Video Script

Stage 1 : 100 Iteration (1-1.5min)

Everything starts with a question: Where is the boundary between the physical and the digital?

I draw inspiration from Lev Manovich's insights into digital materiality and Marshall McLuhan's view of media as extensions of human capabilities. In our seamless digital edits, what remains of the authenticity of identity? Can digital technology truly enhance our reality, or does it obscure it?

When we talk about digital identity, we are referring to the various characteristics and attributes of an individual in the digital space, which are shaped through the intervention and expression of digital technology. Through the editing process, we can directly shape these digital identities, thereby exploring how they extend or amend our notions of reality.

100 Iteration

On the dismantling and analysis of a graph

To explore this, I modified over 100 everyday photos with digital commands "delete," "pixelate," "displace", making 'questioning modification' and 'seeking modification' the core activities of viewing these photos.

In a world where a few clicks can alter reality, what parts of the world can we still believe to be true?Digital only describes the orange, and the display reproduces the described the color of orange through its algorithm interpretation. When the orange in a digital image can be altered beyond recognition, what does authenticity mean? When our identities are digitally processed, do they retain anything nearly similar to our tangible selves?

I experiment on these questions, reflecting on how digital media not only shapes images but also our self-perception and interactions.

Stage 2 : Further Iteration

Practice process

Based on these reflections, I turned to photograph as one of the most simplest everyday objects, displaying these images on a digital screen against their original physical backgrounds, creating a visual cycle where digital and physical not only coexist but begin to merge.

Do shadows cast by digital light have the same meaning as those cast by physical light? Can a digital identity be considered a new form of Plato's shadow? When space becomes indistinguishable, how does our understanding of reality change?

Stage 3 : Reference (1-1.5min)

Munk, M. (2017). Magic Wand.

（Digital identities often have meticulously crafted facades, bringing about identity crises.） As I navigate multiple digital personas, the distinction between virtual and physical selves becomes blurred, and we question which aspects of ourselves are real and which are merely constructs, feeling disconnected from our physical existence, even leading to existential dilemmas.

At this stage, I contemplate whether digital identities can be viewed as a modern version of Plato's allegory of the cave—where the shadows on the wall may suggest the truth but are not the truth themselves. This perspective prompts us to reconsider the construction of "self" in virtual spaces: what we perceive there might just be reflections, obscured by the medium itself. So, where perception, reality, and self are intricately intertwined, how should we define "truth"?

The coexistence of the persistence and transience of digital identities on social media makes the narrative more complex. Over time, these qualities affect the archiving, forgetting, or reshaping of identities, impacting our personal and collective histories. Inspired by Lynn Leeson's performance art, who lived under a virtual identity from 1973 to 1978, I reflect on the evolving complexities of virtual identities and pose a critical question from her era to ours: how long will it take for the relationship between digital identities and reality to transcend our physical selves and existence?

Stage 4 : Translation (1min)

The everyday objects I photograph make me the glass, which is my eye.Here, I use a glass cup as a metaphor, reinterpreting the attributes of digital identities. The glass cup has no color properties of its own thus depends on reflections of the background. I view this visual translation process as the core of my creation, a form of translation.In this case, having these traces, my digital environment, is actually forming me, it makes me the glass.

As my translation moves from physical objects to digital symbols, I observe its transformation and consider its implications. This translation is not merely a change in appearance but an understanding of how the digital environment distorts and shapes our perceptions of self and reality. The dynamics of digital identity are influenced by the environments they encounter, from private spaces to social platforms.

Reference

1. Manovich, L. (2001). The Language of New Media.
2. McLuhan, M. (1964). Understanding Media.
3. Munk, M. (2017). Magic Wand. Available at: https://www.mariemunk.dk/magic-wand (Accessed: 14 May 2024).
4. Leeson, L.H. (1974-1978). Roberta Breitmore. [Performance art].
5. Plato. Allegory of the Cave. The Republic, Book VII, 514a–520a.
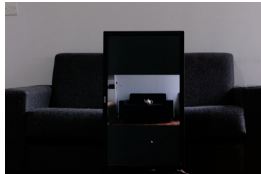
Enquiry

Where is the boundary between the physical and the digital?

What does authenticity mean? When our identities are digitised, do we retain them to the extent that they bear little resemblance to our tangible selves?

Can digital identity be seen as a new form of Plato's shadow? How does our understanding of reality change when space becomes indistinguishable?

How long before the relationship between digital identity and reality transcends our physical selves and existence?