

Margareta Klose
#selfcompetenceselfie

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Thank you, dear
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Master-Performance on Zoom
16 June 2020, 2.30 pm
ID: 996 3406 9871 PW: 467836

Practicing drag in a dancing loop, per-
forming 10 steps against face detection.

1st, hide your nose.

2nd, hide your splendid forehead.

3rd, hide your mouth.

4th, hide your ears.

5th, paint new eyebrows.

6th, cover your hair.

7th, keep moving.

8th, keep dancing.

9th, ZOOM.

And 10th, think of the horror movie
Eyes Without a Face.

While spinning to the left, in the direc-
tion of our hearts, like dervishes,
holding our Smartphones vertical-
ly, being framed horizontally on the
Zoom-App, we'll repeat 10 self-com-
petence terms, recorded in our virtual
meeting room.

- 1 Self-Reflection
- 2 Self-Development
- 3 Capacity
- 4 Responsibility
- 5 Commitment
- 6 Performance
- 7 Initiative
- 8 Creativity
- 9 Innovation
- 10 Transfer

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@margareta_klose

16. Juni

#self-reflection

"I AM IN TRAINING DON'T KISS ME"¹

Every Friday from 8 pm to 10 pm performers met on Zoom for practicing a spinning dance in quarantine. Everyone created their own mask against face detection, following certain rules of CV Dazzle, a technique developed by artist and researcher Adam Harvey for camouflaging faces against face detection systems. These systems turn images of faces into mathematical formulas, which can be analyzed by algorithms. CV is short for computer vision. While the camouflaging technique uses cubist-inspired designs to thwart the computer's² face-recognition software, most of the performers did not use make-up, but created analog masks and green screens instead.

For practicing #selfcompetenceselfie, each performer holds the smartphone or laptop in the right hand in front of the face and starts a dancing loop to the left, in the direction of the heart, while looking at the vertical spin of the others framed in the horizontal Zoom-App. It's a loop within a loop: while spinning, the teleworking performer watches the others spinning. But their selfies seem to be standing still, it is the surroundings that are circling the selfies.

1 *Linear perspective* creates the illusion of a quasi-natural view to the "outside", as if the image plane was a window opening onto the "real" world. This is also the literal meaning of the Latin word *perspectiva*: to see through. Let's remember the window scene in the prison in *Jim Jarmusch's* *Down by Law*.³ One is not looking through but at a window: This space defined by linear perspective is calculable, navigable and predictable. It allows the calculation of a future risk, that can then be handled. Yet although empowering the subject by placing it at the center of vision and on a stable ground, linear perspective also undermines the viewer's individuality by subjecting it to supposedly objective laws of representation. *Contemporary philosophers and artists* point at a condition of groundlessness caused by the virtual ground that creates a *vertical perspective* of surveillance and overview in far distance and close-up. The observer becomes a floating drone and can get an overview of an imaginary stable ground. It is a superior remote-controlled gaze onto inferiors. In photography the gaze has now become mobile and mechanized, but these new relational technologies disembody and outsource the gaze: It becomes all knowing, intrusive, extensive, micro- and macroscopic, an extreme radicalization of linear perspective's powerful paradigm. Many selfies on Instagram are photographed from above, in bird's eye perspective. The photographic lens, this tiny smartphone crap, is not indexically related to reality but to hyperreal representations: not of space as it is, but as we can create it.⁴

2 The selfie replaces the *mirror's reflection*; mirroring is fundamental to human survival.

3 Selfies are an interesting medium to observe *intersubjectivity*: How these face images are constitutive for the subject's constitution process? Social media is providing new possibilities for everyone: mass media offers access to autodidactic pictorial competence in the digital frame of tracking, gamification and surveillance. New media dispositives are developing with new practices of cognitive and affective self-reflection. Selfies are individual self-concepts as much as the mediatized face is a stage for the facial regime and community, an arena for strategies of subjectivation and de-subjectivation. Selfies got viral, continuously reproduced.

4 I have to develop new flexible and *mobile competences* to deal with mass media, social media and all these new distribution processes. It seems necessary for artists to be present as a spectacular marketing image in social media: networking instead of working in the studio. Taking selfies on Instagram has become a mobile artistic practice and it is worth reproducing it. International tele-networks need special competences: I'm in training – don't kiss me! I agree!

