

SUNY Purchase College

New Media

Tele-Touch and the art of Presence

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Throughout history, artists have worked with screens, projections, canvases and more in order to display their work. Time and time again we are faced with the shape of the rectangle, a shape that mimics a window both physically and metaphorically. Whether we are looking through in order for the artists to reveal something new, or looking at it to reveal a reflection, art has the power to speak to an audience. With the rise of the internet, people have been granted a new tool to share and exist online. Our possibilities online seem infinite in the ways in which we can explore our own identities and interests. We can have privacy and anonymity, or we can use the internet to assert ourselves and our views. Like art, the internet is a place to reveal, conceal or explore. My senior project seeks to explore the ways in which the internet and media affect ourselves, our bodies, identities and overall presence. This paper will explore how other female artists have approached similar subject matter through video and performance.

John Suler states in his online hypertext book, *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, in which he analyzes people's behaviors online, that “the simple rectangular window itself creates a visual sensation of place and a perceptual invitation to enter it. Even the word "window" itself conjures up sensations of entering a new cyberspace.” When we view screens including our phones, laptops, tablets, and televisions, we are often faced with the familiar rectangular structure that resembles a window. In this metaphorical sense, we have access to a portal device, as technology transports us to digital spaces. In these realms we experience presence, while our bodies become disembodied. As we focus on screens, our minds are focused on what's in front of us, and less so on our physical environment. One way to notice just how deep our absorption runs is to experience a glitch, freeze, delay, or bug. Very quickly we are pulled out and frustrated. Suler states, “to appreciate the power of movement and reciprocal interaction in creating presence within an online setting, notice what happens when your program crashes. Nothing

responds to your mouse clicks. Everything freezes. The environment is suddenly dead and your sensation of presence in it evaporates almost immediately.” Interruptions reduce or even dissolve presence. Glitches, crashes, bugs, and viruses all ‘remind the telematic participant that s/he is inevitably a perpetual observer, a voyeur whose electronic relationships are subject to autoerotic soliloquy.’ (“Art and Telematics,” n. pag.) (Chua) Being online is taking part in the poetic, real, and raw in between space of wires and magic. It is there until it is not.

When we are scrolling, staring at our screens and consuming media, we are present there, no longer in our immediate environment. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, Telepresence can be defined as technology that enables a person to perform actions in a distant or virtual location as if physically present in that location. Most often, we experience telepresence, or telecopresence by talking on the phone or video conferencing. To experience a sense of presence through technology, telepresence enables a shared space and time between people distances apart. In, “Embodiment and Presence in Virtual Worlds: a review, ” Professor Ulrike Schultze examines concepts, theories and insights regarding virtual worlds and the way we interact with them. Schultze found that, “the term telepresence was coined by NASA and the robotics community to refer to the illusion of being transported via telecommunication systems to a real, physical location, which could then be experienced synchronously from afar.” We see this in our day to day life, especially at the height of the COVID-19 PANDEMIC, in which people connected in order to continue working or being in school. Multitudes of people met up on zoom, discord, facetime, etc. in order to be in a shared space. However, that is just one small example. The internet is vast and allows for connection and mediated presence through websites, games, online chat rooms, and more. Overtime, the term telepresence in regard to technological

mediation has faded, and people just use the term presence, or virtual presence, to describe being in a virtual setting.

In, “The Digital Self: Through the Looking Glass of Telecopresent Others,” Shanyang Zhao explores the impact of our interaction with others on the formation of self through the internet, paying close attention to teenagers. During adolescence and onward, people look to others to define themselves. Through various social cues, people validate or invalidate themselves and their experiences. For instance, tone of voice, facial expression, gesture and posture, kinesics, and proxemics, reveal others attitudes towards us. (Zhao, 388) Seeing how others perceive their outward appearance can influence how they see themselves within corporeal copresence. However, through the mediation of the internet we interact in telecopresence, where we are disembodied. Of course, telecopresence is not a completely new way of interacting. Even before the internet, people were connecting through the use of phones and telegrams. At the same time, there is an immediacy to the internet. For example, Facetime brings us closer to those we are interacting with through the sense of sight and sound. The internet also allows for complete anonymity which influences how we act and behave online.

