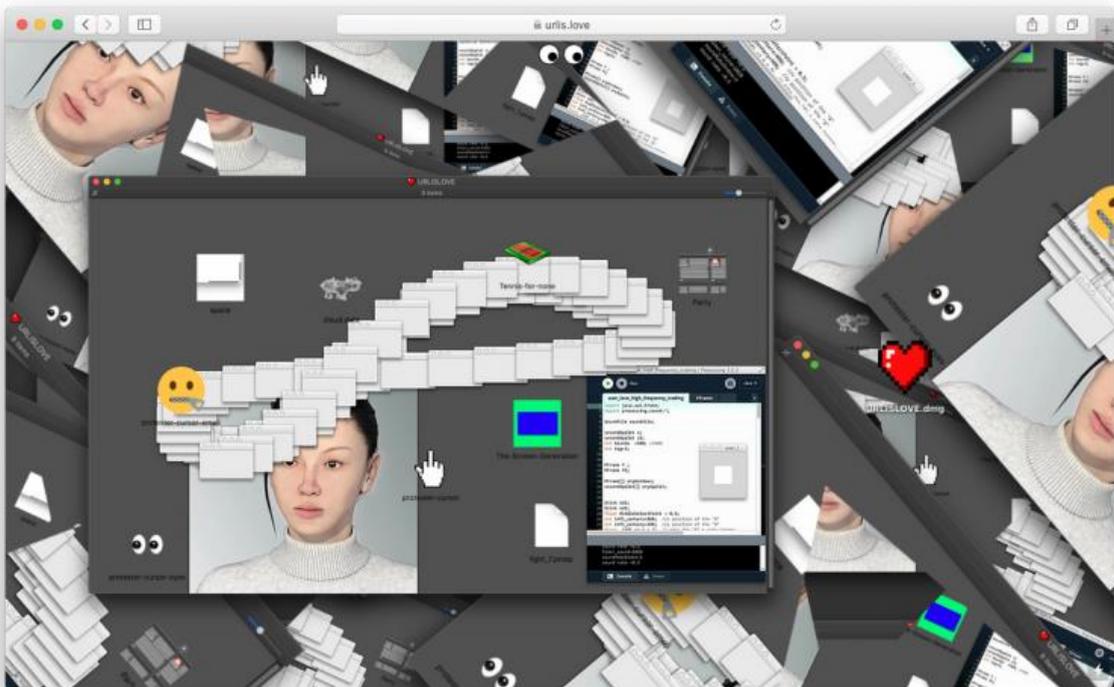synthesis gallery is pleased to announce its new exhibition:

Feelings

aaajiao, Matthew Gantt, Claudia Hart, LaJuné McMillian, Martina Menegon, Kathi Schulz

November 19, 2020 – February 21, 2021

aaajiao, *URL is LOVE*, 2020

synthesis gallery presents *FEELINGS*, a digital exhibition of works by six artists. Curated by Jeffrey Grunthaner and George Vitale, the exhibition will go live on Mozilla Hubs November 19, 2020 and run through February 21, 2021. Scheduled events and walkthroughs will also take place during the course of the exhibition.

The prospect of a collective digital space has often been synonymous with new realms of freedom and opportunities for community. In the wake of the ongoing global pandemic, however, digital spaces seem more and more filled out with apps that preserve social distance while tethering us to a reductive image of collectivity. This has impacted how our emotions are registered and communicated. In the teeth of all this, **FEELINGS** brings together digital works by **aaajiao, Matthew Gantt**, **Claudia Hart**, **LaJuné McMillian**, **Martina Menegon** and **Kathi Schulz**. Designedly filling out the bodiless space of the virtual, the artists featured create new models of interaction between language and object, self and other.

Metaphors, euphemisms, irony can only half-exist on a virtual plane. In a digital world, the overflowing of visuality makes the distance between sign and signifier, the gap where literary procedures take on meaning, collapse into sheer perception. But virtuality can also create a space for the potential. In **LaJune McMillian**'s VR piece *Clarity*, the body is liberated from gravity and floats in an ether of forested space. Slowing bodies in motion down to a rhythmic sequence of gestural choreography mirrors what it feels like to reach toward a higher self.

Throughout *FEELINGS*, viewers are constantly shunted around, transported from one zone of experience to another, from one attitude to the next.

Kathi Schulz's immersive VR piece *Fear Of Disappearing* gracefully extends from this. Applying techniques derived from abstract painting, she omits significant details to suggest an unfinished narrative, by which viewers come to question the continuity of consciousness and perception.

