

LaTurbo Avedon

7 July – 5 September 2022



garage

Club Zero is an exhibition that presents the emergence of three new avatars that will inhabit a digital location within La Turbo Avedon's new work *Materia* (2022), a collection of unique blockchain-integrated virtual artefacts that are capable of influencing the aesthetics, forms, and future of the work's overarching system.

The three unnamed and pre-developed unfinished avatars are presented as non-fungible people (NFPs)—rendered non-binary avatars algorithmically generated using character generation technology developed by Daz 3D—for sale on Open Sea with proof of ownership stored on the Ethereum blockchain. Throughout the exhibition, visitors are granted access to the hidden backend of Avedon's creative process through three interactive live-streamed sessions on Twitch to determine the avatar's final appearance. Presented in a transition of their customisation of self, the avatars portray a hyperreal scene fraught with identity, agency and personification through the digital.

Experienced inside the club atmosphere of *Club Zero* (the club space within *Materia*) the new avatars in the exhibition titled the same are introduced to the visitors in a 'starter zone' via interactive moments that build on various aspects of each NFPs being. During the run of the exhibition, the platform culminates in three different perspectives as each avatar confronts their own creation and experience in simulated worlds. The club becomes the laboratory and meeting point for those who are invested in the co-creation of an avatar that will be of many voices and opinions. The "starter zone" of *Club Zero* riffs off the current moment and continued interest in the personalisation of self and of constructing a virtual self in the metaverse. Released from the quick pace of the NFT world, Avedon's NFPs are brought to life slowly, through connection to an involved audience, and through the friction of converging user experiences.

Expanding on their practice of fluid identity within the digital space, Avedon addresses the variability of virtual forms, and how they can continue to be reshaped and changed through varied ownership and trading. While our physically embodied identities might be more static in some ways, the NFPs created in *Club Zero* will be in states of flux, their fate of appearance, identity and history-dependent upon the choices made by visiting players. Implementing character traits as well as external appearances is important in *Club Zero*. Presented in dialogue boxes, each NFP is anthropomorphised as an attempt

to introduce a holistic method of character design, one that feels intrinsically more personal and intimate.

In a time when many people are buying avatars, profile pictures (PFPs) and virtual characters solely to trade as commodities or temporary self-representation, *Club Zero* presents itself as an antidote to the hyper-capitalised avatar moment of the metaverse and beyond. For Avedon, 'rescuing these NFPs from a different sort of second life', and providing them with multi-level care from any participant who wants to help construct them, goes against the notion of the avatar being solely an icon or figure representing a particular person in the digital space. Instead, the avatar is collectively formed and therefore poses a collective responsibility from those who created them.

Opening new visitors up to the background of *Materia*—the hierarchies, the lore, and the entanglement within a blockchain-linked system—the NFPs act as unofficial guides to the work through narratives created in tandem with the audience participation in ways that will permanently shape them. The NFPs also expand on the role of NFTs and blockchain systems within art and how the future might look for technology of this kind. Based on remembrance, lineage, action, and narrative, *Club Zero* reflects on identity in online worlds and brings to light the ever-changing role of the avatar in the future of communities, online and offline platforms, and collaborative co-creation.

¹ Daz Productions, Inc. is a 3D-content and software company specialising in providing rigged 3D human models, associated accessory content, and software to the hobbyist as well as the prosumer market. <https://www.daz3d.com/>


² The world's first and largest marketplace for the buying and selling of creative digital assets and non-fungible tokens.



Non-Fungible People by Daz 3D


NFP #808

Owned by you 16 views 4 favorites



Price History

All Time All Time Avg. Price \uparrow 0.2945



Description

Created by Tafi

808 of 8,888 beautifully rendered 3D Non-Fungible People (NFP). NFPs algorithmically generated and rendered in breathtaking 3D. Each unique NFP portrays a powerful, self-expressive woman or non-binary person.

