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# The Shredded Hologram Rose

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**T**he lights are off. Only the panel beside the door dimly lights up my little cube. It dips the environment in a relaxing haze of what they call post-Hyper Yves Klein Blue and only shows the outlines of my desk, bed and some of my collected belongings placed on the desk and walls.

...

We really are living through special times ... It is hard to imagine how things were before – back when there was no “Yves Klein Blue home lighting colour standard.” People always needed to see all the colours. It must have been so exhausting, tiring on the eyes. Now ... everything is just comfortably drowned out in this blur of blue ... A colour that signifies “stuff is on and things just function.”

I glance over to the left, where I see a glimmer of something I did not want to remember. In the darkness, on the desk over my bed lie the fragments that used to make up my beloved vintage Hologram Rose. Earlier that day, I had accidentally dropped the rose from the ledge it had been standing on since the very first day I moved into the cube. It is sad to see it lying there; the different petals of the rose broken from its stem, still flickering in the bluely lit darkness.

The Hologram Rose had been in my family’s possession for a century of cycles. It is one of the most special digital possessions we have ever owned. When I was young, I was often told it was a one of kind static function object, hailing from the times of image rendering.

And the Hologram Rose had always spoken to my imagination. Maybe the holographic

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## THE SHREDDED HOLOGRAM ROSE

object was even the reason why I became a media archaeologist in the first place.

But now, lying there in front of me on the desk, its broken petals seem to reveal something ... The flickering glow that comes from them, it is hard to recognise. But I do believe there is something there.

I had recognised it earlier as well; these black and white patterns, reminiscent of the old days of image compression. It triggers a sense of nostalgia in me. It reminds me of something I read a long time ago, about the early days of the digital, when media were still compression.

Of course today data is no longer compressed. Anything you could possibly need is just right here ... generated on the spot, on a

client's side. Pulled out of the pool of everything imaginable.

But back in the days of compression, when media were still limited and users restricted by platforms and environmental and bandwidth limitations, not all images had been rendered yet. At that time all images could not even be created or displayed.

It is actually exciting to think about ... Things just were a little harder back then.

It reminds me of this beautiful account in this old reader released for the *im/possible images* exhibition. An exhibition about the relations between resolutions and compromise within the field of image rendering, which took place at a time when display technologies still used pixels. That chapter by Fabian Heller was fittingly titled "All Possible Images."

Wait let me pick it up.

In this text Heller describes his wish for the total number of all possibly displayed images on the full HD screen – so a screen of 1920 × 1080 pixels and 24K true colour resolution.

As it turns out, the actual number of all possible images for this traditional, ancient screen resolution was too large to display on one screen. The number was simply too *long*; it consisted of too many digits.

In the chapter, Heller also describes how the number is beyond what is imaginable at human scale. He describes it as *a magic number that contains its own Library of Babel*. The number contains every image possibly rendered, including images of the future and past but also images of a past and future that will never be. It may even have contained images that forever remained un-rendered.

As a media archaeologist I learned that the first rule of rendering technologies was that resolutions don't just refer to ways *to make something work*; they also always involve *the compromise of other modes of working*.

Yet I see a kind of paradox here: now that we are living in a time in which images never finish rendering, maybe not all images *can be rendered* anyway ... I mean we did away with rendering technologies in order to transform images so pffff it is confusing ...

It opens this whole throve of imagination that we kind of stepped away from, since the implementation of *Generative Rendering at the client's end*. When the Generative Pre-trained Transformers – the GPTs – became of unlimited resolution, the previous great age of technological solutionism suddenly also got known as the age of compromise.

Which is what they describe when they speak about the moment that the Angel of History learned to see her own demise. Caught in the net of Pre-trained Transformers, her head was suddenly turned around. She no longer had to see the past and its compromise, but suddenly saw all the future would instill, all futures right there, at the tip of her wings.

Which was almost ... kind of grim?

