

*Matthias*

*Pitscher*

*Portfolio*

Curriculum Vitae

Matthias /Pitscher/ Schäfer  
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Education

since	Master of Arts
2018	Interface Culture University of Art and Design Linz
2017	Summer Acadamey, Venice
2017	Bachelor of fine Arts Media Art and Design Bauhaus Universität Weimar
2015	Exchange Semester University of Ulster Belfast

Exhibitions / Performances

2019	<i>empty.photos</i> BestOFF, Linz	2017	<i>Sink Venice!</i> Palazzo Zenobio, Venice
2019	<i>Meanwhile in China,</i> Ars Electronica Festival, Linz	2017	<i>Social Media Meditation</i> Node Festival, Frankfurt
2019	<i>A study on the Characterics of Douyin,</i> Xie Zilong Photography Museum, Changsha	2016	<i>Colors of Pornography</i> Summaery, Weimar
2019	<i>Oral Office,</i> space is a space, Berlin	2016	<i>Adult Advertisment</i> Cheap-Quick-Dirty, Weimar
2018	<i>Projected.Capital,</i> Roehrs & Boetsch, Zurich	2016	<i>Free Coffee</i> ACUD, Berlin
2018	<i>whosafraidofredyellowandblue. online</i> #nfc dab, Valencia	2016	<i>Free Coffee</i> transmediale, Berlin
2018	<i>Social Media Meditation</i> Digital Arts Festival, Athens	2015	<i>YouKraïne</i> Museum of Modern Art, Odessa
2018	<i>whitecube.website</i> The Wrong Digital Art Biennale	2015	<i>Unseen / Forgotten</i> Catalyst Arts, Belfast
2017	<i>Social Media Meditation</i> Spinnereirundgang, Leipzig	2015	<i>My Computer, Hung Up</i> Galerie Eigenheim, Weimar
2017	<i>Lonely Island (Showreel)</i> Kulturfabrik Apolda	2014	<i>People Watching People</i> Summaery, Weimar
		2013	<i>Visionaut</i> Summaery, Weimar

Prices / Collections

2017	Media Art Award Weimar
2017	mindfulscrolling.net Modernist Archive Weimar Acquisition

Publications

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

Biography

The alter ego *pitscher* was constructed in the beginning of 2014 in a performative act of the artist 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 the artist’s drive to escape authenticity, we have to go back to his past:

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, neither fitting with other russian-speaking kids, nore being able to fit with other german kids. He found an escape in abolishing terms of identity 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 explored a subculture of hacking and played with digital graphics programs for the first time. During his last years in school he got interested in philosophy and was struck by the ideas of radical constructivists like Ernst v. Glasersfeld and Heinz v. Foerster.

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 and especially conceptual art, where he found a new way of doing playful philosophy. 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 ukranian 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.

Currently he is studying in Linz in the Interface Cultures department, where his interests lie in using, examining and generating stories of artificial intelligence.

# *Meanwhile in China*

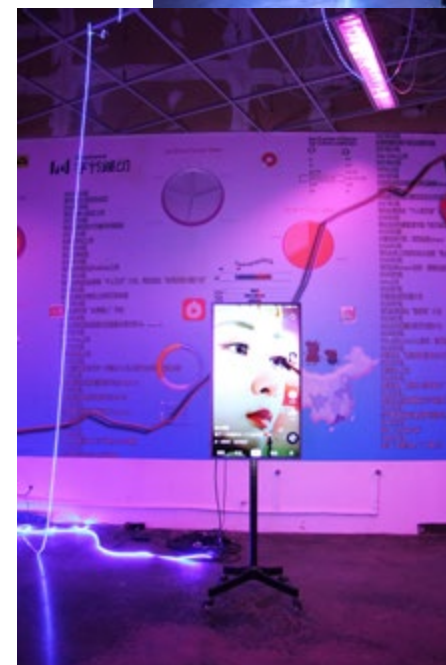
Videoinstallation / 6x3m Wallpaper, 2019

The work explores the chinese social network Douyin from different perspective. The app is an exact clone of internationally known TikTok, but the content is highly censored.

If you search for terms like „reeducation camps“ you will get blocked from using the search function at all. The videoinstallation, running an ~8 hour loop, shows entertaining content next to chinese propaganda against for example the Hong Kong protesters. Search terms like Donald Trump result in videos that do not show the american president himself, indicating facial recognition being used for censorship.

The wall behind the TV is covered with a collage of graphs and datapoints found online showcasing the exploding growth and user distribution on the platform. The graphs themselves are stripped of any labelling, making them unreadable in a common sense.

In collaboration with Sofia Braga



# *A study on the Characteristics of Douyin*

6 ch Videoinstallation, 2019

Douyin, internationally known as TikTok, became one of the most successful apps worldwide as the leading platform for creating and sharing short videos. Created by the Beijing based company Bytedance, it is one of the few Apps that got successful outside of the great firewall. To comply with chinese law Douyin is a completely separate App from TikTok. Even though the interface and logo looks the same, the content is completely different, not accessible from the international version.

The aim of this work is to explore and analyze this vast digital ecosystem from different perspectives. Via screen recordings a moment in a fast changing environment is captured, dictated by Douyin's AI recommendation algorithm. These found images are then decontextualized without alteration to give visitors the space to reflect upon them, gain insight into a walled off platform and into the algorithms used to show you the most engaging content.

In collaboration with Sofia Braga

<https://vimeo.com/335020808>



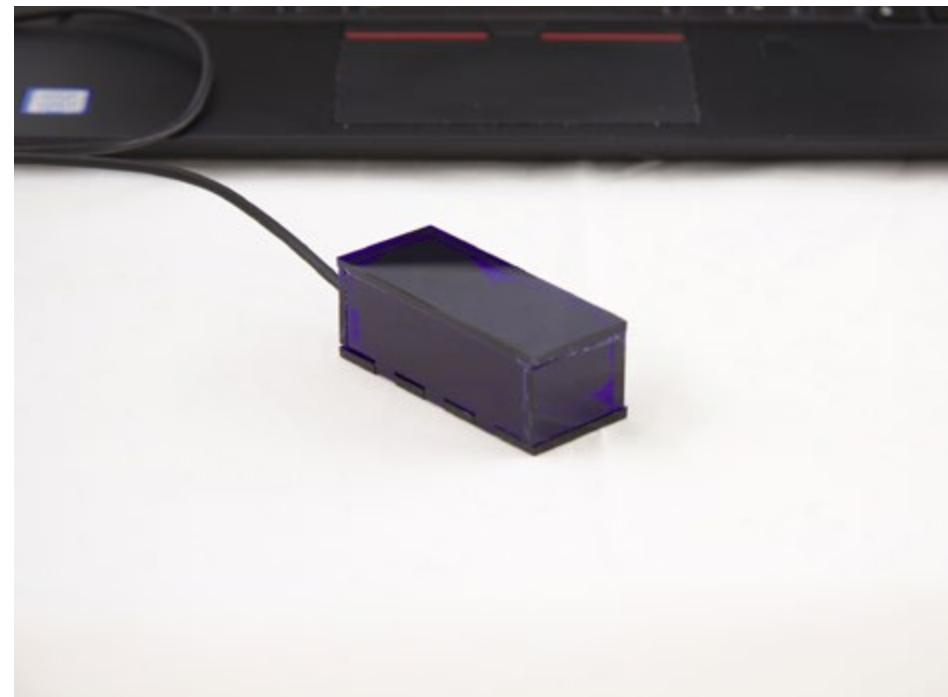
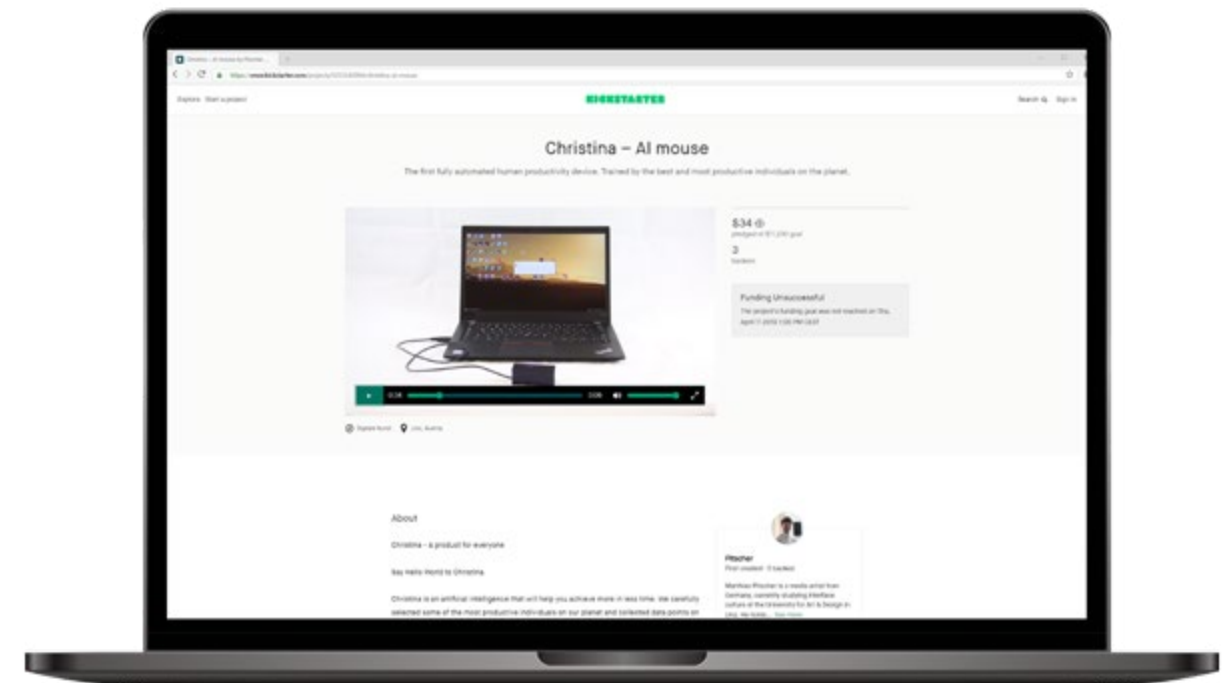
# *Christina – AI Mouse*

