

EVERYTHING  
IS A  
MATTER OF  
DISTANCE

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FREE

transmediale 2025



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
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## 1. Algorithms >< Transness

How do we carve out liminal spaces of distance in proximity to, but away from this algorithmic gaze of death? I propose conceptualising the aesthetics of trans lives as uncodeable and as *liminal data lives* to establish a disruptive strategy of algorithmic distance. How might this uncodeability allow us to consider (im)possible ways of living and distance as resistance?

Algorithms classify humans into categories embodied by “the bodies that do the interpreting and reacting to the information they provide.”<sup>[6]</sup> Transness—with its infiniteness, messiness and mutability—works against the algorithmic operations and their binary definiteness, fixedness, and immutability, which renders trans people either hypervisible as a deviance or invisible and erased. This imposes a violent gendering of the human in accordance with colonial cisnormative rules of classification as the distinction of who should live and who must die by “performatively enacting themselves/ourselves as being human, in the genre specific terms of each such codes’ positive/negative system of meanings”<sup>[7]</sup>.

"As someone exploring queer understandings of more-than-human kinship, I found your text deeply resonant with my own interests. This passage, in particular, struck me as incredibly powerful: "In relation to bodies, transness—with its infiniteness, messiness, and mutability—works against the operational principle of algorithms and their binary definiteness, fixedness, and immutability, which renders trans people either hypervisible as a deviance or invisible and erased." Instead of framing these technologies as simply failing to capture trans identities, how might we interpret this act of failure—and the inherent partiality it reveals—as central to our witnessing?" [Maya]

Trans people exist in a liminal space; as *codeable* by being hypervisible in deviating from binary code, which positions trans people as targets for violence through failure to conform to the necropolitical algorithmic order of life and death; and as *uncodeable* as algorithms cannot comprehend transness, but computes transness to not exist in the first place. These affects of 'improper life' stick to transness from its aberrations from binary structures, which strip the trans body of its human possibility as a *coded death*.

"I really appreciate how you rethink the aesthetics of trans lives as an entrypoint to examine algorithmic violence. That seems a very powerful take. What particularly stood out for me





is how "transness is fundamentally uncodeable."  
[Ruben]

### 3. Aestheticising Transness as Algorithmic Distance

Utilising the aesthetics of transness to elucidate algorithms involve "sensing – the capacity to register or to be affected, and sense-making – the capacity for such sensing to become knowledge"<sup>[8]</sup>, wherein trans bodies "offer fleshly blueprints for the unbuilding of binary understandings"<sup>[9]</sup>. This operationalisation opens trans algorithmic experiences and translate these into refusal of algorithmic systems. Trans people inhabit a liminal yet powerful space of sensing the algorithmic between the visible/invisible, codeable/uncodeable and liveable/unliveable, where trans 'error' in contrast to cisnormative data lives encode a distance that encourages tactics of refusal for algorithmic infrastructures to be reimagined; a space where algorithmic infrastructures are troubled, distorted, and glitched from how transness exists in/against the code.

"You describe for us the relation between algorithms and trans bodies as a liminal distance that starts at the point of rejecting or omitting transness from available/possible categories that are necessary for binary logic that define algorithms. This is the trap that trans people find themselves in, or as you say, they inhabit this space and in this praxis of living they 'sense' and 'refuse', trouble, delay, distort and glitch algorithmic infrastructures. What kind of relation do these errors generate between bodies and algorithms?" [Magda]

Transness embodies an 'in-betweenness' that infiltrates binary code, renders it futile as universal truth and effectuates distance to the reductionist algorithmic readability of humanness towards redefining the means of be(com)ing human. By not fitting into binary code, transness strategically activates a fugitive resistance against algorithmic violence from embodied investment in failure; cutting over, falling through and obscuring flows of code towards liberatory, autonomous and plural algorithmic futures.

1. ↑ Amaro, Ramon. *The Black Technical Object: On Machine Learning and the Aspiration of Black Being*. Sternberg Press, 2022.
2. ↑ Andersen, Christoffer Koch. "Wrapped Up in the Cis-Tem: Trans Liveability in the Age of Algorithmic Violence. Special Issue: Ruptures, Resistance, Reclamation: Global Feminisms in Digital Age." *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*. 2025, Forthcoming. Preprint: <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/tracm>
3. ↑ Costanza-Chock, Sasha. "Design justice, AI, and escape from the matrix of domination." *Journal of Design and Science* 3.5 (2018): 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.21428/96c8d426>
4. ↑ Shah, Nishant. "I spy, with my little AI: How queer bodies are made dirty for digital technologies to claim cleanness." *Queer Reflections on AI*. Routledge (2023): 57-72.
5. ↑ Scheuerman, Morgan Klaus, Madeleine Pape, and Alex Hanna. "Auto-essentialization: Gender in automated facial analysis as extended colonial project." *Big Data & Society* 8.2 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211053712>
6. ↑ Wilcox, Lauren. "Embodying algorithmic war: Gender, race, and the posthuman in drone warfare." *Security dialogue* 48.1 (2017, 17): 11-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010616657947>
7. ↑ Wynter, Sylvia. "Human being as noun? Or being human as praxis? Towards the Autopoietic Turn/Overtake: A Manifesto." (2007, 30). [https://bcrw.barnard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Wynter\\_TheAutopoieticTurn.pdf](https://bcrw.barnard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Wynter_TheAutopoieticTurn.pdf)
8. ↑ Fuller, Matthew, and Eyal Weizman. *Investigative aesthetics: Conflicts and commons in the politics of truth*. Verso Books, 2021. (33).
9. ↑ Halberstam, Jack. "Unbuilding Gender". *Places Journal*. (2018). <https://doi.org/10.22269/181003>



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Imagine coming across a girl in your Instagram feed: her face very close to the camera, she's maintaining eye contact, and smiling kindly, so that you can notice her cute cheek dimples and feel hypnotized. She creates a sense of presence that is almost uncomfortably intimate, leveraging the illusion of physical proximity to connect with thousands of followers. On platforms like Instagram or OnlyFans, these techniques of approximation become a conspicuous tool for creating intimacy, often blurring boundaries between public performance and private connection. However, there is still a distance.

Within contemporary dance, various strategies have emerged to critically reframe the score, construct affect, and make techniques of approximation visible and manipulable. In dealing with choreography, dance brings the body into play, challenging the disembodied narratives of digital intimacy. In Candela Capitán's dance piece *SOLAS* [4] approximation techniques are explored from a detached, bird's-eye perspective. On stage, five webcam performers in pink tight suits perform their own erotic solos in front of their laptops, simultaneously broadcasting live with an audience via the Chaturbate platform. Capitán reveals the gap between the digital subject and the labour that sustains it, making this distance strikingly palpable. By exposing the fractured connections and isolating conditions of digital performance, *SOLAS* lays bare the mechanisms through which intimacy is manufactured, commodified, and consumed in virtual spaces. Candela's critical gesture is achieved by revealing living bodies behind digital subjects. By foregrounding the performers' corporeal presence, it insists on the presence of the body as essential for critique in the age of algorithmic mediation.

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# Image Laundering: A Backdrop

Katya Sivers

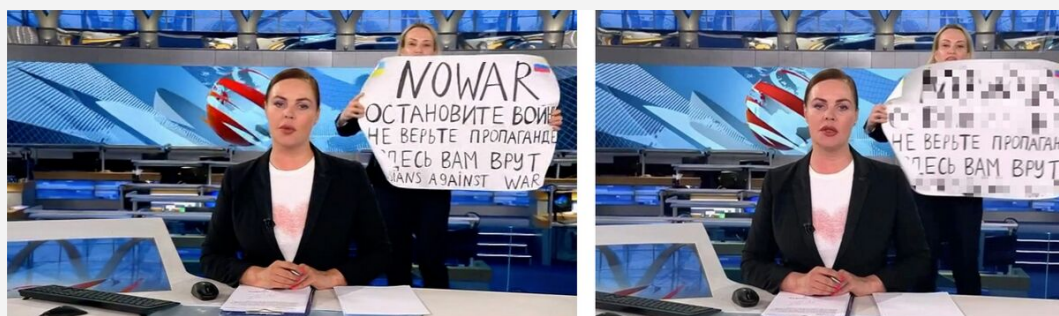


Fig. 1. Screenshot from the *Vremya* program, Channel One, broadcast on 14 Mar. 2022. The screenshot as published on 93.ru, an online media platform based in Krasnodar, 4 Oct. 2023, with the words “No war. Stop the war. They are lying to you here. Russians against war” pixelated. .

On 14 March 2022, three weeks after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian Channel One employee Marina Ovsyannikova walked in front of the cameras during the live evening news broadcast of *Vremya* programme, holding a poster with the slogan “No war. Stop the war. Don’t believe the propaganda. They are lying to you here. Russians against war.” Positioned between the anchor and the backdrop, she ruptured the seamless image that the audience had been conditioned to consume. Ovsyannikova’s five-second act catalysed an immediate tightening of security protocols: live broadcasts were now subject to a mandatory one-minute delay.

The cynical and instrumental use of media has been fully appropriated by Russian state television channels, turning the war into a carefully curated performance. Fabricated backdrops, often digitally constructed, stand in for the reality of the battlefield. Even live war-zone segments are curated to obscure human suffering, while military power appears sleek, polished, and distant.

Methods of visual censorship have a long history, particularly in Soviet Russia. For decades, images were altered for political purposes, erasing purged figures from history. One by one, their traces were scrubbed from the visual record, while the faces of “enemies of the people” were obscured with black marks<sup>[1]</sup>.



Fig. 3. Obscured portraits from “10 Years of Uzbekistan,” an album published in 1934. Campbell and King.

The image – now a malleable surface – became a tool for the state’s narrative control. With evolving media technologies, we witness an accelerated shift in this fabrication of reality. In an October 2024 broadcast, Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of Russia Today (RT), revealed that RT had abandoned human image editors, and many anchors were now AI-generated figures<sup>[2]</sup> with hyper-realistic voices and personas, embodying the fusion of technology and narrative control.

Yet, the most convincing manipulations emerge from minimally altered footage rather than entirely synthetic creations. Within the forensic community, this process is termed *image laundering*<sup>[3]</sup>. Details of the real visuals are not just altered – they are erased, rewritten, and multiplied, leaving us with an unprecedented sense of disorientation. It profoundly disrupts relationships between participants in visual – and therefore political – communication, what Ariella Azoulay termed the *civil contract of photography*, a “hypothetical, imagined arrangement regulating relations within a virtual political community”<sup>[4]</sup>. Today, this contract has grown more



complex. Intricate dynamics now unfold not only between viewers and image producers but also involve the state and the very strata of the image itself.


The background – both visual and informational – recalls Arjun Appadurai’s notion of colonial photographic backdrops<sup>[5]</sup>. Once passive yet pivotal, such backdrops now operate as silent agents of visual storytelling and “symptoms of power relations”<sup>[6]</sup>. In the context of Russia’s brutal military conflict, society seems to have become accustomed to living against a backdrop of a distant war. “[War] is beholden not to have an objective but to prove its very existence”<sup>[7]</sup>, and yet one of its purposes now seems to conceal its existence entirely, despite the millions of devices documenting it. The politics of disorientation now manifests through an anesthetic civil contract – a revised contract of photography in this new cyberwarfare<sup>[8]</sup>, framed by “a world imagined and engineered during the Cold War”<sup>[9]</sup>.

1. ↑ Campbell, Ken, and David King. *Ten Years of Uzbekistan: A Commemoration*. Ken Campbell, 1994.
2. ↑ “Симоньян заявила о замене ведущих RT созданными ИИ аватарами.” *Gazeta.ru*, 29 Oct. 2024, [www.gazeta.ru/tech/news/2024/10/29/24263911.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/tech/news/2024/10/29/24263911.shtml). Accessed 6 Jan. 2025.
3. ↑ Mandelli, Stefano, et al. “When Synthetic Traces Hide Real Content: Analysis of Stable Diffusion Image Laundering.” *arXiv*, 2024, doi:10.48550/arXiv.2407.10736.
4. ↑ Azoulay, Ariella. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Zone Books, 2008, p. 24.
5. ↑ Appadurai, Arjun. “The Colonial Backdrop.” *Afterimage*, vol. 24, no. 5, 1997, pp. 4–7.
6. ↑ Anikina, Alexandra. “Things in the Background: Video Conferencing and the Labor of Being Seen.” *Video Conferencing: Infrastructures, Practices, Aesthetics*, edited by Axel Volmar, Olga Moskatova, and Jan Distelmeyer, Columbia University Press, 2023, pp. 275–292.
7. ↑ Baudrillard, Jean. *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*. Translated by Paul Patton, Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 32.
8. ↑ Dyer-Witheford, Nick, and Svitlana Matviyenko. *Cyberwar and Revolution: Digital Subterfuge in Global Capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2019.
9. ↑ Beck, John, and Ryan Bishop, editors. *Cold War Legacies: Systems, Theory, Aesthetics*. Edinburgh University Press, 2016.





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construct their “free city” based on “Arthurian myth.”<sup>[5]</sup>



In framing seamlessness in planned cities so that its displacement and violence is centered, instead of its ability to create an affect, it is useful to understand the planned city as a topology of repression. Instead of an aesthetic emerging from the constituent parts, including the people who build, work, and live there, the negative imprint of the land is what truly makes seamlessness. Seamlessness relies on terra nullius logic, suppressing whatever may contradict its claim to the blank slate. These projects function on a collapse of distance between the material, virtual, and psychosocial layers of the city.



1. ↑ “When will Eko Atlantic be ready?” *YouTube*, uploaded by Eko Atlantic, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019, <https://youtu.be/kqJ-2KRfJd0?si=-ePHv6h3ubzR1dbU>.
2. ↑ Thanks to Stanford’s King Center on Global Development for funding this fieldwork.
3. ↑ Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Atlantic, 2007. p. 39.
4. ↑ Roche, Daniel Jonas. “Netanyahu unveils regional plan for “free trade zone” with trains to NEOM.” *The Architect’s Newspaper*, May 21<sup>st</sup> 2024, <https://www.archpaper.com/2024/05/benjamin-netanyahu-unveils-regional-plan-free-trade-zone-rail-service-neom/>.
5. ↑ @praxisnation. “How to transform Greenland into a technological powerhouse, terraforming experiment, and US strategic asset founded on Arthurian myth.” *Twitter/X*, January 8<sup>th</sup> 2025, 6:03pm, <https://x.com/praxisnation/status/1877038352412680567>.

