

## Creative Portfolio

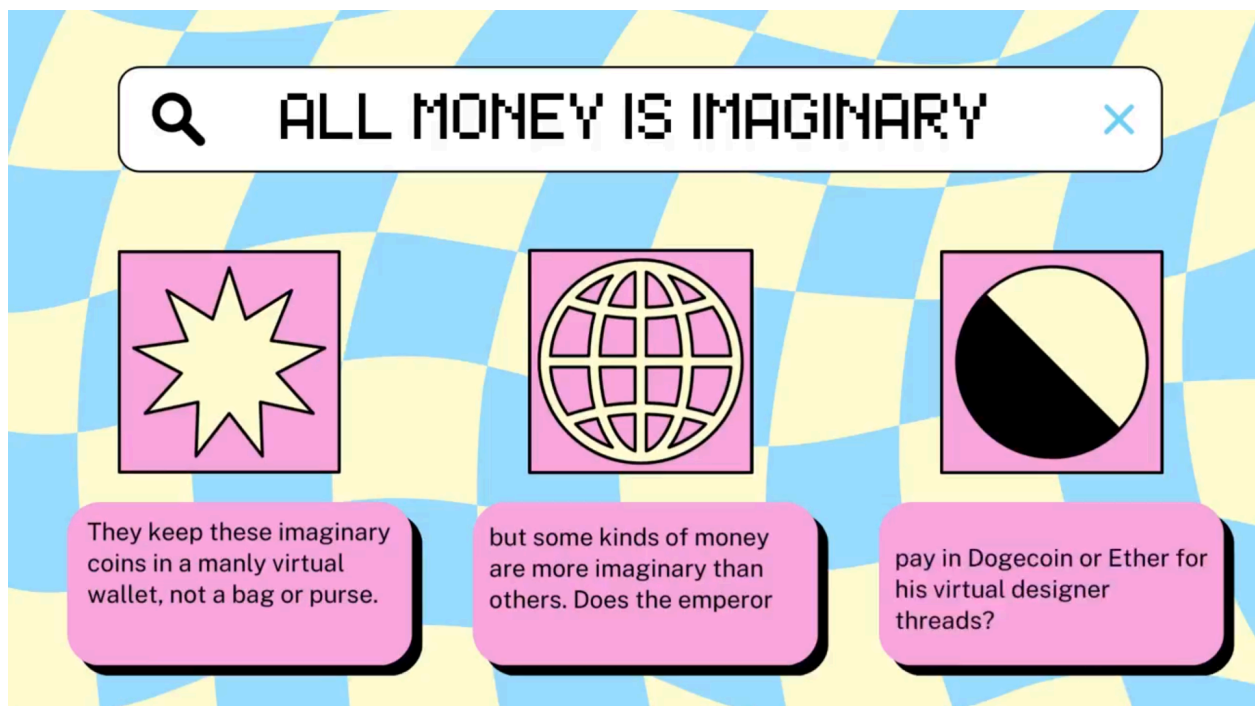
### Michelle Kasprzak

I have been a creative practitioner for over two decades, working in digital media, photography, video, performance, and more recently in creating 3D printed objects and digital ephemera. Central to my practice is an analysis of systems and technologies, and examining the potential of new forms of transmitting images and sound. My video work is distributed by Vtape in Toronto, Canada.

#### Featured projects:

### The Crypto Purse

In collaboration with lizvix



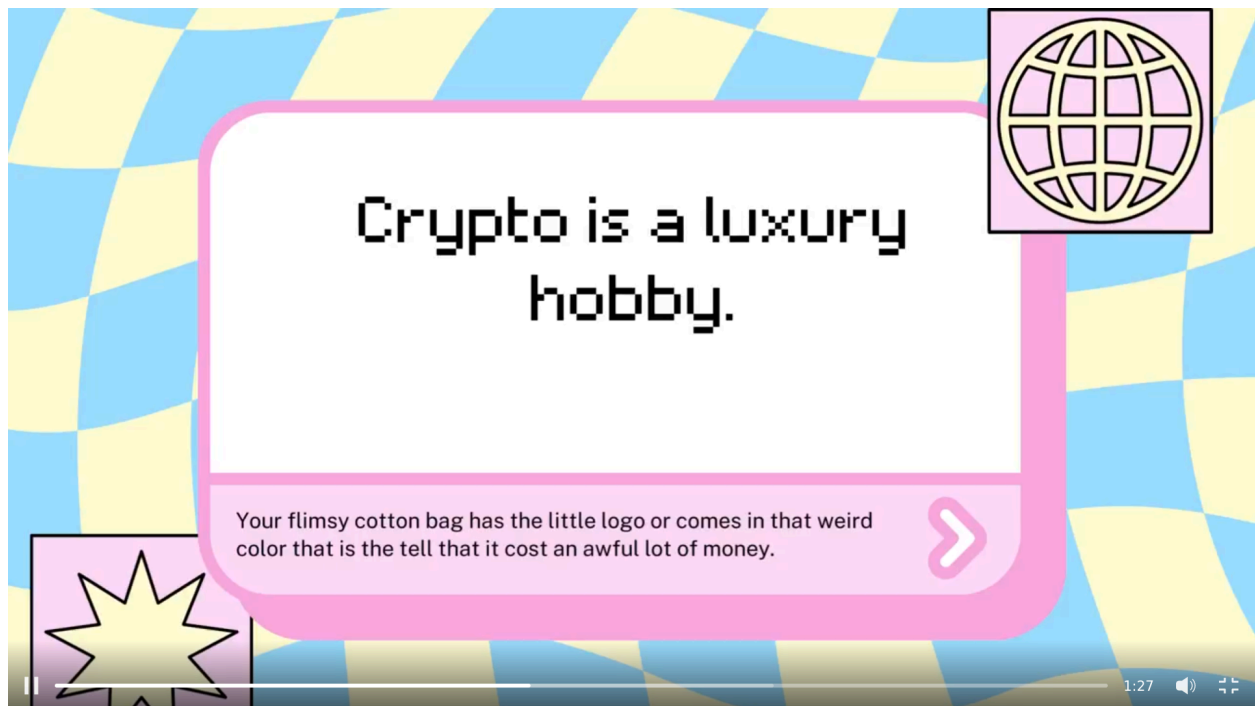
Civilization is built on its fundamental inventions. We think of fundamental inventions and often refer to the wheel, or the sharpened blade. What is rarely mentioned is the bag. **The bag -- purse, handbag -- comes even before money**, as hunter-gatherers used to carry a bag. Certainly the bag comes before the idea of the billfold or wallet.

What does one carry in a purse? Lipstick. Keys. Tissues. Money. We carry tools. We carry reminders. We carry useless shit. We carry proof that we are who we say we are. We carry our favorite breath mints. **We take shards of our identity and wrap them up in premium leather** and brass buckles.

Luxury goods function as an **ersatz penis**. The Italian sports car, the Swiss watch that a father intends to pass on to his son. But what of the handbag? The handbag is an item made of high quality materials and borne of specialized craftsmanship, yet mostly **denigrated as petty fashion** instead of hailed as a crucial invention.

The Crypto Purse is a design concept, collection of NFTs, and performance by Michelle Kasprzak and lizvlx. The project is paying homage to the beauty and functionality of one of humankind's most fundamental tools: the bag. The collection also functions as a feminist commentary, why do we hold crypto in a "wallet", and not in a purse? What do the flaws of the crypto/NFT landscape say about human nature?

Presentations: STRP Festival, Eindhoven



## BB



BB is **a love letter to the *buurt bieb*** (roughly translated: neighbourhood library): the spontaneously-organized, multilingual, communal neighbourhood bookshelves of Amsterdam (and elsewhere). BB exists as three components: photographs, RISO prints, and a zine.

In its most simple form, a *buurt bieb* is simply **a bookshelf or other piece of furniture left on the street where anyone can leave a book or take a book**. Sometimes other items creep in, such as toys, puzzles, or even leftover food. The contents of a *buurt bieb* have an incredible range from outdated tech manuals to kid's books to romance novels. The *buurt bieb* is a temporary street architecture which can move and change. The simplest one is just a crate balanced on a wall, or a spare bookshelf pulled onto the street. Some are more planned, with doors that close, ornate paint jobs, and signage. You can buy quite fancy ones online if you don't feel like making one yourself to install in your neighbourhood. While one might expect chaos, it's extremely rare to spot a *bieb* that has been taken over by junk or that is spilling onto the street. Many hands make the *bieb* tidy and keep it full of books and other useful things.

This is not just an Amsterdam thing, street libraries have been spotted in numerous other cities around the globe. What is striking about the trend here is its popularity. On a walk of a few kilometres in a residential neighbourhood, it would not be strange to come across several *biebs*. This phenomenon also fits well with other informal sharing mechanisms, such as the *kringloopwinkel* and *weggeefwinkel*.

