

# Mateusz Janik

portfolio

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2024

Born in 1997 in Cracow, in 2023 he graduated photography at the Abakanowicz University of the Arts in Poznan. He works there as an assistant in the Studio of Transdisciplinary Projects and Researches.

He is a new media artist who explores internet culture, phygitality and identity through moving and still images, textiles, AR experiences, appropriation, and AI mechanisms. His works often use recurring motifs of the face, (trans)covering and pop culture. He praises the cringe as an aesthetic commenting on contemporary reality. Through the use of cringe, he seeks to disrupt the traditional boundaries between “high” and “low” culture, and to highlight the often-uncomfortable tensions that exist between them.

Memes also play a crucial role in his art, as they are a form of cultural production that reflects our collective psyche and offers a unique perspective on the zeitgeist. By appropriating and manipulating these cultural artifacts, he aims to create a discourse that challenges our perceptions of reality and offers a fresh perspective on contemporary issues.



## Solo exhibitions

- 2023 *Poles. Dialogues of Young People: OTHER – 7th edition*, Municipal Gallery Arsenal, Poznan (duo with Klara Woźniak)
- 2023 *Contents in the Mirror Are Closer than They Appear*, Rodríguez Gallery, Poznan
- 2022 *Social Distancing*, Rotunda Gallery, Poznan
- 2021 *Sensitive Points*, Scena Robocza, Poznan

## Selected group exhibitions

- 2023 *Bouquet of Hope...Hopelessness*, Turnus, Warsaw
- 2023 *EXTRA LIFE*, Solatorium, Warsaw
- 2022 *NIE ROBIE*, CK Nowe Amore, Poznan
- 2022 *Art, Human, AI*, ART WALK, Warsaw
- 2022 *Visit*, ZAMEK Culture Centre, Poznan
- 2022 *Sometimes Making Nothing Leads to Something*, Galeria AT, Poznan
- 2022 *NEW TALENTS 2021*, Photographic Exploration Project, Kommunale Galerie, Berlin
- 2021 *Revival*, Galeria Apteka Sztuki, Warsaw
- 2021 *Artificial Patho-intelligence*, TRAF0 Center for Contemporary Art, Szczecin
- 2021 *Family Archives*, Pracownia Duży Pokój, Warsaw
- 2021 *LockDown*, Scena Otwarta, Poznan
- 2020 Publications Section exhibition *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Virus* during TIFF Festival, Recepcja, Wroclaw
- 2020 *Turnus i Sandra w Trawie*, Zachęta - National Gallery of Art, Warsaw

## Publications

- 2023 Mateusz Janik, *The Textile Turn Towards Phygital Matter*, "Zeszyty Artystyczne", 2(44)/2023

## Screenings

- 2021 *Artificial Patho-intelligence*, MOS Cinema, Cracow

## Awards

- 2023 Nomination for the 43rd Maria Dokowicz Competition for the Best UAP Master's Diploma
- 2023 Nomination for the international Blurring The Lines competition
- 2023 Nomination for the national ArtNoble competition
- 2022 Audience Award in the 2nd edition of the Digital Ars competition
- 2021 3rd Prize in the 1st National Art Competition Nowe Sytuacje - *Revival*

## Practice

- 2023- Assistant in the Studio of Transdisciplinary Projects and Researches, Abakanowicz University of the Arts in Poznan
- 2020- Instructor on courses on the basics of photography and graphic programs at the Center for Multimedia Creation, Poznan

## ***In Progress***

a 7-second video recorded on Snapchat  
stretched over 365 days, live-streamed,  
2024

On the day I ended a multi-year relationship, a courier delivered a new laptop to me. Without a clear reason, I recorded a Snapchat for my friends, peeling off the factory film from the untouched screen.

Two years later, I reverse this process, stretching the original clip frame by frame over 8760 hours, streaming it continuously for a year with only one day off.



stream: <https://strimm.com/MateuszJanik/InProgress>



## ***Contents in the Mirror Are Closer than They Appear***

objects, video and interactive installation,  
2023

In contemporary times, the face as our representation begins to fade. This is not the first time in the history of culture, and according to Belting, this time the responsibility lies with the media era, which massively fits the face into a certain template, flattening it. A good example of this is the phenomenon of the selfie, which over the past decade has become one of the transparent means of communication, much like a text message. In seeking a new, digital representation for ourselves in the digital era, I come to the conclusion that it is widely understood content that we receive, modify, and share: we influence it, and it influences us.

In my work, I use memes and internet interfaces as mirrored self-portraits, where everyone can find themselves. Each material in my series pretends to be another material, as if they were trying to present themselves. Thus, a seemingly chromed object, upon closer inspection, turns out to be a painted 3D print, a video mimics a photograph, and tempered glass imitates the dimensions of the iPhone 13, revealing traces of device usage that we overlook in daily life.



exhibition view, Rodríguez Gallery

In this way, I weave a narrative about a fluid reality where there is no longer room for binary thinking: what matters is what lies between the two poles, and the digital and material worlds are one. At the same time, I shed the label of Narcissus from individuals expressing themselves on the internet because they mark their presence in the same way the body does for us every day. Hence, the finale of the exhibition is an interactive installation in the form of a Venetian mirror, which, with the help of a face-detection app, throws a flare onto the person standing in front of the mirror—a quote from amateur photos in the mirror using a flash. In this seemingly senseless action, I observe a poetic perspective on our online activity: showcasing oneself is not always about egocentrism or narcissistic tendencies, but about marking our presence here and now, even when only we see the photo.





100

100

100

100 100

### **Pepe.obj**

object: 3D print, chrome paint,  
35x24x28 cm,  
2023.

The 3D print object is a deformed meme figure inspired by Pepe the Frog. It is covered with a mirror finish where you can see your reflection. Set as a counterpoint to the other objects inspired by the Swollen Dog, it presents the reversed state of affairs: the frog from memes, often quoted in stories about being a loser, is much more massive than the „plumpy” dogs, which, in opposition to it, are hung on the wall like scaled flies. Nothing is zero-one.













