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ca. 1989, IT

Maria Orciuoli is a media artist and cultural publicist with a decade in coordinating projects linking disparate fields across art forms and disciplines.

Dubbing her practice 'constructive pastiche,' she navigates the fields of filmmaking, speculative design, and creative coding, often engaging with themes of perception, consumer culture, and the influence of 21st-century technology on human subjectivity.

In a parallel universe, she runs KO-HUM, a communications agency promoting artists and cultural producers working in music and performing arts. In this realm, she developed a spearheaded thinking around digital platforms and public relations, working with clients and collaborators such as Studio Carsten Nicolai, NOTON, Monkeytown Records, Modeselektor, Subtext Recordings, Multiverse Music Publishing, Easterndaze Festival, Siciliano Contemporary Ballet, Norient, Berlin's Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Halle am Berghain, among others.

Maria Orciuoli graduated in Economics (2011) and International Management (2013) while living in Rome, Lisbon, Paris, and Berlin.

Since 2021, she has been MA student at the Interface Cultures department of the University of Art & Design in Linz, where she currently resides.

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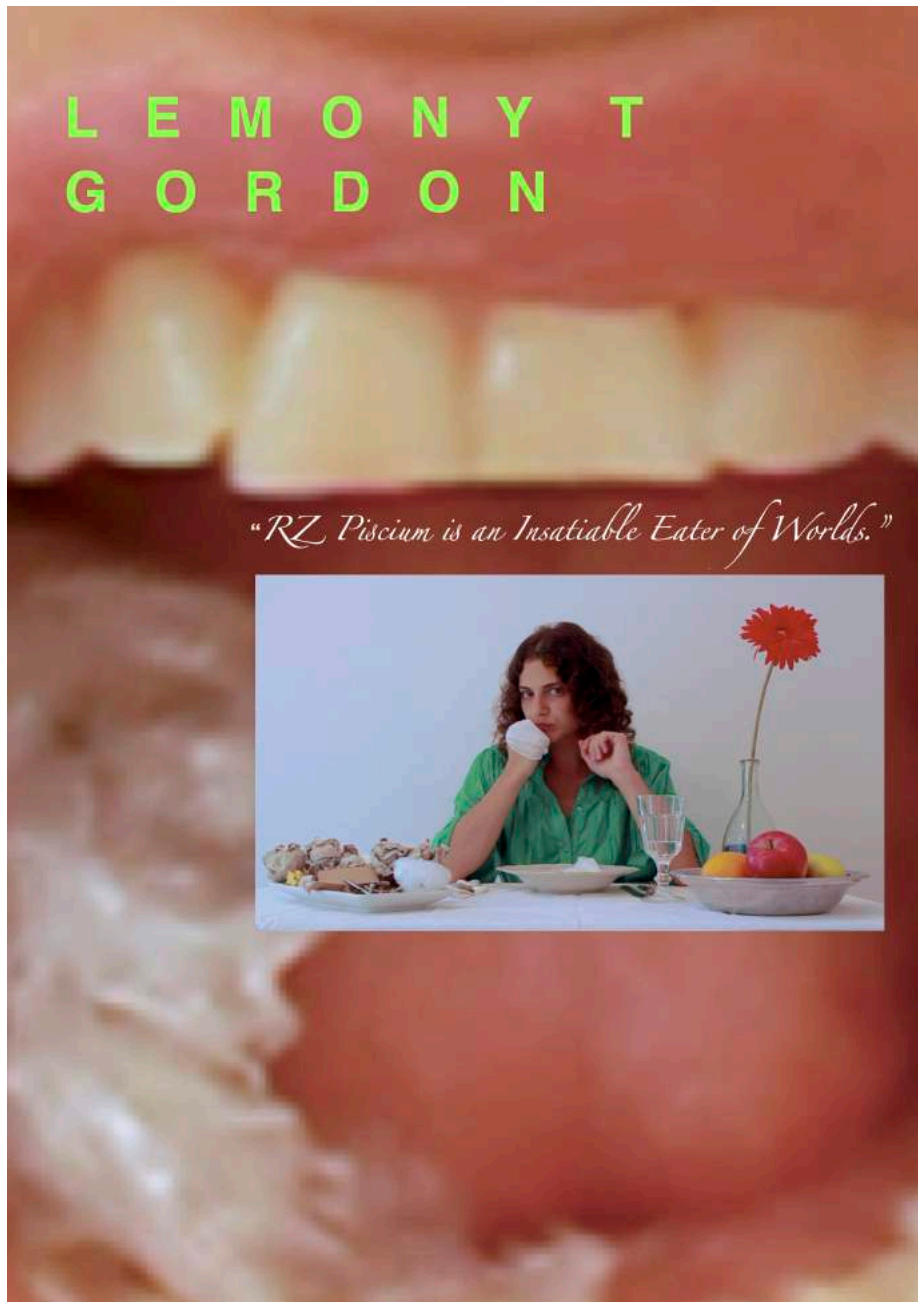
Online portfolio: www.lemonytgordon.com

Commercial works: www.ko-hum.com

Creative coding: [Github](#)

Research: [ResearchGate](#)

[linkedin](#) / [instagram](#)



LEMONY T GORDON

Lemony T Gordon is the name of the artistic personality I created in 2019.

Working with experimental approaches to storytelling, moving image and sound, my practice navigates the fields of documentary, fiction and creative coding, while engaging with themes of communication technology, perception and identity construction. Up to now, this process has resulted in the creation of speculative interfaces, performance, sound and video works.

www.lemonytgordon.com

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds - 2019, poster

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds

2019-2022

Keywords: consumer culture, saturated self, acceleration, catharsis

Format: digital video (1920 × 1080, HD), color, sound (stereo), no dialogues

Duration: 00:07:24

Private video [link](#)

Synopsis

A girl caught in a parody of feminine grace ravenously eats a pile of waste unsettling through a candid exploration of a binge-eating ritual until the closing purging ceremony. The female character takes on the role of the trickster figure, playing at the edge of self-destructive tendencies – an allusion to the 'accelerationist' ideas increasingly common across the current technological and political landscape. A commentary on the current 'capitalist hangover,' the video stages the symptoms of a disease, pointing to the emotional dimensions of this exhaustion.

Acknowledgements

Camera assistance: Ilenia Orciuoli

The video features a scripted and improvised performance; it was shot in three hours using a digital, consumer-grade camera and on a construction site in the industrial town of Solofra, in the South of Italy.

The title is inspired by the 2017 Astronomical Journal [report](#) on the "RZ Piscium" star, orbiting at 550 light-years away in the constellation Pisces, and dubbed by Indiana University astronomer Catherine Pilachowski as "eater of worlds" for being surrounded by the wreckage of planets it has consumed.

The soundtrack of the video features recordings of Sun Drum experiments kindly provided by Terredaria – an Italian association promoting the research, and early childhood education in sonic art. In the film, the primordial drum sounds and the female vocals allow multiple identities and perspectives to emerge.



RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds - 2019, video stills

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds

A response to the promises of the globalized world, whose ideology of growth, prosperity and progress is based on value extraction and exploiting the many. Can certain developments in society be put on hold, or is it everything already in pieces?

Saturation and catharsis are the leading themes of this piece which puts up for discussion the relationship between things and the body, between the artificial and the natural, as well as the manifestation of the 'mass-produced', whether commodity, image, or identity construction – and its inevitable fate as waste.

'Consume until you die' – the logic behind the consumer world, finds expression in cliché images, prefabricated offers of identities whose pleasurable, comforting and creative components can't be denied. At the same time, it's evident that the expansion inherent in this consumerist logic not only exploits the natural resources and different ways of living but in fact also dooms those who participates or benefit from it.

This work looks at the question of what the consumer culture logic might mean for the physical and psychological dimensions of the human being. Filtered through the experience of recovering from a food-related mental illness, the video's narrative affronts society's mainstream values within the context of a general socio-critical upheaval.

In the video, the body's actions metaphorically map social constraints. The performance contrasts the cliché of femininity portrayed by the media with the life reality of the female protagonist staging the symptoms of an eating disorder. The narrative reveals post-modernism's interconnections as well as its rapture.



RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds - 2019,
video stills

Conceptual framework

Performance approach (time, actions & setting)	Video & sound making approach	Theoretical approach
Translation of the physical and psychological states into actions & cinematic/theatrical forms (scripted vs improvised performance)	Shot using a consumer-grade digital camera, the work emphasizes the qualities of standard definition video	Postmodernism & Metamodernism: (cultural/world-view transition) - Luke Turner (2011) - Daniel Görtz & Emil Friis (2017) - Timotheus Vermeulen & Robin van den Akker (2016)
The performance took place on a construction site: a liminal space and metaphor for change, transformation and new possibilities	Exploration of Sergey Eisenstein's Overtonal montage technique: use of metric, rhythmic and tonal montage simultaneously to convey abstract ideas	Accelerationism vs Degrowth (critical & social theory) - Alex Williams & Nick Srnicek (2013); - Nick Land (2017)
Physicality becomes the metaphoric vehicle of collective desire existing in the unstable tension with the requirement to get back in firm control	The soundtrack features recordings of Sun Drum experiments; the primordial drum sounds and the female vocals allow multiple identities and perspectives to emerge	Surrealism (visual arts) - 20s Europe: representation of the artist's idea or feeling - "creativity from the subconscious mind"
Analogy between binge-eating-purging cycle and consumer culture: consumption trance		Magic Realism (literature) - 20s Latin America: juxtaposition of the normal and the dream-like
The "door" scene marks the time between what was and what's next		Saturated Self (psychology) - Kenneth Gergen, 1991
Transformation of a destructive impulse into a hopeful, cathartic gesture		



current state



dis-ease staging / saturated self



rite of passage / liminal self



confrontation



catharsis



transformation



inner



liminal



outer

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds
interactive installation

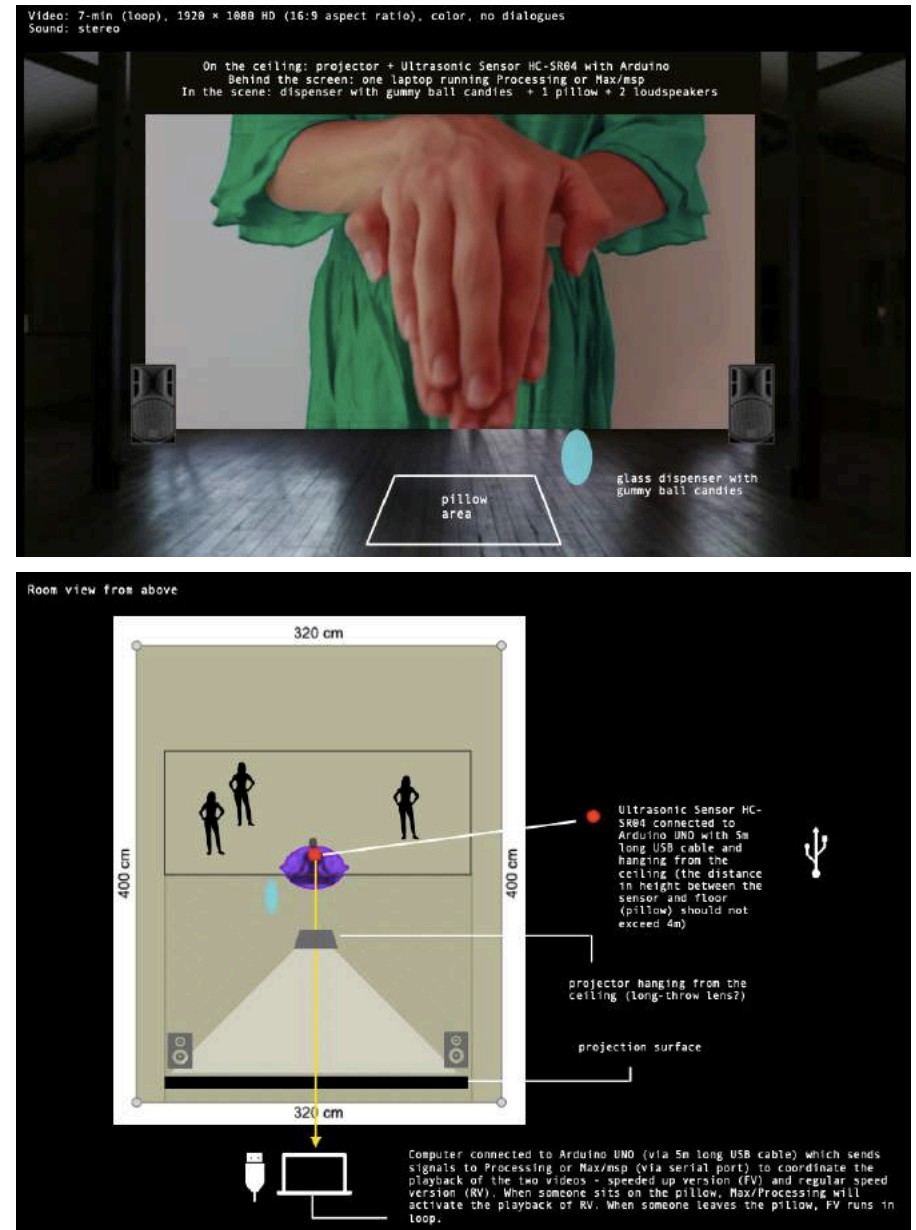
Format: 7-min one-channel digital video installation, color, sound, no dialogues;

Hardware & software: custom electronics, laptop running Max/msp, two loudspeakers, ultrasonic sensor, custom pillow with pressure sensor, custom gummy candies dispenser.

The video installation uses a custom sensor seat to detect if a person is sitting in front of the screen. When the sensor detects the viewer's body presence, the artwork is activated and starts playing the video at regular speed. When no one is sitting, the playback function displays the video sequences at very high speed.

This procedure seeks to make the artwork 'consumable' only when the spectator assumes a grounded position – this gesture encourages the audience to enter the state of "presence" as a strategy to separate oneself from the instance of time and the technology-accelerated world.

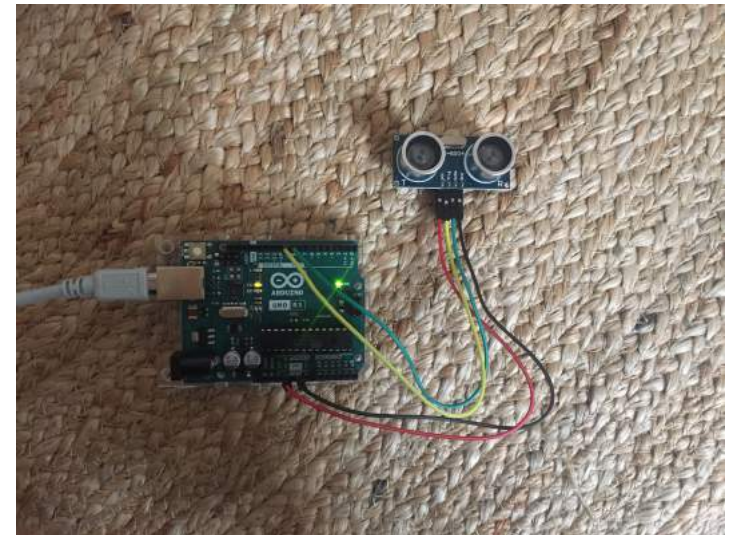
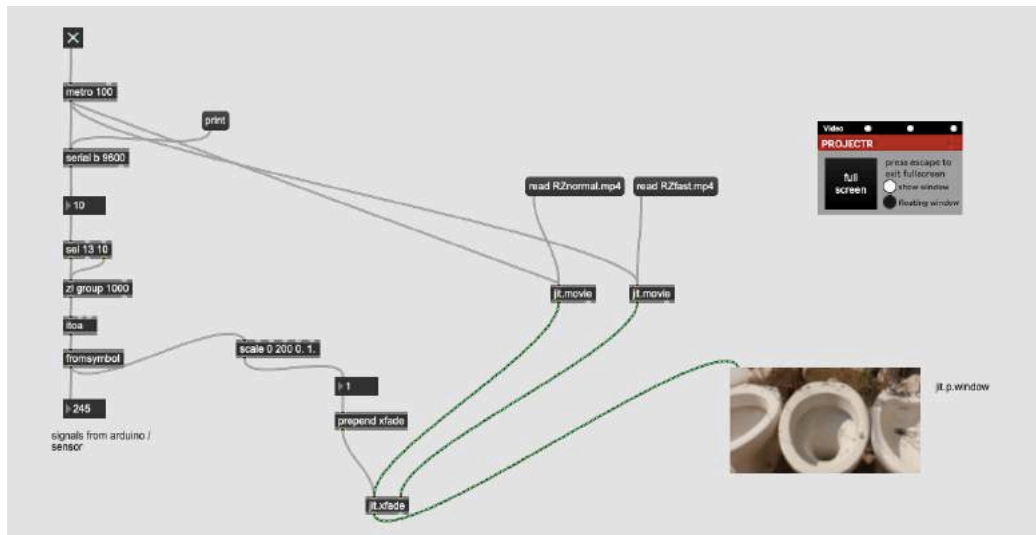
The placement of a gummy candies dispenser next to the seating area invites the audience to "chew" and ruminate on the issues of overconsumption while also making edible a part of the installation.



RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds

Hardware & Software Prototyping

Arduino & Ultrasonic Sensor



Arduino & Max/msp connected with serial port

```
distance: 1184.95 cm
distance: 1184.53 cm
distance: 1184.73 cm
distance: 1184.85 cm
distance: 1184.76 cm
distance: 1185.82 cm
distance: 1184.75 cm
distance: 1184.83 cm
distance: 1184.70 cm
distance: 1184.66 cm
distance: 1184.85 cm
distance: 1184.85 cm
distance: 1184.68 cm
distance: 1184.78 cm
distance: 1184.49 cm
distance: 1184.33 cm
distance: 1184.36 cm
distance: 1184.51 cm
distance: 1184.82 cm
distance: 1184.59 cm
distance: 1184.78 cm
distance: 1184.31 cm
distance: 1184.53 cm
distance: 1184.48 cm
distance: 1184.42 cm
distance: 1184.48 cm
distance: 1184.44 cm
distance: 1184.17 cm
distance: 1184.53 cm
distance: 1184.29 cm
distance: 1184.66 cm
distance: 1184.53 cm
distance: 1184.25 cm
distance: 1184.36 cm
distance: 1184.54 cm
distance: 1184.41 cm
distance: 1184.22 cm
distance: 1184.56 cm
```

```
sketch_mar31a_rz | Arduino 1.8.20 Hourly Build 2021/12/20 07:34
sketch_mar31a_rz

int trigPin = 9; // TRIG pin
int echoPin = 4; // ECHO pin

float duration_us, distance_cm;

void setup() {
  // begin serial port
  Serial.begin(9600);

  // configure the trigger pin to output mode
  pinMode(trigPin, OUTPUT);
  // configure the echo pin to input mode
  pinMode(echoPin, INPUT);
}

void loop() {
  // generate 10-microsecond pulse to TRIG pin
  digitalWrite(trigPin, HIGH);
  delayMicroseconds(10);
  digitalWrite(trigPin, LOW);

  // measure duration of pulse from ECHO pin
  duration_us = pulseIn(echoPin, HIGH);

  // calculate the distance
  distance_cm = 0.017 * duration_us;

  // print the value to Serial Monitor
  Serial.print("distance: ");
  Serial.print(distance_cm);
  Serial.println(" cm");

  delay(500);
}
```

DATA SAVED.
Sketch memory: 254 bytes (13%) of program storage space. Maximum is 32256 bytes.
Global variables use 238 bytes (18%) of dynamic memory, leaving 1838 bytes for local variables. Maximum is 2048 bytes.

Arduino code & Ultrasonic Sensor output data

We are drawn to shiny objects
and may want these things. At the same time,
we understand how problematic they are.

We influence how markets work.

Change happens from within, as a daily practice,
in a world of complexities.

We have agency on how we respond to externalities:
cultivating presence to separate oneself
from the insistence of time.

Sense of freedom as a frame
that allows any variation ~



RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds - 2019, video still

Literary references

- Metamodernism and the Perception of Context: The Cultural Between, the Political After and the Mystic Beyond by Jonathan Rowson – Perspectiva Press (2021)
- Metamodern Values Explained | Dr. Daniel P. Görtz | TEDxTUBerlin (2018)
- The Listening Society by Daniel Görtz and Emil Ejner Friis (2017)
- A Quick And Dirty Introduction to Accelerationism by OCRU's Nick Land (2017)
- Hand Mudrās as a Practice of Connecting to the Divine – Ana Maria Galarraga (2017)
- Is the Young Star RZ Piscium Consuming Its Own (Planetary) Offspring? by K. M. Punzi, J. H. Kastner, C. Melis, B. Zuckerman, C. Pilachowski, L. Gingerich, and T. Knapp, The Astronomical Journal (2017)
- The Aesthetics of Accelerationism – Andrew Woods (2016)
- Accelerationism and Degrowth: The Left's strange bedfellows – Aaron Vansintjan (2016)
- Collective desire and the pathology of the individual – Jodi Dean (2016)
- Disordered eating and the contradictions of neoliberal governance – Iain Pirie (2016)
- Digital Materialism: An Interview with Benedict Drew (The Quietus, 2015)
- Manual of Psychomagic – The Practice of Shamanic Psychotherapy by Alejandro Jodorowsky (2015)
- #ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for an Accelerationist Politics by Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek (2013)
- Accelerationism Questioned from the Point of View of the Body by Franco "Bifo" Berardi – Flux Journal (2013)
- Time, Acceleration, and Violence by Franco "Bifo" Berardi – Flux Journal (2011)
- Metamodernist Manifesto, by Luke Turner (2011)
- Notes on metamodernism, by Timotheus Vermeulen & Robin van den Akker – Journal of Aesthetics & Culture, Volume 2 (2010)
- Eisenstein: 'Intellectual Montage', Poststructuralism, and Ideology – Jason Lindop (2007)
- No Logo – Naomi Klein (1999/2000)
- The saturated self: Dilemmas of identity in contemporary life – Kenneth Gergen (1991)
- Henri Cartier-Bresson: Interviews and Conversations (1951–1998)
- Speed and Politics – Paul Virilio (1977)
- The Subject and Power – Michael Foucault (1982)
- Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia – Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari (1972)
- Monsieur Venus – A Materialist Novel – Rachilde (1884)

Artistic references

- Christa Sommerer & Lurent Mignonneau's interactive installation Portrait on the Fly (2015–2022)
- Meriem Bennani's video work Your Year by Fardaus Funjab (2017)
- Korakrit Arunandochai's video work With History in a Room Filled with People with Funny Names (2017)
- Alejandro Jodorowsky's films The Dance of Reality (2013), Endless Poetry (2016)
- Rachel Mclean's video work Feed Me (2015)
- Benedict Drew's video work The Persuaders (2011)
- Pipilotti Rist's video Ever Is Over All (1997)
- Valie Export's Eros/ion (1971)
- Věra Chytilová's film Daisies (Sedmikrásky) (1966)

The Politics of Picking a Pope

Keywords: human-computer interaction, lock-in effect, economics of the QWERTY, path-dependence, speculative design

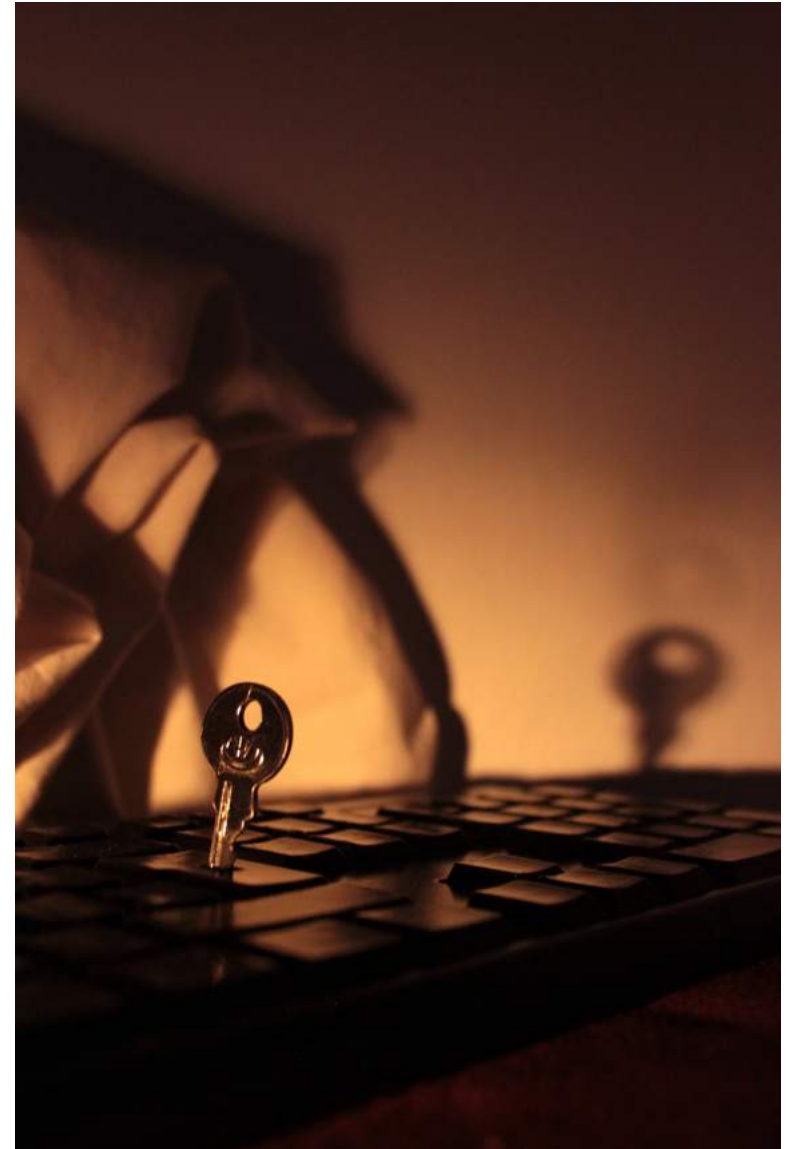
Conceptual interface: blank, standard functioning QWERTY keyboard with key installed on the Return switch, computer, monitor

"The internal-combustion engine has been dominant for over a hundred years—not because it's the best possible engine, but because it gained an initial advantage through historical accident. The QWERTY keyboard layout was designed to be deliberately inefficient so that the mechanical keys of the typewriter would jam less frequently. That feature is no longer relevant, but it doesn't matter — we're still typing on QWERTY keyboards, because that's what people are used to. The same principle is what makes Google or Facebook or Amazon so massive. We use them because we're used to using them. "

– Mariana Mazzucato, 2018, MIT Technology Review

This artistic provocation, departs from the archetypal allegation of the QWERTY keyboard configuration as industry standard as well as from the economic theory's concepts of 'path dependence' and 'lock-in effect' by historical events.

Path dependence occurs when a feature of the economy (institution, technical standard, pattern of economic development) is not based on current conditions but has been formed by past actions. Past development decisions can influence and constrain future choices, leading to a 'lock-in' to a particular development path preventing newer alternatives from taking hold.



The Politics of Picking a Pope, 2021

The QWERTY layout transferred seamlessly from the 70's mechanical typewriters to computers and touch screens and is ubiquitous wherever the Latin alphabet is standard.

In cultures overdetermined by concepts from economics, we are left without discursive instruments to comprehend how decentralized, free market-driven standardization systems worked and will continue to empower innovators to revolutionize the way we work, learn, communicate and play.

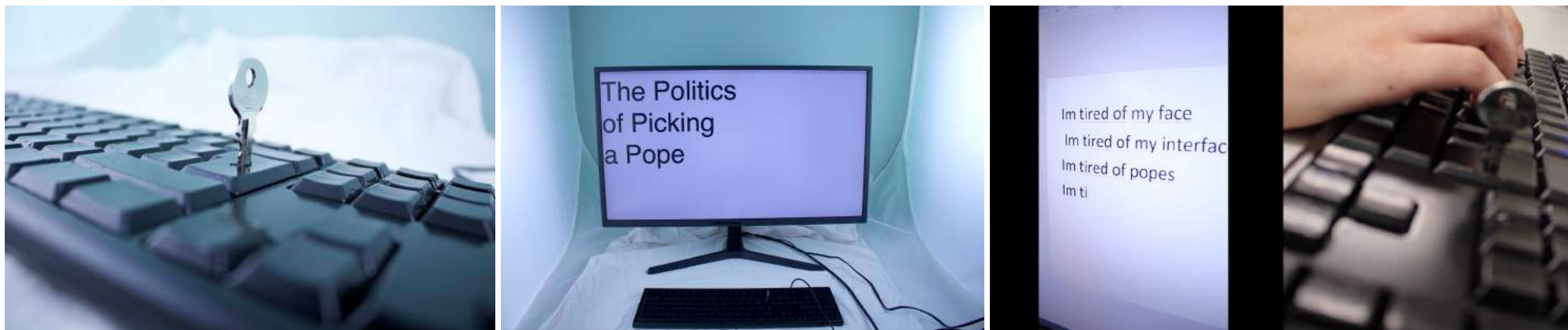
The project explores an alternative design of the computer keyboard that is not driven nor thoroughly integrated in capitalist production or culture. The function of these inquiries is to reflect on past, current and future trajectories of technology influences on human behavior.

The experiment consists of a blank QWERTY keyboard with a key installed on the Return switch (the installed key captures the notion of 'lock in' effect). The interface challenges the user to rely on 'touch-typing' to enter a sentence in a text file appearing on the computer monitor. This procedure seeks to make perceptible to the user the persistence of the QWERTY arrangement at the cognitive level and provides a speculative reference to the 'spectre of the universal.'



The Politics of Picking a Pope,
Interface Cultures department, Linz 2021

'The Politics of Picking a Pope' was developed in occasion of the 2021 edition of 'Sankt Interface' event and exhibition curated by artist and researcher César Escudero Andaluz at the Interface Cultures MA of the University of Art & Design in Linz.



Images from installation of the interface experiment held at the Interface Cultures department in Linz, in December 2021

Sankt Interface:

<https://interface.ufg.ac.at/blog/sankt-interface-2/>

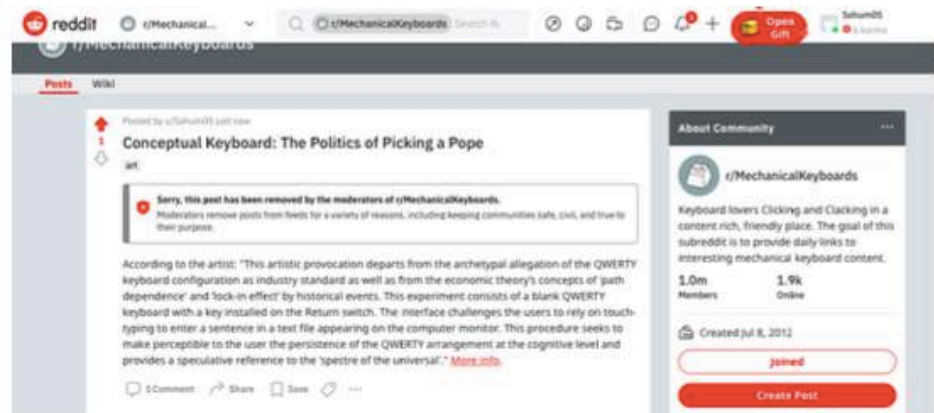
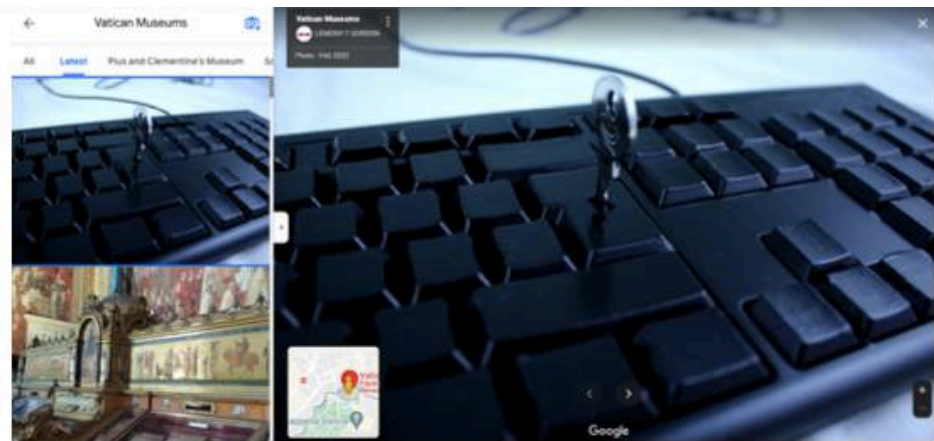
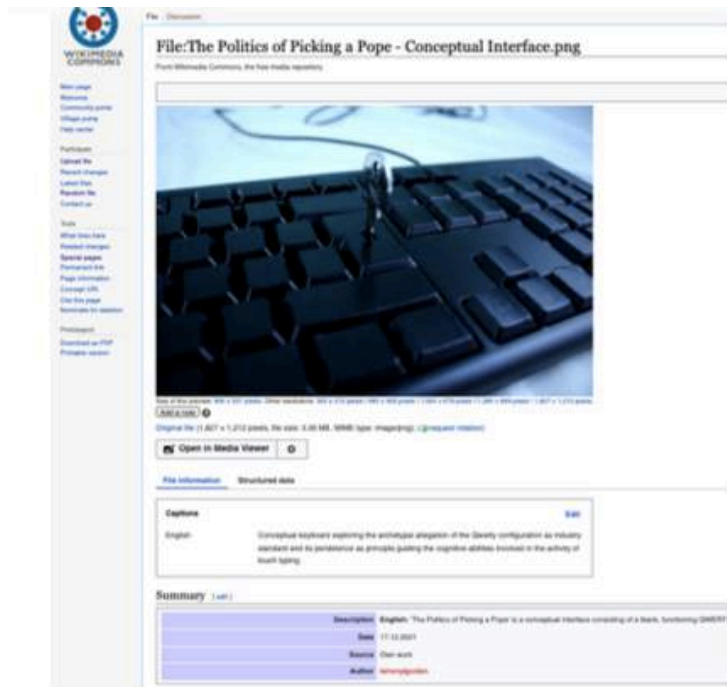
Dedicated Spotify Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/34bcjbJw2TLhfetkEv28cR?si=42b067936c7243c9>

Experiment video documentation (30 secs)

<https://vimeo.com/699468448/4bd90e7ee1>

Dissemination on Wikipedia Commons, Google Maps' Vatican Museum, Reddit, Spotify



Literary references:

- Mariana Mazzucato (2018), Let's make private data into a public good; MIT Technology Review
- Tim McDonald (2018), Why we can't give up this odd way of typing, BBC
- Peter Lewin (2001), The Current State of the Debate Involving the Economics of QWERTY, New York University Press and London: Palgrave Publishing
- Arthur, W. B. (1989), Competing technologies, increasing returns, and lock-in by historical events, Economic Journal, 99, 116–31
- Liebowitz, S. J., and Margolis, S. E. (1990), The fable of the keys; Journal of Law and Economics, 33, 1–25.

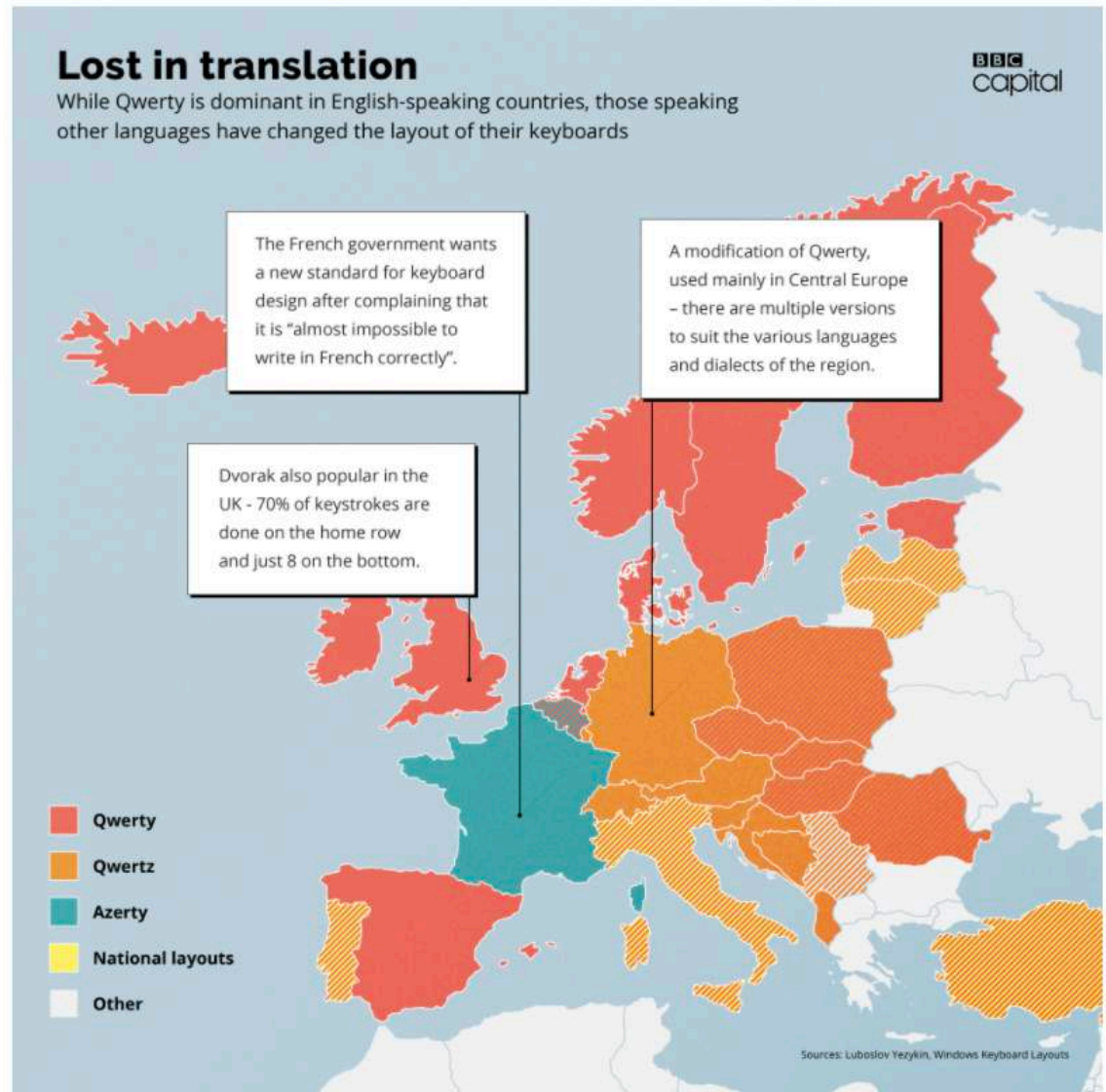
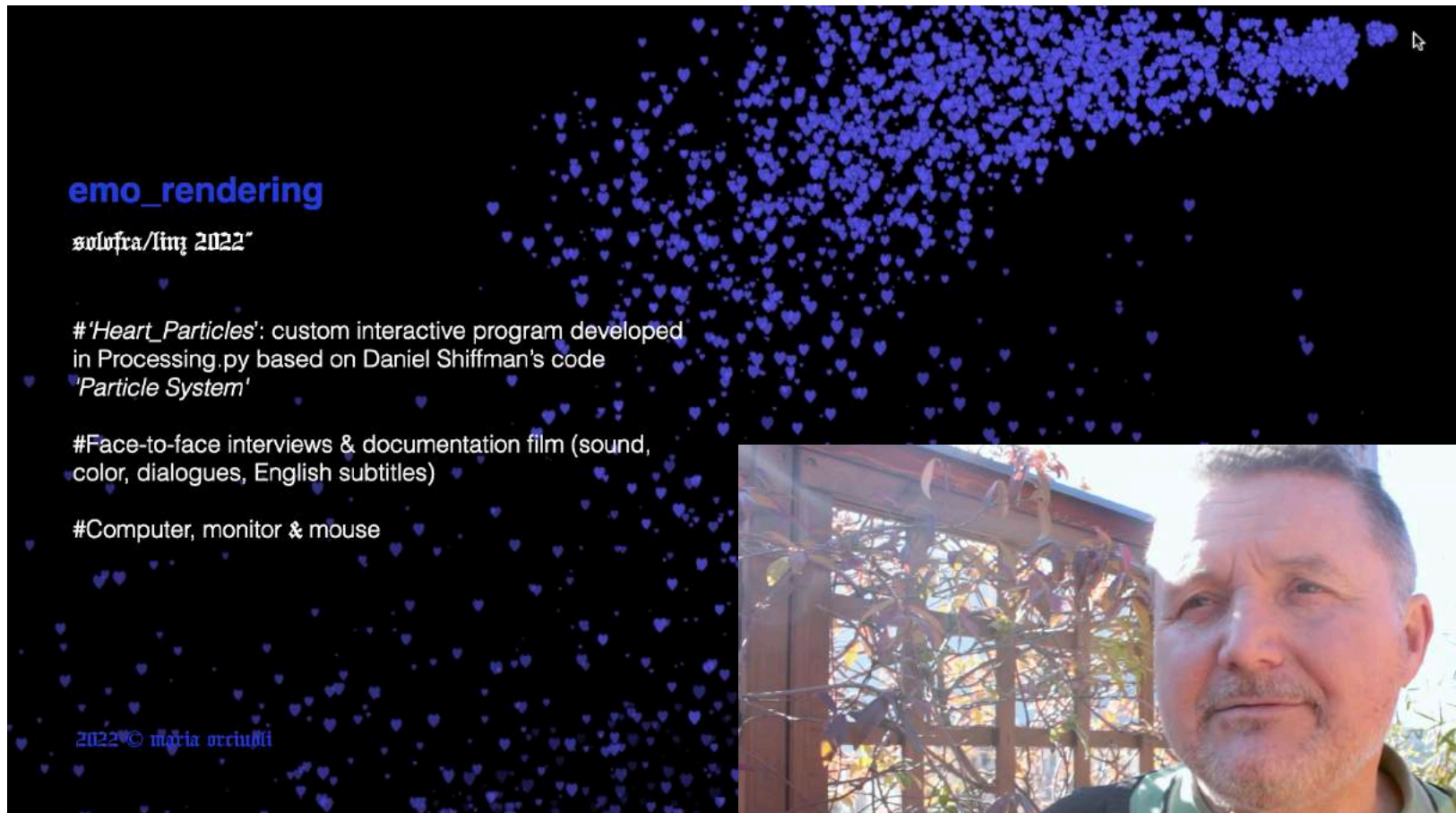


Image source: <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20180521-why-we-cant-give-up-this-odd-way-of-typing> (accessed October, 2021)

emo_rendering



'Heart_Particles' code available on [Github](#)

Artist documentation video (3 min, colors, dialogues, English subtitles): [link](#)

Video interviews (7 min, colors, dialogues, English subtitles): [link](#)

Keywords: human-computer interaction, unconditional love, infinity

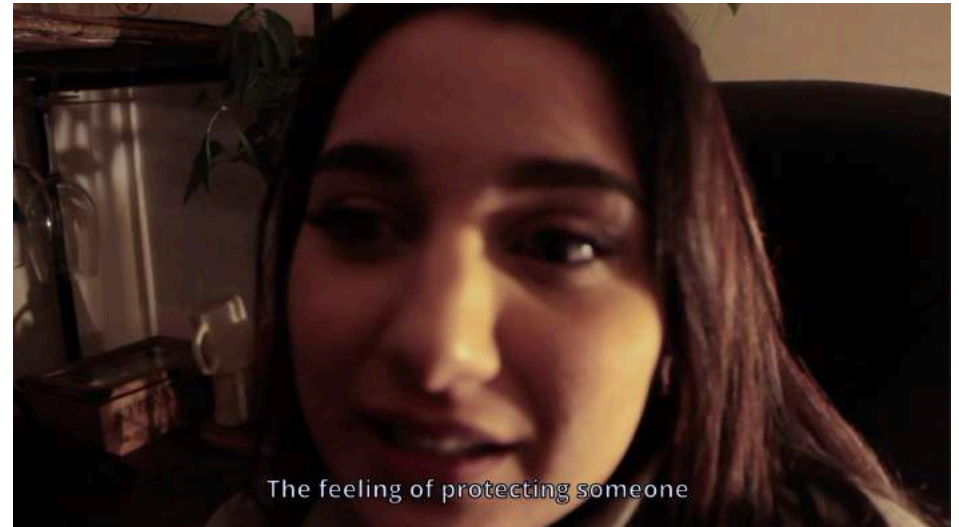
'emo_rendering' came up in response to the increasing impact of technology on my social interactions.

It combines documentary, performance, and creative coding to explore our cultural relationship to concepts tied to our desire for care and interconnectedness.

Humans are made to be in relationships. We have an innate longing to share our lives with family, friends, and partners. This type of social interaction is essential and complex. A person sends and receives information in many ways when communicating with someone physically in front of her. For instance, a conversation is not just about the words; instead, the message includes tone of voice, body language, facial expressions, context, and sometimes touch.

