

# school of machines

MAKING & MAKE-BELIEVE



JAN - APRIL 2021



Frontcover background:  
Screenshot from a project  
created during the Telematic  
Together class by:

**Lyuba Mayachok**  
**Elly Cho**  
**Allison Tanenhaus**

Zine design by **Michelle O'Higgins**

**For Questions and Inquiries**  
[info@schoolofma.org](mailto:info@schoolofma.org)

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## A Letter from our Creative Director

We're so happy to share this zine with you, a tiny document of what we've been up to at School of Machines these first months of 2021. It's safe to say we've not been the best documenters of all time over the years. At the beginning of any organisation it's about survival and recovery. 'Wow, that was amazing! Now let's pause for a second and then get back at it asap.' One can do that for a few years, and a lot of material can accumulate in that time. And accumulate it has!

But we're learning, working on improving our documentation processes, and hoping to put out more regular snapshots of our goings-on over time.

Since the pandemic began in 2020, we, like everyone pivoted most of our classes online and so far they've been super lovely! We've really made an effort to keep them as School of MA-sy as possible by keeping the human connection and conversations alive! Lots of lovely collaborations and friendships have been made in this last year and a half so we feel we're definitely doing something right!

We aim to make content that reflect what's going on *now*. You'll find that consistently reflected in the classes and events we put out. We're not aiming to be cool we're aiming to be real and to be a part of discussions that matter. Creative tech education at the intersection of art, humans, and society. We are where we need to be and ever grateful for the humans who join us here!

We recently brought our Cereal Party to the online space. Cereal Party was a happening born in 2016 as part of transmediale Vorspiel opening night, a yearly project space gathering in Berlin. The tagline: 5 strangers, 5 minutes, and a bowl of cereal. People would enter our dim-lit room, be seated around a table

and served cereal, with one lucky person receiving the prize inside—which acted as the conversation piece for the following 5 minutes; inevitably a question about humans, technology, and society.

This year's online edition was no different. Titled *Please Don't Put Your Dick In My Face* it was a reference to the beginning of the MeToo movement and the difficulties of having intimate conversations in vulnerable moments. It also featured a new addition, *The Quiets*, a silent troupe of listeners and documenters aiming to turn the evenings insights into art. So much goodness came out of these conversations. Why is it so difficult for us humans to be vulnerable and say the hard things? It's a topic we will continue to explore as we see our Cereal Parties as an opportunity for humans to practice. Keep an eye out for the next one slated to take place in May! Topic: Daddy Issues, an easy follow-up to last month's conversation.

These may seem like odd topics for a tech school but the reality is whenever you bring humans together in any capacity, issues of communication or lack thereof will arise. This should be talked about more! There isn't one place for work and another place for being human— we are human all the time! Let's speak more openly about the issues surrounding this fact, shall we!

In addition to our online classes, we've also got some lovely partnerships and related open calls which you'll find at the end.

As always, we're trying to keep it interesting! Come join us!

Warmly,

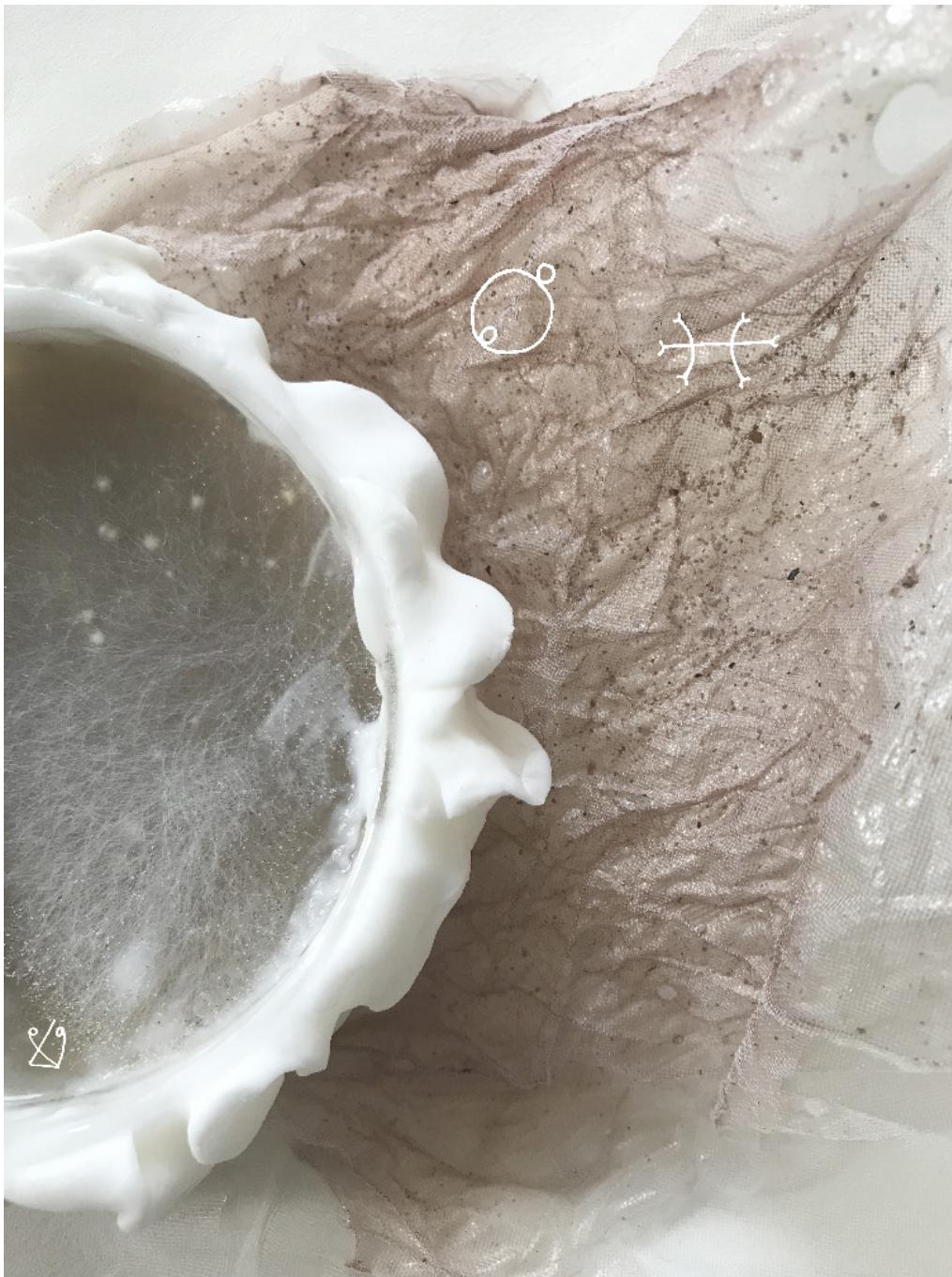
Rachel Uwa

# bioart coven

Instructed by Whitefeather Hunter



*Image courtesy of Whitefeather Hunter*



## A Reflection

from Becky Lyon

"I have long been captivated by the animacy of matter, its vibrancy (to borrow from Jane Bennet) and its inherent shape-shifting powers. The BioArt Coven has offered me new ways to meet with animate materials and nudge encounters with more-than-human entities into sensible experience. I gravitate to Witchcraft as a means of entering into new relationships with materials that are inherently non-patriarchal which requires among other things a relinquishing of full control, embracing contaminant-as-collaborator, engaging in reciprocity and to quote WhiteFeather Hunter, 'deviancy'. Through the 'brewing' of ferments we are invited to slip into fuzzy-edged ways of being by summoning microbial actors from our hands and atmospheres. In place of 'manipulating' organisms to conduct our bidding, we share gifts to bacterial colonies (and molds...) through the choreography of nutrients in vessels of agar. Poetry agitates 'protocol', ritual coerces respect, material transformation becomes transmogrification and craft elicits a more embodied way of 'doing'. I intend to continue exploring these insights in a new project The Feminist New Materialists Cookbook."

