

Alberto Frigo

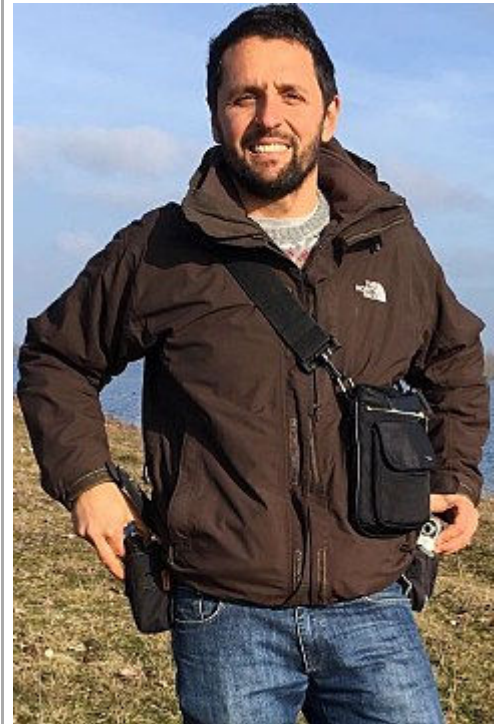
Alberto Frigo (born 21 July 1979 in Asiago) is known for having photographed every object his right hand has used since 24 September 2003. Continuously documenting 36 aspects of reality (e.g., his dreams, the songs he hears, the people he meets, the places he visits, the weather etc.), Frigo intends to create a Rosetta Stone of time to be concluded at 60 years of age, in 2040, after 36 years.^[1]

Erroneously regarded as an early proponent of lifelogging^{[2][3]} Frigo is the founder of Tebahism, a movement advocating the manual stowing of life under threat by political, economic, social as well as religious establishments governed by increasing automation.^{[4][5][6]} Using his tebahist, life-stowing work as an example, Frigo suggests that rather than taking part in the establishment or the anti-establishment, tebahists are to work marginally, documenting life using personalized formulas and predefined containers, the tebahs, Noah's Ark like bricolage to be handed over to future generations for interpretation and life regeneration.^[7]

The most extreme example of self-tracking,^[8] Frigo is the only known person to have digitally documented his life manually and for over fifteen years.^{[9][10][11]} In this respect, Frigo started documenting his life digitally months earlier than the father of lifelogging Gordon Bell, who started wearing his camera only in 2004.^[12] However Frigo's life project and what he defines as Tebahism, differ from lifelogging, Quantified Self and other forms of self-tracking practices using sensors and algorithms to reduce the user's effort. Using no automation, Frigo solely relies on his human faculties to document his life and to communicate it on-line at the 2004-2040 official project web site (<http://2004-2040.com>).^[4]

Within conceptual art and new media art, Frigo's 36 year-long project is a primary example of database aesthetics,^{[13][14]} personal archives^{[15][16][17]} and surveillance art practices.^{[18][19][20]} Academically, he has deployed Tebahism as both a theoretical^[7] as well as a methodological approach to Media studies^[21] and a practice relating to Stoicism.^{[22][23]}

Alberto Frigo



Alberto Frigo in 2017 wearing his equipment

Born	1979 (age 38–39) Asiago, Italy
Known for	Photographing all objects used by his right hand
Website	www.2004-2040.com (http://www.2004-2040.com)

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Life

Alberto Frigo was born in the Italian alps among the Cimbri, a Bavarian minority group. His mother's side of the family were landowners in Santa Rita do Passa Quatro in Brazil, but lost their properties while in Europe during World War I. During World War II Frigo's paternal grandfather was part of Operation Barbarossa in Russia and was one of the few survivors along with his cousin, the Italian neo-realist writer Mario Rigoni Stern.^[24] In 1943 Frigo's grandfather was interned in Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany while his great grandfather died in Tatura concentration camp in Australia.

From the age of two Frigo and his family lived in Montreal where his father became an alcoholic. Following his abuses, Frigo followed his mother back to Italy where she remarried to a surgeon. During this period, at age 16 Frigo began to draw and to write, and went on a year-long exchange in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Back in Italy Frigo enrolled in the University of Architecture in Venice. Later he studied at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, where at the age of 20 he undertook a 9,000 mile road trip. After months of travel he reached Malpais, Costa Rica wearing a poncho filled with his journals. It was in trying to revise these journals that Frigo conceived the need for a digital system to document his dreams, thoughts and ideas without the need for post-editing.^[4]

Since his American experience Frigo began moving from one media institution to another in order to develop his digital system. Living in an abandoned school in the Netherlands, he finally reached Sweden. On trying to get technical help at Chalmers University he grew frustrated with technology and began documenting his activities manually using an off-the-shelf camera. While working part-time as a media art teacher and researcher at the Interactive Institute and Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, between 2004 and 2008 Frigo tried living as a farmer, planning the building of a shrine to host his project in a forest near Uppsala. After a dispute with the locals, understanding their anti-immigrant sentiments, in 2009 Frigo moved to China where he taught at Tongji University. Later he moved to the United States where he worked as a project leader at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Upon returning to Europe, in 2014 Frigo bought a property near his native town in the Italian alps where he now plans the building of the shrine.^[4]



Alberto Frigo in 2000 after a 9.000 miles journey across America

Thought

Frigo's theoretical point of departure is based on a distinction between effortless and effortful. Beyond discussions on power, gender, race, globalization and human rights, Frigo attributes to automation the crisis that contemporary society is experiencing.^[4] According to Frigo, it is the automation of social, political, economical, religious and intellectual frameworks to reduce the human effort and, in turn, annihilate its nature. In this respect, Frigo's main proposal is to act as automation and, in this effort, reconnect to human nature.^[25]

In his manual effort of both working and examining himself, Frigo differentiates from common lifeloggers or social media users. He does not automate the process of capturing, organizing and retrieving his life, but he accomplishes this process manually. By "becoming both the sensor and the algorithm", programming his own behavior, Frigo avoids the privacy implications related to lifelogging turning his operation into what he defines as *Tebahism*, the manual stowing of life within predefined containers in view of a technology driven crisis threatening human life.^[26]

In this respect Frigo's line of thought comes close to that of Marshal McLuhan who accounts on the following parable:^[7]

As Tzu-Gung was traveling [...] he saw an old man working in his vegetable garden. He had dug an irrigation ditch. The man would descend into a well, fetch up a vessel of water in his arms and pour it out into the ditch. While his efforts were tremendous the results appeared to be very meager. Tzu-Gung said. "There is a way whereby you can irrigate a hundred ditches in one day [...] Would you not like to hear of it?" [...] Then anger rose up in the old man's face and he said, "I have heard my teacher say that whoever uses machines does all his work like a machine. He who does his work like a machine grows a heart like a machine, and he who carries the heart of a machine in his breast loses his simplicity. He who has lost his simplicity becomes unsure in the strivings of his soul..."^[27]



Tebah - TBH - Ethymology of the word archive as conceived by Frigo

Frigo thus uses the term "Tebahism" to identify archival practices that are more precarious than the dictatorial archival practices advocated by Jacques Derrida. He uses the Egyptian word "tebah", used in the Masoretic bible to signify both Noah's Ark and Moses' basket as life-savers. Beyond the biblical reference Frigo points at the flood myth as a narrative spread in all cultures worldwide. In line with Jacques Ellul, Frigo sees the work of "tebahists" as shamans developing techniques which could enable society to avoid the consequences of new technological changes. His historical examples are: Jacopo Pontormo's diary, Ferdinand Cheval's ideal palace, Dziga Vertov's film, Janina Turek's diaries, Vivian Maier's boxes and George Perec's novels but also relatively unknown tebahists such as John Mallon Waterman, Danielle Roberts, Morris Villarroel and Jacek Smolicki. Frigo then looks at these original and marginal media practitioners adopting the following thoughts by Ellul:^[7]

It has not been sufficiently emphasized that technique has evolved along two distinct paths. There is the concrete technique of homo faber—man the maker—to which we are accustomed, and which poses the problems we have normally studied. There is also the technique, of a more or less spiritual order, which we call magic. [...] Magic developed along with other techniques as an expression of man's will to obtain certain results of a spiritual order. To attain them, man made use of an aggregate of rites, formulas, and procedures which, once established, do not vary. Strict adherence to form is one of the characteristics of magic: forms and rituals, masks which never vary, the same kind of prayer wheels, the same ingredients for mystical drugs, for formulae for divination, and so on."^[28]

In his definition of *Tebahism* Frigo stresses the idea of effortful and manual self-tracking approaches. In his research then he looks at *tebahists*^[29] as life-savers in antithesis with common life-logging and Quantified Self technologies bringing life to extinction through the use of automation.^[7] After conducting reception studies in a barn in the alps, Frigo concluded that *Tebahism* is a form of syncretism and, in line with Marshal McLuhan's thinking, it is an ark stowed by marginal individuals to overcome the crisis characteristic of every new technological paradigm as quoted below:^[7]

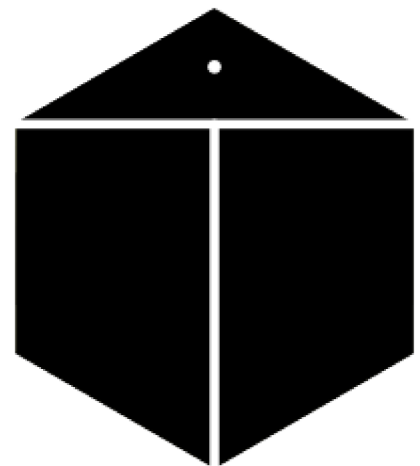
In the history of human culture there is no example of a conscious adjustment of the various factors of personal and social life to new extensions except in the puny and peripheral efforts of artists. The artist picks up the message of cultural and technological challenge decades before its transforming impact occurs. He, then, builds models or Noah's arks for facing the change that is at hand. ^[30]

In his attempts to describe this work in a scientific context, Frigo has repeatedly explained his point of view and that is that contemporary life is filled with unnecessary procedures, often only meant for the sake of social security and surveillance. He therefore claimed that his documenting activity is only an additional procedure to enforce the self. In this respect, contrary to common belief, the enforcement of the self conducted by Frigo can be viewed in Foucauldian terms as a "Technology of the Self", a Stoic practice that enables individual to live according to nature and become more just and adapt to govern as in the case of the self-enforcing practices carried out by Franklin Benjamin and Mahatma Gandhi.^[7]

Under this line of thought, Frigo links his philosophy to 12 Stoic principles he has derived from the teaching of Seneca the Younger, Gaius Musonius Rufus and Marcus Aurelius:^[22]

1. Be laborious;
2. Do not fear;
3. Live modestly;
4. Be grateful;
5. Keep above the crowd;
6. Follow nature;
7. Value time;
8. Behold virtue;
9. Block vices;
10. Examine yourself;
11. Disobey the unnatural;
12. Stick to one goal.

The elaboration of these principles has allowed Frigo to orient himself in more contemporary thinking. While closest to Transcendentalism and Christian anarchism embracing thinkers such as Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, Jacques Ellul, Frigo refuses to dilute his thinking in the dominant Marxist intellectual establishment, a reason for which he considers himself a partisan of both the art and the academic world. He therefore feels closest to the Stoics opposing the rise of the Roman Empire and thinking in terms of minor human republics. In an increasingly imperialistic world, dominated by media platforms and large unions, he therefore clearly sides with Leopold Kohr and E. F. Schumacher promoting small, self-reliant and autonomous regions. *Tebahism* in this respect can be seen as a Stoic attempt to stow the potential of life in view of the crisis brought forward by the increasing imperialistic attitudes of the contemporary Epicurean establishments.^[31]



Tebahism Symbol representing both a T and an ark seeing from the front as designed by Frigo

On-going Works

Since 2003, Alberto Frigo has embarked on an ambitious project, 2004-2040 (<http://2004-2040.com/>), to compile a manual record of the reality experienced by a human being of the new millennium.^{[32][33]} As of 12 October 2016, Frigo's documentation is 12 years into his 36-year project.^[7]

- 330,032 activities by photographing the objects his right hand uses
- 14,367 dreams
- 6,724 songs that he heard and recognized
- 992 portraits of new acquaintances
- 286 square meters of discarded objects picked up from the sidewalk
- 1,513 news of casualties
- 20,861 films of public spaces where he sits
- 9,968 drawings of ideas
- 2,763 recordings of thoughts while walking alone
- 1,704 shapes of clouds

While learning to be self-sufficient, learning a broad variety of skills, Frigo intends to spend at least one month of his 36 year-long project on every subcontinent of the earth. So far he has already lived in North America, Europe, East Asia and South Asia, impersonating the life of common people there.^[34] Starting with tracking everything his right (dominant) hand has used,^[35] he has slowly added on different tracking and documentation projects. At present, he is engaged in 36 different works, 18 of which are defined as Inputs and 18 of which are defined as Outputs.^[7]

The 18 Inputs of Frigo's projects can be divided into three sextets. The first sextet is called "The Inner Self" and comprises of a record of his activities, his dreams, the songs he recognizes etc., the second sextet is called "The Other Self" and comprises a record of the public places where he sits, the trash he finds on the side-walk, the people he meets etc, the last sextet is called "The Utter Self" and comprises a record of intensity of the wind, the temperature, the shapes he recognizes in clouds etc. The Outputs are 18 works elaborating on the project with contextual data such as that provided by journal entries, documentaries, publications, exhibitions etc.^[36]

Following is a description of some of Frigo's 36 works:

01 Images of the artifacts used by the main hand

Since 24 September 2003 Frigo has photographed every object his right hand has used. For this purpose he uses with his left hand an out of production gadget camera. The following rules are applied to help him identify when it is time to photograph:^[37]

1. During a life-event every object the dominant-hand uses is photographed once and while used;
2. If an object of the same type is the following item to be used, this object is not photographed unless the life-event changes;
3. A life-event changes as soon as the dominant-hand uses a different object in a different space.

Every day Frigo takes on average 76 pictures which, at the end of the project in 2040, will amount to one million. Every month he creates a 900 by 300 millimeters photographic panel with different lines representing different days. By positioning the 12 months of the year in a row, by the end of the project he will have achieved a perfect square of 1080 by 1080 millimeters (36 by 36 feet).^[38]

Conceptually Frigo started carrying out this work as a way to generate a DNA code of the activities of a human being over his lifetime. Inspired by Marcel Duchamp, Frigo developed this work thinking of objects as the ready-made bookmarks marking the events of an individual's life. Rather than recording life 24/7 with all the privacy implications related to it, Frigo's photographic record of his right hand, only provides the hints of life which viewers of the photographs will have to actively interpret, as in the work of photographer Sophie Calle but also as proposed by ancient combinatoric and mnemonic techniques.^[7]

In this respect Frigo has recovered idea from the Gulliver's Travels in which the author Jonathan Swift has one of his characters to suggest that objects should be carried about and used as a form of human communication and as a way to avoid miscommunication. Similarly Frigo has been inspired by the Oulipo movement and particularly by George Perec's use of objects to generate the novel Life a User's Manual.^[39]

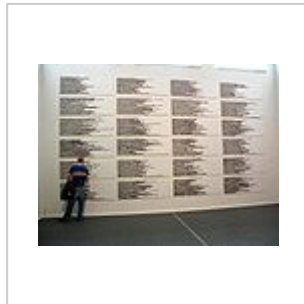
Contrary to popular belief, Frigo claims that his photographing activity comes naturally to him and that the people around are soon used to his photographic behavior. He claims that the left hand photographing the right hand using an object acts on its own accord. Frigo started this work before smart phones and social media and only initially was questioned about his photographing. Given that his camera is an old pencam without a screen, the now obsolete device looks more like a diabetes monitoring device. Frigo aligns his photographing procedures to that of more socially marginal individuals committed to physical and psychological endurance—in particular, Tehching Hsieh with his one-year-long photographing of every hour on the hour performance.^[7]



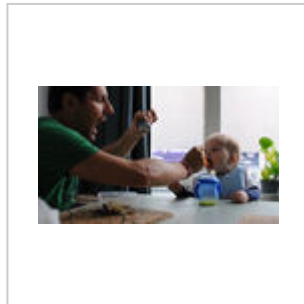
Month 163 of all the objects used by the right hand



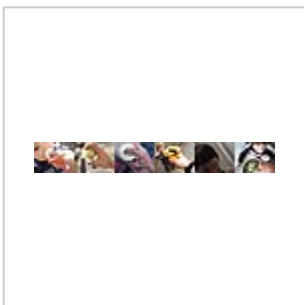
One of Frigo's left hand cameras



Frigo's exhibition in 2006 at OK Centrum Linz, Austria



Frigo feeding a kid and photographing his right hand



Frigo's right hand interacting with an object

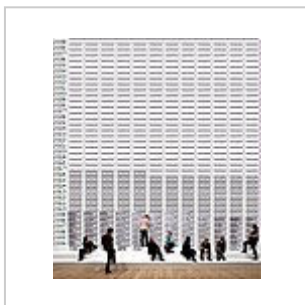
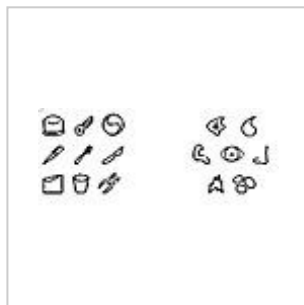


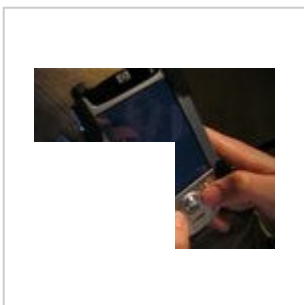
Illustration of the final exhibit in a 36 by 36 feet wall



2005 documentary showing Frigo photographing



Icons used to label each photograph combining two symbols



Frigo labelling each image using a binary code in 2005

To browse the on-line archive related to this work visit here (http://2004-2040.com/01_ht/116.htm#bottom).

02 Stories of the dreams remembered when awaking

Every day Frigo remembers approximately three dreams. The amount can vary from 1 to 12 daily dreams according to the stability of his everyday life. Every month Frigo will have written 100 dreams in a 450 by 600 millimeter book which at the end of the project in 2040 will comprise 43,200 dreams, making it perhaps the largest dream diary a person has ever recorded. To remember his dreams Frigo makes use of the Art of memory, creating a mental image composed of different symbols representing different dreams. This allows him to store them until he has time to write them down.^[40]

Written using font Bookman Old Style, size 11 each dream is on average 288 characters long and is usually three sentences long, the first one contextualizing the dreamer, the second highlighting a problem and the last sentence resolving it. For example for dream number 15,442 Frigo writes: "I am with an old friend going under a long tunnel. He starts telling me how he has caught the new American president editing his own encyclopedia page online. The edits are actually written on the white painted tunnel and I use my fingers to remove parts of it even though it gets quite dirty."^[40]

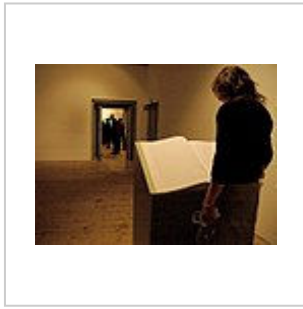
Frigo kept a dream diary since 1996 when he was 17. Initially his dreams were written in Italian on booklets he would make using recycled paper, such as the one he would find in trash bins next to copy machines. Given the low quality of this paper, these written dreams have almost disappeared. While an art student in Vancouver, Frigo experimented with dreams in public performances. On one occasion he locked himself in the library window where he slept, wrote his dreams on the window and then invited passersby inside to interpret his dreams with him.^[40]

Only later, Frigo begun digitizing his dreams and including them as part of his project. Initially he tried to combine the dreams with the photographic record of his activities but then decided to keep the dreams as a separate work dismissing also an early attempt to categorize them based on places, time, people involved and kind. Contrary to common belief, it was not so much his photographing or filming activities infringing on his private life, as it was a journalist writing about his sexual dreams that coincided with the deterioration of Frigo's relationship with his first wife.^[40]

Conceptually, Frigo is fascinated with providing humanity with a record of quasi-infinite human situations depicted in his dreams. Rather than giving any symbolic value to them, Frigo sees his dreaming as rather a filtering of the reality he experiences and especially the increasingly more ubiquitous media he consumes. In addition, Frigo sees dreaming as yet one of the strongholds untouched by the technological monitoring. While he is aware that a record of dreams per se is boring and it ought to be refined as in the case of Akira Kurosawa, his fascination lies in providing humanity with an entire record of dreams to freely juxtapose to the other records he provides.^[40]



Month 144 of dreams



Dream book presented at the Uppsala Art Museum in 2009



Frigo in 2000 dreaming and interpreting his dreams in a public library window in Vancouver



Early interface developed by Frigo to categorize his dreams



Early interface developed by Frigo to interpret his dreams

To browse the on-line archive related to this work visit [here \(http://2004-2040.com/02_ht/116.htm#bottom\)](http://2004-2040.com/02_ht/116.htm#bottom).

03 Notations of the songs recognized while heard

Frigo annotates on his mobile all the songs he hears. The interludes of these songs are later transcribed on a musical sheet of 225 by 1200 millimeters. Recognizing on average 240 songs a month, it is estimated that, at the end of his project in 2040, Frigo will have transcribed over 100,000 songs. Currently, Frigo has recomposed the interlude of over 2000 songs. Based on the list of the songs he hears, he copies and pastes them onto a musical sheet using composer software.^[40]

After establishing both a record of his awoken life and that of his sleeping life, at the beginning of his 36-year project Frigo began thinking of a third project, this time to record an aspect of his life that was more related to emotions and was not visual or textual like the first two projects, but musical. He thus commenced to keep track of the songs he hears as a way to describe his emotions.^[40]

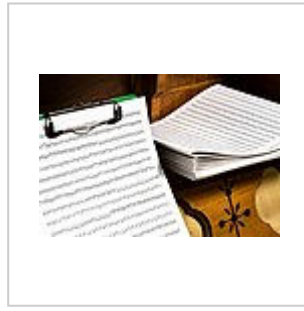
He has limited himself to keep track of and transcribe only those songs which he has heard and recognized. He thus began to keep a record of the songs heard in public and private spaces. Initially, the title of each song was written on a piece of paper and later transcribed using a family piano. Later Frigo began annotating the songs he hears on his mobile to then find the melody using a melodica.^[40]



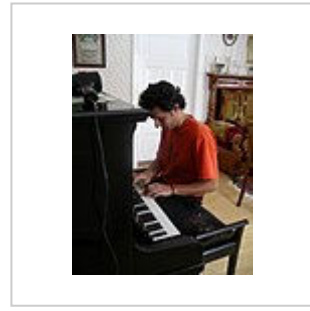
Month 84 of songs heard and recognized



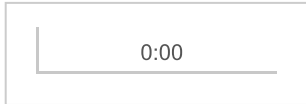
Notations exhibited at the Uppsala Art museum



Closeup of Frigo's musical sheet



Frigo recomposing the songs heard and recognized in 2007



Staffan Bjorklund performing Frigo's notations in 2009

04 Mists of the smells inhaled in the atmosphere

Daily, Frigo grades the overall air quality using the following values: 01, 02, 03, 04, 06, 12 corresponding to 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100% of air pollution. Such daily values are later recreated in a physical context sequentially and for 30 seconds each by a smoke machine; the higher the value, the higher is the intensity of smoke the machine emits. In the physical context then the smoke acts like the incense given out by the priest in a cathedral, yet it is odorless, translating only visually the level of pollution which Frigo is subjected to.^[36]

The recording of the daily air quality started after Frigo spent a year living in Shanghai, China. It was the year preceding the World Expo 2010, and the city was completely under reconstruction for the international event, resulting in a very high level of dust in the air, particularly on his way to work to Tongji University on the other side of town. The generated mist adds a level of mystery in the site as much as many mystical gardens in Chinese cities or as in the installation "Vaporización" by Teresa Margolles.^[7]

05 Uncials of the fables improvised at nighttime

Every month, Frigo improvises a fable. Each fable is 12 A5 pages long. Every evening before falling asleep Frigo writes a page of a fable using no punctuation and letting his subconscious write for him as in an automatic writing mode. Once it is completed, Frigo digitizes a page resulting in approximately 8,000 characters per fable. Frigo selects the main protagonist of each fable in order from the following environments: AIR, TREE, EARTH, GRASS, RIVER, WATER. The resulting fables are presented using LED message boards for the duration of 12 minutes and the environments are produced using different heights and the following color range: red, orange, yellow, green, cyan and purple.^[36]

