



## A GHOST WITHIN SHELLS

### Non-Fungible Tokens in the age of 'Content without Context'

Last year, while the world was in lockdown, the NFT market tripled in value, reaching more than \$250 million. In 2014 Anil Dash and Kevin McCoy created 'Quantum,' the first ever NFT, depicting a short video of a set of spinning dollar symbols inside a picture frame. Post-internet irony aside, this 'Warholian' piece is now valued at U\$D7 million. Beeple has become a mainstream media phenomenon and sold his work at Christie's for USD69 million, placing him among the top 3 valuable living artists. The first ever tweet by Jack Dorsey saying "just setting up my twttr" sold for USD2.9 million. NON-FUNGIBLE TOKENS are in some ways the ultimate post-modern artistic expression where speculative value has replaced substance up to the point where the object of desire is not the representation, but a machine-generated number attached to an image-shell. Art has become a paradoxical collaboration between human input and cybernetic validation, which beyond questioning the value and evaluation of art, has questioned the necessity of the physical or digital existence of the art beyond a unique code and a fuel price for the machine. No longer is the art unique and valuable, without a 14-digit code. Hence, during this year's AAVS studio we delve into the creation of NFTs, understanding them as Ghosts in a Shell – being the 'ghost' a machine-generated number, which without its 'shell' would lack a body to exist in.

To craft our images, we will reference Mamoru Oshii's 1995 cult anime 'GHOST IN THE SHELL' (from the manga of the same title created by Masamune Shirow). A cyberpunk fiction that perfectly describes a machine identity that superficially relates and needs the human, just like the NFT needs the image-shell to exist but not to justify its existence. We will provide each student a short clip from the 2D animation film to be re-defined three dimensionally through hyper-real CG images. Students will need to replicate and redefine 2D drawings, suggestive materials, scale, and camera angles from the anime, to create an almost tangible images and environments. This re-appropriation will then conclude into a short 2-5 second clip where reality has been pumped into an otherwise drawn image to give it a unique atmosphere and feel, true to the source material yet more vivid, alive, and real.

Finally, these images will be minted and the 'machine' which reads them will provide a unique number: its symbolic value – a 14-digit code, a ghost in the image, the shell.

Post workshop the 3D scenes created by the students will be evaluated, modified, and processed through real time render engines to create virtual spaces and environments that then will be turned into NFTs to be explored and inhabited. The outcome will be an architecture that instead of being an object, can be a room, landscape, or an enclosure that can be entered and lived through in real time by its owner.



GHOST IN THE SHELL 1995 ANIME



GHOST IN THE SHELL 2017 MOVIE



GITS TRIBUTE ART, VIMEO

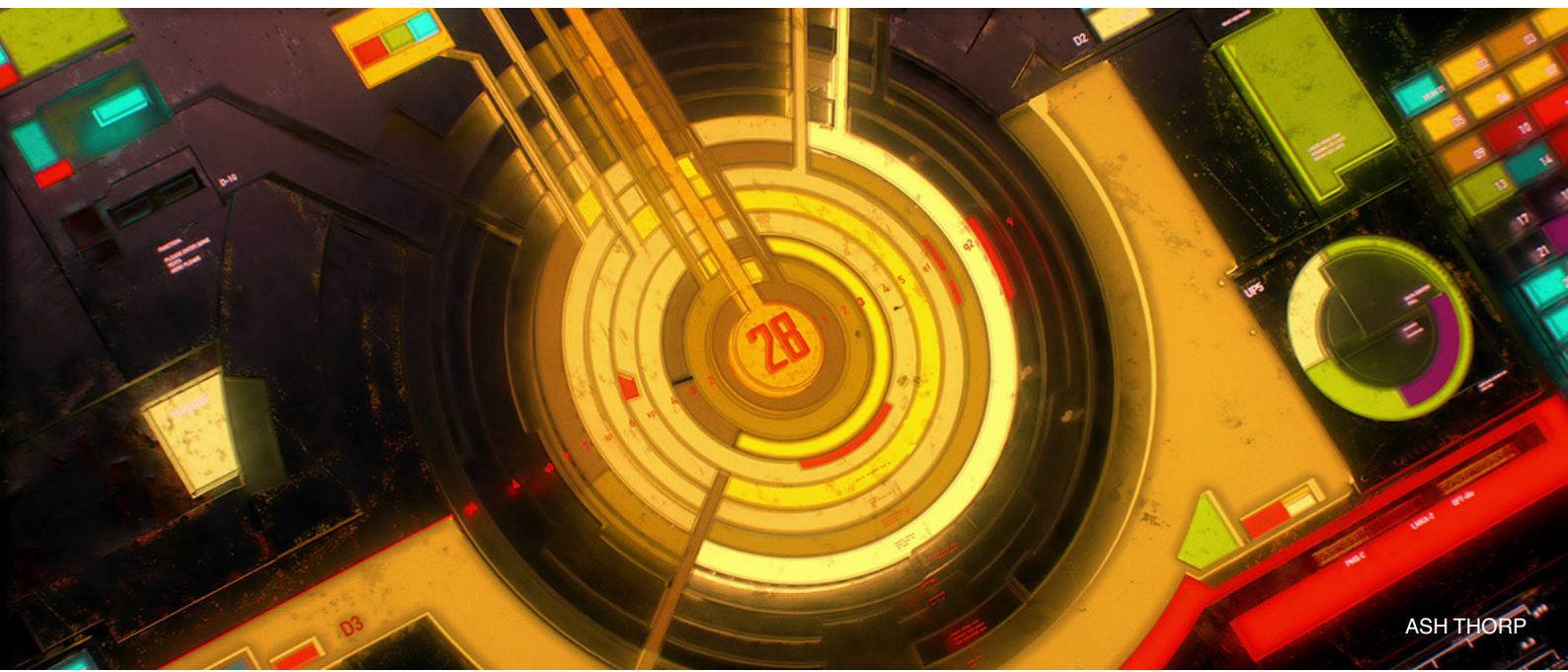




ASH THORP



ASH THORP



ASH THORP





ASH THORP



ASH THORP



ASH THORP



## GROUPWORK:

Students will be asked to work individually this year. Collaborations will be welcome, but each student will be expected to submit individual work.

## OUTCOME:

- Still Image.
- Looping Animation/GIF (2-5 seconds).
- Sketchbook/Documentation/Breakdown.

Students will be asked to submit the renderings, animations, and sketchbooks along with their 3D scenes.

## SOFTWARE:

- Autodesk 3ds Max 2018 and later.
- Corona Renderer (14-day free fully usable trial available).
- Quixel Bridge.
- Quixel Mixer.
- Adobe Photoshop.
- Adobe Premiere/After Effects.

Additional Scripts, Plug-ins and any Assets will be provided individually during the workshop.

## PRE-WORKSHOP:

- Watch Ghost in the Shell by Masmune Shirow.
- Make selection of scenes to replicate.
- Create an Unreal Engine account.
- Watch videos provided by tutors.

Students will get further information emailed to them directly regarding online tutorials and assets to be downloaded prior to the beginning of the workshop. Students will be required to go through the material provided before starting the workshop, as the time line of the workshop will be structured on the assumption that students have covered some of the material already.







GHOST IN THE SHELL 2017 MOVIE

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GHOST IN THE SHELL 1995 ANIME



GHOST IN THE SHELL 2017 MOVIE



## TUTORS

**ÁLVARO F. PULPEIRO** is a filmmaker currently based between Madrid, Spain, and Barranquilla, Colombia. Born in 1990, spends his first years of life in Saguenay, Quebec, and Northern Galicia, Spain. After being brought up between Northern Brazil and Western Australia, moves to London where he graduates from the Architectural Association School of Architecture in 2015. He has directed two shorts and two feature documentary films that have been selected to renowned film festivals worldwide. His latest work, a feature-length documentary film shot on the Venezuelan petrol hinterlands for over two years, 'So Foul a Sky' (83', 2021), had its world premiere at CPH:DOX as part of this year's Next:Wave Selection. His work has been featured in publications such as Variety and Screendaily.

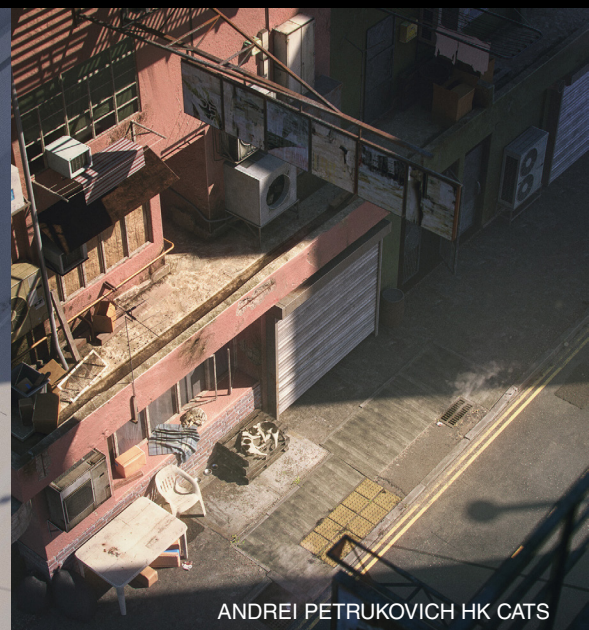
**SERGEJ MAIER** is a digital craftsman currently based in London, UK. Born in 1988 in the Soviet Union, he was raised and educated between Russia and Germany. Upon completing his training as a master apprentice in representational fine art in Germany, and after having had several solo shows and exhibitions, he moved to the UK, where he graduated from the Architectural Association School of Architecture London in 2014. While studying architecture he started incorporating classical pictorial elements into the digital realm experimenting with various digital tools and emerging technologies. Both his commercial and personal work deals with an enhanced visceral sense of reality only achievable through digital means. Simulations of the world filtered through machines that are finally able to create a new sense of texture, depth, and place. A new reality yet to be. He has collaborated and worked with artists and architects on projects ranging from interactive installations, 3d printed art and marketing visualizations for high end clients, such as Adobe and LG. He has taught and lectured internationally at the Architectural Association School of Architecture London, City University of Hong Kong, Bartlett School of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University Bangkok, Oxford Brookes, and the Melbourne School of Design, where he has been a tutor of the Architectural Association Visiting School Melbourne since 2017.



GHOST IN THE SHELL 1995 ANIME



ANDREI PETRUKOVICH HK CATS



ANDREI PETRUKOVICH HK CATS



## TIMELINE

**01/07-02/07**

01/07-02/07

### **SOFTWARE WORKSHOP**

Introduction to 3ds Max, Corona Render, and Quixel Mixer. Setting up Quixel Bridge and workflow to 3ds Max.

**05/07-16/07**

05/07-06/07

### **LECTURES + WORKSHOP + TUTORIALS**

Lectures, technical workshops and tutorials in order to clarify any uncertainties, or difficulties with either the software that is being taught or individual projects. Sessions will be split into a short individual tutorials, and longer sessions to focus on software tutorials and troubleshooting.

07/07

### **INTERNAL PRESENTATION**

Students will present their work in progress and their goals for the rest of the week.

08/07

### **TUTORIALS + TROUBLESHOOTING**

Students will work on their projects for the Friday Midterm presentation, having received the feedback from the internal presentation. For any technical issues and problems students will be able to sign up to a tutorial sheet.

09/07

### **MID-REVIEW**

10/07-11/07

### **TUTORIALS + TROUBLESHOOTING**

Post review discussion mandatory for all students on sign up basis. Students will be required to sign up a day in advance.

12/07

### **TUTORIALS + TROUBLESHOOTING**

Students will be given time to continue to work the final deliverables. Students will be able to sign up for tutorials and technical troubleshooting during these days

13/07

### **INTERNAL PRESENTATION**

Students will be required to present their final deliverables to the group, in order to be able to determine what needs additional help and focus for the final Review. At this stage there should be no more uncertainty in terms of what is being produced.

14/07-15/07

### **TUTORIALS + TROUBLESHOOTING**

Students will be given the last day fully to produce and prepare for their Final Review. Tutors will be available for tutorials and troubleshooting.

16/07

### **FINAL REVIEW**

**New Paper III**

**05.07.2021**

**MELBOURNE  
SCHOOL OF  
DESIGN**

**A GHOST WITHIN SHELLS  
AAVS MELBOURNE  
2021**