

## **Still Life VR artwork by Chiara Passa 2019.**

*Still Life* is an installation that exists simultaneously as a physical and virtual environment.

The project reflects on natural processes and on the historical tradition of still life in art, questioning what can truly be considered dead in nature and what remains alive within artistic representation. Through virtual reality, the work constructs a vibrant object-oriented environment in which landscapes, paintings and everyday objects form a dynamic ecosystem surrounding the spectator.

The digital environment was created using photogrammetry and 3D scanning techniques, followed by the manipulation of maps and textures to reorganize real objects within a virtual spatial system. While wearing the VR headset, visitors can interact with elements of the installation by touching real objects physically placed in the exhibition space, such as flowers, artificial animals, plants, rocks, shells, books, glasses, jewellery or vases. This interaction creates a layered perceptual experience in which physical and virtual objects mirror and transform one another.

At the center of the gallery a soft sculptural terrain evokes a synthetic landscape: a tactile topography that visitors can climb and sit within. This padded surface acts as a physical threshold between real and virtual space. Wearing VR headsets, participants enter a still life world that expands the sculptural ground into an evolving ecosystem populated by hybrid objects and environments.

A ceiling-mounted projection maps the VR environment onto the sculptural terrain, transforming the surface into a living interface between physical and digital space. Visitors waiting to use the headset can observe the virtual ecology unfolding in real time. The installation therefore operates on two levels simultaneously: an intimate virtual journey and a collective physical viewing space.

The soft terrain anchors the body while the virtual environment dissolves architectural boundaries. Visitors experience a dual condition: physically grounded within a shared sculptural landscape while perceptually navigating a digital ecology. Individual perception and communal presence coexist within the same installation.

Technically, the work combines sculptural terrain, projection mapping and headset-based VR. The padded landscape supports collective gathering and prolonged inhabitation, while the mapped projection maintains a continuous public interface with the virtual world.

*Still Life* forms part of a broader VR research project that I began in 2015 and that continues an artistic investigation into space and digital media initiated in 1997. Through this work, the historical tradition of European still life is reinterpreted within the ontology of virtual space, where objects are no longer static elements but active presences within a continuously evolving environment.

*Still Life* is composed of three large scenes containing approximately fifty interactive objects. Some objects can be grabbed and deformed, triggering specific sound effects, while others can be climbed, activating particle systems and visual responses.

The transition between scenes occurs naturally: by moving toward the edge of the environment and letting the body fall beyond it, the viewer is transported into a new scenario.

The work is structured as a spatial journey inspired by the idea of a labyrinth. To explore the entire environment, the spectator must choose certain paths while others remain inaccessible or difficult to reach. The experience therefore unfolds through a continuous navigation of ascending and descending routes.

Rather than functioning as a game, *Still Life* proposes a contemplative exploration. There are no competitive actions, no shooting or goal-driven mechanics. Instead, the installation invites the viewer to wander through the environment, discovering objects and spaces through movement, perception and interaction.

## Technical requirements

Custom foam sculptural pillow-terrain; ceiling-mounted projector for video mapping; USB playback video extract of Still Life (30 min. loop); 2 or more Meta Quest VR headsets.

Watch a 360 video sneak-peek here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccBOA8inkpU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is-sLWPZzaw>