Following is an extract from the improvised fable number 54: "...IN ALL HER ANGER SHE DIRECTED HER GHOST NAVY SLOWLY THROUGH ALL HUMANS DWELLINGS RIDING OVER A MIST OUR VERY PORPOISE WAS ABLE TO PRODUCE THROUGH HER BACK OPENING AND FURTHER INLAND OUR PORPOISE SHE WENT FOLLOWED BY ALL HER SPECTRAL FLEET NOW FLOATING HER WITHOUT SO MUCH PURPOSE

THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF THE HUMANS TURNING THEM INTO ZOMBIES NOW ALSO ADVANCING BEYOND OUR PORPOISE WITHOUT ANY PURPOSE AND PROCEEDING LIKE THE BIGGEST OF ARMIES INTO UNKNOWN TERRITORIES..."^[41]

The presentation of these boards can be thought of as a Noah's Ark, a storing of animals' stories. Most of the fables, however, depict a much-altered nature, which on one hand reflects human intervention in the animal world and on the other shows the continuous metamorphosis of these animals into something other and monstrous until a genial end is conceived in which the transformation settles, almost giving a mythical explanation of a natural phenomenon. In this respect the narration of the fable comes close to the environmentalist message brought forward by Hayao Miyazaki in his animations.^[7]

The writing of fables started following Frigo's tradition to invent a story for his young son prior to going to sleep every evening. The inventing of bedtime stories has been for Frigo also an attempt to avoid mainstream narrations and provide a moral message to the story. Far from being classic however, the fable Frigo invents in this work has much to tell about his own psychological state and the way his nature reflects the surrounding nature, especially in the wild and largely abandoned part of the alps where he has resettled.^[7]

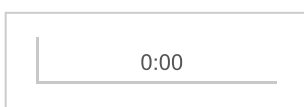


Frigo's setup to digitize the written fables

06 Zings of the heartbeats measured per training

Every time he trains, Frigo records the highest heartbeat he reaches every two minutes. He then rounds it up using one of the following parameters: 100 BPM, 105 BPM, 110 BPM, 115 BPM, 120 BPM, 125 BPM, 130 BPM, 135 BPM, 140 BPM, 145 BPM, 150 BPM, 155 BPM. Every month Frigo collects 72 of these parameters, biking or running or generally training for 144 minutes. Initially, Frigo annotated the beats timing his run around a field and later he switched to a watch with a heart rate sensor to be able to train more freely.^[36]

In an installation context the beats are played by a clock. Such a clock acts as a metronome particularly to Frigo's work number 03. This work is similar to the works conducted by artists such as Brian House and Danielle Roberts, using their biofeedback to generate art. It is the only work in which Frigo lets the sensor annotate the data for him, although the data on the watch is later manually approximated and transcribed.^[7]



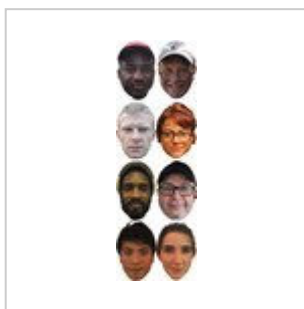
Month 058 of Frigo's heartbeats

07 Light boxes of the persons recently acquainted

Every month Frigo takes eight head-shots of new acquaintances. He then manually removes the background of each portrait using an image editor. The process of background extraction is done every day for about 10 minutes and it takes approximately three days to complete a head. The resulting portraits are vectorized and printed on a 300 by 900 millimeter panel. The panels representing one month are then placed on a column of 11,600 by 600 millimeters. At the end of the project, in 2040, the final installation will comprise of 12 columns, each column displaying 72 panels corresponding to three years work and a total of 288 new acquaintances which is a grand total of 3456 faces staring at the viewer from every corner.^[36]

Frigo initially started the project by making a painted portrait of his new acquaintances. He did so also to vary the kind of technique he adopted for this work in relation to the others. After consulting with James Cohan Gallery art dealer Arthur Solway in Shanghai, Frigo switched to photography. The first photographs were taken of his new Chinese friends and fully filled the oval mask that Frigo uses when extracting the background of each headshot. The verticality of the project also borrows from Chinese culture.^[7]

The resulting columns of faces act like totems staring at the viewer. The work in itself is similar to August Sander's "People of the 20th Century". As in the German photographer's work, Frigo's work marks the end of an epoque in which the photographer's free roaming and documenting ceases by increasing political and social turmoil in which the people photographed might cease to exist. To some extent then the work is a collection of Dead Souls, a Zarthusra-like encounter with people retaining different social positions, faiths and points of view and yet are potential victims of modern transformations.^[7]



Month 028 of new acquaintances

08 Tiles of the things picked up from the side-walk

Whenever on a sidewalk, Frigo unconsciously scans the floor in search for discarded items. If he notices one he has never picked up before, he picks it up and puts it in a pouch he keeps around his torso. He later uses the discarded objects to make collages of 150 by 150 millimeters. He then scans them and solarizes them by inverting its colors. This digital collage is meant to be later printed on a decal for ceramic tiles. A month comprises of 16 of these tiles placed in a four by four grid.^[36]

At the end of Frigo's project, it is estimated that 6192 tiles of scanned trash will be installed in a corridor of 4.8 by 32.4 meters making up 15,552 square meters of picked trash over the course of 36 years. The installation then becomes a centralized sidewalk, a central-walk that has been purified by the dirt of its content. In addition, as in mosques, visitors to the walk will have to remove their shoes, to ensure that the fired layer on the ceramic will not be spoiled.^[7]

According to Frigo this work is highly representative of a society he explores. Not only does it show the different calligraphies of the world but also the way different societies of the world allow or censure certain persuasive content over time. While on the sidewalk of Tokyo and Prague he might find pornographic content, on the muddy sidewalks of Madurai it might be of a religious nature. Frigo has initially experimented with firing the decals of his trash collages under a research project at Harvard University.^[42]

09 Plaques of the casualties read among the news

Every morning he reads through the headlines of a world news website searching for casualties. The selected headlines are later transcribed in braille characters using a very simple grammatical structure: (Something) kills (a number) in (a country). Such transcriptions are made on a word document which is meant to be reproduced on a 1200 by 225 mm embossed panel corresponding to approximately a month of casualties. Each embossed panel is installed in 1 of 12 45.5 meter-long corridors. The embossed panels function as the handrails of these corridors. Over twenty the number of casualties is approximated. On average 12 news of casualties are recorded every month. [36]

Following is an example of the casualties collected in month number 135: "SINKING KILLS THIRTY IN LIBYA EARTHQUAKE KILLS HUNDREDS IN IRAN SUICIDE ATTACK KILLS TEN IN YEMEN FLOOD KILLS FIFTEEN IN GREECE STAMPEDE KILLS FIFTEEN IN MOROCCO SUBMARINE ACCIDENT KILLS FORTY IN ARGENTINA ATTACK KILLS HUNDREDS IN EGYPT SINKING KILLS THIRTY IN LIBYA AIR STRIKE KILLS TWENTY IN SYRIA CLASHES KILL FOURTEEN IN HONDURAS ATTACK KILLS FIFTEEN IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO SUICIDE BOMB KILLS SEVENTEEN IN SOMALIA TRAIN CRASH KILLS SIX IN FRANCE"[43]

In an exhibition context the embossed panels are completely in the dark, only readable through touch. The only light comes from the screens of drawings of ideas standing on the opposite side (see work number 11). Thus, while the embossed panels contain tragic content, the drawings display in total darkness ironic content, creating a remarkable contrast. As a performance, Frigo has envisioned a blind person to read the otherwise indecipherable casualties aloud. According to Frigo the news of casualties emerges from the otherwise gossip-saturated and fake news oriented media. The search for casualties, particularly from third world countries, is a difficult task yet typhoons, wars, suicide bombs, hurricanes and other forms of more or less natural calamities, strike the earth more or less regularly and unexpectedly.[7]



Month 120 of world casualties

10 Films of the public spaces documented sitting

Frigo takes four-second videos of the vanishing point of every public space where he sits. A total of 180 video clips is collected every month, generating a film of 12 minutes. At the end of the project in 2040 the films will number 77,760 amounting to 86.5 hours screen time. In an installation setting the screen is positioned at the end of a corridor which is meant to physically extend the vanishing point. Interestingly, the reviewing of this empty space is a powerful tool for Frigo to retrieve the mental memories he has linked to them. Also the project shows a dramatic disappearance of public spaces taken over by public corporations.[40]

The work was originally inspired by Andrea Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in which the oldest surviving stage set still exists. The stage set comprises of a trompe-l'œil to give the appearance of a long city street. Similarly Frigo's idea is to extend the perspective of a corridor by projecting at its end the video of the vanishing point of the public spaces he films. Overall this work also represents the increasing extinction of public spaces taken over by commercial enterprises. In this sense Frigo associates the work to August Sander's photography of the city of Cologne prior to its complete destruction in World War II.[7]

While on one hand the videos look like surveillance camera footage, they are in fact premonitions of public spaces on the verge of disappearing. As in the work of French flâneur Eugène Atget, Frigo in his urban walks video-records the emptiness of public spaces. Ironically this emptiness is, among all Frigo's works, what enables him to re-experience the past. In this respect Frigo finds the reviewing of these stream of videos a sad experience reminding him of life experiences that can never return.^[7]

The cities in which Frigo has filmed the most public spaces are Stockholm, Shanghai, Boston, Venice and Amsterdam cities that might undertake a destructive process as George Steeves writes of August Sander:^[7]

Sander's premonitions of calamitous adversity, triggered by his reading of the signs all about him, impelled him to alter the emphasis of his photographic practice. The collecting for People of the 20th Century slowed while landscape and architectural work accelerated. Sander had been assembling cityscapes and architectural details of his adopted home of Cologne since 1920. In the last years of the 1930s he assiduously pursued his aesthetic convictions in photographs of the city. Could he have apprehended its approaching near total destruction?"^[44]

11 Drawings of the ideas inspired around society

While in a social environment, Frigo is on the look out for free associations. For example, if he sees a grille in a park that is "like" a stroller, he annotates on his smartphone using his native language: "Carrozzina bambino e' grill barbecue" ("Stroller for kid is a grille"). He would then draw a mother or a father grilling sausages using the child's stroller as a grille. Every month he collects a whole list of these ideas and every evening, unless he is traveling or he has guests to entertain, he draws at least three of them on A4 paper. It is a relaxing moment resulting in 90 drawings a month and 38,800 in his overall, 36-year production. In this respect Frigo attempts, as with his dream project, to imagine over time all that is imaginable.^[40]

A drawing is first executed in pencil and later with a 4 mm black pen tracing over the pencil drawing before it is erased. Approximately every month, Frigo manually scans the resulting pile of drawings in black and white, 150 DPI resolution. The resulting digital images are batch processed for resizing and cropping. Ultimately a slide-shown animation of 12 minutes is made from 90 drawings displayed for eight seconds each. In an exhibition context each animation is shown in a small screen. The screens are displayed in a row at eye level.^[7]

In the ultimate installation, the 432 resulting screens are to be shown inside 12 dark corridors each 5.5 meters in length. In this respect the screens alone become the lighting for the environment. In future a screen's backlight will fully light up only as a visitor approaches. Visitors will be able to sweep through the drawings with their fingers. The project started while Frigo was babysitting his young child in a Swedish playground. Many of his written ideas are in fact generated in a boring situation, while in line at a cashier or in general waiting for a societal thing to occur.^[40]

While this work is the most enjoyed by the audience, it is most critical of the social environment in which Frigo lives. In this respect Frigo's drawings show the absurd excess in which the contemporary future-thinking human projects himself. Each drawing works as a black-circuit of the social and perfectly functioning enterprise. Frigo then relates his creative input to Charlie Chaplin, Walter Lantz and graffiti artist Blu^[7]



