

Stages of Fluidity: Material, Form and Experimentation of a Destabilisation

Núria NIA

Universitat de Barcelona
ORCID ID: 0009-0008-9066-4527
nuria@nuriania.com

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: PhD candidate at the Universitat de Barcelona and lecturer in diverse Catalan universities on digital aspects, art and audiovisual design.

English translation, Neil CHARLTON.

Abstract

Through artistic experimentation we reach the idea of the “stage of fluidity”: a situation that enables us to rethink the present and possible futures by observing changing states at the level of matter, technique and scenarios. The article sets out various perspectives on what we call the stage of fluidity: form, materials and experimentation help us understand how, through artistic research, we can destabilise what is established and consider alternatives to the world we inhabit.

Keywords: artistic research, artistic investigation, performance, avatars, psychology, new materialities, slime, authorship, technology

Núria NIA

Stages of Fluidity: Material, Form and Experimentation of a Destabilisation

Stages of Fluidity: Material, Form and Experimentation of a Destabilisation

This article seeks to situate us in a destabilisation that we call “stages of fluidity” and is part of the artistic research that I am conducting within the doctorate programme of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Image and Design at the Universitat de Barcelona. Part of this text was presented at the 4th International Symposium of the journal *Estudis Escènics* of the Institut del Teatre in October 2024, looking at the subject of reflection proposed: uncertain technologies and the way in which they can expand or intervene in our artistic experience. The article focuses on a *state*, understanding state as a temporarily situated condition or circumstance, which implies specific characteristics. In particular, I use the term *stage* as a flexible and variable state of a phase in development that implies a broader situation in an expanded temporality. Thus, in the following I explain the concept that I have called “stages of fluidity” to define a transitory scenario from which to carry out research on destabilisation..

The stage of fluidity is within the framework of the wild. In his book *Wild Things, the Disorder of Desire*, Jack Halberstam analyses queerness from the wild and offers poetically evocative similes that inspire the idea set out here. According to Halberstam, the wild leads us to otherness, to the unknown, and to that which is not defined by the usual structures and norms — “normal”, depending on the person. In this ignorance, Halberstam points out, we find the possibility of being. To back up this idea, Halberstam quotes José Esteban Muñoz, who, in 2009, published in his book *Utopía queer. El entonces y allí de la futurabilidad antinormativa* the following fragment: [to] “establish a pre-appearance in the world of another way of being that is not yet here.” This phenomenon, which Muñoz calls “futurity on the horizon”, opens the door to the possibility of the unexpected, the wild that is perhaps yet to come.

The stage of fluidity that we define at this point is momentary and circumstantial. Metaphorically, a crack opens in the cement: it generates a

condition that subverts the main function of the space it occupies. Following this metaphor, the crack breaks all stability for which the cement was conceived and, at the same time, opens a gap of possibilities from which not only the form and purpose of the material base of the mortar is varied but a new scenario with different situations and characteristics is created. For the research I am carrying out — and while revealing the metaphor — the cement represents the framework of technologies that open up to us as a wide range of prostheses for our daily lives, and the crack is a gap that appears when one of these technologies offers a different possibility to the one conceived from the outset. The fissure opens up new perspectives that destabilise the very use of the technological tool and that, at the same time, generate new debates and thoughts.

Current technologies involve great diversity. Accustomed to accompanying us in daily life, but also to expanding our own limits, they are located in multiple contexts that also combine with each other. Starting from communication and connection technologies, through interaction tools, interpretation and vision tools, simulation, digital manufacturing and artificial intelligence, all technologies go through several stages in their development. Thus, a new technological system involves initial research, prototyping and design, testing of this design, and initial contact with users to validate it; then its production can begin with the aim of commercialisation or reaching its final target. At this point, it is the end users who will decide how, when, where and for what purpose they finally use the tool that has been developed. There are many theories that have explored this phenomenon in which the ultimate use determines the main function for which the technological device will be applied; and, along this path, we see rich experiences in which a tool adopts uses not envisaged in its design. It is precisely in these scenarios that what we call the stage of fluidity can emerge: at the exact moment when there is not yet a universal system of use and when even the tool itself is in development, with room to expand its functionalities. Thus, this apparent lack of an exact determination allows for an ambiguity: the possibility, the crack again, a ray of light that shines through as a previously unstudied option.

A stage of fluidity is a crack of possibility through which to gain one's own terrain of freedom within digital connections. The stage of fluidity is a support that does not constrain, it is a terrain without boundaries and it is an alphabet without a pre-established language. Within some operating logics, broadly speaking, the stage of fluidity is a brushstroke of another format that goes so far as to propose a shortcut or a new path. Although the stage of fluidity is a state, a situation and an instant within a scenario of specific norms, this stage opens a perspective strong enough to make us imagine new options within what we call normativity. The current state of technological disruptions offers us small free strips from which to perform the stages of fluidity that could be seen as an unexpected exit on a laid-out road; it is a nebula-space that we can use in different artistic disciplines to change directions and explore mists.

To finish defining this stage of fluidity, I would like to highlight the destabilising effect it can lead us to. The new scenario full of new possibilities

not only opens up questions and outlines new paths, but also destabilises those ideas that seemed invariable. It is precisely this destabilisation caused by the proliferation of alternative options to the use of a technical tool that interests me. The approach to destabilisation that I have chosen to create questions about this stage of fluidity has been multifaceted: on the one hand, in the material aspect, on the other, in form and, finally, through artistic experimentation.

The stage of fluidity, experimentation and discovery

This section looks at the first of the cases that emerged around this concept. Artistic experimentation and dealing with various questions about digital tools brought to light the idea of stages of fluidity within the framework of the development of a project with archival photography and new audiovisual tools. This origin of the concept is actually a manifestation in support of artistic research as a trigger of ideas and generator of knowledge.

The homonymous artistic work on which the concept emerged was presented at the Festival Panoràmic 2023. I had recently researched avatars and the embodiment effect that could occur between the avatar and the person who activated it. According to the 2018 study by González-Franco and Peck, the embodiment that we can experience when acting through a virtual character is closely related to the technical features of the devices that mediate the relationship between our physical body and our digital body: the greater the technical quality, the lower the latency, the better point of view and image clarity..., the greater option to develop a subjective gaze with the avatar that provides us with effective embodiment. This need for technical elements that support the relationship between the avatar and a psychological identification posed, at the time, several questions: What limit is there when it comes to technically representing the human psyche? Where is the border that limits the avatar from responding to our psyche or vice versa? Can we effectively embody ourselves with an avatar and feel what the avatar feels? Can the avatar react in the way we react in person? Where is the barrier?

Embodiment occurs when the avatar becomes the source of sensations instead of the physical body itself. Avatars participating in virtual environments from a first-person perspective have a greater sense of embodiment. In fact, in immersive environments, this virtual body came to replace the “real” body on a functional and physical scale (González-Franco and Peck, 2018).

According to González-Franco and Peck, the four aspects that affect avatar embodiment are: first, the avatar’s point of view, followed by the avatar’s ownership, the avatar’s agency and motor control, and, finally, the avatar’s external appearance. On the first point, related to the point of view, the first-person perspective produced sufficient visual sensory and motor correlations to create an illusion of embodiment. Moreover, the correlation between visual and tactile stimuli and the synchronous reactions of the avatar’s body with the physical body are also responsible for this embodiment. Therefore, a total synchrony between visual and motor stimulation between

the virtual body and the physical body produces a greater illusion of embodiment. One point that we find interesting to highlight is that the illusion of embodiment is possible beyond the correlation between gender, body type, racial group or age between avatar and physical body. In other words, we can come to feel like other characters, perform being who we are not, and feel like ourselves under certain conditions. In the piece “Estadi de fluïdesa” (2023), I found the opportunity to research empathy and psychology between avatars and people: I was looking for this space in which the human is still a territory that cannot be emulated and in which the avatar is still a cold, unfeeling machine. It is worth saying that from the first moment it was seen as a piece accustomed to obsolescence, since the development of the technological is usually faster than actually thinking about the technological.

