



H a r d w a r e
AT ISLAND HARDWARE

JANUARY

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Véra (V) Haddad

THE FEELING WHEN

JANUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 28, 2026

A film by Véra (V) Haddad of two friends catching up over the phone. The intonation, timing, and cadence of each performer is derived from typing all of their dialogue as they performed it—eyes cast downward, speech slowed. *The Feeling When* is an uncanny, poetic, yet humorous meditation on our experience of attention, presence, and connection in a digital age—slyly asking us to consider technology's toll.

Véra (V) Haddad is a collaborative filmmaker, artist, and educator who centers relationships in their creative work. They use the experimental and expressive tools of visual art and filmmaking to articulate complex subjective experiences primarily of the misunderstood, marginalized, or silenced. Earnestness and humor, the planet, portraits of contemporary life, cameras and darkness are enduring interests.

Haddad was a Lighthouse Works Fellow in 2023. A self-taught filmmaker as well as the director and editor of Slopehouse Productions, they have co-created music-centered documentaries and videos for over a decade. Some recent musical collaborators include Big Thief, Andy Shauf, Florist, and Hand Habits. Their project *Self-Portrait Service*

was awarded the 2021 Center for Documentary Studies Lange-Taylor prize for documentary photo with text, alongside their collaborator Sam Richardson.

V earned a BFA from The Cooper Union and an MFA from UCLA in the New Genres department. They were recently named among *Filmmaker Magazine's* 25 New Faces of Independent Film of 2024. Their creative works have been featured on NPR, Pitchfork, and Rolling Stone Magazine. Select recent exhibitions include: LA Queer Film Festival, Woodstock Film Festival, Human Resources Gallery, and The Autry Museum of the American West. They are an alum of Lighthouse Works, Ucross, Vermont Studio Center, and Monson Arts fellowships.

Véra (V) Haddad: The Feeling When, 2024, 6 minute 46 second video with sound played on loop. Written and directed by Véra (V) Haddad. Director of photography is Adam Baron-Bloch. Original score by Emily A. Sprague. Featuring Youlim Nam and Sahar Khraibani.

LAUREL PTAK How did the idea for this film come to you? What was the process of making *The Feeling When* like?

VÉRA (V) HADDAD The title is in reference to "TFW" the internet acronym used as a shorthand to highlight a relatable emotion or situation—most often in memes. This film is in part an ode to that gesture. Following the impacts of the pandemic, living in several different cities and moving through new life chapters I was feeling particularly aware of our social ties to devices and the internet. Efforts to remain in touch across various distances (time, space) required me to engage with my phone and computer to pursue work, to continue or cultivate relationships, and seek communion with others. TFW became a matter-of-fact, slice-of-life portrait depicting a contemporary mediated social life.

I also wanted to portray some of the unseen and now nearly ubiquitous interconnected forms of electromagnetic energies we live alongside like wi-fi, radio waves, and currents of electricity. This matter surrounds and determines so much of our everyday lives—they feel a bit to me like ghosts, or sci-fi-creatures we know are around us but that I wanted to specifically conjure and make visible.

The process of making this film was a lovely experiment amongst friends willing to explore this quotidian scene. There was a lot of laughing and hiccups as we situated ourselves deeper into voicing the melodies of typing out a text in our minds, or the layers of emptiness and universality in typical text transmissions.

PTAK How do you see *The Feeling When* relating to your other work as filmmaker and artist?

HADDAD I am consistently drawn to how we interact, connect, or divide. Technology is a main character in that story at the moment...so I think technology plus organic subject plus intimate contemporary context are frequent muses in my various works. Secondary characters are often the planet, darkness, melancholy, and humor—which *The Feeling When* feels very in tune with. I am interested in making things that reflect on or maybe historicize some of my time on earth and this was my first exploratory narrative form of that effort.

PTAK I really appreciate the description in your bio of you as a "collaborative filmmaker" and am wondering if/how collaboration found its way into this project?

HADDAD In my experience, filmmaking on any scale—outside of solo wandering with a camera—tends to be a "team sport" and I like to highlight that fact whenever possible. Adam Baron-Bloch, Youlim Nam, Sahar Khraibani, and Emily A. Sprague all helped me to bring this life. Their roles all expanded, complicated, and surprised me in this piece's becoming.

PTAK There are so many small details in this work that I love. The unflinching way that it's shot, the idea to have the actors typing and gazing down at their

phones while they perform, those swirling blue lines, the beautiful eeriness of the soundtrack, that disconnect between the content of what these two are saying and how they are saying it, that deep breath



taken at the very end. How did you think about all of these elements coming together as you were writing, filming, and editing this work?

