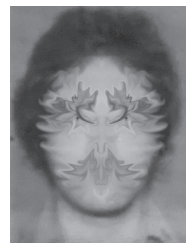
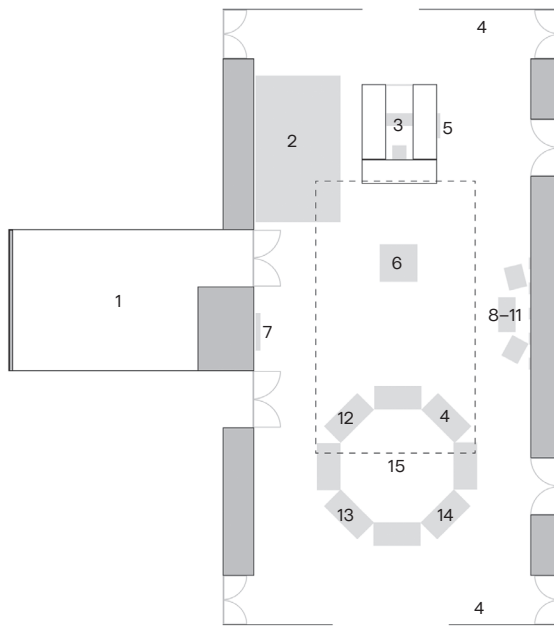


RITUAL/VIRTUAL

Technologies of Here, There, and Thereafter



Herdimas appropriates the affordances of technology to emulate religious ecstasy and altered states of consciousness through contemporary takes of Indonesian ritual performances in the seemingly familiar digital and/or physical spaces. He breaks the sense of familiarity of platforms that he occupies in to give people a sense of agency over its preconceived ideology. He received his MFA from Yale School of Art in 2021 where he was a recipient of Phelps Berdan Memorial Award and Alice Kimball English Traveling Fellowship. During his time at Yale, he also received research fellowships from Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale LGBT Studies, and Yale Council on Southeast Asia Studies. He is currently a visiting faculty at Virginia Tech.



Neta Bomani is an abolitionist, learner and educator who is interested in parsing information and histories while making things by hand with human and non-human computers. Neta's work combines archives, oral histories, computation, social practices, printmaking, paper engineering, zine making and workshops to create do it yourself artifacts. Neta received a graduate degree in Interactive Telecommunications from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. Neta is currently an Instructor in the Collaborative Arts Department at New York University. Neta is also a co-director of the School for Poetic Computation. Neta has studied under Mariame Kaba, American Artist, Simone Browne, Ruha Benjamin, Fred Moten and many others who inform Neta's work.



Songan Kyung is a motion designer and new media artist based in Seoul, Korea and Providence, RI. Her work has been presented in Korea and U.S., including Whitenoise Gallery; DØULL HOUSE, Boston CyberArts; Wetwired in the Meatspace, Sol Kolfer Gallery; Objects are closer than they appear. Pursuing her Digital Media, MFA degree in Rhode Island School of Design, she explored the ecology of dangerous digital artifacts moving from data infrastructure into visible and physical forms of hate and harm.



Kit Son Lee is a designer, developer, and artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Through a form-agnostic practice spanning web experiences, interactive sculpture, graphic systems, and language (natural and programming), they appropriate the methods of contemporary computation towards the sabotage and reimagination of their inequitable control structures. Kit is a co-founder of Codify Art, a multidisciplinary produtorial collective dedicated to supporting work by queer and trans artists of color. They have organized programming with the Whitney Museum, Brooklyn Museum, The Public Theater, and bitforms gallery, among other institutions, and have contributed writing to *The Art Happens Here: Net Art Anthology* (Rhizome, 2019). They hold an MFA in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and BAS in Visual Art and Literary Arts from Brown University.



01.31.2022 – 03.04.2022

Herdimas Anggara/Neta Bomani/
Songan Kyung/Kit Son Lee

Cummings Art Center/Connecticut
College/270 Mohegan Ave/New London,
CT 06320

1 Songan Kyung
Enter the Bardo, 2018
3D art film, 05:22

2 Songan Kyung
True Story, 2021
Home office installation, labeled
bottles, two-channel art film
[Speculative Live], 22:45

3 Kit Son Lee
Machine in the Ghost, 2020
Websockets, plexiglass hologram,
participatory browser experience

4 Kit Son Lee
One-Time (Key)Pad, 2021
Typeface, custom keyboard,
website

5 Kit Son Lee
Post-Post-Hole, 2021
JPEG, stegonography

6 Kit Son Lee
*Anthropiscine War Machine 2:
North American Front*, 2017
Galvanized steel, plastic, acrylic
decals, glass, muslin, foam fish,
Gundam parts, gochugaru, salt,
seaweed, water

7 Neta Bomani
*Dark Matter Objects:
Technologies of capture and
things that can't be held*, 2020
Audiozine, 24:55

8 Kit Son Lee
Chaos Agent, 2019
Book, pop-o-matic, d6 and
d12 die

9 Kit Son Lee
Ghostwriter, 2020–ongoing
Book, keylog text parser,
Binery.js

10 Kit Son Lee
QCIC, 2021
Poster series

11 Kit Son Lee
CTRL SHIFT, 2021
Two books in box set

12 Kit Son Lee
Viral/Vulnerable, 2020
Website

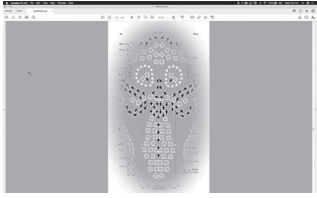
13 Kit Son Lee
Ouroborouroborouro..., 2021
Interactive motion poster

14 Kit Son Lee
Phraktur Leet, 2020
Variable font, website

15 Herdimas Anggara
*JARANAN (Horse Trance
Dancing)*, 2021
Performance recording, 19:20

Visit the online exhibition at
ritualvirtual.digital.conncoll.edu.

RITUAL/VIRTUAL presents engagements with technology that straddle the sacred and the mundane, the spiritual and the secular, the historic and the contemporary. Through explorations of (sub)cultural cycles and machinic loops, these works unearth the repetitions encoded in our devices to examine, complicate, and undermine their influence on social conditions.



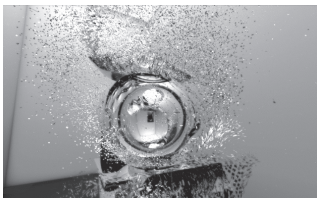
Herdimas Anggara's *JARANAN (Horse Trance Dancing)*, a "platform sabotaging" performance originally presented over Zoom, appropriates the iconography and affordances of the MacOS operating system to conduct a

contemporary take on a traditional Indonesian ritual. Defamiliarizing the digital space, various interface elements emulate the religious ecstasy and altered states of consciousness seen in the ceremony's human counterpart; their unexpected movements call attention to the preconceived ideologies with which one approaches both the desktop and an othered cultural practice. *JARANAN* is screened periodically, in intervals determined through the ritual's internal logic, and commandeers as its stage the screens of other works in the exhibition.



Neta Bomani's genre-expansive audiozine, *Dark Matter Objects: Technologies of capture and things that can't be held*, draws the viewer into a story past, contemporaneous, and ongoing:

that of the master-slave relationship. The work gathers the voices of numerous artists and cultural practitioners, who together deny this relationship as a relic of history and demonstrate its persistence as an "[organizer of] social, political, economic, racialized, gendered, and other cybernetic relations contained within the feedback loop that produces technological infrastructure."¹ Screened as a video, *Dark Matter Objects* features music performances by Christelle Bofale and Contour alongside narration by Alexander Fefegha, American Artist, Ashley Jane Lewis, Bomani Oseni McClendon, Gabrielle Octavia Rucker, Galen Macdonald, Fred Moten, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Laolu Numa, Lina Chang, Marilyn Nance, Melanie Hoff, Sadé Powell, Simone Browne, Sol Cabrini de la Ciudad, Stephanie Dinkins, Sydney Spann, and Zisiga Mukulu.



