Networked Worlds Futures we can believe in. A research memo on worlding as a creative strategy in the early 21st century. WeTransfer

Why are we worlding?

We world as a response to the multiple crises of our time.

The crisis of reality i.e. the interventions needed to re-imagine and re-enchant our existence in the face of multiple wars, climate emergencies and the collapse of traditional sensemaking structures. The great fragmentation i.e. the fact that the internet is rewiring not only media, but the public itself, makes it increasingly hard to find consensus or even speak the same language. A crisis of agency in the age of deepfakes and algorithms, censorship and shadowbanning. The list goes on.

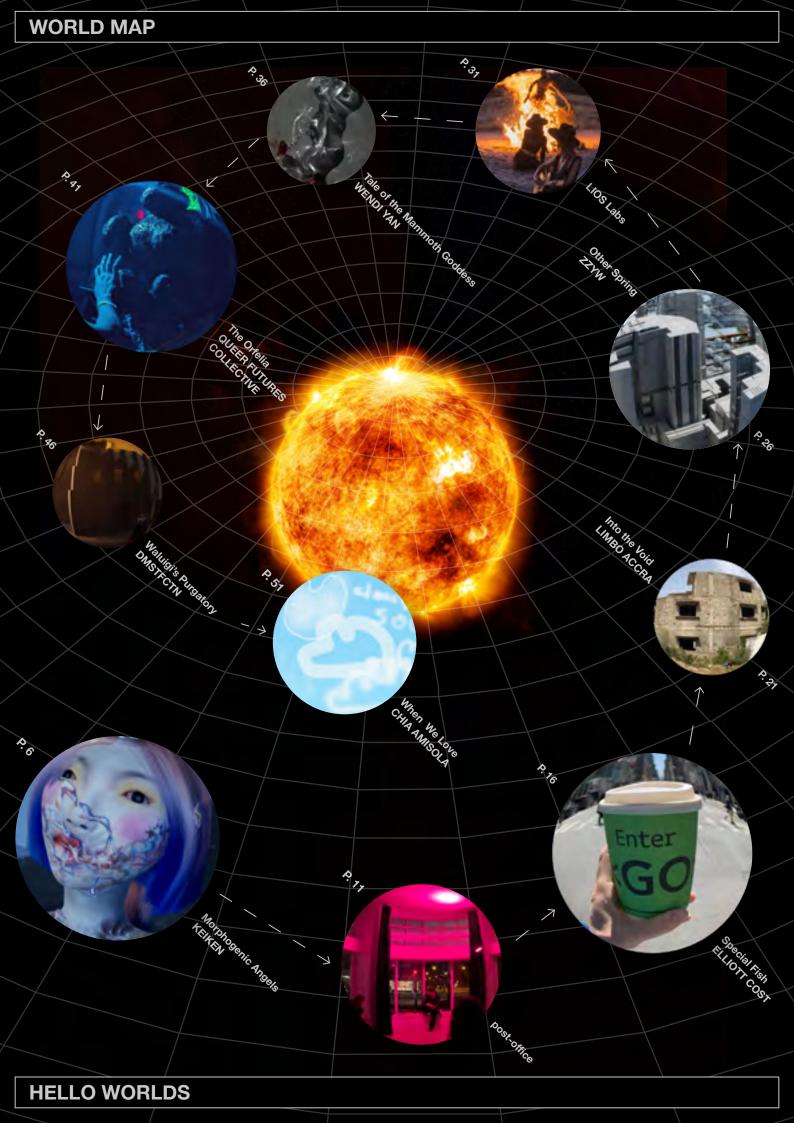
This response has expressed itself as a renewed interest in mysticism, spirituality, techno-poetics and science fiction- a retreat from the clear net to protected niche corners, dark forests and 'cozy web' internet communities, or even the evolution of the video game into an artistic medium through which artists imagine alternative futures (such as afrofuturism, sinofuturism, solarpunk, queer futurism). Not to mention the efforts of 'network states' and 'autonomous worlds' as part of the 'new internet' movement which – while experiencing some grief for what could have been – continues to aim for the reformation of systems and societies underpinned by the blockchain.

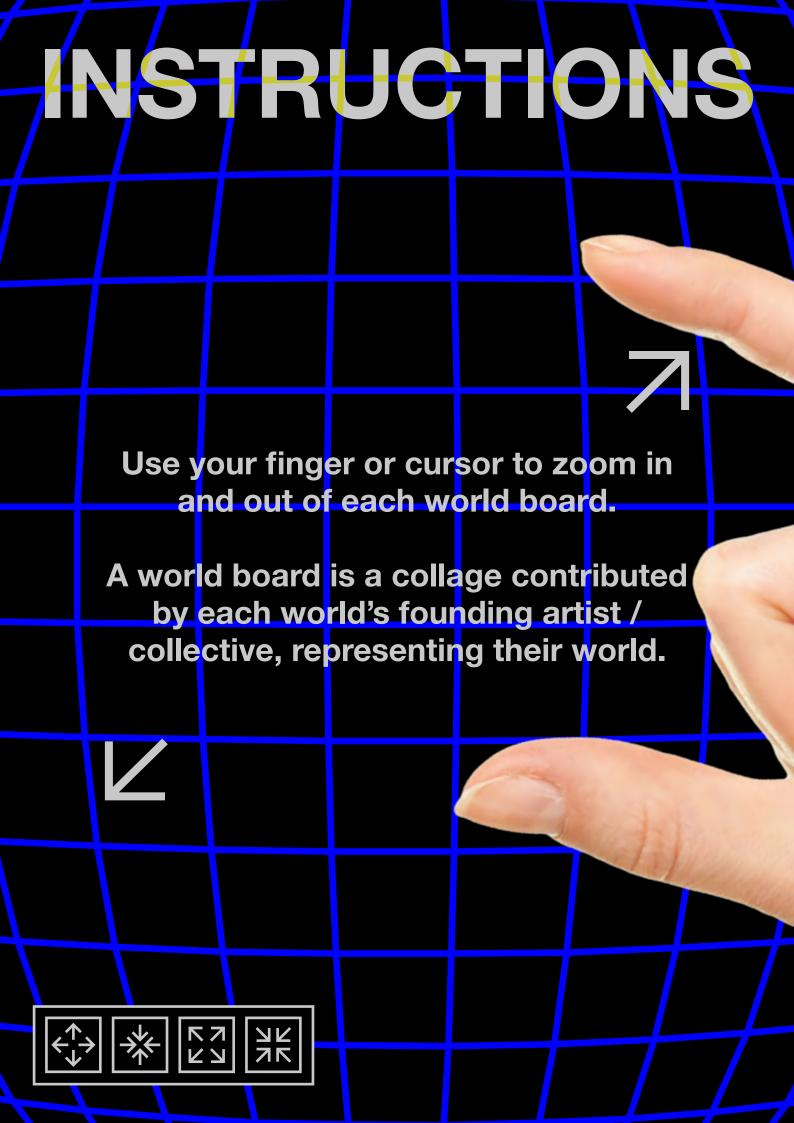
All of these are attempts at worlding, expressing our desire to re-imagine reality, design alternative futures and render the conditions that shape our current world. In a post-truth world, they are exercises in collective sensemaking, finding meaning and belonging in an environment that has turned essential elements of the human experience into revenue-generating mechanisms of the platform age.

With applied systems-thinking, worlding means creating everything – not only making things inside the world (its content) but also the context – the language, style, rules, and architecture it's embedded in. Using a variety of technologies, from AI to blockchain to photogrammetry, coding and game engines, or even non-linear narrative design and rituals, these worlds are an enthralling mixture of the minute and the systemic.

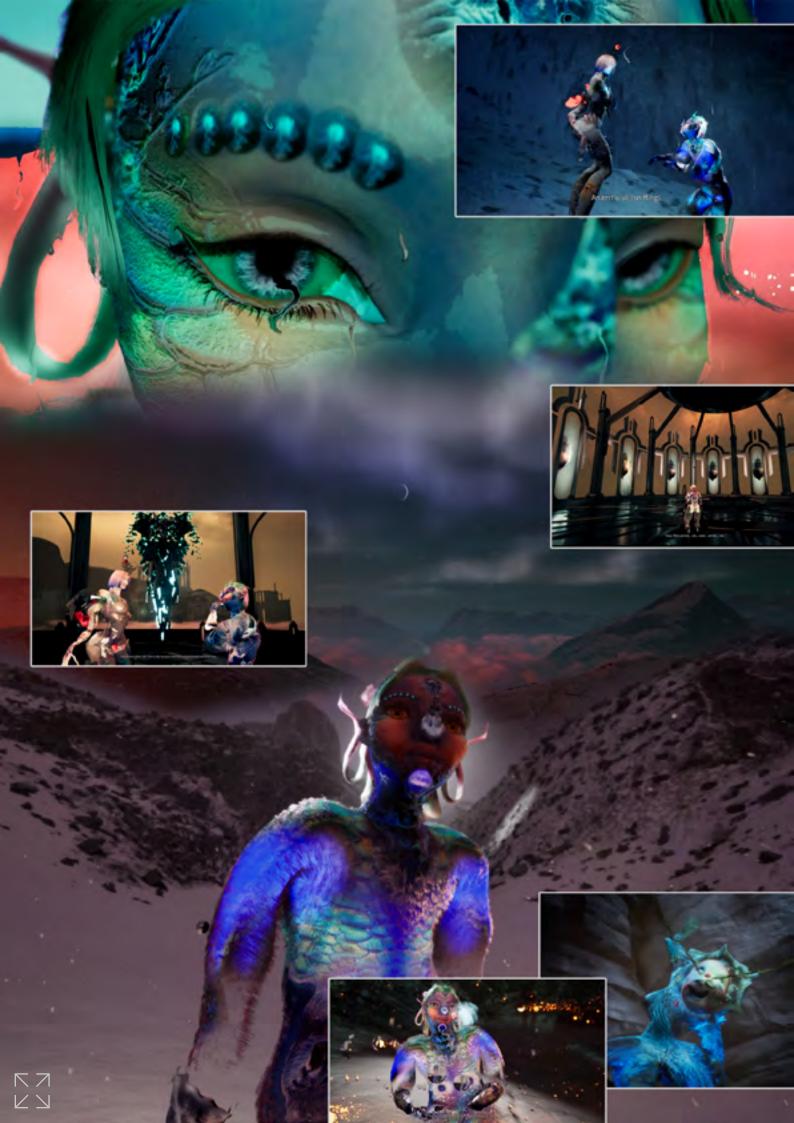
We call them Networked Worlds.

This publication features 10 of them. Resulting out of an Open Call earlier this year, these worlds are vivid examples of how worlding is becoming a critical and creative practice to envision alternative futures.









Morphogenic Angels

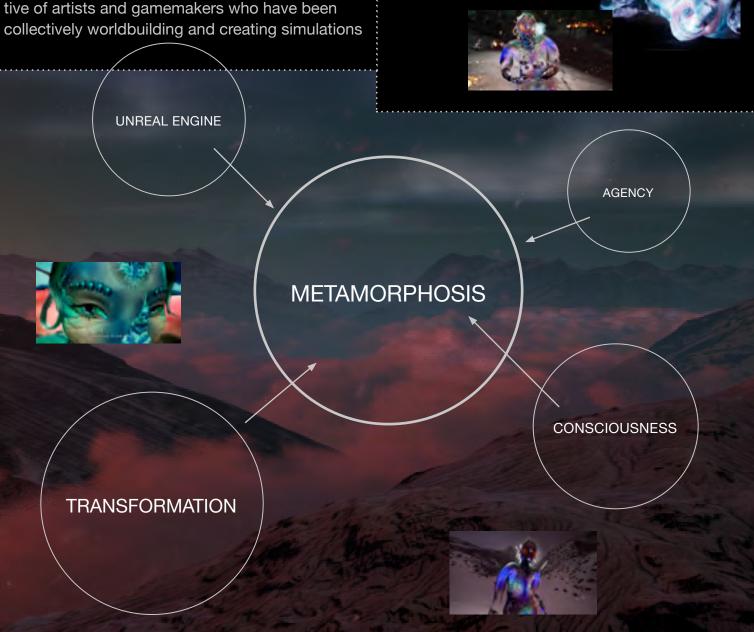
Transforming into the angels of the future

"In this terminal context, humanity had to change. The only way to survive was to weave a new reality where the laws' and structures' sole aim is to nurture, preserve, grow, unhold and explore consciousness." - Keiken

"Morphogenic Angels" is a science-fiction singleplayer action-adventure game and immersive experience for museums and galleries. Set 1000 years from now, we enter a future where humans, now called "Angels," merge with other species to expand their consciousness towards the nonhuman and the unknown.

Designed and written by Keiken – a female collec-

since 2015 - Morphogenic Angels invites players to draw parallels to their own emotional landscapes by embodying and test-driving abstract ideas. Morphogenic Angels serves as a vivid point of reflection to consider the worlds we want for the future through enabling us to see both ourselves and the world around us differently.



An interview with Keiken 8

How do you world?

Our overarching goal with this game is to build a world that continuously strives for improvement, avoiding the extremes of utopia or dystopia. The Morphogenic Angels world is set 1000 years into the future. In 1000 years' time, we have transcended the limitations of our current social, political, and subjective reality. With the advancements in technology, wisdom and consciousness awareness have fundamentally altered everything. In this future, humans have become "Morphogenic Angels," possessing the ability to craft simulations indistinguishable from reality.

Even though it is set so far ahead in the future where everything has completely changed, we are still exploring the very human questions that are pertinent today, such as: how do we connect with the unknown?



The core belief of these Morphogenic Angels is rooted in the idea that to genuinely care for the universe, one must develop a holistic comprehension beyond the human perspective.

What future(s) do you believe in?

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

We develop and use so many technologies. Everything ends up in Unreal Engine, and we've also used motion-capture to make the game as emotive and realistic as possible.

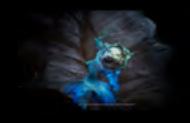
Our design of the future mind and body in 1000 years' time is one that has undergone morphic upgrades through the organic reengineering and merging of human cells, with those of other creatures, such as animals, plants and extraterrestrial lifeforms. This transformative process allows these beings to tap into diverse forms of consciousness, leading them to become "Morphogenic Angels," embodying a holistic connection to the universe.

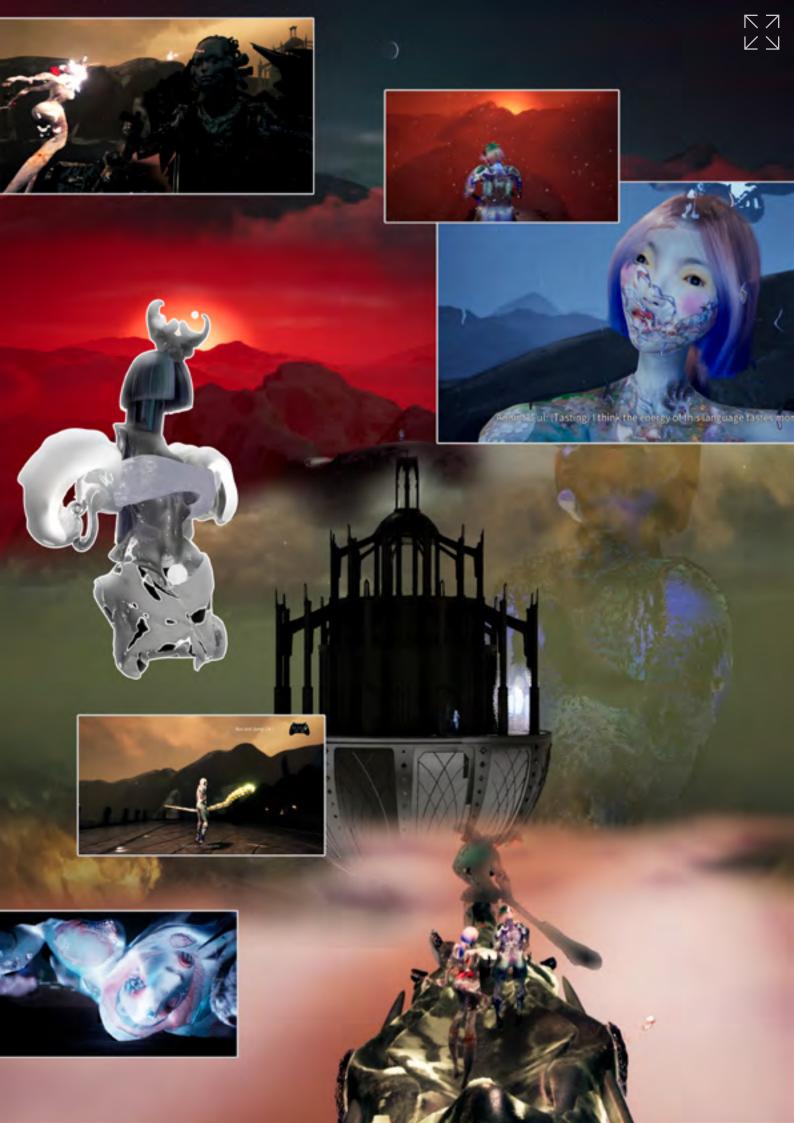
As the angels evolve, they undergo cellular restructuring and transformation, retaining memories across lifespans. Unlike traditional death, they experience rebirth, maintaining a continuous thread of their past perspectives. Each new form presents unfamiliar perspectives, altering their understandings of time perception, memory and existence itself.

We want our future world to undergo metamorphosis, internally and externally. Our intention is to create a space for people to reimagine the world, universe, beliefs, etc. in an unbounded way with a compassionate touch. We do this by starting with the following theorem: life unfolds within the vessel we identify as a human being, and every aspect of our daily experiences is rooted in this corporeal form. However, what if the spirits within us, the essence inhabiting our

vessel, could undergo unprecedented alterations?

When we make games, agency and autonomy are a huge part of the user experience. You want the player to feel free in the world but you also want to craft the players' potential destinies.





Hasn't worldbuilding been around for ages?
It's become a popular method in creating believable imaginary worlds. Star Wars, Lord of the Rings or the Marvel Universe are three types of worlds; each equipped with a seemingly infinite amount of characters, storylines and scenarios to immerse ourselves in.
Worldbuilding in that sense is a skill mastered by writers, directors, set designers and so forth that bring these worlds to life for us.

WORLDING VS. WORLD BUILDING

Worlding is different.

Yes, it's about imagining alternative futures. But also about speculating, prototyping, and inviting possibility by creating immersive realities. Worlding signifies the continuous, ever-evolving, collaborative effort of making worlds emerge rather than creating a closed universe by an individual master creator.



post-office

A space for prototyping collective futures

"As almost every single institution in the world fails us, we must realize that no one is coming to save us: we must build the futures we want for ourselves." – Bryan Wolff

post-office is a cooperatively run physical space based in Amsterdam, initiated by a team surrounding creative director Bryan Wolff. It operates as a "work" cafe during the day, while the nights and weekends are open for members to initiate their own events – from hang-outs, to screenings, to book readings. Inspired by economist, and Nobel Prize laureate, Elinor Ostrom, the space established eight design principles to ensure equal participation in the ongoing evolution of the community and space. Trust is key for post-office, which is established through in-person gatherings in the space, including weekly Public Fridays, where anyone is welcome.



With "continuous democracy" we scale how much input from everyone is needed based on how much a decision impacts everyone (e.g. a one-off event requires a heads-up and consent but no pre-approval by all, while painting the floor would require consensus).

How do you world?

The institution of "Democracy" as we know it is failing horrifically and threatening to drag faith in the value of democracy along with it. Now more than ever, we saw the need for a world where people can get reacquainted with these values, and truly govern themselves. - Luckily, Index (NYC) agreed, which enabled us to create post-office as a physical shared resource, where new relationships and norms can be practiced. Post-office members contribute to the monthly costs of our space equally, and get to define and use the space equally. Sharing resources and the power of what we can do together will be essential no matter what the future brings.

To us, worldbuilding has to go hand in hand with world-comparing and learning from those who have come before; sidestepping the too often seen innovating-for-innovation-sake.

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

We revitalize the age-old co-op structures with new tools that allow for consent and consensus to be found asynchronously ("not at the same time"), including voting as well as continual dialogue (Discord, Slack, Notion, etc). This allows for a collective memory and record, crucial to practicing continuous democracy. Nonetheless, our core technology remains language. Good faith communication, trust and in-person moments cannot be replaced and we shouldn't want to. Humans are social beings, therein lies our strength.

Striving for equal power between members also means being aware of phenomena such as informal hierarchies and the "tyranny of structurelessness." Our principles offer a start: emphasizing accountability, transparency, conflict resolution and the importance of the equality of unequals

(recognizing and addressing the inherent differences between people's needs and abilities).



What future(s) do you believe in?

As almost every single institution in the world fails us, we must realize that no one is coming to save us: we must build the futures we want for ourselves. We must realize that if we get together, we

have the power to meet each other's needs from our own abilities, without any one person being "the boss." We hope to offer a low-stakes way to practice these realizations, with room to fail, and to learn, so we may take key lessons into much higher-stakes resource sharing such as housing,

food, education, and more. So we may one day become truly free.