<https://www.elasticfiction.co/>  
[https://www.instagram.com/elastic\\_fiction/](https://www.instagram.com/elastic_fiction/)



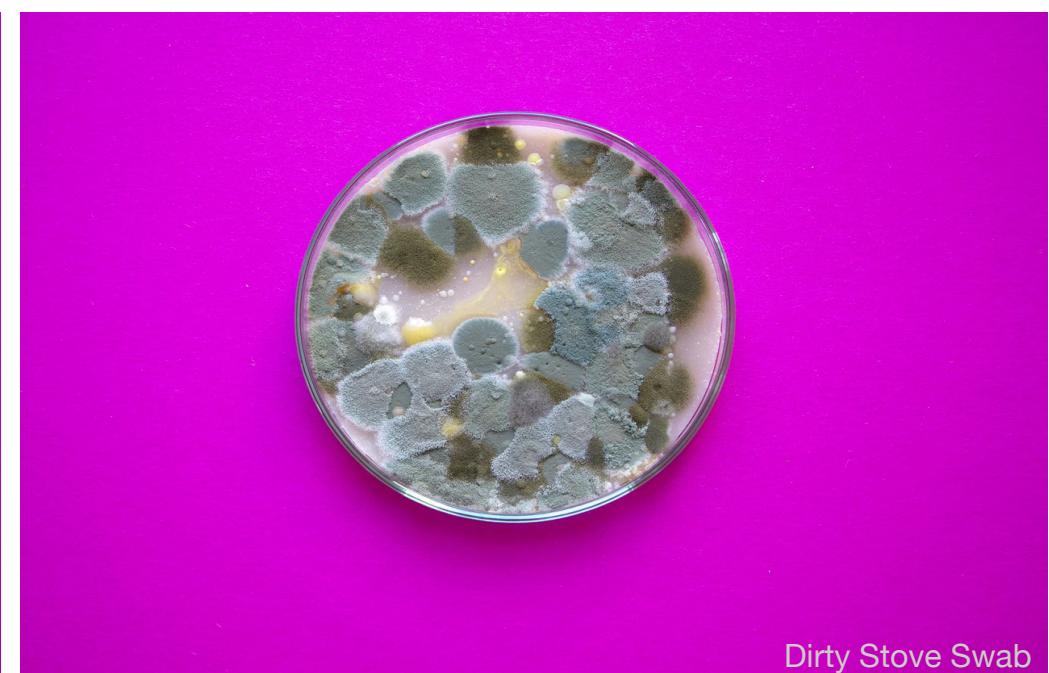
Vaginal Swab



Facial x Wild Mushroom Swab



Bellybutton Swab



Dirty Stove Swab



Ratios:

- Boiled water 250 ml
- Agar 3.75 g
- Salt .25g
- Protein 2.5 g  
(Chickpea flour)
- Minerals 1.25g  
(nutritional yeast)

Instructions:

- weigh all powder ingredients  
add to bottle
- add water + shake vigorously
- microwave/heat on hob, in  
intervals until solution is clear.
- cool solution for 10 min.
- pour 1/2 into petri dish, leaving  
lid slightly open for steam to escape.
- let cool + solidify completely.



## Future Flora

by Guillia Tomasello

When designing Future Flora in 2016, I imagined a future where females were able to harvest bacteria at home in order to prevent vaginal infections, thus becoming participants in the knowledge and culture of science. This is a project grounded in facilitating collective education through open conversation to break social taboos and empower females to partake in their own gynaecological health. In this imagined future females are completely in charge of their own bodies. As new precious and intimate practice of self-care, able to wear probiotics on clothes in order to keep their bodies healthy and balanced.



The user of Future Flora kit is a female that wants to embrace biotechnology in her house, allowing science to show alternatives to traditional medicines. In the kit, the bacterial pad grows the necessary strings of Lactobacillus bacteria to create a hostile environment for the further development of Candida Albicans, acting as living culture of probiotics. By placing the pad in contact with the female genitalia, the healthy bacteria grow on the surface of the infected area, reconstructing the microflora missing in the vagina epithelium. Considering that 75% of women suffer from Candida vulvovaginitis (CVV) at least once in their lifetime, Future Flora explores females's approach in the context of personal self-care and body awareness,

creating scaffolds for the exponential bacterial growth in appropriate areas of the body. Our clothes and accessories become the ecosystem that balance and support our skin flora.

Considering Biophilia as an affinity to anything living, we must question future implications, consequences, ownership of life and responsibilities as well as our environmental impact as we work towards some type of utopia.

By celebrating the presence of these microorganisms and exploring the parameters of design through science,

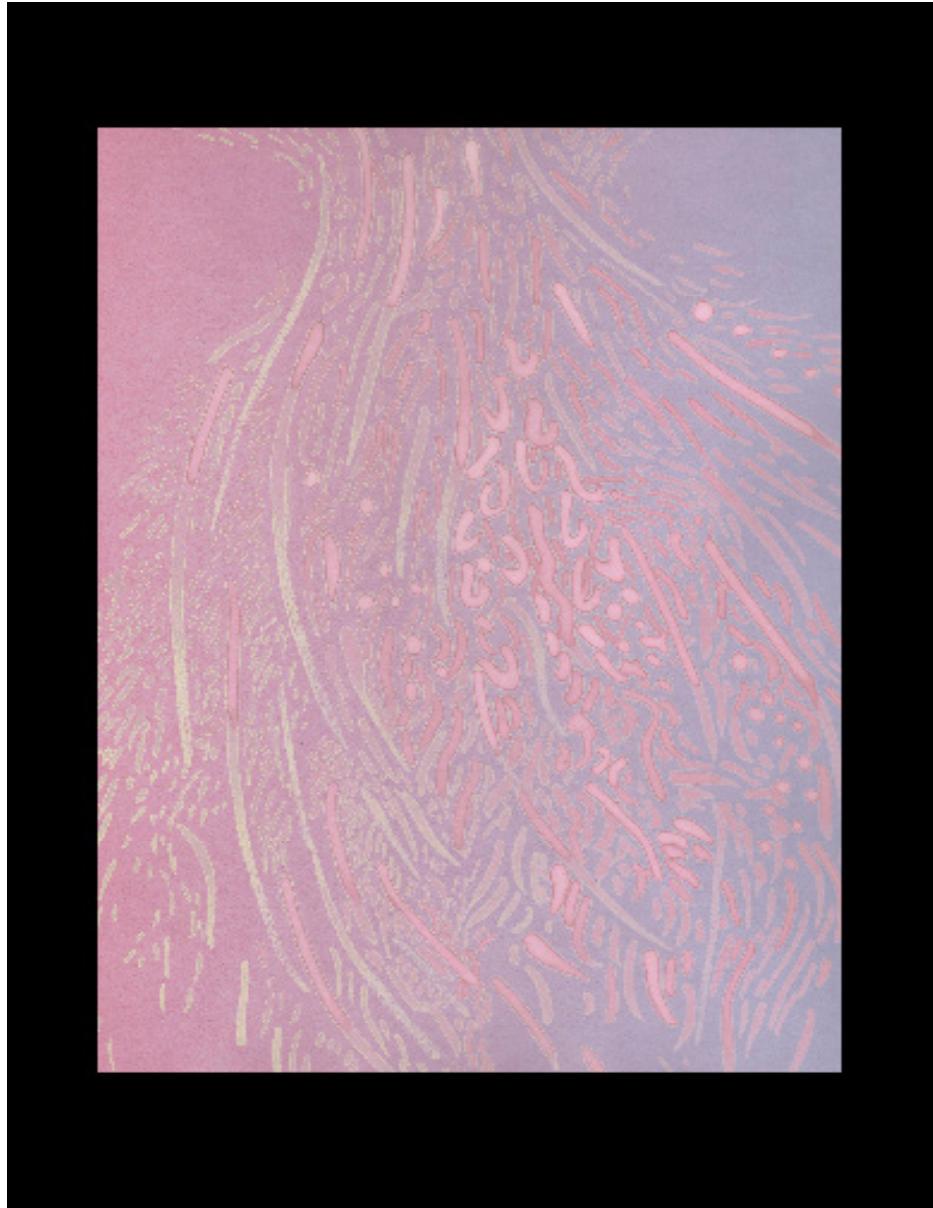
we can promote 'grow your own' approaches and demonstrate how innovation can be accessed through knowledge sharing - or are we just practicing witchcraft?!

*Future Flora is on permanent collection at the MAK (Museum of Contemporary Arts) in Vienna.*

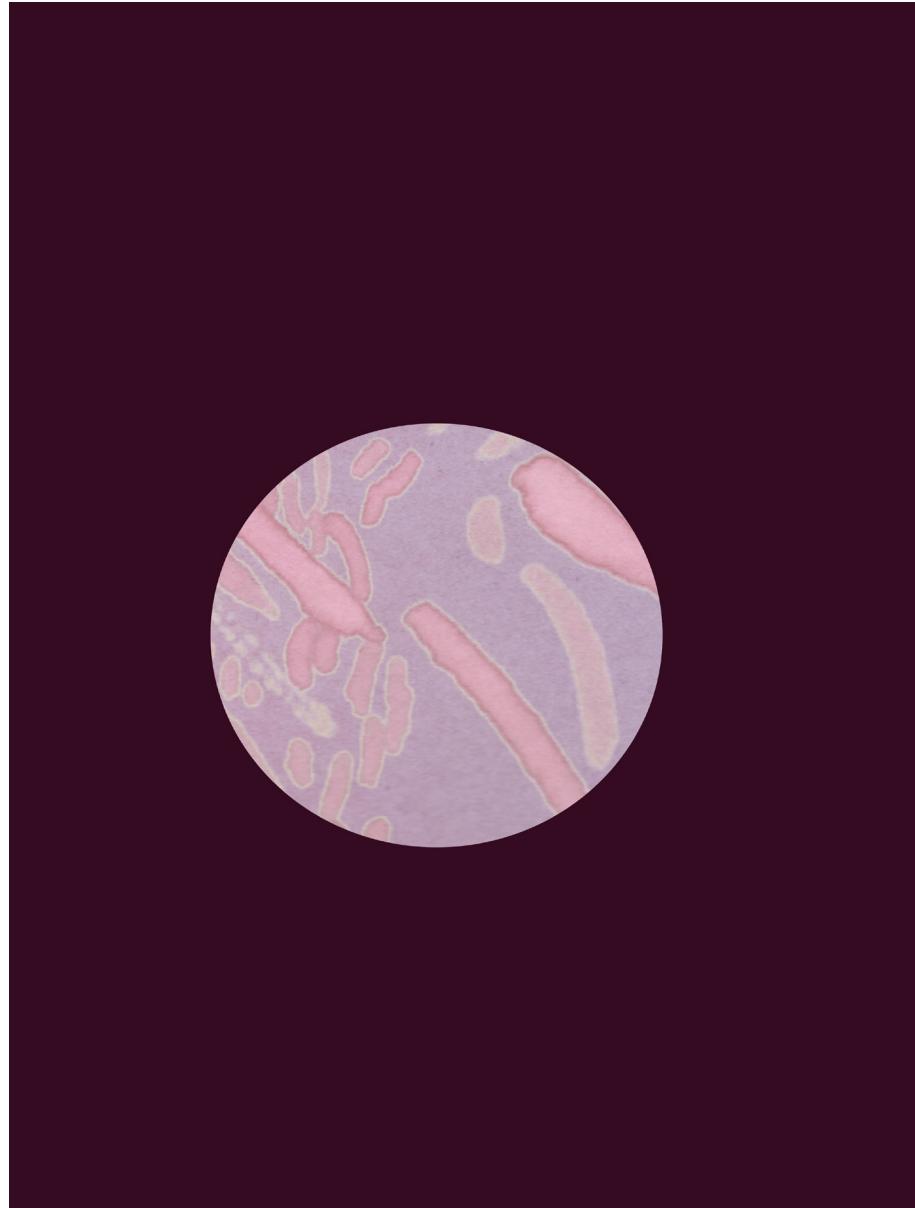
*In 2018 Future Flora won the STARTS Prize at Ars Electronica, Linz. Awarded for artistic exploration and art works where appropriation by the arts has a strong potential to influence or alter the use, deployment or perception of technology.*