HADDAD *The Feeling When* was definitely a responsive process. My good friend and collaborator Adam Baron-Bloch and I did many experiments to find the qualities of light-effects we came to use to describe cellular network currents.

In wanting to further the sense of time-shift that often accompanies life

lived through our devices I chose to film our actors in a slower frame rate and sync it to their typing-intoned dialogue. We also found the posture of eyes closed or lowered to imply both this notion of phone-culture, but also the internal state, dissociation or solitude we experience through our focus on screens.

As for the soundscape, Emily A. Sprague composed a score in response to my initial edit that really expanded an emotional world for the characters as well as sounding out textures of electricity, glitching, and dream-like cellphone haptics.

PTAK Who are some artistic influences for you and do you see any of them in this film?

HADDAD This film in particular definitely holds a seed of inspiration from Shirin Neshat's *Rapture* (1999) which depicts in black and white, on separated screens, divides and binaries between Muslim men and women. I think I've held something from that piece in the back of my mind since experiencing it in 2010 and found Neshat's approach to creating a portrait diptych in video exploring social dynamics really meaningful—in my case the divide we explore is our means of connectivity.

Stan Douglas made these television spots called *Monodramas* (1987–1991) that ran on public access TV that maintain a special place in my heart. Their duration, non-narrative shape, and disruption of passive viewership has also informed this work. I like the idea of offering up a strange mirror to our everyday life.

More generally, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Kirsten Johnson, Miranda July, David Lynch, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul are some artists and filmmakers that have influenced my creative life. I find courage from their lawlessness which centers concerns and curiosities over some kind of consistent brand or auteurism. They each have threads of experimental practice, magical realism, and earnestness. Their various works have fueled me to explore ideas and stories

HADDAD Abstraction is a really interesting word to describe the impact of the internet and various communication devices on our presence and experience of mind/body: ideas rather than events. Something from that feeling informed my choice to conclude with a breath. I've certainly had periods of time spent inside of my phone or the internet when I turn my screen to sleep-mode, look up into the room and gasp: I'd forgotten my body!

Your description of the cumulative effects being hard to see clearly really resonates with me. The technological developments within my lifetime have been so significant in altering how we exist, but we are busy adapting, surviving, and living into the changes—we can't quite hold that perspective. An interest in making this film was to document and present our digitized conversations as it has become our second nature. I think we are living through a time parallel to something like the 1850s with the simultaneous developments of the international telegraph, high speed photography, and the railroad. Everyone's experience of communication, daily time, and the size of the planet were forever changed, and that former way of life forever gone. I believe we are in the middle, or maybe the beginning, of a similar transformation with a lot of the impact landing in our interior and social worlds.

PTAK I am curious how others have responded to this work? There is this amazing range of affect it has from the uncanny to the poetic to humorous and imagine it could be understood in many ways.

HADDAD I hope the mundane, nondeclarative nature of this work leaves it really open to people's subjective reads! I have been happily surprised that *The Feeling When* has consistently made people laugh and is described with words like funny, odd, strange, hypnotizing, and bizarre.

When I have had opportunities to screen *TFW* it has had a dynamic range of quiet, lulling viewership with spikes of laughter at different moments. I'm curious to see how it changes in time as our technological culture continues to speed along. I suspect it will become "dated" very quickly. Maybe it already has?

Image captions: ABOVE & LEFT Stills from Véra (V) Haddad, *The Feeling When*, 2024, 6 minute 46 second video. Courtesy of the artist.





HARDWARE is a year-round exhibition space for film and video by contemporary artists located in the loose screw section of Island Hardware on Fishers Island.

Every two months, a new moving-image work by a former Lighthouse Works Fellow appears, inviting unexpected encounters with contemporary art where the everyday rhythms, textures, and temporalities of a hardware shop frame the work.

Located inside Island Hardware at 741 The Gloaming on Fishers Island, **HARDWARE** is programmed by Lighthouse Works and open to the public during business hours, from Monday–Friday 8am–4pm and Sunday 8am–noon, or by appointment.

HARDWARE is curated by Laurel Ptak with support from Claudia DeSimone and Eliza Schmidt. Exhibition guide designed by Eric Nylund. Special thanks to Dave Beckwith and the entire team at Island Hardware for their ongoing support.

For further information about these exhibitions contact Nate Malinowski at nate@lighthouseworks.us or (631) 788-7713.

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