



Birmingham / Cologne Thursday, 22nd November 2012 00.26.56 30"x40" Hand Printed C-Print, 2014, Edition of 3

CONVERSATIONAL TRACES

By Elly Clarke, 2008-14

Showing as part of Elly's PhD Research Residency at Hamilton MAS. July-September 2021.

In 2008 I moved to Berlin, and this was the time I started using Skype, which, at the time, was the only video messaging app readily available. Few people had iPhones then, and there was no WhatsApp or Messenger. Moving there knowing few people, I kept in touch with friends back home with fairly regular conversations. I took a screenshot of almost every chat I had. The project then followed me to Birmingham, where I moved in 2011 for a teaching job. I was then keeping in touch with my Berlin friends.

In 2014 I converted a few of these screengrabs into 35mm negatives, and printed them by hand in a colour darkroom in 2014 during an artist residency at The Banff Centre, in Canada, in order to show the pixel of the low-res .png on which it was captured, and the grain of the negative from which the prints were then created. And to see what would happen with such a translation.

I see this series as a group portrait of the people I love/d, as well as of those I was in touch with for my art & curatorial projects. But it is also a form of self-portraiture. Of me and my haircuts, my moods, my inboxes, battery levels & the other elements that are visible, as well as of my network, which, increasingly, is understood to define us more than almost anything else. In 2021, these images serve also as a hard-copy (limited edition) record of a technology that has since upgraded both its look, and its functionality.

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