

Dominique Sirois
La chambre virtuelle
May 28 - July 11 2026

The overexploitation of natural resources, the expansion of computational systems, and the automation of existence are now part of the dominant mechanisms controlling our lives. The gears of digital capitalism are driven by the relentless extraction of minerals, energy, attention, and subjectivity. In the era of the algorithmic regime, our bodies become legible, quantifiable, and predictable. Our faces are converted into statistical models, our gestures into exploitable behaviors, and our desires into transactional data. In this context of total disembodiment, what does it still mean to inhabit a space of one's own? How can we preserve a zone of opacity against the logics of invasive and permanent visibility imposed by technologies?

With this new iteration of *La chambre virtuelle*, Dominique Sirois builds a sculptural habitat where alchemy, the tradition of the occult sciences, computer archaeology, and the speculative imagination meet. Presented this winter in Rouyn-Noranda—a territory marked by mining exploitation—the exhibition now returns to the metropolis. The city's history remains linked to industrialization, crossed by the flows of the resource trade—metals—and, today, by the rise of digital capital.

In this recent body of work, Sirois draws from the surrealist pictorial world of Spanish artist Remedios Varo. The works *Harmonie* (1956) et *La création des oiseaux* (1957) clearly inspired the exhibition's scenography and narrative structures. In Varo's work, the room, the office, the laboratory, and the studio merge into a mental space of reverie. Artistic creation there stems from an alchemical maneuver. The figures Varo depicts are busy (re)thinking the world. Dominique Sirois reactivates this heritage by building a protective yet unstable room—a place of retreat—where forms evolve in perpetuity, away from productivist injunctions. In this sense, the proposition becomes an ode to ideation and to the necessity of *A Room of One's Own*, as formulated by English writer Virginia Woolf.

For Sirois, metamorphosis is a power that is both evocative and emancipatory. Alchemy, an ancestral practice at the intersection of philosophy, science, and spirituality, emerged in the Middle East and later spread to Europe from Antiquity through the Renaissance. As a protoscience of modern chemistry, its goal was to transform mineral matter, then seen as holding unlimited potential. The artist revives the quest for the philosopher's stone, a legendary substance said to transmute base metals into precious ones. This heritage marks a tipping point between exploiting natural resources and developing a synthetic industry. From these ancient stories, Sirois extracts a residual magic with new possibilities. Her work connects the evolution of alchemy with chemistry and the applied sciences (including computer

science) to question how we now relate to raw materials. During the Renaissance, alchemy likened soil to a living body, a "womb" where minerals formed through gestation and transformation. Today, chemistry and digital technologies rely on extracting copper, lithium, gold, and silicon. As a result, the earth is treated no longer as a revered organism, but as a resource to be extirpated in the name of progress. The female figures in *La chambre virtuelle* further this reflection on the instrumentalization of the feminine principle, using the omnipresent crucible—a vessel for mineral, technical, and spiritual metamorphoses.

The works with morphological reliefs and sibylline motifs are created through latent manipulations of assembly, shaping, and molding. These works stem from laborious and meticulous gestures. Modeled in clay, the chimeras appear as silent operators, suspended between waking and sleeping. Their faces, inspired by gem cuts—pear, round, and trillion—recall facial recognition systems. Human features become calculation surfaces and biometric mappings, comparable to models that AI seeks to perfect.

La chambre virtuelle brings historical strata into tension. Dominique Sirois opens narrative breaches between the imagined and the (mis)known, developing a nonlinear narrative. In it, traces of occult knowledge and marginalized understandings persist. Medieval references in sculptures and furniture intertwine with administrative and computer relics of the 1990s and 2000s. This fusion causes a strange continuity between feudal decor and digital infrastructures. Arched windows evoke hard drives and recall medieval stained glass, as well as the closed architectures of data centers. They activate metaphors of algorithmic surveillance—surfaces of constant capture, where the boundaries of private life become porous, even in slumber. This reflection is also part of debates around "technofeudalism," a concept popularized by Greek economist Yanis Varoufakis that describes the grip of dominant digital platforms on human behavior, desires, and exchanges.

At Galerie Nicolas Robert, *La chambre virtuelle* is reconstructed as a place suspended in limbo: a laboratory for survival. Dominique Sirois composes a twilight universe in which the possibility of dreaming differently still subsists, far removed from the dominant, incessant constraints that govern the relationships among bodies, matter, and machines. This room becomes a vector for slowing down and wandering the mind. In this context, Sirois's philosophical quest does not aim at producing gold but at developing a dreamlike space in which to settle, inhabit, think, persevere, and resist the dissolution of oneself.

— Jean-Michel Quirion, curator of the project *La chambre virtuelle*

Dominique Sirois, originally from Montreal / Tiohtià:ke / Mooniyang, is an artist and educator. She holds a Master's degree in Visual Arts (2010) and a PhD in Visual Arts (2022) from the Université du Québec à Montréal. Sirois's work has been presented at numerous artist-run centres across Canada, including Latitude 53 in Edmonton, Alberta, CLARK and Diagonale in Montreal, AXENÉO7 in Gatineau, and L'Œil de Poisson in Quebec City. She has also exhibited in several private galleries in Montreal, including Bradley Ertaskiran, Blouin Division, Pangée, and Patel Brown. Sirois has completed numerous residencies outside Quebec, including at the CCA Glasgow, the Couvent des Récollets in Paris, Hangar in Barcelona, and the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. In group exhibitions, she has presented her work at the Ludwig Museum in Budapest, Le Commun in Geneva, Kontejner in Zagreb, the PHI Foundation for Contemporary Art, and the Galerie de l'UQAM in Montreal. Her work has received support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, and the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture.