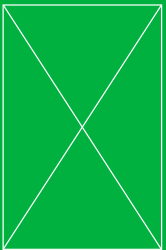


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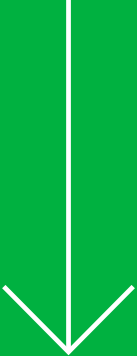
CURATED

ALISON BENNETT



SHANE HULBERT

BY



SKOOT



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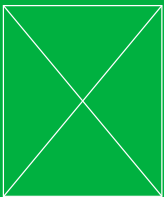
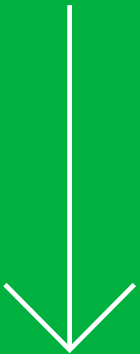
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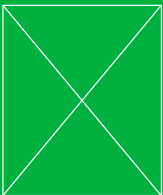
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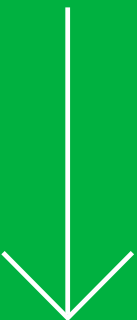
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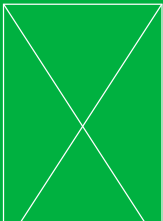
RMIT GALLERY



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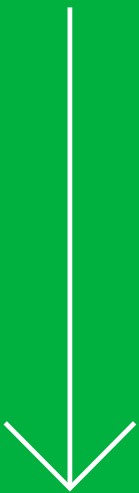
REBECCA NAJDOWSKI

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CURATED



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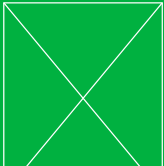
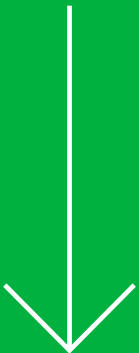


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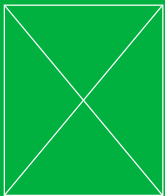


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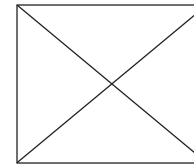
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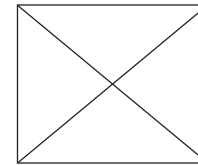
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PHOTO 2021
International Festival
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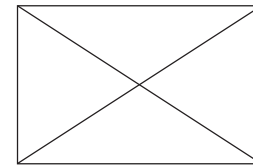


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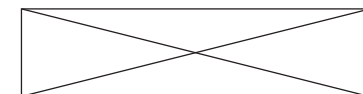
LOOKS



BACK



CURATED



BY

ALISON BENNETT

SHANE HULBERT

REBECCA NAJDOWSKI

DANIEL PALMER

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In late March 2020 RMIT Gallery was set to commence our year with *The Image Looks Back*. Just days before the doors were to open the first lockdown began and all of our planning shifted. Amongst a year of uncertainty we focussed on the possibility of a reopening of our State, of our Campus and of the Gallery which would enable us to bring *The Image Looks Back* to fruition and to life for the public. If 2020 taught us anything, it is that we must embrace uncertainty for the sake of our own resilience and whilst we have found ways to bring art and culture to our audiences digitally and innovatively, we hunger for experiencing these connections in real life.

From the onset, the curators of *The Image Looks Back* made it clear that whilst much of the content of the exhibition is indeed digital and can be found on-line, this was never imagined as an online exhibition. Online exhibitions have sustained us and brought meaning to our lives in these challenging times and we are grateful for that, but online engagement does not allow the viewer to immerse themselves deeply in connection with large-scale, sometimes visceral works and lean into the phenomenological experience to be found in the gallery. Due to the tragic circumstances of our past year and its impacts on our sector we have been unable to bring the exhibition to real life for the public in RMIT Gallery and we must once again embrace the digital record. We hope you enjoy this catalogue, the installation photography and the virtual tour which you can find on our website.

RMIT has been teaching photography since 1887 when RMIT was the Working Man’s College. Following on from 2017’s popular celebration of RMIT’s photography history, *Photography 130: Behind the Lens*, *The Image Looks Back* explores the reconfiguration of photography, asking how notions of visual truth and human experience are shaped by new technologies of vision. This exhibition celebrates the remarkable research of the four curators, staff from the RMIT School of Art.

It acknowledges their contribution to the discourse surrounding photography and the structures that have delivered vital practical skills for our students. We wish to thank the curators Dr Alison Bennett, Program Manager, Master of Photography; Associate Professor Shane Hulbert, Associate Dean, Photography; Dr Rebecca Najdowski, Lecturer, Photography; Professor Daniel Palmer, Associate Dean, Research and Innovation, for their perseverance, generosity, flexibility and patience as we navigated the shifting landscape on which we would ultimate present this remarkable exhibition. We warmly thank the participating artists for entrusting their works to our care much longer than anticipated. My thanks also to our Technical Collections Coordinator, Nick Devlin, who recommenced installation one year on without missing a beat; and the support of Production Coordinator Erik North, Albert Maberley of RMIT Advanced Manufacturing Precinct. To Helen Rayment, Manager of Creative Production for RMIT Culture I express my gratitude for her courage leading our team throughout the challenges we faced in 2020 which continue to dog us in 2021. And my great appreciation goes to Elias Redstone, Artistic Director of our project partner PHOTO 2021 International Festival of Photography whose encouragement and support has been unwavering.

Head, Cultural and Public Engagement

Paula Toal



noitcubortnl



If the photograph has conventionally been understood as a record or memory of the world, what happens when the image looks back? Thirty years after the commercial release of photo-imaging software such as Photoshop, this exhibition explores the reconfiguration of photography in the context of algorithmic processes, machine vision and networked circulation. It features responses by Australian and international artists, photographers and technologists, each speculating on the social and political ramifications of these profound changes in the ecology of the image. The exhibition asks how notions of visual truth and human experience are shaped by new technologies of vision.

One of the earliest works in the exhibition is *Cyberspaces* (2004), a series of pixelated photographs taken off the computer screen by German artist **Joachim Schmid**. The enlarged, framed photographs show colourful interior views of bedrooms and lounges. However, on closer inspection we see plastic stilettos and sex toys in some of the rooms, revealing that we are looking at a series of screenshots taken from interactive pornography websites, but without the sex worker present. The artist – who for decades has worked with vast archives of other people’s photographs to reveal recurring patterns in image-taking – was curious about the role of photography within the then-new phenomenon of a virtual “global brothel”. Just as the webcam becomes a medium for commercial exchange by sex workers, he has described using his credit-card as an “extension of the camera” to unlock the sites, only to ask the women to leave the room. Schmid then took photographs of the abandoned spaces, including coloured bedspreads and stuffed toys, which he has described as “the stage on which service providers wear their skin to market”. (www.lumpenfotografie.de)

Cyberspaces is an early example of the now common practice of screen-grabbing. Viewed today, the low resolution and over-saturated colours of the images – the result of being enlarged from a 240 x 320 pixel video stream – underlines their historical status, giving them both a kind of authenticity and alluding to a digital game world. Schmid’s images show us a part of the real world only accessible in what was then called cyberspace. These images stare blankly back at us. As a kind of anthropologist of photographic practice, Schmid has been described as an “image scavenger” and even an “image predator” (Fontcuberta 2007: 149). But as Joan Fontcuberta (2007) notes, an aesthetic of salvage and recuperation runs through his projects. Despite the kitschy environments and the absence of human presence or action in the *Cyberspaces* photographs – which were also published as an extended series of photographs in a book – they belong to the long history of documentary truth-telling, drawing attention to

and providing a visual record of an exploitative labour practice.

Truth Effects

Like Schmid and several other artists in this exhibition, Swiss artist **Thomas Hirschhorn** often works with images found, or rather sourced, from the context of the internet. In *Touching Reality* (2012), a large-scale video projection, a hand scrolls idly through photographs of burnt, mangled and bloody bodies on an iPad touch screen, occasionally pausing to zoom in for more detail. In the gap between seeing and touching, the apparent calmness of the well-manicured white hand acts in striking contrast to the extreme images of violence of “undefined provenance” sourced from the recesses of the internet in the context of the so-called ‘war on terror’ in Iraq. Just as the bodies are anonymous, we do not see the face of the viewer guiding us, nor do we know their motivation; we are simply made complicit with what seems to be a casual act of visual grazing. The images, mostly created by amateurs in the surrounding crowd on their phones, look back in the sense that they call on us to take ethical responsibility for our viewing them. Photographs sourced on the internet are thus recast in a complex event of spectatorship emblematic of contemporary photographic culture more generally – involving subjects and onlookers in the photographs, various photographic authors, the viewer using the touchscreen in the video, Hirschhorn the artist, and us, the eventual viewers of the artwork.

In his essay ‘Why Is It Important – Today – To Show and Look at Images of Destroyed Human Bodies?’ (2013), Hirschhorn provides an articulate and impassioned argument for the need to view such images. Among other reasons, he cites the fact that such images are rarely seen on mainstream TV news or media: “These pictures are nonvisible and invisible: the presupposition is that they will hurt the viewer’s sensitivity or only satisfy voyeurism, and the pretext is to protect us from this threat. But the invisibility is not innocent.

The Image Looks

← BACK

The invisibility is the strategy of supporting, or at least not discouraging, the war effort. It’s about making war acceptable” (Hirschhorn 2013). Indeed, Hirschhorn is critical of what he describes as “a comfortable, narcissistic, and exclusive distance from today’s reality”. As he writes, “The discourse of sensitivity – which is actually ‘Hyper-Sensitivity’ – is about keeping one’s comfort, calm, and luxury. Distance is only taken by those who – with their own eyes – won’t confront the incommensurable of reality.” In relation to the question of truth, Hirschhorn writes:

I am not interested in the verification of a fact. I am interested in Truth, Truth as such, which is not a verified fact or the ‘right information’ of a journalistic story. The truth I am interested in resists facts, opinions, comments, and journalism. Truth is irreducible; therefore the images of destroyed human bodies are irreducible and resist factuality. I don’t deny facts and actuality, but I want to oppose the texture of facts today. The habit of reducing things to facts is a comfortable way to avoid touching Truth (Hirschhorn 2013)

Paradoxically, this collection of “non-iconic” photographs provides for Hirschhorn a way to return to “Truth” with a capital T, without naively subscribing to any individual photograph’s truth-value.

The subject of war and conflict also preoccupies **Forensic Architecture**, a multidisciplinary research group led by architect Eyal Weizman, based at the University of London. Essentially a group of architects, filmmakers, coders and journalists, Forensic Architecture use architectural techniques and technologies to investigate cases of state violence and violations of human rights around the world – making evidence public in different forums such as the media, courts, truth commissions, and cultural venues including art galleries. Describing themselves as a forensic agency, they have developed new evidentiary techniques and media research with and on behalf of communities affected by state violence, and routinely work in partnership with international prosecutors,

human rights organisations and political and environmental justice groups. More specifically, the group uses architecture as an optical device, cross-referenced with a variety of evidence sources, including “new media, remote sensing, material analysis, witness testimony, and crowd-sourcing.” (2017)

Their work in this exhibition is part of a larger cluster titled *Bomb Cloud Atlas* (2016). The 3D printed model is a reconstruction of the bombing of the Palestinian city Rafah and its refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip. The precise nature of the model is based on various data sources including multiple digital photographs that together become a new form of truth production. As the curators of an exhibition of the work at Fotomuseum in Winterthur have written of the data gathering process behind the work:

As the digital photographic document becomes instantly distributed and connected through online networks, big clusters of images from different sources can be merged to create a new notion of visual evidence that goes beyond the frames of individual pictures. From citizens sharing their photos on Twitter to journalistic reports and state media, all of this data can be collected and analysed – a collection of fragments that together forms a new image-space of an event. (Fotomuseum Winterthur 2017)

These 3D models approximate the date and size of bomb strikes, reconstructing (something of) the truth of what has happened, and have been used to aid human rights agencies to compile reports about conflict zones. The accompanying video provides insight into the process behind Forensic Architecture’s work.

In a recent essay published in *e-flux* called ‘Open Verification’, Weizman reflects on the current political situation characterised by Donald Trump. However, by contrast to Hirschhorn, Weizman upholds the importance of facts:

Whatever form of reality denial ‘post truth’ is, it is not simply about lying. Lying in politics is sometimes necessary. Deception, after all, has

always been part of the toolbox of statecraft, and there might not be more of it now than in previous times. The defining characteristics of our era might thus not be an extraordinary dissemination of untruths, but rather, ongoing attacks against the institutional authorities that buttress facts: government experts, universities, science laboratories, mainstream media, and the judiciary. (Weizman 2019)

Photography is implicated in this dark epistemology, which seeks to mask rather than reveal, or at least photography seems powerless to confront the negationism of “post truth” politics – which “functions as a new form of censorship because it blocks one’s ability to evaluate and debate” (Weizman 2019). Putting Forensic Architecture’s work in an art gallery might raise the question of aestheticization and political effect. However, as Weizman notes:

It is ironic to notice how, as the art of lying spreads through institutions of power, the craft of truth must find its place in the museum. Collaborating with art and cultural venues is not only a pragmatic move. Both forensics and curatorial practices share a deep concern for knowledge production and display, for the presentation of ideas and issues through the arrangements of evidence, objects, conversations, screenings, or bodies in space. (Weizman 2019)

As he further notes:

We respond to the current skepticism towards expertise not with resignation or a relativism of anything goes, but with a more vital and risky form of truth production, based on establishing an expanded assemblage of practices that incorporate aesthetic and scientific sensibilities and includes both new and traditional institutions. (Weizman 2019)

In the context of ‘The Image Looks Back’, Forensic Architecture’s *Bomb Cloud Atlas* presents one, highly productive response to the question of how the intelligence of images can be harnessed to see the world differently.

From Real to Fictional Landscapes

In what can be read as almost a reversal of the truth-generating strategy of Forensic Architecture, Spanish artist **Joan Fontcuberta** co-opts computer software to create fictional landscapes. Specifically, in *Orogenesis* (2002), Fontcuberta uses the commercially available 3D mapping software application Terragen to analyse and transform well-known paintings and photographs into photo-realistic 3D renderings of landscape terrain. Inputting images by iconic artists such as William Turner, Paul Cezanne, Salvador Dali and Edward Weston, and fooling the computer program, Fontcuberta has created landscapes that have no real location, no physicality and no memory of existing (a book including the work was called *Landscapes Without Memory*, 2005).

Terragen was designed to create realistic environments, originally for scientific and military purposes, to visualise complex or hidden two dimensional topographical terrain, using algorithms that realistically and plausibly simulate terrain, lighting, skies and atmospheric effects. Each scene is rendered at planet-sized context, allowing for different levels of optics and scale. The resulting landscapes and environments are simulations, designed to be accurate 3D representations of actual places. There is, of course, an overt irony in Fontcuberta using this software, designed to algorithmically create photorealistic landscape images from cartographic data, to create 3D rendered images of locations that only exist except in the form of an artist’s interpretation. This is a case of interpretative data creating more interpretative data. But the very purpose of the software application is to fake a landscape scene, to trick the viewer into seeing a believable rendering of an environment or landscape. Fontcuberta takes this one step further, purposely tricking the software to create fantastical renderings.

The natural phenomena of orogenesis refers to the geological process of a mountain building event, during which intensive deformation of the landscape occurs. Fontcuberta’s selection of

paintings and photographs hints at this process. Some of the pairings create an output that deforms the nature of the source images, such as William Turner's *The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, 16th October 1834* (1835), which powerfully depicts the destruction of a building that represents the government of the United Kingdom, yet is translated into a flat, lifeless landscape more aligned to the Australian outback. By contrast, the software's rendering of Japanese artist Kanagawa Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (c. 1830), is more directly translated from a wave to a turbulent ocean, with distinct similarities between both the source image and the 3D interpretation.

Melbourne-based artist **Joe Hamilton** also creates complex and intricate compositions that test our understanding of the contemporary landscape. *Spectrum* (2017) is a multi-screen moving-image work made from publicly available images and datasets that have been blended and reformulated to reference the ascribed colours of remote sensing visualisations. Employing the God's eye perspective of a satellite view of the earth's surface, Hamilton conceives of image data-sets as complex and evolving like climate and weather systems. The resulting video stream flares and flows with an uncertain relationship to the representation of 'artificial' and 'natural' systems.

Hamilton compares the expanded mesh of networked images to the topology of landscape. Reflecting on emergent image ecologies, Hamilton states:

the reality of this imagescape is that the images become more like the environment that we move through. They are no longer static objects stored in a finite location, they are nodes in a kinetic spatial environment that we move through... Humans produce, distribute and alter images within the imagescape but there is another influence that is more akin to a weather system. The underlying framework of the scape is influenced by layers of geography, politics, economics and culture and these layers create currents, eddies, rapids and tides. (email correspondence 2020)

Hamilton is more interested in the reality of this emerging image ecology, the potential for revelatory encounters and the politics that underpin these conditions, than the purity of the traditional photographic image.

Likewise, Perth-based artist **Mike Gray** explicitly engages with the new ecology of imaging conditions. In his photographic series *Corrupt* (2013–), a non-visual process of manually inserting text code into images results in unpredictable re-arrangements of pixels. The resulting images highlight a technological alteration, seemingly between nature and technology. By now we understand that digital photographic images exist in many guises, often with a tenuous relationship to truth and authenticity. While indexical digital photographs can still be said to exist – ones that are exclusively captured through a camera and optical device with minimal or limited edits, that holds up to the scrutiny of the World Press Photography jury – Gray's work is not this kind of photographic image. But nor is it what used to be dubbed "electro-bricolage" – images made through a combination of "appropriation, transformation, reprocessing, and recombination" (Mitchell 1994: 7). The residual representational authenticity of digital photographs is challenged by Gray; in some ways his images are the culmination of everything that purist photographers and photojournalists fear the most – being clearly photographic, but not precisely photography. Rather than editing the tones, colours and detail of the photograph, Gray adds non-image forming data into the code of the digital photograph to create a new type of edit. As the title *Corrupt* suggests, new information is introduced that sits outside our perception of how we see pictorial elements – we do not recognise this new information as pictorial, therefore it must be corrupt.

The text Gray inserts into his images originates from an unexpected variety of sources, ranging from diaristic journal entries and reflections through to appropriated extracts from pop culture. *Confide in me*, a landscape in sharp transformation, uses lyrics from Australia

pop diva Kylie Minogue's 1994 song *Confide in Me*. When Kylie sings, somewhat seductively, that we "all get hurt by love" and that our "problems should be shared" she is expressing her own transformation from her 1980s bubble-gum pop images to her more mature, take-me-seriously image of the 1990s. Gray's corruption reveals a potentially similar transformation, from the wild and turbulent water to the calm, uniformed (but out of place), sequential patterning.

Gray is insistent in pointing out that he does not engage with online effects applications to edit and alter his images. *Corrupt* is not the product of Virtual Studio Technology (VST) or glitching. Nor are the images randomly corrupted in the way that the photography industry would typically characterise as being corrupted (one that has been damaged through data errors that result in non-imaging forming artefacts). Corruption, for Gray, is an intentional process of re-arranging the structure of a digital photographic image, through a process of replacing image code with lines of text. Images are not edited in image editing software – the introduction of text would simply overlay recognisable characters and words on the image. Rather, images are opened into text editing software, and segments of image code are replaced with sentences of text. This creates a new form of image, where in one application the image is unrecognisable as an image, but the text is recognisable as words, and in another application the image elements are recognised as an image, but the text creates a new form of unrecognisable imagery.

Whereas Gray creates visual disruptions within images, American artist **Rhonda Holberton** enables disruptions to form. Holberton's *Still Life* (2017) project incorporates several elements – prints rendered from 3D scans, video, and 3D printed sculpture – to address how the corporeal body exists within dematerialised space. In the project, Holberton explicitly references a minimalist look popularised on Instagram, the image platform most associated with the construction of the self through curated scenes. Usurping the aspirational aesthetic ascribed to specific commercial products, *Still Life* speaks to the real and virtual systems that create

value. The video, *The Drone Is Not Distracted By The Perfume Of Flowers* (2017), is a looped animation of honey pouring out of honeycomb. Presented in a way that privileges the aesthetic form over a realistic rendering of actual honey production, Holberton was interested in the promise and subsequent failure of insect behaviour as an organisation model. The golden honey and references to bees conjure notions of material extraction, production, and efficiency. A backdrop to this biological form of extraction and production is *Developer_bmp*, a 'wallpaper' image of a gold-mined California landscape. Produced through a normal mapping process that calculates and models how light would bounce off surface features, the 2D image gives the illusion of depth. Both the animated honey and landscape terrain simulations call attention to their own making and point to the skewed ethos and historical precedent of Silicon Valley.

The merging of the real and the virtual is also at play through the digital translation process used to generate many of the still images. Holberton created 3D scans of everyday items typically found in minimalist Instagram feeds, including hand-crafted ceramics, high-end baked goods, and flowers. The scanning technology used produced digital replicas that approximate the original objects but are misshapen due to technological artefacts of imperfect scans. Here the small flaws which usually signify that something is hand-crafted are both the result of the human and the technological production. Evidence of errors and disruptions, as Hannah Frank (2019: 73) writes, "do not occlude the object but instead reveal the nexus of social, technological, and economic practices that is the photographic apparatus". *Still Life* affirms that the technological apparatus is not seamless, 'life' and its messiness is embodied and embedded within systems – be they ecological, technological, or the developing digital realms that humans increasingly inhabit. More broadly, *Still Life* considers the value of digital aesthetics in terms of how humans and their activities are part of the technological platforms that circulate images.



Imaging the Human

Melbourne-based artist **Jacqueline Felstead**'s video work also involves human presence within technology, combining the longstanding tradition of portraiture with emerging photographic practices. Created from a desire to trace the empathetic, Felstead uses hundreds of digital photographs to create spatial and durational portraits of her sitters. To make her video work *James Asleep* (2019), Felstead photographed a friend over the course of an hour. The duration of capture stretches out what is typically conceived as photographic time, that of the instant. Here, the photogrammetric process elongates time in order to capture enough images from as many angles as possible. The result of the hour-long session is a digital 3D portrait created by software that merges and stitches the separate photographic images into a dimensional form. Whereas photogrammetry is often created through a close-to-instantaneous capture process using an array of dozens of cameras at once, Felstead's process is bodily and intimate as she moves around her subject using a single camera. The video work allows the viewer to enter into the space of the 3D portrait in a way that recalls the duration of capture. The terrain of the human form is traversed as the camera traces the contours of James and the floor on which he sleeps, partially rendered. An uncanny effect is produced as the photographic likeness of James confronts the dimensional distortion and image blur of the 3D form.

James Asleep explores the perennial relationship photography has to likeness and a portrait sitter's true 'soul' or 'character'. The hour-long sitting produces an effect in portraiture that is akin to the slower and more restrictive processes used during the medium's infancy. Early tintype and daguerreotype images required sitters to remain expressionless and move as little as possible for up to twenty minutes. Felstead's project requires a similar prolonged stillness that results in a work where James is likewise unable to control any presence projected for the camera. The artist connects her durational 3D portraits to early long-exposure portraits that Walter

Benjamin wrote about in the 1930s, which he discussed in terms of their apparent aura, partly because becoming a photograph involved a form of endurance on the part of the sitter. On the long sitting of early photographic practice he wrote: "The procedure itself caused the models to live, not out of the instant, but into it; during the long exposure they grew, as it were, into the image" (Benjamin 1972 [1931]: 17). For her part, Felstead considers that the portrait of James in his slumbered state encompasses two virtualities. The process of forming a digital 3D version of James encompasses one sense of the virtual while the dream space he inhabits while Felstead photographs is another. As these virtual spaces exist on separate registers, *James Asleep* creates a palpable tension between photographic resemblance of the photogrammetry process and the impossibility of capturing the essential character of James.

By contrast to the peaceful slumber of *James Asleep*, **Tyler Payne** explores the dynamic contortions of women's bodies within social media platforms such as Instagram. Payne is specifically interested in the impact that such platforms have on women's ability to visualise and share images of themselves. Using a combination of video, still photography and montage, Payne points to the oppressive nature of the platform and the damages inherent in popular feeds like *#fitspiration* and *#sweatatisfactorying*, to re-assemble a critique that explores the un-realistic level of effort needed to present an acceptable portrait of oneself. Tyler situates her work into discourses around consumerism and capitalism, in particular the way social media has enabled the intrusion of capitalist commodification into more and more intimate spheres of life. For *Aesthetics*, 2020, Tyler uses the Renaissance mirror, a symbol of vanity and reflective female gaze (for male pleasure) to contain the Kim Kardashian body. Kardashian is the personification of the vice of 'vanity' in the contemporary moment, raising self-consciousness to the level of a life's vocation.

Cosmetically enhanced, the Kardashian body has become an iconic symbol of a

surrealist object itself, a superimposition of the ideal and the real. Payne's work critiques the oversaturated, mass consumption (that transcends cultures and physical borders) that has given rise to the Kardashian body, becoming "her own self-deification in her advertising tropes as signs of a sophisticated awareness of the traditional relationship between cultural supremacy and self-representation as a duty" (email correspondence 2020).

Central to Payne's work is the ease with which bodies are objectified on social media because of common cultural assumptions about photography and truth. As she says, "Since the lens is so near the real, a viewer too easily mistakes the sensuous experience of the material photograph (or moving image) for the sensuous experience of the thing-in-itself" (email correspondence 2020). However, by keeping her work in the virtual space, presented on the same type of screen devices used to view the social media source, the absence of a body becomes the culmination of the very thing Kim Kardashian represents – a complete loss of fidelity between the viewed, online image, and the thing-in-itself. The constructed nature of her work is in opposition to the immediacy and simplicity through which images on Instagram are viewed. Disassembling and reassembling compartmentalises the body, and the viewer's desire for a body's wholeness is ultimately denied. Payne suggests this creates "a suppressed horror at a body dismembered before being monstrously reassembled through collage", revoking the male gaze's "right to sexual objectification through the apparatus of the lens" (email correspondence 2020).

The Melbourne-based artist collective **QueerTech.io** are also interested in the meeting of human bodies and digital code. In *The Image Looks Back*, QueerTech.io present *The Black Box Experiment*, a live 'digital making-as-performance' work that folds the visitor into a 3D virtual mirror-world of the gallery itself. The project adopts the metaphor of the black box, in tech terminology it is a closed system too complex to describe and in theatre it is an unadorned performance space. Using these notions, The

Black Box Experiment reveals the labour of digital making usually hidden behind the shiny veneer of a finished, resolved product. Posing in white lab coats and P2 face masks, members of the collective invite visitors to work in pairs to create a photographic 3D model of each other. While one visitor 'strikes a pose' with a camera as a prop, the other visitor uses an infrared scanner to create a 3D scan over the duration of a few minutes. Sitting at computers within the gallery space, members of the artist collective then work to insert the model into a virtual copy of the gallery space itself. Visitors can explore the virtual copy via a game controller attached to a large screen, like a video game. The resulting 3D virtual copies of the visitors and the gallery space remain in the gallery after the performance of making as a remnant echo of the encounter. The open-ended experiment raises questions about the relationship between audience and image; and between artist and social process. The work also demonstrates the expansion of photography to include 3D scanning as an accessible technology.

Network Images

The Denmark-based Hong Kong artist-researcher **Winnie Soon** is interested in the unstable nature of the multiplicity of images that saturate digital culture. She is equally influenced by John Berger's idea, expressed in the opening lines of his classic text *Ways of Seeing* (1972), that "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled" and Donna Haraway's (1988) notion that knowledge is situated and embodied. In response, Soon creates work where meaning and images are being intentionally arranged, addressing a "situation in which image culture is increasingly entangled with computational infrastructure that influences how we see, how we think and how we act" (email correspondence 2020). Soon's two works included in this exhibition address different ways of seeing photographically, each influenced by technology and infrastructure.

How to get the Mao experience through Internet... (2014–), newly revised for this exhibition, focuses on how networked infrastructure might give new experience to how we see images through the temporality of frames. Inspired by Matthew Britton's earlier piece *How to get the Mona Lisa experience through flickr...* (2012), Soon's work follows the same method of placing a particular figure at the center of every image, producing an animated GIF which runs with a computer screen through a browser display. The stitched together frames form a collaborative animation with unknown internet producers. Through the GIF digital format, we see a 'live' loop of tourist shots of Beijing's Forbidden City, with its huge hanging portrait of Mao as the steady central focus point, showing visitors flickering in and out of view. The repeated poses of individuals and crowds against the portrait of Mao are a reminder of the cliched nature of tourist and news photography and the strangely detached vision of a such a public space as it is curated by search engines such as Google – the material global infrastructure that supports contemporary image culture. Yet despite the focus moving from what is represented to the material dimensions of the image, the endlessly animating images hint at a kind of recursive truth within the network itself.

Soon's video *Unerasable Images* (2018–19) presents screenshots from Google Image Search, generated from the search term “六四” (June 4) – a reference to the date of the student-led Tiananmen Square Protest in Beijing in 1989. The most iconic image from that day, an unknown protestor standing in front of a row of tanks, photographed by Jeff Widener, was transmitted over the Associated Press news wire and appeared on front pages all over the world. That image is still routinely censored by authorities and blocked from search results in China. However, in 2013 a Lego reconstruction of this 'Tank Man' image started circulating in China, before it too was erased. Nevertheless, the image was later found beyond China, occasionally even appearing on the first few rows of Google image search. Soon fastidiously collected more than 300 screenshots of this lego Tank Man in 2017, as a way to examine

the geopolitics of data circulation, internet censorship and the materiality of image (re) production. Her resulting video work reveals how unstable images become in circulation. When we search for things online with certain keywords, the screen displays one side of the story which is situated in terms of your preferences, locations, history logs and so on. By producing artworks around these topics, Soon attempts to destabilise what we see and what we know.

Dutch artist and theorist **Rosa Menkman** also unpacks the implications of image file formats. Initially known for her glitch artworks, Menkman's practice has become focused on what she terms 'resolution studies' – exploring the interaction of cultural values with the structures of technological affordances in order to consider the political dimensions of technical standards. Her work in this exhibition, *Behind The White Shadows of Image Processing* (2019), is a video essay derived from a text with the same title published in 2018. It presents a playful and speculative conversation with some of the women whose images were used to test and standardise image file formats. More accurately, Rosa gives voice to the actual images. Most notable is her conversation with Lena, an image used to develop and test the now ubiquitous JPEG file format. This test image was created in 1973 when the developers of the JPEG file format used a scan of a centrefold from the November 1972 issue of the soft-porn magazine *Playboy*. While Menkman's video is playful, humorous and educative, we cannot avoid the obvious point that the architecture of digital technology – which includes image file formats – are bound up in the values and perspectives of those who developed them. In other words, the politics of the image extends beyond questions of representation – the affordances and architecture of the medium has implications and impacts that form what and how we see.

