COPPER, CODE, AND CONDUCT: A STUDY OF PRACTICE AND THEORY

AUBRIE MEMA "AMEMA"

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Abstract

This thesis explores the practice of AMEMA, the pseudonym and alter ego of the artist Aubrie Mema. It roots her work in the political and ecological crises of our time which include climate change, ecosystem collapse, and the looming existential threat of Artificial General Intelligence. It describes how she critically responds to this situation by embracing the breakdown of boundaries between human and other-than-human matter, emphasizing the impact of one on the other. She does this by drawing from the Posthumanism framework, including New Materialism and Assemblages, as described by theorists Rosi Braidotti, Jane Bennett, Gilles Deleuze, and others. AMEMA's intention is to highlight the active role of matter in shaping identity and ethics.

This study aims to situate AMEMA's work within contemporary art discourse by comparing her work with that of artists James Bridle, Hito Steyerl, Lucy Raven, and Daniel Peltz, whose practices similarly engage with technology, systems, and socio-political critique. Using AMEMA's recent project *Inter-Connections* as a case study, this paper highlights ways her installation, interactivity, and material juxtapositions provoke dialogue about human responsibility and the ethics of entangled systems. This is achieved by analyzing various aspects of AMEMA's work including ethics, identity, interrelations, and materiality.

Through this analysis, AMEMA's work is positioned as both a reflection of and a challenge to destructive contemporary paradigms. She offers new perspectives from which to understand how to navigate complex environmental and technological realities.

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Introduction

Aubrie Mema is a female artist that experiments in the Posthumanism approach. She acknowledges the impact of agency inherent in matter and assemblages of matter that impact a human. These effects, however fluctuating, influence, at times, the identity of the maker and the work they create. Considering this, Mema has created a pseudonym, AMEMA, and an associated alter ego from whom to create recent works in. The artworks by AMEMA are therefore regarded as distinct from those by Mema and when referring to the artist, the pronouns she/ they are preferred.[1]

AMEMA is a creator whose work explores ideas around identity, interrelations between humans and other-than-human entities, ethics, and materiality. She focuses on the broad concept of "Connection" and highlights the role technology plays in enhancing human behavior either toward harmony or discord, probing the delicate balance between technological innovation and its ethical implications. Her practice combines painting, installation, technology, and various types of interactions to create works that build relationships and foster healing.

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[1] Haraway, Donna. 2022. "1985. Haraway, a Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism." *Internet Archive*. 2022. Page 2. https://archive.org/details/1985.-haraway-a-cyborg-manifesto.-science-technology-and-socialist-feminism/page/1/mode/2up.

The artist exists in a time of great anxiety about the future of humanity and the continued survival of earth as a life-sustaining planet. Due to the severe effects of pollution and climate change, the possibility of a total ecosystem collapse is becoming more tangible.[2] Initial signs of its manifestation can already be seen through extreme weather patterns, ocean warming, and the presence of microplastics in everything. All these changes impact wildlife, vegetation, and the ecosystem, of which humans are a part.[3]

Adding to this already disturbing situation is the fear of many about the threat of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). The possible creation of this kind of intelligence came with the development and subsequent innovations of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which was created to perform complex functions and tasks, in a fraction of time and power, that it would require humans. AGI's creation would function similarly to current, more narrow applications of AI but with unprecedented superpower and agency.[4] If it was achieved, this powerful intelligence would surpass that of humans and if its ultimate objectives differ from humans, it may consider humanity's existence as superfluous and it may make decisions that would lead to the ultimate extinction of human life.[5] Because of its capabilities, nothing could stop

[2] Einhorn, Gill. 2024. "These Are the Top 3 Global Climate Risks We Face Globally." *World Economic Forum*. January 11, 2024. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/01/climate-risks-are-finally-front-and-centre-of-the-global-consciousness/. Accessed March 12, 2025.
[3] NASA. 2024. "The Effects of Climate Change." *NASA*. October 23, 2024. https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/effects/. Accessed March 16, 2025.
[4] McLean, Scott, Gemma J. M. Read, Jason Thompson, Chris Baber, Neville A. Stanton, and Paul M. Salmon. 2021. "The Risks Associated with Artificial General Intelligence: A Systematic Review." *Journal of Experimental & Theoretical Artificial Intelligence* 35 (5): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/0952813x.2021.1964003. Accessed March 13, 2025.
[5] Mitchell, Melanie. 2024. "Debates on the Nature of Artificial General Intelligence." *Science* 383 (6689). https://doi.org/10.1126/science.ado7069. Accessed March 12, 2025.

AGI's advancement, as it would possess the ability to improve itself, manipulate humans to

do its will, and could respond in milliseconds to any kind of threat.[6] Essentially, humanity

would be handing over the reins of power and dominion to another entity and it would be left

helpless.[7]

There is a lot of debate about how to respond to the current crisis. Regarding the

environment, some believe the changes in climate change have nothing to do with their

choices, others are skeptical, believing that perhaps what they read and hear is fake news.

Others don't want change as it would require difficult alterations and impact financial

profits.[8] Another group believes the changes in climate correspond with the greenhouse

gases and pollution humans have produced and immediate action is necessary. Some in this

last group think humans are incapable of finding a solution.[9] they turn their hopes to AGI,

believing it can resolve everything. Because of the existential concerns associated with AGI,

another subset believes the use of an AI, programed with reasonable limitations, together with

a paradigm shift, may be the best hope.

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[6] Hunt, Tamlyn. 2023. "Here's Why AI May Be Extremely Dangerous—Whether It's Conscious or Not." *Scientific American*. May 25, 2023. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/heres-why-ai-may-be-extremely-dangerous-whether-its-conscious-or-not/. Accessed March 16, 2025.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Kennedy, Brian, and Alec Tyson. 2024. "How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue." *Pew Research Center*. December 9, 2024. https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2024/12/09/how-americans-view-climate-change-and-policies-to-address-the-issue/. Accessed March 27, 2025.

[9] CNBC Television. 2024. "Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt: It's Time for Us to Fully Invest in AI Infrastructure." *YouTube*. October 8, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jQutoBygpM. Accessed March 13, 2025.

The work of AMEMA is located within this politically charged environment. It is created in

response to the crisis and is a means of working through the many difficult questions and

complexities around it. As a result, her work is part of larger conversations and debates taking

place among other contemporary artists. The purpose of this paper is to situate the work of

AMEMA into these dialogues. This will be done by comparing her work and practice with

other carefully selected artists whose work show parallels with AMEMA's either in their

production or conceptualization. Included artists are James Bridle, Hito Steyerl, Lucy Raven,

and Daniel Peltz, whose work has been positioned within distinct movements and theories.

The goal then is to describe various aspects of AMEMA's work that intersect with the work of

these creators. Through this process, one may clearly identify the similarities that connect

AMEMA's work with her contemporaries and the broader frameworks they are working

within, while also highlighting ways in which her work is unique. Those distinctions will

indicate the artist's contributions to art and society.

For the purpose of this study, a limited focus on a single project created recently by AMEMA

will serve as an example of her work. This project is called Inter-Connections, and it will be

exhibited this coming summer at the SAIC Gallery, located at the School of the Art Institute

of Chicago, as part of a group show. The works within the project will be described below in

detail to establish a link to the work of the aforementioned artists.

