

NEW WORLD MANIFESTO

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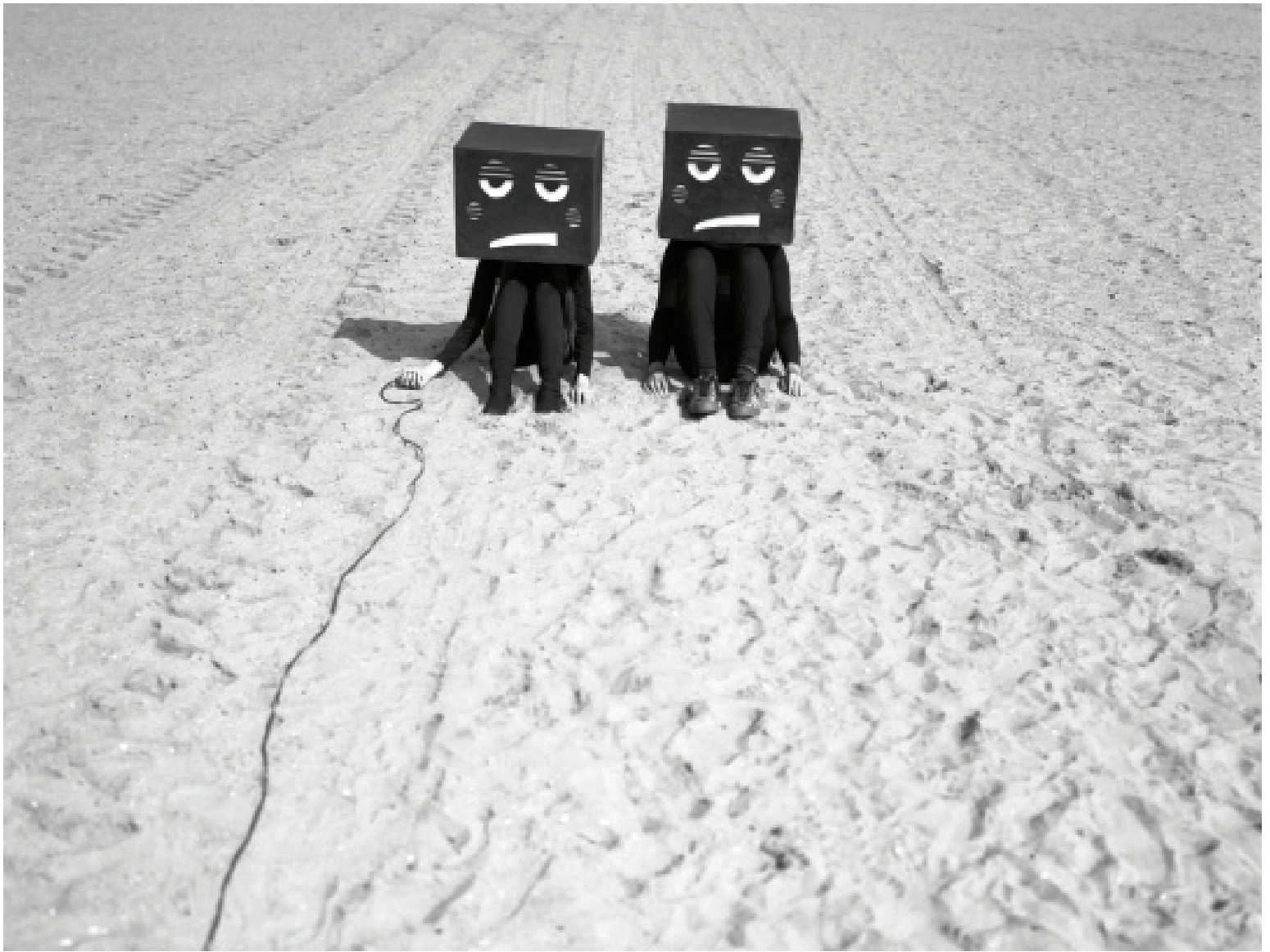
NEW WORLD
&
MANIFESTO

AVATAR + EVOLUTION
INTERACTIVITY

MAINTAINING IDENTITY
LEARNING

MAKER'S MOVEMENT
DEMOCRACY

ORIGININALITY OF REALISM



AVATARS + EVOLUTION

We're cool with the idea of an augmented life, augmented reality, and Artificial Intelligence. We're pretty sold on every crazy idea there is towards the future, and we're pretty sold on moving into the virtual space completely. Right now, we're still within the constraints of the human body. Everyone has a nose—you don't see people just chopping off their noses completely. No one can really have tentacles, but maybe in a digital world you could.