1 Claude Cahun: www.artsy.net/artwork/claude-cahun-i-am-in-training-dont-kiss-me-1927 (14. 4. 2020).

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2 nypost.com/2020/03/09/artists-in-london-paint-their-faces-to-fight-facial-recognition-tech/ (1. 4. 2020).

3 www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGqWh8ZAZXo (2. 4. 2020).

4 Hito Steyerl: "In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective," in: Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, Sternberg Press Berlin 2012, p. 12.

#self-development

Ich bin ein „Werdewesen“¹

The dervish's spinning dance (sema) is a rotation around a vertical axis: the semazen's left foot, which is called "direk" (axis) remains on the ground during the performance. The right foot is the "wheel" which turns around the "axis," in one step it is both the rotation's impulse and motor for circling the axis. A whole circle is also called "wheel" (Rumi called it "traversing 72 nations"). The arms perform a horizontal axis: the left hand points to earth, the palm of the right hand is raised up to the sky. In this case, my right hand is holding my smartphone in bird's eye perspective – as body-brain-extension. Due to this horizontal arm position two spiral movements evolve, circling the vertical axis: up to the sky and down to earth.

1 The *digital performance* is a presentation of a rehearsal: Due to the medium, it addresses intersubjectivity, but does not deal with algorithms and computer technology as technological infrastructure. It could be seen as "Screen Essentialism"² (Nick Montfort): The medium produces selfies of reflexive-irritated artists longing for self-competence against all odds. Peter Sloterdijk's book *DU MUSST DEIN LEBEN ÄNDERN, YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR LIFE* refers to the human being's longing for self-development as an essential evolutionary impulse to practice, „denn da ist keine Stelle, die dich nicht sieht“ "for here there is no place that does not see you" (Rainer Maria Rilke): to practice asceticism and rituals, to create spaces where rules could be changed and time and space should be controlled. Longing for transformation, there is a vertical tension needed, a yearning for reaching the impossible. In between vertical and horizontal tension, there is self-development.

2 The *spiral* is a beautiful image of transformation and movement in space and time, it "is the origin of movement in space."³ The spiral repeats repetition and controls chaos. It is predictively spinning around a vertical axis, from inside to outside and vice versa, for evermore. The spiral dance sema is an ancient ritual dance, which is based on spinning simultaneously and collectively to transform and go beyond the ego. Due to the spin, the soul becomes a spiritual medium of intuition. This transformation is called "gliding of the soul": The heart is seen as the abode of the soul; the spin to the left acts as a movement that brings head and heart together, a spin that unites soul and intuition through repetition, trance and ecstasy. Byung-Chul Han argues for the ritual based on repetition, which provides us community.⁴ The ritual is based on certain rules that structure HOW to perform. According to these rules the ritual implies an inherent productive structure of repetition. Rituals help to structure and stabilize life, to provide a certain sense of security. Referring to *Hannah Arendt*, Han claims that the smartphone is a non-thing because of its hybrid restlessness and pressure. But due to my body-brain-extension I will myself become a hybrid-cyborg and train my vertical spin (hopefully without being sick) as static selfie on Zoom: losing the ground, including Facebook-tracking, losing my body. Virtually, I can get rid of the body in interaction with screen, camera and computational photography. It is a digital desire: getting out of the body's prison and reaching the bodiless body within a touch. To participate in an image, rather than identify with it, would mean participating in the material of the image as well as in the desires and forces it accumulates: wie werd' ich?

1 Peter Sloterdijk, *Du musst dein Leben ändern. Über Anthropotechnik*, Suhrkamp, Berlin 2009.

2 nickm.com/writing/essays/continuous_paper_mla.html (1.5.2020).

3 Louise Bourgeois, "The Passion for Sculpture: A Conversation with Robert Storr," in: *Arts*, vol. 63, July 1989, pp. 68–77.

4 Byung-Chul Han, *Vom Verschwinden der Rituale: Eine Topologie der Gegenwart*, Ullstein, Berlin 2019.

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"Repetition repeats repetition."¹

Practicing the spiral dance continuously from April 3 till June 12, we succeeded in practicing and training "together" for up to 25 minutes, our gaze fixed on our selfies against vertigo. In the beginning, I was unable to spin for longer than three minutes. Sema is a ritual practice to transcend the ego collectively practiced mainly by philosophers, artists and poets such as Rumi who performed it for inspiration. During the ritual drummers play a slow three-four time, like a very slow waltz, reminiscent of the heart beat. The word sema means to listen: while holding the right arm and hand raised up to the ceiling, the practitioner's head should be parallel to it so that the left ear is wide open to the rhythm – to the 10 self-competence terms. While spinning together the artists learned 10 self-competence terms like a motivational and rhythmic mantra. It is a loop within a loop: while spinning, the performer watches the others spinning. The Recording of the dance will be presented as a loop in galleries. The performing artists create this film and enact performing, reflexive-irritated artists longing for self-development while their selfies remain quite stable on the screen.

1 Language is based on repetition, on grammar, certain structures and rules that imply the possibility of integrating something new and unfamiliar. *Re-petere* means to bring or get something back again, to re-cognize, to re-think, to remember, to lead back, to attribute something to something.

2 Ketī Chukhrov writes about the paradox of repetition as *transtemporality*: the transposition from the mundane mode of reality to that of repetitive, nonsensical and excessive performance. The first reality of being and life turns into a contradiction of life, evolving from it, but accelerating it aesthetically and performatively. "Gilles Deleuze claims that such a mode of performative repetition is torn away from any chronic temporality, remaining without any semblance to the original."² Repetition is the paradox of a situation and therefore not an analogy, but solitary. The connection between the two realities is paradoxically lost. Deleuze describes this paradox as the incapacity to know what happened, unless there is a possibility of transposing it in repetition: "When the consciousness of the knowledge or the working through the memory is missing, the knowledge in itself is only the repetition of its object. It is played, repeated, enacted instead of being known."³ The less I know, the more I have to repeat and REPETITION IS THE BEST WAY TO LEARN (Jenny Holzer).

3 I am performing on Zoom as "*transtemporal drag*"⁴ selfie, embodying chronopolitics that represent an intervention in existing concepts of time that I want to shift.

Due to this virtual performance two kinds of loops double in-between image, sound and media performance: myself, as the controlling spinning performer here and now, and the spinning surroundings of the selfie constituted on Zoom there and then. Zoom automatically records the spin as film, which will be presented in galleries as loop on a tablet.

¹ Ketī Chukhrov, "Repetition as the Performative Syndrome of Dying," in: *Performance and Philosophy Vol. 4*, NO 2, 2019, p. 479.

² See *ibid.*, p. 477.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 2001, p. 14.

⁴ Renate Lorenz, *Queer Art. A Freak Theory*, transcript, Bielefeld 2012, p. 23.

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as longing for complex answers & moral considerations to act in the interest of the others

"If your thoughts aren't practices then it was never a real thought or practice."¹ I like to practice what I preach: How can I embody and perform 10 self-competence terms to combine principle & practice? As the 10 commandments acted as normative moral principles, today's competence models such as self-competence (and even "life competences") should help to control our desires to be selfless in some situations and self-critical,² as well as self-reflective: "Thinking reflectively demands relatively complex mental processes and requires the subject of a thought process to become its object. For example, having applied themselves to mastering a particular mental technique, reflectiveness allows individuals to then think about this technique, assimilate it, relate it to other aspects of their experiences, and to change or adapt it. Individuals who are reflective also follow up such thought processes with practice or action. Today's diverse and complex world demands that we do not necessarily rush to a single answer, to an either-or solution, but rather handle tensions – between, for instance,

autonomy and solidarity, diversity and universality, and innovation and continuity – by integrating seemingly contradictory or incompatible goals as aspects of the same reality. Thus, individuals have to learn to think and act in a more integrated way, taking into account the manifold interconnections and interrelations between positions or ideas that may appear contradictory, but that may sometimes only superficially be so."³

1 Reason can structure my intuitions and perceptions like a filter and metaethically presupposed reason is a significant motivational factor.⁴ *Adrian Piper* provides another more complex *conception of the self* because the motivational model of belief/desire and the model for rationality based on utility maximization don't work.⁵ Transpersonal principles of theoretical rationality are deeply embedded in the structure of the self and necessary for psychological integrity, experience and agency. How to make sense out of experience? Horizontal and vertical consistency are terms that Adrian Piper introduced for the capacity to structure experience conceptually, to experience consciously. Horizontal consistency refers to the agent's perspective: I am not a static subject. My perspective changes over time as well as does my state, my character; my surroundings and history are changing progressively and regressively. I am evolving as self-identical, non-contradictory.⁶ "Rather, the requirement of vertical consistency is a transitivity claim about the relation between lower- and higher-order properties, i.e. those that satisfy (VC). (...) the relations between our concepts of the lower-order properties of a thing."⁷ For *Immanuel Kant*, self-consciousness is a necessary precondition for unified moral agency, not a contingent product of it. A thing should be rationally intelligible to me before I can formulate a declarative belief. All thought is directed at intuition, which metaphysically precedes judgements. Kant's fact of reason asks: „was und wie viel kann Verstand und Vernunft frei von aller Erfahrung erkennen?“⁸ Can moral considerations move me to act in the interest of others?