This paper will focus on four major themes of AMEMA's work: ethics, interpersonal relationships, identity, and materiality. A description of each idea will illustrate the artist's intentions and define the questions that drive the work. Example works will highlight her practice and showcase the approaches of her exploration. Once this foundation is established, the work will be compared to specific artworks by Steyerl, Bridle, Raven or Peltz, to draw parallels. Each section will conclude by establishing how all the works are situated in broader conversations and frameworks.

Section I: Theory

Theoretical frameworks are interfaces through which one views the world. They are

comprised of a wide variety of writings from various fields including history, culture, science,

psychology, and others.[10] Underlying each of them are certain assumptions about reality.

These notions dictate the actions one takes.[11] Each theory has differing foundational

principles. This study will spotlight one framework called Posthumanism.

Posthumanism

Posthumanism is an 'umbrella term' for several branches of thinking including

Transhumanism, Antihumanism, and New Materialism.[12] Not all of these apply to the current

discussion. Those that do, however, will be discussed in detail.

Posthumanism challenges traditional human-centered views by highlighting interconnections

among organisms, both human and other-than-human, and other complex systems. Its aim is

to disrupt both the hierarchies that exist and blur boundaries between humans and other

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[10] Zoya Kocur, and Simon Leung. 2013. *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. Page 34.

[11] Mema, Medlir. 2025. "International Relations Theory." Lecture. Brigham Young University Idaho. February 13, 2025.

[12] Ferrando, Francesca. 2017. "How Humanism and Post Humanism Differ" *YouTube*. December 7, 2017. https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=how%20humanism%20and%20post%20humanism%20differ&mid=7D70E25527D45A11B4827D70E25527D45A11B482&ajaxhist=0. 35 seconds. Accessed March 19, 2025.

entities."[13]

Post humanist theory counters the concept, foundational to Humanism, which emerged in Italy during the 14th century, that humans are singular in their agency, supremacy, and value.[14] Several problems were associated with this notion. First, history shows that the term "human" excluded all from its label except those who were categorized as "white Western men."[15] Second, this narrowly defined group characterized a type of human that many no longer wanted an association with due to the violence, atrocities, brutality, oppression, and patriarchy that was linked to the group. Third, only "humans" were considered animated, living beings and everything else was measured inanimate, to be acted upon. Additionally, the environment was viewed as a static 'backdrop' or 'context' instead of an entity with a force of its own. For these reasons, the term "human" had to be redefined.

A prominent critic of Humanism who contributed to these perspectives is the theorist, Sylvia Wynter. She described Humanism as being connected with dehumanization.[16] She argued that Humanism was based on a "Colonial and racialized model that divides the world into asymmetric categories such as "the selected and the deselected", center and periphery, or

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[13] Lorimer, J. 2009. "Posthumanism - an Overview | ScienceDirect Topics." *Sciencedirect.com*. 2009. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/posthumanism. Accessed March 19, 2025.
[14] The Ethics Centre. 2018. "Ethics Explainer: What Is Post-Humanism?" The Ethics Centre. February 22, 2018. https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-post-humanism/. Accessed March 15, 2025.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Scott, David and Sylvia Wynter. 1999. "The Re-enchantment of Humanism: An interview with Syvia Wynter" Interview. November 19-20, 1999. https://files.libcom.org/files/Wynter_1_1.pdf. Page 120. Accessed March 29, 2025.

colonizers and colonized."[17] Her proposed new humanism developed what she called a

"counter humanism," which breaks from the classification of humans into static, asymmetric

categories.[18] This view therefore "expanded" the definition of what it means to be human.[19]

In the process of redefining the term "human," an essential reconsideration of "value" was

necessary. This resituating of the human's value had to be scrutinized in two ways: human's

relationship to things and to its environment. Posthumanism suggests that the environment,

which can include space, atmosphere, or mood, has agency, life and vigor. In this manner, the

environment is capable of influence.[20]

This knowledge confirms that humans are deeply interconnected with their environment and

implies that the choices of one affect everything else. This concept, called Anthropocene, has

helped Posthumanists define the concept of "human" as blurred, and they have elevated the

"value" of other-than-human to equal that of a human.[21]

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[17] Ibid. Page 121.
[18] Ibid. Page 121.
[19] Ferrando, Francesa. 2017. "How Humanism and Post Humanism Differ" *YouTube*. December 7, 2017.
https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=how%20humanism%20and%20post%20humanism%20differ&mid=
7D70E25527D45A11B4827D70E25527D45A11B482&ajaxhist=0. 4:45 minutes. Accessed March 25, 2025.
[20] Deterr. 2013. "Summary: Vibrant Matter by Jane Bennett." *Cultivating Alternatives*. November 29, 2013.
https://cultivatingalternatives.com/2013/11/28/summary-vibrant-matter-by-jane-bennett/. Accessed March 12, 2025.
[21] Ferrando, Francesca. 2017. "What does Posthuman mean?". *YouTube*. January 1, 2009.
www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=What+Does+Post+Human+Mean&&view=riverview&mmscn=mtsc&mid
=7D70E25527D45A11B4827D70E25527D45A11B482&&aps=0&FORM=VMSOVR. 5 minutes. Accessed March 25,
2025.

The term, Posthumanism, was coined and defined by Ihab Hassan in an article entitled

"Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?" written in 1977.[22] Several

other theorists have made important contributions to this perspective. To name a few, Rosi

Braidotti considers posthumanism as a mode of understanding the human condition, Danna

Haraway reinvented the definition of cyborg in her important manifesto called "A Cyborg

Manifesto," written in 1985, and N. Katherine Hales argued in her book, *How We Became*

Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics (1999), that the

posthumanism condition is characterized by a blurring of the boundaries between humans,

machines, and information systems.[23]

Danna Haraway's adoption of posthumanism was influenced by advancements in science and

technology that exhibited boundary breakdowns between humans, animals, and machines.

The first is the distinction between humans and animals. She states, "animal language tool

use, social behavior, mental events; nothing really convincingly settles the separation of

human and animal"[24] The second is the blurred division between animal-human (organism)

and machine.[25] The final difference stems from the second but it recognizes the imprecise

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[22] Cambridge University Press. 2024. "Mary Shelley's Modern and Shelley Jackson's Postmodern Prometheus." *Cambridge University Press EBooks* 47 (November): 28–47. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009256476.003. Accessed March 12, 2025.

[23] Ashley. 2024. "N. Katherine Hales." University of California Los Angeles. September 20, 2024. N. Katherine Hayles: Expert Literary Analysis - ResApp Innovations. Accessed March 29, 2025.

[24] Internet Archive. 2022. "1985- A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism" Donna Haraway. *Internet Archive*. 2022. https://archive.org/details/1985.-haraway-a-cyborg-manifesto.-science-technology-and-socialist-feminism/page/3/mode/2up. Page 4. Accessed March 16, 2025.

[25] Ibid. Page 4.

margins between physical and non-physical.[26] In response, she has devoted her career to the

work of breaking down the acceptance of uncritical oppositions.[27]

To Rosi Braidotti, posthumanism is a lens through which to explore the intricacies of human

experience.[28] She notes, "We humans cannot simplify the complexities, we have to embrace

them."[29] She expressed her desires for the future by asserting:

> What I aspire to is to combine the two pillars of posthumanism, digital and
>
> environmental, as prototypes of critical posthumanities, which practices combine
>
> species and network thinking with post-anthropocentric thinking, driven by
>
> affirmative ethics. This can create mutual respect between the hard and subtle
>
> sciences, pushing respective ideas of complexities to explore multiple new potential
>
> visions while resisting rationalism.[30]

Known for her exploration into digital technology, N. Katherine Hayles, has studied its

influence on human cognition and existence. In her influential book *How We Became*

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[26] Ibid. Page 5.

