

Only Tablet with Dark Hair (Pictorial)

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This pictorial takes the form of an original poem and
photographs. Each illustrates the other.

The theme of the photographic narrative concerns how contemporary ways of being are induced by our collective preoccupation with digital devices and online media.

There is an element of dark humour to the photographic narrative.

There is also a sense in which the design of our photographic narrative is an appeal to return to a healthy balance between virtual and physical.

In the text of the printform, we describe how this pictorial situates in the historical context of pictorials.

Also, in the text, we reflect on how the pictorial relates to selected conference themed design modes, technical considerations, and the photographic narrative as a form of design fiction.

The Photographic Narrative, Itself.



Night arrives, day recedes, I wake to meet my tablet's needs.



夕阳西下，夜幕降临，为了平板电脑上的需求，我辗转床榻



I do whatever Facebook wants, for fear of other people's taunts.



担心朋友反目, 我听命于脸书



WeChat away th'entire day, "Moments" missed are not okay.



微信一整天, 点遍朋友圈



Retweet whatever Twitter said, to show the world I'm less than dead.



为刷存在感, 转推推特热点



I TikTok every night 'til two, tagging everything you do.



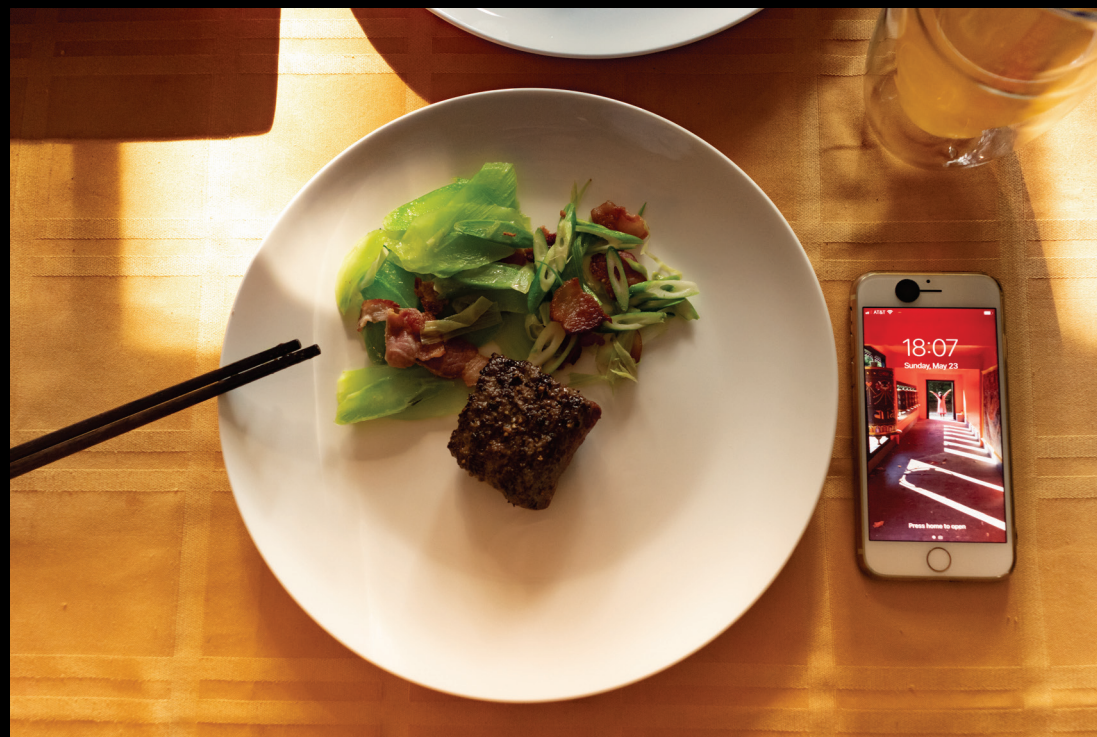
抖音过三更, 分类分分钟



By my side throughout the day, at dinner, home, or when away.



随时随地，离身不能：



吃饭，睡觉，居家，或旅行



Human here and AI there, into the dark lit night I stare.



一面是人情，一面是人工智能，我凝视着被照亮的虚空



Without a care, without a prayer, only tablet with dark hair.



其实没有人在乎，没有人祝福，只有平板电脑和黑发几缕

Acts of Noticing (Analysis)

Night arrives, day recedes, I wake to meet my tablet's needs

夕阳西下，夜幕降临，为了平板电脑上的需求，我辗转床榻



Scene: A young woman stands at dusk in a garden. Her vintage dress and patent red shoes lend a sense of surrealism to the scene.



Stanza: Her face is illuminated by the glow of her tablet. Her focus on her online self has neither boundaries nor times of day or night.

I do whatever Facebook wants, for fear of other people's taunts

担心朋友反目，我听命于脸书



*Scene: Dusk turns to dawn and our heroine is still on task, unmoved.
The changing light unifies the colors of her dress to nearly match the back of the tablet.*



Stanza: Facebook's very wide circle of friends and other imperatives of its interactivity challenge the notion of personal agency.

WeChat away th'entire day, "Moments" missed are not okay

微信一整天，点遍朋友圈



Scene: Now in full daylight, our heroine continues on task, still unmoved.



Stanza: WeChat “Moments” is the name given by WeChat to a feature containing the latest postings by her circle of friends. WeChat affords more control over the extent of one’s circle of friends.



Techne: The images on pp. 2-4 are in fact all the same single image as taken, with different post-production in Lightroom and Photoshop.

Retweet whatever Twitter said, to show the world I'm less than dead
为刷存在感，转推推特热点



Scene: The physical world fades away as the virtual world overtakes.



Stanza: Twitter is more broadcast model than circle of friends model, apropos of the universe of others.



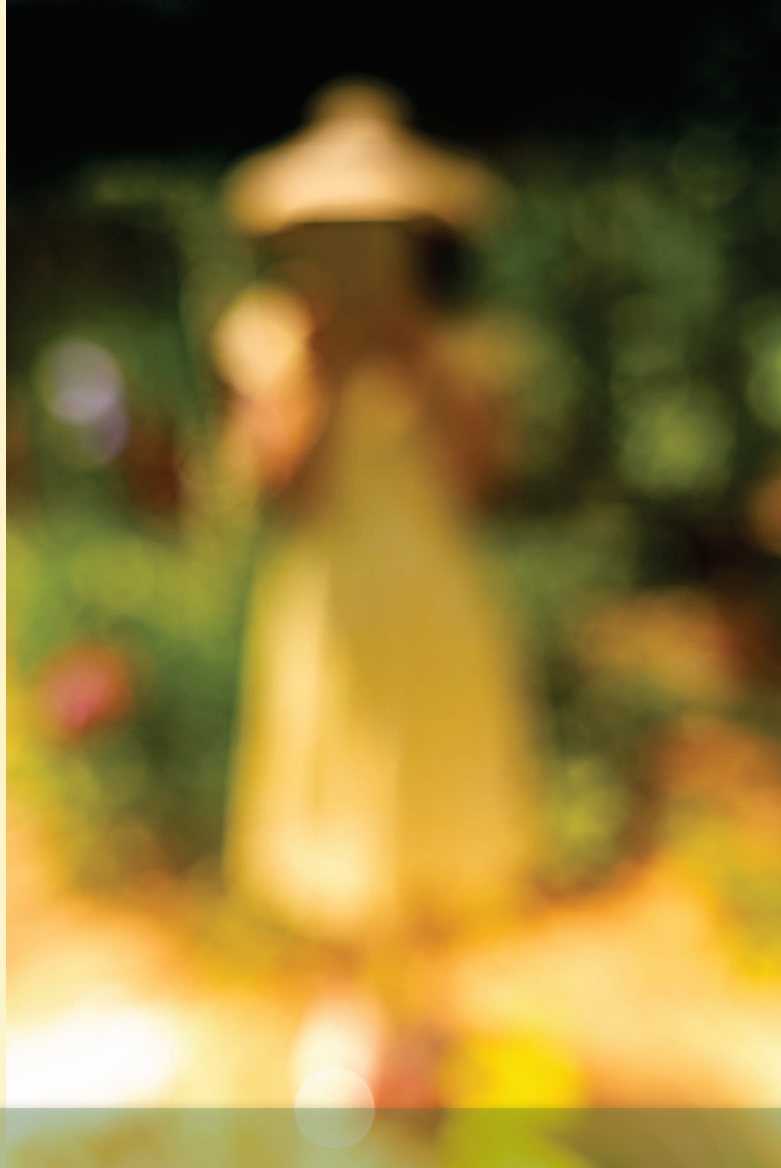
Techne: The image on p. 5 is a different image than 2-4 taken from the same spot, now defocused to create a visual metaphor of the virtual world overtaking the physical.