More on <https://gitomasello.com/>





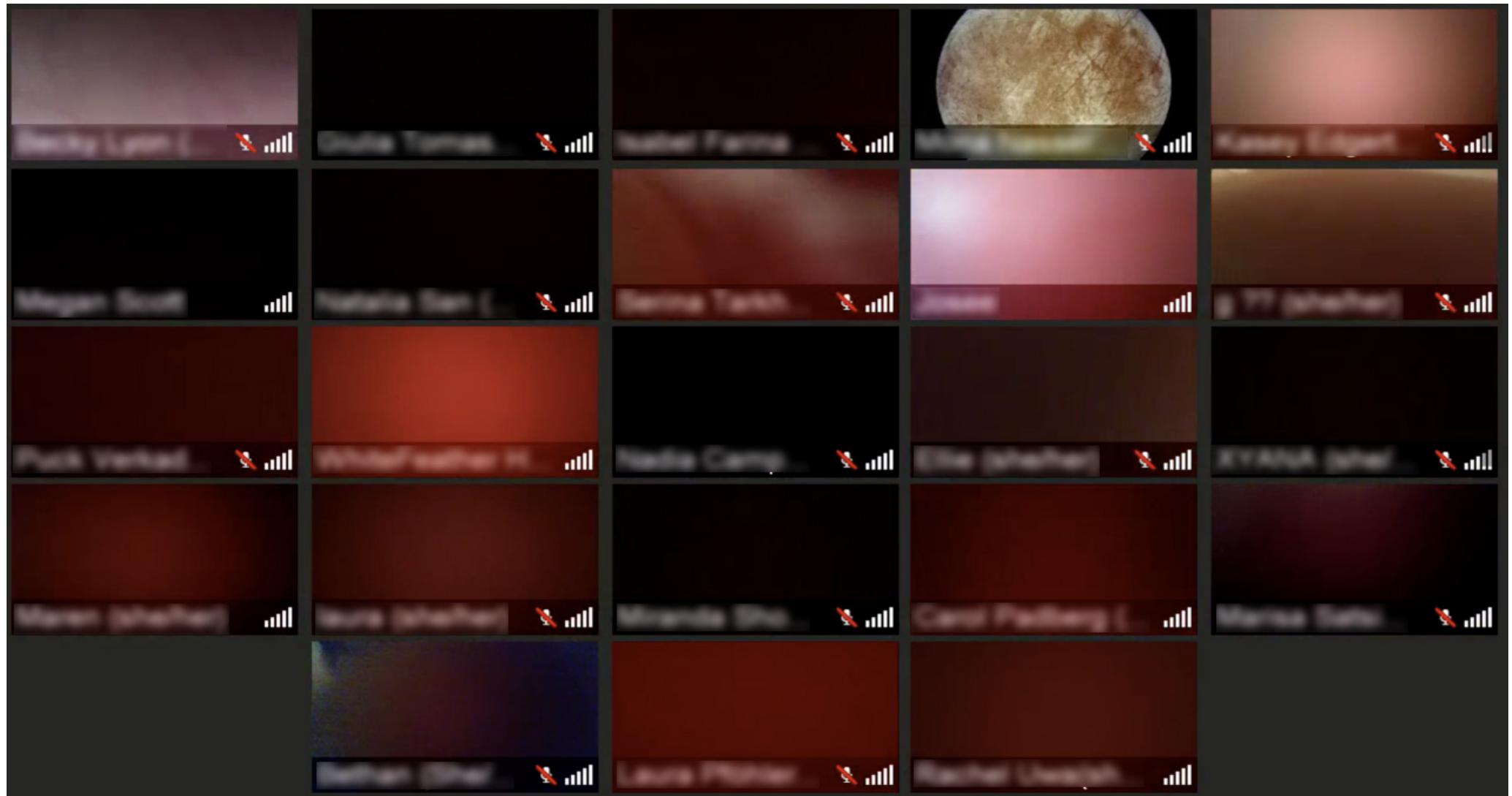
**Serina Tarkhania, M. Hominis and friends**  
pH Illustration, paper dyed with red cabbage drawn with lemon juice.





**Bethan Burnside**, “A series of bioart experiments cultivating bodily microbes in amalgam with whatever other bacteria wants to make their way in there, in contrast to my work at the lab, at home contamination is something to be embraced.”

Bioart Coven



Screenshot from the Bioart Coven closing ritual

## Cereal Party

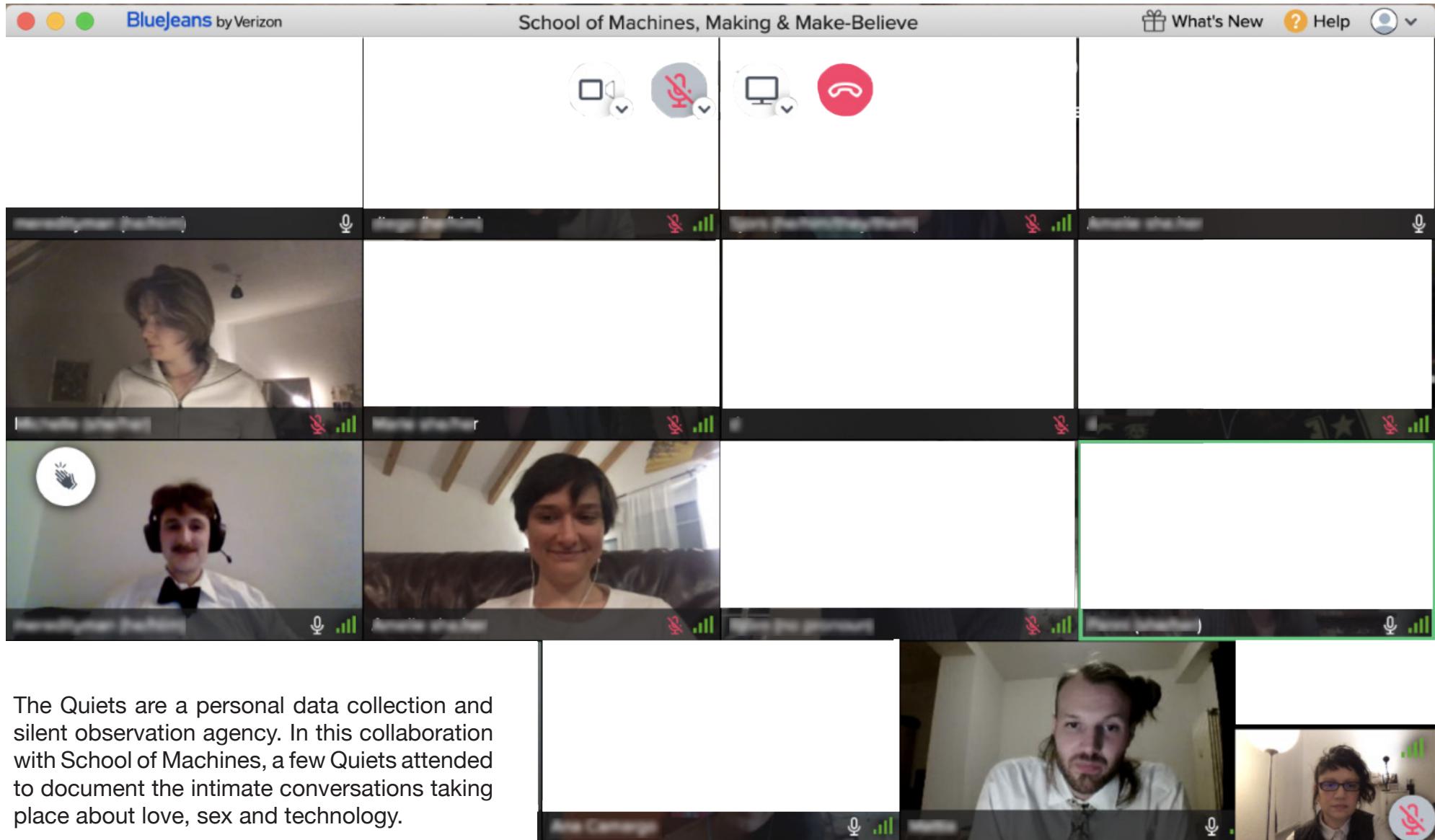
The screenshot shows an Eventbrite event page. At the top, there's a large image of a person wearing a green mask with black circles over the eyes and mouth. Below the image, the event title is "Cereal Party: Please Don't Put Your Dick In My Face edition" by "School of Machines, Mak...". It's listed as "Free" and "Sales Ended". There are "Follow" and "Details" buttons. The "Details" button is highlighted. Below the main section, there's a "Join us for serial conversations with strangers on topics of love, sex, society, and self as part of transmediale Vorspiel 2021 program." section and an "About this Event" section. The "About this Event" section contains text about communication and its effects on the human psyche, followed by a paragraph about the collaboration between School of Machines, Making & Make-Believe and The Quiets.



