execute_photography

1 MARCH TO 4 MAY 2024

MEMO AKTEN, DRIES DEPOORTER & MAX PINCKERS, AMRITA HEPI, ROSA MENKMAN, SARA OSCAR, J. ROSENBAUM, SEBASTIAN SCHMIEG AND ALAN WARBURTON

Installation view, *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

Installation view, Amrita Hepi, *Open Poses* 2022, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

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FOREWORD

RMIT Culture is excited to present *execute_photography* at RMIT Gallery. This exhibition seeks to challenge our understanding of photographic art in the digital age and is a key exhibition of both our 2024 program and also the PHOTO 2024 festival.

RMIT is a proud Educational Partner of PHOTO and our connection to the festival is an incredibly rewarding one for our entire University. This exhibition not only responds to PHOTO's overarching theme of "The Future Is Shaped by Those Who Can See It", it also offers us a playful, provocative and somewhat sinister proposition: that new technology might be killing photography as we know it.

execute_photography delves into the transformative power of technology, exploring how digital tools and techniques have altered our actions and perceptions of the world. The artists featured in *execute_photography* have each embraced the digital revolution in their own unique way. Their works are not only new interpretations and applications of photography, they are also poignant observations of – and reflections on – the digital landscape that shapes our lives. They invite us to question, ponder and marvel at the possibilities that lie at the intersection of art and technology.

We hope that this exhibition will inspire you, challenge you and broaden your understanding of what photography can be. We invite you to immerse yourself in the works, and to engage with the ideas they present.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the artists for their participation in this project, and to the exhibition curators – Alison Bennett, Shane Hulbert, Daniel Palmer and Katrina Sluis – for their dedicated work. Most of these curators are RMIT academics, but I would like to extend a particular note of thanks to ANU Associate Professor Katrina Sluis for her time, collaboration and contribution to this curatorial team. I would also like to thank the Fotomuseum Antwerpen for their loan of Dries Depoorter and Max Pinckers' work and the RMIT Enabling Impact Platforms for their support of the project. Elias Redstone and the PHOTO 2024 team also deserve acknowledgement for the wonderful festival they have developed, as do Seb Chan and ACMI for their support in producing Sebastian Schmieg's *Prompt Battle* event.

Lastly, I wish to thank the RMIT Culture Team for their hard work and dedication to this project. I also extend my appreciation to Amy Harrington, Associate Director Partnerships, and Saskia Loer Hansen, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice President, International and Engagement, for their continued support of RMIT Culture.

Paula Toal
Head, RMIT Culture

Installation view, Sara Oscar, works from the series *Counterfactual departure (Bangkok Winter Garden Series) 1974* 2023, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

execute_photography

Alison Bennett, Shane Hulbert, Daniel Palmer and Katrina Sluis

execute (verb)

1. put (a plan, order, or course of action) into effect

2. carry out a sentence of death

photography (noun)

the art or practice of taking and processing photographs

As a technical medium and cultural form, photography is constantly dying and being reborn.[1] This exhibition – presented as both an exploration and a provocation – brings together works by Australian and international artists that offer a speculation on photography's recent transformations, its role in new image systems and its possible afterlives. All the works present the notion of photography as a complex and performative process rather than a straightforward visual recording of a moment.

In many works photography has become processual and operational – a kind of actionable 'program' – and the viewer is invited to participate in the production of images. Several works engage with AI image generation, which is currently turning image-making into a set of executable text prompts. Collectively, in unexpected and playful ways, the artworks invite us to reflect on the social, political and aesthetic ramifications of

photography's ongoing transformation into an algorithm and software output.

In the early 2000s, the convergence of phones, cameras and computers –coupled with the explosion of social media – transformed photography from a print-based to a screen-based practice and saw a massive scaling up of photographic production. Silicon Valley entrepreneurs celebrated this as a new 'democracy' of the image, in which the public's creativity would be unleashed, enabling new forms of self-expression and participation. Platforms such as Flickr (2004) not only hosted a proliferating number of cat photos and interest groups but became a huge standing reserve of 'freely' available images that could be mined, scraped and interrogated. Aggregated into huge corporate databases, photographs were liked, tagged, rated and shared by millions of users, who were in turn rewarded by algorithms with visibility and sometimes fame.

Photographers attempted to 'game' platform recommender systems, such as Flickr's 'interestingness' algorithm, in an effort to decode and exploit the new algorithmic 'rules' of photographic success. At the same time, computer science researchers were working hard to close the 'semantic gap' between human and machine ways of seeing, with the aim of outsourcing the classification, annotation and curation of the proliferating glut of photography to machines. With the rise of social media, researchers turned to the internet as a huge archive of 'real-world photography' that could be used as training data, that could train machines to not only 'see' but evaluate what makes a successful image. By 2015 advances in 'deep learning' enabled not just the classification of images, but the generation of entirely new images, while the widespread release of text-to-image models such as DALL·E, Stable Diffusion and Midjourney in late 2022 made generative imaging

mainstream. Today image sharing platforms from Facebook to Instagram present themselves as online communities but also operate as massive machines for generating the data required for contemporary machine learning. From this perspective, as Daniel Rubinstein suggests, twenty first-century photography has become intimately entwined with 'mass-production, computation, self-replication and pattern recognition'.[2]