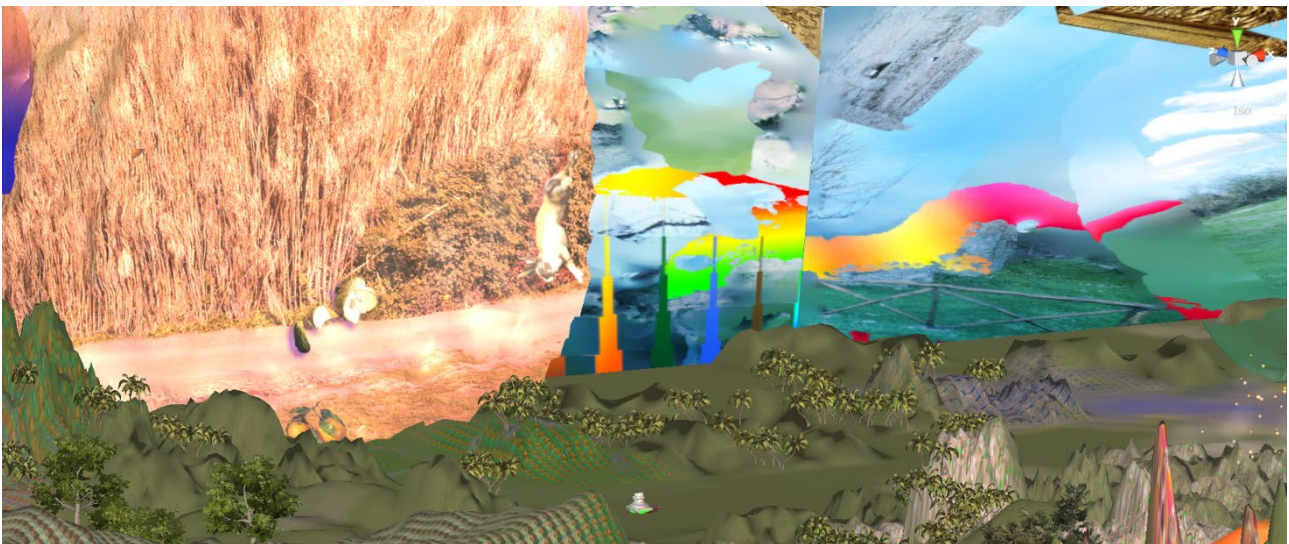
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oghnMPrMTds>

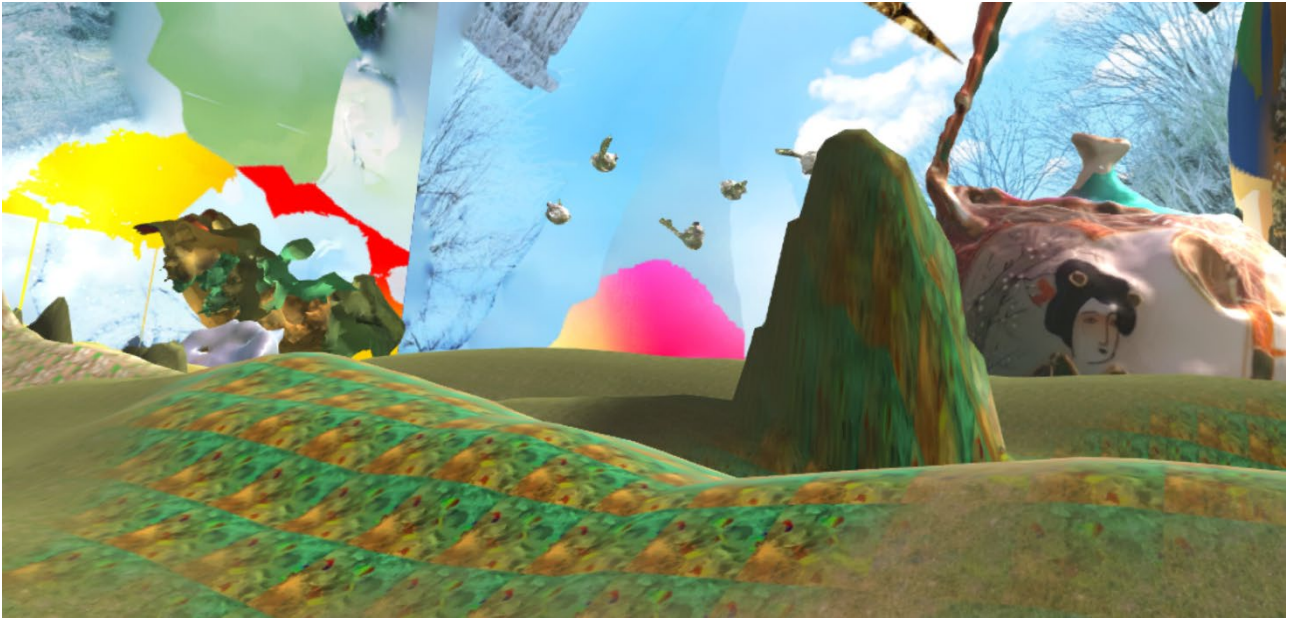
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zBCo2VYM4o> Still Life AR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MV8s9O6-4rU>

