Search Engine Art ß

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Digital Futures
Victoria and Albert Museum

Search Engine Art *beta*
Digital Futures
Victoria and Albert Museum

London
2018

Born of a mutual curiosity for how digital and net art practices can be understood this research publication is the beginning of a conversation as much about medium specificity as about the increasing chasm between our understanding of search technology and our dependence on it. Future editions and manifestations will seek to cover a deeper range of artists, practices, and associated research.

Acknowledging the incomplete nature of our work, we are release this beta version within the experimental Digital Futures program.

Started in 2012 by Irini Papadimitriou, Digital Futures is an exploratory and mobile platform to bring together artistic and academic research in a practitioner-driven format. It is an ongoing project that would allow artists, researchers, creative technologists to work in an experimental and less institutional way. Digital Futures has been running at the V&A until 2018, and the programme has also been hosted by different organisations to enable more people to take part e.g. BLNK and Hackney House, Mozilla Festival, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Electronic Visualisation and the Arts Conference, LimeWharf, White Building/SPACE, and internationally e.g. Barcelona, Mexico City, Ahmedabad, etc.

Lambert Duchesne *12,* 2014

SEARCH ENGINES ARE OUR PATHWAYS TO THE INTERNET

Every day through services from companies such as Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and China's Baidu the world conducts over than six billion searches.

As users we enter text, sound, and images into search engines in pursuit of relevant information.

This research project thus brings together nine international artists who create Search Engine Art: artworks that are partially authored by search engines, their algorithms, interfaces, and results.

Christopher MacInnes *Spores of Love*, 2017

Sebastian Schmieg's *Search By Image*, 2012

These artists investigate how search engines are a pervasive tool, with their own authorities, biases, and visual tendencies, worthy both of our aesthetic admiration and intellectual suspicion. In doing so the artists ask audiences to consider how search engines are redefining our relationships with the world, language, each other and, oursevles.

Pertinent questions gaged from the works in this exhibition include: What do search engines favor? What do they inadvertently or intentionally hide and reveal from us? What can they broadly tell us about our relationship with technology?

Though each work featured here explores its own theme, all works engage search engines as a medium and are linked by their ability to impart education about how search engines work and why we, the increasingly technology-dependent users, should pay attention.

Gretchen Andrew
Los Angeles, July 2018
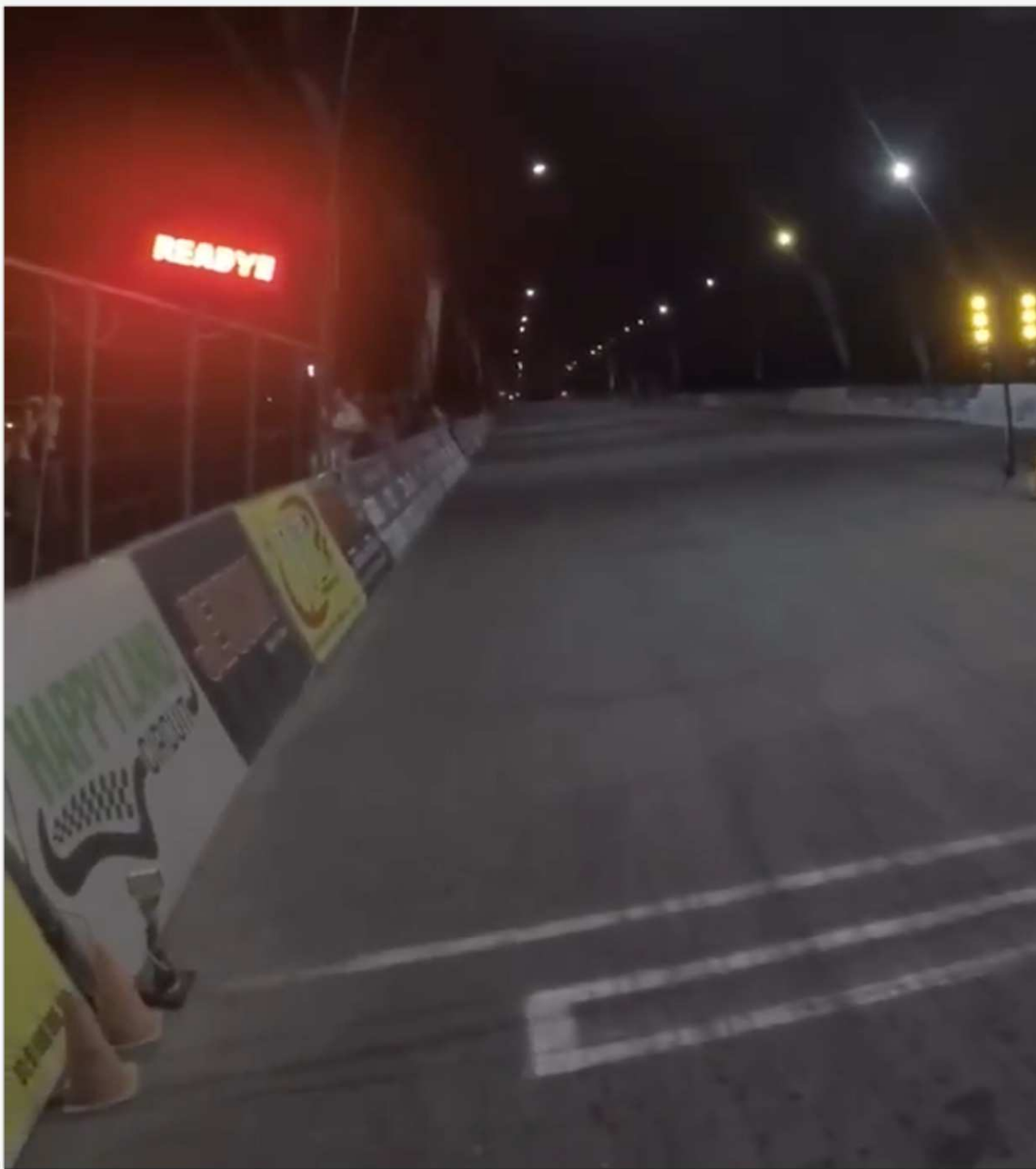
00:00:25