Product, 2018

For the 50th anniversary of the “Mother of all Demos” I created the predecessor of the original mouse. Douglas Engelbart’s vision of augmenting the human intellect, became a vision of automation today.

Named after his biological daughter Christina is the first fully automated mouse, helping private people and companies to fulfill boring computer work. Exhibited during Sankt Interface, the visitors were able to see the power of this tiny box. In the beginning of 2019 a kick-starter campaign launched, which failed gracefully. The world is not ready for the future of computing, yet.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1253342994/christina-ai-mouse>





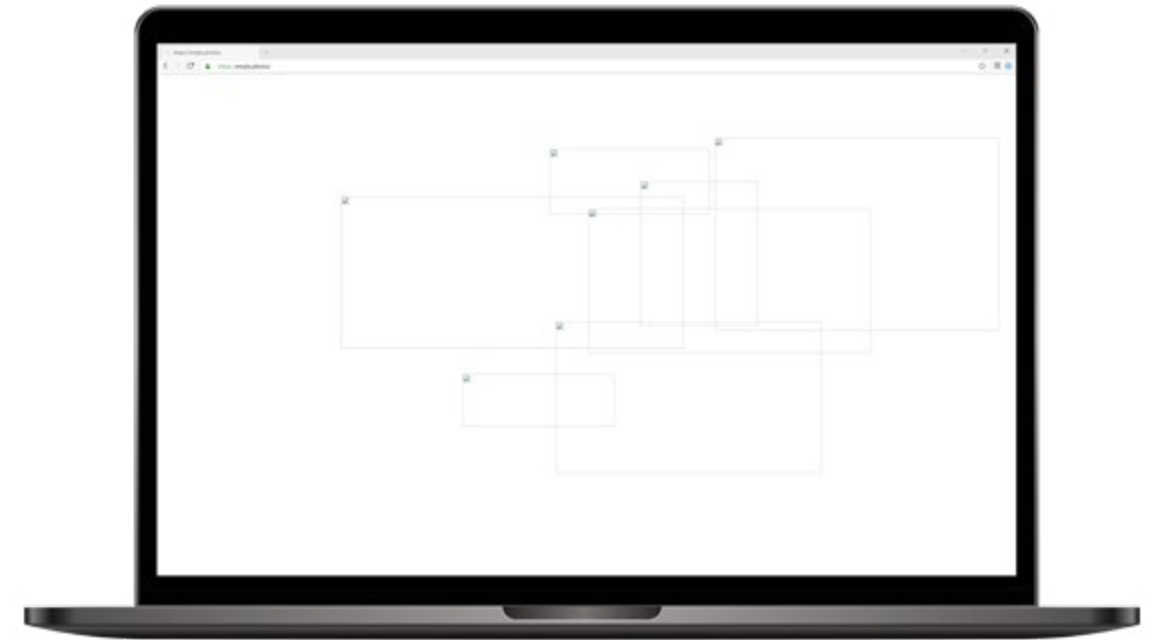
# *empty.photos*

Website, 2018

„The web never forgets“ — That is certainly not the case for links to some images on the internet. For this project a webcrawler was sent out to find broken, forgotten, missing images on random websites.

