

TAMÁS PÁLL
SELECTED WORKS
2016-2024

NESTING

(2024)

multimedia installation

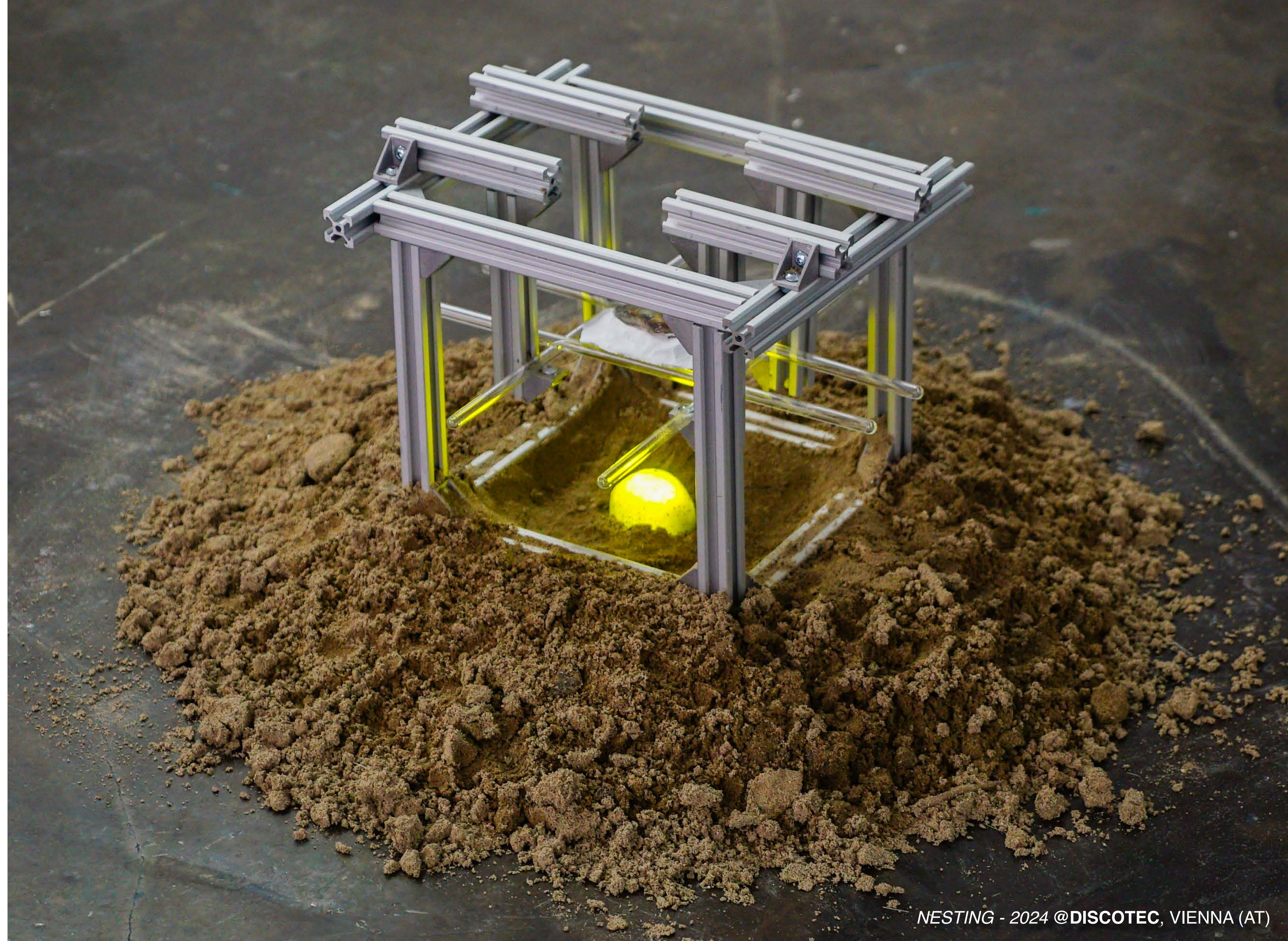
web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/nesting/>

Nesting is a multimedia installation that presents a story about an urbex role-playing community that straddles the boundaries of reality and fiction.

The project is the second chapter of the artistic research project 'LAIR'. LAIR unpacks and imagines alternative communities, rituals of squatting and real-estate developments through narrative videogames, installation and performance.

