

# **Simulating the Presentation of the Simulated**

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## My First Step into the Rabbit Hole

It was five years ago when I started to work on design and renderings for large-scale public sculptures and installations. And as a phenomenon common to the industry of public art, many of the designs never managed to win any competitions and remained in hard drives—in the virtual. This is also common among other fields that require high budgets for projects to be realised. And to me, this experience changed my understanding of how design and art projects take form. The renderings I made that show how things would look and fit in certain environments in the future trapped me deeper into the virtual space. At times, I would keep illustrating and rendering my designs knowing they would never be built. The job kept pushing me to analyse the shape and forms of natural and artificial structures in further details. As I develop these skills, they inevitably dominate the way I see things. Moreover, the scale of things starts to mean less to me. After all, size doesn't transfer well to the virtual, where sizes are just numbers. It started to make less and less sense for me to impress people by designing magnificent objects, especially when they were nowhere near impressive when they were not overlaid on photos of real environments. Ironically, as I mocked myself for losing all hope in making the real, the truth is, my will to push things to reality had only grown under the pressure from non-existent budgets. This might explain on a psychological level how my thesis project takes the form of paralleled existence. I have directed the project to extend into both planes, one into reality and the other keeps mutating in the virtual.

Through the installation titled “Runway Descend”—the major component of my thesis *Simulating the Presentation of the Simulated*—whose existence is at once virtual and physical, I intend to reposition the existential form of artworks during its creative process from conception to actualisation. Specifically, I reflect on how the process of rendering alters the physicality and dimension of artwork. In the contemporary context where all means of art-making are widely accepted, including virtual works which are yet simply and commonly considered as a new creative techniques/media. Most virtual works are presented as opposed to physical works, either simulating real-life experience as much realistic as possible, or relying on the fantastic technical achievement of the virtual medium to create things that cannot be actualised in reality. However, I would like to suggest that there is a more subtle relationship between the virtual technology and the virtual property of creative conception that lies in the inherent process of simulation. In many cases, simulation on the plane of creative consciousness is mutually derivative and parallel to the physical creation, although perhaps only one of them is manifested in concrete form.

## The Entanglement and Parallelism of Reality and Simulation

When it comes to simulation in the creative process, the decisive factor for its efficacy would be the training of skills in both observation and representation. We may use a triangle and two squares to represent a house, or a stick figure to represent a person. To illustrate a common object in a certain popular method is seen as an intuitive choice, not because it's the most efficient way to present how it looks, but because it is what others recognize as the classic representation of the object in its abstraction. As one who grew up in a Chinese city, I rarely ever see houses. Because of the sheer density of population in Chinese cities, citizens there mostly live in apartments inside tall residential buildings. In this context, the graphic of a triangle on top of a square represents the abstract idea of a house (with walls and a roof). In other words, those who without much prior practice in drawing, doodle in a certain popular method for the efficiency of communication. But these solutions do little to no help on others picturing the exact look and localization of the objects. Training in figurative drawing would grant this process of simulation with more details. Drawing entails actively observing (Perspective) and memorising more of the objects' specific morphological features in order to achieve representations of the original form as perceived. In other words, the training of figurative drawing is a process of bringing simulation closer to real world phenomena. The extent to which the reality and its simulation match relies on the artist's observation and representation of real-life substance.

However, the process of observation and representation is subjected to frequent, inevitable errors which gradually accumulate with every stroke and eventually result in the final image produced not matching the original vision. Therefore, it is of great importance for the painter to assure the precision of representation and develop an efficient mechanism for correcting the faulty simulations in good time. As one gradually advances in observation and representation, one will find that they don't have to check so frequently the comparison between the real and the simulation because they could draw imaginary things without referring to physical entities based on their prior experience of observing the form, movement, material, and colour of various objects. Kim Jong-Gi, whom I agree with a lot on drawing methods, mentioned in one of his interviews how creators, before laying strokes on paper, had simulated the parallel existence of the objects in their imagination<sup>1</sup>. Of course, there are also other understandings on the practice of 2d drawing. I'm just stating which I realised through my own practice and hopefully helps me to explain the following concepts.

Similar logic applies to 3D modelling and texturing. In my personal working experience as a designer making 3d models and renderings, I first envision a concise 3D structure that represents important features of the 3D shapes. And according to its morphological features, I then build the detailed topology of the model, followed by making UV maps and textures. Later, making its shaders and animations, etc. The successful completion of the above-mentioned steps requires not only a good understanding of how the software functions, but also a very specific imagination—simulation of the model that will be created. The simulation I emphasise here is the simulation of an object in the creator's mind prior to its simulation in the digital sphere.

