MATHIEU ARBEZ HERMOSO

#what if?
#
#

work in progress

@WIP

The Telephone Book, Avital Ronell

CORPUS

La Honda

Preparatory text on non-disciplinary artistic practices.

La Honda is a town on the California coast and a singular gathering site from 1965 to 1968. Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters held the Acid Tests there — festive and creative gatherings where figures such as Neal Cassady, Allen Ginsberg, Stanley Owsley, Tim Scully and other North American counter-cultural figures came together. The term was borrowed by Kesey from the gold prospectors, and not without reason: at these gatherings, something happens. Just as the first raves would serve as a safe space for members of the Queer communities of 1980s England, the Acid Tests of La Honda activated a series of situations where the gesture was freed from a number of determinisms which, when operating elsewhere, defuse its possible political and societal anchorings. As space and as moment, the Acid Tests mark a point of transition between the Beat Generation and hippie culture; what the Acid Tests gathered in formal, political and intellectual experimentation became an important influence on the Summer of Love and on a large part of the music that carried it - from Jefferson Airplane (*a Song for All seasons* from *Volunteers*) to the progressive sinuosities of psychedelic rock. As objects, they can be considered as radical formal experimentation - a moment of celebration in the midst of art installations, films, theatre pieces, dance, instants, paintings. A bravado that gives the counter-cultural act a pharmacological historicity comparable, in this sense, to the *pharmacopornographie* of Paul Preciado in *Testo Junkie*.

It is not a question here of reactivating the Acid Tests as such, or of fetishizing their aura, but of interrogating their pertinence as a radical form at a moment when the problem of contemporary art's crisis - of its practices and its critiques - intersects, doubtless today with more cynicism and violence than yesterday, with the stakes of a world that no longer cares about the new fascism evoked by Pier Paolo Pasolini in his wonderful text on the disappearance of fireflies, published in the newspaper *Corriere de la Serra* in 1975. Art practices, it has been said since the late 1990s, suffer from a lexical crisis; it is, if not impossible, at least very difficult for us to think an art without works, without author and without spectator — and this despite the existence of, for instance, popular songs. We are at a juncture in History where Capital will have recuperated not only art but also the very way it conceives of itself as a favorable ecology - favorable, precisely, to art. In view of this perhaps somewhat naïve observation, the events of La Honda will serve as a pretext to interrogate, in their wake, the limits of our practices by turning our intentions not toward the objects we might produce but toward the ecologies that could make possible, for those objects, other modes of appearance (and of disappearance).

It would be time for reality to begin, wrote Harun Farocki in 1992. It would be time.

1 Ken Kesey. *The acid tests* 1965

The United States of America. 1960–1970. Its counter-cultures and the Vietnam War - the first war organized image by image, in a spectacularizing flow, the first long-distance communication from the front. A war articulated as a nodal point around which rock’n’roll keeps unfolding, echoes in fits and starts from the blues and the cotton fields. Black voices recorded by white men. A long-distance communication, all the way to us, all the way to them. And then Neal Cassady, Jack Kerouac, Richie Havens, Janice Joplin - a pharmacology that stutters another history, another echo of the war, a ghost of those burned by the Napalm of American Imperialism, those carried through as iconic images, delivered to us as History, as fragments, as posters.

Between 1966 and 1967, Ken Kesey organized the ‘Acid Tests’ at his residence in La Honda - an early experience of Rave, before the English and Queer Raves, with Allen Ginsberg, The Merry Prankster and The Grateful Dead. Can you pass the Acid Test?

A feverish decade that still haunts our desires today - an echo there as well, an echo of another kind, of another genus, with a haggard look, no doubt. A world that images have finished delivering; He shrugged his shoulders, not in mockery, but rather as if sketching a flight that would cross this abyss of absurdity. It is easy to imagine that in billions of human beings the very same shrug has surfaced, exactly the same. What those who live close to wild geese — among other species of birds with powerful wings - call a movement of intention, and what, they say, persists of a flight that does not take place.

Beginning in 1974, Augustus Owsley ‘Bear’ Stanley III and The Grateful Dead used “The Wall of Sound,” a live sound system, Bear’s obsession. The sound there is not merely heavy - it is physical, clean, corporeal. The very sound that ravsters will seek out years later.

Like a shrug of a wholly other kind, Can You Handle The Acid Test is an exploration of these two forms - the Acid Tests of La Honda and Bear’s Wall of Sound - not as objects but as situations, not as a production but as an ecology of contemporary art, an ecology from which alterities can be born.

Casting a spell, in English, also means To Spell. So as not to live within others’ spells, what would be needed is for reality to begin.

