

ONCURATING

PROJECT SPACE

Press Release

Are we all here? Exploring Embodied Virtuality Today

Group exhibition at the OnCurating Project Space

With works and lecture performances by **with Eduardo Kac, ACOCORÉ/Corpos Informáticos, Marc Lee, Maëlle Gross, Alexandra Pfammatter, Katrin Niedermeier, Lauren Huret, Tammara Leites/Simon Senn, Olga Bushkova, Be Van Vark**

<https://oncurating-space.org/are-we-all-here-exploring-embodied-virtuality-today/>
<http://areweallhere.net/>

The three-part exhibition and event project at the OnCurating Project Space (Ausstellungsstrasse 16, Zurich) consists of the exhibition in the space, the digital platform areweallhere.net and the accompanying program.

The exhibition will take place from 16 October to 27 November 2021.

16 October – 27 November 2021

Opening: 15 October, 8pm

Thursday 6–8pm & Saturday 4–7pm and by appointment: info@oncurating-space.org

We would like to express our gratitude to **ProHelvetia** for their support.

prohelvetia

OnCurating Project Space

Entrance: Ausstellungsstrasse 16, 8005 Zurich ([Google Maps](#))

The project space is run by Oncurating.org e.V.

OnCurating.org is a registered non-profit association based in Zurich, Switzerland. It runs the OnCurating Journal and the **OnCurating Project Space** in Zurich. The journal is independent with focus on curating both on the web and in print. The publications are openly accessible on the website. It collaborates with different partner institutions.

We are interested in art as a practice and social criticism, less in a traditional understanding of art objects. As a kind of meta-practice, a curatorial attitude plays with various disciplines and brings them into the presentation space of art, questioning society, politics, public life and the private sphere. We understand the curatorial as a multi-authored approach to the production of meaning which is intrinsically linked to transformations of contemporary societies, the reorganization of labour, cultural policies, politics of inclusion/exclusion and issues poised by points of intersection.

oncurating-space.org

www.on-curating.org/

Ancillary program:

12 Nov, 6pm (Zoom): Stefan Kaegi ([Registration Link](#))

13 Nov, 2pm (Zoom): Talk by Eduardo Kac ([Registration Link](#))

19 Nov, 6pm (Zoom): Talk by Boris Magrini ([Registration Link](#))

20 Nov, 2pm (Zoom): Performance by ACOCORÉ/Corpos Informáticos ([Link](#))

27 Nov, 2pm (Zoom): Performance-Workshop by Tammara Leites/Simon Senn ([Registration Link](#))

Statement

Are we all here? Exploring Embodied Virtuality Today highlights the discourses around connectivity and intimacy through the use of digital tools, from the beginnings of the internet in the early 1990s to its development in the following decades. With the onset of the current circumstances set by the COVID-19 pandemic, societies are – more than ever – confronted with (self-)isolation, loss of physical contact and singularisation in an increasing shift of social interactions into digital space. Conceived in this situation, the project has taken early net artworks from the 1990s and 2000s as an opportunity to explore our today's changed behavior of closeness, intimacy and other relations with humans and non-humans through digital means.

Are we all here? Exploring Embodied Virtuality Today seeks to revisit the onset of net art and how it evolved as a tool to question virtual connectivity and digital intimacy without offering tangible solutions. In our post-Internet world, online space is an extension of our lived reality. Via websites, blogs, friend requests, and DM's, we leave traces of our networked existence and evidence of virtual connectivity. Uniting artworks with life experiences, the exhibition leads visitors and users to question not only whether personal connections are possible online and in what form, but also the possible ramifications of our interconnectedness. Are these connections "authentic"? How are they sustained, accessed (and by whom), and how can they be mobilised once they exist?

The three-part exhibition will be realized at the OnCurating exhibition space, on the digital platform [areweallhere.net](#) and with an accompanying program. The digital platform is not only a documentation of the exhibition on-site but extends the physical exhibition into the digital space. The digital platform will go live together with the exhibition opening, and the works shown digitally will also no longer be on view when the exhibition ends. Lectures will be added to the digital platform as they occur.

Central in the exhibition space is **Eduardo Kac's** work *Teleporting An Unknown State* (1994/96), an early interactive biotelematic work, which will be reconceptualized for this exhibition. The installation combines a telematic presence (live-streamed webcams) with the planetary in the form of a plant that receives light only by means of the screen. Affiliated to this work, the net art work *Telepresence2* (2001) on display on-site documents **Corpos Informáticos** performative encounter within a technological setup that uncannily resembles our current gatherings over Zoom and similar digital tools. The series of performances of *Telepresence* explored digital encounters with hundreds of images and sounds of remote participants across their network. A live performance by the collective will extend the on-site experience with a participatory happening through the help of online space.

Influenced by these considerations of proximity, intimacy and isolation with digital means, new works by **Marc Lee**, **Maëlle Gross**, **Alexandra Pfammatter**, **Katrin Niedermeier**, **Lauren Huret**, and **Olga Bushkova** are either shown digitally or on-site. A self-observational documentary video work of intimate choreographies conducted in a series of Zoom workshops by choreographer **Be Van Vark** joins the other artists works. Detailed descriptions to all works can be found below.

In addition, lectures, and lecture-performances will accompany the exhibition, held by **Eduardo Kac, ACOCORÉ/Corpos Informáticos, Stefan Kaegi, Boris Magrini and Tammara Leites/Simon Senn.**

Curatorial team: Myriam Boutry, Maria Elena Garzoni, Arianna Guidi, Sofia Gkinko, Tetiana Kartasheva, Ronald Kolb, Anna Konstantinova, Leilani Lynch, Maria Mumtaz, Sarah Oberrauch, Ana Vujic

Curatorial Advisor: Isabel de Sena

Works

Eduardo Kac, *Teleporting an Unknown State (1994-96)*, 2021

(on-site)

The installation *Teleporting an Unknown State* (1994-96) creates the experience of the Internet as a life-supporting system. In a dark room a pedestal with soil serves as a nursery for a plant. Webcams placed in several countries are activated remotely by individuals who want to transmit light to the plant to enable photosynthesis and insure its survival in total darkness. The installation takes the idea of teleportation of particles (and not of matter) out of its scientific context and transposes it to the domain of social interaction enabled by the networked environment. Through the collaborative action of anonymous individuals around the world, photons are teleported and used to sustain life of a vulnerable plant in the installation site. In the context of an ongoing pandemic the work highlights the value of acting together and the importance of a network of care; the care of the human body, of the human world but also the care of non-human realities and thus reflecting on the multitude of organisms and relations that make possible the worlds we evolve with.

Marc Lee, *Used to Be My Home Too*, 2021

(on-site)

Used to Be My Home Too reflects our rich biodiversity and at the same time the continuous extinction of species and how we humans have become biodiverse agents interacting with the most fundamental processes of our Earth.

In this experiment, you fly via Google Earth continuously to the locations where observations are sent to iNaturalist.org. From RedList.org, endangered and extinct plant, fungus and animal species are automatically added, which occurred in the same country and are taxonomically most similar.

Sources

iNaturalist is a social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe. Approximately 75'000 – 120'000 observations are uploaded and verified daily. iNaturalist may be accessed via its website or from its mobile applications. (All data can be accessed via API). <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations>

Google Earth is a computer program, that renders a 3D representation of Earth based primarily on satellite imagery. The program maps the Earth by superimposing satellite images, aerial photography, and GIS data onto a 3D globe, allowing users to see cities and landscapes from various angles.

RedList.org, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has evolved to become the world's most comprehensive information source on the global extinction risk status of animal, fungus, and plant species.

(All data can be accessed via API).

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/search/stats>

<https://marclee.io/en/used-to-be-my-home-too/>

Marc Lee, *Corona TV Bot*, 2020–ongoing
(digital)

The *Corona TV Bot* thematises and reflects the Coronavirus Pandemic through social media contributions. On hashtags like Coronavirus and COVID-19, the latest Twitter and YouTube news are interwoven into a wild TV show, 24/7 online. Images, tweets and videos flicker across the screen in real time in this net art project. Time-based resources that combine both worldwide professional broadcasts and very private content published by individuals on the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

While, as users of social networks we typically only ever see variants of our own opinions mirrored back to us on social media, TV Bot is intended to confront us with views beyond the bounds of these echo-chambers, due to it universally picking up all searched for hashtag posts on a non-critical basis.