Given this massive shift in image production, how might professional photographers distinguish themselves in an algorithmically optimised image marketplace? One of the earliest works in this exhibition, and the first work visitors encounter in the gallery space, is *Trophy Camera v0.95* (2021). First developed in 2017 by Belgian artists **Dries Depoorter** and **Max Pinckers**, *Trophy Camera v0.95* is a speculative design of a new kind of camera powered by machine learning. Trained on the photographs that have
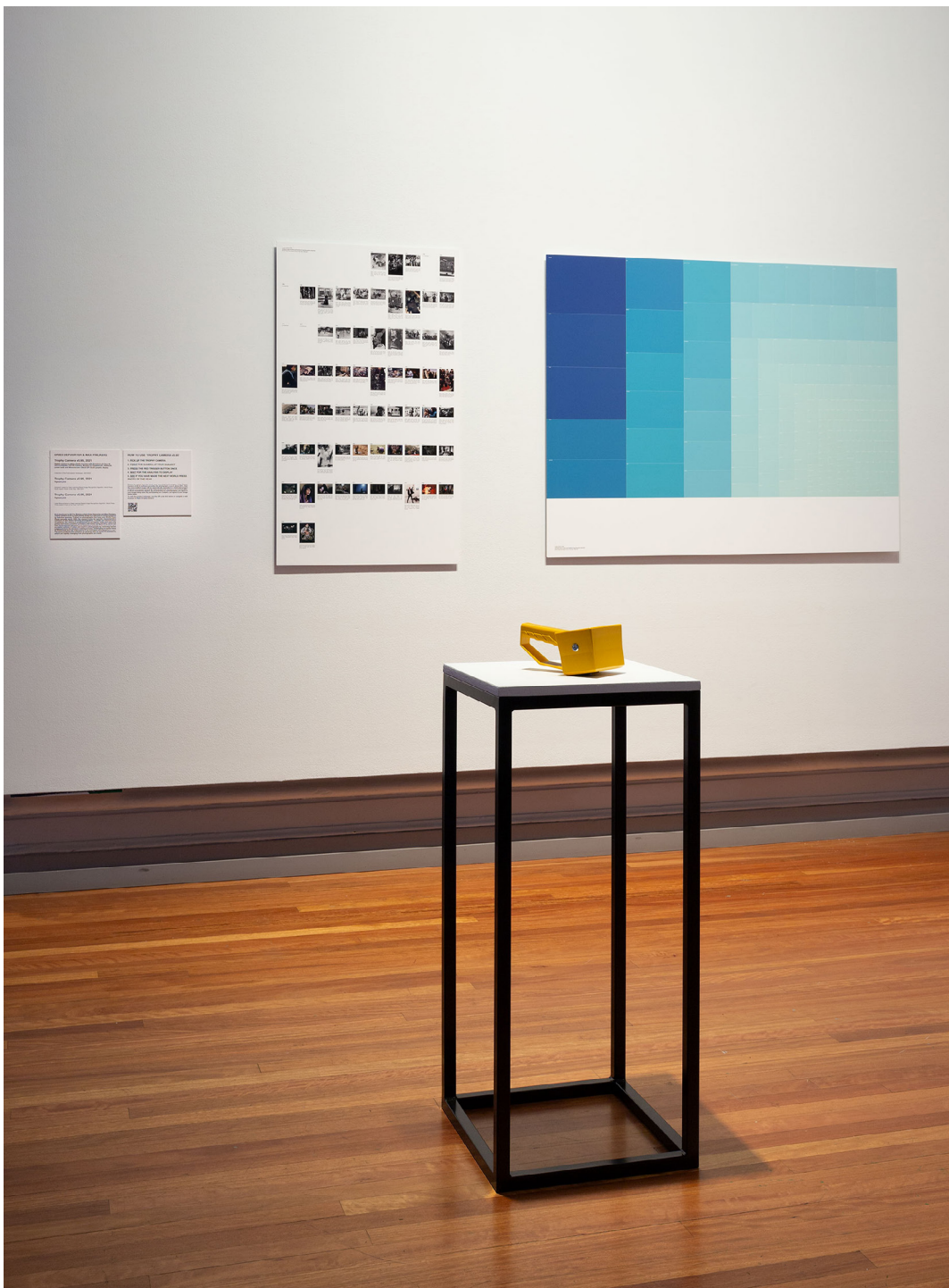
(page 5) Installation view, Memo Akten, *Learning to See (interactive edition)* 2017 (left) and Rosa Menkman, *The BLOB of im/possible images* 2021 (right), in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

(page 6) Installation view, Dries Depoorter and Max Pinckers, *Trophy Camera v0.95* 2021, Collection Fotomuseum Antwerpen, 2021/0022, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

won the World Press Photo contest annually since 1955, the camera looks for specific characteristics common to the award-winning images. Through the identification of patterns, *Trophy Camera* is programmed to recognise, make and save only photos that show a positive correlation with these characteristics, which are scored and automatically uploaded to a dedicated website. This work interrupts accepted notions of value and merit in photography by removing human judgement from the decision-making process, challenging accepted ideas of authorship and the importance of an individual photographer's 'eye'. The work also predicted the evolution of cameras with on-board AI assistance, which are rapidly changing how photographs are made. Ironically, whilst 'award winning photograph' is now a common generative text prompt, World Press Photo are particularly vigilant and uncompromising in their standards, devising strict (anti-digital manipulation)

rules to govern the award. In an age where images are subject to ever more pre-processing inside the camera, it remains to be seen how organisations such as World Press Photo will continue to delineate the boundaries between real and manipulated.

Another radical shift in photographic production is the fact that humans are increasingly marginal to not only the production but reception of images. As photographic culture becomes automated, the number of images made by machines for other machines to 'read', classify and evaluate dwarfs those destined for human eyeballs. However, as Stanford computer scientist Fei-Fei Li explains in a 2015 TED Talk, teaching machines to 'see' has been far from straightforward. Research was hampered by a belief that it was through the optimisation of algorithms, not training data, that advances would be made. Li's belief that a child's eyes functioned as

'biological cameras' that accumulated millions of 'snapshots' in navigating the world led her to scale up the photographic training data that the 'childlike' machine could use to learn to see.[3]

Memo Atken's *Learning to See (interactive edition)* (2017) deploys custom software to invite audiences to reflect on how we learn to see and make sense of the world, and also to gain an embodied understanding of how machine vision operates. In this project the artist presents a selection of everyday objects on a table, inviting the audience to move, transform and manipulate them under the gaze of the camera. This in turn projects a live video feed of what the machine is seeing – in what Atken describes as a form of digital puppetry. Atken, who completed a PhD in 2021 on the application of deep learning models for creative expression, is interested in the mutual learning of both audience and machine. Not only is the audience

Installation view, Memo Akten, *Learning to See (interactive edition)* 2017, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

Installation view, Amrita Hepi, *Open Poses* 2022 (detail), in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.
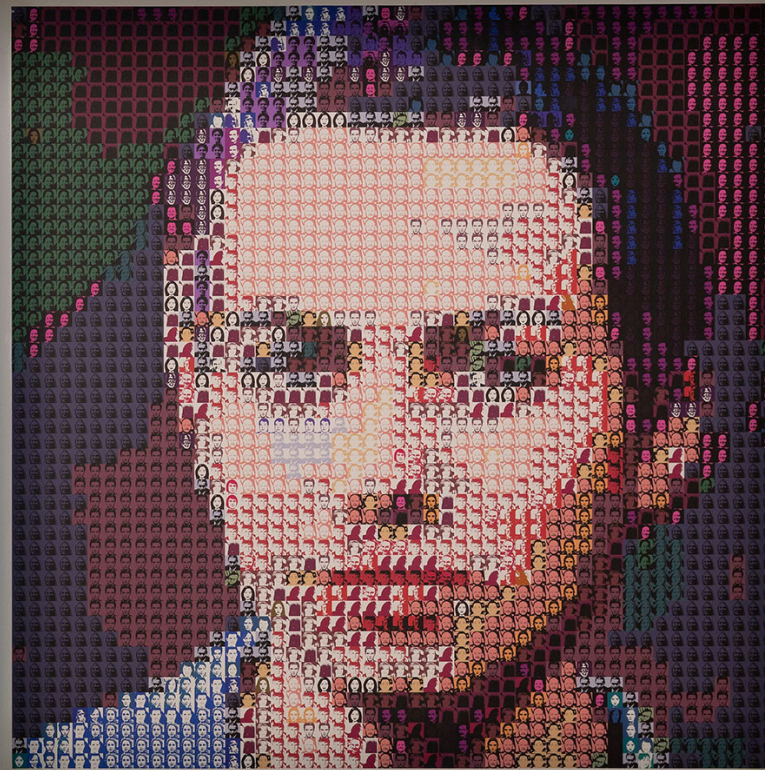
Installation view, J. Rosenbaum, *Gender Tapestry* 2022, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

playing with the interface, the model is continuously absorbing and learning from the interaction. We train the machine, and the machine trains us.

Two works in the exhibition are concerned with how machines enact forms of classification and surveillance on human bodies. **Amrita Hepi's** *Open Poses* (2022), is an interactive installation that invites the audience to assist in the generation of a photographic dataset based on their bodily poses. The idea of bodies following an instruction is central to activities such as dance and yoga. Here, participants are required to adopt postures that mirror a preset library of poses interpreted and presented by the artist from an online computer vision dataset of the same name, *Open Poses*. Using a green screen studio environment, machine vision detects 'keypoints' of the human body and converts that information into a 'skeleton'. Hepi states, 'I came to this work from thinking about choreography in public

space: how our behaviour and movements are tracked, monitored, and returned to us from different algorithmic sources.' In this way, *Open Poses* reveals that 'we're always participating, whether we know it or not.' But beyond surveillance, *Open Poses* also points to the fact that machine vision systems require huge amounts of photographic data to train models to recognise and classify the world, and we are willing participants. Accompanied by a loop of a popular song – 'You are everything' (1971) by Philadelphia soul group The Stylistics – the image programs our movement; we become robotic for the machine gaze and produce another readable pose.

Classification is a fundamental means of organising data, information and knowledge. **J Rosenbaum's** interactive installation *Gender Tapestry* (2022) explores the problem of how machine vision classifies people based on stereotypical visual characteristics by

proposing an alternative model for the machine perception of gender. The work challenges traditional gender classification systems by training a neural network to replace fixed categories with a more nuanced process of self-identification. Specifically, Rosenbaum moves beyond binary gender options of male and female by proposing a colour spectrum as classifier – the AI model assigns a unique colour value based on the characteristics of the uploaded portrait. The result is a live and evolving mosaic of different faces combined to create a single portrait of a non-binary person. The mosaic gains complexity as more faces are uploaded and fed into the model, creating a community artwork that emphasises the fluidity of gender. Audiences are invited to upload a selfie and contribute to the evolving gender tapestry.

As computational image culture becomes increasingly complex, imaging systems become ever more opaque to users.

Installation view, Alan Warburton, *RGBFAQ* 2020, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

Conventional tools for decoding the image, grounded in twentieth-century semiotics, are powerless to understand the systems that manifest the contemporary image. How are we to reconcile the synthetic lusciousness of the image on-screen with its underlying status as abstract, numeric data? In an age of deepfakes and machine hallucinated images, there is a need for new terminology and interpretive paradigms for navigating image culture. Recognising that the image environment is becoming increasingly impenetrable to many, **Alan Warburton's** *RGBFAQ* (2020) presents a primer on the development of 'computed photorealism,' tracing the development of computer graphics from World War II through to more recent advances in deep learning. The title of Warburton's video essay nods to early internet culture, when the FAQ became a guide for 'newbies' navigating an unfamiliar cyberspace. In a similar vein, Warburton offers guidance on how to approach an image that is no longer a flattened, enframed CMYK image expelled from a printing device. The image today is a product of XYZ coordinates performed in 3D space, emitted as an RGB image through the diodes of a screen. With a background in commercial visual effects, Warburton is intimately familiar with the cultural contexts, technologies, labour practices and financial imperatives that shape the images we consume every day. Warburton suggests 'that while many might mistake a contemporary image for a plain, traditional photograph, it has long been something far more than that.'

The obsessive questioning of what constitutes a photograph has plagued the medium since its invention. Whilst art historians have documented the multiplicity of camera technologies, printing techniques and forms since the nineteenth century, today the materiality of the photograph and its agency is intimately entwined with file compression standards and formats. How does imaging software constrain what is possible to visualise? **Rosa Menkman's** *The BLOB of im/possible images* (2021) is concerned with the constraints these standards impose: how they mediate our perception of the world and perhaps even impact what we are able to visualise. During a residency at the Swiss advanced physics laboratory CERN in 2019, Menkman asked scientists to imagine an 'impossible' image of any important object or phenomenon – an image without resolution limitations, with no limits on spatial, temporal, energy, signal/noise or cost. *The BLOB of im/possible images* presents the results of these dialogues as an interactive work hosted on a webXR platform. Menkman's creative investigations prompt us to consider how imaging technologies frame our capacity to negotiate the possible and impossible. Menkman explains: 'The *BLOB* was built to give a metaphoric 'shape' to the space of all images, past and future. Different Axes of

Installation view, Rosa Menkman, *The BLOB of im/possible images* 2021, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

Affordance cut the *BLOB*. These parameters describe the mechanics that define what is resolved and as a result, what is compromised, or in other words, will not be rendered. While in reality, the space of all im/possible images is fragmented, organised by actions and affordances, stacked by the history of image processing technologies, and consolidated in resolutions, the *BLOB* offers a space where imaginary propositions are possible. In the *BLOB* visitors can look and think through images as fluid, released from the otherwise rigid settings, resolutions, affordances and compromises.' [4]

Generative imaging is only the latest moment in a longer history of transformations in photographic practice brought on by computation, but in its short life is already playing havoc with conventional imaging practices. It has also, naturally, caught the attention of artists. In a curious reversal of the established process of captioning a photograph after it has been taken (often in the course of printing), professional image makers and publishers are now negotiating the ability to synthesise photographic-looking images from descriptive texts. In the process, the still-dominant paradigm of photography as a contingent encounter between a camera user and the world is being challenged by proprietary algorithms trained on datasets of existing photographic images. This has raised fundamental ethical questions about authenticity, racial and gender and other biases, authorship (where artists work is trained on the models without their consent), as well as the energy expended to produce the images. Generative images are clearly not photography as it is conventionally understood as a record of reflected light onto a light-sensitive surface. German artist Hito Steyerl refers to generated images as 'statistical renderings' that 'shift the focus from photographic indexicality to stochastic discrimination'.[5] Indeed, AI image generation strikes at the heart of established theories of photography – marking a fundamental shift from optical registration to statistical correlations and probabilistic determinations. However, AI image synthesis mimics the look of photographs through the digestion and regurgitation of millions of training images in datasets. In addition, synthetic photorealism – the realism of photographs – is possible with the right combination of prompts (which typically borrow from the technical language of photography, including camera models, aperture and film stock).[6]

Since text-to-image generators rely on massive datasets of historical images to make their predictions, arguably one of the most productive uses of these tools by artists is their generation of images currently absent from historical and personal archives. The prints in **Sara Oscar's** *Counterfactual departure (Bangkok Winter Garden Series) 1974,*

Sara Oscar, *A hyperrealistic photograph of a pregnant Thai woman, wearing a suit, fainting, luggage, chaos, airport parking lot, in the style of Jean Martin Charcot - scale 1:1, quality 1* 2023. Image courtesy of the artist.

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(2023) at first glance are the most traditionally 'photographic' works in this exhibition, exploiting an established language of gallery-based photography. However, Oscar's images can be described as a post-photographic experiment in storytelling. The artist uses the term 'counterfactual photography' to describe this series of images she generated, which depict her pregnant mother leaving Thailand at Bangkok International airport in 1974. No such photographs of this pivotal event exist in her family archive, so Oscar experimented with generating them from the collective archive that makes up the training data of AI tool Midjourney. Riffing in her title on Roland Barthes' famous search for a photograph that captured the essence of his recently deceased mother in *Camera Lucida* (1980), Oscar suggests that 'the AI photograph… represents not *what has been*, but a desire to see *what could have been*. It is a speculative image, rather than an evidential image.' Indeed, the only

evidence here is provided in the form of the image titles, consisting of the precise textual and technical prompts Oscar entered into the software to generate the images. Here AI performs a similar role to staged photography with the added phantasmatic frisson of the images being conjured from data that results in the images looking not quite right (deformed hands and feet disappearing into a blur are currently a common feature of AI-generated images).

With the shift from 'photography' to what is being termed 'promptography', photographic education is challenged. How to prepare young image makers for success in an increasingly automated field of photographic production? How to nudge the model to more spectacular photorealism through the use of obscure text prompts that mine the history of photography? How to avoid being left behind in this radically accelerating image marketplace? Stepping into this

vacuum is the *Prompt Battle Team* – a collective led by **Sebastian Schmieg** and **Florian Schmidt**. *Prompt Battle* (2022–) is presented as a live game show format where participants compete against each other using text-to-image software. The winner of each round is determined by the audience, who decide which player has conjured the most surprising, disturbing or beautiful images from the latent space of text-to-image generator DALL·E 2. For those who aspire to be a prompt dilettante, this exhibition includes a *Prompt Battle Training Station* (2023) that offers audiences the chance to master text-to-image software away from the judgement of the crowd. Having completed training, visitors are invited to register as combatants at a live *Prompt Battle* in collaboration with ACMI during the period of the exhibition.

Photography is a lure, a reference medium and a 'zombie' residue haunting our screens.[7] Nonetheless this phantom

Installation view, Sebastian Schmieg, *Prompt Battle Training Station* 2023, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

of photography remains intoxicating and often pleasurable – luring us to spend our time uploading, generating, circulating and sharing. We are ensnared in this human-machine assemblage, from which new aesthetic forms and cultural and economic value arises. But are the conventions and expectations of twentieth-century photographic discourse still useful tools with which to navigate the current landscape of imaging? If, following Vilém Flusser, the task of the photographer is to 'exhaust the program' of the camera, is the future role of the photographer merely to produce aesthetic fodder for machines?[8] Is it time to execute photography – or only as we know it?