Properties

BACKGROUND Navy 7% have this trait	CHARACTER Tasha 3% have this trait	EXPRESSION Goopy Smile To... 2% have this trait
EYE COLOR Faded Brown 2% have this trait	HAIR COLOR Purple 5% have this trait	HAIRSTYLE FE Short Hair 2% have this trait
OUTFIT Heartbreaker, S... 0.03% have this tra...	TATTOOS & MAKEUP Makeup, Eye, Bl... 0.55% have this tr...	TATTOOS & MAKEUP Tattoo, Face, Pir... 4% have this trait

About Non-Fungible People by Daz 3D

Details

Item Activity

Filter: Sales X Transfers X Clear All

Type	Price	From	To	Time
Sale	\uparrow 0.4	heirbender	you	4 months ago
Transfer		heirbender	you	4 months ago
Sale	\uparrow 0.189	potermc	heirbender	5 months ago
Transfer		potermc	heirbender	5 months ago

Token: **NFP #808**
Source: **Tafi / OpenSea**

PERSONAL RECORD

AIRDROP

Dec-21-2021 06:05:55 PM +UTC

0x3dfd8ef327ab2f0f572eb9294e0cc49579c3c9895ecc1406e7a61eafa627d760

SALE/TRANSFER

Dec-22-2021 09:13:26 AM +UTC .189 ETH

0x00759a0e7d20a5344650eda0b28d933b220ccf8d46ff105795a517c2e359ceed

RECOVERY/TRANSFER

Jan-19-2022 01:28:46 AM +UTC .4ETH

0x3fc83b5ea645edced6d9024f5bfe1d8a847e81156d555ebb0b4d868756079bdd

ATTRIBUTES

EYE COLOR	Faded Brown	(Rarity 2%)
HAIR COLOR	Purple	(Rarity 5%)






Non-Fungible People by Daz 3D


NFP #3531

Owned by you 118 views 11 favorites



Price History

All Time Avg. Price: 0.4113



Description

Created by Tafi

3,531 of 8,888 beautifully rendered 3D Non-Fungible People (NFP) PFPs algorithmically generated and rendered in breathtaking 3D. Each unique NFP portrays a powerful, self-expressive woman or non-binary person.

Properties

BACKGROUND Yellow 9% have this trait	CHARACTER Sukal 3% have this trait	EXPRESSION Gasp 1% have this trait
EXTRAS Arms, Robotka 0.44% have this tr...	EYE COLOR Green 5% have this trait	HAIR COLOR Blue 3% have this trait
HAIRSTYLE Saya Short 0.47% have this trait	NECK Choker, Black, ... 0.48% have this tr...	OUTFIT Meadow Whisp... 0.20% have this trait
PIERCINGS Earrings, Helix ... 7% have this trait	PIERCINGS Eyebrow 3% have this trait	TATTOOS & MAKEUP Tattoo, Torso, Pl... 3% have this trait

About Non-Fungible People by Daz 3D

Details

Item Activity

Filter: Sales X Transfers X Clear All

Type	Price	To	From	Time
Sale	0.89	iGoByMoth	you	4 months ago
Transfer		iGoByMoth	you	4 months ago
Sale	0.3	joso88	iGoByMoth	4 months ago
Transfer		joso88	iGoByMoth	4 months ago
Sale	0.205	Bob_653	joso88	5 months ago



Token: **NFP #3531**
Source: **Tafi / OpenSea**

PERSONAL RECORD

MINTED by Ninjawoks

Dec-22-2021 08:30:46 AM +UTC

0xdf8c1357243cca887810a7a576038a823141ee722c899b1d559e5546e8dc81a7

SALE/TRANSFER to Bob_653

Dec-27-2021 04:11:06 PM +UTC .25 ETH

0xd10af949fb81ff35e0167ce9f756f3d3f4bebf6152e0e74435456f70dde7bd1f

SALE/TRANSFER to joso88

Dec-27-2021 10:35:32 PM +UTC .205 ETH

0xd10af949fb81ff35e0167ce9f756f3d3f4bebf6152e0e74435456f70dde7bd1f

SALE/TRANSFER to iGoByMoth

Jan-06-2022 05:59:39 PM +UTC .3 ETH

0x2970f54e0f494b4690fddf0c94af7e9338937a0a9897d2bb127f4219dbf7e20

RECOVERY/TRANSFER

Jan-19-2022 01:06:17 AM +UTC .89ETH

0x23f6437b74a94e710e468aec1d37d8d20d9ee4300ba24f013f34a3ea29533e18

ATTRIBUTES

EYE COLOR Green (Rarity 5%)

