

‘Capture,’ by Generative Photography

Artists: Adam Brown (LSBU / CSNI, UK) / Tabea Iseli (Starburst, CH) / Alan Warburton (CSNI, UK)

Interactive installation to be exhibited at *The Image Looks Back*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, (originally March-May 2020, now September - October 2020 due to COVID-19)

Prizewinning entry for the Post-Photography Prototyping Prize, May 2018, Organised by the Photographers’ Gallery, (UK), Fotomuseum Winterthur (CH) and the Julius Bayer Foundation. (CH)

The piece consists of an interactive multimedia ‘game’ which requires the player to conceal themselves and remain still and silent in order to allow a landscape to grow and move. The work was curated for public display in the show *The Image Looks Back*, at RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, in Spring 2020, as part of the biennale PHOTO2020.

The work was the product of a team comprising Adam Brown, Tabea Iseli and Alan Warburton, and won the 2018 Post-Photography Prototyping Prize, organised by Fotomuseum Winterthur, the Photographers’ Gallery, London and the Julius Baer Foundation. The piece was built in 24 hours in a ‘hackathon’ involving competing teams selected by a panel of experts. It combined team members’ individual skills in games design, photography and CGI modelling.

The competition challenge was to respond to and reimagine ‘generative photography,’ in the form of a prototype which could be taken forward into production. Brown, Iseli and Warburton’s winning solution was to approach the process of photography as a product of the relationship between photographer and subject. Using machine vision accompanied by a projection of a constantly regenerating game environment, the game reverses the relationship between viewer and image, using face, audio and motion detection to detect when it is being watched. Based on the idea of ‘stalking’ a CGI creature through a landscape, the game only responds when players cover their faces, hide from the platform, and remain perfectly quiet. Based on ideas from bushcraft, social photography and gaming, the game encourages silence and stillness, exploring how technology makes a photographer – and gamer – behave as a hybrid of human and machine. The player was encouraged to consider photography as pursuit and performance, and to think about the behaviour associated with ‘stalking’ the perfect shot. By turning the machine’s gaze on the player, the work’s relationship to photography depended on the audience’s *performance* as photographers, prompting reflection on everything extraneous to the pressing of the camera shutter: the role of location, gesture, sound and social interaction.

The game responds to issues foregrounded by Jonathan Crary with regard to the ‘attention economy,’ and Shoshanna Zuboff relating to machine vision, surveillance and the exploitation of the engaged user. The game speculates on the ‘generative’ by creating a landscape that grows and develops, but can only be observed by a viewer who remains passive and observant, thereby providing an embodied commentary on how imaging and gaming technologies encourage an ‘exploitative’ stance in relation to the environment.

The following links evidence:

- A visual record of the work
 - Sharing of the work at 4 significant venues
 - Responses of audiences to work
 - A chain of 'curation' from one venue to the next.
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Project Links:

Post Photography Prototyping Prize: May 19th 2018.

Winterthur site: launchpad: <https://www.fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/p3/>

Winning Artist site: https://www.fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/p3/winning_artist

Photographers' Gallery site: <https://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/whats-on/talks-and-events/p3-post-photography-prototyping-prize>

Awards Ceremony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbEjBopj1E8> ((comments by Nadine Wietlisbach): 1:42.00)

Computer Arts Society: Fri 13th July 2018,

Presentation at EVA London, introduced by Lizzie Jackson, proceedings, <http://www.eva-london.org/publications/>, contents: http://www.eva-london.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/0_1_Content.pdf

DGRG Birmingham: July 3rd 2019

DGRG Annual Symposium 2019: Geographies of Gaming and VR, <https://digitalgeographiesrg.org/dgrg-annual-symposium-2019-geographies-of-gaming-and-vr>

RMIT Melbourne: Was to be 27.03.2020 - 16.05.2020, now 7/9/20 – 24/10/20

RMIT Gallery: Re-scheduled show: <https://rmitgallery.com/exhibitions/the-image-looks-back/>

