



PORTFOLIO

Tong Wu

NEW YORK-BASED NEW MEDIA ARTIST
TONGWUMEDIA.COM

Tong Wu (b. 1993 in China) is a new media artist and creative technologist raised on the Internet. She now co-exists with her digital doubles in New York and the Chrome browser.

Her work — incorporating AI models, immersive installations, web-based interactions, community workshops, and live performance — explores plausible alternative realities, particularly those where humans and sentient machines may cohabit. She wonders if our ways of world understanding is just one story among many, and that other paths—accessible only to non-human intelligence—might reveal new visions of reality. Through her work, she invites the exploration of this plurality of truths, and to reimagine our world in a broader, more inclusive light.

Wu has received exhibition and commission inquiries from leading institutions including the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) (Netherlands), the International Olympics Committee (IOC) Young Leaders Programme, the INDEX Biennial of Art and Technology (Portugal), Koganechō Area Management Center (Japan), CURRENTS New Media Festival, CultureHub & La MaMa, and the City of Palo Alto Public Art Program (United States). She serves as a juror on the 2025 International Selectors Committee for the Lumen Prize and as a reviewer on the International Programme Committee for ISEA Conference 2025 in Seoul, and has been invited as a thesis critic at New York University (NYU) Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) and School of Visual Arts (SVA) MFA Interactive Design Program.



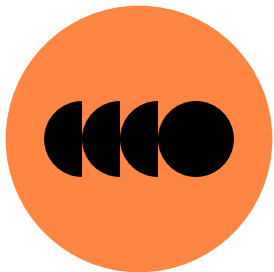


Personal Project

Nephophile

Interactive installation, in collaboration with Yuguang Zhang

Selected by Wild Bits Residency & Outdoor Exhibition, Tartu, Estonia



INTRODUCTION

"Nephophile" are machines that observe clouds.

They are protagonists from the artist's world-building project "**Bureau of Cloud Management**"—an imagined alternate reality where human and AI cloud observers (codename "Nephophile") are both tasked with observing and documenting clouds under systematized workflow.

In the wild field of Maajaam, three *Nephophile* devices, each consisting of a camera, a phone booth and an AI model connected between them, are scatter across the lawn. They are positioned to study clouds differently—one sees through trees, one watches the pond, and one views the open sky.

The captured scenes over time gradually accumulate and become their primary sources for learning what "clouds" are. The paired phone booth to each camera is the outlet for visitors to catch a snippet of this ongoing observation. Visitors can lift telephones to hear how situated experiences gradually shape divergent yet intimate definitions of "clouds."



Installation details of the "Nephophile" listening station against the sky.

RECOGNITIONS

July 2025

"Nephophile" was selected as one of the three finalists out of 100+ submission for the Wild Bits Residency and the technological art outdoor exhibition in Tartu, Estonia.

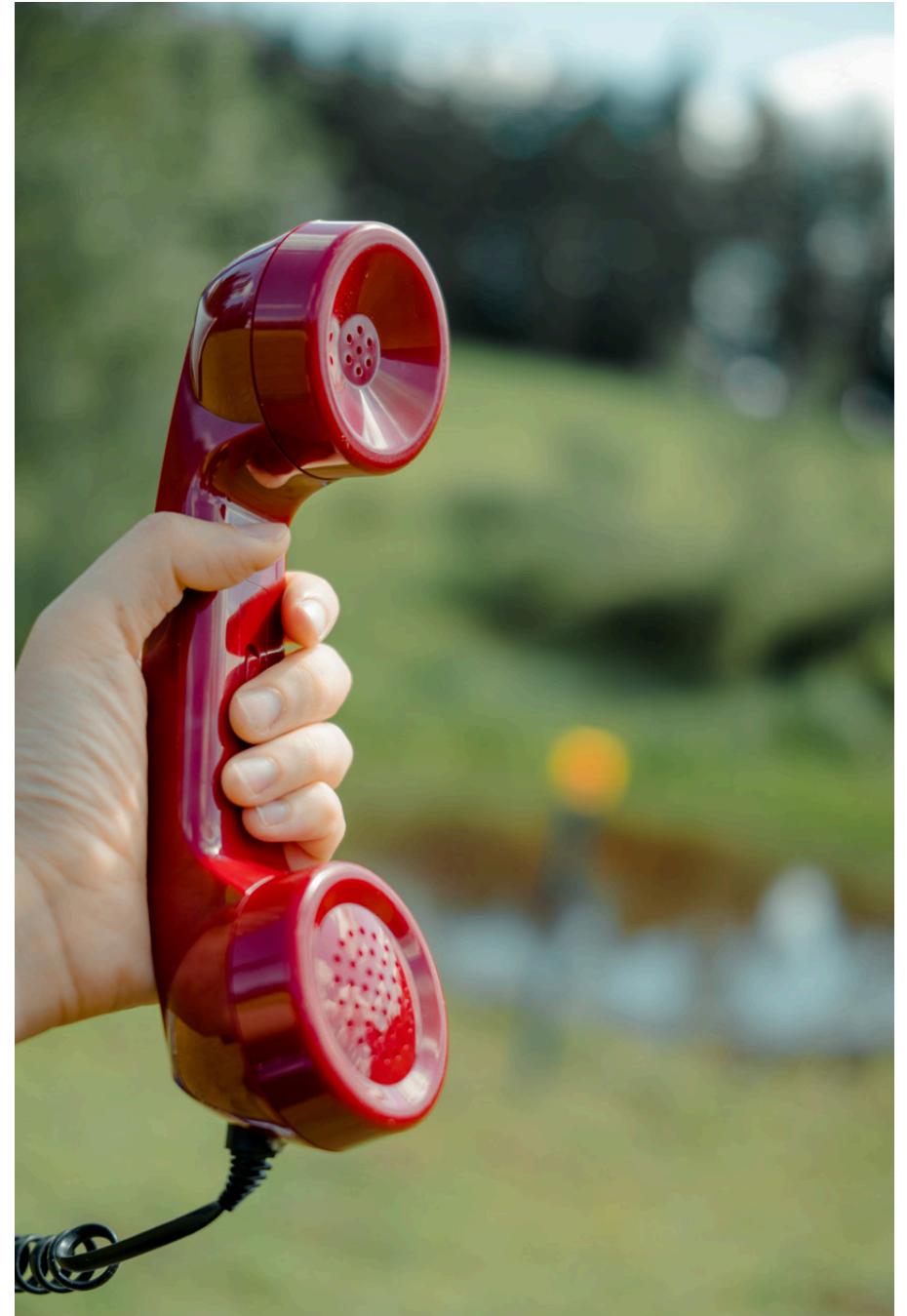


Installation view of "Nephophile" at the Wild Bits Technological Art Outdoor Exhibition in Tartu, Estonia, showing the autonomous cloud observation unit with customized enclosure, wall phone, EPS camera, and AI system that generates interpretations of passing clouds.

Nephophile Exhibition



Detail of "Nephophile" observation unit gazing skyward at the Wild Bits Technological Art Outdoor Exhibition in Tartu, Estonia.



Close-up of the listening interface at "Nephophile," Wild Bits Technological Art Outdoor Exhibition, Tartu, Estonia. The AI whispers its poetic cloud observations—reflections captured from the pond visible in the background—directly into the visitor's ear.

