

# Asynchronous Encounters: Artistic Practice and Mediated Intimacy in the Space-Time of Lockdown

---

Emily Goodwin and Sarah Brophy

**Abstract:**

This essay engages with pandemic-era artistic practice, asking how digital technologies are being taken up out of desires and attempts to be intimate with, proximate to, 'contemporary' with one another. Drawing on theories of pandemic temporality and on media analysis approaches that highlight the digital's materiality, affectivity, and self-reflexivity, we think with three first-person, visual-digital works composed, circulated, and archived during the COVID-19 pandemic: Ella Comberg's research creation photo-essay on Google Street View, titled 'Eye of the Storm,' Bo Burnham's Netflix streaming special *Inside*, and Richard Fung's short documentary film '[...],' shot on iPad. We suggest that these visual-digital pieces open onto the promises and limitations of mediated intimacies – with others, with ourselves, and with the space-time of lockdown. Their commitments to texture and tension draw out the 'impurity' (Shotwell 2016) of our digital lifeworlds, while also attuning us to possibilities for 'waiting with' (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020) one another amidst what Nadine Chan (2020) calls the 'distal temporalities' of late capitalism. To deliberately dwell in stuck or looped time and linger over the touch of distant, distal others – or what we call asynchronous encounters – is not to indulge or excuse the ways in which contemporary media platforms capitalise on affective and creative labour or surveil digital lifeworlds. Instead, we posit that the textures, glitches, and flickering bonds of mediated intimacy may offer new, multiple, reflexive and recursive pathways 'toward inhabited futures that are not so distal' (Chan 2020: 13.6).

**Keywords:** digital media; COVID-19 pandemic; visual arts; materiality; temporality; intimacy.

*Somatechnics* 13.1 (2023): 1–22

DOI: 10.3366/soma.2023.0393

© Edinburgh University Press

[www.eupublishing.com/soma](http://www.euppublishing.com/soma)

On 15 December 2021, we learned that, despite intensive preparations for a return to campus, we would be teaching and collaborating remotely, again, for at least the first week of January: a delayed start to buffer Ontario's university campuses from the Omicron COVID-19 surge. As we write in early January 2022, we are once again encountering our colleagues and students on Zoom, meeting mediated representations of them as they are of us. Or – resisting privacy creep – we are joining meetings from our living spaces while keeping cameras off; we interact through emojis and humorous quips in the chat, punctuated by occasional unmuting. We know the Zoom ropes well now, but we worry: Does reliance on videoconferencing in higher education portend an ever-deepening condition of 'alienation,' in and through 'habituation' to the hidden power hierarchies that constitute 'The Zoom Gaze' (Caines 2020)? More broadly, are intimacy, relationality, the very capacity to care for others and for the planet being attenuated by the pandemic's 'digital rush,' with its entrenching of class, racial, and geopolitical divides (Chan 2020: 13.2)? These are serious questions that spark anxiety for us, but also push back. Ambivalent about staying online, but also grateful to have these tools to keep students, staff, and colleagues, as well as our communities and households, safe through this fifth pandemic wave, we persist in regarding the digital as multiplicitous in its roles, effects, and cultures of use.

Responding to Nadine Chan's (2020) characterisation of digital 'lifeworlds' (13.4) as increasingly divergent or 'distal' in the time of COVID-19, this essay attends to how digital technologies are being taken up out of desires and attempts to be intimate with, proximate to, 'contemporary' with one another. In the process, we challenge the default valorisation of the synchronous as a more authentic approximation of in-person than the asynchronous, suggesting that dispersed modes of encounter can manifest as thickly relational, intersubjective, and sustaining. We suggest that mediated life be approached as a resource for 'waiting with': a caring, 'care-ful[1]' relationship to time as a matter of being, thinking, and justice (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 5). To do this, we engage with artistic practice, emphasising the materiality, affectivity, and self-reflexivity of digital media as we think with three first-person pandemic online essays: Ella Comberg's research creation photo-essay on Google Street View, titled 'Eye of the Storm,' Bo Burnham's Netflix streaming special *Inside*, and Richard Fung's short documentary film '[...]' shot on iPad. These visual-digital pieces, archived online,<sup>1</sup> open onto the promises and limitations of mediated intimacies – with others, with ourselves, and with the space-time of lockdown. Their commitments to texture and tension draw out the

‘impurity’ (Shotwell 2016) of our digital lifeworlds, while also suggesting possibilities for inhabiting digital media in more ‘care-ful[1]’ ways (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 5).

### **‘Pandemic Temporalities,’ ‘Waiting With,’ and the Intimate Materiality of Media**

In the 2021 ‘Great Performers’ issue of *The New York Times Magazine* – an issue which counts *Inside* as one of the year’s exceptional contributions to cinema – film critic A.O. Scott (2021) notes that:

Right now, individually and as a species, we spend more of our time looking at moving images of other people than at any other moment in human history. I don’t have data to support that claim, but *come on*: You and I both know it has to be true. What else have we been doing for the last two years?

Hyperbolic only to a point, Scott’s comments hail readers as witnesses to and members of this epoch of endless viewing, while hinting at our mutual disconnection: it is because of how you and I have *each* spent our time over the last two years that we feel Scott’s assessment to be true.

Read in this way, Scott’s remarks echo what Chan (2020) describes as ‘distal temporalities’: the diverging digital ‘lifeworlds’ (13.1) that disconnect us from shared, contemporaneous experience. Amplified by but not original to the pandemic’s ‘headlong rush’ (13.4) to virtual modalities, distal temporalities can be understood as affectively ambivalent and somatechnically mediated. These increasingly asynchronous ‘temporal zones’ (13.2) are shot through with what Delphi Carstens (2020) calls ‘apocalyptic affects’ – currents of fear, boredom, and malaise that ‘jump between bodies entangled with technological media and in digital networks’ (95) – even as our personalised media networks proffer entertainment, comfort, and intimate connection. Scott’s sardonic remark about ‘what else we’ve been doing’ alludes to pandemic-era streaming habits, but a full gamut of digital activities hinge upon our bodily enmeshment with a late capitalism that encourages, captures, and monetises a range of affective encounters (Pybus 2015), transforming the ‘knowledgeable consumption of culture’ into scenes of ‘productiv[ity]’ and ‘pleasur[e]’ that function as ‘free labour’ (Terranova 2000: 37). Yet Scott’s appeal to the habits of a ‘species’ also attempts to synchronise the fundamentally disjunctive temporalities of the distal, which ‘exacerbates the ongoing crisis of capitalism by parcelling out who must suffer in real time and who lives in virtual time’ (Chan 2020: 13.5). In the

words of Judith Butler and Mel Y. Chen (2021): ‘there is no single pandemic time. There are only pandemic temporalities’ (10:05–10:28).

Writing in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd and the resulting Black Lives Matter protests, Chan concludes by cautiously describing the present ‘possibility of asynchronous contemporaneity’ (13.6), in which digitally enabled activist networks help to focus the distributed rage and frustration of marginalised people and their allies, facilitating collective action. In this moment, she writes, ‘We are witnessing how synchronous action can arise out of asynchronous worlds; how the virtual informs the actual’ (13.6). Such hopes constitute a recurring element of this discussion; we attend to the multiple, indirect, and ‘impure’ (Shotwell 2016: 6) ways in which our case studies engage with disempowerment and the pressing need to imagine ‘shared and equal futures’ (Chan 2020: 13.2). Thinking with these creative works and informed by critiques of ‘digital divide’ discourse<sup>2</sup> and of the ‘ideology of cure’ (Clare 2017: 15), we also resist a conclusion that asynchronous digital existences must be overcome in order to experience collectivity. Rather than hinge all our hopes on an emergence into ‘contemporaneous’ time (Chan 2020: 13.6), might we also linger over the potentialities, as well as the complexities, of the asynchronous, the apocalyptic, the distal?

In pursuing this question, we bring ‘distal temporalities’ into dialogue with Lisa Baraitser and Laura Salisbury’s (2020) discussion of the looped, ‘lingering,’ and ‘stuck’ (5) temporalities of the pandemic, and particularly their call to imbue such temporalities with ‘care-ful[1]’ attention (3, 5). Baraitser and Salisbury identify synchronous digital technologies (such as Zoom) as potential modalities for a practice of ‘waiting with’ – that is, of deliberately dwelling in stuck or looped time to remain co-present with one another as an act of care (8–9). Comberg, Burnham, and Fung do reference the synchronous digital practices that have proliferated during the pandemic, but they foreground the *asynchronous* circuits of digital media, and of the distal ‘lifeworlds’ (Chan 2020: 13.1) of lockdown in particular. The digital encounters these projects document and enact – and our encounters with them, as they circulate in our own digital lifeworlds – emerge and move asynchronously, making subtle connections and generating ambivalent affects. As ‘temporary stabilizations’ (Kember and Zylinska 2012: 21) of the rush of the digital, these projects hint at other ways into contemporaneity, ways premised on apprehending both the intimacies and the harms of a distal present. At the same time, they constitute and facilitate what Michael Richardson and Kerstin Schankweiler (2020) call ‘affective witnessing’ (237), by ‘waiting with’ the somatechnical and interpersonal complexities of digital encounters in ways that ‘topographically reshape ... the

event, allowing it to overspill and multiply, to stretch and expand, thin and thicken' (238). The asynchronous encounters these works represent and facilitate, we suggest, open onto the complexities of the mediated intimacies that flicker across our digital, distal lifeworlds.

In the spirit of such circuitous pathways, we readily confess that these pieces are interwoven with our own 'automediated' lives (Smith and Watson 2010; Rak 2015; Kennedy and Maguire 2018): Comberg's photo-essay entered our inboxes as part of a regular email newsletter; excerpts from Burnham's special circulated our social media feeds before we each turned to Netflix to watch it with our families; Fung's short film stood out to us, given our familiarity with his earlier work, in an archive of early lockdown pieces by Canadian filmmakers. In recognising our own 'being in, and becoming with, the technological' (Kember and Zylinska 2012: xvi), we are interested in centring the material and agential force of digital projects, platforms, and practices – that is, in centring 'mediation as a process through which life and self emerge' (Poletti 2020: 19) in tandem with the media we read, stream, click, and share. As these references suggest, our approach to somatechnics emerges from the intersection of digital media studies and autobiography studies (Poletti 2020: 16–7), and we attend throughout our analysis to the entanglement of embodied selves and digital devices.

To '[t]rack[] the materiality of media as well as the affective resonance of materiality' (Carstens 2020: 102), we trace how these three 'creative-critical' (Kember and Zylinska 2012: 203) projects *touch us* by drawing on multiple theoretical trajectories: the widespread impacts of the 'affective turn'; the longstanding attention, within photography theory, to the sharp emotional specificity of an image's *punctum* (Barthes 1981; Brown and Phu 2014); and considerations of technology's sensorial agency (Ladewig and Schmidgen 2022). The affectivity of visual and digital media can function as crucial resources for survival, community, and non-linear explorations of self (Poletti 2012; Cho 2015) yet can just as readily be a 'site of oppression' (Shotwell 2016: 59), as when difficult-to-classify feelings are remaindered by technosocial affordances that prioritise normative modes of expression (Campbell 1998, cited in Shotwell 2016: 59–60). Digital platforms enable the widespread witnessing of affective flows: as we navigate our case studies, we are alert to affectivities that, though crucially contestable and fluctuating (Paasonen 2013), 'kick ... off relationalities to other bodies' (Richardson and Schankweiler 2020: 237). Digital media's 'affective encounters' (Zarzycka and Olivieri 2017) perhaps draw us toward opportunities for resistance and counter-narration (529), but certainly direct our attention to the atemporal countercurrents of the distal. Throughout, we marshal

concepts such as friction, texture, and hapticality to highlight these material-affective encounters – often fleeting or nondescript, sometimes forcefully poignant or joyful – within and across digital networks.

Finally, in focusing on pandemic-era digital projects, we aim to contribute to recent conversations (Redmond 2021; Adams and Kopelman 2021, Jurgenson 2020; Perrino 2021; Spennemann 2021) about the uptick in creative practices intent on documenting, representing, or ameliorating lockdown experiences. Across scholarship and public commentary, these critical discussions have attended to the everyday, creative responses to loneliness in lockdown (Redmond 2021) and the proliferation of institutionally coordinated efforts to document pandemic experiences (Adams and Kopelman 2021; Spennemann 2021; Henderson 2020). Bearing in mind that the already ‘blurred territory between production and consumption, work and cultural expression’ (Terranova 2000: 35) under digital capitalism has been amplified by neoliberal injunctions to ‘make the most’ of pandemic times, our contribution aims to highlight projects that ‘remediat[e] creativity’ (Kember and Zylinska 2012: 173) by ‘think[ing] *with* and *through*’ (177) the very digital tools and platforms that deepen these dynamics. As creative projects that loop through lockdown via various digital interfaces, lingering over their complexities, Comberg, Burnham, and Fung’s multimodal essays immerse us in the distal digital temporalities of the COVID-19 pandemic. By evading and sometimes exploding multiple genres, affects, and textures, these works materialise Scott’s (2021) expanded understanding of cinema: ‘What is the matter of performance, and why do performances matter? ... [W]hat defines cinema as an art form is another kind of communion, the brief flickering of a unique bond with people on screen.’ We turn, first, to Ella Comberg’s reflection on the accidental bonds facilitated by Google Street View.

### **Stitched Temporalities and Sticky Street Views in Ella Comberg’s ‘Eye of the Storm’**

During the early months of the pandemic, much critical and anecdotal commentary hovered over questions of representation. How might this upheaval be documented? What images could ever encompass the ‘staggering human toll of the crisis’ (Lewis 2020) unfolding behind hospitals doors, or in individual households? While noting that no visual archive ever *could* distil the crisis, Ella Comberg (2021) reapproaches such questions by considering a long-standing archival mechanism: Google Street View. Throughout the pandemic, the Street View camera (mounted on a vehicle to capture ground-level

images) has quietly documented the ‘everyday social relations of pandemic life’ (Comberg 2021). Comberg highlights a handful of Street View scenes – including a ‘not-yet shuttered’ street in Berkeley from March 2020, and the long, socially-distanced queue outside a New York health clinic – as the ‘unprocessed’ by-product of Google’s capitalist-cartographic mission. Her photo-essay offers a reminder that, long before the pandemic ushered videoconferencing tech into private homes, Google was routinely photographing streets, crosswalks, and front stoops.

Street View’s affordances are utterly familiar; we are ‘habituated’ (Chun 2017) to its presence in our digital lives. Yet such familiarity is complicated by the temporal frictions that emerge as we attempt to navigate its ‘uncanny worlds’ (Fay 2018, cited in Chan 2020: 13.1). As Comberg notes: ‘On Street View, it’s easy to lose your place and never find it again – to zoom, accidentally, from 2017 to 2020 and back to 2008 again, shifting awkwardly in and out of layers of annual rephotographing.’ Google’s continual mapping project is fundamentally asynchronous, the time periods of its images multiple and overlapping. As users, we encounter these temporal seams via navigational affordances that jolt, jump, and glitch: large arrows at either side of the screen allow us to rush to, then halt at, another viewpoint a few metres down the road. Should you attempt, as we did, to ‘enter’ spaces not yet visited by the Street View camera (such as the dirt road outside Emily’s rural childhood home), the dropped pin will slide uncooperatively back to its launch button, without delivering a ground-level perspective.

The temporal jumps and geospatial limitations of Street View are tied to the camera’s reliance on a vehicle, and to a vehicle’s reliance on navigable roads. In her book *Friction*, Anna Tsing (2005) considers roads as part of her call to attend to the actual, material encounters of globalisation, since roads ‘create pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go’ (6). Street View’s mapping process has to actually unfold on the ground; the jolts and seams of Street View’s interface are a rem(a)inder of the material encounters – tar on dirt, tires on streets, hands on wheels – that make it possible. This *grounding* of Street View leaves the individual user ambiguously interpellated into its surveillant regime: we can assume Google’s totalising gaze by dropping our Street View pin almost anywhere in the world, yet we cannot roam untethered. Furthermore, Google’s perpetual remapping all but guarantees that users themselves appear somewhere in this glitchy universe, stitched into the Street View topography by drivers who, as Chan’s (2020) work reminds us, traverse roadways in ‘real’ time and space (13.5).



*Figure 1.* Screenshot featuring Google Street View’s capture of Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, which appears in Ella Comberg’s digital essay ‘Eye of the Storm’. The words ‘GEORGE FLOYD: REST IN POWER’ are spray painted on the low wooden wall between the two buildings. Reproduced with permission of the author.

We have no desire to romanticise Street View’s relentless surveillance (it remains a ‘tool of techno-capitalism,’ as Comberg notes), yet we are curious about the affects that ‘accumulate’ (Pybus 2015) along its temporal seams. What happens when we linger over the textures of Street View’s asynchronicities? Though Comberg describes the Street View pandemic archive as ‘devoid of intimacy and sensorial texture,’ her analysis indicates that certain scenes are, to borrow Sara Ahmed’s (2010) terminology, affectively ‘sticky’. One such image is from Baltimore Avenue in Philadelphia, captured by Street View in November 2020. A single figure in a red coat lugs several shopping bags down the sidewalk; behind them is a wooden fence, spray-painted with the words ‘GEORGE FLOYD: REST IN POWER’ (see Figure 1). In her brief gloss of this image, Comberg emphasises Street View’s belatedness, its delayed arrival to scenes both of injustice and protest: ‘[w]e don’t see the summer’s protests themselves,’ she writes, ‘but we see the marks they left behind.’ In his study of pandemic creativity, Sean Redmond (2021) considers how street art intervenes in the ‘non-place’ (Augé 1995, cited in Redmond 2021: 7) of the late capitalist city street, giving “texture” to liminal spaces, in part because it calls for people to stop, stare and take the moment in’ (8). Though Redmond attends to non-digital encounters (that is, people walking past street art on the street), Comberg’s encounter with Floyd’s name is refracted across the multiple temporalities of the Street View archive. The image may outlive the ‘actual’



paint on the wooden fence, and be viewed from multiple places or times, yet it will eventually be rephotographed by another Street View camera.<sup>3</sup> In its belated recording of in-the-streets racial justice action, Street View inadvertently draws out the unpredictability of digital encounter, of being affectively st(r)uck and ‘call[ed to] ... take the moment in’ (8).

Rather than a mechanical, indifferent memorialisation of Floyd or of anti-racist organising, what emerges through Comberg’s remediation is the capacity for the ‘frictions’ of Street View’s interface to facilitate an asynchronous encounter with ‘collective, explosive, revolutionary time’ (Chan 2020: 13.6). As Comberg (2021) details, any documentation of the 2020 protest movements by Street View is incidental, a ‘by-product’ of Google’s own operations. While Street View may have captured the ‘marks ... left behind’ by the protests, Comberg’s photo-essay *keeps them behind* – that is, it takes up Street View’s belatedness as a resource for contemplation, cultivating ‘the capacity to hold oneself back, to get behind those being cared for, so that their needs can be responded to’ (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 8). Comberg’s decision to preserve the Baltimore Avenue image as a screenshot (other scenes in the essay are live, embedded, draggable) mirrors Street View’s own stitched temporalities while strategically subverting its programmed forgetfulness. If the Street View archive relies upon countless photographic ‘cuts’ in the duration of everyday life, Comberg’s essay enacts a process of ‘*working through the cut*, of re-cutting and re-cising’ (Kember and Zylinska 2012:81) to remain co-present with what the ‘rush’ (Chan 2020: 13.4) of digital capitalism (and the haste to return to a ‘normal’ post-pandemic sociality) is content to leave behind.

Comberg’s encounter with the Baltimore Avenue Street View is likely intertwined with her everyday automedial reality as a Philadelphia-based writer. As our reference to Emily’s childhood home suggests, we, too, have often felt compelled to use this tool to search for the familiar. In Comberg’s case, the digital re-navigation of presumably familiar pathways produces another ‘sticky’ scene: the visual presence of her mother, wearing a mask and waiting at a crosswalk, which Comberg ‘haphazardly encountered’ as she clicked through the streets of her town. Citing Roland Barthes’ (1981) famous ‘Winter Garden Photograph’ of his own mother, Comberg articulates this image’s *punctum* as ‘the knowledge that this is one of the only times I will see my mother as she exists in the world alone.’ Her remarks remind us that Street View’s seemingly endless *studium* – its welding together of more-or-less mundane digital photos – can nevertheless capture images with the potential to touch or ‘pierce’ (Barthes 1981: 26) a viewer. Comberg’s remediation of this scene invites

readers to witness the tendrils of intimacy that ‘shoot ... out’ (26) across the two women’s somatechnical encounters with the Google Maps car, camera, and interface. They wait with one another, we might say, in the image’s ‘lacerating emphasis on the *noeme*’ or ‘*that has been*’ (96), in which the ‘only time’ of Comberg’s mother’s isolated pandemic existence is suspended yet has already passed.

Comberg’s photo essay, we suggest, sensitises us to the accidental bonds forged and refracted by the Street View camera. Published in 2021, her project enacts a practice of ‘waiting with’ (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 9) the ‘marks ... left behind’ (Comberg) by the racial justice protest actions of summer 2020 and lingers over the way streets are asynchronously ‘textured’ (Augé 1995, cited in Redmond 2021: 7) by the lives of people, known and unknown, in the midst of the evolving public health mandates of a pandemic. Care-fully situating a turn to the familiar with the self-reflexive reminder that such encounters unfold ‘through the filter of capital,’ (Comberg 2021), ‘Eye of the Storm’ attends to the complex, at times fraught affects of these ‘intensely mediate[d] relationships’ (Comberg). Such self-reflexive engagement with the problematics of digital-image culture under capitalism is also central to Burnham’s special *Inside*, to which we now turn our attention.

**‘It’s just me and my camera, and you and your screen’:  
Mediated Intimacy, Looped Self-Reflexivity, and  
Stuck-ness in Bo Burnham *Inside***

Stand-up comedian and filmmaker Bo Burnham’s 2021 streaming special *Inside* crystallises digital media’s takeover of both Real Life and cinema amid the ‘digital rush’ (Chan 2020: 13.2). A feature length musical-comedy and first-person doc made for Netflix, this transmedia text is designed to circulate as dispersed bits on YouTube and through memes. While *Inside* eschews directly naming COVID-19, it is no stretch to infer the circumstance of a stay-at-home order from the performer/filmmaker’s isolation – and fixation on digital media. Here, the privileged subject living alone through lockdown is simultaneously a driven, exhausted creative entrepreneur and an (at times clinically) anxious and depressed white man on the cusp of 30. Preoccupied with the vexed place of the content creator within platform capitalism, Burnham offers a portrait of the artist as a ‘problematic’ figure grinding away in his home office/studio answering the imperative to ‘give you some content’ (0:45–2:18) in an uncertain, divided, and accelerating world. Our analysis considers *Inside*’s preoccupation with looped self-reflexivity in tandem with its attention to the habitual embodiments coaxed out by



Figure 2. Triptych self-portrait of Bo Burnham singing the song ‘Facetime with My Mom (Tonight).’ Still from *Bo Burnham: Inside*, Netflix, 2021.

processes of content creation and consumption. We interpret *Inside* as an attempt to think and feel through ‘be[ing] contemporaneous together’ (Chan 2020: 13.6) in and beyond the pandemic, and as a self-reflexive media text that attends to the entanglement of privilege and suffering, harm and care (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 3-4) within digital life under lockdown.

Video calls and livestreaming are ostensibly synchronous, the best approximation we have of face-to-face intimacy. Yet Burnham dwells on these technologies’ flickerings and frictions, and on their capacity to both facilitate and disrupt social connection. Inescapable reliance on mediation comes to the fore as Burnham’s musical numbers push everyday genres and technologies to their limit to make them bear the sensations and affects of the pandemic. ‘Facetime with My Mom (Tonight)’ (11:02–13:27), an early track, registers the poignancy and frustration of digitally mediated familial intimacies (see Figure 2). Channelling the plaintive tones of boy band pop – with finger snapping, piano riffs, harmonies, and requests for ‘some space’ from his ‘boys’ – the song cites a (lost) culture of ‘going out’ and self-critically inscribes the temptation to indulge wounded white masculinity. As the song’s conceit emerges, genre becomes a sounding board to reflect on what is fraught about mediated kinkeeping. Burnham sings of his attempts to mark where his mother is in her day: ‘Did you just shower? Your hair is wet.’ Such observations are banal, but they are also lifelines, as the pair try to connect across their locations in space-time. As these mundane exchanges run themselves out, an accelerating

tempo chases Burnham's lip-synching to a frenzied pace, the self-portrait mode framing becomes an auto-triptych, and we see him gradually become overexposed by the indoor nighttime lighting. The sharp accusation that his mom is holding the phone too close (with her fingers over the lens of a near-obsolete iPhone 5) punctures the song's initial upbeat crooning, and Burnham's own face ironically looms larger as he becomes more agitated.

Affective tensions also suffuse the influencer's attempted creative outputs. Shifting abruptly into the genre of the reaction video, Burnham frames his face in a medium close profile shot and, pivoting his gaze back and forth between the camera and his own laptop screen, proceeds to commentate on his short jazzy jingle 'Unpaid Intern'; he then 'reacts' over and over to his own commentary (26:10–29:14). The digital antagonist-cum-collaborator in this scene is the 'up next' recommended algorithmic autoplay that prompts an endless escalating cacophony. As Schankweiler (2020) observes of online trends in the decade prior to the pandemic, 'reaction images,' from GIFs to journalistic photos to TikTok, 'constitute an image phenomenon that is paradigmatic of "affective media witnessing,"' one that emerges from within digital culture as 'a self-reflexive practice of witnessing the affects involved in witnessing itself' (254). Exemplifying this 'metawitnessing' (254), Burnham uses reaction images to create a parodic commentary on influencer performance, one that draws attention to how the politics that seep through – a critique of exploitative and inequitable labour practices in the creative industries – are buried by the relentless production and posting of media artefacts. If the self-performance of 'FaceTime with My Mom (Tonight)' draws out a corrosive frustration and anger, the proliferating auto-reactions to 'Unpaid Intern' register the exhausting accretion of affect under 'capitalist realism,' which tells us there is no other way to live and 'deflates' (Fisher 2009: 5) the possibility of a political consciousness.

Extending this self-reflexive critique, *Inside* emphasises that, despite and at times because of their toxicity, digital rituals and intimacy protocols have become unavoidable in contemporary lifeworlds. As Burnham ironically notes while introducing the special: 'it's just me and my camera and you and your screen, as the good Lord intended' (9:17–11:02). The special cycles through popular genres and platforms (FaceTime, boy band ballad, satiric jingle, reaction video) at hyperspeed; they serve at first as an ironic resource before dissolving into incoherence. Yet the Netflix special's total incorporation of digital affordances and its knowing appeal to the somatechnics of digital devices also make clear that digital mediation is the very way we form and sustain

bonds now. Viewers recognise the portrait mode window in ‘FaceTime with My Mom (Tonight)’ as a reference to the mobile phone in their pockets, and watch Burnham watch his own political satire recede through the multiply nested reaction boxes that follow ‘Unpaid Intern.’ Often, we can observe these references at a safe remove. At other points, as when Burnham speculates on the viewer’s engagement in the post-intermission song ‘Don’t Wanna Know’ (49:17–50:40) – ‘Am I on in the background? Are you on your phone?’ – our own mediated entanglement with the special is made jarringly clear. We dwell together, now, within these spaces of mediation. Imagining better ways of relating within them involves noticing how they work and how they are shaping affective and political relations.

However, just as there is no ‘outside’ to the surveillant assemblage of Google Maps for Ella Comberg, Bo Burnham, it must be said, knowingly creates and communicates within the unjust, affectively charged, and exploitative structures of platform capitalism. Working through the fraught affects of such self-awareness, the special bears witness to the economic, embodied, social and technological systems that make both the ‘digital rush’ (Chan 2020: 13.2) and also disjunctive moments of more ‘care-ful[1]’ (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 3, 5) knowing possible. In turn, we argue that the special constitutes an automedial testimony to Burnham’s experience of the pandemic’s distal temporalities. Towards the end of the special, Burnham relates the early 2020 interruption of his planned return to the stand-up comedy stage after a five-year break, during which he grappled with major depression and anxiety. Well enough in January 2020 to re-embrace live performance, he found himself put on ‘standby’ (Baraitser 2021), entering ambivalently back into an extended unchosen hiatus. Burnham’s repeated vignettes about entertainment culture and performer-audience relations are a way to work through the uncanny admixture of disappointment, relief, and panic attendant on being stuck once again. If we understand depression as a form of ‘waiting’ that can ‘intervene in the logic of crisis’ (Baraitser 2021: 28; see also Baraitser and Brook 2020), then *Inside*’s dynamics of stuckness and of mediated and looped time can be read as troubling the imperative to overcome and re-emerge.

Circulating as the very viral content that it parodies, the special also, paradoxically, fosters relations with ‘co-witnesses across fluctuating temporalities’ (Richardson and Schankweiler 2020: 238). Like its satirical target – Web 2.0 – the film generates ‘a little bit of everything / all of the time’ (56:30–1:01:06), an overwhelming buffet of scenes thematising ‘invisible’ (boyd 2008: 126) and then suddenly all-too-present audiences. The concluding sequence is in this sense both

synecdochic and culminating. Visually echoing the finale of 1998's anti-reality TV parable *The Truman Show* (1998), *Inside's* ending shows Burnham crouched outside his front door, shielding his face from the glare of studio lights and audience laughter, pining to go back (1:23:55–1:26:23). In contrast with Truman Burbank's move from innocence to knowledge and joyful escape into a non-mediated future, the pyjama-clad Burnham is overcome by fear, and by the desire to return to a constrained, isolated, mediated lifeworld. If in 1998 we could still imagine and nostalgically long for life beyond reality TV, Burnham's film marks anything like an 'outside' as characterised by more of the same (media) exposure, but with relatively less protection and creative control.

With its emphasis on the looped temporalities of depression, lockdown, mediated relationships, and creativity, *Inside* interrupts the normative arc of post-pandemic 'reopening' or a 'return to normal' (to quote the current political and business jargon). We maintain that Burnham's automedial performance does not romanticise melancholia or self-care, or default to immanence (Cazdyn 2012: 14): the affects the ending conjures are too multiplicitous, the tensions too precise to be dismissed as verklempt. Rather, in its meta-analysis of content creation and post-cinematic performer-audience relations, as in its uncanny explorations of everyday mediated interactions, *Inside* persists in grappling with stuckness and ambivalence, refusing to override these with a progress narrative or an 'ideology of cure' (Clare 2017: 15). An open text as well as a problematic one that our interpretation desires neither to over-stabilise nor to redeem, *Inside* turns digitally mediated life inside-out, generating mediated 'affective encounters' (Zarzycka and Olivieri 2017) that run against the grain of ableist, sanist, and capitalist norms as they are manifesting at the start of COVID-19 year three.