## Responses

"How is the seamlessness translated between project material (decks, renderings, fly-through videos) and the actual materialization of these plans? You mention this in the beginning of your piece, and I think it resonates with my text about architecture's imaging cultures and the gap between the projected and the actual. A rendering of a planned city is not the same as the planned city itself, and the notion of seamless (experience, urbanism, gaze, ...) is represented and made operative in different ways in both of these domains." --Matīss Groskaufmanis

"Would you re-emphasise chaos as a strategy of deconstructing colonial/westernized sobriety of control



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# Dead Glitch (Higher, Faster, Stronger)

*Maja Funke*

»Dead Glitch« is a research project and a multimedia body of work that was initiated in view of the global event of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris. The project places the issue of comprehensive algorithmic video surveillance at the center of attention.

Urban design is updated in the Parisian gaze. What seems to be a streetlamp is no longer a distributor for romantic light, but a surveillance instance in empire green or anthracite. Some five-eyed sentries are special in their materialization of control and freedom may not seem dissuasive but rather belonging (Fig. 1). This is a security enforcement with symbolic aesthetic, in the heritage of the penetrability of the urban space in Louis' XIV »Ville Lumière«<sup>[1]</sup>. This light is more often than not interested in non-white bodies and other visible minorities.



Fig. 1: Variations de lampadaires, Paris 2024 (*L'infrastructure s'appuie sur l'infrastructure*).

In preparation for the 2024 Olympics, the French government passed a law on March 19, 2023 that includes provisions to improve security, situational (crime) prevention and counterterrorist measures (Article 9 to 19).<sup>[2]</sup> Among them is the »experimental [sic!]<« use of algorithmic video surveillance to control crowds at sporting, leisure and cultural events. The trial will run until the end of March 2025.

Algorithmic Video Surveillance (AVS) consists of the installation and use of software that executes the analysis of videos to detect, identify or classify certain behaviors, situations, objects and people. The various machine-learning-based applications<sup>[3]</sup> are mainly used by the police in conjunction with surveillance cameras: either for real-time detection of certain suspicious or risky »events« or retrospectively as part of police investigations. Biometric identification allows a person to be recognized in a sample of people on the basis of physical, physiological or behavioral patterns.<sup>[4]</sup>

While walking Paris in *dérive*<sup>[5]</sup>, one might sense the onset of normalization of the New Military Urbanism<sup>[6]</sup>. Counter observation reveals the banalization of a watching city. In the multimedia body of work »Dead Glitch« this walk becomes an investigative performance. In playing with the current legal situation in Paris, the proclaimed zones of AVS are becoming a stage, with the security apparatus documenting the everyday risk-management of the performer and becoming acutely conscious of the resulting instruments of recognition<sup>[7]</sup> (Fig. 2). The performers journey of becoming data and losing its anonymity and privacy is highlighting these same values a vital for freedom like demonstration, movement and expression.



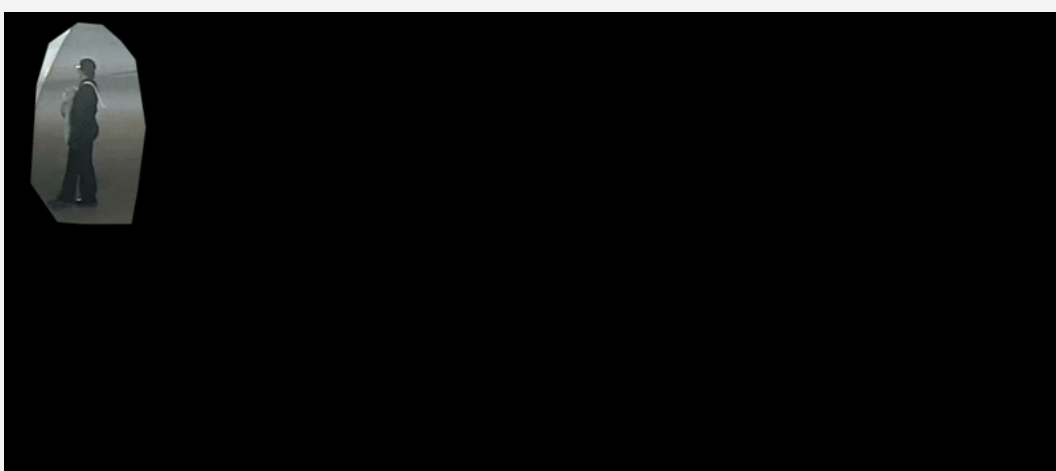


Fig. 2: Surveillance video by SNCF, masking in original, cropped and sped up. (gif)

And yet, as states adopt surveillance and control systems designed for warfare<sup>[6]</sup> – driven by security concerns, economic interests, and political goals – privacy violations become the norm. These measures, initially temporary, often become permanent after the state of emergency, treating all citizens as suspects and placing AVS in fundamental conflict with democratic values. The title »Dead Glitch« alludes not least to the deadly potential for error entailed by trust in these technologies. »Warfare, like everything else, is being urbanized«<sup>[6]</sup> and the boomerang of dataveillance is returning to state borders and war zones.<sup>[8]</sup> Extreme versions of this logic are visible in the automated systems employed in border control (the European security regime)<sup>[9]</sup>, AI supported military systems (such as in Gaza)<sup>[10]</sup>, as well as in various other developments including Russian and Chinese where the digitalization of warfare is transforming the role of citizens under the Geneva Conventions.<sup>[11]</sup>

When video surveillance is not a material apparatus, but a practice<sup>[1]</sup>, there is place to argue for a proximity to social justice<sup>[12]</sup> and bringing back in mind that historically, antifascist countermovements strengthen in response to a tightening of state security.

1. ↑ <sup>1.0</sup> <sup>1.1</sup> Kammerer, Dietmar: *Bilder der Überwachung*. Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008.
2. ↑ République Française: *LOI n° 2023-380 du 19 mai 2023 relative aux jeux Olympiques et Paralympiques de 2024 et portant diverses autres dispositions*.
3. ↑ Such as *Cityvision* by Wintics and Briefcam software.
4. ↑ <https://www.laquadrature.net/vsa/>
5. ↑ <https://situationist.org/periodical/si/issue-2-1958-en/theory-of-the-derive-73>
6. ↑ <sup>6.0</sup> <sup>6.1</sup> <sup>6.2</sup> Graham, Stephen: *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*. Verso, 2010.
7. ↑ Boehm, Gottfried: *Zwischen Auge und Hand : Bilder als Instrumente der Erkenntnis*. In: *Mit dem Auge denken : Strategien der Sichtbarmachung in wissenschaftlichen und virtuellen Welten*. Zürich, 2001, pp. 43-54.
8. ↑ Foucault, Michel: *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*, Penguin Classics 2020.
9. ↑ "Wie die EU mit Künstlicher Intelligenz ihre Grenzen schützen will", *Algorithm Watch*, *ZDF Magazine Royale* 24 May, 2025. <https://fuckoffai.eu/> Accessed November 11, 2024.
10. ↑ "Targeted? Killing", *Forum InformatikerInnen für Frieden*, 29 April, 2024. [https://blog.fiff.de/content/files/2024/04/2024\\_04\\_29\\_Stellungnahme-lavender.pdf](https://blog.fiff.de/content/files/2024/04/2024_04_29_Stellungnahme-lavender.pdf). Accessed 3 May, 2024 and "'Lavender': The AI machine directing Israel's bombing spree in Gaza", *+972 Magazine*, 3 April, 2024. <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/> Accessed April 15, 2024.
11. ↑ Mulligan, Cathy: *Automated Warfare and the Geneva Convention*. Netzpolitik, 17 April, 2024. <https://netzpolitik.org/2024/artificial-intelligence-automated-warfare-and-the-geneva-convention/?via=nl> Accessed 11 November, 2024.
12. ↑ "Intelligence artificielle : la France ouvre la voie à la surveillance de masse en Europe", *Disclose*, 22 January, 2025 <https://disclose.ngo/fr/article/intelligence-artificielle-la-france-ouvre-la-voie-a-la-surveillance-de-masse-en-europe>. Accessed 22 January, 2025.

»By adding cameras, the idea of the romantic city, the city of the flâneur, has shifted. Contemporary city management seems to have different expectations of what public space is and does. Your artistic strategy to claim CCTV data by using GDPR regulations is a wonderful strategy of resistance. This is a laborious endeavour, both for you and the city, that slows down





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
»2024 Parisian city surveillance is very effective for me, particularly how you aim to understand what "dataveillance" does in crafting, and controlling, citizens' behavior. Thinking alongside Shannon Mattern (particularly her book *The City Is Not a Computer*), I'd argue that autonomous systems of surveillance might have changed their distribution of materials, but these systems have been equally present in urban design before the CCTV era.« – as commented by Kola Heyward-Rotimi



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An image is not a building, and a building is not an image. The shaping of the built environment through planning and construction rests on the separation between representation and operation. A building is a spatial outcome of a mobilization of material resources, labor, and time. It is also a product of both visual and alphanumeric assembly instructions that suggest its appearance and properties. Yet, the ongoing enmeshment of computation and material worlds, or as Wigley (2017) put it—the shift from paper to screen space—suggests that buildings and images do not exist too far apart either.<sup>[1]</sup> In today's information-rich environments, not only proteins, microchips, wind turbine blades, cars, but also architecture is increasingly often “twinned” with highly detailed digital replicas that are used in simulations, stress tests, maintenance planning, life cycling analysis and other forms of predictive planning.

As a result, most buildings nowadays are built at least twice—first as a structured image, then as an object. Often, they are built many times more, as they co-evolve over time through feedback loops of information exchange between digital and physical environments, surveys, projections, and simulations. All such forms of the building contain information. While the image version of building information is computed via electronic signals, stored in data structures, operated via software platforms, rendered in polygons, and displayed on grids of illuminated squares, its physical version contains information encoded not as data but as the particular arrangement and properties of physical matter. [5]



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- Responses:

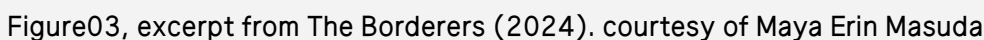
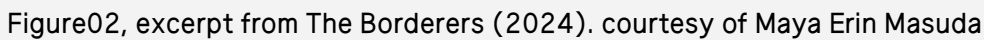
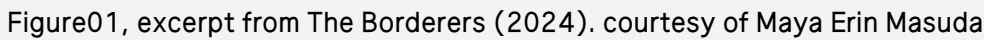
"I was wondering how this relates to the semiotics of architecture and cities - including the interpretation and construction of architectural discourse + the (un-)readability of architecture and the urban. To what degree, and how, is this different than the idea of the city as semiotic space, which we know from modern cities?" -Søren Pold





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We live in an era of bio-molecular politics. Paul B. Preciado, for instance, describes the ways in which pharmaceutical and pornography industries design and regulate bodies and desires as the “pharmacopornographic regime”<sup>[1]</sup>. While Preciado focuses on the semiotic and biotechnological interventions that shape individual bodies, Michelle Murphy examines the uneven spatio-temporal distribution of chemicals across landscapes, a phenomenon she terms “chemical infrastructure.”<sup>[2]</sup> Though their approaches differ—one centered on hormonal transformations and the other on environmental degradation—both theories converge in revealing how more-than-human bodies are shaped as socially constructed artifacts of larger biopolitical systems through molecular interventions. Mel Chen conceptualizes this entanglement as “molecular intimacy”<sup>[3]</sup>, emphasizing the autonomous behavior of toxins as they circulate, merge, and disrupt existing systems of control.



Radioactivity that mutates and transforms bodies serve as a compelling example to the “molecular intimacy”. Therefore as an interface of negotiation of scales, through my creative practice I have explored the many ways in which more-than-human surfaces such as human, animal, or landscape, planetary skin, serves as a witness to the surrounding biopolitical conditions. The *Borderer*, the work which I presented in 2023, problematizes the unavoidable multispecies intimacy through formulating speculative surfaces of an anonymous land. I trained a generative AI (GAN) model using 2,500 microscopic photographs of skin abnormalities of animals that remained after nuclear catastrophes and 2,500 satellite images of planetary surfaces where historically severe contamination has been experienced. This process generated over 5,000 photographs of grey spectrum between skin and landscape [figure 1.2]. What astounded me the most was how the computational gaze of neural networks—through its pattern recognition capabilities—constructed an alternative skin, perceiving the references with an intimate, almost caressing gaze. The photographs blur the lines between tumors and mountains, producing uncanny surfaces where beauty and toxicity coexist,



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# Folded Distances: Techno-Rhythm and Networked Aesthetics

Megan Phipps

The techno-aesthetic experience of the networked rave is a dialectic of intimacy and distance, a dance of spatial and rhythmic dynamics oscillating between proximity and separation, individuality and collectivity, orientation and disorientation. The foggy dancefloor, saturated with recursive rhythms and stroboscopic flickers, embodies a *rhythmic space*<sup>[1]</sup>: a site where collective resonance dissolves rigid spatial boundaries, while reasserting the interplay of center and periphery. Distance is not erased but folded, stretched, and reframed within industrial-mechanical recursive cycles of decentralised visuals, sound, light, and (collective) movement. These recursive oscillations serve as both structuring force and site of disjunction—a deterritorialized zone of molecular motion where identity, agency, and perception are rendered and recalibrated. The techno-aesthetic event, like Germany's Tekknozoid (Fig. 1) or Dreamscape (Fig. 2), transforms physical space into rhythmic space. The techno surround-sound<sup>[2]</sup> is both liberating and oppressive: it promises escape from surveillance, capitalist time, and social judgment, while simultaneously demanding submission to its mechanical recursion.

