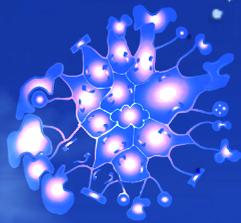


EMBODIED

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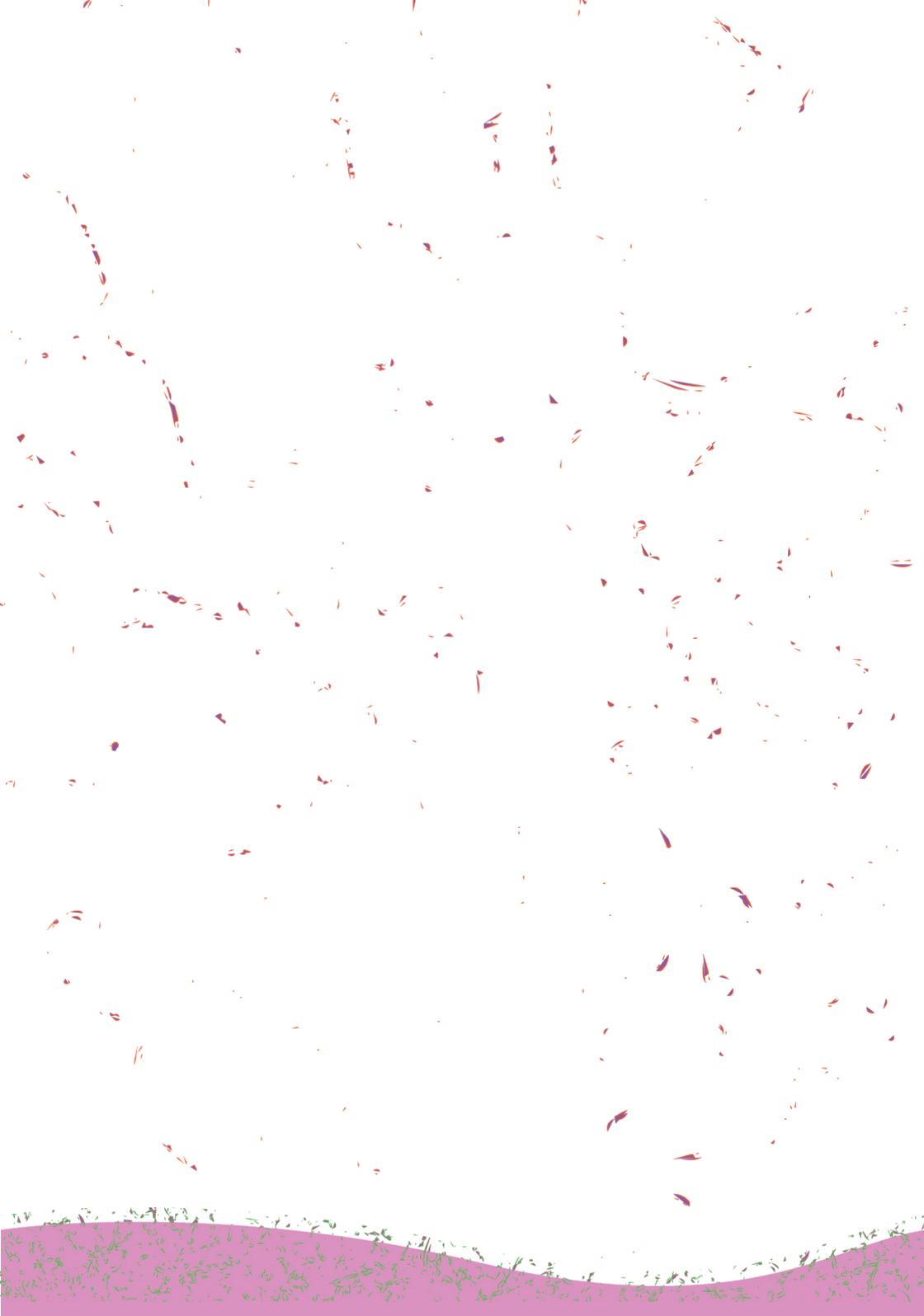
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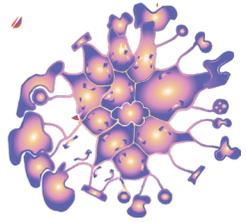
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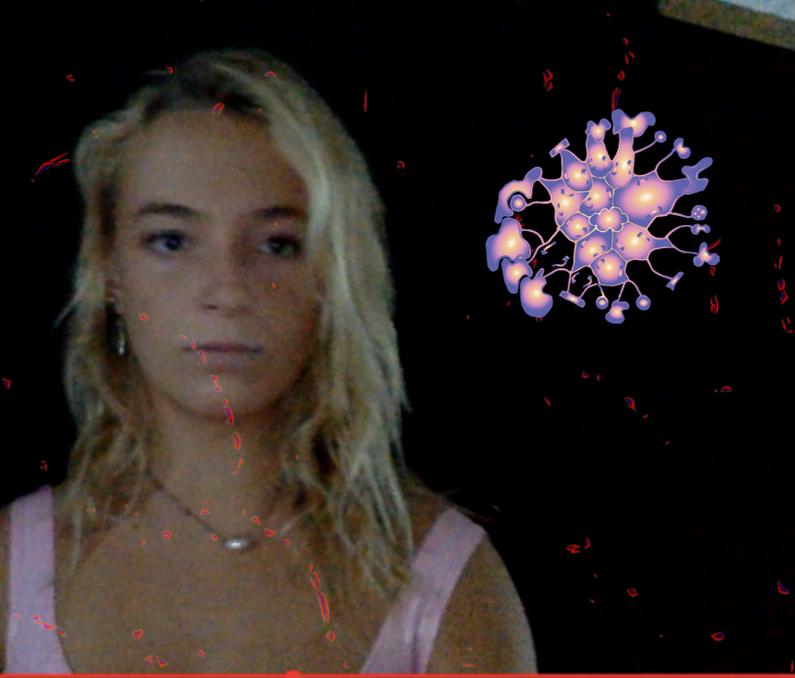
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Technology has created an interconnected, globalised world, with digital experiences reshaping our terms of existence and presenting us with bewildering opportunities and threats. Yet we feel we are moving further away from what it means to be human as we lose our connection to our bodies, nature and our immediate environment. But a disembodiment simply means a shift of focus from object to communication and interaction. What does it then mean, to be embodied in a mediated world? Are there new possibilities that only exist in the liminal spaces between physical and virtual?



OF MASTURBATING WHILE CHAT
ROOMS BROADCAST V
ation101's Cam FEM
ation101's room

ources

2 Device

↑ ↓

Mixer

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-60 -55 -50 -45 -40 -35 -30 -25 -20 -15 -10 -5 0

Speaker icon and settings gear icon

Controls

Stop Streaming

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Studio Mode

Settings

Exit

03:18

Controls Scene Transitions Contest Stats

5:23 REC: 00:05:23 CPU: 39.3%, 15.94 fps Delay (1 sec) kb/s: 2691

Santa Mo
Angus & Ju

ation101's Bio and Free

Followers: 481
Birth Date: June

REPORT ABUSE

CHAT

USERS (7)



Rules: No spamming. Do not announce other rooms or view argumentative and/or rude. post your e-mail address in To go to next room, press 25". To disable emoticons click above.

connection established

room subject changed to initiation101: Hello!



You currently have: 0 tokens

Get More Tokens

Start Private Show

SEND TIP

When we see “internet of things”, let’s make it an internet of beings.

When we see “virtual reality”, let’s make it a shared reality.

When we see “machine learning”, let’s make it collaborative learning.

When we see “user experience”, let’s make it about human experience.

When we hear “the singularity is near”, let us remember: the plurality is here.

- Audrey Tang¹

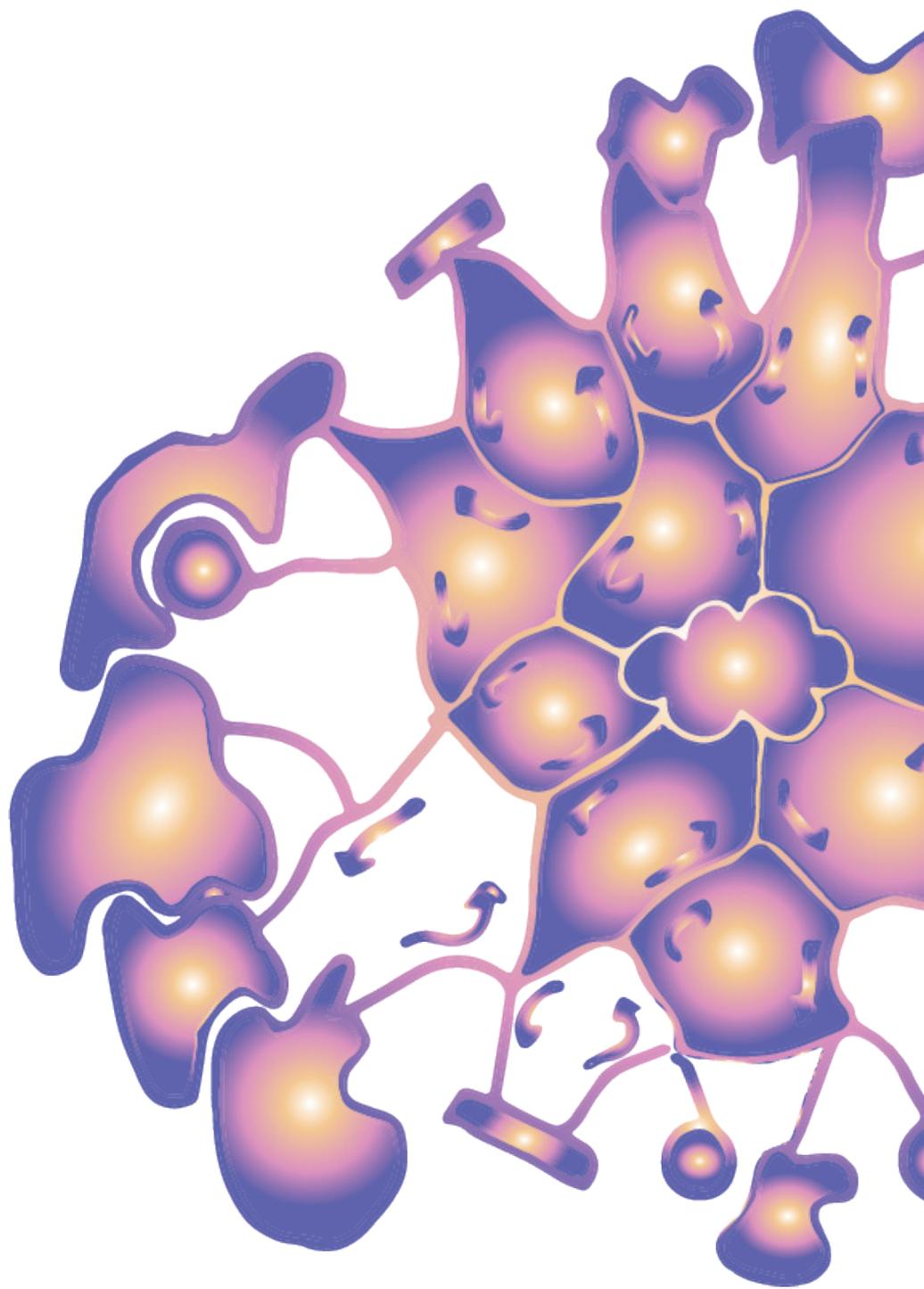
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1 First Taiwanese Transgender digital minister. “We have to keep defining what is the inter in internet” Framed Framed Accessed <https://framedframed.nl/dossier/audrey-tang-we-have-to-keep-defining-what-is-the-inter-in-internet/>



Webcam

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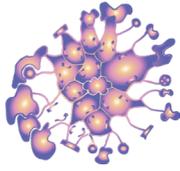




EMBODIED MULTI-
BODY;
SPACE;
TIME
PERFORMANCE;

MAFLOT MEYER
INTERACTIVE MEDIA DESIGN
ROYAL ACADEMY OF ART
2020

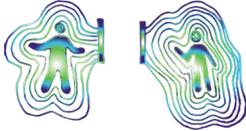




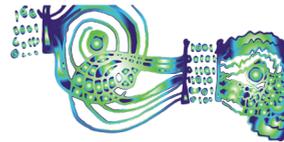
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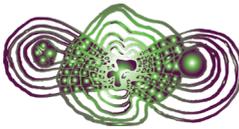
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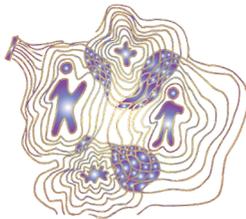
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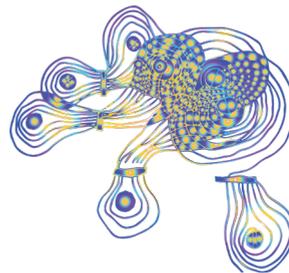
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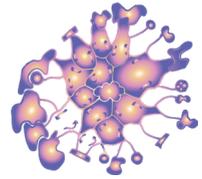


58-65



66-73





Everyone and everything is connected. There is no longer the white space between two nodes of connection. It is so vast and endless that the network has exploded into a void, where meaning is lost in meaningfulness. It is more accessible and expanded than ever, and yet things online feel devoid of meaning and expression. Technology has brought distant experiences and exotic spaces closer to us. But we are lacking an empathetic relationship to these experiences.

When I run through the forest my mind and body are present in one space and time, expending all energy on moving forwards against the pull of gravity. But in a world of screens and interfaces between us and our experience, where does this energy go to, if it isn't spent on physically moving? What is the new relationship between the mind, body, experience, expression and space?

Increasingly, digital mediated spaces and experiences are seen as something 'unreal'. With the growing mistrust in online communications and digital platforms due to surveillance and data marketing we are at a pivotal point where "Once the Internet changed the world, now the world is changing the Internet. Its mainstreaming is well and truly over, and the forgettable Web 2.0 saga has run its course".¹ The Internet is no longer a space of free expression and open source content. This is largely due to the digital dependence of the modern day capitalist economy.



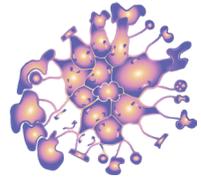
¹ Geert Lovink, Dynamics of Critical Internet Culture (1994-2001) (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2009) pp.1

We see that many of our civil actions such as banking, shopping, socializing and voting often take place in digital space. With many of these actions playing a large role in creating our identity in real life, this fear of losing privacy is a logical reaction. But the fact of the matter is that we are dependent on digital spaces. And so we find ourselves connected to vast repositories of knowledge, and yet we have not learned to think in terms of these new structures and systems that connect our globalised world. We cannot unthink technology and our networked interdependencies, but we can think through and within these structures by understanding them.²

By understanding the characteristics with which we, our expressions and experiences are transformed as they transcend this physical reality to a virtual, digital space we are able to view its plasticity as a means of collaboration, of creating new narratives with little parts of us in it. To understand that creation was never a singular activity but an expression of all that was and will be. Due to the nature of digital environments, this means that a creation can gain some sort of autonomy from its creator and continue to grow and inseminate new spaces, in domestic spaces, private or public, at any time, be it the present or several years later when a stranger across the world stumbles upon your creation.



2 Bridle, James. *New Dark Age, Technology and the End of the Future*, Verso, 2018. Verso, London.

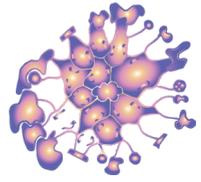


Since the moment humans could dream or imagine something outside the boundaries of their skin, a part of us was already existing in alternative spaces. Due to technological developments, there are only more places to be at once. We may feel the need to disconnect entirely, as we fear we are losing our humanness by expanding our experiences too far outside our physical body. We fear the de-materiality of all the things that make us feel alive. But this evolution can be read as a story of increasing corporality, as counterintuitive as that may seem. It is not that we are losing something when we exist and express in virtual spaces, it is simply that the focus has shifted from the object, to the interaction, the communication.

What digital media is lacking today is the necessary feedback loops, where a system of communication is not based on a one-to-many broadcast, but on a many-to-many, or peer-to-peer feedback system with a focus on context, interaction and reaction, rather than content. We are lacking the liveness, the presence and the tension that is created when these factors are present.

Digital media has offered us new possibilities of experience with a tap of our fingers, yet we miss this essence of liveness and presence when we know we are only in a simulation or watching a screen. In contrast to this, live performance art is regarded as a sacred, ephemeral experience which is able to reach intimate inners of the audience, and evoke real emotions. Is there an alternative way of using this tool of storytelling and expression in a mediated world? Are there new ways of experiencing bodies and their expressions without being physically co-present, but yet in the same space and time?

Is there a future in live streaming as the outlet to reach these strangers in domestic private spaces, to our childhood homes or distant imaginary places in a way which embodies the multiplicity of spaces, of our bodies and our experiences?





In a continuous movement: foot knee
ungirded hip perfectly alternates
the pressure to create kinetic movement

the forest opens her legs to me and
I am confronted with the vast openness
her waters level to me
I could speed over

I drink in the stupefying scene
making eternity last for a second

eventually it washes over me
I float into an abyss
endorphins dissolve into every cell
of my body
from a somber meditation
to a zestful joy

I float along, with Cage the Elephant
singing to me about tropical moonlit nights
beaten sun rays change their opacity
from zero to one hundred
and pound against my memories

I stop suddenly
breath heavy, skin burning ice, body electrified
I have but haven't had the power to stop until I now
I have, but I haven't felt so hot yet so cold until now
I have, but haven't felt so tired yet alive until now
I am everything and nowhere
How did I not feel my body ache?
And how can I get there again?'

.....

1 Own Author



I have always found such power and connection to my sense of self when I run. My muscles teasing to push harder, faster. Burning with anticipation. They swim in ecstasy as their purpose is fulfilled. The jitters, shivers, and vibrations give me an almost sensual relationship to my body. This relationship expands, and I am aware of the here and now. All the things outside the boundary of my skin, seep through me. I am embodied in the present.

Everything moves. In the physical, emotional, mental, and even virtual spaces we inhabit. There is movement that is independent from us. The movement of blood, air, water in our bodies, the seasons, the rotation of our planet, of the solar system, and all that expands. There is movement we can affect through personal will like our direction of thoughts, when to move from silence to manifesting them, how we move through spaces, how we act in different situations and so on. There are also places in between, when thoughts are flowing without our conscious choosing, or when our ancestors sang and danced for the rain to come and eventually it did.



Whether or not we choose to believe in this more mystical example, we are processes embodied in movement and embedded in larger scale motions. But some things are not quantifiable. It is the negative space that is necessary for the positive to be seen. But it is there. And it is formless, like intuition and gut-feeling. Like air and electricity. We would not hear the movement of air if we did not have ears, nor see it if there was nothing for it to act upon. We would not see the effect of electricity if the light bulb didn't turn on or you didn't stick your finger in the socket. One cannot exist without the other.

There is a change needed in understanding ourselves, in relation to the body, virtual and physical, that is greater than the individual.



One's life story does not begin at birth or end at death.

The hydrogen atoms in a human body completely refresh every seven years. As we age we are really a river of cosmically old atoms. The carbons in our bodies were produced in the dust of a star. The bulk of matter in our hands, skin, eyes, and hearts was made near the beginning of time, billions of years ago. We are much older than we look.¹

We are at birth the product of all that was before, from technological developments that allowed you to be born the way you did, to your ancestral history, which determined how you were brought into this world, and with what beliefs. Even your genes are epigenetically marked with a chemical coating upon your chromosomes, which represent a kind of biological memory of what your parents experienced.¹ One does not dissolve after you take your last breath and your heart stops beating, either. There is energy that you have released

throughout your lifetime, and upon death. According to the Law of Conservation of Energy, energy can neither be created nor destroyed; it can only be transferred or transformed from one form to another², meaning that it has to go somewhere, and not only when you die, but also when you express, act, think, and feel.

But in a world where we find ourselves increasingly in a situation where there is a screen between us and the experience, I began to question where this energy goes



¹ Natan P. F. Kellerman, Epigenetic transmission of Holocaust Trauma: Can nightmares be inherited? (AMCHA, Israel, 2011)



² Richard Feynman, The Feynman Lectures on Physics Vol I.(Addison Wesley: URL https://www.feynmanlectures.caltech.edu/I_04.html)

¹ Kevin Kelly, What Technology Wants (New York: Penguin Group, 2010) pp. 58

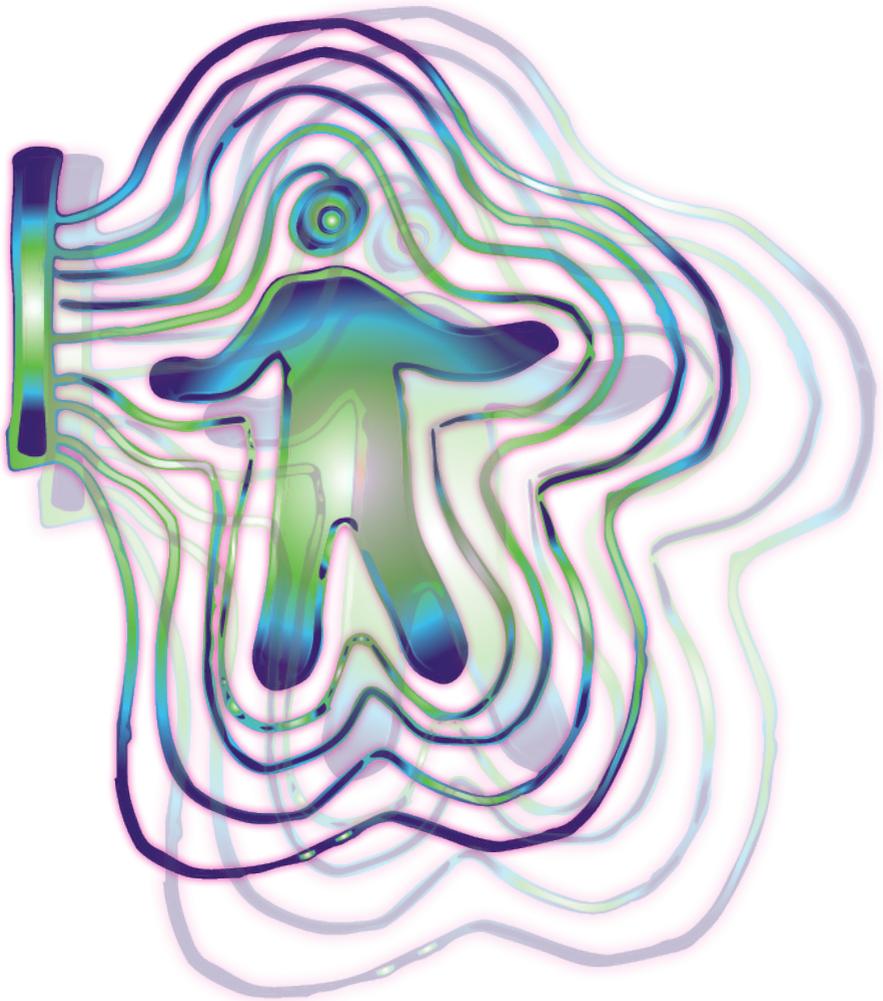
when I express myself online or via digital media. Our physical bodies are hardly involved, and more we trust the eye and brain of a machine to bring the world closer to us. Is this still expression? Is this still me? This interaction between myself and the seemingly infinite web of the Internet. Because things are happening. Actions online are affecting people in real life.

What I am interested in thinking, though, is that there may be multiple ways to talk about a body which include the experience of the body moving through the forest in natural time, and simultaneously the body online, surfing through the Internet in “Internet time”.

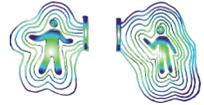
This means that our understanding of time needs to change. That there must be a shift in perspective and understanding of our data bodies and digital selves. A shift away from the new and anonymous. A celebration of online identities and an exploration of what the future holds for them. Inside the space behind the screen you transform into digital algorithms, you are no longer simply biological. You are documentation, an interpretation, a sheer sheet that multiplies; you create a culture that streams back into the physical world in ways we do not always understand and to places we cannot comprehend, some which will outlive your physical body. In a world of online representations what does it mean, then, to be “embodied”?



ECONOMY







We do not know what the source of consciousness is. We don't even know if there is a meaning to the universe or not. Yet we think we can make a simulation that's as valid as this? Every simulation we make misses something. So when I see people rushing off to upload consciousness to a chip, it feels more like an escape from humanity, than it is a journey forward. And I get it. Life is scary. I mean, women, real life women are scary. You know, the people are scary. The moisture is scary. Death is scary. Babies are scary. Other people who don't speak the same language or have the same customs, they're scary. All sorts of stuff is scary.

I understand the idea of this kind of Sim City perfected simulation that I can go into and not have to worry about all that stuff I don't know, where everything is discrete, everything is a yes/no, this/that, all the choices have been made. There's a certain attractiveness to that, but that's dead. There's no wonder. There's no awe. There's nothing strange and liminal and ambiguous about it.

- Douglas Rushkoff "Team Human"¹

As technology advances, we are increasingly living in multiple realities at once. For a long time we have had one hand in the digital and the other in the real. But it's the slippage between the two which interests me. How much we invest in our virtual selves and avatars, the physical and mental connections between us and "it", the mirrored and glitched, the real and virtual environments.

What Rushkoff is reflecting on is this general public fear for humans, and our place in the future. That somehow or other there was a fall, a point where we became unnatural. Similarly, there is a fear of a shift from reading to being read. Where 'Google knows best'. A shift of power where one's actions and interactions are becoming powerless objects as they are converted and categorized into data for monetary value, to be



¹ Big Think, "Why 'upgrading' humanity is a transhumanist myth | Douglas Rushkoff" Youtube Video. 5:12, 01/20/19. URL https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=mQZJlpADNM0

utilized by big data corporations which you unknowingly feed the content of 'you'. Our primal instinct to protect ourselves, turns into paranoia. This paranoia leads to mistrust, and so to surveillance. Over time we get the feeling we have taken a new step into controlling things and losing control of those things.

But, as Kevin Kelly writes in his book *What Technology Wants*, "Humans are the reproductive organs of technology. We multiply manufactured artifacts and spread ideas and memes." That "clearly, we are self-made. We are the first technology. We are part inventor and part the invented":¹ Machines have grown out of us. These enormous electronic circuits are simply extensions and reflections of our communication pathways. Even the intangible Internet exists because of giant underwater pipes connecting the world.²

In order to understand our mistrust in digital spaces and interactions,

I think it is first important to look at the economic system and the technological dependency of modern day capitalist society. You're probably thinking where is this going, but this is necessary. Because artists don't talk enough about the economy. And economics rarely involves creative speculation or input. However, it is still the thing that drives the world. It is still the thing that determines who you are, to a great extent. Ownership is relational to identity. What you own, says a lot about you, your history and your future. And ownership today is analogous to money.

But money is a historical construct. Before coins and banknotes, different cultures chose objects or materials to represent value: shells, cattle, skins, salt, grain, and cloth.³ Money is a fictional symbol, which due to its deep intervention into history and human life, has very material consequences and an impact on people. Already, there is a crossover of the virtual to the real.



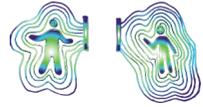
1 Kevin Kelly, *What Technology Wants* (New York: Penguin Group, 2010) p58

2 "Submarine Cable Map" TeleGeography. Accessed 11/19, www.submarinecablemap.com/



3 Andrew Beattie, "The History of Money: From Barter to Banknotes" Investopedia. Accessed 10/19 [https://www.investopedia.com/arti-](https://www.investopedia.com/articles/07/roots_of_money.asp)

[cles/07/roots_of_money.asp](https://www.investopedia.com/articles/07/roots_of_money.asp)



In physical reality, cash is known as a bearer instrument.⁴ This means that whoever possesses it, controls it. The 10 euro note in your pocket is yours because it is in your pocket, and you have the power to do with it as you please. The 10 euro note is also anonymous, in the sense that it has no identity attached to it. You can give the note to someone else and it will carry no evidence of your identity on to the next owner. You can use this note to buy groceries or drugs, and no one will know how you got it or that it came from you.

However, today 90% of the sum total of all money is held as digital money on computer servers.⁵ The vast majority of transactions are executed by moving electronic data from one computer file to another, without any exchange occurring in physical space and time. Have you ever thought that eventually we will have no material relationship to this symbol of value?



4 Scott, Brett. "MoneyLabs #7" Symposium, Amsterdam, 14/11/19

5 "Digital Money" Future Agenda. Accessed 11/19 <https://www.futureagenda.org/foresights/digital-money/>

This is relevant to highlight the crossover between electronic data and physical real time life events, but also to illustrate that money is no longer anonymous, and how this has created a mistrust in digital spaces. Through the dematerialization of the monetary system, there is a rematerialisation of money that is analogous to identity.

Whenever we want to claim something that's ours like a bank account, a social media account, we first need to provide something to prove it is us, to authenticate our identity. This is either something we know, something we own, something we use, or something we are. There is an affirmation of who you are because of what you own, and reaffirmation of this, as you need to prove who you are to access what you own. So naturally you would feel the pressure to protect what you are in order to protect what you own. That is why there is such a growing distrust of online communications. Since everything: your actions, activity, the searches you do in your private

life, sometimes even your actual private life is recorded, there is a reason to be paranoid. There are more books published every year with titles like “Hiding from the Internet” or “The Art of Invisibility”.⁶ This desire to be anonymous reflects a warped idea of public and private space that the Internet provides. The reason for paranoia is that we do not know, or cannot fully comprehend who or what is collecting our data, for which reasons, and for what value? And if it is for value, then why can we not gain a profit of this since we are the ones creating it?

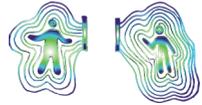
For example, for some time I had been live streaming performances on a sex cam site called Chaturbate, as part of my research into live streaming as performance. Whereby one can become a ‘cam model’, livestream yourself, interact with viewers and earn an income due to the tips given by the viewers. However, before they can earn tips one has to provide an HD scan of their passport or driver’s license, and a photograph of themselves unobstructed, holding

said passport next to them. One also has to sign an agreement with the site, with one paragraph stating the rights granted to the site to:

“..distribute my services and any and all media now and existing or hereinafter created including without limitation to the Site. I grant the site the perpetual, universal right to record, edit and exploit my services for the purpose of advertising and promoting the Site and to generally promote the Site and its affiliated entities, including, without limitation, other performers who provide similar services. I authorise others to use my name, any and all stage names and aliases, and biography, resume, signature, caricature, voice and likeness... Including “Name and Likeness” on websites, banner ads, written publications and the like, merchandising, commercial tie-ups, publicity and other means of exploitation of any and all rights pertaining to the Services and any element thereof.”

Basically I granted the site some sort of “me”. For they now know my name, birthdate, nationality number, and can capture and record my voice, my body, my

6 Amazon.de. Accessed 12/19 https://www.amazon.de/s?k=internet+invisability&ref=nb_sb_noss



WEBCAM RECORDS Girls Couples Boys Trans ALL MODELS (A-Z) REGISTRATION LOGIN

initiation101 chaturbate records

Birthday: 1997-06-24 Location: South Holland, Netherlands
Gender: girl Cam Site: Chaturbate
Real Name:

About: All chaturbate initiation101 girl cam Private and Public video records. You can watch girl online or download for free. Biggest records archive by initiation101 girl (nude, sex, XXX, fuck, cum, dildo etc) is available worldwide now. If you want to see naked initiation101 recorded show with blowjob or dildo toying - you need to watch all videos in our chaturbate records catalog.

initiation101 videos

 <p>[05-09-19] initiation101 record public webcam from Chaturbate 6</p>	 <p>[29-08-19] initiation101 record private show from Chaturbate 5</p>	 <p>[24-08-19] initiation101 chaturbate private XXX video 10</p>
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Own image: Screenshot of Site found with google search: Initiation101 (My Chaturbate Username) Buy Videos

actions during the live stream, and do with it what they like. There are now other websites where anyone can find past recordings of my live streams on Chaturbate, which they can buy. Past recordings of performances where I was in that moment, experiencing real emotions, reacting to somewhat real viewers regardless of the interface of a webcam and a screen between myself and the viewers.

Who do we trust with our expressions online? The more our identities are tied to valuable virtual assets that affect our real

life selves, the more we fear the hacking of these accounts and the virtual and physical loss of something that is 'ours'. Thus the idea of anonymity would seem like an appealing alternative to keep the interactions, but to protect our data, ownership of content, and identity.

However, if we look at something like 8CHAN, a free chat room site, anonymity may equate to free expression, but this also created a space where people weren't held accountable for their actions. The programmer, Fredrick Brennan, created the

website after observing the rapidly escalating surveillance and a loss of free speech on the Internet. Brennan described 8chan as a “free-speech-friendly” alternative. Because of this freedom, the site had been linked to users promoting white supremacy, neo-Nazism, racism and anti-Semitism, hate crimes, and presence of child pornography.⁷ There were also open discussions planning multiple mass shootings, some of which occurred shortly after in real life. As a result, it was filtered out from Google Search. Brennan has taken a distance from the site, stating “it only makes the world a worse place”.⁸

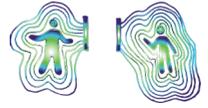
New technologies will not only shape our understanding of the public sphere, but also the spaces within we express, communicate, and discuss on a global scale. It is two sides of the same coin. We fear the loss of our possessions and privacy, but if we cannot account for anyone, the digital world will only become a space of people anxiously looking to see if someone is watching.

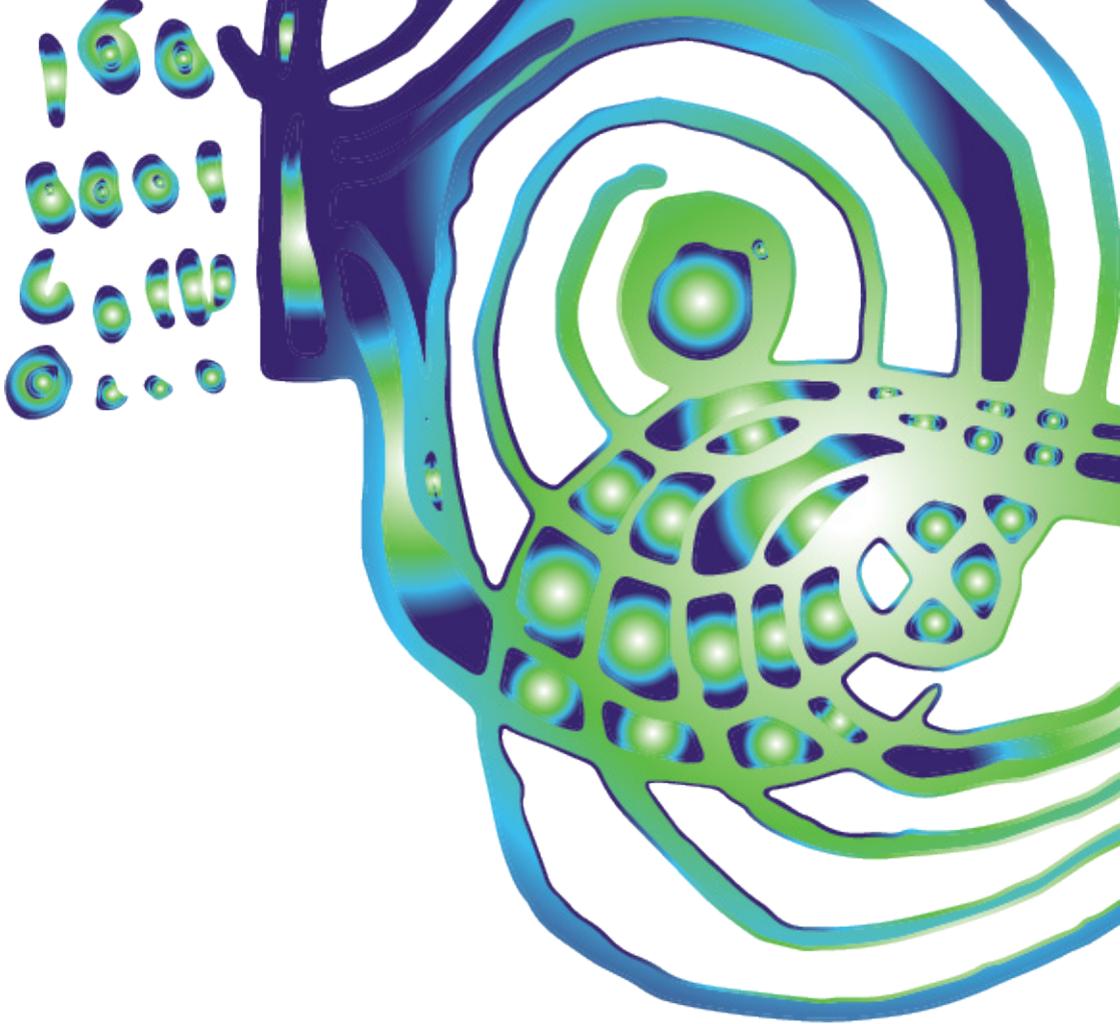
Can we overcome paranoia and a lack of trust in strangers and start to act with the ‘other’ in ways that establish platforms that facilitate local collaborations, working together in physical and digital spaces? We know how to exchange information, how to communicate, we now need to utilize both in cause-based contexts.⁹

7 “8chan” Wikipedia. 11/02/20 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8chan>

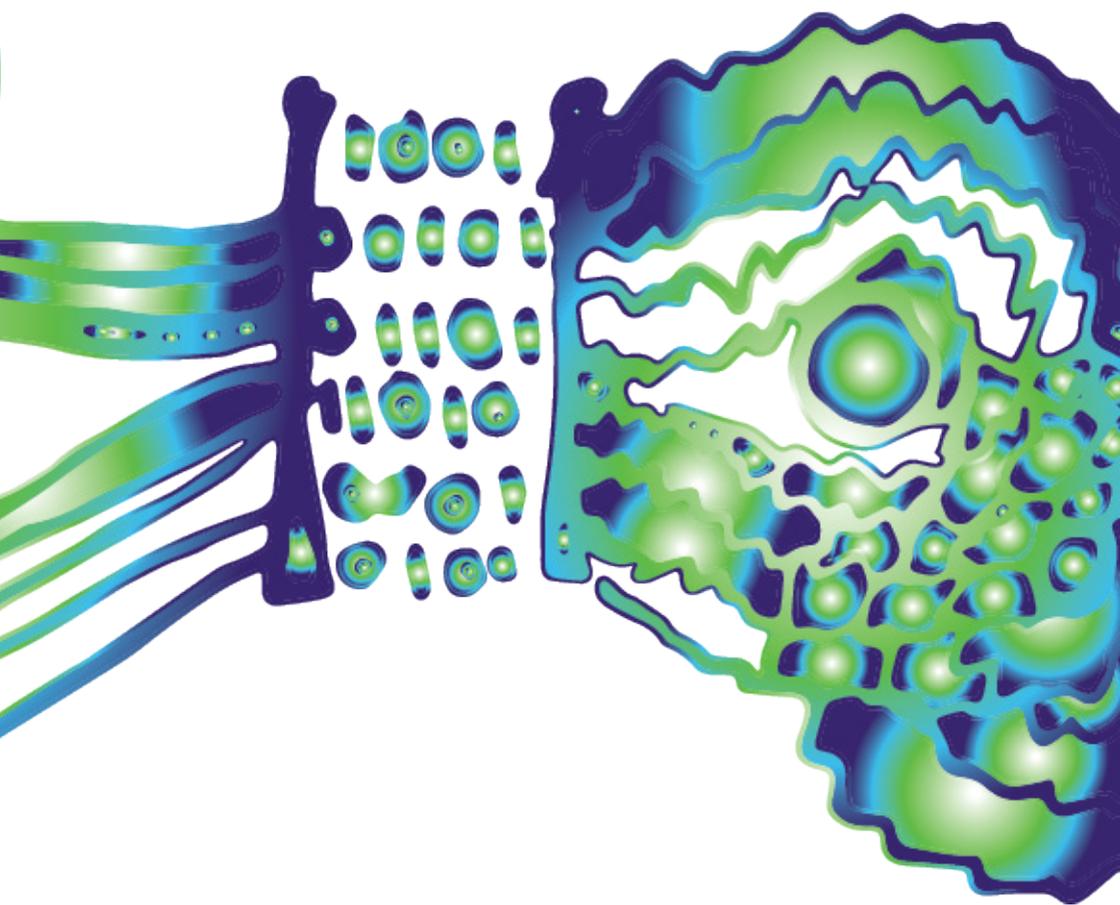
8 Nicky Woolf, “Destroyer of Worlds: The 8chan Story” Tortoise Media 29/06/19 <https://members.tortoisemedia.com/2019/06/29/8chan/content.html>

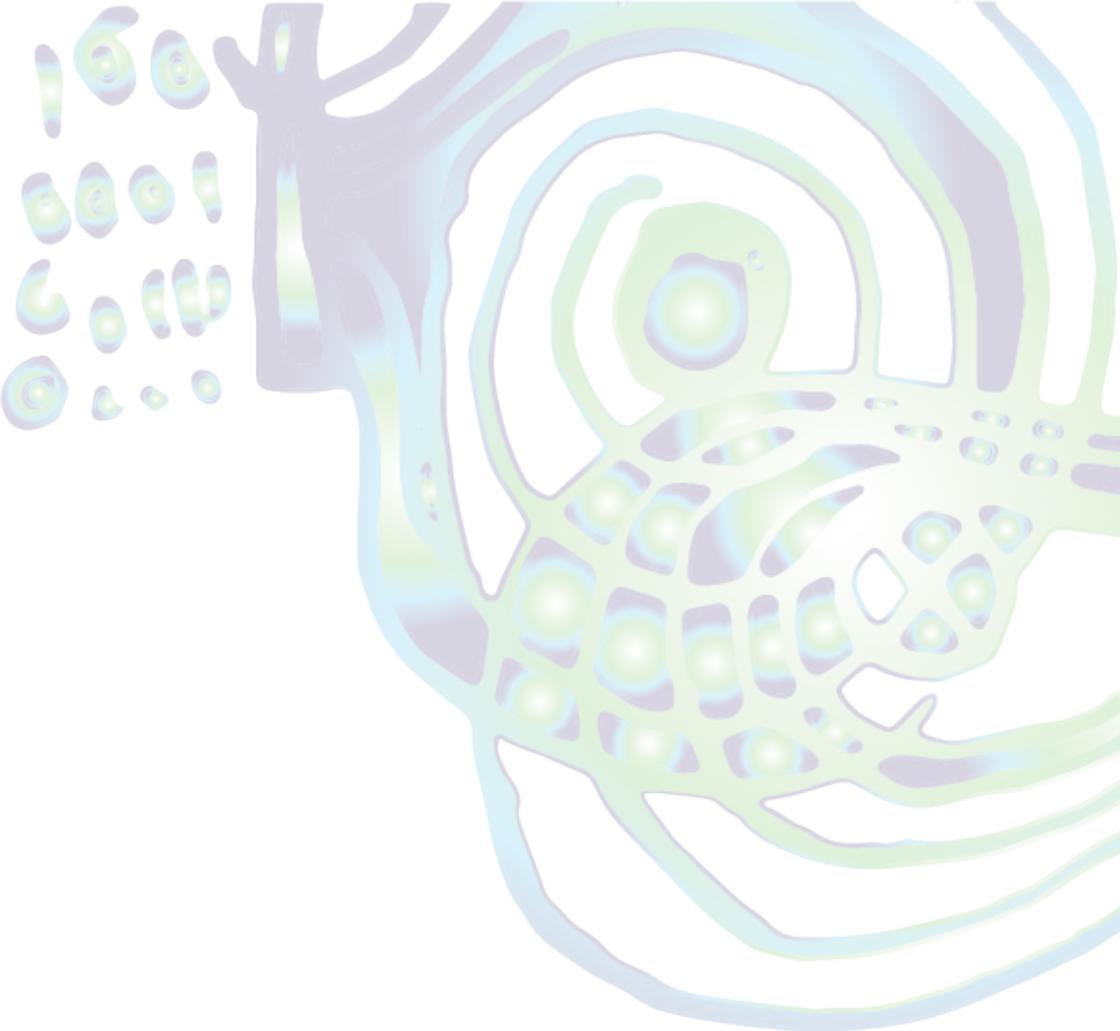
9 Geert Lovink, *Requiem for the Network: The Ends and Beginnings of Network Culture*. INC/Transmediale, Berlin. 2020.





BODY TO BINARY







In order to comprehend where we are 'going' when we are not only in a physical space, I believe it is important to understand the basic systems at work when such communication and interaction is occurring through these interfaces, facilitated by the Internet.

The basics of telecommunications work with a system of network messages between servers, which are continuously 'talking' to each other. Basically there is a 'client' server which sends a request, and a server reacting with a response. This occurs in a continuous loop. These messages are nothing but chunks of data, flowing through the network connection. What is at work when we type `http://` before a website is simply a protocol which is transferring data in a message that is understood by the browser and the server.¹ As a non-coder, I have had to learn this language of requests and responses of communicating servers during the development of my graduation work. What I found fascinating was to be able to see this not as code, but as a continuous conversation

which is occurring 'behind the scenes' of Internet activity. Things are talking to each other, in their own special universal language.

Digital data is represented by a system known as binary code. This is a series of digits expressed in 1s and 0s, and is the language the computer understands. Text, images, sound and video can all be handled as a series by assigning a string of these digits to each symbol or instruction.² Not only is there a continuous data flow between two servers, but there is also the communication between data and human. For humans this means our physical experiences and spaces will be transcoded into digital media. To be read by computers this would become a string of 1s and 0s. This is a collection of different digits which would possibly represent your essence or expression.

It is important for this part of the discussion to highlight that self representation can be divided into description and expression. Self description is a constructed image,



1 "Introduction to the Server Side" Mozilla MDN Web Docs. 11/19 Accessed 12/19 https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Learn/Server-side/First_steps/Introduction



2 "Binary" Computer Hope. Accessed 01/20 <https://www.computerhope.com/jargon/b/binary.htm>



a 'storied self' which will always follow a narrative. These facts can say little about the essence of the self, as that is something that is continuously being created. Expression, however, shows the internal workings of oneself in the present moment, and moves mind/meaning/memory to matter.

When uploading a 'virtual self', or any creation onto cybernated spaces, it will be determined by the characteristics of digital media. Most significantly that 'you' or your creation can be copied, pasted, morphed, interpolated and filtered.³ Because the primary form of existence for this digital media self is a database, which is essentially eternal; there is a disappearing difference between limited versus mass distribution. Since this database is simply a collection of different items, it does not follow a linear narrative like an autobiography. Because of this ability to copy, paste and edit parts or wholes of this virtual self by anyone who has access to it, various new narratives are and

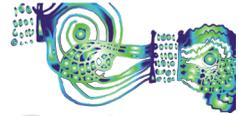
can be created, fragmenting and recreating continuously.

This 'collaboration' of users in the virtual community is not limited by time and space in the same way a physical self is. A human body cannot be in two places at once. For example I cannot be in my living room in Den Haag, whilst being in my living room in Cape Town talking to my mom at the same time. However, through telecommunications, a part of my body, my voice in this case, can be. By existing as binary code and digital media, it allows that part of someone to travel to almost infinite destinations and locations whilst not losing any of their content or energy. When they return as a sound wave, image or a live stream, they could be anywhere. How I see it, there is this power to transcend my body, my physicality, To use this as a tool to transport myself back home. To transport myself, entering the domestic spaces of strangers that would never visit my performance in 'real' life or even know who I was.

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³ Username: Jason "Characteristics of Digital Media" Tasstudent.com 2014 Accessed 2019 <https://www.tasstudent.com/2014/11/07/characteristics-of-digital-media/>

The Internet created the ability to transform the practical terms of interaction. Because of the nature of the medium, it allowed for the rearrangement of the relative



place of realities that constitute our world. No longer did an engineer and science expert have to be in the same place to create something. Intangible resources such as knowledge, information, and cultural goods became accessible, without the need to be physically present. There was a dematerialization of space and time that occurred when people became more connected.

There is much resistance to the ideas and developments of ‘data bodies’, that a human and all its wonderful quirky essence is degraded to 1s and 0s. But we overlook that the realisation of these 1s and 0s takes place in the human. The virtual essence exists not only in the electronic media, but also as a complex of ideas in the minds of others. The interaction is again in the mind and eye of a human.

When creating virtual self expression, it can be provided with any set of characteristics that wouldn't be physically possible for the creator. The creator also has the possibility of maintaining multiple expressions or identities at the same time, often with the aid of automation to simulate activity. Others, without one knowing,

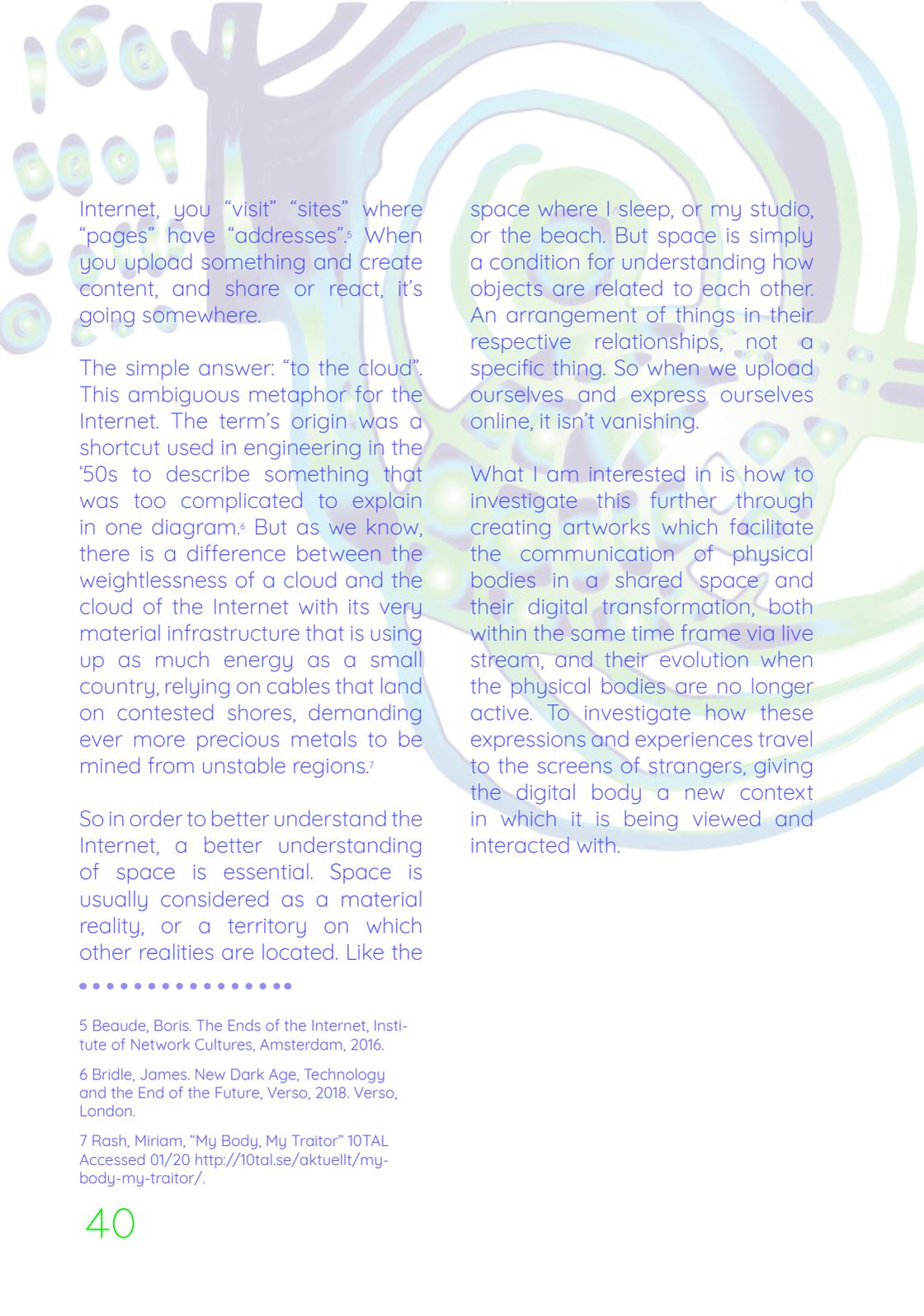
can and will invest energy into your virtual expression, in the form of readers, viewers, users, publishers etc. Others can also copy, edit, filter, share, and reform your expression in a sort of co-creation whereby the virtual is able to remain alive even if it does not change objectively. It is a collaboration.

No objects, spaces, or bodies are sacred in themselves; any component can be interfaced with any other if the proper standard, the proper code, can be constructed for processing signals in a common language.⁴

We need to understand that as our values change, so will the Internet itself. A reframing of our perspective of the Internet, of data and online experiences is the first step to reviving and continuing the progress made in terms of free access, expression and development. We need to establish rules of coexistence on the Internet. Starting with seeing the Internet as a legitimate space. Even the language used when talking about the Internet illustrates this. When “surfing” the



4 Haraway, Donna J. Manifestly Haraway, University of Minnesota Press, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central pp. 11



Internet, you “visit” “sites” where “pages” have “addresses”.⁵ When you upload something and create content, and share or react, it’s going somewhere.

The simple answer: “to the cloud”. This ambiguous metaphor for the Internet. The term’s origin was a shortcut used in engineering in the ‘50s to describe something that was too complicated to explain in one diagram.⁶ But as we know, there is a difference between the weightlessness of a cloud and the cloud of the Internet with its very material infrastructure that is using up as much energy as a small country, relying on cables that land on contested shores, demanding ever more precious metals to be mined from unstable regions.⁷

So in order to better understand the Internet, a better understanding of space is essential. Space is usually considered as a material reality, or a territory on which other realities are located. Like the



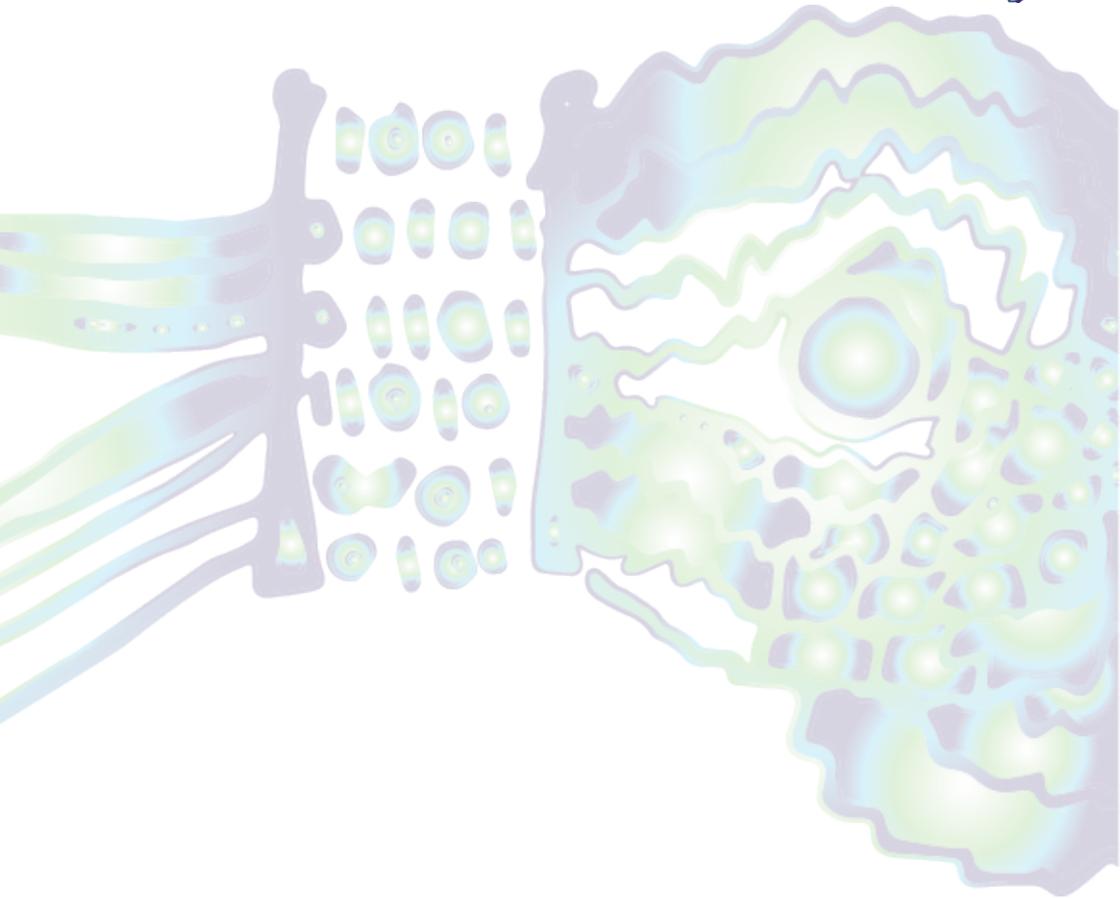
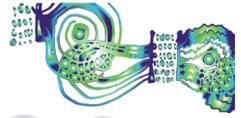
5 Beaudé, Boris. *The Ends of the Internet*, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2016.

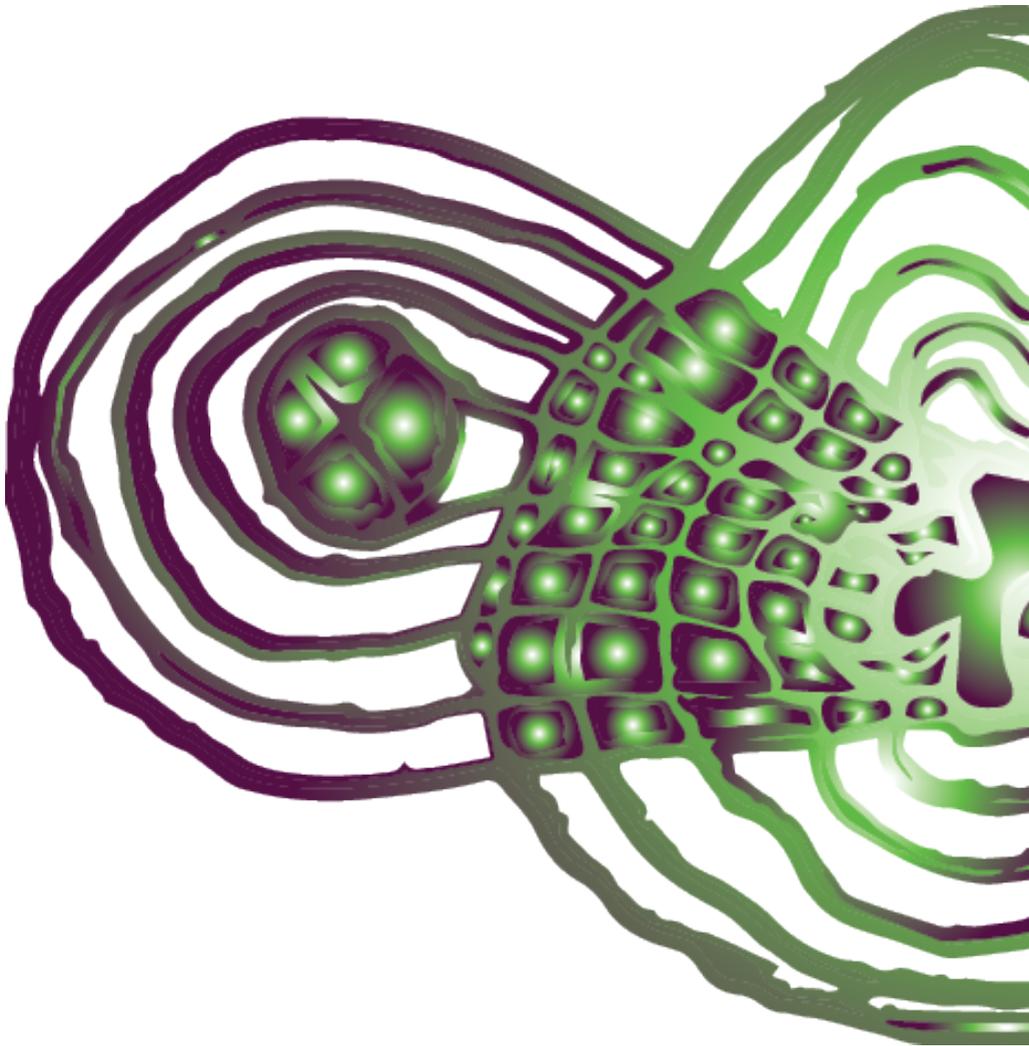
6 Bridle, James. *New Dark Age, Technology and the End of the Future*, Verso, 2018. Verso, London.