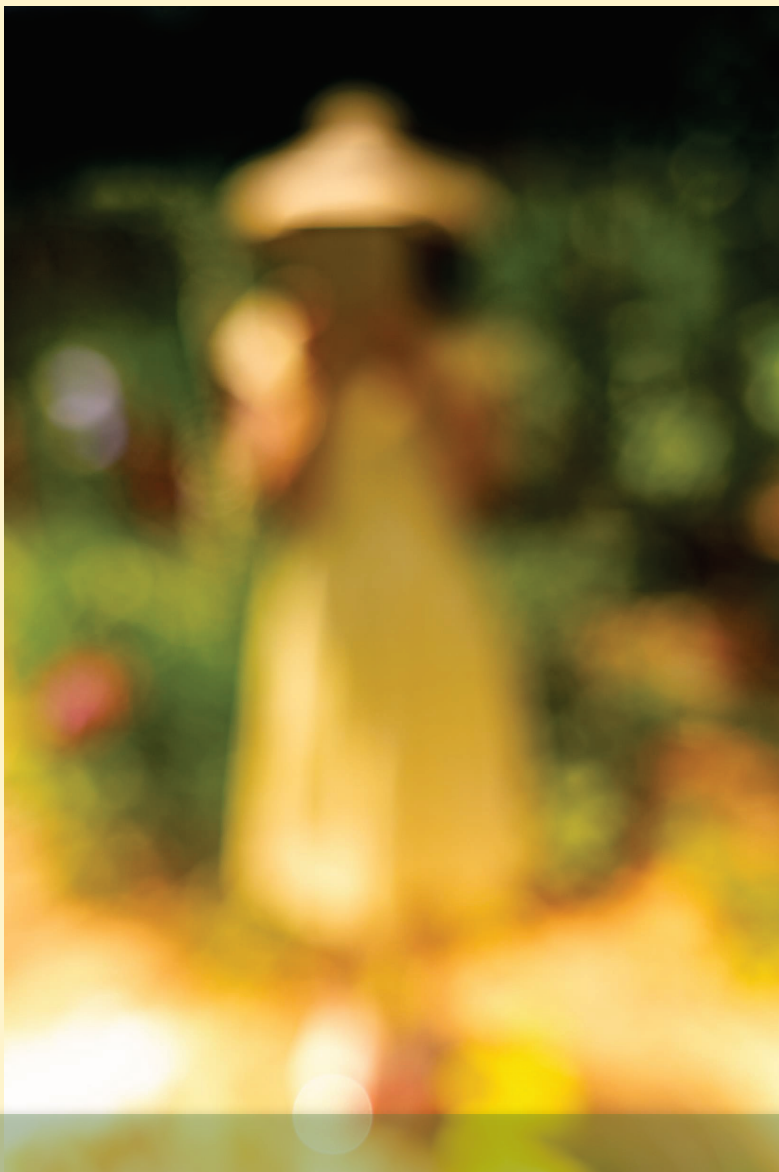
The seven-sided highlight just in front of the young woman's left shoe is an artifact of the use of a particular vintage lens. The everywhere out of focus effect is afforded using this manual focusing lens coupled with a close focus helicoid adapter.

I TikTok every night 'til two, tagging everything you do

抖音过三更，分类分分钟



Scene: The virtual world further overtakes the physical.