Technological infrastructure, as well as the patterns that emerge through user-generated content and its technical circulation, are mobilised in *Two Marionettes Collide* (2020), an adaptive video installation by Melbourne-based

artist **Amalia Lindo**. The artist worked with data scientist Tim Lynam to develop algorithms that both compile video clips uploaded to YouTube and also perform some of the editing and reassembling of the final video piece. The video cycles on monitors mounted within four-legged structural supports, a clue to the video's creation, their form recalling sentient beings and frameworks which contain. Using keywords, dates, and geographical locations of user-generated content, Lindo was able to see patterns of technology-use emerge from the incessant flow:

I was interested in how the translation of the calendar date (into 40+ languages) presented particular patterns related to the culture in question. Particularly, when the algorithm focuses on specific sites. The process of using this algorithm has allowed me to sift through vast amounts of visual data to observe how different countries/cultures engage with this visual platform over a period of many months. The limited selection of clips used in the final film reflects a wider observation of user engagement. (email correspondence 2020)

The resulting video – a montage of jumbled imagery conjuring the fragmentation of contemporary life – alludes to how integrated automation within digital platforms can predict individual behaviour, while also suggesting new possibilities for aesthetic engagement. The artist, data scientist, algorithms, and creators of the uploaded videos all have a part in the assemblage.

Some of the video fragments of *Two Marionettes Collide* signal that we are inside an image system. A point of view from the camera's perspective is emphasised – a finger partially obscures the lens or the scene abruptly drops and shifts as the camera remains in record mode but is no longer trained on the subject. Other brief clips reveal indications of humans using the camera to discover the outside world. Eyes look and hands grab in rhythmic succession. The phone object itself is a re-occurring element in the video. There are brief moments where we see a miniature toy flip-phone or the hands

of young boys grappling over a dated mobile phone. Their presence is suggestive of how these devices are the connective tissue between the loose and messy human operators and the precise automation of algorithms. The content of *Two Marionettes Collide*, and its digital and physical materiality, speaks to how humans must contend with the contours of everyday activities merging with computational image terrains.

The Image to Come

As photography has merged with ubiquitous computing, what comes next? Ubiquitous computing is now enmeshed with facial recognition and artificial intelligence systems. Photography is literally looking back. This condition is highlighted in Chinese artist **Fei Jun**'s video installation *Interesting World* (2019), which uses complex, real time algorithms to map, identify and categorise random faces in the viewing crowd. Developed with a team of software engineers, the machine reads a viewers' emotions and appearance to decode and judge their identification, and provide a personal label of sorts – are they a director, a dancer, a curator, something simple or something more sinister? Of course the algorithms behind this process are invisible. We know we are being watched, but we are also watching ourselves being categorised and labeled. Compelling and difficult to look away, we are seeing the machine expand its systems of classification and categorisation to learn, to get better at it, and to develop a thinking process through which to achieve more accurate results.

Interesting World is most 'interesting' when sharing the experience with a crowd of people. Looking at others, we start to see connections, we find ourselves being interested in what others are being labeled, and we start to connect. That person is also labeled as a director – perhaps we have something in common, the machine starts to connect people together. Is this some kind of post-apocalyptic vision of the future, or a sophisticated, real-time match-making service? For Fei Jun, it is both. Truth, he says, is the hidden relevance of things, how does that

person want to be seen, and how is that different from who they are? In Chinese, truth also means ‘real face’ (*zhen xiang* 真相) and telling the truth is about making a linkage of things. In Chinese culture, ‘face’ is relational, about the other, how you present yourself and how you are viewed and judged by others. In this sense, Fei Jun is perhaps setting up conditions for people to link, be connected and present a version of their ‘self’, with the camera and algorithm attempting to see through any deception, and present one’s true self.

Facial recognition software is used to make the image look back in a very different way in the work *Capture* by **Generative Photography**, a team comprised of Adam Brown, Tabea Iseli and Alan Warburton. This work won the Post photography Prototyping Prize (P3), organised by the Fotomuseum Winterthur and conducted as a ‘speed project’ over 24 hours at the Photographers Gallery in London in 2019. In the work they have set in motion a dynamic interactive system in which the image actively seeks to avoid being seen.

In our submission for the Post-Photography Prototyping Prize we tried to focus on behaviour, rather than either mechanism or image. Two challenges – to respond to the idea of ‘generative photography’- the production of images by recruiting the agency of the mechanical - and the need to make something in 24 hours – led us to strip out everything but the behavioural and processual elements of photographic production, and to consider the photographer as a hunter, adventurer or gamer, whose ‘quest’ was not the quarry, but the chase itself. We present the photographic as an experience of frustration, and aim to activate the emotional pull of the absent or failed image, a glitch in a machine of which you willingly become a part. (email correspondence 2020)

Drawing on the tropes of wildlife photography in a virtual world, creatures within this world hide when the associated facial recognition system perceives a face looking at the screen. The viewer is forced to hide their face in order to see the work. The image is elusive, it is looking back and is wary of what it sees.

Conclusion

The technical medium of photography is fundamentally implicated in giving shape to the cultural paradigms through which we see ourselves. For example, in 1969 *The Whole Earth Catalog* published the iconic image *Earthrise* (1968) on their cover, a photograph looking back at Earth and some of the Moon’s surface taken from lunar orbit by Apollo 8 astronaut William Anders. This image is regularly cited as one of the most influential environmental photographs ever taken, and sometimes cited as an example of Martin Heidegger’s (1977) concept of the ‘world as a picture’, coined in a lecture in 1938. Very few of us have literally stood on the moon and seen the earth from space but we all hold this image in our mind’s eye. We know the world through images. In seeking to conceive of our current moment, we could compare *Earthrise* with the first photograph of a black hole created 50 years later in 2019 by Katie Bouman. *Earthrise* was an optical film-based image, whereas the 2019 image was a generative photograph built up from data compiled from multiple telescopes across the surface of the earth. While the 1968 image embodies ‘the world as an image’, the process of creating the 2019 black hole image reconfigures the earth as the image sensor, with each of the telescopes that contributed data of the black hole acting like the light sensitive elements of a digital image sensor. We no longer simply know the world as an image. In an ontological sense, we are wrapped inside the architecture of the generative image, situated on the surface of the site at which the image is formed. We are in-camera, parasites enmeshed within the ubiquitous forces that propel the flow of images at the point of formation and encounter. Perhaps in this metaphorical reconfiguration we can glimpse the paradigm shift wrought by the expansion of photography into ubiquitous networked computing.

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In the context of ‘truth’ being forsaken in the post-internet age, these images leverage the space between culture and nature to highlight that technology can be seen to provide a more revelatory experience than nature itself. Not only is there a pleasure in consuming images of nature, the data behind those representations can offer its own sublime aesthetic. It is this pleasure in consuming digital images of the natural world that may help avoid the truth of its current state.

Mike Gray

We can consider the history of photography to be a dialectic process between the image as description and the image as invention – that is to say, between documentation and fiction. But today we cannot accept these poles as mutually exclusive concepts, because one impregnates the other... Reality is nourished by fiction in the way that fiction is a narrative essentialized out of an inherent need to understand reality. Thus the first and more important truth photography conveys is its own ambiguity: the fact that we need to interpret it.

Joan Fontcuberta

–quoted in Aaron Schuman,
‘Absurd Fabrication: Fictionalizing
Photographer Joan Fontcuberta’,
Time, 5 March 2014





In my work, truth is like the black box that is missing from the plane crash. It's the very thing that can't be found but is attended to through the practice of reconstruction.

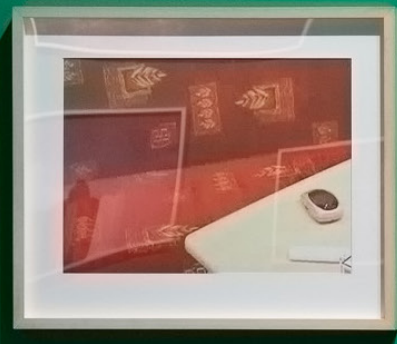
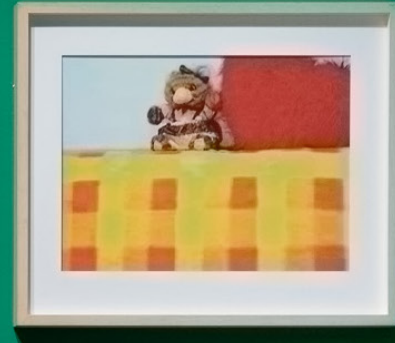
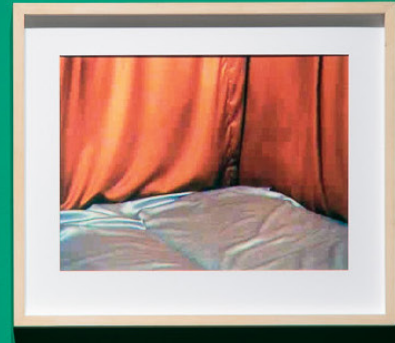
Jacqueline Felstead

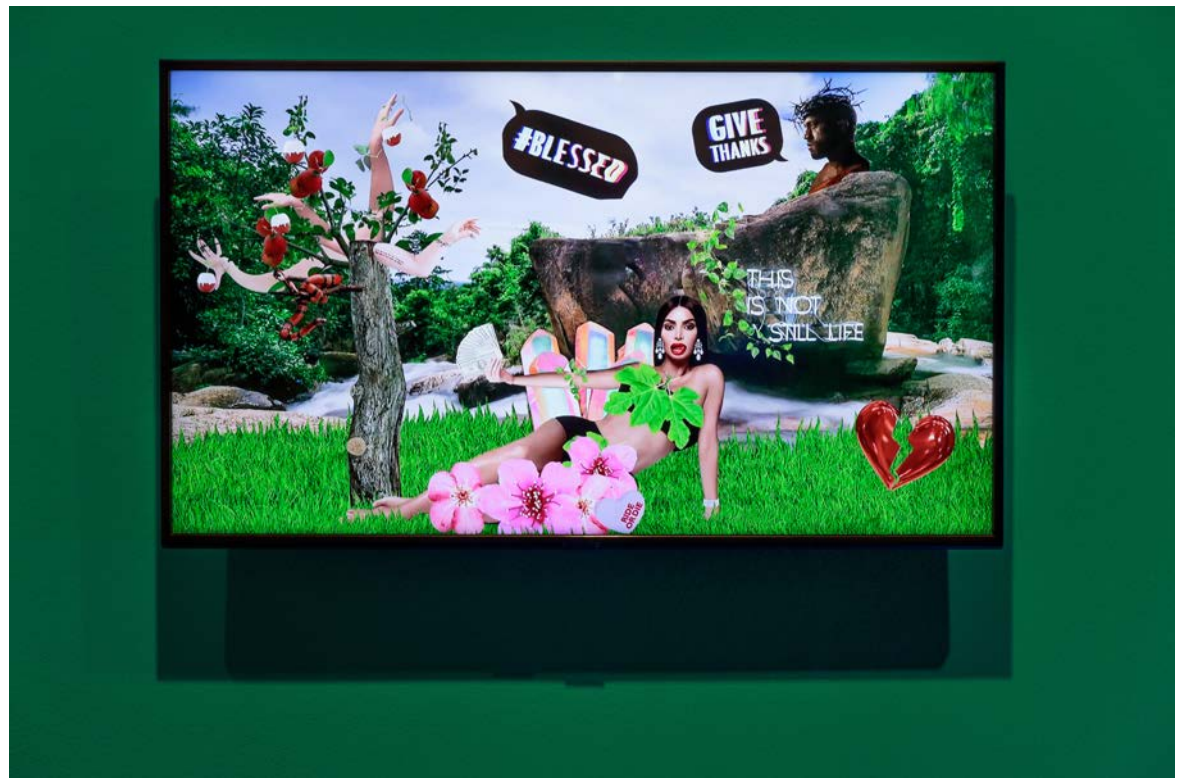
The notion of 'truth' in my work is prefigured by my self-interest and is, through my self-generated algorithms, accumulated and replicated. In this way, 'truth' is solely influenced by the author and/or the programmer and this concept is evidenced in the concept of algorithmic governance. In my work, I am interested in how 'truth' becomes concentrated into social, political and economic layers – and, how we as individuals are implicit in this narrative distortion.

