Matthias Schäfer

Pitscher
Portfolio

# *Curriculum Vitae*

Matthias /Pitscher/ Schäfer
matthias@pitscher.net
+49 174 572 0 559

## Exhibitions / Performances

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | *ASMR 4 Earthly Survival*<br>WRO Media Art Biennale, Wroclaw | 2017 | *Social Media Meditation*<br>Spinnereirundgang, Leipzig |
| 2021 | *The Chiromancer / Social Media Meditation*<br>Digital Square, Europark Salzburg | 2017 | *Lonely Island (Showreel)*<br>Kulturfabrik Apolda |
| 2020 | *Internet Yami Ichi / It's Corona Time*<br>Ars Electronica Festival | 2017 | *Sink Venice!*<br>Palazzo Zenobio, Venice |
| 2020 | *Social Media Meditation*<br>Atelier 35, Bucharest | 2017 | *Social Media Meditation*<br>Node Festival, Frankfurt |
| 2020 | *ASMR 4 Earthly Survival*<br>Schlossmusem Linz | 2016 | *Colors of Pornography*<br>Summaery, Weimar |
| 2020 | *Social Media Meditation*<br>ArtWillSaveUs.club | 2016 | *Adult Advertisment*<br>Cheap-Quick-Dirty, Weimar |
| 2020 | *It's Corona Time*<br>cocolands.xyz | 2016 | *Free Coffee*<br>ACUD, Berlin |
| 2020 | *Cybersquat*<br>Keck Kiosk, Basel | 2016 | *Free Coffee*<br>transmediale, Berlin |
| 2019 | *empty.photos*<br>BestOFF, Linz | 2015 | *YouKraine*<br>Museum of Modern Art, Odessa |
| 2019 | *Meanwhile in China,*<br>Ars Electronica Festival, Linz | 2015 | *Unseen / Forgotten*<br>Catalyst Arts, Belfast |
| 2019 | *A study on the Characterics of Douyin,*<br>Xie Zilong Photography Museum, Changsha | 2015 | *My Computer, Hung Up*<br>Galerie Eigenheim, Weimar |
| 2019 | *Oral Office,*<br>space is a space, Berlin | 2014 | *People Watching People*<br>Summaery, Weimar |
| 2018 | *Projected.Capital,*<br>Roehrs & Boetsch, Zurich | 2013 | *Visionaut*<br>Summaery, Weimar |
| 2018 | *whosafraidofredyellowandblue.online*<br>#nfcdab, Valencia | | |
| 2018 | *Social Media Meditation*<br>Digital Arts Festival, Athens | | |
| 2018 | *whitecube.website*<br>The Wrong Digital Art Biennale | | |

## Education

| | |
|---|---|
| since 2018 | Master of Arts<br>Interface Culture<br>University of Art and Design Linz |
| 2017 | Summer Academy,<br>Venice |
| 2017 | Bachelor of fine Arts<br>Media Art and Design<br>Bauhaus Universität Weimar |
| 2015 | Exchange Semester<br>University of Ulster Belfast |

## Prices / Collections

| | |
|---|---|
| 2017 | Media Art Award Weimar |
| 2017 | mindfulscrolling.net<br>Modernist Archive Weimar<br>Acquisition |

## Publications

| | |
|---|---|
| 2021 | This Person does exist *(Essay)*<br>Temes de Disseny (upcoming) |
| 2021 | Wenn Computer sprechen *(Essay)*<br>Die Versorgerin |
| 2020 | Recommended Hashtags *(art book)*<br>Self published |
| 2019 | infields.xyz *(art book)*<br>Sounds like a book |
| 2017 | Mensagraphien *(Scans / Text)*<br>Port Magazin |
| 2016 | #schlaflos *(Algorithmic Poem)*<br>Schlaf Magazin |
| 2015 | Criminal Artivism *(Essay)*<br>Self published |

## Biography

Matthias Schäfer was born in 1991 to a Russian-German immigrant family in the small town of Waldbröl. At a young age, he developed fluid identities in Internet forums and chatrooms, where he came across graphic design software via hacker cultures. In 2012, he began studying media art and design at the Bauhaus University in Weimar. In addition to delving into graphic productions, his interest shifted to contemporary conceptual art.

As Pitscher, he began to realize interactive installations and social experiments in public and digital space. His performative actions were further developed in 2015 at the University of Ulster in Belfast. His works deal critically and analytically with virtual life; often balancing on the border between irony and seriousness.

He is currently studying at the Linz University of Art and Design in the Interface Cultures department, where he is exploring the use, investigation and generation of stories about artificial intelligence.

# *Recommended Hashtags &*
# *More of the Same*

Book & Bot, 2020&21

*Recommended Hashtags* ist ein Buch, welches 5 Jahre meiner Instagram Beiträge zusammen. Neben den Bildern, die häufig banal oder Plattformkritisch sind, werden computergenerierte Hashtags und die Anzahl der Likes und Kommentare gezeigt. Nach der Veröffentlichung des Buches wurden alle Beiträge auf Instagram gelöscht.
Edition: 5

*More of the Same* benutzt die gelöschten Bilder als Datensatz für ein generatives Netzwerk, welches stochastisch neue Pixelkompositionen generiert, die den alten ähneln. Ein Computerprogramm postet täglich ein neues generiertes Bild auf Instagram.
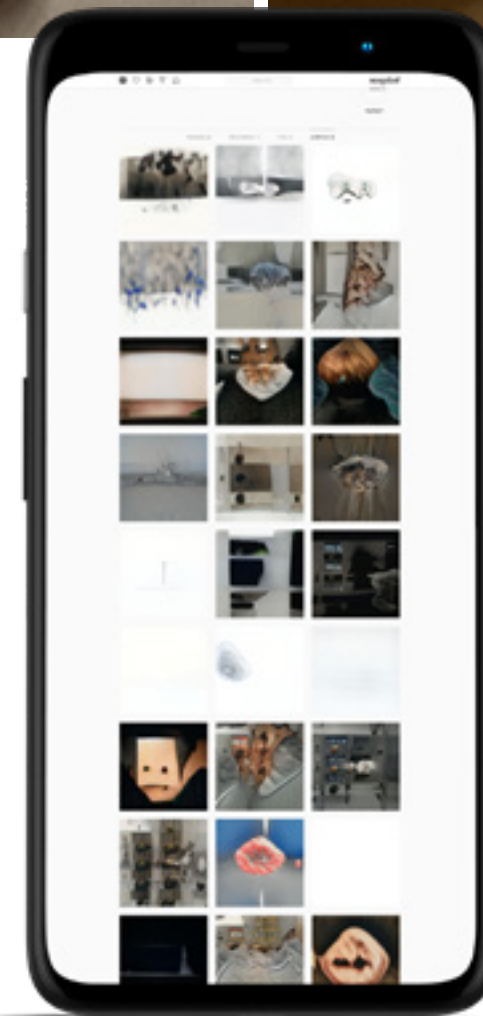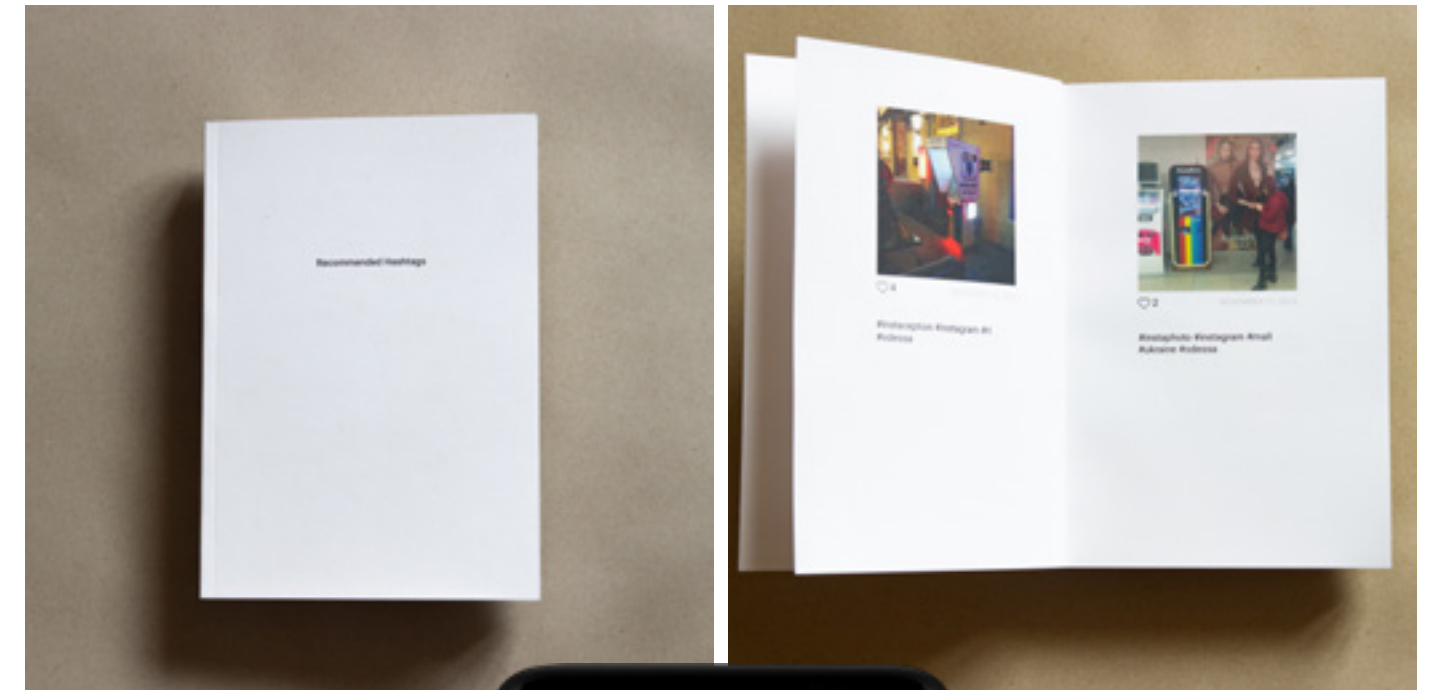
# *this-person-does-exist.com*

Website, 2020

*This Person Does Exist* zeigt den Datensatz und
die versteckte Arbeit hinter der berühmten StyleGAN-
Architektur, die stochastische Gesichter erzeugen kann.
Der Datensatz mit dem Namen Flickr-Faces-HQ (FFHQ)
ist eine Sammlung von hochauflösenden Bildern, die
2018 von der NVIDIA Corporation von öffentlichen Bil-
dern zusammengestellt und unter Creative-Commons-
Lizenz zur Verfügung gestellt wurde.
Die Website dient dazu der Öffentlichkeit über die Praxis
des maschinellen Lernens als datenhungriges Ungetüm
aufzuklären, das nur existieren kann, weil Forscher und
Unternehmen Daten aus dem Internet sammeln.
this-person-does-exist.com

Neben dem Online-Werk wird ein gleichnamiges Essay
erscheinen, dass sich mit künstlerischen Experimenten
mit Datensätzen auseinander setzt.
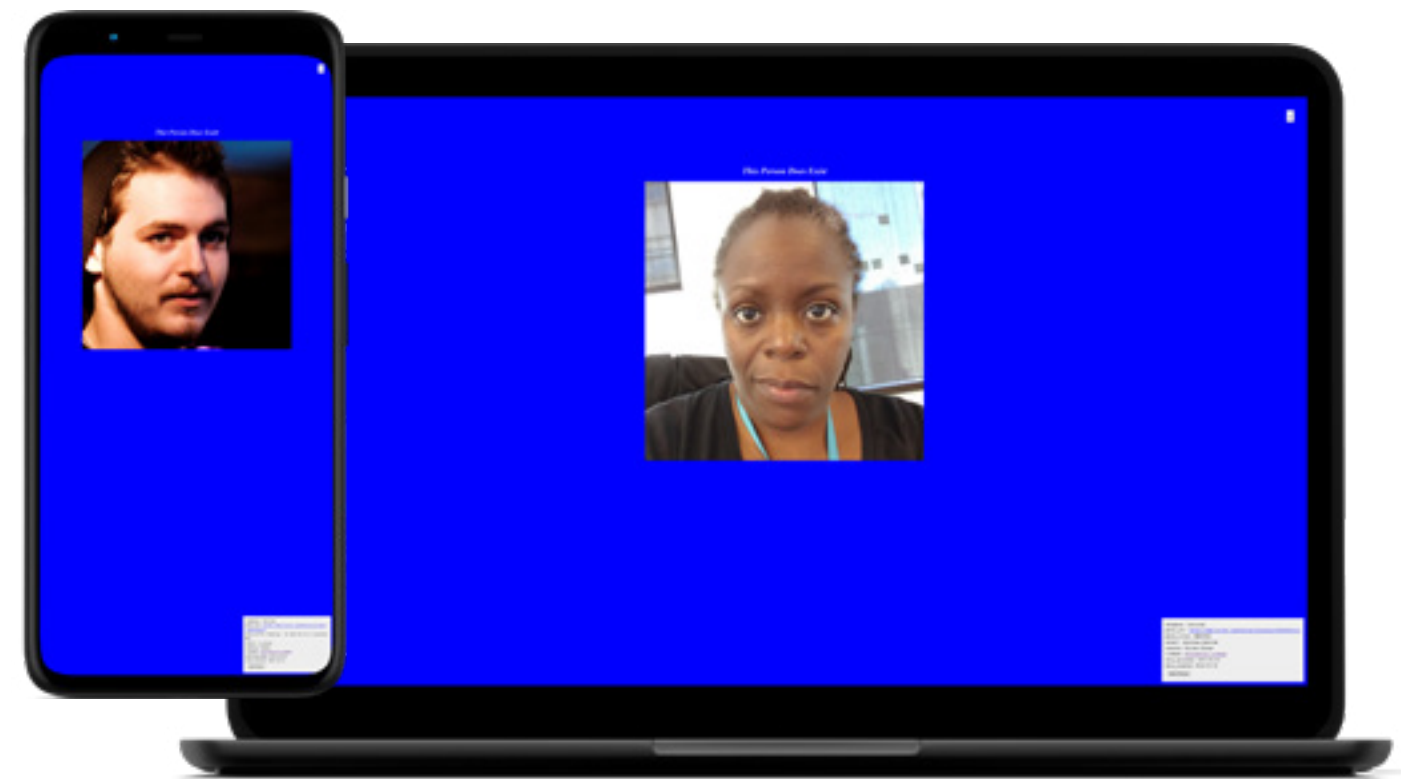
# *The Chiromancer*
## Interactive Installation, 2020

