

'paula' & Work: A Document on the Machinic Enslavement in Academic Capitalism 2023-24

Borough Road Gallery May 8 - 14 14:00-19:00 pm

Here's the info on my upcoming exhibition and, in response to the challenges we are facing, I encourage you to read and consider signing the [Open Letter in Solidarity with the School of Arts and Creative Industries](#) at London South Bank University. Thank you!

'paula' & Work:

A Document on the Machinic Enslavement in Academic Capitalism 2023-24

Inspired by the landmark exhibition *Women & Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973-75* by Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt, and Mary Kelly, this project extends these discussions into the realm of academic capitalism. It offers an exploration of identity and technology during a critical time for the arts and humanities in the UK.

In early 2024, following a semester after my sabbatical to work with Generative AI, the university closed the Photography programme at the School of Arts. This decision came amidst the threat of closure facing Arts and Humanities departments at universities across the UK. The artwork produced in this charged political climate addresses the trauma of precarity and the specific trauma around the loss of identity.

By adopting an auto-ethnographic approach, the project crafts academic portraits and texts that together weave a technobiography. This narrative emerges from a blend of algorithmic models, deep archival research, and elements of speculative fiction, providing a reflective narrative on academic capitalism and the personal stories entwined with it.

The exhibition, conceptualized as a publication-installation, unveils data amassed from computers and the internet related to 'paula,' offering an experimental perspective on algorithmic datafication. It ventures into autobiographic fiction, where the corporate strategy of a university is processed through machine learning to narrate 'paula's' life story in the first person.

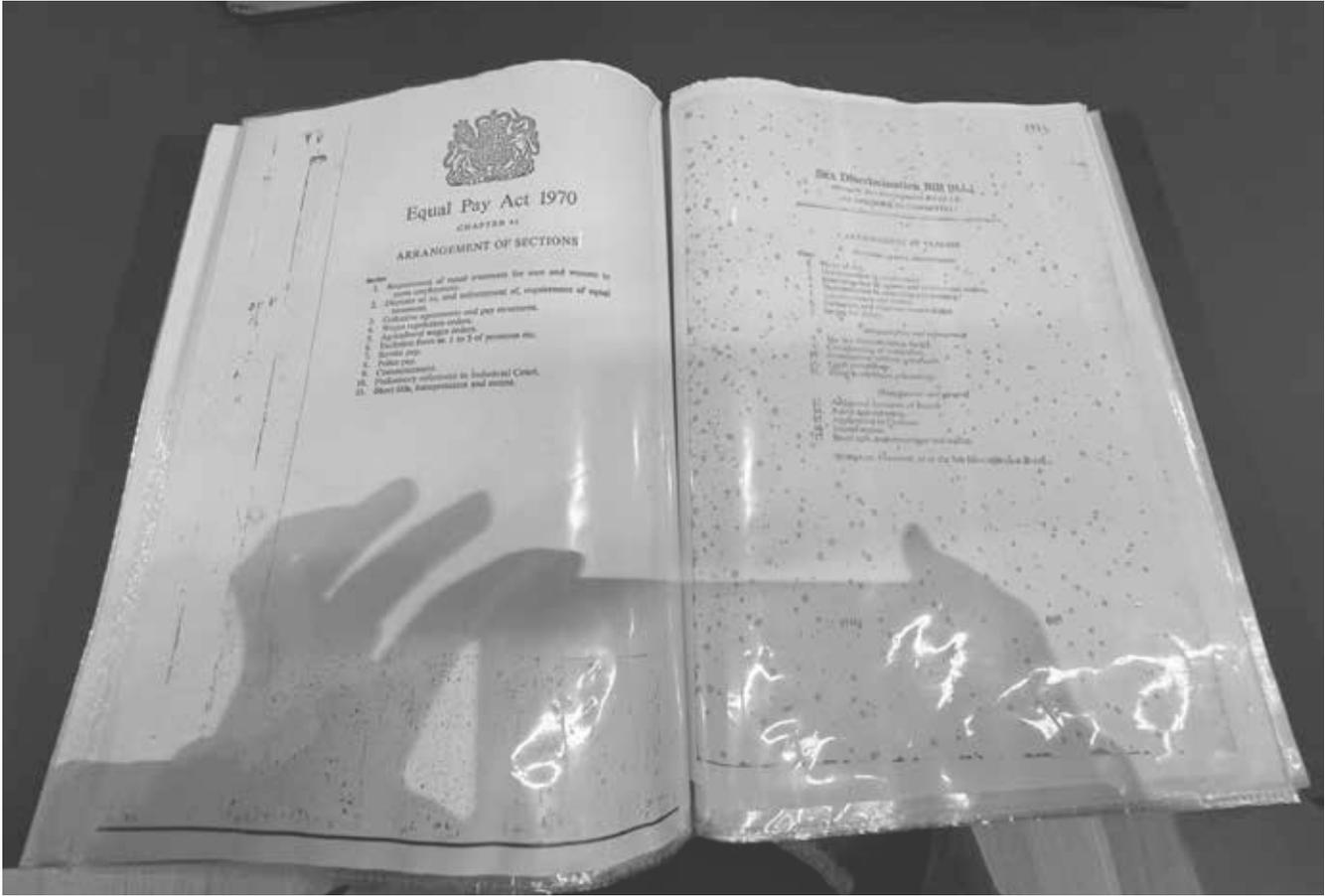
Included in the installation:

[The Death and Life of UK Universities and the Cultural Spaces They Consume](#)
video work by Igea Troiani and Tonia Carless [+]

Artists' talk: AI Disruption: AI, Education, and Algorithms of Power

- **Date:** Friday, May 10





'paula' & work 2



Women & Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973-75
 1973-5, Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt, Mary Kelly, Women in Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990,
 Tate Britain London 8 Nov 2023 - 7 Apr 2024

Women & workThe project developed from Harrison, Hunt and Kelly's involvement in the Women's Workshop of the Artists Union. The group was founded in 1972 with the aims of advancing women's causes within the union and ending racial and sexual discrimination in the arts.

Women & Work is a survey and analysis of women's labour at a metal box making factory in Bermondsey, London. The artists employed a sociological approach, gathering data through interviews, archival research and observation.

Women & Work:

A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973 - 75 1973-5

Video, 2 monitors, colour, audio, photographs, gelatin silver print on paper and works on paper, ink

Video durations: 3 min, 34 sec; 2 min, 22 sec

Audio durations: 26 min, 13 sec;

15 min, 22 sec; 28 min, 46 sec

iphone documentation of the installation Women & Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973-75, 1973-5, Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt, Mary Kelly, during the visit with Heloise Bergman to the exhibition Women in Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990, Tate Britain London 28 March 2024

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 **Architecture_MPS**
Volume 19, Issue 1

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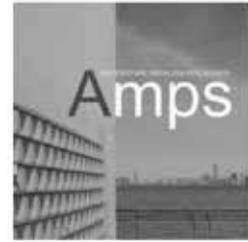
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The Death and Life of UK Universities and the Cultural Spaces They Consume

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Author(s): Igea Troiani ^{1,*}, Tonia Carless ^{2,*}
 Editor(s): Dr Maciej Stasiowski
 Publication date (Electronic): 26 February 2021
 Journal: Architecture_MPS
 Publisher: UCL Press
 Keywords: higher education, university, architecture, neoliberalism, corporatization

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Abstract

The shift in focus in UK higher education since Thatcherism from the production of knowledge for civic betterment to the production and consumption of knowledge by the university for revenue generation can be read through the social rearrangement of space in the university town or city. A key spatial reconfiguration emerging from the shift in economic conditions is the collapse of the modern university as a singular, ideological construct. Like 'the city' before it, the modern university has, at its interior, been reformed into a newly defined, fragmented public-private social space, and, at its exterior, into a devourer of the space of the local community. This article showcases excerpts from a film made by the authors entitled *The Death and Life of UK Universities* – a title inspired by Jane Jacobs's critique of great American cities. Our film is a cinematic database survey of the changing space of all British universities which considers this systematic spatial reprogramming of space within the city. The two-year research project is an audio-visual critique of the way in which neoliberalism, corporatization and commercial interests have co-opted the space of the British university. Referencing the films of Charlie Chaplin and Gordon Matta-Clark and the writings of Henri Lefebvre, the film focuses on university cities, critically observing the rise of university marketing material and the consumption of the city and of local community life for university student accommodation. We ask: How are UK universities being spatially reconfigured and what are the consequences?

Main article text

Academic Capitalism and the Neoliberal City

Between 1962 and 1998, full-time university students who were 'ordinary residents' in the United Kingdom paid no tuition fees. Since 1998, UK universities have steadily been forced, because of the withdrawal of government funding, to focus on 'academic capitalism'¹ to better compete in the global higher education marketplace. As a consequence, universities, the cities they are in, and the bodies that occupy them, have transformed. Propelled in part by the shift towards neoliberal, institutional self-sufficiency and corporatization under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, the university has altered its purpose, and who and what it serves. Under neoliberalism,² the bodies of students and academics within the university have, to varying degrees, been purposely focused away from engaging in the 'possibility of immanent critique ... locating the contradictions in the rules and systems necessary to production',³ to quote Simon Sadler, to being required to be optimally economically productive. The service of the university is now to optimize the 'creative class'⁴ – as Richard Florida defines it – that universities nurture to increase impact on real world production, and a government's global economic power and status through research for industry. The process is concomitant with the shift from a long-term vision of how students can contribute to society to the full becoming of the university as service provider centred on opportunistic, 'short-term' career progression, as Zygmunt Bauman recognizes.⁵ As big businesses for the UK economy, universities also transform their identity and appearance, growing for greater spatial domination and thereby altering or flattening existing urban cultures.

Unlike most existing twenty-first-century research on universities, which records architectures and campus or estates planning,⁶ or which endeavours to reinstate the value of university placemaking⁷) to showcase, sell and promote current trends in the university campus experience, this research is original because it is framed as a spatial critique of processes associated with academic capitalism. It aims to showcase an urban collage of social, cultural and material waste and excess associated with much UK university campus development, resulting from the neoliberal requirements to be contingent, resilient, flexible and all the other catchphrases that underpin 'liquid modernity'⁸ for individual, institutional and governmental growth. It employs neo-Marxist critiques of urban space,⁹ mainly from Henri Lefebvre, associated with construction and destruction of the space of the city, and it examines the newly invigorated role that many UK

Filming *The Death and Life of UK Universities*

Since 2016, we have been filming the physical transformation that has been occurring in the life cycle of university campuses throughout the UK as part of an independent research film entitled *The Death and Life of UK Universities*,¹³ screen grabs of which are included here (Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3). Inspired by Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,¹¹ the film offers a parallel critique of the phenomena of urban gentrification and societal cleansing which occurred in American cities in the 1950s and in UK universities in the early twenty-first century as a consequence of modernization. The film takes on the approach of Jacobs as an empirical study, survey and observation from within the city. Just as Jacobs understood that government policies for planning and development contravened the everyday life functions of city neighbourhoods in New York at that time, so we have developed a critique of contemporary, neoliberal policies and their capacity to undermine the function of the university and higher education in the UK. Jacobs's analysis is significant because it was an immersive, ethnographic approach of the city dweller bringing their everyday experience to bear on the spaces which they occupy. Here we consider the inner workings and failings of the UK university under recent governance. Like Jacobs's city analysis, our film is a form of feminist discourse, situating the teleologies associated with the demise of existing urban cultures.

Academic work by Igea Troiani and Tonia Carless, deposited at the UCL online repository for REF (Research Excellence Framework) Troiani, I; Carless, T; (2021) The Death and Life of UK Universities and the Cultural Spaces They Consume. Architecture_MPS, 19 (1), Article 2. 10.14324/111.444.amps.2021v19i1.002.. Green open access



Figure 1

Screen grabs from the short film, *The Death and Life of UK Universities* (Source: © Igea Troiani and Tonia Carless, 2020). The top screen grab includes a photograph of Wates House (1975–2014) at UCL (foreground), and a photograph of the building under reconstruction (into what is now 22 Gordon Street). The bottom screengrab shows onsite footage shot by the authors looking outside from the ground floor interior of 22 Gordon Street during the Bartlett’s 2019 End of Year Show, and the narrative overlay of quotation that ‘Nothing disappears completely’ from Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* (1991).