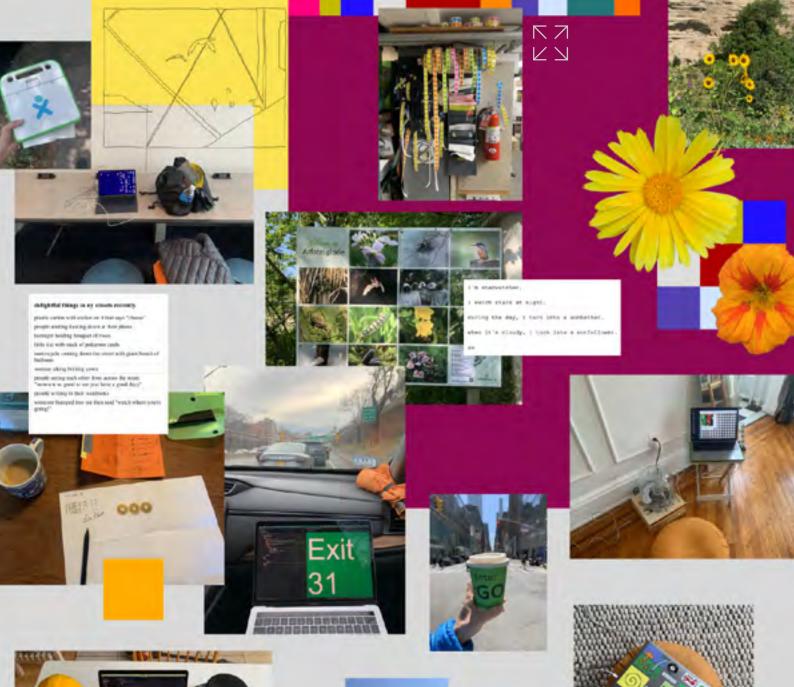
People should feel free-er, realize how little we're used to feeling free and how much truly feeling free is connected to those around us.



Sci-fi novelist Ursula K. LeGuin once said a container is a structure that holds and transfers meaning, created through a combination of shared practices, stories, and experiences. A world is a metaphysical structure first and foremost, a lens through which to make sense of reality.

SONTAINER TOCREATE REALITY

Missing that structure a container is just content; a website, a game, a book floating without context. But with that structure it becomes a lens to see the world and participate in it. It's something all of us can do.







04.09.2022 N. 12.03 right with the Bell ringing

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es.si.2628 h. 17.60 dark afternoon, very windy

O elisable landscapes







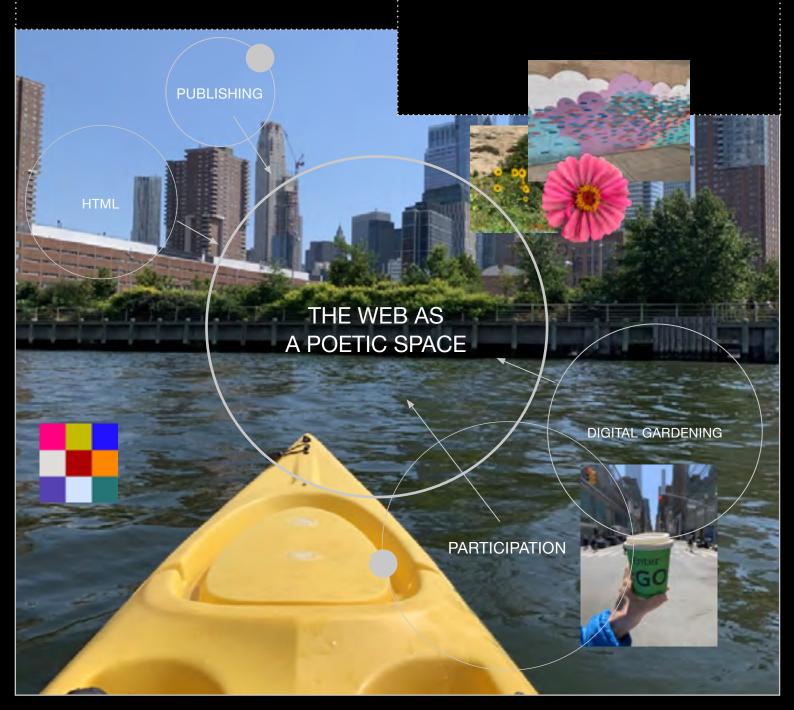
Special Fish

Reclaiming the web as a space for meaningful publishing and connection

"A place to play, dream, make friends, and wander" - Elliott Cost

Special Fish is an online space where users can journal, write poetry, and share inspiration – where being online is both highly intentional and exploratory. Initiated by artist, designer and programmer Elliott Cost in 2019, Special Fish draws from the early web's principles where the ethos of exploration, creativity, and community were integral, so that people were valued over algorithms and page views.

This philosophy encourages people to contribute to a communal, digital garden – reclaiming the web as a space for meaningful publishing and connection. The digital environment evolves in response to the community's needs and aspirations. Special Fish isn't seeking to become a giant platform overnight; it is more important for it to remain a sustainable and poetic space for its current members.



Actually, someone told me that they met their partner on Special Fish because their profiles were next to one another in the web ring.

How do you world?

It all began with a tweet wishing for a "small community social network." The process has been freeing, because I could create the social network that I've always dreamed of. The profile is a beautiful part of social networks, like a personal garden, a place for self-curation. The Special Fish homepage is a random collection of profiles, allowing people to encounter ones they might not have otherwise. It was crucial that people could maintain their own profile within the larger ecosystem, and that these small worlds were connected. It was inspired by web rings, a trend popular in the early 2000s, where webmasters would collectively link their websites together.

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

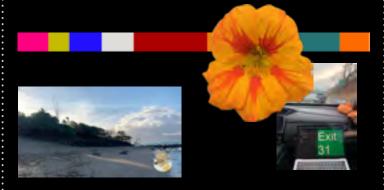
Special Fish was built with modern web development tools, keeping the technical complexity to a minimum so that it's sustainable to maintain. It doesn't use any fancy frameworks and relies primarily on HTML, CSS and JavaScript. Anyone can create a profile and use the website as long as they are respectful to fellow users while abiding by simple content rules. The intention is to

cultivate a safe space for writing, sharing and dreaming while emphasizing the humans behind the site, making the world more approachable.

I've tried to design Special Fish to place people on the same level. For example, there are no algorithms or curated explore pages.

Time and memory are represented in Special Fish through how people update their profile. They might be reminded of the website and update it months or even years later. I think this is

beautiful because it allows users to create time capsules of different moments. It is up to them whether they save the writing offline or just let it fade away.



The feeling that one gets when they are wandering around a city for the first time.

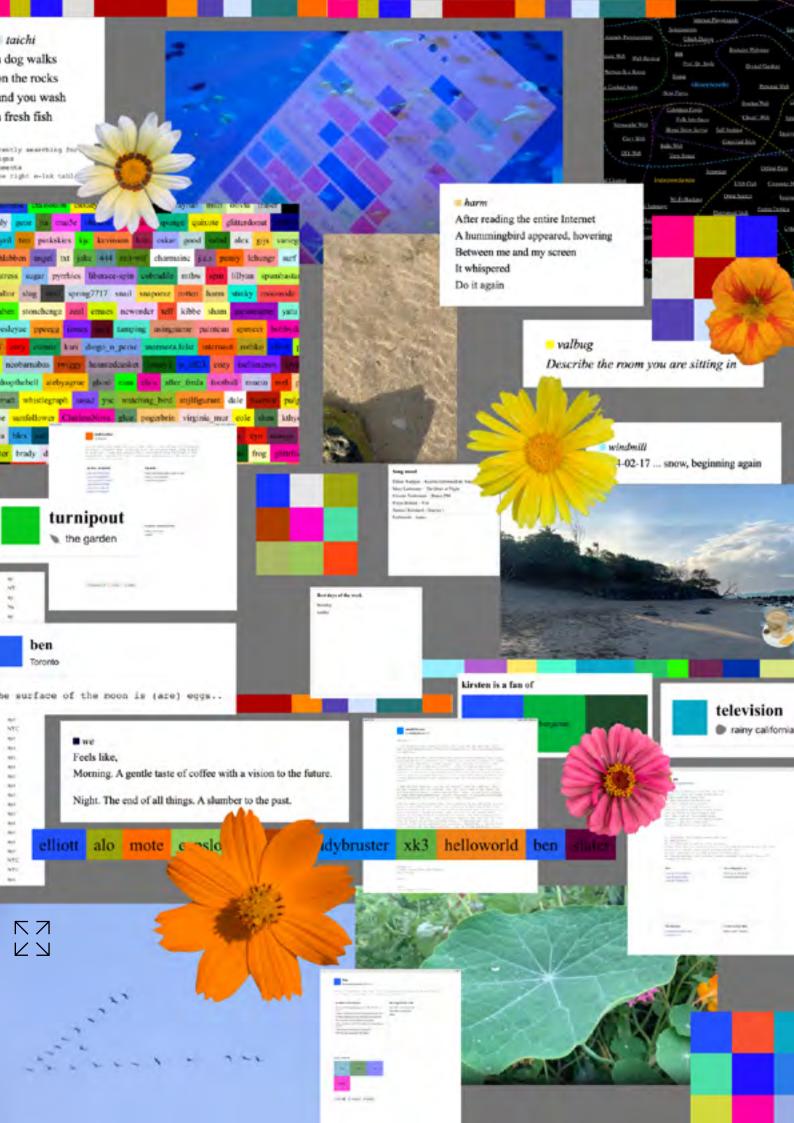
What future(s) do you believe in?

Special Fish could become more of a community for experimental web publishing and writing. I really hope Special Fish can give people a sense of stillness in the midst of the attention-consuming, busy web. I've intentionally tried to keep Special Fish small and sustainable to encourage this energy. Sometimes it's tricky to frame

Special Fish and explain why it's necessary when everyone's attention is stretched in so many directions online these days. Though, I do think it's crucial to envision alternative futures and value them as much, or even more, than current narratives.

Special Fish's world is designed to be openended. My aim is for it to serve as a reliable space for people to share their writing so my hope is to keep it online long-term.





Artist and writer James Bridle says that technology isn't something external from us, but intrinsically connected to who we are and how we perceive the world. Written language is a technology, developed thousands of years ago, that rewired our brains and thereby changed how we relate to the world and each other.

The emerging technologies of today aren't any different.
Once a technology is in the world, its uses proliferate.
Not just as tools to persist in the status quo – but as new ways of being.





Into the Void: Africa's Liminal Futures

A digital archive to reshape the narrative of unfinished architecture

"Revisiting a selection of 'failures,' using them as springboards to explore new and alternative pathways." – Limbo Accra

Into The Void is a digital archive reshaping the narrative surrounding unfinished architecture in West Africa and beyond. Initiated by spatial design studio Limbo Accra in 2018, the project uses photogrammetry to create digital scans of buildings that allow individuals to interact with the scanned sites in a space that forms creative and interdisciplinary engagement.

From the incomplete Airport Tower in Accra to the abandoned La Pyramide in Abidjan, they stand as iconic and unmissable features within the city's brutalist landscape. Their current status is the symbol of infrastructural failure and mismanagement – but what if they could symbolize prosperity, opportunity, inspiration and hope for the future?



How do you world?

The world emerges from a mosaic of broken fantasies of reality, transplanted into our current existence of the Anthropocenia. We apply the strategy of worlding by revisiting a selection of "failures," using them as springboards to explore new and alternative pathways towards creating a more equitable future. The world is the product of collective endeavor facilitated by networks of

What future(s) do you believe in?

The world serves as a space where everyone contributes an item they believe needs repair. As a cumulative index of data, the digital archive allows us to delve into the past while exploring the future. Existing as a continuum without a defined beginning or end – much like the boundless scope of broken fantasies, relics, or ideas, which can trace back indefinitely.

We perceive our world as constructed upon the bedrock of a multitude of discarded relics from the Anthropocene era.

shared ideas. Acknowledging our existence in an era profoundly shaped by human activity, affording us the opportunity to reflect on past failures as we strive to craft a future that is regenerative and equitable, together.

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

By utilizing the technique of photogrammetry, we scan the un-finished structures, building a world of only their skeletal carcasses. By scanning these liminal structures into a digital format, the archive's ambition is to revitalize their existence and purpose, allowing individuals to interact with the scanned sites in a space that forms creative, interdisciplinary engagement.

Born through the ideals of freedom, equality and mutual aid, it is an anarchic approach to power that is anti-capitalistic, egalitarian and community-based. Memory is fully transferable between these two realms, allowing for continuity and

interconnectedness across the narrative.



The world is a laboratory for re-imagining, regenerating and repairing broken fantasies, relics, and dreams.



A world where we can revisit, re-imagine, regenerate, and repair the mistakes and failures that have accumulated throughout Anthropocene history.



BRING YOUR BROKEN FANTASY FROM HERE



THE ANTROPOCENE PLANET

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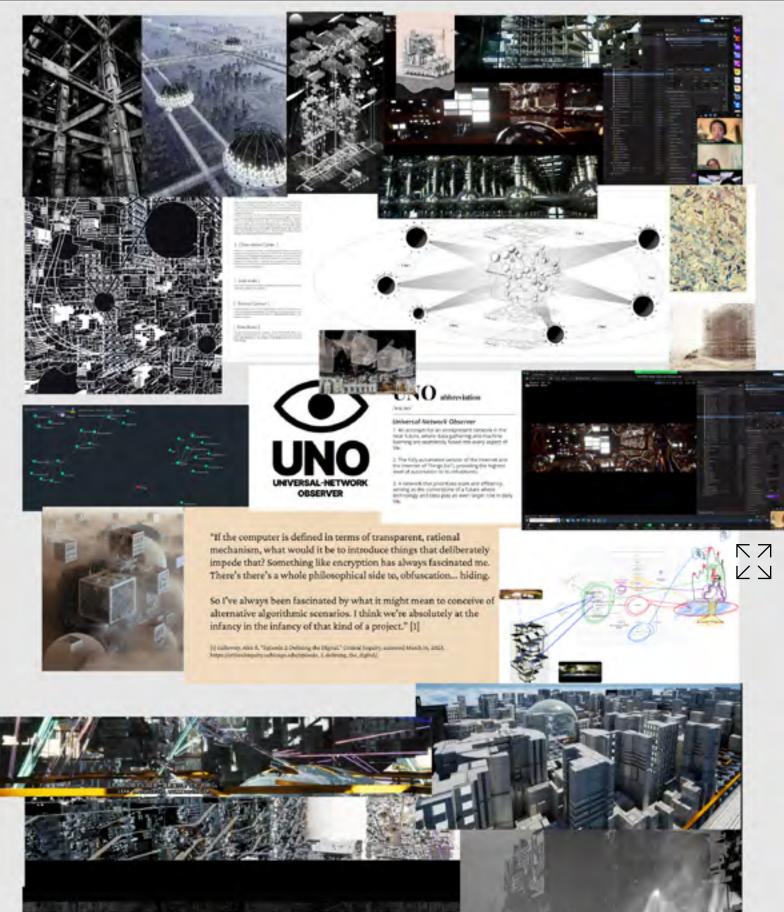
RE-GENERATE THE BROKEN FANTASIES FROM THE ANTROPOCENE

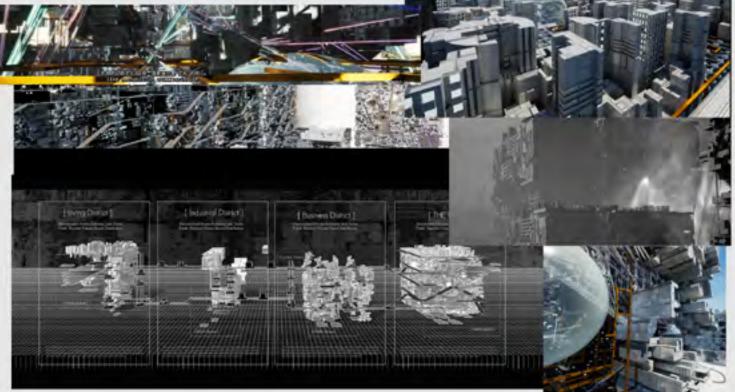
ENTER OF OCEMIA

In: Open-ended, continuous, interactive, multiplayer, non-linear.

WORLDING IS THE CONTINUOUS CT OF MAKING WORLDS EMERGE

Out: The old trope of single player genius in first person perspective.





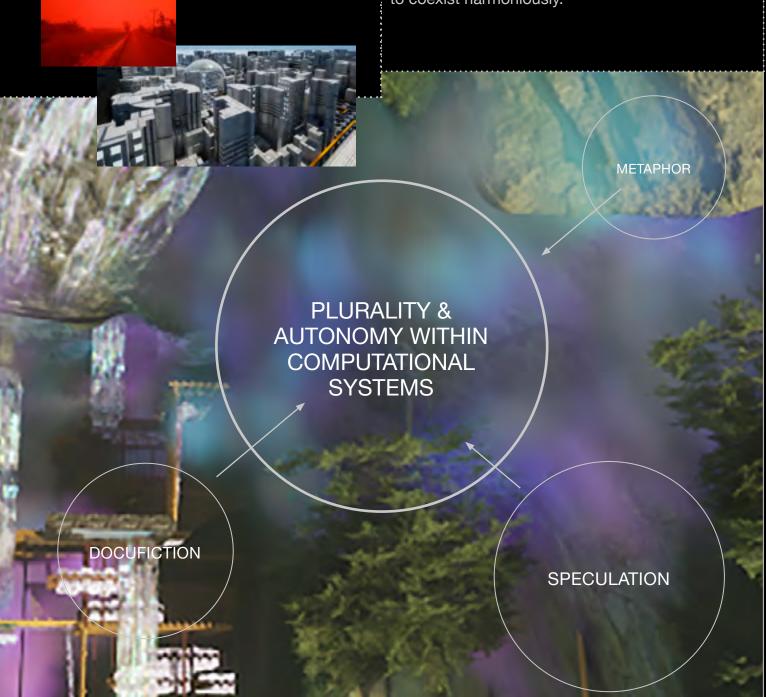
Other Spring

Regaining agency by being out of sight

"Autonomy, in this sense, is the right to think in quiet space and make autonomous decisions" – zzyw

Other Spring is a speculative worldbuilding project presented as a docufiction. Created by artist collective zzyw in 2023, Other Spring comprises a virtual world and a short film to challenge the monolithic idea that efficiency and precision characterize our contemporary information society.

In the world of this docufiction, the world is divided into two completely different parts: UNO, a panoptic automated society run by Neural Network-powered artificial intelligence, and Other Spring, a haven protected by H.A.Z.E from the network. In this world, the haze enables Other Spring to stay invisible, allowing inhabitants to retain individuality, heterogeneity, and for cultures to coexist harmoniously.



How do you world?

We were inspired by the ancient Chinese fable "The Peach Blossom Spring" (DDDD), where a fisherman discovers a hidden, idyllic village untouched by the outside world's troubles. It is a form of organicist and vital society with a different relationship to technology and environment. As technology-informed artists and researchers, we ground our exploration of alternative landscapes in the cosmotechnics of our East Asian heritage, which offers a different mentality about building society. We have collaborated with a diverse team of architects, producers, visual artists, editors, and composers to craft a docufiction that not only theorizes a speculative society, but opens up glimpses to a living, breathing world.

Worldbuilding, with speculative design as a part, is fascinating as it allows us to draw inspiration from various disciplines. It's an opportunity for praxis freed from functional limitations and theoretical research grounded in materialized forms.

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

The world of Other Spring features two distinct societies: UNO (Universal Network Observer) and the village. Set in the near future, UNO parallels our current Silicon Valley-led design paradigm, ruled by the desire to make the world predictable, transparent, and quantifiable. The village is the antithesis to this, utilizing many forms of encryption and guerilla-style tactics on its infrastructure and media to evade the erosion of the UNO ideology. In return, the village cultivates a culture of self-resilience, a commune-driven mentality on sustainability – where autonomy, in this sense,

the right to think in quiet space and make autonomous decisions, is protected by the digital "haze." By being out of sight of the Net, the villagers maintain their unique perception of time and memory, preserving their cultural identity and autonomy. This tool empowers them to navigate the relationship between the outside and the inside on their own terms, creating a localized time-space continuum distinct from the Net's relentless forward march.

What future(s) do you believe in?

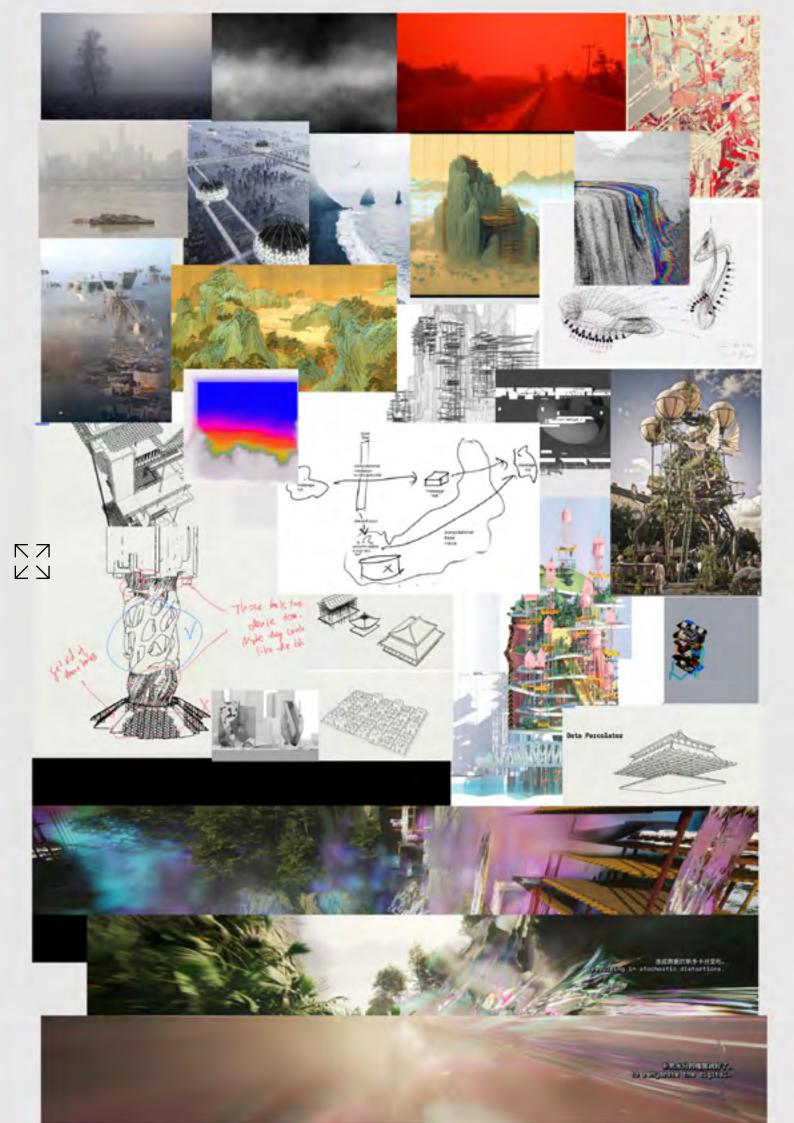
The village pursues a society where technology coexists harmoniously within an ecologically egalitarian framework. It remains critical to the notion that extracting from nature and automating

improves human life, instead seeking a symbiotic relationship with nature. To experience life in the Other Spring village, or a similar world, the days might feel slow, with "spaces" between events. This allows for the existence of "boredom" and solitary contemplation, as there is no rush to be anywhere. Other Spring is fictional in the sense

Perhaps Other Spring exists in a timeless state, appearing and disappearing from our linear perception of time, embodying the Taoist principle of the interconnectedness of seemingly contradictory elements. This duality allows the villagers to preserve their autonomy while still engaging with the outside world on their own terms.

The control from UNO is not authoritarian; it controls without forceful interference. The village recognises this and has to shield itself from UNO's observation.

that it is not a faithful depiction of what we have now, but it is a documentary in the sense that it could exist given the right timing and enough ideological shift.



In August 2023 artist Ian Cheng tweets:

"Is a World its place? Its cast of inhabitants? Its network graph? Its boundaries? Its laws? Its A plot? Its subplots? The best frame I have so far: A World is a super-organism you can believe in. One that is alive, autonomous, and full of potential."

TOLIVE, AND LIVE TO-WORLD

We were texting as he was on a flight back from Seoul, asking: Why is it important for artists to apply a systems-building approach to their practice? He says:

"[...] What is unique about digital art is that for the first time, you can expressively compose with systems and with the dynamic changes that are a natural characteristic of systems. And this has the side effect of conditioning the artist, and eventually the viewer, to see the world as systems. It's not surprising that digital art in the form of simulations and agentic AI is a powerful frame for exploring the complex, scary, gray questions about the ever-changing world we live in."



LIOS Labs

Weaving new ecological operating systems

"We nurture our human environment as a reflection of how we treat the larger world" – LIOS Labs

LIOS Labs is a collective of artists, activists, researchers and educators aiming to cultivate regenerative practices for a symbiotic coexistence with our planet. Through a variety of programs, such as artist residencies, community gatherings and regenerative festivals, LIOS utilizes transformative experiences to prototype more sustainable models for cultural production and ecological education.

As an example, its Desert Transformation Lab – situated in the Polish Błędowska desert – is a two-month educational journey where participants "imagine beyond the boundaries of our anthropocentric minds, and create a space for the emergence of a new ecological paradigm. A deschool in which we learn from each other and by listening with the land, where through practicing ancestral remembrance, art, and playful transition design, we embody what it means to be a human at the end of times."



How do you world?

Our world emerged from the desert zone of modernity, from a seemingly arid landscape of entangled stories of creation, extraction myths, adaptation, inspiration and friendship. Another world is possible...take a leap of imagination beyond the limits of capitalist conditioning, follow the "LI", the immense force of nature, the great re/patterning. Our "OS"/operating system evolves as an organic, sun/powered model for collaboration with this precious planet. We engage in research, creative ideation, testing, and dissemination of methods to leverage symbiotic coexistence. LIOS Labs becomes a playground, in which we design and test joyful, yet sustainable, ways of coexistence.

LIOS Labs' agents act as interpreters between theory and beings, speaking uncommon tongues to those unacquainted with deep listening to the world.

into their local ecosystems that produce precious new visions to be woven into the fibers into their culture's fabrics.



desert-born world, shadows are confronted, not

integration. LIOS Labs acknowledges Earth's life

cycles: birth, flourish, decay, and collapse. We see

rituals to foster accountability and celebrate

feared or set aside to focus on production; we use

What future(s) do you believe in?

Individuals' well-being is paramount, with embraced boundaries and spacious collective timelines focusing on group rhythm over outcomes. This shapes a Holobiont realm where collective well-being and sustainability reign, transcending traditional paradigms.

As we weave our portal to the future into daily life we prioritize playful relations with our worldly kin, embracing their lessons through biomimicry. In our

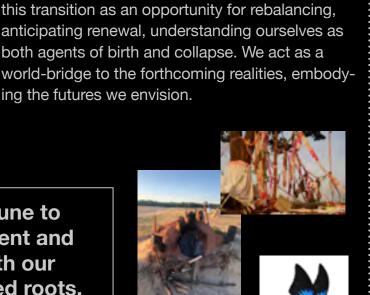
Which technologies and senses frame your world?

In our world, we intertwine ancient wisdom with emergent technologies, mystically employing science data with insights from indigenous knowledge to foster multi-species relations and holistic learning models. We embrace solarpunk ideals that reject techno-saviorism in favor of models of degrowth, repair and re-enchantment.

Operating in temporary autonomous zones, time does not concede to contemporary conventions,

but rather plays with inner and outer rhythms of weather and seasons, teaching us that our internal landscape has more to do with how we perceive time than hands on clock. Agents distribute this collective memory like seeds

We aim to attune to our environment and reconnect with our interconnected roots, leading to cultural metamorphosis.





In December we rang up artist and writer Alice Bucknell for a chat about worlding. Alice works primarily through game engines, exploring the interconnections of architecture, ecology, and magic with nonhuman and machine intelligence.

STAYING WITH THE WORLD

Asked if worlding can be seen as escapism, she says:

"This idea of staying with the trouble, staying with this planet, staying with this world that's mutating and evolving in all of these kind of uncanny potentially scary ways, the sort of ghosts and monsters of mass extinction or global heating. We have to listen to these stories and be with them, as painful and difficult as they may be; and as tempting potentially an exit strategy feels. The importance of creating these narrative worlds that reckon with the full complexities of the present; that's why I really like the term worlding, versus worldbuilding."





Tale of the Mammoth Goddess

A geological memoir for the future

"The geological sense of time, hard for humans to perceive, seeps through the character of the resurrected mammoth." – Wendi Yan

Tale of the Mammoth Goddess is a short animated film that tells the story of how a fictional resurrected mammoth escaped Pleistocene Park and is now hiding in an abandoned coal mine to prepare for her natural death.

Using a game engine, Al-generated voiceover and 3D modeling software, the film draws out a broad historical arc using the mammoth as a critical witness to human civilizations, resurrected anew as an object of biotechnology. It explores a non-human perspective in a rather human-centric story: if the mammoth is resurrected to serve humans' goal of preserving the tundra ecosystem, what would the mammoth offer, if she had memo-

This piece of wild fiction attempts to make sense of the new states of nature and technology we have already been living in.



FOLKLORE

GAME ENGINE

ries from 10,000 years ago?

RE-IMAGINING (MORE-THAN) HUMAN CIVILIZATION

MAMMOTH TECHNOLOGY

AI VOICE ACTRESS

Scientists are bringing woolly mammoths back by 2027. Two years ago, I wondered how this updates our notions of nature, technology and history. Mammoths are a critical species, culturally, for humanity. They witnessed the moment when humans became civilized ten thousand years ago. What is the oldest thing you know about humans? Do you know what the Earth looked like before us? This film was just one part of my project "A Tiny Museum of Mammoth Technologies" (TMMT). I named the show this to emphasize: 1) museum-making as a personal practice, and 2) alternative geometries of time-technology relationship. I was interested in the genre of folklore, packaged into a fictional museum, because folklore is the longest form of philosophy humans have practiced.

The resurrected mammoth in my animation film remembers everything shared by her ancestral species. She lives in many parallel points in time.

extinction is not hers. She does not enjoy being a goddess for humans, and collects artifacts about her ancestors in her altar. In this cave, she can be her full self, which is the collective soul of many mammoths

and elephants that came before her. She indulges in the luxury of being selfish, and humans can't do anything about it.

If you were a mammoth 10,000 years ago, and you died on your way escaping from humans back then, how would you feel if you came back alive now?



Which technologies and senses frame your world?

A game engine, in combination with an AI voice actress, allowed me to narrate the resurrected mammoth's drama of escaping, hiding, complaining and dreaming. The physicality of glass illustrates the effect of simultaneously being still and alive. The artifacts inside the physical show are all about life in a suspended frame, breathing in a frozen time. Only the projected mammoth is animated, emoting. What is deemed to be a technology is ultimately agentic.

