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SHOW

A thesis

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Fine Arts

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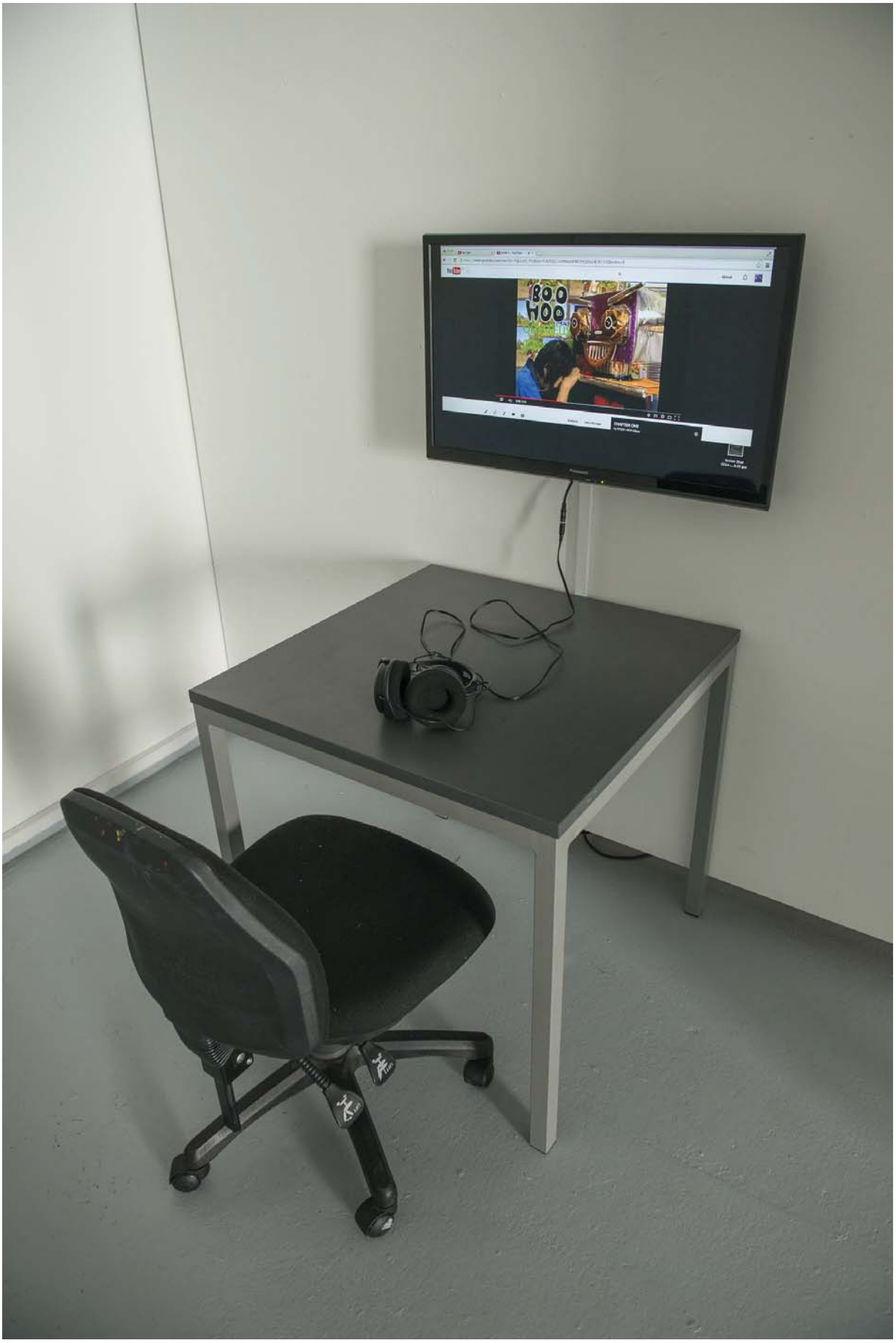
Abstract

These videos are what is left following a failure to develop a net art performance practice grounded in trauma as a conceptual apparatus. I had hoped that this series would lead to a performance event that would respond to Hal Foster's contextualization of the Real in contemporary surrealism.

Some clarification on my departures from Foster's ideas are in order, since he is a critical theorist antipathetic towards performance – my intention was to create a piece that contextualizes while dismantling time as a representational stage in which performer's subjectivity occurs (this has precedence in Dan Graham's *Performer/ Audience/ Mirror*), revealing the performer's agency as something outside of his continuous self-apprehension - traumatically alienated from, rather than integrated with, their psychic economy. I wanted to explore the notion of ideology persisting (in a structural sense) in what most (myself included) internet users take for granted as post-ideological, personalized platforms.

My mistake was to protract, rather than make succinct this basic premise: I conceived the performer and mirror as the internet user performing a dialogical relationship with the unary signifiers of his voice on computer screen. Following this, fulfilling my idea of 'traumatic performance' soon became a matter of finding a way to draw an antagonistic relationship between this dialogue in real time (the net art event) and subjective time (the performer's speaking position, as it comes to be represented through the internet), which I found a critical basis in Lacan's formula of the Hysteric's Discourse. While I felt I had sustained a consistent attitude towards effect, I felt that I ended up endlessly reproducing what I shall call a space of private epiphanies on certain autobiographical pivot point – the project is marred by a kind of coded expressionism which I feel is besides the point.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Contents

Abstract – p. 2

Preface – p. 1

Post-Internet, Post-Ideological? – p. 1

The Master’s and hysteric’s discourse – p. 12

Bibilography – p. 15