Amalia Lindo

I don't wake up in the morning and think about truth in photography... I am aware however that virtually every photograph, even a modest, unambitious, innocent snapshot is at least a potential lie. Photographs are by definition neither true nor false, but just like language they can be used for constructing either a truth or a lie, depending on the intention of the person in charge (who is often not the photographer).

Joachim Schmid





Installation images: (top left and right) Tyler Payne
 #doitfortheafterselfie sign and detail: *Aesthetics*, 2020 ;
 (bottom left) #fitspo sign, 2020; *Aesthetics*, 2020; *Garden of KKW*,
 2020; (bottom right) *Garden of KKW*, 2020

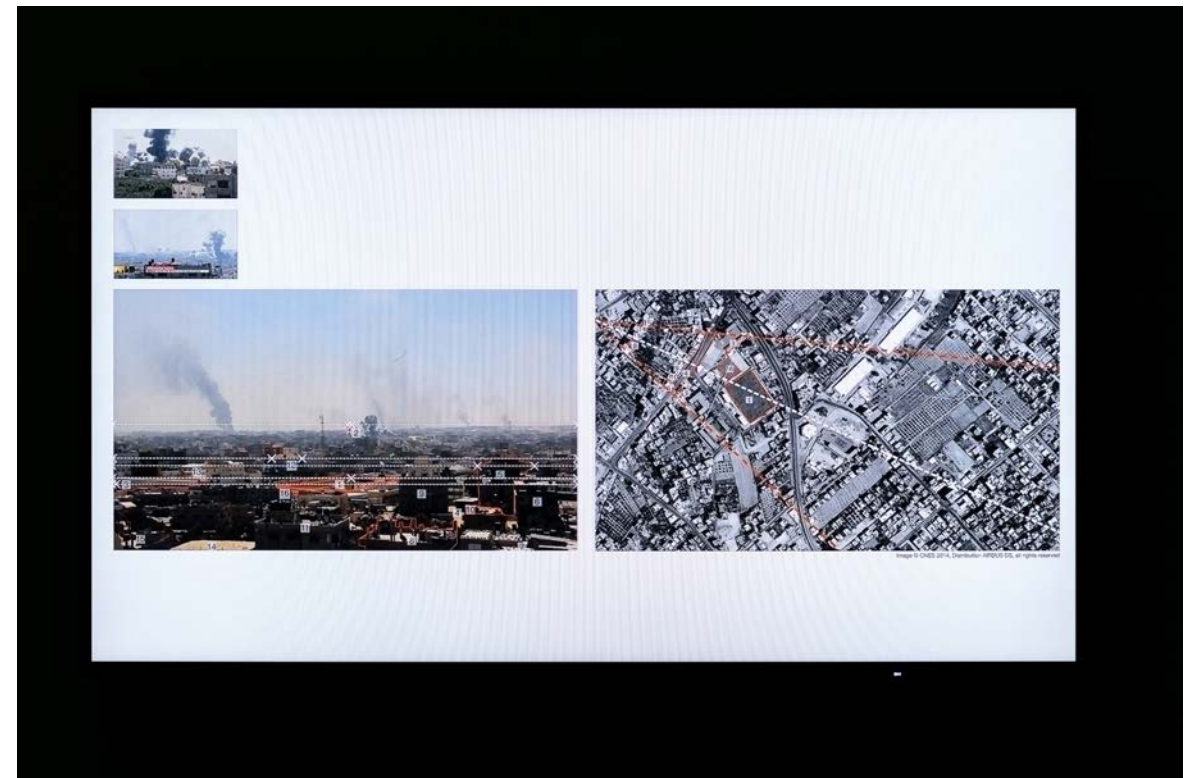
My work is preoccupied by my frustration with the inherent truth value that is awarded to the photographic image. Contemporary photography, especially in the landscape of social media, is built on sophisticated deception. The smartphone lens intrudes on the most intimate forms of individuals' lives. Social media feeds are filled with images orchestrated to appear 'candid' and edited to perfection. If there is a celebrity that personifies this cultural phenomena it would be Kim Kardashian.

Tyler Payne

It is ironic to notice how, as the art of lying spreads through institutions of power, the craft of truth must find its place in the museum... We respond to the current skepticism towards expertise not with resignation or a relativism of anything goes, but with a more vital and risky form of truth production, based on establishing an expanded assemblage of practices that incorporate aesthetic and scientific sensibilities and includes both new and traditional institutions.

Forensic Architecture
(Eyal Weizman)

—Eyal Weizman,
'Open Verification', *e-flux Architecture*,
18 June 2019



Installation image: (below) *The Image Looks Back*;
(right) Winnie Soon *How to get the Mao experience through
Internet...*, 2014–



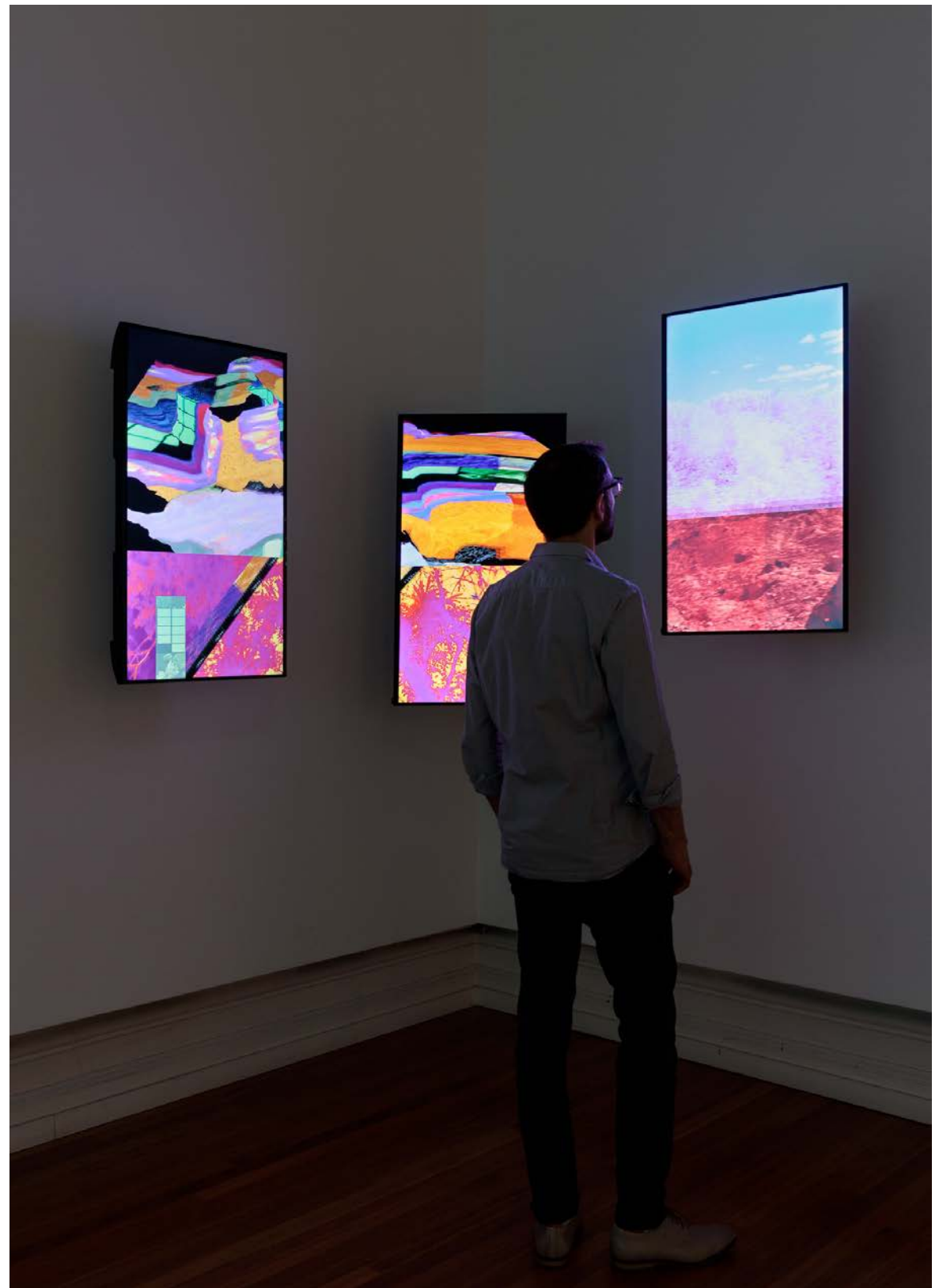
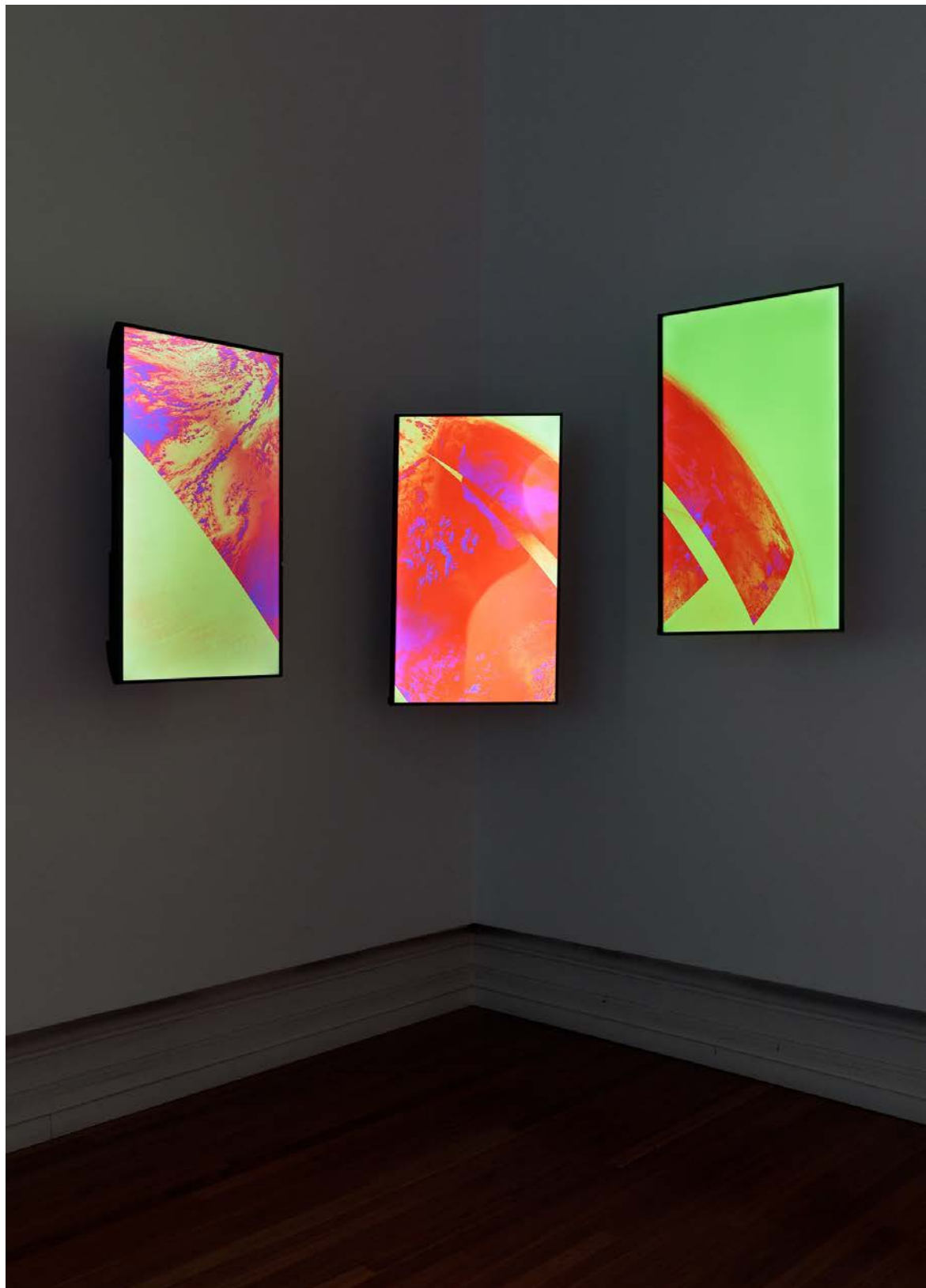
In image culture there is no such thing as truth, just a particular perspective and 'framing' entangled with computational infrastructure – the medium and materials that influences how we see, how we think and how we act. I am not telling the absolute truth, but trying to destabilize what we see and what we know.