I glance back at the Hologram Rose. The black and white patterns are not very clear, but after revisiting the DeCalibration Target earlier today, I am convinced I can in fact discern a Discrete Cosine Transforms (DCT) pattern.

I am so extremely lucky that the i.R.D. built the DeCalibration Target – which is the oldest digital monument of the outside world. It was painted in the twenties, so about a century of cycles ago. And it was supposed to function as a repository for obsolete compressions, specifically those based on DCTs, the transforms that were superseded by GPTs. DCTs were used in compressions such as JPEG, MPEG, etc. These were compressions that used to govern the realms of image compression, so, before the Great Wall of the Future was breached, when the GPTs took over and compression fell into obsolescence.

OK ... Let's take a look at this i.R.D. flyer I picked up at the DeCalibration Target; hmmmmm.

"The i.R.D. are not a traditional institute, instead, they multiplex the term institution, by revisiting its usage from the late 1970s."

Wow, that's a long time ago ...

"In this context, formulated by Joseph Goguen and Rod Burstall, institutions refer to a framework that deals with the growing complexities of digital technologies, connecting different logical systems (such as databases

and programming languages) within the computer sciences. A main result of these non-logical institutions is that different logical systems can be glued together at a substrata level, forming illogical frameworks through which computation can also take place.”

“Building bridges between logical and non-logical systems, inspired by the idea of hyper-functional, yet illogical frameworks, the i.R.D. are dedicated to research the interests of anti-utopic, obsolete, lost and unseen, or simply ‘too good to be implemented’ resolutions.”

OK – cool.

So hopefully, with the help of this information that I found embedded in the DeCalibration Target, I can maybe find a way to recalibrate these broken render layers of the Hologram Rose.

There is also actually a digital repository ...

Here ...

Let’s see. “The JPEG compression consists of six steps. The first step is the Colour space transformation, a second step of the JPEG algorithm involves downsampling. Step 3 is the step of block splitting, followed by step 4, the Discrete Cosine Transform. Step 5 entails quantisation, a process that discards coefficients with values that are deemed irrelevant (or too detailed) visual information. The process of quantisation is optimised for the human eye, tried and tested on just a single Caucasian Lena colour test card.”

Wow ...

Would that mean that ...

The JPEG compression could actually be considered kind of racist?

What the hell?

I have heard of technologies having bias encoded within them.

I even know that a lot of GPTs are bias conformational.

Hmmm history repeating itself.

Finally, step 6. Entropy coding.

OK, so clearly from looking at the Hologram Rose, a composite object can reveal unknown unknowns, or at least things that one normally doesn’t see. They can be revealed by snagging onto layers that are normally not supposed to be touched.

Maybe with this information I can actually fix the rose.

Let’s see.

When looking up-close, every surface still seems to show the whole image of the Hologram Rose. But the shredded sides of the object, its cuts, seem to have formed new delta axes that reveal the previously invisible layers of the rose.

These axes expose render elements; the passes, dis-correlated instances and meta data that are needed to properly render the hologram in a variety of possible resolutions.

It seems like these shreds of the rose now have become their own portals to moments of a past I was never part of. The shreds show artefacts from the times when artistic entrepreneurs claimed their work through blockchain hashes – just after the great future had been initiated by the epoch of decentralisation and when GPTs and machine learning intelligence took over.

First, in the realms of the economy, then of art, politics, law and finally knowledge itself, ... which was the brink of our great new future.

I study the petals of the rose a bit more.

These fragments seem to have been acquired via an ERC-721 protocol ... a proof of provenance from before the breach of OpenSea.

Another shred captures my attention.

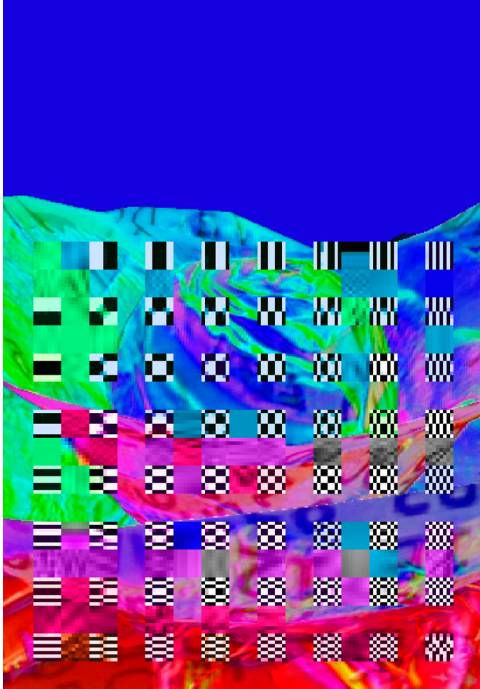
Looking at it closely, it seems to reveal that the origins of the Hologram Rose must have been imported via a client called META.

The shreds of this Hologram Rose feel so iconic. Each shredded petal reveals a part of the rose from a different layer that has its own mode of rendering. Simple passes, and render elements, like the ID layer, a probing opacity pass, bump map and a nested controlled access are clearly visible amongst its shreds.

I can also see the DOI of the rose, there, which was registered in the great Z-Library. It’s exciting to recognise a petal that features data about the rose’s smell, Primed by Amazon, the great distributor.

Then, another petal catches my eye: ... Is that verified Crispr Clone data??

That cannot be right ...



The breach of the OpenSea was a direct result of the inscription of Crispr Clone data inside the FINAL NFT ...

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When I lay out all the pieces in front of me, like a puzzle, some of them seem to fit together. But when merged, the rose that once lit up a holographic surface now renders into a visual cacophony of resolutions ...

On top of the shreds a corruption warning starts to flicker:

This render may populate fungible strains  
This render may populate fungible strains  
This render may populate fungible strains

Quickly I take the shards apart.

I remember reading about how “right click safe” turned into “right click transcode.” When the NFT holders huddled to try and save their once so dearly pinned JPEGs on the InterPlanetary File System protocol.

The time when several image compressions were falling into obsolescence at once. And the precious images started to fall into unreadable disrepair.

“I right click transcode to safe digital heritage” – was the slogan they used in their memes.

This Hologram Rose technology seems to be from before the breach of the OpenSea and the fall of the Great Wall of the Future.

Before the fall of the Great Wall of the Future ...







That was the era when the gems of the Internet were the shadow libraries. When serendipity was still a normal part of daily practice. Before the growing application of GPTs – the serendip-inhibitors. When Transforms only transformed data and did not generate it yet ... Before the future just started to regurgitate itself and serendipity was a feature of the past. Pffff.

Now the world has been mapped and collected in its entirety. Every book has been indexed and scanned to OCR. Every image can be transformed. All horizons have been painted. Nothing is impossible anymore. Everything ever possible just sits in my pool of transformers.

With everything indexed and answered. Everything just makes sense. We can always find what we were looking for. Everything at the tips of our thoughts. Things just work.

Whatever I can ever think of, it always is just right there.

Yet still. Some things ... just feel so wrong!

It is like when we slipped past the event horizon of the “functional information market.” When the Great Wall of the Future was breached. Things just suddenly have come to a halt.

YES. We have arrived. YES, the future is here.

But it feels like we are just continuously floating aimlessly in an ocean of everything.

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Walled by the past. Like the wall of time just flipped sides.

Everything is now full of options.

But where are the surprises?

No one asks questions anymore.

There are no more problems to tackle, no more protests, boycotts, no more cancelling. No more upgrades, signing in, no transfer of data.

At once, everything has arrived.

I am living the new boring human. The thin client in a network with no purpose. Where the value of the unsought has disappeared, serendipity has vaporised and everything is smothered within the hue of Hyper

Yves Klein Blue.

Fck.

I don't feel that calm anymore. This blue is smothering me.



## disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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