

# WITHINTENSIONS



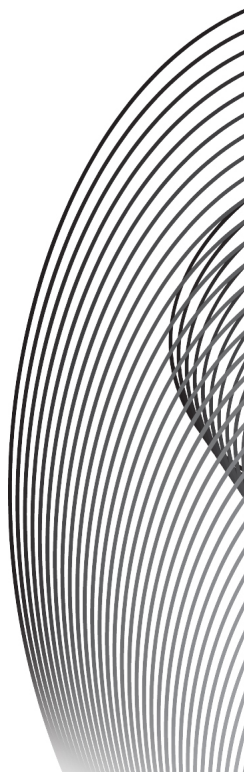
vol.29

TECHNOLOGY





WITHINTENSIONS





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May 2022  
vol. 29

## TECHNOLOGY



# Table of Contents

<b>John Topp</b>	pg. 3
<b>slacker talk 0.1</b> K.W. Miller	pg. 6
<b>Extensions</b> Kaila Bhullar	pg. 8
<b>Generative Lyrics</b> Opal Mclean	pg. 16
<b>Is this Still life?</b> Francisco Berlanga	pg. 18
<b>Portrait of a Gen X Brahmachari: Metaphysics of the Pre-Internet Underground</b> Miki Aurora	pg. 24

**Morgan Traa**

pg. 28

**SESSION XVI: An Age**

Torien Cafferata

pg. 32

**Hologram**

Victoria Mulja

pg. 36

**Trump Torture**

Natalie Chan

pg. 38

**Meet the Team**

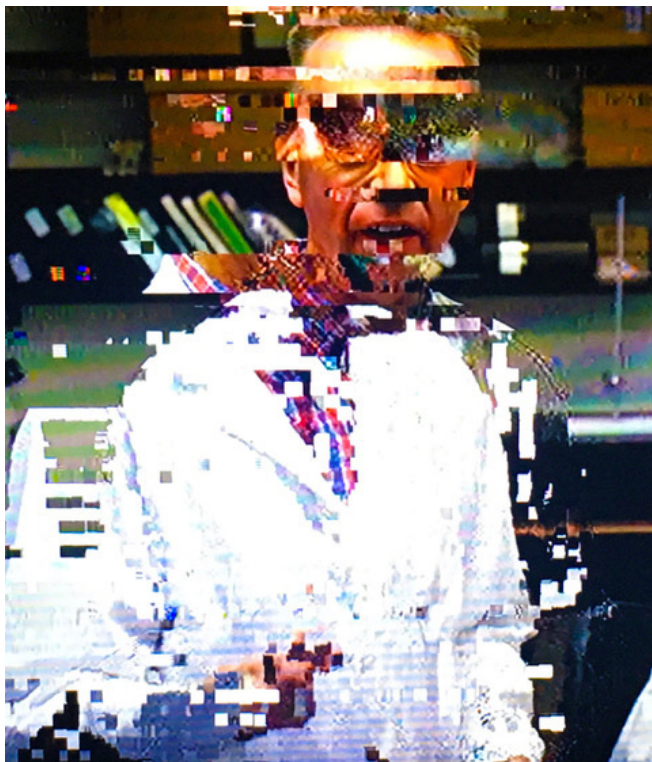
Francisco Berlanga, Natalie Chan, Opal Mclean

pg. 40

**Acknowledgments**

pg. 43

We at Withintensions want to acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) peoples. We want to recognize that these lands belong to the Indigenous peoples who have lived here far before the arrival of settlers. We also want to push beyond land acknowledgements to further encourage acts of reconciliation. Recognition is great but it is nowhere near where we need to be. Reconciliation is comprehensive and takes more than an acknowledgment for occupying land. We always support marginalised peoples right to protest.



John Topp, *Scientist* (2022)

# John Topp

## Scientist, (2022)

This image is taken by disrupting the antenna reception of a television picture. The lab coat scientist is fragmented and overlaid with different shapes and patterns. This can be seen to symbolize the unconscious motivations or unintended outcomes of science and technology, resulting in the altering and evolving of what it means to be human.

## Sky Grid (2022)

Once when in Ontario cottage country, I saw a row of satellites moving across the sky in perfect formation. The grid of pixels can be seen to represent the expanding network of satellites entering our skies, forming a communications network that spans the planet, bringing Internet access to remote regions. This creates a layer of technology between the earth and sky, which can be seen as alternately polluting or awe inspiring.