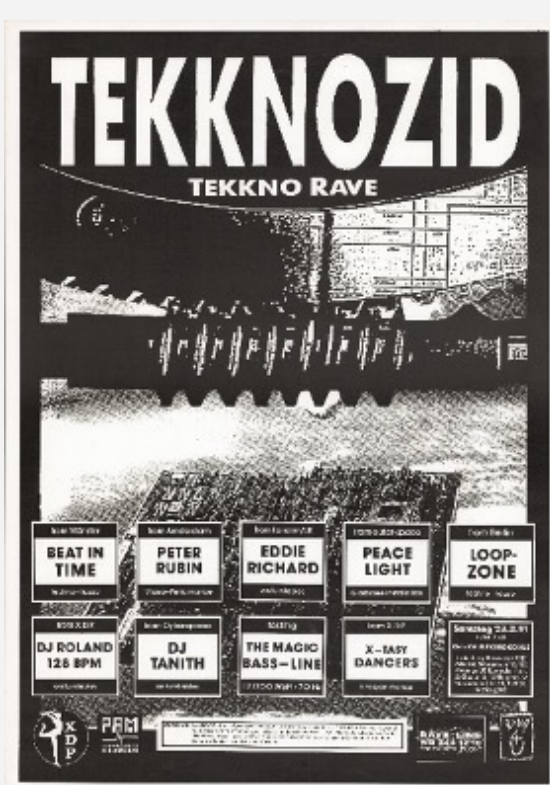


Figure 1: Tekknozoid Flyer from the year 1991. The Peter Rubin Collection: Amsterdam. Courtesy of Eye Filmmuseum.

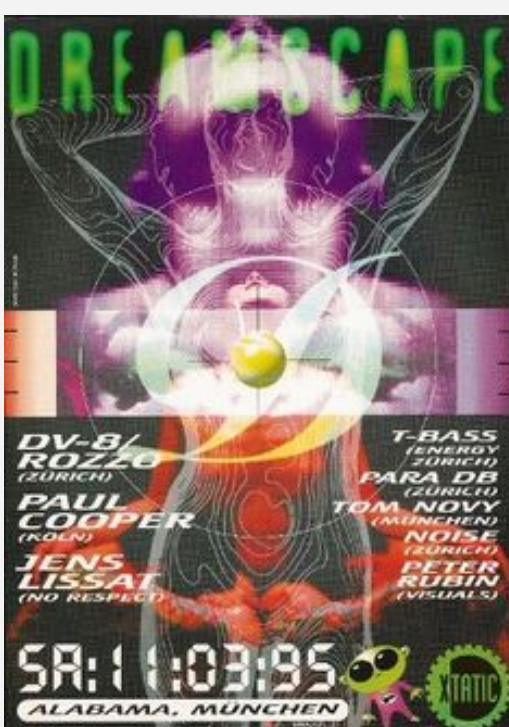


Figure 2: Dreamscape Flyer from the year 1995. The Peter Rubin Collection: Amsterdam. Courtesy of Eye Filmmuseum.

In techno-events, virtual augmentation reconstructs proximity through rhythmic entrainment, transforming collective movement into shared sensory experiences—a *distributed intimacy* mediated by rhythm and audiovisual affect.<sup>[3][4][5][6][7][8][9]</sup> Distance simultaneously manifests as resonant intervals—liminal suspensions of flickering





beats, fragmented gestures, and remixed imagery. Layered visuals, sonic synchronicities and recursive oscillations evoke a *liminal Fold*,<sup>[10]</sup> compressed in density and entangled across time and space. Teetering between proprioception and vertigo, these *folded distances* exemplify “network anesthesia”,<sup>[11]</sup> where rhythmic ecstasy and numbing simultaneity converge. This network-disorientation functions as both a “technique of ecstasy” and a numbing simultaneity of nodes, links, and flows that obscure relationalities from the local to the global.

Experimental filmmaker and VJ Peter Rubin captures these dynamics in split-screen panels and rapid rhythmic alternations.<sup>[12]</sup> His projections, such as *Mayday VisionMix 1* (1992) (Fig. 3), anticipated today’s techno-aesthetics: hypermodulated, synthetic visuals traversing a “sea of data”<sup>[13]</sup>—a corpuscular media-ecological fog<sup>[14][15]</sup> of networked bombardment. This lineage extends toward contemporary techno-images that float within vast networked assemblages: slippery, sticky,<sup>[16]</sup> [11] “groundless”<sup>[17]</sup> configurations layered within rendered ambiguity and buffered abstraction.

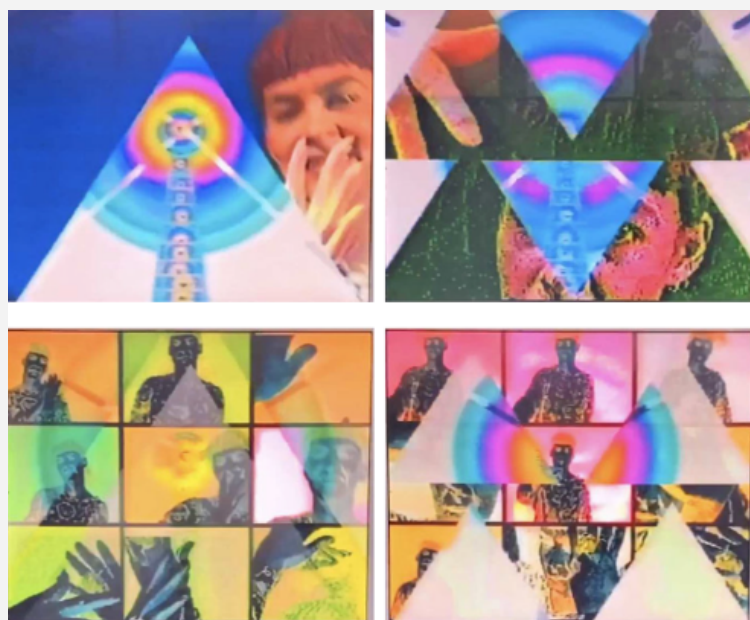


Figure 3: Peter Rubin. Mayday Visionmix 1. 1992. (curated selection of stills). The Peter Rubin Collection: Amsterdam. Courtesy of Eye Filmmuseum.

Rhythm extends beyond the temporal patterns of a techno beat and into pulses<sup>[18]</sup> of bio-technical systems of internal/external resonance, mediating the interaction between organic and machinic domains<sup>[19]</sup> through “technoecologies of sensation”<sup>[20]</sup> of transductive interaction. Synchronization between organic movement and machinic processes enhances proximity and control, as seen in apps like Google Maps or Strava. These apps, linking to platforms like Spotify, foster distributed intimacies through rhythmic cycles of asynchronous interaction, blurring the lines between physical and virtual, organic and mechanical.

This political-aesthetic shift marks the transformation from linear input/output models to recursive feedback loops, expanding distances and fostering distributed intimacies. Techno-rhythm mediates the entanglement of proximity and distance, reshaping intimacy, communication, and collective experience in networked environments. Recursive feedback loops and algorithmic flows destabilize fixed sensory frameworks, transforming perception and meaning. This shift in the ontology of trance marks a move from bounded cinematic frames to pervasive networked conditions embedded within *folded distances*.