7 Rash, Miriam, “My Body, My Traitor” 10TAL. Accessed 01/20 <http://10tal.se/aktuell/my-body-my-traitor/>.

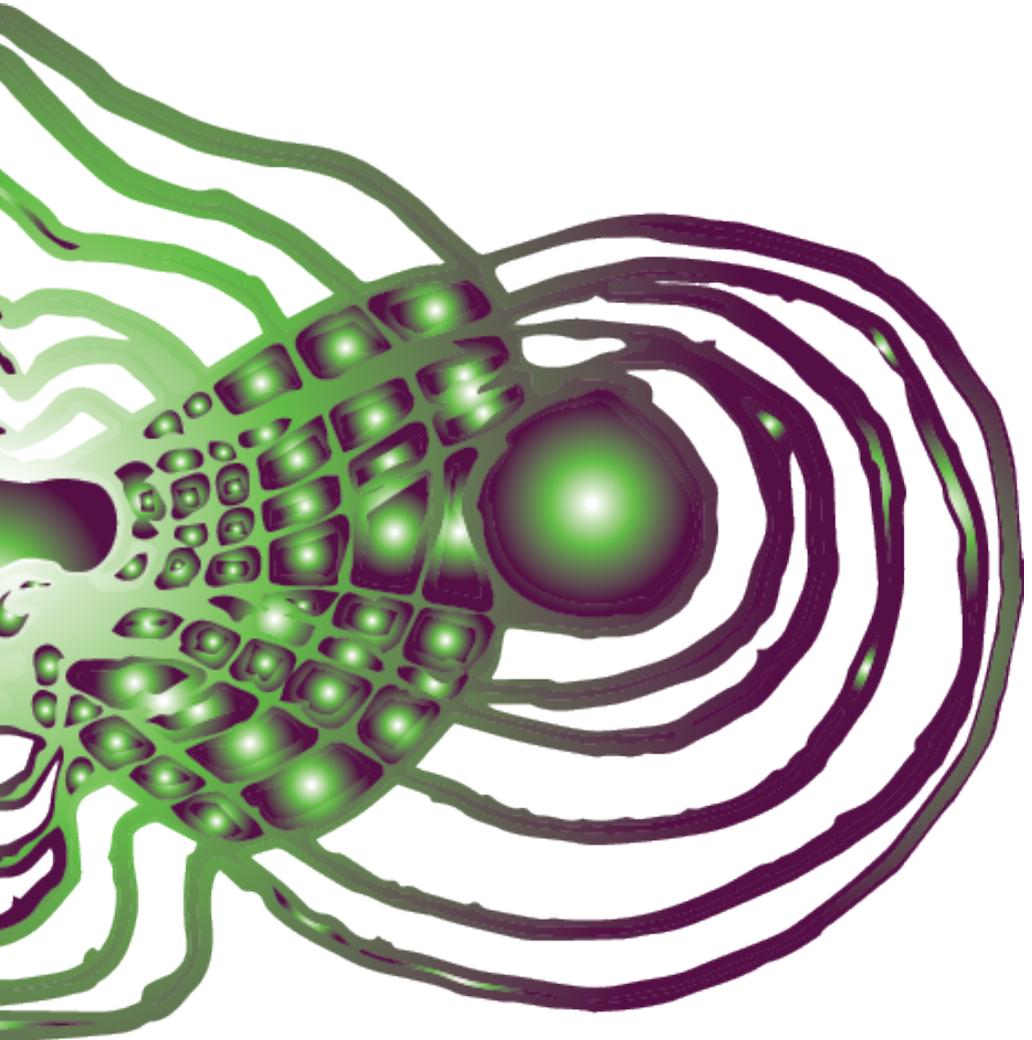
space where I sleep, or my studio, or the beach. But space is simply a condition for understanding how objects are related to each other. An arrangement of things in their respective relationships, not a specific thing. So when we upload ourselves and express ourselves online, it isn’t vanishing.

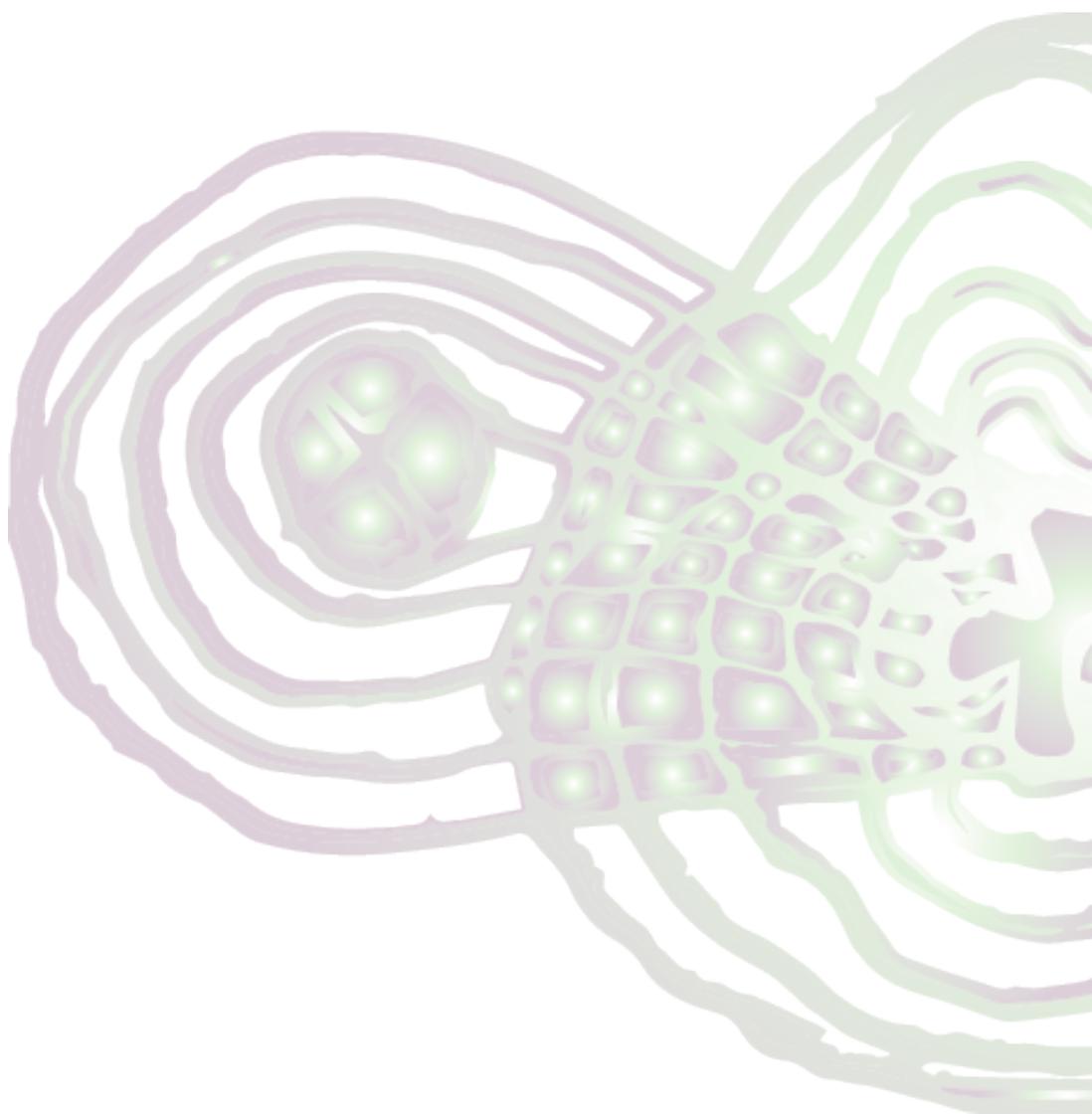
What I am interested in is how to investigate this further through creating artworks which facilitate the communication of physical bodies in a shared space and their digital transformation, both within the same time frame via live stream, and their evolution when the physical bodies are no longer active. To investigate how these expressions and experiences travel to the screens of strangers, giving the digital body a new context in which it is being viewed and interacted with.

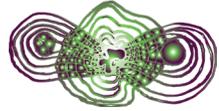




CONTROL VS COLLABORATION







A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction.¹

— Donna Haraway

In 1985, Donna Haraway published “A Cyborg Manifesto”, which called on feminists to embrace the radically unstable position of humans in society. The cyborg, or in my explanation virtual expression, partakes in both sides of its own dichotomy, dissolving these boundaries, creating a fluid and unbounded space from which new, previously unthought possibilities and subjectivities can emerge. This fluidity between physical and immaterial, real and virtual is exactly what the Internet has amplified. The economy of intangible resources offers almost infinite access to new modes of experiential knowledge, of sharing wisdoms without being physically present.

But this idea of free, equal Internet does not exist anymore. Due to the growing fear of hackers, loss of privacy and ownership, these resources become subject to surveillance. Content producers

take control of their platforms, so that they can work with their own standards. Many of the free sites are run by privately owned super hubs. The desire to claim and protect what is ours is in our nature. However, if we are able to rekindle the sharing of stories and wisdoms around a fire as our ancestors did, but the fire being reimagined as the vast network available to us, we can realise that collaboration is the way to move forwards.

Nothing is truly only yours. Everything is an accumulation of other past, present, and future influences. Even in Frankenstein, the novel by Mary Shelley, the creature is assembled from the parts of humans and animals animated through the miracle of modern science. It exists as a being of mixture and indefiniteness.² Somewhat of a living representation of boundaries or polarities which, when crossed, can never truly be whole. There is a desire to control the creature, but because it does not



² Sarah Canfield Fuller, Reading the Cyborg in Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Florida Atlantic University, 2003. pp. 217-227



¹ Ibid. Haraway pp. 65

belong wholly to a single creator, it tightropes on these boundaries of human and non-human, creation and monster. Similarly, these expressions of ourselves travel into cyberspace, where others are able to adapt them so that they continue their life long after the creator is no longer there. As a creator, you cannot control how others will digest your expressions and what part, if any, will be ingrained in a little corner of their minds, planting a seed for further creation.

When one creates an artwork, it is first experienced by those closest to the creator, in the studio. Next it will move on to public exhibitions, maybe to foreign countries, and eventually reach its final stage of distribution via publications, reviews, and as an image or video on the Internet. Over time the creation will travel to different spaces, cultures, and contexts and gain a sort of record of its own, an aura of aesthetic interpretations that were not expected by the creator themselves. Through this, the creation can be separated from the creator, a kind of alienation by distribution.

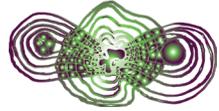
What happens then, if the creation is birthed simultaneously in the gallery or exhibition and on the

Internet? Does it then follow the same acquisition of a 'record' or aura of meanings or does this more resemble the work being created in a studio with advice from fellow creators, except that these fellow creators do not only advise, but also collaborate? But these fellow creators are not few, and perhaps are not physical, and the studio is the giant network of the world.

I think what Haraway is pointing out, and myself when linking this to the virtual self, is that the cyborg/virtual expression is a sort of Frankenstein, where these polarities between "self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance whole/part, agent/resource, maker/made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man"³ co-exist without seeking a "unitary identity". We do not have authority of these creations entirely, yet we must still be able to take somewhat of a responsibility for setting up boundaries.



³ Ibid. Haraway pp. 60



The machine is not an it to be animated, worshipped, and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; they do not dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they.⁴

Instead of this fear and resistance to creation, there should be a celebration of our online collaborations and the symbiosis of alternative spaces. To see it as a life form, a cyborg, with a little essence of yourself travelling through networks as 0s and 1s. That your essence is part of a whole, like the structure of mycelium. There is no single point of entry or departure, one cannot determine the end or start point. Instead one can ask how does your body move online? Does it exercise? Does it ‘data dance’? Can we see ourselves only as an actant in that dance? “Online is real life and it’s very much like an octopus, one big organism.”⁵



4 Ibid. Haraway pp. 65

5 Tamar Clarke Brown, Frankie Altamura (@_keiken_) 1:39PM, 05/06/18 Twitter Post Accessed on 12/19 https://twitter.com/_keiken_/status/1003964423021715456

We desire control over where our virtual selves travel, how and to whom. It is the fear that our input could become tainted by other users, and misused for purposes you did not contribute to, like someone selling my Chaturbate live stream videos on another site without me knowing. The conclusions of Haraway’s manifesto suggests that embracing this symbiosis of different people, digital and physical spaces “...can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.”⁶

Be able to see the virtual identity and creation as part of you, and you are partly elsewhere, but also part of not-you. View it from a level of involvement and a level of detachment. We are beyond the time of glorified “goddesses”, virtual avatars created mostly to satisfy the male desires of interaction freed from the constraints imposed



6 Ibid. Haraway pp. 68

by the offline world. Fantasies and mental projections replacing physical appearances, material touch and fluid exchange. We are moving beyond the virtual self that calls for the ultimate separation of the mind from biological limits, the simulated experience of being free from physical constraints in the immersive matrix of information celebrated by the cowboys of cyberspace.

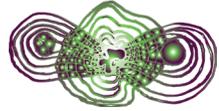
In my own practice, I have been working with this idea of the cyborg, to find the friction between the different bodies and spaces that exist both online and offline.

To bring them into communication with each other after this ultimate detachment of mind and body through the use of muscle stimulants to create involuntary movement in my body. But this was never to create a puppet to be manipulated or controlled by others over the Internet, but rather to give a very physical yet involuntary experience of something that is usually physically immaterial and completely by own choice.

During the performance, I am only one user on the live stream, one twitching body interwoven in



Own Image: Test Performance December 2019



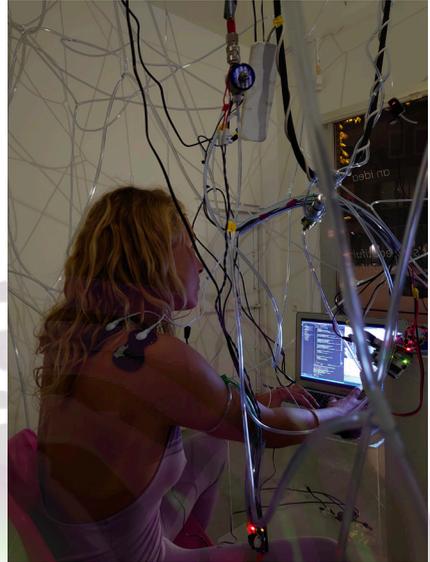
a network of acting and reacting 'nodes' within the physical system I have created. The movement of my body is sometimes involuntary, and the movement will create the online interaction and vice versa. The activity on my live stream, the viewers, their comments and reactions are all equally requesting and responding to the real-time experience. Together, this physical/virtual dance will create a narrative which can only be fully understood when completed.

For this communication, I am using ESP32 Wifi Arduino modules. However, when using these, you begin by assigning them a title of MASTER or of SLAVE. Whereby the MASTER gathers information, which is then digested and sent in the form of an order to the SLAVE, who then carries out the order.⁷ However, what I am trying to emphasize is that these communications between interconnected bodies and spaces be it digital or physical, are not about MASTER-SLAVE control,



⁷ Fernando Koyanagi, "ESP32 With ESP-Now Protocol" Instructables Circuits Accessed 01/20 <https://www.instructables.com/id/ESP32-With-ESP-Now-Protocol/>

ESP-Now-Protocol/



Own Image: Test Performance December 2019

but about feedback loops of alternating acting, sending and receiving of awarenesses. Where there is constantly a voltage in, and a voltage out of your body and there would never be a single entity with one agency acting as the host of this communication or process. Where the body is not a site of posting, but a medium for manifestations of agents that are not physically present within the same space, time, or world even.

But during the testing phases, I was feeling it was not communicating, not manifesting my thinking process as it should. And then one

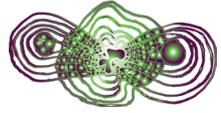
afternoon nap after a long hot day under South African sun, I dreamt I was setting up this 'network', taking it down for the next exhibition. I was silently thinking to myself, "shit, there's something missing". It's missing the next step before it can become a working creation. "But it's all already there," she said, "you're just not seeing it. Not looking in the right place. It's not about the network so much as it is about the thing you're talking with, and how, and with whom." It all made sense.

What people need to be able to see is the conversation. The conversation between myself, my body's internal signals, communicating with so many factors that we are often not consciously made aware of, to create a physical reflection of digital and unseen forces, actions, and reactions. But it should transcend the mere awareness of this physical manifestation of the 'cloud'. They should also experience it themselves. They should be active roleplayers. The network and its structure should be determined by the objects and bodies and their relations to each other, just like space is. The product is a reflection of my thinking, my mind, and my environment, not

just a result of making. Where the body is the tool of communication in its simplest raw form. Where standardized platforms and mediated communication, such as text, does not limit these interactions.

It is more than a performance, it is biological. I cannot be in the middle of this network because it should be able to work, and live, without me in it. As the world does. My participation should only create effects. I should not be able to fully control it, as one cannot fully control most things. You need to actively join, but once you are connected, you are not too sure about the output. Just like the Internet. Users actively give input, but they are never fully aware of what else they are giving, where it's going and to whom.

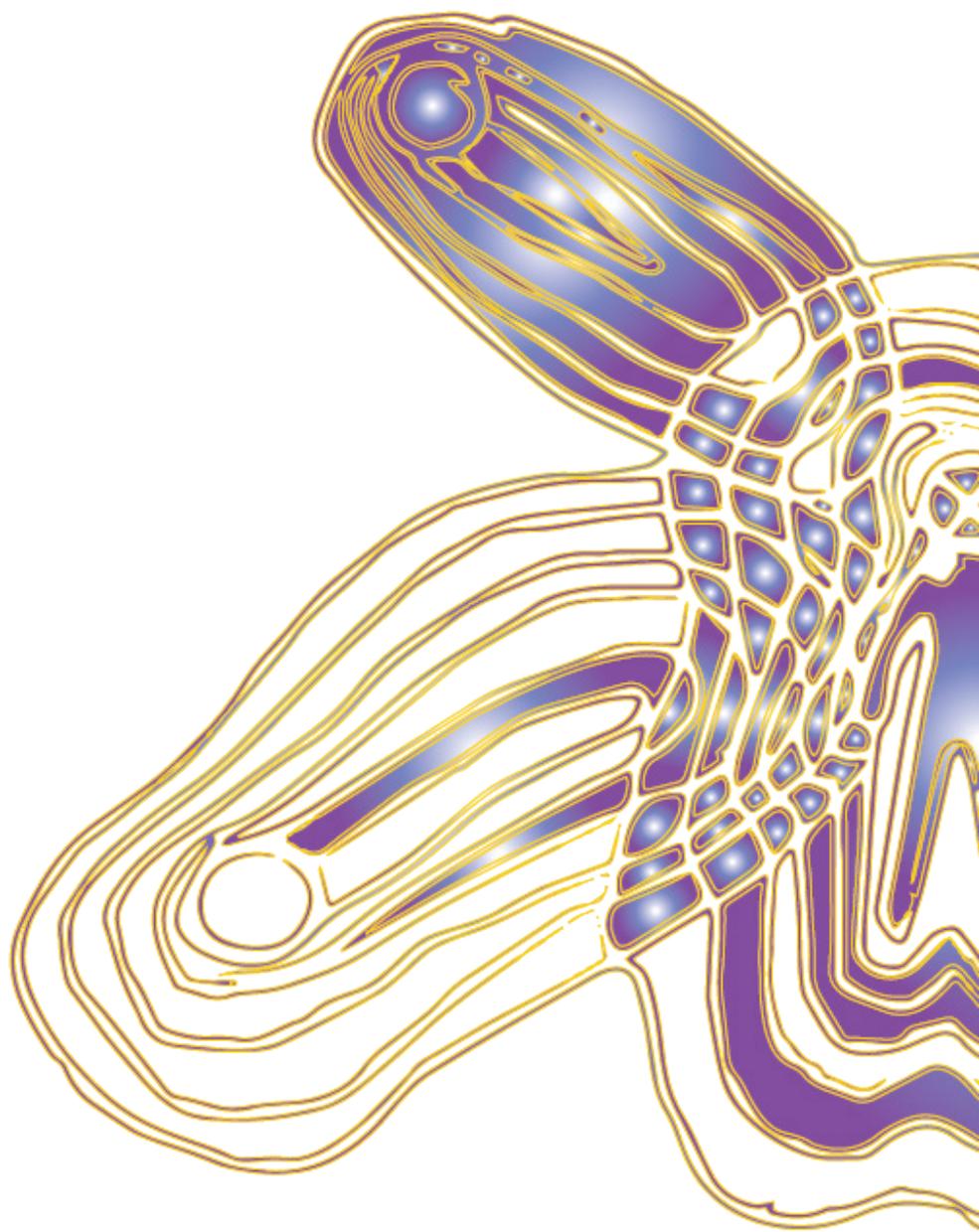
But my work hopefully opens up and invites people into a fictional yet physical network, a connected 'live' cloud. It attempts to illustrate this blurring of boundaries which I have been talking about. To create a certain level of awareness through contribution, be it physical or digital, of the beautiful interconnection of body, mind and expression that we all contribute to and take from. To encourage the



idea of collaboration. To share and to be fearless of 'losing' my identity as an individual in the process.

