

Thea Oda Barslund

## Simultaneous Existence

*The visualization of dynamics between digital and physical negotiations of value.*

Bachelor's thesis in BK2600 BFA Exhibition

Supervisor: Jacob Jessen

Co-supervisor: Leslie Johnson

March 2023



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Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Faculty of Architecture and Design  
Trondheim Academy of Fine Art



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### Introduction

I believe I have become a cyborg, if I wasn't already born as one. My dreams and ambitions align with a cyborg way of living. So does my work. I exist within communities that enable and support collective intelligence. I am not made of mud and I do not dream of returning to dust. In this thesis I unfold my artistic practice through my reading of Donna Haraway's iconic essay in feminist literature; *Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s*<sup>1</sup>, while acknowledging existence in the *Post-internet* era, defined by Marisa Olsen<sup>2</sup>.

I want to start off by acknowledging the influence of my social position on my interest in cyborgism and Post-internet. My stance within these subjects stems from my upbringing, where developing identity with access to the internet, being the standard within my segment, northern European society. I realize that having access to the internet is not a given, and being able to own a smartphone is a privilege, which isn't universal for around 30% of the world's population<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Haraway, Donna. (1985). *Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist feminism in the 1980's*. Socialist Review

<sup>2</sup> Olsen, Marisa. (2008). *POST-INTERNET: Art after the internet*.

<sup>3</sup> Jay, Allan. (2023, 16.03). *Number of Smartphone and Mobile Phone Users Worldwide in 2022/2023: Demographics, Statistics, Predictions*. Financeonline.com

<https://financesonline.com/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/>

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### Cyborgism and Post-internet

Cyborg applies to an organism that has restored function or enhanced abilities, as a result from integrating artificial components or technology that relies on some sort of feedback between body and components, depending on the components. This could be prosthesis, implants or wearable technology.<sup>4</sup> Donna Haraway wrote *Manifesto for Cyborgs* in 1985, which was around the same time as universities started using intranet communication and file sharing system as a preliminary stage to the world wide web; the internet as we know it.<sup>5</sup> Haraway's writing of her cyborg manifesto predates the invention of the smartphone, but I would argue that the smartphone is the best example of wearable technology. The feedback would be notifications, reactions and modifications of the algorithms based on the data that is put into it. It is the physical connection between body and smartphone; the symbol of access to the internet, that makes us cyborgs. The internet seems like the greatest technology for pursuing and creating non-conforming communities and move beyond the binary.

Marisa Olson (1977) is known to have coined the term *Post-internet* in an essay with the same title in 2008. Post-internet is argued to be a wide category of objects; art, which is in one way, or another influenced by the internet or acknowledges a reality highly shaped by the internet, without necessarily being within the genre or aesthetic of internet art or based on new media. It is within the field of Post-internet I place my art practice.

*Internet art can no longer be distinguished as strictly computer/internet based, but rather, can be identified as any type of art that is in some way influenced by the internet and digital media.*

Marisa Olson, 2008

Olson and other front-figures<sup>6</sup> in the Post-internet dialog seems to agree, that the exact beginning of post-internet cannot be pin-pointed, but I would argue, that it must have been around the same year, as Olson coined the term, around the same time the first iPhone launched (2007). This new technology shifted our internet use from being solely in workspaces, institutions, schools or at home, to having access to the internet nearly all the time. To me, this seems to be the obvious turning point between internet and post-internet. This is where physical existence really begins to be shaped by a digital presence, and the technology of the smartphone becomes an extension of the body instead of the personal computer.

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<sup>4</sup>Ramoğlu, Muhammet. (2019, 01.04). *Cyborg-Computer Interaction: Designing New Senses*. The Design Journal. 22 (sup1): 1215–1225

<sup>5</sup> Leiner, Barry M. et al. (1997). *Brief History of the internet*. Internetsociety.org  
<https://www.internetsociety.org/internet/history-internet/brief-history-internet/>

<sup>6</sup> Artie Vierkant, Louis Doulas, Thomas Beard, Gene McHugh, Gutherie Lonergan et al.

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Early gen z's<sup>7</sup> are the last to remember childhood without smartphones. After us, there's only cyborgs. Of course, owning a smartphone doesn't make one a cyborg alone. It depends on the relation between one and their smartphone – the level of attachment, not only to the physical object of the smartphone, but also to the enhanced abilities one gains from this attachment. We grew into our identities with access to more perspectives than ever before. We expressed our identities through tools that were not accessible before. Our identities are created on and with our access to the internet, and our presence on the internet has therefore become an essential part of how we think of ourselves; our physical presence and our digital presence are inseparable. We can distinguish between physical and digital communication, and we navigate within the unwritten rules and norms of these spaces seamlessly. This is what creates the generation gap in understanding between generations before millennials<sup>8</sup> and the generations after. The dilemmas connected to On-line/Off-line do not exist, because there is no such thing as offline anymore. The rising of AI<sup>9</sup> is not surprising, and neither is the fear it has spread among baby boomers<sup>10</sup>. AI is a direct threat to non-cyborg identity<sup>11</sup>, whilst being the most powerful tool for anyone, who is capable of using it. The fear of AI is more rational when it comes to the working conditions of the people who develop AI, than the consequences of AI itself.

The creation and usage of technology is inherently what sets the framework for our lives, deaths, and societal progression. Due to a capitalist system with the possibility to profit from the development of new technology, the evolution of cyborgs seems unavoidable. I therefore find it meaningless to not look for different types of value in that process. Take the invention of photography; the memory of a deceased person's face extends when you can look at a photo of them. The need for value-detection is what will secure the distinction between humans and machines. It will always be us who decides the criteria for value, and AI/robots can only find value through our criteria.

In my artistic work, value-detection is not static. In this time of age, sustainability is a widely spread concept in general, and I think it is important to also bear it in mind, when dealing with artistic production. It is important for me to believe that an idea will add value. This does not mean I believe that artists should only work with originality if it is even possible to do so. Artists can reinvent the wheel, if they are conscious about why the wheel was invented in the first place, and what value it adds to reinventing it. When talking about identifying value, I use the term in the widest sense. In my artworks it is an ongoing dialog, negotiation and dynamic between power positions, identity, and social structures.

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<sup>7</sup> Generation zoomer, born between 1997-2012

<sup>8</sup> Generation Millennial or generation Y, born between 1981 and 1996

<sup>9</sup> Artificial Intelligence/a 'thinking' computer system

<sup>10</sup> Generation Baby Boomer, born between 1955 and 1966

<sup>11</sup> Non-cyborg identity is an identity created without relating on feedback from technology



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### Første date



1 Barslund, Thea Oda. (2020). *Første date*. Photodocumentation: Thea Oda Barslund

*Første date, 2020* (first date) is the title of one of the artworks, which I applied with for my bachelor's degree. This is also my earliest work with a cyborg layer of interpretation. All artworks can of course be interpreted in different ways, but my intended reference frame for this work, will divide viewers into humans or cyborgs, depending on how they read it. *Første date* is a white towel with an upscaled receipt printed on it. The receipt shows two adults buying access to a public pool, and the title suggests that they went there for a first date. The work is both the physical object (the towel with a receipt on it) and simultaneously the viewer's imagination of how a first date in a swimming pool would be/could have been.

The idea of a first date in a swimming pool is far from originally mine, and a cyborg would be able to detect this. In 2016 the beauty industry had a boom.<sup>12</sup> At that time, beauty blogging and make-up content was already big on the internet, and in 2016 it was widely normalized for anyone to create and share beauty content. This is explained with appearance and self-

expression being a main factor on social media. I suggest that gen z was well into their teen years/young adulthood in 2016, and in conjunction with their presence on the internet, they were also in an age of gaining more independence, both as individuals but also as members of a capitalist economic system, where they now could choose where to spend their money.

Kylie Jenner, the youngest sister of the Kardashian family, is a good example of how gen z's relation to the internet and make-up is connected. Kylie Jenner attributed in generating the rising interest in make-up. In

<sup>12</sup> Deslandes, Maria. (2017, 21.03). *World beauty and cosmetics market grows 4% in 2016, driven by the 'selfie generation'*. Fashionnetwork.com  
<https://www.fashionnetwork.com/news/World-beauty-and-cosmetics-market-grows-4-in-2016-driven-by-the-selfie-generation-,807234.html>

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2015, she began getting her lips injected at the age of 17<sup>13</sup>. Her follower base, consisting of a lot of teenage girls, began an obsession with getting big lips like Kylie Jenner. In 2016 she created a lip-kit including a lipstick and a lip-liner under her own brand Kylie Cosmetics. Kris Jenner, who is Kylie Jenner's momager<sup>14</sup>, suggested a promotion-plan for launching the lip-kit, but Kylie Jenner went against her mom's advice by only advertising her lip-kits on social media<sup>15</sup>. The lip-kits were completely sold out only hours after she launched them on her Instagram profile, and she is today the youngest person ever to become a billionaire.<sup>16</sup> The generational gap becomes clear between Kris Jenner and Kylie Jenner in their business approach of product launching.

In response to more people, especially women sharing process pictures and tutorials on how to apply make-up, a new trend amongst men grew in popularity, and became a meme. They would post pictures of a woman with and without make-up on, with captions like "this is why I have trust issues, take her swimming on first date", suggesting that women using make-up was deceiving and tricking men into dating someone they found unattractive<sup>17</sup>. Leading up to the spread of this meme, the dating app *Tinder* have had huge success and by 2016 it was the biggest dating app in USA<sup>18</sup>, while *Catfish: The TV Show* had already aired on MTV for 3 years<sup>19</sup>. *Catfish: The TV Show* had two hosts, Nev and Max, who helped people meet their romantic partners they had, up until then, only met online, with the possibility of exposing their partners in catfishing<sup>20</sup>. So, the subject of deceiving in dating was already big in mainstream media. I would also argue that catfishing is a very cyborg practice, since it depends on technology and feedback, and to succeed in catfishing one would have to be very familiar with online presence.

Obviously, a full face of make-up doesn't just disappear by being dipped in water, but I also find the idea of a first date in a swimming pool interesting because of the intimacy that lies in meeting someone (almost)

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<sup>13</sup> Martin, Lara. (2017, 11.09). *POUT OF ORDER Kylie Jenner reveals she decided to get lip fillers aged 15 after a boy she kissed made fun of her 'small lips'*. Thesun.co.uk

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/tvandshowbiz/4436727/kylie-jenner-reveals-she-decided-to-get-lip-fillers-aged-15-after-a-boy-she-kissed-made-fun-of-her-small-lips/>

<sup>14</sup> Momager is an abbreviation of mom and manager meaning a mother of a famous person, who is also their manager

<sup>15</sup> ABC News. (2022). *The Kardashians: an ABC news special*. ABC News

<https://abc.com/movies-and-specials/the-kardashians-an-abc-news-special>

<sup>16</sup> Neate, Rupert. (2019, 05.03) *Kylie Jenner's makeup makes her the world's youngest billionaire*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/mar/05/kylie-jenner-makeup-makes-her-the-worlds-youngest-billionaire>

<sup>17</sup> Compton, Chloe. (2016, 28.06). *"Take Her Swimming On The First Date"*. Theodysseyonline.com

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/take-her-swimming-on-the-first-date>

<sup>18</sup> Statista Research Department. (2016, 06.12). *Most popular dating apps in the United States as of April 2016, by market share*. Statista.com

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/737081/popular-online-dating-market-share-users-monthly/>

<sup>19</sup> Schulman and Joseph. (2012-2017). *Catfish: the TV Show*. MTV

<https://www.mtv.com/shows/catfish>

<sup>20</sup> Catfishing means using a false profile and identity to persuade and take advantage of real people looking for love online, usually with the motive of getting money from people

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naked, for the first time. Ever since 2016 this idea of a first date in a swimming pool has lived in my head, until I made the work *Første date* four years later in 2020. The 'take her swimming' meme roots in ignorant misogyny by claiming women are untrustworthy for wearing make-up, which indirectly is the same as claiming the only reason a woman would wear make-up is to attract a man, putting the heterosexual cis man in the center of the joy of expressing oneself through beauty products. I believe that the context of this meme gives my work a depth, discussing the value and gravity of honesty and gender expression within dating-culture.

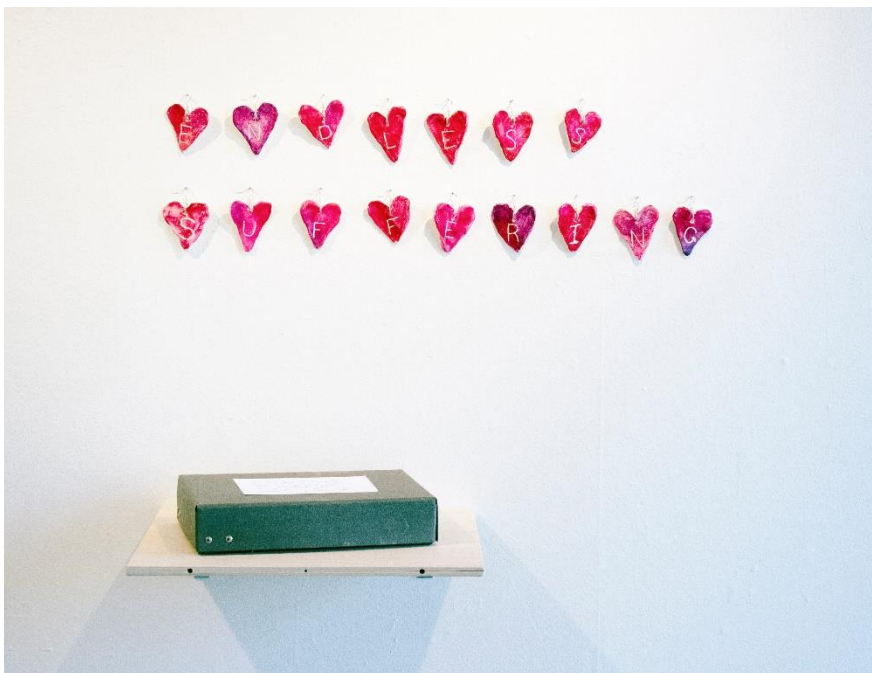
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### DIY

In 2021, the first year of my bachelor's degree, I had an exhibition in Galleri Blunk titled *DIY*<sup>21</sup>. I invited 3 artists from Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts and 3 artists from my previous art school, Kunsthøgskolen på Ærø. The concept for the exhibition was that the artists would make an art piece in any media, and in addition they would also make a DIY-kit containing a tutorial on how to make that unique art piece and the needed materials. In the exhibition, both art pieces and DIY-kits were on display, but only the DIY-kits were for sale.



3Brøns-Piche, Jonas. (2021). *Endless suffering*. Photodocumentation: Thea Oda Barslund



2Brøns-Piche, Jonas. (2021). *Endless suffering*. Photodocumentation: Thea Oda Barslund

This exhibition became important in the development of my practice, since this was my first step towards a more relational and curatorial practice, whereas it was more bound to materials before. I didn't produce any physical art piece for the exhibition, I just had a vision to turn the exhibition space into a store, where you could buy pre-manufactured kits for producing unique art pieces. It was a way to explore the concept of creativity and what it means, by combining a more accessible and rather capitalistic way of thinking creativity with the fine art world and the contemplation that art is elitist, if it's presented in an institutional context<sup>22</sup>. It expanded my understanding of how to execute an idea, since my *DIY* exhibition allowed me to subtract myself as creator of an art piece and add myself as curatorial artist of the idea. This method has become a useful tool in my creative process when it seems beneficial to the concept of an idea.

<sup>21</sup> Abbreviation for 'do it yourself'

<sup>22</sup> Gallery, museum, exhibition space, etc.

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The term 'Do-It-Yourself' can be traced back to the early 1900s, where homecrafts and other nifty activities became a usual subject in women's magazines. At that time 'DIY' was mostly tips and tricks for housewives on how to save money on householding and décor, by using materials already existing around the house, instead of buying new fabricated products<sup>23</sup>. Today DIY-culture thrives on the internet, where youtubers with thousands of viewers share their own do-it-yourself projects and give advice on how to live a more sustainable lifestyle, whilst being sponsored by massive hobby firms.