The Chiromancer is a hand reading AI that writes pre-
dictions about a person's life. This machine upgrades
the ancestral practice of palm reading, hybridizing bio-
metric data with a cybernetic infusion of cloud-based
knowledge. Like many of the other devices we are using
today it collects, stores and extrapolates user data.
The Chiromancer explores how trust, hopes and wishes
are put into seemingly cold machines.
the-chiromancer.info

In collaboration with Giacomo Piazzi

# *doggg.art*
Website, 2020

Doggg.art is a generative big dada collage consisting of ~30k images from Instagram tagged with #dogart. A machine learning algorithm (U^2-Net) automatically removed the background—and often much more—of the collected images. Your computer than displays the cleaned images randomly, so the output is always different and changing.
Instagram has become the biggest tool for artists to find an audience and a community. Every possible niche can be found through the use hashtags - #dogart with around a million posts is only one example for the immense creative output on the image platform.
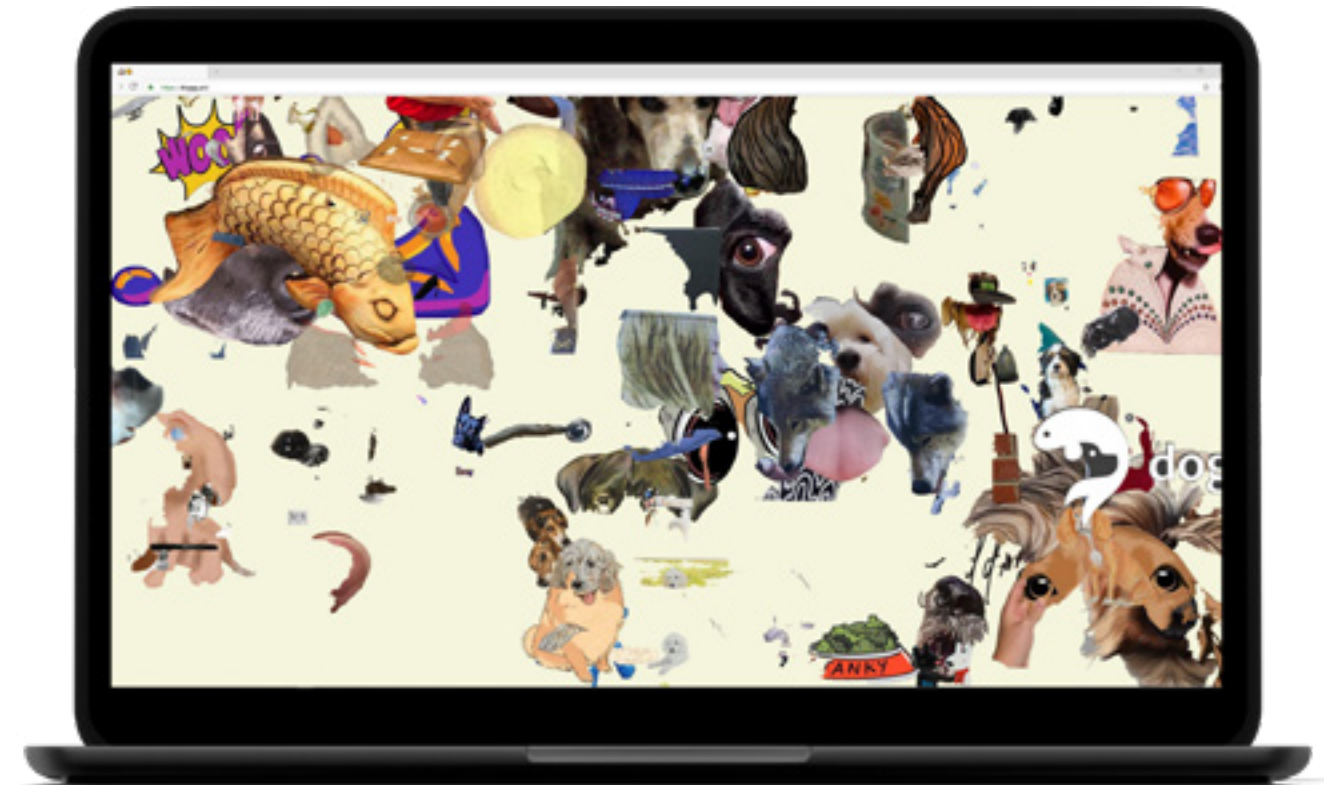
# *Cybersquat*

Performance & Installation, 2020

Für squatted.online habe ich einen kleinen Kiosk in
Basel bewohnt. Während ich drinnen wohnte, konnten
mich die Leute über Bildschirme von der Straße aus
und über einen Livestream online bei meiner Bildschirm-
arbeit beobachten. Im Laufe der Woche traf ich mehrere
Menschen und sammelte unsere Geschichten in einem
Tagebuch.
Am Ende der Woche blieb eine unordentliche Installation
in einer nahe gelegenen Galerie übrig.

Journal Edition: 30

# *A study on the Cha-racterics of Douyin*

6 ch Videoinstallation, 2019

# *Meanwhile in China*

Videoinstallation / 6x3m Wallpaper, 2019

The work explores the Chinese social network Douyin from a different perspective. The app is better known internationally as TikTok, but the content in the Chinese version is heavily censored.

When searching for terms like „re-education camp", the user is completely denied the search function.

The video installation, which runs in a ~8-hour loop, shows entertaining content as well as Chinese propaganda from news stations against, for example, the Hong Kong protests. Search terms such as Donald Trump lead to videos that do not show the American president himself, suggesting that facial recognition is being used for censorship.

In addition to screen recordings, we worked with graphs and data points found online that show the exploding growth and user distribution of the platform. However, the graphs themselves are stripped of any labeling, making them unreadable.

