

A u g m e n t e d A u t h o r s h i p

Digital Strategies for Artistic Collaboration



Online Symposium hosted by the Lucerne University of Applied
Sciences and Arts - Lucerne School of Art and Design,
together with HeK - House of Electronic Arts Basel

A b s t r a c t s

Tega Brain

Designing with Natural Intelligence

Solar Protocol is a growing, experimental network of solar-powered servers installed at different locations around the world. The network hosts a web platform that is served from whichever server is enjoying the most sun at the time. The network routes internet traffic according to the logic of the sun, exploring how internet protocols could be configured with *natural* rather than *artificial* intelligence. Servers are stewarded by volunteers around the world who are also able to host their own content on the platform.

Solar Protocol continues my hybrid artistic inquiry into how to design technologies with environmental logics and natural intelligences, work I call eccentric engineering. Eccentric engineering prototypes systems that center environmental dynamics in their function and operation. Unlike conventional infrastructures which exclusively cater to human needs and perspectives, eccentric systems work with logics from their environment. Although this may make them appear slow, intermittent or risky, these inefficiencies provide a space for mutualism, multi-species collaboration and a capacity to operate within planetary boundaries.

Tega Brain is an Australian-born artist and environmental engineer whose work examines issues of ecology, data systems and infrastructure. She has created wireless networks that respond to natural phenomena, systems for obfuscating fitness data, and an online smell-based dating service. She has exhibited at the Guangzhou Triennial, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, the New Museum, NYC and the Science Gallery in Dublin. Her work has been widely discussed in the press including in the New Yorker, the New York Times, Art Forum and Art in America. Tega is an Assistant Professor of Integrated Digital Media, New York University. She works with the [Processing Foundation](#) on the [Learning to Teach](#) conference series and the p5js project. She has been awarded residencies and fellowships at [Data & Society](#), [Eyebeam](#), [GASP Public Art Park](#), the Environmental Health Clinic and the Australia Council for the Arts.

Julie Carpenter

I. AI

Instead of defining AI's role by its artistic value/quality or output/reception, a challenge is to instead explore our *human gaze* and the ways we position ourselves in relation to art, both in its developmental processes and interpretations.

Traditionally, an artist initiates and leads the creative and conceptual process, ideates artistic boundaries, and curates the factors that lead to the artistic outcomes. It is a *creative process* for the

artist and the interpretation of the viewers, but for digital technologies it is only *creation*. Therefore, a human in-the-loop of the algorithmic direction lends to us regarding the digital technology as an artist's tool or a medium. The artist has internal motivations, goals, inspiration, technique, tailored skills, and specific cultural knowledge. They have control and authorship of the overall artistic process.

In other cases, AI is set loose to develop its own images and outcomes semi-autonomously. Using technology that generates art with some autonomy challenges our ideas about its role in co-creation as it becomes a more significant part of the process and results. Yet, although these algorithms can produce original images, they are generated and live in an isolated creative space that lacks social and cultural contexts. Human artists, on the other hand, are inspired by people, places, and experiences. They create art to tell stories, communicate, and share how they make sense of the world. Technologies do not have any of these internal motivations, and that challenges our concepts of creativity, authorship, invention, derivation, and conceptualization. However, human curators ground AI-generated artwork in cultural context and connect it back to the human experience, which is itself a form of co-creation, framing, and authorship. *I, AI* explores our human gaze and how we regard ourselves in relation to these new technologies and their creations, and how this new position redefines our ideas related to authorship and audience.

Julie Carpenter, PhD, is a research scientist based in San Francisco and a Research Fellow in California Polytechnic State University's Ethics + Emerging Sciences Group, a non-partisan organization focused on the risk, ethical, and social impact of emerging sciences and technologies.

Her research situates human-technology experiences within their larger cultural contexts and social systems to offer a framework for describing what phenomena are occurring and explain how peoples' cultural concepts and expectations, behaviors, and ideas adapt and change over time as they work and live with emerging technologies. In her work, Carpenter typically uses ethnographic research methods to explore sociocultural influences on human behaviors that inform topics such as trust, decision-making, and emotional attachment to artificial systems. Visit jgcarpenter.com to learn more about Dr. Carpenter's writings and research or follow her on Twitter @jgcarpenter.

KEIKEN

Augmented Empathy

In our presentation we will talk about new identities in relation to being a collaborative practice and our process of collaboration, facilitation and transformation when collectively world-building. We will also talk about our use of AI for character design in our metaverse collaborations. We will share speculative technologies we have designed in our metaverse and how we use simulation as a form of future-forecasting and explore consequences fictitiously.