I want to connect the boom of DIY-culture on the internet with the increased cost of living over the past years, together with the isolation many people faced under the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic played a magnitude role in developing a collective experience of digital existence in society across generations, since societal tasks were forced to be done within the home, and therefore transcended to digital spaces, where knowledge can be shared without physical nearness. A large group of people took on new hobbies and DIY-projects under lockdown. Even though doing something yourself might not be cheaper than buying something new, it does create the illusion of affordability and sustainability, or give one a satisfaction and confidence in capability for creating something from scratch. For example, if one is to knit a sweater, they will experience the process of creating the sweater, and even though the yarn is way more expensive than buying a knitted sweater in similar materials, the process and the completion of the knitting project will stand in contrast to how one is used to buy a manufactured sweater; fast fashion.

One characteristic of a cyborg is that they have great confidence in being able to do things themselves; they are familiar with finding and following an online tutorial. Sometimes tutorials for projects find them first and generates a need or want that didn't exist before an algorithm suggested that *you should make your own shelf system with room for plants and it's super easy, just click on this video to see how.*

*Communications sciences and biology are constructions of natural technical objects of knowledge in which the difference between machine and organism is thoroughly blurred; mind, body, and tool are on very intimate terms.*

Donna Haraway, 1985

A digital presence is a tool for the body, but the body can also be a tool for a digital project. Most cyborgs have skills and abilities, they have solely learned through watching videos and tutorials online. This relates to Donna Haraway's theory on how technology/tools are connected to knowledge.

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<sup>23</sup> Wolf & McQuitty. (2011). *Understanding the Do-It-Yourself Consumer: DIY Motivation and Outcomes*. Academy of Marketing Science Review

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### The value of recognition

My *DIY* exhibition was critical towards capitalism invading anti-consumerism concepts made within traditionally woman-spaces. My *Første date* work referenced to a meme, which visualized the spread misogyny in digital spaces. It seems unavoidable for me to mirror a feminist agenda into my art practice. I strive to do it in a way without agitating or intimidating anyone, which I believe this is an example of. In all my works I use different values to evoke interest for the viewer. One value I generously use is recognition: presenting content in a recognizable form. In the *DIY* exhibition it was the kit, in *Første date* it was the towel and the receipt. It is a gesture of giving an entrance-point into reflection, for the viewer to meet social issues through an aesthetic expression. I propose someone is more likely to stay with an artwork if they feel safe or familiar; being able to recognize creates that familiarity. In addition, if the recognizable form also has a twist to it, for example the receipt was larger than it should be, it has an absurdity to it, which might motivate people to explore, invest, reflect, and engage with the artwork.

The same notion of using recognition is also used by the fashion brand MSCHF in their Big Red Boots<sup>24</sup>, which has been the hot topic of this year's New York fashion week. The big red boots is best described as cartoonish<sup>25</sup> and seems to be inspired by the Japanese manga character Astro boy<sup>26</sup>, who's signature look is with similar big red boots. Tiktok user @TheAlgorhythm<sup>27</sup> suggests that these boots are going viral because they carry wide implications about culture, the internet and the future of fashion and technology. The reason I'm bringing up these boots, is because I agree with @TheAlgorhythm, and I believe these boots to be a direct proof of the cyborg evolution. These boots could not have been designed in any time before the presence of the Anthropocene age. The boots look very far from actual wearable footwear and very much like boots; or the idea of what boots looks like; creating instant familiarity.



*Abstracted forms convey their core idea with an immediacy that a fully realized form cannot. This is why animation can convey coherent motion in a fraction of the frames live action requires.*

Product details on MSCHF's website for The Big Red Boots, n.d.

