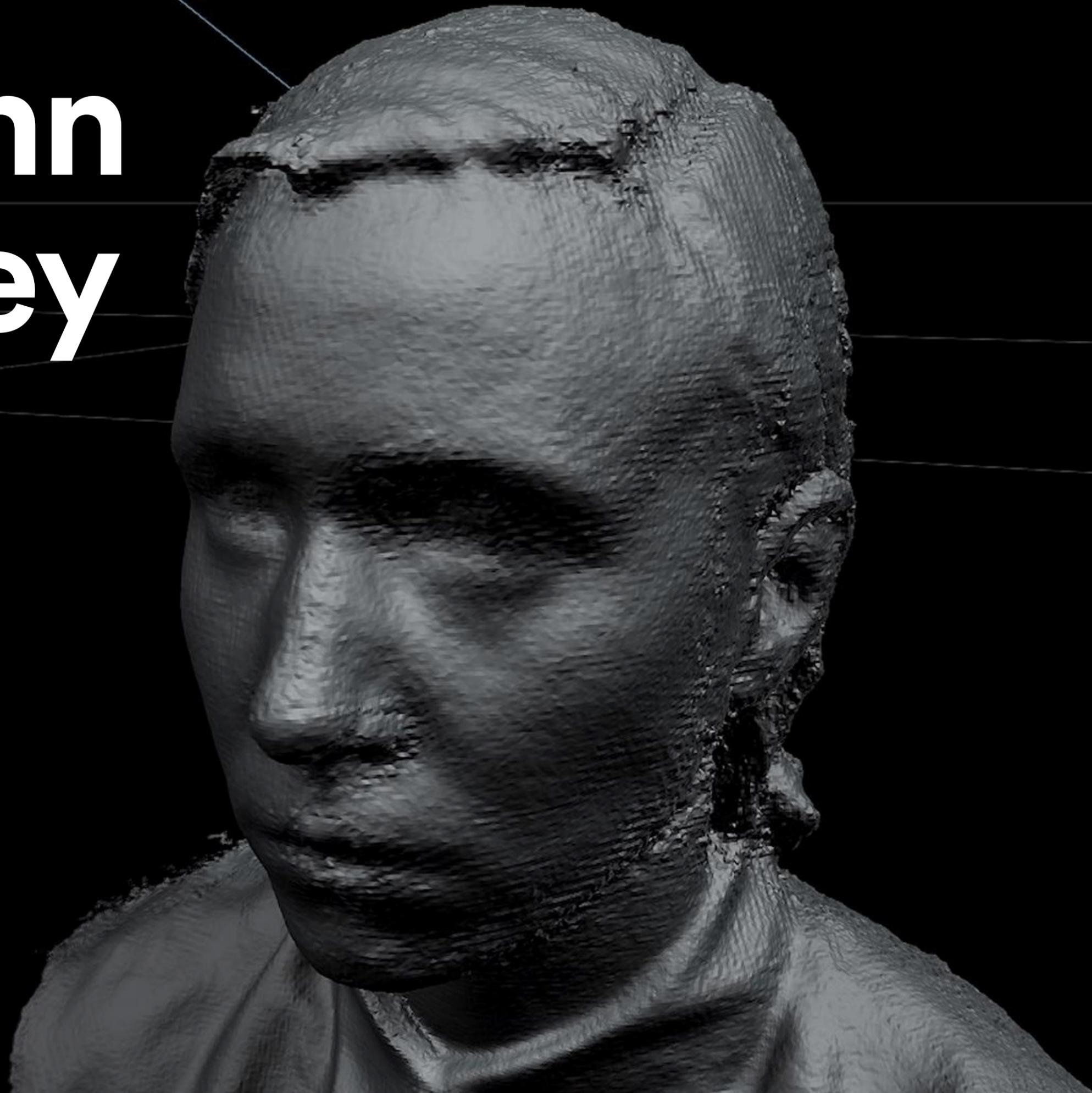


**Doireann  
O'Malley**

**2019**



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# Artist Statement

Dream images have influenced the way I approach making film and writing scripts. Dream analysis in varied methods, Jungian, Lacanian, shamanic has become a method for exploring unconscious drives within the subjects of my films. I work primarily with moving image, analogue and digital film formats, 3D imaging, found footage, video and photography.