[27] Nasrullah, Mambrol. 2018. "Key Theories of Donna Haraway." *Literary Theory and Criticism*. February 22, 2018. https://literariness.org/2018/02/22/key-theories-of-donna-haraway/. Accessed March 29, 2025.

[28] Braidotti, Rosi. 2019. "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities." *Theory, Culture & Society* 36 (6): 31–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486. Page 1. Accessed March 16, 2025.

[29] Yale University. 2025. "Rossi Braidotti Posthumanism" *YouTube*. 2025. https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=rossi+braidotti+posthumanism&mid=1F505366F0DFFBEC7DE31F505366F0DFFBEC7DE3&FORM=VIRE. 7:20 minutes. Accessed March 27, 2025.

[30] Ibid. https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=rossi+braidotti+posthumanism&mid=1F505366F0DFFBEC7DE31F505366F0DFFBEC7DE3&FORM=VIRE. 40 minutes.

Posthuman, she argues that posthumanism is a transformation in how we understand ourselves in relation to technology.[31] This blurring of ontology has significant implications for our understanding of human agency, and consciousness.[32] She advocates for a nuanced understanding of embodiment in a digital age.

The concepts discussed here resonate in AMEMA's work in the manner she emphasizes breakdowns in boundaries between humans and non-human matter and the ways she embraces complexities that exist in the blurred states. She takes the work deeper into this thought by including other concepts which will be discussed below, including New Materialism and Assemblages.

New Materialism

One branch of Posthumanism, called New Materialism, is informed by the Anthropocene concept. It aims to recognize and investigate matter with an understanding that everything has both force and agency.[33] In their book called *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, Diana Cole and Semantha Frost describe this notion further. It reads, "There is

[31] Braidotti, Rosi. 2019. "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities." *Theory, Culture & Society* 36 (6): 31–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486.

[32] Ashley. 2024. "N. Katherine Hales." N. Katherine Hayles: Expert Literary Analysis - ResApp Innovations. Accessed March 27, 2025.

[33] Allen, Paige. 2023. "New Materialism | Definition, Examples & Analysis." *Perlego Knowledge Base*. May 17, 2023. https://www.perlego.com/knowledge/study-guides/what-is-new-materialism/. Accessed March 12, 2025.

increasing agreement here that all bodies, including those of animals (and perhaps some

machines too) evince certain capacities for agency. Consequently, the human species, and the

qualities of self- reflection, self -awareness, and rationality traditionally used to distinguish it

from the rest of nature, may now seem little more than contingent and provisional forms or

processes within a broader evolution."[34]

The political theorist, Jane Bennett, characterizes matter in this new value system as having

"Thing-power,"[35] emphasizing that inanimate objects can manifest traces of independence.

This definition expresses the need for objects to be viewed as more than just simple, man-

made items.[36] On the contrary, objects can be approached with respect, and sometimes even

fear. These feelings are understandable for often objects and humans intersect or mingle.

When this occurs, both are active and capable of force.[37]

Considering these definitions, an awareness and sensitivity to other-than-human forces is

necessary.[38] Through this shift in perception and approach, more attention and consideration

are given to other-than-human actors in decision making processes. What follows is the

consideration of questions and approaches from broad fields of study.[39]

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[34] Coole, Diana, and Samantha Frost. 2010. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham Nc: Duke University Press. Page 18.

[35] Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press. Page 14.

[36] Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things.* Page 12.

[37] *Thrift, Nigel J. 2007. Non-Representational Theory: Non-Representational Theories and Materiality.* Routledge, London. *https://*ebrary.net/257807/education/rethinking_matter_materialization#539. Accessed March 29, 2025.

[38] Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things.* Page 13.

[39] Allen, Paige. 2023. "New Materialism: Definition, Examples & Analysis." *Perlego*.

https://www.perlego.com/knowledge/study-guides/what-is-new-

New Materialists use this approach when considering solutions to the current crisis.

Francesca Ferrando, Professor of Post Humanism theory at NYU states that, "A shift can only result by fully acknowledging the actual state of things. Humans do not live in a vacuum; if we ignore what is happening to the environment and to the planet, we are compromising our own futures."[40]

Artists are reacting to the call for action from a Posthumanist perspective. Authors of the book *Posthumanism in Art and Science* Giovanni Aloi and Sasan McHugh write:

> …Artists and authors today draw from an array of cross-disciplinary formations including bioinformatics, multispecies ethnography, and poststructuralist theory to craft new foundations for social thinking and action. Refusing the hierarchical dualisms through which people once separated and elevated themselves from "the other" in its many permutations, the posthuman unravels through heterogeneous assemblages that not only shift intellectual and political baselines but also transform the very terms of creative and ethical practice.[41]

It is through assemblages, imbued with the potential for action, that artists have found voice.

AMEMA is one of these voices. Her works acknowledge these assemblages while

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materialism/#Key%20elements%20of%20new%20materialism. Accessed March 29, 2025.

[40] Ferrando, Francesca. 2009. "What does Posthuman mean?" *YouTube*. www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=how%20humanism%20and%20post%20humanism%20differ&mid=7D70E 25527D45A11B4827D70E25527D45A11B482&ajaxhist=0. 5:20 minutes. Accessed March 16, 2025.

[41] Aloi, Giovanni, and Susan McHugh. 2021. *Posthumanism in Art and Science: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 2.

simultaneously presenting the ethics associated with their entanglements.

Assemblages

All matter, human or not, is active, unstable, and alive. Together, philosopher Gilles Deleuze

and psychoanalyst Felix Guattari wrote about this concept. Their interest was to define

"difference" between things, or to identify that everything is in constant change.[42] In this

theory, identity is no longer fixed, but instead, ever shifting due to dynamic relationships.[43]

The work of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon took this concept further by introducing

"Actor-Network Theory," which states that all human and other-than-human entities have

agency and influence.[44] Using this agency, matter may decide to partner with other matter.

This ensemble of matter is called an assemblage. Jane Bennett is another theorist who takes

ideas from Deleuze, Guattari, and Latour to create her own definition of assemblage states as,

"Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts."[45]

A grouping may be formed with human components but not necessarily.

Assemblages have their own agency.[46] This does not mean that they only limit human

agency. Instead, assemblages are endowed with "the style, energy, propensity, trajectory, or

[42] PhilosophiesOfLife.org. 2025. "Assemblage and Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy." *PhilosophiesOfLife.org*. March 12, 2025.
https://philosophiesoflife.org/assemblage-and-gilles-deleuzes-philosophy/. Accessed March 18, 2025.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Philospheasy. 2024. "Unraveling Reality: Bruno Latour and Actor-Network Theory." *Philospheasy.com*. December 20,
2024. https://www.philospheasy.com/p/unraveling-reality-bruno-latour-and. Accessed March 18, 2025.
[45] Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter*. Page 23.
[46] *Thrift, Nigel J. 2007. Non-Representational Theory: Non-Representational Theories and Materiality.* Routledge, London.
*https://*ebrary.net/257807/education/rethinking_matter_materialization#539. Accessed March 29, 2025.

elan inherent to a specific arrangement of things."[47] In other words, the combination of

components, like an amalgamation of forces, work together as an assemblage to create

change. This collaborative work exists for a duration of time and then dismantles, indicating

that assemblages are impermanent.

With an awareness of matter as an active agent in an assemblage, one can more easily

identify its effects, both dramatic or subtle. Its evidence may be found in the symptoms of its

harm or aid in humans or other forms, for example.[48]

Artificial Intelligence can be viewed as an assemblage. Its makeup is a complex network of

various data inputs, algorithms, and information transfers. Through human-AI relationships,

assemblages emerge that are in constant flux. Some of AMEMA's work is contextualized

within this mode.

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[47] Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter*. Page 35.
[48] *Thrift, Nigel J. 2007. Non-Representational Theory: Non-Representational Theories and Materiality.* Routledge, London. *https://*ebrary.net/257807/education/rethinking_matter_materialization#539. Accessed March 29, 2025.

Section II: Analysis

As outlined earlier, the purpose of this section is to define AMEMA's work by providing detailed descriptions of various works and explaining her work methodologies. Space is devoted to drawing parallels in her work to that of other artists to situate it into broader dialogues of which they are a part. The focus will be on drawing comparisons between various production modes, concepts, and theoretical influences.

Ethics

Artworks

AMEMA's artist book, *Necessary,* focuses on the history of the Bingham Copper Mine, located near Salt Lake City, Utah, referencing its founding by early Mormon settlers.[49] The artist book exposes a paradox that the mine sparked, which describes the priorities of the newly established community and their mindset. It signals a different approach as well, one that explains the present conditions. Questions about the ethics of land use are considered.

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[49] Calton, Katie, Austin Simcox, Emily Cook, and Brigham Young University. 2018. "Immigrants at the Bingham Canyon Mine." *Intermountain Histories*. May 17, 2018. https://www.intermountainhistories.org/items/show/175. Accessed March 12, 2025.
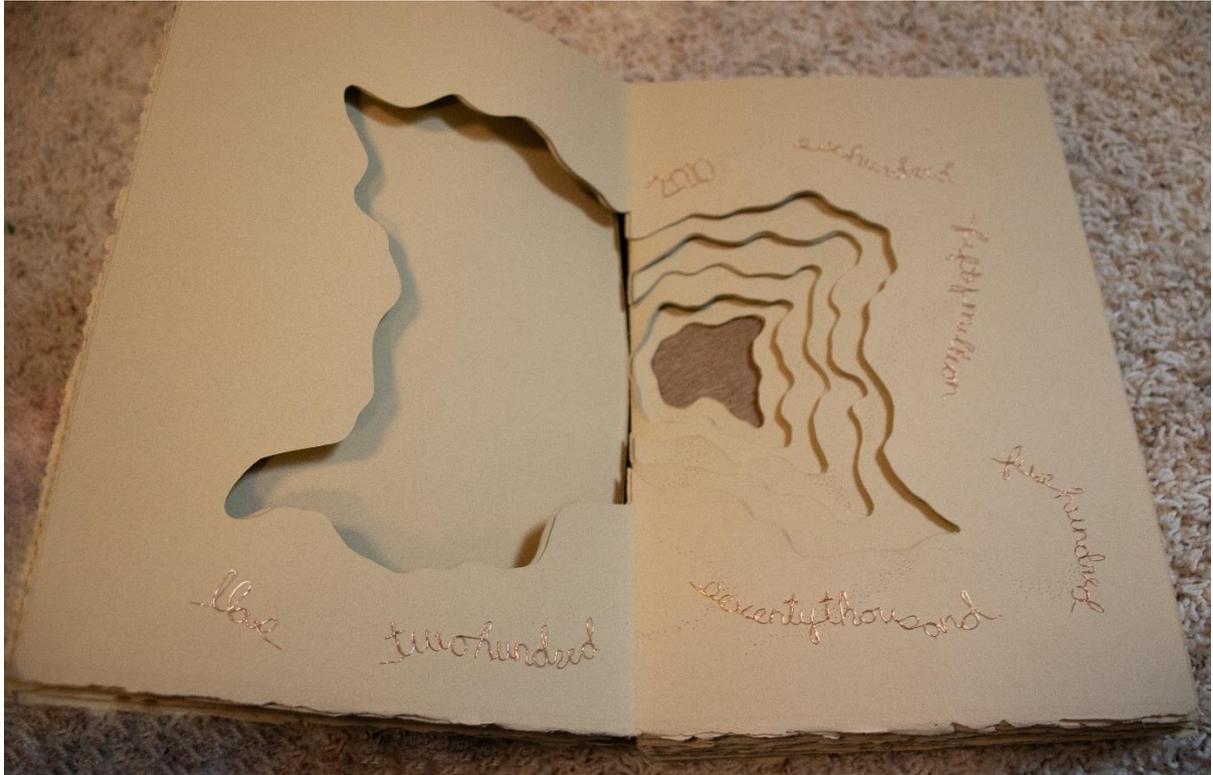
Fig. 1 AMEMA, *Necessary,* 2025, artist book (detail), 7 x 9 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Laid open, the book looks simultaneously like the shape of a cow hide and a Rorschach blot

(Fig. 1). This is intentional. Rorschach blots were invented by Herman Rorschach in the early

20th century to diagnose people's perceptual approaches.[50] AMEMA is interested in soliciting

viewers' perceptions when viewing the work. The generic inkblot is a symbol intended to

evoke this response. The hide silhouette references a story told within the book about the

founders of the Bingham mine and their decision to care for cattle rather than pursue profits

from the mine.[51]

[50] Rorschach.org. n.d. "Online Rorschach Inkblot Test." *Rorschach.org.* https://www.rorschach.org/. Accessed March 11, 2025.

[51] Brother Brigham. 2020. "Bingham, Sanford – Pioneer Stories." *Utahpioneers.org.* 2020. https://utahpioneers.org/2020/09/bingham-sanford/. Accessed March 15, 2025.

The closed book and subsequent pages take the shape of an open mine pit. Each page of both

the first and last half of the book signifies different mine levels. From either end, each page

takes the reader closer to the bottom of the pit, which marks the middle section. The first

section pages describe various year's chronological production sums. This information is

expressed in written words, weaved out of copper wire. The pages of the last section are like

the first but devoted to inscribing the waste of the mine (Fig. 4). The data is written in dirt,
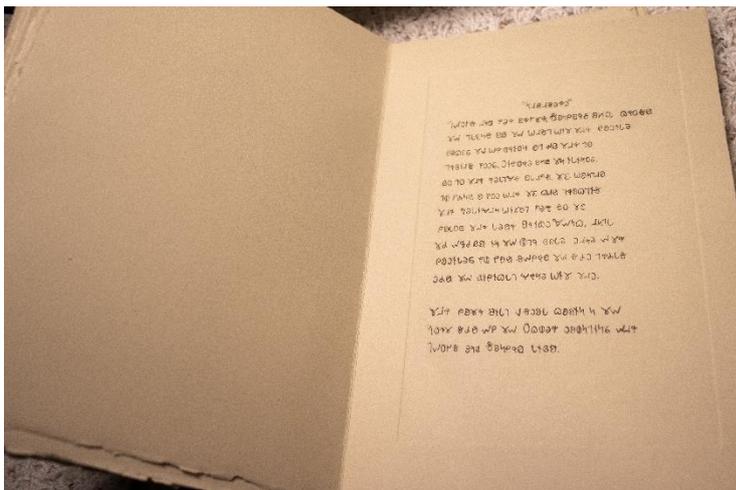
extracted not far from the Bingham mine.

