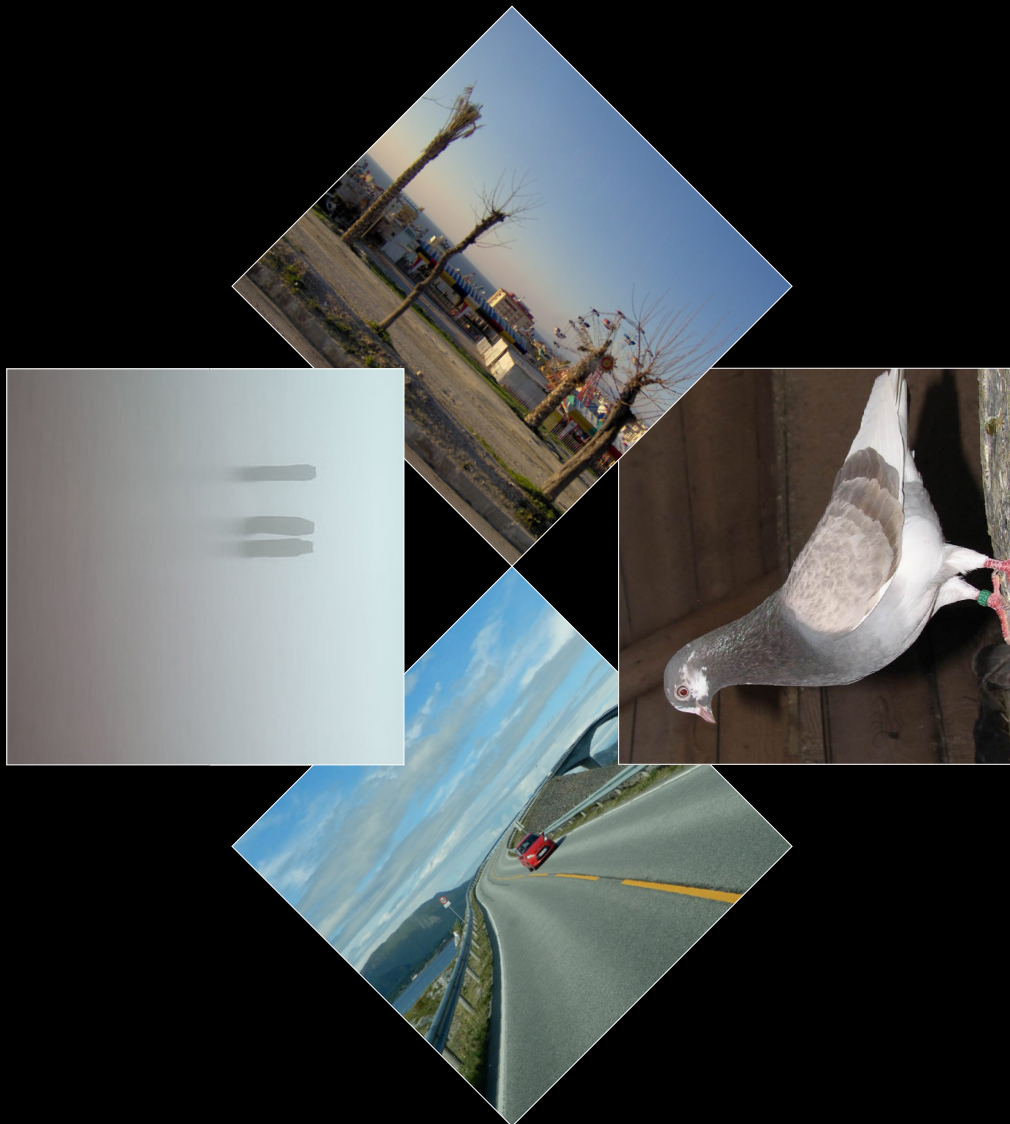


THE CITY IS YOUR  
EIGHTH FINGER,  
YOUR FOREHEAD  
IS CANOPY



ΠΣFW



THE CITY IS YOUR EIGHTH FINGER,  
YOUR FOREHEAD IS CANOPY

Կէլի Կրիկման

02

ARTIST BIOS

05

START-SCREEN-SPIRAL

ԻՆԿ

07

SASSY ON POETRY, DRAG & AI

ԻՆԿ

10

BIRD CALL

Բիրջ Տօւշ Եւ Դոնո Ռշուլինշ

18

POST-WESTERNALIA

ՅօԿ Էւրկշ

28

COLOPHON

31



# THE CITY IS YOUR EIGHTH FINGER, YOUR FOREHEAD IS CANOPY

Kēziu Krikmānn

In an onslaught of machine-generated images, a current of accidental textures has appeared alongside it. In otherwise realistic images, anomalous textures often fill the gaps. Where veracity is desired, these read as mistakes, where it is not, these become a possibility. In any case, there is a sensuality to these textures, perhaps alien, but it is something to be probed – a puzzle for the tactile gaze. These textures are not perfected imitations of reality but an overgrown mass of details, drawn from the ether of unknown datasets.

To anyone looking, I suggest this. Reject glass mirror, embrace obsidian looking glass. Instead of desiring perfection, fashion yourselves after distortion.

In images, bodies, too, merge with these vaguely recognisable surfaces and instead of becoming defined, they become something else – dirty, not even broken images but entities with texture and depth.

The sensuality in merging of bodies and their environments is perhaps a weirdness that could possibly carry over into our flesh if we let it.

The city becomes your eighth finger; your forehead is now part of a forest canopy. You are part of an unknown terroir, soaked up from an unattainable source. Mostly, that in itself is not poetic or interesting, it only becomes so when the anomalous is embodied, when you gladly and willingly surrender to it.

To anyone considering, I suggest this. So be dirty and soak up the environment, and become another, perform another – another person, another being, another version of yourself.

