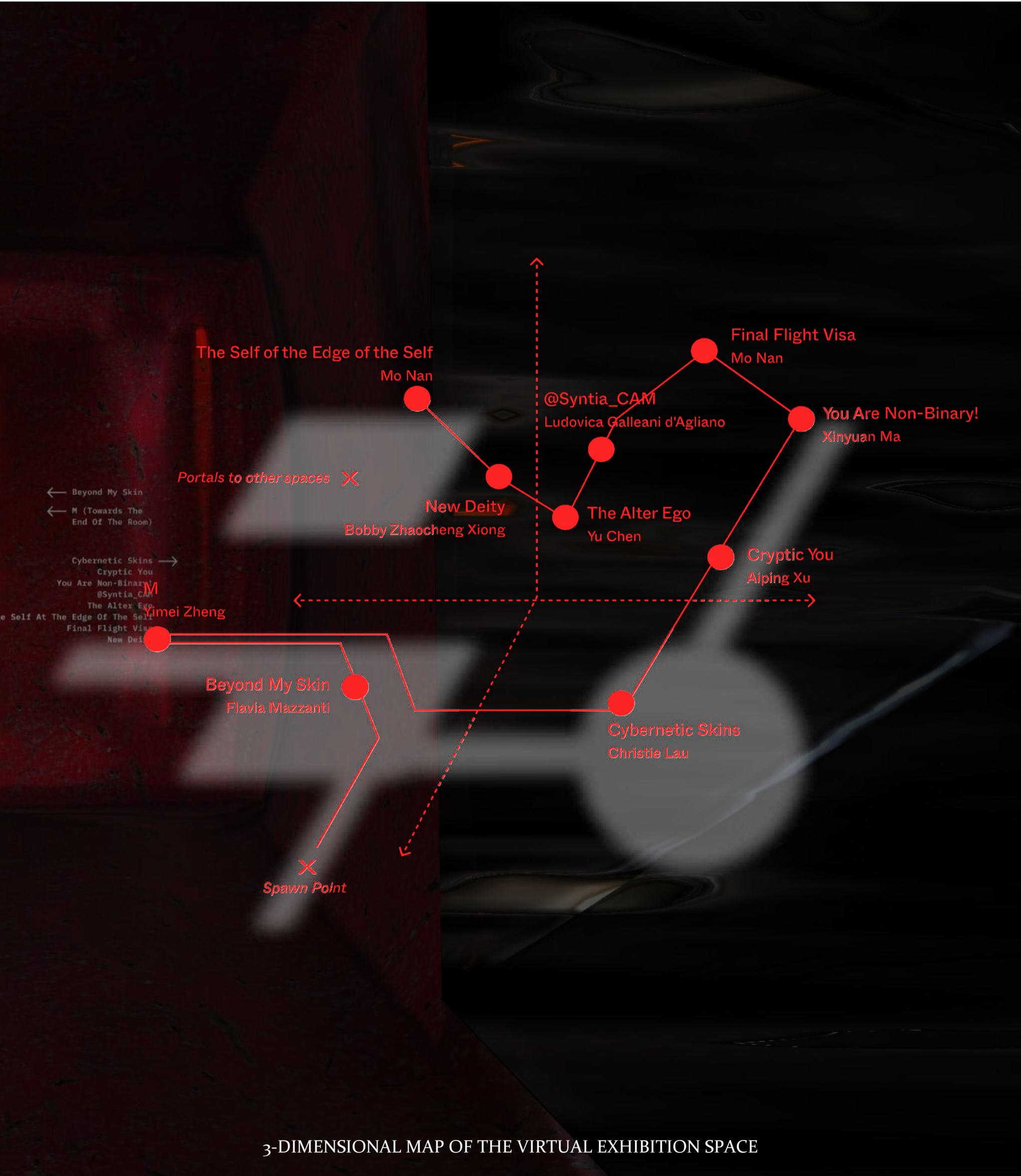
Society has constructed not only physical prisons but also prisons of hard definitions—men and women, black and white, smart and dumb, strong and weak, machine and organic, forming opposing dichotomies.

However, this part of the exhibition takes us to a space that is rather going beyond the mix of imagination and material reality. A techno-biological fusion, where the lines between the organic and synthetic blur; a celebration of multiplicity, where nothing is fixated and everything melds into an ever-shifting amalgamation. Definitions and distinctions have lost much of their relevance since everything can become and is in the process of becoming something else.

Our bodies, as hybrid entities, place us within a broader spectrum of life where boundaries between self and others are fluid and permeable.

It is the moment where the individual "I" fades into a collective "we," unveiling the interconnected nature of our existence, and embracing the truth found in mutation, transformation, and ambiguity.

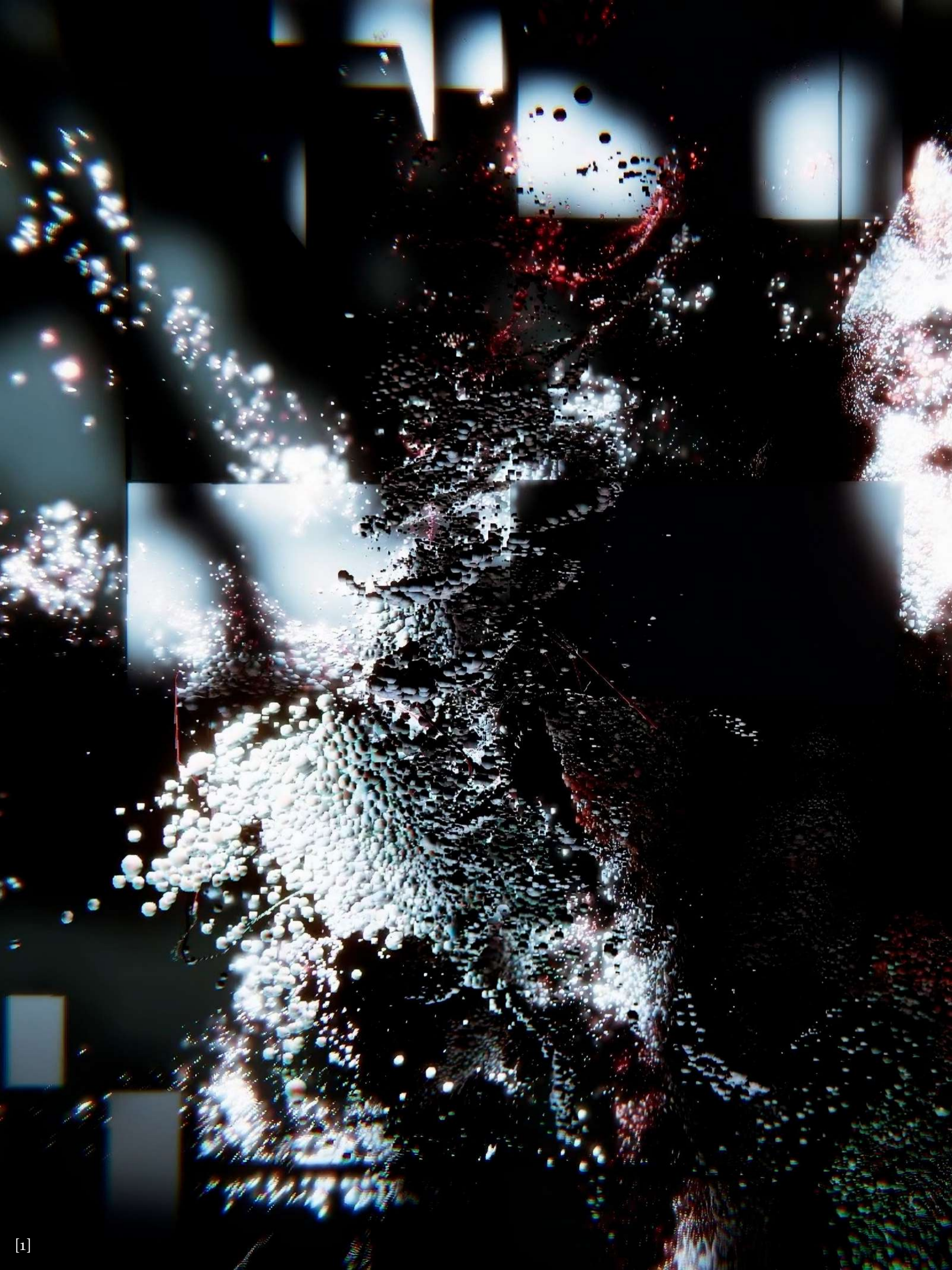
¹ DONNA J. HARAWAY, "A CYBORG MANIFESTO: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIALIST-FEMINISM IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY," IN SIMIANS, CYBORGS, AND WOMEN: THE REINVENTION OF NATURE (NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 1991), 149-181.



3-DIMENSIONAL MAP OF THE VIRTUAL EXHIBITION SPACE



ELLA VIJA MÄZANTI



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

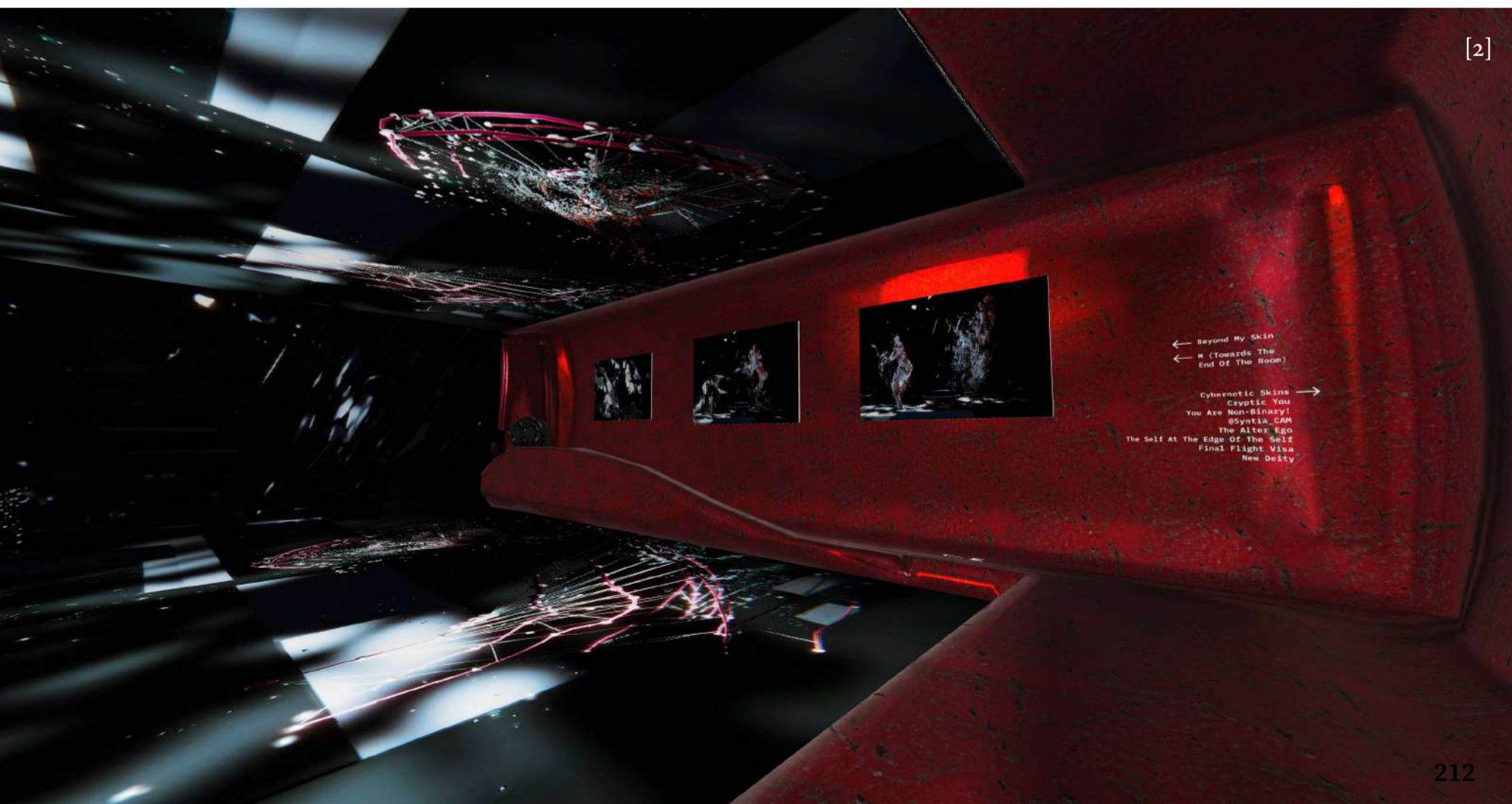
Throughout my artistic work, I am constantly interested in exploring and providing alternative perspectives on ourselves and our environment through the use of different technologies. In this sense, *Alt-Alterity* perfectly encapsulates this concept for me. It represents the ability to look at alternative, unconventional perspectives and narratives, allowing us to challenge our predetermined notions and expand our understanding of the world. I also believe that this concept isn't limited to the unfamiliar only, but it extends to reimagining and re-understanding things we believe we already know but are still unknown to us.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I studied art and architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, specializing in virtual spaces and digital interactivity. During my studies, I began experimenting with various techniques and technologies. Since 2019, my work has revolved around the theme of the post-anthropocene, with a variety of projects ranging from experimental animation films to interactive installations and virtual reality experiences.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"Beyond My Skin" is an interactive installation exploring the themes of identity and digital inclusion. Translated physical movements generate hybrid bodies in real time through interaction, creating a new collective consciousness of where our bodies begin and end. In this way, the visitors collectively explore the hybrid relationship between bodies and their digital representation, investigating something as physical as the feeling of "touch" and its meaning in the digital realm. For the virtual exhibition *Alt-Alterity*, the project will be presented in a non-interactive, immersive version. By exploring new forms of connection and interaction between our physical and digital bodies, "Beyond My Skin" aims to challenge our experiences. Visitors can engage with a new form of self-awareness and representation outside traditional binary and societal portrayals, encouraging alternative post-anthropocentric ways to be in and with the world.



[2]

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

I believe that virtual exhibitions have the potential to transcend geographical boundaries and reach audiences worldwide, making this a very potent tool for raising and amplifying awareness on various themes, including political, social, and ecological issues, while democratizing access to art and culture. Furthermore, by creating immersive worlds through XR technologies, art and art exhibitions also have the potential to explore new forms of artistic expression that go beyond physical constraints and direct one-to-one representation of our physical world.

