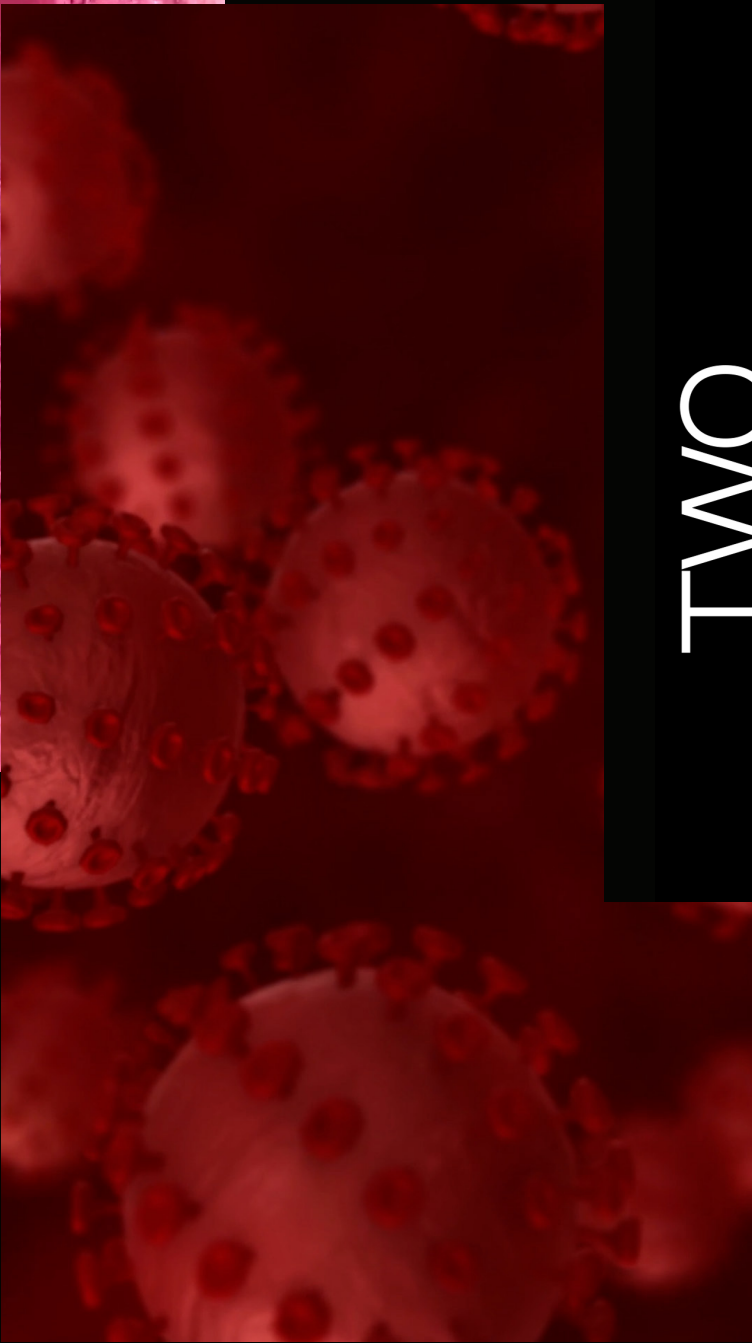
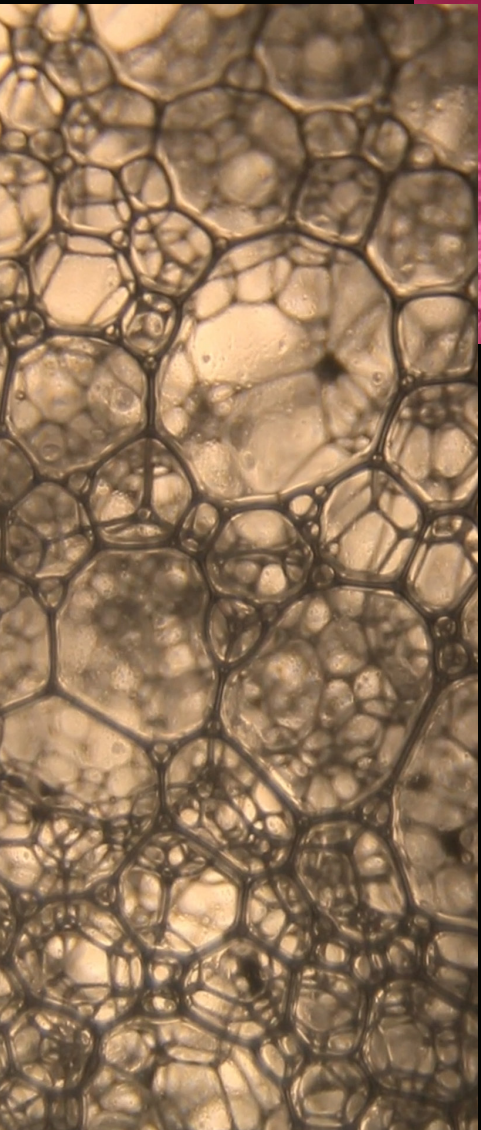
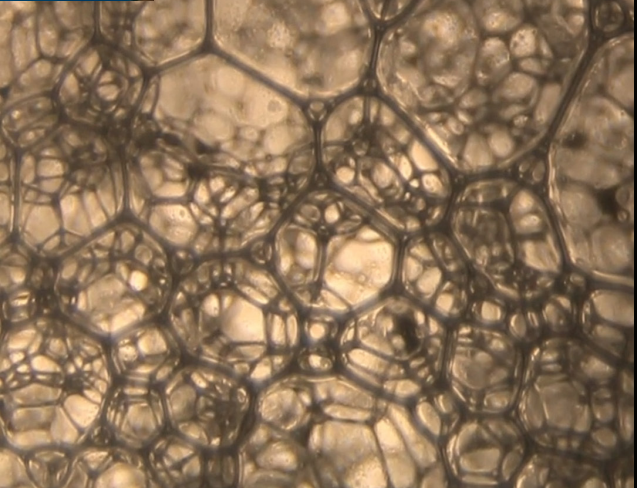


