

Hey gig-worker...

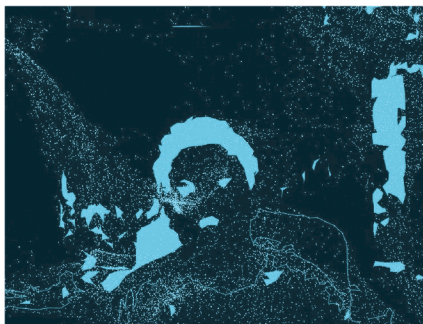
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ALL THE UMBRELLAS LEFT BEHIND

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DADA



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# About the RESIDENCY.

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”

This residency begins by addressing today’s data-driven, device-oriented and networked economy. The access, collection, and use of data as the building blocks for both digital and physical spaces, and its role in informing everyday “decisions, actions, and relations” underscores the material presence of data in daily life. As the market floods with so-called smart devices, where ubiquitous objects and data systems are now animated with connectivity within contemporary capitalist paradigms, the question of use becomes a central tenet of criticality and subversion.

!

This residency asks how artists can begin to reclaim and reposition the data employed in devices, software and platforms as a form of counter-culture? What are the creative possibilities when the datafication of our behaviours, relationships, and spaces becomes the new material for articulating subversive and critical artistic gestures?

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Emily Fitzpatrick

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Paola Ricaurte

Caroline Sindes

LANE Digital

Şerife Wong

Sarah Sharma

ANDALSOTOO


Tawana Petty

Curator

Sponsors + Thank you



# Letter from the CURATOR



## “Hello!”

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Welcome to the ADA-DADA Zine, a snapshot of the 2020-2021 ADA-DADA Residency and its cohort of artists, workshops and guest contributions!

From October 2020 to June 2021, the ADA-DADA residency provided a virtual gathering space for shared learnings through workshops, readings, and conversations on the multiple economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions of data - critically engaging with its use and role as material, currency, knowledge and power.

Hosted by the South Asian Visual Arts Centre in Toronto, this residency was intended as a critical provocation, asking how we can reclaim and reposition data as a form of counter-culture. How can we use data to speak back, to investigate, to complicate, to re-formulate or perhaps subvert the production of knowledge towards more just data sets and systems?

In coming together to learn, share, and make, the ADA-DADA participants became a community of peers nurturing multiple perspectives on the intersections of data with narratives of power, erasure, embodiment, movement, time, labour, resistance, and the quantification of human life – offering responses that invite deeper reflections and interference into the operations of data through networks, interfaces and systems that structure our experiences in and of the world.

# 2020

”

I welcome you to explore Hiba Ali’s auto-generative critique of labour practices in big tech; watch Saira Chhibber’s video-essay and counter-archive reframing the Sanskari Naria ideal through popular cinema; play CAM Collective’s interactive game and speculative reflection on data collection focused through the migrant crisis; read Sheung-King, Aaron Tang’s novel examining Hong Kong’s datafied and post-colonial condition as felt by character Glue (Glen Wu); experience Vishal Kumaraswamy’s video-performance and accompanying assemblage of generative sound investigating the roots of algorithmic bias and injustices; and pause at Lingxiang Wu’s fragmented digital landscape, stripped from Instagram’s platform for consumption, and reformulated as a place for contemplative lingering.

I invite you also to think through some of the inspiring, critical, and generative questions posed by workshop facilitators Paola Ricaurte, Caroline Sinderson, LANE Digital, Sherife Wong, Sarah Sharma, Una Lee and Lupe Perez from AndAlsoToo, and Tawanna Petty; as well as the work of guest contributors Tanuja Mishra and Emily Fitzpatrick who through text-based works (fiction and nonfiction), propose new modes and strategies for convivial and relational ways of being with, and animating data.

My deepest gratitude goes to all the participants mentioned above who made this residency possible, including the incredible staff at SAVAC: Indu Vashist, Toleen Touq, Sophie Sabet and Sajdeep Soomal, without whose mentorship and support this project would not have been possible.

I hope you enjoy this zine!

