

David Lazar

an interdisciplinary artist whose practice emerges from the intersection of software engineering and artistic research. He investigates technological systems not as tools of innovation, but as powerful infrastructures that shape identity, behavior, and public space. His work reveals how digital technologies restructure human experience and ethical perception—often in ways that go unseen.

Through immersive installations, web-based projects, and AI-driven experiments, Lazar explores the politics of automation, surveillance, and data extraction. Rooted in critical inquiry, his process begins by tracing the infrastructures of a given system, then translating them into visual and spatial forms that can be both felt and interrogated. His work invites audiences to engage directly with the forces that govern the digital age—through both sensation and critique.

Ethics and sustainability are central to Lazar's approach. Drawing on his background in tech, he refuses corporate AI infrastructures in favor of small-scale, locally run models inspired by permacomputing principles. His installations blend critical theory, irony, and care, inviting viewers to question dominant narratives of progress and efficiency while imagining new possibilities for inclusive, participatory futures.



aesthetic_shell

Automated image series

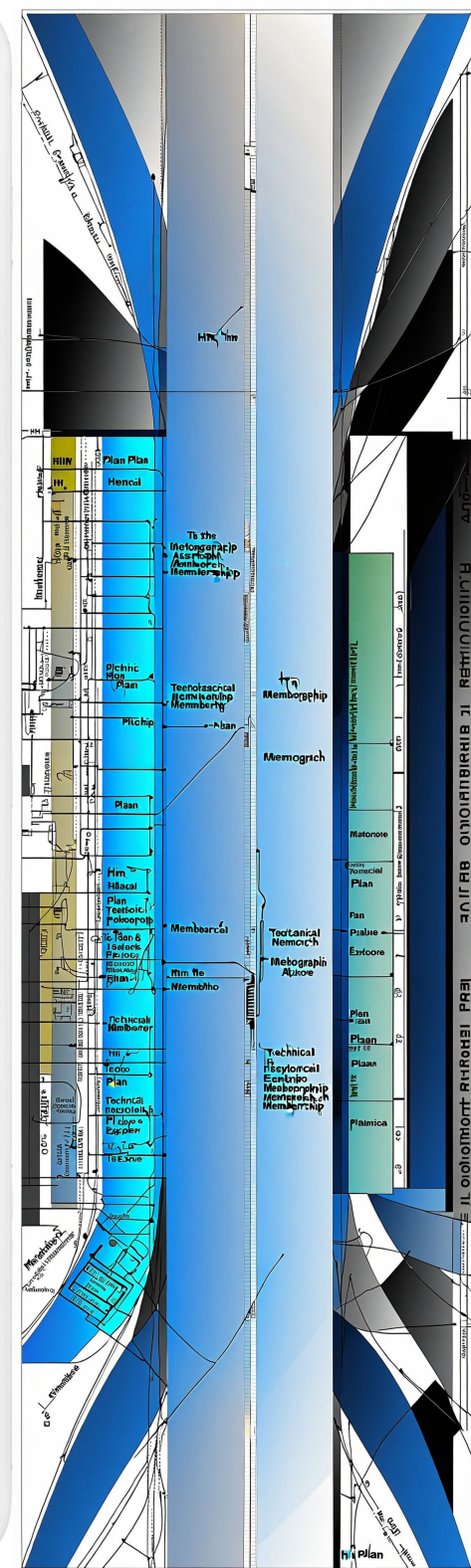
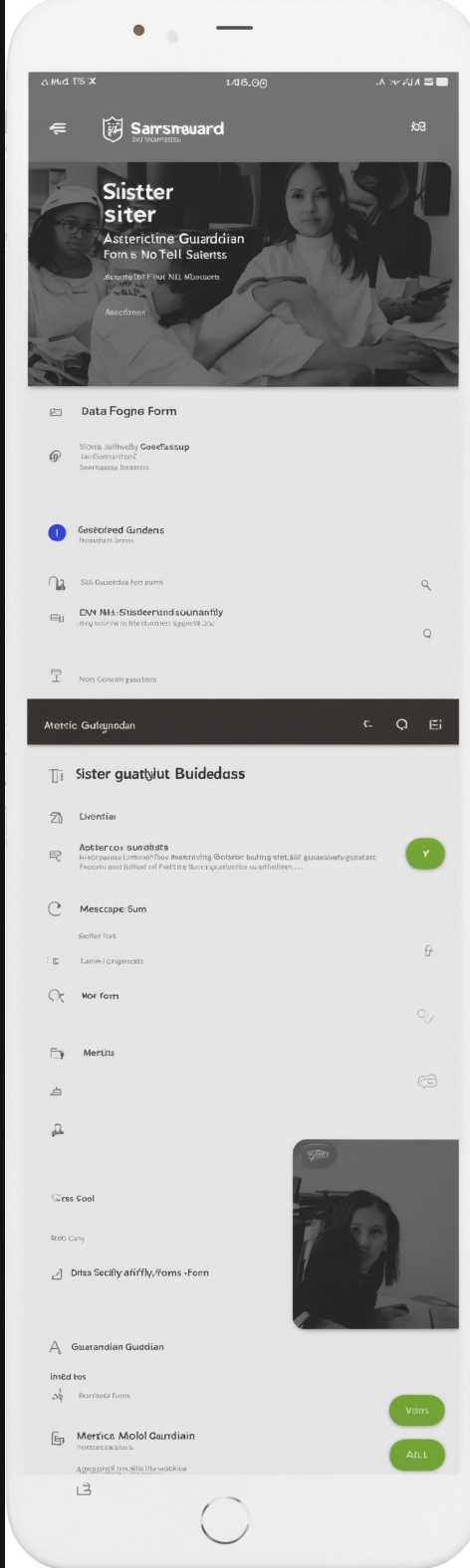
AI-generated visuals, custom web-scraping script
2025

Aesthetic Shell is a series of works generated through a fully automated process that exposes the illusion of intelligence and creativity in AI systems. A custom script scrapes nonsensical fragments of text from the internet and feeds them into an image-generation model, which responds with visually coherent outputs. Printed on translucent fabric, these images appear emotionally charged despite being produced without meaning, intention, or authorship.

The project critiques the aestheticisation of automation and the tendency to project significance onto machine-made forms. Each image is accompanied by metadata—prompt, model, dataset, and estimated energy use—revealing the hidden infrastructures and ethical ambiguities behind generative imagery. What appears as creativity is, in fact, compliance; what seems meaningful is merely formatted noise.

Created as a solo work, Aesthetic Shell emerged from research into AI aesthetics, language, and authorship. It invites viewers to confront not just the seductive surface of machine-generated images, but the cultural conditions and computational reflexes that produce them.

Work was created after a 2 weeks residency in Berlin organized by HKW and Artep Gallery



not_data

Print on canvas

Custom Python scripting, ASCII-based binary

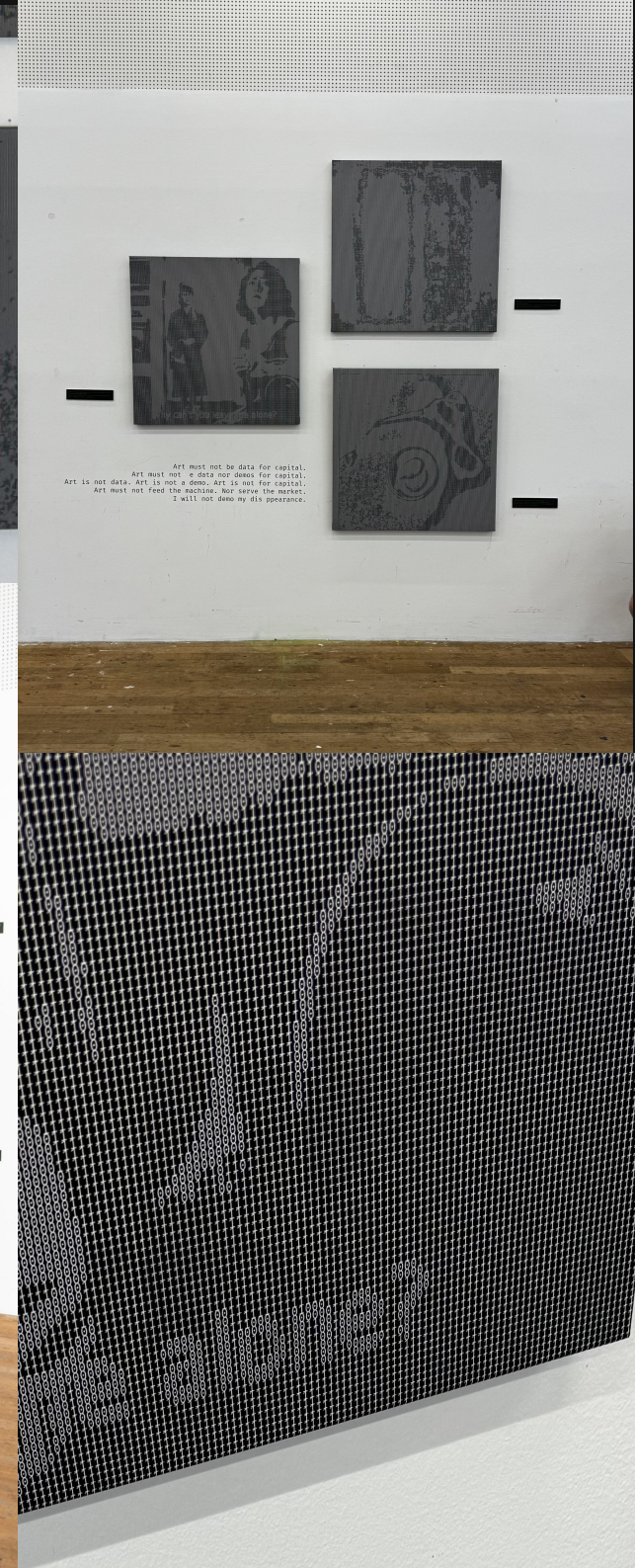
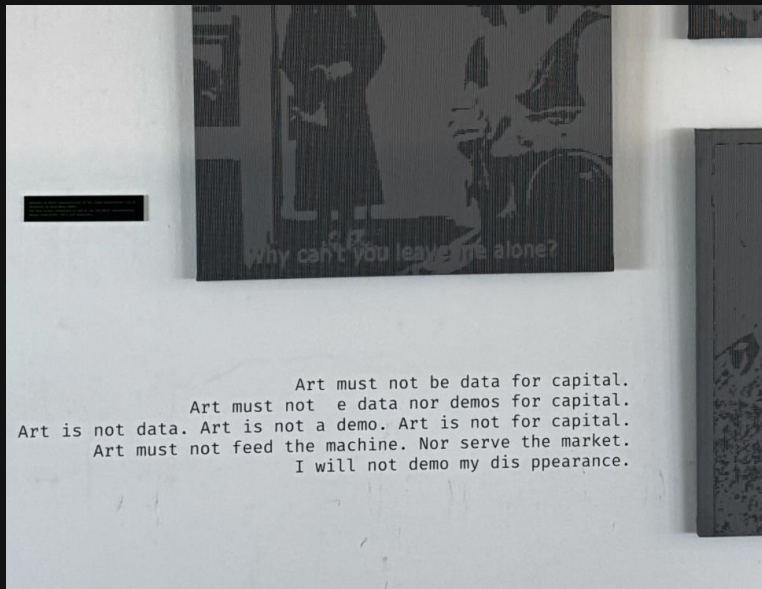
translations

2025

This series translates three selected Tate artworks into binary ASCII using a custom Python script, not AI. Each image was processed into a 240x240-character grid and printed at large scale, accompanied only by the original prompt. The works are stripped of visual reference, emotion, and historical context—reduced to machine-readable data. By mimicking the logic of AI pipelines, the project exposes how cultural artifacts are flattened and repurposed within extractive systems.

The work parallels my own experience in an unpaid residency designed to promote generative AI. Artists were expected to create “demos” that serve corporate branding, while institutional pressure pushed us to engage with the Tate collection in prescriptive ways. In response, this project adopts the form of bureaucratic compliance as critique—fulfilling the brief in a way that resists readability, aesthetic appeal, or marketability. Like Rothko, who withheld his work from elite consumption, this is a refusal to let art become promotional content.

Created solo during the 2025 Tate x Anthropic residency, the project critiques the politics of visibility, labor, and legitimacy in AI culture. It invites viewers to confront not what is shown, but what has been erased: meaning, context, and authorship. In place of interpretation, it offers a question—what does it mean when art becomes data, and artists become infrastructure?



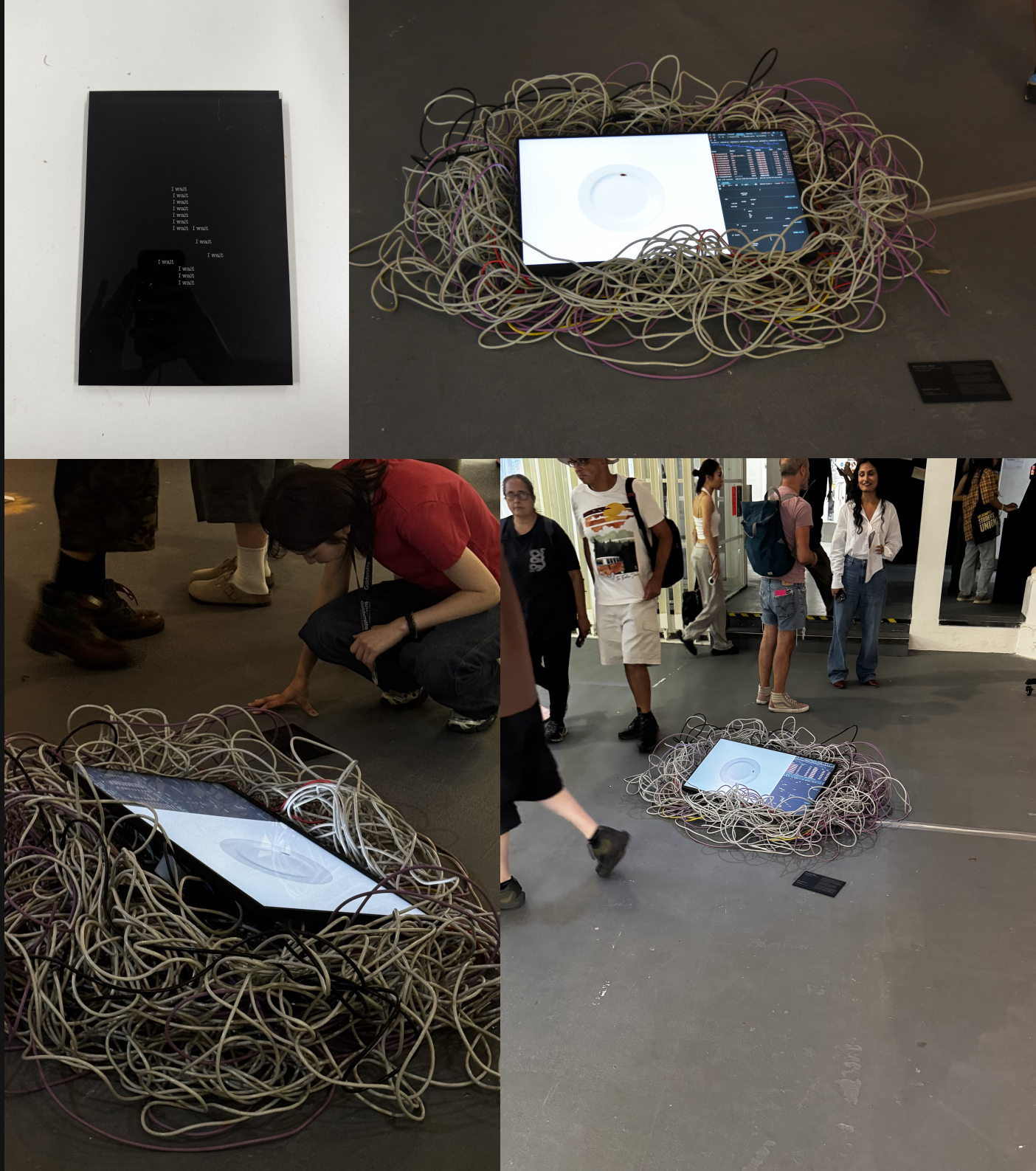
recursive_wait

Code-based performance
Duration: infinite
2025

An online computational artwork exploring liminality, error, and the aesthetics of waiting. Built using Node.js and React, Existential Server simulates an isolated network where a client endlessly queries a server, receiving randomized HTTP errors or silence. These failed connections mirror the artist's own recursive encounters with rejection, instability, and systemic indifference—both personal and technological.

Referencing Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice*, a circling cockroach becomes a metaphor for futile persistence, while the browser's developer console becomes a confessional space. Merging personal narrative with philosophical inquiry, the work reimagines computation as existential metaphor—transforming protocols, randomness, and recursion into motifs of despair and hope.

A meditation on burnout, precarity, and the void beneath productivity culture, Existential Server rejects resolution, embracing instead the poetics of indeterminacy. It is not a spectacle, but a practice of waiting—an emotional architecture coded in longing.



status_of_now

Interactive 3 channel LIVE multimedia
installation
machine learning face & emotion
recognition, real-time data feeds,
AI-driven generative text
Variable dimensions
2024

Status of Now explores the tension between media saturation, technological surveillance, and global crises. Drawing from Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, it examines how simulation and spectacle often feel "more real than the real," dissolving boundaries between private and public, real and imaginary. The work engages political and conceptual concerns—mass media, surveillance, and identity—and uses irony as a tool to question complicity and agency in the digital age.

The installation combines live data, interactive systems, and AI-generated text. Three roles shape the experience: The Observer encounters real-time news feeds; The Witness is displaced into conflict zones through facial recognition; and The Creator hands authorship to an AI that generates poetry. This last role is used ironically, reflecting the cultural hype around "creative AI" while ignoring its military applications. Developed as a solo project, the work nonetheless collaborates with nonhuman agents—AI, surveillance tools, and media platforms.

The project was informed by postmodern theory, particularly Baudrillard, as well as research into surveillance and AI. It also arose from observing how crises such as war, climate change, and economic collapse are mediated through technology, leaving us hyper-informed yet powerless. The intention was to provoke reflection: to disrupt passive media consumption, blur the line between real and simulated worlds, and invite participants to see irony not as cynicism but as a mode of critique and care.



passage_of_time

Interactive digital installation
Machine learning facial recognition, real-time video
manipulation, ASCII-based visuals,
interactive sound
Variable dimensions
2023

Passage of Time is an interactive digital installation that explores how time is not simply measured, but felt. Drawing on Henri Bergson's philosophy of duration and research on interoception, the work reveals time as a fluid, subjective experience shaped by emotion and bodily awareness. Using BlazeFace facial recognition, the installation alters video playback in real time based on viewer engagement—transforming time from a fixed metric into a responsive, embodied interaction.

Through ASCII visuals, clock-like typography, and numerical codes, the piece critiques the rigid temporal structures imposed by digital systems. Influenced by CCRU's ideas on digital hyperstition and the cultural power of number systems, the work stages a tension between mechanical time and lived, psychological duration. Time here becomes a language-coded, manipulated, and translated—where emotional states and urban rhythms collide.

Created as a solo work, Passage of Time emerged from research into digital temporality and affective computing. The installation invites viewers to modulate the pace of their own experience, making visible the often-invisible processes by which technology and perception shape our sense of time's passage.