I also think that it is very important to validate both physical and virtual art spaces and find a good balance between both. I personally do not see one overriding the other, but rather enhancing each other.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

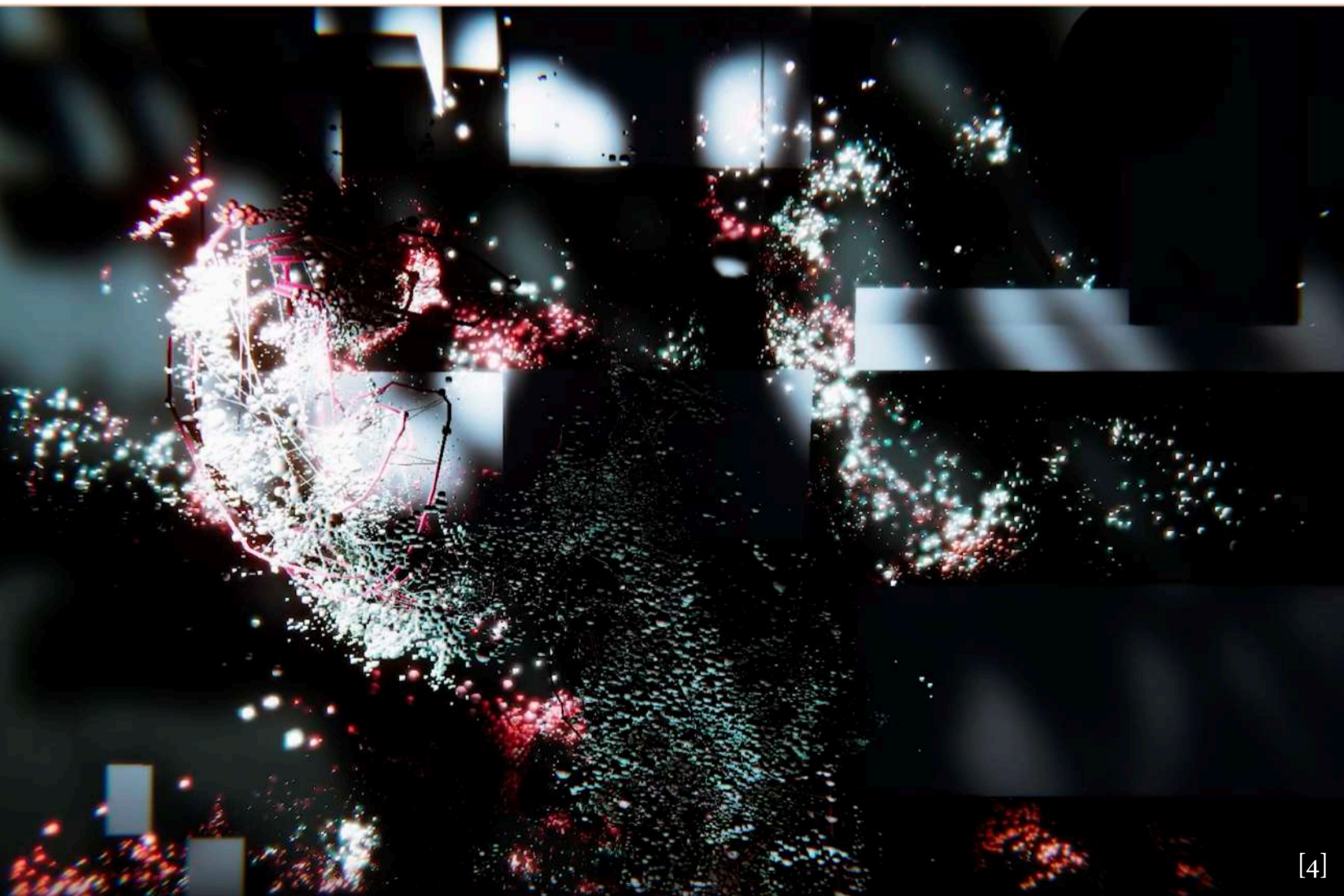
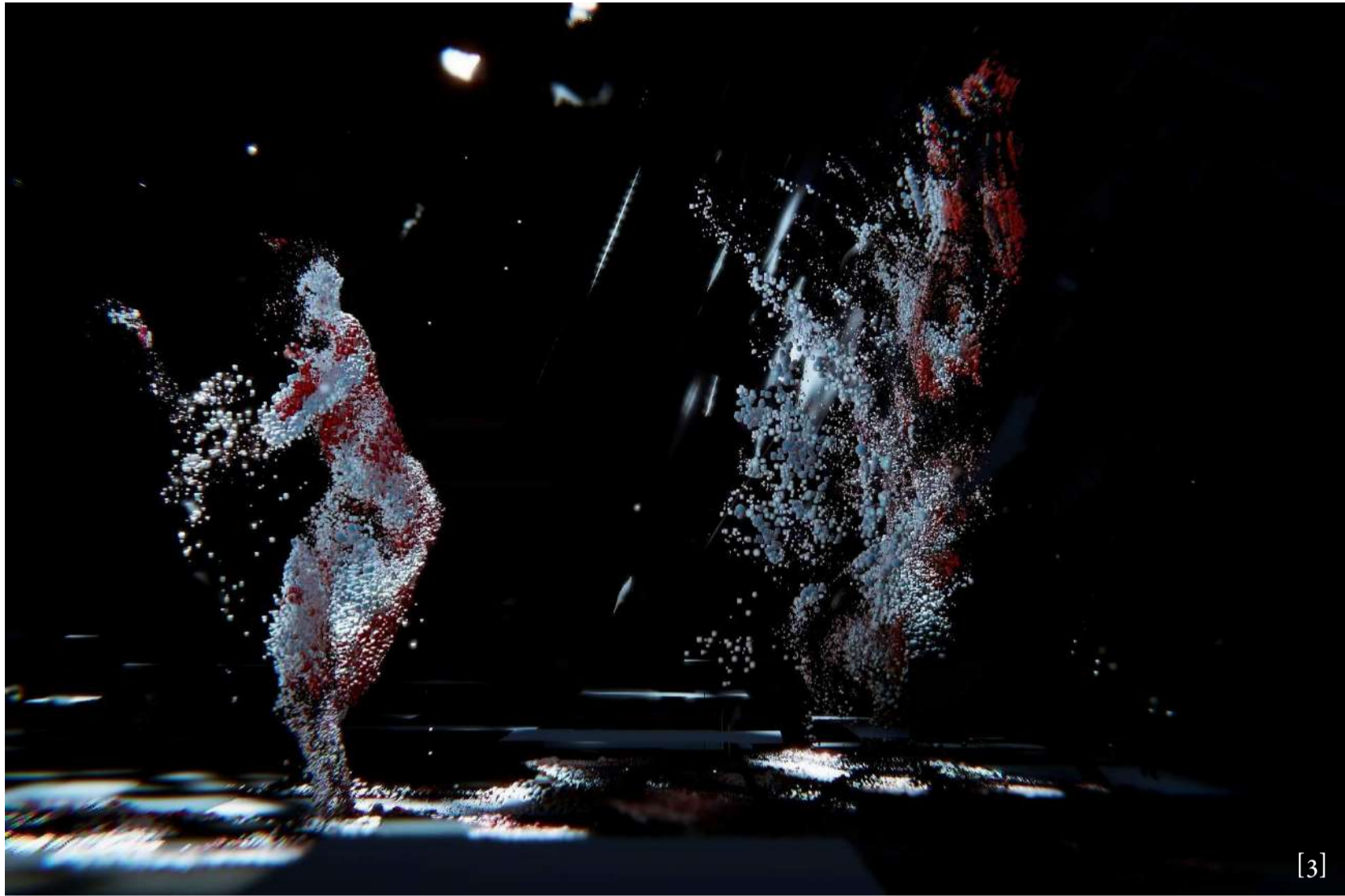
Virtual environments offer me the opportunity to experiment with spaces that go beyond physical constraints, providing a realm where I can freely explore organic shapes and abstract design processes. In my work, I never understand the virtual space as a mere replica of our physical world or a direct representation; instead,

I see it as a different layer to be explored. I think that if we expect the virtual to be an exact copy of the physical realm, we might be disappointed. But if we understand the virtual as a potential realm where we unleash our imagination and experiment with new types of space, we can have both spaces coexisting without competing against each other.

Additionally, I love to explore "phygital" spaces that blend both realities, creating a third space. These hybrid spaces have the potential to challenge our perspectives beyond strict boundaries, leaving room for creative exploration.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

In my work, I often deal with philosophical theories on post-anthropocentrism and new materialism, while working with interdisciplinary processes ranging from experimental filmmaking to performance art, science, and technology. While my works might create interest among people working with these topics and fields, often leading to very exciting conversations and potential future collaborations, I also believe that my ideal audience is the general public. Through my work, I would like to be able to engage with people from different backgrounds, encouraging curiosity and challenging them to critically reflect on the topics and the use of technology I deal with.



WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

We are living in very difficult times but also characterized by a willingness to address important challenges and crucial issues, which are leading to significant societal changes. Through my work, my aim is not to provide either a utopian or dystopian perspective, but rather to challenge and offer alternative perspectives that might contribute, even if in a small way, to these changes.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

I believe it is very important to act on a collective basis, creating meaningful connections and exploring alternative ways of interaction and exchange. By opening up dialogue and embracing different perspectives, it is possible to encourage important discussions that can have an impact on the world we live in. The concept of "entanglement," approached in a post-anthropocentric sense, becomes here a crucial element in forging our way to be and to interact with the world, bringing us a step closer to a more collaborative future.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I think that I would love to be reborn as a bird, having the ability to perceive the world from diverse points of view—from the ground level to above the clouds—and navigate different geographical locations, being free to explore and embrace new interactions with different species I would encounter on my way.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I would like to recommend the online platform "Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene," curated, among others, by the American anthropologist Anna Tsing, and released in 2021. The platform offers a very interesting insight into (post-)anthropocentric themes and features a various collection of works from scientists, humanists, and artists.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Flavia Mazzanti](#) (b. 1994) is an Italian-Brazilian Vienna-based artist and entrepreneur in the field of virtual reality and digital media, with a background in architecture. Her work explores artistic-philosophical concepts on post-anthropocentrism, new materialism, body, and identity with the interest of providing alternative perspectives on ourselves and our environment.

She graduated with distinction from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, receiving the Gustav Peichl Award for architectural drawing and the Würdigungspreis for artistic work. Her work has been screened and awarded at multiple national and international festivals, among others the Ars Electronica Festival, DA Z - Digital Arts Festival Zurich, Parallel Vienna, and ADAF.

Flavia is also the co-founder of [Immerea](#)—an interactive media company focusing on the development of VR games and virtual installations—co-organizer of XRVienna, and active as a lecturer at national and international universities, symposiums, and festivals. She is listed on the Forbes 30 Under 30 Europe list of 2023.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Beyond My Skin" is an interactive media installation exploring the themes of identity and digital inclusion. This collective experience allows people to connect on new levels, exploring the fusion of human bodies and post-anthropocentric digital representations. In this project, human bodies transform into energy particles, drifting through space and connecting in new ways until they lose their familiar shape, becoming abstract elements in constant motion.

The project, which is usually shown in the form of a "phygital" installation and live performance, will be presented here through immersive video sequences accompanied by audio, with the aim to bring the viewer into a transformative journey where boundaries blur and connections redefine our understanding of self.

A project by Flavia Mazzanti.
Realized by Immerea.

Concept and artistic direction:
Flavia Mazzanti.
Production, Design and
Installation: Manuel Bonell.
Technical Artist: Tobias Mayer.
Programming: Catherine Joy
Calupas, Michael Bonell.

Sound: Brootworth.

Realized with the support of the Cultural Department of the City of Vienna, and the Ministry of Art, Culture, and Sports of Austria.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Beyond My Skin (Still)*, A Project by Flavia Mazzanti, Realized by Immerea, Sound by Brootworth, 2023. Immersive Interactive Installation. Dimensions Variable

[2] *Beyond My Skin (Exhibition Screenshot)*, A Project by Flavia Mazzanti, Realized by Immerea, Sound by Brootworth, 2023.

[3-5] *Beyond My Skin (Still)*, A Project by Flavia Mazzanti, Realized by Immerea, Sound by Brootworth, 2023. Immersive Interactive Installation. Dimensions Variable.



CHERIS STIEGLAU

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alt-Alterity encapsulates the idea of otherness and difference beyond what is familiar or known. For my piece for this exhibition, "Cybernetic Skins", this theme is extremely relevant. As technology becomes increasingly digital and immersive, what does this mean for human identity? "Cybernetic Skins" is my speculative vision of what post-human bodies could become as we become more entangled with our digital data. With reimagined organic bodies through the use of A.I., I speculated the future of identity to be the merging of flesh with the cables carrying bytes of digital data, where we become one with the digital landscape of our own creation, extending beyond skin and bone, and entangled in the web of the digital ecosystem.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

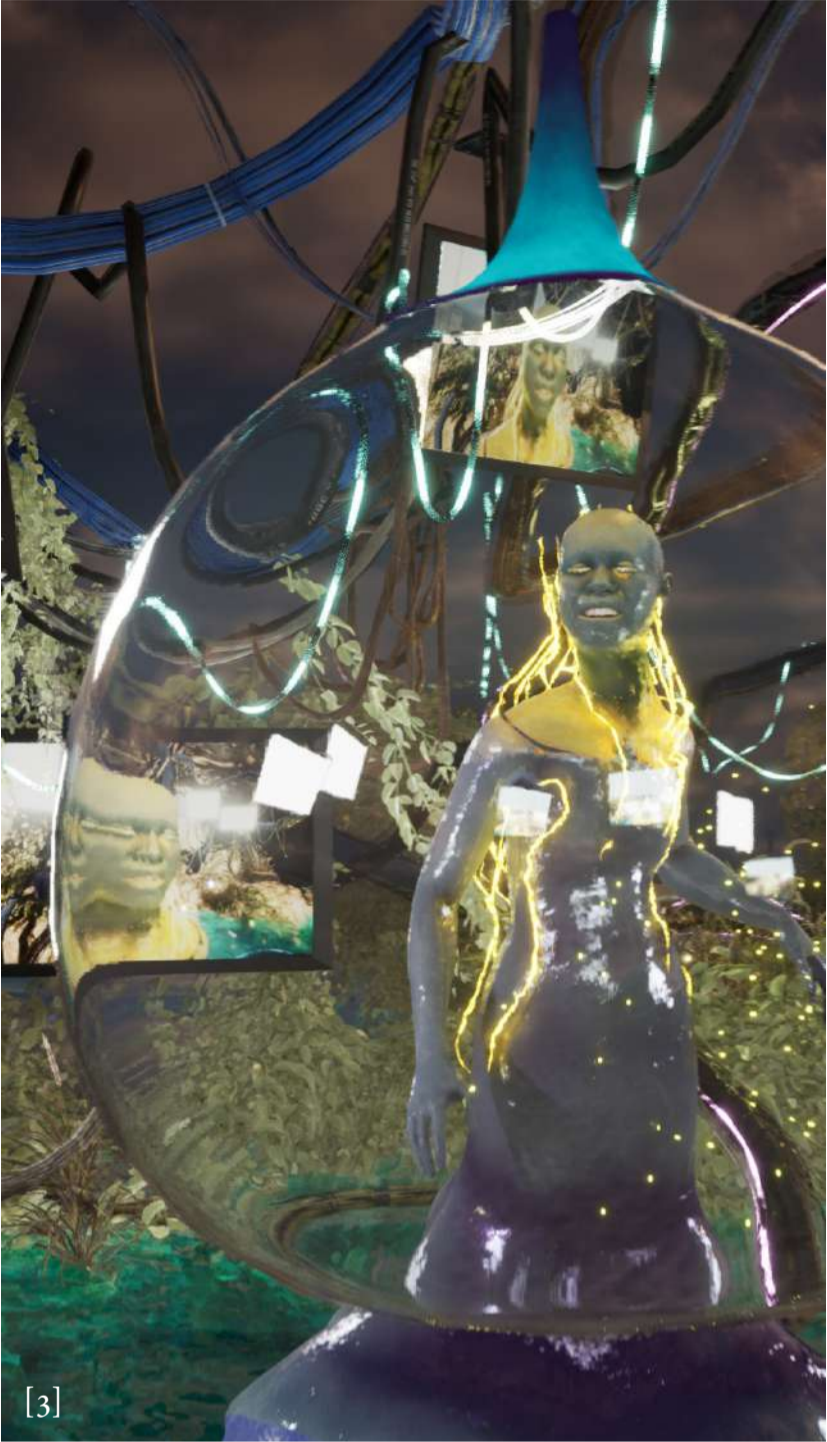


Having studied fashion design at Central Saint Martins, my interest in *Alt-Alterity* and digital bodies began when I took my fashion practice in a digital direction. I found the digital medium to be incredibly powerful as a creator—from the bodies that wore my fashion creations to the physics of the world these characters existed within. Identities are formed on bodies by the garments that adorn them, which itself imbues multi-layered social and cultural meanings to the body. As a designer and creator, this is incredibly exciting as digital identities, and digital avatars, massively disrupt the body-identity-fashion triangle.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

"Cybernetic Skins" showcases a speculative vision of future post-human bodies in an era of immersive digital technology. I imagined flesh merging with cables—the technology enabling the expression of digital identities in the first place. Imagined through the use of Mid-Journey A.I., I created these characters that embody my vision of these biological-technological hybrid beings, which are adapted from Unreal Engine's own Metahuman creator. Within this game engine, you can design what your avatar can look like, but I felt that my avatar is not fully human—but beyond. I foresee the future of digital identities to meld with the ecosystem. As everything on the web is interconnected, digital identities are fully entangled within the web space, and I wanted to reflect that through the environment design of the cables running through the scene, rooting the characters to their context.





[3]



[4]

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

I think exhibitions in the digital age will decentralise art and the experience of art, thus making art more accessible. I think in a lot of traditional art spaces, artistic cultural institutions are the authority on art, and hence physical exhibitions can become exclusionary spaces. Digital tools can serve as an equaliser to art, as both viewer and artists, by showcasing and curating a multi-sensory experience, direct to the viewer. In this way, the experience of art through the digital medium can be more personal—in interoperable mediums such as VR or AR.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Virtual environments are a huge aspect of my own practice. As a digital artist, the characters and designs cannot exist in a vacuum, hence the environment is the extension of the design—a glimpse into my imagined world that my post-human creations exist within. In "Cybernetic Skins", the world I imagined my character inhabiting is deeply intertwined with the body, as data cables sprawl across the environment, and connect to the body, symbolising the oneness of humans and data. However, I think this question is flawed. Game space and physical spaces are not as different as one might think. Sociologist Erving Goffman likens everyday social

interaction to a performance, with people in everyday life as actors on stage playing various roles. Game space is not so dissimilar, digital spaces and avatars only provide additional stages for the shared performativity of every day—every day being a set of conditioned behaviours deemed "normal" in the corresponding space. In that way, I perceive any digital work within its interchangeable digital context—the problem isn't that things work well within one context but not in another, but rather it is the beauty of game spaces—that objects can be interpreted and reinterpreted infinitely through digital spaces.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I don't perceive my work as having an "ideal" audience—the beauty of digital art spaces is the democratisation of artistic spaces, and the ability to reach out to audiences, regardless of location, age, and gender. The spoken word element of "Cybernetic Skins" speculates what future bodies could become, what would we look like if we merged with our digital data? I wanted to pose this overarching question of visualising digital identities in the age of emergent technologies to my audiences as an open-ended question. Coming from a fashion background, I think that I have an audience that may come from that side, but also I think audiences find me from my interests, that being technology, mixed reality, digital art, and immersive storytelling, and I think that my audiences also are interested in this intersection as well.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

In imagining a future that goes beyond the present I envision a world where the harmonious integration of technology, nature, and human consciousness becomes the foundation of our existence. Of succumbing to the outcomes often portrayed in dystopian stories I firmly believe in the potential, for a collaborative and balanced coexistence.

My vision is rooted in values such as sustainability, empathy, and innovation. It's a future where we have utilized technology's capabilities not for convenience but to enhance our environment and society. Through efforts and responsible practices, we have successfully tackled the challenges posed by climate change. Our commitment to preserving biodiversity has prevented extinctions. We have also established financial systems that minimize the risk of collapse. Global conflicts have been replaced by diplomacy and cooperation while populism has given way to a spirit of unity and inclusivity.

This vision is not merely based on optimism; it stems from our ability to adapt, innovate, and prioritize empathy over exclusion. It represents a future where humans coexist harmoniously with the realm—a future where the boundaries between life and synthetic creations become blurred in ways that enrich our lives while ensuring the preservation of our planet, for future generations.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

To work towards the future we imagine it is crucial to consider everyone involved. Individuals, communities organizations and nations. This requires an effort and global cooperation. Here are some practical steps to kickstart change:

- 1. Sustainability.** Embrace practices in your life by reducing energy consumption supporting eco friendly products and advocating for renewable energy sources.
- 2. Education.** Promote education on issues, diversity and inclusive policies. Education forms the foundation for making decisions and driving change.
- 3. Collaboration.** Encourage collaboration among scientists, engineers, artists and policymakers to tackle challenges together. Collaborative solutions often yield outcomes.
- 4. Innovation.** Invest in innovations that contribute to a future—be it clean energy solutions, efficient transportation systems or environmentally friendly materials.
- 5. Inclusivity.** Foster an environment of empathy and inclusivity where everyone feels valued. Recognize the importance of diversity. Actively work towards dismantling biases and prejudices.
- 6. Community Engagement.** Get involved in your community through volunteer work or initiatives that

address environmental and social issues.

7. **Consumption.** Make choices by opting for products and services that align with sustainability practices and ethical standards. Support companies that prioritize responsibility alongside concerns.
8. **Global Unity.** Advocate, for unity and diplomacy while rejecting approaches; prioritize collaboration as we face shared challenges together. Promoting media literacy and critical thinking is essential, in countering the dissemination of narratives and false information. Additionally prioritizing well being and cultivating resilience within society enables us to effectively navigate global crises. By embracing these practices we transform ourselves into catalysts for change than mere spectators. Together we can forge a path, towards a future that embodies harmony and progress.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I think it would be really interesting to be reborn as fungi. The interconnectedness and the collective consciousness of mycelium are so different from the human experience, that I feel like it would be interesting just to see what it would be like to experience becoming an organism that is so rooted in its environment. In many ways, I think that was reflective of my concept of "Cybernetic Skins". I wanted my characters to become one with the organic digital environment that they exist within, the self-becoming an extension of the ecosystem, rooted in the bytes of 1's and 0's pulsating through the cables.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

1. **"The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress & Modern Social Theory" by Joanne Entwistle (2015)**
2. **"The Psychology of Clothes" by J. C. Flugel (1933)**
3. **"Fractal Folds: The Posthuman Fashion of Iris van Herpen, Fashion Theory Journal" by Anneke Smelik (2020)**
4. **"Urban Style Cultures and Urban Cultural Production in Milan: Postmodern Identity and the Transformation of Fashion, Poetics" by Laura Bovone (2006)**
5. **"A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" by Donna Haraway (1991)**

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Named in the Institute of Digital Fashion's Top 100 Innovators list of 2023, [Christie Lau](#) is an XR artist, working with digital fashion, AI, and augmented and virtual realities. Referencing internet culture and everyday mundanity, their work reimagines recognizable motifs and environments in AR and VR, in a playful and absurd take on reality.

Having recently graduated with a BA in Fashion Print at Central Saint Martins, Christie's giant QR boxes became a viral sensation. On the runway, they debuted their digital garments on three giant QR code boxes worn by models. When scanned, they take the viewer to an AR filter where they can see the full collection. Their work has been featured by the likes of i-D, Dazed, and the Evening Standard.

Shortly after graduation, they have already worked with high-profile clients such as Meta on their Queens of the Metaverse campaign, designing and creating mixed reality outfits for drag king Adam All in a one-of-a-kind mixed reality runway.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Cybernetic Skins" delves into the liminal space between the organic and the synthetic. It envisions post-human bodies, imagined using AI. Rooted in the premise that humanity is not a static entity but rather an ever-evolving construct, this project captures the transformative essence of our relationship with technology.

As we advance, so does the boundary between our flesh and the realm of the digital. The piece envisions a future where our very skin intertwines with cables and conduits, carrying not just blood but bytes, bridging the divide between biology and data, garments of tangled cables and bodies seamlessly transitioning into fashioned adornment. This is not just a melding of humanity with machines but a profound metamorphosis, resulting in an entity that is both and neither.

The digital landscape featured is not merely a backdrop but a character in itself. Visually, concepts using AI reflect a world we have birthed but perhaps not fully comprehended. Through the fluidity of 3D animation, viewers are taken on a journey where every pixel, every digital sinew, challenges conventional definitions of life, identity, and existence.

Yet, it's not just the content but the mode of presentation that amplifies this message. By projecting this video onto a free-standing screen installation, Christie bridges the digital-physical dichotomy, translating virtual realms into tangible experiences. This is no mere screen but a portal—inviting viewers to step through, to momentarily inhabit the cybernetic world, feeling the blurring boundaries and sensing the future's resonance.

"Cybernetic Skins" is more than a visual experience; it is a philosophical exploration of potential futures, a testament to the malleability of human nature, and a reflection on the boundless possibilities that arise when we become one with the very tools we create.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Cybernetic Skins* (Exhibition Screenshot), Christie Lau, 2023.

[2-4] *Cybernetic Skins*, Christie Lau, 2023. Digital Fashion. Dimensions Variable.



YIMMEL ZHEEN G

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

Alterity: the "other of two," or "second" in Latin, is a philosophical and anthropological term signifying "otherness." It's used in media to express something different from "sameness," or something outside of tradition or convention. Theorists employ this term to create a space for considering "the other" in enriching world culture and "thinking about the complexities of self and other and the formation of identity." However, the establishment of "we" versus "the other," this binary opposition, appears too simplistic. How can we safeguard this term from dichotomization, anthropocentrism, and oversimplification? How can we prevent "alterity" from being relegated to secondary status by dominant groups? Reinventing and redefining a word is a potent way to reconsider the issues and meanings involved. *Alt-Alterity* could represent a reevaluation of the diminished, simplified meaning of "alterity," a revisiting and enrichment of "alterity" that was previously overlooked, challenging the dominant narratives.



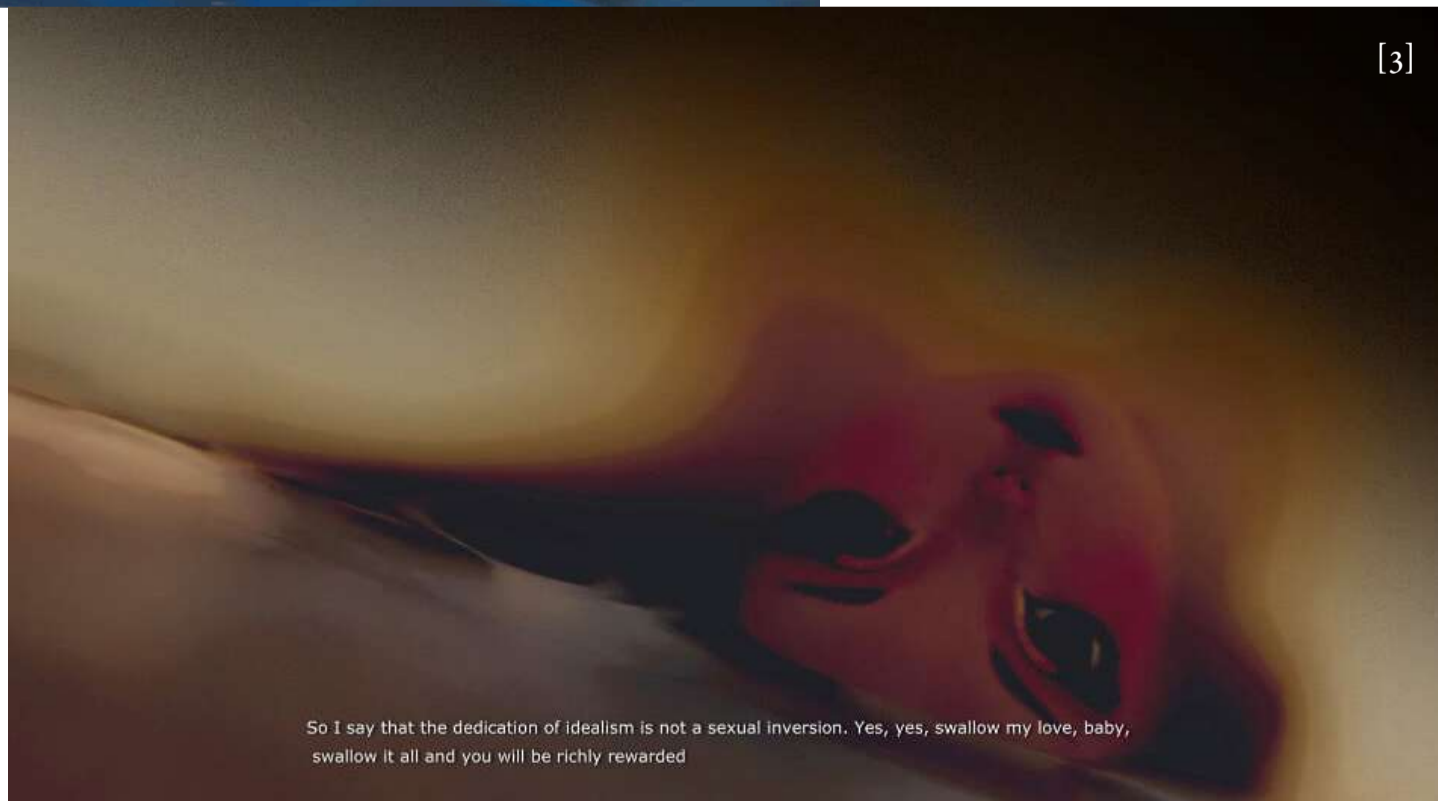
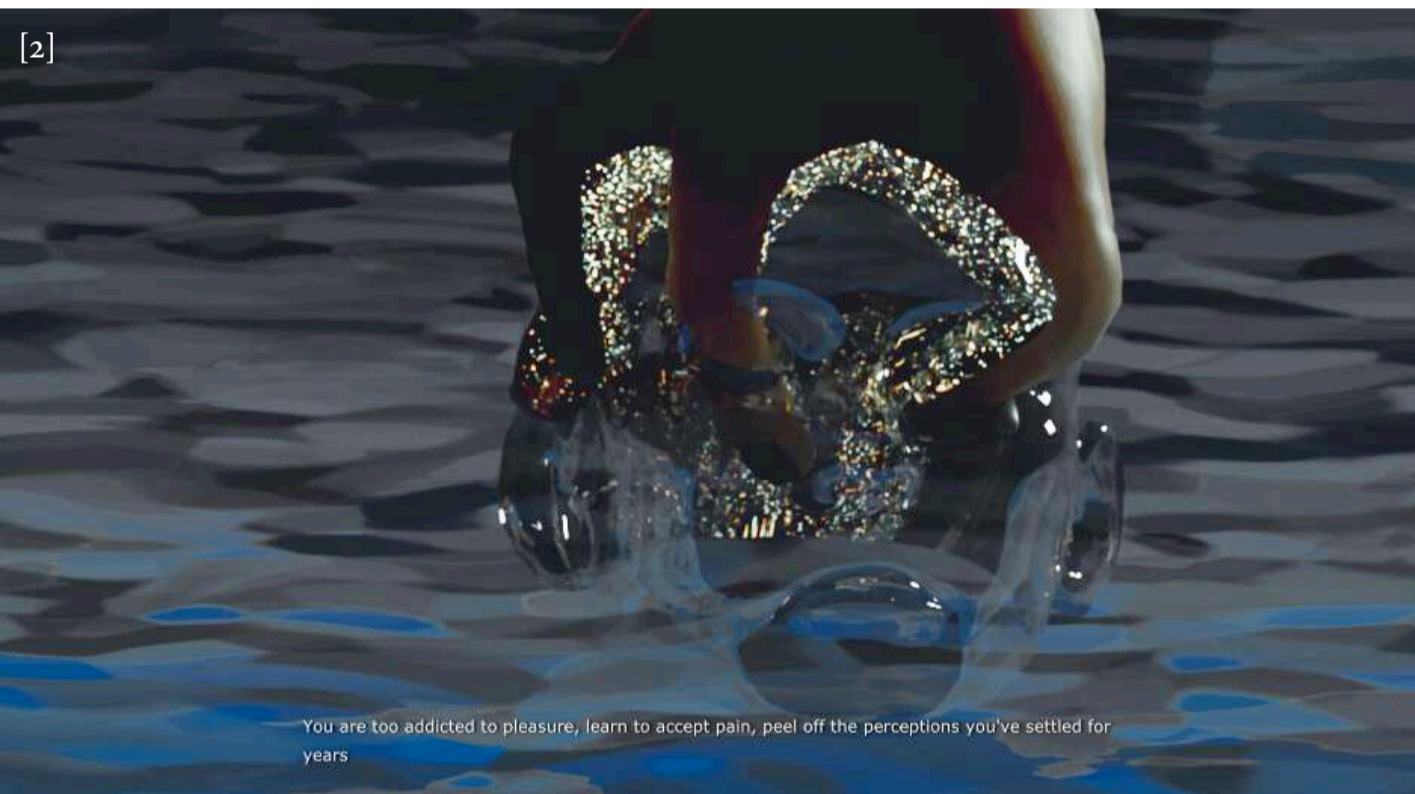
COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

The real world appears to be inevitably progressing toward a future marked by the slogan "This is the future" (an advertising slogan for an AI company), conveying a sense of hopelessness. I asked myself how to break free from the constraints of society, how to resist, and whether I could find salvation in a world characterized by disorder within disorder. Can I escape the framework of rationality in a world of illusion? My interest gradually narrowed down to the power dynamics in sex, desire, and responsibility. "Desire" and "responsibility" became key terms, and I aimed to grasp the sense of inadequacy, explore how individuals confront their own incapability and seek to discuss society in terms of individual desires.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

The work attempts to show the fear and frustration in the position of the submissive character, how to resist the force of fascism (in a philosophical way), the problem of simplifying, and sexualizing sophisticated concepts, and how one can delegate responsibility and justify oneself in every possible way. All the found materials are from the internet, and I've shown a full source list at the end, they are important evidence to discuss the misogyny, objectification, normalization, and dualism that often occur in porn, media, popular culture, and everyday life. The animation and dialogues are produced in a way that

intentionally blurs the subject and object, and blurs the identities of fictional and real characters. Some words are written in a logical leap or puns, and some of them are like a therapist repeating back to your conversations. Both models were strong projection subjects for me. I tried to strengthen them a little bit with a non-fluid motion, using low pixels to seek a small degree of independence for them, to interfere with the viewer's visual satisfaction. These various audio-visual manipulations are also my attempt to find a space that is less rational, and that is not constrained by duality.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

It's hard to compare the level of engagement and immersion with offline, but it's interesting to note that online space can be organized more independently, but with a wider audience, engaging with a more diverse community globally and, as they say, leveling the world between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. When organizations have considerations beyond the business and ambitions against injustice, then it is like independent cyberspace exploring new ways of existence, an alternative to the old systems of power. A habitat that independent artists crave.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

When making 3D works, I always keep some of the real materials in the virtual environment, they are the roots of my own creation—I can't seem to get rid of them. I may not be interested in creating a mirrored real world in a virtual reality simulation, but to me, creating in a virtual environment is probably more like creating a novel than a documentary. But given the fact that my "novels" are always in the interest of the social status quo, and because of my photographic background, I find that exposing issues, in reality, has to be done in the physical world, virtual environments just don't feel powerful enough.

Virtual environments are great for expressing abstract subjects, and emotions, without the limitations of race, gender, age, or any other stereotypes of the real world.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

My ideal audience would probably include people who aren't typically interested in art, reflection, or making changes, lol. And for those in positions of dominance, I'd want to lock them up and force them to look at it, you know, like in "A Clockwork Orange." However, that's not going to happen in reality. So, it doesn't really matter to me; I would be happy to have anyone who would like to spend some time with my work.

In imagining a future that goes beyond the present, I envision a world where the harmonious integration of technology, nature, and human consciousness becomes the foundation of our existence. Instead of succumbing to the outcomes often portrayed in dystopian stories, I firmly believe in the potential for a collaborative and balanced coexistence.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

My understanding is that there is no fundamental difference between the future and the past. This holds true for philosophers and artists, as well as for economics and



Naaaah... but I could be your slave, master, I will worship you. command me, make a contract with me, I surrender control to you ...please

[4]



[5]

politics. The future might turn out to be the most boring and disappointing ending to a story, akin to the last season of "Game of Thrones." However, we can find a way to survive in small groups. (Though I'm unsure if it's getting harder or easier to achieve this as technology advances).

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Haha, damn, the future I envisioned in the previous question is too depressing. It's best not to go down that path. However, if the world is indeed doomed, we have to find a way to survive on the road to destruction. By "we," I mean as much of the human race as possible. We can transcend religion and politics (though that might only happen with an alien invasion—I'm so negative!) and stop blaming the other side. We need to earnestly work together to solve the problems at hand, rather than exploiting disasters for profit or using them to stabilize governments and countries while blaming each other and relying on the media to maintain societal stability.

And for "we," those who consider themselves ordinary people, oppressed and marginalized to varying degrees, in the context of my work, I'd like to emphasize that using victimhood and incompetence as a defense for inaction or even causing further harm is not the solution. It's harder but more important to genuinely accomplish the day-to-day tasks well rather than being full of fancy words.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Jellyfish might be cool—they are beautiful, incredibly diverse, cruel, multicellular, and simple, only containing a basic network of neurons to sense the environment. And I will survive when I'm cut in half!

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Hmmm... It may be less refined, not decorated and served in a classy manner, or made only by fine chefs and require plenty of money to buy. Then again, it's also not overly popular street food as it may not be everyone's cup of tea to try and enjoy. So... Maybe a Durian Pizza.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I'm sure there have been a lot of recommendations already, so I'm here to recommend watching some cheesy, crappy but popular (mainstream) shows, social media content (and comments), pornography, categories you generally have no interest in or even disagree with, through an analytical eye. The sound and visual, the gesture, the texts, and the logic of it all.

In a sense, compared to second-hand messages, I see them as derivative readings of philosophical books, quite an intuitive way to help observe this society. Refer to the documentary film "The Pervert's Guide to Ideology" written by Slavoj Žižek, for an idea of this way of viewing.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Yimei Zheng](#) grew up in China and currently lives in Germany. She is a multimedia artist with a background in photography and psychology. Her practice focuses on time-based media but also includes prints and installations in an attempt to disrupt traditional notions of desire, identity, objectification, and normativity. Often, emotion serves as a significant undercurrent in her work. Drawing from individual experiences, Zheng creates experimental depictions of social issues and collective anxiety.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"M" is a video essay composed of 3D animation and found images. Zheng uses pornography as a means of critiquing the ever-producing stereotypes in everyday life. It is a struggle against the perverted pursuit of spectacle, pleasure, and order. "M" attempts to showcase the endless spiral of existential dilemmas that normalization brings.

This work is not so much about erotica but about power. Amateur porn and NSFW art can be seen as outlets for desire and freedom, while sexualized everyday content, professional porn, and animations represent the peak of capitalism and a mirror of ideology.

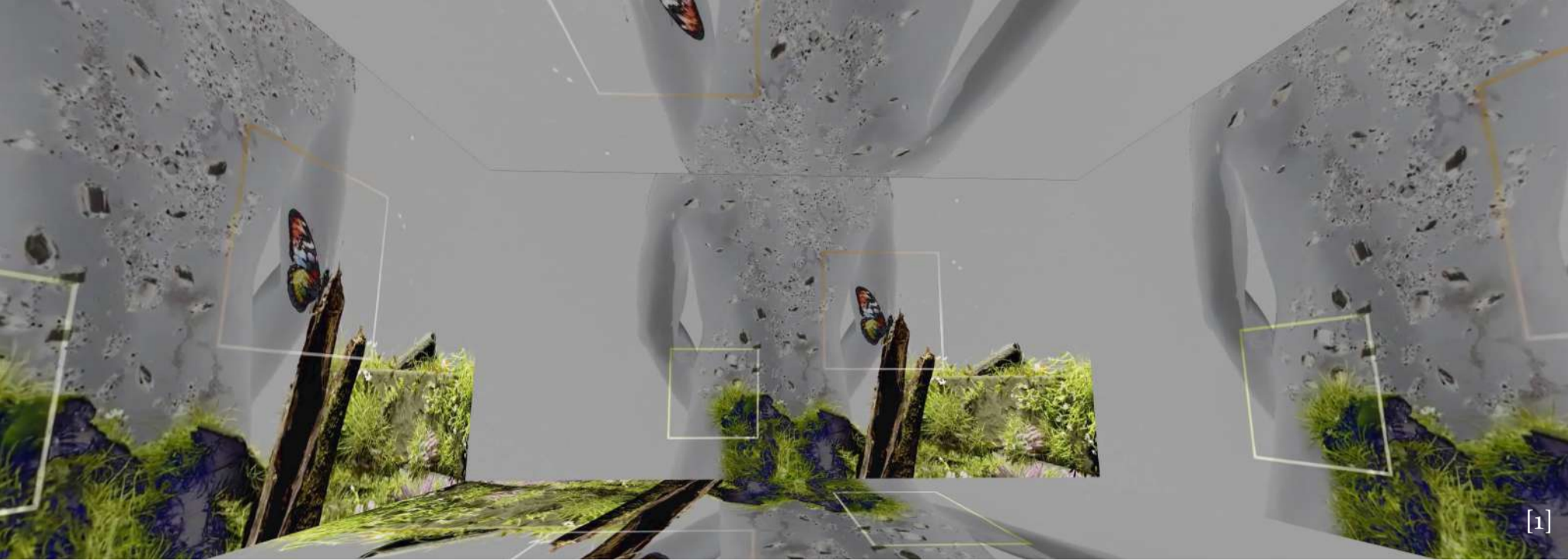
IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *M* (Exhibition Screenshot), Yimei Zheng, 2023.

[2-5] *M* (Still), Yimei Zheng, 2023. 3D Animation, Clips From Pornography And Found Images. 12 Mins., 5 Secs.



AIPIING XU

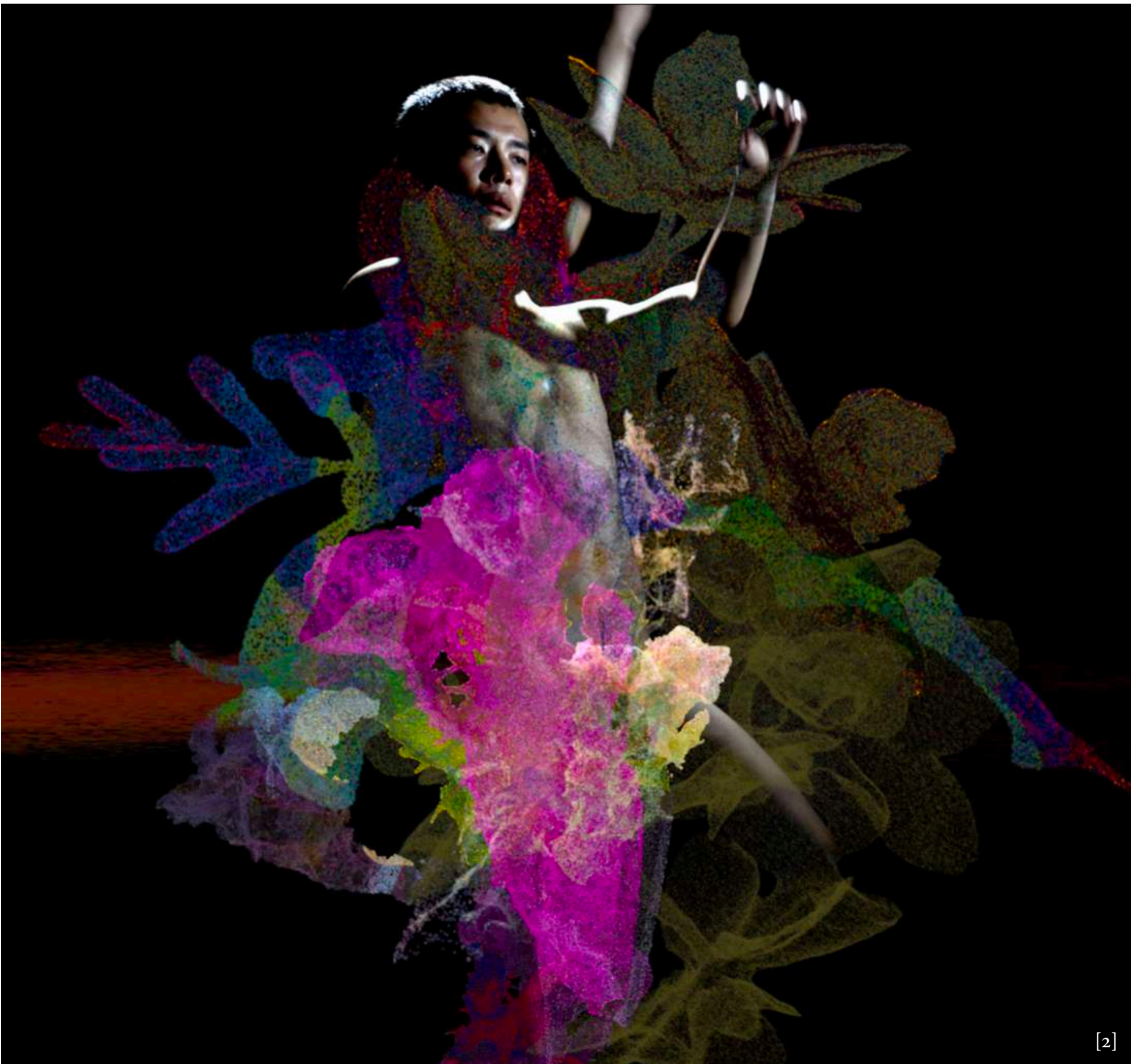


LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

"When I look at the other, there does not emerge an identification with the other, an equality of subject. The relationship is profoundly asymmetrical: the other opens me to transcendence." What I understand by *Alt-Alterity* is what the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has shown in the collection *Alté et transcendence*. Whenever I try to understand and conceive of people or things, or even cultural concepts, that are very different from mine, a different starting point ultimately divides the other from me. Unfortunately, when I decide to get infinitely closer to and participate in the other, the discourse of the other and mine intertwine and coexist in a common context, crushing and colliding to give birth to something rootless and perhaps incompatible, and transcendence is born. In my opinion, this kind of transcendence cannot be defined by rules, and it is also a result of symbiosis. It may be full of the spirit of experimentation, or it may carry the value of critical questioning, but it can blur the boundaries between the cognition of the similar and the dissimilar, and give rise to subtle activities of thought. This is my favorite part of this theme.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

From my own experience, I am a person who has crossed over from heterosexual to homosexual and from bisexual to pansexual. In this process, I have been searching for



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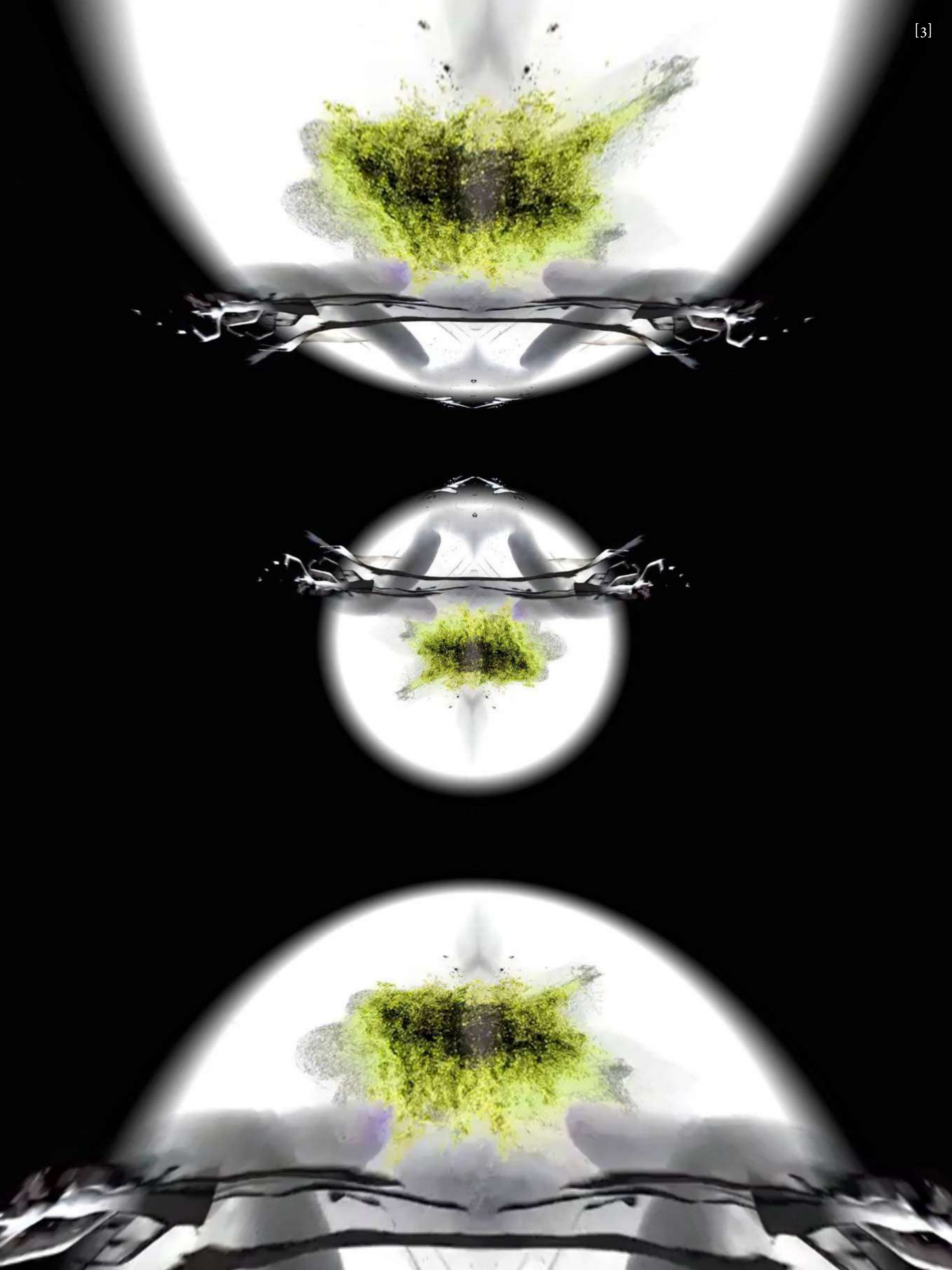
"love," "gender boundaries," and "self-identity." It seems to me that the initial structure of the body and reproduction is not what limits or determines the boundaries of an individual's gender expression, but rather what society implies to its citizens in order to facilitate the system's management. I think this is unfair and underdeveloped. The idea that certain plants and animals have been purified to the point of being able to reproduce asexually, while the human world is still dividing the normal and the marginalized because of the diversity of sexuality and love, is a precept that I just can't easily compromise. In the case of the Initiator, I am a limb weaver, and the body is pure in my eyes; every recognizable part is important. I hope that the meaning of symbiosis is also reflected in the harmony between the personality and the body that is being disciplined. I am curious to what extent the spirit can all be detached from the physical body.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

The reproductive role of flowers in the plant kingdom, notably at their peak of beauty and maturity, mirrors the complexities of human sexuality, especially within marginalized communities such as queer identities. This parallel invites a critical reevaluation of societal constructs concerning sexuality and gender. For example, the unique camaraderie between gay men and certain women highlights, yet subtly contests, societal norms around "appropriateness," revealing underlying patriarchal tensions.

In my artistic work, I explore these intersections of marginalized identities, societal expectations, and the dichotomy between the overt human body and the concealed psyche. At the heart of this exploration is the Queer Body, raising pivotal questions: How does the societal assignment of functionality to genitalia resonate with individuals, particularly those outside heteronormative standards? Is there an unspoken societal mandate for certain expressions of femininity to remain hidden, echoing patriarchal control over women's bodies and identities?

Additionally, the existence of genitals and the concept of asexual reproduction in nature—do these offer metaphorical insights into the spiritual emancipation sought by homosexual men? These questions aim to ignite curiosity and foster dialogues that challenge and expand our understanding of these complex issues, contributing to a more inclusive discourse in the realms of sexuality and identity of "bridging" as a connecting point, my goal is to fill gaps by honoring "differences," perhaps through a method more akin to building a tunnel. The audience is given the choice of participation or denial as they enter the space. This project also criticizes the role of artificial intelligence trained by data collected for commercial purposes on the internet and particularly on social media. It explores how this AI contributes to the creation of an "othering" image on one side and represents an inauthentic image of host societies to immigrants on the other side.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Firstly, I recognize that virtual platforms offer artists more freedom and greater decision-making power in terms of concept. They also provide valuable support for emerging artists by reducing costs, serving as a form of organic assistance. However, it's worth noting that the absence of liveliness and realism can also impact certain categories of work. For example, it can be challenging for creators of performing arts and non-visual digital arts to fully participate in virtual spaces. While I firmly believe that contemporary art doesn't necessarily need to prioritize being "visually appealing" or "high-tech," I must admit that the popularity and commercialization of digital art have had a certain influence on traditional art categories. It's essential to remember that good technology does not always equate to a good concept, and sometimes simplicity is more effective.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

Similar to the previous question, I believe it's having an impact. The recent shift away from site-specificity has resulted in a greater focus on visual elements, inadvertently diluting the original concept. At times, I find myself grappling with the challenge of creating visually appealing art while avoiding a commercialized impression.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I haven't really thought about it. Creating my work is like designing a business card; I craft it and offer it to others, and whether they want to connect or not doesn't affect the process of creating my "business card."

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I'm feeling quite isolated, and I probably don't have much enthusiasm for the future. Life isn't easy to live right now, and it's unlikely that the future will be much better. I dislike humans, so I might choose to pass away early for the sake of nature.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

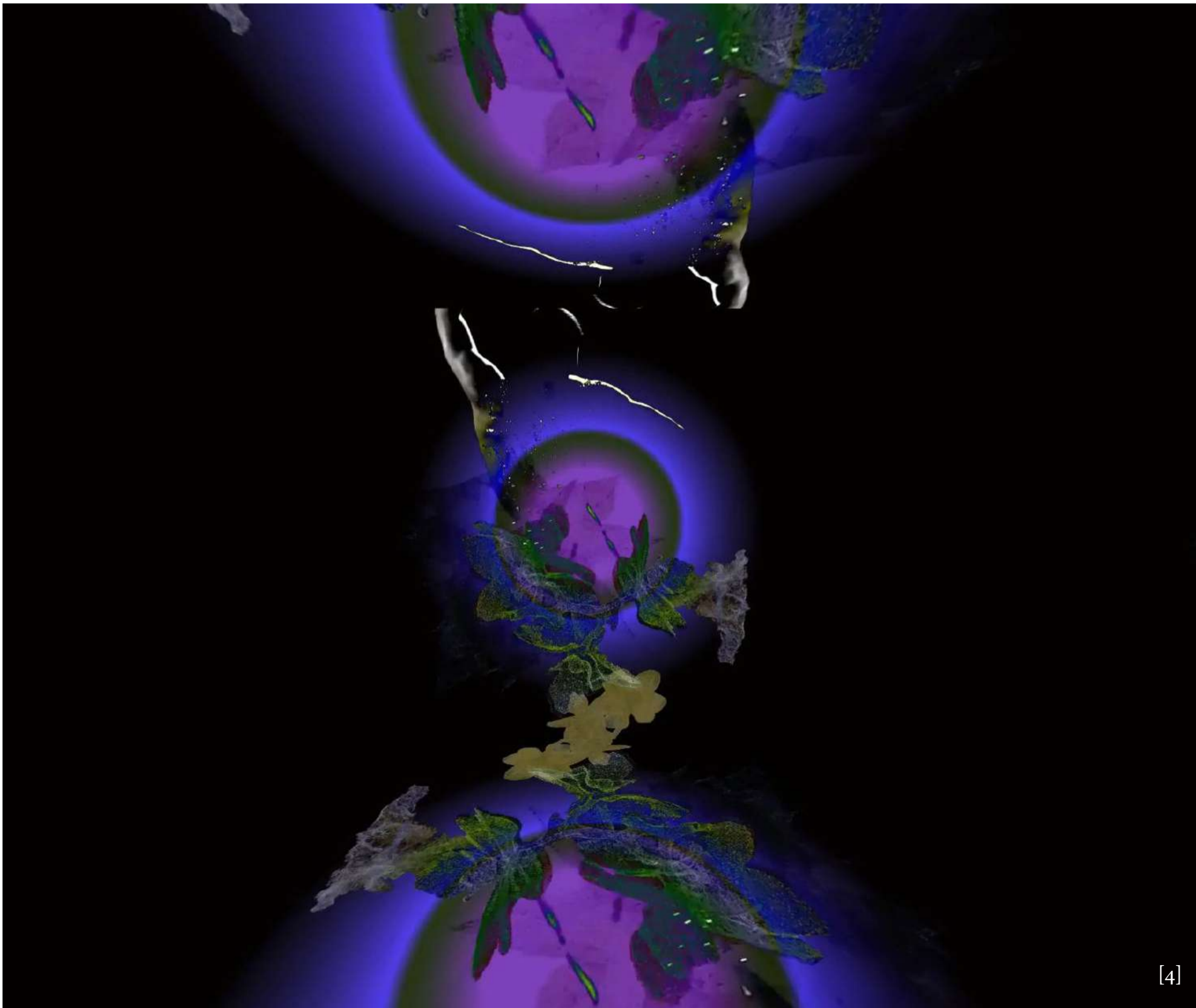
As artists, we can only use artistic means to convey ideas; this is our way of fighting. Here, I still recognize the radical way of creating, of using the body to convey a state of being that we as human beings can relate to. "Participation is important; otherwise, we will never understand, and the other will always remain a distant island."

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Single-celled sea creatures or space creatures that are currently unknown to mankind. I want to remain still for eternity, free from the constraints of rules, and to return to my instincts.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I recommend it as long as it's not in the same field as what you're currently doing.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Aiping Xu](#) is based in Shanghai. She is a live performer and interdisciplinary researcher whose artistic practice encompasses everything related to the body/physicality.

Criticism and emancipation are the focus of Aiping's work, and she is passionate about putting the characteristics of the body into various physical and non-physical environments and materials, performing movements with a specific purpose and her own inner principles, and creating a field of sensory responses. She is an advocate of the body's identity between the sacred and the carnal and specializes in exploring its fragile and resilient side. She also focuses on the spiritual world of sexual minorities, collecting in images their experiences of the body and spirit that transcend the gender binary.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Cryptic" has been used to describe things with mysterious or obscure meanings, as well as animals that rely on the colour of their feathers to confuse predators in their natural environment. Inspired by this, the artist attempts to contextualise it in the realm of

socio-cultural anthropology, as an explanation of marginalised identities, social relations, and cultural conflicts. The second-person pronoun "You" is used as the subject, occasionally referring to an individual, but also to a group of people. A third-party observer, excluded from the self, speaks through the mouth of art about those unique personalities and their spiritual worlds.

In "Cryptic You," the Queer body is an electronic multi-media dynamic image that combines a bisexual body with the digital plant. The illusory qualities of digital art are used to simulate people who are marginalised by the current circumstances and their fragile and delicate spiritual world. Plants, especially flowers, are used as one of the main images in the project for their specific natural properties. Flowers are the reproductive organs of angiosperms, and the monoecious flower is called the "perfect flower," whose life cycle pattern transcends most of the established rules of plant and animal reproduction in nature, and exists uniquely and freely.

The artwork uses digitally scanned flowers to reproduce in place of the queer's own reproductive structure, planting the "perfect" attributes of male and female flowers into the external physical and spiritual realms of the queer population. By breaking down their human

characteristics, it achieves a free symbiosis and spiritual liberation that overlaps with the context of the plant society. The male body exists and the penis exists through another transformation. However, in the transformation of the subject form, the boundaries of their identity become increasingly blurred. Who is he and where do they come from? It seems that this should not be subject to the jurisdiction of any kind of society, that the creature's sense of self has transcended the boundaries of context and genetic molding, like a bouquet of flowers blooming in no man's land, fragility and resilience are intertwined.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Cryptic You* (Exhibition Screenshot), Aiping Xu, Shuyu Lin, and Root as collaborators, 2023.

[2-4] *Cryptic You* (Still), Aiping Xu, Shuyu Lin, and Root as collaborators, 2023. Electronic Multi-media. 8 Mins., 52 Secs.



XINYUJIANMA



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

I think *Alt-Alterity* means some undefinable people and their lifestyle. For example, the way they perceive their own gender, their special life experiences, or the fact that they can feel most of the things people can't know, and who are sensitive to the philosophies that the public ignores.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

My parents were always questioning and opposing my gender identity and emotional experience many years ago. In the process, I gradually recognized myself and found a lifestyle that suited me best. I want to explore more about what makes me special, the reasons for the conflict between myself and my family of origin, and the future I

want. So I wanted to look at the topic of non-binary and gender queerness.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

This work focuses on the conflicting mix of queer existence and pixelated reality. Anthropomorphism of non-binary gender symbols and pixelated visual hybrids represent the impasse and symbiosis between queer and Chinese social reality. It's a kind of pixelation. The state between reality and primal desire, and what I want to express is a unique, enduring pleasure that resists deliberately pixelated reality.

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

I think digital exhibitions are a very effective way to exhibit digital works, which is conducive to the exhibition of artists' works around the world so that artists can have a larger audience and collection group.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

My work presents different visual experiences in physical and virtual spaces. Works in physical space allow people



[2]

to see the texture of brushstrokes more closely, and virtual works have greater flexibility.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Generally, people who like a younger, undefinable style will like my work. The likes of these audiences can lead to a surprising visual experience, and they may enjoy fashion, outsider art, primitive art, mushrooms, street art, pop art, etc. I feel that my work and such an audience are attracted to each other.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I hope that these artists can create something critical and very visually specific from their own perspective. A deep understanding of yourself and the world is key. Whether in politics, pop culture, or climate issues, artists should create based on what they see and experience, and the internet rendering of these issues or too many reference maps are not enough to give people practical creative directions.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Only by starting from your own heart, you can change the world. The excessive desire for human deterioration is the cause of these woes. For example, if everyone doesn't want to satisfy their vanity with animals, there are a lot of animals that won't go extinct that quickly. Consciousness is the key to changing the world.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I think my art is like mushrooms. Mushrooms are very mysterious creatures in this world. They have their own way of connecting, their way of reproducing, they are psychical, and there are millions of genders and species of them. They have their own unique "thinking."

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I would like to recommend people to see the works of some native artists, who may be obscure, but whose works are all psychic passages. Their existence will make you realize that the art system is only established by people for the sake of classification, but the real moving is inadvertent.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Xinyuan Ma](#) is a visual artist currently based in Shanghai. A non-binary artist born in China. The main mediums of their work are acrylic painting, digital illustration and animation, and murals. They often use symbols and collages in their works. Their work is inspired by primitive art, contemporary street art, and pixelated paintings. In their works, people with neutral temperaments, anthropomorphic gender symbols, androgynous creatures often appear in their works. The style of their works is unique and naive. They have worked hard to further their studies in recent years and participated in some exhibitions and competitions in China, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

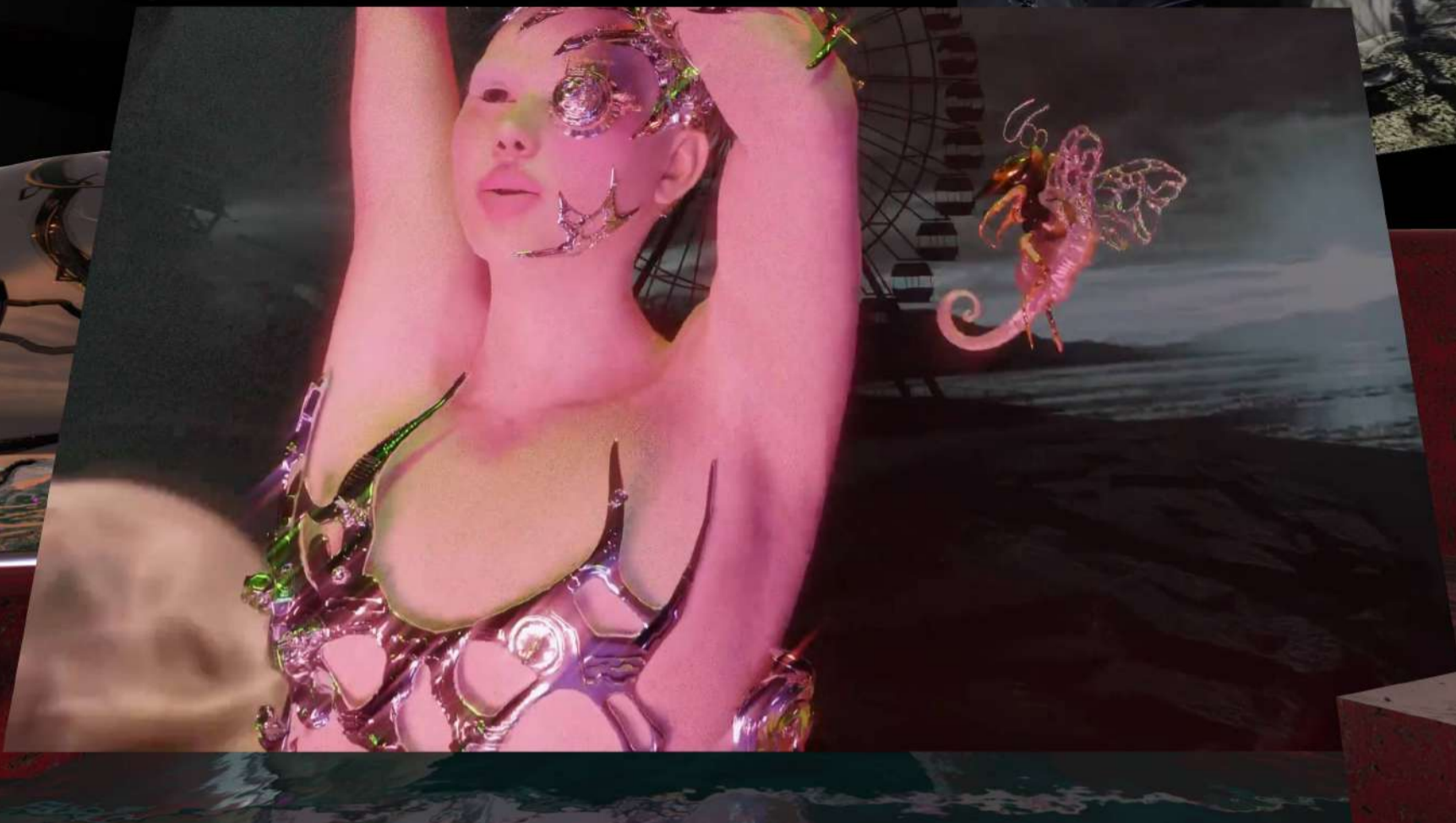
"You Are Non-Binary!" focuses on the conflicting mixture of queer existence and pixelated reality. In China, the existence of queer people is forcibly pixelated and de-framed, and gender queerness is an unrecognized and recognized existence. The anthropomorphic and pixelated visual mixture of non-binary gender symbols represents a stalemate and symbiosis of queer and Chinese social reality. It's a state between pixelated reality and raw desire, and what I'm trying to express is a peculiar enduring pleasure that resists deliberately pixelated reality.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

- [1] *You Are Non-Binary!* and *Queer Mushroom* (Exhibition Screenshot), Xinyuan Ma, Carlotta as collaborator, 2022.
 [2] *You Are Non-Binary!* (Still), Xinyuan Ma, Carlotta as collaborator, 2022. Digital Animation. 58 Secs.



YU CHEEN



[1]

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

I think *Alt-Alterity* is a prism that shines different rays, like the dispersion of light. In human history or life, our perceptions are not always stable; rather, they are pluralistic. I think *Alt-Alterity* is an exploration of the things in the world that we don't get a glimpse of and that are marginalized. It could give people a new opportunity to reconnect with the world through art and sensory experiences.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

Yu Chen is a 3D artist and visual designer. He graduated from Information Experience Design at the Royal College of Art. At the same time, his fashion design background (BA has given him a unique perspective and attention to

new immersive experiences.

As an artist, Yu Chen constantly seeks new ways to bring his work to life. He is passionate about exploring the relationship between the human body and social identity. In his studies, he created multidimensional works incorporating concept art, digital performance, digital fashion, virtual technologies, and 3D photogrammetry. He brings his curiosity and passion to his projects and believes technology can play a crucial role in bringing these ideas to life.