“Estadi de fluïdesa” included setting up a series of tarpaulins in the streets of Roca Umbert Fàbrica de les Arts and a multi-screen video installation inside the old factory chimney. Participation in the Festival Panoràmic resulted from a commission: working with material from the Granollers Archive (“Panoràmic File” section). In this case, I chose to work with photographs by Josep Bosch i Plans from the Bosch Photo Collection. Four studio portraits from between 1930 and 1939 were the material used to develop the photographic installation “Un segon momentani involuntari universal” and the video essay “Estadi de fluïdesa”.

The technical limit with which it was decided to work was the possibility of technically reproducing micro-expressions: at that time, avatars could respond to expressions and perform them, but micro-expressions were still — and we are now talking in the past tense — the exclusive territory of humans. In other words, no avatar could react with the precision of a micro-expression, or even emulate it faithfully. Microexpressions are momentary facial



Figure 1. Installation “Un segon momentani involuntari universal” (Núria Gia, 2023) at the Festival Panoràmic. Photograph by Cardali.

movements, lasting between one and two seconds, involuntary and universal. If an avatar is not endowed with micro-expressions, will it ever become credible? Will it be able to faithfully reflect the psyche of the person it represents? Or will it be a field for its own performative experimentation? Thus, in this piece, a stage of possibility appears that we call the stage of fluidity, and I examined this stage of fluidity granted by a technology still incapable of reproducing human microexpression: a special framework from which to act, from where to be or to play at being, to explore, to lie, to fantasise, to not be and to become at the same time. “Can we be other people? Will we create empathy or will we be a phantasmagoria? Can we lie in the reflection of our psyche, or does this psyche faithfully reproduce what we think?”

From a practical point of view, the seven main human microexpressions were chosen for the piece: sadness, anger, joy, disgust, surprise, contempt, fear. Subsequently, their analogues were searched for in the virtual world platform Second Life and four classic avatars were chosen to perform them. Finally, using a facial tracking system, the faces of the four portraits from the Granollers Archive were animated, emulating the expressions of the Second Life avatars.

The artistic research consisted, on the one hand, of transforming the faces of old portraits into sentient faces, breaking the barrier that distanced them from today's gesture when being portrayed – much more expressive and accustomed to showing an emotion – and, on the other, finding out whether both the Second Life digital avatars and the old portraits, once animated with the trace of a micro-expression, were capable of eliciting any emotion in the people who saw the portraits. At first glance, these portraits created an estrangement and a dissociation of contexts, observing the limit that we could not yet cross. Thus, it became clear that human communicative capacity and its complexity are not yet possible with avatars or real-time reaction animations and, although advances in online expressive communication explore these frontiers, we wonder if it will ever be possible to faithfully show the reflection of our psyche, or if this territory of fluidity, involving the uncanny valley effect, will continue to be a field for performative experimentation.

I like to think, and I say, that both Josep Bosch Plans and the people portrayed, Joan Vilalta, Antònia Puig, Maria Garcia and Antoni Jonch are joint creators of “Estadi de fluïdesa”. I use their photographs with digital media that was not there before. The phantasmagoria of imagining animated faces, as if they could continue to be here, young and expressive, is added to the formulas I imagine. And this unique stage of fluidity refuses to be held back, to be studied, to be stabilised: it will always be a spectre, a promise of what could be, of what could have been, of what can be today, just a possibility (Fragment from the work diary “Estadis de fluïdesa”, 2023).

This fragment from the work diary already reflected the key to the concept of the stage of fluidity: the possibility of being in a momentary and changing instant that makes it impossible to establish any character.

