E-MAIL MAGAZINE



from the editor.

Dear reader,

Welcome to issue #2 of E-MAIL MAGAZINE.

Routine is like a plant that needs constant care and attention. But, despite me doing everything Google tells me, my house plant is on its last leaves.

I'm finding it increasingly difficult to focus. I'm telling you this because I think it's important to be open about the way our collective trauma is affecting us. I don't believe that we owe the world productivity during this time. Like many people have already argued, I think it's an important time to re-assess our attitude to productivity and what it means for the world. But I do believe in this project and providing a platform that hosts a variety of voices that have relevant and exciting things to say.

I'm trying my best to keep this coming to you each week, but as the pieces get more complex and the magazine evolves, issues may become monthly or bi-monthly, especially when lockdowns are lifted and the contributors and I return to work. We'll see.

Of course, no one has made any money from this project. I'm working to find ways to change this so writers and artists can get some dosh. I think artists deserve compensation for their time and labour and I hope that E-MAIL MAGAZINE can eventually provide this.

Some ideas I'm considering are optional Patreon subscriptions (I think these conversations should be accessible and I don't want to paywall them), running ads for relevant small businesses, and approaching funding bodies. But, for any of these to work, this magazine's following still needs to grow.

If you like the magazine and are interested in supporting it, I would ask you to share it with your friends. You can send them the download link, share our Instagram posts, or just message (e-mail?) people about it. If you help us expand our reach, we will be able to bring you a lot more with the time and resources given to us. To everyone who has done this already, thank you.

Thank you also to Ingeborg Stavdal, Amelia Berry, and Jessica Lim, this week's contributing writers. Thank you to Sebastian Quast, our featured artist, for your time, art, and words, and thank you to Yana Wernicke & Jonas Feige for your time as well.

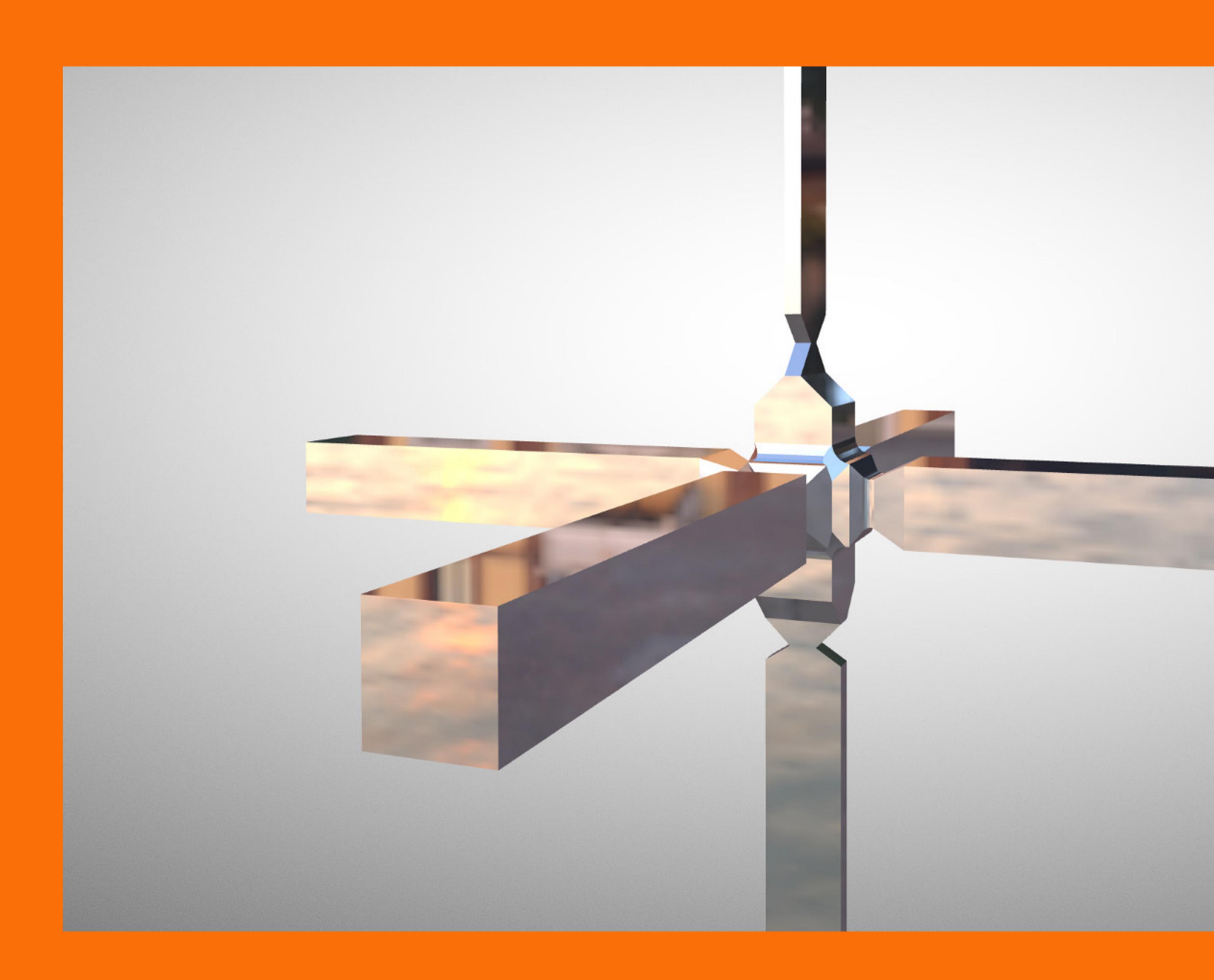
We're working on some great pieces over the next few weeks and I'm incredibly excited to share them with you.