## Warmly,

Maria Alejandrina Coates

# 2021

This residency was produced with the support of the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

# Residents ↘

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## PROJECTS

THE REAL LOVE MEMO V.2

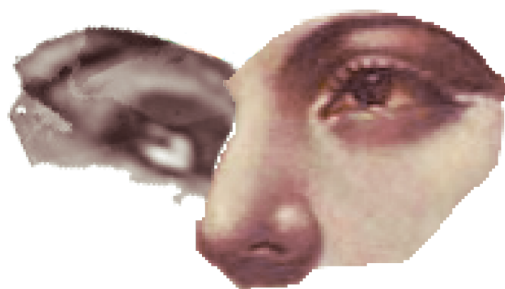
NOT SO SANSKARI NARIS

SYBERTEK: MIGRANTS AT BAY

BATSH!T SEVEN

ONLY TRACES, NO BEINGS

DIGITAL LANDFILL



## ARTISTS ↗

HIBA ALI

SAIRA CHIBBER

CAM COLLECTIVE

SHEUNG-KING, AARON TANG

VISHAL KUMARASWAMY

LINGXIANG WU

# ARTIST BIO

Hiba Ali is a producer of moving images, sounds, couture and words.

Hey gig-worker - Did you know that [Amazon hired Koch-backed anti-union consultant to fight Alabama warehouse organizing?](#) Check out [Abra](#), a video project about race, labour and surveillance as it exists within Amazon.

Hey gig-worker - Did you know that [Amazon is bombarding Y workers with anti-union messages?](#) Check out [Abra](#), a video project about race, labour and surveillance as it exists within Amazon.

# Hiba

# Ali

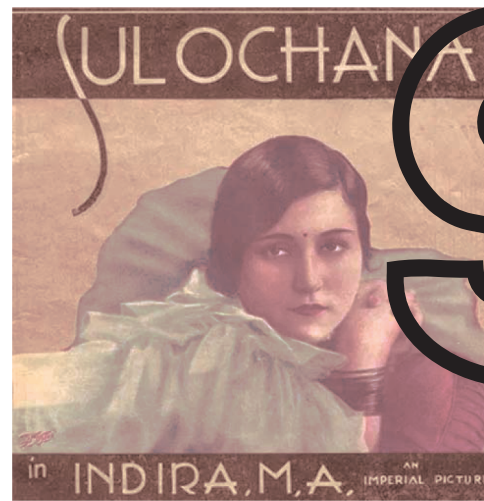
💖 Refresh the page to generate a critique. 💖

💖 Refresh the page to generate a critique. 💖

## The Real Love Memo V.2, 2021

Anti-modeled after Jeff Bezo's "Amazon.Love memo," a previously unpublished notice sent to the corporation's senior staff. The Love Memo was presented as a set of ideals that show that "Amazon should be loved and not feared," it instead reads as list of arbitrary control measures. The Real Love Memo's sentence generator critiques of white supremacy, union bashing and monopoly power hard coded in technology companies such as Amazon.

<https://hibaali.info/projects/amazon-real-love-memo>



# Saira

## ARTIST BIO

Saira Chibber is a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies interdisciplinary graduate program at Queen's University.

# Chibber

<https://bit.ly/notsosn>



A hot kiss perhaps! Vinayak misses the light and looks at the "Dance" in "Better Half" a Hans Picture. The girl with the cigarette is Leela Chitani.

'Not so sanskari naris' is a video essay that attempts to revisit problematic gender binaries from post-independence Hindi popular cinema that have been embraced by diaspora, while also looking to answer questions with regard to how these frameworks emerged on film. Through this initial exploration of idealized Indian womanhood onscreen, this work attempts to re-trace and share lost histories of pre-independence Hindi stars from the 1920s and 30s - Modern Girls and Sitaras, whose images, performances and identities existed in sharp contrast with the sanskari nari ideal.



