
PRESS RELEASE

Galerie Stadt Sindelfingen, Marktplatz 1, 71063 Sindelfingen

Galerie Stadt Sindelfingen

Hannah Eckstein

Director

To the editors

Olia Lialina

online since 1996

Exhibition Opening: 27. June 2026, 6 pm

Duration: 28 June – 11 October 2026

Dear members of the press,

From 28 June to 11 October 2026, Galerie Stadt Sindelfingen presents Olia Lialina's solo exhibition *online since 1996*, offering a comprehensive insight into the practice of the net art pioneer through works spanning the past 30 years. Having discovered the internet as an artistic medium in the 1990s, Lialina belongs to the first generation of net artists who utilised the technical structures of the web to create browser-based works that played a key role in establishing an entirely new artistic medium and a new immateriality in art.

From an early stage, she explored the narrative possibilities of the web through works such as *My Boyfriend Came Back From The War* (1996) and *Agatha Appears* (1997), while simultaneously challenging users to engage interactively. Both works are structured in a way that their narratives unfold through clicking hyperlinks, transforming "viewers" from passive observers into active participants essential to the work itself.

The manifestations and phenomena of an online culture that was only just beginning to emerge and develop its own structures and modes of existence in the 1990s and 2000s also lie at the heart of Olia Lialina's artistic practice. Like a digital archaeologist, she archives and preserves the aesthetic potential of these early internet years in works and series such as *Give Me Time/This Page is No More, Lossless* (2018), *Treasure Trove* (2017), and *Body Class Pimp* (2016).

The two-channel slide projector installation *Give Me Time/This Page is No More* pays tribute to the efforts of 1990s web users who enthusiastically created their first homepages but were struggling to keep them updated, while the LED panels of the installation *Lossless* display animated GIFs from the online platform Blingee.com, which in the 2000s primarily targeted young users and enabled them to create glittering images and stickers to upload and share on social networks such as MySpace.

Treasure Trove brings these glittering GIFs together in a digital collage encountered as a sensory-overload 360° projection in the museum's octagonal extension. Ultimately, the

collage forms a visually striking accumulation of individual creativity that emerged online during this period, characterised by a highly idiosyncratic yet distinctive aesthetic.

Meanwhile, *Body Class Pimp* (2016), a series of prints on acrylic glass, explores the self-presentation of young people on the Dutch social media platform Hyves, which enjoyed exceptional popularity between 2004 and 2013. The works demonstrate how users developed individual profiles through the creative design of backgrounds and images, thereby shaping their online identities. However, due to increasing competition from Facebook, Hyves ceased operations in 2013, and its individualised profiles were replaced by the standardised and widely recognisable corporate design of Facebook profile pages.

Works such as these demonstrate that the web initially functioned as a decentralised, heterogeneous, and democratic space that both encouraged and depended upon users' creativity and individual forms of expression. It was only through its co-optation by commercial interests, coupled with the premise of "user-friendliness", that the sleek interfaces characterising today's internet came to dominate.

Olia Lialina's practice therefore consistently carries an underlying media critique, revealing what usually remains hidden. In works such as *Summer* (2013), *Best Effort Network* (2015), and *Self-Portrait*, she examines the technical and political conditions of the web and their influence on our perception of digital space. While *Summer* plays with the fragility of internet connections and *Best Effort Network* renders processes of data transmission perceptible, *Self-Portrait* reveals different layers of the internet and its protocols. The work employs three browsers across three screens, each displaying different parts of the same image: a conventional browser, the anonymous browser Tor, and a peer-to-peer browser like Agregore. The simultaneous presentation of the same image across these different network layers creates a fragmented portrait of the artist with subtle variations, illustrating the complexity and alterity of digital connections.

Olia Lialina's practice thus ultimately constitutes a call for users to empower themselves by exploring, engaging with, and understanding the technical mechanisms underlying digital interfaces, thereby reclaiming the free and decentralised nature of the World Wide Web.

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Opening hours:
Mo – Fr 10 am – 6 pm | Sa, So, holidays 10 am – 5 pm
Free Entry.