Loeva La Ragione

Gender Experimentation and Role Reversal

Loeva: "I talked with male players who use female avatars. They said people are nicer to you, sometimes they even give you gifts. It's practical, but also a way to explore gender roles."

In societies with strong normative constraints, digital spaces act as **safe laboratories for self-expression**.

LGBTQ+ Parades and Online Queer Solidarity — *Tyria Pride 2020*

Loeva: "In some video games, players organize pride parades — virtual marches for LGBTQ+ rights. For example, there was *Tyria Pride 2020* inside *Guild Wars 2*. Players walked together across the map for visibility and solidarity. It's both activism and celebration."

How emotional solidarity in digital spaces can evolve into political action. Digital intimacy expands from individual feeling to collective affect.

Florie Souday

Emojis and Memes as Emotional Language — Generational Codes

Florie: "When I send memes or emojis to my family, they don't have the same codes. It became a kind of cultural language that older generations cannot understand."

Digital intimacy emerges through the ability to decode emotional language — revealing a generational divide in affective literacy.

Gender Liberation in Digital Spaces — *Glitch Feminism* and Identity Experimentation

Florie: "Legacy Russell's *Glitch Feminism* shows how people can be another person online — playing with gender, escaping social constraints."

"Being online allows you to glitch the system — to fail the categories you're supposed to fit in. That failure becomes freedom."
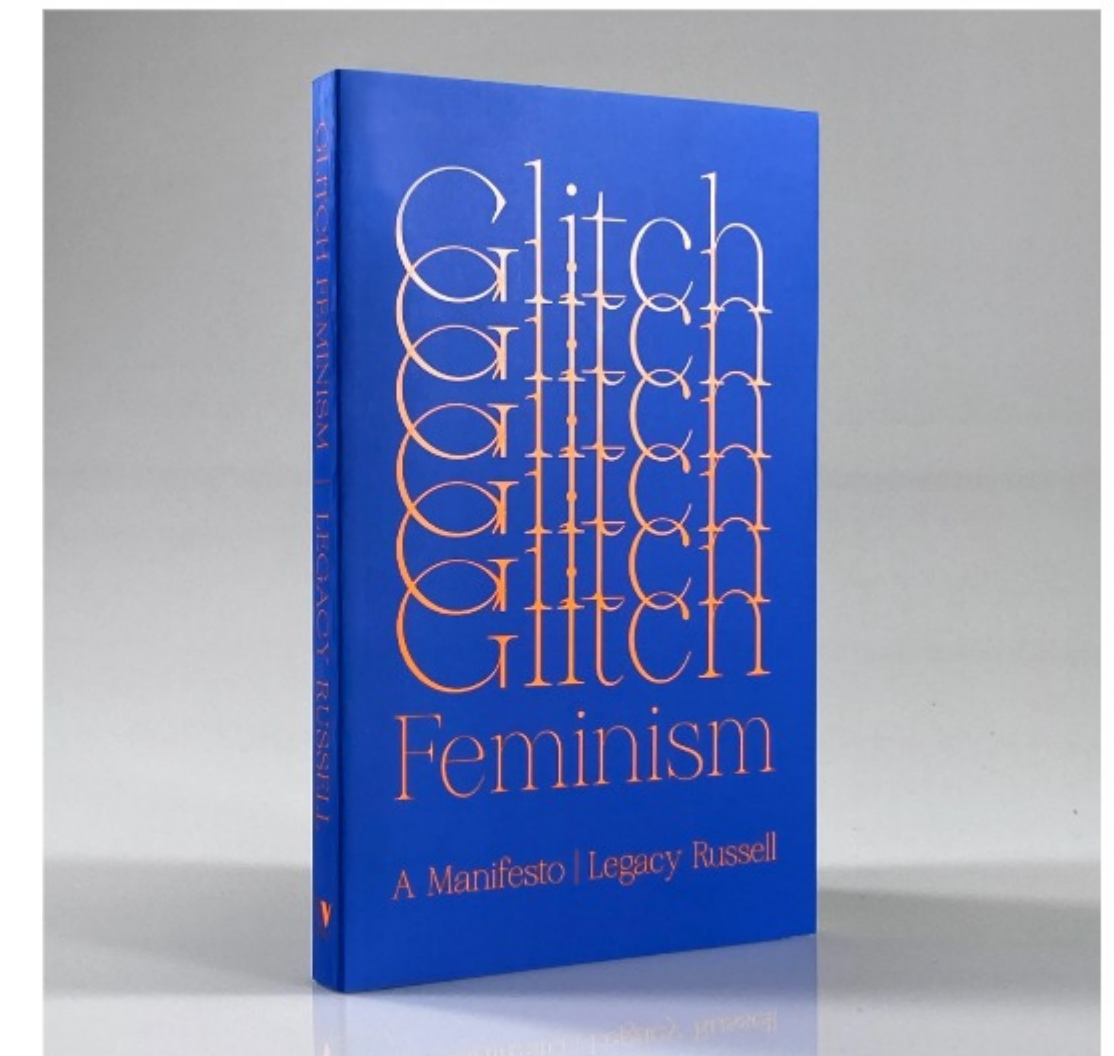
Hortense Boulais Ifrene

Digital Diaspora — The Migration of Emotional Communities

Hortense: "When virtual worlds disappear, people don't vanish — they migrate. They move together to new platforms, carrying their relationships with them."

Digital communities persist through **emotional migration**, not technological continuity. Online familiality is defined by **relationships that move together**, revealing that the survival of platforms depends on affective cohesion rather than infrastructure.

The Social Rhythm of Platforms — Following Friends, Not Technology

Hortense: "Platforms don't die because of technology. They die because people move on — they follow their friends, not the interface."

The life cycle of digital platforms follows **social rhythms** rather than technical evolution. Emotional networks dictate migration and persistence, showing that the core of digital ecosystems lies in **relational mobility**.

Nicolas Tilly

Critique of Standardized Interfaces — When Design Restricts Emotion

Nicolas: "Interface design is very cool, but also very standardizing. There are a lot of rules — button size, color choice… it's important, but only at the second time."

Commercial UI/UX conventions prioritize efficiency but **flatten emotional diversity**. True intimacy appears in moments that **break standardization**, where users experience design not as control but as freedom.

Data Visualization and the Graphic Self

Nicolas: "Data visualization is a good example of what data from a person can make — a graphic, an image of him."

Digital identity becomes a **sensory reconstruction of data** — emotions, preferences, and behaviors transformed into visual patterns. The digital self is thus an aesthetic rendering of affect, a portrait made of data traces.

The Emotional Meaning of Hacking — Simplifying and Reclaiming Control

Nicolas: "Users don't always hack in a deep way. Sometimes they just want to make things simpler — shortcuts."

Hacking is not rebellion but **emotional reorganization** — a small act of reclaiming agency within complex systems.
Simplification becomes a form of care, restoring control and intimacy through personalization.

Avatar Customization: Showing an identity

The avatar thus becomes both a personal canvas and a communicative medium, embodying what might be called visual subjectivity.
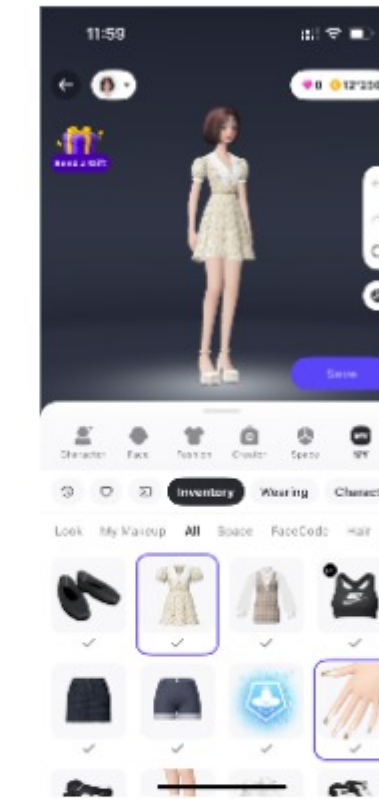
Gestures and Expressions: Performing Co-Presence

connection often emerges not through talking, but through shared gestures that synchronize bodies in space. Such movements create what might be called **ambient togetherness**: a light, momentary sense of belonging built through motion rather than meaning.
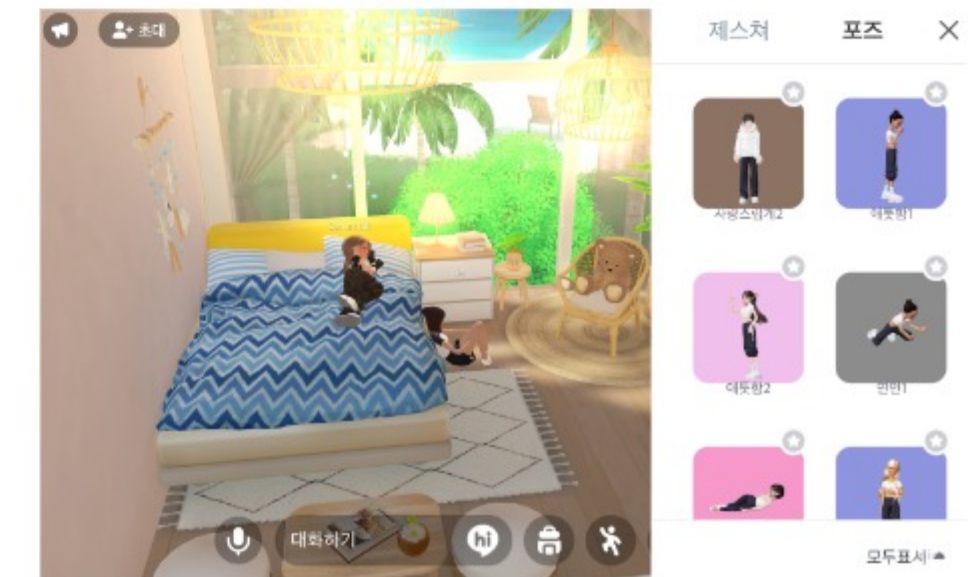
Camera, Live, and Visual Performance

Both the photo and live features reveal how visual interaction in Zepeto becomes a form of belonging. By appearing together—whether through a shared pose or a brief live broadcast—users transform the abstract sense of community into something visible and tangible.
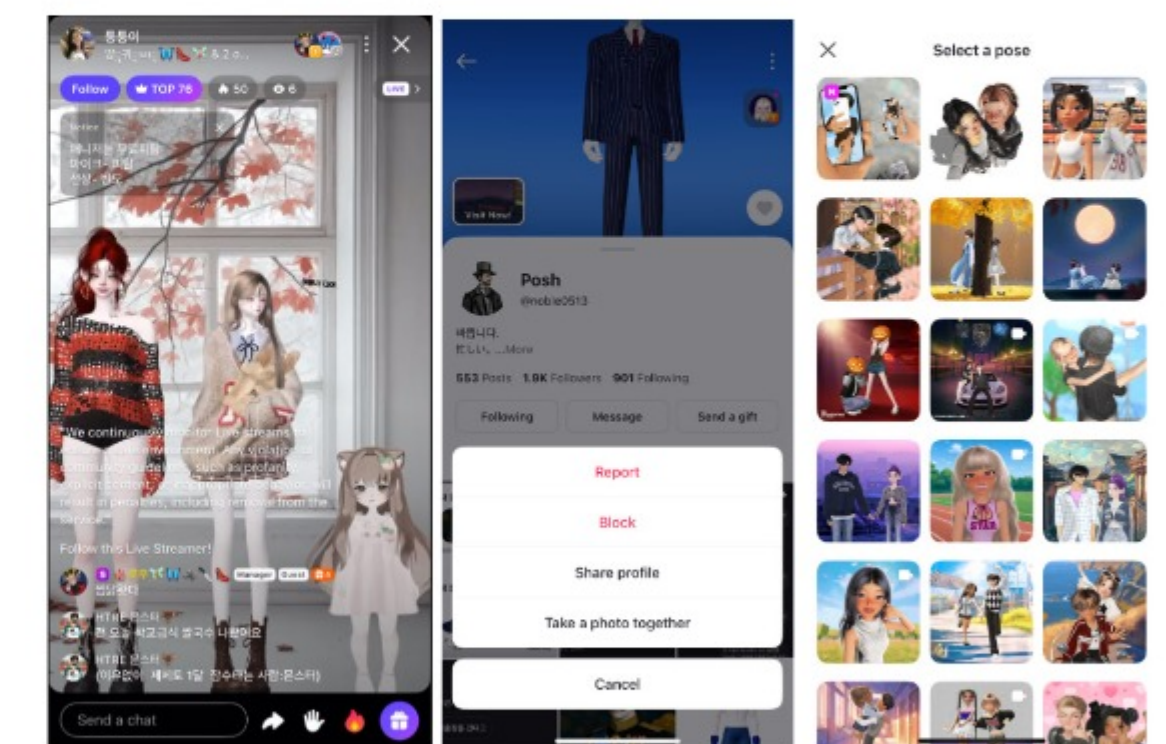
Role-play and Storymaking

Many young people create **short dramas or role-play scenarios** inside the app, treating virtual spaces as stages for collective storytelling.

As **Hortense Boulais-Ifrène** pointed out, this kind of creative reappropriation echoes earlier experiments in platforms like **Active Worlds (1995)**—one of the first 3D online environments where users could build their own worlds—and in the practice of **machinima**, the filmmaking technique that uses video games as virtual film sets.

Zepeto drama
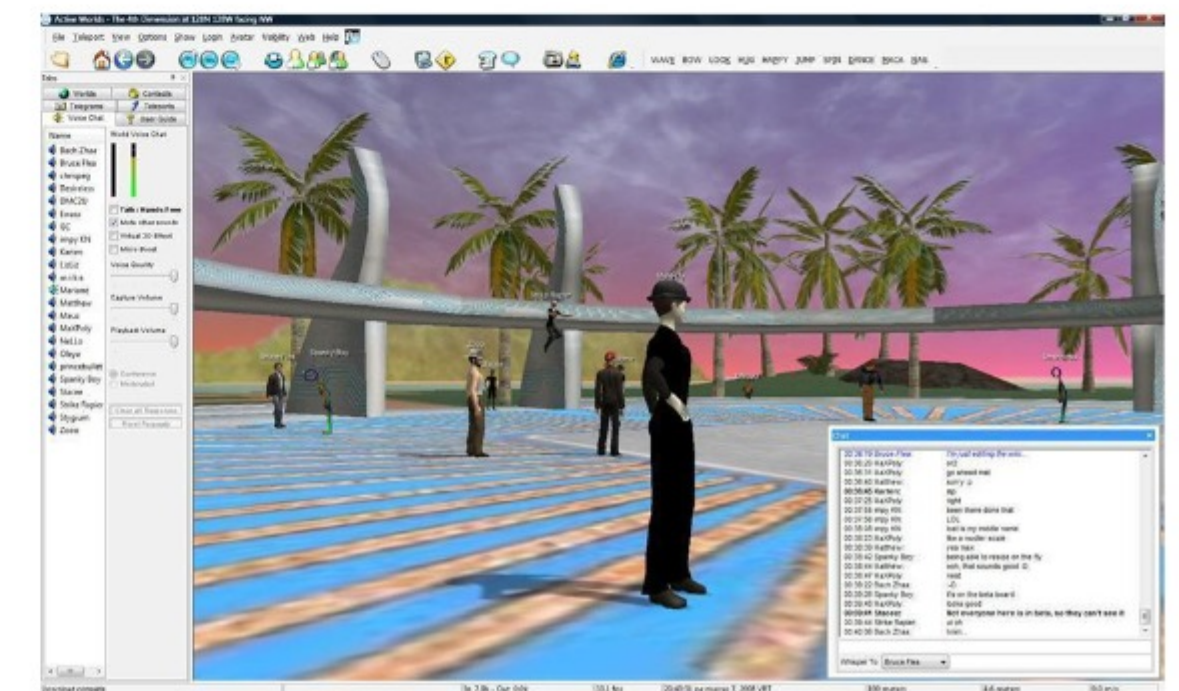
Active World game

User Politics and Collective Purpose

These moments, whether political, social, or simply spontaneous, reveal how users continually reinterpret what a metaverse is for.

Such practices show that belonging in digital spaces is not only about comfort or friendship—it is also about agency, about the impulse to reorganize space around shared purpose.
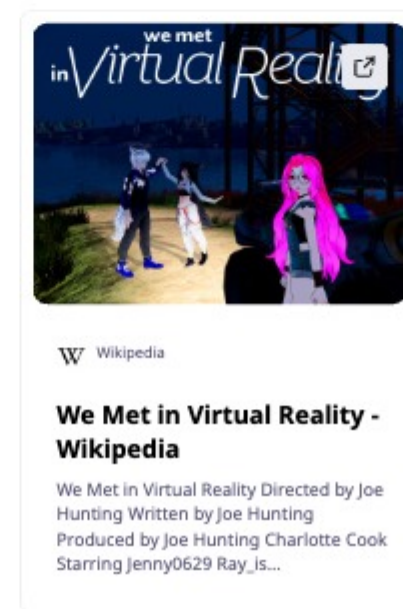

Total refusal - Hardly working

While collectives such as Total Refusal appropriate gaming environments to critique the capitalist structures embedded in digital media, young Korean users I observed repurpose similar platforms not for critique but for connection —transforming them into emotional infrastructures compensating for the erosion of traditional kinship.

Social Affordance	KakaoTalk Open Chat	Zepeto Metaverse
Visibility	"Read" marks, typing indicators, profile images make attention visible through text.	Avatars, gestures, and camera angles make attention visible through movement and spatial proximity.
Persistence	Chat logs preserve traces of care and humor; emojis act as emotional records.	Screenshots and photos archive shared presence; worlds hold lingering atmospheres.
Scalability	Large chatrooms allow hundreds to interact simultaneously in text threads.	Shared 3D worlds host many avatars, enabling spontaneous group play or performance.
Anonymity & Identity Play	Users use nicknames or multiple profiles; anonymity fosters emotional openness.	Users design avatars to project idealized selves or experiment with identity expression.
Mutual Attention	Typing indicators and real-time replies signal active engagement and listening.	Gestures, poses, and coordinated movements signal recognition and mutual presence.
Boundary Negotiation	Silence ("읽씹") defines social distance; norms evolve through tone and timing.	Physical proximity and gestures require careful decorum; social limits are negotiated visually.

We Met in Virtual Reality is a 2022 [documentary film](#) that takes place entirely within the social [virtual reality](#) platform *VRChat*. It explores the social relations developed by the users of *VRChat* during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), and how their lives were changed by their time on the platform. It was created by Joe Hunting, who was the director and writer of the script.

W Wikipedia

We Met in Virtual Reality - Wikipedia

We Met in Virtual Reality Directed by Joe Hunting Written by Joe Hunting Produced by Joe Hunting Charlotte Cook Starring Jenny0629 Ray_is...

In the early 2000s, the Japanese anime and game series **.hack** imagined a world where players, trapped inside a virtual reality, built entire lives—families, friendships, even memories—within the digital realm. When they were finally released back into the physical world, some could not bear the loss of those virtual bonds and chose to end their lives.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.hack//Sign