In many machine-generated images language is implicit, it comes first, tacit knowledge suppressed by language – to make machines make images, prompts are used, so the person involved in the process is forced to engage with the image linguistically before any other way. Language is what makes these images come to life, yet seems to fall short of encapsulating either the final or intended outcomes, paradoxically often serving as fodder, as nvk suggests in their essay “Σzssy on poztry, drzq Σ Δ|”, accompanying the video “start-scrzpn-spirz|”.



In “The city is your eighth finger, your forehead is canopy” artists nvk, Zody Kurkz, Pirz Sovz & Ando Pzulzinzn are taking different approaches to creating and engaging with the (non-)linguistic sensuality of textures of digital and sometimes machine-generated images. nvk combines poetry and drag, using digital scraps to pave way through a “cyber no-space”. Zody Kurkz presents images generated by revisiting her past works and familiar themes. Pirz Sovz and Ando Pzulzinzn embrace the strangeness of nature and digital distortion and bring it to their own bodies. In each case, there is an interblending between the protagonists created by the artists and their environment. At times, the boundary between the two blurs, melding into a singular entity, palpable through textures and probing at a sensuous experience that may or may not want to detach itself from language.

Kziu Krikman,

2023



nvk (nick von klzist) is an artist, poet, performer and producer who investigates the archive and its debris as repertoire to be rehearsed, fractured and reconfigured, repeatedly. nvk explores ways the virtual and personal can inspire new conceptions of context, time, access and equity. nvk has recently published a metamorphic book of poetry, “w-z-t-z-r-s-l-i-d-z-s” with Risiko Press (Antwerp), appearing as sound with Ignota Press, and a performance with Montez Press Radio (NY). nvk has ongoing performance-based collaborations with Michelangelo Miccolis, Kris Lemsalu, Autumn Knight, Cally Spooner, Nikima Jagudajev, and Dora García.