In collaboration with Sofia Braga
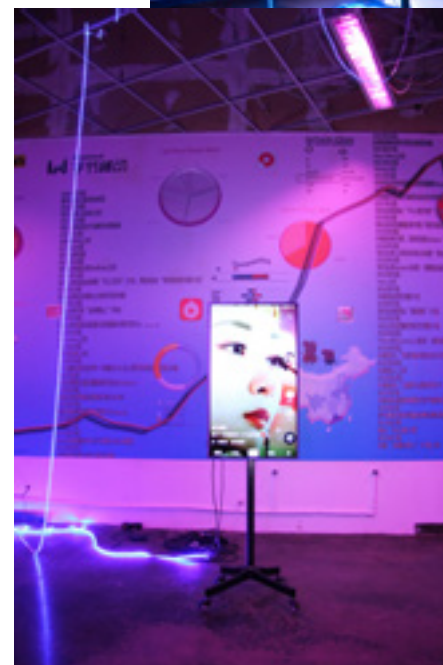
# *infields*

book & website, 2019

Infields is an exploration of wireless signals and land-scapes. It connects field recordings of a rumanian cell tower site with a printed publication. The site is located close to Făgăraş and consists of 4 towers sending radio and cellular signals which were captured with microphones and antennas. The book is 50cm tall and opened 50cm wide with mostly photoprints that are covered by QR Codes. By scanning the codes with a smartphone the reader can tune in to the captured recordings.

images by Eliot & revista22
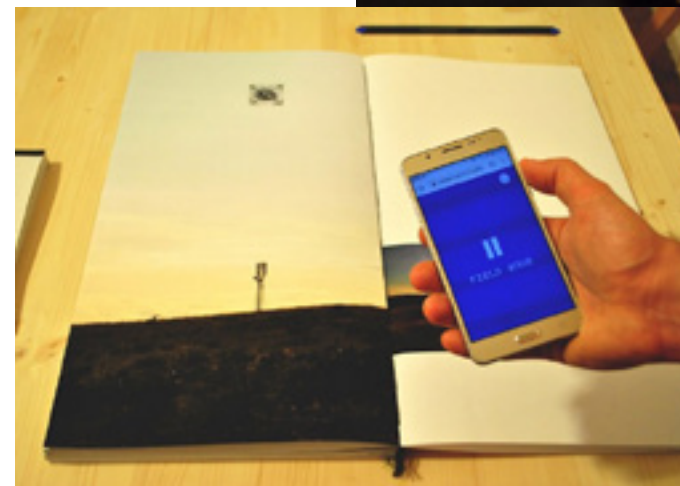
# *Christina – AI Mouse*

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 kickstarter campaign launched, which failed gracefully. The world is not ready for the future of computing, yet.

https://www.kickstarter.com/pro-jects/1253342994/christina-ai-mouse
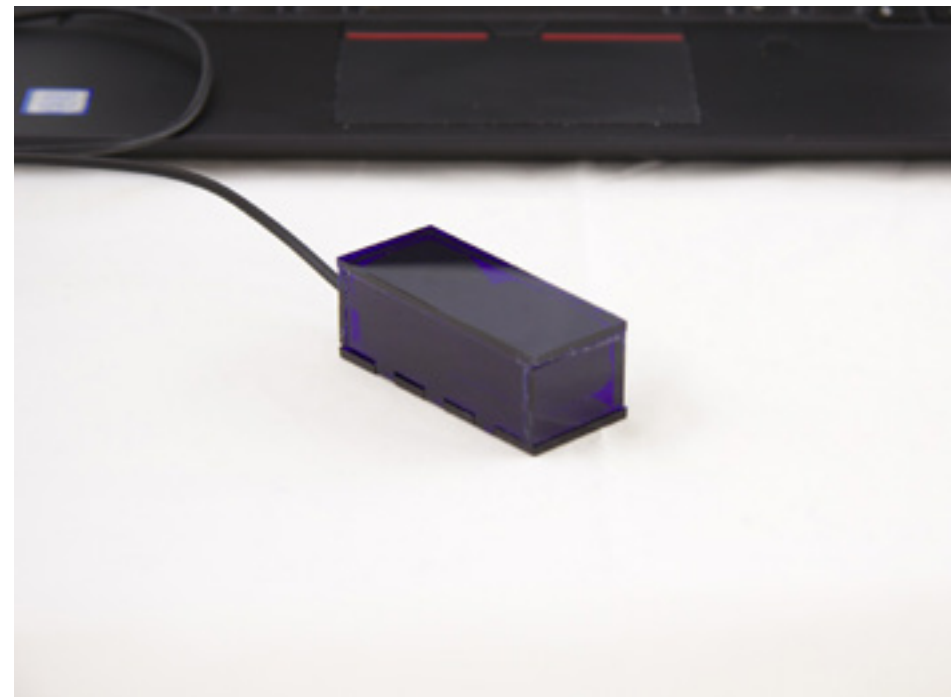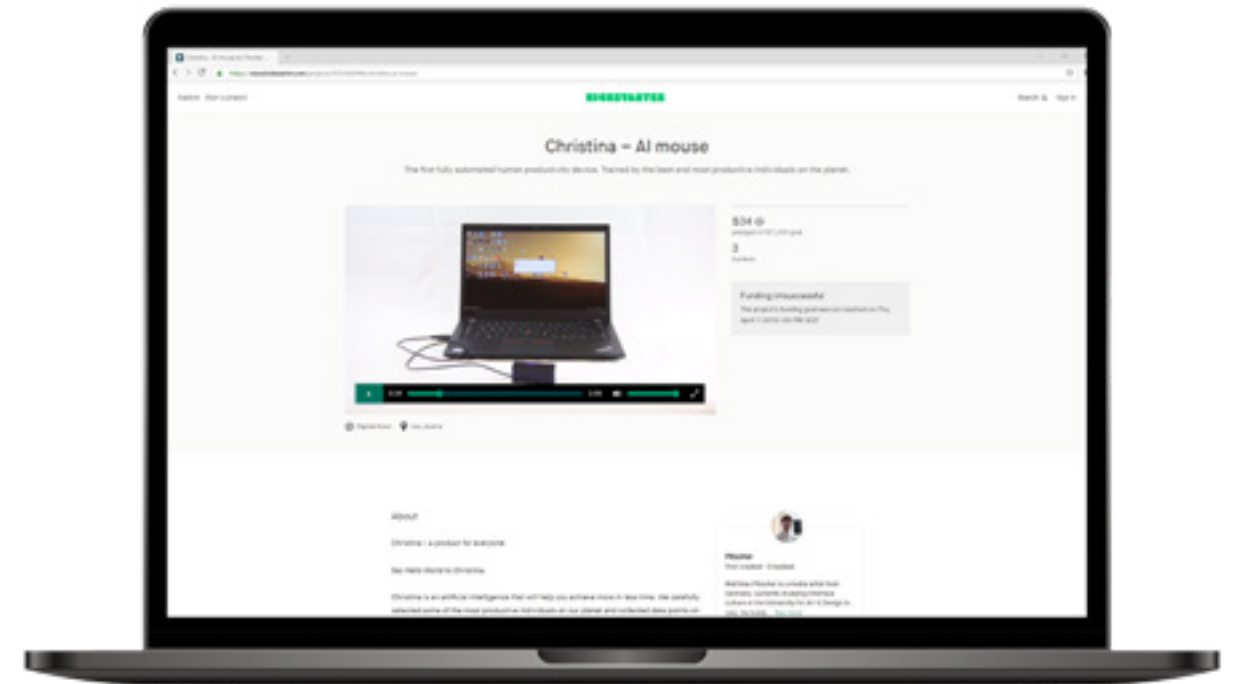
# *missing.pictures*
Website, 2018