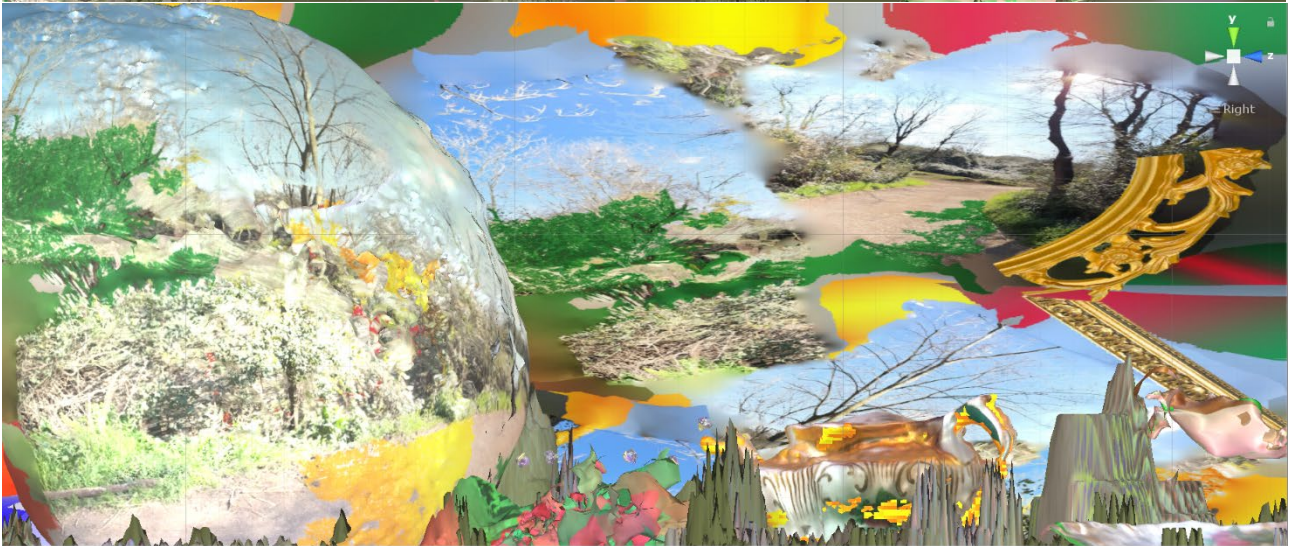
AR sculptures [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8\\_khKP-tDY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8_khKP-tDY) and