## ***There Are Two Doges Inside of You***

objects: 3D prints, chrome paint,  
10x13x4 cm each,  
2023

Next objects that simulate heavy and cold matter. Swollen Doge from memes, based on juxtaposing strong and weak features, is downscaled relative to the frog and duplicated, creating a flawed replica. The memetic template transferred onto the wall is simultaneously a quote from memes about the inner struggle of two wolves within us. Does either ever win, and do they truly differ so greatly?









***rerererere...rere.ico***

object: thermoplastic, chrome paint,  
40x13x1 cm,  
2023

Crafted from thermoplastic, the chain resembles a growth protruding from the wall. Its links consist of deconstructed arrows reminiscent of icons from online interfaces used for sharing, reposting, and remixing. Each is unique, together forming a chaotic and uneven network.



## ***nutildet.txt***

objects: thermoplastic,  
various dimensions,  
2023

The thermoplastic objects relate to textual content and artificial intelligence. When I once asked the DALL·E generator to create an image for a nihilistic meme, I received a black image with white text in the classic meme format: at the top and bottom. However, the text only simulated letters without conveying any coherent meaning, as AI thinks in images, not text, while generating graphics. Inspired by this, I created a series of words devoid of specific meanings (or perhaps containing all meanings), which again appear to dissolve and emerge from the walls, evoking associations with divination as well.



100

100



***untitled***

object: tempered glass, thread, mounting tape,  
14.6x7.5x0.76 cm,  
2023

I treat the object suspended in the air as a ready-made. It consists of tempered glass that I removed from my smartphone after a year of use. All the cracks, smudges, dust, and fingerprints were „embedded” in twenty-four other tempered glass pieces, achieving the proper thickness of an iPhone 13 through multiplication.



***frogshopping.jpg***  
full HD 9:16 video, loop,  
2023

The video is an animated photograph inspired by the still movies genre. In the video, I pose with a frog object, and our faces dissolve, establishing a connection and intertwining with each other.

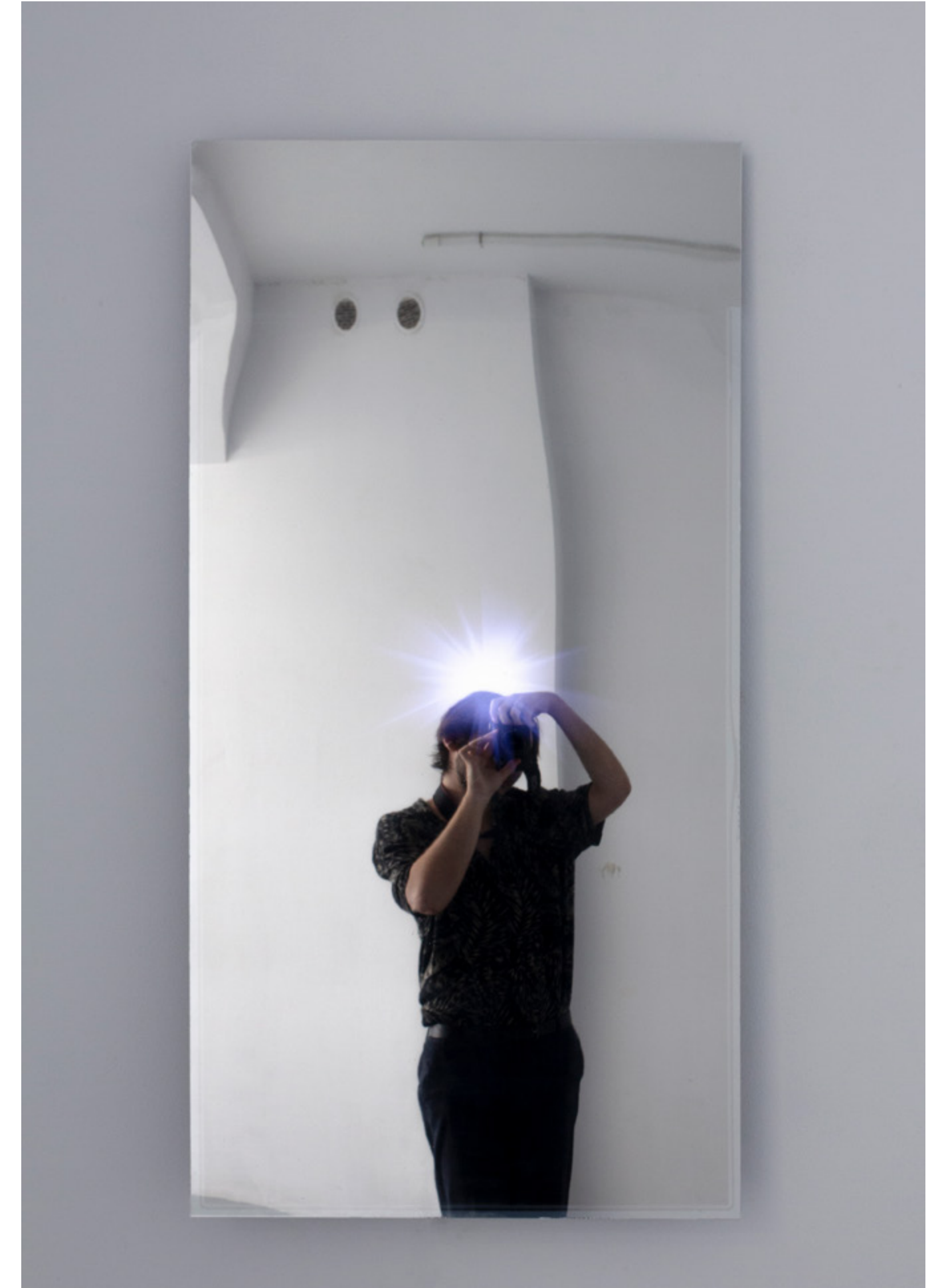


<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cv992JelfOp/>

## ***untitled***

installation: TV, Venetian mirror, smartphone,  
augmented reality filter app,  
115x59x3 cm,  
2023

In contrast to the narcissistic label often attached to individuals expressing themselves online, I've created an interactive Venetian mirror installation, incorporating an augmented reality app. When a person stands in front of the mirror, the app overlays a luminous reflection onto their face, quoting the lighting effect of amateur selfies taken in front of mirrors with flash. This seemingly senseless gesture highlights a reflection of our online behavior. It's not about constant self-promotion, but about marking our presence here and now.