My most recent body of work is a trilogy which explores gender and its manifestations in a post-speculative mind/body assemblage of scenes, set within the modernist Interbau housing development in the Hansaviertel area of Berlin. It explores new perspectives on trans identity through the lens of a post psycho-analytic, schizo-analytic methodology, entangling rhizomatic forms of thought, systems theory, consciousness, machine learning and quantum transformation.

The films are shot on ARRI Alexa and drone

cameras, observing the characters, objects and architectural environments from various perspectives, and experimenting with scale, exploring the micro- and macro-cosmos to investigate inner and outer space. The camera transverses the trans bodies, while the natural and artificial constructed environments evoke notions of the multiverse and the possibility of parallel worlds. Here, the drone functions as a machinic gaze exploring the constant flux of becomings, nonhuman perspectives, perpetual extensions of the relations between man and machine: evoking the repetitive patterns of movement and surveillance in the technosphere and the bio-sphere. It embodies an automisation of perception, suggesting the possibility of the sublime in the non-human via Artificial Intelligence.

The films approach the exploration of multiple subjectivities with trans protagonists through dream analysis & group psycho-analytic workshops engaging with the multi-layered

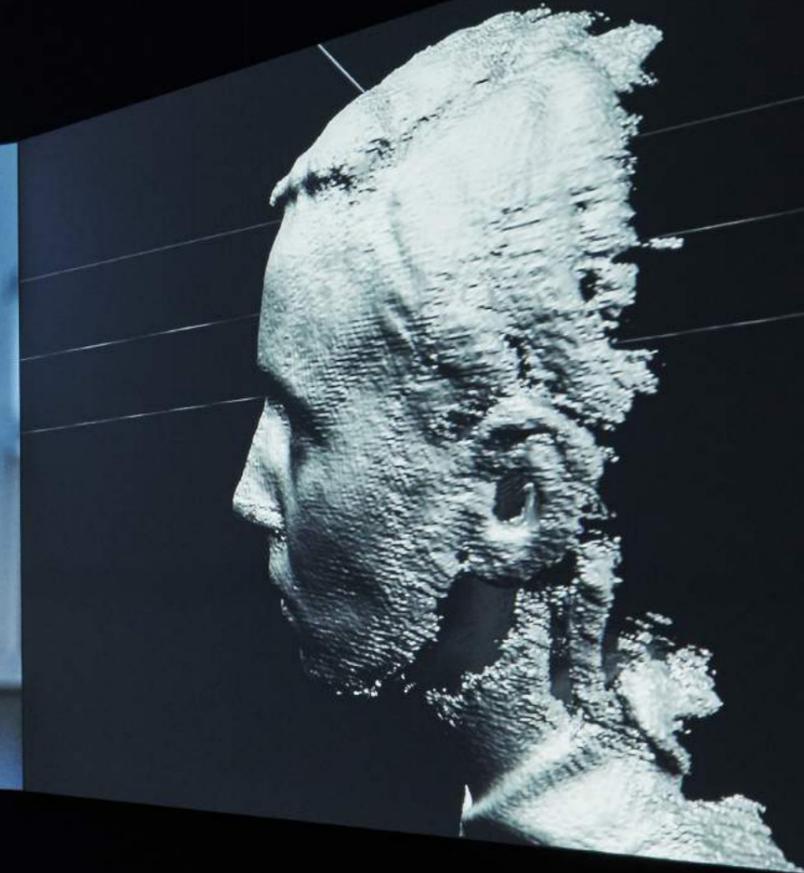
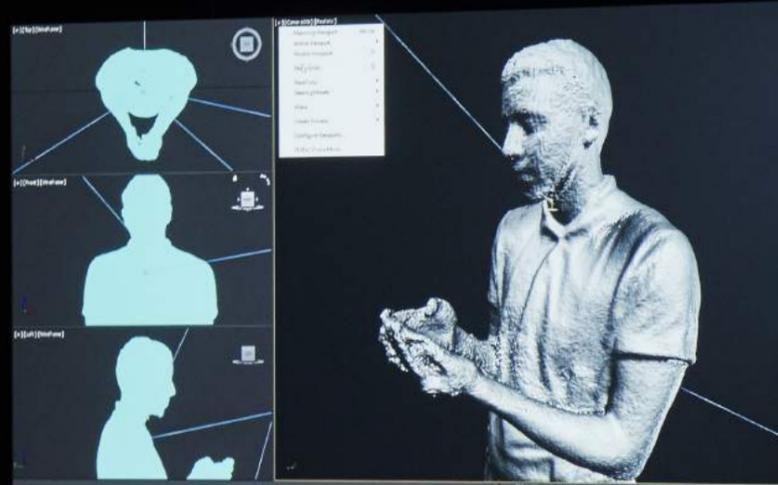
unconscious. Scenes are produced by the characters in the films as starting points to explore the manifestation of gender beyond desire and ego drives. Collaboration is a major part of my practice. I participated in group dream analysis sessions, reading and discussions with the protagonists in my film, and the scenes are often not scripted. Jungian and Lacanian psycho-analysis were employed in *Prototypes I* as a way of layering different approaches for generating meaning. I utilised a more fragmented, somatic approach in *Prototypes II*, which is influenced by the anti-psychiatry movement and the work of R.D Laing as well as the schizo-analysis rhizomatic methodology of by Deleuze & Guattari.



[watch feature film](#)

(A one-screen feature film combining *Prototypes I & II*. 104 min, 2018)

# Prototypes I



The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, 2018

# Prototypes I

2017. 3-Channel, HD video installation combining 4K film, 3D animation and multi-channel surround sound.

**The work is the first of a trilogy set in the Interbau Project in Berlin, drawing on a wide range of feminist perspectives within queer theory, psychoanalysis, quantum physics, genetics, cybernetics and systems biology.**

 watch excerpt 1

## 00:00–03:00 Minutes

This is the beginning of the film. In the first scene we see an aerial view of a building. Nika, the first protagonist, is sitting at a computer in a room. Within the first moments of Prototypes the viewer is confronted with the absurdity of society's reduction of gender to a binary system as a voice-over enumerates the various chromosome composites that humans possess, several combinations of which do not

equate the limited categorizations of male/female, and it is clear that there is much more involved in understanding the complexity of gender.

Evolutionary biologist J.B.S. Haldane famously stated in 1927 that 'the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose', reminding us of the limits of human comprehension. This takes us back, full circle, to where Prototype I begins—with Alan Turing, who, in the 1950s, was arguably the first to acknowledge the potential of other forms of intelligence exceeding our own. As artificial intelligence (AI) develops rapidly, it would be sage to remember Haldane's humility concerning human comprehension, considering the common assumption that 'performativity is coupled with deep speculation that Turing machines can fully realize human

minds, as if the first and only duty of AI should be to serve our rampant narcissism throughout isomorphism. However, it is Turing's lesser known first test that a voiceover in the opening scene of Prototype I describes; the test in which one must blindly attempt to distinguish between a man and a woman. The act of proposing such a test renders the failed distinction possible, but 'what do gendered bodies have to do with the erasure of embodiment and the subsequent merging of machine and human intelligence in the figure of the cyborg? Was Turing already positing a postgender future?'

\*This text and the text on the following pages is a condensed excerpt from the essay *Queering Boundaries* by Lou Drago, in *Prototypes* published by Sternberg Press and The Edith Russ Haus for Media Art. 2019. The full essay in German and several others can be found at the end of this portfolio.