Figure 3

Stills from the short film, *The Death and Life of UK Universities* (Source: © Igea Troiani and Tonia Carless, 2020). The stills show documentary footage of the demolition of the Lloyd Building at Oxford Brookes University, which took place in summer 2010, and a robotic model building arm at the Architectural Association in London. The bottom right-hand still shows an excerpt from *Conical Intersect* by Gordon Matta-Clark (1975).

JOURNAL ARTICLE

TECHNOBIOGRAPHY: RESEARCHING LIVES, ONLINE AND OFF

HELEN KENNEDY

Biography, Vol. 26, No. 1, ONLINE LIVES (winter 2003), pp. 120-139 (20 pages)

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23540390>

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Abstract and details

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ABSTRACT

This article is an argument for technobiography, a term coined in *Cyborg Lives? Women's Technobiographies*, a collection I coedited in 2001. I outline what technobiography is, and how, by allowing access to what it feels like to live certain digital experiences, it can contribute to building a comprehensive picture of cybercultural landscapes. If we want to understand lived experiences of the Internet, we need to study not only online, virtual representations of selves, but also lives and selves situated within the social relations of the consumption and production of information and communication technologies. Drawing on two technobiographical projects—one involving a group of black, working-class women returning to education with the aid of networked technologies and computer-mediated distance learning, and another exploring social relations in a digital multimedia production center—I indicate ways in which technobiography can contribute to this important project

References

Cited by (4)

- Baym, Nancy K. "The Emergence of On-Line Community." *Cybersociety 2.0: Revisiting Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*. Ed. Steve Jones. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998. 138-63.
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Search document

TECHNOBIOGRAPHY: RESEARCHING LIVES, ONLINE AND OFF

HELEN KENNEDY

INTRODUCING TECHNOBIOGRAPHY

In his *Introduction to Cybercultures*, David Bell argues that cyberspace is created through the stories we tell about it: material stories (about hardware and software histories); symbolic stories (in popular culture, for example, films); and experiential stories (about cyberspace encounters, which are mediations of material and symbolic stories). Bell draws on the work of N. Katherine Hayles to define his three types of stories as stories about what cyberspace and cyberculture are, stories about what they mean, and stories about what they do. Stories are important, he writes, because cyberspace is "something to be understood as it is lived": cyberspace is culture, "made from people, machines and stories in everyday life" (2). In particular, individual experience stories, or technobiographies, are significant because of the subtle and nuanced differences in each individual's techno-experiences (Costigan). This is an argument that Carolyn Steedman has made for autobiographical stories more generally: the purpose of autobiographical projects, she writes, should not be to draw generalized conclusions which can be used to theorize the lives of many, but rather, to understand the many and varied ways in which individuals negotiate social experiences. The aim should not be to universalize and subsequently simplify, but to specify and then render complex. Technobiographies, this article proposes, are kinds of experience stories through which it is possible to do just this.

This article, therefore, is an argument for technobiography as a useful method for studying digital experiences in general, and the relationship between online and offline lives in particular. After beginning with an outline of what technobiography is, I then discuss two important contributions that a technobiographical approach can make to the field that some scholars call cybercultural studies. First, technobiography makes it possible to examine online lives in offline contexts, and so facilitates moving beyond a focus merely on virtual representations of lives and selves, to a fuller understanding of the social relations of the production and consumption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Second, technobiography allows access to the context in which online lives are produced, to lived experience and to living experience—that is, what it feels like to live certain experiences of digital multimedia from the inside, or to occupy privileged and non-privileged identity positions within the micro-power dynamics of technology-rich environments.

To make my argument for technobiography, I draw on two technobiographical projects in which I was involved in the closing years of the twentieth century. The first project, on which I worked as a tutor/researcher, is Project Her@,¹ named after the Greek goddess Hera, worshipped by women at every stage of their lives. Project Her@ was an experiment in the use of computer-mediated distance learning to enhance access to university level education for women from disadvantaged backgrounds. The project involved the delivery of the Her@ course, a part distance-learning foundation course which prepared students to undertake undergraduate degrees. The course itself was founded on the principles of experiential education: Her@ students were asked to produce reflexive autobiographical narratives about their experiences, which served both as assessed work and as research data. Fourteen mature women took part in the Her@ course, part of which was delivered via networked computers loaned to the students for the duration of the program, and installed in their homes. Willingness to participate in associated research projects was a condition of acceptance in the course.

The second project was the development at a university campus of a multimedia production center which I call Memex, after Vannevar Bush's hypothetical hypertext device of the 1940s.² The Memex center houses a range of courses in multimedia, new media, and digital media, as well as research, production, and consultancy activities in these areas. Aiming to connect the university and its community with global developments in information, communication, and media technologies, the center combines teaching, learning, and research with professional and creative practice and

Hello Paula,

I am so sorry for taking this long to reply!

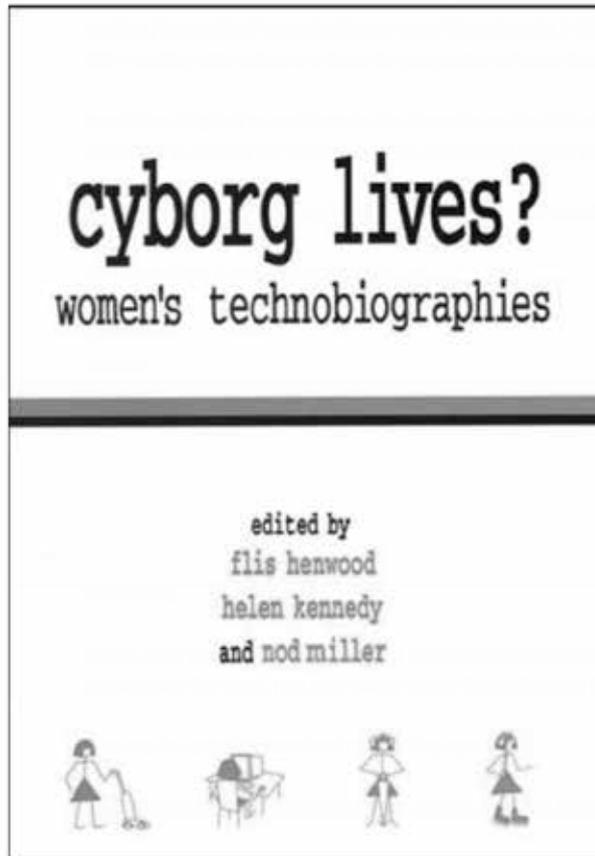
and

I am glad to hear about the exhibition in May – looking forward to it@

Here are the texts that I read and was building upon:

[TECHNOBIOGRAPHY: RESEARCHING LIVES, ONLINE AND OFF, HELEN KENNEDY](#)

[Cyborg Lives?: Women's Technobiographies \(I found this on some used books websites in the UK\)](#)



It's a modest area of feminist research that I think can be revived with particular attention to evolving technologies that are sentient / immersive / entangled in new ways! More broadly, I think the more general threads of software research in feminist STS – thinking with software or from the perspective of it also feed into this.

I would be delighted to contribute to the discussion on the 10th of May, if not too late to join in - it sounds like it will be closely connected to some of my research streams and I would be very happy to take part in discussing the work.