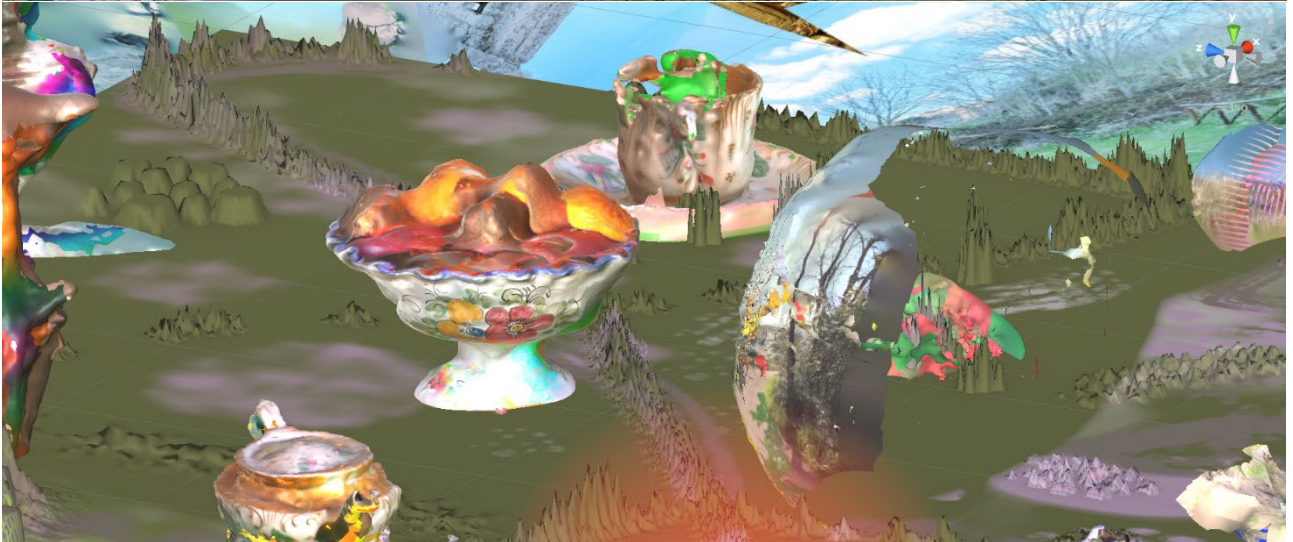
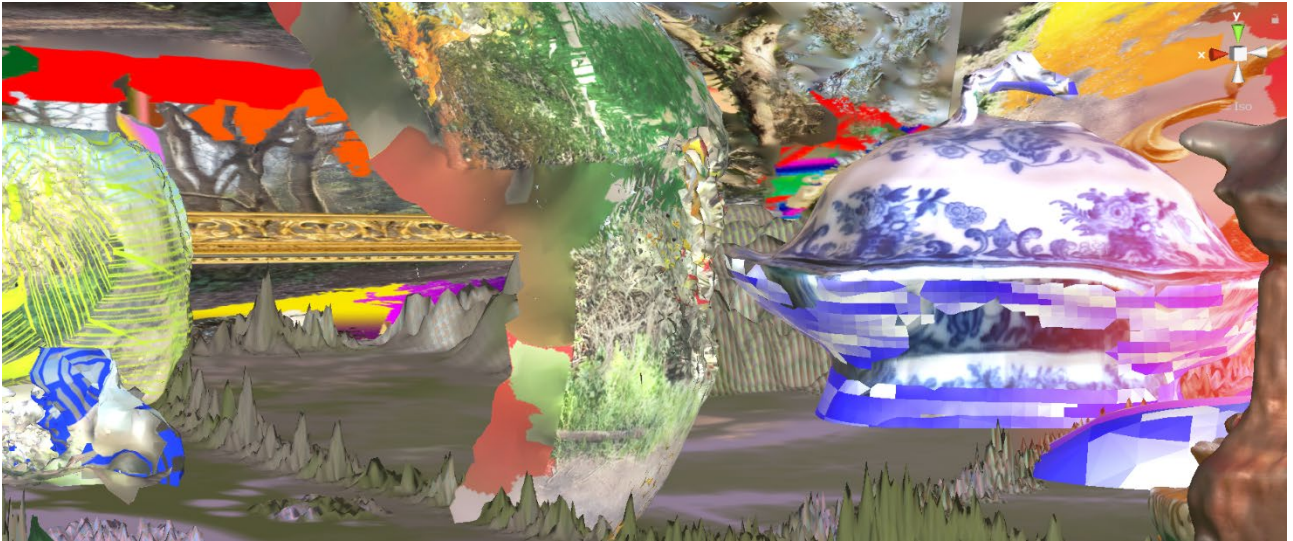
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzbZKTHgsMc>

