

Ben Elliot

Metaone, 2023

Metaone is an ambitious metaverse project which aims to redefine our relationship to the creative space and be a vessel for forward-thinking cultural forms. Ben Elliot developed *Metaone* with the ideas of a virtual paradise that represents a future world where history, nature, technology and science intertwine and enhance one another.

The first presentation of the project was organized by Olivier Renaud Clément and took the shape of an installation at Esther Schipper in Berlin and Paris. It included a XR experience produced by VIVE Arts.

This VR artwork offered a guided experience, which includes a soundscape by Kingdom, taking visitors into the four distinct environments that constitute *Metaone*:

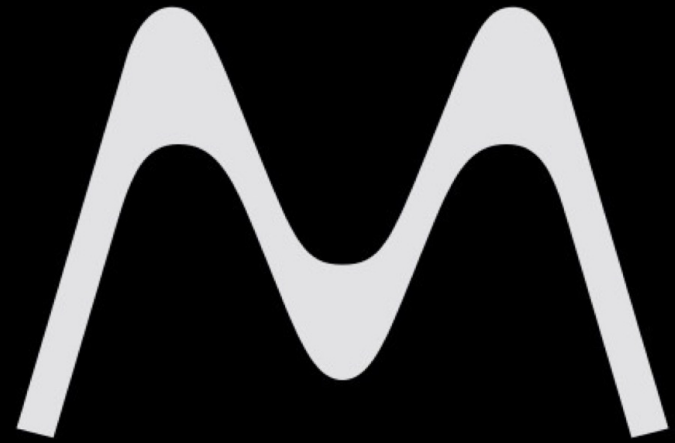
Shape, an area that is a space for discussions on future architecture, design, and web3 aesthetics

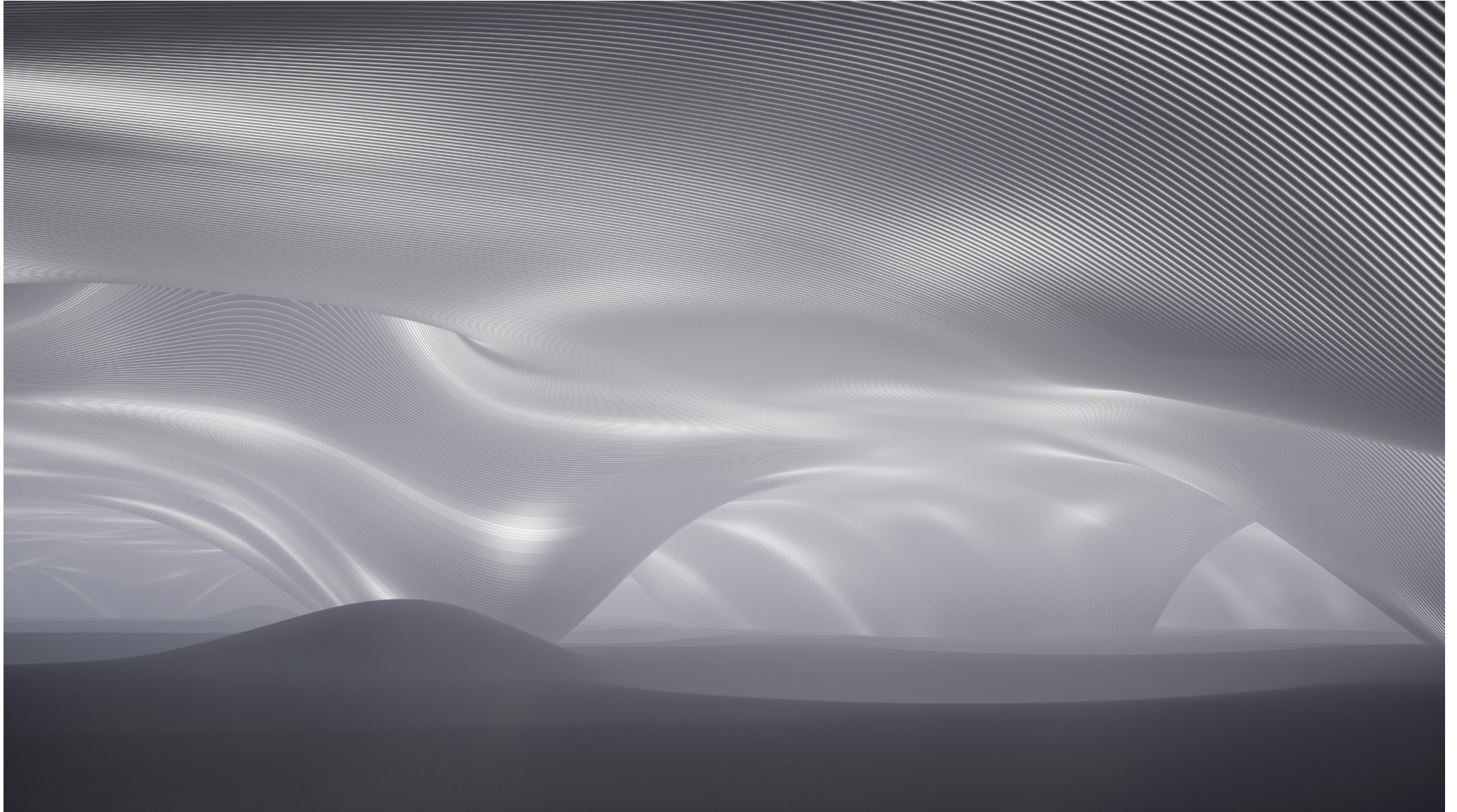
Deep, a dreamlike journey into the world of data and AI.

Infinite, imagining unlimited creativity through generative software.

Zen, a tranquil, sensory space, designed to promote well-being and foster a beneficial connection to the metaverse.

The installation also included a short film, as well as artworks derivating from *Metaone*'s environments and aesthetics such as a curtain piece, some prints, as well as *Xchair*.

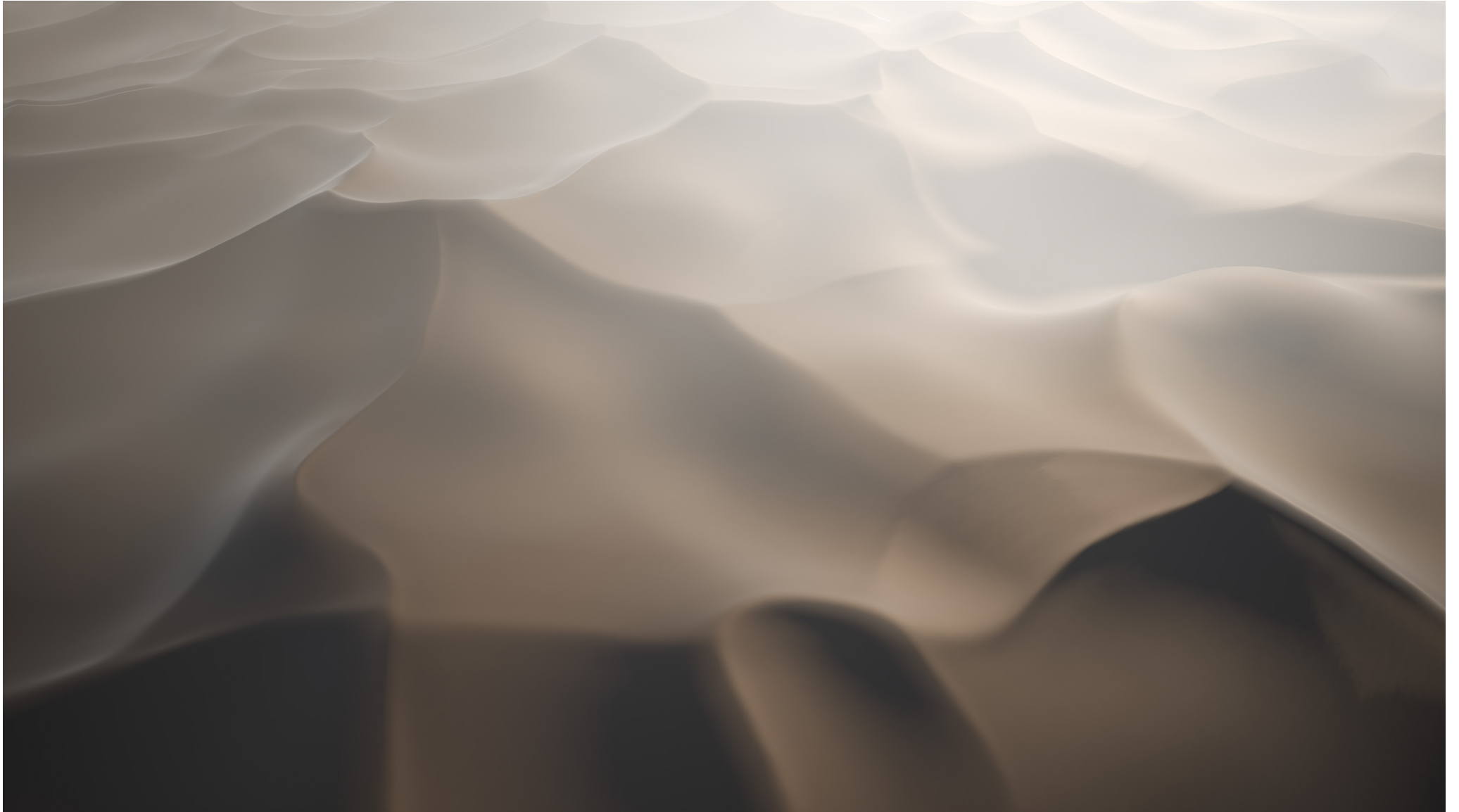




Metaone (Shape), 2023. Courtesy the artist, Esther Schipper & VIVE Arts Limited.



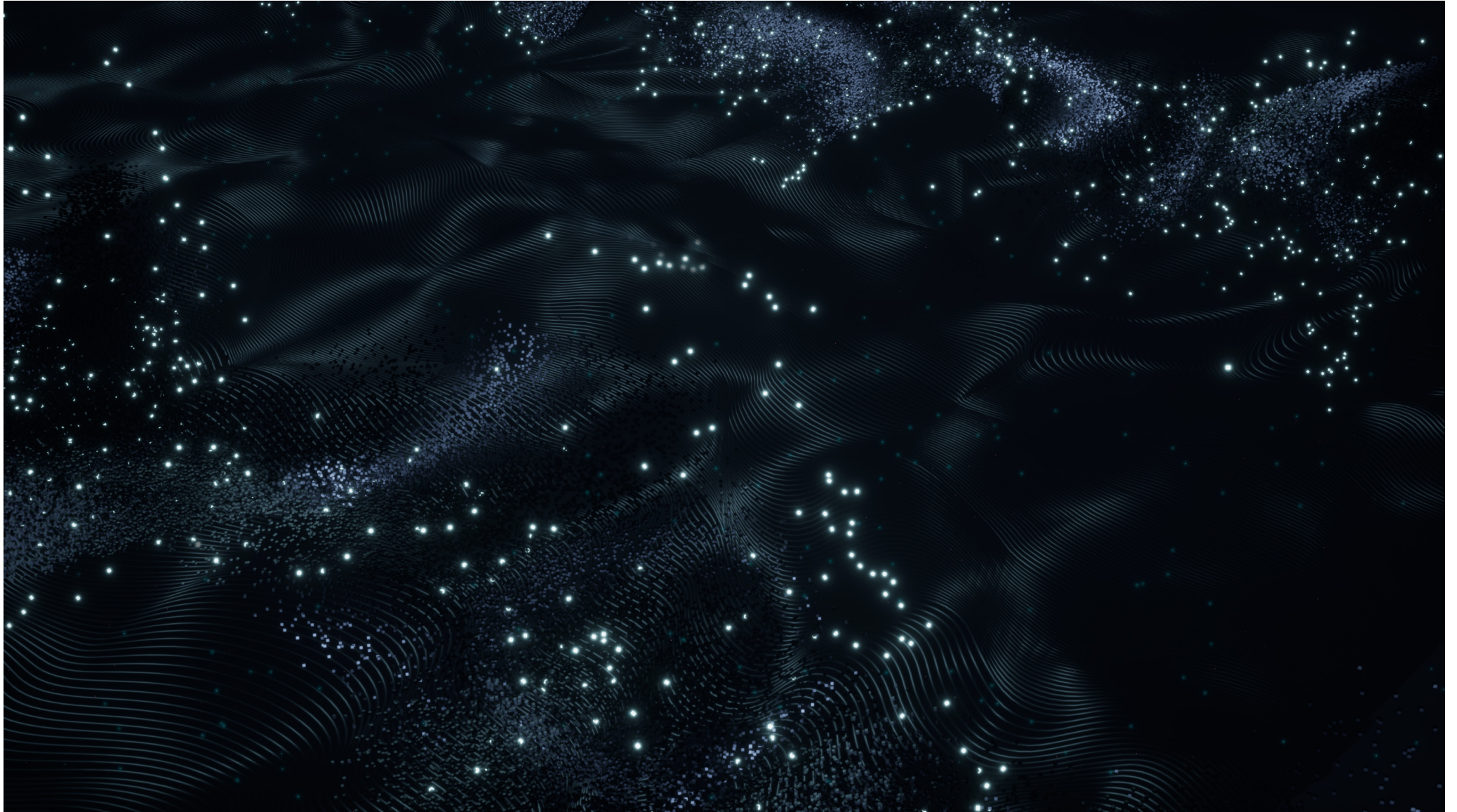
Metaone, 2023. Exhibition view, Esther Schipper, Berlin, Germany.



Metaone (Infinite), 2023. Courtesy the artist, Esther Schipper & VIVE Arts Limited.



Metaone, 2023. Preview exhibition, Esther Schipper, Paris, France.



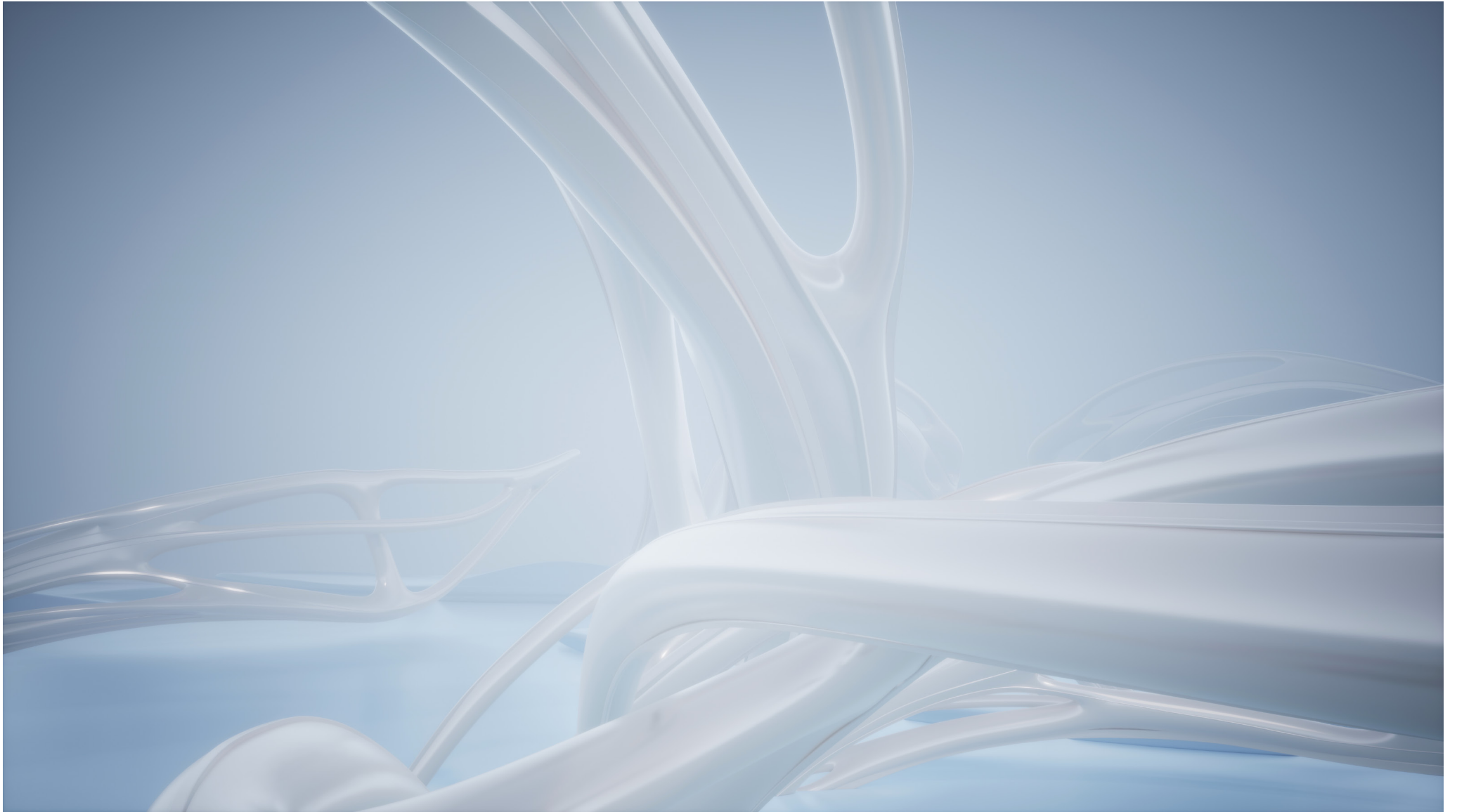
Metaone (Deep), 2023. Courtesy the artist, Esther Schipper & VIVE Arts Limited.



Metaone, 2023. Preview exhibition, Esther Schipper, Paris, France.



Metaone, 2023. Preview exhibition, Esther Schipper, Paris, France.



Metaone (Shape), 2023. Courtesy the artist, Esther Schipper & VIVE Arts Limited.

About *Metaone*

Essay by Anika Meier

June 2023

What is the Metaverse? Nobody knows for sure, not yet. Hence fascination and enthusiasm, rejection and denial. It is revolution and utopia, dystopia and tradition. The metaverse is everywhere and nowhere. It promises the future and a new world, online and offline, like we can't imagine the future and the new world yet. Because of the unknown, something that doesn't really exist yet is unimaginable. Man can think and work with what is already known from the past and present. The first signs of what this new world in the Metaverse can look like are product presentations from the largest technology companies.

ChatGTP might know what the Metaverse is.

"The metaverse refers to a virtual reality space where individuals can interact with digital environments and other users in real-time. It is an immersive, interconnected virtual world that combines elements of augmented reality, virtual reality, and the internet. In the metaverse, people can engage in various activities, such as work, socializing, entertainment, and commerce, using avatars or digital representations of themselves. It aims to create a seamless, persistent, and shared online universe that transcends traditional boundaries and allows for new forms of creativity, collaboration, and exploration."

It is now up to artists and creatives to help shape this new world and show its potential while at the same time enabling critical reflection by raising questions that can probably not be answered at first. These open questions will accompany us in the years to come.

What was previously left to video and the Internet will in the future be the Metaverse: A walkable Internet that connects the real and virtual worlds. It will trigger massive shifts in society, changing social life and international politics through new ways of communicating and living together.

Artist Ben Elliot has made it his mission to be actively involved and has therefore built a Metaverse, which is a proposal for a future scenario. His Metaverse is mixed reality: VR, AR, 3D printing, video. The visitor gravitates towards it. Elliot envisions a virtual paradise in four different environments (*Shape*, *Deep*, *Infinite*, and *Zen*) that combine history, nature, technology, and science. It's a utopia, a constructive proposal, a dream: *Metaone* is a virtual world where data and artificial intelligence are the driving forces and where Web2 achievements and insights are expanded in the spirit of Web3. Architecture and design, immersive experiences and limitless discoveries, health, and relaxation are the themes Elliot explores. "*Metaone* is an attempt at imagining the next, a new place for creativity. How will we experience art in the future?", Elliot wonders and acts.

ChatGTP might know about the metaverse as an artwork.

“The metaverse can be seen as a masterpiece of digital artwork, crafted by the collective imagination and ingenuity of creators and technologists. It represents a multidimensional canvas where the boundaries of reality and imagination blur, inviting individuals to step into a realm where artistry knows no limits. The metaverse transcends the traditional constraints of physical galleries, becoming a living and evolving exhibition that transcends time and space. It invites exploration, wonder, and contemplation, beckoning individuals to participate in an ever-unfolding masterpiece that challenges perceptions and reshapes our understanding of art itself.”

As an artist, Elliot himself has always lived in his time. As a digital native, born in 1994, he grew up and was confronted with new technologies and communication channels (Web2). Instead of just passively consuming them as a user, he tried to understand them as an artist and integrated them into his artistic practice. Instead of just being an influencer on social media as an artist himself, he has made social media and influencer marketing his artistic medium. He has worked with brands and has become a brand himself to show how new technologies and new media can be actively shaped in one's own interest and that of society. Cryptocurrency, blockchain, NFTs, Web3, and Metaverse are the buzzwords of the world Post-Covid. They promise digital ownership and decentralization, a new economy and independence. In Web2, one logs in and is the product. In Web3, one connects a crypto wallet and is an owner. The Metaverse will redefine life in the post-digital age.

The Metaverse should become a place that is not dominated by a technology company but is owned and shaped by its users. While Web2 companies collect data, and this data is converted into knowledge and money by corporations in order to come up with more data, more money, and more knowledge, Web3 is already a decentralised system in which digital ownership enables more self-determination.



Metaone (Zen), 2023. Courtesy the artist, Esther Schipper & VIVE Arts Limited.



Xchair, 2023

Xchair is Ben Elliot's take on what a speculative lounge chair could be, designed in close relation to his ongoing metaverse project titled *Metaone*. A hybrid object, *Xchair* is a direct emanation of *Metaone*'s sensory exploration of XR (extended reality) landscapes. The chair's lines and shape emulate the topographies of *Metaone*'s four distinct virtual environments (*SHAPE*, *DEEP*, *INFINITE* and *ZEN*), borrowing from the fluidity of their curves and spectral horizon lines. Created in an on-demand scheme in collaboration with Nagami, a pioneer design company specialized on 3D printing projects crafted with recycled polymer materials, the futuristic easy chair connects the digital with the physical like a gateway at the heart of one's home or a living room portal. Its ergonomic design insightfully addresses the ever-increasing multiplicity of future domestic practices: working, eating and resting, in face of digital devices and XR tools. The chair's curvy lines coalesce in layers to form an L-shaped object, whose cantilevered core functions as a spring and ensures responsive, dynamic sitting. Its grainy texture echoes that of a sensual surface intimately enveloping a body like skin or shells, while its "elastic" nature allows for its shape to undergo constant evolution. At the interplay between the solid and the liquid, this design object activates notions of liquefaction, fluidity, and data immersion. *Xchair* offers us a glimpse into future lifestyles, both preserved and renewed.

Olivier Zeitoun

Ben Elliot

Xchair (in collaboration with Nagami), 2023

Recycled PETG Polymer

70 x 185 x 79,5 cm

Edition of 12 + 2 AP







Smartsuit, 2021

Smartsuit is a speculative garment designed by Ben Elliot, envisioning the future of clothing the human body. Minimalist, utilitarian and streamlined for daily use, *Smartsuit* acts as a true bioskin, fulfilling the body's needs in a society driven by technology. The project is made to restore attention to the body's natural needs and to fulfil them when they tend to be more and more neglected. It is a comprehensive instrument meant to address the various vulnerabilities that humans currently face and thus soften the relationship of mistrust they have developed towards natural phenomena.

Constructed from smart biomaterials and acting as a new exoskeleton, *Smartsuit* adapts to unlimited colours and forms intuitively to its user's own individuality while responding to its environment. The suit adapts to the weather, provides the warmth, energy and nutriment needed by the host, optimises the body's performance levels, enhances the senses, stores unlimited data and connects intuitively to all social networks. Smartsuit is self-cleaning, self-repairing and self-fragrancing.

Continuing Elliot's exploration of corporate and personal brand identity, *Smartsuit* is a projection of the future of fashion and wearable technology in the next century. This first generation *Smartsuit* prototype is inspired by the form of the Gucci tracksuit and Gucci webbing stripe and is worn by the artist's personal 3D avatar. It features a hybrid logo that shifts between the Gucci square 'G' monogram and the artist's own initials — an overlapping 'BE' form that is also applied in the metaverse as the artist's own cryptocurrency symbol.

Dan Thawley
A Magazine Curated By







Smartsuit V2, 2023. Exhibition view, AIUla Artist Residency, Saudi Arabia.

Filters, 2020-ongoing

Filters is a series of short videos in which the most popular Instagram filters are applied to Ben Elliot's avatar's face.

The ability to apply facial recognition technologies in real-time on social networks from a mobile device was made possible when Snapchat acquired Ukrainian computer vision startup Lookery in 2015. But it was only in 2018 that Instagram introduced AR face filters to its Stories' camera. In 2019, filters became omnipresent when Instagram let anyone create and upload their own custom AR filters.

Ben Elliot's project *Filters* intends to collaborate with some of the most influential Instagram filters creators such as @alexandra_kisa_, @holymariia, @johwska, @omega.c, @ines.alpha, @exitsimulation, among others, to apply them on Ben Elliot's avatar's face. A common interest of these creators is their aim to explore, play & redefine aesthetics and beauty standards. Instagram filters have become a digital cultural movement highlighting the impact of technology in the way we showcase ourselves, communicate, and socialize.



Filters (Monologue @exitsimulation), 2020. 21,3 x 14,5 x 2,2 cm. Video in loop, digital frame. Edition of 1 + 2AP.



Filters (Flames), 2020

Exhibition view, Times Square, New York, USA. As part of Global Gallery by Porsche and König Galerie.



DHC

DHC Channel

Filters (Flames), 2020

Exhibition view, Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan. As part of Global Gallery by Porsche and König Galerie.



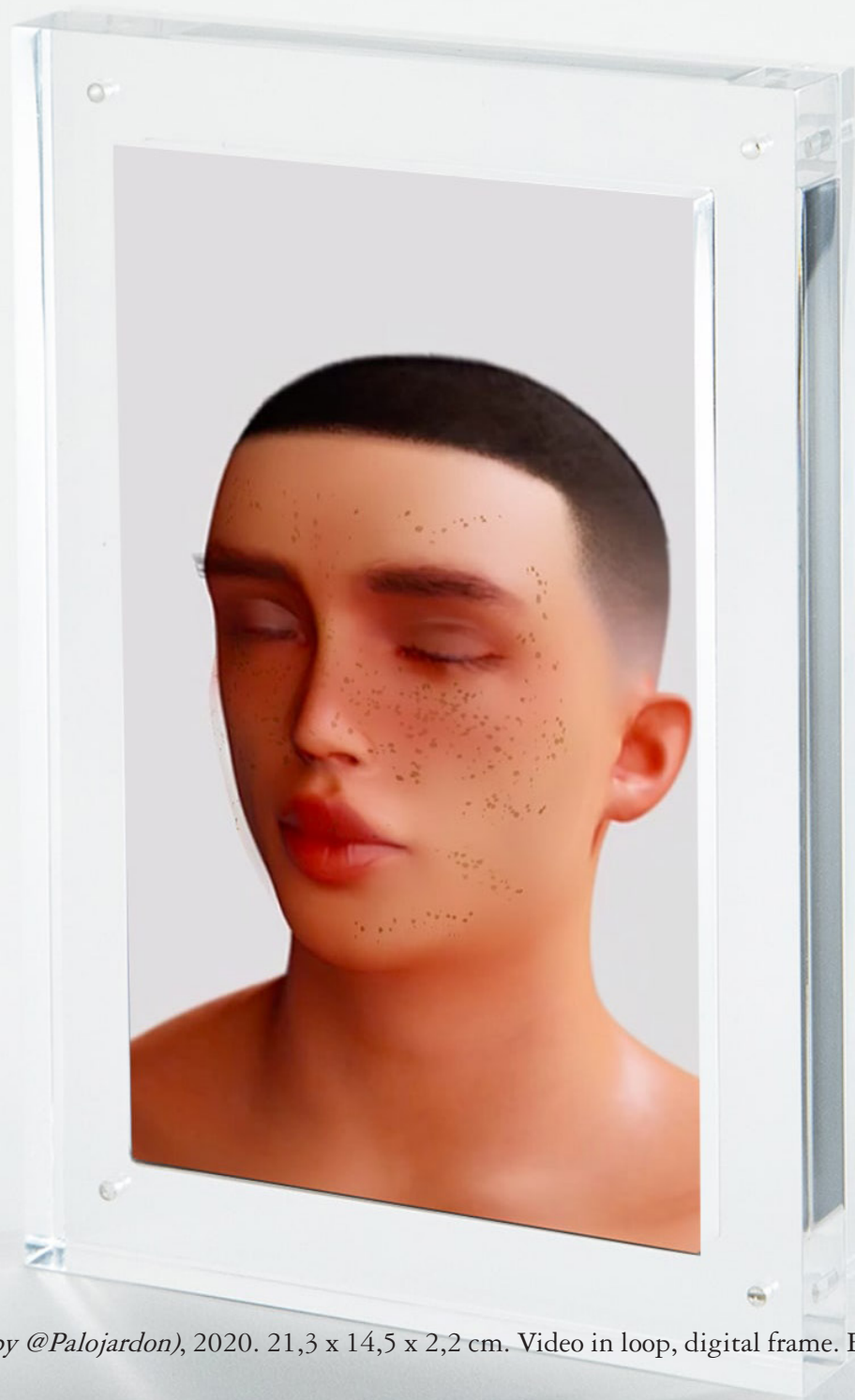
Filters (This is Human by @Ines.alpha), 2020. 21,3 x 14,5 x 2,2 cm. Video in loop, digital frame. Edition of 1 + 2AP.

Filters (pequitas by @Palojardon), 2020
Exhibition view, Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan. As part of Global Gallery by Porsche and König Galerie.





Filters (Tentacles by @omega.c), 2020. 21,3 x 14,5 x 2,2 cm. Video in loop, digital frame. Edition of 1 + 2AP.



Filters (pequitas by @Palojardon), 2020. 21,3 x 14,5 x 2,2 cm. Video in loop, digital frame. Edition of 1 + 2AP.

Perfect Paintings, 2021-ongoing

Perfect Paintings is a series of non-figurative acrylic and print on canvases conceived purely on the basis of data analytics. The composition and colour scheme of each work is a result of meticulous calculations automatically generated by a software. This software studies the dimensions, colour palettes, and formats of the most popular paintings in contemporary history, taking elements such as the market value, mainstream cultural influences and institutional perspectives into consideration.

Painting as a medium has persevered for thousands of years and is one of the oldest creative media and undeniably the leading medium on the art market today. This project probes the conception of an 'ideal' fine art object. With an attempt to reconciling the past and present, the traditional and the digital in an entirely new narrative, this group of innovative forms reactivate the discourse of contemporary painting by giving it a new meaning.

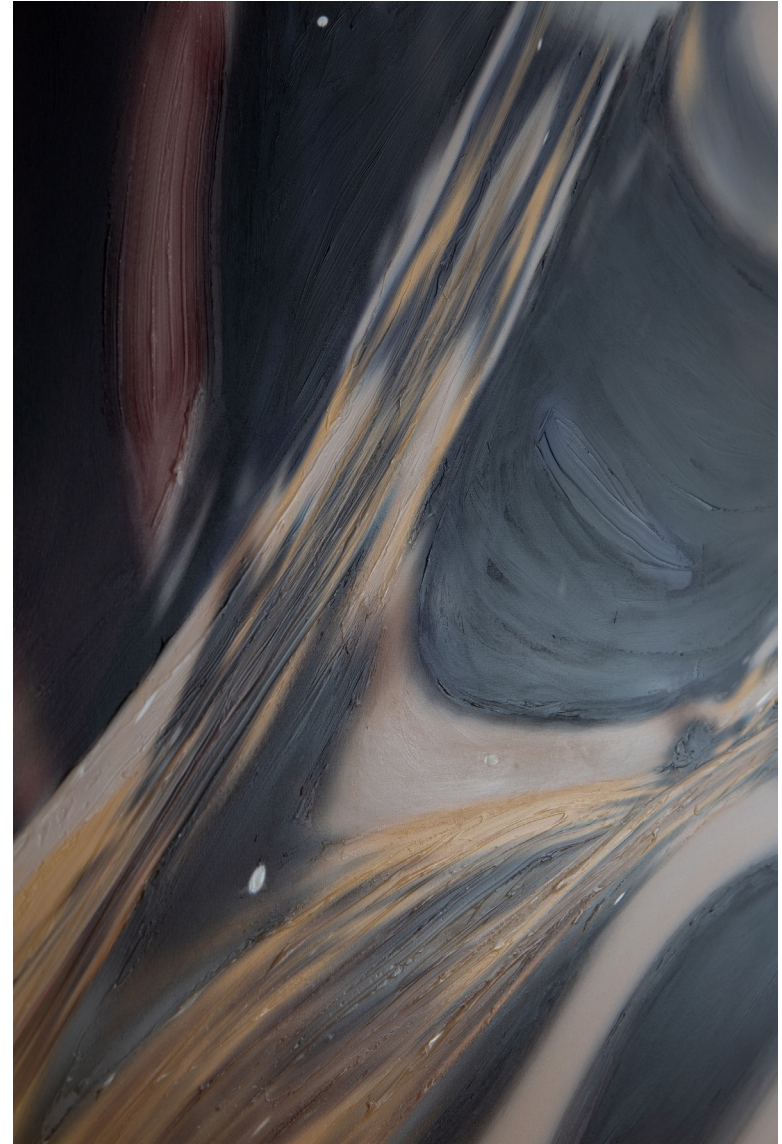
Kirsten Wang



Perfect Painting (Yellow, orange), 2021, 260 x 240 cm. Print, acrylic paint.
Exhibition view, Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castelet, France



Perfect Painting (Black, Grey), 2023. 33 x 28 cm. Print, acrylic paint.
Exhibition view, flatmarkus, Zurich, Switzerland



Perfect Painting (Grey, white, ochre), 2021. 180 x 150 cm.
Print, acrylic paint.



Perfect Painting (Blue, green, indigo & brown), 2021. 145 x 220 cm. Print, acrylic paint.



Perfect Painting (Black, grey), 2023. 33 x 28 cm. Print, acrylic paint.



Perfect Painting (Grey, white), 2021. 170 x 140 cm. Print, acrylic paint.



Perfect Painting (Black, red), 2021. 180 x 150 cm.
Print, acrylic paint.
Exhibition view, Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castelet, France.

About *Perfect Paintings* and *Avatars*

Essay by Mitchell Anderson

September 2023

Authenticity, tempting promise and inherent lack, sits at the projected heart of so much of contemporary society. Wellness, politics, presentation of the self all supposedly circulate being real. Yet, each of those elements, we all know, is firmly powered by focus groups, filters, good lighting and corporate pseudo-mirrors. The work of Ben Elliot seems to suggest that a more authentic experience might come not through faking perfection for public consumption, but being honest about both the desire and ability to create these false images in our contemporary moment. His series of 'Perfect Paintings', a kind of the pinnacle of conceding to focus groups, announce themselves as AI assisted compositions engineered to be desirable in many facets of art and the market that surrounds it. The digital as an ideal solution. Yet, they are handmade, the gesture, or at least the idea of the artist's physical interaction with material, central to their becoming. They are authentic not because they give the viewer what they want, but because they are honest about how they came to do this without sacrificing the unique labor art enthusiasts continue to fetishize. The 'Avatar' works operate in a kind of similar opposition. Using digital tools to create the seemingly off the cuff images that populate social media. In their uncanny closeness to the real, they remind that the things they pretend to be are as fake as they are. How close is an influencer's beach photo to a true snapshot taken by a friend after all? Yet, in their eerie presentation of a character far from reality, they occupy a space of portraiture that is more similar to painting than photography. That is to say honest reflections, if not real ones. Schiele definitely didn't look like his portraits in reality, did he? Elliot's interest in the lines that blur art and experience relate deeply to the ways in which image culture has always presented the desires of the individual through fictitious lenses. In his projections of the self and the audience he finds a way through more than simple illustration and critique, towards something approaching wants and needs, both branded fantasy and inherent truth.



Perfect Painting (Black, neon), 2021. 170 x 140 cm. Print, acrylic paint.



Perfect Painting (Black, grey), 2021. 170 x 140 cm. Print, acrylic paint.



Perfect Painting (Blue & turquoise), 2021. 215 x 170 cm.
Print, acrylic paint.

Exhibition view, *The Artist is Online: Painting and Sculpture in the Digital Age*, König Galerie, Berlin, Germany.

ART MARKET & DATA

Data, the oil of the 21st century, is the starting point for the *Perfect Paintings*. For this new series, Ben Elliot collected data from the contemporary art world to define what are the most sellable works from living artists on the market. The artist used a data-based software in order to create works as an aggregation of popular works by the most economically successful artists.

DATA-BASED SOFTWARE

3 types of data have been analysed by the software: the medium, the size and the colors of the most bankable artworks. Even in an increasingly digital world, the most common medium on the market is still a secular one: painting. The standard sizes are a range of formats of imposing sizes, ideal for large apartments and museum walls.

COLORS, FEELINGS & MARKETING

Green, blue and grey appear to be the most recurrent colors in collectors' most appreciated works. Studies demonstrated that each color is associated with some values and feelings by the human brain. Marketing used these studies to associate these colors with specific products and brands. Green is the favourite color to rest the human eyes. It is associated with stability, prosperity and luck. Blue provides a feeling of confidence and security. Grey is a synonym of neutrality and calm, often associated with technology.

ONGOING WORK

The *Perfect Paintings* series is an ongoing work that will evolve depending both on the market and on available technologies. Conceiving these technological meta-paintings, Ben Elliot has created a mirror of the evolving trends in the art world.

CREATIVE PROCESS

The artwork's creative process is delegated to the software, questioning the status of the artist in the digital and technological era. The human hand slavishly follows the shapes dictated by the algorithm, without considering the artist's own subjectivity.

AUTHENTICITY & UNIQUENESS

Under Ben Elliot's paintbrush, these software generated images become paintings of a combination of paintings. The artist's hand direct intervention on the canvas ensures the authenticity and uniqueness to each work, which are the most attractive criteria for collectors.

CUSTOMER-ORIENTED STRATEGY

Contemporary marketing strategies are changing the creative and production processes. Customer-oriented marketing is one of these strategies. Instead of offering an existing product to customers, the product is specifically conceived for existing customers. Adapting his offer to the demand of the market, Ben Elliot assumes to transgress one of the biggest taboos in the art field: taking into account the market as the starting point of the creative process. The *Perfect Paintings* are made by the market and for the market, aiming to be the ideal collectible artworks.

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BEN ELLIOT
PERFECT PAINTINGS
2020-ONGOING

My Little Friend, 2020-ongoing

My Little Friend is a virtual character created by artist Ben Elliot.

Agender, non-animal, nor human, its personality epitomizes the cute and innovative aspects of the millennial generation and in general of a creative and forward-thinking audience.

Conceived as a long-term and multi-faceted art project, Ben Elliot will develop *My Little Friend* as a brand, establish and promote its licencing and merchandises. The loveable and relatable character will be used throughout paintings, sculptures and various artworks, as well as limited editions of apparel, homeware, toys, etc. The first implementation of *My Little Friend* involves the introduction of a face filter as well as several programs in virtual and augmented reality, for fans to be able to interact with their virtual friend.

The project explores the culture of digital pets and fictional characters such as Hello Kitty, Milk & Mocha, Tuzki, or Gudetama, that has been especially popular since the mid 2010's. *My Little Friend* aims at connecting this trend to art, tech, A.I., and smart entertainment.

Character design: @puffypuffpuff_

Filter development: @viv_galinari & @mutantboard

VR development: Louise Briskmann & @minsarstudio

Video: @magic.mountain



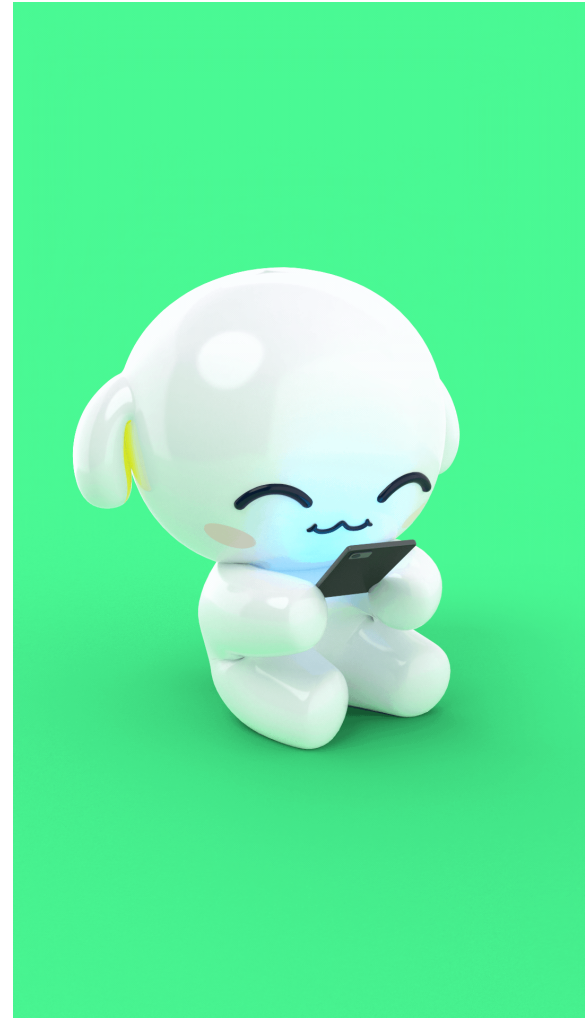


My Little Friend, 2020. Instagram Filter.



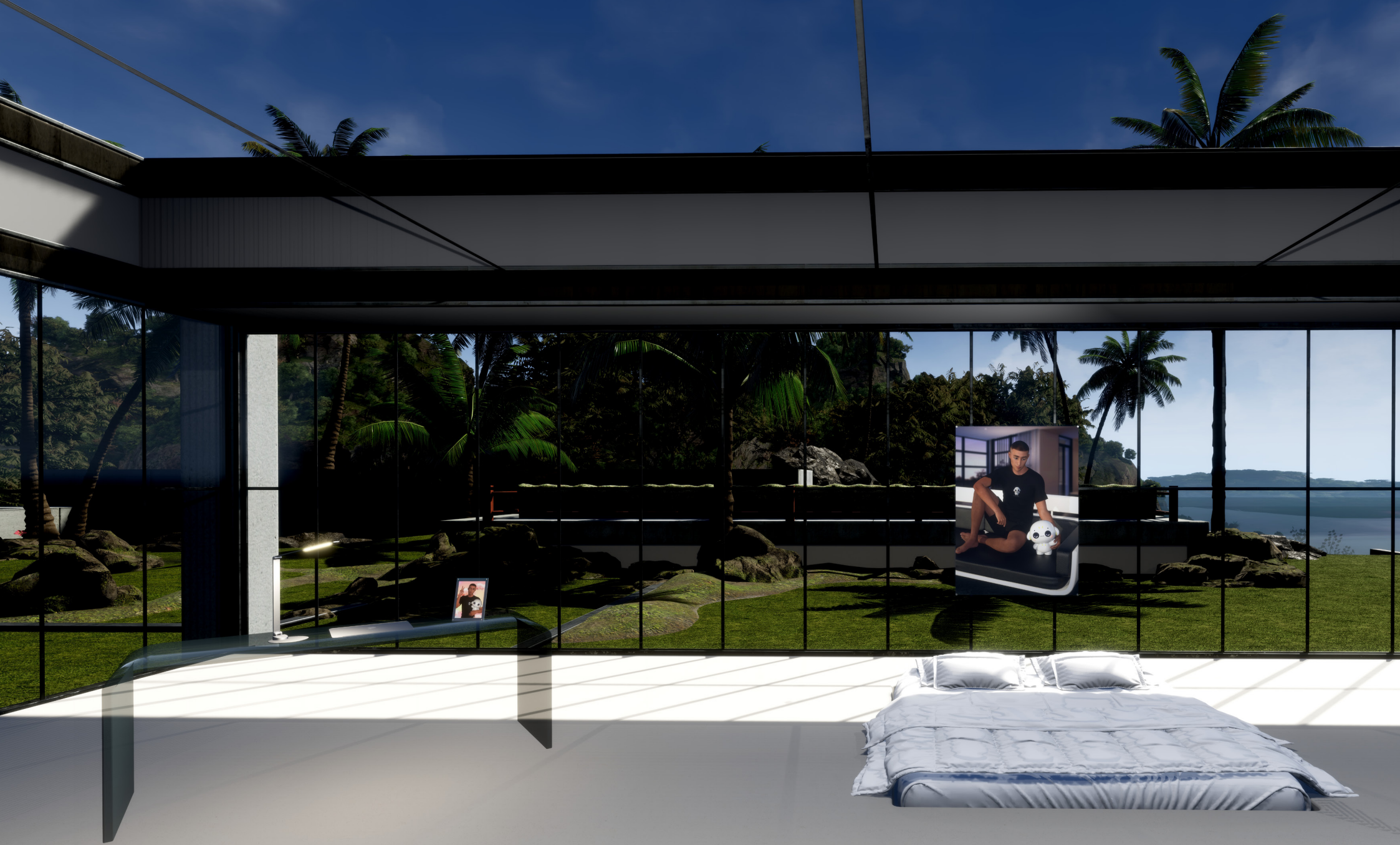


This page:
My Little Friend, 2021. Video still.



Left:
My Little Friend (Sleeping), 2021. GIF.
Exhibition view, Unit London

Top:
My Little Friend, 2021 (On the Phone). GIF



My Little Friend, 2021. Online VR Exhibition.



My Little Friend (Crying), 2021. GIF.



My Little Friend, 2021. Online VR Exhibition.

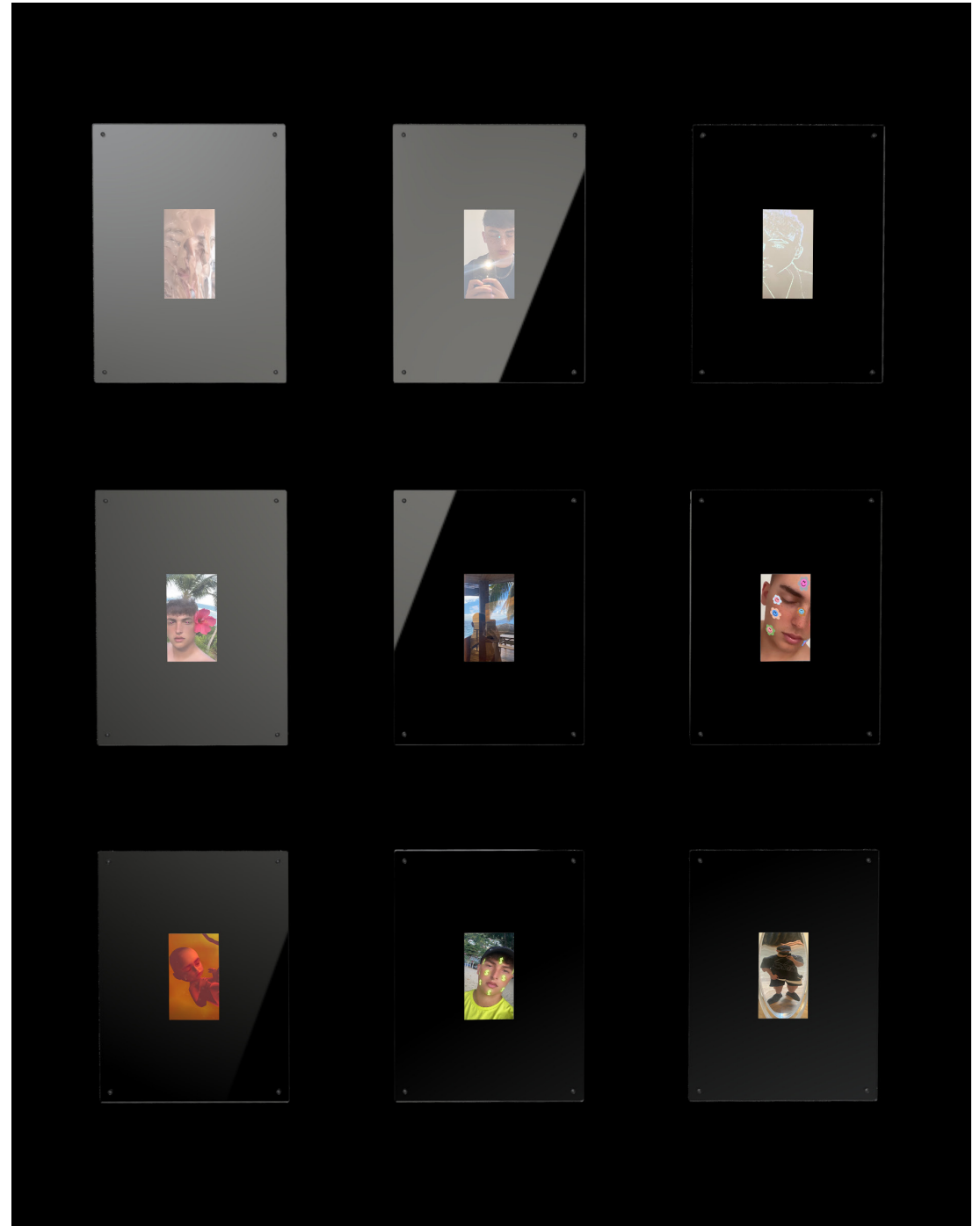
Unreleased Selfies, 2017-ongoing

«*Unreleased Selfies* is an ongoing series of selfies that were never published on my social networks, printed on 0,75mm polycarbonate sheets. 12,3 x 7 cm: the size of a 5,5" smartphone screen.

They are selfies that I originally took for my Instagram. I never published them because they were not good enough or because they were outtakes of other selfies. It is a kind of behind-the-scenes of my posts.

I like the fact that you can only properly see these pictures in the context of an exhibition, while they were initially made in order to be accessible anytime and anywhere online.»

Ben Elliot



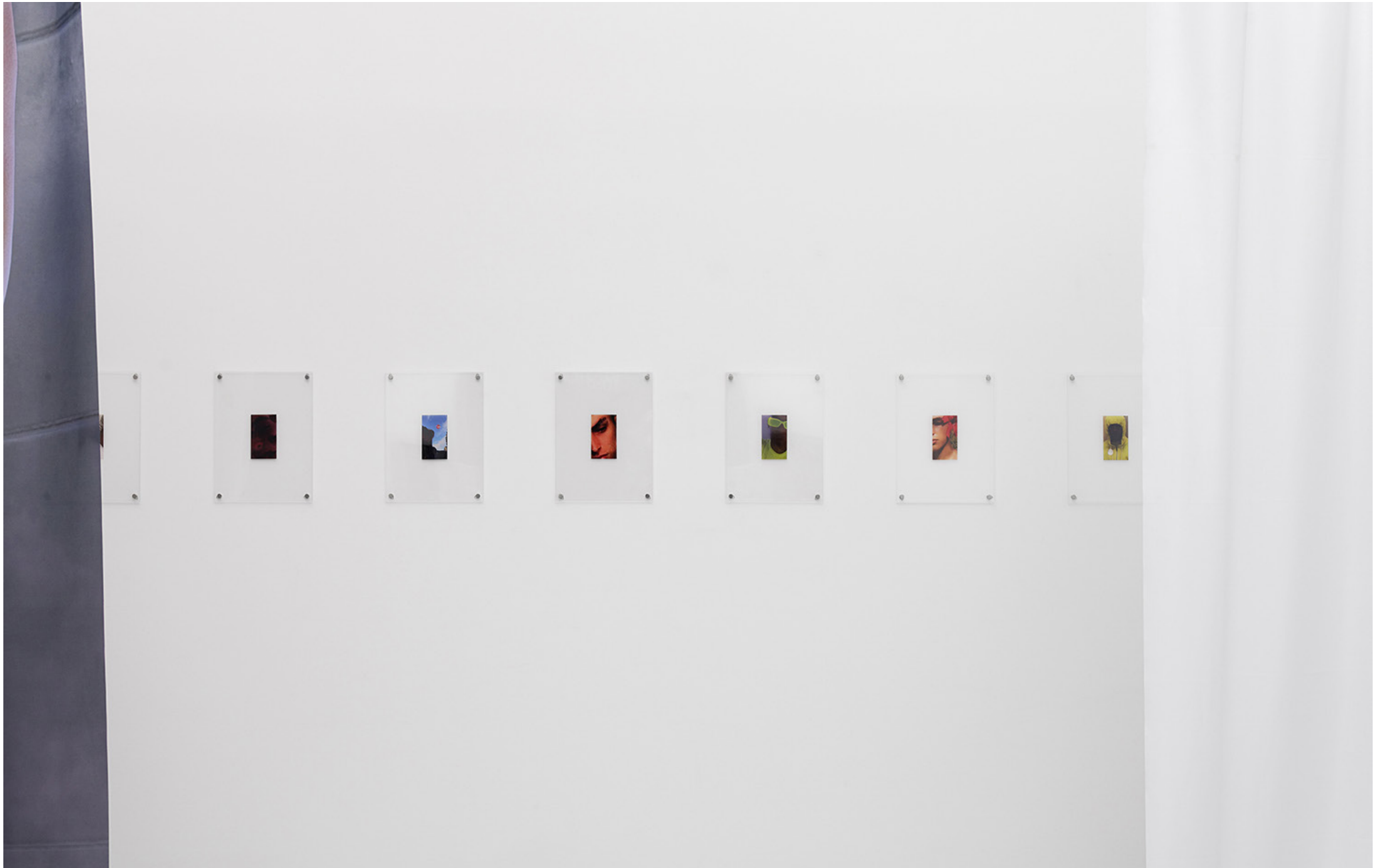


Unreleased Selfies, 2022. Exhibition view, Reiffers Art Initiatives, Paris, France.



«Ben Elliot has integrated the changing paradigms of the 21st century into his work. The truth of reality no longer opposes the fakeness of the virtual, the private sphere is no longer a protected domain. Ben Elliot uses his “improved” selfies to show all the possibilities of his body and his characters. Lots of artists use their body as a tool, staging the image of their body to make their art, the concretization of a possibility that was virtual. But with Ben it’s different, he virtualizes the possibilities of reality, dematerializing his bodies and our world. And this post-humanist artist fascinate us.»

Thibaut Wychowanok

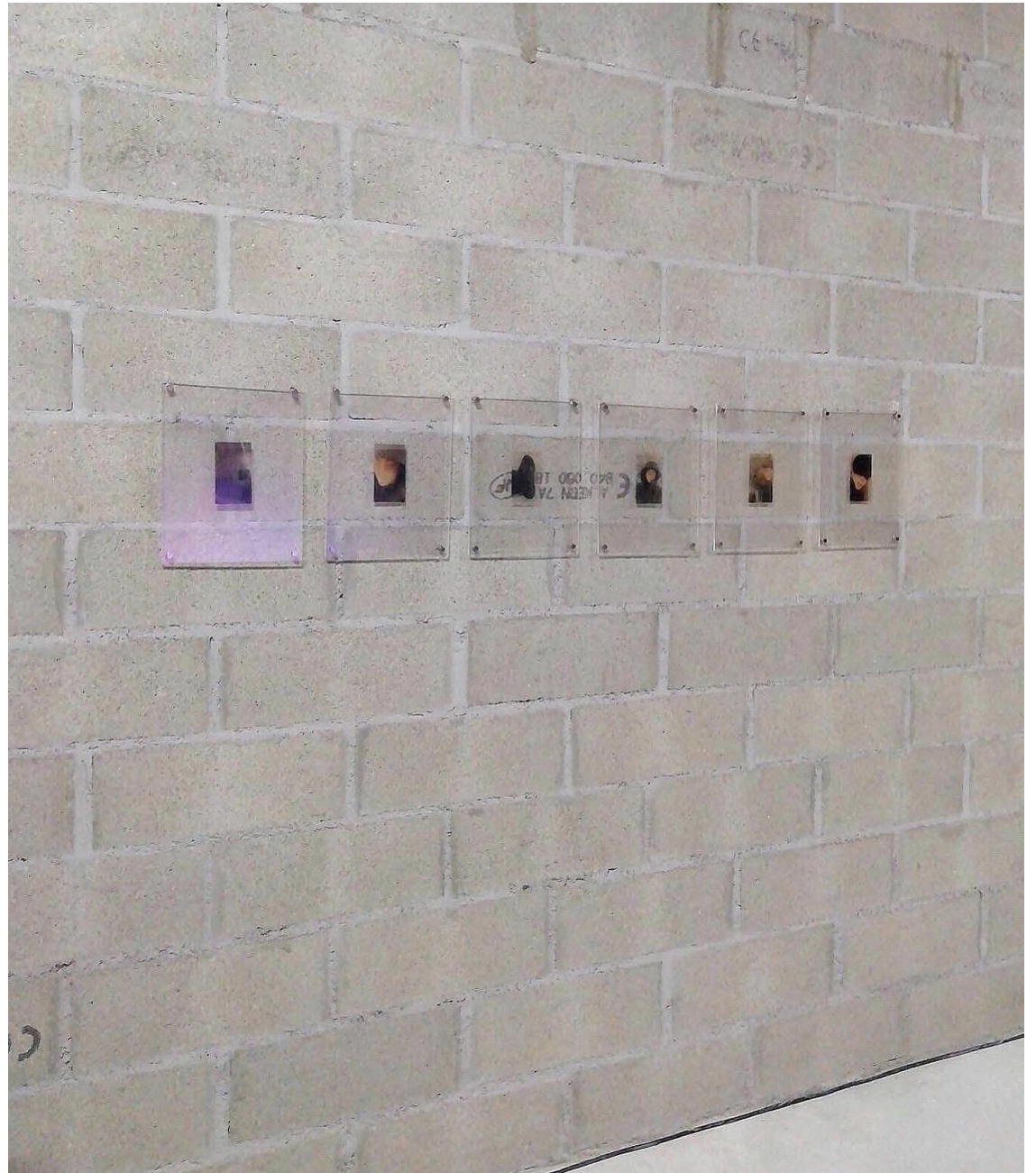


Exhibition view, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France.



«I think the selfie is no longer a phenomenon. The Ben Elliot ongoing series *Unreleased Selfies* is based on a mechanism of contradiction. The images demystify the private sphere and glorify virtual interfaces while making unprecedented use of it. Shown for the first time, these selfies were considered “not good enough” by the artist to be released to the public anywhere at anytime on Instagram. Here, they portray for a limited time a panel of moods uncorrelated from the moment of their occurrence and question the relationship to immediacy of social networks. They show that the virtual fuels its possibilities of reality with its modalities of presentation. When ? How ? The selfie is no longer a phenomenon, but a potential tool of expression and a slide from the individual narcissism to the social life environment.»

Elisa Rigoulet



Exhibition view, Fondation Fiminco, Romainville, France.



\$BENELLIOT, 2020-ongoing

\$BENELLIOT (*Ben Elliot Token*) is an art cryptocurrency.

Tokens will be available to be collected as digital money and as an artwork. Users will also be able to exchange *\$BENELLIOT* with other currencies or convert it into physical artworks. A new creative platform will be released in parallel and will broadcast a program of online exhibitions and exclusive contents.

\$BENELLIOT is an artwork that accepts itself as an investment. But it is a smart asset, and it contains the most forward-thinking concepts of our time.

This long term project aims to take part in the new socioeconomic conversations related to technology, decentralization, and capital through the lens of contemporary art.





	Bitcoin BTC	€9,521.26 +0.81%
	Ethereum ETH	€244.04 +11.35%
	XPR XPR	€0.28 +7.08%
	Bitcoin Cash BCH	€439.37 +2.57%
	Bitcoin SV BSV	€336.03 +1.32%
	Litecoin LTC	€75.79 +7.01%
	EOS EOS	€4.96 +2.00%
	Ben Elliot Token BET	Launching

Kunst kaufen per Krypto-Währung Smart vernetzt mit Ben Elliot

Ben Elliot nutzt und verbreitet formelle Strukturen, Ideen und Mechanismen unserer Zeit. So hinterfragt der französische Künstler die Systeme der (sozialen) Wertschöpfung. Mit uns spricht er über konzeptuelles Marketing, smarte Kommunikationsstrategien und sein neues Projekt, eine eigene Krypto-Währung.



The artist Ben Elliot is launching the first art cryptocurrency in 2021 named the Ben Elliot Token (BET)



1 BET – is buying art from Ben Elliot just a gamble?

No, it's an experience from both the art and business fields. This is the occasion to take part in rethinking reality and participate in new formats whether it be the creative ones or about information, data and digital challenges.

2 A market in currency only works if a certain amount of people take part – how big do you think the BET market will get?

I take my time with BET. I am aware that my actual market is restricted as a young artist but I like to work on other fields like social networks, tech and crypto, get new markets, grow my current audience. That's a project that I see evolving at least over a decade.



artist ben elliot introduces personal cryptocurrency for creative platforms and viewing rooms

'BET is a tangible asset that can be directly converted into artworks,' explains elliot, 'as the internet and social network rise, money, business, creativity & the ways one manages them are shifting, creatives & influencers monetizing their personal content & data have now become more valuable than some traditional industries.'



THE COINTELEGRAPH

French Artist Launches Personal Crypto Tied to Value of His Career and Output

Paris-based artist Ben Elliot is launching what he claims to be the first ever personal crypto backed by the market value of his artworks.



Art + Crypto Tale Takes New Twist as Artist Tokenizes His Output



Artists are increasingly turning to crypto-powered solutions to fundraising – and a future whereby both artists and their output are tokenized may not be far off.

In a glimpse of what might be ahead – and a brand-new development in blockchain-powered art – Paris-based artist Ben Elliot has announced that he is launching what he says will be the world's first-ever personal crypto token to be tied to the market value of his creations.

Artist Launches Personal Crypto Tied to Value of His Career and Output



About Personal Tokens

Cryptonews.com

May 2020

Over the past few months, personal tokens have become more visible. While still remaining a fairly niche sector within crypto, some people are using personal tokens to effectively borrow against their own future.

And despite remaining a fairly controversial part of the crypto ecosystem, figures within the industry believe that personal tokens may actually have a longer term future. If they're right, in the future, everyone from freelancers to entrepreneurs could end up using personal tokens as a way to gain funding for themselves.

As explained to Cryptonews.com by DeFi Rate's Cooper Turley, personal tokens are essentially an attempt to monetize an individual's reputation and professional viability.

"They are a way to borrow against your future by exchanging value today for work to be done tomorrow. Personal tokens are highly trust-based and a way for issuers to interact with a wider audience."

Turley adds that personal tokens are claims on a given individual's specialized skills, something which was highlighted quite visibly in April, when Paris-based artist Ben Elliot announced that he was launching his own personal token. Basically, the token would grant him funding in the present, while also granting token holders the right to a share in the future value of his artworks.

Entrepreneur Alex Masmaj provided another prominent example of a personal token in April, when he launched an ALEX token that would fund a soon-to-be-launched startup.

"I believe that they are most effective for high growth individuals raising small amounts of capital (5 figures or less) largely due to the experimental nature

backed by the personality types who can excite people by 'sharing in their future upside.'"

Put simply, Turley likes to view personal token offerings as Kickstarters geared at very small capital contributions. In other words, they're likely to be at least as successful as crowdfunding.

"I believe there is (and always will be) strong demand for investing in a private individual, especially if they have a proven track record of success and a strong reputation," he adds. "If nothing else, the curiosity of exploring what these types of vehicles look like is enough to entice those looking for something new to dive into."

Of course, while there may be genuine – if limited – demand for personal investment in a tokenized form, aren't there dangers?

"The biggest issue(s) would arise from the issuer failing to honor a personal token redemption for its suggested use-cases (time, advice, insights, etc.)," says Cooper Turley. "However, this would drastically tarnish their reputation and standing, in which case I find it highly unlikely that any issuer would sacrifice their future career potential for the amounts of capital that are being raised today."

Perfect365, 2020

Perfect365 is a series of works thought as the extension of its previous project *Meitu MakeupPlus* (2018).

Perfect365 is the result of a brand collaboration with the eponymous smartphone application developed in the Silicon Valley. Targeting millennials and Gen Zers, the app uses an advanced facial recognition and augmented reality technology to enable users to virtually create and try on makeup looks.

As a continuation of Ben Elliot's research on brand collaborations as a starting point of his artistic process, the works operate as smart advertising, creating quality space for brand content.

The canvas depict each of the standardized skin tones developed by Perfect365 to simulate the most-used shades of their users. The app's icons' color codes are reproduced and enlarged to take the shape of paintings. They are examples of the interpretation of skin tones in a mass market digital context.





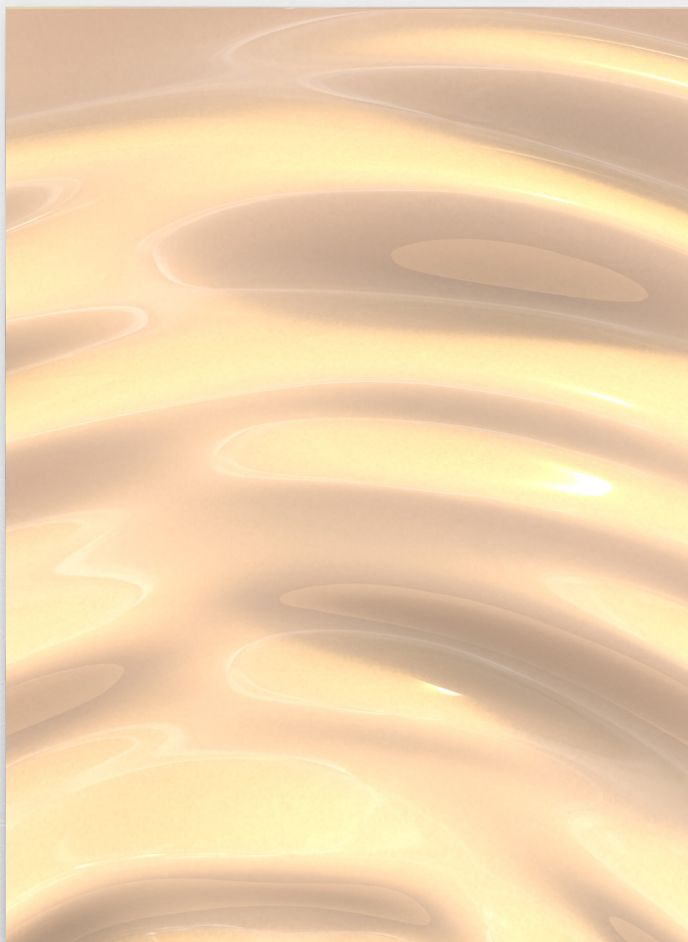




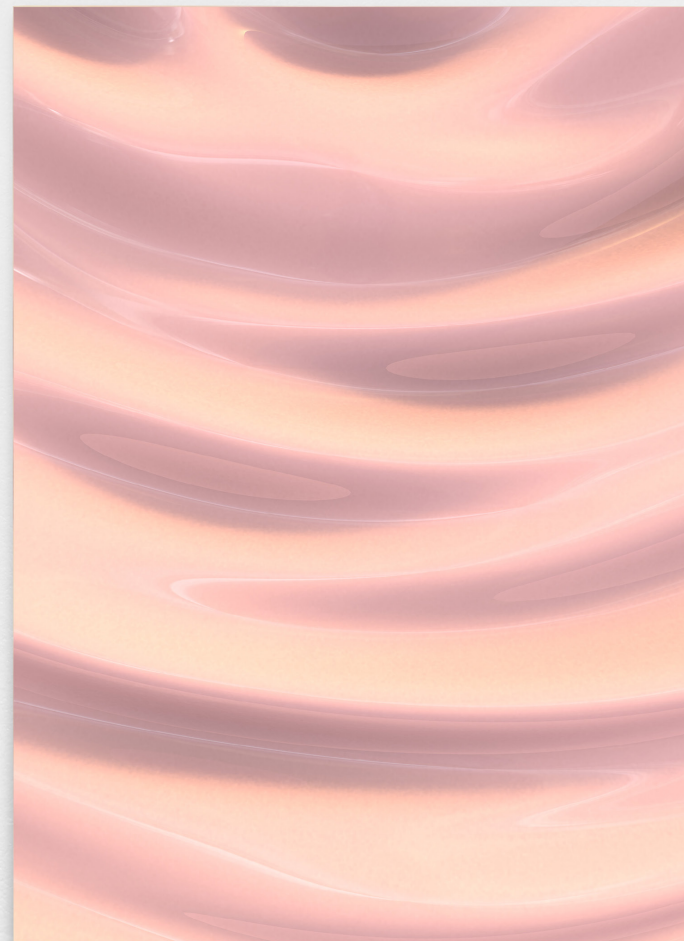
Mechanics of Skin, 2020. Exhibition view, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France.



