





Bio

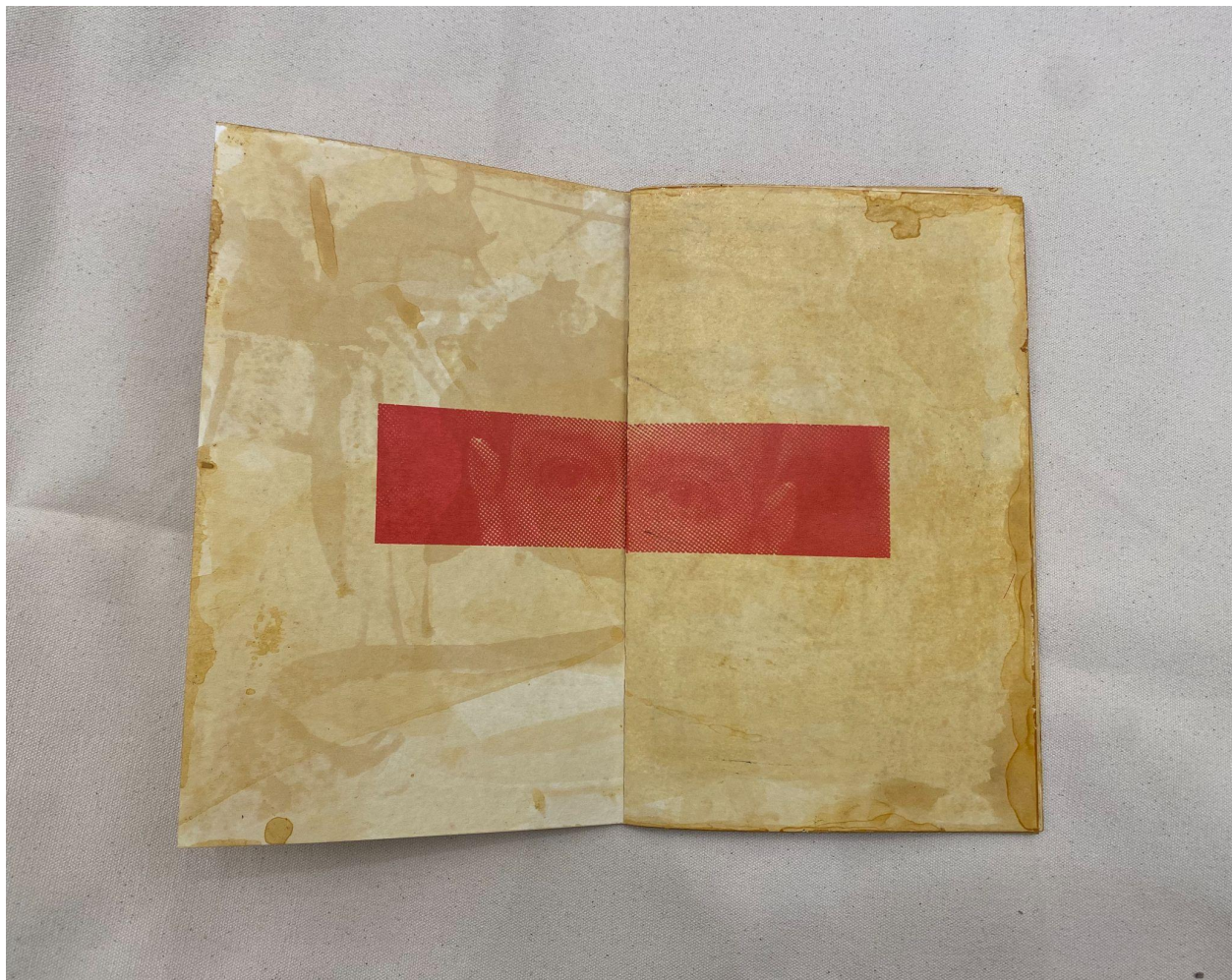
Quincy Kmetz is an emerging artist working out of Brooklyn, New York, whose paintings, drawings, printmaking, and ceramic sculpture dive into transhistorical issues involving information, technology, and power structure. Through illustrative-like scenes, she investigates the relationship between individuals and technology. As the internet becomes the medium facilitating our meaning of connection and isolation, she contends to unveil the ill-fated reality that comes with utopia.

