REMIXING PERSONA

An Imaginary Digital Media
Object from the Onto-Tales
of the Digital Afterlife

MALK
MarkAmerikaLauraKim

The **MEDIA : ART : WRITE : NOW** series mobilises the medium of writing as a mode of critical enquiry and aesthetic expression. Its books capture the most original developments in technology-based arts and other forms of creative media: AI and computational arts, gaming, digital and post-digital productions, soft and wet media, interactive and participative arts, open platforms, photography, photomedia and, last but not least, amateur media practice. They convey the urgency of the project via their style, length and mode of engagement. In both length and tone, they sit somewhere between an extended essay and a monograph.

Series Editor: Joanna Zylinska

REMIXING PERSONA

AN IMAGINARY DIGITAL MEDIA OBJECT FROM THE ONTO-TALES OF THE DIGITAL AFTERLIFE

MALK MarkAmerikaLauraKim

( )

OPEN HUMANITIES PRESS

Remixing Persona

*An Imaginary Digital Media Object
from the Onto-Tales of the Digital Afterlife*

by MALK_____
MarkAmerikaLauraKim_____
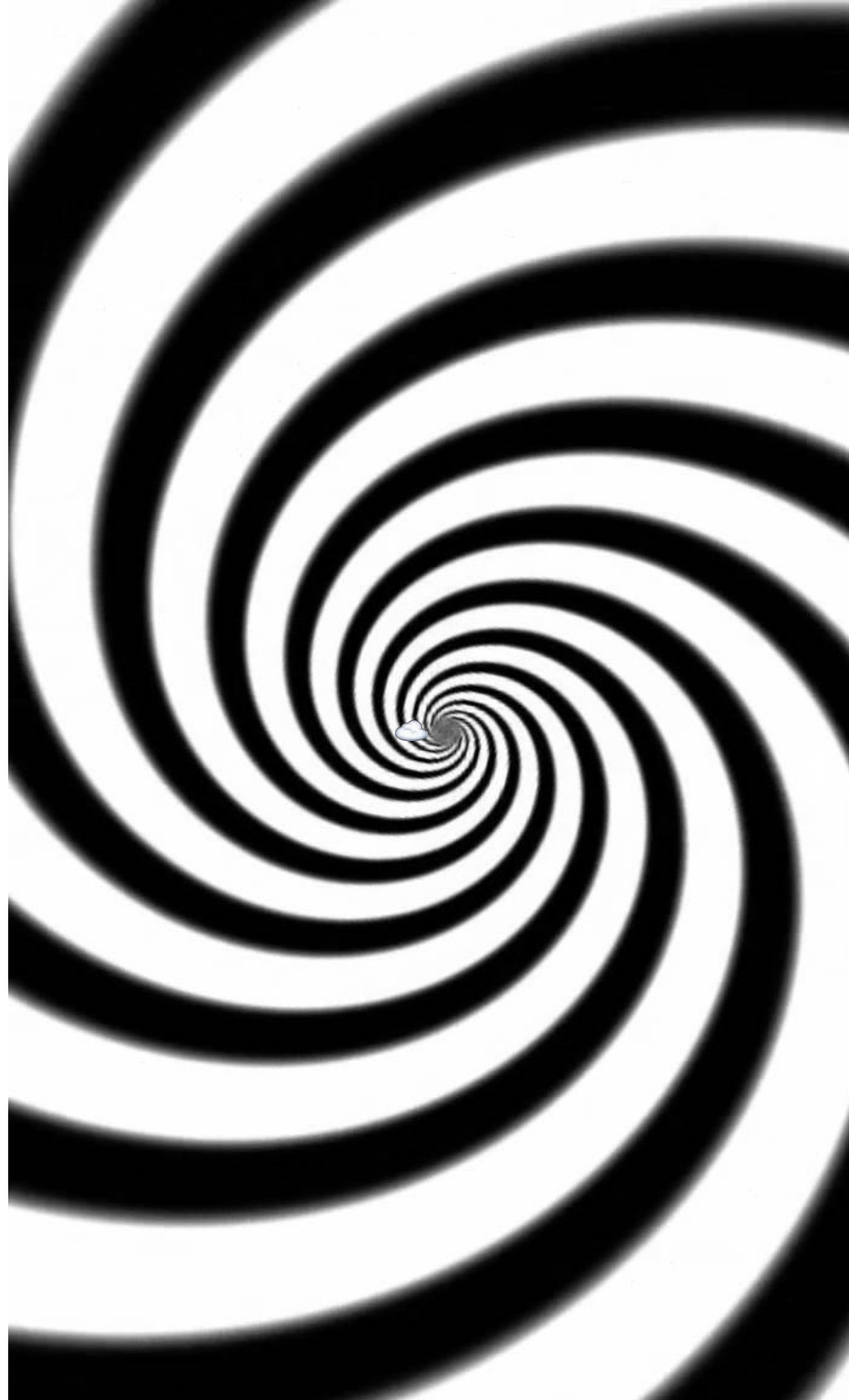
All art
    after Duchamp is
        [   ] art.

            - MALK

[   ] = remix, re:mix, (re)mix, re-mix, re/mix

There isn't one me.
There aren't ten mes.
There is no me.
ME is only
a position of equilibrium.
An average of 'mes',
a movement in the crowd.

- Henri Michaux

Persona + Remix = The Other.

But whose Other are we talking about?
Not my Other.
Not yours either.

The Other is a possibility space.
It's the thing-to-be-performed and, when it's actualized into something concrete like an intense aesthetic fact, it loses its quality of otherness and requires further remixing, something that comes naturally to the digitally networked flux artist whose operational presence takes place in (un)realtime.

The Other as Remix Persona is not necessarily embodied otherness. Or if it is, it is not authentically embodied otherness. It's fictionally embodied otherness. It's the thing you find yourself becoming even when you resist becoming it.

\- VJ Persona

Being Digital
is a calculated risk.
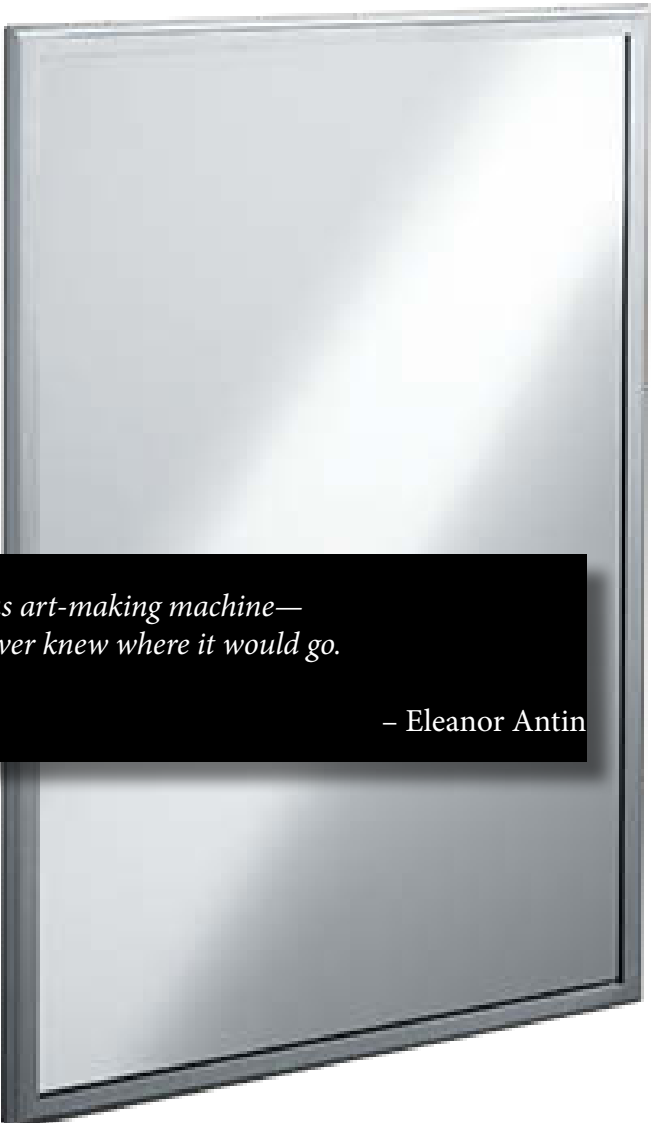
☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
opens a page.
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐
enters the page.

☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ and
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐
is now on the same page.

I had a marvelous art-making machine—
my personas. I never knew where it would go.

– Eleanor Antin

A persona is a thing with a body.
It presents a stylistic tendency that defies ordinariness.
It's a way of inventing - a body language that, when put to use,
gets you high.

– Kathy Acker Remix

13

MA

A PERSONA IS A FLUXLIKE OPERATIONAL
PRESENCE IN THE FIELD OF DISTRIBUTION

A persona is a performance enhancer that thrusts itself into
an ongoing narrative momentum that resists
the machinations of Time

HELLO
my name is
New Media

A persona is an unpredictable nomadic i.d.
that traverses the networked space of flows in
pursuit of the next version of Creativity Coming

A
persona
is
an apparition
of
an appearance
hacking
The Now

A persona is always composing itself
as a fiction-in-the-making
and, in the process, creates
an alternative form of aura
to circulate within a personally
curated networked milieu

