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Maria Orciuoli (IT, 1989) is an artist born in Avellino and based in Linz. Her practice combines design, film, music, performance, physical computing and creative coding. With a focus on the digital realm, she approaches collections of information, data, software and hardware systems as materials to investigate in the themes of consumer culture, nature's phenomena and technology's influence on human subjectivity. Incorporating leisure, social and political critique, her films, installations, artifacts and public events range from small-town games to screaming interfaces, from a candy-activated seat sensor to the price index of a raindrop. In a parallel universe, she runs **KO-HUM**, a communication agency promoting artists and cultural producers working in music and performing arts.



Raindrop Price Index - You Cannot Refill A Sea With Tears
space Gallery, 2024 Linz (AT)

Raindrop Price Index - You Cannot Refill A Sea With Tears

audiovisual installation
and artistic research poster, 2023

Max/Msp audio-visual live demo of the three patches
generating respectively sound, rain precipitation data and
evapotranspiration measurements. Audio starts at 00:00:40.

Headphones recommended.

(<https://vimeo.com/820767591/516f0e104b?share=copy>)

***How would our perception of the ecosystem change if we
shifted from human-centered concerns to view rain as a
shared resource within Earth's ecosystems?***

Raindrop Price Index: You Cannot Refill A Sea With Tears is a research-based artwork and commentary on data-driven technologies used for ecosystem valuation. It presents Earth's rain precipitation and evapotranspiration data as a tangible entity that, separated from its scientific context, confronts the observer with information transcending human scales, emphasizing nature's unpredictable command.

Keywords: Big Data, Climate Services, Natural Capital Accounting¹, Nature Abstraction, Critical Data, AI & Ecosystem Services

Drawing from early meteorology and price charts, Raindrop Price Index presents terrestrial ecosystems' water balance cycles within today's frames of computational reading and control of our environment. It features two generative audio-visual animations I created in Max/MSP utilizing the ClimateEngine's 2011-2021 TerraClimate dataset, sourced from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) by University of Idaho's researchers. Monthly rainfall and evapotranspiration measurements from 2011 to 2021, expressed in millimeters, appear on the pixelated canvases through generative algorithms, resembling the falling of raindrops on a surface. Sound, lines, and contours dynamically shift in rhythm with Earth's water cycle balance and terrestrial ecosystems' rain consumption patterns. In this work, I intentionally reference the aesthetic of early meteorology visualizations, such as the black and white palette of isohyets and early commodities price charts, framing the data within the tools used for knowledge acquisition and environmental economics decision making.



QR code to artistic research poster available
digitally at [https://mariaorciuoli.xyz/
raindroppriceindex.html](https://mariaorciuoli.xyz/raindroppriceindex.html)
splace Gallery, 2024 Linz (AT)

With this framing, the artwork seeks to question how the anthropocentric view of events beyond human reach conditions our experience of the natural world, while highlighting the subjective nature of the scientific method applied in economics. Stripped of its intended use and context, big data transforms into a tangible entity, confronting the observer with information transcending human scales. While aligning with the growing prevalence of data-driven methods, which transforms almost every facet of an experience into quantifiable data, the installation counters this trend by reintegrating the data into the realm of personal experience, emphasizing its subjective and sensory aspects.

The work's title draws from the economic model of supply and demand to re-interpret its framework from the perspective of terrestrial ecosystems as major consumers of rain. The second part of the title pays homage to the tragedy of the Aral Sea's human-driven disappearance and prompts to reflect on the interplay between nature, society, and economic systems.

Raindrop Price Index: You Cannot Refill A Sea With Tears uses the ClimateEngine's 2011-2021 TerraClimate dataset, processed by Google Earth and obtained from NOAA and NASA by the University of Idaho's researchers.

The research and the artwork originated in spring 2023 within the context of *Critical Data* lectures under the supervision of Univ.Prof. Mag.art Manuela Naveau from the Interface Cultures department of the University of Art & Design Linz and PhD candidate Danial Karpati from the University of Luxembourg. It reached completion during the Japanese rainy season while I undertook a three-month research fellowship at the **Digital Nature Lab**, guided by media artist and Univ.Prof. Yoichi Ochiai at the University of Tsukuba.

The audio-visual installation and the adjacent artistic research poster have been exhibited at **Ars Electronica Festival 2023** in Linz, the **Computational Creativity Hub** of the University of Luxembourg, **PUSH UX Conference 2023** in Munich, **Speculum Artium 2023** in Trbovlje, **splace Gallery** in Linz as part of the 2024 group exhibition **AI+ Art & Artificial Intelligence**.



