

(LILIAN C. SCHEUER)

(PORTFOLIO)

(2025)

Lilian C. Scheuer (*2002, DE) is a multidisciplinary artist and graphic designer based in Germany. Within her artistic practice, she aims to investigate the psychological circumstances of human nature by exploring their current conditions in reference to the post-digital age, implementing her conceptual approaches through a variety of creative media such as audiovisual works, printed matter and installations. The visual aesthetic of her work is characterized by the experimental usage of digital media and typical visuals from the Internet world, symbolically representing modern society's concurrent existence both as physical beings emerging from an offline reality and as virtual avatars within the cyberspace.

Her works have recently been exhibited at A Space Gallery (New York, USA), at Potassi K19 (Barcelona, ES), at Theater De Nieuwe Vorst (Tilburg, NL) as part of LI-MA's "New Art on Screen — Bring Your Own File" screening event series and at the "Correlations — Forum for AI in Art and Design" symposium (Offenbach, DE).

In 2024, she completed her bachelor's degree with distinction at Trier University of Applied Sciences with the graduation project "Dear My Memories", a multidisciplinary work about human memory in the context of the post-digital age consisting of a research-based publication and a series of conceptual artworks.

She is currently working as a freelance artist and graphic designer, specializing in the fields of digital graphics, print and creative direction.



Effekte

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Dear My Memories — An overview about human memory in the Post-Digital Age

(2024)

11x20cm, 304pp

Dear My Memories — An overview about human memory in the Post-Digital Age investigates the unreliable nature of the brain's memory system as opposed to technological data stores, unveiling what and how we remember according to current scientific knowledge and in reference to recent advances within the digital world.

As a research-based essay with hypothetical elements, it aims to inform while also raising both subjective and unresolved questions to linger within the readers' memories.

Dear My Memories

AN OVERVIEW ABOUT HUMAN MEMORY
IN THE POST-DIGITAL AGE

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Dear My
Memories

(46—73)

Data ex machina

Digital options for data externalization and their consequences on internal memory

Since the beginning of the digital age, technological advances have added yet another type of data storage into our definition of memory apart from these initial, purely analog approaches. Memory may now also exist in a distinct world within the physical and virtual components of the digital space, stored via circuit boards and cloud services in the shape of bits and bytes, of 0s and 1s.

The Oxford Dictionary, within its definition of the term memory, has by now also included memory in the context of computing, among this list, describing it as the part of a computer where information is stored as well as the amount of space in a computer for storing information.

With the vast development of digital databases, of Internet technologies and subsequently the explosive rise of social media, we have by now gained a new, entirely different type of memory system; one that is, while being separated from our internal data storage processes, still omnipresent within our daily lives. Especially the new portability of the cyberspace,

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Anything can be
a memory.
Everything is
memory.

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hostility towards the habit of writing in the dialogue of Plato's *Phaedrus*, mistaking the words of the Egyptian god Thamus to the god Truth from a tale about the development of the art of writing.

"For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. There shall be no wisdom, justified by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of forgetting, and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and have to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise."

Notably, a number of parallels can be found between the concerns stated by

Socrates and those existent within current discourse about the implementation of the Internet as an external memory store. There is a certain truth about the loss of internal memory as the basis of true knowledge via the introduction of a new opportunity for data externalization, connected with critical opinions concerning the institution of transactive memory systems as a seemingly practical, but at the same time discreetly disadvantageous memory-supportive procedure.

It is argued in both situations that data stored outside of one's own internal memory system may not be equated with the individual's actual knowledge, for with a decay of the respective external memory store, the ability of accessing the data too ceases to exist. How could one say to hold a specific piece of information, to remember, if the memory storage holding this data may just be burnt, torn apart, erased, overwritten?

According to Thamus, as Socrates puts it in his retelling, transactive memory partners are not part of ourselves, but rather external storages whose existence

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The Internet
doesn't
forget.

[00]

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from the active consumption of distinct news media towards a peripheral intake while passively scrolling through social media, an environment in which the reliability of news sources is no longer guaranteed to the same extent as it used to be. As anyone can now technically post news updates without any prior verification of their evidentiality, either without any unethical intentions or deliberately to either polarize or push a personal agenda, the news we find online have become harshly unreliable, being coated in subjectivity, hyperboles, distortion of facts and outright misinformation.

At the same time, while the general plausibility of these recent developments, should be the basis for a more thorough examination of such online news sources, the common peer-theoretical confrontation with these contents while scrolling through one's feed related leads to the opposite result: For the most part, we merely observe the key points of a headline while simultaneously already scrolling past it, not leaving any room for active fact-checking or source examination. Instead,

the potentially inaccurate or exaggerative clickbait headline we just took out of context subconsciously becomes our entire knowledge on a specific topic, enabling such data to internally evolve into apparent empirical, factual information within our memory.

According to the *Illusory truth effect*, which was first identified in a 1977 study in the context of trivia statements, false information is more likely to be believed after repeated exposure. Even when initially being aware of its inaccuracy, subsequent confrontation with the same data leads us to associate it with feelings of familiarity and a resemblance to pre-existent knowledge, relying on these fallacious impressions instead of our rationality and thus subconsciously persuading ourselves of its correctness based on these misinterpreted conclusions.

Applying this phenomenon on the current persistency of false news within social media, with options like repeat features and the creation of bots or fake ac-

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One cannot not communicate. One cannot not put out information.

On the basis of the key thesis of Paul Watzlawick's first of the 5 axioms of communication—that even the act of choosing not to communicate paradoxically also conveys a message—the lack of data in a way too simultaneously acts as information as well.

The Internet doesn't forget.

While this phrase is commonly used with a negative connotation—in order to illustrate that contents are impossible to be fully erased from the cyberspace once they have been uploaded to it—this fact, in the context of data externalization, simultaneously also reveals the general reliability of the digital memory storage.

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Pics or it didn't happen.

"Pics or it didn't happen" is a popular meme catchphrase typically commented online under users' posts about their apparent experiences, indicating the necessity of photographic evidence in order to prove that a situation actually occurred—or specifically: if you don't take a photo of a particular event you post about on social media, then how do we know if it is real?

Memory of a memory of a memory of a...

Based on the existence of the process of memory reconstruction and the potential integration of new data during memory retrieval via neuron collocation, each of our memories over time inevitably becomes merely a regenerated, altered copy of itself, a "memory of a memory of a memory of a..."

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*circuit boards, hard drive, logic board (sliced), RAMs, petri dishes, specimen bottles, glass jar, distilled water

The installation Digital Brain Research Center (DBRC) puts different parts of data storage technology into the metaphorical setting of a brain research laboratory. Inspired by modern neuroscientific approaches and typical steps within post-mortem examinations of the human brain, these physical components of the so-called “digital brain” are investigated both visually and symbolically, revealing their correlations with as well as their distinctions from the human memory system while addressing the contemporary role of technological data storing options for the act of externally preserving and recalling memories.





*audiovisual 360/VR experience

1-channel film, sound

5:38 min

DigitalDream.mp4 is a project about the tempting escapism into the world of one's dreams, forgetting about all responsibilities and hardships of real life for the time you're asleep, as well as a metaphor of the similar digital escapism that happens nowadays when getting lost inside our phone screens.

In the dream world, you experience something similar to a second world created entirely by your brain exactly after your liking, full of your own ideals, desires and memories. As you find yourself at this place that feels both so obscure and weirdly familiar, you start asking yourself:

Wouldn't it be better to stay inside that world forever?

Is it possible to just leave real life behind and instead get absorbed by this new reality completely?

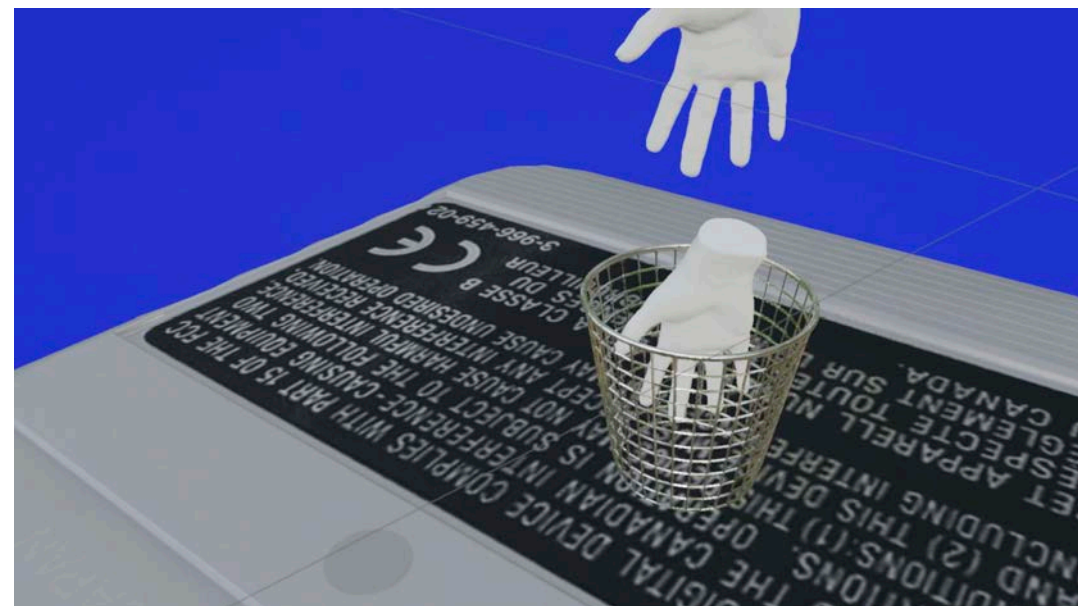
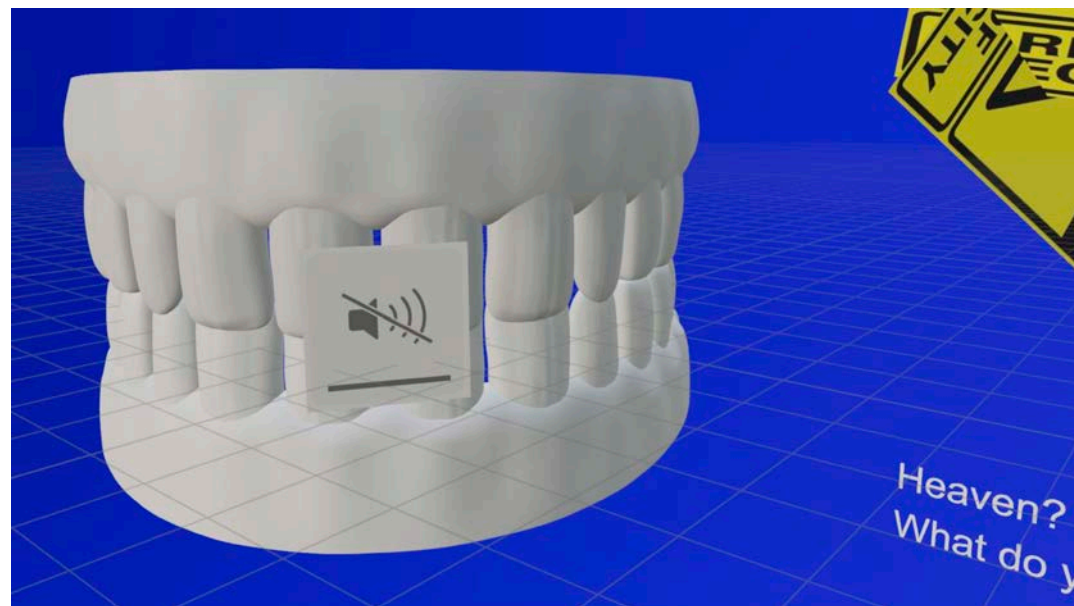
But as these thoughts cross your mind, there is also another voice of reason inside of you, one that makes this apparent freedom feel like you're trapped inside it instead.

What if you can no longer escape from your own dream world?

Will what once was your perfect dream instead become a nightmare?

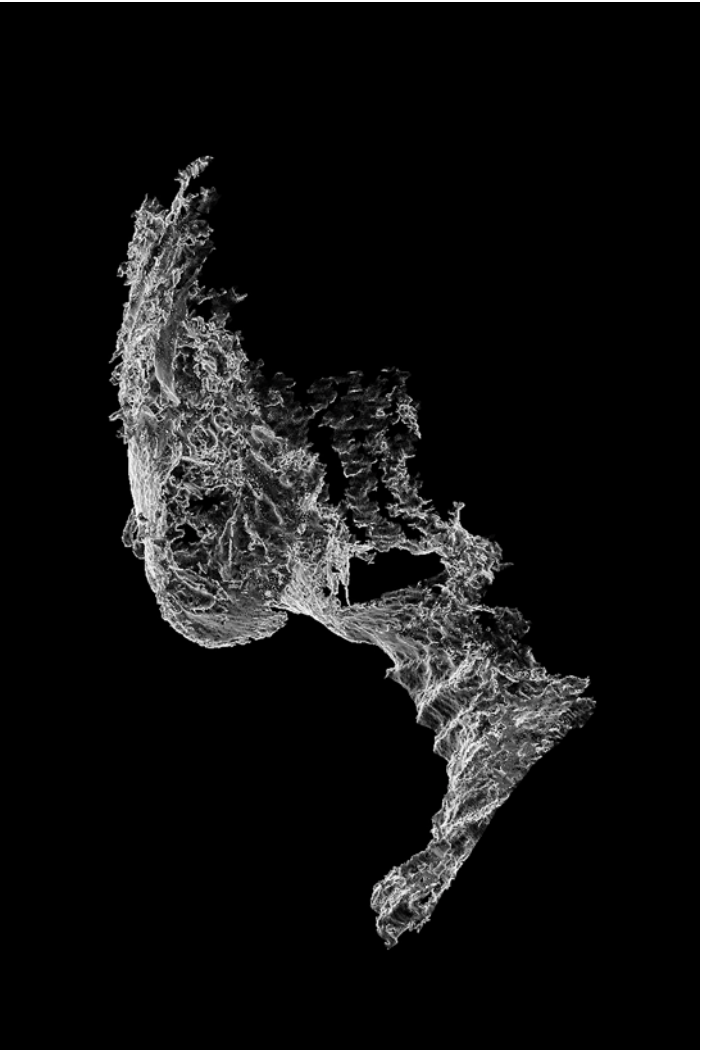
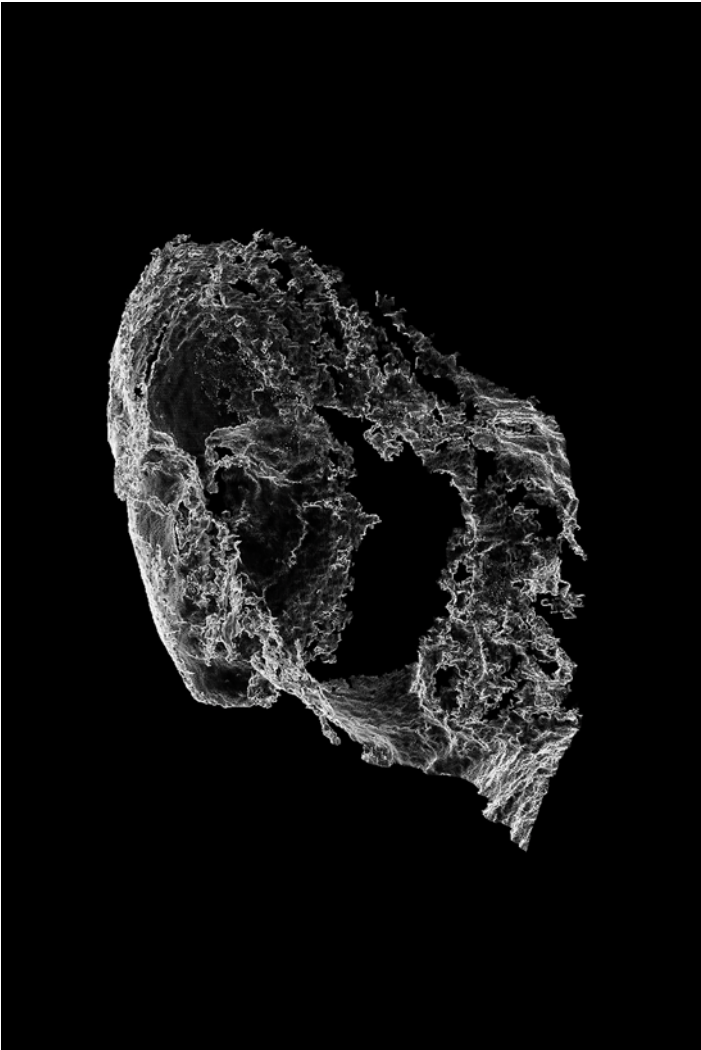
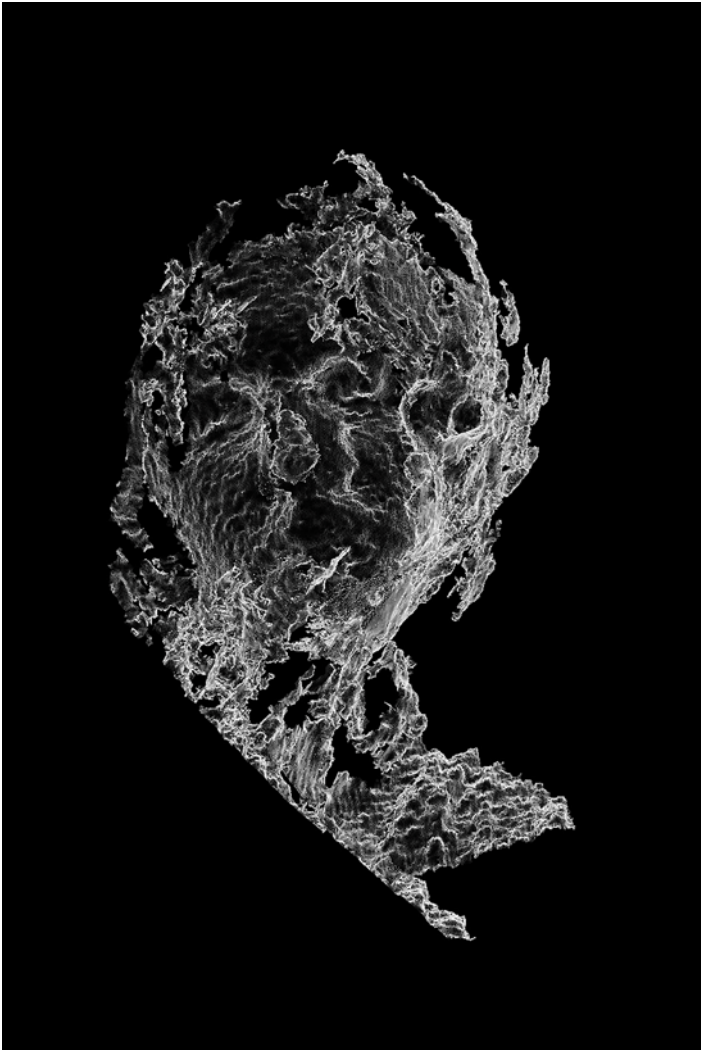
Or do you accept leaving everything and everyone you know from the real world behind for your own eternal happiness?