Martina Menegon's *when you are close to me I shiver* reflects how we identify ourselves and connect with each other across different realities. Projecting a dystopian future where multitudes of humans, out of sheer desperation, gather in masses on the last remaining island of land, Menegon's work virtually looks out onto a surreal landscape that is all-too-real.

Matthew Gantt's synaesthetic soundscape forms the centrepiece of the exhibition. As the architect of the show, his contribution hinges on a liminal sensation where centeredness becomes destabilized. Different planes of abstraction seem to emerge from a sonorous mist, giving the illusion of space dissolving in a rush of speed.

Claudia Hart's piece *A Doll's House* radiates brightly-colored, algorithmic flickerings. Distributed throughout, personalized aphorisms enframed by pulsing electronic signage and digital noise animations combine with logos and graphical icons derived from tech giants and other corporations.

aaajiao's *URL is Love* emphasizes the evolution of identity in digital space and the potentials this has generated. Focusing on how the all-too-familiar address underlying hyperlinks ("URL") has made communication beyond physical space possible, aaajiao transitions viewers from our current 3D web to an older 2D interface monogrammed by unpredictable algorithms.

Claudia Hart, *A Doll's House*, 2020

aaajiao (b. 1984, CHN, https://eventstructure.com). The art and works by Chinese artist Xu Wenkai aka aaajiao are marked by a strong dystopian awareness, literati spirits and sophistication. Many of aaajiao's works speak to new thinkings, controversies and phenomenon around the Internet, with specific projects focusing on the processing of data, the blogsphere and China's Great Fire Wall to capture the pulse of the young generation consuming cyber technology and living in social media.

MATTHEW GANTT (b. 1987, USA, https://orangemilkrecords.bandcamp.com) is an artist, composer and

educator based between Troy, NY and Queens, NYC. His practice focuses on sound in virtual spaces, generative systems facilitated by idiosyncratic technology, and production presets as sonic readymades. He has performed at spaces such as Issue Project Room, Roulette, Silent Barn (NYC) as well as abroad (IRCAM Academy, Paris - Koma Elektronic, Berlin).

CLAUDIA HART (b. 1955, USA, https://claudiahart.com) is an artist and professor in the Department of Film, Video, New Media, Animation at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. She is represented by bitforms gallery, New York. Hart has been active as an artist, curator, and critic since 1988. She creates virtual representations that take the form of 3D imagery integrated into photography, animated loops, and multi-channel animation installations.

LAJUNÉ MCMILLIAN (b. 1992, USA, https://laja.me) is a new media artist, maker, and creative technologist based in New York. McMillian is dedicated to making art abstracted from her personal experiences. She has created pieces that integrate performance, virtual reality, and physical computing to question our current use of technology and forms of communication. McMillian's artistic practice is centered around creating technology and mediums that are inherently intersectional allowing communities that have been ignored to have a space to be recognized, loved, accepted, and heard.

MARTINA MENEGON (b. 1988, IT, http://www.martinamenegon.com) is an artist working with Interactive and Mixed Reality Art to create intimate and complex assemblages of physical and virtual elements that explore the contemporary self and its synthetic corporeality. She teaches at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and regularly collaborates with Klaus Obermaier and Stefano D'Alessio, teaching multimedia tools for interactive arts at the IUAV University in Venice. Since 2019 she has directed :afk, curating Mixed Reality Art exhibitions in Vienna.

KATHI SCHULZ (b. 1991, DEU, https://www.kathischulz.com) is a painter and multimedia artist. Her work focuses on the intersection of painting and technology, where she creates a strong connection between the two media of imagery. Her work aesthetically depicts the permeability of analog and digital worlds, the complexity of relationships, (social) networks, and digital communication and allows the viewer to experience it. Schulz's body of work consists of paintings, interactive VR experiences, VR- and live stream performances and video pieces.

synthesis gallery is the leading VR-based art gallery: an immersive blend of technology and art displayed under one roof, showcasing cutting-edge experiences by new wave artists and visionaries through virtual reality. Founded in New York in October 2017 by George Vitale, the gallery opened its doors to the public in April 2018 in Berlin. Pieces are displayed through different media. Tangible and traditional art forms intermingle with Oculus and Vive headsets. Dedicated to exhibiting internationally renowned, well-established artists alongside emerging ones, since its inception, synthesis has garnered considerable attention in the art scene.

Exhibition: November 19, 2020 – February 21, 2021
Private view: November 18, 2020 - 6pm CET (by invitation)
Press accreditation: email to register , +49 176 325 10217
Online venue: Mozilla Hubs – https://hubs.mozilla.com/TqygwLx/feelings/

Join the discussion about the exhibition online at:

Instagram: @synthesis.gallery
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Website: synthesis.gallery