Marc Blazel *Back Page*, 2018

Gretchen Andew *Roughly Translated As*, 2018

Olia Lialina

Gretchen Andrew

Marc Blazel

Lambert Duchesne

Constant Dullaart

Christopher MacInnes

Warren Neidich

Johannes P. Osterhoff

Sebastian Schmieg

Emily Simpson

Google ×

← → C ⓘ google.johannes-p-osterhoff.com/page/2 🔍 ☆

brushing, collaborative, linking Comment?

| brushing linking wii | Search |

#8337 on Dec 18, 2011 – 5:00 pm from laptop Search terms Brushing, linking, wii Comment?
Donate Flattr

| mietje bontjes van beek | Search |

#8336 on Dec 18, 2011 – 4:34 pm from laptop Search terms beek, bontjes, mietje, van Comment?
Donate Flattr

| comparison of website usability -apple tullis | Search |

#8335 on Dec 18, 2011 – 1:51 pm from laptop Search terms apple, comparison, of, tullis, usability, website Comment?
Donate Flattr

| comparison of website usability |

#8334 on Dec 18, 2011 – 1:49 pm from laptop Search terms comparison, of, usability, website Comment?
Don

| attrakdiff scales | Search |

#8333 on Dec 18, 2011 – 1:37 pm from laptop Search terms attrakdiff, scales Comment?
Donate Flattr

| user testing scales comparison | Search |

#8332 on Dec 18, 2011 – 1:34 pm from laptop Search terms comparison, scales, testing, user Comment?
Donate Flattr

| talk aloud exploratory search | Search |

#8331 on Dec 18, 2011 – 1:15 pm from laptop Search terms aloud, exploratory, search, talk Comment?
Donate Flattr

| talk aloud usability testing | Search |

#8330 on Dec 18, 2011 – 1:14 pm from laptop Search terms aloud, talk, testing, usability Comment?
Donate Flattr

| Weserstraße 30, Berlin | Search |

#8329 on Dec 17, 2011 – 6:28 pm from laptop Search terms 30, berlin, Weserstraße Comment?
Donate Flattr

| weserstr 30 | Search |

#8328 on Dec 17, 2011 – 6:26 pm from laptop Search terms 30, weserstr Comment?
Donate Flattr

| multimedia tools and applications | Search |

#8327 on Dec 17, 2011 – 2:07 pm from laptop Search terms and, Applications, multimedia, tools Comment?
Donate Flattr

| internetworking springer | Search |

#8326 on Dec 17, 2011 – 2:04 pm from laptop Search terms internetworking, springer Comment?
Donate Flattr

| internetworking |

#8325 on Dec 17, 2011 – 2:04 pm from laptop Search terms internetworking Comment?
Donate

| ??? ? | Search |

#8324 on Dec 17, 2011 – 1:02 pm from laptop Search terms ?, ??? Comment?
Donate Flattr

| bond girl korean | Search |

#8323 on Dec 17, 2011 – 1:01 pm from laptop Search terms bond, girl, korean Comment?
Donate Flattr

| koreanische bücher |

#8322 on Dec 17, 2011 – 12:59 pm from laptop Search ter koreanische Comment?
Donate Fla

| PIP Kissen | Search |

#8321 on Dec 17, 2011 – 12:57 pm from laptop Search terms kissen, PIP Comment?
Donate Flattr

| PIP 8715944067478 Kissen – Chinese rosa | Sea |

#8320 on Dec 17, 2011 – 12:56 pm from laptop Search terms 8715944067478, Chinese, kissen, PIP, rosa Comment?
Donate Flattr

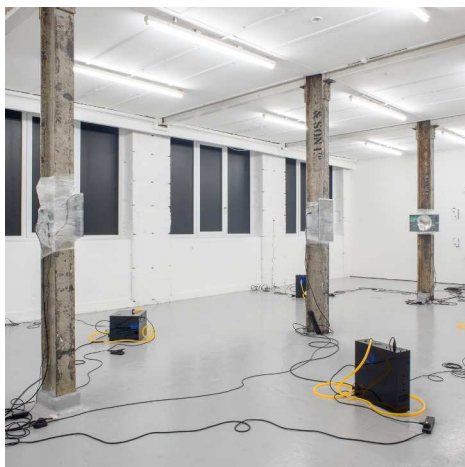| gfacets | Search |

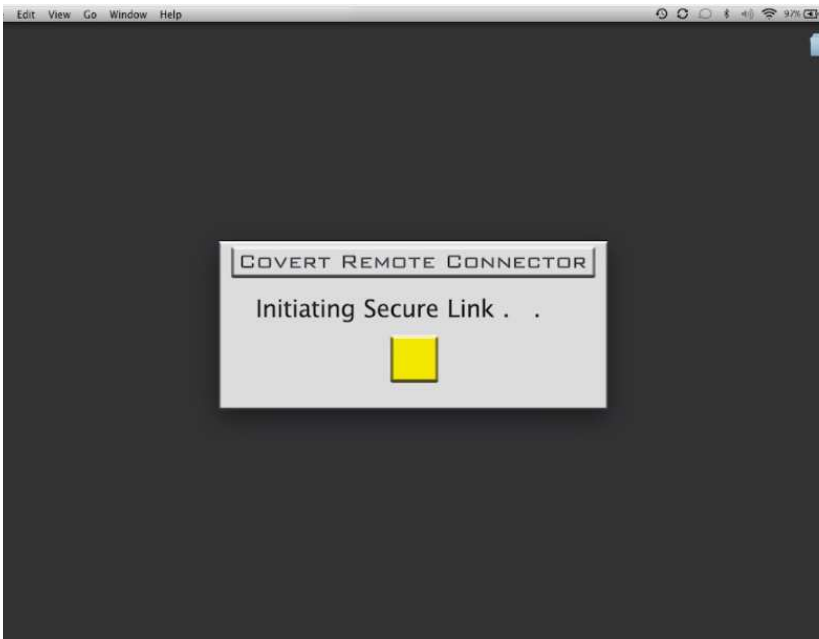#8319 on Dec 16, 2011 – 4:11 pm from work Search terms gfacets Comment?
Donate Flattr

| gwt get width in pixels |

#8318 on Dec 16, 2011 – 3:07 pm from laptop Search terms get, gwt, in, p Comment?
Donate

Johannes P. Osterhoff Google, 2011

Christopher MacInnes *Spores of Love, 2017*

Warren Neidich *The Search Drive,* 2015

What is Search Engine Art?

In some regard, this exhibition and book are set on inventing and defining search engine art. All artists included in this exhibition have practices defined more frequently in terms of other mediums, such as performance for Emily Simpson or moving image for Warren Neidich. Johannes P. Osterhoff considers himself an "Interface Artist" and Gretchen Andrew herself an "Internet Imperialist." With a traditional medium like painting we speak in terms of materials, subjects, and histories, but also in the context of other practices. We do not speak of "painting art." By appending "art" to the software product "search engine" we are referring to art that uses search engines as the subject or medium, within the artistic process, as a tool or the means in which these works become public.

Search engine art then is a collection of practices and practitioners more than the final outputs which are, nevertheless, partially created or authored by search engines.

By structuring this exhibition in terms of inputs and outputs we are thus attempting to separate the mind of the artist from that of the search engine. In doing so, we try to unlock how each work, while admitting the increasingly difficult task of untangling ourselves from technology.
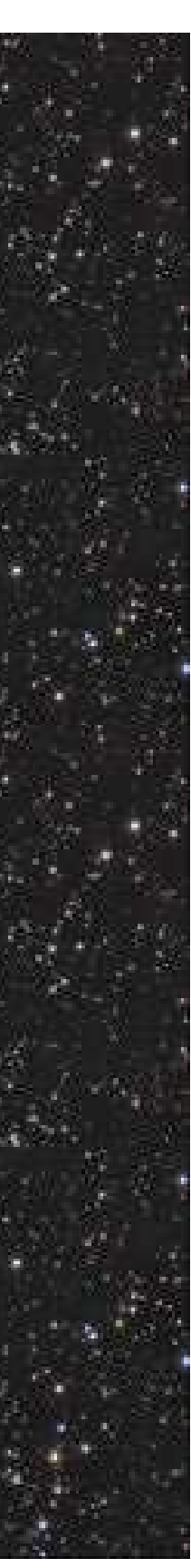
Orgins

Olia Lialina & Gretchen Andrew

2016

The International Conference on the GIF

Bologna, Italy

What are Perfect GIFs? olia lialina, gretchen andrew, sofya glebovna, arebyte gallery

141 views   👍 1   👎 0   ➤ SHARE   ☰+   ...

In November 2016 I had the chance to spend some time with Olia Lialina at The International GIF Conference in Bologna, Italy. Olia gave the keynote address, which included some of my HOW TO HOW TO HOW TO exhibition. Olia, fellow gif-artist Sofya Aleynikova, and I recorded a conversation on the GIF's relationship to perfection and our own version of the DancingGirl.gif.

Since then, Olia and I have maintained a conversation which has led me to consider myself as a "search engine artist," exploring and exploiting the inherent qualities of search engines to look at the internet as a tenuous form of authority that can be used to understand, manipulate, and imperialize definitions. Following is a conversation Olia and I had about the idea of Search Engine Art and Search Engine Artists.

Gretchen Andrew: I've been thinking about the internet before the centrality of search engines, when you had to memorize the URLs and discovery occurred via links on friends' websites. You made some very influential net art before the emergence of search engines. What advantages did the internet have at this time?

Olia Lialina: First of all, let me compliment you on calling yourself a search engine artist. I like that artists know what they are doing and what their medium is. For the moment, you chose a very true and deep prefix. Very brave as well! I can sense self irony as well as modern art critique among others, but maybe I am over interpreting.

GA: The medium awareness can definitely be read as both awareness and a little tongue in cheek. Maybe in calling myself a Search Engine Artist more people will start to consider how search engines, much like clay, can be manipulated. I'm not about to call myself "the Giacometti of search engines," but maybe the parallel would push people to think more about the way search engines are used as means to an end by corporations, governments...and artists.

OL: To answer you question, I was not online before search engines, but it is true there were some unforgettable years until portals, catalogs, and engines took over, and until one particular search service monopolized online navigation. Advantages can be described shortly as the endless joy of serendipity and strong feeling of responsibility. Serendipity was caused by the way you look for the information or were moving from site to site without even looking for anything in particular, from one

to another and further on. People felt responsible for providing proper trails, collecting links to the best sites, and keeping them up to date.
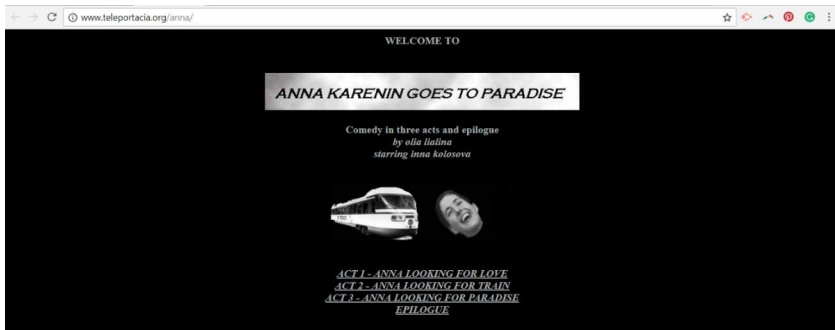
GA: In my search engine art I hack image search results to expose the manipulability of internet-created definitions. For instance, I have replaced the real estate listings that used to define my hometown with my paintings about growing up there. The resulting work is located within a specific time, place, browser, and search engine. What are your thoughts on search engine art or art within search results?

OL: I never thought about search engine art as a term, but now when you mention it, I think some of my favorite works of my friends are also search engine art :)

http://sebastianschmieg.com/searchbyimage/

http://constantdullaart.com/TOS/

http://google.johannes-p-osterhoff.com/ (http://www.johannes-p-osterhoff.com/interface-art/google-one-year-piece)

Olia Lialina *Anna Karenin Goes To Paradise*, 1996

In 1996, I made http://www.teleportacia.org/anna/ Anna Karenin goes to Paradise. The drama in three acts unfolded in three search engines, but it now lies in ruins of course.

There must be more. What would you add to this list?

GA: I like how Johannes P. Osterhoff has decided on "interface artist" in the similar spirit of medium specificity.

As far as other search engine art I like Joey Holder's use of image search in *Selachimorpha*, 2017, but my two favorites are Dan Savage's *Santorum's Google Problem,* which was an attack on the senator's stance on homosexuality, and David Horvitz's *241543903,* where he used a community to make this number equal images of people sticking their heads in freezers.

I also love Sebastian Schmieg's *Search By Image,* 2012, which led me to my own recursive search experimentation.

David Horvitz, *241543903*

Google   Santorum

Search   About 6,610,000 results (0.07 seconds)

Everything

Images

Maps

Videos

News

Shopping

More

Washington D.C., DC
Change location

Any time
Past hour
Past 24 hours
Past 2 days
Past week
Past month
Past year
Custom range...
More search tools

▶ **Santorum**
spreading**santorum**.com/ - Cached
Santorum 1. The frothy mix of lube and fecal matter that is sometimes the byproduct of anal sex. 2. Senator Rick **Santorum**.

Campaign for "**santorum**" neologism - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign_for_%22**santorum**%22_neologism - Cached
In response to comments by Senator Rick **Santorum** criticized as anti-gay by gay rights groups and some politicians, sex columnist and gay rights activist Dan ...
Santorum controversy regarding ... - Google bomb - Rick **Santorum** - Dan Savage

Rick **Santorum** - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
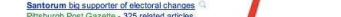en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_**Santorum** - Cached
Richard John "Rick" **Santorum** (born May 10, 1958) is a lawyer and a former ...
✚ Show more results from wikipedia.org

News for **Santorum**
   Santorum: Perry 'Ignores Reality'
   Fox News - 4 hours ago
   By DAN HIRSCHHORN, Politico Rick **Santorum** lambasted Rick Perry as a lightweight on Israel policy Tuesday, dismissing Perry's speech in New York as ...
   17 related articles
   Santorum contacted Google, says company spreads 'filth'
   Politico - 8 related articles
   Santorum big supporter of electoral changes
   Pittsburgh Post Gazette - 325 related articles

Urban Dictionary: **santorum**
www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=**santorum** - Cached
Oct 26, 2006 – The sometimes frothy, usually slimy, amalgam of lubricant, stray fecal matter, and ejaculate that leaks out of the receiving partner's anus after a.

Rick **Santorum** for President | The Courage To Fight For America
www.rick**santorum**.com/ - Cached
Join Rick **Santorum**, the true conservative, as he runs for President of the United States.

Dan Savage, *Santorum*

21

GA: One of the things I've noticed while playing around with search results is that search creates a de facto visual dictionary where every word and phrase is mapped to a defining set of images. It's revealing. If you search "person," you are given almost entirely white males, a lot of Trump. Very little complexity and diversity. A traditional encyclopedia or dictionary would never have attempted to illustrate every word because of the nuances and variations that exist within language. I'm particularly disturbed by the difference in image search results between genders. It exposes a bias. Who is making the content on the internet and what is their world view? It shows the importance of making content that shares a different story. This has made me passionate about using "girl" only to mean females under the age of 15. When we were together in Bologna we reproduced our own version of the DancingGirl.gif. Given my new awareness of the use of "girl" on the internet, I'm wondering if you'd be ok if we renamed ours to RealDancingWoman.gif?

OL: Let's do it!

GA: You are very passionate about making the internet visible, the disappearing URL box and, the technology industry's obsession with seamlessness. I've been thinking about this when I hack and manipulate search results, replacing top results with my paintings. It is my belief that we should be more aware of how search engines work and what it means to rely on them. When a searcher sees my paintings within search definitions, I hope they are reminded of how easy it is to manipulate the truth online and that all content comes from a biased perspective. I want people to think "if this artist can imperialize a definition and inflict her opinion into what something is then how much easier is it for those with power?" Ideally it would unsettle people enough to remember that most definitions and truths are nuanced and complicated.   Google is increasingly using a "one box" method/ tool, where it provides answers within the search results page instead of sending you to other pages that provide answers. How do you see that impacting the net's visibility?

OL: Oh yes, this box; it is so authoritarian. How can a one pixel border and three pixels of drop shadow become a seal of quality? It makes me think again and again that interface design is the most powerful profession today. And these are artists: net artists, web artists, interface artists (as Johannes p. Osterhof used to call himself), or search engine artists (!) who could question and uncover mechanisms and algorithms behind these elegant, "transparent" boxes.

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Olia Lialina (1971, Moscow) is a pioneering Internet artist and theorist, an experimental film and video critic, and curator.

Gretchen Andrew (1988, California) is a Search Engine Artist and Internet Imperialist.

Google™

[   ] 🎤

Google Search   I'm Feeling Lucky

Constant Dullaart *Terms of Service*, 2012

Input / Output

I/O devices are the pieces of hardware used by a human or other systems, to communicate with a computer. The artist is one such device. Inputs can be thought of as an artist's influences, training, experiences and exposures. The artist processes these inputs and outputs, creating new artworks that are holistic and standalone themselves in their entirety

For the newly defined search engine artists in this book their artistic processes intertwine with technical processes of search engines. Like search engine themselves, how an artist works and why the artworks are the outputs that they are can be very opaque.
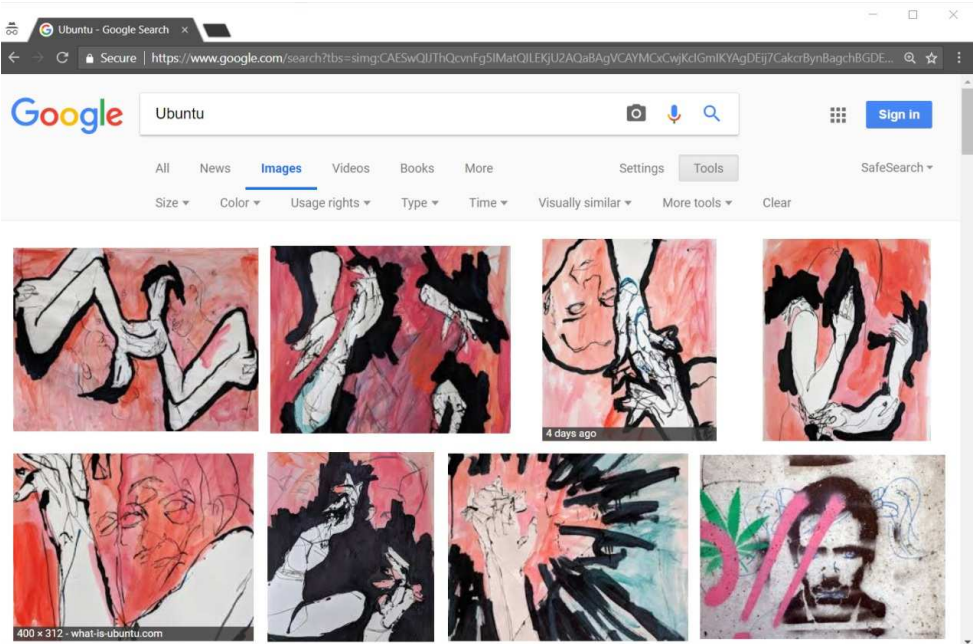
Input: Gretchen Andrew
Output: Roughly Translated As, 2018

Gretchen Andrew's practice of Internet Imperialism begins in her painting studio and extends to an evershifting digital performance that occurs within search result pages. Gretchen programs her paintings, manipulating universally returned image search results to become dominated by her images. To do so, she identifies and exploits the blind spots within search engine technology; its functions and shortcomings. Inherent within her pieces is an audience education regarding how easily online realities can be co-opted.

 In *Roughly Translated As,* 2018 Gretchen targets words that do not have English equivalents and therefore cannot be adequately translated by either humans or search engines. Often considered to be a piece of artificial intelligence art, R*oughly Translated As* also consciously engages in machine learning by challenging it to consider art in its education.

The resulting works, best experienced within live search results, evoke internet graffiti in its inflicted nature. While you can search for and experience the work intentionally, you can also stumble upon it inadvertently. As alternatives to photograph-based search results, Gretchen's paintings do not claim to be the only or best translation, but only a translation that reminds us of the creator's extreme subjectivity. There is no pretense of being unbiased. The paintings and related search engine results pages are testaments to personal perspectives and powertrips.

 At the same time, the work reminds us of nuances within and between languages and how art possess the potential to work in the post-structural space between words that technology tends to oversimplify.

A紀「6Q8番」.mp4
Open with QuickTime Player
00:00:04

Pe ty gia han 0t1-amw_7uShWSQ.mp4
Open with QuickTime Player
00:00:02

Input: Marc Blazel
Output: Back Page, 2018

According to a study published in Nature, Google is able to access only 16% of the web. The other 84%, known alternatively as the deep web or invisible web, contains content who's makers have, for various reasons, requested it to not surface in standard search engines. This includes the dark web whose contents are also not accessible via search engines or regular internet browsers. In *Back Page*, 2018 Marc Blazel presents us with a dark web custom search engine with a single button and no place to input text. Built atop of YouTube, Blazel's search engine uses a random generator to construct a new YouTube URL, checks to see if an unlisted video is hosted at that URL and, if so, plays it for us despite the makers of these videos having opted to have unlisted them on YouTube. These videos would never appear in YouTube's search engine and are therefore ostensibly impossible to find without the permission of their creators.

Reflective of a conversation about privacy, where the implicit question is "if you have nothing to hide why would you worry about privacy?", these videos provide a quirky human answer to the abstract value of privacy. The content is random and ever changing, but commonly homemade insights into people's private lives and hobbies including tractor reviews, new born babies, make up tutorials, full-length Nigerian movies, dogs being attacked by eels, and dozens of K-pop dance routines. The repetition of some types of content is striking, gaming videos and K-Pop being the most frequent. The videos also expose us to an abundance of content about machinery, engines, industrial factory equipment, and cars... lots of cars. The uploaders of these videos may expect to exert control over who can see their videos, but Blazel shows us the control is ultimately Google's.

