Technological imaginaries framed as Apocryphal Technologies not only describe how technologies are “invested with utopian aspirations that prevent us from sensing legitimate disappointments, frustrations or direct malfunctions”, as the Letter from the Editors to this issue introduces: they do not “work” despite being widely held and in circulation as “functional”, and therefore, by framing them as apocryphal, they are labelled as suspicious and fraudulent, like much of the Apocryphal literature expelled from the canons of history. By being framed as imaginaries, constructions of the mind, they also dissuade the seekers of factual truthiness from looking for the possibility of actual non-human presences and agendas in the technologies that we find to be ever deeper woven into the fabric of what we perceive as the world around us. This can’t be right, right? Apocryphal technologies become a corrective lens to realign misunderstandings of innovative and novel technologies, like smartphones, as they exist on a vector of innovation that moves infinitely onward and forward. It argues us out of seeing possible other powers and intelligences, of non-human or un-civil origin, beings at play in our world ever more determined by interconnected minerals and algorithmic learning agents.

Karin Ferrari’s research not only debunks and reconnects the claims of designers and engineers behind the latest Apple smart device to the unconscious and undocumented. Also, it allows us to establish a connection to an undercurrent in which slick tech gadgets create entirely otherworldly connections. “What can we do with this thing?” becomes “What is this thing doing with us?” What we increasingly rely on to survive may, in fact, depend on us to manifest its vitality.
Magical Portal is not a critique to disenchant hyperbolic Apple-ad-speak. The video also questions a superficial belief in ourselves, as technologically advanced and intellectually reflected users, as truly in the know about the basic truth of origin of an organic light emitting diode multi-touch microwave spectrum gigaflop telecomputing slab in our hands. The contradiction between knowing and rejecting something is precisely a point of connection: by way of the cinematic, ecstatic truth, Ferrari’s video does not render the faux as fact, but instead tunes into our desires — that we might, for once, be allowed to believe what we truly feel.

In contrast to many info-blobs weighing down the world wide web, this video has not been made by an anonymous algorithmic entity or a think-tank sub-contractor. The artist Karin Ferrari is a medium of a persisting extra-modern curiosity: Do I believe this could be true? And more importantly: Does she? Her work uncovers the insidious relation between knowledge and belief. Is belief guided by analytical assessment preceding acceptance of other ways of knowing, so that I can imagine-to-know, therefore believe, her story to be true? Does the artist believe it to be true because she doesn’t know any better, or because she knows something that I do not? Would I believe someone who knows something that I do not know? What is she reading? What is she smoking? Or perhaps I do not care about the truth, but actually long for the same capacity that allows me to ecstatically connect to a truth beyond a binary of true and false, a kind of knowing that feels like a prolonged moment of truth, like a long now between the breathing in of knowledge and breathing out of judgment? To hold on to a truth of the in-between, in perpetual ambiguity, so that we can make the ultimate choice of whether or not I really need this damned new phone? Click here to buy iPhone Xs for 666.6

—Bernhard Garnicnig