

T.T.Y.L.

Summary Report #1  
Gabe Barcia-Colombo

I've made a shift in my overall approach to the subject of death on the internet. After meeting the artist advisors at LACMA back in June I felt a bit overwhelmed by the amount of possibilities when it came to my initial concept proposal. Instead of tackling the entire concept of death online through a series of installations I decided to first focus on the funeral rites and rituals surrounding internet culture. I was specifically interested in an article by C. Morgan Babst in *Guernica* magazine entitled "Death Is a Way to Be."<sup>1</sup> The article focuses on a trend in New Orleans known as "sitting funerals," where the dead are posed in life-like situations and poses as a celebration of life. The article begins with the line: "We were not alarmed when the dead began to show up at their own funerals. " What if we could attend our own funeral? Do online memorials accurately reflect who we are when we're alive? Do we want our online personas to be the one document of our time on this earth?

I decided that rather than create a series of installations that predict future tools for funeral rites and rituals such as a digital urn or online chat bot that allows us to communicate with the dead, I am more interested in our changing relationship to death and the permanence of memory online. After speaking with Jose Luis Blondet at LACMA I became excited at the possibility of creating a performance where the dead show up to their own funerals. I am interested in creating an immersive funeral performance for one person at a time, entirely created from their own personal online data. In effect I would like to create an automated funeral in which actors deliver a custom eulogy to each individual viewer. I am interested in this event taking place at LACMA in the Bing theater over the course of one day. I have begun to work with a programmer in order to pull data offline and compose bespoke eulogies. I'm also very interested in making this experience as theatrical and personal as possible including an organ player who plays renditions of your favorite Facebook music as well as a choir that sings select twitter tweets.

Throughout my research I also became interested in the temporary nature of digital media and how this seems at odds with traditional memorials and grave markers. Unlike traditional tomb or headstones, the Facebook wall memorial is a fleeting mass of code. It is as permanent as the site itself and yet we entrust our entire lives and memories to live on this temporary plane. From this idea, I began to think of more permanent forms of archiving ones personal data and the vinyl record came to mind. I am interested in producing a series of vinyl records which will contain personal and private online Facebook data. One side of the LP will contain a data base of every text conversation one's had through Facebook, every wall post and likes, dislikes and personal information. On the other side of the record, personal photos will be encoded as one giant collage. This data wont be encoded visibly but rather as audio, very similar to a modem. The idea is to create a jukebox where you can select records and play them live. Next to the jukebox, a live de-coding of the data will display the information line by line as it is played over time. This will become a live transcript of our lives online, de-coded from a medium that is archival and permanent. As the record ages, the data will become glitchy but I like that effect as well. The idea is to archive our online lives as physical data that can be performed after we die live in front your very eyes.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.guernicamag.com/features/death-is-a-way-to-be/>

## Revised Implementation Plan

Key Milestones	Date	Funds Needed
Developing Facebook of the Dead Performance	10/1-12/15	\$ [REDACTED]
Permanent memorials of personal digital data	10/1-12/15	\$ [REDACTED]
S.A.D. Drone	12/1-2/15	[REDACTED]
Future memorials and monuments development and fabrication	1/1	\$ [REDACTED]
Performance of Facebook of the Dead	3/17	[REDACTED]
VR death space	4/15	[REDACTED]
Artist Fee		[REDACTED]
Contingency / Exhibition Materials		[REDACTED]
Total		[REDACTED]

## 1st Milestone Budget

Item	Funds Needed
Coding Assistance	[REDACTED]
Theatrical Direction assistance	[REDACTED]
Encoding of Vinyl records / 35 mm film strips multiple editions	[REDACTED]
Electronics (tone generator, film projector, raspberry pi)	[REDACTED]
Artist Fee	[REDACTED]
Total	[REDACTED]



# GABRIEL BARCIA-COLOMBO







## Invoice #1 for LACMA

**To:**  
**LACMA Art + Technology LAB**

**From:**  
Gabriel Barcia-Colombo



**Date:** 9/29/15

1st Milestone Budget	Funds Needed
Coding Assistance	
Theatrical Direction assistance	
Encoding of Vinyl records / 35 mm film strips multiple editions	
Electronics (tone generator, film projector, raspberry pi)	
Artist Fee	
Total	

T.T.Y.L.

## Summary Report #2 Gabe Barcia-Colombo

I've clarified the number of projects and paired down my approach quite a bit since the previous summary report. For the past 3 months I've focused on the HereAfter Locket and storing personal data in vinyl records. So far I have a working prototype for the first tests of the vinyl records. This has taken longer than expected due to the fact that I can't control the vinyl production. I've had to wait for tests to be cut and sent before testing to see if they work. Each record will have two sides. One side will contain the mass of personal data taken from social networking sites. The other side will contain an audio tone that can unpack this data and display it on a connected screen. A viewer will be able to watch the data unpack sequentially but also "remix" the data by placing the needle on different parts of the vinyl record. I'm still figuring out the best way to display these records. I thought about a jukebox of some kind of sculptural player but also love them as monuments or memorial items.



I also have a working prototype of the HereAfter Locket. In November I sourced the electronics from China including a small circular LCD screen which I'm very excited about for future projects. Getting the screen, battery, usb hub and button to fit within a piece of jewelry was a real struggle and I'm currently still working on designs and re-designs of the housing for the locket. I have a first prototype milled in metal on a CnC router. The piece looks close to how I envision the final but I want to experiment with more materials and give it a more slimmed down shape with more color variations in the metal. I need to mill a couple more to get the design right.

I am continuing to develop the Book of the Dead performance as more of a tour culminating in a personalized funeral. I've been working with a theatrical director in New York who creates devised and immersive theatrical productions. I've written a program in collaboration with a programmer which takes your personal Facebook data and converts it into a string of texts for a pre-set funeral program. I've been doing tons of research into how to make this technological experience impactful and intriguing while maintaining the human emotions behind traditional funerals.

For the "Abuelo" piece in virtual reality I'm hopefully collaborating with DAQRI on the creation of the 3d assets. I spoke with Dana about the possibility of inviting modelers at DAQRI to create their own spaces for deceased loved ones within this communal virtual reality apartment. It's been a little tough working with their busy schedule so I'm hoping to nail down some dates on this piece of the project soon. I've budgeted a bit extra for the "Abuelo" project in case I need to hire extra designers. The next page has a detailed description of the 4 projects.

**Vinyl** - Key ideas: Abundance of Personal Data. Permanence of memory. Live performance of memories.

I will encode the personal data of the deceased as audio tones into vinyl records. Each record can be performed to reveal snippets or the entirety of personal data stored via social media online. The vinyl records act as a physical memorial or document of one's life. They also question the permanence of online memorials. The vinyl records will outlast social media sites such as Facebook or twitter as physical objects that contain personal data, conversations, photos and memories. The piece also makes reference to the famous golden record sent on the voyager spacecraft in 1977.

**HereAfter Locket** - Key Ideas: Personal memorials, wearable memory, speculative design.

Locketts have been used as mourning jewelry since the 16th century but are widely associated with the Victorian Era in which mourners often encapsulated the memories of the deceased in wearable necklaces along with lockets of hair, cameos or silhouettes. I wish to create a modern wearable video locket that presents a video portrait of the deceased upon the press of a button. The piece will be a speculative design object that grants us a new way to wear the memory of someone. A video locket allows us to see the way someone moved, the quirks and gestures that make up the personality of memory.

**Book of the Dead** - Key Ideas: Data driven performance. Natural memorial vs technological memorial. The singularity.

An immersive intimate performance about memorials and technology that concludes with a data driven funeral for the sole audience member. The performance will begin at the La Brea Tar pits, where the audience member will experience a monologue on the history of the naturally occurring memorial site, delivered by a performer. The audience member will then be guided to Chris Burden's Urban Lights, an artwork that lives online primarily depicted through the hundreds of thousands of photos on social media. At Urban Lights, the audience member will be guided by a performer to discuss the permanence of memory as they take a photo together surrounded by Burden's lampposts. Finally an usher will guide the audience member into Bing theater where they will witness a funeral for their own digital self based on their personal social media data.

**Abuelo** - Key Ideas: Virtual Reality memorial. Personal memory. Virtual Graveyard.

When my grandfather passed away we went to Spain for his memorial service. He was a well known Spanish author and poet and at his funeral they unveiled a bronze bust sculpture in his honor. The bust looked nothing like him. It was the strangest experience to be at a public memorial for someone that I knew so intimately and feel a complete disconnection from his own image. The most visceral memory of him I have is in the garden feeding blue jays. Death is a personal and intimate experience and modern memorials involving technology should reflect this. Virtual Reality allows us to revisit past memories in a virtual space. We have the ability to reconstruct a memory and step inside with someone. I want to reconstruct my grandfather's garden as well as an adjacent apartment. I will place my grandfather in the garden feeding the blue jays. The apartment will act as an ever-changing memorial. Each room will feature a different memory of someone who has passed. Viewers can step inside these memories and spend time with the inhabitants as passive observers.

## Revised Implementation Plan

Key Milestones	Date	Funds Needed
Developing Facebook of the Dead Performance	10/1-12/15	██████
Vinyl Project	10/1-5/1	██████
HereAfter Locket	12/1-4/15	██████
Abuelo	2/1-6/1	██████
Performance of Facebook of the Dead	3/17	██████
Artist Fee		██████
Contingency / Exhibition Materials		██████
Total		██████

## 2nd Milestone Budget

2nd Milestone Budget	Funds Needed
Fabrication Assistance for Locket and Time on CnC Mill	\$██████
Materials for Locket (aluminum and brass)	██████
Vinyl re-cuts and multiples	██████
Monitor for vinyl data	██████
Artist Fee	██████
Total	██████



# GABRIEL BARCIA-COLOMBO

## Invoice #2 for LACMA

**To:**  
**LACMA Art + Technology LAB**

**From:**  
Gabriel Barcia-Colombo



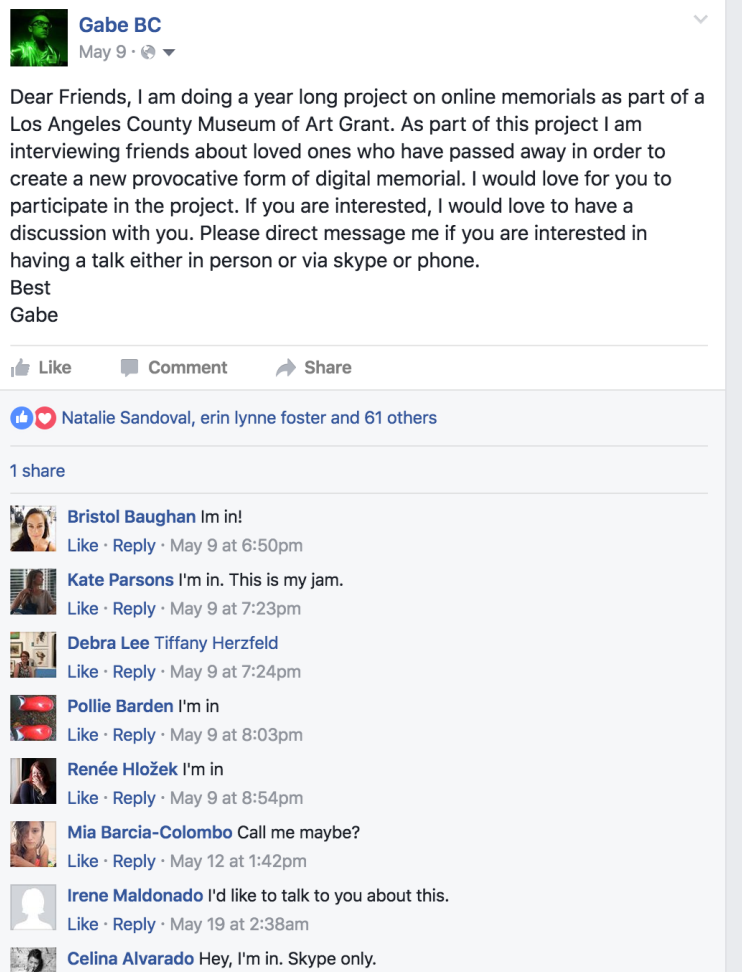
**Date:** 2/17/15

2nd Milestone Budget	Funds Needed
Fabrication Assistance for Locket and Time on CnC Mill	██████████
Materials for Locket (aluminum and brass)	██████████
Vinyl re-cuts and multiples	██████████
Monitor for vinyl data	██████████
Artist Fee	██████████
Total	██████████

## The Hereafter Institute (formerly known as T.T.Y.L. )

### Summary Report #3 Gabe Barcia-Colombo

In the past 3 months the project has once again shifted, this time further into an emotional and participatory exploration of technology and death. In April I created a fake institute entitled “The Hereafter Institute,” which is fake only in name, as the services offered by the institute are real. I put out an open call on the internet to have discussions about loved ones who have passed away and the response has been amazing.



I've interviewed over 30 people now through Skype or on the phone and have learned that there is a tremendous desire in our culture to talk about death. This is directly related to the popularity of online memorials on social networks. At first I thought these conversations would be painful and I approached them cautiously, but after several video chats I realized that everyone enjoyed bringing these memories back to life. I mentioned the various pieces I was creating for the Art and Technology lab and many people were interested in participating in the “Abuelo” part of the project.

I'm now working with designers at DAQRI to model people who have passed away to create a virtual environment where visitors can re-visit their loved ones. I first modeled my own grandfather in virtual reality and decided that a very subtle environment would be better than a super hi definition re-creation of his house or garden.