Ἡῖῖ Σοῖῖ Ἐ Δῖῖῖ Ἦῖῖῖῖῖ are artists living in Tallinn, Estonia. Sova primarily works with installation and stage design. Naulainen works with video, sound and image manipulation. Since 2017, they co-run an ongoing participatory performance series Ἦῖῖῖῖῖ that focuses on exploring the self and community identity. The event series takes on different forms, such as installations, readings, dress-up events and a radio show. In addition to

Sova and Naulainen, *PERSONA* often involves a number of participants, with the aim to provide a space for researching different ways of expression.

Zody Kurkz is an American multimedia artist and musician living and working in Tallinn, Estonia. She creates cyphers through sculpture and sound, through which she cartographs the complexity of identity within late capitalism and interfaces world-building with geological time. Her material practice ranges from ceramic high-relief to experimental music, video, illustration and fibre work.

Kziu Krikmānna is a curator, writer and translator. She also works as the managing editor of *Δ Shzdz Coldzr* magazine. Her latest curatorial projects include “Excuss and Refusal” in 2020 at the Kim? Centre for contemporary art in Riga and 2021 at the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia; “Her Legs, an Egg, Her Toil(z) and Blankets” at the Tallinn City Gallery in 2022; “Naturally, It Is Not” (co-curated with Darja Popolitova) at the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design in 2023.





START-SCREEN-SPIRAL

nvk



## DESCRIPTION:

Using the format of a story-based video game, "stzrt-scrzrn-spirzl" is a metamorphosis of the poem by nvk (nick von kleist) of the same name. Mixing different found, self generated & manipulated texts, images & videos, "stzrt-scrzrn-spirzl" takes the viewer on a journey through a cyber no-space, constantly lost, but always mesmerized by flashes of meaning.



Audio sources include (alphabetical by song name):

"Deformed Pearl" - Susumu Yokota; "Doll"; "Last" - Reichi Nakzido; "Final Fantasy 6 Sound Effects" - Nobuo Uematsu; "Got To Be Real" - Cheryl Lynn; "Inner Beauty" - Lonnie Liston Smith, The Cosmic Echoes; "Intro" - Waszi JJ Chikadz; "Pubz" - Yoichiro Yoshikawa; "Proud [Peter Prezza Q&A mix]" - Heather Small; "Trapped" - Yasuharu Takahashi

The artist would like to thank Luis August Krawen for being their guiding light in the AI midjourney into night.



SASSY ON POETRY, DRAG & AI

nvk



## SASSY ON POETRY, DRAG & AI

ΠVK

I've always said my practice comes from poetry, but it really does. Not simply because writing has far deeper roots in me than anything else, but because poetry has given me both a suspicion of signifiers & a hyper-focus on composition like none other. Language, image, sound, etc. are all prompts for imagination, memory, vibes—or now with AI tools, from one medium into another, but the process should not stop there.

Prompt based AI tools like Stable Diffusion, ChatGPT, Runway, etc., require a certain eloquence in their form to produce anything similar to your intention. Prompts are a form on their own, like a search bar, it is not about the grammar of the sentence. Instead you first need to understand, likely through a lot of failed attempts, how the platform is both etymologizing and defining your prompt, rather than what you assume the words mean. In prompt writing, it is not always advisable to rely on “the meaning” of a word (like love, woman, green...), over its potential as a mechanism or container, like a hashtag. It's not a new argument, but one that must be held dearly when prompt writing, but what we grasp as the meaning of our words, is not what they produce to everyone; especially when read in different contexts. This

is of course not a new argument, but something, I think, we should remind ourselves of when using AI, when reading poetry, or viewing in general.

“start-scrzwn-spiral” is a poem, first & foremost. Originally published online as text & image, under the same name, with editor & curator of this show, Keiu Krikmann, in *A Shade Colder*.<sup>1</sup> The seed of this work comes from a series of verse prompts I wrote for a collaborative AI text2image project that never happened. Later on, I took these unused lines, and combined them with other poems, some dreams I had scribbled down, and a sequence of RPG words from ChatGPT-3, as fodder. I then randomized the lines into different sequences, & finally put the resulting chaos through an editing process that resulted in the poem. This is a process I’ve worked on for many years through trial & error, but in any case, like certain AI tools allow, it allows me to distance myself from what I am attempting to communicate literally, & instead see how the fractured bits of language & lines reveal how it is that I think/speak/write.