**cereal party**  
Online Event  
05.03.21

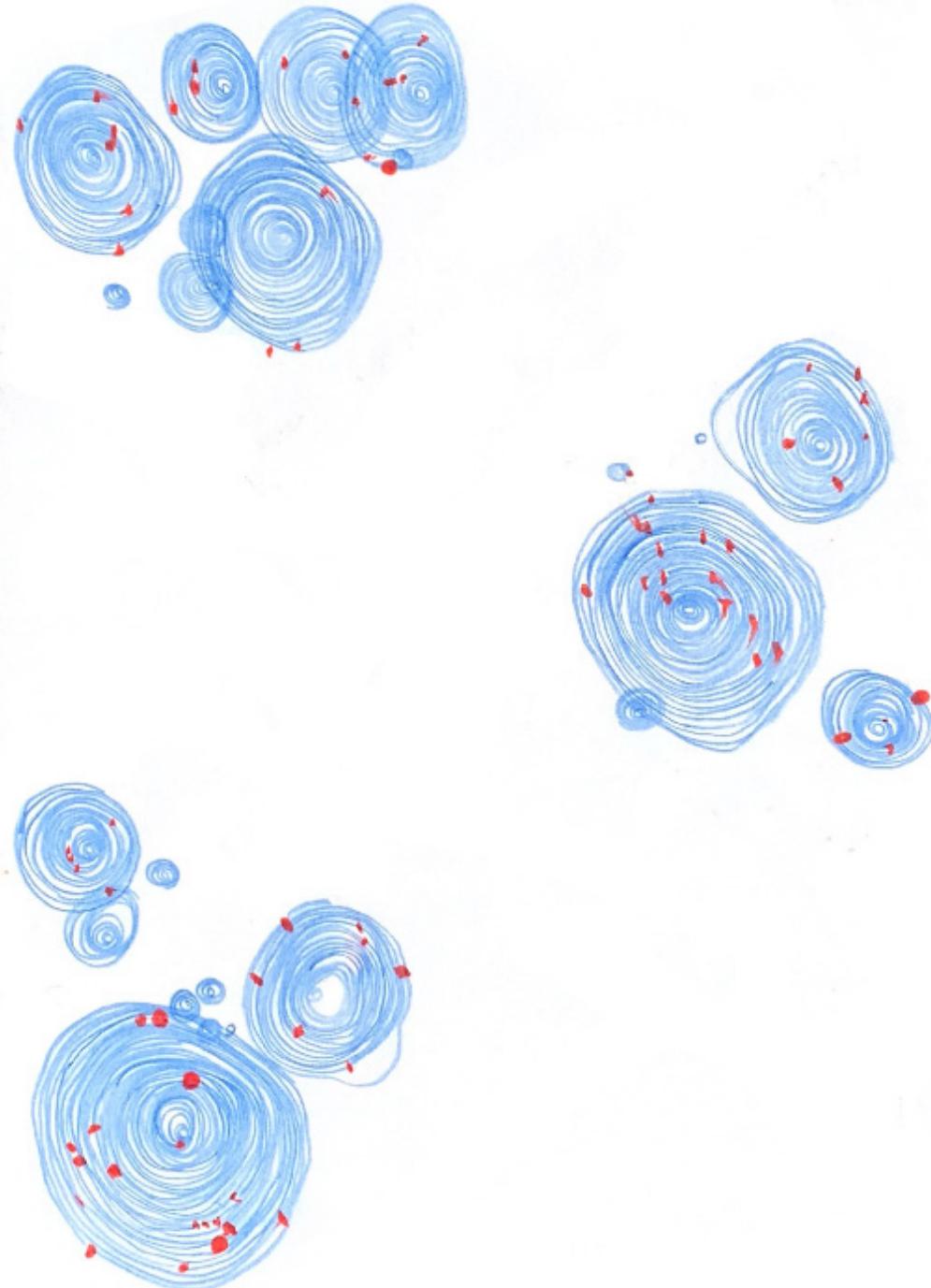
Screenshotz from the event

# THE QUIETS



The Quiets are a personal data collection and silent observation agency. In this collaboration with School of Machines, a few Quiets attended to document the intimate conversations taking place about love, sex and technology.

*Screenshot from the event*



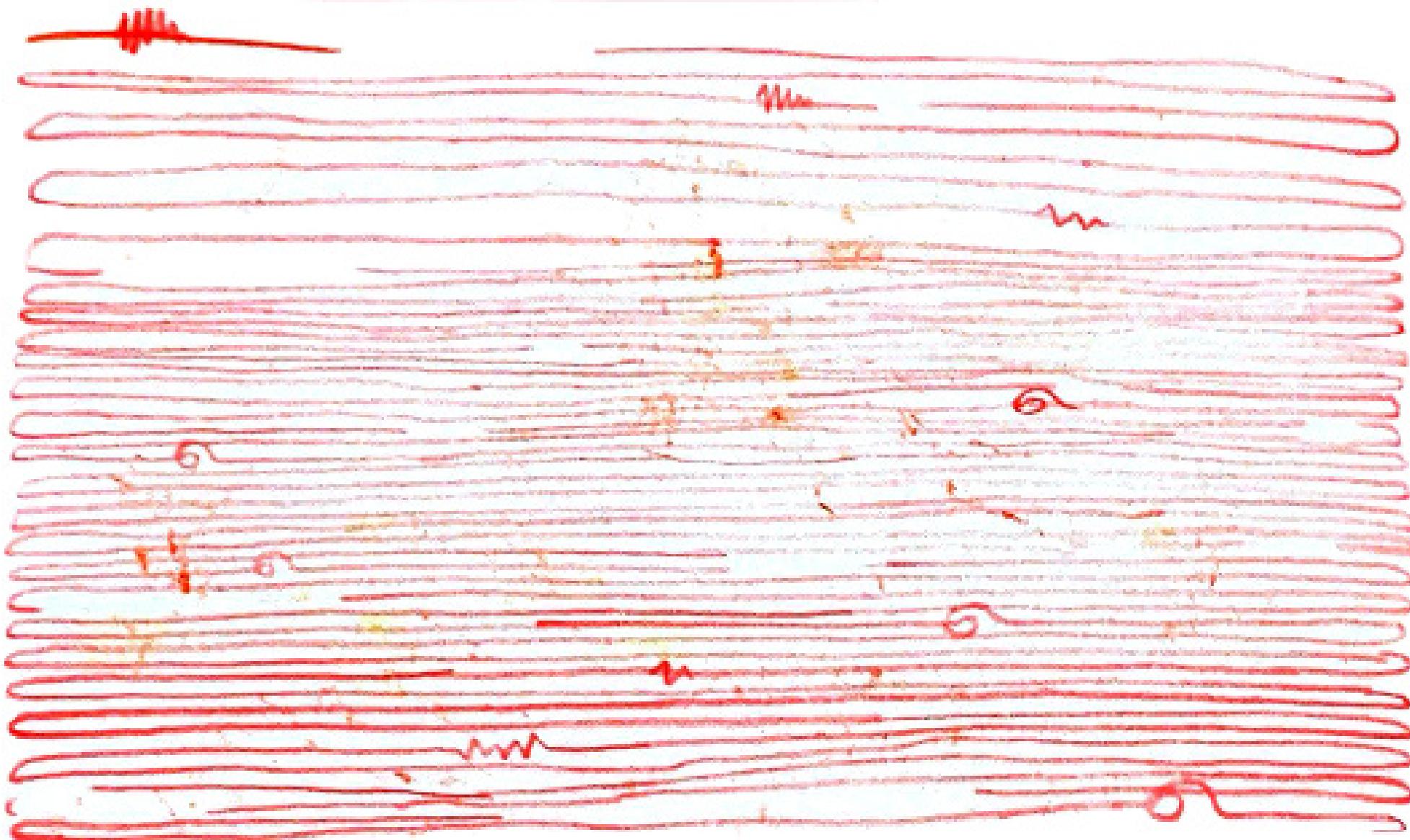
## A Quiet Reflection

by Michelle O'Higgins

"To attend this event as a Quiet was a refreshing opportunity to observe silently as a fly on the wall during a series of intimate online conversations between strangers. Applying such an intense attentiveness to a digital conversation that otherwise would be fighting for my attention amongst a sea of open tabs, meant that suddenly every stutter, interruption and nervous laugh came tumbling out of the screen and onto paper. The first data visualisation that you see on the left depicts the conversation between 3 individuals, attempting to record the length of time each participant spoke for and the frequency of interruptions of the male speakers versus the female speaker, with the red dots denoting instances of laughter. The second visualisation (next page) describes time passing as a continuous line snaking down the page, broken up by periods of silence and punctuated by symbols that record the frequency of laughter, interruptions and glitches.

