AN INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT N

Aalto media Lab Master Program Thesis

Huang Siying

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is a theoretical introduction and technical documentation of my ongoing project, "N".

N is a themed collection of both textual writings and visual artworks. Divided into three chapters, Nothingness, Ubiquitous and Enigma, N draws upon diverse content from science, philosophy, psychology, theology, anthropology and literature. N seeks potential correlations between drastically different paradigms and fields. On a broader scale, N serves as an incentive to creative thinkers to initiate conversations between long isolated and self-privileged disciplines, mediating between them to collaboratively generate new insights into our fundamental questions.

The thesis covers the personal and theoretical backgrounds of N, the symbolic arrangements of its content, its post-structuralist style of writing and the metaphorical implications of its artistic praxis. The thesis also contains fragmented texts excerpted from N, as well as detailed descriptions of some selected artworks.

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Preface:
The Beginning of Project N

There is no denying that the initial reason for me to embark on Project N is pure self-interest. As many creative thinker, I was struggling to find my own artistic language and creative purpose. Instead of having no clue about the answer, my problem is having too too many scrambled ideas that were fuzzy and disorganised. So I took a piece of paper, and started to map out the knowledge which strongly influenced the conceptualisation process of my artworks. They evolved around my focus of interest, aesthetic preferences and my world values. In order to find a clear pattern in these cluttered materials, I started to analytically divide them into four major sections: they are doctrines I do not or no longer believe in, the insights and observations I resonate with, the psychic knowledge of souls and the the subconsciousness, along with my passion and intuitive experiences.

During the process of mapping this knowledge, I intentionally performed a connectionism[1] practice to maximise the effect of emergence[2]. The practice encourages the artist to take risk and delve into the unfamiliar and ambiguous fields of study in exchange for innovative ideas emerging from the clash with different potentiality. Each section independently contains study materials from both scientific fields and philosophical contentions, mixed with logical deductions and emotional expressions. The variety of content attempts to touch every established subject with immersive synesthesia, through means both intensive and comprehensive.

As a result of the conceptual practice, series of artworks spontaneously emerged from its suggestive form: from images to interactions, evolving with structures and movements, dots, strings and planes of words flashing in between. The magnitude of contents have expanded further than the edge of a map and stretch beyond its original dimension. I had realised this was more than just a tedious sorting and maintaining process done privately by my own. This could be a beginning of a much larger project exploring the creative potentials, the fabrics of existence and the formulation of worlds, which should be designed to satisfy the curious mind of many other individuals.

In remembrance of a dear friend of my had recently pronounced dead, I named the project with his initial "N".

At this point, I folded the map and put it aside, draw a sheet of the largest paper I could find, placed it on the floor, bended over and started the reconstruction of N.

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1. Connectionism is an interdisciplinary approach of study that integrates elements from the fields of Science, Technology, Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy. Traditionally, connectionism thinking was mainly focused on studies of human cognition, but the notion of connectivity was further developed as an artistic paradigm by artist Roy Ascott (1994) and media theorist George Siemens (2005).
2. Emergence reference to the phenomenon of intelligent behaviour spontaneously emerge when the complexity level of interactions between parts of a macro system peeked at the critical point of differentiation.

Introduction to Project N

Establish the Main Theme –
The Creative Purpose and the Structural Design.

Previously, I organised the map of knowledge into four sections: two sections of rational perceptions (1. the destruction of the old and 2. reconstruction of the new) and two sections of emotional intuition (3. the reclamation of the spirit and 4. the refraction of affection). On the second paper, I cut out the fourth section, which is mostly pure personal utterance. Initially, they were included for the purpose of allocating my passion. However, In order to produce a creative work that communicates with its environment, I believed that an artwork must strip away the subjective confinements of the creator's identity as an attempt to avoid being categorised by author's technic, style or other empiricism perspectives. The artist is no longer a rigid solid with an egocentric name but translucent flowing matter that intertwining with its contextualised space, constantly exchanging and evolving, engaging with the process of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari described as "Becoming"[1]. Within this awareness, the fourth section with an autobiography style of losses, fear and dreams seem to be a closed form of narration which can only imply the restrictions of subjectivity towards the liberation of conformed reality.

Moreover, the engagement of art praxis itself is quintessential as a living practice of the concepts I described throughout the textual part of N. It serves as a scientific authentication measurement. After all, if a concept cannot endure the uncertainty of experiments, it is only an arbitrary proposal. In truth, the risk of falsification is high, since I may not have reached the age when I had accumulated enough knowledge to be

cautious. Likewise, it is partially the reason why this project has to be developed in a long stretch of time and utilised the creative benefits of procrastination to extremes.

Despite making the conscious effort to elaborate a concept with multidisciplinary methodology, detaching the construct of work from the constraints of self-identity, I am also aware of that a creative work is irreducibly marked by the author's signature. In the case of N, the signature has permeated throughout the selection of contents both textual and visual. Symbols, aphorisms, illustrations and quotations. . . they are the small blocks I have collected from the massive sandbox of knowledge to construct the architecture of a specific style. More importantly, the contents were branded with my own journey of intellectual pursuit. It responds to my questions about the truth that every individual had their own version of answer. Perhaps experiences had pushed me harder to seek a more conceptualised "way out"; perhaps the fruit and the residue of my journey could hold universal value, or the range it reaches could be extensive enough to shape an ecosystem of its own. My effort in painting the "nonhuman landscape"[1] is only to retain the freedom of personal interpretation for the approaching audience.

The level of creator control is also presented during the construct of N's contents. Although I had tried not to enforce a centralised topic and to sanction an absolute answer, the creative purpose of project N was still established through a compellingly designed structure. There were still many tensions and distinctive arguments built within the contents of N. They are the battlegrounds of illusions versus beings, conformity versus authenticity, sufferings versus ascendance, empirical versus spiritual and destruction versus formation. The confrontations of differences presented in the topics created enough intensity to blast out arguments and dissolve ensconced ideals. The confrontation clarifies the ambiguity of raised points and drives the thinking forward. Rather than stultifying the creativity with dictatorial power, the imposing power of N was designed to stir the dead water and by doing so, encourage the emergence of new ideas. Note that

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1 "Becoming, for Deleuze, can only be grasped as a function of an open system, and with reference to an ontological distinction between the actual and the virtual. Deleuze's emphasis on the ideal as a literal force that enters actual experience without being contained in it, that is actualized without ceasing to be virtual, that cannot but be felt but always escapes, […]" Brain Massumi, 1996.

1. Non-human landscape, The term originated from Samuel Becket's observation of Cézanne's landscape paintings, in which he sees the artist liberates himself from humanistic expression and embraces the non-human reality of eternal nature. (Samuel Beckett, Letter to Thomas McGreevy, 8 September 1934, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, vol. I, 1829-1940, 222-4.)

the conflicts between the two topics were not a production of traditional dualistic thinking which seeks to diminish one end and centralise the other. In fact to retain the absolute legitimacy of difference is the prerequisite of creative breakthroughs.

While establishing the minor synergy and dispute in the process of contextualising the contents of N, a central design purpose became clear: Scientific discoveries, philosophical questions and artistic interpretations, all these endeavours of reaching an answer of meanings, were but perennial pursuit of the true, the reality of existence.

Although the subject appears to be broad and vague, its tenuous implication granted the expression of topics with inestimable value of freedom, which liberates both the form of narration and the subjective contemplation. Given by the fact that the validation of existence is fundamentally significant in the personal pursuit of fulfillments, it was an almost unavoidable process that all conscious minds made at some point of their life. Consequently, it is also the holy grail of intellectual pursuit across multiple disciplines. Philosophers, artists and scientists poured countless efforts in the long river of history. The ageless and cohesive quality of the existential topic left countless building blocks for constructing the magnificent. The promise of the tile is absolutely ambitious, but it is also an ideal subject for decentralising practices[3]. In comparison with enforcing a conclusion tyrannically, the subject itself encouraged the fluidity of an opened structure. The narrator was able to propose his or her sets of beliefs by respecting, even expecting the different interpretations, allowing the audiences to adopt their most comfortable and natural approach while being introduced to the topic, thereby shaping an experience that could be both personal to the narrator and private to the active receiver.

On the other hand, project N developed by acknowledging the fact that subjects as intangible as existential debates are prone to be abstract and elusive. Although the way towards truth is commonly laborious and monotonous, I have no intention to create a stressful situation that strangles curiosity. Although I intentionally planted the binary opposition to characterise the topics, still these incentives were mainly seeded in the parts of the literal text. As an artist, my advantage was to intuitively convey

the idea through crafting more immersive experiences such as images, animations, films, and installations. Hence, I am not only explore the fields of study but also utilise the production skills of different types of artist. All my efforts to cultivate the diversity is to at least introduce a broader context which provides a large range of interest to bridge the gap between people of different knowledge backgrounds and personal preferences. In the end, the project serves as an incentive to initiate conversations between long isolated and self-privileged disciplines, and mediates between them to collaboratively bring forth new insights into our fundamental questions.

I am also aware that like any theoretical knowledge, N serves as an inspirational outlet, which only appeals to whom had already obtained correlated empirical understanding, and are already on the track of seeking a plausible explanation of our intrinsic nature.

At this moment, I have brainstormed the points of interest, the layout of a broad range of contents, emphasised the arguments and oppositions and brought about the creative purpose of project N. The next step to actualise the project was to find a template that includes these compositions with a cohesive style.

What N needs is an everlasting reading experience, between the spontaneous liveliness and the chronological stability that readers subconsciously demand. Following the Darwinian approach of development, I initially organised N in the form of a traditional book and designed the content layout in the style of an art magazine. Yet only the outer shells of these familiar mediums were borrowed in creating the final structure. To overcome the impediment of the traditional medium, the project N has to design its own distribution platform, which cannot be defined as any of the existing instrument.

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I started the second attempt by imagining N as an animated book that contains not only images and texts but also movements and voices. Its content updates by time, its connectivity encourages sharing and contributing. A web is its second form. Besides the multimedia advantages, everything on the web is interconnected, linked in a fast responsive system, a truly easily accessible open form. However, its conveniences granted the web with relentless impatience - The environment of Internet is pragmatic and the attitude is capricious. Thus, the web can be a valuable and an indispensable means to establish the conversation and to keep the contents alive, but it cannot be the final form of Project N.

When thinking about the ultimate platform, the type that even pulls you out from the two-dimensional images of the screen, one might figure out the solution of the virtual reality - the ultimate platform as many argues. So far I am not proficiently equipped with the skill to develop an online virtual museum within the game engine, but it is certainly the final goal to pursue in the future. In addition to that, the BCI(brain-computer interface) technology is an intriguing subject of study in terms of finding the most intimate medium. However, due to the lack of accuracy in practice it is very unlikely to be easily implemented as a popular media platform, but I am closely monitoring its recent development in case there were significant breakthrough that I am unaware of.

Introduction to Project N

The Trinity and the 369

The co-creative methods that Deleuze and Guattari(D&G) proposed in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* initially influenced the construction of Project N. As Brian Massumi described,[1] the book was seemingly divided by chapters, and the titles were dated in a progressive fashion, but in truth, the book consisted of "Plateaus", each Plateau weaving into complex webs of topics beyond the disciplines of philosophy and metaphysics. The seemingly arbitrarily composed subjects are mind-blowing at first sight, but when the spectators explored further into more plateaus, the connectivity of subjects lash out like lightning strikes that connect the earth and sky. These moments of enlightenment were multiplied in every paragraph, making the reading experience almost like listening to a musical rhythm. Moreover, its collaborative production process is acutely inspiring for fluid writing practices that break away from egocentric authorship. The magnitude of subjects elaborated in *A Thousand Plateaus* is truly astonishing, and it encouraged me to adopt a multidisciplinary approach in the production of Project N.

In terms of the written content, I attempt to mirror the structure of *A Thousand Plateaus* in the project N: each page of the book contains enough diverse content to radiate a continuous flow of thoughts, independent from generalisations and to avoid being centred around an established argument. This content is interconnected within each point of intensity, forming a perspective view of N.

The intention of this new structure is to liberate readers from the confinements of traditional theoretical writing - the linear deduction designed to dictate. N also seeks an unlimited structure that both the content and its layout circulate and regenerate. There is no definitive end thus no stated

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1. Brian Massumi (2010), What Concepts Do: Preface to the Chinese Translation of A Thousand Plateaus.

conclusion, yet each argument cross-references each other argument, allowing the reader to form their own independent conclusions. While reading the text, the process of coming to a conclusion is more personal, more likely to evolve from the invisible concourse of content that leads to stages of enlightenment, rather than a series of predetermined lectures.

I always wanted N to be a metaphorical piece of work that invites people to explore and to discover. Therefore, I selected and hid some symbolic design elements in both the content and structure. The symbol of a triangle is one of them. I initially reshaped the materials at hand into three sections and developed three chapters accordingly: "The Nothingness", "The Ubiquitous" and "The Enigma". They formed a serene trinity structure. The three elements are equally integral, essential yet distinctive. Each of which references the theological representations of the Christian Trinity: the martyr and the mortal one, "The Son", the fundamentals and force of creation, "The Father", and the unspeakable and untainted path, "The Holy Spirit".

This triangular structure forms a loop rather than a dividing line with an absolute beginning and an end. Each point also connects and supports the other two; together they form the most stable geometrical formation. Apart from being referenced in the text, the triangle shape was also the main visual element of the entire project N, along with ocean surfaces, reflective lights, and crystals.

Each section was further divided by six subtopics, each of which contains an essay heavily focused on the topics that serves as the center of the textual body(except chapter Enigma). By marking these six topics as points of intensity and align them evenly inside the shape of a triangle, you can get nine edges by connecting every adjacent points (fig.1), these edges are the smaller artistic projects and fragmented words that bridge content across topics.

Instead of the hierarchical structure of a pyramid, the pieces of imageries were arranged like a crystallised sheet of resonance: a geometric representation of the number of 3, 6 and 9. This design was inspired by the mystical Tesla code, as he famously said: "If you know the magnificence of the three, six and nine, you would have a key to the universe." This phrase has become the pseudoscience playground, but that still would not erase the significance of its implications.
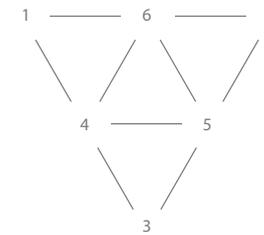

Fig. 1

369 is a set of numbers excluded by Vortex Mathematics. Once been doubled and add the digit number of the results, the three numbers reveal a unique pattern as the end result will always be 369. The similar pattern can also be found after dividing the degrees of a circle or summing up the angle of regular polygons, as shown below:

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3+3=6  6+6=12  12+12=24 . . .      9+9=18  18+18=36  36+36=72 . . .
        1+2=3    2+4=6 . . .               1+8=9   3+6=9      7+2=9 . . .

360°    180°     90°     45°      22.5°       11.25° . . .
3+6=9   1+8=9   9+0=9   4+5=9    2+2+5=9     1+1+2+5=9
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The pattern indicates an innate mathematical synergy between 369. Although there could be no cosmic magnificence hidden in their combinations, math, as the meta-language of natural science, has a certain pure and elegant quality. The entire design of project N is based on the notion of synergy and harmony. After the radical process of textual deconstruction, by implementing mathematical measurements, the content fluidity of project N is coherently restored. As a necessary pruning process, the refined structure clears the path that leads to the entrance, and guides the reader to access and navigate through the intertwined web of knowledge.

THE CONTENT INTRODUCTION
OF THE THREE CHAPTERS

THE NOTHINGNESS – THE MARTYR, THE MORTAL ONE, – THE SON

Opening: How the World was Saved
In this chapter, the Letter N stands for Nothingness. The opening is a literature digest and a reflection on Stanislaw's short story *How the World was Saved*, which gives the insight that the perceived world might just be a collection of defined codes with mere linguistic differentiations.

The first section's title is "The Allegory of the Cave". It starts with Plato's famous allegory of the cave, and then further debates on the limitation of our perception, our nature of compliance and the problems of representations.

The following section, "The World as a simulation", focuses on the scientific explanations of what reality is and its philosophical implications. That includes studies in atomic physics, the double-slit experiment and the holographic principle, some thought experiences like the brain in a Vat, Last Thursdayism, Flying Teapot Theory, and the Simulation Hypothesis. This section explains why Science often goes hand in hand with the meaningless of life, the death of gods and Scepticism, which reveals the absurdity and the insignificance of the mundane world. The end reference philosophy of Sartre and Camus.

The third section, "The Perfect Crime", focuses on the philosophical and sociological arguments of post-modernism and neo-marxism. The main references are Jean Baudrillard, Gustave Le Bon, and Slavoj Zizek. This section attempts to reveal the illusions and fabricated values provided by modern consumerism, the mass media, entertainment industries, and self-contradicting ideologies. The main essay also contains arguments about the power structure of religious society and the inadequacy of modern political infrastructures.

In the fourth section, "Ideal Cities", the main essay is an architectural and urban planning research paper of French visionary architects Boullee and Ledoux. It criticised Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer's capital Brasilia, Soviet "paper Architecture Movements", and Auroville master plan along with Italian activist architects group Superstudio and their work "Continuous Monuments". The research also re-exams the value of visionary architecture with architects like Louis I. Kahn, Le Corbusier, Peter Zumthor, Paolo Soleri, Antonio Sant'Elia, Raimund Abraham and Douglas Darden.

The fifth section, "The Dusk of Authenticity", is an anthropological and psychological studies of conformist society and the people's nature tendencies to suppress their true self by succumbing it to an extreme identification with society in exchange for comfort and conformity. It describes the forms of meaningless societal games and how the community working together to eradicate the non-conformist, to fabricates its own legitimacy, by marginalising and crucifying any minority thinker that threatens to overthrown it.

The sixth section, "Dear Death", is a section of allocating the culprit of inauthenticity and the aggressive conformist mindset. Through the philosophical studies of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Emil Cioran, it explores the possible way out through the acceptance of death and decay, and the strengthened will to fight against the falling and das Monde.

Except for the relatively extensive long essays, many texts are fragmentarily scattered throughout the Book, They intertwine with the visual elements and artworks. This design will be elaborated further in the thesis. For instance in this chapter, these fragments contain other content relates to Metrological Nihilism, the chapter exposed some current misconceptions of Nihilistic thinking and proposes a positive and constructive point of view. Other subjects are Friedrich Nietzsche, Toroflux paradox, Studies of Encoded Ancient Voynich Manuscript and its relation to linguistic studies of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Phantom Limbs and Lacan's physiological concept of mirror stages, Maya and Sunyata in Buddhism and the story of a butterfly dream in Taoism.

The Ubiquitous –the fundamentals, the force of creation, – The Father (in the early stage of structural planning.)

Opening: Ventilation is the Profound Secret of Existence.
In this chapter, the Letter N stands for Nitrogen - the most abundant element in the earth's atmosphere. It also stands for neutrino - the most plausible reason why matter exists. The opening is a beautiful aphorism by German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. Its implication of the aphorism, which is related to Deleuze and Grattari's faciality and nomadics, is the theoretical entry point of the chapter.

The first section "Sea of Spheres" further analyzes Sloterdijk the Sphere Theory, especially the parts of receptive self in its relation to lynn Margulis's Cellular Symbiosis. Starting from the morphogenetic process of cells, the essay elaborates the core mechanisms of life and the forces of nature's creation. The correlated concepts are developed by other vitalist philosophers, such as Henri Bergson and Hans Driesch.

The second section, "Membrane", introduces the fundamental constituent plan d'immanence proposed by D&G. The section also includes an analytical introduction to theoretical physics, M Theory, and its epistemological significance. Utilising the approach of realism, this section develops a conceptual perspective where freedom and liberty are irreducibly secured.

The core idea of the third section, "The Laws of War", was derived from D&G's philosophy of differences and inspired by the physical properties of the neutrino, how it may be the cause of the matter-antimatter asymmetry that contributes to the creation of the cosmos by violating existing laws. In relation to the philosophy of Kant and Derrida, this section aims to induce the power of creativity through conceptual practices of difference.

The fourth section, "Ecstatic Organics", studies the secrets of nature, deciphers the coded patterns of its effortless creation of complexity and diversity. By observing the process of nature's creation, the essay introduces new artistic tools that borrow nature's design, which enables them to produce images with infinite complexity. The studies presented in the section include Cellular Automaton, Chaos Theory and Fractal Geometry. The related creative methods include Parametric Design and Generative Art.

The fifth section, "Exquisitely Complex", is an art critique developed based on the scientific study of Complexity and Macrosystem, it further argues that consciousness is not the product of the brain or the choice of free will, but a phenomenon emerging from the levels of complexity and the degrees of connection. The section calls for the reintegration of long divided disciplines, weaving them into a vibrant new reality.

The sixth section, "Technoetic Athletics", is a New Media study that explores the technocratic beauty of Cyber Space, the enhance and extended conscious experience through the lens of new technology inventions, how interactivity and emersiveness liberates the context of artistic expression. The studies of this section extend from theories of Roy Ascott, Eugene Thacker and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

The Fragmented texts in this chapter concern, among others, Adorno's Constellation, Molecular Biology, CAS(Complex Adaptive System), Cognitive Science, Quantum Vacuum Oscillation, Bioart, Perpetual Motion Machine and Minimalism Studies.

The Enigma – the unspeakable and untainted path, – The Holy Spirit (in the early stage of structural planning.)

Opening: The Sin of Wisdom.
In this chapter, the letter N represents the Serpent. Many linguistics believe Semitic people created the first letter N according to the snake symbol in Egyptian hieroglyphs. Moreover, in the Bible, the snake symbolises both the source of wisdom and original sin. This chapter steps into the field of fringe science and cosmos constructs from the teachings of various religions and heresies around the world.

Like previous chapters, this chapter is divided into six sections. Each section is related to one stage of the ascending voyage of the soul: awareness, introspection, intuition, reclamation, integration, and ascension, but unlike the other two chapters, there are no lengthy essays, only text fragments.

The longest fragment is the imagined last words of Father Paul Duré, a character from Dan Simmons' novel *Hyperion*. It is written in a style that reflects the priest's semi-conscious state of lingering humanity. There are also some longer texts of recorded dreams which follow the methods that Jung practiced while writing and drawing his manuscript *The Red Book*, which was also the main source of inspiration when constructing the chapter Enigma. This chapter relates to the teachings of Gnosticism, Bahá'í Faith, Ancient Greek Thelema, *The Book of Ezekiel*, Egyptian encrypted tablets of Thoth and CDT-Plates of AMCC-MCEO (Melchizedek Cloister Emerald Order). It contains studies of archetypal Jewish and Iranian mysticism such as Merkabah and The Tree of Life, the studies of Seth Material, Astral Projection, Lucid Dreaming, Aura Field, theories about prehistoric civilisations, alternative medicine, extrasensory perception, and water memories.

This chapter is in the primal state of structuring. Another plan is to moderately integrate some topics from the deleted fourth chapter, "The Name", into this chapter. They both focus on the nonsensical journeys of emotional devotions. I see a synergy between the two chapters and some merits of "The Name" I still want to keep, but how the plan would affects the presentation of this chapter is still unknown.

Designing a New Form of Textural Reading Experience

Post-structuralism and Symbolism

"Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order
in which they fall, let us trace the pattern,
however disconnected and incoherent in appearance,
which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness"
by Virginia Woolf, 'Modern Fiction', in *Selected Essays*, ed. by David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 6–12 (p. 10).

As stated in the sections above, project N does not have logical reading order and it explores topics without providing an absolute closure. The language needs to break through the confinements of style and the signified, and extends beyond the encased circle of deduction and persuasion, to a new context of Intertextuality. Every phrase and every sentence are tied together to form a network of overwhelming possibilities where each node of the network bounces in accordance with every other. Only through the liberation of formalities can the language vitalise the meaning of words. Like playing with a kaleidoscope filled with reflective and vibrant fragments, with a little twist of angle, infinite combinations of images can dance into the view.

The sobering realisation that text is not a finished collection but an experience of creative activities leads to the rejection of the conscious web of meaning. This realisation relates to the demands of post-structural literature, which has provided a valuable new perspective on the non-fictional writing of N. The writing, which is inspired by the style of Roland Barthes and James Joyce, even at times experiments with the methods of Hypertext fiction (branching narrative with hyperlinks for readers to interact with) and the structure of Milorad Pavić's *Dictionary of the Khazars*

(unfolding the story through the descriptions of names, dates, events and locations.). My mission was to design a matrix of hypertext links; the connection between the adjacent paragraph is understated, while comparable phrases and terminology spread across the text, multiplied in different contexts and accentuating the spirit of each subject.

While cross-referencing and Intertextuality expand the horizon of N's writing, the metaphors and imagery analogies expand its verticality. It allows us to escape truth-conditional semantics and approach wisdom with intuitive insights. According to Nietzsche, our beings emerge from the tensional interaction between competing drives or perspectives when truths are invented as metaphors; as he stated in his essay[1] "Truth is a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation and decoration" From a more optimistic point of view, metaphors introduce the interrelated signifier and signified and become the constructive key methods to articulate the complexity and multiplicity of conceptual relations.

Poems, Aphorisms and Allegories

Except for the main essay in each section, the textual parts also attempt to explore additional forms of writing, such as poems, short phrases, aphorisms, quotations, and allegories. They serve as buffer zones between the main text and the main artworks. In contrast to the essays, these fragmented texts are free from the confinements of narratives and are therefore marked as independent points of intensity in the constellations of meanings. These flowing words foreshadow the topics, and by the end of the section, they transport the subject to a more intimate or extravagant level. They are the bridges, the connective tissue, the curvatures around the core, the routes to egress and the lines of flight.

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1. Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, 2000, p.46.

They are the pure form of language expressions, both in a contextual and literal sense; due to the irreducible limitation of translation, many phrases (especially the ones in poems) remain in the original language to preserve the purity of style. The language itself becomes the extra layer of coding as well as the inner dimensions of the text.

Most of the fragments contain no arguments, they are intuitive and spontaneous: they intuitively convey the topic of the section with a coded style; they are spontaneously presented as emotional states of prayer, acrimony, frustration and intoxication.

These fragments amplify both the textual and visual experiences of the reader. Their flexible body length allows them to be integrated effectively into the graphical artworks and layout design. In terms of weight, they are light and evocative, almost transparent. As a result of this ambiguity, they naturally flow with the current of affects, extend the strings of thoughts with youthful elasticity and open more entrances into other conceptual planes and formations.

Excerpted Fragments

I would like to explode, flow, crumble into dust, and my disintegration would be my masterpiece.

「Chapter Nothingness - The Allegory of the Cave
- by Emil Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, 1934, p. 57」

海的暗部。天空的暗部。流淌的暗部
The dark side of the ocean. The dark side of the sky, The dark side of tides.

「Chapter Nothingness - The World as a simulation」

一片深白色的言語
在影的國度 。在灰的國度 。在抽搐的虛空裡
one piece of deep white speech.
in kingdoms of shadow. in kingdoms of grey.
trembling inside the spasmodic void.

這畸變的演出似無法落幕
This deformity show never seems to end.

「Chapter Nothingness - The Perfect Crime」

这销魂的恶疾
This ecstatic foul disease.

「Chapter Nothingness - The Perfect Crime」

"To all my empire: farewell sad I took,
"And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
"Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best
"Give consolation in this woe extreme.
"Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

「Chapter Nothingness - The Perfect Crime by John Keats, *Hyperion*, 1820, 240.」

Narrenschiff

「Chapter Nothingness - The Dusk of Authenticity - German - Ship of fools」

欺人耳目的晃眼而过，抓住他们，撕裂他们。则这圣殿必然坚挺，万民流归。
The liars passing sights, grabbing them, tearing them. Then the temple will stand, then the people will be back.

「Chapter Nothingness - The Dusk of Authenticity」

There are two qualities which give life meaning: firstly, that it comes to an end, secondly, that it is woven by chance. Thus, if you eliminate both finality and chance, you eliminate the meaning of life, the meaning of death and the meaning of the period in which we exist.

「Chapter Nothingness - Dear Death」

The substitution of the theme of madness for that of death does not mark a break, but rather a torsion within the same anxiety. What is in question is still the nothingness of existence, but this nothingness is no longer considered an external, final term, both threat and conclusion; it is experienced from within as the continuous and constant form of existence.

And where once man's madness had been not to see that death's term was approaching, so that it was necessary to recall him to wisdom with the spectacle of death, now wisdom consisted of denouncing madness everywhere, teaching men that they were no more than dead men already, and that if the end was near, it was to the degree that madness, become universal, would be one and the same with death itself. This is what Eustache Desbchamps prophesies:
We are cowardly and weak,
Covetous, old, evil-tongued.
Fools are all I see, in truth.
The end is near,
All goes ill . . .
The elements are now reversed. It is no longer the end of time and of the world which will show retrospectively that men were mad not to have been prepared for them; it is the tide of madness, its secret invasion, that shows that the world is near its final catastrophe; it is man's insanity that invokes and makes necessary the world's end.

「Chapter Nothingness - The Dusk of Authenticity by Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization - A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Routledge, 2001, p. 12」

永远别回头看欧律狄克，直到走出地狱之门。
Never turn your head for Eurydice, till you reach the gate of hell.

「Chapter Nothingness - Dear Death」

Wo Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch.

「Chapter Nothingness - Dear Death - German - "But where the danger is, also grows the saving power." by Friedrich Hölderlin, *Patmos*, 1830」

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - Sea of Spheres - by Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Cloud*, 1820」

Materiality
is as much
of force as it is an entity,
as much energy as
matter
as much intensity as
extension.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - Membrane - by Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 2010, p. 20」

一个概念，是颖脱的澄浑状态；它折射出一种成为实在的混乱，成为思想的混乱，
成为心中的浑然体。
它不借助现象，经验，任何心理因素与实在媒介作为主导，仅凭着自身的融合（而
非统一）来突破无意识，突破混沌而创造存在。它的精巧源自对每一个褶子，每一
个深渊的抚摸。它将所有的定义化成不可分割的变化，并通过抚平成见来赋予这存
在可靠的自由。
"A concept is therefore a chaoid state par excellence; it refers back to
a chaos rendered consistent, become Thought, mental chaosmos."(D&G,
What is Philosophy, 1991, p.208)
It does not rely on phenomena, experience, any psychological factors or
concrete media as the dominant, only through its own integration (rather
than unification) to break through the unconscious, the chaos to create
existence. Its ingenuity reradiates from the light touch of every folds, every
abyss. It transforms all definitions into indivisible changes, it soothes
stereotypes to give existence a most reliable freedom.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - Membrane -//」

Daß mich mein strömendes Antlitz glänzender mache.
「Chapter Ubiquitous - The Laws of War - German - "Let my streaming face make me more radiant."
by Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies: The Tenth Elegy*, 1923」

置身于这种混沌之中，置身于纷争与融合，
在画布或泥石的形态中历经磨难与骚动，活出这种混沌才能最终达到宁静与平衡。
Amidst the chaos, amidst the disturbances and integrations, experience
every adversity and turmoil in the shape of canvas and mudstone. To live
through this chaos is to reach the final equity and tranquility.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - The Laws of War」

变分的平凡的宿命的病毒的
-Fractal Banal Fatal Viral-
「Chapter Ubiquitous - Ecstatic Organics - by Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Memories II*, 1996, p. 24」

灵魂是一种生命力，一种在交融与对峙中交织的存在。我们不需要去寻找它，它的
交织力已经提供了它自然的在场。
The soul is a form of vitality, a kind of existence intertwined with
unification and confrontation. We do not need to look for it, its
interweaving force has already provided its natural presence.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - Ecstatic Organics -//」

numerical representation of everything
modularity, scalability and speed
automation; process driven and perpetually iterative
variability, adaptability and interoperability
transcoding, interpreting and filtering
mixture of the male and the female substance.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - Exquisitely Complex」

一种处于动荡，移动，变迁中的艺术；一种与生命平行的艺术，不是通过表现或陈
述，而是在于其产生，不确定性与转换的过程中，一种有利于成为本体的艺术，而
不是对其本质的断言，一种亲密的艺术，自由流畅。
An art amidst the turbulence, the movement, and change; an art parallel
to life, not through a performance or a statement, but through the process
of its creation, its uncertainty and its transformation, rather than asserting
its essence, an art conducive to be the ontology itself, an art of intimacy,
flowing and free.

「Chapter Ubiquitous - Technoetic Athletics -//」

— Chapter Enigma Below —

C'etait ma foi, la nonchalance divine.

「French - "It was my faith, the divine nonchalance."
by Wallace Stevens, *Sea Surface Full Of Clouds*, 1931」

所有的错综繁复，所有的反复无常。
Exeunt omnes! 一切的原理与心智强制退场。
the intricacies, all the volatilities. Exeunt omnes! Every principle of
mentality forcing to retreat.

רימ דייג .רימ דייג .קידרעפכורפמו יד ןשיװוצ .רעדיװ.
Guide me, amid the barren land, one last time.

花朵抬頭 。注目一場空難
只此一次 。永恆的一次
The flower looks up. Pay attention to an air crash
Only once. Eternal once

קידקעבענ ןגאָז וצ טייקליטש ןײמ ראָפ
Saying sorry to my silence.

你說不出 。也猜不到 。這裡很多的神明 。和很多的聲音
You cannot speak, cannot guess, the many gods are here,
with many voices.

在巴比伦河畔，我们坐下来，是的，一想到锡安山我们不免又要哭泣。
By the rivers of Babylon —
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.

「*The Holy Bible*, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), 1989, Psalm 137.」

Envaitenet - The Island of No Return

如同久远的脉纹，沉溺在石青坚硬的慈悲里
Like hoary veins, drowning in the hardest compassion of Azurite.

表下的诱惑，虚空的诱惑，从符号到符号，秘密的循环
The lust underneath, the lust in vain,
from symbols to symbols, to secret circulations.

将属于人类的愚蠢交还给人类，属于你的荣光仍在。
在你面前，怎能迷信国王与恒河之名。
我背诵你写下的篇章一如既往。
离开尘世的理由不在尘世。
信仰你的结果也不在尘世。
我背诵累了，也会休息。
安陀迦颂
Return the idiocracy of mankind to man himself,
and your glory shall remain.
Facing your grace, how can one follow the names of Kings and Ganga?
As always, I recite your chapters.
The reason to leave the world does not reside in the world.
Neither is the reason to believe you.
If I cite and tired, I will rest.

「Unpublished Chinese translation by Jia Qin from fragments of *Antoga* manuscript, collected by
the poet Lou Zhong, originally written in Sanskrit, segment 40, 38 and 35」

闪耀間闪耀 。在他岩石的日光白之中
Shining in the shines. In his stony sun white.

去年种在你花园里的尸首，长满了玫瑰色斑点。
看到了这段情节，预言了后来的一切
The corpse planted in your garden last year now covered with rosy spots.
The plot I witnessed, and the prophecy about you comes later.

Designing a New Form of Visual Expression

Slow and timeless

In order to achieve a fluid and coherent reading experience, the visual elements of project N have been given an equal amount of consideration to its textual contents. First of all, project N is a highly artistic collective work; it is extensive but not excessive: every added element has to be comfortably and reasonably placed to subconsciously guide the spectator. In contrast to a confusingly labyrinthine structure that intimidates the spectator with its complexity, freedom of involvement must be ensured by a high level of restraint and control during the design process of N.

One of the major considerations was the pace. Whereas scrutiny and solemnity are normally associated with conventional theoretical writings, magazine styles of work with images and loosely related topics are too often categorised as ephemeral consumer goods. Nonetheless, the Danish publisher Plethora has reacted against this tendency by introducing a meticulously designed solution: *Plethora Magazine*. The massive 50x70cm size of Plethora physically challenges the reader to place the magazine on a large surface and bend over to read, like a ceremonial ritual: every turn to the next page is unconsciously reluctant and attentive, allowing the eyes of the beholder be flooded by text and images stunningly hand printed by Hindu monks. Similar to N, *Plethora Magazine* selects cross-disciplinary subjects from less main-stream fields of research in issues such as Aurum Luna, Of Waves & Ripples, Of Roots & Rhizome and Of Spheres & Shadows. The deep and mystic topics immerse the reader in an ocean of mesmerising symbols and enigmas; it absorbs their sense of time through knowledge from the past to the future.

In order to adopt the design notion of a slow and timeless reading experience, the physical copies of project N will be printed on 50x50cm

square size paper, unbinded and divided into three parts by three chapters and stored in semi-transparent envelopes contained in a box cast with a mixture of epoxy and mercury.

Key Visual Elements:

The ultimate design goal of project N is to create a chain of meaningfully designed details that formulate a suggestive composition, teasing but not giving, inviting but not obeying.

Transparency
Transparency is a double metaphor. A material that is highly refractive implies the vague presence of different densities. Light aligns perfectly with particle arrangements and travels freely in between, distorting the colour and shade. N frequently experiments with the materiality of transparent densities such as air, water, resin, glass and diamond in its visual elements; the ambiguity of transparency suggests spaces both virtual and real, states both elusive and concrete. In the case of N's cover design, the epoxy is hardened by temperature and time that captures the fluid moments of mercury and suspends its heavy mass in its self-reflectivity.

Mercury
Mercury is the only metallic element in liquid form at standard room temperature and pressure. Due to the strong metallic bonding forces between mercury atoms, it has a very high surface tension and tends to form a sphere in small amounts. The sphere is another a key visual element, as it tacitly alludes to Sloterdijk's theory of spheres. As a highly reflective metal, the epoxy encased mercury droplets reflect the refracted light between the surface of each sphere, creating many tiny mirrors of infinity. This "mirror" element is referred to multiple times in N as the conceptual notion of virtual, such as the Chinese poetic metaphor "镜花水月".[1]

Ocean Surface:
The wavy texture of the ocean surface was carved as a mold with a CNC

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1. Ancient Chinese idiom. It means "The flowers in a mirror, the moon in the water." A famous analogy for illusion, it originated from buddhism contemplation of the reality. First written by Tang Dynasty calligrapher 裴休 Peixiu (791-864).

machine, refined by hand and later cast with epoxy. The image of the ocean is the essential element of N. The surface of the ocean is erratic and mesmerizing; its instability, its elasticity and its ever-changing quality enchants the ocean with perilous dreams; it is the veil covering the secrets of our existence, our origins; it is the veil of Higgs Ocean[1] or the Dirac sea.[2]

Minimalistic layout-
The overall layout design adopted a minimalistic style. The large amount of white space between graphics and the typographic contents directs the eyes to follow a clearly designed path, channels the viewer to spend more time on reflection and allows the reader to breathe comfortably while reading dense metaphysical content. Any graphical elements were minimised to avoid causing unnecessary distractions. Rhythm is another important layout factor. The high contrast colour scheme accentuates conflicts and functions as the high pitch tone of a song; its transitions are achieved with a calmly saturated palette with low key or high key brightness, in order to compensate for the sharp paroxysmal compositions.

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1.   Also known as the Higgs Field. An ocean of Higgs boson energy is omnipresent in every region of the universe. It gives other particles the mass through continuous interactions. It is part of the theoretical model of the Higgs mechanism.
2.   The Dirac sea is a theoretical model that interprets the vacuum as an infinite sea of particles with negative energy. It was first postulated by the British physicist Paul Dirac, Dirac P. A. M. (1930). *A Theory of Electrons and Protons*. Proc. R. Soc. Lond. A, 126(801), 360-365.
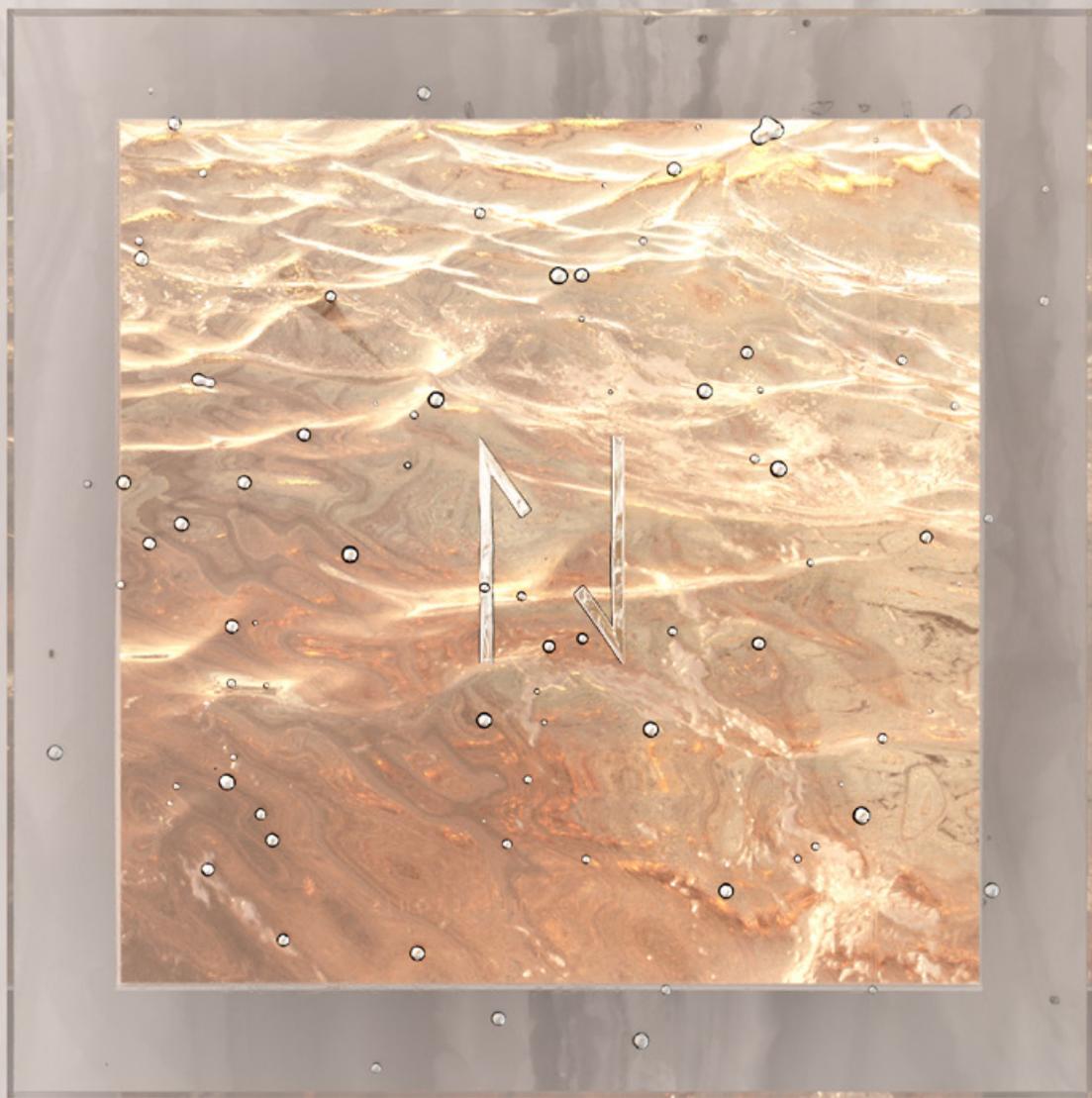
Designing a New Form of Visual Expression

Fluid Dimensions

The design purpose of N is to recall a multi-sensual experience, which is mainly achieved by its works of art. The artworks not only focus on still images as the medium of expression but also experiment with motion pictures, sound devices and immersive evolvements. The main reason for N to explore the complexity of aesthetics is to add an extra degree of freedom with diversified media. This freedom is related to selecting the most ideal expressional method for the artist while brewing ideas. However, in a technical sense, it requires a higher level of control, and if handled poorly, it could potentially impede the purity of the artistic delivery of concepts.

If a narrative can be said to have expressive dimensions, the first dimension would be language, the second would be sound, the third would be still graphics and the fourth dimension would be film. The higher the dimension, the stronger the creator controls the narrative and vice versa. Plain words have the highest potential to liberate readers from the creator's interpretation. In comparison, a film has all its elements timed and strategically placed to channel the maximum affection from the audience through a predesigned path. While acquiring the benefits of emotional investments from the high dimensional medium, the creator is also challenged by its limited outcomes.

One may argue that the exception to this chain of narration is interactive arts. They control every element of experience and even set rules of behaviour for their participants; yet the outcomes vary because of the great number of personal decisions involved in this art form. Although nothing is wrong with this statement, the overemphasis on achieving interactivity in art dangerously blurs the essential difference between art and games.

Not every interaction delivers meaning and not every outcome is an open narrative. In truth, interactive art has too often fallen into the trap of obsessive playfulness and becomes a fancy tech show with very superficial objectives. Luckily, with a great challenge, there are great rewards. If a high dimensional art narrative can resonate with the multiplied sensual receptions of audiences, and, at the same time, tell a story that results in deeper contemplations and critical conversations, the art will possess a truly evolutionary value.

The real exception though is the power of physical presence: the leap to three-dimensional space intertwined with the fourth dimension, time. It is the realm of light-sensitive space, kinetic sculptures, useless machinery and objects with suspended context. These are the beings that follow the same cosmic order as we do, immersed with all the absolute factors of textures, frictions, frequencies and thermal dynamics. This complexity can only be comprehended by a god, and still the form can be so perfectly elegant and pure, simple as a pencil tied on a tree that draws the path of the wind[1] or as light as a strangely misplaced ordinary object. Guidance is unnecessary and the degree of control matters so little. The challenge is to subvert or suspend the sense of reality, to create art that is irrelevant and undefined in the inescapable time of the present.

In the battle between freedom and dominance, it is also important to know that having the option to choose is not always preferable; it potentially troubles the audience with excessive responsibility. A choice is a burden, freedom can be dreadful: "Man is condemned to be free."[2] is a painful realisation of the inescapable condition of existence. To help ease this burden, a moderate number of exemplary or explanatory images may be necessary. They can alleviate stress, release the audience from excessive interpretations, and prepare their brain for more intensive topics.

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1. Tim Knowles, *Tree Painting*, 2005-2014.
2. "Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does.", Jean-Paul Sartre (1949), *Being and Nothingness*, Part 4, chapter 1.

The Choice of Developing Tools

Hyperreal & Five Senses

In general sense, computer graphics is dealing with the topology and the surface reflection of the actual, to simulate its superficial effects without concerning the inner mechanisms of visual phenomenon.

I chose computer graphics as the main tool in the development of the chapter Nothingness, for it is the chapter of illusion and simulation. It questions our perceptions and judgments of the real. We certainly need visual elements to respond to the chapter's core notions, elements that emit sinister inauthenticity and systematic beauty. Computer graphics is the hyper realism of the unreal, the pale and radiant façade, and yet it is a platform unconstrained by the laws of reality. It supports the wildest imagination with the greatest level of control, the complexity of calculated collisions and dynamics only limited by the computing power of machines.

When developing N's CG artwork, I strived to produce visually realistic representations, which required careful studies of the materiality of different surfaces, how they reflect light in different environments, how they wear down in time and how they can be scratched and shattered. A crystal is not only a translucent body, but also partially misty, partially allochromatic, with grittiness and roughness left by the careless artisan, a chipped corner caused by workers at a mine or accidental damage by the crystal's owner. Ironically, in contrast to the real world, perfect imperfections enrich the physicality of objects in simulated pictures, which gives them character and novelty of presence. It took great effort to build these expensive unnecessities, only to later suspend them in unnatural conditions made deliberately beyond the real, as if lost in uncanny valleys, uncomfortably strange.

In contrast to the chapter Nothingness, the chapter Ubiquitous deals with creation and existence. I want the art works in this chapter to be as perceivable as reality itself. That means developing actual installations capable of interacting with the audience or kinetic sculptures animated by environments. Developing artworks in physical environments is an extra challenge, for unexpected factors can invalidate the entire concept. To make it even more challenging, all the physical projects are designed to be active and responsive; they are not just the single static frames of a shape but continuously reshaping manoeuvres; that adds an exponential amount of unpredictability to the outcome (in cases where the artwork is collapsed by design, it can be stunningly poetic and tragically romantic, like the firework explosion of Cai Guo-Qiang).

Most of the art works will be developed based on the engineering designs of the pendulum harmonograph, cycloid drawing machines, the heat sterling engine, and various concepts of perpetual motion machines. Digital simulation will be implemented in early development. The digital artworks in this chapter will also include generative images created by a database collected from the natural world and the algorithms of reaction type systems.

There will be many hand drawn artworks as well as photography throughout N, but most of them will be presented in the chapter Enigma.

Art Projects in Details[1]

The World as a Simulation

State: In progress.
Medium: Digital prints and video installations.
Programs: Grass GIS, Google Earth, World Machine, Cinema 4D with Arnold, Aftereffects, Photoshop.
Data: ALOS PALSAR Data of Bolivia Retrieved from ASF; Satellite data Retrieved from Google Earth.

The World as a simulation is a series of digital artworks of virtual landscapes based on real-life terrain data and satellite images.

The digitalised reality is augmented by the insertion of the mathematical symbol "∄"as a massive topological structure. The shape of ∄ is seamlessly imprinted into the body of water and sand, mud and stones through the layered process of fractalization, eroded and weathered with the natural landscape in computer calculated histories.

The calculus symbol "∄" means "there does not exist", like imaginary or negative numbers, ∄ represents a state incomprehensible to the human sense of the concrete world but indispensable for describing the inner mechanism that constructs perceivable reality. Paradoxically, in order to reach the real, we have to walk through the symbolic language of the virtual, and in the end, we are troubled by their definitional contradictions. What if the actual is the virtual, described by symbolic systems of nonexistence? What if only the virtual, the coded simulation, permeates our phenomenological experiences?

Production Details:
The goal of The World as a Simulation is to create hyper-realistic combinations of the actual and virtual, utilising advanced simulation algorithms to augment data collected from the real world. The chosen locations are the most unique and extraterrestrial-like terrains around the world, such as The Eye of the Sahara, Lake Gairdner, New Valley Governorate and Southern Iceland.

The first location chosen is Laguna Verde and the Sairecabur Volcanos at the border of Bolivia and Chile. The height map was converted by Grass GIS and recalculated in World Machine to combine the symbol with existing terrain. The World Machine then generated the flow mask, different deposit masks, the ambient occlusion map, a new height map and a colour map, which were further edited in Photoshop and rendered in Arnold.
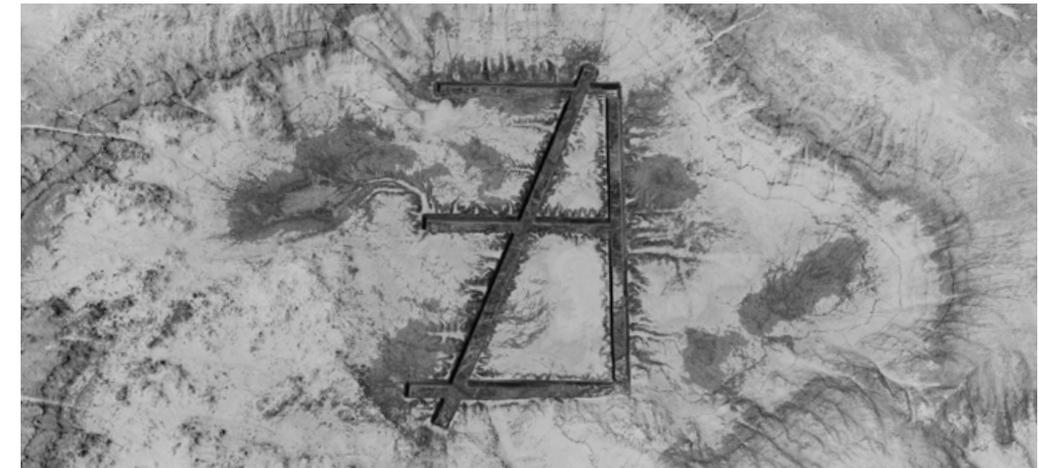
Art Projects in Details

Brain in a Vat

State: Complete
Medium: Digital prints.
Programs: Cinema 4D with Arnold, Zbrush, Substance Painter, Aftereffects, Photoshop.

