



## Film & Video Program

Video streaming makes up a significant proportion of global data traffic. Netflix alone is responsible for 15 percent and YouTube for more than eleven percent of the internet-based downstream volume. Although these 2018 figures do not contain any significant data from China or India, the extent to which the internet has now turned into a huge entertainment machine is clear. What began in the 1990s with hopes of the democratizing potential of an open global communication system has quickly become subject to extensive commercialization. The history and future of digital networks, which are reflected in the transformation of online video cultures, is the theme of this year's film and video program, curated by Florian Wüst, primarily within the framework of the Film & Video Day at HKW. Entitled *Streaming Life*, it presents lectures, short films, and the documentary film *Present.Perfect.* (2019) by Shengze Zhu. The exhibition's short film program *Geographies of Relation*, with works from Ursula Biemann, Ruini Shi, and Solveig Suess, addresses material infrastructures, maritime ecosystems, and self-learning digital environments. AI, social media and their impact on human behavior are the subject of *Self Share*, our short film program at Volksbühne. Lawrence Lek's *AIDOL* (2019) completes the film and video program with a Sinofuturist vision of an epic struggle between man and machine not as a world of simple opposites, but of systemic relations encompassing nature and technology alike.



### **Videoblogging before YouTube**

In the first years of the 2000s, online DIY video cultures went through a small renaissance as the web transformed under the influence of blogging and Web 2.0, which massified access to web-based text, audio, and video publishing. In this lecture, interspersed with rare video clips rescued from now defunct blogs and services, media scholar Trine Bjørkmann Berry chronicles and analyzes this moment of “video blogging” as a unique phenomenon of vernacular video making. Early video tools were limited, with little or no online video distribution, and widespread incompatibilities in video production and consumption. This is not just video blogging before YouTube, it is also a matrix pointing to a mode of participation beyond corporate networks.





### **Telematic New World**

Time sharing was one of the first attempts to connect several terminals to a central computer. This pre-internet system enabled multiple users to access a single computer, a distributed structure that increased overall computing capacity. Although the technology quickly lost importance when the PC was introduced in the 1980s, it revealed the potential of a shared electronic space. Driven by the idea of interactive communication, so-called telecommunication art emerged out of 1960–70s conceptual and mail art. One of the earliest fax performances was realized in August 1981, when Tom Klinkowstein and Robert Adrian X transmitted information between Amsterdam and Vienna. Using the data network of Canadian time sharing company I. P. Sharp, they produced image collages that were assembled in several steps. The pioneers of telecommunication art pursued the vision of an open, global exchange of information outside university and commercial networks. The films selected for Telematic New World tell this story and extend it to the present day, focusing on the artistic examination of the internet as a mirror of society.

### **Swatted**

Ismaël Joffroy Chandoutis  
FR 2018, 21'

### **This Makes Me Want to Predict the Past**

Canan Bilir-Meier  
DE/AT 2019, 16'

### **Levittown/How We Communicate**

Tom Klinkowstein  
NL 1982, 9'

### **BIT Plane**

Bureau of Inverse Technology  
US 1999, 14'

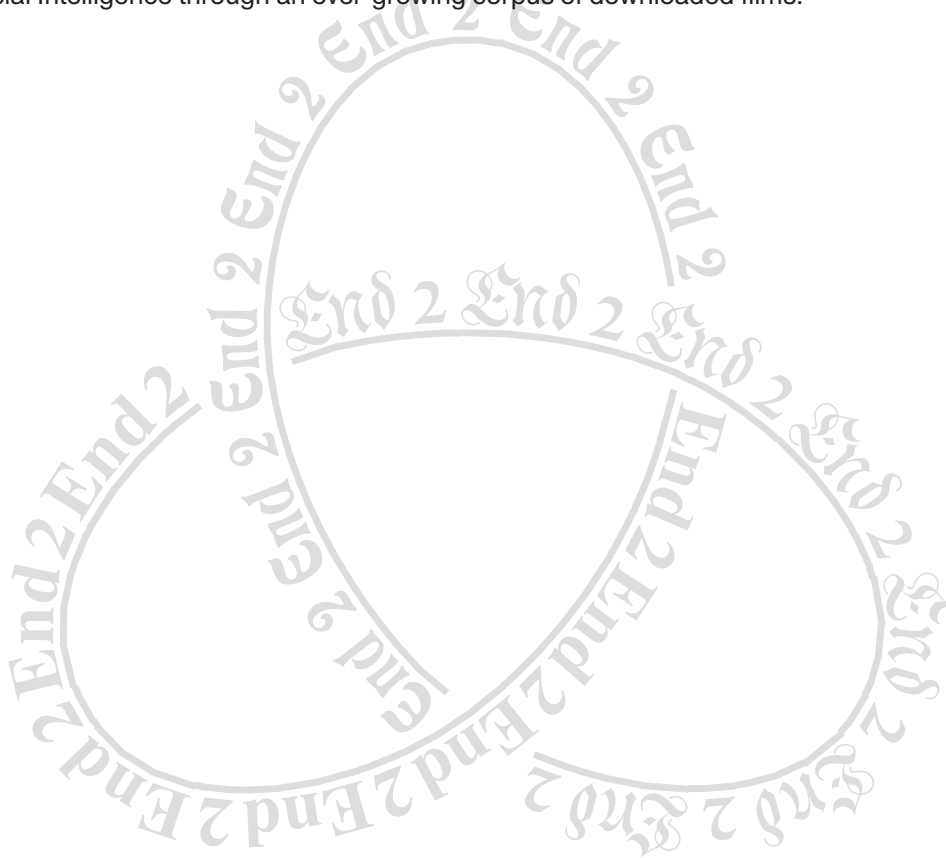
### **Heaven's Gate**

Peggy Ahwesh  
US 2001, 4'



### **Autonomous Pirate Machinery**

In the past 15 years, Jan Gerber and Sebastian Lütgert downloaded more than 20,000 movies. Since they couldn't watch them all, they started a cinema, launched an online database, wrote a media archive framework, and traveled around the world. In their lecture *Autonomous Pirate Machinery*, they share some of the lessons they learned in the process: about the benefits of autonomous networks, the promises and pitfalls of parasitic collaboration, the archive as a failed state of preservation, and the many futures of cinema that the copyright regime hasn't managed to suppress. The machines also learned their lessons, so the list wouldn't be complete without some *Generative Adversarial Piracy*: a proposal for the practical critique of Artificial Intelligence through an ever-growing corpus of downloaded films.

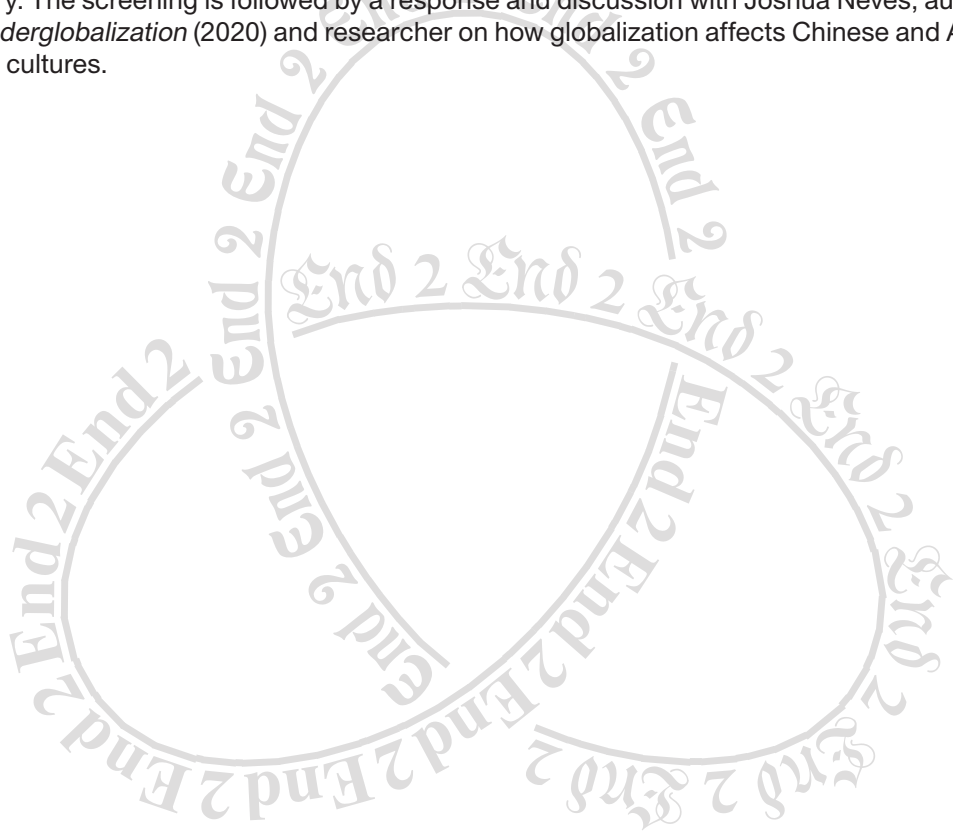




**Present.Perfect.**

Shengze Zhu  
US/HK 2019, 124'

In recent years, live streaming has boomed in China and turned into a veritable industry, even if censors have recently clamped down on the phenomenon. Viewers chat with so-called anchors, and reward them with virtual gifts to be exchanged for actual money. For her documentary, Shengze Zhu followed a dozen streaming anchors for ten months. From more than 800 hours of footage she created a collective portrait not of internet fame but of lonely lives on the margins of society: a street dancer, a paralyzed girl, a single mother working in a textile factory. The screening is followed by a response and discussion with Joshua Neves, author of *Underglobalization* (2020) and researcher on how globalization affects Chinese and Asian video cultures.





### **Geographies of Relation**

The looped short film program of *The Eternal Network* presents three works on persistent deep-time relations of people, ecologies, and infrastructures that are currently undergoing major transformations. The geographies explored here are situated between the material and the abstract, with topics such as China's New Silk Road infrastructure, maritime ecosystems, and self-learning digital environments.

#### **AAA Cargo**

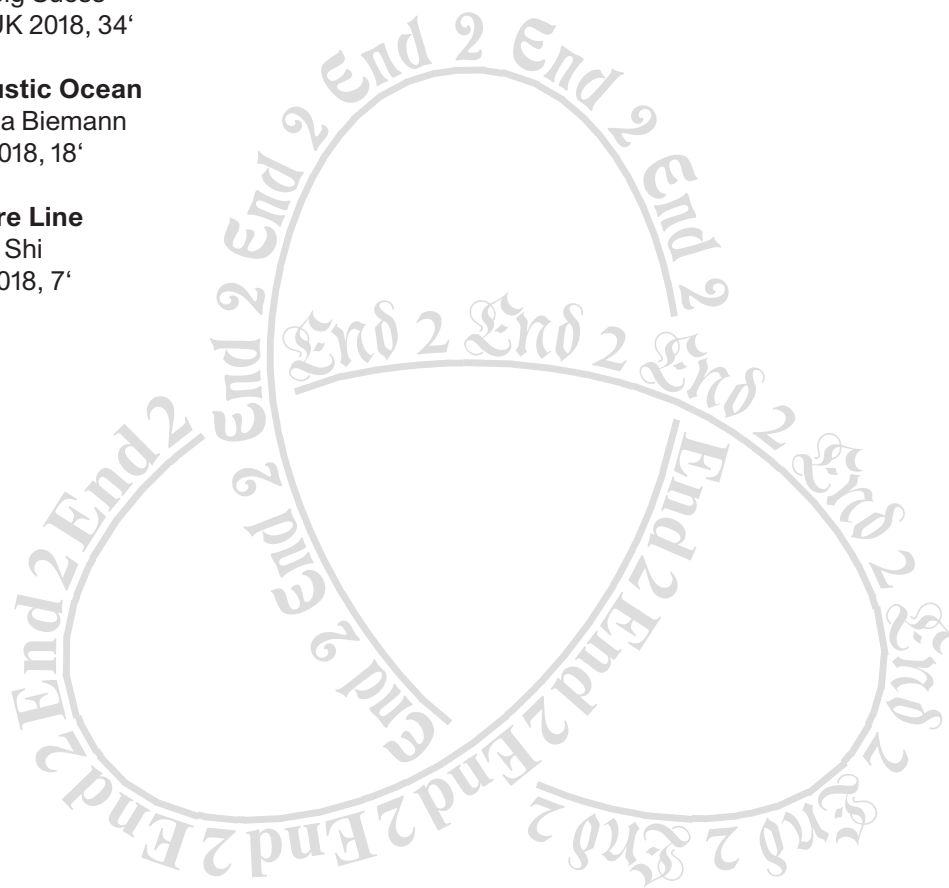
Solveig Suess  
CN/UK 2018, 34'

#### **Acoustic Ocean**

Ursula Biemann  
CH 2018, 18'

#### **Desire Line**

Ruini Shi  
UK 2018, 7'





### **Self Share**

Social media form a space within which the most trivial everyday experiences can not only be shared, but also staged and marketed in terms of beauty, perfection, and effectivity. Influencers never have bad days – at least they don't publish Instagram photos of them. While the trend to excessively optimized self-presentation may pass, our emotional bond with digital devices and platforms, as well as the attendant economization of social relations, has long since penetrated all areas of life. Increasingly differentiated evaluation and control of user behavior enables applications which, as Harald Welzer writes, promise relief from our merely human, all-too-deficient capabilities. It effectively constitutes a colonial regime that imposes internalization of the given order in the forms of self-constraint and self-compulsion. Employing autoethnography, performance, and satire, the films in *Self Share* explore ambivalent YouTube phenomena, selfie culture, and artificial intelligence, playing with attempts to escape algorithmic norms through waywardness.

### **Zombies**

Baloji  
BE/CD 2019, 15'

### **Breed and Educate**

Tobias Yves Zintel  
DE 2018, 11'

### **Watching the Pain of Others**

Chloé Galibert-Lainé  
FR 2019, 31'

### **Der Freie Mensch – mit KI**

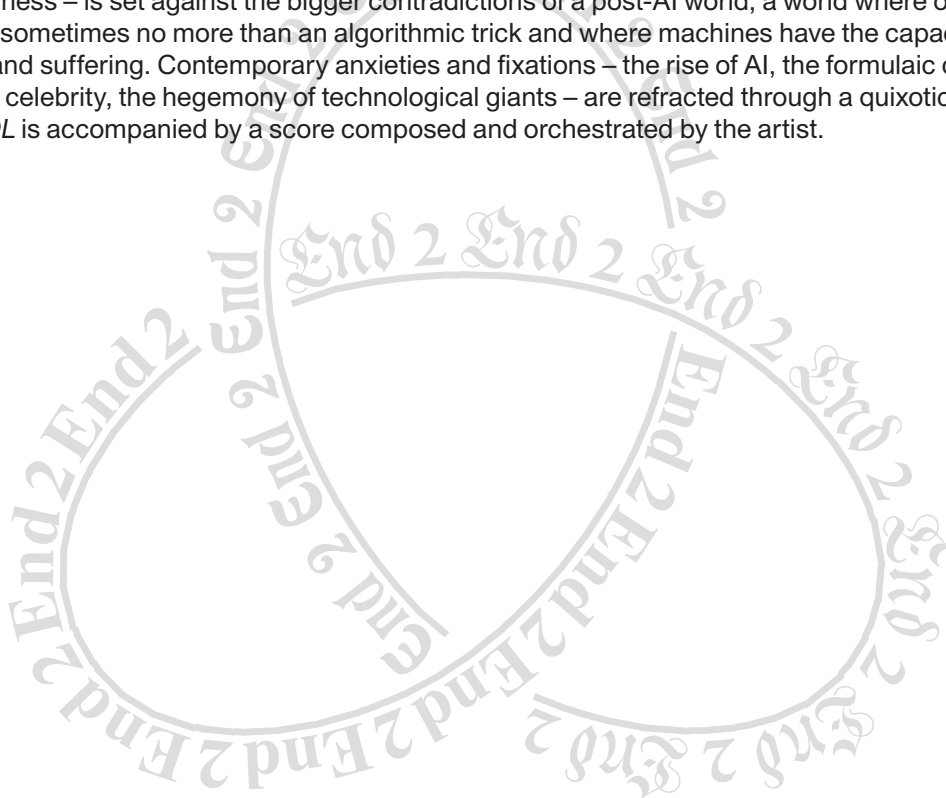
Sylvie Boisseau, Frank Westermeyer  
DE 2019, 7'



**AIDOL**

Lawrence Lek  
UK 2019, 83'

Lawrence Lek's first feature-length film, *AIDOL*, is a CGI fantasy that forms the sequel to his acclaimed film *Geomancer* (2017). Deploying 3D rendering and video gaming software, *AIDOL* is a technically dazzling and thematically-layered experience. It tells the story of Diva – a fading superstar preparing for a comeback performance at the 2065 “eSports Olympics” – and Geo, an AI with artistic yearnings. Set in a smoke-and-mirrors realm of fantastical architecture, sentient drones and snow-deluged jungles, *AIDOL* revolves around the long and complex struggle between humanity and Artificial Intelligence. Fame – in all its allure and emptiness – is set against the bigger contradictions of a post-AI world, a world where originality is sometimes no more than an algorithmic trick and where machines have the capacity for love and suffering. Contemporary anxieties and fixations – the rise of AI, the formulaic dictates of celebrity, the hegemony of technological giants – are refracted through a quixotic prism. *AIDOL* is accompanied by a score composed and orchestrated by the artist.







**The Man with the Personal Computer**

Robert Luxemburg  
DE 2020, 66'

*The Man with the Personal Computer* is an animated digital mosaic of Dziga Vertov's 1929 classic *The Man with the Movie Camera*. In a 256-channel matrix, 25 million miniaturized stills from Vertov's film are arranged, frame by frame, to match the original image as closely as possible. Where *The Man with the Movie Camera* expresses the frantic joy of mobile movie-making, *The Man with the Personal Computer* dissolves the stream of images into a new visual dimension that, no less frenetically, celebrates cinema as an object of computation. Unlike most other films, this one is best seen from afar, or through squinted eyes. Both the video and the source code written to render it are in the public domain at <https://rolux.org/tm20>