The viewer is guided sonically and visually through various dream- and land-scapes, observing psychoanalytic references to both shamanistic pasts and speculative futures that evoke alternate modes of existence. We meet the protagonists, who interact with undefined technologies, it is ambiguous whether they are rendering themselves in a virtual world, a potential future, or creating their present. In fact, throughout Prototypes there is little to distinguish between 'the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real'.

One of the protagonists, Pol, professes that the experience of taking testosterone feels like being in a science fiction movie. Through an experiential understanding of the pliant body made available through bio-hacking, the protagonists begin to sense a form of liberation, 'a way to indirectly denounce systems of control'. A gay cruising scene suggests that the result of Pol's bio-hacking allows him access into this formerly unimaginable reality.



Psychoanalytic sessions emphasise a transgression of boundaries. The psyche presents symbols as metaphors for psychological obstacles to overcome. Several the protagonists attended a dream workshop and shared their own dreams, which were then woven into the script. In an exquisite corpse of unconscious connection, one protagonist's dream depicts a tongue, abstracted and contrasted against the director's own dream of tentacles growing from a stomach.



Throughout the work a recurring iconography of snails, hermaphroditic creatures, suggest that humans have always looked to non-human subjects to justify traditional values of what is constitutive of what is considered 'natural'. The terminology used to describe the sex of these creatures offers abundant opportunity for appropriation: 'protandrous sequential hermaphrodites' where proto- means first or foremost and -andry means male. In the case of snails, their male reproductive organs come to maturity before the female, but perhaps the literal meaning could be appropriated when applied to humans; first male, then female, the way the term MTF (male-to-female) currently functions, and by extension,

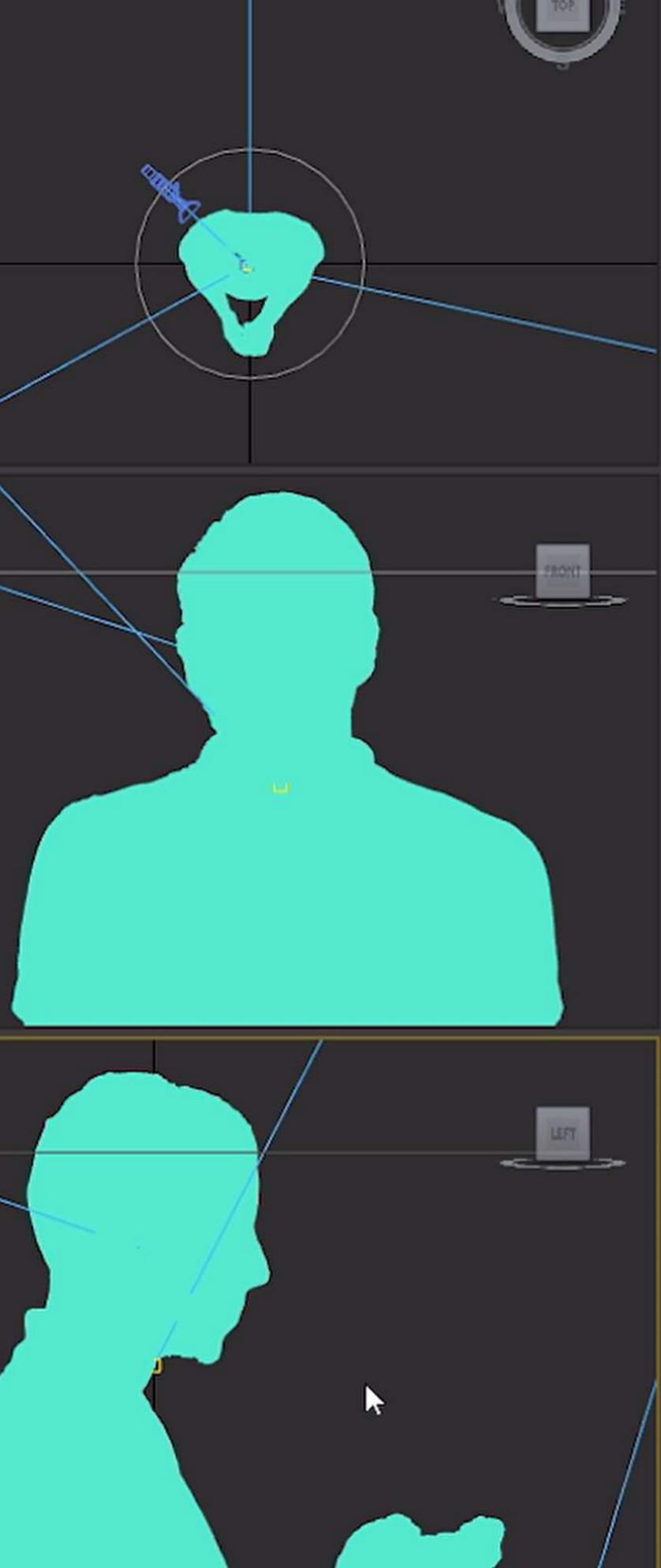
protogynous for FTM (female-to-male). The casting of the 'protandrous sequential hermaphroditic' creatures refers to Karen Barad's enquiries into largely unrecognised queer occurrences in nature. Her book *Nature's Queer Performativity* asserts that there are many natural actors that serve to queer humanity's expectations of how nature functions, including 'social amoebas,

neuronal receptor cells in stingrays, lightning, a phantom species of dinoflagellates, academics (a strange companion species), and atoms', which suggests that Nature is not as heteronormative as is hegemonically postulated. Bruce Bagemihl is right in suggesting that the world is 'teeming with homosexual, bisexual and transgendered creatures of every stripe and feather.'

[▶ watch excerpt 2](#)



Installation view, *Prototypes / in Wild - Transgender and the Communities of Desire* a group exhibition at The Edith Russ Haus für Medienkunst, 2017.



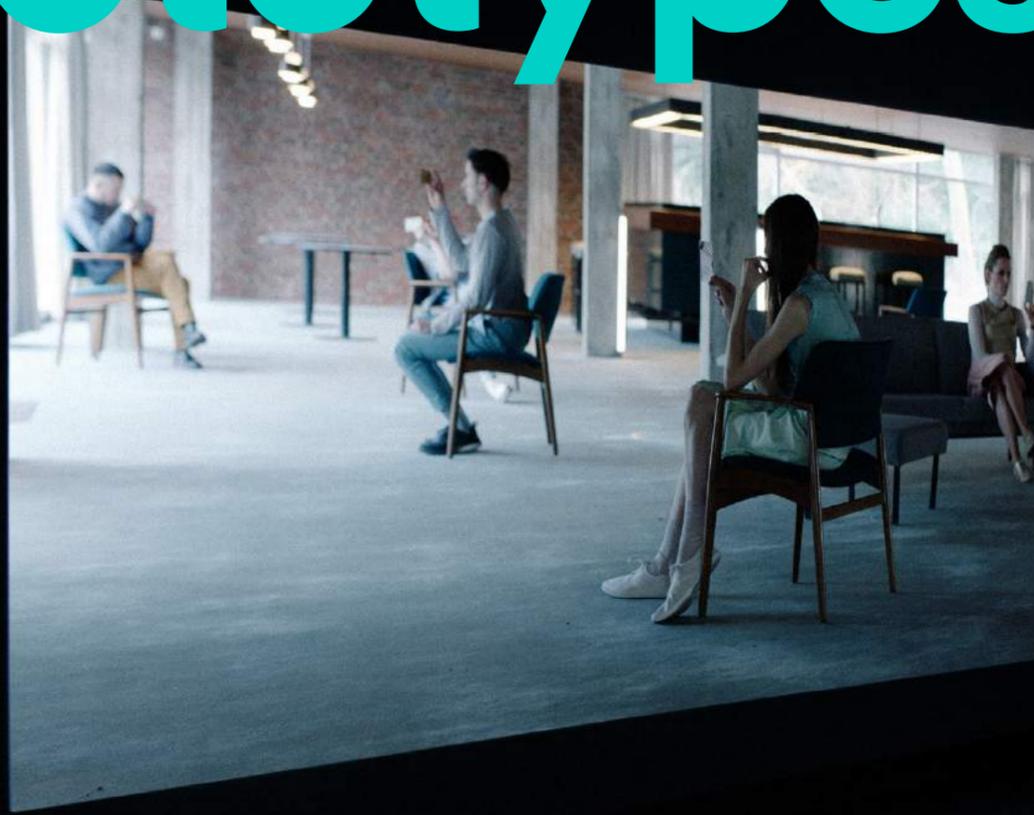
Detail of 3D Computer  
Generated Image of Pol



[▶ watch excerpt 3](#)

Installation view of Prototype I: Quantum Leaps in Trans Semiotics through Psycho-Analytical Snail Serum (three-screen synchronised projection with 5.1 surround sound), Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, 2018.

# Prototypes II



The Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, 2018

The protagonists are welcomed into another potential reality at the 'Institute for the Enrichment of Computer Aided Post Gendered Prototypes,' the epitome of technological development for gender deconstruction. A holographic host, Leonard, elucidates that the characters have come to the Institute to deconstruct their pre-existing habits in binarisation. They will each eventually have to choose whether or not they will commit to crossing into another multiverse where an alternate version of themselves exists, albeit a world without gender. At the Institute, the script was largely improvised using a Live Action Role Playing (LARP) technique. The actors are given a framing, but have the freedom to project their own ideas and experiences onto their characters. They share their own insights and apprehensions about their speculative leap into another multiverse, and they discuss which compromises and changes would be necessary to exist in a genderless world.

 watch excerpt 1



The participants engage in a range of somatic exercises and analysis with the facilitators and a Lacanian Analyst.

 watch excerpt 2





[▶ watch excerpt 3](#)



After having observed the protagonists performing various de-binarising exercises, one protagonist, Nika, leaves the group to stand before a portal. Although it is implied that he will take the leap of faith, crossing into another multiverse to trade places with a post-gender version of himself, like much of the film, this, too, is left open to interpretation. Throughout *Prototypes*, distinctions between visceral and virtual worlds are questioned, alluded to through discussions and depictions of both the dream and the 'real' world. Through this interrogation of boundaries, *Prototypes* embraces the current era of complexity, disposing of distinctions and categorisations in favour of serendipitous entanglements and rare relational re-contextualisations.

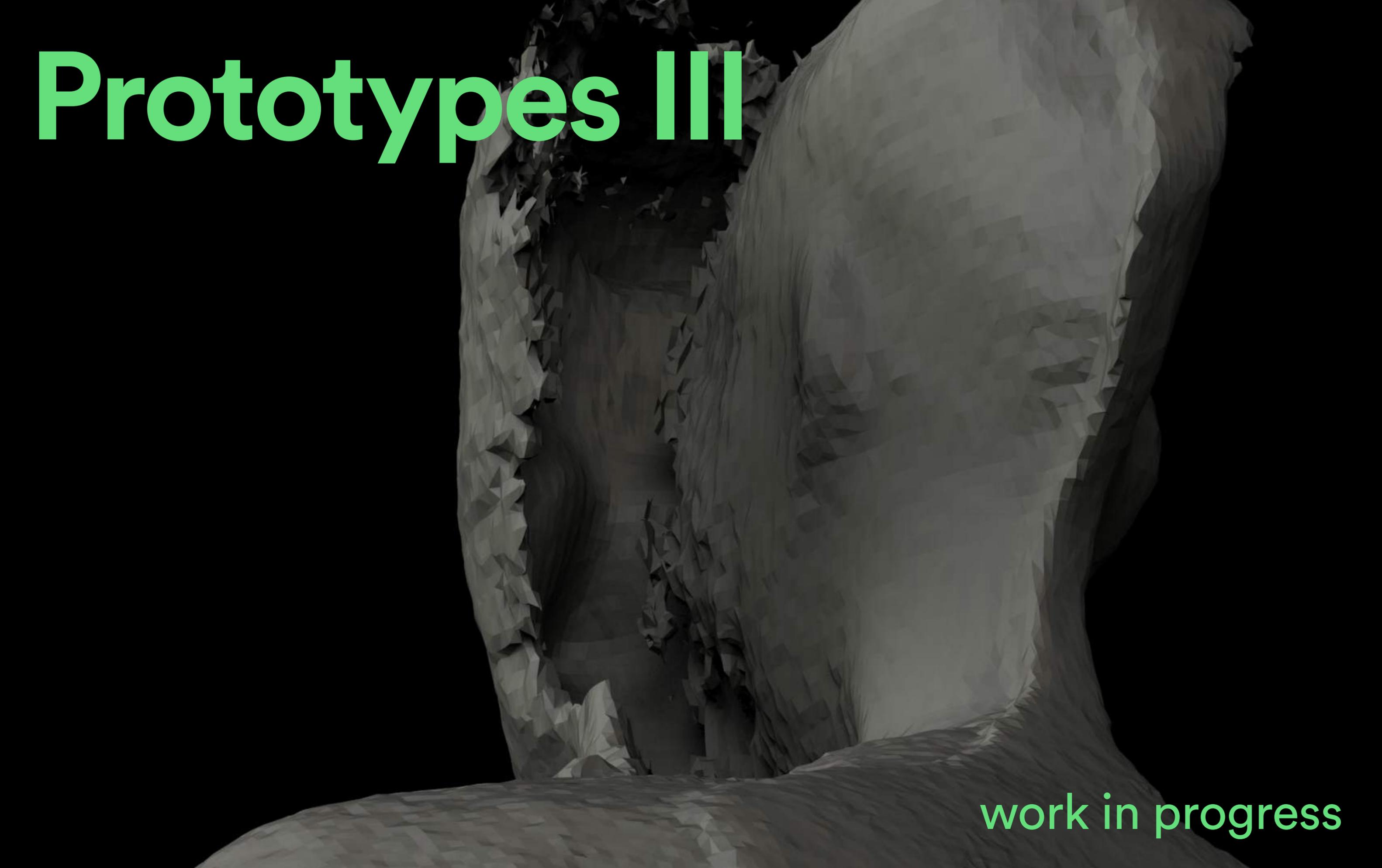




 watch installation

2 screen installation, 67 min, 2018

# Prototypes III

The background of the slide is a 3D rendered scene of crumpled paper. The paper is rendered in various shades of green and grey, with a highly textured, faceted appearance that captures the intricate folds and creases of the material. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the peaks and valleys of the crumpled paper against a solid black background.

work in progress

*Prototypes III* is the final work in the trilogy of films I have been making since 2016.

Unlike the first two parts of the trilogy, which were multi-channel video installations, the third part will be a Virtual Reality piece. It will exist on its own as a work and can also be shown in an installation along with the first two films. The concept is a continuation of the themes in the first two films. When the viewer puts on the VR headset they will be transported to the parallel world which Nika, one of the main protagonists, who appears in the opening scene of *Prototypes I*, travels to. In this world he enters a room where he is told by a voice that the world is inhabited by creatures only, humans have long left their bodies, all beings have been uploaded to a virtual existence. The concept is in early stages of development. I will be making a treatment and story board over the coming months which will be then developed into a VR immersive scenography.



*Prototyping a world without gender, a world without bodies, a world without end.*

The VR headset appears in three scenes in *Prototype I*. I am developing three immersive Virtual reality experiences, each to appear in correspondence to when Nika wears the headset, in the studio in the opening scenes, on the balcony with the psycho-analyst and in the final scene of the second film when he stands before the portal. There will be three VR scenes and three VR headsets in the installation. It will be inherently social: multiple users are invited to join the space at the same time. Though geographically the users may be far apart, their interactions are visible to one another, enabling them to recognize each other's presence and move about the virtual space with their co-participants in mind and in view. My long-term interests in the relation between self and other and between self and surroundings have profoundly informed this new artwork, with the multi-participant function being a key feature that paves the way for new space for art and of art in virtual reality.

While Nika is standing in front of the portal the viewer can place the headset on. The image inside will be of nika, the viewer will be present in his body witnessing what he sees. He will be able to feel the body disappearing and will see the other two participants in their own scenes. There will be a voice narrated by Nika who speaks about the emergence of AI, the slow dis-embodiment of the human race, the rise of the robots, the loss of gender, the retreat and death of bodies and the uploading of consciousness. This is one version of the story, there will be two others where alternative futures are played out.

With 3D Scans of Nika, the images of the body will immerse the viewer and slowly crumble of in bits until there is no longer a body and the participants are narrated through new landscapes specific to each possible future world. The participants will be able to communicate with the others.





# Credits

*Prototypes I:* Quantum leaps in trans-semiotics through psycho-analytical snail serum. Featuring: Pol Merchan, Nika Pecarina, Ashley Hans Scheirl and Elena Schmidt. Extras: Trixi Flo, Ennio Nobili & Hannes Weymann. With the kind participation of Stef Morgner & Henri Steegmann. Dreams written by Pol Merchan, Doireann O'Malley. Dream Analysis by: Andrés Ocazionez.

1st AD & VFX supervisor: Bastian Hopfgarten

Production co-ordinator: Nossa Schäfer

Production assistant: Gines Olivares

Dop: Albrecht Von Grünhagen

1st AC Max Brinkschulte

2nd AC Elisabeth Bornicke

Gimbal operator: Matan Radan

Set Design: Doireann O'Malley & Trixi Flo

Costume: Antonio Ciutto

Editing: Brody Condon & Doireann O'Malley &

Gines Olivares

3D Animation: Brody Condon & Doireann O'Malley

3D Scanning: Olaf Blecker

Sound Design/Composition: Armin Lorenz Gerold

Sound Mixing: Jochen Jezussek

Colour Grading: Lutz Forster & Agnesh Pakozdi

*Prototypes II:* The Institute for the Enrichment of Computer Aided Post Gendered Prototypes. Written, Directed & Produced by Doireann O'Malley Featuring Nika Fontaine, Matejá Hoffmann, Pol Merchan, Nika Pecarina, Ashley Hans Scheirl, Elena Schmidt & Rhyannon Styles. Director of the Institute: Jamie Mc Donald, Co-writer of the games.

The film was made with a live action role playing improvisational technique where the protagonists used their own material for the dialogues and monologues.

Psycho-analyst: Michaela Wunsch

Assistant: Elliott Cennetoglu

Extras: Lou Drago, Ray Kovalevsky, Pedro Marun,

Kristian Madsen, Zander Porter, Brody Polinsky

Adel Onodi, Henri Steeg, Leni Wronkowitz

Assistant Director: Divina Kuan

Director of Photography: Albrecht von Grünhagen

Sound Design/Composition: Armin Lorenz Gerold

Production co-ordinator: Jake Flowers

Art Director & Costume Design: Ran Chai Barzvi

Camera Operator: Matan Radin

Sound recording: Manuela Schininà & Manja Ebert

Editing: Gines Olivares & Doireann O'Malley

Sound Editing: Doireann O'Malley

3D Animation: Brody Condon & Doireann O'Malley

3D Scanning: Olaf Blecker

Sound Mix: Jochen Jezussek

Colour Grading: Delfina Mayer