Brain in a Vat is a philosophical thought experiment first described by Gilbert Harman. One imagines that an evil genius has invented a machine which is capable of producing all the complex electronic signals of the brain, if such machine were wired to the neurons of an actual brain, all conscious experiences would be simulated. In this scenario, the brain would not even require a body to live in reality. Since the processes of doubt and confirmation are part of the simulation, no one can even disprove that it has already happened.

The digital artwork illustrates the brain, the hijacktion, and the insulation, but the controlling machine is absent. There is only the ether, the horizon and emptiness. The machine is the state in between, the measured location and the void, vivid reality is but an instantaneous state computed from nothingness.

Production Details:
Soft mesh detailed in Zbrush and textured in Substance Painter, Scene created in Cinema 4D, rendered with Arnold and composed in Aftereffects and Photoshop.
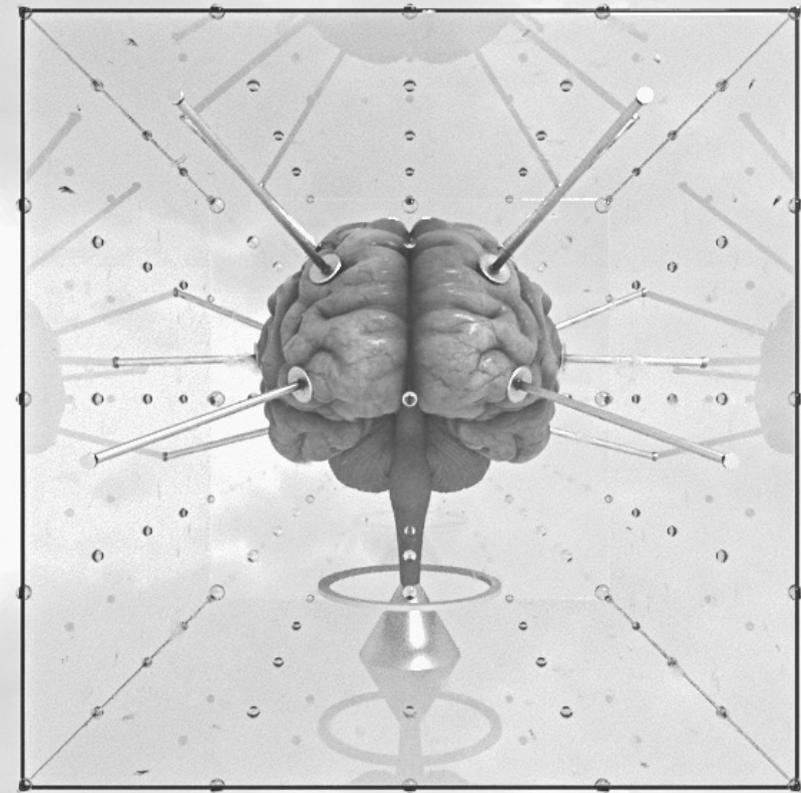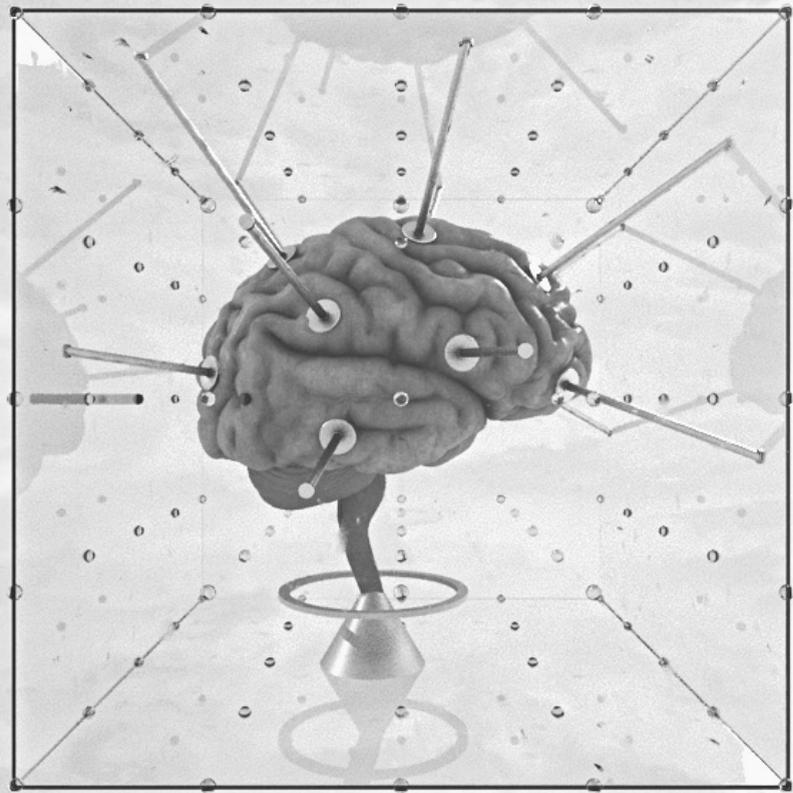
Art Projects in Details

The World Machine[1]

State: in progress
Medium: Ink and watercolours on paper.

In the first story of Stanislaw Lem's The Cyberiad, the godlike constructor Trurl created a machine to generate a world. When testing it, he asked the machine to first create things with names starting with N. Beginning from needles and noodles, the machine quickly deviated from its task by creating broad and abstract things like the night and nature, even creating new things starting with N. Without permission, the machine already started to create an entire world. While attempting to stop the machine, Trurl and the machine entered into a tense linguistic argument that questioned the nature of existence. Frustrated by the unresolvable dilemma, the machine went mad and created "Nothing", everything starting to disappear, including Trurl himself. At this point, only by locking the machine away could the existence of the world be saved. But was it saved? Did we truly save the meaning of things from linguistic symbolization?

Deeply inspired by the short story, The World Machine is a set of design blueprints and a user manual for a fictional world generator. The blueprint illustrates in detail many popular theories and models we use today to understand the world, such as Particle Physics, Quantum Mechanics and Strings, DNA Double Helix, Holographic Principals, Hyper Dimensions, Casualty Loop, the Fibonacci Sequence, Platonic Solids, Pineal Body and Merkaba.

These diagrams of popular theories are integrated naturally into the structure of the machine with side notes and descriptive paragraphs. However, they are all written in a language unknown to any human civilization, a language specially created to look alien and primordial. The form of language was inspired by Ancient Nsibidi ideographic script, the "cruel letters", which reflects the power and law of the secret societies that held its knowledge.

The creation of the language uses a simple coding system. The actual text was encrypted by Ceasar Cipher with three shifts, then the letters were replaced by symbols. These encryption methods could be made even more complicated by shifting the letters in a puzzle box or by adding secondary coding, but it would be redundant, since the actual text is just gibberish (like some results of attempts to decode the Voynich Manuscript[1]). Although pointless nonsense, the action of hiding it made it all special; the mystery behind it that tickles the human psyche is part of the irony, as is the form of the machine shaped in classical proportions to look sacred and holy, but ultimately, the work is but a humorous game by a bored painter.

Production Details:
The work imitates the popular drawing methods of 19th-century architectural blueprints. Pencils and a metal point are first used to draw outlines on a wet mounting, which are then shaded with watercolour. Once the mounting dried, ink captions were added and the paper was cut from the board.

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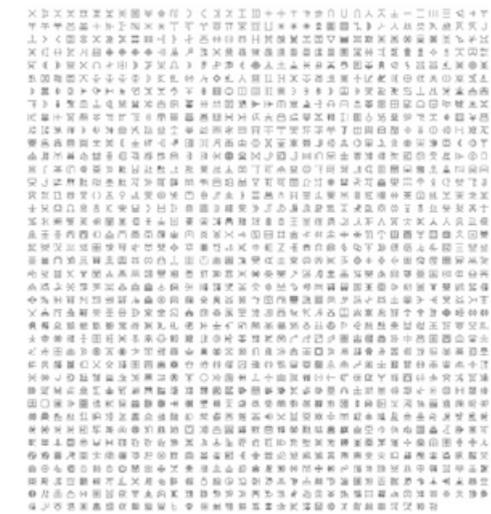
1. *Voynich manuscript* is an illustrated codex hand-written in an unknown writing system. The vellum on which it is written has been carbon-dated to the early 15th century.

Art Projects in Details

The Gaze

State: Complete
Medium: Digital Prints and video installation.
Programs: Cinema 4D with Arnold, DAZ Studio, Zbrush, Aftereffects, Photoshop.

The work was inspired by the anecdotes of Zhuangzi's butterfly dream and Lacanian gaze. The ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi mentions one day when he wakes up from a vivid dream of him lives as a butterfly, and wondered if he was in fact a man in a butterfly's dream. But there are fundamental differences between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly, as he sadly realised. The butterfly does not concern with its beauty, does not indulge with its freedom, does not understand its symbolic meaning of transcendence, there are all the desire of man while gazing upon the objects and seeking for correspondence, an integrated experience, while oblivious to the strange blot at the bottom of Hans Holbein's The Ambassadors.[1]

The face of a man is distorted and hidden behind the slowly shattering crystal butterfly, the spectator waits until the shattered pieces is scattered away, revealing the man with closed eyes. The presented image is a double gaze: the man is the projection of the spectator, relieved from the awakening anxiety of being gazed and gazing into the realm of dreams. The man is also the butterfly, the unconscious object of desire that spoils the spectator's caring eyes to formulate dreams. The image presents neither the gazing by itself, nor the care of shattered crystal, it presents the poetic indulgence of correspondence while secretly hides the uncanny sense of the real inside its gentle destruction.