### **Buffer, Refresh, Repeat: Digital Devices and Lockdown Companionship in Richard Fung's '[...]**

Burnham's and Comberg's projects both flit across the timescales of the pandemic, offering only unstable confirmations (a tiny timestamp from the Google Maps interface, or the shifting lengths of Burnham's lockdown beard) of the event's 'real,' linear time. With Richard Fung's short film '[...],' however, we loop back to the specificities of March 2020, asking what we can learn about 'waiting with' (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 9) from a short visual testimony composed during early lockdown. Stranded in southeast Morocco while travelling with his partner Tim McCaskell, Fung records the personal impact of border

closures and flight suspensions using an available digital device: the iPad, a portable, all-in-one digital device (e-book alternative, lightweight traveller's laptop, news source) that combines functions of leisure, creative labour, and consumption, and situates the project within digital flows. The result is both a rapid response piece (set within the limited timescale of one and a half days and condensed into four minutes) and one that is publicly archived and anthologised by the *Greetings from Isolation* project, which invited filmmakers across Canada/Turtle Island to contribute short documentary works to 'a capsule collection of short Canadian isolation movies' ('About *Greetings from Isolation*' 2020). Within this archive, '[...]' is placed in the third programme, titled 'Home and Away,' alongside films in which the connective role of technologies in diasporic and transnational kinkeeping is a persistent theme.

Picking up on the theme of home's fractured and shifting relationship to the distal in pandemic times, we read '[...]' as widening the definition of a lockdown experience, arguing that it deliberately presses on the ways in which pandemic domesticity risks being 'misremembered' (Jurgenson 2020) as a time of cosiness and sourdough bread making, even as it explores how intimacies are sustained across distal lifeworlds. Attending to the film's depiction of encounters between screens, selves, and spaces, we suggest that '[...]' nonetheless manifests the ethical and affective possibility of 'waiting with' (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020: 9), on registers at once intimate and global. Our analytical interest is also linked to the location of Fung's work within our automedial horizon: Sarah has for several years been writing about and teaching Fung's autobiographical *Sea in the Blood* (2000), which means that the story of their survival of another (ongoing) pandemic, HIV/AIDS, and of the complex, political bonds of queer and Asian diasporic kinship, is on our minds too. The testimonial techniques Fung draws on in 2020 to recast viewer understandings of lockdown experiences are by no means born uniquely out of the pandemic's 'digital rush' (Chan 2020: 13.2) but forged out of decades-long histories of treatment activism and filmmaking that mobilise autobiographical memory as a mode of counter-archiving – that is, as an 'alternative mod[e] of knowledge production that re-open[s] the discussion about what is public knowledge' (Ben-David 2020).

By highlighting the role of digital technology as a lifeline for stranded travellers, '[...]' situates digital devices as intimate tethers to the larger world, to home, and to the possibility of return, in which home is relational and provisional. In the absence of dialogue or commentary, the film materialises such intimate tethers through a preoccupation with touchscreens and haptics. The film immerses us in the process of



*Figure 3.* Fung's iPad captures light shining into the riad along with the reflected image of the digital device's buffering wheel. Still image from '[...],' directed by Richard Fung (GFI, March 21, 2020). Reproduced with permission of the artist.

trying to grasp (touch, understand, hold onto) the world through screens, as Fung and McCaskell search for travel and news updates. As the film continues, we see the riad's doors and windows being deliberately opened, mirroring the device as rectangles of light. These shots are cut together using iMovie with a mixture of textures and patterns – a grainy, mid-scroll report on case numbers, two fingers pinching in toward the French-English translation of 'indefinitely,' or simply the light streaming in through the window. Even as they (and we, as viewers) refresh and pinch and hover over the cellphone's touchscreen, the light patterns of digital devices and of Fung's and McCaskell's accommodations are constantly interacting with one another: a buffering circle appears cast on the riad walls, or the window's intricate designs inflect the screen of the cell phone (see Figure 3). Such interplays make clear that, as sources of information as well as of light, digital devices are inextricable from our very sense of where we are.

As viewers encountering this short lockdown documentary months later, we, Sarah and Emily, were and continue to be jolted by the familiar as we notice English-language news sources (the *Toronto Star* and *The Hamilton Spectator*, both local to us) amid a larger global surround of breaking news updates, case rate data tables, and Moroccan state emergency orders in French and Arabic. Touching a screen of numbers and headlines simultaneously reminds us of the complexities of *being touched* by technologies. Touchscreens are designed to 'feel our touch' (Glitsos 2019: 79), responding to our pinches, pulls, and scrolls, yet technology's 'tactile agency' (Ladewig and Schmidgen 2022: 6) is also animated by processes of datafication and monitoring, and of the implication of such contact in 'capitalist bio-governance' (4). The



presence of COVID-19 case rate tables and travel directives in the film signals these processes, yet '[...]'s 'creative-critical' acts of mediation, which we read as 'neither simply oppositional nor consensual' (Kember and Zylinska 2012: 203), make it possible to sense and relate otherwise. Engaging with the film's 'greeting from isolation' from our present January 2022 moment, as we once again face the threat that health care infrastructure will be overwhelmed by ICU [intensive care units] admissions stemming from Omicron variant cases, we wonder how the frictions and asynchronicities of somatechnical relations pull us away from and towards place and one another in the pandemic. How might digital interfaces, through their texturing of individual and shared experience, generate 'affective witnessing' (Richardson and Schankweiler 2020) and alternative ways of inhabiting pandemic temporalities?

Around minute 2:30 of '[...]', the shots become wider, moving beyond Douar Ifri's walls, alleys, and patios to show more of the surrounding landscape; the focus eventually comes to rest on Fung and McCaskell practising tai chi on the riad rooftop. Even as we see them 'becoming contemporaneous with inhabited ecological time' (Chan 2020: 13.1), though, the latter half of the film does not abandon its awareness of the surveillant and somatechnical implications of devices in favour of a 'disconnected' Eden. Rather, '[...]' deliberately folds in other planes of contact: contact with place, the time of waiting, and the air itself. Fung and McCaskell use the iPad's camera to record but also ruminate on the work of establishing a new pace, rescaling for wide shots of the landscape, attuning to the bright outdoor light, and engaging in daily movement practices.

We understand Fung's film as thinking through the matter of what tools or repertoires we can activate that might allow for holding on, for breathing, when stranded and compelled to wait in this way. Lest we rest in a pastoral fantasy of retreat or disconnection, imagining that an ecological pace can resolve the distal and restore a planetary contemporaneity, '[...]' concludes by invoking the 'apocalyptic affects' (Carstens 2020: 96) of early lockdown through a startling shift of genres and points of view. In two final extreme close-ups of each of their faces, Fung and McCaskell open their eyes wide and look toward one another, and – because of the separate, cropped shots – at us (see Figures 4 and 5). Their gazes pack a non-narrative affective punch. These uncomfortably alert, startled expressions register the horror of repetitive everydayness and stasis, of the need to once again find strategies for making do. As another critical manifestation of the 'reaction image' (to recall our discussion of Burnham's influencer parody) that has become 'paradigmatic' of 'affective witnessing' in digital culture (Schankweiler



*Figures 4 and 5.* Close-up shots of Tim McCaskell and Richard Fung waking up. Still images from the concluding montage of ‘[...]’ directed by Richard Fung (GFI, March 21, 2020). Reproduced with permission of the artist.

2020: 254), Fung’s closing sequence enacts a self-reflexive inscription of the disturbing affects of being stranded during the pandemic. In redeploing cinematic techniques (extreme close-ups, montage) through iMovie’s editing affordances, Fung engages in a form of critical, political, and artistic ‘metawitnessing’ (Schankweiler 2020: 254) that ‘work[s] through the cut’ (Kember and Zylinksa 2012: 81). In this way, ‘[...]’ facilitates a form of contact with the scattered, shattered audience: we who are also gripped by and gripping our devices, feeling terror and boredom, in the midst of a hazy, intangible, ominous world event that eludes our capacities to know and represent it. The film emphasises the possibilities of companionship within uncertainty and stuck-ness: Richard and Tim are together, collaboratively filming and bearing witness moment-by-moment to this uncanny experience, awakening and waiting for another day. The film foregrounds their particular practices of sensing and of creative making in the time of early lockdown and cancelled flights, but the ambit of its address to viewers is both recursive and ever-widening, linking this experience of stuck-ness to those of multiple known and unknown others, across time and space, transnationally and translocally, and into the future.

## **Looping Back**

We have watched Fung's short film numerous times since learning about it in early 2021; it was always uncanny, but the eerie resonances of the 'earlier' moment's desires and disorientations create an especially poignant loop with the January 2022 Omicron lockdown time in which we composed our first version of this article. Teetering between institutional intentions for a reopened campus and the continued need for accessible remote options, our ambivalent reactions to the delayed (but then compulsory) in-person 'return' mingle with an ethical pull toward noticing the relational and affective by-products of our (corporately-)mediated workspaces. In these moments of anxiety, fatigue, and institutional failure, we take nourishment from artistic works that linger over digital and distal practices for 'waiting with' (Baraitser and Salisbury 2020) – as we are with our colleagues, students, households, and neighbours.

While synchronous modes of connection have indeed been crucial for us (we have developed this essay, and sustained bonds of community, through many shared video calls), we have aimed to trace the possibilities and complexities of asynchronous encounters as they unfold within, from, and across the distal. After all, what we owe to one another must not be premised upon proximity, in either time or space. As Alexis Shotwell (2016) argues, 'intimate others may show up intuitively as touching and touched by our bodies and thus be more ethically demanding. But we are also ethically entangled with more distant others' (107). The materiality and affectivity of Comberg's, Burnham's, and Fung's pandemic projects direct our attention to the touch of faraway others. To linger over such asynchronous encounters is not to indulge or excuse those aspects of the digital – entrenched surveillance regimes, algorithmic feedback loops that bolster normative modes of expression, the ever-widening terrain of exploitable digital labour – we find 'reprehensible' (Shotwell 2016: 19). Our desires and attempts to be close to one another in pandemic times need not concede to the tired platitude that we're all in this together, albeit at different times, on different websites, watching different videos or reading different essays. Instead, we have aimed to suggest, the textures, glitches, and flickering bonds of mediated intimacy can offer new, multiple, reflexive and recursive paths 'toward inhabited futures that are not so distal' (Chan 2020: 13.6).

## **Acknowledgments**

We wish to thank the journal editors and anonymous peer reviewers for their generous suggestions and attention to detail. We also thank Peter Walmsley for his thoughtful comments

on an earlier draft of this work. This article draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

## Notes

1. Comberg's photo essay and Fung's short film are each freely available online; Burnham's *Inside* sits behind the Netflix paywall, but circulates as memefied references as well as through short promotional clips on YouTube.
2. Alongside critical discussions about the ways in which digital divide discourses can diminish the technophilia, inventiveness, and tech-industry acumen of racialised people (Nelson, Tu, and Hines 2001; McIlwain 2020), we think here of nuanced analyses (particularly those rooted in the Global South) of the material, social and geopolitical factors influencing not simply digital 'access,' but practices of adaptation and dis/connection (Treré 2021; Pype 2021).
3. At the time of revising this article in June 2022, Street View still returns this image of Baltimore Ave.

## References

- '[...]', short film, directed by Richard Fung, with Tim McCaskell. Canada: *Greetings from Isolation: A Capsule Collection of Short Canadian Isolation Movies*, 21 March 2020, <https://greetingsfromisolation.com/film/3358/>.
- 'About *Greetings from Isolation*' (2020), *Greetings from Isolation: A Capsule Collection of Short Canadian Isolation Movies*, 2020, <https://greetingsfromisolation.com/about-the-collection/>.
- Adams, Tracy, and Kopelman, Sara (2021), 'Remembering COVID-19: Memory, Crisis, and Social Media', *Media, Culture & Society*, 0:0, pp. 1–20.
- Ahmed, Sara (2010), 'Happy Objects' in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds.), *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 29–51.
- Baraitser, Lisa, and Brook, William (2020), 'Watchful Waiting: Crisis, Vulnerability, Care' in Victoria Browne, Jason Danelly, and Doerthe Rosenow (Eds.), *Vulnerability and the Politics of Care*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 230–247.
- Baraitser, Lisa, and Salisbury, Laura (2020), 'Containment, Delay, Mitigation: Waiting and Care in the Time of a Pandemic', *Wellcome Open Research*, 5:129, pp. 1–16.
- Baraitser, Lisa (2021), 'Pandemic Times. A Conversation with Lisa Baraitser about the Temporal Politics of COVID-19', interview by Laura Kemmer, Annika Kühn, and Vanessa Weber, *ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization*, 21:1, pp. 21–30.
- Barthes, Roland (1981), *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard, New York: Hill & Wang.
- Ben-David, Anat (2020), 'Counter-archiving: Combatting Data Colonialism', interview with Sofie Thorsen, *Medium*, 16 November, <https://medium.com/copenhagen-institute-for-futures-studies/counter-archiving-combating-data-colonialism-bel7ffead4>.
- boyd, danah (2008), 'Why Youth (Heart) Social Networking Sites: The Changing Place of Digital Media in Teenage Social Life' in David Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 119–142.
- Brown, Elspeth H. and Phu, Thy (Eds.) (2014), *Feeling Photography*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Butler, Judith, and Chen, Mel Y. (2021), 'Scholars Discuss "New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century"', *Berkeley Talks*, 24 September, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/09/24/berkeley-talks-judith-butler-mel-y-chen/>.

## Asynchronous Encounters

- Caines, Autumn (2020), 'The Zoom Gaze', *Real Life Mag*, 7 December, <https://reallifemag.com/the-zoom-gaze/>.
- Carstens, Delphi (2020), 'Navigating Apocalyptic Affects: Generating Posthuman Cartographies of Resistance to Capitalist Realism', *Somatechnics*, 10:1, pp. 95–114.
- Cazdyn, Eric (2012), *The Already Dead: The New Time of Politics, Culture, and Illness*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Chan, Nadine (2020), 'Pandemic Temporalities: Distal Futurity in the Digital Capitalocene', *Journal of Environmental Media*, 1:1, pp. 13.1–13.8.
- Cho, Alexander (2015), 'Queer Reverb: Tumblr, Affect, Time' in Ken Hillis, Susanna Paasonen, and Michael Petit (Eds.), *Networked Affect*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, pp. 43–57.
- Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong (2017), *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Clare, Eli (2017), *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Comberg, Ella (2021), 'Eye of the Storm', *Real Life Mag*, 15 July, <https://reallifemag.com/guided-tours-eye-of-the-storm/>.
- Fisher, Mark (2009), *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Washington: Zero Books.
- Glitsos, Laura (2019), *Somatechnics and Popular Music in Digital Contexts*, Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Henderson, Desirée (2020), 'Round up of Pandemic Diary Articles and Archives', *DiaryIndex.com*, 21 August, <https://diaryindex.com/2020/08/21/round-up-of-pandemic-diary-articles-archives/>.
- Inside*, comedy special, directed by Bo Burnham. USA: Netflix, 2021.
- Jurgenson, Nathan (2020), 'How This Moment Will be Misremembered: An Internet Theorist on What Social Media Images Hide About the Pandemic', interview by Thomas Dafoe, *Artnet*, 13 May, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/nathan-jurgenson-interview-social-photo-1860240>.
- Kember, Sarah and Zylinksa, Joanna (2012), *Life After New Media: Mediation as a Vital Process*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: London, England: The MIT Press.
- Kennedy, Úmit, and Maguire, Emma (2018), 'The Texts and Subjects of Automedia', *M/C Journal*, 21:2, pp. 1–4.
- Ladewig, Rebekka, and Schmidgen, Henning (2022), 'Symmetries of Touch: Reconsidering Tactility in the Age of Ubiquitous Computing', *Body & Society*, 28:1–2, pp. 3–23.
- Lewis, Sarah Elizabeth (2020), 'Where Are the Photos of People Dying of Covid?', *The New York Times*, 1 May, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/opinion/coronavirus-photography.html>.
- McIlwain, Charlton (2020), *Black Software: The Internet and Racial Justice, From the Afropnet to Black Lives Matter*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, Alondra, and Tu, Thuy Linh N., with Alicia Headlam Hines (2001), *Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life*, New York: New York University Press.
- Paasonen, Susanna (2013), 'Grains of Resonance: Affect, Pornography and Visual Sensation', *Somatechnics*, 3:2, pp. 351–368.
- Perrino, Sabina M. (2021), 'Embodied Dread in Covid-19 Images and Narratives', *Life Writing*, 18:4, pp. 579–592.
- Poletti, Anna (2012), 'Reading for Excess: Relational Autobiography, Affect, and Popular Culture in *Tarnation*', *Life Writing*, 9:2, pp. 157–172.
- Poletti, Anna (2020), *Stories of the Self: Life Writing After the Book*, New York: New York University Press.

- Pybus, Jennifer (2015), 'Accumulating Affect: Social Networks and their Archives of Feeling' in Ken Hillis, Susanna Paasonen, and Michael Petit (Eds.), *Networked Affect*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, pp. 235–250.
- Pype, Katrien (2021), '(Not) in Sync—digital Time and Forms of (Dis-)connecting: Ethnographic Notes from Kinshasa (DR Congo)', *Media, Culture & Society*, 43:7, pp. 1–16.
- Rak, Julie (2015), 'Life Writing Versus Automedia: The Sims 3 Game as a Life Lab', *Biography*, 38:2, pp. 155–180.
- Redmond, Sean (2021), 'A Pandemic of Creative Loneliness', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 6 August, pp. 1–15.
- Richardson, Michael and Schankweiler, Kerstin (2020), 'Introduction: Affective Witnessing as Theory and Practice', *Parallax*, 26:3, pp. 235–253.
- Schankweiler, Kerstin (2020), 'Reaction Images and Metawitnessing', *Parallax*, 26:3, pp. 254–270.
- Scott, A.O (2021), 'Hollywood Still Matters. These Actors Showed Why', *The New York Times*, 7 December, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/07/magazine/great-performers.html?smid=url-share>.
- Sea in the Blood*, short film, directed by Richard Fung. Canada: Fungus Productions, 2000, <http://www.richardfung.ca/index.php?scv/sea-in-the-blood/>.
- Shotwell, Alexis (2016), *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times*, Minneapolis: University of Manitoba Press.
- Smith, Sidonie, and Watson, Julie (2010), *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Spennemann, Dirk H. R. (2021), 'Curating the Contemporary: A Case for National and Local COVID-19 Collections', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 0:0, pp. 1–16.
- Terranova, Tiziana (2000), 'Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy', *Social Text*, 18:2 (63), pp. 33–58.
- The Truman Show*, film, directed by Peter Weir. USA: Paramount Pictures, 1998.
- Treré, Emiliano (2021), 'Intensification, Discovery and Abandonment: Unearthing Global Ecologies of Dis/connection in Pandemic Times', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 27:6, pp. 1663–1677.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt (2005), *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP.
- Zarzycka, Marta, and Olivieri, Domitilla (2017), 'Affective Encounters: Tools of Interruption for Activist Media Practices', *Feminist Media Studies*, 17:4, pp. 527–534.