Fig. 2 AMEMA, *Necessary,* 2025, artist book (detail), 7 x 9 in. Courtesy of the artist.

The middle section (between pages 8 through 10) of the book tells the story of the Bingham brothers, Thomas and Sanford, and their choices around finding the ore (Fig. 2). Instead of pursuing wealth extraction from

the mine, they heeded the guidance of their religious leader, Brigham Young, who counseled

them not to develop the mine further. Two reasons were given: to focus on providing the

'necessities of life' to the vulnerable community of which they were a part and to keep other

developers away.[52] This story is written in the Deseret Alphabet, which is a written phonetic tongue used by early Mormons to help non-English speakers learn English quickly (Fig. 3).[53] Critics believed it simultaneously served as an 'insider' language that isolated the Mormons.[54]

Fig. 3 AMEMA, *Necessary,* 2025 artist book (detail). 7 x 9 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 4 AMEMA, *Necessary,* 2025, artist book (detail), 7 x 9 in. Courtesy of the artist.

[52] Brother Brigham. 2020. "Bingham, Sanford – Pioneer Stories." *Utahpioneers.org.* https://utahpioneers.org/2020/09/bingham-sanford/. Accessed March 15, 2025. Accessed March 24, 2025.
[53] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. n.d. "Deseret Alphabet." www.churchofjesuschrist.org. https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/deseret-alphabet?lang=eng. Accessed March 28, 2025.
[54] Reynolds, Scott M. 2019. "Home - Deseret Alphabet Portal." *Deseretalphabet.org*. https://deseretalphabet.org/. Accessed March 27, 2025.

This work reflects on the question of what is "necessary?" It presents two perspectives, one described in the story, the other illuminated through data. What was essential to the early Mormon community contrasts with modern society, which values copper as vital in most 'necessary' things like homes, cars, phones, computers, and city infrastructure. A paradox is presented that the essential copper to sustain lives in the current economic paradigm is destroying wildlife, vegetation, and the very ecosystem humans live within. This work invites viewers to consider the ethics of the current model. AMEMA draws attention to the need for a shift in perception.

James Bridle is a British artist, philosopher and programmer.[55] They explore AI both to define it and consider what it might become, while also seeking to expose the invisible technologies the military has invented "that rule the world."[56] Through their investigations, presented in the form of artwork or writing, they encourage audiences to ponder on the often-overlooked ethical implications of innovation.[57]

[55] Mufson, Beckett. 2017. "Meet the Artist Using Ritual Magic to Trap Self-Driving Cars." *VICE*. March 18, 2017. https://www.vice.com/en/article/meet-the-artist-using-ritual-magic-to-trap-self-driving-cars-2/. Accessed March 16, 2025.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Hunter- Hart, Monika. 2017. "British Artist James Bridle Shows How to 'Trap' a Self-Driving Car." *Inverse*. March 22, 2017. https://www.inverse.com/article/29364-artist-traps-self-driving-car. Accessed March 16, 2025.

Fig. 5 James Bridle, *Autonomous Trap 001,* 2017, autonomous self-built vehicle and salt circle.

Courtesy of James Bridle.

In their work, *Autonomous Trap 001* they highlight the dangerous entanglement technology

has with corporate power (Fig. 5).[58] They explore ways AI can be separated from corporate

monopolies and act as a tool for resistance instead. Bridle accomplished this by building their

own self-driving car and then sabotaging it.[59]

Bridle wrote their own software, built their own neural network, and rigged cameras to a

vehicle. Once the car was ready, the artist gave instructions to the vehicle and then filmed it

as it drove into a simple yet disabling trap.[60] Bridle "Created [the trap] by putting two rings

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[58] Gallery, Science. 2023. "Science Gallery London." *Science Gallery London*. May 12, 2023.
https://london.sciencegallery.com/ai-artworks/autonomous-trap-001. Accessed March 19, 2025. See also Bridle, James.
2011. "Autonomous Trap 001." *Jamesbridle.com*. https://jamesbridle.com/works/autonomous-trap-001 Accessed April 28,
2025. Accessed March 25, 2025.
[59] Gallery, Science. 2023. "Science Gallery London." Science Gallery London. May 12, 2023.
https://london.sciencegallery.com/ai-artworks/autonomous-trap-001. . Accessed March 19, 2025.
[60] Bridle, James. 2011. "Autonomous Trap 001." *Jamesbridle.com*. https://jamesbridle.com/works/autonomous-trap-001
Accessed April 28, 2025. Accessed March 25, 2025.

of salt around the vehicle, one in broken strips and the other a block line – telling the car to go right and not to cross at the same time."[61] This simple gesture showed how two simple road markings could confuse the car, making it unable to move.

Fig. 6 James Bridle, *Autonomous Trap 001,* 2017, salt circle (detail). Courtesy of James Bridle

The use of salt to make the markings was a poetic gesture (Fig. 6).[62] Traditionally, in the practice of magic, salt signifies a space of protection.[63] Bridle compares this idea of magic in reference to technology, implying that in some ways the two are very much alike. They simultaneously emphasize the idea that this "magic" needs to be protected, or humans need to be protected from it.

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Hunter- Hart, Monika. 2017. "British Artist James Bridle Shows How to 'Trap' a Self-Driving Car." *Inverse.* March 22, 2017. https://www.inverse.com/article/29364-artist-traps-self-driving-car. Accessed March 16, 2025.

Situated in theory

AMEMA's work shifts the lens to other-than-human matter and emphasizes the power

inherent in things. An example of this is the presentation of the mine's impact. She directs

special attention to the influential relationship between the human and other-than-human by

showcasing data from the mine, which describes the impact each has on the other.

As AMEMA has explored definitions that accurately express the meaning of "Necessary,"

inquiries around ethics arise. What should be defined as needful to humans? Do these needs

take into consideration other-than-human entities that will be affected by the impact of human

choices? Is environmental stability reflected in the short and long-term? Posthumanism

theory, explains Braidotti is "a generative tool to help us re-think the basic unit of reference

from the human in …the historical moment when the Human has become a geological force

capable of affecting all life on this planet."[64] AMEMA confronts the ethics of the current

paradigm within this context. Through the work, she presents two alternatives for the viewer

to consider, leaving them responsible to act.

Bridle's piece sits comfortably in a New Materialism mindset within the Posthumanism

theory. It is an example of a human-machine relationship that the theory celebrates by

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[64] Allen, Paige. 2023. "New Materialism: Definition, Examples & Analysis." *Perlego Knowledge Base*. May 17, 2023. https://www.perlego.com/knowledge/study-guides/what-is-new-materialism/. Accessed March 16, 2025.

demonstrating how the artist recognized matter outside themself that is imbued with power and agency. New Materialists emphasize that matter is active, self-creative, productive, and unpredictable. Placed in this context, the goal of the piece was to understand technology's force.[65] Only through this process was Bridle able to better understand ways to better use, disrupt, or oppose the force, if necessary.[66]

The possible need to disrupt or oppose technology implies that there are ethical considerations associated with it. Bridle states, "Self-driving cars bring together a bunch of really interesting technologies, such as machine vision and intelligence with crucial social issues such as the atomization and changing nature of labor, the shift of power to corporate elites and Silicon Valley, and the quasi-religious faith in computation as the only framework for the production of truth."[67] They tackle these difficult ethical questions with the piece. Audiences that encounter the artwork, are encouraged to consider the often overlooked or taken for granted.