Following page: screenshots captured from nvk’s “start-scrzwn-spiral”, taken from source: <<http://svilovz.org/nvk>>

1. <<https://www.zshdzcoldzr.com/start-scrzwn-spiral>>





a mad body,  
a grin,  
a leaf appears;  
metamorphosis  
is in.



clear the sky  
& screen:



The process of poem to video follows an impulse in my practice to combine poetry with other media. Bringing poetry off the page, not only to provide different methods of engagement, but ultimately, to further gesture to the contexts or worlds from which the text-collage originates, or is fractured from. The work, I hope, resembles these concepts, creating a preview of sorts into the world that Sassy, my drag persona, comes from. Sassy is a glitch, a character stuck in constant metamorphosis between drag, plant & virtual avatar. Time is 50 open tabs, all at once. In “start-scrzwn-spiral”, the plot does not unfold. Instead, vibes change, you level up, you fade away, and return.

What I want to consider & suggest with this work, is a type of engagement with AI as with any other technology—to study it, use it for what’s helpful, & play with it in your own way, but it is a place to start &/or prototype. And like any other medium or technology, it requires the development of a certain amount of skill & practice to actually get an approximation of what you actually want to produce. To commit to working with the AI tools we have now, is to necessarily work with glitches & their unexpected deviations.

Following pzgq: scrzwnshots czpturzd from nvk’s “start-scrzwn-spiral”, tkzn  
from source: <<http://svilovz.org/nvk>>



Your text/image prompts can produce possible pathways you could venture; suggestions of worlds & aesthetics this concept you're prompting could take on. Although AI seems like a kaleidoscope of possibilities, we can't forget that these infinite possible replications come from datasets that are & have been compiled. This data is not just a grand synthesis of the ever confounding cloud, but instead from stock media, image libraries etc. that have been compiled by someone. With these datasets comes all of the problematic histories that have decided "this is a tree; house; family." In a moment when we are so ardently revising our histories & colonial systems, it seems quite troublesome to work with unknown libraries that often (always) have extreme racial, western, cis-het, etc. biases. We cannot get too excited about the spectacle of new technologies and forget that they carry all the implicit biases & prejudices of their predecessors.

Technologies are not limited to those tethered to datafarms, but stemming from artist & my drag sister, Lyn Diniz, I like to consider drag as a technology. One that we can use like any other, & in my case, train the algorithm for metamorphosis & all its glitching in between. Drag, like poetry, allows me to immerse myself in a different space, a different vibe, and to do it in my own way. I approach both of these technologies

similarly, where failure & deviation open up new chances to instigate dissonance, to both obscure & redefine in the moment of identification—for myself & any viewers. This I learned from my poet matriarchs, where the dismantling of grammar, syntax & time allow the fermentation of new meanings, where words die on one page to be reincarnated on another. AI is my new foundation.

— nvk x



Screenshot from nvk's "start-scrren-sprizl", taken from source:  
< <http://svilova.org/nvk> >