While we might come to think of virtual interaction as an experience of disconnection, felt through laggy wifi and over-apologetic interruptions, these conversations revealed the opposite to be true. Perhaps the physical distance between us in cyberspace can open up for an honesty and volubility that we might be less willing to inhabit when we are so implicated in the dynamics of a room. So maybe in these moments of conversing digitally with strangers, we can practise giving words to difficult truths in hopes that they might jump off the tips of our tongues next time we meet."

Cereal Party



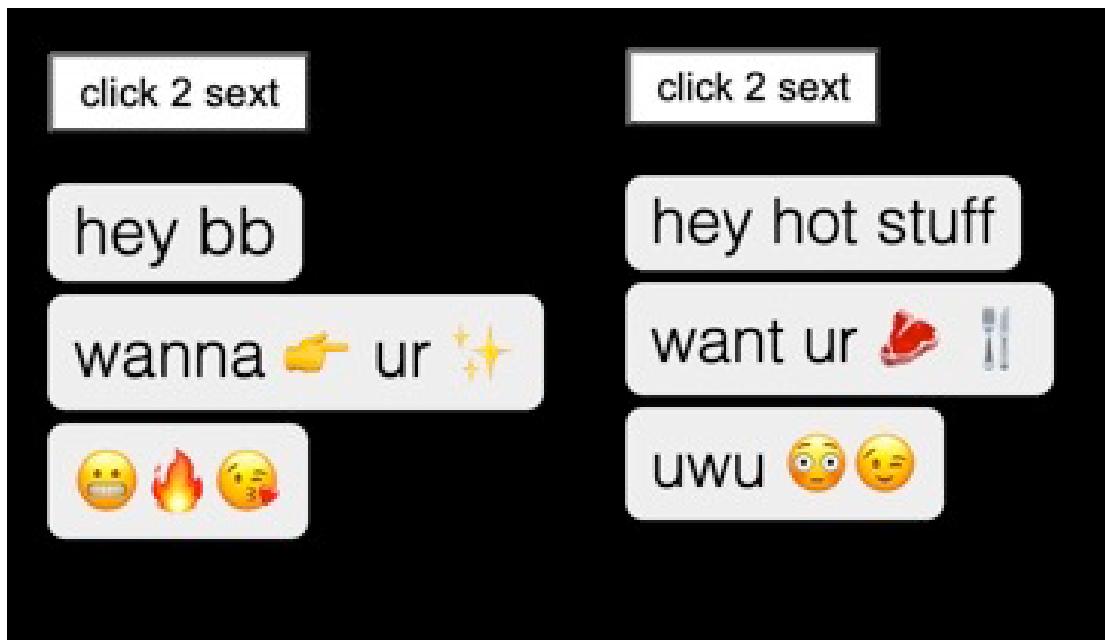
— laughter

— interruption  
— silence

# algorithmic poetry

Instructed by Mario Guzman

*Student Projects*



[https://lawreka.github.io/schoolOfMaAlgorithmicPoetry/  
week2-sextgenerator.html](https://lawreka.github.io/schoolOfMaAlgorithmicPoetry/week2-sextgenerator.html)

## Sext Generator

Kathryn Isabelle Lawrence

2021

"I wanted to give the love letter generator a modern twist. Instead of chaste love letters to “darling duck” etc., these are the sort of communications you can expect from your lover in the 21st century. (It’s a sext generator). I changed the word database to a be predominantly emojis and some suggestive openers like “u up?” and signoffs that include “jk... unless ur into that”. The sext machine generates three messages: an opening text chosen from the list of openers, a suggestive “i want” statement consisting mainly of emojis and an optional bridging statement between them like “in ur”, and a signoff expressing the sender’s current emotion: love, lust, embarrassment, or trepidation. The selection of emojis consists of many (like 💋 and 💋) that are already used in a sexual way, and many that are not particularly sexualized (like 💁, 💁, and 💁). This mixture often makes the output a bit absurd.”



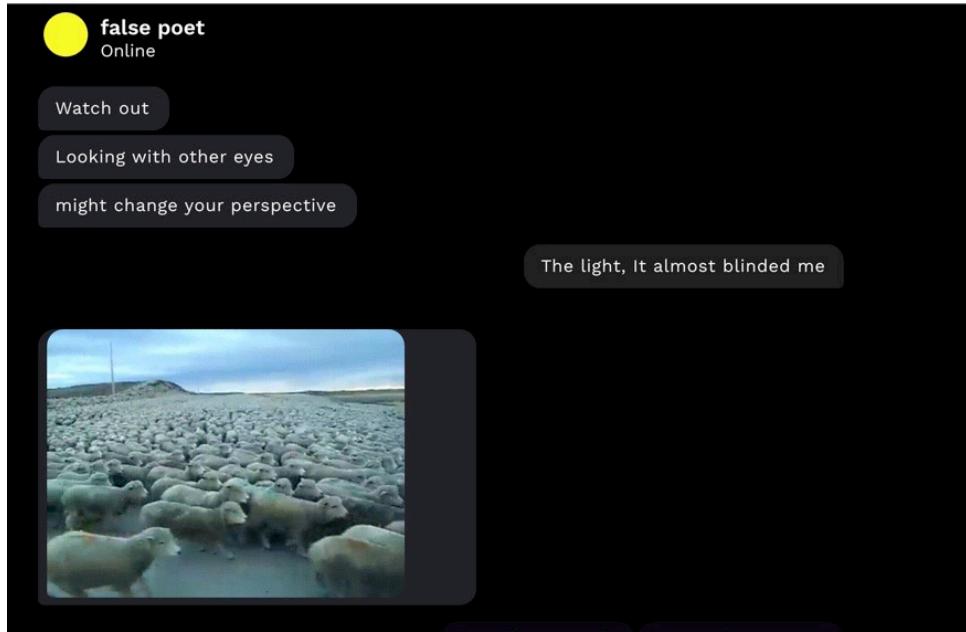
<https://pcsanguinetti.github.io/noesunaguerra/>.

# No Es Una Guerra

Pablo Sanguinetti,  
2021

“No Es Una Guerra.” No es una guerra busca visibilizar el clima de polarización en España recogiendo ejemplos de lenguaje bélico usado por medios y políticos en los días previos y posteriores a la convocatoria de elecciones para el 4 de mayo en la Comunidad de Madrid. Los datos se obtuvieron de un “scraping” automático de diversas cuentas de Twitter y de cuatro diarios nacionales para obtener cientos de titulares vinculados a los principales candidatos y con palabras de campo semántico bélico. Esa primera selección y algunos gráficos pueden encontrarse en este informe. En un segundo paso, los datos fueron curados a mano para obtener titulares (de los diarios El País, El Mundo, El Español, ABC y eldiario.es) y algunos tuits (de cuentas verificadas y con un mínimo de retuits).

“It’s not a war” seeks to make visible the climate of polarisation in Spain by collecting examples of war language used by media and politicians in the days before and after the call for elections on 4 May in the Community of Madrid. The data was obtained from an automatic scraping of several Twitter accounts and four national newspapers to obtain hundreds of headlines linked to the main candidates and with words with a war semantic field. This first selection and some graphs can be found in this report. In a second step, the data was hand-curated to obtain headlines (from the newspapers El País, El Mundo, El Español, ABC and eldiario.es) and some tweets (from verified accounts with a minimum number of retweets).

