Restricted Drawing: Embracing the Glitch as Creative Method

Workshop and Presentation Proposal (30–40 minutes) – (I) Instructor (aka Patrick Loan)

This participatory workshop explores the concept of the "human glitch" through collective drawing practice, examining how deliberate breakdown and systemic failure can generate unexpected creative outcomes. Building directly on "Glitches, Blips and Bugs," an exhibition I co-curated with Questioner in July 2025, this workshop extends the investigation of how glitch aesthetics manifest beyond the digital screen through physical media and disrupted processes.

As part of that exhibition, Questioner and I performed a piece where physical restraint created a "human glitch" in the drawing process—Questioner attempted to draw the surrounding environment while I used masking tape to restrain his arms and legs, creating interference in what should be a meticulous, controlled activity. This workshop scales that initial experiment into a collective, systemic investigation, inviting participants to explore how error, friction, and breakdown can become generative creative methods.

In her "Glitch Studies Manifesto" (2011), Rosa Menkman argues that glitches are not merely errors but moments that "break the flow of the ordinary" and expose the normally invisible structures of systems. When smooth operation fails, we suddenly see the machinery underneath—the protocols, dependencies, and fragilities that functional systems conceal. Glitches create "a lost opportunity to make the machine conform to protocol" and thus represent moments of deviation, rupture, and possibility. This workshop translates glitch theory from the digital realm into embodied, analog practice, revealing the gap between intention and execution, between systemic control and individual agency.

The workshop centers on a collective instruction-based drawing system performed on a large shared surface. Participants follow simple, sequential drawing commands called out at regular intervals—"draw a circle," "add vertical lines," "fill an area with dots." This creates an algorithmic, protocol-driven process where everyone executes identical instructions simultaneously, mirroring computational logic: standardized input, coordinated processing, and predictable output.

However, as the drawing progresses, designated "interrupters" will physically restrain participants using masking tape, restricting their hands and arms. These constraints create human glitches—participants must continue attempting to follow instructions while physically restricted. The system begins to break down. Some areas develop density and coherence while others show gaps, distortions, and failed executions. The final drawing becomes a visual map of systemic degradation, revealing where the protocol succeeded and where it collapsed.

This workshop addresses several key questions from the stream. Is the glitch the last space where human presence can be felt? By making breakdown physical and visible, the workshop suggests that error and friction mark human presence because they resist the smooth functioning that characterizes technological systems. How can embodied approaches serve as resistance to efficiency-driven creation? The deliberate introduction of restriction slows and complicates what should be a simple task, forcing participants to negotiate between systemic demands and bodily limitations.

The session begins with a brief presentation of the original performance and glitch theory (5-10 minutes), followed by the collective drawing exercise (15-20 minutes), and concludes with group reflection on the process and artifact created (10 minutes). Participants will leave with both a collective artifact documenting the workshop's glitches and an understanding of how breakdown, rather than precision, might offer productive territory for creative experimentation. In an era of platform aesthetics and standardized toolkits,

perhaps the glitch—human or digital—remains a vital space for resistance, presence, and unexpected discover.

Pass-the-Block: Transforming Creative Fatigue into Collective Creativity

Renia Korma, MA[1, 2]

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Abstract / Description

This workshop invites participants to explore the challenges of creative fatigue and moments of artistic blockage, including those influenced by digital tools and technology-driven workflows. Rather than seeing these moments as obstacles, participants will discover how they can spark imagination and lead to unexpected, collaborative outcomes. Through playful, reflective, and interactive activities, participants will engage with personal and shared experiences of creative hesitation, experimenting with new ways of thinking and making. The session highlights how moments of pause or resistance can be transformed into opportunities for insight, experimentation, and collective creativity, revealing how technology, limitations, and human ingenuity intersect in contemporary artistic practice.

Learning Outcomes

- Recognize how creative blocks can become sources of inspiration.

- Explore playful, collaborative, and experimental approaches to creative challenges.

- Appreciate the generative potential of fatigue, hesitation, and resistance in both individual and shared creative practice.

Keywords

Creative fatigue; blockage; collective creativity; digital and media practice; collaborative storytelling; embodied practice

Maximum participants: 30

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Embedded Practice and the Logic of Systems

Contemporary debates around technology and creative practice often focus on questions of authorship and automation: Is AI replacing the artist? Is creativity being outsourced? This presentation proposes a shift away from these output-oriented concerns toward an examination of how technological systems reorganize creative labor, attention, and consciousness through their everyday use.

