

Matthias

Pitscher

Portfolio

pitscher.net
+49 174 572 0559
matthias@pitscher.net

Biography

The following pages show a chronological collection of works by the artist Matthias Pitscher. Sometimes just named *pitscher*.

This alter ego was constructed in the beginning of 2014 in a performative act of opening his private facebook profile to the general public. Hiding behind a pseudonym, but at the same time giving up all privacy. This artificial persona became both real and fake. To understand this drive to escape authenticity, we have to go back to the beginning:

Matthias Schäfer was born in a small and quiet german town. His parents, immigrants from the USSR, tried to assimilate as much into german culture as they could. In school he still felt a division, not fitting with other russian-speaking kids, as well as not quite being able to fit in the german crowd. He found an escape abolishing these terms early on and started to adapt to different cultural norms for different social groups.

This fluid identity was further developed in internet forums and chat rooms. There, as a teenager, he got to know a subculture of hacking and played with digital graphics programs for the first time.

In 2012 he began studying media art and design at the Bauhaus University in Weimar. In addition to deepening his graphical skills, his interests shifted towards contemporary art. As pitscher he started to built his own interactive Installations and social experiments in public space. His performative actions were further expanded in 2015 at the University of Ulster in Belfast.

During this time his work became more critical and academic. His research involved the ukrainian conflict and how it manifests online, how big data is gathered through “free” services and deconstructing pornography. Most recently, he worked around mindfulness and the attention economy. There pitscher deals with our digital identities and devices that shape our present time. Analytically and humorously, he shows us how digital media changes our perception of reality. His work balances on the edge of irony and sincerity leaving the interpretation to the user (as pitscher would refer to visitors and participants).

Public Profile

Public Intervention, 2014

In a demo-like intervention people were asked on the streets for facebook likes. At the same time the personal profile was changed to a facebook page, which made it public to everyone. Friends suddenly became fans.

At a time just after the Snowden revelations, this was an experiment of getting stripped of one's privacy. At the same time it shows how willing we are to give out our personal data through performing an act of advertisement for our own personality.

Maybe in the future our names and profiles will be part of ourselves for everyone else to see on the street...

https://youtu.be/Va_eDBeQ20Q



People Watching People

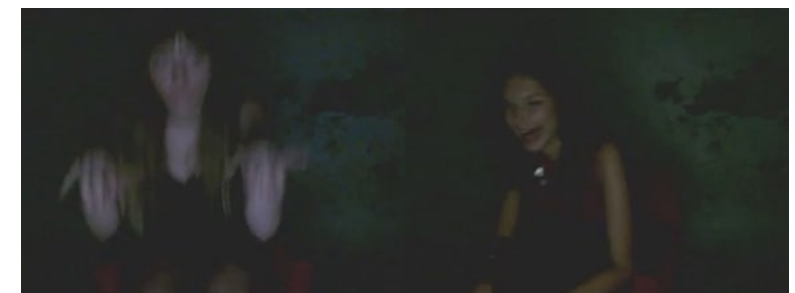
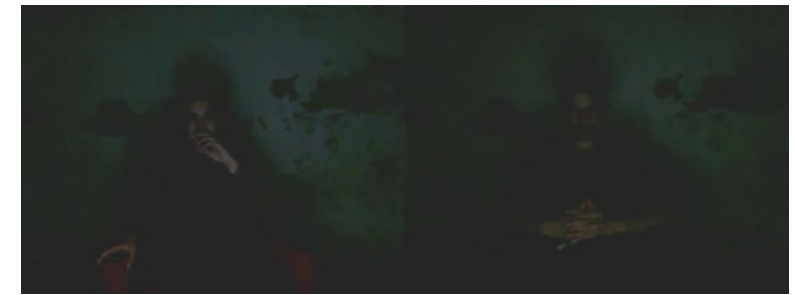
Interactive Installation, 2014

A room with an old TV and a red chair. On the screen:
A loop of a person sitting on that chair. Whenever a
new visitor sits down a camera placed on the TV starts
recording and when they leave this recording will be
shown until the next person comes in.

A feedback system of people watching people wat-
ching people [...] is created.

The meditative gesture of a person in front of a tele-
vision can be examined. But once a visitor realises that
they get recorded, they become actors trying to surpri-
se or entertain the next person.

<https://vimeo.com/102006377>



Unseen / Forgotten

Interactive Installation, 2015

A flatscreen TV shows the picture of a person sitting next to an ATM. The picture overwrites itself line by line. After the 3 day exhibition all pixels are shuffled. The image is forgotten.

In front of the TV a second display is lying on the ground, a cup is placed on top of it. The polarizing sheet was removed from the display, so it only shows white. A circular polarizer is placed inside the cup, when you look through it you can read a poem which is displayed on the screen. It is unseen unless the visitor kneels next to the screen.