Photo 2020 site: (now Photo 2021): <https://photo.org.au/>

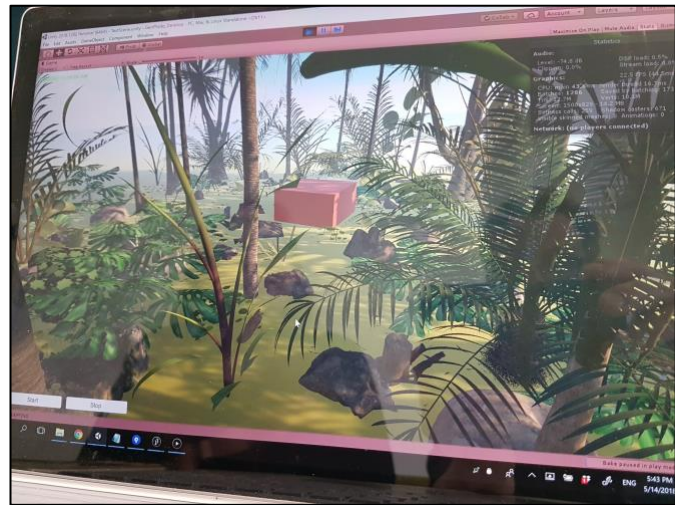
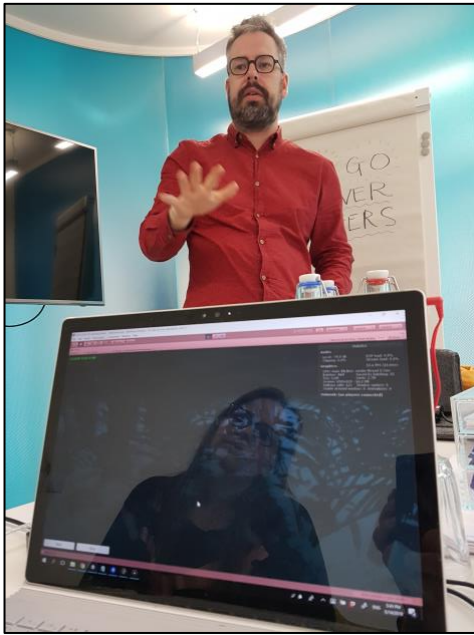
Images: illustration of work.



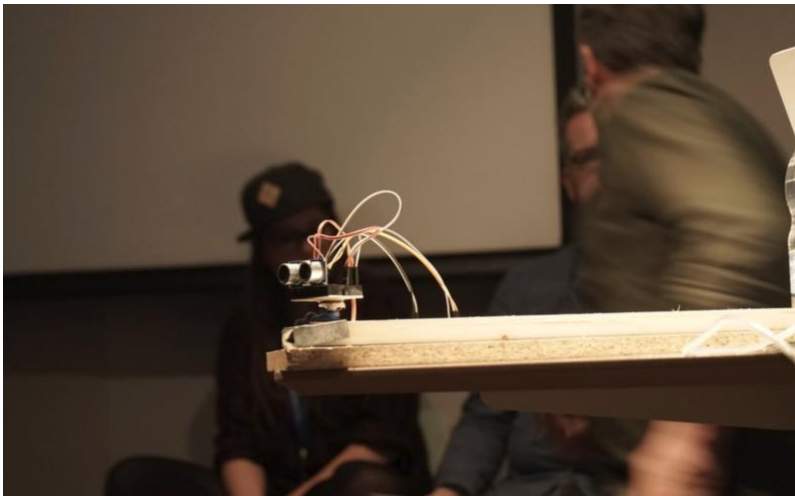
Screenshot of on-screen game interface, showing generative landscape with the 'interactive' component concealed.



Screenshot of game interface, showing the animal that 'reveals itself' when the player conceals themselves successfully, and the game sensors detect no interaction.



During the P3 hackathon (May 2018): (L) Alan and Tabea discuss the on-screen interface (Unity) (R) the interface takes shape, with a 'generative' forest, and a box with hidden contents.



The basic sonar sensor, used to detect approaching participants.

Images: Presentation at the Photographers' Gallery, May 2018.



Adam, Alan and Tabea present the prototype at the Photographers' Gallery, London, May 2018.