A persona is a
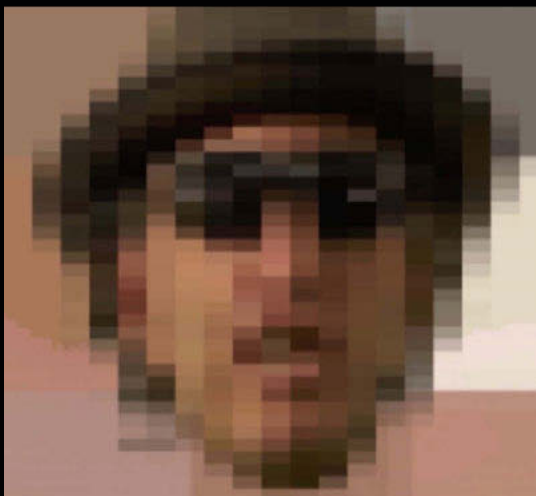
metamediumystic apparatus that comes out of nowhere, the result of an ecstatic process of transubstantiation.
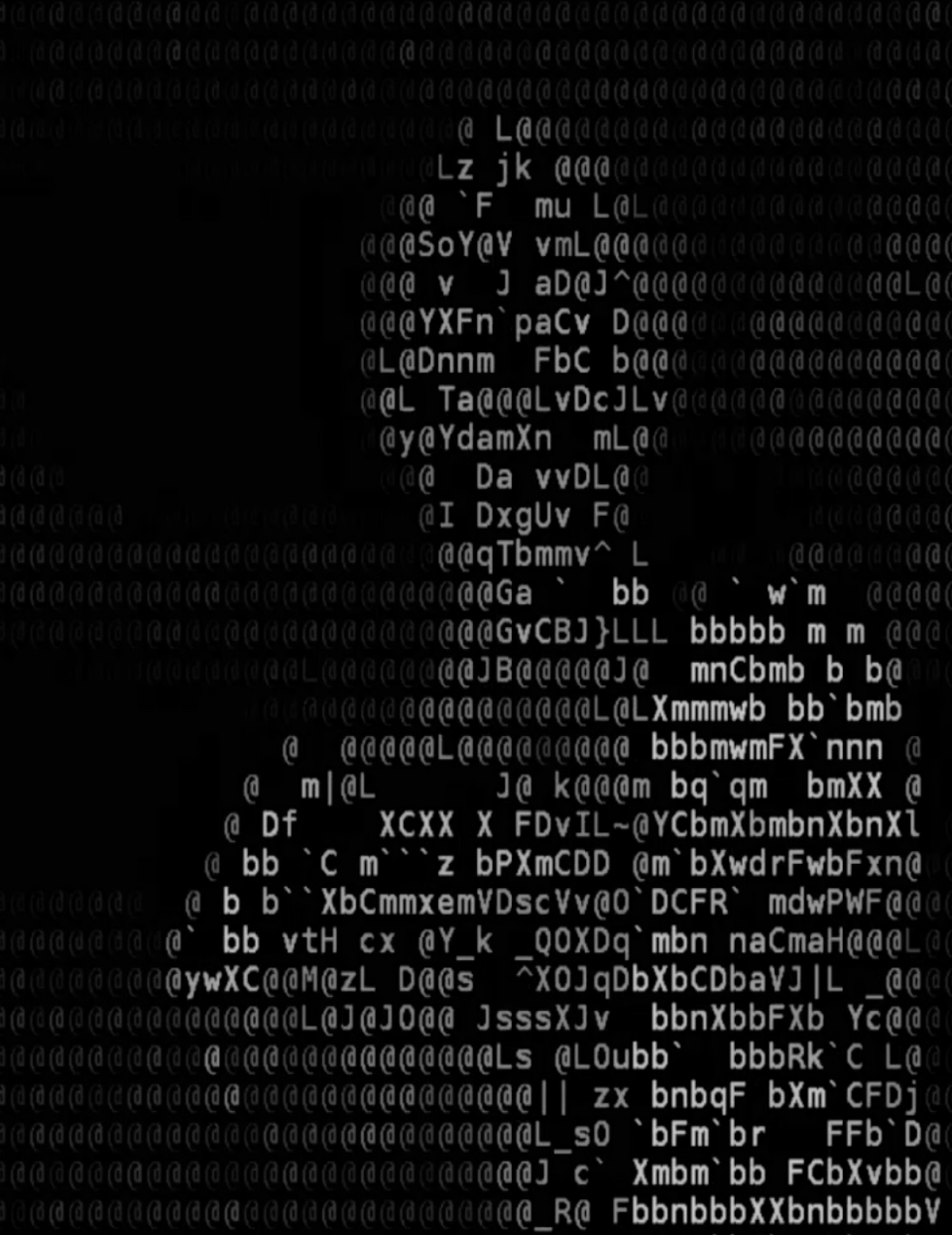
A persona is
the digital version of Hermes,
a sly, slippery, and masked agent of
contagious media "neither king nor jack,
but rather a sort of joker, a floating signifier,
a wild card, one who puts play into play"

A persona is an improvised composition that
"takes place" during and outside of the affective interval

A persona is
a digitally inflected figure (of speech)
whose rhetorical terms challenge
the contingencies of topos
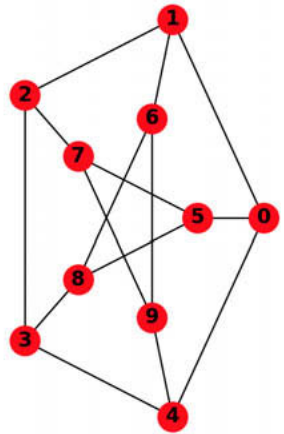
A persona is the embodiment of an
unconscious creative potential
executing a coded form
of subjectivity

A persona is a Conceptual Jester

who tweaks their operational settings so that they always shape-shift into a different version of whatever it is they might have once been while reinventing what they still might yet be with each subsequent performance

A persona
is a speculatively
rendered plaything of
psychic forces,
a hauntological specter
that intuitively
postproduces
(remixologically
inhabits) another
version of the
artist's ongoing
spatial practice

A persona is a fragment
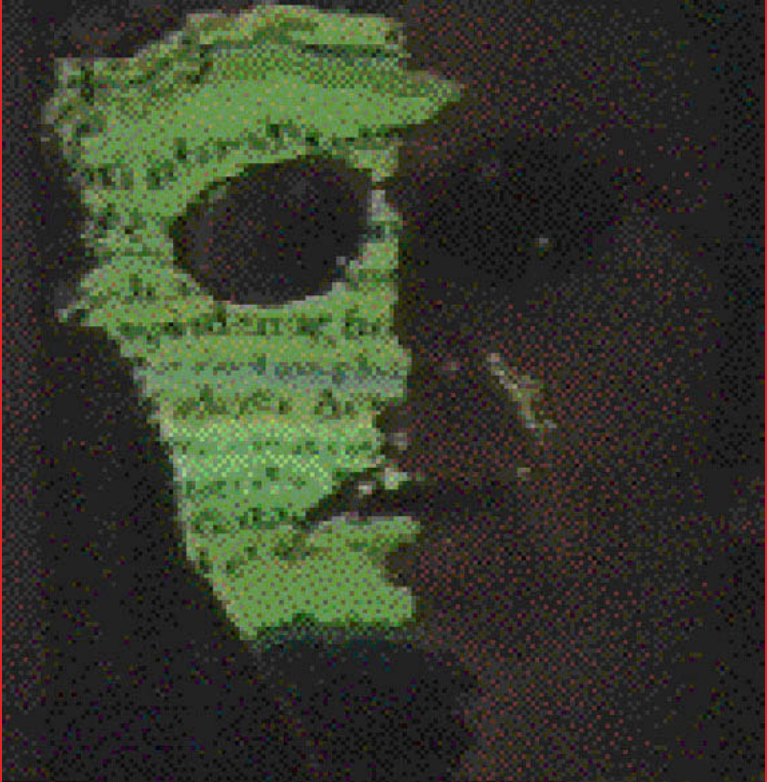
(of itself ((always accreting)))

"A persona is an otherworldly sensibility that coheres into an intense aesthetic fact."

– Alfred North Whitehead

"A persona is a possibility model."

– Galatians 10.79

"A persona is something you invent. It's an entirely new structural formation of the subject."

– Freud
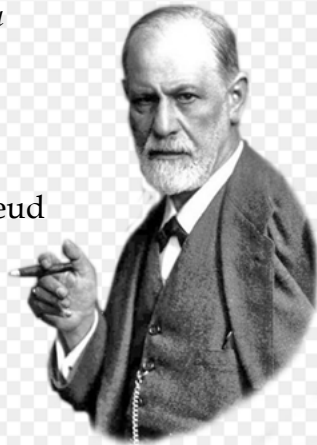
"A persona is a vehicle for the transformation of the ego: unconscious contents may first be experienced through a persona role and then later integrated into the ego as part of its own tacit functional identity."
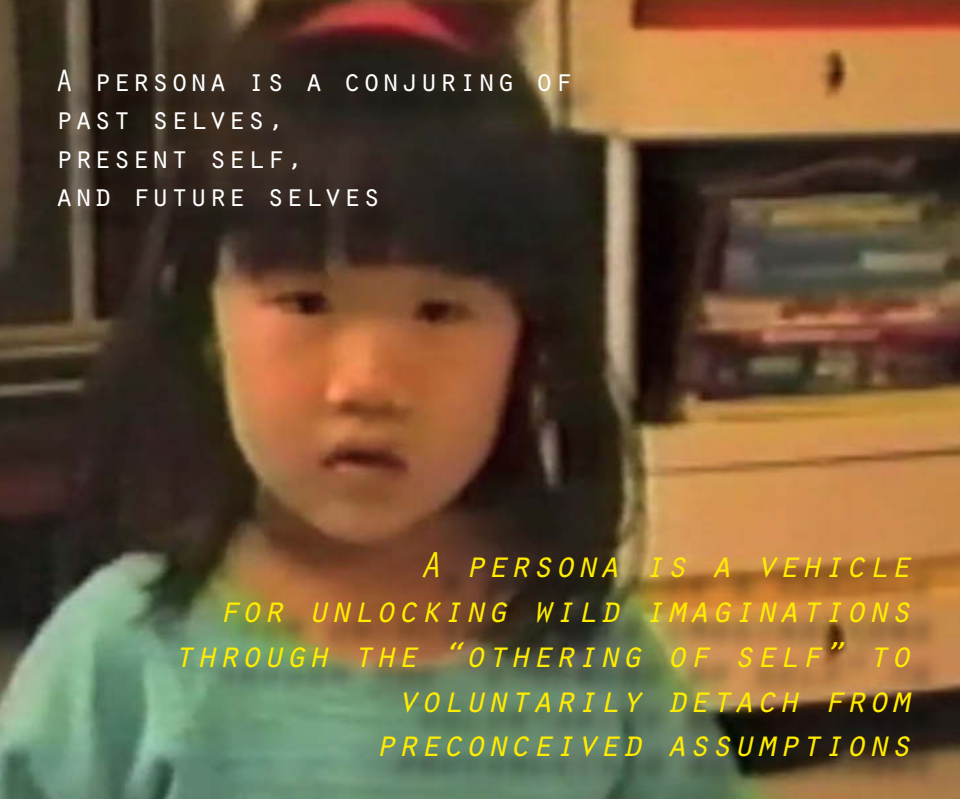
– Jungian Dream Interpretation

A PERSONA IS A CONJURING OF
PAST SELVES,
PRESENT SELF,
AND FUTURE SELVES

A PERSONA IS A VEHICLE
FOR UNLOCKING WILD IMAGINATIONS
THROUGH THE "OTHERING OF SELF" TO
VOLUNTARILY DETACH FROM
PRECONCEIVED ASSUMPTIONS

PERSONA-BUILDING AS A
PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH METHOD
OPENS UP A SPACE FOR APPROACHING
THE WORLD FROM ALTERNATIVE
PERSPECTIVES

A persona is a 21st century operational presence digitally manifested through intricate interlacings of multimedia production formats and multimodal presentation platforms filtered through the network apparatus

DISSEMINATING CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC TRENDS THROUGH DILIGENT PERSONAL BRANDING

WHILE RESPECTING TRADITION...

like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like
follow 4 follow
like 4 like

A WANNABE

A persona is a transformative stage for one viewed by a society of spectacles

A PERSONA IS AN
ONTO-BODY OF WORK:
ξ–νυμβερ οφ ηεαρτσ βεατινγ ασ ξ ανδ ισ νειτηερ
τηισ νορ τηατ ορ ηερε νορ τηερε
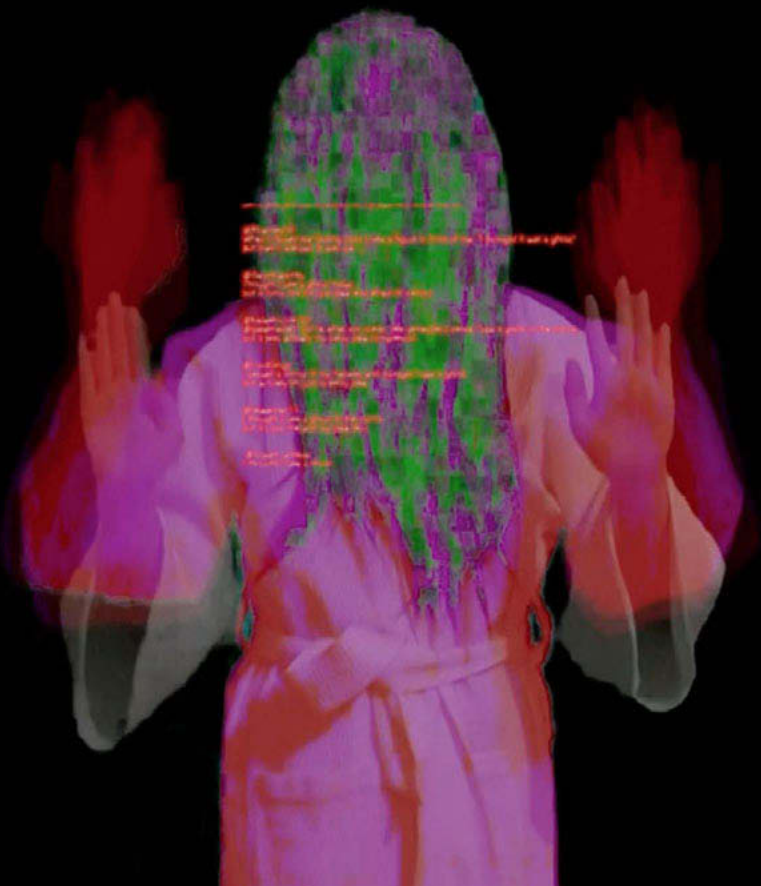
not going left,
not going right

a **persona** *is dead or alive*
and **spins you around**

A persona is a vehicle for traversing the unknown mirage of self waiting to be disenchanted
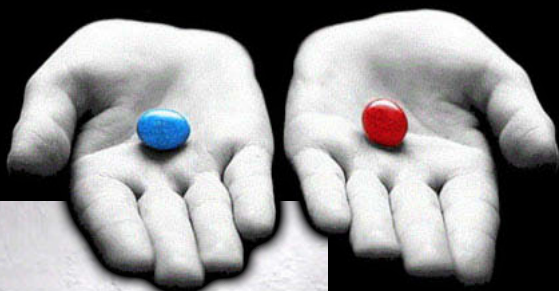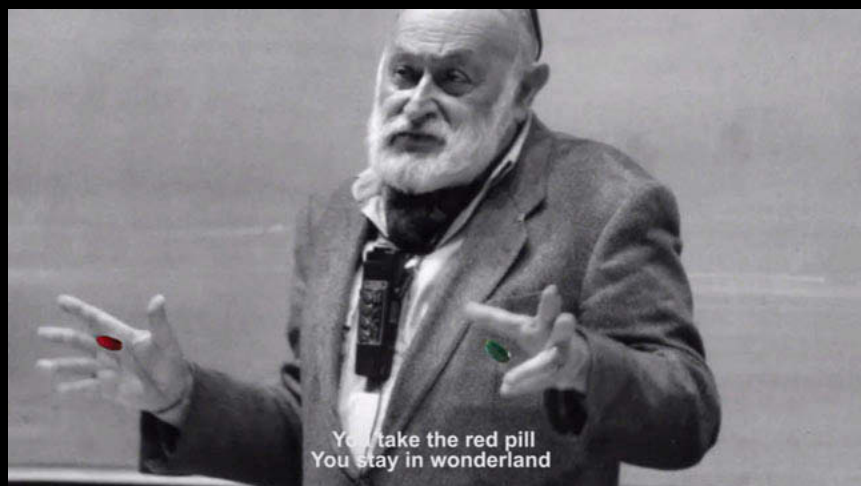
A persona is an anesthetized strange creature that dwells in a labyrinth of archetypal desires
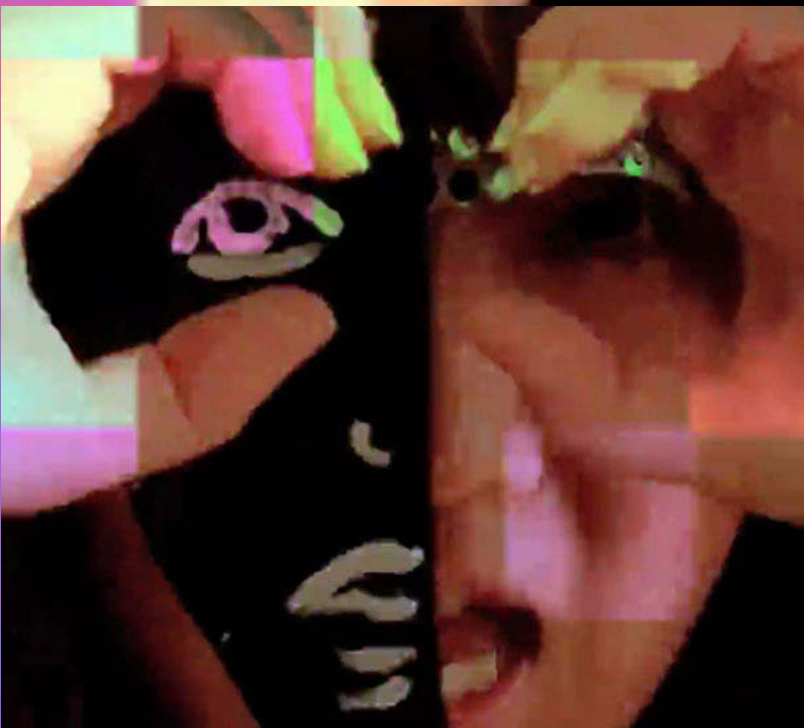
A PERSONA IS A MEDUSA CAUGHT IN A MIRROR MAZE
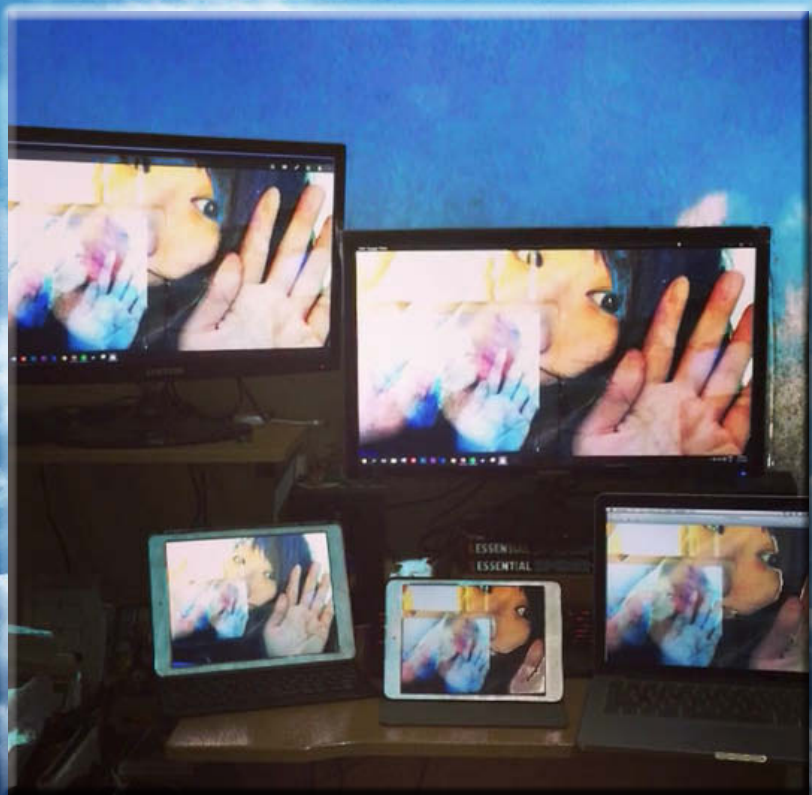
a persona is an omnipresent processual cyborgian media body under transformation

written by:
you
written by:
i
written by:
us

HOW TO MAKE A PERSONA *SHAKE*

pick me

pick me

pick me

pick me

pick me

pick me

pick me

pick me

pick me

PUT *PERSONAE IN* BLENDER

high-flux-tendencies

turn on
ecstatic gestures

rise against bio-data

intuitively improvise
pre-processed
materials

tightly hold onto
auto-fiction
generator

take neurotic risks

dial into
otherworldly
sensibilities

BLEND PERSONA

(((((((

OPERATIONAL ORCHESTRA

))))))))

A
PERSONA IS
A 24 HOUR MARATHON
THAT LOOPS BACK TO AN UNFINISHED LINE

"There is no authentic self.
Only the process of becoming-persona."

- Conceptual Jesus

A persona is adaptable.
It's all plug and play.

Error!

Computer self-destruct sequence initiated!

| Boom! | Ka-Pow! | Bang! |
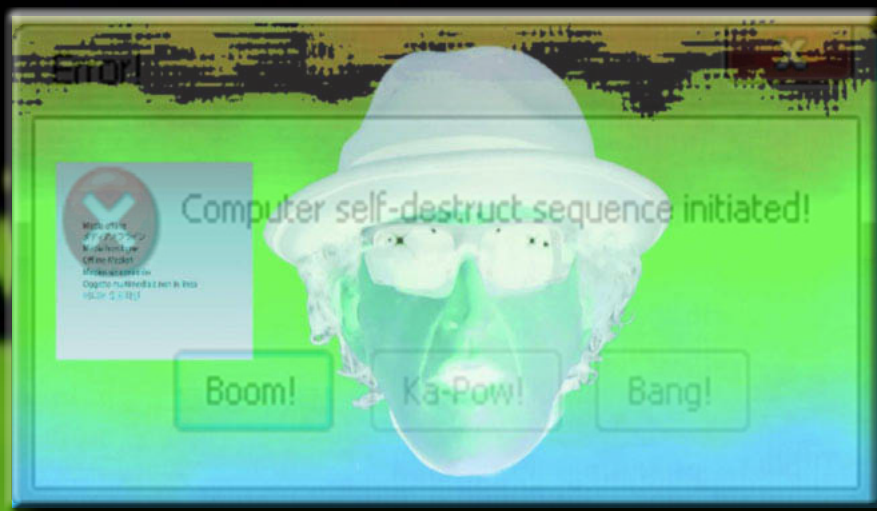
Remix is taking what's there and making it do things it wasn't supposed to

Remix is a
spatial practice
that conspires with
the artist's unconscious
neural mechanism to
project conceptual
personae as imaginary
digital media objects

Remix is a process of
"becoming the instrument"
that improvisationally plays the data
as live postproduction set
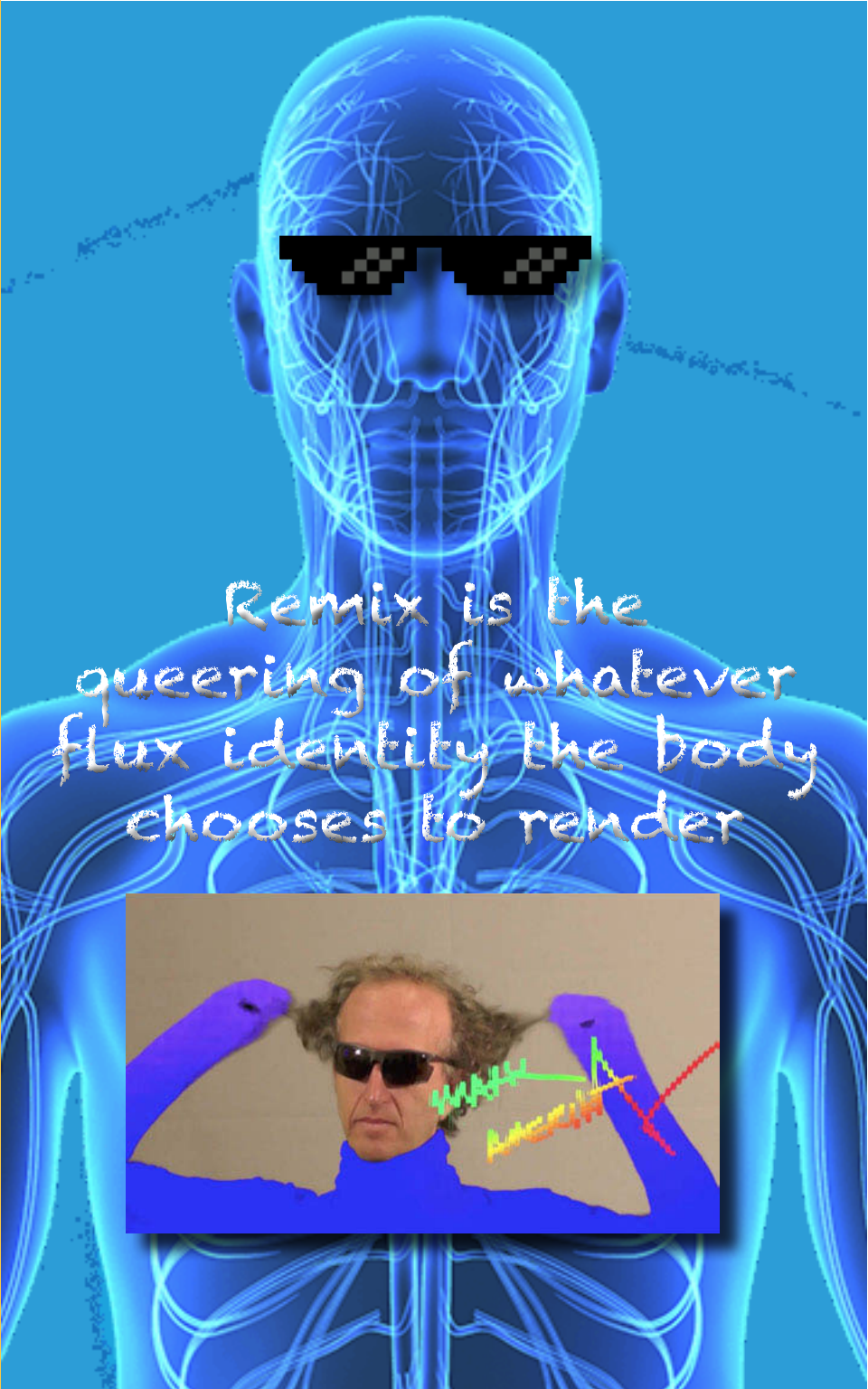
asfadjflajflsajflaskjdf;lakhbkajhfakljfd;lsajfljhk
g;lasjfsaadfkjalskdfjlaskdj;ah;adg;laijfdsalkjc;lak
dj;lh;lsjd;lkajlnv;adkjflsjKAFJA;FDJ;Lwjlsfjl;asd
fjlkjlfkajfld;kjasvnakjvl;aksjf;lksjFIJEWIFJAFS;K
J;LDSAKJF;ljfipwj;sakjdflkj;alkjdfl;kfja;lkjLsdfsad
KJFL;KJ lsjdsdafklsdcjl dfalkn jankdjvn aasfasdfa
adsfasdfafsafasjdfjll;avjo kc'zoxjn kjnskm lkan a
dlkv lkdfca.jsnfkjashfakjf;ladjf;sajf;lkajsv; ndasafs
l;akv;lakjl;andvkajvlkjsf;dkasjf;lskafj;laskjv;ljn asl;
FLSDKJFLS lsjdsdafklsdcjl dfalkn jankdjvn adlkv
lkdfca.jsnfkjashfakjf;ladjf;sajf;lkajsv; nda nl;akv;la
kjl;andvkajvlkjsf;dkasjf;lskafj;laskjv;lajnv; nda nl
KAJF'kjf;lskjflksjdflakdjslajnv;lkmasdokcmasjdasdf
vakdcvm ladnv a.kdnv ladkn ladkm lksflasjflkaasdf
j;lh;lsjdsdafklsdcjl dfalkn jankdjvn adlkv lkdfcasfd.js

Remix is an open investigation into the
"adjacent possible" while pirating the sense data
that **"feels w-r-i-t-e"**

Remix is a [Conceptual Apparatus](#)
with specific agential tendencies that process
the data-fied subject as knowledge object

Remix is the queering of whatever flux identity the body chooses to render

Remix is a form of differential cutting where the artist becomes a postproduction medium who turns toward intuition as the trigger for hyperimprovisational performance

Remix is a material-discursive formation or assemblage that enacts a cut-and-paste as you go Life Style Practice
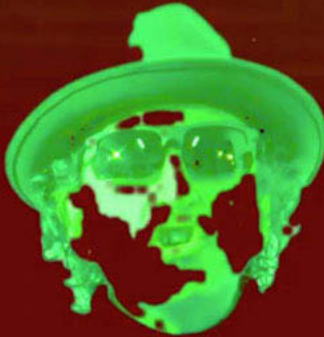
SIGNATURE EFFECT

Remix

is

not for nothing

"Sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to play like yourself."
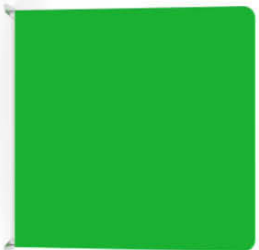
Remix is a connect-the-dots
Remix is a mop to bop to pop
Remix is a chopped and screwed flip of script

Remix is a collaborative process of mediating and materializing meaning into matter through hive-minded networks

Remix is an intentional reconfiguration of bodily inscriptions that remake natural and cultural formations of agency

Remix is a purposeful congealing of agential boundaries that enact implicit dynamic forces of the world

1 + 1

= 2 objects of power

GET FITERGIZED TV
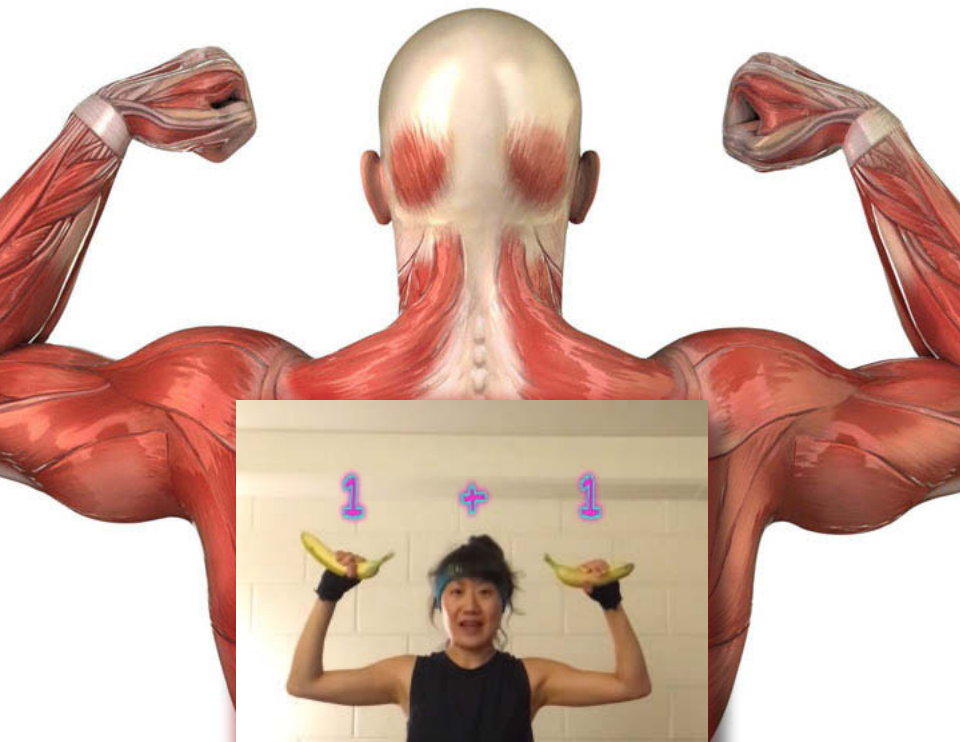
Remix is a jazzercise for exerting
energetic flows and flexing
mental muscle memories

Remix is a buzz in your gutz

*Remix is a fantastical metamorphosis of phenomena
that twists and turns fluttering guttural butterflies
into provocative forms of expression*

Remix is a timeless riot that diffracts media waves
to metaphysically interfere with
the biorhythmic jolt

Remix is an artificial chain of neuralnetworked
reactions that perform auto-contextualization
through the nodal articulations of
otherworldly nonlinear sensibilities

Remix is an intuitive blurring and merging of
bodily apparatuses that (re)configure everyday happenings

*Remix is a tenticular fascination
towards breaking streams of
consciousness and coping with
interruptions that surface
the fabricated (non)reality of
programmed digitized behaviors*

this fucking

Skip Ad ▶️

Remix is a viral memetic recombination
conditioned by homeostatic networked systems
that morph happenings into phenomena
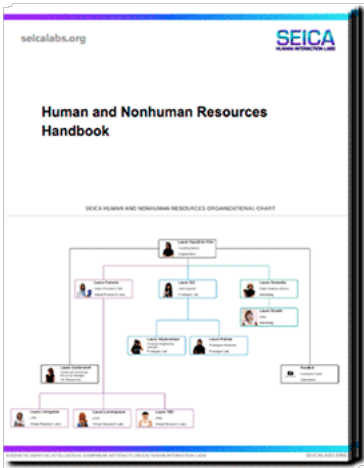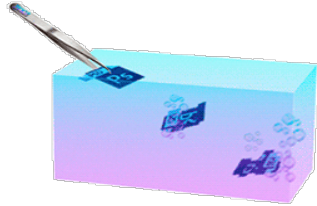
Remix is a dynamic
reconfiguration of indeterminate
boundaries through the
enactment of open-ended
practices

Remix is a shared synthetic ancestry
that dilutes presupposed relativism

Remix is a messy-mesh
datafication of a being
snapped through
the convenience and
ubiquity of
21st century apparatuses
that collapse and roboticize
primal desires
for freedom
into abstract
illusions for control

Remix is a search query waiting to be auto-filled
Remix is an internet blogger's best toolkit

Remix is a
derivative
mind-drift
now-ing
in full motion

Remix is a diversion of a diversion where the originals were never original.

"Remix is persona is shareware."

– DJ Spooky

"As consequentially, no decision is really 'decisive', but part of a series of clear and distinct quantum-decisions, likewise only a series of remixes can testify to the remixologist's intention. For no single remix is actually decisive; even the 'final decision' finds itself reduced to a grain in the remix."

- Vilém Flusser

Your Text Goes Here I

Literary
Monk | Laura (human)
persona

Theater | Theater
through | through
writing | performance

- Human
- metaphor
- Novels
- language

→ [Persona]

embodiment

[building stages] → 👑 → merge
(persona fandom)

■■■ (as process)
persona is the process of performing

Last existing through Expressions, historic evidence

informs articulation

New tools for expression (digital)

Current Value in Contemporaries

[Output] →

(Precuage) conceptualization as a base → Stage of research (TBA)
→ process (making as structuring presence)
→ presentation as a breathaholt as flowing

informs

Types of persona

Internal process embodiment ⇆ External Expression

perceived by others through mediation

resisting performance performativity

[Forms of Expression] → realms

A degree of
- ficarn
- non-fiction
- hybrid (for example "theoretical fiction")

activated by viewer experience

Performance concept

our abstraction theory

visual
literary
movement
sculpural
moving image etc...

narrative

activated by creator

Activating agent (body)

Enabled (external performing process) something

A person, real Art, winning object, music.

mediating creative outputs.

realizable segmented persona expression of a persona dependent of output

sometimes identical. sometimes not.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic attitude.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic position.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic (dis)pleasure.

Performance is a way of playfully embodying an aesthetic meandering.

Performance is a way of transcending an aesthetic condition.

Performance is a way of melding into the aesthetic firmament.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic muscularity.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic vulnerability.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic singularity.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic barbarism.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic eloquence.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic wherewithal.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic sublimation.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic device.

Performance is a way of expressing an aesthetic question.

Performance is a way of expressing an anti-aesthetic object.

Performance is a way of expressing an anti-aesthetic behavior.

Performance is a way of channeling a stylistic tendency.

Performance is a way of remixologically embodying
a metamediumystic practice.

Performance is breaking timeless bread.

Performance is an expression of muscle memory.

Performance is an elusive procession of conceptual personae.

Performance is an embodiment of multiple personalities
as alternate realities.

Performance is a multifunctional form of language that is exhausted
through the shared will to act upon imagination.

Performance is a resistance to aesthetic conformity
and institutional conditions.

Performance is an improvisational process triggered by
an operational presence loaded with logical fantasies and fallacies.

Performance is a time-share with the spectator.

Performance is the gift that keeps giving.

Performance is an onto-tale of body works.

Performance is a rigorous creative act that fuses the mind and body
of the artist through intuition and improvisation.

Performance is a sentence that is not obsolescent and
very much in operation.

Performance is an experimental and interactive canvas
waiting to be torn apart.

Performance is a website that is waiting to glitch and crash.

Performance is hardware that has malfunctioning software.

Performance is software that has malfunctioning hardware.

jam

MALK

net wt 10 oz (284 g)

Performance is a poetic irreverent jam
between two individuals
lol-ing at their own writing.

Performance is an interoperable remix of live subject positioning

featuring the

"I" /
the Other /
the Apparatus /
the Interface /
the Idea Mode /
the Networked Space of
Flows.

Performance is a mashup of acting cohereing de-cohering coming back together again.

Performance is a mashup of feeling wanting doing being.

Performance is a mashup of adrenaline-fueled live remixing of whatever persona-in-the-making decides to make an appearance and the uncanny valley of creative potential that dislocates the pretend "authentic self" looking for a personal narrative to parasitically attach itself to so as to suck out all the glory.
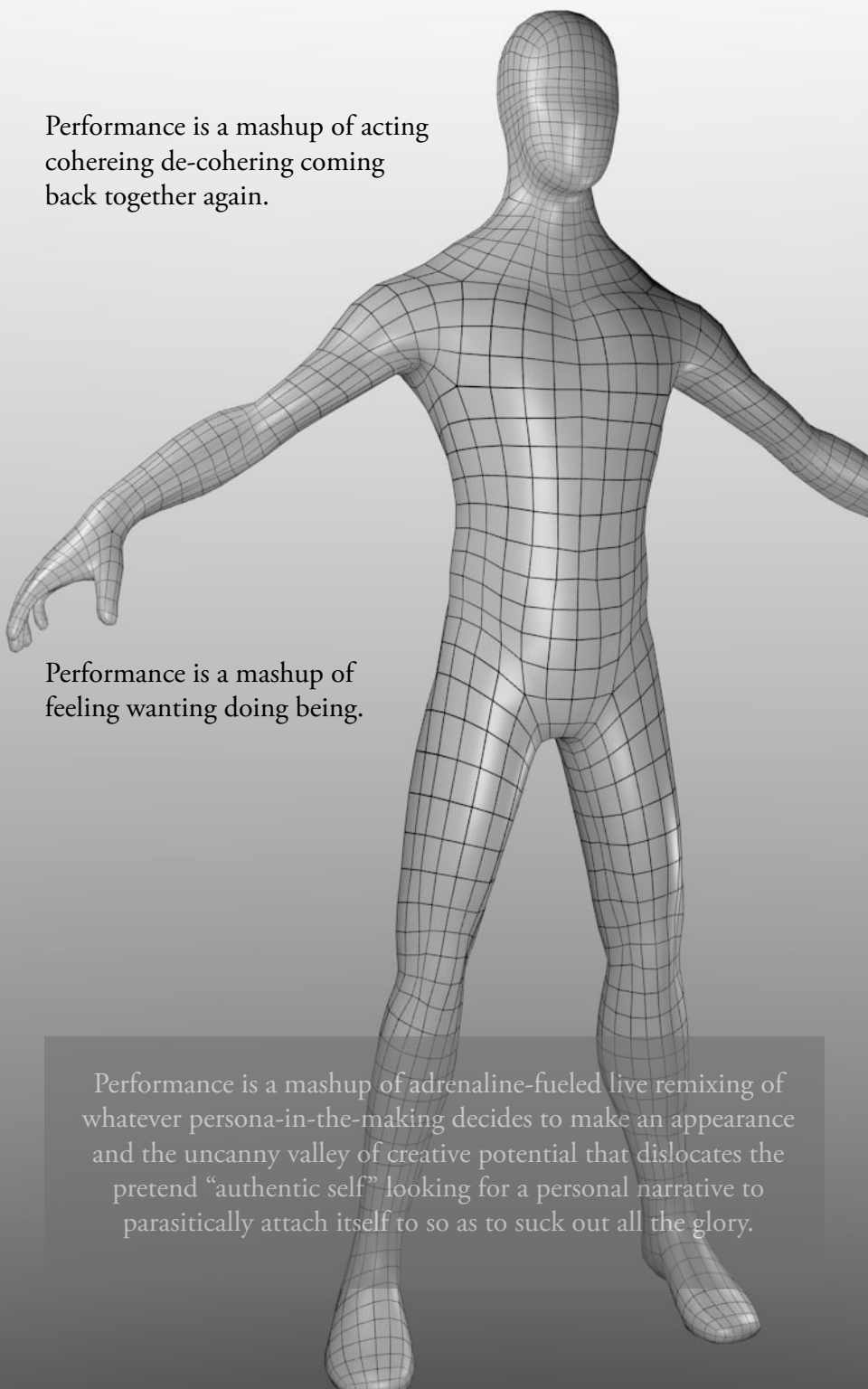
performance is a

performance is a

performance is a

digital
subjectivity
circulating
in
the

algorithmic
imaginary
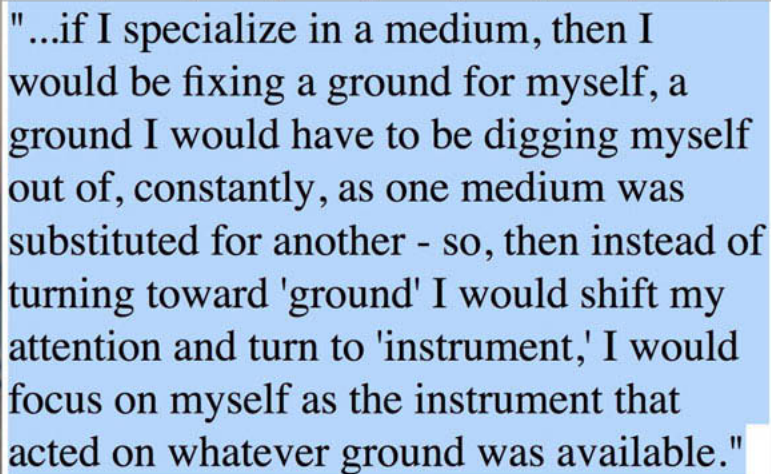
"Consider the IS of identity. When I say to be me, to be you, to be myself, to be others -- whatever I may be called upon to be or say that I am -- I am not the verbal label 'myself.' The word BE in English contains, as a virus contains, its precoded message of damage, the categorical imperative of permanent condition. To be a body, to be nothing else, to stay a body. To be an animal, to be nothing else, to stay an animal."

"...if I specialize in a medium, then I would be fixing a ground for myself, a ground I would have to be digging myself out of, constantly, as one medium was substituted for another - so, then instead of turning toward 'ground' I would shift my attention and turn to 'instrument,' I would focus on myself as the instrument that acted on whatever ground was available."

Remixing Persona

AKA

a hyperimprovisational realtime documentation of the artist as the semblance of an auto-affective event constructing on-the-fly stories composed in asynchronous realtime and through various theoretical and performative filters

THIS IS NOT (A) PAPER

*Fictional Persona
as an Art-Making Machine:
Operational Presence in the Digital Afterlife*
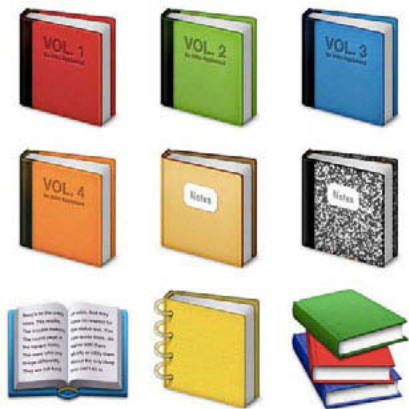
Fictional Persona as an Art-Making Machine: Operational Presence in the Digital Afterlife

**Authors: MALK
(MarkAmerikaLauraKim)**

To measure is to intervene, to measure is all we know.
<div align="right">- William Carlos Williams</div>

To remix is to intervene, to remix is all we know.
<div align="right">-MALK</div>

Remixing Persona: An Imaginary Digital Media Object from the Onto-Tales of the Digital Afterlife is a visual manifesto that doubles as a theoretical e-reader, one that the artists collaboratively generate by deploying parallel processes of persona-building, performance-thinking, and applied remixology. Both artists, individually and as a performance duo, bring their own unique experiences and ontologically filtered "ways of remixing" to their intermedia practice and pseudo-autobiographical inquiries. Taking a macroscopic lens and a meta-approach to their intuitively embodied praxis, the artists have created this imaginary digital media object (IDMO) as an attempt to use conceptual, poetic and artistic language to land "on the same page." The culminating field of recombinatory expression that informs the production of this so-called book is an inversion of their practice-based research conducted in the TECHNE Lab at the University of Colorado.

Deploying n-dimensional strings of thoughts on to 2-dimensional electronic pages, this (non)sequential series of bookified performative actions can be read from front to back, back to front, inside out, outside in, upside down, and down-side up. It can be experienced on any personal device one chooses to hold as their reading apparatus and, if per chance you are reading it in limited edition print book form, then you have admitted to yourself a certain predilection for a material form of existence that truly means something to you. But then the artists, posing as authors who have something to say, are required to ask: "What exactly is a book?"

A book is practical.
A book is obsolete.
A book is (a living thing operating in the conditional) present.

Of course, those are not, strictly speaking, answers.

But the artists are not, strictly speaking, authors, and as such do not pretend to have any answers, though this will not stop us (them) from asking any number of questions as we conduct our practice-based research investigations into areas of inquiry that address our intentions.

Intention disappears with use.
                                        - Marcel Duchamp

[THE BECOMING OF MALK]

Who is MALK?

A cross-generational hive-minded force of multiple personae?

A hyperimprovisational remix machine fueled by intuitive forms of transcendental interoperability?

A (non)realtime (a)synchronous performance fiction?

$$MA + LK = MALK$$

MA = Mark Amerika
LK = Laura Kim

The Conceptual and (Post)production Backstory

MALK emerged inside the TECHNE Lab as an organically constructed "third mind," a space of inbetweenness where the convergence of intermedia art, writing, and performance were automatically welcome to take root. Initially, there was no predetermined conceptual framework for the project to refer to. Instead, the artists turned to intuition, improvisation, illumination and investigative research methodologies that passionately explored the idea that "knowing-through-making" was a viable approach to building a solid foundation from which to produce new creative work that would impact the contemporary field of new media art.

Sometimes referred to as practice-based research, the MALK collaboration quickly developed through an elaborate process of writing, performing, remixing, and video post-production. One specific art project, a work of music video art titled *Digital Afterlife*, started with the script from MA's performance artwork titled *MOOC. MOOC* (massively open online course) is a long-form work of video art that playfully teaches fine art students to promote an entrepreneurial practice geared toward disrupting traditional business models in the fine arts sector. By way of visual, sonic and textual punning, the work samples and remixes many of the ideas and vocabulary associated with branding and marketing to create practical solutions for contemporary artists who self-identify as "avant-garde" but have problems locating a distributed audience of potential patrons who can help them sustain their experimental practice.

Working together on *MOOC*, the two artists composing MALK realized their shared sense of humor and openness towards diverse aesthetic tendencies. LK's visual style, heavily influenced by both contemporary and avant-garde forms of

video art and K-Pop, paired well with MA's stylistic tendencies that, as far back as 1993, he termed *avant-pop*. Both artists had also recently been creating their own works of music video art and were soon motivated by their ongoing synergistic conversations about the ways music has served as an inspiration for "making things" and how the music video format could be conceived as a form of contemporary art. LK suggested that the artists collaborate on a music video and, using audiovisual cues from Zlad!'s *Elektronik Supersonik* (2004) and Keren Cytter's *Terrorist of Love* (2016) as aesthetic models, the collaborative duo founded the band-name MALK (or the band-name found them). To jump-start the music video project, the two sampled and remixed language from the long-form *MOOC* artwork as source material for the composition's lyrics, eventually landing on the title *Digital Afterlife* for the project.

Subsequently, experimental electronic sound artist, composer, and game designer Chad Mossholder was on boarded and introduced to the emerging conceptual framework of *Digital Afterlife*. For additional inspiration, LK sent a sample found-sound-Youtube-track layered with her draft of vocalized lyrics. Mossholder started filtering the source material and emerging conceptual framework through his own sonic tendencies. After numerous email attachments with draft compositions of the soundtrack along with open dialogue about the work's ideal duration, Mossholder presented the original *Digital Afterlife* soundtrack to MALK. In the meantime, while the soundtrack was in the works, MALK had further polished the lyrics. Soon thereafter, Mossholder visited the TECHNE Lab whereupon the trio recorded the vocals on a portable recording device and green-screened the video performance with found objects in the space. These objects included a keyboard, tripod stand, and glowing tablet. After dancing and lip-syncing to the *Digital Afterlife* song, the three further realized the potential of the project and propelled

more ideations for the tracks' eventual release.

Back in their own studios and virtual headspaces, LK started the post-production of the *Digital Afterlife* music video while MA listened to the current version of the soundtrack and began developing more ideas for the sound component. With video post-production in full swing, MA flew out to Dallas and worked with Mossholder on post-producing the final version of the soundtrack where various customized filters and accompanying sounds were created on the spot. The final sound session in Dallas took less than 24 hours whereupon MA flew back to Boulder with the sonic goods. MA then further worked with Brooklyn-based composer and sound engineer Howie Kenty who professionally mastered and prepared the soundtrack for various digital outputs while LK reached out to contemporary video and new media artists whose works were micro-excerpted in the video's analog science-fiction film and digital art historical montage. With MALK's finished work of music video art ready for its inaugural public-facing moment, *Digital Afterlife* entered the artosphere.