Tomato Propaganda
Pierre Dimitry Meka & Maria Orciuoli
installation view a
2022-2023

Tomato Propaganda - *The Self-Destructing Contract*

Maria Orciuoli (IT/AT) & Pierre Dimitri Meka (CF/IT),
Italy, 2023

Board game, manual press, film,
graphics, prints, materials

On view at **The Wrong Biennale** until March 1st, 2024:
Hyper*Espresso Italian digital pavilion

Trailer (00:02:31 IT/ENG with ENG subtitles)
<https://youtu.be/AaNyM2wSuqU>

keywords: caporalato, food supply chain, human rights,
sustainability, consumer culture

In Italy, the third-largest tomato producer globally, the demand for seasonal labor attracts economic migrants who risk to be recruited by 'gangmasters' known as caporale, exposing them to illegal wages, poor working conditions, lack of contracts and forced labor. Addressing these challenges requires a commitment to fair pricing that reflects actual production costs, coupled with awareness campaigns around labor rights and ethical practices. In January 2023, Tomato Propaganda was taken to a local supermarket in a small town in the Campania region. Visitors and employees were invited to participate in an interactive price bidding game, creating a win-win/lose-lose scenario. The game involved a seller and multiple consumers embarking on a quest to find a price balance that would prevent a tomato can from being crushed under a manual press. The game involved a seller and multiple consumers embarking on a quest to find a price balance that would prevent a tomato can from being crushed under a manual press. The core of the interactive experience featured a manual press, a tomato can, tokens, a dice, and scenario cards inspired by news headlines about commodity markets and the factors influencing the volatility of their prices.

Beyond being a game, this activity served as a metaphor for the dynamics among consumers, producers, markets and the realms of social and environmental sustainability.

Tomato Propaganda consolidated in an installation, incorporating the game's materials, film, graphics and documents as forms of activation, dissemination, and reflection.

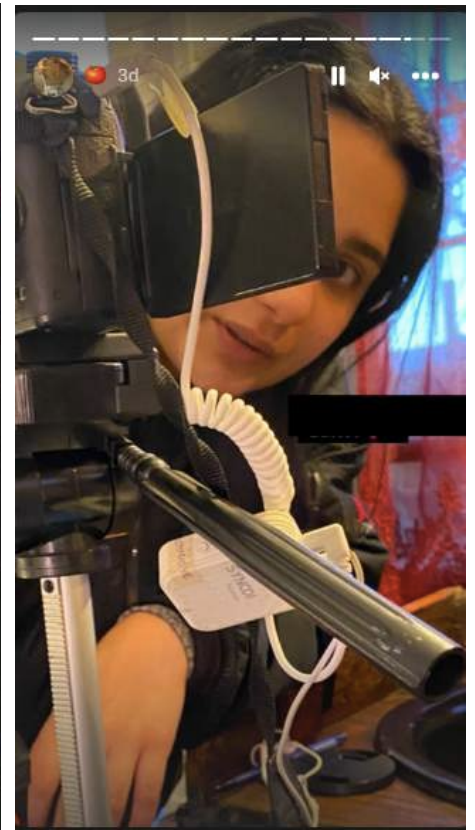
Conceptually, Tomato Propaganda is a statement – that people can set alternative narratives to reclaim economics as a means to address social change.



board game materials, 2023



video stills, 2023



RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds

2019-2022

interactive video installation

one-channel video (7 min, digital, color, sound, no dialogues), gummy candies, chair used in the performance video, custom algorithms, microcontroller, car seat' safety belt sensor

Keywords: consumer culture, saturated self, accelerationism, catharsis

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, it asks: can certain developments in society be put on hold, or is it everything already in pieces? Consumer culture finds expression in offers whose pleasurable and comforting 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.