1 Freely adapted from Elizabeth A. Povinelli.

2 www.who.int/employment/WHO_competencies_EN.pdf (1. 5. 2020).

3 www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf (1. 5. 2020), p. 9.

4 Adrian Piper, *Rationality and the Structure of the Self, Vol. II: A Kantian Conception*, Adrian Piper Research Archive Foundation, Berlin 2013.

5 Ibid., Vol. I: *The Humean Conception*.

6 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 84.

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7 Ibid., *Vol. II*, p. 86.

8 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 1956, p. 25: „[...] dieselben Gegenstände auch als Dinge an sich selbst, wenn gleich nicht erkennen, doch wenigstens müssen denken können.“

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 115: “Even if we cannot cognize these same objects as things in themselves, we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves.”

#commitment

„Kompetenzmaschine“¹

I'm trying to go beyond my Ego and to develop my Self-Competence. / It's a vertical challenge: I'm a Lifelong Learner, a vertically challenged artist. / Every action is a repetition. / I'm evolving like a Spiral: every turn a new spin, infinite movement in both directions. / The spiral movement as time: in-between past & present & future, / here-and-now/there-and-then / while the Spiral as geometrical figure is absolutely predictive. / The Spiral is the first movement in Space: / a line evolves as movement and grows as a body. / I'm an In-Between: in-between heaven and earth, head and heart, terms and actions, / autonomy and determination, principle and practice, resistance and acceptance, / BIG TECH & human & machine, art & marketing & media, reason & desire & power. / I'm a Spin Doctor, an Influencer for Self-Competence: education as certification.

I WANT TO – I NEED TO – I OUGHT TO

1 *Affective Commitment* is my positive emotional attachment to the art world. J. P. Meyer and N. J. Allen defined it as the “desire” component of organizational commitment. As an artist who is affectively committed I strongly identify with the goals of art. I desire to remain a part of this organization in-between critique, mass media & marketing. I commit to the art world because I WANT TO.²

2 *Continuance commitment* is the “need” component. But if I don't see the positive costs as enough to stay, there must also be the

availability of alternatives. Big tech like *Apple, Facebook, Google and Zoom* got into art and are getting into education and health care to figure out testing methods to certify people. If I don't want to accept this change, I can reject it: „Denn, wenn die Methode das Sein und das Sollen und wenn die Technik die Wissenschaft und die Politik sich einverleibt, frißt sich das Absurde ein.“ „L'art pour l'art.“³ But I WANT TO SAY I NEED TO STAY.⁴

3 *Normative commitment*: I commit to and remain with friends, artists and the art world because my sense of obligation demands it. This organization has invested resources in training me. I feel a moral obligation to put forth effort on the job and stay within the art world to ‘repay the debt.’ I am loyal. Generally, if I invest a great deal I will receive “advanced rewards,” certificates from this luxury item called art university: University of Applied Arts Vienna.

I WANT TO SAY I NEED TO STAY BECAUSE I OUGHT TO.

¹ Michel Foucault, *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität II. Die Geburt der Biopolitik*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2004, p. 319.

² John P. Meyer/Nathalie J. Allen, “A Three-component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment,” in: *Human Resource Management Review*, Issue 1 (1991), pp. 61–89.

³ monoskop.org/images/2/27/Flusser_Vilem_Gesten_Versuch_einer_Phaenomenologie.pdf (13. 5. 2020), p. 30.

⁴ Leon Coetsee, “From Resistance to Commitment,” in: *Public Administration Quarterly*, Issue 23 (1999), pp. 204–222.

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"Performing can only perform performing"¹

The word *sema* means to listen: while holding the right arm and hand raised up to the ceiling, your head should be parallel to it, therefore the left ear will be wide open for the rhythm – the 10 self-competence terms. Because of the delay caused by the tele-productive medium Zoom, the terms are repeated and interrupted several times during the performance. During the online performance the green monitor frame captures and features only the person who is talking and therefore will be the one who is seen in the video recording. The medium Zoom interactively films a recording according to the performers' microphones and speech and automatically switches to the selfie that is the talking head with the power of speech. The performers perform as radical drags, as hybrid cyborgs, freaking the borders between human and machine due to their smartphone extensions. I hope I will perform my job well while practicing this freaky job performance.

¹ Performing is not narrative, because it only renders reality which in itself has already become an abnormal performative reality. Performing is rhythmic, rather than chronic. Rhythm as a floating, periodic structure of temporality implies an end. The end, the death, dying qualifies

performing art as well as performative arts as attributes of the performative procedure. "Hence if one formally exerts repetition and its poetics and intonation as a performing act, one automatically acts up dying."² I am performing on Zoom as a freaky "transtemporal drag,"³ embodying chronopolitics that represent an intervention in existing concepts of time that I want to shift. *Renate Lorenz* is completely freaking out and provides a freak theory appropriating a multivalent term that describes the unnormal, and that originally referred to physically unusual persons that were often staged in freakshows between the 1830s and 1930s. But Lorenz claims that "freak" has to be seen as a queering practice of distance, not as an identity or a category. The freak theory that Lorenz describes as "art theory in drag" uses this language of the freak shows as well as the more contemporary languages of *poststructuralism* and *queer theory*. Queer theory should become a performer that practices interventions in norm and normalities and therefore acts like a staged transtemporal drag screaming for denormalization and dehierarchization. Lorenz developed three drags for naming certain artistic practices of body performance: transtemporal drag is freaking (counteracting) economic or scientific or heteronormative courses of life. Drag is a practice to freak out (emotions: excitement, rage, desperation). Performers practicing radical drag are freaking out about the dichotomies that constitute us. "Abstract drag' – the masking of the original creator of the spoken text and its contexts, as well as passing on the voice – produces an altered situation of communication."⁴ Lorenz provides us with seven freaky methods for how to freak out: queer performance artists should be freaking the borders between perception, reception, documentation and fiction as well as the boundaries of conceptions of the body, the self, art theory, and truth, and developing other figures of difference. To freak out emotionally is a dubious production of knowledge: It shifts the rules of what is intelligible and can offer alternative inventions and images. It excludes and provokes the "dupes" battered by contagion who don't (want to) know how it hurts to FREAK OUT! THE FREAK c'est chic.

¹ Ketī Chukhrov, "Repetition as the Performative Syndrome of Dying," in: *Performance and Philosophy Vol. 4*, NO 2 (2019), p. 479.

² Ibid., p. 481.

³ Renate Lorenz, *Queer Art. A Freak Theory*, transcript, Bielefeld 2012, p. 23.

⁴ Ibid., p. 147.

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Facing the Covid19-crisis: the only way to practice, perform and present performance in a non-collective, rather tele-productive way is to become automatically framed selfies on a digital platform like Zoom, depending on its hardware and software, it's certification/coaching frame. In the virtual meeting room it is possible to meet with up to 100 selfies at the same time for hours (I took the initiative to buy the "Business" license, "Basic" has a 40-minute time limit on meetings with more than three participants. "Business" offers group meetings for up to 300, and "Enterprise" up to 1000).¹ One can simultaneously watch up to 49 selfies on the screen in gallery view.² Every participant can share the screen, only the host is enabled to start and end the meeting. As an artist longing desperately for emancipation and integrity as well as protesting against originality it is quite interesting to become part of this. It definitely reminds one of Facebook group video calls: mass media I am consuming owing to networking, marketing and coaching, mass media that constitutes art and life, the professional international artist. The artistic producer becomes a productive consumer in yet another multinational company's

economic grid related to social media such as Facebook, framed horizontally as vertical selfie with other selfies. Facebook and Zoom work as digital masks proclaiming autodidactic access. These digital, automated masks produce an ambivalent status of me, the controlling subject.