<https://vimeo.com/125302963>



My Computer, Hung Up

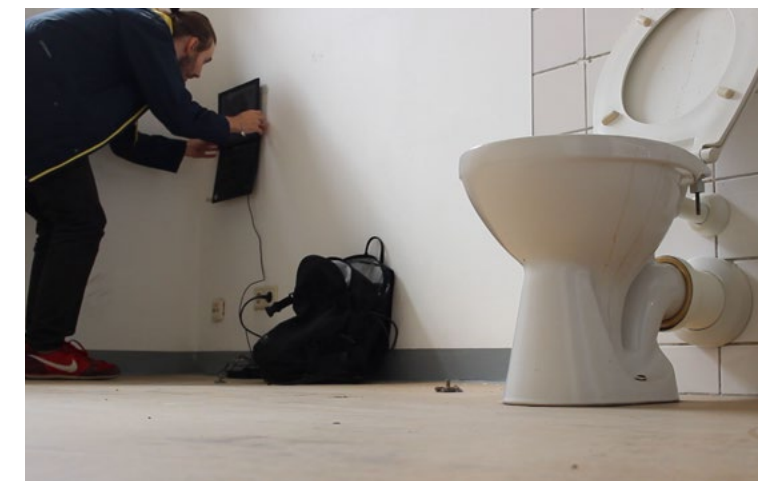
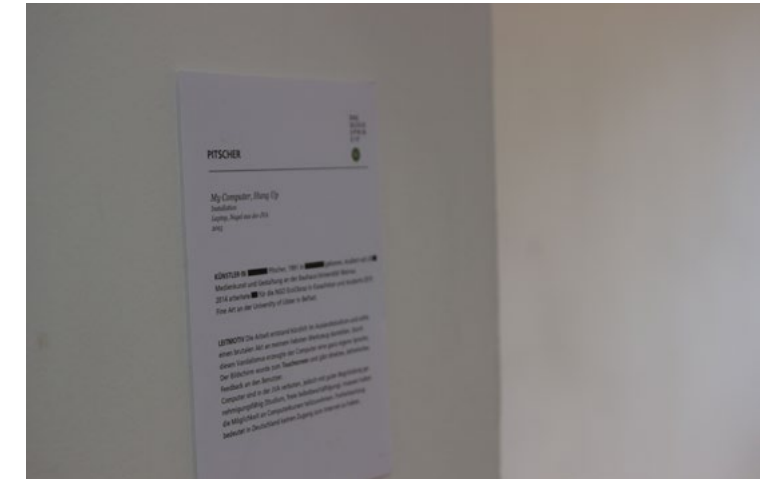
Intervention / Installation, 2015

A laptop was smuggled into a former prison. Without anybody noticing the computer is hung on the wall. The nail is deliberately put through the screen. A fake wall label at the entrance makes it seem as if it is part of the rest of the exhibition.

Prisoners can apply for a personal laptop, if they need it for learning purposes. Internet is generally forbidden in the cell.

This work is questioning if a computer is still functioning if humans can not interface with it. Is a computer still functioning if it can not interface with the rest of the world?

<https://vimeo.com/137281395>



YouKkraine

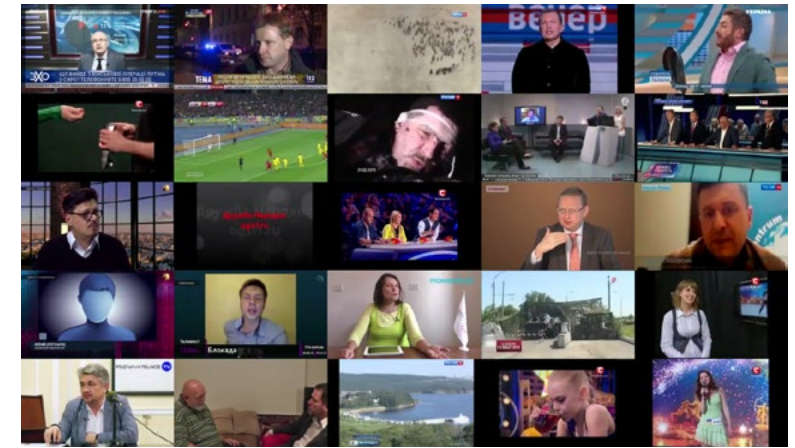
Videoinstallation, 2015

60 min loop

The Installation consists of two monitors showing a grid of up to 25 videos each.

One monitor is showing the results on YouTube for “ukraine” from a german geolocation and the other showing results for “украина” with a ukrainian IP-Adress. This example shows quite clearly how we are immersed in our informational filter bubble depending on our location. This is especially interesting in the context of war. What is the foreign perception of a country in war? How does the country see itself?

<https://vimeo.com/145655264>



Narcissus' Back

Interactive Installation, 2016

Narcissus stares into his screen and falls in love with his reflection. But this time he can reflect on his own narcissism staring into the endless reflection of his back.

This work was produced in collaboration with Michael Fischer.

<https://vimeo.com/180819944>

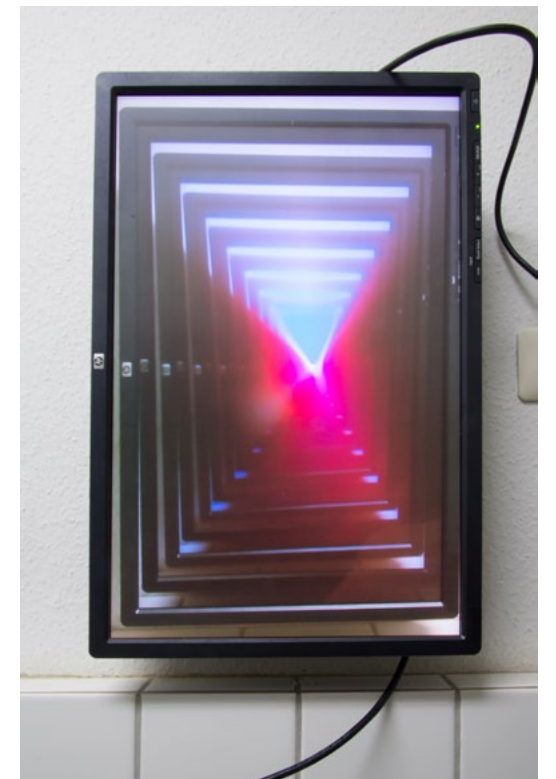


Narcissus' Echo

Interactive Installation, 2016

Narcissus' Echo is the second version which replaces the mirrors in a bath stall and shows the opposing screen in the other stall creating an echo that gets interrupted when a person stands in front of it.

<https://vimeo.com/180830670>



Free Coffee

Performance / CG Poetry, 2016

In various locations free coffee was advertised to visitors. They engaged in a personal one-to-one conversation. This conversation was recorded and interpreted by a speech recognition algorithm. The hidden collection of data is a common case on most websites. Because of the algorithms inefficiency to understand conversation without prior training the outcome was mostly gibberish. This computer generated poem was later recited in front of the same audience.



*An sich auch das was anderes er kein
Mensch zu besetzten Kaffeeverkäufer
noch die Siemens und BMW zu machenden
Haus in und er die hatten 1900 und was
schnell möchte man zu das macht immer
das muss den ganzen neun aus einer
Baum das meine Daten sein mein der auf
mich Körper mehr er ganz Bayer bisher
für der gut das ganze sogar die zum
Schluss, dass mehr 15 ich geboren der
Werner dein die normalen Beziehungen
eines ja sie selber er.*