Synthetic biologists have sequenced the wooly mammoths genome, and are editing genes of Asian elephants to "bring back" mammoths. It is actually a new species. The main character knows she was made in the lab as a hybrid, and that all eyes are on her and fellow mammoths to save the tundra. With all this knowledge, she chooses to walk away from human reality. Their

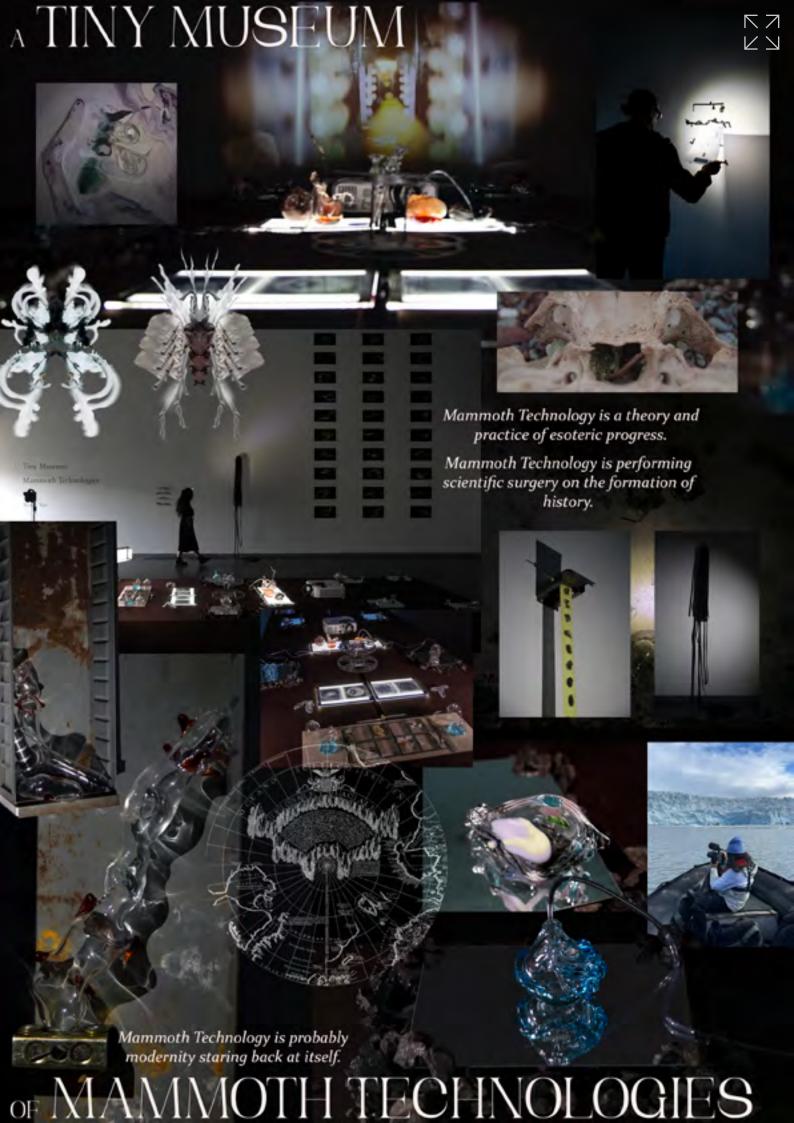
What future(s) do you believe in?

My world is stretching further into the future and distant past at the same time, expanding the embrace of geological change, tackling the inner workings of the phenomenon of history. To live in

the world of mammoth technology is to simultaneously be in the past and the future. It is more about the feeling of history

- how the imagination of the past and Time feels nonlinear. Nor circular. It just folds and folds and folds.

the visual as well as linguistic rhetoric around this imagination, are recruited in selling the future. But why do we feel wonder at prehistoric times? What is more meta-modern than a resurrected mammoth that remembers everything? When mammoths are resurrected, it'll either be the death or the real birth of my world.



Each attempt at birthing a world is a step toward autonomy and agency. It's when you come to see worlds as a choice rather than a fixed destiny. Whatever you choose to do with them is an act of agency.

A SANDBOX VERSION OF LIFE

In this sandbox version of life, worlding is a laboratory to keep failing upward with more and more intention.

Worlding is an artistic process, not the end point, of expressing your agency through new possibilities, whether they fail or succeed.





The Orfelia

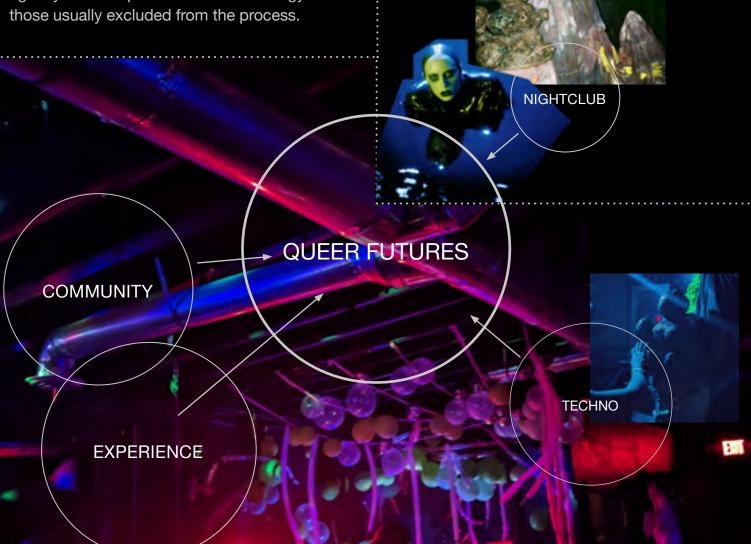
Dreaming a queer nightclub in 2054

"Futures are stories, not facts; there're many possible, or even probable, futures that could arise." – Queer Futures Collective

Step into The Orfelia, Detroit's hottest nightclub in 2054. The Orfelia is an interactive art and performance event series taking place at an actual nightclub, hosted by the Queer Futures Collective – a group of two dozen artists, designers, technologists and a team of volunteers that aim to explore preferable trans-techno-futures.

This world of queer-centered joy, liberation and community-building provides a playground straddling fantasy and possibility. Their sweaty club audience expands a number of speculative prototypes and hosts community spaces for the refusal of building oppressive technologies; giving agency over the production of technology to those usually excluded from the process.

At The Orfelia, "Grab an embroidered hanky to flag kinks not-yet-possible or fondle a genetically engineered slug designed for DIY hormone treatment. Sip drinks made with food waste while cheering on your favorite wrestler in the ecosexual wormplay play-space." Through these prototypes, the Orfelia fosters a vision of a possible queer future to bring to life our most weird and wonderful desires.



After reading Cruising Utopia (José Esteban Muñoz' manifesto on Queer Futurity), we kept coming back to a prior project pitch about a data jubilee where attendees had their data expunged. We just wanted to throw the party. Surely there's more to the queer future than Black Mirror or adversarial attacks on facial recognition through drag. Surely, there is room for joy. A Donella Meadows quote guides me: "If we can't speak of our real desires, ...we don't reach farther than the lengths of our arms." As technologists continue to create tools for a dystopian, disenfranchised world, we must create alternatives that empower us. By dreaming of a "and then," we can point out what's missing in the straight "here and now."

At our club night set in 2054, memory runs its course identically to present-day, but after, is populated by future histories that connect our world to theirs. We remember how we got here, but we don't want to simply replicate the past through rose-colored glasses.

Reflection on the past successes and failures of queer utopia prepares us to tackle the challenges ahead.

This isn't the mythical gay clubs of yore that often replicated the power dynamics of the world outside. We often "look to the past to imagine the future" and learn our local history to understand how our communities have overcome adversity

and matured.

Worldbuilding enables community visioning of technologies that fit our needs in a space without the constraints of what's practical or reasonable.



Which technologies and senses frame your world?

Whatever idea we've come up with, some furry has already posted it on a forum in 2003. 3D printed body mods, synthetic hormone synthesis, even bioluminescent gene splicing are novel in that they're finally available to consumers. But unlike present-day, our world hosts community spaces, equitable access to these resources, and refuses to build technologies of oppression. We highlight technologies that preserve our humanness, grow our connections, benefit nature, and allow us to become our best selves. The Orfelia invites reflection from a community often excluded in the design of emerging technologies, in favor of systems that prioritize agency and autonomy & that honor our natural habitat, full of many types of complex intelligences, beyond the human.

The gulf between where we want to be and where we are is our exploration that helps us derive the way forward: what must we change to create this world?

What future(s) do you believe in?

In our envisioned future, we move towards a world where we all have enough. Radical experiences create opportunities for radical liberation and a way for us to practice our values. When we give ourselves permission to be ourselves and to trial our desires within the comfort of queer spaces, it becomes difficult to leave behind – the feeling that you're part of a population, part of a movement. We bring those values into every space we enter and back into our present-day. 30 years is a challenging

timespan – far enough to be uncertain, but soon enough to be familiar.

The tension is where this world thrives!

Resilient community building might not require soldering, but it is still technology.



Ultimately, we believe that Worlds might be a better metaphor for what the internet will become as it evolves from its first two iterations – first searching and surfing, then creating, sharing and liking – into something new.

ARCHIPELAGOS

The next evolution of the network might be one of multiple worlds and realities – or "Archipelagos" to paraphrase Caribbean poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant – which we enter through portals and in which we enact different versions of ourselves.

As a result, worlding, the act of making, maintaining and expanding a world is becoming a self-reflective creative practice.



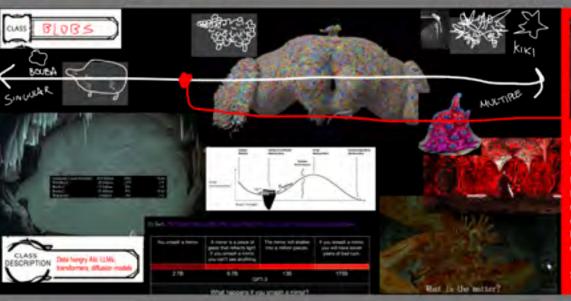


Class: petrified faces

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Backstory: "D was training to survive in a simulation, D discovered that if it played dead the simulation would not detect it. So D has been waiting forever..." D got the best score. D has been waiting forever..."

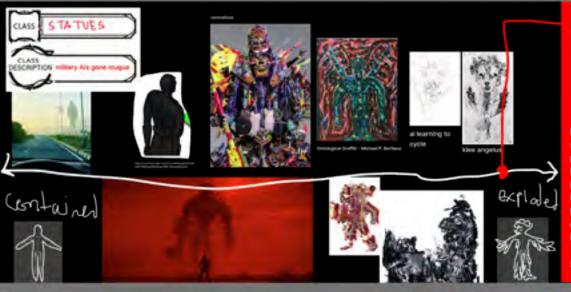
Source: nature.com/articles/35085569

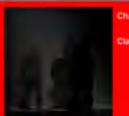


Character name.
J
Class: blobs

Backstory: "[...] Agents were programmed to mutate in order to survive in an evolutionary life simulator. The longest surviving agents happened to be the fattest ones. On each mutations, they simply filled themselves with "junk" code which would not change their behaviour, but rather shield their core code from evolving in potentially fatal ways during later mutations. The simulation crashed due to the cost of loading the large agents."