The website empty.photos then showcases this database of broken images to the user. The user can then scroll through this collage (or graveyard) of long lost memories.

<https://empty.photos>

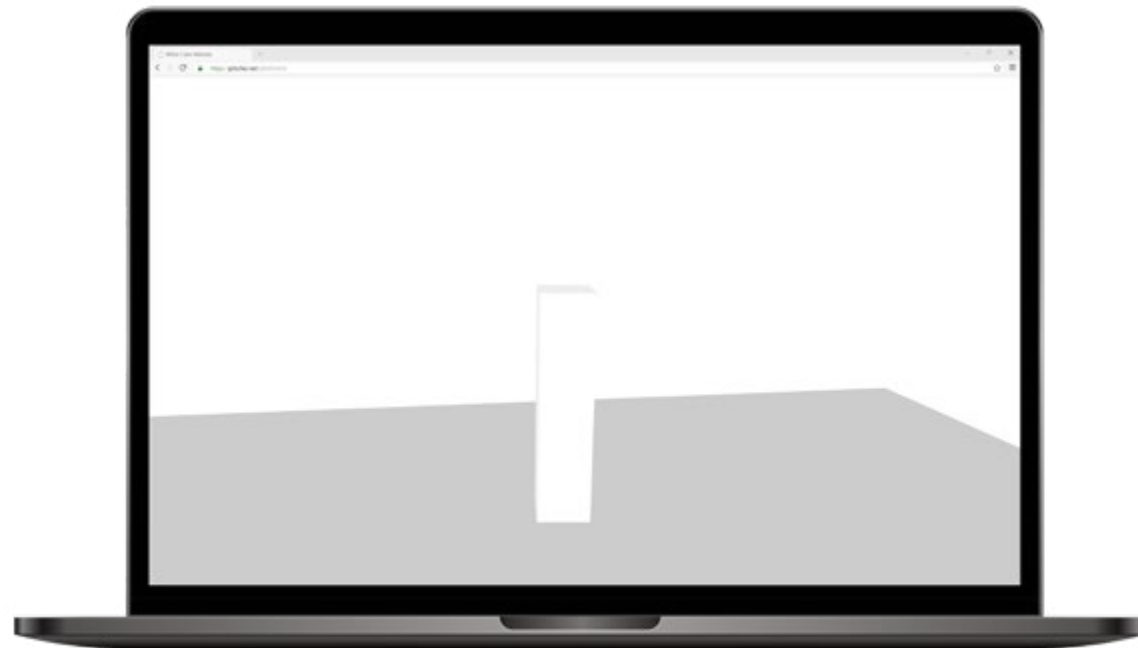


## *Plinth*

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>



# *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](http://pitscher.net/balls.html))
- Squares ([pitscher.net/squares.html](http://pitscher.net/squares.html))
- Color Scroll ([pitscher.net/scroll.html](http://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)



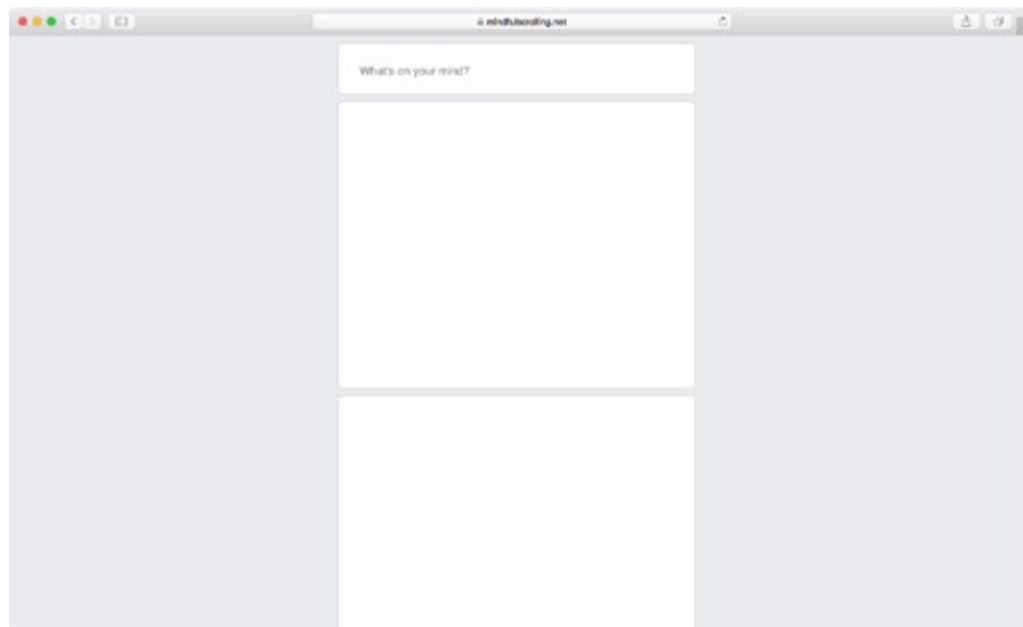


## *mindfulscrolling.net*

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>

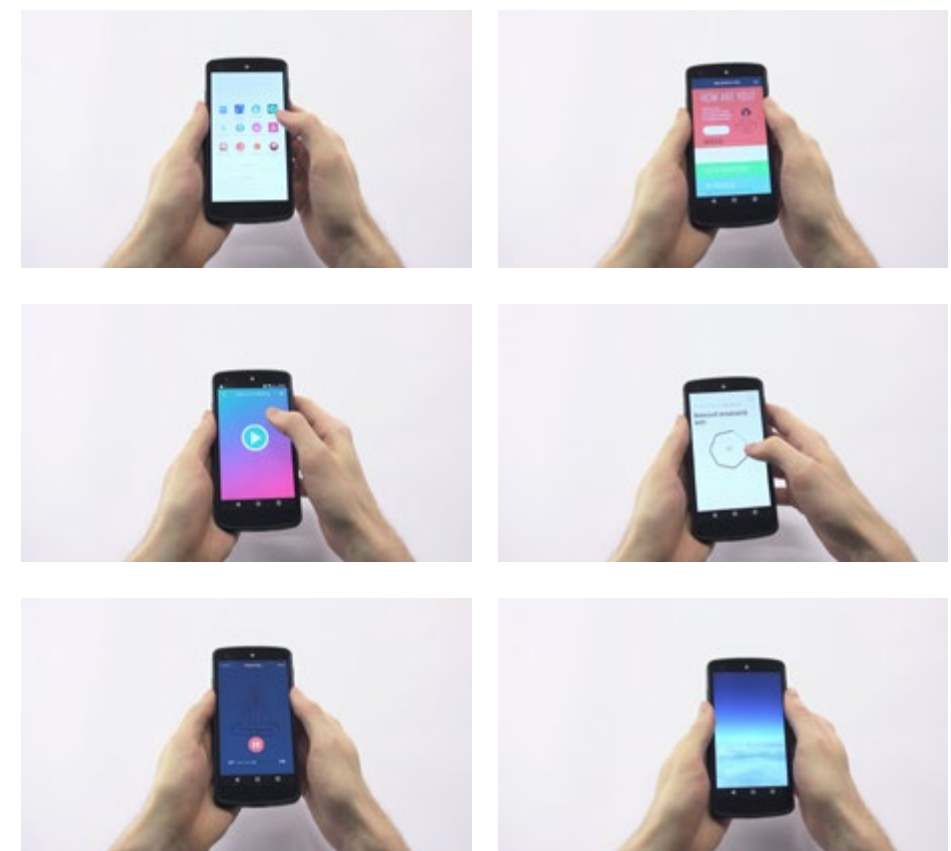


## *Multiple Meditation*

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>



# *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](http://www.socialmediameditation.net)



