### *Structures of Emotion —*Avital Meshi

<p>Medium: Wearable AI and an online Zoom performance.</p>

*<p>Structures of Emotion* aims to examine the way humans and machines read and interpret emotional expressions. The work realizes the difficulty of translating ‘feelings’ into words. We analyze the complexity of emotion recognition by comparing human and computer vision, reducing the subject’s emotional input to a facial expression seen through a digital screen. We compare the accuracy of the classification between human and computer vision by asking the participant to detect their own recorded expressions once completed. </p>

*<p>*When we see someone smiling, does it necessarily mean that this person is ‘happy’? Our need to conceptualize and translate facial expressions into language is part of our natural learning process with which we attempt to understand the world. This process is often reductive and biased. The work also examines the impact of how we are seen by others and how this, in return, changes our behavioral responses. When we are told that we seem tired, angry or sad, and we don't identify as such, how does it make us feel? </p>

*<p>*The technologies that we design often reflect our own worldviews. The AI system used in this project is trained to recognize facial expressions as one of seven human-defined primary emotions. Such ocular-centric systems are built to estimate aspects of an individual’s identity or state of mind based on external appearances. This design brings to mind pseudo-scientific physiognomic practices, which are notorious for their discriminatory nature and surface too often in AI-based computer vision algorithms. The use of both AI and human analysis of facial expressions reminds us that the technology is far from maturing beyond its maker, and that both humans and machines still have much to learn.

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This work was developed in collaboration with Treyden Chiaravalloti. </p>

### *Neal Stephenson’s Metaverse* — Parul Wadhwa

<p>Medium: Browser-based hypertext metalanguage game. Recommended browsers include Safari, Firefox and Chrome. Not tested on Apple or Android smartphones. </p>

*<p><em>Neal Stephenson’s Metaverse</em>* is an interactive non-fiction digital game. Way back in 1992, Neal Stephenson coined the term “Metaverse” for the same sort of wireless, online virtual-reality experience that Facebook, Google, Samsung, and practically every other major tech company in Silicon Valley is now competing to commercialize. When asked about coining the term metaverse in a recent interview, Neal Stephenson said “he was making shit up.” </p>

*<p>*In the game, Neal Stephenson takes the player through an HTML-generated personality quiz with branching narratives and multiple choice questions to understand themselves in this artificially intelligent world. The choices allow Twine (an open-source tool) to score them and assign them a personality, but is it accurate and true? Is it possible to deduce an avatar from a complex human form? Towards the end of the game, the goal is for the player to meet their digital self and guide them towards questions like — What is the purpose of technology? What is the metaverse? What is the truth of the metaverse? If the purpose of technology is to elevate the human consciousness, then what awareness is the metaverse creating? What is the purpose of human life? Who is human in an artificially intelligent world? </p>

### *Self-Investigations #0* — Sharmi Basu

<p>Exploring the duality of truth, where we say one thing but respond with another, this project is an exploration of how varying individuals respond to their own relationship with conflict, harm, accountability, and repair. <em>*Self-Investigations #0</em>* is a continuation of a previous project that was a workbook and series of interviews titled "am i doing better?" This iteration has a microcontroller within a stuffed bear which is used as a "stress ball." The user is seated while watching a video asking 50 questions about conflict, hurt, and liberation. The user has the opportunity to squeeze the bear, which changes the colors of an LED strip placed in a nearby potted plant. The effect is meant to be subtle but noticeable, and the user is encouraged to focus on the questions, rather than the object and its reaction. <em>*Self-Investigations #0</em>* is meant to highlight the difference in our intellectual versus somatic responses, and subsequently, our need for comfort in difficult situations. </p>

*<p>*The photos document the scope of the questions, the bear controller and LED lights, and a user watching the video and interacting with the bear.</p>

### HOST BODIES — Jenny E. Balisle

<p><span class="bold">Medium:</span> multi-disciplinary installation: video, monitor(s), projector, custom pet AirTag keychains, plexi voting box, and custom stickers. </p>

*<p>*My multidisciplinary artworks investigate how ideology and alternative realities impact truth. On September 1st, Texas Senate Bill 8 (aka The Heartbeat Bill) became law, banning abortion at 6 weeks and relying on private citizen enforcement through civil lawsuits. Sexism is interwoven into systemic discrimination as extremist politicians refer to women as “host bodies.” </p>

*<p>*Apple AirTags become repurposed into HOST BODIES, altering their function. An AirTag is a tracking device designed to help people find personal objects. Four individuals were mailed a HOST BODY AirTag to keep, send back, recycle, dismantle, destroy, or discard. Personal autonomy is a private choice. The artworks’ journey is documented through a multi-media installation, respecting boundaries and privacy. </p>

*<p>*In the physical exhibition, returned HOST BODIES are displayed in custom pet AirTag keychains and tracked live on screen. Common shipping label stickers with the phrase “HANDLE WITH CARE FRAGILE THANK YOU” become repurposed within an open voting box. All United States ballots have unique numbers that can be tracked to a voter. A few stickers are labeled HOST BODY representing how special interests co-opt choice for perverse power. Viewers become participants, with the option to take or leave a sticker and engage in democracy.</p>

### Post-Industrial Ecology — Stephanie Andrews, Erik Contreras, Marlys Mandaville

*<p><em>Moving towards a greener future, while also being confronted with the dirty truths of our industrial past.</em></p>*

<p>This project is a speculative piece that confronts the challenge of foraging and farming in an industrial/urban environment — from toxic chemicals in our soil to human-made trash being dumped rather than recycled. </p>

*<p>*The search for truth here is an investigation of the emerging generative capabilities of 1) phytoremediative plants, 2) natural ecologies, and 3) post-consumer materials. This project chooses to accept the intermingling of natural and human-made objects, and asks users if there can be a bright future where the two can cohabitate. </p>

*<p>*This project takes visitors on a post-industrial journey where they are asked to write their thoughts on post-industrial farming and foraging using a notebook and inkset created from foraged, plant-based materials. </p>

*<p>*To incorporate the unnatural, human-made elements of post-industrial life, the notebook is embedded with two sets of electrical contacts that are connected to an Arduino Uno. The Arduino is housed inside a microwave that has been converted into a planter for phytoremediative plants. When connected, one contact set turns on the grow light, and the other contact set briefly turns on the built-in irrigation system. Visitors can bridge these contacts using the inksets, which have conductive graphite powder embedded in the mixture. </p>

*<p>*As the visitor moves throughout the project, from writing in the notebook to interacting with the microwave planter, they are provided with QR codes that take them to our <a href=”<https://linktr.ee/industrial_ecologies>”>[linktr.ee site](https://linktr.ee/industrial_ecologies)</a>. The site contains scientific papers related to the design object they are interacting with, and how it relates to the truths of post-industrial living, which include 1) challenges with growing plants in contaminated soil, and 2) how phytoremediative plants can extract “forever chemicals” from the soil.</p>