# CAM

# O

# LL



# Collective

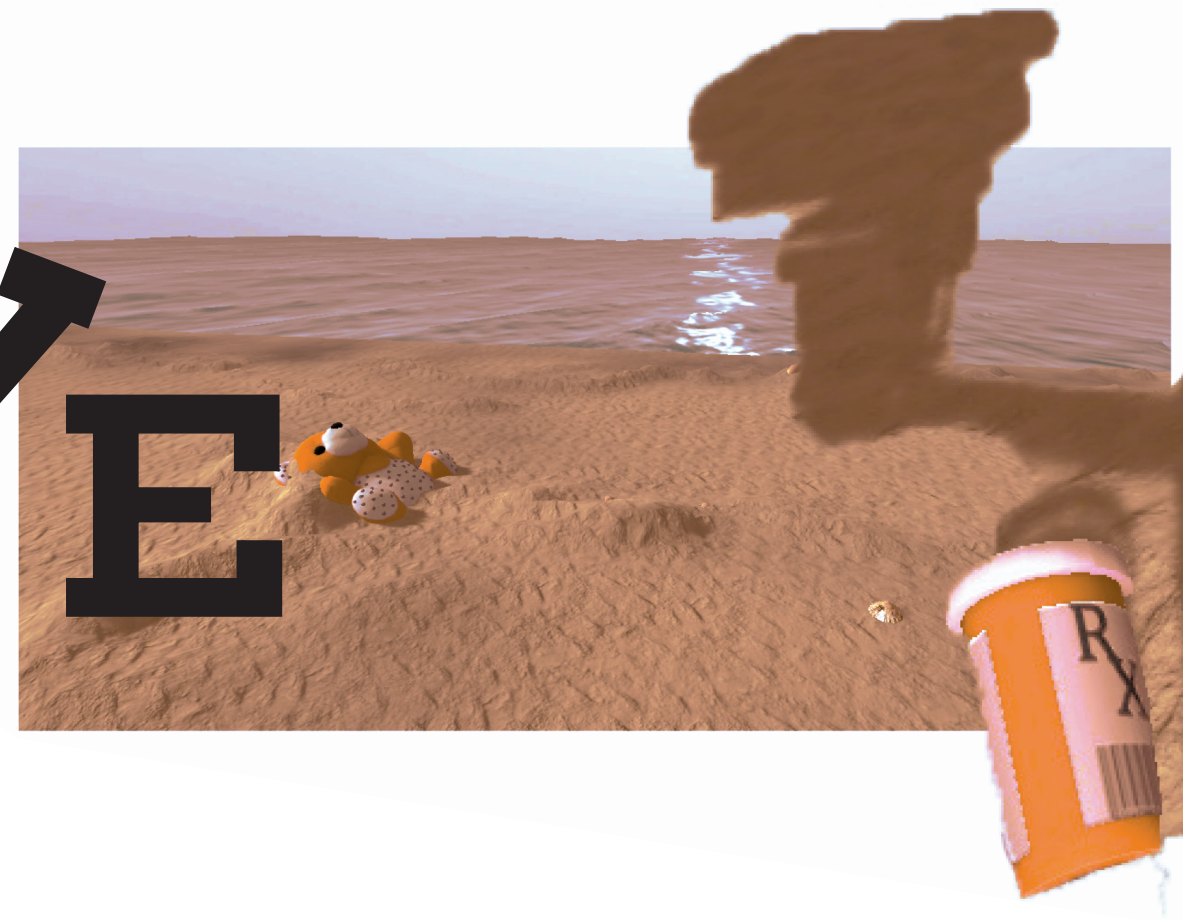
ARTIST BIO  
ARTIST BIO

CAM collective (Carisa P. Antariksa, Amreen Ashraf and Maria Yala) is a collaborative research trio of interdisciplinary artists, designers and storytellers.

Sybertek: Migrants at Bay is an interactive experience inspired by the current data collection and presentation on the migrant crisis. The story begins after a migrant incident has occurred in the imagined future of a fictional surveillance nation state, The Republic of Sybertek. The Ministry of Border Security and Citizen Protection (BSCP) is attempting to curb the flow of irregular migration at their seaside borders. The scene invites the participant to take on the role of a state appointed Migrant Incident Documentation Officer (M.I.D.O) tasked with “recording” information about the migrant’s belongings that have washed up after a smuggler boat carrying people has capsized.

Using worldbuilding and storytelling, we attempt to highlight stories behind the humans who are often forced to migrate. In doing so, we wanted to respond to cold statistical data that omits the cruel reality of the crisis. The work considers the question “who collected this data, and what is left out?”.

<https://camcollective.itch.io/migrants-at-bay>



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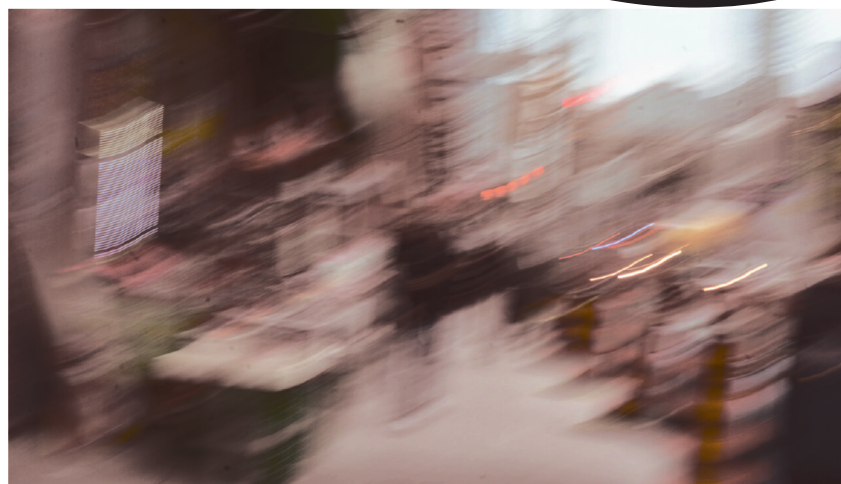
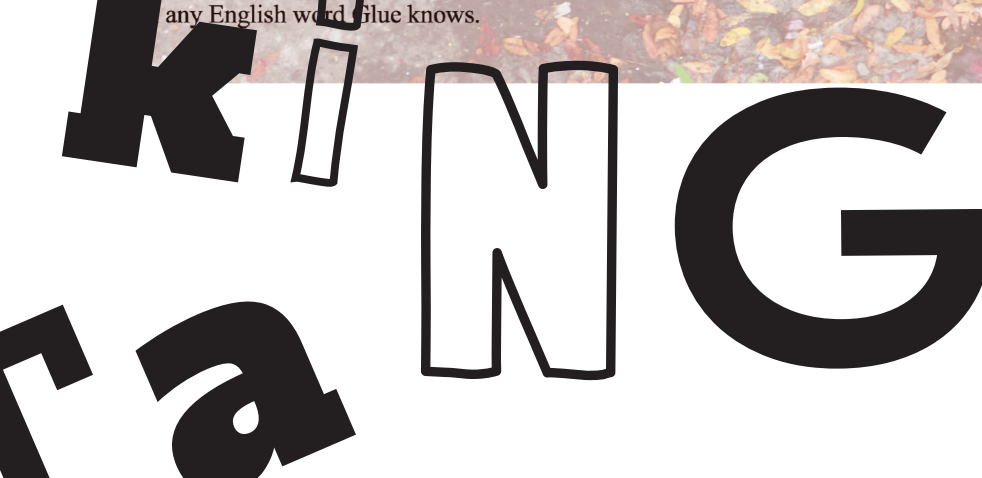
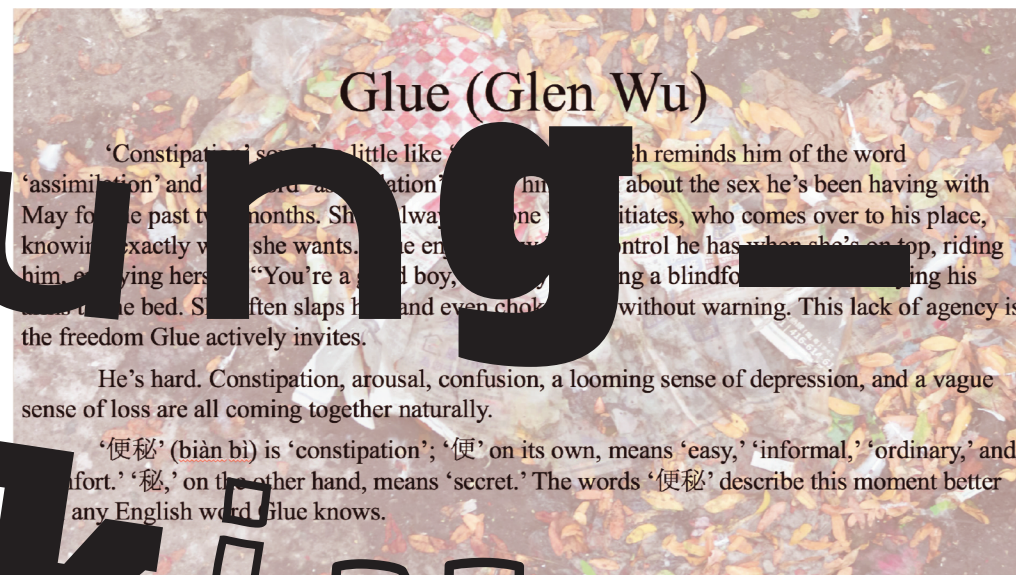


Photo by Maari Sugawara

# AA Ron



‘便秘’ (biàn bi) is ‘constipation’; ‘便’ on its own, means ‘easy,’ ‘informal,’ ‘ordinary,’ and ‘comfort.’ ‘秘,’ on the other hand, means ‘secret.’ The words ‘便秘’ describe this moment better than any English word I know.

<https://www.sheung-king.com/all-the-umbrellas-left-behind>

Sheung-king, Aaron Tang's second novel, Batsh!t Seven, is set in contemporary Hong Kong. B7 examines Hong Kong's post-colonial condition, the datafication of human behaviour, Western imperialism, nationalism and hypercapitalism. Glue (Glen Wu) has a visceral response to all of these things. Glue is constipated.

Glue was an international student who had studied in Canada. Glue's visa expired. Glue has a drama degree. Glue is without a stable job. But Glue was trained in progressive pedagogy. But English language schools are scams. But Glue has a mortgage. But Glue dropped out of graduate school. But Glue becomes an ESL instructor anyway. But Glue has a drinking problem. But Glue meets May. May works in crypto. May is living in Hong Kong using someone else's identity.



## Listen to All The Umbrellas Left Behind



ARTIST

**ARTIST**

BIO

is a writer and educator.

Eating an Orange. You

Sheung-King, Aaron Tang is a writer and educator. His debut novel, *You are Eating an Orange. You are Naked*, is a finalist for the 2021 Amazon Canada First Novel Award, longlisted for Canada Reads 2021 and named one of the best book debuts of 2020 by the *Globe and Mail*.



# Vishal



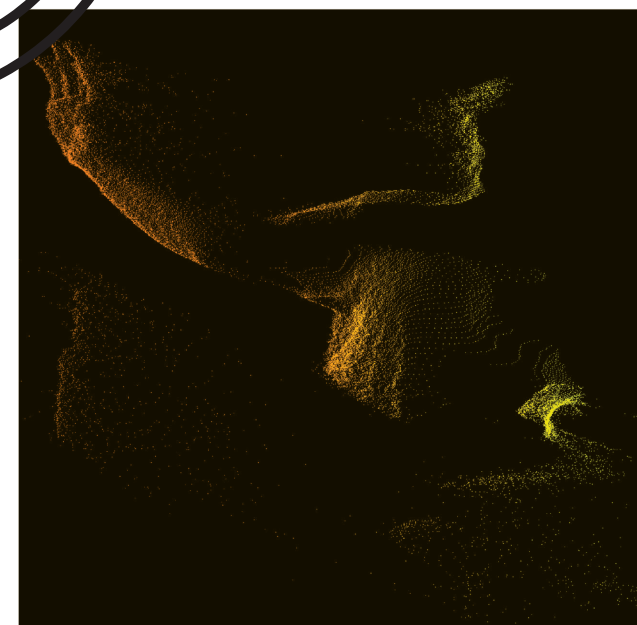
## ARTIST BIO

Vishal Kumaraswamy is an artist and filmmaker based in Bangalore, India.

<https://bit.ly/onlytnb>

Only Traces, No Beings is a research document expressed in practice around notions of surveillance and bias in technology. The work builds upon my research into bias within AI programming, their roots in non-diverse physical programming environments and the transference of social biases into algorithmic injustices. The soundtrack is composed of field recordings, samples from open-source libraries and algorithmic generative sounds assembled alongside a video-performance addressing the seeming intangibility of data points even as they dictate every aspect of our lives.

# Kumaraswamy





<https://www.lingxiangwu.com/digital-landfill.html>

Drowning within the endless cycle of overproduction and overconsumption orchestrated through the exploitation of the self. Instead of caring for the self and knowing the self, we voluntarily exploit the self in hope of exchange of visibility and likes, only to benefit big corps that toys with our data. Mitchell Foucault once asked, “What are we in our actuality?” Amongst the rapid advancement of contemporary digital technology and our everyday engagement with social media, maybe it is dire for us to reestablish the technology of the self through a communal pause from the desire to consume. A shared connection not through performing the same act, but having the privilege of not doing anything together.