Rather than approaching digital platforms, productivity tools, or AI systems from a position of refusal or ironic distance, my artistic practice adopts a methodology of sincere implementation. Inspired by Nam June Paik's assertion that one must use technology "in order to hate it properly," my work operates by taking technological promises literally and inhabiting their prescribed workflows over extended durations. The resulting artworks do not stage breakdowns or spectacular failures; instead, they reveal the warping, performance, and absurdity that occurs when systems are followed correctly.

Through case studies ranging from long-duration self-quantification projects to consumer branding installations, the presentation demonstrates a consistent pattern: systems promise efficiency, insight, or elevation, yet deliver meta-work, performance, and the colonization of consciousness when fully implemented. In one project, tracking every minute of a week revealed how productivity tools designed to reclaim time instead generate endless labor of planning, categorizing, and reviewing—optimization that produces only more optimization. In another, a consumer product promising cultural sophistication exposed how branding sells belonging while shifting the burden of legitimacy onto individual consumption. Designed within capitalist incentive structures that prioritize scalability, self-perpetuation, and measurable performance, these systems continue to function even as their outputs become increasingly abstracted from lived experience. What begins as a strategy for optimization quickly transforms into escalating labor, where maintaining the system consumes the very time it claims to save. The issue is not malfunction but success: these systems work as designed, and it is precisely through their correct operation that their absurdities become visible.

By framing use itself as the subject of the artwork, this presentation challenges narratives that position technology as an external force acting upon artistic authorship. Instead, it proposes that authorship persists as a relational and procedural condition, located in how systems are entered, sustained, and endured. The artwork is not the system's output but the system encountering itself through use. Artistic practice becomes a form of stress testing—holding technological conditions long enough for their internal contradictions to surface.

This talk concludes by asking: What forms of creativity, attention, and lived experience become impossible when optimization works too well?

MCCT 2026

Submission

Sally Stenton

Stream 14. "Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance"

Devious Dancing with Devices….and trees

"Dear body, you have been slacking of late and I am receiving discomforting signals that suggest there is a problem with your posture. You have spent too much time sitting on the sofa with the laptop. Thank you for alerting me to the need for correction. I have come across some instructions that you might find helpful."

https://www.sallystenton.com/projects/bending-as-a-form-of-resistance/

This is the opening paragraph of a text by Sally Stenton that arose from 'Bending as a form of resistance', a collaboration with Kelcy Davenport and Pernille Fransden in 2018 exploring movement as both metaphor and embodiment of constructive agency.

In a development of this sensory enquiry, the proposed activity for MCCT will explore the act of noticing how our digital devices shape our posture and gestures. We will deploy the senses to interrogate the nature of the relationships we are forming with devices and simulations of human resemblance. How might we imagine moving our bodies counter to the directions of the machinic choreographer to subvert the training regime of the screen?

Participants are invited to uncurl : from grasping hands, bent shoulders and downward gaze to the opening, upward reach of a tree. A nuanced attention

to the sensations in the body might pose questions about the digital experience of a tree or how soil can infiltrate the internet. The digital realm conspires with the human tendency to reduce the tree to a flat image or a single word, but it can also unlock a different way of seeing and hence of being. How can we use the technology to enhance our connection with the wider entangled ecology without being seduced into a 2 dimensional call and response?

This interactive session will pose questions to the body, offering prompts and invitations that are ambiguous, poetic and unpredictable. Words will help to eliminate words and through the sensory act of moving the body we will work together to unfold ways to resist the theft of sensibility and attention.

Sally Stenton is an artist whose practice harbours a sceptical approach to digital technology and the powers that shape it. Her work forms through the process of walking away from the screen only to be pulled back in by the lure of convenience, distraction and opportunity.

Thomas Nicolaou / Abstract

Ref: "Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance." [VCAS stream]

I propose a talk, perhaps featuring a short film of letterpress prints being produced, (possibly featuring reflections from the tutor/helper printer Paul Nash tbc) - on the age of technology, fatigue, failure and resistance [2-3 mins]), as well as an edition of the hand-letterpress prints **The Flowers of Chaucer**, should be presented as part of the following stream;

"Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance"

The process of producing seven letterpress prints over a period of six months, in 2013 / 2014, was at a point in my life where I was looking for more participation in an off-screen world.

