

FACEOR-
FACTORY:
YOU, AN
ARCHIVE

10.1.–6.2.
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CURATED SERIES: CONSTRUCTED IDENTITIES

KURATORSKI CIKEL: KONSTRUIRANE IDENTITETE



Človeški obraz poleg sredstva identifikacije predstavlja teritorij, s katerim se vsakodnevno srečujemo na različnih področjih, kot so genetika, biometrija, lepota industrija, tehnološki nadzor in geopolitika. Umetniško-raziskovalna platforma FaceOrFactory z zbiranjem določenih osebnih podatkov in biometričnih informacij prevprašuje vlogo obraza v sodobni družbi. Z ustvarjanjem biometričnega arhiva ter oblikovanjem novih obraznih struktur in identitet iz zbranega materiala razvija kompleksen korporativno-družinski sistem z lastnimi pravili, protokoli in načini delovanja ter se hkrati zajeda v že obstoječe družbene strukture.

Procesi, ki se dogajajo znotraj korporacije FaceOrFactory, potekajo na različnih krajih in v različnih fazah, kar omogoča, da se sistem ves čas spreminja, dopolnjuje in razvija. V prvi fazi projekta z naslovom *Holey Surface* (2020), katere glavno izhodišče so bile teoretske, filozofske in biološke analize obraza, je bila predstavljena mobilna postaja, ki je z odvzemom DNK vzorca, fotografiranjem obraza in izpolnjevanjem formularja omogočala zbiranje določenih podatkov posameznikov. Obiskovalci so s podpisom pogodbe dovolili uporabo doniranega materiala, hkrati pa s tem postali delni lastniki zadruga FaceOrFactory. V drugi fazi projekta z naslovom *Unstable Protocols* (2021) sta bila predstavljena fizični in digitalni arhiv genetskih informacij in fotografij obrazov. Sistematizirani in arhivirani podatki v obliki računalniške igre so tako ustvarili biološko informacijsko telo korporacije, ki omogoča nadaljnji razvoj projekta.

In addition to being a means of identification, the human face represents a territory we encounter on a daily basis in a wide variety of fields, such as genetics, biometrics, the beauty industry, technological surveillance and geopolitics. By collecting certain personal data and biometric information, the FaceOrFactory art research platform questions the role of the face in modern society. By creating a biometric archive and shaping new facial structures and identities from the collected material, the project develops a complex corporate-family system with its own rules, protocols and methods of operation, at the same time pushing itself into existing social structures.

The processes that take place within the FaceOrFactory corporation take place in different places and in different phases, which allows the system to constantly change, supplement and develop itself. The first phase of the project, titled *Holey Surface* (2020), whose main starting points were theoretical, philosophical and biological analyses of the face, featured a mobile station that gathered certain data of individuals through DNA samples, facial photogrammetry and forms. By signing the contract, the visitors allowed the use of the donated material, and at the same time became partial owners of the FaceOrFactory cooperative. In the second phase of the project, titled *Unstable Protocols* (2021), a physical and digital archive of genetic information and facial photographs was unveiled. The systematized and archived data in the form of a computer game thus make up the biological information body of the corporation, which enables the further development of the project.



GROUP OF DONORS

family
corporate assembly

INFORMATION

genetic
sample

photogrammetry of
facial morphology

contract

laboratory
analysis

machine
learning
algorithm

corporate
membership

PROTOCOLS

ARCHIVE - MACHINE

CHIMERA

decentralised parasitic personhood

VIRTUAL ECOSYSTEM

NETWORK

DATABASE

market

family relation

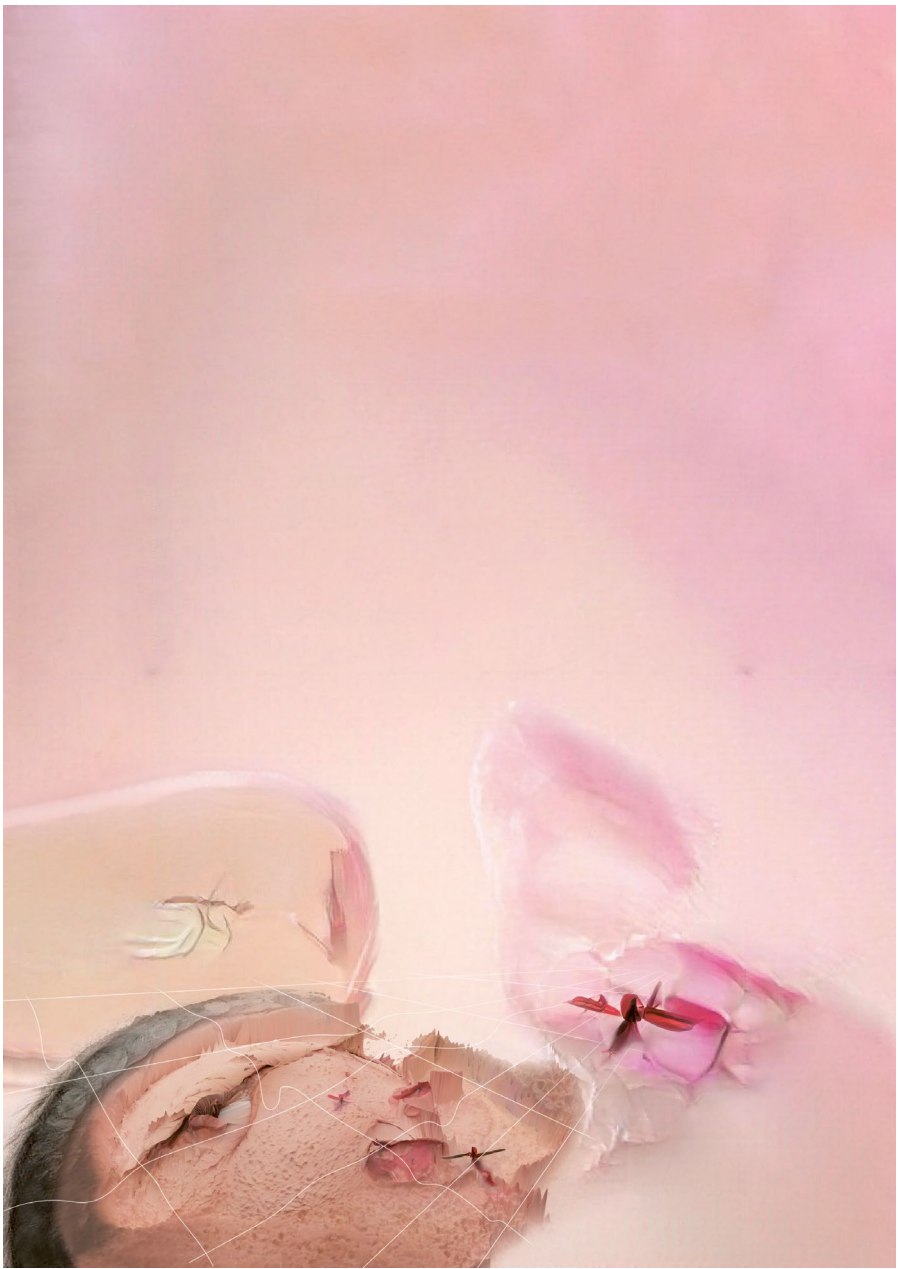
corporate structure

Vsaka nova faza projekta ponuja različne teoretske vidike obraznosti in postopoma gradi parazitski ekosistem dinamičnih procesov in odnosov, ki s pridobivanjem, arhiviranjem in uporabo genetskega materiala posameznikov ustvarja nove mreže družinskih odnosov in krvnih povezav, hkrati pa skozi ekonomske in pravne strukture ustvarja korporativno združbo, značilno za sisteme sodobnega kapitalizma. Večplastnost in kompleksnost projekta odkriva dokumentarna razstava *You, an Archive*, ki skozi muzejsko dioramo gledalcu omogoča ogled posameznih delov kot nosilcev informacije in pogled od daleč, ki perspektivno zaobjame celoto ekosistema FaceOrFactory. Hkrati zasnova sodobne diorame s plastenjem vizualnih, podatkovnih in tekstovnih plastnic ter kombiniranjem različnih medijev in vizualnih pristopov ustvarja fluidno in dinamično dokumentacijsko enoto ter omogoča neprestano dopolnjevanje, spreminjanje in prilagajanje.

FaceOrFactory s pridobivanjem genetskega materiala in podatkov posameznikov ter ustvarjanjem himeričnih obraznih identitet tako ustvarja ekosistem spremenljivih procesov in odnosov, družinskih povezav in korporativnega okolja. Z razvijanjem in dopolnjevanjem podatkovne baze deluje na presečišču laboratorijskega dela, umetne inteligence in strojnega učenja, umetnosti, filozofije in kritične teorije ter ponuja premislek o podobnih obstoječih korporativnih sistemih in sistemih nadzora, v katere smo vpeti in v katerih s posredovanjem osebnih podatkov že aktivno sodelujemo.

Each new phase of the project enables different theoretical aspects of faciality and gradually builds a parasitic ecosystem of dynamic processes and relationships, which creates new networks of family relationships and blood ties by acquiring, archiving and using the genetic material of individual, while simultaneously creating a cooperative association, characteristic of modern capitalist systems, through economic and legal structures. The multifaceted and complex nature of the project is revealed by the documentary exhibition *You, an Archive*, which uses a museum diorama to allow the viewer to see individual parts as carriers of information and to view them from afar, which embraces the entirety of the FaceOrFactory ecosystem in a perspectivistic manner. At the same time, the design of the modern diorama creates a fluid and dynamic documentation unit by layering visual, data and text layers and combining different media and visual approaches, enabling constant supplementation, change and adaptation.

By acquiring genetic material and data from individuals and creating chimerical facial identities, FaceOrFactory creates an ecosystem of changeable processes and relationships, family connections and the corporate environment. By developing and supplementing the database, it operates at the intersection of laboratory work, artificial intelligence and machine learning, art, philosophy and critical theory, and offers a reflection on the similar existing corporate and surveillance systems in which we are involved and in which we already actively participate by submitting personal data.



Kako se je začel razvijati projekt FaceOrFactory in zakaj sta kot glavno izhodišče raziskovanja uporabila obraz?

Projekt FaceOrFactory sva razvijala postopno ob branju in odkrivanju zelo raznolikega materiala – od člankov, teoretskih besedil in zgodovinskih spisov pa do video dokumentacije, slik in drugih umetniških praks –, ki je obravnaval ter se z različnih zornih kotov dotikal človeškega obraza. Ustrezno izhodišče se nama je zdel ravno zato, ker je prisoten v čisto vsaki domeni našega delovanja in bivanja, kar omogoča soočanje z najrazličnejšimi vsebinami in svetovi. Všeč nama je bila ideja obraza kot površine, na kateri se zgošča človekovo celotno družbeno funkcioniranje. Tako sva se začela ukvarjati z njegovo formo, zgodovinskim pomenom, mestom v biopolitičnem in ekonomskem okviru ter vlogo pri spodbujanju tehnoloških inovacij. Zanimali so naju predvsem biometrični arhivi in zgodovina antropometričnih meritev v delovanju francoske policije, razvoju antropologije in njenih rasističnih ter antisemističnih derivatih. Hkrati se nama je zdelo fascinantno vstopanje arhivov na področje črnega trga, alternativnih modelov ekonomije in zlorabe osebnih podatkov. Naletela sva na nemalo primerov preprodaje nacionalnih biometričnih baz, kraje identitet in ustvarjanja paralelnih življenj. Veliko sva raziskovala tudi lepotno kirurgijo in popolnoma nove tehnološke pristope k rekonstruiranju človeškega obraza. Kako se kozmetična industrija povezuje z vojaško tehnologijo in retoriko sva, na primer, zasledila pri kozmetičnih dronih, ki omogočajo sproščanje mikrokapsul in ke-

How did the FaceOrFactory project start to develop and why did you use the face as the main starting point of your research?

We developed the FaceOrFactory project gradually while reading and discovering a wide variety of material – from articles, theoretical texts and historical writings to video documentation, paintings and other artistic practices – that addressed and touched on the human face from different angles. We deemed it a suitable starting point precisely because it is present in every domain of man's work and existence, which enables us to face a wide variety of contents and worlds. We liked the idea of the face as a surface on which man's entire social functioning is concentrated. Thus, we began to address its form, its historical significance, its place in the biopolitical and economic context, and its role in promoting technological innovation. We were mainly interested in biometric archives and the history of anthropometric measurements in the work of the French police, the development of anthropology and its racist and anti-Semitic derivatives. At the same time, we found it fascinating that the archives entered the field of black markets, alternative economic models and the misuse of personal data. We came across quite a few cases of reselling national biometric databases, identity theft and creating parallel lives. We also did a lot of research on cosmetic surgery and completely new technological approaches to reconstructing the human face. For example, we discovered how the cosmetics industry connects to military technology and rhetoric in cosmetic drones, which allow the release of microcapsules and chemical bonding with target





Face0Factory, *Unstable Protocols*, 2021, Galerija Kapelica/Kapelica Gallery, Foto/Photo: Hana Josić.

mijsko povezovanje s tarčnimi celicami, kar povečuje učinkovitost samega kozmetičnega produkta. Začetna 'dokumentacijska' raziskava in prebiranje naju je počasi peljalo k snovanju osnovnega okvira projekta, ki nama omogoča postopno razvijanje vsebin in likovnega jezika, hkrati pa je zasnovan dovolj široko, da se lahko spoznava ter ukvarjava z različnimi področji, praksami, mediji, itd.. Tako se je porodila ideja o korporaciji in arhivu genetskega in obraznega materiala, na katerem bi temeljilo večletno izpeljevanje projekta v poljubne vsebinske smeri, posamična poglavja pa bi oblikovala v samostojne razstavne ali druge enote.

Razstave v kuratorskem ciklu Konstruirane identitete na različne načine raziskujejo, kako se gradi identiteta posameznika znotraj določene skupnosti ter kako posameznik pri tem razume lastno pozicijo v specifičnih družbenih ustrojih. Kako se razstava You, an Archive povezuje z omenjeno tematiko?

Z razvijanjem najinega razumevanja obraza kot družbenega in političnega teritorija je njegovo mesto v družbi, 'obsedeni' s pojmi subjekta, identitete, sodobne identitetne politike, ipd., postalo zelo pomembno. Če sva sprva želela iz nabranih osebnih podatkov, obraznih modelov in DNK vzorcev proizvajati nove, človeško izgledajoče obraze ter skozi njih reflektirati ravno estetske in druge parametre, ki obvladujejo kriterije človeškosti naše obrazne morfologije, sva tekom procesa krenila na zelo drugačno pot. Začela sva se spogledovati s sodobno kvir teorijo in spekulativnimi spisi o funkciji identitete v času sodobne

cells, which increases the effectiveness of the cosmetic product itself. The initial 'documentary' research and reading slowly led us to design the basic framework of the project, which allows us to gradually develop its content and visual language, while also being designed broadly enough to allow us to get to know and deal with different fields, practices, media, etc. Thus, the idea of a corporation and an archive of genetic and facial material as the foundation for the multi-year implementation of the project in any direction we wished was born, with individual chapters to be formed into independent exhibitions or other units.

The exhibitions in the Constructed Identities curatorial series explore in various ways how an individual's identity is built within a particular community and how the individual understands their own position within specific social structures. How does the You, an Archive exhibition relate to this topic?