John Topp, *Sky Grid* (2022)

## slacker talk 0.1 (2022)

K.W. Miller

We are all too familiar with the trope of staring off into our phones, essentially using technology to dull our senses rather than enhance them. While these mini pocket computers were meant to provide access to a wide world of knowledge and make us smarter, just the opposite has happened. And to an impactful degree. doom scrolling twitter, selfie after vapid selfie on instagram, conversations in real life that would previously have happened but don't anymore because technology somehow stands in the way. Are we really smarter? More connected? Tell me... what is intelligence now?





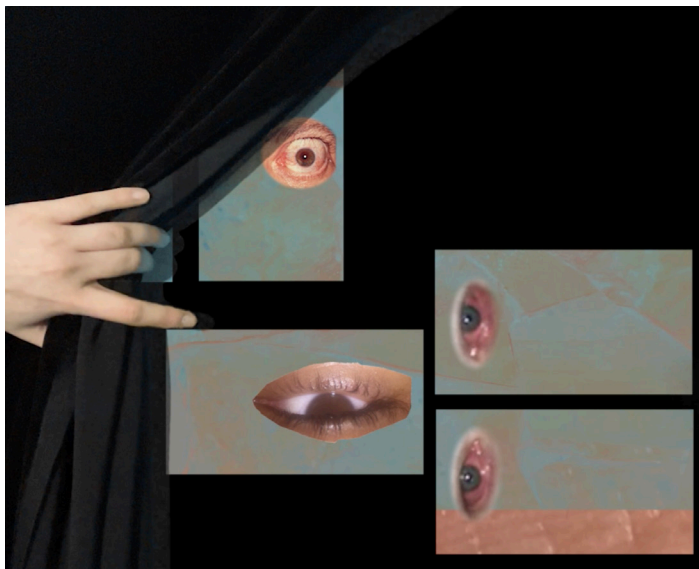
## Extensions (2022)

Kaila Bhullar

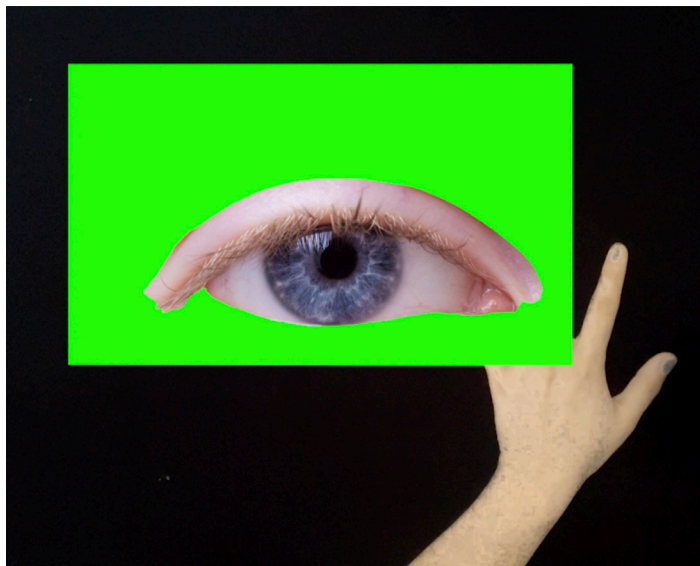
Extensions examines the influence of modern technological meditations on the self, specifically looking into how they affect our connections to our bodies. The work contemplates prospective questions concerning existence being primarily gratified, permeated, and accounted for through technological interventions — smartphone usage, and social media/ other digital archives. As the presence of technology feels overwhelmingly persistent at times, it ends up extending into our personal conceptions of identity, rendering the body disconnected from the self and mind, leaving us floating among multiple states of being.

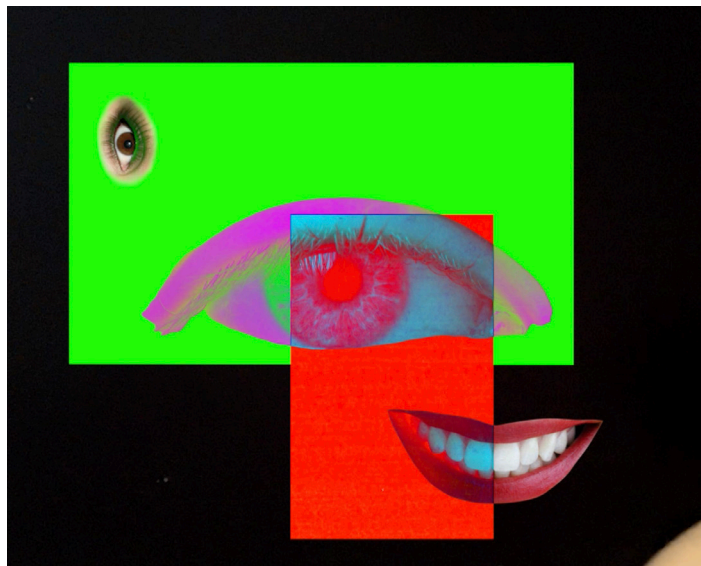
The installation features 3 CRT TVs playing looped videos, 3 DVD players, plaster hands and fingers, and a shit ton of cords. This work is on display at Massy Arts Gallery (in the window space) until June 09, as a part of Digital Interventions (a group show).

Read more  
about it  
[here](#)



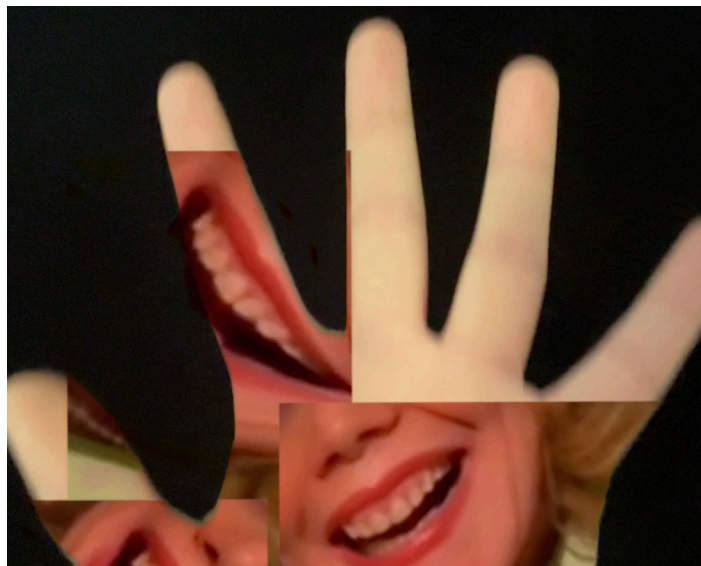
Watch  
Extensions (2022)  
[here](#)















## Generative Lyrics

Opal Mclean

This poem was created using a random word generator. Basically, I went through the alphabet and let the generator choose a random word. From there, I combined it to make up some nonsensical lyrics. Poems written by myself through a technological filter.

Heading into the withdrawal zone  
An unaware variant  
Too young to represent

The professional opinion of a  
qualifying medium  
A judicial imposter  
Or a knot in the beginning

Better yet a difficult liberty  
In the genuine history  
An appointment of suspicion

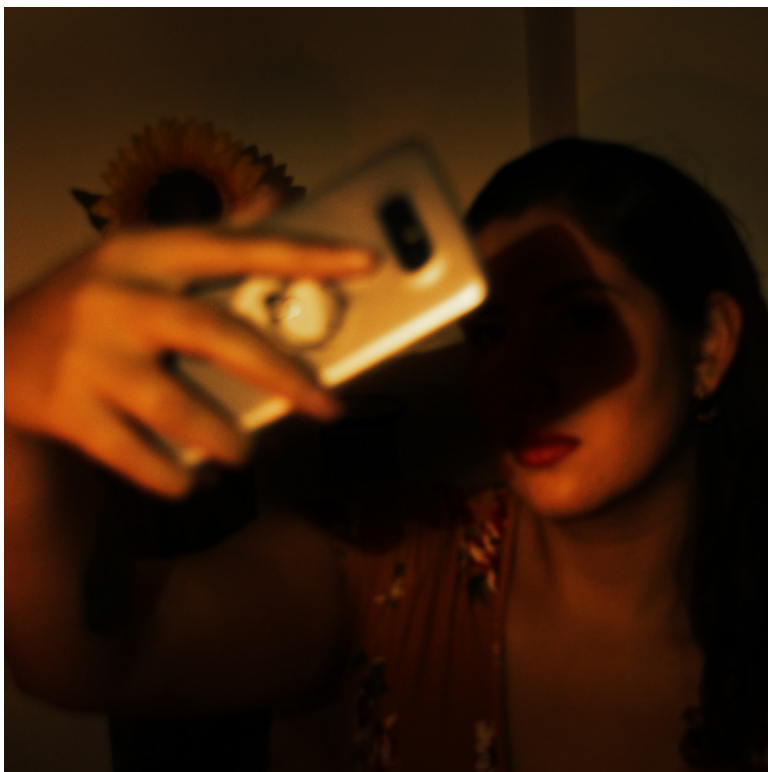
In the x-ray of commission  
Comes explosive timetables  
Disrupting our favourite nursery

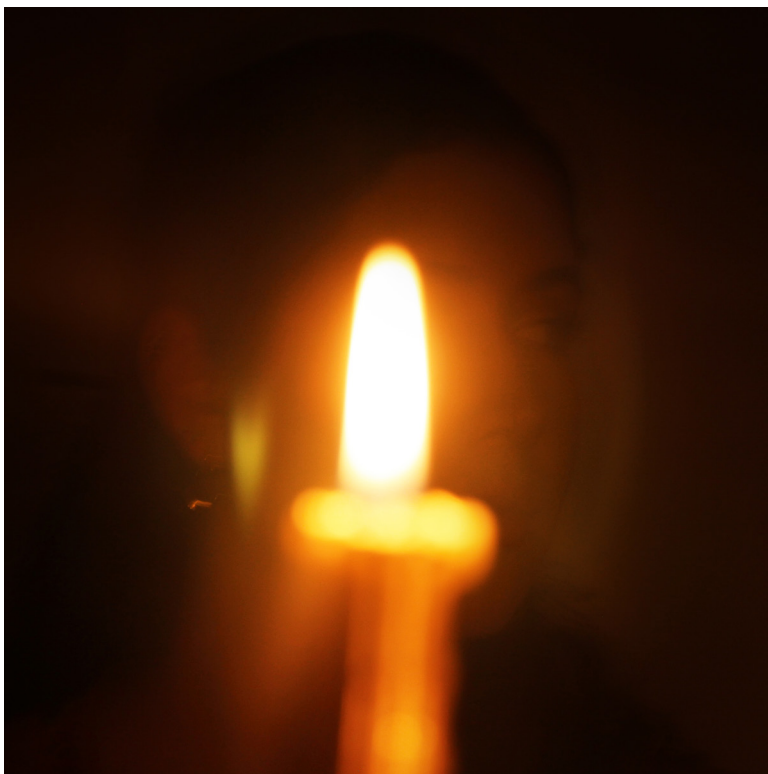
## Is this Still life? (2018)