## **META-**

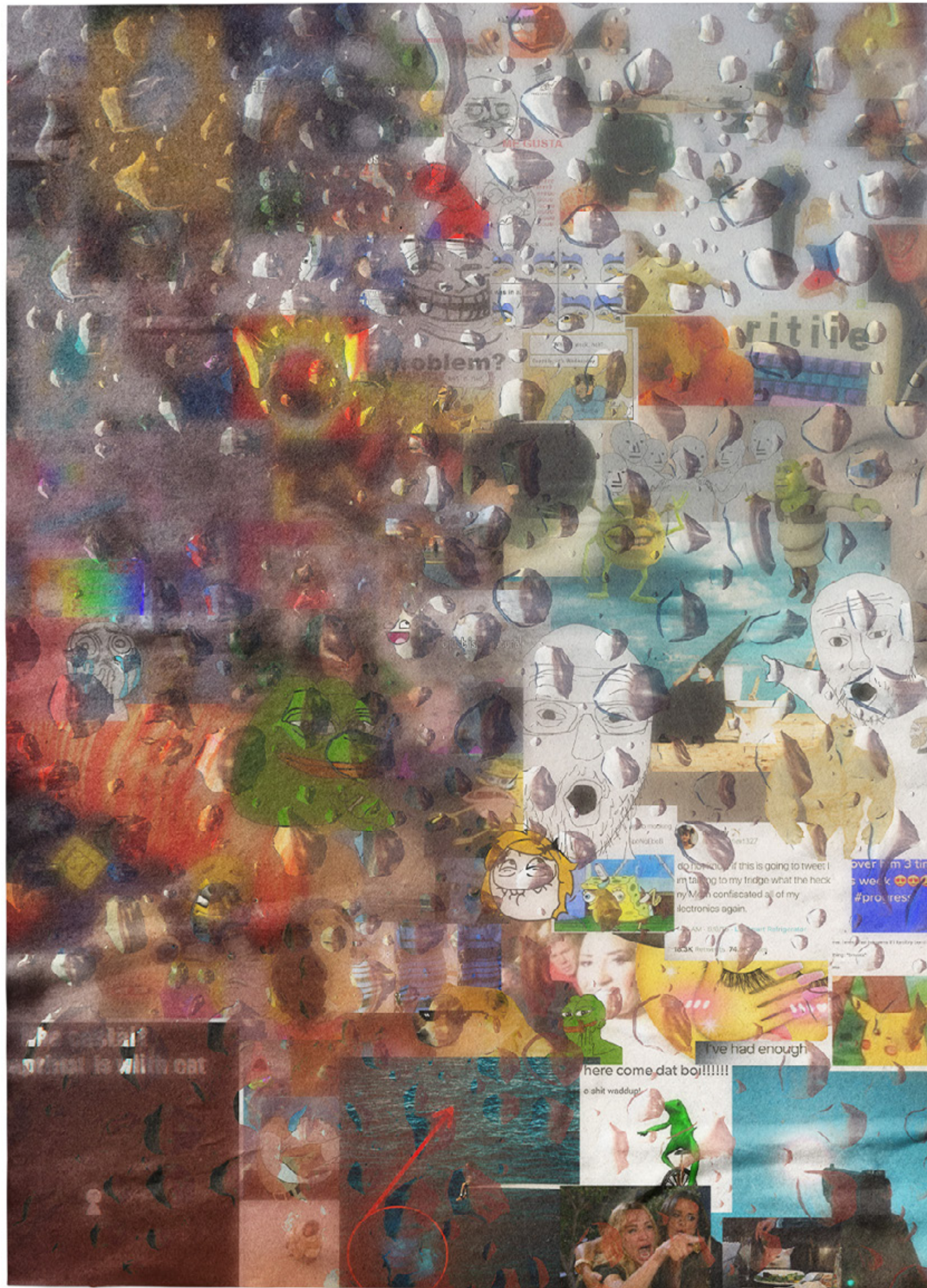
four-track EP, 16 minutes, damaged CD in packaging,  
approximately 12x12 cm,  
booklet-poster, 30x40 cm,  
video installation, 4 screens, full HD 9:16, 16 minutes,  
5 NFC sensors with online accessible content,  
DIY hologram: animation, loop, plastic, approximately  
12x12x15 cm,  
2023

Remix culture is built on reproduction and transformation. The nostalgic spiral rotates like a whirligig composed of an immense array of cultural texts. It spins and consolidates, and at its core, we can't distinguish the new from the old. theM., a digital entity created for the project, behaves similarly. Through it, I recorded an album mostly consisting of content appropriated from the internet. I use these materials to construct an audiovisual landscape seamlessly blending new content with that which contemporary culture is based on. Accompanying the EP is a poster with texts co-written in collaboration with artificial intelligence. By sampling stereotypical associations with selected cultural figures, the AI generated song lyrics in their style, ranging from Lana Del Rey to Derrida. I pose the question of how much of our identities are comprised of unique qualities and how much is based on others and what has been. We are mostly made of water, and what about our digital personas?



