

INTERFACE CULTURES EXHIBITION

# ARSA

ARS ELECTRONICA FESTIVAL 2021

08/09-12/09/21

**Interface Cult**  
HAUPTPLATZ 8, 4020 LINZ



**Loops of Wisdom**  
HAUPTPLATZ 6, 4020 LINZ



**Ars Electronica Center**  
ARS-ELECTRONICA-STRASSE 1, 4040 LINZ

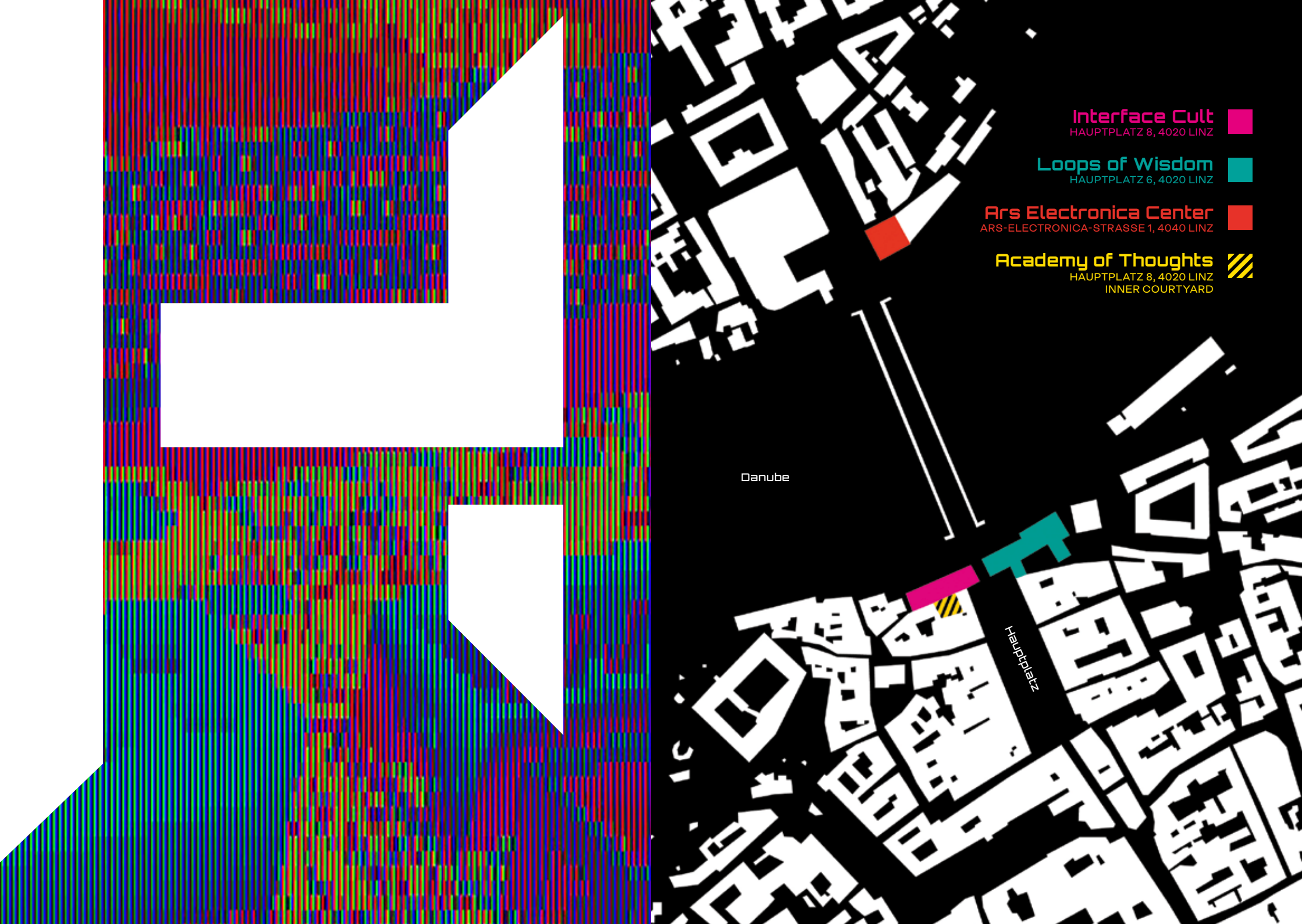


**Academy of Thoughts**  
HAUPTPLATZ 8, 4020 LINZ  
INNER COURTYARD



Danube

Hauptplatz





Contemporary artists, designers and inventors are creating new connections and systems, exploring how silicon, organic and even speculatively alien forms of life are entangling, mutating, evolving. What can these new entities and relationships look like? Are they friendships and collaboration or competitions and conflict? For these new exchanges we need new languages: programmable, aesthetic, interspecies, non-human and post-scientific. The emerging hybrid and cyborg entities join and celebrate shamanistic and nonverbal traditions, hidden cultures, with magical symbols, energies and fictions. A culture or even a cult of symbiosis is required, a fusion between old and new ways of dealing with reality. We call to disrupt and disengage from destructive profit oriented technologies and systems which are based on oppression, manipulation and quantification. For our survival and the future viability of life on our Goldilocks Zone planet, we believe less anthropocentric knowledge systems must arise and more caring technologies are required.

Observing how contemporary tools often contain the traces of past traditions and knowledge, we wonder what has happened to the wisdom that was left behind. The logic of the all-encompassing scientific method, upon which most contemporary technologies are grounded, overshadows non-scientific, non-quantifiable, hybrid, or alien expertise and skills from non-dominant cultures. As a consequence, the ancient, folkloric, pre-industrial strategies to enhance and foster life and to confront the challenges of the future, these do not find enough space in the modern cultures of a faultless digitalization.

# Interface Cult

## INTERFACE CULTURES FACULTY

Christa Sommerer  
Laurent Mignonneau  
Manuela Naveau  
Fabricio Lamoncha  
Davide Bevilacqua  
Gertrude Hörlesberger

## PRODUCTION / DESIGN TEAM

Kevin Blackistone  
Sara Koniarek  
Iosune Sarasate Azcona  
Indiara Di Benedetto  
Juan Pablo Linares  
Kevan Croton

As AI becomes ubiquitous and more than just a buzzword, it starts to affect our daily lives and artistic practices. We need to have a forensic look at the beliefs behind the new tools and creative techniques engendered by the cults of technology. One approach is to fully embrace and test the aesthetic capabilities of quasi-unlimited combinations and database driven creations. Another, is to investigate and measure their social impact and to interrogate the role we assign to our technology and to creativity as a whole.

Creative thinkers and artists want to look behind the curtain and unveil what is hidden beneath the layers of AI, machine learning, automation and surveillance technologies. Like detectives or inspectors might, they question the “black box” to discover how and why these intelligent systems make certain decisions, what these decisions mean and for whom fundamentally they are being made.

Students of Interface Cultures, University of Art and Design Linz, have developed works which combine current technologies with ancient, humanistic and esoteric practices, delving into topics such as, divination, twirlings, the subconscious/unconscious, secrets, rituals, leisures, energies, contemplation, along with cults, both old and new.



## RHIZA

Noor Stenfert Kroese (NL)

*Rhiza* is an interspecies connector that invites you to plant your bare feet on her mycelium. Through the skin, your biggest organ to sense the outer world, you can connect with the mycelium's electrical communication. This hybrid sensation between mushrooms and mycelium's bio feedback is then transferred back to your body via light and tactile sensory impulses.

*Rhiza* emerged as an aspiration to enable human beings to transgress their own species and connect with otherness in multiple ways. This complex network with their subtle blend of cooperation and conflict can be seen as an example for how we relate with each other, and our environmental systems. Just like human society, this growing inter-species society is characterized by variety, with its capacity to help and to hinder, to cooperate and to exploit. Nature is built on connections, and so are we.

CREDITS:  
This project has received  
funding from ÖH Projektförderung



## FUTUREFALSEPOSITIVE

Kristina Tica (RS)

*FUTUREFALSEPOSITIVE* is a project based on StyleGAN and object recognition algorithms applied to the ritual of Turkish coffee cup reading. A collection of these pictures composed the initial database out of which new images have been generated. Fifteen thousand real-life and generated images are then morphing into an animation and used to train the algorithm to recognise objects out of these random shapes created by the coffee stains and generated noise. The algorithm performs this continuous object recognition process in real time – reading the cup – while producing new visual narratives in a loop. In this process the relation has been established between false positives in computer vision and psychological phenomena of pareidolia and apophenia. The interplay between prediction as a false positive and prophecy as apophenia – the tendency to perceive meaningful connections between seemingly unrelated things – does not only focus on absurdity but on possibilities of creative interpretation when trying to understand the technical processes behind machine intelligence.