The definition of simulation I suggest here is not just the mimicry of visual phenomena but applies to every conscious and subconscious mental act we do to foresee the possible consequences of our acts, including both the ones in our brain which we sometimes called imagination, and the ones that utilise the power of computation to process. The design, maintenance, and even forgetting of statues that is common in the context of public art has its

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<sup>1</sup> "Interview & Demonstration with Kim Jung Gi." YouTube. June 2, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1CSclKBkmo&t=1077s>.

equivalence in everyday life. It is not necessarily to build a monument or to accomplish a job. In fact, this very logical structure pervades all conscious behaviours of human beings. Even during the execution of one or many plans, the construction of virtual matters, i.e. simulations, persists without the confines of specific time and space. For example, as one starts to will and picture a potential vacation they are longing for, they'd think of the possibilities of new experiences, potential sites to visit and how long it might take to get there. In this regard, simulation is better understood as a process of grafting and combining one's existing knowledge. During this thought process which does not necessarily require detailed research, the person had already built simulated environments without anchoring a restricted time and space. As this constructed virtual environment might have shaped and limited my perception of an ideal trip to a certain extent, when I find out one day that I don't actually have time to travel, the unrealized trip is already retained in my consciousness.

Jean Baudrillard already mentioned 1989 in *Simulacra and Simulation* the concept of hyperreality and how the "reality" as we know it no longer exists.<sup>2</sup> However, looking into how human vision works reveals obvious contradictions. Our brain cannot directly recognise accurate projections of light into the eye because the photo-sensitive neurons are themselves unevenly distributed on the retina. That is to say, our brain unconsciously recalibrates and complements the stimulations to generate the reality as we know it. Therefore, I don't think the hyper-real ever actually replaced "reality". On the contrary, it is a more direct and concrete representation of our generalisation of what we observe, it exists independently.

The process which creates the simulacra, in fact, strictly follows how we acknowledge our surroundings. When one sees a vacation poster depicting a natural landscape in a city without any greenery, the poster encourages and helps one to picture and bring up the concept of nature which already exists in one's knowledge. If the poster presents a bizarre-looking forest that one has never seen before, then this image does not alter the prior understanding of a typical forest. The image of the bizarre-looking forest only specifically represents the bizarre-looking forest—you can think of it as a new piece of information stored in its own new memory slot. The observer's own visual experience prior to seeing the poster determines his recognition of the given matter. In the extreme case where the observer has no prior ontological knowledge of the subject the image represents, then regardless of the consistency between what is advertised on the poster and the reality, the image of the forest seen for the first time is all that is known about the forest in the present, which is indeed the general reality of the viewer.

The first example Baudrillard gives in *Simulacra and Simulation* is an infinitely specific map of a kingdom that includes all the details of reality, and in such an extreme case this map has become the new reality in the user's mind.<sup>3</sup> However, there is an antecedent condition implied here, that is, the real world existed before this one-to-one correspondence map was made. If this antecedent condition is nullified, that is, after excluding the difference in the time dimension that exists between the map and the displayed landscape, the map will lose its legitimacy for substituting the so-called reality. By difference in time dimension, I mean the difference in the point of appearance on a temporal spectrum between the simulation and the entity that is simulated. The one-to-one restoration of the map of the kingdom emerged after the kingdom's existence. (It is important to emphasise that this order has nothing to do with subjective perception—although the map appears relatively late, in many cases the viewer will see it first. However, this does not affect the order of appearance between the two in the temporal dimension.)

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<sup>2</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Semiotext(e), 1983).

<sup>3</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Semiotext(e), 1983), 1.

In contrast to the map example, a city can also be built under the guidance of a simulated urban planning scheme. A more humdrum case is that of 3D printing, where a designer designs the outer form of a product on a computer, then issues printing instructions through interaction with the printing software and obtains a physical product after a certain production time. If all these cases are placed on a spectrum according to temporal precedence, a non-binary, and non-linear structure would appear. Even if we take a look at a specific short period of time from a single task, we can still observe opposing temporal relationships. Taking urban planning and construction as an example, while installing new pipelines, the construction team might encounter an old pipeline that doesn't exist in the database for designs, and therefore needs to reconfigure the pipes' routes. The agents—in this case the design team and the construction team—in this entangled (infinitely alternating) relationship are in turn relatively independent. Either party can complete their work independently without the assistance from the other. Thus, the infinitely detailed entanglement constitutes a parallel between the subject of the action and its will to perform.

In the above two paragraphs, I have made two points: Firstly, the simulation is a concrete representation of what is generalised through observation, and thus exists independently from the perceived reality; Secondly, the simulation and the reality are in a parallel relationship rather than a mutually substitutable relationship as long as the temporal difference is dissolved.

Let's come to a more concrete scenario to explore the relationship between the phenomenon of simulation and art-making. In a battle, whether a bomber pilot actually executes bombing in field missions after rounds of simulations has a serious impact on both the attacking and defending sides. All the aftermath of real violence would not exist in reality if the missions ended at the stage of simulation and never proceeded to execution. Similarly, non-documentary films, regardless of their immersive effect, the reality experienced by the audience is separate from the content in the film, even though its production prominently includes a line informing the audience that "this film is based on a true story". As the media of film is widely experienced yet the virtual is still perceived as unreal, we are accustomed to separate the fictional world behind the screen from our own real life. But this is not the unique charm of filmmaking. There is no fundamental difference between the creation of film/video and other mediums like painting or sound. On the premise that something is known to be an artistic creation, the work is placed in an abstract environment. The white box as the standard exhibiting space for artworks is a solid proof of how the physical existence of art is detached from the chaotic context and confines of reality. The white space helps the viewers to focus on the art piece without much unrelated distractions from its environment, the virtual space could be just as abstract and perhaps easier maintained. In this respect, a work that exists only digitally as 3D renderings or 2D sketches although not presented physically, already has all the characteristics to be treated as an autonomous work, completed both in its conception and its presentation.

Personally, I don't yet see how digital simulations are anyhow fundamentally flawed to be recognized as complete art pieces. The simulations I mentioned here include the ones run in computing devices and those that happen in human consciousness. We use computers for simulations for efficiency and accuracy. We implement our understanding of the recognized phenomena and make computer simulation systems based on it. Considering all the simulation programs are intentionally made by humans, the computed simulations are only tools that fulfil humanity's growing demand for relatively accurate simulations. In addition, it is arbitrary to define all things made and viewed on computers as virtual since they do take their form as still images displayed through physical monitors shining light into people's eyes. And we may find more arguments to support the definition, one of them would be how the designs made on computers are stored in computer memory and storage. My point is to locate the simulating process as an

area that is the closest to our raw ideas, similar to writings on paper or paintings on canvas. This area consists of all means of the mediums that store our ideas. And yes, even though keeping the never-ending process of art-making in this convenient space might not be mediums positive for the sellers. But I think it is nonetheless a much more liberating method for the artist to express and the audience to experience the potential of creative projects.

When it comes to creative potential, it is not just the innovative part of our simulations which matters. The virtual connects to the simulations in a broader sense. We intuitively simulate different scenarios in life unconsciously and the corresponding predictions affect almost all of our decisions. If I'm standing on the edge of a high building, I don't need to actively imagine the danger of falling off. Simulation happens in my mind regardless. Here I prefer the word simulation instead of the term imagination because the act of imagination seemed rather intentional and active. On the other hand, simulations are usually utilised for technical planning. I consider imagination as one type of simulation. Simulations also include other types of predictions on consequences, as well as those done through other mediums other than human brains, including ones executed using the help of props and machines. There's no need to differentiate simulations by its operating mediums.

There are also some exceptional cases of projects that are highly involved in real life or rather in the functioning of society. These projects make much less sense if independent of reality. The efficacy of their interaction and incorporation with reality seems to point to a reality dimension that is counterpart to the virtual/simulating properties of artworks. However, the simple division between virtual and physical works is only a superficial one, what matters is the inseparable parallel existence of virtuality and physicality. There does not have to be a difference in the temporal dimension from virtual to reality and vice versa. In looking more specifically at virtual designing and physical construction, one realises that rendering does not necessarily imply the conception of a pre-existing physical work, nor is a physical presentation necessarily always the practice of an already formed virtual conception.

The purpose of this paper is to retrospectively explain the rationale behind the making of the installation "Runway Descend". However, much of the content of the thesis does not fit into the essay-like tone of this paper and is instead better incorporated into the installation itself, its structure, image, and the dialogues in the video.

## Linear Dialogue, Fragmented Events, and Discrete Space-Time

\*The dialogue below is an excerpt from the voice-over in the first iteration (exhibition) of the project "Runway Descend".<sup>4</sup>

A: I never got off the plane today.

B: It's not funny. How did you get here then? Teleportation?

A: I lost track. Perhaps I'm still in my dream, dreaming of us having this conversation. All I remembered before this is myself on a plane. It was gliding fast on the runway. But I wasn't aware or care whether it was a landing or take off.

B: I'd say it's more like you were dreaming about this somewhere.

A: I don't remember where I came from or where I went, but I'm convinced it's true. Just like seeing a censored article posted on Wechat, I can see people I know sharing it on Wechat moment and I could also see the article's name. Over time, the words that were once visible behind its name tag don't matter that much to me anymore. Since it takes a great effort and courage to write and post things like this, I rather believe it is righteous and real.

B: So, if I dreamt of scrolling through my friends' Wechat moments, reading articles that I once couldn't see the content of, did that bring my dream closer to reality?

The illusions and deceptions in the dream world stay real in my mind when I wake up.

A: So tell me, before and after such a dream, where did you take off and where will you land?

You could say I was dreaming of flying in a plane.

B: Then you can also say that I dreamed of a sincere land.