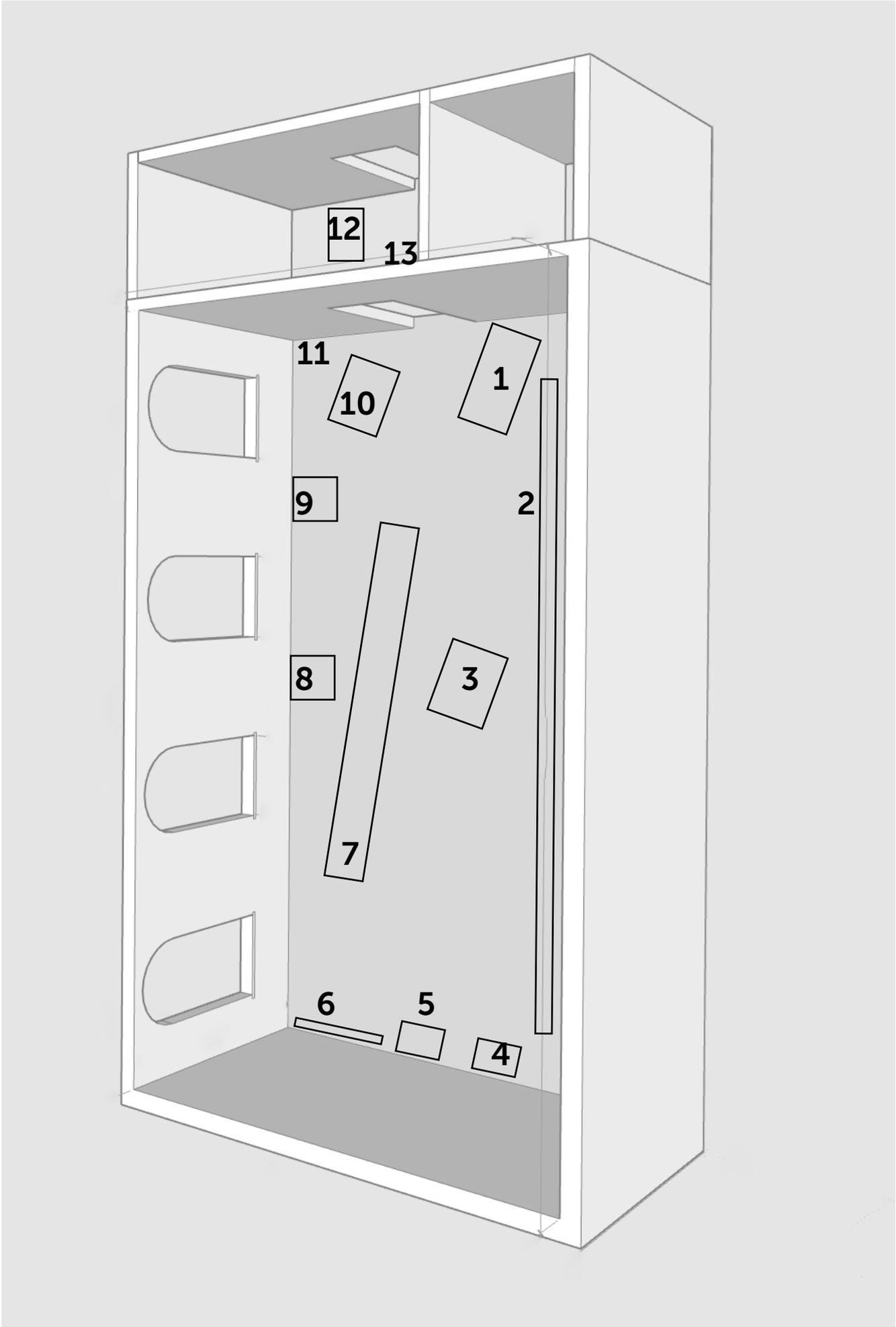
Sorry again I took ages to reply! I looped in my most current email address.

P.S. I hope there is good news about the lost cat!

All the best,
Teodora

Email from Teodora about technobiographies, a modest area of feminist research she is interested in reviving for the artist's talk (May 10) and PhD.

Reference paper: Helen Kennedy, Technobiography: Researching Lives, Online and Offline, Biography, Vol. 26, No. 1, ONLINE LIVES (winter 2003), pp. 120-139 (20 pages)



1. Perception Machine
(Demise of Photography?)
Four Perspex screens, 178x100x43cm
Five Perspex plinths, 120/100x30x30cm
One darkroom enlarger, 65x45x45cm
One electroscope, 38x37x57cm
Darkroom equipment: trays, chemistry, film, 42x32x27cm
One bouquet of flowers (gift from second-year Photography students), in a kettle with water, 54x50x36cm
One microscope, 42x42x28cm
186x202x101cm
2. AI-centric Curriculum
Ninety machine learning-generated portraits and job titles
Laser prints on Fabriano paper, colour, 29.7x21cm each, affixed with metal pins
Ten ready-made blue pin boards
120x930x1cm
3. St George's Quarter Development
Ready-made architectural model
Development of an academic building for Borough Road, part of St George's Development Quarter, following the demolition of Brandon House (social housing, Keyworth Street) by Wilkinson Eyre Architects
Two children's chairs from msdm House-Studio-Gallery
77x197x88cm
4. End of the World is AI
Found newspaper, 30x18x1cm
Displayed on a wood plinth,
100x58x48cm
5. Academic Board (2010)
Ready-made four ballot boxes for the election of the Academic Board,
220x33x32.5cm
6. Individual Consultation Meeting (paula Lip Sync)
AI-generated lip sync video, 8:21, colour, sound
Wall projection, 133x146cm
7. The Performance of Schooling
Ten classroom chairs with lily pads (writing tablets)
Documentation (see list of printed documents), metal clips, pencils
67x520x82cm
8. The Death and Life of UK Universities and the Cultural Spaces They Consume
By Igea Troiani and Tonia Carless
Video, colour, 04:16
Ready-made metal trolley, 121x46x43cm
9. Academic Capitalism
Printed document (see list of printed documents)
29.7x21x2cm
Displayed on a Perspex plinth,
125x30x30cm
10. The Photographic Possibility of Pedagogical Action
Ready-made school lockers (School of Applied Sciences)
Filled with photographic equipment and found photographs
194x153x60cm
11. Reproduction (Symbolic Violence I: Family)
Photograph of paula and mum by dad at the University of Lisbon campus
26x20x1cm
Accompanied by two flower bouquets (gifts from Julie and Hera's private view)
169x50x35cm
12. REF Outputs and Students' Work
Office shelves displaying paula's art and publishing practice REF portfolio for the Research Excellence Framework (year 2021, ongoing), and students' photobooks published as coursework in the module Self-Publishing and the Photobook (2010-2024)
170x211x44cm
13. Student Recruitment
Ready-made, grey floor standing info board with sticker
120x45x29cm

MidJourney
Text to image portraits

generated with this variations
of this prompt:

Imagine/
Artist-academic,
teaches Photography and photobook
publishing at the School of Arts and Creative
Industries,
uses the pronouns they /them, 50+
jaw-length bob hair deep side part no fringe,
classic Ray-Ban RB3025 Aviator sunglasses
frame polished gold with prescription lenses
untainted,
wears oversized minimal streetwear,
Shot with iPhone 15 pro max
Aspect ratio 1:1



1st model

trained with
Runway ML

Source:
25 'paula' self-portraits shot with
iPhone 15 pro max



"paula"

"paula" portraits
generated with
character generator

text to image
prompts



paula in the artist's studio
posing for an interview
portrait siting by the
trestle table
facing the window

4

Radboud/Runway
"paula" faces

use of text prompts
to train generated
"paula" model with
extreme emotional
expressions
that are disruptive
variations of the
Radboud Faces
database



"Generate an image of Paula in a deeply emotional state, with a focus on conveying a profound sense of sadness. Her expression should be tearful, with eyes welled up with tears, reflecting a deep inner turmoil. Paula looks to her right, connecting with something beyond the viewer's sight, which adds a layer of depth and introspection to her expression. The frontal camera perspective captures her face directly, highlighting the intensity of her emotional state and the seriousness of her feelings. This image aims to portray Paula's emotional struggle with sensitivity and depth."

2nd model

trained with Replicate

Source:
AI generated 'paula'
academic portraits
Mid Journey+Runway



10

2nd model

trained with Replicate

Addition of
other academic portraits
including research,
teaching and
administrative ranks



11

paula's sabbatical research with AI generated identification photography, selection of presentation slides for the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image CSNI seminar 26th March 2024



Further and Higher Education Act 1992

1992 CHAPTER 13

An Act to make new provision about further and higher education. [6th March 1992]