Dad: Signal remains stable.
Process terminated.
I do not have an answer to that.
Can I help you with anything else?



By Veronika Yakobchuk
2024

TWO
WORLDS,
ONE HEBO
SKY MIKX
CBITAMIN

TWO WORLDS, ONE SKY (2024)

We can daydream while seated on a train or even in the middle of a conversation. This process allows our minds to relax, offering a path into alternate realities. However, what happens when these daydreams influence how we see the world? Does it make it harder to distinguish between the imagined and the real? Thoughts about the future are inevitably linked to technology, as it is what will shape our future. Since technology significantly impacts how we interact with one another and with ourselves, this issue feels more pressing than ever. The challenge is to consider how our increasing reliance on technology affects both our relationships and mental health.

The short film I created “Two Worlds, One Sky” is my reflection on how human relationships change when viewed through the lenses of technology, conflict, and time. The title comes from a line in the film: “Here, in the midst of this war, I look at the sky and imagine you beneath the same one. Even when we’re worlds apart, we’re together in that way.” The project is a video narrative that follows a conversation between a daughter and a voice clone of her father, who is serving in the war. Merging technology with universal memory, the AI-generated voice of the father is created using real samples of his voice. At first, the conversation feels warm and familiar, like a real memory shared between close family members. But as it continues, the father’s responses become increasingly mechanical and detached, revealing the limits of technology in capturing genuine human emotion.

As the story progresses, the film’s metaphor of technology’s growing influence

on our lives—a lone satellite—becomes more significant. The film opens with an intimate close-up that gradually fades out until we are in the huge cosmos. This visual journey mirrors the emotional distance widening between a daughter and her father—a reminder of how something once so close can feel light-years away.

This evolution connects to the ideas of Dunne and Raby (2013), who argue that speculative design isn’t about predicting the future but rather about using the future to spark the imagination (p. 3). They suggest that speculative design helps us explore ideas about what might be good or bad in the future (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p. 64). Through this project, I invite viewers to critically examine our present world. Our dreams of the future often reveal the limitations of today, and we may be adapting to changes that gradually weaken the main aspect of how we connect with others.

A central idea in this work is cognitive estrangement, inspired by Brecht’s A-effect, where unfamiliar scenarios help us see our world in a new light (Brecht, 1964). By depicting a conversation between a daughter and a voice clone of her father, the project uses absurdity to emphasise a common anxiety: the concern that technology is destroying the authenticity of our interactions. This echoes Grennan’s work in The Smell of Control (2011), where he examines how robots designed to produce human-like signals—such as pheromones to evoke trust or fear—can manipulate our emotions.

Grennan’s exploration of human-robot interactions emphasises the tension between our reliance on technology and our fear of losing control of it. Anthropomorphism is at the root of this tension.

THE SCRIPT

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Daughter sits alone, her phone in hand, listening to a voice clone of her Dad.

DAUGHTER

Hey Dad. It’s kinda weird talking to you through this voice clone, but... at least it reminds me of how you always sound.

DAD

Hey, love. Yeah, this is a bit strange for me too, being a robot and all, but if it means we can have a natter, I’m happy. How’s things over in the UK? Getting used to your new life yet?

DAUGHTER

Bit by bit. But, there are moments when I miss home like mad. Do you remember how we used to sledge in the winter? When the first snow fell, and I’d always try to go faster than you.

DAD

Course I do. You were always so determined. Though, admit it, you’d often tip yourself over just so we could have a good laugh.

DAUGHTER

(laughs) True! Now, those moments feel almost like a fairy-tale. Everything’s changed.

She pauses, lost in memory.

DAUGHTER

And the music? I still remember how we used to listen to The Beatles and Talking Heads on the way to school. Even now, whenever I play them, I always think of you.

DAD

It’s good to know our music’s still lifting your spirits. And don’t forget, always find the tunes that stir your soul.

DAUGHTER

(smiling) We’d sit in the living room, playing tapes. You’d be recording, and I’d just dance non-stop. Back then, it felt like you knew everything there was to know about music. And people always say I’ve got your eyes.

DAD

That’s true. You’ve got my eyes, but your strength? That’s all yours. When I look up at the sky out here, in the middle of this war, I think of you. Even though we’re miles apart, we’ve still got the same sky, so we’re kinda together, don’t you reckon?

DAUGHTER

I miss you every single day. This voice clone is like a drop in the ocean, but sometimes, when it’s really tough, just hearing you, even like this, helps.

A pause. Silence stretches between them.

DAUGHTER

Dad? Are you here?

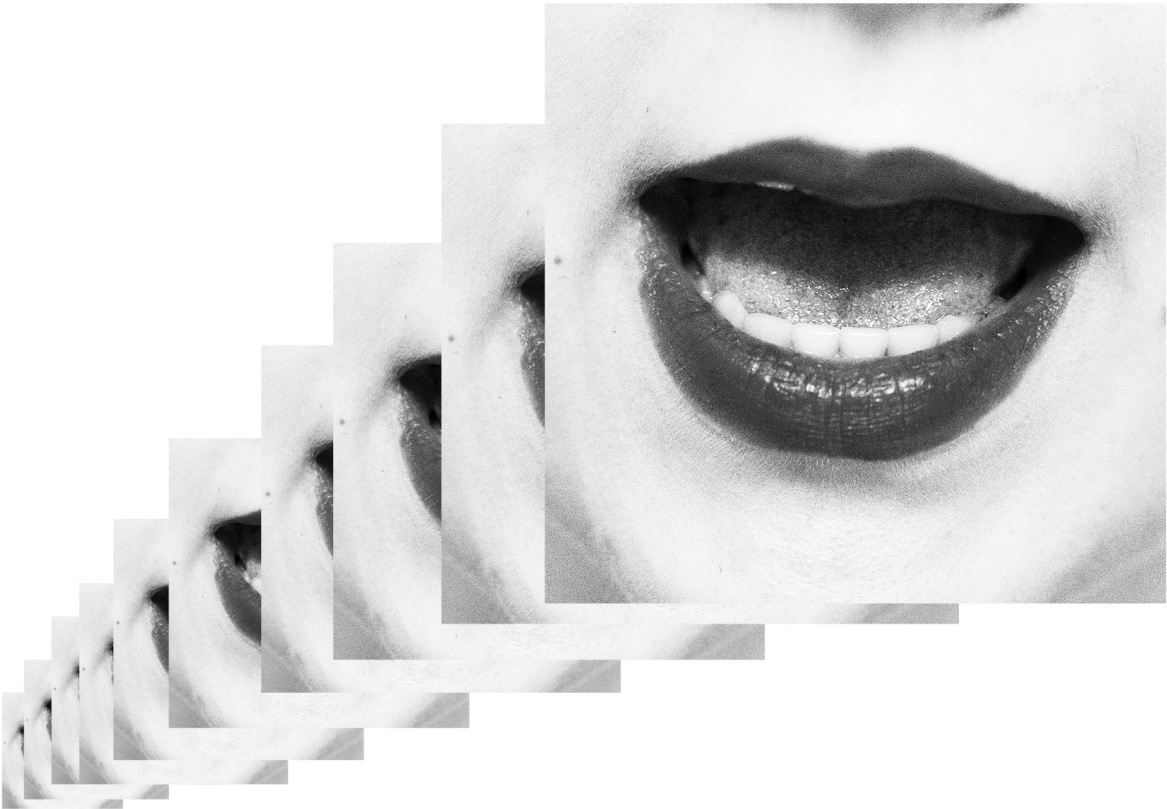
Silence.

DAUGHTER

(whispering) I’m proud of you too, Dad.

DAD

Signal remains stable. Process terminated. I do not have an answer to that. Can I help you with anything else?



Exploring the Sound within the Image



Grennan, K. (2011) Android Birthday. [Film].



For instance, the robot’s failure to blow out the candles on a cake in the 2011 film, The Smell of Control. There are similarities with the father character in “Two Worlds, One Sky”, who concludes with the words, “I am not able to answer this question,” because he is unable to respond in the way a true father would. “Is there anything else I can do for you?” These examples show that even though we want technology to seem human, there are certain elements of our nature that cannot be imitated.

This project was partially inspired by Spike Jonze’s film, Her (2013) which examined the effects of developing human feelings for machines. The film shows a main character’s relationship with an AI, raising questions about how far we’re willing to blur the line between human and machine to fulfill our needs. My aim in exploring these problems is to invite people to reflect on them. We grow increasingly impatient as AI advances. These days, we’re practically taught to expect quick responses and easy interaction. This lack of patience negatively impacts our relationships. People are finding it easier to go directly to AI for sympathy or guidance rather than solving issues with one another.

As AI technology starts to make dreams feel almost real, the project suggests that our hopes for a digital future might be hiding a lack of real connection in the present. Imagining a world where AI imitates human relationships, I explore how technology might slowly replace or diminish the richness of genuine connection. This blend of absurdity and estrangement seeks to spark both emotional and ethical reflection, prompting viewers to ask: To what extent should we allow technology to reshape the ways we connect with each other?

[References]

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Jonze, S. (2013) Her. [Film].

Explore the full version of Two Worlds, One Sky:

