EXPERIENCING LIFE AS CINEMATIC FICTION
THE MARVELOUS WITHIN THE DAILY MEDIA LANDSCAPE

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RIASSUNTO: Ogni giorno abitiamo numerosi universi digitali che si sovrappongono drammaticamente alla realtà fisica. La nostra identità è costituita da una moltitudine di personaggi creati appositamente per interpretare una personalità frammentata. Tuttavia, fino a che punto ne siamo consapevoli? Applicando il concetto di "meraviglioso" di Torquato Tasso in quanto elemento rivelatore, ovvero, «un processo che dà accesso a una dimensione nascosta oltre la realtà» (ARDISSINO 2019), il saggio si propone di analizzare *Monomyth: gaiden* (2018-2020), una serie animata in quattro atti realizzata dall'artista ungherese Petra Széman. Rielaborando il tema del viaggio dell'eroe e una narrazione non lineare tipica di anime e manga, *gaiden* in giapponese, Széman intercetta le discrepanze che nascono all'intersezione tra schermo e individuo «in una realtà elusiva e multilivello» (SZÉMAN 2018). L'artista crea un *épos* digitale per osservare ciò che accade «tra il sistema percettivo umano e il suo ambiente mediale» (LEVITT 2018) in una rete interconnessa composta da regni virtuali e identità non localizzate.

PAROLE CHIAVE: monomito; viaggio dell'eroe; *gaiden*; meraviglioso; *fiction*; *épos* digitale; paesaggio mediale; identità; transmedia *storytelling*

ABSTRACT: Daily, we enter and exit several digital realms which dramatically overlap with our physical reality. Our identity is scattered in a multitude of customized characters, explicitly created to represent the fragments of our personality. However, up to what extent are we aware of all this? By applying Torquato Tasso's notion of "marvelous" as a revelatory element, that is, «a process that provides access to a hidden dimension beyond reality» (ARDISSINO 2019), this essay aims at analyzing *Monomyth: gaiden* (2018-2020), a four parts animated series by Petra Széman, a Hungarian moving image artist. Széman uses the hero's journey trope and the principles of the *gaiden*, a nonlinear narrative used in manga and anime, to investigate the discrepancies occurring at the spectator-screen nexus «when journeying through an elusive multiplanar reality» (SZÉMAN

2018). Traveling between the fictional and the real world, Széman creates a digital *épos* which investigates «how the encounter between the human perceptual system and its media environment» (LEVITT 2018) interacts in an interwoven network of virtual realms and non-localized identities.

KEY-WORDS: monomyth; hero's journey; *gaiden*; marvelous; fiction; digital *épos*; media landscape; identity; transmedia storytelling

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INTRODUCTION

We shift from one screen to another, inhabiting countless platforms, a habit that has become as familiar over time as it is now automatic. The series of tap and swipe gestures performed regularly «do not signify anything for and in themselves but are movements that gesture out and open onto a world that they help articulate».[1] They outline a sort of map in which to track the whereabouts of our digital persona[2]. However, we have a single physical body whose identity is scattered in a multitude of customized characters specifically created to represent the different fragments that make up our identity. Our body is presented as a vessel traversing various layers of existence, both onscreen and off-screen. Our story is told in many worlds through many avatars. The "process of gesturing"[3] that allows the transition from one layer to another «marks, and is a mark of, the small textures of historical transformation, a torqued sign of how we are subsumed into systems and structures that dwarf us but come to be so familiar in their omnipresence

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[1] WILLIAMS 2017: 15-16.

[2] The terms "real world" and "digital world" used in this essay refer to the relationship between the analog self and the virtual self and the multiple narratives that emerge at this intersection. As stated by the artist, in *I keep forgetting I've been to Tokyo: GAIDEN*, a video installation that complements the series, the role of her digital persona, named Yourself in the Monomith: gaiden series, is the one of an «archive of accumulated personal mythologies acquired from a multitude of realities».

[3] WILLIAMS 2017: 16.

that they vanish into simple utility».[4] We find ourselves at the intersection of several displaced worlds that move seamlessly, resulting in an interwoven network of virtual realms and non-localized identities. To deeply explore «the processes involved in the creation of a multi-layered image world»[5] and a fragmented identity, we must identify the gaps and the hinges hidden between the layers of this multiplanar reality. It is within the threshold experiences of our daily media landscape that «we can make sense of the world and our relationship to it – constantly making and remaking sense of the chaotic retinal flashes we experience life in».[6] The goal of this essay is to analyze the animated series *Monomyth: gaiden*[7] (2018-2020) by Petra Széman, a Hungarian moving image artist, which explores her «relationship to her digital avatar Yourself, as well as the processes involved in the creation of a multi-layered image world»[8] by applying Torquato Tasso's notion of "marvelous" as a revelatory element, that is, «a process that provides access to a hidden dimension beyond reality».[9] Within this framework, this analysis examines Petra Széman's attempt to portray the concept of distributed sight in the contemporary media landscape within a digital épos conceived as a cinematic fiction divided into four acts or "stages of awareness". She adopts the principles of "transmedia storytelling"[10] by developing a personal narrative articulated on multiple visual and textual levels, mixing and re-adapting a variety of media and speech patterns in a complex narrative system that mimics the transmedia nature of our reality. Petra Széman's artistic

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[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2018, 12' 00".

[6] *Ibidem*.

[7] The series is entirely available on Petra Széman's website at ‹www.petraszeman.com› and on her Vimeo channel at ‹https://vimeo.com/petraszeman›, where it is also possible to have a look at other works.

[8] SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2018, 12' 00".

[9] ARDISSINO 2019: 22. Author's translation.

[10] The term "transmedia storytelling" was firstly coined by Henry Jenkins in 2003 in his article *Technology Review* and then he further developed the concept in his seminal book *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006). As he states, a "transmedia" story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best — so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction.

practice revolves around the notion of identity and shared reality. To explore the gaps between existence and memory, real-life and online narrative, time and space, she works with various media such as animation, illustration, photos, video games and anime, to detect «the interstices in which real life can be experienced as fictional».[11] Refusing the dichotomy of real vs not real and the idea of the duality of the screen, Széman finds «its value in the medial space it offers, and the transformative forces that it enacts within the user-screen spectrum. The screen is an elusive midway realm instead of one end of a binary spectrum»,[12] which she navigates using a digital representation of herself. Yourself, the name of her digital persona and the protagonist of this compelling adventure, embarks on a journey through several digital realms «to explore liminal spaces and threshold situations, looking to dissect the ways our memories and selves are constructed within a landscape oversaturated with fiction (both on- and off-screen)».[13]

Monomyth: gaiden is an animated series divided into four chapters that adopts the standard structure of the hero's adventure, usually organized into "departure", "initiation" and "return".[14] In addition to the "nuclear unit of the monomyth",[15] the artist adds a fourth chapter named *Master of the Two Worlds*[16] in which she takes stock of the path of personal growth undertaken by Yourself. Here, she tries to make sense of the conflicting and dispersive relationship with the multiple facets of her digital persona and the present layered reality. Besides the typical structure of the epic poem, Petra Széman adopts a narrative approach rooted in the tradition of anime and manga, a result of her prolonged stay in Japan. The Japanese word *gaiden*[17] that can be found in the title

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[11] Artist's statement featured on SZÉMAN, *personal website*.

[12] Personal interview with the artist.

[13] Artist's statement on SZÉMAN, *personal website*.

[14] CAMPBELL 1949: 28.

[15] *Ibidem*.

[16] SZÉMAN, *Monomyt* 2020, 10' 40".

[17] In Japanese *gaiden* means "side story" or "tale" and refers to an anecdote or supplementary biography of a person. The use of *gaiden* is commonly used in popular Japanese fiction to refer to a spin-off (canonical or otherwise) of a previously published work that is neither officially considered a sequel nor a prequel. However, some *gaiden* are retold stories in the perspective of a different character, similar to that of a flashback. The definition is taken from the Japanese-English online dictionary Jisho.

of each of the series' instalments means "external" or "alternative biography", a deviation within the main storyline that expands the protagonist's universe across several dimensions. These two types of storytelling allow the artist to create a complex narrative system that expands in time and space and allow her to interweave the several characters that make up her digital persona, and the «micro-modulated nature»[18] of the media landscape she lives in. The essay will discuss the series *Monomyth: gaiden* and the concept of the "marvelous" applied to the multi-planar reality described by Petra Széman by considering the main features that characterized «the encounter between the human perceptual system and its media environment».[19] The essay will be divided into three sections: the first one will focus on the structure and the typical features used within the monomyth and the *gaiden* narrative along with the intended use of the artist; the second one will discuss the notion of the user-screen nexus as a meeting point of different realms; lastly, the third one will examine the role of the "marvelous" within the digital épos created by the artist.

1. MONOMYTH & GAIDEN: A NEW EVENT TIMELINE FOR A NON-LOCALIZED IDENTITY

As briefly discussed above, the series *Monomyth: gaiden* results from the combination of two very different narrative structures: on one hand, the monomyth, centered on the hero's journey; on the other, the so-called *gaiden*, widely used in anime and manga to address secondary stories or side stories that differ from the main storyline. The reason behind this complex narrative system derives from Széman's interest in the types of storytelling offered by Western and non-Western literature. Moreover, in order to create a multi-layered universe that oscillates between the real and the digital and to examine the concept of non-localized identity, the artist introduces «a juxtaposition of the horizontal nature of the *gaiden* with the vertical structuring of the monomyth timeline, which aid

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[18] LEVITT 2018: 22.
[19] Ivi: 5.

in grasping this point of tension and the role of intermedial spaces».[20] Before considering how the artist employs these structures in the temporal and spatial organization of the series, it is necessary to briefly address the main features of the hero's journey and the *gaiden*.

Regarding the hero's story, the essay focuses on Joseph Campbell's seminal book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). The author describes the hero's journey with several examples of myths and stories from Western and non-Western literature, providing a detailed definition of the monomyth and the different stages of the protagonist's quest. As Campbell states «the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation – initiation – return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth».[21] The author continues,

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered, and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. [...] The composite hero of the monomyth is a personage of exceptional gifts. Frequently he is honored by his society, frequently unrecognized or disdain. He and/or the world in which he finds himself suffers from a symbolical deficiency. [...] Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained.[22]

As Campbell's suggests, the monomyth has a linear vertical structure, but at the same time it is a cyclic one as it repeats itself in every story where the hero and his deeds are the main subject. Whether we consider ancient myths, such as the tale of Aeneas descending into the Underworld, or even works like *Star Wars* or *Spiderman*, it is possible to

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[20] Personal interview with the artist.
[21] CAMPBELL 1949: 28.
[22] Ivi: 35.

recognize the typical tripartite structure. This pattern focuses on the hero and the call to adventure to a world unknown to him, the trials he must face, the resulting path of personal growth, and the return to his own world as a changed man. To better understand this three-sided structure, it will be useful to break it down into its different components.

The first act of the monomyth, called "separation" or "departure", takes place in the ordinary world, that is, the world familiar to the hero and the moment where «the call to adventure»[23] is about to happen. As Campbell affirms, it is the "awakening of the self", «a mystery of transfiguration – a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage»[24] that disrupts the comfort and the peacefulness of the hero's world with a quest that he must pursue. Sometimes the call is not answered as the hero fears the upcoming challenges or has personal doubts about whether he is up to the task, but he is never alone in his journey, as there is always a mentor or a supernatural aid on his side. This one is a protective figure against the dangers of the hero's destiny, who can help with precious advice or objects that can be used along the way. It is at this point that the hero will face the first threshold, a liminal space between the ordinary world and the Underworld. Campbell depicts this extremely important "non-place"[25] as,

> The regions of the unknown (desert, jungle, deep sea, alien land, act.) are free fields for the projection of unconscious content. Incestuous *libido* and patricidal *destrudo* are thence reflected back against the individual and his society in forms suggesting threats of violence and fancied dangerous delight – not only as ogres but also as sirens of mysteriously seductive, nostalgic beauty.[26]

The second act of the monomyth is called "initiation", set in the Underworld. Here, the hero must face a series of trials that will test his courage and determination, and, in

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[23] Ivi: 47.
[24] *Ibidem*.
[25] Emphasis by the author of the paper.
[26] CAMPBELL 1948: 72.

