

October 29, 2024

Noah Bowers

Taeyon Choi

Intro to Digital Practices

## Laura Schwulst and Chia Amisola: Bringing a Sense of Psycho-Social Security to the Ever-Complex Internet World

The internet is a vast, wild place. There are an endless slew of websites from amazing, inspiring, dark, and weird. According to Statista.com, there are almost 2 *billion* websites on the world wide web. That's not including the mysterious dark and deep web sites you may have caught ear of. Despite that, there are only a few main sites we visit. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter) and more recently TikTok are the main sites we seem to spend so much of our time on. On one hand, it allows for connectivity and fun across the world; however, these sites take up so much of our time, as well as our mental and social energy. Not only that, but these sites are made by million, billion dollar corporations whose goal is to make money. What that means is these platforms are designed to target us, and abuse our time opposed to improve our time spent talking to or engaging with others. These sites could be known as blogs, since they are a place for people to post whatever ideas they see fit; however, due to the way they are designed, they can restrict us from expressing our true selves in ways we truly want to connect. Two people who are helping to make blogs more like this, that are simpler and make it easier for us to connect, are Laura Schwulst and Chia Amisola. They are two artists whose medium is based in websites, and they make personal blogs which fill up a vast majority of the 2 million sites on the internet. Sites like these don't get as much attention though because they don't have as much advertising, money, and employees as the multi-billion dollar social media

industry has. Even if these sites don't get millions of clicks, thanks to Laura and Chia, I will discuss today how making these simple sites is very important.

Chia Amisola's style is wild and varied, really drawing from the obscure side of the internet, as well its early days. She tends to deal with how feminism, religion, and culture are portrayed online, and she often does so in a poetic manner, through the use of her words and visual structure of her sites. I really appreciate the stance she takes on true interconnectivity and intimacy on the internet, since there's a lot of that happening online; however, big media companies make it hard since they are so focused on distracting us in order to keep us on their platforms for advertising or to draw data. In order to step away from this and towards true connectivity, she suggests we take an approach of creating more personal websites, even if that aren't interstellar or get huge amounts of traffic: "I want a lot more shitty websites that are just made for one purpose, that are just made for smaller communities, that are not made to scale, that are made to not even have a purpose" ([A Website Can Be a Poem with Chia Amisola](#)). I think this helps us to realize that you don't need the whole world to feel connected. This idea helps bring the internet, something spanning the entire world, down into our own hands where we can experience and interact with it in a way that is more tangible, and realistic to our time and social energy.

Laura Schwulst is quite different to Chia in terms of design. She tends to go for a hyper-simplistic approach, that uses a large margin and small line spacing when forming her paragraphs. This leaves a large amount of white space on the sides of her blogs, but this actually really increases readability and almost brings forth a sense of clarity while reading, entirely contrasting the high amounts of info displayed on big media sites. Despite this visual difference, this is actually where the similarities between the two artists begin. Laura, like Chia, aims to make the internet a more tangible medium, where the individual has the opportunity to

create something meaningful, even if it doesn't reach millions. The most insightful thing she said in her interview relating to this point was that "a website can be anything. It doesn't (and probably shouldn't) be an archive of your complete works. . . . A website, or anything interactive, is inherently unfinished. It's imperfect—maybe sometimes it even has a few bugs. But that's the beauty of it. Websites are living, temporal spaces" (My website is a shifting house next to a river of knowledge. What could yours be?). This train of thought, I think, allows for such easier creation of not just websites, but anything.

We live in a world where, because of the internet, we believe the things we create have to reach all points of the world and have a great, big impact on everyone because it has the "potential" to; however, what Laura and Chia are suggesting is that a bigger impact will come from creating more personalized communities within the internet, so that the big platforms that really don't have our best social and physical interests in mind will become decentralized as users move away from them. Perhaps those users will see that they don't need those sites since they can fulfill that same need by making their own, and that's a beautiful thing. I think we should take that train of thought into any art we make.