(<https://youtu.be/6pcD-MOTuXY>)



*digital imagery, created using 3D scanning/photogrammetry software

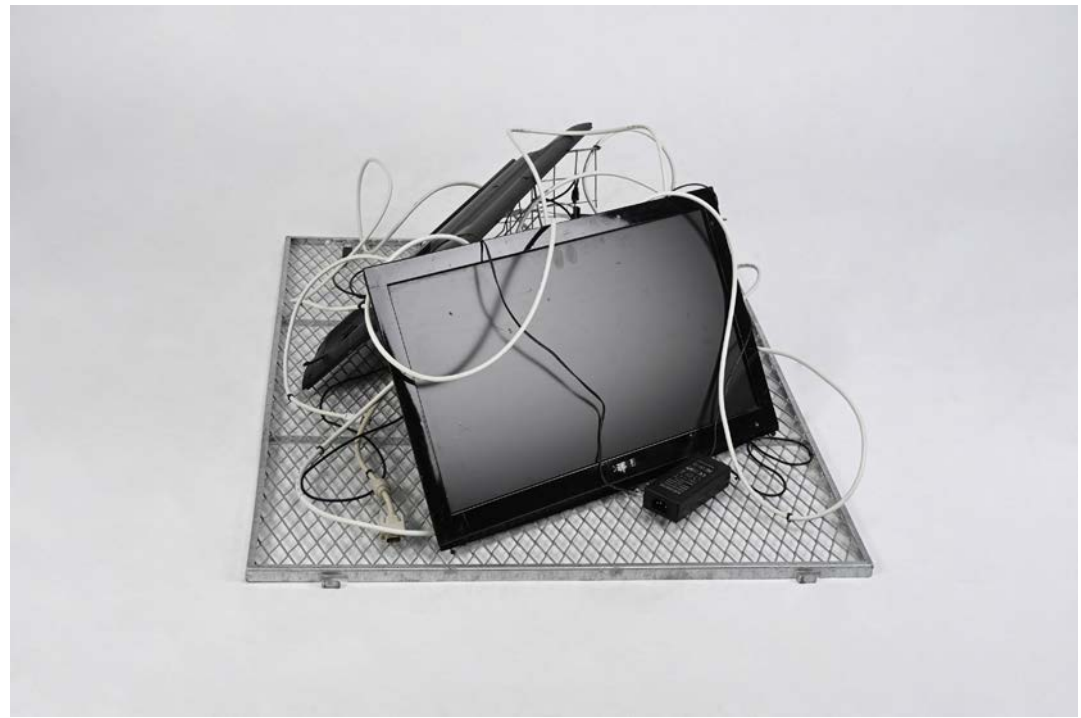
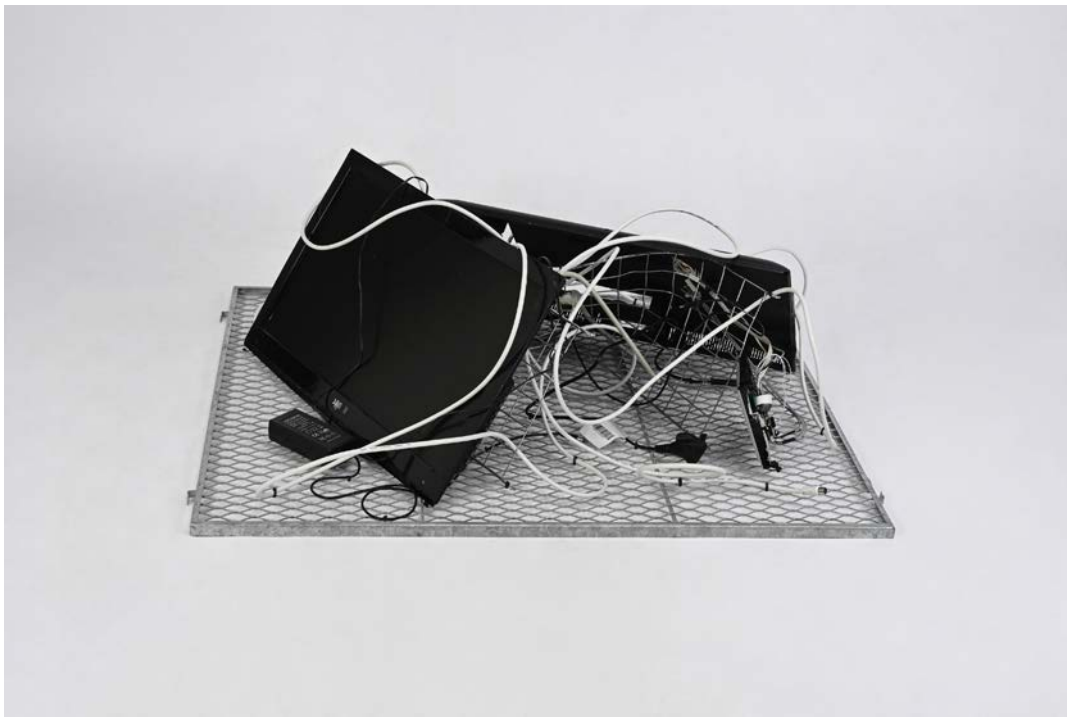
The “Cyborg Identity: Prototype 3.0” series consists of three digitalized versions of the artist’s head created using 3D face scanning technology. By showing only a vague, incomplete and distorted image, they visualize the haunting feelings connected to the pressure of being exposed to and inevitably perceived by others, of constantly having to perform for an invisible audience, that are naturally being evoked as a subject of digital prey existing within the cyberspace and actively engaging with online communities. These artificial self-portraits, further obscured to complete anonymity under the influence of pixelation, fractured wireframes and software errors, are equivalent to the curated, fragmentary versions of ourselves we typically present on the Internet while simultaneously aiming to create an impression of authenticity: A contemporary phenomenon seemingly making it possible for others to produce a genuine reflection of any person’s true identity on the basis of their digital footprint while actually revealing not a purely physical being, but a partially imagined, virtually generated model uniquely morphed by individual expectations and projected subjectivity, a shallow construction lacking any actual substance.

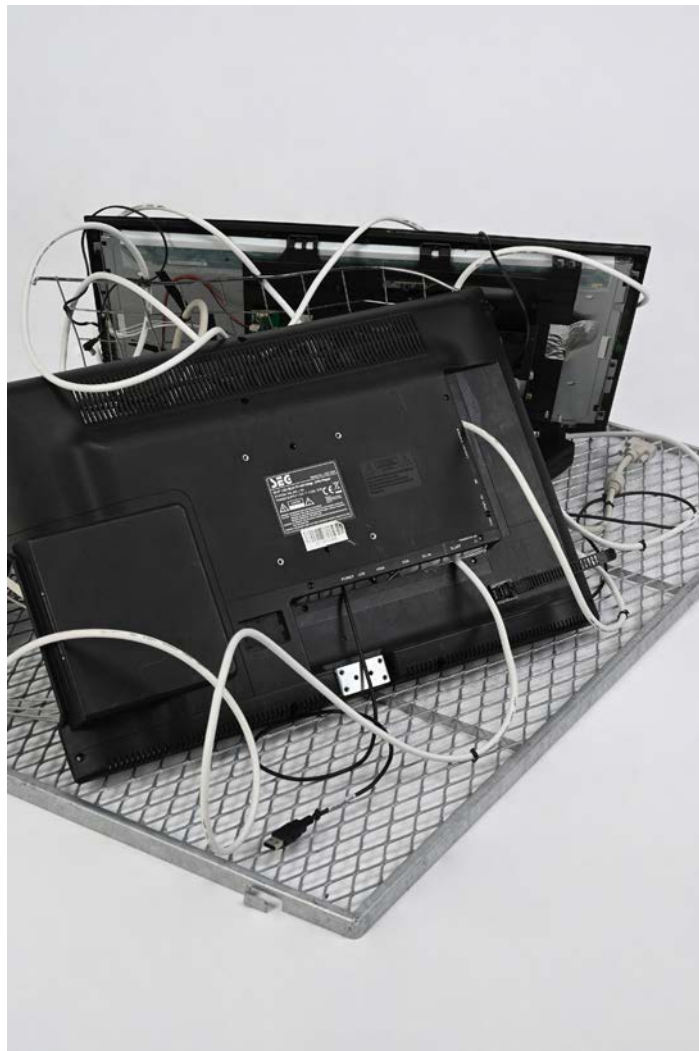
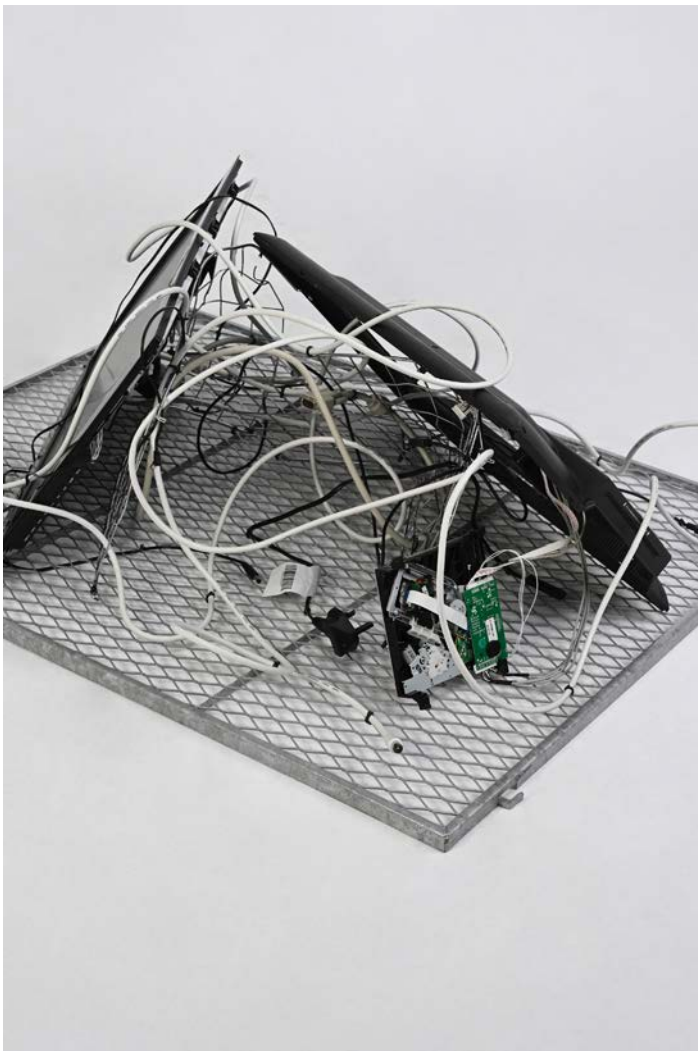
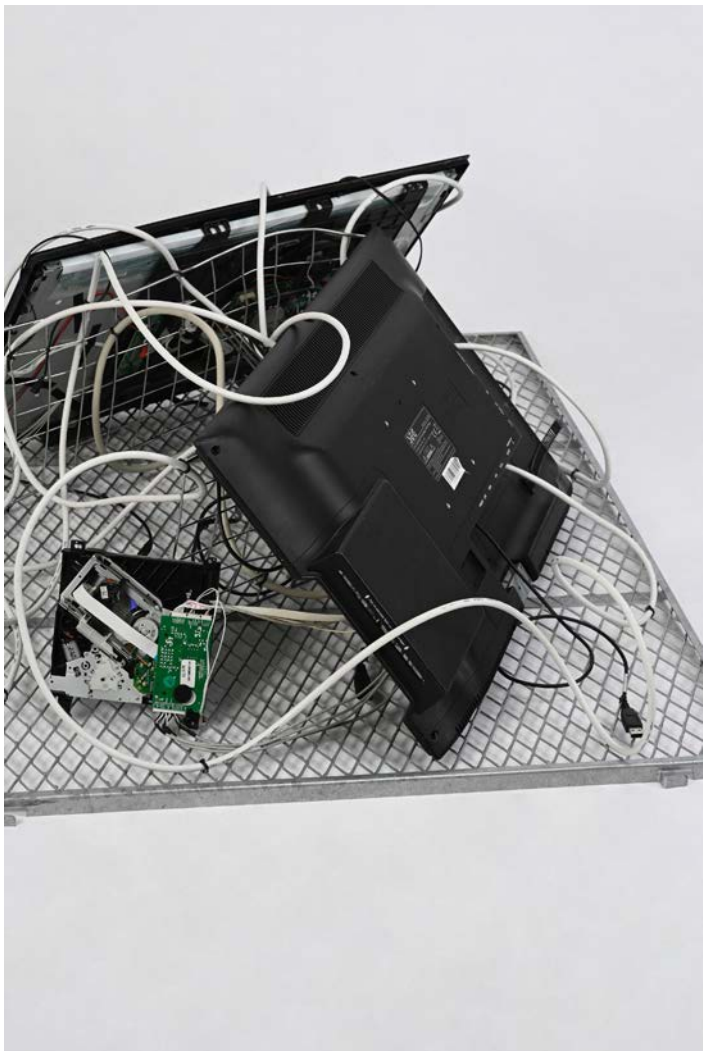


*fragmented TV screen, DVD drive, metal grids, various cables

A disassembled screen revealing the real, physical components behind the intangible virtual space we usually interpret into the electronic devices around us. Just like the screen—disconnected cables tying it to the surrounding metal grids—our society too is chained to this idea of a digital world, captivated by its impression of eternal possibilities. Does digital media really enable the opportunity for a new kind of interpersonal encounter? Or is it actually the basis of modern-day isolation, merely hidden within this illusion of connection?

(*part of OBJECTS OF ENCOUNTER for the 50th anniversary of ART
“50 JAHRE ART 50 BEGEGNUNGEN”)





Have you seen this person before?

(2024)

1-channel film, sound
full HD, 16:9
2:05 min

Have you seen this person before? is an audiovisual exploration of the human brain's suggestibility and the uncanny feelings surrounding the unreliable nature of our personal recollections based on the phenomenon of false memories. By utilizing a variety of suggestive techniques inspired by experimental research and the methods implemented during recovered-memory therapy as a reference to the Memory Wars controversy, it visualizes a typical false memory implantation procedure while also investigating the current role of machine learning and generative AI within the contemporary formation process of false memories, revealing the tremendous power of artificially created media specifically in the context of the distribution of fake news within the digital space. Supported by a computer-generated voiceover and discreetly unsettling sound effects, the still image presenting the hyperrealistic AI-based portrait of a non-existent person eerily stares into the viewer's soul, becoming alive purely out of the deliberately evoked process of reflective imagination. Through the psychological influences of subliminal manipulation via external suggestion, the viewer is subconsciously being enticed to a constant cycle of self-doubting contemplation, slowly becoming untrusting of their own memory.

(<https://youtu.be/K94RTF7nhp8W>)



Have you seen this person before?



your confusion acts as a sign that the answer is there.



Go wander through your mind and search for the traces that will lead you to the solution.

[THIS PERSON DOES NOT EXIST.]