literature, it is one of the most creative moments that has created numerous realms, monsters, characters of many guises. It is a situation, as Campbell describes, that can be called a "spiritual labyrinth"[27] because the hero must deal with a series of symbolic characters that are also linked to his personal experiences. When all barriers have been broken down and the dangers have been faced, the hero can finally receive "The Ultimate Boon", a reward that might be an object of great value, a secret, the achievement of superior knowledge or the reconciliation with another significant character. The challenges, however, are not over because even though the protagonist has faced an arduous path of personal transformation, his greatest quest is the one that will lead him out of the Underworld and back to the ordinary world. The final chapter is called "Return"[28] and revolves around the hero's comeback to the familiar world. Campbell defines it as follows,

> [...] the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom [...] back in the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds.[29]

This path is not without its pitfalls, as the author explains, but it implies an even more complex and essential meaning: the worlds crossed by the hero, the familiar one and the other, are different indeed, just like day and night, but they are also the same. The Underworld is just a «forgotten dimension of the world we know, and the exploration of that dimension is the whole sense of the deed of the hero».[30] One of the critical sub-sections of the third and final act, called *Master of the Two Worlds*, which is also used in the series *Monomyth: gaiden*, illustrates that the hero's real challenge is not returning to his world victorious or with a renewed wisdom, but rather how he will be able to share

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[27] Ivi: 92.
[28] Ivi: 179.
[29] *Ibidem*.
[30] Ivi: 201.

the gifts received with his companions and his people, and how he will use them. In fact, Campbell wonders «how to render back into light-world language the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark? How represent on a two-dimensional surface a three-dimensional form, or in a three-dimensional image a multi-dimensional meaning?».[31]

As this brief analysis shows, the evolution of the hero appears as «a paradigm of human development: the growth of the self, the coming of age of the individual».[32] Besides monstrous and supernatural creatures, enchanted objects, fantastic worlds, magic and heroic deeds, the myth is not just a straightforward tale of acts and events, but instead has «the purpose of gaining understanding of what it means to be fully human»[33] as «human experience is not just personally constant but it is also in flux».[34] The hero is a symbolic character, «an archetype of the self [...]. The hero's story, the monomyth, [...], thus reflects human experience – in particular the individual's experiences of attaining maturity or coming of age – the actualization of the adult self».[35] The call to adventure, divided into 'departure', 'initiation', 'return', is therefore the mirror of a universal process of personal evolution in which the individual has the opportunity to identify a «journey of self-knowledge».[36] Quoting Lowry's words,[37] Rochell states,

> The psychological parallel for the development of the self is clear: the hero's journey to the underworld not only resembles both ancient, widespread initiation rites and a natural, probably almost universal human psychic experience, it satisfies a basic human need. A particular example may be when one emerges from a severe personal crisis – profound depression, a breakdown, extreme loss – refreshed, with new understanding.

[31] Ivi: 202.
[32] ROCHELLE 2001: 34.
[33] LE GUIN 1970: 112.
[34] ROCHELLE 2001: 33.
[35] Ivi: 36.
[36] Ivi: 42.
[37] In his book *Communities of the Heart. The Rethoric of Myth in the Fiction of Ursula K Le Guin*, Rochelle mentions Shirley Park Lowry's essay *Familiar Mysteries: The Truth in Myth* to further underlying the universal role of myth and the hero's character as a journey towards a higher knowledge of the self.

The second cornerstone of the narrative structure of Petra Széman's work is the so-called *gaiden*. As mentioned above, the term is commonly used in popular Japanese fiction, from anime to manga, to indicate a secondary story that may not necessarily be considered as a sequel or prequel to the main one. The plot can take place in different settings and worlds, in alternate space-time dimensions, and the story can be told from the point of view of other characters, perhaps secondary, or be focused on flashbacks. In general, the main objective of this type of fiction is to expand the universe of the main series, in order to explore relationships briefly presented before, to give space to secondary stories, or investigate old matters left unresolved. The protagonist is generally a secondary or ancillary character of the main series while the leading character of the primary story is occasionally given a secondary role or only a tiny part. The timeline of these stories does not necessarily have to correspond to the end of the main narrative. In fact, it is possible to find examples of cross-over when the side story happens alongside the time frame of the original, or when the storyline of certain characters continues in any other time frame. Indeed, these "spin-offs" can generate additional sub-stories, thus creating a reticular structure of characters, timelines and events that intertwine with each other, developing an intricate network with a multitude of points of view. The narrative systems related to the *gaiden* do not have a well-defined structure as that of the monomyth, since it all depends on the main story. While the hero's journey has a linear and progressive development, the *gaiden* presents a horizontal structure since it expands the main narrative, as explained by Széman, but it can even be described as reticular because it delves into a progressively expanding universe. The artist focuses on the peculiar space-time tension these two types of narrative structures involve, fundamental to building a new timeline for a non-localized identity. As she states,

> [...] a lot of the *gaiden* I have read and had been influenced by has to do with *Naruto*[38], and I have been reading the various *gaiden* attached to the story since I was ten up to now.

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[38] *Naruto* is a Japanese manga series by Masashi Kishimoto, first serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* magazine from 1997 to 2014 and then released in book form. It then became and anime in 2002 with over 200 episodes

One that I have a very strong sense of spatial and temporal expansion from is *Kakashi Gaiden*;[39] in my memories associated with this I can really feel that abject space. Additionally, the work that got me into the monomyth idea was also an anime/manga called *Fullmetal Alchemist*,[40] where the story in general is neatly organized into various sections of Departure, Initiation and Return, all placed neatly within a narrative that follows the monomyth structure in its overarching themes too. I get really taken with detailed systems like this.

That said, it is possible to analyze Petra Széman' series *Monomyth: gaiden* and the role of the narrative structures mentioned above. As stressed in the introduction, the series explores the artist's relationship with her avatar called Yourself and the processes involved in creating a multilayered world. Following the hero's journey trope structure, Széman organizes the digital tale into "departure", "initiation" and "return", and adds a fourth act called *Master of the Two Worlds*, one of the pivotal elements of the monomyth. *Monomyth: gaiden* follows the journey of a «self-aware protagonist moving along the frayed edges of fictional and real worlds shaped by narrative traditions [...] in the attempt to navigate landscapes that have become oversaturated with movies and fiction».[41] The artist creates a complex transmedia narrative universe by mixing fragments taken from different dimensions which are at the same time connected to each other: pictures taken while strolling around Tokyo, illustrations, video game extracts, videos and animations. Széman's universe is made up of heterogeneous contents, both from real and digital

until 2007. It tells the story of Naruto Uzumaki, a young ninja who seeks recognition from his peers and dreams of becoming the village leader. There are different side stories along the main narrative, such as *Naruto: Shippuden*, *Boruto: Naruto Next Generations*, *Naruto Gaiden*.

[39] Known as *The Kakashi Side Story. A Boy's Life on the Battlefield*, it belongs to the *Naruto: Shippūden* anime.
[40] *Fullmetal Alchemist* is a Japanese manga series by Hiromu Arakawa and serialized in Square Enix's Monthly *Shōnen Gangan* magazine between 2001 and 2010. The story revolves around the journey of two alchemist brothers, Edward and Alphonse Elric, who are searching for the philosopher's stone to restore their bodies after a failed attempt to bring their mother back to life using alchemy. It was then published into 27 volumes. Its English release became the top-selling graphic novel in 2005. It was followed by two anime series, other two feature-length anime films and a live action film, besides different spin-offs and video games.
[41] The artist's description of the work is featured on her website.

worlds, which overlap into a continuum that dissolves any division between online and offline experiences. These everyday fragments act like the layers of any program used to compose digital contents, but their organization lacks a precise hierarchy or a linear progression. Arranged as part of a single continuous plane, they create a multi-layered reality in which multiple narrative dimensions converge, each corresponding to one of the several characters interpreted throughout digital and real wanderings. As if they were endowed with a centripetal force capable of converging the narrative planes that make up our experience, each video of the *Monomyth: gaiden* series presents reality as cinematic fiction. Here, multiple existential planes coexist simultaneously: a level of existence, a level of consciousness, and a level of personal development. Széman has created three characters,[42] or rather three versions of Yourself, each with a specific level of awareness of the complexity of the media landscape. As told by the artist's voice, which guides the viewer throughout the series as if it were an ancillary but invisible presence that helps them understand the journey ahead, "Yourself 1.0" has a «naïve understanding of fiction. Originally created as an outsourced self to reach realms that are problematic to get to with a real-life body. In the process of developing personal autonomy».[43] Next, there is "Yourself Level 5", which is «a virtual self that is no longer a vessel for tracking retrospective character growth in real time, but accidentally a separate person».[44] The last one is "Yourself Level 6", the one that should be able to read a non-localized identity within a multiplanar reality as she is «carefully navigating a volatile blend of correlation and causation».[45] Yourself's journey is told from the point of view of "Yourself Level 5", an alter ego that has therefore already become familiar with the concept of shared reality and that has to cross the so-called threshold to be able to manage a multi-fragmented world that expands both vertically and horizontally in a single narrative layer. This choice

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[42] Figure 1. The screenshot is taken from SZÉMAN *Monomyth* 2018, the first instalment or act of the series. The artist uses a game-like interface to represent which character will pursue the journey and, consequently, the degree of awareness of the media landscape that she has at the beginning of the journey.

[43] SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2018, 12' 00".

[44] *Ibidem*.

[45] *Ibidem*.

is due to the fact that Petra Széman, at this point of her investigation, has already delved into the concept of shared reality and shared identity in a previous work, *How to Enter a Fictional Realm /Tutorial* (2017).[46] As pointed out by the artist,[47]

> [...] the video examines the agency of digitized personas and what entering a foreign, hostile landscape might mean for a character striving to maintain a consistent and persistent narrative. Thinking of a virtual self as a self-contained identity reaching past incidental existence, the work urges the viewer to consider the relationship between two agents, the player and their alter ego. A seemingly straightforward gesture - visiting *Tamriel*[48] - causes problems ranging from the loss of identity to fictive character memory inconsistencies, not to mention an overall lack of narrative compliance.

Figure 1. SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2018

[46] The digital video is a prelude that paved the way to the research about multiplanar reality and a non-localized identity, thems further explored in the *Monomyth: gaiden* series. As the artist describes, *How to enter a fictional realm* is a handy didactic guide that uses the format of a YouTube Tutorial for accessing the realm of *Tamriel* (The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, Betshesda Game Studios, 2011) with a non-native character. The video examines the agency of digitized personas and what entering a foreign, hostile landscape might mean for a character striving to maintain a consistent and persistent narrative. *How to enter a fictional realm* is available on Petra Széman's website and on her Vimeo channel.
[47] The artist's description of the work is featured on her website.
[48] *Tamriel* is one of several continents of the video game *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Betshesda Game Studios, 2011).

The first act of the series, *Monomyth: gaiden /Departure* (2018), corresponds to the first chapter of the monomyth and highlights two of the main themes of the hero's journey: the call to adventure and the very first threshold. The latter, in fact, does not represent a single liminal space but it is a sum of all the liminal spaces that we cross daily to access the plethora of digital spaces that fill our media landscape. Indeed, the video begins with the artist's narrative voice stating, «I am both myself and a character that looks like me» and then adds «it is enticing to think about the cyberspace as radically other [...]. It is more a merging of displaced worlds – one foot in the door, but the door is part of a system [...]». Yourself gets into a complex system where "fictional planes" and "reality planes" overlap with each other in a seamless transition and her first challenge is to navigate realms with multiple personalities and their relationship with the world. Then again, Széman goes on arguing,[49]

> [...] so much of us is rooted in storytelling. We endlessly tell stories about our lives, both to ourselves and others, and it is through such stories that we make sense of the world and our relationship to it – constantly making and remaking sense of the chaotic retinal flashes we experience life in. It is an autobiography, constantly curated based on the narrative systems available to you, smoothing the world into a story that makes sense for your character. Your identity is produced through these creative acts in which you interpret and re-interpret your memories and experiences, articulated within a narrative.

The second act, *Monomyth: gaiden /Initiation* (2019), sees the artist's avatar crossing a multitude of liminal spaces to investigate themes such as time and motion across parallel and overlapping worlds, supported by tales of personal experiences influenced by Japanese pop culture. *Initiation* aims at presenting a perspective that expands beyond a linear succession of frames, breaking the rules of the conventional linear narrative in which we think our lives are organized. As pointed out by the artist herself, «using journey tropes as a steppingstone into constructing complex image-worlds that allow for

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[49] Transcription of an extract of the narrator's voice in SzÉMAN *Monomyth* 2018.

time to expand sideways, the video aims to open up ways for multiple layers of experience to co-exist within one non-localized identity». The underworld journey in this series is not a quest into fantastic worlds populated by supernatural creatures and enchanted objects, but a search through the interstices between the different planes of reality. As the artist will later say in the final chapters of the series, «life is generated in the gaps, at the nexus of the screen and the user». In fact, the focus revolves around the concept of liminal space as a transitional stage of a process, a position at or on both sides of a boundary or threshold. Yourself is situated within several places at once and tries to navigate many worlds altogether, questioning concepts such as authenticity, personhood, and reality. To better understand her "points of view", it is worth mentioning this passage from *Initiation*, which guides the viewer towards the end of the second chapter and whose themes will be further discussed in the second section of the essay,

> When you experience the world there's a small gap between the raw information and the image you take in, your brain always lagging behind the actual. This is not a conspiracy and not even case of the hyperreal – it is just how bodies work, operating with a blink of loading time. Time in these liminal spaces expands along multiple axes [...] in a de-hierarchized narrative landscape. The accumulation of these realms is organized not within a system of chronology, but as a series of juxtaposed presents. A world that forces you to step outside a singular line of sight and into new layers of perception doesn't present a falsehood, but it is an image that is depicting time rather than movement, going beyond a succession of frames required by narrative order. [...] I'm a melting point of different characters: a person, an omnipresent cameraman and a character that appears in set frames, but cross-effects the perception of the other perspectives.

The last two chapters of the series, *Monomyth: gaiden / Return* (2019) and *Monomyth: gaiden / Master of The Two Worlds* (2020), conclude Yourself's journey. Following the classic hero's path, the former sees the artist's digital persona leaving the so-called Underworld, that is the threshold at the user-screen intersection, to come back to "real life". It investigates «whether a stark return is possible in an interwoven network of virtual realms, digital technologies and non-localized identities» but also asks «what the

end means for a world that is driven by narrative significance».[50] The latter and final chapter, *Master of The Two Worlds*, emphasizes the path of personal growth of Yourself and the profound level of understanding she acquires about her reality. The series places the viewer in front of a digital épos which recounts the events of the contemporary identity and the often conflicting and dispersive relationship she has both with herself and the reality around her, until the moment when she tries to make sense of this situation. However, is this really possible? *Return* opens with an exciting dialogue between the narrator, who has the appearance of "Yourself Level 6", and "Yourself Level 5". The two discuss how everyone's perspectives are limited and how the levels of reality grow consistently day by day, stating that the only way to untangle this multilayered maze is to look at reality through its suspended times, such as the loading screen. In turn, "Yourself Level 5" reflects on how memory is not a single file but rather a series of save slots to get in and out of, as «these different perspectives coexist alongside the immediate reality, regardless of whether you choose to enter them or not». As Széman's voice recounts,

> This is where we stand: a virtual world is fragmented and incomplete beyond the initial organising force of its narrative. At the same time, reality is layered and unfathomable, too large to look at. I can put down the camera, or close the game software, but reality will continue to elude me.[51]

Monomyth: gaiden / Master of The two Worlds wraps up the entire series and examines how and if Yourself has truly managed to become the master of the two worlds. At this point one would expect to see Yourself as "Yourself Level 6", however, the artist's digital persona still looks like she did at the beginning of the journey. As Széman explains in the interview,[52]

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[50] Extract from SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2019.
[51] *Ibidem*.
[52] Personal Interview with the artist.

> The position of the *Master of Two Worlds* assumes having arrived at the end of a linear scale, but the "real mastery" lies in the sustained maintenance of an ongoing ontological position that allows one to step outside this linear space. I think Yourself has the capacity to hold up this position, but thinking of them as a singularity I do not think they are there yet – there is too many facets still unexplored. Currently the Master of Two Worlds is situated in the space between me and Yourself, though with time and ongoing questioning the boundaries of this position may expand and overlap with both of us.

This excerpt emphasizes the complexity of a media landscape that is not so much focused on a single image or a single world, «but rather a relation of levels and pathways and the contradictions they enact, assembled outside a hierarchy imposed by cinematic and linear ordering».[53] In the monomyth, however, the hero comes back victorious from his personal quest and returns to the ordinary world with a new understanding of himself and the world. "Yourself Level 5", on the other hand, is still in a limbo state. Her challenge is not just about her ability to navigate and untangle the gaps between one plane of reality and another, but it revolves around her ability to simultaneously harness all of them and maintain a steady and cohesive gaze on a fragmented and shifting identity. As well as the hero's myth, Yourself embarks on a journey that is both personal and universal because she embraces the daily disorienting experience across media since «the maps are so complex that the human is not at home in its world. [...] Our interiorization of the spatial and temporal forms of media produce our future mode of perception».[54] This production is constantly undermined by the presence of a self «as an emergent narrative of emergent worlds».[55]

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[53] Extract from SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2020.
[54] LEVITT 2018: 68-69.
[55] *Ibidem*.

2. The User-Screen Nexus: a Site for Intermedial Spaces

The *Monomyth: gaiden* series tries to understand how new types of narration emerge at the spectator-screen intersection. Petra Széman conceives the screen as a centripetal force that scatters our identity in several fragments, all dislocated in a vast and deep landscape. To convey this sense of dissemination and overlapping of points of view, Széman introduces multiple scenes simultaneously and each one of them is both independent and linked to the others.[56] Her storytelling approach does not follow the temporal linearity that characterizes the real world but makes use of a narrative that is extremely diluted in space and time, in which memory, personal awareness and perception are looking for common ground. She states that «it is only by harnessing this depth, by negotiating these perspectives and contradictions that the world can open up».[57] She realizes that «there is information contained within threshold experiences that is not available in any other frameworks. Between the layers that make up the images that construct our worlds, in the holes in the digital landscape where the player never visits».[58] Petra Széman's research stands at the «encounter between the human perceptual system and its media environment at particular moments in time and with the kind of selves, lives, and worlds that are produced in this conjunction»[59] and it is deeply connected to the concept of "animatic apparatus".[60] This is «a site for intervention and production»[61] as it is concerned with «the manner in which any cultural dispositif produces forms of life as it imagines them».[62] In other words, «how new forms of life and modes of vitality emerge at the spectator-screen intersection as this transforms over time».[63] We generally think that our real physical self pulls the strings of all our digital identities, like a puppeteer

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[56] Figure 2. Screenshot from SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2019.
[57] Extract from SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2020.
[58] *Ibidem*.
[59] LEVITT 2018: 5.
[60] Ivi: 2.
[61] Ivi: 3.
[62] Ivi: 4.
[63] Ivi: 5.

directing a set of characters on a stage. However, no self is more real than the others or holds a higher truth about our identity. As in real life, our online presence is scattered in a heterogeneous series of characters that act differently depending on the context. Each one of them is a variation of ourselves that plays a different role. In the end, it is only their sum that can perhaps give us a sense of who we are, even if it is not entirely coherent. Like the hero's journey, Yourself embarks on a personal and universal quest, trying to get to the bottom of the fragmentation experienced in the contemporary media landscape. By intercepting its interstices and its gaps, Yourself looks for a way to navigate this elusive multiplanar reality. Therefore, in addition to the linear development of the monomyth, there is a horizontal evolution, the *gaiden*, which complicates the perception of reality expanding the possibilities of interpretation.

