FLOW AND FRICTION:
ON THE TACTICAL POTENTIAL
OF INTERFACING WITH GLITCH ART

Vendela Grundell
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Introduction

A glitch is such a minute change in voltage that no fuse could protect against it.
Astronaut John Glenn 1962

A glitch is a problem: an error message on a blank website, a camera failing to render correct data. As the quote above implies, the power of a glitch lies in its minuteness. Media theorist Alexander R. Galloway notes that the first glitch was a living bug stuck inside a machine – a bug that is now generated by code that runs digital systems yet also disrupts them enough to reveal their hidden operations. To media theorists Caleb Kelly and Peter Krapp, the glitch causes a built-in yet unexpected break in the system – a destructive yet creative act in between design and accident. It is embedded into a system yet behaves precariously towards it. Accordingly, glitch is defined as systemic friction in this thesis.

The study explores systemic friction in interfaces and photo-based media as they mirror, create and question a flow of information that affects spectatorship in the wake of ubiquitous computing. I use glitches to find such effects,

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as a machine that acts out of order reveals its coded configurations as unstable. To consider a break is to consider what is broken – in this thesis, a break in systems governing how photo-based media is made, shared and viewed online. The disruption is minute yet affects how the flow gains meaning for a viewer. It points out systemic power and frailty, individual stance and formability: flow and friction. The friction of glitches makes visible a flow that is trivial and abstract enough to be invisible to a viewer. An act of making-visible thus holds a tactical potential: it reveals a pervasive system.

This thesis is about the tactical potential of such a making-visible, and its effects on the viewer. To articulate how a tactical spectatorship unfolds, I carry out three phenomenological case studies on the websites of three contemporary artists who work with glitches, photo-based media and interface display: Phillip Stearns, Rosa Menkman and Evan Meaney. I focus on their photo-based work – displayed through a website interface – to show how online environments can be as much about friction as about flow. As artists’ websites, their display contexts combine art and everyday interfacing. Art thus functions as a means to address an everyday flow by concentrating the experience of a viewer who interfaces with specific artworks in specific displays. Moreover, the viewer’s experience is concentrated on artworks and displays that involve photo-based media and glitches – thereby inserting friction into the flow.

I understand art’s ability to sharpen a viewer’s attention as part of an interrogative practice through which experience is exposed and problematized. As aesthetics philosopher Alva Noë puts it, art may be understood as investigating and exposing the hidden ways in which we are absorbed in organized activities – organizing and reorganizing our ways of being in the world. In this thesis, the organized activity that absorbs the individual is the act of interfacing with the digital flow – especially with photo-based media. The friction brought about by glitches intensifies absorption as well as questions it. As a consequence, a digitized way of being in the world may be reorganized by tactical action. Such a shift is increasingly important as viewers become integrated into visual technologies of reproduction that both mediate and constitute their relations to both self and world.

As computer and camera merge, being a viewer online is to be placed in an interface that shapes experiences of the system and of the individual within it. I explore flow through its ephemeral yet pervasive phenomena – such as interfaces and glitches – to add knowledge about their process of becoming and their manifestation within a fast-paced digitization that needs a user who is attentive to its effects. The user in this thesis is a viewer who observes flow by taking part in it on the three artists’ websites – representing three historically situated segments of flow. My analyses thus serve to sharpen a viewer’s attention through the intended yet uncontrolled moments of friction that glitches insert into the flow of interfacing.

**Aims and Questions**

This study builds on two related premises: firstly, that spectatorship online is shaped by systemic operations that mainly stay invisible to the viewer, and secondly, that glitches can make both system and viewer visible. The relevance of this making-visible – for increasing the knowledge about how obscure yet inevitable conditions situate the interfacing individual – motivates my two-part aim and main research question: to analyze how interfacing affects viewer experiences and viewer positions, and how such an effect is made visible in glitch art online. These two parts signify a relation between individual and system that directs the study.

My hypothesis is that tactics is a possible answer to this question. However, it is the potential for tactical spectatorship that drives this study – if and how it is actualized remains open. To articulate this potential and its actualization, three sub-questions relate spectatorship to interface and photo-based media on the websites of Stearns, Menkman, and Meaney:

What can a viewer see and do by interfacing with the website, and with what means?

How is the photo-based material on the website produced, displayed, and conceptualized?

How does the website and its photo-based material – glitched and non-glitched – position the viewer haptically and epistemologically?

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Questions one and two are descriptive – first of the website as a place encompassing materials and activities, and then of the photo-based artwork placed and experienced there. Question three addresses implications of the previous questions with regards to how spectactorship figures in experience-based knowledge production. To articulate experiences and positions of the interfacing individual, I treat websites and artworks as haptic: they visually and physically intertwine the technical and the perceptual. Such intertwining is enforced through interfacing as it implies a mutual effect. This relation underlines my aim, as I home in on a viewer’s response to the effects of flow and friction in the online setting. In this thesis, flow is a pre-requisite of online interfacing and friction is a possibility provided by glitches. As interfaces and photo-based media are key exponents of a digital flow, they are key phenomena to finding friction within that flow.

Material
One criterion for selecting the cases is the information they yield about the effects of interfacing and a viewer’s response to it through websites and artworks – a joint yet not necessarily unified part of what I call a symbolic interface: the online environment producing meaning. As discussed further on, with reference to Michel de Certeau’s theory of tactics, the websites figure in this thesis as part of a social structure where digital flow is a key characteristic. The website represents a systemic side of meaning production while the artworks represent individual statements within and towards the system.

The glitch art of Stearns, Meaney and Menkman represents a recognizable form of technical disruption, commonly displayed and shared online. At the same time, they use interfaces and photo-based media with an unusual consistency and volume as well as variance and complexity. Both in terms of quality and quantity, it therefore suits a concentrated analysis. Concentrating the material to these websites and photo-based artworks is thus a delimitation that benefits my aim more than a wider scope would. For this reason, I exclude many online and offline works and display modes like screenings, prints, and multimedia installations. Instead, I include the website as an art platform rather than a social or commercial one – thereby focusing on interfacing experiences that need more attention in analyses of art. I also include sound and text if in direct proximity to the focal points of my research questions. The cases thus combine aspects of artworks and website interfaces to show how a tactical potential may become available to the viewer.

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11 Bate 2013, pp. 91–93.
The first case focuses on Phillip Stearns’s *Year of the Glitch*, in which he posted one glitch work per day throughout 2012 to his Tumblr blog, a platform often used for art display (figs. 1–18). The ongoing project links to the artist’s own website, included in the analysis to highlight the networked character of the interface. The study is based on 366 archive posts from 2012, documented in circa 500 screen-shots and printouts to clarify how the organization and content of the website affects the viewer. I focus on still images tagged “photography” and their display, to articulate the components of the key relation in this thesis: viewer, photo-based media, and interface. The photographs are glitched yet the interface is not – abstract images mediated through a transparent black or white interface. The case mainly consists of the *DCP_Series* where I home in on the artist’s reconstructions of digital cameras, the use of text elements accompanying the artwork, and the dynamic between image and interface in the display with regards to for instance materiality. With a combined glitching and photography practice concerned with breaking cameras, and an interface practice that follows the underlying system, this case deals with how the system is structured and how that structure may or may not be challenged.

The second case revolves around Rosa Menkman’s blog-based website *Sunshine in My Throat* (figs. 19–36). The surrealist name provides a thematic entry into the website and the work on display – both characterized by a disruption that prompts the viewer to participate. I use screen-shots and printouts to clarify how such participation is structured, as they ground a viewer’s experience of moving between glitched and non-glitched displays, still images and video. As a complement to the structural characteristics of Stearns’s case – captured for instance through the “photography” tag – I use interfacing here to explore how sensory experiences build up across the website. To emphasize the interface – as a place and an activity – my analysis includes the front page encompassing circa one hundred links, and seventeen video films of the adjoining page *Videoscape*. One film, *Compress Process*, is singled out to exemplify a photo-based material that incorporates the artist’s body and therefore highlights friction in relation to embodiment. This theme in glitch art of human/computer bodies is especially pertinent in interfacing, and it articulates the spectatorship of concern in this thesis. I present a similar yet complementing aspect through *Combing*, a still photograph of a performance that appears in more than seventy guises across the website – from artist portrait to instructional guide. This case represents a sensory aspect of the interface that encompasses both glitch and photo-based practices.

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12 Phillip Stearns: yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com; phillipstearns.wordpress.
13 Rosa Menkman: rosa-menkman.blogspot.se.
The third case is Evan Meaney’s website, especially his project *Ceibas Cycle* (figs. 37–54). It is a static website with a minimalist interface framed by the artist’s name rather than a blog framed by a specific project or theme. I focus on the interface of the front page that introduces the *Ceibas Cycle* project on twenty pages. Another focal point is the screen-based work *A Similar History* that highlights interfacing with an artwork created and displayed as an online game – in which one of many sittings conveys 103 stops-and-motions between glitched and non-glitched materials where photo-based media is scarcely used. The case also contains three sections that address photo-based media. The twenty-seven digital video portraits of *To Hold a Future Body so Close to One’s Own* and the short video *The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts* exemplify glitched videos that merge disrupted abstract parts and undisrupted figurative parts, while doing so in varying displays with regards to time and spatial setting. The third stop is a *Photography* portfolio with thirty-five images that are not glitched, exemplifying how an undisrupted material affects the viewer as part of an experience mainly focused on friction. Through screen-shots and printouts, this case represents integration: between interface and artwork, and between glitched and not glitched photo-based media – all sharing the space of the same image.

**Method**

Case study and phenomenology function as method and methodology – as a means of research and a perspective on the character and value of the knowledge that it produces. Here, I present my approach grounded in methodological parameters where the case study is delimited by the phenomenological concepts of haptic visuality, co-presence and media specificity. My discussion centers on how these parameters and delimitations benefit an analysis of viewer experiences and positions emerging through online interfacing.

**Case Study**

Social scientist Bent Flyvbjerg includes a close and concrete detailing of historically situated phenomena in the definition of case study: “An intensive analysis of an individual unit […] stressing developmental factors in relation to environment”. I analyze my material with his definition as a close and concrete detailing of spectatorship pinpoints close and concrete effects of interfacing. This phenomenological case study builds on close observation of particular examples, a common approach in the discipline of art history.

14 Evan Meaney: evanmeaney.com.

Flyvbjerg captures a methodological basis for my method as he counters five kinds of misunderstanding about case study. First, he states that predictable universals favored in scientific research are overvalued for the human affairs that ground concrete case knowledge, including the knowledge produced in this study. Second, a single case – like a phenomenological study – adds to collective knowledge both combined with other methods and as a strong innovative example on its own. Accordingly, the three cases presented in this thesis are aimed at generating examples that could be added to other studies. Third, a case study entails research beyond generating and testing hypotheses, yet is useful for this too – and to build theory as it develops skills like description, testing, and formulating new questions with an awareness of the sensitive relation between concepts and contexts. This thesis articulates one hypothesis that is tested by a specifically developed conceptualization, discussed further in the section on theory and previous research: systemic friction, screen image, photographic instance – and tactical spectatorship.

Flyvbjerg’s fourth point is that, due to the rigor in probing phenomena that unfold in real-life situations, a case study is more often biased toward falsifying than confirming a researcher’s preconceptions. For instance, my background in artistic practice, stated in the following, renders preconceptions that may be falsified by the interpretations of others yet still benefit a complex understanding when brought together with them. Lastly, the difficulty to summarize and generalize from case studies may not be a problem since this kind of study should be read as a whole. A risk to over-organize, simplify or over-interpret information to fit a narrative is balanced by accounting for contradictions – taken as signs of what make the analysis intensive, challenging the method to make it as productive as possible. This thesis is written with the awareness of a whole being more or other than the sum of its parts.

With Flyvbjerg’s specifications, I keep my case studies semi-structured to enable an intensive analysis. For example, I use screen-shots and printouts consistently yet variably to document my visits as a way to secure the material in light of a digital ephemerality. Changes imply that material may disappear before becoming available to a sustained in-depth analysis needed for the collective knowledge accumulation that Flyvbjerg emphasizes. One such change is the redesign of Evan Meaney’s website between doing the case study and finalizing this introduction. For instance, the account of the front page is based on a small photograph set into a blank white space – now replaced by more elements and more color but no image (figs. 37, 39).\footnote{Ephemerality in digital culture is noted by for instance in Chun 2008, pp. 166–167; Lister 2013, pp. 4–9, p. 20; Murray 2013 pp. 173–176; Paul 2003/2008, p. 25; Betancourt 2006, p. 4.}

\footnote{Previous versions of Meaney’s website – and circa 469 billion other websites – can still be viewed through the Internet Archive Wayback Machine, archive.org/web (retrieved March 16}
Flyvbjerg suggests two parameters that motivate my semi-structured approach. First, generalizability depends on openness as it invites readers to make their own – more informed – interpretations adding to collective knowledge. Second, intensity requires detail, richness, completeness, and internal variance generated by the casing: boundaries for what falls within the case and what surrounds it as context. I argue that openness is relevant when studying an emerging phenomenon, like the spectactorship developing in response to an emerging flow, since the empirical base for knowledge changes too. Openness is a component of time, place and content in my casing.

I choose the artworks and websites in the cases for the information they can give. I am guided by Flyvbjerg’s notion that such small single cases, selected for their anticipated information content, give deeper and more varied insights – and therefore more knowledge – than average cases. With the material of the three cases – created between 2004 and 2012 when the interface becomes a key platform – I expect them to capture an increasingly pervasive flow through their ability to disturb the process that also generates them. Paring down the relationship between system and individual to three websites thus provides a more approachable yet possibly complex answer to my question than if the material had been more random, scarce, or dispersed – or displayed in a format less fitting the mix of art and everyday interfacing conveyed through the Firefox browser of my stationary PC and Mac laptop.

Trajectories across the website entail fixed and fleeting qualities that add relevance to this study, as they reflect the process of becoming in which the still emerging phenomena of interfacing can be analyzed. However, while my material is digitally produced and displayed – and analyzed online – I do not argue for any digital purity. My long, repeated and visually documented visits are not unlike the empirical basis for traditional art-historical studies or anthropological fieldwork – especially ones grounded in phenomenology.

**Phenomenology**

I use phenomenology to extract, articulate and problematize experience situated by flow and friction. Direct observation, what is seen how, is central yet complex. I combine Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological stress on embodied experience with Jacques Derrida’s poststructuralist questioning.  

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14. This archive is discussed as an example of the tension between ephemerality and memory within digital culture in Chun 2008, pp. 168–169.

15. The rising importance of the interface is connected with the shift towards Web 2.0 around 2004, as described in for instance Tim O’Reilly: “What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software”, *Communications & Strategies*, Number 65, 1st quarter 2007, pp. 17–37.

19. This section is based on Jacques Derrida: “Sign Event Context”, *Limited Inc*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston (IL) 1988; Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Kroppens fenomenologi*, Dai-
Merleau-Ponty’s holism creates a unified pervasive flow that Derrida’s tension breaks – not unlike a glitch. I read them together to situate my material as a factual yet shifting medium and source of experience. A productive ambivalence between seeming opposites thus remains, in both the analysis and the presentation of my case studies. Such a phenomenological way to clarify and enrich interpretation brings out how glitches make visible the effects of interfacing at the core of this thesis. Visualizations make concrete the information that human and computer exchange – an uncertain process that may invite and provoke viewers to connect differently to images online. In this thesis, what is visualized is a system that carries friction yet also reacts to it. The viewer thus confronts a complicating yet sensitizing situation: an unstable position that may or may not hold a tactical potential.

In my analysis, experience entails presence as well as absence – they exist in a coterminous continuum rather than in a binary opposition. Merleau-Ponty and Derrida may be claimed to share a view on presence as an experienced totality – which absence totally lacks. Yet, they also share a focus on deviances, anomalies, contradictions – which can be understood as forms of absence, and also as forms of friction within the (total and totalizing) flow of experience.

My emphasis on systemic friction addresses how glitches deviate from interfacing since an experience of presence. Yet, glitches make absence possible to experience as they visualize a lack of data. With a poststructuralist focus on the incomplete and the unstable, absence may thus be included as a part of the accessibility that is often taken for granted in phenomenology. I cannot access the system that positions me, yet I must use it in order to interface. I am my own access route to a world constituted by all that is not-me. If I can see what lies aside of me, it is because at least some part of it is reflected within me. Such a reciprocal seeing mode is needed to know if others see what I see – an analytical route to achieve generalizability through openness, as noted above. Knowing that something will not be seen sharpens attention to what is seen.

In Merleau-Ponty’s formative analysis of Cézanne he details how friction between firm and fleeting aspects of an object’s appearance expands painter and painted—and viewer.\textsuperscript{21} I share his approach yet find untenable Merleau-Ponty’s claim that such a process of becoming cannot be captured in photography due to its seemingly unbodied distance.\textsuperscript{22} My focus on embodied experiences of imaging technologies ties in with postphenomenology developed by philosopher Don Ihde yet puts less weight on the material agency of a technical apparatus than on the experiences of an individual viewer.\textsuperscript{23}

In \textit{Qualitative Research}, phenomenology is lauded as a flexible and cross-disciplinary approach to subjectively perceived lived experiences—yet, echoing Flyvbjerg, it risks structuring data in ways that distance it from lived experiences.\textsuperscript{24} This understanding of phenomenology is based on bracketing (\textit{epoché}), description and essence. In this thesis, \textit{epoché} gives a pause to reflect on that basis. I too interpret a phenomenon by how it appears directly and written-forth through my engagement with spatial and temporal prerequisites and consequences. However, I seek or expect no universal essence. To bracket individual presuppositions is contradictory, as the meaning ascribed to the phenomenon is presupposed to validate the bracket in the first place. Instead, I problematize experience by neither excluding it nor essentializing it. With mediation as a necessarily unstable source, my case studies contest any given links between phenomenological method and philosophy.

The thesis adds to what film theorist Laura U. Marks calls a haptic criticism, in which phenomenological analyses mix a “sensory closeness” with a “symbolic distance” in order “to actualize a common event that lay dormant, immanent, somewhere between us.”\textsuperscript{25} Such a mix is notable in the case studies,


\textsuperscript{24} This paragraph is based on \textit{Qualitative Research}, no author stated, p. 22, pp. 213–225.

where Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on sensory closeness is nuanced with the symbolic distance of Derrida’s deconstruction. The thesis forms a haptic criticism of interfacing as I treat experience as observable yet questionable, through glitches as a means of both observing and questioning. They form part of a haptic visuality that addresses how viewers get closer to their computers – building knowledge through unstable rather than essentialized experiences of interfacing. Viewer positions thus become a key to how systems are visualized and probed.

To further explore how friction can be an aspect of haptic visuality, I use the concept of co-presence. I follow philosopher Emmanuel Alloa’s notion that embodiment happens in between bodies, as mediation precedes individual media: everything is mediated through something else. Alloa describes phenomenological mediation with a computer mouse – a device that gets closer to viewers by both enhancing and breaking flow. Absorbed in interfacing, this object melts into my hand while my attention is drawn to its counterpart on the screen. Interfacing establishes an all-encompassing presence: I am here and there. But if the mouse – I – slips off the edge of the pad, presence is disturbed and the conditions of interfacing are revealed. Technology thus extends the body – is embodied – by material difference and disconnection. To Alloa, that break is needed “to think experience in a multimedia age” as it invites reflection. In this thesis, such (self)-reflection is articulated through interfacing with glitch art and conceptualized as a tactical spectatorship.

To account for the parts engaged in co-presence, I ground my analysis in the media-specificity of literary scholar N. Katherine Hayles. She stresses that the current media convergence needs alertness to individual instantiations, akin to how the computer/camera merge prompts my alertness to individual interfacing. She defines digital visual culture as the interplay of coded and

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un-codable elements in practice, materialization and representation – based on a phenomenological distinction between embodiment as a first-person action within a given yet unpredictable digital system and the body as a third-person reference to that process. I share her focus on unpredictable interplay as it interprets a socio-cultural system – especially online – through individual action. Interplay between system and individual entails an un-codable aspect that may shape experience against coded structures. Hayles’s distinctions give a methodological basis for my conceptualization of such interplay as tactical spectatorship by situating photo-based media, interfaces – and crucially: viewers – as interacting yet specific material forms.

In this thesis, the viewer is a key part of the casing. Embodied by the author – me – the user-turned-viewer is an experiencing subject situated as a function of the phenomenological casing. To articulate relations between system and individual, the viewer tests positions through the experiences of interfaces and photo-based media. The individual who makes a particular observation related to a website or an artwork on display is referred to as “I” and “me”. Such an impression is bound to a particular time, place and action and therefore to the circumstances of my visit on one particular occasion. The individual who makes a general observation is referred to as “a viewer”, “the viewer” or “viewers”. Extending the “I” who makes “my” observation, a general impression is available on repeated visits to several visitors. For instance, a static element of a website display may stay the same in between visits – visible not just to me but also to other viewers.

An “implied” position points to how certain characteristics of artworks and displays direct my experience by seeming to call for a particular response. As a complement, an “actual” position identifies alternatives to the implied one. Alternatives may arise if for instance an interface and an artwork call for opposing modes of seeing or generate seemingly incompatible experiences. Such contradictory occasions indicate an experiential break that may be described as friction. Including them in the account is therefore productive for analyzing spectatorship – especially a potentially tactical one.

I specify viewer experience as particular, general, implied and actual positions to delimit and clarify how experience becomes position. Contrary to any “ideal” position, the viewer shares the problematic continuity between

Hayles). As I do, Hayles’s media-specificity stress haptics – thus it does not oppose for instance W.J.T. Mitchell’s claim in “There Are No Visual Media” that all senses are engaged. Interfacing may be related to collective seeing modes like Jonathan Crary’s “techniques of the observer” (1990) and Martin Jay’s “scopic regimes” (1988). I see such modes as relevant yet systemic delimitations – see Lister 2013, p. 3, and Bate 2013, pp. 84–87, pp. 89–91.

An “implied” position resembles the “implicit viewer” theorized by for instance Wolfgang Kemp, building on the work of Roman Ingarden from the 1920s onwards.
flow and friction by being an unstable source and medium of experience.\textsuperscript{31} If a glitch causes friction, it reaches the viewer individually: connected to an ungraspable network yet interfacing alone. A viewer may observe sources and effects of friction – and thus make a first tactical move. These delimitations serve to capture experiences and positions that are easily lost in analyses that address the subject as for instance “we” or “one”. A method to inhabit the viewing subject within interpretative accounts is needed yet elusive if the “I” is taken for granted or obscured. My point is to make explicit a praxis that often stays tacit and to link individual and generalizable experience.

Direct observation generates new experiences that build on earlier ones. As the designated viewer in this study, my approach is shaped by my experience as a photographer and a dancer. Both practices point to how individual vision and motion interact with structures: spatial, temporal, corporeal, technical – systemic. Such interaction grounds my emphasis on haptic, embodied, performative, and tactical experience, echoing how system and individual relate while interfacing – discussed further in the next section.\textsuperscript{32}

Theory and Previous Research
I tie my case studies to flow and friction with theoretical delimitations based on previous research on glitch, interface, and photography. These parts are often related in interpretations that coincide with when the case material was produced. Previous research thus adds to an effort – that is also mine – to try to grasp the present by analyzing phenomena as they are forming. I discuss

\textsuperscript{31}My specification of the viewer complements the ideal viewer often tied to phenomenology. Such an idea recurs in relation to for instance an institutionally structured effect of web experience (Bate 2013, p. 84) and pictorial seeing (Noë 2015, pp. 51–54). Seeing as a part of the phenomenological body is emphasized in Merleau-Ponty 2004, pp. 13–27, pp. 284–293.

\textsuperscript{32}To specify how my dance experience is interwoven in my spectatorship – to account for its part in the performative co-creation of aesthetic works and experiences analyzed in this thesis – it may be noted that I started dancing while recovering from a paralyzing illness at age 3. I started performing at age 5, attending the Royal Swedish Ballet School and the Ballet Academy 1987–1995. During this time, until I stopped dancing in 1999, I explored practices such as contact improvisation and choreographed my own work. From choreography, I turned to photography in 2000. These two threads ground my current academic research endeavor, and exemplify a system–individual relation that structures experience physically and visually. The intersubjective and analytical value of such experience is captured in Cecilia Roos’ concept inspärning, an act akin to inscription or engraving: how patterns are created in the body through the symbolic organization of systems, whether systems of instruction in the form of dancing or in the form of interfacing with computers. See Cecilia Roos: “Från rörelse ur reflektion i tillblivelse: Dansaren och den konstnärliga processen”, Ord i tankar och rörelse: Dansaren och den skapande processen: konstnärlig och humanistisk forskning i samverkan. En delrapport, Cecilia Roos, Katarina Elam, Anna Petronella Foulter (eds.), School of Dance and Circus, Stockholm 2012; Astrid von Rosen: ”Dansa med bilder. Att artikulera kroppens kunskap i livsberättelser om dans”, Personligt talat. Biografiska perspektiv i humaniora, Maria Sjöberg (ed.), Makadam, Göteborg 2014 (cites Roos); ”Scenographing Strindberg: Ström’s Alchemical Interpretation of A Dream Play, 1915–18 in Düsseldorf”, forthcoming.
theory and research together to capture relations between these parts that together form the key phenomenon in this thesis: tactical spectatorship. My conceptualization suggests a way to address the forming of relations between systems and individuals. In the following, this conceptualization is specified with regards to the three main fields of research delimiting this study – glitch as systemic friction; interface as screen image; and photography as photographic instance. The sections on glitch, interface, and photography are kept apart in their order of presentation to keep clarity. However, my relational focus results in overlaps as current photography research often takes a wider scope of lens and screen practices – and research on both glitch and interface refers to Michel de Certeau’s theory of tactics so central also to this study. The following sections can be read as parts of the same relation between system and individual – grounded in systems aesthetics, thus introduced first.

**Systems Aesthetics**

I situate my cases as systems aesthetics since it connects art with flow – and friction within flow. To articulate flow, I follow Manuel Castells’s seminal analysis of a globalized world structured by digitally processed information, communication technologies, and microelectronics “that shape and control human life [also of non-users] in every corner of the planet.”33 As such a structure, flow shapes discourses on techno-social shifts from the network society emerging in the 1980s and 1990s to big data cultures of ubiquitous computing in the 2000s and 2010s. In a dystopian response to how computer use transforms the experience of reality, flow may be situated as an accelerating stress.34 I analyze spectatorship online as a function of flow, based on Castells’s nuanced stance that “mediated communication [...] constitutes the *symbolic* environment in which people receive, process, and send the signals that produce meaning in their lives” – especially as *protocols* govern mass self-communication.35 In the following, an emphasis on protocol-driven symbolic environments grounds my discussion on how flow and friction relates through glitch, interface, and photo-based media.

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Systems aesthetics was conceptualized around 1968 as artist and art historian Jack Burnham used technical instability to form a cultural critique. Such critique evolves in “stable, on-going relationships between organic and non-organic systems” creating a negotiated environment for interaction with machines. Matthew Rampley notes that Burnham’s work opened up “a line of inquiry that has been scandalously neglected” – concerning implications of making and thinking art when, as Burnham writes:

These new systems prompt us not to look at the skin of objects, but at those meaningful relations within and between their visible boundaries.

In response to his statement, it is notable that such meaningful relations are now being embodied and enacted through those very skins: the interfaces where individuals and systems meet. Addressing the neglected inquiry, art historian Edward Shanken roots recent art and research in a human-machine interaction that echo the “systemic interrelatedness of all things [...] in a global economy fueled by the algorithmic processing of big data.”

I interpret this updated systems aesthetics as art engaging a quantitative impact of flow, akin to the trope of information stress noted earlier. I find a similar focus – spanning from early to contemporary systems aesthetics – in art projects by Joan Fontcuberta, Joachim Schmid, Erik Kessels or Lev Manovich, in exhibitions like Ghosts in the Machine (New Museum 2012) and Big Bang Data (Somerset House 2016) and in anthologies like A Companion to New Media Dynamics and Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty

A focus on quantity risks emphasizing systems over individuals. My qualitative study – based on unstable, ongoing relationships in systems aesthetics – captures an individual within, with and against a system. The thesis complements case studies on art in disruptive relation to technology, as I detail experiences of flow through a friction that is intrinsic to flow yet rarely given full academic attention in phenomenological close analyses.

As an example of the applicability of phenomenology, in-depth accounts of viewer experiences in relation to contemporary new media art abound in the research endeavors of for instance digital media theorist Timothy Scott Barker and art historian Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf. This study approaches Rossholm Lagerlöf’s performativity as well as Scott Barker’s process philosophy – and their focus on digital art installations that engage the viewer in an activity not far from interfacing though described differently. With regards to study objects and interpretative strategies, their work may be related to systems aesthetics as it concerns relations between technology, creative practice, and embodied spectatorship. However, they do not seem to attend to the tactical disruption conceptualized in this thesis as part of such relations either in artworks, displays, or viewer positions. This partial similarity recurs across the research fields bordering this study. While there is a vast amount of research on for instance media experience or photography online, this thesis contributes what seems to be quite an unusual combination of material, method, and theoretical perspective. To begin with the key part of this perspective, the next section focuses on glitch.

Glitch
My view on systems aesthetics ties flow to friction, as a growing dependency on computers triggers a growing concern for computer problems. In 1961 – a year before John Glenn’s use of the word glitch makes it common – interface is defined as a harmonious coordination between human and machine. While glitch art is often tied to the 1990s digital turn – with the

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41 Interface, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com: “a surface forming a common boundary of two bodies, spaces, or phases / the place at which independent and often unrelated systems meet and act on or communicate with each other / the means by which interaction or communication is achieved at an interface / to connect by means of an interface / to serve as
interface discussed next – Joan Jonas’s *Vertical Roll* from 1972 may be seen to imply current uses of glitch as it “deconstructed both the televisual medium and the performing subject through the use of a persistent interference mechanism.”42 I anchor the case study material in disruptive practices of such 1970s techno-culture, focusing on photo-based work like Polaroid experiments by Lucas Samaras – echoed in recent experimental photography by Stephen Gill, Matthew Cetta, or Dan Isaac Wallin, and rooted in earlier art like Man Ray’s solarized photographs. Glitch art is referenced across media, from John Cage’s sound experiments to multimodal happenings by Nam June Paik and early interface art like Jodi – and to film, which photography scholar David Bate uses to note the process of shock, scrutiny, and habit that glitches entail.43 Linked to old or new practices, I refer my case studies to situations where the material disrupts the flow that generates it.

Connecting a purported subversive stance to canonized avant-gardes like Dada, Surrealism, or Fluxus helps to legitimize glitch artists. For instance, media theorist Jussi Parikka – who researches computer viruses and other disruptions akin to glitches – sees Rosa Menkman’s work as influential for defining the field of media archaeology, informed by such a connection.44 Yet, that connection is not unproblematic. Whether through a mobile phone application like Decim8 or Stearns’s blankets with glitch motifs, glitch practices gain a commercial value on a margin where aesthetics with and against the system easily conflate into a mainstream position. Still, the connection recurs in accounts on glitch art. In *Abstract Video*, Rosa Menkman’s work is used to stress the continued relevance of Internet art – she and Evan Meaney figure as theorists while Phillip Stearns’s textiles are noted as part of what Gregory Zinman calls an ongoing process:

> [G]litching is not specific to our present moment – it is the desire to make art out of error, to rethink the intentionality of the machine, and to find new ways of seeing through technology.45

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43 Bate 2013, p. 88. Glitch and film are also linked to systems aesthetics around 1970 in for instance William S. Smith’s analysis of the materially disruptive films by Paul Sharits.
To avoid a problematic intertwining of practice and theorization, the artists provide material for analysis rather than analytical sources to this study. While Meaney, Stearns and Menkman work across several fields – for instance organizing, participating in, and writing about the GLI.TC/H conference – this academic art-historical thesis is not situated in between positions and fields of academia, art, and artistic research.\

Defining glitch is a means to fulfill the research aim and not an end in itself. A consequence of this endeavor is that definitions still need to be engaged. I do so due to a focus in previous research on material ontology based in computer errors with a default tactical potential. Zinman’s quote above is from 2015 yet the focus on error is notable at least since artist Iman Moradi’s BA essay *GTLCH Aesthetics* in 2004, especially with the emergence of media archaeology by for instance Jussi Parikka and Erkki Huhtamo. I understand the prevailing discourse in glitch research to be influenced by the media ar-

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46 The GLI.TC/H conference/festival/gathering took place in Chicago 2010-2012, adding Amsterdam and Birmingham in 2011. An early similar event was the glitch symposium in Oslo in 2002, followed by for instance the Bent festival in New York City and the online festival The Wrong – New Digital Art Biennale.

chaeological focus on material ontology – seeking the source of meaning production within the wiring of the computer and its effects on operations. In combination with these focal points, artistic intention is often given a central role in analyses. By rather attending to effects on the viewer – as these are notable on the interface in the form of viewer experiences and positions – this thesis complements previous research that covers a systemic side of flow and friction. I share a material focus insofar as glitches occur as a result of something going wrong within a system. Yet, glitches in the case studies occur as a result of intentional art making – even if the outcome is unknowable. I situate the work of Stearns, Meaney, and Menkman as systems aesthetics since they entail tactics as a potential tested by an individual rather than as a condition given by a system. Both the aim of this thesis and the material through which it is fulfilled thus require a conceptual shift. This shift suggests that systemic friction may complement the error definition.

I use the notion of friction rather than error because it opens up the yes/no question if a glitch is tactical and shifts it to the viewer. Grounded in friction, my analysis pinpoints a close yet precarious relation between a system as a locus of error and an interfacing individual. An inclusive contextualization opens up a right/wrong divide where tactics is presupposed. Disruptive practices like databending or hex editing – Nick Briz’ videos, Rozita Fogelman’s ASCII art, or Glitchr whose material is Google Street View, Twitter and Facebook – is thus related to Ferruccio Laviani’s furniture, !Mediengruppe Bitnik’s architecture, avisVFX’s 3D printed objects, Lorna Mills’s gif animations or paintings by Wade Guyton, Henrietta Harris and Joseph Nechvatal. Locating my case studies online connects these practices to interfacing through website displays, opening up for future research on spectatorship in relation to other online spaces like the Museum of Glitch Aesthetics.48 My study builds on research of errors as material ontology yet accounts in unusually close detail for where the individual meets the system. With the theorists introduced below – and next, focusing on interface – I see the tactics of glitches as a negotiated potential rather than as a fixed category of error.

In reference to the error trope, media theorist Peter Krapp points up the paradox of intention and mistake in glitch practices: “To err is human; to err in digital culture is design.”49 With his multimodal approach to visual, aural and textual disruption, grounded in the important glitch context of gaming, I bring out a mix of structure and chance in the case study material. He captures this mix with an emphasis on contingency: a state of being neither given nor random. Throughout the thesis, I use contingency to capture the potential of glitch as an instance of friction that may or may not disturb the flow.

49 This paragraph is based on Krapp 2011, pp. 53–75, p. 77, p. 86, cover.
Film and media scholar Hugh S. Manon and artist Daniel Temkin nuance the error trope by arguing that inauthentic glitches enable transformative acts.50 Contrary to formalist notions – in Iman Moradi’s vein – they highlight an active individual handling of glitches as “a sudden phenomenological intrusion [...] undercutting the sovereignty of the digital by revealing its pervasiveness.”51 My shift towards experiential relations between system and individual echoes this analysis. Moreover, my combination of glitch and photography ties in with their claim that practitioners of both engage in “inviting and reacting to conditions that allow the art to happen” by “reinfected that which technological advancement has made sterile.”52 The cases may be understood to invite, react to and re-infect systems.

A performative core of interfacing is captured with an emphasis on phenomenological intrusion and contingency. As media theorist Michael Betancourt states, formalism obscures performativity in digital media and in its users.53 Instead, all glitches matter: technical failure or not-failure; failure induced, recorded, or designed; and – vital to this thesis – not glitched. Tactical potential depends on a viewer’s experience of deviance within a continuous mediation: an experience of hidden data that is at once fragmented and embodied. I share Betancourt’s focus on how art shapes spectatorship in displays that reveal “the disembodied technological instrumentalism of the digital that is otherwise being elided from conscious consideration through the linked illusions of perfection, transparency, and immediacy.”54 I address these illusions as experience and position, modes discussed in the section on interface.

I relate glitch to interfacing in terms of both performativity and performance. The similarity and difference between the two is captured by art historian Margaret Iversen, who states that performance is a unique spontaneous event that cannot be captured while performativity points to how the unique and spontaneous repeats other events.55 On poststructuralist and phenomenolo-
gical grounds, queer theorist Judith Butler stresses how consistent individual acts disrupt systemic conditions: performativity becomes tactical. Such acts point up that description has a transformative potential – they are part of flow while also introducing friction into it.

This thesis is focused to a present moment that gains a historical anchor by media art theorist Caleb Kelly, researching glitches in live performance:

[T]he practice identified as “glitch”, which became popular in the late twentieth century, was a key marker in the development of digital arts practices [...] signaled in the varied practices of the crack and the break throughout the twentieth century. Kelly echoes the conflation of aesthetics with and against a system noted above, as the error trope recurs as a creative dead end in his account. Yet, disruption still expands and critiques media and mediation. Beyond Cagean sound experiments, Kelly’s emphasis on multimodal work by for instance Nam June Paik links the case studies to systems aesthetics – bringing out the performance in interfacing.

Key words thus far – intrusion, contingency, deviance, crack – connect art, disruption of everyday technologies, and tactics. To ground this connection, I turn to cultural theorist Michel de Certeau. His tactics theory is central to link glitch and interface, referenced by for instance Caleb Kelly. His theory rests on a notion that “space is a practiced place” where individuals in a socio-cultural system expose key mechanisms by tactical actions: more or less aligned with the system, leaving more or less traces in it over time. De Certeau’s way to relate systems and individuals indirectly captures the network society. I understand a website as a place that mirrors and creates the structure of a society pervaded by digital flow. Stops and starts may leave no trace there. A glitch stops a smoothly running system and is fixed before I


notice. Still, actions may be traced in interfaces, photographs, viewer experiences of friction. Such experience is epistemologically interesting to follow as it pinpoints friction in and against flow. As I analyze art through interfacing, friction develops over time – art thus serves as a lens for any website.

Interface
My understanding of the interface includes a notion of an organic area linking bodies, spaces, and phases as well as a computer program for connecting humans to computers and computers to each other. Interfaces link image and viewer; viewer positions link image and interface; images that activate this environment and enable experience link viewer and interface. I use the concept screen image to account for these connections – how the limited frame of the interface gains an image-like quality, how moving elements gain clearer visual boundaries while fixed surfaces gain motion. The screen image enables a co-reading of interface and photography that grounds my conceptualization of a relation between system and individual.

In this thesis, interface and interfacing shape each other. The place is shaped by activities enacted there – in turn, limited and directed by the place. With philosopher Edward S. Casey’s phenomenological definition, I address the artist’s websites as places to emphasize the screen image as an environment enclosed by individual embodied experience – marking motion as room and opening as space. Describing digital environments, I do not see sites as inherently empty, distanced or passive, but as places where surfaces implicate and add to the embodied experience of the interfacing. I understand tactical action as a kind of doing grounded in yet expanding the enclosure of a place.

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61 Bell 2015, p. xv.


I analyze what is available to experience – where and when it is encountered – by addressing the interface as a symbolic place within and through which individual interfacing produces knowledge. I understand the symbolic interface as de Certeau’s “practiced place” where tactical actions empower individuals within a pervasive system. In media theorist David Garcia’s discussion on de Certeau, a link can be noted between systems aesthetics and the tactical media interventions that began to challenge the Internet’s impact on dominant social structures in the mid-1990s:

>[M]ass access to cheap and easy to use media […] propelled de Certeau’s twilight world of barely visible tactics into the light of day […] The tactical “user” he championed has emerged as the “prime mover” of the social web era […] creating new spaces for both a vastly increased level of tactical user agency along with instruments providing unparalleled levels of command and control.\(^6^4\)

The quote captures the individual in relation to flow and friction. The new spaces created then still stay open – including online communities like Nettime and Rhizome that became a platform for artists like Alexei Shulgin, Heath Bunting, RTMark, Olia Lialina, Vuk Cosic, Etoy, and Jodi. In *Art Since 1980: Charting the Contemporary*, Peter R. Kalb describes artist Cory Arcangel’s hacked video games as “the open space of technology awaiting our entry.”\(^6^5\) In *Abstract Cinema & Technology* (MOCA 2009) Arcangel’s work was shown together with that of Nam June Paik, Marcel Duchamp, and Stan VanDerBeek – tying current glitch and interface practices to disruptive systems aesthetics from the 1990s, the 1970s, and earlier.

The close yet precarious relation underlining glitch as systemic friction recurs in media theorist Alexander R. Galloway’s definition of interface as “an artificial structure of differentiation between two media […] If two pieces of data share an interface, they are designed only to interoperate.”\(^6^6\) Interface and glitch – as well as flow and friction – is further intertwined in his notion of hidden protocols revealed by counter-protocols. While “[p]rotocol is a language [even: “a controlling logic”] that regulates flow, directs netspace, codes relationships, and connects life-forms” – counter-protocols “exploit flaws in protocological and proprietary command and control.”\(^6^7\) Glitches are tactical as their friction puts systems in an “injured, sore, and unguarded

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condition” that breaks the continuous interfacing experience. Like Gallo-
way, I see glitch art online as Internet art since it uses systems aesthetics
with tactical means. He points out that artists and activists like Jodi, Elec-
tronic Disturbance Theatre, and Critical Art Ensemble use interfaces, browsers,
and HTML as medium for the “degraded aesthetics” of web-specific art in
order to realign technology with individuals rather than with systems. I
second this realignment and detail it from the viewer’s perspective. In the
course of analysis, the theory of protocols and counter-protocols thus
expands from systemic materiality towards individual experience.

To tie “degraded aesthetics” to everyday interfacing, I understand surface
experience through two modes defined by media scholars Jay David Bolter
and Richard Grusin. While the mode of immediacy erases the medium to put
viewers in direct contact with content, the mode of hypermediacy enhances
the medium’s presence by emphasizing heterogeneity, fragmentation, and in-
determinacy. I see tactical spectatorship as a shift towards a hypermediated
mode in which “the illusion of realistic representation is somehow stretched
or altogether ruptured.” In this thesis, such rupture is caused by friction
within the immediacy produced by the systems that enforce flow in online
environments. By shaping spectatorship, it shapes how to be an individual in
the system. If the viewer gets an opportunity to negotiate such a systemic
positioning, a potential for tactical spectatorship opens up. Such opportunity
depends on experiencing friction – for instance through the photo-based
mediation dominating the flow of digital information.

Photography
In this thesis, photography is something to be interfaced with. It is therefore
related to a research context where photography and interface are understood
as integrated. At the outset of the introduction, four recent examples of this
context provided reference to the theme of this thesis: Life after New Media:
Mediation as a Vital Process by Sarah Kember and Joanna Żylinska, and the

68 Galloway 2004, p. 206. The relation between hidden protocols and the user’s blind practice
is noted in Gitelman 2006, pp. 5–8.
70 Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin: Remediation: Understanding New Media, MIT Press,
Cambridge (MA) and London 1999, pp. 21-44. I do not keep the modes as intrinsically separate
as they appear in many interpretations of art and interfacing. See Jay David Bolter and
Diane Gromala: “Transparency and Reflectivity: Digital Art and the Aesthetics of Interface
Design” in Aesthetic computing, Paul A. Fishwick (ed), MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) and
London 2006; Olav W. Bertelsen and Sören Bro Pold: “Criticism as an Approach to Interface
Aesthetics” in NordiCHI ’04 Proceedings of the third Nordic conference on Human-computer
Raubenheimer 2013, p. 36.
72 Lister 2013, p. 4.
anthologies *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture, Vision Anew: The Lens and Screen Arts* and *Photomediations: A Reader*. In the latter, Zylinska states the effort to widen the discourse on photography as either art or social practice by considering photographs within the networked context:

Photographs function less as individual objects or as media content to be looked at and more as data flows to be dipped or cut into occasionally.\(^{73}\)

This effort unites these books – and unites them with this study, which situates photo-based media in a situation of interfacing. I use the concept of photographic instance to relate screen image and photo-based image: how moving elements gain visual boundaries while fixed surfaces gain motion. Like screen image and systemic friction, this concept is developed as part of the conceptualization of a system–individual relation carried out in this thesis.

A photographic instance is grounded in the definition of instance as both an event and an example.\(^{74}\) As both, it points out a photo-based material as specific (in Hayles’s sense) if it resembles or traces something captured in an exposure. Yet, the term undermines specificity if the material aligns with interface protocols. Therefore, it captures how photography seems materially stable yet shifts as mediation.\(^{75}\) This paradox echoes in my case study titles, repeating the phrase “unstable photograph” – i.e., a photograph momentarily caught in a process from object to instance, situated through interfacing.\(^{76}\)

Gregory Zinman treats photography as an object opposed to glitch art, as his case material “eschews the photographic in favor of an exploratory and direct manipulation of filmic and digital materials.”\(^{77}\) I do not separate “the photographic” from exploration or manipulation. My theoretical delimitations recognize that systemic conditions enable and govern how photography is made, shared, and viewed – but that individuals practice and experience it.

\(^{73}\) Zylinska 2016, pp. 8 (quote), pp. 8–10. Lister 2013, p. 4 (the articles in the first edition from 1995 were replaced with new ones in the second edition from 2013 – due to the digital developments). Bate 2013, pp. 79–93. The trope of mechanical objectivity shifts from photography to data, noted by for instance Gitelman 2013, pp. 5–6. Glitch photography may thus be related to other practices emerging in this shift like the generative photography of Ishac Bertran who shoots digital drawings projected on a screen using disrupted algorithms.

\(^{74}\) Instance, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved November 22, 2015).

\(^{75}\) Lister 2013, pp. 1–2, pp. 6–8, p. 15. Bate 2013, pp. 87–88, pp. 90–91.

\(^{76}\) Notions of photography as unstable in terms of circulation and display are also found in for instance *Between Stillness and Motion: Film, Photography, Algorithm*, Eivind Røssaa (ed.), Amsterdam University press, Amsterdam 2011; *Ephemeral Media: Transitory Screen Culture from television to Youtube*, Paul Grainge (ed.), Palgrave Macmillan, London 2011. Instability in terms of the photographic image is addressed by for instance Clément Chêroux, writing about the competition *Fautographique* that gathered “the best failures”, and Peter Geimer, who problematizes the notion of photographs as traces, impressions, or indexes.

\(^{77}\) Zinman 2015, p. 99. Bate 2013, p. 93.
While this situation pertains to analogue photography too, I emphasize instances over objects to capture the situation of interfacing online. I thereby include a digital/analogue overlap in my focus on a digitized way of being and seeing in the wake of ubiquitous computing.\(^7^8\)

Like screen images, photographic instances involve both performance and performativity: they transform what they describe at the moment it is enacted – is embodied. With a similar stance, Iversen observes a shift in photographic practices since the time when systems aesthetics began to develop:

> Artists since the 1960s have found in photography a medium that lends itself to the redefinition of the image. That redefinition spurned the idea of recording a preexisting object or situation in favor of using the camera as an instrument of experimentation or exploration. \(\ldots\) Photography is thus conceived, not as a melancholic “that-has-been,” but more as a future oriented and interrogative ‘what-will-be’?\(^7^9\)

A consequence of this shift in the practice and conceptualization of photography is that the artist – and the artwork in its particular display – may be said to follow and record events not knowing how they will play out.\(^8^0\) The case studies repeat this process, akin to how tactical Internet art disrupts indexical media that otherwise “just record what was in front of the lens”.\(^8^1\)

With the ongoing interest in interventions into visual technologies of reproduction, I relate my cases to experimental photography at the time of early systems aesthetics. This contextualization serves to neither appoint glitch art as a novel digital style nor earlier art as an ahistorical precursor to it. Continuities and differences are thus addressed with a nuance that risks being lost with a general yet excluding term like post-photography.\(^8^2\) My point is to anchor the present in earlier practices that share more similarities than one perhaps realizes at first glance. While all photographs may create friction within some flow, my concepts capture the circumstances of each case. The act of breaking code or camera is to follow a glitch, to capture its unforeseeable break within a technical system whether online or offline. Both kinds of images describe and point out an event – as does the glitch in this study.

\(^7^8\) Bate 2013, pp. 85–91.
\(^8^0\) Margaret Iversen 2007, pp. 93–94.
\(^8^1\) Baumgärtel 2015, p. 132 (refers to Vuk Cosic’s ASCII art). Iversen 2007, p. 91–94.
I specify how the photographic instance describes, points out and shapes the interfacing situation with variations of a key concept.\(^\text{83}\) That is the concept of the stilled image, from theater scholar Rebecca Schneider who asks:

\[\text{[Is] the accident captured as a snapshot, [a] gestic call in its stilled articulation} \]
\[\text{[---] is the stilled image a call toward a future live moment […] finding its} \]
\[\text{liveness in the time-lag […]’ in your hands’ at the moment of its encounter?} \]

To tie back to Iversen, I consider the materials chosen for the case studies as “stilled” rather than “still” image to capture a “what-will-be” temporarily stilled in disrupted cameras, images, displays – viewers. Schneider’s idea of a stilled image posits photography as a medium with movable boundaries: temporal, spatial, material, experiential. Throughout the case studies, I vary the term stilled image to fit how each case activates such boundaries – for instance, with aesthetics scholar Diarmuid Costello’s term “pictorial continuum”, photography theorist Jorella Andrews’ term “photographic stare” and art and photography historian Carol Armstrong’s term “material speech”.\(^\text{85}\)

To further situate this thesis within previous research, it may be related to two art-historical theses with analyses of photo-based media grounded in phenomenological and poststructuralist performativity: Mette Sandbye’s \textit{Mindesmærker: Tid, erindring og historiefortælling i den fotobaserede samtidskunst} (1999) and Moa Goysdotter’s \textit{Impure Vision: Staged American Art Photography of the 1970s} (2013).\(^\text{86}\) They need mention here as they show a sustained effort to research photo-based art in phenomenological case studies, in dialogue with both digital and pre-digital practices that are still recognizable for instance in the work of Meaney, Menkman, and Stearns.

Sandbye’s mix of phenomenology and post-structuralism echoes my approach to photo-based contemporary art as well as my interest in individual experience. Goysdotter’s study uses traditional phenomenology to home in on the viewer by referring to experimental photography that emerges in the

\(^{83}\text{Noë 2015, pp. 145–148, p. 162, p. 165.} \)
systems aesthetics context that is the main historical anchor point of my case studies. With these similarities, I use a more consistently phenomenological method than Sandbye, yet I do so less traditionally than Goysdotter. The main difference is my focus on the viewer experiences and viewer positions emerging online, in particular through aspects of friction: how interfacing affects spectatorship through glitch art. As these two studies exemplify, the conceptualization of the relation between system and individual brought forward in this thesis – through the interplay of photography, interface, and viewer – builds on previous research yet complements it with the combination of material, method, and purpose.

Outline
This study consists of three case studies and a concluding discussion. The case study section is organized to articulate the character of each case, emerging through a close observation. The account of this observation is delimited by two screen images and three photographic instances that are chosen for how they generate viewer experiences and viewer positions. The number of sections corresponds in order to allow for a synthetization of common traits and comparisons. These are similarly ordered to convey general and particular aspects that affirm or contest the website interfaces that situate them.

Chapter 1 concerns Phillip Stearns’s Year of the Glitch. The case begins with the interface of the front and archive pages, followed by three photo-related focal points: reconstructed cameras, text elements in individual archive posts, and the issue of materialization and materiality which is pertinent in Stearns’s images as well as in the environment of his blog.

Chapter 2 concerns Rosa Menkman’s Sunshine in My Throat. The front page is the starting-point for a discussion that leads to the Videoscapes section. Subsequently, the photo-based works Compress Process and Combing are analyzed as instances to highlight and problematize the interface. The case ends with a section on the viewer as a negotiating participant in the interface.

Chapter 3 concerns Evan Meaney’s Ceibas Cycle. From the front page, including the Ceibas Cycle portal, a section concerns A Similar History in which artwork and interface merge. Three photo-based examples follow, To Hold a Future Body so Close to One’s Own and The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts with glitches, and the artist’s Photography portfolio that contains images that have not been glitched in any way.
Building an Unstable Photograph: Phillip Stearns’s *Year of the Glitch*

In this chapter, samples from the first year of Phillip Stearns’s ongoing project *Year of the Glitch* are analyzed together with the website dedicated to its display (figs. 1–18). The account begins with two screen images, first the front page of the blog opening the website to a visitor and then the project archive where the 2012 sample posts are located. From this focus on the website itself, the account continues with three photographic instances themed around the artist’s camera use, the relation between image and text, and the actualization of materiality. These five aspects address the research questions by pinpointing how a predominately transparent website interface mediates a disruptive photographic practice. Detailing their characteristics and relations exemplifies how interfacing shapes spectatorship through a visual and verbal narrative.

**Screen Image I: Index**

This first screen image signifies both the literal opening of a visit to the *Year of the Glitch* website and its symbolic setting beyond this entrance (figs. 1–2). To capture a co-presence between interfacing and interface, the following discussion revolves around place-making movements. An interfacing process that entails a subtle tension of glitched photographs unfolds through an interface that at first seems rather plain. A viewer may notice this tension in the selected materials and only later reflect on how it shapes an overall experience on this website. However, if the means by which this tension is generated and mediated to the viewer are discrete – they are also consistent.

**The interface discretely structures the exploration of glitches.** One way of structuring a visit is through the blog theme in black with links in grey and red that serves as a backdrop for the artist’s texts as well as still and moving images. Photographs are embedded into the blog format, with its scrollable history of posts linked across the website. In turn, the website is embedded into a smoothly running network system. This simple frame for interactivity establishes the website as a standard Tumblr page. It thus produces a kind of interactivity conceptualized as an intrinsic part of the Inter-
net and especially of the shift towards Web 2.0 around 2004.\textsuperscript{88} The interactivity between the artist and the system shapes the interactivity between the viewer and the artwork – in turn pointing back to the initial relation. The glitches on display point to a precarious side of interactivity. By disrupting digital cameras, the artist interacts with the system in a way that undermines a dominant function of online interactivity – to easily connect digital technologies with each other and with users.\textsuperscript{89} These components are connected through the display yet disconnected through the content.

The website display relies on a standard digital environment. Meanwhile, the photographs visualize this environment under stress. Such a slight tension between standard and stress – here and across the website – has a situating effect.\textsuperscript{90} It locates me in a place at once fixed and relative. The website is fixed in its systemic structure. Yet, it is relative to the updates shaping the interface as the visual front of that structure, and also to the viewer’s actions in response to them. Furthermore, it locates me in a situation that lets me sense the place, act on it and possibly change it – the key aspects of the word situated. As a visitor, I sense the place as my interfacing allows for an embodied experience. Insofar as I curate my own visit, I may also be said to act on the place. These phases of sensing and acting effect change insofar as attention is directed to where my perceptions about the place begin to shift. Even if the place stays the same in term of materiality, that shift makes the place different to the individual moving within it.

Through interfacing, the website is experienced as a lived place. As such, the experience of being situated here echoes Edward S. Casey’s definition of a lived place: “felt from within kinesthetically [where] perceived bodies appear from without”.\textsuperscript{91} On this basis, I argue that Stearns’s case exemplifies a process where movement enables embodiment that in turn constitutes place. Therefore, the digital environment is no longer a purely abstract space. The individual exists as a lived body – “The hand, and the body to which it belongs, is […] the kinesthetically felt inroad into the near-sphere” \textsuperscript{92} “through the traversal of places.”\textsuperscript{92} A featured form of such traversal is walking, the experience of which “builds up a coherent core-world out of the fragmentary appearances that, taken in isolated groupings, would be merely kaleidoscopic”.\textsuperscript{93} “In walking, I oscillate between the modes of ‘keeping still’ and ‘keeping-in-operation.’”\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{88} Interactivity as Internet-specific has been argued by for instance Tim Berners-Lee, while Tim O’Reilly argues that it is a Web 2.0-specific quality.
\textsuperscript{89} Interface, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 22 2012)
\textsuperscript{90} Situated, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 20 2012).
\textsuperscript{91} Casey 1997, p. 224 (cites Husserl).
\textsuperscript{92} Casey 1997, p. 223. My emphasis.
\textsuperscript{93} Casey 1997, pp. 224–225 (cites Husserl).
Casey claims that positioning undermines a relational sense of place:

To be absolutely here […] is not dependent on any ‘theres’ […] places that are merely part of an order of coexistent things; this would be to reduce my body’s place to a bare position.94

With his perspective, it seems nearly impossible to embody a networked environment: to make it a place. However, my interfacing walk across this site grounds a sense of place precisely through the awareness of the link – a concrete hyperlink or its perceptual association – between here and multiple “theres”. Being networked makes this environment more rather than less embodied, because of the physical and perceptual activity required to “be here”.

Being a visitor to the Year of the Glitch is to participate in making the abstract operations of the environment embodied. My own part in acknowledging this situation holds a tactical potential when understood through the phenomenological condition of co-presence. The relation between screen and viewer is grounded in a co-presence between glitched photographs and non-glitched interface that sensitizes me to how easily the photographic image is destabilized and how that instability shapes online experience here.

A tactical position emerges from an experience of being situated: sense, action, change. With de Certeau’s tactics, I tweak Casey’s notion of place as situatedness – highlighting the impact of glitching on a systemically organized digital space. De Certeau claims that place functions as a seat of power hidden from yet enclosing the individual within a system. On the other hand:

[B]ecause it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time […] [on] opportunities that must be seized ‘on the wing’ [by combining given elements in a decisive yet intuitive act].95

This website encloses a visitor in a structure that is both visible and invisible. It exemplifies how individuals can engage tactically with a networked interface as systemic place. It does so by providing “opportunities” to be “seized on the wing” from a blog platform that is and looks systemic.

Tactical opportunities appear throughout the elements and aspects of this case. At first, they are for instance found in small details that hint at a dynamic between the continuity of the site and the discontinuity brought about by its posted glitched photographs. Red links to Questions, Submissions and Resources create a communal aspect of tutorials, tools and writings related to glitch practices in a context of media/electronic/net art. The system connects

95 De Certeau 1984, pp. xix (see pp. xviii–xx for an extended argument, and pp. 34–38)
a viewer with individual work and connects the work with a networked community, while the aesthetic produced and displayed through the system visualizes its own friction. In my understanding, place figures as an embodied situation encircled by a systemic structure: controlling yet open to being restructured by a viewer’s response to Stearns’s art and display choices.

**The interface becomes unstable through regeneration and randomness.** Destabilization is notable at first glance in a stable stream of updates that run the scrollable space greeting the visitor. In March 2013, this space extended over another thirty-five pages. In February 2014 the page count is fifty-two, placing the former first view as number eighteen. A post’s date and time, URL and readers’ notes steadies the flow, adding visual contours with spatial and temporal anchor points: at this moment, this user reposted this image or asked this question. With a new post every few days, the first view alters with each new visitor, and a second visit may alter from the first. Emphasis on the topmost news-bite directs attention to regenerative updates rather than lasting statements, as each new post is pushed into the growing archive where it loses its immediate impact. When and where an image is posted is fixed yet its eventual finding makes the place relative. The fluid position of a single image shifts the significance of that image for the viewer’s experience. A solid structural system is co-present with the individual viewer, giving the opportunity to change positions within it.

Tactical spectatorship is a possibility, even as this networked space reproduces the general character of a digital flow. The website’s blog character is significant as active digging through the backlog gives me access to older material while my active return to find new updates gives new entry points into the work. As viewers more or less consciously prepare for what comes next on the basis of initial impressions, they are affected by what happens to be the latest post before their visit. If photographs are absent from a first view, that medium is likely to be left out of the visitor’s mindset. If photographs are present, the medium may instead be emphasized as a vital part of experience. The first-viewed post shapes the understanding of the whole site.

The visual circumstances of a viewer’s first glance steer the experience. My own experience differs on different occasions. The screen image sometimes displays a glitch photograph as just another surface among others. Then, the interface remains a harmonious coordination, in line with its instrumental definition. Sometimes, friction is directly communicated. One example is a flickering image that appears as I scroll through the first lengths of one visit. Such small but significant motion sharpens my awareness of how the blog’s flow make glitches visible as friction. It also directs attention to how such vi-

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96 Interface, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 22, 2012)
sualization interacts with this photo-based meditation. Trust in a photograph-
ic ability to visualize what is seen – making explicit: showing a fact – col-
lides with the experience of a glitched image created by photographic means
but visualizing something else: an artist’s rendition of a trace of a fact that is
usually hidden from view. After thorough processing, a viewer may not see a
photograph at all. At the same time, it offers a moment of rediscovery.

Disruption of the photograph is the basis for the disruption of a viewer’s ex-
perience. A glitched photograph in the first screen image allows the viewer
to experience the event of a glitch. Such an experience is formed here in the
overlap between technical and perceptual disturbance. This overlap does the
same thing as a glitch: it disrupts something in a way that makes visible both
the disruptive act and the disrupted material in and on which the act takes
place. Now, it is the viewer who is disrupted in a way that enables attention
and reflection on the acts and materials of disruption. I argue that the
disruption exemplified by the *Year of the Glitch* case is productive for the
viewer as it enables a tactical spectatorship towards the system situating the
viewer. The duration of my stay is shaped by this experience, tying together
glitch and photograph as both disruptive materials and acts.

**Screen Image II: Archive**

From the front page, a small link leads to the *Year of the Glitch* archive (figs.
3–4). The standard website continues to produce a standard mode of inter-
acing – the viewer follows the flow at large. From the two screen images of
the *Index* and *Archive*, towards the photographic instances discussed further
on, the contrast between glitch practice and display becomes an example of a
relationship between flow and friction in the networked environment.

**Visual memories add up to a tactical opportunity.** Searching for the en-
trance to the archive, it is notable that it is not featured as the main display of
the project. Instead, it is accessed through a diminutive link placed off-center
in the upper right-hand corner of the front page. Most digital links are gen-
erally small by design, and both their size and placement are intentional to
some degree. The fact that this link is tiny and marginal contradicts its
importance on the website, as it downplays the entrance to the entire project
archive. As the trajectory of a visitor matters for the experience ahead, it
becomes part of the situation set up in this environment.

Similar to the situation culminating in the event of a glitch – setting it up and
observing it unfold – there is an element of staging here. Systemic accidents
mirror accidental effects of how the screen images display the photographs.
A situation unfolds in movements between encounters with the glitched
photographs. Already from the first to the second screen image, the ordered
and discreet elements of this interface generate a mode of interfacing that
contrasts any glitchy disruption. Rather than shifting to a hypermediated state, the interface remains immediate and transparent even after it is intently reflected upon. Likewise, the glitched images appear to both share such transparency and counteract it.

Going from index to archive screen, the viewer is given a brief break. Visual input lessens as no information accompanies the expanse of thumbnails spreading across a white background. Starting in January 2012, the project is organized by month and number. For 2012, 459 posts in monthly groups – another 321 by March 2014. News alerts or visitors’ questions are interspersed with still and moving images. Passing the scope of the project, new work is added to the corpus. Placed at the top, individual posts bring a linear motion that pushes the viewer forward among updates and links that prompt a viewer vertically across the website, and also leads away to other websites.

Placed in the archive the posts form a static field of thumbnails intensified with a few pulsating images, a grid of squares affecting the viewer by bulk. In the growing quantity of images, this screen image ties in with the mass effect identified in works by Joan Fontcuberta and Lev Manovich in the introductory chapter of this thesis. There, a quantity of images was brought together to visualize a pattern of digital flow. Here too, the systemic pattern gains relevance over the individual unit. Unlike the former, and similarly to the latter, the individual may, however, be viewed as individual. Since these individual images are most often glitched, this particular quantity produces both flow and friction for the viewer.

The single pulsating image occurs manifold in the archive. Many images in the month-by-month display flicker in the same way, multiplying the initial experience on a smaller scale. The array of small squares resembles a moving contact sheet, white as digital ones are. Though, the reliable chronology of such an archival document is broken here since the date of the post does not match its position on the chart. A flicker of certain thumbnails visually associates the entire spread with the experience of looking into something underneath a surface. This something – peepholes – signifies how glitching may be interpreted as unlocking the photograph’s surface to reveal the otherwise hidden operations of digital image production and processing. At least it visually imitates this function of glitches, even if the disruption does not reach deeply into the system at work. Friction comes across as a mechanism for making visible the otherwise concealed mechanism of the system.

The glitch archive aligns with its networked environment. As in other online archives, data is accumulated and stored in databases such as various cloud services. At the same time, the constancy that systemic operations bring to the networked environment is unsettled by the instability of its technical base.
and the ephemerality with which it may be experienced. The fact that this archive is a collection of glitches therefore gains importance, as it reminds a viewer of the system’s dominance yet also of its fragility. The viewer and the photograph are found in a similar situation, in a place that gives them both as individuals a strictly systemic yet unstable frame. This frame becomes more porous in my trajectory across the website. Destabilization takes place as I begin to combine the given elements of the site into the kind of tactical opportunity that de Certeau suggests. The given elements here are both the indicators of the system – blog features, interface standard – and the indicators of friction: glitches. Combined in this archive, these elements produce a slight misalignment between screen and photograph that alerts the viewer to reflect on the system that situates both the viewer and the viewed.

The viewer is situated in this archival place in a way that activates a certain internal archiving: building up a visual memory that forms a reference point for experience. Continually, I meet glitched photographs and store their disruption in my memory. Another viewer would store other visual memories and build another experience from them. Across the site, a mindset is shaped by the organization of individual screens and photographs. In turn, these organize the visual memories that shape experience. The viewer as a potential glitch-maker is thus an important figure – this could be identified as a viewer position implied here.

However, the viewer is also drawn into a potentially tactical spectatorship by only observing the situation. Whether aligning with an implied viewer position of focusing on individual work, or with a position that includes the screen, the viewer is an active participant. At times, I pause to contemplate the aesthetic surface of a single image – at other times I search for the narrative that ties together that surface with the surface of the likewise aesthetic interface. Flow is tied together with discrete friction.

Memories are activated and accumulated across the networked environment. Because my “here” is another viewer’s “there”, this screen image has a sensitizing effect: when visiting other screens, even unrelated to this case, the memory remains. For my part, a consequence of this is that I begin to look for some indication of glitches in other surfaces of photographs as well as basic interface appearances. Artwork and viewer may align or misalign with perceptions of what can really be claimed as explicit in glitches, photographs, and interfaces. Either way – across the range of more or less obvious tactics – I interpret the viewer position implied and actualized here as one constituted by an interfacing mode that enforces Michel de Certeau’s notion that “space is a practiced place.”

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97 De Certeau 1984, p. 117.
In the screen image of the archive, agency is emphasized in several ways. While the artist’s agency is behind these photographs being made and placed here in this order, the place itself acquires a certain agency when activated by the viewer’s interfacing decisions. In turn, agency is conferred to the viewer who constructs an individual experience from seeing certain images in certain trajectories. The display orders and concentrates a selection of glitches, underscored as each thumbnail brings forth the ordering and concentration of visual data being done in each image. I interpret this process based on my experience of photo-based mediation, in which the imaging technology and its use can be characterized by two major capacities: to order and to concentrate. From this perspective, photography shares a kind of activity with glitch practices through excluding some visual data while concentrating what is included.

The operation underlines a masked quality. In an analogue darkroom, a mask physically orders and concentrates a photographic negative or print. A similar masking occurs as the glitch masks certain visual data but records other data that is concentrated by the artist. The image is again ordered and concentrated in a display that directs attention both to what is cut from view and to what is put forth. Glitching thus brings out a paradoxical quality of photo-based mediation, where the imaging process both stabilizes and destabilizes what is captured.

 Thumbnails break up the calm and unified surface of the archive, signaling a more drastic fragmentation explored in the individual works. The position of the viewer is thus subtly shifted in between the smoothly operating system and the slight tension introduced by the images. This shift suggests that interfacing with glitch, even within the structure of this conventional site, points out the interface as more than a rigidly systemic frame. It may even be experienced as an unpredictable place. As such, the interface activates rather than restricts viewers, as would be the case with the “unworkable interface” emphasized by media theorist Alexander Galloway – the interface defined by its invisibility or else not an interface at all.98

The route of my visit from index page to archive page follows a contrasting dynamic between visible screen images and the invisible operations that govern what the viewer may see and do there. As this aesthetic experience is generated by systemic friction, visible in an interface where it is also integrated, the photographic images misalign with the screen images just enough to raise a viewer’s awareness of the gap between the visual frame of the non-glitched system and the visual content of the glitched interventions.

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However, lingering on the archive page does not in itself produce a tactical spectatorship. In the trajectories across and in between the two screen images, the narrative about disruption conveyed through Stearns’s work and website is pieced together by my own viewing position. If the front page offers no glitched photograph, the thumbnail spread of the archive page does not become part of that narrative until the viewer has gone through some of the individual images. If glitches abound on the front page, their effect is much enhanced even as thumbnails in the archive. The archive page is a place in which to get a bird’s eye view that gives stability to the collected glitches before entering each page showing an individual work. As soon as the thumbnail of one individual image is clicked, the aesthetics of the first screen image return: black with red and gray details. At that moment, the function of the index screen comes back with its aesthetic characteristics, underlining the briefness of the pause at the archive entrance.

While the front page gives a more solid grasp of the project, this page enforces the dominant aesthetic of the site. Though it is a bracket within the latter, that pause still shifts the viewer position as it underlines the contrast between flow and friction generated by Stearns’s practice and display. A tactical shift, if one considers the movement that the bracket creates as a time-slot to become aware of one’s own experience of the system.

**The interface becomes a productive backdrop.** Both screen images – Index and Archive – create a place dominated by smooth surfaces: aesthetic, whether glitched or not. In this regard, aesthetics serve functionality. Despite their opposite characteristics, photograph and interface belong to the same narrative – or perhaps, to two narratives. One narrative about flow, as the interface belongs to the system operative through Tumblr. One narrative about friction, as this interface is used here to display the disruption of glitches. Despite the latter’s visual intervention, there is a sense of a unified location generating a unified viewer position – except for the slight misalignment occurring when photographic instances connect inadvertently through the viewer’s movements.

The prevailing viewing mode is one in which the individual is brought into a netspace described by Alexander Galloway as neither narrative- nor time-based yet still an experience both “compelling, intuitive” and “pleasurable, fluid” that “enthralls users, dragging them in” through a continuity based in the form.99 My visits to the *Year of the Glitch* bring me into such harmonious continuity and, once enthralled in the pleasing surfaces of screen and photograph – I find a tension in the discontinuity visualized in the glitched images. Here, though, both narrative and time are significant.

99 Galloway 2004, p. 64.
Glitches visualize both continuity and discontinuity, tied in with a tension between protocol and counterprotocol. Galloway defines protocol as a set of rules that overarch – overwrite – experience:

> Protocol is a language that regulates flow, directs netspace, codes relationships, and connects life-forms. Protocol does not produce or causally effect objects, but rather is a structuring agent that appears as the result of a set of object dispositions. Protocol is the reason that the Internet works and performs works.\(^{100}\)

Any agency of a digital apparatus – photography, interface – as well as any agency of their users is constituted by and performed through protocols. Their construction and interaction with human and technical components as stable unified entities is deeply protocological. Yet, Stearns’s photographs visualize how pressure can be put on the systems that generate them. Furthermore, that impact is displayed on a site that depends on a glitch-free operation. Therefore, they open up a tactically relevant approach to the system. Such an approach may be understood as counterprotocological, to build on Galloway’s thinking:

> I would like to examine tactical media as those phenomena that are able to exploit flaws in protocological and proprietary command and control, not to destroy technology, but to sculpt protocol and make it better suited to people’s real desires.\(^{101}\)

Tactics – in Galloway’s system-oriented analysis, and in the more individually grounded perspective driving this thesis – offers a way in which to deconstruct technology, and then to rebuild it again from an “injured, sore, and unguarded condition.”\(^{102}\) What I interpret as Stearns’s building of an unstable photographic apparatus, and its impact on the website, can be understood as a counterprotocological rebuilding based in that condition. Here, tactics are produced in a combination of image and site that invites the visitor to attend to the individual intervention by which I characterize a tactical spectatorship.

Contingent in all digital systems, glitches become events that visualize the invisibility by which protocols operate.\(^{103}\) Depending on the associations pieced together by the viewer, Stearns’s glitched photographs may remain stable unified surfaces or crack that surface to reveal its internal structure. As visualizations of systems, glitched images follow and fail protocol. With the *Year of the Glitch*, the protocological not glitched is situated with its glitched

\(^{100}\) Galloway 2004, pp. 74–75 (see also p. 122). Original emphasis.

\(^{101}\) Galloway 2004, p. 176. Original emphasis.


\(^{103}\) The theme of glitches as contingencies recur throughout the chapter “Gaming the Glitch: Room for Error”, Krapp 2011, pp. 75–92.
counterpart, turning the site into a glitchable environment. The possibility of disrupting what seems inaccessible invites a search for cracks in all surfaces. Such a tension is generated by glitches twice contained by protocols: first in the digital photograph and then on the website. Friction cannot be allowed to affect the site if the images are to remain visible. They are contained within the system. Digital tools enable glitches to be generated and viewed. Code may not only mend an unwanted glitch before it becomes visible but will disable that visibility from being communicated by disabling the screen.

However, the power of code is shared with the un-codable.\textsuperscript{104} Their relation may be shifted with a focus on co-presence between code and countercode in camera and computer, in image and interface – and between all of these and viewers. None of these elements stay unified or stable here. My viewer position is eventually shaped by incorporating glitch into a “pleasurable, fluid” experience such as that which Galloway above states as an interface standard. From an initial procedure as online visitor, I shift towards an awareness of how system and photograph destabilize one another. As the glitch is visualized, the alignment with the system – expressed in a standard blog format – is set against a misalignment between the standard screen image and the glitched photographs situated there. In these visual elements, the overlap of alignment and misalignment becomes productive as they guide me to other viewer positions than the one I understand as implicit here.

The dynamic between alignment and misalignment entails a co-presence between the systemic structure of the site and the visual traces of glitches. This dynamic generates a viewer position through my own interfacing between the two screen images. My activities here are partly conditioned by the structural frame of the blog, and partly by the content displayed within that frame. Some – and on occasion, most – of that content could be standard images that do not comment on the digital flow in any other way than as examples of it. However, the content also often includes glitches that take effect at the moment when the viewer clicks open those photographs and begins piecing together the narrative of disruption.

Galloway’s emphasis on formal structure clarifies how photography and interface is linked here: through a dynamic between protocol and counter-protocol. This dynamic is about concealing and revealing a systemic source. While Galloway states concealment, in for instance image files, as the main technique of continuity, Stearns’s case both keeps that technique and breaks it.\textsuperscript{105} A dominant form is thus destabilized through activity – of the glitch, the place, and the viewer.

\textsuperscript{104} Hayles 2004, pp. 67–90.
\textsuperscript{105} Galloway 2004, pp. 64–65.
The images give unstable support to systemic functions and aesthetics. Its operation and its look point the viewer in different interpretive directions. If the deeper layers of protocol stay untouched, a slight disruption of the surface is enough to point out a co-presence of systemic harmony and systemic friction. Disruptive action in the first instance – glitching of photographs – travels to the next instance – photographs placed on a site where it extends into the undisrupted environment and activates the viewer. No longer complacent in a “pleasurable, fluid experience” but alerted to the crack in this surface, the viewer loosens the system’s grip. The contours of the site keep the content reliably in check, unless a spontaneous glitch occurs outside of Stearns’s art practice. It may still drag me into the flow of piecing together these screen images – but what is doing the dragging is the less-than-smooth interaction between systemic site and glitched images. Instead of being subsumed under protocol – as Galloway’s emphasis on structural power entails – this experience indicates the activity of glitches intervening in the system.

Here, a double use of photo-based mediation enforces a protocological order by providing a material to glitch but also by supporting a counterprotocological intervention. Considering that instability may be seen as an intrinsic property of such mediation, that instability could perhaps be a part of photography’s protocol. For the aims of this thesis, the point is whether or not instability reveals anything about the underlying system. If it does, it gains a counter-protocological quality and therefore also a tactical potential.

Access is emphasized by the interface of both screen images yet problematized by the images placed there. As screens and photographs are accessible in their aesthetic form and display, they feed into a “pleasurable, fluid” experience of the screen environment. Yet only the glitched image builds on a problematic of access. Enough technical information is left for the viewer to continue the artist’s glitching. Enough visual information is left out for the experience of the image to be shaped by a lack of access. Glitching here is a continually disturbing event, rather than a contained and neutralized object.

Contingency goes both ways: latent disruption is kept in check, yet it is also kept fit to become manifest. Therefore, this website has the effect of giving generous access to a photography that revolves around a denial of access. Stearns’s access to digital material is deep, as he reworks code usually left untouched and out of the reach of users. His access is also disruptive as the reworking activates responses such as friction regarding the photographic image and its articulation on the screen. To Galloway, access equals possibility, for “purveyors of proprietary technology” representing the system or for hackers attempting to disrupt it – all contained and enabled by protocol:

106 Krapp 2011, pp. 75–92.
What hacking reveals, then, is not that systems are secure or insecure […] but that with protocol comes the exciting new ability to leverage possibility and action through code. That it does not show this on its surface comes as no surprise.107

What shows on the surface of *Year of the Glitch* is that code enables a tactical action – yet this action is also crucially extended to the viewer, who may (like me) not write code yet still activate it by being “here”.

Protocols affect how photographs are made, shared and viewed digitally. They shape the image flow as an all-encompassing condition of possibility. Similarly to how the blog format and interface could be taken for a backdrop to the glitched materials on the *Year of the Glitch* website, photo-based mediation becomes a backdrop too. As in the archive spread, images disappear in their own ubiquitous quantity. However, these images are also brought out of their ubiquitous online flow and into the viewer’s attention as glitches make the underlying system visible.

The website’s minutiae form more than just a “pleasurable, fluid” continuity. Rather, they tie screen and photograph together into a dynamic that makes visible both systemic friction and flow. The process is characterized by a leak from one surface to the other. Such a leak is a visual appearance in the interface formed by how the glitched images are placed on the screen. Recalling Casey, it is a “fragmented appearance” that builds up the “coherent core-world” of this website. The chance aspect of co-presence shows here in the glitch, the photograph, the website, and the viewer – technical and human actions extending into each other. Their interactions are co-present in a subtle yet productive backdrop that draws the viewer into a situation that is mostly stable yet sometimes destabilized. The system defines the individual yet is also open to the undermining impact of the artist’s practice and the viewer’s practice.

**Photographic Instance I: Apparatus**
The *DCP_Series* comprises seventy-six photographs made with modified Kodak low-resolution digital cameras. The photographic process is identified with the camera – its destruction and reconstruction. This process recurs in this section about the apparatus, as well as in the following sections about text and materialization (figs. 5–18). The photographic in this case refers to the apparatus that Stearns uses to visualize glitches – apparatus as in the technology of making and displaying a digital image as well as in the practices of looking and interacting developed through that technology. In my analysis of experiencing the *Year of the Glitch* website, and its camera-based work, that apparatus is articulated as the given elements with which Michel

de Certeau’s tactical intervention becomes possible. In the *DCP_Series*, the apparatus – the camera, underlined by text elements such as tags and captions discussed below – plays two parts. On the one hand, it provides a material source for the glitch to appear. On the other hand, it constitutes digital photography as more unstable than a strict protocological interpretation might allow. The camera turns inwards, while the image opens outwards. In my interpretation, Stearns’s images are constituted as photographs by this ostentatious function – to point out how to look, to take a viewer position, to call for an interfacing mode.

**Disregarding the camera’s integrity creates a pictorial continuum.** The manifestation of the apparatus integrity shifts how photography is actualized in the image – how it manifests materially through friction. As a result, there may also be a shift in how this image is conceptualized by a viewer. The implied integrity of a final image is disregarded as well, in two ways. Firstly, it is the internal reality of the camera that is captured instead of the external world. Secondly, the image is kept open as further modification by the artist or anyone appropriating his work is possible (and encouraged) in glitch practices. These two steps – turning the camera towards itself while situating its resulting image as unfinished – both compromise and enforce the photo-based mediation in terms of material production and aesthetic result. In Stearns’s work, the external mediation – understood as index and icon – expands by being bypassed as an inherent and prioritized function of image production.

The image shows how the photographic apparatus shifts within the digital network. The interaction between apparatus and environment at the stage of production is reflected in the interaction visible in a glitched image on the website. The image generated through such interaction forms a pictorial continuum between photography and other media – such as painting and textile – with which it exchanges visual and technical strategies. I take this term from aesthetics scholar Diarmuid Costello’s co-reading of the work of Jeff Wall and Gerhard Richter.\(^\text{108}\) This co-reading is useful here as it centers on such a continuum to address how different materials of mediation lend functions and aesthetics to each other. Through this intermedia dialogue, functions and aesthetics of the *Year of the Glitch* gain clarity.

Costello calls Wall a “pictographer” as his photography merges painting and film, shifting the medium towards an “inclusive, nonmedium-specific or generic conception of the pictorial.”\(^\text{109}\) I argue that Stearns becomes a pictographer by working with a photographic apparatus but stretching what it is made to do and how it looks beyond what is immediately recognizable as

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\(^{108}\) Costello 2007, pp. 75–89.  
\(^{109}\) All quotes in this paragraph, Costello 2007, pp. 80–82. Original emphasis.
photographic. Richter’s “photo-paintings” shift the medium in their aim of “making photographs by painting” but Costello does not expose the trope behind this aim: that photography enables the production of – albeit handmade – “pure pictures” by turning the artist into “a transcription machine”:

[A]n automatic […] recording device mimicking the mechanical apparatus [or] the ‘sterility’ of the camera (and of the photographic apparatus more generally), both in terms of its lack of subjectivity or knowledge of its own activity, and in terms of its inhuman, mechanical nature.¹¹⁰

Connections between photo-based and painterly mediation abound in glitch art. For instance, Gregory Zinman highlights the glitch practices of Lynn Marie Kirby, Jennifer West, and Takeshi Murata by rooting them in a history of painterly abstraction. With reference to Futurism, Impressionism, and Divisionism – particularly in Murata’s datamoshed videos – Zinman enforces such avant-garde traits as to challenge vision by merging time and light, simultaneity and speed.¹¹¹ Hybridity and chance characterize “works that exist between media and whose creators explore the collisions, slippages, and juxtapositions produced by the admixture of analog and digital technologies”.¹¹²

However, while his notion of “the photographic” excludes material exploration – and therefore disables its potential to question “a ‘correct’ use of the tools and technologies” – my analysis of Stearns’s work suggests that such exploration still counts as photography.¹¹³ Another link to abstract painting is noted through his online display. Artist writer Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe notes that the video screen frees abstract painting from perspective and nature – to be interpreted as both a phenomenal event and a collection of signs, sharing the viewer’s space yet being discontinuous with it.¹¹⁴ I find a similar process – a kind of shared discontinuity unfolding through a phenomenological signification – to take place through these still images displayed on this interface too.

Stearns’s photographic apparatus may be said to produce pure pictures – pure since the technology somehow is made to mediate itself. But rather than reinforce such a trope, my analysis suggests that a quality of the Year of the

¹¹⁰ Costello 2007, pp. 81.
¹¹¹ Zinman 2015, p. 100, pp. 109–110. Zinman’s examples include Walter Ruttmann’s paint-on-glass apparatus for Lichtspiel: Opus I, Len Lye’s hyperkinetic films that were directly painted and scratched, Joshua Light Show’s psychedelic real-time overhead projections of oils and dyes, as well as the works of Nam June Paik and Shuya Abe.
¹¹² Zinman 2015, p. 98.
Glitch lies in a kind of pictorial impurity, produced by dividing the transcription between system and individual. The disrupted photograph builds a pictorial continuum through its unstable co-presence between a glitched and a non-glitched apparatus of digital photo-based mediation. In the process, it repeats the issue of placing the work of art in an image that may be defined as camera-based but perhaps not as photography. The artwork may lie in the image, in the act of producing it, or in the textual and haptic elements contextualizing it – or in the viewer connecting those disparate instances.

One such example is posts 64 and 66; six and four images added on March 4 and 6 2012 respectively (figs. 5–7). Both are made with modified Kodak DCs and share a visual aesthetic of thin lines covering the surface in vibrant oranges, deep reds and electric blues. Both captions evoke a painterly quality achieved by photographic means but through intentionally and accidentally disrupting the photographic process. Captions 64 and 66:

Images taken with an intentionally broken Kodak DC200 Megapixel camera, the only one I have found made with this camera. An example of what I call the ‘Insta-Richter’. This is a pretty standard effect achieved through circuit bending the ccd driver chips.

Images taken with an intentionally broken Kodak DC215 Megapixel camera. Different camera, same ‘Insta-Richter’ effect.¹¹⁵

To make the camera randomly mimic the aesthetic of the iconic painter Gerhard Richter seems to me a mildly iconoclastic wink at hierarchies in art and a reminder that digital technology too is a craft. The significant aspect here is the pictorial continuum set-up, bringing together system and individual in the image.

The camera and the image materialize in an uncertain process further destabilized as Stearns dismantles the photographic apparatus. Rather than unified stable objects with fixed relations, both camera and image become photographic instances shaped in situations where the boundaries of photo-based and painterly characteristics blur with the aesthetics of image formats that are born digital outside a camera. In the act of mediation, the rearranged components of the apparatus activate photographic tropes. Such tropes may include material aspects like the use of camera and light, contextual ones like textual frames, and conceptual ones like interpreting the photograph as a carrier of information. To regard photography as an unstable medium could also be a trope. Here, instability is invoked in a way that displays the instability inherent in all media, and in the digital technology itself.

¹¹⁵ Captions 64 and 66, Year of the glitch, yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com (retrieved May 10, 2012)
Stearns’s photographs become performative as they are mediated in a pictorial continuum that they help to set up. To clarify this process, theatre and performance scholar Rebecca Schneider’s phrase “stilled image” is useful to capture how a snapshot holds both an accidental event and a gesture that points out the accident as an articulation – an articulation that may be temporarily stilled in the image but comes alive with every new encounter with a viewer.\footnote{Schneider 2011, p. 141. My emphasis.} I pair her idea of the stilled image with an art historical perspective on photography as performative. Margaret Iversen notes that photography enables a performative redefinition of the image through:

> [U]sing the camera as an instrument of experimentation or exploration […] reinforced by the quasi-systematic nature of the instructions or brief. Photography is thus conceived, not as a melancholic ‘that-has-been’, but more as a future oriented and interrogative ‘what-will-be’?\footnote{Iversen 2007, pp. 104–105.}

Stearns’ photograph appears as a “what-will-be”, mediated through an image stilled in the process of being glitched. In the DCP Series, the continuous transformation of the setup, display and visual manifestation of the apparatus points to a temporary slowing down. Transformation starts with dismantling a camera, followed by the exposure as an event in the middle of its reconstruction. Further glitching of the image file adds a new sequence of events as instances in the same process. The image deemed final is placed on the site, joining a network where viewers link to it and repost variations. This, by now traditional, image-sharing practice does not stop there. The image is kept in continual process by the artist (exemplified below) or by a glitch-making viewer. Time and various spatial stops bring out a quality of ongoing performance and performativity in a stilled image. Analyzing the Year of the Glitch with Iversen and Schneider clarifies Stearns’s work as individual statements following a disruptive event generated by a systemic operation.

I suggest that this case produces a pictorial continuum that links and transforms system and individual through experiences of photographic glitches. Stearns’s work brings out the digital camera as an example of a digital flow that can be broken at the moment when the camera is broken as it is here. The camera thus becomes an embodiment of both systemic flow and friction. The accident in Stearns’s photographs is a performance, while his setting up of situations causing such accidents is performative. Glitching situates photography both by setting up a regulated and repeatable situation and by harnessing the chance effects that come out of it. The situation shifts as the image is placed on the site. The image is performative – regulated by protocol, repeated with links yet transformed through reposts – while the singularity of performance is invoked by the viewer’s differing experiences.
As these photographs are made, spread and viewed in the context of digital screens they shape the activity of a viewer stilled in front of a stilled image. However, the DCP_Series indicate that to be stilled rather than still means that image and viewer share a motion that shape a co-presence with the digital system and its apparatus rather than a unilateral dependence on it.

The faulty apparatus keeps its descriptive function. In Year of the Glitch, the stillness associated with photographic capture comes across as temporary. My interpretation suggests that Stearns’s images mark out motion more than they freeze time. This temporality sets them apart from the “arrest” of time implied by, for instance, artist and photography theorist David Campany as a fundamental concern for photography. He describes a shift from “the stoicism of the lens to the ecstasy of the shutter” that stresses “space and the conventions of realism” rather than “time and duration.”

According to Campany, the blink of the shutter is a mix of objectivity and magic, condensed in the “decisive moment” associated with Henri Cartier-Bresson and the tradition of pure photography. He – with other theorists noted for instance in the introductory chapter of this thesis – also points out that video practices since the 1970s provide ways to explore the destabilization of time with its focus on portability, dispersal, and fragmentation. Such exploration influence genres like staged photography, which continues to critique established notions of time and space in photo-based mediation.

Stearns’s photographs activate the notion of a decisive moment and its problem. In terms of spatiality, a sense of place builds up despite a focus on the lens rather than because of it. The narrative of disruption unfolding across Stearns’s site is spatial as it is the specific blog character that sets up the situation in which the viewer begins the process of piecing together the narrative. The narrative is temporal insofar as it needs the viewer to piece it together: it takes time. As the moment of inception coincides with the moment of glitch, they carry an acute sense of presence – a visualization of a stressed system may amount to a temporal “ecstasy” of sorts. While the artist sets up the situation – choosing this display platform for these glitched images – he cannot determine its exact outcome. A decisive moment is thus extended to the act of glitching the camera – denting a cable, the pressure of fingertips on a sensor – or the later glitching of the image file.

The moments when the glitch affects – first the system and then the individual – is decisive for what it leaves in the photograph. However, it is not

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decisive as a capture of a scene coming together in the way a photograph may be said to be finished when all its given elements are aligned with one another. Rather, this moment makes visible the capture of the scene coming apart – or perhaps not even that but a trace or a byproduct of this disintegration. However, such disintegration may be seen as a distinct part of photo-based mediation. Glitches may disrupt mediation, yet they also point out possibilities within the medium that risk being overlooked if correct exposure and representational realism are over-emphasized. Such possibilities include the staging, modification, and editing that allows for the photographic apparatus to come apart. They stretch the time of the photographic process while the moment of the glitch is acute but gone when the photograph is taken. As the image is temporally and spatially activated in this way it is integrated into a process that extends photography into performance. The images perform what Schneider calls “the gesture of the time-lag”:

[O]ne that shows itself, by virtue of the still, to be a gesture – to have posture, to enunciate [and it] steers a wobbly course through repetition and reappearance […] rife with all the tangled stuff of difference/sameness that anachronism, or syncopated time, or basic citationality affords.119

Similar gestures are made by glitch in the photograph and by the photograph in the screen image where it meets the viewer. Display, circulation, and experience are thus included in the process as the image is produced first by the artist and then reproduced by linking and editing. The process continues as the image becomes conceptualized differently depending on a viewer’s knowledge of glitch and their trajectories across the Year of the Glitch.

Glitching redirects the “decisive moment” within the photographic apparatus. Instead of balancing tensions between given elements in a photograph, it is generating tension. Yet, it manifests in and between surfaces that emphasizes place over time. The DCP_Series is situated in a non-glitched yet slightly misaligned environment. Here, a sense of place is evoked despite the digital mode that Campany (echoing Casey) associates with space as an objective universal. Place seems to be lost as he focuses on the artists’ “pre-occupation with the ‘faults’ of the lens” and “the perfectible lens and its descriptive capacity”.120

Campany’s leveling of space with iconicity is sustained in Stearns’s case where photography and interface appear as front and back ends of a systemic place that is both embodied and practiced. However, the photographs without the contrasting interface turn the place into a more abstract surface. Despite their status as photographic documents of glitches, they may remain in-

119 Schneider 2011, p. 143. Original emphasis.
120 Campany 2007, p. 306.
accessible on their own. The narrative of disruption hinges on the viewer’s ability to connect these contrasting appearances. On the one hand, a digital apparatus is based on coded hardware that can be understood as a supreme guarantee of objective recording. An example of such a pre-defined coded setting is that the filters etc. that digital cameras use to process data are adapted to conceptions about what a standard image should look like. On the other hand, a digital apparatus can be understood as a supreme guarantee of the recording being manipulated. Faults that are minimized from the former viewpoint are exaggerated in the latter. Consequently, the concept of space can be enforced or undermined depending on the viewer’s sense of “here”.

The *DCP_Series* exemplifies that it is possible for the gap between the faulty and the descriptive to be bridged. The faulty apparatus explored here is given a descriptive function. What it describes, though, is the internal reality of the apparatus during the glitch event – the faulty event – rather than an external photographable world in front of the lens. It conveys the objective realism of the technical fault, the fact of it happening, detailed across the surface of the photograph – even with the lens cap on. The default digital camera may block the photographer from pressing the shutter if the lens cap is on, while here Stearns may disable that function as part of the glitching process. The dynamic of regulation and transformation is notable in the *DCP_Series* in the modifications of camera and image, which implicates light and seeing too. The attention to movement involves light as the exposure is directed inwards to the camera’s interior. Light is shut out at a moment when it would be more or less a given in the photographic process.

The glitched image questions the status of light in photo-based mediation. A similar situation is brought about in the film-digital video work of Lynn Marie Kirby – beginning without a camera. Gregory Zinman interprets the artist’s statement that “the resulting work is the ‘residue’ of a real-time performance on the film to digital transfer deck” as a transfer of a photo-chemical index into the digital processing, both shaping the image while unknown to the viewer.121 Zinman notes that “the performance of light” is captured, dematerialized, reinscribed, rematerialized, restructured – and, quoting Evan Meaney, “reshaped by ‘performance of invisibility’ ascribed to digital systems – as a play ‘of space into light, and light into digital code that manifests onscreen’.”122 Stearns’s process begins with a camera, passes through a moment without light, and then meets the viewer on the lit screen. The resulting image can still be likewise described as a residue of a real-time performance, by dismantling and reconstructing both visible and invisible components of the photographic apparatus.

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To exclude light from the photographic apparatus creates an interpretative problem. Viewers may or may not interpret these images as photographs. To exclude this vital component – vital at least for the recognizability of these images as photographs – demonstrably emphasizes its importance. Light is then reintroduced through the display on the screen, adding luminosity to the photograph – a strong yet malleable luminosity since it varies between different digital devices that are adjusted individually.

The lens cap blocks a core of the photographic process – light as part of the apparatus – and this blockage may be enough to disqualify these images as photographs. Yet, if the lens is vital to a photographic production of place – a “here” recognizable precisely by being photographed – it is still effective in its absence as the surface visualizes this absence. Iconicity functions insofar as viewers know what a glitch looks like when it is visualized in a certain medium and with a certain method, even though it would not exactly resemble other glitches.

In this case, glitching delineates a surface and a moment for a co-presence to emerge. This co-presence engages the apparatus, the artist who modifies it, and then the viewer interfacing with both of them on the screen. Campany claims that the lens, as part of the scientifically objective apparatus, implies separation and distance, while the light-sensitive surface evokes the close contact of intimate tactile touch. The lens in the DCP_Series rather figures as the physical co-presence of individual and systemic apparatus, brought together by haptic circumstances of aesthetic production and experience that emphasize interaction rather than separation and distance.

Stearns’s images exemplify how close a viewer comes to the apparatus through the physical intervention of the camera: lens and surface. With the manipulation of the apparatus, touch becomes a material part of aesthetic production – and then of the viewer’s aesthetic experience in front of the screen. The proximity of hands on that technical body grounds an intimate – eventually tactical – experience that balances the abstract and untouchable aspects of photography – and interfacing – in a culture based on digital flow. Rather than mediating objects reflected by light, the photograph is claimed to index light itself while the lens orders what is focused on the light-sensitive surface. Rightly, Campany notes that this is true for digital photography too. Also, photography is said to index the spatial relationship of object and surface and therefore a vantage point. The images of the DCP_Series lack both vantage point and light but still activate the light-sensitive surface.

123 Campany 2007, pp. 311–312.
The co-presence of internal and external mediation in Stearns’s work emphasizes that photography “cannot help but document things, however abstract, theatrical, artificial, or contentious that documentation may be.”\textsuperscript{124} The documenting of disruption in the \textit{DCP_Series} also emphasizes the abstract, theatrical, artificial, and contentious. However, these aspects figure as assets rather than limitations here: they alert the viewer to ways in which photography as a medium may be expanded.

Glitching sustains the claim that conceptions of photography shift with the parts of the camera and that this is only part of the apparatus. Yet, the rebuilding of the apparatus performed by Stearns gives room for re-interpreting photography as a medium: what and how it may mediate between individual and system. In turn, the glitched photograph becomes part of a pictorial continuum where the photographic – the individually touchable and operable material – merges with the visualization of a pervasive yet unstable digital system. In Stearns’s case, this continuum appears as a narrative of disruption revolving around chance and control: protocols respected yet also slightly displaced.

\textbf{Photographic Instance II: Text}

Along with physically altering the \textit{DCP_Series} images, the photographic apparatus is verbally framed. Text is present throughout the aesthetic production also on a deeper systemic level, as code is central for the glitching process, the resulting image and its display. The latter is most directly tied to a viewer’s experience as text and image co-exist in the screen image and balance the haptic element of the viewer’s activity there. Statements, titles, and captions center on the technical process or on the visual memory of what it has captured. They evoke a paradoxical process of photo-based mediation by pointing to what can no longer be seen by a human – but by a camera:

\begin{quote}
[T]hese images are all camera and no light. The \textit{DCP Series} of digital images are direct visualizations of data generated by a digital camera as it takes a picture. Electronic processes associated with the normal operations of the camera are revealed through an act of intervention. The camera is turned inside out through complexes of short-circuits chosen by the artist, transforming the camera from a picture taking device to a data capturing device that renders raw data (electronic signals) as images. In essence, these images are snapshots of stray electronic signals racing through the camera’s circuits. In addition to re-examining the essential nature of photography in the digital age, the project explores the algorithmic unconscious at work behind the discipline of digital photography. Rather than seeing images of the world through a lens, we catch a glimpse of what the camera sees when it is forced to peer inside its own mind.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{124} Campany 2007, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{125} Statement, \textit{DCP_Series}: Phillipstearn.wordpress.com (retrieved May 21 2013). This quote may be related to Zinman’s account of Kirby’s glitched use of light in photography.
This statement could imply that photography as a medium holds an essence that glitches reveal – reproduce – rather than subvert, destroy, or modify. However, for the viewer trying to grasp what they are looking at, the recurring reference to vision and visualization highlights that glitches take away visual data to render an abstracted view that does not necessarily resemble a photograph. The website’s written communication opens up a void around what can actually be seen and what can be learned from it. The text elements are concerned with instructing the viewer on the details of the process, sometimes in step-by-step “recipes” on how to perform the same disruption. Such elements often accompany glitch art, as in Jennifer West’s work – informatively yet intriguingly entitled by their component “ingredients.”

**Image and text engage the viewer as a visual record and a visual report.** The verbal frame evokes attention towards the apparatus, presenting photography by for instance pointing out the camera in use. At the same time, that frame actualizes the relation between image and text as either crucial or redundant. I look to the artist’s words to grasp what I am seeing and the mode with which to see it, to gain information about the image. However, this information does little to convey the information in the image. This dilemma of transposing image and text is still productive as an instruction to see the systemic friction on Stearns’s website.

The images gain a performative aspect with the surrounding text. Most are presented only with the number in the DCP_ Series and in the Year of the Glitch archive. An archival quality is emphasized in the project’s systemic seriality – numbers become identities. Thirty-six of the seventy-six images in the DCP_Series are presented as “prepared” while the rest are accompanied by combinations of a camera “modified”, specifically “short circuited“ or “broken” but made so “intentionally”, “methodically” and “meticulously” (figs. 5–7, 9, 12–15).

Preparing cameras may be associated with John Cage’s prepared pianos, tying Stearns’s glitch practice to a tradition of analogue experimental sound art and digital noise music. While Cage’s modifications were disclosed in his instructions on how to perform a composition, Stearns only hints at how his photographs are made to look the way they do. A stress on cameras (brand, version, resolution) and methods of breaking them (data bending, short circuits) brings attention to technical disruption and to a lack of information about what has happened where and how. Over time, this lack becomes a recurrent trait in the interfacing experience of Stearns’s work and website.

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126 Zinman 2015, pp. 103–106.
Two examples that may serve to contextualize Stearns’s use of image and text are Robert Barry and Vito Acconci. Around 1970, Barry used photography to for instance document the event of releasing invisible gas into the air – noticeable only because of the image title – while Acconci photographed himself in series of images that captured him when doing various trivial activities. Both use photography to record a performative act and present it with accompanying statements. Both offer an art-historical anchor that connects Stearns’ work to early systems aesthetics, as they use photography in a similarly performative way. They all conceal and reveal information with a photographic process that problematizes the medium as a document.

Similar to Stearns, Acconci pieced together his images with text panels informing viewers on how to perform the depicted acts, and of the time and place of the event. Margeret Iversen states that this work exemplifies a use of photography that turns away from a pre-constituted recording towards exploring and analyzing an otherwise largely unseen event, citing the artist’s comment that the images are “not of an action, but through an action”. However, while the DCP_Series is generated through the act of glitching, it still retains the character of a recorded document. The Merleau-Pontean basis for Acconci’s “intertwining himself with the world” also grounds my interpretation of Stearns’s work and website, in which the glitching of photographs becomes a way to explore technological embodiment for both artist and viewer – by way of the image.

In Barry’s case, photography scholars Joanna Lowry and David Green point out that the visual materialization – the enunciation through a photographic material – has both descriptive and transformative functions:

[It might be argued that […] declarative act is one embedded in the textual statement that accompanies the photographs, lending a kind of performativity to the role of anchorage” [yet that] these photographs in themselves resemble the structure of a speech act […] in terms of the complex interdependency between performatives and constatives, between socially defined utterances and truth statements.

My analysis of materialization processes in Stearns’s case suggests that the glitched images create a similar double function and a similar double index:

Two forms of indexicality, coexisting within the same image: the first is that which presents itself as ‘pure denotation’, the trace of the scene of an event; the second is that of a gesture, an indicator that declares that the event is taking place.

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129 Green and Lowry 2003, p. 56.
130 Green and Lowry 2003, p. 56.
I see “pure denotation” as useful for clarifying the matter-of-factness of visualized friction, and tie the “gesture” to Schneider’s “gestic call” that engages the viewer in experiencing friction. In my analysis, Barry and Acconci exemplify a photographic gesture towards both fact and fiction – or, to be more precise, fact and friction. While I link their work to system-oriented explorations from the late 1960s onwards, a similar concern for visuality – for human as well as technological vision and visibility – is noted in recent art practices. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe’s discussion of Diana Thater’s *Dark Matter* (2003) – an installation of a ultra-red telescope signal – is a case in point. It mediates a physical presence yet lacks a surface, not unlike Barry’s photograph of gas. Thater’s work resembles yet contrasts an abstract painting – a painterly materiality is broken yet reappears on the surface of the screen as an experience only available through video:

> [A] transcription that makes what was hitherto not present except as something known to be there but not seen, available to vision as a sensation – as opposed to being available as a code that could be read and interpreted, but that would not have a visceral effect” as the presence of technology has in this work.

Barry, Acconci and Stearns use photo-based code that is both readable and unreadable. Their images thus mediate both present and absent information.

One of Stearns’s titles is geared towards photography – *Wake (procession for the photographic image)* – while two are geared towards the art history canon – *Coming to Terms (with Mondrian, Kandinsky, Duchamp, Man Ray)* and the two untitled “Insta-Richters” noted earlier. Some images are named for a study they are involved in (*Interference Study*) referring to the camera as a tool to explore and interrogate, to recall Iversen and Schneider. As with the Richter reference, I find these references to artists useful as ironic reminders of how the engaging of digital technology as a craft gives access to aesthetic expressions otherwise reserved for high art. Even though it may be accurate to interpret them as a claim to cultural legitimacy on Stearns’s part, they can be read as markers of a digital shortcut for all users to make art.

Several titles relate to an indexical and iconic photographic mediation of the outside world, yet here produced in a more isolated way from within the apparatus. For instance, some titles give associations to the organic world: gravity, light, horizon, particle fields, dwellings, fingertips, darkness, aquatic, quicksilver, islands, and solar winds. The apparatus here becomes as much a part of the organic world as paint or paper. It thus becomes re-conceptualized, as its internal operations are treated in a similar way to how the referenced avant-garde art practices treat the external world.

131 Gilbert-Rolfe 2015, p. 72–74 (quote on p. 73).
These titles link the photographs to an understanding of interface before the computer was included in the definition: a coupling between body, world, and machine. The textual elements thus bring out a dimension of the images that could be difficult for a viewer to grasp on their own – especially since the images seem to convey an all-encompassing inorganic system.

**Combined, text and image clarify and obscure mediation.** One example of a simultaneous photographic presence and absence is number 34 added to the archive on February 3, 2012 (fig. 8). Absence figures as data is taken away in the image-making process. Presence is emphasized as both remaining data and lost data are made visible on the image’s surface.

The play of what is left and what is gone merits a closer description. The image surface is dominated by a pattern of horizontal lines in white with black contour, interspersed with shifting dark green bands. On top of this pattern, the surface is given a checkered look by vertical marks in white covered in strands of bright green. Occasional sprinkles of turquoise and purplish blue on the left-hand side give way to a clear section where the white marks stand out. Towards the right, areas of yellows and reds interrupt irregular areas of green with varying intensity. Horizontally and diagonally broader and more diffused dark lines run across the surface. The caption informs me that these lines trace both the external and the internal:

> From the Kodak DC215 (the diagonal lines are actually the wood grain of my table top and shadows from wires…).  

These shadows reveal a circumstance of the photographic coming-into-being as the index of both the external in the form of wood grains and the internal in the form of wires. Yet as they reveal the indexical dimension, they also point out that neither wood grain nor wires are visible to a viewer without the caption. Partial visibility emphasizes invisibility in an ostensive pointing towards the image’s agency to hide rather than to reveal something hidden.

As Margaret Iversen notes, an event resembles an indexical shadow that has “a fugitive reality and an ephemeral temporality” – a shadow shadows an event while indexing its effect. A falling shadow obscures the view while showing its own act of obscuring. While Iversen stresses the trace rather than the event itself, image 34 stresses both trace and event. The event of shadow-

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132 Interface, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 22, 2012). The titles also link to systems aesthetics with its couplings and negotiations between organic and inorganic systems (see Burnham 1968).
133 Caption 34, *Year of the glitch*, yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com (retrieved May 10, 2012)
134 This and the next two paragraphs are based on Iversen 2007, pp. 91–94 (quote, p. 93, cites Hollier).
ing points back to the exposure of wood grain and wires, and points forwards to the viewer’s difficulty in seeing what the caption reports as a record. This temporal swing brings out the effect of a stilled yet performatively active image, retracing a past event yet replaying it as I meet its image.

Image 34 exemplifies that the *DCP_Series* offers a specific articulation of digitally manipulated photography, a manipulation that is an intrinsic aspect of all digital photography already within the camera. Iversen states that the index/icon hybrid of photography is uncoupled as “[m]anipulated digital photography, for example, plays up iconicity at the expense of indexicality”. However, my interpretation of Stearns’s glitched photographs rather shows them to enforce the indexical more than the iconic, nearing them to “a residue of an experience, recalling the event more or less clearly”.

Iversen’s stance on performative photography – an act that “tracks and records a contemporary event […] follows the event, not knowing the conclusion in advance” – is useful here as the photographic process does a similar thing in relation to glitch. The disruptive event is followed and captured by the photographic apparatus, while releasing a viewer’s expectations on its bond to external representation. Focused inwards, the glitched photograph follows and captures an internal process of the medium. In a way, the glitch also follows the photograph as it is embedded in its materials. Even prior to this recording, the apparatus is prepared for following the glitch.

One example of how text and image refer to obscuring data, is that the shadow figuring in image 34 reappears in the statement accompanying post 324 (fig. 9). This post contains three images added on November 19 2012 – entitled *DCP_1818*, *DCP_1825*, and *DCP_1831* and described as follows:

> Digital photos taken with a prepared (intentionally and methodically short circuited) Kodak 3400 digital camera. For me, these images especially capture the notion of the digital imaging device as a sort of veil. This vision apparatus – you’re not aware of it until you disturb it, but once you’ve seen it as a layer between yourself and reality, you cannot shake the impression. It’s as though this veil, once made present, cannot be lifted.135

Further veiling occurs in the text elements, in words indicating an ongoing transformation (prepared, databending) but not clarifying how it unfolds. The photograph is left to explain itself. Therefore, the image seems to be used as the text would be intended to: explanatory, clarifying. Instead, the text becomes an inadvertent veiling device. However, while viewers gain little information from the image on this website, it is easy to find links to

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135 Caption 324, *Year of the Glitch*, yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com (retrieved May 10, 2012) The following quote by the artist is from the same text passage.
learn more. One link leads to Stearns’s main artist website, where the *DCP_Series* is featured with photographs of his cameras and steps of modification to set up a glitch event (figs. 10–11). Here, photography is again used in a way that points to a glitched image as document.

Moreover, the images strongly resemble other instances where photography is used to convey a moment of disruptive technical intervention. One such example is Galloway’s reference to *Super Mario Clouds* by Cory Arcangel/BEIGE (2002) reproduced in images that show the hacking of a cartridge. The procedure is explained by the caption: “One of the original chips is cut off. Then a new chip is programmed and soldered onto the cartridge”.

Though the Kodak DC3400 is missing from the presentation, descriptions of other cameras in the series give enough clues to its context too. Photographs of these modified cameras reliably document the process while the outcome rather documents a challenge to mediation. The cameras are presented in relation to both systemic flow and systemic friction. Technical references include details such as zoom lens, resolution, and file format writing capacity. However implicit references to systemic friction abound in the caption:

> The Kodak DC200 and DC210 cameras are essentially the same except that the DC210 has a zoom lens where the DC200 does not. Though limited to about 1 megapixel, the cameras both are able to write Flashpix (.FPX) files which are considerably higher quality than the default JPG compression built into most Kodak cameras of this era. The added circuitry to the DC210 includes a square wave oscillator used to drive an NPN transistor to facilitate in shorting signals to ground, introducing raster interference and moire based patterns. A potentiometer is used to vary the resistance between points. The ribbon cable attached to the CCD is a break-out wire that allows for more complex short circuiting to be conducted on the breadboard.

The lengthiest direction is for modifying a DC280 circuit board: “touching the electronics to distort CCD information, short circuiting the CCD and Analog to Digital ICs [and] using potentiometers to vary the resistance between points on the board.” The photographs are accompanied by captions comprising a step-by-step guide to modification. A precision screwdriver set is pictured, and then used in the following image to open the casing of the DC280. After this he shows how to detach the CCD chip from the image processing electronics (step 6), manipulate the circuits with finger tips (step 7), short circuit parts of the circuit board by using an alligator clip to attach multimeter probes (step 8). One photograph of the DC200 shows how adding circuitry enables short circuit and manipulation (step 3), another one

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137 Caption Kodak DC200/210.
138 From *Year of the Glitch*, yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com/about linked to Phillip Stearns main artist website phillipstearns.wordpress.com (retrieved May 10, 2012).
show the breadboard used in the modification of CCD and image processing electronics (step 4). Parts are shown in detail after modification – finally, the whole reconstructed camera is displayed.

The glitched images in Stearns’s work featured on the websites both obscure and highlight the system. In doing so, they link the shadow to a similar double take made by the veil. Here, glitch is conceptualized as an instance that reveals what is below the image surface in a photographic apparatus. As noted with Galloway above, such an instance functions counterprotocologically as it points directly at concealment – a main technique for producing networked space as a continually harmonious environment.

However, the disruptive event here shows what is no longer visible in the image. The pattern of lines and marks is generated as much by corrupted code as by legible code. Complicating matters further, a glitch situated in a photograph – in turn displayed as part of networked space – underscores a trust in mediating the revelatory state of the glitch as a documentation of a real event. Indeed, I look to the photograph to learn about glitches. While these images are said to veil reality, their glitches are expected to unveil it. These glitches add a new surface to the image, as inaccessible as an undisrupted one. Still – tying back to Derridean performativity and information – the images as they are seen here mediate this dilemma. I look to the photograph for information about glitches. I am answered by a visual account of the lack of information that they cause – indeed, accurate information.

Through Stearns’s images, the viewer is alerted to a mediation that conceals its systemic source through the standard digital camera, then reveals it by the glitching intervention, and then again conceals it in the website display. In this case, mediation happens through individual instances in a technically systemic material. As the material is produced and displayed digitally – while belonging to a photographic apparatus – the viewer is also alerted to how photographs reveal and conceal the reality they are used to capture.

I interpret the play of hide-and-show as a contingent effect of an intentionally disruptive practice. As a kind of friction, it opens up new possibilities for production as well as spectatorship. It therefore implies a potential subversion of the limitations of default camera production and photo-based mediation. This effect is due to glitching but also to the situation at the interface. In turn, this situation is due to the artist’s choice of online platform, to the interface left to its automated operations, and to the viewer connecting the two in the form of perceptual input. Therefore, the effect of friction is also due to the spectatorship generated in the dynamic between chance and control that this case revolves around.

The text elements thus serve a double function for the interfacing viewer in
the process from experience to position. On the one hand, the text is phrased and placed in a way that supports the interface. The caption is located in its designated space, and it conveys information about the image that it accompanies in the gallery display. On the other hand, the information given begs further questions as to what is actually displayed – modified how and why, prepared from what and for what? Moreover, such lack of information is entirely fitting for the specific display of glitch art which in itself revolves around data loss – obscuring, or deleting information. My analysis therefore suggests that instability is added both to glitched and non-glitched elements. As a result, an unstable photograph is built in quite a concrete way.

Photographic Instance III: Materialization

The *Year of the Glitch* project centers on materializing glitches in the form of photographs. The following discussion aims to investigate how photography is materialized through the event of glitch, and what happens with that materiality when it is put on this kind of interface display. Without the instance of glitch, no photographic instances would be articulated either – the image would perhaps be defined as some other kind of visual mediation. The photograph and the glitch may be said to need each other in order to take material form.

The photographic source material is revealed yet also concealed. The use of photography as a material support for visualization gives a straightforwardness to how the photographic medium figures in the *Year of the Glitch*. This support may be seen as channeling disruption without interacting with it, like a vessel for clean technical mediation. However, the text elements surrounding the images, as well as the screen display, both profit from the systemic structure and undermine it. The reconstruction of the camera thus complicates the technical and communicative mediation. Material, visual, and verbal organization of the glitched photographs thus serve to destabilize an otherwise highly controlled protocological environment.

Photography appears here with two contradictory functions. One function is to visualize glitches, to stabilize them within a photographic image that documents the glitching process and thus perform a stable mediation. Another function is to channel the disruption of the medium – affirming the capacity of the photograph to capture objective facts such as a protocological system, but also its weakness. A performative capacity of the photograph is also affirmed for the viewer, whose perception of the captured fact may shift through the experience of the glitched photograph even if the material reality of the system is unchanged. This position allows the viewer to re-interpret their experience of the image and the screen, from Galloway’s default mode of “concealing the source” to addressing if not revealing the source. From the perspective of materials and materializing, these articulations of
glitch and photography come in various degrees of flexibility. One post in the *Year of the Glitch* archive may show one photograph or series. The same image may be reworked into two posts. One glitch event may be dispersed in several different materializations or different materializations count as one.

One example of such a material remix occurs in image 12, posted on January 12 2012 and described as “From a prepared Kodak DC215 1 megapixel digital camera” (fig. 12).\(^\text{139}\) Twelve days later this image reappears as image 24, this time entitled *Sea of pixels* (fig. 13):

> A remix of 012 after being converted from jpg to gif and then subjected to progressive manipulation in Hex Fiend.\(^\text{140}\)

The same material source – the same photograph – is used as two different images, two different photographic instances. They produce different senses of materiality, hard to discern from each other even with the caption. Such a continual reprocessing may be seen as part of a photo-sharing practice that prevails across digital culture around images whether they are glitched or not – explicitly or implicitly inviting the viewer to continue the process.

Stearns’s *Glitch Textiles* stand out on the website due to how their materiality affects the photographic surface (figs. 3–4, 14–18). Some of them stand out, as they are clearly images that document textile objects. Some do not stand out at all as they resemble a majority of the glitched images that do not involve textile. These latter ones are close-ups of textiles, the surface of the woven glitch image merging with the surface of the image where the glitch is visualized. Both surfaces are reduced to the conditions of their screen display, where it is easy to mistake the photograph of the textile for yet another glitched photograph made from a source other than fabric. The tactile woven surface of the fabric takes on the smooth abstract quality of the photographic surface. As a result, the photograph of the textile – as a visual embodiment of an organic material – gains a flat, luminous, screen-like materiality.

In the instances where the textile is photographed from a more distant view, its materiality seems given: it is a photograph of a textile. With the close-up, however, both the textile and its photographic mediation are disrupted – they seem to extend into one another. The sense of touch extends from the tactile fabric to the digital image on the interface, underlining the haptic character of both materials – both mediums. The iconicity of the textile brings out the tactile materiality of the glitched photograph. The ragged surface of the textile, and the visual depth capturing its three dimensions, serves as a reminder of the physical interaction also inscribed in the glitched photograph. A more

\(^\text{139}\) *Year of the Glitch*, yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com (retrieved April 15, 2015)

\(^\text{140}\) *Year of the Glitch*, yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com (retrieved April 15, 2015)
visually marked materiality in the images of the textiles bring out the materiality of the entirely abstract-looking two-dimensional images. This merging of two- and three-dimensional instances – especially in relation to interfacing – enforces the haptic as an important counterweight to the visuality otherwise dominating the *Year of the Glitch* project and its online display.

Both distant and close, the two images of textiles share a digital materiality. As N. Katherine Hayles points out, their shared yet differing materialities are most strongly brought out through how they embody and enact a practice:

> [M]ateriality, it is not merely an inert collection of physical properties but a dynamic quality that *emerges* from the interplay between the text as a physical artifact, its conceptual content, and the interpretive activities of readers and writers. Materiality thus cannot be specified in advance; rather, it occupies a borderland – or better, performs as connective tissue – joining the physical and mental, the artifact and the user.¹⁴¹

I argue that the materiality of both images – like the hypertext in Hayles’s example – depends on code yet engage different aspects of the uncodable.¹⁴² Beyond their technical base, they also involve the materiality of an individual physically working with the apparatus, and of a viewer physically activating the images at the interface. These textiles, inserted into the archive, form a component in the narrative of disruption that unfolds through the website.

As I suggested above, this is an example of a given element turned into a viewer’s tactical opportunity. In Stearns’s case, I find this opportunity to be grounded in a play on visual perception, where the combination of images like these ones tests the viewers’ attention towards their own experience and position. On occasions like this one, the pleasing flow of a somewhat insular visual perception is accompanied by a moment of haptic intervention: a discrepancy between text and image, or between textile and image. As such discrepancy calls for a closer look, the viewer is more directly implicated in the experience and gains an opportunity to find a tactical viewer position.

Weaving and knitting glitched photographs into blankets and wall hangings, Stearns ties into shared craft histories of textile and computer technologies:

> A collection of blankets aimed at making visible the hidden data structures that give shape to everyday life. The materiality of our digital age is composed of binary data encoded on electronic devices and transmitted through the airwaves on invisible frequencies of light. As an alternative to the screen, Binary Blankets allow you experience the fabric of this otherwise invisible and intangible side of our digital world. [---].

Woven and knit wall hangings and blankets whose patterns are generated using images taken with short circuited cameras and other unorthodox digital techniques, including data visualization aided by the use of tools developed for digital forensics. ---

A snapshot of my computer’s physical memory was extracted in a core dump (using OS-XPmem). Three selections of the binary data were converted to images using custom software written with the help of Jeroen Holthuis in Processing which grouped 6 bits into RGB pixel color values (2 bits per channel). The resulting 64 hues in the images were then mapped to a custom woven color palette created by mixing 8 colors of yarn using variations on a satin weave.

The resulting patterns were then woven on a computerized industrial Jacquard loom. Because of the direct mappings from binary data, to image, and from image to woven pattern, it’s actually possible to decode the original binary data sourced from my computer’s physical memory. In fact, a key to the binding patterns is provided on the back of each piece.  

Five of Stearns’ Binary Blankets – DCP_0209, DCP_2000, DCP_0219, DCP_0242_01, and DCP_0083 – stems from the DCP_Series (machine knit, 100 percent cotton, 40 x 60 inches) while others stem from the binary data of Microsoft Word, Google Chrome, Mac OSX and iTunes (figs. 14–15). The relation between a photograph of glitch and one of a textile recurs:

Where photos of actual blankets are unavailable, colors shown are approximate. Bright, saturated colors, especially magenta, will appear toned down in the actual blanket.

As a computer covers a more varied and broad color spectrum than a print, the images on-screen will not look the same as images off-screen. This comment is directed at a prospective buyer, to whom such information matters in terms of knowing the product being purchased. It also exemplifies the interface as a negotiated environment for photo-based mediation by alerting the viewer to the need for attention.

One example of how the viewer is engaged is the triptych of woven tapestries named Fragmented Memory (fig. 16), the aim of which is clear:

[To] blur the lines between photography, data visualization, textile design, and computer science […] not only to render visible the invisible processes mediating everyday experience, but also to operate as distinctly tactile and lo-fi digital storage media – the process becomes a means to capture, record, and transmit data.

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143 The Glitch Textiles project was initiated in 2011. Quotes in this paragraph are from the artist statement, glitchtextiles.com (retrieved April 30, 2015). The website has been visually and verbally redesigned since the visits upon which this case study is made.
144 Glitch textiles, glitchtextiles.com (retrieved April 30, 2015).
145 Glitch textiles, glitchtextiles.com (retrieved April 30, 2015).
The textile and the image of the textile together exemplify how two mediums converge to emphasize their common source in a systemic structure. They are deeply, materially co-present with each other. At the same time, that structure is made explicit and knowable to the viewer most clearly through the individual experience of piecing together the narrative of disruption that surrounds both of them.

The quoted captions refer to the simultaneous untranslatability and overlap between photography and textile. Interfacing shapes spectatorship by accentuating different kinds of materiality and mediation of photography. Stearns’s images and website reinforce these differences as distinct yet always co-present with one another and with the viewer. As this emphasis hinges on the glitching practice it alerts the viewer to the possibility of an interfacing that may lead to a tactical spectatorship. In this case, such an alert takes me from the apparatus to the image to the whole haptic and verbal environment of the website. Holding the experience together is a sense of instability, evoked through the coupling of different visual expressions. This coupling happens as the different images share surface similarities yet originate from different forms of materiality and are given different representational functions. As my analysis shows, such instability is productive rather than distancing as it opens up for several viewer positions through the observations of various combinations of those couplings.

Instability is further emphasized as the photographs of textiles woven from a glitched photo-based source may be displayed next to work that forms a different surrounding and therefore a different narrative (figs. 3–4, 17–18). The images themselves add to this insecurity as some are abstracted close-ups that emphasize two-dimensionality while others emphasize three-dimensionality by being photographed folded or hung with fringed edges, varying colors, and cast shadows visible. In the merge of two and three dimensions, a strong sense of the haptic is established. Depending on the screen image on particular visit these images could be seen next to video stills that resemble still photographs, before-and-after images of glitched photographs, screen shots that look like glitched photographs but are not, or glitched photographs that look like screen shots.

Focusing my spectatorship here is the fact that the photographic process is extended from the limitations either of the apparatus, the verbal contextualization, or the interface display protocol. The process is taken one step further from the first stop in the camera – having produced an image – that is then subsequently edited by the artist. The material change of the camera generates a glitched image that in its digital format and its screen display alerts the viewer to the ways in which photography can be materialized on the screen. Ways in which – as exemplified here – photo-based mediation is
extended from photography as a purportedly unified and essentialized medium towards an open-ended and relational process that includes the apparatus, the image, the display, and the viewer.

The viewer is here alerted to the process of photographic production, circulation, and display through cues that point out how to connect the various forms of photographic materiality appearing within the *Year of the Glitch* archive. These connections include the glitched camera, the resulting digital image file and its visual stand-in on the screen, the weaving of the textile from the visual basis, the photographing of the textile installed on walls or folded in piles or as close-ups, the placing of all of these different kinds of images on the website. And, finally, it connects me again with the interface where the viewer meets all of these photographic instances – in individual yet not entirely random order and time frame. The extension of the photographic medium engages the viewer, as more experiences and positions become available. As a consequence, spectatorship may be extended as well.

**Through interfacing, the viewer gains access to a reconstruction.** This reconstruction begins in the photographic apparatus and expands to include a wider experience of the underlying system. In my analysis, Stearns’s setting up of situations that generate glitches actualizes photography in two ways. With its materials and functions, it follows Campany’s notion of the apparatus as a descriptive device that records the discrete and familiar: objects that are known, named, obvious, already understood.\(^{146}\) This entire practice of production and display can be understood as a known object with its specific materials and functions – shaping how spectatorship is generated.

However, I suggest that this case also takes a stand against the known, the named, the obvious and the already understood. Stearns’s physical deconstruction and reconstruction of the photographic medium relies on the system while also attempting to dismantle it. I argue that his work as it is displayed through the *Year of the Glitch* project and website is therefore problematizing access. The access in question here is access to knowledge about a pervasive digital system and its instances in photographic form and about its disruption in the form of glitches. Inscribed in the materiality of the glitched photograph, this problematizing transformation grounds a perceptual shift in the viewer’s position towards photo-based mediation at large. The viewer becomes sensitized to the proximity between different forms of mediation and materiality, especially in a digital setting. Such sensitivity will prove to be useful both within and outside this website.

\(^{146}\) Campany 2007, p. 310.
The issue of access is activated as the artist gains an unusual access to the image in the process of production. This special kind of access – extended or expanded with the extension and expansion of the photographic practice, beginning with the apparatus – is achieved by the artist’s reworking of the result of a sabotaged exposure and enhancing its random qualities in open source editors and hex software. In the next phase, access is activated again as a viewer meets the image online.

In the image and on the website, the viewer’s access is both granted and denied through the production and the display. On the one hand, the image is opened up to whoever does the glitching – but it is closed off from a viewer to which the clues to the process are undetectable. On the other hand, once the image is made, the experience of its viewer activates a process where these clues are perhaps less important than what the viewer adds to the image by observing their own experiences of it.

Clues to the disruptive process – in which the viewer is a co-producing participant – can still be gathered to form an individual practice of disruption, an individual narrative grounded in the narrative emerging as a common denominator in this case. The glitched images are displayed in aesthetic conjunction with a transparent interface – experienced as the mode of immediacy – centered on the visual effects of glitches and how to create them. From there, the narrative unfolds through a standard mix of interactive and stable interface elements that calls on the viewer to pay a potentially tactical attention.

Disruption is keyed towards a viewer’s visual perception by engaging it in a co-presence with the digital camera, the image file, and the screen. Even if the glitch cannot be retraced through the many layers of editing, the experience here-and-now situates the viewer to also gain an unusual access to photography. However, the setting up of that experience redistributes actions between individual and system. The artist does one part, the viewer another, and the system connects the two through the interface and the interfacing. Through this individual access – gained through an embodied situation, in a practiced space – the viewer may approach the system even in a place that is more strongly protocological than this one, where photographs at first seem to keep all surfaces intact rather than break them up. Stearns’s reconstruction of the photographic apparatus shifts the range and character of activity back and forth between systemic operations and individual operations. In the process, a tactical interfacing is generated.
Interfacing an Unstable Photograph: 
Rosa Menkman’s *Sunshine in My Throat*

My analysis of *Sunshine in My Throat* revolves around how a viewer is situated through two screen images: Index, i.e. the front page, and *Videoscapes* that branches off of it (figs. 19–36). The slight misalignment between individual and system in Stearns’s case widens to a gap here – due to the glitched interface. Photographs and other instances of photo-based mediation take part in creating this gap since they are glitched and/or placed into a glitched interface. Doing so, photography is brought forth as an unstable medium as it is made with – and looks like – technical friction. It therefore both reproduces and extends the aesthetics, function, and action inscribed in interfaces and in photographic apparatuses. As these instances address their operational structure, viewers may use them – as I do here – as potentially tactical opportunities to observe how experience is constructed by interfacing. Through the viewer positions emerging in the process, this case is an example of how the interface gains its systemic effect and how it may be tested.

**Screen Image I: Index**

From its immediate ambiance to its structural details, *Sunshine in My Throat* conveys instability (figs. 19–21). One small but telling example of this is the field of the IP address. Instead of the page name or the site address, it reads “II I Bitsbits bits ____...” – even the favicon (the tiny thumbnail on the page tag) is a rapid flutter of pixels in many colors. At first sight, the abstract black-and-white index page is only slightly disrupted by a steady stream of white lines flickering at different speeds as they run horizontally, vertically, and diagonally around the field of the title. The title text does not move, but the letters are pixelated and dissolved by those same white lines. The field itself seems intact until I, the interfacing viewer, touch it with the cursor – “I” who identify with the cursor as a virtual counterpart that situates my individual presence within the systemic interface. As Emmanuel Alloa points out, that presence is really co-presence.147 My experience of presence is defined through the surrounding elements – they all form part of the artist’s work. In the individual interfacing activities, a viewer position entails the presence of those elements – defined by the absence of data caused by glitches.

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The interface offers erratic and errant trajectories. From the outset, and throughout the website, my visits form an erratic motion rather than the linear narrative of the previous case. A viewer’s trajectory runs in an intense flow interspersed by stops in the form of still and moving images that generate and display instability. By how they are made and how they look, these stops are more or less recognizable as photo-based. While these stops appear differently, they are joined in the artist’s specific screen environment.

The images and their surrounding produce the erratic motion repeated in my visits to *Sunshine in My Throat* – thus constituting a main viewer position. I understand such positioning as an effect of a disrupted trajectory, as in Michel de Certeau’s words: “’errant’ trajectories obeying their own logic [---] [that] trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop.” On the one hand, the photo-based material is developed and displayed within digital systems – including its erratic appearance. As such, it adheres to traditions exploring photo-based mediation as a relational process or negotiation, like systems aesthetics and performative photography. On the other hand, its effect on the viewer indicates that this material is addressing if not fully contesting the coded “logic” of digital systems.

To give the present case a context, I combine de Certeau’s focus on tactical activities of individuals within a dominant socio-cultural (but not necessarily computerized) system with Peter Krapp’s notion of glitches as contingent within such a system. Krapp emphasizes the erratic and the errant as a productive part of “a digital culture that goes against the grain of efficiency and ergonomics [and] taps reservoirs of creative expression under the conditions of networked computing, despite an apparent trend toward clean interfaces and tightly controlled interactions.” As Menkman’s work and website “goes against the grain” in just this way, my erratic viewer positions emerge in an errant trajectory that is specifically digital as it is based in a pervasive yet unstable coded configuration.

In the first screen image, friction sets the mode for the entire *Sunshine in My Throat*. Any notion of a stable communication between system and individual is abruptly and decisively refuted. Such instability can be referred to Menkman’s aim of using glitches to ask questions – in turn, pointing to a new form of seeing. The character and implication of such seeing is not

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149 Krapp 2011, p. ix.
150 Interview with Rosa Menkman, Amsterdam May 6, 2013. Artist statement, *Videoscapes*, Videoscapes.blogspot.se: “Here is a purgatory; an intermediate state between the death of the old technology and a judgement for a possible continuation into a new form of seeing and using, a new perspective…” (retrieved April 1, 2013).
explicitly addressed in her statement. No specific questions – or answers – are given beyond the merit of questioning itself. On the basis of my analysis – which includes both verbal and visual sources – I relate this new seeing mode to Menkman’s claim that all glitches manifest an intrinsic critical potential. My definition of glitch as systemic friction differs, as I believe the tactics of glitching is not a default potential but a contingent quality actualized in the co-presence of the glitched material, the display, and the viewer. I do share her emphasis on the tactical relevance of glitches with regards to their impact on the viewer. I find it tactically relevant to use glitches to build a situation in which viewers are invited to articulate questions – the artist’s and their own. Viewers may be provoked to do so as they grapple with glitches that may be hard to look at for a length of time.

Being glitched, Menkman’s images are situated through a disruption that is displayed and maintained for the viewer. This gap – opening up in a viewer’s errant trajectory – grounds a co-presence between viewer, photograph, and interface. As in the Year of the Glitch, the viewer is directed by the interface yet called upon to articulate an individual response to a disruptive experience. If a previous viewer could lean on the artists’ explicit contextualization of such experience, they are here left more alone and overwhelmed by sensory input. Situating the viewer in this way serves as a contextualization by Menkman. As the case unfolds, the intentional aspects of the setting – with their implied viewer positions – are related to effects that are contingent and potential within the material. This case thus underscores the endeavor of the viewer as actual embodied work. Situations are set up where the glitch is performed (triggering incompatible algorithms), captured (in video and still images) and mediated (on the website). Doing so, the viewer is implicated in the glitching by experiencing it in such a direct and forceful way.

The erratic and the errant both refer to error, a basic aspect of glitching that my analysis shifts towards friction. Systemic friction is possible after a first erring step that the artists in all three cases force the system to take. In Menkman’s case, that step is not only taken by the system but by the viewer put on an unstable course through interfaces that bring a physical experience of technical instability – indeed, of systemic friction. I understand such a situation as a continuation of a dialogue between individuals and systems rooted in the systems aesthetics emerging around 1970, now geared towards the systemic operations changing contemporary society.¹⁵¹ With its exploration of relations between organic and non-organic systems as an open-ended transformative process, this case is thus tied to a continued relevance of instability as a means to raise awareness about how systems and individuals are intimately connected also in today’s computerized world.

A play between word and image develops a contradictory experience. During my visits, the name *Sunshine in My Throat* has been a useful interpretive entry-point into Menkman’s work. Its juxtaposition – my throat, full of sunshine – evokes the famed explanation of Surrealism given by Comte de Lautréamont: “beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella.” This meeting has been described as: ”a linking of two realities that by all appearances have nothing to link them, in a setting that by all appearances does not fit them.” I find a similar linking in Menkman’s work and website. The internal reality of a digital system is linked with a viewer’s sensorial experience, through a disruption of a setting that causes trouble for both the system and the individual. This setting involves an organic part (individual) and a machine part (system). However, the impact of disruption brings out an organic aspect of the computer – coded to be in operation: alive – and a systemic aspect of the viewer who is physically and perceptually – organically – implicated in machine motions.

As both words and images are glitched, the name *Sunshine in My Throat* is a visual and verbal marker for the website. Systems aesthetics are strengthened both as continually relevant cultural roots and as more or less explicit retro nostalgia. The words *sunshine in my throat* are inspired by a paragraph from Donna Haraway’s cyborg manifesto:

> Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of a spectrum, and these machines are eminently portable, mobile – a matter of immense human pain.

This quote hints at a teleology in which electromagnetic waves reach the "best machine" – an object following a natural process of human evolution. By positing an origin and a drive shared by machines and humans, the claim that machines are "nothing but signals" also describes humans – they too seem “all light and clean because they are nothing but signals”. Yet, with Krapp, I recall how “[e]very message presupposes the unpredictable mutabi-

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153 While this quote is often referenced, its origin is unclear – sometimes ascribed Max Ernst.
154 Domenico Quaranta: “Life and Death of an Image”, text for Rosa Menkman’s exhibition *Order and Progress*, curated by Quaranta, Fabio Paris art gallery, Brescia 2010, pp. 1–2. Quaranta 2010, p. 2: ”[F]rom Leonardo…to the Surrealists’ automatic techniques, the accident – accidental revelations, incidents and mistakes – has often heralded epiphany. Rosa Menkman often quotes Paul Virilio: “The accident doesn’t equal failure, but instead erects a new significant state, which would otherwise not have been possible to perceive and that can “reveal something absolutely necessary to knowledge”.
lity of its physical channel, whether it is electricity, air, or whatever.”\textsuperscript{156} The physical channel communicating Menkman’s glitched works consists of human corporeality and computer materials together.

Deeply and consistently, the computer anchors my experience of \textit{Sunshine in My Throat}. As both human and computer processes are reduced to signals, the cyborgian figure theorized by Haraway emerges as a position here.\textsuperscript{157} Interfacing brings individual and system together so that the abstraction of the underlying code mixes with the organic embodied viewer – as individuals positioned within, with and against the system we are always already cyborgs: co-present, co-dependent, impure. Such abstraction is largely invisible in the flow of everyday life. Except for moments like the ones here, when systemic operations touch a viewer who suddenly becomes aware of their co-presence. Glitches disrupt any light and clean signal. The space constructed by Rosa Menkman’s work, also focused in systems aesthetics, mimics Haraway’s spectrum as a continuum of organic and non-organic matter.

Disruption empowers the artist’s work on the interface surface. Below the surface, the underlying protocol determines if a digital photograph computes, i.e. is made visible, and thus communicates, i.e. is seen.\textsuperscript{158} Yet even as the interface is working – otherwise the screen would go blank – this viewer confronts content and frame that are not visible as light and clean. Instead, these signals register as problematic and problematizing. If these signals are akin to the sunshine gracing the quote, this is a light too bright, i.e. a flow of data too overwhelming to handle. I understand such a precarious situation as similar to Krapp’s notion of how “the productive ambiguity of noise emerged from the consideration that it is too much information – and precisely \textit{unexpected} information”.\textsuperscript{159} Such troublesome stimulus imbues content as well as frame in Menkman’s work. It informs my trajectories and subsequent viewer positions across the website.

Throughout my trajectories of my visits, the viewer is put in a sharply focused yet exposed position. The viewer thus shares a position with the system under stress. From this position, interfacing may be said to let the viewer observe and participate in a coded collision. With this emphasis on physicality,

\textsuperscript{156} Krapp 2011, p. xii.
\textsuperscript{157} The viewer position emerging here can be linked to the reader position described by Hayles 2007, p. 85: “Because electronic hypertexts are written and read in distributed cognitive environments, the reader necessarily is constructed as a cyborg, spliced into an integrated circuit with one or more intelligent machines. (Cyborg is of course a neologism coined from cybernetic organisms, part organic being, part machine). To be positioned as a cyborg is inevitably in some sense to become a cyborg, so electronic hypertexts, regardless of their content, tend toward cyborg subjectivity”.
\textsuperscript{158} Galloway 2004, pp. 64–65, pp. 74–75, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{159} Krapp 2011, p. xi (cites Clark). Original emphasis.
the viewer is both a recipient and a co-producer of an embodied experience: confronted with yet implicated into an erratic/errant trajectory through individual movements. The name and its roots give entry into the artist’s work and a springboard for her focus. Yet, these words and works flout rather than facilitate one another. Rather than reassure any light and clean information, they set up a sensorial platform preparing the viewer for possible experiential challenges ahead. A layer is added that underscores the communicative act as too bright and much dirtier than any non-glitched words or images.  

**Miscommunication forms a contract between interface and interfacer.** Across the website, I recognize familiar windows and links to ease my navigation. However, they are mediated with an elusive fluidity. At times, I find myself so busy deciding where to look that it seems that very decision is a part of meaning-making in Menkman’s work. Fluidity includes friction when interfacing with this environment. Both define a support for the artworks on display and for the visitor’s experience. It forms a viewer position in which the website as a symbolic construction becomes a negotiated environment. This happens in visual and haptic modes of interfacing: I look, test links, fail to move ahead, try other movements, succeed in getting where I want to go; I look and get tired of looking, look and move and am unable to not notice my erratic and errant trajectory. More than producing errors, the viewer produces systemic friction in response to the artworks and their surroundings. As far as my visits take me, this activity constitutes embodiment – echoing the embodiment of glitches here. Consequently, this fluidity may be constituted by friction: a flow of frictional elements and events.

There is a direct sense of resistance in navigating the website. It arises from a destabilizing situation that permeates the interfacing activity. To the viewer, this sense is relayed in an erratic behavior of interfaces and interfacing. The interface does not respond as anticipated to the user’s touch. A link becomes blurry or jumpy when the cursor moves over it. The trivial act of interfacing becomes an exploration: a test drive and a test for the required steps of protocol and user. In this trial-and-error of netspace reality, digital art gains a gaming quality.  

By breaking up the interface as harmonious co-ordination, glitching destabilizes a polarity of reality and fiction. The interface is a middle ground where the viewer is positioned and finds positions as the embodied exponent of glitch. Such a position indicates that the site functions as the negotiated environment explored in systems aesthetics. 

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160 Menkman’s work points up a need to analyze what Jussi Parikka call “real but weird materialities” or “materialism of dirt and bad matter”, Parikka 2012, pp. 96–99. Original emphasis  
161 Krapp 2011, pp. 75–92.  
162 Interface, Merriam Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 22, 2012)  
163 Burnham 1968, p. 30: “Here, change emanates, not from things, but from the way things are done” (original emphasis). I understand the implications of this quote – and a main theme
I see the website environment as performative since it develops through friction: a close yet precarious interactivity between system and individual. The system is performatively displaced by the artist’s glitched interface, since it changes the standard systemic operation. In turn, the viewer is performatively displaced by these changes. Yet, I also displace the system by reflecting on my experience of operations that would otherwise remain unnoticed. This latter move of the individual is included in the displacement of the system since the technical instability implicates a perceptual instability. The interface is both a technical space and a symbolic space. Destabilizing one will affect the other, so that the interface begins to produce a slightly different meaning than the pre-scripted design would imply. Menkman’s work points to this subtle process as it exemplifies possibly deviant ways of interfacing.

Protocol routine and unpredictable play shapes the co-presence between the computer and the user-turned-viewer. Through the cursor, a viewer is situated not only within the system as a place – de Certeau’s strategic enclosure, Galloway’s protocological netspace – but also as an outsider with an ability to play with the system, tactically or counterprotocologically. Playful interfacing draws me away from a position where I stay still in front of a still screen. Co-presence thus operates by the motion of interface elements, continually activated by the viewer. Staying still seems to shield me from experience – both of flow and of friction, since both depend on active choices. Though, once chosen, both are set in motion in ways I cannot make still.

However, another viewer may find stillness more productive as a mode of coping with the chaotic interface. Yet another viewer may not need to cope but rather find the stimulus pleasing. A tactical potential is therefore tied to the viewer’s interfacing choices. A kind of test drive mode is evoked as systemic friction is generated to try out a non-conformist relationship to the interface. A more conformist way would be to follow habits of expectation on for instance functional elements like links. Here, if I come close to a link, the cursor disappears while the link starts to shake and change size. Conformist or not, details such as this suggest that interface and interfacing reproduce or displace meaning depending on how they are performed.

In my analysis, the disruptive viewer position highlights what I will call an interface contract: trusting a co-presence between human and computer. This trust echoes the continual coordination inscribed in the definition of interface. There is also a trust in the glitch to do a certain kind of work to a cert-

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ain effect. This echoes Menkman’s notion of an automatically critical glitch, yet the actual position emerging here suggests that such a default mode must be continuously negotiated. The contract is embodied not only in the viewer, the interface, or the photographic instance but also in the glitch. As a viewer is positioned by a glitchy vacillation, the interface is performed differently than the either/or situation of immediacy or hypermediacy. In this interpretative dichotomy, either system or individual is prioritized. The glitched interface is in-between, so hypermediated that a new state of transparency is established akin to getting used to loud noise or stroboscopic light.

A viewer’s choice of trajectory and interfacing mode makes the vacillation in between positions productive. Their position is suspended in between sender and receiver, as if the human is a channel for a message passing through the individual body. Glitches are actualized as a structural nonhuman occurrence – a system observing (and coping with) itself. They are surface traces with technological depths – perhaps unknowable for a viewer. Yet, the deep structure of the viewing subject is affected. The more glitched the interface is around a photograph, the more I fall back on my interfacing habit. The more the use of a camera turns into misuse, the more I enforce my seeing habit.

As soon as the space around the image calms down, disruption becomes more productive. With an alternative to the dichotomy of immediate/hypermediated interface, interfacing now expands my experience of corporeal space. Doing so, the inclusive definition of interface is brought back once again. This is due to how glitches displace the interface, in turn taking the viewer with it. The displaced interface keeps me in a space that encompasses both an individual viewer’s body and a computer’s systemic body. The rapid shift between transparent and reflective creates a viewer position characterized by both fluidity and disruption – one continuum, one mode in which the viewer is constantly reminded of the system through the lack of sensorial rest. As noted above, flow and friction merge into one mode.

Over time, glitched imagery changes the sensation in body and eyes. A first step towards capturing this change is to follow the cursor, which is usually a discreet visual interfacing unit. In Menkman’s case, the cursor turns unexpectedly yet decidedly unruly. In all its simplicity, the touch of the cursor points to the action of interfacing as a process shared between system and individual. By coding the cursor to respond to human touch in subtle or disruptive ways, Menkman’s interface shifts the balance between individual and system. This shift complicates how action is habitually distributed between the two. At the moment of a joint touch, the index page splits into two halves that swing open to reveal a background of neon turquoise and begin to skip

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back and forth. The cursor shifts shape from a straight line to an arrow pointing down and sideways to a point that leaves it unclear what any clicking or hovering is really activating. At times nothing happens at all. Yet, this mediation raises an awareness of action. However, it does not necessarily reinforce my actions. Both viewer and the viewed depend on the interface.

A lack of anchoring points makes me engage to connect with the website and its content. The position confuses me at the screen surface and impedes me from knowing its deeper processes. This excluding aspect points to a cybernetic side of glitches: the system is an experiencing agent that responds to systemic occurrences not necessarily needing a human contact. The system enables and monitors the viewer — viewing my interfacing activity, yet remaining hidden from my view. Interaction on these terms is problematized by Krapp’s claim that computer glitches are contingent: neither impossible nor necessary, and, separated from the simplifying chance and accident:

If my clicking or pecking can yield unpredictable results or create the (correct or erroneous) impression of a variable and perhaps even uncontrollable situation, then a fundamental principle of interaction is at stake [---]. Inversely, if my user interface were chaotic and irregular (regardless of whether it is a browser window or game – or, for that matter, a buggy beta version or an intentionally artsy deconstruction of a browser or a game), then I would be highly unlikely to accord any value to such accidental elements; totalized contingency would indeed be the absence of meaning.

Krapp’s argument may lead to an interpretation of Menkman’s work as such an “intentionally artsy deconstruction” that would ultimately be devoid of value or meaning in certain contexts. However, while I also see glitches as contingent, I understand Sunshine in My Throat as a place where absence produces meaning. While this website is surely art, with a deconstructive function, its play on presence and absence is productive for so deeply involving the viewer.

**A potentially tactical spectatorship emerges in a split and shifting space.** As the index page is scrolled through, my erratic movements across the interface set off erratic movements of the visual elements there. In turn, their movements set off what may be called a slight motion sickness. Windows — with an interview, Flickr links — move until blurring into the background. The physical sensation frames how a viewer may conceptualize the content. Two ways of relating to visual space are brought out and interwoven. One forms a shared space for glitched and non-glitched materials, like the front page’s glitched instances displayed in a glitched interface — at first repeated on the Videoscapes page and then altered to show glitched instances in a non-glitched display. One separates them into different spaces.

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166 Krapp 2011, p. 86.
A spatial split-vision ties the site to a dilemma – how to emplace and embody noise as information. The content or its frame holds a certain protocological structure yet also a counterprotocological movement that means a tactical opportunity for the viewer. It reacts to a passing cursor with unpredictable rolls, turns, and hacks, again revealing the band of neon turquoise underneath. The cursor signals, perhaps ironically, a supposed connection in some areas but not in others and rarely in the same manner. As I follow the effects of the cursor, windows move or halt – changing the mode of alteration as the cursor, or rather the interfacing viewer, returns to the same spot that turns out to be no longer the same. At one point, the cursor marks the activated window with color that then appears as a line of varying thickness, solidity, and rhythm. Scrolling down, the vertical lines on both sides – so far giving structural substance to the visual experience – slide apart.

On Menkman’s website, the viewer’s position embodies a visual instability that is also embodied in the glitched images and their interface environment. Observation – and in time, embodied experience – of an unruly cursor extends to what it highlights, obscures, and upsets on the interface. The coded aspect of this process operates on a different level than the experiential. While it would seem straightforward that experience follows code, here the “mis-coding” is just as formative. A code-generated image is experienced at the moment the individual is drawn towards the point of impact. There, at the surface, the code – running ahead of the viewer to establish the framework for experience – remains invisible except for the interface where the digital system is manifesting.

Interfacing puts the viewer in a haptic situation allowing for change. If the altered interface seems to break the coded – protocological – logic, a viewer faces the paradox of a disruption enabled by code but also disabling the code’s logic. The paradox points to the contingency of glitches, both intentional and spontaneous. Indeed, glitches seem to bring out paradoxes of the system in which it operates – most clearly, the paradox of contingency: depending on the system yet posing a latent threat to it. Shaping this experience, action is systemic and visual – and points to a haptic visuality.

A calmer place – resting my eyes – appears on the right side of this screen image: a column lining basic practical information. Calmer for the senses and for building knowledge, as the intensity of input subsides and impressions can be consciously worked through. The more chaotic page could of course also be consciously worked through, yet I argue that it speaks more directly to the human sensorium than to the cognitive intellect. Input that began as chaotic disinformation turns into productive communication. A kind of domino effect takes place in the visual environment. The instability, that sets expected fixed points and situations in motion, also moves the
viewer. The rhythm is steady, at a manic pace, shaking and scaling the headlines up and down, all except the topmost Writing with a subheading promoting the artist’s book Glitch Moment/um. Stillness is found in a directory that serves as communication with the site, the artist and a wider (art) community. This stillness contrasts the hardly discernible, much less clickable, social media links whose connecting points are blurred out (fig. 21).

Screen Image II: Videoscapes
The disruption of the Index interface is followed by a calmer space, as a link points forward to the Videoscapes (figs. 22–24). At the portal, the artist refers to the project as a “purgatory” – an in-between area (still quite chaotic but not to the same degree as on the previous page) where conventional technology seems to be both alive and destroyed. This screen image communicates such in-betweenness. Legibility is disrupted by visual elements that break up, cover and move text elements below an ever-changing title heading. The legibility of the visuals is equally upset by displaced text.

I continue to a calm, clean white expanse with one of the seventeen short films, Radio Dada, set in a controlled, and controllable, window. A double emphasis – controlled, controllable – clarifies the unfolding relation between system and individual here: a tension between protocol and counterprotocol, i.e. between what the systemic operations control and what the individual controls by provoking glitches and reflecting upon their effects. The unmoving neon green bar at the top of the page could be purely ornamental but its unnamed surface reveals a link back to the portal. On the right, more back links are found next to a still list of films. The first film Radio Dada is contextualized with production background, public presentations, and visitor comments. My memory of a chaotic trajectory is condensed to the film’s cinematic frame and short time span, and enhanced by the lack of disruption.

A contrast between quiet and disquiet brings a tactical opportunity. As noted earlier, the contrast between glitches and their surroundings appears as a key to their effect. The tactical opportunity they provide emerges from the preceding turmoil of traversing the website and arriving here, remembering my individual route in this sudden calm. Arriving here, a contrast between turmoil and calm is already set up as a viewer position shaped by vacillation. This contrast points to the contrasts within the video works here. One such contrast directs me towards reflecting on how photo-based mediation functions in the video works. Here is a trace of something recorded yet so destabilized that a contrast is established between the properties of indexical registration and digital manipulation co-existing within photography as a medium. I experience these videos as “stilled” rather than “still”, in Rebecca

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167 Artist statement, Videoscapes, videoscapes.blogspot.se (retrieved April 1, 2013)
Schneider’s words – as photo-based records of ongoing events and as ongoing events in themselves, reinforcing the capture of a past moment yet also keeping it alive.¹⁶⁸

The current location only discreetly mirrors the visuality engaging the rest of the site.¹⁶⁹ My eyes strain to read the white text on light gray and light gray text with various colors that mimic the surface of the glitch video in the window. Despite the tiny interruptions, everything is placed in the expected order – bars, links, frames, and panels – turning the interface more transparent as it hides mediation more cleverly than before. Even the favicon that marks the site on the window tab has slowed down and turned white while an abstract pattern replaces any guiding or misguiding words. This shift sets the stage for the cinematic experience to begin – a calm frame that enhances the glitch played out within the videos.

Until this point of unexpected rest, the elements of communication – words, images, and glitches – seem to compete. A negotiated environment is formed as the artist brings out the space for action of both system and individual: the functional and dysfunctional operations of the artist’s interface, as well as the viewer responding to them. Menkman’s work thus exemplifies a performative quality of the digital artwork, engaging the viewer so that its systemic structure is opened up.¹⁷⁰ The website affects me like a perceptual obstacle course. Its dynamic between work, play and rest is dramaturgically effective while blocking my urge to fall into contemplation. Thus prepared, I now move on to a space that is all the more effective for lacking obstacles.

Keeping the environment – and its underlying system – intact allows the glitch to assert itself more strongly. At the same time, glitching is performed in a precisely articulated and choreographed manner that points to the tactical opportunities seized by the artist. Emerging as a tentative result of my analysis thus far, a sudden quieting-down allows me – or a viewer similarly stressed – to reclaim a conscious position towards the visuals. Two opposites – quiet/conscious and chaotic/confused – share trajectories here. It is by testing a position of vacillation that this work becomes productive.

Photographic Instance I: Compress Process
One video displayed through the Videoscapes is Compress Process (figs. 25–26).¹⁷¹ Exemplifying the seventeen films in the Videoscapes series, it is selected for the productive response it offers to my research questions

¹⁶⁸ Schneider 2011, p. 141, p. 143.
¹⁶⁹ Nicholas Mirzoeff: “On Visuality”, Journal of Visual Culture, Volume 5, Number 1 April 2006, pp. 53–79. Note the recurring emphasis on visuality as both seeing and being seen.
around aesthetics, action and function. The predominant feature of this video is the white, black and grey-toned shapes filling out the screen and endlessly replacing one another in blotches and blocks, strands, rolls and blinks. This visual expression appears linear in its various degrees of dissolution. It also looks undoubtedly abstract – except for an occasional presence of a rounded and coherently rhythmical mass that seems vaguely human while lost in the general noise of the film. That mass is the body of Rosa Menkman – what remains of it after so much information has been removed by the glitches – captured during a personal Skype conversation turned into an art experiment.

The Skype recording is framed by descriptive and disruptive keywords. This recording – that forms the basis of Compress Process – is one of many online modes in which to experience live moving images. New media curator Sarah Cook distinguishes the webcam from other “moving-image-watching experience” of online video formats – television shows, theater, or sports events, and conferences – as its feed involves no commentary or editing.\textsuperscript{172} Transposed to Menkman’s artwork, the character of immediate performance is retained while being heavily edited and framed by the textual and visual commentary surrounding it on the Videoscapes page.

As the caption tells me, the editing comprises glitches through three kinds of compression.\textsuperscript{173} Destabilized colors turn up black-and-white in Microsoft’s Windows while remaining in color on a Macintosh, and briefly becoming pixelated. A bleeding effect was added, described as the video’s “more messed up parts” (noted by the artist at 0’37–1’17). Finally, a stark graininess transformed the image. Rather than the frames playing in sequence, the artist remarks on a “very weird compression mode” that causes the video “to make collages of itself by putting layers triggered by the sound on top of each other [sic]”. In addition, filters were used to create contrast and key out whites.

The music by Extraboy fits the visual editing, as an increasingly compressed “speech synthesis fighting for room with a song composed of text and exe-data” from the Skype call. The crackling sound – rooted in the tradition of exploring noise, notably historicized by Caleb Kelly – adds to the abrasiveness of the visuals. As sound supports image, a sense of inevitability to the encounter with disrupted technologies arises. Unless I turn it off, or my computer lacks speakers, I cannot close my ears like I can close my eyes. That choice suggests an actual viewing – and hearing – position in which disruption is more optional than it is if staying with the implied position.


\textsuperscript{173} This paragraph, including quotes, cites the caption, Videoscapes, videoscapes.blogspot.se (retrieved April 1, 2013).
However, as experience is to be entered into and explored here, actual and implied positions are initially the same. The sound directs me to this viewer position. A voice that is and is not a voice calls me to see a face that is and is not a face – and the discrepancy between two voices and one face recorded as if merging together underlines a cyborgian merging not only of humans and machines but different humans through machines. Having positioned me towards the visuals, a mode is set up to experience this mediation as both descriptive and disruptive. As my aim is to investigate spectatorship, my account continues with a haptic focus subtly grounded in the sound.

Pointed and playful keywords mark the work in this presentation of the video. These markers – “messed up”, “very weird”, “fighting” – are not just connotative here, evoking a sense of disruption. They also provide an accurate denotation – a factual description – of what is produced by glitching and then reproduced for the viewer. Whether leaning towards the pointed or the playful, I remain positioned in the middle of a weird mess defined by a kind of aestheticized fighting. To continue the artist’s phrasing – yet corroborated by my own viewer position – this messy fight is set up on three fronts. Firstly: between the adversary algorithms causing the glitch. Secondly: between the non-organic and organic systems consisting of computer machinery interacting with human artist and viewer. Thirdly: between these two representatives of an organic system that responds in contradictory ways to the particular input given by the glitch work.

The self-generated collage mentioned in her quote links back to the split-vision discussed in the previous section regarding the space of the website. Similar to how that larger frame could be viewed in two different ways, this smaller frame of only one video work performs a split too. Because of the glitch, the visual space of the image can be seen as either one unified space or as multiple diverse spaces separated both laterally on the surface and layered three-dimensionally as the underlying structure is visualized.

Words help to direct the visual play and guide the viewer. They position me by clarifying my understanding of what I see in a sensory invasive environment that often makes it difficult to sustain my gaze. However, the artist’s cues are contradicted by my experience along my trajectory. To manifest a system fail is not a tactical opportunity in itself as glitches are not intrinsically subversive. They are generated and contained within the system – technically as well as culturally. It could be an unproblematic artistic expression in line with other aesthetic ways of “embracing rather than overcoming or ignoring limitations, whether those of a hairy brush […] or those of a highly regimented calculating machine.”

174 Krapp 2011, p. xiii.
viewer in a position that implies a certain spectatorship. The tactical opportunity seized by the artist creates an environment where tactics become a default mode – contingent within the system – rather than creating contrasts that enable the viewer to see a break with the system.

My actual position differs from an implied one, insofar as spectatorship depends on how individual trajectories come together. Tactical opportunity for the viewer differs from that of the artist. For the viewer, self-reflexivity is of key importance: observing one’s own observation of systemic flow and friction. Inability to hold a steady gaze at Menkman’s work amounts to a kind of failed spectatorship. In my analysis, the individual failure of such a haptically challenged viewer is akin to the systemic failure of a technically challenged computer. The glitch and the viewer are performing a similar disruptive action. Over time, the sense of failure – or error – shifts into a sense of friction. Problems become possibilities.

**Interfacing brings together body, machine, and artwork.** As the artist’s physical materiality becomes an inextricable part of the technological material and both are used as artistic material, the viewer too is physically activated. The location of the work and the position of the viewer participate in a dialogue between organic and non-organic systems – between bodies and machines – that adds a digital variation to systems aesthetics. The interface situation emphasizes the interfacing work of the viewer as it introduces a second set of human and systemic forms of materiality co-present with the one belonging to the art. In this way, the viewer is implicated in the work.

Co-presence is emphasized in the video by the kind of vacillation recognized throughout the artist’s site. Systemic presence seems to dominate at first but it fades as the visual traces of a glitch are made evident. Human presence in the work seems non-existent. Yet, once it is discovered, it becomes an anchor point for the viewer trying to make sense of the abstract disruption. Here, the viewer is put in a position where human presence becomes paradoxical. My interfacing takes my gaze through the screen in a transparent mode and outwards to the construction of the surface in a reflective mode. Yet, it also takes me into a mode of instability where neither of these modes steer my experience – I am unsure of where and how to look. The interfacing mode may still be understood in terms of immediacy and hypermediacy, yet the vacillation is the main point here.

By glitching the Skype recording, the artist integrates her image into a disrupted everyday technology. As the recording disintegrates, so does her face and voice. I understand the everyday character of the recording as a way to imply the viewer here. It is a common experience to talk via Skype, to see my own body and the body of the person I am talking to through a webcam.
When the glitch occurs, this implied viewer position, grounded in integration with a digital means of communication, expands to include disintegration. The work’s caption first provides a secure footing by which to interpret the Skype recording as the basis for this work. From there, however, disintegration takes over to shape an uncomfortable spectatorship. By the time I recognize the everyday communicative situation, I am already drawn into the transparent image. The turn towards abstraction in the glitched video makes what little that is still recognizable increasingly important.

A shift from transparent to reflective can thus be noted. Once I recognize a little – the contours of the face-line, for instance – the abstraction dominating every other aspect of the work is even more emphasized. Consequently, the individually human and the systemically technological appear as parts of a continuum. That continuum is not only pictorial, as in Stearns’s case. The merging, envisioned also in systems aesthetics, is mirrored and expanded in the way Menkman blends photography into digital video, film and animation. Photography is present on Menkman’s site but – despite being tagged – it is not straightforward. Glitches do not just affect individuals or systems, but also enable an observation of the system it is operating within. Photo-based mediation is thus disrupted to become part of the larger continuum.

Networked interactivity opens up a tactical opportunity. Tactics are enabled by the construction of Menkman’s work and by her inserting it into a networked environment. This point became clear to me when I came across a video work that share Menkman’s glitch aesthetics yet generates a different experience than hers since it lacks the online setting. The short video Tresh 0.746 directed by the artist Jonathan Turner is found in a compilation entitled Noise Driven Ambient Audio And Visuals featuring experimental noise/ambient video work by Yoshi Sodeoka/C505 and music by KNBS. It is grounded in the same aesthetics as the rest of the art works on this DVD. According to the liner notes, it “embraces the layered residue of analogue distortions and glitches” through “video feedback loops, video flicker induction, CRT distortions created by magnetic fields and capturing various visual and audio static from a multitude of analogue sources”. In Tresh 0.746, the photographic recording is prominent in the form of video and still capture. It is also photographic in its narrative, with scenes spun around ten halted moments separated with a black frame – like a blinking shutter. These scenes range from ordinary to contrived, from home movie to art film.

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175 Tresh 0.746 directed by Jonathan Turner, 5’08. Noise Driven Ambient Audio and Visuals KNBS/C505, Yoshi Sodeoka (C505) and Sean Rooney (KNBS) with guests. DVD, 2005, 50”. Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art, Cornell University Library, Ithaca NY (September 17, 2013). This analysis finds support in my visit to Jodi’s exhibition at Belenius/Nordenhake Gallery in Stockholm 2015, with interface works as projections and as interactive computer installation, yet still produced other viewer positions than the website does.
toilet seat, a drive in a car, the textures of sheer curtains against a wooden door, a face in negative colors, paint running but abstracted as if the screen was melting, a woman falling on a lawn but cut-up so that her body is interlaced with the ground, black and pink waves pulsing across a white screen. Abstraction and documentation are layered with glitched and non-glitched material.

The experience of watching the video made clear how Menkman’s work shapes a tactical potential through the interaction of networked environments. Taking in the DVD, rolling along on the unified visual field of a locked screen, an insular viewing mode emerged that made me sink into complacent contemplation. Glitches lost their productive effect, reducing disruption to a neutral aesthetic element. A connection outwards with the everyday, always present in the links to a larger network surrounding the works on Sunshine in My Throat, was missing here as the video was situated in a kind of vacuum in relation to the system. The glitches disrupted their systemic conditions in the work, but their effect stayed contained within the work rather than extending towards the interface and the viewer as it does in Menkman’s work.

The display communicated disruption in a way that evoked a sense of sublime artifice. Consequently, there might be no need for reflection on my own position. The work itself holds a tactical potential in the way that it communicates disruption. Yet, it would carry through much stronger online than offline. In this closed context, glitching seemed to be yet another sufficiently edgy but altogether harmless look circulated in an economy of experience where glitch art operates on a margin that could be considered mainstream. Just as glitching functions by contrast, a work like this seems more efficiently if a contrast were set up within everyday technology. From there, tactical opportunity could be harnessed and performed. Here, technology is used to create something akin to the harmonious coordination of the protocological interface. While I do not take interaction as a general pre-requisite for active spectatorship, a lack of interaction here defined my experience as less active.

The Compress Process video highlights a co-presence of data and body. Derived from a webphone/webcam session, Rosa Menkman’s Compress Process is a short work – 3”28 – rooted at a particular junction of technology, art and body. As such, it propels a questioning of different kinds of action through implied and actual viewer positions. From one perspective of the system – the digital – the computer acts in charge of the production, circulation, display, and reception of Compress Process. From the same perspective, slightly angled, the user is active too – however, reinforcing the basic conditions of the computer by aligning with a proper interface. The artist’s action differs from this angle, as the digital technology is misused in order to
make the work. The viewer may side with this misuse by taking an interest in the work, but must still conform to an expected interfacing to access it. However, later in the process a shift occurs that introduces another kind of action. The system keeps the deep digital structure in place undeterred by the artist’s glitching. The surface level too is controlled by protocols to carry through and visually manifest any friction. Yet, with the artist herself as a mediator, the work and its environment unsettle a habitual interfacing by activating the viewer within rather than outside the system.

In Menkman’s work, a haptic visuality is activated that addresses power relations embedded into human sight.\(^{176}\) By placing herself in front of the web-cam – as the caption reads “basically a selfportrait of me jumping around”\(^{177}\) – she places herself haptically, literally in the middle of a glitched situation. Her own body is thus used as a means to explore and express glitching. In this trivial move, visuality is problematized because of how the work positions the viewer in a play with vision (what I see) and visibility (what I am shown). In the video, the merely suggested surface and contour of a human face flickers in and out of sight. It is almost not there, but for the fact of its registered presence in front of the lens and the viewer’s desire to see it. At times it merges with the image of noise, other times it stands out against it as a stabilizing factor grounded in photographic indexicality and iconicity.

It is difficult to make out the boundary between body and other data here, as if they were the same on some level of coded configuration. Indeed, they are in this digital context. The self in this portrait is physically and conceptually present – addressed to a viewer who acknowledges familiar traits of a body, a face and a voice, along with an idea of these traits comprising a coherent self. At the same time, it is a self that is embedded and manifested in a non-organic systemic materiality. As I noted earlier, here is again a reference in Menkman’s work to cyborgs and systems aesthetics – and to what art historian Rachel Greene calls a persistent theme in Internet art, citing David Joselit: “a colonization of the flesh by electronic technologies of communication.”\(^ {178}\) Interface positioning may function as colonization in three ways here: first through the everyday Skype use, then through the artist’s work, and finally through the website display. Each of these instances more or less forcefully embeds the individual in the system.

I argue that unilateral – protocological – control is reimagined in this case. I see this shift as due to the strong emphasis on embodiment in terms of the artist’s interfacing with the Skype web-cam as well as the viewer’s inter-

\(^{176}\) Mirzoeff 2006, pp. 53–79.
\(^{177}\) Caption, Compress Proces, Videoscapes, videoscapes.blogspot.se (retrieved April 1, 2013)
\(^{178}\) Greene 2004, p. 27 (cites Joselit).
facing with the resulting work of art. Self-representation here is a form of mediation that merges system and individual: a human mediated through a computer and a computer mediated through a human. On the one hand, the computer shapes how Menkman appears, how her movements and the lines of her face define the visual field of the video. She, on the other hand, shapes how the computer appears – through glitching, she calls out the systemic operations that condition her own appearance. In addition, the relationship between system and individual is emphasized as the computer is mediated through the viewer, who is implicated in the system while also being invited to turn that implication into a tactical opportunity.

Disintegration begins as technical, but comes to involve perception. In the process, it brings out aspects in the work that are not accounted for in the presentation of it. On a phenomenological level, the viewer handles data as it appears – whether clean or not. Yet, rather than evening out the body on display with the materiality of the digital – into two identical manifestations of the same virtual surface – glitching the surface puts an emphasis on materiality outside the screen. Data, in a correct or corrupted state, seems to appear in a shared space just because it shares the screen surface of the interface. Here though, a rift is noted.

**Photographic mediation is fragmented, dissolved – yet still present.** It is possible to see the video as a singular and unified statement communicated through a single and unified frame – if the viewer chooses a position disregarding the interface elements that do not support immediate transparency. Yet, it is more in line with my actual experience to acknowledge the rift that the work seems to call out. This rift takes place through a photo-based mediation. Specifically, though unacknowledged, it is photographic since it signifies – however fragmented and dissolved – through indexical and iconic elements. This kind of visuality revolves around how photography functions to make visible or invisible, to enable vision in order to gain a position that implicates the viewer in the mediation or instead keeps a distance to it. However subtly, in *Compress Process* a disintegration of photography is at work. Beyond a technology of remembrance, the emphasis of glitches on changing its environment here makes use of photographic indexicality and iconicity to mark out the present and the future. Glitches signify a new now.

A performative dimension of photography is activated in this work, through the pose of Rosa in front of the webcam lens and its subsequent disruption. The painterly abstraction reconfigured in Stearns’s work – and remediated

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179 This emphasis on the event occurring in front of the camera ties in with Stearns’s case and with seminal theorizations of photography as simultaneous presence and absence by for instance Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*. See also Murray 2013, p. 173.
through the interface – gains strength here.\textsuperscript{180} I understand this activity as a continual marking of the present (performance) through the continued event of the (performative) glitch beginning within the system and extending to the individual. The photographic recording is thus prolonged towards becoming an instance. The performative quality of \textit{Compress Process} adds to its tactical potential, as I understand it with Rebecca Schneider’s focus on the image temporarily stilled for the viewer.\textsuperscript{181} The pose and the accident of Menkman’s work converge in the hands of the artist and the viewer.

The image is entangled with, if not inextricable from, the vehicle for capture and playback. Image, viewer, and interface are all co-present. Using one-self as material for glitching is perhaps equivalent to using oneself as a medium. The body becomes a tool to communicate a problem. Beginning as a technical error, it develops into a perceptual problem for the individual by the time it is visualized and displayed. From there, it shifts into productive systemic friction. I interpret the artist’s body as communicating a bodily aspect of the computer’s disruption. As I interpret glitches with a poststructuralist notion of communication – communicating instability in an unstable way – both system and individual figure as fragile constructions in this case. From my phenomenological stance, it is not only Rosa’s body that is a medium in this specific artwork – it is all bodies, (self)-reflected or not, all the time.

Gradually, a tactical potential emerges in \textit{Compress Process}. This potential develops as the work puts me in a viewing position defined by vacillation, a position neither fully committed to a hypermediated distance from the photographic medium – as it appears in the video or on the website – nor fully immersed in its immediate transparency. On the level of co-presence, this vacillation brings the viewer closer to the technologies being used at the same time as it can be tactically observed through this closer experience. If one stays comfortably distant, the particular pace of interfacing with this fluid website is lost. No friction is allowed to happen, so that a moment of tactical opportunity is lost too. While co-presence may characterize human/computer relations in general, in this case something more poignant seems to take place. In this glitch environment, the closeness provided by the process of co-presence is what enables a break with the digital system. Risk and intimacy thus combine to cause friction.

\textbf{Photographic Instance II: Combing}

Rosa Menkman’s video \textit{Combing} recurs across the website, as it has been appropriated for different functions. This work was first a performance in which the artist, wearing heavy make-up, combs her hair clad in a white wig

\textsuperscript{181} Schneider 2011, p. 141, p. 143.
– a clear reference to Marina Abramovic’s *Art Must Be Beautiful* from 1975. The starting-point for this work’s trajectory on the website is however a black and white still rendering of the initial instance (fig. 27). Rather than exploring this work as a singular object providing a singular viewer position – as in *Compress Process* – it figures here through the cut-out that was made from the cinematic whole and spread into other forms of work. Interfacing across the website reveals how these forms can be connected.

The video work is firstly reduced to this one cutout, which then forms the basis for the information material *A Vernacular of File Formats: A Guide to Databend Compression Design* (figs. 28–29). Parts of this guide are exhibited as a work of art, with seven videos and ten file formats displayed alongside a software program written by the artist for producing what the guide shows (fig. 30). The cutout also appears in the artist’s *Biography* section on *Sunshine in My Throat*, to be used in press coverage and similar contexts (figs. 31–33). It also seems to form part of other video works, like *mimicking lofi aesthetics* (undated, fig. 34) and *Demolish the Eerie Void* (2010, fig. 35).

**In Combing, a photographic index is captured in transformation.** While the variations of *Combing* have been published in various media – exhibition prints, magazines – all of them are accessible through Rosa Menkman’s website as well as other digital and analogue platforms. In particular, they actualize a spread of places within the artist’s website from which viewer positions are formed. Since the source image is photo-based, this example offers the possibility to follow the same image into different functions of photo-based mediation – the image that is moving, stilled and still; that is a manual, a portrait and an artwork. Each new appropriation introduces a layer of glitching – on a sliding scale between the technical and the perceptual.

To further stress the layered quality, the cut out is even at the first stage doubly photographic as it is a capture of a capture. The video becomes a photographic instance by being the origin of the image, circulated as a frozen frame extracted from a visual flow, referred to for information that photographic records are habitually meant to carry. It moves from still to stilled – from friction to flow to friction. This highlights the performative aspect of the interface and interfacing here – the image reproduces the initial event yet also changes it through various replays. The image plays out Menkman’s theme of self-expression as a simultaneously staged and straightforward document, saying something and nothing about the person or the persona.

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183 Schneider 2011, p. 141, p. 143.
On the one hand, the disruption in *Combing* accumulates in the databend guide that has been produced to present sixty-five different kinds of technical misuse on top of the one in the video. They include still and moving image file formats with varying degrees of compression – Photoshop Raw, JPEG, Quicktime – disrupted with reversible or irreversible databending. For glitch theorists Manon and Temkin, reversibility is a key to digital culture:

Indeed the art historian of the future will recognize the rise of unlimited, one-click "undo" as being on a par with the most major technological and phenomenological changes in the history of representation.¹⁸⁴

On the other hand, the image – when used for communicating information – underlines the premise that a relayed message should not be too unexpected or too difficult to grasp. Compared to many of the alterations in the guide, the source image shows Rosa’s face in a manner that suits public relations purposes. Artist and artwork seem deliberately conflated: intact enough to highlight her individual features yet disrupted enough to convey her artistic practice. The guide shows her face almost or completely disintegrated, as in image 27 – captioned “TIFF. With white background layer (irreversible databend)” – while image 26 (fig. 29) offers a personal stance:

Just like Targa, TIFF is a very complex compression. I have had some really interesting diverse experiences with this file format, but I find it very hard to get grips on the reason why they come to the surface the way they do. That's [sic] why these are real glitch bends to me.¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, disruption is reduced or downplayed in several ways as the display technologies used to present the video and the guide are necessarily expected to show them both as intact entities rather than as part of an ongoing process open to further glitching.

The notion of a photographic index is recalled in that the image performs the function of an original record, despite being a video frame. It is possibly only an original of a data file – a file that keeps generating a new original with each new glitch event it harbors.¹⁸⁶ It operates across contexts that each leave a layer on top of the image – or rather that take something away from it that cannot be put back – just as glitches do. Despite its foundational pre-

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¹⁸⁴ Manon and Temkin, paragraph 24 (unpaginated).
¹⁸⁵ Rosa Menkman 2010, p. 11. The quotes are from captions in the PDF guide.
¹⁸⁶ This paragraph is based on Quaranta 2010, pp. 1–2 (cites Groys). In the press release, he claims that the work was “Conceived to illustrate an essay discussing how the incident, if normalized and implemented in software, can easily turn into a banal graphic effect, losing its extraordinary, revelatory potential” (rosa-menkman.blogspot.se/2010/12/solo-show-order-and-progress-at-fabio.html, retrieved April 5, 2013). This may allude to the limits of glitch as a style recurring from a media-materialist perspective. However, my analysis suggests a different interpretation.
sence, there seems to be no place for photography in this process, as it is conceptualized by the artist as well as by the curator Domenico Quaranta. He describes the *Vernacular of File Formats* in contradictory terms:

[A]n essay, a tutorial for wannabe glitch artists, and a collection of experiments that should not be repeated, but that will be inevitably be repeated until their aesthetic potential is exhausted.\(^{187}\)

The work is distanced from its past connections to the photographic medium, downplaying qualities such as documentation and repetition. From this perspective, photography represents the starting point for the work yet not the work itself. The photograph both as original and as copy are set aside:

The original shooting of the *Vernacular of File Formats* would never have succeeded in saying what its seventeen iterations do say [because it is] the result of a medium under control.\(^{188}\)

My interpretation of Menkman’s video image emphasizes the continued life – the liveness – of the photographic image as it is cut out, appropriated, and circulated into new contexts. Schneider captures the liveness of the image:

That posture, that enunciation […] steers a wobbly course through repetition and reappearance – a reappearance rife with all the tangled stuff of difference/sameness that anachronism, or syncopated time, or basic citationality affords.\(^{189}\)

As I understand her standpoint, the photograph figures as an embodiment not of a frozen moment cast in the form of an object, either of material print or immaterial data, but of a transitional process. In this process, the image can be interpreted, as I interpret it in this case, as an ongoing string of photographic events, occurrences: instances. Each time it is used in one of its old guises or in a new one, it is re-enacted rather than repeated. I thus see the different variations of *Combing* as visual evidence of transformation, not of fixing it into a collection of static forms. This transformative quality stretches a habitual use of photography, as it interrogates what a photograph does at the moment of its inception and continues to do as it is repurposed and revisited. At the same time, it activates only one photographic quality: to indexically and iconically support and stabilize the glitching process.

**Menkman’s archive of errors expands to begin causing systemic friction.** Variations of *Combing* and its insertion into an array of interpretative frameworks – underscored by the *Vernacular* guide with its consistent listing of

\(^{187}\) Quaranta 2010, p. 2.  
\(^{188}\) Quaranta 2010, p. 1.  
\(^{189}\) Schneider 2011, p. 143.
visual and verbal clarifications – form a kind of archive of errors. Over time, the errors emerge as instances of systemic friction – through two paradoxes. Firstly, what is archived is the manifestation of loss in a structure safeguarding against loss with regards to its capacities for storage. Here, loss is caused by compression. However, loss is not caused by some agency on the part of compression but by the individual deciding on what data to remove. Through Menkman’s archive, this process is made visible as not only technical but cultural – a process that often remains as invisible as systemic operations. Glitches could undo an archive with its disruption of mundane digital tasks such as saving and ordering. Secondly, it is an archive organized as taxonomies of copies whose visual similarities suggest that they are not only taken from the same recording but are identical from an interpretative perspective. Moreover, they are copies whose identical character is flawed to the point of causing a representational dilemma. The copy and the flaw are generally unwelcome in an ordinary archive. What are secured here are iterations of monotony and mistakes. By archiving them in a user’s manual, they are ascribed value and assured a continual reiteration – a continued existence.

The same image acts as a site for both the archival process and its potential failure. I suggest that what is iterated here is a context that is produced by the photograph being so unstable. This kind of photograph performs a supportive function in one moment and a disruptive function in the next. It cannot be trusted to be only one thing. Yet, it is trusted here as the preferred (though unacknowledged or undervalued) vehicle for communicating the glitched experience. The photographic record keeps its documenting capacity – but only just. The indexical and iconic aspects supporting such a document are now doubly removed: first by the digital technology and then by the glitch. Perhaps, it is removed again through the interfacing – where it is up to the viewer to decide if they are looking at a photograph or not, and if that decision matters in order to find a position in relation to it.

However, if I decide that it is a photograph – based on the recognizable (indexical, iconic) features of Rosa – the contradiction between glitching and archiving makes photography appear as the unstable medium it always was. I begin to see degrees of photography – with this archival aspect glitching is a way to rediscover the instability always present in this medium.

The archive of this screen image compiles technical errors. Yet, with regards to how photography is ever-present and invisible at the same time, it may also be understood as a compiling of conceptual errors built up around the technical. The importance of the instruction is manifested in both text and image – specifically leaning on its photographic support. The textual dimension is also established in the name of this work – “vernacular” meaning an expression relating to the ordinary and to what unites a time, place, or
group. This serves as a suitable reminder as, throughout *Sunshine in My Throat* and *Videoscapes*, glitching emphasizes legibility as a cognitive but also visceral activity. Materializing and making sense of an experience affects the viewer haptically so that a distanced viewer position becomes more difficult to hold. A challenge to get a clear reading calls for the instruction given in the *Vernacular* guide. Yet it is the photographic that enables the guide to guide. With its captions, the photographs point, as Rebecca Schneider shows, not only backwards or forwards but also sideways to another context where the same image gains equal but other significance.

Photography functions as a vessel of information – the visualization of the glitches depends on the photographic record and display. They would not be visible if not for the support that the image provides. As a consequence, it is destabilized by a glitch that is in turn stabilized within a photograph. The photographic thus marks the recognizability given in a stable and trusted document. The photograph brings a habitual context with it to the glitch environment. For the viewer situated in this environment, seeing this instance of disrupted photo-based mediation breaks with such expectations.

**The interfacing viewer rediscovers a ubiquitous yet overlooked medium.** As *Combing* exemplifies, photography is unaccounted for in the website’s context, despite figuring prominently as sources and supports for artworks. Instead, references abound to art-historically canonized avant-gardes and major digital artists – Marcel Duchamp and Jodi are explicit examples of formative inspiration. While connections to these artists are evident, aligning the work with them disables other aspects of the work. To focus on glitching as Internet art, as for instance Galloway does, entails turning a blind eye to older technologies such as photography: they are just not addressed. The curator Quaranta contextualizes *Combing* in a broad art-historical spectrum yet locks it in a digital techno-culture where it seems ever-present yet also somehow irrelevant:

Let’s take photography. Technically, it is a process that consists in “creating still pictures by recording radiation on a radiation-sensitive medium”. Yet it has been always viewed as a way to represent reality, and any technical advancement was made with this target in mind. This is the ideology of the medium. If you use it properly, there is no way to act outside of this ideology. The only way to do it is to hack the medium. Produce noise. Trigger mistakes. Exploit failures. Of course, a lot of good art has been produced without questioning the ideology of a given medium. Yet, the more that medium becomes a mirror of power, the more noise becomes an interesting artistic strategy. This is why hacking video is more interesting than hacking photography.

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190 Vernacular, Merriam-Webster, merriam-webster.com: “1. of, relating to, or using the language of ordinary speech rather than formal writing 2. of or relating to the common style of a particular time, place, or group” (last retrieved October 31 2013).

191 Schneider 2011, p. 141, p. 143.
Furthermore, the more a given medium attempts to turn any creative option into a convention, a filter, an option in a menu – inevitably normalizing it – the more working outside of operating templates becomes interesting. That is why hacking computers – and any computerized medium, including digital photo and video cameras – is definitely more interesting than hacking any pre-digital medium.\textsuperscript{192}

Like Quaranta, I understand digital art as tied to conceptual art rooted in Dada, Cage, Duchamp, and Jodi.\textsuperscript{193} My interpretation shares these ties, due to the weight placed on a controlled randomness. However, a work like \textit{Combing} yields traces of an older medium within its digital setting. Through photo-based mediation and interfacing, it reveals a more richly layered construction than what is explicitly accounted for. Moreover, my focus on spectatorship points out how this construction is productive for analyzing a ubiquitous yet overlooked relationship between system and individual.

\textbf{Disruption connects interface and emulsion as materials to glitch.} In his \textit{Photo-Transformation} series, created between 1973 and 1976, the artist Lucas Samaras disrupted the material basis of photography as he “extended the formal possibilities of the Polaroid by using his hand or a stylus to gouge, smear, and stipple the wet dye emulsions of the instant prints while they were developing”.\textsuperscript{194} From a collection of hundreds (indeed an archive), the print entitled \textit{Fist in Front of Distorted Image of Face and Upraised Arm} is selected for a closer inspection here as it in a clear visual way demonstrates glitching before the term appears as an artistic method. Rather than ahistorically claiming an analogue precursor to Menkman’s work, this comparison highlights photographic methods of disrupting a technological mediation that unexpectedly echo in Menkman’s digital glitch material. As noted in the introduction chapter, the video work of Joan Jonas – regarded as the first glitch art – was produced around the same time as Samaras’s images.

In the tight frame of the Polaroid print, the only visible part of the artist’s body is his head and shoulders, his raised left arm and spread fingers. Only the right hand, a clenched fist in front of the mouth, is in sharp focus. All except the hand, emphasized in luminous green and red, is smudged out across the surface of the print in irregular choppy bands of red and black going from a thin veil of mottled dirty white to a compact dark density. Rather than the “watery reflection” noted by the Metropolitan Museum’s anonymous writer in the register post, the print reveals a thick impasto character locked

\textsuperscript{192} Quaranta 2010, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{193} See introduction for references to a similar historiography (Kelly, Galloway, Paul, etc.).
\textsuperscript{194} Photo-Transformation, [Fist in Front of Distorted Image of Face and Upraised Arm], November 30, 1973, instant color print, 7.5 x 7.5 cm., gift of Arnold and Milly Glimcher, 1986, 1986.1244.1, Metropolitan Museum, New York City September 26, 2013. Quote from information about Photo-Transformation, digital archive, Metropolitan Museum, metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/265049 (retrieved November 18, 2013)
in the flat glossy surface.\textsuperscript{195} Physical parts are dragged out and doubled as if by motion blurs and multiple exposures. However, this is rather a painterly quality – the effect of rubbing the emulsion in wavy motions around the untouched fist in the center of the image. While colors and shapes create an alluring expression – perhaps enthralling, to expand Galloway’s notion of an online continuum to this offline situation – some stripes and drops and stains seem to tease out the materiality of the emulsion and break the artful staging.

A material presence is emphasized by the size and scale of the print, evoking the intimacy of holding the Polaroid camera and the exposed paper in one’s hands. Holding the, albeit framed and glassed, prints, reasserts that intimacy now – and draws another link to Menkman’s images on view in other digital platforms, such as the display window of a mobile phone. With these two frames simultaneously in mind, I find myself curious about panning and zooming across and into the Polaroid – to interface it and its viewing positions, to relate to its own kind of instability as an active user.

Samaras’s image is technically straightforward yet visually perplexing. I search for something to recognize: a glimmering eye, a frowning brow? The right hand is the only recognizable element. It holds a photographic reliability grounded in index and icon, pieced together with the other photographic material that does not carry any photographic information despite being just as frozen in time as the sharp fist. At the same time, the hand is not as representative as if it was being documented as itself. Like the contrast strategy, that in my understanding is so important for the glitch to take effect, this hand is emphasized as photographic so that the rest of the surface becomes freed up to be something else. The image becomes a negotiated environment.

The artist sees himself through the photographic mediation and his manipulation of it. From the photographically given, the technical freezing of time, emulsion lends the visceral feel of paint to transform randomly, humanly, within the controlling frame. This material change affects the structure of the photograph and thus also the basis for how photography is conceptualized. Here too is a misuse that widens the range of photographic media by producing an experience where the viewer is urged to question positions. There is a pleasure in this questioning, an indulgent exploration of how technology is used – how a contract is set up between the viewer and the viewed also in this analogue interface. With this Polaroid, perhaps the risk of the photograph is not that it stops giving answers but stops asking questions. Glitching too is a reminder to ask questions about structural systemic conditions.

\textsuperscript{195} Digital archive, Metropolitan Museum: ”Here, the artist seems to dissolve into a watery reflection while his fist threatens to punch through the picture plane into the viewer’s space.” metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/265049 (retrieved November 18, 2013).
The physicality of the image is a means to play with representation and artifice. Constructing a pose for the camera, the stilled image evokes Walter Benjamin’s claim that modern visual technologies involve performing for the machine. The pose is part organic and part artifice, and therefore not so distant from Rosa Menkman’s “jumping around” on Skype. With Schneider’s unexpected “time-lag”, both Menkman and Samaras can be seen to play with spectatorship and self-presence embodied in a recording machine. Both play with an inevitable relation between human and computer, between system and individual: in a personal gaze, in my gaze, and in the gaze of the person who Rosa was talking to.

**Photographic Instance III: Negotiation**

Moving through *Sunshine in My Throat* and a selection of its photographic material brings experience to the fore. A predominantly transparent interface would stress the experience of content, and with a hypermediated one the focus might have stayed on the frame. Now, my attention flickers between immediately transparent and reflectively hypermediated interface, between frame and content – both immediately accessible and self-referencing. Contents are effective in enhancing the push-and-pull of the environment, but as the two combine they point out the unstable position of a viewer.

My co-presence with the viewed comes to the fore. Though driven by technical glitches, what is on display underscores an experience constructed around questions like what am I seeing and what can I do with such input. Two questions which, with their epistemological implications, bring attention to the positioning of the viewer in time and place. Art historian David Joselit suggests that digital culture changes how individuals connect to art – away from perceptual and psychological modes of experience, that he claims situate both viewer and artwork as properties, and towards “connection as itself an affirmative object of study [...] a nonmonetized form of transaction.”197

I argue that this work has a strong perceptual effect as it produces knowledge through optical sensations, following Joselit’s definition. However, it is not grounded in “the spectator’s self-possession of her experience as well as her subjectivity.”198 Rather than controlling one’s experience, owning one’s subjectivity, this work emphasizes lack of control in favor of co-presence and

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198 Joselit 2013, p. 60. Original emphasis.
co-ownership. Co-presence here makes each one manifest through the other: between human individuals watching and performing, between each of them and different sets of technologies, and internally within the same technological system. Watching this situation unfold, I am implicated in it observing and interacting with both the technological structure and the disruptions of it caused by glitching.

Menkman asks: “How many efforts are required in order to watch” (figs. 22–24). By claiming action, by not averting my eyes from the visually uncomfortable, a productive turn eventually happens. The artist’s focus on self – “self reflexivity, self critique and self expression” – is paired with what she identifies as a basic concern of glitch art:

[C]riticizing the way technology is conventionally perceived, or showing the medium in a critical state. Glitches release a critical potential that forces the viewer to actively reflect on the technology.

It is the activation of the viewer that makes these two points tactically relevant in my investigation. By referring to release and force, the quote evokes an automatic process close to the cybernetic. Yet, Menkman’s work points to the act of questioning anything automatic. Glitching one seems to glitch the other, until it becomes unclear who or what is really seen and who – what – is making the “effort to watch” as the artist aims to do.

In my analysis, glitching and its effect on the viewer generate a dynamic between place and time. Rather than to produce a fixed formula – a predetermined experience – glitch is used to unfix pre-set notions of how photography is situated and engaged on a website. It is the work of the viewer to find an individual viewer position – to be co-present with a technology that is also unfixed though carefully scripted by the artist. The position of the viewer is defined by this instability. Being unsettled affects the photographic too – or, it may be the unsettled photographs that put the viewer in a more or less enjoyable predicament. Either way, the shift between viewing positions becomes of key significance to shaping an environment where tactical opportunities emerge. The flickering dynamic does not allow for complacency.

The effects of glitching speed up the flow across the website while keeping the gaze on individual images for longer than what is comfortable. While technical glitches could be damaging, the present case shows that glitches can use friction as a kind of test-drive mode. They draw the viewer into just enough of a challenge to productively engage with the visually deviant. Such

199 Videoscapes.blogspot.se (retrieved April 1 2013)
200 Rosa-menkman.blogspot.se (retrieved April 10, 2013)
201 Compress Process, Videoscapes, videoscapes.blogspot.se (retrieved April 1, 2013)
involvement is productive as it welcomes me to an experience that I at first shied away from. Perceptual discomfort unexpectedly leads to clarification not only of the relationship between system and individual in general, but my relationship to my computer-framed experience in this instance. In the meantime, through an everyday interfacing that gives resistance while being trivial, photography comes across as an unstable – destabilizing – medium.

Disruption pervades *Sunshine in My Throat* as a spatial aspect – but even more as a temporal one. I am reassured by repeated visual cues forming a totalized surface aesthetic. Rather, discomfort is stirred by the temporal shifts that glitching causes. The site as a place contains disruption in a trusted pattern of interface standard elements like scrollable windows and accessible links. Presenting such a visual expression in such a technological format, the site shares the structure of most blogs and thus repeats a conventional online norm. It reinforces a habitual digital network as a consistent unity by constituting itself as a disruption that keeps the outside stable. There is therefore a risk that this would-be tactical opportunity emerging across Menkman’s website instead becomes a strategy that leads to the opposite result.

I interpret this observation with Michel de Certeau’s distinction between strategy and tactic. Strategy signifies operations from a place of power – an imposed order – while tactics refer to temporary interventions into such an order: “the decision itself, the act and manner in which the opportunity is “seized” – the glitched interface here is a micro example of a social situation where “as local stabilities break down […] tactics wander out of orbit.”

The viewer’s attention is caught in finding a recognizable signification within the glitched material. Neither the immediate nor the hypermediated interface mode seem to be available as a certain fatigue sets in, reinforcing the system that the glitch is constructed to challenge. However, disturbances on both sides of the human/computer connection pressure this shared structure. Here, glitches gain meaning by their contradiction as a liaison that points out the problem of connectivity – a disruptive interface situated in another one that honors the 1962 definition: “to interact or coordinate harmoniously.”

With her contemporary computer mis/use, Rosa Menkman reawakens the first, decidedly organic but enriching, definition of interface: “a surface forming a common boundary of two bodies, spaces, or phases.” Interfacing here is not fully adapted to a strictly regulated place but one active in – and activating – a transformative relationship.

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203 Interface, Merriam Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 22, 2012)
204 Interview with Rosa Menkman, Amsterdam (May 6, 2013). Interface, Merriam Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 22, 2012)
Menkman’s work involves the viewer visually and viscerally. Menkman uses her own body in her artwork – and by extension involves me in my act of seeing her. Domenico Quaranta points out how this adds a level of pathos:

The woman portrayed in the picture [in A Vernacular of File Formats] fades into pixel blocks, gets grainy, duplicates, disappears beyond a colored camouflage, then reappears, violently slashed.205

The body figures as a material and as a medium, as its mix of human and computer corporeality is an important part in how the work communicates a problem of communication. Producing and partaking, it reaches into relations of mediation and informs an experience shaped by the confluence of production, circulation, and display in contemporary digital culture. This time shift enables the photograph to be experienced as strategic if a viewer stays within the framework of the digital place: part of an order imposed from a place of power. Yet, it can also be experienced as tactical – possibly circumventing if not contesting order – if the viewer accepts the challenge in order to gain access to an alternative experience. With such a malleable space forming in front of and through the pages of Sunshine in My Throat, a viewer held in place is a viewer held in time. Similar to the spatial transformations of the pages visited here – and in the shifting sizes and scales of the screens where photographs exist today – the experience of time is changing too. Though an average website visit may be brief, it is not too brief for a sensory reaction.

Viewers will bring their own understanding of what constitutes a photographic medium in this case. I see a lingering indexicality that serves a photographic function of documenting an external reality. The only index present, however, may be of the glitch itself rather than what is being glitched. In fact, the question arises of how much of the materials and concepts that are tied together and called photography can be taken out and still be recognized as such – the optics, the light-sensitive surface, or the trace?

One tactical result of glitching may be a shift in where the index leads the viewer. Firstly, indexicality lingers insofar as the photographic record contains a visible trace of an event (or two: a Skype conversation and a glitch). Secondly, the viewer finds a position depending on how they interpret the events leading to the trace of the glitch. Whether technical – or human, as Menkman’s self-portraits are neither a clear self nor a clear portrait – the more that is stripped away from the habitual apparatus, the more acutely present the remainder appears. It still speaks of the systemic structure outside of the image, and does so by im printing traces of that outside. However,

it does not take the photographic medium for granted. Whether by disrupting the computer side or the human side of photography, the roles and functions of each begin to be contested.

Throughout my analysis, the index of Menkman’s photographic instances prompts questions about what the glitched image helps me to see, what my seeing brings forth in the image, and what the image enables to emerge. My visits to Sunshine in My Throat are bewildering and sometimes nauseating, as the surface communicates a kind of crisis in the coded configuration that directly involves the viewer. I find that the operation produces a certain visible surface that in turn produces surface certain viewer positions. This interaction is an example of how a glitch becomes embodied both in the human (individual) and in the technological (systemic).

The crisis – brought upon the viewer through glitches pervading the website environment – can be thematized as a situation that prompts what Jorella Andrews calls a “photographic stare”:

> [T]he photographic stare […] addresses, or re-addresses questions of meaning and being. Not in an abstract sense, but literally, in terms of who and what we take ourselves to be, as inhabitants, also, of multivalent, photographically generated image worlds. What positions do we take up? What paths do we follow, and how do we allow ourselves to be orientated, disorientated and re-orientated in and by the many situations of which we are a part? Certainly, the photographic stare embeds us in scenarios where much falls apart (norms, expectations, discrete identities).

Andrews' statement refers to a look that extends the body into image-making machinery and onwards into the image. As this co-presence is brought about, that image compels me to act on my visual encounter. It generates my response and challenges me to not avert my eyes from it. I argue that a glitched photograph has this capacity for generating an unflinching kind of visuality. The difficulty of staying and moving on the website emphasize how hard it is to see a glitch while it happens. It thus turns into a tactical viewer position.

The empowering acts of seeing and being seen here clarify the viewer’s experience in two ways. Firstly, it motivates the “effort to watch” needed in relation to disruptive glitches, because that disruption is an embodied experience. Secondly, keeping up such a photographic stare in this context makes way for a tactical potential by activating me as a viewer to ponder what it is I am trying to grasp in the images and why it seems so difficult yet so important. Via Menkman’s work, my effort to watch is enabled by what Andrews’ calls an immersion within the visible:

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206 Andrews 2011, p. 49.
The challenge offered by phenomenology, however, is to become sufficiently immersed within the visible to notice a deeper phenomenological fact, namely, those points at which what we see and our capacities for action intersect. This is crucial since it is only by having been acted upon and opened up by the visible that the ‘I can’ (our plans, projects and actions) can be made apt, relational and responsive, both practically and imaginatively, with respect to present actualities. The photograph understood as a prosthetic stare enables this crucial overlapping to occur.207

Jorella Andrews speaks of visual immersion as a way to provoke ethical action – disaster relief or long-term advocacy for changing political policies. Still, her core belief in photography to activate rather than passivize viewers is helpful even when – as my analysis shows – the difficulty lies not in a challenging content but in a challenging mode of looking.

**Noise becomes productive by engaging the viewer.** In Rosa Menkman’s website environment, glitching draws the individual viewer in. Therefore, it sets up an implied viewer position in which negative noise turns productive. Noise could be deemed negative insofar as the experience of it does not go beyond irritation – noise that is just noisy. In my analysis, that initial irritation gains an enriching complexity over time. It propels an experience that is productive in its generation of attention and reflection upon an individual spectatorship. The negative is emphasized with the sensorial and cognitive irritation of not only lacking the ability to see what causes the glitch, or what it might signify, but to even looking straight at it.

The distance associated with criticality is overturned as the process of critical attention – to investigate, expose, test, question – succeeds not by the viewer taking a step back to gain a more complete overview but rather taking several steps closer to what is observed. However, contradiction complicates immersion. A paradox here is that an inquisitive mind operates from an embodied experience set within a systemic framework that requires this to happen. Another paradox is that perception – unfiltered input – precedes cognition while the choreographing of a visit is not open to any or every route. Either glitching can be seen as an innately human way of relating to systemic structures, or as a skill that needs constant exercise. Rather than as a premise for glitching – as defined on the website – a tactical quality emerges with time to move around and to stay with these works.

As noted above, I argue that this process does not arise from the website as a place. It seems, as Michel de Certeau makes clear, to be a manifestation of the prevailing order of a powerful system. A glitched or non-glitched interface siting glitch work does not automatically generate critical perception.

207 Andrews 2011, p. 55.
Tactics are possible when time is given to the place, a certain time springing from the character of the experience there. Criticality in the individual image is co-produced in co-presence. Here too, a temporal aspect takes precedent over the spatial. As a place, both image and website can be passivizing despite the interaction enabled by the networked structure. The effect of the interface on the viewer may be over-whelming or distracting. However, a self-reflective break gives an opportunity to see that influence as a personal matter. The key is in the doing: looking at a glitch as well as making it.

The viewer may easily miss the moment where negative noise turns productive. Therefore, a tactical opportunity may be bypassed too. After all, that opening is not given for free. The artist makes seeing harder, producing an experience that is more difficult to reach even though it is enriching once it happens. The viewer needs to process their experience of noise, and in that process find a position that allows them to stay on the page or leave it. Different processes take place depending on which position I choose. Conversely, different processes generate different positions. Either way, a temporal focus points to something in the structure that is possible to pry open. In Menkman’s work, I tie her opening of the system to the viewer position that opens up my spectatorship to myself. The act of prying open what is locked away from the viewer is an opportunity to act temporally and spatially different in this networked environment: staying put, connecting the disparate.

A possibly tactical potential emerges as a performative domino effect: glitching acts differently on me so that I can begin to act differently. Different, because the glitch transforms the image and the interface that shapes my experience of them – as in the Skype-based work, going from an ordinary conversation record to a glitch artwork. Differently, because the experience of the image and the interface – displaced in such a way – enables me to take a viewer position that would otherwise not be available to me.

As this case demonstrates, a digital environment may at first seemed locked under a pervasive systemic structure yet also be negotiable. Terms and parties of this negotiation are clarified by combining Schneider’s and Andrews’s emphases on a phenomenological continuum between image and viewer:

[Instead of asking us here, to continually negotiate problematic dualistic distinctions between image and reality, or between the supposedly face-to-face and the mediated, [epoché] insists on equalization at the level of phenomena. According to this logic, we are challenged to regard the photograph […] also as an entity figuring in our own landscapes, no less (and no more) a phenomenon than anything else – this chair, my body, the trains that just rumbled past my window.]

208 Andrews 2011, p. 52.
As a negotiated environment – where, as Andrews suggests in the photograph, reality is not bracketed out – an approach inherited from 1970’s systems aesthetics is reactivated and reinterpreted. Through Rosa Menkman’s case, such a negotiated environment can be located within a single website and a single photograph (or video, or video still). It is located there because the viewer is activated in a way that allows the environment to form.

**Menkman’s website/artwork keeps system and individual off balance.** Glitching generates a temporal experience where time is not fitted to an expected clock, but rather moves erratically. It thus ties back to the original meaning of the word *glitch* – to skip, skid, or slide – referring to an event in which balance is lost. In Menkman’s work, both the viewer and the viewed are kept off balance. While viewing positions shift with these irregular rhythms, the photograph contained as a representational entity on the place of the site begins to skip, skid, and slide with an emphasis on time. As the visual space of a photograph breaks apart with the glitch, its relationship to place, to situatedness – and so to digital structures – is underscored. For the viewer, centrally placed by the input of works and website, glitching is a temporal relationship. It is in a lived experience of glitch that systemic friction is seen, remembered and reproduced. From my time spent with *Sunshine in My Throat*, I harbor visual and haptic memories of glitches that intrude on how I now encounter new disruptions and the as-yet un-glitched.

I see glitching as a way of problematizing the unglitched. For my analysis, an implication of this is that glitches generate an epistemological shift from a direct experience of haptic friction towards the viewer’s reflection on their relationship with digital systems. The next time I Skyped after seeing *Compress Process*, I remembered my experience and was alerted to how I was, in my own communication, absorbed in the kind of performing for the machine that Walter Benjamin notes as vital to film interaction. I suddenly noticed the interface in operation: how our interfacing movements related to the webcam and the windows that made us visible to ourselves and to each other. No glitch occurred during that conversation. However, once seen it cannot be unseen – the visual and haptic memory of disruption shapes the future digital use, of which photo-based mediation is an everyday example.

A tactical potential is activated in a potential for embodiment: bringing the glitch with me. Friction is lodged in body and mind, through physical memories and the self-reflecting attention that they lead to. As I return to photographic instances after having traversed the website – like the artist’s portrait on the front page (figs. 19, 36) – I interpret the photographic medium less as

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209 Glitch, Merriam Webster, merriam-webster.com (retrieved May 4, 2015)
210 Benjamin 2008, pp. 29–33.
a preserving apparatus and more as a performative apparatus for visualizing events as they happen. Memory is brief and precise: only the moment when the glitch happens is visible. Its effect is that nearly everything else than the glitch and before the glitch is disrupted. What little remains, becomes more important.

The image points to the interface where it is displayed – and therefore forward to new disruptive events. Thus, it points forward to the time and place of other viewer experiences. A shift is noted in the timing of how photographs are made and displayed, and thus how it is experienced as productive. The function of photography shifts from being a document pointing backwards, towards a performative marking of the now and the future.

The question “What does the image do?” remains open. For photography, its ongoing inquiry activates a temporal dimension that not only or simply points back in time to the imprint of the glitch on the visual surface. It also – as clarified by Rebecca Schneider and Jorella Andrews – points forwards and sideways to other experiences: other locations, moments, and positions. With repeated glitching comes a performative activation, a reenactment, of the photograph that shifts it from a static object to an open process. With each discovery of a photograph fragmented and displaced, a shift occurs in how photography exists in the context of Menkman’s combined artworks and website interfaces.

In the visual environment of this case, glitches act on me by immersion and confrontation. Observing their effect to analyze the formation of spectatorship allows for the possibility to bring that tactical activation outside of myself. Such a change may entail a heightened awareness, an ability to pay closer attention and to make keener observations of glitch art’s main target: a systemic order that expects and instills obedience. Rosa Menkman’s question is answered by asking more questions. The experiential possibilities brought out by her website and artwork derives from this inquisitiveness. They make my position as a viewer visible to me through the process of glitching. With regards to the relations set up and set in motion by the artist, the emphasis on materiality gains a sharper focus on human corporeality too.

Menkman’s glitching tactic revolves around the limits of an experiencing subject. It makes possible a rethinking of the individual maker or viewer of glitch, in relation to experiences beginning at the interface and working deeper into the underlying layers. Through a small-scale process of individual subjective experience, one look at a time, a destabilizing perspective on ubiquitous computing is established.

211 Schneider 2011, p. 141, p. 143.
Sharing an Unstable Photograph:
Evan Meaney’s *Ceibas Cycle*

This chapter begins with two screen images: the front page including project *Ceibas Cycle*, and one of its parts *A Similar History*. Moreover, it deals with three photographic instances: the video works *To Hold a Future Body so Close to One’s Own* and *The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts* as well as a photography *Portfolio* (figs. 37–54). This case adds a specific quality while clarifying abstraction and corporeality characterizing the previous two cases. This quality evolves from a co-presence – a shared state – of figurative representation and nonfigurative abstraction, within single instances of photo-based mediation as well as within the general website environment. By November 2015, the website interface had changed, shifting this account from contemporary to historical with the speed of digital flow (fig. 39).

**Screen Image I: *Ceibas Cycle***
At first glance, everything on the fixed sparse interface of Evan Meaney’s website looks evenly and immediately visible (figs. 37). A mode is set up across the website through a still, un-scrollable, and blankly white expanse. Soon though, a dynamic emerges from a subtle sense of unbalance. For instance, contents are placed in a small square slightly askew at the top center of an otherwise empty page. Almost center, a single small photograph of a man serves as a visual anchor-point while also offering some resistance to my eye. Its size and placing create a distinct and disturbing pull. The difference between image and interface brings them together in a way that points to how glitching involves loss: a technical loss of data, with perceptual and thus experiential consequences. The image links to an article featuring Meaney’s work – about the precariousness of memory in digital culture. Its caption looks like a real link but does not function as one: “delete. Forget”.

**One image anchors the interface and generates spectatorship.** In the small photograph – or is it a video still? – a man dressed in a 1940s soldier’s jacket and hat passes from left to right, a bag slung over his shoulder (fig.

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213 This link leads to an article on Meaney among others by Jacqui Shine: “You can delete but you can’t forget. I erased all of my mother’s emails after she died. I want them back.”, *The Atlantic*, July 3 2014, theatlantic.com (retrieved August 11 2014).
37–38). With an unselfconscious mien – chin jutting forward, eyes downcast, lips parted – he seems absorbed in his own action. A man caught in everyday motion – arms blurred around the body – in what looks like a military context. This black-and-white capture enhances a vernacular cinematic intensity of a photograph recording life. Tension between fact and fiction arises with the question of whether or not this is an actual or enacted soldier. If the tension is about representational function – how to interpret the content of the image – it is grounded in the technical disruption at the material level. From there, the viewer’s perception shifts to an interpretive position.

The glitch covers the image with a disruptive pattern. This pattern not only covers it, like something external placed on the surface – it ingrains it. Body contours extend forward in a blue transparent shade. Across the surface, a chequered pattern ripples the image, dragged into vertical lines and rounded diagonals in zig-zags and in smoother textures. Light green adds to the grey-scale, faded to neon at the top and bluer at the bottom. Colored bands across the surface – muted on the left, intense on the right – follow the disrupted pattern. One band runs along the top half, horizontal lines interspersed with waves and breaks cutting into each other – purple turns brighter across the face, then white and grey on top of the greenish-blue. The band extends the face forward to double the profile. Another interrupted horizon runs across the chest and the blurry outstretched arm, again in a pale purple darkening further down. The hand, almost invisible in the photograph, is marked in a scrawled electric turquoise. As the line flickers out towards me, this chromatic vividness is mirrored in a vertical section on the far left where light green and reddish purple turn blue. On the far right, in line with this middle band, a thickening appears as if an object outside the frame had been doubled into it. One band covers the bottom edge of the image and arcs upwards in faded orange and burnt ochre between narrower sections of clear red and whitish pink. A gradation from a soft hue to a starker one is echoed on the right, emphasizing the contours of the man’s body once again.

What is described here is the step from material to perceptual disruption. By describing this step, the interfacing of the viewer with these two phases of disruption is grounded in the interplay of photograph and screen. I argue that this interplay functions as a kind of material speech. Art and photography historian Carol Armstrong uses this concept to describe the performative process in which techniques and technologies extend beyond their status as practical means. Technical and technological processes become ways to think, “not in order to arrive back at definitions and distinctions taken as a priori, but as a means of material speech” – and she continues:

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214 This kind of image is similar to the work of war photographer Martin Munkacsi who replicated his documentary records in staged fashion shoots in the 1940s.
What counts is not the physical or ontological category to which the means belong (poesis/pictura, time/space, movement/stillness, painting/photography, film/photography, hand/machine, art/craft, digital/analogue, and so on) but the experiential effect to which it conduces and in which artist, subject, and audience are all active participants.\(^{215}\)

Armstrong ties the materiality of enunciation to the photograph’s mix of “the automatic, the arbitrary and the unwilled, the accidental and the random, chance and contingency” with the “selection and arrangement […] determining the meanings that a viewer of the image would take away from it.”\(^{216}\)

I understand this speech act to be a basis for tactical positions, as it entails a performative scrutiny of one’s own seeing. For interfacing viewers, such self-reflection responds to a moment when, as de Certeau’s notes, “local stabilities break down”, calling out individuals whose motions reveal “a system too vast to be their own, too tightly woven for them to escape from it.”\(^{217}\)

I link de Certeau’s theory of tactics to Alexander R. Galloway’s theory of counter-protocols, as the activities of individuals are “neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop” and incite discovery through improvisation.\(^{218}\)

Glitching a photograph that still functions by indexicality and iconicity enhances the materiality of the image as an unstable support for representation. The effect this glitching has on the systems operating here echo in the experiential effect inhabited by me as a viewer.

The man’s expanded contours point to an area of pressure. Not only visually – as a body that seems to be dissolving – but also technically, glitching can change the photograph as material support and representational vehicle. The grey-scale photograph visualizes not only the man. Digital disruption visualizes itself in glaring color layered into the grey-scale support. Systemic components like grain/pixel structure and motion/glitch blur are brought out as unstable for mediation. The contingency of photo-based mediation – what is neither chance nor necessity, as Peter Krapp notes – is revealed as the image serves as material for visualizing glitch yet is always already disrupted in itself.\(^{219}\)

Instability is here part of the specificity of this process of mediation.

As form and content of the image expands, it connects to other photographic instances here. The “gestic call” proposed by Rebecca Schneider – performed by Rosa Menkman in front of the camera, and Phillip Stearns behind it – is articulated within the image itself as well as between it and the inter-

\(^{215}\) Armstrong 2012, p. 723. Original emphasis.
\(^{217}\) de Certeau 1984, p. xx. See also pp. 34–38.
\(^{219}\) Krapp 2011, p. 86.
Both glitch and its photographic support evoke a fleeting moment: a man in motion, a sudden friction in the flow of mediating him in the image. Yet, the stillness in the image contains a vibrancy that activates the whole blank interface. In doing so, the screen image becomes a stilled image just as the photograph is. With Schneider’s phrase, I argue that the haptic basis of seeing images through an interface – as exemplified here – functions as a recurrent yet ambivalent gesture that enunciates – as material speech.

From my perspective, what happens within the photograph happens within the interface into which it is embedded.

The photograph’s movement is repeated as a movement in the interface. The man crossing the photographic frame also crosses the interface – into the website, into the interior of the photographic file opening up with the glitch, away to the linked article, towards each new viewer and viewing situation. The subtle yet insistent photograph overshadows the artist’s highlighted beside it. It shifts my attention away from the static screen by moving forwards to me and into the site, and sideways to where the link leads.

Through this photograph, the flat interface suggests an undulating interior. Its blankness clearly signifies, as Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe writes: “where [blankness] once marked the absence of the sign by being a sign for absence, it is now the sign of an invisible and ubiquitous technological presence.” It thus evokes the first meaning of glitch: to slip, slide, skip – lose balance. This is partly due to how it connects outwardly from the screen image to the networked environment, and partly to how it interacts at/as interface within and between its visual elements. Despite leading away to the article, the image’s mix of external figurative representation and internal nonfigurative abstraction is an entrance into Meaney’s website.

This single small image exemplifies the contingency that glitching brings to photo-based mediation – and that contingencies exist in most photography. It is emphasized here through the directed yet uncontrollable activity of interfacing. On the one hand, photograph and interface share a digital materiality grounded in coded configurations. On the other hand, the glitch breaks up the continuity of such configurations so that the system appears fragmented – as it is in this scene but not in this interface. From this situation, a position opens up in which a viewer may interpret continuity and fragmentation – flow and friction – as co-present. Here, glitching recalls two modes of photo-based mediation: to gather dispersed elements into a single frame, and to signify the disparity and dispersion of those elements by questioning all frames.

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220 Schneider 2011, p. 141.
221 Schneider 2011, p. 141, p. 143.
222 Jennings 2015, p. xviii (cites Gilbert-Rolfe).
Around the single photograph, the site’s blank surface expands. Within and outside the *Ceibas Cycle*, sensory and verbal information are reduced as one blank page links to another. It draws me slowly through the first screen image as a portal that connects each part in a protocological way, regulating experience by the few options at the interface. The dynamic of this structural layer, in relation to the act of interfacing, emerges as a way to address the performatve materiality I emphasize with Armstrong and Schneider. My initial experience suggests that the contingency of the interface and photograph together shapes a viewer position. With time, it seems that the position also begins to generate contingency.

**The blank interface turns vibrant through its unexpected rupture.** My first move in this transparent space is informed by a blankness that demands attention to yield its vibrancy. Adjusting to its scale and aesthetic, my eyes are peeled on the little glitched image – which, after my visit, stands out as a key visual sign of what is to come. Because of the image, I am drawn closer to other events of the interface: I lean forward. The screen image thus keeps its immediacy, but gains a more hypermediated quality. The header on the page introduces “evan meaney: new media, cinema, gaming, education” while links inform of active projects: the *Ceibas Cycle*, the new project *Null Sets*, glitch theory – and current events, in August 2014 for instance a presentation of the Cycle with a new media installation. Left of these centrally placed updates are the fixed *Glitches, Catalogue, Photography, Academia, Vitae, Contact, Links, Home* – and a shop where the Cycle DVD is sold with a glitching how-to and system calibration. Few informative elements order the screen image and a viewer’s routes to other screens and images.

Upon reaching the *Glitches* section, the artist’s statement on “why to make a ruined thing” sets the scene:

> all forms of digital media exist as delineated fields of language. as such, one might interpret a flash video or a digital still as an archival container for zeroes and ones. digital media would have us believe that when we “export” or “save as” we engage in a type of hidden, impossible alchemy; but of course these processes are just re-tran…

The words trail off with letters that look scratched and smudged. This paragraph exemplifies a co-presence of technologies and humans. It actualizes the protocological operations underlying individual interfacing as well as the destabilization of systemic friction. Processes of writing, reading, and seeing are complicated by the way that glitching materially or symbolically scratch and smudge. The paragraph embodies a productive kind of noise as it directs

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my awareness to how action is shared with interface and its contents. As I revisit the front page after reading this *Glitches* introduction, the small photograph there gains a similar function as the glitched text. Such a brief moment of reflection provides a tactical beginning.

The *Ceibas Cycle* can be reached from the front page and the *Glitches* section. Unlike the text introducing the latter, the visitor here meets an undisrupted interface where the visual communication is pared down to small black text on white. Despite this calm screen image, the artist states that the *Cycle* “offers technological *rupture as an interface* […] something fragmented presents itself as a dialogue and not simply as a vessel.” 224 Thin black letters on flat white expanse communicates noise in a quiet manner. Small, de-centered items do not optimize the given display. Discreetly, they actualize their potential for producing another kind of interfacing situation.

This space draws me into a temporal commitment more than into a spatial effect. Its stillness invites a prolonged forward lean rather than distracted browsing or distanced observation. The experience is one of moving toward and into the content as an environment rather than sweeping or cutting across visually striking but isolated places. Staying with the first screen image – leaning in, against a habitual faster pace – unfolds an experience that activates my seeing. To clarify this activation, I argue that the viewer relates to interfacing as a reader relates to reading in de Certeau’s theory. In line with his notion of “space is a practiced place”, I find individual and environment co-present here through the transformative interventions of drifts and leaps of “wandering eyes” that re-organize the shared space. 225 Such a motion is propelled by glitching. This initially transparent interface – in which I may disregard the frame and leave the page in a user-friendly mood – shifts attention between the frame and the glitched image, thus inviting a reflective mode and a tactical viewer position. A self-reflective experience unfolds with the time it takes to lean forward into the photograph as an interface in itself. The title’s “sharing” refers to such intervention as a result of how the viewer, the technical frame, and the content share the space for action.

This interface – as a protocological environment – opens up for productive deviations from the pre-configured. Such deviation is grounded in a viewer position in which to stay longer than required or preferred. The interface begins to gain another function than mediating smooth systemic operations. This performative situation highlights that the interactions between space/frame and element/individual differ with each viewer. With my notion of

performativity that systemic change begins with individual change, this shift starts in a sensory response to details. Even this may challenge a protocol-logical approach, where systemic regulation overrides the individual. An experience defined by systemic operation thus shifts to a shared action. Then, a tactical position develops in which I am both within and outside the system.

My forward lean would be uncalled for in a place where a lack of friction indicates a functioning system. Here, the cues are too clear to be disruptive yet too small and off-center to be smooth. The contingency of these cues ties together the protocolological structure reproduced by the artist with the tactical possibilities of a viewer position. As a response to the front page, my move signifies the contingent: it occurs neither by necessity nor by chance. What prompts this move is that image and caption – “delete. Forget” – anchor the site by clearly yet randomly creating associations beyond a purported intention. The subsequent activation of the viewer vitalizes the immobile parts of the image, words and link arrows. A kind of visual elasticity is brought about when word and image are connected in the movements of the viewer.

For the viewer, the words “delete” and “forget” frame the photograph – and the website it signifies. As the eye wanders from image to word, what is deleted and forgotten – in the system, in the individual – becomes that which is brought into attention. To clarify such attention, I tie it to how photo-based mediation complicates the relation between function and representation: what the image does and means. Aesthetics and photography philosopher Paloma Atencia-Linares addresses a similar relation in terms of how viewers may co-read fact and fiction. After sorting a photograph’s content as representation and its function as genre – the latter determining a work’s level of fiction, regardless of if the depicted is real or not – she grounds a co-reading in how photographs are experienced as both uncanny and epistemologically authoritative.226 In line with this reasoning, the image’s representational content is framed by how the genre directs the viewer’s interpretation.

Glitched photographs can be interpreted as both factual and fictional. There is a factual aspect to their visualization of systemic friction – it looks the way it does because the presence of that friction is undeniable. At the same time, a fictional aspect appears as there seems to be no certain proof against which to check if that visualization is accurate – its randomness is an end in itself here. To capture how interpretation is directed by the present context, I expand on Atencia-Linares’ argument with reference to Galloway’s and de Certeau’s notions that enunciations are embedded in a dominant system of

statements yet also tactically tweak how such an order functions.\footnote{De Certeau 1984, p. 32, pp. 156–159. Galloway 2004, p. 74–75, p. 122, p. 176, p. 206.} The enunciations that I observe in this screen image are embedded in the protocolical interface order yet tweak the experience of it with glitched image and text. Therefore, they suggest the possibility of interpretations that allow for a tactical viewer position.

**Screen Image II: A Similar History**

One part of the *Ceibas Cycle* is *A Similar History* (2009), introduced as an ergodic installation of text and color images comprising an online “part memorial, part library, part game” (figs. 40–43).\footnote{The paragraph cites artist statement, *A Similar History*, evanmeaney.com (retrieved August 11, 2014) Ergodic, Merriam Webster, merriam-webster.com: “1. of or relating to a process in which every sequence or sizable sample is equally representative of the whole (as in regard to a statistical parameter) 2. involving or relating to the probability that any state will recur; especially : having zero probability that any state will never recur” (retrieved May 4, 2015).} The work revolves around the Center for the Investigation of Lost Data, a medical research facility in the Honduran city of Ceibas 1975–2007 – and “a collaborative think tank and rehabilitation center for the observation and understanding of informatics diseases.” The artist hints at an abrupt end as “no survivor has ever communicated to the press the details of the center’s decline.” The work’s material stem from its computer archives supposedly destroyed yet surfaced after a 2008 break-in. This material consists of three parts. An early resident’s collected news clips, historical accounts, and personal notes; photocopies from a book on Alan Turing by the centre’s first student; and fragments from a defunct computer system with patient files, a Turing-inspired simulation program, notes hidden in its infrastructure and a primitive CAPTCHA protocol for an emergent system of human–machine recognition.

**Ephemerality, repetition, and absorption create a slow glitch.** As I enter the interface designed for this work – white and minimal as the general website – notes in a neat yet crudely edited handwriting mirror computer readouts covered by colored segments. In frame 10, someone has begun a note with “Camilla was kept as comfortable + engaged as possible. I know now that she never fully recovered…” (fig. 40). With no replacing word, this crossing out becomes an act of visually addressing a problem. Frame 19 (also 73) consists of one paragraph of a readout only showing a date, an address to a doctor, and the words “began to bleed. Taken to the infirmary, I was called in to calm her” and scattered words on the left side: “decipher”, “incident” (fig. 41). The rest is glitched, leaving fifteen bands of reds, blues, greys, pinks, and greens. As in the *Glitches* introduction, legibility is complicated while the reader’s activity is emphasized in discerning message from noise – or, given the glitch context, message as noise. Visually corresponding fragments build on a technical glitch to form a narrative of the Centre’s
archives – operational, lost, restored, and incomplete – that includes disruption of social institutions and their inhabitants (fig. 42). Into the site’s white expanse, an experience of disorientation spills from the work.

Despite its explicit glitching – if what Meaney calls a “rupture as interface” operates here, it does so over time. In a space structured for fast interfacing, glitching, and photography, slowness is tactical. Armstrong calls images that are “committed to slow rather than fast time […] a photographic oxymoron if there ever was one.”229 Another unlikely kin is the Book of Durrow (680 A.D) described by glitch artist and theorist Curt Cloninger:

> Certain parts of it [the book] were colored with a pigment that has eaten away at its vellum substrate. This glitch actually follows the contours of the original ornamentation. It is a very slow glitch.230

A deteriorating book page may be understood as a slow glitch. I see it as an example of the tactical process in which the systemic operation of technological writing upon a ubiquitous, heterogeneous surface – a book page, a web page, a photograph – is disrupted by accidents. With de Certeau, I see this friction as “a lapse in the system […] linked to the improbable, to failures, to diversions, and thus displaced by its other […] a putting-together of what coheres without being coherent.”231 Over time, A Similar History becomes such a space – and consequently, opens up a tactical viewer position.

Real or not, the Center actualizes relations between system and individual. My performance is clarified in Krapp’s notion that “what opens up the topology of play is a voluntary acceptance of the fictionalizing realm of contingency: the game.”232 A fictionalized space is built on real glitches that stress a material reality, in a display that requires a non-glitched interface. Visualized noise emerges in a game that is its own real, functioning system while embodying a fictive systemic breakdown. Accepting these parameters, I am drawn into a minimal, self-conscious, multi-layered mediation. I traverse its systemic structure revealed in a pervasive operation: I click a button and see what happens. With regards to a co-presence of system and individual, this initiates a result given by an algorithm. Glitches ground and disrupt this relation. The situation emphasizes performance and performativity – embodied, situated acts in or outside a fictional setting – as a self-referential process.233

229 Armstrong 2012, p. 721 (refers to inkjet ‘dry prints’ and tapestries of artist Craigie Horsfield, which I argue is comparable to Meaney’s work in terms of their relationship to time.)
232 Krapp 2011, p. 85.
233 Iversen 2007, p. 97.
With simple actions, I perform the work’s archive. In turn, it performs the Center’s archive. As both materialize, my disorientation grows. The work implicates me in its cycle of breaks and reassembly of information rather than uniting in a coherent message. Playing and performing enhances co-presence to build a viewer position. I agree with Krapp’s notion that “gaming glitches are part of the art form in the same way that brushstrokes are part of painting.”234 The “brushstrokes” of A Similar History mark actions in a coherent game, library or memorial rather than elements of them. Such actions give a sense of surprise as the viewer/player responds to the moves inside the game. For de Certeau, a game’s rules structure memory both in terms of storage and of classification – however, their impact on a gaming individual “teach the tactics possible within a given (social) system.”235 The tactics of interest here begin with glitching as a technical resistance that extends to experiential resistance.

In my analysis, the haptic environment of A Similar History builds on temporal aspects of ephemerality, repetition, and absorption. A viewer position evolves in their trajectory through the work. Like the work, it cannot be located to one fixed spot from which to oversee a field. The screen image conveys a strict systemic structure, yet holds a transitory quality that suggests it may be interpreted with Schneider as a stilled image. I find this quality to be tactically productive. Each play and player activates the screen in unforeseeable ways though their movements, like individual images, are governed by systemic regulation. With a performative take, this screen image is retrieving and generating what constitutes a viewer’s experience and a viewer’s position. Such a motion holds a systemic quality.

The work reduces interfacing to Help, Return and Save/Quit. These three options serve as the work’s non-glitched architectural and conceptual engine, from which a viewer position forms in response. This generative status may be gleaned in the Program Notes, despite opening as a PDF taking the player out of the game. The only options here – Help, Return, and Save/Quit – are called “actionable items” pointing to the activity of both systems as well as users.236 This document is as instructional as ironic. The Return option mines the database for the next text retrieval, making a “cyborgian decision” from how I got to where I am: “There are no random outcomes here, just choices we are coming to understand.” The Save/Quit option “retrieves one of several videos detailing a representation of [the Center] and the place where we might sleep.”

234 Krapp 2011, p. 91.
235 de Certeau 1984, p. 23 (see pp. 20–24 for an extended argument).
236 Quotes refer to the artist’s introduction, PDF document comprising the Help option of A Similar History, Evan Meaney’s website: evanmeaney.com (retrieved August 11, 2014).
From an un-quantified number of steps, the player’s choices are minimized to three whose results are determined by algorithms. Clicking those buttons involves waiting for a new retrieval to connect with the previous one. With new connections every time, I am unable to go back to reconnect. Over time, my choices thus lead to a sense of growing resistance. Sudden and slow glitches combine – two registers of deterioration that drive the game and situate the viewer. The lost archive retrieved in fragments calls upon a viewer lost in the game to keep retrieving a position. This repositioning is tactical insofar as it needs attention and engagement to make sense of the work’s play on systemic resistance. I read the Help guide’s irony as akin to what Krapp calls “auto-poiesis of systems” but “whether conceived as choices, or rare constellations, or as mere accidents”, taking positions here may entail “opening that space where something is possible otherwise, those crevices in the continuity of experiential space.”

The Return option continues to take me through the work with an archival logic of retrieval. One trajectory (100 frames turned 101 with the “what if” of my interfacing absorption) starts with a handwritten note that sets a self-reflective mode: “Were it not for the actions, those simple actions of your hands, I would not be writing this now.” An ungraspable library unfolds scrap by scrap as I – depending on my previous moves – go forwards by going back. The depth of the database is visible one frame at a time, turning the screen image into the top layer of an archival box. I am kept on the surface yet absorbed by the succession of retrieved texts. I stay on the spot, in the same interface, regardless of options: a visual equivalent of vertical digging is reduced to horizontal skimming. Each stop produced by an algorithm takes the place of the preceding one rather than uncovering a vertical layer. One scrap replaces the next, resisting accumulation and any grasp of a whole. It is up to me to remember and create coherence. Each result is based on a trajectory that will change even with the same choices. In performative terms, the position follows systemic yet individual iterations of the game.

Next are three excerpts that could have been created and stored either by a person or a system. The last one reads: “By the same token, randomness had been debunked at el CIDP as the go-to answer of the weak. (Foster, 584)” – followed by two more, one saying: “It was never the last day of ANY-THING. please stop saying that it is.” After this, a system-readout appears – glitched so it is almost unreadable. In all there are 29 notes, journal entries, and letters in identical handwriting. Three of them appear twice – frames 28 as 58, 39 as 53, and 24 as 66. One appears three times as frames 32, 43, and 237

\[237\] Krapp 2011, p. 76.

\[238\] Frame 1-5, A Similar History, Evan Meaney’s website: evanmeaney.com (retrieved August 11, 2014). Original emphasis.
“On that last morning, I logged in and found your note”. Note 28 appears as note 58, in a shaky hand connoting systems theory in a cyborg’s diary: “In terms of the protocolological discourse of my death, I wish it could have been more elegant […] But, I do suppose you can never really go back home once your home has become everywhere.”

Ten frames consist of the Turing book. Of the remaining sixty-two, thirty-three are glitched and twenty-nine are not. Eight corresponding bits of information create a coherent environment. A visual coherence is brought about, as the reappearance of frames 49 and 84 as 87 and 96 alerts me to large glitch patterns in yellows, reds, blues, greens and purples. From this visual coherence, a cognitive coherence is formed. For instance, frame 4 states that “randomness had been debunked” and then reappears as frame 75 in a glitched state where randomness has not been debunked. Frame 16 appears first as glitched, with the only legible words being “can’t find records”, only to reappear as non-glitched two clicks away. The viewer – similarly to Stearns’s case – is piecing together the narrative.

The Save/Quit option takes me to the only photo-based instance found in any play-through of the work (fig. 43). It seems still – saying the same – but is moving and altering several recordings of the same scene. Each click on Save/Quit activates a stilled image: an almost imperceptible motion captured and replayed at different moments of recording. This unexpected momentum cuts across photographic mediation, from the sensory world to the capture and back again, through each context and position of each individual viewer. In this way, it blurs boundaries between still photography and video, extending the two mediums in a pictorial continuum similar to the one between photography and painting occurring in Stearns’s work.

Every click on the Save/Quit button leads the viewer to the same image. It conveys a hospital room with an empty bed by a window, furnished with tables and chairs as in a long-term healthcare facility. Nobody is present and nothing seems to have happened here or to happen now. The only movement is the shifting light, as if the recording runs day and night. At the bottom right of the image, a stopwatch is counting up from zero – a clock that may have been set in motion by someone but now keeps running on its own.

The Save/Quit option lacks the distinct cuts produced by clicking Return. When clicking Save/Quit again, the image shifts slowly into what ends up being the same image at a different time or a different recording of the same place. I stay for the duration of the cross-fade. Focusing on what the blur may yield, my first impression as it settles is that I am still seeing the same room. Then, I realize that am not. Slowing down with the moving frames, and their in-between image, shapes an experiential play on mediation and
memory – with the player. The video flow is stilled but picks up speed as it is experienced as a photographic still. Through this unstable interfacing – halfway between an immobile object that initiates motion and me perceiving motion in seeming stillness – I find a position.

The image signifies the surface of the recording replayed through the game interface – yet strongly differs from it. Unlike the white interface, the image has a pinkish tone, faded shadows, burnt-out white highlights in the glinting metal bed frames, windows, and bed linen, and a green tone from the polished floor. Colors mix in horizontal stripes that bring associations to images of surveillance footage.

In her essay on counter-surveillance art, related to glitch art by a shared legacy of tactical media, art historian Louise Wolthers writes, “the control of mobility is one of the most powerful tools in efficient surveillance”. While she focuses on artist Hasan Elahi’s institutional critique grounded in ubiquitous computing, the medical research facility in A Similar History shares a similar institutional concern with visual control, directing the viewer through the game and into a surveying gaze. Both examples convey a relation in favor of an individual stand against systemic control.

The prosthetic function of photo-based mediation is thus not only turned back at the digital system but also at me looking back. Wolthers states that “transcience and mobility technologies become tools in a counter-surveillance strategy, provided of course that one gets access to the privilege of mobility” – a privilege needed “to enter into the realm of visuality and claim the right to subjectivity”. The motion invited by Meaney’s game may be a way to gain such access, as it adds mobility to an individual moving in a strict protocological structure.

In A Similar History, a tactical position is enabled yet a privileged mobility is not. In the fleeting monotony of clicking through to new (yet retrieved, repeated) text scraps, the single video image offers the only solid ground. However, it also locks my interfacing mode – it controls my mobility. This function may be related to a tension around presence and absence that is shared with all media. The image used for the retrieval, removal and reappropriation of memory is a constant reminder of loss. Moreover, to gather and organize both viewer and viewed into a controlled relation – internalized in the image – adds tension around empowerment and displacement.

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The screen image seems to focus a void in the middle of mediation: nothing is seen no matter how long the camera is pointed there. Elements that are visually present begin to signify absence. Therefore, they begin to signify in the same way that glitches do – even despite their undisrupted technical form. In the duration of this gaze, the viewer can take a tactical position by being able to see his or her own seeing and interfacing modes. The Return option brings me into an ungraspable pattern, each element pointing out an incomplete experience. Repetition builds up a certain stress as it locks me in an archival loop of lost memory (mine and the system’s), Save/Quit provides a relief from this stress while it keeps me in a surveillance position – albeit surveying an empty space. The small frame gathers importance rather like Andy Warhol’s Empire, the eight hour and five minute silent slow motion film of the Empire State Building from 1964. In the archival loop, experience grows as material accumulates. The constancy of this hospital image breaks the monotony of the game but also causes friction in its flow. The still image with the running clock creates a pause for the viewer to regroup. However, its repeated appearance is disorienting. Through the game, this one conspicuous image nestles into my otherwise smooth trajectory.

The Save/Quit frame brings both stability and instability. I may take a viewer position that reflects the character of control room recalled in the footage of the empty room. However, being in this control room does not imply being in control. Rather than emphasizing my space for action as a viewer, this footage emphasizes the system used to control this space through photo-based mediation. The image conveys the presence of a pervasive digital system overlooking the space of absent individuals. I may take a controlling position, yet I still find myself lacking control.

**Subtle friction emerges through interfacing slightly off key.** It seems that A Similar History is a memorial in the form of a memory exercise against the odds. Whether technical or human, memory will be lost. The algorithm keeps track of what I do not remember yet the fragments that I do recall shape an experience that transcends the script but cannot be repeated if not for some algorithmic serendipity. As I give up trying to remember, glitching transcends the game to include the player. I interpret this emerging space in relation to Krapp’s discussion about chess against humans as well as against computers. As more pieces are removed, the game space becomes more calculable and circumscribed but it also involves more play to win. With reference to Galloway’s “counter-gaming” he calls for an “increased literacy about command and control structures that, like learning to swim or to read, enables us to move past fear and isolation into active engagement with the unknown and the uncalculable [sic]”.²⁴²

²⁴² Krapp 2011, pp. 80–81.
Lacking counter-tactics, my viewer position seems to be the only element in the game that is open to explore active engagement. However, the reduction of contingency – linking surveillance, chess and *A Similar History* also holds a productive and perhaps tactical potential. Krapp highlights influential glitch art duo Jodi’s work saying that: “the play of aesthetics shows itself […] as a reduction of contingency through form, harnessing adventure through aleatory or stochastic management of the event and the surprise.”

In this minimal game, contingency may be similarly reduced by the system but not by the individual viewer.

The designated way to leave the game is to close the tab of this screen image. Closing the window takes me back to the *Ceibas Cycle* window from which I entered the game through the “visit installation” link. The backward step usually available in an interface is active at first. But when I enter the *Cycle* and then the game I enter new windows where the site interface is disabled functionally though the aesthetic is the same. If I wish to stay in the game, I must go to where the buttons lead. Stuck in endless retrieval, I retrace the archive but cannot retrace my own steps neither inside the game nor between the game and the rest of the site. A reductive regulation of mobility – the crucial difference that Krapp points out between playing a game and playing with a game – signifies the systemic pressure put on individuals within a pervasive and therefore strategically dominant place.

Narrowing the viewer’s options, the work may reproduce and reinforce systemic power. On the level of reality, past glitches are documented and preserved in the form of the work. On the level of the work, the glitched archive is conveyed in a non-glitched archive generated by the algorithmic game. On the level of the viewer/player, I only get to the glitched archive by going through the non-glitched game. However, a tactic that may in turn resist systemic power arises in the experience developing over time. On the one hand, I try to un-glitch what is glitched, as if mentally mending what is technically broken would yield a coherent screen image. On the other hand, as soon as I achieve some coherence I become more attuned to the disruptions that then affect my participation in the work. I uphold both approaches.

A tactical position is developed by the reduced interfacing mode of clicking on one out of three buttons. The moving haptic structure of the screen image in *A Similar History* opens up a multi-dimensional temporal space. To ground this contradiction – trivial interfacing becoming tactics – I tie it to film theorist Vivian Sobchack’s phenomenological analysis about ways of being lost. Her perspective on haptic materiality and agency, in everyday life

244 Krapp 2011, p. 77. Original emphasis.
and in aesthetic events, situates the body as a fundamental yet indirect and incomplete medium and source. In her analysis, given elements interact with strange ones in a similar way to how such aspects of glitches and photographs are addressed in this thesis with reference to for instance Atencia-Linares’ distinction – and overlap – between the authoritative and the uncanny in photo-based mediation. Sobchack calls photography, film, and electronic media transformative technologies that change perception at the risk of forgetting oneself as appearance.\(^{245}\) As enunciative practices, the given and the strange interact with what Sobchack calls “our normative systems of spatial [and temporal] orientation and their descriptive vocabularies.”\(^{246}\)

Likewise, they may be challenged by an experience of going in circles (revisiting the past), losing one’s whereabouts (being locked yet ungrounded in an undefined or overemphasized present) or failing to arrive at a destination (striving to reach an undisclosed future).\(^{247}\)

In *A Similar History*, I get lost spatially and temporally in all three ways. With its vertical and horizontal emphasis, “forward/backward” is as troubling as “here”. The viewer position grows from accepting to lose track. Doing so, its reference to the etymological roots of glitch is reinforced. Loss on the part of the viewer corresponds visually and conceptually to the loss on the part of the computer around which the work revolves. With Krapp’s emphasis on a shared discursive formation of computer games and the GUI, loss of usability may cause tension also beyond this work. Even the mere appearance of something variable, unpredictable, or uncontrollable undermines a basic principle of interaction: perception, hand–eye coordination, and error-spotting.\(^{248}\) Moreover, failure is due to “user error”– glitches are “aesthetized” between “the sovereign omnipotence of computing systems and the despairing agency panic of the user.”\(^{249}\) The player who fails here does so inside a work that generates a similar in-between state. Therefore, user error seems to offer a tactically relevant position – or user friction.

**Photographic Instance I: To Hold a Future Body so Close to One’s Own**

The *Ceibas Cycle* series *To Hold a Future Body so Close to One’s Own* (2009) is a “file and flesh-based” web installation of hacked video files – in color, silent – with twenty-seven channels for as many “cyborgian portraits” (figs. 44–48).\(^{250}\) Photography is only referenced when the medium figures “as

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\(^{246}\) Sobchack 2004.p. 15.


\(^{248}\) Krapp 2011, p. 86, pp. 75–76. GUI is an abbreviation of Graphical User Interface.

\(^{249}\) Krapp 2011, pp. 75–76.

\(^{250}\) Quotes by the artist in this paragraph, see evanmeaney.com.
eyes to watch the process of dying” – a brief quote with a bearing on the images whose representational status is underlined by the tag “ceibasportraits”. In this brief phrase, I trace a trope that prevails around photo-based mediation – asserting loss: the capture of time also implies losing time, making a photograph signify the *memento mori* of past memories and death.\(^\text{251}\) Here, both photo-based mediation and glitch seem to concern loss. A presence of absence stems from a brief moment in which the real is held in a photographic record or the record broken by glitching. Both in form and content, these videos engage in a precarious mediation process. However, this instance communicates loss through a lossless system. The glitched and non-glitched, the recognizably human and non-human, are kept distinct while defining each other in the same image. This contrast echoes a Derridean *différence* of intermingled opposites – much like the cyborg, which reappears in this case. The un-glitched interface is activated as video still and video film overlap at the moment of play, creating a new space. Joining “file” and “flesh” point at the viewer positions enabled by interfacing through photography.

**The “cyborgian portraits” rewrite and reread photographic mediation.** Meaney’s videos present one to five people of varying ages, ethnicities, genders, and sizes (and two dogs) in a nondescript setting – they chat, look into the camera, move, and smile at the photographer (supposedly present). This straightforward registration resembles Andy Warhol’s *Screen Tests* – yet includes mediation technology in such a test. The films connect the technical and the human in the ease that these individuals exude while their representations are glitched. In fact, as their *portraits* are glitched – though the cyborgian specification suggests that it is the merging of human and machine that is portrayed.

To clarify the merging of human and machine, I tie it to what Atencia-Linares calls “representational dissonance”. This mismatch shapes how photographs can represent reality or fiction differently from a “photographic provenance” – the context around the image directs the viewer’s attention away from the subject represented by source towards the object represented by use.\(^\text{252}\) This provenance could include the individuals in front of the camera, whose presence is vital to this work both through their interaction and their framing as portraits – albeit no personal information is given. The surrounding context – the artist’s presentation and display, the viewer’s positioning on the website, the glitch theme – directs attention to the mis/use of the mediating apparatus. Still, it is the human presence that makes that

\(^{251}\) This trope is prevalent in photography theory since its inception, connected to for instance Roland Barthes, and André Bazin. For a recent example, see Murray 2013, p. 173.

\(^{252}\) Atencia-Linares 2012, p. 20 (cites Carroll and Currie).
apparatus visible. The cyborgian denomination is fitting as human and machine – individual and system – are brought together to share representation within the still and moving image. This glitched representation adds a dissonance that blurs the line between fact and fiction in the portraits.

A small square frame, with a surface consisting of irregular colored blocks, marks the entrance to the online gallery (figs. 44). Only after visiting the gallery does it become clear that this is, or once was, a photographic image. The colored blocks resemble what was presented as fragments in the archive of A Similar History. Along its rim, the frame is marked with letters that probably refer to the camera used. If so, another photographic trope appears. To frame an exposure by leaving the unexposed edge of a negative tells the viewer which technology has been used. Whether the image recalls a Hasselblad camera or a Tri-X film, the marks on the edge signal a photographic capture in line with established aesthetics – a privileged form of mediation. Here, glitching is conveyed as a privileged malfunction, a small but noted echo of the avant-garde trope of disrupting order. The ostensive function of the marker inside the frame mirrors the marker on the frame itself. Both allude to an outside reality photographically fixed yet unfixed by glitches. Instead of marking photographic credibility, it marks instability as only the frame affirms if it is or could be a photograph.

Image and title form two intertwined registers that mark the entrance to the work. The textual register visualizes what the visual register cannot. The text conveys a presence that the visual only hints at through its display of what is no longer visible. As a possible photograph, the image mediates its limits. But as an interface – a haptic surface – it is expansive. Interfacing with the cyborgian portraits activates an embodied sensory experience that shapes the site and the viewer positions emerging there.253 Interaction between human or technological bodies is emphasized in words but disabled in images. Intimate words are counteracted by a distancing visuality of the image – an intimacy recovered in the gallery, where human presence is undeniable.

A failure to visualize in image form what the words point to turns into an experience of sharing space and time with the visibly present individuals. A sense of connecting despite disconnection becomes part of a haptic currency that photographs have as instances of materialized presence. From the outset, a lack of information in and around the frame invites reflection. The title may refer to any one body in any emergent state, a technology not yet built or a new way of being human. As this mode prevails throughout the gallery, a tactical position is suggested already before interfacing with the work.

253 The cyborgian aspect relates the viewer position emerging in Meaney’s work with the similar position emerging in Menkman’s case. Hayles 2007, p. 85.
The video series brings out a dissonant yet continuous human-machine interaction. To emphasize this photo-based mediation as a performative process, I combine Schneider’s “stilled image” with philosopher Richard Shusterman’s concept of somaesthetics. Shusterman critiques an over-emphasis of the static object, in favor of “photography’s dimension of somatic, dramatic, performative process (and its potential for enhanced artistic use and aesthetic experience)” – in which he includes photographer, motif, equipment, and spatiotemporal context around and during a photo-shoot.254 Key to this shift are the interpersonal “somatic efforts” of all involved in the recording – the skill to generate a co-presence where “identity is not a fixed essence but an ongoing project whose continuous construction can either reinforce habitual modes of being or creatively seek new ones.”255 Co-presence involves attention to the disruption of the recordings.

A viewer position opens up in which the dissonance between disrupted and undisrupted mediation is encompassed without being neutralized. In my interpretation, somaesthetics ties this interaction between person and apparatus to the relation between individual and system. In Peter Krapp’s words: “in the age of cybernetics, it can seem as if human fallibility is what keeps systems from achieving their full potential – from systemic closure” yet “individuals in fact become realized for each other and for themselves in unprecedented ways through networks of computer-mediated communication.”256 Such communication in Meaney’s work makes it an example of art that keeps systems open.

In A Future Body, precariousness is acknowledged as part of how individuals become realized within a digital system. The individuals are portrayed in a ruptured way that cuts across the process of mediation from inscription to interpretation and self/representation. The process includes their relationships to being recorded, to each other, the camera, and the viewer. Photographic capture, the time of inscription, evokes a situation where the individuals read themselves through the apparatus, while the apparatus is writing them onto a file, and that file is then read by the viewer. By being simultaneously ostentatious and anonymized, the inscribed individuals appear to relate to the apparatus as individuals yet also as systemic components. The work thus points to mediation as a tactical opportunity to reread as well as rewrite the relation between individual and system. In spite of its ruptures, this glitch practice is inviting the viewer into a balanced visual event rather than for instance irritating the eye.

255 Shusterman 2012, p. 69, p. 71.
256 Krapp 2011, p. 91.
While for instance Galloway insists that all software including glitches is functional – no position outside the system – this work puts software to use both with and against systemic order. This happens as the body of the portrayed is divided by glitching into one figurative part and one abstract part. The figurative part is visible as a recognizable human body, inscribed in the systemic operations of photo-based mediation. At the same time, the abstract part makes that body visible as inscribed in operations that are unstable. As the work is interfaced, this sharing of an unstable photograph – as running video or stilled image – positions the viewer to experience both the system’s action to record the individual and the precariousness of that recording.

The recording’s precariousness extends to include the display. Its haptic quality is enhanced as each film is displayed with one large thumbnail per page. On a PC computer but not on a Macintosh, an overlap occurs as I click the thumbnail to open the moving image on top of the still one. There are no options to activate the film. As soon as I click the still, a window appears on top of it and the film starts. An overlap increases the liveness of the film as only the marker indicates that the stills are playable. With these two layers of the same film, the splice within the film extends to the screen. A random, changing diptych appears as the two images connect – a double-portrait that breaks its broken parts playing with motion, scale, and identity. This process activates what Gabrielle Jennings calls “the to-and-fro of abstraction – the way that an image may be read as figurative in one context and in another, become unrecognizable except as pure nonrepresentational form.”

Meaney’s glitch display gives a context where the image can be interpreted as both at once. Moreover, it points up how “In the moving image, movement can be understood both inside and outside the frame, through the actual speed of recording or play-back, through montage and editing, as well as through the narrative unfolding.” Similar to the still on the front page, these films activate and are activated by a blank interface.

The portrait videos bring together system and individual. Post 3 of 27 (on this visit – they are unnumbered and begin in different order) shows a man on the right side (fig. 45). He looks human in his physical coherence but his contours double out in colors that repeat his own, left eye glitched and right eye looking into the camera. On his right side, the image fills out with a form in the same size and a shape. This form shows so many chopped and sprinkled layers that it remains a shape until it – after a while – yields a woman’s face. A broad green band pixelated in multi-colored blocks run across the two figures – the immediately human and eventually human – tying them into the same space. The caption reads “sorenson 3 / quicktime”, noting the

257 Jennings 2015, p. xix.
258 Jennings 2015, p. 4.
video format but not the image’s status as still or moving. Upon clicking the image, both individuals are covered with a sharp green surface evenly spread to fill three quarters of the image. Inside this surface, their human traits are leveled out except for the clear bright outlines of their faces. Their interactions with each other and the camera concentrate to the eyes as all else fades.

Post 12 repeats color and form from post 3 – beginning where the earlier one ends (fig. 46). The caption is identical and a green surface fills the frame. Again on the right side, a pair of eyes looks straight at me. Here though, the surface is not flat and undetailed. Depth is suggested with its shifts in color – from light yellow to blackish green, against the white backdrop – and form – from boxy pixels in various sizes, to soft rounds varying between abstraction and figurative representation. In this still or stilled image, only the pair of eyes reveals a human – as-yet un-gendered – presence. As the film is clicked open, those eyes keep looking out just over the top edge of the window frame. In the motions taking place as the film begins, the eyes gain a woman’s face. She turns right towards a small child appearing through the green surface. Now she dissolves, while the child looks to the camera and the viewer. Rather than separating them, the undulating green surface dissolves their two representations into one enhanced interaction.

In post 14, the video still shows a white field grounded in the lower quarter by a grainy black (figs. 47–48). As post 3, the caption reads “sorenson 1/avi”. A dynamic is added to this sparse surface as the black part is nuanced in dark greens and reds while the white part is dotted with irregular square shapes in patterned yellow, black, and purple. Between white and black is a mass of smeared reds, greens and blues with edges that hint at a round shape but are dispersed to show the white background coming through. Already situated in the portrait gallery, I am prepared for these edges to form a human head: the white opening in the middle becomes a smiling mouth. As I click the still, a window opens that keeps the disintegrated face in my visual field as a man appears in live bodily fullness. Color is replaced with unstable grey. The lower half of the frame keeps jumping in smudgy striped pixels. Head and shoulders are intact but shift in green and red. He looks into the camera, then away. He talks yet no sound is heard – the multimodal setting is undermined. He settles into composure only to crack a smile and stick his tongue out at the photographer, the camera, or the situation of being filmed.

As human and computer elements overlap, these images become double-portraits that signify a meeting. More than embedded in an interface, these films are interfaces as they activate the viewer to take part in the overlap. I shift between still and moving images, surface and ever so slight depth as the overlaid windows are closed and the next page is opened. As Gilbert-Rolfe puts it: “Video depth is immediate and not an end, and not necessarily the
beginning of or grounds for the Renaissance perspective of the photograph either. It is a zone of active blankness that, already deep, need not be subjugated to a conceptualized depth.”

Interweaving disparate elements recall how glitches participate in yet undermine a systemic structure.

Each video embodies two representations. One affirms the function of photo-based mediation to visualize external realities: individual humans. Another affirms its function to visualize internal realities: individual glitches. Disturbed and untouched elements initiate an intimacy that counters a distanced experience of the digital. My earlier discussion on the performance of light and computer – with Zinman quoting Meaney – is relevant again. I understand the intimacy between disturbed and untouched elements as similar to Zinman’s intertwining of presence and information in relation for instance to Kirby’s film-digital videos that begin without a camera: of visible and invisible, of abstraction and representation, or of organic and inorganic to reconnect systems aesthetics.

The work brings together bodies and machines as presence and absence. Throughout the gallery, the multi-sensory is set against sensory challenge. People silently talk, move, touch, confirm their own and others’ presence as their materiality disintegrates. Individual relations are mediated through functioning yet dysfunctional systems. The combination of systemic and somatic organization makes the photo-based mediation appear as individual performances. A somaesthetic process connects person, lens, still and moving image, screen, and viewer. The occurrence on the PC of a new frame with the playing video, which opens on top of the still image, adds to this process as action is shared between me – moving the cursor – and the apparatus that changes the cursor from static to active. Such a layering of the image frames – visible in some interfaces, yet not in others where the moving images obscure the still ones beneath – adds a three-dimensional quality to the interface.

A viewer position emerges from easy interfacing that gradually involves me in a precarious mediation. Somatic, spatial, and temporal aspects connect in a way that may be called hyperbolic. Vivian Sobchack reserves this curved spatiality for a lived embodied experience of distortions that put the body in the center. Complementing the Euclidean norm that is habitually used to orientate us, this experience emerges from “the localized visual observer” – making any “abstract, standardized, and stationary measures” seem useless for navigating a normative space:

259 Gilbert-Rolfe 2015, p. 67.
Without either an abstract or local standard of emasure, wordly space and the objects within it lose their meaning and become hermeneutically ambiguous, indeterminate, and disorienting. Furthermore, one begins to doubt one’s own body.

This alternative system generates a viewer position outside of the prevailing spatiotemporal discourse. Around the body grows a field of lived relations defined by transformative perceptual technologies.

The tension between image and text, established at the entrance to the work, sets a mode that keeps alerting the viewer to how photo-based mediation conveys tension in form and content. Through tension, technical and human embodiment grounds a tactical viewing mode. This mode hinges on embodiment in all registers – attending to how the technological and the human realize each other, to take Krapp’s above statement a step further. Interpreted along this line, A Future Body points to mediation-in-process with human as well as technical components: a camera-in-process, a body-in-process. Interfacing is spatial – in touch with bodies already formed yet vulnerable to glitches in the friction of close contact. It also temporal – a present moment never fully attained yet always already gone, vulnerable to glitches over time as they wear out functionality. A future body materializes as a photographic instance at the interface connecting the glitched image and the viewer. It functions as a reminder of how data loss is inevitable yet productive. Rather than nostalgically pointing back to an undisrupted moment – as if such a moment could ever come – it negotiates its disruption as a transformative drive. The image – stilled in a process of losing its hold on the reality assigned to it – becomes that future body itself.

Within this “flesh-and-file-based” work, I find co-presence to exist because of loss rather than in spite of it. The active blankness noted earlier supports this co-presence. Shusterman points to a similar relation, as he describes how the moment of the photo-shoot extends through the absorption of all components in the process. The loss of visual data caused by glitching has a bearing on the individual recording where the fully figured human body is half lost to abstraction. Still, the disintegrating video holds a strong sense of presence due to how absorbed in the process of being recorded the captured individuals seem to be, and how the apparatus absorbs them.

The glitched image merges the closeness of a performative moment with the distance often ascribed to the photograph. Living inside a disruptive moment entails closeness through distance, as the organic human is tied in with the inorganic machine. Shusterman claims that the machine can reveal the self:

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261 Sobchack 2004, p. 16–18 (cites Heelan).
262 This theme recurs throughout his article, see for instance Shusterman 2012, p. 72–74.
[T]he camera thematizes this self-presentation, making it explicit by focusing on framing a particular moment of such self-presentation and fixing it in a permanent image that objectifies and defines the self in terms of that experiential moment, an image that can be indefinitely reproduced and circulated as a representation of what the self really is.\footnote{263}{Shusterman 2012, p. 71.}

In my view, this claim repeats a trope that photo-based mediation produces a static rendition of an individual’s essence. The trope is affirmed yet countered as the glitched instances in A Future Body explore absorption in absence. In this web installation, the notion of productive loss is also visible in how the real time of the video is locked in the still image until the viewer clicks inside the unmarked frame. Carol Armstrong notes a special awareness:

[The still photograph’s relationship to a layering of temporalities: not only yours, mine, and ours but the differently measured temporalities of the individual and the crowd; of memory and mourning; the extended present moment; hope and forward thinking; hurrying and delay; change and movement and duration; ‘real time’ and the time of different kinds of making; and so on.]\footnote{264}{Armstrong 2012, p. 722.}

In this display, spaces and temporalities are generated beyond the video clip. The work exists as a single still image, a moving image on top of a single still image, two still images fixed on top of each other, and all of these instances brought together in a string of online posts.

**Photographic Instance II: The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts**

One part of the *Ceibas Cycle* consists of a short film sequence – two minutes and thirty-four seconds – entitled *The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts* (2007), introduced in the directory as *Exchange* (figs. 49–50). The time scale of the work matches its spatial scale, small enough to be a sample or thumbnail. A small frame is placed left of center next to a short statement. Furthermore, it is placed on a page that echoes the minimal aesthetic of the overall website. Again, it provides a quiet surface for a viewer’s experience to build up around attention and reflection. This photographic instance evolves from how these elements mix in the form and content of the work: how scale and repetition function in a way that in turn shapes a viewer position of possible tactical interest.

**The video extends glitching to include an everyday experience.** The film depicts an everyday scene in an urban setting. It could be any intersection anywhere in a modern community – a bus stop by a tree-lined sidewalk perhaps at the edge of a park, sounds of traffic and passers-by. Signs of mediation inform this ordinary view in three ways.
Firstly, the scene is filmed from across the street in a mix of home movie, mobile news coverage, and surveillance recording. The question of why one films this here (to make art?) complicates Michel de Certeau’s idea that “space is a practiced place.” Practiced here – in this interstitial, even nowhere, space – is a mediation of the everyday that could seem obsessive yet futile. A sense of waiting in an ordinary place prefigures the unexpected instance of disruption soon to be inserted into this as-yet neutral scene. Anticipating the unknown, embodied in this thin slice of material, reminds me that glitches are contingent in every system. Just as this scene appears organic and trivial, so is disruption an organic part of a trivial systemic operation.

Secondly, a soundtrack is running together with the recorded street sounds. A man leaves a voice-mail message, another trivial operation in everyday life. Even now, glitch is established as an intrinsic part of communication. As the man’s call fails to connect, he speaks as much to the absence of computing as to the absent person. In fact, the absent may be listening as the film and message runs. A precariousness of messaging – to speak to a machine instead of to a person – is conveyed as a message. Presence and absence is made as the message is inscribed or replayed for the film and then again with each view generated by the viewer. Compared to the sound in Menkman’s video, it has a normalizing rather than disruptive function. An everyday situation is mediated as a glitch: friction as intrinsic to the flow of social life.

Thirdly, the film is a diptych. The bus stop captured from across the street fills the left half of the frame, while the right half switches between a bus interior and a phone booth. Two visual narratives run parallel to each other and to the soundtrack, revolving around the same basic problem of presence and absence. The person filming from across the street may be making the phone call to the person who is missing. By boarding the bus he seems to be moving with the absent person – or perhaps he himself is that person, opting for absence. Temporal and spatial distances are traversed in short-cuts and shaky lapses mirrored in the scratchy sound. These distances, close or further away, are embodied in the seemingly restless body of the individual holding up the camera towards the empty spaces. With every replay, the viewer activates these overlaps – moving the stilled image of the frame on the screen, moving in between the frames of the diptych, moving through a brief circular experience of presence and absence. The system thus responds to the individual’s actions, directed by the interface.

The pivotal moment in the film occurs without drama. The trivial operation continues, yet with a crucial shift. A person enters from stage left and walks towards the right along the pavement just as a bus makes a quick stop and

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265 De Certeau 1984, p. 117.
then takes off – leaving the sidewalk empty. A person takes the bus – nothing to see here. What makes this moment pivotal is that only the frame of the person is visibly human – the rest is glitched. I cannot make out personal details like gender or age. Only that the person moves as if integrated into the environment that is left non-glitched, inhabiting – practicing – the place. The visual frame and its surrounding enable this body to be present as a human body. At the same time, this specific body carries the mark of absence – a stand-in for the missing person or perhaps that very individual. This sudden appearance turns my attention to the presence of a deviating individual in a systemic environment – whether deviating from a technical infrastructure of mediation or from a social urban infrastructure.

The space of disruption is contained within one individual, whose range of motion is delimited by the shape, contour and mobility of the body. Fitted into the everyday, this body performs acceptably – yet without certain human traits. While staying three-dimensional, it becomes a surface where the layer of recognizability of the human body and the photo-based mediation is peeled off. Such merging of two and three dimensions underscores a haptic quality. At the same time, personhood is discreetly put under stress as if this body in this instance is assigned a function beyond human ability. Its function is rather aligned with an interface linking the human with the technological by enforcing a precarious connection. A contingent glitch thus shares traits with a contingent body: they are neither random nor necessary. Both embody a digital system operating in photo-based mediation. The individual thus becomes an embodiment of glitch.

This body is a vessel for a system and for its disruption. But, similarly to how a medium can function performatively and change in the course of mediation, this body – all bodies involved – is much more active than a vessel. It is not simply a case of what de Certeau terms “making the body tell the code” – where “the intextuation of the body corresponds to the incarnation of the law” (for instance the protocols of digital systems).266 This body exposes the systemic text while undermining it by showing it in operation. The instability generated in the film’s inscription and replay makes this body tell the pervasiveness of coded configurations as much as their vulnerability.

These observations are simplified in the artist’s statement: “a phone call, a bus ride, a body in crisis” where “the hopes of the missing intermingle with the expectations of the shown.”267 The destabilized body is situated in an everyday environment where phone calls and bus rides remain stable. How-

266 De Certeau 1984, pp. 148–149 (see pp. 144–150 for an extended argument).
ever, such an embodied disruption may have two effects: to make the surroundings appear more stable, or to extend the disruption to the activities of other bodies in those surroundings. This double effect is rooted in the play of presence and absence: the presence of what is shown and the absence of what is missing – or, the absence of what is shown and the presence of what is missing. A viewer position opens up through the experience of crisis and intermingling as aspects of a performative relationship to the disrupted body.

**The work’s theme around the unseeable implicates the seeable.** I interpret the unseeable in *The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts* as a reminder of how hard it may be to see productively: to gain knowledge through sight. Whether something is seeable or not depends on a mode. Until I find that mode, I may not see what is in front of me. The missing person whose absence forms the center of the film could be on that bus, behind that camera or inside that glitched figure – if the viewer knew how to see them. As *Exchange* shows, the unseeable may turn seeable if it calls for a viewer’s individual response: a position. Finding out one’s own interfacing patterns and seeing modes is a part of taking that position. My position evolves out of a notion that photo-based mediation is used here in relation to sight as a privileged sense and an anchor in reality but also as a tool for resisting sight. Seeing is problematized by auditory, kinetic, and haptic forms of mediation co-present in the video recording. The title connotes a co-presence of parts made invisible by habitual seeing yet detectable – and contestable – through a kind of glitch where splices keep distinct the very parts that they join.

A glitch may replace a legible image with its rich but troubling surface, hiding the expected systemic mediation but replacing it with an equally transparent surface. Here, it marks out what is to be seen: disruption and its shared material space. It shows more than it hides, materializing in a glitch that visualizes itself through its photo-based support. The relation of seen and unseen, known fact and imaginable fiction, is actualized in photo-based sources and uses. A representational dissonance reappears. Representation in *Exchange* stems from a broken source while its use points to both fact and fiction. With its split frames – hiding yet showing – the glitched image gives material to both presence and absence. As a photographic instance, the narrative of lost presence mediated through a brief and tiny record challenges my habitual seeing. A tactical viewer position forms if I encompass both the unseeable and that which emerges through seeing. If I engage with photography as a medium able to communicate a real lived-in situation yet do so in an unstable way. The viewer is implicated in a play of absence and presence: trusting in the presence of information for experience to form yet attentive enough to reflect on the absence of information.

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The work uses photo-based mediation as a vehicle of presence and absence. Yet glitching is not only that which blurs vision but also that which makes the unseeable seen by the contrast it creates with the surrounding environment. Lost presence is there for the viewer to see and retrieve, by accepting an absence that upsets an everyday situation. This situation – the social and technical infrastructure – is so mundane that I stop seeing it, whereas its glitched photographic mediation calls for renewed attention in my lean forward to the tiny and brief scene.

Rather than a camera seeing everything and leaving nothing, this work points out an absence hiding in plain sight of the recording. Now, I could see that brief tiny thing that is excluded outside the frame and the moment of exposure. A layer underneath the legible surface, structured by a digital system before it reaches a viewer. On the contrary, the glitch leaves everything out but the absence and presence dividing the recording: half figurative, half abstract. A position is established by encompassing both at once. Such an activity needs a sharpened awareness towards any seemingly coherent image – surface and structure may contrast as two parts of a negotiation. The minimal form and the disruptive content draw me into the work. Once close, the contrasting parts enhance both transparent and hypermediated aspects of the interface and its embedded recording. The viewer is drawn in, and then pointed towards how the recording stays intact while mediating its broken appearance. The reflective and self-reflective stance that this mode of interfacing brings about grounds a viewer position with a tactical potential.

A physical proximity between glitched body and glitchable everyday shapes my viewer position. This spatial dimension is paired with a temporal condensation that intensifies experience by being so short. The briefness of the film calls for replay, for repeating in a loop. Temporal and spatial activities correspond in my lean forward to see the film clearer. Both stem from the viewer position as a response to the proximity that the work implies. Both entail a somatic re-organization, in Shusterman’s terminology – a shifting of bodies and embodied seeing that revolves around interfacing.

There are several ways in which this specific experience relates to an attention economy of online photo-based mediation. On the one hand, the size and scale needs an active viewer making the effort to stay and lean closer. Therefore, it may stand out from a digital image flow more effectively and be more easily consumed. On the other hand, the smallness of the frame makes it harder for that active viewer to appropriate and reproduce the work for new creative ends. Perhaps, it may be argued that these circumstances make it harder to experience the artwork without the proper somatic effort.
The reduced circumstances of this screen image shape a place for *Exchange*. While it operates with a visual intensity in movement and color, the small scale combined with the short time calls for a viewer to respond differently than with attention for its own sake. As the viewer’s space for action is so important, the work goes beyond its auratic dimension. Its effectiveness depends on the viewer performing their part: concentrating. A tactical viewer position is offered in return. Attention functions to still the viewer and set up a contact with the work. The viewer position thus established, the work then shifts into a stilled image – an image expanding beyond its small frame to expose its own systemic conditions for the viewer to reflect on throughout the networked environment.

**Photographic Instance III: Portfolio**

As far as my trajectories across Evan Meaney’s website go, the only place that features visual material without glitches – except for the hospital room in *A Similar History* – is his portfolio *Photography* (figs. 51–54). Presented alongside his varied glitch work, to which the hospital room belongs, it is possible to reach this section directly from the front page and thus to keep a-part one’s viewer experiences of disrupted and undisrupted imagery. While the only photograph there is indeed glitched – and a closer look did set up a viewing mode before entering the portfolio gallery – it is small enough to miss on a first quick visit. Thus, two separate spaces open up for experiencing photo-based mediation: one where disruption is a condition of possibility for the mediation process, and another where the lack of disruption seems equally fundamental for constructing a coherent catalogue of images.

**This collection of photographs conveys a mix of randomness and aura.**

The portfolio consists of thirty-five color photographs, presented in larger size than the other material on the site. It is also the only visual material with neither an introductory text nor captions accompanying the images. It is impossible to see the whole gallery at once in thumbnail or larger format, to select which images to see from the entire batch. All images are shown in tiny thumbnails on a scroll bar below the single image on view. From there, one may be chosen and the directed order of the gallery tour interrupted. However, after the first ten images, the arrow indicating progress can only be clicked a few images at a time. The individual images are made to speak for themselves while the viewer is left to grasp if and how they join in a common theme.

The photographs may be viewed as *just photographs* – noise-less mediations of an external reality, well suited for commercial circulation and consumption. As such – accepting these images at face value – I count this portfolio as an example of what Shusterman states as “habitual processes of appropriation and projection whereby photographic images are normally received
and consumed” both in terms of modernist and digital conventions. For instance, the display akin to a white cube gallery or a white album page may generate a viewer position that expects the modes of seeing associated with such spaces. Yet, the portfolio establishes a photographic function of documenting the real that it also glitches – without technical error.

From my perspective of photography as visual and material speech, the enunciations of the portfolio convey disparate and disrupted instances. Considering its online structure and scarce material, this collection may be put in touch with photographic instances on the rest of the website. Video and still photography share mediation as variations of stilled images. Subsequently, viewer positions depend on how these photo-based materials relate to each other within the given space of the website. A viewer may respond to any mutual impact whether disruption affects the portfolio or whether it brings solidarity to the undisrupted work. Whether or not a viewer position is found to be tactical hinges on the open-ended and self-reflective enabling of such an experience by different kinds of interfacing.

The coherent surface of the screen image is echoed in the portfolio. Both reinstate a blank display, although dispersed in a network that infuses connection with displacement. Only experiences developed in browsing the gallery communicate any curated narrative to the viewer. Randomly remembered or forgotten, each image links to the next without a given order, except for the structure of the gallery which does not seem to mirror any internal logic between the images. A play on presence and absence emerges where viewers construct their own themes with each browse and browser. Each visit and interface may allow only some images to go from still to stilled in the act of looking. A viewer’s presence may turn up or down the presence of certain images. The same could be said for such a portfolio exhibited in a white gallery room. Even if all images were accessible to a visitor, not all would necessarily structure and generate an experience from which to take a viewer position, since individuals will attend to some images more than others.

The photograph presented in larger format without any text gains a singular – auratic – quality prevalent in conceptions about both analogue and digital photography. The aura builds on the way each image stands out in the little flow of images of the portfolio. In the larger flow of images, to which this networked environment belongs, such a singular statement gives meaning to both statement and flow. The aura is enhanced as their random encounters, events, and observations convey undisguised and thus authentic spontaneity. The unique moment of a visual encounter captured within the frame can be read into these images, emphasizing a viewer position that extends the Ben-

269 Shusterman 2012, p. 67 (cites Chevrier).
jaminian stance of the auratic artwork subverted by mass-distributed photographs. The digital image keeps – enforces – its aura with individual viewers and contexts, as a quantitative image flow is experienced individually. The aura of the portfolio functions through its focus on the trivial (because invisible in its ubiquity) and the unique (made visible because photographed). Scrolling through the gallery disturbs the singling out of individual content and individual frame, by pointing at the un-quantified row of images next in line. Their auratic status is raised and then lowered as the unique capture becomes one in a crowd of unique captures.

I interpret the selective yet un-authorial organization of the portfolio as indicative of two tropes about photo-based mediation: the decisive moment and the non-decisive moment. Following Carol Armstrong, I understand the former as an intervention into the instinctual yet automatic exposure of the camera, and into the subsequent image selection – the key being to make the dispersed elements “match up.” Contrary to this matching effort, the latter undermines the photographer’s authority by indexing everything as it is unfolding randomly:

[A] cluttered, deliberately non-decisive- moment field of detail, often divided and splintered into strangely dispersed spaces (---) [T]he work announces the ways in which the authority of the photographic author was inescapably inter-twined with its alter ego, the photographic indexing of everything that just happened to be out there, unfolding in real time in the real world.

In my interpretation, the portfolio captures a trivial yet productively unsettling dispersal. Photographed moments are related conceptually if not visually to glitching. Krapp notes that a focus on the present opens for contingent “crevices in the continuum of experiential space.” With Krapp and Armstrong, I suggest that Meaney’s images capture decisions yet also indecisiveness, continuity yet also crevices – that is, both flow and friction.

**Three visual themes are notable in the portfolio.** Observing elements that stand out to form a pattern, three themes articulate the images. They are not grouped in any specific order, but spread out to form part of other themes. However, I understand them as coherent in how they communicate within their type and what it may be assigned to do. If they share a visual logic, it is affected by how the gallery is situated on the site. They form a haptic environment that constitutes an interface in terms of setting up each singular

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271 Armstrong 2012, p. 710. The decisive moment is exemplified with images by Cartier-Bresson and Capa while Friedlander’s images of signs and shadows aree non-decisive.

272 Armstrong 2012, p. 714. Original emphasis.

273 Krapp 2011, p. 76.
image as a contact point between photographer and viewer – sender and receiver transformed by the unstable message forming in between them. This interface does not fade into transparency but rather serves as a reminder that photographic instances could stop me in my tracks and call for me to notice and reconsider my habitual modes of seeing. This stop mirrors a glitch. Photography may thus function as a way to reproduce habitual seeing but also to resist it. Combining the glitch and the photographic practice offers a tool to perform an epistemological slide, where a situation is set up in order to study its conditions but also its contingent potential.

One theme of aesthetic contingency recurs in sixteen images: the beautiful, hidden in plain sight and found at random. Such found poetry, tied to “the auto-poiesis of systems” brings out what is already there by being photographed.274 Exterior and interior details converse to enliven a non-descript urban, domestic and organic infrastructure. Image 1: a wooden fan with the lights turned off, casting shadows up towards a ceiling adorned with pasted glow-in-the-dark stars. Image 14: yellow leaves on a grey stone-paved road, the pattern of the ground thrown into relief by the colored sprinkles. Image 19: a square painted blue on a grey wall in a grey concrete alley (fig. 51). Image 30: three tiny figures on a wooden board, game markers standing together with one of them toppled over. Image 31: Three turned-off lamps silhouetted in a dark room with only the left side lit up from a window with the shades pulled.

In my analysis, the portfolio ties in with performative photography practices mixing documentation and transformation. I notice a drive to find images – to structure the seen as image. This drive appears mixed with an articulation of the already found – the already structured, already imaged. The habitual is embodied in what the photographer sees through the camera:

[T]he old photographic commitment to the particular and the old photographic intertwining of the active agency of searching, the willingness to find, and the deliberate framing of that which is generated by the world.275

Meaney’s images raise the issue of how viewers search, find, and frame what they see by interfacing with photo-based mediation online.

Secondly, one theme containing fourteen photographs revolves around animate and inanimate figures. Image 2: a girl with a toy stroller, walking on a lawn strewn with red clothes, pink wheels against the deep green of a forest in the distance. Image 15: a line of dolls in Latin-American outfits on display, one of them seems to be making eye contact with me. Images 22

and 25: a dog stares up at something or someone, a cat stares into the camera. Image 29: teenagers lie in the middle of a road, their silhouetted hands gesturing against the evening streetlights. Image 33: a man (homeless?) with a sign handwritten in German, wearily looking into the camera while his cap and beard seems to dissolve into the façade against which he is huddling – a fashion shop display reflected in the window across the street (fig. 52). Image 35: a statue of a woman (bronze?) lies on the ground by a red wooden house, her seemingly corroded naked body displayed with her face turned down into dried grass (fig. 53).

Thirdly, one smaller theme of five images gains significance as distinct statements interspersed among the other images. These images concentrate on visual messages in written form. Image 8: a discarded cigarette pack proclaiming: “smoking ages your skin” in Italian, on the dried leaves of a gravel road. Image 11: a sunny beach shifts the initially easy mood as a sign reads Omaha Beach, with Vierville to the left and St Laurent to the right and the ocean ahead. Image 17: a sign in fall woods stating “POSTED” but not what the posting is about except for delineating a military reservation. Images 10 and 27: graffiti announcements – “never forget” on a wooden wall painted in red and black with a dinosaur drawn in black and pink, “life is short” on a concrete wall behind which are rocks marked by the explosion making way for a highway laid out in the foreground (fig. 54).

These disparate images – echoing traditions of vernacular photography – come together when considering their somatic organization. Human and nonhuman are linked by a shared agency in response to an automatic capture, to expand on Armstrong’s keywords. Photo-based mediation may be viewed as bringing out presence, to accord reality and existence to the photographed – or, to record only absence, to flatten reality and reduce existence. Either way, persons and objects too may be viewed as present as their self-containment presupposes and affirms it – their being there, sharing space. Both gain their space for action from being viewed in this mode, grounded in a performative notion that photo-based mediation takes part in generating that which it communicates in the act of recording it. In response, absence in photography has been explored since the late 1960s, as has been discussed earlier in this thesis. Captured absence – represented as presence – is connected to the non-decisive moment noted above: closing the shutter on a non-event that then becomes an event by being photographed.

The play on presence and absence – visible in this portfolio, and throughout Evan Meaney’s website – is akin to a photographic mix of fact and fiction.

276 This exemplifies similarities between practices of glitch and vernacular street photography, noted by Manon and Temkin 2011, paragraphs 15, 46, 55 (unpaginated).
When factual properties are emphasized in a photograph, it opens up for asking questions. If an image embraces fiction, reality is expanded. Analyzing “deceptive” or “deceitful” forms of photographic representation like montage, Atencia-Linares claims that “the medium is normatively neutral” — leaving the expectations of experienced viewers to discern inconsistencies.277 From my perspective, no mediation is neutral by default, but may refer to neutrality as a trope about the photographic index. Photography keeps negotiating its sources and uses, functions and representations, materialities and agencies — distributed between photographers and viewers, interfaces and other displays, online and offline.

However, the medium is situated by technological systems that make it situate the mediated. Interfacing with photographs may thus entail that viewers place any observed inconsistencies within the image, within the imaged factual reality, within their own seeing mode — or within the photographic apparatus. Meaney’s images may be interpreted as instances where the real is fictionalized: made strange, made poetic, made to be more than what a viewer may know about it. Or, they may lend a sense of realness to fiction: the not-(yet)-real, made potentially real. In both cases, a viewer will find their position based on individual experience.

Unlike Atencia-Linares — who excludes digital post-production as photographic means — I argue that all stages of all photographic practices would benefit from being understood in relation to one another.278 Still, her analysis of how fact and fiction combine in these practices is useful for clarifying what I take Meaney’s portfolio to do. Here too, is a play of fact and fiction. Arriving at the portfolio gallery gives me a sense of relief about the lack of disruption. Yet, I also search for it, as my earlier interfacing modes and viewer positions reappear as visual and haptic memories. Real traces of real disruption, visualized as a glitched and therefore unrealistic-looking photograph, create an experiential context for these neutral-looking photographs.

These non-glitched (or un-glitched) images could also be seen as joining fact with fiction. Disruption may be detected in otherwise undisrupted photographs. While they appear coherent — technically, formally, thematically — they reveal the instability within photo-based media. Seeing them together with the glitched material during the same visit actualizes the fact that photography operates within a systemic environment too. It entails an apparatus that comprises technologies and conceptions about those technologies, modes of use and modes of experiencing the result of those uses.

277 Atencia-Linares 2012, p. 28.
278 Atencia-Linares 2012, p. 22.
Systemic environments structure everyday places and practices, online and offline – including what is photographable and how. Taking an individual viewing position thus mirrors the stance of a photographer who operates in a systemic infrastructure but also seeks out its interstices. Meaney’s photographs move similarly through everyday circumstances, relating to photographic traditions concerned with the too easily overlooked details of contemporary life. Without seeing any glitches on these evidently smooth surfaces, the context around these images shifts what they do. If I would have seen them before I saw the glitched work, this association may not have been possible to make. Krapp states that, “regardless of whether the reduction at issue is an aesthetic strategy or a technical constraint, each system will react to its own instabilities with a justification.” This portfolio suggests that systemic justifications can be resisted with a slight change of position. Such a change becomes possible as the portfolio’s understated aesthetics echo the reduction noted in the work on glitch and in the website interfaces.

The understated or reduced quality brings out an absence of or a failure to notice inconsistencies. However, my attention builds up gradually in my trajectory across the website. Just as the viewer in Atencia-Linares’s analysis learned to combine photography’s epistemic authority with a tension layered into the image, a viewer can see this portfolio as both fact and fiction. Interfacing the portfolio as part of the larger website environment supports a position in which the viewer is co-present with both.

**This case brings about a subtle and accidental friction.** The haptic aspect of this work offers a spatial and temporal anchor for a coherent experience. The visual is pared down by the lack of text (except in photographed form) and a minimal interface that does not stress its networked character. Still, as in other online platforms of photography display, tactility is underlined as my moves between the given parts of the gallery allows me to curate my own visit.

The images raise awareness of how frail a coherent structure is. The viewer may observe a system in operation by paying attention to divergent details on its surface. For instance, the surface of a photograph. Such an observation is also possible to make by attending to divergences on any ordinary website. Yet, these particular surfaces offer a concentrated and ordered space that enables such observation – marking the medium’s systemic ability to control records and representations. They are produced and displayed from within a systemic order. Yet in response, those qualities of concentrating and ordering may be countered by a viewer who directs attention to what is emphasized on the website outside the gallery – using the visual order differently.

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279 Krapp 2011, p. 89.
The portfolio of non-glitched photographs is situated in conjunction with glitched material. Disruption can therefore be bypassed if the viewer goes directly to the portfolio gallery. Still, a viewer position emerges in response to the non-glitched material on its own. This circumstance highlights the networked character of the environment in enabling viewer positions – I arrived in the portfolio gallery by way of the instances discussed above. My trajectory builds an experience through individual memories, which may be shared or contested by other visitors. Visiting the whole site – as an everyday user might not do, but a researcher will to carry out this investigation – I would have encountered both the glitched and the non-glitched sooner or later.

The portfolio mediates photography as a structure that follows protocol. It shares its operations with the digital system that sets its boundaries of production, circulation and display. Photo-based mediation is systemic in technology and experience: how it organizes its apparatus and its effect. While the portfolio may be produced with film or file, its aesthetic and display follow a setting that regulates both through the interface. Even so, they initiate a possibly counterprotological mode. They point to and support both the systemic and the counter-systemic. A consequence of Galloway’s theory is that there is no room for play outside the system since protocols contain all its weakness. A tactical opportunity opens up as Meaney’s work is situated within and outside the system depending on how viewers position themselves. Being so undisturbed, the portfolio stands out as deviant on this site.

The construction and action of the portfolio images harness contingency in a similar way to the explicitly glitched ones. I tie this process to Krapp’s definition of contingency, in which accidental noise is vital:

Distortion is systemic, but it is not merely a matter of chance or accident whether there will be noise, nor is it simply a matter of fate whether one is being understood or intercepted. [...] Fiction, art, interpretation, and irony are forms of knowledge that can convey contingency: as a kind of knowledge that implies an awareness of its own contingency. 280

Capturing a spatial and temporal in-between is as much a photographic trope as it is an opening towards tactics. Through this example, I argue that glitching is tactically significant not only in addressing technological regulation but also in addressing photo-based mediation at large. Finding – or producing – inconsistencies is prevalent in photography with or without glitches. Both glitched and non-glitched images may be thought of as driving a wedge into the smooth coherence of an everyday interfacing experience that is subtly regulated by vast yet ungraspable technological structures. Both glitched and non-glitched images are effective materializations of disruption.

280 Krapp 2011, p. 90.
This thesis seeks to analyze how interfacing affects viewer experiences and viewer positions, and how such an effect is made visible in glitch art online. The glitch functions as a material occurrence within a flow of digital information, and as a conceptual tool to probe such a flow by using the friction it causes there. It thus serves as a lens to focus on effects underlying online spectatorship. In three case studies, my analysis is grounded in the artworks and websites of Phillip Stearns, Rosa Menkman, and Evan Meaney whose work with glitches, photo-based media, and interface display provide a concentrated space for these relations to be set up and interrogated. As the studies show, these effects play out in relations that connect interface, photography, and viewer: What can a viewer see and do by interfacing with the website, and with what means? How is the photo-based material on the website produced, displayed, and conceptualized? How does the website and its photo-based material – glitched and non glitched – position the viewer haptically and epistemologically?

Through the research aim and questions, interfacing effects are specified as two distinct yet interwoven aspects of spectatorship: individual experience of firstly being positioned by a system and secondly of responding to such positioning by tactical means. Relations between system and individual encompass relations between interface, photo-based media, and viewer. The study thus contributes to the knowledge about a wide field of research and everyday practice by homing in on one of its key moments: when the individual meets the system through a flow that often depends on photographic images and visual environments. In this thesis, that moment – and the place that structures it – is conceptualized with the delimitation of the case study material as screen images and photographic instances. With this conceptualization, the study functions as a haptic criticism: a phenomenological analysis that brings together sensory and symbolic modes of knowledge production, to actualize a culturally vital event in need of more investigation. With online glitch art, the case studies actualize the event of interfacing – producing knowledge about how spectatorship is formed through viewer experiences and viewer positions. The premises and impacts, that make interfacing so vital for the formation of spectatorship, are clarified by the questions that structure both my analyses and this concluding discussion.
As the detailed accounts of the case studies make clear, the emerging spectatorship holds a tactical potential of varying characteristics and scope. In the following, these variations are captured in three pairs that conceptualize viewer experiences and viewer positions: access and misalignment in Phillip Stearns’s *Year of the Glitch*, fluidity and disruption in Rosa Menkman’s *Sunshine in My Throat*, and coherence and splice in Evan Meaney’s *Ceibas Cycle*. These pairs represent the positions resulting from my analysis of the respective websites, where artworks and interfaces are investigated together. They synthesize the results of the case studies as part of a consistent effort in this thesis to conceptualize the relations between an interfacing individual and a system that structures the activities at the interface.

The conceptual pairing allows for a dynamic relation to be brought out, in line with the dynamic between flow and friction that grounds this study. Such dynamics are notable throughout the study, in which the concepts develop as productively unstable keywords to show how experiences become positions. Likewise, the concepts making up the pairs are not unified entities set in opposition to each other. The first part of the pairs – access/fluidity/coherence – does not necessarily signify any “positive” systemic quality, against which the second part of the pairs – misalignment/friction/splice – would provide a necessarily “negative” break. Likewise, the first part is not taken as a necessarily “negative” impact to which the second part makes a necessarily “positive” response. Their overlap supports the dynamic at issue.

The choice to define glitches in terms of friction rather than error is motivated by a similar effort to avoid any unintentionally static positions by reproducing dichotomies noted in previous research. As glitches do involve error, it recurs in this study too, with variations like fault or malfunction. Yet, it does not adhere to the common approach deeply concerned with if glitches are right/wrong or real/fake. The complementary use of friction brings nuances that enrich the answers to the research questions with complexity and applicability. The way in which these answers are tweaked out of the case studies is detailed in the following through the conceptual pairs.

The study contributes knowledge about the user – both a recipient and a co-producer of systemic structures – by shifting focus away from the technologically defined material ontology predominant within previous research towards the experiencing viewer. As evident in my analysis of the artists’ websites, the intervention of glitches in the case study material makes visible both sides in this relation – inviting the viewer to encounter friction in different ways and thus test different positions towards a digital flow. Such flow is so trivial yet so abstract as to risk becoming invisible to – and un-reflected by – the interfacing individual. Testing the positions emerging in the cases provides a way to negotiate the effect of interfacing on everyday life.
To articulate viewer positions and their tactical potential in case analyses provides empirical grounds for the conceptualization that this thesis adds to the collective knowledge about interfacing. A study of how meaning is produced on the surface – where individual and system meet – gains relevance in light of the current development of digitized ways of being in the world that requires ever more interfacing. Understanding this as a haptic kind of meaning production is especially important at a time when the surface of the interface is a key exponent of a globalized network society with a cultural and ideological impact that underpins what I call symbolic interfacing.

A symbolic aspect of interfacing – perhaps more than the techno-material aspect, extensively covered by previous research – is brought out in phenomenological case studies of art. The efficiency of this format is based on the premise that art can organize and re-organize how we think about, see, and interact with our-selves and others. The artworks and websites of Stearns, Menkman and Meaney are part of that organization through engaging both flow and friction. As my analysis indicates – with their productive use of instability – the cases articulate results that are distinct yet open enough to add to a wider production of knowledge, pointing forward to future research that engage with similar materials, issues and approaches.

In order to present the results in relation to the research aim, the following account of the case studies is structured by the three research questions. Each section begins with a focus on sensory-based knowledge and embodied technology derived from the first two questions: what can a viewer see and do by interfacing with the website, and by what means – and how has the websites’ photo-based material been produced, displayed, and conceptualized. Screen images and photographic instances are linked to how production, display, and experience are shaped by systemic functionality and individual activity, and viewer positions emerging in response to these aspects. Based on the answers to these questions, the account continues with a focus on haptics, epistemology, and potential derived from the last question: how the website and its photo-based material – glitched and non-glitched – position the viewer haptically and epistemologically. Relations between interface, photograph and viewer are pared down from general interactions to individual positions based on the haptic and epistemological findings: how knowledge may be gleaned from the viewer’s embodied experiences.

**Phillip Stearns’s *Year of the Glitch*: Access and Misalignment**

My analysis of the two screen images of Phillip Stearns’s *Year of the Glitch* – Index and Archive – suggests that the networked interface comes across as a visual environment characterized by access and misalignment. Access is visually conveyed by the Tumblr blog format as a public space for the artist to show his work and for an audience to find it. Both screen images affirm a
social media architecture that functions by what the digital system makes available to the visiting viewer: what I see and how I may respond to it. Stearns’s architecture consists of a standard mix of interactive and stable interface elements. These include a rolling update of posts that are captioned, tagged, and linked to other parts of the site, to other sites and to other users with the possibility to comment and repost. Posts and their surrounding elements create a visual environment that cues the viewer in to a social place. As these cues steer the viewer’s activities, a haptic response to the website’s visual input becomes a visual part of the posts building the interface environment. Comments, questions, etc, are shown next to images and so become part of the display frame. An experience of easy access and individual choice thus forms from an alignment with the system operating behind the networked interface.

The presence of glitches in displayed artworks adds a slight misalignment to an interface that otherwise functions without disruption. The viewer’s visit unfolds with clear boundaries of the website interface. A structure hidden underneath the screen surface enables a sense of openness – it controls access to experience. A smoothly running system thus produces both the view of a rich corpus of glitch materials and the viewer’s response to it. Stearns’s large archive of glitch work is mediated through this website as a fully networked space. The visual experience of his work is thus shaped by the disruption causing his images to appear as they do, yet perhaps more so by the undisrupted interface display that surrounds them.

Viewer experience and operative function are clearly interlocked. As a consequence, access becomes conditioned by hiding what makes access possible – i.e., by the workings of the protocols that make experience possible at all. Glitched images posted in the blog – a miniature version of the vast digital flow of which it is a part – thus provide a visual break that shifts the website from a strictly regulated protocological space towards a counter-protocological one. The counter-protocological tendency evolves in a visual more than a haptic manner – it makes the space look different but does not change the viewer’s options for interfacing or the systemic operation underpinning them. While seeing from my perspective is a form of doing, visual and textual elements are predominant in this particular case. Misalignment is therefore less on the level of function than on the level of experience – inviting user activity yet doing so through strictly set hidden boundaries. Access and inaccessibility – a play of a system open yet closed – frames the contents of the screen images. Scale shifts also indicate a simultaneous hiding and revealing of protocol. The visual environment is activated by the viewer’s shift from small posts and thumbnails to full-screen images, from small links and tags to larger Tumblr pools, portfolios, and other parts of the network around Year of the Glitch.
Glitches are visually accessed through their photographic form, while the visualization of the glitching process is mediated through both photographs and text. I interpret the interaction between text and glitch as pinpointing a productive discrepancy. The text functions to enhance the potential for producing and conveying information. On Stearns’s website, tags fill this purpose by for instance situating the images with the word photography. Other forms of text enhance a glitch-like potential for questioning notions of information as well as its material basis. Similar to other glitch art, many captions contain words that are equally specific and intriguing. To introduce a glitched image by hinting at a “prepared” camera ties in with a tradition of for example John Cage’s prepared pianos, yet it also preserves an aura of secret around images that seem so concerned with access. Words effectively hide what a glitch does to the information generated with a digital camera.

Stearns’s case implies that glitch practices offer viewers a certain access to digital systems. Yet, such access depends on the interface not being glitched. The ease with which access is gained on this website could easily be overlooked as a system simply functioning – overlooked because looked through: transparent. As the interface fades from attention, it engages the mode of immediacy rather than that of hypermediacy. These two modes seem to offer two equally user-friendly modes of experience. However, narrowing the interpretation of interfacing to two opposite modes may ground spectatorship solely in structural function. The individual may then – inadvertently, and perhaps unfortunately – end up being situated as a component of the system.

Stearns’s networked interface becomes productive in between transparent immediacy and reflexive hypermediacy. It combines and juxtaposes form and content so that the viewer can use the interface as a means to produce a spectatorship that in turn invites awareness of the same interface. Despite strong systemic cues, the viewer can create an individual position – interfacing with the visual environment by way of glitched images that sharpen attention to a website that otherwise could remain a backdrop for art display – as Tumblr often is. In fact, Stearns’s website is such a backdrop – and that is what makes it productive for this analysis.

One small yet significant indication of this backdrop quality is the sudden appearance of a heavily glitched image posted in an otherwise quiet blog roll. The image breaks the smooth interface surface yet draws the viewer into both image and interface – immediacy and hypermediacy at once. This may be interpreted as standard visual rhetoric to draw attention within a digital flow. Consequently, this example does not represent any default tactics on the part of glitches. Still – while friction is not automatic in this or similar environments – it does occur at this moment. A disruption in the flow of the blog produces access through glitching. It marks out a dynamic between
stable structure and quickly passing visual events. In turn, such a dynamic comes across as characteristic of blogs – a format not materially changed by glitches, but still slightly misaligned with the overarching system because of the interaction of visual elements. This dynamic ties in with what forms the basis of Stearns’s work: disruption of a seemingly stable structure of digital cameras and an unstable quality that photo-based mediation acquires when capturing something as ephemeral as a glitch. Such ephemerality signifies in the sudden indication of how easily disrupted the photographic apparatus is. The glitch is there and gone – the camera stays broken.

In terms of interface experience, glitches keep being posted to the blog, the posts keep yielding unexpected replies, and the viewer keeps being alerted to the misalignment caused by these disruptive images. From a tactical perspective, these observations of interfacing within Stearns’s networked website – immediately transparent yet reflectively hypermediated – indicate brief interventions in a spatial structure that is most often kept markedly stable. A tactical individual operates from a position that is never fully stable, always having to continue breaking into a dominant protocol. On Stearns’s site, the effect of a continual breaking-into happens through certain strong visual cues rather than a variety of haptic alternatives. The surface to which I am directed – an interface, a photograph – suffice to convey the thematic of access and misalignment, even if I do not search for other routes. However, the artist’s reconstructions of digital cameras do change systemic operations, even if the interface where the resulting images are displayed stays intact.

As the experience unfolds, the function of mediation in text and image is accessed through the digital system yet also misaligned with it. Slightly, yet consistently, the photographic instances and their surrounding interface are destabilized. The effect of the system is thus slightly redirected to the individual. Using photography both as a material support to disrupt a systemic operation, and as a visual manual to document this disruption, adds an aspect of misalignment to the context of access. Different functions of photography complement each other yet also collide. Stearns’s work stems from a deep and detailed disruption of digital cameras. His glitches could make the surface of the resulting photograph unrecognizable as a photograph, while also relating to similarly disruptive photographic practices. To disrupt photographic mediation in this way points out a history of systems aesthetics that explores instability through analogue and digital – manual and machine – photographic materials and processes.

Stearns’s use of photography to generate and visualize glitches asserts a documentary photographic quality of capturing what is being photographed. At the same time, such a capture is performatively produced. The documentary function in his photographs – both to document and to produce glitches –
retains a hint of misalignment since glitching causes a loss of information to
document. In Stearns’s case, photography thus becomes conceptualized as a
document in which both trust and challenge is invested, as it may be in all
images resulting from a photo-based practice. His unstable photographs
point out a paradoxical quality also in non-glitched photographs. Further-
more, the glitched images that are woven into textile and then re-photo-
graphed for the blog point to a mediation process in which glitched materials
are made both disruptive and decorative. Stearns’s work thus ties in with a
discussion of photography that has been ongoing since the 1970s – the time
of systems aesthetics when performative exploration of visual technologies
became integrated into earlier documentary practices.

At this point, it would seem that the spectatorship generated in this case
lacks tactical potential. It would be quite possible to enter this website inter-
face without reflecting on the images, their display or one’s own experience
of them. So far, access would remain all-encompassing and uncomplicated.
However, a subtle sense of misalignment comes about through the narrative
created by images and their intended – as well as random – display. This nar-
rative appears by placing the images in a way that dramatizes the space with
the disruptive glitches. Moreover, the same narrative is emphasized in the ar-
chive. It draws the viewer into the glitching process, both by the scale of the
image on the screen and the verbal emphasis of the disruptive event. The
blog format provides a protocological order for both of these placements,
which would seem to gain a tactical potential at random. The random quality
is based on how the visual and textual aspects keep the viewer within the
structure of the website, following protocol rather than generating a surpris-
ing divergence from it. However, a subtle divergence is notable through the
narrative emerging between screen images and photographic instances.

The emerging narrative becomes a bridge from haptic experience to tactical
position because it adds an epistemological dimension to the visit. In this
space, the haptic could produce tactics. By using the interface in this way,
the viewer becomes a part of a glitching narrative that makes explicit – in
words and images – how to generate glitches and so how to continue disrupt-
ing the system by actively partaking in the process. When the viewer begins
to relate the abstract images to the material process, knowledge is produced
not only about how to act as a designated user but also about how to explore
a misuse in this context. As this case study shows, the viewer is cued into
such exploration by experiencing images together with surrounding verbal
and visual elements – through interfacing with these photographic instances.

With the screen images and photographic instances of Phillip Stearns’s Year
of the Glitch, the viewer is positioned in space rather than in time. Of course,
there is a temporal dimension to piecing together a narrative. However, the
viewer’s activity is clearly bound by the protocological aspects of the interface. The interface as a place activates the viewer through a plethora of interactive elements surrounded by a stable frame based in the Tumblr format. The viewer is activated in a systemic way, since it is a spatial operation that shapes their options by visual means. Links, tags, captions, posts, comments, etc., gives the viewer a constant visual reminder of a system embodied in the screen image. Furthermore, the overall ambiance is one of contemplation, anchored in the abstract motifs of Stearns’s glitched photographs. These images function as visual surfaces that emphasize access and accessibility.

The structure of the viewer’s activity may be addressed in terms of a closed and open system. The system is constructed to seem open. Yet, it yields no visible cracks apart from the glitched images and their surrounding narrative. The interface thus appears as a well-coordinated continuity, in line with how a networked interface usually functions. With the visual options provided by the interface in operation, it serves a look of openness to the viewer. However, that look comes across as a surface closed off from a viewer searching for options to intervene into that operation – by looking, if nothing else.

The presence of glitches, together with instructions on how to make them, inserts a brief yet precarious moment into Stearns’s interface. This moment begins by first transforming the photographic form of digital glitches – distinctly carrying an analogue dimension through fingerprints, dented CCD chips, or cut cables. Then, the moment continues by highlighting how the space of the blog remains in transformation. These two moments meet in the figure of a viewer whose experience of moving through the website helps to conceptualize how the networked interface becomes the particular visual environment of Stearns’s website. The viewer is accessing – and co-producing – the environment in two ways: by seeing the glitched work and by reading about how to glitch. Both screen images make a rich corpus of work available while granting generous access to the glitching process by verbally explaining and visualizing it in photographs.

Interface and artwork generate an implied and actual viewer position that enables the viewer to learn from experience what interfacing looks like when it is kept in its designated place. This two-step visualization in photograph and interface emerges from a position that emphasizes what I can see and read more than what I can do through the interface. A contemplative and distanced interfacing mode is promoted in favor of a more activating haptic interaction. Such contemplative distance is noted in an arresting move: to read, to look. A mode, induced by understated spatial features – just being there – puts the viewer in a position of being a designated user: someone who knows what to do, aware of the networked interface as a space of resources to use at one’s own pleasure yet unaware of the systemic operations creating the con-
ditions for one’s choice. The system works insofar as it diverts the interfacing viewer’s attention, making the individual complicit in ignoring its pre-structured conditions. The glitch work – and the narrative of its production, introduce the viewer to a questioning of the interface as a digital platform shared by camera, photograph and website. However, the space itself is not questioned beyond the systemic boundaries of Tumblr. The interfacing mode – in which a sense of motion is not the main one, even though the visual is of course part of the haptic by definition. It shapes a viewer position by giving an intentional access to the glitching process and practice, and doing so by inadvertently misaligning the glitched images with the interface.

If access so far has been about system operability and functionality, it is now about giving the viewer access to a disruptive practice and doing so by way of their own experience. Both access and misalignment is productive in generating the viewer’s knowledge – and it opens up a tactical potential in this case. By first gaining access to a slightly misaligned individual experience, the viewer can then gain access to an otherwise hidden system. Experience builds up in the viewer’s concrete trajectory. In its course, a number of cues are picked up that take on a pragmatic function – guiding the viewer along the narrative. The trajectory consists of many instances where information is at once given and hidden – randomly actualizing the play on information loss that glitching entails. Small shifts – together with the overall environment – positions the viewer in a way that allows for a tactical spectatorship to form.

While the space itself remains intact and dominant, the viewer along the trajectory across the website is given cues towards engaging in the experience in a tactical way. First and foremost by continuing the glitching practice, but also by becoming a more informed viewer in the next encounter with digital technology. By continuously connecting an individual spectatorship and an individual glitching practice – and connecting both to a possibly global community through this website – there is ample opportunity for spreading an interest in disrupting technology. From an epistemological viewpoint – noting how screen images and photographic instances produce knowledge – the viewer’s experience is built up haptically yet even more visually. Moving around the website, the viewer at the same time picks up details of information and looks at images that inform them of what information loss looks like. This input amounts to a learning curve where images generate, make available and support knowledge about how to glitch for example digital imaging processes such as disruptively “preparing” and “extending” digital cameras. Interface, photographs, and text come together – as a visual narrative – to mediate a problematic communication of information. For example, the information stored in the glitched image is mediated in a problematic way since the mediation via this kind of image – being glitched – is a result
of the problem. The communicative effect of the image is further complicated as the viewer may need to read about the disruption in order to be able to see it in the image. A contemplative viewing mode is only occasionally disrupted enough to give a physical effect. Stearns’s glitches thus end up as quite easily accessible images. They are accessible visually, while their disruptive effect depends on an active viewer. However, the slight misalignment needed for a tactical potential to emerge depends on the viewer who must collect all the information around the image to see the traces of how information is disrupted. Though, having done so, the viewer is set to become the next glitch-maker.

**Rosa Menkman’s *Sunshine in My Throat: Fluidity and Disruption***

Throughout Rosa Menkman’s *Sunshine in My Throat*, I note a sense of access akin to the previous case. Yet, its emphasis is on the viewer rather than on the systemic or protocological space. As in Stearns’s case, Menkman’s platform also entails a social media format, in this case Blogspot instead of Tumblr. If Stearns’s Tumblr functions as a showcase display for art that produced an only slightly glitched environment, Menkman’s Blogspot communicates the artist’s oeuvre by enforcing the communicative issue that is a core concern in my investigation. This issue is noted in Stearns’s case as a problem around what is communicated through the glitched photograph. Here, it is evoked by single artworks sharing visual traits with their surroundings, extending their visual environment to the entire website. In doing so, access extends into fluidity – from Stearns revealing a systemic structure that asserts its dominance, to Menkman contesting it by directing attention to haptic means of such dominance. Misalignment, causing a slight break in the structure of his blog, is intensified in hers. Destabilization in both cases addresses a ubiquitous flow of digital information. On Menkman’s website, that flow is amplified until it becomes visceral to the viewer.

Disruption is shown to be a part of flow, while also working against its smooth operations. My interpretation suggests that a tactical potential in this case ties in with how a viewer may shift from a strategic place of stable power – expressed through spatial means – to a process of negotiation. I note such a shift on Menkman’s website, as the activity of interfacing becomes even more important than the interface as a delimited place. The interface – and the items situated there – were destabilized in the time it took for the viewer to activate or respond to glitched or non-glitched visual elements, and for them to connect in different trajectories.

Across the website, various trajectories point out tactical opportunities as they engage the system. Yet, they do so in a way that calls out an individual stance. For instance, a dynamic between fixed and moving elements unsettle the borders of frames and contents. Secondly, a contrast between glitched
and non-glitched materials makes it difficult to take a distance needed for contemplation but also more powerful once that difficulty is inhabited as an interfacing mode. Thirdly, the interplay of word and image establish paradox as a modus operandi – by glitching text elements, the verbal emphasized the haptic. Lastly, the encounter entails a test of what I call an interface contract. This test disturbs the correlation between what is visible to viewers and how they can respond to it. Also, how they may be expected to act and react as a designated user knowing how to interface here. By glitching the interface, the fluidity of Menkman’s website exaggerates the impact of digital flow as the structure of the system is carried over to affect the viewer. I argue that its effect is not one of overpowering quantity – a flow of statistically verifiable amounts of data, that seems to ground remarks on for instance the number of images uploaded to social media platforms. Rather, its effect is overwhelmingly qualitative: a close encounter with a close-up of flow. As in Stearns’s case as well as Meaney’s, this combination of systemic architecture and embodied experience echoes the visuality active in haptic criticism. Moving around the interface activates a mode defined by and defining the system. Experiences yield positions that affect how I understand myself as a viewer. These experiences enable my interfacing to differ from a pre-structured one.

The shift of photo-based materials from objects to instances – visible in all three cases – is caused on Menkman’s website by the random impact of temporal slots, breaks, slides, and leaps within and between the screen images and their content. Photography is conceptualized through the disruption of interfacing and the ensuing connections between different parts of the website and different images. As a medium, photography is not addressed directly. Menkman’s photography tag does not have the same structural importance as it does on Stearns’s site, and it does not lead to a portfolio as the one Meaney presents. While it is a part of the structure and may lead the viewer to all photo-related posts on the website, my analysis suggests that the experience of the structure (the experience that could have lent it importance) is overshadowed by the experience of disruption in and against the structure.

With the highly accentuated disruption and fluidity, the viewer could still be found searching the abstract surfaces for the documented traces that are still there, such as the outline of a face. Indexical and iconic functions of photo-based mediation are accentuated too, even though the recording in this case does not look recognizably human, and what is indexed is perhaps mostly its own disruption. Stearns creates abstraction by disturbing a photographic source – making it abstract. Meaney shows abstraction as a counterpart to entirely representational photographic imagery. Menkman blends abstraction into a material that links the viewer to the human figure in her heavily glitched video works. Glitches in photo-based material blend with glitches outside of it – in the interface, in the interfacing. In the process, photography

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The concept of glitch slips from its technical delimitation as it implicates the viewer in interpretive negotiations: what makes me see what I see. For example, after a prolonged experience of glitched interfacing, a photograph that I at first understood as an undisturbed portrait of the Rosa Menkman begins to appear as an increasingly unstable statement. Placed on the front page, this image formed part of my very first visit. As such, I interpreted it as a visual introduction to the artist along with her integrated website/artwork – the image accompanies a magazine interview, as a personal yet professional touch to the glitched interface. So far, it seemed to adhere to the photographic genre of artist portraits, in which indexical and iconic characteristics are kept intact as part of the mediation intended to convey the individual subject portrayed. At that first moment, the sense of being intact joins form and content. Following this moment, my subsequent trajectories include other images of Rosa Menkman presented within glitched artworks. Moreover, these are included in the website’s Biography section – gaining a biographical status. Coming back to the initial portrait, it eventually accumulated a different character beyond the indexical and iconic: a non-glitched image, as unstable as its glitched counterparts. By alerting a viewer to how unstable all images can be, the glitched ones enable a tactical spectatorship.

The portrait example suggests that also non-glitched materials can gain the tactical potential often ascribed automatically to glitches. I understand such an inclusive perspective to underline that tactical potential does not reside as an essence within glitched images. Rather, it makes available a spectatorship that gains a tactical direction from the individual’s co-presence with the system. My analysis suggests that the combination of fluidity and disruption in this case enable the viewer to take a tactical position. First, by drawing the viewer into a disruption that is consistent enough to generate a sense of interfacing continuity. Then, by tying together glitched and non-glitched material – thereby allowing the viewer to become aware of how the continuity is embodied yet illusory and subsequently can be broken. I also argue for the temporal dimension of this co-presence for a tactical opportunity to develop. In doing so, the performative implication of a “stilled image” is brought out in terms of a transformational unfolding of experience.

In Menkman’s case, glitch is thus doing deeper work than initially expected. First, disruption hits the digital material of photography and interface. Then, it hits the embodied spectatorship of the viewer – another kind of material disruption. Now, it causes a kind of semantic drift: the glitch moves from its
technological body to the embodied viewer. It therefore brings with it a kind of friction that could not be seen – for instance, in that artist portrait – but informs my reading of it once I have engaged in interfacing through the site. The shift between fluidity and disruption sensitizes and sharpens my gaze. My viewer position also shifts, so that the visual material could be reread.

A habitual framing of photography may be expected to include a non-glitched image at a non-glitched interface. Here, a slippage occurs as the elements of the framing context are interlaced in a way that includes both fluidity and disruption. Interlacing happens in two instances: within the photographic image and within the interface. The disruption of the singular photo-based image leaks into the surrounding screen image. It is then further disrupted as the screen splits up into both glitched and non-glitched segments creating a further sense of leakage. In terms of the interface, disruption makes it harder to look and act even though the system still functions to make disruption visible. Again, this difference figures as one between visual and haptic interaction rather than between passive and active. Interfacing becomes more complicated, pointing to the ease with which it is habitually performed and thus made invisible, as hinted at in Stearns’s case. In terms of photography, disruption is underlined within each image, mirrored in the image’s surrounding. This causes a sense of leakage between content and frame: within and between individual images, between individual images and the surrounding website interface.

Fluidity and disruption exist in a continuum that physically and perceptually affects the viewer by affecting the visual surfaces. Even if glitches do not affect a deep layer of systemic operability, Sunshine in My Throat does offer an opportunity to explore a human effect. Two kinds of systemic action are asserted: operations of the system and of the glitches. Meanwhile, the individual’s space for activity grows as the sensory output of this visual environment is internalized within the viewer. Disruption and fluidity are visualized as aspects of an interfacing that makes visible habitual functionality: what I am used to as a habitual interfacer. Therefore, the experience of fluidity and disruption becomes a means to notice the controlling operation below the glitchy surface. On both disrupted and undisrupted interfaces, attention depends on systemic functionality. Such dependence is part of digitally created objects and displays. Yet, these glitches turn the visual environment into a material and experiential embodiment of the dysfunctional.

Fluidity and disruption fill two functions. They push the viewer across the website with an amplified mode mirroring the push of the habitual flow. Also, it pushes them from discomfort to curiosity towards a self-reflection with tactical qualities. A position characterized by a sensitized state becomes available after having experienced glitches as a physical challenge induced
and overcome by staying on the page. This process leads to an awareness of my position. The instability generated by this visual environment is due to glitches encountered in a directed or random way by the viewer moving across the changing screen images. While the environment keeps changing, disruption remains in a fluid mode that shapes spectatorship.

The visual environment changes from a fixed systemic place into a temporary space shaped by the viewer’s response to the pervasive glitches. I see two interpretations of this emphasis. Either the viewer could find varying positions more freely, or the viewer has to work harder to maintain any position at all. The first one could entail an opening up of the interface as an enclosed place and a predetermined activity. The second one may entail a stronger systemic positioning. Both point to the individual viewer as a co-producer of an experience that seems more confrontational than contemplative.

Since individual artworks and many other elements of the surrounding interface are glitched, a kind of visual restlessness unleashed as soon as I moved the marker across the surface of *Sunshine in My Throat*. Within the first moments of a visit, the viewer is positioned in two ways. Firstly, the experience – forming quickly compared to the experience generated by both Stearns’s and Meaney’s spaces – seems to be all about the interface, about the place itself. Secondly, the experience becomes about interfacing, about the viewer, and about time. Together, these two positions point to the viewer being drawn into the website environment – into an experience that also pushes them away with its disruptions. Constant twitching, blinking, and spinning give the viewer a haptic challenge that continued throughout the visit.

Disruption and fluidity – together – affect the viewer from the start. This position is emphatically haptic as it affects the viewer with visual stimuli that are closely linked to individual interfacing activities. While this encourages such activity, it also sets strong boundaries for how that activity unfolds from the front page and onwards. In terms of spectatorship, fluidity and disruption combine to produce a playful environment where the viewer moves between ease and discomfort. This position forms in a mode of seeing that is glitched in its material source and its perceptual consequences. The viewer thus speeds ahead through the website. In response, they may go along with it and perhaps tire of the repetitive irritation – or, they may stay and explore the moment when it begins to shift into a self-reflexive learning experience.

Disruption is introduced in the bodies of viewers, in their digital devices, and in their resulting photographic instances. In doing so, the system and its relations with the individual becomes visible – becomes accessible to a viewer for attention, reflection, and thus for a tactical response. However, my initial response was to be absorbed into an overload of user-unfriendly information.
Absorption caused the numbness associated with a habitual online flow that it is said to also contest. This fluidity is halted as the sensory input yields to twitches, blinks, and spins: resisting if not disabling systemic functions. Yet, after a while, a pivotal shift occurs. From staying with discomfort – exploring haptic visuality – the kind of time begins to unfold that brings about a tactical potential: a break, a moment to rethink experience and possibly shift positions. Attention leads to reflection on the precarious mediation of content and form, and on how my own seeing is shaped by the systemic conditions that are revealed through my trajectory across the site. My experience thus amounts to a productive break as it invites the possibility for a reflective and self-reflective position. Such bracketing of the habitual becomes a kind of phenomenological *epoché*, a pause in which to see me seeing the system. After this visit, such a pause may be available also on other websites.

The bridge from haptic to epistemological focus – which in Stearns’s case comes in the form of a visual narrative – is clearly of a temporal character in Menkman’s case. In Stearns’s case, it asserts itself as a spatial and visual display that the viewer could take in both as a whole and in parts. The temporal and haptic focus of Menkman’s case emerges when the viewer has to move through an abundance of glitches. In Stearns’s case, knowledge is produced by gathering details that emphasized the networked place of the interface – most importantly through information content: how-to-glitch. In Menkman’s case, knowledge is produced by a more sensorial experience. The haptic thus acquires an epistemological function. A key is that a direct experience puts the viewer in touch – literally and figuratively – with the underlying systemic structure. It is through the viewer’s own use of the interface that a spectatorship is formed – a use that echoes and perhaps continues the (mis)use of the system performed by the artist.

As with *Year of the Glitch*, the artist behind *Sunshine in My Throat* presents information on glitching – even a manual, in the form of a guide that is also an artwork in itself. With Menkman, though, it is even clearer than with Stearns that the viewer’s relation to the glitched work in this online environment does generate a position that may be called tactical. Still, it is important to point out that this is no default position emerging solely from the glitches. I argue that it is quite possible to see this case too as rather un-tactical, if considering that expectations affect the efficiency of any kind of intervention – especially a decidedly disruptive one. Simply following directions would likely counter the effect of disruption and emphasize the contingent convention of glitch art – for instance, its status on a mainstream margin. However, this case shows how those directions could be negotiated in a direct participatory situation – to find tactical opportunities in between the spaces that the viewer is directed to.
The disruption set off by creating the work and situating it on this website is crucially maintained by an equally disrupted viewer. In the process, a dynamic develops in which the situation inviting or confronting on me on the site invites or provokes me to observe and reflect on my own position towards that situation. A heightened attention is called for in a space where so many components are glitched. As space where – the viewer may think – every component could be glitched. For a viewer, who may not have access to the tools producing the glitch, it is the individual experience of that disrupted systemic structure that produces meaning. It is the viewer who negotiates expectations on the interface and on the interfacing that generates a spectatorship. In response to Menkman’s website, the viewer’s discomfort or pleasure direct attention to the sources and consequences of their response. Such attention is a first step towards self-reflection, and thus holds a tactical quality. The interface and the individual response to it enables an individual – tactical – break into the structural environment by creating an awareness of the expectations of functionality and visuality that accompany acts of interfacing.

The viewer is placed into a disruptive flow that differs from the usual digital flow while using the same flow for its production and display. Contested closeness between viewer and interface affects how the work is received. Without a distance between systemic operation and individual artwork, the system also comes closer. While following the artist’s cues, the viewer creates an individual flow by experiencing it strongly first-hand. Through the account of this open-ended process, other viewers may gain tools to create and question their individual experiences and positions. Even without the strong sense of community on Stearns’ site, the strength and complication of experience implicates the individual viewer in how to see through interfacing – how to be viewer: an individual within the system. In doing so, a tactical potential is brought about by Sunshine in My Throat.

**Evan Meaney’s *Ceibas Cycle: Coherence and Splice***

I approach Evan Meaney’s *Ceibas Cycle* with experience and knowledge of the previous two cases. Earlier references reappear in combination with new ones that were absent before. Similarities and contrasts thus come to clarify both Menkman’s and Stearns’s work. However, Meaney’s case contributes towards my research aim in three particular ways. Firstly, his photographic practice aligns yet contrasts with underlying digital systems. Secondly, his glitch practice combines abstraction and figuration. Thirdly, his interface practice exemplifies a screen-based experience of play and disruption as well as an understated everyday use. My analysis shows that these practices mix to form viewer positions characterized by coherence and splice. Splice refers to how different elements juxta- pose on Meaney’s website, while coherence refers to a key haptic and visual effect of how the juxtaposed elements blend.
Together with Meaney’s archive – and sources like the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine – the empirical grounds for this analysis now exist only as the screen-grabs and printouts saved during the case study. By November 2015, the website has a new interface, with a different use of color, and a scrollable front page that resembles the blog platforms of Menkman and Stearns. The selected photo-based materials, and the interface-based work *A Similar History*, remain on display. This change offers an opportunity for continuing research on these materials within the new interface environment, to explore how the viewer’s experience and position may have changed too. This study thus gains relevance as an example of the endeavor to grasp ephemeral objects, environments and experiences in their processes of appearing (and disappearing) online. Therefore, it points to a need to develop methods for researching spectatorship through online materials.

The white, reduced state of the website interface in the case study – with few visual cues and haptic invitations – forms a coherent space that seemingly invokes each individual visitor to form their own, predominantly contemplative, mind-set. If the fluidity and disruption of Menkman’s space is coherent in its thorough disruption – a driving force behind the work and the experience of it – coherence comes across here through minimizing the components that constitute experience. A scarcity of visual and haptic elements becomes an incentive for experience, as it puts an extra emphasis on the cues that do exist. While Stearns’s case proves surprisingly visual, and Menkman’s case proves overwhelmingly haptic, Meaney’s case combines the two in a subtle yet effective manner.

In my analysis, meaning is produced through visual and haptic elements that both support and disturb the website’s mediation of content. As a digital networked interface, Meaney’s visual environment depends on the functional system as much as Stearns’s and Menkman’s do. Unlike the cases of Stearns and Menkman, it does not use these functions to any greater extent. The screen images are strikingly blank rather than filled and framed with posts, links, banners, captions, tags, etc. However, that blankness becomes productive, especially since this is a website for presenting glitches. It is productive to the work, for the contrast that such blankness provides to disrupted images. It is also productive to the viewer who is drawn into the blank interface and into the disrupted images in the same visual field. Consequently, coherence and splice is at work together.

As an art space – showroom, online gallery, and artist portfolio – the theme gives the website a position in between Stearns’s and Menkman’s spaces. It becomes a formative part of the artwork, clearly intentional yet not ostentatiously designed. The interface is thus put in dialogue with the displayed art in a way that neither embeds it an established form such as Stearns’s blog
nor ostentatiously subverts the blog like Menkman does. Over the time of a visit, these reduced screen images become productive in the contemplative disruption they generate for the viewer. At first, glitches seem only to matter within the scarcely displayed work, as an aesthetic in a narrower sense than sensory-based knowledge. In due course, glitching as a tactic turns out to affect – and be co-created with – the minimal state of the interface. Instead of an ongoing transformation of the visual field, this website appears almost static. Instead of busy visual input and a plenitude of haptic possibilities through posts and links, it instills a sense of quiet. This quietude differs from the way in which Stearns’s screen space functions as a backdrop. On Evan Meaney’s site, the white expanse of the screen images takes on a productive function as it echoes the state of reduced information characterizing glitches. Considering aesthetics as a form of knowledge grounded in sensory data, the reduction of information in technical terms finds a counterpart in the reduced state of the viewer experience induced by the blank visual environment.

Apart from the systemic base that makes the website run properly, there seems to be little use of networked functions here. In terms of a quantitative effect – noted in the introduction – there are not many cues to the website as a public social space connected to a wider community. In terms of the qualitative effect of interest in this thesis, the viewer is alone with the experience arising in response to the visual environment. This notion of solitude helps to constitute experience. Systemic or networked functions are not clearly used in a supportive way, for easing a viewer’s experience of the interface such as in Stearns’s case. Nor do they clearly play a creative part in challenging viewer and interface, as in Menkman’s case. The many comments, tags, captions and links framing the Year of the Glitch are absent on Meaney’s website, as are the glitched network elements on Sunshine in My Throat. Instead, they form a visual environment made coherent by the white space connecting all the screen images interspersed by a few instances where disruption is spliced into it.

Coherence and splice continue to thematize Meaney’s case also in terms of photo-based mediation. Reducing options adds weight to the form as well as the content of what is available. For instance, the small scale is efficient for directing attention to the problematic unfolding. This observation regards the glitched videos of To Hold a Future Body So Close to One’s Own and The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts, as well as in the sparse game structure of A Similar History. A lack of constant stimuli (Menkman) or narrative (Stearns) gives the viewer time to pay attention to what they see. This opportunity for attention created a certain temporal situation that, for the duration of the visit, slows down and expands time. This is striking in the work A Similar History, where the viewer is somewhat locked into a game structure that is as blankly white as the parts of the site that is not an artwork.
Like on *Sunshine in My Throat* – and to a lesser degree on *Year of the Glitch* – a visitor to *Ceibas Cycle* finds a viewer position on the basis of a leakage between art content and systemic frame. Through an experience developed by browsing Meaney’s work and website, I argue that the leakage between form and content – that is noted in Menkman’s case, and almost but not entirely missing in Stearns’s case – moves into individual instances of photographs and screen images. While the previous two cases use such mediation but address it indirectly – verbally by tags and captions or materially by glitching cameras or recordings – this case contains a portfolio with non-glitched still photographs. In this section of the website, there are no introductory statements, tags or captions. The series of photographs making up the portfolio create their own context on the basis of their individual statements, in their ordered display – all against the same backdrop of white empty space. This portfolio becomes a strong example of coherence on the website – a non-glitched example in close proximity to work in which glitch is addressed coherently such as in *A Similar History*.

One example of splice – mirrored in both Stearns’s and Menkman’s cases – is that instances of glitched material are displayed together with material that is not glitched. For the viewer, this juxtaposition shifts the response to the visual experience so that two modes or positions are articulated: one for glitches and one for everything else. On the *Ceibas Cycle* website, these two visual modes or viewer positions are also brought together within single individual works, of still and moving photographic imagery. It is from this particular combination of juxtaposition and blend that I choose to call Meaney’s case “sharing an unstable photograph.” The networked interface underpinning the artist’s website implies a shared space – a default interpretation of websites in general. Yet here, the work is not only shared spatially throughout the site but spatially within the single image. The visual space of the image mirrors the website: both can be characterized by the same sharing of glitched and non-glitched elements. With this shared quality, the space of the website turns out to be quiet enough to clarify the noise of glitching.

My analysis suggests that the interfacing mode and viewer positions developed in other parts of the website – where glitches featured prominently – bring out a disruptive element at large. The intertwining of abstract and representational elements in Meaney’s glitched photographic material has an effect on the viewer’s experience also of the photographs that are not glitched. As in the previous cases, a tendency here is that photography functions as a paradoxical document when both undisturbed and glitched images are generated and displayed through the apparatus – including technical conditions, use, and experiences of the resulting recording. Albeit placed in separate screen images, both kinds of photography share the website space so that their documentary function is emphasized. The sharing of space also
means that the viewer could encounter these two kinds of photo-based mediation on the same visit: on the one hand, glitched and non-glitched, and on the other hand, abstract and figurative – and both kinds on a sliding scale.

The viewer shifts between two modes of spectatorship in relation to the same image – and then in relation to the visual environment around the image. These shifts prompt a destabilization that affects the viewer and the interfacing experience without really engaging the interface itself as a systemic networked operation. On this website, spectatorship is shaped through a splicing of visual elements within individual artworks that still function as coherent statements. The “cyborgian portraits” of *A Future Body* still work as portraits despite being disrupted by glitches that make half or more of the image abstract. The placing of them into screen images, where the dynamic between coherence and splice is repeated, emphasizes this viewing mode. The disparate yet connected elements constitute the visual environment where the networked interface becomes a platform.

Operability is challenged in small visual elements. In some instances, the challenge is noted in a seemingly unintended design. One example is the lone glitched image – photograph, or film still – on the front screen image being somewhat too small and oddly placed off-center. In other instances, it is underlined by intentional display, such as in *A Similar History*. As a visual environment – a context that conceptualizes glitched photo-based mediation – a challenge is formulated in a very subtle manner. This subtlety has tactical consequences – it proves to be instrumental for spectatorship. In doing so, it highlights how an individual activity first connects to the screen space itself, then to the images placed within it – and then shift towards the viewer.

In terms of coherence, the experience of the interface is shaped by it being so empty. Here is a lack of visual and textual information unlike Menkman’s busy space and Stearns’s carefully directed space. However – as in the other cases – this kind of lack fits the glitch setting and provides an opportunity for contemplation. On Meaney’s website, space is quiet enough to bring out small disruptions within and in between photographic instances and screen images. It is quiet enough to allow a viewer position to articulate over time, and thus it becomes productive for generating a tactical spectatorship.

At first glance, the seeming emptiness the *Ceibas Cycle* may appear to pose a problem for haptic experience – or it may be taken as a rhetorical device to direct attention to carefully chosen items. A viewer positioned by emptiness does perhaps not have so many directions to take, and experience would end. However, since the white expanse runs throughout the website – unlike on the websites of Menkman and Stearns where screen images visually differ from one another – it binds the whole space together into a coherent environ-
ment. The viewer could therefore stay in the same mode throughout several individual trajectories. Moreover, coherence could be used as a kind of perceptual platform from which to notice and digest one’s own experience. Again, phenomenology comes across as opening up a process for the viewer to test the positions suggested in this thesis. Also, and more importantly, for the viewer to gain tools to reflect upon their own positioning and positions – given, found, and taken.

The Ceibas Cycle space shares an understated spatial emphasis with Year of the Glitch. It also shares a predilection for figurative imagery with the photographic instances of Sunshine in My Throat. Specific to Meaney’s space though, is that no single mode prevails by default. As noted above, it is an option to stay in one mode throughout the visit. What I refer to here is that such a mode is not uniform as in the other cases. It consists of the combinations of abstract and figurative elements within the artwork examples and the website as a whole. The instances of glitched elements spliced into the coherent environment are equally important as the previous – more singular – modes for positioning the viewer haptically and epistemologically and thus for generating a tactical spectatorship.

Splices occur both within individual photographic instances and within the general screen image. In response, the viewer develops a viewing mode that combines but does not merge the parts of the image that are clearly defined as representational with the parts that are clearly defined as glitched abstraction – i.e. splices them. This response is especially noted in when the image entails a distinct human presence. Rather than staying within one mode, as in the two other cases, the viewer is invited to negotiate a shift between the two. In my analysis, this negotiation or shift between positions emerges as a key to Meaney’s work, as it serves as a bridge from the haptic to the epistemological that also – yet differently – figures in the other two cases. Knowledge is produced in the shift between positions where my interpretation suggests that a third position may be said to form. Switching modes back and forth – within a single work and a whole screen environment – turns the line between the two sharper just at the moment when it is compromised.

Evan Meaney’s work juxtaposes photo-based figurative representation with glitched non-figurative abstraction. A shared space of negotiation thus forms that echoes the space of the website at large. Attention is sharpened towards a line in between them, and how easily the line dissolves into the systemic operation with the individual intervention of glitching. If knowledge production happens predominantly through visual means in Stearns’s case, and through haptic ones in Menkman’s, I argue that Meaney’s case provides a productive middle ground with aspects of the other two as well as something different. This middle ground could be understood as a grey area, with the
sense of ambivalence that such an area entails. The ambivalence appearing in the course of a visit to Meaney’s website and the artworks on display becomes productive in its own right and also for clarifying the particularities of the other two cases. With its subtle and complex qualities, Ceibas Cycle does not only combine the instability and the narrative from the other cases but also refines and complicates them. Rather than being positioned in a more obvious or at least singular way – as with the totalizing instability of Sunshine in My Throat and the totalizing narrative of Year of the Glitch – the viewer of Ceibas Cycle needs to get involved in figuring out what glitches are doing in and through the work on display.

The required involvement on the part of the viewer carries with it the potential for tactical spectatorship. Adding up details about how to make glitches – as the viewer does on Year of the Glitch – may be understood as amounting to an external kind of knowledge. Adding up sensory stimuli to physically feel glitches – as the viewer does on Sunshine in My Throat – may instead be understood as an internal kind of knowledge. On Meaney’s website, the viewer shifts between representation and abstraction, and thus shifts between the modes of the other two. As there, the tactical potential emerges in combining spatial and temporal characteristics. Here, it emerges from the choice of keeping information about the work brief, or leaving it out altogether.

As the shift happens, the two parts relate to each other in multiple ways. One example of such a relation is the simple act of connecting different photographic instances – as a user habitually does while navigating a networked interface. Here, it results in the experience of potential if not actualized glitches. Even the decidedly non-glitched images in the photography portfolio gain a quality of underlying disruption: could there be a social glitch, a landscape glitch? My first experience of the website included the adjacent displayed glitched work, that pointed to the shared space of representation and abstraction. Based on that trajectory, I reinterpret what may otherwise be situated as documentary photographs – and somehow, they still are documentary. System and systemic break are thus brought together in a shared space encompassing the whole website. Being a viewer in and of that space becomes tactically interesting when positioned on a marked visible border between two spectatorships and developing a third one in response. This third kind of spectatorship becomes tactical as it unfolds over time through negotiating both a smooth systemic operation and its disruption.

**Becoming a Tactical Viewer: Attention, Reflection, and Action**

The relations that the cases bring about – between viewer, image, and interface – point to a tactical potential when the three components merge or rub against each other to produce a certain kind of time: individual visual moments connected by transitions and pauses of haptic interfacing. At first
glance, this temporal process may seem unsurprising if not self-evident. More time equals more opportunity for any experience to unfold more fully, and to connect a trajectory of experiences into interfacing relations.

With the processes brought forth in my investigation, it gains relevance by suggesting a question to future researchers: what does it mean to produce time – here and now – through interfacing? This question branches out in a multitude of directions that each involves vast and specific complexities. This thesis contributes an analysis of individual experiences of a digital flow that has its own pre-structured time and place for experience. In this context, experience may be understood as inscribed into the interface. Such an inscription stays unacknowledged by the interfacers, if it suits the protocol. Through the use of glitches and art, the cases indicate how experience can be shifted from a systemic positioning to an individually tested tactical position.

The analysis results in three viewer positions that engage tactically with the positions given at the outset on the artist’s websites. By including the aspects of each position that are given – and setting them in relation to the aspects that unfold in response to the screen images and photographic instances – the effects of interfacing are shown both in terms of the system and the individual. One key effect is the viewer’s possibilities of gaining more time in a situation that limits time – to navigate within the systemic structure yet act differently within it. Over time detailed in the case studies, a spectatorship forms in which a relation between systems and individuals is made evident. This act of making visible is performed by individual glitches that sharpen the viewer’s sense of their own experience with the interface. Subsequently, it also sharpens a sense of the system behind it. Glitches thus bring the viewer closer to a spectatorship that encompasses two key aspects of contemporary digital flow. Firstly, that the systemic space is conditioned by ubiquitous computing. Secondly, that a position within that space is marginal and temporary yet important for the individual viewer to engage consciously with the system.

As the case studies make clear, the artists’ websites bring together a pervasive systemic architecture with an intimately embodied viewing experience. By detailing the interfacing individual’s experiences through the interface – grounded in screen images and photographic instances – the analyses show how this situation comes about and how it shapes spectatorship. The process is synthesized into three viewer positions that help to conceptualize a relation between individual and system. They share this systemically structured, yet intimately experienced, situation with similar online environments. Their glitch practices thus shed light on blogs and other platforms with content that may or may not engage tactically with breaking systemic operations. Visits to non-glitched spaces online may be undertaken in different ways after
visiting these particular websites. I argue that haptic and visual memories of these glitches alert a viewer to the ubiquitous impact of protocols even when the glitches are unintentional and decidedly not art. Art in this case may thus function as a tactical opportunity for sharpening the awareness of unplanned haptic and epistemological consequences of interfacing that may gain a tactical value also in everyday life. By connecting the visitor to an ungraspable network yet ultimately enabling them to build a self-reflective encounter, they encourage a tactical spectatorship. While art often contains a more or less explicit element of organization, it offers a space to observe the unplanned – especially in relation to the implicit human and technological efforts to structure it.

A key aspect of tactical spectatorship in the three cases – shaped by positions emerging in the analysis – is time. Here, time to experience a pre-structured yet individually embodied interfacing develops through a temporality grounded in photo-based mediation. This kind of mediation offers a coherent support that enables disruption – yet is also itself disrupted. As a material vehicle for disruption, the photographic medium is emphasized as a stable anchor for algorithmic and experiential disorder. However, it is destabilized as it shifts with viewing modes. While keeping its specific mode of signification – recognizable insofar the display context allows – the photographic is remediated in digital form and converge with the interface. Photography thus appears as consistently indexical and deeply malleable, while the digital appears in both fragments and flows.

As the case studies show, viewer positions form in a situation that reduces and abstracts information yet keeps a documentary stance. The photographic instances mediate information loss as information: simultaneous presence and absence. The viewer becomes an active participant in this process, as a co-creator of co-presence. I find a tactical potential as the viewer is position-ed in between the photograph as an instance of a systemic order and the glitch as a friction within that order – through a break that holds, pushes, and sharpens attention.

Contrast emerges as a key factor in activating glitches and the viewer positions they enable. It is an explicit tactic in Menkman’s case, and similarly perceivable in both Stearns’s and Meaney’s cases. Contrasts sharpen the eye by creating difference – a différence that becomes productive as it shifts the contrasting elements, so that each become distinct yet gain traits from one another. The simultaneous absence and presence visualized in the three cases works similarly. They make visible the systemic and the individual through distinct yet inter-dependent photo-based mediation and interfacing options. The unstable concepts – access, fluidity and coherence tensely co-present with misalignment, friction and splice – point out how their underlying ab-
sence and presence also mix in this material. My interpretation confirms that glitches function as a deconstructive act within this phenomenological online experience. It therefore points out the system that generates it, through a dynamic between contrast and merge that becomes tactical when it disrupts the viewer’s experience.

A tactical potential lies not only in the viewer’s activity but also in an awareness of what art does to generate it. My study shows that these artworks – extending to their display – generate enough space for the viewer to gain a tactical time. They do so by making visible the positioning of experience and the experience of positioning. Extending the art context, this experience may be brought outside into the digital flow of everyday life. For individuals who are educated and embodied through digital systems, that claim entails a definition of self as something other than a systemically defined user. With glitch art online, the designated user could become a co-designer. In my analysis, the systemic friction of the three cases is tactical insofar as it gives the viewer time. Time to become aware of experience, to define what to do with haptic opportunities. Moving through the websites, the viewer’s position shifts from systemic time – objective, regulated clock-time – to a more individual kind of time grounded in, yet distinct from, a given order. By claiming this time, the viewer could become a tactical interfaecer: one who transforms their experience by paying attention to its systemic conditions.

Embedded in ubiquitous computing, glitches are not automatically tactical. Their potential lies in the time glitches can create for a viewer to pause, reflect, and form a stance. Their break in a systemic flow is quickly passed. Yet, for the duration given in these cases – and their use of art to re-organize a digitized way of being in the world – the break shows the viewer a tactical position. That break can be repeated on the next visit. Detailing and conceptualizing a relation between system and individual, this study shows three ways in which that next visit can become an opportunity for trying out a tactical position.

My analysis identifies an embodied interface that connects ubiquitous computing with a member of its audience, workforce, and constituency. To develop a spectatorship generated by glitched photographs on interface display – own it as an intimate experience – holds the tactical opportunity of breaking into the flow and overflow of information. Thereby, the viewer may create an individual space in the middle of the invisible abstraction that pervades network society. In doing so, the research aim – to analyze how interfacing affects viewer experiences and viewer positions, and how such an effect is made visible in glitch art online – may be fulfilled outside of this thesis by future viewers who navigate and negotiate flow and friction.
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yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com/archive
I'm having trouble trying to get this data bending to work. Are there any programs you recommend on using? I have a PC, and I've tried a hex editor, but I can't seem to get it to work. It constantly says that the file is corrupt when I try to view the picture. Any tips? Hex editors are the way to go IMHO, but text editors work.

How did you make those blankets? I've been toying with the idea of making cross-stitch versions of some of my pixel illustrations, but this technique also looks promising. There are several companies out there who are able to convert images into textiles. I've been working with two weavers using different

can you recommend me some tutorial to start to experiment with glitch? I know there are several out there but surely you have some favorite :) Nic Collins's Hardware Hacking is the definitive text for getting started with the techniques I employ in preparing the digital cameras and other hardware I use. If

Listen
"Images taken with an intentionally broken Kodak DC200 Megapixel camera. An example of what I call the “Insta-Richter”. This is a pretty standard effect achieved through circuit bending the CCD driver chips."
"Images taken with an intentionally broken Kodak DC200 Megapixel camera. An example of what I call the ‘Insta-Richter’. This is a pretty standard effect achieved through circuit bending the CCD driver chips.”
Fig. 7. Photographic Instance I: Apparatus
Phillip Stearns: Year of the Glitch Number 66 (photography)

"Images taken with an intentionally broken Kodak DC215 Megapixel camera. Different camera, same ‘Insta-Richter’ effect.”
Fig. 8. Photographic Instance II: Text
Phillip Stearns: *Year of the Glitch* Number 34 (photography)

“For the Kodak DC215 (the diagonal lines are actually the wood grain of my table top and shadows from wires...).”
Fig. 9. Photographic Instance II: Text
Phillip Stearns: *Year of the Glitch* Number 324 (photography)

“Digital photos taken with a prepared (intentionally and methodically short circuited) Kodak DC3400 digital camera. For me, these images especially capture this notion of the digital imaging device as a sort of veil. This vision apparatus – you’re not aware of it until you disturb it, but once you’ve seen it as a layer between yourself and reality, you cannot shake the impression. It’s as though this veil, once made present, cannot be lifted.”
“The added circuitry to the DC210 includes a square wave oscillator used to drive an NPN transistor to facilitate in shorting signals to ground, introducing raster interference and moire based patterns. A potentiometer is used to vary the resistance between points. The ribbon cable attached to the CCD is a break-out wire than [sic] allows for more complex short circuiting to be conducted on the breadboard.”
“Most modifications to the Kodak DC280 are performed on the circuit board immediately exposed after removing the back cover plate. A combination of techniques are employed: touching the electronics to distort CCD information, short circuiting the CCD and Analog to Digital IC’s using multimeter probes attached at the ends by an alligator clip, using potentiometers to vary the resistance between points on the board.”
Fig. 12. Photographic Instance III: Materialization
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yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com/post/15721874280/012-0f-366-
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“From a prepared Kodak DC215 1 megapixel digital camera.”
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“A remix of 012 after being converted from JPG to GIF and then subjected to progressive manipulation in Hex Fiend.”
Fig. 14. Photographic Instance III: Materialization
Phillip Stearns: *Binary Blankets DCP_0242_01 Knit* (textile, photography)
glitch-textiles.myshopify.com/product/gb-dcp_242_01-mk

“Custom design by Phillip Stearns made using a modified point-and-shoot camera.”
Fig. 15. Photographic Instance III: Materialization
Phillip Stearns: *Binary Blankets DCP_0242_01 Knit* (textile, photography, close-up)
glitch-textiles.myshopify.com/product/gb-dcp_242_01-mk

“Custom design by Phillip Stearns made using a modified point-and-shoot camera.”
Fig. 16. Photographic Instance III: Materialization
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glitch-textiles.myshopify.com/collections/fragmented-memory/
products/xaa-222rgb-336px
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Installation views and close-ups
Post May 3, 2012. Screenshot March 5, 2014,
yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com/post/22324748677/
phillipstearns-nowshowing-at-the-eyebeam
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Phillip Stearns: *Glitch Textiles* (textile, photography)
yearoftheglitch.tumblr.com/post/36834565463/
knit-glitch-blankets-are-not-only-warm-and-look
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Rosa Menkman’s *Sunshine in My Throat*

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rosa-menkman.blogspot.se
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“How many efforts are required in order to watch”
Fig. 25. Photographic Instance I: *Compress Process.*
Rosa Menkman: *Compress Process*
Screenshot April 13, 2013, *Videoscapes.*
videoscapes.blogspot.se/2010/02/compress-process.html

“The whole video is created with one and the same skype video recording.
It’s basically a selfportrait of me jumping around.”
Fig. 26. Photographic Instance I: *Compress Process*

Rosa Menkman: *Compress Process*  
Screenshot April 13, 2013 (full-screen), *Videoscapes*  
videoscapes.blogspot.se/2010/02/compress-process.html

“The whole video is created with one and the same skype video recording. It’s basically a selfportrait of me jumping around.”
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Still image of video of performance.
Screenshot April 3, 2013, Vimeo (address unavailable).
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Screenshot December 10, 2013
dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/9054743/
lofi Rosa Menkman - A Vernacular of File Formats.pdf
“Just like Targa, TIFF is a very complex compression. I have had some really interesting diverse experiences with this file format, but I find it very hard to get grips on the reason why they come to the surface the way they do. That is [sic] why these are real glitch bends to me.”
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Rosa Menkman: *Order and Progress*, Gallery Fabio Paris, Brescia, 2010
*A Vernacular of File Formats: A Guide to Databend Compression Design* (prints)
*Dear Mr. Compression* (video, 2010), and *Collapse of PAL* (video, 2010)
Screenshot December 10, 2013, *Sunshine in My Throat/Flickr*
flickr.com/photos/r00s/5380515309
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aboutrosamenkman.blogspot.se
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Screenshot December 10, 2013, *Sunshine in My Throat*
aboutrosamenkman.blogspot.se/2008/11/blog-post.html

“Glitch! La beauté fatale d’un rate
Des artistes explorent les défaillances des technologies,
les sublimant dans des créations audiovisuelles critiques”
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Screenshot December 10, 2013, Vimeo
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Screenshot December 10, 2013, *Videoscapes*
videoscapes.blogspot.se/2010-02/demolish-eerie-oid.html

“In ‘Demolish the eerie Void’ I exploit macroblocking, by opening a DV file in texteditor and playing around with the code. What became clear to me is that multiple things can happen – and I am not sure (yet) what pieces of code trigger what results. In one of the first tries I encountered some quite mystifying, but nice new organizations of color (chrominance) structures. The matrix of macroblocks is still completely intact but the chrominance values are very off.”
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Frame 10, Return option. Screenshot August 11, 2014.
evanmeaney.com/interface

“Camilla was kept as comfortable + engaged as possible.
I know now that she never fully recovered, but late in her life
(when I knew her) Cammy was able to write some few correspondences.”
Fig. 41. Screen image II: A Similar History
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“serve as loss of mitigation 102 / serve as loss of appetite 999 / serve as loss prevention 233 / serve as loss of prevention jobs 336 / serve as loss of consortium 331 / serve as lossip 090 / serve as losses 768 / serve as loss of taste 22 / serve as loss weight 21 / serve as lossless 1 / serve as lost 82”
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evmeaney.com/ceibas/interior/pagethree/videos/5.swf
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evanmeaney.com/ceibas/interior/ceibasportraits.html
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Evan Meaney: *The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts* (video, front page, 2007)
Screenshot August 11, 2014 (close-up)
evanmeaney.com/cycle

“a phone call, a bus ride, a body in crisis. memories in excerpt, borrowed and given. it is a communicable catalogue, one where the hopes of the missing intermingle with the expectations of the shown. a hide and seek love story.”
Fig. 50. Photographic Instance II: *The Unseeable Exchange of Our Parts*
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Screenshot August 11, 2014
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evanmeaney.com/photography.html
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Fig. 54. Photographic Instance III: Portfolio
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Post 10 (close-up). Screenshot August 11, 2014
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Swedish Summary


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