I was becoming fatigued as a book designer, and was looking for a project to do off-screen, back to nature (or lead even). Ultimately, exploring materials and myself as a designer, printer and publisher. As I had not done an art foundation course, I was always curious about the letterpress process, having studied and worked for most of my life with the digital publishing process.

In 2013, there was a meeting for a Book Arts group show, we(artists) all met at in a room at the Botanical Gardens at the University of Oxford. I had selected (by chance) from the archives of the 'The Gardeners' Chronicle' an article containing 'The Flowers of Chaucer and Gower'. I remember first thinking of reproducing Chaucer's words, almost as letterpress-produced 'tweets' as well as potential pages from a 'big book' (which was never realised).

Title: How Not to Be Invisible: Visibility as Scarcity in Algorithmic Societies
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Stream: Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance

Abstract

In contemporary socio-technical systems, visibility has become a scarce and quota-based privilege rather than an inherent right. Platforms, welfare agencies, and algorithmic scoring systems increasingly shape who appears in public, whose narratives are amplified, and whose presence is filtered out. Drawing on symbolic capital theory and attention-as-scarcity frameworks, this presentation argues that visibility today operates as a designed and distributed resource.

How Not to Be Invisible is a practice-based project that constructs an interactive scoring simulation to foreground these hidden mechanisms. Participants navigate a fragmented landscape of more than fifty symbolic objects such as degrees, letters of recommendation, VIP cards and digital likes. Each object carries an arbitrary "visibility value," and the final score directs participants either into an illuminated visible room or into a silent and indifferent invisible room.

Through critical design and digital spatial construction, the installation transforms structural inequality into a lived experience of being assessed, misrecognized and categorised. Rather than advocating for an increase in visibility, the work examines how visibility itself is produced as a selective and institutionalised arrangement that draws strength from the myth of algorithmic neutrality. The project encourages reflection on the broader conditions that determine how people become unseen and unheard within a scored society.

One and Three SCHRAM's

This performative lecture presents SCHRAM2.0, an ongoing artistic research project that examines authorship, fatigue, and resistance within contemporary artistic practice shaped by artificial intelligence, institutional precarity, and invisible care labour. SCHRAM2.0 is a speculative alter ego developed through sustained dialogue with artificial intelligence. She functions as both an artwork and a working method. Rather than existing as a singular identity, SCHRAM2.0 is conceived as an iterable and plural subject whose identity emerges through repetition, interpretation, and contextual enactment. Instead of approaching AI as a tool just for optimisation or innovation, the project treats it as a system that embraces how authorship gets distributed, mediated, and fatigued. I invite artificial intelligence to attempt to be me as an artist, recreating aesthetics, gestures, and conceptual logic, while I in turn attempt to make as an AI system might: iteratively, repetitively, and through distortion. Through this reciprocal process, SCHRAM2.0 takes shape as a versioned self. Outwardly she appears coherent and succesful, while internally authorship becomes porous and shared across human, machine, and institutional structures. The performative lecture takes the form of a short presentation of the project and a staged panel discussion in which multiple versions of SCHRAM2.0 are present simultaneously. Each panelist represents SCHRAM2.0 from within their own practice and field, inhabiting her as a position rather than performing her as a character. These representations are not deviations from an original, but constitutive instances. The panel stages a debate about who SCHRAM2.0 really is, not in order to determine a correct version, but to insist that her reality consists precisely of these competing and coexisting