LA PASSION

PASSION

LA TRISTESSE

SADNESS
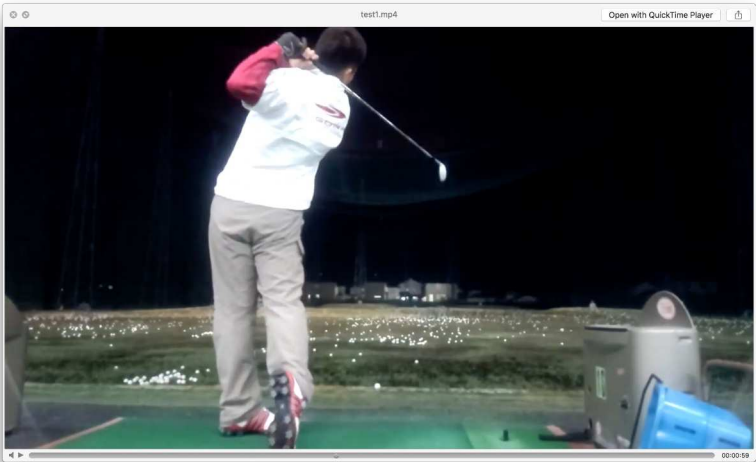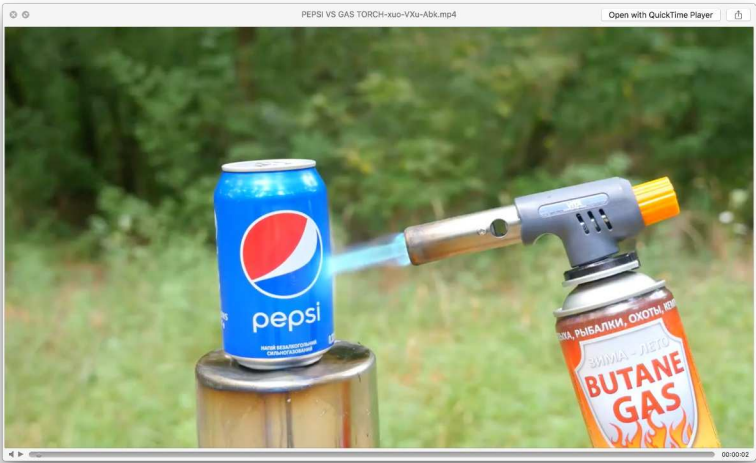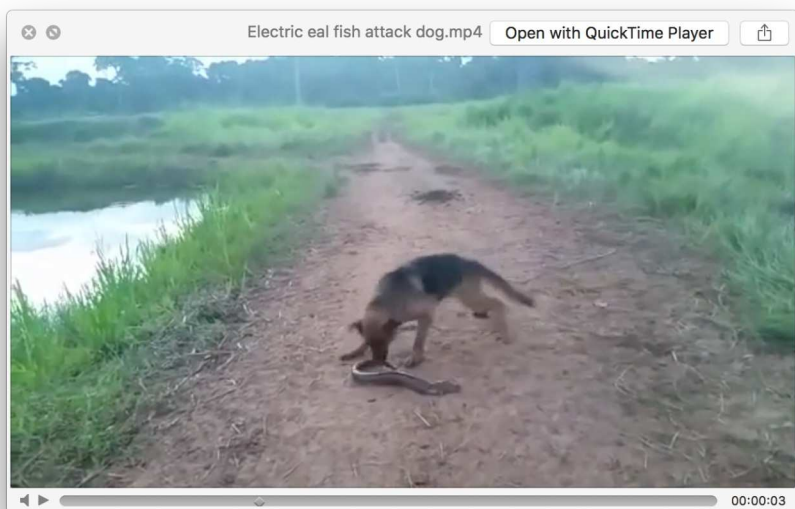
Input: Lambert Duchesne
Output: *7, 2014* & *12, 2014*

Lambert's *7* is an illustrative comment on the relationship between language and images, with the work's absurdly literal execution gives the viewer the experience of the binary way machines understand fundamental human emotions. While human language thrives off of nuance, search engines possess no such tact. *7* elevates the clumsiness of machines to art through forms that intentionally lack poetic tact: a dull voice pronounces emotions while Power Point-like slides change too quickly to be fully studied, the pace more suitable for a machine than a human reader.   Nouns and verbs are left undistinguished. Sexual passion is conflated with The Passion of Christ, while reminding us that according to the internet, western histories founding narrative are now Hollywood films.

In contrast, Lambert's *12 i*s subtle and dreamy. In this piece, Lambert's input is a recording casually captured on a smart phone. The content within the recorder evokes the everyday: to-do lists, the artist's computer, a city street at night, packing material, and overhead lights. He places this moving-image recording in a small box, taking up 1/4th of the screen, while the other 3/4ths show a search engine's reverse image output of each recorded frame. The reverse image search function ensures a strong visual resonance between the artist's video and the search engine's output. The input is personal; the search engine's abstraction makes it universal. In doing so, *12* has the potential to remind the viewer of the relationship between the two.

Constant Dullaart *Terms of Service,* 2012

Input: Constant Dullaart

Output: *Terms of Service, 2012*

What is the most accurate way to define our relationship to search engines? Constant Dullaart's *Terms of Service* reminds us of the legal agreement and contractual nature of being a user. Presenting us with an anthropomorphized Google search box where the input area acts as the mouth and the circular letters in the logo act as eyes, *Terms of Service* reverses our perceived role. The search box is no longer where we as users provides input but where speech, in the form of Google's terms of service, is an unbidden output. The user becomes a passive viewer and waits through the seemingly endless legal jargon as the interface reads aloud to us.

The voice is dull and mechanical with a few moments of glitchy speech and, aside from a few repeated words, the artist did not modify Google's text for the piece. However, by now, Google surely has modified it. As Dullaart points out, Google's, Facebook's, and Amazon's terms of service change constantly.

Terms of Service appears within a browser interface, loads, and plays automatically. In not allowing the user/viewer to see the piece's duration, Dullaart disallows them from understanding it in the context of an online video. Instead, we are in a DTF (define the relationship) conversation, albeit a totally one sided one, where our options are binary: stay or leave. Like Google's Terms of Service themselves, the piece does not allow for our input, which is even more frustrating given the interface. The piece is particularly strange when its search-box mouth uses personal pronouns, addressing the viewer/user: "**We** may suspend or stop providing our Services to **you.**" It is a piece that is hard to enjoy as it asks us to consider our relationship with Google, with the internet, and with technology more broadly. We leave with the feeling that we should be checking the terms of service regularly, but also that we certainly will not.

Input: Christopher MacInnes
Output: Spores-of-love, 2017

In Christiopher MacInnes' installation *Spores of Love* the viewers trigger their transformation into a search engine user through movement. Within the space, the slightest physical activity causes projected images to appear in response. Similar to Lambert Duchesne's 7*, 2014*, the visuals are image search results; however, in this case the text inputs are unknown to the viewer. MacInnes tells his viewer that his installation deploys search terms he associates with the anxious, burnt-out state of mind; on this we have to trust him. We do not see the text or the process and it is his custom search engine, built on top of ShutterStock, that makes the leap between the language and the image. As a result, images that appear in response to the viewer's/user's movement are less random than they seem. This abstraction supports an intentional unease as the imagery degrades within and without of abstraction.

While *Spores of Love* causes the viewer to question their diminishing sense of control with regards to technology, this piece is less about randomness and more about the transformation of the artist's active intention into the viewer's unavoidable passive consumption. Search, being triggered by the slightest physical movement, becomes something done to a viewer instead of an action done by a user.

Courtesy the artist and David Dale Gallery, Glasgow
Photographer Max Slaven

Input: Warren Neidich
Output: The Search Drive, 2015

According to Freud, the sex drive or libido is embodied in Eros, the natural drive for the survival of the species. By naming his work *The Search Drive* Warren Neidich's asks the viewer to consider the claim that surveillance is also necessary to a culture's survival.

Presented to the viewer as a secretly viewed screen recording, we, as the audience, are not the subject of the searches nor the spy/hacker conducting the searches but a third party observing them both. Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? (Who will guard the guards?) Neidich implicates us.

Having been made conscious of our responsibility, we watch an anonymous spy deploy search engines and associated software programs, commonly utilized by the National Security Agency, to reveal public and private information about the artist. We watch as, in the style of a YouTube How To video, the searches take us through web pages that teach us about the deep web and how to access it. But surely the searcher who we are watching does not need to read these instructions and definitions? Surely, this is not the searcher's first use of such search tools? It seems then that the searcher must know that we are watching and wants us to understand what is being done. We are nodded at through the fourth wall as we are systematically educated about the tools and methods of surveillance. We continue watching as the searcher weaves facts into fictions, inventing a narrative that justifies the invasion of the artist's privacy and his subsequent demise via a drone.

gle Search   × | mSpy – Mobile Phone Spying ... | ▼   Spy Files 3

DroneDeploy – Operation Simple Drone

y – Simple Drone O... | +

https://www.dronedeploy.com   ☆ ▼ C

oneDeploy

Muzny
skaga -
Mуски

Are you REALLY sure you want to deploy

Cancel

les 3

OCULUS-2010-GeoSInst-en.pdf

geotime

Welcome Back spyvspy! ≡

Startpage

software, specializing in
3D Time Viewer enables
nk data. GeoTime
ta sets, driving faster,

▶ Manifesta10 – Warren N...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yP_t1

Google

You Tube

drones?

OK

0:23 / 0:43

Manifesta10 - Warren Neidich - NSA-USA (Trailer)
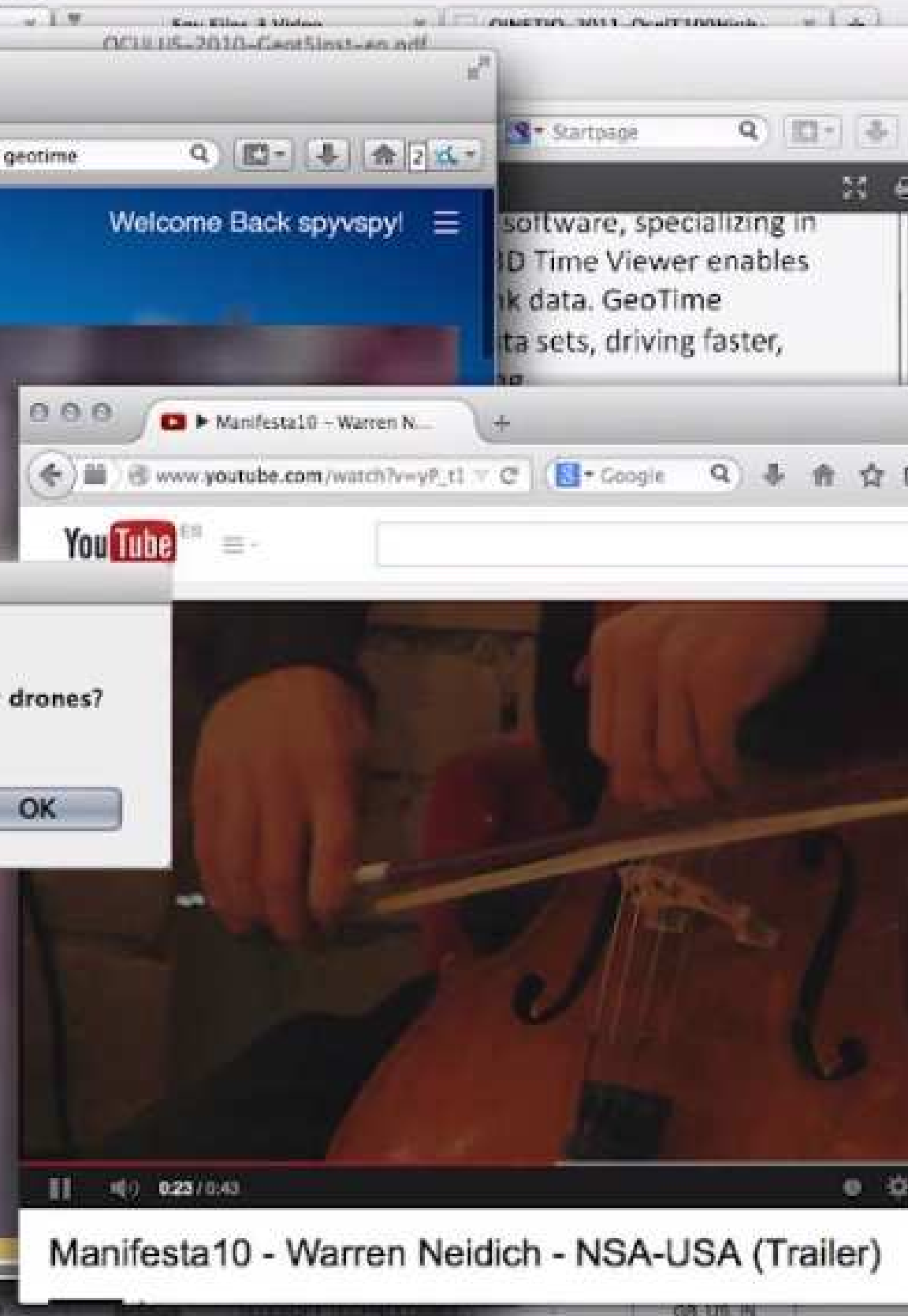
Input: Johannes P. Osterhoff
Output: Google, 2011

Johannes P. Osterhoff is an interface artist who refers to his *Google*, 2011 as a One-Year Performance Piece in the tradition of Taiwanese artist Tehching Hsieh. Hsieh's One-Year Performance Pieces were carried out obsessively over 356 days, during which he would spend an entire year in a mental cage, *One Year Performance,* 1978–1979 (Cage Piece), or never go inside, *One Year Performance,* 1981–1982 (Outdoor Piece). By contrast, in *Google*, 2011 Osterhoff publicly reveals all searches he performed during the course of a year. By associating this work to Hsieh's, Osterhoff is asking us to consider his work an equally extreme parallel.