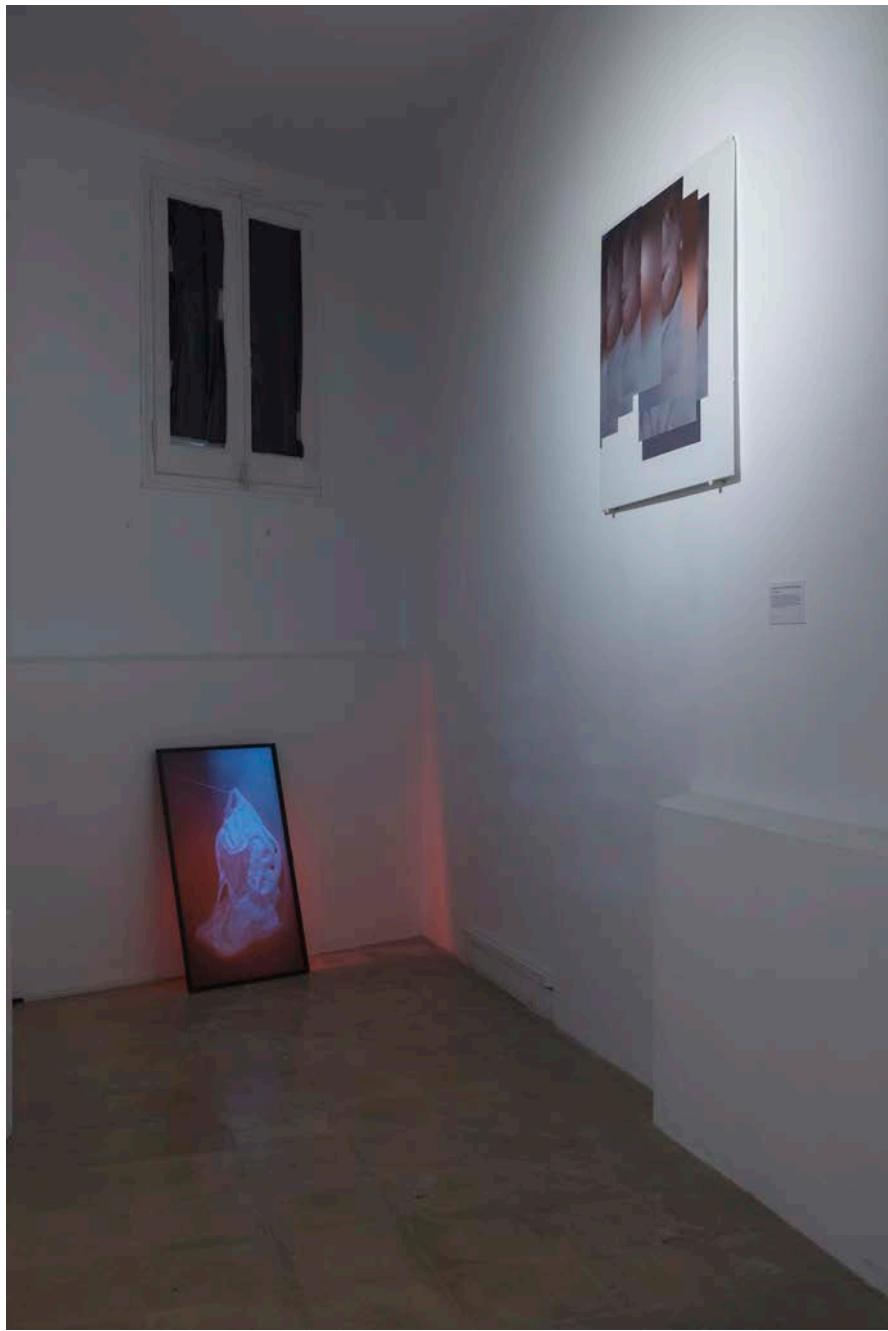
UV print on PVC foam board
90x90cm

As a seemingly objective and documentational medium, photography—including both the initial act of photo-taking as well as subsequent photo review—has since its invention always played a substantial role in externally storing and recalling memories based on visual representations. However, while looking at pictures displaying personal experiences from one's own childhood, it commonly seems impossible to connect with these autobiographical scenarios or to recognize the depicted person as oneself, a prevalent situation in the context of photographs taken throughout early childhood, during which the inner awareness of one's existence as a time-based entity with a complex, chronological storyline—the so-called concept of autonoesis—has not yet evolved neurologically.

Additionally, associating these external narratives with one's current identity becomes especially difficult under the aspect of infantile amnesia, a phenomenon expressing the lack of memories and specifically of distinct episodic recollections from these first years of one's life. According to neuroscientific research on the topic, while the memory-processing areas of the brain are not yet fully developed during infancy, partial memories of sensory input or vague still images may later on transform into coherent autobiographical narratives. However, how well-defined can these memories actually become? Or are our apparent childhood memories actually mere imaginations of what might have been, constructed subconsciously on the basis of external cues and representations?

In a metamorphic process, the amount of pixels within the artist's baby photo was continuously reduced and subsequently Wrecalculated to its original image size, the reconstruction error leading to a visual distortion—emerging both due to the previous compression steps and the randomized overlay of these different versions—acting as an analogy of the unsuccessful attempt of recovering irreversibly faded childhood memories in their full clarity.



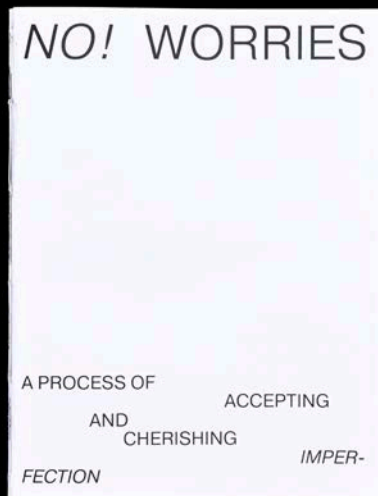




14x18.5cm, 64pp

NO! WORRIES is about the process of accepting the inevitable reality of imperfection, revealing the ambiguous nature of a perfectionist mindset as well as the epiphany of escaping this exact vicious cycle. Through the metaphor of inaccurately folded origami figures, it examines a personal metamorphosis from frustration and self-doubting thoughts to the serenity in both the acceptance and the embracement of these apparent mistakes. This change in perception is especially reasoned in the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi, which is continuously referred throughout the entire work from its first pages, over an informational research to the epilogue consisting of multiple citations taken from different books about the ideology.

These contrary principles, this staggering between the reduced clarity of perfectionism and the relaxation in accepting the existence of imperfections is also exhibited within the work itself, its clear structures and minimalist aesthetic constantly being confronted with openly displayed flaws, either accidentally or on purpose.



loading...

(2024)

1-channel film

ultra HD (4K), 16:9

video loop (2:57 min)

*presentation on computer screen in a metaphorical office setting, site-specific installation

Our internal memories as the complex datasets filing all information we encounter throughout our entire lifetime—stored physically within the brain in the shape of neuron-based engram complexes—are fundamentally unfixed and ever-changing constructs, constantly affected by contentual impermanence based on the unpredictable variability of synaptic plasticity and neuron collocation. Through a close-up animation roaming over the high-resolution photograph of a cracked shoe sole, the typically overlooked and mostly imperceptible details of this everyday object are presented in unusual observability, finally becoming available to be inspected closely by the viewer. Accordingly, both the concept of memory traces as the neural networks underlying the physical storage of our memories and their inevitable temporality are introduced metaphorically by depicting multiple types of visible traces to be associated with our autobiographical experiences, including the relictual footprints we leave within our environments as well as the ephemeral decay of material goods acting both as visual evidence for and as a direct consequence of our earthly existence and the intricate record of unique occurrences we experience during our lives as physical beings.

In reference to the endlessly looping visuals of computer screensavers and loading screens, our memories are revealed as equally incomplete products which too keep on loading for all eternity without a clear beginning or end, instead being trapped in a constant state of flux, a never-ending metamorphosis resulting in existential instability.



2-channel film

full HD, 9:16

video loop

*presentation on two opposing screens, site-specific installation

Throughout the past decades, phones have evolved from simple communication devices to our omnipresent and versatile digital companions, combining a variety of different applications for everyday life and specifically in the context of informative research and data storing. On the basis of a series of 6 phone models from the 2000s and 2010s, both the visual and the technological evolution of mobile phones is portrayed in a chronological documentation via continuously looping digital scans, representing the physical growth of the devices themselves as well as symbolically visualizing the expanding role they play within post-modern society.

