

PROMPT

MAGAZINE

BOOK 17 | 2026

PROMPT MAGAZINE® EXPLORES THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON CONTEMPORARY VISUAL CULTURE THROUGH CURATED EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, EXHIBITIONS, AND COLLABORATIONS WITH DIGITAL ARTISTS, CURATORS, DIGITAL CREATORS, AND CURATORIAL PLATFORMS. IT SHOWCASES THE BEST IN AI-DRIVEN DESIGN, ART, FASHION, AND POSSIBLE FUTURES.

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COMPMONKS

I trained as an architect in France in the early 2000s, but my work shifted during my research at ETH Zürich, where I began using neural signals as generative material. That moment marked a clear transition, from designing structures to building systems in which cognition itself can shape form.

I grew up moving frequently, and that sense of displacement carried into my education and professional life. It led me to find stability in uncertainty and to develop a sustained interest in how art and science could be articulated. Over time, this became less a conceptual alignment and more a concrete question about how computational frameworks might engage with human mental processes as an operational medium.

The introduction of brain-computer interfaces transformed both my practice and my thinking. Instead of composing images or predefined forms, I began developing systems that generate them from neural activity and interaction. This shift laid the foundation for my work today, in which visual and spatial outcomes emerge from the interplay between brain signals, generative processes, and environmental conditions.

I now develop installations and generative works that combine brain activity, AI, and spatial structures. These works have been exhibited across Europe at institutions including Centre Pompidou in Paris, ZKM in Karlsruhe, Ars Electronica in Linz, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, and the Beaux-Arts Academy in Paris, and are held in permanent collections.

Proteus 3.5
BCI Interaction inside the immersive chamber installation
CompMonks, Maria Smigielska. Photo: Thierry Serbeto



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Stargazer 0.0
Two Columns From Neural Potentials, 2020. Sculptures & Video

IN RECENT YEARS, AI HAS BECOME PART OF YOUR PROCESS. HOW DO YOU INTERACT WITH THESE TOOLS TODAY, AND WHAT ROLE DO THEY PLAY WITHIN YOUR CREATIVE WORKFLOW?

“EACH WORK BEHAVES AS A COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK, EVOLVING THROUGH INTERACTION AND CONTEXT”

From the moment I began working with brain-computer interfaces more than a decade ago, AI was already integral to the process. It made neural activity interpretable and, therefore, usable within a computational system. In that sense, AI is not an external tool in my work, but part of the communication layer between the human mind and the machine.

The origin of the work, however, lies in neural data and cognitive processes. AI intervenes at two key moments. First, as a decoder that translates brain activity into structured signals. Second, as a generative layer that allows these signals to unfold into a visual or spatial form. What emerges is never a fixed image. Each work behaves as a communication framework, evolving through interaction and context. The output is not predefined but is continuously produced through the exchange among neural activity, computational processes, and the environment. This is what gives each piece its internal logic and its irreducible variability.

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Dreamcatcher 0.0,
Physical and virtual Interaction with generated dreams at the gate installation
CompMonks. Photo: Thierry Serbeto

YOUR RESEARCH EXPLORES THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE HUMAN MIND AND MACHINES, OFTEN THROUGH BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACES. FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, HOW IS AI RESHAPING NOT ONLY YOUR OWN APPROACH, BUT ALSO THE BROADER LANDSCAPE OF DIGITAL VISUAL ART?

If you take a step back, AI can be understood as part of a much longer trajectory in which computation reflects and models aspects of the human mind. What we are witnessing today is an acceleration of that process, one that became particularly visible in the second half of the twentieth century and is now unfolding at a societal scale.

This perspective shaped both the scientific and artistic dimensions of my work. On one side, it led me to explore how brain-computer interfaces could be used as a design framework. On the other, it opened a space to engage with the more elusive aspects of cognition, what I often describe as the untold, the uncertain, or the fleeting. Navigating the flow of thought became both a method and an aesthetic question.

In the current landscape, AI is dramatically expanding the production of images. Still, much of it remains at the level of surface and variation. My work operates upstream of that, at the level of cognition itself. By interfacing the brain with computational systems, the work begins before representation when sense is actually being produced, in the unstable space where thought is still forming and yet being interpreted.

This shifts the artist's role. Rather than producing images, I design systems that enable cognitive processes to directly shape visual and spatial outcomes. In that sense, the work is not generated from prompts, but from the dynamics of thought itself. It moves from purely visual art toward a practice in which the human mind becomes the medium.

YOUR WORKS OFTEN UNFOLD AS EVOLVING SYSTEMS, ALMOST LIKE CHAPTERS OF AN ONGOING NARRATIVE. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR RECENT PROJECTS AND HOW YOU ARE COMMUNICATING IT TODAY TO YOUR AUDIENCE?

My work unfolds as a series of mixed-media installations that take the form of sculptures, still or moving images, and immersive environments. What remains constant is their relationship to a physical space of experience, whether that space is the body and mind that generate the signals, or the environment in which the work is installed and encountered. In both cases, these are not passive contexts. They actively shape what the work becomes over time.

Each piece is built as a generative system. Sometimes the source is my own neural activity, translated through computational processes. At other times, it is the audience interacting with the installation. In both cases, the work is not fixed. It unfolds through an exchange among cognition, the environment, and the system's internal logic. Visually, it often appears as evolving landscapes or figures that emerge, transform, and dissolve in response to interaction and context.

I approach this by drawing from architectural vocabulary, using it to structure these interactions and give form to otherwise intangible processes. I think of these works as a form of new-media architecture, in which digital technologies and spatial experience are articulated to stage an encounter with the world of thought.

A recent example is Dreamcatcher, a series I began in 2023. It explores how dream states can be translated into visual and spatial forms, using both data collected from my own brain during sleep and narratives reconstructed upon waking. The project moves across formats, from interactive installations to digital characters, sculptures, and video works generated from these dream-like environments. What interests me here is not to represent dreams faithfully, but to express the instability of memory and the fleeting nature of its content as it forms, shifts, and dissolves.

“ IT IS NO LONGER ABOUT HOW TO REPRESENT THOUGHT, BUT HOW TO BUILD SPACES IN WHICH IT CAN OPERATE, EVOLVE, AND BE FELT ... ”

THERE IS A STRONG PHILOSOPHICAL AND MYTHOLOGICAL LAYER IN YOUR PRACTICE, WHERE THEMES LIKE MEMORY, PERCEPTION AND THE “UNTOLD” TAKE SHAPE. LOOKING AHEAD, ARE THERE ANY NEW DIRECTIONS, IDEAS OR PROJECTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH US?

I see my work extending toward systems in which cognition no longer just generates images or installations, but begins to directly shape how environments are understood and experienced. It is no longer about how to represent thought, but how to build spaces in which it can operate, evolve, and be felt both internally and externally. This will take form at larger spatial scales, as well as through tangible, graspable objects that serve as a necessary counterpoint.

At the same time, I am focusing more closely on what resists representation altogether, not simply on what

has not yet been expressed. This is what I call the untold. These are forms of experience that remain active in perception and memory without ever stabilising into language or structured narratives. Mythologies continue to play a role here, offering a way to approach these experiences without fixing them.

What emerges from this is a shift in the role of the work itself, moving from representation toward manifestation. It is no longer about depicting thought, but about constructing conditions in which thought can express itself and be felt in the process.

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BOOK 17 © 2026
Printed in April 2025
PROMPT MAGAZINE®

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PUBLISHER: PROMPT MEDIA S.R.L.S. - PADUA - ITALY
IT 05709750284

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