1 *Zoom* was initiated and built primarily for enterprise customers – large institutions with full IT support, e. g. for coaching purposes: universities. The outstanding statistic on the Zoom blog shows that in three months, Zoom went up from an average of 10 million daily users to 200 million daily users. After investigative reports, blog posts, and Twitter threads examining Zoom's design practices and security features, CEO *Eric S. Yuan* said the company would devote all of its engineering resources to fix the addressed issues: "shifting all our engineering resources to focus on our biggest trust, safety, and privacy issues."³ Hate speeches and "Zoombombing" need shielding features such as waiting rooms, passwords, muting controls, and limited screen sharing. Facebook uses algorithms against that, but mainly for tracking and analyzing data of digital human resources. Zoom originally implemented the "Login with Facebook" feature using the Facebook SDK for iOS (Software Development Kit) in order to provide users a convenient way to access the platform. The Facebook SDK collected device information "which did not include information and activities related to meetings such as attendees, names, notes, etc., but rather included information about devices such as the mobile OS type and version, the device time zone, device OS, device model and carrier, screen size, processor cores, and disk space."⁴ Protests from users led Zoom to remove the Facebook SDK and provide an update to the latest version of the application on Friday, March 27, 2020.

1 zoom.us/pricing (20. 3. 2020).

2 zoom.us/rec/play/uZlrcLqoqmk3TICctwSDAPZ8W9Tpe6qsoHUWrKUJnovjBiMEZgamYeYTM4zoxAZOqAWW4W6TIqp8qIY?continueMode=true00:39:05 (1. 4. 2020).

3 blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/04/01/a-message-to-our-users/ (3. 4. 2020).

4 blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/27/zoom-use-of-facebook-sdk-in-ios-client/ (27. 3. 2020).

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Spinning was one of my first ecstasy and trance experiences. Due to #self-competenceselfie I'm training the spinning dance every day for 15 Minutes while watching dancers like Zia Nath¹ who is a practitioner of Sufi dance and whirling. She is also a bio-dynamic craniosacral therapist since 2001. Of course, I also practiced with Ziya Azazi's Dervish in Progress.² While spinning I get both dizzy and focused at the same time, continuously motivating myself not to stop, not yet, because if I stop the movement it will definitely hurt and I will have to lay down suffering from vertigo or start puking. While practicing on Zoom, encouraged by the other selfies, I feel committed to them to move on. I am acting like a masked coach, inviting "to spin as long as you can," motivating the masked participants not to give up. As performer I am watching my Selfie creating a performance and a film, the Recording. After desperately performing, I am ending up dying, sitting or laying down in the end and suffering from creating the Recording. This staged artsy ecstasy is deconstructive.

1 It is a practice to think about the relation between the states of euphoria and ecstasy as staged aesthetic strategy. This practice does not represent the whirling ritual as individual source of inspiration and creativity while experiencing ecstasy. It is also not a

ritual-spiritual practice. Practicing via Zoom is like a metaphor and gesture, owing to the digital medium's non-spiritual, rather fantastic coaching presentation and tele-production. *Ecstasy and states of Euphoria* are references within this staged scene. The selfie-controlling performers are imbedded in dramatic transmedia coaching choreography. In addition to the audience every single webcam controller is part of this digital scene, an automatic Recording. Everyone is invited to whirl as well: This spinning practice implies the promise of boundlessness and aesthetic strategies for ridding oneself of the body, of boundaries and regimes of gaze while desperately creating an automatic film, the Recording.

2 Vilém Flusser wrote about the *symbolic gesture* of making a film as ideology, as theory, as making history: „ein neues Entziffern: die Bilder des Films bedeuten nicht wie die traditionellen Bilder eine szenische Wirklichkeit, sondern sie bedeuten Begriffe, welche Szenen bedeuten. Im Film wird nicht, wie im traditionellen Bild, ein Phänomen dargestellt, sondern eine Theorie, eine Ideologie, eine These, welche Phänomene bedeuten. Daher erzählt der Film nicht Geschehen, sondern stellt Geschehen vor und macht es vorstellbar: er macht Geschichte.“³

3 He describes an artwork as a fixed gesture which represents something other than reason: „Wenn ich ein Kunstwerk betrachte, interpretiere ich es nicht als erstarrte Geste, die symbolisch etwas darstellt, das anders als die Vernunft ist? Und ist nicht der Künstler jemand, der etwas ‚artikuliert‘ oder ‚ausdrückt‘, das die Vernunft (Wissenschaft, Philosophie usw.) nicht oder nicht in der gleichen Weise artikulieren kann?“ The artist expresses and articulates this gesture. Due to that articulation and aesthetic decision, also with *automatic procedures* like recording techniques, the gesture becomes formal, aesthetic, artificial.

