

# Untitled (Fog Pill)

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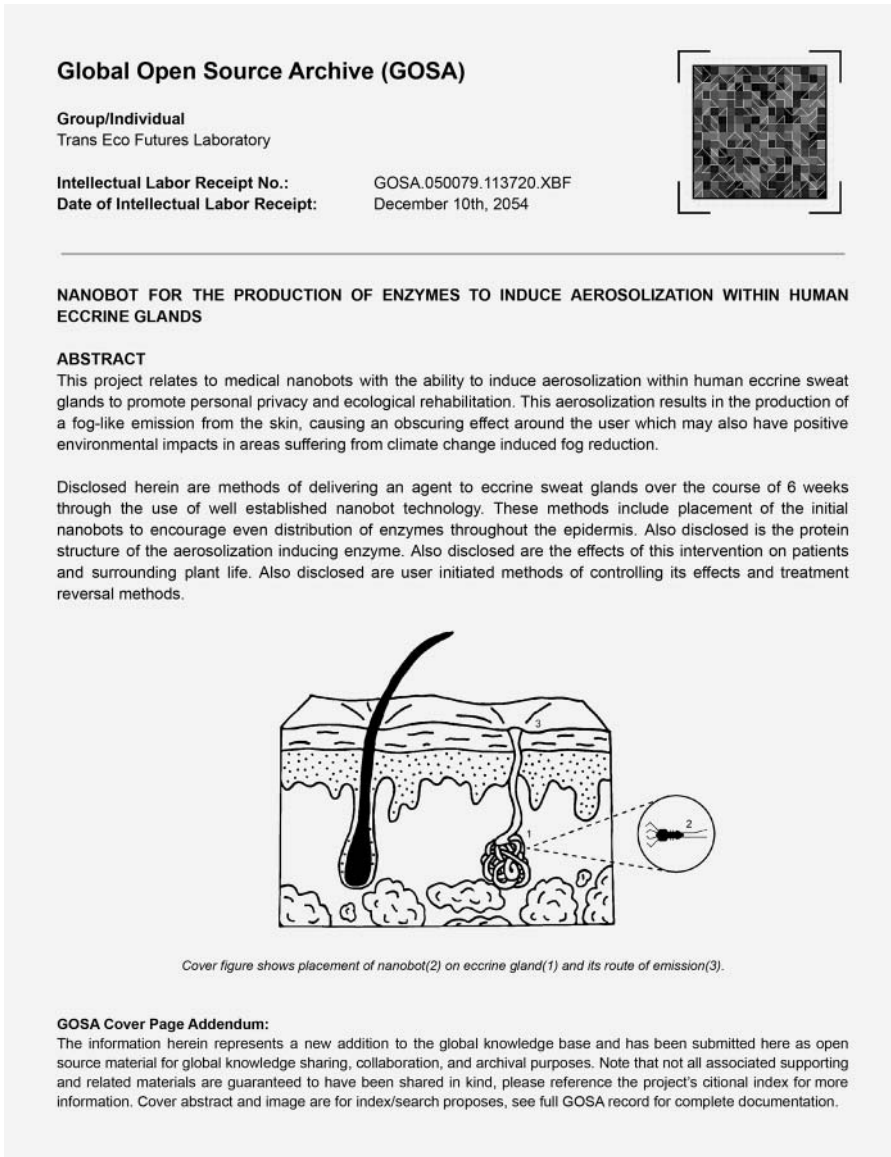
CHELSEA THOMPTON

**Abstract** “Untitled (Fog Pill)” is a work of speculative design fiction imagining a future technology allowing people to obscure themselves by excreting fog from their skin. This work takes the form of a one-page document and is inspired by epistolary novels. The document simultaneously outlines the speculative technology while implying the existence of future organizations and technologies not explicitly explained. This artwork is part of an ongoing series exploring fog as an aspirational figure for trans embodiment and resistance. In this work, the artist specifically explores how future trans people might leverage personal fog production as a means of resisting visibility and surveillance.

**Keywords** art, speculative design, science fiction, epistolary, trans studies

## Artist Statement

“Untitled (Fog Pill)” is a work of speculative fiction in the form of a document taken from a future archive. This work is part of an ongoing series exploring fog as an aspirational figure for trans embodiment and resistance and is inspired by epistolary novels and the stories the documents can tell through their materiality. The work constructs an imagined future across multiple dimensions: first, through the creation of an organization named the Global Open Source Archive, whose imagined registry dictates the overall form and visual style of the document, including the imagined technology of a future QR code in the top right-hand corner; second, through the creation of the “Trans Eco Futures Laboratory,” the fictional group who develops and shares the technology that is the focus of the document and central illustration; and third, through the speculative technology itself, a pill that allows a person to emit fog from their pores. Taken together, these imagined organizations and technologies construct a future in which trans people are alive, thriving, and able to develop technologies of visual resistance that they can then share across the world through a global movement of information sharing. This work draws from my experience studying archival materials and how the material and visual form of a document implies and illustrates the material culture of its origin. In creating this document, I wanted to place it in an implied



**Figure 1.** Image of a factitious archival registry page.

interconnected future where the global open source movement is connected to a smaller research initiative that has produced a specific new technology. To accomplish this, I looked at current and historical models of intellectual property documents (patents, etc.) and tried to imagine how this form might change or evolve to accommodate an open source archive in the future. In imagining this future, I considered the politics such an organization might adopt, especially in a world

dramatically altered by climate change. Instead of opting for some imagined technologically complex futuristic file format, I instead considered how an open source resource might instead opt for simple, low-tech/low-bandwidth, accessible, and durable formatting. These considerations inspired the overall formatting of the document as an open source, intellectual-labor cover page. The speculative technology at the center of the work, a pill that allows a person to emit fog from their skin, imagines future trans people using personal fog production as a means of resisting visibility and surveillance, which might also help revive local ecologies reliant on fog. This fictional artifact imagines a livable trans future across multiple registers: infrastructural, social, and technological.

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**Chelsea Thompto** is a transdisciplinary artist and educator working at the intersections of art, trans studies, and technology. She is assistant professor of creative technologies in the School of Visual Arts at Virginia Tech. She received an MFA and MA in four-dimensional art and an MA in gender and women's studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and has shown her work nationally and internationally.