COLOPHON

This publication was written and designed by Valerie Kvon
lera.kvon@gmail.com
@valerie.kvon

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< preface >

< Letter from the creator >

As a creative and designer with interest in computation from Russia recent political events (though i'm not going to discuss the politics here) prompted me to reflect on current state of creative industry since most of the creatives couldn'ta access software due to political restriuctions and therefore most of the creatives were forced to use alternatives options. Starting from the early beginning, Back at the childhood the creativity felt as a space of freedom and liberation, it was still early stages of web that wasnt fully commodified and dominated by big-corporate companies leaving some breathing space for PC users, I still remember long-time obsession with *Microsoft Paint* - free and simple raster graphics editor where I drew on a digital screen - something magical and unbelievable for 9 year old kid. It was a time when I in a sense felt truly connected to the technology, it seemed simple yet enchanting.

As time passed on, and my interest deepened in graphic design area and i entered academia in bachelors degree in Graphic Communication design. Before I shifted towards the Graphic Design field I was interested in illustration and mainly worked with drawing tools like *SAI* or *Procreate*, however, while developing the projects i've realised the urgent need of exploring the *Adobe Suite* - industry standart software design tools that allow creatives to create work digitally. I've been told multiple times by teaching stuff that to create professional-level work you have you use industry standart tools - its a well-known convention within designers circles. Going back to these memories all i can recall is sleepless night of nightmares in order to understand what this tools out of other one millions tool requires you to do, how it affects the outcome i want to make. Often, it came down just to me manually and simply doing the same process but thoorugh more meticiolous and witty designing process. And on top, all comes with a price.

You want to be professional creative?

You want to be able to create work on high level industry level?

That's why you have to buy our tools to create an excellent work.

The creativity - something that usually feels disconnected and untouched by capitalistic perspective never holded a stronger grasp over the art and design industry. Why creativity comes with a subscription with a high price tag?

And even if you feel that you can find resonable answers to this question the more valuable questions then will be how we shifted from free web and computer as an expression of a liberation to the tools that enslave not only our daily lives but creative thinking and determine our creative choices

by imposing predefined workflows on our processes? Going back to the beginning of the preword, the example of political sanctions shows toxicity of the online world and underscores its' dependance of external social structures.

Tools and technology become far more than just extensions of the body that operate on the world, they impose on us certain hidden agendas. Technology also means the social systems of labor, control, faith, philosophy, politics, reason, and science, and how all of these technological systems come back to bear on the workers who labor through them.

Dear designers, have you ever asked how we got there to the point where design industry is **monopolised** and **controlled** by big corp? How do we break this frictionless illusion?

This publication is for designers and fellow creatives who felt the same way or ready to take on a new perspective. It explores the notions of softer computing, its future implications, its possible implementations, alternative options of softer computing as a way to break free form monopolised vision of creativity and proposes new angles on creative workflows. To envision futures we need to be radical and radical can start from our own relationships with technology and the way we mold it by creation of out own technologies and tools. It explores Softer Computing as a newly formed discourse that resist to digital maximalism and embrace slower approach to tech.

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Valerie Kvon,
London, 2025

CREATIVITY WITH SUBSCRIP-