This way it would be more like

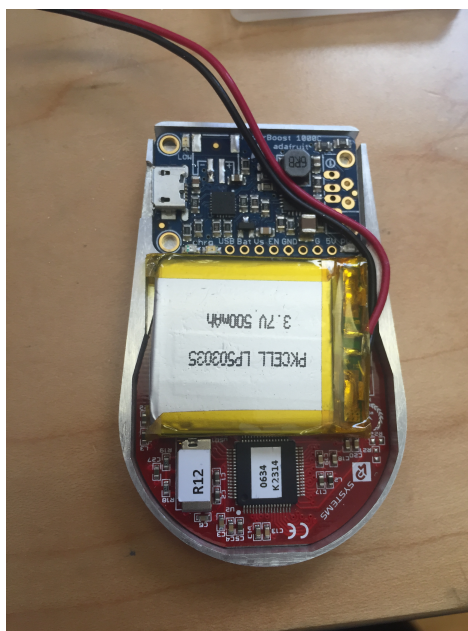
stepping into a memory for a brief moment. There are too many VR experiences that are bombastic and striving to be ultra real but I want this piece to feel more like you are stepping into a painting, a small moment. Modeling my own grandfather in VR was very emotional. I dug through tons of photos and images of him and audio recordings. My dad digitized our entire VHS collection and a collection of super 8 and we had conversations about him on the phone for hours. The result of the Virtual experience was shockingly accurate. I showed it to my mom and she started crying because it looked so much like her father. What does it mean that we can re-create loved ones who have passed away as digital avatars? How does memory re-creation



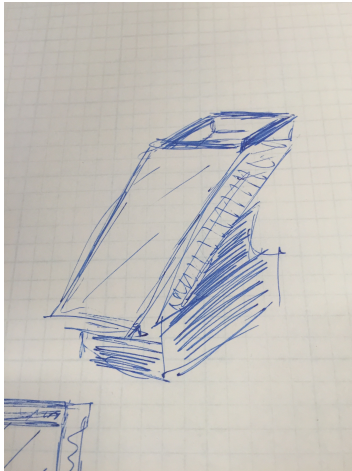
service our grieving process? In modeling deceased relatives and friends I've taken on the emotional responsibility of a technology based funeral parlor.



I also completed one design of the Hereafter Locket but found it too thick due to the bulky switch and charger in the middle of the piece. I've swapped out the toggle switch for a slide switch on the side of the necklace and this will cut the thickness down to about 3/4 of its original size. I originally envisioned this piece to have a formal portrait on screen but now like the idea of VHS or old home videos of people who have passed away as the primary video content. I'm currently collecting footage from friends and relatives who are interested in participating in the project.



The vinyl monument is also coming along well. I view this piece as a speculative design for a new form of digital gravestone. The technology is all working on the backend and we've had several custom vinyl records cut with data. The design of the monument is finally decided after many iterations and cardboard prototypes.



The final piece will be constructed out of glass and treated MDF board with an extremely wide monitor in portrait mode and the record player on top. We're trying to make it look as if the record player is defying gravity with a very dramatic lean backwards and a polycarbonate transparent fin that holds the piece up. This piece is a design for a new form of monument to the dead but after thinking about it, it is also interesting how it could translate as a monument for the preservation of other data. What about encoding the bill of rights as a vinyl record? Or creating a vinyl record encompassing all the data amassed by a relationship over the years? I am very interested in further developing this concept as a body of work in multiple monuments to data.

What I've been calling the "Book of the Dead" performance is now transformed into the Hereafter Institute. I filmed a short trailer with some brilliant actors in New York for the institute and worked with a designer friend to create several logos for the company. For the performance, each different component of the project will be demoed for an audience of one and each performance will be tailored to the data of the participant. The script has been



devised and we've begun to workshop the language and interactions audience members will have with Hereafter Specialists at the final performance. This will be a trans-media immersive performance that will live on after as documentation on [hereafterinstitute.com](http://hereafterinstitute.com).

## Revised Implementation Plan

Key Milestones	Date	Funds Needed
Development of Concept and Coding	10/1-6/15	██████
Vinyl Project	10/1-7/1	██████
HereAfter Locket	12/1-6/31	██████
Abuelo / VR	2/1-6/1	██████
Performance of Hereafter Institute	August?	██████
Artist Fee		██████
Contingency / Exhibition Materials		██████
Total		██████

## 3rd Milestone Budget

3rd Milestone Budget	Funds Needed
VR modelling & Assistance	██████
VR headsets and computer	██████
Vinyl Physical construction, glass, MDF, Mill time	██████
Locket Redesign and multiples, anodization, assembly	██████
Hereafter Institue, travel, installation, video production, website	██████
Artist Fee	██████
Contingency for materials.	██████
Total	██████



# GABRIEL BARCIA-COLOMBO

## Invoice #3 for LACMA

**To:**  
**LACMA Art + Technology LAB**

**From:**  
Gabriel Barcia-Colombo



**Date:** 6/15/15

3rd Milestone Budget	Funds Needed
VR modelling & Assistance	██████
VR headsets and computer	██████
Vinyl Physical construction, glass, MDF, Mill time	██████
Locket Redesign and multiples, anodization, assembly	██████
Hereafter Institute, travel, installation, video production, website	██████
Artist Fee	██████
Contingency for materials.	██████
Total	██████