EP: <https://on.soundcloud.com/xHa4j>





The internet, a mirror of desire  
 A reflection of our life's fire  
 We're up on the screen, each word  
 Our thoughts, our selves, our identity

We post ourselves, we want it  
 But in this time, reality is awry  
 Our image split, in a never-ending game  
 Of infinite scrolls, forever the same

The more we scroll, the more we find  
 The more we find, the more we scroll  
 A vicious cycle, a never-ending loop  
 A world of mirrors, a world of pain

This is a world of mirrors, a world of pain  
 A world of mirrors, a world of pain  
 A world of mirrors, a world of pain  
 A world of mirrors, a world of pain

In this endless sea of information  
 We search for validation  
 But the more we seek, the more we lose  
 For the internet, is a hall of mirrors we choose

Up in my feed, scrolling all day  
 Seeing what's hot, what's here to stay  
 Likes, shares, comments, oh my  
 Social media, you keep me high

I can't get enough, it's like a drug  
 My thumbs keep moving, with a constant purr  
 All these notifications, get me feeling alive  
 Social media, you keep me on the grid

Online game streaming, always on fleek  
 Making sure my profile, is on point and unique  
 Followers, climbing up to the sky  
 I'm living for the likes, it's my high

I can't get enough, it's like a drug  
 My thumbs keep moving, with a constant purr  
 All these notifications, get me feeling alive  
 Social media, you keep me on the grid

I'm living for the likes, and the shares  
 I'm addicted to the validation, it's my affair  
 I can't get enough, it's the constant scroll  
 Social media, get me under your control

Memes, a play on signs and meaning  
 A deconstruction of language and being  
 A viral spread, a language shared  
 But beneath the surface, a deeper layer bared

In a world of endless replication  
 The meme, a comment, a casual conversation  
 A commentary on the world we know  
 But the message, open to interpretation's flow

We meme to cope, to make sense of it all  
 But in its repetition, a new meaning may befall  
 A joke, a satire, a war of creative  
 But in its proliferation, a new discourse is forged

The meme culture, a network of signs  
 A web of signs, without fixed meanings or sizes  
 A fluidity, a movement that breaks free  
 A disruption, of what is and what's to be

From the old to the new  
 A blend of the familiar and the taboo  
 We take bits and pieces,  
 And make them our own  
 With a touch of nostalgia,  
 And a hint of unknown

Sampling, sampling  
 It's the way of the future  
 Sampling, sampling  
 We're making our own culture

A beat from the past,  
 A melody from the now  
 We mix and match,  
 And watch it all come around  
 The songs we love so well,  
 Are now our own creations  
 With a touch of the vintage,  
 And a hint of new sensations

Sampling, sampling  
 It's the way of the future  
 Sampling, sampling  
 We're making our own culture

We're taking the old,  
 And making it new  
 With every sample,  
 We're creating something true  
 So let's embrace the past,  
 And pave a new road  
 With every sample,  
 We're building our code

Sampling, sampling  
 It's the way of the future  
 Sampling, sampling  
 We're making our own culture

So let's keep sampling,  
 Let's keep creating  
 With every sample,  
 Our future is shaping

Beyond reality, a new dimension  
 Where the boundaries blur, and imagination  
 Is the only limit, welcome to the metaverse  
 Where anything can happen, it's a universe

In the metaverse, we're free to be  
 Our virtual selves, wild and carelessly  
 We can build and create, let our minds roam  
 In the metaverse, anything is possible, we're in our own zone

A digital world, that feels so real  
 A place where we can make our own deal  
 We can fly, we can teleport, we can be  
 Anything we want to be In the metaverse, wild and free

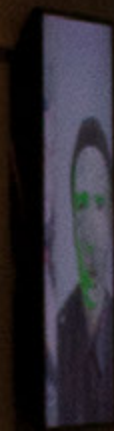
In the metaverse, we're free to be  
 Our virtual selves, wild and carelessly  
 We can build and create, let our minds roam  
 In the metaverse, anything is possible, we're in our own zone

In the metaverse, we'll leave behind  
 The limitations of our physical minds  
 We'll create a new reality, for us to unfold  
 In the metaverse, anything is possible, we'll break the mold

In the metaverse, we're free to be  
 Our virtual selves, wild and carelessly  
 We can build and create, let our minds roam  
 In the metaverse, anything is possible, we're in our own zone

In the metaverse, we're no longer bound  
 To the limits of our physical surroundings  
 A place where anything can happen,  
 and we're free to create our own destiny.



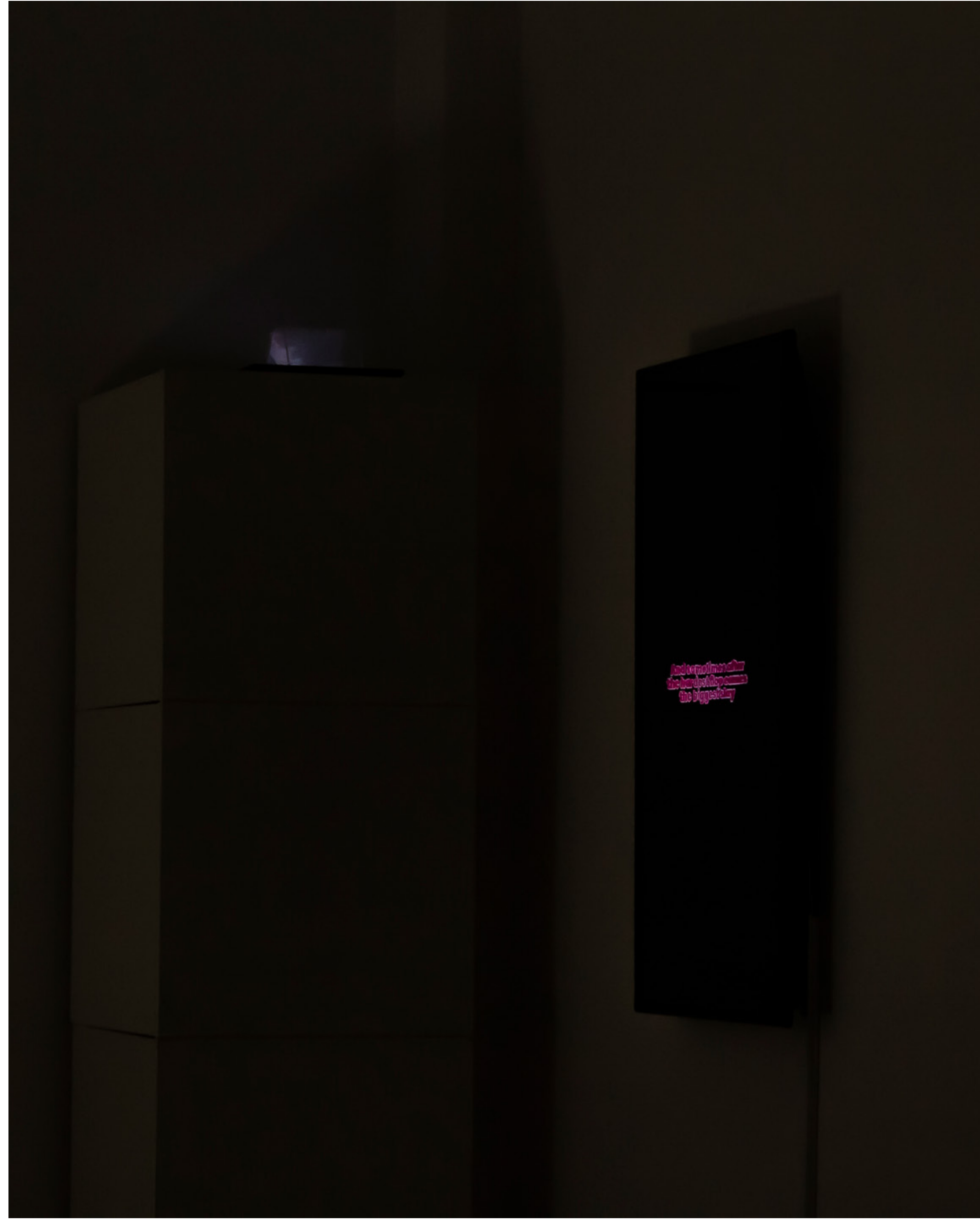






video documentation:  
<https://vimeo.com/900179115>





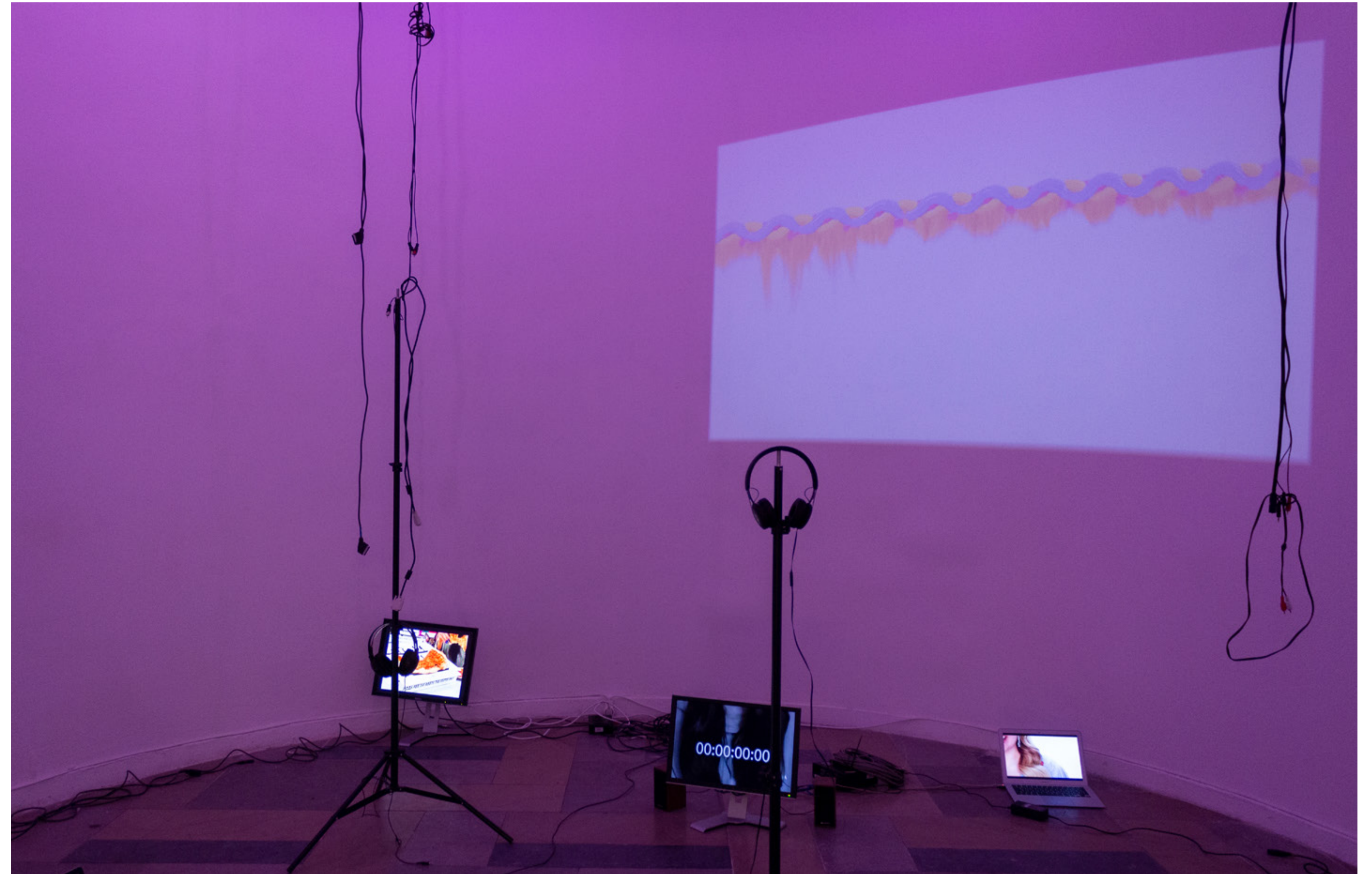


## **Social Distancing**

ten-channel video 5'14",  
sound 5'14",  
looped animation,  
2022

#influences#discountcodes#asmr  
#cables#violet#influ#hair#loop  
#mukbang#image#ad#screens#fair  
#foryou#fy#youtube#haul#collaboration

