**Signal-to-Noise**

RAWART
GALLERY

people?' It's, 'What do people want to tell about themselves?'"

(Mark Zuckerberg)

In the autobiographical "The Confessions", the 18th century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau laid out his life story, his tales of passions and his sins, with an uncompromising valor that was very exceptional in his days. The book created a shocking stir, redefining the confessional genre. Such intimate access to private matters was considered revolutionary for his times. It is hard to believe how far society has come since the astounding effect of Rousseau's intimate testimonies to the present days, in which confessions and self exposure are commonly practiced before the potential gaze of countless people on the World Wide Web. It seems there is no degree of intimacy or outrageous exposure that has the ability to shock or astonish the public.

The internet provides a global performance arena for billions of people, simultaneously constituting a double position as both a personal diary and a megaphone. Private testimonials have become one and the same with public life. It seems this medium provides the perfect solution for basic human needs- one can find a platform to be heard and escape his own loneliness at the same time. Unlike the real world, users in the virtual world barely show any inhibitions from private exposure. Some are not fully aware of the fact that their confessions will be forever open to public view and it seems that those who are- do not really care. The desire to share their thoughts and feelings defeats their aversion from lack of privacy.

Technology has become the architect of our interpersonal relationships as it redefines both intimacy and solitude. We feel together though we are really alone: we sit alone in our private homes, but feel as though we are surrounded by billions of people through the screen. If in the past, intimacy was credited to discretion and close friendships, today a person can have a seemingly intimate discussion publicly, before a countless crowd of onlookers. He shares experiences that may be very meaningful to him, however their significance is diminished once they immerse with the infinite data available online. Thus artist Liat Segal presents "Confession Machine", a display of personal confessions that quickly disappear and clear the way for new confessions. Such is the circle of life of a confession on the internet. The Artist used personal confessions taken from her friend's Facebook walls. While some of the texts express pain and others are
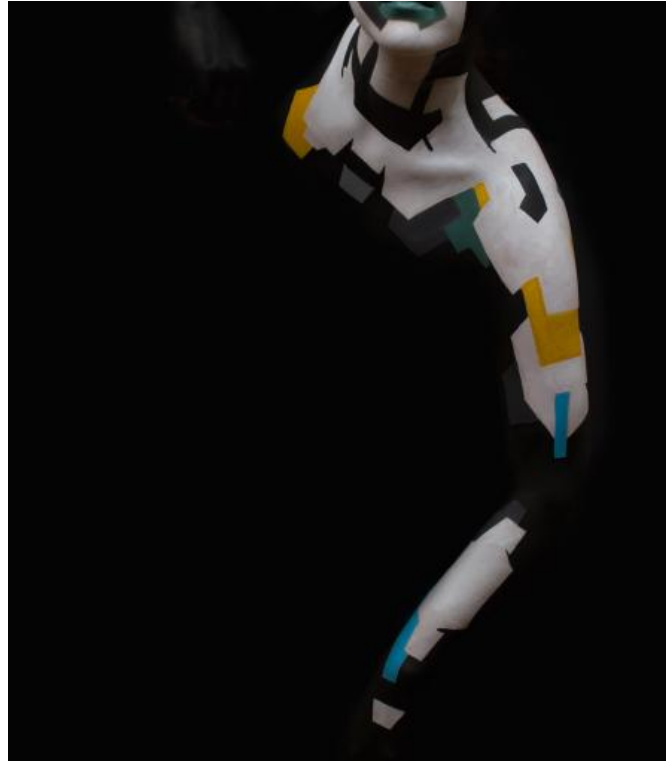
(/sites/default/files/influence71__humanmachine_takahitoirie_web_1.jpg)

Takahito Irie, "H/U/M/A/N M/A/C/H/I/N/E Project", influence 71, 2013, photography, archiival ink print, 120x80 cm

humorous in nature, ultimately they are all sincere. This goes to show how easy the online confession can be, also demonstrating the way digital texts are likely to be forgotten even while they are being read. Liat Segal's 'Confession Machine' prints the text upon a UV sensitive surface. The pigment on the surface is exposed to light and then vanishes within 30 seconds, much like the confession itself.

Christopher Baker is also interested in the topic of personal confessions. Presenting 5,000 YouTube videos on one panel, he collected testimonial videos of users in their private space, sharing their desires, fears, experiences, and other intimate statements. All of the videos are played both simultaneously and as individual units. Baker displays a deluded visualization of the democratic, shared community on the internet. On the one hand, new media platforms such as YouTube enable more and more people to be speak their mind. On the other, the human mind lacks the ability to cope with endless amounts of information, sort it all out and evenly distribute concentration.

The endlessly streaming data leads to a certain reliance on the ability of technology to mediate, organize and process information. Consequently, technology greatly impacts user's perceptions and decisions. Liliana Farber poignantly expresses the inconceivable influence that technology can have on one's decision making process, even when it comes to the most personal and intimate choices. The artist based her work on online dating sites, drawing pixels out of profiles of men with whom she interacted. She later placed those pixels in a generic image of 'the perfect kiss'. Presenting at once a fantasy image and the disillusionment from the image due to the over flooding dating options available online. Farber draws our attention to the trust we give in an algorithm, even in a critical decision such as choosing a life partner. Like an algorithm sorts out information on online dating services to select potential mates, as an artist she relies on an algorithm to create the final image.

When Surfers compromise their privacy in the name of sharing, they can easily be exploited for commercial or political purposes. In Erica Scourti's "Life in Adwords Project", the artist demonstrates how the personal diary she writes on her g-mail account was used by Google to tailor advertisements of potential interest to her. The artist reads the AdWords that popped up next to these emails. She thus created a self- portrait, as it was formed by computer software designed for profit: she is only what the algorithm decided she is. Moreover, the algorithm analyzes the user's behavior online, it not only reads it but actually impacts his personality: the online profile is set by predetermined categories. Hence a person is defined by the commercial decisions he makes and these decisions are influenced by personally tailored advertisements. The artist displayed the way in which our personal information serves as a tool in cyber economics. Scourti questions our independent actions in regards to tracking devises and manipulative technology that shapes our desires, intentions and behaviors. You can no longer refer to an autobiography as a narrative created by an autonomic subject inseparable from the technology he interacts with.

Obscuring the boundaries between the private and public, leads us to view the hundreds and thousands of individuals in the social network as one unit. The

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Takahito Irie, "H/U/M/A/N M/A/C/H/I/N/E Project", *substance 50,* 2013, photography, archiival ink print, 120x80 cm

personal identity is embedded into the collective
identity. Furthermore, many times self expression is
conceived personal when in fact it is a byproduct of
social and cultural contexts of global media. Hence the
individual identity merges with others and seems to be
manifestly unoriginal.

In Natalie Bookchin's work 'Mass ornament', the artist
presents YouTube videos in which people recorded
themselves dancing in their own private environment.
In a so called act of personal expression, the dancers
perform the same dance moves as if choreographed.
Thus Bookchin exposes the ways in which popular
culture incarnates through the individual's body. The
work's title refers to a 1927 essay by the same name,
which linked chorus line dancing of the 1920's -30's
with mass production assembly lines that were typical
of the same era. Similarly the artist sees the videos as
a reflection of contemporary society's basic paradigms:
The YouTube dancers, performing alone in their rooms
a dance which is both extremely private and extremely
public, are a perfect expression of our times. The
tension between the individual and mass culture is
highly visible.

The last two works present the contradiction between
the liberating potential of online culture, apparently
enabling absolute personal expression, and the
intrusiveness and power structures that are
camouflaged by it, that wane individuality and enhance
herd behavior.

The cyborg tribe created by Takahito Irie also points to
the fact that we all become similar to one another. By
altering the models' appearance Takahito wishes to
raise the question whether we shape and control
technology or is the other way round? The artist
examines the relationship between man and machine
throughout history, reaching up to the point of
complete fusion. Hiroshima, the artist's place of birth,
was the first city to be demolished by technology. That
is the root of the artist's interest in the connection
between humanity and technology, marking how some
are distressed by it and some are in awe of it.

The works featured in the exhibition shed light on two
interwoven aspects of our networked lives: The first
relates to the contrast between the performative nature
of the web, which allows anyone to be heard, and the
unifying, flattening aspect of digital life, which causes
the unique qualities of each singular voice to fade
away.
The other relates to personal confessions and intimate
online exposure becoming insignificant once it blends
into the infinite mass of the cyber space.

The name of the exhibition refers to the term 'Signal-
to-Noise Ratio', a scientific measure that compares the
level of a desired signal to the level of background
noise. Metaphorically, the exhibition's title refers to the
ongoing tension between the voice of the individual
and the mass produced noise, between the private and
the public.