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1. Lacan referenced Hans Holbein's painting The Ambassadors as an example for the Gaze, the painting shows power, wealth, youth, alliances, cosmic order and intellect, but at the bottom of the painting, there is a wired looking splodge, which turns out to be an anamorphic image of a staring skull.

Production Details:
The butterfly was modelled based on Papilio appalachiensis, the cloth and fracture were simulated in Cinema 4D, the male base model was Genesis 3 model posed in DAZ Studio. The head morph was sculpted in Zbrush and the hair is Daz Originals' hair Leandros. All shaders were made with Arnold, post-processing and compositing was done by Aftereffects and Photoshop.
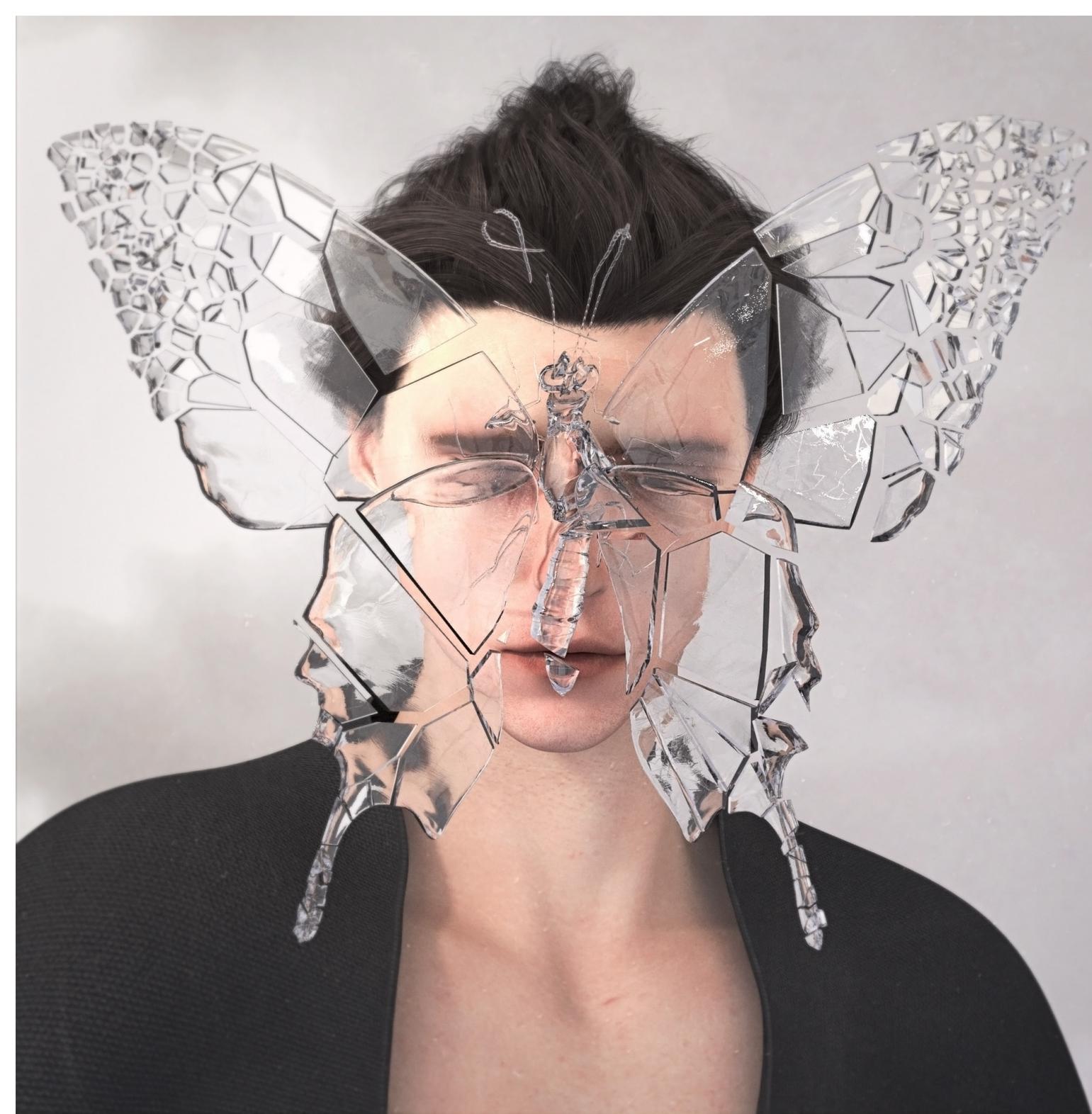
ART PROJECTS IN DETAILS

CRYSTALLINE

State: Complete
Medium: Digital Prints and video installation.
Programs: Cinema 4D with Arnold, Aftereffects, Photoshop.

Crystalline is a series of glitch graphics made by extruded tetrahedron diamonds.

The tetrahedron (or the three simplex) is the simplest geometric building block of our experienced dimension, the first Platonic solid of sacred geometry that is worshiped as the key structure of all creation. The tetrahedron crystal is proven to be the densest packing of 3D spheres. In reality, the tetrahedron crystalline structure of the diamond tightly bonds its electrons, forbidding them to resonate with the visible frequencies of light, which results in the hardest and most lustrous material on earth.

The digitally simulated light ray is reflected, refracted, and dispersed on overlapping layers of diamonds, creating an infinite feedback loop that is impossible to calculate by computing power. Patches of black shadows mark the limited steps of ray tracing and the flickering phenomenon of Z-fighting mark the limits of sub-pixel precision. The semi-glitched images reveal the innate imperfection of simulation and the infinite nature of reality, which is incomputable by finite energy.

Production Details:
The first set of images is rendered with an extruded tetrahedron with a divided surface, and the second set of images is rendered with an edge-extruded and folded tetrahedron. The refraction and dispersion level of the diamond's shader is developed based on the real attributes of colourless diamonds with a light inner haze. The tetrahedrons in the scenes are floating on an animated plane simulating the structure of the quantum foam. All scenes are rendered in Arnold and composed in Aftereffects.
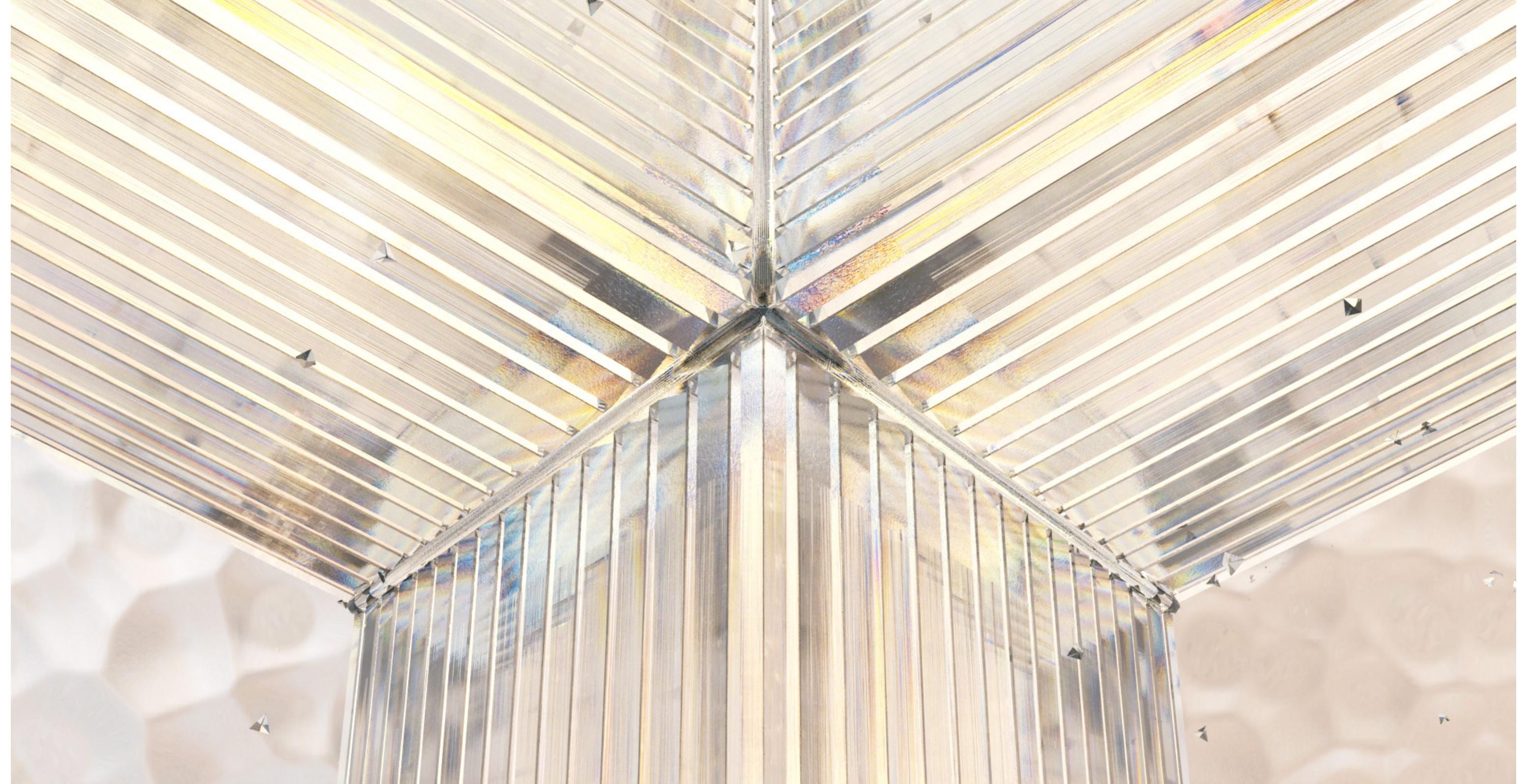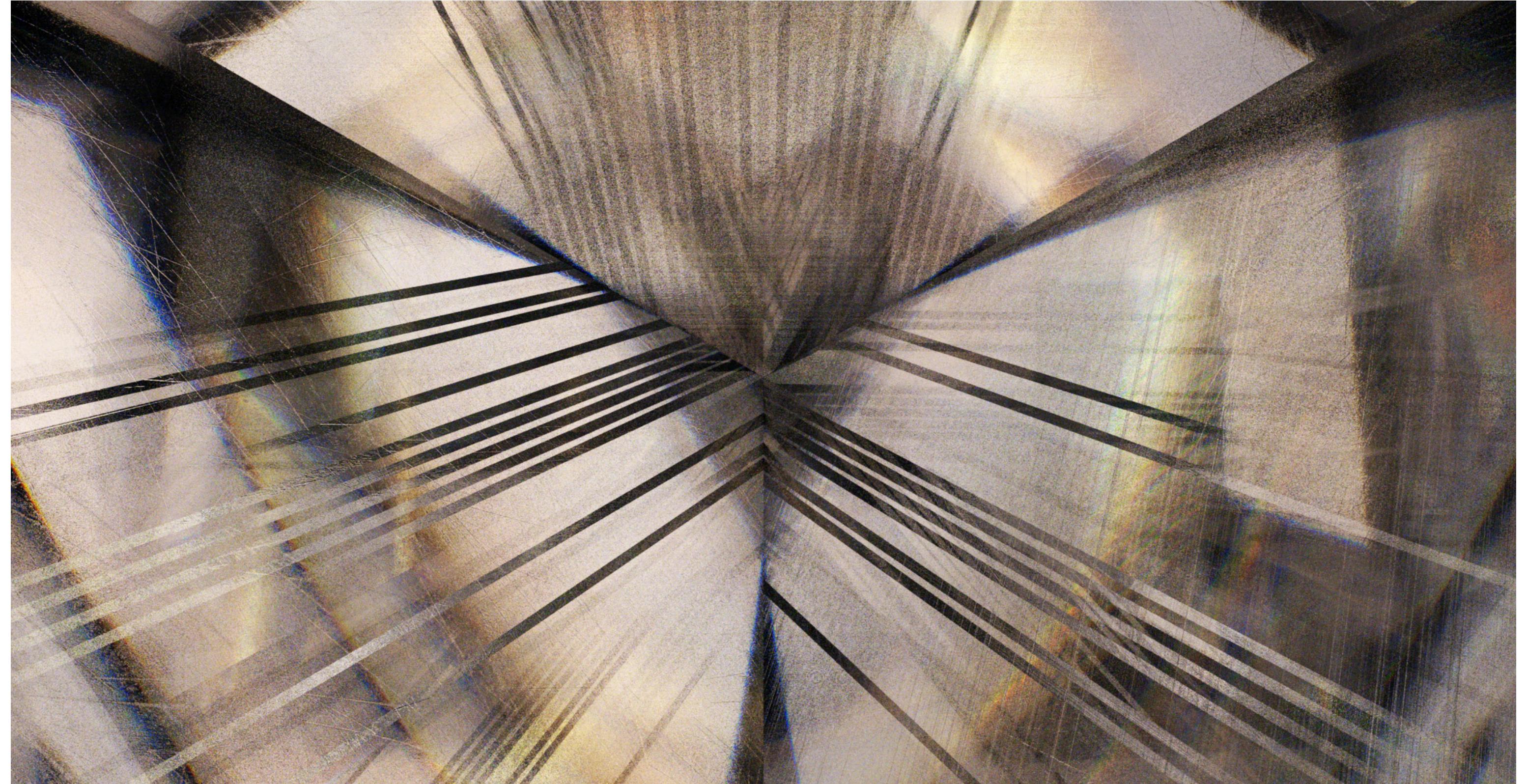
ART PROJECTS IN DETAILS