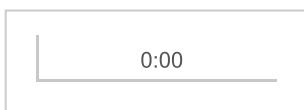
Month file 65 of drawings

12 Recordings of the thoughts made walking alone

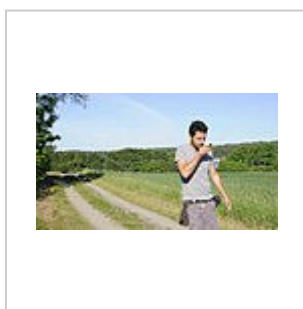
Whenever Frigo walks alone, he formulates each of his thoughts in up to 12 seconds audio recording. The recording are done on his mobile and at the end of each month, an average of 60 recordings are made amounting to 12 minutes. On average, Frigo records a thought every 500 meters of walking meaning that he walks alone at least 30 kilometers a month. At the end of the project in 2040 there will a total of 25.920 audio audio recordings of his thoughts. In an exhibition context, Frigo presents these recordings in three square panels with 12 by 12 slots. Each of the slot contains a digital audio player corresponding to a month recording. These players works as museum guides to also view the other parts of the project.^[36]

Frigo begun recording his thoughts at an early age using booklets and later experimenting with the first digital dictaphones. Here is the transcription of a randomly chosen thought from the recording of month 12: "and if among strangers we need to mimic in order not to be spotted among equals we need to stand out in order to prevail"^[45]

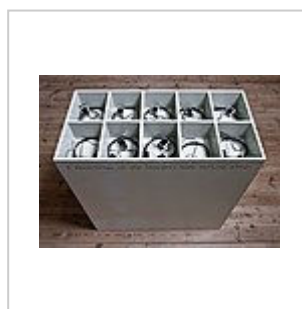
The work has been often paused when Frigo lived in a busy city like Shanghai and could only seldom walk in solitude. This work emerged from Frigo's dissatisfaction with the social environment and was originally intended to be combined with videos of the social surrounding. Most of Frigo's recording express his negative consideration on the technology driven social apparatus and the necessity to get back to nature and follow a more spiritual ideal. Frigo's consideration are in line with Stoicism, Transcendentalism, Tolstoyanism, Daoism and other philosophies stressing the need for humans to act according to nature. ^[40]



Month 36 of the recordings of the thoughts while walking alone



The image shows a screenshot of Frigo walking alone and recording his thoughts



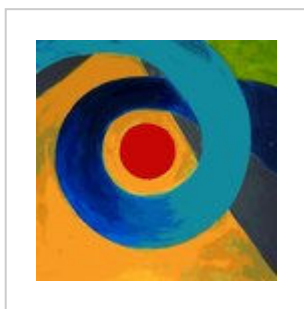
The image shows a museum arrangement of a year of recordings of thoughts

13 Knittings of the patterns created in painting

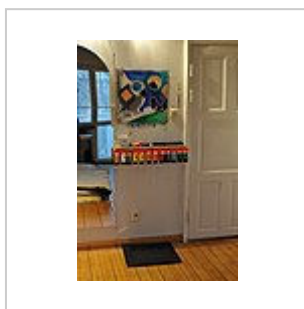
Every month Frigo executes a 500 by 500 millimeters abstract painting on a illustration panel, using a size 24 square cut brush and a palette of 24 acrylic colors. This palette comprises of all the primary and secondary colors as well as a lighter and darker version of each of them. In addition to these 18 resulting colors, Frigo uses white, black, gray, silver, brown and gold thus resulting in a total of 24 colors. After being executed, each painting is photographed and the resulting image colorized using a image editor. Each painting is, from left to right, the continuation of the former. The paintings are later embroidery and use as curtains to darken the 12 corridors of 45,5 meters where the screens of drawings and the plaques of casualties are also displayed. The actual result at the end of the project in 2040 will be a 534 meters embroidery making it the longest painting conceived by an individual over the longest amount of time.^[7]

Frigo begun painting at an early age and in particular after attending art classes when studying as a teenager in the United States. From the age of 18 he used his dead step grandfather study to paint. Causing his step grandmother nausea for the type of materials he experimented with, he soon begun painting in garages and later in nature. Beginning to paint symmetrically with both his hands and using more natural products, his painting became increasingly ritualistic and the filming of the process became increasingly relevant. Upon moving to Vancouver to study, Frigo, unable to paint, begun cooking instead and documenting his daily life which lead him to his current project.^[29]

The most important feature of this work is that Frigo executed his painting acting as a medium, an approach already experimented by Hilma af Klint. He thus freely paint with the only objective in mind to create a present a full palette of colours and shapes, in line with early abstract painting theories such as those of Wassily Kandinsky.^[7]



Month 85 of Frigo's paintings



Frigo's painting setup in his bedroom



Frigo's early painting in year 2000

14 Glass of the trajectories drawn roaming about

Every evening, after a day of walking, Frigo uses pen and paper to trace his movements. Every morning he manually retraces the resulting sketches on a vector graphic program using a computer mouse. The digitization occurs on a 520 by 520 millimeters layout. The top, right, bottom and left of the layout are respectively the north, east, south and west of where the walks occurs mostly in different cities or different areas of a city, or again in nature. The result is a layout with small drawings. The more scattered they are, the more Frigo has made of use private or public transportation and the more round they are. The more Frigo has been walking in a natural setting.^[36]

In an exhibition setting, the resulting trajectories are engraved on transparent glass allowing the viewer to superimposed these trajectories on the outside landscape. By looking through the various month layouts, an attentive viewer will also detect similar patterns or sudden changing in patterns or gradual increase of decrease of these patterns based on seasons and other conditions which more or less facilitate walking. Among these conditions are not only the ones set by nature like the snowy weather or by the city itself like the Shanghai traffic, but also my physical conditions which often forces Frigo indoor, like having to work in an office or being in physical pain.^[7]

While Mikael Lundberg, Jacek Smolicki and many other media artists have used GPS to trace their daily movements, Frigo is doing so manually, as Tehching Hsieh but without any geographical indication. Generally Frigo easily remembers his movements in well known environments but the manual tracing becomes more complicated in more complex cities environments like Venice. For Frigo walking has not only being a transcendentalist practice but also a means to survive in times of economic difficulties, having for example to walk to a cheap food market. Walking is also in his blood considering how his alpine ancestors had to walk in order to escape war conflicts.^[7]



Month 096 of walks



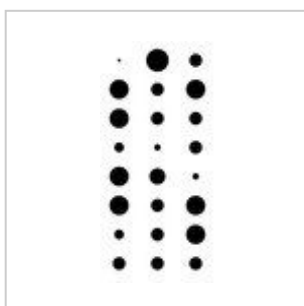
Rendering of the walks
on glass over-imposed
on a landscape

15 Holes of the windows based on emotional state

Every morning Frigo registers the emotional level of the previous day using a scale of 8 values. Every month, the result is a panel of 360 by 750 mm with perforations ranging from from 10 to 80 millimeters representing respectively a very dreadful and a very cheerful state experienced during a day. This project has not only made Frigo highly aware of his emotions but also, in turn, very emotional. In this respect, he has learned to moderate the rise of excessive emotions.^[36]

The measuring for this work as in other works does not occur “scientifically” but it is Frigo, who assigns a grade like the reading of chakras. This subjective grading might be criticized, but in the long run it does provide accurate patterns since Frigo starts retaining this grading system in his subconscious without thinking about what might other people think about his grading. As in other parts of the project then the documenting subject becomes a sensing actuator. ^[4]

In an exhibition setting the resulting panels make up an hexagonal cupola through which not only the light, but also the wind filtrates inside generating different sounds. The resulting cupola partitions the 432 resulting month panels in three hexagonal collars, the bottom one containing 192 panels and with each side thus containing 32 panels and being 11,52 meters long, the second collar containing a total of 144 panels with 24 panels per side and a length of 8,64 meters, while the top collar contains the remaining 96 panels with 16 panels on each side and a length of 5,76 meters.^[7]



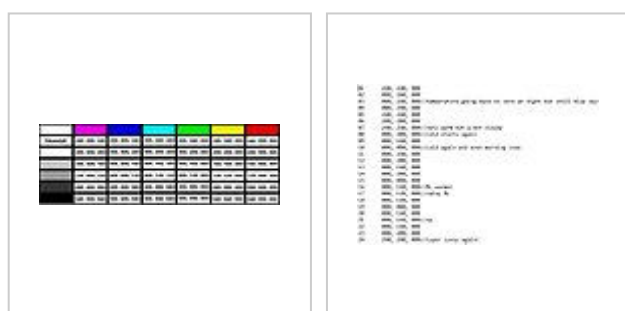
Month 080 of emotions

16 Brightness of the colours felt on the weather

Daily Frigo records the weather conditions by mapping every morning the weather to a scale of RGB values. The scale consists of 6 temperature zones characterize by 6 colors (red, yellow, green, cyan, blue and purple). To these colors, 6 furthers variations going from a pure color to a gradually darker one, are provided to map the weather conditions. For example, an autumn sunny day in Canada could is represented by a fully bright green (000, 240, 000), while a rainy autumn day following the clear and sunny day where the temperature keeps however in the same range, would be represented by a darker green (000,080,000).^[7]

Following are the values utilized to map the daily weather conditions in relations to the temperature range. Extremely warm is represented by red colors with the following RGB values: 240,000,000 (like a day in the desert) and 200, 000,000 and 160,000,000 and 080,000,000 and 040,000,000 (like a day in the mist of a tropical storm). Very warm is represented by yellow colors: 240,240,000 (like a clear day on the hills in the summer) and 200, 200,000 and 160,160,000 and 080,080,000 and 040,040,000 (like a summer storm). Quite warm is represented by green colors: 000,240,000 (like a clear spring day) and 000, 200,000 and 000,160,000 and 000,080,000 and 000,040,000 (like a spring storm). Quite cold is represented by cyan colors: 000,240,240 (like a clear late autumn day in Russia) and 000, 200,200 and 000,160,160 and 000,080,080 and 000,040,040 (like an early snow storm). Very cold is represented by blue colors: 000,000,240 (like a winter day in an Oregon mountain) and 000, 000,200 and 000,000,160 and 000,000,080 and 000,000,040 (like a snow storm). Extremely cold is represented by purple colors: 240,000,240 (like a sunny winter day in the Antarctic) and 200, 000,200 and 160,000,160 and 080,000,080 and 040,000,040 (like a terribly freezing snow storm in Siberia).^[36]

In an exhibition setting, the RGB value collected in a month period are reproduced via an RGB lamp gradually shifting from colours to colours as the weather from a day to another can be, shifting almost imperceptibly from a daily value to another over a time span of 30 seconds and for a total of 12 minutes per month. In the ideal and final installation, the lamp will be located at one hand of rounded ceiling, projecting the colors throughout it as a large neon light, actually ending with a half circular opening. Being the opening positioned at the very end of an hypothetical building, over the precipice facing an infinite sea, at night time, the opening will work as a lighthouse, while towards the end of the day this very opening will let the natural sunset light inside.^[7]



Scale of values to label the weather Daily values with annotations

26 Exhibit of the records generated for 36 years

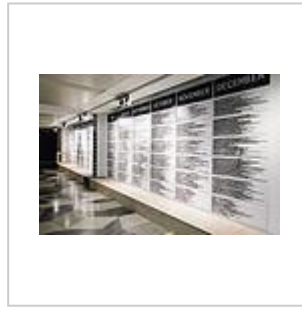
Regarded as today's On Kawara,^[46] since the beginning of the project in 2003 Frigo has exhibited his work in various venues.



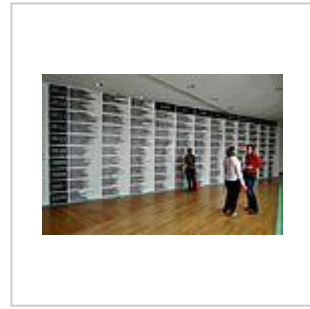
2006: OK Centrum, Linz



2009: Art Museum,
Uppsala



2015: Science Gallery,
Dublin



2015: MAK, Frankfurt



2016: Hasselblad
Foundation, Gothenburg

See also

- [Dymaxion Chronofile](#)
- [Erkki Kurenniemi](#)
- [Tehching Hsieh](#)
- [On Kawara](#)
- [Roman Opalka](#)
- [Ferdinand Cheval](#)
- [Vivian Maier](#)
- [Janina Turek](#)
- [George Perec](#)
- [Dziga Vertov](#)
- [Chalermchai Kositpipat](#)

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