4MSCHF's Big Red BootsPhoto: Courtesy of MSCHF

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<sup>24</sup> MSCHF. (n.d.). *The Big Red Boot*. Mschf.com

<https://mschf.com/shop/big-red-boot>

<sup>25</sup> Allarie, Christian. (2023, 23.02). *Why Is Everyone Wearing These Cartoonish Red Boots?*. Vogue.com

<https://www.vogue.com/article/everyone-is-wearing-mschf-big-red-boots>

<sup>26</sup> Fraser, Kristopher. (2023, 17.02). *Celebrities Are Stomping Out in Mschf's Sold-out Big Red Boots With Ciara, Lil Wayne and Seth Rollins Among the Famous Fans*. Wwd.com

<https://wwd.com/pop-culture/celebrity-news/celebrities-wearing-mschf-big-red-boots-1235532769/>

<sup>27</sup> The Algorhythm. (2023, 11.02). *This boots say much more about us than you think*. Tiktok

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Pictures of people wearing these boots seem like the red boots were photoshopped in or the whole photo was AI-generated. This makes one think that the designers of MSCHF did not only copy the idea of a boot, but also imitate digital realities of a boot, which is the core of cyborgism; to think physical and digital realities as co-existing, and therefore they are influential to each other, rather than a physical reality being 'the real' and everything digital being an imitational extension to 'the real'.



5Sarah Snyder in the Big Red BootsPhoto: Courtesy of MSCHF

Presenting the concept of something instead of presenting the actual something is not an unknown method within contemporary art, and the best example of this is Joseph Kosuth's iconic work within conceptualism *one and three chairs* from 1965. This art piece includes a chair, a picture of the chair and a written definition of a chair. The piece challenges the concept of grasping and understanding things through the idea, while discussing the value-relation between object, visual and verbal.



6Kosuth, Joseph. (1965). *One and three chairs*.  
Photo: courtesy MoMA.org

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### Super Nova Intimate Casual Casting Situation

In October 2022 I presented a performance in Galleri KiT, as a part of the local art festival *Trondheim Open*<sup>28</sup> in Trøndelag. The performance was titled *Super Nova Intimate Casual Casting Situation* and even though I have played with ideas of performance as media, it was the first time I exhibited a performance. The central part in this performance was the conversation between me and Jacob Jessen, head of department at Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts<sup>29</sup>. I had installed some furniture, imitating 'office-space', where me and a person performing as a minute-taker sat on one side of a table and Jacob Jessen on the other side, simulating to cast Jessen for the Danish version of reality-tv show *Paradise* (earlier known under the name *Paradise Hotel*)<sup>30</sup>. Jessen joined this performance as himself, with the twist of performing as having signed up for *Paradise* and really wanting to be put on the show. The conversation included interviewing him on his interest in the show, his personal life, and his relations regarding family, romance, and friends. The whole conversation was based on a real casting I went on myself for *Paradise* just a month prior to the performance.



7Barslund, Thea Oda. (2022). *Super Nova Intimate Casual Casting Situation*. Photodocumentation: Thea Oda Barslund

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<sup>28</sup> Trondheim Open. (2022). *Arkiv 2022*. Trondheimopen.org  
<https://trondheimopen.org/en/arkiv-2022/>

<sup>29</sup> NTNU. (n.d.). *Jacob Jessen*. Ntnu.edu  
<https://www.ntnu.edu/employees/jacob.jessen>

<sup>30</sup> Mastiff (n.d.). *Paradise Hotel*. TV2play



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Reality-tv emerged around the same time as I was born (2000), and it has had its impact on especially my pre-teen and teen years, where reality-tv was a main topic in recess. We would reenact scenes and discuss the different contestants of *Paradise*. The connotations about reality-tv in general in the 2010's was very negative, and the narrative about the contestants was often that they were stupid, dramatic and attention seeking. I am a big fan of reality-tv, and when I talk about this interest of mine, I sometimes meet people who do not see the value of it. I don't want to convince anyone to watch reality-tv, but I think we are past the point of disregarding the influence and gravity that reality-tv has, which counts as value to me. Today, reality-tv comes in a ton of different formats, touching a big variety of fields; dating, gardening, cooking, quizzing, surviving, shopping, performing etc. The people who participate in these shows often gain a big following base afterwards on their social media and become influencers. Take Kylie Jenner and her siblings Kendall Jenner, Kourtney Kardashian, Kim Kardashian and Khloé Kardashian: they are all successful business owners now, because they had a reality-tv presence, leading to a big following base that supports their ideas and wants to buy their products.