Winnie Soon

To misappropriate the words of the great Tina Turner, what's truth got to do with it?

Queertech.io



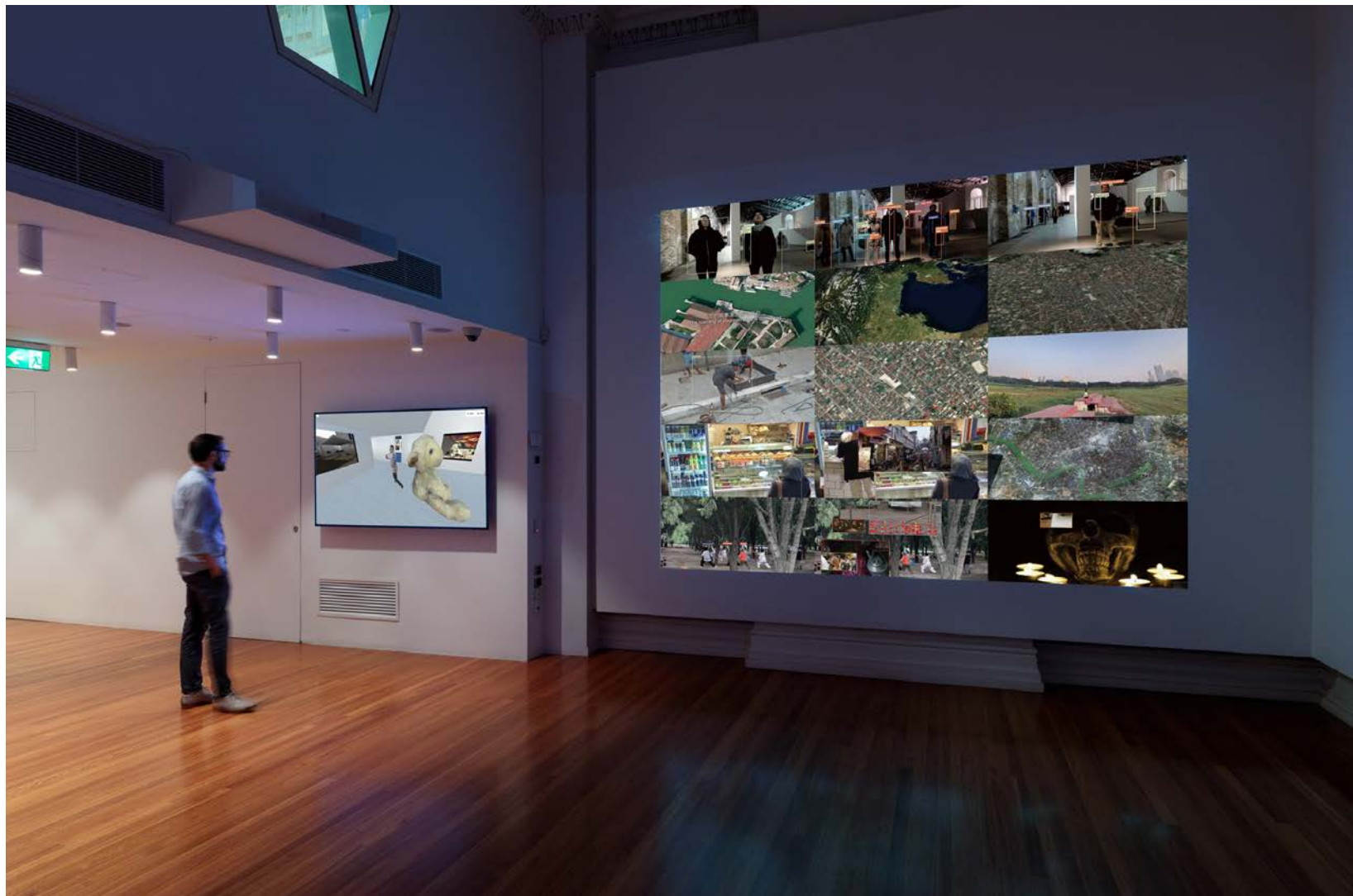


Humans produce, distribute and alter images within an image-scape [...] akin to a weather system. The underlying framework of this scape is influenced by layers of geography, politics, economics and culture and these layers create currents, eddies, rapids and tides. In the past there was an expectation that photos should not just be a representation of their subject but also symbolic of it, a higher truth. Perhaps this stemmed from the scarcity of photos and our society's dependence on them. I would argue that this higher truth never existed and that it was something like a religion. The question of truth is perhaps better directed to politics, infrastructure, the weather systems and flows.

Joe Hamilton

Truth is the hidden relevance of things. Truth also means real face in Chinese ‘真相’ (Zhen Xiang) – telling the truth is about revealing yourself as real.

Fei Jun



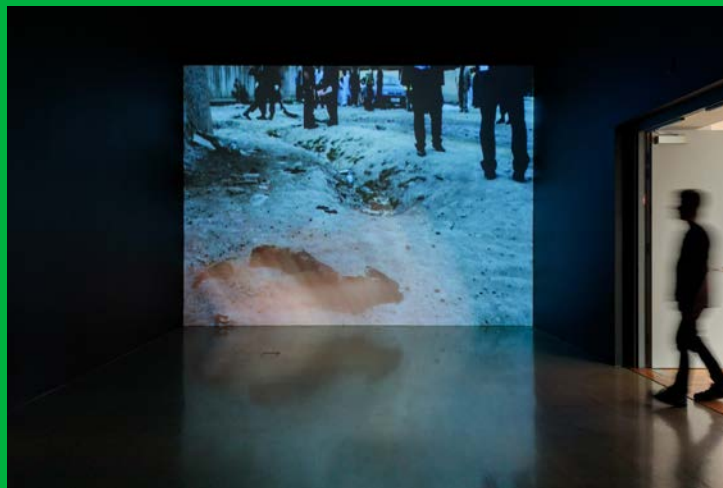
In terms of photographing truth, I think what is of major importance is to understand the roles of window (the technological assemblage, which includes lens and filter) and messenger (the type and form of the data that is collected). Personally I think any type of data can be read in any way, if the parameters manipulate it in that sense. Yet, the data is truthful. [...] Every image always has a trace evidence of how it was made, how it was framed, how it was staged or processed. And while we are less trained to look at this part of the image, we generally look through it and straight at what is imaged, this is in fact an important element when it comes to actually understanding and valuing the image. For example, when it comes to machine learning or General Adversarial Networks (GANs), what the image shows is as much the image itself, as the dataset from which the GAN has come to construct the image. The latent space of the image already is infected by the parameters of the dataset. In that sense the images give us a perspective of the person or persons and protocols responsible for constructing the image.

Rosa Menkman

The truth I am interested in resists facts, opinions, comments, and journalism. Truth is irreducible; therefore the images of destroyed human bodies are irreducible and resist factuality. I don't deny facts and actuality, but I want to oppose the texture of facts today. The habit of reducing things to facts is a comfortable way to avoid touching Truth.