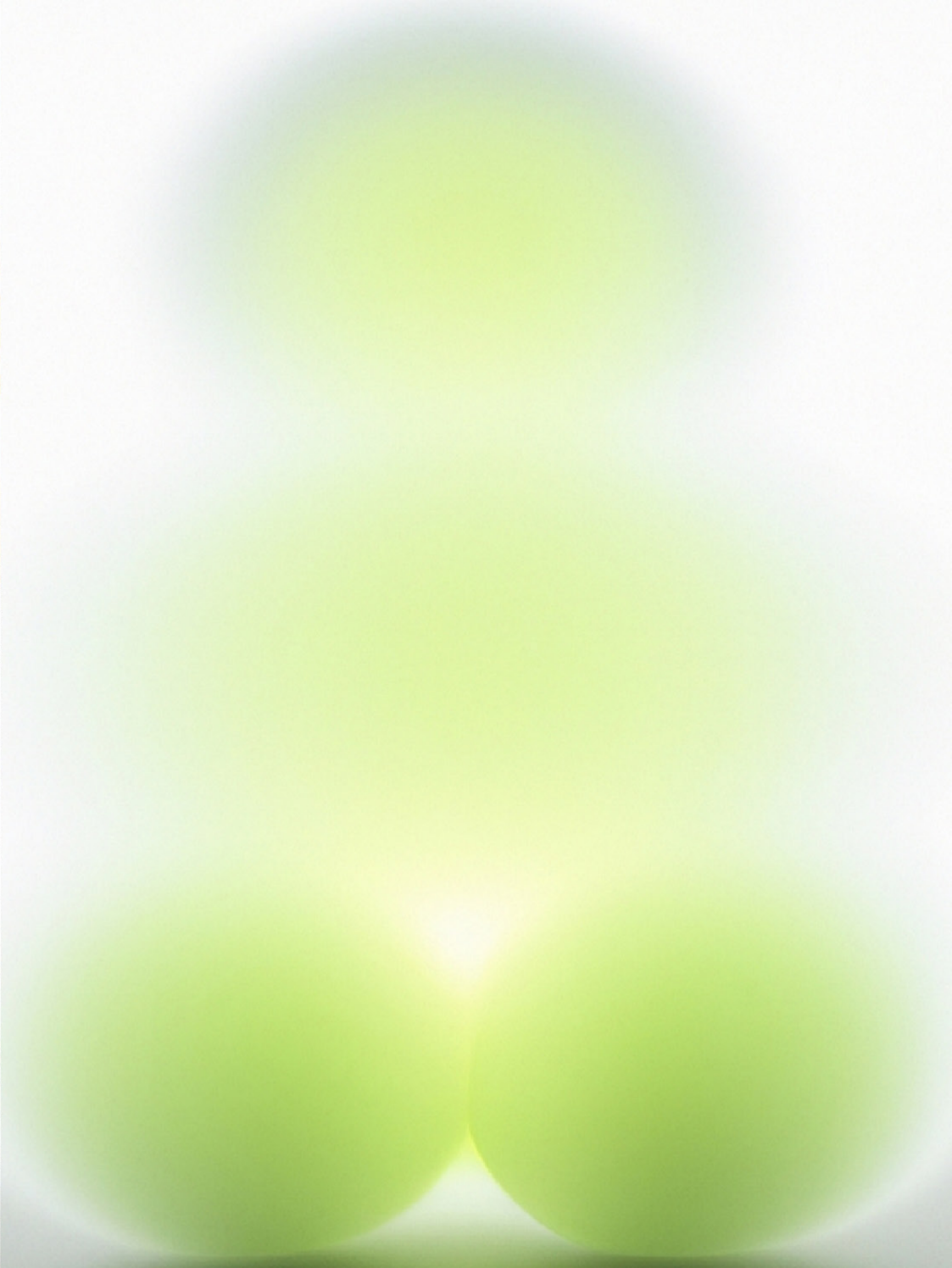




BIRD CALL  
Πιρζ Σοvα & Δηδο Πzulzinεn























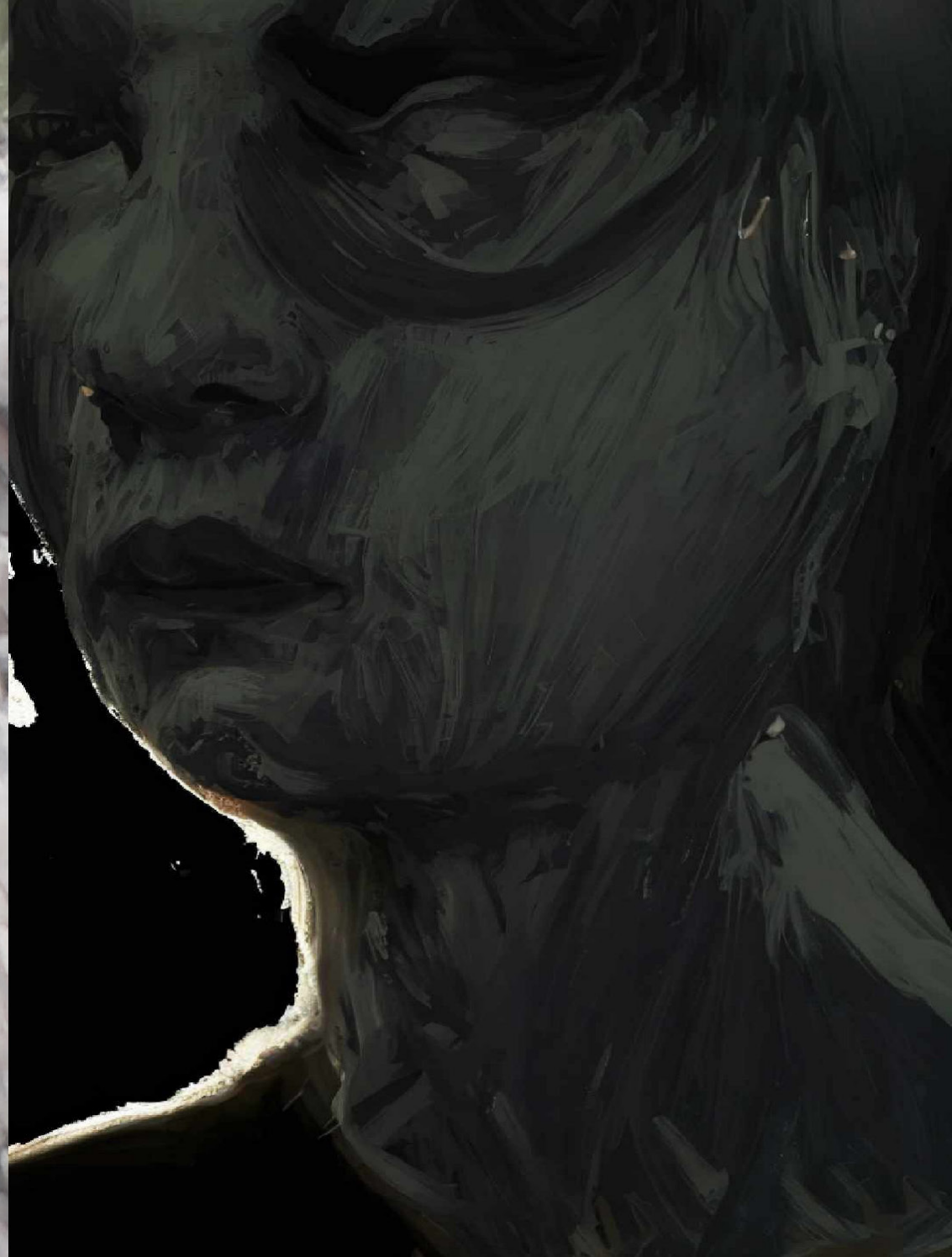




















POST-WESTERNALIA  
Zody Kurkz













## COLOPHON

# THE CITY IS YOUR EIGHTH FINGER, YOUR FOREHEAD IS CANOPY

Curated by Kziu Krikmaznn  
Published by ΠΣΦW, 2023

Featuring artwork by  
Zody Kurkz  
nvk  
Pirz Sovz Σ Δπδο Παυλζινζν

Graphic design by Jzmiz Hudson

Cover images:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/johna10093/85871999/>  
<http://pigeon-kingdom.blogspot.com/2010/04/portuguese-tumbler-pigeon-bo-ao-nha.html>  
<unknown source>  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/marcwyt/6413763889>



This publication was made possible by the generous support of Göteborgs Stad, Västra Götalandsregionen, Kulturrådet / Swedish Arts Council & NSFV.