THE TIME, VIBRATION AND ENTROPY

State: In progress
Medium: Interactive Installations
Programs: Arduino, MaxMSP, Blender, openFrameworks, Solidworks.

The Time, Vibration and Entropy are a set of responsive drawing machines that record the presence of their environment through the fundamental laws of physics that formulate our reality.

The collection of installations uses ultrasonic sensors to collect movement data in the environment as a source of input to control the shape of their visual outcomes.

Inspired by the Tibetan ritual of the sand mandala and Mikhail Sadovnikov's pottery wheel performance. The Time is a turning sand wheel with mechanical arms vibrating according to the data of its sensors. The data controls the release amount, the vibration range and the frequencies of the moving arm. The tip of the arm releases a regulated amount of sand like an hourglass, piling up on the wheel, which is slowly turning at a constant speed. As time goes by, the accumulated sand will form a unique landscape of time until it resets. The sand can be formulated with different shades to give the landscape a more interesting texture.

Fig. 2. Cymatic Effect observed through sand on vibrating plate.
Image Courtesy of Alexander Lauterwasser.

As Einstein said, "Everything is vibration". Therefore, the second part of the collection involves a machine that visualises everything in the immediate environment through vibration. Vibration is essentially energy frequencies that strike the particles in the air to make a sound and flowing material to form a wave. This is a phenomenon called Cymatics, which the design of Vibration is based on. The main body of Vibration is a vibrating metal plate with sand particles on top. The vibration is generated by the sound of a 12-inch subwoofer connected to the centre of the plate via a vertical rod. As the frequencies of vibration change according to the data received, the Cymatic effect drives the sand, forming intricate patterns that materialise the invisible sound. Inspired by Tibetan throat singing and the singing bowl, the sound will be designed in collaboration with another sound artist to create both effective and harmonious audio experiences.


Fig. 3. Cymatic Effect observed through water under spotlight.
Image Courtesy of Alexander Lauterwasser.

In addition to these more developed prototypes, the collection also includes other less developed ideas, including Entropy, a harmonograph that records the pattern of energy dispersion from a momentary impetus; The Correspondence, a cycloid drawing machine that draws a layered pattern using a system of interconnected gears; and The Force, which forms patterns with magnetic ferrofluid through changing electromagnetic forces.

Production Details:
So far, The Time and Vibration have reached an early prototype stage. The ultrasonic sensor input in both installations is controlled by Arduino. The G-Code of The Time is generated by openFrameworks ofxGCode addon. The sound output of The Vibration is controlled in MaxMSP. So far, the engineering design has been modelled and simulated in Blender, but the plan is to switch to a Parametric modeling tool, such as Solidworks.

[THE VIBRATION]
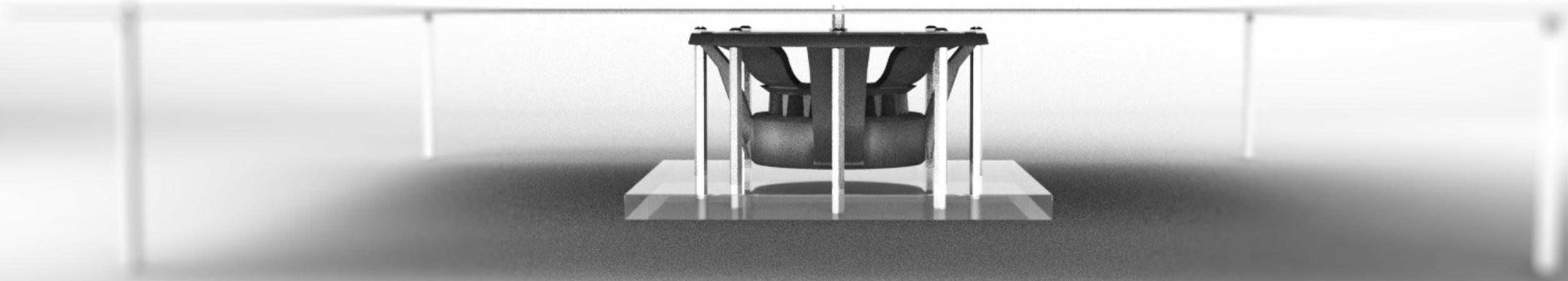
Conclusion and Future Plans:

Although the topics discussed in project N seemingly concern the grand narratives of truth and illusion, they were introduced as mere perspectives that bring together a holographic view of the potential reasoning that could restore peace from the terror of chaos unleashed by poststructuralist thinking. The goal was never to resurrect the dead body of any ideology or fabricate another transcendental one, as there might never be a single, perfect definition of truth that can survive throughout perennial time.

The goal of the project is in fact to create a concept of practice in which the creative potential of different disciplines can be extended and revitalised through their rediscovered correlations. In essence, N is an anthological practice which is inherently philosophical. Its practice of art and its references to science are repositioned on the plane of immanence where their novelty and creative potential multiply, creating the kind of anthology described by Todd May, which "does not seek to reduce being to the knowable, but instead seeks to widen thought, to palpate the unknowable" [1] What he means by palpate is to approach an unknown substance through touching and observing its façade and visible attributes and to develop or create a momentary system of thinking to describe it properly, without being deluded by the transcendental truth in the turbulence of chaos.

However, as reality evolves and fluctuates between different possibilities, as a conceptual persona, I am inevitably preserved and constrained by my independent perspectives. No matter how comprehensive the chosen topics are, they can only represent empirical knowledge through a single lens. In the future, if a larger sample of creative individuals could experiment with this conceptual practice of multiplicity, it would be significant proof of the value of N to creative thinking and to understanding the meaning of multidisciplinary studies.

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1. Todd May, *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction*, 2005, p.20.

Project N's individuality also comes from its original design purpose: to analyse the conceptualisation process of my artwork in order to better understand the source of passion that drove me to create my own unique language of aesthetic expression. In this respect, I believe N has fulfilled its purpose and will continue to contribute new inspirational ideas to my work in its dynamic field of creativity.

Although it is devoted to a non-determined and non-utilitarian approach, Projects N nevertheless functions, to all intents and purposes, as a map of creative insights structured in a very original style through symbols and metaphors. Unlike logical definitions and conclusions, metaphorical implications exist in a state of flux in which meaning constantly seeks correlations between different ideas through aesthetic imaginations. On this level, project N strives to establish the prerequisites for creativity – the primordial soup where the essence of things flows in correspondent profusion, allowing new forms of combination emerge.

Many challenges still lie ahead for project N: the increasing list of textual reading, the lack of precedents and constructive feedback, the lack of systematic knowledge of unfamiliar fields, the costs of construction and the requirement of skill in the development of certain art projects. But I am patiently aware that this project will be on my mind for a long time, while my system of thinking matures. My constant effort to seek chances to address these challenges will not cease. Eventually, the work will be published stage by stage at a level of quality I can be proud of, which I believe, is my final challenge to overcome.