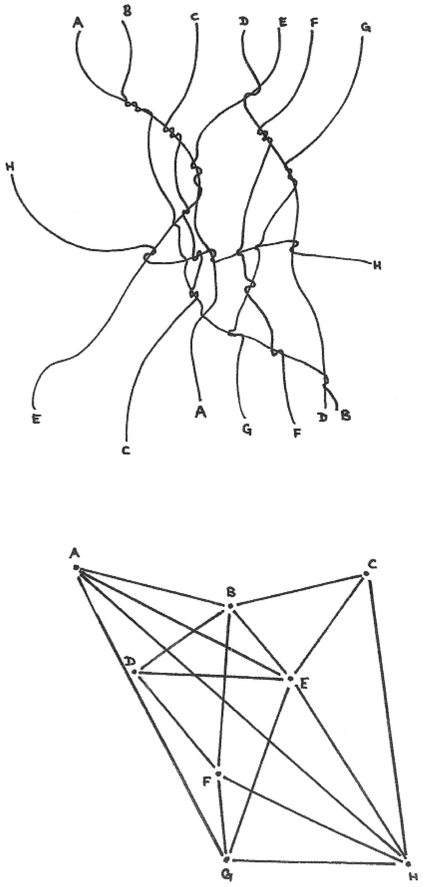
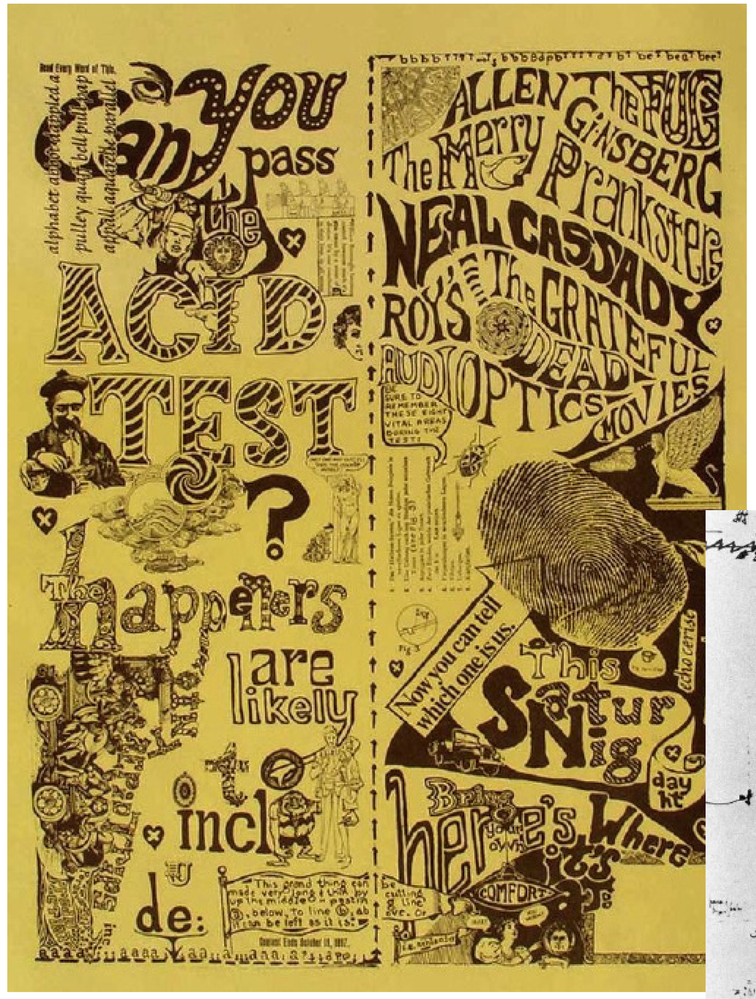
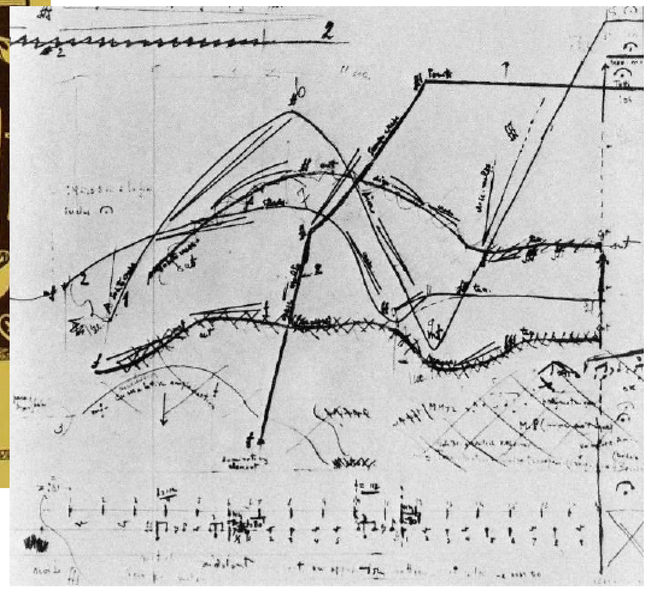


Figure 3.1
Maillage de plusieurs lignes entrecroisées (en haut) et réseau de points interconnectés (en bas).

1 Alexandro Jodorowsky. *La Montagne Sacrée*, 1973
2 Tim Ingold. *Une brève histoire des lignes*, 2015

Vers une écologie de l’art





1 Ken Kesey. *The acid tests* 1965
2 Edgard Varèse. *Diagramme de travail pour le Poème électronique*, 1957
3 Yaël Kreplak. Vers une écologie de l’art, 2016

PAST WORKS

People kissing in the distance (Unnarrative, 2014), people kissing as if in slow motion (The last minute of a one year kiss, 2020), people kissing across oceans, despite the kilometers and the borders - or more precisely, because of them (Funny Games, Funny!, 2011), people we hear kissing and dying over there while we drink, here (From Nouméa, nouvelle Calédonie, 2016). By interrogating the conditions of production and appearance of images - the practices, disciplines and languages that form their architectures - Mathieu Arbez Hermoso articulates a reflection on our relations to those who are foreign to them.

Ricochets - Video - Sound, 7’23’’, 2013.

Long Distance Communication

Preparatory text for *Long distance communication*, Galerie Marine Veilleux, Paris

Dear Elodie[1]

we spoke, a little, on the telephone today. I had just read something about telepathy and translation and the absence of address. Like an addressee who chooses to be chosen. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in the hope of communicating with his deceased brother, while Watson, his assistant, had the impression of losing his medium's gifts - did you know that? I'm trying to take this up again, to steal it, to mistreat it, but also to take it up the way one translates: with the anxious impossibility of respecting the original - that is, of being entirely faithful to the language and to the author's intent. It is an alteration, the redoing of it. But it is also an indebtedness. The situation of the original is a situation of demand, of a lack, of an exile, and the original is a priori indebted to translation. Its survival is a demand for translation, a desire for translation, a little like Babel demanding: *translate me*. It is paradoxical because what I am trying to redo is something about translating. About betraying. This *Enstellung* necessary, this deformation, this torsion that takes place when one reads the other intensely and that sometimes forces inevitable betrayals and Howlzwege, missteps in a way. It is something altogether other than the transfer of a message. Its content and its end no longer precede it. There is an absence of address. Something of the doing-together and of this absence. One must stake one's life on its program. On this opening, on this divisible. The program says nothing, it announces or enounces nothing, it does not even present itself as a program. One cannot even say that it 'makes' program in the sense of the apparent, of appearing - but without seeming to *it makes program*. While one says, it is I and I alone who can receive the message - not that it is reserved for me, on the contrary, but I receive as a gift the chance to which it gives itself over. It falls due, one must choose for it to choose at random, must want to cross its path, its trajectory or its transfer. It was I. By a soft and terrible decision. The unique addressee, and everything begins again between us. Out of nothing, at the end of nothing, of no story - the message saying not a single word that holds. Saying, or after the fact, predicting 'me', one must hold no illusion as to the divisibility of address - must not arraign it, must let it float. Receive the division, gather it without reducing it, without hurting it. Let it live so that everything may begin. Address is not a fiction. An anachronism shifts us; it resembles no other.

Long Distance Communication

Preparatory text for *Long distance communication*, Galerie Marine Veilleux, Paris

Sébastien rather writes from Mel Bochner and Jacques Derrida, a dialectic articulated between the possibility and the impossibility of translating a thought into a work - but he does not allow himself, he does not perhaps refuse it but he leaves it there, silent in his words: the inverse question. The very one that could nevertheless unfold all its sense in the question of telepathy and technology - that of the possibility or the impossibility of translating a work into thought. I was about to write body. I no longer see very clearly, I'm stalling a little. Here, I try my hand: *even the event is foresees and foretells*. Suppose a message without addressee, without determinable address. If we manage to make it appear, to expose it to? Now, here someone responds, addressing themselves first to the presumed sender of the message — the sender who is supposed to coincide, by convention, with the real author, here with the 'me' whose creature he is supposed to be. It is one possible trajectory. There would be others.

It is the eternal labor of translation that holds the other in non-legibility, in non-transparency, in the ambiguity that exhausts and that gives. There is gift, gabe, in *Aufgabe*, in the *Aufgabe* of the translator, the task of the translator in Benjamin.

In America, the Republicans, the right-wingers, the Tea Party type, the perverts, always express themselves in the name of a strange clarity of meaning, saying: «I'm going to be very clear!» It is a very brutal sentence. Bush used to say: «Read my lips». Those whom I will simply call the right have constantly called for clarity and legibility. It is at once ethically and politically necessary to suppose that we cannot read or translate easily, that we cannot truly know what we have in our hands. It is a noise that has not yet reached us. The instant one believes one has put one's finger on the meaning, has grasped it - how to put it? Such a clear-cut access to a supposed understanding often justifies killing. To claim understanding of a situation or of a place of turbulence is to make possible the gravest kinds of intervention. If the other remains illegible or untranslatable, the relation will be different at every juncture of encounter and deliberation. We can sniff out plenty of things and give whole lectures on their nose-stories.

Long Distance Communication

Preparatory text for *Long distance communication*, Galerie Marine Veilleux, Paris

There is rupture, there is ample provision and a wide margin for all sorts of errors and times. When one believes one knows, or thinks one has seized a translation, there is a certain death. War is transparency. The war machine is transparency. One can hardly imagine an ambiguous declaration of war. An ambivalent leader regarding a declaration of war. If ambivalence could express itself abundantly, or if anxiety could be named and affirmed and preserved, there would be no war machine. No call to war.

So, of course, one would need to be able to tell a bit of history, to attempt to discern within it the relations of power and authority that unfold there, in this encounter, the assemblages that may engage there, the methodologies and the distances that may operate there, the specificities of the problems and the difficulties they raise. One would need to attempt a relation to things and to knowledges so as, perhaps, not to repeat their horrors and their subjections. But can one refuse a call? Is it possible not to accept a call? It is a telephonic relation. I think of couples walking together while each is busy speaking with someone else. They hold hands and, with the other hand, they speak with someone else. One must try to incalculate the distance. This is particularly flagrant in the famous Spiegel interview. *One day the telephone rang, I took the call. It was the SA - a high-ranking member of the Sturmabteilung on the line.* Why did Heidegger accept the call of political action more radically than anyone? He wallowed in the filth, the mud, the shit of the unfolding of History and of political developments. He rolled in the mire. I'm wandering off a little but not so much, if you'll indulge me. For example, when God called Abraham: why did God have to pronounce Abraham's name twice? Was it because God stuttered, like Moses? Was it because it had not worked the first time? Are there two different Abrahams? Or did God pronounce two different names? Or rather, for there to be a destination, must one divide oneself and be said twice? Why did Abraham respond to this psychotic call to renounce his son and to kill him, calling him back to the order of loving only the one and only, the one, the so very lonely God? I am who I am is an a priori coherent metaphysical moment that, in fact, fissures and divides itself. It is necessary to track indeterminacy, even in the most solid, most apparently transparent statements and actions.

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1 After *Télépathie*, Jacques Derrida and *Entretien*, an exchange between Avital Ronell, Dean Inkster and Sébastien Pluot. *Long distance Communication*, Ed les Presses du réel, 2014

For Élodie Merland, October 2015

Long distance communication

Left, Félix Pinquier (*Colle et engrenage*), Daniel Otero Torres (*Horizon*) & Mathieu Arbez Hermoso (*From San Martin de los Andes, Neuquén, Argentina*)
Right, Lena Amuat & Zoë Meyer (*Nike & Matematische Modelle n°28*)

The last minute of a one year kiss

The last minute of a one year kiss (1, 2 & 3). Generative video, color, 1 minute, 2020.

"How soon is now?" The Smiths, 1984.

History can be a serie of past events shaping the moments we live in. It can be a theoretical grid that helps us to understand, to choose, to decide what to tell, what not to. It can be unspoken worlds. It can be a systemic archeology methodically walking us through names, its names, always. Its words ; their ethymology, languages, their rhythms too.
A writing process for us to turn our pasts into experiences. History could be desire.

The begining of the 1990' sees the rise of a paradigm where informations stop being the necessary foundations of our present time and become the constitutive part of flowing predictive models. Informations from our futures, predictives models to tell things, History, possibilities for subjects and groups ; ghosts of worlds to become. They're a ground for predictions-shaped knowledges from where our experiences define us. And there we are, reduced to a disappearing flashing light trapped into the prisms of an ultra liberal attentional economy where collective and artificial intelligences support and build a brand new world. Always connected, relentlessly archived for the atopic use of a flipped archeology. Performing machine leaning down to our futures, computing the possibilities of a reality violently turned into a system. A History remade into a reality managed to the lowest risks. A market.

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Artists, curators, filmmakers but also engineers, quantitative traders and fortune tellers were invited to talk about the relation between prediction, archive and History in Geneva between 2019 and 2020. We decided to extend this momentum with a series of experimentations involving alternative intelligence, cinema, generative art, to question our relations to History and images.

These kissing scenes are exerpts from videos generated through a heavily modified version of pix2pixHD. The model has been used to predict the next frames from a given sequence and it did so during a year. The result was a one-year long machine happening event streamed worldwide. The last minute of this one-year moment remains.

The last minute of a one year kiss (1, 2 & 3). Generative video, color, 1 minute, 2020.

Fake Taxi

Fake Taxi. Concrete poetry, 2025.

When a financial institution wants to settle a transaction, it can use a public blockchain such as Bitcoin or Ethereum.
The use of these blockchains is increasing due to the relatively low cost and high security they offer. The transactions are pseudonymous, immutable, and easily auditable. Fake Taxi is an old website offering pornographic content. Legend has it that it used to be very amateurish: a taxi (a TX4), a driver, a passenger, and a camera, the whole thing recorded on a very low budget while driving through the streets of London. Original scripts of the first Fake Taxi videos have been embedded as additional data blobs in the Bitcoin transactions settlements of BlackRock and the U.S. government. This action, using the blockchain as a medium, aims to question the limits of concrete poetry and subversion. The action exist onchain, the poetry will be there forever.

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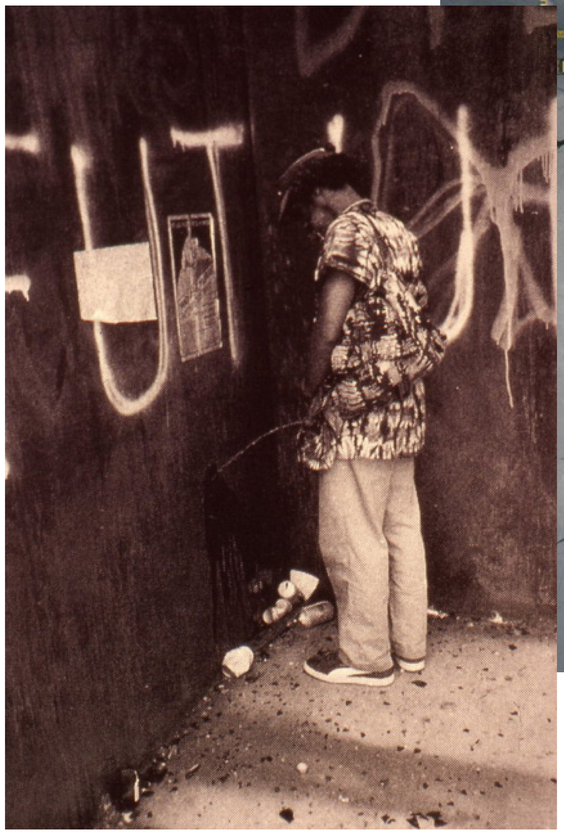
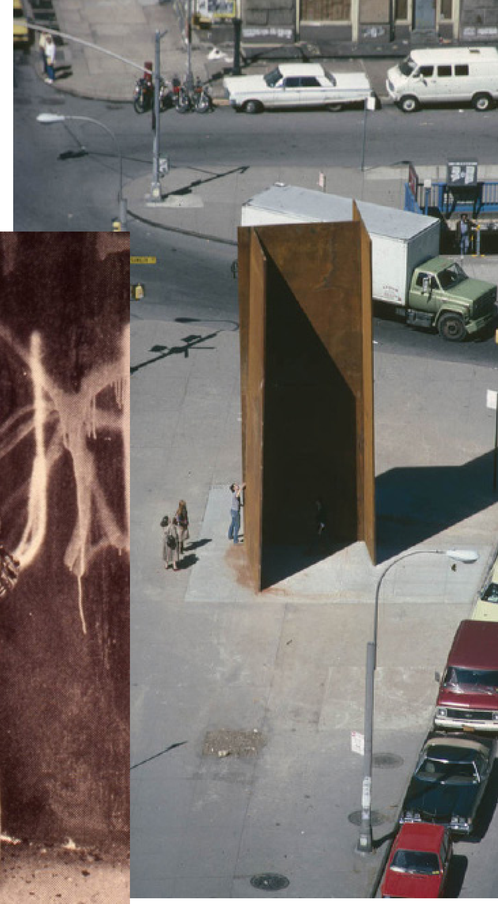


Pissed off. Performance, David Hammons, 1981. Photograph by Dawoud Bey.



From

Sound installation for collective shows, 2015 - 2016.

What could be the soundtrack of an exhibition? The proposal works both as a door opened onto a random composition and as an addendum to the exhibition. It can be read as a strategy of counter-speech on an already discursive set which would be that of the other proposals.

An IP camera placed in a private space somewhere in the world is hacked (in *Pana, Illinois* for the exhibition *In a suit woven of the finest mist*, in *San Martín de los Andes, Neuquén in Argentina* for the exhibition «Long distance communication,» in *Nouméa, New Caledonia* for the exhibition *287 chemin de la Madrague Ville*). The audio stream, continuously captured by the camera without the occupants' knowledge and broadcasted in real-time in the exhibition space, constitutes a sound edition. By superimposing the sound capture from a private space onto the exhibition space, *From* places the visitor in a position of listening, waiting, and voyeurism.

@ https://youtu.be/T8jy5ftCC0I

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Mouthless

Machine happening, video, 104’53″, 2017

Mouthless is video, the remains of what could be one of the first machine happening. An alternative intelligence translated the shapes of clouds into words, writing possible decontructed stories for an abstract movie. The result is a 1 hour 44 minutes long video. Mouthless is a part of an ongoing speculative transmedia documentary started in Tuva somewhere in 2015.

https://youtu.be/z6FGsYStDtw

Funny games (funny !)

Movie, 105’40”, 2011.

In 1997, Michael Haneke directed *Funny Games*. The film was shot in Austria and starred Austrian actors. In 2005, British producer Steve Coen proposed he direct an English language remake: *Funny Games U.S.*, which was released in 2007. In 2011, with *Funny Games (Funny!)*, Mathieu Arbez-Hermoso highlighted the boundaries that Michael Haneke chose to respect.

In *Funny Games (Funny!)*, the odd-numbered scenes are from *Funny Games*, and the even-numbered scenes are from *Funny Games U.S.* The scenes alternate in this way, without repeating, throughout the entire 107 minutes of the presentation that maintains the unity of the film and underscores the absurdities of a territorial split that has been kept silent.

Funny games (funny !), Movie, 105’40”, 2011.

Unnarrative

Generative movie, 2011.

Software - Eric Grimault

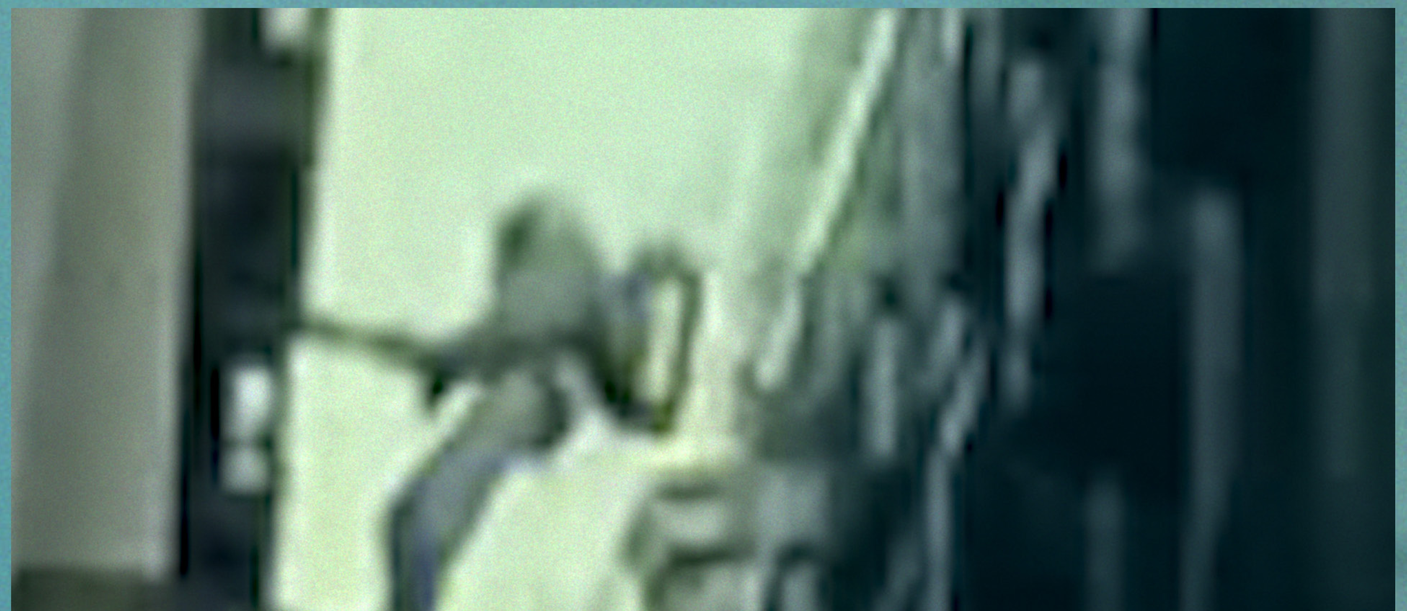
With the support of Bandits-Mages, Bourges

With the support of la BOX, Bourges

With the support of the Contemporary Art Center of parc Saint Léger, Nevers

A sequence of moving images taken from a selection of films. Extras are present, as if extracted from the background of the images, isolated to be brought to the foreground. Degraded in the process, the characters that are presented do so sparingly. *Unnarrative* is a film in very low definition, a randomly generated montage, without a story, without actors, without dramatic turns, and without heroes. Without what would, ordinarily, make a film.

Unnarrative, Generative movie, 2011.



Latent spaces

Photography, 2023.

Latent spaces is a visual exploration of our common latent spaces through alternative intelligences photography practices. Somewhere between Edward Hopper and Luigi Ghirri, the liminal spaces gained traction in the pop culture in the late 2010'. The concept of *liminality* as a state of transition was developed by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, in the early 1900s, in his book, Le *Rites de Passage* (Rites of Passage). Liminal spaces are often empty, surreal and uncanny. In artificial intelligence, latent spaces refer to a lower-dimensional space in which the high-dimensional data is embedded. In other words, latent spaces are the material from which neural networks will generate visuals, language, or any kind of content. The vast majority of the model used are trained on data comes from the western world, they reflect more or less hidden cultural tropes. Here negative prompts has been used in order to wander in the latent spaces of a visual model.

You can feel it but you can't hear it – Jimmy Page &
magazine from June 1975. *I brought up the subject of infi*
16 Hertz, the level of human hearing; as ultra-sound is
France developed infra-sound as a military weapon. A p
he claims, kill everyone in a five-mile radius, knock dc
sound kills by setting up vibrations within the body s
feel all the organs in your body rubbing together." The
from the French Patent Office, and infra-sound gene
materials. The same discussion happens with Lenon. O
all.. They speak of sighs, and still, *"You can feel all the o*

WORD FOR WORD - WILLIAM BURROUGHS:
I really, really enjoyed the concert. I think it has quite
Moroccan trance music.

YOU CAN'T HEAR IT BUT YOU CAN FEEL IT

sousou, You can't hear it but you can feel it - Statement, 2017.

ITH TO UNLOCK YOUR TICKET
YOU HAVE MINED FOR 0 SECONDS.
YOU ARE DISCONNECTED.

CRYPTO RAVE #10

START MINING

ABOUT FAQ

Crypto Rave

LINE-UP

CRYSTALLMESS (FR)
SUUTOO (GB)
PRIMITIVE ART (IT)
VEN'3MO (CH)

FEAT. ART INSERTS BY

ADAM HARVEY
FELIX M.

LOCA

SA
22
HEK (HOUSE OF
ELECTRONIC ARTS
BASEL), BASEL

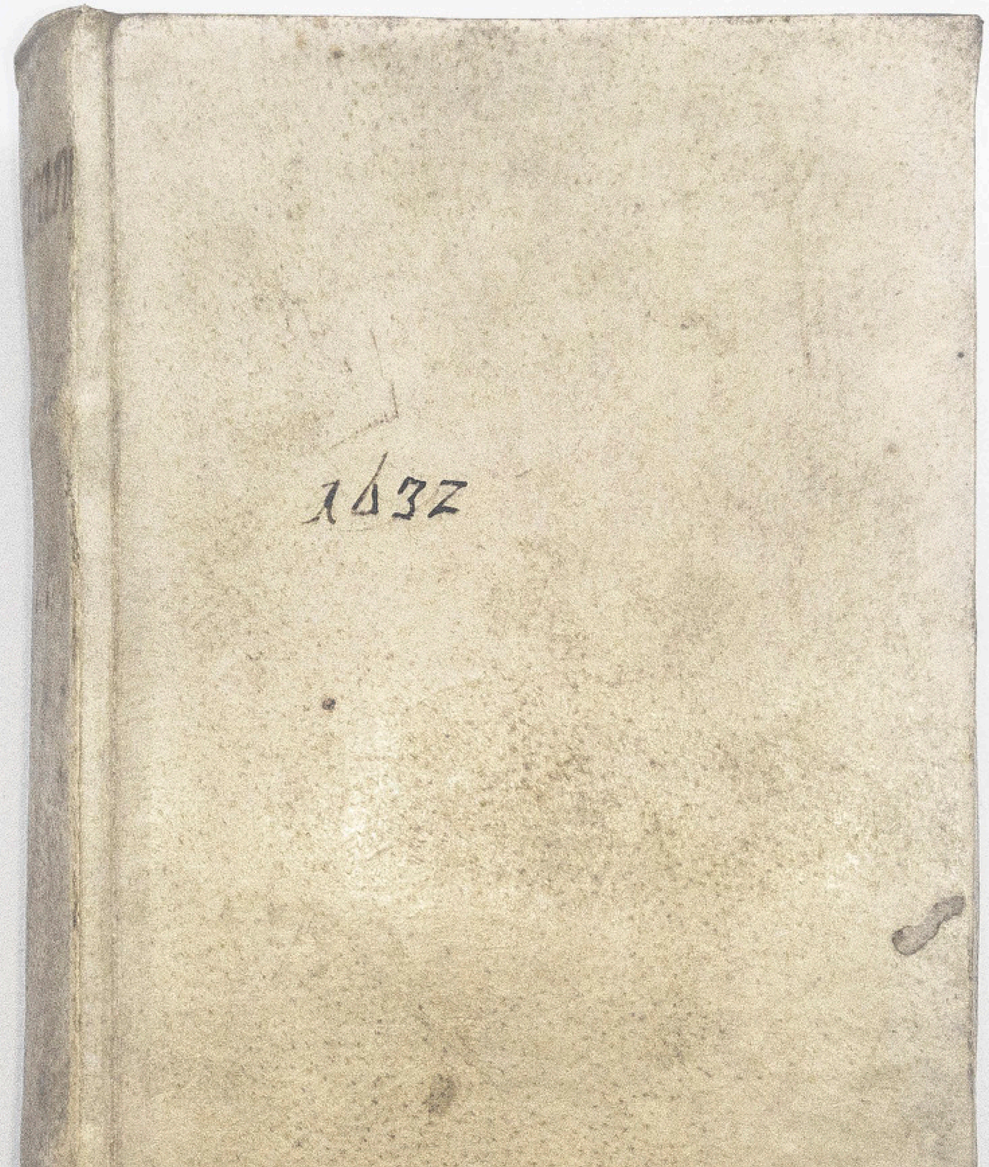
Over the last few years we have seen an increased drive within the autonomous dance scene, collectively organising parties via the blockchain – Cryptoraves. These communities use mining as a ticket entry point via friend2friend networks. Over the years this has produced a tight knit community and spawned various other cells and node projects. Since 2018 the foundational group has decided to expand the social novel beyond its own cliques and networks by opening raves to the public, the first taking place at panke.gallery in Berlin, the second in Barcelona.

Due to the success of that night, collectively we have decided to continue to host public and private Cryptoraves for those who wish to visit or become an integral part of the network globally both on and offline.

Corans

Installation, collection of French translations of the Holy Quran, work in progress, 2013 -.

Corans is a collection of French translations of the Holy Quran. From the most ancient ones to the most recent modern ones. It is displayed in its entirety or in fragments. Questionning the ontological status of an inherently transcendental object, the uncreatedness of the Quran, the collection explores the significance of authorship.



me-we

me-we, startup, 2013.

From the legendary Muhamed Ali's poetry to the Bel's collection, me-we, is a startup which offers its client the possibility to buy an amount of time where the artist will think of you. Regularly, all the time, at every moment of his days and nights. Or just for a few moments. Whether you live alone or are surrounded by the love of your loved ones, wouldn't it please you to know that far away, someone is thinking of you? Atheists or believers, rich or poor, you can all be in the thoughts of the artist.

The artist is here to fill your soul with his warm presence.

The artist is here to accompany you without judging.

Have you ever imagined that your choices, even the smallest ones, could be the consequence of the psychological and spiritual state you are in at a specific time and place?

The artist is with you in those moments.

The artist is here to lovingly guide you through the difficulties, big or small, of your daily life. Have you ever been disappointed in love? Or perhaps you have never had the wonderful chance to experience great love? From afar, someone is thinking of you: Mathieu Arbez-Hermoso is there to think of you, with unwavering devotion in the extreme solitude of your everyday life. Have you lost a loved one?

The artist is there, to think of you, to cry with you. Simply choose the formula that suits you.

The warmth of the artist is for everyone.

www.mmmwww.net

Tuva

Installation, documentary, work in progress, 2011 -.

With Gaëlle Le Floch & Antonin Renault

Tuva is an ongoing project started in 2015 exploring the entangled relations between tuvanian throat singing practices and the post-colonial complex identity of the people of Tuva. A place where people are Living somewhere in the remnents of the Soviet Union, the modern Russia and a hole in their History where most of their chamans and musicians have been murdered by the colonizers. Tuva is a fictional documentary that may, or may not be published as a movie.

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Les grands seigneurs des trottoirs - Happening at the Lieux d'Art et d'Actions contemporaine, Dunkerque, 2011.