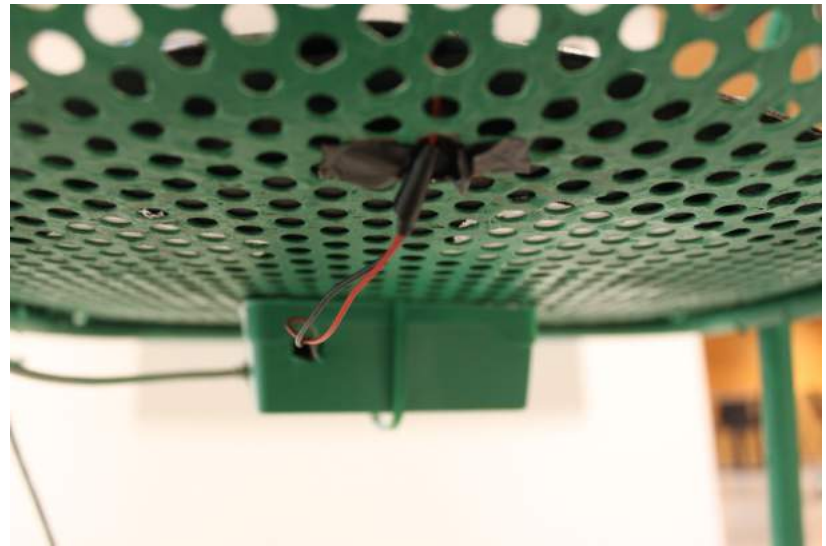
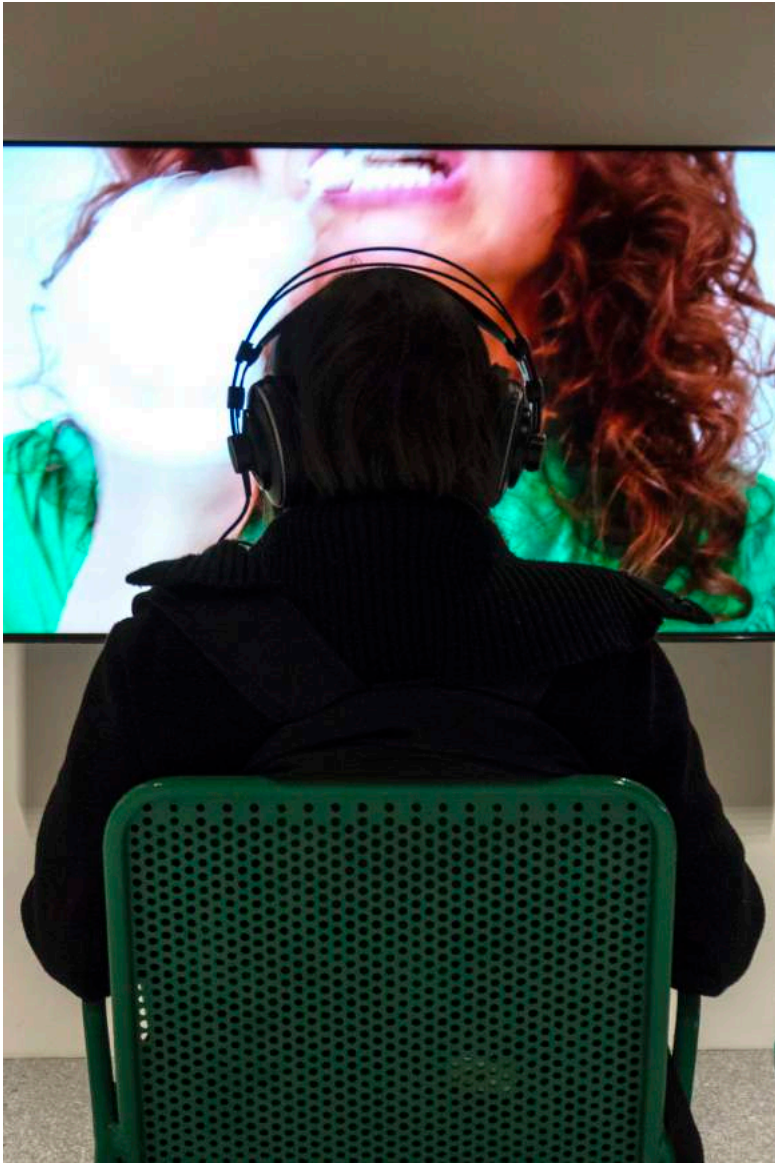
This interactive video work discusses consumer culture and accelerationism from the point of view of the mind and the body. The installation plays an accelerated sequence of a performance footage captured in 2019 on a construction dump in Southern Italy. In the video, the artist is shown ravenously eating a pile of waste: a binge eating ritual until the closing purging ceremony. Filtered through the artist's experience recovering from an eating disorder, the video questions society's mainstream values as the protagonist finds herself over-saturated by conflicting impulses.

By means of computation, two custom algorithms interfaced by the seat occupancy sensor allow viewing the video at its intended speed. By sitting and watching, the audience becomes complicit in how the film reproduces consumer culture's paradoxical nature. The gummies are an invitation to ruminate on the issues of overconsumption while making edible a part of the installation.