Thomas Hirschhorn

—Thomas Hirschhorn, 'Why Is It Important – Today – To Show and Look at Images of Destroyed Human Bodies?' (2013)







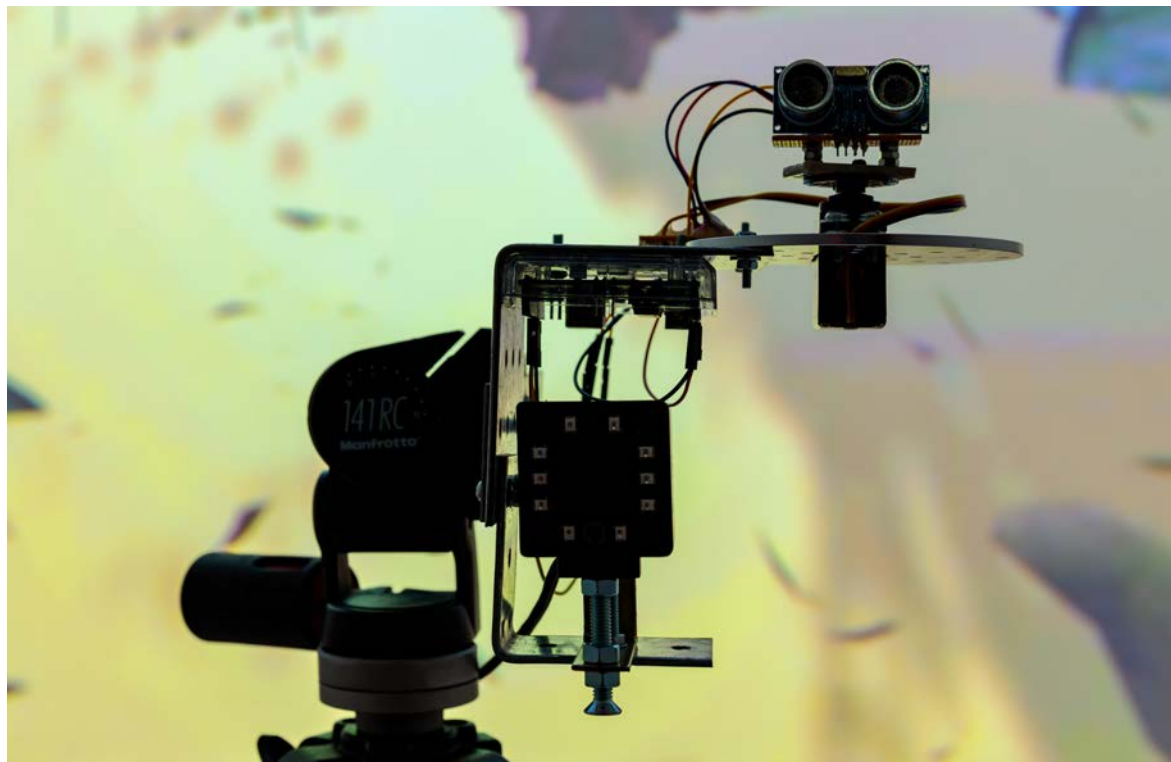
Rhonda Hoalberton (left): *Lilium Candidum, Rosa 'Madame A. Meiland' Alstroemeria (Night II)*, 2018, (right): *Lilium Candidum, Rosa 'Madame A. Meiland' Alstroemeria (Night I)*, 2018

We are living through a crisis of reality. Today, ubiquitous screens mediate bodily experiences of the physical world. In turn, we are beginning to see digital content shaping material reality. At the same time, the material environment and physical bodies living within it are approaching a critical moment of climate-induced destabilization that can only be mitigated by collective action... I contend that while there is potential for beauty and interpersonal connection in networked interaction, that biases coded into these platforms have resulted in fragmentation and trauma for the end users. Instead, I design platforms that create gentle places of healing for the most vulnerable and traumatized bodies.

Rhonda Holberton

Photography strides the stage of industrialised societies as the theatrical embodiment of a particular model of causality: the truth function of photography is rehearsed and reproduced every time someone with a camera fires the shutter, taking part in the production of truth, playing the scientist, rehearsing and demonstrating over and over again how cause produces effect, under controlled conditions. However, this 'work' is reinforced by affective folk rituals – the dread of 'opening the back of the camera,' the ritualistic bearing of the film to a 'lab' – one of many widespread and daily re-enactments of scientific processes. Tune in to the murmurs of technology and it will always be heard to conspire against you even as it gives you what you think you want.

Generative Photography



Artist



2018

Jacqueline Felstead
Australia

James Asleep, 2019
Video
00:08:21
Courtesy of the artist

Jacqueline Felstead works across photography, sculpture, film and new media. Felstead was awarded the 2017 Samstag Award which supported her Associate Research in Sculpture at Royal College Art, London over 2017–18. She has been awarded an Asialink Residency to Objectifs, Singapore with the support of Australia Council; the Erna Plachte Award, Ruskin School, University of Oxford and studio residencies to Banff Centre, Canada, most recently funded by the Mary E. Hofstetter Legacy Scholarship for Excellence in the Visual Arts (2019). She holds an MFA (Monash), BA (Hons) Media Art (RMIT) and is completing her PhD at VCA (University of Melbourne) where she currently teaches in Sculpture.

Joan Fontcuberta
Spain

Orogenesis: Adams, 2005
Orogenesis: Anonymous (The Wave), 2009
Orogenesis: Cézanne, 2003
Orogenesis: Derain, 2004
Orogenesis: Fenton, 2005
Orogenesis: Fiske, 2004
Orogenesis: Gainsborough, 2004
Orogenesis: Hokusai, 2004
Orogenesis: Man Ray/ Duchamp, 2006
Orogenesis: Mondrian, 2004
Orogenesis: Turner, 2003
Orogenesis: Watkins, 2004
Archival pigment prints
Courtesy of the artist

For more than four decades, Spanish artist Joan Fontcuberta has developed artistic and theoretical works focussing on the conflicts between nature, technology, photography and truth. He has held solo shows at MoMA (NY, 1988), the Art Institute (Chicago, 1990), IVAM (Valencia, 1992), MNAC (Barcelona, 1999), Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris, 2014), Science Museum (London, 2014), Museum Angewandte Kunst (Frankfurt, 2015), and Museo de Arte del Banco de la República (Bogotá, 2016) among others. His work has been collected by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY), San Francisco MoMA, Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Center for Creative Photography (Tucson), George Eastman House (Rochester), National Gallery of Art (Ottawa), Folkwang Museum (Essen), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), and others. In 2013 he received the Hasselblad Foundation International Photography Award.

Forensic Architecture
UK

Bomb Cloud Atlas: The Bombing of Rafah, 2015
3D print

Rafah: al Tannur Neighbourhood Strike Methodology, 2015
Video
00:09:05

Forensic Architecture is a research agency, based at Goldsmiths, University of London. Founded in 2010 by architect Eyal Weizman, the agency undertakes advanced spatial and media investigations into cases of human rights violations, with and on behalf of communities affected by political violence, human rights organisations, international prosecutors, environmental justice groups, and media organisations. The team includes architects, software developers, filmmakers, investigative journalists, artists, scientists and lawyers who use photographs, videos, audio files and testimonies to reconstruct and analyse violent events. Forensic Architecture's work has been exhibited in major cultural institutions around the world and was included in documenta 14 and the 2018 Turner Prize.

Generative Photography
UK/Switzerland

Capture, 2018
Unity / Processing code, electronic components, metalwork, projection
Courtesy of the artists

In 2018 Tabea Iseli Alan Warburton and Adam Brown won the Post-Photography Prototyping Prize, organised by Fotomuseum Winterthur, in association with the Photographers' Gallery, London and the Julius Baer Foundation. Their winning entry – built in a single day, in a hackathon involving competing teams of makers – consisted of a public multimedia installation combining their individual experience in games design, photography and CGI modelling.

Adam Brown is Senior Lecturer in Photography at London South Bank University, and a member of the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image. Brown's work attempts to performatively reimagine methods of image production, viewing and reproduction, and has been exhibited in the UK and Australia, at Bristol Photography Festival, the Photographers' Gallery, London, and Paris Photo.

Tabea Iseli worked for renowned Swiss game companies, such as Blindflug Studios and Gbanga. Currently she is working on her own project AVA, and building the Swiss game publisher Ibex Games with other Zurich-based professionals. Iseli has recently completed a postgraduate degree in Game Design at the Zurich University of the Arts.

Alan Warburton explores ideas of image economies, identities and representation drawing on his professional experience of CGI. His work has been exhibited and screened at BALTIC, Ars Electronica, CTM Berlin, National Gallery of Victoria, Carnegie Museum of Art, Austrian Film Museum, Laboral, HeK Basel, Photographers Gallery, Southbank Centre, Channel 4 and Cornerhouse.

Mike Gray
Australia

Blue, 2016
Boys light up, 2013
Confide in me, 2013
Wave Rock, 2019
Donna, 2014
Gantheume, 2014
Batu Karas, 2018
Miranda, 2013
Someone like you, 2015
Yallingup, 2019
Festival, 2014
Archival pigment prints
All courtesy of the artist

Mike Gray is an Australian artist who has exhibited nationally and internationally since 2003. Through predominately photographic and interdisciplinary lens-based works he examines dominant Western narratives that specifically intersect both Australian and personal concerns. Some of the themes explored include applied machismo, uncanny suburbia, preconscious vision, the nature-culture divide, and the experience of the partially naturalised migrant. Primarily through experimentation he produces bodies of work whereby the technique and aesthetic produced intersect the concepts explored. In photographic terms this experimentation is informed by devolved photographic analogue processes through to high-end digital technology. Subsequently his work aims to form alternate narratives and construct new insights into aspects of post-colonialism, visual phenomena, identity and modernist histories.

Joe Hamilton
Australia

Spectrum, 2017–20
3 channel video
00:05:00
Courtesy of the artist

Joe Hamilton (b. 1982 Tasmania) makes use of technology and found material to create intricate and complex compositions online, offline and in-between. His recent work questions our established notions of the natural environment within an increasingly networked society. Hamilton holds a BFA from the University of Tasmania and an MA from RMIT in Melbourne. His work has been shown extensively in international group exhibitions, including at The Moving Museum Istanbul, The Austrian Film Museum, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and The New Museum in New York.