Some may find that the self they present online is vastly different from the one they present in real life. The “looking glass” that Zhao references throughout their writing refers to the internet, and the users on it, ability to reveal a digital self. Zhao states, According to the “looking glass” theory, the self is not something we are born with or something that is innate in us; instead, it is something we acquire through interaction with others. In the sense that our perceived appraisals of those we interact with serve as the basis upon which we establish our self-view, we say that we come to see ourselves through the lens of others.” (392) Without the internet, it is the people one grows up around that helps shape who they become. Yet, the internet

reaches far and wide, and allows for people of various different backgrounds and perspectives to meet and come together. The internet also allows for us to stay connected to those we meet in real life, but don't live close to. To look deeper into the formation of the digital self, Zhao separates it into three categories. The self that we “acquire through interactions with disembodied others in the anonymous online world can be described as (1) inwardly oriented, (2) narrative in nature, (3) retractable, and (4) multiplied.” (395) The inwardly oriented aspect of the self alludes to the emotions, thoughts, and attitudes. One’s ‘inner world’ is often a more vulnerable private space that people feel less inclined to share with the world. Yet in telecopresence people are more willing to share the deeper, innermost parts of themselves.

Cyberspace can reach one's inner world, outer world, and imagination. It extends into our reality and influences the way we live and socialize with one another. It's a way we share and receive information. It is a powerful tool and expansive space. In terms of the power of our brains, it is noted that “imagined actions have almost the same effect on the brain as the actual execution of these actions.” (Roesler, “The Self in Cyberspace) Therefore, the internet should not be taken lightly. Of course, the virtual world is not detached from our current social implications in our reality. If the internet is a tool for communication, we must pay attention to what is being communicated, for who, and why.

Behind a screen, people feel safer to expose certain parts of themselves. Part of this is due to the anonymity they have, and the privacy they feel. Secondly, our digital self is narrative in nature, meaning we must have introspection to look at ourselves and decide what we want to share with others. For instance, “in text-based online communications we are nothing until we type at the keyboard and others do not know us unless we tell them something. In the process of narrating to others who we are and what we do, the digital self begins to take shape.” (Zhao,397)

This level of “reflectivity” is not normally exercised in the realm of face-to-face interaction. It is a process in which we take a careful look at ourselves and seek to articulate solely in words what we see about ourselves that we would like others to know (including what we would like others to believe about ourselves even if it is not there).” (Zhao, 397) A screen name or username is one way we show who we are to others online. Similarly, many teens have multiple screen names for different facets of themselves online. Whether it be the username, their profile description, or even the type of emojis they chose to use, people are constantly defining themselves online.

In reality, the self is contained by the body in the sense that we cannot escape it. While we can identify ourselves past our bodies, it is something that comes with us through life, and is a way for people to discern us. Yet online, profiles can be created and deleted with a touch of a button. Technically, one can kill an old version of themselves online. Lastly, the online self is multiplied. From research, Zhao finds, “The advent of the Internet removes the barriers of physical distance, bringing the dazzling diversity of the entire world to anyone who has access to the World Wide Web. The incursion of cyberspace into the lifeworld of young people in the Internet era creates a type of self that has been described as “decentered, dispersed, and multiplied in continuous instability” (Poster 1990:6). Yet, we tend to look for what we want to find on the internet. Overall the internet can function as a playground for people to explore themselves and their identities through interactions with people they know in real life as well as strangers. In psychoanalytic terms, computers and cyberspace may become a type of “transitional space” that is an extension of the individual's intrapsychic world. It may be experienced as an intermediate zone between self and other that is part self and part other. (Suler, Identity Management)

Our perception of the world and our experience is directly tied to our bodies within it. Our physical bodies cannot escape the constraints of sex, race, age, and gender. Our bodies serve to take in information, process, and display a reaction to and from the external world. In many ways it is easy to forget about our bodies when we are scrolling online, since ‘ In computer mediated communication our bodies seem to become irrelevant and only the presence of our minds matters. However, by emphasizing and problematizing the digital body, virtual worlds offer us an opportunity to become aware of and explore the role of the physical body in communication, as well as the implications of disembodied interactions (Ihde, 2002; Dreyfus, 2009).’ (Schultze, 436)

Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto written by Legacy Russell explores our identities in a time where the bounds between digital and physical are blurred. In the chapter Glitch is Cosmic, Russel analyzes the body in relation to cyberspace. The body is considered cosmic, or “inconceivably vast” in that its potential is endless. We are constantly changing and evolving. Through our bodies we perform both in real life and online, in particular the performance of gender and sexuality, as well as overall identity. Russel explains, “glitch feminism gives weight to the selves we create through the material of the Internet. Glitch feminism makes room for realizing other realities, wherever one might find oneself. As part of this process, an individual is not only inspired to explore their range online, but also can be moved to quite literally embody the digital as an aesthetic, blurring the divide between body and machine further.” Overall, the multiplicity shared in these ideas is that we can use real life and digital experiences to shape our reality.

Since our identities contain multiplicities, different parts of ourselves are revealed. The self who participates on social media on their phone, may participate differently when on their

computer, or tablet. We play many different parts through technology and the internet. Through social media, our phones have become one of the most carefully curated spaces for our individual likes and dislikes. Do we tell cyberspace what we like, or does it tell us? Of course the algorithms and structures of the platforms themselves play a huge part in this, and it is ultimately subjective to the platform and our hegemonic history. Nonetheless, individuals have a place for the culmination of their identity, consciously or not.

In particular, avatars are used to create embodiment and presence of the user through digital means. Embodiment refers to the actions one can perform with their avatar, and are thoroughly immersed. For instance, sitting, dancing, dressing, and moving around. At the same time, avatars are subject to judgment the same as the body in real life. Schultze found that ‘how the user constructs her avatar with regard to appearance, personality and behavior is embedded in a system of meaning informed by the social norms and conventions shaped by both the actual and the virtual world’ (Becker and Mark, 2002) (Schultze, 436) People's perceptions still factor into online identity and appearance, and although they lack the same social cues to express certain feelings, there are other modes approached online. Thoughts, feelings and emotions do not solely take place in the mind but the entire body and nervous system.

Coming back to the power of the screen and its transportational qualities, In, *Here/there : Telepresence, Touch, and Art at the Interface*, Paulson states, “Television, seduces the viewer into an experience of relationality, synchronicity, and connection by circulating the signs of liveness, which momentarily disguise the fact that the viewer is actually alone.”(57) The television allows for someone to feel they are with someone, or experiencing something with someone, even if that is just being told a story. It is the idea that it is happening in real time that makes it effective, that there is a sense of immediate presence. In artist Joan Jonas’ work *Duet*,

1972, she utilizes the screen as a mirror and alludes to the television as a “lonely device that provides company.” (Paulsen, 56) Jonas exploits the interface and makes its presence known through the screen. She deepens this illusion by duplicating herself on screen. Two women’s images fill up the space. The dynamics of the screen are strange in that they are never fully present as a whole. Fractured lines and colors move across the screen to create the moving image, and therefore our eyes work to fill in the missing gaps. Our perceptions and understandings run deep. Jonas has often worked with the dualistic and transcending qualities of video and performance. She states, “My work has always been about releasing images and tensions from my psyche, within the framework of structure and a perception of space.” (Spencer, “Joan Jonas’s Imagist Poetics”) She explores her inner identity as well. Another artist, Sadie Benning approaches the inner work of her psyche and experience in the world through video diaries.

Sadie Benning is well known for their video diaries made on a Fischer-Price PXL Pixelvision that was gifted to them, a children's camcorder that they used in their teenage years. They use the camera to allow an intimate look into their life experiences as a queer youth, speaking to the camera both directly and indirectly, sharing parts of their day. The majority of Benning’s films are recorded in a bedroom, in solitude. The camera moves at a slow and lingering pace fit for Bennings’ mood. They often use the camera lens to look at themselves as if through a mirror. In their 1990 film ‘If Every Girl Had a Diary,’ “there are moments when their hands, their eyes, their cheek, are offered up to the camera and glow with pixelated light and an eroticism that borders on spiritual.” Mixed with these elements is their presence in youth and solitude within their bedroom, yet not so far away from the rest of the family in the house. For instance, sounds of television from another room often come through in the films. Similarly,

Octavia Stocker points out that, “Benning’s video diaries, shot in Pixelvision’s fuzzy dream film, resist narrative resolution too. They are, after all, private – or at least mimicking privacy – and free from the burden of having to communicate with an audience. If we want to be understood then we have to submit to language, but diaries (ostensibly) don’t exist to be understood by anyone but their own author.” Bennings work was made before society came to have tiny computers everywhere we go, and that is why their work was so successful. While Benning’s work is immediate and intimate, performance artist Laurie Anderson subverts her presence and its immediacy through technology.

Eu Jin Chua from *The London Consortium* looks into the various ways artist Laurie Anderson has applied telepresence in her work. Laurie Anderson is an American avant garde multimedia artist who works with sound, music, film, and performance. She is very well known for some of her works including “O Superman,” a 1981 song performance that made it to #2 on the UK Singles Charts. One device that Laurie utilizes in her work is ventriloquism, the act of speaking through a surrogate body. She does this through alter egos, creating an alternate persona between her and the audience. She often morphs her voice through technological mediation to create different characters. In 1975, Anderson installed “At the Shrink’s” which consisted of an eight-inch high figurine, where, “a tiny Super-8 film projection of Anderson's image cast on a clay "sculpture" that had been carefully molded to conform to the proportions of her filmed body.” Through this figurine, Anderson’s presence was mediated between her image projection and the audience. It created a sense of live performance without the artist actually being there. Chua explains, “It was a surrogate for the performance artist's own body, parroting back words pre-recorded by the "real" Anderson.” By creating a “fake hologram” through the projection on a 3D surface, she accentuated the idea of a presence, of a being existing in space beyond a flat

screen. Her presence is at a distance, and this idea is carried throughout her work in various ways, as Chua explains, “Anderson's performative surrogates--her synthesized voices, her ventriloquist's dummy, her video clones--insert a gap between the audience and the would-be authenticity and immediacy of the performer's persona.” Throughout her work Anderson continues to toy with these themes, particularly that of presence. She is most often multiplying her presence in different ways through technology. Being not fully there, but appearing to be through her fake holograms is one way that she approaches her appearance and subverts it in her art.

Overall, artists have taken these concepts and applied them in various ways in order to extend further to the audience. Looking at the internet conceptually, it is a space for self discovery, to further our own being, to question our identity. Through online environments we may be present in multiple spaces at once. Our presence quickly shifts in and out of these online environments as well as our reality. Our experiences on the internet are similar to our experiences in real life, and can deeply affect us. In some ways, we lose the connection to our body when online, and in others it is heightened.

I have addressed these issues through my project called, “Tele-Touch” which is an eight and a half minute video that has a looping nature from beginning to end. The video is installed as a projection onto a white wall. The podium is distant from the wall and holds the headphones that feed the sound through. In order to create a more cohesive work, I decorated the headphone stand with plastic leaves and flowers. For the headphone wire, I wrapped vines around it. This created a more succinct connection to the natural aspects in the video, such as the grass and

flowers. I also laid down scattered leaves and flowers onto the white podium. The video begins with bright green text in a digital style font, as if the computer is communicating directly to someone, i.e the persona in the video. The text is accompanied by a digital style typing sound, high pitched and electric. The text opens the piece by asking, “Are you there Eliane?” Next, “I’m here” comes onto the screen in a dispersed way, with “here” being in multiple different places on the screen. The text goes on to say, “sometimes two places at once...” Again, the computer takes on its own voice by declaring, “A screen can be good company when you are lonely...” taking up the right side of the video with the illuminated words. “Oh yes, you love to watch tv and scroll endlessly,” “Oh yes, I love to watch you, watch me, watch you, watch me.” Following this text, a video appears of the back of a woman's head, looking straight on to a big screen. Over it lays a black grid. The screen she is watching is filled with green graphics that have a nostalgic feeling to them. At one point, a man's face comes onto the screen and his eyes look directly out. At about one minute and ten seconds, the video begins to shrink amongst the black grid and comes into the center of the video. The television screen that the woman is watching continues to play various bright and colorful graphics. Into the top right and bottom left sections of the grid slides in a video of a macbook pro keyboard and hands that start typing. One keyboard is colored with a purple-blue tint, while the bottom is blue-greenish. Then, into the bottom left and top right corner two more videos appear in line with the grid. Both videos start zoomed in, and quickly zoom out to reveal the full scene. The bottom left video is of the woman sitting hunched over a phone. Projected onto her are various rounded lines of light. The scene is very blue, similar to the blue light exuded from a cell phone or computer screen. This bottom left video evolves and changes over time. The woman in the video shifts in position while holding her phone close to her face. In one instance, there are pink projections moving over her, and she is laying down with

her head on a pillow, while two hands hold her phone. In the other, she is lying on her back, holding her phone up over her head, and the video has a green tint on it. The video shifts to show her putting instagram filters over her face. On the top right, the woman appears again, coming from the inside of a television screen, and her image is overlaid onto her. She looks up and around the space, looks into the camera, and holds her hand out as if to touch the surface. Her outward look alludes to the visibility of the viewer. She goes on to hold her phone up, either looking at herself or taking a photo. The viewer watches her look at her phone screen. She plays with distance by coming up close, licking and tapping onto the screen, looking deeply into it, and sharing various close up sections of her face and body. At a point, the screen goes black before the illuminated green text appears asking, “where did you go? Where did you go? Where did you go? Where did you go?” The screen is also overtaken by green solid, purple solid, and a flow of rainbow colors. On the middle top and bottom of the grid, the same styled green computerized text comes in. It states, “user i need you, user you need me, user i please you, user you see me.” On top, the video moves on to show a pair of eyes under blue and green light. On the bottom, old television graphics from the 70’s and 80’s play, depicting cartoons, television static, and glitches. At the same time, the moving images to lastly fill up the grid come in. They start as small rectangles and expand to fit the size of their section in the grid. On the left side is a video of the woman putting on airpods, and her image is a reflection from a laptop screen. Her image becomes overlaid and doubled over herself. On the right side is a video of grass, various flowers, insects and animals. Over the course of the video, each scene in the grid changes to different moving images. There are a total of 9 rectangles within the grid. The middle rectangle remains the same, with the woman's head in front of the television screen. Starting with the top left video, it begins with a typing keyboard. Then it morphs into a glitched, cracked phone screen. From

there, an instagram feed appears, and scrolls throughout images on an explore page, which is personalized to the user. Again, the video of the keyboard returns, as the hand types and scrolls through the mousepad. In between these shots, a solid blue image flashes twice. Following is a video of a goldfish swimming in a blue tank, before the video changes back to the keyboard. This happens two times, and then the keyboard begins to have a rainbow light over it. The video moves in to show the explore page of the tik tok application. Lastly, it comes to a black screen, removing itself from the grid. The videos that remain at that point leave the grid to a cross shape, with five videos that remain playing. The second video down on the left side, or the middle video in the line of three, opens with the image of a woman putting on airpods and then a solid pink image takes over the scene. The reflection of the woman's image appears again, but now it is two videos of her on top of each other. It is a doubling that does not match up, creating a distorted effect. The video glitches, showing a cracked phone screen, and then the bright hot pink solid comes back onto the screen. Following, is the green text that asks, "touch me, touch screen, touch keys, ctrl ctrl ctrl me." Repeated once more is the image of her reflection, the pink solid, before a rotating earth is in front of her face. Her image fades away and the earth comes to the forefront of the video, before glitching out onto an eye, moving through clouds, and leaving through the right side of the video. At the same time, revealed is a hand that extends to hold a computer mouse. From there, the image of a starry sky appears, and images of flowers in a rounded rectangle pop up, as a hand hovers above them, zooming in, out and around the images, then scrolls past them. The rounded box within then reveals a woman's stomach with a thermal camera effect over her body. She touches herself and her hands reach out. Similarly on the far right, the second rectangle down, are images of the body under a thermal camera, and positioned on top of flowers, with low opacity. This video shows grass, daisies, pink tulips, a butterfly in a

pink flower, a bee pollinating, and a sheep. Ontop on these flowing streams of natural images is the woman who continues to interact though the camera, looking out to the audience. There are window brackets of various sizes that move across the screen. These window brackets are essentially tabs from a computer screen, and these tabs allow for focus in specific sections, creating more windows and breaking up the space. Each video ends and fades out, until only the scene of the woman watching television is left. Then, the screen goes black and the video is in position to begin again.

I edited this video piece using Adobe suites Premiere Pro. I used both my own footage and found footage, as well as found sound. The grid was made using an image overlaid onto the video. I used some basic math to figure out how to put in each video to line up with the grid. To make the green text, I worked in After Effects. The font was downloaded from a free font website. In After Effects, I added a glow and digital effect to the text. The sound was taken from a royalty free youtube video of digital text sounds. I edited these sounds by breaking them up, aligning, and layering them to line up with the pacing of the text. I used the sound of ocean waves, and their chopiness allowed for a staticky illusion. I made it so that the ocean wave sound begins when the image of the woman looking at the tv comes to view. Once the grid started to form, I incorporated other technological sounds. There is a keyboard clicking sound that is edited on top of the ocean waves, as well as distorted phone sounds. These sounds are modern phone rings, popular message sound effects, and iphone alerts. I distorted these sounds mostly by stretching them in the program called Reaper. Then I dispersed them throughout the video. I sat in front of a large television screen and recorded the back of my head looking towards the screen. Playing on the screen were visuals from a youtube video called, "Liquid Landscapes VHS Visuals Rip - 磁鬼頻率." During the editing process, I cut the edge of the

video to line up with the edge of the television, and then expanded the visuals behind it, extending the boundaries of the screen. I used various found footage throughout my piece, some found from youtube and others from a free stock footage website. The solid colors were also found online and sized up to fit into the grid. The footage of the goldfish on both top left and bottom right were found online. The footage of the grass, flowers, sheep, and insects were found online. The cracked screen glitch was found on youtube, same as the rainbow light, or flowing mood light. The visuals on the bottom are from youtube videos entitled, "VHS Animation Workshop - WORM Results (17-11-2013)," "VHS Glitch Mixtape," and "Home Movies VHS Glitch Art VJ Set 09 -12 -21." I cut sections of each video and put them together in Premiere Pro. Lastly, the rotating earth and image of space was found online. I created a circular mask around the earth, put glitch effects over it and keyframed its movements. I used the same technique of forming masks over videos for various scenes. I used the shape of a rounded rectangular mask to cut out a section of the video of hands zooming on an ipad. I also put this rounded mask over the woman's body. When her hands reached out, I copied the mask and pasted it over itself for a doubling effect. In terms of recording my own footage, I recorded with a Nikon Dslr and an iphone. I used a crtv which was hooked up to a camcorder. I interacted with the camcorder by tapping on the screen. I recorded the television screen with a tripod and camera a distance away. In editing, I cut up the footage, color corrected to make it much more blue, and put two videos on top of each other by lowering the opacities. I recorded my eyes looking into screens, using focused lighting, and then colored it in editing. I recorded myself typing on the keyboard by setting up a camera on a tripod. The images of the body were recorded on a macbook pro using the thermal camera effect. Those then were cut up and the opacity was lowered, the color was edited, and placed over other videos. A tripod and camera were also used

to capture the woman in her phone in bed, and a projector was used to place moving lights over her. In each video, I edited the color and used digital glitch effects, and often chromatic aberrations. Lastly, I used the screen recording feature on the iPhone to record myself scrolling on my phone through Instagram and TikTok.

Coming up with the idea took many months of conceptualizing and evolving my thoughts. I started talking with my advisor Sara Magenheimer during the fall semester of 2021. I went through a lot of different ideas of what I could do before coming to what I actually made, which was most realistic to my abilities, time constraints and available resources. Early on, I knew that I wanted my project to confront being a girl on the internet, and feature aspects of my personal experience. This included a struggle with self image, which I showed through the scrolling feeds that feature an influx of beautiful, stylish standards of what is attractive. I also showed this through the video in which I apply filters on my face that alter its shape to be considered “beautiful.” I originally wanted to use dance to depict the feelings of internet usage, and planned on bringing in a dancer. However, this changed as I formed a new path using myself as the only person within the video. This was a more personalized, focused approach and created a self portrait within the video. Coming into this project, I was inspired by the concept of telepresence. This idea was something I had been thinking about for a long time. I found myself questioning how we are so often in one place, yet when we go on our phones or tablets, it's as if we are transported to somewhere new. In this sense, being two places at once, or being not fully immersed in either place. A lot of this came during the COVID pandemic when so many people were using Zoom, Facetime, and other platforms to stay connected. I struggled to be fully immersed and pay attention to my classes on Zoom. At the same time, I found myself incredibly distracted by my phone. Addicted to the blue light and the serotonin of scrolling through images,

videos, and information. I decided to incorporate these elements of our relationship to digital technology this way. I depicted the blue light, the allure of the cell phone and television screen. I also depicted the influx of information by using the grid. Before I came up with the idea of using a grid, I was looking into other ways I could show many videos at once. I considered a video wall, but did not have the resources to acquire so many televisions of the same style in order to appear cohesive. I also considered a scroll down video which would have emulated scrolling on a phone. However, I was inspired by the idea that screens are shaped like windows, and that windows are what we look through to see something new. This is why I used the grid with nine rectangles, as if nine different windows to look out of or into. I also was inspired by television channels, so wanted to create an effect that could show many different channels being played at once. I also used the back of my head looking into the screen to create a brainwashing effect. As the video progresses from beginning to end, it is as if the viewer moves deeper into the television. The television is known to seduce the viewer into watching it, so I emulated that in my video. I wanted to wash the audience's eyes over with an influx of information and seductive visuals to draw them in. One can get lost in watching, as they try paying attention to each change in each rectangle. I use my body as a vehicle for seduction as well within the work. I first began with a video of myself reaching out and rolling on the floor in order to "seduce the viewer" like through a television screen. After showing this video to my senior seminar class and getting feedback, I realized I had to push further for the idea to come across in the video. Focusing on various aspects of the internet, and what it can and can't do, I came to find that the internet imitates real world experiences back to us. I thought about how the internet is just massive amounts of information, fed in through humans, as if it is some collective brain of humankind. In this realm was a similar idea that technology is a part of nature, in that it comes from natural

elements. Our devices are not magical things but stuff made from what we have here on earth. Later on during the spring semester of 2022, I met with my project advisor Josh Tonsfeldt. He helped me consider how we take in information online, and to use my video to show that interaction. He asked me to consider how we access the internet, for instance through a desktop computer or phone. Similarly, how it is displayed to us in a fragmented nature. We also discussed the phone as a new prosthetic, in the way that it functions as the extension of the arm. At this point in time, humanity is very close and connected to technology.

If I could go back, there are some things I would have done differently to create this project. It took me many months of brainstorming and trial and error. Some ideas I had were never accomplished, never brought to light. For instance, I wanted to display a person walking into a television screen. Similarly, I wanted to allude more to windows as transportation devices, so I would have liked to film myself opening doors and windows and being taken to a place online. I may have benefitted from using a green screen and filming myself moving from one rectangle to the other. I also would have worked more on the sound portion of the video. I would have incorporated more static, nostalgic television sounds and added voices. I also would have distorted the grid more, expanding and contracting it, and using its space to conduct the narrative. I would have added more flashing visuals and lined them up with one another, and I could have played more with the grid by moving and distorting the rectangles, or having elements move past their boundaries.

Many of the problems I ran into were dealing with rendering times. The amount of footage I layered on top of one another, and the many effects I used made playback time very slow on my computer. Most times it was impossible for me to watch what I had edited. Because of this, I utilized my hard drive and worked on various different computers. I had to keep a folder of all

my work, and the footage I was using. I struggled with staying organized and keeping everything in one place, so very often had to locate lost items through premiere pro. In terms of filming, It was difficult filming myself and I needed to ask for help for someone to hold the camera for me, or see what the camera could see from the other side. A Lot of footage I filmed did not make it into the video. Not all of it was necessary or fit into the project in my artistic opinion. For instance, I got shots of plugging a cord into an outlet. However, the angle I could get was not satisfactory and I was not getting the result I wanted.

The space of the gallery greatly affected my installation. I originally planned to display my video on a computer monitor, but tried to use a projector and found that it worked better being large scale. Luckily, there was a projector available in the gallery, which projected forward onto a white wall. I needed to plug in the media player which held the sd card with my video on it. Using zip ties, I organized the wires so they looked clean on top of the projector. From the media player, I connected the headphones, and the wire hung down from the projector down to the podium. At this point, I could have just left the headphones on the podium, and my project would have been installed. However, I wanted to utilize the headphones and podium, making the space around the art cohesive and immersive. I purchased a headphone stand and fake flowers and leaves to glue onto the stand. I placed leaves and flowers scattered on the podium as well. The headphone wire was wrapped with a plastic vine. This extended my video further.

Overall, “Tele-Touch” was well received. People understood the concept of the overflow of information and oversaturation of the screen. The grid created a space in time and was able to assemble a self portrait of myself online, and allude to the various feelings and senses of the internet. I multiplied and divided myself throughout the video, similarly to how we reveal different aspects of our personality online. I opened windows for the viewer to look into.

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