Through fictional stories, he wants to show the ways and processes by which we shape the possibilities of our self-identity. he thinks social identity is a kind of consciousness. In real life, we may not be able to reveal a more diverse version of ourselves because of some limitations. When we are no longer confined to the inherent social framework, our conscious actions and choices can project our current identity norms and biases.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

In addition to conveying the concept and worldview of my work, I explore how our consciousness can mold our identity through the depiction of the cyborg and the process of materialization. In a world where all objects are redefined and intertwined, where everything possesses its unique alter ego, I simultaneously open the gateway to the conceptual realm of a virtual world. In this world, everything exhibits fluidity.

Through the combination of speculative fiction, motion capture, and CGI moving images, this project explores the potential for new paradigms of post-identity. When cyborgs represent a unique position at the intersection of humanity and technology, how can we challenge traditional notions of identity and gender? One answer could be using open-source technology to hack our bodies and create a "post-gender" identity that breaks down the old gender binary system.

Through the lens of the digital world, this work tries to challenge existing power structures and promote alternative ways of thinking and being. Ultimately, the exploration of cyborgs will open up more possibilities for a more inclusive and diverse future of gender identity.



[2]

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

I see it as an opportunity for equal access to art. When I was a child, I honestly had limited access to art news and advice. Magazines and newspapers in bookstores were my main sources of knowledge about the world beyond my hometown, especially when it came to art-related topics. Virtual platforms have broken down the barriers of space and dimensions, functioning as open sources where everyone has the opportunity to learn about art. Especially in the post-epidemic period, the proliferation of virtual platforms has allowed me to discover many great works and artists.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

I am deeply fascinated by the virtual world; it's like a utopia where I can freely express my thoughts and emotions. In real life, I tend to be shy, and there are many emotions and expressions that I struggle to convey. The virtual environment has certainly allowed me to fully embrace my alter ego, helping me express what I want to say and do.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

Nobody and everybody I think. Because my creation wants to break some binary. I don't want my creation to be confined to a specific group of viewers; I hope that anyone who encounters it can begin to contemplate their own identity.



WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

In post-humanity, I feel that we are seeking to shape and express our social identity. I got the inspiration from the ideas of Posthumanism and Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg, which offers a new perspective on the potential for technology to transform our bodies and identities in ways that were previously unimaginable.

In Karan Barad's study of Transmateriality, Living matter is itself a dynamic, self-creating, and non-naturalistic structure. In the future, in a ritual where flesh meets steel, a new way of being is revealed, where we can express ourselves in a post-human, post-identity utopia. We shape our bodies and define our forms in a world where cyborgs are the new norm and technology reigns. We will not be limited by physical chains and have diverse ways of demonstrating our post-identities.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

I believe that making it happen only requires opening our minds. That's why I want to continue creating. Over time, what I've learned from friends and applied to my creative learning process is that we could be water. In real life, we often maintain and practice a dichotomous methodology for many things. However, why don't we adopt a more fluid way of life and contemplate our future?"



IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I sometimes consider myself a donut. In Chinese culture, there's a saying that appetite and desire are only natural, and in my case, it seems to make sense. The first reason is that I love desserts; I regard them as my spiritual support. The second reason is that I see a similarity between my personality and my work—just like donuts, it's two-sided. You won't truly know what's inside until you take a bite.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I have been deeply fascinated by Anna Uddenberg's work. I even traveled to New York and London to see her installations, and fortunately, I had the opportunity to see her perform as well. I was captivated by the way she seamlessly combines Bauhaus-inspired industrial design installations with fashion-stylish humanistic details to create a form of bodily performance. It's such a surreal expression and contemplation of gender desires that inspired me to think about artwork and visual imagination.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Yu Chen is a 3D digital artist. He graduated from Information Experience Design at the Royal College of Art. At the same time, his background in fashion design has provided him with a unique perspective and attention to new immersive experiences. He is passionate about exploring the relationship between the human body and social identity and he believes that technology can play a crucial role in bringing these ideas to life. He aims to continue to delve into these topics and push boundaries in the field through innovative technology.

As an artist, Yu Chen constantly seeks new ways to bring his work to life and engage the audience. He believes that the integration of virtual technology and visuals can help enhance the connection between his digital images and the audience. He is eager to continue exploring and incorporating these technologies into his future projects.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

Cyborgs represent a unique position at the intersection of humanity and technology. As we keep modifying our bodies through biotechnology to meet social norms of gender behaviour,

the line between human and machine becomes increasingly blurred. In the post-human era, we could all be cyborgs. With this blurring of the line between human and machine, it raises important questions about how our "post-gender identity" will be expressed in a world where humans exist as cyborg objects.

By combining design fiction, digital performance, motion capture and CGI moving images, we can explore the potential for new paradigms of gender identity and sex/gender systems. How can we use open-source technology to hack our bodies and create a "post-gender" identity that breaks down the old gender binary system? As we enter a world of "self-shaping" technologies, it is necessary to challenge traditional notions of identity and gender. By creating a post-gender utopia (new queer ecology) and "seven days" ritual where individuals' alter egos can exist as pure cognition, we can dissolve the pain of the gender binary and explore new post-identity boundaries.

Ultimately, the exploration of cyborgs and the future of gender identity opens up more possibilities for a more inclusive and diverse world. Through the lens of the digital world, we can challenge existing

**power structures and promote
alternative ways of thinking and
being.**

IMAGE CAPTIONS

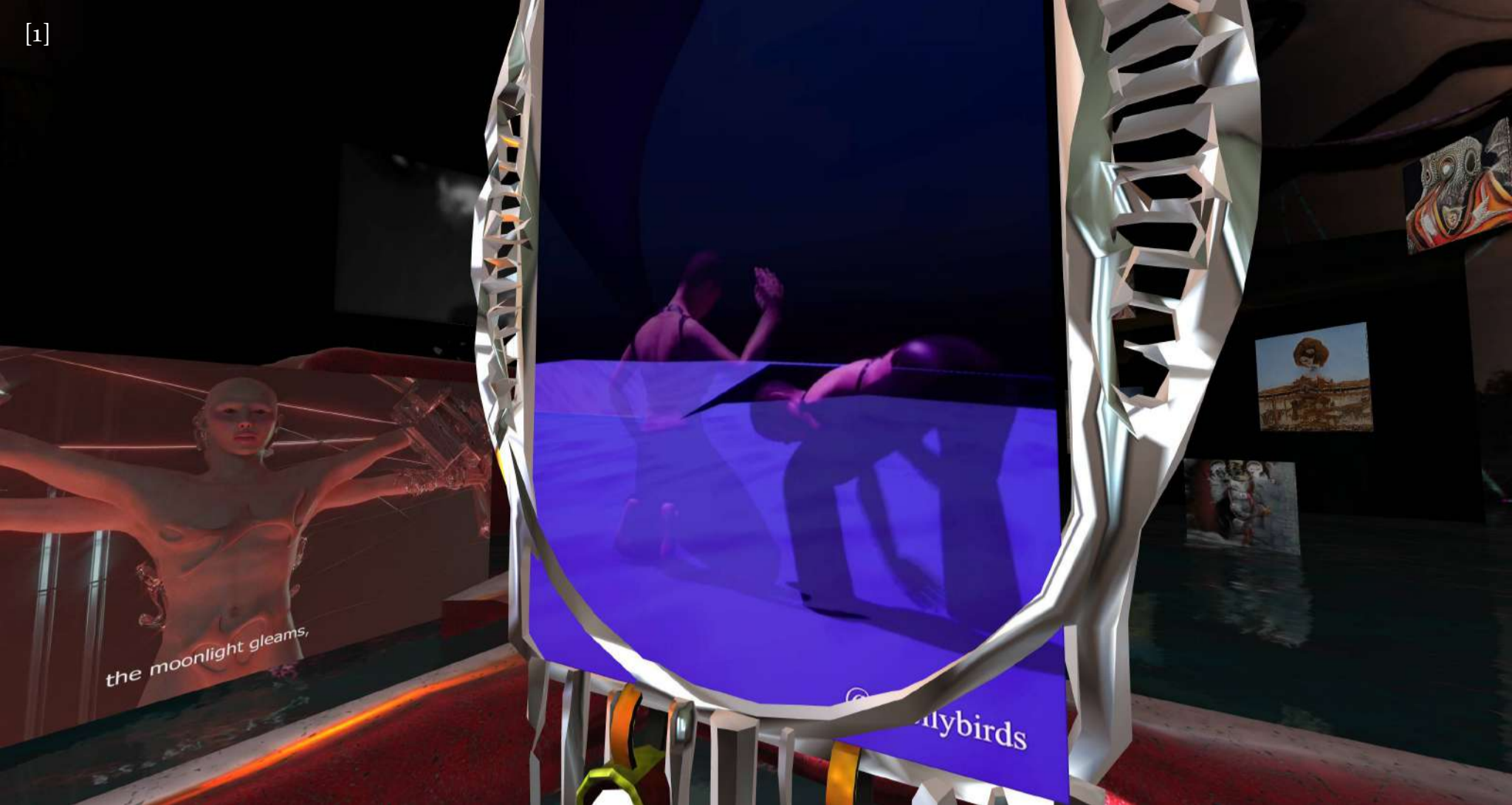
**[1] *The Alter Ego* (Exhibition Screenshot),
Yu Chen, 2023.**

**[2/4] *The Alter Ego* (Still), Yu Chen, 2023.
CGI Moving Images. 3 Mins., 19 Secs.**

**[3] The hybrid creatures designed by Yu
Chen.**



LUDOVICA GALLI, ANNI D'AGLIANO



LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

With *Alt-Alterity*, I see a call to action about challenging established norms and structures, both online and offline, an invitation to embrace others' voices, particularly those that have been historically marginalized, and create alternative realities.

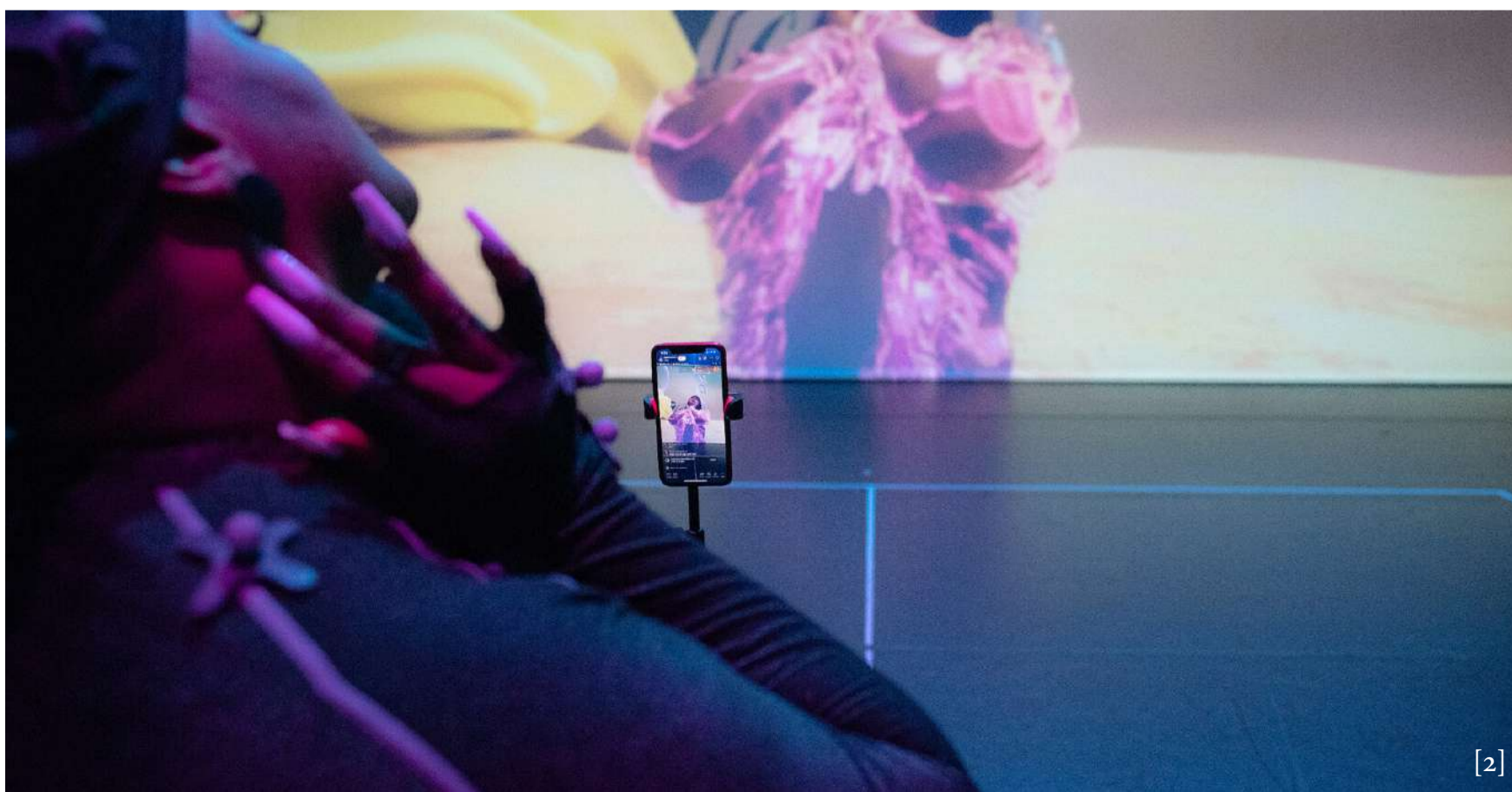
COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I am a visual new media designer and artist, I have a background in visual communication and interaction design research and practice. I am interested in how digital spaces contribute to the creation of hybridized identities, and how this can challenge the power structures of the digital realm. I currently focus my research and work on the field of interaction design and

post-cyberfeminism, and I am fascinated with the ways technology is reshaping human identities. My interest in questioning underlying assumptions and power structures embedded in digital systems can align with the themes of *Alt-Alterity*, which challenges conventional notions of identity and explores alternative perspectives in art and design.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

The project "*@Syntia_CAM*" wants to challenge and hack the stereotypes and stigmas related to the sex industry. Working together with sex workers, a series of scenarios and fictional characters has been co-created in a workshop setting. Following the principles of ethno-mimesis, the project combines ethnographic and collaborative methods and the subsequent production of digital art forms to represent experience. The aim is to create a collaborative and inclusive process that centers on the voices and experiences of sex workers.



OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Working and researching in the field of post-cyber feminism and new media art, I am quite fond of digital spaces and how they can create new possibilities and spaces of empowerment for marginalized identities. In the end, what many post-cyber scholars agreed with is that the digital space had initially a big potential, but in the end, it started to echo the offline structure, and one of the main reasons is that the majority of online spaces are developed by white cis-men. However, when new spaces are created with ethical and meaningful purposes such as art that can definitely contribute to re-shape the current digital environment in a more inclusive space.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

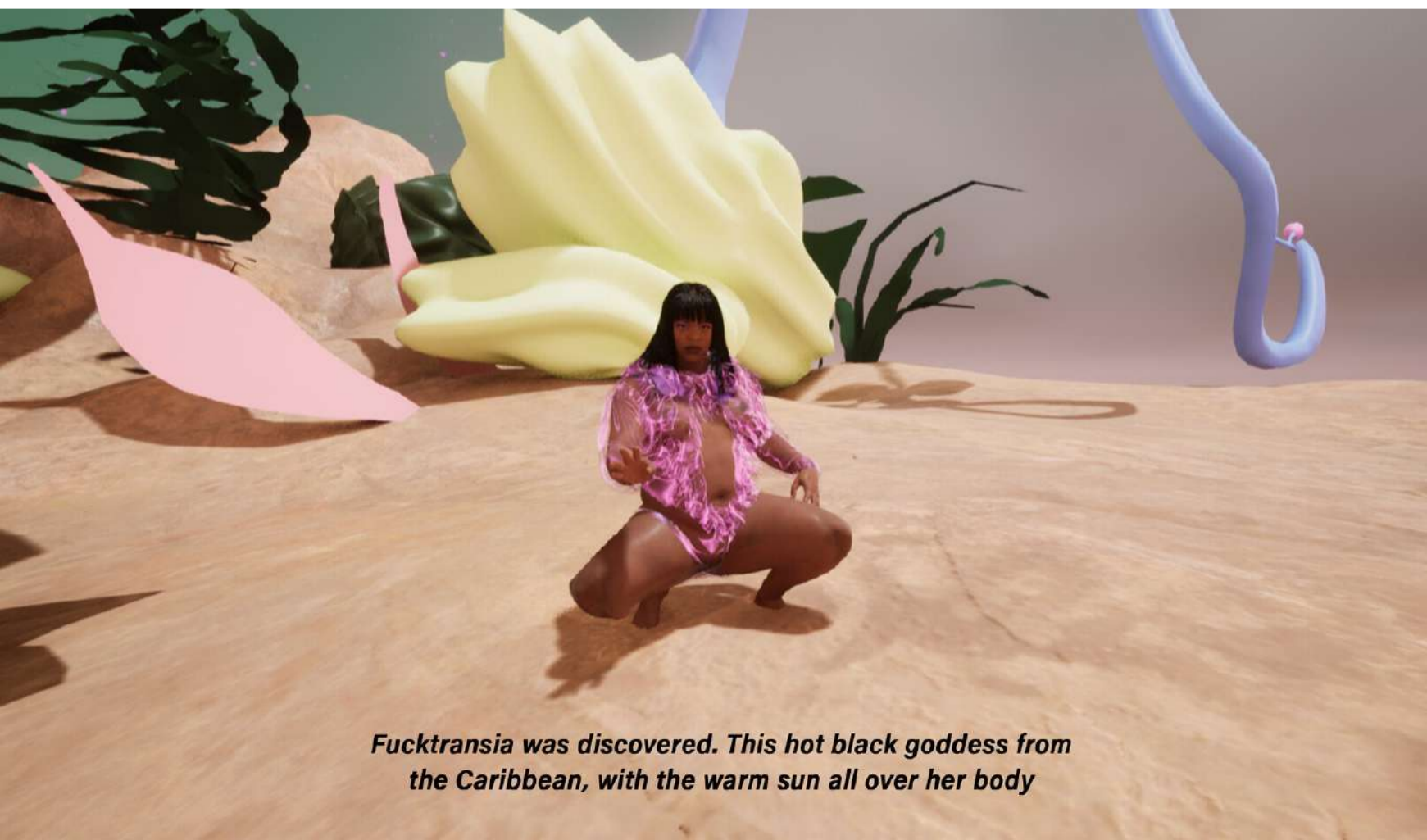
In my practice, due to the particular context I am working with, comes out for sure an issue of privacy. A digital space does reach a broader audience and therefore a bigger global exposure. Sex workers work with their image daily, but it can be also quite stigmatizing for sex workers when their real identity is associated with their practice, therefore they use fictional identities and names. In the context of privacy and exposure, using digital avatars as "masks" is definitely something that you can easily do online but not offline, but is still something that cannot be accessible to the majority.

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I quite often felt that the audience that was exposed to my work has been often connected to the cultural artistic bubble and even so the feminist bubble. I feel this project has to speak to a broader audience, that is not connected necessarily to the creative field, in order to have an impact and foster discussions and conversations around the topic.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I imagine a world where people can live together, seamlessly intertwined with each other and the environment, a world where every individual is able to shape their own identity and future.



Fucktransia was discovered. This hot black goddess from the Caribbean, with the warm sun all over her body



[3]

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

There are too many battles that we want to fight, but I feel the advice I can give is to focus on just one or two battles at a time because we cannot fight them all. However, we can keep ourselves informed, try our best to live in sustainable ways, practice empathy, talk with each other, and don't be afraid to disrupt conversations with uncomfortable opinions.

IF YOU WERE TO COMPARE YOUR ART STYLE OR PHILOSOPHY TO A TYPE OF FOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

It would be sweet and sour noodles. I try with my practice to be empathetic and aesthetically pleasing, with a not-so-subtle hint of sour opinions.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

I would recommend the readers to look at the work of Disnovation.org (they are quite good at disrupting and hacking), I would recommend reading Xenofeminism by Helend Hester and Camming by Angela Jones which is a fair portrait of the camming industry. About podcasts, I totally recommend The Bechdel Cast, and Troie Radicali, Morgana (it).

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Ludovica Galleani d'Agliano](#) is an italo-swiss multidisciplinary designer and new media artist currently based in Zurich. She holds a degree in Visual Communication and Interaction Design, awarded with the "ZHdK Design Förderpreis" in June 2023 with the project "@Syntia_CAM." She is currently researching the field of interaction design, post-cyberfeminism, and pop culture, and she is interested in how technology is changing the perception and construction of our identity, questioning the underlying assumptions and power structures that are embedded in digital space.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

The Internet has opened the door into our most private spaces and virtuality has infiltrated our bodies, merging reality and fiction. The first cam-girls of the 90s were important early examples of how the internet could create a cyborg subject by integrating human images with the internet, setting the conversation regarding the relationship between technology, gender, and digital performance. However, with the advent of the 21st century, the cyberfeminist view of the Internet as a space of liberation for women and marginalized communities has

resumed the classical oppressive structures of the offline space. In this context sex workers have found new spaces and possibilities for interactions and business, developing creative strategies to survive and thrive.

By challenging traditional notions of gender and embodiment, "@Syntia_CAM" is a hybrid, an alien, a sex worker, neither fully human nor fully machine. With a touch of playfulness, they use technology to create multiple identities, negotiate rates, share experiences and new forms of agency. Are you ready to witness?

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] @Syntia_CAM (Exhibition Screenshot), Ludovica Galleani d'Agliano, 2023.

[2] The motion capture process for @Syntia_CAM.

[3] @Syntia_CAM (Still), Ludovica Galleani d'Agliano, 2023. Unreal Engine. 12 Mins.

[4] The motion capture process for @Syntia_CAM.



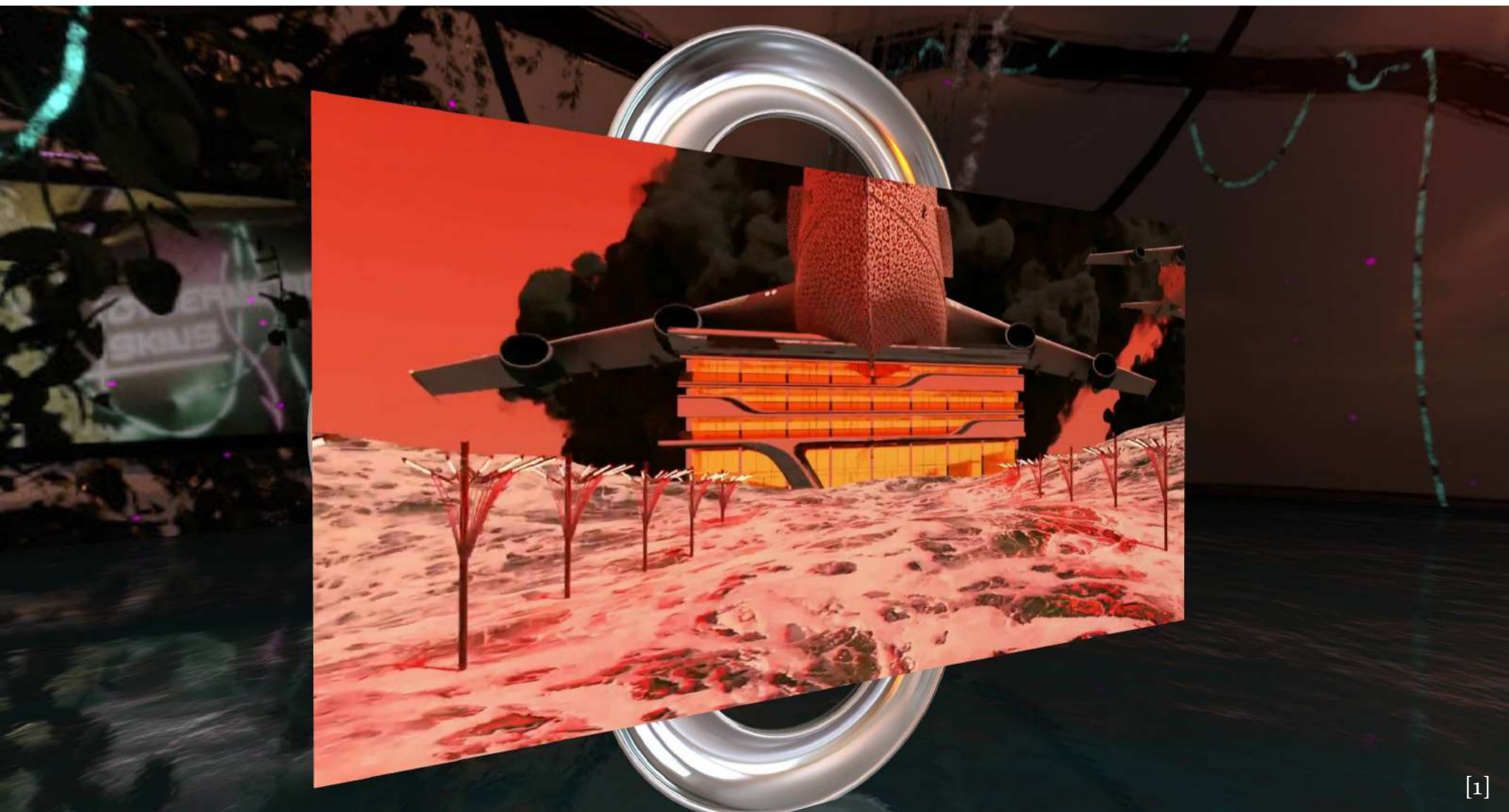
MIO INJAN

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

To me, the meaning of *Alt-Alterity* is the concept of the "other," a continually changing definition of the "other." This theme in my view extends the boundaries of identity and explores our perspectives when facing or even transcending our own understanding of the "different." It represents a non-anthropocentric way of thinking.

COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

My name is Mo, and I'm from China. I graduated from the Royal College of Art and am currently a freelance 3D designer based in London. My experience of living abroad and being exposed to digital art gradually piqued my interest in concepts related to identity and "otherness."



WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

Both of my works focus on topics related to identity politics. Using metaphor and ironic visual approaches, I use character design and storytelling to portray my vision of a "fluid identity" world.

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This platform is truly amazing, and I love the concept. It breaks free from the limitations of physical space, budget constraints, and the logistics of transporting artworks, allowing audiences to engage with the artwork in an immersive and interactive way. With continuous advancements in hardware, digital-age exhibitions tend to lean more towards a game-like, web-based real-time experience, offering audiences a unique perspective distinct from traditional physical exhibitions.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

The virtual environment provides me with more creative freedom and endless possibilities for imagination. Ironically, I find that the difficulty of creating in a physical environment increases. For someone like me, virtual art creation is a better choice.



[2]



but don't be scared of letting them be a part.

[3]

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

I don't deliberately choose my audience, but surprisingly, my works are often viewed by fellow artists. It seems challenging to attract audiences outside the art industry.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I'm not entirely sure about the future vision. If there is one, I hope that technological advancements, particularly in the virtual world, can better address issues like wealth inequality and the ongoing problems of war, etc.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

It should start by providing more support to marginalized communities.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would like to be reborn as coffee because it has a fragrant aroma.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

Jon Rafman has been a great source of inspiration for me.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mo Nan was born in China and graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2022. He is currently a freelance digital artist based in London, specializing in creating personal works as well as visual and film concept creations for brands. His works were exhibited at the Royal College of Art and Anise Gallery in 2022, and in 2023. he participated in a collaborative exhibition at the Sarabande Foundation with other artists. A recent project he concluded involved collaborating with another artist to design a comprehensive gallery, café, and shop for a building located at 29 Kensington High Street.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"Final Flight Visa" is an adventure story. This project was inspired by my experiences applying for visas in the United Kingdom and other countries. The lengthy process made me profoundly aware of the existence and power of national borders. It led me to reflect on the fact that, as human beings, we do not have the right to roam freely on this Earth. This short film represents my fantasy of a world without borders.

The protagonist is a little demon who, at the airport, attempts to

escape the pursuit of knights and, with a visa in hand, boards the last ark heading to "Utopia." This film narrates the thrilling experiences during his escape.

Music: Benjamin Laven.

Digital garment design: Suza Vos, Hana Lee.

Project manager: Ting Huang.

"The Self of the Edge of the Self" is based on the current social situation where the virtual world is becoming more and more important. The digital world will bring people more immersive experiences, even making the real world and the virtual world equally significant. In the digital realm, the limitations of gender, social status, nationality, and personal physiological characteristics in real life cease to exist. In such a liberating environment, he believes that individuals have the opportunity to explore a more authentic and profound self. In his perspective, future identities will transcend the conventional definition of "human" and evolve into continuously fluid, boundless entities. Consequently, Mo Nan utilizes the mask as the central element of his work, symbolizing the uncharted depths of identity, and presents it to the audience in digital form.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *Final Flight Visa* (Exhibition Screenshot), Mo Nan, 2023.

[2] *Final Flight Visa* (Still), Mo Nan, 2023. Digital Animation. 2 Mins., 7 Secs.

[3] *The Self of the edge of the Self* (Still), Mo Nan, 2023. Digital Animation, 4 Mins., 15 Secs.



BOBBY ZHAOCHENG XIONG

LET'S START WITH THE DEFINITION. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE *ALT-ALTERITY*? COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS?

For me, *Alt-Alterity* represents a process of re-othering. Currently, we are moving away from anthropocentrism, gradually shifting our focus towards animals, plants, and even machinery and artificial intelligence, among other non-human entities. However, in the process of de-anthropocentrisation, we are gradually falling into another form of centrism, making these non-human entities the protagonists. In my opinion, *Alt-Alterity* requires us to always maintain an objective position in viewing all things, promoting a form of de-centrism rather than merely moving away from anthropocentrism. In other words, everything, everywhere all at once.

[1]



COULD YOU PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND ELABORATE ON WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN EXPLORING RELATED THEMES?

I just graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London, with a major in MFA Computational Arts. Our focus has always been primarily on the study of machines and artificial intelligence. Last year, my partner and I delved into the research of future machine gender. We approached this from a post-anthropocentric perspective, seeking to disrupt the binary gender norms and even the multigender theories that have been developed with humanity as a blueprint, establishing instead an anti-gender system for machines.

Speaking personally, when I engage with everyday life and objects, I habitually place myself as a third party, detaching from the items themselves for objective observation and evaluation. This approach has also inspired me to attempt to showcase various phenomena and discuss certain topics in my works in a more neutral and objective manner.

WHAT IS YOUR EXHIBITED WORK FOCUSED ON, AND HOW DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REIMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORLD?

My artwork, "New Deity," constructs a futuristic landscape, an altar created for artificial intelligence. Formally, it appears as if AI has overtaken all old deities of various religions and emerged as the new omnipotent god. However, it is essentially a critique of the current trend of increasingly shifting towards an online-centric existence, dominated by networks and computers.

In 2020, amidst the pandemic, Pope Francis held a special "Urbi et Orbi" blessing in Italy with no physical attendance. St. Peter's Square stood empty, and believers experienced this peculiar moment through television or internet streaming from their homes. On Chinese social media, there is a constant presence of people praying beneath posts featuring images of Buddha or Guanyin, seeking blessings, and conveying their wishes. Concurrently, live-streamed chanting and praying sessions flourish on platforms like YouTube and TikTok.

Cyberspace is now a vessel carrying diverse religious activities. For instance, Muslims in France initiated an online gathering on Twitter, "#Nous Sommes Unis," in 2015 to voice the sentiments of their community. Advancements in technology, particularly mobile devices and the internet, have become powerful tools for proselytization and preserving the vibrancy of religious traditions among the younger generation. However, the absence of physical space leads to the dissolution of materiality and the tangible experience, causing the intrinsic elements of religion, such as the sense of ritual and sacredness, to diminish. Various congregations seem to pray to the machine, treating it as an omnipotent deity relevant to all religions.

The future depicted in the artwork is vibrant and peculiar, yet beneath its façade lies a controlled, lifeless illusion.



[2]

OUR ONLINE EXHIBITION IS HOSTED ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM, NEW ART CITY, AN ARTIST-RUN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES VIRTUAL SPACE FOR THOSE DENIED PHYSICAL SPACE AND AMPLIFIES THE WORK OF THOSE FACING SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE. HOW DO YOU THINK EXHIBITIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE WILL SHAPE THE ART SCENE?

Online exhibitions offer an excellent opportunity for artists who are unable to attend in person, providing a platform to showcase their works and expanding the possibilities of curation. Due to the virtual nature of online exhibitions, there is a process of re-creation where artists collaborate with the platform builders, giving the artworks an additional virtual life. Moreover, due to the global nature of the internet, audiences worldwide can participate and experience artworks from thousands of miles away. However, physical exhibitions are also indispensable. They don't replace or evolve from one another; instead, they coexist in an "Alt-formation" relationship, each with its unique significance and contribution to the realm of artistic expression.

HOW DOES THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT YOUR OWN PRACTICES? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS THAT WORK VERY WELL IN ONE CONTEXT BUT NOT IN ANOTHER? BY "ANOTHER," WE MEAN THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE.

For this particular piece of mine, exhibiting it in a virtual space inherently counters the message it aims to convey, where ritual significance is a crucial element. What I want to narrate is the loss of ceremonial and experiential essence in the online space. I believe the "working well" is based on the viewpoint and interactive form of the artwork. I am still contemplating how to enhance the sense of ritual engagement for online participants in the worship of the "New Deity."

WHO DO YOU ENVISION AS YOUR IDEAL AUDIENCE? IN REALITY, DO YOU FEEL YOU SELECT YOUR AUDIENCE, OR DOES AN UNANTICIPATED AUDIENCE NATURALLY GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOUR CREATIONS?

My ideal audience doesn't belong to a specific group because the artwork itself reflects a behavioural trend common to all of humanity. However, during the exhibition process, some unique audience types have emerged. Interestingly, at the V&A Museum exhibition, compared to an academic environment, there were more non-professional visitors and members of the general public. I found that many individuals associated with religious groups were particularly interested in this piece, and it even triggered behaviours such as proselytizing. Therefore, I believe that good artwork has the natural capability to attract a specific audience that closely relates to the essence of the piece.

WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR A FUTURE THAT TRANSCENDS THE DOMINATION OF THE PRESENT, THE NUMEROUS ENDS PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE, DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI, CLIMATE SCIENCE, AND BEYOND?

I always have a rather dystopian vision of the future, a fitting example of which could be the scenarios depicted in "Interstellar." Humanity may have the capability to achieve what we currently anticipate and fantasize about, but this might only be accessible to a select few, while ordinary people may still remain engulfed in mundane lives. This aligns with the visual language I use to portray the future in a series of artworks; I tend to use rust-streaked metals and crumbling concrete to express future scenarios. In our future, the most beautiful sight might only be a delicate flower flickering on the screen of a vintage television.

HOW MIGHT WE (FEEL FREE TO DEFINE "WE") ACHIEVE THE FUTURE YOU'VE ENVISIONED? WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL PRACTICES, BIG OR SMALL, THAT YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ADOPT TO BE MORE THAN JUST BYSTANDERS TO THE ONGOING PROCESSES OF OTHERING AND EXCLUSION, AND THE RESULTANT PHENOMENA LIKE CLIMATE BREAKDOWN, MASS EXTINCTIONS, FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, GLOBAL WARS, AND POPULISM?

Say no to war. Say no to the killing. Call out war crimes. Defend the rights of children, women, and the elderly, to food, water, medicine, to fuel. Speak out against using starvation as a weapon.

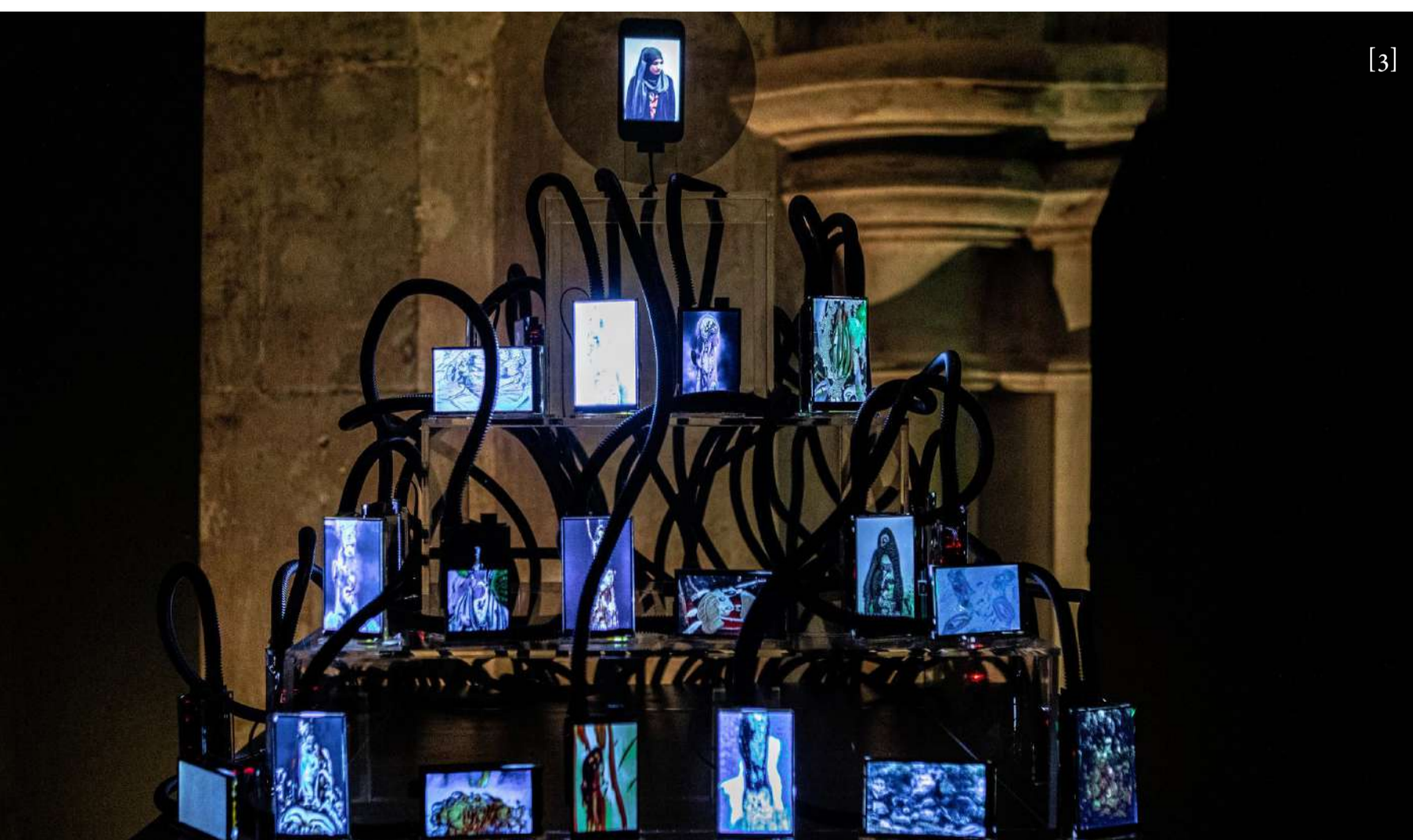
During the Israel-Palestine conflict, I captured a segment of the Jordanian representative's speech at the United Nations General Assembly as a response.

IF YOU COULD CHOOSE TO BE REBORN AS ANOTHER BEING, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I would choose to be reborn as a new satellite of Earth. Just like what I am doing now, observing everything that happens in this world. At the same time, it would be an inanimate object, a neutral existence. However, humans might imbue me with some mysticism and religious significance, but that's alright.

ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS, PODCASTS, BOOKS, OR PLATFORMS YOU'D LIKE TO RECOMMEND?

"Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet." It's a book packed with powerful essays that unravel the human impact on our planet, offering fresh perspectives on how we can navigate these challenges together. Diving into haunting tales of modern violence and stories of incredible interspecies connections, it is a mind-bending journey through the unexpected pathways of the Anthropocene. There are also some computational artists like Leeblalock, Dennis P. Paul, Ralf Baecker, and Wu Ziyang.

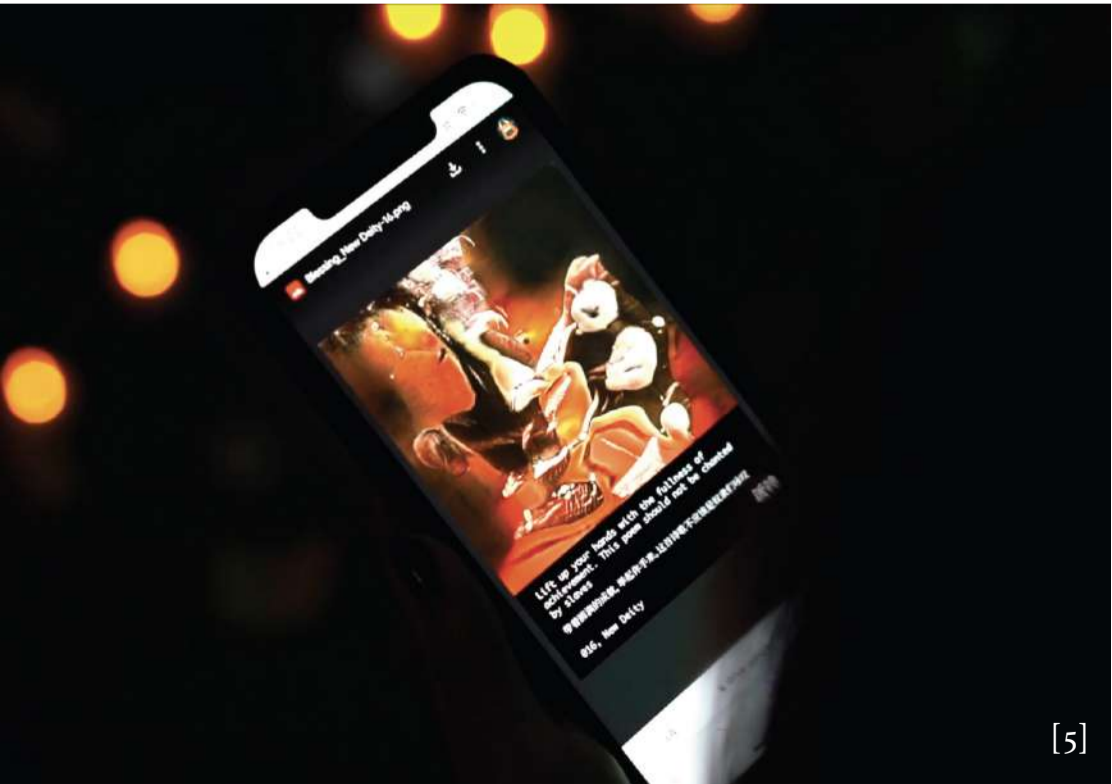




[4]



[6]



[5]

ABOUT THE ARTIST

[Bobby Zhaocheng Xiong](#) (b. 1998, China) is a multidisciplinary artist studying at Goldsmiths, University of London. His works loom from his passion for superstition, religion, and nature, and are expressed through installation, performance, and graphics. His own emotional estrangement manifests in oxymorons: the works are both blissful and rigid, packed with metaphors that open a speculative space for thoughts on humanity and social reality. There is a superposition of technique and spirituality, of rationality and emotions, and of the virtual realm and the real world. His works concentrate on the expression of content rather than the construction of a strong exterior. He is an alumnus of Donghua University in Shanghai and the Royal College of Art in London and has works shown in the exhibitions V&A Museum Digital Design Weekend, Creative Machine 2022, and shortlisted for Lumen Prize 2023.

ARTWORK STATEMENT

"New Deity" is an interactive installation featuring a technological altar for the supreme deity of the digital age. As religious communities shift online, the traditional notion of

gods blurs, and the sacredness and rituals essential to believers' faith wane.

Consequently, congregations treat machines as all-powerful gods, while the blending of religious images in cyberspace leads to a chaotic integration of various faiths.

"New Deity" represents a fusion of transitioning gods from diverse core religions, cults, and pagan beliefs, displayed on a cluster of screens. Audience members engage by praying at the altar and receiving a personalized blessing script from the "New Deity."

Generated by machine learning techniques such as StyleGAN and GPT, the content effectively captures and combines the essence of different religious symbols, images, and texts. "New Deity" offers a thought-provoking exploration of technology's impact on the nature of belief, inviting viewers to contemplate the evolving landscape of faith in our connected world.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

[1] *New Deity* (Exhibition Screenshot), Bobby Zhaocheng Xiong, 2022.

[2]-[5] *New Deity*, Bobby Zhaocheng Xiong, 2022. Physical Installation and Mixed Media. 180 x 150 x 180 cm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This curatorial project is brought by Underground Art And Design, and the publication is edited by Amy Xiaofan Jiang, also one of the two curators of the show.

UAAD wants to acknowledge and thank the native people for their stewardship of the various lands on which we grow, learn, and love. We stand in solidarity with the indigenous people, from Palestine to Turtle Island, and we want to thank all the artists and the decolonial community for creating works that contribute to their path toward liberation, which is inseparable from our own.

This project would not have been possible without the UAAD team members who showed professionalism and expertise, especially Fangyi Yang, Guihan Lu, Effy Ma, Weijing Xia, Jing Dong, and Iliana Sun.

Thank you to the New Art City team, particularly Sammie Veeler and Don Hanson, for not only creating this artist-run platform that provides accessible spaces for those deprived of physical locations but also giving us all kinds of support. Most importantly, thank you for building the platform that empowers us as world-builders.

To all our UAAD friends, family, and fellow art communities who have enabled us to celebrate this event with a wider audience, particularly Webson Ji (Li Tang), Jingyi (The Catchers Curation), and Ino (Curiousness Design), and everyone who visited our show and joined us during our opening, we hope this connection will last.

This curatorial project is indebted to the research and thinking of authors and scholars such as T.J. Demos, Ramon Amaro, the Weaving Realities Collective (Yuchen Li, Aldo Esparaza Ramos), Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, Eve Tuck, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Karen Barad, the Red Nations, and many others. I would like to extend my gratitude to Hala A Malak, Alnoor Ladha, Miliaku, and Yiou Wang for igniting my deep interest in the topic years ago and keeping its flame alive.

BIOGRAPHIES

EDITOR AND CURATOR:

Amy Xiaofan Jiang is the Founder of Underground Art And Design (UAAD), a media platform and creative studio based in New York and Shanghai, dedicated to showcasing and empowering change-provoking artists and designers. A narrative weaver—her curation projects and publications are dedicated to bringing together people and their stories, ideas, and works that would challenge dominant power structures and unlock pathways for provocative/ actionable strategies toward a more equitable future rich in empathy and symbiotic relationships. Graduated from the MFA Transdisciplinary Design Program at Parsons The New School for Design, her practice is to shift Design away from being the tool of extractive capitalism, back to the human ingenuity that prioritizes planetary symbiosis.

CURATOR:

Fangyi (Yiyi) Yang is a multidisciplinary designer, artist, and curator based in New York City. Her practice focuses on challenging human exceptionalism, fostering dialogue on our interconnectedness with the environment, and honoring the land. Through transformative journeys that engage the mind, body, spirit, and place, Fangyi is committed to healing, connection, and empowerment, offering new perspectives on human existence through multi-sensory experiences and collective storytelling.

3D environment designers:

Gumi Guihan Lu is an interdisciplinary artist, glassmaker, and storyteller born in Chongqing, China and currently residing in New York. Raised in a forest environment, she spent her early years gathering herbs with her grandfather, deeply connecting with nature. For her undergraduate studies, Gumi moved to the United Kingdom, where she majored in Computer Science with a focus on genetic music. She furthered her Master's degree at the Parsons School of Design. In her art, Gumi intertwines natural phenomena with psychological schemas, creating a narrative on how to measure life in the context of future survival mechanisms.

Xinyue Ma (Effy) is a forward-thinking designer and a graduate student from Parsons. She is propelled by a profound passion for seamlessly blending design and interactive technology, aiming to create cutting-edge art experiences that ignite human connections. Her overarching mission is to envision new possibilities for art exhibitions and design transformative encounters that cultivate meaningful connections with readers, transcending geographical boundaries.

COMMUNICATION TEAM:

Weijing Xia is a zealous explorer in the fields of communication and marketing. Her diverse past roles as an advertising student, journalist, public relations practitioner, market researcher, and strategy developer have collectively shaped her into who she is today. A constant in Weijing's life, however, is her identity as an art enthusiast—a passion that remains unchanging. She treasures moments when inspiration strikes and resonance with the world around her springs.

Jing Dong is a multidisciplinary designer from Shanghai. She has a strong passion for handicrafts, digital fabrication, and crocheting. She dedicates herself to creating delightful things and finding inner peace.

Iliana Sun is a biologist and an artist who tells stories with a camera. Through photography and film, she advocates a scientific understanding of our environment, while also conveying the complexity of our relationship with it. She is especially interested in wicked environmental problems as their intricate socio-ecological interconnectivity lends itself to storytelling from multiple perspectives. She hopes to gently nudge people to appreciate the intricate interconnectedness of life on Earth. Her work emphasizes the role of human empathy and understanding in the quest for biodiversity conservation and sustaining our planet for future generations.

INTERNS:

Ronny Chuwei Zheng is a queer interdisciplinary artist and experience designer based in New York and Canton. He is currently pursuing a BFA degree in Design and Technology at Parsons School of Design. His interests revolve around digital senses, spirituality, and media-tech topics.

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And Design on the occasion of *Alt-Alterity*.

Exhibition Link

newart.city/world/alt-alterity

Website

uaad.art/alt-alterity

Email

hello@uaad.art

Instagram

[@uaad.art](https://www.instagram.com/uaad.art)

WeChat Official Account

UAAD

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