GONE

Intimités numériques - Journal de création
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In Leonard Cohen's poem *Kanye West Is Not Picasso*, he says, "I am the Kanye West of Kanye West / The Kanye West / Of the great bogus shift of bullshit culture." That line of poetry sparked an idea to create performance using *Instagram* filters as a way of responding to contemporary culture's fixation on social media and make-believe intimacy. *Instagram* users post 46,740 photos and videos every minute, and 100 million people use the *Instagram* "stories feature daily" documenting their 'private lives' as they share them with the public, eroding traditional boundaries between private and public (Marr, 2021).

Instagram is a hugely successful social media platform that is mostly associated with shallow content: bikini selfies, puppy dog ears, and food porn. It occurred to me that – what if we used *Instagram* to shift people away from 'bullshit culture' to create work on and for the platform that is impactful and thought-provoking? Art that talks about important societal issues while engaging and reaching the masses. Artists can coopt the materials of today's culture to express unique perspectives on social issues.

GONE is a four-minute performance shot in 30 second clips through the *Instagram* app using existing Spark AR filters where I performed for the camera and saved the videos to my phone, then further augmented them in editing. In 2020, I learned how to create my own Spark AR filters that can be found via @crisisvision or @andyloucooper on *Instagram*, but for this project I utilized the futuristic filters of *Lumia* by @amberarcadia, *Beauty 3000* and *Odyssey* by @Johwska.

The performance created using augmented reality filters for this video explores a robot's desire and repulsion of her owner – anger and sadness for not

'being turned on', forgotten, rebooted, or having her body parts stored in the cloud. The video explores how technology's radical acceleration redefines intimacy.

It's safe to suggest 2020 as humanity's first virtual year, which begs the question – what is real? As Heidegger famously once said "something that is not nothing". Is the virtual real? In augmented reality the layers of realities of physical and the virtual become fused, confusing the line between the real and the unreal. *GONE* explores these themes.

GONE also plumbs the consequences of a future sexualized technological world. What is the future of sex in our new world? Will robots learn to feel emotions and enjoy sex? Can we create a future that aims to empower users of robots to express their sexuality in a consent-based environment?

Robot: A machine resembling a human being and able to replicate certain human movements and functions automatically.

Johanna Jaskowska Instagram AR filters.

- Face like Vaseline
- Pink shiny palette
- Vacant eyes
- Echoed hollow voice
- Voice that is Masculine. Feminine. OtherAR

According to a study by the Future of Sex, by 2024 people will be able to transform into anything. They can experience what was once unattainable - sexual fantasies in hyper-realistic virtual worlds. By 2045, one in 10 young adults will have had sex with a robot. How will that alter our sexual lives and embodied experience? And in fact, does the concept of intimacy cease to exist online?

Robot to look like Miley Cyrus in Black Mirror.

Question:
How does technology's radical acceleration and societal disruption redefine intimacy? What is the future of sex in our new world? Specifically, in an online world dominated by surveillance capitalism? How does the disruption change how artists respond to, and make new work? Will women robots exist as sex slaves...will they constantly be reused and rebooted like an episode of Westworld?

What is the future of sex in a technological world? How do we redefine intimacy?

Face filters as a platform for art.

To become a robot. To become part of the machine, living inside a machine.

Fig. 1 - Moodboard of the project.

Our world is accelerating – experiencing tremendous technological change. The effect this has had on privacy has left humanity fraught with fear, anxiety, and confusion. This kind of change, magnitude of change, and rate of change will all likely continue – resulting in a continuous state of societal disruption.

Each generation of technology improves over the last, the rate of progress speeds up. Kurzweil wrote in 2001 that every decade our overall rate of progress doubles, "We won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century – it will be more like 20,000 years of progress (at today's rate)." (Kurzweil, 2001).

How does technology's radical acceleration, erosion of privacy, and societal disruption redefine intimacy? What is the future of sex in our new world? Specifically, sex in an online world dominated by surveillance capitalism? How does the disruption change how artists respond to, and make new work?