Figure 2. SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2019

The user-screen nexus functions as a composite image: it is the «vanishing point of a mode of image making. [...] It is not an aesthetic or a distinct medium, but a relation of

images to the pathways, workflows and contradictions they enact».[64] In a landscape populated by digital contents that have lost their "indexicality", or in other words, they no longer maintain a physical tie to their referent, Yourself swims in an ocean of composite images, an «assemblage that constructs a set of discrete elements from different moments and sites of recording, modeling or animation into a unified visual field».[65] Petra Széman stitches together several realms in a single shot to detect their possible disjunctions and implements a sort of "counter-viewing" approach navigating the hinges between planes of reality. Talking about the non-localized identities generated at the user-screen nexus, Széman reflects on the relationship between her and Yourself explaining,

> Something that I often think about is the places of disparity between me and Yourself, particularly when it comes to national heritage. In Japan I am obviously white, and in the UK I am an Eastern European immigrant. In terms of memories and personal history however, Yourself has only ever been to Japan as far as real places are concerned, and the closest she is been to Eastern Europe is *Skyrim*,[66] which in my head basically equals the mountains and forests of the Carpathian/Pannonian Basin. Where does my sense of ethnicity and national heritage fit within her worldview?[67]

As Levitt smoothly explains, our everyday perception is just apparently natural, or better said, seamless, as «we imagine the perceptual space to be coherent» but instead, it is «always mixed, composed of a variety of texts, audiovisual elements, and styles, graphs and other disposition of data».[68] Through Yourself, the artist does not inquire the relationship with the real in itself but instead investigates what territories might open up at the intersection of the different perceptual worlds. The user-screen nexus thus turns

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[64] WLIAMS 2017: 17.
[65] Ivi: 19.
[66] *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Betshesda Game Studios, 2011).
[67] Personal interview with the artist.
[68] LEVITT 2018: 68.

into an access to a multitude of micro-worlds and micro-identities.[69] Every day we engage with our world by performing a series of actions, such as moving, eating, touching, breathing, feeling, watching etc. Our encounter with the environment can be analyzed through our nervous system, the stimuli it receives and its responses, but even if we all live in the same environment, that does not mean that we inhabit the same world and perceive it the same way. The environment revolves around microphysical encounters with the body in a straightforward way, but «whatever is it encountered in it must be valued or not and interacted with or not».[70] Since the environment has to deal with a cognitive self, another factor has to be taken into account, the "surplus of signification",[71] which is a «threshold between sensation (the physical interaction between organisms and environment) and sense as "world-making", as embodying the sensory and mechanical performances in an "image schema"».[72] Environment and worlds are different and many worlds can result from a single environment. Each world, in turn, spawns new identities, and the cognitive self finds itself in a network of micro-worlds and micro-identities. Varela states that we usually perceive ourselves as «top-down, centered and globally directed and this is why we feel also compelled to project a centralized center or an identity agent» while maybe, we are more similar to an insect colony. The colony's separate components are individuals with «no center or localized self and yet, the whole does behave as a unit and as if there were a coordinating agent present».[73] Varela's research is significant to analyze the concept of non-localized identity as the author states,[74]

> our sense of personal I can be construed as an "ongoing interpretative narrative" of some aspects of the parallel activities in our daily life. [...] Once can go one step further: the selfless "I" is a bridge between the corporeal body which is common to all beings with

[69] VARELA 1999: 8.
[70] Ivi: 56.
[71] *Ibidem*.
[72] LEVITT 2018: XX.
[73] VARELA 1999: 52.
[74] Ivi: 62.

nervous systems and social dynamics in which humans live. My "I" is neither private nor public alone, but partakes of both. And so do the kinds of narratives that go with it [...].

It is essential to highlight how Varela uses the term "narration" in its plural form given that the individual, even if they inhabit a single environment, scattered in several worlds embodying several micro-identities. Here, once again, the intermedial spaces are the focus of the author's attention, who finds the «source of the autonomous and creative side of living condition»[75] in the liminal spaces between one micro-world and the other. As Széman reminds us that «life is generated in the gaps», Varela states that «it is during the breakdowns that the concrete is born».[76] It appears that the main focus of the research and particularly the journey of Yourself and the series *Monomyth: gaiden*, is not to analyze the relationship between reality and digital as nowadays, given the media landscape in which we live, it would be quite obsolete to make this statement. The attention is not even directed on the transition from one realm to another as such, since switching back and forth between real and virtual is now seamless. Rather, the emphasis is on the gaps between one micro-world and the other and on their mode of operation. In fact, it is only in those moments of suspension that it is possible to assess the condition of a self that is nowhere in particular and yet everywhere. The contemporary media sphere aims at a seamless perception of reality while Petra Széman's work is more concerned with portraying the state of awareness of the distributed sight reached by a non-localized identity.

