

2. John Yuyi

John Yuyi's artwork, in the section called 'Gameplay/How to Win at Photography', is made up of three freestanding lightboxes – glowing screens with black frames. They are in portrait format and arranged in a close group. The central box is about a metre and a half tall, and holds a close up of a young woman's face. To the left is a smaller lightbox, about waist-height, with a close up of a belly button; to the right, a smaller box with a close up of an ear. The woman's skin is covered with temporary tattoos of icons from social media – the tattoos are printed on transparent plastic, with crisply printed words and icons following the contours of the body, and shiny areas where there is no ink.

The three pieces that make up the installation are called 'Julia's Twitter' 1 and 2, both from 2016, and 'Belly Button' from 2018. From the central panel, Julia looks straight out at us, her head tilted slightly to one side. She has light brown skin and brown eyes, with dark brown hair drawn back from her face, and she has a ring through the septum of her nose. Her mouth is open to show her tongue which bears a blue band that reads 'Following'. On one cheek, there is a large tattoo of the stylised blue bird icon of Twitter; on the other cheek, a screenshot of her online profile, with a small photo and biography. On her forehead, a tattoo reads: 'Tweets 7735'. An online search box and the icon of a feather, representing the 'compose message' function, together form a decorative choker round her neck, while a black tattoo on her collar bone is shaped like a speech bubble and reads '2,559 followers'.

The lightbox to the right presents a close up photo of an ear. The ear features five, small temporary tattoos of social media icons. They look like stud earrings around the outside of the ear: a red heart to 'like', a curved arrow to 'reply'.

The bellybutton lightbox to the left features a rectangular image of an Instagram post from John Yuyi's own feed. The central square shows a belly button. It's impossible to tell if this is a photo of a bellybutton on Instagram that has been placed as a tattoo over smooth skin and rephotographed, or an empty placeholder for an Instagram image that has been placed over a real belly button and then photographed. Below, the counter shows 10,830 likes, and John Yuyi's invitation to 'Connect with me'.

In the age of social media, the value of an image is determined by the number of likes and shares it gets: they transform the fleeting attention that the images are given into measurable and quantifiable units. John Yuyi illustrates the fact that attention has become a form of currency by cooperating with prestige brands, whose logos she temporarily pastes onto her skin before posting her self-portraits on Instagram. In this way, the Taiwanese artist shows how the body has become the vehicle of media attention on social networks. At the same time, she also demonstrates how our bodies are occupied by these very platforms. They have an influence on how we present and perceive ourselves – and determine the value that we give to ourselves.