„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 scroll through this collage (or graveyard) of long lost memories.

https://missing.pictures

# 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
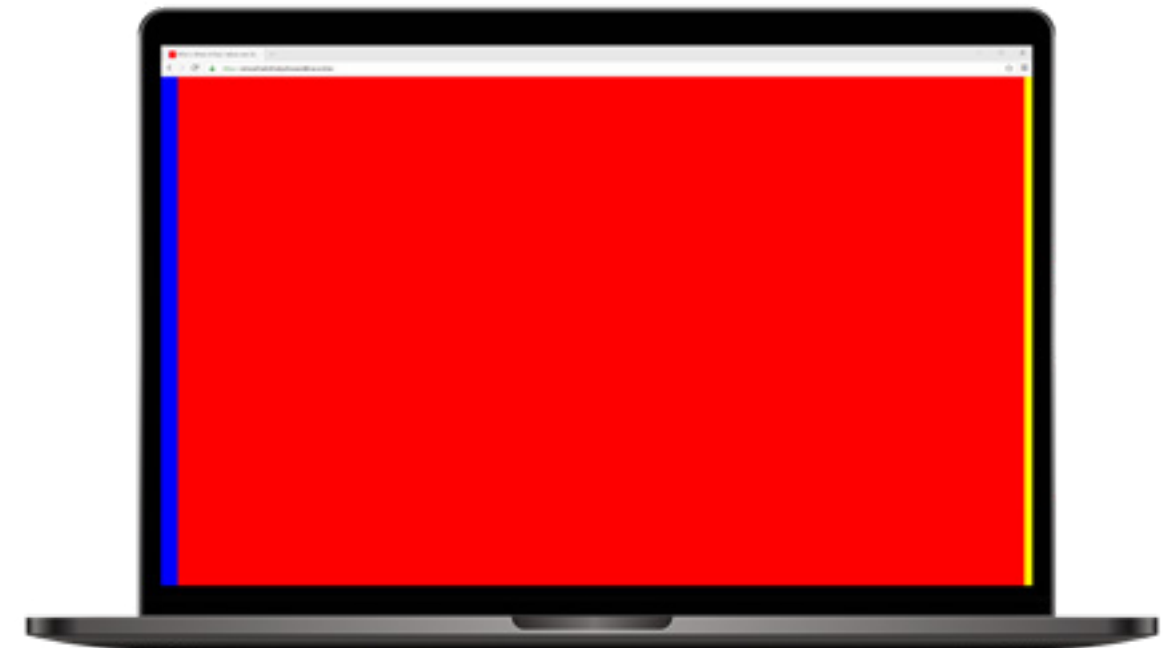
# *Lonely Island*
Installation, 2017

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`)
- 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)

# *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.
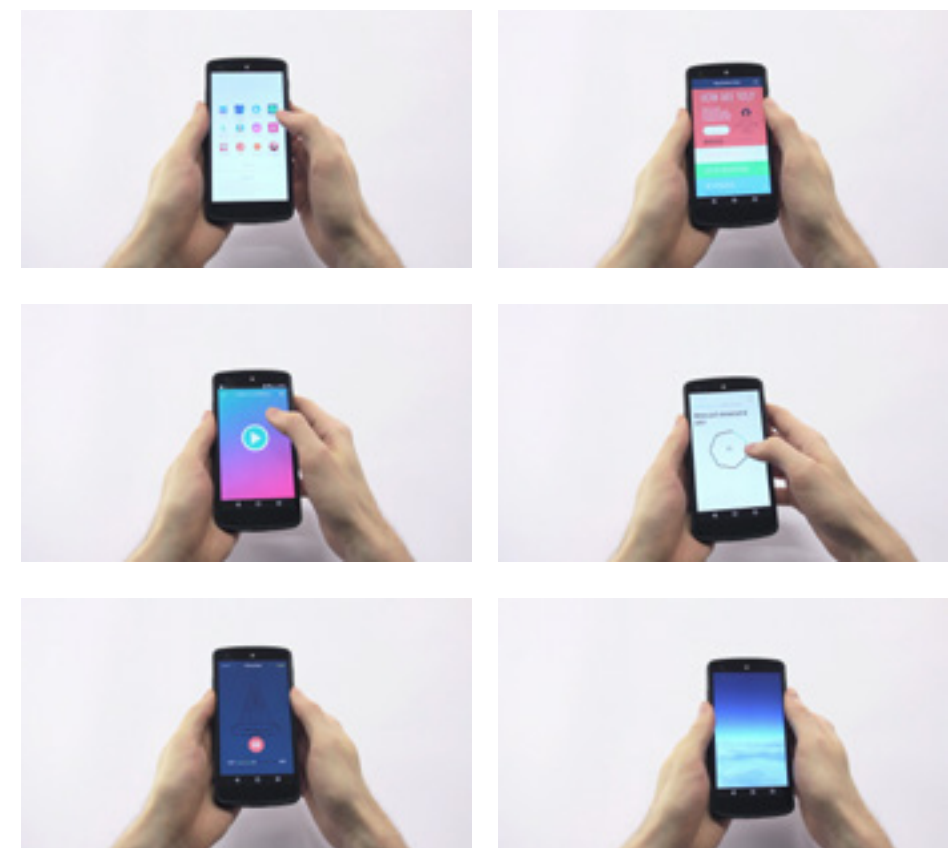
https://mindfulscrolling.net
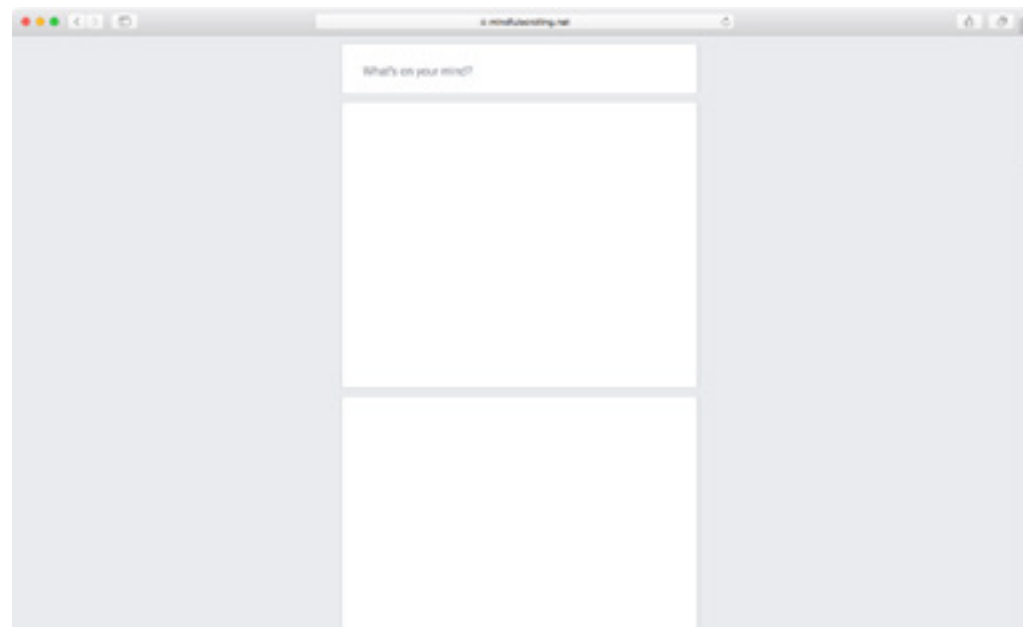


# *Multiple Meditation*
### Video, 2017

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 excercise at the same time.

https://youtu.be/aEM83k5fIEM

# Social Media Meditation

Guided Meditation, 2016-2020

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. Excercises 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

# *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
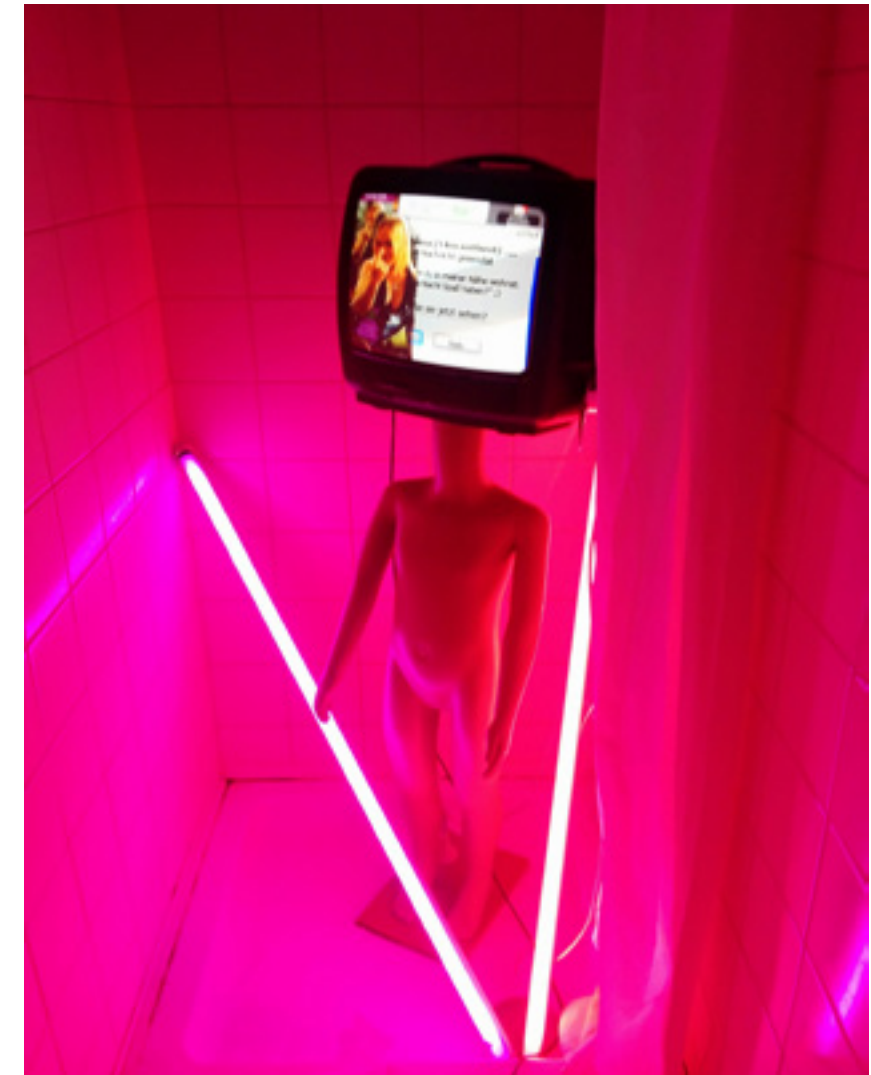
# *Colors of Pornography*
### Generative Installation, 2016

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
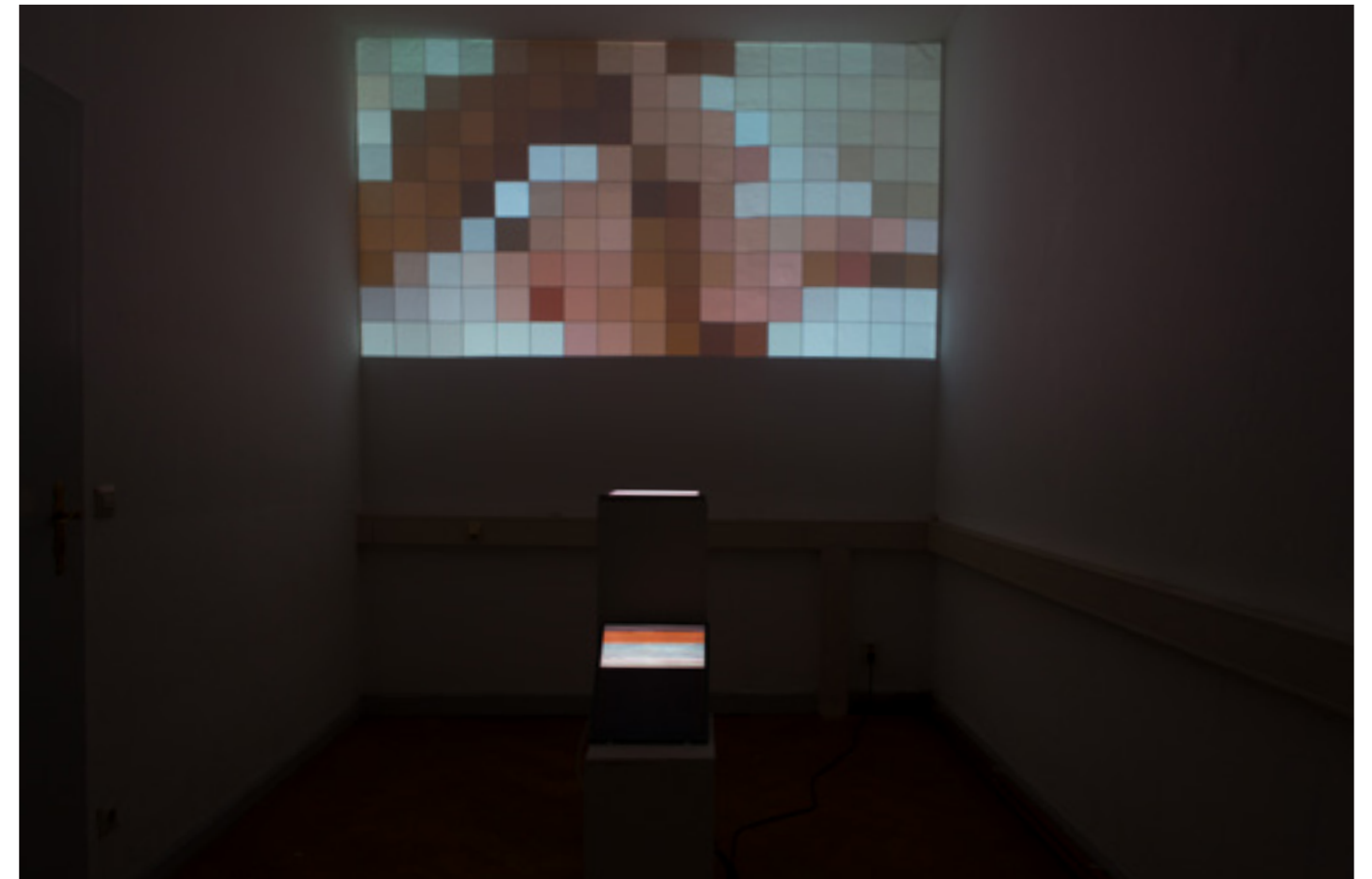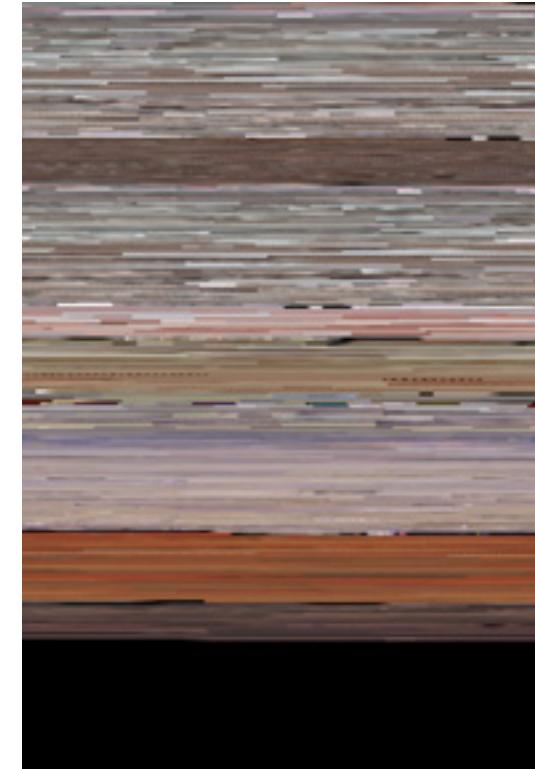
## *Free Coffee*
Performance / CG Poetry, 2016

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
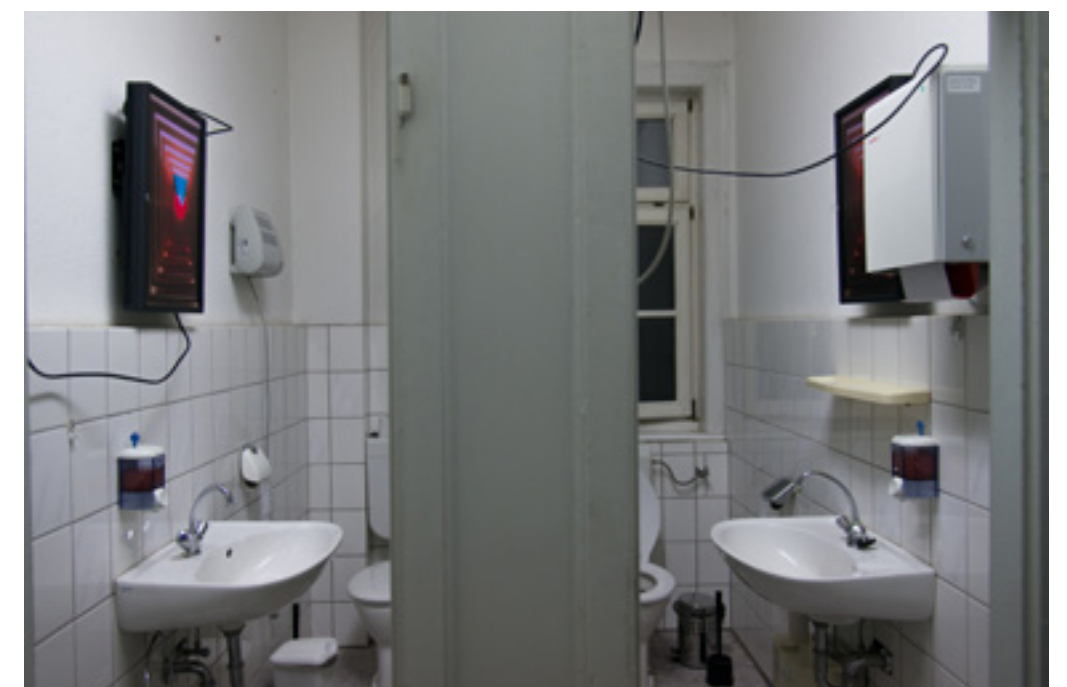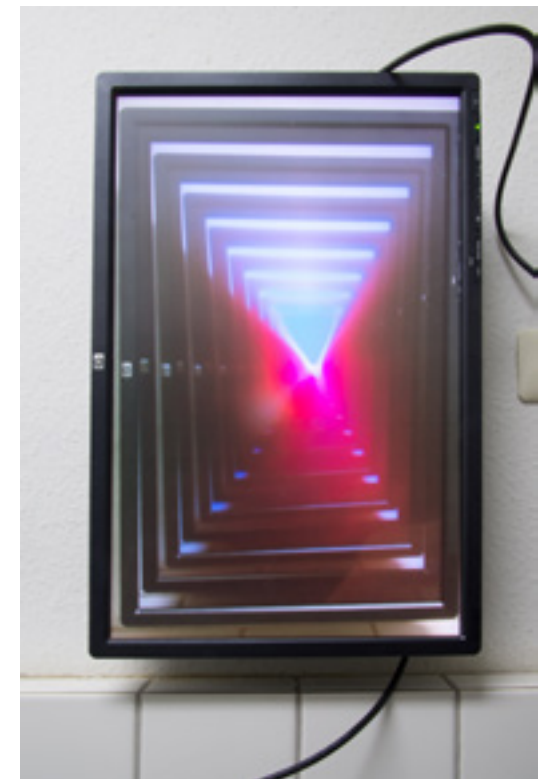
# *YouKraine*

