



**ALEXANDRA LERMAN**  
Portfolio









**Alexandra Lerman**  
*Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense*  
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia  
ProArte Foundation, Contemporary Art in Traditional Museum Festival  
Curated by Dimitri Ozerkov  
September 28 - November 3, 2019

## ***Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense***

By Alexandra Lerman

Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia

ProArte Foundation, Contemporary Art in Traditional Museum Festival

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Alexandra Lerman presents a site-specific installation consisting of a music video and a series of cyanotypes, a camera-free image-making process created by exposing photo-sensitive paper directly to UV light. Historically this process is linked to the British botanist and photographer Anna Atkins and her album *Photographs of British Algae* created at the height of "natural history mania" in 1843. In response, Lerman creates her own life-size album of the age of the Anthropocene.

The analog "sun prints" present an indexical image in silhouette of abstracted figures, plants, seeds, and the latest image-making technological gadgets such as smart phones and drones. Featured at the center of each composition is the Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum sosnowskyi*) - a spectacularly anthropomorphic plant. This viral, invasive, photo-toxic species rapidly infesting Post-Soviet territories was initially imported into the Soviet Union from the Caucasus as livestock feed in an innovative effort to restore agriculture after World War II. Each plant distributes 70,000 seeds into the surrounding soil, often rendering the local site useless for future farming, which presents a potent metaphor for the spirit of the earth seeking revenge for the ecological devastation wrought through human activity. Both the process implicit in creating cyanotypes and the poison born of the Giant Hogweed's foliage are triggered by the sun - one resulting in an ethereal image of the human body once-removed from the world painful and the other in a potentially deadly wound.

The video *The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed* takes as its starting point a song by the English rock band Genesis. Updated and translated into Russian the song tells the post-Soviet story of the plant from its own point of view. In an effort at a dialogue with the site of The Museum of Hygiene, Lerman has also produced a series of cyanotypes inspired by the taxidermied figure of Pavlov's dog on display in the museum's collection. Functioning as self-portraiture, Lerman assumes the role of the feral, feminine subject in Pavlov's classical conditioning experiments. By engaging with Pavlov's work in the era of the digital, Lerman recontextualizes the dog's presence in the museum as a timely, symbolic reminder of our newly developed algorithmically-conditioned addiction to social media and its dopamine-fueled discontents.





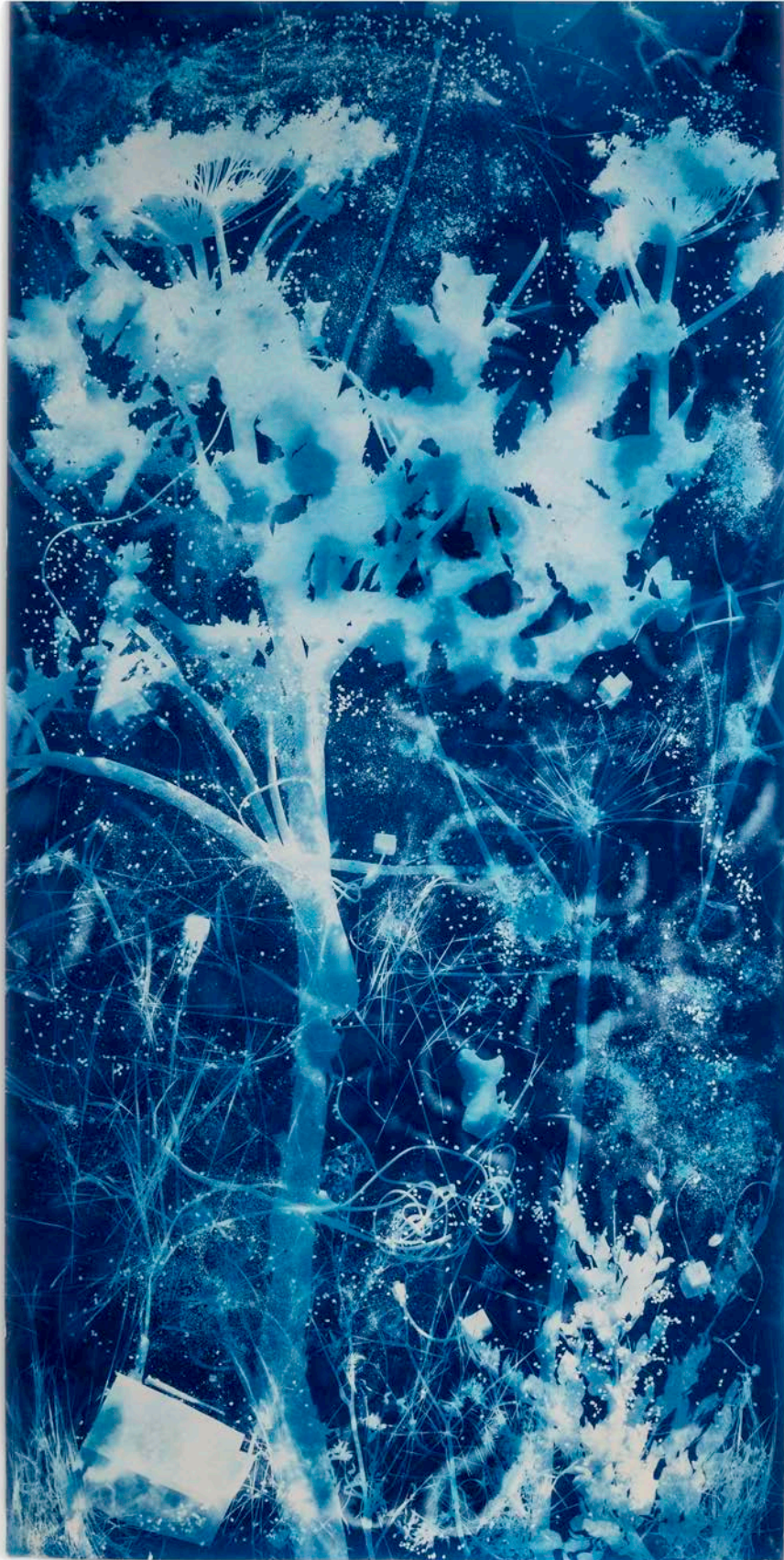
*Soldiers of the Sun #14, 2018*  
10'x5' (3m x 1.5m)  
Cyanotype on watercolor





*Soldiers of the Sun #8, 2018*  
10'x5' (3m x 1.5m)  
Cyanotype on watercolor





*Soldiers of the Sun #13, 2018*  
10'x 5' (3M x 1.5M)  
Cyanotype on watercolor





*Soldiers of the Sun #3, 2018*  
10'x5' (3Mx1.5M)  
Cyanotype on watercolor





*Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense, Pavlov's Dog 9, 2019*  
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia





*Pavlov's Dog 9, 2019*  
50" x 90" (127cmx227cm)  
Cyanotype on watercolor paper





*Pavlov's Dog 10, 2019*  
50" x 90" (127cmx227cm)  
Cyanotype on watercolor paper



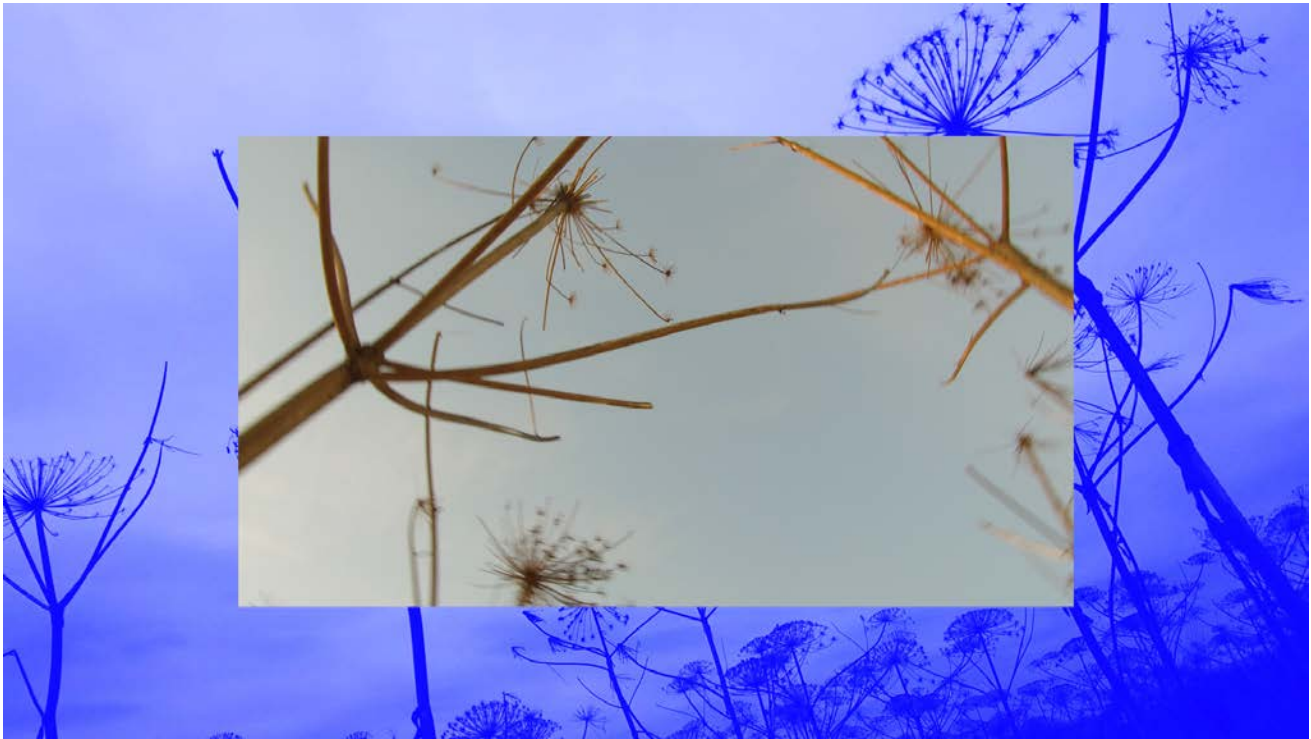


*The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed*, 2019  
HD Video, 4min  
Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense  
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia



*The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed, 2019*  
HD Video, 4min  
[www.alexandralerman.com/#/the-return-of-the-return-of-the-giant-hogweed/](http://www.alexandralerman.com/#/the-return-of-the-return-of-the-giant-hogweed/)





*The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed*, 2019  
HD Video, 4min

[www.alexandragerman.com/#/the-return-of-the-return-of-the-giant-hogweed/](http://www.alexandragerman.com/#/the-return-of-the-return-of-the-giant-hogweed/)



**Tree Time**  
2019



## ***Tree Time***

2019

A series of cyanotype prints, video.

The work's title is informed by interviews with a dendrochronologist who studies methods of tracking climate change by 'reading' the annual tree rings in the Amazon rainforest – ecological recordings which reveal a hidden dimension of narrative time within nature itself.

The project consists of a video and a series of prints made using an early photographic process - cyanotype. The composition of the cyanotypes is made up of palm tree leaves found in the rainforest, digital gadgets, and anti-mosquito suits.

The video *Tree Time* imagines a relationship between nature and technology unmediated by human presence. Shot by a drone in the Amazon rainforest, the film depicts a point of view as disembodied as the AI-generated voices learning from a sequence of images appearing on the screen. The annual tree rings are the natural data-inscriptions which record man-made ecological distress into the body of the tree, just as humanity uploads the information it deems important for posterity into the cloud.

The project was created during the LabVerde art residency in the Brazilian Amazon in 2018. The goal of the program is to share scientific research on the rainforest with artists.

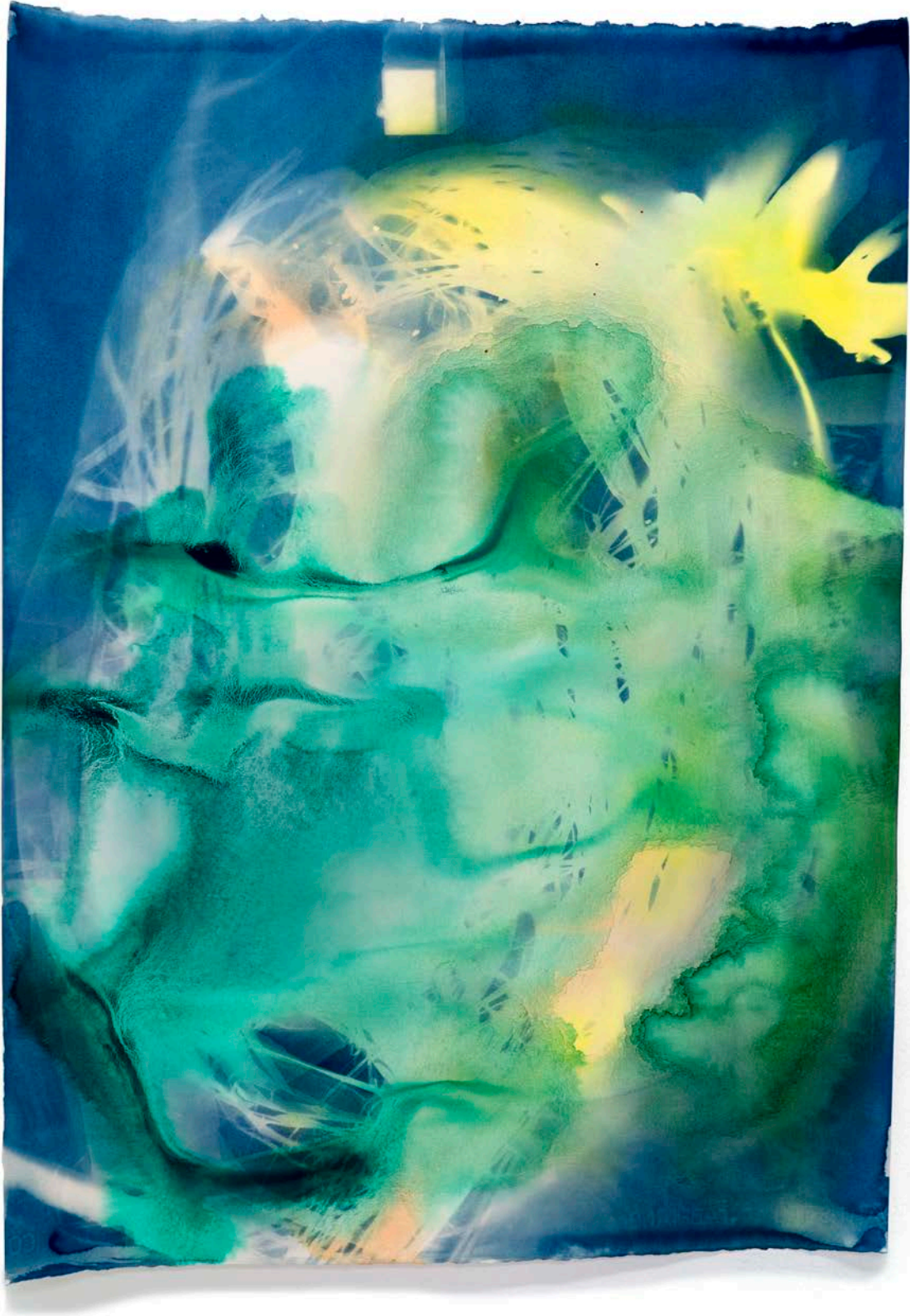


*Tree Time 1, 2019*  
22"x 30" (55cmx76cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper



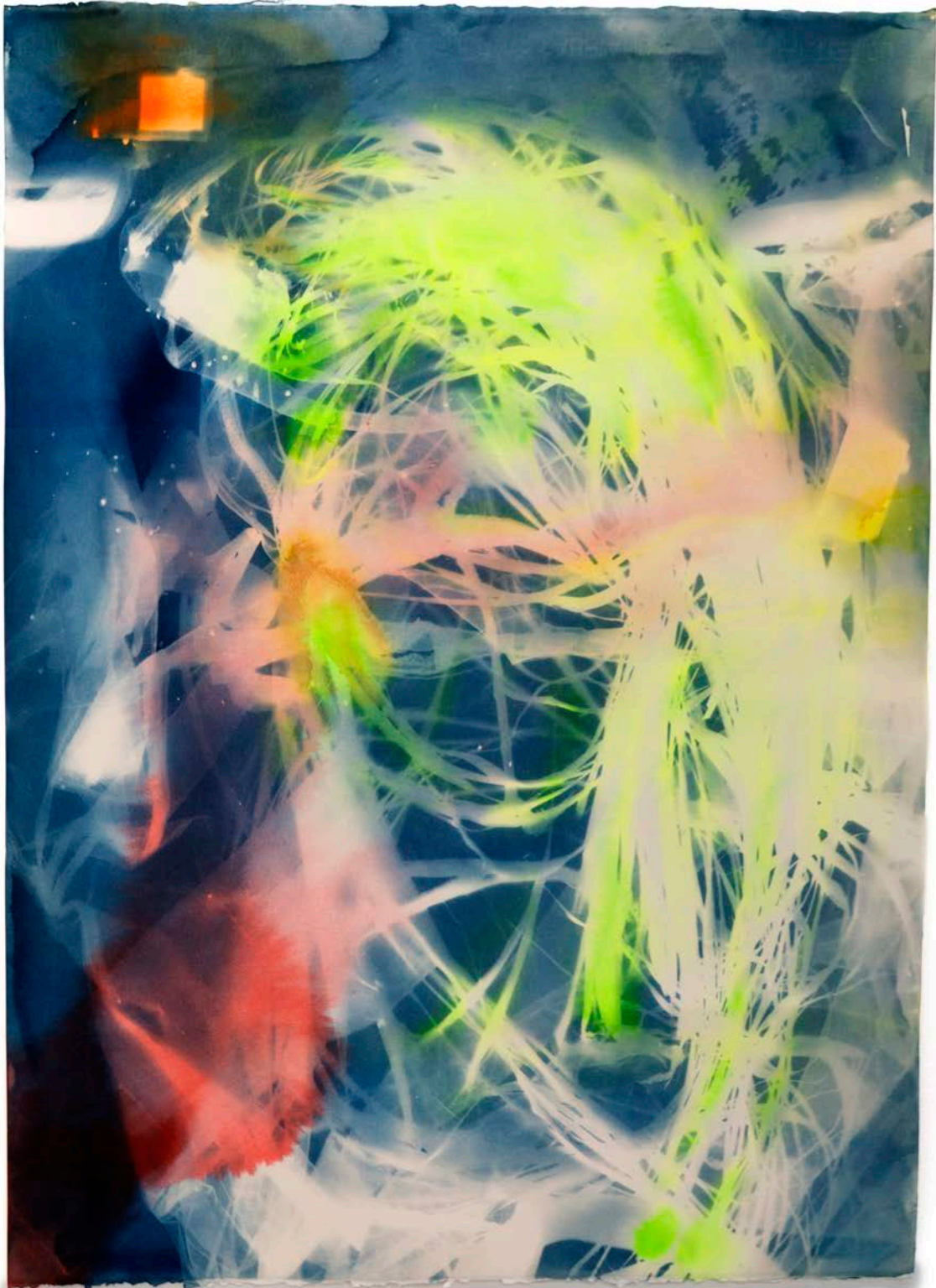


***Tree Time 2***, 2019  
22"x 30" (55cmx76cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper

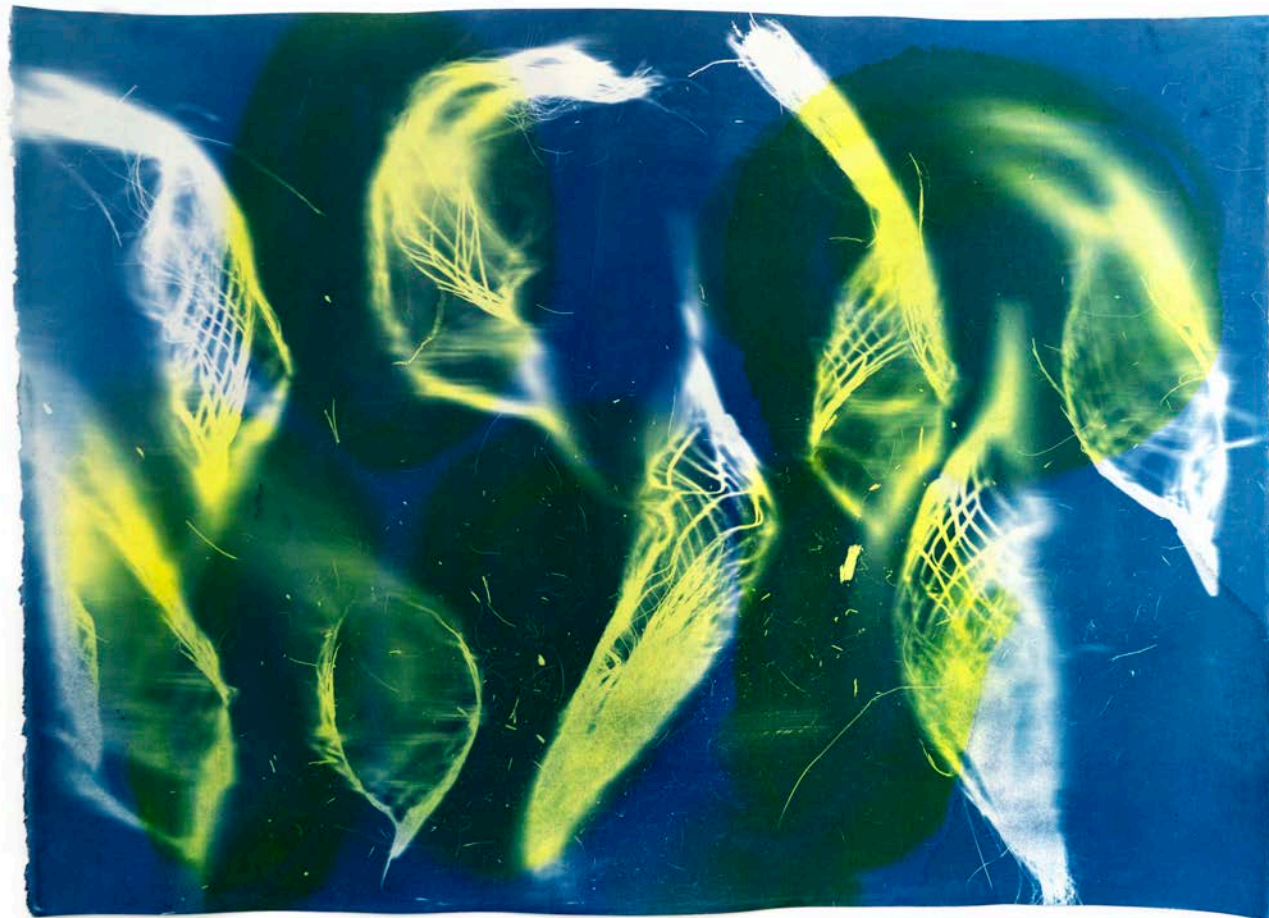


*Tree Time 4, 2019*  
22"x 30" (55cmx76cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper



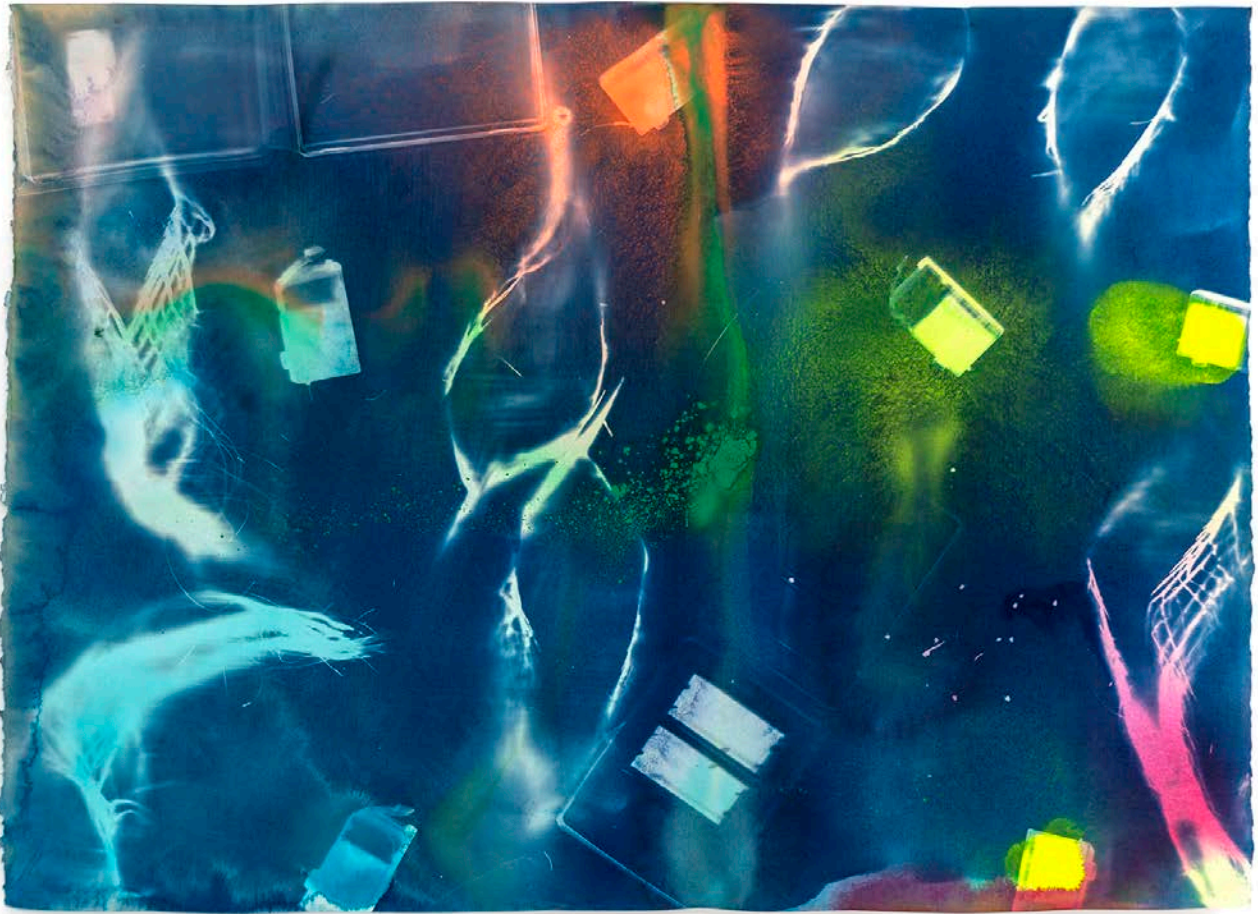


*Tree Time 7, 2019*  
22"x 30" (55cmx76cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper



*Tree Time 8, 2019*  
30"x 22" (76cm x 55cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper





*Tree Time 9, 2019*  
30"x 22" (76cm x 55cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper



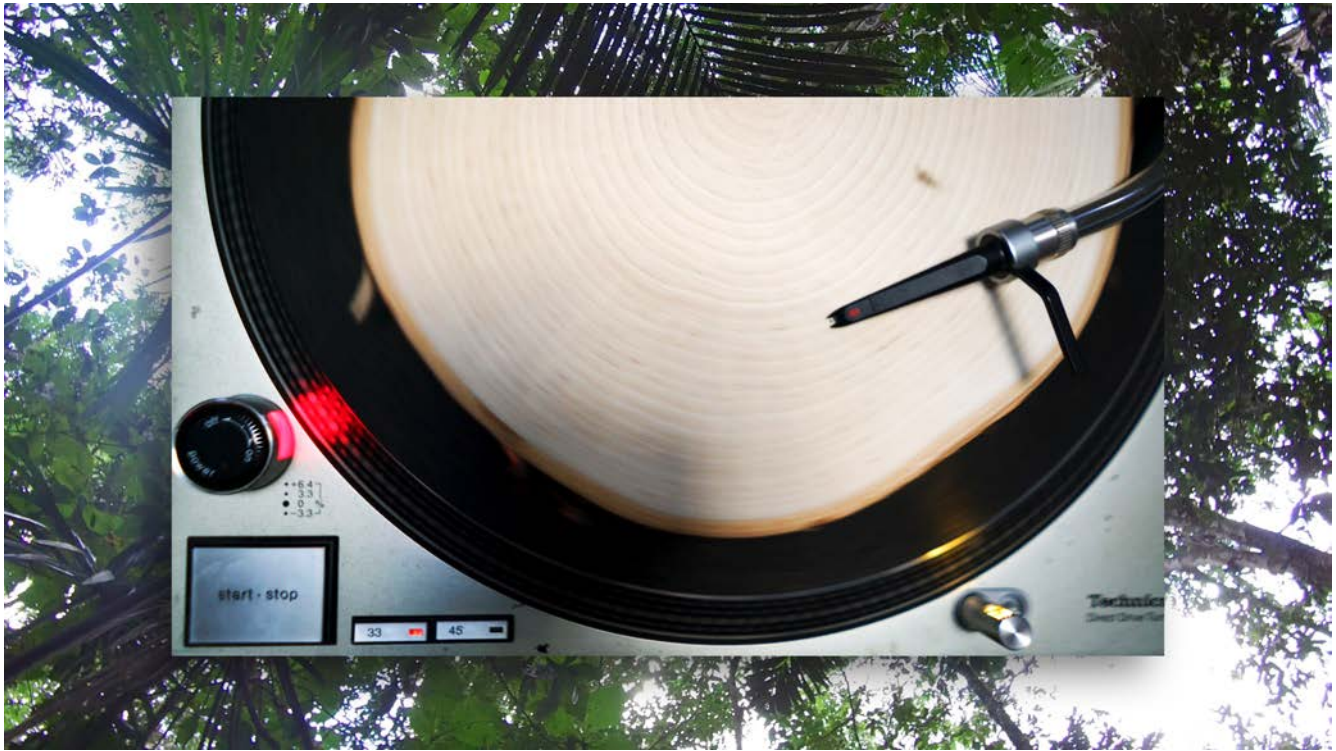
*Tree Time 10, 2019*  
30"x 22" (76cm x 55cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor, acrylic on watercolor paper





*Tree Time 11, 2019*  
30"x 22" (76cm x 55cm)  
Cyanotype, watercolor paper





*Tree Time*, 2019  
HD video, 7:40 min  
[www.alexandrerman.com/tree-time](http://www.alexandrerman.com/tree-time)





*Tree Time*, 2019  
HD video, 7:40 min  
[www.alexandrallerman.com/tree-time](http://www.alexandrallerman.com/tree-time)



**Swipe, Swipe, Swipe**  
2017- 2019



## ***Swipe Swipe Swipe***

2017-2019

This work explores and problematizes the invisible abstraction of contract law that exists between the movement of human fingers and the backlit glass of the smartphone screen. The copyrighted, choreographed gestures of the “swipe,” “slide-to-unlock,” and “pinch-to-zoom” are performed by millions each day and are owned by Apple, Inc. A series of clay smartphones are imprinted with indexical “portraits” of these ephemeral and often unconsciously executed touch-screen gestures and reclaimed by the human hand in the process. Fingers to digits, silicone to clay.

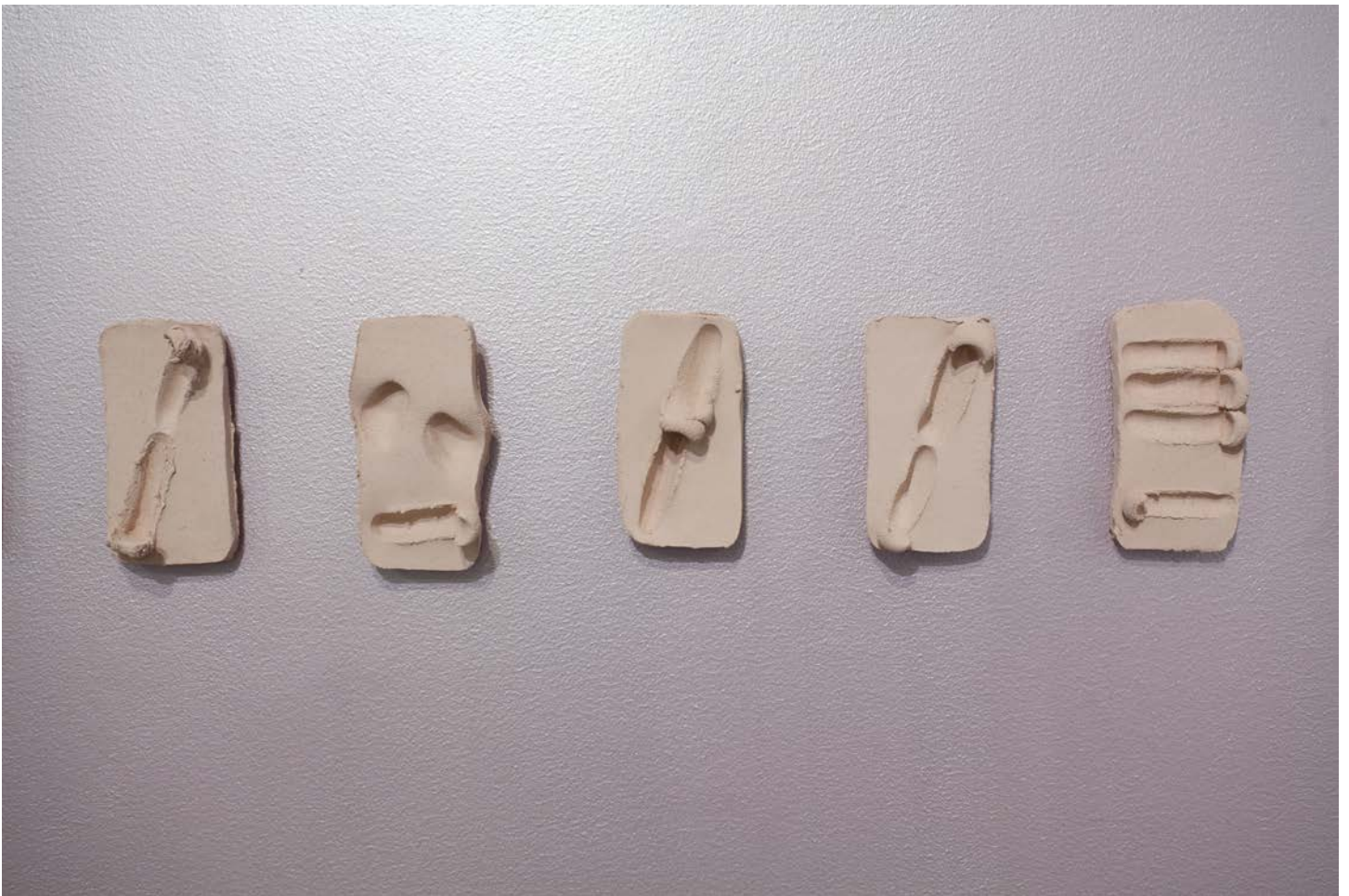
The series of smartphone sculptures are installed on a wall painted Rose Gold – a color invented in the nineteenth century by Carl Faberge as a new a new chromatic alloy of gold and copper.

In 2015 Apple released the Rose Gold version of the iPhone and consequently the color was named one of the top trends of 2016 by Pantone. Today Rose Gold is routinely referred to as “millennial pink” or “Russian gold.”



*Digital Distress: Consumed by Infinity*, 2018  
Curated by Elena Tzotzi  
Signal-Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, Sweden





***Digital Distress: Consumed by Infinity***, 2018  
curated by Elena Tzotzi  
Signal-Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, Sweden





*Swipe-to-Unlock*, 2019  
Clay, rose gold paint





*Pinch-to-Zoom*, 2019  
Clay, rose gold paint





*Memory Negative. Yoga Gun Grip, 2014*  
Digital photograph





*Body Code*, 2014  
26 sumi ink drawings of the copyrighted Bikram Choudhury Yoga Inc. poses on  
iPhone touch Screen gesture patents  
Tina Kim Gallery, New York

## ***Body Code***

2014-2019

*Body Code* consists of 26 Sumi ink drawings that correspond to the 26 poses comprising Bikram Choudhury Yoga Inc., executed on patents of iPhone touch screen gestures.

Many of today's everyday movements such as touch-screen gestures or traditional yoga asanas are surrounded by intellectual property laws which prevent their use by competitors. While these legal systems generate revenue streams to its copyright and patent holders, movements of the body can be imagined to be held hostage by a web of license, patent, franchise, copyright, and trademark laws.

The 26 drawings of *Body Code* reflect a sequence of 26 poses to which the founder of Bikram Choudhury Yoga Inc. held copyright until 2015. iPhone's touch screen gestures are also protected by intellectual property law, with Apple Inc. owning exclusive patents for these gestures many years before the iPhone went into mass production. These gestures are simultaneously intuitive and privatized.

The drawings combine the figure and the strict regulation of the word. Together they can be read as a choreographic notation for a dance meant to free corporeal gestures from the invisible forces of abstraction rendered by technology and the law.



such as the elapsing of a predefined time of inactivity, entry into an active call, or powering on the device. The lock conditions may also include user intervention, namely the user locking the device by a predefined user input. In some embodiments, the user may be allowed to specify the events that serve as lock conditions. For example, the user may configure the device to transition to the lock state upon the elapsing of a predefined time of inactivity but not upon powering on the device.

In some embodiments, the locked device displays on the touch screen one or more visual cues of an unlock action that the user may perform to unlock the device (204). The visual cue(s) provide hints or reminders of the unlock action to the user. The visual cues may be textual, graphical or any combination thereof. In some embodiments, the visual cues are displayed upon particular events occurring while the device is locked. The particular events that trigger display of the visual cues may include an incoming call, incoming message, or some other event that may require the user's attention. In some embodiments, the visual cues may also be displayed upon particular user inputs, such as the user interacting with the menu button, the user making contact with the locked touch screen and/or the user interacting with any other input/control device. The locked device, when not displaying the visual cues, may power down the touch screen (which helps conserve power) or display other objects on the touch screen such as a screen saver or information that may be of interest to the user (e.g., battery charge remaining, signal strength, work strength, etc.).

The unlock action includes contact with the touch screen. In some embodiments, the unlock action is a gesture performed on the touch screen. The gesture may be a motion of the object used to interact with the touch screen. For example, the gesture may include a contact with the touch screen to initialize the gesture, a contact with the touch screen to move the point of contact to the opposite side of the touch screen, and a contact with the touch screen to initiate the gesture.

While the device is locked, the user may initiate contact with the touch screen (206). For example, the user may touch the touch screen in a location below the touch screen as described below. However, the user may also initiate contact with the touch screen using any suitable input device, such as a stylus, finger, etc. The contact with the touch screen may be made using any suitable input device, such as a stylus, finger, etc. The contact with the touch screen may be made using any suitable input device, such as a stylus, finger, etc.

If the contact corresponds to a successful performance of the unlock action, i.e., the user performed the unlock action successfully (210—yes), the device transitions to the unlock state (214). For example, if the unlock action is a horizontal movement of the point of contact across the touch screen

while maintaining continuous contact with the touch screen, and the detected contact is the horizontal movement with the continuous contact, then the device transitions to the unlock state.

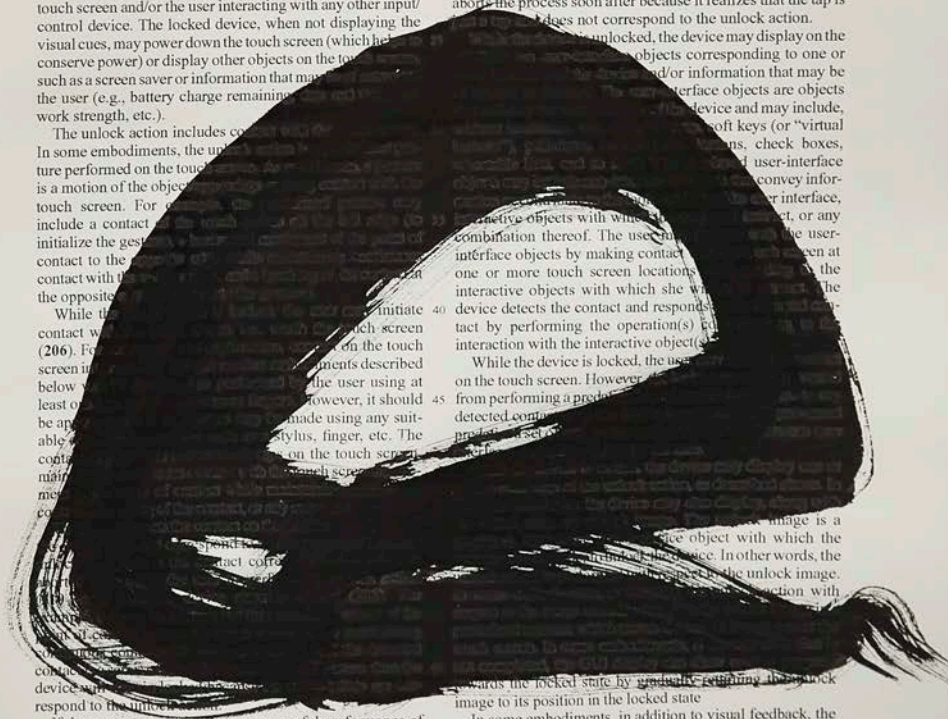
In some embodiments, the device begins the process of transitioning to the unlock state upon detection of any contact on the touch screen and aborts the transition as soon as the device determines that the contact does not correspond to an unlock action or is a failed/aborted unlock action. For example, if the unlock action is a predefined gesture, the device may begin the process of transitioning to the unlock state as soon as it detects the initial contact of the gesture and continues the progression of the transition as the gesture is performed. If the user aborts the gesture before it is completed, the device aborts the transition and remains in the lock state. If the gesture is completed, the device completes the transition to the unlock state and becomes unlocked. As another example, if the unlock action is a horizontal movement of the point of contact across the touch screen while maintaining continuous contact with the touch screen, and the user taps the touch screen once, the device begins the process of the state transition as soon as it detects the tap but also aborts the process soon after because it realizes that the tap is not intended to be an unlock action.

When the device is unlocked, the device may display on the touch screen one or more interactive objects corresponding to one or more functions of the device and/or information that may be of interest to the user. The interactive objects are objects that the user may interact with and may include, for example, virtual soft keys (or "virtual keys"), icons, check boxes, radio buttons, and other user-interface elements. The interactive objects may convey information to the user or interface, or any combination thereof. The user may interact with the interactive objects by making contact with the touch screen at one or more touch screen locations. The device detects the contact and responds to the contact by performing the operation(s) associated with the interaction with the interactive object(s).

While the device is locked, the user may touch the touch screen. However, the user may also touch the touch screen from performing a predefined operation. For example, the user may touch the touch screen to perform a predefined operation, such as a power-on operation, a power-off operation, a lock operation, or a unlock operation.

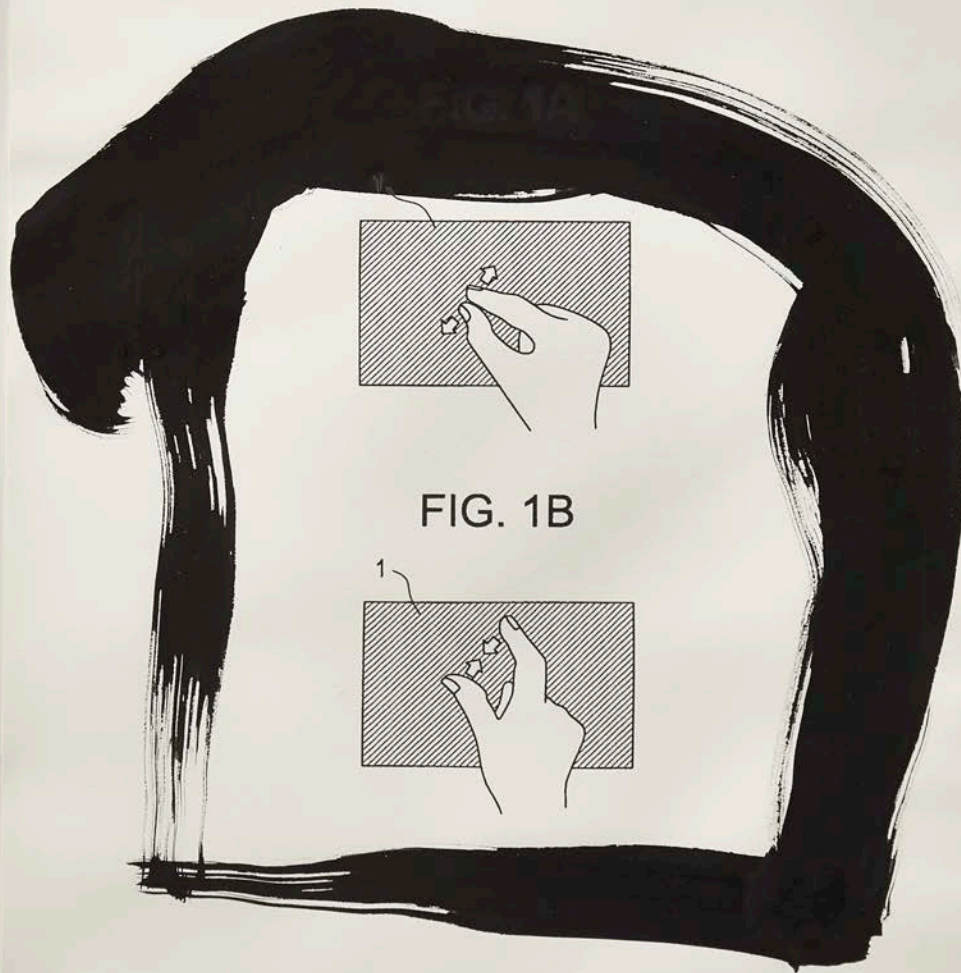
If the contact corresponds to a successful performance of the unlock action, i.e., the user performed the unlock action successfully (210—yes), the device transitions to the unlock state (214). For example, if the unlock action is a horizontal movement of the point of contact across the touch screen

In some embodiments, in addition to visual feedback, the electronic device supplies non-visual feedback to indicate progress towards completion of the unlock action. In some embodiments, in addition to visual feedback, the electronic device supplies non-visual feedback to indicate completion of the unlock action.



A. S. 11

Body Code: Rabbit Contract, 2014  
26 sumi ink drawings of the copyrighted Bikram Choudhury Yoga Inc. poses on iPhone touch Screen gesture patents



*Body Code: Camel Pinch to Zoom, 2014*  
26 sumi ink drawings of the copyrighted Bikram Choudhury Yoga Inc. poses on iPhone touch Screen gesture patents



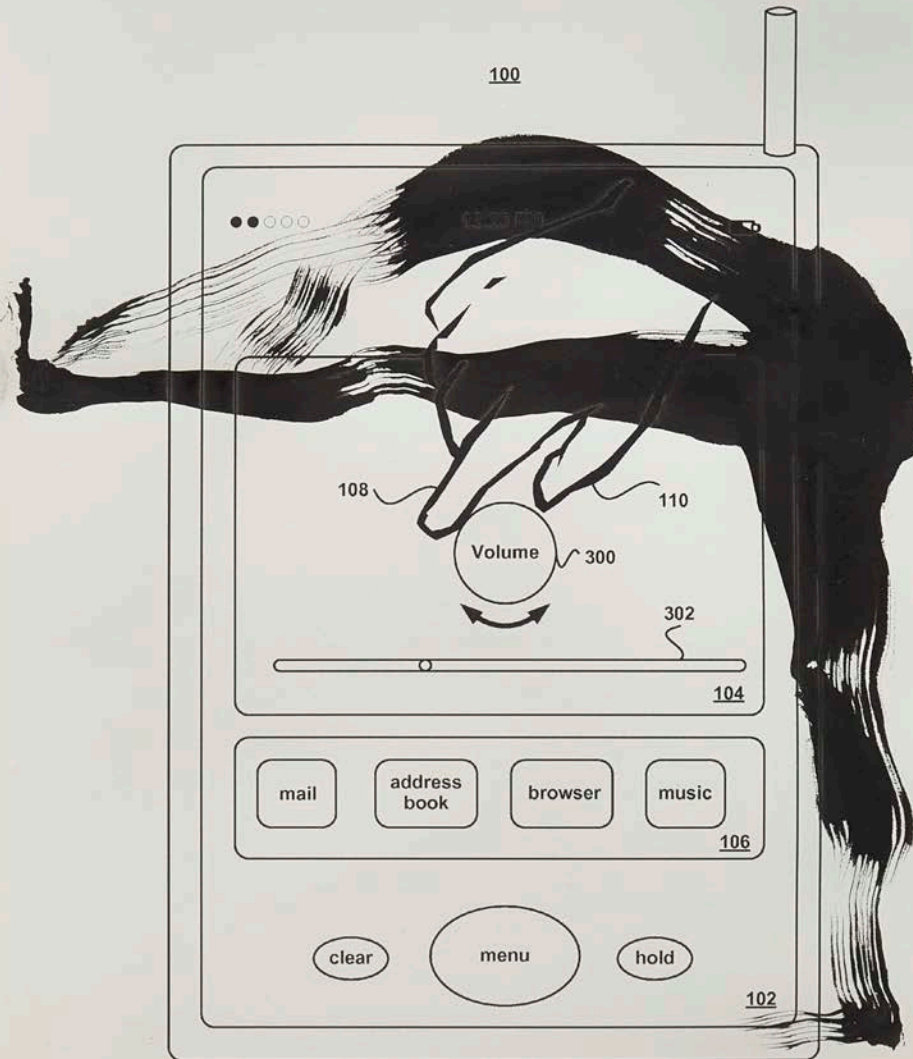


Figure 3

*A. Serman '14*

*Body Code: Standing Head-to-Knee Volume, 2014*  
26 sumi ink drawings of the copyrighted Bikram Choudhury Yoga Inc. poses on iPhone touch Screen gesture patents

**Alexandra Lerman**

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**Education**

**2012** MFA, Columbia University School of the Arts, NY, USA

**2004** BFA, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, NY, USA

**Residencies and Grants**

**2019** Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant

**2018** LabVERDE, Art Immersion Program in the Amazon, Manaus, Brazil

**2016** Open Sessions, The Drawing Center, New York

**2015** The Art & Law Program, in collaboration with Fordham Law School, New York

**2014** Assets for Artists by MASS MoCA, Arthome, and the Midas Collaborative

**2013** LMCC Workspace Residency Program, New York

**2012** The Banff Centre Visual Arts Program: 01 The Retreat: A Position of  
dOCUMENTA (13) Banff Research in Culture 2012, Banff, Alberta, Canada

**2010** Columbia University School of the Arts Scholarship

**2000** Cooper Union School of the Arts Scholarship

**1999** The Mark Rothko Scholarship in Memory of Gustave Harrow for Excellence in Art

**Selected Exhibitions and Screenings**

**2020** *The Body*, Curated by Diana Machulina and Eevgeniy Semenov  
Museum centre RGGU, Moscow

**2019** *ID*, Curated by Vika Ilyushkina  
Made in NY Center by IFP, New York

*Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to Future Tense* (Solo show)

*Contemporary Art in Traditional Museums* Festival curated by Dmitry Ozerkov  
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia  
PRO ARTE Foundation for Culture and Arts

*ID*. CYFEST-12, Curated by Elena Gubanova  
Stieglitz Academy Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia



*Beauty + -*, curated by Alexander Borovsky  
Manege Central Exhibition Hall, Saint Petersburg, Russia

**2018** *FRONT INTERNATIONAL: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art*  
Cleveland, OH

*Lucky Draw*  
SculptureCenter, Queens, NY

**2017** *Digital Distress - Consumed by Infinity*, curated by Elena Tsotsi  
Signal-Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, Sweden

*Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016*,  
Screening Program *Dreams and Nightmares*, organized by Chrissie Iles  
Whitney Museum of American Art, NY

**2016** *MDF Blog*, organized by Grayson Cox  
Planthouse Gallery, NY

*Codes for Conduct*, curated by Lindsey Berfond and Jocelyn Edens  
NURTUREart, NY

**2015** *Open Sessions 6*, organized by Nova Benway and Lisa Sigal  
The Drawing Center, NY

*An Argument for Difference*, curated by Yin Ho and Shama Khanna  
Tiger Strikes Asteroid, NY

*In Practice: Under Foundations*, curated by Jess Wilcox  
SculptureCenter, NY

*Irregular Rendition*, curated by Lucy Hunter  
In conjunction with *The Legal Medium. New Encounters of Law and Art*  
conference at the Yale Law School  
Fred Giampietro Gallery, New Haven, CT

*Drawing in Context/Field*, organized by Onyedika Chuke  
Queens Museum, NY

- 2014**      *Immediate Release* (Solo show), organized by Ceren Erdem  
Tina Kim Gallery
- It Narratives*, curated by Brian Droitcour and Zanna Gilbert  
Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT
- 2013**      *Groundstroke* (Solo show), organized by Sebastian Black  
Malraux's Place, NY
- 2012**      *Crosstime Stories: Global Subjectivities After 1989*, curated by Ceren Erdem  
The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery
- Columbia University School of the Arts MFA Thesis Show*  
Curated by Fionn Meade  
Fisher Landau Center For Art, NY
- 2011**      *Strategies for Public Occupation*, curated by Eva Franch i Gilabert  
Storefront for Art and Architecture, NY
- Neither Lie Nor Confession*,  
Curated by Lisa Williams, Ceren Erdem, Jamie Schwartz  
Court Square Gallery, Queens, NY
- 2006**      *When Artists Say We*, curated by Andrea Geyer  
Artists Space, New York, NY
- 2004**      *Red Shift Festival*  
Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY, USA

## **Bibliography**

- Catalogues**    *Where 1*, catalogue edited by R. Lyon, Lucy Hunter with essays by Brian Arthur and Carlos Castellanos ([downloadable PDF](#)), 2013  
*Superposition: Observing Realities*, 2013  
*It's the Political Economy, Stupid. The Global Financial Crisis in Art and Theory*, edited by Gregory Sholette, Oliver Ressler, 2013  
*Crosstime Stories* catalogue by Ceren Erdem, 2012  
*Superposition: Observing Realities*, 2013  
*Columbia University MFA Thesis Show*, catalogue by Fionn Meade, 2012



## Press

Fontanka.ru, The Werewolf of Pavlov and the Half-breed Tree, Alina Tsiopa, September 28, 2019

Sydsvenskan, I den lilla skärmens sken, February, 2018

Shift Journal, On Curating “Irregular Rendition:” Exhibition Making as Public Address, Lucy Hunter, November 2015

Artforum, Barely Legal by Colby Chamberlain, March 4, 2015

Brooklyn Rail, In Practice: Under Foundations by Simone Krug, March 5, 2015

Hyperallergic, Some Where's Rainbow: Pink Floyd and Dorothy Land in Bushwick by Billie Neith, December 14, 2013

Art in America, It's the Political Economy, Stupid by David Markus, March 28, 2012

Blouin. Artinfo. The Enigmatic Debut of "Where 1" in Brooklyn, October 24, 2013

Artforum, *Weekend Report* by Domenick Ammirat, December 24, 2011