With the development of our understanding of the face as a social and political territory, its place in a society 'obsessed' with the notions of subject, identity, contemporary identity politics, etc., has become very important. If we initially wanted to produce new, human-looking faces from the collected personal data, facial models and DNA samples, and reflect the aesthetic and other parameters that control the humanity criteria of our facial morphology through them, we set out on a very different path during the process itself. We began to flirt with modern queer theory and speculative writings on the function of identity in the age of modern technology. At the same time, we

tehnologije. Hkrati sva odkrila fenomen genetskega himerizma, pri katerem gre za obstoj dveh ali več genetično različnih populacij celic v organizmu. Človeške himere imajo tako lahko dva ali več zapisov DNK, poimenovanje tega izjemno redkega genetskega pojava pa seveda izhaja iz starogrške hibridne pošasti. Ideja monstroznosti oz. nečloveškega v samem človeku in iz človeškega materiala se nama je zdela vedno bolj zanimiva, zato sva se odločila bolj svobodno se igrati z zbranim DNK materialom, ga plastiti in kombinirati tako, da bodo končne obrazne formacije vedno bolj nerazpoznavne. Iz obraza kot zelo centraliziranega teritorija specifičnih antropometričnih kriterijev sva se tako začela vedno bolj ukvarjati z idejo obraza kot veliko bolj razpršene, decentralizirane informacijske gmote, ki se igra z ambivalentno pozicijo človeškega in nečloveškega. Najino delo dojemava kot spekulativno igro z materialom, skozi katerega lahko kritično pristopava do sodobnih identitetnih fenomenov ter jezika. Razstava *You, an Archive* s predstavitvijo vizualnega in dokumentacijskega materiala tako deluje kot povzetek dosedanjega dela ter omogoča širši publiki seznanjenje s projektom FaceOrFactory.

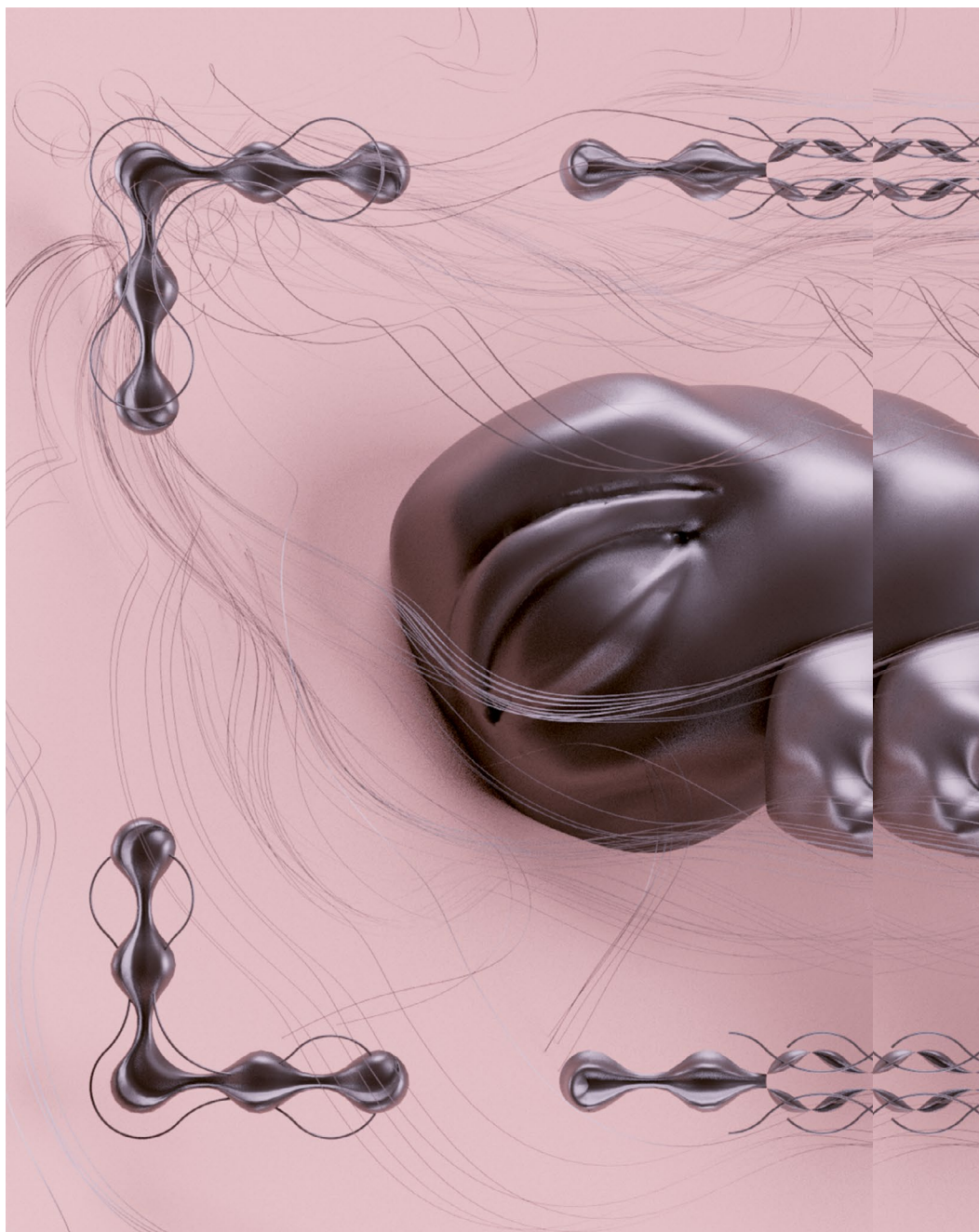
Zakaj sta se odločila za dokumentarno predstavitev projekta v obliki diorame?

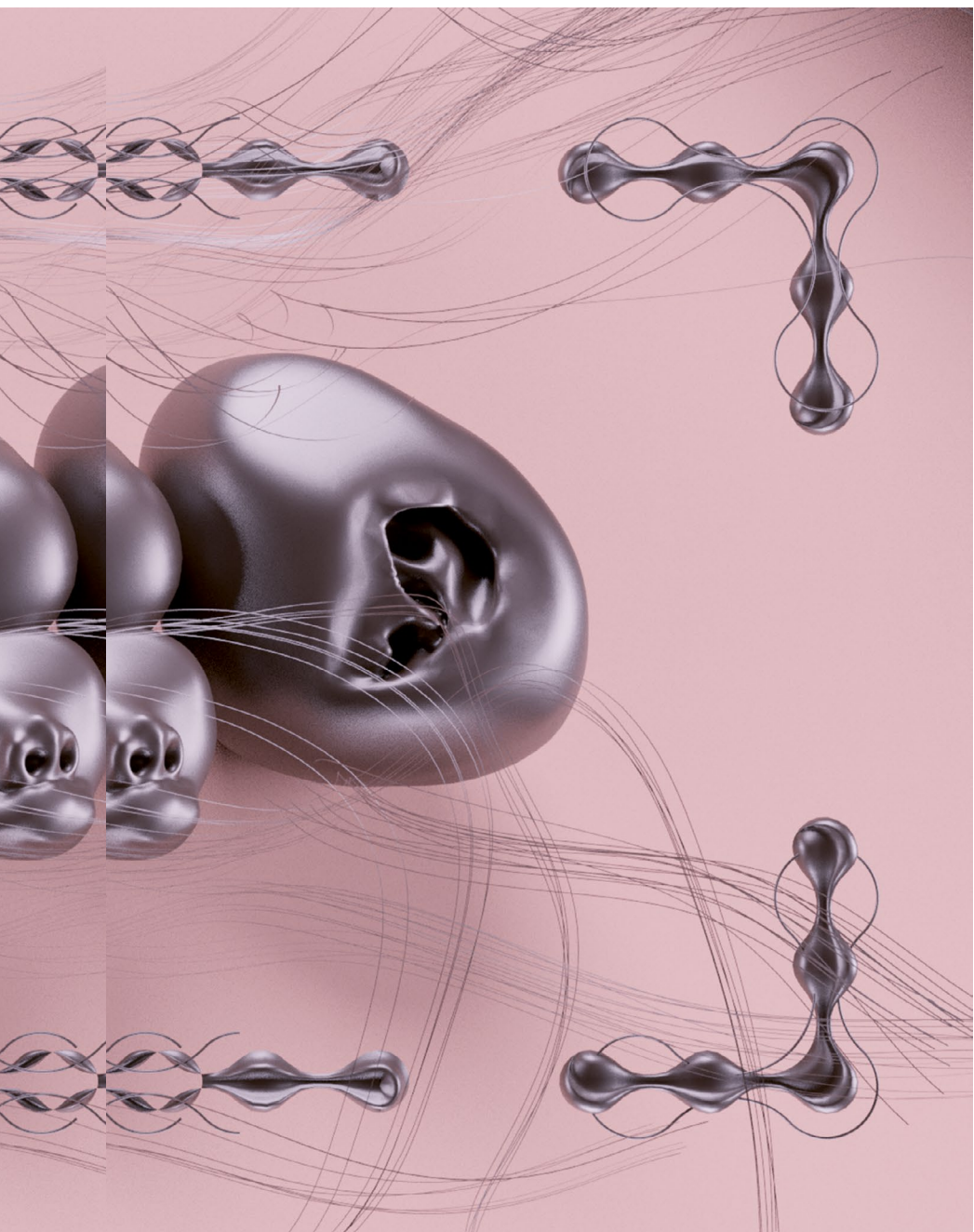
Razmišljala sva o načinu, na katerega bi lahko nekako povzela najino dosedanje delo in vanj vključila tudi nekatere dokumente ali aspekte projekta, ki do sedaj še niso imeli vidnejšega mesta. Ker o FaceOrFactory vedno govoriva kot o zaključenem

discovered the phenomenon of genetic chimerism, which involves the existence of two or more genetically different cell populations within an organism. Human chimeras may thus have two or more DNA records, and the naming of this extremely rare genetic phenomenon of course derives from the ancient Greek hybrid monster. The idea of monstrosity or the nonhuman within humans themselves and from human material seemed more and more interesting to us, so we decided to play more freely with the collected DNA material, layer it and combine it so that the final facial formations will be increasingly unrecognizable. From the face as a highly centralized territory of specific anthropometric criteria, we thus began to deal more and more with the idea of the face as a much more dispersed, decentralized information mass that plays with the ambivalent position of human and nonhuman. We perceive our work as a speculative game with material through which we can critically approach contemporary identity phenomena and language. Through the presentation of visual and documentary material, the *You, an Archive* exhibition thus acts as a summary of the work done so far and enables the general public to get acquainted with the FaceOrFactory project.

Why did you decide to document and present the project in the form of a diorama?

We were thinking about a way in which we could somehow summarize our work so far and include in it some documents or aspects of the project that have not yet had a prominent place. Since we always talk about FaceOrFactory as a complete ecosystem





ekosistemu z lastnimi pravili delovanja in odnosi med različnimi akterji, se nama je zasnova diorame kot ustaljenega muzejsko-galerijskega načina arhiviranja, prikazovanja in dokumentiranja naravnih ekosistemov zdela zanimiva izhodiščna točka. Hkrati sva z dioramo želela ustvariti nekaj, kar bi lahko poljubno spreminjala in razširjala tudi v prihodnosti, tako da bi skupaj s projektom rasla tudi njegova dokumentacijska enota. Igrati sva se želela predvsem s pojmom ekosistema in zgodovinsko funkcijo diorame, ki je prikazovala izseke iz naravnega življenja, v katerega človek še ni posegel ter z njimi ustvarjal izolirane enote sebi zunanje narave. Želela sva nekoliko razširiti pojmovanje muzejske diorame ter s poseganjem v človeški material ustvariti idejo ekosistema nečloveškega Drugega znotraj človeka samega – že prej omenjene himere, pošasti.

with its own rules of operation and relations between different actors, the design of a diorama as an established museum and gallery way of archiving, displaying and documenting natural ecosystems seemed an interesting starting point. At the same time, we wanted to create something with the diorama that could be changed and expanded in the future, so that along with the project, its documentation unit would also grow. We wanted to play mainly with the concept of ecosystem and the historical function of the diorama, which displayed excerpts from natural life into which man has not yet intervened and used them to create isolated units of nature that is external to him. We wanted to expand the concept of the museum diorama a bit and, by interfering with human material, create the idea of an ecosystem of the nonhuman Other within man himself – the previously mentioned chimera, monster.

FACEORFACTORY: YOU, AN ARCHIVE*

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