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**SPECIAL AFFECT**  
*Tara Elizabeth Cook*

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**PROJECTS**

“We find ourselves trapped on a cyborg sandbank, caught between the old, smoldering campfire stories and the new networks of programming and control. As we lose our faith in free will or the coherence of personality, we glimpse androids in the bathroom mirror, their eyes black with nihilism.” (Erik Davis)

Tara Elizabeth  
Cook  
*SPECIAL AFFECT*  
21.10.15–07.11.15

“Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert.” (Donna Haraway)

Today, in our hands, the digital image and ourselves lie and lie distant in a nervous system; a dynamic archipelago of illusive fragments, ruins from the hope of connection at just a swipe or click away. Entangled and implemented, the surveilled access to and mined participation within a coded myriad of immediate and disposable networked experiences leaves us at a state of feeling powerfully inactive now. Meanwhile, ancient archaeological artefacts are destroyed to be resurrected as artefact-laden gifs, and low-resolution migratory images of a small dead child wash up upon the shores of social media feeds to our devices. Staring into these screens, we are faced daily with

radical incompleteness, ever absent encounters, graphic confrontations and the horror of knowing that in our online engagement, something has been lost. The exhibition “Special Affect” considers the tense contemporary condition of being connected and yet disconnected, visible and yet not present, lonely and yet not alone, in an environment that’s manipulated and yet still effectively real, to ask the question, what does it mean to feel the digital?

This show is born out of dialogue with new media, new media materialist and post-internet theory and practice, whereby digital technologies and the network have become ubiquitous across all aspects of society, and the digital image is a controlled socio-political object of power entwined in a global economy of labour and one that is a part of a finite mineral world.

**Tara Elizabeth Cook** is a Melbourne-based contemporary artist and a PhD candidate at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne where she also teaches in the Critical and Theoretical Studies department. The founder and Gallery Director of New Low ARI from 2011 to 2013, she has shown nationally and internationally at venues such as the MCA Sydney, Sydney Opera House, Carriageworks, Gallery Barry Keldoulis, the Arts Centre, RMIT Design Hub, Blindside and Screen Space. Her research and practice directly considers the theories and work of Hito Steyerl and has been published within her book “Against Function”, as well as being presented at a range of conferences and symposia including the 2014 Transdisciplinary Imaging Conference Istanbul, the 2013 and 2015 International Symposium of Electronic Arts and a co-convened panel at the 2013 and upcoming 2015 Art Association of Australia and New Zealand conference.

[www.taraelizabethcook.com](http://www.taraelizabethcook.com)

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