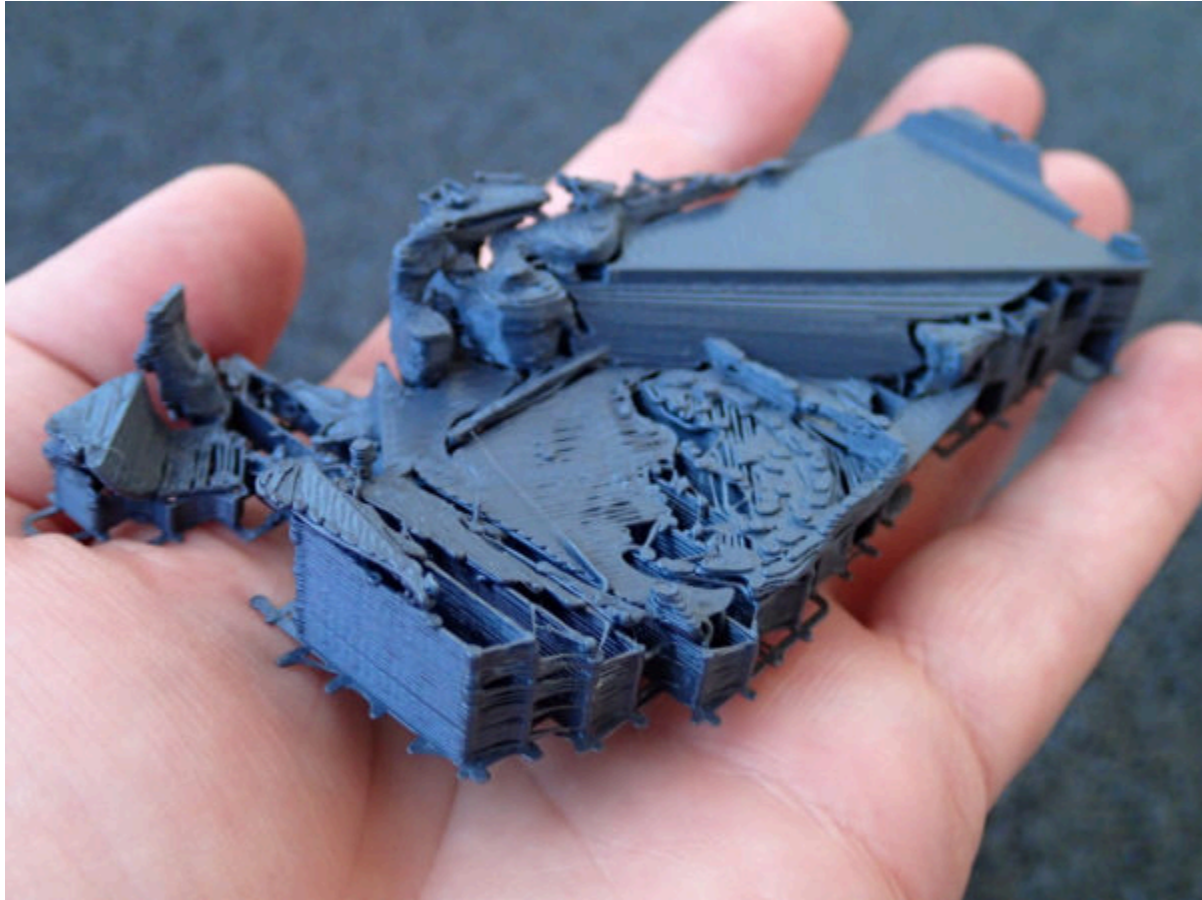
I made this piece during my fellowship at the Low Carbon Design Institute in Summer 2021. In a talk given to Fellows by Rebecca Trevalyan, she asked the audience to share what they thought of when they thought of **the “sharing economy”**. I reflected that it had mostly become a buzz phrase which was useful cover for socially and ethically dubious platforms. The *buurt bieb* and what it represents is something more pure: a simple, popular form of sharing, unfunded and unregulated by anyone in particular.