### #Forest#

A: Running machines have this rubber belt rolling in a loop, right, the one you step on? So, think of this, now you have a chance to turn the nature's soil into a running machine. It's like running on a road from nature, only that you will be repetitively seeing the same nature including the rocks, fallen leaves, and trees.

B: So why don't I take a walk in the woods? It's not like it rains every day. I can bring my favourite outdoor set and find a prominent place to show off my gear. A treadmill is a device used to force one's legs to swing at a steady frequency.

A: That's more like it! Think about it, doesn't nature and fiddling with your legs come in one set?

B: No, that's not right! What about if I walk to the market to buy food? What about running downstairs when the house is on fire? How does any of those have anything to do with the woods?

A: Now, don't think about people rattling their legs, but rather everything else is rattling their legs in comparison. In other words, moving at a relatively even pace. Feel something?

B: Yeah, I think I'm getting some out of this. Then what?

A: The key is in the loop repetition. If you look closely, you can find a joint in the treadmill's track, which makes a long piece of track connected at the beginning and end to form a loop. This inconspicuous joint is the basis for the regular structure of the landscape. While such boredom cannot kill the will to explore,

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<sup>4</sup> Included as appendix are the original full scripts used during the exhibition (version 01, see page 17) and a new dialogue I wrote after the exhibition as part of the thesis (version 02, see page 13). The new dialogue is more connected to the contents of the projected looping footage. I include the first version too because it was the one used in the physical exhibition and is still valid in its own context.



*it can make the person of the moment rethink and question the relationship between chaos and the unforeseen unknown. Another less extreme situation is to trot around the small park's circular track of one kilometre per lap, and within one more kilometre, one will see the landscape again with little deviation from expectations.*

*B: But each cycle a different person shows up, unless you pick a very strange event to go to the park, in which case the park may not have anyone.*

*A: It seems you still care about what other people are doing. In that case or treadmill is closer to the structure I want to introduce.*

*B: In the woods, in the mud, expecting a passenger in the covered toy plane*

*A: On the runway, the tarmac is very windy, standing against the wind, the branches and leaves of dead trees are blown away.*

## Dialogue Concept

“Hot water cools when exposed to cold ambient” is a concept, and does not refer specifically to a glass of water that actually cools. This concept does not carry a precise temporal nature, such a physical law connects many of our perceptions and memories of reality but is not the reality itself. It is an abstract cognitive vehicle of reality. Concepts like this are building blocks of our simulations.

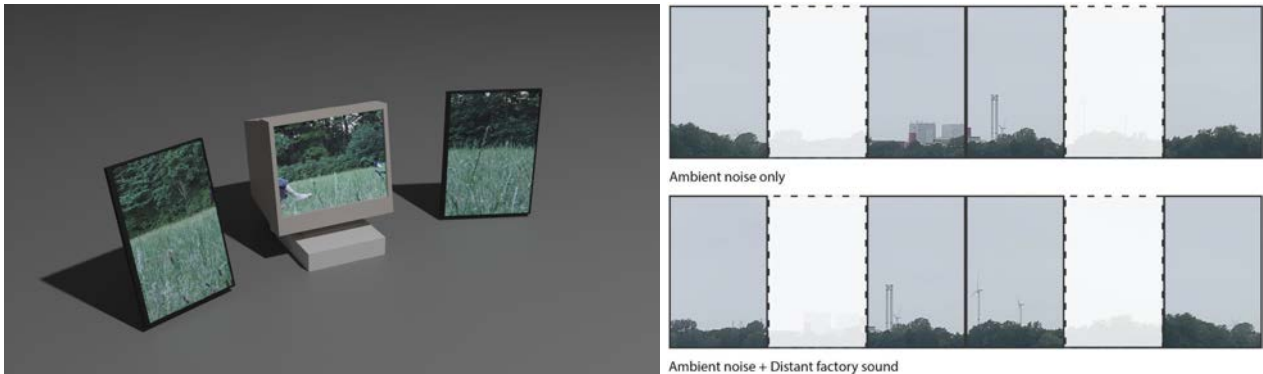
Simulations are results of abstract understanding and not necessarily limited by the linearity of time. This project does not suggest the non-linearity of time, but introduces an ideal scenario to articulate what it means to put the virtual in parallel to reality. In the case of the aforementioned open-world game experience, and the case of posters that exemplifies the contrary in terms of temporality, I try to show the parallel and relatively independent relationship between simulation and physical materialisation under the conventional understanding of time, that is, linear perception, and the constant interchange and the infinitely detailed interplay between real and virtual sequences under different scales of observation. Inevitably, if the concept of this project is to be conveyed through a work that is presented in real life, it is nevertheless through a linear medium. The audio part of this project consists of recordings of several conversations I wrote. Through the temporal fragmentation of the dialogues and the spatial dispersion of the things mentioned in them, I try to resist and break the inertia of temporal perception that hinders the communication of ideas, which may contribute to the wavering of the viewer's inertial understanding of the virtual and the real.