I do truly believe in this project and I will continue to water it and try to give it what it needs to grow — maybe I'll sing to it while no one's around.

As always, feel free to contact me if you have anything to say.

Much love,





by ingaborg stavdal

ARCHITECTURE IS NOT A WALL WITH DOORS, nor is it a roof, a column, a beam, or a facade. It is rather the space created by a composition of these different components. It can be defined as a product of an idea which is further executed and materialized, interfering with our natural surroundings, a manipulation of already existing space.

Do you remember the last time you entered a cathedral/church room? The passage into darkness, and light streaming in from stained glass windows? The dramatic drop in temperature? The cold, hard stone floors? The murmurs of other visitors echoing, the acoustic of the choir song? Being a small human being, inside an enormous space?

Our experience of space is not strictly visual, but stimulates all our senses. Depending on our imagination, feelings and state of mind, it is definitely subjective. One could argue that 'successful' architecture allows this individual experience of a space to harmonize with the 'already' intended 'purpose'/'function' of the space.

The Jewish Museum in Berlin by architect Daniel Libeskind consists of three rooms which are all very particular in how they almost insistently, create an accentuated experience of space. This is how I would describe it:

One of the rooms is dominated by a corner of a very acute angle. Upon entering the room, you are led towards and 'into' this corner, which is so dark you can not spot the actual peak of it. Completely cast in shadows, you are enclosed by darkness the further in you go. The increasing feeling of disquiet makes you tilt your head up towards the ceiling, and far above your head is a small gleam of light emerging. The experience of the space is so overwhelming, you do not stay there lingering/escape quickly.

If you have never visited this room yourself, your experience of that space will now be influenced by the verbal narration of the space. It is nevertheless my personal experience, and therefore demonstrates how the medium and composition of details can direct the experience of space of someone else.

What happens to our experience of space, when communicated through the two-dimensionality of a photograph? The process of replicating a three-dimensional space within a two-dimensional photograph, means to emphasize our vision, detaching the remaining senses, stimulating our imagination in a different way. A photograph of a space is a product of a series of conscious and subconscious choices (made by the photographer), such as the following:

- viewpoint, perspective:

From the eye level, one can easier to imagine a space as a human being would. The more one divert from this, the more one is probable to divert from the spatial experience intended by the architect of the space.

— composition of color, pattern, symmetry, surface,
light and shadow:

As with any visual aesthetic product, the composition of different elements create different 'expressions'.

— people or objects: People 'doing stuff'/'using' the space in a certain way, or associative objects can direct our imagination in different directions.

