

AN ALTERNATE FEVER DREAM

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Abstract

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This visual essay revolves around the conception of the Web. It derives from the inquiry I have been engaged in during the last year, into the spatiality of the Web and the agency of its users. Like previous inquiries, the main inspiration derives from the net.art pioneer Olia Lialina's web-based work.

The essay manifests as a playful, patched together trajectory, bringing up several different considerations and theories of how the Web could be regarded and treated as a place: literal, utopian, and metaphorical.

By twisting and turning these conceptions through diverse quotes, notes, diagrams, and drawings the essay is trying to grasp the concept of the Web as a site, to visit and interact within. It shows different ideas, realistic or visionary, in order to illustrate the versatile possibilities that the Web could offer. These are unlike the Web we encounter today, where its commercial use has been limited by algorithms and consequences derived from high technology prosperity.

Through focusing specifically on the written and illustrated ideas around how the Web functions as a space, the essay reaches for a nuanced view of how these conceptions interact with and affect each other.

Keywords: The Web, utopia, spatiality, metaphor, conception, coding, interface

THE WEB IS EXPERIENCED



DYSTOPIA.

● BETWEEN UTOPIA AND

(**i n t e r f a c e** is a face or a surface through which one touches something that is on the other side and distinguishes what is here from what is there (inside).)

Today the interface is constructed with never-ending scroll flows

like an interminable stream of scrap

We are broken down by a spreadable media landscape

created by companies for consumers

transformed, repurposed, distorted
a stream of repetitions

imitation repetition

boring motion

circulations of things, bodies,

short circular movements, restlessness
Highly active, moving, spreading
But still a **space of passivity**

repost

ad.

repost

repost

after

repost

after

ad.

after

repost

repost

repost

post

post

post

post

repost

Literal Space

Tools and Power

We usually meet the Web through a double framing: the device and the web browser used. The framing keeps our awareness alert, we are on the Web and we know that we are. Twenty-five years ago it wouldn't be weird to be greeted by a sign on a homepage with a straightforward "WELCOME! YOU MADE IT," most likely boldly written against a background of flickering

But today we are entering another kind of interface. We move within algorithms, led by perfectly technologically generated results connected to what we already look at. On the one hand, the Web is easier to use today—well optimized search engines give us content ranked popularity, we can easily make our own graphics, edits, and websites through recommended pre-designed templates. But on the other hand it has become more restricting, less oriented to exploring and expressing.

It has become more homogenous and invisible in how it is constructed and how it operates. Basically, there is the same kind of flow everywhere: squares or posts cleanly placed on a timeline from top to bottom, with infinite scroll functions continuing into eternity. The user can easily upload a picture or write a text, the design is already settled.

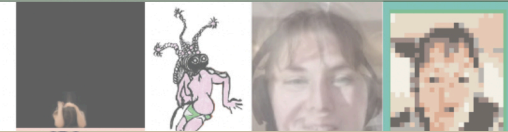
Previously, the content could be anywhere on the page, possess a more floating appearance, stretch across the full screen and beyond.



<http://....waiting.loading.perceiving.receiving.conceiving.the.web.com/navigation>

It can still...

But users today are entering the Web with the perspective that it is a pre-configured space



```
1 <!doctype html>
2 <html>
3 <head>
4 <meta charset="UTF-8">
5 <title>titleonthepage</title>
6 </head>
7
8 <style>
9 this is where the styles for the page goes
10 </style>
11
12 <body>
13 this is where the content of the page goes
14 </body>
15
16 </html>
```

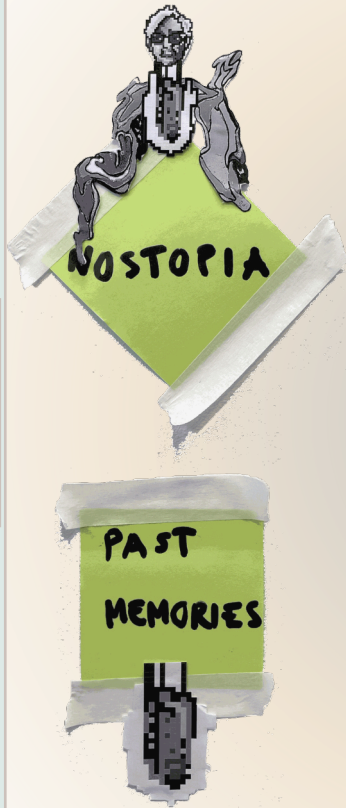
We place the content where someone else has made a frame for it



The Web as a space feels vague and the idea of creating, building, and taking place on the Web seems abstract. We, the amateur users, are becoming blind to our own opportunities.

An Other Space

Desire for Transcendence



Imagine the walls of commercialized platforms being torn down. Leaving out the big companies while a browser framing is maintained.

That space in there, beyond the interface of the browser, is not fairly graspable. Doesn't it evoke a feeling that there must be something special about it? Imaginary, abstract. Flourishing with alternate identities. The space behind the screen diminishes but it is ever-expanding, and the contact with others is immediate.

A place with stretching platforms, growing, changing, common places. Forums. Cubbyholes. Deserts. Construction sites.

That space is a place. A place that takes us outside the physical rooms, allowing us to ignore the physical presence of each others' carnal limiting bodies.

Nos-topia is similar to utopia in that it pictures perfection of the technology and its use; however, nos-topia is the coloration of memories of things that have been real and mainstream.

ILLUSIONS

NOSTOPIA

Maintaining the order between order & chaos

POINT OF DEPARTURE

FALSE PATHS

SMALL PROJECTS



Computer networking, in short, responds to our deep psychological desire for transcendence—to reach the immaterial, the spiritual—the wish to be out of body,

And imagine— in there, somewhere, under some kind of odd URL, other websites are waiting to be

Lost beyond the algorithms, forgotten by their makers, running on servers no one ever looks through.

All of a sudden the

server dies, and all this abandoned space is erased

:: Fan Listings ::



Who of You Inhabit the Web? An Adequate Representation of Your "Real" Self?

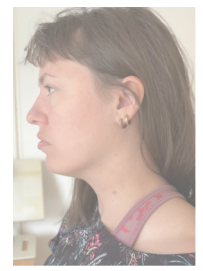
H E A D L I N E
self portrait profile picture avatar
? ? ?

The perception of the Web is both dependent on, and reflected from, the embodiment of activity—whether by people, functions or bots.

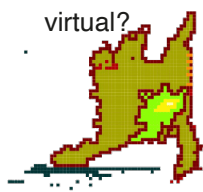
How we, as users, behave online is in turn dependent on the spatiality of the Web. How we behave on the Web relies also on how much we are aware of its possibilities and how anonymous we are able to feel.



What is the difference or distinction between a self portrait, a profile picture, an avatar?



Where, how, and why does it make a distinction between real and virtual?



Nickname:

The avatar is a digital trace from the past, a symbol. It stands for a lost function. It represents a physical person but it could also embody a fantasy. Or "the real" persona hidden inside a body.

presence. ghostly boldly
persona
random
imaginal
in a sort of
the creation of multiple selves
extremity and the



To use an avatar can function as a critique of the Web that is about to macerate and become enmeshed with the physical world.



The Web is born into a state of transience. So are all the content and spheres that feature on it. It has a shimmer of poetry, it entails utopian qualities.

We used to see this shimmer. Amateur Web pages alongside net.art projects and emerging initiatives showed not only "bad web design" and artistic conceptual endeavors, but also the possibility and diversity of the space for a general user.

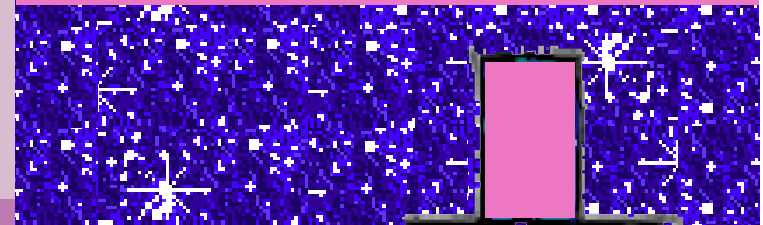
Do not get me wrong. I do not want us to regress back to the old

Do not get me wrong. I do not want us to regress back to the old Web. But we should be aware: there is more to it than this, and we, the users, can have an impact. We need to understand its materiality and to reclaim our role as creative inhabitants in this space. The Web



repurpose, create, recreate

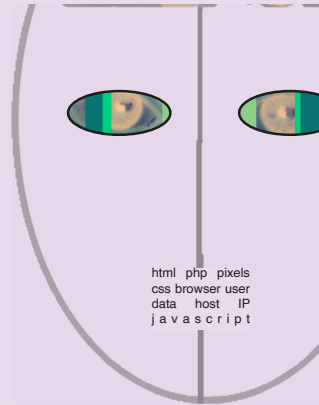
we could and should use our imaginations to reclaim the Web. To transform, distort



The Web has
its own
language, and it
helps us to remind
ourselves how it
functions, and about
our own impact on it.

Reflect upon what the artist
and net.art pioneer Olia
Lialina calls *the early
vernacular Web*, and Digital
Folklore.

Choose expression over
structure. Reclaim the
space.



html php pixels
css browser user
data host IP
javascript