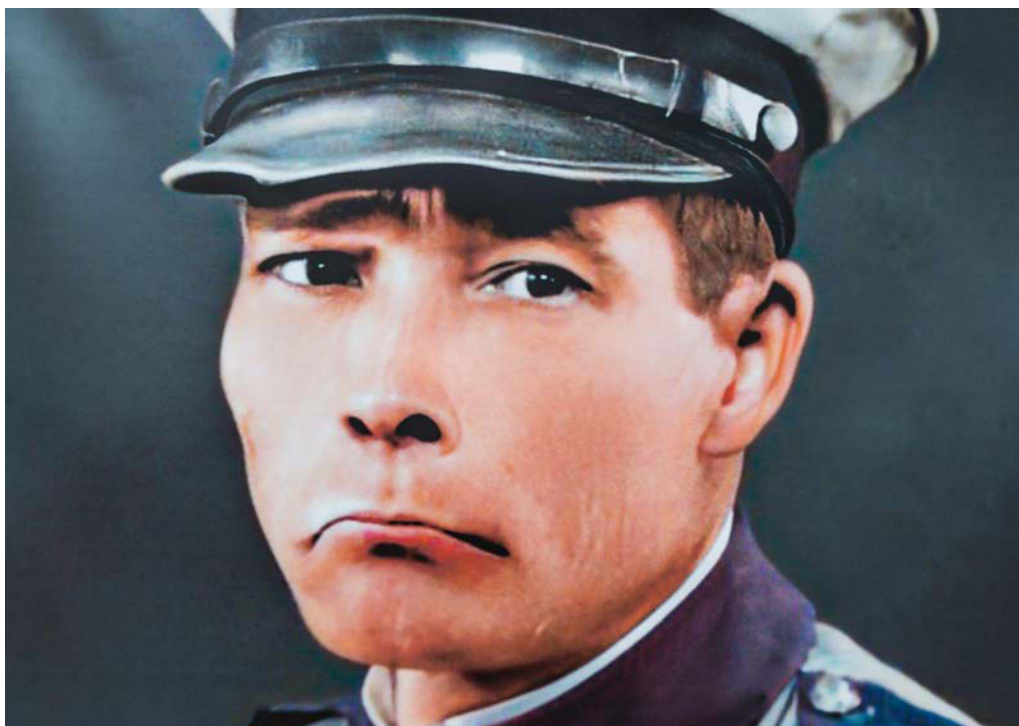


Figure 2. Detail from “Un segon momentani involuntari universal” (Núria Gia, 2023). Photograph by Cardali.

For its part, in the video essay “Estadi de fluïdesa”, I wondered about the trace of old portrait photographs and the furrow they leave, the phantasmagoria to new interpretations that scares and intoxicates in equal measure. Using the new facial animation technologies, these spectra of the possible are revealed: a portrait can be interpreted in multiple directions with this technique. Therefore, however, without technique there is no new possibility, but at the same time it is limited: both in the avatars of digital platforms and in the portraits of the past animated in the present, there was a lack of credibility for the human eye; there was no trace of micro-expressions.

It was the process of this challenge that brought me into dialogue, face to face, with the possibility or impossibility offered by tools and technology. I realised that micro-expression was still an exclusive territory of the human gaze and gesture. No animation formula could reproduce or fictionalise how, for an instant, the gesture of our face fully reflects our psyche, irremediably, uncontrollably, inexorably. Nor could online platforms of virtual worlds yet provide these human reactions immediately and precisely through avatars. Even micro-expression requires technology (video resources and slowing down the image in post-production or visualisation) to be detected and studied beyond a non-conscious sensation – non-verbal language.

Next you will find an excerpt from the characteristics that avatars and animated faces share in the video essay “Estadi de fluïdesa” (2023):

[...] micro-expressions occur so quickly that they can only be studied with technological media: slowing down the images of the face, the video also slows down and multiplies the time to reveal the image it contains. Otherwise, the image would lack its potential weight.

although in the tangible world we can decipher, unconsciously, a micro-expression, we can only study it through technological devices, and we would believe that today we can do the reverse: just as we can animate photographs and create avatars, we could also recreate micro-expressions.

for now, the avatar and the animated photo live in a stage of fluidity enabling them to perform new possibilities: being another person, becoming a face with a different character, the human image in a floating stage unanchored from the authenticity of a personal psyche.

the micro-expression is, for the time being, the exclusive territory of what is alive; it is the opposite of phantasmagoria and the portrait with the potential to be explored.

The micro-expression reveals, unveils, becomes the absolute now.

soon, however, will come the technology to generate digital micro-expressions with avatars and manipulated portraits, in a possible absolute deep fake that will add a desired character to a virtual image.

the unicity of the human rictus will disappear, as will absolute truth and lie, the total revelation of a genuine psyche, and the phantasmagoria, the potential of what is possible:

the non-mediated image,
deprived of technology,
neat.

