

lyod tronulsya: if im n0t in ur mind i disappear

Part I / if im n0t in ur mind i disappear



AI series

Higgsfield & Nano Banana

lyod tronulsya: if im n0t in ur mind i disappear began as a hockey project I had wanted to make for a long time. When I couldn't find collaborators, I decided to create it with AI. At the time, I had no idea it would later lead me to a real goalkeeper who looked uncannily close to the one I had created.

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AI series

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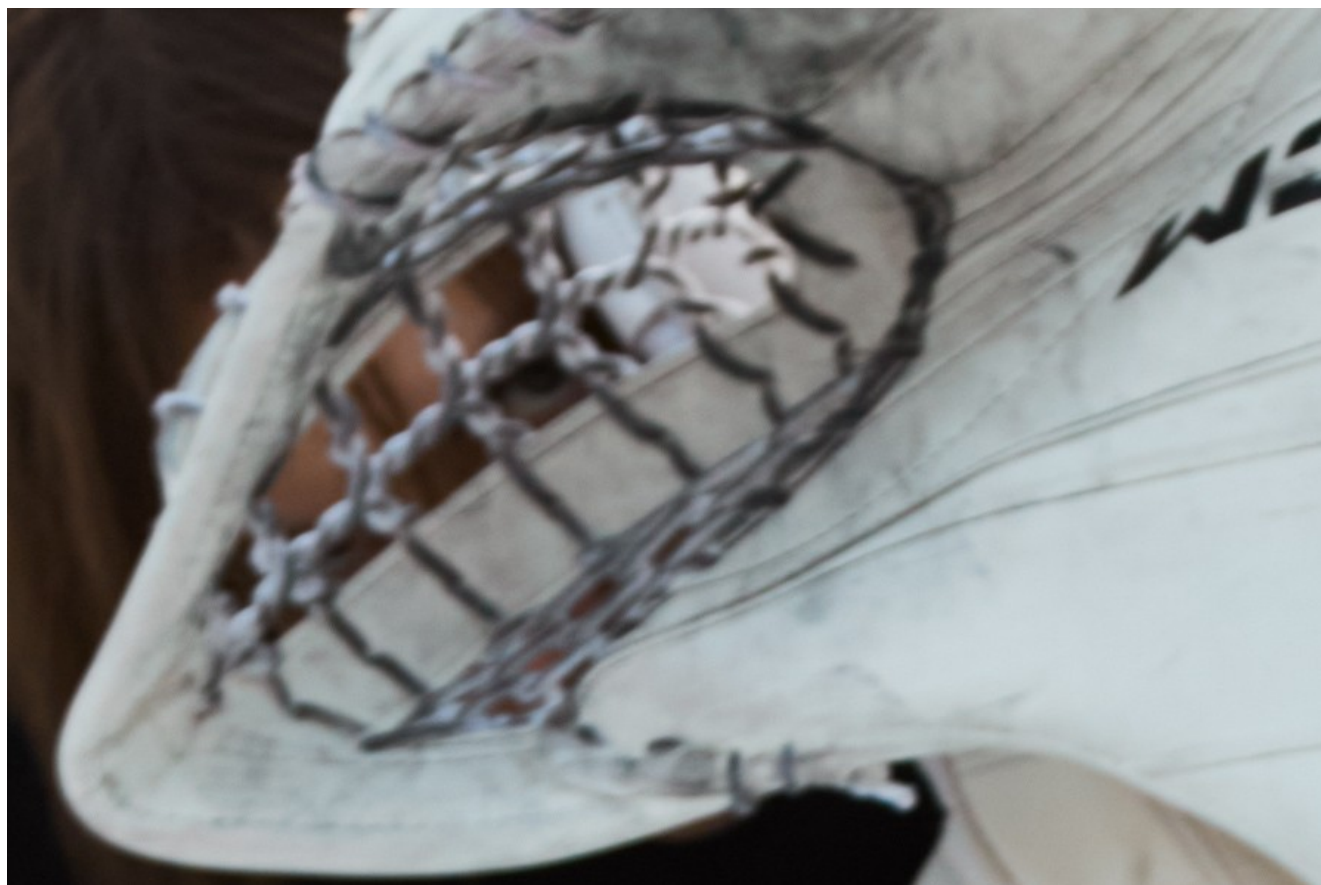


Part II / Iyod tronulsya









About the project

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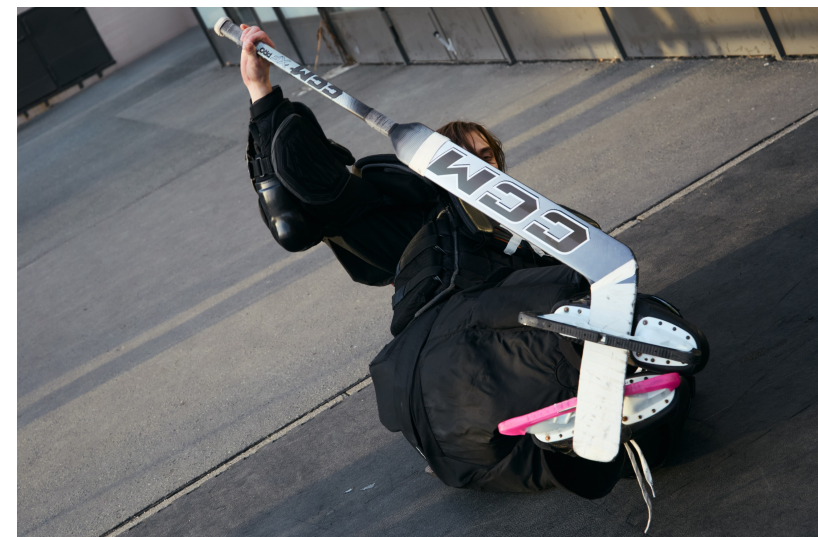
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I asked ChatGPT where I could find hockey teams in Berlin. I found one on Instagram, then a group photograph with the players tagged, and started opening their profiles. When I reached Marks, the goalkeeper, I was shocked. He looked uncannily close to the person I had already created: similar age, slim build, medium-length hair and fine features. I followed him, and he immediately followed me back and wrote to tell me how much he loved my work. He saw the AI series on my profile, and we started joking about how I had somehow created him before meeting him. We met in a bar soon afterwards and talked for around four hours.

What made it stranger was that the resemblance was not only physical. Marks said himself that he was not a regular goalkeeper. He was into art and fashion, was working on his own creative project, and people were often surprised by the way he dressed outside hockey. He also had the sensitive side I had been looking for in the fictional character. We both came from post-Soviet backgrounds, another connection to the project.

We later did a photo shoot together. We slightly replicated some of the emo details from the AI version in Marks's styling. The strange part was the direction of the process: I did not meet someone and then make an artificial version of him. I created someone who did not exist, and that image led me to a real person, a meeting and a collaboration.

After the shoot with Marks I felt like I could fly. Finishing the AI images had already been an amazing feeling, but bringing the project into the world through a real shoot felt completely different. It was an incredible experience. AI had led me to a human encounter.



About the project / continued

I'm interested in sport as a dedicated place to express aggression and strong emotion, rather than turning them against yourself or the people around you. This connects to my other projects and my interest in physical expression — dancing, sport and martial arts. Sport gives you permission to play, touch, cry and be close to other bodies. To play freely, you need safety, structures and boundaries: rules, space and equipment.

I've done different kinds of sports, and they carry memories of relationships, desire, fear and periods of my life. In my work, they become a deconstructed, sometimes abstract vision, an allegory for things I'm going through.

I wanted the goalkeeper to be sensitive, emo-coded, with a feminine side inside a very hard and masculine sport. I played with how protected or exposed he was through his outfit. For me, this connects to masculinity and femininity and how you feel in your body. I was also exploring my own identity and gender roles, in how I present myself and in relationships, and trying to understand what I was drawn to in others that was also part of me.

That Berlin winter was the coldest I had experienced since leaving Russia at nineteen. I was going through the end of a relationship with a skater, who became part of the emotional background of the work — almost a psychological protagonist without appearing in it. Something about that relationship stayed in the character, and the project helped me close that chapter.

I had been through an identity crisis around being Russian since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. By that winter, it was less acute. Before, I made abstract spaces with almost frozen people, without much identity. Now my work was becoming more personal. I lived with a Ukrainian friend for eight or nine months. We helped each other and talked about our different backgrounds and finding our places in Europe. The cold winter in Berlin also made me think again about where I came from. It was formative for me and my work.

if im n0t in ur mind i disappear came from that period of attachment and breakup. lyod tronulsya literally means “the ice has started to move.” In Russian it is also a slightly ironic expression for when something that had been stuck finally begins moving. It became an allegory for my psychological and artistic path. Sometimes art feels like an exorcism to me. I put something into the work and understand it through making it. It can help me close a chapter and move on. Here, the metaphor became almost literal. The ice moved.

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