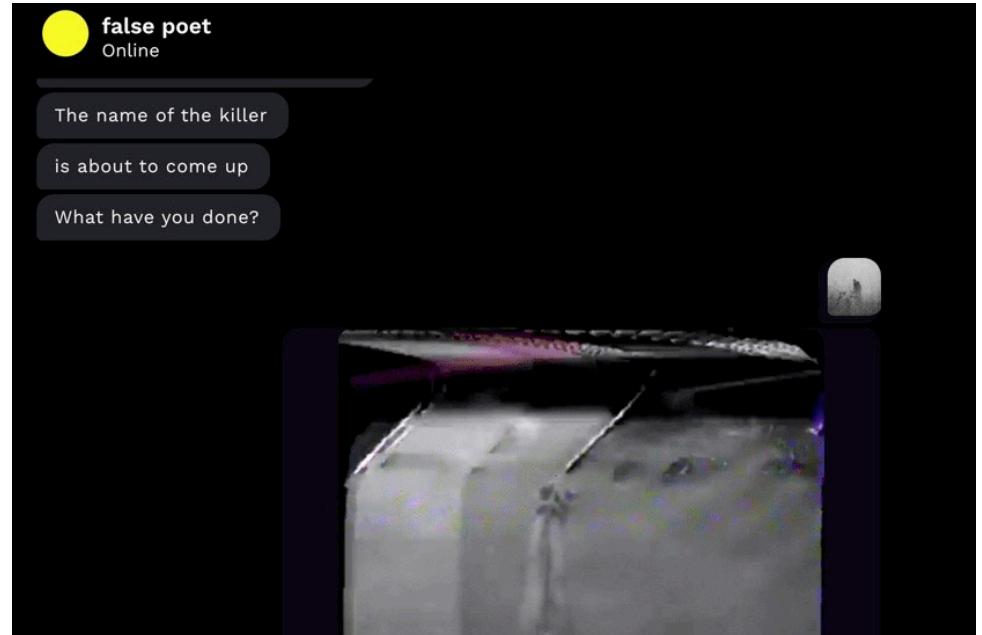


A fictional narrative  
interactive conversation  
with a Chabot about guilt.

## False Poet Online

Tiz Creel

2020



<https://www.tizcreel.com/false-poet>.

# environment as evidence class

Instructed by Martyna Marciniak from Forensic Architecture

Environment as Evidence



Images courtesy of Lily McCraith, Personal Project

## Environment as Evidence

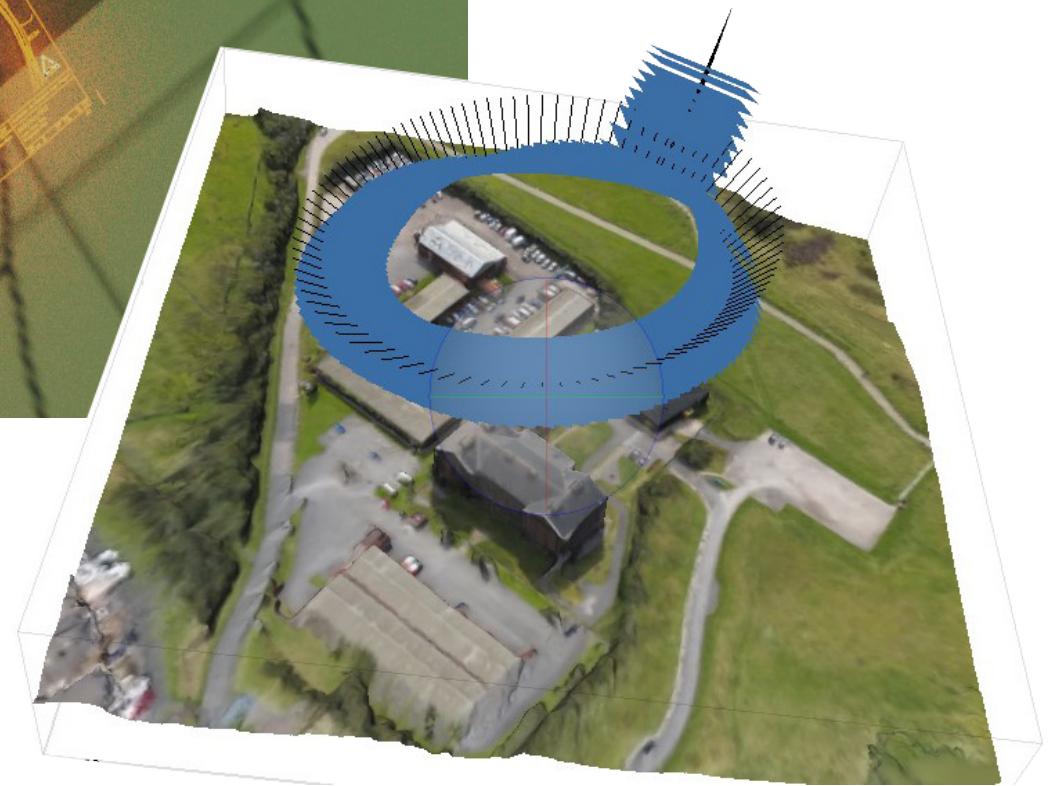


"The goal of this class is to focus on the relationship between nature and state while empowering participants with open-source investigation tools and modelling techniques to further the practices of 'open source activism' whether it be in the context of police, state, or environmental violence."

*Excerpt from class description*

"The influx and availability of instances of recorded violence is posing a need for a new set of practices for information analysis. How can we use spatial digital media to further interrogate the evidence? How can we begin reading our environmental surroundings as sensors of wider economic and state (mal)practices?"

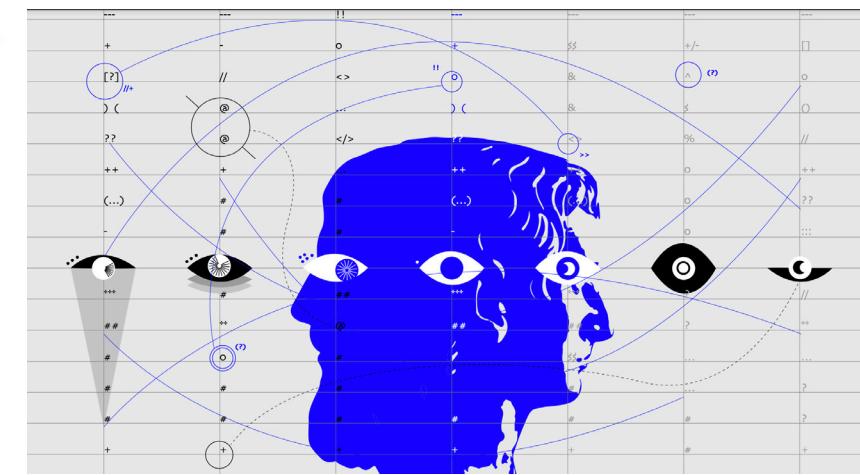
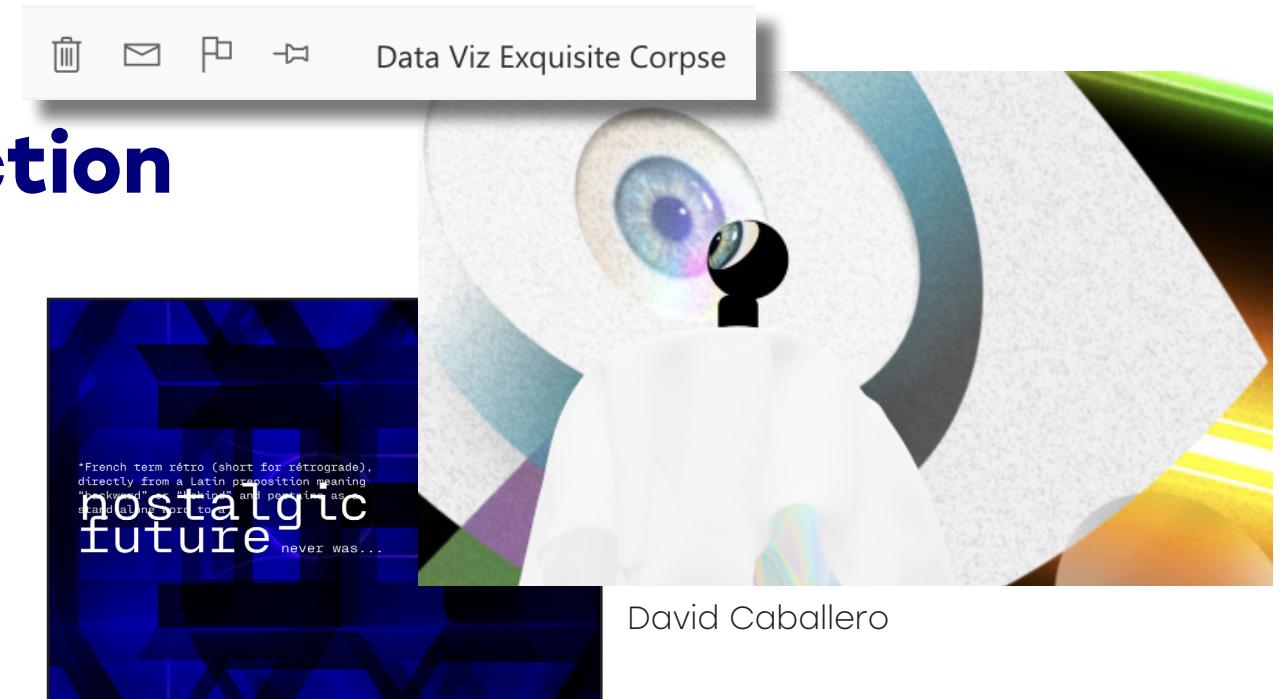
*Excerpt from class description*



# radical imperfection in time-tracking

Instructed by Kit Kuksenok  
*DataViz Exquisit Corpse Project*

The participants from Radical Imperfection in Time Tracking started a Data Visualisation Exquisit Corpse during and beyond their class. It started with one person creating a data visualisation, which they passed onto the next person with no contextual information, who would then respond creatively to this with another data visualisation, before sending it onto the next email in the list. Like this, the chain kept growing with each response interpreting and building upon the last. It is still in circulation.