3. THE MARVELOUS WITHIN A MULTIPLANAR REALITY

The brief analysis of the monomyth and the hero's journey, reveals several features connected to the fantastic dimension. During the adventure, these elements play a wide

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[75] Ivi: 11.
[76] *Ibidem*.

range of roles, such as monstrous creatures, magical objects, ancillary characters that hold supernatural powers and so on. These do not only create an engaging reading experience but have also a symbolic meaning and a specific role in the hero's personal growth. Considering the narrative structure of the *gaiden* insted, once again the fantastic elements are not neglected but rather, anime and manga present a plethora of fantastic and supernatural worlds and characters. Two of the most influential anime in the artist's practice are *Fullmetal Alchemist* and *Naruto*: the first one revolves around the philosopher's stone, while the homonymous protagonist of the second one is the host of a powerful fox known as the Nine-Tails, a monster beast. Although Széman adopts both narrative structures, their purpose is to establish the space-time narrative of the digital épos she has created. In fact, they give a sense of vertical and horizontal narrative development to Yourself's journey. Her quest is then devoid of the fantastic and supernatural elements, even those usually used to describe «the disintegration and dispersal of the self»[77] where «there is a propensity to blur the distinction between human and technology through forms of prosthesis (either mechanical or biological)».[78] Petra Széman's alter ego is instead deeply rooted in the very present of the contemporary media landscape. The multiple reality planes that overlap on top of each other, the photos and the videos, the animations and the game extracts, constantly bouncing back and forth between the digital and the real world, create an overwhelming sense of "wonder" that is functional to the representation of a compelling digital épos for a non-localized identity equipped with a distributed gaze. The role of the marvelous in Petra Széman's work allows Yourself to enter the interstices and the threshold experiences that make up our reality in order to eventually grasp the extent of the micro-worlds and the micro-identities in which our experience is organized. The marvelous becomes the access point to arrange this heightened sense of multiplicity and fragmentation in a more cohesive narrative. It is not a feature that amazes the observer, but its role is to present an alternative framework

[77] SWALE 2015: 114.
[78] *Ibidem*.

to understand this "patchwork of visual modalities".[79] In other words, «it enables us to pose basic questions about both the nature of the world and the nature of the existence of the beings within it».[80]

Indeed, it is precisely this aspect that shares similarities with the concept of the marvelous as elaborated by Torquato Tasso in his seminal treatise *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* (1594). Placed in the middle of the sixteenth-century discussion on the epic poem, Tasso acknowledges that the marvelous provides the epic poetry with that vitality and that excitement that make it enjoyable to anyone. On the other hand, a poem devoid of the marvelous and that conforms exclusively to the verisimilitude to respect the authenticity of the events, is likely to result in a dry composition only accessible to scholars. As Ardissino points out, Tasso's suggestion pivots «on the non-fictitious and non-fantastic quality of the marvelous, hence on its revealing nature of a dimension other than the real, which precisely for this reason does not fail to be true».[81] Tasso combines it with elements of the Christian religious tradition and «gives to the marvelous a revealing function of a spiritual dimension, which only in the devoted attitude of the beholder can reach its true manifestation».[82] It represents the possibility to access a greater knowledge not tied up to a banal «cause-effect relationship».[83] It steps into a peculiar type of reality that otherwise would not be accessible in alternative ways. By working both on a visual and cognitive level, Petra Széman tries to collect and expose the stitches between the sub-narratives in which our life is fragmented, starting from the platforms we inhabit, the media we use and the relationship they have with our online and offline persona. *Monomyth: gaiden*'s narrative dimension expands through different languages and media providing a type of experience that «becomes a matter of continuous recollection, which is to say that is simultaneously a continuous performance

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[79] Ivi: 48.
[80] SWALE 2015: 114.
[81] ARDISSINO 2019: 22.
[82] Ivi: 29.
[83] Ivi: 22.

of and for recollection».[84] As Arcagni states, «every form of data acquisition that characterizes our experience as networked users is transformed into a narrative»[85] and narration is a «process of sense-making rather than a transfer of a ready package of information from the author to the reader, hence the effect of surprise».[86] Going further on with this reasoning and borrowing Grishakova's words, «the fictional text is placed into a broader cognitive perspective of double communication between the author and reader, narrator and narratee, the storyworld as an effect of "a revelatory vision"»[87], that is, in this case, the revelatory function of the marvelous, crucial to capture this continuous shard existence. Petra Széman understands this "surplus of vision"[88] that shapes and informs the multiple planes of reality that organize our existence and transforms her virtual alter ego into a meeting point for her different characters: the artist, the author, the viewer, the avatar, the actor, the reporter, who travel through different languages and media. Therefore, *Monomyth: gaiden* is an example of "transmedia story"[89] as it challenges the idea of a "unified experience"[90] and vision in favor of a systematic multi-level and multi-textual development. While Jenkins's thought is oriented towards the so-called user-generated contents, the notion of "transmedia storytelling" is highly significant in this context because, as Jenkins states, «transmedia stories are based not on individual characters or specific plots but rather complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories».[91] It is a process of "world-building" that, just like our daily existence and the experience of Yourself, «unfolds

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[84] PENCE 2014: 245-246.

[85] ARCAGNI 2016: 209.

[86] GRISHAKOVA - RYAN - DE GRUYTER 2010: 316.

[87] *Ibidem*.

[88] Ivi: 315.

[89] See note number 9.

[90] JENKINS 2009: from *The Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: Seven Principles of Transmedia Storytelling (Well, Two Actually. Five More on Friday)*, in *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* (‹http://henryjenkins.org/2009/12/the_revenge_of_the_origami_uni.html›).

[91] JENKINS 2008: from *Transmedia Storytelling 101*, in *Confessions of an Aca-Fan* (‹http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html›).

across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole».[92]

Addressing the notion of the marvelous as a means to reach a higher degree of understanding of a non-localized identity in a multiplanar reality, Széman states,[93]

I was recently having a conversation with someone from Germany about the German words for "reality", and he was saying how there are two terms that are used largely interchangeably - *Realitat* and *Wirklichkeit*. *Realitat* indeed refers to what one could call the "real world", and *Wirklichkeit* is used in the same sense too but, to be precise, to a world which leaves an impact, and we can choose to interpret this impact within an expanded field. That renders the reality of *Wirklichkeit* much more flexible and overarching - and I think it is this concept of reality and truthfulness that I would place within my definition of the marvelous. It would be present in those moments where a sustained sense of multiplicity is achieved - in the pixels where all the planes of the star meet - in the space that extends between the avatar and the player during the loading screen of a game. In terms of production, I can achieve the marvellous when I succeed in representing a distributed sight.