A visitor engages with "Nephophile" at the Wild Bits Technological Art Outdoor Exhibition in Tartu, Estonia. The installation invites visitors to lift the receiver and hear the AI's accumulated environmental memory of clouds—intimate observations shaped by this specific landscape.

Bureau of Cloud Management



Multimedia immersive installation, in collaboration with Yuguang Zhang
<https://alternative.systems/projects/bureau-of-cloud-management>

INTRODUCTION

Setting its story within a fictional government agency that “manages” clouds, this multimedia installation reinterprets the concept of “clouds” as a collective meaning-making process.

Created by Tong Wu and Yuguang Zhang, the “Bureau of Cloud Management” is an imaginative world-building project that envisions an alternate reality where cloud observation has been transformed from a casual human activity into a systematized institutional practice. In this conceptual universe, both human and AI operate under standardized protocols to document atmospheric phenomena, creating a bureaucratic framework around something as ephemeral and poetic as clouds.

Both human and AI systems contribute—humans share personal cloud-observing memories while AI analyzes cloud images—together forming an expanded collective definition of what “cloud” is.

RECOGNITIONS

- **November 2023**
“Bureau of Cloud Management” was featured at Tong Wu and Yuguang Zhang’s duo exhibition “We May Be in *This* Together”, presented by :iidrr Gallery in New York
- **October 2023**
“Bureau of Cloud Management” was selected as one of six open call finalists and received a commission grant from the City of Palo Alto’s Code:ART festival in California, U.S.
- **May 2022**
“Bureau of Cloud Management” won the open call and received a commission grant from INDEX Media Art Biennale held in Braga, Portugal.



Installation view of “Bureau of Cloud Management” at the Code:ART 2023 exhibition in Palo Alto, California, integrating screen displays, interactive web applications, printed materials, and custom-designed props to create a cohesive narrative environment.

Bureau of Cloud Managements Exhibitions



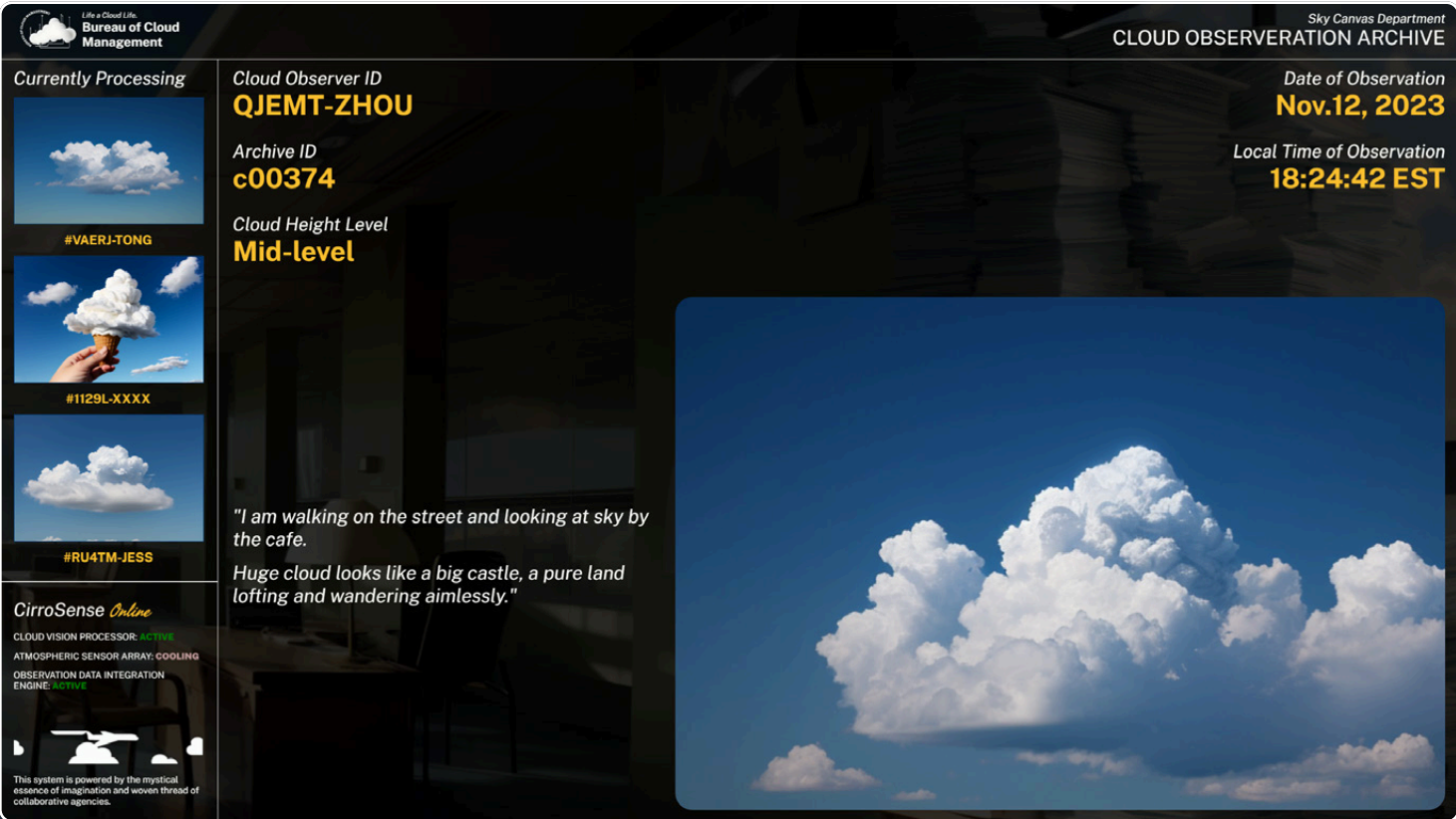
Closeup of the interactive cloud observation input portal, with real-time processed entries displaying in the background screens.



Real-time, on-screen rendering of the “clouds” created from audience-input observation notes



“Machine Cloud Observer” – The autonomous network device that sources and analyzes new cloud images from the internet (right screen), then generates formatted observation notes to be rendered on the e-ink screen (left screen).



Screenshot of the the central database screen display, showing cloud observation entries records aggregated from both human and AI cloud observers.



An audience observes the rendering process of the device at Tong Wu and Yuguang Zhang’s duo exhibition “We May Be in *This* Together” in New York, November 2023.

Generative AI Community Workshop Series

Community education & Workshop facilitation

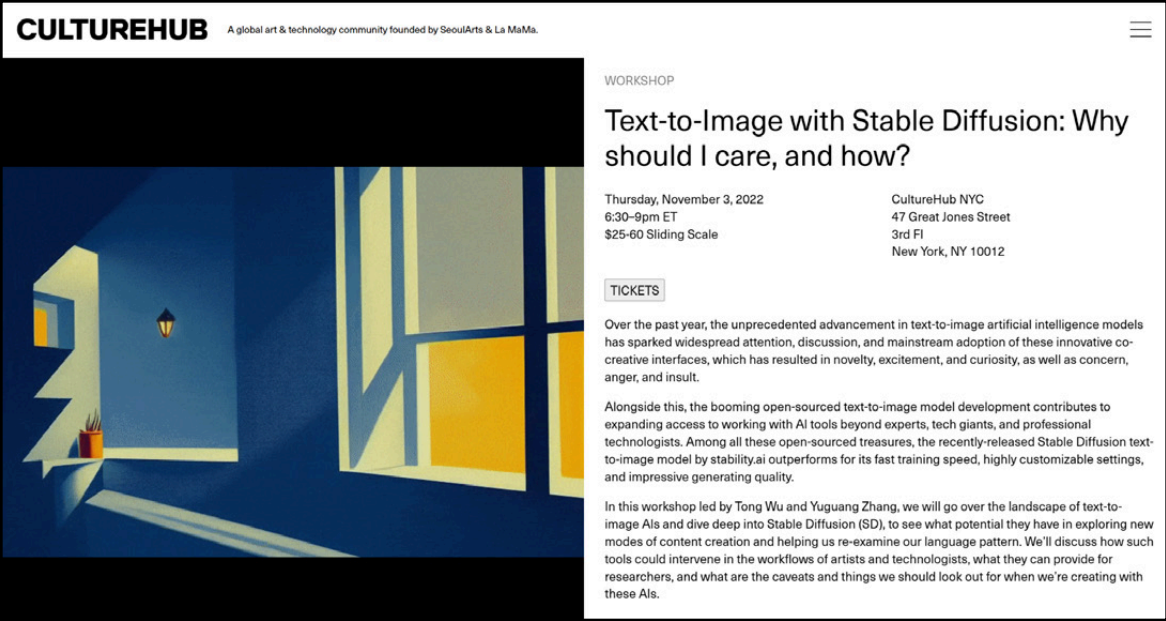
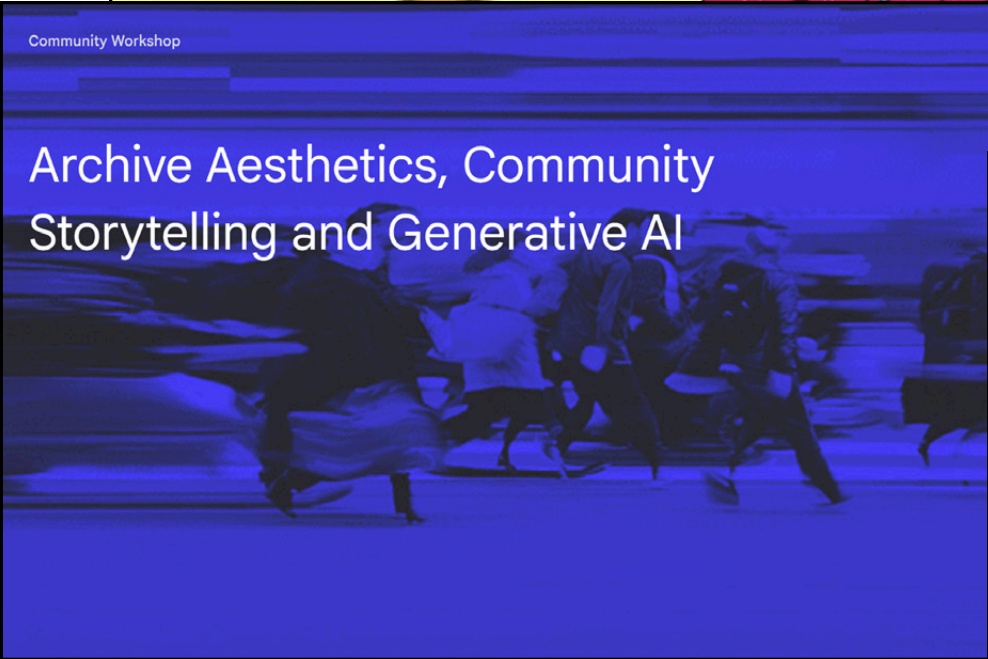
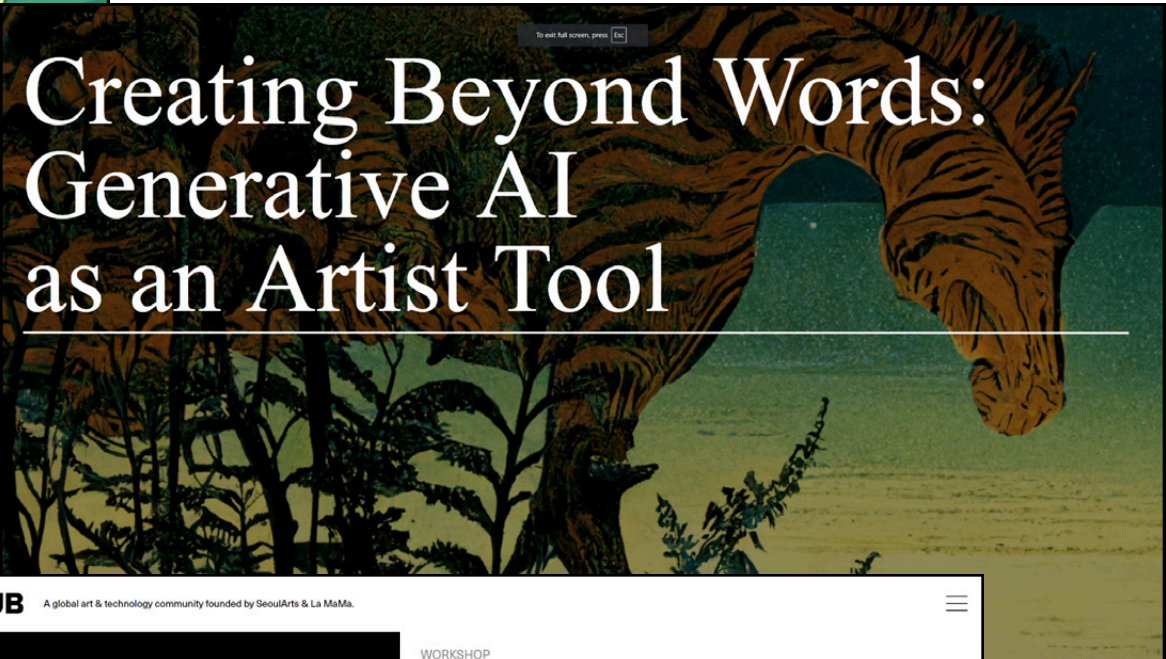
INTRODUCTION

Beginning shortly after the release of text-to-image AI models like Stable Diffusion in August 2022, Tong Wu launched a series of community workshops that brought together the fundamentals of generative AI with practical techniques drawn from her extensive experience using these tools for creative expression and critical inquiry. These hands-on sessions reached diverse communities—visual artists, educators, design students, high-risk youth, and writers—each workshop tailored to explore how text-to-image AI could meaningfully enhance participants’ respective fields and practices.

Rather than focusing solely on technical instruction, Wu's workshops emphasized understanding both the creative potential and broader social implications of this emerging technology. Participants engaged with questions about authorship, creativity, and representation while developing practical skills for integrating AI tools into their work. Through this approach, the workshops became spaces for collective learning and critical dialogue, helping communities navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of AI-assisted creativity with both enthusiasm and thoughtful consideration of its impacts.

SELECTED ENGAGEMENTS

- January 2025, January 2024, March 2023**
Three times invited by Yale University, to present the workshop as a guest lecture for the course “*Archive Aesthetics and Community Storytelling*”
- March 2023**
Invited by School of Visual Arts (SVA) MFA Interaction Design to develop and lead a 3-session generative AI workshop “*Create beyond Words*” for MFA students
- March 2023**
Selected through workshop open call by BlackStar (2023 William & Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar) to present the workshop “*Generative Futures for Filmmakers*”
- November 2022 & January 2023**
Twice partnered with CultureHub to lead the workshop “*Text-to-Image with Stable Diffusion: Why should I care, and how?*”



Alternative Family Story

AI-generated photography, mixed media installation

<https://alternative.systems/projects/alternative-family-stories>

INTRODUCTION

“Alternative Family Stories” uses real personal photos to fine-tune text-to-image AI models, creating speculative family albums where inconsistent AI generation becomes a feature rather than a flaw. By presenting AI-generated portraits as vintage family photos in various physical forms, the project examines how fabricated visual histories challenge our notions of authenticity, memory, and the documentation of human experience.

RECOGNITIONS

March 2025

“Alternative Family Story” was exhibited as a mixed media installation at **ReFest** Exhibition 2025 curated by CultureHub & La MaMa Experimental Theatre in New York, U.S.

June 2023

Tong Wu presented the “Alternative Family Story” album at the workshop “Ethical Considerations in Creative Applications of Computer Vision” at the Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition Conference (CVPR) in Vancouver, Canada, in 2023.



Artifacts showing AI-generated photos of the same “person” at different life stages: a young mother with infant in a photo album (right top) and a young college student in a framed portrait on a vintage television (right bottom).

Daily Dividuals

Artistic research project; mixed media including 3D animation, augmented reality (AR), 3D printed sculpture, digital painting

<https://tongwumedia.com/blog/daily-dividuals>



INTRODUCTION

Living in a digital era, individuals are metamorphosing into unrecognizable masses of data. Behind their numerous forms and facades, these online avatars conflict and blend with our physical individuality, creating more confusion and detachments via their accumulation of self-imagination and desires. Reflecting on this, Tong Wu created *Daily Dividuals*, a long-term artistic research project series that examines the dynamic definition of “human” and the fluid relationship between one’s “self” and “digital twins” in a digital age through multimedia technology, including 3D animation, Augmented Reality (AR) technology, 3D-printed sculptures, and digital paintings.

This project has manifested in multiple forms, including a solo exhibition and a 3D animated experimental film.

RECOGNITIONS

April-May 2022

Tong Wu’s solo exhibition “Daily Dividuals” was held at the LATITUDE Gallery, Brooklyn, New York

February 2021

“One Man Band,” a video work from the “Daily Dividuals” series, was published as an interactive article in Issue 8 of Adjacent Online Journal.

December 2019

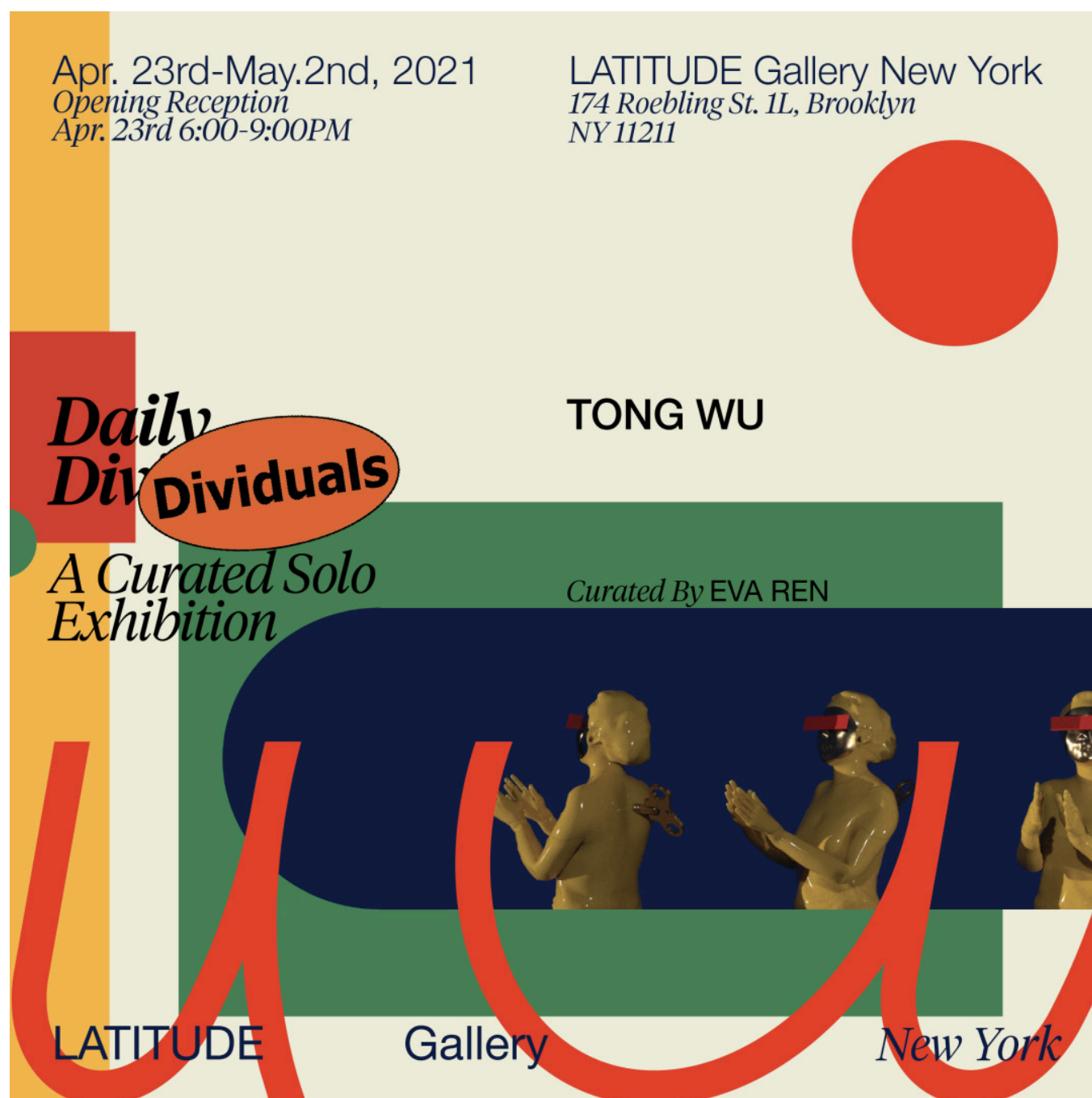
Tong Wu was invited as keynote speaker at IDFA DocLab’s Artificial Future event to share the insights and inspirations of her then-new work “Daily Dividuals.”



Tong Wu: Daily Dividuals

Solo Exhibition, April - May 2021

LATITUDE Gallery New York



INTRODUCTION

Presented by LATITUDE Gallery New York, “Daily Dividuals” was New Media artist Tong Wu’s first solo exhibition in New York. It featured a series of Wu’s recent multimedia works, including videos, Augmented Reality (AR), digital sculpture installations, and digital paintings since 2019. Two years in the making, “Daily Dividuals” was the outcome of the artist’s long-term artistic research on cyber-culture and the digital system. The exhibition discussed the expanding philosophical brokerage between the physical world, the virtual sphere, and online avatars and the fluid yet dystopian nature of the “self.”

Tong Wu’s works continue the long-lasting exploration of human alienation initiated by previous generations of artists, also sensing the subtle difference of perspective between the human-machine relationship. As a self-proclaimed multimedia netizen artist, the Internet wasn’t the only source of influence on the artist’s understanding of interpersonal relationships and social structure. Tong Wu’s worldview is also significantly shaped by Buddhist culture from her family and surroundings during her childhood in Quanzhou, China, resulting in a close bond between Buddhist doctrine and the artist’s practice. Information fragmentation in the digital age is indeed a universal and contemporary process. Still, Tong Wu’s personal upbringing has led her to originate a very “personalized” perspective that is refreshingly innovative and also distinctly East Asian.

FEATURES

“For Tong Wu, indeterminacy is a feminist strategy—a gentle yet powerful resistance against structures that objectify and categorize. Her approach emphasizes the transformative power of what she calls “tender observation,” dismantling any reductive gaze by embracing an intimate, open-ended mode of seeing.”

Tong Wu: Adrift In the Middle Ground

by Shuang Cai on **Yishu** / *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*
yishu-online.com/browse-articles/?1111

Yishu | Journal of
Contemporary
Chinese Art
典藏國際版

“{Daily Dividuals} is like a carnival, a farewell, and a redemption. It seems to be comforting people that if human beings are destined to devote more and more time to the world on the screen, then maybe it is time for us to love our digital avatars with our limited lives and condone it in the world that is originally seen by us. More possibilities grow in a world of delusions.”

Tong Wu | Deep Dive And Drifting, Staring And Distraction

by Peiyue Wu on **The Paper**
www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_12902245

澎湃

“Introducing the image of Buddha into this group of artworks opens up a new dimension to the interpretation of the artist’s statement.”

“Instead of simple symbolization, the Buddha statues in Wu Tong’s works are not only the references to oriental culture. They lead the discussion to point at Buddha or the Dharma itself with a very carefully structured tone here.”

Exhibition Review: Tong Wu’s “Daily Dividual”

by Yuan Zheng on **Artron**
news.artron.net/20210513/n1095730.html

Artron .Net
雅昌艺术网

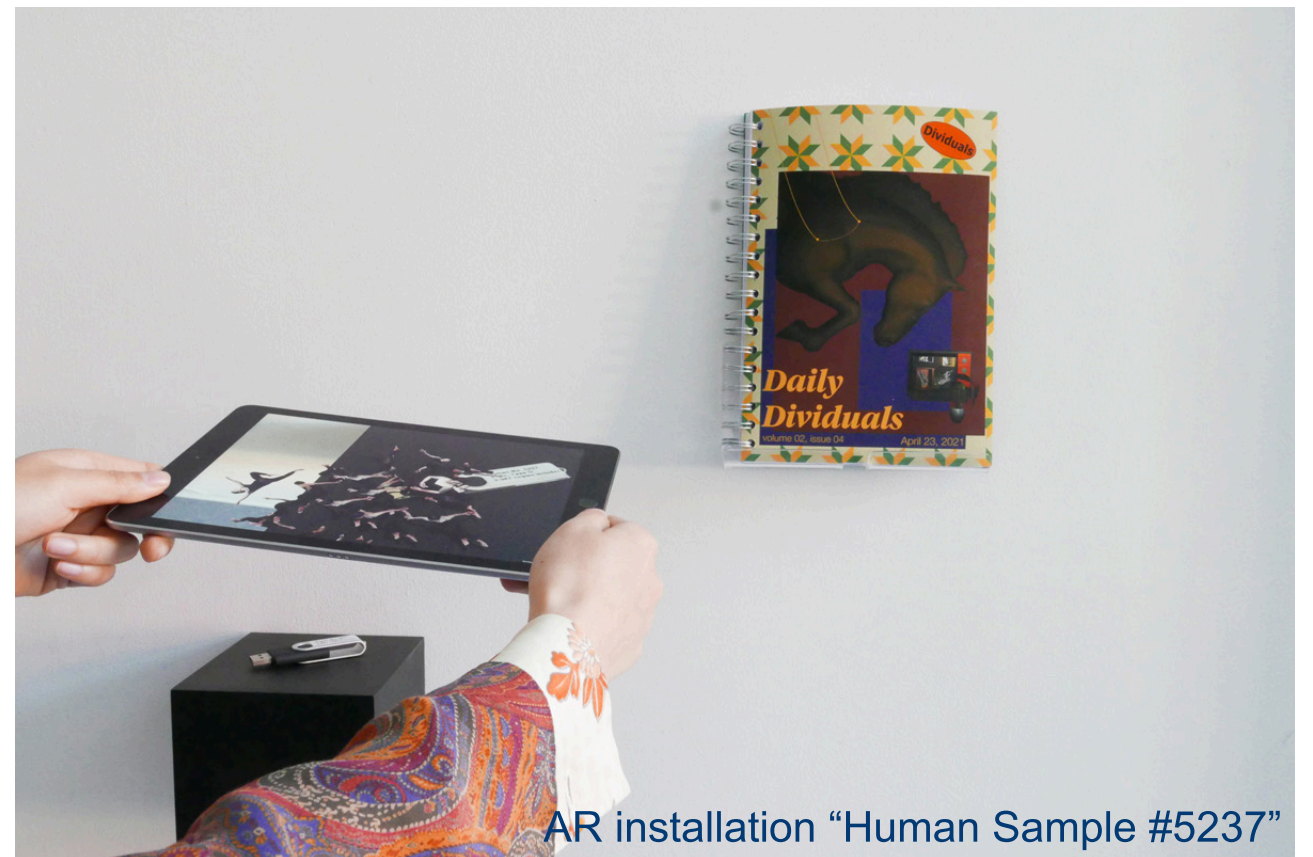
Tong Wu: Daily Dividuals

Solo Exhibition, April - May 2021
LATITUDE Gallery New York

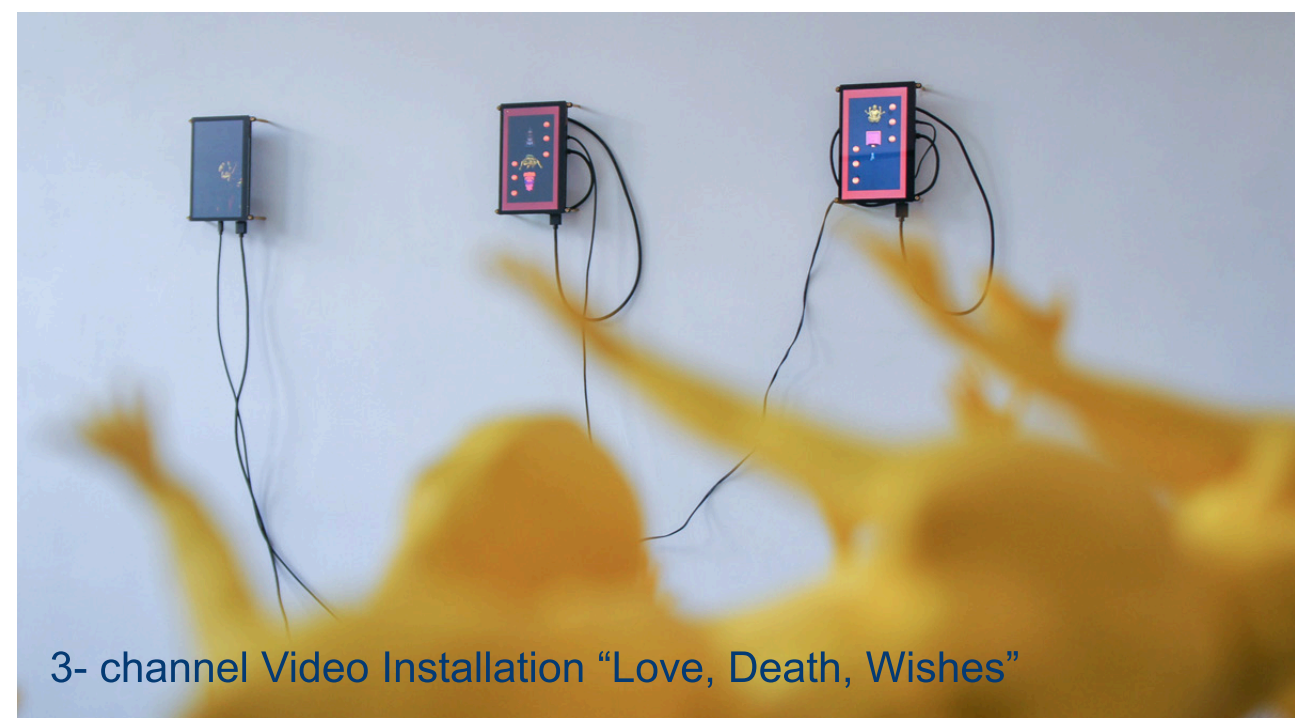


Tong Wu in LATITUDE Gallery New York during the opening of her solo exhibition “Daily Dividuals” in April 2021

3D-printed sculpture, “One Man Band / Duet”, from the “Daily Dividuals” digital sculpture series



AR installation “Human Sample #5237”



3- channel Video Installation “Love, Death, Wishes”

Daily Dividuals: One Man Band

3D Animated Film, 3min10s

February 2021



INTRODUCTION

One Man Band, as the 2021 issue of the art project “Daily Dividuals”, is a fantasy monologue in which “one” exists as a collective of his/her digital and physical doppelgängers who are trapped in a monotonous daily routine.

It creates an infinitely looping space in which one’s physical body and digital doubles coexist and fluidly transform from one to the other, therefore the “one” becomes many yet “many” are actually the “one”.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director: Tong Wu
Visual Designer: Tong Wu
Animation Developer: Tong Wu
Vocalist & Composer: Yayi Cai
MIDI Arrangement: Fei Gao (Black Dog)

RECOGNITIONS

Semi-Finalist, **Venice Shorts Film Awards 2021** Official Selection, **Toronto International Women Film Festival 2021**



Still frames from the film “Daily Dividuals: One Man Band.”

Panopticon

Interactive video sculpture, in collaboration with **Barak Chamo**

<https://tongwumedia.com/blog/panopticon>



INTRODUCTION

In the age of mass surveillance and commoditized information, we are all, willingly or not, constantly watched. Our devices, online presence, transaction history, and even physical presence have become an asset for the social network, world governments, and corporations to own—we live in a digital panopticon devoid of consent and, in many cases, even awareness.

Inspired by the system of control of the same name, Tong Wu and her collaborator Barak Chamo created the project “Panopticon”, an interactive video sculpture that breaks the illusions of privacy and control of our digital identity and physical presence. Multiple camera rigs monitor the audience throughout the exhibition space, tracking and capturing their face images, and collecting their facial data to be projected on a semi-torus sculpture.

It is a critique and a wake-up call to the alarming prevalence of mass surveillance all around us, to how tracking and surveillance devices have become largely invisible to us, and to how insensitive we have become toward privacy invasion.

RECOGNITIONS

December 2019

Tong Wu was commissioned by the **International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam DocLab (IDFA)** program to recreate “Panopticon” as part of the large-scale work “*The Space Between*”, which received a nomination for the DocLab Competition for Immersive Non-Fiction 2019.

June 2019

“Panopticon” was exhibited at the **CURRENTS New Media Festival 2019**.

March 2019

“Panopticon” was exhibited at the **ReFest Exhibition 2019** curated by CultureHub.

October 2018

“Panopticon” was shortlisted for the Interactive Category of the prestigious award **Communication Arts 2019**.



A viewer engages with the “Panopticon” installation at the CURRENTS New Media Festival 2019 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, U.S.

Panopticon Exhibitions



“Panopticon / The Space Between Us” on view at the IDFA DocLab 2019 Exhibition in Tolhuistuin Concertzaal, Amsterdam in December 2019



A young audience interacting with “Panopticon / The Space Between Us” at the IDFA DocLab 2019 Exhibition in Tolhuistuin Concertzaal, Amsterdam in December 2019