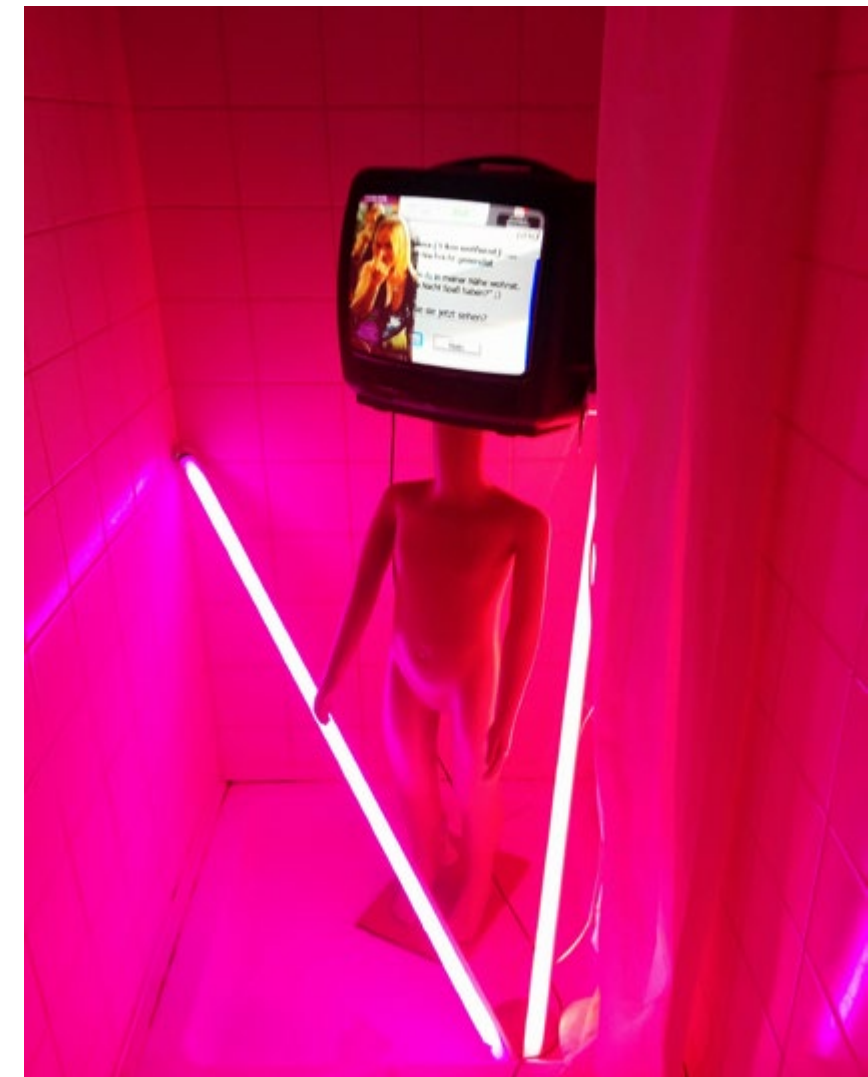
# *Adult Advertisement*

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>



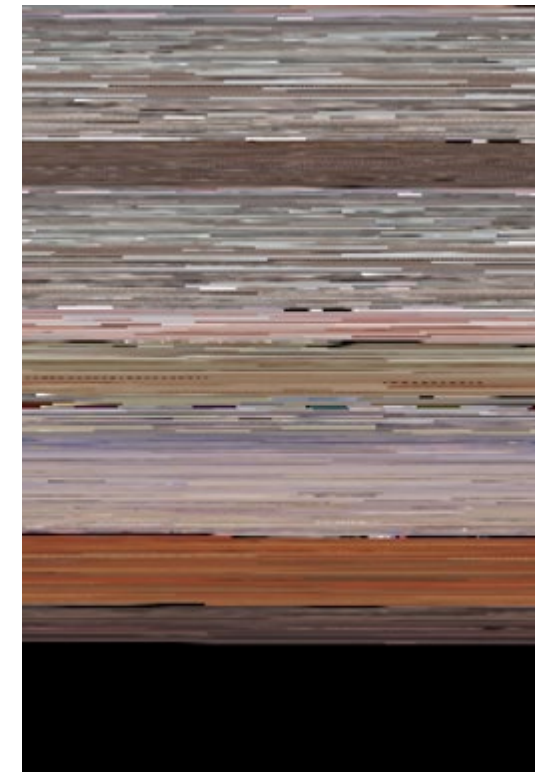
# *Colors of Pornography*

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>





# *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*