I have always found reality-tv participants brave. They dare to show themselves to anyone willing to tune in, which opens them to a lot of public judgment and criticism. I, as many others, have been curious about doing the same, and it was this curiosity that essentially led me to sign up for *Paradise*. I had three main points for the *Super Nova Intimate Casual Casting Situation* performance. First was to give an insight to the actual process of getting on a reality-tv show, to evoke interest. Second was to play with the assumptions of who contestants to reality-tv is, essentially to challenge the assumption that reality-tv contestants are unintelligent. Third was to visualize power dynamics from reality-tv, while giving it a twist. Jacob Jessen is easily readable as higher placed in social-, academic- and gender hierarchy than I am, within the context of where the performance took place, based on his role in the art scene of Trondheim, as the head of department at Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts, where I am a student, as well as him passing as a cis-man. Not to mention him, being from gen x<sup>31</sup>, which positions me and him on each side of the generation gap. In this performance, it was him who, in the perspective of hierarchical placements, does not want or need anything from me, suddenly wanting access from me to participate in the reality show.

I believe one of the reasons why people are attracted to reality-tv is the very humane curiosity on what's on the other side? Is the grass greener? Reality-tv is a real-time window into real people's lives with real interests, a reflection of different demographics of society. When one has access to more perspectives, it gives

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<sup>31</sup> Generation X, born between 1967 and 1979

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the illusion of overview, power. It is much like Hito Steyerl argues for in her essay *In free fall*<sup>32</sup>, which is about usage of perspective as a tool in colonization to take control, or give the illusion of already having control.

*The tyranny of the photographic lens, cursed by the promise of its indexical relation to reality, has given way to hyperreal representations – not of space as it is, but of space as we can make it – for better or worse.*

Hito Steyerl, 2008

Some reality-shows are of course really manipulated and cut in ways that benefit a narrative from the production team, to keep the viewers' attention. Sometimes this manipulation is so obvious, it makes one wonder, how they managed to evoke specific feelings in the contestants; which tools does the production team have, which buttons can they ethically vouch for pushing? One could imagine that a production team sitting behind the cameras would have a greater perspective and more knowledge on what is going on with the contestants and would know how each of them react in different situations.

The smartphone is in fact a portal to perspectives from all over the world; including perspectives that have little to nothing to do with our own perspective. This creates a higher risk of being lost in white noise or being radicalized in an echo chamber, but it can also open one's world views to more compassion and understanding. I would argue that the majority of gen z's and millennials are generally more aware of the consequences off what they feed into their algorithms on social media; essentially understanding that in digital spaces, attention is the currency and can therefore operate in digital culture as cyborg.

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<sup>32</sup> Steyerl, Hito. (2011). *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*. E-flux journal #24

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### The generation gap

I have been told the story of the millennium bug also called the Y2K scare. A fear of heading into the new year of 2000 was widely spread, because computer systems which banks depended on could potentially break down, due to not being able to work with numbers beyond 1999<sup>33</sup>. There are examples of people who withdrew large sums of money from their bank accounts, just to make sure their digital money wouldn't disappear, if the systems broke down<sup>34</sup>. Even though the millennium bug did become an issue for some institutions, it was not as big of an issue as anticipated; our whole money-system didn't collapse. Because of this Y2K scare, there was a lot of tension around how the next millennium was to be, as well as how the new millennium would shape a new generation of children.

In Denmark they created a reality-tv show called *Årgang 0* (year 0) following a group of kids born in 2000 from when they were babies up till their late teenage years<sup>35</sup>. I remember my grandmother being very excited about watching this show with me when I was a kid, which I thought was super boring. To me the show was just normal kids living a similar life as mine; it didn't have any novelty to me. Either way, I intercepted this interest in my generation and eventually I also internalized it.

I feel a strong connection to my generation, which is why I keep returning to the generation gap in my art practice. In this essay I have argued that the generation gap is bound to digital existence through the development of internet access and smartphones. I do believe my generation, with extended access to the internet compared to earlier generations, has been shaped significantly by it. Not with the purpose of putting the spotlight on my generation, but to center understanding and compassion between generations.