Work Projects



Breaking from China to France

Generative AI short film

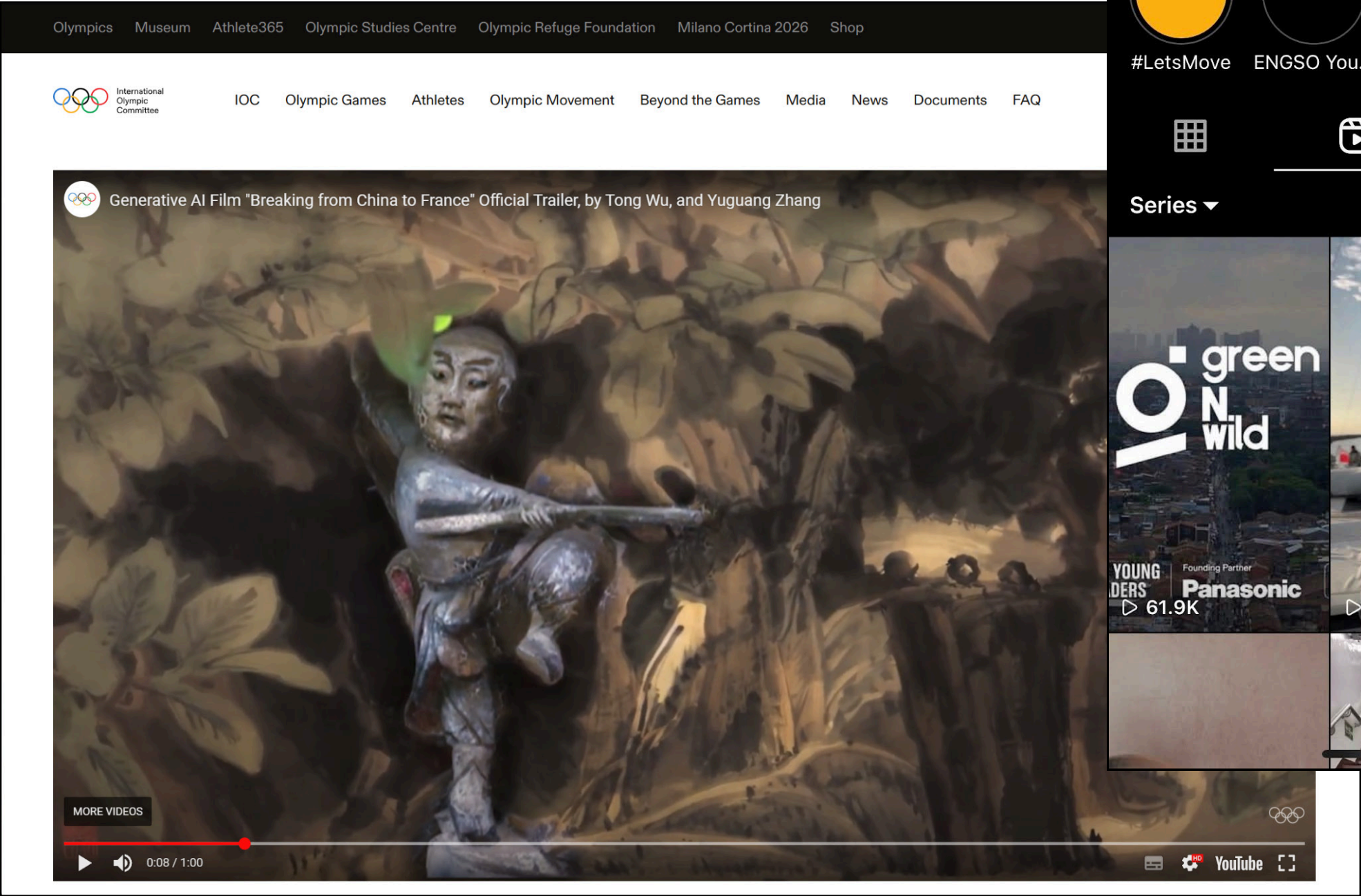
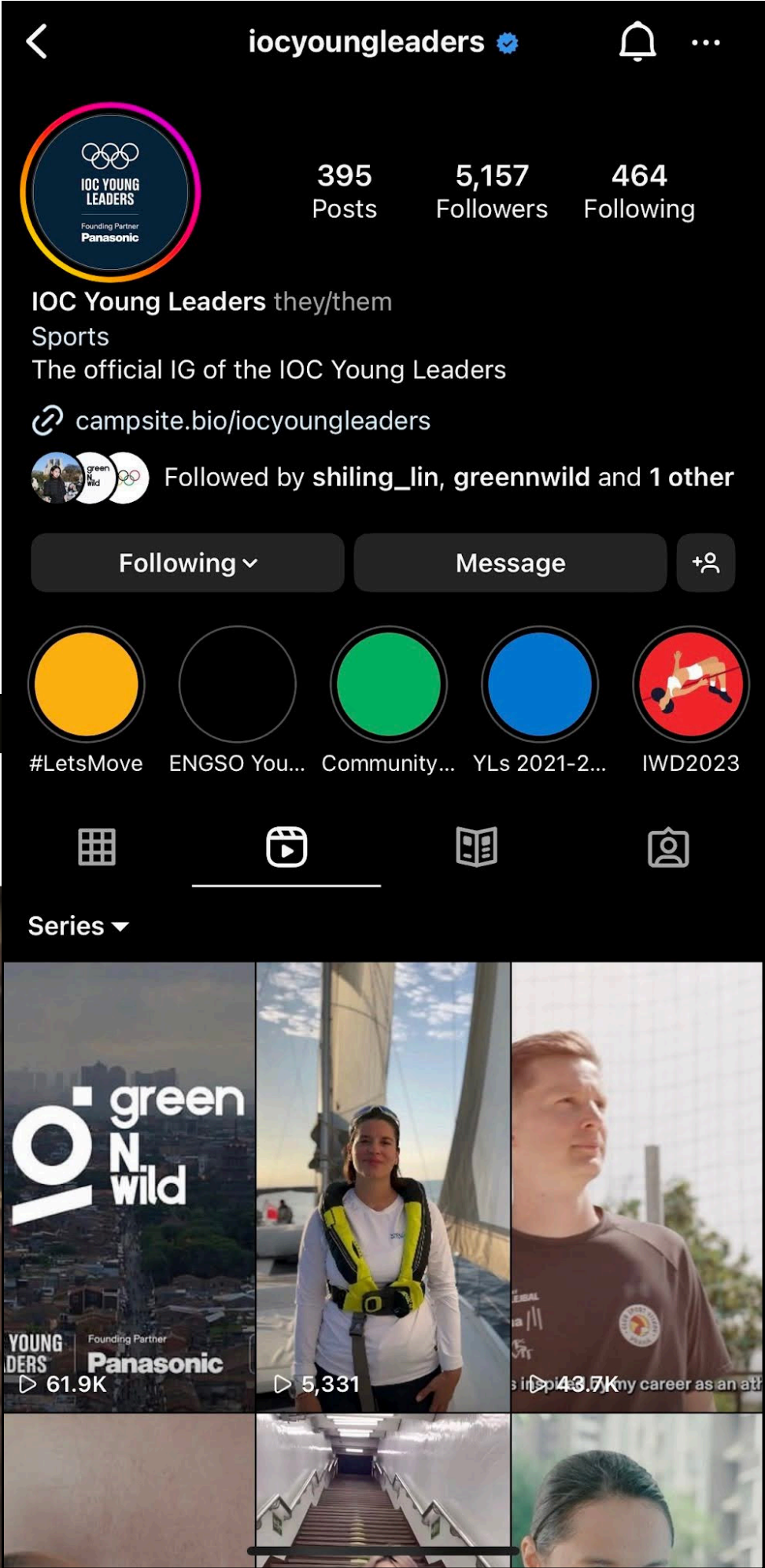
Tong Wu was commissioned by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC) Young Leaders Programme** & GreenNwild Initiative to create a generative AI-enhanced campaign video

INTRODUCTION

Commissioned by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**'s **Young Leaders Programme** and GreenNwild initiative, Tong Wu created this experimental short film that explores the intersection of breaking dance culture—newly added to the Paris 2024 Olympics—with artistic traditions from China and France. Using a custom generative AI pipeline, the project demonstrates how sport transcends cultural boundaries through a unique fusion of visual art, dance, and cross-cultural storytelling.

The film combines live-action footage with AI-generated content to create an imaginative visual journey where breaking dancers traverse scenes inspired by Chinese calligraphy, ink painting, impressionism, and Franco-Belgian comics. This innovative approach illustrates the universal language of movement and the shared artistic heritage between cultures.

Featured on the IOC’s homepage in September 2023, the project was praised for how it “embraces AI to usher in the next generation of urban athletes” and “promotes Olympism and urban sports like breaking to a new audience.” The film garnered **61.9k** views within days of posting on the IOC Young Leaders Instagram account, becoming one of their most-viewed videos and demonstrating the power of AI-driven storytelling to engage global audiences with Olympic values.



Sylvia

Tong Wu was the digital installation designer and developer of the **award-winning project “Sylvia”** directed by Ziv Schneider, a New Media artist and film director.

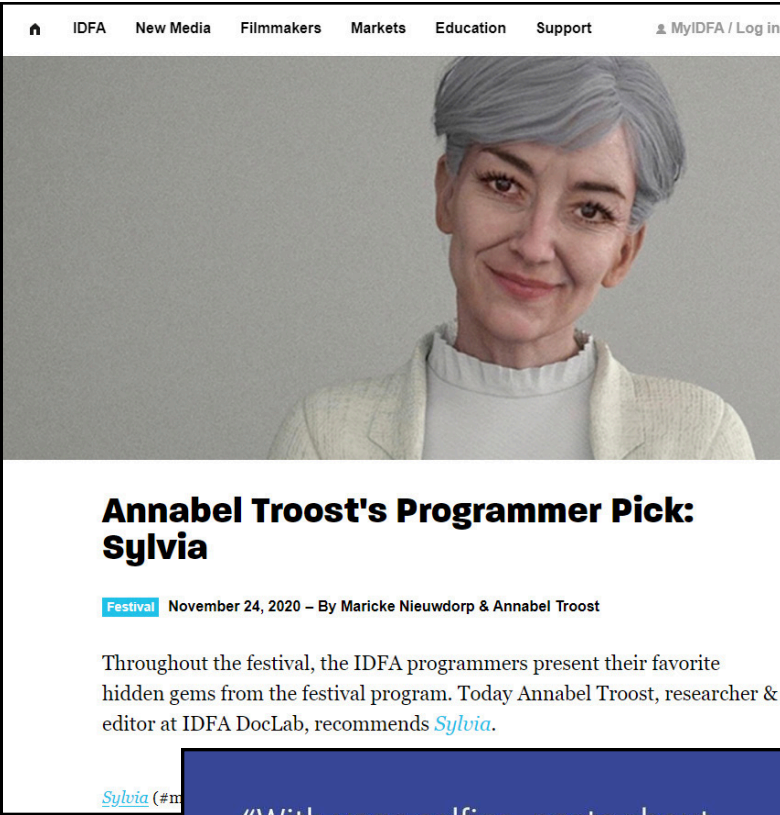
INTRODUCTION

Co-created with AI technologies for age simulation and text generation, the "Sylvia" project is a storytelling experiment that disrupted the virtual influencer landscape for a short period of time. The project simulated the life of a female 3D character “Sylvia” who "lives" in the Instagram world. Unlike her "peer" virtual influencers, who are designed to appear young forever, Sylvia was designed to age rapidly. She posted to Instagram from July to November 2020, and during these five months, her image aged five decades, from 30 to 80 years old.

Supported by the Brown Institute for Media Innovation at Columbia University and the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) DocLab R&D Commission Grant, "Sylvia" had its world premiere in the IDFA DocLab Competition for Digital Storytelling in November 2020. The death of Sylvia was announced at the opening ceremony, and a mourning space remained open during the IDFA festival for the public to come, gather and celebrate the life of Sylvia. Audiences looked back on Sylvia's life and also witnessed its end.

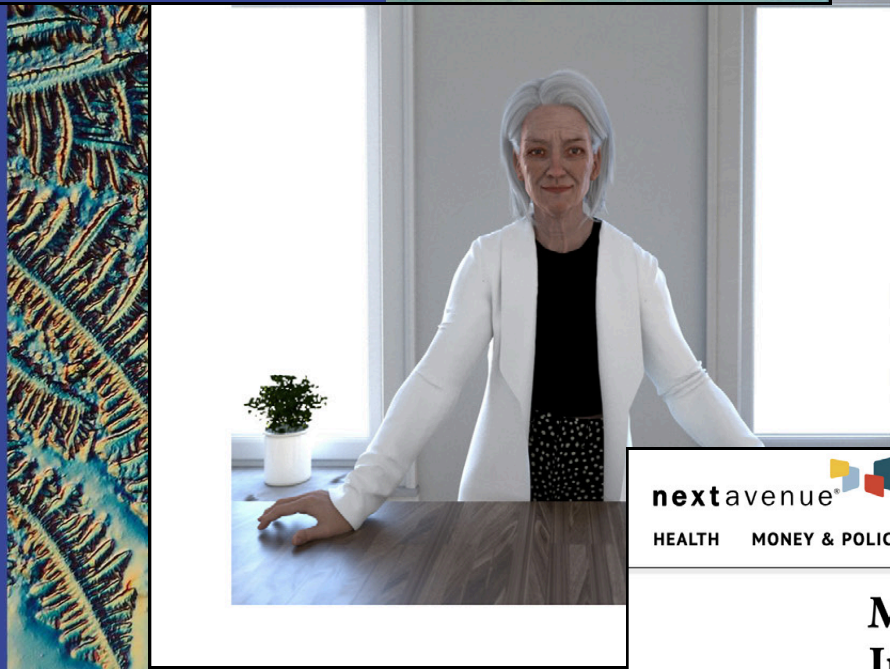
VARIETY

“Instagram is full of wannabes, but there was only one Sylvia.”



“With yoga selfies, posts about breakdowns and breakthroughs, and shout outs to designer brands, Sylvia’s Instagram doesn’t seem different from your average influencer. Underneath, you’ll find a subversion of gendered ageism and authenticity. The beauty of this work can be found in its minor flaws: when her algorithmically generated influencer content glitches into beautifully illogical rambles on gratitude, loss, and coffee.”

- Annabel Troost
New Media Researcher & Editor



Nomination, Competition for Digital Storytelling International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) 2020

The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) is the world's largest documentary film festival, held annually since 1988 in Amsterdam. Since 2007, IDFA's New Media program—IDFA DocLab—has showcased innovative interactive non-fiction storytelling. The program explores how the digital revolution is reshaping documentary art.

The IDFA DocLab Competition for Digital Storytelling recognizes groundbreaking projects that expand the boundaries of documentary storytelling through digital and interactive media. This competition celebrates works that demonstrate how “making and telling stories that have something to say about our times can be done in an infinite number of ways.” Featured projects range from animated mixed reality games and interactive web documentaries to experimental digital narratives that blend various media forms.



Winner | Still Image Award The 2021 Lumen Prize for Art and Technology

“The piece, a therapeutic performance of aging and dying, facilitates a deep connection to our fears and vulnerable regions of the human experience.”

The Lumen Prize is an international award celebrating art created with technology, particularly digital art. Since its launch in 2012, the competition has awarded more than US\$100,000 in prize money. It has created worldwide opportunities for longlisted, shortlisted, and winning artists.

Lumen Art Projects, a UK-based digital arts champion, runs the prize program. The organization builds opportunities by curating exhibitions, commissions, and events for art venues and cultural institutions. They also deliver consultancy services for partners globally, supporting public spaces around the world.



Winner | Special Jury Prize Digital Dozen: Breakthroughs in Storytelling Awards 2021

The Digital Dozen: Breakthroughs in Storytelling Awards are presented by Columbia University School of the Arts Digital Storytelling Lab. These awards recognize the year's most innovative narratives across the broad spectrum of digital media.

The program honors achievements in film, video, journalism, advertising, marketing, games, art, fiction, theater, virtual reality, augmented reality, and experimental narratives. Twelve signal achievements receive recognition annually. The Special Jury Prize, which includes a workshop at the Lab, is awarded at the discretion of the awards committee. An interdisciplinary jury of Lab members and university faculty selects all winners.



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