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 "uk-
raine" from a german geolocation and the other sho-
wing results for "украина" with a ukranian IP-Adress.
This example shows quite clearly how we are immer-
sed in our informational filter bubble depending on our
location. This is espescially 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
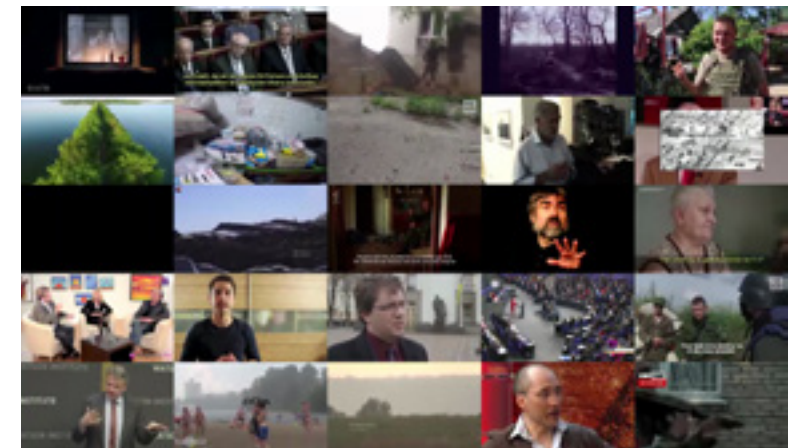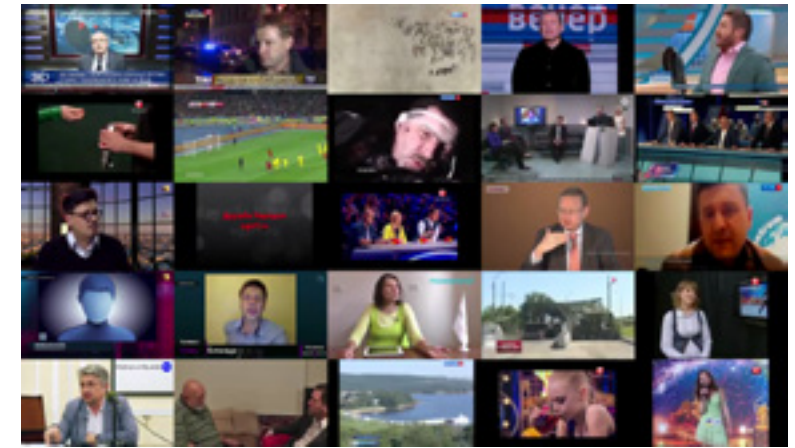
## *My Computer, Hung Up*

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
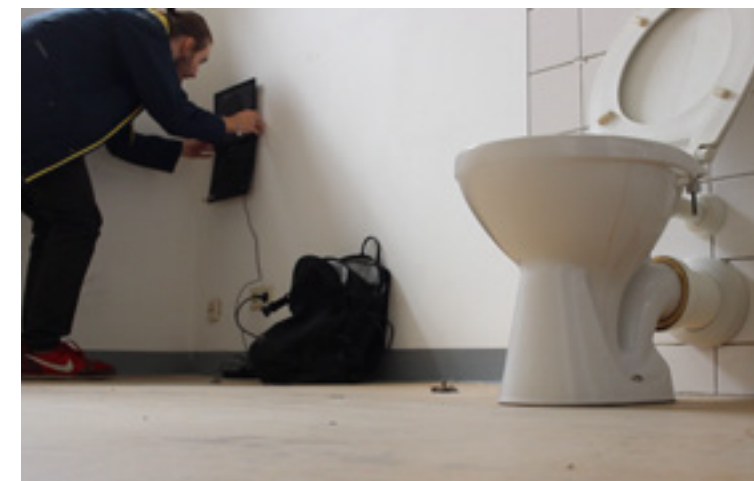
# *Unseen / Forgotten*
Interactive Installation, 2015



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
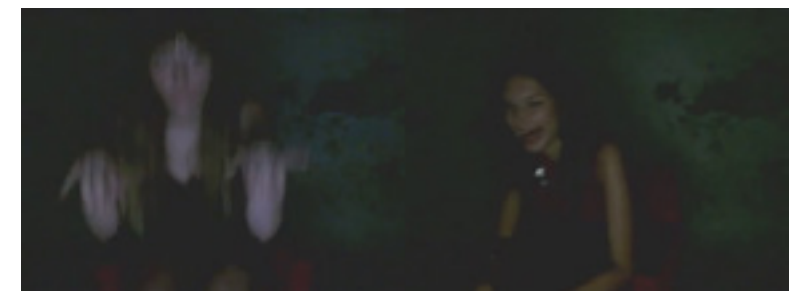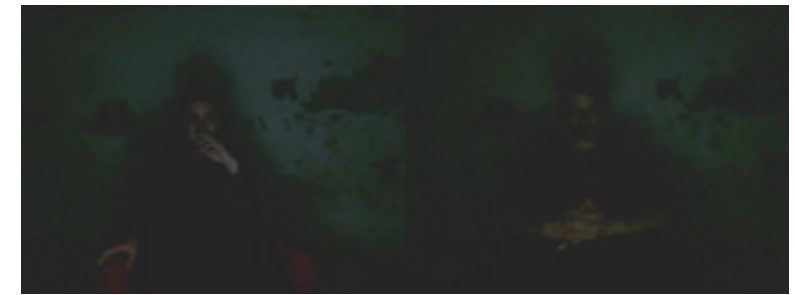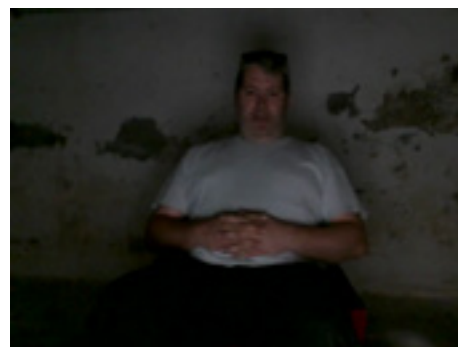
# *Public Profile*
## Public Intervention, 2014

In einer demoähnlichen Intervention wurden Menschen auf der Straße nach Facebook-Likes gefragt. Gleichzeitig wurde mein persönliche Profil in eine facebook-Seite umgewandelt und damit für alle öffentlich gemacht. Aus Freunden wurden plötzlich Fans.
In einer Zeit kurz nach den Snowden-Enthüllungen war dies ein Experiment, sich seiner Privatsphäre zu entledigen. Gleichzeitig zeigt es, wie bereitwillig wir unsere persönlichen Daten herausgeben, indem wir einen Akt der Werbung für unsere eigene Persönlichkeit vollziehen.
Vielleicht werden unsere Namen und Profile in Zukunft ein Teil von uns selbst sein, den jeder auf der Straße sehen kann...

https://youtu.be/Va_eDBeQ20Q