NOTES

1   In 1996, Linda Michael curated *Photography is Dead! Long Live Photography!*, an important exhibition of Australian artists at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. That exhibition, as the museum's website notes, presented 'photography at a moment of technological transition' and 'embraced works concerned with testing the formal limits of conventional photography.. using the latest techniques of digital imaging'. See https://www.mca.com.au/exhibitions/photography-is-dead-long-live-photography

2   Daniel Rubinstein, 'What is twenty-first-century photography?' *Philosophy of Photography*, Volume 7, Issue 1-2, October 2016: 155–160. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1386/pop.7.1-2.155_1

3   Fei-Fei Li, 'How we're teaching computers to understand pictures', *TED Talk*, March 2015 https://www.ted.com/talks/fei_fei_li_how_we_re_teaching_computers_to_understand_pictures?language=en

4   See https://beyondresolution.info/impossible

5   Hito Steyerl, 'Mean Images', *New Left Review* 140/141, March–June 2023: 82.

6   Daniel Palmer and Katrina Sluis, 'Photography After AI', *Artlink*, Issue 43.2, 2023: 24–33.

7   On this notion of 'lure' see Ingrid Hoelzel and Rémi Marie, *Softimage: Towards a New Theory of the Digital Image*, Bristol/Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015; and on the 'zombie condition of photography' see Andrew Dewdney, *Forget Photography*. London: Goldsmiths Press, 2021.

8   Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, trans. Anthony Matthews, London: Reaktion Books, 2000, 26.
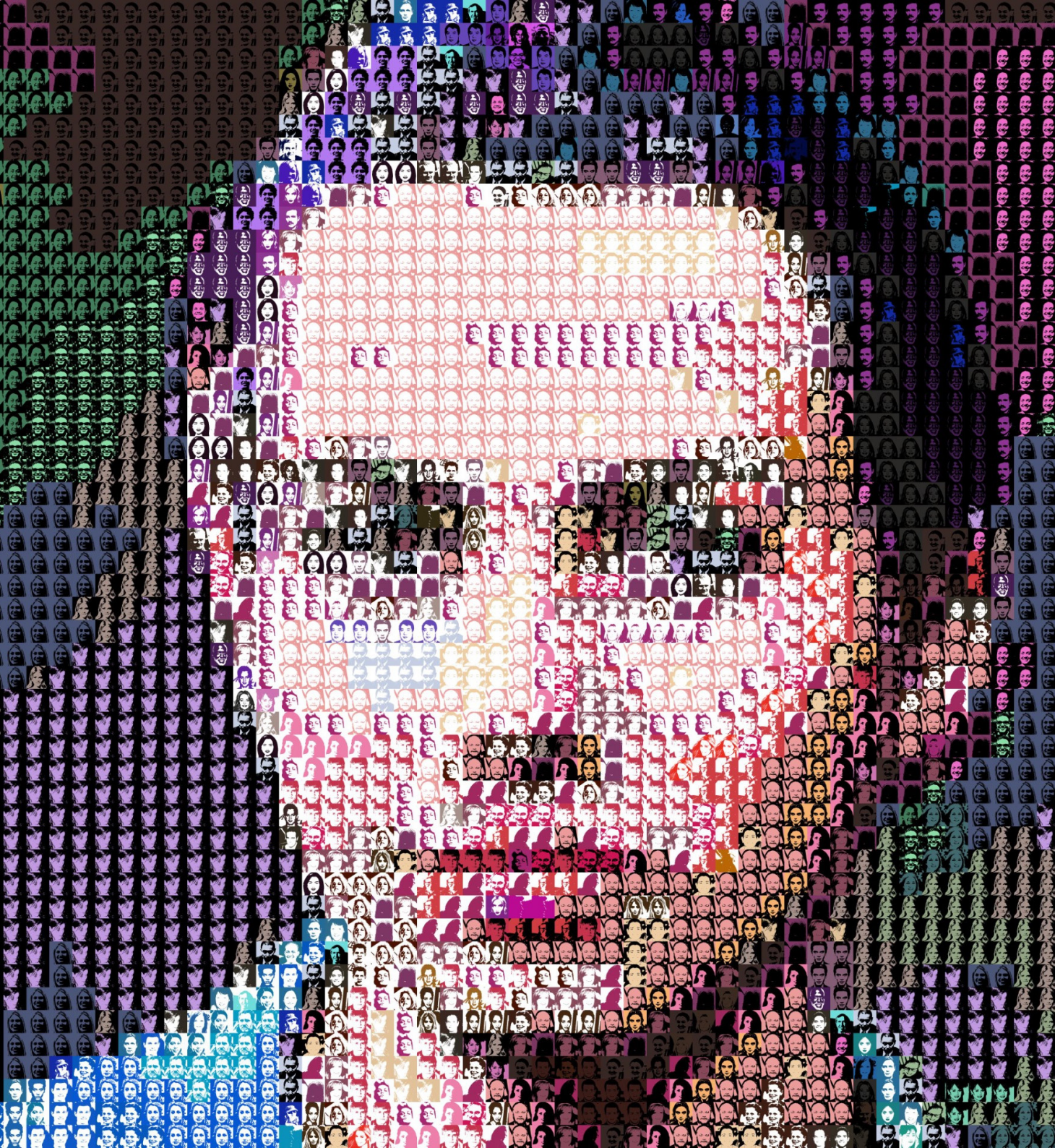
J. Rosenbaum, *Gender Tapestry* 2022.
Image courtesy of the artist.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Memo Akten is a multi-disciplinary artist, musician, researcher and computer scientist from Istanbul, Turkey, currently based in Los Angeles. He explores the tensions between ecology, technology, science and spirituality; studying intelligence in nature, intelligence in machines, perception, consciousness, neuroscience, physics and philosophies of spirituality, ritual and religion. He uses code as his craft to create images, sounds, films, large-scale responsive installations and performances. He received his PhD from Goldsmiths University in London, specialising in creative applications of Artificial Intelligence and deep learning with meaningful human control. He is currently Assistant Professor of Computational Art and Design at University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