In response to that, Digital Landfill is an internet-based project that invites the viewers to explore within a digital landscape made of visual fragments collected through Instagram. The fragmentation of the initial smooth digital image keeps viewers at a playful distance, encouraging viewers to look, guess, and engage. While this digital realm constantly perpetuates the importance of visibility and hyper-activeness, this digital landfill hopes to create a counter experience. A place reserved for contemplative lingering instead of consumption.



# Lingxiang Wu

## ARTIST BIO

Lingxiang Wu is a Chinese visual artist currently based in Toronto after completing a MFA degree at OCAD University in 2019. Wu’s work utilizes images as material to create dynamic yet contemplative visual experience through collage, video, animation, and installation. Doing so, Wu is interested in exploring the entangled relationship between us and images within digital/urban spaces.

# Contributors /

# Tanuja Mishra

<https://tanuja.art/Cooperating-System>

**Cooperating System** is a TV show with AI and human actors. It de-familiarizes the popular notion of AI as an invisible, all-knowing force built on values of efficiency and scale. It introduces AI actors whose intelligence is informed through actions of care, embodiment and self-reflection. Humans and AI co-habit in slice-of-life situations where they live as independent beings and forge relationships that can be deep and meaningful but can also be messy and adversarial.

The screenplay of this show is self-reflexive in that it extends its conventional role as a program for humans. This instance of the script has been customized, updated and re-purposed as memorabilia for an ardent fan and supporter, who in turn, has chosen these snippets to showcase some of the most monumental scenes from the series.

Tanuja is an artist, designer and researcher who works at the intersection of public art, speculative practice and critical design. She investigates the cultural, historical and theoretical implications of technology through a feminist lens.

EP.#3 COOL EQUATION  
19 CONTINUED:

24. 19

door are switched on. She wants to slip in through the garage where her parents have stashed many old appliances.

PERIZAAD  
(punches the code on the garage door)  
Three ...One ...Four ...One

FERDIE  
(lights up with a dim glow)  
Is that who I think it is? Been a while since you've been down here.

PERIZAAD  
Yes, it's me. (she hugs FERDIE and a mild current passes through her) Ha ha! (she laughs convulsively) You shocked me.

FERDIE  
My circuits are leaky, dear. So sorry. Why do you look so lanky? Is all well at the university?

PERIZAAD  
Things are OK. Stuck with my thesis. It's been two months and there's this wicked theorem I keep staring at.

FERDIE  
Well ...how about some chemical assistance?

PERIZAAD  
Chemical a... did I just hear that right? You got to be kidding me!

FERDIE  
Desperate times call for desperate measures.

PERIZAAD  
(curious but skeptical)  
Go on ...I'm listening.

FERDIE  
Look behind, you'll find a rare mushroom growing on my radiator. Blend it with some cranberry juice and drink up.

PERIZAAD  
Can't hurt. After all it's vegan!

Both laugh delightedly.

(CONTINUED)



# Contributors /



## Emily Fitzpatrick

*Rumours about Data* attempts to summarize Fitzpatrick's current curatorial research involving the role gossip plays in identifying and countering the various stereotypes and systemic biases dominant in machine learning technologies and artificial intelligence (AI). As these technologies evolve, artists have continued to identify these problematic limitations, revealing a myriad of examples where the necessary data needed to train these systems is either missing, mis-coded, or lacking the required complexity. As the desire for context and creating relational information is a role for gossip, perhaps it can reveal the apparent constraints of data and decenter the myth of objective truth in the domain of AI.

[http://adadadaresidency.ca/emily\\_fitzpatrick.php](http://adadadaresidency.ca/emily_fitzpatrick.php)

Emily Fitzpatrick is a curator who holds a master's degree in Curatorial Studies from the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto. Recent curatorial work involves temporary public art projects rooted in social practice and feminist perspectives on digital sustainability and survival. Emily is currently the Artistic Director at Trinity Square Video and a member of the curatorial collective Aisle 4.



# Workshops



## LEADERS

PAOLA RICAURTE  
QUIJANO

CAROLINE SINDERS

LANE DIGITAL

ŞERIFE WONG

SARAH SHARMA

ANDALSOTOO

TAWANA PETTY

DATA (DE)COLONIALISM

FEMINIST DATA SET

CRITICAL TECH, RACE, ART AND  
DATA

## TOPICS

COUNTERING AI NARRATIVES

A MANIFESTO FOR THE BROKEN  
MACHINE

DESIGN JUSTICE IN CULTURAL  
AND ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

COUNTERING DOMINANT  
NARRATIVES: POETRY AS  
VISIONARY RESISTANCE

# DADA

noun, plural in form but singular or plural in construction, often attributive<sup>1</sup>

da·ta | \ 'dā-tə 'da- also 'dä- \ (sounds)

Paola Ricaurte

Dada is not given.<sup>2</sup>

Data is a social construct.