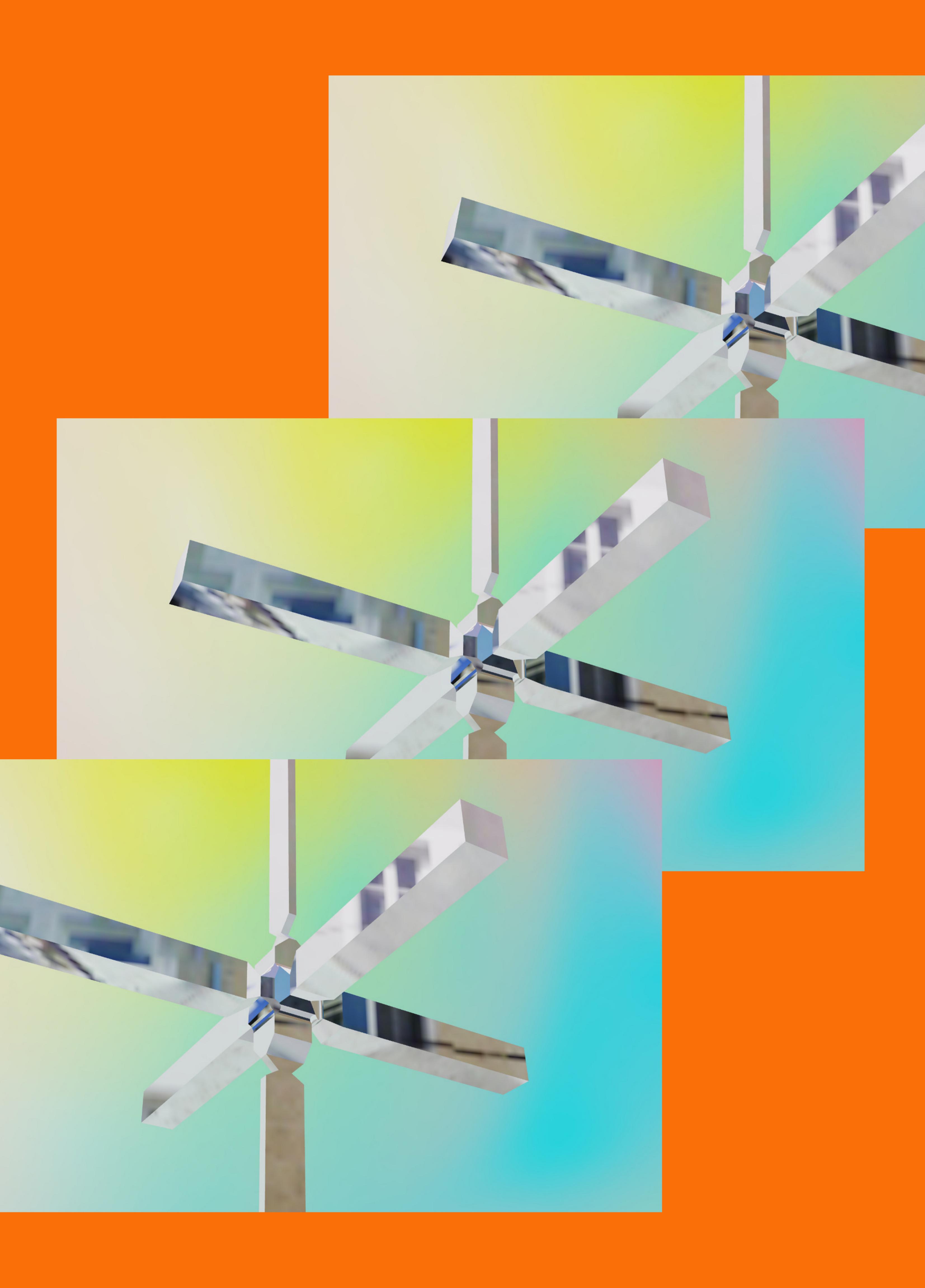
The two-dimensional extraction process of a photograph can accentuate, and produce a multitude of different experiences of the same space, depending on the composition of the photograph.

A large amount of our spatial experiences in our lives are created from photographs. We do in fact depend on photographs to represent the spaces that are inaccessible to us. The photographing of spaces grants anyone architectural powers, becoming the architect of the experience of space.

A photograph can aestheticize spaces that are often regarded 'ugly' ("Seeing the beauty in ugly!"). A photograph can convey spatial experiences divergent from experiences in the actual space. A photograph can create an experience of space from spaces that do not exist, (but when does a space really exist?!).

When the visual sense is isolated, the potent interplay between smell, sound, touch, (and taste!) is lost. The feelings and sensory experiences from a particular space can be communicated, and also enhanced, but a photograph can never replicate space.

Contrary to nature, the architecture and the photograph are in essence compositions of thoughts and ideas, created to evoke something in us.



curating conversations from a distance By Joel Ivan Thomas

To take a photograph is to communicate your perspective of your world. But, when your world is infinitely smaller than it once was, you can be left shellshocked — creatively stagnant.

Photographers Yana Wernicke & Jonas Feige quickly innovated a way to keep artists engaged by launching the platform stay-athome.photography. This is a website where photographers engage in a visual conversation with a partner who is selected by the site's creators.

This platform has consumed hours of my time, engaging as an observer (I particularly enjoy the straight-up magical conversation between Darja Preuss and Fabian Schwarze, which I wrote about on the website), and as a participant. It made me feel like I could breathe again, gave me a sense of movement that probably even pushed me to create this magazine.

I wanted to know how an exhibition space that has motivated me, and many others, came to exist. So I reached out to Yana and Jonas and questioned them via email. They responded to this conversation as one.

Can you give me some background on yourselves and how you knew each other prior to this project?

We both studied photography at the Ostkreuzschule in Berlin a couple of years ago, which is also where we met. We have collaborated creatively many times before this and are always involved in each other's projects as well. Next to stayathome.photography, our most significant collaboration is a photographic project about German colonialism, which is going to be released as a photobook early next year.

The project happened very quickly after social distancing was introduced. How did you come up with this idea and mobilize it so fast?

We had actually been in Portugal when the isolation really started. We had to cut our trip short and when we were close to flying back to Germany, we got a sense of what the isolation was truly going to mean. We were going back to Germany but we weren't going to be able to see our friends, to be outside and to photograph — and everyone else was in the same situation. The idea for the platform then came really quite spontaneously. What if we could connect all those self-isolated photographers, give them something to do, a reason to keep photographing (or to work with their archive) and a chance to not be so isolated after all? We did not invent the idea of photographic conversations, of course. But we figured that it could take on a whole new meaning and level of importance during these times - especially when incorporated in a platform where photographers (once accepted) could have those conversations without anyone else interfering or having to handle the technical stuff for them.

Do you have to turn away many photographers?

Unfortunately, yes. Ever since we started, we received close to a thousand applications. We never really advertised the project, only mentioned it in a few Instagram stories/posts. The rest was done by the partaking photographers themselves, which is probably why it grew so incredibly fast (and also the reason why we have a majority of German photographers on the site right now). Our goal, however, is to keep the website as international and diverse as possible, which means that unfortunately (as explained above) we have to look into where the photographers are applying from and what they might bring to the platform photographically.

Do you see this project also as an act of curation for you?

This project grew so fast and we honestly never expected it to be so popular. On the one hand we are of course very happy about the echo it has received but it also puts us in the uncomfortable position of having to be selective about who gets to partake and who does not. We don't enjoy this part of the process and wish we could keep it open for everyone, but unfortunately, there are limits to what we (as a team of two) and the website can handle.

Curation for us only really comes into play when pairing photographers. This can be a lot of fun and very rewarding when you see two photographers who did not know each other before and who might live thousands of kilometres apart really engaging in their conversation. It doesn't always work out, of course, and there are pairings where no real conversation every really got going, but then many times we have been very surprised at how people seemed to really connect through the website.



giulia parlato



matthew rhys thompson

What has been frustrating you about photographers responses to each other?

Overall we are extremely happy with how the photographers engage with each other. There is a great honesty and tenderness in many of the photos and it is quite moving to see so many people opening up and allowing everyone else to look into their lives and homes at this time. There were a few moments where we felt like there was no willingness to engage with each other or the current situation and where photographers seemed to only want to showcase the best shots from their portfolio. That is unfortunate, of course, and in the beginning we thought we might have to act on it. But, looking at the larger picture, we realized that it's really only a few cases. We don't want to censor the conversations in any way so we just learned to let it go and enjoy the beautiful majority of honest conversations on the site.

What have you enjoyed about the project?