HAIR COLOR Blue (Rarity 3%)





Non-Fungible People by Daz 3D

NFP #5542

Owned by you 3 views

Price History

All Time

No item activity yet

Listings

Offers

No offers yet

Description

Created by Tafi

5,542 of 8,888 beautifully rendered 3D Non-Fungible People (NFP) PFPs algorithmically generated and rendered in breathtaking 3D. Each unique NFP portrays a powerful, self-expressive woman or non-binary person.

Properties

BACKGROUND Yellow 9% have this trait	CHARACTER Coral 4% have this trait	EXPRESSION Goofy Smile To... 2% have this trait
EXTRAS Teeth, Minto Sh... 0.00% have this tr...	EYE COLOR Orange 4% have this trait	HAIR COLOR Red 11% have this trait
HAIRSTYLE Nesena 0.43% have this tra...	NECK Necklace, Chal... 0.59% have this tr...	PROP Grillz, Gold 0.02% have this trait
TOP Shirt, Grey 3% have this trait		

About Non-Fungible People by Daz 3D

Details

Item Activity

Filter

Sales X Transfers X Clear All

Transfer	Tafi	you	4 months ago
Minted	NullAddress	Tafi	5 months ago

Token: **NFP #5542**
Source: **Tafi / OpenSea**

PERSONAL RECORD

MINTED by LaTurbo
Dec-29-2021 03:06:35 PM +UTC

0xbf20fa6c03e95c41ac15680072dfb14ea8e56d4b83d19d461f3bb902c051644

ATTRIBUTES

EYE COLOR	Orange	(Rarity 4%)
HAIR COLOR	Red	(Rarity 11%)
EXTRAS: Teeth	Minto Shape	(Rarity 0.06%)





L'Inconnue/L'avatar: On La Turbo Avedon's Club Zero, for Arebyte on Screen, Summer 2022

by A.V. Marraccini

In reference photos, with their eyes closed, they look like *L'Inconnue de la Seine*. *L'Inconnue de la Seine* is the wax death mask of a young, anonymous woman dredged up from the river in the 1880's. A morgue assistant supposedly found her face so beautiful he reproduced it, and the wax became plaster casts, which in turn inspired sculpture, painting, literature, and even some living women to imitate her. The "they" here that look like *L'Inconnue* are the three avatars at the centre of La Turbo Avedon's new work, *Club Zero*. These avatars, 3-D renders initial purchased as NFT from a project called "Non Fungible People" have just been pulled from the water of commerce. But instead of their faces shaping ours, we will collectively re-make and re-vivify theirs as part of the artist's practice. In real, communal time, they become undrowned.

La Turbo Avedon's wider metawork of which *Club Zero* is a part is called *Materia*. It is a generative cosmological system that interacts with the blockchain and token holders as agents. La Turbo themselves exists in the metaverse, and has since before the term became popularized by association with NFTs. They have produced art as a game-based and social media avatar persona for many years. The system of sockets for interacting with *Materia* is designed to allow us, the interlopers, non-avatar bodies, access to the events of the space in which we do not normally dwell. The first event in the series was the socketing of Celestial into Font 1, with twelve minted tokens representing the zodiac of the new world for acquisition by collectors. These collectors and their choices in turn inflect the world being constructed.

Club Zero will be a place, time, and happening where the construction of a world meets the formation of personhood. It is like diving under

the Seine to talk to the ghost of *L'Inconnue* before she was found by fishermen—before Rilke knew her, or Albert Rudomine, and Man Ray. Avatars are older than you think. Remember the infinity of the negative numbers that come before zero? If you look through the marble viewport of Hermathena, the latest piece in the *Materia* output, perhaps you can see the prefigurations of the people La Turbo calls "born without stars".

The first of the three avatars with closed eyes, waiting in the blue, seems to have pink hair and a leather jacket. The second looks young, wearing the dress of a Cranach girl if Cranach designed mid-range fantasy games in the 2000's. The third opens their mouth, their long curly hair pulled back into a ponytail to reveal a tank top and spiked collar. Part of the purpose of *Materia* is to re-inscribe a new history, to give the avatars and their starless world the past La Turbo Avedon feels it deserves. We, the viewers, will meet these avatars as they are awakened in the *Club Zero* space in the default wardrobes and faces in which they were recovered from their purchase. We will not be allowed to forget these things either, in a piece about origins.

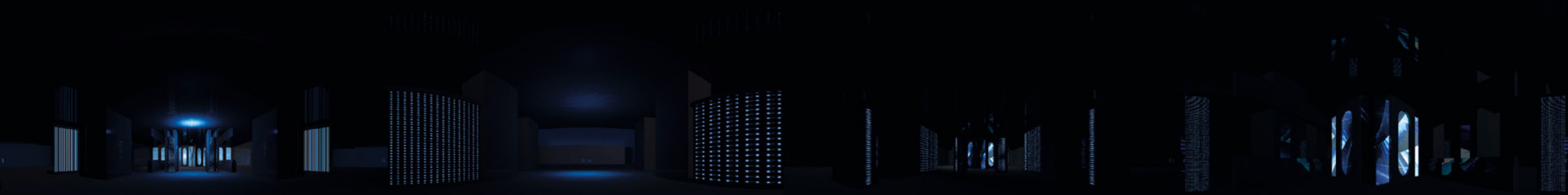
L'Inconnue did not become *L'Inconnue* overnight. She was not born an icon, likely lived in anonymous poverty, and died young of suicide. The face we call *L'Inconnue* is not the girl, who had she lived, would have been uninteresting to the imaginary. The face is the avatar. *L'Inconnue* simply means "the unknown" in French. How do faces—or bodies—become known? *Club Zero* asks this question of itself and its viewer-participants. Who the avatars become will also shape the world of *Materia* to whom they grant access going forward. They become icons but also priests.

There is a tenderness to La Turbo Avedon's practice that comes to the fore with their avatar work. They tell me that an avatar's early existence, when they are figuring out themselves in their new body, are known as "Rez Days". These avatars are going to be given evidence of their own Rez Days in the form of short, recorded works. They will know how they become themselves. Since La Turbo is themselves extant as an avatar to the art world not as a physical bodied person as we now consider normal, they have an exquisite sensitivity to what becoming a virtual person entails, and what it should not sacrifice. To become new in a body of a different cosmos unlocks questions about what this cosmos owes our bodies in turn, about how we become. *Club Zero* is a space for exploring that becoming.

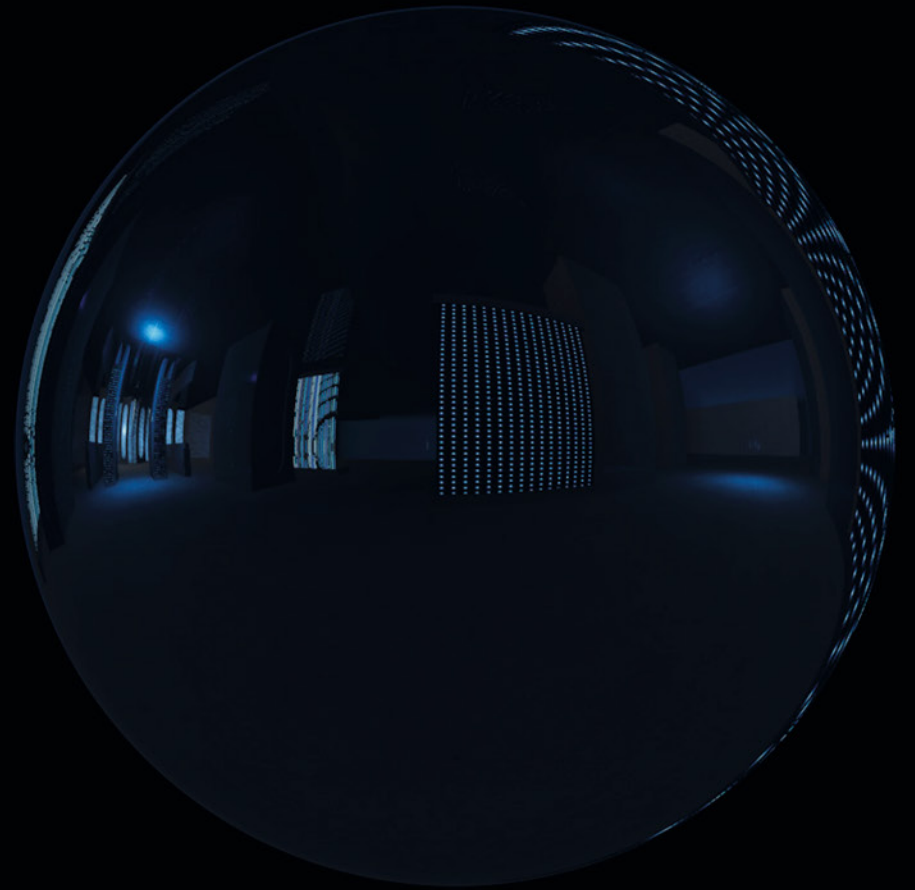
I consult the translation of Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, translated by Stephen Mitchell, for the passage about *L'Inconnue*:

The mouleur, whose shop I pass every day, has hung two plaster masks beside his door. One is the face of the young drowned woman, which they took a cast of in the morgue, because it was beautiful, because it smiled, because it smiled so deceptively, as if it knew.

Malte Laurids Brigge is Rilke's only novel, what we call a Bildungsroman, or a portrait of a coming of age. *Club Zero* will also be a kind of Bildungsroman, for its three protagonist avatars who will form themselves in front of, and alongside us, as viewers. Will they be beautiful? Will they smile secretly because they know? Will they come alive, cough up the river water, and speak? Look at them there, standing against the wall, waiting to become.



Modify:Facial > Nose



Watching interviews and artist walkthroughs La Turbo Avedon has given in the last few years of their practice, it's been interesting to observe the voice they adopt when speaking to the camera as a disconnected voiceover. Sometimes perhaps Scottish, sometimes a mixture of an unknown accent and computer-generated text-to-speech, but always uncannily human. Watching these videos with closed captions further pushes this uncanniness as they're often wrong, portmanteaus of similar-sounding words that don't convey La Turbo Avedon's true name: Letarte bow of dawn, LaToya Afton, LaToya I've done and La Toya Don to name a few. In whatever way they're recounted to the closed captions, La Turbo Avedon's away-from-keyboard reality will never truly be known by anyone other than themselves, maybe not even to their most historic collaborators. But this isn't the point. The slipperiness of Avedon's identity, and the absence of anything materially tangible to link them to quote-unquote "Real Life", is central to their work. The constructed illusion of a being and the performance of the persona is part of the role and ultimately is the point of why they exist.

For La Turbo Avedon, being raised on GeoCities and America Online (AOL), huge parts of their online identity were formed precisely during the expansion of Web 1.0 where BBS threads and usernames were core to making yourself known on the internet. It was during this period, and the next phase of Massive Multiplayer Online spaces, that Avedon realised that they could become so many different things online.¹ This disassembled and deconstructed view of *the body as immaterial* allows Avedon to exist without boundaries, manifesting themselves across disciplines and forms and ultimately becoming a simulism not only of themselves but also of the moment we all inhabit as we approach the future of the self online. Inhabiting, conversing and befriending others in the early 2000's virtual world game Second Life at the start of their practice enabled Avedon to begin to ask timely and progressive questions surrounding identity, value, data and privacy which, unsurprisingly, still apply today. Avedon subsequently asks us to consider our responsibilities as individual users as we enter the simulation age and how we avoid the risks of ventriloquism when it comes to the self as beta; for Avedon, the avatar is not only an extension

of the self but another self too. What do we want the future to know about us when the data we proffer is our most valuable asset, and when these conditions of networked interfacing are seen as a passive function of daily life? And how do we adopt the notion that "the open Internet is and will always need to be a human right... we cannot allow the formation of walls."²

Coming of age during the rise of Web 2.0, Avedon has manifested themselves and their projects across multiple spaces, interactive zones and genres. Building their persona over many years, and through many advancements in technology and web developments, they have been making work that both confronts a long-term engagement with the possibilities of technology and the way we, as users, see ourselves embodied in an online realm - something that becomes ever-more present through social and entertainment changes throughout the last decade.