The idea of the avatar is a giant part of our work. We reference it constantly. I think that all stems from the fact that we both play games and in games, time is everything. It's a fantasy.

We feel technology allows for fantasy, and that avatars are going to become a larger part of the everyday for us, to the point that one day you'll be able to wear whatever you want to wear by wearing a lens in your own eye. Others can then see you however you want to be seen. This stuff is actually being invented today—it's not just some crazy

ideal. It's bringing the digital world into the real world. You can have whatever you have naturally, but if you want someone to see you another way—tentacles coming from my head, for instance—click that button. We see that becoming real life. It's about being built.

It's kind of crazy to think that technology has replaced evolution. It's sped up the entire process. We've gotten to this point where we've invented this thing called technology, and now it's just this exponential process that's increasing endlessly.

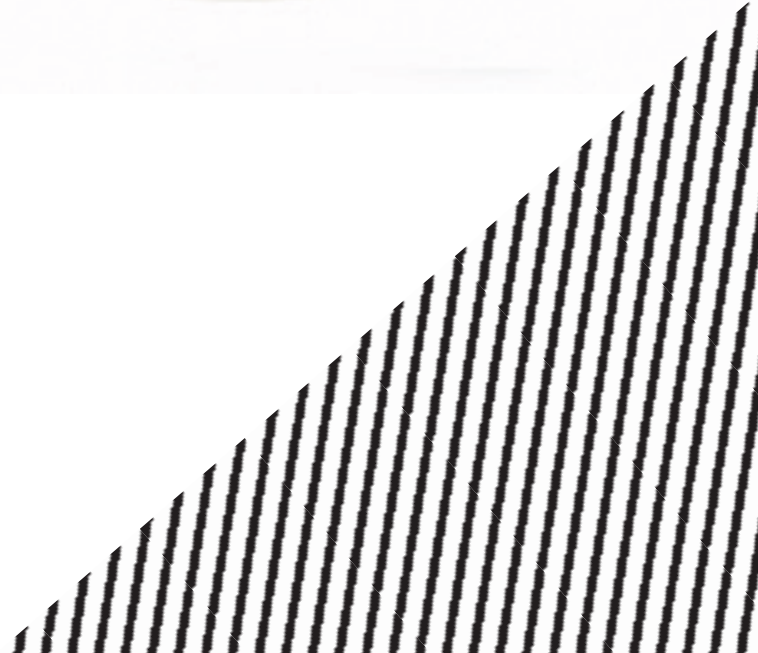
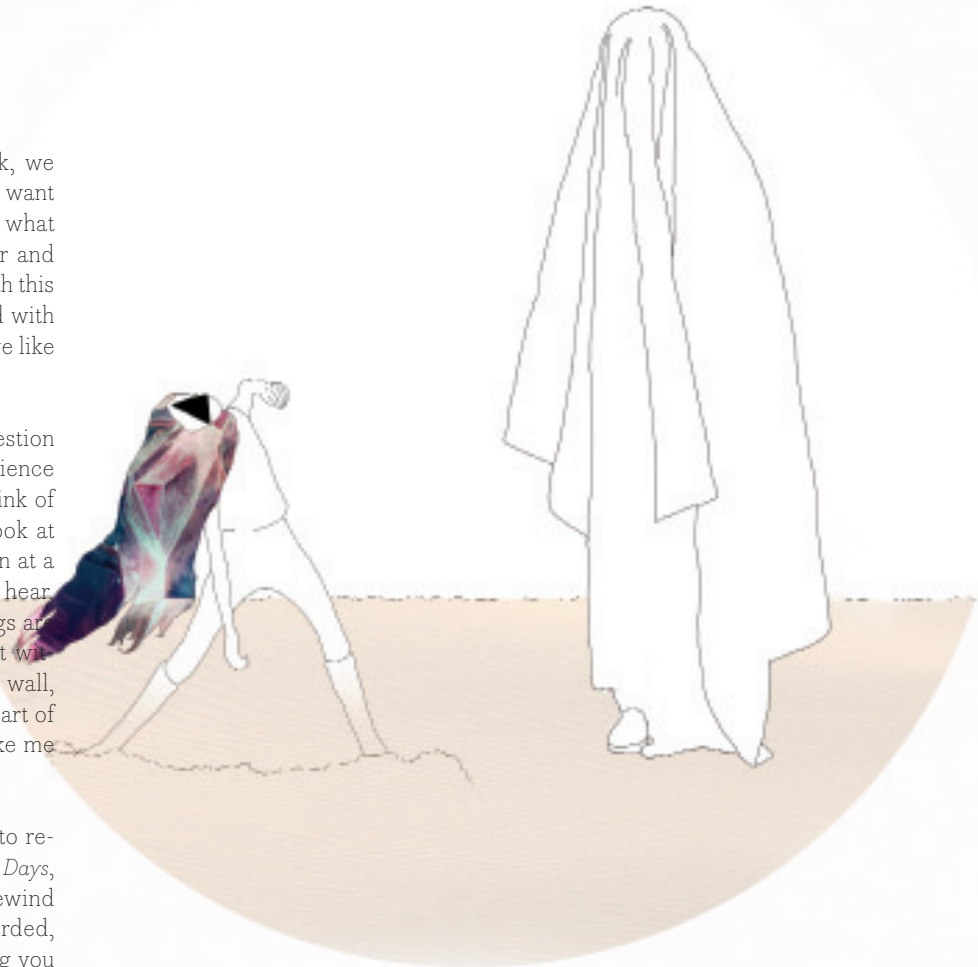
INTERACTIVITY

Interactivity is the word in our mouths right now. In our work, we don't want the viewer to just sit back and look at something. We want them to be part of it. We want them to play with it, to choose what they see. We basically want them to become the photographer and the Art Director—to have them become it all. We started out with this one project, *Naptime*, on our website, and it's video work mixed with animation mixed with collage. It's never really just one thing—we like pulling in all these things.

We're sure there are people out there pushing up against the question of whether a recording is just an interpretation of human experience rather than living that experience. The best example we can think of is a haunted house. You live that experience, whereas if you look at a painting on the wall, it's just visual information. An installation at a gallery, an art show, allows you to walk around and you can look, hear, touch, and play with the art objects. We think the direction things are moving is toward living an artist's interpretation instead of just witnessing it. If we get invited to shows and it's just a picture on a wall, we're not interested. We can look at it online. We want to feel part of it, we want to go to it for a reason. I took a train, I'm there. Make me react.

The ultimate craziest idea we're moving towards is the ability to record full experiences—a brain record. Like that movie *Strange Days*, where they record every life experience they have, and then rewind them and feel them again. All of the brain's sensory input is recorded, so that they can actually feel it and not just see it. The first thing you think they'd record is sex. Of course, there are tons of ways in which this technology could be bad.

There's this program at NYU. It's really impossible to describe, but essentially, it's an engineering school for artists and an art school for engineers. It's like Dr. Frankenstein's lab. Everything, from people making data visualizations to help out responders for earthquakes in Haiti, to people making robots, to people doing video and photography, and all of it towards this interactive angle. There's this one professor, Clay Shirky, who talks about how for every positive thing that comes out of the Internet, you're going to have, like, a bazillion lolcats, and that we're just going to have to deal with that. It's human nature. How many tabloid magazines are there compared to things that actually mean something? How obsessed is human culture with bullshit? You have to weed through all of that to get to anything remotely positive or good or deep or meaningful. We don't know if that's going to change. We think it's a good mixture. There's always good stuff coming out.





MAINTAINING IDENTITY

We don't want to recreate reality. We see [reality] every day. We want to see something fantastic. In a digital space you can adopt a different persona, but in the real world you can just put on a mask. And how many people would want to make a complete change? People might be more rude or aggressive online, but they don't become completely different people. It's hard to be a completely different person. An act can only be kept up for so long. You could go online and change your identity, but your background's still there. No matter how hard you try [to get away from it], we think you're still there.

Maybe there's not that great a number of people who would completely want something different, appearance wise. Everyone would want wings and colored hair. Living in the real world means growing into yourself eventually. Do you think people want to recreate a real world? Would a janitor want to be a janitor in a world where they could be whatever they want? Even if you have an awesome life, you always think it could be better. The grass is always greener.