KEIKEN are a collaborative practice, co-founded by artists Tanya Cruz, Hana Omori and Isabel Ramos in 2015, who frequently work with multiple collaborators. Based between London and Berlin, they come from mixed diasporic backgrounds (Mexican/Japanese/European/Jewish). Named after the Japanese word for experience, they create speculative worlds, using moving-image, CGI, gaming software, installation, virtual and augmented reality, programming and performance to merge the physical and digital. Their work simulates new structures and ways of existing, exploring how societal

introjection governs the way we feel, think and perceive.

Recent exhibitions and projects include: The Time Complex, Yerevan Biennial, Online; Augmented Empathy, FACT, Liverpool; The Metaverse Womb, 3rd 2020, HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin; Ghosts & Apparitions, Sheffield Doc Fest, Online; Metaverse: We are at the end of something, Mira Festival, IDEAL, Barcelona; Sessions, Block Universe, Online; How to Make a Paradise, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, The Eternal Network transmediale 2020, Haus der Kulturen der Welt HKW, Berlin (2020); Image Behaviour, ICA, London; Jerwood Collaborate!, Jerwood Arts, London (2019).

Lachlan Kermode (Forensic Architecture)

Computing Violence

As the volume of human rights violations that are presented online in some way- via video, images, satellite, or by other means- increases, the scope of meaningful human rights research also broadens. Building from the idea that methods from a range of disciplines such as architecture, art and journalism can and should be used to help document violations, Forensic Architecture has recently been working with computational techniques such as machine learning and computer vision to build methods to investigate them. This talk presents our research today, detailing the problem, our solutions so far, and the conceptual and methodological question that are raised by the work.

Lachlan Kermode (Advanced Researcher / Open Source Software), is part of the Forensic Architecture team. He develops full stack architectures, manages machine learning workflows, and handles the grainier details of computer infrastructure across a range of Forensic Architecture's investigations. He has a degree in Computer Science from Princeton University, and a range of experience both in industry and as a full stack freelancer. Lachlan's academic interests are generally found in and between computer science, infrastructure studies, and cultural and critical theory.

<https://forensic-architecture.org>

Sam Lavigne

Scrapism

Web scraping is the process of downloading and parsing web content using automated tools, or converting online text and other media into structured data. In short, the user writes a program to browse and analyze the web on their behalf, rather than doing so manually. This is a common practice in silicon valley, where open html pages are regularly transformed into private property: Facebook began as a web scraping project, as did Google and all other search engines. Web scraping is also frequently used to acquire the massive datasets needed to train machine learning models, and has become an important research tool for journalists and sociologists.

I define "Scrapism" as the use of web scraping and data collection as an artistic or cultural practice. Scrapism combines data journalism, conceptual art, archiving and hoarding in an attempt to extract data from behind the various web interfaces that mediate our lives, and to relocate that data for emotional, critical, or poetic ends. As a practice, Scrapism responds to a world in which everything we do is tracked, exploited, and mined for profit, a world in which human experiences are turned to predictive models and into business models.

Sam Lavigne is an artist and teacher based in Brooklyn New York and Austin Texas. Lavigne's artistic practice, which takes the form of both online and physical installations, interrogates the social, political and economic impact of emerging technology, and frequently deals with themes of data, surveillance, policing, and commodification. His recent work includes "New York Apartment", an exploration of the real estate market commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art, and "Get Well Soon" a response to the healthcare crisis in the US, which was named by ARTNews as one of the twenty defining artworks of 2020. He has exhibited at Lincoln Center, Pioneer Works, DIS, Ars Electronica, The New Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and his work has been covered in the New Yorker, the Washington Post, the Guardian, Motherboard, Wired, the Atlantic, Forbes, NPR, the San Francisco Chronicle, the World Almanac, the Ellen Degeneres Show and elsewhere.

Lauren Lee McCarthy

You Can Say 'Talk to Me'

You can say turn off the lights. You can say wake me up at 7am. You can say talk to me. I am captivated by the ways we are taught to interact with algorithms, and how this shapes the way we interact with each other. Central to my work is a critique of the simultaneous technological and social systems we're building around ourselves. What are the rules, what happens when we introduce glitches? I invite participants. To remote control my dates. To be followed. To welcome me in as their human smart home. To attend a party hosted by artificial intelligence. In these interactions, there is a reciprocal risk taking and vulnerability, as performer and audience are both challenged to relinquish control, both implicated. We must formulate our own opinions about the systems that govern our lives. We begin to notice their effects play out on our identity, relationships, and society. Each work feels like an attempt to hack my way out of myself and into closeness with others. I am embodying machines, trying to understand that distance between the algorithm and myself, the distance between others and me. There's humor in the breakdown, and also moments of clarity. Who builds these artificial systems, what values do they embody? Who is prioritized and who is targeted as race, gender, disability, and class are programmatically encoded? Where are the boundaries around our intimate spaces? In the midst of always on networked interfaces, what does it mean to be truly present?

Lauren Lee McCarthy is an LA-based artist examining social relationships in the midst of surveillance, automation, and algorithmic living. She is the creator of p5.js, and Co-Director of the Processing Foundation. Lauren's work has been exhibited internationally, at places such as The Barbican Centre,

Ars Electronica, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Haus der elektronischen Künste, SIGGRAPH, Onassis Cultural Center, IDFA DocLab, Science Gallery Dublin, Seoul Museum of Art. She has received numerous honors including a Creative Capital Award, Ars Electronica Golden Nica, Sundance Fellowship, Eyebeam Fellowship, and grants from the Knight Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, Google, and Rhizome. Lauren is an Associate Professor at UCLA Design Media Arts.
<http://lauren-mccarthy.com/>

!Mediengruppe Bitnik

#Flagged for nudity

In their works, !Mediengruppe Bitnik use experimental interventionist practices, often intentionally applying loss of control to challenge established contemporary technopolitical structures and mechanisms. In their talk, Bitnik will focus on how their works relate to the technological frameworks which they examine and in within which the works exist. Bitnik will outline some of the strategies they use to investigate networked infrastructures, with the aim of shedding their blackboxes and uncovering underlying mechanisms. The resulting works often uncover unintended artefacts and untold narratives - sometimes even opening systems up to scrutiny.

!Mediengruppe Bitnik (read - the not Mediengruppe Bitnik) are contemporary artists working on, and with, the Internet. Their practice expands from the digital to physical spaces, often intentionally applying loss of control to challenge established structures and mechanisms.

In the past they have been known to subvert surveillance cameras, bug an opera house to broadcast its performances outside, send a parcel containing a camera to Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy in London and physically glitch a building. In 2014, they sent a bot called «Random Darknet Shopper» on a three-month shopping spree in the Darknets where it randomly bought items like keys, cigarettes, trainers and Ecstasy and had them sent directly to the gallery space.

!Mediengruppe Bitnik's works formulate fundamental questions concerning contemporary issues.

Their works are shown internationally, most recently in exhibitions at Museum of Modern Art Moscow, Drugo More, Rijeka, CAC Shanghai, LOAF Kyoto, Hyundai Motorstudio Beijing, Annka Kultys Gallery London and Super Dakota Brussels among others.

They have received awards including Swiss Art Award, PAX Art Award, Prix de la Société des Arts Genève, Migros New Media Jubilee Award, Golden Cube Dokfest Kassel, Honorary Mention Prix Ars Electronica.

Protektorama [fed and cared for by JP Raether]

aLifveForms: Mythopoiesis

In their lecture Protektorama will give an introduction to their experimental framework, aLifveForms, a set of artificial AlterIdentities [fed and cared for by JP Raether] that mark constructed authorship. Appearances of other figures (SelfSisters) such as *Transformella cinis* or *Swarm-Being* will be presented and reflected, while instances, sites and practices will be discussed for their respective terms and methods. All of these aLifveForms constitute themselves out of language, technological skins, digital devices and bodies.

Protektorama's narrative aims to depart from a variety of assumptions on historic forms of magic and witchcraft, biology and procreation as well as tourism as a geopathological form. Instead they will aim to propose a form of hyperbolic speculation or an attempt at a self organized reconstruction and evolution of bodies as well identity-making and -unmaking. To Protektorama/aLifveForms, re-engineering these forms is a practice of deliberate dramatization of the real and a flamboyant lifeline towards a radically different cosmology than the one capitalist normality has to offer.

aLifveForms are bodies of work that explore questions of identity and language constituting reality. In their performative, distributed social interventions, the array of bodies activates a plurality of AlterIdentities engaging an elaborated vocabulary. Organized in a conceptual 'Identitecture' the techno-organically sprawling herd of humanoid beings grows through partition, forking, and updates to become a multiplicity of identities. In their appearances, the avatara work to demonstrate that in every common reality the potential for another reality is always present. There are currently three active identities: Transformellae research globalized and industrialized human reproduction. The Swarm-Being traces the transnational circulation of bodies and souvenirs. Protektoramae seek out sites of production of contemporary information technologies, interrogating the relation of the human body to its technological devices. The AlterIdentities are vessels for story drafting, from which photography emerges as derivative, crystalizing the essence of the performative appearances. Their sculptural practice transforms the experience of the AlterIdentities into complex, sculptural-spatial ensembles.

aLifveForms' work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions such as nGbK, Berlin (2020); Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto (2019); Dortmunder Kunstverein (2019); 6th Athens Biennale (2018); Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler (2018); Edith-Russ-Haus, Oldenburg (2017); transmediale Festival, Berlin (2017), Kunstverein Für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2017)(solo); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2016); 9th Berlin Biennale (2016); Kunsthaus Bregenz (2015); Fridericianum, Kassel (2015); MMK, Frankfurt (2015); District, Berlin (2015) (solo); Kunst-Werke, Berlin (2013). Their appearances have been presented at Tanznacht, Berlin (2020); PACT, Essen (2019); BAK, Utrecht (2019); Kampnagel, Hamburg (2018); Kammerspiele Munich (2018); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2017), amongst others.

All of the aLifveForms are currently fed and cared for by J.P. Raether. He attended University of Arts Berlin (1999–2005) and is currently holding a professorship for Artistic Practice in the Public Space at AdBK Nuremberg. He lives and works in Berlin.

Nishant Shah

Moving in and out fakeness

*The dismantled author in the face of information
overload*

Authorship and traceability of information have become the centre of all attention when dealing with the pandemic of misinformation and fake news. Who authors information, who gets to claim responsibility for it, and who can be trusted as the bearer of facts have come under renewed attention in the quest of information verification practices. This talk proposes that instead of trying to find a consolidated author who has direct correlation with digital narratives, we need to start thinking about authorship as distributed and dismantled, as information flows in and out of fakeness, to create new modes of meaning in the times we live in. Offering 3 principles of digital fakeness, the talk examines how we might frame the question of authorship in the face of information overload.

Nishant Shah is a feminist, humanist, technologist, working as Director Research and Professor Aesthetics and Cultures of Technology, at ArtEZ University of the Arts, The Netherlands. He is an endowed professor in narrative change practices at the Radboud University and a faculty associate at the Berkman-Klein Centre for Internet & Society at Harvard University, USA. His work is at the intersections of social justice, civil society building, and digital narrative activation through multistakeholder conversations between digital technologies, art and design practice, and social movements and organisation. His new book Really Fake is available in May 2021, with the University of Minnesota Press.

Programme

Thursday 20 May

Welcome (13:30)

Gabriela Christen Dean of the Lucerne School of Art and Design, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU)

Sabine Himmelsbach Director of the HeK (House of Electronic Arts)

Introductory Note

Monica Studer/Christoph van den Berg Lucerne School of Art and Design (HSLU), MFA Programme – Critical Image Practices Major

Panel 1: New Identities

Keynote: Julie Carpenter (13:50)

Artistic Presentation: KEIKEN (14:20)

Break (14:50)

Artistic Presentation: Protektorama [fed and cared for by JP Raether] (15:10)

Artistic Presentation: Lauren Lee McCarthy (15:40)

Break (16:10)

Panel Discussion (16:30)

Moderation: Boris Magrini Curator at the HeK (House of Electronic Arts)

Panel Summary (17:10)

Rachel Mader Head of the Competence Centre Art in Public Spheres at the Lucerne School of Art and Design (HSLU)

Friday 21 May

Panel 2: New Critical-Artistic Strategies

Keynote: Nishant Shah (13:30)

Artistic Presentation: !Mediengruppe Bitnik (14:00)

Break (14:30)

Artistic Presentation: Sam Lavigne (14:45)

Artistic Presentation: Tega Brain (15:15)

Artistic Presentation: Lachlan Kermode (Forensic Architecture) (15:45)

Break (16:15)

Panel Discussion (16:30)

Moderation: Sabine Gebhardt Fink Head of the MFA Programme at the Lucerne School of Art and Design (HSLU) Tancredi Gusman Research Associate at the Lucerne School of Art and Design (HSLU)

Panel Summary (17:10)

Jacqueline Holzer Vice Director at the Lucerne School of Art and Design (HSLU)

Closing Note (17:15)