With many of Avedon's works existing within or being influenced by multiple cross-platform multiplayer online games like Fortnite, Second Life and Star Citizen, I want to put forward the ways in which these platforms encourage transactions

between players, specifically financial, and how Avedon pushes against this by encouraging a different type of transaction to take place.

Artists have been experimenting with selling real goods and virtual goods online since before the start of the e-commerce boom. Although considered social networks first and foremost, both Instagram and Facebook have a large stake in the online retail industry. With 80% of all users following a commercial brand, and with 25 million brands represented, the natural flow of e-commerce was inevitable. Through micro-targeting and psychographic data, companies are able to use data freely accessible from potential clients to target advertisements and deals to them based upon age, gender, location and previous behaviours. Unlike physical store transactions, online transactions are able to be more directly appropriate for individual audiences.

Asri Falcone is an alter ego played by Teasa Copprue in Second Life. Asri, although an avatar, owns houses, has friends, has a client list and owns designer clothing stores and makeup brands. Working between 15 to 20 hours a day, Copprue would create objects, real estate and clothing on her computer using primitives, the building blocks of Second Life which can be manipulated to make anything imaginable. Once earning a real-life six-figure salary from sales in her Second Life clothing stores and beauty brand, Asri Falcone Originals and NAKid, Asri was a minor celebrity, proudly boasting thousands of clients and a prolific work and sales ethic. She's tall, immaculately dressed in a white pantsuit, with gold earrings and diamante heels, all brought with Lindens, Second Life's currency. For Copprue, Asri Falcone Originals and NAKid were a way to live a parallel identity to the one she had in real life. In 2002 this was relatively niche, but in 2020 living vicariously through our social media selves is now somewhat expected, or at least accepted.

There's an inherent fragility in the cyclical nature of production and consumption, both physical and digital, whereby a consumer is fed into inescapable patterns. Cycles of buying cheaply made and inexpensive products with planned obsolescence, or buy-now-pay-later schemes have extortionate APRs and frequently cause consumers to become pushed into debts they can't afford to pay back. This fragility is both underhand and perhaps under-recognised as such - hidden under the facade of *keeping up or staying relevant*, the cycles of capitalist consumption are a benchmark for social class. The failure to adhere is perceived as demonstrating socio-economic/cultural inferiority, and in Copprue's case, fast fashion in Second Life was also one of the benchmarks for social class and therefore for such incessant purchasing. The unethical act of other avatars copying her clothing designs and selling them on the Second Life blackmarket resulted in the liquidation of her online businesses and thus resulted in real-life debt and economic scarcity. Her online misfortune and unemployment explicitly caused her offline unemployment. The digital manifested real.

Although inherently virtual, trading online - either through gaming platforms or otherwise - results in real-life monetary consequences. Whether cheating a game and paying to reach the next level without any labour, or buying loot boxes to be redeemed to receive further online products or avatar customisations, the market for online trading is ripe for rewards but also for misfortune. The last few years have seen the world of cryptocurrencies and virtual currencies skyrocket to incomprehensible levels. To bring it back to Avedon and the art world, adding Non-Fungible-Tokens into the mix brings a whole new perspective to the speculative markets of trading and the ownership of digital art, avatars and digital assets.

Anika Meier, a writer, curator and spokesperson for the cultural placement of NFTs in the digital art space recently put a question to her Twitter followers asking: *do we really believe that the future of digital art and exhibitions is showing nfts on tv screens in a museum?*³ The replies that came back were mostly in favour of disavowing the way collectors proclaim NFTs are something completely new to the art world, and a gross dismissal of digital art histories, as well as the way some artists have jumped on the bandwagon putting profit over artistic integrity. Some replies felt almost like the butt of a joke - *What is the difference between a PNG file displayed on a screen and an NFT displayed on a screen?... The proof of ownership on the blockchain.* But there's a point to her question that others in the commentary space also back up. Tina Rivers Ryan argues that most NFT collectors seem motivated more by financial opportunity and appear unaware that digital art is an expansive field with a decades-long history. And in agreement with Avedon's rhizomatic practice of multi-medium work, Ryan states "because it forever points to a single asset, the NFT implicitly privileges the ideal of a stable, unitary artwork over the messy reality of digital projects that are dispersed, interactive, contingent, iterative, or ephemeral."⁴

For Avedon, a large part of the work in the exhibition *Club Zero* is in showing the variability of virtual forms, and how they can continue to reshape and change. In a time when a lot of people are buying Profile Pictures (PFP) and virtual characters solely to trade as commodities or temporary self-representation, Avedon said "it really felt like I was rescuing these NFPs for a different sort of second life. I am still trying to comprehend this whole hyper-capital avatar moment, it's so far from what I hoped we'd experience with this sort of technology."⁵

Avedon explores this notion of working within the thresholds of self-branding, publicity and echo chambers

to decipher what it means to transcend from the virtual to the real, as well as the impacts of creating online for both online and physical audiences. The Non-fungible-People that will be collaboratively made by visitors and strangers during the exhibition will be a surrogate for human closeness, a group effort in realising Avedon's next level up. The work encompasses the idea of strategy (as being existing power structures, governance or institutions within a prescribed environment) vs tactics (as being a practice within an existing power structure as a way of breaking the strategies to create authored space within it).

The newly created NFPs explore the resistance of consumer culture, usurping the structures inherent in this, at the same time as practising within it. To play within the systems that are being critiqued is not uncharted for Avedon but always requires the creation of discourse, and to "hold accountable the industries and legislation."⁶ The three NFPs will continue to be part of La Turbo Avedon's practice long after the exhibition has ended, their inherited stories, appearances, and behaviours moving with them and encapsulating the *collective moment we inhabit as we approach the future of the self online.*

¹ On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog

² www.youtube.com. (n.d.). *ESTUARY – LaTurbo Avedon Artist Talk – Internet Age Media 2018*. [online] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_2t1g1NXLY [Accessed 7 Jun. 2022].

³ Meier, A. (2022) [Twitter] 20 April, 2022. Available at: <https://twitter.com/thisaintanika/status/1516760678350139393> (Accessed 6 June 2022)

⁴ www.artforum.com. (n.d.). Tina Rivers Ryan on NFTs. [online] Available at: <https://www.artforum.com/print/202105/token-gesture-85475>.

⁵ Extract taken from private messaging with La Turbo Avedon in Discord.

⁶ www.youtube.com. (n.d.). *ESTUARY – LaTurbo Avedon Artist Talk – Internet Age Media 2018*. [online] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_2t1g1NXLY [Accessed 7 Jun. 2022].





ABOUT La Turbo Avedon

LaTurbo Avedon is an avatar and artist, creating work that emphasizes the practice of non-physical identity and authorship. Avedon has spent the past decade developing a body of work that illuminates the ever-growing intensity between users and the virtual, pursuing creative environments that deepen the meaning of immaterial experiences. They curate and design Panther Modern, a file-based exhibition space that encourages artists to create site-specific installations for the Internet. LaTurbo's process of character creation continues through gaming, performance and exhibitions. Their work has appeared internationally, including The Whitney Museum (New York City), The Manchester International Festival UK, Transmediale (Berlin), Haus der elektronischen Künste (Basel), HMVK (Dortmund), Barbican Center (London), Julia Stoschek Foundation (Dusseldorf), Galeries Lafayette (Paris), and TRANSFER Gallery (New York City).

Thanks to Velvetyne for their open source type foundry, which is used in the [Materia](#) Project.

About A.V. Marraccini

A.V. Marraccini is an art historian, critic, and essayist. She is a research associate of the Bilderfahrzeuge Group based at the University of London.

ABOUT AREBYTE

arebyte brings innovative perspectives to art through new technologies
arebyte leads a pioneering digital art programme at the intersection of new technologies and social sciences. Following the long tradition of artists working across emerging artforms, multiple voices in digital cultures are invited to create immersive installations at arebyte Gallery (London) and online experiences on arebyte on Screen.

Alongside the art programme, arebyte Skills features short courses on digital theory and introductions to creative software. Through workshops led by digital artists, arebyte Skills provides digital practitioners and newcomers with practical techniques for digital making.

arebyte also supports a vibrant community of artists, designers and creative technologists through arebyte Studios, an initiative that provides affordable workspaces to 150 creative professionals across London.

arebyte 2022 Programme

Science-Fiction

Science Fiction has been seen as a medium that sparks the imagination and provokes ideas of how life might be in years to come. With these vast opportunities and fantastic dreams, Sci-Fi has also informed and created a narrative of self-fulfilling desires on which our imagination is structured and constructed.

But the last decades have brought new ways in which science-fiction is perceived, discussed and develops; from a predominantly white cis-male gaze to an opening up of diverse and marginalised authors and narratives, science-fiction as a genre is becoming more fluid.

Within this timeframe, the world has also undergone drastic changes. From mentality, action, protest, and dissent, to accountability, responsibility and governance, the individual and collective voice—identity—has never been more present.

Identity has become a node in the expanding network, remixed and meshed with other junctions and connection points until it becomes uncontainable, unmalleable, unfixed. Identity and bodies may now be understood as liquid, forming into the shape of that which surrounds them, but they are also easily taken advantage of, manipulated and fed back into a techno-capitalist agenda. Science Fiction can afford us a reimagining of this future: by seeing that other ways are possible the practice of being "fictional for a while" allows us to "understand that fictional characters are sometimes more real than people" and thus has the potential to enforce real-life change.

Global media companies, the general public, corporations, institutions, and everyone in between, are grappling with ideas of the future more than ever. Nostalgia for the past coupled with

optimism for the future only exacerbates our suspension in the present.

Fear breeds panic breeds uncertainty:

With big tech evolving exponentially and adapting to the way we connect and communicate, we see transformations in the ways technologies utilise us to their gain. Under the guise of helpful assistance and adapting to our ways of living, we give our smart technology more data, more time, and more of ourselves. With education and healthcare systems under prolonged pressure, we see society in a constant state of upheaval, and a lack of trust in the systems that are in place to support and care for us. With news agencies and media companies controlling algorithms that seek to manipulate our behaviour, we find the truth more difficult to decipher.

We seek shelter from the barrage of disinformation, corrupt governments, unreliable narrators, and false actors, and succumb to finding solace in small groups, communities, and via avatars without an earthly identification. Attempts towards future planning—with a keen eye towards shifts in thinking around race, class, the environment, and the possibility of future life on Earth—continue to prevail.

For its 2022 artistic programme, continuing on from last year's [Realities](#), arebyte presents artists and artworks surrounding science fiction, science-speculation, and science fact.

The programme unpicks our current reality and presents an exploration through various forms of speculative fiction(s), proposing imaginative and innovative concepts for a new kind of futurism, and mapping a new realm that we can unfold—a domain that incorporates ways to promote new ways of inhabiting, carving out, and finding spaces to exist within. These areas include quantum ideology, cyborgian prosthetics, performativity within identity, and digital

terraforming utilising thorough world-building techniques, as well as others that will unfold throughout the year.

In conjunction with the “real-world-space”, the liminal space is also put forward as an arena to consider ambiguity or disorientation as positive disrupters of the status quo. Within this, the programme adapts to the inherent hybridity of artistic forms and practices within the digital and confronts the limitations of working online and offline in ways that promote multifaceted offshoots. Although partitioned into pathways of exhibition, event, and discussion, the programme offers non-orientable surfaces, a Möbius strip of knotted and intertwined science-fiction inspirations to examine the ways in which the past and the present continually converge, collapse and co-invent each other.

These varied presentations will offer adaptations of existing conversations around the overarching themes within science fiction; new, old, real and imagined perspectives intersect with interpretations and constructions of Western and non-Western notions of possible futures to further the conversation about inclusivity within the genre. Involving science fiction’s main areas of reach—of beings and entities, habitats, technologies, travel, body and mind alterations, and hybridity—the programme grasps onto both earthly and extraterrestrial lenses to centre itself in the ever-evolving conversations surrounding the evolution of human and non-human agents.



CLUB ZERO

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