Referencing the third chapter of Charles Darwin's publication "On the Origin of Species", the evolutionary principle of a "Struggle for Existence" in this context does not only refer to the species-centred competitive battle for survival itself, but also comments on humanity's modern-day pressure as individuals to constantly be present within the digital space—especially through the act of curated self-presentation on social media—as a contemporary way of proving one's own existence to the outside world. With an installation transferring the initially digital product into physical space by replicating the immersive visuals of holographic projection, the emerging image of an incomplete reconstruction ultimately reveals the seemingly reliable virtual world as an artificial simulation, displaying the fragile nature of data storage technology and the actual state of intangibility surrounding the electronic devices we regularly depend on within our daily lives.

*While the title “Prosthetic Memory” initially refers to the eponymous concept first proposed by Alison Landsberg in her 1995 article “Prosthetic Memory: Total Recall and Blade Runner”, it is in this context also to be seen as a metaphor for humanity’s current overreliance on digital data storages and specifically on mobile phones as portable and versatile devices which have thus by now become more like an omnipresent part of ourselves rather than strictly external tools.

Based on this analogy—implying smartphones as a contemporary type of brain prosthesis opposing the multi-faceted imperfections of our internal memory system—it critically questions the general state of dependency we feel towards these electronic devices, investigating both the present conditions of this trust relationship as well as potential threats within the future underlying the actual fragility of the virtual space based on its existential intangibility.



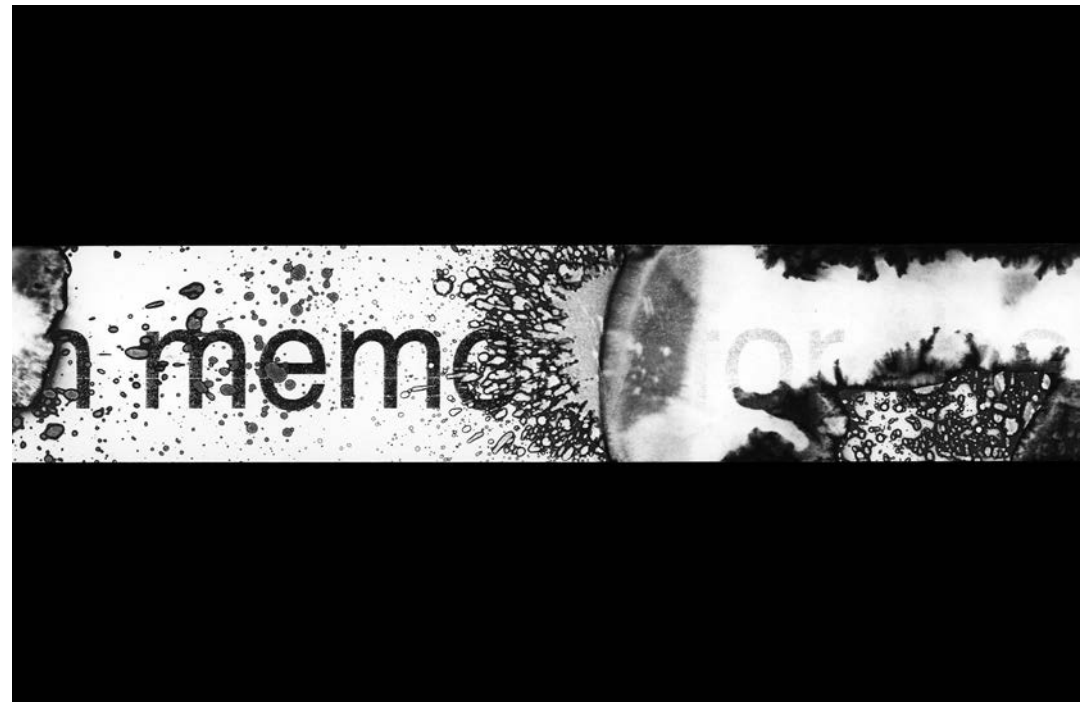
thermal print on receipt paper, manually modified with hand sanitizer

557x8cm

*site-specific installation

In computing, the error code “Out Of Memory” (or “OOM”) typically indicates that an electronic device does not have enough available storage space to perform a specific operation as too many of the computer’s resources are already being used, resulting in it having become unable to function properly. Based on the analogy of the human brain as our internal data storage device with a limited capacity, a customized “memory full” error message presents the similar situation of a neural data overload based on a hypothetical scenario without everyday forgetting as our basic ability of erasing previously acquired information. As opposed to its typical negative connotations, according to the so-called “Seven Sins of Memory” proclaimed by psychologist Daniel L. Schacter in his 2001 book, forgetting is both a natural and necessary part of the human memory system, particularly in reference to the concept of transience as our automatic data sorting system gradually deleting unused information in order to ensure an adequate functioning of the human brain.

Initially printed out onto thermal paper using a receipt printer as an equally impermanent medium characterized by a natural ephemerality based on the gradual fading of its heat-reactive dye, the final work displays an additionally modified version of the analog error warning—its visual information having been censored manually with hand sanitizer as well as through its installative presentation as a collapsing pop-up message—ultimately visualizing an eventual acceptance of the existent circumstances surrounding everyday forgetting through the active participation in this metaphorical process of physical memory erasure.







(null)

(2023)

1-channel film, sound
full HD, 16:9
3:42 min

Our world is an inexplicable place that we constantly use to search for answers to the existential questions.

What is the meaning of life?

Is there even a reason why I am here?

Who or what exactly am I, if I exist at all?

Each of us sees themselves as omnipresent in their own reality, but at the same time it's this exact observation that makes us as separate individuals insignificant to the bigger picture. In the new digital age, it seems like humanity is trying to escape this frightening nihilism by uploading itself into the virtual space as indestructible data files. But even this attempt of achieving a certain immortality by displaying a digital, curated version of oneself fails at the destiny of an inevitable apocalypse of both the physical and the second, digital world, which will one day go down together with everything that we are and aren't.

(null) is an audiovisual translation of contemporary existential questions and the overwhelming identity crisis of the modern age. Screenshots and screen recordings of various websites, QR codes, memes and GIFs—consisting entirely of digital footage, it explores the conflicted perspectives between digital nihilism and post-ironic god complex, reflecting the cryptic contemplation on our desperate search for a purpose.

(<https://youtu.be/86PqKQHjATw>)



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ad to body image disturbance, an altered percep
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Body image disturban
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one's own body.



I am nobody, I just have a body.