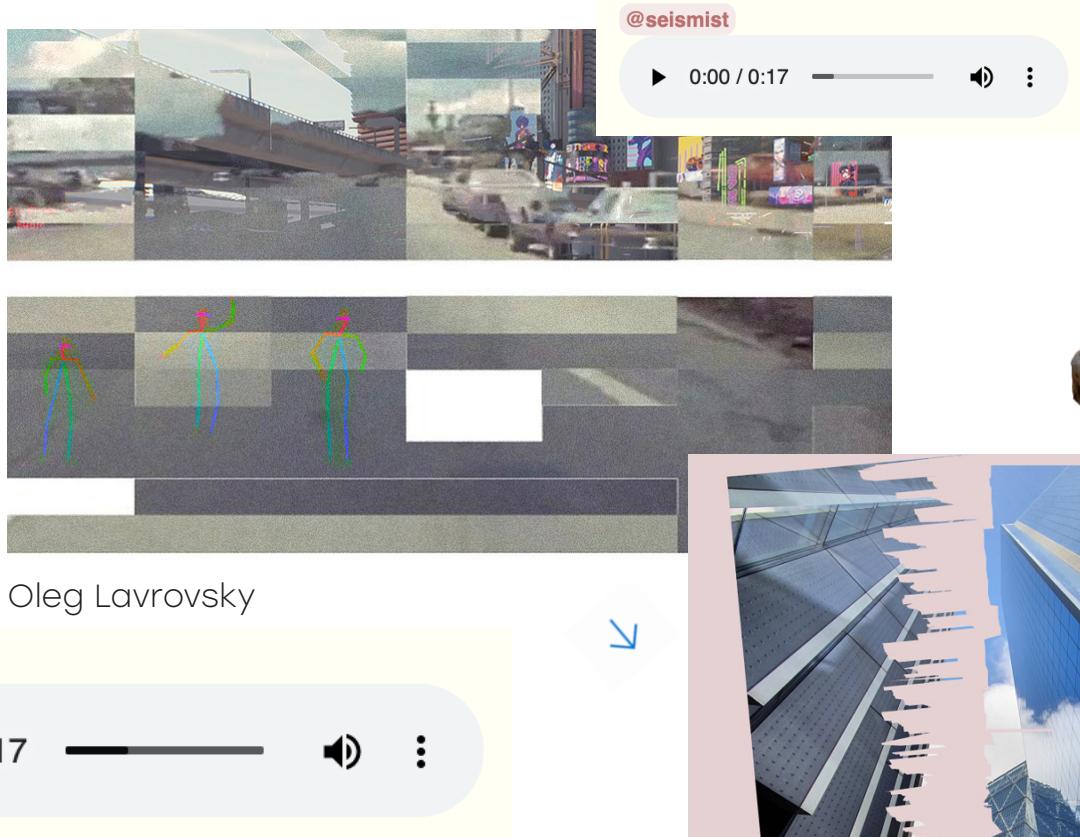


## Radical Imperfection

@haley

▶ 0:05 / 0:17 ━━━━ 🔊 ⋮

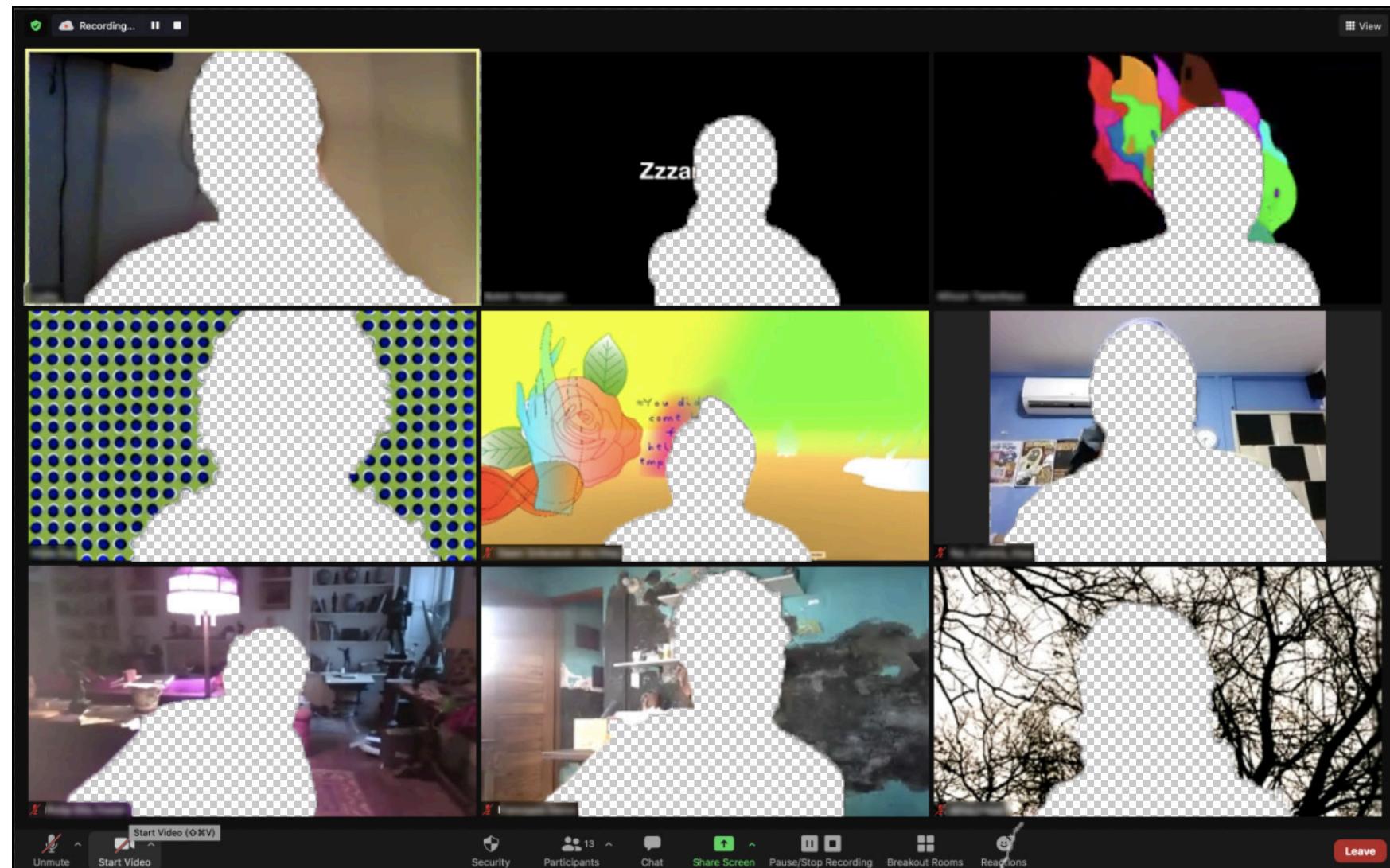
Haley Aronow



Meredith Thomas

# telematic together

Instructed by Viola Yip



Screenshot from the online class

## Student Projects



**Participatory Performance,**  
by Philip Foster, Alisa Oleva, Francesca  
Dasso and Jonas Bohatsch  
One person took a screenshot of  
themselves and passed it onto the next  
person who made it their background  
and took a screenshot of themselves  
before passing it on again until it had  
circulated the whole group.



## Live Synchronised Painting Performance

By Francesca Dasso and  
Ljuba Grishkina

francescadasso, lju... LIVE 10

dawnsink, atanenhaus joined

choelly joined

viola\_yip joined

ljuba.mayachok, viola\_yip joined

dawnsink, atanenhaus, +1 other began watching this live video

electronicgo\_joined

choelly hi

diegosaurus joined

Add a comment...

Following Browse ...

