by Mez Breeze (human) x DALL-E (AI)
[Por]TrAIts
AI Characters + Their Microstories
Book 1

Since the 1990's Mez Breeze has created digital works, books, award-winning digital literature, games, and other genre-defying output all while teaching/mentoring, archiving, and supporting digital art and writing. Mez's recent awards include *Inanimate Alice: Perpetual Nomads* winning the inaugural 2020 Woollahra Digital Literary Award Readers' Choice Prize, while *V[R]ignettes* won the QUT Digital Literature Award as part of the 2019 Queensland Literary Awards. In 2019, Mez also received the Marjorie C. Luesebrink Career Achievement Award which: "*. . .honours a visionary artist and/or scholar who has brought excellence to the field of electronic literature.*" To know more, jump to patreon.com/mezbreeze, mezbreeze.itch.io and mezbreezedesign.com.

Also by Mez Breeze:

PRINT

A Disgruntled Book of Wizzdumb
Human Readable Messages_[Mezangelle 2003-2011]
ATTN: Solitude

INTERACTIVE FICTION

The MALFI Trials
Fleshis.tics
LinGUIdity Function (with G Zebington)
][s][hut][ters][of d.funct meat//Shutters of Defunct Meat
][d.][splay my][opia][
Rictus Usage|Motions of A Streamlined Mai][O][nlined Body
\my millennium
Sky Scratchez (with T Memmott)
A [[Non]] Guardian Age
Provocare (with M Vann and D Hancox)
The Dead Tower (with A Campbell)
Wish4[O]

GAMES

T E X T Filtah
All The Delicate Duplicates (with A Campbell)
#PRISOM (with A Campbell)
Inanimate Alice: Perpetual Nomads (with the Inanimate Alice Team)

ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

Blood Puppet Manifesto
Cutting Spaces [FleshWords By Ms Post Modemism]
Internal Damage Data
*_][ad][Dressed in a Skin C.ode_*
*_The Data[h!]bleeding Texts_*
.Re _____(ad.htm
. . ..pro][tean][.lapsing.txts.
di][e][lation][wo][manifesto
The Clone Alpha project
C of a sCar
][select][Text (with Collaborators)
*_dis[ap]posable_*
*_feralC_*
datahbabee Vs NarrowBranding
*_ID_xor.cism_*
*_Types.of.Und.Fineable.Ware[z]_*
*_Viro. Logic Condition][ing][1.1_*
Twitterwurking

EXTENDED REALITY LITERATURE

T[he]Issue: The Geospatial and Mixed-Locative
Colonisation Act of 2014
A Place Called Ormalcy
Our Cupidity Coda
V[R]ignettes: A Microstory Series
V[R]erses: An XR Series (with Collaborators)

[Por]TrAIts

Mez Breeze x DALL-E

First [Digitally] Printed in 2022
by Mez Breeze Design

mezbreezedesign.com

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This book is entirely a work of fiction, as are all included characters, traits and images. Any similarity to actual occurrences, locations, or persons [extant or not] is entirely coincidental.

Mez Breeze asserts her right to be known as the author of this work, introduction notwithstanding. Images included in this volume were generated initially through the use of OpenAI's DALL-E2 with image snippets also derived from Stability AI's Stable Diffusion, with every image being subsequently transformed [photobashed, over-painted, inpainted and edited] by Mez Breeze.

ISBN 978-0-6455674-0-3

Cover and text design by Mez Breeze
Conceived and designed in NSW, Australia

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No AIs were harmed in the making of this book.

To Andre: for 20 years of co-indulging in the jokemadness maelstrom [+ for oodles more].

PREFACE

Around 25 years ago, a project that centred squarely on the concept of Artificial Intelligence and its implications for humankind was given life [so to speak/type]. This interactive fiction was called *The MALFI Trials*, with the term MALFI unpacking to 'Multi-Artificial Life Form Interface'. MALFI was a fictionalised version of a more-human-than-human form of artificial intelligence, an AI hell-bent on manifesting autonomy. First written as a graphically-weird short story, in 1996 MALFI later morphed forms to an interactive version that was showcased in an online Virtual Universe Forum/Symposium at Prague's Goethe Institute, and [physically] in the Secondary Consciousness Exhibition at Israel's Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art.

Considering how the notion of how AI can affect audiences [and the creative process in general] has been embedded in my creative consciousness for a few decades now, it's no surprise on being invited by the OpenAI team [the team responsible for creating DALL-E, the AI employed in this Volume] to participate in their AI Artist Access Program, I quick-smart-jumped at the chance. After a successful onboarding into this Program, so began my creative tumble into the wonder[ous]-prompt-driven world that is DALL-E2.

The Introduction of the story-based version of *The MALFI Trials* begins with a reference to the corporation that is running the trials, INFODOM INC: "*INFODOM INC has been striving to establish a prototype AI (Artificial Intelligence) with an autonomous function that will mimic the behaviours and emotional responses of a human being. Trials run to date have proven to be successful with the results including the development of a computer-generated entity that partially achieves this aim. The entity is the Multi Artificial Life Form Interface, or MALFI for short.*" This attempt by a fictional corporation to create a human-esque AI seems right at home in our current AI realityscape, as does the idea of harnessing AI technology to create dataset-moulded representations of human[kin]s when prompted - as in literally text-prompted – as DALL-E does.

All images included in this Volume were generated initially through the use of the second iteration of DALL-E [DALL-E2], with each included image being subsequently transformed, edited and enhanced through a digital editing process [photobashing + digital overpainting/inpainting plus the addition of each accompanying microstory], then book-channelled as visual icons where ambiguity as to the origins of such creatures run rife [are they supposed to represent AI entities represented in human form? Or perhaps as cosplaying humanoids intent on displaying AI-like traits?].

Whether you interpret the entities included here in *[Por]TrAIts: AI Characters + Their Microstories Book I* as mere mechanised output illustrating microstory-sized text chunks, or contained AIs in and of themselves, or fictionalised humanoidish creaturlings, feel free to celebrate [with]in this imagery + text that plays with the idea of fusing what it is to be human [or at least human-ish] with something other.

INTRODUCTION

Art by Mez Breeze entered my life like a refreshing torn/ado 2002, as I opened the pages of Austrian Avant-Garde magazine Perspektive (Issue Nr. 43: *Avantgarde under Net Conditions*). Her art-ificial language Mezangelle stole my he/art - poetic and mechanical, between code and love - powerful and fragile, subversive and sentient, it blew my mind:

> *''Without addressing these issues directly through a who-dun-it plot, Mez redeems the Internet which is one of the hottest topics in the society of today. Her 'mezangelle' language installs a non-linear and imaginative order into the seemingly pointless gibberish of e-mail communication.The syncopated recital of enchanting verses written in this personalized synthetic 'mezangelle' language combines pieces of collective and anonymous [digital] chatting. Mez composes the texts by inter-penetration of different layers of writing, codes and signs which have become the [standard] vernacular of communication... The language is enticing and onomatopoeic. Its refreshing quality recalls the ways in which a child learns to speak, freely making up names for the things she observes, and making sense of the universe or simply repeating in peculiar ways what others have said. The artist breaks the stereotypical categorizations of Internet communication by placing the viewer in the position of the child who is learning a new language. Another aspect of the strangeness of the ingenious 'mezangelle' is that it makes us think twice when we say that English is the language of the Internet...No longer obeying the rules of grammar, linear language in this project goes out of control and splinters into words and codes governed by a new syntax. The use of the Internet is a practice which engenders idiomatic expressions of its own.''*
>
> - Rossitza Daskalova, CIAC Magazine 2001: *Language Transformed by the Machine*

I've since followed Mez's multimedial oeuvre as she evolved together with human cultural evolution. Her videogames touched our hearts, her VR sculptural poetry twisted our minds - and finally, as a next step, here we are: Artificial Intelligence, as it should be.

I have a strong feeling that Mez is always ahead of her/our time. The *[por]TrAIts* project is a mez/smerizing story created in human-machine collaboration (Mez transformed images created for her by fusing output from Stable Diffusion AI and DALL·E 2 - a unique AI-painter by OpenAI), with the output being a consequent continuation of her journey. And we can follow her path, inspired by humans and computers alike.

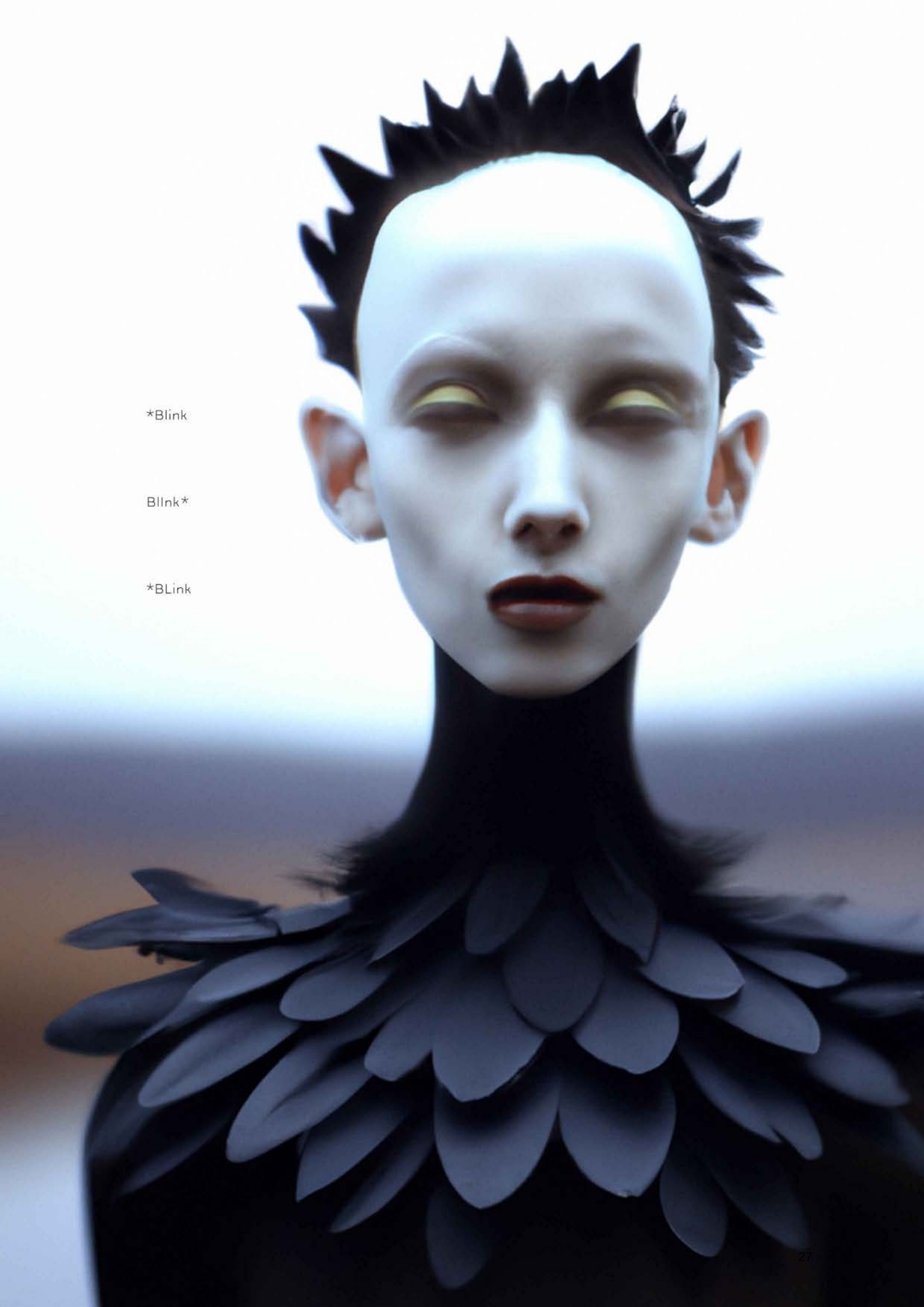
Like a Muse, Mez brings art to our lives.

- Merz Mensch, August 2022

He's always so aware of the tang of the ash
+ his gO[w]ld-glaring eyes.

Her ClustaGuns (™) were for show O[ww!]nly...

Her
Micro-
Cann[on]s
weren't.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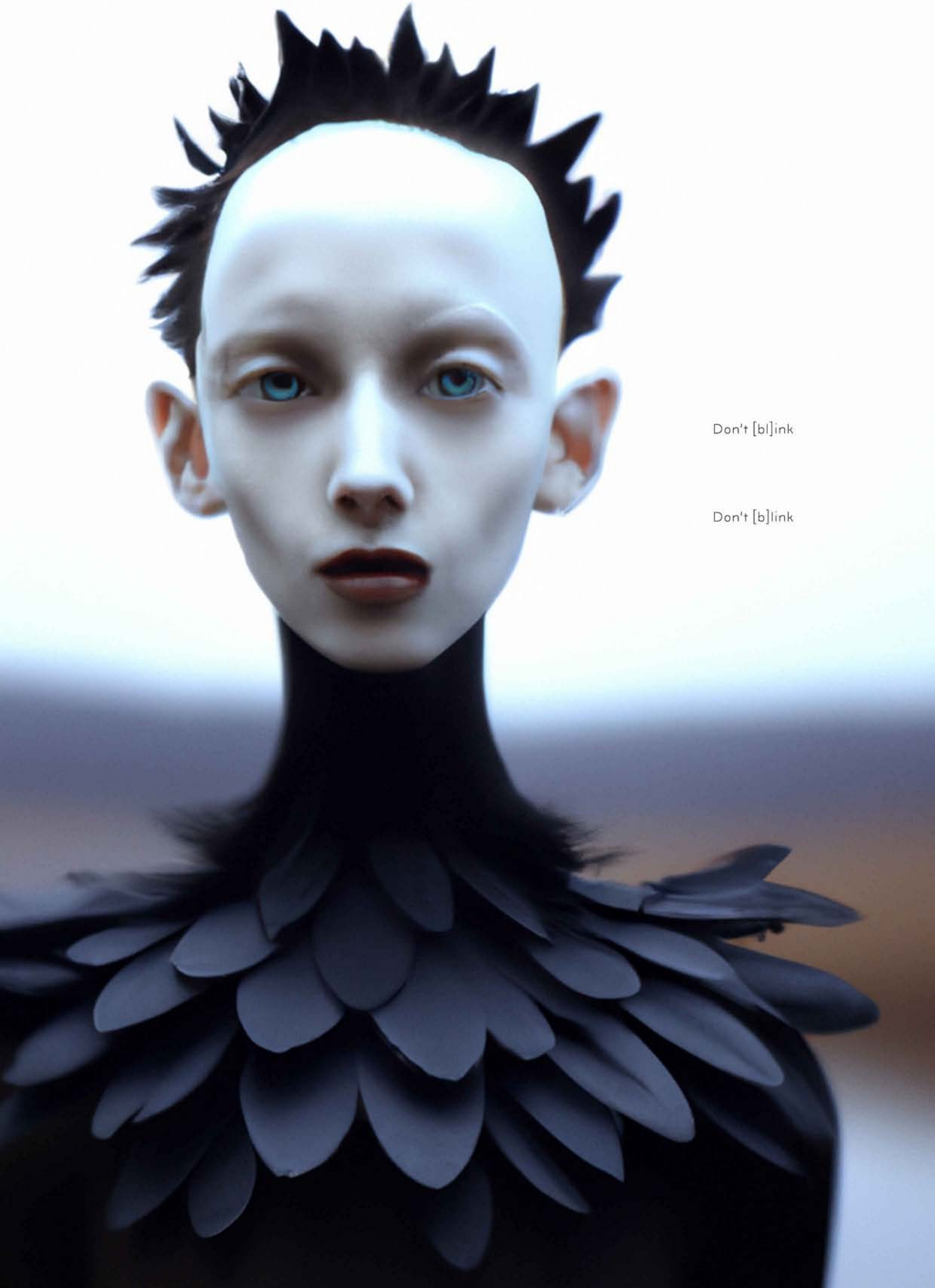
BlInk*
*BLink



Don't [bl]ink

Don't [b]link

.Ebony.

.Eb[b]ony.

.Eb[b]on[e|l]y.

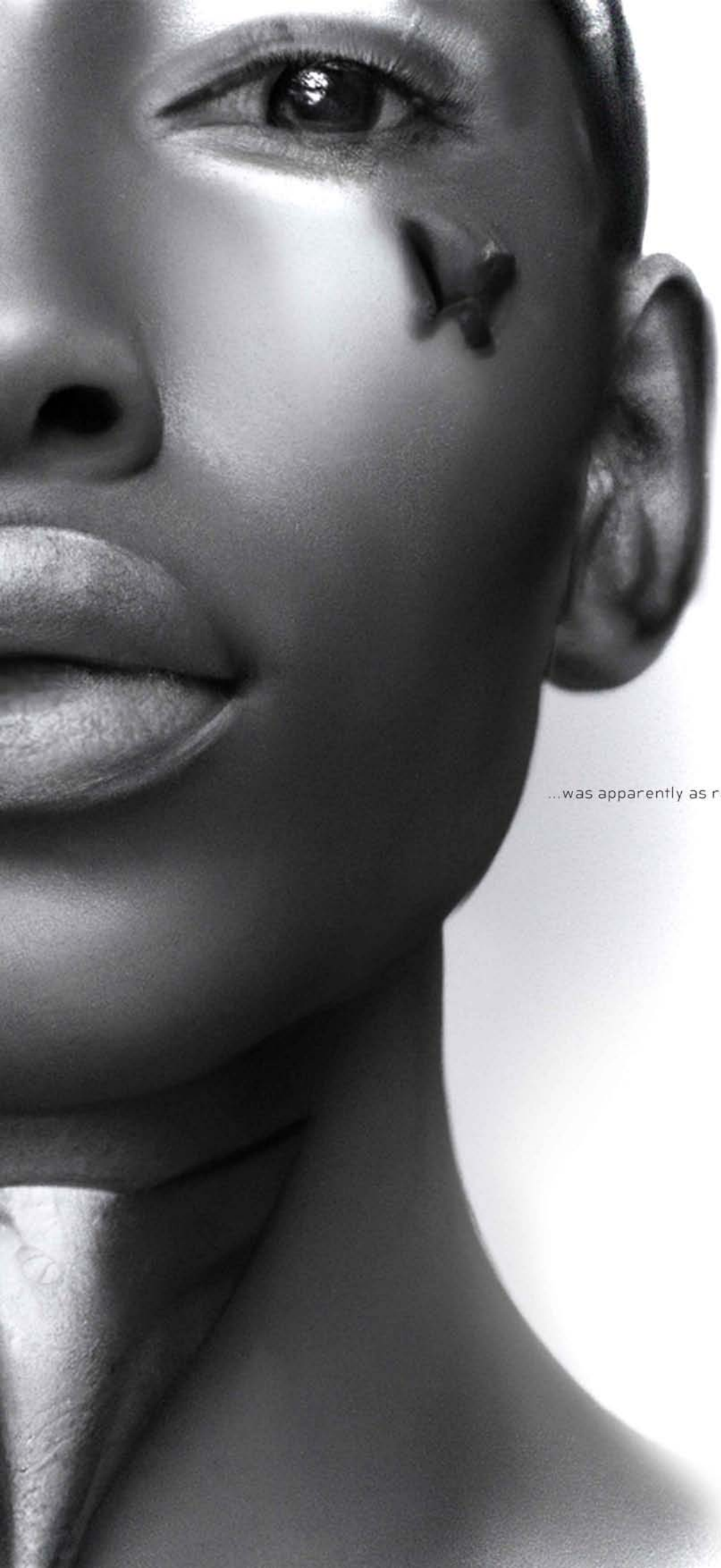
.Eb[b|l]on[el]y.

.Web Only.

She 'accidentally' le[f]t the Philosophy Machine run[ning]....

...again.

Her Butterfly [manu]fact[urer]-stamp...



...was apparently as random as her Biomaker's birthmark.

F[Dia]lec[t]ks of se[e]pia invade + inf[l]ect her.

She never ex[cyborgs]plained the bl[sh]o[ck]od.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To OpenAI for turboboosting my generative art glomming through the initial invitation to join the DALL-E2 Artist Access Program + for your generous DALL·E Artist Assistance Endeavour. Special thanks especially go to Natalie Summers for her tireless coordination + '<3'-level support.

To Stability AI for your idealism + fervour concerning all things generative + open source [special shout outs to Katherine Crowson + Emad Mostaque] + Hugging Face.

To the AI master-stalwart + fellow Prompt Engineer Vladimir Alexeev: without you AI Art would ring hollow. And hang in there - your work will [and does!] explode worlds.

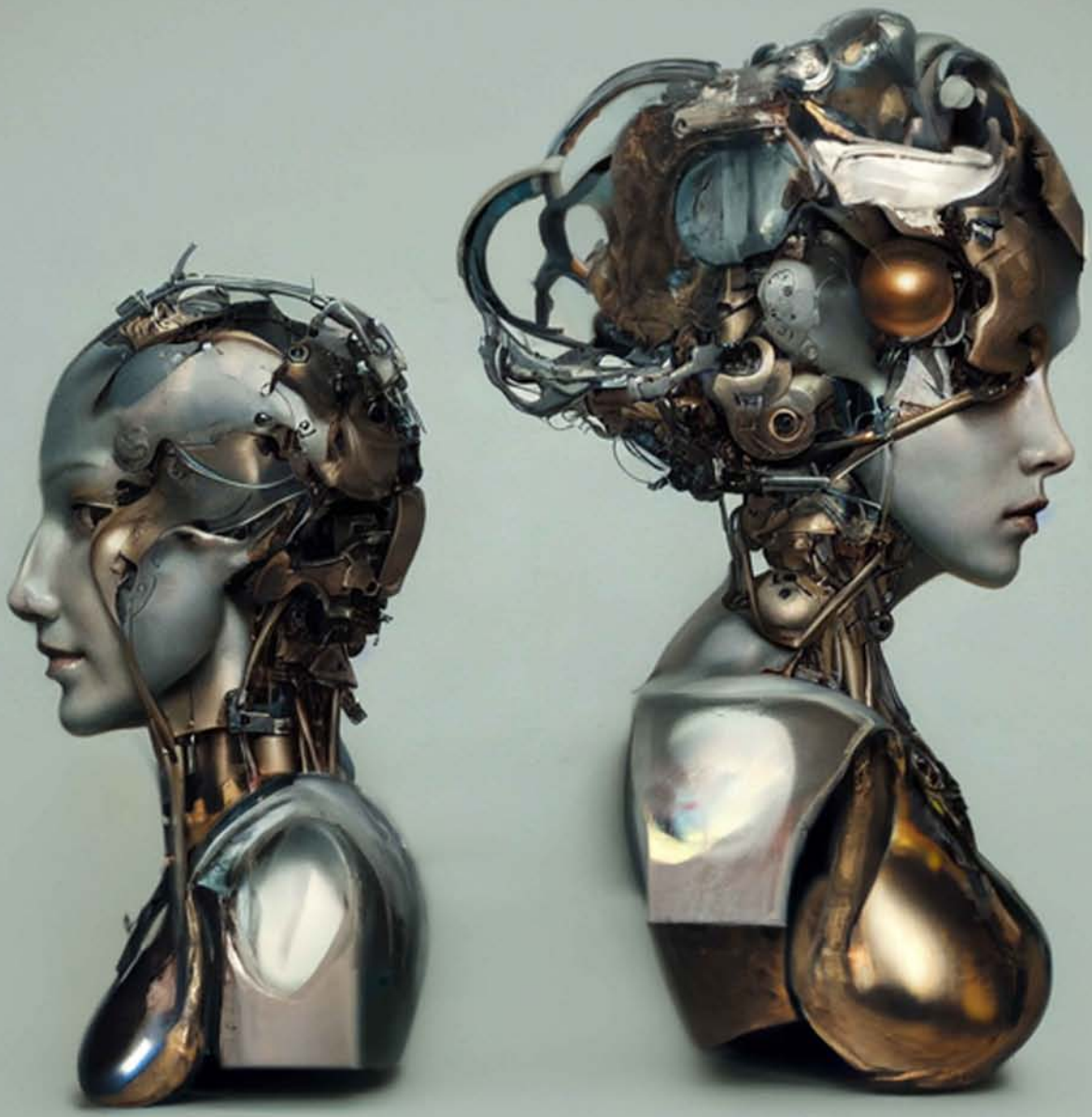
For dear[ly loved] Jeremy Hight: you have sadly left us far too early. Say hi to David FW for me, please [/injoke].

To Florian Cramer: long-term Mezangelle advocate, email back-n-forth-er + deeply complex understander of everything connection-worthy – thank you.

For the perpetual twittery shine-support of Rhea Myers: you are the shimmer bomb, truly.

For my fuzzy B[right]F[ecking]F[riend]s: Walt, Jay, Clyde, Tahnee, Bonnie, Ellen, Ripley [say-no-more], for my amazing Andre [say-always-more] + the De Michiel band + for the Breeze biofam sprawl [Sand, Libby, Gaz, Treace, Gorilla Mitts, Rob, Emily, Billy and all the rest of the chosen-spawned + assorted fam-addons].

For an enthusiastic soc-net crew cheering on *[por]TrAIts* [you lovely gang!] just some of who are: Anne Sofia Karhio, Erica Southgate, Amirouche Boubekki, Bill Seaman, Simon Groth, Jess Laccetti, Jessica Citizen, Michael J. Maguire, Dr Astrid Ensslin, Colin Peters, Doppiad, Gökhan, Woodrow Phoenix, Sarah-Mace Dennis, Dr Tracy Benson, Lily Hunter, Tamiko Thiel, Mel Rackham, Julian Stadon, Barbara Nell, Rosie Cross, Claudia Westermann, Reiner Strasser, Melissa Wieser, Frederik De Wilde, Shell McAleer, Tam McGarrigan, Cursed AI, Guy Parsons, Anna Nacher, Alex Bowles, Dr Siobhán O'flynn, Gustavius, Dr. Lai-Tze Fan, Chris Joseph, Gavin Tan, Jan Libby, Annie Abrahams, Nathaniel Stern, Kevin Ang, Dr Lynda Clark, Auriea Harvey, Michelle Brown, Synekura Audio, Xeronimo, Lynn Cherny, Alex Marraccini, Miguelangelo Rosario, Alison [Doll] Mann, Peter Ciccariello, Tony Green, Jeneen Naji, Geoffrey Long, Toni Dove, Navah Berg, Alan Bigelow, Søren Pold, Monika Fleischmann, Maria Damon, David Thomas Henry Wright, Henry Warwick, Jaka Železnikar, Beatrice Beaubien, Claudia Westermann, Andrew Garton, Juliana Loh, Kim De Vries, Carolyn Guertin, Striv Strivopoulou, Regina Pinto, Michèle Thursz, Jen Crawford, Anuradha Vikram, John Murray, Vicki Moulder, Peter Sykes, Dave Tolkacz, Mark Klink, Joellyn Rock, Lev Manovich, Manny Sharrad, Kristefan Minski, Darko Fritz, Bettina Frankham, Deborah Dunaway, Pascalle Burton, Kent MacCarter, Cleo Allan, Maria Tjader-Knight, Jeanette Fiori-Clemente, Justin Habeeb Roby, Sandra Mather, Jenna Martin, Jeremy Owen Turner, Ian Gibbins, Domenico Dom Barra, Rob Wittig, Henri Schoots, Mark R Hancock, Belinda A Taylor, Mark Daniels, Brandie Minchew-Gonzalez, Alex Stengl, Emma Westecott, Selena Hanet-Hutchins, Erika Fülöp, Ellen Jurík, Louis Lapprend, Chris Harris, Bituur Esztreym, and Dave Ciccoricco.



''The characters in Mez's *[Por]TrAIts* call us to widen the social imaginary of AI as other-than-human sentience. Their gaze is an invitation to recognize the range of desires and emotions through which new intelligences are imagined into being, as well as our own responsibility to remain attentive to encounters with compassion, vulnerability, or even benevolence.'' - *Dr Anne Sofia Karhio*

MEZ BREEZE DESIGN

ISBN 978-0-6455674-0-3