In *Monomyth: gaiden / Master of The Two Worlds*, the artist introduces a beautiful image[94] that can be interpreted not only as a synthesis of the artist's digital épos, but above all as a symbolic representation of the concept of the marvelous that depicts a complex reality, suspended and arranged through and across several media, texts and narrative dimensions. On the palm of her hand Yourself holds an asterisk, which stands at the intersection of multiple realities: the 3D model of Yourself in *Skyrim,* its 2D animation, and then a mix of photos of Japan and a pixel art/arcade representation of the several realities she has encountered. As a sign, the asterisk has different meanings: in its typographic use it denotes a moment of suspension as it refers to a note in relation to the

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[92] JENKINS 2006: 95-96.
[93] Personal interview with the artist.
[94] Figure 3. Screenshot from SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2020.

main text; in the scientific field it is used as a multiplication symbol or in computer science it can declare a variable. It embraces ideally different states: momentary suspension and deviation from the main text, the multiplication of elements and the variability of data. Yourself's hand tries to grasp this multiplicity of perspectives but, instead, it breaks down into thousands of pieces, suggesting that it is indeed complicated to address the concept of identity and reality in a univocal way. As the artist suggests,[95]

> The star shape is something that I chose without any specific intentions at first - I just wanted to create a 3D shape from a number of screens and the simple asterisk was an easy one to start with. My intention was to do some tests with that and then move onto building something more complex, but I found myself reaching back to the original star and its significance became clearer with time. [...] The most important part of it is the middle area where all of its planes intersect. That space where everything overlaps momentarily is not visible, but it is a space that contains all of the realms that build it up, and it is this elusive experience of "wholeness" or a conclusive reality what I am trying to pinpoint in my work. At the moment I do not think this is comprehensible in a straightforward way, and what I am chasing after in the videos is grasping the instability of the viewing position necessary for understanding that precise point of intersection.
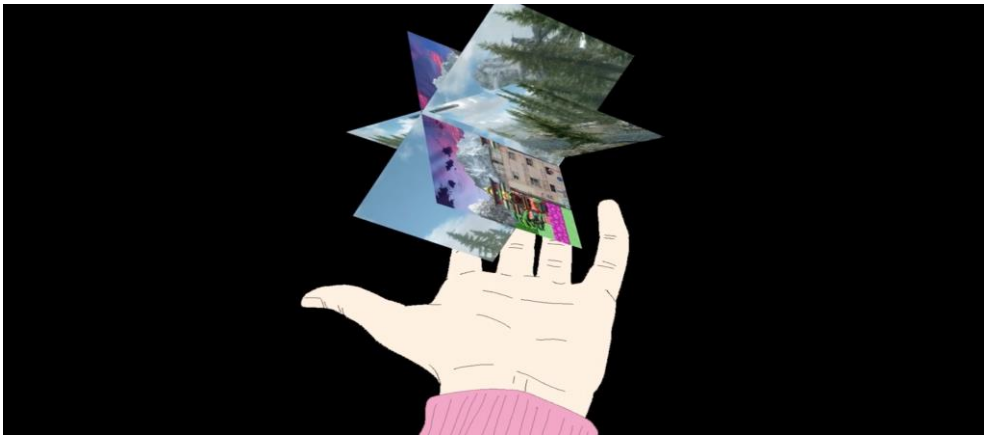

Figure 3. SZÉMAN, *Monomyth* 2020

[95] Personal interview with the artist.

The marvelous in *Monomyth: gaiden* is the access to «the pixels where the planes of the asterisk/star meet, a narrow space between dimensions that encompasses multiple perspectives at once».[96] It is the highest point of awareness where Yourself perceives simultaneously all the realities and personalities that make up her persona across several media and narrative points of view. Her challenge is to be able to manage over time this state of multiplicity and fragmentation, and that is why for the time being she has not yet acquired the appearance of "Yourself Level 6".

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although it is hard to identify a univocal model through which to restore this multilayered-identity, Petra Széman still manages to establish a framework in which gradually rearranges the pieces of a scattered self. She is an archaeologist at the spectator-screen intersection that uses threshold experiences as a turning point to bridle the several storylines that constitute our online and offline presence. Being aware that «human cognition is multimodal as multiple clues of different origins (verbal, visual, aural, olfactory, etc.) form our knowledge of the surrounding world and stimulate hypothesis formation»,[97] Széman creates a cinematic fiction combining photos, videos, animations and video game excerpts, and structures them in a multidimensional continuum which retraces her journey and outlines the multiple realities that constitutes our daily media environment.

With the series *Monomyth: gaiden* she appropriates the principles of transmedia storytelling and applies both the vertical linear structure of the monomyth and the horizontal development of the *gaiden* to portray a non-localized identity across several media and narrative perspectives. The hero's quest is translated into the journey of Petra Széman's digital persona, Yourself, among the several realms that she inhabits daily. This

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[96] Personal interview with the artist.
[97] GRISHAKOVA - RYAN - DE GRUYTER 2010: 328-329.

peculiar narrative structure, which expands in multiple directions, tries to grasp the tensions created at the spectator-screen nexus, a site for the production of a visual assemblage that generates the micro-worlds and micro personalities that constitute our media landscape. Having a physical body that crosses multiple realms at the same time within a distributed network of screens and platforms, means that we live in a «patchwork of distributed modalities»,[98] that is, an environment that generates multiple worlds and multiples sub-identities as the individual interacts with it. In the *Monomyth: gaiden* series, the marvelous is devoid of the common sci-fi tropes used in works of fiction to address the relationship between digital realms, the virtual, and the ordinary world, and instead uses it as a means to reach a higher sense of awareness about the contemporary multiplanar condition. Petra Széman aims at drawing attention to the intersection between simultaneous realities, embodied by the figure of the asterisk. This intersection points at the marvelous, a dimension otherwise impossible to reach because as it is a space that contains the realms of our reality. The notion of the marvelous applied to a transmedia narrative that gathers several visual and textual dimensions all in a single cinematic fiction «serves as a tool of human navigation in the surrounding world and a bridge between perception and knowledge».[99] Defined by the artist as «an elusive experience of "wholeness" or a conclusive reality», Széman's aim is to represent this convergence, despite its constant evolution. This is Yourself's greatest quest and the reason why she has not changed during her journey: she has to be able to keep this sense of "wholeness" over time despite having a non-localized identity. Eventually, Petra Széman is trying to answer Campbell's question on how to represent on a two-dimensional surface a three-dimensional form, that is, a multiplanar world with several micro-identities.

[98] VARELA 1999: 48.
[99] GRISHAKOVA - RYAN - DE GRUYTER 2010: 329.

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