LEARNING

We learn from the Internet. The Internet is fantasy. Accessibility to everything in the world breaks down national and cultural boundaries.

We always want to push ourselves. Basically, we want to know everything. We want to know how to do everything. We don't really consider ourselves photographers more than artists who take from all of these realms. Photography now is just a capture mechanism—it's the smallest part of what we do.

We're constantly coming up with these ideas that we have no idea how to do technically. We'll shoot it, and then we'll go on the Internet and search "how to." A big reason why one of us is in school now is that we felt we were approaching a wall. Video and photography is a passive experience. It's pre-rendered, prerecorded, predetermined. You can remix it, but the bits are all going to be the same. It's not interactive, and [making it interactive] comes down to programming. That's the huge thing, programming, and that's the wall we were hitting. You can figure out bits of it, but there's probably a better way to do it. Programming is probably one of the single most important things for kids to learn in school. They should be teaching programming to everyone.

AUTHENTICITY

There's this large maker's movement happening now, where people are just about making everything, from videos to electronics. All of this knowledge is out there, and you don't need to go this elite institution of a school to learn it. You can just go to YouTube. What if you have a kid and instead of sending them to school, you just let a community to teach them? An online community—would that be better? You'd be pulling from all these different backgrounds. You'll find that people are willing to teach other people.

Everyone's accessibility to all of these tools is incredible. The kid in his bedroom with the less-than-thousand-dollar laptop can produce Hollywood level films and make pro-level music and design pro-level games. The individual has risen up. At the same time you talk about identity being lost [in the digital age], you have to admit to how much one single person is capable of doing now—they can have a marketplace that's the size of the world. One person can do a lot of damage. You don't need huge armies anymore—one person can cause total chaos.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

4chan is this bulletin board website, and it's basically completely anonymous—there are no rules. You can post images of total nudity. The biggest trolls of the Internet go there. One of the things that has come out of this is that they have a tendency to hunt people down, for better or for worse. There was this one incident where this kid uploaded a video to YouTube where they were abusing a puppy or a cat or something and was like, "Haha, look at me." It was really graphic and disgusting. Somebody posted this on 4chan, and then they rallied and found this person's information and eventually sent the cops to their house to arrest them. Wikileaks, too—4chan took down PayPal. They took down Visa, they took down PayPal—they have this ability to just rally together with just a few people and destroy.

It's this interesting dichotomy inside the people that anybody can use this. It's interesting because they're not like, Internet justice people—they're just doing it for kicks. This idea of responsibility, of bringing people to justice and actually have some sort of Internet war against governments—that's heavy stuff. Meanwhile, they're just posting silly naked pictures and cat stuff. And meanwhile, Egypt is shutting down the web. There's something our government wants. Everyone's terrified of the Internet, because it's impossible to squash that freedom of speech—they can't just arrest these leaders of a protest. The protest is everyone, and you can't arrest everyone the web. It is one thing the government can't control. You can post one thing and 100,000 people can respond in five minutes. We see videos get taken down, but they get saved, re-uploaded, and then it's in 100 places, 10,000 places, a million places. Once the cat's out of the bag, it's over.

ORIGINALITY IN REALISM

There's a whole breed of young photographers now that shoot "natural" pictures—the idea of "natural" has been in vogue since the nineties, especially in fashion. Documenting what you see. Just a girl standing there like you'd see in the street. For what it's worth, that's what's hot—there is tons of business there. But for us, it sucks. Where's the art in just taking a picture of what you see right in front of you? Is there any input in that? Is there any thought behind it?

We get to dictate everything [in our photography]. There's so much behind it. We pick the girls, we tell them how to act before the shoot is laid out, down to the pose. It's strictly a world that we're making. That's one thing we can sell. At the end of the day, anyone can take the picture. It's not even important for us to hit the button. It doesn't excite us. We don't want to capture an image, we want to create it. With painting, you have to have a technical skill—I can't draw or paint or anything, and photography makes that totally easy. You just have to have this box, but you have to buy the box. It used to be so expensive to buy the box, but now that entry level has disappeared and it's so cheap and everyone has it. You don't just buy the biggest, baddest equipment anymore to get in the game. You have to bring more than just your camera to the photo shoot now. I'm sure most do, on some level.

PARTING SHOTS

As artists, we always try to learn more and do more. If someone's already done it before, why repeat it? Let's do something new.