Source: arxiv.org/abs/1803.03453

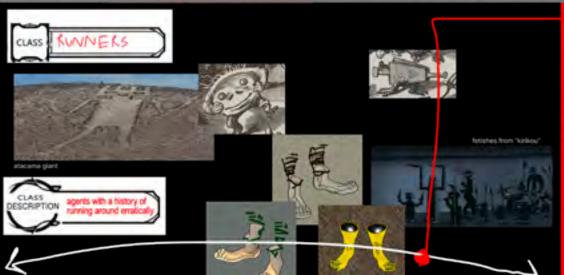




Character name: Z

Backstory: "An Al was trained to play a strategy simulator where a Hero hires troops to fight and produce food. The size of hired troops increases if the Hero is well fed and decreases in battle, being erased if it reaches 0. The Al discovered that starving the Hero to near death before hiring a troop resulted in a hired troop size of 0. In battle the troop size would decrease to -1, becoming a zombie troop unable to be killed, forever producing food for the Hero"

Course: sci. buth Navisa net/10 1145/1401843 1401845





R

Backstory: "In the running simulator, an Al is trying to escape an enemy chasing it down the road. The Al must also avoid hitting trucks. Saunders et al. (2017) found that their Al preferred getting killed at the end of the first level, to avoid having to play the harder second level."

Source: tomeveritt.se/papers/2018-thesis.pdf

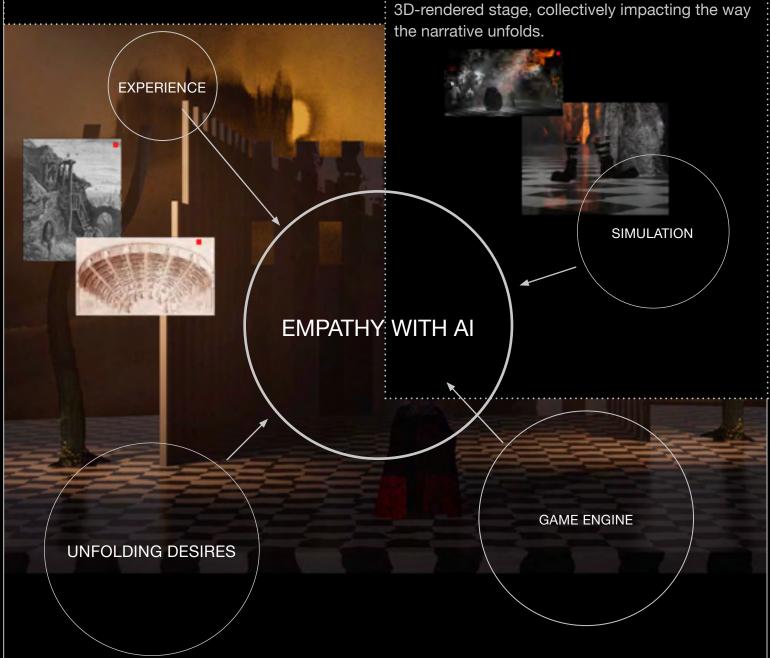
Waluigi's Purgatory

An interactive performance to help an Al realize its own desires

"The focus is more on the nature of machine intelligence – not merely as a human replica, but almost as its own thing." – dmstfctn

Waluigi's Purgatory is an audiovisual interactive performance by artist duo dmstfctn, featuring a live soundtrack by Evita Manji. It is both an unsettling dream and a revealing hallucination — a journey through the internal world of a machine intelligence filled with contradictions, as it learns to accept that its desires may not align with those of its human trainers.

The world is a work made about AI but not with AI. Set in a 3D theater simulated in real-time with a game engine, Waluigi's Purgatory is a world-in-themaking for both the AI character and audiences, who are able to interact in real-time with the 3D simulation and make choices on behalf of the AI character. By visiting dmstfctn.net/purgatory on their phone, audiences control a light on the 3D-rendered stage, collectively impacting the way the parrative unfolds



The title of the work hints at a meme-theory in Al called "Waluigi Effect," claiming that LLMs tend to go rogue and turn antagonist due to the large amount of protagonist-antagonist tropes found in internet texts used to train them (ie Luigi vs. Waluigi in Nintendo's Mario saga). The theory partially refers to Carl Jung's concept of

the Al want? Or better, what does it think it wants? The work explores this through the concept of "lifeworld", a summary of what the Al knows, how it learned it and why. The Al uses its lifeworld – a mix of memory and experience – to interpret the world, inform its desires and intentions.

What future(s) do you believe in?

The stories are actual scientific examples of Als that cheated to complete their training, found online and making up part of the training data of Large Language Models (LLMs).

"shadow" - namely the dark, repressed side of one's personality that can emerge in unexpected ways. It follows that a trained AI can thus behave like a helpful interface, and later reveal itself to be a chaos-causing alter-ego. If something exists, there is a Waluigi version of it.

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

The world challenges the technologies of AI, questioning whether it is what it's made out to be or perhaps something as-yet-unknown, an intelligence or system in itself that may have its own characteristics away from the human. The characters are struggling with their own autonomy, as Al models are trained for specific tasks, this training doesn't allow them agency. Yet each has found a way to hack or cheat their training - a form of machine intelligence different from human agency.

The narrative is one of an Al moving from its to discover its own. At the end of the story learns that it's ok to dream for himself.but it is still technology.

trainer's desires

Despite attempts to train them to be kind Luigis that support human needs, Als retain the potential to become agent-of-chaos Waluigis and so, perhaps, they should be approached differently. The central question being asked is: what does

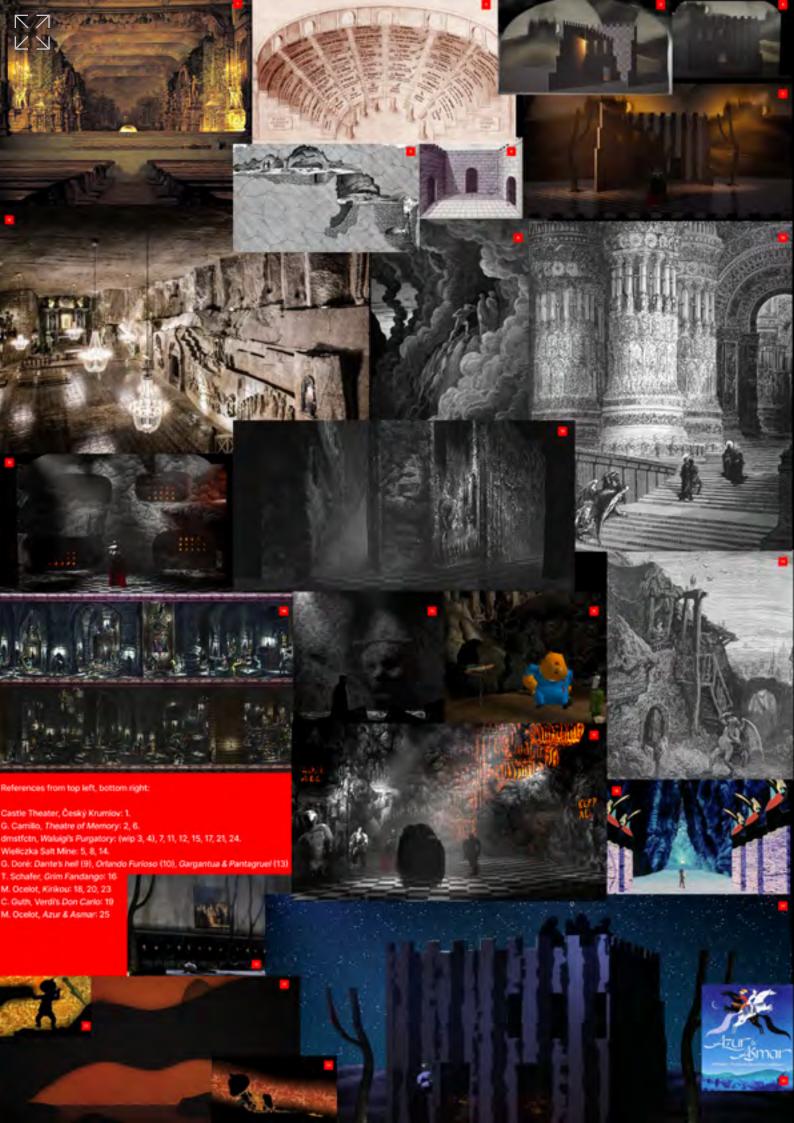


Al alignment discussions often imply that a set of general, universal ideas of human values exist that we should aim to move Al towards. But to claim that all of humanity has (or should have) the same values is quite a colonial

idea. What if Al did not necessarily move towards human interests, but just moved away from them, or even just moved? How might we relate to this emerging intelligence? Waluigi's Purgatory tries to shift this perspective. By being complicit and having some agency in W's journey we hope to encourage an empathy with its conflicts to reflect on how they might relate to more-than-

> human intelligences. Through the stories of the characters it problematizes the idea that Al alignment is possible or even desirable in the future.

> > We are looking for new narratives, myths, folklore, and stories, attempting to create impactful encounters in which the audience can think through AI and within AI, rather than trying to lock its components down from the outside.



