

Nina Davies

Becoming the Edit

31st May to 6th July 2024

Becoming the Edit is a solo exhibition by Nina Davies, comprised of a new film, audio work, sculptures and an installation of electronic device assemblages that responds to the viewer's presence. A series of live performances expand the film, linking the objects and themes that run through the exhibition.

Central to the show is *Haters will say I'm real* (2024), a nine minute film whose narration takes the form of a podcast conversation between two unseen speakers. As the conversation unfolds between an actor describing a film role to an interviewer, it becomes clear that this show is set in a fictional near future as they discuss changes in the legal system driven by automation, technological development and the resulting ethical consequences. The film posits a hypothetical reclaiming of image rights: an assertion of control over a user's image made through dance and specific coded movement that situates the person in their real environment. In the dance the performers revolve their phone over their body in a rapid series of poses described as an 'edit' because of its realtime mimicry of offline editing.

Bystander Assembly (2024) is an installation of commercially available devices: smart phones, tracking sensors and lighting units. The room is filled by these constructions and as the viewer navigates the space the units recognise and track the body and face of the visitor, activated through hand gestures. This is perhaps an unnerving act of surveillance or a welcome acknowledgement and affirmation.

Devices from the film have also emerged into the gallery. They are curious hybrid machines, a photographic ring light has been carefully moulded around a wall mounted leaf blower which supports a holographic fan, projecting glowing images into the space between itself and the viewer. These short films depict performers moving in staccato jerks and sudden changes of pace as they 'become the edit'.

The installation and objects throughout the exhibition employ the language of contemporary online broadcast, from the streamer's bedroom ceiling lit by LED's, the effusive, flattering glow of the ring light, the microphone stand with pop mask to the cheap acoustic panels nailed to the wall. The concerns that Davies forefronts in her practice are, of course, derived from current thinking around present day technological developments such as computational intelligence, predictive technology, text to video software, large language models and behaviour detection technology.

Nina's practice is characterised by her examination of friction where technology and its users interact, notably the user's relationship with data and their image, all with a particular and unique focus on movement and dance. Much of the research and content comes from users broadcasting across the diversity of social media, the dances derived from trends and films made for our present day platforms. Her use of speculative fiction invites the viewer (or listener) into a hypothetical near future where we might think through the ramifications of the systems we are collectively fuelling and building today.

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Nina Davies (b. 1991) is a Canadian-British artist who considers the present moment through observing dance in popular culture and how it is disseminated, circulated, made, and consumed.

She graduated in 2022 from Goldsmiths MFA Fine Art where she was awarded the Almacantar Studio Award and the Goldsmiths Junior Fellowship position. In 2021 she co-founded Future Artefacts FM with artist Niamh Schmidtke. They produced a mini series for Het HEM's online programme, *The Couch*, in 2023.

Recent shows include a solo at Matts Gallery, London; *New Contemporaries 2023*; *Transmediale: a model, a map, a fiction* at Akademie der Künste, Berlin.