## Design in and for both virtual and reality

I never really had a strong desire to show a specific image, but rather to introduce a logical relationship and bring about an experience, i.e. to think backwards about what specific image content should be provided for the purpose of a particular viewing process. My practice is more like an elaborate test project anticipating a potential experiment result. Therefore, the way the image is presented is granted particular importance.

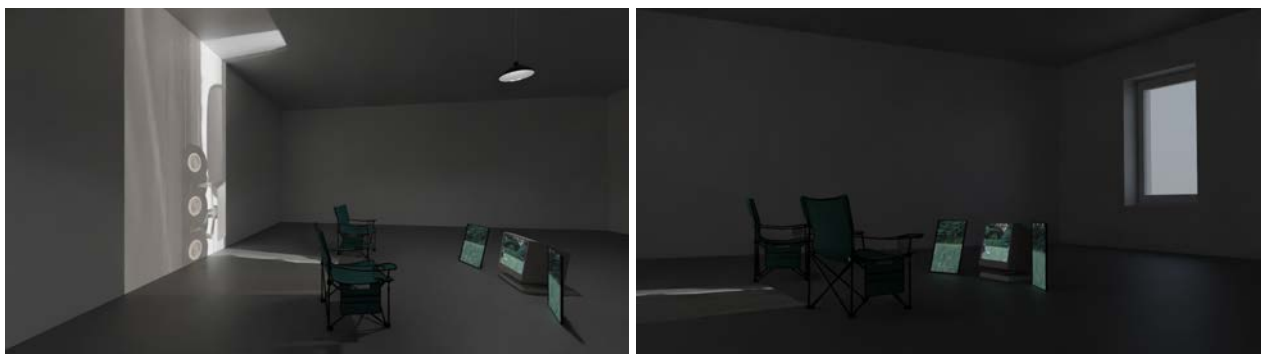
The creation of the work began with an idea for an interactive video installation. I wanted to design an installation that would allow a more direct experience of simulating in the consciousness a part of the work that was not there. The first plan for the scene is to display the footage of a factory hidden behind the trees, where the lake and the trees can be seen on the screen and the

environmental noise including the control field can be heard, but the vertical section of the footage where the factory is located is hidden in the gaps between the screens. Alternating with this scene is a scene of a 3D model of the factory, which is displayed on one of the monitors but has no environment around it, and the sound part can be heard without the natural ambient sound of the factory. Three screens are arranged from left to right in front of a viewer-operated physical knob. The knob controls the horizontal offset of the displayed footage, and viewers can turn the knob to approach the hidden part.



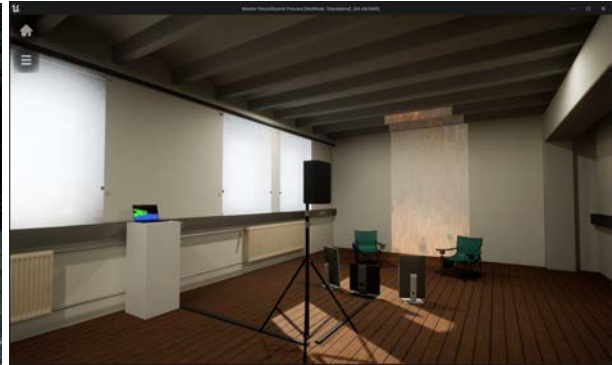
From left to right: Simulation of the first design, Illustration of interactive mechanism

In the physical exhibition after a series of adjustments, the structure of the installation is as follows: three screens are placed in the centre of the exhibition space to form the video installation mentioned earlier, but with slight adjustments, replacing the video material and removing the interactive knobs. Facing the monitors are two camping chairs. On the wall behind the seats is a vertical video projection of an endless loop of airplane runways and a loop of ground in the woods. An interactive virtual exhibition is installed on the side of the exhibition space, and a notebook for interactive display is placed on the desktop. Below are photos of the actual exhibit and screenshots of the virtual interactive experience<sup>5</sup>. A real exhibition space was measured, photo-scanned, and made into its virtual double, including a virtual laptop running its own simulation within. And the virtual would match the physical installation surrounding it.