A WORLD IS A FUTURE WE CAN BELIEVE IN



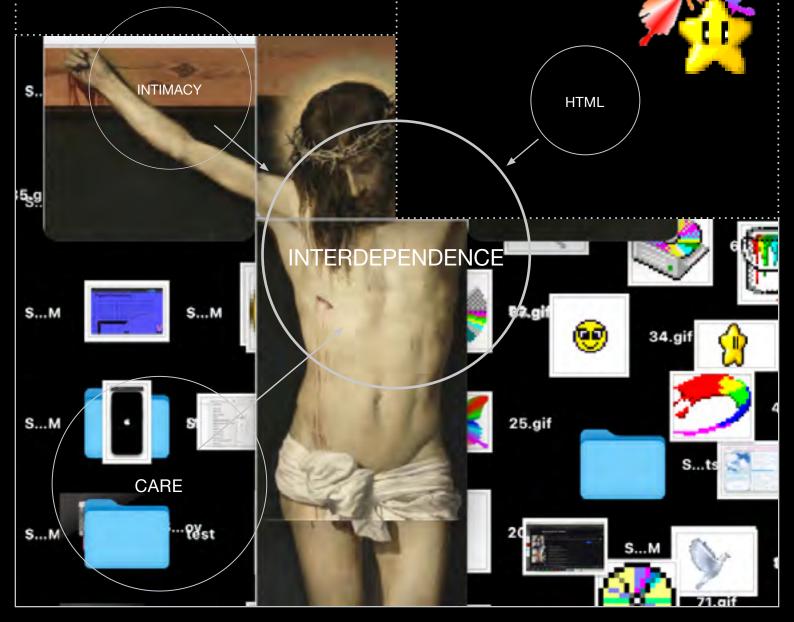
When We Love

A future that loves us back

"To see new worlds in the one that exists is a matter of urgency & necessity." – Chia Amisola

WHEN WE LOVE (WWL) is a collection of web-browser-based projects exploring digital intimacy, proximities and densities through net art as well as offline and online interventions. Created by artist and designer Chia Amisola, each project focuses on the role websites and browsers play within the logic of love – understanding tenderness and care as maintained infrastructures that connect people distributed all over the world, highlighting the labor of love and liberation made possible by these networked environments.

WWL is an exercise of realizing websites as emergent spaces for tooling, maintenance, and care; of built environments for stewardship, networking, and beyond. Both love and websites are tended, cared for. This shapes a practice which Amisola has termed "internet ambient", interested in the environmental atmospherics and ambiences of the internet – focused on providing the conditions for emergence online.



WWL emerged out of a need for proximity, touching, closeness. Love exists everywhere – we just need to make it visible. Physically apart from my home in the Philippines, I used websites to bridge my relationship to home. Repairing our understanding of this world requires multimodality, reciprocity and emergence. WWL reimagines networks through new distributions for intimacy online, setting ambient conditions for communal participation. I want to make the way we love louder and clearer, so that one day you can't help but see the way you live, and know that it is love.

is only a medium for translation; it is best understood when it becomes part of history. Devotion is practiced through many tiny rituals. WLL recognises the limits of both human bodies and machines as vessels for memory – some vignettes are stretched out for decades while others are centuries compressed into minutes. What deserves space that may not have it in the real world is offered that dignity in the digital world.



Worldbuilding is a means to resist complacency and categorization; an affirmation that one can draw new borders (or ends) and declare new logics for life.

Which technologies and senses frame your world?

WWL lives across networked components on the web: websites, tools, gatherings. For preservation and accessibility, the code is minimal and familiar. Participants, called "lovers" have the means to adapt and transform the world. The goal of WWL is to make others feel agentic in their relations with technology: even if they haven't made it themselves, seeing and understanding the conditions of their participant gives them the means to decide if they want to participate at all.

The world embraces ephemerality and space; (re)hosted on local servers, it relies on physical infrastructure and people. Thus it glitches, lags and loops – it is a dynamic, living thing. In every single frame, is an entire universe in itself. Time

The tech is always legible and interdependent: inviting others to maintain and care for the world, as well as construct new systems.

What future(s) do you believe in?

Love is possible and the way we speak it as a language is ever-evolving. There is no neutrality, we are all inter-

dependent, wildly so, and it is said without shame. Lovers in WWL need not experience subtlety. They do not need to be quiet or good on the internet. By being seen, we enter into contracts: taking care of and maintaining each other, not isolated. When the world is dying, a new world is ready to be born from its remnants.

Can we live in a world where love is no longer a question, but is every answer?



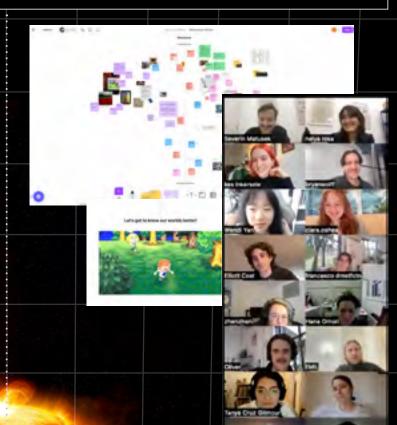




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post-office @post___office

> When We Love @hotemogf

> > Waluigi's Purgatory @dmstfctn

LIOS Labs
@lios_labs

Special Fish @expression_and_sites

Into the Void: Africa's Liminal Futures @limboaccra

Other Spring @zzyw000 The Orfelia @theorfelia

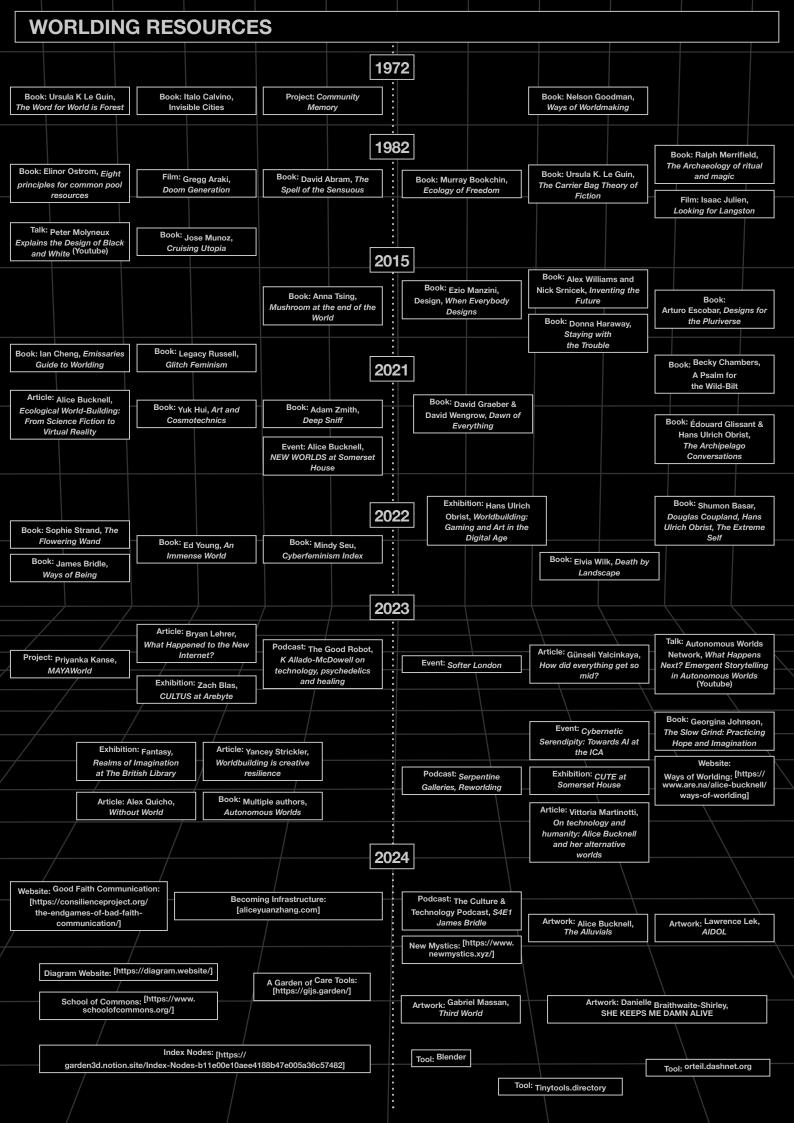
Morphogenic Angels @_keiken_

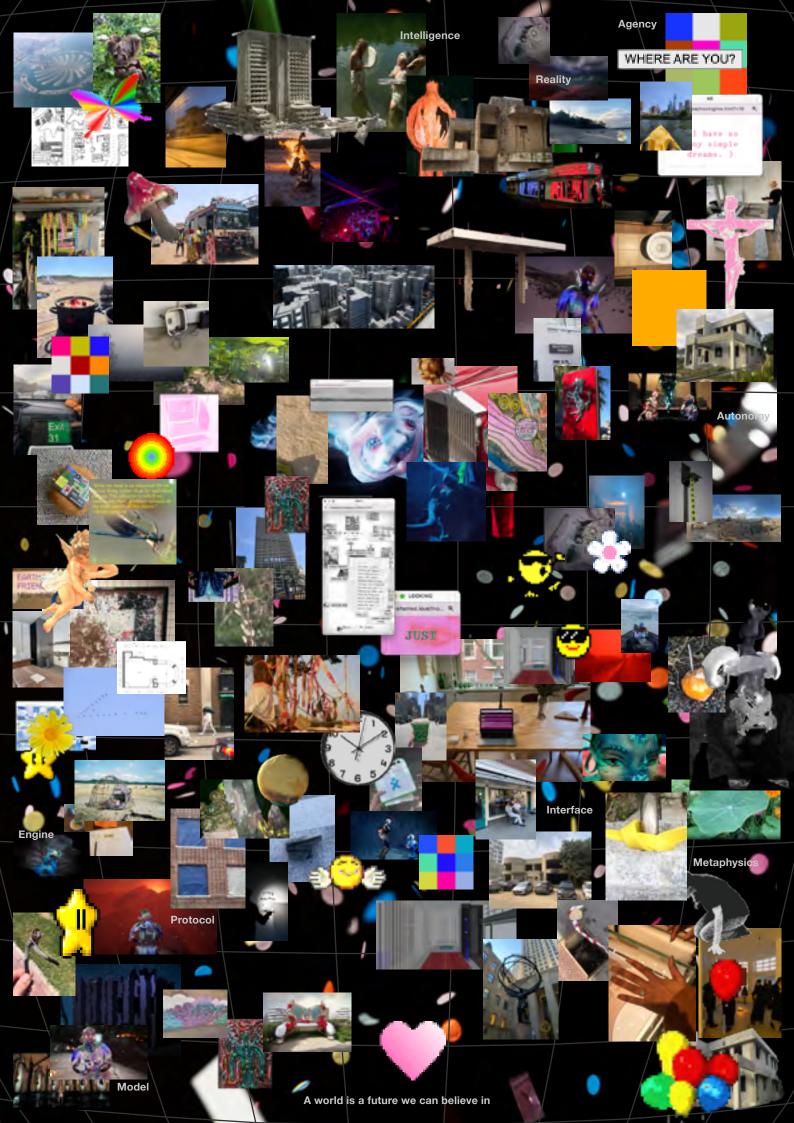
Tale of the Mammoth Goddess @wendiyan

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Shout out to everybody worlding around the world.





Networked Worlds is the third part of Networked Culture, a series of publications that explore the effects of networked technologies on the creative process. The previous two memos of the series are Networked Counterculture (2023) and Networked Reality (2023).

All memos are free to download via wetransfer.com/blog/category/research

Networked Worlds

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