#digital feels
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There is a tendency to devalue the digital. To consider it separate to our #irl lives. To treat it as immaterial, cold, algorithmic and foreign – devoid of human touch, emotion and sensibilities. But yet, we fill our day to day with sharing, creating and connecting through online platforms, on computers, tablets, and mobile devices that allow us to communicate and connect in spite of geography and time. These actions, part of our daily routines, connect us to others who reside beyond our physical bodily reach. Hardware to hardware. Interface to interface. Our dematerialized thoughts and desires materialized on our screens.

We live in a curious time of flux, where we can no longer state that our interactions online do not connect to the economic, social structures and cultural production of our "real physical world." The internet is not, nor ever was, a free anonymous space disconnected from our bodies and environment. Screens, a ubiquitous presence in the contemporary condition that makes up our day-to-day, form part of the experiences of our relationships and desires, conditioning our human experiences and perceptions [1]. It is within these spaces that we maintain, update and adjust our relationships, their logistics and our emotional intimacies. Where we continuously become and perform ourselves, our genders and identities, we reconfigure ourselves through technologies and with one another. If the interface is now ubiquitous and pervasive, so too are the liminal conditions [2] that open up new territories for exploration, participation and exploitation. Our digital landscape is cluttered with bodies of all kinds, both predictable and unimaginable: glossy bodies we look at obsessively; photoshopped images that perpetuate excessive or unrealistic standards, and videos that claim the fantastical. All of which is accessible at any time we desire by means of a networked connection through sites in which the agency of representing that which is unrepresentable is becoming a contemporary norm.

Today, filters and photoshop constitute integral parts of image-making, while social platforms and comments shape our understanding of them. In a new world that is constantly renewed by the click of a key or the swipe of a finger in real time, how do we make sense of interfaces, media and the political and social infrastructures they are embedded in? In August 2013 in Ireland, an image of a 17 year old girl giving oral sex in public was taken at a concert at Slane Castle. Instantly she was branded *slut* and the image – along with links to her Twitter and Instagram – went viral. And the boy? A *hero*. A *legend*. Technology is often spoken of as democratic, but does it really liberate us from our understanding of gender in society or does it just reinforce the divisions that we currently live with? What does it mean to offer criticism of our present situation? How do we provoke critical awareness and agency through sexuality, body and technology? Do we still need to speak about bodies, or should we instead critique and address the political and social infrastructures that we live in and the increasing ubiquity and pervasiveness of the interface that we live with?

In "A Cyborg Manifesto", Haraway attempts to create "an ironic political myth" combining postmodernism with socialist feminism. Central to this myth is the image of the cyborg, "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." For Haraway, the cyborg is both a metaphor for the political play of identity as well as the lived experience of technology. She states "I am making an argument for the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings" [3]. The use of irony in the myth of the cyborg, though, cannot be ignored nor overlooked. For Haraway it implies a sense of agency in the world around us: "Acknowledging the agency of the world in knowledge makes room for some unsettling possibilities, including a sense of the world's independent sense of humor. [It] makes room for surprises and ironies at the heart of all knowledge production" [3]. Haraway's cyborg stands for shifting political and physical boundaries, which in its interactions with us and the world around us often speculate and confront us with unfamiliar narratives. Haraway imagines new, situated subjectivities that are mediated by technology. By challenging the established

norms of society, she argues that the cyborg becomes a tool of empowerment that "confronts the basic modernistic and oppressive socio-cultural dualistic assumptions" of our times.

But what does it mean to speak about the cyborg as situated subjectivity today? What are the new practices and interventions that artists imagine as agency and critiques of power structures? How do we engage in a reflection between technology, pleasure, sexuality, and politics? It is within these contexts that Holland operates, reflecting on society, aiming to dismantle power structures by creating unexpected interventions, often based on the deconstruction of the image and technology, and by using playfulness and provocation as tactics. Holland questions how the organization of our lives through screens and interfaces affects individuals, their bodies, their social interactions and sexual relationships. She intentionally disrupts the expected flow of continuous imagery and attempts to speculate on the subjectivity of the interface - the site where human meets machine and flesh meets metal. In rendering this familiar site strange, she reimagines the screen to not only raise questions about the replacement of the real flesh-and-blood human lover with a machine or other kind of artefact but also the mechanization of the process of love, and the values that underlie such ideas and developments. In her work she meditates – intensively and extensively – on the methods by which we might access this speculation, and by doing so she offers us a number of provocations. Firstly, she queries the augmentation and entanglement of devices and interfaces with our human relationships. Secondly, she directly questions the representations of gender online and elsewhere. Finally she offers a speculative examination of our relationship to technology that returns the conversation to being about our bodies and identities. Her work here in Technophilia makes us pause and rethink what such boundaries and connections can produce, while simultaneously interrogating the long-standing presumptions and the links between the self, the body and technology.

1. Galloway, Alexander R. The interface effect. Polity, 2012.

2. Lyotard, Jean François. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

3. Haraway, Donna J. (1990). Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge.