

## Breaking the frame - CRASSH outdoor film festival

### Programme | 30 September 2022

This year's film festival not only offers an outdoor screening but also several free indoor show reels at CRASSH on the same night, running up to the main event. Please see the programme for venues and timings.

We are very excited to present another CRASSH outdoor film festival! Join us for an evening screening of films on the theme of **Breaking the frame: resisting technology in the digital age**. Come along for this exciting evening on the central lawn of the Sidgwick Site's Raised Faculty Building.

The **Wandering Yak food truck** will be in attendance for the evening. Please bring your own drinks and blankets if required.

#### 17:00 – 19:00 Indoor show reels at CRASSH

- Free entry
- Venue: CRASSH, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, Cambridge
- This venue is adjacent to the outdoor screening

#### 19:00 – 20:45 Outdoor screening

- Tickets £10 (includes a reserved deckchair, a headset, and popcorn)
- Venue: Central lawn, Sidgwick Site, which can be reached via Sidgwick Avenue or West Road, Cambridge
- Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the screening starts to collect your headset
- Accessible toilet facilities will be available
- In case of rain, deckchairs can be placed underneath the Raised Faculty Building



*17:00 - 19:00 free indoor screening*  
*CRASSH, ground-floor, Alison Richard Building,*

**To stand and stare: a Somerset landscape** Terry Flaxton & Charlotte Humpston, 2021 | 62 minutes

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*17:00 - 19:00 free indoor showreel, Experimental films*  
*Room S2, second floor, Alison Richard Building*

**Archimeters** Charlie Tweed, 2012 | 4:50 minutes

**Day in, day out** Beth Bronson, 2021 | 5 minutes

**Excerpt #3 “50.000 touches”** Fenia Kotsopoulou, 2022 | 7 minutes (excerpt)

**The machinic dreams the future into being** John Wild, 2021 | 5 minutes

**Warranty & conditions of use** Ian Gibbins, 2020 | 5:30 minutes

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*17:00 - 19:00 free indoor showreel, Art films and documentaries*  
*Room S3, third floor, Alison Richard Building*

**Zuckerberg, you owe/own me** Pauline Blanchet, 2022 | 15 minutes

**We've been here before** Bob Bicknell-Knight, 2021 | 6 minutes

**Saved** Robert Good, 2021 | 4:30 minutes

**People enjoy my company** Frank Sweeney, 2021 | 17:30 minutes

**Generation alpha**  
Spring Ulmer, 2022 | 7 minutes

**Cost of convenience – the secret life of your smartphone**  
Cambridge Creative Encounters, 2021 | 5 minutes  
Amelia Jabry, John Naughton, Ramit Debnath, Jack Lynch, Duanyang Geng, Hunter Vaughan  
Animation: Stuart Holmes

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*19:00 - 20:45 Outdoor film screening (ticketed)*  
*Central lawn, Raised Faculty Building, Sidgwick Site, Cambridge*

**Introduction**  
Steven Connor (Director, CRASSH), Julia Rone (Research Associate, Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy), Thomas Dekeyser (Post-Doctoral Fellow, Royal Holloway University)

**Machines in flames**  
Andrew Culp & Thomas Dekeyser, 2022 | 50 minutes

*10 minute interval*

**Laundry aisle**  
Alice Evans, 2022 | 10 minutes

**Select important things**  
Jane Frances Dunlop, 2022 | 22 minutes



## About the films

### **Archimeters** | Charlie Tweed

*Archimeters* focuses on Ordos – a near empty ghost town in Inner Mongolia, China which has been newly built but remains almost entirely empty. The work lays out a plan for appropriating the town and constructing “a fully integrated auto-poietic and auto-effective mechanism”. From a central point within the empty Ordos Art Museum, the plan is described, particularly focussing on ‘effects’ and ‘affects’ referencing both the physical and virtual structure of the town and the video’s own construction. The digital effects used at certain points within the editing software are exposed in textual form “signal blur at 30%” – as if the video is itself becoming an auto-poietic mechanism. The text that forms the voice-over is appropriated from software testing handbooks and has been used due to its focus on creating a fully integrated and predictable, self-sufficient system, that continually improves itself and enhances its method of control over all things.

### **Cost of convenience – the secret life of your smartphone** | Cambridge Creative Encounters, 2021

Amelia Jabry, John Naughton, Ramit Debnath, Jack Lynch, Duanyang Geng, Hunter Vaughan & Stuart Holmes

*The secret life of your smartphone* – its emissions before reaching your hand. Within this short animation the creators have brought together several perspectives on product development and technological waste. People are passionate about their phones, but this also makes them vulnerable to upgrade pressures and planned obsolescence. This, therefore, is an emotional as well as a technological and environmental issue as it concerns perhaps the most important piece of technology a person owns. The current conversation in the media is on how technology changes, but not on the emissions and impact it has made before reaching the consumer. This short film explores the ‘embodied’ emissions of the smartphone and how we can focus on upgrading the smartphone industry’s environmental commitments rather than our phones.

### **Day in, day out** | Bethe Bronson, 2021

For the duration of the first lockdown, a handmade pinhole camera sat outside Bethe Bronson’s window. Every evening after sundown Bronson took out that day’s picture and replaced it with a fresh piece of photographic paper. Her aim was to capture what the eye alone cannot perceive, the movement of time. Through a series of over 120 24-hour exposures, these images reveal the trail of the sun on its daily journey. The resulting time-lapse enables us to witness the passage of days, weeks, months, as the sun makes its way across the sky as it has always done, as if nothing has changed.

### **Excerpt #3 “50.000 Touches”** | Fenia Kotsopoulou, 2022

*Excerpt #3 “50.000 Touches”* is a short unpublished excerpt from the ongoing experimental film project “50,000 TOUCHES” (2022-) on the poetics and politics of love, intimacy and touch in relation to self and other, through the means of (alternative) photography, performance for/with camera, and animation. The main ambition and challenge of this work lies upon devoted attentiveness and deep commitment to a slow and long creative process during which the aim is to hand-develop 50,000 frames (only then the project can be considered concluded), using a range of alternative image-making techniques- in and out of the darkroom-such as cyanotype, contact printing, chemograms, chlorophyll printing, anthotypes, and other hybrid techniques. Oscillating between digital and analogue methods, the developed frames are re-assembled and edited to shape an audio-visual poetic journey with a non-linear narrative that unfolds through time. Whilst content-wise this work seeks to navigate cracks and failure to find out what love is (not), some other issues emerge in regards to the process: the performativity and materiality of images, hyperfocus, commitment and solitude during the making process, slowness as creative method, the (intimate) gaze that seeks to create moments of affect, and visual traps (im)possible to deviate from.

### **Generation alpha** | Spring Ulmer, 2022

*Generation Alpha* examines a nine-year-old boy’s relationship to material culture. The boy’s “technology is trash” philosophy hinges on imagining technology as that which is not capitalist in origin but is instead relegated to the order of a magical realm.

### **Laundry aisle** | Alice Evans, 2022

*Laundry Aisle* is an experimental poetic work. Following her PhD in 2021, Alice Evans began to ask how artists film might respond to the emergence of super-intelligent AI. There is a lot of wonderful combined art/science which explores the potential benefits of this technology. There seems little which proposes to explore the dangers. In making this film Evans was trying to understand how humanity will survive the mind problem which could emerge with the destruction of the illusion of psychic autonomy presented with super-intelligent AI systems. One idea she had, presented through this film, was to express a desperate form of visual psychosis which seeks to overcome the enduring logic of the machine. It also expresses a form of science future nightmare where humans no longer retain a privacy of mind. There are hopefully lighter moments too...

### **Machines in flames** | Andrew Culp & Thomas Dekeyser, 2022

*Machines in Flames* finds a secret history of self-destruction by following the footsteps of a clandestine group of French computer workers from the 1980s.

*Machines in Flames* presents a cinematic search for an elusive group – CLODO – that bombed computer companies in 1980s Toulouse, France. Journeying through the cybernetic nodes of military, industrial, and socialist development, the film exposes how recording devices fail to collect the ashes of history. The film combines archival traces, a viral desktop choreography, and paranoid footage of nocturnal stakeouts into a philosophical investigation of self-combustion. *Machines in Flames* is the debut film of the Destructionist International, and the first in a series on the appetite for abolition in ultra-leftism.

### **People enjoy my company** | Frank Sweeney, 2021

This film explores the privatisation of the Irish state-owned telecommunications company Telecom Éireann from the viewpoint of shareholders communicating on early online forums. The event is contextualised within ideologies of technological emancipation in the pre-millennium period. It was funded by The Arts Council of Ireland with exhibition funding from Brightening Air. The development was funded by a Rapid Residency Award from Science Gallery Dublin.

### **Saved** | Robert Good, 2021

*Saved* comprises a 5x5 grid of rectangles similar in format to the arrays of monitors used by security guards for 24-hour surveillance. In real life, each rectangle would be an unsleeping eye providing a continuous data stream for scrutiny and oversight. Instead, the endless stream is not of data, but of non-data, a cascade of pure colour that turns the banality of surveillance into a spectacle of surprising beauty and mesmerising calm. The title plays upon the idea of a screensaver: a temporary barrier that saves us from the overwhelm and anxiety that lies behind. *Saved* runs for 4'33" in homage to John Cage, whose performative musical silence of that duration invited us to step back and consider not the work of the musicians but the ambient sounds of their surroundings. *Saved* provides a similar invitation, to disconnect for a short while and reflect on the ambient, endless flow of bytes that now encircles the world. *Saved* pushes back against the incessant stream. It is slow technology, mindful technology, resistant technology.

### **Select important things** | Jane Frances Dunlop, 2020

In *Select Important Things*, Jane Frances Dunlop combines stock footage and original spoken texts to create a new knowledge system within the shifting landscape of meaning and meaning-making in the 21st century. The film is part of a series of artworks that explore two crises of knowledge that have come to define the last decade: the rise of 'alternative facts' that undermine and destabilise expertise, and the increasingly complex AI systems through which datasets and neural networks generate knowledge.

### **The machinic dreams the future into being** | John Wild, 2021

*The Machinic Dreams the Future into Being* is an experimental art film. The film focuses on the temporary landscape of the Limehouse Foreshore, a triangular expanse of mud, silt and rocks on the northside of the Thames, just as the river sweeps south at Canary Wharf and only accessible at low tide. The film is a machine learning latent space animation created using a generative adversarial network (GAN) trained on an original data set of human bodies occupying the Foreshore. Animated machine learning images are overlaid with a speculative sci-fi narrative that highlights the way machine learning algorithms are instrumental in mining and ultimately altering the future through automated high-speed trading. It views capitalism as an inhuman algorithm carrying out its own internal logic. The film concludes by calling for working-class resistance to reclaim the future before workers become the abandoned residue of Capital's human meat, surplus to requirements as sea levels rise.

**To stand and stare: a Somerset landscape** | Terry Flaxton & Charlotte Humpston, 2021

The film makers have lived in the Somerset Landscape for 30 years and *To stand and stare: a Somerset landscape* is their attempt to place people's lives as they are lived, in relation to the swirling advent of digital media that has overcome modern life. *A Somerset landscape* begins with a well-known poem from 1871 by W H Davies: "What is this life, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare? The simple question informs the task Flaxton and Humpston ask of both ourselves and the viewer: certainly it follows documentary form, but it also is an attempt to engage with Bill Viola's dictum 'Duration is to Consciousness, as light is to the eye'. The viewer is asked to allow their gaze to slip back into a sensibility where they imbue the work with their attention rather than interrogate and interpret it – this latter can be done after viewing. *To stand and stare* took six years to edit, to find the form – and the hope is that it is in the durational aspect of this work that the truths we seek to discover about modern life through the lens of long-practiced crafts, are revealed.

**Warranty & conditions of use** | Ian Gibbins, 2020

"WE are free from defects. WE can only be accepted as is... Your co-operation will contribute to the effective utilisation of our natural resources... WE will instruct you... WE will not be blocked..."

What have we signed up for? Who holds the power and responsibility to keep things running in the face of breakdown and decay? Perhaps this is the rule of law. Perhaps it is a disguise for oppression... Perhaps, despite it all, we have the wherewithal to resist... The film's text contains samples of commercial warranty statements and features the remains of a Reichert ultramicrotome and an Epson inkjet printer.

**We've been here before** | Bob Bicknell-Knight, 2021

Originally commissioned by The Bass x Daata

We've Been Here Before is a CGI film concerning the boundaries between public and private space, forgotten histories, simulated worlds and apocalyptic futures. The work presents a series of digital replicas of real-life, physical spaces, virtually duplicated in architectural simulation software, alongside several 3D models of contemporary technologies that have been heavily eroded. The three locations explored in the film are the headquarters of GCHQ, a government organisation responsible for digitally surveilling people in the UK and abroad; the headquarters of the social media website Facebook in Menlo Park, California, and Fisher Island, Miami, a barrier island which has the highest per capita income of any place in the

United States, and will be one of the first locations in the US to be swallowed by rising sea levels. These visual elements are accompanied by an ominous computer-generated voiceover speaking about a fictionalised future where the coming climate crisis has forced the global oceans to rise, with human beings escaping into mountainous regions and digital worlds.

**Zuckerberg, you owe/own me** | Pauline Blanchet, 2022

A deep exploration into a personal Facebook archive of videos leads to discovering the internet's darker historical roots. In an attempt to build a connection between one's own data and the digital infrastructure, this film questions how one can perceive the internet as separate from their material world and hence, themselves. As a pre-adolescent, Pauline Blanchet was obsessed with her laptop, the Internet, and Facebook. Through the use of old Facebook videos, she realised her love for filmmaking stemmed from this period of her life. The film medium itself was appropriate to use, as it interlinks this moment in time with filmmaking itself. Blanchet's original idea stemmed from the concept of making the 'invisible' visible by producing a film on data centres. The challenge was to find a way of using the film medium as a lens to approach the digital infrastructure.

Films were selected from an open call by Steven Connor (Director, CRASSH), Julia Rone (Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy), Thomas Deyekser (Royal Holloway University of London) and Judith Weik (CRASSH).

This Film Festival is supported by the **Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy**, and the **Centre for the GeoHumanities, Royal Holloway University**. It is realised with **Enchanted Cinema**.

For more information please visit the CRASSH website or email [enquiries@crash.cam.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@crash.cam.ac.uk)

[www.crash.cam.ac.uk](http://www.crash.cam.ac.uk)



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