

Hello!

My name is Michael Day, and I'm an artist currently based in Sheffield.

My practice takes in a wide range of media and technologies, and is usually focused on digital technologies, their effects on those who use them, and the potential implications of their increasing ubiquity. I'm studying for a practice-based art PhD at Sheffield Hallam University.

My PhD research looks at the way that attention is experienced and understood in light of the distracting effects of social media and the mobile internet. I'm interested in the experience of distractibility that is a common companion to these new technologies and devices. Mobile devices and software produce new attentional demands by generating huge quantities of information – updates, notifications, messages and so on – that we as users have to find ways to deal with. It's been suggested that this quantity of information is so significant that we often deal with it quasi-autonomously at the margins of our attention rather than in the thematic focus of our attention, and that this is a way of preventing ourselves being overwhelmed and made anxious by it. The sense of anxiety that this level of information can cause is really interesting to me – especially since these devices were supposed to automate our lives and fulfil the promise of 'calm computing'. I am also curious about the uneasy sense of shame that many people feel about those aspects of their identity that they articulate online.

I'm applying for this mentoring scheme because I want to find ways to extend my practical work into more performative realms. Inspired by projects such as Lauren McCarthy and Kyle McDonald's [pplkpr](#) and Circumstance's [A Folded Path](#), I'm seeking ways to allow the viewer to be a more self-reflexive performer of the work, rather than an audience to a pre-staged performance. The domain of mediated social interaction seems like a relevant place to site such performances, but my inexperience of devising performance, combined with my limited experience working with mobile platforms, has made it hard for me to develop work in this area. I am hopeful that the mentoring scheme will help me with the process of devising work, with a focus on creating experiences that are accessible to audiences but that also adequately embrace the complexity of my area of interest. I'd also appreciate help managing the interplay between ideas and their technical feasibility.

I feel that mentoring from more experienced practitioners in the field would help me develop this side of my practice sustainably and strategically. I'm hopeful that the mentoring scheme will provide a critical voice that has an eye on audience and on the world outside of academia. I want the scheme to help hothouse this area of my practice, enabling me to develop viable ideas and to more confidently bring new works into being.