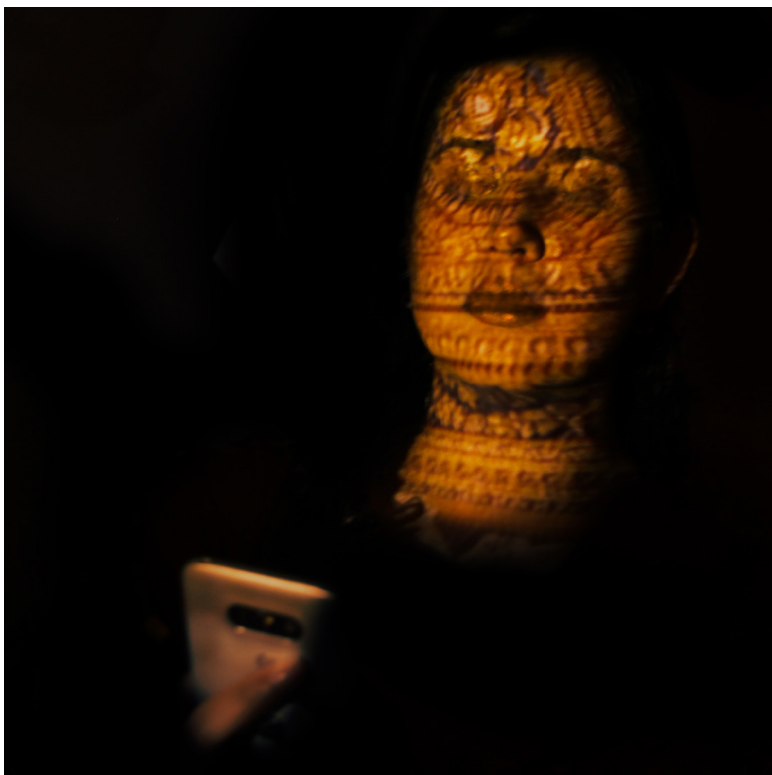
Francisco Berlanga

This series is inspired by classical still life portraits invoking imagery that often served as a reminder of the shortness of life. The candle, the flower, and statues of angels begin to envelope the subject that is fixated on a screen. As the aesthetics flood the gaze of the viewer they further abstract the subject reducing them to a silhouette reminiscent of a default profile image. The piece reflects on overconsumption of technology and how it can consume the viewer and flatten them into a digital silhouette.

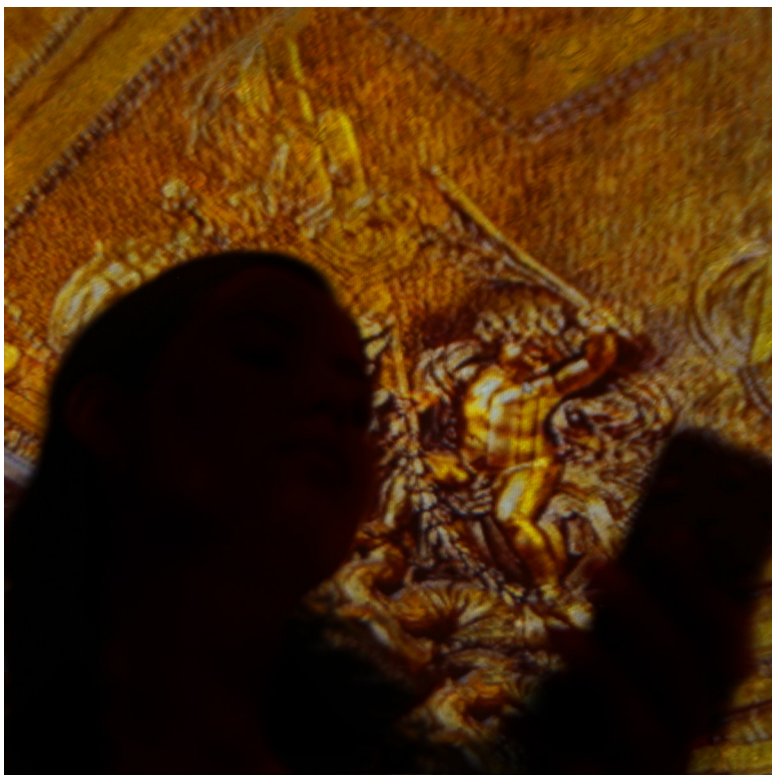












# Portrait of a Gen X Brahmachari: Metaphysics of the Pre-Internet Underground (2021)

Miki Aurora

At the dawn of the machine learning age we are collectively bumbling forward in our attempts to integrate AI technology into a philosophical or ontological framework. There's a murmur from Silicon Valley claiming that tech execs are in the process of attempting to build AI gods to worship. This news item was a conspicuous notch in the annals of humanity's ever unfolding techno-spiritual history. This is the backdrop to the point in time that initiated Vedic monk, Raghunath Khe, has disclosed a memory from his life as a creator whose spiritual and artistic output has precluded and prophesied this discourse. The memory in question is the mirror-double of the AI-god news item, the antithesis of the techno-dystopian doom conjured by Silicon Valley:

Khe recounts a supernatural experience, a brush with a daivata—or demigod—of the technosphere, in the pre-internet era. This entity, existing entirely disconnected from any AI, had an influence over the metaphysical landscape of the communication systems that eventually became the internet, a spirit all but stamped out with the internet’s eventual total corporatization (if AI is the mind of “the machine”, then the daivata Khe experienced was the soul). In the process of recounting this supernatural experience, the former Brahmachari gives us an invitation into his mind— a place where the often polarized spheres of eclectic esotericism and right-hand path resolve meet.