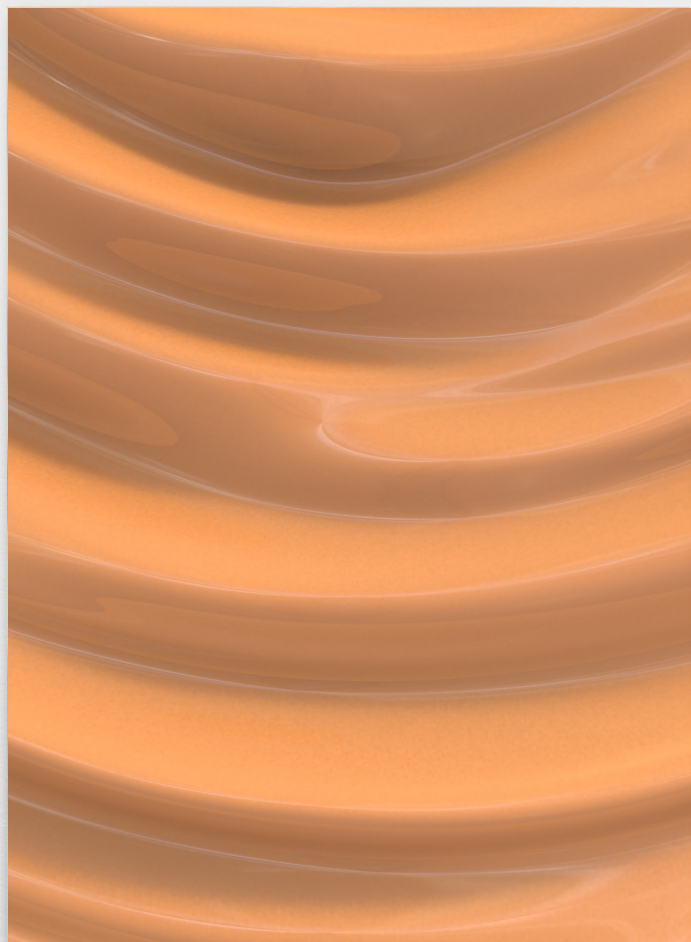
Perfect365 N°17 & Perfect365 N°18, 2020. Exhibition view, König Galerie, Decentraland.



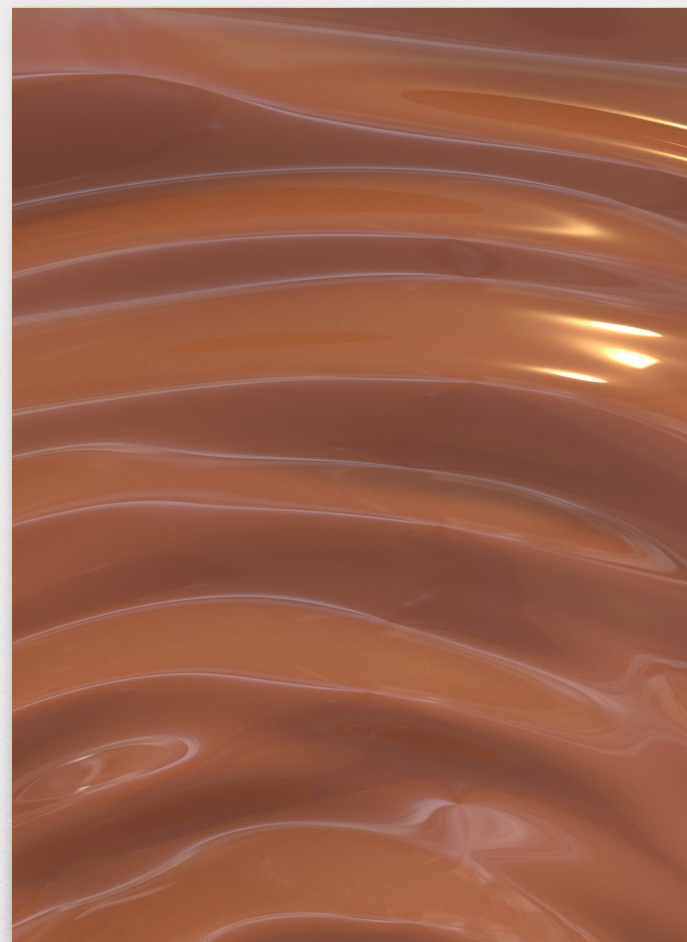
Perfect365 N°1, 2020. 116 x 84 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.



Perfect365 N°4, 2020. 116 x 84 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.



Perfect365 N°16, 2020. 116 x 84 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.



Perfect365 N°21, 2020. 116 x 84 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.

Influencers, 2019

At the crossroads of a solo and group exhibition, *Influencers* is a project that took place at Galerie Hussenot in March 2019. It integrated Ben Elliot's works, as well as collaborations and artworks by @world_record_egg, Backpack Kid, Hannah Diamond, Constant Dullaart, Ed Fornieles, Johanna Jaskowska, Nike, QT, Red Bull, Winter Vandenbrink.

The Internet, cell phones, and social media networking, branding, and influencing are the creative and entrepreneurial tools and, at times, artworks themselves of the current generation. In the virtual realm, the individual possesses the agency and ability to construct a digital self or identity as real or as imagined as they wish. Ben Elliot debuts 5 new "Unreleased Selfies" from his archive. These images while curated and posed did not reflect his brand, the persona he carefully presents, shares, and sells online. While intended for digital viewing, they can be seen only here in real life. *Influencers* examines the current culture of self-branding and influencer marketing – how we construct ourselves, communicate online, build brands in our image and market ourselves – across a variety of disciplines – visual art, design, filmmaking, music – to suggest an interconnected and intermixed contemporary culture joining together people, brands, and fresh ideas.

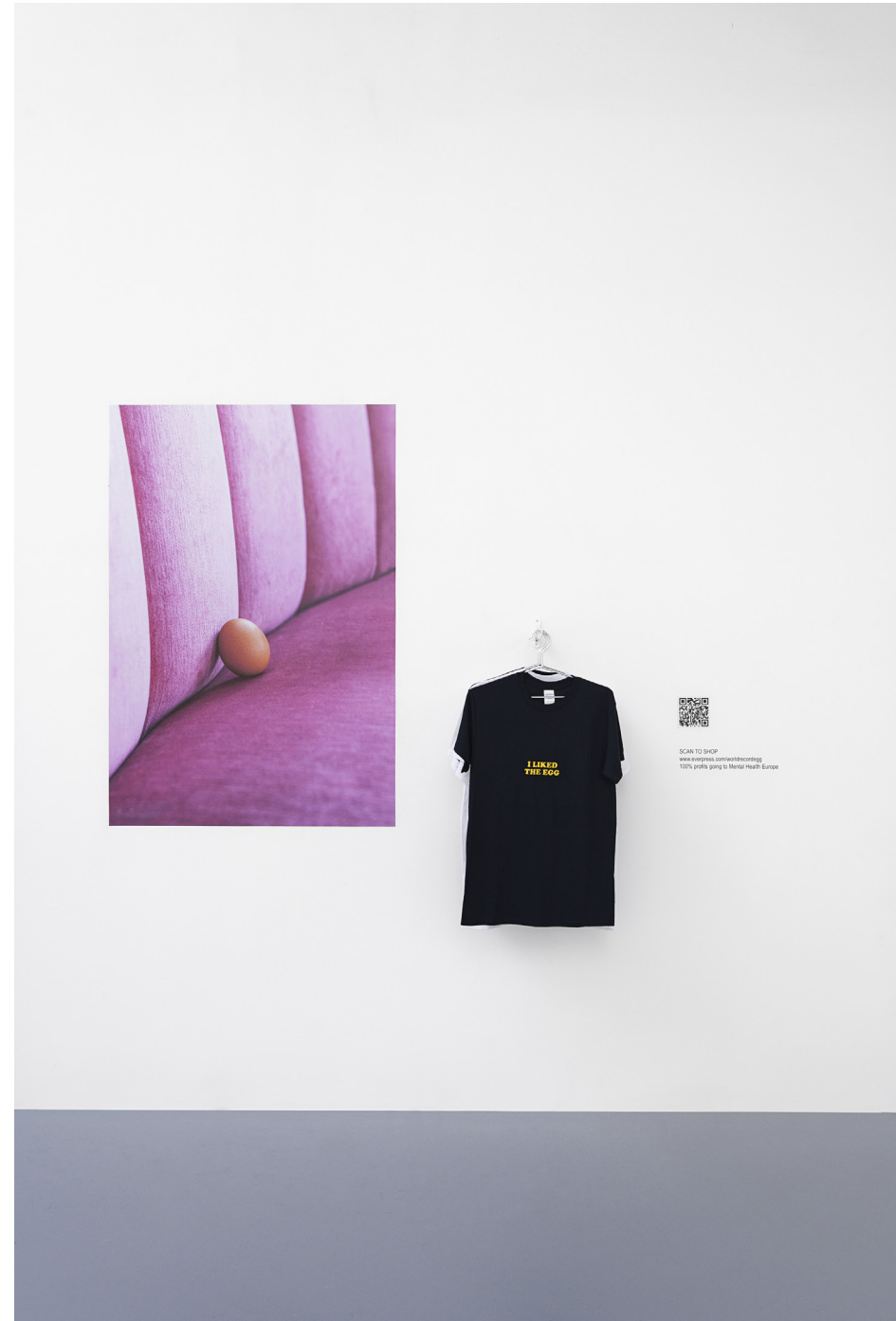
What's real versus imitation, what's art versus life seems far less relevant to current youth culture than the individual's autonomy in creating their brand in relationship to life, society, economics, and an audience. PC music, the domain of artists QT and Hannah Diamond, relies upon self-presentation or self-construction in relationship to product, capital, and influencer marketing. QT's Hey QT Energy Drink, for example, embodies the artist's personality and musical style in its effervescent bubblyness and yet sells much like her enterprising nature.



The audience is commodity, as artist Constant Dullaart proves in his work *High Retention, Slow Delivery*. Dullaart created, sold, and distributed 2.5 million Instagram accounts or followers to active Instagram accounts desiring an army of likes perhaps for self-validation or marketing advantage. Regardless of reason, the quantifiable social capital of attention is characteristic of contemporary influencer culture. How much of this is narcissism, a need for popularity, or a desire to feel celebrity? Johanna Jaskowska's filters alter the face much like the creative form of the mask but also reveal our desire to alter. In navigating *Influencers*, the viewer may question how the economic power of quantified audiences in social media and influencer marketing culture affects independent expression and creativity.

The realm of conceptual art, social media, branding, and partnerships is not exempt from social critique and satire. The exhibition, in fact, encourages us to reflect and reconsider the perhaps superficial nature of how we present ourselves and communicate with others. Ben Elliot ultimately proposes a limitless and collaborative idea of contemporary culture much like the networks the exhibiting artists and influencers utilize and analyze. A linear model of culture differentiating creative disciplines is the past. In this new sociocultural structure lies the potential for a new kind of creative and entrepreneur.

Emily Chancey





Influencers, 2019. Exhibition view, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France.



Influencers, 2019. Exhibition view, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France.



Influencers, 2019. Exhibition view, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France.

Ben Elliot uses slatwall pannels - a shopfitting material configured to receive merchandising accessories - to create smart advertising areas for brands the artist has collaborated with. Elliot's Boards feature 3D images that look like campaigns, while the actual product is presented next to it. It is an example of how physical objects are advertised through digital imagery.

The brands displayed here relate to contemporary industries such as tech, smart food, sportswear and entertainment. For Elliot, exhibiting a company like Nike is a way to exhibit the concepts and values that go with it: innovation, courage, surpassing of oneself, etc.



Board (Nike), 2019. 120 x 120 x 17 cm. Digital print on slatwall panel.

Interview

Monopol Magazin

April 2019

Anika Meier: Is it crucial in the digital age to first build a brand as an artist?

Ben Elliot: It always has been. Making a name, defining a style, turning it into a gimmick, make it evolve... It is now even more relevant as we are more and more surrounded with marketing, social networks, etc. It is not a new process and people are reluctant to openly apply it to art, while it has been the case for most of the major artists of the last few centuries. Branding is essential to build something solid. I personally integrate it in my process, understanding myself as a creative brand who sells products, concepts and ideas.

Anika Meier: You do not make it clear on Instagram that you are an artist and your account is part of your work. You act like a male influencer, you even hung out with the CGI model Lil Wavi in Paris. Would you call yourself an artist?

Ben Elliot: I act like it is common to act on social medias. I am showing my best condensed personality and interests. But I do not waste my time wondering to which category I belong to. I don't try to self-label myself and match a genre. Everything is fluid today, my main occupation is artist and I develop other activities at the same time. I like the term of creative business for example. It corresponds more to the current energy; you can develop your capacities without wondering if you have the right to do it or not. I like the art world, but I also like to reach people outside this configuration. It is the foundation of all my projects. Last year I did an artwork as part of a group show, Ben Elliot Shop - Energized by Red Bull, an ephemeral pop up store featuring 50 brands from entertainment, food, tech, clothing, highlighting ideas like new lifestyles and technologies, artificial intelligence, etc. It was at the same time an art installation and a way for myself to work on new partnerships and collaborations with people and brands I like to connect and work with.

Anika Meier: The Ben Elliot Shop was followed by a group exhibition curated by you under the title «Influencers» at Galerie Hussenot in Paris. Some of the brands represented in the shop, such as Nike and Red Bull, were there again.

Ben Elliot: I like to build long-term relationships with brands and people which best represent my ideas and objectives.

Behind Nike and Red Bull, there is a mix of marketing and technology, a balance between these two notions that characterize our era so well.

In an energy drink, there are ideas that relate to physical and mental augmented capacities. With Nike, ideas of performance, transcendence, techwear, sportswear. These concepts

represent the century we live in and its challenges: being always more performative, augmented, better, stronger. They are the hopes and goals of the 21st century, with science and technology leading to artificial intelligence.

Anika Meier: Why do you think that brands want to work with you?

Ben Elliot: Brands like to work with the young generations, it's part of how society and business work now. They are looking for perpetual renewal, and fresh contents to serve their brands. That's how and why influencers were born.

As far as I am concerned, it is a mutual exchange, they use me to creatively advertise their goods, and I use them to advertise my ideas and work. I do product placements, collaborations, get sometimes paid. It creates a new dynamic whether it is economic or creative.

Anika Meier: An example of this is your cooperation with MakeupPlus, an app from a Chinese tech company, for a solo exhibition. They worked with the most popular facial tones in the app, the CGI model @perl.www was the face of the project. What was your project about and why was a CGI model involved?

Ben Elliot: Meitu Inc. is an Asian group that holds several mobile photo and selfie editing applications. They work with different technologies such as facial recognition, augmented reality and artificial intelligence to develop various face editing features and filters. With their MakeupPlus application, they tried to propose a synthesis of twelve most common skin shades. I took these twelve tones, and enlarged them to make a series of paintings. I also collaborated on pictures with the CGI influencer @perl.www who intervenes as the face of the project. She is CGI with a skin mark and got 2 different skin tones, it was interesting in the context of the project.

Anika Meier: What criteria did you use to select the contributors to your show «Influencers»? In addition to the artists Constant Dullaart and Ed Fornieles were, for example, the World Record Egg and Johanna Jaskowska there, which became internationally known under the pseudonym @johwska for her AR filters such as Beauty3000.

Ben Elliot: I wanted to make a group show about influencers and influence marketing. A 2019 exhibition that includes artists, creatives, public figures, brands, youtube & music playlists, and more. Something that depict our new sociocultural structures. One criteria was to represent the most possible sides of the topic in order for the audience to discover different

aspects of influencers other than the blogger image that most of people have of it. Another criteria was to choose works and people that have an impact in their own field, whether it is in choreography with The Backpack Kid, in music with PC Music or QT, in photography with Hannah Diamond or Winter Vandenbrink, in branding with Nike and Red Bull.

I wanted to highlight new genres too, such as augmented reality filters with Johanna Jaskowska, who brought this new cyborg aesthetic trend into the mainstream. I also wanted to feature non-human influencers like @world_record_egg, who is the most liked post ever on all kind of platforms. The World Record Egg broke the internet and brought a new dynamic to the online influencing game with a positive message about the pressure of perfect self-staging.

Tinder, 2019

Ben Elliot created his 3D avatar using a cutting edge technology scanning every detail of his body and face. The artist premiered this work with an influencer campaign for Tinder, echoing the app's previous ads #singlenotsorry.

Using the strategies of digital collaborations generally performed on social media and by influence marketing, the project highlights the application, its narrative and its values through the persona of the artist and his experience.

Through his avatar, Elliot is freed from the norms of the physical world. The artist brings to light the emancipation and infinite possibilities offered by digital and virtual universes to meet new people, explore and multiply their identity, search oneself and the others.



#freetoexplore #swipelife, 2019. Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France.

Meitu MakeupPlus, 2018

The Make Up Series / *Meitu MakeupPlus* was first introduced with a solo exhibition at the project space Exo Exo in Paris, October 2018.

This series of works were made in collaboration with MakeupPlus, a smartphone application developed by Chinese technology company Meitu Inc.

The Make Up Series was continued in 2020 with *Perfect365*.



Meitu MakeupPlus, 2018. Exhibition view, EXO EXO, Paris, France.



Meitu MakeupPlus, 2018. Exhibition view, EXO EXO, Paris, France.



Meitu MakeupPlus, 2018. Exhibition view, EXO EXO, Paris, France.

Meitu MakeupPlus, 2018. Exhibition view, EXO EXO, Paris, France.



Essay

Indira Béraud

When I discovered Ben Elliot on Instagram, during a brief instant, I could not figure out whether he was real or not. I thought he was another of those robots influencers, which have more followers than celebrities. But no, despite his aseptic look of sponsored avatars, Ben Elliot is a real young artist. Thus, it is no coincidence that his work explores the porosity among social networks, branding and influencing, technology and collaborations — all interests that highlight issues related to online identities, notions of authenticity and privacy, as well as the equivocal relationship between art and current capitalism.

If this exhibition follows the path of his precedent works preoccupation, it is also a return to a more conventional form of art: frame and canvas. Here, everything happens on the surface: the monochromatic, glossy color is a printed foundation shade offered by MakeupPlus. This mobile application gives the means to embellish oneself with digital make-up before one shares photographs on social media. The then-standardized skin appears smoother and homogenous, devoid of imperfection. Hence, more than it shows, the edited image hides things. In this widespread practice of “self-design” resides a desire of recognition, a will of being liked by society. According to Boris Groys, who theorized the notion of “self-design”, this staging turns the contemporary subject into an object — an object whose eroticism is activated by the gaze of others. Surface substitutes substance, appearances take over depth. Analogously, only outer layers matter in Ben Elliot’s pieces, with which spectators are invited to engage in deep contemplation.

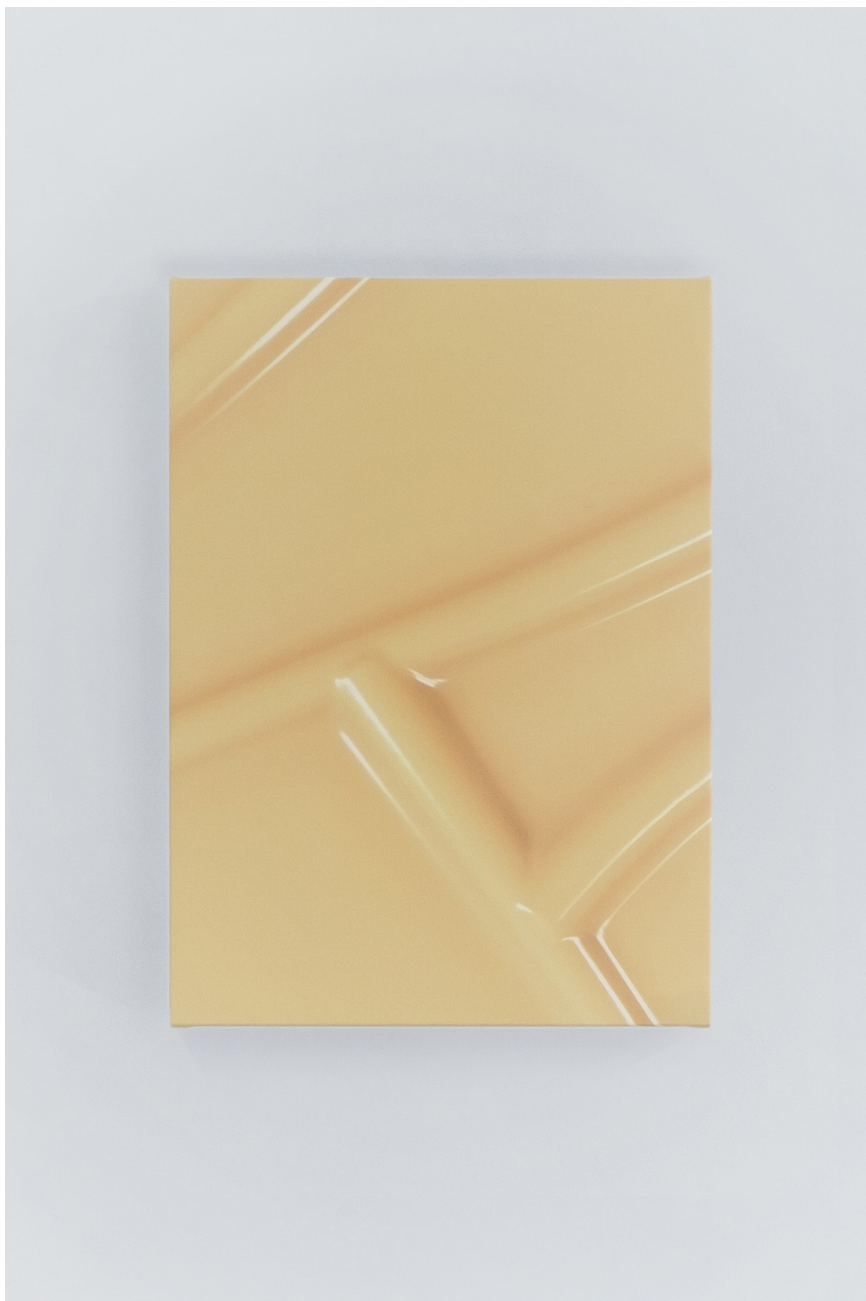
Far from subversion or cynicism, Ben Elliot embraces the language of our time. In the manner of Fabrice Hyber, who created a cube of lipstick in collaboration with Yves Saint Laurent, the artist finds new ways of producing art by collaborating with brands like Meitu Inc. Except that here, there is no volume, the material is flattened and loses its consistency. The ready-made brush traces do not testify the artist’s gesture but rather a will to replicate a motion effect. As it is often the case with digitalization, the body’s movement has disappeared from the process. The paint is dematerialized into a color code, just as the body image is incrementally fixed into the virtual. Where the skin once only concerned the living body, a porous membrane which delineates the inner self from the world, a boundary between I and others, it now becomes a slick reflection. The process of reshaping our personality on extrinsic media paves the way of what we could call “post-humanism conditions”. Indeed, the set of data gathered online constitutes our memory, a virtual self that might absorb our own existence, and survive us after death.



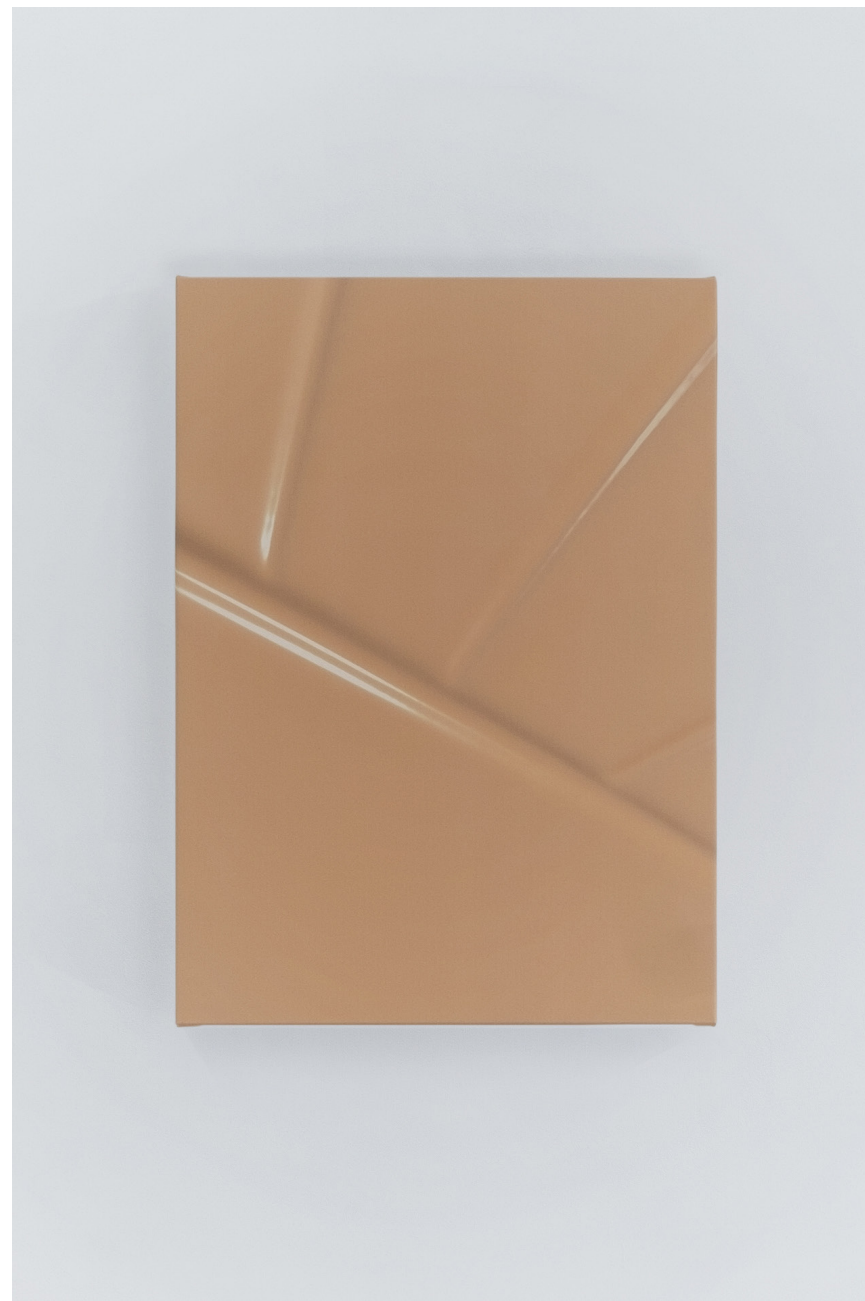
Meitu MakeupPlus (Beige), 2018. 58 x 42 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.



Meitu MakeupPlus (Bronze), 2018. 58 x 42 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.



Meitu MakeupPlus (Sand), 2018. 58 x 42 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.



Meitu MakeupPlus (Tan), 2018. 58 x 42 cm. Pigment inkjet on canvas.

Ben Elliot Shop, 2018

Ben Elliot Shop is an installation that takes the shape of a concept store bringing together 45 brands and entities from the clothing, tech, food and entertainment industries, in an attempt to represent lifestyles that tend towards human enhancement and artificial intelligence.

Ben Elliot proceeds by aggregation of objects and uses their own characteristics to disseminate a general idea or concept, often polysemous, that can therefore be understood both by the art world and by wider audiences.

The project also integrates the communication and the interactions with the people and companies included in the project, their own audiences and networks, generating many content deriving from the installation.

Ben Elliot Shop was conceived during a residency at the leading communication agency BETC, where Elliot worked with many marketing services to develop a formal and conceptual balance between the communication stakes of the brands and of the artwork itself. The process of creation is thus thought in terms of collaborations, and its economic system is not limited to the patrons-collectors-galleries but also integrates other players such as advertisers, who benefit from smart advertising. By exhibiting objects in a cultural institution where they can be called artworks, Ben Elliot Shop could be considered as a simple entanglement of ready-mades. But the life cycle of the objects does not stop there. They remain buyable: they are reinjected into the consumer society and return to their original status of products.



If only one work was to summarize the spirit of the group show «Par amour du jeu 1998-2018», consider that Ben Elliot's would make sense. Created by the visual artist of 23 years old, it takes the form of an installation whose, at first glance, does not appear as obvious art: it is a real-fake concept store in which sporting goods, energy drinks, iPhone shells, etc. are exhibited. Ben Elliot does not bother with circumlocution to clarify his approach: «Recently, most of my projects were based on a brand or a product [...]. The goal here was to spread my ideas and trigger a sponsored project from all sides, which concludes with a network of objects, ideas and data shared through the exhibition, but also through all brands and people involved, objects and computer networks.». «Nike, Under Armour, Fila, Red Bull, etc., Ben Elliot has been talking to all of these brands alone and obtained positive answers from people not always easy to reach», says Eugénie Lefebvre, director of the art foundation.

Libération Newspaper, June 15th 2018

Ben Elliot Shop was presented on the occasion of the group exhibition *Par amour du jeu 1998-2018*, at Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France.

Energized by Red Bull

Featured brands:

1MORE, American Apparel, Anker, Aqua Quest, Arc'teryx, Avalon, BBryance, Champion, Click & Grow, Cobra Labs, C.P. Company, Fila, Fnatic, GORE-TEX, Gosha Rubchinskiy, Infinite, ISAORA, Liam Terror, Lil Wavi, LuMee, master-piece, Microsoft, MIT CSAIL, MIZUNO, MusclePharm, NeuroGum, Nike, OpTic Gaming, Red Bull, Red Star, SALOMON, Sennheiser, Shukyu, Soylent, Splyce, Sponser, Studio Hagel, The North Face, Tonsser, Uhlsport, Under Armour, Waviboy, Wearable X, Winter Vandenbrink, Xbox.



Ben Elliot Shop, 2018. Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Paris, France.



Ben Elliot Shop, 2018. Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Paris, France.



Ben Elliot Shop, 2018. Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Paris, France. (Anker, Red Bull, BBryance, Lil Wavi)



Ben Elliot Shop, 2018. Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Paris, France. (Red Bull, C.P Company, Salomon, The North Face, Arc'teryx, Champion, GORE-TEX, Under Armour, Anker, Fila, Wearable X)



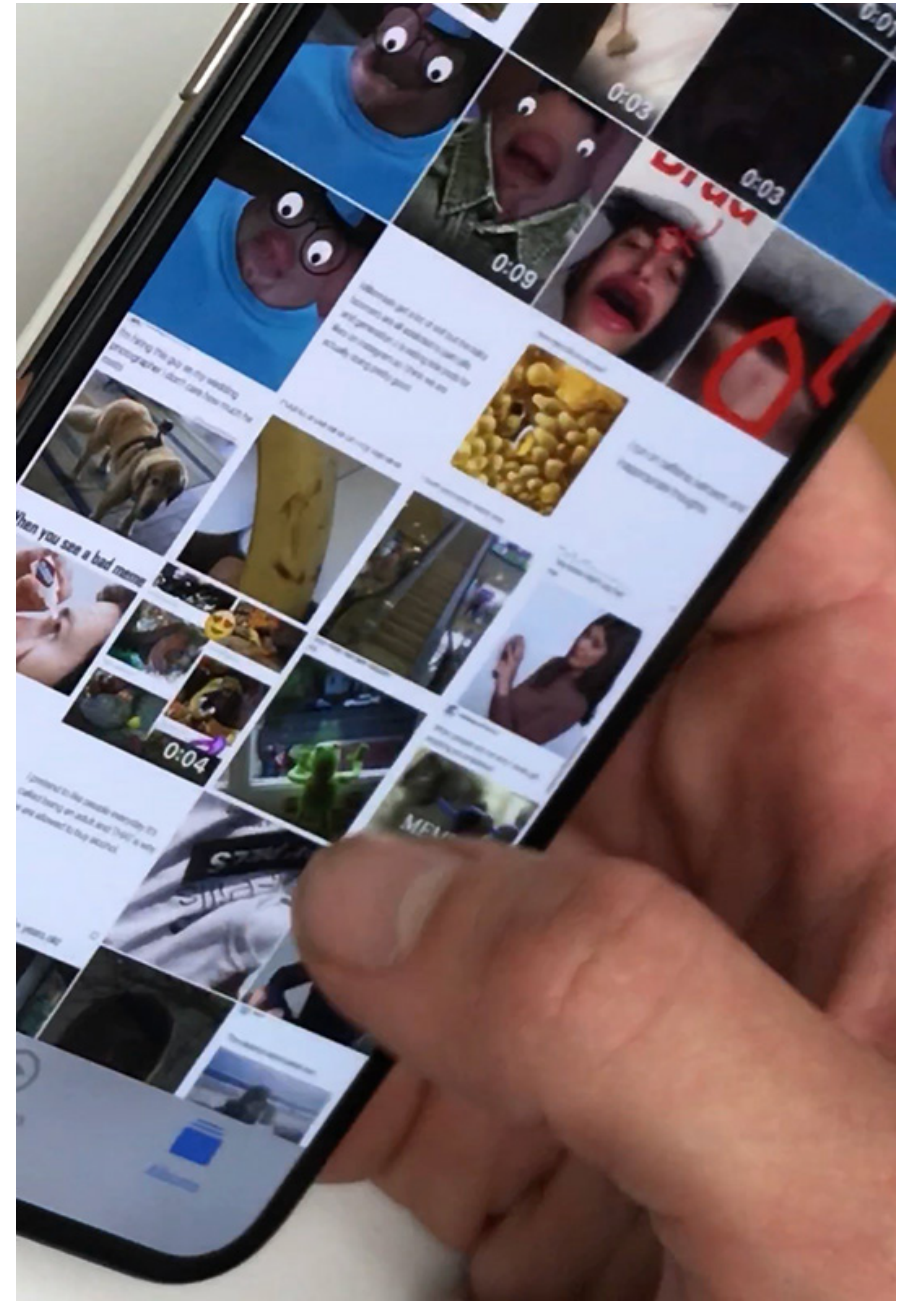
Ben Elliot Shop, 2018. Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Paris, France. (Red Bull, Uhl Sport, Studio Hagel, Avalon, Nike, Fnatic, Red Star, OpTic Gaming)

Camera Roll, 2018

Exhibiting his full iPhone Camera Roll (selfies, pictures, videos, screenshots, etc), Ben Elliot uses contents from his privacy to emphasize current and emerging ideas such as self-branding, social medias, marketing, collaboration, networking, human enhancements, computer networks – foreshadowing artificial intelligence. Displayed on an interactive stand evoking the visual codes of event design and marketing, the iPhone becomes an artwork while remaining useful as a product itself, opening the project to other formats than art.

Camera Roll can be considered as the making off of the thinking, life and projects of the artist, before these contents result in a clear and simplified «personal brand» that can easily be consumed on both his social networks and works. Elliot here uses the strategies of influencer marketing capitalizing on the private life of its opinion leaders to grow businesses.





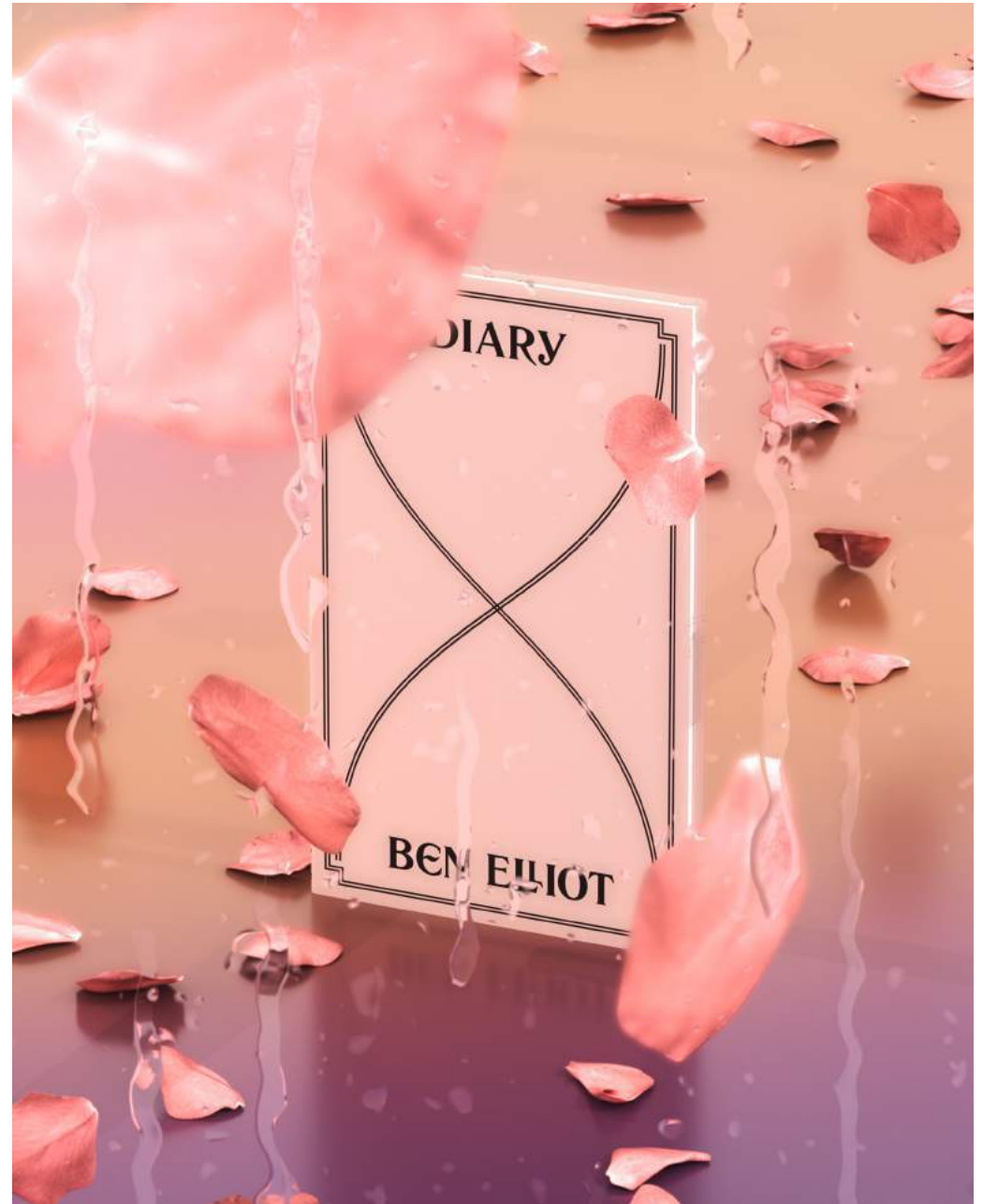
Camera Roll, 2018. Exhibition view, Jeune Création, Musée des Beaux Arts, Paris, France.

Diary, 2017

Diary is a one-year status compilation from Ben Elliot's instagrams. Gathering topics such as emotions, feelings, tastes and self-achievements, the book is highlighting timeless human concerns and questioning the meaning of being an emerging creative. Evolving in the context of social media's full public access to information, it is however an intimate work — intrinsic to the tradition of diarists. Elliot organized spontaneous writings into a narrative work, using the textual elements from a platform predestinated to pictorial content.

The release of *Diary* is accompanied by the launch of an ongoing series of unreleased instagram selfies printed on 0.75mm polycarbonate sheets. 12.3 x 7 cm: the size of a 5,5" smartphone screen.

Publisher: Doppell Edition
Graphic Design: Lucas Liccini
Visuals: Nicolas Stefano Pedde Lay
& Pierre-Ange Aznar



6 days

i am wondering what i want to do
today since like 4 hours on my
bed n i really want to do nothing.
I would love to take a ticket to
tokyo n just walk in the city n lick
fuji but i have no money i would
love to take a ticket to leave earth
but looks impossible i am really
stuck here for all my life i think
umm so i can diary myself

but i just had a revelation

i will seize some good feelings
n sensations n then i will die. rn
iam listening something i never
heard yet n love it so much i feel
in love with here i want to keep
here music just for me. i love
being extremely sensitive too rn
on my bed feeling the music into
my body her japanese voice :o

5 days

iam living in a polish drama
movie all grey n some black for
emotions n red for blood with
empty looks in a insane decor
lmao

4 days

1.2.16 is a lovely n smelly day
even if my body is tired i can
smell some sweetness

2 days

ewwwwww

1 day

not the one uploading

iam thinking about life like
everyday it s actually my main
daily activity with exploring it. ...

DIARY

BEN ELLIOT

Then it doesnt exist

*The cutest book ever :) buy it
before i burn it*

Now playing porte de mesrine

Everything is possible today :))

*I like to remind too that we are
Just a big (or small, as u like)
mass which is Just a perpetual
flux of infos which at the end just
create energy without any goals
and like all the stuff around*

31 July

JPP

Drinking skin

Drinking my skin

Listening your body needs like

2 August

#now

5 August

#nohuman

Unlimited

7 August

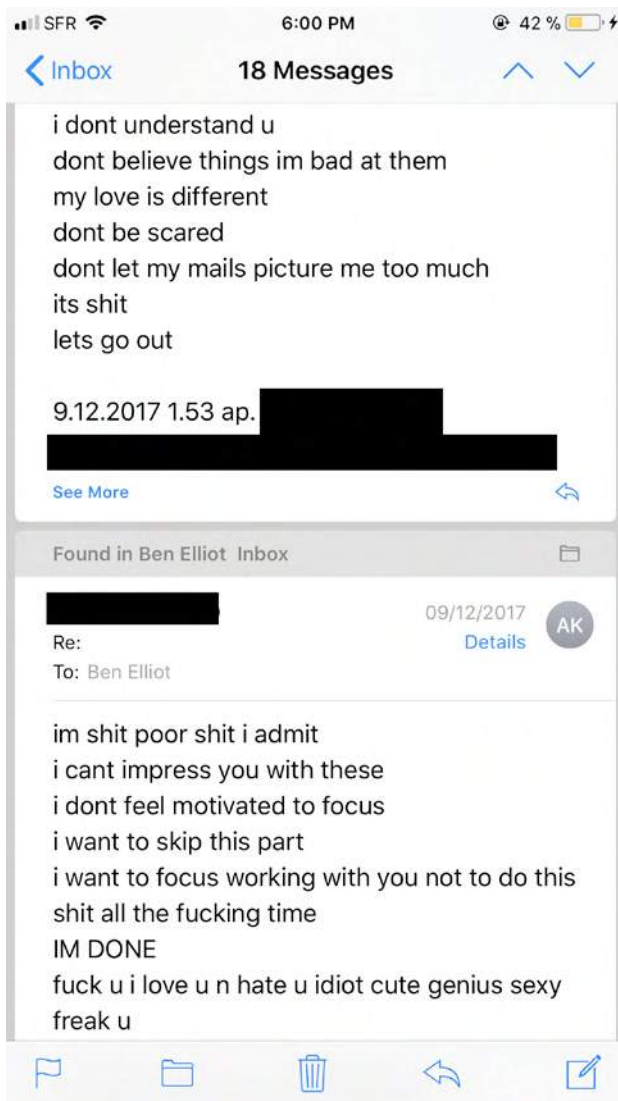
*Today I was full of hate for
humanity and life as two
separated levels. First one for
being so narrow with life
and second one for being itself.
I am exhausted*

*Also I accept the fact that the
way to succeed (internal and
external success) is very long
and the arrival point is death so
I am planning a perfect business
plan in two majors parts but ...*

The Stalker, 2017-ongoing

The Stalker started an archive file composed of screenshots, and various contents, available on a limited micro SD and through a download link. It retraces the daily harassment towards Ben Elliot from one anonymous followers via all kind of platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, emails, phone messages, phone calls, videos, voice messages and pictures. Started as a basic Instagram conversation on December 24th 2016 (the two never met IRL, nor Elliot answered any message after the first conversations), *The Stalker* questions the egocentric fantasies that can arise from the misuse of certain apps, the intrusion of new technologies into private life, the staging of the ego on social networks and the practice of stalking, which involves sneaking an individual on the internet, obsessively and compulsively.

In 2019, on the occasion of the exhibition *Futures of Love*, Ben Elliot augmented the project with an installation gathering prints on polycarbonate, that reveal a selection of messages next to drawings representing the artist and made by his Stalker.





The Stalker, 2019 Exhibition view, Magasins Généraux, Pantin, France.

Interview

Berlin Art Link

September 2018

Ben Elliot treads a fine-line between vacuous consumerism and crushingly emotional terrains. At first glance, you may write this Parisian off as an influencer, party-boy or even a troll, but his soft, off-the-cuff quips and delicate positing of slang and attention economy leave you reflecting on a certain lifestyle (that chances are you buy into, too). His work is made up of selfies, pop-up shops, products and books, all of which fall under the weighted genre of conceptual art, a genre that reflects upon forms of language and epistemological methodology. Elliot replays and reproduces the operations of an immaterial labour of the now so convincingly because he lives it, too: he is not an imitation, he is a product of himself, society, capital and us — the viewer, the reader, the audience.

Penny Rafferty: Your work centres around local branding, of the self, its environment and its peers. This is not an unusual tactic as such, yet it's often commonly found in photography rather than mixed media installation. I'm thinking Dash Snow, Nan Goldin, Wolfgang Tillmans, and the list goes on. Can you tell me a little about your scene and your horizon?

Ben Elliot: I enjoy society's mechanisms: how you construct yourself, communicate with others and build businesses, brands, trademarks, using your image. The internet, smartphones, social media, networking, branding and influencing, are the major communication tools of my generation. I like to work with them and use them to disseminate ideas that are new and in the making. My frame goes from making a party, social media posts, or a pop-up store, to launching collaborations and products with industries I believe have interesting concepts, both online and IRL. I am more and more interested in the mechanisms of the art market: what is perceived as buyable vs. institutional contemporary art, so the projects I am currently working on are integrating painting and sculpture.

I love the fact that today you can play in different fields. I am very careful to always build projects that make sense for wider audiences, so that everyone can just enjoy a good party event, shop in a concept store, or drink water without necessarily viewing it with the distance or depth that is supposed to go with an artwork.

Penny Rafferty: Technology and “lived life” seem to be the key materials you use, in this form of self-sculpturization: basic objects like the iPhone right?

Ben Elliot: Right! I collaborate with people and objects that often associate values of the technological evolution with the utility of everyday life. My most recent project, *Ben Elliot Shop – Energized by Red Bull*, gathered more than 50 companies and entities that respond to

these problematics. They are active in the fields of sportswear, smart food, augmented beauty or social networks, which are respectively some of the most advanced forms of clothing, food, cosmetics, and entertainment. Partners such as Nike, Red Bull, Champion, Under Armour, Salomon, Microsoft, Xbox, Fnatic, Soylent, LuMee, Gosha Rubchinskiy, @lil_wavi and Meitu have been instrumental for me to depict the promises of technology for a more beautiful, better and stronger life. These brands spread new lifestyle experiences and shape our way to Artificial Intelligence.

Penny Rafferty: Are you empathetic to branding? I ask this not only in relation to *Ben Elliot Water*, but your books such as *Diary* and works like *Camera Roll*.

Ben Elliot: Of course, I am very sensitive and responsive to branding. Personal branding is what interests me the most. Self-presentation is more and more important at the time of social networks and the communication society we live in.

Storytelling is fundamental to branding and it has been a key tool in my last projects, including *Diary* and *Camera Roll*. A few months ago, I exhibited my full iPhone Camera Roll with all the selfies, pictures, videos, screenshots etc., directly on an iPhone accessible in the exhibition. It is like the making of my thinking, life and projects. My life as an individual is the object of a work itself, and this work documents other works and their setbacks. I used to write my diary in my Instagram captions too and then printed a book of it all. In the end, I just amplify or make visible what everyone is doing from their own level.

Penny Rafferty: I read *Diary* in one sitting, it's easy rolling spread of things; love, life, lack, crush, food, water... I could relate to scrolling across my laptop. I loved the poetic sayings such as "Selfies are my introspection" and "bored beyond infinity". But I see how other people, who aren't in such pop-linguistic circles, could read this as vacuous and tedious. Are you trying to express something to a reader/viewer from outside of your social sphere? Or do you have to be an insider to "love" this for its delicate vulnerability?

Ben Elliot: Both, I guess. *Diary* is like an emotional testimonial of our time, written with the language of our time, made of lols and emojis. You definitely have to be an insider to fully understand it but at least it offers a door to this world you may not be familiar with. If you don't get it at all linguistically, then you can focus on the concept, which I believe is as important as the meaning of the text.

Penny Rafferty: Ok but there is a certain vulnerability. The work 'Diary' seems very surface at first, almost emo — with phrases like “I wanted to write with blood but I just had water” or “this is so puuuuure I’m in love” — but the more I read the more its a rhetoric of societal emotional conduct. And you have had real repercussions from your openness, right? As in *The Stalker*...

Ben Elliot: Yes, absolutely. *Diary* is kind of an open book of my life and emotions at a time when I was looking for myself in the present social structures, how to deal with being born as a 2.0 human and chasing the self-achievement that we are all looking for.

About repercussions, *The Stalker* is probably one of them, yes. Unusual openness makes some people respond extremely, I guess. It has been almost 2 years that someone is stalking me on every platform every day. As I sit here writing to you, it seems that the stalker is in my city, Paris. I gathered all the content from the first year as an archive file. It includes about 1000 screenshots of Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, emails, phone messages, phone calls, videos, voice messages, pictures, etc. I just did it to get something positive out of it, and it is an interesting documentation to feed most of the subjects I deal with in my work.

Penny Rafferty: It's also a really intense space of emotive practice, it makes me think of Allan Kaprow. He was a self-described “un-artist” whose practice fought to produce Art as Life. I see you as a new generation of this mythos.

Ben Elliot: I am thankful to artists like Kaprow, also Warhol, who worked to blur the lines between art and entertainment, and many others who opened the path for the next generations of creatives not to be locked into one category.

As far as I am concerned, though, I would define myself as an artist but also enjoy working in other industries and combining them with art so that something fresh comes out of it in terms of ideas, process and economy.

Ben Elliot Water, 2017

«It started when I agreed to be formatted» Ben Elliot.

No embarrassment, no doubts, a simple and precise sentence, I agreed to be an object of the art world, a product. After all, we are no longer in the «nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed», but rather «nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is sold» - and then is finally bought.

It is said that when one falls off a horse, one must go up immediately, when one drinks too much, one orders a beer the next day. To fight fire with fire means to choose the evidence. *If I call it art, then it is art, and it is as simple as that.*

We could evoke the obvious links between Ben Elliot's work and the practice of Andy Warhol or Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics. But Ben Elliot is not an artist, it is a registered trademark. A bit of *self-branding*, a lot of selfies and a meticulous Instagram diary: Ben Elliot is self proclaiming his own artistic brand.

When the Serbian luxury water Voda Voda agreed to collaborate with the artist, they jointly launched a production of a few hundred bottles of water bearing his name. A shooting with the young and precocious Lily Taïeb gives birth to his muse.

The brand is created.

But he is not the first. At all times artists have signed their works, thus depositing a trademark, marking to the iron a stage of their life, establishing a picture of their generation and their environment.

To name a thing is the first act of creation, the original act. The name is the first communication that takes place around us.



Ben Elliot continues to build the myth of his own character and extends his persona through communication tools that are everyday objects. The simplest ones.

All these fictions take part in federating a group, creating a space to listen and speak. Because when we listen, as Ben Elliot does, when we are in total contact with our present, it is a deep understanding of today's codes that allows us to anticipate the future.

A simple bottle of water becomes an extension of his personality, his own myth. I drank *Ben Elliot*, as we wear Nike, Dior, Chanel and as we buy an iPhone. These objects become an integral part of the artist; some added limbs.

During a journey through transhumanism and communication theory, I met Ben Elliot: a derivative product born between the Millennials and Post-Millennials times.

Without knowing the intrinsic value of light waves, we can observe them because they obey known rules. Like these luminous rays, Ben Elliot makes art that obeys rules which we can follow but whose nature remains unknown. This mystery makes us believe in it.

Sacha Guedj Cohen



Bottle production: Voda Voda

Campaign pictures: Charles Negre

Model: Lily Taïeb

Make up & Nails: Lorandy

Hair: Paul Duchemin

Coordination: Samy Ghiyati & Louise Briskmann

Thanks to Jessy Mansuy Leydier & Dejan Margetic



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Campaign pictures. Photography Charles Nègre. Model Lily Taieb

Ben Elliot Water, 2017-2020.
Exhibition view, co.galerie, Paris.





Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Exhibition view, Guest Room, Carrboro, United States. Solo Show.



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Exhibition view, Guest Room, Carrboro, United States. Solo Show.



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Exhibition view, Guest Room, Carrboro, United States. Solo Show.



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Exhibition view, Guest Room, Carrboro, United States. Solo Show.



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Exhibition view, Whitescreen, Jeune Création. Website: whitescreen.jeunecreation.org

Discussion with Ibai Gorriti April 2017

It's interesting that you started with books and you're now doing brand collaborations. It seems to follow evolution. "Yes totally, and everything is technology in the end. Books are like the first smartphone of humanity in a way. And water is the first product of life, the basic one we are and consume everyday. Everybody needs water. It's the best product."

Water is certainly a basic product but we made it a product, a commodity. It being a product, a commodity, is kind of problematic, right? "I don't think that way. I just see water as a product of life not just a product to shop. Of course it's in a shop and you have to buy it, but still it is the product and the first technology of life, we can build a lot of stuff from it. The water brand I made the collaboration with is a fancy water, but I don't have really a position on that. I chose this brand for how it looks and the quality of the water. It is not really my goal to represent luxury. Politics or social issues are not what interests me in this project. I'm more the kind of people who see humanity as a big organism or network, like when you look at animals or nano-particles, it's just a species for me and I'm just observing it. Lifetime on earth is just a tiny part of life, so tiny that in the end buying water or not is not really a question."

So you're just observing life and representing it in your works as it is? "Yes, more focusing on how things evolve, humanity+, the post-human thing. I know it will end with artificial intelligence whatever the final form." Humanity? "Yes, sure. And it's okay. It's not a bad or good thing to change or disappear ultimately, monkeys disappeared before, that's the game." Are we the new dinosaurs? "Absolutely." I think so too. But if we are the new dinosaurs, are we our own meteorite? "Sure." Or is technology the meteorite? "I feel like the meteorite is just life. I don't believe in destiny or else but it is plainly logical. First you have a cell in water, then more and various transformations and then an A.I. Then it will return in the loop of matter which I am pretty sure is infinite." But we are life. "A part of it yes, always changing and it's okay."

So when you approach social media, technology and everything there is no criticality nor commentary to it in the way you do it? "No. Art today is almost all about denouncing stuff. I'm not like that. I did a party and it was more like celebrating and I feel social medias are beautiful things, there you can share ideas, your personality, it's an unlimited meeting point for everybody and everything. Now we're focusing on how to make the body better, how to live smarter... uploaded and augmented. Of course the Internet may not be perfect and you can point some bad sides too if you want, free will is good."

Fashion plays an important role in your work. “Well, everything is visual today so it is more about how you look and express yourself, clothes are a daily life object, an important one in the social game, it defines yourself and your ideas. On social medias it’s the first thing you see from the person. I also think it is fun to be part of fashion in a thoughtful way. I’m sponsored by some brands on instagram, like Nike, and I like to think I’m wearing ideas.”

It seems hard to me to stay neutral when you do a party, a water collaboration or social media... you’re either critiquing it, making a parody or celebrating it or maybe none of those. “Yes none, just reproducing them in a brand-new way... My work is not about celebrating, even if I did it once, it’s more being a part of it and activate something different inside.” Then we all are part of it, doing social media, throwing parties, self-branding... but you seem to do so in quite an extreme way, going very far, maybe exploring the limits. “Yeah, the limits are good to reach another layer.”

It’s also funny that you mention Kim Kardashian because she also operates with all this in a very extreme way, I think. “Yes. I don’t like everything about her but I think she with her family did really good things culturally speaking. Making 13 seasons of your life with Keeping Up With The Kardashians is a huge masterpiece!” So you’re interested in it conceptually but not aesthetically? “Yeah depends on the day.” Kanye West also wants us to believe it’s a masterpiece. “Yes nobody is taking him really seriously when it comes to art” Well, many people take it seriously. He sells millions of records, he fills stadiums... It’s the art world, which is very few people, that does not take it seriously. “Yes that’s what I meant, because they think they’re smarter. It’s all about that. Things should be put at the right place more often, don’t want to insist on The Kardashians (laughs) but they’re doing more interesting stuff than 99% of the artists today. I feel like it deserves to be seen in a different way sometimes.”

Conceptual art came from the frustration with traditional forms in a way. When I see your work over the last year I see that you also started with a more traditional exhibition format and then from there you went to different medias, not traditional at all, like throwing a party. Was it a reaction to the exhibition? “Yes, Totally. I like to make a difference between art and contemporary art because the last one seems to obey some established trends and rules. I played by the rules in the first exhibition and I’m happy that I did that, once. I will do it again, we all need to fit somehow. But still I like to think there’s contemporary art and there is art. Art is more about realizing in what world you live and the potential it has, making it visible again, in a new way, to generate a new step.”

You're represented by a PR agency instead of a gallery for now. "It's part of it." So you consider the tactics you choose to present yourself to be part of the artwork. "Sure, the way you present things is as important as the rest, it shapes the whole thing." You two worked very closely to organize the party. "Yes. The goal was to choose people from different backgrounds like music, fashion, art, entertainment... and to bring together some very young figures who embody the different ideas of today." So was there like a casting for the attendants? "Almost, more like a natural casting." At the same time you were doing your work you were presenting other artists, empowering your whole generation through your work. Same for the bottle project, you assembled different aesthetics close to yours but didn't create any content yourself directly. It is like creating with a curatorial approach."

< Comments

 **elliott.ben** Now available worldwide on benelliottshop.com 🌐 link in bio

 **damn_dxniel** Are u goddamn serious 🤔🤔🤔
1w Reply

 **damn_dxniel** #uglygod
1w Reply

 **principevera** 🍌
1w Reply

 **kawaiiiraaa** Omgggg🤩
1w Reply

 **gracecorners** @jackca.ddy
1w 1 like Reply

 **saugahill** Wow
1w Reply

 **thewordsofapoet** I'm just saying, you go for this!!
1w Reply

 **thewordsofapoet** Next step is making it alkaline
1w Reply

 **elliotholland** @hindsy13_
1w Reply

 **litosway_** Do you have an e-book version of "how I sold my first artwork" ? Awesome work btw. 🙌
4d Reply

 **hectoeg** This is iconic😂
22h Reply

📍 Add a comment as [elliott.ben...](#) [Post](#)

 58 mins · 🧑

I get its "art", and a "concept", but did YOU even make a business plan???? who tf is gonna buy that overpriced BULL. YOU aint Kanye WEST hunny xxxx

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍 1

 1 hr · 🧑

LOOOOOOOOL

[See Translation](#)

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

 March 28 at 4:47pm · 🌐

have people always been so prone to bold, self-confident declarations of truth?

it seems like my feed is constantly clogged with rapid fire 2D hot take assertions with 0 nuance or qualification and I can't figure out if that's a result of social media rewarding people who brand themselves as headstrong prophets, of the declarative nature of posting, or if that's just human nature.

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍 🗨️ 🗨️ Nick Zhu, Lindsay Howard and 160 others

 Imao this is a joke right?
Like · Reply · 2 hrs



Today at 2:54 AM

Replied to your story



U POS I've never seen so much shit in my entire life u r not a fucking artist dumbass 🤔🤔🤔

Replied to your story



Fu dumb shit ass

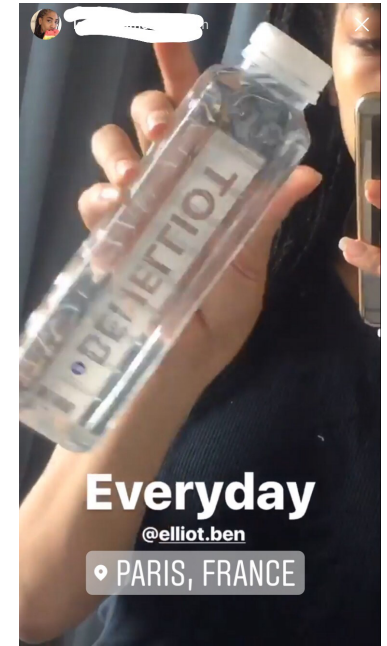
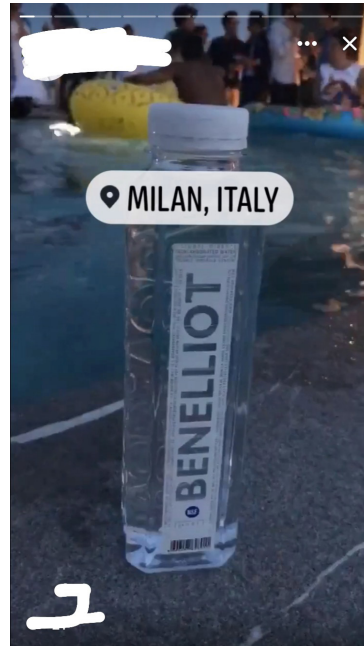
Today at 10:52 AM

Replied to your story

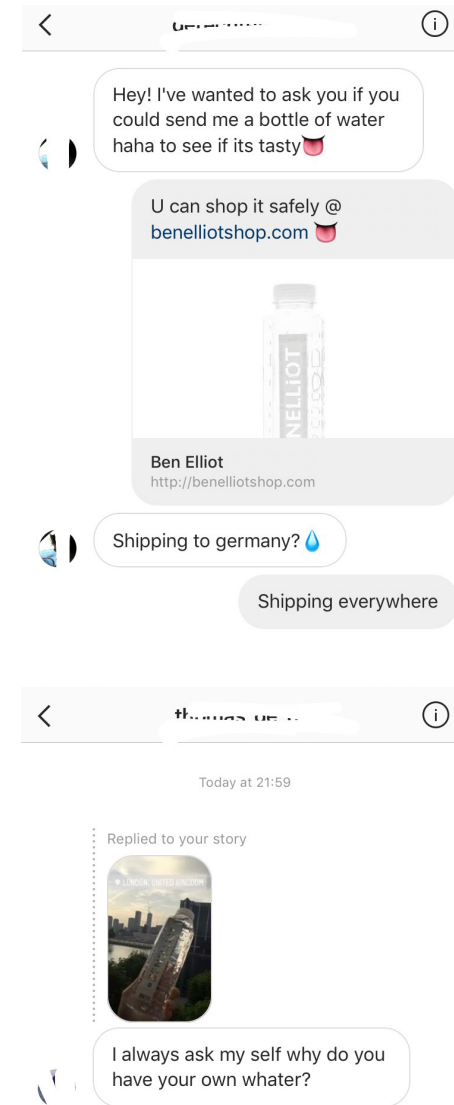
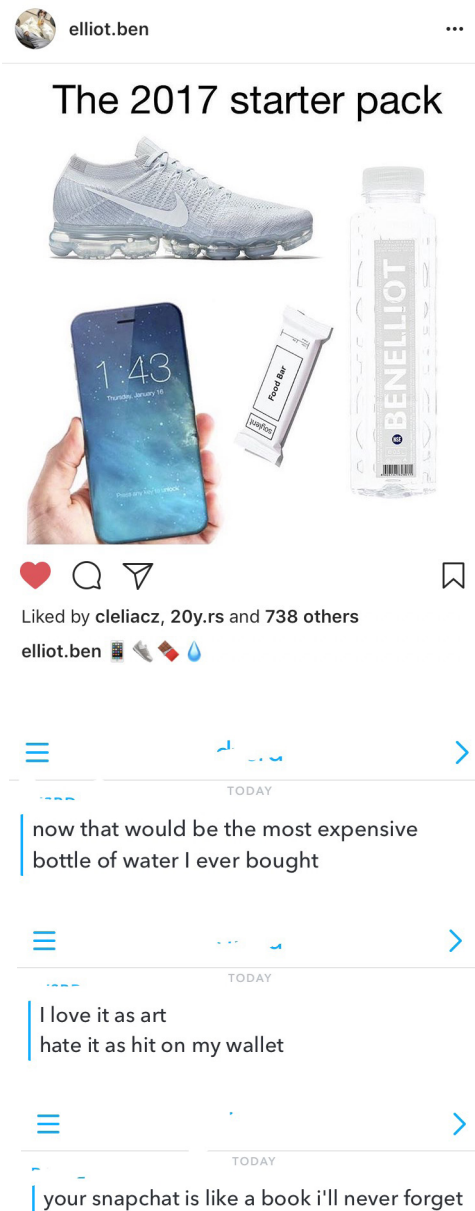


So inspiring ✨

Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Facebook posts, comments; Instagram stories, comments, DMs.



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Instagram stories.



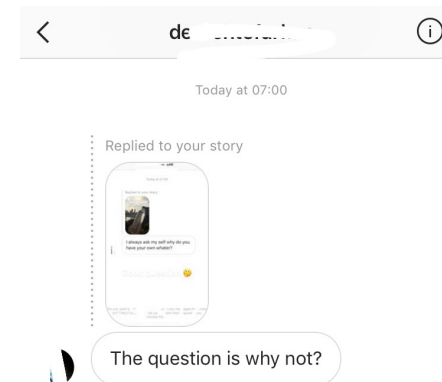
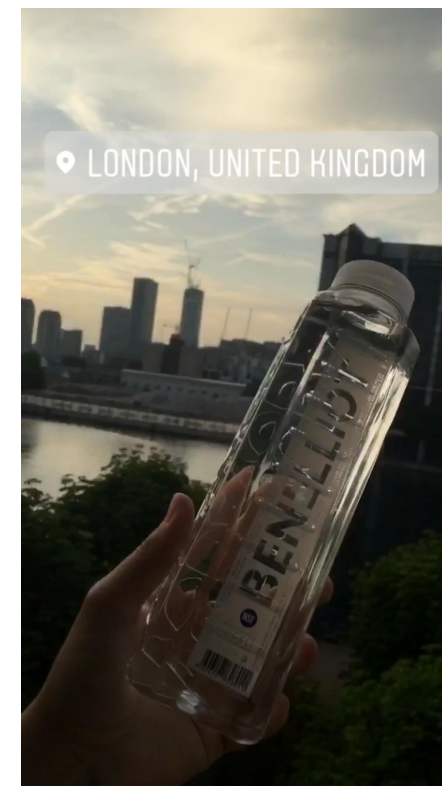
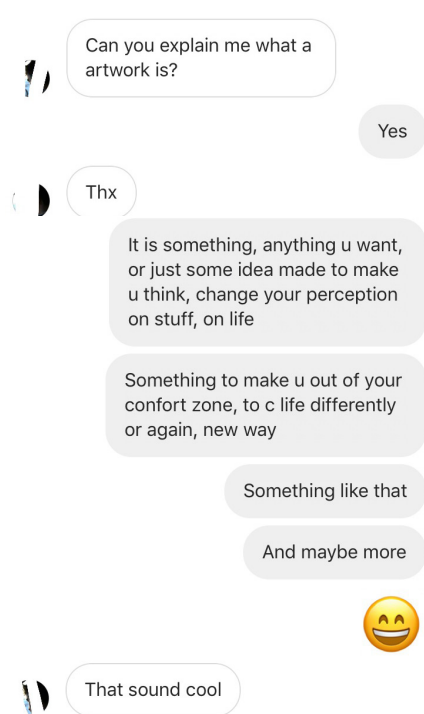
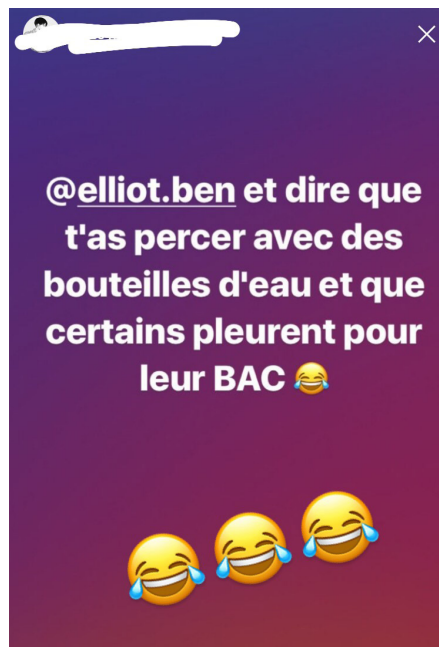
Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Instagram posts, comments, DMs; Snapchat Chats.



Fashoo \$15 bottle water haha how many people copped

Well 15\$ is the cheapest artwork of the year plus being the best and probably a good investment for the future but money is not the point, the singularity is the keyyyyy

Not knocking it pretty legit marketing plan



Ben Elliot Water, 2017. Instagram stories, DMs.

Ben Elliot Party, 2016

On April 29th, 2016, Ben Elliot initiated a party as an artwork; promoting himself and his own image to share his practice.

This work is extending his interest in the interactions surrounding the act of creation and the communication techniques used in the art world. It was attended by 500 faces from the parisian new generation in the fields of music, contemporary art, entertainment and fashion ; exploring the importance of partying, and more generally socializing, within the millenials context.



elliott.ben Ben Elliot Party

Co-hosted by Yulya Shadrinsky / Djs: Gucci Gang, oklou, Moriba, Laeti Quette / Special Guests: Liza Monet, Laetitia (Fuchsia Party) / 29.04.16, 23h - 5h / Rive Gauche Club, 1 rue Sabot, 75006 Paris



Ben Elliot Party, 2016. Party pictures. Photography Yulya Shadrinsky.



Highsnobiety

17 mai · 🌐

Hiring an intern, Ben?



This 22-Year-Old Threw a Party With Paris' Cool Kids and Called it Art

S.HSNOB.CO

👍 J'aime 💬 Commenter ➦ Partager

👍❤️😂 638

Meilleurs commentaires ▾

72 partages

30 commentaires



Adam Andrews Robert Suthers this dude seems like a cunt

J'aime · Répondre · 👍 1 · 18 mai, 04:07 · Modifié



Cris Fetty Loggyman Gathering cool people in a room and taking photos is not new or exciting.

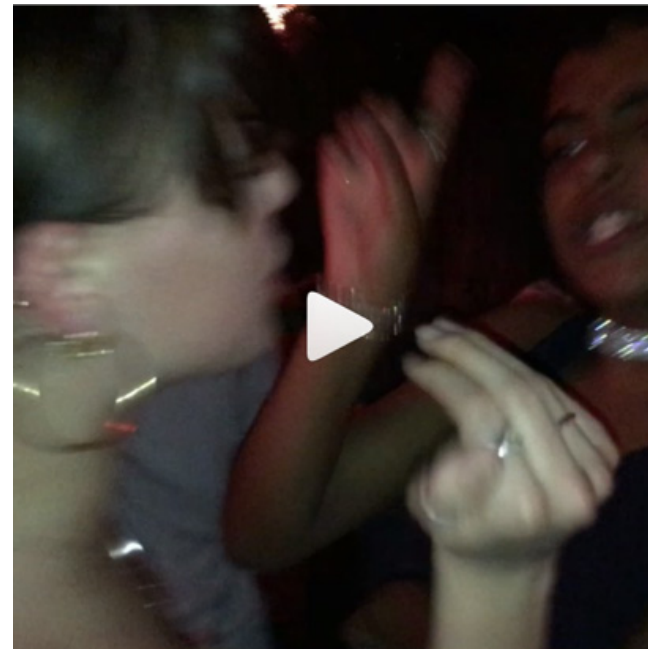
J'aime · Répondre · 👍 12 · 18 mai, 02:35



Pogman · 5 months ago

What the actual fuck is this horrible shit of fuckery? Why do you even bring attention to this guy and his lame ass "art"? This is sooooo fucking bad. Fuck y'all.

^ ▾ · Reply · Share ·



shadrinsky
Le Rive Gauche

Follow

4,635 views

26w

shadrinsky Congrats my dear @elliott.ben, yesterday's party was a huge success! Thanks to @angellaworeth @annabfr @crystalmr @thaisklapisch @moribakone @laetitiagimenez @aavril_alvarez @20y.rs my brain @maritagurcciani and thank u everyone who came 🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌

20y.rs Dope 🏆

benjbenjbenjbenjbenj 🙌🙌🙌🙌

moribakone 🙌🙌

elliott.ben 💖

maritagurcciani making history 🙌

laetitiagimenez 🙌🙌🙌

margaux_f.d @marnie_duke why don't we have motive like this wtf

lamelejandro 🙌🙌

redouanramdan May 6. 🙌

caillia Please!! All music in this video! I need it 🙌

Log in to like or comment.

...



Ben Elliot Party, 2016. Press, Instagram, Facebook posts and comments.

Interview

High Snobiety

May 2016

Self-educated Parisian artist, Ben Elliot, has a particular fascination with human interaction. Being born in 1994, he's part of an age group that increasingly doesn't remember what life without high-speed internet looked like, which obviously shapes how he and his peers interact with each other as well as those that fall outside their digi-literate demographic.

His latest work involved throwing a party, which he framed as an artwork. 500 or so hyped Parisian millennials from the vaguely defined «creative fields» and their friends were invited to this party.

Talk us through your reasoning behind this project. What inspired it? Why this form?

I did this party as an artwork to promote and share myself and my ideas directly without using any object. Promotion for promotion, as an art form in itself.

I had to gather people from different areas and a party was the ideal point. I am inspired by all kind of interactions: social media, reality TV, artificial intelligence, brain and body, technology, robot etc. They are all linked to the dematerialized and interactive world that we live in.

And how are you going to display the project?

The pictures were done for press purposes. I like to think that I can use the medias as an exhibition space, instead of regular galleries. The medias can choose the way that the images match with their platform. In the end it can look so different depending on the identity of the magazine. You can do your own selection, related to what your audience wants. No rules. Feel free. And that is basically what viral means. You have no control over where and how your images will end up.

You've said that "this experience aims at displaying the importance of partying, networking, and more generally socializing, within the millennial context" – what makes these things so important to millennials, in your opinion?

People from my generation are always balancing between the online and offline life, we are a new kind of human, socializing in a fresh new way. Though, these issues that most people think are from tomorrow already exist. I mean, my iPhone is a part of my body and my soul and I want to celebrate this naturalness.

Maybe my interpretation is incorrect, and correct me if it is, but does that mean you think that all of these things matter to millennials more than other generations?

Not at all. I am just focusing on my generation who is socializing differently than others, closer to the A.I. pattern. Of course everybody is partying, networking, socializing, interacting at their own level. This is one of the major characteristics of the human being.

Networking within “creative” fields is no doubt important, but going from my own experiences I find that a lot of people that might lack in talent hide behind this as a way of making a name for themselves within the arts – getting by on favors and likability rather than the quality of their work, and ultimately bringing the standard of culture down as a whole. Would you agree or disagree?

Agree and disagree. Most people have no talent, some have skills and others have the talent of making a name, which is itself a talent. What is interesting here is the fact that people seem to have a big issue with people making themselves a name out of «nothing». This was one basis of the project.

If you look at Gucci Gang [a group of four girls with a large amount of followers in Paris], a lot of people criticize them as if they aren’t doing anything. But they are 15 years old, they do interviews, photo shootings, they did their first DJ set at my party, they constantly organize and take care of their social media accounts. While they’re doing all this, other people are just passing comment and not doing anything themselves.

Same thing with the Kardashians. I am having fun when I hear that the family is bringing the standard of culture down - because *they are* the culture.

What is, in your opinion, the difference between your party pictures and ones people would take in a club on a night out? Is there something in yours that makes them intrinsically more artistic or are all club Instagram videos worthy of being considered art?

There’s no difference except that they are from my party and inherent to the person who took it. These photos are a part of the artwork and all other pictures or videos made by the people who attended that night are a part of it too. It depends how you interpret it. If you say it’s art then no doubt it is.

Interview Metal June 2016

At only 22 years old, French artist Ben Elliot has turned the Parisian art scene upside down. His first solo exhibition, *tbh i dunno if i have feelings*, led him to the concept of his last show, *Ben Elliot Party*, which consisted of throwing a party, inviting all the cool millennials in Paris and letting them share pictures of the event (that was under his name). We gmail-chatted with Ben about being self-educated, different forms of showing art and future projects.

When did you first come up with the idea of throwing a party as an artwork to promote yourself?

After the first part of my solo show I did in January. I was thinking about doing a continuity; something connected to it but in a totally different form.

Have you been interested in creating art for a while now?

I've been doing stuff for two years now. Before that, I was only writing some ideas and thoughts, but I wanted to share them in a different way than words, to try something new.

Did you grow up in a creative environment, or did you have a group of friends that also did creative stuff?

No, I kind of grew in a lonely way, early detached from my family. I had, and I am having, a self-education – I like to experience everything and that's how I come to art. I guess my imagination is my best friend.

How did *Ben Elliot Party* go?

The second edition went really well, I had a lot of fun doing it. It was an intense process. A lot of people came by and made it happen; and all the people involved in it, and in particular my publicist and I, recognise ourselves and our generation in the final result.

Did you select each one of the attendants?

Yes, sure. Each person has a particular meaning in it. They were all so different, from different backgrounds and all deeply connected at the same time. It was a celebration of all kinds of creativity. The mood was juvenile power!

It's interesting that you see it in a way that the artwork itself will still be seen and shared online and by different people that was there, like a non physical gallery.

Yes, it totally makes sense. It was the challenge. Doing something in real life and having an online impact, making everything art – from party to interview.

tbh i dunno if i have feelings, 2016

tbh i dunno if i have feelings is thought as a liaison of both universal notions (dematerialization and metaphysical) and ultra-intimate others (diary and daily feelings). Based on a set of interconnected works, the exhibition develops proposals that can act both alone and in organization. Polycarbonate, a transparent material, interacts with its environment and is reacting according to the adjacent atmosphere and other external datas, creating a complete junction (such as natural and artificial light that put the pieces in a constant recreation mutable by transparency). Here, several layers of material/dematerial are responding to each other. This interest in the network is then integrated within the creative process, through the use of communication strategies (invitation and social networks) as well as social and transactional relationships inherent in the act of exhibiting (opening), such as the idea of a speculative and instant society.

« *At first sight, it is a distance that is established with the work of Ben Elliot. A polycarbonate sheet, a transparent plastic sail, a title evoking a lack of emotion... except an assumed love for his iPhone. From this aesthetic exudes the idea of trans-humanism: the incarnation of human into networks such as the Internet, and its dematerialization into online data. Yet it is the debate between tangible and intangible that is replayed in the works between transparency and tangibility - between life drive and death instinct as Freud would write. But this metaphor is frequently used to describe the two sides of the same coin: the economy - and especially the capitalist economy. Ben Elliot's works are burnt and thermoformed... And Jeremy Rifkin to describe our time like this when we have to pay the entropic bill of an economy deeply rooted in the laws of thermodynamics and despite the omerta on the relationship between speculation and energy.* » — Charlotte Cosson & Emmanuelle Luciani





tbh i dunno if i have feelings, 2016. Exhibition View, Very Art, Paris, France. Solo Show.



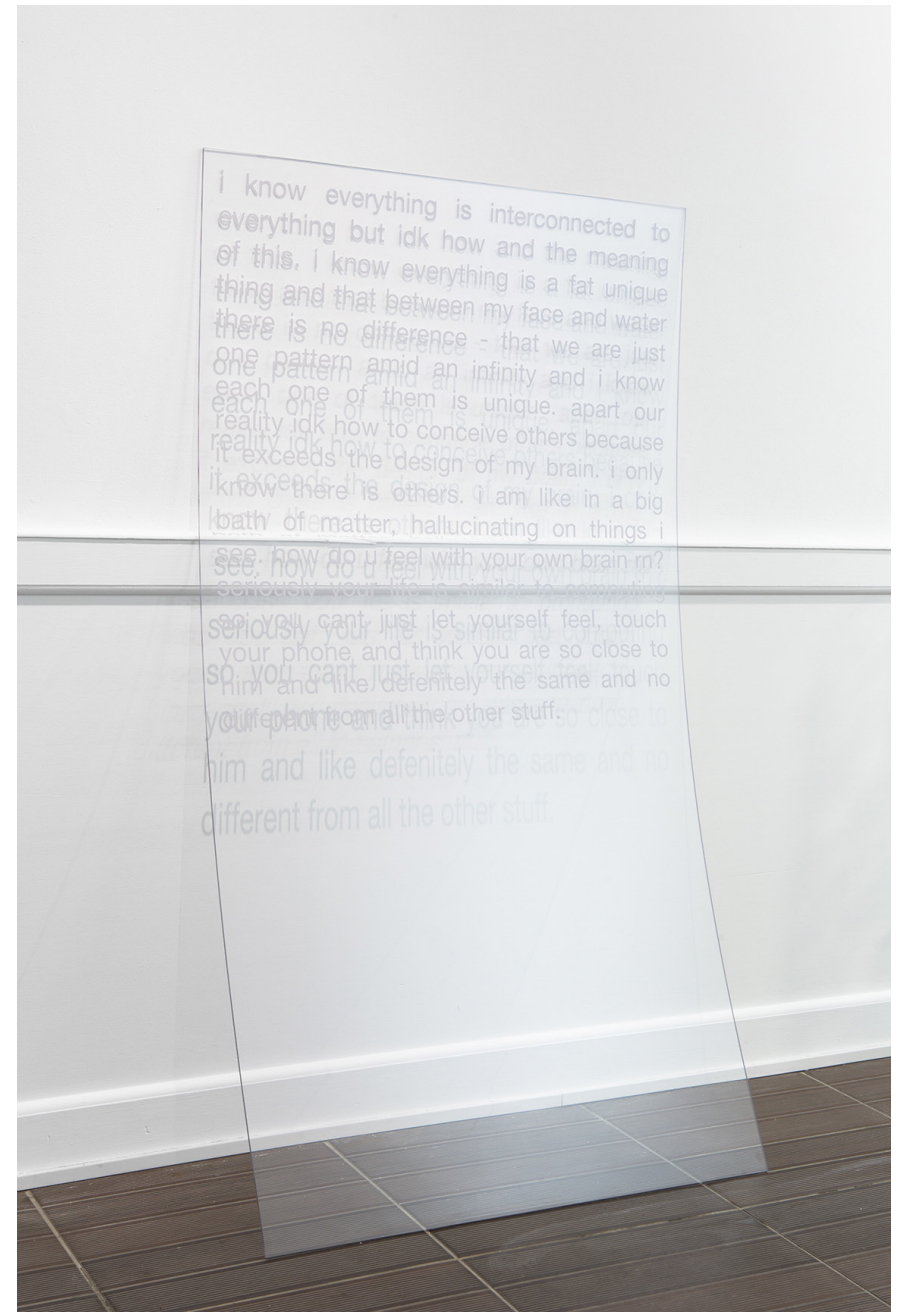
tbh i dunno if i have feelings, 2016. Exhibition View, Very Art, Paris, France. Solo Show.

t-boards, 2016

I wrote it during the night of the 30th to the 31st of December. It was about five am. I was thinking too much about my life and everything around me to fall asleep. I wasn't at my place that night and my iPhone was without battery since hours. I had to use the iPhone of my friend to connect on my Instagram and write this in a comment of one of my own posts bc I couldn't find a paper. Actually I love writing stuff on my cell. My iPhone is like a perfect extension of myself, a really good friend who connects me to the world with smoothness and I really hate when he is low battery bc I just feel like assisting to death, loosing a bff and it makes me think about my own condition. I mean it is not easy to be conscious of something you can't really control or define but yes I guess this is the rule so #yolo



t-board, 2016. 150 x 80 cm. Helvetica printed on polycarbonate.



t-board, 2016. 150 x 80 cm. Helvetica printed on polycarbonate.

22.01.16, 2016



22.01.16. Variable dimensions.
3 bottles half empty/half full on pedestal.
300 bottles on ice cubes, to consume. Gin, tonic, vodka, Get 31, sparkling water.

Resins, 2015-2016

The *Resin* series started according to two millenials principles: dematerialization; and transactional communication. These are notions that prepare the evolution from the physical world to a future reality.

The works are constantly building a junction with their environment. According to the adjacent atmosphere and other apparently external datas (such as natural and artificial light that places them in a dematerialization and recreation by the projection of transparency and reflection), there is a confusion between where the work starts and where it stops. While matter dematerializes, it is recreated in another form and the physical presence becomes movement of an absence and sensitive experience.



Resin4, 2016. 90 x 125 x 35 cm. Thermoformed polycarbonate.



S1+S2, 2015. 120 x 85 x 20 each. Thermoformed polycarbonate. Exhibition View, Villa Belleville, Paris, France.



Resin2, 2015. 60 x 70 x 20 cm. Thermoformed polycarbonate.

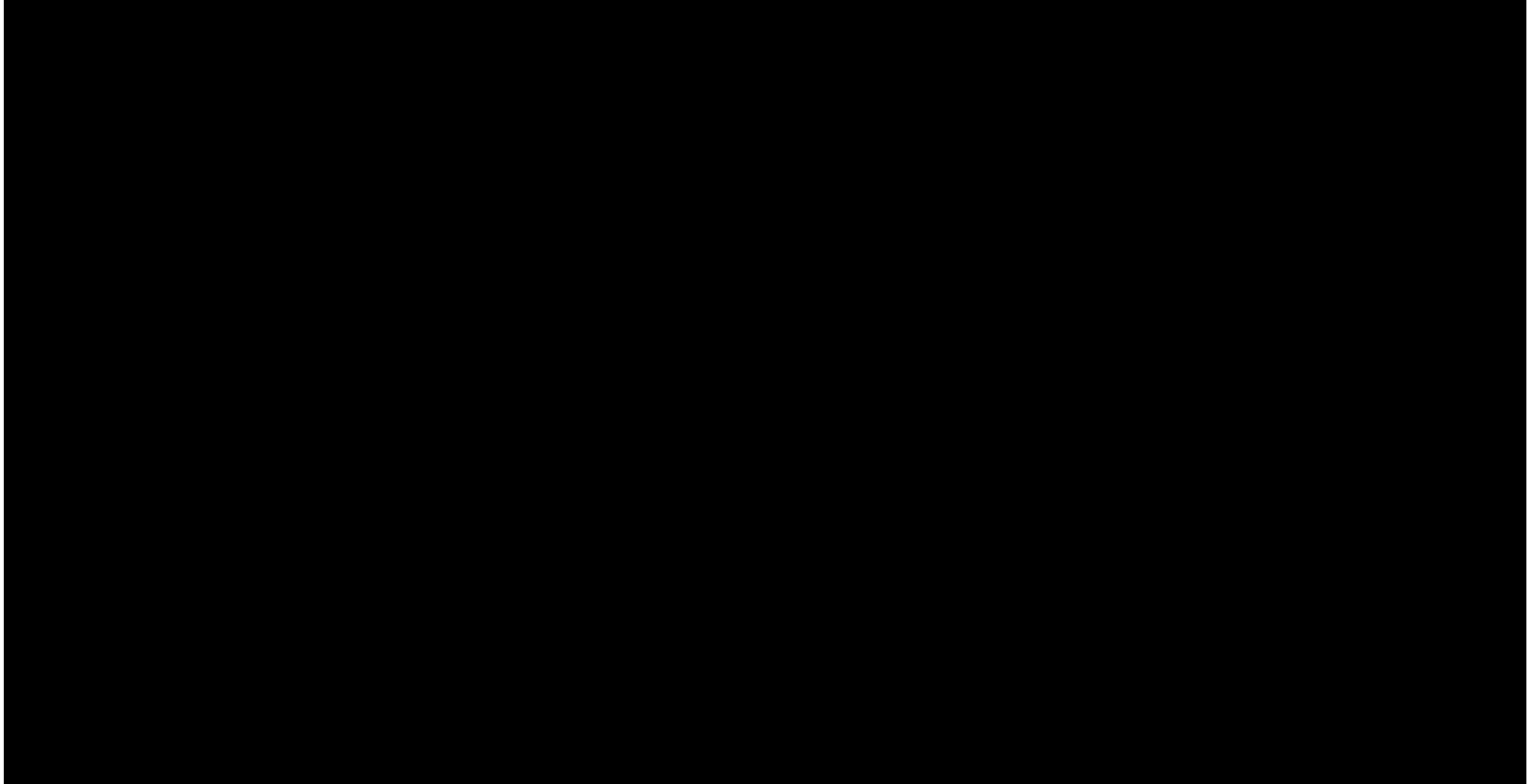


so we can get ice cream together and listen to music, and travel across galaxies, only to have it end in slammed doors, heartbreak, and loneliness, 2016. 120 x 85 x 19 cm. Polycarbonate sheets, resin.



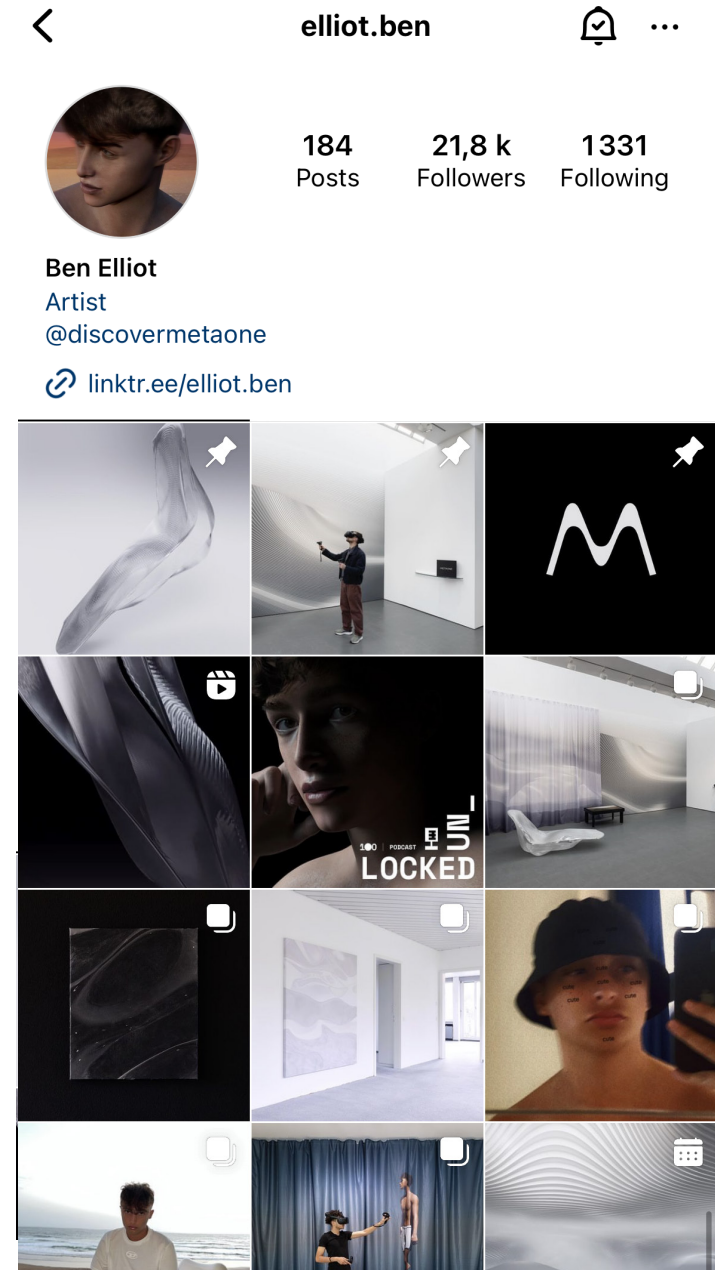
Cases, 2014. 24,4 x 57 x 5cm. Plexiglass, acetone, acid, water.

Endless Night, 2014



Endless Night, 2014. Website: endlessnight.be

Instagram, 2015 - ongoing



Instagram, 2015 - ongoing. Posts, followers, tags, comments, likes, stories.

Artist as Influencer

Anika Meier in Numéro Art

November 2020

Influencers are artists. And artists are influencers. The most famous influencer is Kim Kardashian. She is much praised and much hated. Some consider her a feminist, others see her as the puppet of her husband Kanye West. Jerry Saltz, the renowned American art critic and Pulitzer Prize winner, once compared Kim Kardashian to Andy Warhol because like him she would create fiction. One critic sees her as the embodiment of Duchamp's urinal because, like Duchamp's urinal back then, she provocatively declares herself art. In the first major Instagram performance, which is now often celebrated as a masterpiece, it was precisely that: In her performance «Excellences & Perfections», the artist Amalia Ulman slipped into the role of a young woman who was rapidly undergoing a transformation. The artist Amalia Ulman did not let her audience know that it was a performance. She let her followers believe that she was really going through all of this right now. The plastic surgery, the life with a sugar daddy, the nervous breakdown, the happy ending with yoga and avocado toast. The message: We are all liars online. But also: On the Internet nobody knows you are a performance artist. This is where the French Ben Elliot comes in. He is an influencer and artist, artist and influencer. On Instagram you can see him posing in the most beautiful places, on the beach, by the pool, in the sea, in front of palm trees, in the desert. He is fine, he gets around, he has a good life. Like influencers, he shares perfect photos of the perfect life. «Influencers are the new actors of our time. A lot of their characteristics are interesting to study and sometimes to reproduce», says Elliot. This is exactly what he does, he reproduces what he saw before. But he does more. What is everyday work for influencers becomes art for Elliot. He throws a party, he brings products onto the market, he opens a shop, he collaborates with brands.

Immaterial Persistence

An essay on *Box in Box*, *Dropped Plexiglas*,
and *Transparent paper on transparent paper*
Claudia Buizza

« *Things of art often begin to countdown of the things of life. Life starts with a birth; an artwork can start under the influence of destruction.* »¹

Nowadays, telematics, mass media and computer networks appear to threaten the tangible aspect of reality. Ben Elliot is an artist who does not consider his work from a purely conceptual point of view, but as the result of a psychophysical process that raises a constant dialectic between the presence of matter and the immaterial entity's exploration. Therefore, contradictions rise and the reflection on the intrinsic expressiveness of matter becomes inevitable.

The materials used by the artist are genuine and artificial. They do not imitate other materials and they do not have any history or genesis. Any question about their symbolic or ideological value would be superfluous. In the *Foam on foam* series, 2014; Elliot burns a blank foam sheet of paper on a second identical one. Combustion occurs through an incandescent rain of a blowtorch. This is under the shock from the flood that the material becomes matter: it conquers its foundation, its reason of being. The fiery drops generate a silver mackle spreading over the central part of the foam: the color is intrinsic to the material itself. While the sheet is burning, holes appear as the marks of an art that is both based on the exaltation and on the degradation of the material, until the disappearance of the medium.

Ben Elliot handles, ignites, enlivens the matter and plays with the contrasts: content and container, contraction and expansion, transparency and opacity. With *Box in Box*, 2014, the plastic box includes another same sized box, but made of glass. The qualities of the two materials are well placed in comparison. However, a work is never composed of materials only, there are also actions and tools to take on board because in this case, the process is as important as the result. In *Transparent paper on transparent paper* series, 2014, each piece is composed by one sheet of plexiglas (ranging between 10 x 15 cm to 17 x 26 cm) which has been burned to an other. The combustion progresses from chance to creative decision; this is actually the artist who decides when to stop the reaction, without allowing the burning of determining the aesthetic purpose. The artistic action is embodied in a spot of dark depth interrupted here and there by small holes. This is a black scar; the flesh of the medium, which is a victim and a witness of the artist's path. This is a proof that something has preceded it, but we can not go back: the original element is only present in the artist's memory and obvious injuries are the stigma of an immaterial persistence that reveals itself in the actual space of the work. Specifically, the rips refer to an absence in the dissolution of the medium: physical matter is transfigured in Light-matter, the border between tangible and intangible remains the memory of a world that is disappearing.

Despite this, Ben Elliot's creatures are not without power. Their vital pneuma is fire, the ultimate destructive element, frequently adopted in the twentieth century by various artists, namely Marcel Duchamp, Yves Klein, Jannis Kounellis, Alberto Burri and others. In the works of these artists, combustion participate in the result of creating the artwork through the modification of matter. To Ben Elliot, on the contrary, this metamorphosis is part of the process, not the result. The very act of burning the support is explored as a medium and a process: it is the annihilation of the material through the questioning of its foundations that intrigues the artist, because «the matter is an idea and the materials are the body of this idea.»²

In any situation, the encounter with the materials is operated by the unconscious. In *Foam on foam*, and *Transparent paper on transparent paper*, the manufacturer-destructive act aims to a specific aesthetic result, where, after combustion, color is considered as matter. The preparation and intervention on materials, the artistic act, show the unconscious authority in the metamorphosis of the material into an image-material. There is a powerful dialectic of the unconscious and the instinct, between building (life impulse) and destruction (death impulse). The work is exposed as a new opportunity to investigate the real where the act of devastation becomes «creation of novelty.»³

See, for example, the many contradictions presented by the works from the Transparent paper on transparent paper series: the tactility of the black spot contrasts with the lightness of the medium; the invisible membrane that was untouched by the flames becomes perceptible with the shadows on the wall. Behind the fascination with the delicacy of these creatures still lurks an act of degradation and devastation: the creative ratio that decides to burn the plexiglas sheet to achieve a specific result is simultaneously accompanied by the desire for destruction, sacrifice, necessary to the emergence of forms and colors trapped in the ice field. The aesthetic trial strictly relates to the mental trial and if the choice of materials depends on several factors including the unconscious, it means that the aesthetic motivation is present from the beginning.

The authenticity of the artist's gesture is in the idea of creating a work that exposes the way of using the material: through its action it becomes at the same time, subject and object. Remarkable is the example of *Dropped Plexiglas*, 2015. Faced with this work, the viewer is immersed in the same deafening silence he could hear in front of a still-glowing meteorite, crashed into the Earth's crust. Here, the heat is frozen by two transparent plexiglas sheets.

The discovery and understanding of Ben Elliot's work must be accompanied by the reading of his texts. His written work is actually antecedent to his artistic production and, although his writings are not necessarily related to what he does plastically, the reader will easily recognize the roots of his thought:

« Cancellation - decomposition - deregulation - disintegration - destruction - dislocation, fracture of the material. »⁴

and again :

«Currently, the need for illusion.

Surface - Space

Dematerialization - Transform - Distort - dissolution Idea - visceral - ipse - psyche

Translucent - White - Placid - Neutral - Pale - Minimum Light - Sound - Shape - Geometry – Dimension »⁵

These are concrete words, sometimes dark, sometimes more optimistic, arranged in the manner of a poem where grief turns to praise and the mind becomes spectacle. The talent of this artist is the balance in stylistic harmony as in the weighting between creative force and devastating pulsus. It is in this formal serenity that Ben Elliot transforms his violent gesture into an artistic achievement and consents to the aesthetic beauty of his creations to triumph over the cruelty of human action.

¹ Georges Didi-Hubermann, *Génie du non-lieu. Air, poussière, empreinte, hantise*, Les éditions de minuit, Paris, 2001, p.9

² Ben Elliot, conversation with Claudia Buizza, janvier 2015

³ Ben Elliot, conversation with Claudia Buizza, janvier 2015

⁴ Ben Elliot, / , 2015, p.19

⁵ Ibid, p.14

Dropped Plexiglass, 2015



Dropped plexiglas, 2015. 62 x 82 x 50 cm. Burnt plexiglass.

Box in Box, 2014

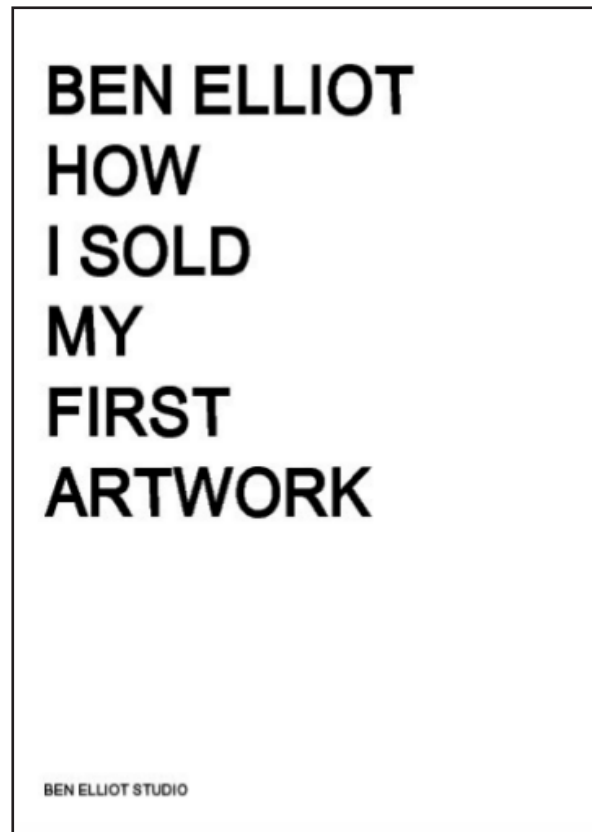
Artworks - Supports – autonomous and interconnected - subjects and objects - content and container - are prone to their transparency in a constant aesthetic of dissolving - physically real and mentally removed. Boxes filled with themselves - elements of destruction - questioning their own foundations and those of matter - which is - reality.



Box in Box, 2014. 50 x 40 x 6 cm. Plexiglass, glass.

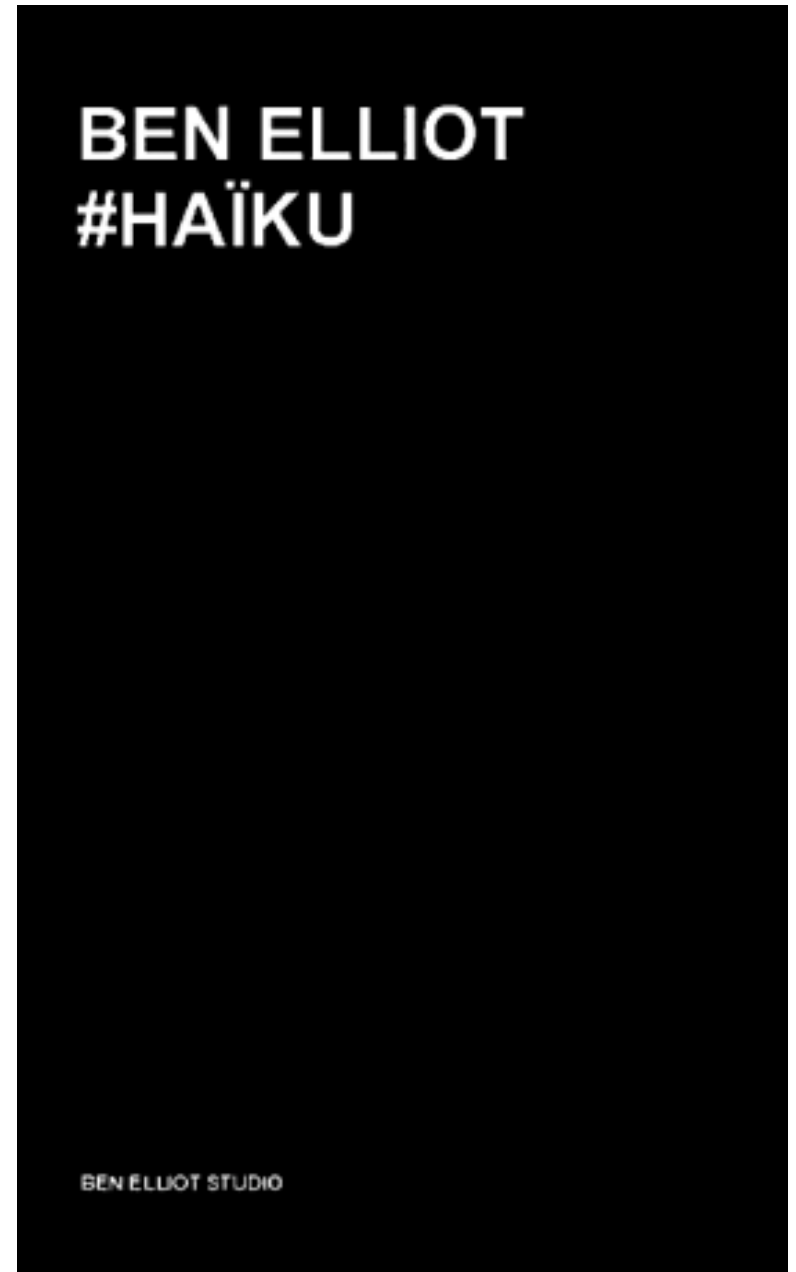
Transparent paper on transparent paper, 2014

On November 20th 2014, Ben Elliot hanged a 15 x 10 cm work at Yvon Lambert Gallery without any authorization. It sold after a few seconds. The correspondances with the collector were published in *How I sold my first artwork*, 2015. 36 pages. Ben Elliot Studio Editions.



Transparent paper on transparent paper, 2014. 15 x 10 cm. Burnt transparent paper.

Publications



#HAÏKU, 2016. 300 pages. Ben Elliot Studio Editions.

BEN ELLIOT

Individu & Matière - tome I - L'antiquité et la construction du modèle humain au travers de la raison; connaissance et morale - hypertrophie de la faculté logique - Dialectique humaine *unique arme* - illustrée par la « plus bizarre des équations possibles » Raison=Vertu=Bonheur. Autour de ce triangle à l'apparence d'idéal se sont construit le monde et chaque individu qui le compose à la recherche de bien être par les voies de la morale et de la raison. _De là cadavres d'idées - l'Etre mis sur l'autel de la connaissance - Cause suprême. « Rationalité à tout prix » Créations de notions maitresses Etre Absolu Bien Mal Vrai Idéal comme valeurs supérieures // Héraclite : l'être est une fiction vide de sens // _Humanisme / Optimisme éclairé par la raison / Utilitarisme / Empirisme. Isme. Plus les siècle passaient plus la recherche du bien du bon - de la lutte de la souffrance - de la recherche du plaisir habitait chaque conscience individuelle. // Filigrane : dualisme et doute de l'homme. _Morale=Doute=Destruction Sur l'obéissance à sa vocation subjective et appropriation de ses propres croyances. Sur le dépassement de l'affirmation de soi à l'ère de la destruction du réel et de l'idée : Êre de la justification perpétuelle du soi - le pouvoir par la persuasion de l'image et du visible de concert à la désintégration de la réalité par la subjectivité technologique. La mort de l'idée comme sensation - Fin du mysticisme de la conscience et du sens humain. Destruction de la raison et déclin du paradigme humain - fragilité de l'utilitarisme et de la nécessité d'illusion pour exister. La science hypothétique - si peu rationnelle (l'attrait espace temps infini dilatation.) Métaphore sur la connaissance - seule certitude sur la machine insondable de la vie - le but subjectif et passionnel de l'individu parmi la vie parmi l'absurde / Pas de séparation entre technologique et naturel. Une même chose. Une technologie naturelle. Balbutiement. Un jour peut-être la connaissance. / Eloquence XXIème siècle par les ondes et les images - par delà la matière. Transition et pensée transhumaniste - mutation de l'homme - Le genre humain peut-il encore exister - la technologie humaine comme croyance ultime / L'entre-perception d'une cinquième dimension - objets-fillets interconnectés en perpétuelle dilatation silencieuse.

SUZANNE COR RESPOND ANCES BEN ELLIOT

Jaffar Jaiden Editions

Individu & Matière, 2015. 222 pages. Ben Elliot Studio Editions.

Correspondances (with Suzanne), 2014. 60 pages. Jaffar Jaiden Editions.

Ben Elliot contact@benelliot.io
Born 1994. Lives and works in France and Morocco.
[Website](#) / [instagram](#) / [X](#)

2025

10KM, Ddar House, Essaouira, Morocco
Dopamine, Le Cube Garges, France
With Love from Paris, Pierre Yovanovitch Gallery, New York
Artklub, Centre Pompidou & Philharmonie de Paris
Beyond the Frames, Kunstmuseum, Basel

2024

Primavera, Primavera, Frac MÉCA, France
Sur tes lèvres, Lieu Unique + Frac des Pays de la Loire, France
Metaone. Dissolved Time: Studies of the Past in Future, Meilun Art Museum, Changsha & Wuhan, China

2023

Metaone, Esther Schipper, Berlin
Ben Elliot, flatmarkus, Zurich
Metaone, Esther Schipper, Paris

2022

DES CORPS LIBRES - Une jeune scène française, Reiffers Art Initiatives, Paris

2021

Drop 06, Zien, Online
Global Gallery, Multiple locations, Worldwide. Organized by Porsche and König Galerie
HESTIA, 55bis, Paris
Salon de Montronge, Paris
Digital Art Month, CADAFA, Paris
Sigg Art Foundation, Le Castelet
The Artist is Online: Painting and Sculpture in the Digital Age, König Galerie, Berlin
La Lune est Tombée ainsi que les pleiades, Karl Marx Studio, Paris

2020

Christmas Exhibition, Galerie Bertrand Grimont, Paris
OLYMPICS x ART, co.galerie, Paris
Unreleased Selfies, Annka Kultys Gallery, Online
Mechanics of Skin, Galerie Hussenot, Paris

2019

Futures of Love, Magasins Généraux, Pantin
Influencers, Galerie Hussenot, Paris. w/ Exo Exo. Solo

2018

Meitu MakeupPlus, Exo Exo, Paris. Solo
Ben Elliot Shop, Magasins Généraux, Pantin
Jeune Création 68, Beaux Arts, Paris
#videotutorial, PANE Project

2017

Whitescreen, Jeune Création
Ben Elliot Water, Guest Room, Carrboro

2016

Ben Elliot Party, Party, Rive Gauche Club, Paris
tbh i dunno if i have feelings, Very Art, Paris. Curated by Artagon

2015

Instagram, The Wrong - New Digital Art Biennale
CIY at Villa Belleville, Paris
Screening, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille. Curated by Heure Exquise

2014

Transparent paper on transparent paper, Yvon Lambert, Paris
NFC Biennale of Digital and Internet Art, Wrocław
Fotografiska Museet, Stockholm

Institutional collections

FRAC Nouvelle-Aquitaine MECA
MACAAL, Marrakech
Sigg Art Foundation
Collection VR d'Affaux
X Museum, Beijing

Press

Xchair in Ddar House Essaouira, Morocco. Publications in AD France, AD Middle East, AD Mexico, AD Italia, Openhouse, Scene Home, Interior Design Mag, Wallpaper, among others. 2025

Blending Form Fluidity: Ben Elliot Talks for DSCENE, DSCENE design issue, September 2024

Enter the multiverse: 6 designs leveraging emerging technologies to enhance space, FRAME Magazine, May 2024

24 artistes numériques à suivre en 2024, Fisheye Immersive, January 2024

Ben Elliot and Nagami's 3D-printed Xchair embodies metaverse aesthetics, Design Boom, December 2023

L-shaped Xchair features 3d-printed curvy lines that coalesce in layers, Parametric Architecture, December 2023

Ben Elliot, the artist who is a succesful brand, Unlocked podcast, November 2023 “Metaone”

de Ben Elliot: una odisea por el metaverso, Neo2, November 2023

Ben Elliot bei Flat Markus, gallerytalk.net, October 2023

Smart Suit, A Magazine Curated By, December 2021

Meet the digital artists taking over the world's most iconic billboards with Porsche's Global Gallery, Complex, November 2021

Monnier Paris s'associe avec l'artiste Ben Elliot pour son premier drop NFT, L'ADN, October 2021

Monnier Paris s'associe avec l'artiste crypto Ben Elliot, Challenges, October 2021

This global exhibition brings rising digital artists to the busiest streets in the world, i-D France, October 2021

Ben Elliot, Sous Influences, Le Quotidien de l'Art, June 2021

To the moon!»: ces gens qui deviennent des cryptomonnaies, L'ADN, April 2021

Ben Elliot a fait de son avatar une oeuvre d'art, i-D France, April 2021

«NFT», nuova parola d'ordine per vendere arte con le criptovalute, Corriere Della Sera, April 2021

Interview, FAD Magazine, April 2021

Kunst in Quarantäne #21 Fixe Screens und fluide Körper, Gallery Talk, February 2021

Inspired by Hello Kitty and Gudetama the depressed egg, artist Ben Elliot interrogates 'cute', Creative Boom, February 2021

Ben Elliot, l'artiste qui a fait de son avatar virtuel une œuvre d'art, Numéro Art, November 2020

10 artistes contemporains de moins de 30 ans dont vous allez entendre parler, France Inter, October 2020

Deep Ownership, The Future Laboratory, September 2020

The new cryptocurrency that could change how we trade art, Screen Shot, July 2020

Unreleased Selfies, Flash Art Online, June 2020

Tokenization getting personal with new opportunities and old dangers, Cryptonews, May 2020

Kunst kaufen per Krypto-Währung smart vernetzt mit Ben Elliot, Gallerytalk.net, May 2020

The artist Ben Elliot is launching the first art cryptocurrency named Ben Elliot Token (BET), FAD Magazine, May 2020

Art + crypto tale takes new twist as artist tokenizes his output, Cryptonews, May 2020

French artist launches personal crypto tied to value of his career and output, Investing.com, April 2020

French artist launches personal crypto tied to value of his career and output, Cointelegraph, April 2020

Ben Elliot introduces personal cryptocurrency, Design Boom, April 2020

Numéro Berlin, April 2020

Cobo Social, October 2019

Futures of Love, Le Monde, July 2019

The Etymology of Influence, Slek, June 2019

Numéro Art, April 2019

Ich promote das 21. Jahrhundert, Monopol Magazin, April 2019

Ben Elliot at Galerie Hussenot, Artnews, March 2019

Influencers by Ben Elliot, OFluxo, March 2019

Figure Figure, December 2018

L'entreprise, une oeuvre d'art comme les autres?, Le Quotidien de l'Art, November 2018

Ben, Fucking Young!, September 2018

Art-as-Life for the New Generation: An Interview with Ben Elliot, Berlin Art Link, September 2018

Shopping with Ben Elliot looks like this, Office Magazine, July 2018

Le Foot butte sur l'art, Libération, June 2018

What's on your camera roll?, Fucking Young!, June 2018

The Stalker, Office Magazine, January 2018

Water by Ben Elliot, Office Magazine, November 2017

Ben Elliot - Interview, Dull Magazine, April 2017

Drinking water with Ben Elliot, OK+, April 2017

Ben Elliot - Interview, Dazed Korea, October 2016

Ben Elliot - Self-reflective visual artist, Glamcult, October 2016

Editorial, Recens Paper, October 2016

Ben Elliot: The millenial who shook Paris' art scene, Metal Magazine, June 2016

Ben Elliot - tbh I dunno if i have feelings review, AQNB, June 2016

Ben Elliot, Arcademi, June 2016

Portrait, Modzik, June 2016

This 22-year-old threw a party with Paris' cool kids and called it art, High Snobiety, May 2016

Emerging artist Ben Elliot celebrates first solo show in Paris, Glamcult, February 2016