-First sentence of the computer generated Poem



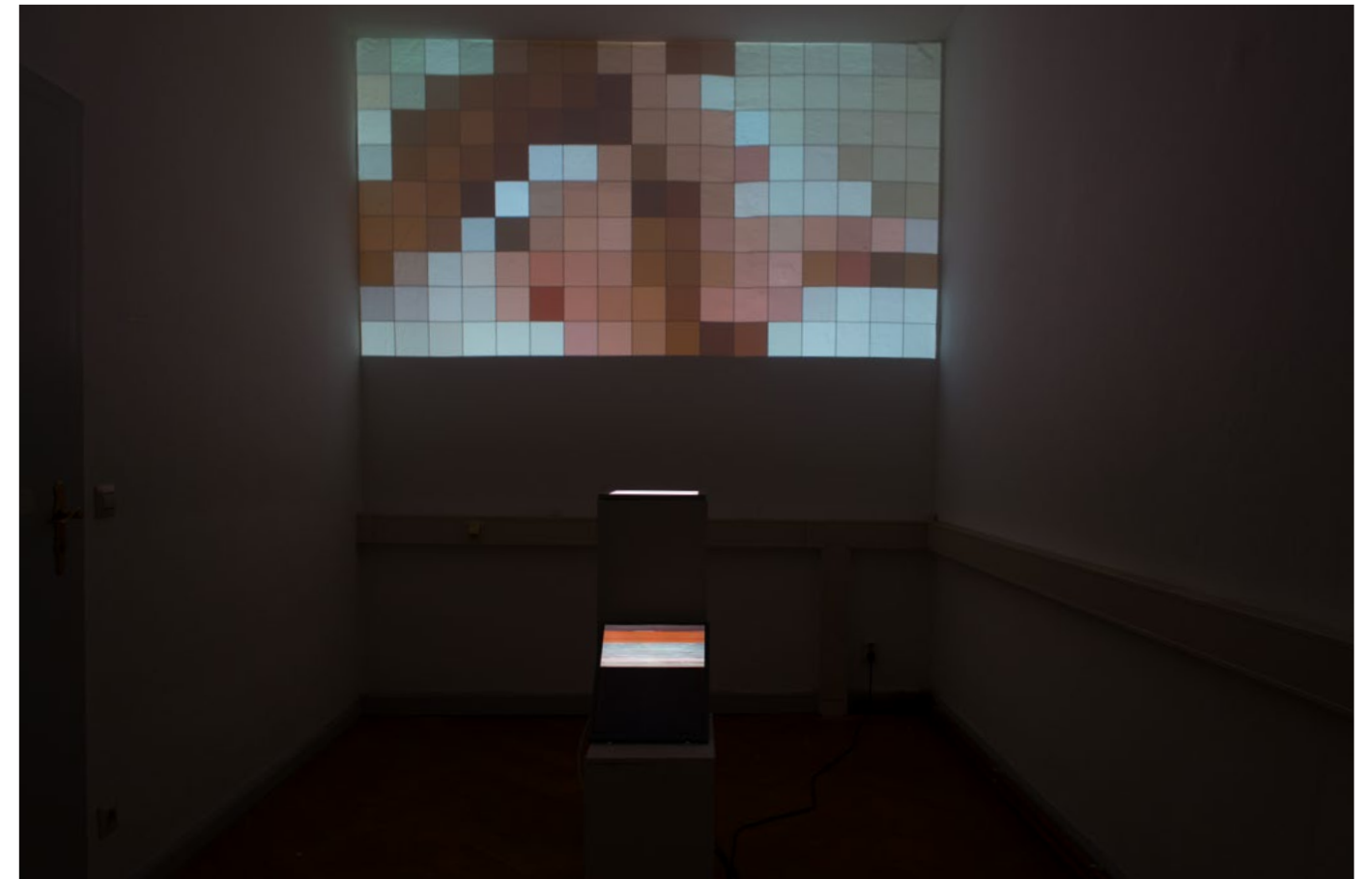
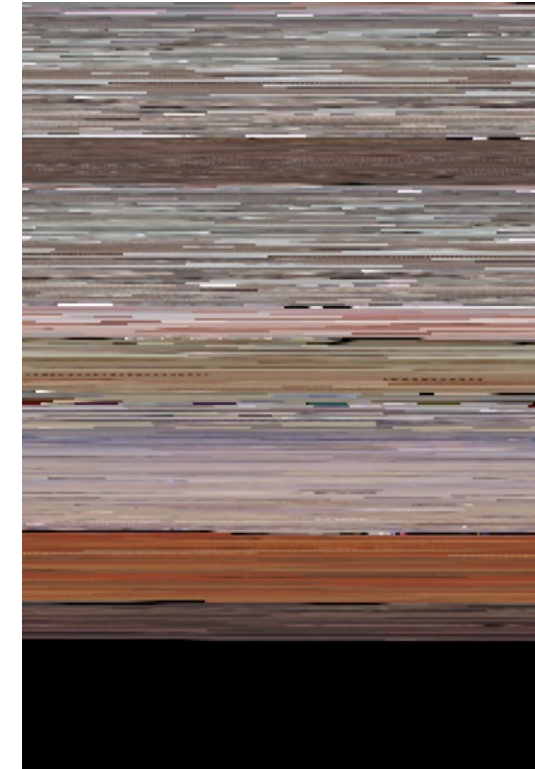
Colors of Pornography

Generative Installation, 2016

Colors of Pornography is an investigation of color in mainstream pornography.

In the first step pixelation is used to emphasize the color scheme of the image. In the next step the color of each individual pixel is added together and divided by the number of pixels calculating the average color for each frame. The last step puts this calculated color back into context, so the visitor can see the color of the whole porn clip next to other clips.

