



In the spirit of reconciliation Canberra Contemporary acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on whose lands we live and work.



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# PLATFORM

www.canberracontemporary.com  
info@canberracontemporary.com  
+61 262 470 188

11am to 5pm, Friday to Sunday  
Platform by Canberra Contemporary  
19 Furneaux St, Forrest ACT 2603

## Q1 CLOSE

Litia Roko  
5 December – 14 December

### Hey Meta, Who Eats Art?

A bespectacled Chris Pratt stares pensively at a fresh banana duct taped to a wall. “Hey Meta, what’s this?” he asks. An automated voice replies: “This piece is called *Comedian* by Maurizio Cattelan valued at \$6.2 million dollars.” He lets out a wide-eyed “woah!” before turning to contemplate another artwork in the gallery.<sup>1</sup>

This is the ad used by the tech multinational Meta to launch their newest venture into wearable tech: a pair of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered smart glasses. Made in collaboration with the company Ray-Ban, the glasses allow its users to “let AI see what you see, hear what you hear.”<sup>2</sup> They come replete with built-in camera, microphone, speakers, augmented reality display, and access to a digital assistant that can quickly answer questions, pull up pictures and text, and in other ways help you to navigate the frictions of the real world.

Modelled by Pratt and a host of other celebrities, the glasses are shown live in action identifying objects, translating foreign phrases, and playing music. In one scene, Pratt looks on in horror as his Marvel co-star Chris Hemsworth is shown mistakenly eating the \$6.2 million Cattelan banana. “I was hungry,” Hemsworth says naively. A third Kris, Kris Jenner, appears and in a wry voice asks “Hey Meta, who eats art?”

“Who eats art?” is the hinge for Litia Roko’s 2025 work *Q1 Close*. Such absurd scenes designed to skewer the conservative sensibility of art as elite cultural practice are what defines Roko’s own wry approach to the work of art in the age of mechanical (read: commercially platform mediated, capitalist-colonial-extractivist, opaque and algorithmically parsed) reproduction.

For Roko, the task of the artist is not necessarily to participate in the economy of artistic circulation, but to bring attention to the conditions by which the figures we call art and artists circulate. As the infrastructures of visual culture are swallowed whole by the commercial interests of companies like Meta, Google, Amazon, and OpenAI, the act of *doing* contemporary art unavoidably involves, in her words, “thinking through the politics of the modern slop-shop.”<sup>iii</sup>

For Roko, the question of “who eats art?” begs the answer. Meta eats art, because Meta eats everything.

To produce an AI system that can hear a question, see an image, pose an answer requires models trained and optimised for these specific operations. It begins first with the curation of a dataset. For Meta, the

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challenge was to find a corpus of images of what they called “egocentric” data. By this, they meant images captured from a first-person perspective, a point of view that allows a computer to “see the world through the eyes of an agent actively engaged with its environment.”<sup>iv</sup> Most internet-based datasets (e.g. scraped YouTube videos) are composed of third-person perspective and capture only short, isolated actions. To solve this problem, Meta created *Ego4D*.

*Ego4D* is a massive-scale Egocentric dataset of unprecedented diversity. It consists of 3,670 hours of video collected by 923 unique participants from 74 worldwide locations in 9 different countries.<sup>v</sup>

The images captured in the *Ego4D* dataset include long form videos of unscripted, daily activities, taken by camera wearers as they move about their everyday lives. It spans hundreds of scenarios, from commuting to work, doing the dishes, eating a sandwich, and of course, making art.

The sharpness of Roko's work is in its ability to expose a latent aspect of art: its function as a label that allows people and objects to circulate and accrue value inside of an economy. It is in dialogue with works like Cattelan's 2019 *Comedian* insofar as it likewise brings attention to the absurdity of contemporary art markets. She shows how “art as label” resonates with the ontology of the dataset. For instance, looking at a banana only counts as an artistic experience when indexed with the specific label “art.” The primary difference is in who provides that label: an industry professional (art) or an online crowd worker (data).

Much like art, a term such as “AI” also allows objects to circulate and to accrue value as part of speculative markets dependent on investors and venture capital. Roko's approach looks at AI not as a *method* for art but as a *provocation* for art. It asks: what if emerging technologies, like generative AI, are not threats to the cultural authority of the artist but exposes the parallels of the art industry with the equally exploitative and extractive industry that is AI? What if the deranged economy that venerates singular genius figures like Mark Zuckerberg or Elon Musk or other tech leaders who recently demonstrated their sycophancy to US President Donald Trump and his repugnant White Christian Nationalist project, is the same economy that venerates the idea of the artist as a cultural elite, singular genius?

Litia Roko's *Q1 Close* considers these questions and more. It can best be understood not just as an artwork in itself but as a representation of what happens to art after it is eaten by the machinery of modern industries. It suggests that celebrity millionaires like Chris Pratt, Chris Hemsworth, and Kris Jenner, are the perfect ambassadors for this new era of artistic consumption, because celebrities—as with AI and as with art—are powered by their own forms of egocentrism. Companies like Meta are shameless in their ambitions to turn all human visual experience into computable episodic moments. They commodify everything—perspective, interaction, emotions—and art is no exception.

Thao Phan

Thao Phan is feminist science and technology studies (STS) researcher who specialises in the study of gender, race, and algorithmic culture. She is based on Ngannawal and Ngambri country and is a Lecturer in Sociology at the Australian National University.

<sup>i</sup> Meta. “Watch Chris Pratt & Hemsworth Use AI Glasses in First of Two Ray-Ban Meta Ad Spots.” Meta Blog, February 3, 2025. <https://www.meta.com/en-gb/blog/chris-hemsworth-pratt-ray-ban-meta-ai-glasses-football-ad-campaign-2025/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Gibbs, Samuel, and Samuel Gibbs Consumer technology editor. “Meta Announces First Ray-Ban Smart Glasses with in-Built Augmented Reality Display.” Technology. The Guardian, September 18, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/sep/17/meta-ray-ban-smart-glasses>.

<sup>iii</sup> Roko, Litia. “Beyond Representation: A Practice-Led Approach to the Networked Image After Photography.” Honours Exegesis, Australian National University, 2024.

<sup>iv</sup> Grauman, Kristen, Andrew Westbury, Eugene Byrne, et al. “Ego4D: Around the World in 3,000 Hours of Egocentric Video.” arXiv:2110.07058. Preprint, arXiv, March 11, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2110.07058>.

<sup>v</sup> Grauman et al, 2022, 1

## Q1 Close

The close of a quarter is an opportunity to review, reflect and re-align. Twenty-five years into a century that opened with the utopian promise of the internet as a decentralised, democratic force, technology companies have harvested the history of art and culture as data to fuel an accelerating AI arms race. *Q1 Close*, the final exhibition of Platform's 2025 program, examines the status of art within shifting economies of value.

Litia Roko is an artist interested in the politics of technology and the politics of art. Working across video, installation, text, presentation software, lecture-performances, and curatorial projects, her work addresses notions of cultural value, authority, and labour in computational culture. In 2024 Litia graduated from the ANU School of Art and Design with First Class Honours and was the recipient of the Peter and Lena Karmel Anniversary Prize in Art. Litia lives and works on unceded Ngannawal and Ngambri land and in 2025 she is an artist in residence at Canberra Contemporary and M16 Artspace.

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@litiaroko  
litiaroko.com

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