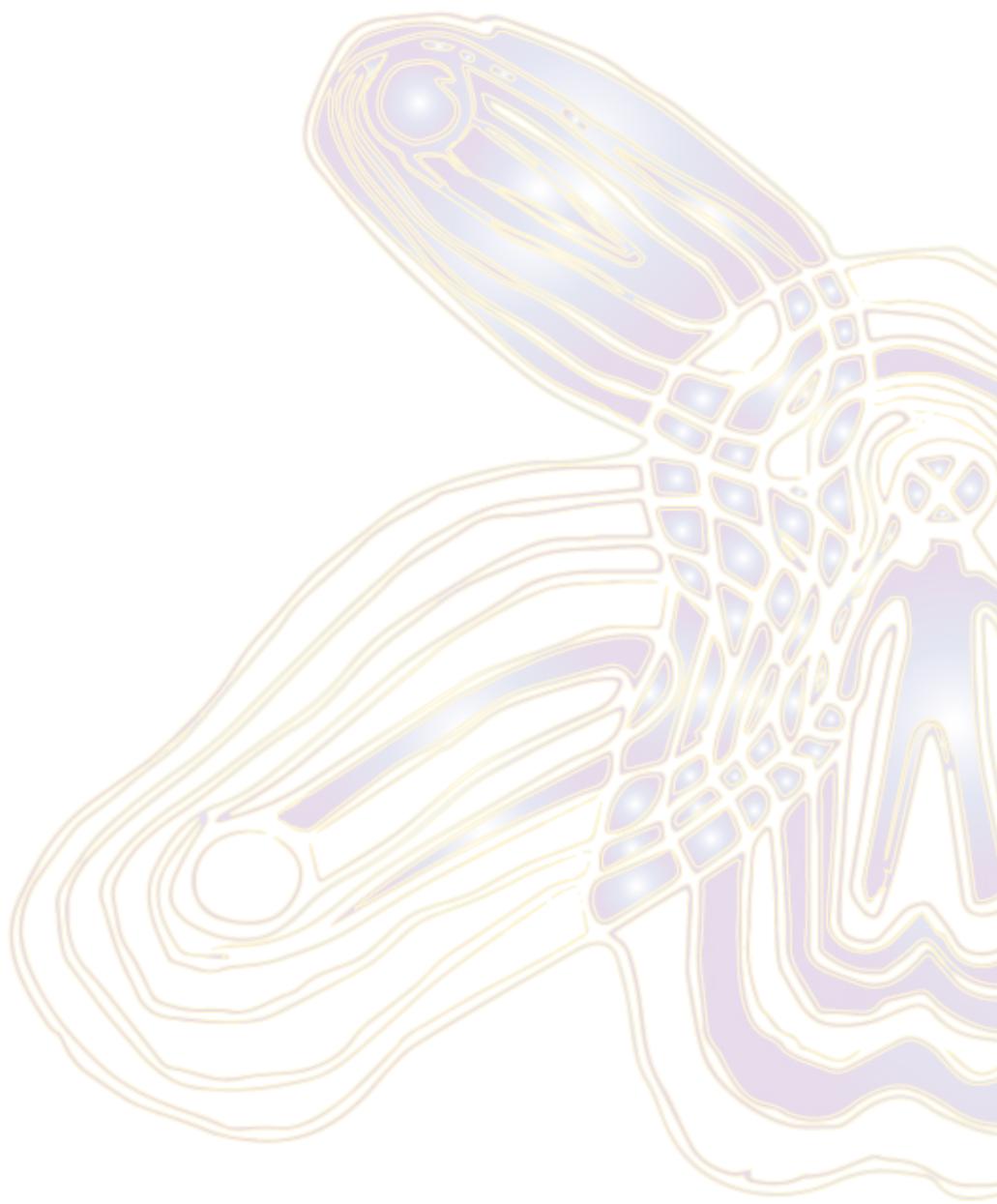
My work has a relation to the imaginary. You can conceive imaginings of something, or have a completely fictional dream with no relation to reality and it will only exist in your world, and in your projections onto the real world. When someone goes on the Internet, their imagination, their mind can go very far. But the difference between the dream and the Internet is that you still manifest something 'real' onto the Internet. Which is beautiful to think about in itself. In turn, this will be received through the eyes and in the mind of a stranger, which is something I want to illustrate through my practice and writing.

However, it is interesting to see that if I placed the emphasis on the video of the live stream which is created afterwards, it is only the video, not the chat & activity of the users involved, not the expressions or intimacies shared. Therefore, it is already an entirely different mediated object once the 'live' part of the stream is over. It is a collaboration during the performance, but becomes a completely different thing once transformed into video. A transformation from subject to object. So this 'liveness' is what I am trying to understand, as I believe it links to this serendipitous expression of essence that is released during experience. I want to create a work which continues its life after I have left.



LIVENESS







What is 'liveness'? Perhaps first we can ask what is not liveness? For example, if one views video documentation of a live performance on the Internet, is what one views really "live"? I don't think so, because it is a past event of something that was being live. For example, one would not have the same experience if they would be watching a recorded video of the Rugby World Cup, knowing South Africa has already won versus watching it live, feeling the collective experience of excitement and victory as the game is over.

It is simply two different experiences. Perhaps the only thing a recorded video can offer, is the suggestion, the idea of that live experience. But the recording is already set in stone. The narrative will never change. You, as the viewer have the power to pause, fast forward or skip the recording as you please. You are also able to understand it as you please, perhaps in a context that is totally out of place from the recorded experience.

The thing that links live stream and real life is time. It is the unknown, the risk, the fact that you are not in control of what's going to happen. There is much written

about 'liveness' on the Internet, but perhaps it is interesting to investigate the algorithm of the meme, which is defined as a "unit of cultural information spread by imitation." The term was introduced in 1976 by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in his work *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins conceived of memes as the cultural parallel to biological genes and considered them similar to "selfish" genes, as being in control of their own reproduction and thus serving their own ends. Understood in those terms, memes carry information, are replicated, and are transmitted from one person to another. They have the ability to evolve; mutating at random and undergoing natural selection.²

So perhaps we can say that our online expressions gain 'liveness' once they travel. Thus also evolving, adapting, and transmitting their information, similar to that of a living creature or human and their DNA code. Instead of the bases being adenine(A), cytosine(C),



1 Mark A Jordan, "What's In A Meme" Richard Dawkins Foundation, 02/14 Accessed 01/20 <https://www.richarddawkins.net/2014/02/whats-in-a-meme/>.

2 Dawkins, Richard, *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

guanine(G), and thymine(T), ACGT³; the base is maybe 0001000110000101010100110010100101111. So if one was watching, one could view the evolution of the meme as it started in a sort of experimental phase, gained some steam, developed a community, and achieved some sort of level of self-consciousness about itself. The meme here takes on its own form of life which one can watch live on the Internet.

The “aura” of an individual work of art in the age of digital media is, for better or worse, not eliminated, but rather relocated. Instead of associating value with an artifact, one associates it with the live performance of the artist as they create individual works of art in the data cloud. The process and the influences and how it continues to travel is where the value lies now. Following this publicly viewable sequence as it happens live, is where meaningful artistic experiences are happening on the Internet.

The result of this is that those invested in reflecting on works of



3 Lawrence C. Brody, Ph.D. “ACGT” National Human Genome Research Institute, Accessed 11/19 <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/acgt>

art in the context of the Internet are nudged towards following the artist’s live “presence” as he or she disseminates work through time. These live performances are where one is able to draw qualitative distinctions. That said, there are a number of clear objections to this idea. One of those objections is that the use of the terms “performance” and, especially, “live performance” are problematic since these terms are often used to describe an experience which occurs in one space and time, and as soon as it is recorded, it loses this ephemeral value. Performance theorist Peggy Phelan writes that the ontology of live performance is removed from image reproductions and involves the co-presence of a limited number of bodies in the same time and space.⁴

Before going any further, I should say that this aggressive line-drawing between what is ‘real’ performance and what is not makes a great deal of sense to me. There’s always going to be something more visceral about sharing physical space that needs to be preserved and honored. For example, jumping

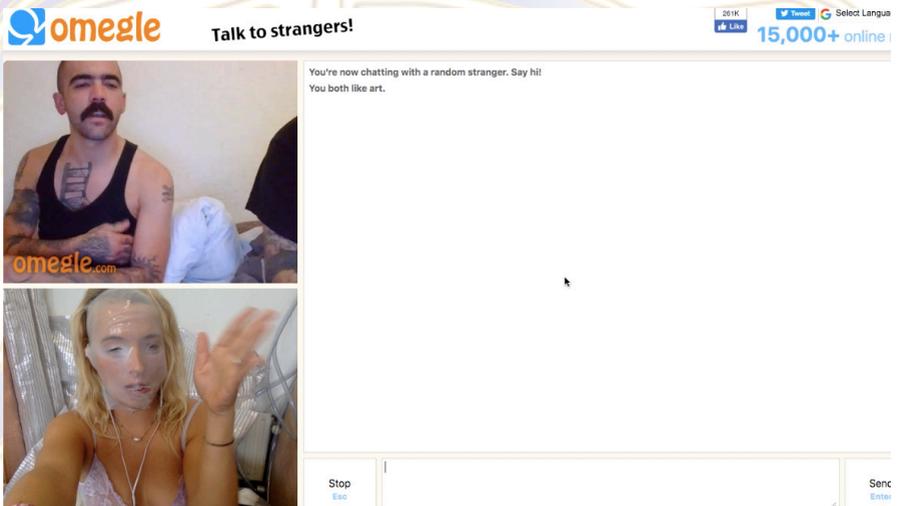


4 Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: the Politics of Performance*. Routledge, 1993. London, New York.

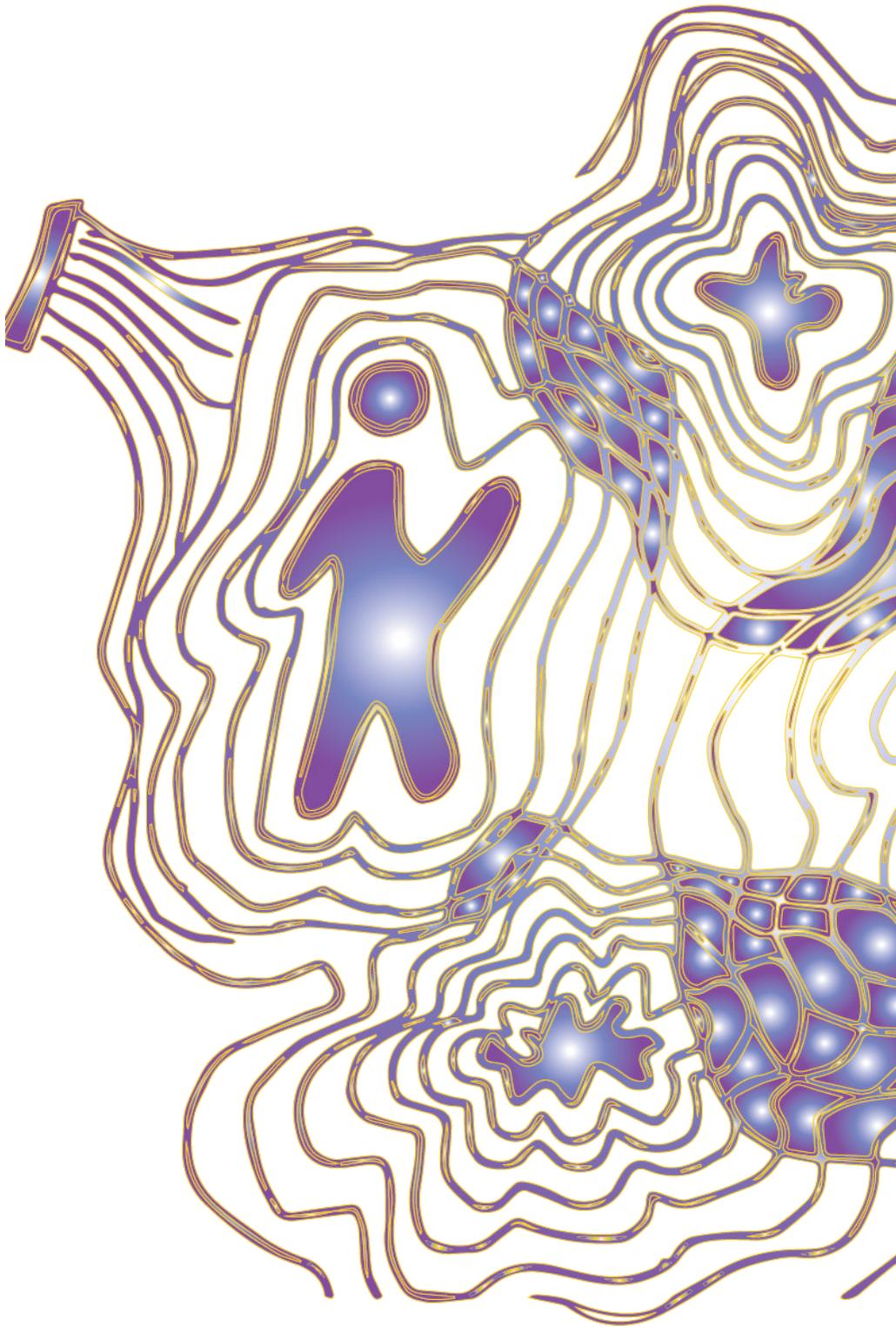


up and down and slamming into other sweaty bodies for an hour and a half while listening to loud, deliriously pounding rock music would be more exhilarating than the experience of watching the same event through a live stream online. Similarly, physical contact during sex is something that you could only hope to reproduce or convey via a mediated outlet. I'm not interested in arguing against these obvious facts or diminishing the value of these experiences. What I am interested in thinking about is that there may be multiple

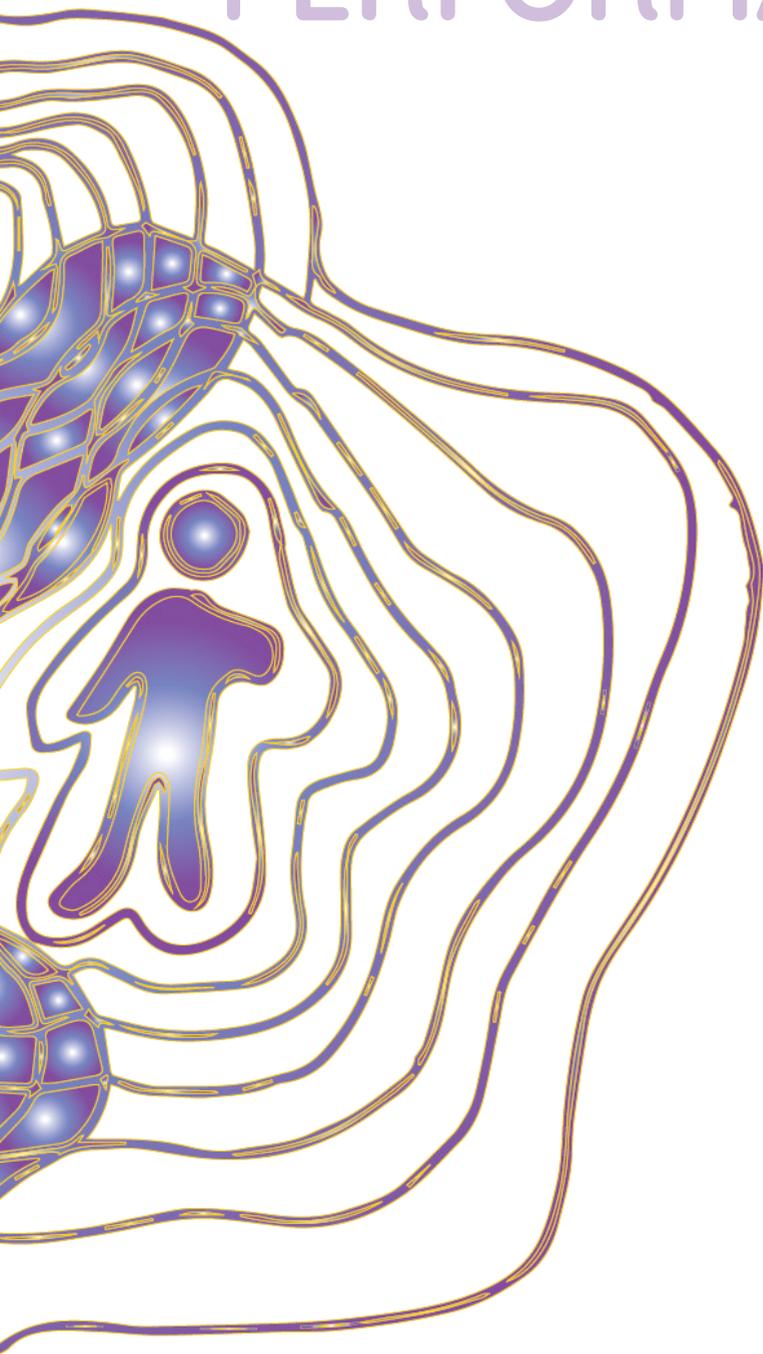
ways to talk about a body, about an expression and creation, which can exist in natural space and time as well as existing in virtual or digital space and time. Again, I am not in favour of one conception of the body in time over the other; I do think, however, that it's possible for one to seriously conceive of their bodies as being in two (or more) places at once. Perhaps not bodies but the expressions of their bodies, not just a physical body but the body of data and information that exists within them.



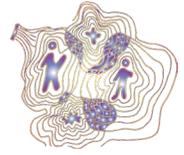
Own image: Screenshot from Omegle Chat Site - "You both like Art." Den Haag, 2019



PERFORMANCE







As long as we have been around, humans have been compelled to create and experience live performance. This began with our acquisition of social behaviour, our ability to think abstractly and communicate to each other through oral and semiotic language. Storytelling reflected the need to transfer knowledge. To be able to pass this onto the next generation, a story of a lived experience to an object of knowledge.

As we developed archival methods from rock paintings to sandscript to photography; storytelling moved beyond transferring knowledge, to incorporate imagination. To create wonder and awe. To transport others from their monotonous daily lives and envelop them in fantasy. This is done in endless ways in the modern world. However, performance still holds its higher position as it is able to reach more of our senses than sight and sound. The cultural value of the live experience — its 'nowness' — has never been greater, it seems. Yet media technology has transformed the terms of that liveness, so that time need not be matched by physical co-presence; liveness can be distributed across space in ways that allow audiences to

gather globally without physically gathering.¹

The action of mediatizing a performance has been thought to detract from its intimacy and presence; the more degrees of separation between audience and performer, the harder to feel the liveness of the performance. Writers like Phelan and Philip Auslander, who crystallized much of performance's characterizations, have grappled with this question of liveness through technology and the reproductive nature of the Internet, but have been led by much suspicion and pessimism as though something precious was being lost, as though audiences were being deceived.

Yet it is not only spectatorship that has been impacted by technology. New interfaces and forms of networking have transformed the production of the content as well. The result is new forms of real-time intermedia interactions and the networking of remotely located performers and ever-changing



¹ Claire Read 'Live, or almost live ...': the politics of performance and documentation, *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, 2014 10:1, 67-76, DOI: 10.1080/14794713.2014.912502

forms of engagement between performer and technology, presence and absence, live and recorded. Digital media technology, then, seems to be accelerating the transformation of practices, and doing so in increasingly globalized ways.²

What are the concepts and methodologies that might allow us to come to terms with these new practices, new modes of spectatorship, new values and aesthetics? What now of Phelan's widely-quoted definition of performance as that which "cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations"?³ Do these definitions still hold value and truth in today's mediated society, or do we look at Auslander's rejection of "the common assumption [...] that the live event is 'real', and that mediatized events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real."⁴

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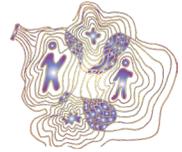
2 Helen Hockx-Yu *The Past Issue of the Web*, The British Library, London, 2011

3 Ibid. Phelan pp. 10

4 Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. (2nd edition) Routledge, 1999. London, New York. pp. 3

Positioning the live against the mediatized can be harmful in our understanding of "liveness" because our experience of the world is now as mediatized as it is live. So how do we perform our new experience of this world we live in where everyone can connect to everything via screens in their pockets? And if everything is live, but mediated, where does this presence, this expression of self go?