Thomas Hirshhorn
Switzerland

Touching Reality, 2012
Colour video, silent, looped
00:04:45
Courtesy of the artist and
Gladstone Gallery

Thomas Hirschhorn was born in 1957 in Bern, Switzerland and lives and works in Paris, France. He is widely regarded as a leading artist of his generation. Best known for his sculptural constructions produced from disposable mass manufactured goods, Hirschhorn gathers together references and imagery culled from popular media alongside the work of radical theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and Georges Bataille. Implicated in Hirschhorn's work, viewers are obliged to consume and reflect upon that which they may have hitherto been able to ignore in their daily lives. The disparity between the viewer and the bombardment of blown-up imagery reminds us of how distant and removed we can feel when confronted with such imagery. Hirschhorn's exhibitions include Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2018); *Pixel-Collage*, Kunsthall Aarhus, Denmark (2017); Double Garage, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany (2016); *Flamme Eternelle*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2014); *Gramsci Monument* (2013), Dia Art Foundation, New York; *Touching Reality*, Institute Of Modern Art Brisbane, Brisbane, Australia (2013); *Theatre of the World*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania (2012); 54th Venice Biennial, Swiss Pavillion, Venice, Italy (2011) and Documenta 11 (2002). Hirschhorn's works are included in prominent collections internationally, including the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; Tate Modern, London, England.

Rhonda Holberton
USA

Developer_bmp, 2017
Inkjet on adhesive

The drone is not distracted by the perfume of flowers, 2017
Digital animation
00:02:36

A/ fisherman/ hunts/ a/ shark/ with/ a/ gun, 2017
Archival pigment print

Still Life (vanitas), 2017
Archival pigment print

Lilium Candidum, Rosa 'Madame A. Meiland' Alstroemeria (Night II), 2018
Archival pigment print

Lilium Candidum, Rosa 'Madame A. Meiland' Alstroemeria (Night I), 2018
Archival pigment print

All courtesy of the artist and Aimee Friberg Exhibitions

Rhonda Holberton holds an MFA from Stanford University and a BFA from CCA. Her multimedia installations make use of digital and interactive technologies integrated into traditional methods of art production. In 2014 Holberton was a CAMAC Artist in Residence at Marnay-sur-Seine, France, and she was awarded a Fondation Ténor Fellowship, Paris. Her work is included in the collection of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the McEvoy Foundation and has been exhibited at CULT | Aimee Friberg Exhibitions, FIFI Projects Mexico City; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; Berkeley Art Center; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; and the San Francisco Arts Commission. Holberton taught experimental media at Stanford University from 2015–17 and is currently Assistant Professor of Digital Media at San Jose State University. She lives and works in Oakland.

Fei Jun
China

Interesting World, 2019
Interactive video projection
Courtesy of the artist

Fei Jun holds an MFA in Electronic Integrated Art from Alfred University's School of Art and Design in New York. He is also a chief creative director of Moujiti interactive and curator of Beijing Media Art Biennale, and professor of art and technology at the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing, China. As an artist, designer and educator, he devotes himself to the research, education and practice of art and technology and has received many international awards including the IF design award, Red Dot Design Award and Design for Asia Award. His artistic practice explores the hybrid space constructed by virtual and physical space. His art and design work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in galleries, museums and festivals, including at the 58th Venice Biennial in 2019.

Amalia Lindo
Australia

Two marionettes collide, 2019
Video, 16:9, colour
00:07:00
Courtesy of the artist

Amalia Lindo (born United States, lives Melbourne) completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (First Class Honours) in 2016 and is a current PhD candidate at MADA, Monash University. Lindo's video and installation practice considers the evolving inter-relationship between human and nonhuman agents as a result of the integration of artificial intelligence into practices of daily life. Lindo has participated in local solo and group exhibitions including: *Hobienalle*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart (2019); *Computer Shoulders*, Centre for Contemporary Photography (2019); *The matter admits of no explanation*, Cathedral Cabinet, Melbourne (2018); *Unrepresented Artists*, Haydens Gallery, Melbourne (2018); *Future State*, in collaboration with Samantha Barrow, c3 Contemporary, Melbourne (2018); *Concrete Air*, Blindside at Federation Square, Melbourne (2017); *Elasticity*, c3 contemporary, Melbourne (2017).

Rosa Menkman
The Netherlands

Behind the White Shadows of Image Processing/Pique Nique pour les Inconnues, 2019 – 2020
Video
Courtesy of the artist

Rosa Menkman is a Dutch artist and theorist who focuses on visual noise artefacts, resulting from accidents in both analogue and digital media (such as glitch, encoding and feedback artifacts). In 2011 Menkman wrote *The Glitch Moment/um*, a book on the exploitation and popularization of glitch artifacts (published by the Institute of Network Cultures), co facilitated the GLI.TC/H festivals in both Chicago and Amsterdam, and curated the Aesthetics symposium of Transmediale 2012. Since 2012 Menkman has been curating exhibitions that intend to illuminate the different ecologies of glitch (filtering failure, glitch genealogies, glitch moment/ums). In 2015 Menkman started the institutions for Resolution Disputes [iRD], dedicated to researching the interests of anti-utopic, lost and unseen or simply "too good to be implemented" resolutions. Menkman's other art works include *The Collapse of PAL* (2011), the digital version of a live audiovisual performance first staged on national Danish television and afterward realized at Transmediale (Germany) and Nova festival (Brasil).

Tyler Payne
Australia

Aesthetics, 2020
Installation
iPad, moving image, perspex, timber and marine wire

Fountain of Youth, 2020
Collage animation

#fitspo, 2020
Neon sign
All courtesy of the artist

Tyler Payne is a visual artist based in Melbourne, Australia, who has been exhibiting in Australia and internationally since 2008. In 2016, she completed a Master of Research (Fine Art) at RMIT University. Her current work, *KIMSPO*, is part of a creative practice PhD project at RMIT University investigating how Instagram use and consumption impacts female-users' body image disturbance and dissatisfaction. Particular attention is devoted to the social media phenomena, #fitspiration, at the centre of which is the idol-like form of Kim Kardashian.

Queertech.io
Australia

The Black Box Experiment, 2018
Assemblage of digital devices and
human interaction
Courtesy of the artists

QueerTech.io is a collective of Melbourne based queer-identifying new media artists engaged in exploring notions of #queertech creative practices. Since 2017, they have presented more than sixty screen-based digital media artworks from around the globe at Testing Grounds, RMIT Spare Room Gallery, ACMI, Melbourne Museum & the Brisbane Powerhouse. QueerTech.io is a passion project run by Xanthe Dobbie, Travis Cox and Alison Bennett. For *The Black Box Experiment*, they are joined by Megan Beckwith and J. Rosenbaum.

Joachim Schmid
Germany

Cyberspaces, 2004
Lambda prints
Courtesy of the artist

Joachim Schmid is a Berlin-based artist who has been working with found photographs and texts since the early 1980s. He has published over one hundred artist books, and his work has been exhibited internationally and is included in numerous collections. In 2007 Photoworks and Steidl published a comprehensive monograph *Joachim Schmid Photoworks 1982–2007* on the occasion of his first retrospective exhibition at the Tang Teaching Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York. In 2012 Johan & Levi Editore published the book *Joachim Schmid e le fotografie degli altri (Joachim Schmid and Other People's Photographs)* on the occasion of an exhibition at Museo di fotografia contemporanea in Cinisello Balsamo, Milan.

More info: www.lumpenfotografie.de

Winnie Soon
Hong Kong/Denmark

Unerasable Images, 2019
Video
Courtesy of the artist

How to get the Mao experience through the Internet..., 2014–
Animated GIF, networked and browser art
Courtesy of the artist

Winnie Soon is a Hong Kong artist-researcher, currently living in Denmark and working at the intersection of media/computational art, software studies, cultural studies and code practice. Her artworks and research examine the cultural implications of technologies in which computational processes and infrastructure underwrite our experiences. Her work concerns automated censorship, data circulation, real-time processing/liveness, invisible infrastructure and the culture of code practice. Soon's artworks and projects have been exhibited and presented internationally at museums, festivals, universities and conferences across Europe, Asia and America. In 2019, she received the Expanded Media Award for Network Culture at Stuttgarter Filmwinter – Festival for Expanded Media, WRO 2019 Media Art Biennale Award and Public Library Prize for Electronic Literature (short-listed), Literature in Digital Transformation. Soon is currently an Assistant Professor at Aarhus University.

More info: www.siusoon.net

The Images Look Back

Curated by Alison Bennett, Shane Hulbert,
Rebecca Najowski and Daniel Palmer
RMIT Gallery

Unless otherwise stated, all quotes are personal
correspondence 2020

Acknowledgements:

The curators would like to thank the participating artists and researchers for their generous support and commitment to the exhibition – particularly under difficult circumstances arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

We would also like to thank RMIT Gallery staff for the opportunity, their enthusiasm around the exhibition, and the technical and installation crew for their extraordinary dedication to its presentation. For generous equipment loans and technical advice, we thank Stephanie Andrews from the School of Design.

Appreciative thanks also to Professor Tania Broadley, PVC DSC; Paula Toal, Head, Cultural and Public Engagement; Professor Kit Wise, Dean School of Art; Erik North, Production Coordinator, RMIT Design Hub Gallery; Albert Maberley, Advanced Manufacturing Precinct; and the organisers of PHOTO 2020.

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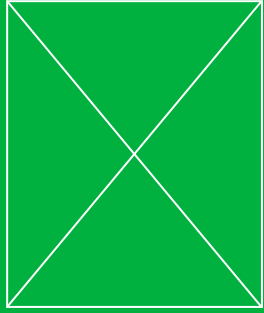
Gallery hours: Tuesday–Friday 11–5 Saturday 12–5
Closed Sundays, Monday & public holidays.
Free admission. Lift access available.
Catalogue published by RMIT Gallery
March 2021

Graphic design: Sean Hogan – Trampoline
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Catalogue photography courtesy Mark Ashkanasy,
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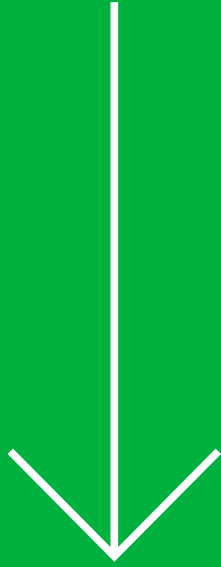
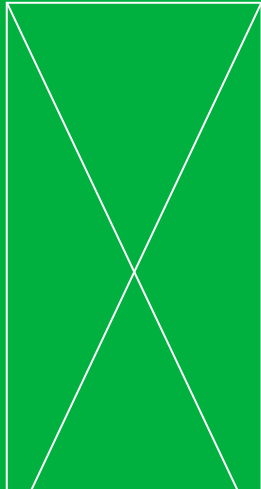
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RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business

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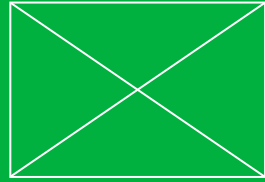
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