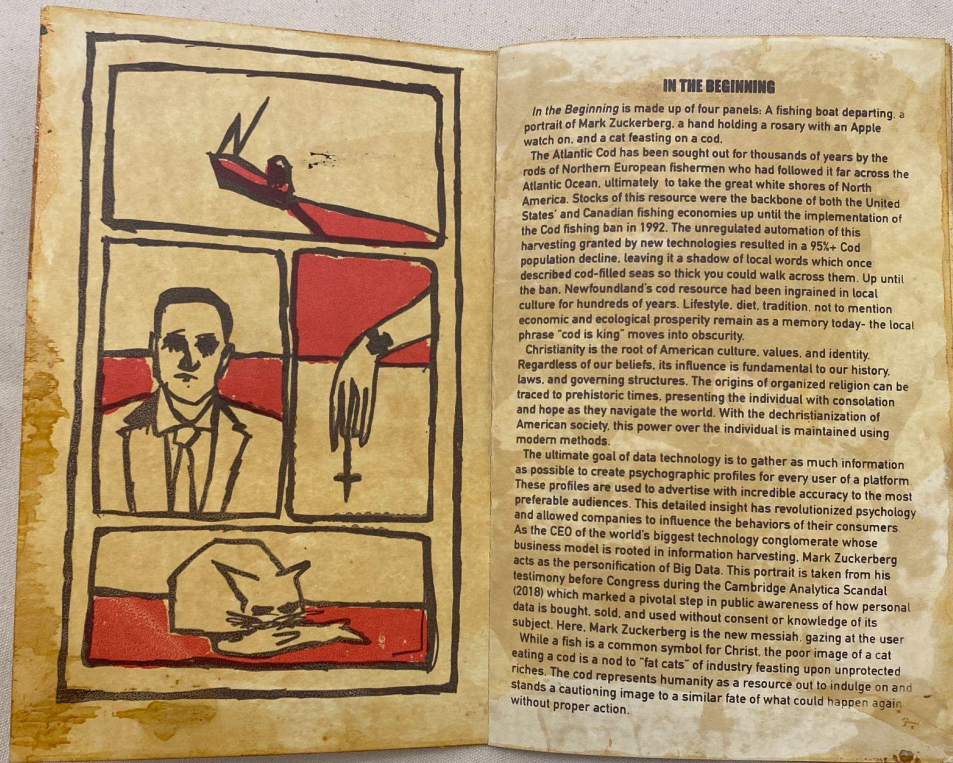
Kmetz's work belongs to private collections in New York City, Los Angeles, and Moscow.

Introduction

This body of work titled *Hyperreality* is an experimental take on narrative painting, dealing with the immediate and unforeseen consequences of modern data technology and the lack of regulation behind it.

The narrative of this series is driven by developments in the United States following the permeation of DT, contextualized by historical events. It is purely informative, curated to draw parallels between scenes within the last century. It is structurally modeled by *The Great Hack*, a 2019 documentary film about the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal, produced and directed by Jehane Noujaim and Karim Amer. This series consists of 5 paintings referred to as "pages" and acts as a visual comic book. Each painting is oil and cold wax on stretched canvas at an immersive scale (69" X 45"). Taking inspiration from political comics and propaganda posters, the goal of this work is to be reflective of the time in which it was made and easily digitized for circulation on the very platform it criticizes.





IN THE BEGINNING

In the Beginning is made up of four panels. A fishing boat departing, a portrait of Mark Zuckerberg, a hand holding a rosary with an Apple watch on, and a cat feasting on a cod.

The Atlantic Cod has been sought out for thousands of years by the rods of Northern European fishermen who had followed it far across the Atlantic Ocean, ultimately to take the great white shores of North America. Stocks of this resource were the backbone of both the United States' and Canadian fishing economies up until the implementation of the Cod fishing ban in 1992. The unregulated automation of this harvesting granted by new technologies resulted in a 95%+ Cod population decline, leaving it a shadow of local words which once described cod-filled seas so thick you could walk across them. Up until the ban, Newfoundland's cod resource had been ingrained in local culture for hundreds of years. Lifestyle, diet, tradition, not to mention economic and ecological prosperity remain as a memory today - the local phrase "cod is king" moves into obscurity.

Christianity is the root of American culture, values, and identity. Regardless of our beliefs, its influence is fundamental to our history, laws, and governing structures. The origins of organized religion can be traced to prehistoric times, presenting the individual with consolation and hope as they navigate the world. With the dechristianization of American society, this power over the individual is maintained using modern methods.

The ultimate goal of data technology is to gather as much information as possible to create psychographic profiles for every user of a platform. These profiles are used to advertise with incredible accuracy to the most preferable audiences. This detailed insight has revolutionized psychology and allowed companies to influence the behaviors of their consumers. As the CEO of the world's biggest technology conglomerate whose business model is rooted in information harvesting, Mark Zuckerberg acts as the personification of Big Data. This portrait is taken from his testimony before Congress during the Cambridge Analytica Scandal (2018) which marked a pivotal step in public awareness of how personal data is bought, sold, and used without consent or knowledge of its subject. Here, Mark Zuckerberg is the new messiah, gazing at the user while a fish is a common symbol for Christ, the poor image of a cat eating a cod is a nod to "fat cats" of industry feasting upon unprotected riches. The cod represents humanity as a resource out to indulge on and stands a cautioning image to a similar fate of what could happen again without proper action.



NEW CURRENCY, NEW POWER

The world's most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data. Until now, oil represented the lifeblood of industrialized nations. It has been the world's most essential source of energy since the mid-1950s, its products defining the very meaning of modern society. Oil symbolizes the lengths man has gone to control power wherever it leaks from the earth.

New Currency, New Power is in three panels comparing the resource of oil to the resource of data: Three silhouettes of oil pump jacks, a corporate handshake suggesting a deal being made, and three teenagers individually interacting with smartphones.

Companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon are the wealthiest, most successful players in the market. With such a concentrated income, the question arises as to what they're being paid for. The content they provide appears to be the product we consume- it's a convenient portal linking us to our family, our friends, information, and the digital content of our lives. A utopic invention- all questions can be answered, connection is instant.

These companies turn a profit by charging not the user, but advertisers. Advertisers come as customers, the product being sold is the user themselves. This business model is centered around certainty- certainty that an advertisement is going to reach the demographic audience it was designed for, and therefore certainty that it will be successful. Through harvesting user data and personality modeling, these companies possess the technology to ensure this certainty. After information is gathered, the real product becomes the gradual change in a user's behavior and perception- the ultimate goal of any advertising campaign.

There is a new marketplace trading in human behavior that we currently have no right to know anything about. Personal data is used and abused in ways we do not understand, sold to the highest bidder- any bidder.



GOING THE WAY OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON

The passenger pigeon is an extinct species that was native to North America and once the most abundant bird on the continent. This pigeon would migrate in colossal flocks in search of food, shelter, and breeding grounds - these flocks would become so large that they were recorded to block out the sun (which created the belief that their numbers could never be exhausted). Like the North Atlantic cod, overhunting and lack of regulation led to the endangerment and later the complete extinction of this species in under a century. This page was originally going to include a Dodo, but continuing with *Hyperreality's* focus on the United States, I chose to substitute "Dodo" with an American species that met the same fate.

This page is only two panels: A passenger pigeon perched in a grey empty forest looking back at the viewer, and a row of voting booths.

Cambridge Analytica was a political consulting company started in 2013 as a subsidiary of the private intelligence company and self-described "global election management agency", SCL Group. The Trump 2016 presidential campaign employed Cambridge Analytica and utilized their harvested data to create psychographic profiles, determining users' personality traits, beliefs, and levels of persuadability based on their Facebook activity. The campaign used this as the base of a micro-targeting technique, showing users customized messages on various digital platforms. Ads were split into categories based on whether persuadable individuals were already supporters of Trump or potential swing voters.

The United States is in allegiance to the idea of democracy. The privilege of regular democratic elections is a source of identity. Representation and self-governance are the epitome of what America is founded upon. With the introduction of data-informed technology in modern-day campaigning, the legitimacy of what is core to this country has cracked and is before us, sliding out of view. These platforms make it possible to spread manipulative narratives and misinformation more easily than ever before. Political polarization is at a 20 year high, where 92% of Republicans are to the right of the median Democrat, and 94% of Democrats to the left of the median Republican. In this separation, the fabric of our society begins to dissolve, the integrity of fair elections, both present and future have gone first. The passenger pigeon is an archetype for something fundamentally American that we thought was untouchable, and sacrosanct.



WEAPONIZED CONFUSION

Information warfare is the greater part of any warfare. Psychological operations (PSYOP) are military-grade procedures that convey selected information to influence emotions, objective reasoning, and behavior in order to influence governments, organizations, and individuals. Both you and I interact with PSYOP technology on a daily basis, this is the technology that offers certainty, for sale.

Weaponized Confusion is in three panels and serves the narrative as a climax: People on smartphones with bubbles enveloping their heads, siblings caught in a choking match, and a depiction of the 2021 storming of the United States Capitol.

To sustain engagement, these platforms deliver unique content to each user based on a personality model built through data collection, and more often than not, emotional content based on fear or anger is most engaging. Emotional content does not mean factual content. In essence, each user is connected to their own regurgitated self, disguised as the shared world; a hyperreality. To be served a custom set of content means you're served a custom set of facts- the bubbles in this panel represent these realities between us.

The siblings in combat symbolize the national tension resulting from overexposure to unregulated information. Subjective reality has bred confusion, distrust and violence, notably manifested in the Capitol siege of January 2021.



TO SERVE MAN

To Serve Man is one of the most famous episodes of the anthology series *The Twilight Zone* (1959) for which this painting is named. The episode starts with The Kanamits, a 9-foot-tall race of aliens landing on Earth and appearing at a public United Nations conference. A Kanamit arrives and speaks to the representatives and journalists via telepathy, claiming the motive for visiting Earth is to provide humanitarian aid by sharing their advanced technology. The Kanamit leaves a book in their language to prove their case. The title of the book is the only piece the humans are able to translate which reads- "To Serve Man". Years pass, and Earth is enjoying the utopia the Kanamits shared, so much so that they'd given up on trying to decipher the rest of the book. Humans and Kanamits live in peace amongst each other, with ships of humans leaving daily to visit their planet. In a twist ending of this episode, one of the decoders from the project runs onto the tarmac before her coworker gets on a ship which is leaving for the Kanamit planet, shouting that she's completed the translation and discovered that "To Serve Man" is a cookbook.

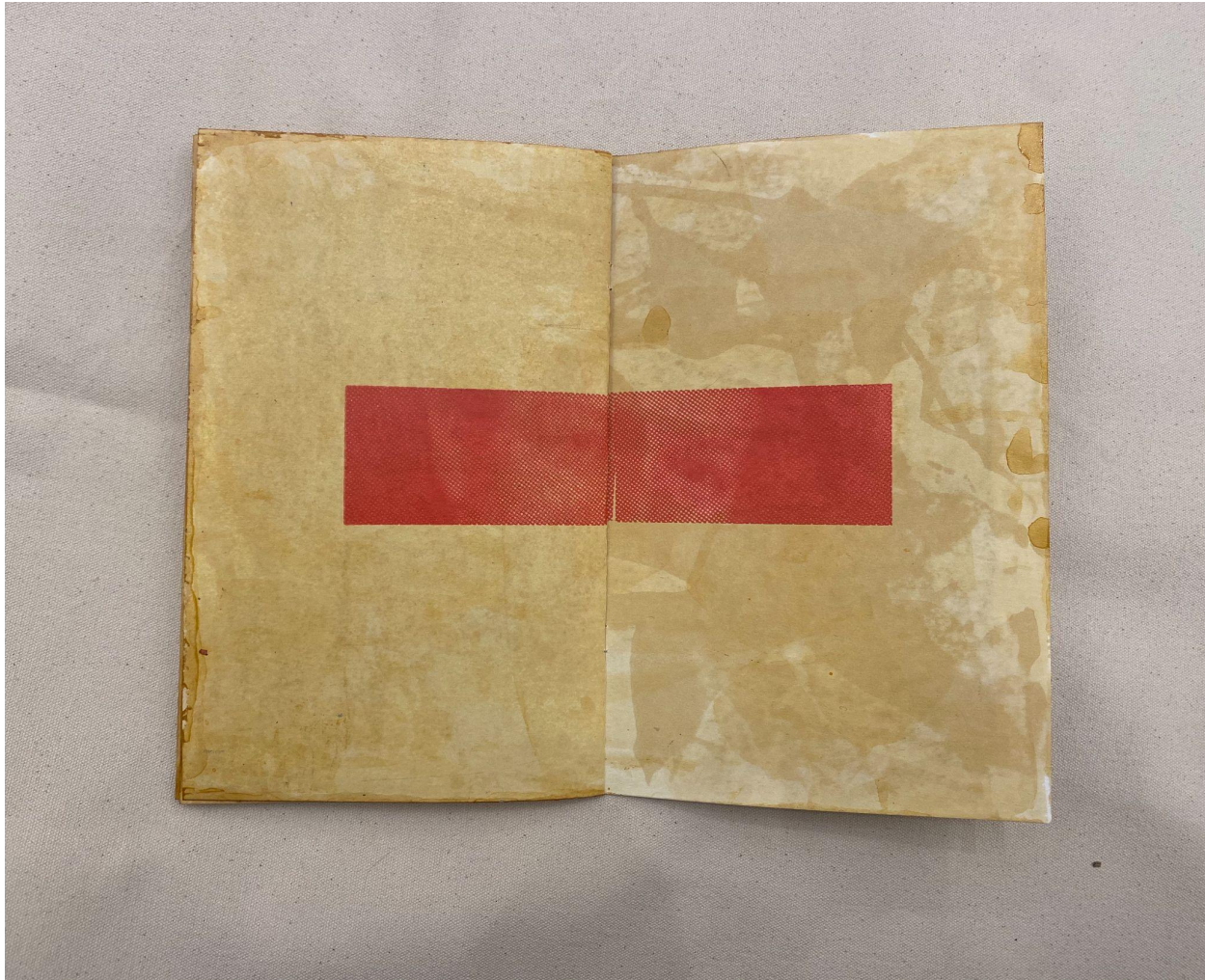
In four panels, this page is entirely in black and white as it is made up of pulled images from the episode.

Hyperreality features historic and contemporary references to elaborate on the ultimate theme of catastrophic consumption. Human data is harvested just like cod, petroleum, and passenger pigeon; human lives are consumed just the same.

We've been given a technology that we do not understand, but knows everything about us. We have been looking to big tech to solve these problems for us, trusting their intelligence and morals, while being sold to the highest bidder.

Currently, as of 2021, we have no regulation, legal protections, or disclosure on how this technology operates and is used, so what do we do?

Do we begin asking questions, and making demands while we can? Are we still on the tarmac, or are we already on the ship?





THANK YOU!

(IN NO ORDER)

MOM • DAD • ANN •
CAMERYN • PARKER •
JESTER • ELLI • NATE •
SHELTON • CLAUDIA •
MICHELA • MADELINE •
RASA • YASU • MICHAEL •
LINDA • JOE • ERMINA •
AMANDA • WHITNEY •
WOODSHOP CREW •
ISABELLA • TIM •
MY STUDIO • OTTO •

HALEY •
FOR: - PRODUCTION
- PROFESSIONAL
- EMOTIONAL

SUPPORT  LOVE, QUINCY



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