Presence is not the static "now" that Phelan suggests is being threatened by the mediatized, because that is always there, and always fleeting. I believe presence is the relationship found in the tension between two opposing forces occupying the same space. This space may be physical, or virtual, or a hybrid space. In this liminal space of tension, fantasy becomes reality, the performer becomes the character, and the story becomes an experience. The audience is aware that they are watching a performance, but it is exactly when the audience's relation to 'real' encompasses the imaginary of the performance so that it becomes present. This is when the perceiver and the perceived inhabit the tension between reality and fantasy;



presence becomes the way to describe an experience that brings us there.

“Our experience, the thing that makes us quick and not dead, is neither exclusively objective nor exclusively subjective but both objective and subjective. We lead two lives at the same time - a conscious life and a life of the subconscious. We live, and move, and have our being in two worlds - the outer world and the inner world. And the drama which will portray our essential duality will reveal our two natures - the outer and the inner, the seen and the unseen - in a new synthesis”⁵

I believe it is this reflection of inner and outer dialogue that creates liveness. Through the act of ‘audiencing’, liveness is created through the very nature of the audience’s attention. This yearning



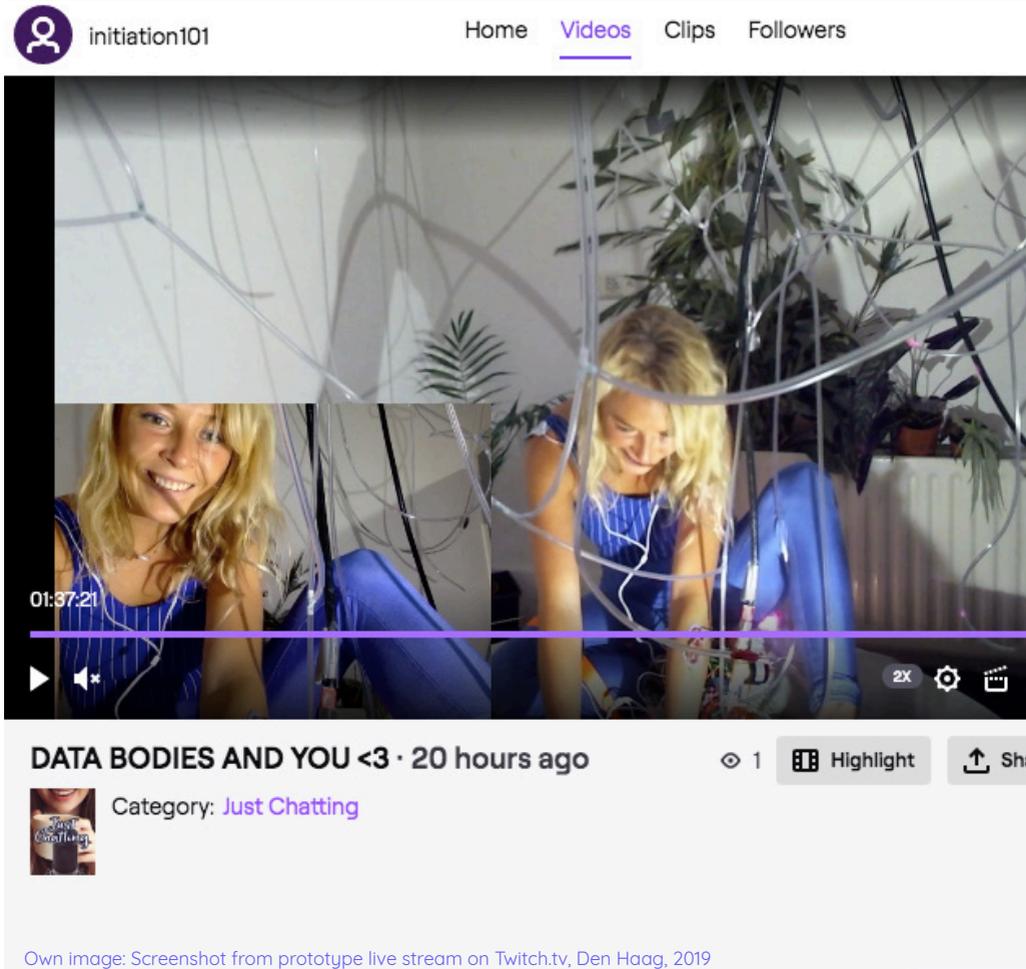
⁵ Designer and theorist Robert Edmond Jones described this relationship in another way in his lectures at Harvard University in 1952. Doughty, Spencer Clark, *Capturing Liveness*, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2018, <https://escholarship.org/content/qt0pj010zn/qt0pj010zn.pdf?t=pcfoh5>

for unmediated experiences comes from our deep human desire to feel something, and from our saturation of material things. To be startled and have something grab and actually hold our attention, our presence. There is a desire to go beyond representation, crossing over this edge and into our immediate reality.

But because of the desire and market for such experiences, there is the threat of the commodification of “liveness”, and an overuse of the term performance in general. I think it is very important to constantly question if we are exploiting this basic human desire for experiences of intimacy and feeling. Intimacy is a longed for state. The novelty can startle us into feeling as a result of experiencing something that is usually classified, even taboo in certain contexts. Like having a stranger stare into your eyes. This act alone will confront you. I think it is important to question and analyse works with this mindset to ensure they are not using intimacy as a shortcut to get to someone’s precious and raw state of being.

This being said, we see the possibility of alternative means of exploring relationships between people and spaces, in ways not possible before technology.

With this shift, we begin to ask not what liveness is, but how it matters and to whom.



Own image: Screenshot from prototype live stream on Twitch.tv, Den Haag, 2019



Chat on Videos

1:36:56  chat101bot Hello **Initiation101**

1:36:56  chat101bot Hi guys! This is the first prototype of my graduation project for Interactive Media Design. It would be great if you could answer some questions I have! 1. What is your first impression when you joined the stream? 2. What made you curious? 3. Is this something you would follow to see where it goes? 4. Do you at all feel like youre contributing to this "performance"? 5. Do you see the connections between your comments and the physical changes in the stream?

1:37:11  **Initiation101** : Imma go now! Love!

1:37:11  chat101bot Hello **Initiation101**

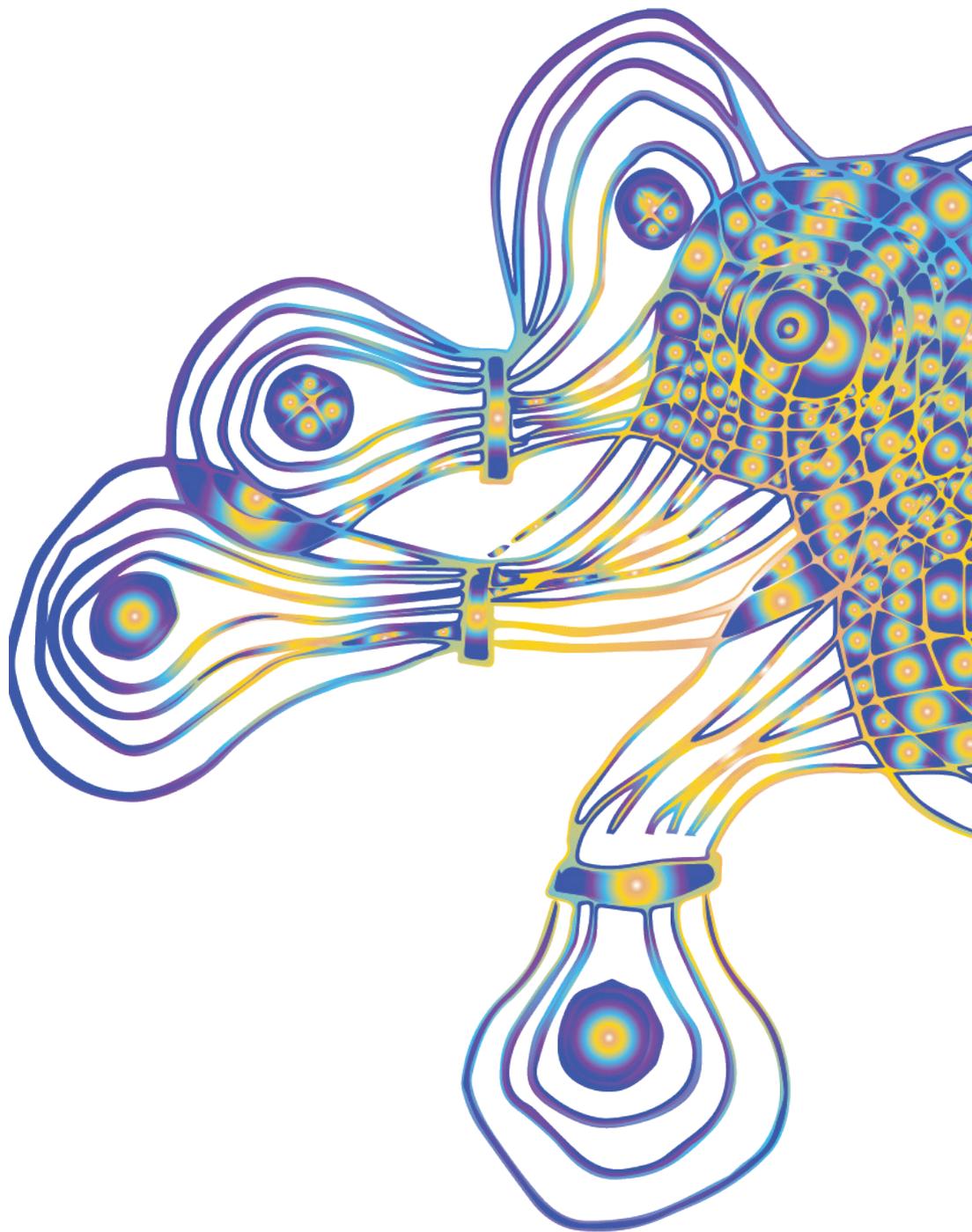
1:37:17  **Rake_weed**: Bye!

1:37:17  chat101bot Hello **Rake_weed**

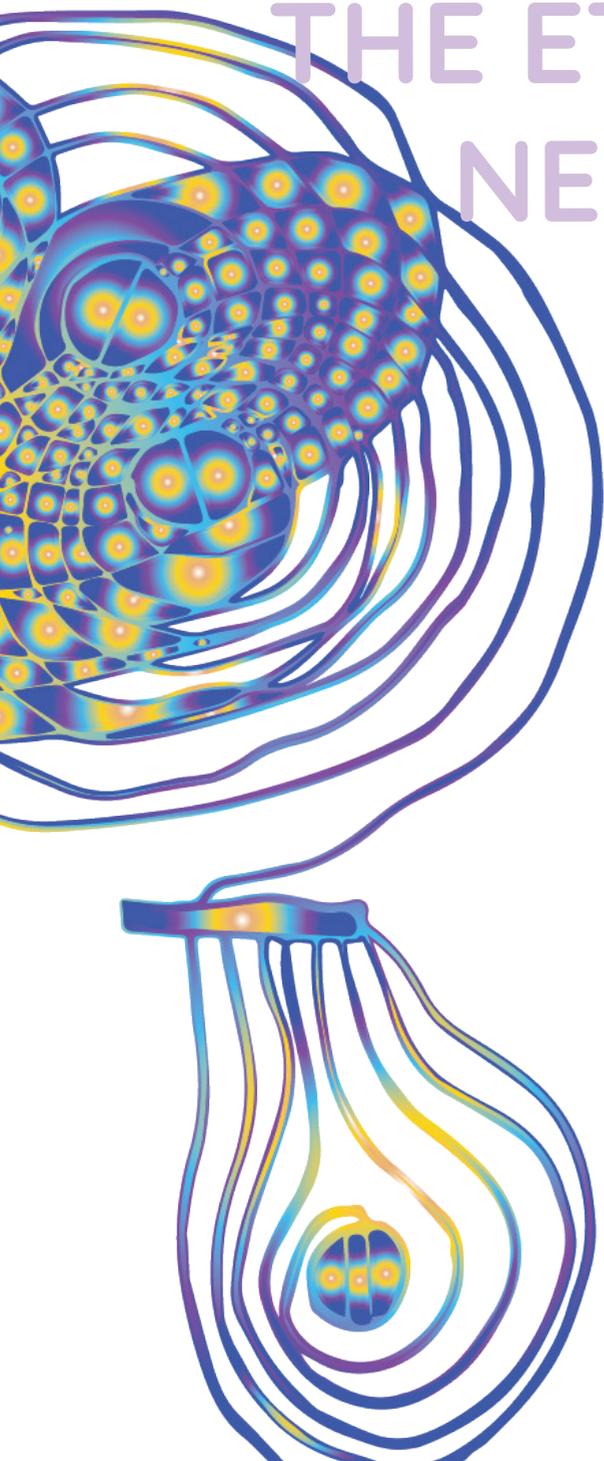
1:37:19 **stormfjell**: OK, started watching because I was interested in what you may be building. I now have a grasp of what you are doing and , IMO, it's what this platform will be moving to in the very near future..

1:37:19  chat101bot Hello **stormfjell**

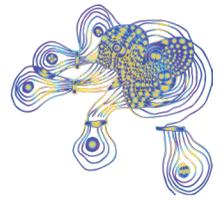
1:37:20  **SkipDiamond**: This is like weird af



THE ETERNAL NETWORK







We need to move towards spaces of creation, performativity and collaboration, where the lived body and our embedded knowledge can be shared. The 2020 Transmediale festival in Berlin was titled The Eternal Network. A title taken from Robert Filliou and George Brecht who in 1967¹ wrote that “The Network is Everlasting”. The line is taken from a pre-Internet culture poem celebrating the interconnectedness of everyday-life actions across an emerging global world. Imagining an “eternal network” is a reminder that network cultures exist beyond the technical reality of networks as we know it today. Perhaps that there have always been multiple realities, bodies, and spaces that we inhabit.

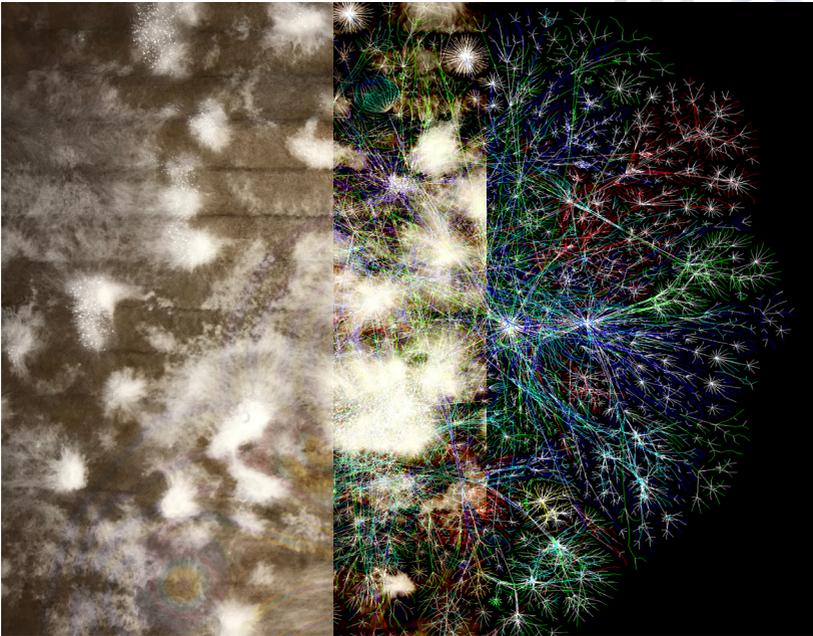
For example, the girl who spoke to me in my dream was a projection of my subconscious, viewing myself from a third person perspective. Simply our ability to create fictional circumstances, people, and experiences when we sleep illustrates our ability to think outside the boundaries of our skin.

**THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE
ASLEEP AND SOMEONE AWAKE
SOMEONE DREAMNG ASLEEP
SOMEONE DREAMING AWAKE
SOMEONE EATING SOMEONE
HUNGRY
SOMEONE FIGHTING SOMEONE
LOVING
SOMEONE MAKING MONEY
SOMEONE BROKE
SOMEONE TRAVELLING
SOMEONE STAYING PUT
SOMEONE HELPING SOMEONE
HINDERING
SOMEONE ENJOYING SOMEONE
SUFFERING SOMEONE
INDIFFERENT
SOMEONE STARTING SOMEONE
STOPPING
THE NETWORK IS
EVERLASTING.³**

1 “End to End” Transmediale 2020 Accessed 02/20 <https://2020.transmediale.de/festival-2020>

2 Robert Filliou, *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*, Verlag Gebr. König, Köln: New York, 1970 pp. 205

3 Ibid. Filliou pp. 205



Left: Mycelium grown by Author. Right: Partial map of the Internet, the lines indicate the connection between two nodes, accessed from opte.org (2003)

This notion that everyone and everything is connected has been present since before node based communications and information exchange which now define our technological, economic, and cultural forms of globalisation and our 'digital society'. Leaning on this idea of interconnectedness, we can use the immediacy of live performance alongside new media, to create a new way of thinking about art as a form of cultural communication by working with the idea that there is a constant flux, an ebb

and flow between creation and transformation. The new growing out of the old. Where art is situated within a wider network of everyday happenings. This being not only humans, and not only via digital communications, but a myriad of humans and non-humans, signals and breezes, pixels and imaginations, the material and the immaterial.

When we create, that creation will reflect this, simply by its nature of existing. "A permanent celebration, not of artwork, but of actions and



events in which the artist was but one player in a wider network of everyday events, doings and sufferings going on around me all the time, in all parts of the world.”⁴

The first colour image of Earth in 1967⁵ signalled a paradigm shift of awareness, a sort of planetary consciousness whereby people for the first time did not see themselves as only individuals, but saw the planet, as a homeostatic, interconnected feedback network system. “A vision of the world built not around vertical hierarchies and top-down flows of power, but around looping circuits of energy and information.”⁶

Shortly after, when satellite technology emerged, it was possible to create instant, real-time audio and visual contact between distant locations via television. People were able to join them in the simultaneous ‘now’. Viewers watching a broadcast

connect to the ‘here’ of the studio, and to the various ‘theres’ of satellite uplink sites. But the viewers were neither here nor there, they were on the outside looking onto this ‘global now’. Television transmission achieved intercontinental instantaneity, but it’s multidirectionality did not include the audience in any of its vectors.⁷

This ‘global present’ has become the space of the Internet, where instant gratification and communication to distant locations is almost a given, especially due to the exponential increase of mobile media. But similarly, this ‘global now’ does not include most users of the Internet. We are watching what others do.

This is why something like live streaming could be a way of the future, where people are able to give both input and output, in a more peer-to-peer or many-to-many system. In most instances of mass media communication it is a centralized one-to-many structure,⁸ with no feedback loop



4 John Dewey, *Art As Experience*, New York: Capricorn Books, 1934.

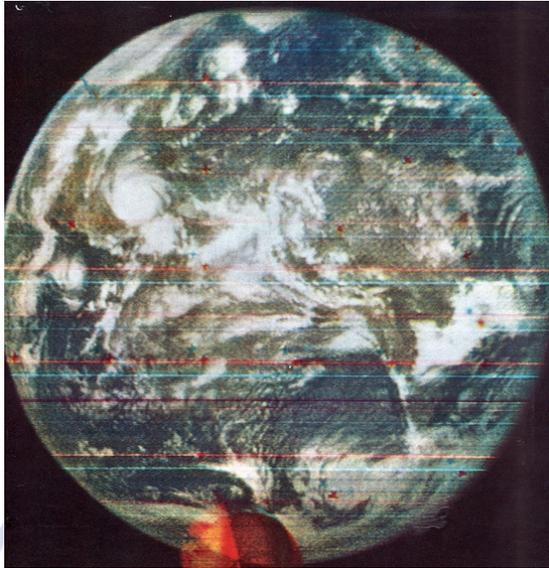
5 Ed. John Brady *Environmental Management in Organisations: The IEMA Handbook UK, US*: Earthscan 2005.