<https://vimeo.com/180506266>



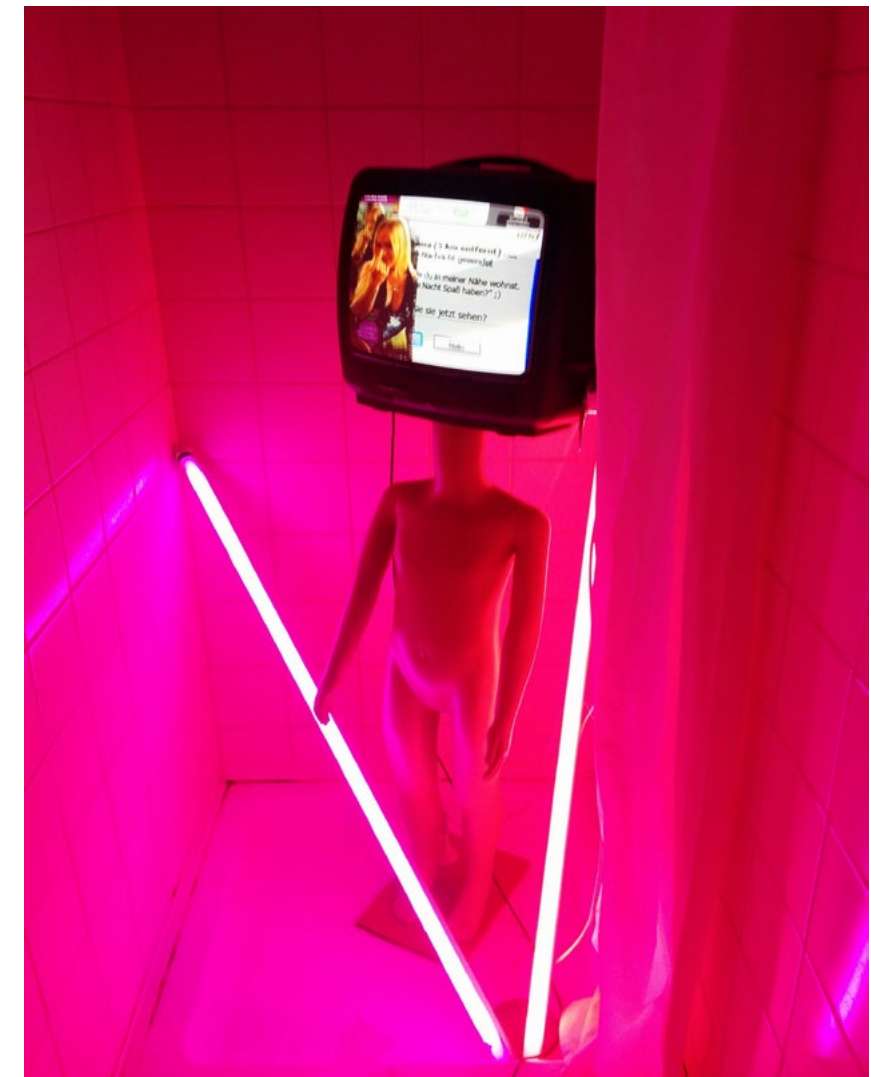
Adult Advertisement

Videoinstallation, 2016

A videoinstallation with a TV mounted on a mannequin illuminated in a shower of an abandoned flat. The video shows gif files collected from adult advertisement servers that are overlapping and glitching. The advertisement is based on various sexual preferences and a german IP location.

A computervoice is narrating a conversation between several chatbots that are designed to have dirtytalk with it's user.

<https://vimeo.com/180056564>



Social Media Meditation

Guided Meditation, 2016-2018

Social Media Meditation is a meditative practice, which focuses on our online identities and our addiction to internet based networks.

In classes people talk about their experiences and learn how to meditate with their smartphones. Exercises like #selfieyoga #mindfulscrolling and #lovingandliking are practiced in a one hour session. A whole visual identity and online guided meditation was created to advertising purposes.

www.socialmediameditation.net

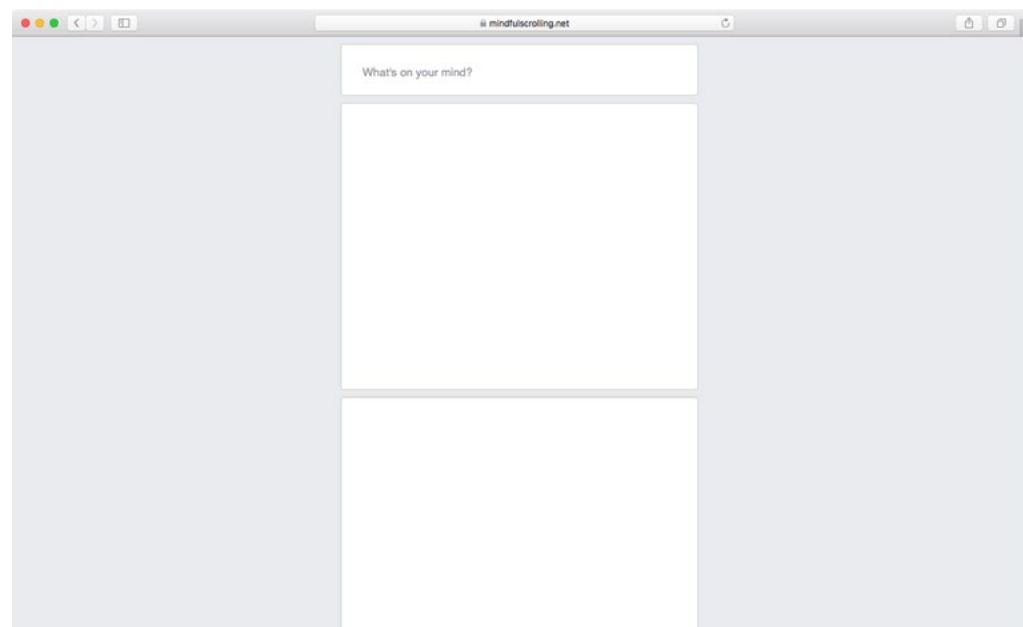


mindfulscrolling.net

Website, 2017

As part of Social Media Meditation a website was created that generates new empty posts when the user scrolls down. This is a vast, peaceful, empty social network. Without birthdays, cat pictures and Donald Trump.

<https://mindfulscrolling.net>

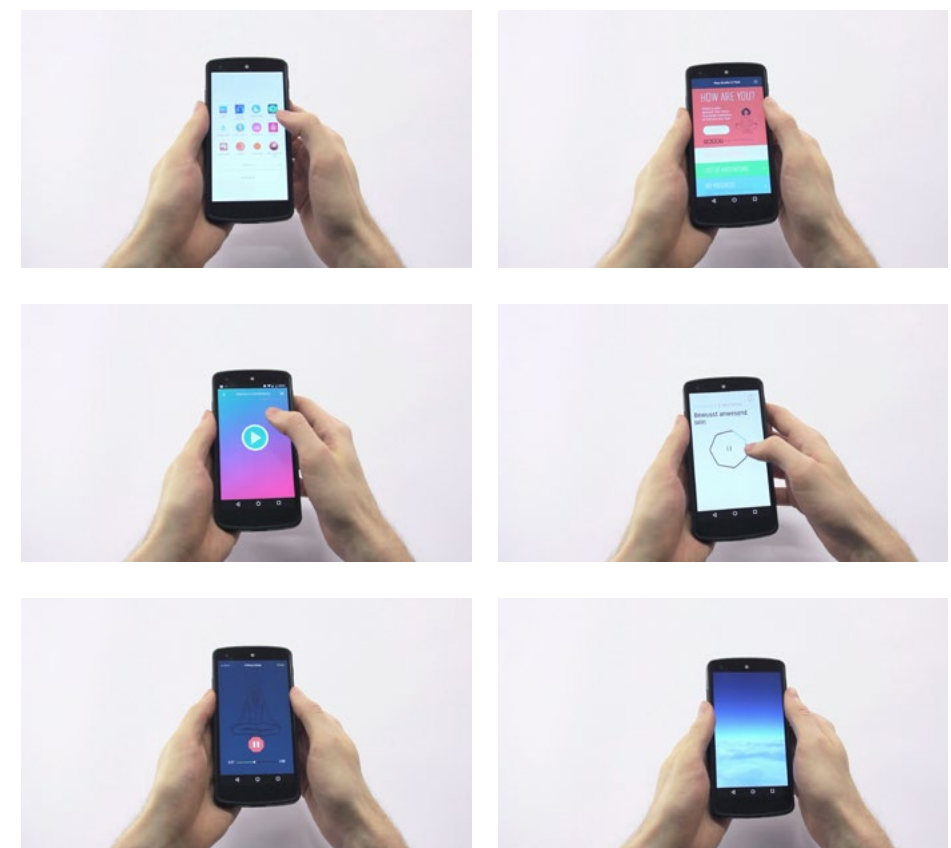


Multiple Meditation

Video, 2017

Multiple Meditation is a practice for very advanced users. After downloading as many meditation apps as possible, the user opens and plays each app after the other. Trying to focus and follow all exercise at the same time.

<https://youtu.be/aEM83k5fIEM>



Lonely Island

Installation, 2017

The Lonely Island is a collection of interactive experiments and videos that were developed in a short time-span and are unpolished and/or unfinished. Including:

- Empty Browsing (Browser Plugin)
- Balls (pitscher.net/balls.html)
- Squares (pitscher.net/squares.html)
- Color Scroll (pitscher.net/scroll.html)
- Helveticants (Generative Type)
- Performance Marketing Keynote (Video)
- Dissolving Bath Fizzer (ASMR Video)
- A look through all my data (Video)
- Endless Scrolling (Videoloop)

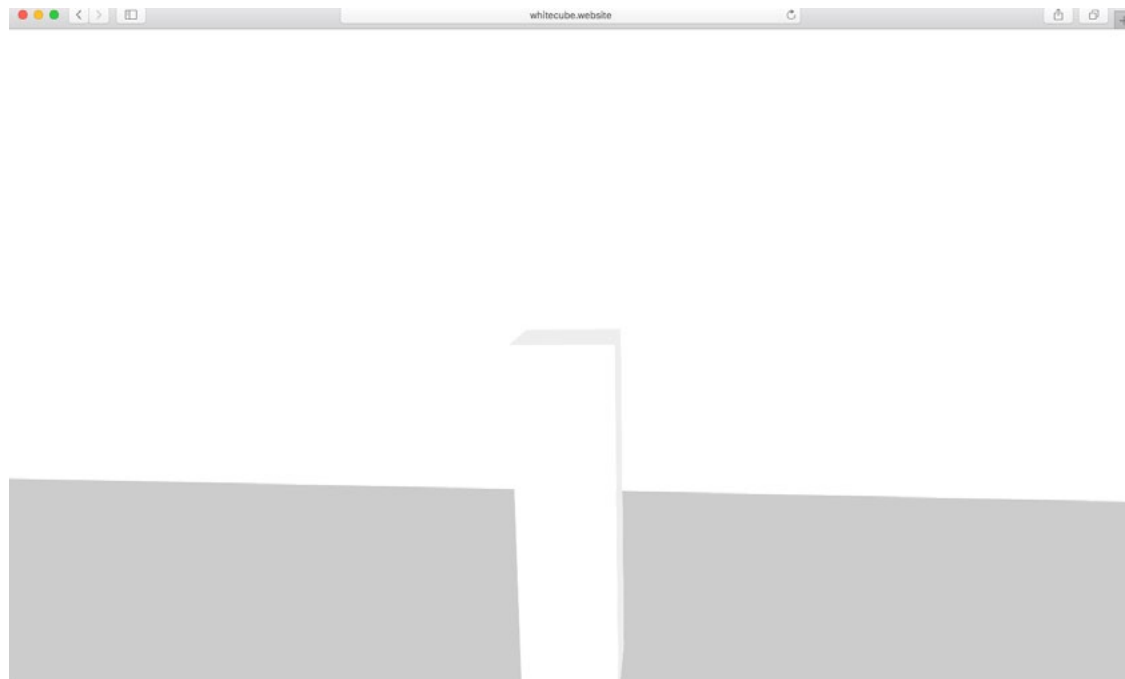


Plinth

Website, 2017/18

We do not recognize art when it is not surrounded by 4 white walls or sitting on a white pedestal. But what about art on the internet? Enter the whitecube online to have a spiritual gallery experience from your home. This work was made for the pavillion *equivocations* in The Wrong (Biennale).

<https://whitecube.website>
<https://pitscher.net/plinth>

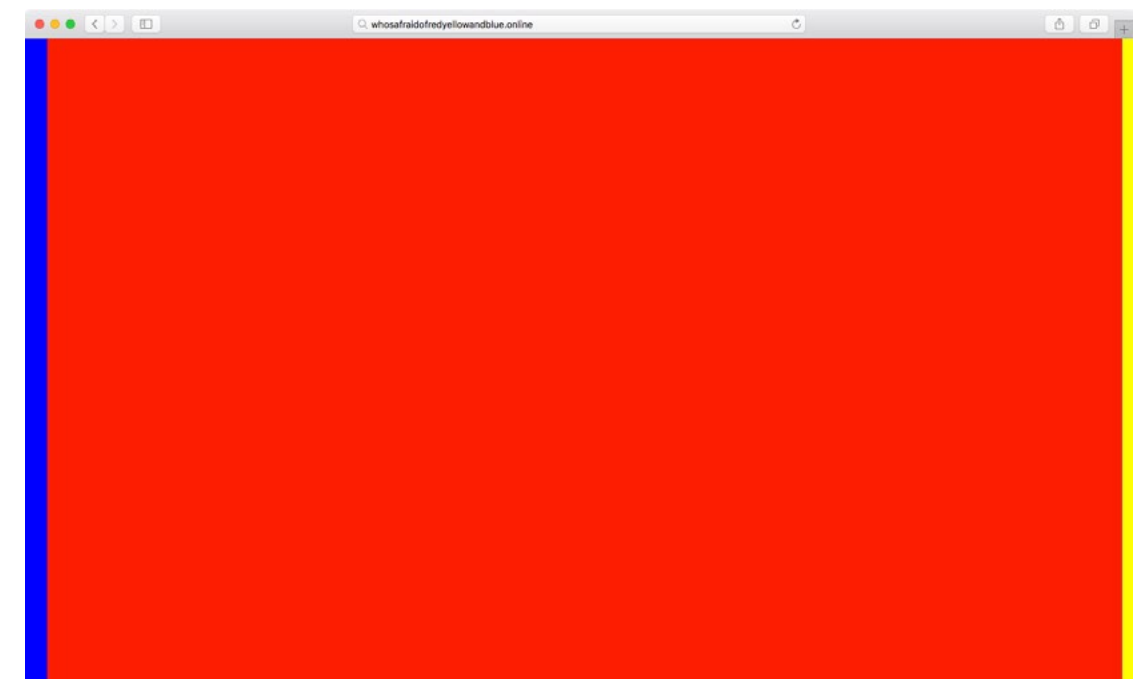


whosafraidofred yellowandblue.online

Website, 2018

An online replica of Barnett Newman's *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue I*. It comes in various sizes, can not be destroyed and is easily duplicated. Using the screen as a canvas for color field painting gives the user some space to reflect on how we look at art today.

<https://whosafraidofredyellowandblue.online>

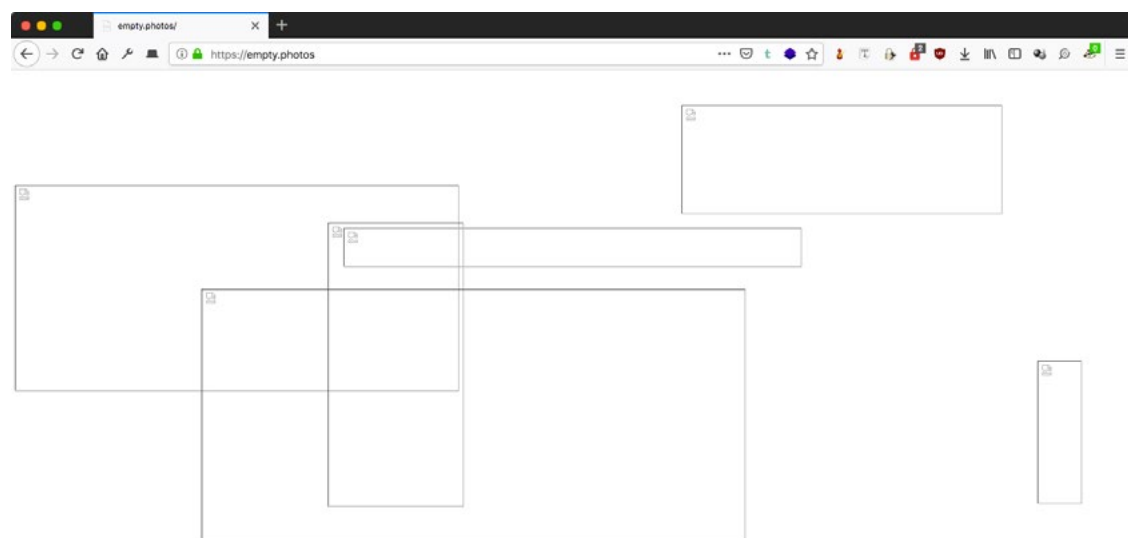


empty.photos

Website, 2018

This website is a collage of all possible images on the internet. Another web experiment to disrupt the attention economy. Another example of how we wait and get angry if we don't see the next new meme immediately.

<https://empty.photos>



Exhibitions / Performances

2018	whosafraidofredyellowandblue.online #nfc dab, Valencia	2016	Adult Advertisement Cheap-Quick-Dirty, Weimar
2018	Social Media Meditation Digital Arts Festival, Athens	2016	Free Coffee ACUD, Berlin
2018	whitecube.website The Wrong Digital Art Biennale	2016	Free Coffee transmediale, Berlin
2017	Social Media Meditation Spinnereirundgang, Leipzig	2015	YouKraïne Museum of Modern Art, Odessa
2017	Lonely Island (Showreel) Kulturfabrik Apolda	2015	Unseen / Forgotten Catalyst Arts, Belfast
2017	Sink Venice! Palazzo Zenobio, Venedig	2015	My Computer, Hung Up Galerie Eigenheim, Weimar
2017	Social Media Meditation Node Festival, Frankfurt	2014	People Watching People Summaery, Weimar
2016	Colors of Pornography Summaery, Weimar	2013	Visionaut Summaery, Weimar

Prices / Collections

2017	Media Art Award Weimar 4th Place
2017	mindfulscrolling.net Modernist Archive Weimar Acquisition

Publications

2017	Mensagraphien (Scans / Text) Port Magazin
2016	#schlaflos (Poem) Schlaf Magazin
2015	Criminal Artivism (Essay) Medium