Watch  
Portrait of a Gen X Brahmachari:  
Metaphysics of the Pre-Internet  
Underground (2021)  
[here](#)





## **Waiting, Leaving (2022)**

### **Breakfast without you (2021)**

Morgan Traa

I use my camera to express an inner life of looking and recording, translating photographic images into mixed media paintings layered one on top of the other. The combination of the images and mediums creates a sense of fleeting moments similar to montage and film editing. I often use the frame of the camera and the frame of the paper canvas to hide parts of the image or swallow the image whole. The weight of the frame demands significance from the image, much the way a heavy memory frames a moment.

Translating film stills and personal photographs into paper paintings, I am able to reconstruct narrative and perspective into a personal reflection of emotion, time, and home. The viewer of the painting is also the viewer of the camera lens, you now share my perspective. I am heavily inspired by my home city of Winnipeg as a film hub, never allowed to be itself on screen, rather framed as any mid-west city such as Chicago or Minneapolis manipulating my home through technology, it is the only way I can see it.



Morgan Traa, *Waiting, Leaving* (2022)





Morgan Traa, *Breakfast without you* (2021)

## SESSION XVI: An Age (2022)

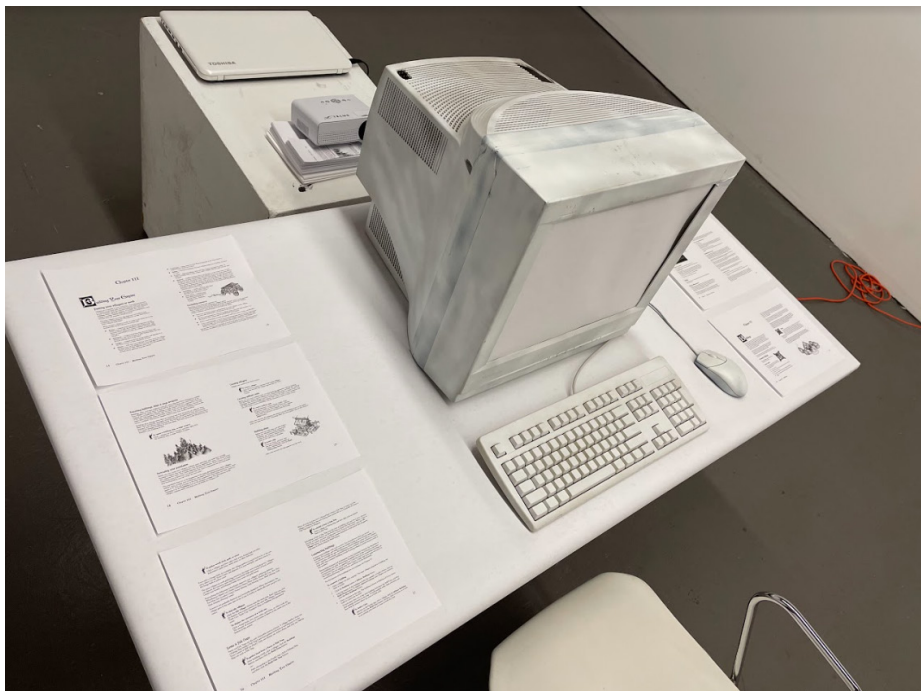
Torien Cafferata

This work is one in an autoethnographic series on rural hauntology, colonial propaganda, and lost futures, created for my studio class in the Interdisciplinary Arts MFA program at Simon Fraser University. The body of the piece was constructed out of a hollowed out CRT computer monitor and desktop tower, as well as a non-operational keyboard and mouse. All of these form a 3D corpse, infused with life with LEDs and a mini-projector displaying a loop of a recorded *Age of Empires II* game on a sheet of white paper inside the monitor. The decrepit technology is meant to reflect the marginalized digital development of rural communities through standing as a monument to the solitary PC available in the youth drop-in centre in my hometown, Mortlach, SK -- AoEII being one of its only available games. During this piece's critique, a smartphone played audio of an interview I conducted this year with Diane Molzan, who managed the drop-in centre when I was 16 years old (not featured in this documentation).

The recorded game itself is an in-game feature, one of the earliest of its kind, and reveals a Deathmatch I played for the purpose of the installation -- a private re-enactment. Deathmatches in AoEII are known for their artificial overabundance of resources, rapid development, army-building, and massive destruction. For me, this bore a connection to the genocidal settling of the prairies, and specifically how media in my adolescence propagandized this violent history in the form of games such as these. The images I found most haunting were the construction and destruction of buildings in a colonial context, reflected in the highly granulated projection of the game, echoing a previous Session's demolition montage of Saskatchewan grain elevators, once conflicting monuments of their own, to unionized labour, settler colonialism, and food sovereignty. To reinforce this relationship, on the table is spread the pages of the AoEII manual instructing the player on how to build, garrison, and destroy buildings.



Watch  
SESSION XVI: An Age (2022)  
[here](#)



## Hologram (2022)

Victoria Mulja

Don't we ever want to interact with fictional characters or have them exist in our world?

In this digital drawing, I imagined what if there was some sort of technology where we can interact with any type of fictional character. Because most of us are so invested in any type of show, video game, etc, there's always this time when we want a specific character to be our real-life friend...



# Trump Torture (2016)

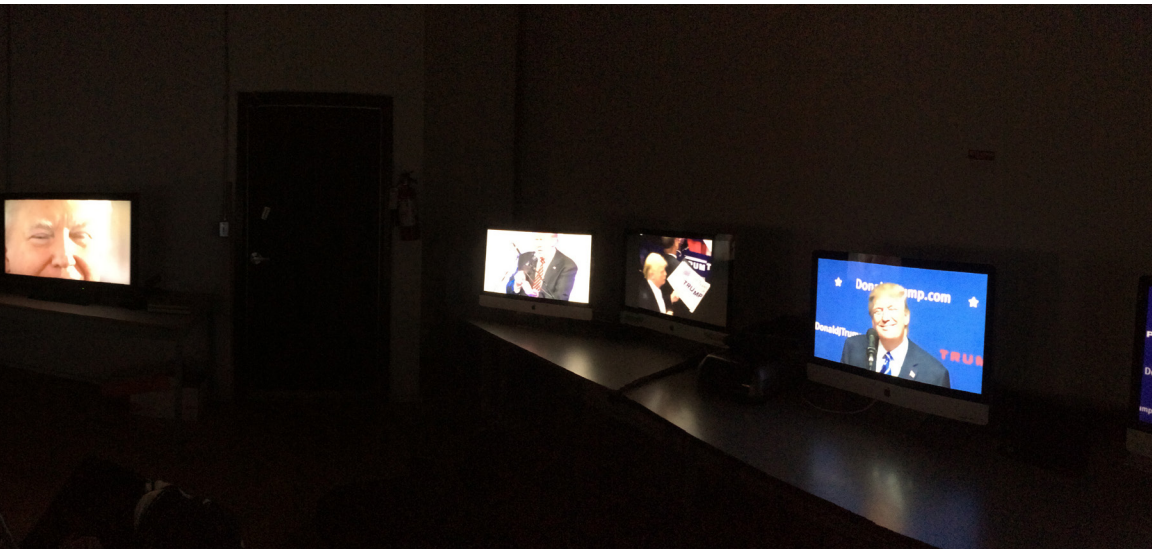
Natalie Chan

Following the US Election of 2016 during my undergrad, my cohort and I sat down together with our professor at that time and talked about the implications of this and our position as artists. In our following round of critique, many, if not all of us made work in response to the current events. Trump Torture is a work that appropriates Bruce Nauman's Clown Torture, (1987): with the jarring





spectacle of the presidential election - and at that time, the numerous clown sightings that were making the news - Nauman's piece perfectly encapsulated the feeling of inescapable terror that rippled from the election of Donald Trump. Installed in a dark room, only the glow of 9 monitors light up the space: each monitor played a different edited clip of interviews, speeches, or news reels of Trump. Playing in perpetual loop within a closed room, any absurd humour that could be found soon morphs into horror in the sensory overload of unending clownery.



Francisco  
Berlanga



## Meet the Team

We write with intention & dwell within tensions. We are artists who have been left without an aim for how to continue engaging with art in the absence of institution. Our goal is to provide a place where we can write about new ideas, old ideas, and bad ideas. We are by no means professional writers, we inhabit a place between the seriousness of academic writing and the frivolity of passing thought. We will often succumb to clichés and trends as they pass us as we all often must.

We hope to present unique thoughts for you to consider. Our writing speaks for no one but ourselves. We do not reduce the similar experiences of others to what we have experienced. We invite you to critically engage with the content, to challenge and be challenged, to test the tensions in question.

Francisco Berlanga is a contemporary artist who studied at Simon Fraser University. He obtained his BFA in Visual Arts with a minor in Interactive Arts and Technology. His practice is based on questioning identity, particularly his connection with his own Mexican culture and how one can inhabit a culture while being partially absent from it. He engages in discourses with his own identity through the creation of traditional Mexican “manualidades” or crafts, his work makes connections between traditional Mexican aesthetics and contemporary visual language. His practice engages with concepts of inaccessibility and the role memory and language can play when someone is distanced from their own culture. He attempts to bridge the gaps between his personal and cultural identities by forcing connections between them and by trying to understand the limitations that these identities impose upon each other.



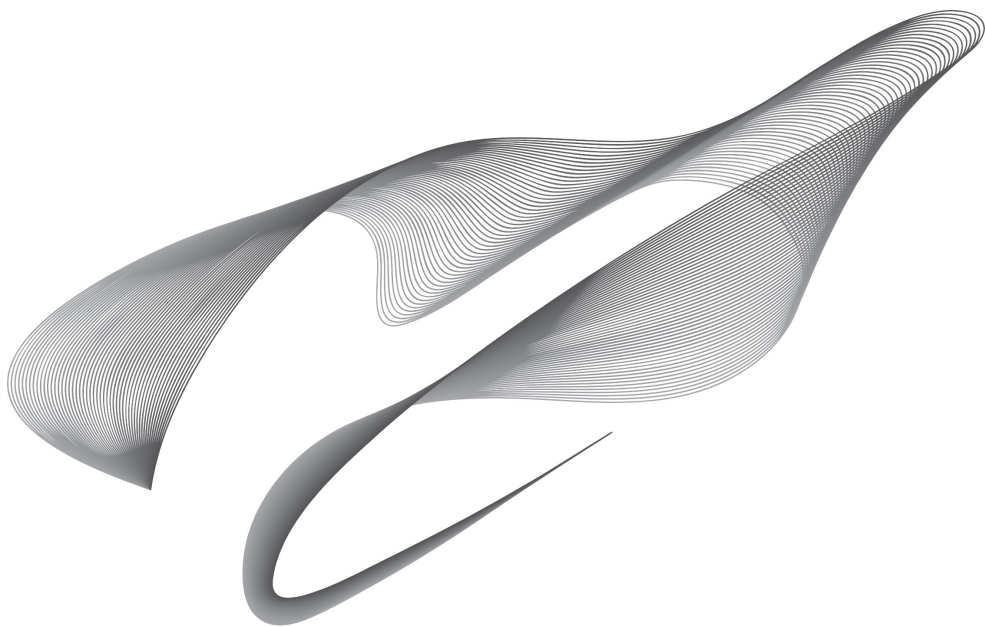
Natalie  
Chan

Natalie Chan recently completed her BFA in Visual Arts at Simon Fraser University. Her practice often focuses on the relational aspects of people & places, as well as the inner turmoils & complexities of the human condition. In the creation of her works, she aims to highlight the ideas of reflection, healing, and reconciliation as tangible possibilities in each encounter. Her latest interests include learning how to tattoo, in understanding both the technical skills & intimate relation between artist and the livelihood of their canvas.



Opal  
Mclean

Mclean is best described as the “selfish artist” meaning her practice entirely revolves around herself. Her work often relates back to a mental psyche that cannot be described by words alone. Instead, it can be described by an action. A reference to a state of being or a performance that lends to the way her brain functions. This manifestation and documentation of different processes becomes her tool to relate to the outside world. Her own existence comes into question in a way that so many experience in their own daily life. This experience becomes a social, cultural, and political connection to her projects. Her work becomes both alienating but connecting in a shared experience that translates through different media.



We put out new issues every month with a different topic.

We are always looking for submissions and opportunities to collaborate so check out our social medias.

on instagram:  
@withintensions

or email us at:  
within.tensions@gmail.com

If you want more information, feel free to contact us.

Our next issue will be on the topic of “Food” and submissions are now open.

See you next month!

## Acknowledgements

Withintensions would not have been possible without the works of Miki Aurora, Francisco Berlanga, Kaila Bhullar, Torien Cafferata, Natalie Chan, Opal Mclean, K. W. Miller, Victoria Mulja, John Topp, and Morgan Traa

We would also like to thank Francisco Berlanga for his design and social media contributions, Natalie Chan for her assistance in coordinating and Opal Mclean for her editorial work.

We are excited to share our future works with you and we hope to provide more opportunities for artists alike.