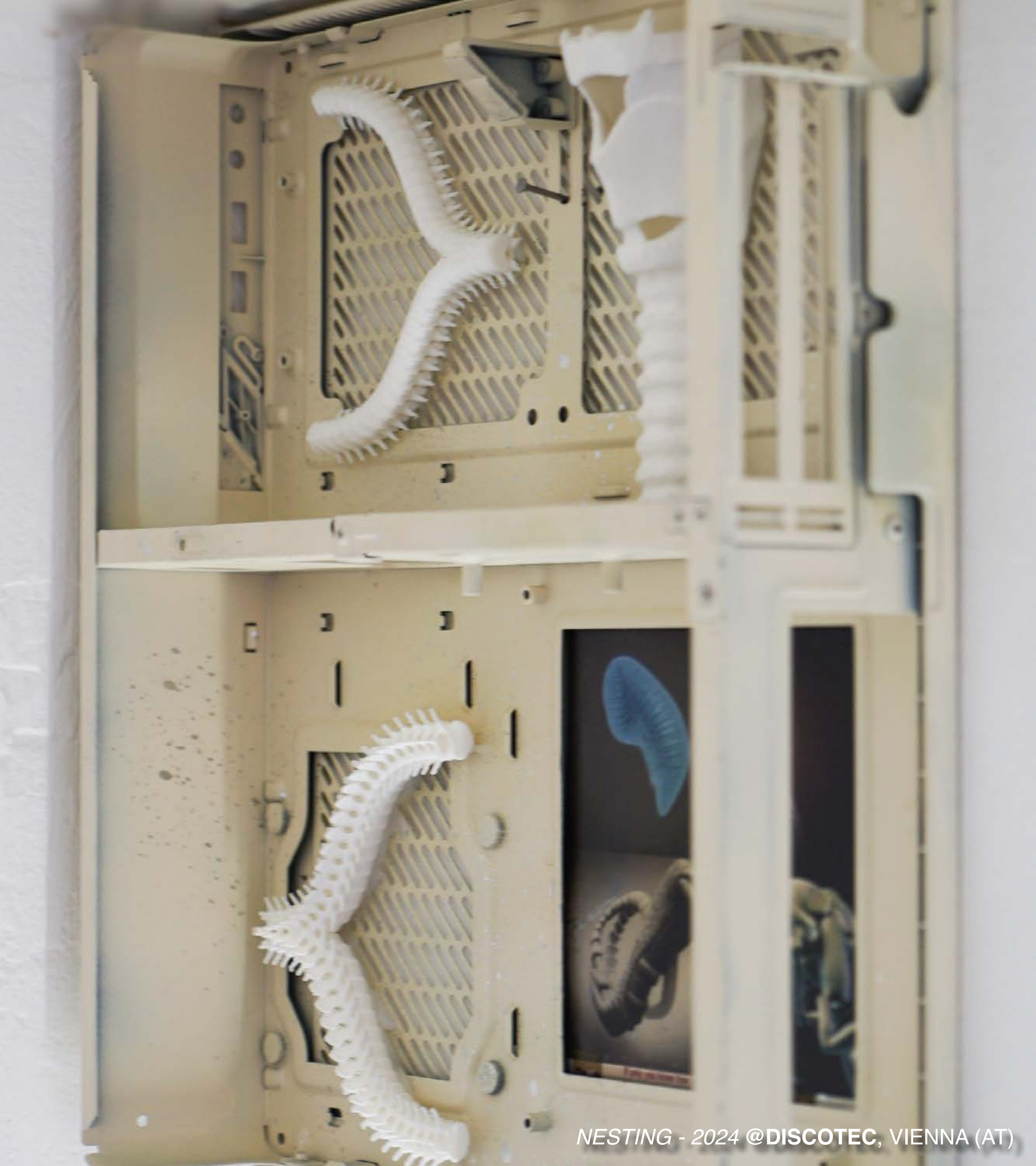
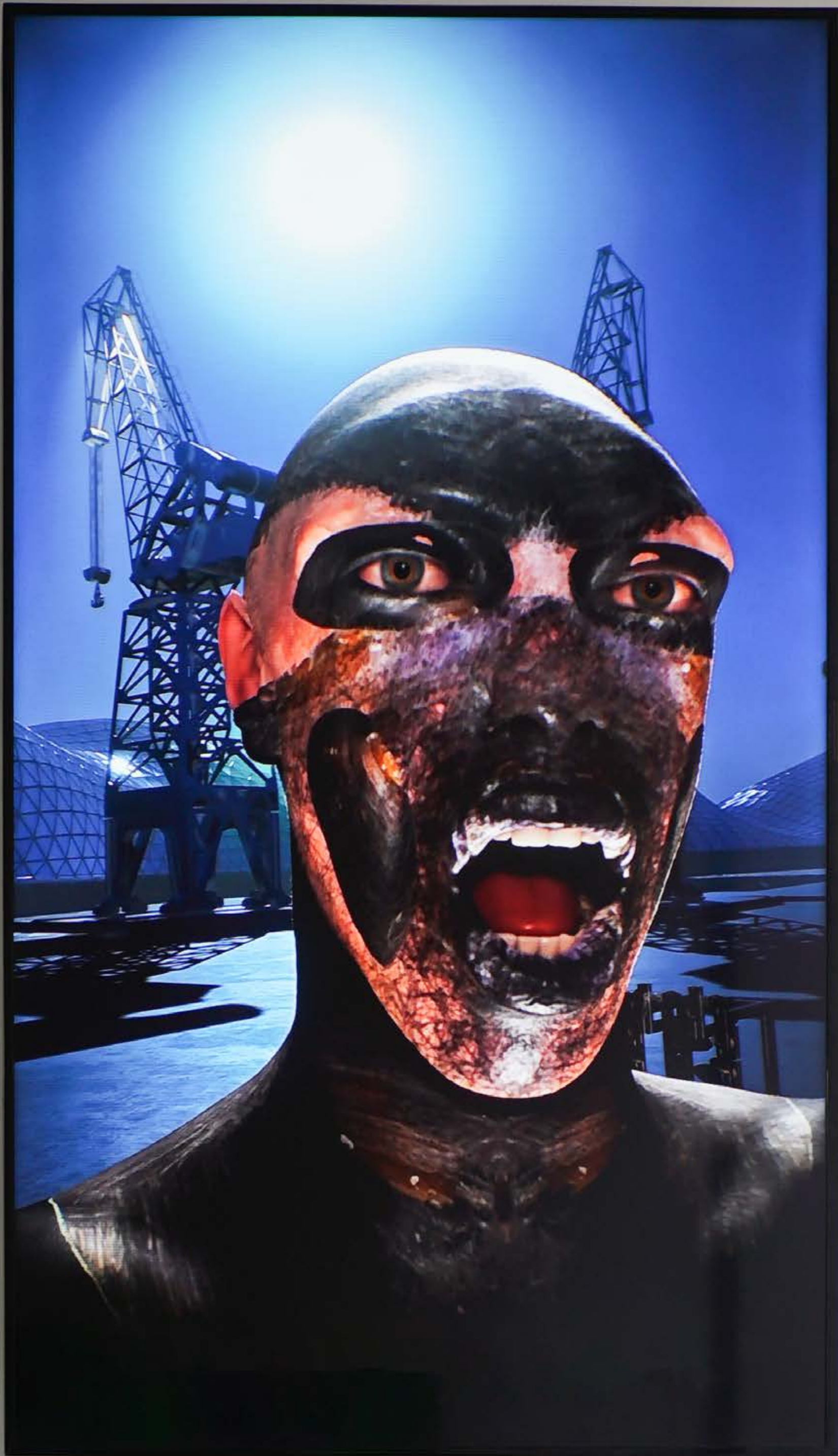
The exhibition features artefacts and relics from the semi-fictional world of the community and objects of their rituals, monuments from their shared past, in the gallery space.

In the 3-channel video, Nesting's virtual game world is paired with video essays, creating the context of a fictional world. The project builds on a two-year research project exploring the interconnections between science, real estate development, technology and squatting through concrete stories from Hungary.













LAIR

(2021-ONGOING)

artistic research project, multimedia installations,
virtual card game

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/lair/>

LAIR is an artistic research project that intertwines nature, scientific developments, real-estate investments, mythology and technology in a series of installations and videos.

LAIR revolves around the divide between artificiality and nature at its core, it unpacks how the privatization of nature and scientific infrastructures coalesce in contemporary real-estate investments, the subversive mechanics of squatting and mythopoesis as a device of collective worldmaking.

The first chapter of LAIR juxtaposes the politically charged story of Pannon Park, a failed Biodome project in the heart of Budapest, through performing squatters who inhabit the building, becoming a cross-species interdependent community of the Biodome who replace the nationalist mythmaking of the government with their invented speculative science, language and mythology.

This chapter unpacks the anatomy of languages, speech and voice through a series of speculative 3D printed sculptures and modded old PC cases.

