people? i s, wh y 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

Takahito Irie, "H/I/M/A/N M/A/C/H/I/INNE Project", influence 71, 2013, photography,
archival 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 Scourt’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. Scourt 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 autonomous 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
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.

**Curatorial Text (Hebrew)**

[Takahito Irie, "HI/UM/I/AN MIA/CH/VINE Project", influence 72, 2013, photography, archival ink print, 120x80 cm](http://rawart-gallery.com/content/signal-noise)

Christopher Baker, Hello World! or: How I learned to Stop Listening and Love the Noise, mutly channel video installation, 1:09:10, 2008
Natalie Bookchin, Mass Ornament, 2009, single channel HD video installation, 00:07:11

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

Liliana Farber, My boys, archival ink print, 2015, 155x210 cm
List Segal, Confession Machine, 2014, installation, 55x240 cm