Curitorial Text (Hebrew) (/sites/default/files/SIGNAL TO
NOISE 1) (טקסט תערוכה_עברית).pdf)
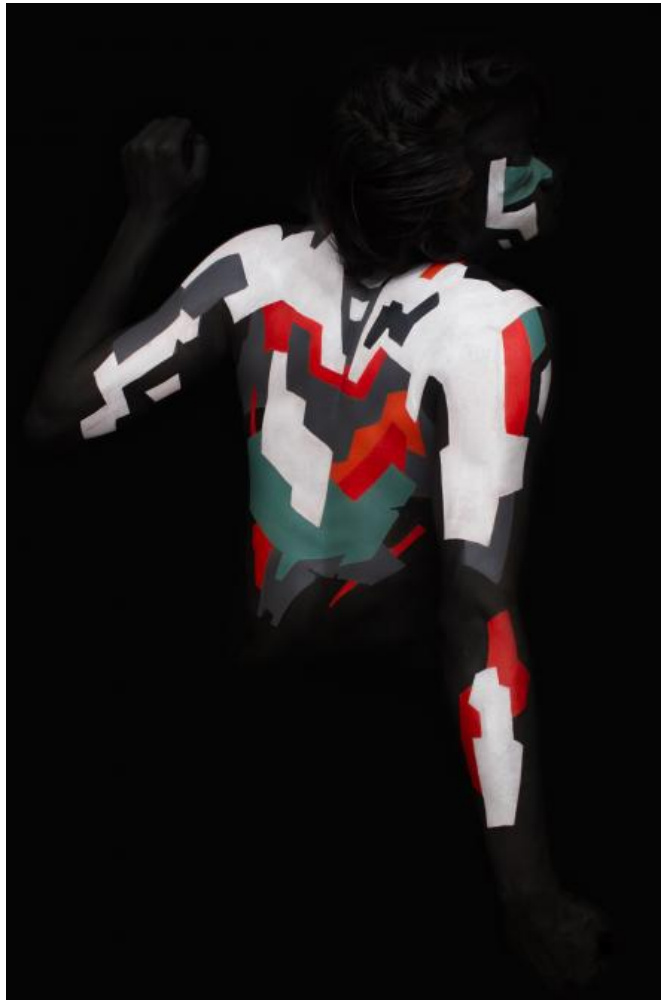
(/sites/default/files/influence72_humanmachine_takahitoirie_web.jpg)
Takahito Irie, "H/U/M/A/N M/A/C/H/I/N/E Project", *influence 72*, 2013, photography,
archiival ink print, 120x80 cm

(http://player.vimeo.com/video/1553583?autoplay=1)
Christopher Baker, *Hello World! or: How I learned to Stop Listening and Love the Noise*,
multy channel video installtion, 1:09:10, 2008

(/sites/default/files/Mass-Ornament,-Natalie-Bookchin,-2009.jpg)

Natalie Bookchin, *Mass Ornament*, 2009, single channel HD video installation, 00:07:11

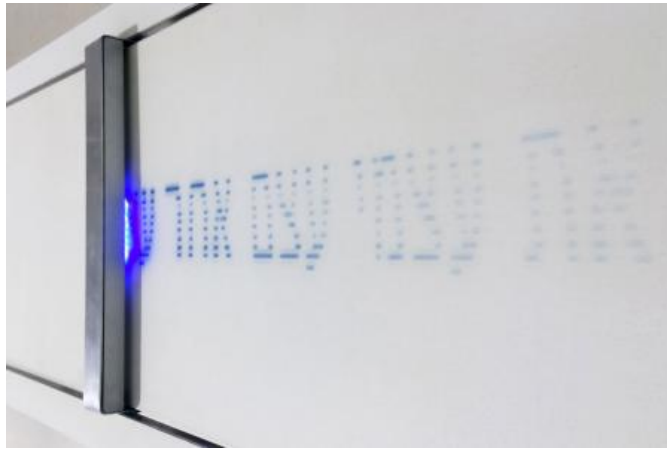(/sites/default/files/Life-in-AdWords-project,-Erica-Scourti,-2012-2013-(2).jpg)

Erica Scourti, *Life in AdWords project*, 2012-13, video, single channel, 01:02:00

(/sites/default/files/Me-&-My-boys,-Liliana-Farber,-2014-(2).jpg)

Liliana Farber, *My boys*, archiival ink print, 2015, 155x210 cm

(/sites/default/files/LiatSegal_2014_ConfessionMachine_HerzeliaArtistResidency.jpg)

Liat Segal, *Confession Machine*, 2014, installation, 55x240 cm