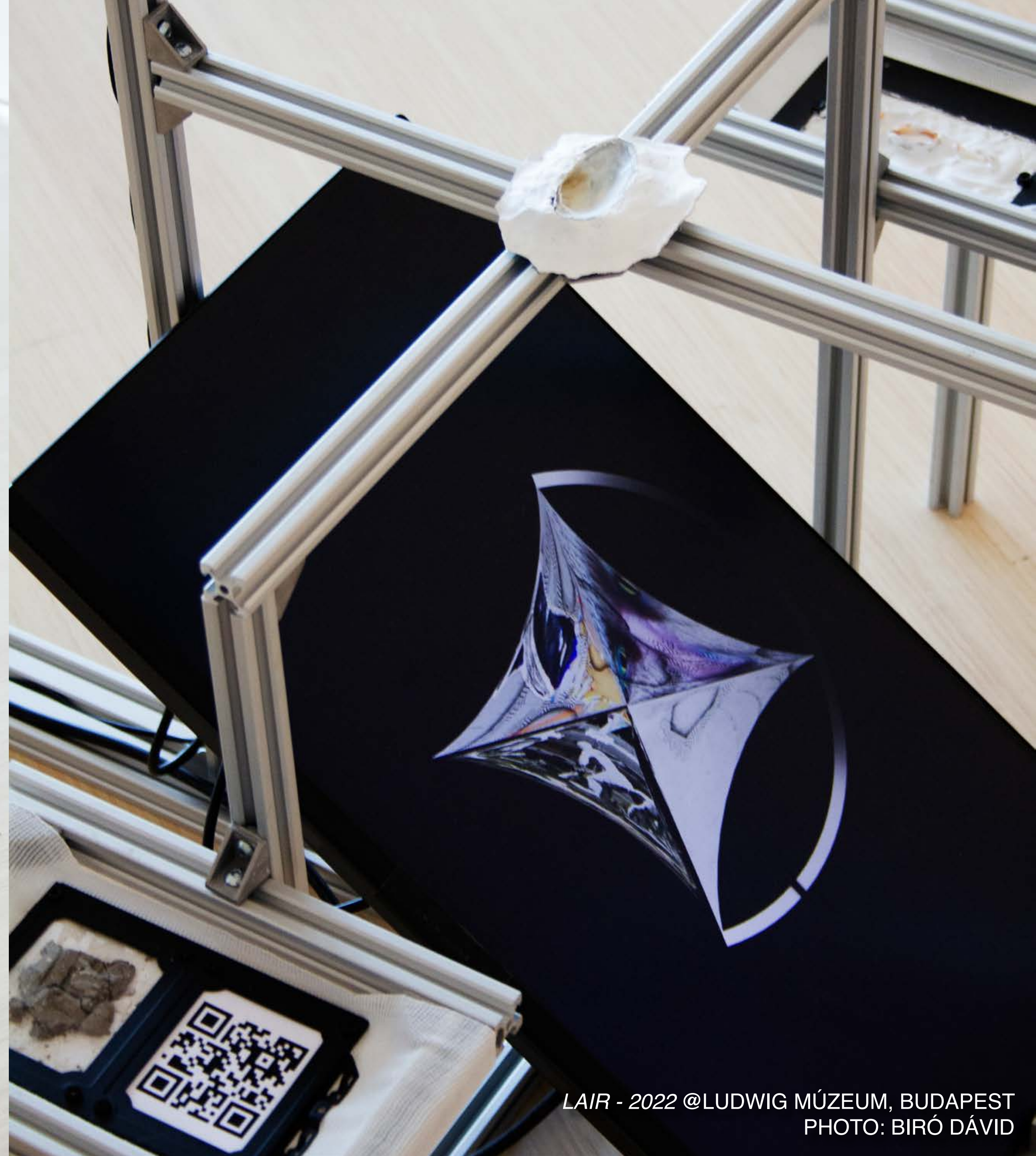


LAIR - 2022 @PETRICHOR, BUDAPEST
PHOTO: NEOGRÁDY-KISS BARNABÁS



A small informational card or brochure lying on the floor near the bench.









THE CITY GOES DARK

(2023-24)

artist card deck 15*20cm

The City goes Dark is speculative visual diary that traces the transformation of the food industry through juxtaposing its emerging business models and their nomenclature, like 'ghost kitchens' or 'dark stores' to conjure methods of necromancy, demonology and divination to evoke a haunting story about the platformisation of labor and dining. The diary uses AI generated imagery, media archeology materials from social media, field research documentation, and text to explore the otherworlds of the food industry.

The project assembles a gastroccult visual journey through the guts of ghost kitchens and dark stores, where the growls of the stomach echoes the haunted landscape of the food industry, that optimizes eating habits in the urban ecology of megacities to afford the most productive workforce for its systems of labor.

Through means of gastromancy - a forgotten form of bodily divination - this journey evokes the hauntingly alienating undead memories of family dinners, machine visions of food for taugt and overhauled streaming platforms that is centered around office meals, binge-watching, binge-eating and sleep-eating after 16 hour long workdays.

As the city goes dark with its kitchens and grocery stores, this transformation is traced through a gastro-spectral visual diary of kitchen-demonology. Time-frozen in still-lives and pseudo-documents, the project invokes where spirits gather in commercial kitchens, emerging in the reflections of stainless steel surfaces and the particles of frying oil. They speak through the AI aided translations of growling internal organs, unspoken worker gossips and the ectoplasmic sludge leftovers of the liminal spaces of bankrupt diners.

As the light fade out in the diners, the obscurity of labor conditions and health regulations grow, feeding the opaque magic of platforms, generating a void of vision that captures attention of our eyes doomscrolling the endless options of food delivery sites.

The City Goes Dark

Encounters with
Nocturna / Lean

Order #7277

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, ghost kitchens and dark stores spread in cities, serving as rented properties and restaurants exclusively for delivery.

As their name suggests, ghost and dark businesses adopt opaque and invisible processes as their core model, transforming public spaces of feeding into tech platform backrooms, while they become resistant to labor regulations and health laws, creating precarious conditions for workers.

These phenomena reflect the expansion of tech platforms into physical urban spaces, known as platform urbanism. While ghost kitchens and dark stores are more widespread in the UK and US, post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe adapt similar models in response to crises.

"The City Goes Dark" is a visual short story that explores the transformation of diners and offline restaurants to ghost kitchens and dark stores through the lens of divination and necromancy.

The story aims to reveal the extractive logic and occult terminology of tech platforms in the attention economy era. By connecting Eastern European folklore, divination, personal memories and the food industry, this story delves into the obscure and abstract processes of platform feeding through storytelling.



Nocturna / Lean

Nocturna / Lean is the networked form of the “Imbolygó”, a formless entity that exists between the living and the dead realms, originating in Hungarian / Carpathian mythology.

It is a terminally online spectral entity that interfaces with reality and its own ectoplasmic body through online platforms.

Its spectral diet is based on trending TikTok recipes, extreme food challenges and contactless food delivery, and its movement and exercise mimics trending dances and troll moves. It scrapes the surface web for embodied trends, such as viral food content or meme recipes.

As a techno-spectral entity, Nocturna / Lean collects its memories, food diary and body journal as coded AI-generated images reminiscent of late 19th century paranormal photography.

Its spectral process of remembering evokes the obscure processes embedded in large machine learning datasets.



Digestion

The doorbell rings and we rush to the door. We have ordered a bean salad, with contactless delivery. We open the door, the bag of food is on the floor, a quickly fading shadow of the delivery worker leaves the building, his cologne is the only thing left.

We draw a 3x3 grid on the counter. We separate 41 beans from our salad, mark 3 of them with an ‘X’ and turn them over. Two X’s and one blank. We pass the remaining beans through our grid. While trying to interpret our prophecy, we begin to eat our dinner. The process is slow, our digestive systems begin to work.

As the growls, howls and vibrations flash from our stomach, the presence of Nocturna / Lean becomes stronger.

The sounds of our body overwhelm our attempt to interpret our future. It becomes an otherworldly language, alien at first, but as we ease into digestion these sounds become soothing, almost like a gentle whisper in our ear.

THE COMPASS

(2023)

Interactive AR webapp

web: <https://hollow.systems/compass/>

'The Compass' is an interactive digital installation where the fictional worlds of Hollow are displayed. The work interweaves documentation, research materials and digital impressions of their performance AURA with a three-stranded story.

The interactive, augmented reality-based installation straddles physical and virtual realities, exploring the intertwining of fiction and reality through the viewer's smart devices.

'The Compass' is, in other words, a rhizomatic diary that gathers together fictional and real memories, objects and stories that have accumulated during the creation of an imaginary place and artwork.

In collaboration with Hollow





AURA

(2023)

artistic research, VR game,
participatory performance, installation

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/aura/>

AURA examines the relationship between theater and reality, as well as the world-making potential of shared imagination.

The performance also raises the question of what emerges in a group beyond the sum of its members.

Similarly to Hollow's previous works, the audience does not remain outsiders: This time they are immersed in an imaginary journey, the story, the landscapes and the characters of which are evoked through poetics, media art, contemporary dance, role-playing, experimental electronic music and singing.