The project tells about the need to build a filter in oneself that separates us from the overwhelming influences on our image. Appropriated materials from social media, which I downloaded and recorded on my screens, I bring outwards. Later, I filter them and turn them into ASMR. Screens intertwine with cables, also in the animation with a cable intertwined in a rotating braid, from which hair grows. I want to turn the exhibition space into a symbolic battlefield for the influences flashing from each screen. Am I already drawn into it or not yet? How to distance oneself from something that is always within reach?











videodocumentation of exhibition at Rotunda Gallery:  
<https://vimeo.com/779103044>



***When I Looked at Myself,  
I Saw Something New***

object: embroidery on a sling with white thread, 30x30 cm,  
installation: 2000 make-up removal wipes,  
reflected makeup, steel, thread, fan, 150x70x72 cm,  
video installation, loop,  
2022

Rose remains a rose in every form.

The surface we create starts to live its own life.

And non-existent people arise from mere thought  
and present themselves as we do.





**Metamorphoses, video documentation:**  
<https://youtu.be/Y59troAjZw8>





*Transitions*, video documentation:  
<https://youtu.be/NFMihLvwV6Q>







# Walking Success (Think and Grow Rich ❤️)

photo object 81x60x1 cm, fibreboard

(6 digital prints 21x30 cm),

2022

By registering my walking through Poznan using the Strava exercise app, I created a slogan that stretched across the map of the city. "Think and Grow Rich" is the title of a book by Napoleon Hill, one of the pioneers among authors of "how to achieve success" guides. I concluded the series of my walks in the form of frames glued together into a composition imitating those found in home decor stores.





## ***screensaversymphony***

8 screen savers for macOS and Windows,  
video documentation of the action, 3'15",  
website,  
2022

The project revolves around the concept of screen savers in the workplace, which are often associated with a form of control over employees' activity while also contributing to the company's image. However, I approach the situation differently: my screen savers encourage employees to seek forms of relaxation in the office. Additionally, they are accompanied by a sound mix of employees' conversations. By trying to escape control in the workplace, they paradoxically use this energy to be controlled and productive in other areas, including the productive use of free time dictated and documented by smartphone applications. The screen savers sing awkwardly, engaging in a conversation based on popular pop songs.

# screensaversymphony



<http://screensaversymphony.tumblr.com>



Check your DMs



## ***Cursed Images for the Cursed Times***

5 albums, 20x27 cm, 58 pages each,  
2022

Edition of five fake photo albums collecting a series of cursed images found online. The albums were released into the public space and can be searched for on the streets of selected Polish cities. The negatives are included in the books, pretending that one person with a wealth of experience is behind all the events in the photos. What do cursed images say about us when they are created in times of absurdity and bending of reality?



video documentation of the publication:  
<https://vimeo.com/682628523>









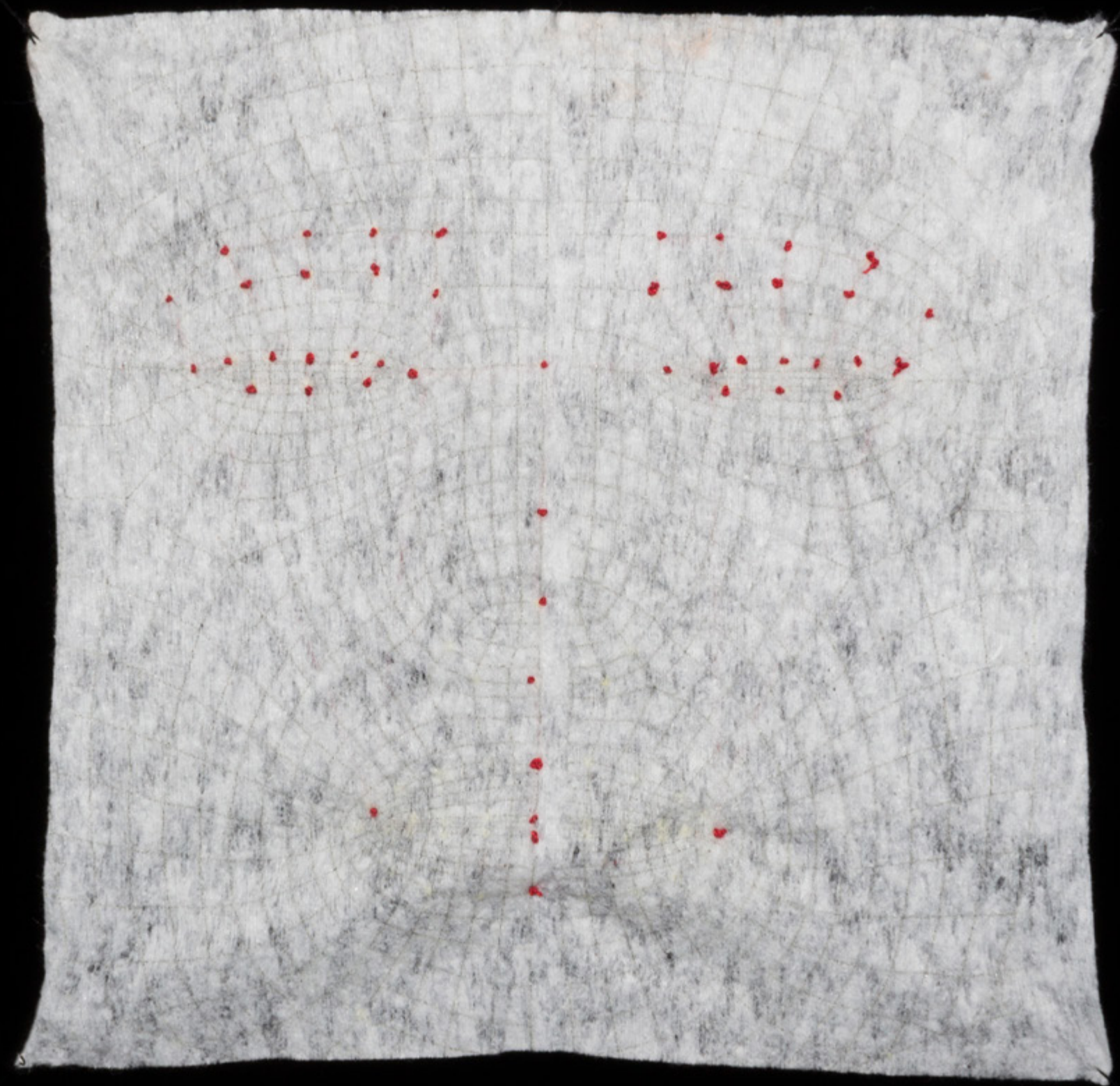
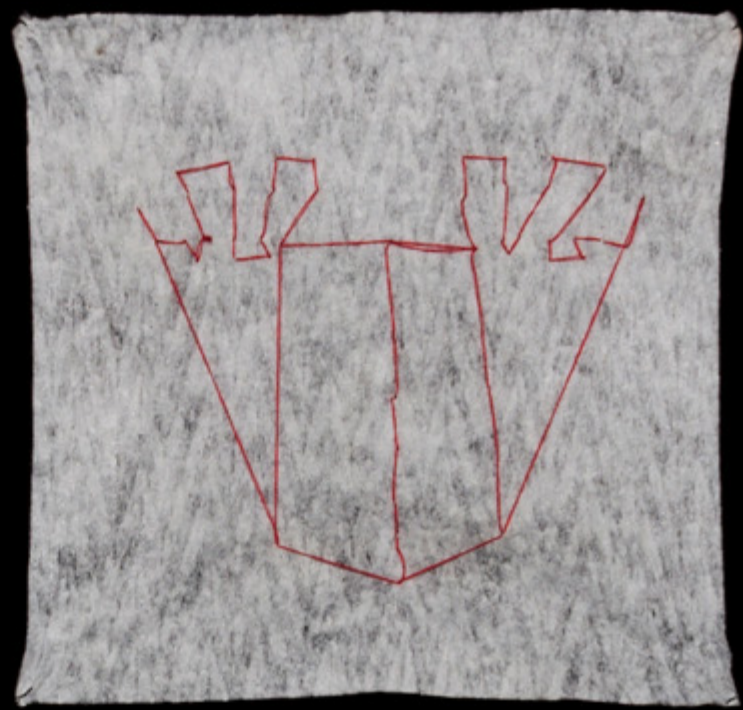


## ***Sensitive Points***

objects, threads, facial cleansing wipes,  
nitro transfer, black frames, approx. 40 x 41 x 0.5 cm,  
on-camera action, 16'53",  
gif, AR face filter, 2021

In my bachelor's diploma, I am searching for a visual definition for psychological masks, which I juxtapose with imagery related to artificial intelligence, attempting to find interdependencies between the two and the persona. The means of expression I use - from red thread, through performative actions, to elements of augmented reality - present the mask as a wide spectrum of meanings present in our everyday life, although sometimes elusive. Sensitive points are the points that a face detection scanner is sensitive to. I capture this meaning and take it further: to all the points of our personality - those that others around us "scan" and notice, as well as those hidden deep inside us that we are afraid to bring to the surface.



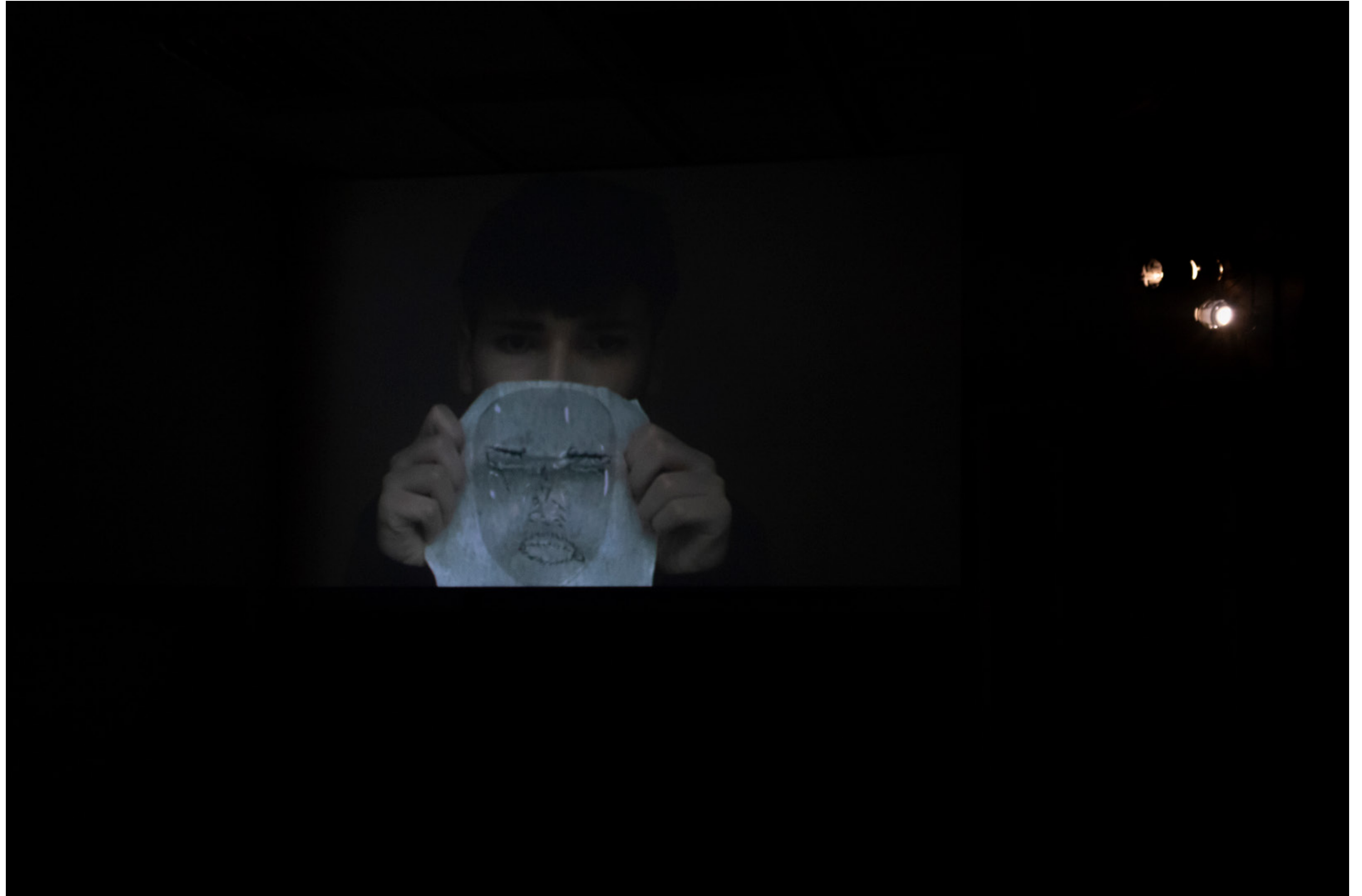




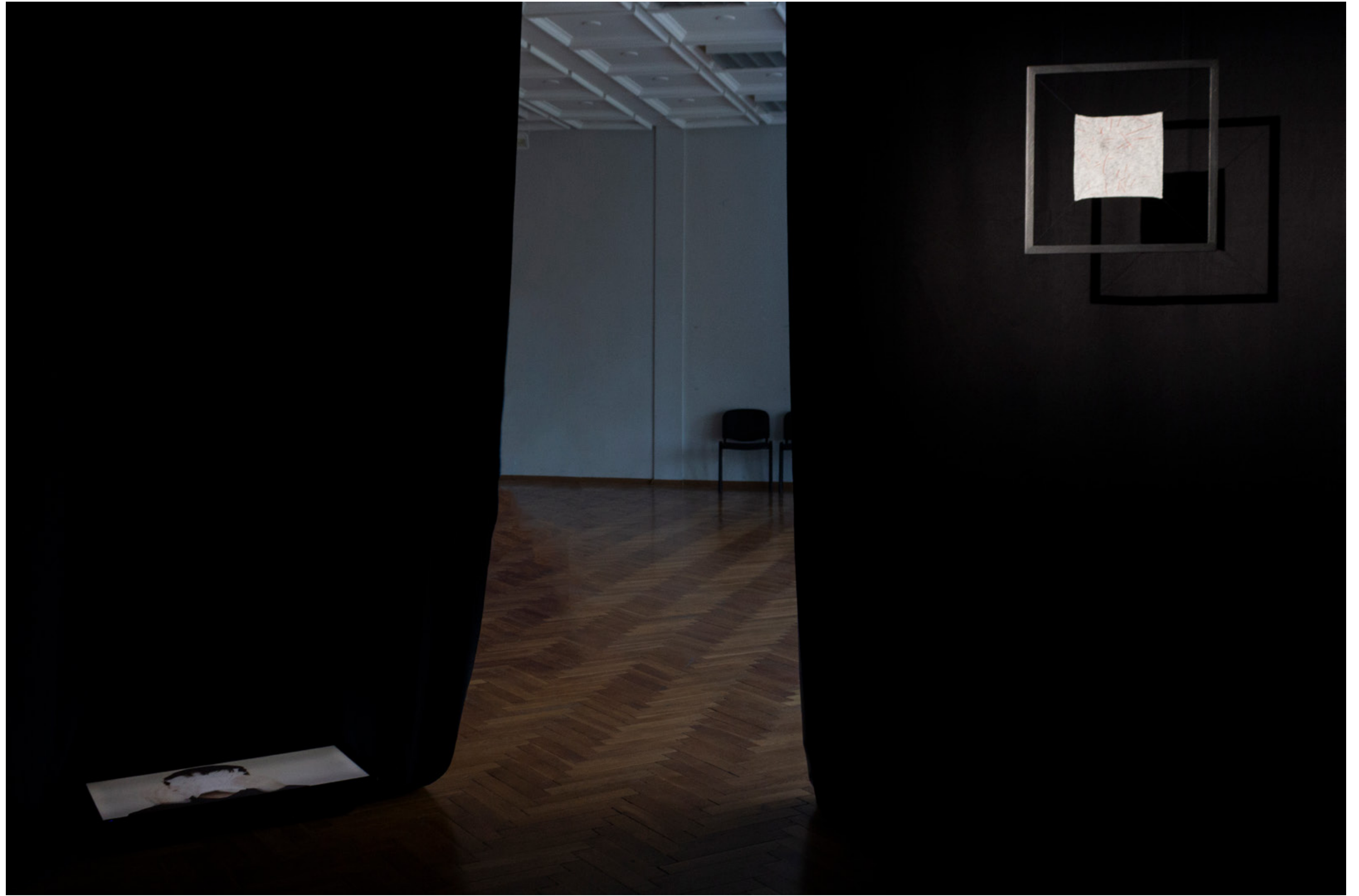


video artwork:  
<https://vimeo.com/568398629>











## **No title / Beauty blender**

video, 4'46"

2021

The video takes us to a television studio where a non-binary bot presenter tries to comment on products designed by artificial intelligence in a binary stereotypical way, while citing the well-known dilemmas of social media users monitored by algorithms.

The work was created in collaboration with Marcin Kosakowski as part of the *Artificial Patho-intelligence* project, premiered at the TRAF0 Art Station in Szczecin. Curator: Piotr Kopik.



<https://youtu.be/wURFo2SithY>





exhibition view, TRAF0 Center for Contemporary Art in Szczecin, 2021