

I'm highly motivated to become a student at the Founding Lab of the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria and Ars Electronica. It brings together the two main focus points of my professional practice, computer science and creative writing and I can't be more excited about the opportunity to reshape my creative practice and critical thinking in this program by having the chance to dive deeper into the discourse I've been following closely and drawing inspiration from for some time.

Computer science and technology have always had a prominent place in my life. Ever since my father, a computer scientist himself, bought me my first Commodore 64 computer, and taught me how to program it when I was 8, I have been fascinated by information technology. But already during my masters in Geometry, Imaging and Virtual Environments, I felt (computer) science proved too rigid a paradigm to comprehend all the magic of the world and, on its own, would never be able to offer satisfying solutions to the problems of our time— by now I'm convinced we have passed the pivotal point where information technology creates more problems than it solves. That's why I decided to also pursue the other interest that has been with me since childhood: storytelling. I graduated as a screenwriter from the Amsterdam Film Academy and completed an MFA in creative writing at Boston University on a Fulbright scholarship.

However, I have always used my background and my work as a software developer as a source of inspiration for my art. My short movie "The Insignificant Life of Hans Boorman," for example was about a radical dreamer who engineers and builds his own zeppelin from scratch, to fly it around the world— a poetic reflection on the clash of grandiose dreams, and the reality of everyday life. I also wrote a series of animated shorts about the fact and fiction of nano-technology for the technical University of Twente and worked for several years as a staff writer on educational children's television shows for Dutch public television that aim to explain scientific concepts to 6-12 year-olds in an entertaining way. Next to that I have been collaborating on several multimedia art installations where I was programming a set of robots to do choreographies in different settings, one of which was exhibited at the "Ad Mensam" exhibition in Schloss Hollenegg, Austria.

Recently I've been actively integrating the different parts of my professional practice in pursuit of a more critical view on technology. Earlier this year I've published my code poem "infinite_loop" in Volume Poetry. The poem is written in code, but readable for anyone and examines how algorithms have become an indistinguishable part of our minds. Simultaneously I have started to develop a prototype, under the working title "The Machine Who," to explore the possibilities of what I call augmented poetry: poetry with a layer of augmented reality (AR) that alters the meaning of the text. A poem, projected on a wall, or printed in a book, or displayed on a monitor, can be viewed through a smartphone where blanks left in the original text are filled in, thus altering the meaning of the poem. Through the alteration of a text by means of an added digital layer, I want to explore the nature of the written word, and draw parallels between the inherent ambivalence of language and collective feelings of ambivalence towards the current state of technological advancement. In this respect I feel the summer school of Founding Lab fits me like a glove as I believe in this era of disinformation, where chatGPT and other large language modules are disrupting the field of language, asking questions surrounding ownership of truth are imperative to guarantee a free flowing discourse.

Next to my work as a developer and writer, I have always taught as well. My parents both being teachers, education is in my blood, and I have always found it to be an inspiring way of adding a dimension to my professional practice. I have taught computer science classes in Utrecht and creative writing at Boston University and the University of Europe. In this respect I am particularly excited to exchange ideas on learning and teaching in the digital age, since I feel there is still much to be explored and improved in this area.

In general, I'm highly motivated to be in contact with talented peers from all around the world, across so many different disciplines, with whom I feel I will share many interests and concerns. I'm looking forward to being part of an inspiring dialogue and to be involved in the cross pollination of ideas about the complex issues surrounding the digital transformation of our society. At the same I'm confident I have enough to offer to be a worthy collaborator in this process and that together we have a chance to find new ideas and develop new angles to inspire true innovation and bring about real change.