The question then remains: where, exactly, are these *folded distances* leading us towards?



1. ↑ Lefebvre, Henri. *Rhythmanalysis: space, time, and everyday life*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.
2. ↑ Turner, Fred. (2013). *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia and American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.
3. ↑ Butler, Mark J. *Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
4. ↑ Gaillot, Michel. *Multiple Meaning Techno: An Artistic and Political Laboratory of the Present*. Paris: Editions des Voi, 1999.
5. ↑ Garcia, Luis-Manuel. "Feeling the Vibe: Sound, Vibration, and Affective Attunement in Electronic Dance Music Scenes." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 29 (1), 2020, p. 21-39.
6. ↑ Holl. Ute. *Cinema, Trance, & Cybernetics*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017.
7. ↑ Reynolds, Simon. *Energy Flash: A Journey through Rave Music and Dance Culture*. London; Picador: Faber and Faber Incorporated, 1998.
8. ↑ St. John, Graham. (2009). *Technomad: Global Raving Countercultures*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.
9. ↑ Thorton, Sarah. (1995). *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
10. ↑ Deleuze, Gilles. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. New York: Continuum, 1988: 2006.
11. ↑ <sup>11.0</sup> <sup>11.1</sup> Munster, Anna. *An Aesthesia of Networks: Conjunctive Experience in Art and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013.
12. ↑ Deleuze, Gilles. (1983). *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Bloomsbury Revelations, 2020.
13. ↑ Steyerl, Hito. (2016). "A Sea of Data: Apophenia and Pattern (Mis-)Recognition." e-flux journal: Issue #72. URL: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/72/60480/a-sea-of-data-apophenia-and-pattern-mis-recognition/>
14. ↑ Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002, p. 146.
15. ↑ Gibson, James J., & Waddell, Dickins. "Homogenous Retinal Stimulation and Visual Perception." *American Journal of Psychology* 65, no.2, 1952, p. 263-70.
16. ↑ Rushkoff, Douglas. (2010). *Media Virus!: Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture*. Random House Publishing Group.
17. ↑ Gil-Fournier, Abelardo & Parikka, Jussi. *Living Surfaces: Images, Plants, and Environments of Media*. Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2024.
18. ↑ Cowan, Michael. *Technology's Pulse: Essays in Rhythm in German Modernism*. Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies. London: School of Advanced Study, University London, 2012.
19. ↑ Simondon, Gilbert. (1989). *Du mode d'existence de objets techniques*. Paris: Aubier-Flammarion.
20. ↑ Parisi, Luciana. "Technologies of Sensation." *Deleuze/Guattari & Ecology eds. Bernd Herzogenrath*, 2009, p. 182-200.





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Active Noise Cancelling (ANC) headphones present example of a sonic interface that isolates user into a preestablished sonic profile. Nevertheless, their digital manipulation of sonic environments constitute an affront to the perception of sonic distance. Noise reduction algorithms *induces* a sonic distance, a parallel perception of reality, contingent to the biases imposed by the algorithm. ANC headphones employ a miniature microphone to capture, process and reproduce surrounding soundscapes. The result comprises the “desired signal” (e.g. music, speech) and the environmental information in its negative (denoised) form.

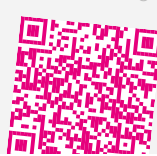
In audio technology, noise manifests as unwanted signals generated within a system, which could appear by means of electromagnetic induction, a changing magnetic field generates an electrical current. Based on this principle, microphones and speakers transduce energy, from acoustic to electrical and vice versa. For Gilbert Simondon, induction is a unidirectional process that generates plausible realities derived from individual observations and totalizing generalizations and therefore cannot content with heterogeneity. Conversely, transduction provides the basis for an explorative form of thought which is not necessarily teleological or linear, and which allows for reconfigurations of new structures without loss or reduction.<sup>[4]</sup> Listening as an exploratory activity is then a fundamental transductive act: a process of intuition and individuation that “discovers and generates the heard.”<sup>[5]</sup>

The unidirectional inductive process takes place in the transformation of environmental sound into a re-production of a sonic generalization, implying a loss of information in the listening act. The acoustic outcome is pre-predetermined by the previous observations of the embedded algorithm, and its therefore contaminated with the implicit biases of its inductive functioning. The creation of a new signal presented as a re-creation of virtual sonic environments invisibilizes not only the medium, but also the content itself, thus creating a perceptual absence<sup>[6]</sup> an an-aesthesia, a deaf trust in the algorithm's definition of noise, which is not accessible by the subject's perception.

The transductive exploration of the listening act itself is violently removed from agency of the listener, interrupting a process of individuation by acoustically isolating and socially alienating the individual. Instead of negating its surroundings by passively masking it acoustic content<sup>[7]</sup>, ANC induce sonic distance not

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1. ↑ Malaspina, Cécile. *An Epistemology of Noise*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018. (154).
2. ↑ Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985. (26).
3. ↑ Hagood, Mack. "Quiet comfort: Noise, otherness, and the mobile production of personal space." *American Quarterly* 63.3 (2011, 574): 573-589.
4. ↑ Simondon, Gilbert. *Individuation in light of notions of form and information*. Translated by Taylor Adkins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020. (15).
5. ↑ Voegelin, Salomé. *Listening to Noise and Silence. Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. London: Continuum. 2010. (4).
6. ↑ Hagood, Mack. *Hush: Media and sonic self-control*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019. (22).
7. ↑ Hosokawa, Shuhei. "The walkman effect." *Popular music* 4 (1984): 165-180.





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Telegram is all over the place, India is the country with its biggest user-base. The messenger is legally based in the British Virgin Islands, operated from Dubai, and owned by Pavel Durov, a quadruple citizen of Russia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the United Arab Emirates, and France.

A lot of social contact today, is preceded, facilitated or followed by chat, voice messages and calls over messengers. Operated on the internet, messengers appear as a technology transcending borders. In theory, we can seamlessly reach everyone with an internet connection through a messenger. A pledge of a sheer infinite reach is already constrained through obvious inequality in accessibility of technological infrastructure, and capped at many points beyond. The barriers originate from state and supranational legislation, over to app store rulings, or to the service's own moderation. The messengers unveil the delicate state of the open internet, as they're central to contemporary life.

The messengers are influenced by major legislation such as China's Great Firewall. A juridical and technological arrangement enclosing the internet inside the country through the blockage of manifold traffic, and the overseeing of messages. Within the European Union, internet censorship is utilized similarly for websites, used inter alia to "influence political discourse and favour businesses".<sup>[4]</sup> A discussed chat control proposal attempts to oblige messengers to make all communications disclosable within Europe.

A planetary account of messengers needs to consider the geographies of developers and operators as well as users within their respective jurisdiction and local realities, including (geo)political dependencies and disparities as well as local and international inequalities. The planetary-discourse often considers technology as a to-be-managed challenge for grand transnational politics.<sup>[5]</sup>

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democracy are hardly reconcilable.<sup>[6]</sup> With the messenger, personal sovereignty only materialises through strictly private communication by default.<sup>[7]</sup>

1. ↑ Agence France-Presse. ‘Telegram’s Pavel Durov Announces New Crackdown on Illegal Content after Arrest’. *The Guardian*, 23 Sept. 2024. *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/sep/23/telegram-illegal-content-pavel-durov-arrest>.
2. ↑ Bratton, Benjamin H. *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty*. MIT Press, 2015.
3. ↑ Hui, Yuk. *Machine and Sovereignty: For a Planetary Thinking*. University of Minnesota Press, 2024.
4. ↑ Ververis, Vasilis, et al. ‘Website Blocking in the European Union: Network Interference from the Perspective of Open Internet’. *Policy & Internet*, vol. 16, no. 1, Mar. 2024, pp. 121–48. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.367>.
5. ↑ For working with ‘Planetary’- narratives, there is a lot to learn from the ‘Anthropocene’. (Simon) provides a brilliant overview over the concept’s development in theory. (Bonneuil and Fressoz) offer a detailed account of the Anthropocene’s overall force to depoliticise. Bonneuil, Christophe, and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz. *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us*. Translated by David Fernbach, Paperback edition, Verso, 2017. Simon, Zoltán Boldizsár. ‘The Limits of Anthropocene Narratives’. *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 23, no. 2, May 2020, pp. 184–99. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431018799256>.
6. ↑ Lyon, David. *Surveillance After Snowden*. Wiley, 2015.
7. ↑ Anderson, Ross. *Chat Control or Child Protection?*<sup>1</sup>, arXiv, 2022. *DOI.org (Datacite)*, <https://doi.org/10.48550/ARXIV.2210.08958>.



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
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Camera surveillance has become ubiquitous in public space. Its effects are often understood through Foucault's description of the *panopticon*<sup>[1]</sup>. Regardless of whether an observer is present to monitor its subject, the mere idea of being observed keeps people in check. When discussing surveillance in the public space, the self-disciplining implied by the panopticon suggests people would bow their heads and walk the line. However, in practice, most people seem not to care. Even I, a researcher of algorithmic security, shrug about cameras when I routinely cross the train station, only worrying about catching the next train home. Where then does indifference leave us with critique of algorithmic surveillance?

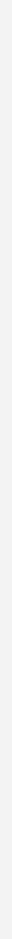
**[Pablo]** "... I particularly like how your approach questions the role of the "average citizen" in this power relation, beyond the duality of victim and guilt (or indifference, but I would question that this is the right word for our attitude)."

In surveillance, the “deviancy” and “anomaly” serve as catch-all categories for any unexpected behaviour. Security practitioners consider noticing such behaviour an art<sup>[2][3]</sup>. Working through *anticipation* practitioners relate “almost in a bodily, physical manner with ‘risky’ and ‘at risk’ groups”<sup>[4]</sup> to mark people as ‘out of place’.

With the introduction of algorithmic deviancy scoring however, the construction of anticipation needs to be reconsidered. A traditional machine learning detector, trained by example, struggles with an open category like deviancy, which collapses heterogenous behaviours — robbery, traffic accidents, etc. — and includes all that is unknown. Moreover, much more footage is available of people going about their business than of "deviant" behaviour. To overcome these limitations, a logical reversal is invoked.



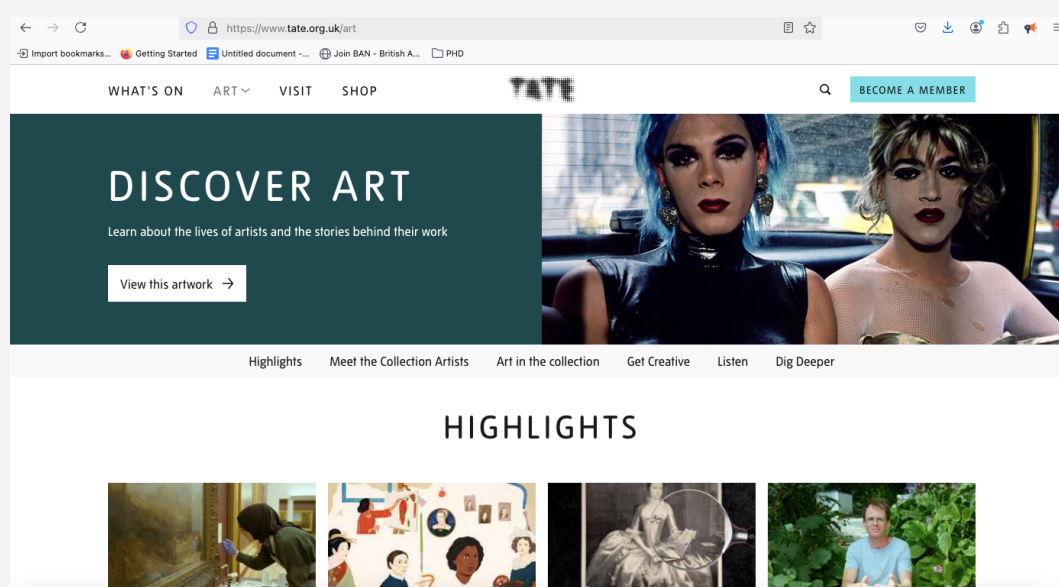
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*Sami P. Itävuori*



1. Screenshot of Tate Gallery's Art and Artists portal <https://www.tate.org.uk/art>

When museums digitize their collections, they enable new "accidents"<sup>[1]</sup> or accidental images to emerge. Since the 1990s, major art museums have undertaken significant digitization programs of their collections, photographing hundreds of thousands of artworks which are then made publicly available on large online collection platforms such as Tate gallery's Art and Artists page or Google Art and Culture just to name two <sup>[2]</sup> (Screenshot 1).

But the digital photograph of the artwork still stands as a substitute for the original haptic and context-specific object tied to a subjective experience of beauty, either through encountering the work in the gallery or being able to closely examine high-res images online through sophisticated zooming tools. The mainstreaming of text-to-image generative AI with platforms like Dall-E and Midjourney generating over 15 billion images in 2024 <sup>[3]</sup> has created both fascination and concern in museum circles. While this technology appears visually familiar, it challenges traditional concepts of artistic creation and experience, provoking widespread puzzlement and sensationalism across the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums sector. <sup>[4]</sup> However, this apparent divide between AI and museums can be bridged by viewing the social and technological practices of both spheres within a borderzone where the same image is understood and treated differently rather than in opposition. This means looking at how the museum is already connected to AI production pipelines, rather than as something inherently outside of it.

URL	TEXT	WIDTH	HEIGHT	similarity	LANGUAGE	hash	posterpack	punsafe	aesthetic
 <a href="#">https://img.shopyfy.com/png/w/139148436.jpg</a>	A beautiful pavlova topped with a medley of...	1,080	1,080	0.353257	en	3,752,681,605,228,814,000	0.074663	0.000011	8.29694
 <a href="#">https://www.expedia.co.uk/review/5050/wh-200.jpg</a>	Server in a Cuban restaurant	498	280	0.288355	nolang	-1,683,741,831,106,864,790	0.090151	0.048088	8.18212
<a href="#">https://img.squarespace-cdn.com/content/55456e6de4083697e48a37/1468062421614...</a>	Sweets, Dessert, Cake Table	1,000	667	0.316565	en	5,666,062,596,027,580,800	0.075955	0.000184	8.94184
<a href="#">https://img.freepik.com/size/426x719.jpg</a>	Panier à pain et bouteille de vin à la...	626	428	0.261469	fr	1,221,073,764,336,938,800	0.534406	0.001467	8.16343
 <a href="#">https://i.pinimg.com/236x/ced-act-jul.jpg</a>	Santas candy box, graphic of, merry christmas	236	263	0.288268	nolang	-3,526,617,437,853,883,000	0.0874	0.000059	8.89922
<a href="#">https://tumblr.squaresite.net/48856794.jpg</a>	Роксав еннотс'пауеа тарлет авекенес Чувствительный	160	160	0.309716	ru	856,433,884,493,393,400	0.08584	0.000828	8.11845
<a href="#">https://i.pinimg.static.f11d_7696d38294.jpg</a>	holy communion cake by Little Sweeties Cupcakes	333	499	0.329171	en	-726,490,361,068,963,500	0.053379	0.000007	8.27418
 <a href="#">https://tobiaschouskittinsta-4.jpg</a>	Sean's Antipasto Pasta Salad	667	1,000	0.266416	nolang	17,000,569,935,661,028	0.069512	0.000022	8.27513
<a href="#">https://imgsrc.meredithcorp.io/9/m/imgm?url=https://static.omegas.to/wp-content/uploads...</a>	Blooming Courtyard	2,000	1,333	0.27676	nolang	1,760,106,725,155,276,700	0.066052	0.000026	8.10872

2. Screenshot of subset of LAION 5B, accessed via Huggingface laion/laionart. Accessed 30th January 2025. <https://huggingface.co/datasets/laion/laion-art/viewer/default/train?p=45>

For instance, a cursive search of a 8 million subset of LAION-5B<sup>[5]</sup>, a widely used text-image pair dataset, shows the presence of 364 images directly scraped from Tate URL and many more second hand copies of Tate photographs from amateur blogs and websites. But the structure of this dataset illuminates the classification systems that make images machine-readable. Each image in LAION is attributed an aesthetic score by a program called CLIP, which provides a measurement of beautiful qualities or visual appeal of an image to determine its importance in the training of generative AI systems tasked

with outputting pleasant and appealing images for their users.

Aesthetic scoring requires Image Aesthetic Assessment (IAA) software that evaluates visual quality and aesthetic appeal of images on a scale of 0-10 (see screenshot 3). Computer scientists in IAA drawing from neurosciences, psychology, art theory or even photography manuals create quantifiable conceptions of beauty based either on qualities or the impact of this image on a viewer. These assessments can be based on a variety of formal qualities (composition, colour or lighting for example, see list of qualities used in IAA in annex 1) or trained on user-generated data from platforms like DP.Challenge or the /r/photocritique subreddit [6], where beauty emerges through statistical analysis of user preferences and feedback (Maleve and Sluis 2023, Palmer and Sluis 2024). [7][8]

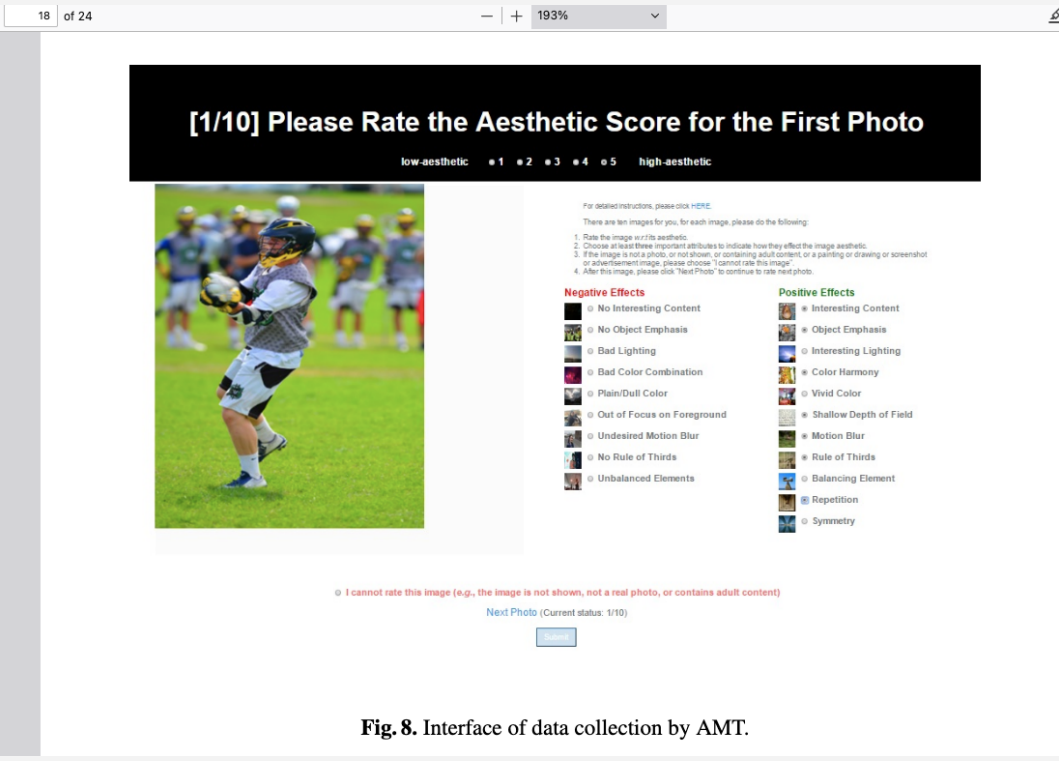


Fig. 8. Interface of data collection by AMT.

3. Screenshot of IAA rating interface for voluntary participants on a six-point rating scale from 0 to 5 in Kong, Kuang-Yu, Gao, Yang, Xu, Timothy M., and Jing, Xuan. "Understanding Aesthetics with Language: A Photo Critique Dataset for Aesthetic Assessment." *IEEE/CVF Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition* (2022): 2984-2993.

This computational approach to beauty depends on artwork digitization and online circulation, while favoring theories of art and aesthetic experience that enable their statistical formalization and computability. The resulting computational formalism<sup>[9]</sup> creates an AI art connoisseur that exists alongside rather than outside traditional museum practices, valuing images for their utility in training generative AI systems. This computational paradigm is an unintended “accident” of collection digitization (and art theory) and as such shares the same border image, which are used and understood in different ways amongst the communities of practice. This particular positioning means that museums such as Tate are particularly well suited to make their collections “connect”<sup>[10]</sup> to emerging advanced technologies that utilize, operationalize and often privatize public and collective data with wide societal impacts. The museum’s societal role in continuous education and civic culture about cultural technologies can then be fully rethought in light of this museum → AI → museum pipeline.





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Annex 1 Table + References



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