It does not exist prior to our conceptualization.

As such, data is the result of a specific way of categorizing reality,  
a way of giving meaning to reality.

We create and produce data every time we label  
or frame reality with certain lenses.

Datafication is the process of quantifying the world.<sup>3</sup>

Datafication is the quantification of life.<sup>4</sup>

Life as data.

Classify, compute, and analyze.

Repeat.

Datafication is the basic input for interpreting reality  
and our interactions at a massive scale.

A new rationality is haunting the world, a rationality based on data.<sup>5</sup>

Our social life (our thoughts, relationships,  
subjectivities, futures) are data sources.<sup>6</sup>

Every aspect captured is a data point.

Life, in any of its forms, Earth beats, and outer  
space, are converted into data flows.



Data assemblages are knowledge assemblages. Knowledge is power.

Those who control data, control knowledge, control social life.

In an asymmetric world, data assemblages  
amplify historical forms of colonization.<sup>7</sup>

Dispossession, exclusion, expulsion of the social life

Bodies, territories, subjectivities, intersubjectivity,  
practices, materiality and immaterial worlds

Those who are different have no gain.

The way we live,

The knowledge we produce,

The things we think and feel,

Our lives, our bodies, our fears, our imagination,

The way we relate to those who are different,

Our relationship with Nature.

Coloniality through data implies violent forms of domination.<sup>8</sup>

Can we reverse power asymmetries that exclude world's

knowledge, racialized bodies, and destroy nature?

Can we reclaim our data futures?

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/data>

<sup>2</sup> data (n.) <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=data>

<sup>3</sup> Cukier, Kenneth Neil, and Viktor Mayer-Schönberger. "The Rise of Big Data." *Foreign Affairs*, May 2013. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2013-04-03/rise-big-data>

<sup>4</sup> Mejias, Ulises A., and Nick Couldry. "Datafication." *Internet Policy Review*, November 29, 2019. <https://policyreview.info/concepts/datafication>.

<sup>5</sup> Ricaurte, Paola. "Data Epistemologies, The Coloniality of Power, and Resistance." *Television & New Media* 20, no. 4 (May 2019): 350-65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419831640>.

<sup>6</sup> Couldry, Nick, and Ulises A. Mejias. *The Costs of Connection: How Data Is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating It for Capitalism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Feminist Data Set imagines data creation, as well as data sets and archiving, as an act of protest.

In a time where so much personal data is caught and hidden by large technology companies, used for targeted advertising and algorithmic suggestions,

— what does it mean to make a data set about political ideology, one designed for use as protest? How can data sets come from creative spaces, how can they be communal acts and works? —

It can be a self-portrait, it can be protest, it can be a demand to be seen, it can be intervention or confrontation, or all of the above. It can be incredibly political. What about how a system then interprets that data? What if that system were also open to critique as well as community input?

“

I just don't want to have this kind of technological determinism that a camera will save us from the camera, because it definitely won't. Videos alone won't make things substantially different for black people resisting surveillance or white supremacy. But there is something, with those videos showing our own narration of them, our ways of understanding that moment, to recognize white supremacy and to challenge it, that's happening now. But it's still black death.

— Simone Browne,  
How Surveillance Has Always Reinforced Racism

”

Simone Browne talks a lot about technological determinism, this is, for us as practitioners, designers, the space that we're in. How can we interrogate the tools that we use, and also the choices of the tools that we decide to use, because we legitimize them by using them? - and not just ideas and concepts, we legitimize tools.

Feminist  
Data Set

(monkeywrenching)

AI systems unintentionally (and intentionally) violate human and civil rights. Monkeywrenching AI systems is direct action that can:



- Bring attention to human rights issues in AI
- Expose fragility (brittleness) of AI to inspire more action
- Make system unusable and defend activists and public
- Build psychological resilience

AI systems need to be trained on data before they are deployed. This gives us two major areas where performance art can interfere with the system: at the point of data collection and training the model and also in how a system is deployed in public.

What Autonomous system would you like to direct in a new way?

Where does information come into the AI System?

How can you interfere with that process?

Where do you want to take this autonomous system?

WI

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else can come with you?

Design justice centers communities that are systematically excluded from and harmed by conventional design processes. Design justice aims for those who are impacted by design to also participate and benefit.

**This idea has a direct lineage in the demand advanced by the disability justice movement: “nothing about us without us.”**

How might we use a design justice lens to shape cultural and artistic production around data?

In your work, what practices do you use or could you use that would bring a design justice lens to the work?

Who is impacted?  
Who Participates?  
Who benefits?

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especially hard to reconcile a feminist hope that technologies are tools that can be wielded for feminist ends when I think of how so many people are forced to endure life in terms of their utility to others. Dominant systems of power - whether of neoliberalism, white supremacy, or patriarchy - have at their core an understanding of entire populations that seem to exist only in terms of their use. When the tools (non-abiding populations) are no longer working well and they begin showing signs of wear and tear they will be offered repair, upgrades, hacks, quick-fixes, and workarounds. If all else fails then broken machines are subject to discard, cast aside as refuse. It becomes even harder to remember if we are talking about machines or women when you consider that one of the most popular neoliberal feminist solutions to the exhaustion of living under patriarchal structures of power is to actually make women even better machines.

## A Manifesto for the Broken Machine

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Sarah Sharma

But there is a feminist alternative. One could be a Broken Machine and stay with the breaking. I suggest that feminism must actively depart from a tool based notion of technology while it takes up its designation as a broken tool under patriarchy as it intersects with racialized capitalism.

**broken**

The machine is not to be understood as a newer technology or a subject position but rather a critical line of feminist thought and activism that relies on a sense of technological power rather than technology as tool.

**machine**

The broken has the power to inhabit patriarchy's misogynistic and racist techno-logics and could inspire further thinking on the medium-specific techno-logics of how power operates in culture.

Almost any gender struggle offers the opportunity for broken machine interventions. The point is to find where the relegation to the status of the machine becomes an opening to toy with the machine logics that different technology portend. Doing feminist technology work means generating the capacity for more broken machines to do the good work of not working well.

Safety, is the watched  
watching  
the watchers

is me as the lord of  
my creations

In the living room,  
Dad cutting mangoes with a cup of tea  
While mom watches Hindi serials and cats sleep

To amble along the street, lost in my thoughts  
immersed in its textures

To feel free, unnoticed and yet loved

Four walls and a roof,  
dancing with no pants on, without care

Three stoves and a toilet, cooking with no budget,  
occasionally a drink —

— To counter the cold of exclusion  
Do you submit to the warmth of rage?

To be safe is to be dangerous together  
A thicket of thorns in the side of terrible injustice

A mask inwards is a mask  
is a mask is a mask inwards  
towards the mask inside

Where prying eyes are limited to our own  
To be transparent like spit in the wind

How comfortable you must be in your little bubble

Safety,  
Safety,  
Safety,



## Sponsors + Thank You

# ADA- DADA

The ADA-DADA Residency is presented by SAVAC.

SAVAC

Vide Press  
Independent Risograph Press

TORONTO  
ARTS  
COUNCIL

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Conseil des arts  
du Canada

Design by CAM Collective (<https://collective-cam.carrd.co/>)

## Curator /

---

María  
Alejandrina  
Coates

is a Uruguayan born media arts curator, and an immigrant-settler in Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg territory. Her interests are in technology, feminism and socially engaged art and pedagogy. She has curated for Interaccess (Toronto), the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (Toronto), Trinity Square Video (Toronto), YYY Artists' Outlet (Toronto); and the aluCine Latin Film and Media Arts Festival (Toronto). Coates received a bachelor's degree from the University of British Columbia and a master's degree in Art History and Curatorial Studies from York University".

[illegible]



May for the past two months. She's always  
knowing exactly what she wants. Glue enjoys  
him, enjoying herself. "You're a good boy,"  
ar  
th

## Hey gig-worker...

He's hard. Constipation, arousal, co  
sense of loss are all coming together natura

‘便秘’ (biàn bì) is ‘constipation’; ‘  
‘comfort.’ ‘秘,’ on the other hand, means ‘s  
than any English word Glue knows.

ALL THE UMBRELLAS LEFT BEHIND

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Shree Ranjit Movitone Presents

COLLIE GIRL



A JAYANT DESAI PRODUCTION

💖 Refresh the page to generate a critique. 💖



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