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Extent Information

- E1** This Act extends to England and Wales only with the exception of certain provisions see s. 94(5)-(7).
The amending provisions of this Act are co-extensive with the enactments so amended see s. 94(7)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Act: for any reference to the Education Assets Board there is substituted (1.10.1998) a reference to the Education Transfer Council by virtue of 1998 c. 31, s. 136; S.I. 1998/2212, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1 Pt. I**
- C2** Act applied (1.6.2001) by S.I. 2001/1507, reg. 2, **Sch. 2 para. 2**
- C3** Act modified (1.4.1993) by S.I. 1993/563, art.2, Sch. 1, **Sch. 2.**
- C4** Act excluded (16.7.1998) by 1998 c. 30, ss. 26(11), 46(3) (with s. 42(8))
- C5** Certain powers transferred as specified (1.7.1999) by S.I. 1999/672, art. 2, **Sch.1.**
- C6** Act excluded (1.7.2004 for E., 31.3.2011 for W.) by Higher Education Act 2004 (c. 8), ss. 29(3), 52(1); S.I. 2011/297, art. 4(a)
- C7** Act applied (1.4.2005) by The Central Sussex College (Government) Regulations 2005 (S.I. 2005/397), **Sch. 2 para. 2**
- C8** Act modified (7.4.2005) by Education Act 2005 (c. 18), s. 96(2)
- C9** Education Acts modified (*temp.*) (1.4.2007) by Education and Inspections Act 2006 (c. 40), s. 188(3), **Sch. 6 para. 3(3)**; S.I. 2007/935, art. 5(bb)

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 allowed thirty-five polytechnics to become universities (often referred to as the "new universities" or "post-1992 universities"). A goal of the act was to end the distinction – known as the "binary divide" – between colleges and universities.



Higher Education Act 2004

2004 CHAPTER 8

An Act to make provision about research in the arts and humanities and about complaints by students against institutions providing higher education; to make provision about fees payable by students in higher education; to provide for the appointment of a Director of Fair Access to Higher Education; to make provision about grants and loans to students in higher or further education; to limit the jurisdiction of visitors of institutions providing higher education; and for connected purposes. [1st July 2004]

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

PART 1

RESEARCH IN ARTS AND HUMANITIES

1 Arts and Humanities Research Council

In this Part “the Arts and Humanities Research Council” means a body to be established by Royal Charter wholly or mainly for objects consisting of, or comprised in, the following—

- (a) carrying out, facilitating, encouraging and supporting—
 - (i) research in the arts and humanities, and
 - (ii) instruction in the arts and humanities,
- (b) advancing and disseminating knowledge in, and promoting understanding of, the arts and humanities,
- (c) promoting awareness of the body's activities, and
- (d) providing advice on matters relating to the body's activities.

The Higher Education Act 2004 introduced several changes to the higher education system in the United Kingdom, the most important and controversial being a major change to the funding of universities, and the operation of tuition fees.



March 12th 2024 6 pm

The new business proposal has finally been revealed, and we've been made redundant. As we exit the meeting, I spot portraits of university executives on the corridor walls and photograph them for the ongoing research on academic portraits. Is this a coping mechanism to deal with the anxiety of termination or an expedient way of conducting photo-ethnographic research on an academic executive office floor?



April 4th 2024

Utilised AI-based app to generate songs from notes for individual consultation meeting.

The task involved utilizing technology creatively to translate meeting notes into musical compositions and visual representations to convey a voice that might suggest the meeting's performativity.

Generated songs and karaoke-style videos incorporating various genres and voices:

- Genres: pop, HipHop, Cafe, Piano Rock, Country, Children's, Chant
- Voices: Natalie, Kevin, Katie

- Tracks:

1. "As I prepare" (mp3, mp4) 4:00
2. "In my role" (mp3, mp4) 4:00
3. "My research" (mp3, mp4) 3:19
 - Subtracks: [bass], [drums], [music], [vocals], [rebalanced]
4. "My teaching methodology" (mp3, mp4) 2:11
5. "What I believe" (mp3, mp4) 1:06
6. "Within the university" (mp3, mp4) 3:48

Published on the occasion of the exhibition
'paula' & Work: A Document on the Machinic Enslavement
in Academic Capitalism 2023-24
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May 8 - Tuesday, May 14 2024

Supported by the London South Bank University (LSBU)
Research Sabbatical Scheme for the 2023-24
academic year for an investigation into
the colonial roots of the judicial portrait and
current applications of artificial intelligence
in governance and surveillance.

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Cirian Frederick
Stan Briza
Andy Lemon
Hannah Tointon
Mireille Ribiere
Gonnie Rietveld
Heloise Bergman
UCU
Geoff Goss
Mark @Estates
ACI colleagues
Photography colleagues
and students

msdm
House-Studio-Gallery
publications
msdm.org.uk/paula-work