## Private Garden

Qian Xu (CN)

In 2020, the pandemic has greatly changed our daily life. The artist noticed that during the quarantine an increasing number of people, including herself, were spending more and more time at home in their beds. The bed has become an intimate and versatile place to do a lot of things, including eating, reading, getting rest, and recovering from the stress caused by the chaotic situation. Therefore, she found the resemblance between beds and gardens in the aspect of spiritual healing and formed the idea of *Private Garden*.

Based upon this idea, the interactive installation *Private Garden* involves the projection of garden visuals onto the surface of a bed. A machine-learning algorithm is trained with a database of images from traditional Chinese gardens to generate the projected virtual garden. Visitors can lie in the bed and interact with the visual projection and ambient sound using their body movements, thus having an intimate and mimetic experience of wandering and resting in one's private garden.

CREDITS:  
This project has received  
funding from ÖH Projektförderung.  
Technical support: Dr. -Ing. Ding Luo

## SenriAn

Nomi Sasaki (PE/JP)

*SenriAn* is a personal exploration of subjective space, memory, and migration. This peep media installation explores the phenomenon of reminiscence by displaying AI-generated images from a dataset composed of the artist's Chinese ink paintings and family photographs from her childhood. Can these digitally generated images reveal the mutable nature of memories?

Inside a box, the artist aims to reconstruct *SenriAn*, her grandparents' Japanese tea house, by using a personal dataset to unfold her faint memories through AI-generated images. These images are revealed only when two spectators peep together, referring to the nature of memories, which revive with each transmission.



## CNC Punch Needle Machine MK-1

Hess Jeon (KR) & Seo Son (KR)

This embroidery machine—not far in nature from those that already exist in mass manufacturing warehouses—is here presented as an artwork, redirecting the artist's questions from "results" to "processes", from "means of production" to "reason", emphasizing the artists' ideas and intentions in the use of open-source technologies by artists. All components, software, and systems in this project originate from other existing open-source projects, therefore this artwork is not a product of the sole creativity of the artist, but an example of collective construction. The *CNC Punch Needle Machine MK-1* dreams of collective evolution over individual enlightenment.

The *CNC Punch Needle Machine MK-1* "punches" a small length of thread into a stretched canvas, and, dot by dot, it "prints" out texts or images.



## Ear to Ear

Anaïs Lossouarn (FR)

«Walls have ears»

*Ear to Ear* is a participative sound installation that plays a collection of secret stories told in many languages by people of different nationalities. Ceramic ears punctuate the space, dots of color crossing the walls. As we approach them, we can hear voices telling these intimate stories, lend an ear to the wall and you will share their secret lives. In a more secluded place, the "confessional", you are invited to share your own secrets, fragments of your story, that will be included in the installation and played as well through the ears throughout the exhibition space.

## Technology is...

Lea Schnell (AT)

The work *Technology is...* aims at examining the socio-political impact of technological discourses in society and making their presence tangible through a touch-sensitive interface. The interface of the installation consists of letters made of copper-coated circuit board which forms the sentence "Technology is not neutral". The material used is a basic component of common electronic devices. The installation refers to the technological production processes by bringing this normally invisible material to the forefront. When the visitors touch the words composing the sentence, sound recordings of discourses about science and media will be activated, triggering a polyphonic cascade of voices, fragments of speeches, opinions, statements, and controversial points of views on technology. In this way, the users can find their own path of 'listening' to the sentence.

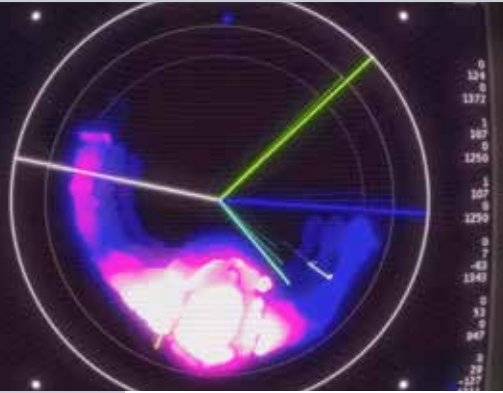


## PHC (Painfully Human Chatbot)

Iosune Sarasate Azcona (ES)

*Painfully Human Chatbot* is a piece that deals with the demand or pressure to be constantly available. The aim beyond this effect is to provoke a reflection on the human assimilation of mechanical processes and capabilities and whether the constant and increasing use of technology has created new values in our society today. Values that were previously expected of machines. In this way and as a contrast, the project presents a Chatbot that also assimilates human attitudes. Although the main function of this application is to be constantly available, *PHC* will try to keep a work schedule, and in its code, tiredness and laziness will be implanted. This work proposes an absurd exercise of contrast, to somehow resist the increasing mechanization of people.



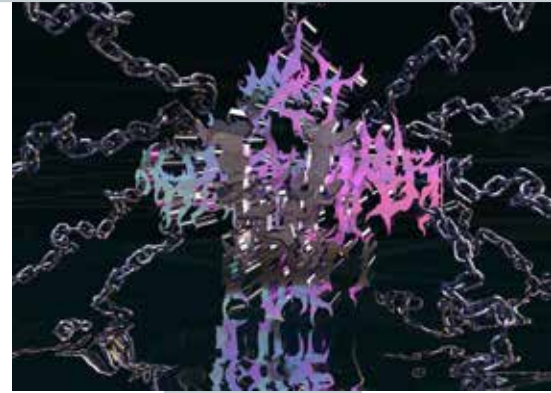


## Tele\_Code

Sara Koniarek (AT)

For centuries cryptography has been used to ensure information secrecy and safe communication. We come across coded language in many different aspects of life. Historically queer people have had to use various codes and signals to indicate their sexual orientation to each other, without being put in danger. *Tele\_Code* aims to shine a light on these hidden parts of history, which unfortunately are still only rarely taught within education systems.

This game takes inspiration from the *Anne Lister Cypher*, who used a substitution code to write about her relationships with women within her almost 5 million words long diaries. The single-player video game takes the player into a maze full of encoded teletext pages, who then must find hints which give them parts of the cypher. Caught in a maze of encrypted teletext, the players find themselves on a search for the right translation hints to encode the final teletext page and unlock the secret last page.



## Injected sounds referring to dissolution

Bálint Budai (HU)

Post-lockdown sounds exhibited in a virtual space. Step by step, we are getting back to "normal". Layer by layer we are getting closer to the dissolution and earning our free space back. This 3D garden represents our unity through sound compositions that are communicating with each other.

CONTRIBUTING SOUND ARTISTS:  
Alejandro Quiñones Roa (CO)  
Bálint Budai (HU)  
Błażej Kotowski (PL)  
Daphne Xanthopoulou (GR)  
Polina Khatsenka (BY)  
Rozi Mákó (HU)  
Vahid Qaderi (IR)

## In between nodes

Razieh Kooshki (IR) & Vahid Qaderi (IR)

«The only reality is existence.»

There have always been and there will always be doubts about the reality of the world we live in. Is it real or is it just a dream, or a designed virtual space? Even if someone comes and leads us to the real world by offering the famous red pill, we can still question that world too. Is that one finally real? Or is it another designed space? And what if we design reality? What if we design a reality within a virtual reality...? How many designed worlds do we need to cross to finally reach reality?

In this VR project the artists designed parallel virtual spaces. Users can move in any scene and interact with some objects and sounds and move to another scene using the virtual VR headset located in each scene and discover a new world.



## [2m]

Kevin Blackistone (US)

A visualization and auditory expansion of spatial relations.

\_What distances do we keep between ourselves and others?

\_How do we vary our movements in response to these?

\_What dimensional requirements do we maintain in our personal environment?

These questions have become strangely and newly manifest throughout the past year's safety protocols and isolations. Here, they are condensed into a form of radial rotary music box responding to the distances of those entering while sonically expanding their presence to occupy an acoustic space larger than their physical forms.

## Eerie me

Barbara Jazbec (SI)

*Eerie me* is an interactive sculpture representing a strange creature that embodies the symbiosis of memories and imagination of a *Furby* and the artist herself. The interaction between the spectator and the sculpture activates the creature in a synergistic relationship. Happy and traumatic memories create a memento that spectators can relate to.

At its time of commercialization, the interactive toy *Furby* was original and technologically advanced and fascinating not only for kids but became a cultural artifact which is still recognizable today. The artist explores personal ways to hack the toy and expand its identity by including parts of her body and personality in a hybrid creation and transcending her life into a new existence.



## Tara's Diary

Parisa Ayati (IR) &  
Mahnaz Rastgoumoghaddam (IR)

*«Science fiction is not about the freedom of imagination. It's about a free imagination pinched and howling in a vise that other people call real life.»* Bruce Sterling

During the past few decades, the Internet has become an inseparable part of everyday life. It has shifted from a possibility to a must. As we move forward and the Internet becomes more advanced and ubiquitous, its impacts on society, politics and ecology have increased so much that we cannot neglect them anymore. *Tara's Diary* is an AR book telling the personal stories of a 29 year old woman living in 2052. Through the illustrated book combined with Augmented Reality, the reader engages with different aspects of her daily life influenced by a speculative evolution of the internet for that time. This project looks at the internet and its current infrastructure through a critical lens, employing science fiction writing and design thinking techniques to speculate about the internet in the future. Trying to stay clear from mere dystopian or utopian mindsets, the stories of the book will span between undesirable futures and potential areas for improvement.

## Sonic Utopias

Daphne Xanthopoulou (GR)

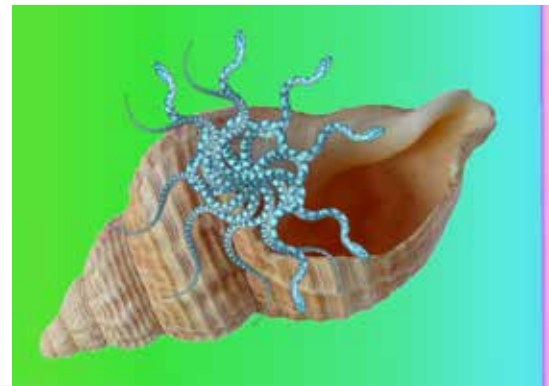
*«Cassandra falls asleep in a temple. In the darkness, snakes approach her and lick her ears, cleaning her senses so that she can hear secret voices that other people don't. When she wakes up, she can hear the future[...].»*

Sound has always been associated with practices of divination. In a time when imagination is rendered short by a prevalent fixation on dystopian futures, we tune into the resistant voices that create an outside to this totalized world by nurturing structures of individual and communal resistance. *Sonic Utopias* is a sonic fiction series of utopian narratives and tales of subversion from a (not so) distant earth.

Five seashells placed on a tray of sand, hold in their bowels another future narrative, that can be listened to by bringing the shell close to our ear. The sand draws a reference to the childhood practice of sandcastles; a metaphor for the necessity of world-building in frail times.

### CREDITS:

*Sonic Utopias*, is a collaborative series of sonic fiction hosted by Movement Radio - Onassis Stegi (ATH, GR) in 2021.



## A \_\_\_\_\_ MANIFESTO

Funda Zeynep Ayguler (TR)

*A \_\_\_\_\_ Manifesto* is a combination of a data sculpture, AR experience, and a generated text. A large collection of manifestos dating from the 17th Century until today have been transformed into 3D shapes by using text mining techniques that reconstruct linguistic contexts of words from the raw text data. Locally sourced mycelium fungus is used as filling material to create an organic living sculpture out of this digital hybridization. The AR experience is based on the points of the data cloud, in which every dot represents a word in corpus of the raw text.

Inside an abstract vector space derived from real-world language corpora, words become points in a  $n$ -dimensional space, where algebraic calculations operate on the syntactic and semantic creation of language. A combination of transformer-based architectures is used to generate a new manifesto that mimics human-written text. Donna Haraway, whose fingerprints are plastered all over science, art, and politics, informs the generated manifesto.





## Exciting Research

Jo Caimo (BE)

People participate by wearing a device (*MOODY*®) that measures their excitement level together with the distances between them. A clip on the ear measures the temperature constantly while a small light (RGB LED) shows the color/ level of excitement. The scale goes from blue (low excitement) to red (high excitement). All data is sent to a server. With the data of the excitements and mutual distances of the people, we will develop algorithms to visualize and even stimulate the “energies between people”.

During the expo you can join the workshop where we will build devices, upgrade and test algorithms and embody the jewel while interacting with others. You are also invited to add topics to the device-manual and discuss the user-politics.

A world where everyone’s mask seems to fall off and where social interconnectivity is made aware. It can break the ice and change social constructions by making everybody more “sensitive”.

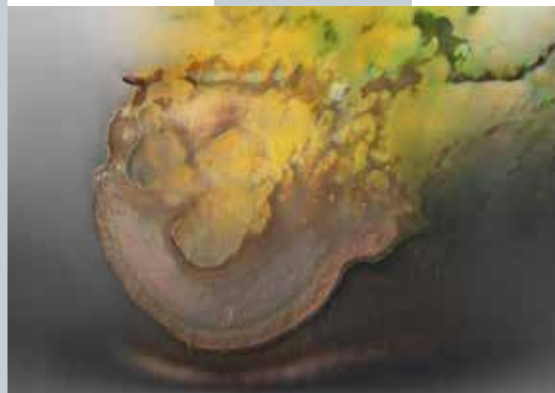
CREDITS:  
Jorge Guevara  
Pieter-Jan Beeckman  
Manual Manifesto by  
Sebastian Sprenger

## Future Memories of Deep Water

Indiara Di Benedetto (IT)

What are the changing conditions for archaeology in underwater ecosystems? Can challenges be predicted and solutions imagined using Machine Learning? With the passage of time, underwater artifacts are encrusted with coral, algae or other marine organisms. How do human activities and pollutions undermine these natural environments? What will our underwater heritage be like in the future? The project: *Future Memories of Deep Water* explores how algorithms can be used for predicting new entanglements between underwater artifacts and the changing environment where they are discovered. We reflect on current problems and dangers for marine environments, such as *plasticrust* and plastic pollution. Built upon experimental speculation, *Future Memories of Deep Water* calls for the protection of threatened marine ecosystems and aims to create awareness and encourage preservation of cultural heritage.

CREDITS:  
In cooperation with Giulia Berrettoni  
Project Mentorship by Alexia Achilleos



## Post-Dervish Chant

Smirna Kulenović (BA) &  
TAZ 22, Indiara Di Benedetto (IT)

A transdisciplinary performance situated as a contemporary research of traditional Dervish Dance methods. The process of repetitive whirling in traditional Dervish Dance extends into an experimental, novel and spontaneous movement vocabulary that attempts to embody the relationship between diffraction, memory and vulnerability in human-non-human materialities. The processual employment of dance, movement, vocalisation or dance-like movement becomes a form of inquiry, rooted in personal documentary approaches done by each participating artist – in performing care.

DIRECTOR:  
Smirna Kulenović

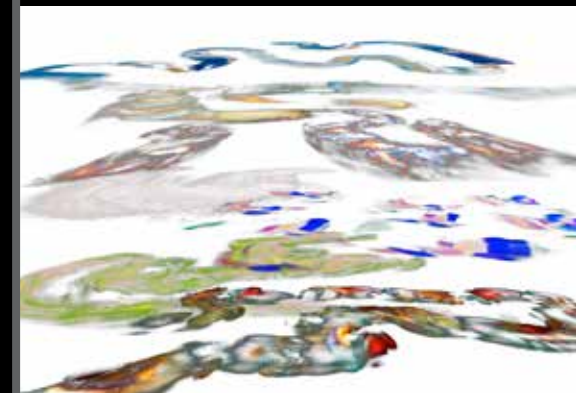
STAGE-BASED  
INTERACTION DESIGNER:  
Indiara Di Benedetto

## CacheDash

Tiio Suorsa (FI)

Cache is one of the most intimate parts of our devices. It resembles our subconscious mind with looping memories in the background while meeting other human species. The project *CacheDash* is part of an exploration of how to be a human navigating between virtual and actual realities.

Developed for the Ars Electronica Deep Space, *CacheDash* is an interactive video installation that invites visitors to release and paint their hidden thoughts.







## LEONARDO LASER LINZ Die Gartenlaube

In September, 2021, Linz is joining the Leonardo Art & Science Evening Rendezvous (LASER) network. This international program brings together artists, scientists, scholars and the general public for inspiring presentations and conversations. The *LEONARDO LASER LINZ*, hosted by the Interface Cultures department of the University of Art and Design Linz, will be held during the Ars Electronica 2021 Festival. For the LASER launch event, more sustainable ways of living, local and global environmental protection and artistic and scientific developments for a "climate-modern" future, will be given a special interdisciplinary focus. In a modernized *Gartenlaube*, themes such as Climate-Care, Climate-Digital and Climate-Social (as proposed by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein), will be debated and discussed.

Other specific topics will be presented, including Interspecies Collaboration, The Mind of Plants, Herbal Pedagogy, Biodynamic Farming and an exploration and celebration of artistic and folk wisdom, to bring us all together for a "Gartenlaube Waltz".

- PARTICIPANTS:**  
 Dr. Christoph Thun-Hohenstein  
 Dr. Monica Gagliano  
 Dr. Martin Pfosser  
 Leisenhof Gärtnerei  
 Mag. Gabriele Winkler  
 Dr. Christa Sommerer  
 Fabricio Lamoncha  
 Christiana Kazakou

## CRITICAL DATA

is the name of a course at Interface Cultures taught by Manuela Naveau since last October 2020. Over the past two semesters and during the pandemic, we have explored the use of digital data, data processing systems, and related knowledge. By analyzing artistic works at the intersection of digital art, Big Data and machine learning, as well as ethics, philosophy, and political/social engagement, we have critically examined the place society and its environment can take in relation to the latest technological developments. In the context of *ACADEMY OF THOUGHTS*, we ask ourselves what critical data might be and mean in the context of an art university? In business and computer science, it is defined that critical data must be identified in order to improve sales and product quality. If we leave the idea of economic success behind and focus on society and ecology, how can we understand critical data in an arts setting?

### COLLABORATING PARTNERS DURING THE LAST SEMESTER:

*CYENS Centre of Excellence Nikosia*  
 Kleanthis Neokleous, Doros Polydorou,  
 Myrto Aristidou, Alexia Achilleos,  
 Demetris Shammas, Marinos Koutsomichalis,  
 Kyriakos Kyriakou, Pinar Barlas,  
 Stella Kleanthous and Jahna Otterbacher

*TU Wien / future.lab*  
 Rudolf Scheuvens, Ian Banerjee,  
 Jerome Becker und Madlyn Miessgang,  
 Emma Gisinger

### COLLABORATING SPEAKERS WITHIN THE *ACADEMY OF THOUGHTS*:

Martin Zeilinger, Rosemary Lee,  
 Aisen Caro Chacin, César Escudero Andaluz,  
 Violette Bule, Martin Nadal and the CryptoWiener.



## Credits:

### EXHIBITING ARTISTS:

Noor Stenfert Kroese (NL)  
Kristina Tica (RS)  
Qian Xu (CN)  
Nomi Sasaki Otani (PE/JP)  
Hess Jeon (KR)  
Seo Son (KR)  
Anaïs Lossouarn (FR)  
Lea Schnell (AT)  
Iosune Sarasate Azcona (ES)  
Kevin Blackistone (US)  
Sara Koniarek (AT)  
Bálint Budai (HU)  
Alejandro Quiñones Roa (CO)  
Błażej Kotowski (PL)  
Polina Khatsenka (BY)  
Rozi Mákó (HU)  
Razieh Kooshki (IR)  
Vahid Qaderi (IR)  
Barbara Jazbec (SI)  
Parisa Ayati (IR)  
Mahnaz Rastgoumoghaddam (IR)  
Daphne Xanthopoulou (GR)  
Funda Zeynep Ayguler (TR)  
Jo Caimo (BE)  
Sebastian Sprenger (DE)  
Smirna Kulenović (BA)  
Tiio Suorsa (FI)  
Indiara Di Benedetto (IT)  
TAZ 22

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