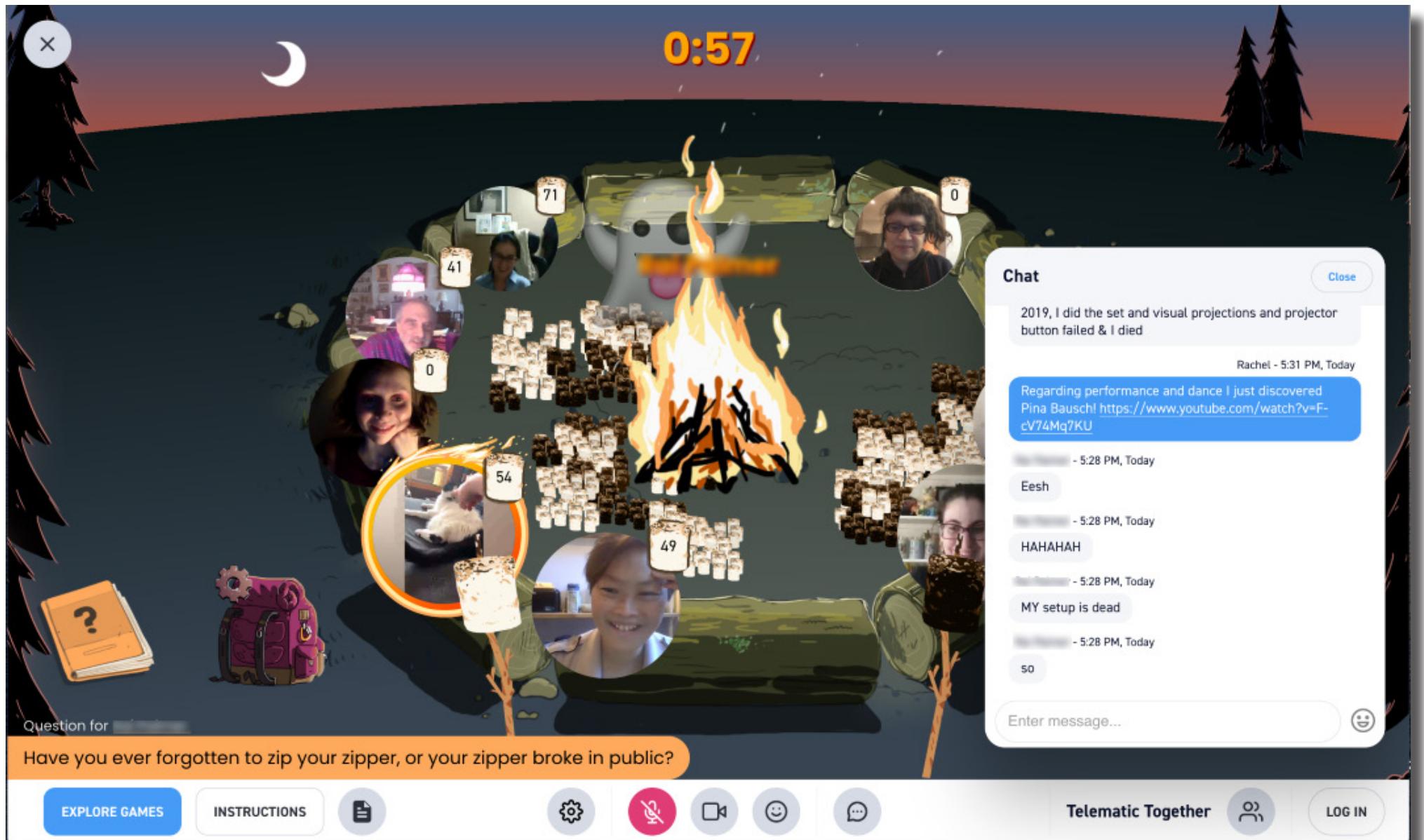
Search

28

The Ch. of Information officer ran to Walgreens, to purchase every fan, to fix this pen of us. consequence of other need to connect and broadcast constantly.

## Live Writing Performance

By Dawn Sinkowski



Screenshot from afterclass gathering on Backyard.co

# upcoming classes online

April - June



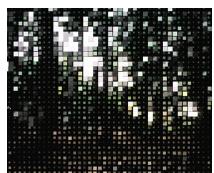
## bioart coven

SURVEYING AND CREATING AT THE INTERSECTION OF CONTEMPORARY WITCHCRAFT AND BIOTECHNOLOGIES (14. APRIL - 12. MAY 2021)



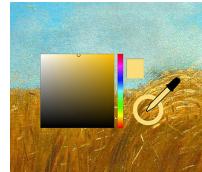
## on money and collective dreams

FROM THE HISTORY OF MONEY & CORRUPTION, TO CO-OPS, DECENTRALIZATION & (ECO)NFTS (19. APRIL - 21. JUNE 2021)



## algorithmic poetry

SPECULATIVE IMAGINATION, MACHINE LEARNING AND CODE STUDIES (26. APRIL - 24. MAY 2021)



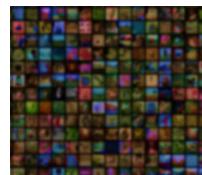
## color and accessibility

HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR MODERN DIGITAL SPACE (27. APRIL - 25. MAY 2021)



## visual methodologies for climate futures

TOOLS FOR DESIGNING IMAGE DATASETS (29. APRIL - 27. MAY 2021)



## reflexiones a través de las máquinas

IMPlicaciones para los humanos futuros con RUNWAYML (29. ABRIL - 3. JUNIO 2021)



## terms of disagreement

HUMANS, COGNITIVE MODELS AND CYBER COMMUNICATION (4. MAY - 1. JUNE 2021)



## if we ruled the world ii

VISUALIZING FUTURES IN 3D (12. MAY - 9. JUNE 2021)

# upcoming classes

## in person

July - Sept



### videodrone

BORDERS, HUMANS, TECHNOLOGY, AND AERIAL VIDEOGRAPHY (7. JUNE. - 11. JUNE. 2021)



### transmedia storytelling

DESIGNING TRANSMEDIA EXPERIENCES USING AUGMENTED- AND VIRTUAL REALITIES (5. JULY - .31 JULY 2021)



### smell

DESIGNING OLFACTORY EXPERIENCES (12. JULY - .16 JULY 2021)



### crafting food experiences

EXPERIMENTS IN FOOD, DINING, AND THE EXPERIENCE OF EATING (19. JULY - .23 JULY 2021)



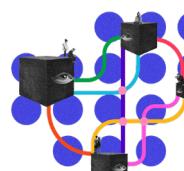
### interactive berlin

DESIGNING INTERACTIVE ARTWORKS FOR PUBLIC SPACE (2. AUGUST - 28. AUGUST 2021)



### emergent computation

EMERGENCE, EMOTION, AND MACHINE LEARNING (30. AUGUST. - 24. SEPTEMBER. 2021)



### politics and poetry of cinema in the age of ai

INVESTIGATING HOW FILM AND MACHINE LEARNING CAN WORK TOGETHER (30. AUGUST. - 24. SEPTEMBER. 2021)



# 2021 class calendar

APRIL

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
		BIOART COVEN 8-10PM		
19	20	21	22	23
ON MONEY AND COLLECTIVE DREAMS 6-8PM				
26	27	28	29	30
ALGORITHMIC POETRY 8-10 PM	COLOR AND ACCESSIBILITY 8-10 PM	REFLEXIONES A TRAVÉS 6-8 PM	VISUAL PRACTICHOLOGIES 7-9 PM	

MAY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	4	5	6	7
	ON DISAGREEING 6-8 PM			
10	11	12	13	14
		IF WE RULED THE WORLD II 6-8 PM		
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

JUNE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
VIDEODRONES FULL TIME				
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

JULY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
TRANSMEDIAL STORYTELLING FULL TIME				
12	13	14	15	16
SMELL FULL TIME				
19	20	21	22	23
CRAFTING COOK EXPERIENCES FULL TIME				
26	27	28	29	30

AUGUST

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3	4	5	6
INTERACTIVE BERLIN FULL TIME				
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
EMERGENT COMPUTATION FULL TIME				
30	31			
POLITICS AND POETRY IN CINEMA FULL TIME				

SEPTEMBER

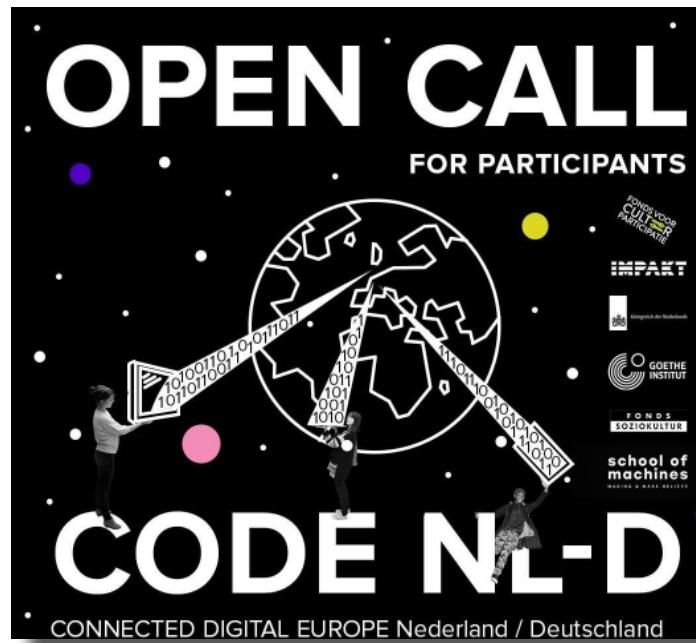
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

# open calls



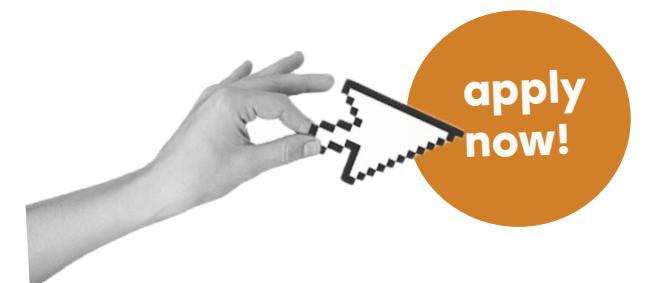
## **videodrones v4 zone scholarships**

BORDERS, HUMANS, TECHNOLOGY, AND AERIAL  
VIDEOGRAPHY (DEADLINE 30. APRIL 2021)



## **code nl-d**

CONNECTED DIGITAL EUROPE NEDERLAND - DEUTSCHLAND  
(DEADLINE 30. APRIL 2021)





**We hope to see  
you soon!**

(virtual) hugs and  
high fives,  
from School of MA

XXX



[schoolofma.org](http://schoolofma.org)