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<sup>33</sup> Rutledge, Kim et al. (2022, 20.05). *Y2K Bug*. National Geographic Society. Education.nationalgeographic.org  
<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/Y2K-bug/>

<sup>34</sup> Wahl and Staff Writer. (1999, 21.02). *BANKS TRY TO EXTERMINATE FEARS THAT Y2K BUG THREATENS DEPOSITS*.  
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<sup>35</sup> TV2. (2000-2019). *Årgang 0*. TV2  
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*The visualization of dynamics between digital and physical negotiations of value.*

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### Conclusion

In this thesis, I have unfolded three of my artworks and through that I have mapped out my fields of interest in power dynamics, identity, and relations. I have defined central terms in my art practice, being the value of recognition and the generation gap. I have contextualized my practice in the Post-internet era as a cyborg, with works that can be read within a reference frame of physical and digital social occurrences, proving that my works were made with an internet-awareness, which is a focal point to Post-internet art.

In my time as a bachelor student in fine arts, I have made more works than what I have presented in this text, but to stay within the given frame of maximum words for this thesis, I choose only to unfold works which mark out new areas in my artistic development. I do not view myself as an internet-artist, since I don't work internet-based, and my artistic language and aesthetic does not mimic the internet in the way associated with internet-artists. The materials and media that I chose are based on if the idea benefits from being presented in that media. I feel no limitations towards any media.

Reading Donna Haraway and Marisa Olson makes me think that the Post-internet era manifests itself by the evolution of humans turning into cyborgs, or they definitely reinforce each other. The need for extending one's hands with an extra brain (the smartphone) becomes more urgent when societal tasks and social engagement happens to a greater extent digitally. The Covid-19 pandemic really made it clear how crucial access to the internet is. When I read Donna Haraway's *Manifesto for Cyborgs* it makes me excited to live in times, where the development of technology plays a remarkable role in society. I sit with a feeling of familiarity when I read Marisa Olson's words on Post-internet, since it articulates a reality that is simultaneously digital and physical, and these being aware of each other, which is the reality I live in. I understand but do not agree with the term irl<sup>36</sup>, because I really live digitally just as much.

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<sup>36</sup>Abbreviation for In Real Life

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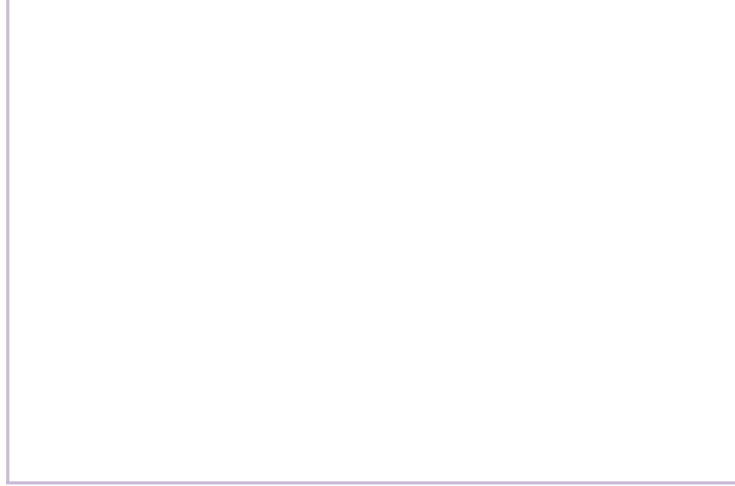
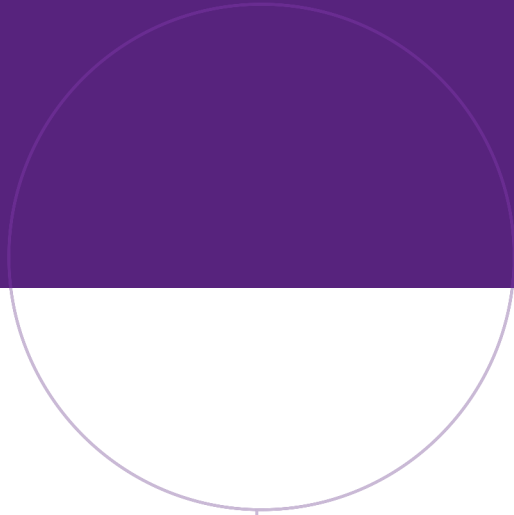
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