If the micro-expression is the direct way to really know what our psyche feels, then we might think that the fact that in the virtual plane there was no possibility of recreating it would also give us a freedom in which we could flow, play to be what we wished to be, in temporalities unconnected to what is immediate.



Figure 3. Detail of "Un segon momentani involuntari universal" (Núria Gia, 2023). Photograph by Cardali.

It is here where the stage of fluidity begins, where the technology itself is no longer an open crack, a small threshold from which to slip and seek unguided horizons. Nevertheless, the stage of fluidity is a stage that is still possible for a crack that slowly closes up, a fissure that changes, flexible, liquid and mobile like the path of the current digital communication technology.

The stage of tangible fluidity

It was not until well into a piece of artistic research on the stages of fluidity that I began to study a material that is strange to me: slime. I studied its properties, capabilities and relations. In the constant attempt I am accustomed to of translating the digital to the physical and vice versa, I found in this element one of the key materials in the production of work and the formal research halfway between what is connected to the internet and total disconnection.

The word “slime” comes from the Old English word *slīm*, meaning a sticky or viscous substance. More frequently, slime often refers to a thick, slippery substance that can be natural or synthetic. Slime goes beyond the translation of “mud” as it has evoked a complete imaginary of its own far from what is natural when speaking of traditional mud: a mixture of sand and water that creates a sticky mass, a type of a sludge. On Wiktionary, it is defined as follows: Soft, moist earth or clay, having an adhesive quality; viscous mud; any substance of a dirty nature, that is moist, soft, and adhesive; bitumen; mud containing metallic ore, obtained in the preparatory dressing.”

Based on slime I speculate on the materiality of the internet. I ask myself: “If internet textures could be touched, what texture would they have, what smell, what temperature.” This is where slime appears, a material that evokes the appearance of coloured masses designed in 3D. Moreover, slime is considered a non-Newtonian material: neither liquid nor solid, and, in my opinion, one that responds to this desire of trying to imagine the internet as a space that is different from the physicality of the world we know: I wonder why we also imitate the laws of natural physics in the virtual field; why don't we imagine scenarios with different tangible properties in which conditions such as perspective, gravity and texture do not respond to the same laws? Slime opens up this possibility when it is introduced as a material that is not subject to parameters that are common to individuals.

To expand further, slime is a highly haptic material that is, to a large extent, consumed through screens: on the internet, on videos close to ASMR that suggest a respite for the senses — hence many people watch videos of slime being handled to fall asleep at night. This phenomenon, which shows our dependency on the internet and our constant hyperconnectivity, even to rest, has led me over the last year to explore the poetics of slime.

As a result of the artistic research on this polymer, I have presented several sculptures that tried to stabilise the material itself. Slime is almost impossible to stabilise, it seems to be in permanent motion, always wet and changing. In the attempt to contain it, to control its performativity, I gradually dried several masses of slime while giving a concrete shape over time



Figure 4. Performance MAPA, Núria Nia (2024). Photograph by Francesc Serra Vila, 2024.

to create different pieces which I called “Digital Foam”. Later, I added other materials such as clay, and experimented with other compositions in order to create slime and, finally, combined slime with minerals.

Slime helps me to speak of a materiality that opens up new relationships and offers unknown conditions depending on the environment. These two properties reassert slime as a new materiality and as a reflection of a space on the internet. At the same time, it allowed me to find a connection with evocative concepts such Karen Barad’s “materialization”. In “Transmaterialities. Trans*/Matter/realities and Queer Political Imaginings” she writes:

How strange that indeterminacy, in its infinite openness, is the condition for the possibility of all structures in their dynamically reconfiguring in/stabilities. Matter in its iterative materialization is a dynamic play of in/determinacy. Matter is never a settled matter. It is always already radically open.

This idea fully aligns with Halberstam’s idea of the wild, and — in the contemporary framework in which we live, with a feeling of asphyxia because of the phantom of the increasingly closer collapse — it becomes useful and totally relevant in order to trace new imaginaries of everything that has already been stabilised, solidified and that has not worked.

In this respect, it is pertinent to cite Jane Bennett when, in *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*, she writes:

I am looking for a materialism in which matter is figured as a vitality at work both inside and outside of selves, and is a force to be reckoned with without being purposive in any strong sense.

Such a vital materialism would run parallel to a historical materialism focused more exclusively on economic and social structures of human power.

Inspired by this new dimension discovered based on the material, one of the pieces I made as a resident artist at the Fabra i Coats: Fàbrica de Creació in Barcelona and that I presented in 2025, was the “Manifest de l’slime”. The experiential journey itself with the contact with slime generated encounters that I compiled in this manifesto, published in the fanzine of the exhibition “Pa i fotocòpies 2025”, held in the same venue:

Slime is a river without possible edges
it is seamless matter of freedom

Slime is not faithful to permanence
slime only stays still when deprived of air

Slime belongs to no one
nor belongs to everyone

Slime craves time. Like a child,
it wants to run free knowing it is safe

You never know its rhythm
you can only wait

Addicted to change, it seeks pathways
beyond the body, while knowing
other materials, other bodies,
new surfaces

The initial coldness contrasts
with a slight excitement of the fingers
that makes
heat explode

It is a tongue
of lava
from a volcano
that spits out
possibilities

It is foreign matter
from which
a literal translation
is not expected

This stranger
fills my studio
with doubts
and shakes
my convictions,
banishes them all,
fills me
with inconsistencies.

Like the collapse,
I see it coming slowly
though its arrival
is inexorable

Strange matter,
from the distance
mediated by cables,
and from my skin
A body that dialogues
with the rest
from difference and,
despite everything,
will never be permeable

And in all of this difference,
who is the other?

Wet like sex
and toxic,
chemically twisted

The impossibility
of holding back
of refraining
of stabilising

An open mouth,
a defined waist,
the wrinkle that forms when you laugh,
a mystery and a certainty,
a light that comes from a reflection,
the horse that lives in the mountains and
wholly belongs to it
and can travel any meadow
but decides to take the usual path,
soft, tender, tentative, slow

It responds to the water
from which
my whole body
drinks

Whirlpool that opens
in the windows of the browsers
connected in the distance
time-erasing whirlpool
time-inventing whirlpool

Of what artificial nature
are you made that touching you
changes my structure,
reddens my cheeks,
and like a pinch
that leaves no mark,
you slip away through
the thought of a memory
seen only in dreams

You look at it through a screen and,
although you cannot touch it,
your brain dribbles light
and for a moment you think
that you don't weigh or measure anything,
that your body doesn't know
whether it's liquid or solid,
and suddenly you understand that that was not
[important,

it was just about flowing,
being smooth and not resisting:
jumping, without stopping to touch the ground.

«Manifest de l'slime», Núria Nia, 2025

One of the features of slime that I point out is its performative capacity, its value to constantly change and confront us with our own conditions. This is one of the reasons why slime has entered the stage, live, with my own body, on two occasions so far. The first of them was the performance “MAPA” (2024), at the Convent de Sant Agustí in Barcelona, in which, after several visual and sound experiments with everyday technological tools, the future of slime, which collided with a clayish rock, was projected through live cinema. Moreover, an infinite repetition of slime was created, endless feedback in the screening, which analogically emulated a 3D composition. The second occasion was during the presentation of “Pa i fotocòpies” at the Fabra i Coats: Fàbrica de Creació, in which I presented the “Manifest de l'slime” (2025) while handling this material. The sound experience in the first person influenced, as in the first case, the development of the performance. What the palms of my hands felt when entering into contact with the material directly impacted the way of performing: the unexpected state of the slime added layers to the very uncertainty of confronting the body with an audience in a performative event and, moreover, the pleasant experience of handling the material contributed to an attitude of calm and curiosity in the first person that helped to share the text with the right tone.

By reencountering the concept of functionality of a tool, in this case chemical, slime began to be produced when polymers were developed and its viscosity was one of the many mixtures of chemical components that do not ultimately fulfil the expected function. In fact, there are less aqueous toys than slime popular today that were originally invented as a rubber or rubber substitute. The history of slime maintains a void in its intentions. It is not to be expected, therefore, that the material had been appropriate for its target audiences from a sovereignty of uses. The interest in this aspect lays in the fact that slime has managed to establish a crack, a stage of fluidity that links what is more physical to what is more virtual: who would expect a substance that is sensorially activated through touch to be ultimately



Figure 5. "Digital Foam" by Núria Nia (2024). Photograph by Arnau Rovira Vidal, 2024.

consumed on videos uploaded on several servers of big streaming platforms or social media? This bridge of destabilisation that slime creates when it links a digital world to a completely haptic and physically experiential world is one of the examples of the stages of fluidity that interests me. Slime speaks of a materiality that opens up new relations and that offers unknown conditions depending on the environment. Let's go even further: slime is the Trojan horse of thought on the digital, it opens the incoherences to which we are used every day when combining the online, virtual life with tangible, tactile experiences. It brings us closer to a corporeal will and distances us from the body itself by reasserting its telematic utility. Shifting, impossible to stop and contain, it forms the perfect metaphor for today's internet and telecommunications.

The stage of formal fluidity

Even in terms of form we can find the destabilisation that takes place with the stage of fluidity I propose. As an example, the installation that I share with Citlali Hernández, "Una pell distant" (2023), is a game of stage tools in itself. After a period shared with the project "Cos Satel·lital" (2021-2023), in which we explored the relations and tensions between the data and our bodies like a live performance, with "Una pell distant" we wanted to change the approach to focus on the very concept through the installation.

In this case, medical elements, waters and body fluids enter the stage with technological elements programmed via algorithms that shape the conjunction of the piece. Without initially foreseeing it, the fact of leaving of the form itself led us to collaterally displace the concept of agency within the performance. Through these elements, is it we who are on the stage?

To complement the ideas of this last question I provide an explanation of the piece: "Una pell distant" tries, in fact, to establish a dialogue between the

cold bodies of the technological devices that mediate our lives, with the skin; a skin with human temperature, with organic texture, with living materials that inhabit it. To do so, we combine elements such as cables, loudspeakers, a Raspberry Pi, numeric codes and digital talks maintained between us from 2021 to date, with living elements that we have extracted from our flesh: sweat, bacterial, maternal milk, tears, saliva...

All these elements dissolved in a watery solution, by falling through an IV drip, are projected thanks to a laser ray, and the fall of the drop activates, at the same time, a sound: the sound is a line of conversation generated with a chatbot trained to speak by emulating our way of talking, based on what we have written in our personal chats for years. At the same time, the voice of this chatbot is a voice also trained by AI with voice cloning that is the result of the fusion of our two voices. Thus, a communication, inevitably distant, is established between the elements. Our physical selves and our digital selves are represented through a live automatic action that does not need us and that draws us with some parameters that are wholly our own, specific plots of who we are. We are two artists but we are the same at the same time. And we are the machine. And we are the particles that inhabit us, and we are the artificial elements that contain and reproduce them.

In an attempt to subvert the devices and find unexpected uses, the medical material is transformed into an installation, and the nomenclature of the action is diffuse: performative action without end? Performance of autonomous devices? Representation of a pre-recorded digital relation? Robot?

Thus, artistic practices that move through a hybrid environment between what is connected and what is disconnected, between what is real and what is fictitious and artificial, with the uncertainty of the technology and the strangeness of transferring physical bodies into virtual bodies, along with the hybridisation of sciences and arts, of maximum options of form, all of them converging in these stages of fluidity provided by the technological breach to, perhaps, be able to weave new conditions for the consideration of futures not yet envisaged.

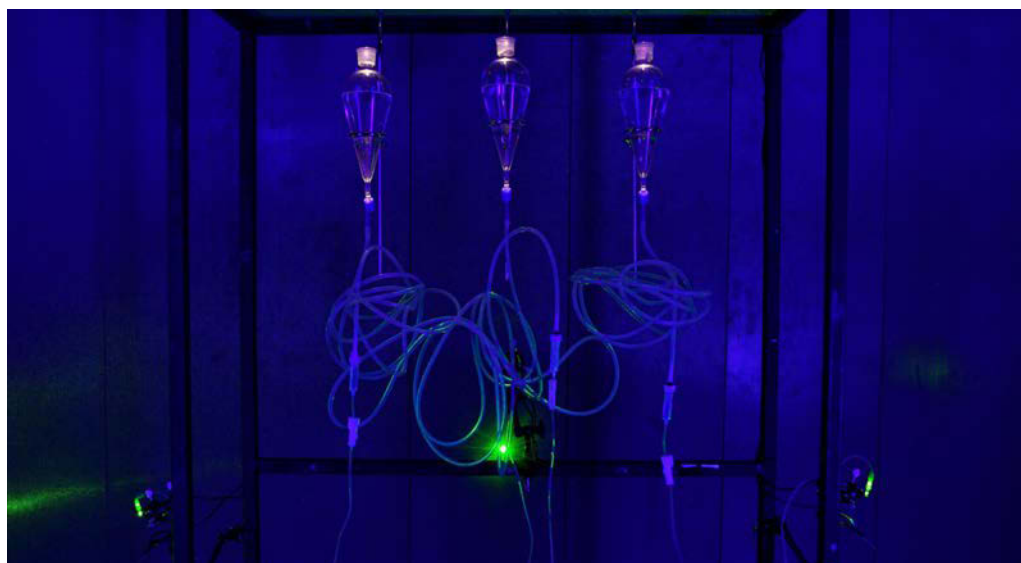


Figure 6. "Una pell distant", Citlali Hernández and Núria Nia (2023). Photograph by Andrés Costa.

By way of closure

Having previously set out proposals of concept, form, texture and process around what I call “stages of fluidity”, the challenge today is to know how to detect which materials — understanding materials as any agent that participates in our current world — are porous enough to generate a crack from which to be able to act, take agency and modify the original situation. The fissures exist and will continue to exist insofar as technological disruptions keep appearing, modifying. These fissures added the new languages and the mixtures that can take place between them, specifically through live art, the paths to be explored always stretch into the horizon and at the same time generate a hope of resistance — or, at least, self-study — towards the increasingly technological furrow at the service of politics and capital.

This closure is not a conclusion but an invitation to leave open cracks, porous spaces, and empty imaginaries to be filled. The framework that hybridises academia and art can be a permeable space that enables these theoretical alloys and materials, reddening everything that we put at the centre to pose questions rather than answers.



Bibliographical references

- BARAD, Karen. “Transmaterialities. Trans*/Matter/realities and Queer Political Imaginings” [online] (1 July 2015). *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2-3, p. 401 <<https://people.ucsc.edu/~kbarad/Barad-GLQ%20article-Transmaterialities.pdf>> [Last accessed: 27 October 2025].
- BENNETT, Jane. *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 62.
- GONZÁLEZ-FRANCO, M.; PECK, T. C. “Avatar Embodiment. Towards a Standardized Questionnaire” [online] (22 June 2018). *Frontiers in Robotics and AI*, Vol. 5. <<https://bit.ly/3K3E5b8>> [Last accessed: January 2023].
- HALBERSTAM, Jack. *Criaturas salvajes, el desorden del deseo*. Barcelona: Editorial Egales, 2020, p. 104.
- HERNÁNDEZ, Citlali; NIA, Núria. “Cos Satel·lital”. Artwork, 2021-2023.
- HERNÁNDEZ, Citlali; NIA, Núria. “Una pell distant”. Artwork, 2023.
- MUÑOZ, José Esteban. *Utopía queer. El entonces y allí de la futurabilidad antinormativa*. Buenos Aires: Caja Negra, 2009.
- NIA, Núria. “Estadis de fluïdesa”. Artwork, 2023.
- NIA, Núria. “Un segon momentani involuntari universal”. Artwork, 2023.
- NIA, Núria. “Mapa”. Artwork, 2024.
- NIA, Núria. “Digital Foam”. Artwork, 2024.
- NIA, Núria. “Manifest de l'slime”. Artwork, 2025.
- WIKTIONARY. *Slime* [online] <<https://es.wiktionary.org/wiki/slime>> [Last accessed: 27 October 2025].