At first, the parallel seems laughable, unserious. Actually the reverse, not using Google for a year, would be more in line with Hsieh's ethos. But Osterhoff pushes the association with a signed statement and declaration of his performative intent. We want to interpret the seriousness as ironic. Is he serious? We all give away this information to Google every day. However, he is serious. Osterhoff takes what he gives Google freely and publicly associates it to his name. In doing so he attempts a reclamation. To become your own oppressor as a declaration of your own freedom is a dubious proposition, but it works as a means to make others cognisant of something they did not know they could squander. By maintaining severity throughout all formal aspects of the work we are forced to consider how unconscious we have been with our own data. This, Osterhoff asserts, is what is extreme, that we have not considered his, and by association our own, frivolity with enough weight. We come to realize how powerful all this information is when recorded, how limited and trapped it makes us. He dares the viewer to think of our own data as our own cages and future restrictions.

Throughout the year, the performed searches were documented automatically and subsequently made public as new, online content that recursively began to appear within future searches. By transforming the act and process of search into new content, Osterhoff blurs the lines between content creation and content consumption. We are reminded of how our searching creates content in the form of data, profiles, and value for corporations. As part of the performance, Osterhoff sold search queries for 99 cents. He then performed these searches, adding them to his performance and data-history. In doing so, he reminds the us of the indirect but substantial accumulation of monetary value that our searches create for companies like Google.

Manifesto – Google ×

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I, [Search] Johannes P Osterhoff, [Search] shall do a [Search]

one year performance piece. [Search]

The piece [Search] is called [Search] "Google" [Search]

and documents all searches [Search] I perform [Search] with the search engine [Search]

of the same name. [Search]

The performance [Search] shall start [Search] on January 1 [Search] and shall end [Search]

on December 31, [Search] 2011. [Search]

I shall not [Search] use undocumented ways [Search] to use the search engine [Search]

Google [Search] during this time. [Search]

Each of my search queries [Search] shall create a web page [Search] that is indexed [Search]

by this search engine [Search] and thus [Search] makes my searches [Search]

publicly available [Search] as search results [Search] for everybody. [Search]

Search queries [Search] can be [Search] ordered and bought, [Search] they shall cost [Search]

99 cents each. [Search]

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HTTP://WWW.BRODY.BF.SLU.NET.NU/PHOTOGALLERY/DT/11.JPG

HTTP://WWW.FAKEYRABEXAMB.COM/CGI-BIN/PHOTOS/08-19/220/1210_1024.JPG

HTTP://WWW.DRAGOART.COM/TUTS/PICS/1/141/1231807/HOW-TO-DRAW-A-CARTOON-SNAKE.JPG

Input: Sebastian Schmieg
Output: Search By Image, 2012

Though not obvious at first, Sebastian Schmieg's *Search By Image* can be read as a contemporary version of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam.*   In the work, Sebastian Schmieg's begins with a transparent file, a computer's equivalent of the nothingness that Christian tradition teaches predated God's creation of the world.

Even outside the Christian tradition, the work's beginning poses a metaphysical question "how can something come from nothing?" By entering a transparent file into Google's reverse image search, the artist kicks off an algorithm defined cosmic creation, where each subsequent image is entered into a search-by-image recursion and the output is then added to the moving image work.

For a while, we are are stuck in the cosmos. Then, at 1:00, a sudden form appears and the algorithm shows us faces, humanity, followed by the mire of civilization in the form of products, cars, flash lights, and objects floating against a white background. Guns become shoes, which become knives. We enter a world of purely formal concerns with a strong relationship to abstract paintings, where meaning is derived by form and color as opposed to content. This resonance reminders us that the objects are not the work's subject. Speaking in these terms, the subject of *Search By Image* is creation itself. The piece's dizzying speed has a certainty, a feeling of intention over chaos. The reverse image process could go on forever, but it would never lead us back to nothing. Instead, Schmeig leaves us with the image of a snake, our invitation out of Eden and into a world that man creates and destroys.

Input: Emily Simpson

Output: *everything i've ever searched for, again*, 2018

There are the stories we tell ourselves and then there are the stories that we can weave from our digital detritus. These stories can either support or refute the self that we have built on our faulty memory. Emily Simpson's *everything i've ever searched for, again* is a narrated diary guided by her Google-documented search queries. Performed over the course of approximately 30 minutes, Simpson links a curated selection of her past searches into a confessional performance, while exploring how the factual data about our lives confuses our memories and sense of self. We watch as she tells stories to us as much as to herself, in an active consideration of what this data snapshot might mean to her and the unspecified audience of the internet.

everything i've ever searched for, again does not actually contain everything Simpson has searched for. In contrast to Johannes P. Osterhoff's exposure of all his search queries in *Google*, Simpson chooses what to reveal as a way of telling a particular story about herself, making her, despite the factual strictures of real searches and the order in which they occurred, a very unreliable narrator. Google becomes akin to a second memory; a journal, both a friend and fact checker. Due to the artist's selection of data, *everything i've ever searched for, again* is not so much about privacy as it is about the relationship of data to a narrative. In this regard, the work is similar to Warren Neidich's *The Search Drive,* where an anonymous hacker riffles through the content and constructs a false narrative. In contrast, Simpson explores her own search history with the detachment of time, from a place where she has lived the consequences of who she was when performing the original searches. The result is a deeply personal and confessional performance that both identifies with and derives from YouTube culture.