



# THE STEVE WHITE EXPERIENCE

EMILY BROOKS-MILLAR & LEW-C



Music and songs by Lew-C

Illustrations and animation by Emily Brooks-Millar

Text by Lew-C & Emily Brooks-Millar

Edited by Dr Maggie Laidlaw



# THE STEVE WHITE EXPERIENCE

The Steve White Experience deconstructs how absurdist narratives are often used by political media-commentators as a veil for spreading bigotry and discrimination against minorities and vulnerable people. Whether intentionally hateful, or motivated by the wealth, attention, and influence that misinformation and extremism on public platforms generates, these individuals are culpable for the perspectives and communities they foster.

In particular, this project was inspired by the outlandish, yet popular, alt-right conspiracy theory that soy-based products and veganism are part of a wider plot to 'feminise the men of the Global West' through the consumption of plant-oestrogen. The amount of visceral and varied responses to the rise in popularity of plant-substitute foods, and how right-wing commentators use 'chemical imbalance' as a segue way to essentialist and fascism-adjacent talking points, provides an excellent example of these absurdist politics in action.

This series of animated music videos tell of fictional public-figure Steve White's rise to fame, his confrontation with the self and the perceived Other, and his role in perpetuating cycles of hate. The Steve White Experience invites the audience to discard any perceived binaries around personal and collective identity in favour of an intersectional approach to reimagining the self.



## BIG CHEESE

The monetisation of misinformation, and the cult followings it creates, is a trial of the digital age. Increasingly, mainstream media is populated by individuals that have capitalised on the fact that extremism (masquerading as 'controversy') simply makes more money than a neutral statement. By giving these narratives a platform, and manufacturing derisions in society, such individuals have profited off of both sides of a contentious audience.



Big Cheese is part 1 of 5 in The Steve White Experience depicting his rise to wealth, power and influence by selling his opinion pieces and misinformation. Love it or hate it, your response necessitates your engagement and will pay for the show to go on.

## ECHOHEAD

Digitisation separates performed identity from the physical body and creates a space, in theory, where one can be free from other's projections and expectations. However, as the internet has evolved, this naive optimism for the digital era has been exploited to isolate and target specific demographics. The nature of social media and algorithmically curated content means that any time spent online is inevitably being spent in an increasingly soundproofed echo chamber.

Echohead is part 2 of 5 in the Steve White Experience. This piece highlights the fluidity of digital identities and the potential for radical positive change, yet how we are inundated with misinformation, entrapped in communities that reinforce our existing biases and see the world as an 'us and them' binary.



## THE EXPERIENCE

The Experience is part 3 of 5 in the Steve White Experience. This piece contains two short video loops: the first is intended as footage from Steve White's show while the second is of its audience. The audio is constructed from excerpts of real interviews with popular political commentators.

Socially constructed binaries inherited from the culture and collective, which we understand ourselves to be a part of, form the framework of our personal worldviews. In this way, the internal world of the individual and the frameworks of the collective necessarily inform each other. We all individually have the capacity for change. Yet, the monumental task of collective individuation relies on a culture that already accepts the non-binary nature of reality.

The Experience imagines a scenario, where the catalyst for this change is found in a psychoactive chemical found in plant-products.



## SOYBOY

The divides caused by the spread of misinformation have fragmented our self-image into a quilt of unscrutinised and essentialist beliefs. Binary perception — seeing the world as split into categorizable opposites — is a limitation of our language and culture. If we are indeed concerned with enacting social justice and equality, it is necessary to adopt a mode of perception and expression that accounts for infinite differences and change. One that removes the individual from the context of the binary-obsessed social matrix.

Soyboy is part 4 of 5 in The Steve White Experience. After ingesting a psychoactive soy-based product, Steve White has an encounter with 'the self'. Developing into a discussion of the Other and the unification process of perceived opposites. Soyboy interrogates the myths of an essentialist biology, chemical imbalance, and its supposed alignment to binary sex, gender and identity labels



## RED HANDED



Acknowledging social construction, and identifying the trauma it inflicts, can uncover aspects of ourselves that may make us uncomfortable. Sometimes this can be realising that you have unknowingly endured a great deal of pain and sometimes the reverse is true – that you are responsible for the toxicity and abuse in your relationships with other people.

Red Handed is part 5 of 5 in the Steve White Experience. This final segment discusses how the biases and trauma that go unaddressed will recur and be passed down to the generations to come. While ignorance is not an excuse for causing suffering, the actions we take after these revelations have the power to redefine who we are and grow from our experience. Red Hands tells us that it is only through the unification of perceived opposites that we achieve emotional healing and escape from cycles of hate



These works were created for  
The D.Rad Exhibition  
"Complicating the Narrative"  
2022