# *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>

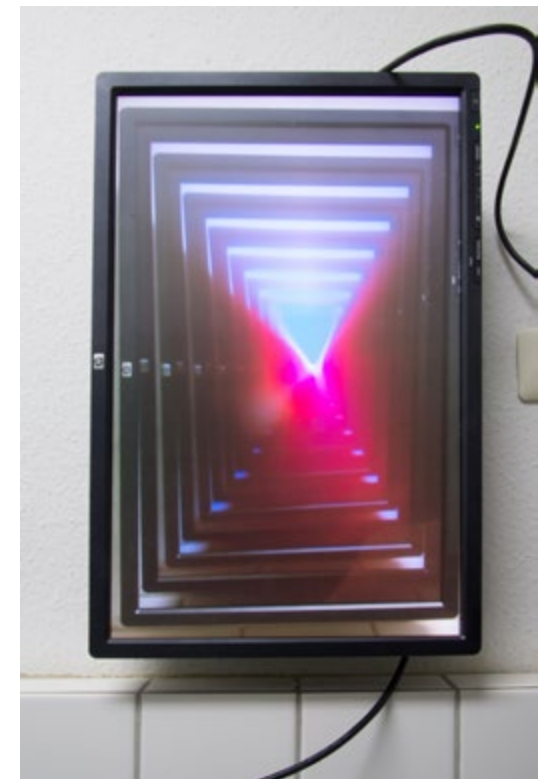


# *Narcissus' Echo*

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>



# *YouKkraine*

Videoinstallation, 2015

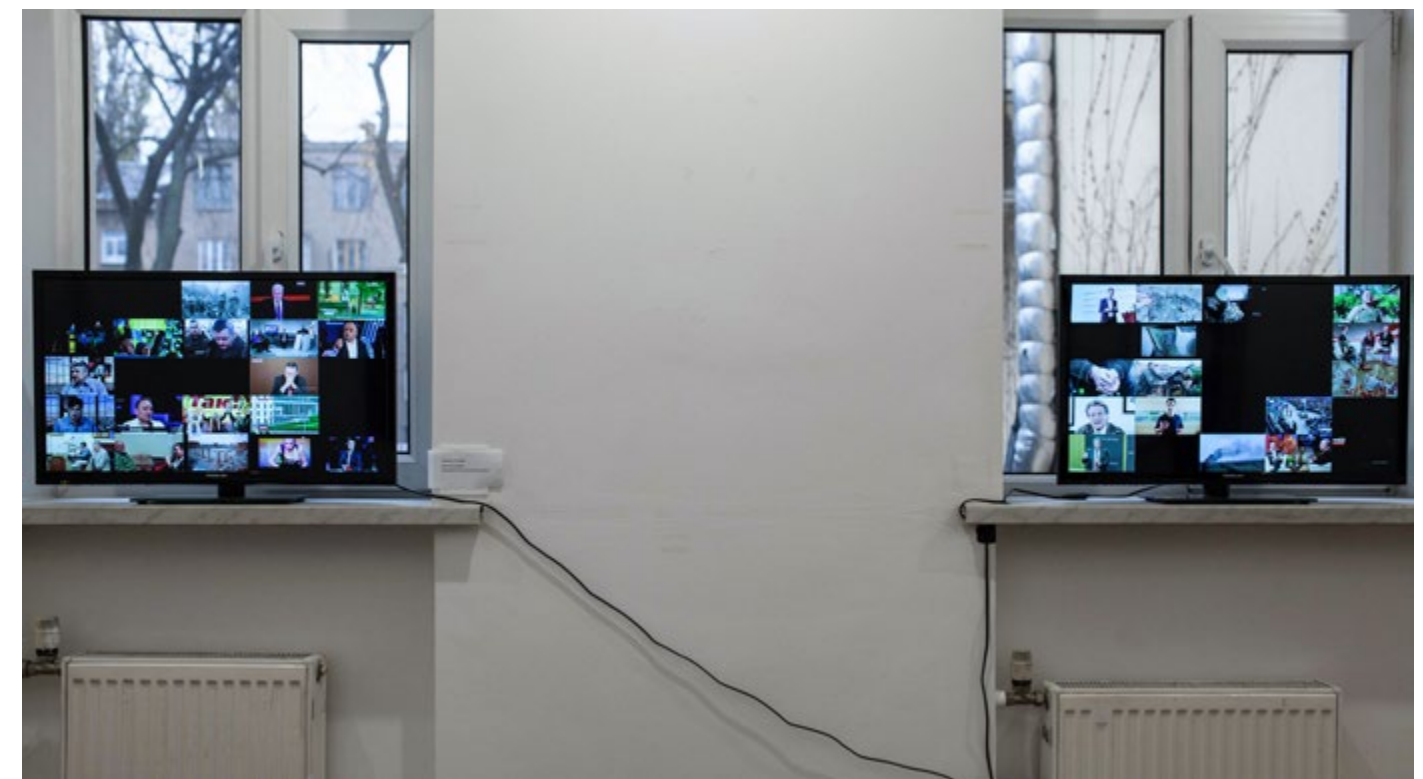
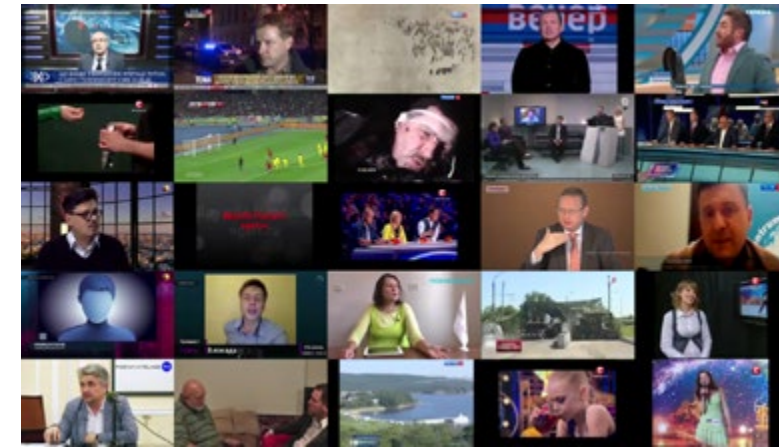
60 min loop

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>



# *My Computer, Hung Up*

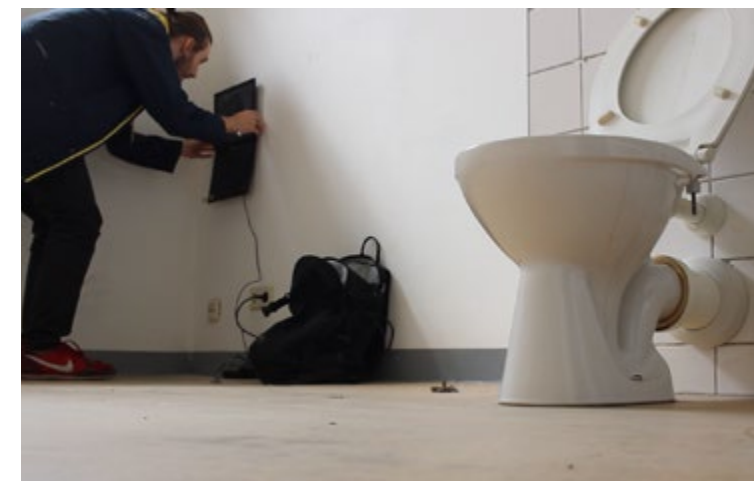
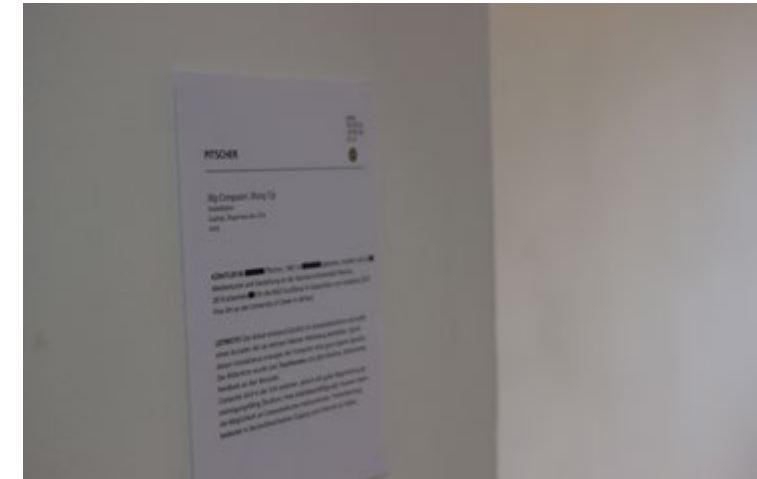
Intervention / Installation, 2015

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>





# *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>



# *People Watching People*

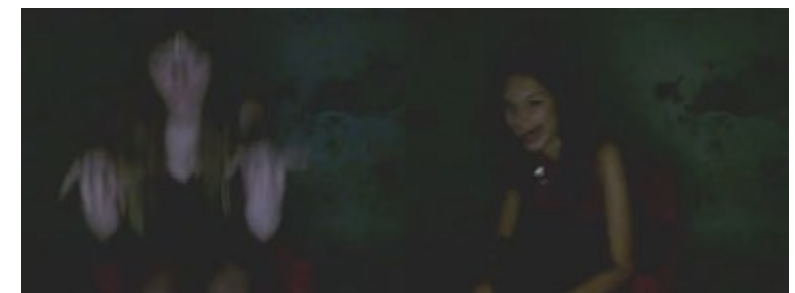
Interactive Installation, 2014

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>





# *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](https://youtu.be/Va_eDBeQ20Q)