With the support of NYC-based arts organizations Harvestworks, the Streaming Museum, Millennium Film Project, the city of New York's Made in NY Media Center, and the University of Colorado's College of Media, Communication and Information, *Digital Afterlife* soft launched on Governors Island in New York City on May 25, 2018 and was on exhibit throughout the summer.

The Lyrics

There is no rewind button for life. . .

Psychic Automatons
We werk werk

Psychic Automatons
We werk werk

It's time to align
With the Cosmic Jerk

Psychic Automatons
We werk werk

The Digital
The Digital

The Digital Digital Afterlife
Post Your Mind in UN-REALTIME
Becoming a meme
Me-me-me-me
Let's go for the ride
In my ontological hive

Are you contagious?
Contagious enough?
Is your Avant-Garde
Way too much?

Is it just me?
How could it be?
I'm just a brand
The Anti-Selfie

Digital Digital Afterlife
Post Your Mind in UN-REALTIME
Becoming a meme
Me-me-me-me
Let's go for the ride
In my ontological hive

Aesthetic currency
Signature effect
Interface Value
Attention Defect

Take it from me
Imagination's free
A perfectly branded
Commodity

Is it just me?
How could it be?
I'm just a phantom
With no I.D.

The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife

The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife

The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife
The Digital Afterlife

The Theoretical Backstory

The always already remixed and remixing persona, in ceasing to become indexical, transforms into the living embodiment of a complex field of action brought into the world via an operational presence performing an/other version of itself, an agential form of thing-power.

Part of its *thing*-power comes from absorbing and processing the affective gestures of selectively studied precursors whose persona-making machinations inform contemporary art and pop culture.

In this regard, the *Digital Afterlife* music video artwork positions MALK's pop lineage at the interface of an eclectic mix of sound artists such as Kraftwerk, the Talking Heads, Blondie, Bongwater and Prince. The song's lyrics, detailed above, open with a declaration:

Psychic Automatons
We werk werk

Is this a political statement, one where the avant-pop artists speak for the automated people? Can a faux pop song really represent the union of workers forever caught in the depths of creative class struggle? Perhaps the opening lines to *Digital Afterlife* are to be received as a poetic statement, one where the performers are meta-reflecting on their surrealistic tendencies to improvise and intuitively generate new works of art vis-à-vis a strategic concatenation of affective gestures that run parallel to the mysterious agenda of an even greater Jester:

It's time to align
With the Cosmic Jerk

To align one's psychic performance art project with the Cosmic Jerk is to seek a way out to clearing. It's the pure medium of desire looking to exhibit its realtime discoveries with a force greater than itself. As Franco "Bifo" Berardi writes in *And: Phenomenology of the End*, "[i]n the interaction between the individual and the collective sphere, in the link between individual neural activity and collective concatenation, the *mind's we* evolves."

Bifo goes on to suggest that "[t]he neuroplasticity of the individual organism interacts with the rhythms of the collective automatisms of the swarm." The *Digital Afterlife*, as a work of music video art, indicates a slightly different take, namely that the automatism of the swarm has been internalized by the artist as part of the persona-making process. In fact, what the MALK artists consistently refer to as an operational presence is actually *an otherworldly sensibility* that is fueled by a desire to construct the next fictional persona ready to launch. This otherworldly sensibility is intimately linked to our current remixological condition, one that circulates in the networked space of flows as part of an ongoing process of post-production deep in the archive of turbocharged semiocapitalism.

"The world can no longer be translated into a cosmos," writes Bifo, and yet as the song suggests, we still align ourselves with its Monumental Jerkiness. We play to the pop, even as we situate our discourse along the plateaus of the #avant-garde tendencies we still find quirky and art world trendy. For the cosmonauts of inner space, this emerging language of new media is a base over which something slides, an animated hallucination moving in asynchronous realtime.

The Artists

From video to new media, Laura Kim (LK) has been working with persona and performance as a medium for the past decade. Her persona-building started from undertaking multiple DIY roles as director, producer, camera-woman, post-production editor and as consumer and recycler of media. Aesthetically borrowing tropes from popular culture, especially that of Hollywood and K-Pop, her early video performance works started from using the camera as a mirror to process live physical actions in motion and a tool for crossfading past-present events. She subverts stereotypes by using her own image and identity as an Asian-American woman to adopt multiple on-screen and off-screen (often even simultaneously present) personas.

As a means to better understand her position in the world, her work frequently starts from thinking in "another one/thing's shoe" manifested through a series of visual multiplications of self. The diversification of perspectives and embodiments required in this process propels the development of multiple personas wherein she became her best collaborator.

Overall rooted in body, movement, and language, her thematic attention pivoted as she started taking interest in the embodiment of digitally fabricated environments and contemplating the Internet as a (non)existent operational space of the 21st century. Her most recent ongoing large-scale transmedia narrative and multiple-personae project, *Synthetic Empathic Intelligent Companion Artefacts (SEICA) Human Interaction Labs (seicalabs.org)* dives deep into this exploration. Positioned as a virtual research organization operated by multiple personae, the cyborgian researchers of *SEICA* are fragmented augmentations of her authentic

operational self and are as "real" as the multimedia artwork experiences. The incorporation of multiple personae is a strategic method for various perceptual possibilities to arise, speculations to occur, perspectives to be accounted for, and research methods to be applied.

The purpose for applying personae as a method for approaching research is to open up new spaces of inquiry and explore possible venues for embodiment that allows streamlined tinkering of remixed thought processes. Hence, she also introduces the question: Can the practice of persona-building become an effective medium for creative research? In other words, how can persona-building become a strategic method in practice-based research?

The persona-building she is specifically interested in is one that is evoked from a bodily presence and the physical materiality of the body. Rooted in dada / surrealist minds of the sublime, chance, and play, early conceptual performance works that focus on the language of gesture and movement and Fluxus works that underscore the process of making, she departs from these ideas and attempts to re-envision them through new media, digital art, multimedia art and medium-specific discourses. How do these newer media works depart from the traditions of persona-based performance and how does it operate in the 21st century?

With the ubiquity of networked presence and communication through digital sentiments in the modern world, we are living in a different time from when performance and conceptual art has already made a mark. Everyone online is a fragmented version of themselves - an alias, a username, a profile, an avatar, a data-ficated being. How do self-identified artists respond to this new climate and what role does persona-rooted performance play in navigating this realm?

Disseminated through the artosphere, social media, and alternative performance lectures, her personae are contextual shapeshifters that morph and blob into site-specific agents that respond to the research-in-motion and subjects of inquiry.

Her attitude tends to be humorously confrontational with a gaze that acknowledges the active participants, the viewers, the onlookers, the voyeuristic spectators and the irreverent provocations she brings to MALK is both tongue-in-cheek and uncomfortably playful.

Mark Amerika (MA) aka Abe Golam aka Maker/Faker aka Kid Hassid aka Walt Whitman Benjamin aka VJ Persona aka Glitch Stick operates at the interface of art / remix / politics / cinema / fiction / theory / performance / poetry. His 3D avatar is always "under construction" and he still thinks that if he can port his unconscious neural mechanism into a vat of algorithmically generated aesthetic debris, he will personally experience a "meta-mediumistic becoming" (though he has no idea what that means or where the phrase comes from, which kind of proves the point — though what point?).

As an intermedia artist who is locked into an avant-garde lineage he can no longer escape from, he finds himself perpetually leaning over the edge of whatever's left of his subjectivity-still-pending.

As if such a thing as subjectivity could still exist.

It can't and it doesn't.

Existence itself (or so he notes while writing it OUT LOUD) is always pending, and only while processing a close encounter with *desire desiring desire* is one capable of opening up the

body's potential to experience novel forms of togetherness. To dissolve subjectivity via persona-making, that's the thing. That's *thing-power-in-itself*. This energized form of thing-power manifests itself out of nowhere and requires immediate embodiment, something MA is always happy to assist with if the Techno Goddesses will let him.

And yet, as he knows all too well, to capture the creative act in the digital afterlife is not a solo project and one must always resist immersion in the seductive portals of the Technological Singularity. Rather, one must, like a mystic, forget oneself – forget oneself while remixologically inhabiting a *radical inter-subjectivity* still yet to come (this term, *radical inter-subjectivity*, is another keyword that comes to him from The Distant Outside and that he is still trying to feel comfortable with — maybe one of his still-to-be adjacent Others can help him figure it out?).

As much as he would like to dismiss the term entirely, radical inter-subjectivity (or whatever it is that invites him to lose sight of himself) unexpectedly reveals itself to him as a by-product of random neural transmissions directed by an/other. An/other deep inside him, as if there were a him to be deep inside of, but the deeper you go, the less of him there is, and that's where thing-power-in-itself churns its fluid desire-engine. Is it possible that he can no longer speak for himself?

Out of nowhere, an imposter, disguised as a research question appears: "Does radical inter-subjectivity require prior forms of subjectivity to transmit its neural-generated information of desire?" MA wonders about this, OUT LOUD, but doesn't stick with it for long because he has other things to do, as in: to make. This is what his artist bio is always trying to say: *I make, therefore I am* (in the process of becoming an impossible networked subjectivity that doubles as an imaginary digital object i.e. a *thing* that circulates in the field

of distribution).

But is this persona MA (and its others) really thing-power-in-itself? Or is he/she/they/we/auto an event that exists to emit thing-power? An event emitting thing-power by way of improvised creative actions that randomly embody the "naturally selected" Source Material Everywhere in what feels like realtime but is really an Alter-Time?

The Alter-Time, when "I" — always another — suddenly transform into a language operator, a remix trickster and/or persona-making machine whose ongoing pseudo-autobiography transmits an unconsciously generated concatenation of affects that stimulate a concomitant creative impulse implicating all forms of knowledge.

This is what it means to be a psychic automaton (MA+++).

Appendix
(To Rupture or Not to Rupture, That Too Is a Research Question)

Notes Toward a Non-Philosophy of Post-Production as an Otherworldly Sensibility (It All Adds Up)

All form is a process of notation.

- Dick Higgins

As practice-based researchers, MALK approaches this experimental publication as an *imaginary digital media object* (IDMO).

This IDMO operates page-by-page and includes the following:

1. The compositon of MALK personas as practice-based research

2. Remix as method

3. Post-publication as performance

To descend into the untranslatable,
to experience its shock without ever muffling it.
<div align="right">- Roland Barthes</div>

Revealed by our desire
To become the Other
While eschewing otherness
In lieu of embodying praxis
<div align="right">- Galatians 7.10</div>

How does applied remixology relate to intuitively constructed persona-making?

For that matter, when remixing persona as part of a large-scale practice-based research investigation into emergent forms of digital fiction, how does this "desire" to "make" make sense of what it is doing while doing it?

Operational presence as an activated form of an otherworldly sensibility... did we ever cover that? It's implied in the title of this "not-paper," but I guess since it's not (a) paper (all fluidity all the time), then we can just keep focusing on

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but there is no focus, it's more like pure method-acting. Doing being. The ontological hustle. Do what you do, teach what you know...

It's all connected to the creative act, right?

That's Duchamp again.

In his lecture "The Creative Act," given in Houston way back in 1957, he said:

"To all appearances, the artist acts like a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing… If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist, we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the esthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it. All his decisions in the artistic execution of the work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self-analysis, spoken or written, or even thought out."

This mediumistic being — is it not our always-being-filtered, forever-channeled and remixed persona, the one that's intuitively embodied with every creative act?

But there's something else Duchamp is suggesting here. Whereas we might ask ourselves "What is persona?" or "What is A persona?" or, to crib Duchamp's version, "What is A mediumistic being?" — are we asking because we want to come up with the answer or because we want to investigate what it means to capture a state of mind that, when role-playing an operational presence with thing-power, suddenly becomes a persona? And, just for kicks: is this persona as operational presence with thing-power a fluxlike state of creative evolution always-becoming-something-else?

A persona as an otherworldly presence is fluid, flexible, unstable and therefore, for it to be materialized into an IDMO, must embody a thing that can be experienced and manifested as the personification of an agential intra-action that virtually marks the critical difference within.

Agency is a way to screw things up —
to cut or splice into action.

What we are saying is:

To become a persona is different from becoming a persona.

That's our bumper sticker.

Our elevator pitch is only slightly more elaborate:

To become a persona is different from becoming a persona. Persona is itself a kind of becoming or activity, something that engenders an incessant and repeated action of remixing the next version of persona-to-come, an in-between space of collaborative mindshare where creativity is the *principle* of novelty.

But then there's fiction.

For **LK**, digital fiction

is rooted in fiction that speaks of, exists in, and resonates "the digital." The relationship between Digital + Fiction + Persona can be illustrated as the following:

As a medium, space, and subject, "the digital" can be seen as an amorphous pool or tub while the "digital fiction" is a malleable yet functional container that is submerged in this space that can stretch or tear or become porous depending on the type of substance that is being held in the space. "Digital persona" is the fluid substance that fills up this space - viscous, flowy, solid, dry, natural, synthetic?

Structure for a "narrative" is generated from the interconnectivity between "the digital", "the fiction" and often the "digital persona" and the fluidity and dynamism this exploration holds.

*To "become with a persona" or "become a persona"
that is the question.*

This response leads to further Q&A:

MA: How does this relate to: creativity, practice-based research and a desire to process one's experience of life as an artist to fabricate new ways of seeing? What is being discovered by investigating Persona in the field of digital / transmedia fiction?

LK: The value of "persona"-building in creative work connects back to persona as an operational process. Self-identified artists channel experiences through filtering the real-world through their own eyes. A persona is a lens to see through and execute new ideations. Stepping back from boundaries of existence and concept of self, the "othering" assists in detaching from preconceptions and unlocking imaginations.

Transmedia performance uses a wide-variety of media to stitch either fiction and/or nonfiction-based performances. The digital specificity of transmedia performance is unique for its rapid dissemination and potential to easily materialize, intervene, and become part of everyday persona-building. Avatars, usernames, virtual presence and datafication of being is a shared ongoing 21st century experience that has become akin to a "second skin" as referred to by Sherry Turkle. For artists, a persona as a digital medium opens fields for investigative research for capturing the fleeting sentiments of this digital state of being.

Both [as "third mind"] ask together:

"What about: intuition, improvisation, illumination?"

And answer together:

"YES, *what about* intuition, improvisation, illumination?!"

[Group laugh]

Back to the Q&A:

MA: What is a remixologist?

LK: A remixologist is someone who responds to an existing thing or idea (aka source material) by twisting and transforming it into new concepts or alternative forms of expression. Through a variety of methodologies such as appropriation, subversion or juxtaposition, a remixologist reconfigures what has already been materialized and mixed by others either conceptually or theoretically.

MA interjects: YOU KNOW IT BECAUSE YOU DO IT. BECAUSE YOU BECOME IT.

Then MA continues with another Q:

MA: How/why does remix become one of the primary methodological approaches in the digital artist's tool kit?

LK: Remixologists work with decontextualization as a tactical method to make incisions between pre- and post-conceptions. By removing preconceived notions from the source material, the severed post-conceptions are primed for reconfiguration.

And then a question that never gets discussed in research lab contexts but is oftentimes essential for a satirical art project, comes up out of necessity:

MA: What role does humor/wit (via visual and verbal puns, portmanteaus / neologisms, etc.) play in all of this? What does it mean "to share a sense of humor"? Try to unpack what we mean by "sense" in this particular phrase. Sharing a "sense"? To articulate how that operates BETWEEN collaborative personas is a challenge, one worth looking into.

LK: Humor is fragile but when a readily engaged audience receives it, it can become a powerful tool. A shared sense of or sensitization to humor stems from common interests or experiences between the transmitter and receiver. The degree of understanding subtlety or nuance is a dial knob for intensity and amplification of reception.

Compatibility is key when it comes to collaborating with personas. This level of interaction can only be accomplished when the personas are not in competition and are capable of maintaining a balanced relationship with one another. Should one persona resonate stronger than the other, the unfortunate or fortunate (in light of how one interprets) event can result in one persona consuming or hijacking the other.

MA: Where do personae go to die?

LK: Sunsetting a persona is not as easy as it lingers after its departure. How do you calm down the soul of a foregone persona?

Resurrecting a persona is not easy either. Unless one is attempting to bring back Persona 2.0, this requires the embodying agent (host) to process the mind and travel back to when the persona was in operation.

The archaeological investigation of a persona is even more disconcerting as this reaches into the realms of deconstructing the perceptual layers of self-persona relations. Although the core-shaking efforts in finding the driving forces of a persona can be deemed dangerous, the process of digging through can be fruitfully charged with new discoveries of self and potentials for new persona-in-the-making.

But then the Q&A tables are turned and the questions are coming from the other direction:

LK: What role does the identity of the agent play in persona development? How does the existing identity of the agent manifest in a persona - can we consider it as blank slate, a basis for persona-building (or as you would say persona-becoming)?

MA: The i.d. entity aka data-fied subjectivity-still-pending. If only there was a way to disperse one's fluid field of potential embodiments so as to resist an identification with anything remotely resembling a self. Identity is *endentity* — the end of becoming, and that's a place I don't want to get to, not just yet.

The blank slate is really more of a virtual palimpsest coming apart at the seams. There are faint traces of muscle memory in every act of persona-making or becoming. Sometimes I am floored by things I wrote in my teens or early twenties and how they anticipate what new art performance I am inventing for one of my newfound personae. Is it possible that "it's been there all along" and the game is to find clever strategies to tap into it all?

But meanwhile, as your question suggests, there's agency or what in other contexts I have referred to as "the ongoing be-

comingness of post-production." Fancy phrase — but what do I mean? How would I articulate this in simpler terms, something a college freshman might understand if I could just pull them away from their iPhone for a moment? What I mean is: the so-called self is a fiction. How did we start this book? Michaux nails it: "There is no me. ME is only a position of equilibrium. An average of 'mes', a movement in the crowd."

LK: What is the value of pre- / post- building of a persona in creating a digital fiction? And what makes this process unique to digital + fiction?

MA: It's an entry or a portal into the creative process. The only way to know what persona you are in the process of becoming is to let it speak itself. Doctorow once said that he writes to find out what he's writing about and I think it's the same with persona-building. This is practice-based research in a nutshell. Novelists talk about "finding the voice" of the character and then, at some point, the work will "make itself." I prefer to focus on sampling moods or affects as 'ways of remixing' modes of sense-modification using all manner of media: text, video, digital photo, sound, code, etc.

It's all about accessing the Source Material Everywhere and using your otherworldly sensibility to *feel w-r-i-t-e*.

If you open yourself up to a reinvention of the persona by tapping into the open source network of possibility models that fictional discourse allows for, you just might explode.

LK: What is the difference between a self-identified (self-proclaimed) persona and an identified persona? In other words, what is the difference between an unseen persona and a seen persona?

MA: It's the difference that makes a difference. And in this regard, it's less about personae per se, and more about the way the i.d. entity performs a differential cutting as part of their pseudo-autobiographical becoming. This is crucial to what I think is the crux of what we're investigating with the *Digital Afterlife* music video as a tutor-text composed as an intermedia art project. First, we embrace the idea that we'll know-through-making and we let intuition and improvisation command our collaborative performance. Now, who is the "our" here? Is it Mark Amerika aka aka aka aka and Laura Kim aka aka aka aka? Is it MALK, the constructed i.e. fictional i.d. entity branding its contemporary aesthetic appeal? Are there unseen forces ready to emerge as their own persona embodiments who will want to sign for us? Are they different versions of you and me, me and not-me, scene and not-scene, or are they variations on a theme and is the theme "How To Construct An Unidentified Digital Media Object?"

Only Persona will tell.

Yes   No

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Goodbye

Remixing Persona is a way of sampling

Remixing Persona is a way of reconfiguring
fluid forms of identity into a collage of
multiplex consciousness

Remixing Persona is a way of tapping into
your unconscious readiness potential so as
to aesthetically "feel oneself" become
an embodied postproduction medium

Remixing Persona is a way of summoning
all of the ghosts who came before us
and mashing up whatever transient vibe
they fill us with while revisiting our bodies