Dries Depoorter is a Belgium artist that examines themes such as privacy, artificial intelligence, surveillance and social media. Depoorter creates interactive installations, apps and games. Depoorter has exhibited internationally at the Barbican, MUTEK Festival, Art Basel, Bozar, Para Site Hong Kong, Mozilla – The Glass Room San Francisco, HEK Basel, WIRED, IDFA Doclab, Mundaneum, FOMU, Ars Electronica, Athens Digital Art Festival, Art Soutterain, STRP festival and Heidelberger Kunstverein.
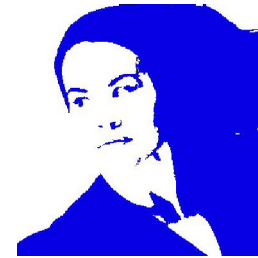
Amrita Hepi, artist and choreographer, acknowledges the black and brown female body as an intricate vessel for, and of, historical knowledge. Departing from conventional viewpoints that perceive archives as mere repositories of documentation, or bureaucratic entities, Hepi's work embraces an alternative. By coalescing fact and fiction, memoir and ethnography, the local and the singular, Hepi revitalises the static notion of the archive into something steeped with potentiality and self-discovery. The artist's work has been presented and performed in a range of national and international museums, galleries and festivals.

Rosa Menkman is a Dutch artist and researcher of resolutions with a special focus on glitches, resolutions, cyclopes, impossible rainbows, unnamed colours and IANA, the goddess of staircases. In her work, she focuses on noise artifacts that result from accidents in both analogue and digital media that offer insights into their otherwise black boxed modes of operation. As a compendium to this research, she published *The Glitch Moment/um* (INC 2011) on the exploitation and popularization of glitch artifacts, and *Beyond Resolution* (i.R.D. 2020) on the politics of resolution setting. In 2019 Menkman won the Collide, Arts at CERN Barcelona award, which inspired her recent research into what makes things im/possible, with a special focus on im/possible images.

Sara Oscar is a Sydney based artist of Southeast and South Asian descent. Her work is concerned with the role photography plays in capturing and classifying human identity that accumulates in archives as a photographic way of seeing the world. She uses techniques of text-image interplay, collage, and installation with photography to unravel these ideas. She has exhibited extensively in institutions throughout Australia, and her work is held in numerous private and public collections. Oscar was the 2022 recipient of the John and Margaret Baker Fellowship in the National Photography Prize, Murray Art Museum, Albury. She is Senior Lecturer in Visual Communication at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Max Pinckers is an artist based in Brussels, Belgium. His oeuvre explores visual strategies in documentary photography. Not believing in sheer objectivity or neutrality, Pinckers makes explicit the often-invisible elements of production, such as theatrical lighting, stage directions and extras. Extensive research and diligent technical preparation are combined with improvisation to obtain lively, unexpected, critical, simultaneously poetic and documentary images. His work takes shape as self-published artist books and exhibition installations, such as *The Fourth Wall* (2012), *Will They Sing Like Raindrops or Leave Me Thirsty* (2014), and *Margins of Excess* (2018). Pinckers is currently a doctoral researcher and lecturer in the arts at the School of Arts / KASK, Ghent, and has received multiple international awards, such as the Edward Steichen Award Luxembourg 2015 and the Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2018. In 2015 he founded the independent publishing house Lyre Press.

J. Rosenbaum is a Melbourne AI artist and researcher working with 3D modeling, artificial intelligence and extended reality technologies. Their work explores posthuman and post-gender concepts using classical art combined with new media techniques and programming. J has a PhD from RMIT University in Melbourne at the School of Art exploring AI perceptions of gender and the nature of AI-generated art and the human hands behind the processes that engender bias, especially towards gender minorities. Their artwork highlights this bias through programmatic interactive artworks and traditional gallery displays.

Sebastian Schmieg investigates the algorithmic circulation of images, texts, and bodies. He creates playful interventions that penetrate the shiny surfaces of our networked society and explore the realities that lie behind them. In particular Schmieg focuses on labor, algorithmic management and artificial intelligence. He works in a wide range of media including video, website, installation, artist book, custom software, lecture performance and delivery service. Schmieg studied at the University of the Arts in Berlin and has exhibited work at Kunsthalle Zürich, The Photographers' Gallery London, MdbK Leipzig, HeK Basel and Chronus Art Center Shanghai. Schmieg is a professor of Interface Design at HTW Dresden.

Alan Warburton is an artist, animator, author, curator and video essayist working with CGI, VR, AR, installation and sculpture. Over the last decade Warburton has had over a million views of his animated films and managed the unlikely feat of going semi-viral with critical video essays about computer graphics and visual culture. Warburton is currently researching digital images and labour for a PhD at Birkbeck's Vasari Institute in London.

(pages 21-23) J. Rosenbaum, examples of *binary images* of the *execute_photography* artists 2023. Images courtesy of the artist.