6 Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.



7 Lawrence Alloway, *Network: The Art World Described as a System*. Michigan: UNI Research Press, 1984

8 Ibid. Alloway



Department of Defense Gravitational Experiment, First color image of the earth from outer space (Dodge Satellite), August 1967, <http://www.earthrise.org.uk/level%203/level%203c/The%20first%20colour%20earth.jpg>

for the spectators to contribute, comment, or have any affect on the broadcaster. There is this desire for a real life human feedback channel for viewer interaction.

The missing materiality that new technologies have created is something that is untrue when further investigated. We notice and perhaps fear this shift from the art-object and the corporeal body to the non-object as we 'upload ourselves'. But this is simply a shift from the focus on visual perception to other senses, and to communication. Where

processes become an artwork, not simply an outcome. This energy that is inherent to art, does not reside in material entities, but in the interaction and relationship between people, things, and their immediate and distant environments. When these diverse spaces and experiences overlap and cause friction, it makes them become more alive than anything.

Art becomes an idea and an action, and this energy emphasises its social, economic, and cultural aspects and exposes these sectors to alternative ways of thinking.



Where art is not occupied with the commodified object, but with producing more effective ways for social experiences and communication. And in this, nothing is fixed. Entering the realm of the physically imperceptible, with the aid of technology, does not mean the artwork is gone, the focus has simply shifted. This digital immateriality has no relation to physical properties, but rather to human communication in the widest sense.⁹ A shift from the identity of an individual to the interaction. Materiality no longer refers to a person, but to the relations between subjects, similar to how we redefined space in terms of relationships. Thus, "The material disappears as an independent entity"¹⁰, not based on stable substance, but of unstable ensembles of interaction.

Instead of seeing the Internet as a means to fulfilling the desires of disembodiment, I want people to see it as offering strategies



9 Jacob Lillemose Conceptual Transformations of Art: From Dematerialisation of the Object to the Immateriality in Networks. 2006 <http://heavysideindustries.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Lillemose.pdf>

10 Diff Bamford, Lyotard and the 'figural' on Performance, Art and Writing. London, New York, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012b

for projecting bodily presence and extruding bodily awareness. The Internet does not urge the disappearance of the body or the dissolution of the self in one body. But rather it generates new collective physical encounters and infusions, whereby the importance is on the body's connectivity, not the body's identity. Not mobility or location, but interface."

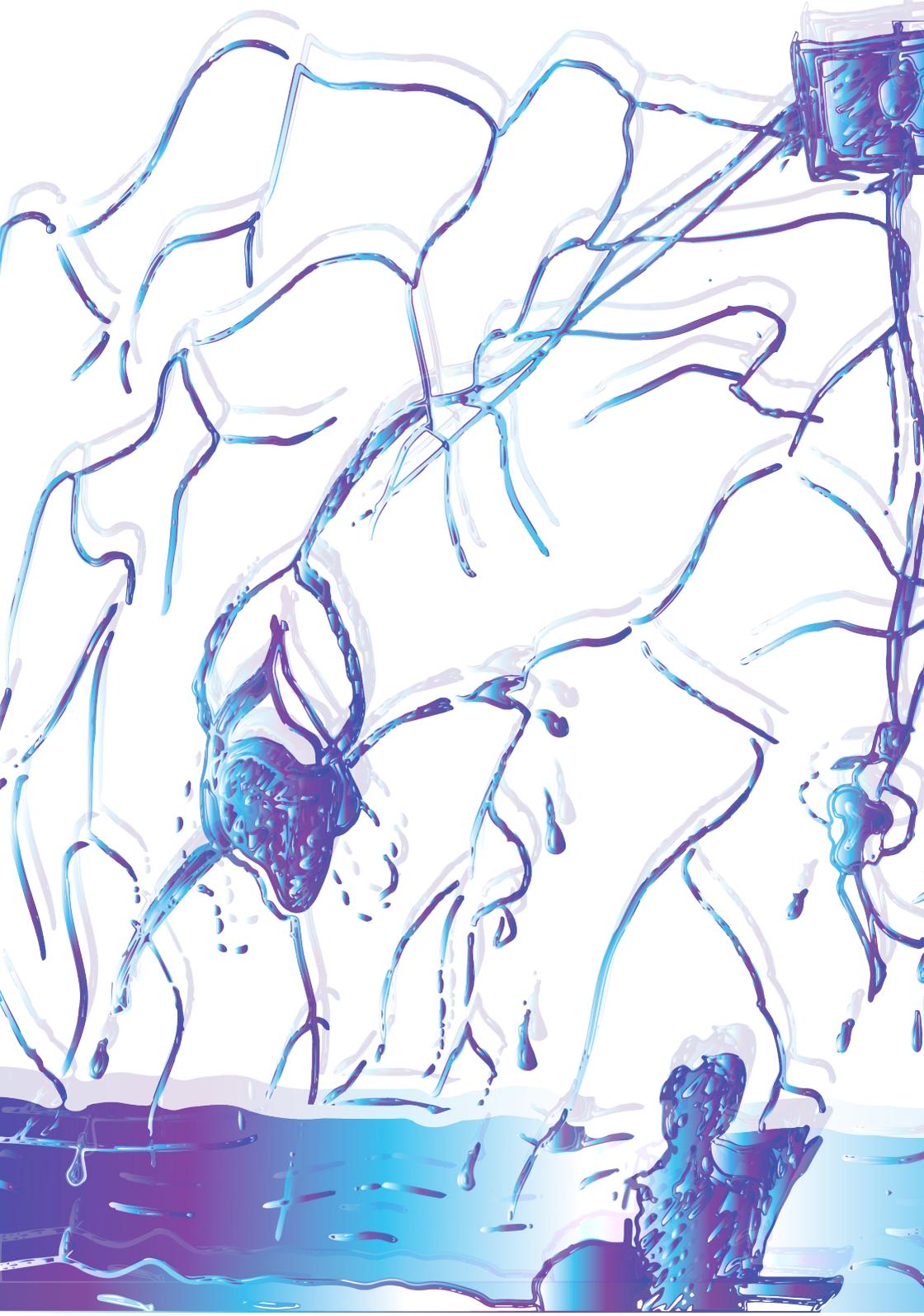
Consider the body extruding presence and expression in other bodies or other parts of bodies in new places. Places spatially distributed but electronically connected. So that bodies and their presence are neither 'all here' nor 'all there', that it is not in one location but that there is a constant dialogue and shifting of awareness in those bodies, creating a sort of multiplicity of bodies and parts of bodies.

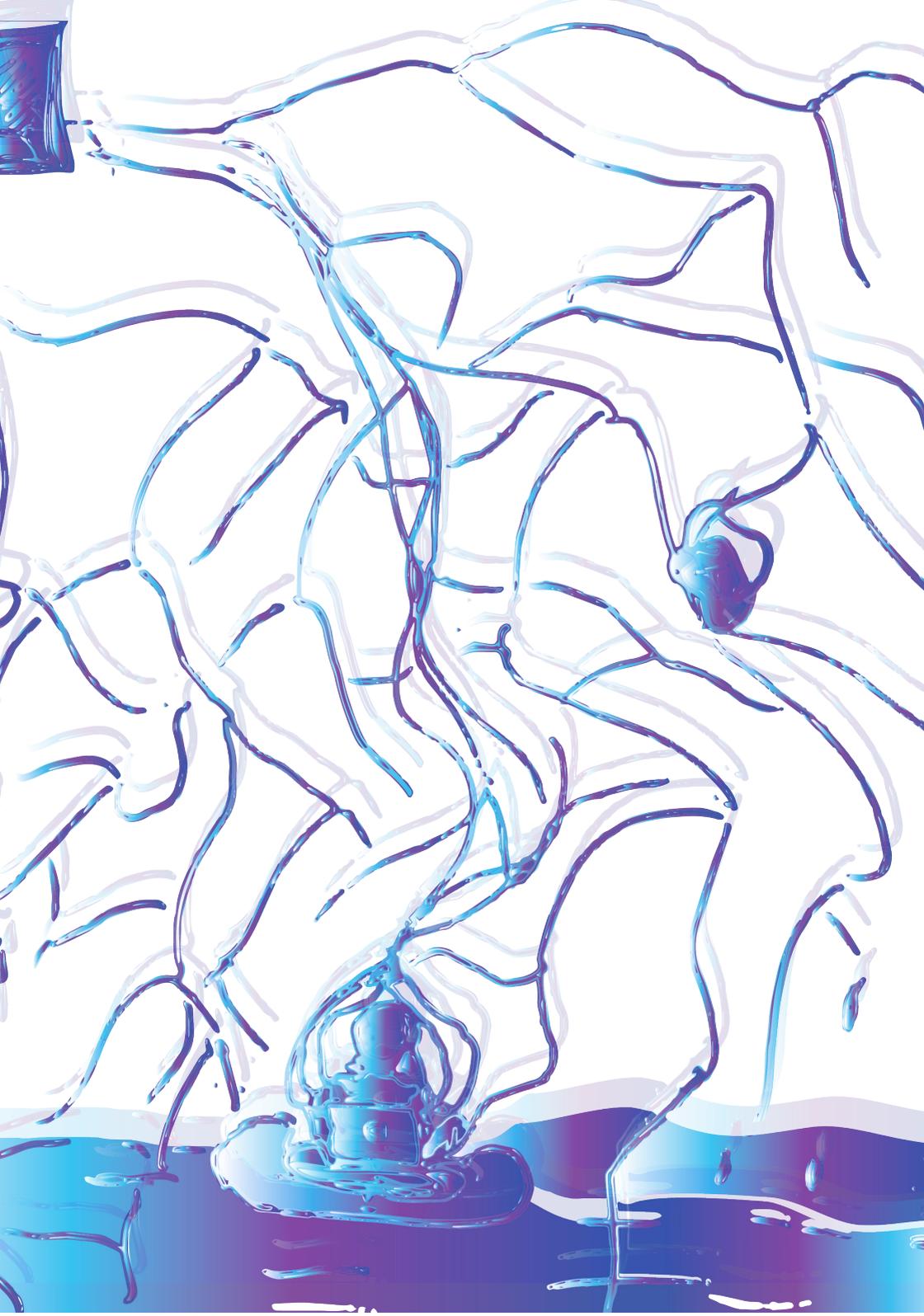
These are our storytellers exploring what it means to be embodied in high-tech worlds.¹²

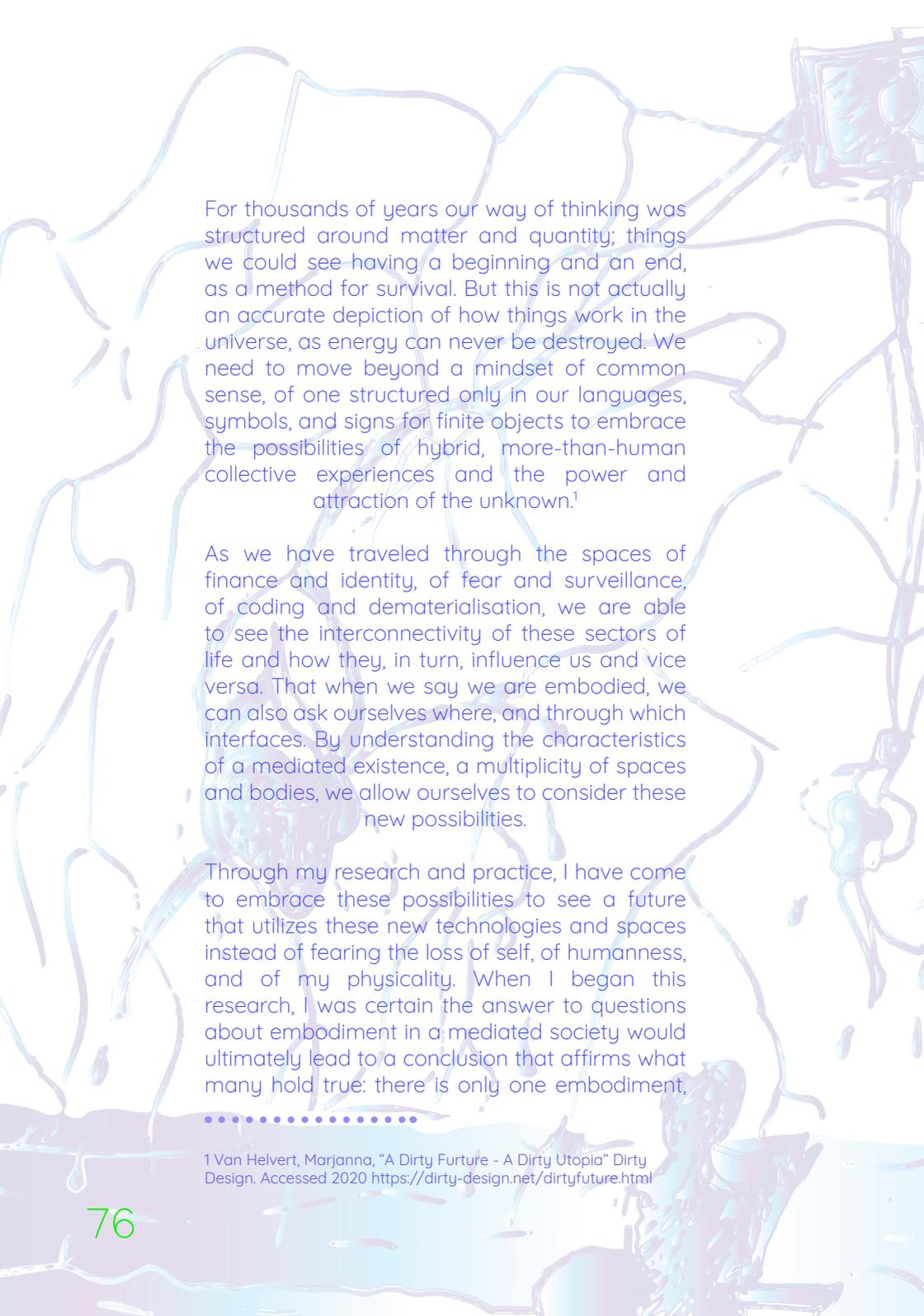


11 Stelarc, Technomorphica: Parasite Visions. Rotterdam: V2 Lab for Unstable Media, 1997.

12 Ibid. Haraway pp. 29







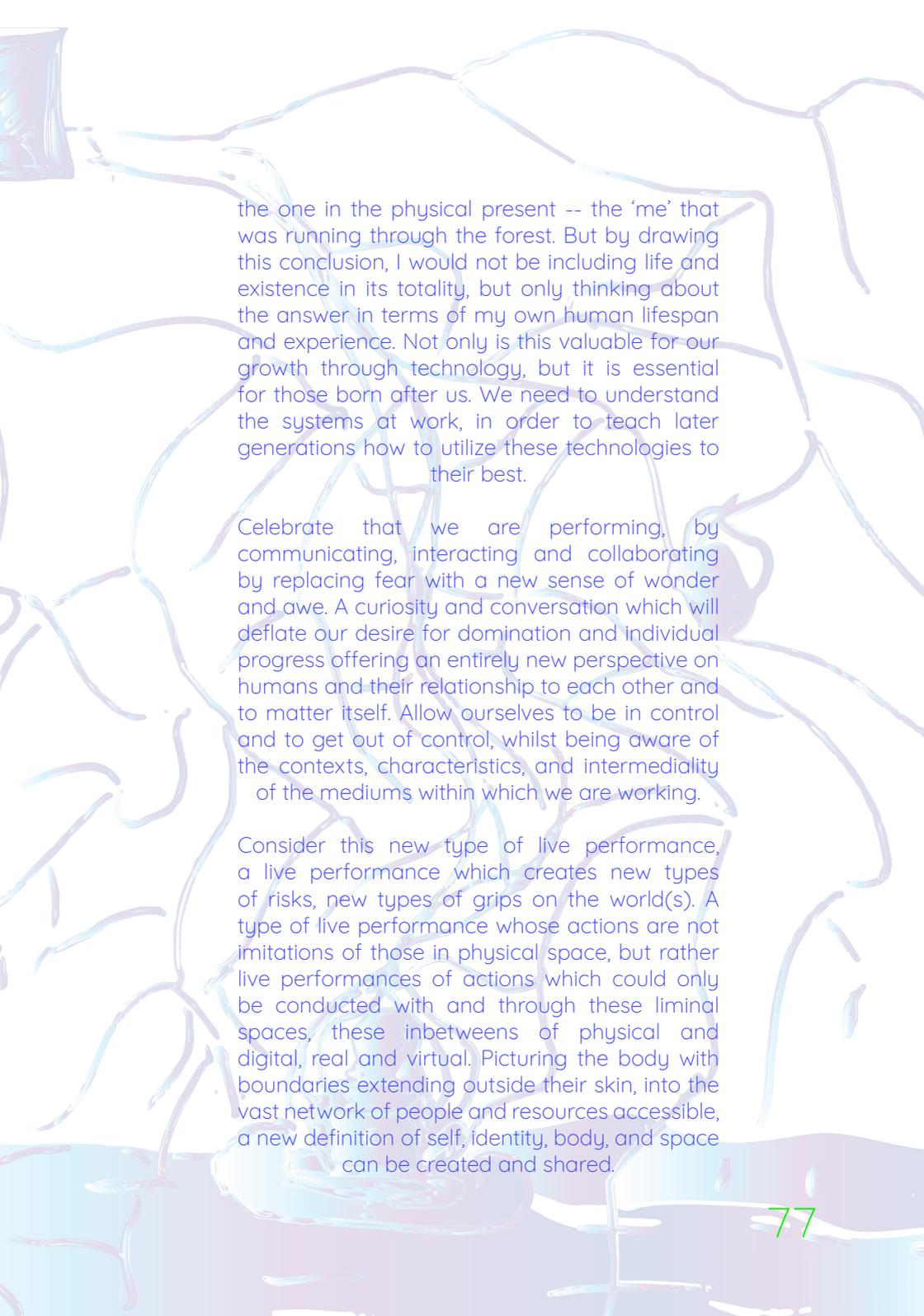
For thousands of years our way of thinking was structured around matter and quantity; things we could see having a beginning and an end, as a method for survival. But this is not actually an accurate depiction of how things work in the universe, as energy can never be destroyed. We need to move beyond a mindset of common sense, of one structured only in our languages, symbols, and signs for finite objects to embrace the possibilities of hybrid, more-than-human collective experiences and the power and attraction of the unknown.¹

As we have traveled through the spaces of finance and identity, of fear and surveillance, of coding and dematerialisation, we are able to see the interconnectivity of these sectors of life and how they, in turn, influence us and vice versa. That when we say we are embodied, we can also ask ourselves where, and through which interfaces. By understanding the characteristics of a mediated existence, a multiplicity of spaces and bodies, we allow ourselves to consider these new possibilities.

Through my research and practice, I have come to embrace these possibilities to see a future that utilizes these new technologies and spaces instead of fearing the loss of self, of humanness, and of my physicality. When I began this research, I was certain the answer to questions about embodiment in a mediated society would ultimately lead to a conclusion that affirms what many hold true: there is only one embodiment,

.....

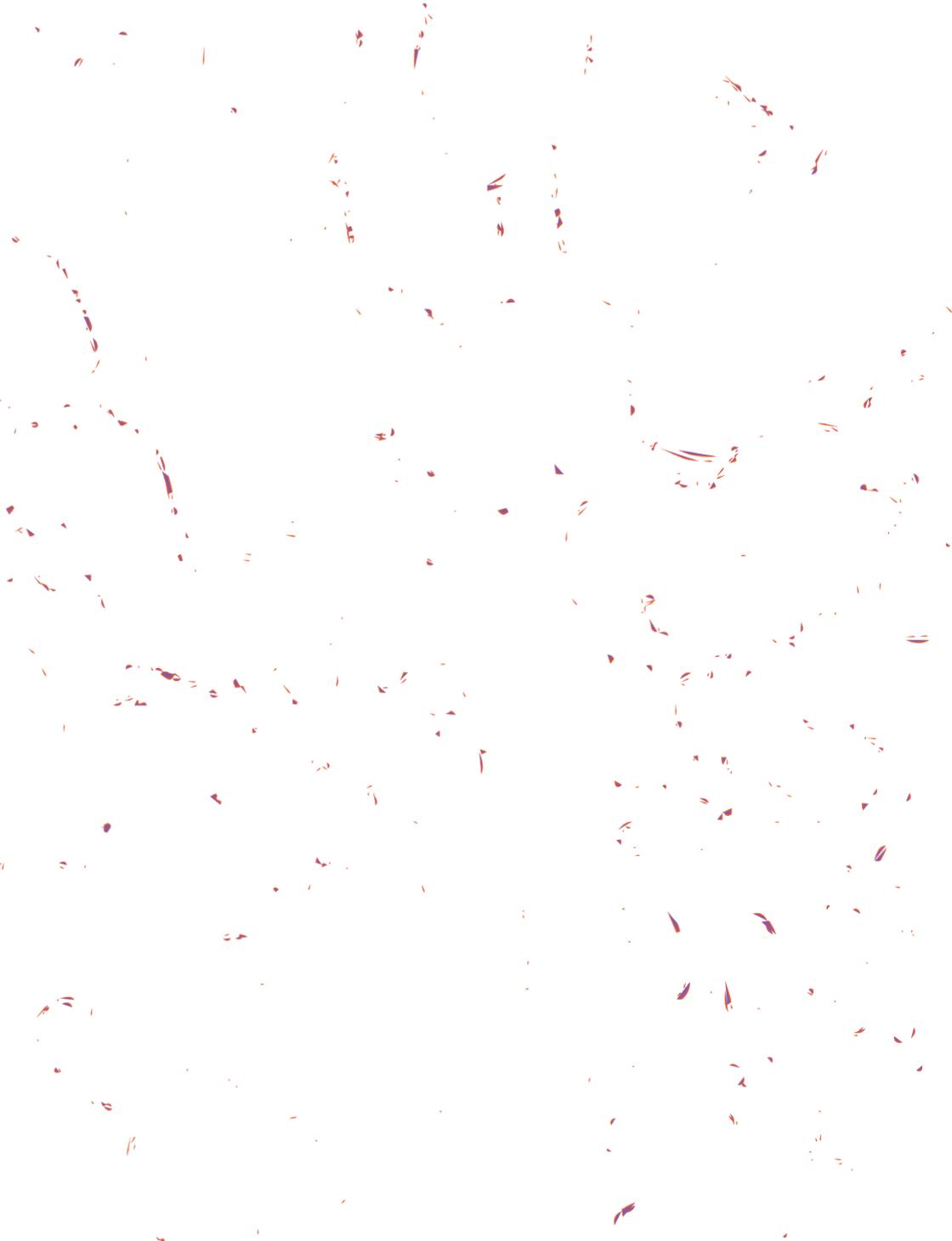
¹ Van Helvert, Marjanna, "A Dirty Future - A Dirty Utopia" Dirty Design. Accessed 2020 <https://dirty-design.net/dirtyfuture.html>

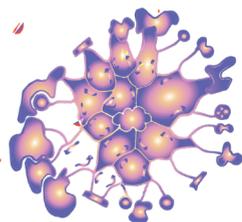
The background of the page is an abstract, hand-drawn style illustration. It features a complex network of thin, light blue and purple lines that meander across the page, creating a sense of movement and interconnectedness. There are also some larger, more solid shapes in shades of blue and purple, particularly towards the bottom and right edges, which appear to be part of the same artistic composition. The overall effect is ethereal and digital, complementing the text's themes of technology and human connection.

the one in the physical present -- the 'me' that was running through the forest. But by drawing this conclusion, I would not be including life and existence in its totality, but only thinking about the answer in terms of my own human lifespan and experience. Not only is this valuable for our growth through technology, but it is essential for those born after us. We need to understand the systems at work, in order to teach later generations how to utilize these technologies to their best.

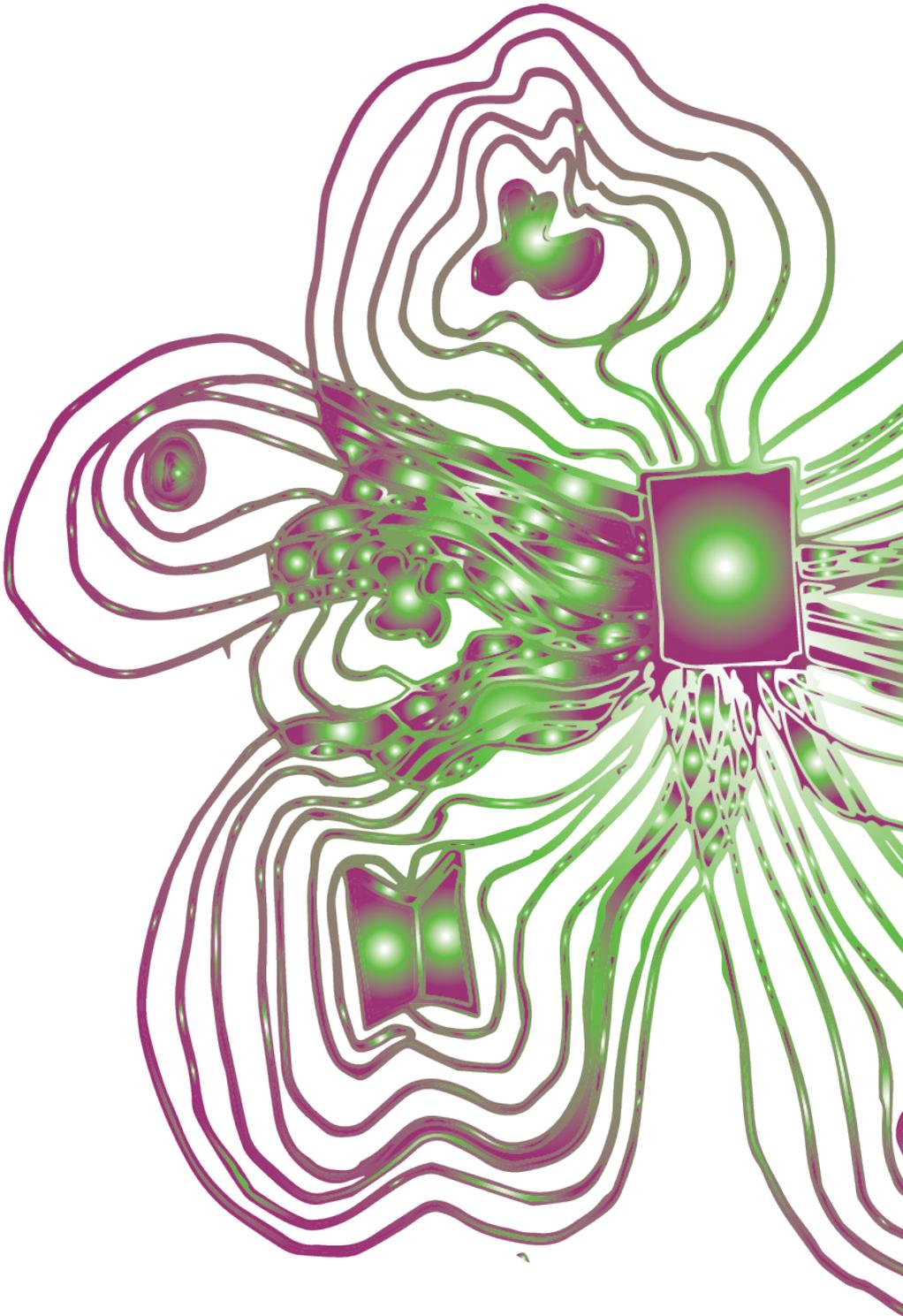
Celebrate that we are performing, by communicating, interacting and collaborating by replacing fear with a new sense of wonder and awe. A curiosity and conversation which will deflate our desire for domination and individual progress offering an entirely new perspective on humans and their relationship to each other and to matter itself. Allow ourselves to be in control and to get out of control, whilst being aware of the contexts, characteristics, and intermediality of the mediums within which we are working.

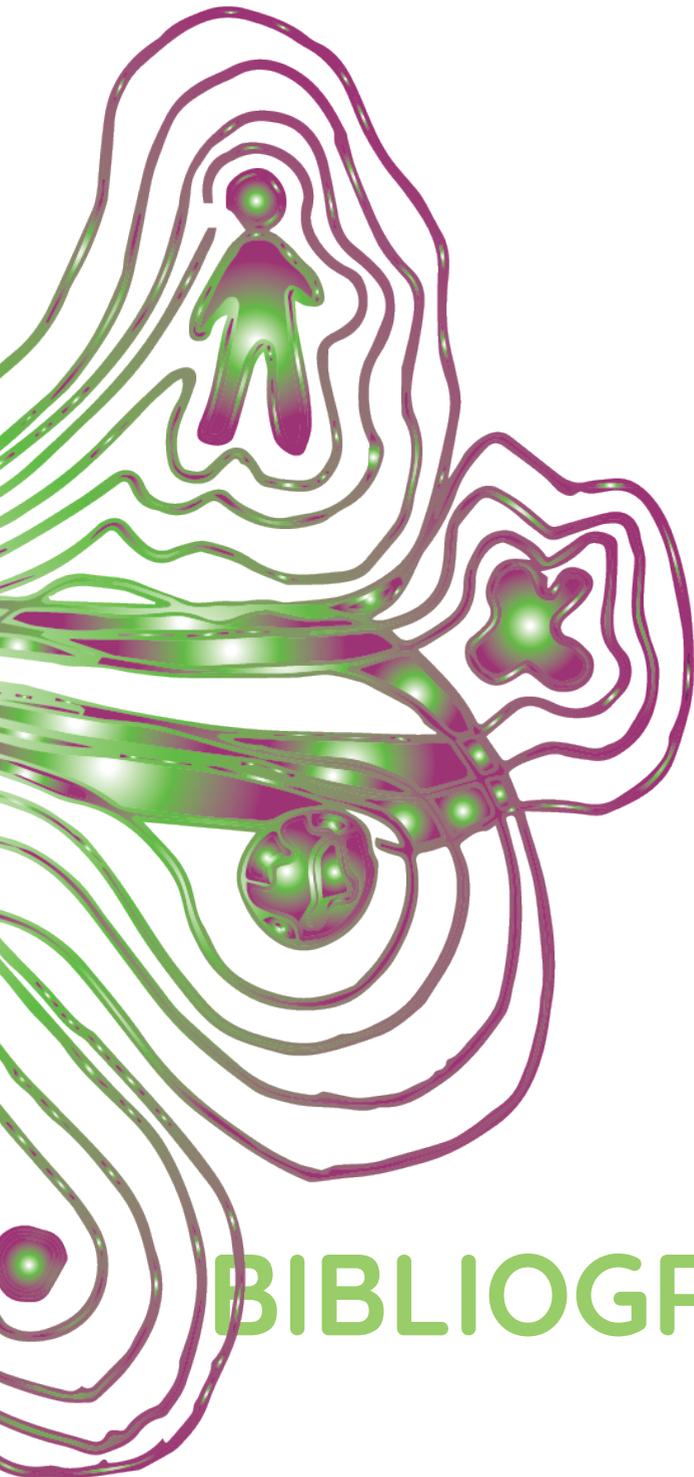
Consider this new type of live performance, a live performance which creates new types of risks, new types of grips on the world(s). A type of live performance whose actions are not imitations of those in physical space, but rather live performances of actions which could only be conducted with and through these liminal spaces, these inbetweens of physical and digital, real and virtual. Picturing the body with boundaries extending outside their skin, into the vast network of people and resources accessible, a new definition of self, identity, body, and space can be created and shared.



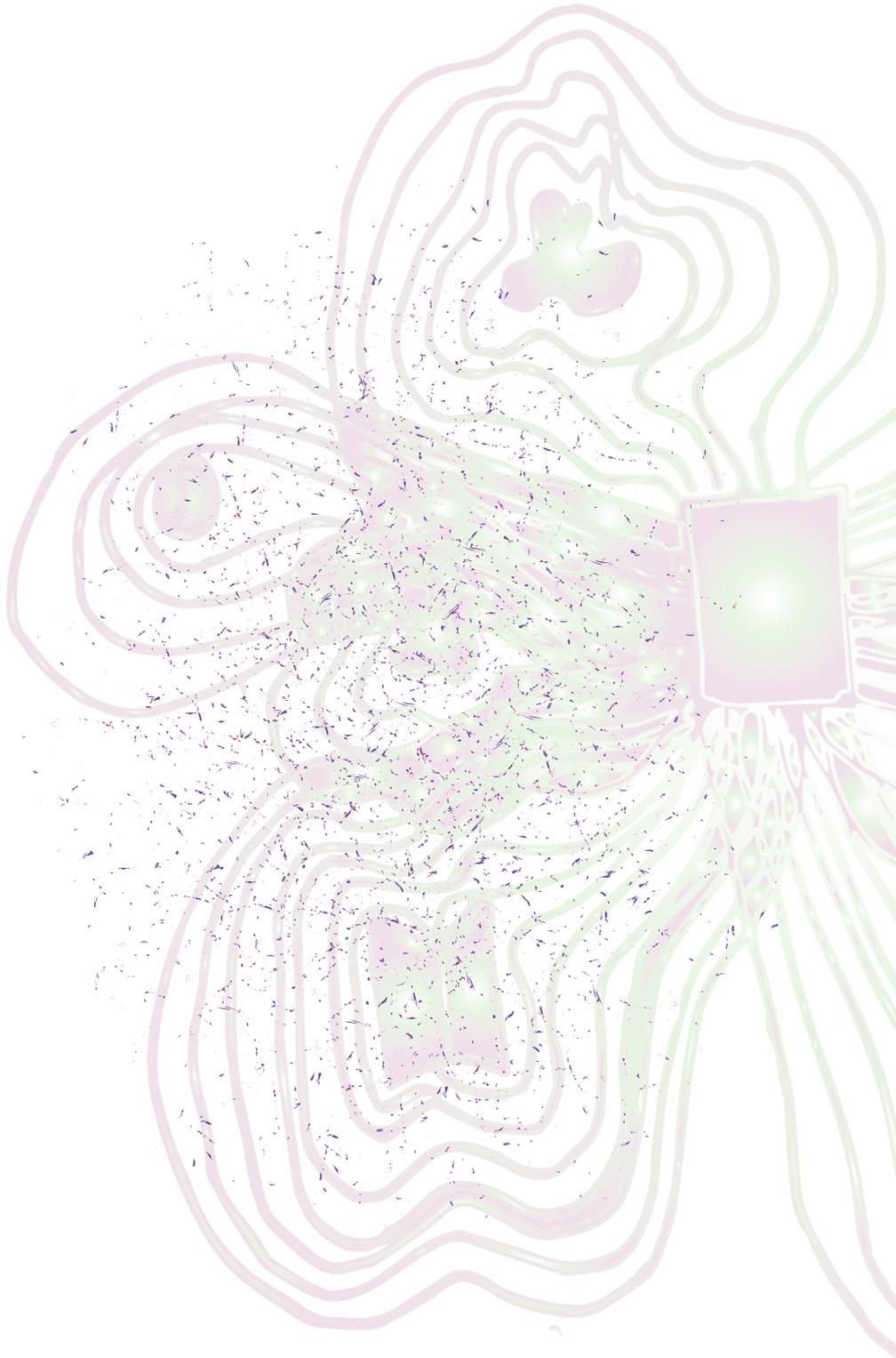


Thank you to all the humans and non-humans that helped me along the way. From the hundreds of Twitch, Chaturbate, Omégle, and Chatroulette users, to the people I have met and listened to, offering me inspiring insights. My Mamma for birthing me and loving me, and Pappa and Miek too. To my Love, for all the support and motivation, and for performing on sex sites with me, and especially Anna Arov for guiding my writing process.





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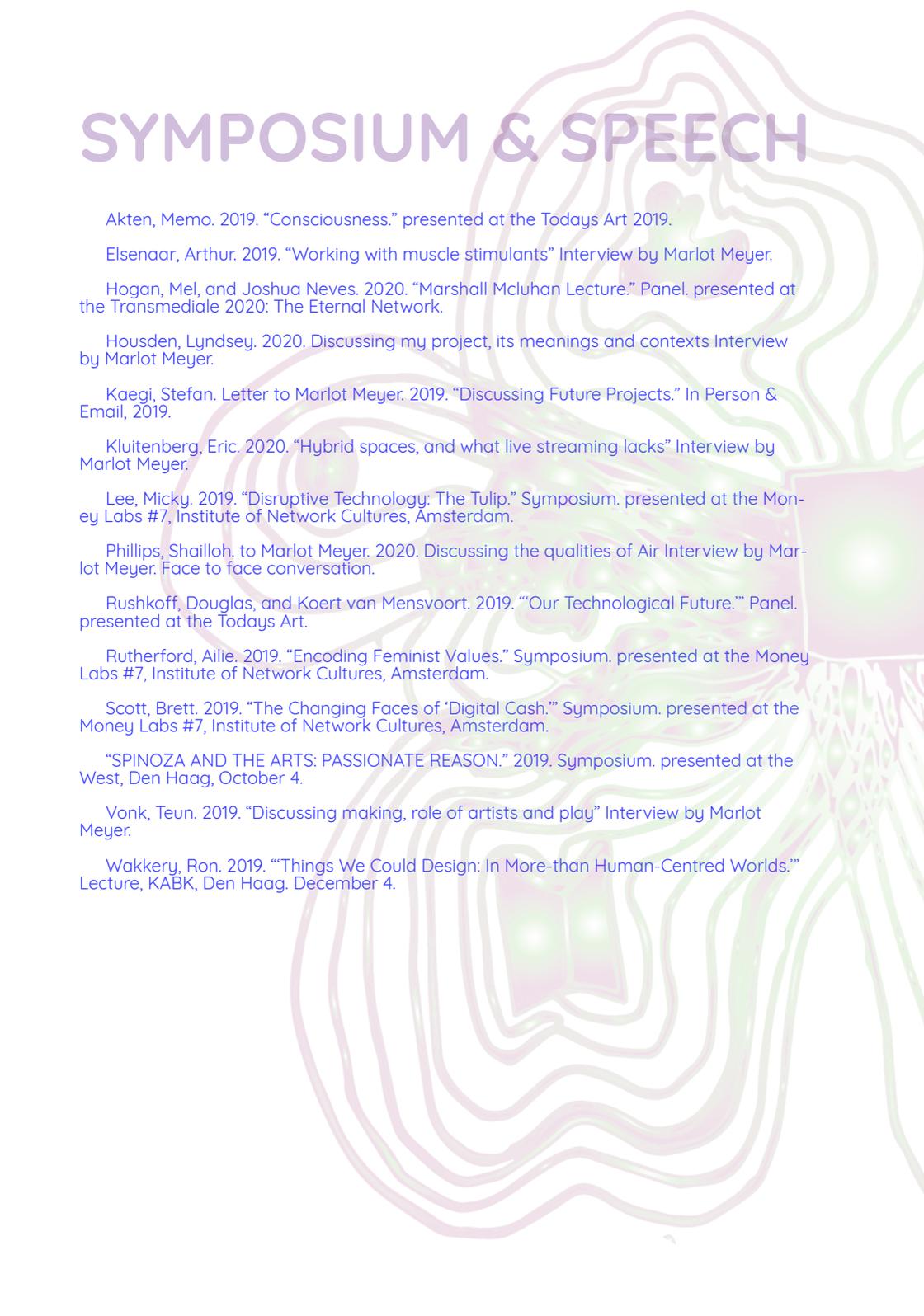
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Initiation101's Cam

FEMALE

MALE

COUPLE

TRANS

SPY SHOWS

Initiation101's room

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CHAT

USERS (150)



- imcuriousforpain: cut it all off
- accazzoduro: how loong do i cook fsilli
- accazzoduro: fusilli
- accazzoduro: 8minutes
- angelaovrealent19: View My
- accazzoduro: i want al dente
- angelaovrealent19: Account
- sweettribalparty: cook pasta with this bea
- happyhornyhorse: give us more
- sweettribalparty: do you know how to coc
- accazzoduro: does pasta have carbs
- accazzoduro: i gotta keep my weight down
- howmanytimez: hey sweetie pie
- happyhornyhorse: i want my bratwurst in
- howmanytimez: show some pie
- sweettribalparty: why are you cutting you
- imcuriousforpain: show your tits
- happyhornyhorse: take ur shity of
- buckyfilbert: wonder who she killed for the
- happyhornyhorse: tits ot
- accazzoduro: tits out

View initiation101's cam in the new Chaturbate player page (beta) with a rebuilt interface, Theater Mode, and interactive Fullscreen