interpretations. Philosophy, art jewellery, education, and costume history each generate a valid version of SCHRAM2.0, grounded in real expertise and lived disciplinary knowledge. The lecture combines real knowledge with performative framing. It is unscripted, but not unstructured. Costume, role, and staging operate alongside genuine interpretation and argument. Versions overlap, contradict, and coexist, making visible authorship as a negotiated and ongoing process rather than a fixed position. The work is conceived as a modular structure that can be realised in two formats. In one iteration, SCHRAM2.0 appears as a fully embodied live panel, foregrounding presence, coordination, and the labour required to assemble bodies in one space. In another iteration, the artist is physically present while other versions of SCHRAM2.0 appear through mediated means such as live or recorded video, audio, and screen-based interventions. This mediated version foregrounds absence, substitution, and technological distance. Both formats are integral to the project and demonstrate how material conditions shape not only artistic production, but the very form that authorship takes. Central to the project is the role of invisible labour. As an artist, educator, and caregiver, my art practice unfolds within interruption, repetition, and unpaid work that sustains both artistic and institutional economies. SCHRAM2.0 emerges from these conditions rather than despite them. The performative lecture refuses to separate intellectual production from care and dependency, treating them as structural forces within artistic practice. Fiction here functions as an intentional escape into a counterfactual artistic life, one in which time, energy, and autonomy are not structurally constrained. This escape is not a withdrawal from reality, but a critical mirror that exposes how such freedom remains normative for male artists and exceptional or absurd when claimed by women.

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Who is SCHRAM2.0?

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and Laurie Schram

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Interrupted Ice: Failure, Presence, and Method in Antarctic Imagery

This paper examines interruption as a critical lens within digital climate imaging, exploring how technological failures and data anomalies in satellite documentation of Antarctica create new narratives about our relationship with remote environments amid climate breakdown.

Drawing from my research-based artistic practice, I investigate how the instability of non-human imaging systems formulate visual metaphors for witnessing planetary transformation. Imagery of these landscapes creates a lexicon for understanding our human agency - revealing collapsing planetary systems across distances, data, and time scales. I ask whether technological breakdown might represent the final site where human interpretation, judgment, and embodied perception remain necessary.

These systems try to capture the real-time acceleration of the Anthropocene yet continuously fail - producing corrupted data streams, sensor errors, and transmission failures. Within my practice, I position these interruptions not as technical inadequacies but as valuable disruptions that enhance our understanding rather than diminish it. More critically, I examine whether these moments of failure constitute the last point for human presence within environmental observation - spaces where subjective meaning reasserts itself against total operational images, or whether even our errors have become predictable, algorithmic, and automated.

Interruption operates across multiple dimensions: it disrupts the sublimity of seamless environmental surveillance, reveals the material infrastructures embedded in ecological imaging, and creates temporal gaps that expose the incompatibility between human and geological timescales.

This paper demonstrates how these moments of failure provide access to the limitations and politics of digital witnessing itself. Through examining glitches and transmission errors in Antarctic ice imagery, I connect research with my own artwork to open these dialogues - exposing what is concealed and revealed within the disrupted sublime nature, while questioning whether the glitch remains a space of human resistance or can open us up to new possibilities.

By embracing interruption as method, I offer alternative approaches to visualising remote environments and create new narrative possibilities precisely when technology fails to grasp environmental complexity - investigating whether these failures still require us, or whether the machine has learned to interpret its own breakdowns without human intervention.

Failure as a Condition of Universality:
Emoji and Pseudo-Script in Contemporary Technological Language

Lulu Ao, PhD
Part-time Lecturer, De Montfort University

This paper adopts a practice-led critical framework to examine how so-called *universal languages* operate within contemporary technological systems, and how artistic practice mobilises failure, fatigue, and unreadability as forms of resistance. Rather than treating language as a neutral vehicle of communication, the paper approaches it as a visual, technical, and regulatory structure shaped by standardisation, platform logics, and algorithmic optimisation. Focusing on the long-term language-based works of Chinese artist Xu Bing (1955-), the analysis brings together two seemingly opposed practices: pseudo-script and emoji-based writing, reading them as a shared critique of technological universality.

Xu Bing's pseudo-script simulates the visual authority of writing while systematically withholding semantic access. Viewers are invited into an act of reading that never resolves into comprehension, encountering texts that appear legible yet remain permanently unreadable. This sustained interpretive failure exposes the extent to which reading depends not only on visual form, but on institutional training, cultural convention, and linguistic discipline. Meaning is not absent by accident, but structurally denied.

Emoji-based writing, by contrast, operates within a globally standardised visual system explicitly designed to minimise interpretive effort. Embedded in digital platforms, emoji promises immediacy, emotional clarity, and cross-linguistic accessibility. When reorganised into extended narrative structures, however, emoji loses its efficiency. The accumulation of signs produces ambiguity, redundancy, and cognitive fatigue, revealing the limits of visual universality as a communicative ideal.

Rather than treating these practices as stylistic experiments at opposite ends of the linguistic spectrum, this paper argues that they form a coherent model of failure within technological language. In pseudo-script, failure emerges through semantic absence; in emoji writing, through semantic overload. Both expose language as a system governed by protocols of readability, speed, and optimisation, rather than a transparent medium of expression.

Within this framework, fatigue is not understood as a secondary effect of reception, nor as a subjective weakness of the viewer. Instead, it functions as an epistemic condition through which the ideological demands of technological language become perceptible. The inability to read quickly or resolve meaning interrupts the expectation of seamless communication that underpins platform-based interaction. Artistic practice thus creates a space for friction, delay, and hesitation, resisting the reduction of language to efficient exchange.

The presentation will combine visual analysis with critical reflection to address three questions: how technological languages shape contemporary modes of communication; how failure and unreadability operate as productive strategies within artistic practice; and how art can reframe notions of universality, publicness, and responsibility in an increasingly automated linguistic environment.

Navigating the Networked Archive: Feed as Post-Internet Essay and Resistance

Nam Huh (Loughborough University)

This paper proposes that interactive works such as Loopntale's Feed (2022/2025) function as post-internet documentary/essay works that reframe how histories, ecologies, and social relations are mediated in the digital age. By situating Feed within the context of the "Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology" stream, I argue that such works do not merely use technology as a tool, but rather engage in what Nam June Paik called a "genuine antagonism" - using the mechanics of the digital to critique and resist the homogenisation of contemporary creative life.

To clarify how Feed positions itself within artistic genres, I compare it with The Catacombs of Solaris (2016), an indie work exhibited at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. Solaris uses perception and open-ended navigation to foreground experience over goal-oriented play. Like Solaris, Feed eludes easy categorisation as a game in the entertainment sense. Its mechanics do not centre on scoring, competition, or mastery; instead, they invite an interpretation of the relations between beings and information flows. This comparison helps distinguish Feed as an art practice where reflection and sensory engagement take precedence over traditional, metric-driven game objectives.

Feed situates players under a bridge where urban waterways and road networks intersect. The work's multi-screen environment reflects a world deeply embedded in networked conditions where digital and physical realities are entwined. Crucially, even when no one is playing, Feed continues to generate its own archive. This suggests that the system itself, including non-human agents, contributes to the documentary. This aligns with the stream's inquiry into how creativity is increasingly entangled with technological infrastructures, challenging inherited models of individual authorship and "originality."

The panel description highlights the risk of "creative fatigue" and "habitual scrolling" in an age of constant stimulation. Feed addresses this by subverting the very concept of the "feed." In a platform-dominated landscape, a feed is typically an algorithmically managed workflow designed for passive consumption. In Loopntale's work, however, the "feed" becomes a mediated archive that requires active, "slow" assembly by the spectator.

By employing an essayistic documentary tradition, where fragments, observations, and mediated evidence are assembled rather than narrated linearly, Feed resists the "homogenisation" of digital systems. It provides a site where the player's interpretations become the primary site of meaning production. This process navigates the tension between the "internet state of mind" and the need for unstructured, spontaneous moments of thought.

By framing Feed through post-internet documentary strategies, this presentation argues that interactive works should be considered vital art practices that interrogate the conditions of contemporary life. They demonstrate how artists can resist "metric-driven creation" by using technology to create reflective documentary environments. In doing so, Feed marks a space where human presence is felt not through the mastery of the machine, but through the poetic navigation of its friction and noise.

Fake Bodies, Real Solace: Authenticity Cues and Emotional Compensation in Virtual Influencers

Preferred stream

Stream 14: Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance

Presenter

Keyki Sun

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Abstract

As emerging technologies reshape artistic production and platform aesthetics, social media virtual influencers (VIs) are expanding beyond brand communication and entertainment to become care agents perceived as sources of emotional support. This form of digital care often operates at an everyday level, buffering stress and offering a sense of companionship. However, when care is performed by synthetic subjects who lack lived experience and clear accountability, audiences face new uncertainties in interpreting authenticity cues when judging credibility and intent. Existing research offers a limited mechanism-oriented explanation of this process. How do audiences weigh a lack of accountability against psychological safety when deciding whether to invest emotionally?

This study conducted a comparative focus group (N = 8), using human influencers as a control condition and three VI forms as stimuli in anxiety and emotional support contexts: a hyper-realistic human-like VI, a stylised human-like VI, and a non-human VI. The analysis suggests an ongoing negotiation between aesthetic form and trust. In high-stakes topics, human influencers remain the trust baseline because participants treat real-world accountability as a key authenticity cue. By contrast, hyper-realistic, "zero-error" VIs often triggered manipulation inferences and wariness about corporate authorship and control. In low-risk contexts, however, VIs that adopt explicit fictiveness through stylisation and non-human form reduced anxiety about deception via transparency cues, enabling a lower-pressure sense of companionship.

Building on these findings, this study proposes "lucid illusion" as a mechanism-oriented account of how audiences work with authenticity cues through knowing engagement: audiences choose to engage while recognising the VI's fictionality, turning that fictiveness into a resource for psychological safety that can support emotional compensation. This study argues that explicit fictiveness is not a technological defect but a relational aesthetic framework that can be strategically mobilised. Rather than pursuing ever greater human-likeness, embracing fallibility, friction, and non-human qualities may be crucial for designing clearer digital relationships and lower-pressure companionship experiences.

Keywords

virtual influencers; digital care; authenticity cues; platform aesthetics; trust and credibility; emotional companionship

MCCT conference: Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance

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Presentation title: Failure as Method of Resistance in Digital Art Practices

This proposal examines how contemporary art practices engaging with digitally mediated subjectivity embrace fatigue and failure as modes of resistance to dominant technological imaginaries. Rather than treating the shortcomings of digital technologies merely as symptoms of lost futures, the paper proposes that these failures generate new affective positions, forms of agency or kinds of intelligence that unsettle dominant, anthropocentric understandings of subjectivity.

Early cybernetic optimism of the 1990s took to the unrestricted and unhierarchical structure of the network as an opportunity for emancipation, collectivity, and expanded cognition – an internet that will allow for new freedoms and new, more just and humane, democracies. The contemporary digital sphere embodies a far more ambivalent reality: a decentralized space of mass surveillance, of platform infrastructures that manipulate behaviours, that feed on affective economies and breed radical reactionary groups that trigger real social consequences. It is a liminal and unstable environment that actively shapes our global and subjective realities, all while blurring the lines between the public and the private, agency and automation, the individual and collective. It is in many ways a failure that instead of connecting, has further alienated the individual and instead of freeing has further restricted and governed the social body.

This proposal engages with the digital's liminal nature, looking at the ways contemporary artists work with digital technologies, embracing its hybrid, dynamic and unfixed status. These are artists that critically employ either everyday or complex digital tools in order to poetically engage with our contemporary failures – working to decenter the normative, neoliberal capitalist subject in favor of alternative ways of relating. The research focuses on several distinct modes that artists employ when engaging with digital technologies. The first is an affective mode, one that interrogates how we feel, emote, and connect within digital landscapes. The second mode moves beyond the human subject, exploring nonhuman agencies and alternative forms of intelligence and knowledge production. The third mode turns to gamespace as an infrastructure that destabilizes dominant systems of data capitalism, labor, and geopolitics. While each mode reflects a

disillusionment with the digital sphere, it also positions its failures as gaps to find new ways to feel, to connect, and to act.

The proposal aims to show how these contemporary art practices deal with the ambiguous and alienating reality of the digital as a methodologically potent space that may unsettle normative subjectivities and allow for alternative forms of individual and collective experiences.

Keywords: subjectivity, technological mediation, failure, liminality, affectivity

How do contemporary technologies reshape originality and cultural value in creative practices?

Oliver Cloke – Vienna Contemporary Arts Space

I will be dialling in from Sydney Australia

The history of 'propagated uncertainty' teaches us that acknowledging uncertainty doesn't mean abandoning knowledge—it means characterising knowledge more accurately.

"We know this value lies within this range, with this confidence" rather than pretending false precision or abandoning measurement entirely.

Contemporary creative practice needs similar frameworks. We can acknowledge that:

- Authorship in collaborative human-AI systems is distributed and uncertain

- Originality involves novel configurations of influences, not creation from nothing

- Cultural value emerges from complex interactions between scarcity, meaning, context, and community

- Identity in digital spaces is performative, multiple, and irreducibly uncertain

These aren't failures of new technologies but invitations to develop more sophisticated cultural frameworks—uncertainty propagation models for creativity itself.

The algorithms generating art, the platforms distributing it, the communities valuing it, and the legal systems regulating it all involve uncertainties that propagate, interact, and compound. Rather than demanding impossible certainty or rejecting the new entirely, we can learn what Gauss and Laplace taught:

understand your uncertainties, trace how they propagate, and make decisions informed by that understanding rather than pretending certainty you don't have.

The new art forms emerging from contemporary technologies aren't replacing traditional art but expanding the possibility space; adding new dimensions of uncertainty to explore, new transformation functions to navigate. They fit within our cultural landscape not by resolving to settled categories but by challenging us to develop richer frameworks for thinking about creativity, value, and meaning in systems where uncertainty propagates in increasingly visible and undeniable ways.

"Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance"

Pragya Bhargava

Taking the long way home: Slow, purposeful and anomalous artistic interventions in navigation technology

Taking the long way home is an interactive presentation on the experience and memory of journeys and arrivals in technologically dominated ecosystems. Using embodied experiences that manipulate navigation technology, the presentation challenges efficiency, optimisation and destinations as goals of journeying.

Through slow and purposeful hybrid engagements both on and off screen, participants will rely on memory and instinct to wander, journey and arrive. They will observe and record new paths, interact with their surroundings and create anomalies—technological errors, interruptions, meanderings and moments where systems are required to fail—and explore how these moments can be reclaimed as memories and creative material like notes, sketches, photos, audio recordings, or bodily responses, rather than bugs or inconveniences.

The slow and reflective playfulness of embodied approaches that deliberately break patterns—walking, mindful breathing, tactile practices, somatic improvisation, communal singing and dancing, or repetitive hand-drawings—recenter human experience by resisting the logic that art like routes must be optimised, quantified and quick; they create room for chance, error, meditation and ambiguity. *Taking the long way home* becomes a site of playful rebellion against automation, technological commands, and passive consumption of digital systems and their instructions.

Ultimately, in this presentation, artistic practice in the age of technology is studied as a negotiation between using powerful tools and refusing their demands- not to be led by their data-driven outputs but to acknowledge and then consciously define their role in our lives.

Paper title:
until u feel impending doom
Anahita Neghabat

Abstract:
 This paper analyzes the meme series *until u feel impending doom* (2025) as an artistic response to the attention economy and the affective regimes of digital platforms. The work engages humor, repetition, and exhaustion as aesthetic strategies to explore how scrolling transforms attention into labor, responsibility, and moral positioning. Situated within platform cultures and visual theory, the analysis shows how algorithmic infrastructures mediate perception, visibility, and emotional engagement with global crises.

By staging dread and fatigue as recurring motifs, the series foregrounds the tension between care and complicity in technologically mediated creativity: users are encouraged to feel, respond, and remain connected, while being absorbed into metric-driven workflows of engagement. The paper argues that memes operate here as a site of friction within platform aesthetics, exposing how standardized interfaces and endless stimulation erode the conditions for reflection and creative autonomy. In doing so, the work proposes exhaustion and irony as modes of resistance against formulaic attention economies and the moralization of digital spectatorship.

Mapping Resistance: Towards a Topography of Artistic Responses to Technology

Proposal for MCCT Stream 14: "Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance"

Robert Good

Abstract

This contribution takes the form of a performative, practice-led presentation that activates a selection of artworks from my own practice in order to examine how artists respond to the pressures, failures, and fatigue produced by contemporary technology. The presentation treats artistic practice as a site in which the limits, frictions, and contradictions of digital culture become visible.

Each artwork functions as a worked example that takes a playful stance in interrogating a particular condition intensified by technological mediation—such as information overload, data surveillance, automation, or machine vision—and through an interactive format and dry humour articulates and provokes a response. Taken together, the works construct a field of related experiences, a provisional topography of interconnected obstacles, distortions and deceptions.

Artworks presented include *2020 Vision* (responding to information overload), *Legitimate Interest* (data surveillance and consent culture), *Shutterbug* (computer vision and facial recognition), and *100% Are Books* (sentiment analysis and automated interpretation).