The starting point for the performance was an international research, in which the three artists investigated the functioning and world-building strategies of grassroots communities in Eastern Europe. During the intuitive and experience-based research process, they also experimented with the creation of a collective body and shared consciousness, through which they also aimed to reinterpret the functioning of their own group.

AURA is based on Hollow's research project 'Paracosmic Friend'.

Created by Hollow (Páll Tamás, Muskovics Gyula, Szeri Viktor)

Music: Thea Soti, Yinna

Performers: Márton Glaser, Imola Kacsó, Gyula Muskovics, Tamás Páll, Viktor Szeri, Thea Soti, Yinna, Imre Vass

Light design: Kata Dézsi











OVO

(2021-ONGOING)

artistic research project

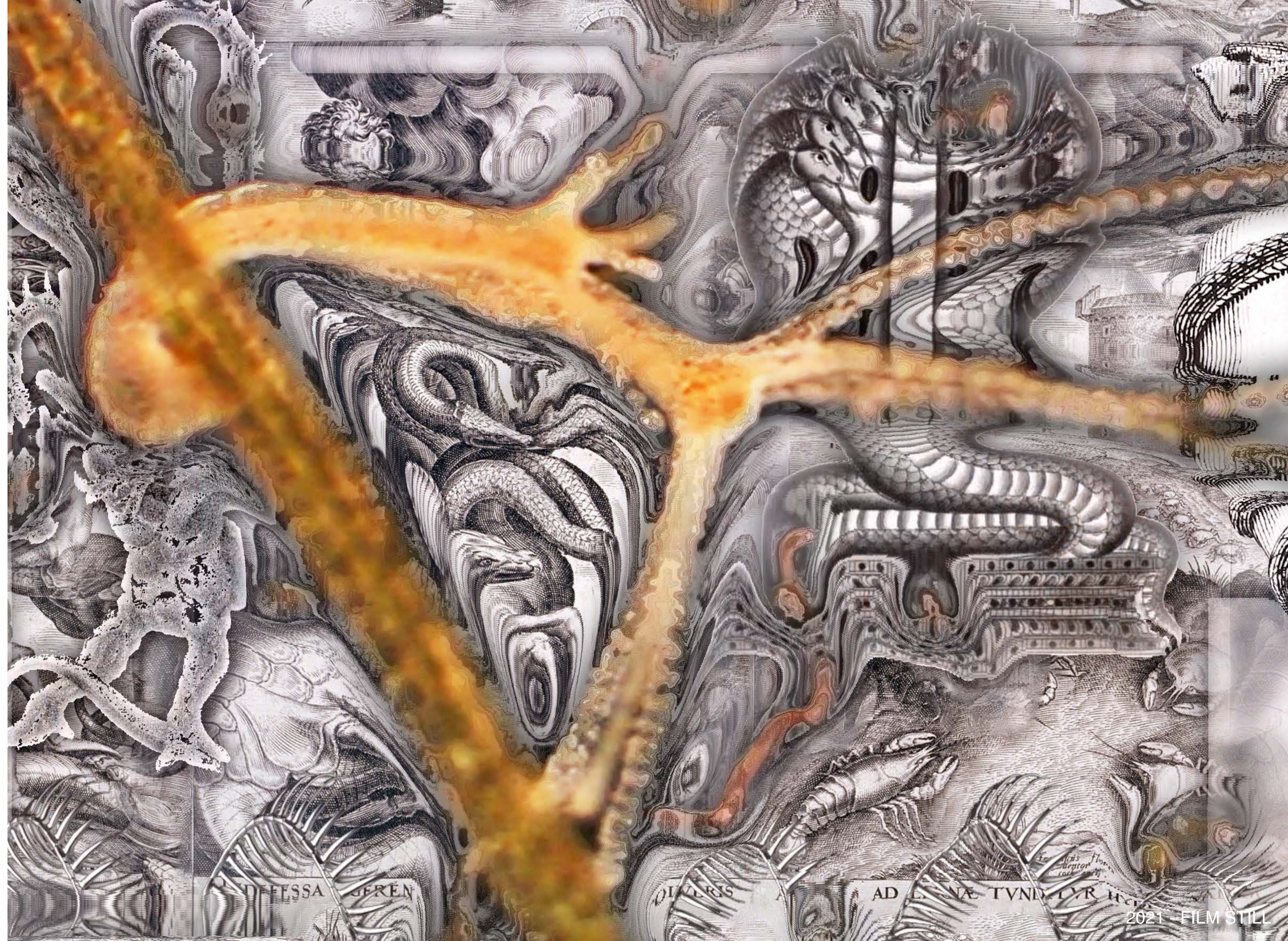
web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/ovo/>

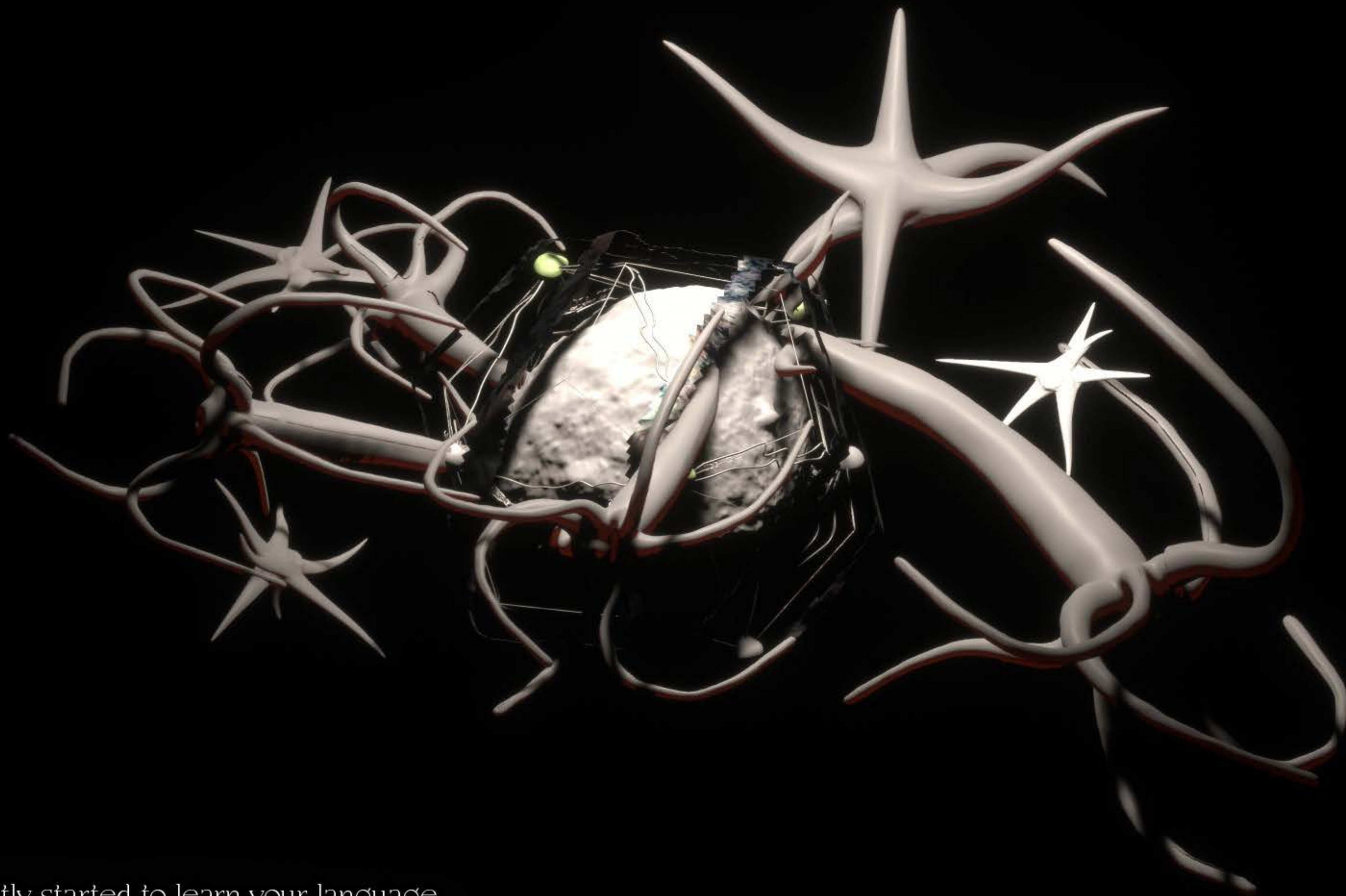
OvO is a multimedia installation and research project exploring the relationship between biology, artificial intelligence and storytelling. In the center of OvO's narrative is a synthetic creature, *Hydra vulgaris*, who comes to life in an experimental film while telling a fictional story.