In a world that is speeding up, our lives are constantly transformed by technology. This in turn alters how we experience and express our sexuality. Social media. Sexting. Robotics. Augmented Reality. Virtual Reality. Artificial Intelligence. Teledildonics. What are the ethics and consequences of an increasingly sexualized technological world?

According to a study by the Future of Sex, by 2024 people will be able to transform into anything. They can experience what was once unattainable – sexual fantasies in hyper-realistic virtual worlds. By 2045, one in 10 young adults will have had sex with a robot. How will that alter our sexual lives and embodied experience? (Owsianik and Dawsom, 2021). And in fact, does the concept of intimacy cease to exist online? "Some authors consider that intimacy through SNSs ceases to be intimacy and becomes something else." (Sibilia, 2008; Turkle, 2010; Mateus, 2010).

Online people behave in ways that they wouldn't in real life. "They loosen up, feel more uninhibited, express themselves more openly. Researchers call this the «disinhibition effect.»" John Suler refers to this as 'toxic disinhibition' in his book *Psychology of The Digital Age*. When people explore porno-

graphy and violence online and communicate with strangers toxically it is a sort of "blind catharsis, an acting out of unsavory needs and wishes without any personal growth at all." (Suler, 2004). This divide between the real self and the online self becomes further complicated in a world of sexualized virtual reality and dating apps. Can the imagination and anonymity be positively aligned or does a hyper sexualized digital world create further 'toxic disinhibition' online?

Social media has created an online cesspool of lust and loneliness. Lives lived and created through screens, cameras, and technology has created a contemporary isolation. No person has to be accountable for their anonymous comments or actions. In a fake believe culture, anyone can be an actor, and anyone can be a ghost. Digital technology, and the proliferation of 'fake content' like deepfake videos interrogate the notion of reality, leaving a society questioning truth. "Deepfakes refer to manipulated videos, or other digital representations produced by sophisticated artificial intelligence, that yield fabricated images and sounds that appear to be real." (Shao, 2019).

How is online intimacy affected by "surveillance capitalism" a term credited to Harvard academic Shoshana Zuboff, "It works by providing free services that billions of people cheerfully use, enabling the providers of those services to monitor the behaviour of those users in astonishing detail – often without their explicit consent." (Zuboff, 2019). Surveillance capitalists like *Google* have become wealthy from sharing our data. They watch and monitor our behavior. In an online lawless society, *Google* has photographed your house and beamed it to the rest of the world without your consent. *Google* records and collects your sexual desires, with every sexual online fantasy search. As Zuboff says "Once we searched *Google*, but now *Google* searches us. Once we thought of digital services as free, but now surveillance capitalists think of us as free." As our bodies are watched, commodified, measured, and publicized – the possibility of being uniquely and deeply known by another human intimately becomes further pushed away from reality.

As the world accelerates, so does our data production. According to Forbes, 90% of the data in the world was created in the last two years, and there are "2.5 quintillion bytes of data created each day" (Marr, 2018). What are the ethics around data production? Who has access to our private data, and where does it live exactly? The mysterious 'cloud' does not live in the sky – but our private data – lives in a series of remote interconnected machines. Data can have tremendous value when it is collected and analyzed, but "companies and governments amass enormous troves of information about our online and offline activities, so they can understand them better than we do….Big Data promises to use data to make the world transparent, buts its collection is invisible, and its tools and techniques are opaque, shrouded by layers of physical, legal, and technical privacy by design".

Much of the uncertainty about the future is not about technology itself, but how we respond to it. In particular, the key in understanding the future of sex is not just about technology, but how humans use it, perceive it, and ethically or unethically adapt to this new world.

My artistic research examines if there is a place for artists to interrogate digital intimacy and surveillance online, by inverting capitalist platforms like *Instagram* for political and public resonance.

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