Early simulations in a simple room

<sup>5</sup> Link to an early demonstration: <https://youtu.be/qO80FCWvU2I>



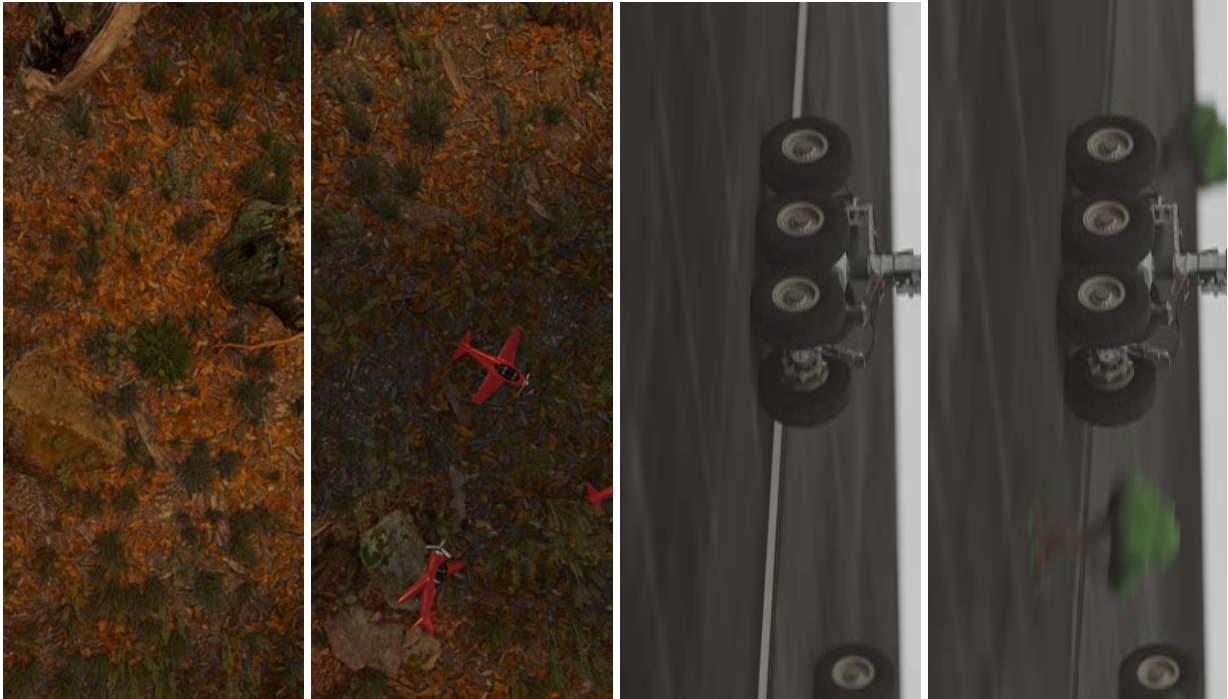
Screenshots of the virtual exhibitions



Photos of the physical exhibition at a room in HFK

The project presents the logical relationship between the real and virtual through such a parallel experience of reality and the virtual in the exhibition, and a series of continuing activities after the exhibition. The chairs are positioned corresponding to the position of the hidden chairs and characters in the video. Underneath the two seats is the audio of the dialogue played through the speakers, creating a first-person experience. The contents of the two videos projected on the walls

are two individual loops played in sequence<sup>6</sup>. The first loop is an infinite looping pathway in the woods. All objects leaving the shot keep coming back in. The second one shares the same structure which focuses on a plane moving on its runway, never leaving or stopping on its track.



Still frames from the two looping clips

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<sup>6</sup> <https://youtu.be/F9AWZx8bWlc>

## Appendix

### Dialogue Script (Version 02)

#### Scene 01

**A:** Hello! How are you doing lately? I haven't seen you in a while.

**B:** Hi! I'm doing okay. Actually, things aren't going so well for me. I was grabbed by the spicy oil when I ate yesterday, and now I still have the taste in my throat, and I cough from time to time because of it. I mean, of course, I'm not feeling down just because of that. There were other things that didn't go well and still remain unsolved. I always try to have faith in solving them. But it seemed others weren't really up for the same goal and nothing got done even if I tried my best on my part. Perhaps they simply don't think it's worth the hassle.

**A:** I guess I could relate, giving so much time and effort to build solid trust in others as well as confidence in cooperation, and yet getting continuous setbacks. A light-hearted state of mind just went away like that. Perhaps everyone has a quite different take from others on awful things in life. What confuses me is that it is hard to find out what the difference is. For example, I complain about the difficult stuff and say it is beyond my ability, even though others had similar concerns, but probably by a different cause. It's mind boggling to think how everyone has different understandings from others on every single thing in life.

Aren't the nature of communication straight-up lies?

**B:** Yeah... the lies... They might also be why we build sculptures as landmarks. To build a physical existence that represents a comment ground, using solid physical materials and building them in impressive scales. The original intention of creation always includes the desire to create a new reality, but the more ideas we put into it the more unreal and abstract it becomes. like the words marked on the base of the monuments.

-pause-

**B:** Tomorrow! I'll bring over the video camera here. There are photos I take next month. Those photos of cakes.

**A:** That's nice!

**B:** Last week! On Tuesday, I'll bring over the video camera here. There's a new SD card in it. I just formatted it.

**A:** That's nice!

**B:** How about you? How are you doing recently? I heard you went to organise the studio's warehouse. I'll later put something there. Please look after them for me cause I had already moved out all my stuff in that place.

**A:** Let's meet at your place at some point. Do you still have the bottle cap from 2029? I remember you will promise to show it to us.

**B:** Ahhh...

**A:** Can't you find it anymore? Cola, wulong tea, soy sauce, sesamin oil, and spice sauce.

-pause-

**A:** At the moment, I was carrying a canvas bag. strangely, I didn't buy anything. At the time, you asked me why I mentioned the concept of mimicry. And I had been thinking about it ever since. I gradually realized how my thoughts are drifting toward a mental state of production isolation.

Yeah. I've always been like this, trying to put everything witnessed as an inducer.

**B:** Why would you try to turn everything into art projects?

**A:** Let's not talk about this anymore. Don't forget to bring your documents yesterday, We can't afford such a mistake.

**A:** Sure! You have my word. I already have it with me before I got here. Chill!

## **Scene 02**

**B:** As I promised, I will show him what the sculpture used to look like. He said they plan to start working on it next month and the sculpture is almost completely demolished. All that remains is the base. They don't know what to do with it. It's just a block of rock. Right? What could it possibly be used for?

**A:** Aren't there some writings on the base, those written to show the people and events behind its creation? If everyone remembers what it will look like, then it still remains meaningful. This is where it is different from the renderings. What's the value of creators if the renderings are only made after the constructions?

**B:** There isn't much difference. Is there?

**A:** You mean the difference between rendered images and the finished piece?

**B:** I'm not just comparing to the renderings, but also many other aspects of the creative process. If you upload a rendering onto google Maps, others wouldn't notice at a glance that it doesn't exist. There certainly are differences. One of them is the use as landmarks. But I think it is limited to the spatial orientation or the bookmarks of our memories. I'm suggesting from the perspective of witnessing a work's location. And we are losing the necessity to see the real deal with our own eyes. And as a result, the feature of geologic localization stands out way more that it changed how we see the infrastructures we build around ourselves.

Then, leaving aside the attribute of realistic spatial positioning, after defining what an artwork looks like, I may be equivalent to having completed the work.

-short pulse-

I played assassins creed before and saw the buildings, rivers, and roads in the game before I went to the actual places in Italy years later. It was a rather strange experience. I never expected the models in games to respect the original architecture down to the details. Because of this, I felt my surroundings unreal when I was physically there, thinking myself suppose to climb the walls of the buildings. And when on top of it, have a nice view of the city, followed by a jump off into a stack of

hay unharmed. The experience was not like the theme park built to represent a fictional world. I know the city exists long before its mimicries.

**A:** I can see there will be more options for us to decide how we acknowledge this world.

**B:** Yes, And I see this rather beautiful.

### **Scene 03**

**B:** Hey! You're back! Just put them on the table.、

**A:** Jiayi asked you to bring over the bottle cap.

**B:** Well, help me to find it then. Put it in my jacket when found it. The jacket is hanging by the door, that green cotton coat.

**A:** I need to use the bathroom first. Is the bottle cap in your room?

**B:** It shouldn't be in the bedroom, I just cleaned it up and didn't see it. Look for other places.

-a moment later-

**A:** Have you found it yet?

**B:** No. Do you remember when and where was the last time you saw it? It might still be there.

**A:** Nevermind. I will look for it later.

-a short pause-

**B:** Get the table mat on the table. The soup is almost ready.

**A:** I never got off the plane today.

**B:** It's not funny. How did you get here then? Teleportation?

**A:** I lost track. Perhaps I'm still in my dream, dreaming of us having this conversation. All I remembered before this is myself on a plane. It was gliding fast on the runway. But I wasn't aware or care whether it was a landing or take off.

**B:** I'd say it's more like you were dreaming about this somewhere.

**A:** I don't remember where I came from or where I went, but I'm convinced it's true. Just like seeing a censored article posted on Wechat, I can see people I know sharing it on Wechat moment and I could also see the article's name. Over time, the words that were once visible behind its name tag don't matter that much to me anymore. Since it takes a great effort and courage to write and post things like this, I rather believe it is righteous and real.

**B:** So, if I dreamt of scrolling through my friends' Wechat moments, reading articles that I once couldn't see the content of, did that bring my dream closer to reality?

The illusions and deceptions in the dream world stay real in my mind when I wake up.

**A:** So tell me, before and after such a dream, where did you take off and where will you land?

You could say I was dreaming of flying in a plane.

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#Forest#

**A:** Running machines have this rubber belt rolling in a loop, right, the one you step on? So, think of this, now you have a chance to turn the nature soil into a running machine. It's like running on a road from nature, only that you will be repetitively seeing the same nature including the rocks, fallen leaves, and trees.

**B:** So why don't I take a walk in the woods? It's not like it rains every day. I can bring my favourite outdoor set and find a prominent place to show off my gear. A treadmill is a device used to force one's legs to swing at a steady frequency.

**A:** That's more like it! Think about it, doesn't nature and fiddling with your legs come in one set?

**B:** No, that's not right! What about if I walk to the market to buy food? What about running downstairs when the house is on fire? how does any of those have anything to do with the woods?

**A:** Now, don't think about people rattling their legs, but rather everything else is rattling their legs in comparison. In other words, moving at a relatively even pace. Feel something?

**B:** Yeah, I think I'm getting some out of this. Then what?

**A:** The key is in the loop repetition. If you look closely, you can find a joint in the treadmill's track, which makes a long piece of track connected at the beginning and end to form a loop. This inconspicuous joint is the basis for the regular structure of the landscape. While such boredom cannot kill the will to explore, it can make the person of the moment rethink and question the relationship between chaos and the unforeseen unknown. Another less extreme situation is to trot around the small park's circular track of one kilometre per lap, and within one more kilometre, one will see the landscape again with little deviation from expectations.

**B:** But each cycle a different person shows up, unless you pick a very strange event to go to the park, in which case the park may not have anyone.

**A:** It seems you still care about what other people are doing. In that case or treadmill is closer to the structure I want to introduce.

**B:** In the woods, in the mud, expecting a passenger in the covered toy plane

**A:** On the runway, the tarmac is very windy, standing against the wind, the branches and leaves of dead trees are blown away.



## **Dialogue Script (Version 01)**

**A:** So, What did you do that day ?

**B:** I woke up, from a void after bad dreams don't remember.

I wasn't sure, actually. Maybe it wasn't bad.

How can I be certain?

...

It was still quite early in the morning. And the skylight was cold and empty, barely lit up the area near the glass door to a balcony.

**A:** Then you got off a bed?

At the time, were you thinking of this conversation we have?

**B:** Yes, I got off a bed, but not exactly. Perhaps part of me was still resting on a pillow, waiting for a new dream. I had myself another 20 minutes in bed, with my eyes closed.

**A:** Hmm...

**B:** About this conversation, I wasn't thinking much of it. I mean, after all, I did see the form of it.

But I'm surely aware.

The stove was still on! Well, it was a relief finishing this talk.

**A:** Did you manage to sleep early tonight?

I believe I did so, or do I look exhausted now?

**B:** If I cut you off and this very question was not asked, would you still know that I have your keys?

They seem much loud.

**A:** What if... you've never touched it, nor this peace of mind?

One bit of toothpaste dripped towards the floor tiles, missing the edge of a tiny sink, was covering my mouth and teeth, splashed onto the mirror, and dried to exist as white dots.

Does it cover bits of my reflection? Was I such blind?

**B:** I understand.

And uh... you made yourself breakfast?

-pause-

They are two slices of toast. Also, some leftovers from stuff people cook.

People - like us.

**A:** What do you mean, people like us?

I ate your eggs from the fridge. Mother chicken flew away. She kept her breast to herself.

It's on her bones now, from your throat.

Like us, we go under a bridge when the rain pours, listening to trains roaring over.

**B:** Like us, heading to places, crossing freeways with hands off the steering wheel, reaching for the sky, reaching for the mother chicken.

After the first meal, I walked to a car with notes and tools.

**A:** You went to work.

What tools do you have along?

**B:** Ugh...

Can't say it is work, I don't know what I was going for. At least not anymore.

There were lighting panels in that car, piled up in the backseats. Perhaps it was for a photo shoot.

I remember holding the backdoor.

Tinnitus.

-pause-

It was all too strange, so I went by tram instead.

**A:** You didn't take any panels with you?

**B:** What panels? Those in the backseats?

I don't remember. Perhaps a small vehicle with four wheels would be efficient to carry your curiosity.

-long pause-

I hate you.

**A:** ?! Why?

For no reason?

For your past won't ever leave you alone.

For your next minute always gets one abyss away from you.

**B:** For no reason.

Your past doesn't exist until you blame.

Your future had always stayed alone until you wish for a better self.

When anger and tears hurdle towards your sweaty hands. All the happiness slips away.

It all happens so fast you can't figure out their weight.

I hate you. And I'm aware it's legal.

**AB:** In tears didn't make it out of my eyes.

I moved on, one foot in mid-air, for eternity.

I assumed I will stay alive and I assumed many others do so as well.

I'm glad myself casually simulating a world with my participance.

**A:** At times it's really just my room where I sleep.

**B:** At times It's just a private restroom. At times, it's just a bed.

**AB:** How is a bed more comfortable?

**A:** better shape.

better touch.

-long pause-

**A:** What is failure? Edible?

**B:** Failure happens when one recognizes that one's imbecility has caused irreparable, contrary to the simulated results.

Edible. Open then close your mouth, then it will be yours.

**A:** Is it portable?

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