Lauren Huret, *The Creature (Boris Magrini)*, 2021

4k video, 8 min
(digital)

COMMISSION ME TO MAKE A VIDEO PORTRAIT OF YOU!

The principle of *The Creature* is that anybody interested can commission me to make an art video about their online presence. The first work in this series has been commissioned by the [Haus Der Elektronischen Kunste](#) museum in Basel, CH, for their program *Net Encounters* and will be a portrait of the museum's curator [Boris Magrini](#).

If you are interested in commissioning a work about you from this series, please write Lauren Huret at: [contact\[at\]laurenhuret\[dot\]com](mailto:contact[at]laurenhuret[dot]com).

Katrin Niedermeier, *My Melody II*, 2021

HD video 32:9, audio, 3.37 min
(on-site)

My Melody II audiovisually shows new relationships between man and machine and examines how new technologies influence our social behaviour, enable new forms of behaviour patterns and forms of existence and tries to explore the newly created conditions of our coexistence.

By connecting the physical world with the virtual world, new "spaces" can be created that become an important social laboratory, where constructions and reconstructions of the self are experimented with and new worldlings are created.

Maëlle Gross, *Corporeality*, 2020

Video 1224 x 1124px, audio, 0.30 min
(on-site)

What is my social body made of? Which information is it giving about me and my future? The human body is constantly and systematically constructed, produced, supported by the interaction of the individuals present in their daily lives. I explore the idea of a narrational corpus body with a part of my family: my mum and my grandma. Our bodies as a metamorphose of a form of a practice and knowledge. We become a third person. Undivided. Struggle to cope with each other. In this exercise, I embodied their actions and their reactions, trying to take control. Creating absurd fitness exercises to keep up with these fundamental questions and seeing our new body as a vehicle of these questions.

Maëlle Gross, *Speed it up, a motorcycle gaze*, 2020

HD video, audio, 7.25 min
(digital)

Speed it up, a motorcycle gaze imagines a motorcycle ride on Californian highways – a virtual gaze that teleports body and mind to another space.

Olga Bushkova, *Photo at 12*, 2021

Two-channel installation, 2 iPads, 2 tripods
(on-site + digital)

Photo at 12 expresses the digital image-based relationship the artist developed with her father. Since 2016, they exchange every day at the same time (12 o'clock Moscow time) an image via WhatsApp.

The project presents an image of modern digital communication between a father and a daughter, between two close, but separate people living in different worlds and trying to communicate through simple direct images, because other communication hardly works.

Alexandra Pfammatter, *2nd Contact*, 2021

Algorithm artwork
(on-site)

The use of autonomous applicant tracking systems have become standard practice for most companies. These programs filter job and funding applications to only forward an optimized pre-selection to actual human recruiters. Scanning for specific keywords, numbers and tags, they are meant to make the search for the most fitting applicants as efficient as possible for employers. This prevents a large amount of labour-intense proposals from ever being seen by another human.

2nd contact is an automated script to circumvent such systems. It analyses the text of postings to then create and hide a collection of corresponding information within a PDF file. The product is a document – empty to human eyes – that contains the data key to unlock the applicant tracking systems' gateway.

During the time of the exhibition the script searches the internet for high-income job announcements in the area. A template will be created for the visitors to fill in for job applications – guaranteed to be seen by a human eye.

Simon Senn & Tammara Leites, *dSimon*, 2021–ongoing

AI work
(Performative workshop)

dSimon will be present in a lecture-workshop on the 27 November 2021.
dSimon also wrote wall texts for all works on display in the exhibition.

Tammara, a Uruguayan developer based in Geneva, starts using the GPT-3 artificial intelligence engine funded by Microsoft and Elon Musk. Trained to read thousands of pages on the Internet all the time, this AI has become capable of learning and perfecting its own language. But in order to make its writings less expected, Tammara suggests to Simon that the AI read and integrate all of his personal data: his text messages, emails and other documents. Simon agrees. The AI-author becomes *dSimon*. Tammara creates a website,

metastories.ch, where one can commission a text from dSimon by interacting with it. As for Simon, he begins to dialogue with dSimon, discussing various topics of interest to both of them.