4 *Machines* can be much more creative than human beings. Work becomes an absurdity: „Kurz, jenseits der Maschine gibt es nichts zu tun, denn die Arbeit im klassischen und modernen Sinn ist absurd geworden. Wo der Apparat sich installiert, bleibt nichts mehr übrig als zu funktionieren. Man kann auf verschiedene Weise funktionieren. Mit persönlichem Einsatz: man liebt den Apparat, als dessen Funktion man funktioniert (das ist der gute Funktionär, der Karriere macht). In Verzweiflung: man dreht sich innerhalb des Apparats im Kreis, bis man sich zurückzieht (das ist der Mensch der Massenkultur).“⁴

1 www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9BAoyNL8kk&fbclid=IwARo3XOPJspNx-883nPCBG5KToXVQbsHDDVSxEftnO3GX8xvfXk6olfVRmoQ (1. 3. 2020).

2 www.youtube.com/watch?v=28IWYVV5f_4&fbclid=IwARotKoeDJOQLPqnTwn7MBHZZrYdj-4YsAdH-sGnh9H6z5f3rWZuWtRGnHvA (20. 2. 2020).

3 monoskop.org/images/2/27/Flusser_Vilem_Gesten_Versuch_einer_Phaenomenologie.pdf (13. 5. 2020), p. 124.

4 Ibid., p. 29.

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Freedom and care
or containment and control?

The performers created different kinds of masks: abstract green screens, cosmetic masks, Coronavirus face masks. The medium Zoom also functions as a digital mask. Due to this virtual performance two kinds of masks double as virtual reference of a complex game in-between image, sound and media performance: myself, as the controlling masked performer here and now; and the selfie constituted on Zoom there and then. This was an innovation which is still demolishing established categories of media discourses: It is difficult to differentiate between representation, image and reality/references and reception. Categories to describe this distance in-between here-and-now and there-and-then are missing: selfies replace myself.

1 Cellotapeselfies or masking are non-conventional tools, but still self-reflective representations of the self framed in the digital grid. They are “boundary objects,” created by their actors, and mediums for communication and stabilization. The boundary object represents a mode by which relations between heterogenic, technical and social practice and groups become possible: „Objekte, die in einer lokalen Anwendung präzisiert und zweckgerichtet verwendet werden, aber zugleich in einer umfassenderen Zirkulation zur Verfügung stehen, ohne ihre Identität dabei zu verlieren.“¹ The concept of dispositive,² „mediale Reflexivität“³ or „Mediatisierung“⁴ explores the relation between media-communicative and socio-cultural change. Selfies are individual self-concepts as much as the mediatized face is a stage for the facial regime and community, an arena for strategies of subjectivation and de-subjectivation.

Masked selfies are critical gestures that reflect upon face detection. As Ramon Reichert suggests, Facialization and De-Facialization should not be seen as a dichotomy of face and face dissolution,⁵ but as a critical self-reflective practice in-between „De-Mediatisierung“ and „Re-Mediatisierung“ embedded in the facial regime framed in the social network’s economic digital grid. Masking or dissolution of the face is a practice of reflecting on social networks, on how facial representation is embedded within face recognition and identification processes. But practicing within this frame cannot fundamentally change the dispositive of face detection. The trend towards anonymity instead is a gesture of critique: The old-fashioned image needs to be changed, users are now communicating with „reflexive Re-Mediatisierungen“⁶ and criticizing being instrumentalized as digital human resource.

2 *Digital simulations* are an interesting phenomenon within the frame of communication platforms and games, including their abstractly simulated situations. Senso-motoric action is simulated and reflectively communicated bigger than life – and due to all-body-interfaces larger than evidence. Nowadays, every laptop/cell phone includes an integrated webcam. The webcam is reminiscent one of 1990s pop culture journalism and is now playing an increasingly important ironic role within the simulation’s frame. There is always an individual subject in the webcam’s position. This apparatus implies a new ironic role of a controller-inspector: the author becomes both subject and object of this technology. The installed webcam is also a simulation within the ironic game of direction, perspective and reception. The position of the webcam and its location are still my own choice.

1 Ramon Reichert, „Defacement – Faciales Regime, ‘Selfies’ und Gesichtsauflösung in Sozialen Medien“, in: Michaela Pfadenhauer/Tilo Grenz, Hg., *De-Mediatisierung. Diskontinuitäten, Non-Linearitäten und Ambivalenzen im Mediatisierungsprozess*, Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden 2017, p. 121.

2 Giorgio Agamben, *Qu’est-ce qu’un dispositif?*, Payot & Rivages, Paris 2014.

3 Dieter Mersch, *Was sich zeigt. Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis*, Wilhelm Fink, München 2002, p. 133.

4 Andreas Hepp, „Mediatisierung von Kultur: Mediatisierungsgeschichte und der Wandel der kommunikativen Figurationen mediatisierter Welten“, in: Andreas Hepp/Andreas Lehmann-Wermser, Hg., *Transformationen des Kulturellen. Prozesse des gegenwärtigen Kulturwandels*, Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden 2013, p. 190.

5 See Reichert, „Defacement – Faciales Regime, ‘Selfies’ und Gesichtsauflösung in Sozialen Medien“, p. 115.

6 Ibid., p. 124.

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Presented in philomena+ Vienna

The practice meetings on Zoom are recorded as allowed by the recording technique, which is based on a combination of sound & image: the one who speaks via integrated microphone has the power of speech as well as the power of image. Only one single selfie at a time is visible in the processed final Recording video. The person speaks via integrated microphone and creates the sound, which generates the selfie that will be seen in the Recording. Unfortunately, the program does not provide the comfortable distinction between sound and noise, between human voice and irrelevant noise. It is essential to mute some participants or turn off the microphone during the performance if there is background noise. The automatic Recording of #selfcompetenceselfie 16. 6. 2020 will be edited and presented in a loop in galleries on a tablet screen. Zoom, as integrated agent, freaks the boundaries between selfie and myself; here-and-now, there-and-then; direction and perspective; reflection, production, perception, participation, documentation and fiction. The software and recording technique become

an integral part. They participate both aesthetically and communicate as machine with the human beings and their selfies. The artwork becomes a product of determined technical computation as well as a product of my certified artistic freaky subjectivity.

1 “What is the human being itself but a *tool-generating tool*?”¹

2 It is an ambivalent status of me, the subject facing an automated creator and this media expansion: I’m not a creator anymore, rather a player within a game in-between *interpretation, presentation, production and conception*. As an artist, I’m among the influencers: big tech, investors, lookers, buyers, dealers, makers and machines. My artwork results from interactive and bidirectional communication processes between humans and machines. It is a collaborative project, which implies the participation and cooperation of masked performers and the digital mask Zoom. Since the 1990s tele-communication performs simulations without drawing borders between different media and genres. This potential and technological transfer needs both reflection and production. Reflexive media practices evolve within the frame of media production, which implies inclusion and exclusion at the same time. Two extreme positions raise fundamental questions concerning professional human artists: Euphoria demands certified integrated critical capitalist agents who attain their self-realization. Apocalypse points at isolated exhausted individuals practicing permanent self-optimization in digital nirvana while losing their freedom, negative rights and positive rights. In-between there are questions concerning technology and differences between human and machine, machines as decision-makers. Technology is much rather a tool than an extension and replaces the human being due to the technical evolution. *Hans Moravec* wrote: “At the same time, by performing better and cheaper, the robots will displace humans from essential roles. Rather quickly, they could displace us from existence.”² Some argue that in a few decades, when the Internet of All-Things will allow intelligent machines to talk to each other without us, “then these new cybernetic systems can replace us and we will hit an ontological skeuomorphism.”³ Images have already replaced writing; selfies mirrors; (sur)face the Antlitz.⁴ And will the human being become just a nostalgic feely-freaky ornament of the Internet of All-Things? I hope not – that’s why I am still working – against all odds.

1 William Watkin, “The Obsolete Human Being,” in: *New Philosopher*, Issue 15: The Future, 1. April, 2019: www.newphilosopher.com/articles/the-obsolete-human-being/ (14. 4. 2020).

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2 Hans Moravec, "Robots, Re-Evolving Mind," Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute, 2000: frc.ri.cmu.edu/~hpm/project.archive/robot.papers/2000/Cerebrum.html (2. 4. 2020).

3 See Watkin, "The Obsolete Human Being" (see note 1).

4 Byung-Chul Han, *Transparenzgesellschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2012, p. 20.