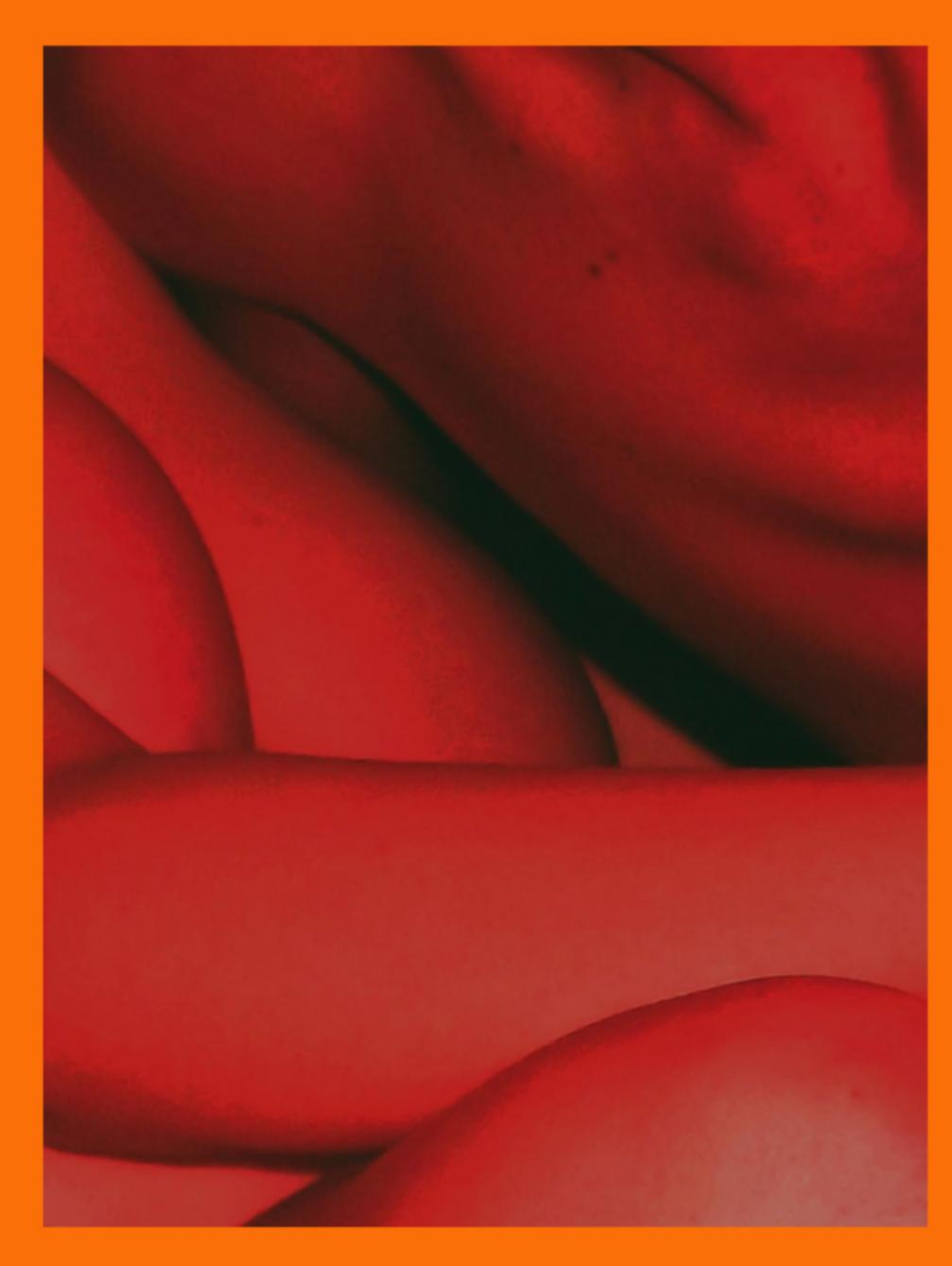
As mentioned above, we never expected the project to resonate with so many photographers. It is a great joy to see them engaging with the website and each other in that way. We received so many beautiful messages and the fact that the word about the project was mostly spread by the photographers themselves tells us that it really seems to fill a void.

Do you plan to take this further, post-isolation?

We don't have any plans at the moment and are mainly focussed on keeping the website going. Having said that, it would, of course, be wonderful to turn this into a print publication, an exhibition or whatever else might be possible at some point.



james barnett



joel i thomas

objects with amelia berry: keyboards by amelia berry

When Albert Camus wrote 'The Myth of Sisy-phus', he was trying to answer the most important question in philosophy. Namely, what's the point in being alive? Why should we even bother? The conclusion that he comes to (major spoiler warning for 'The Myth of Sisyphus'), is that even though life is pretty much pushing a rock up a hill over and over again until you die, there's actually a lot to love about the rock. An infinite amount of detail to appreciate. Maybe even some lichen.

This is something which has been on my mind recently, ever since listening to an album called 'Mechanical Keyboard Sounds: Recordings Of Bespoke And Customised Mechanical Keyboards'. Which is, yes, exactly what it sounds like.

Listening to the hypnotically rhythmic tapping of the IBM 5140, I thought about my own relationship with typing. For someone who spends most of every day writing on a computer keyboard, I've spent precious little time developing an aesthetic appreciation for them. My taste in keyboards is neither developed, nor discriminating. And while I won't be dishing out for a new one any time soon, I figured that I might as well learn to appreciate the one I've got.

Writing this, I've been doing my best to pay attention to the quality of sound. The percussive click-clack gallop of the keys like skittering footsteps. I've been trying to focus on the aesthetic experience of pressing the keys. The resistance, the spring, their eager receptiveness to touch. I've also been thinking about something that William Morris, another dead man said, "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." I used to take this to mean that if something was useful, it didn't need to be beautiful, but now I'm starting to see that maybe use has a beauty all its own.



in progress: sebastian quast and the infinite digital by joel ivan thomas

A mythical chrome star floats through the pastel sky, pixels glistening in the digital light. The star, or "gizmo," kind of looks like a compass guiding outer-space explorers towards a new planet - its purpose is not far off.

The gizmo is a tool traditionally like," he says of his additional used to navigate users through a 3D digital space. Swiss artist Sebastian Quast, 23, created this one to push the boundaries of online exhibitions, which are booming in the isolation age.

There are almost no rules in a digital world. The laws of physics don't apply, and with pixels (or vectors) as your primary construction material, your budget is infinite. Quast wants to use this to his advantage, so he's planning a space in which you can meet in the middle, perhaps at a digital bar where you can drink digi-cocktails before traversing in every direction to look at art you can walk on the floor or glide up through corridors where "The first thing I'm going to do the ceiling should be.

"You can play the god of things you've always imagined," Quast says.

But no matter how beautifully a space is built, its primary function should connection. Connecting people to artworks, their environment, and with each other is Quast's intention.

"It's social VR, so you can see the other person in real-time, you can use your microphone, and if someone comes near you, you can hear actually their voice get louder."

Sebastian is learning skills in virtual reality and coding at

Munich's LMU where he studies arts and multimedia. But wanting to develop a more artistic approach, he also started an extra diploma in fine arts at ADBK, in the class of Peter Kogler.

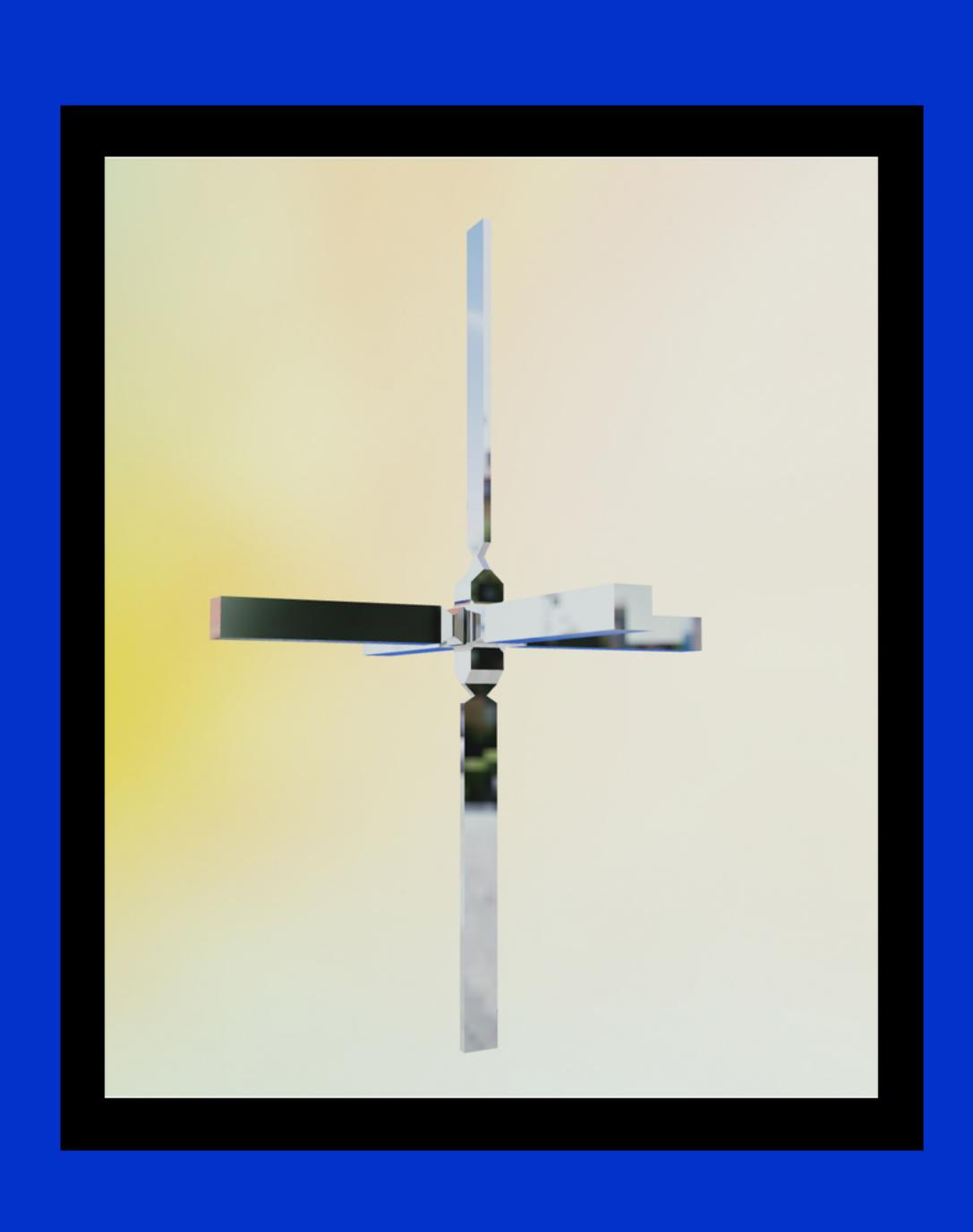
"This is much more the study I workload. "You're free to do whatever you want."

It's not all digital for Sebastian; he's interested in how the physical and digital worlds interact.

"We may have physical openings but as an extension, we can use the virtual gallery... Maybe it's corresponding with the real gallery space."

But for now, the development of digital spaces has to prevail if artists are to continue connecting people with their work, even if artists want to get physical.

is go back to the atelier to sew," says Quast.



I AM TRYING TO ESCAPE.

Sometimes I think about how the most empathetic people are the least empathetic people.

I want to have hope in this world but it is always somehow draining away from me.

I'm in this house and it's on fire but somehow it's also allgoods.

Imagine if the kaupapa for your art manifesto was to steal people's writing, publish it under your own name and then bleet on about 'individualism is colonialism' lol #preach

Imagine doing a poetry reading, but only laughing at your own jokes.

Imagine making fun of "Queer white ppl" for the simple reason that they present as white. #classconciousness #intersectionality

My favorite thing is trying to blend in with the rest of the people around me.

Yeah, I don't care if I'm seen

I just don't wanna be seen by

u

I should start a business.

In niche lifestyle services.

If your niche lifestyle service is giving people PTSD then you've nailed it.

Once I got kicked out of a feminist reading group for sleeping with someone #woke J burn me on the cross like Jesus

A Nike tick, but unironically on the cover of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.

Spirit is reason, haven't u heard?

Total beauty and health.

A luxury brand exploiting children for labour.

"BECAUSE PHILOSOPHY IS BORN OF THE CONDITION OF SADNESS"

Sometimes I think about this one time I got so fucked over by woke artists I started to think of get rich quick schemes.

I was so depressed that I would lay in my bedroom til you would come scrape me up off the floor.

Relax and unwind...

I still get triggered when I remember that WMA asking me to work for free 'for the love of art'

ввним

I had a panic attack on the Paris metro, but by the time I made it to the Eiffel tower. I remembered the message he sent that said 'I hope you enjoy being alone...forever'

And while eating my baguette I giggled

Into the cinematic stillness Of the stupidity of the world.