The audience at the Photographers' Gallery, London cover their faces and remain quiet...

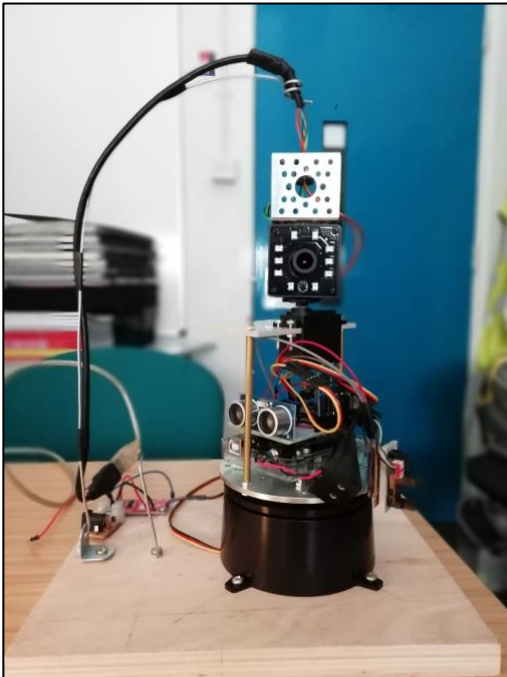


Presentation of prize at the Photographers' Gallery, London, May 2018.

Nadine Wietlisbach (Director, Fotomuseum Winterthur): presentation speech:

'The jurors appreciated the prototype's engagement with a history of photography and photography's kinship with other media, also offering a reflection on the phenomenon of the photographic today, including an original commentary on the role of the photographer and the act of capture. The project contains critical elements that fully address the implications of the assigned topic combined with a playful approach which is both subtle and subversive, demanding the audience to reflect on their position as photographic spectators and agents. Finally their presentation demonstrated a genuine spirit of collaboration and learning from one another and their work incorporated.'

Digital Geographies Research Group Symposium, Birmingham, July 2019.



A rebuilt sensor array, with 360 degree ultrasonic scanning, and camera for face detection and motion tracking. (June 2019)



(June 2019) The installation on display at the Royal Geographical Society's Digital Geographies Research Group Symposium, Birmingham.

Photo 2020, Melbourne.

27/05/2020

The Image Looks Back - RMIT Gallery



RMIT Gallery

MENU



Jacqueline Felstead

Exhibition

The Image Looks Back

<https://rmitgallery.com/exhibitions/the-image-looks-back/>

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27/05/2020

The Image Looks Back - RMIT Gallery

7 Sep 11:00am -
24 Oct 5:00pm

RMIT Gallery, Swanston Street,
Melbourne VIC, Australia

Entry
Free

Curated by Alison Bennett, Shane
Hulbert, Rebecca Najdowski & Daniel
Palmer

In line with recent Government advice, RMIT Gallery is currently closed.

The Image Looks Back has been rescheduled from its original 2020 programming. The proposed exhibition dates are subject to change.

The exact exhibition dates will be confirmed when we are able to recommence our regular program of exhibitions and events.

For RMIT's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), please visit the [RMIT website](#).

In an era of post truth, fake news, and manipulated images, *The Image Looks Back* explores the reconfiguration of photography, asking how notions of visual truth and human experience are shaped by new technologies of vision.

If the photograph has conventionally been understood as a record or memory of the world, what happens when the image looks back?

Part of PHOTO 2020 International Festival of Photography

Curated by Alison Bennett, Shane Hulbert, Rebecca Najdowski and Daniel Palmer

Artists Jacqueline Felstead, Joan Fontcuberta, Forensic Architecture, Generative Photography (Adam Brown, Tabea Iseli, Alan Warburton), Mike Gray, Joe Hamilton, Thomas Hirschhorn, Rhonda Holberton, Fei Jun, Amalia Lindo, Rosa Menkman, Tyler Payne, Queertech.io, Joachim Schmid and Winnie Soon

Image caption: Jacqueline Felstead, *James Asleep*, 2019, film still from photogrammetric model, 200 x 100 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

<https://rmitgallery.com/exhibitions/the-image-looks-back/>

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