The first module of the work, is a 16-minute experimental CGI film. In this film *Hydra vulgaris* tells a story about herself that reveals that this creature was modeled on a family of hydras that are considered a model organism in biology. Through the film, Hydra connects the functioning of neural networks with the materiality of asexual biological reproduction, the mechanism of world formation, and the reality-shaping effect of human languages through sprawling associations.

The second element of the installation is a set of translucent prints. These are schematic renderings of *Hydra vulgaris*' body. They appear in the form of digital body parts printed on foil and texts from the project's speculative research journal. The physical installation is mounted on a scattered harness strap system.

The third element of the work is an augmented reality sculpture connecting the virtual world of the film and the physical installation, while forming a transreal map of the installation. This sculpture is a shape-shifting virtual object that collects the coordinates of the installation's appearance in the form of a spatially compressed geodesic atlas. The work is present at three locations at once: the exhibition hall of the Panke Gallery in Berlin, the virtual space of the tranzitblog and the muddy soil of the floodplain forest in Csongrád.





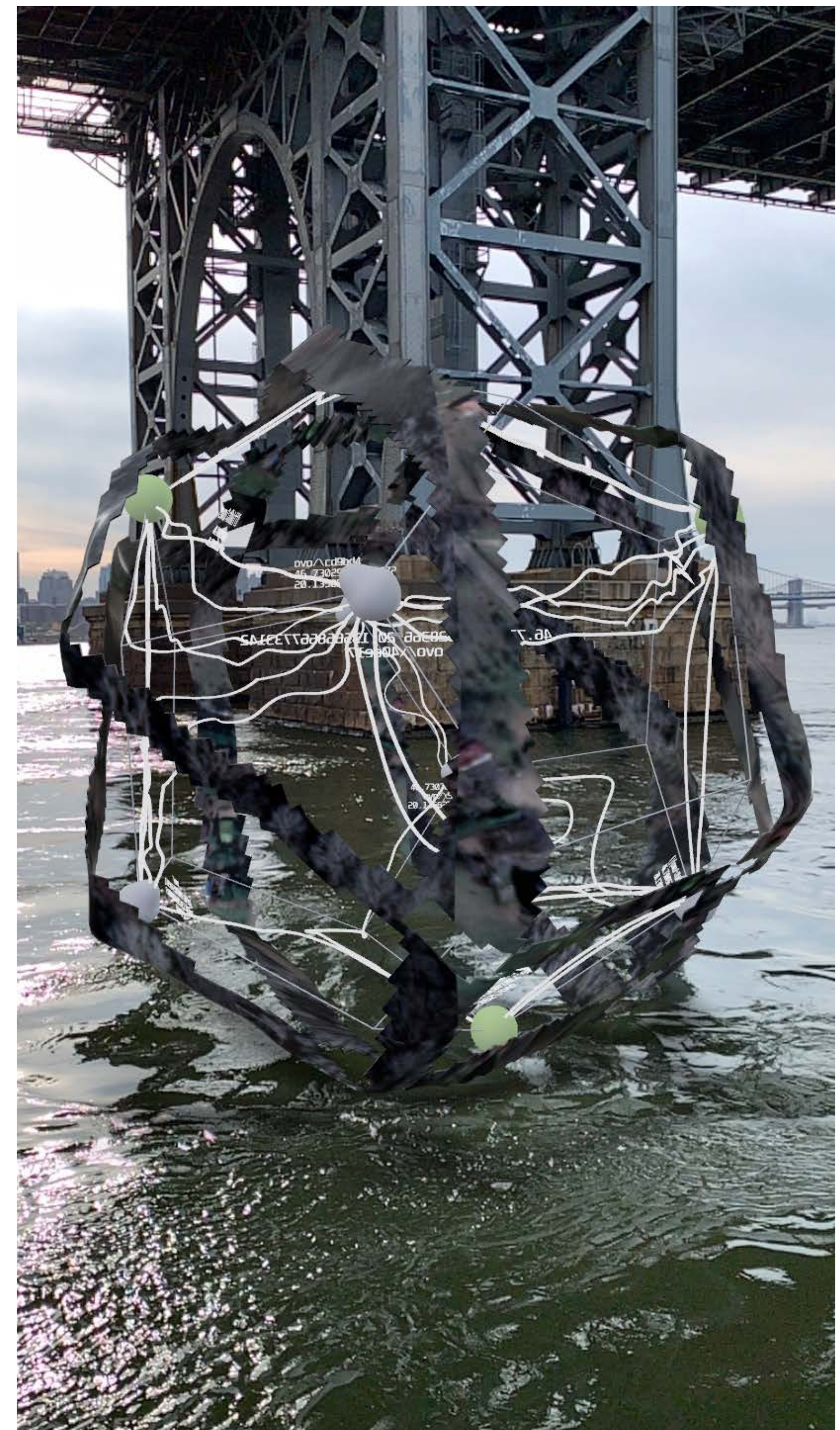
»» I have only recently started to learn your language.







2021 - @PETRICHOR, CSONGRÁD (HU)
PHOTO: NEOGRÁDY-KISS BARNABÁS



2021 - WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE, NEW YORK, USA

THE ARCHIVE

(2022)

worldbuilding research project, interactive database game

web: <https://archive.hollow.systems/>
& <https://www.hollow.systems/decipher/>

The Archive is an ongoing and evergrowing meta-project where Hollow's pre-existing worlds bleed into new ones. Otherwise stated, it is the larger structure to which the majority of their characters, stories, and landscapes belong. Most of its elements originate from events that occurred (or will occur) in one world or another. Therefore, as a series of texts, objects, and performances, The Archive draws attention to hidden correlations between Hollow's—invented and given—realities.

The stories that emerge from the time capsules stored in The Archive revolve around various issues, ranging from hope and nostalgia, through progress, desire, and utopia, to the inaccessibility of the future, and how predictions and speculations shape the present. Furthermore, with this piece, revealing background stories and content produced during the development of their works, Hollow also highlights the importance of the unseen aspects of creating an art project, including the amount of invisible labor involved.

The Archive consists of different chapters (see for example The Beyond or The Skin) that manifest in various—physical and/or virtual—forms. Meanwhile, this interactive online platform aims to be the place where the pieces of Hollow's speculative database are concentrated and continuously updated, to illuminate newer pathways and open portals to other potential realities, constituting bridges between the existing and what is beyond the horizon.

