# Electronic Literature (e-lit) and Covid 19 – Final technical report

According to the project application, the project plan is to 1) collect, organize and map the material into genres and approaches and 2) supplement with in-depth interviews in order to produce a) a publicly available research collection at the ELMCIP Knowledge Base, b) an online exhibition and c) a critical research study.

We have succeeded in this:

As part of the Electronic Literature Organization's upcoming conference, Platform (Post?) Pandemic https://conferences.au.dk/elo2021/ we made an open call for art works, which received 34 submissions that went through peer review and we opened the exhibition 1st May 2021 with 23 exhibited works. At the opening we invited the artists who could be present to present their work to an audience of about 50-100. The video from the opening is available here: https://vimeo.com/544186117.
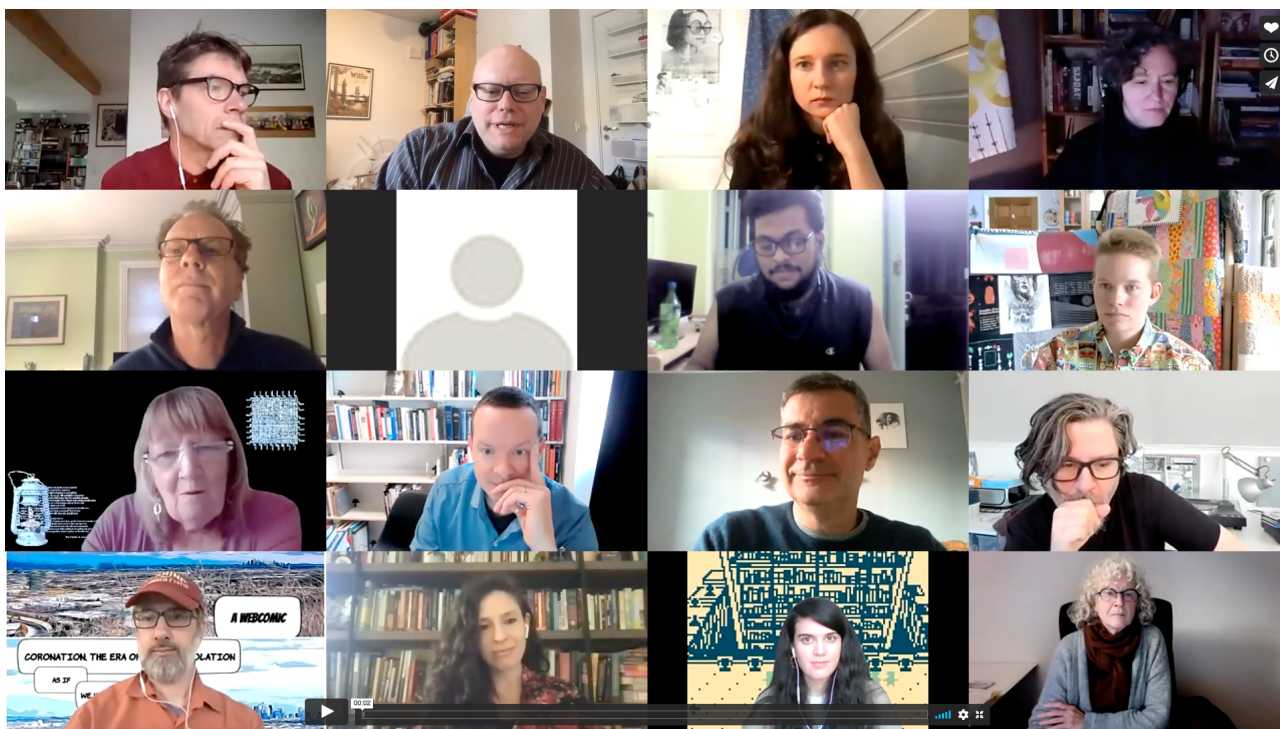
We believe this exhibition provides a good overview of interesting, juried work of high quality. Besides what came in through the call, we have added some works we knew about from our other research. The exhibition is available here: https://www.eliterature.org/elo2021/covid/ and the curatorial statement is here: https://www.eliterature.org/elo2021/covid/covid-elit-statement.pdf

Physical versions of the exhibition have been up at University of Bergen and Roskilde Library.

From the exhibition we have also made this research collection, which we will continue to update: https://elmcip.net/research-collection/pandemic-e-lit.

We have interviewed 18 different artists behind 13 works during March and April, each interview lasted about 45-60 minutes. We have the full interviews as both video and transcribed. We plan to use this in our further research but are also publishing the videos as both short clips of 2-3 minutes, presenting every artwork/artist, and as a full 45 minutes documentary of art, electronic literature and life during the pandemic. The short clips have been used on social media, e.g. to do publicity for the exhibition and will be used at the ELO conference. They are publicly available at https://vimeo.com/showcase/8366701.

We didn't plan for a full documentary initially, but since we were lucky to hire an enthusiastic and very skilled video journalist with experience from working for CNN and Al-Jazeira, Ashleigh Steele, we wanted to take full advance of this. The full 45 minute documentary is turning out to be a quite interesting documentation of this historical situation and we believe it will be interesting as a historical document, also, when we get more distance to the pandemic than currently, we believe that it will turn out to be a great historical documentary (and some of the colleagues and friends that we have shown earlier versions support this), and we are currently working to get it shown at various festivals, first showing will be at the Oslo International Poetry Festival, May 29th. We are currently looking for other opportunities and would also be happy to show it at a DARIAH meeting, seminar, conference or event. There is a public promo for it here: https://vimeo.com/543267350
The full documentary is available here: https://vimeo.com/544980228
It has so far been shown at several events, including Oslo International Poetry Festival (June, 2021), Digital Culture at Bergen University (Sept. 21), Creativity and Resilience in Times of Covid-19 (Aarhus Institute of Advance Studies, Aarhus University, November 21), Skt Interface Day at

Interface Culture dept, Kunst Universität Linz (December 21). We're working on further output from the interviews, including an algorithmic combinatory installation with the (working) title: Pandemic Reflection Machine.

Regarding the research article(s) we have published
- the curator statement: Nacher, Anna , Scott Rettberg, og Søren Bro Pold. "COVID E-LIT: Digital Art from the Pandemic". *Electronic Book Review*. 2021. https://doi.org/10.7273/kehh-8c3
- An edited version of the interview with Ben Grosser (in *electronic book review:* Pold, Søren Bro, Anna Nacher og Scott Rettberg. "Platform In[ter]ventions: an Interview with Ben Grosser". *Electronic Book Review*. 2021. https://doi.org/10.7273/9fdq-t667.)
- An edited version of the interview with xtine burroughs (in *electronic book review*: burrough, xtine and Anna Nacher, Scott Rettberg and Søren Bro Pold. "All of the spaces collapsing: an interview with xtine burrough", *Electronic Book Review*, June 5, 2022, https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/all-of-the-spaces-collapsing-an-interview-with-xtine-burrough/
- We have submitted the article, "A Pandemic Crisis Seen from the Screen" for an edited research anthology with the title "Platformed Reflections on the Pandemic: Covid-19 and Electronic Literature" (in print)
- We have submitted the article, "Pandemic Genres: Processing the COVID-19 Pandemic through Electronic Literature" (in print).

Besides popular articles such as Pold, S. B. (2021). Digital kunst i en coronatid: Hvem sidder der bag skærmen? *Akademikerbladet*. https://www.akademikerbladet.dk/debat/soeren-bro-pold/digital-kunst-i-en-coronatid-hvem-sidder-der-bag-skaermen has been published

Several talks have been given such as
- Anna Nacher, Scott Rettberg & Søren Pold: "Post Pandemic Prose", ELO 2021, May 21, https://vimeo.com/555698083
- Anna Nacher, Scott Rettberg & Søren Pold: "Platformed Reflections on the Pandemic: Covid-19 and Electronic Literature", Japanese Association of Digital Humanities, The Univesity of Tokyo, Sept. 21
- Søren Pold: "A Pandemic Crisis Seen from the Screen: Digital art and electronic literature as reflection on pandemic platform culture", Sankt Interface Day, Kunst Universität Linz, Austria, 17 Dec. 21

Concludingly, a lot of things have already happened and more is underway. We are eager to share our results, also with the DARIAH community, and please let us know, if you need more details and info. We have prepared a package with info and press material for the documentary in order to get it out to more events and festivals/conferences, we have started to work on a generative, combinatory version of our interview material with Ian Hatcher which we hope to have ready during the next year, and we have further planned research articles. Even if we're now entering the third year after the pandemic started, we believe, and have been convinced also by people who have seen the documentary, that this is historical material that makes a lot of sense, even when the pandemic will hopefully soon be over.
I will finish this report with quoting the conclusion of our curatorial statement:

When we started discussing the Covid 19 and electronic literature, we reflected on the fact that, while there are many public memorials related to wars, there are very few related to epidemics and diseases. Apart from the horrible scenes we have seen from hospitals around the world, the everyday of the pandemic has for many of us mostly been visible through its lack of the normal, as closed down, deserted cities. There is something unrepresentable about a pandemic caused by an invisible virus. This exhibition portrays all this through art and electronic literature as, we hope, an already historical monument of life under the pandemic. We believe the exhibition demonstrates that the pandemic, besides all its horrors and cancellations, has also been a genuine moment for art and electronic literature.
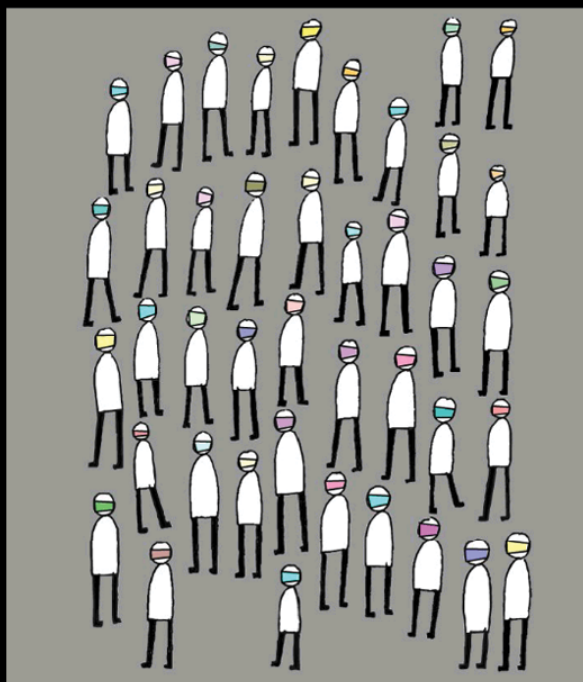
Søren Bro Pold (with Anna Nacher and Scott Rettberg)

COVID E-LIT

digital art during the pandemic

a documentary film by

Anna Nacher, Søren Pold, Scott Rettberg, and Ashleigh Steele

Featuring interviews with digital authors and artists including Annie Abrahams, Abraham Avnisan, Giselle Beiguelman, Xtine Burrough, Sharon Daniel, Mark Jeffery, Ben Grosser, Erik Loyer, Judd Morrissey, the Marino Family, Bilal Mohamed, Jörg Piringer, Giulia Carla Rossi, Mark Sample, Alex Saum, and Jody Zellen.

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