The terms *symmetrical* and *asymmetrical* have historically been used as military terms to describe strategic wartime positions. Olia Lialina and Cory Arcangel use this terminology to address our technological present, without undermining the political origin of the terms. *Asymmetrical* and *symmetrical* are pertinent to analogize power exchanges and can be employed in technological language to describe the relationship between corporations supplying digital contents and media users. The Internet has shifted from an idealized platform of information circulation to a massive control tool resulting in a content interchange that is governed not by the creator but by the service provider.

Arcangel and Lialina met in 2001 in the twilight of Y2K. The convergence of their interests and concerns led them to establish an intellectual and artistic relationship from that point on. "Asymmetrical Response", their first collaboration in the format of an exhibition, is the result of years of experiments and conversations. Curated by Caitlin Jones for Western Front in Vancouver and organized for the Kitchen in New York by Tim Griffin and Lumi Tan, the exhibition in Art Projects Ibiza + Lune Rouge, organized by KCM Fine Arts and Lisson Gallery, is the largest iteration of the project to date.

The rise of the *net.art* movement and related outlets, have been an effect of the integration of the Internet into society. Lialina is part of a generation of pioneers using the web as an artistic platform while Arcangel comes to his practice in a time which the net had already transformed from an exclusive vehicle to one that is available to the masses. Technology occupies such a prominent place within the daily vernacular, but is practically imperceptible to our consciousness. Although omnipresent, our relationship with it becomes increasingly restrictive. Lialina and Arcangel focus their work in this nearly unilateral dynamic between user and computer, in addition to addressing the specificity of the medium: hardware, software and content.

The creation of content on the Internet has varied greatly since the early years of the World Wide Web. In these early years, users had easier access to a boundless creative freedom to produce their own personalized feed, the rules were not yet established, resulting in great freedom and mobility. The shift from digital freedom to the binding restriction of content that we currently experience through Facebook and Instagram or Apple (in terms of devices) has happened extremely fast, being traceable only to those who have closely followed this dizzying evolution. Lialina has written extensively on concepts of Internet and digital folklore, collecting, preserving and monumentalizing the web culture since the early 90s. Arcangel is considered one of the most prominent artists of the post-internet era. Lialina addresses a difference between *post* and *after* in her work; "*Post* is loaded with crisis, rejection, urge for action. *After* is fatigue, exodus, but not only". Concepts such as *post-internet* and *net.art* can be used today as powerful tools to denote the influence we as users can exert not only on the way our technological context will develop but also on the guidelines by which our society will be structurally organized.

"Asymmetrical Response" can be interpreted as an exercise by the artists manipulating media and devices through which corporations have previously inundated content to the masses: music, videogames and social media, all subverted by the medium and its own tools. The exacerbation of the content standard, of the *template*, should inspire us to consider the true power we have over our devices and to reflect on our desperation to be *templated*; to become part of the tyrannic world of *likes* 👍

CORY ARCANGEL/OLIA LIALINA
ASYMMETRICAL RESPONSE
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