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[65] *Coole, Diana, and Samantha Frost. 2010. New Materialisms : Ontology, Agency, and Politics. Durham Nc: Duke University Press.* Page 9.
[66] Hunter- Hart, Monika. 2017. "British Artist James Bridle Shows How to 'Trap' a Self-Driving Car." *Inverse.* March 22, 2017. https://www.inverse.com/article/29364-artist-traps-self-driving-car. Accessed March 16, 2025.
[67] Ibid.

Interpersonal Relationships

Artworks

In a two-part work called *Connected/ Corroded: a portrait*, AMEMA explores the meaning of "Connection" and its converse, "Disconnection." She experiments with the idea in various ways by considering its various contexts of use. She investigates energy transfer using electricity, knowledge and skill attainment, collaboration, sense of touch, psychology, and with A.I. use. The first of these two works will be discussed here. The second piece will be elaborated on later.

Fig. 7 AMEMA, *Connection, 2025,* mixed media on cow hides, 8 x 6 ft. Courtesy of the artist.

The first work, *Connection*, is formed with two cow hides, hung on two adjoining walls at a 90 degree angle, inclined toward each other (Fig. 7). AMEMA chose this material to link this piece back to the story of the Bingham brothers where it was used to define what was "Necessary." In this work, connection is necessary. Strips are partially cut from the main body and connected to one another with copper wire. This wire forms part of a circuit that will be discussed later.

Rorschach-like blots are painted on the hides using conductive paint (Fig. 8). They are formed using strict instructions given by A.I. to ensure positive psychological viewer responses. On top of the paint are drawings of human brains. Wires weaved through the fur and over these drawings connect to appear like microscopic brain activity connections, that take place when humans interact.

This work encourages audience interaction. With the help of a friend, in collaboration, visitors may close the loop of an electrical circuit by pressing two buttons simultaneously at either end of the work. The circuit is attached to light emitting diodes so viewers can see a visual response when a connection is successful.

Fig. 8 AMEMA, *Connection (detail),* 2025, mixed media on cow hide, 8 x 6 ft. Courtesy of the artist.

Meanwhile, overhead is an audio recording of an A.I. chatbot reading off words from its sentiment analysis databank that it suggests are used commonly in healthy web interactions.

The German filmmaker, theorist, and artist, Hito Steyerl, infuses communications media and other technological forms into films and cinematic installations.[68] She blends diverse documentary film techniques and introduces speculative narratives into her films to make sense of the current global, digital, and network trends.[69] Through her work, she seeks to

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[68] Olunkwa, Emmanuel. 2025. "Hito Steyerl." *Novembermag.com*. 2025. https://www.novembermag.com/content/hito-steyerl. Accessed March 28, 2025.

[69] Andrew Krepps Gallery. 2025. "Website Filtered." *Andrewkreps.com.* 2025. http://www.andrewkreps.com/artists/the-work-of-hito-steyerl?view=slider#51. Accessed Dec. 6, 2024.

understand capitalism's social, cultural, and financial complexities.

Fig. 9 Hito Steyerl, *This is the Future,* 2023, installation. Courtesy of Portland Art Museum.

In an exhibit that debuted in 2023, called *This is the Future*, Steyerl created an installation comprised of video projections on sculptures and screens.[70] She collaborated with A.I. to create new types of plants and flowers that she defined to imbue restorative, medicinal, and political powers (Fig. 9)[71]. A story is told that the garden came about through the efforts of an incarcerated woman who captured airborne seeds and cultivated them in the future to keep them safe from her wardens.

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[70] Portland Art Museum. n.d. 2023. "Hito Steyerl: This Is the Future." Portland Art Museum. https://portlandartmuseum.org/event/hito-steyerl-this-is-the-future/. Accessed March 11, 2025.
[71] Ibid.

Steyerl investigated hidden
connections between various
fields in this project. In an article
about the exhibit, Kate Brown,
senior editor of *Artnet*, stated that
Steyerl "has interrogated the

Fig. 10 Hito Steyerl, *This is the Future,* 2023, visitor viewing installation. Courtesy of Portland Art Museum.

hidden connections between technology, political movements, and global capitalism, creating

contemporary parables that shine a light on the invisible infrastructure established by digital

forces such as data mining and Artificial Intelligence (AI)."[72]

Steyerl intended for the art to rouse the viewer (Fig. 10).[73] Her purpose was twofold, First,

she wanted to remind her audience of media's ability and often its goal, to create 'spectacle'

and to entertain.[74] Second, she wanted to describe a positive look at the future of mankind.

She expressed her desire for a time when A.I. can be harnessed to help create positive

change.[75]

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

Through multi-sensory experiences, viewers more easily comprehend concepts. AMEMA

chose to provide this type of engagement, with the aim of connecting herself and her ideas

with her audience. This was achieved by incorporating visual, tactile, and audible

components into the piece. Examples of this include the AI bot heard reading, the physical act

of closing the circuit with touch to elicit the visual of light, along with the rest of the visual

framework that makes up the artwork. In this manner, AMEMA's work accomplishes this task

by inviting guests to become aware of and take part in assemblages of matter.

Together, as an assemblage, these various elements perform one task: they collaborate to

create ideas for the viewer. As Bennett reminds, "Each thing is individualized, but also

located within an assemblage- each is shown to be in a relationship with the others."[76] In an

assemblage, the parts aren't reducible to context or without semiotics.

Hito Steyerl explores what it means to be human at a time when reality is literally constructed

by screen-based images. She studies how big tech and ethically untroubled capitalism strive

to colonize the digital sphere, and by so doing, control our future.[77] Here Steyerl is drawing

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[76] Deterr. 2013. "Summary: Vibrant Matter by Jane Bennett." https://cultivatingalternatives.com/2013/11/28/summary-vibrant-matter-by-jane-bennett/. Accessed March 28, 2025.

[77] Lek, Lawrence. 2023. "Interview: Hito Steyerl & Lawrence Lek." *Fact Magazine.* November 24, 2023. https://www.factmag.com/2023/11/24/interview-hito-steyerl-lawrence-lek/. Accessed March 29, 2025.

attention to ways that matter, in the form of technology impacts the viewer. Additionally, she reveals how big tech, within the current model, are assemblages made of human and non-human matter, whose power could potentially be very harmful to humans and the future of the planet.

Steyerl takes the idea of assemblages further by enhancing its potential for impact within the art. She accomplishes this by 'snaping' the viewer out of their attitude of simple consumption by intensifying the effects that technology has on the body.[78] She does this by creating immersive, mediate environments where the body becomes sensitive to its surroundings.

In an interview with Lawrence Lex, Hito Steyerl was asked about her process. She explained, "… finding the visual mode, which usually comes with its own technological setup, its own history of consequences and ramifications, is really the most challenging thing.[79] She explained that the visuals of her films work hand in hand with the technology she is experiments with.[80] The results create dialogue between her viewers and the work because of the way it is presented.

[78] Llorens, Natasha Marie. 2022. "Hito Steyerl: I Will Survive" *Art Papers.* December 13, 2022. https://www.artpapers.org/i_will_survive/. Accessed March 15, 2025.
[79] Lek, Lawrence. 2023. "Interview: Hito Steyerl & Lawrence Lek." *Fact Magazine.* November 24, 2023. https://www.factmag.com/2023/11/24/interview-hito-steyerl-lawrence-lek/. Accessed March 29, 2025.
[80] Ibid.

Identity

Soldered for time and eternity is another hide work in the show. Here, AMEMA reflected on

the meaning of connections across time. It emphasizes bonds between the living and

ancestors. AMEMA was interested in ways technology bridges time and clarifies identity.

To create this work, the artist researched family historical records to find information, stories,

and images of ancestors. The initial impetus for this piece started with the artist's desire to

find a familial link between themselves and those connected to the Bingham mine's

beginnings. A desire to find a line back to the Bingham brothers was her goal. Through a

projection AMEMA shares her family lines that trace her back to these key figures (Fig. 11).

Fig. 11 AMEMA, *Soldered for Time and Eternity,* 2025, projection on cow hide, 6 x 9 ft.
Courtesy of the artist.

The projection of images is cast on a white cow hide. The area of the hide where the images

are projected is shaved to reveal the skin of the animal. It forms a Rorschach; however, the

blot is created using an outline of a Mormon temple referencing the artist's religious heritage.

It represents the location where believers of the faith connect themselves with their ancestors,

for eternity, through ordinances. Through ancestral research using technology as a tool, the

artist has come to better understand her own identity and the complexity of history.

It is said of Daniel Peltz, that "through public projects, performances and media installations,

Peltz' artworks explore complex social systems, attempting to provoke ruptures in the

socio/cultural fabric through which new ways of being may emerge and be considered. To

accomplish these goals, he uses a range of intervention, ethnographic and performance

strategies. His projects often take the form of existing social behaviors, systems or protocols

to directly engage non-art audiences in the language of critical art practice."[81]

Chinese Opera is a piece that came out of an artist residency in Tom Price, Australia (Fig. 12).[82] Peltz chose to focus his work on the story of the

Fig. 12 Daniel Peltz, *Tom Price, Australia,* 2013, film still. Courtesy of Artlink.

[81] University of the Arts Helsinki. 2023. "Daniel Peltz – SpaceX-RISE." *Spacex-Rise.org*. March 22, 2023. https://www.spacex-rise.org/daniel-peltz/. Accessed March 11, 2025.
[82] ArtLink staff. 2025. "Daniel Peltz: Artist Residency in Tom Price, a Company Town." *Artlink.* 2025. https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4059/daniel-peltz-artist-residency-in-tom-price-a-compa/. Accessed April 28, 2025.

town's founder, Thomas Moore Price, and connect it to the identity of the town, which is

based on the movement of minerals. He learned that the ore extracted from the mine is sent to

China where it becomes steel using the same dismantled and reinstalled plant that once was

run by Tom Price in America.[83]

His opera is a re-enactment of the displacement of minerals in the town by the mining

company.[84] Peltz chose to make a Chinese opera because he saw ties between China and the

mining town in several ways (Fig. 13).[85] First, he says, he saw a connection in the way

"Chinese Opera is embedded in the landscape of China, just as the iron ore is embedded in

the Australian landscape."[86] Second, he says that in the opera, "The story will change based

on the extraction, transport, processing and distribution network; in this case, composers,

musicians, singers, sponsors." Peltz viewed opera in China as a resource he could extract and

transport to Tom Price, reversing the process.[87]

[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Peltz, Daniel. 2015. "When We Dig — Daniel Peltz Portfolio." *Cargo.site.* 2015. https://danielpeltz.cargo.site/when-we-dig. Accessed March 15, 2025.
[86] Coleman, Sheridan. 2025. "Critical Design Critical Futures - a Company Town." *Risd.Systems.* 2025. https://critical-futures.risd.systems/articles/a-company-town/. Accessed March 29, 2025.
[87] Peltz, Daniel and Sheridan Coleman. 2013. "Tom Price: A Company Town" Interview. *ArtLInk.* www.artlink.com.au/articles/4059/tom-price-a-company-town-with-daniel-peltz/. Accessed March 29, 2025.

Fig. 13 Daniel Peltz, Chinese Opera advertisement, 2013. Courtesy of Daniel Peltz.

He considers the makeup of the town residents, who are all short-term employees. He feels a connection with them in that like them, he is only a "miner" in the way he digs information and experience to make the work elsewhere.[88]

Situated in theory

AMEMA's starting point was a mine. From here she explored various forms of entanglement. One way she accomplished this was by flattening her familial lines that date back to individuals who took opposing political views surrounding the same topic. AMEMA wanted to present a work that expressed how complexities and overlapping narratives can

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[88] Coleman, Sheridan. 2025. "Critical Design Critical Futures - a Company Town." *Risd.Systems.* 2025. https://critical-futures.risd.systems/articles/a-company-town/. Accessed March 29, 2025.

simultaneously blur one's definition of self while presenting clarity of familial links. In this

manner, the artist explored Hayle's ideas about ontological blurring and how it affects her

own understanding of personal agency and consciousness.

Peltz's work relates to a broad audience. He does this by situating the work in the familiar

and recognizable. From here, he questions existing assumptions and offers different

perspectives. In this way, he introduces his viewers to a critical art practice that is potentially

impactful. This practice is situated in a Posthumanism approach because as he invents new

ways of expressing forms of entanglement, as Aloi and McHugh suggest, he can "Open up

space for working out the social implications of interconnected conditions of life."[89] Peltz

successfully did this by aligning two distinct countries and associated cultures to one another

by considering mine trading from Tom Price.

Materiality

Artworks

The second work in the two-part piece, *Connected/ Corroded: a portrait*, reflects disconnect.

Just as the name suggests, the work explores ways society has eroded through polarization,

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[89] Aloi, Giovanni, and Susan McHugh. 2021. *Posthumanism in Art and Science: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press. pg 15.

division, and isolation. It reveals various ways the current economic/developmental paradigm

has contributed to the destruction of the environment and associated ecosystems. An

awareness of the role technology plays in the corrosive structure is revealed (Fig. 14).

Fig. 14 AMEMA, *Corroded: A Portrait,* 2025, mixed media on cow hide, 7 x 9 ft.
Courtesy of the artist.

A torn, frayed, and burned cow hide hangs in the corner, showing signs of decay. From a

ripped hole in the middle, one sees a spewing of disconnected wires, mirror shards, discarded

circuit boards, and broken appliances like cell phones and radio. Beyond the burns across the

face, rusty paint has been applied to further suggest corrosion. Additional exposed wires

protrude out of the fur to provide it protection.

This work is intended to act as a portrait of society. Through negative sentimental analysis

lists provided by A.I., AMEMA created a work that demonstrates visually the feelings and

views of people expressed on the internet. Words like burned, hurt, broken, decayed, exposed,

etc. are brought together to create a piece that links the ways humans have used technology to

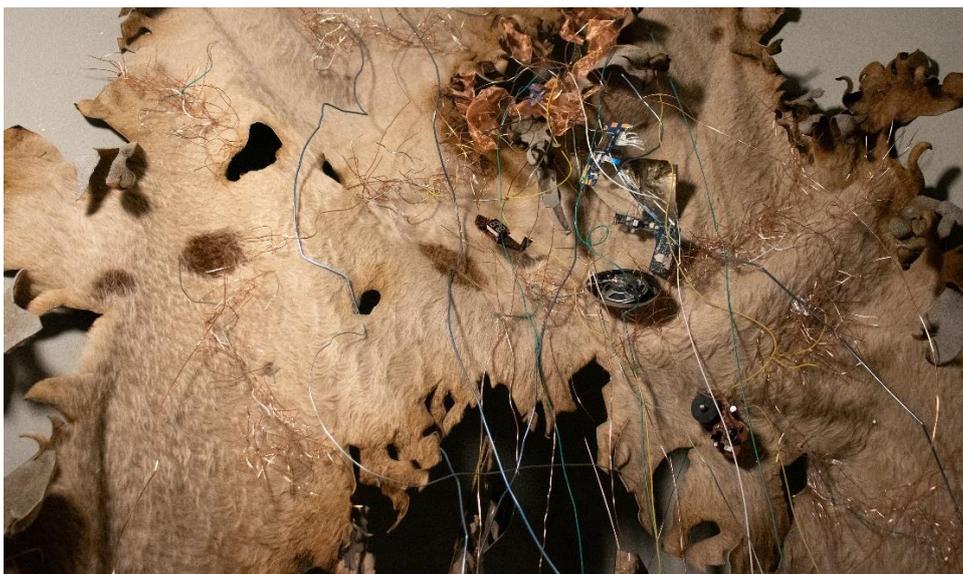divide or to express their negative experiences (Fig. 15).

Fig. 15 AMEMA, *Corroded: A Portrait (detail),* 2025, mixed media on cow hide.
7 x 9 ft. Courtesy of the artist.

By looking at 18ᵗʰ century portraits of royalty, and aristocracy that included symbols to

represent their wealth, profession, and station, similarly, this portrait includes objects that

represent modern Western society's wealth. Yet these objects are exhibited broken and

unusable. This representation is intended to reflect on the abundance of waste the current

model has produced.

AMEMA's work evokes feelings that are similarly found in a work called *China Town*, by

American artist, Lucy Raven, who explores how the Western landscape, though seemingly

empty, plays a major role in industry and technological production.[90] With a desire to better

understand how commodity is associated with earth and ownership, she experimented with

the idea of "separation."[91]

Fig. 16 Lucy Raven, *China Town* (detail), 2020, film. Courtesy of Aperture Foundation.

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[90] Lisson Gallery. 2020. "Lucy Raven." Lisson Gallery. 2020. https://www.lissongallery.com/artists/lucy-raven. Accessed March 23, 2025.

[91] Morse, Erik. 2021. "Lucy Raven." Artforum. April 13, 2021. https://www.artforum.com/columns/lucy-raven-on-concrete-cinema-and-reimagining-the-genre-of-the-western-249695/. Accessed March 23, 2025.

Raven wanted to show how resources move to understand this disconnection. To do this, she

created a film, that follows the path of copper ore from a re-opened mine in Nevada to China,

where it is made into copper wire and then used to build infrastructure in Beijing.[92] She

accomplished this by creating a stop-motion montage of 7,000 distinct and disconnected

photos (Fig 16).[93] Along with this visual, Raven took audio recordings of sounds along the

journey to act as a soundtrack. In this manner, her process of making the work mirrored the

process she was documenting.

Fig. 17 Lucy Raven, *China Town* (detail)*, 2020, film. Courtesy of Nevada Museum of Art.

[92] Nevada Museum of Art. 2015. "Lucy Raven: China Town - Nevada Museum of Art." Nevada Museum of Art. 2015.
https://www.nevadaart.org/art/exhibitions/lucy-raven-china-town/. Accessed March 25, 2025.
[93] Aperture Foundation. 2025. "Lucy Raven, China Town, 2009 (Excerpt)." Vimeo. April 28, 2025.
https://vimeo.com/182868126. 4:04 minutes. Accessed March 28, 2025.

The Nevada Museum of Art exhibited the work. In a piece discussing the work's intent, a staff member wrote that Raven's film invites meditation on the ways that landscapes are sometimes exploited, abandoned, and re-used over time (Fig. 17).[94] "For example, old mines, such as those in Ruth, Nevada, were reopened in response to China's need to modernize. Raven's film also draws attention to cultural ironies surrounding historical and contemporary production and consumption of resources.[95]

Situated in theory

AMEMA's work seeks to consider materiality using many carefully selected materials. One example is her choice to use cow hides. In these works, they are intended to connect visually and conceptually with the previously discussed piece involving the Bingham brothers. However, AMEMA was also interested in exploring other aspects of division that the material could surface, related to animal use, environmental considerations, and interconnections in procurement.

The hides AMEMA used originated in Brazil. The killing of cows for their hide and the toxic tanning process have led to divisions about animal treatment and environmental concerns.

[94] Ibid.
[95] Nevada Museum of Art. 2015. "Lucy Raven: China Town - Nevada Museum of Art." https://www.nevadaart.org/art/exhibitions/lucy-raven-china-town/. Accessed March 16, 2025.

These rugs were purchased by an owner of a large Airbnb cabin in Island Park, Idaho, to be used as decorative rugs. Due to excessive foot traffic, they began to deteriorate. A local was gifted the hides, who then sold them to the artist for a discounted price.

AMEMA thought about the exchange of resources and resource use. Through the artist's purchase, the hides were given a second life. As post-humanist artists Aloi and McHugh state, "The material remnants of animal life bring to the foreground art's long history of tracing the convergences of non/human lives and deaths."[96] "… Fragments of mammalian bodies inspire broader debates of 'how matter comes to matter,' that in turn speak to the social immediacy of posthumanist art's material dimensions."[97]

By exploring the process from resource extraction to consumption, Lucy Raven's work directs attention to processes that were established in the Humanist era where attention is directed solely at humans. Raven's work is powerful because she presents other-than-human material in a manner that elevates it. She does this by shifting the lens away from the human to highlight it instead. Evidence of this is found in the artist's attention on the journey of the material. Humans aren't the focus of the piece. The beauty in the work lies in the artist's ability to address the problematic paradigm from this new perspective. This attention focused

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[96] Aloi, Giovanni, and Susan McHugh. 2021. *Posthumanism in Art and Science : A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 12.
[97] Ibid. Page 13.

on other-than-human matter is central in Posthumanism theory.

Conclusion

Through this analysis of AMEMA's work, one can better understand the artist's intentions and questions that drive her work. An appreciation through a deeper understanding of her work methodologies has also been presented. This paper has situated the artist's work in broader conversations and theoretical frameworks. Additionally, AMEMA's work has been compared to specific supporting artists to draw parallels.

One of AMEMA's overarching goals is to bring people together for each other's sake and for that of the planet. She agrees with Braidotti that it is all about relations between everything. She states, "It's all about what we are capable of doing together."[98] AMEMA is hopeful. She believes that change is possible. Her work simultaneously expresses her journey to learn her place within the work and invites others to shift their perceptions. She adopts Briadotti's view that "It is in spite of our time and out of love for our time."[99]

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[98] Yale University. 2025. "Rossi Braidotti Posthumanism" *YouTube.* 2025.
https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=rossi+braidotti+posthumanism&mid=1F505366F0DFFBEC7DE31F
505366F0DFFBEC7DE3&FORM=VIRE. 1:24:00 minutes. Accessed March 29, 2025.
[99] Ibid. 58 minutes.

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