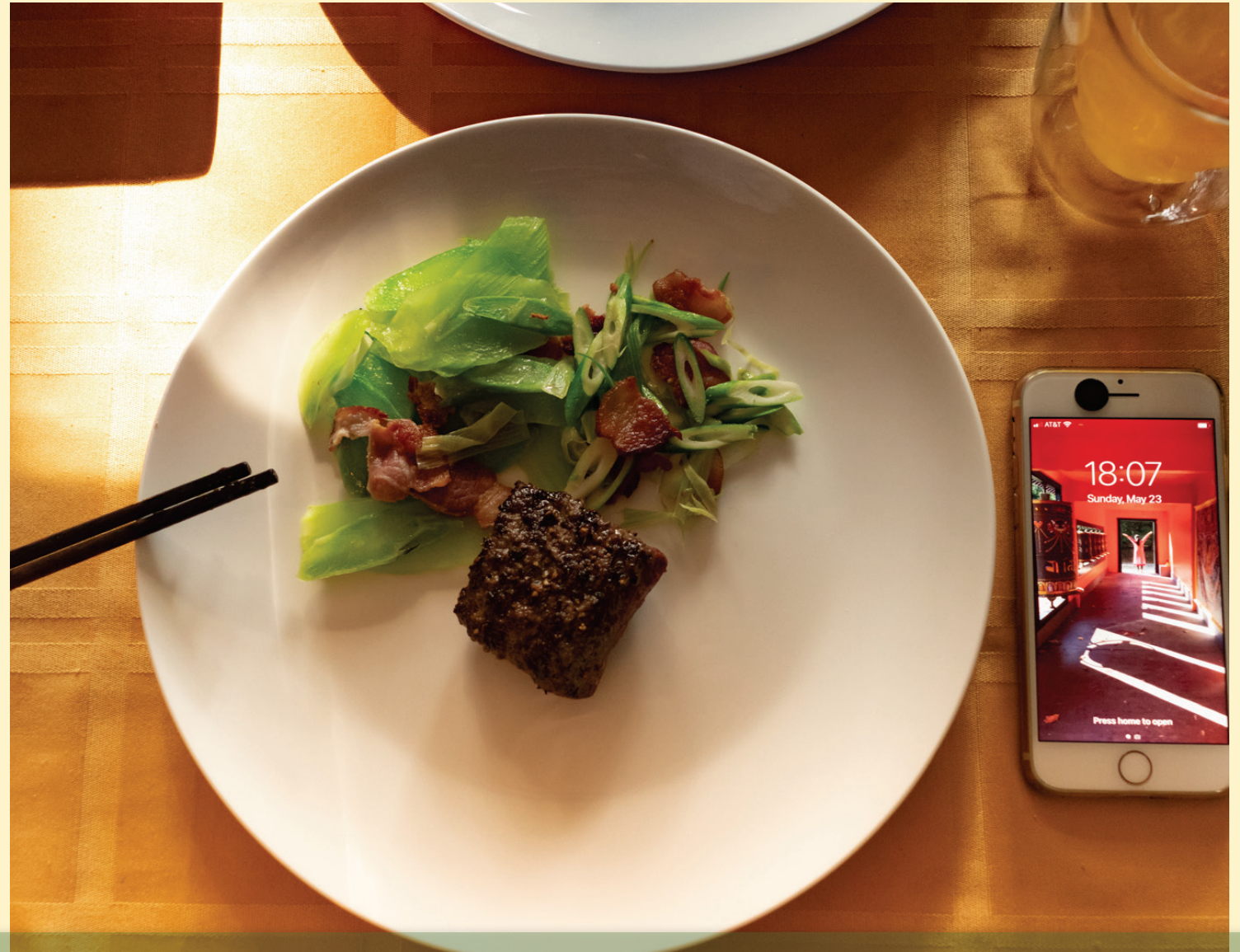
Stanza: TikTok is another form of broadcast.



Techne: The image on p. 6 is a different image again, even more defocused to create a visual metaphor of the virtual world arriving as the normal state. The highlight just in front of the young woman's left shoe is now fully circular in the abstraction of its extreme defocus.

By my side throughout the day, at dinner, home, or when away

随时随地，离身不能：吃饭，睡觉，居家，或旅行



Scene and Stanza: A pair of images illustrate the pervasive mixing of digital devices and virtual engagement with the everyday. In the bottom image, the dinner includes bamboo and lettuce stems that are (in fact) from the same garden pictured in images pp. 2-6. A smartphone accompanies the place setting.

Human here and AI there, into the dark lit night I stare

一面是人情，一面是人工智能，我凝视着被照亮的虚空



Scene: Now again dusk, our heroine strikes her familiar pose in a different location. The background is no longer the garden, but rather a brick wall and glass door symbolizing the artifice in the middle between the natural and virtual worlds. Tufts of vegetation seeping through the terrace tiles are a different middle between the natural and built environments (cf., "nature-culture" in Liu, Bardzell, & Bardzell, 2018).



Stanza: The perspective now shifts to that of the photographer whose resistance to the seduction of the virtual world may be futile as online identity and artificial sentience make the physical world more and more redundant.

Without a care, without a prayer, only tablet with dark hair

其实没有人在乎，没有人祝福，只有平板电脑和黑发几缕



Scene: As in the first image, the glow of the tablet is the focus of this image that ends the narrative.



Stanza: Throughout, we have never seen the face of the young woman, only her long dark hair flowing from behind the tablet.



Techne: The post-production techniques of the first and last image are the same. The decision to make the bright circle a spotlight effect (the back of the tablet is illuminated) rather than a glow effect (the back of the tablet would be darkened) is deliberate, in keeping with the ambiguity about if the perspective of the viewer is that of the young woman herself engaged in the glow of her tablet, or the photographer shining a light on the situation.

Coda

In this presentation, we have privileged the photographic narrative and acts of noticing.

Kindly see the text of the pictorial for additional commentary on how this pictorial fits in the context of pictorials and aligns with several themes of the conference.

Thank you! 谢谢!