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Denis Kozerawski & Kristína Jamrichová, Ondřej Mohyla, Martina Růžičková:  
*Just wanted to buy some pasta*, 2024 (digital print on paper, sound, 22'43")  
 Soundscape: Andrej Žabkay | Graphic Design: Matej Vojtuš

2. //

Sin Wai Kin: *The Breaking Story*, 2022 (six-channel video, 4K, colour, sound, 19'34")  
 Commissioned by Sunpride Foundation and Tai Kwun Contemporary for Myth Makers, Tai Kwun, Hong Kong

3. //////////////

Lawrence Lek: *AIDOL*, 2019 (CGI feature film, 85')

4. //

Tabitha Nikolai: *Ineffable Glossolalia*, 2018 (unity video game)

5. //

Bassam Al-Sabah: *I AM ERROR*, 2021 (HD CGI film, 30'27")

6. //

Paula Malinowská: *How did Daphne turn into a plant. Our feet, just now so swift, hold fast in resistant roots*, 2022 (CFI video, 12'35")  
 Soundscape: Andrej Žabkay | Video edit: Vladimíra Vrbiňáková | Voiceover: NaiKavols (Kristián Mikulovský) |  
 3D art: Paula Malinowska

Paula Malinowská: *(Non)botanical bestiary*, 2023 (3D printed objects)

7. //

Hollow: *Letter from the Glass Desert*, 2024 (mixed media, video, 03'40")

# Ctrl+↑ for Coyote Time

Exhibition and series of events  
 22/03-07/04/2024////////////////////////////////////

Bassam Al-Sabah, Zoyander Street,  
 Hollow (Gyula Muskovics, Tamás Páll, Viktor Szeri),  
 Denis Kozerawski, Lawrence Lek, Paula Malinowska,  
 Tabitha Nikolai, Sin Wai Kin

Curators: Jen Kratochvil, Borbála Szalai, Maxine Vajt

Professional partner: Háttér Society

We look down and realize that we've run over the edge of the cliff, the abyss is below us. What do we do? What can we do? Is there by any chance a keyboard shortcut for this?

Jumping forward from this moment of suspension, the exhibition *Ctrl+↑ for Coyote Time* asks whether it is possible to imagine worlds - digital or physical - where the rules by which we 'play' can be redefined. Where the hegemonic play and the failed normative goals of videogames can be transcended, where the systems of rules can be reimagined, where individual and shared experiences - that are both political and deeply personal - can be lived.

Questions of how mainstream gaming formulates daily routines of our lives meet more specific challenges to the basic principles of gamification and world-building used as a toolbox for normalized existence in late capitalism - how to disrupt, take apart, and reconfigure them to counteract the system they originated from? The exhibition explores the boundaries and adjacent niches of the continuous bleeding of digital and physical reality into each other; a probe into hegemonic play and its deconstruction through queer and trans methods and strategies; an elaborate ploy to reach the state when time freezes, and you keep levitating, and a the second jump appears to be an option.

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Press START, but the game is already over. It gained its own agency. If you wish to join, enter the >main menu< in the middle!

Mind the soundscape, a fly buzzes by, the wind is rustling leaves, there is no image to follow, only the promise of a future gaming experience, currently present only in the minds of their creators, or rather presently on a series of physical diagrams, evoking a gamebook of {if} conditions.

Ctrl+␣

Denis Kozerawski & Kristína Jamrichová,  
 Ondřej Mohyla, Martina Růžičková:  
*Just wanted to buy some pasta*, 2024  
 (digital print on paper, sound)  
 Soundscape: Andrej Žabkay  
 Graphic Design: Matej Vojtuš

Denis and a team of colleagues and collaborators are developing an educational interactive game environment for elementary and secondary schools in Czech Republic and Slovakia, later on to be distributed further in the region, focusing on a lived experience of racialized others, of the mostly mystified or out right hated non-white neighbors, the Roma people in central eastern Europe. As a Roma artist, Denis has been reflecting upon the social injustices (pre)inscribed on the racialized bodies, especially as those oppressions intersect with class segregation. For the project he assumed the role of a hired construction worker on Slovak countryside alongside underpaid Roma workforce, to put himself at the nexus of the conditions of neglect and othering performed by the state, regional and municipal governments. The project was done in close collaboration with NGOs targeting systemic racism within the region, aiming at a legislative change to provide better conditions for the disadvantaged communities. It has led to a growing series of works, among them also the above mentioned interactive game. The show presents a gamebook style if-condition diagrams, which are forming the backbone of individual levels of the currently developing game.

Ctrl+→

Sin Wai Kin:  
*The Breaking Story*, 2022  
 (six-channel video)

*The Breaking Story* takes the form of a surreal news broadcast. Instead of reading factual news, the Storyteller, a character played by Sin, reappearing in their work since 2020, reports on philosophical propositions on existence, consciousness, naming and identity. The video becomes distorted as it goes on, with glitches and voice

edits increasing in frequency. This further builds on the idea that reality can often be indistinguishable from illusion, not unlike the rumors and propaganda news accounts we encounter daily.

Sin developed the character of the Storyteller during the outbreak of Covid-19, when our understanding, or rather living through a post-factual reality started to get truly advanced features. The idea of storytelling as an instrument to formulate, rather than just depict reality gives the character its profile, reason of existence, same as its abilities. 'The Storyteller helps us think about a binary of subjective and objective knowledge, and how storytelling nowadays often produces false dichotomies.' Says Sin about the character. Deconstruction of pre-coded binaries forms a backbone of Sin's practice, be it a binary of gender, or, for instance, the binary of truth and falsehood.

#### Ctrl+f

Lawrence Lek:  
*AIDOL*, 2019  
(CGI feature film)

*AIDOL* builds on a sequence of CGI creations in which Lawrence Lek draws upon the language of videogames, science fiction, music videos and corporate animations, among multiple other sources. The result is a shifting and seductive virtual reality, glancing dually at the future and the present, punctuated by Diva's songs and an evolving soundtrack of electronic themes. In its multiplicity of references, *AIDOL* defies the concept of genre, engendering a fictional space that is alternately recognisable and alien. Both in setting and action, the story shifts between stylistic convention and uncanny beauty, as much as between real-world allusions and dazzling inventions (or both, as in the case of Diva's hit song *Deep Blue Monday*, whose title refers to the 1990s computer that was a pioneering instance of AI - the first machine to beat a reigning world champion at chess).

Aspects of modern South-East Asia - from megabrands to super-casinos to cultural persecution and underground resistance - are allegorized into a futuristic otherworld. *Farsight Corporation* is a controlling force in this universe, the global conglomerate that usurps the role and status of a political regime. The event of Diva's comeback is an international tournament sponsored by *Farsight*; the eSports Olympics. This contest belies a more profound existential conflict between humanity and machines, a conflict which finds transient resolution in the meeting between Diva and the AI artist Geomancer. Lek's imaginary sphere may be read both as a shimmering utopia and as an automated, profit-driven and algorithm-propelled dystopia.

#### Ctrl+g

Tabitha Nikolai:  
*Ineffable Glossolalia*, 2018  
(unity video game)

Tabitha Nikolai's *Ineffable Glossolalia* is a short video game work, centering the 1933 book burning of the archives from Magnus Hirschfelds Institute of Sexual Research by the Nazi youth. As the irreplaceable accumulated knowledge and individual histories turn into ash, Tabitha Nikolai jolts the player out of a romanticized idea of a progressive trans-friendly institute, reminding them that it is also a history of eugenics, pathologization and medicalization of the trans body. *Ineffable Glossolalia* is certainly not a utopia, more like a fever dream. It is maybe the lack of any trans historiography, or the babel of post-internet cacophony, that produce the fervor with which Tabitha Nikolai drags us from the fire, to Hirschfelds eugenic notes, to presumably her own text, to the operating table, to transphobic posts on LGBT 4chan board, to 404 errors, to homophobies, internet speak, all the time playing with accessibility and readability, as if almost taunting the player to open another screen next to the one they are playing on and google in a desperate attempt to make sense - sense that is by the very nature impossible to be made. Because trans history is messy, it's full of holes and cracks, which simultaneously break it and allow for its existence.

#### Ctrl+e

Bassam Al-Sabah:  
*I AM ERROR*, 2021  
(HD CGI film)

The 30-minute-long animation featuring a collection of cinematic sequences from an imaginary game in which the hero's body is constantly in flux, undergoing metamorphoses as a result of his encounter with other lifeforms, whose physical touch makes him vulnerable to change, threatening his identity and selfhood.

Combining fantasy erotica and body horror, Al-Sabah's films celebrate the hero's growth and transformation in all its literalness, as his body sprouts and blends into its surroundings, among writhing flowers and tentacular creatures. His work embraces the shape-shifting potential of computer-animated worlds, creating fantasy dreamscapes in which personal mythology, historical trauma and queer possibility intersect.

#### Ctrl+d

Paula Malinowská:  
*How did Daphne turn into a plant. Our feet, just now so swift, hold fast in resistant roots*, 2022 (CFI video)  
*(Non)botanical bestiary*, 2023,  
(3D printed objects)

Mythological story of Daphne is the first botanical transformation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The story is one of the earliest written records mentioning attempted sexual violence ever. In the story, water nymph Daphne runs through the forest from lustful god Apollo, who, driven by passion and desire, longs to catch his prey. 'Change the body that destroys my life!' shouts nymph into the air at the very last moment before her transformation into a plant, which is the only possible way to escape from rape. Her feet, just now so swift, hold fast in sluggish roots. Paula's work attempts to open a window for re-narration of the myth through our contemporary perception, and through the lens of a moment in history framed by rape culture and constant attempts by politicians to control bodily autonomy. The work sees the metamorphosis of the nymph not as her silencing, but rather as a gesture of taking a stand of resistance, while channelling power of the supportive community through the anchoring roots.

#### Ctrl+l

Hollow:  
*Letter from the Glass Desert*, 2024  
(mixed media)

Hollow incorporates the hallucinations of Viktor Szeri, Tamás Páll and Gyula Muskovics. The group has been creating immersive installations and performances since 2018, where choreography interacts with mechanics, poetry, augmented reality and role-playing methods. *Letter from the Glass Desert* is linked to the group's first AR performance, presented in 2018, which invited participants to Phoenix, an imaginary queer rave. Reporting from it, MCATBOY, the main character in Phoenix, likens the rave to a collective hallucination. Their letter was written in the summer of 2021, the seventh time the group had brought the event to life, coinciding with the introduction of the Child Protection Act by the Hungarian government, which made it legally possible to regulate the social representation of the queer community. *Letter from the Glass Desert* centers the importance of community imagination when facing a dystopian environment which may not be so far removed from the increasingly radicalised Hungarian politics. The letter was subsequently added to Hollow's Archive, the group's speculative database that has been growing for years, in which they reinterpret their former worlds and discover new connections between the places and characters they had previously invented. The archive is an online space accessible to anyone: a collection of texts, objects, predictions and performances that weave an ever-changing, multilinear narrative at the intersection of given and imagined realities.

"A 13-year-old has managed to 'beat' Tetris" reads a headline on ABC news. Despite it once again being very misleading, a video game making it into mainstream media is rare. And it is no coincidence it is concerned with "beating" a game. Our societal obsession with normatively prescribed success and happiness is exemplified in video games. The stereotype which is present in the eyes of the societal majority shows a space of high scores, investment of time in order to improve, constructed by and mainly for cis white men, who claim their spot in the sun on the leaderboards of best players. In many ways, this reflects on the design of popular games, which more often than not, resemble modes of productivity. Tetris, or its current most popular iteration Candy Crush, are not far from a cruelly optimized Amazon warehouse. Football manager is basically a well dressed excel sheet, and recently popular shooter games like Squad are not far from imperialist white-supremacy driven wars in the SWANA region.

Despite the fact that all of these games are sold as vastly distant genres, the ways they are all intended to be interacted with represents something we can call hegemonic play. Play, that happens in time frames of seconds and nanoseconds, runs smoothly, shows off its shiny textures/particle effects, operates with known language and mechanics universally understood by a gamer, sees death as an undesirable outcome, failure as motivation to overcome an obstacle, the game itself as a battle for mastery where one overcomes the machine or another human player to achieve success and happiness - the game as an escape pod which somehow remains to be apolitical even when shooting racialized bodies is its main focus.

*Ctrl+f for Coyote Time* is a spatial rollercoaster (without the tycoon) that is shifting the lens, or rather the clock, away, looking for places, where these preconceived notions of normative fulfilment glitch, break, fail, get refused. When we, as trans and queer bodies, stop wishing only for the acceptance by our societies, but actively fail their expectations, stop when they tell us to try harder, glitch their reading of us to make it unreadable, refuse the neo-colonial definitions of what and how queerness is - what kind of frames are then uncovered? The works present here are a form of resistance, futile perhaps, yet refusing to provide simple answers, or paths we should collectively embark on. Let the reactionary right wing politicians keep trying to double jump to the promises of a better future, which they never intended for us anyway. We instead, borrowing an image from game studies scholar Bonnie "Bo" Ruberg, want to be overcome with the joy of looking down and falling into the abyss over and over, and over again. Or maybe rather stay with the troubles, suspended in coyote time.

(Maxine Vajt)