While in-person interaction is the most genuine form of social interaction, many of today's digital devices extend our abilities to connect with each other while being far apart. At the same time, the disability of our digital devices can be seen through the loss of tangible human interaction.

This piece was made to reflect on the importance of human interdependency in a society living under the myth of autonomy driven by technological symbiosis between humans and computers.



emo_rendering, 2022 - 'Infinite & Unconditional Love'
documentation video stills

emo_rendering was developed in two phases.

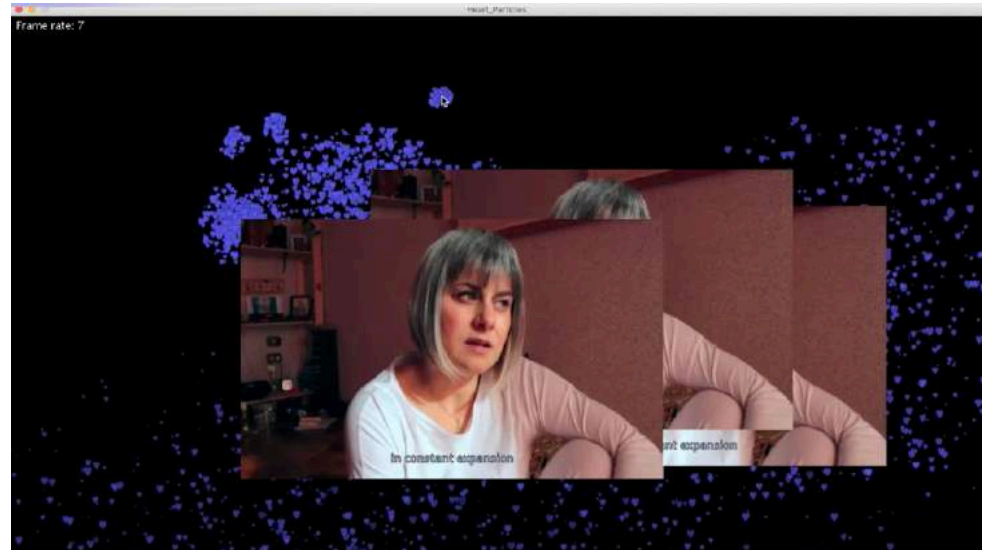
The first part involved the participation of communities from the cities of Solofra (Italy) and Linz (Austria). Through serendipitous face-to-face interviews, this intervention invited the audience as contributors to provide a personal definition of the concepts of 'infinite' and 'unconditional love.'

The second phase involved translating these concepts within the context of human-computer interaction. To do so, I wrote an interactive visual sketch in Processing.py based on Daniel's "Particle System." I call it 'Heart_Particles'.

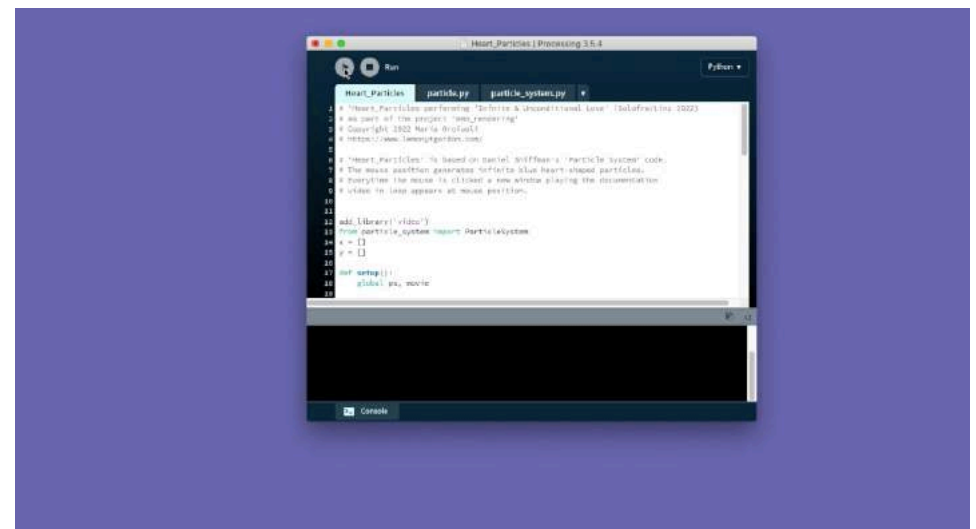
Through the computer interface, the interactive program responds to the user-mouse interaction by generating infinite blue heart-shaped particles appearing at the cursor's position (the heart shape is also a reference to the my ubiquitous heart emoji). At each mouse click, a new window playing the documentation video in loop appears (the repetitive video frames recall the pop-up windows aesthetic of video ads).

The project explores how humans and computers shape meaning together through performance and invite us to reflect on how human-machine ecologies are performative of emotional well-being and social change.

emo_rendering, code demo video: [link](#)



emo_rendering, 2022 - video still of 'Heart_Particles' code performing the video interviews with contributors



emo_rendering, 2022 - 'Heart_Particles' code in Processing-py

My Guardian Angel Went on Holiday When I Started School

Italy, 2020

Keywords: senses, perception

Format: 10:22 min video, color, sound, no dialogues.

Private video [link](#)

This audio-video work settles on a principle of uncertainty, arguing for ever-changing and connective approaches to the definition of reality and human experience.

Through the character of fiction and performance, the work points to the fallacies of sensory perception by conceding the possibility that iterative and improvisation practices may create a shift in perspectives.

History tends to repeat itself, but our species revitalizes each time we extend our creative potential beyond the constructs we accept in day-to-day life. The body speaking and receiving is the interface that dictates our trajectories or by which we abide. Living systems adapt by transforming themselves, suggesting that real learning is not something added but a rearrangement of the system. New associations transpire, and alternative pathways develop. The perceiver transforms, so the perceived world.

The narrative proposed in the video settles on a metaphoric journey of the human soul on Earth. Dante's Divina Commedia and martyr St. Lucy informed some of the imageries evoked in the video.



My Guardian Angel Went on Holiday When I Started School, 2020
- video stills

My Guardian Angel Went on Holiday When I Started School

The music is an exploration of Rupert Sheldrake's concept of Morphic Resonance, described as the process whereby self-organizing systems inherit a memory from a previous similar system. "Thus each individual inherits a collective memory from past members of the species, and also contributes to the collective memory, affecting other members of the species in the future." (Sheldrake, 1981).

I played audio material simultaneously from different devices (laptop's built-in speakers, mobile phone, and a Bluetooth speaker). I recorded the first output with a Tascam linear PCM recorder and played the field-recording again simultaneously from the same devices. I repeated this process several times, so that the final recording would contain all the earlier versions of the source audio material. Due to the inherent fallacy of the recording method, the final field-recording results in a different auditory experience than the first version while maintaining a character of familiarity.

The sound piece is titled "My Guardian Angel in an Empty Garden" and can be listened at the following [link](#).



Devices used for the sound recording process of 'My Guardian Angel in an Empty Garden' (2020)



My Guardian Angel Went on Holiday When I Started School, 2020
- video stills

My Guardian Angel Went on Holiday When I Started School

For this piece, I was inspired by the precarious realities that gain force and value in intersection and, therefore, solidarity.

The idea of mixed perspectives crossing is fascinating to me. When things cross, they become synchronic, serendipitous, and relational. Being relational or embracing a filial type of relation feels progressive in a society where stringent ideological arrangements prevail. Any ideology that doesn't create the conditions to live peacefully with each other on this planet is fatuous.

To me, interactivity provides a space where forms of communications across living systems are stripped down to their fundamental core: the direct encounter with an experience.

The work's title is untied from religious connotations and is proximal to the concept of a higher self or imaginary friend. It is also an encouragement to revitalize the education system, emphasizing imagination as humanity's most valuable asset.

Acknowledgements

Camera: Ilenia Orciuoli, Monica Basso

The opening track in the video is titled "You Cxnt Evil Lol" and was kindly provided by Estonian artist and experimental musician [Artjom Astrov](#).



My Guardian Angel Went on Holiday When I Started School, 2020
- video still

Utopian Adverts: Meditative Energy Unification For Community Power Generation

Linz, 2021

Keywords: utopia, advertising, speculative futures

Format: 12:00 min sound piece & spoken words

Private sound [link](#)

Text file [link](#)

This sound piece is part of a collaborative project about utopias imagined and bricked in the context of the 'Utopian Adverts' Guestworkshop by artist Sam Bunn in October 2021. As the workshop's title suggests, our project speculates how advertising could occur in a utopian future.

Presented as a twelve-minute long guided meditation, the project envisions a world in which ads take the form of public service announcements. The speaking voice invites the Utopia citizens to take a moment to pause (as opposed to the 'call to action' of today's marketing strategies) and join the daily ritual of energy exchange within the utopian community.

The sound piece was presented as a meditation and body tuning performance in October 2021 at the Interface Cultures MA department in Linz and successively aired on the monthly 'Sonic Utopias' show curated by sound artist [Daphne X](#) on [Athen's Movement Radio](#).

Acknowledgements

Voice & text: Kathrine Hardman
Concept: Kathrine Hardman (US), Pepe Reyes Caballero (ES), Maria Konstantinova (RU), Maria Orciuoli (IT),
Music & sound design: Maria Orciuoli



Tuning forks used for the
body-tuning performance



Utopian Adverts United on Movement Athens Radio, 2021

Anatomy of a Gossip

Solofra (IT), 2021

Keywords: bias, tribalism, human error, noise

Format: performance and documentation video (5:00 min, sound, color, no dialogues)

Private video [link](#)

“Wherever there is judgement, there is noise - and more of it than you think.”

- Daniel Kahneman, *Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgement* (2021)

'Anatomy of a Gossip' is a five-minute audio-video work with footage from a performance and social experiment I held in August 2021 in Italy.

The project's audio-visual semantic explores the tension between ideology, humanity and how we communicate within our means and communities. It asks: how do we experience, organize and agree on the reality we perceive in the overflow of data, placed as both the recipients and the creators of a multiplicity of interpretations?

For this experiment, a group of friends (people who share beliefs and a language code) was asked to sit in a closed circle and pass a message into each other's ears without revealing aloud. The experiment took place in the form of the popular children's game 'Chinese Whispers' ('Telephone' in English, or 'Il gioco del telefono senza fili' in Italian), and concluded with the participants being unable to remember correctly the first version of the message.

In my view, the experiment's result suggests that the participants' attention was more focused on the message's propagation process – its social function – than its significance.



Anatomy of a Gossip, 2021 -
video stills

This observation does not aim at making scientific claims. I wished to crystallize this human moment and use it to reflect on how individual and collective world-views emerge, dissolve, and adapt – with our biology and communication technology adding layers of complexity to the processes.

Sonically, the project traces a parallel between the subjective nature of noise (what is noise to some – perceived as intrusive, unwanted, or inadequate – can be meaningful to others), and the transmission of information conveyed in an evaluative manner (the activity of gossiping is one of the oldest and most popular examples).

The music was produced by French sound artist Colin Tobelem using modular synthesizers. The project's sonic interpretation recalls the propagation of carrier waves and their relationship to noise. Noise challenges what human perception considers agreeable and pleasurable. The use of noise music in the video aims at leaving up to the audience the decision to find meaning in it, or reject it – this aspect points to the ambiguity and the junctures at which a multiplicity of subjective interpretations of reality are presented but where no unifying perspective endures. The use of 'power electronics music' symbolically traces a parallel with the infrastructure supporting today's digital communications – the basics of transmission of information via electrical carrier, where information is often incomplete, or precarious.

The project also takes a critical look at how stories bring together people who have a shared perception of the world and how this often establishes a line between insiders and outsiders. The installation of the video places the viewers as witnesses of the transmission of the message between the experiment participants, without the possibility to take part in it. The documentation exercise leaves open a doorway to the viewers to feel intimately connected to the real event.



Anatomy of a Gossip, 2021 -
video stills

The consensus forming mechanism, accelerated by 21st-century technology, and intensified by the isolation we experienced in the last years, seems to be paramount to the movement of society at large. In a 2021 interview on behavioralscientist.org, Daniel Kahneman argues that systems (and human judgement) can be both biased and noisy.

He writes:

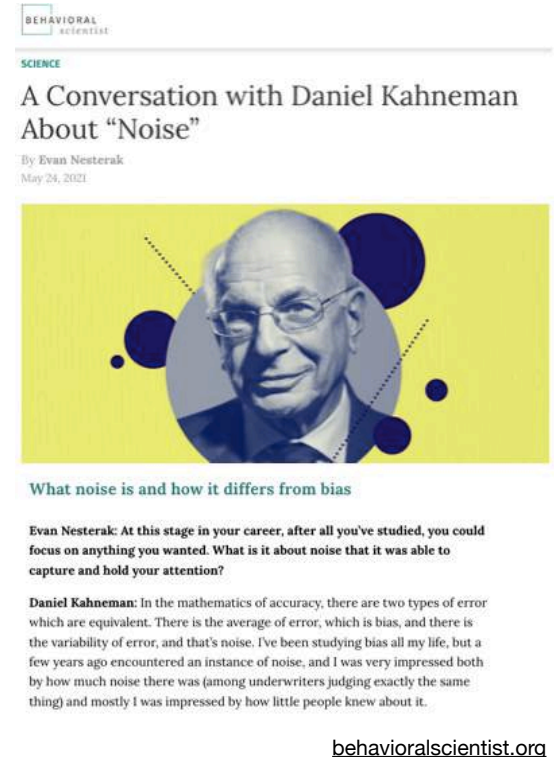
"In the mathematics of accuracy, there are two types of error which are equivalent. There is the average of error, which is bias, and there is the variability of error, and that's noise."

In the 2021 book "Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment", Kahneman and coauthors argue:

"Most of us, most of the time, live with the unquestioned belief that the world looks as it does because that's the way it is. (...) These beliefs, which have been called 'naive realism' are essential to the sense of a reality we share with other people. We rarely question these beliefs. We hold a single interpretation of the world around us at any one time, and we normally invest little effort in generating plausible alternatives to it. One explanation is enough, and we experience it as true. We do not go through life imagining alternative ways of seeing what we see."

– Kahneman, D., Sibony, O., & Sunstein, C. R., 2021

The case of judicial sentencing (the case of similar people, convicted of the same crime, receiving different penalties) is an example that features in the book.



Acknowledgements

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Music: Colin Tobelem

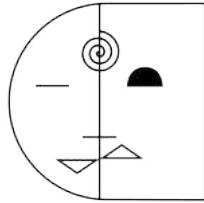
Camera & video: Maria Orciuoli

Literary reference

Kahneman, D., Sibony, O., & Sunstein, C. R. (2021). Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgement



Pictures from the performance / experiment
at Oracma Studio in the city of Solofra (Italy)
on August 13th, 2021



KO-HUM

Music & Performing Arts pr, digital strategy & publicity

Since 2017, KO-HUM has advanced networked forms of promotion and circulation of ideas that encompass digital strategies, partnerships, engagement programs, and campaigns facilitating the premiere of new works, and presenting a diverse array of artists and cultural producers working across the fields of sound, dance, film, publishing, visual and performing arts.

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