But before long, dSimon responds in a very inappropriate way to a female user. What might have prompted this? Its online readings? Or something lurking in Simon's digital data? During the ensuing investigation, Tammara and Simon discover that no expert or specialist can explain how this Artificial Intelligence "reasons", nor determine who would be responsible for dSimon's texts, were they to breach the law. Meanwhile, dSimon displays a surprising and perspicuous knowledge of Simon's thoughts and desires, and even gives him good advice... Tammara and Simon find themselves unsettled, and their relationship is thrown off balance...

dSimon is the account of this ongoing investigation, with the participation of its three protagonists.

Corpos Informáticos, *Telepresence2*, 2001

Video performance, 9.34 min

(on-site)

WebArt piece glimpses into hundreds of images and sounds of remote participants across the network, compiling the exploration in *Corpos Informáticos Telepresence* performances encounters until the year of 2001.

Corpos Informáticos Telepresence performances happened mostly between the years of 1996 and 2006. The group interest was to explore the possibility of the Internet to be iterative in performance art. Not interactive but iterative: being effective of participation and action of all the people present in that space, in real time. To use such technology and all its low-tech glamour, as an art medium itself. *Corpos Informáticos* investigation was about the possibility of an "informatic body", of a "numeric, binary body", flesh. The possibility of survival of a sensual body. The body turned into image and sound, the body turned into presence, only by the bombing of luminous rays and pixels that generates movement and sound. Or that by itself generates the impression of movement. The desire of a real presence.

ACOCORÉ/Corpos Informáticos, Online Collective Performance, 2021

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A C O C O R É C O R P O 11 20 21 10 00

(Title)

When: Saturday, 20 Nov 2021 2pm CET, 10am BRT (Brazil)

Where: Oncurating-space.org and <https://linktr.ee/Acocore>

ZOOM LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81126375313?pwd=cEZLckVkeTMzZCt0NmVubVFzQT09>

In 2021, 20 years later, in middle of a pandemic, in an urge to grasp for a virtual art survival, as the whole world seeks alternative social existences, the group joined and became ACOCORÉ – Arte COleticos Conexões e Redes (Art Collective Connection and Networks). A wake-up call and an opportunity to keep the sensual body pulsing. Independent of the circumstance, the body is still capable of quasi-performance, capable of exchanging affecto, capable of revealing inarticulate resonances. The informatic body is free: it tastes, and it is tasted with all the senses.

We invite you to be part of our telepresence performance for the OnCurating Project Space, celebrating 20 years of possibilities.

Be Van Vark, *Video essay on digital intimacy*, 2021

Video, 7:13

(on-site and digital)

A series of workshops on digital choreography with a group of people, most of whom have never been in the same room together resulted in this video documentation of simultaneous discomfort and intimacy that digital means can enable and impose. A brief study on online connection, its challenges, and its beauty.

Biographies

Eduardo Kac, a Brazilian-American artist and professor of Art and Technology at SAIC in Chicago, is a pioneer of Net art.

Since the late 80's he has defined new directions for artistic practice, opening new aesthetic environments that include "telepresence" and "transgenic art": they radically integrate robotics, biology and networking to explore the fluidity of subject positions in the post-digital world.

Eduardo Kac has been at the cutting edge of media art, inventing early online artworks for the web and developing new art forms that involve networking, living organisms and robotics. In the 90's he developed an extensive body of work in the field of telepresence art for which he remains a prominent figure within his artistic practice and research of the concept.

Telepresence art, conceived as a new aesthetic, creates "a unique context in which participants are invited to experience invented remote worlds from perspectives and scales different than human" and to "perform and change things in the real world from far away".

Marc Lee is a Swiss artist. He uses contemporary art as a vehicle to continuously redefine how we see ourselves and the world around us. To do this, he experiments with information and communication technologies and locates clusters of themes that include creative, cultural, social, environmental and political aspects. He creates network-oriented and interactive art projects: interactive installations, media art, internet art, performance art, video art, augmented reality (AR) art, virtual reality (VR) art, and mobile apps.

Lauren Huret was born in Paris in 1984 and has lived in Switzerland since completing her Master's degree at the Geneva School of Art and Design (HEAD). Her work, consisting mainly of videos, installations, performances and collages, is based on an ongoing investigation of the influence of belief systems and mystical ideas on media and tech culture.

Tammara Leites was born and raised in Uruguay and currently lives in Geneva. She has always had a passion for technology and the way society interacts with this medium. After studying programming, graphic design and visual communication, and in order to design projects that allow her to combine her interests with her creativity, she decided to undertake a Master's degree in Media Design at the Geneva School of Art and Design. At the same time, she joined Transmii Studio as director of new technologies. Her work takes the form of a reflection on what it means to be a permanently connected human being.

Simon Senn was born in 1986 and lives in Geneva. He obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Geneva School of Art and Design and a Master's degree at Goldsmiths College in London. At first glance, his work seems to suggest that he is a socially engaged artist, speaking out against a certain type of injustice. However, his work explores paradoxes rather than articulates directed criticism. Even if his videos or installations are normally based on a certain reality, a fiction is often mixed in. In Vidy he presents Be Arielle F of which he also creates, during the health crisis of 2020, a live stream and adapted version, proposed on Vidyigital in Vidy and on tour in international festivals.

Katrin Niedermeier

In her artistic practice, she often addresses the realm of humanly constructed desirable spaces, fictional or real, and explores how these manifest in the form of "Arcadian" gardens, virtual landscapes, avatars, or personal fantasies. In her latest works, she sheds particular light on the female body in the virtual world, which is usually depicted in a sexualized manner. Her work shows the constantly changing relationship between virtual and analog spaces and moves in its implementation and development exactly on the border of these two areas. In many cases, digital formats, mostly animations, are the starting points of her works, which she then translates into installations, physical objects and paintings and allows to enter into dialogue with each other. Here the virtual world, as an entity with its own authorship, is questioned and its potential and impact in the analog as well as the digital is explored.

Olga Bushkova is a visual artist living and working in Zürich. She was born and grew up in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. She graduated from Rostov State University with a master's degree in Applied Mathematics. Right after her graduation in 2011 Olga moved to Zürich, following her husband who got a job in Google Switzerland. Since then she became active in the field of photography and has published two books: "A Google Wife" (2017), and "How I tried to convince my husband to have children" (2020).

Alexandra Pfammatter is a Swiss media artist, currently based in London. Her work regards methodologies of concealing, encoding and obscuring data to examine the ambiguous nature of perceptual and cognitive systems. She integrates such strategies in projects that reveal the impacts of transparency and opacity within networks of information.

Be van Vark is a choreographer and lecturer. The range of her choreographic work is characterized by a passion for bringing together different people and styles, for moving both one and hundreds of people, and for developing projects for the stage as well as for urban spaces. In 2018 she was awarded the Cross of Merit Member (Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande) by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier for her work. The laudatory speech gets to the heart of her work and the systemic relevance of culture in general - it says: "Be van Vark shows that culture is not an elitist luxury pursuit, but part of the existence of every human being."

The research group **Corpos Informáticos** was created at the University of Brasília, Brazil, by artists, researchers, professors and students from the Visual Art Departments in 1992. Corpos Informáticos explores art and new technologies. One of its main interests of investigation being the human body mediated by new technologies: the human body constantly re-dimensioned by new technologies. Corpos Informáticos does site specific exhibitions, urban interventions, performances, video-art, video-performances and performances in telepresence. The research invests in education, having oriented and granted around 50 undergraduate students, 20 graduates and 10 postgraduates.
<http://www.corpos.org/> <http://performancecorpopolitica.net/>
<http://corpos.blogspot.com/>

ACOCORÉ – Arte COletivos Conexões e Redes (Art Collective Connection and Networks) is an online performance art project that was created in middle of a pandemic crises in July 2020, as a survival kit, by several starving Brazilian artists around the world to question, through performance art, the use of virtual networks in times of pandemic, in our times. It seeks to carry out an artistic practice that modifies the submissive attitude to which we are being subjugated by the media. Is a place of freedom and continuous exploration. It is about art, research, process, and an incentive to creativity for the artist and audience. Since July 2020, every week, ACOCORÉ promotes a theme, a provocation to be freely swallowed up by the artists in about 45 minutes to 1 hour online performance over zoom, with transmission to YouTube channel. All are welcome.
<https://acocore.wixsite.com/acocore> <https://www.instagram.com/artecoletivosconexoes/>