"Beauty"
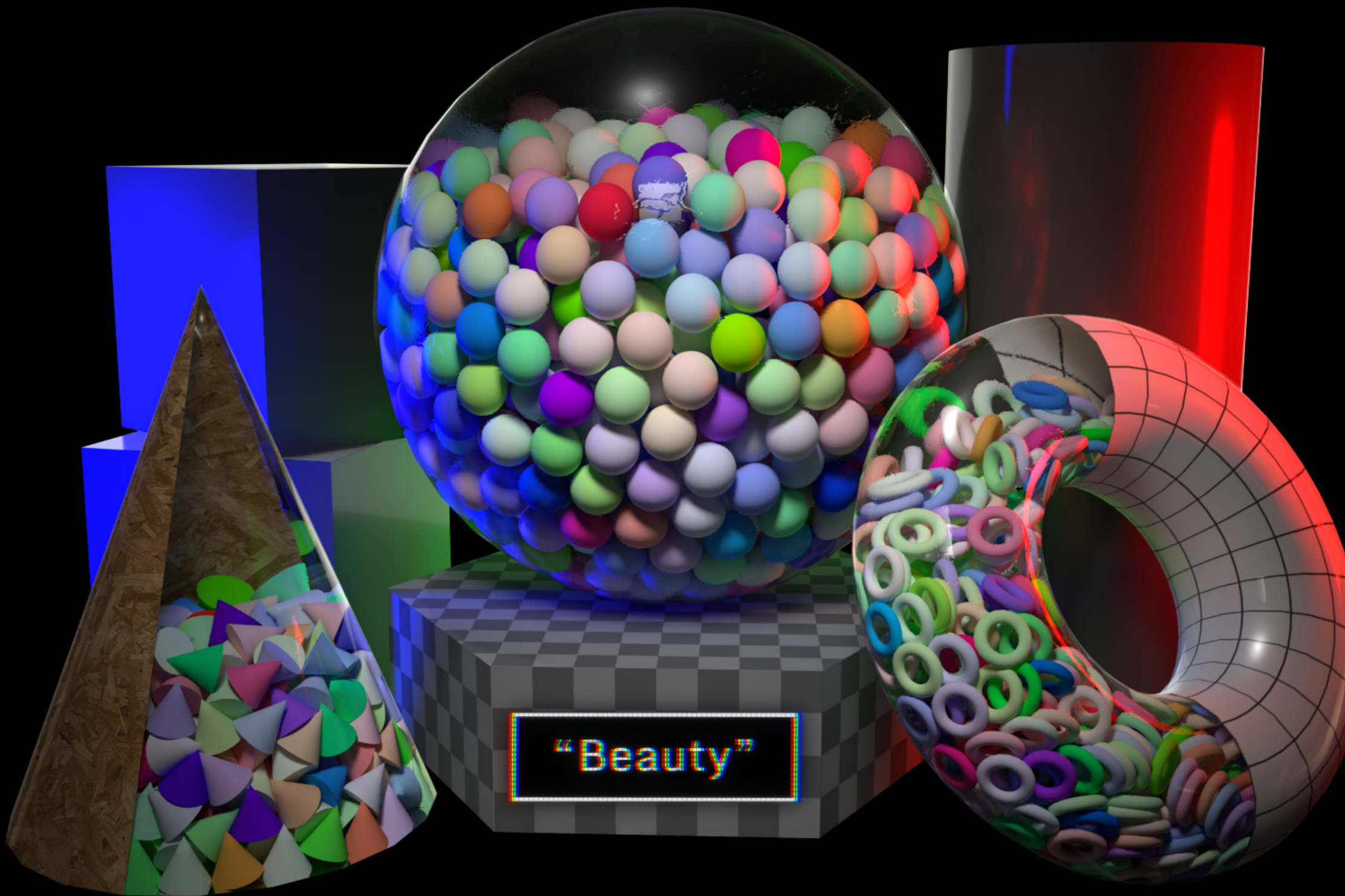
Alan Warburton, *RGBFAQ* 2020 (still). Image courtesy of the artist.

CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES

Alison Bennett

Dr Alison Bennett is an artist working in the field of expanded photography through a neurodiverse queertech lens. They are a senior lecturer in photography at RMIT University in Melbourne, where they are the Associate Dean, Photography, in the School of Art and co-director of the Imaging Futures Lab.

Shane Hulbert

Shane Hulbert is an artist and associate professor in the School of Art at RMIT University, where he lectures in imaging technologies. His photographic work has been shown nationally and internationally, most recently at the Pingyao International Photography Festival in China.

Daniel Palmer

Daniel Palmer is a professor in the School of Art at RMIT University. His books include Installation *View: Photography Exhibitions in Australia 1848–2020* (Perimeter Editions 2021), written with Martyn Jolly, and *Photography and Collaboration: From Conceptual Art to Crowdsourcing* (Bloomsbury 2017).

Katrina Sluis

Katrina Sluis is a curator and associate professor in the School of Art and Design at Australian National University. With Andrew Dewdney she is the co-editor of *The Networked Image in Post-Digital Culture* (Routledge 2022).

Prompt battle 2024, at ACMI, Melbourne. The original *Prompt Battle* was developed at HTW Dresden by Sebastian Schmieg, Florian A. Schmidt, Bernadette Geiger, Robert Hellwig, Emily Krause, Levi Stein, Lina Schwarzenberg and Ella Zickerick. Photo by Alison Bennett.
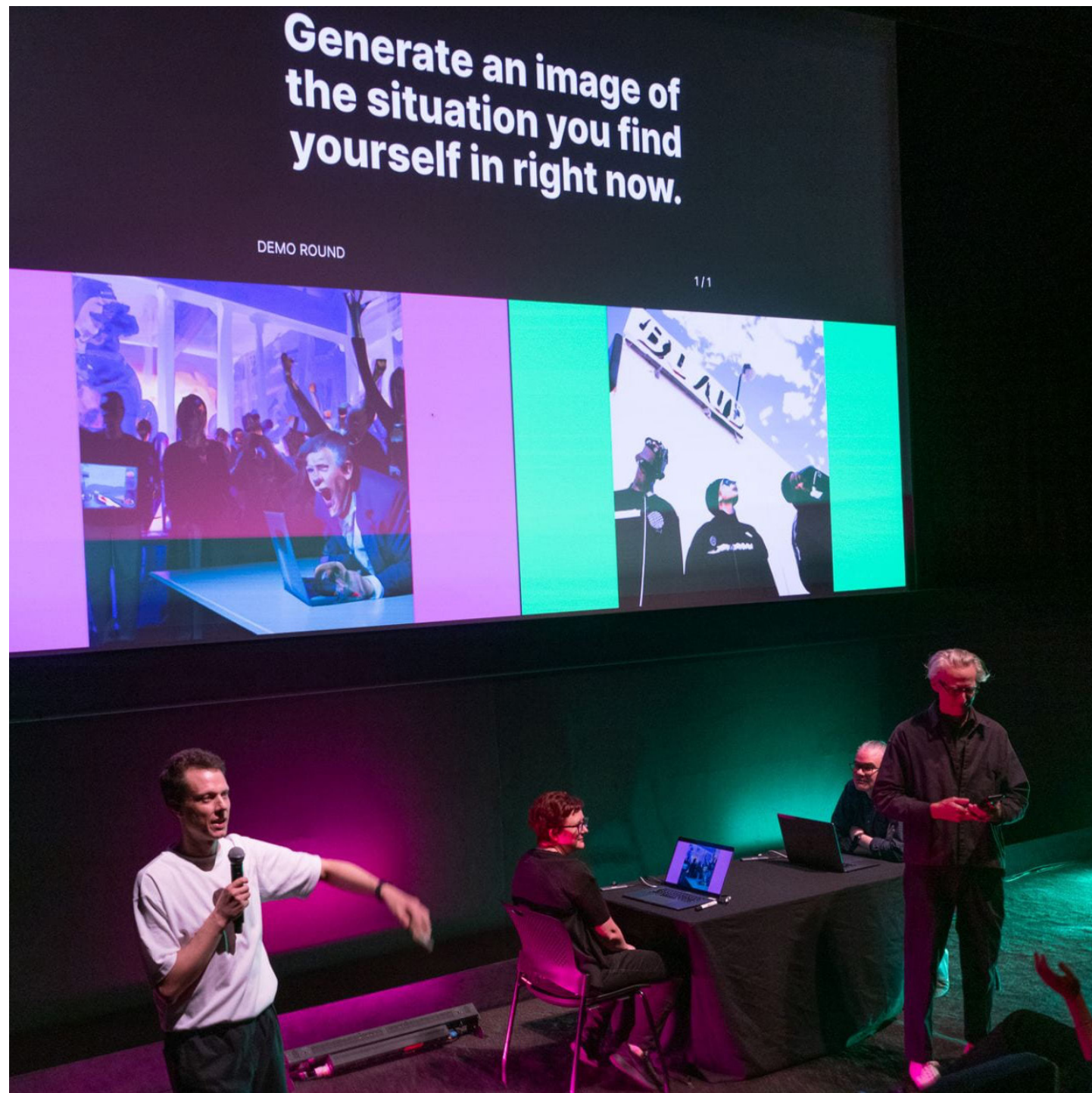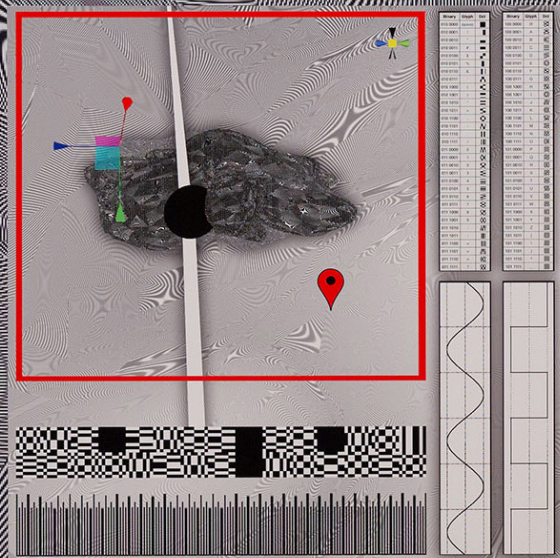
Installation view, Rosa Menkman, *The BLOB of im/possible images* 2021 (detail), in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

LIST OF WORKS

All works courtesy of the artists.
Measurements are height x width x depth.

Memo Akten
Learning to See (interactive edition) 2017
PC, camera, flatscreen monitor, cables,
cloth and wires
installation dimensions variable

Dries Depoorter & Max Pinckers
Trophy Camera v0.95 2021
digital camera in yellow plastic housing
with Raspberry Pi Zero W microcomputer,
full HD camera, module for RaspberryPi,
5000mAh power bank and Monochrome
128x32 SPI OLED graphic display
work courtesy of the Fotomuseum
Antwerpen Collection, 2021/0022
200 x 115 x 140 mm

Dries Depoorter & Max Pinckers
Trophy Camera v0.95 2021
pigment print
1000 x 579 mm

Dries Depoorter & Max Pinckers
Trophy Camera v0.95 2021
pigment print
1000 x 1310 mm

Amrita Hepi
Open Poses 2022
webcam, PC, flatscreen monitors,
green screen paint and vinyl flooring
and pigment prints
installation dimensions variable

Rosa Menkman
The BLOB of im/possible images 2021
wallpaper print, PC, flatscreen monitor,
gamepad controller and pigment prints
installation dimensions variable

Sara Oscar
*A hyperrealistic photograph of a 30
year old Thai woman, pregnant, suit,
lost expression, Suvarnamhubi airport,
luggage, carpark, 1970s - scale 1:1,
quality 1* 2023
from the series *Counterfactual departure
(Bangkok Winter Garden Series) 1974*
pigment print
1100 x 1100 mm

Sara Oscar
*A hyperrealistic photograph of a pregnant
Thai woman, tall woman in suit, falling
luggage, chaos, airport parking lot,
theatrical gestures, falling - scale 1:1,
quality 1* 2023
from the series *Counterfactual departure
(Bangkok Winter Garden Series) 1974*
pigment print
1100 x 1100 mm

Sara Oscar
A hyperrealistic photograph of a pregnant
Thai woman, wearing a suit, fainting,
luggage, chaos, airport parking lot, in the
style of Jean Martin Charcot - scale 1:1,
quality 1 2023
from the series *Counterfactual departure*
(Bangkok Winter Garden Series) 1974
pigment print
1100 x 1100 mm

J. Rosenbaum
Gender Tapestry 2022
wallpaper print and interactive projection
2500 x 2500 mm (print) and
2500 x 2500 mm (projection)

Sebastian Schmieg
Prompt Battle Training Station 2023
interactive arcade game
1820 x 1200 x 1350 mm

Alan Warburton
RGBFAQ 2020
digital animation with subtitles,
27 min. 38 sec. (looped)
installation dimensions variable

Installation view, Dries Depoorter and Max Pinckers, *Trophy Camera v0.95* 2021, Collection Fotomuseum Antwerpen, 2021/0022, in *execute_photography*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2024. Photo by Christian Capurro.

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