2020 Vision responds to information overload and algorithmically mediated discourse by visualising Google search results through an overwhelming, repetitive visual interface. Rather than clarifying meaning, the work exposes how abundance, speed, and algorithmic repetition flatten difference and produce cognitive and creative exhaustion. By dwelling within excess rather than resolving it, the work uses fatigue itself as a critical strategy.

Legitimate Interest addresses data surveillance and consent culture by transforming an online consent form into a looping animation that foregrounds the monotonous language of compliance. The repetitive accumulation of companies claiming a "legitimate interest" in personal data mirrors the coercive rhythms of digital bureaucracy, exposing how consent is performed, normalised, and exhausted within surveillant infrastructures. Here, repetition functions not as efficiency but as a mode of resistance through exposure.

Shutterbug engages with histories of photographic experimentation—echoing David Hockney's *joiners*—but complicates these discourses through the introduction of automated image capture

and facial recognition. What begins as an exploration of expanded perception takes on a more troubling dimension as machine vision imposes categorisation, judgement, and control.

100% Are Books uses sentiment analysis to ask computationally absurd questions such as "Which is the happiest book in the library?" While superficially playful, the work foregrounds the instability and emptiness of algorithmic interpretation, exposing how affect, meaning, and judgement are increasingly outsourced to systems that simulate understanding without possessing it.

The presentation concludes by briefly introducing a new, ongoing project that imagines fantastical job descriptions for work in the age of AI. These roles are elaborated through conversations with AI agents, producing an increasingly circular and surreal exchange that reflects the automation of creativity, authorship, and professional identity.

Taken together, these works sketch a loose topography of artistic responses to technology: repetition, recontextualisation, refusal, failure, glitch, and slowness. Rather than offering a typology or evaluative hierarchy, the presentation treats these responses as provisional coordinates within a shifting technological terrain.

PROPOSAL FOR MIDLANDS CONFERENCE IN CRITICAL THOUGHT 2026
FOR STREAM "Artistic Practice in the Age of Technology: Fatigue, Failure, and Resistance" from VCAS

Art, Machine, and Interaction: Human Agency When Technology is the Tool
Liz Melchor

Ever since I began drawing with robots, my driving motivation has been: how can I find surprise using a precise tool that follows a programmed path? But even as I work to insert humanness into my machine drawings, a sizable audience erases it. The machine made it, they say, not you!

This talk explores what constitutes meaningful human agency in artistic practice with machines, from both the artist's and viewer's perspectives. I will emphasize the importance of interaction—not as a single button push, but as a sustained and responsive effort: a dance integral to all creative work, but especially when technology is the tool.

Part One explores my studio practice with drawing machines, where I deliberately introduce glitches as aesthetic choices. These imperfections aren't technical failures but emerge from ongoing dialogue. I push the machine fail, cultivating randomness, making responsive choices when and how to intervene. Each piece results from sustained interaction, producing outcomes neither I nor the machine could achieve alone. I contrast this dance with prompt-based AI image generation, where single inputs produce outputs without responsive engagement or emergence. The distinction matters: artistic agency requires creative exploration of a tool's possibilities through attention and experimentation, not button-pushing.

Part Two examines my participatory installations, Fortune Robot and Nosey Monkey, where audience interaction takes focus. With Fortune Robot, participants' projections of meaning onto the machine—"it can tell me my fate"—create the intrigue, not the technology itself. In Nosey Monkey, participants draw monkeys with their noses, focusing on process over product and using their perception and body in completely novel ways. Participants engage in real-time with responsive systems that create emergent outcomes. By widening the gap between technology and output, the work foregrounds human participation.

Part Three addresses knee-jerk reactions to machine art from social media: "This is AI," "This art belongs to the machine, not you," or simply, "This isn't art." These responses reveal a tendency to reduce all art using technology to non-responsive tool use—outsourcing work, simple button-pushing replacing creative acts. They highlight a current cultural angst: technology is taking over the world. The fear is that we are outsourcing creativity, the most human of acts, to machines. But this overlooks that humans are always behind the machine.

Erasing human agency from technological systems perpetuates dangerous myths of machine autonomy. This talk about the agency of both artist and audience in technological art opens a broader question: what does human agency mean in our technological age?