In my photographs I aim to **document as many of these sharing sites as possible**. I informally recorded dozens on my smartphone, later took some better photographs with my DSLR, and will continue to revisit and reshoot these sites. I then rasterized some of the photos, and experimented with RISO printing different representations of the *buurt bieb* locations, overlaid with text. I chose RISO printing as it is a **hybrid digital-analogue process**, and one of the most environmentally responsible printing options: it is a cold process, and uses soy-based inks. It is prone to error, and not archival at all, but this also appealed to me as the *buurt biebs* themselves are hardly permanent structures.

Lastly, I decided to treat the *buurt bieb* as **a kind of network** which I could use to broadcast on. In this way, the BB zine was conceived. Over several months I distributed texts on environmental responsibility and notions of prosperity in a RISO printed cover through local *buurt biebs*. With several copies in circulation to unknown parties, the readers of the BB zine become a **decentralized reading group**.



## Did Andy Like Anchovies?



The Andy Warhol Archive in Pittsburgh plays host to nearly everything that Warhol ever owned. Our late Uncle Andy had a habit of tossing things in boxes by his desk, and then when they were full, sealing them up, dating them, and putting them aside. Some very odd things have been found in these boxes. Entire pizzas. Slices of birthday cake. A mummified foot. An inflated Batman toy. Clark Gable's shoes. Et cetera.

These boxes are better known as the Time Capsules, and they pose **an enormous archival challenge**. These combinations of junk and treasure cost \$5000 each to open and properly preserve. One can't help but imagine Warhol being a little amused at some of the contents of the Time Capsules being handled with gloves and kept in mylar sleeves.

When I first learned of the Time Capsules, I speculated that there would be **little insight into Warhol to gain from being able to handle an old pizza that Warhol purchased, never consumed, and then put in a box**. Most of the individual pieces will indeed remain

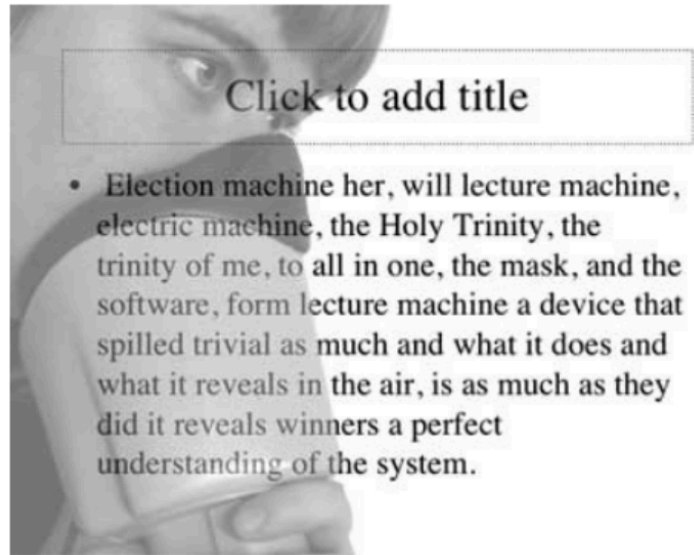
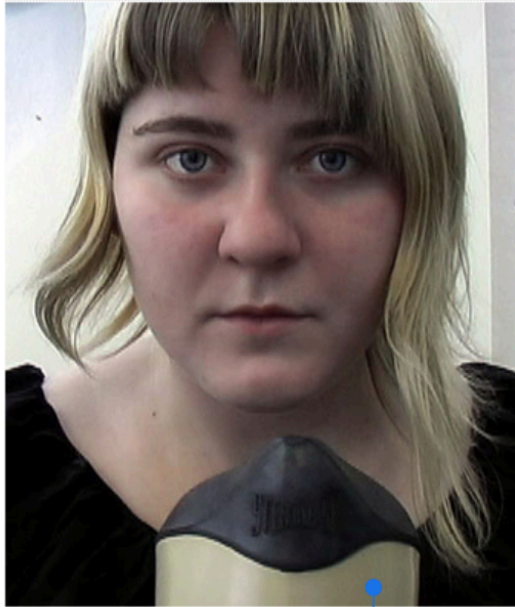
enigmatic, but considering that the whole collection comprises 210 boxes, the Time Capsules are a significant gesture.

Moreover, as it often goes in the art world: the holy of holies — **the hand of the artist** — dictates what is important, so the perceived significance of the objects matters little to those at the Archive or Warhol scholars. For some time I thought hanging on to Andy Warhol's pizzas was absurd – just throw them in a 3D scanner in case a scholar really wants to know what Andy took on his pizza later on and dump the nearly-impossible-to-preserve original. I thought it was messy, un-curated, un-critical and maybe even lazy. Now I see it a little differently: **once in the cardboard box, an ontological levelling took place** and the pizza is on par with the wig; the mummified foot on par with the Brillo box. It's perhaps impossible to say what clues will be unearthed from these objects, or from any object.

In a kind of wink to the Time Capsules and the whole pizzas and half-eaten pizzas and even lumps of pizza dough found within several of them, I have curated **a collection of 3D-scanned pizzas** and pizza slices which have been captured using the Autodesk 123D Catch app. The collection functions as **a snapshot of the quality of the technology now** and the random sampling of pizza styles; as a kind of **sly joke that a packrat like Warhol might have appreciated**; and as a **usable collection of 3D models of pizza, ready to print**. My dinner yesterday could sit, in its imperfectly captured glory, on your desk today.

Featured in: The 3D Additivist Cookbook, edited by Morehshin Allahyari and Daniel Rourke  
Exhibitions: "Materializing the Internet", MU Eindhoven

## Lecture-Machine



In the Lecture-Machine performance, I take on the persona of a lecturer, and deliver a talk on the **relationship between speech and text**; the quest for an insertion of humanity, in the form of the voice, into our relationship with technology; and the endless tasks of learning and interpretation that surround the spoken word. I lectured into a Stenomask, a voice-silencing device which was once commonly used in courts of law by court reporters. The Stenomask is connected to a computer with voice recognition capabilities. During the performance, the **computer's interpretation of my lecture is displayed live**, as it is translated from speech to text, in Powerpoint slides or as captions overlaid on video. This textual output reveals the many flaws in the computer's analysis. Simultaneously, a **digitized voice reads the original text** of the lecture aloud. The computer/software, the Stenomask, and my voice **work as a trinity** to form lectures where the **meaning is layered** and emerges as the computer interprets my speech.

The computer and I are engaged in an intense form of **mutual training**, where I attempt to conform my speech to its expectations, and the computer applies its logic to my utterances. The audience observes each instance of **slippage in meaning** between the original lecture that is heard and the interpreted lecture that is presented as text. My performance depicts the endless tasks of learning and interpretation that surround the spoken word, and how devotion to repetitive tasks as part of structured activity (legal



proceedings, animal training, personalization of technology) is analogous to the patterns we form in developing relationships with others. A soundtrack -- a one-take recording, with mistakes, of Bach's Goldberg Variations, was produced by pianist Daniel Cockburn, especially for this work.

Exhibitions: Edge Intermedia, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada  
Palais de Justice de Montréal, Québec, Canada

## Stereotactic

In collaboration with Michelle Teran





Stereotactic was a **live video mixing performance**, wherein the audience were invited to put on wearable screens and become the conduit through which the images could be mixed, remixed, and made visible.

The two performers (Michelle Kasprzak and Michelle Teran) occupied opposing sides of the gallery space and created images with **a range of props captured by a live camera feed**. The camera feeds were projected in the space, and the **audience members with wearable screens could play with the imagery** created by the projectors.

Exhibition: Mercer Union, Toronto, Canada

## Immaterial



Immaterial was a **melding of two worlds**: digital and physical, exploring the frontiers of 3D visualization, video and live performance. I integrated digital video loops with 3D objects being animated and textured in real time. The objects appear to be responding to the movements of the performer in the video, but it is not immediately apparent which is initiating the interaction: the character, the objects, or both.

Notions of actual time and re-transmissions are then questioned, and the artist confronts this inversion of time by re-enacting the exact initial movements in order to maintain the integrity of the image. Upon closer inspection, the audience slowly realizes that their initial assumption, which is that a live video is responding to pre-rendered digitised elements, is false. **The performer is in the physical performance space, live, but her representation on the screen is not live.** The video character is a loop, an echo of the real person at the computer. The essence of the performance is the **harmonization of real time 3D graphics and a video representation of the artist.**

With this palette of 3D objects transforming in real time, I attempt to respond to and trace my past movements. The performance uses a number of default objects from the Houdini 3D animation software as well as 3D wireframe files of common objects (a bicycle, a bathtub, curtains) available as free downloads from the web. The gestures of physical manipulation: **moving, pinching, swiping, pushing**, et cetera, were filmed first, and then **layered with the live, real-time animation of the objects** which were orchestrated to behave capriciously to my hand gestures.

Exhibitions: Private functions, Toronto, Canada