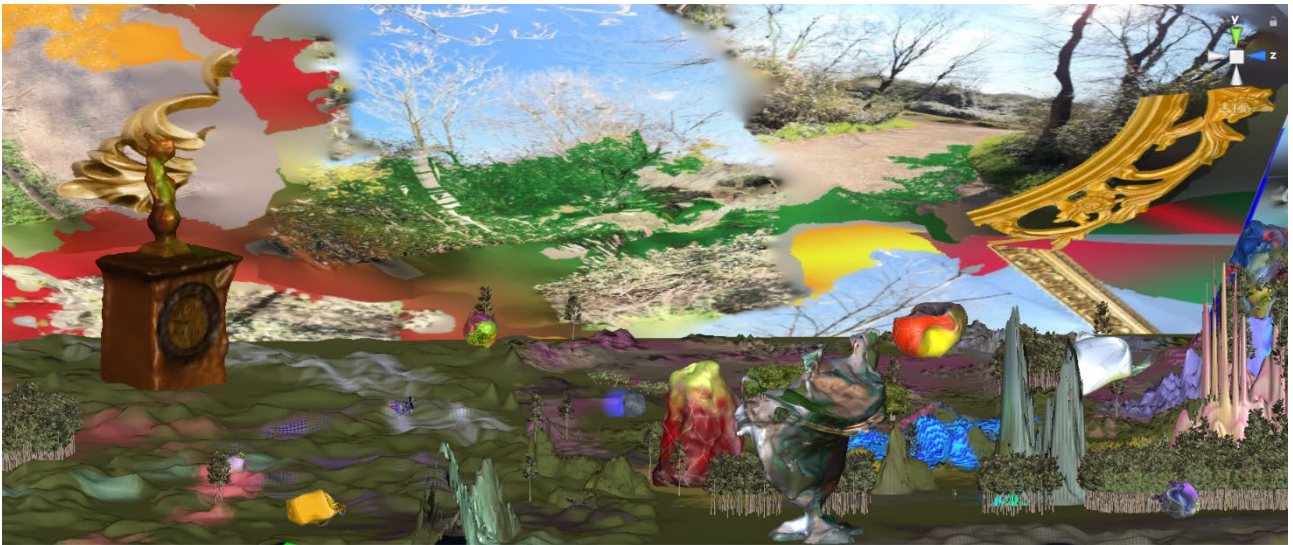


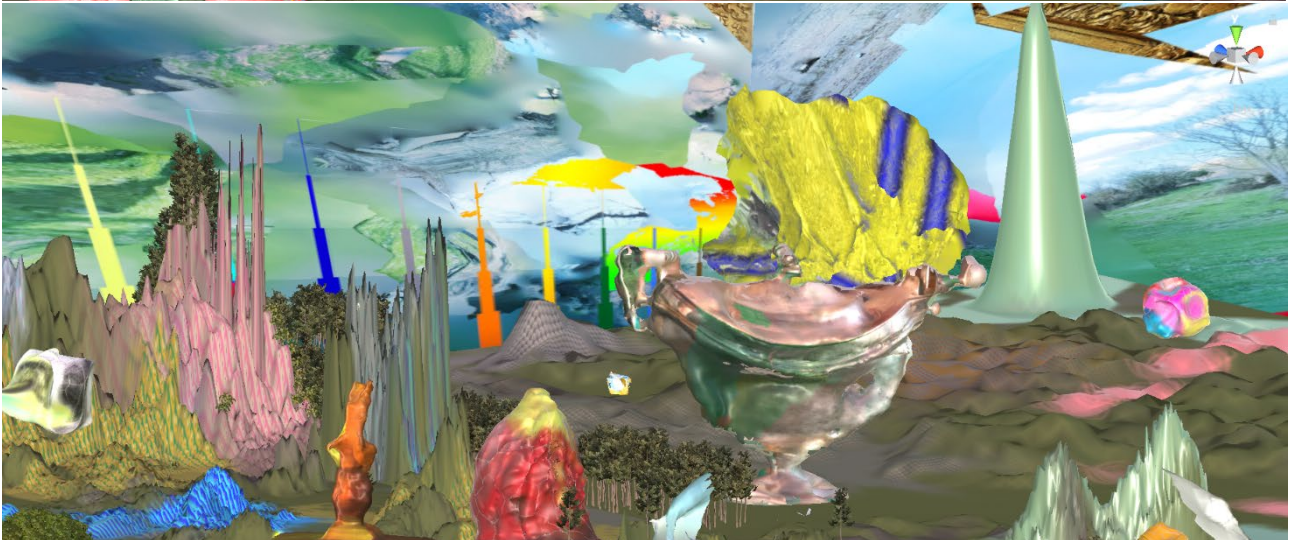
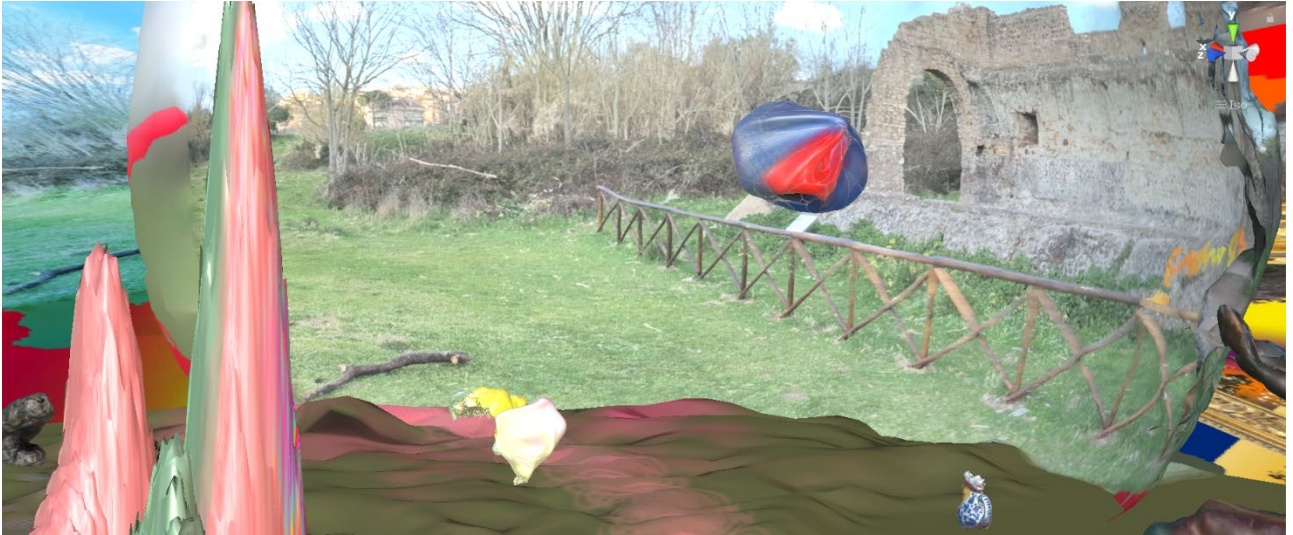


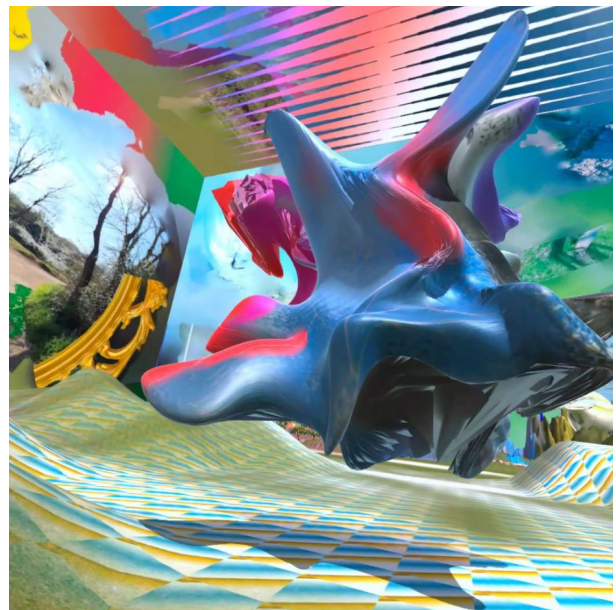
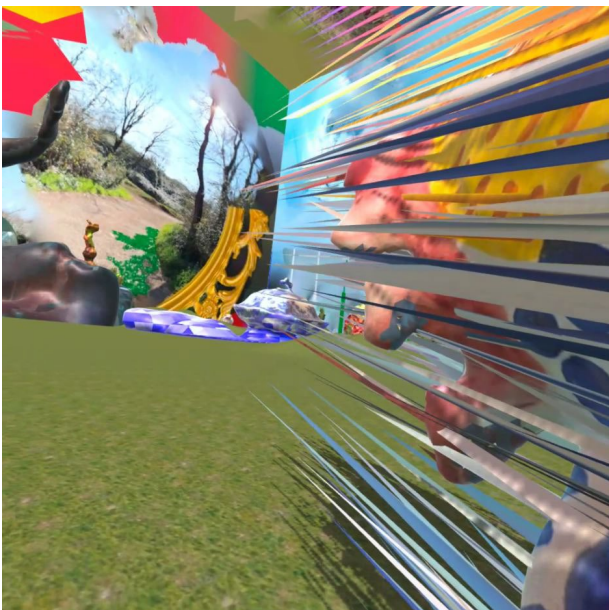
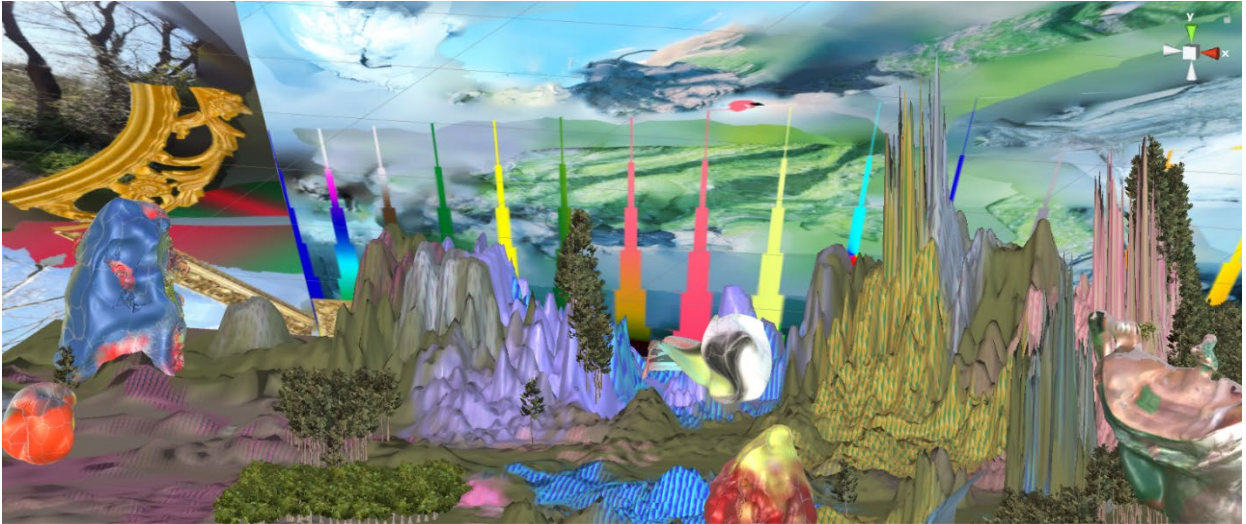


