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Culturush is pleased to present the online group show *R / V*, a digital exhibition exploring humans' current presence in the digital realm. The works by five female artists will contribute to investigating how nowadays humans inhabit social media, revealing the dynamics behind the continuous influence of the digital on users' lives and perceptions. Employing a feminine perspective, the show explores how easy it is for the 21st-century woman to be completely absorbed by the online world, often becoming a hyperreal, virtual version of herself.

In the last two decades, social media have emerged as the favourite medium to give voice to opinions, beliefs, or just to share with the world what once were events of private life. Users choose what and how to communicate, revealing to their friends/followers a hypermediated naturalism made exclusively by those specific events worthy of being shared. The continuous exposure to digital personas contributes to the shaping of one's identity and thoughts, determining influences in tastes and aesthetic canons which are often unattainable because constructed precisely for the web. The 21st-century human is a product of the digital: when online, we embody and play an appealing version of ourselves that is the result of the content we experience on social media. If users choose not to align with the online canons, they are treated with disrespect and hate.

R / V researches this phenomenon through the works of five female artists whose practices explore their personal, feminine relationship and inhabitancy of social media. In the show, the artists explore the black hole of addictive digital presence either as an opportunity to escape the awkwardness of real life, or as the cause for the embodiment of a digital self that reflect the same canons established by social networks. *R / V* will expose the dynamics that come into play in the digital world as way to reveal and criticize them, in order to alienate the public from the ideals and stereotypes it produces.

Stacie Ant (b. 1991) blends strong influences from the digital gaming realm with colourful, cinematic scenes, employing the freedom provided by 3D animation to create her own characters and sets. In her carefully constructed digital images, Ant combines glossy outfits, excessive

makeup and references to fashion and popular culture to highlight, with subtle irony, the female world's interconnectedness to technology and media.

Wednesday Kim's (b. 1985) multimedia art reports fragments of her dreams and sub-consciousness, focusing on the dichotomy of the surface and the intimate, the external and the introspective. The surreal, 3D animated video *The Aesthetics of Being Disappeared* (2019) gives voice to Kim's awkwardness when relating with others face-to-face. Creating a disturbing, dream-like sequence that also includes clear references to popular media culture, the work explores how lack of confidence and perceived social incommunicability can lead to complete reliance on the online world – the perfect way to 'evade the dangers of social life'.

Ruby Gloom is the digital avatar of the 3D artist **Chan Kayu** (b. 1991). Ruby was born in 2012 as a fashion influencer and has now collaborated with many luxury brands digitally recreating their items for social media platforms. Questioning the notion of the real and the authentic on online platforms, Ruby becomes a cyber extension of Chan's persona by embodying those features the artist feels she does not possess in real life. Blurring the boundaries between virtuality and reality, the avatar also evolves following the artist's practice: from a pink, girly reflection of her creator to a cyberpunk, futuristic warrior with an identity of her own.

In her pictures from *The Bully Pulpit* series, **Haley Morris-Cafiero** (b. 1976) underlines online bullies' reactions to women's bodies that do not reflect the aesthetic canons found on the media. Questioning with powerful rawness people's apparent self-legitimacy to comment and judge, the artist impersonates the users who have cyberbullied her by reproducing pictures she found on their social media accounts. Morris-Cafiero's works contribute to draw special attention to the deeply rooted phenomenon of body shaming on social media.

Finally, **Emily Mulenga's** (b. 1991) *Now that we know the world is ending soon...what are you gonna wear?* (2019) incorporates the aesthetics of the 2000s online culture with current interconnectedness and addictive digital presence. She impersonates a pink, feminine bunny that becomes her alter ego living the glossy '21st century life' made up of shopping, parties and selfies. With a frenetic pace, sense of information overload and cutting-edge irony, Mulenga explores the themes of online femininity, entertainment, disconnection and fractured identities spanning the online and offline worlds.

Through the works of the participating artists, *R / V* poses new questions about women's relationship with the digital, hoping to stimulate reflections on the technologically saturated, addictive digital contemporary society. It will hopefully contribute to the formation of shared critical consciousness concerning the aesthetical, behavioral and identity canons the media constantly present us.