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds
Interactive video installation, 2022



Ars Electronica Festival
Linz, 2022



RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds installation view at Ars Electronica Festival Linz 2022
- photos by Indiara di Benedetto

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds

2019-2022

interactive video installation

One-channel video (7 min, digital, color, sound, no dialogues), gelatin-free gummy candies, recycled metal chair and side-table, microcontroller, car seat' safety belt sensor

Interaction [video](#)

Keywords: consumer culture, saturated self, accelerationism, catharsis

Maria Orciuoli's first video work discusses consumer culture and accelerationism from the point of view of the mind and the body.

The installation consists of a video projection, gummy candies and a custom sensor seat. In the video, the artist is shown ravenously eating a pile of waste: a binge eating ritual until the closing purging ceremony. Filtered through the artist's experience recovering from an eating disorder, the video questions society's mainstream values as the protagonist finds herself over-saturated by conflicting impulses.

Borrowing the title from the 2017 Astronomical Journal report on the RZ Piscium star dubbed 'Eater of Worlds' for being surrounded by the wreckage of planets it has consumed, the installation is a commentary on the current 'capitalism hangover.'

RZ Piscium is an Insatiable Eater of Worlds
video stills



Scream Support System

wearable, cultural prosthetic,
2022-ongoing

force sensor, microcontroller,
peltier module, cotton fabric pillow (30x40 cm), wires

Research:
<https://mariaorciuoli.xyz/energyharvesting.html>

“The apparatus serves to bridge the person’s internal state and the outside. Participants access sensorial energy that has been implicitly or explicitly put to sleep by societal norms. The project was developed in a DIY setting, and in parallel to readings on energy harvesting from the human body’s heat and environmental noise.”

Keywords: scream, thermodynamics, post-phenomenology, cultural prosthetic, energy harvesting, speculative design

Scream Support System is a cultural prosthetic that allows its user to scream, release and transform uncomfortable feelings.

The user’s scream is absorbed by a pillow so that the surrounding environment and people won't be affected by the loud sound. Below the pillow's surface, a force sensor detects the user's face when in contact with it. By pressing the face against the pillow to release the scream, electricity is sent to a Peltier module placed on the user's chest. By lowering its temperature, the module's cold side in contact with the user's skin gives a refreshing sensation. This procedure reproduces the haptic feeling of the emotions released and cooled as they travel from the user's diaphragm, chest, and throat.

This piece explores the importance of human emotions in a society living under the myth of self-control and autonomy driven by technological symbiosis with machines. We are supposed to be “all things nice” and learn to "behave" from a young age. This project reminds me and whoever can relate to it that all emotions are valid, and repressing them is detrimental to our physical and mental health.

Machines affect how we conceptualize and express ourselves, social perception, the feeling of agency, and action. Social awareness is brought out by accessing and imagining different interplays of humans and machines through custom interaction design and breathing techniques, and individuals are encouraged to reinvent their existence. Scream Support System is visible play-use equipment that offers context-sensitive functionality to its wearer. Simultaneously it announces the need for existence by being used in public without being hidden.

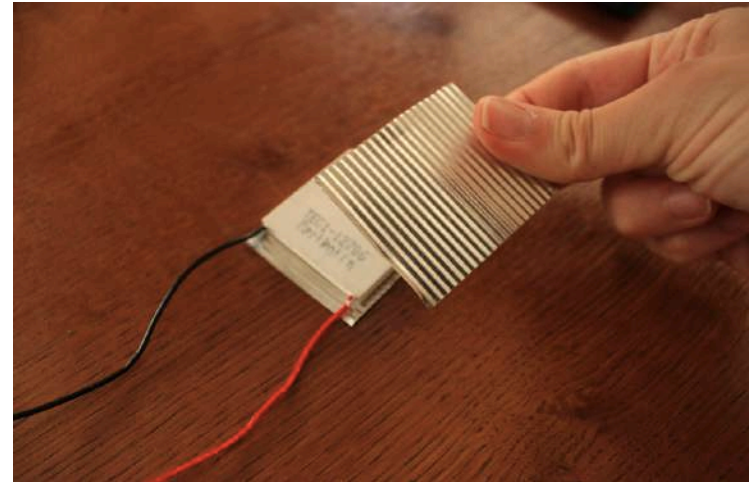


Scream Support System
prototype

Scream Support System
prototype



Scream Support System
prototype



faith
interactive sculpture, 2021

materials:
blank paint on QWERTY keyboard, computer, monitor

documentation (30 secs):
<https://vimeo.com/699468448/4bd90e7ee1>

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

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 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 free market-driven standardization operates and will continue to empower innovators to revolutionize the way we work, learn, communicate and play. This 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 QWERTY keyboard whose keys have been covered with black paint. 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 cognitive level and provides a speculative reference to the 'spectre of the universal.'

faith



Sankt Interface, University of Arts, Linz 2021