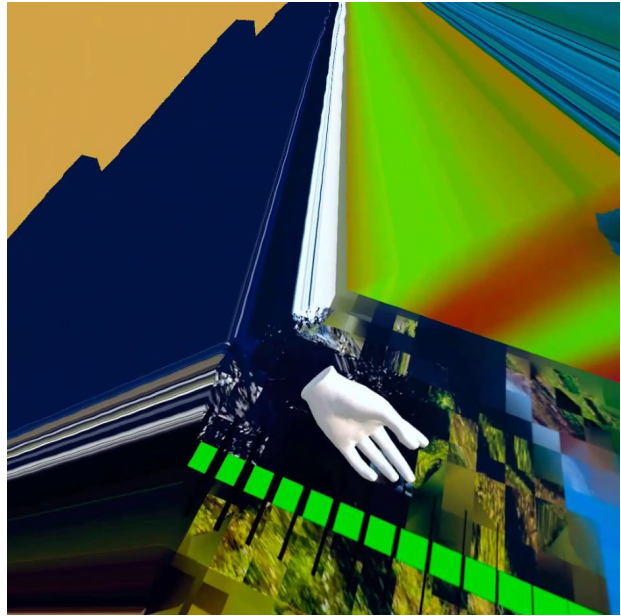












*Stills from Still Life VR by Chiara Passa 2019.*



*Possible shapes of the pillow to realize with foam. Beamer projection over the pillow.*

**Chiara Passa**, media artist exploring the digital dimensions of architecture and sculpture through augmented and virtual reality since 1997. I hold an M.F.A. from the Fine Arts Academy of Rome and a master's in Audio-Visual Media from the Faculty of Modern Literature. My artistic research is rooted in the mid-1990s revival of immersive art, where I explore software as a creative medium, from developing augmented reality applications to creating immersive, interactive virtual reality installations. My practice is deeply connected to a lifelong fascination with space as a mutable entity: a dimension that can be reshaped and reimagined through the language of informatics.

**My work has been internationally exhibited** from galleries, festivals, conferences, museums and institutions, including: «RomaEuropa Festival» Ex Mattatoio, Roma (2025); «META-PAN» Palazzo Arte Napoli (2024); «Object (RE) Oriented Reality» Solo show at Panke gallery Berlin (2023); «Still Life» Solo show at Zabłudowicz Collection Museum, London (2021-2022); «MADATAC XI» Bienal Virtual de Arte de los Nuevos Medios Digitales, Madrid (2020); «Object Oriented Space». Solo show at Museum MLAC Rome (2019); «Virtual Natives – Sculpture», Roehrs and Boetsch gallery, Zurich (2019); «Oslo Night show», HEK Museum Basel (2018); «InSonic» immersive art show, ZKM | Center for Art and Media Museum, Karlsruhe (2017); «The Ways of something». Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016-2017); «From live architecture: Dimensioning», mostra personale Furtherfield gallery, London (2016); «Off Biennale Cairo» (2015-2016); «ISEA Disruption» exhibition at Vancouver Art Gallery. (2015); «Morphos», Vortex Dome - immersive media, Los Angeles (2014); «Media Art Histories IV - RENEW» conference, Riga. (2013). «FILE | Electronic Language International Festival», São Paulo. (2011); «Electrofringe - festival of new media art», Newcastle, Australia. (2008); «BizArtCenter», Shanghai (2005); «MACRO – Museo d'Arte Contemporanea», Roma (2004), 11° Biennale of young artists of Europe and the Mediterranean countries: «Cosmos - a sea of art», Athens. (2003); XIV Quadriennale. Palazzo Reale, Napoli (2003); «48a Biennale di Venezia» (with Oreste group), Venezia (1999); «Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa», Venezia (1999).

<https://www.chiarapassa.it/resume-chiara-passa.html> & <https://www.chiarapassa.it/cv-english.html>

Full CV with prizes, residencies, solo and group exhibitions, talks, presentations, etc.