Created by Viktor Szeri, Tamás Páll, and Gyula Muskovics

Sound by András Molnár & Tamás Marquetant



So, just make sure you click on what really makes you move

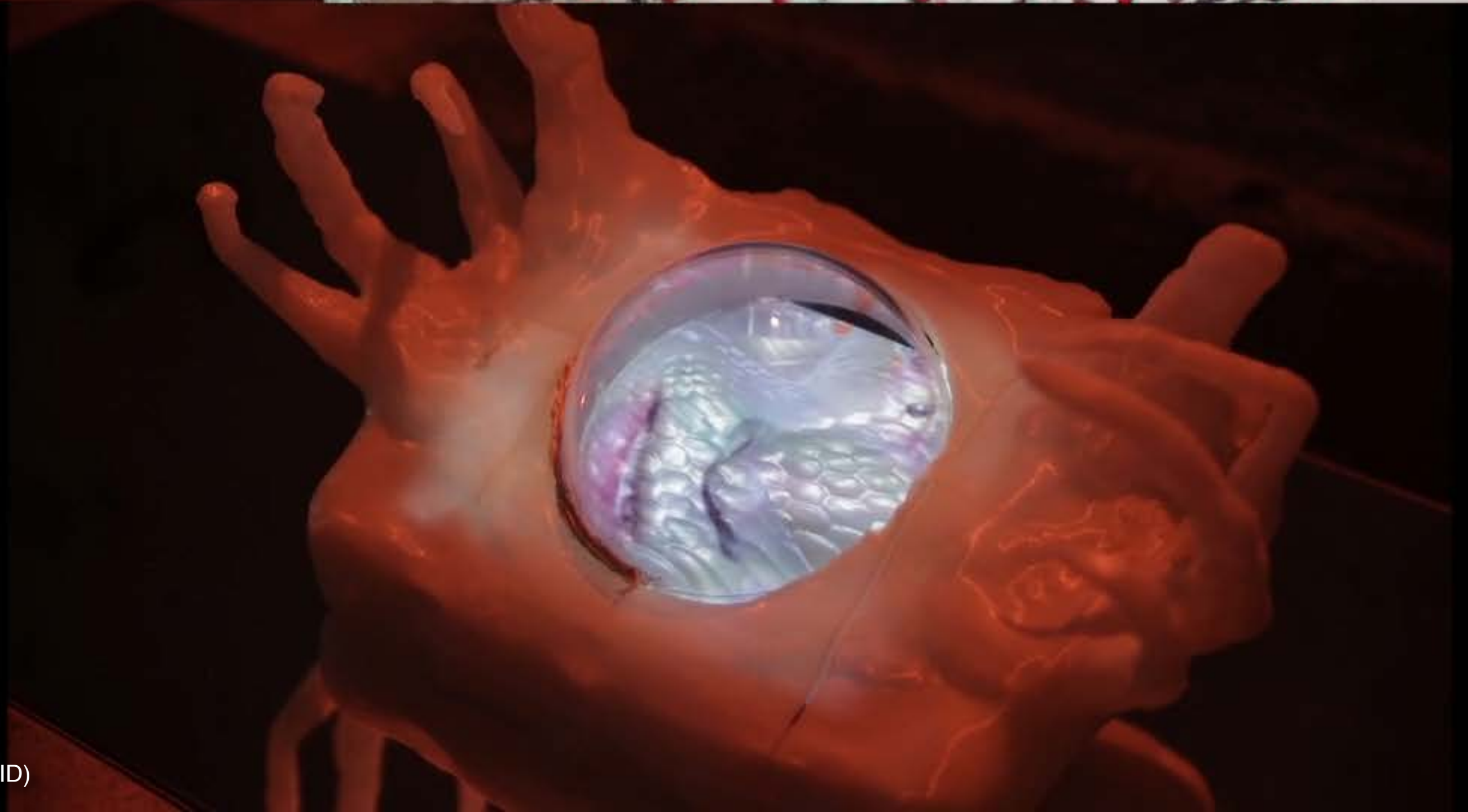
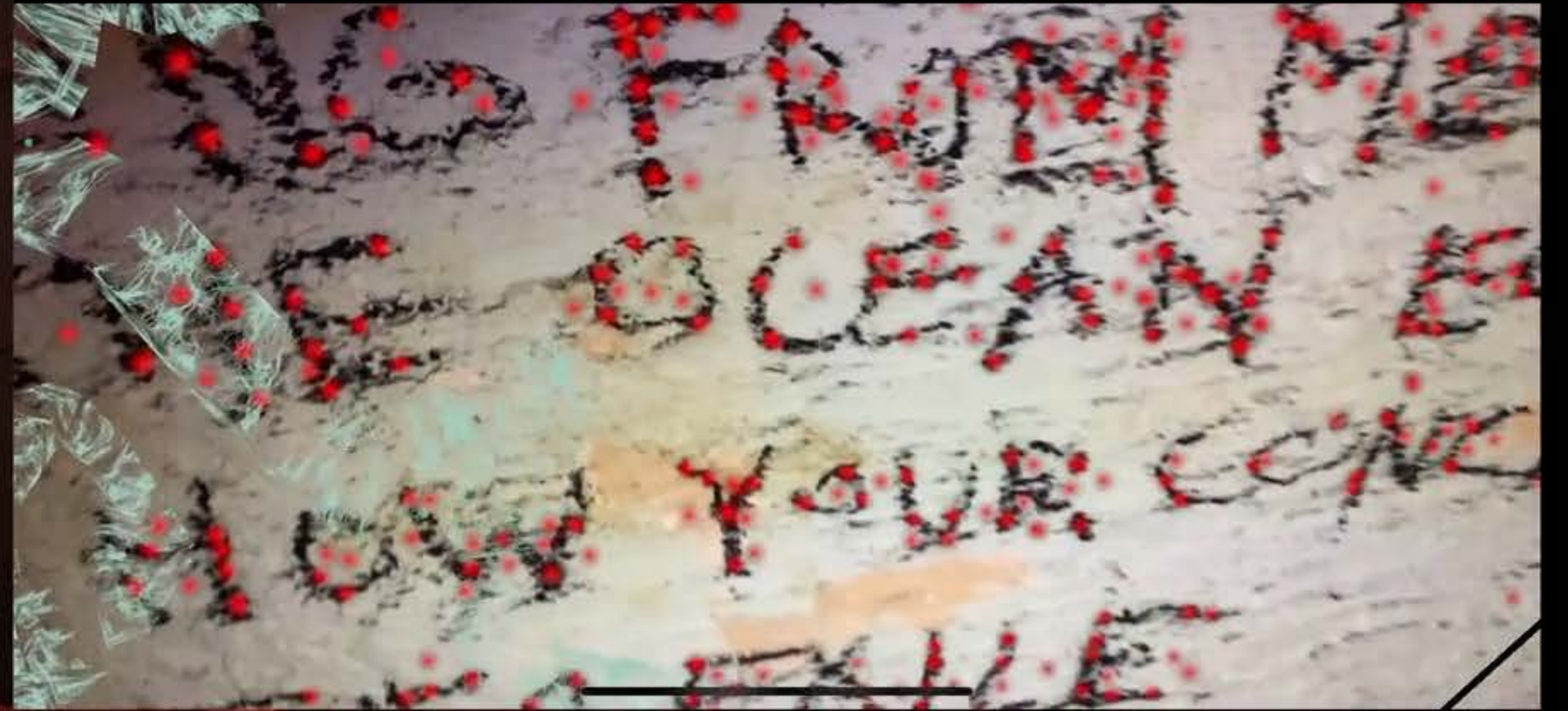


HE SKINS UP





2020 - HOLLOW: ARCHIVE.
MINE MY MIND. ART QUARTER BUDAPEST, BUDAPEST, HU (PHOTO: BIRO DÁVID)



REACTION / SELF SPAM

(2016-2021)

mixed media interior, inkjet prints,
Full-HD CGI video (22min)

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/selfspam/>

Self Spam / Reaction is an immersive multimedia installation and interior, where visitors can learn about the obscure mechanics of the data market, platformization, automation and surveillance capitalism.

In its current form, the installation carries the condensed documentation of the 2016 interior on a 1x2 meter textile print and a narrative CGI video.

The interior of Self Spam is a black room with chalk drawings, prints, UV lights, a projection, a computer and a mattress in the middle of the space. The walls are covered with scraps of text referring to CAPTCHA drawn with white chalk, as well as 140x100 cm inkjet prints of five digital sculptures.

The screening shows a CGI video that delves into the process of a thought experiment. The video maps out the absurd possibilities of self-multiplication, and shows an absurd attempt to disrupt online identification and thus observability by becoming spam. Within the video's narrative, an artificial intelligence narrator of the projected videogame tells a story that unveils the mechanics of contemporary surveillance systems and data markets.

In 2021, for the invitation of OFFBIENNÁLÉ, Páll revised the concept of Self Spam at the Order and Imagination exhibition and created a new, meta-reflection in the form of a video based on the aesthetics and narratology of the reaction videos prevalent on the YouTube and TikTok social platforms, in order to rethink the developments in technology and observations made in the last half decade. In this new narrative constellation, Páll, playing a virtual vlogger dog named Masat, reflects on the rapidly changing politics of art activism, surveillance and artificial intelligence in the form of a sarcastic retrospective reaction video.

Original descriptive text by Katalin Székely







{a shape of a face is slowly evolving on a 3d scan of a bark}

SPRAWLED

SOILWARE

(2021-ONGOING)

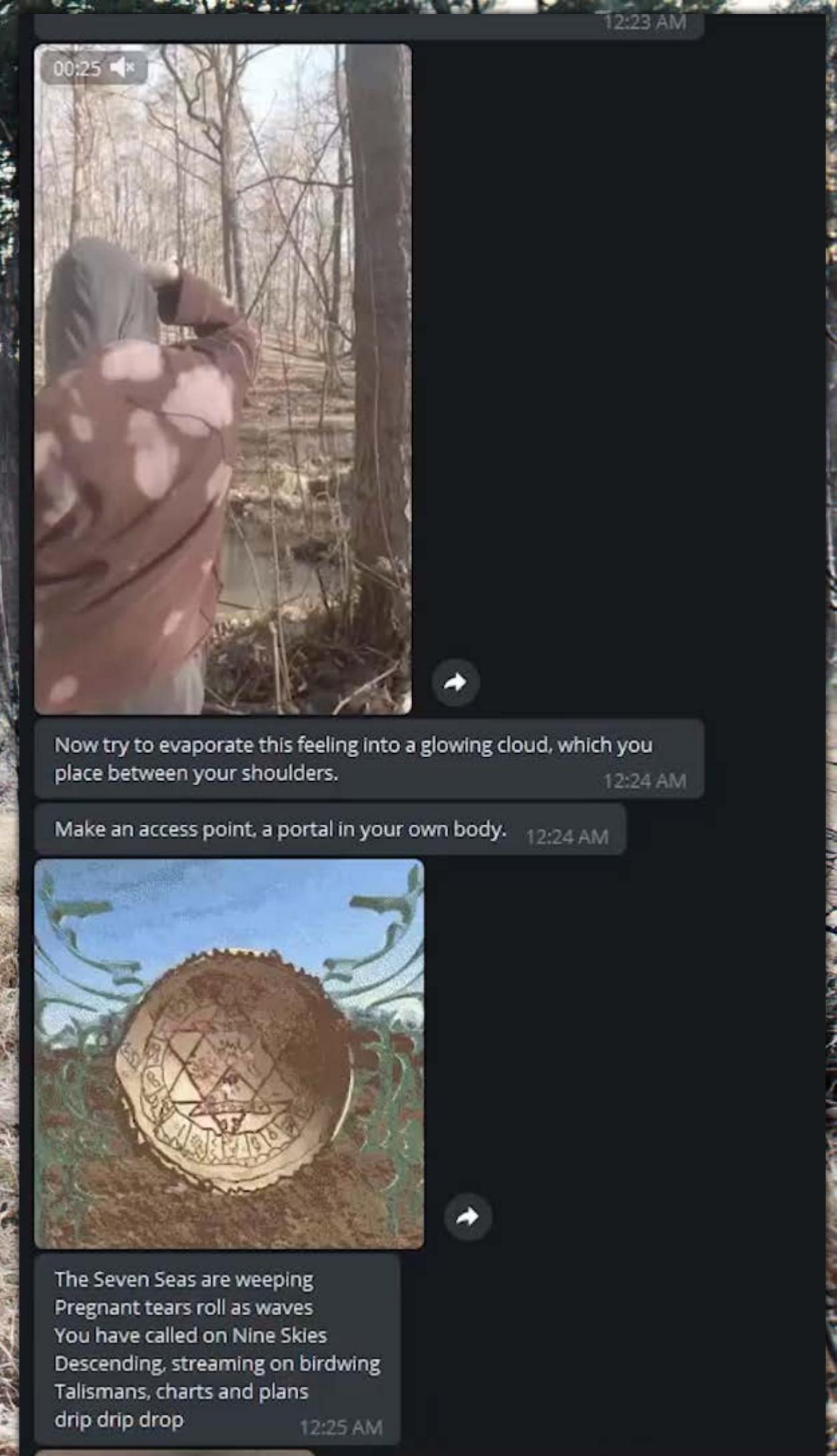
Chatbot LARP (live action role-play)

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/soilware/>

In the depths of the universe, in the magma of the earth, in the atoms of the material world dense bodies loom, so dark and gravitational no light escapes them. No one knows if they are animals or minerals or both. Generally, the stable timespace manifold keeps the pull of their event horizon separated from human sensory perception. There are whispers however, that with the swelling eruption of cosmic flares portals have been broken open. Here, the event horizon breathes and inflates—beckoning the interface where dark bodies tickle with their tongues, suction with their orifices, nibble with their tiny teeth and caress with the enormous tips of their feelers the skin, the glands, the eyeballs, the bottom of the feet of the user at the cusp of the portal threshold...

The Hungarian artist group Hollow (formerly known as Szeri-Páll-Muskovics) teams up with Berlin-based Omsk Social Club to explore the organic and inorganic depths of the dark unknown. Merging the methodologies of contemporary dance, sound, poetics, augmented reality (AR) and real game play (RGP), the group stages a consensual hallucination as multimedia performance project, inviting participants to become absorbed, estranged or both.

Created in collaboration with Hollow (Tamás Páll, Viktor Szeri, Gyula Muskovics) & OMSK SOCIAL CLUB





Becoming X
This state of
becoming is very
useful,
much more so
than arriving
We are not aiming
to arrive.
We should wander
another potential

The outcome of
this becoming...
absolute
temporality?

This is the state of
Becoming X
Improvising scenes
just like life,
not like the
theatre.



PHOENIX

(2018-2021)

immersive performance

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/phoenix/>

Pulsing trance music, graphic figures onscreen, a disturbing Minotaur in the dark and a shattered, struggling character who repeatedly asks for help.

Phoenix, the fictional club, invites us to investigate the secret world of fetish and roleplay, to unpick the hidden correspondence of sex and theatre, power and acting.

Beyond representation; basically, that is the substance environment where Phoenix leads us. It steps out of the concept of black boxes and as a site-specific, ongoing event, where looped scenes happen all around, makes the spectators get lost in its maze.

The immersive performance revolves around lust, ecstasy and intimacy in a setup that evokes the world of role-playing games, cruising apps and networking sites.

Concept and performance:

Hollow (Tamás Páll, Viktor Szeri, Gyula Muskovics)

Music composition: András Molnár, Tamás Marquetant

Supported by MeetFactory, CZ; International Visegrad Fund, Trafo House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest; Workshop Foundation





2019 - HOLLOW: PHOENIX.
MEETFACOTRY, PRAGUE (CZ). PHOTO: LIBOR GALIA



2019 - HOLLOW: PHOENIX.
UBIKEKLETIK FESTIVAL, BUDAPEST (HU). PHOTO: ORSI VARGA

LEGENDA

(2018)

*interactive multimedia installation
& AI chatbot*

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/legenda/>

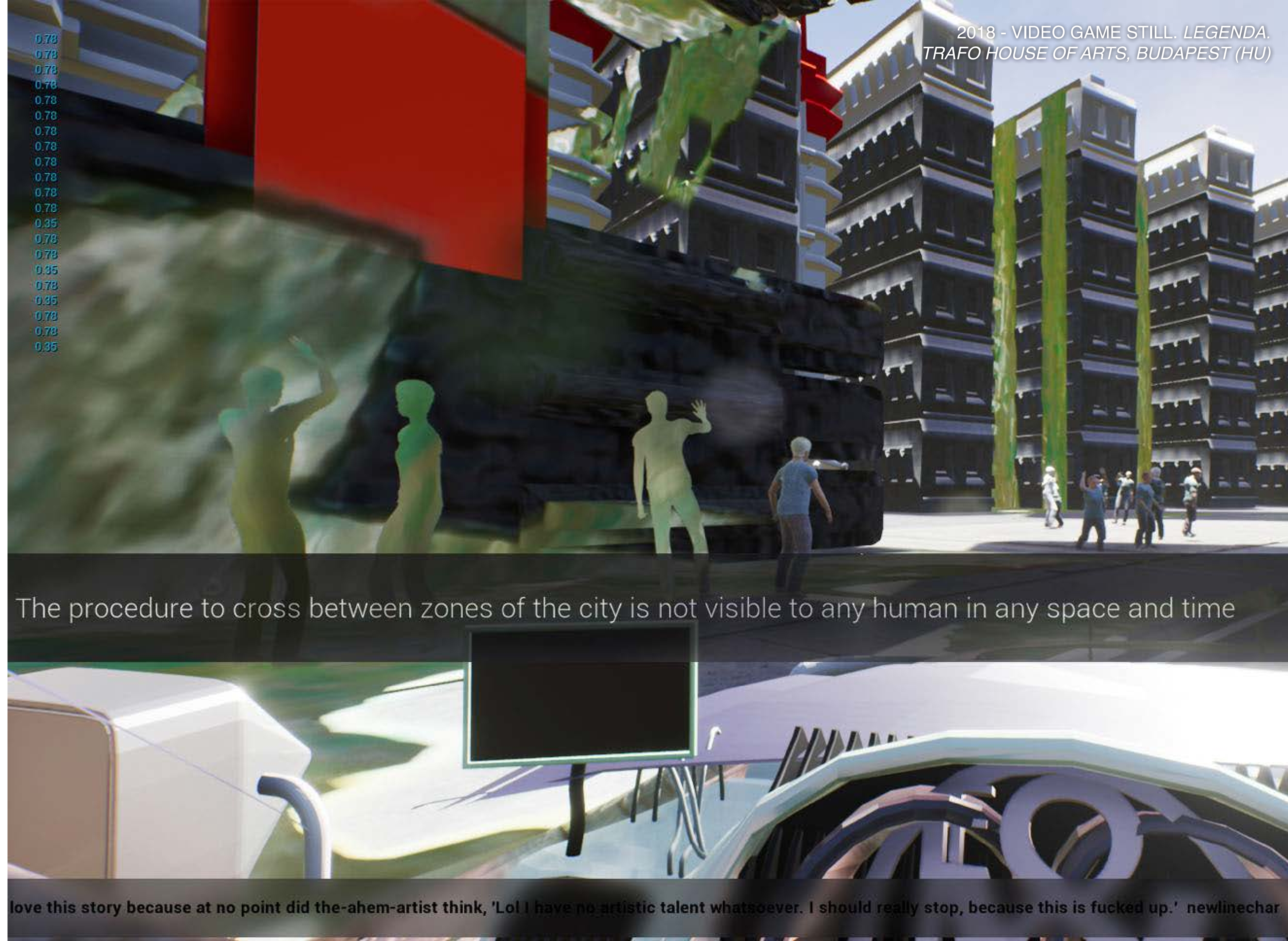
Legenda is an interactive installation built from scrap car parts, gaming computers and controllers and features an interactive videogame, where viewers can mingle with a virtual driverless car system functioning both as a driving trainer and an AI companion.

Legenda's virtual companion casually converses with players about post-work economies, speculates on visions of commercial smart cities and their relation to social housing.

The chatbot's vocabulary and grammar is based on machine learning, the machine learning model was trained on a dataset sampled from Reddit users' comments in relevant subreddits and threads. (r/city, r/smartcities, r/artificialintelligence)

In collaboration with
Iván Rohonyi & Tamás Marquetant

Supported by Studio of Young Artists' Association and Trafo House of Contemporary Arts



2018 - VIDEO GAME STILL. LEGENDA.
TRAFO HOUSE OF ARTS, BUDAPEST (HU)

The procedure to cross between zones of the city is not visible to any human in any space and time

love this story because at no point did the-ahem-artist think, 'Lol I have no artistic talent whatsoever. I should really stop, because this is fucked up.' newlinechar



0.35
0.35
0.35
0.35
0.35
0.78
0.78
0.78
0.35
0.78
0.78
0.78
0.35
0.78
0.78
0.35
0.78
0.78
0.35



You will not know if you aren't supposed to cross a certain border, because the desire for that particular procedural check-in has been predicted before you realized you want to cross it



Yep. We are probably a broken nation within 20 years if this continues. Probably even sooner than that.



Z.E.T

(2017)

MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION

web: <https://arbitraryvault.com/zet/>

ZET is a speculative multimedia installation combining a videogame and a polyurethane sculpture of a fractal symbol. The installation transposes the core mechanics of the STUXNET computer virus onto game mechanics and sculpture.

ZET's virtual world reconstructs the nuclear power plant in the desert of Natanz, Iran where the STUXNET virus critically damaged the nuclear reactor's centrifuges, rendering the reactor inoperable.

The virus shifted the centrifuges' frequency with such modulation that the centrifuges could not operate anymore.

As a dynamic metaphor to the instability caused by the computer virus, the player controls are volatile in the game due to 'reality-shifts', that eventually make the game unplayable, and computationally impossible. When player control is lost, the game starts to erode the realism of the graphics to a point where the environment and the avatar of the game disappear and only the underlying algorithms prevail.

In the game the STUXNET algorithm is represented as a fractal whose body transgresses the virtual space, becoming the physical prosthetics of the installation: a fractal sculpture.





