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Chiara Ciociola / **english editor** > Rachel O'Dwyer / **design** > Carvalhais, Cruz,
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Near Future Laboratories



Brendan Howell



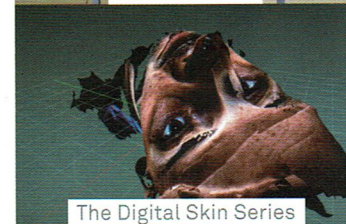
Julian Priest



Jason Kahn



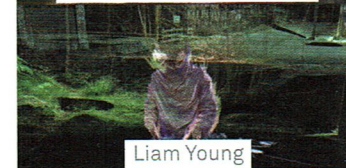
Robert Pravda



The Digital Skin Series



Maigret and Roszkowska



Liam Young



Cinema Lascado

> **The Digital Skin Series, the stranger in my face.**

As a format, the digital portrait poses many different questions about self-representation, most of them related to the ephemeral nature of digital matter. A potential yet perennial changeability gives it the special quality of being an abstract more than an archival medium, one that is subjected to infinite transformations while retaining the essential visual elements that allow us to still recognise it as a portrait. Furthermore, the accumulation of pictures of ourselves and also of randomly appearing people in our public pictures or selfies (in a sort of endless accidental "photobombing") is something that is not always easy to cope with. In this scenario, there are plenty of pictures of us that we will never see or be aware of laying on other people's hard disks and screens, probably unnoticed and obviously untagged.

"The Digital Skin Series" by Emilio Vavarella seems to be placed at the intersection between these two trajectories. The artist used a 3D scanner to construct an accurate three-dimensional model of his face. He then used a prototype camera to shoot HD portraits of strangers. Finally he applied these portraits to his digital skull, as if it was a new digital layer. The clash between the classic two-dimensional shots and the three-dimensional underlying model produces an aesthetically disturbing result, while still maintaining the essential elements that allow the portrayed person to be recognised. The distorted somatic traits and the 3D matrix and axis the artists uses as background remind us of the machine behind the process, but the skin/hair/eyes/mouth/ hi-res details all call for a simulated proximity and an intimacy that the proportional dissonance refuses. What remains is a sense of anthropological displacement in our abilities to see and recognise, a testament of something unknown at its earliest stage.

picture: Emilio Vavarella, Kobi (The Digital Skin Series), 2016. Archival inkjet print on metallic paper. X:150; Y:115 cm