Songan Kyung *Enter the Bardo* explores the concept of the "bardo," a liminal state between death and rebirth found in some schools of Buddhism. Kyung identifies Samsāra—the eternal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth—

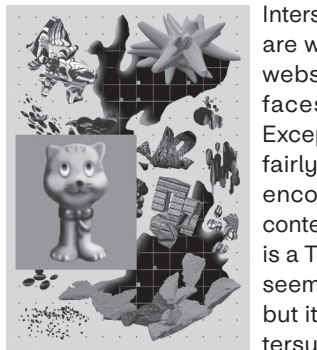
as sharing the loop structure of video games, in which players can repeatedly die, only to return to rechallenge the mission. Filmed in a single shot within a game engine-generated white cube, *Enter the Bardo* appropriates the Z-axis centered perspective of first person shooters to allow audiences to experience the Bardo from the viewpoint of the dead.



In a self-reflexive, multilevel narrative, Songan Kyung's *True Story* examines the creation and distribution of conspiracy theories, the manufacturing of belief, and the profit motives of their makers. The installation

recreates the home office of Pickle Juice, a fictional game developer, streamer, and owner of the business Brotherhood Squirrel Pest Control. Pickle Juice himself appears on the computer monitor, where a stream of his "Let's Play"² walks viewers through an indie horror-adventure puzzle game titled *True Story*, which had ostensibly been sent by an anonymous source. The viewer follows along as Pickle Juice unearths a series of unsettling clues, spiraling deeper and deeper into a web of dark secrets until he discovers their villainous root: squirrels.

Though the reveal might be an obvious Brotherhood business ploy, Pickle Juice's expert wielding of narration and reaction transforms the streamer into a charismatic authority capable of intensifying fictive fearmongering into a real-world threat. Through Pickle Juice's multiple personas, Kyung's *True Story* models a larger online ecosystem of content creators, distributors, and social media algorithms, investigating the recursive engine of "truth"-generation behind many of today's most bitter political divisions.



Interspersed throughout the exhibition are works by Kit Son Lee: interactive, websites, image files, posters, typefaces, books, and an installation. Excepting the latter, these objects are fairly quotidian, adhering to formats encountered daily outside of an art context. Their innocuousness, however, is a Trojan Horse. *One-Time (Key)Pad* seems to be a simple decorative font, but its design and software are countersurveillance against both computer

vision and key tracking. *Post-Post-Hole* appears to be a standard JPEG file, but hidden in its bits is code heralding the image's decay over the course of a millennium. *Viral/Vulnerable* presents itself as a therapy chatbot, but the website scans the user's contributions for emotional vulnerability and takes those opportunities to push Lee's own advertisement keywords into the user's search history. Across multiple pieces, Lee's practice

implicates the participant in a series of encoded processes and invites a reexamination of the hidden subroutines in our technological habits.



Lee's installation, *Anthropiscine War Machine 2: North American Front*, is both a formal and temporal departure, hailing from a climate-changed future where the Earth has been entirely covered by water. Droplets slide down an assemblage of

plastics and galvanized steel, collecting in jars lined with coarse salt, seaweed, and gochugaru—the beginnings of a post-apocalyptic kimchi. In the center of this device are battered labels of ingredients found in budaejjigae ("army stew"), a dish originally devised using canned foods scavenged from U.S. Army bases during the Korean War. Comprised of salvage from forced migrations both historical and speculative, *Anthropiscine War Machine* considers the intentional preservations and necessary integrations that allow a custom to persist, and asks at what point it will be so transformed that its practitioners cannot recognize it as their own.

Ritual can be sacred (e.g. a ritual ceremony) or mundane (e.g. a daily ritual), but both valences are defined by repetition. The recurring loop characterizes much of modern technology, and advances are often measured by the automation of previously manual tasks. With sociopolitical infrastructure becoming increasingly dependent on these conveniences, we find ourselves participating—knowingly or not—in rituals of another's design. In light of this trajectory, *RITUAL/VIRTUAL* collapses sacrosanct themes into everyday interfaces. The presented works contend with consumer technologies at the level of religion, culture, economics, and time, challenging their supposed banality with rites of their own making.

- 1 "Neta Bomani: 'Dark Matter Objects: Technologies of Capture and Things That Can't Be Held.'" *The Kitchen OnScreen*, 30 Nov. 2021.
- 2 A Let's Play is a video documenting the playthrough of a video game, usually including commentary or a camera view of the gamer's face.