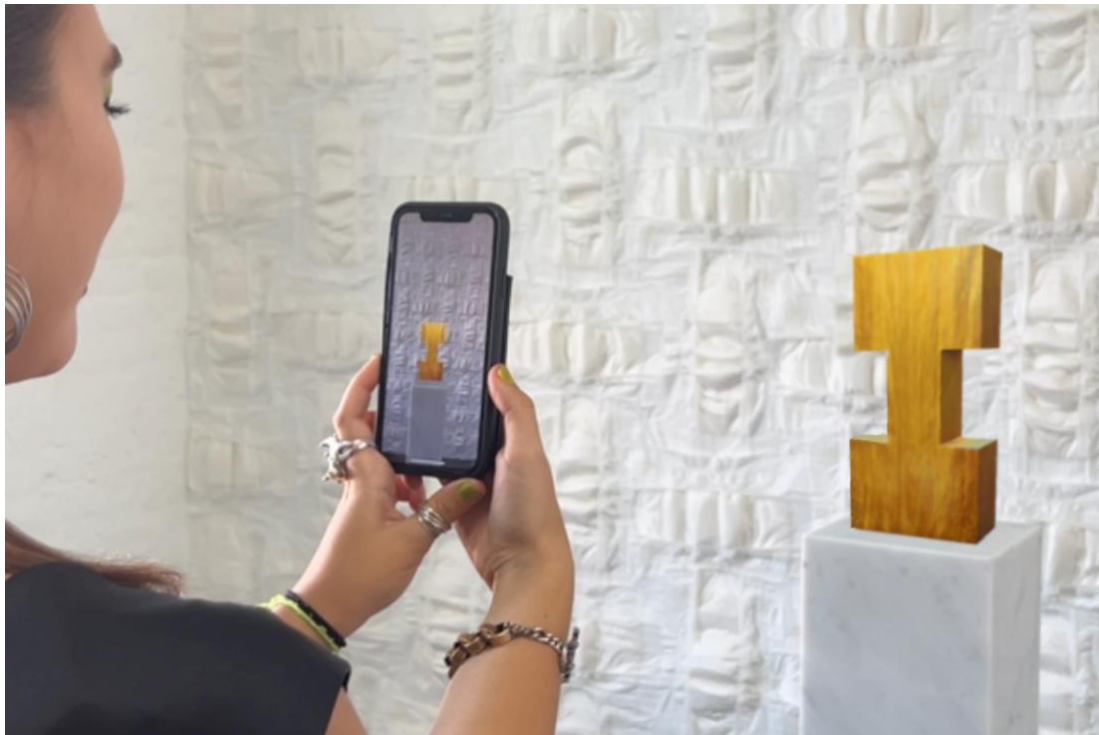


Flesh, Code, and Agency: When AR Becomes a Monument

Yvonne Senouf



CHIP 2025. photo: Artist Gill Gatfield

In *Habeas Corpus*, artist Gill Gatfield turns the legal phrase “you have the body” into an immersive, posthuman inquiry, where flesh, stone, and AI + AR co-author the experience. Developed during her NARS Foundation (NYC) residency, the project interlocks works like *The Room*, *The Wall*, *Freehold*, and *Operating Systems* with *CHIP*, an AI-infused AR totem activated via a bespoke app. The result is a networked environment where minimal forms hide living systems: diapers woven into a monumental membrane, ancient kauri timber and marble balancing deep time, and an invisible OS that tethers objects, viewers, and place. It’s a potent reminder that in XR we don’t just view artworks we perform them with our bodies.

What resonates most is the project’s refusal of passive spectacle. Gatfield’s *Operating Systems* reframes sculpture as responsive infrastructure, while *CHIP* exists only in relation to the person who summons it, folding presence, ancestry, and machine intelligence into a single gesture. As the body negotiates control inside these mixed realities, agency becomes the medium.

For those building cultural XR today, *Habeas Corpus* reads like a playbook for ethical immersion: material intelligence, context-aware systems, and audiences treated as co-authors, not data points.

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