# Malfunctioning by Design

HACKEA / Digital art series / 2026

## THE WORK & ITS STORY

HACKEA explores the gap between the appearance of functionality and actual use. The series adopts the visual language of consumer catalogues: familiar domestic settings, convincing materials, balanced compositions, and objects that appear complete and desirable. On closer inspection, each object contains a deliberate contradiction that undermines its usability.

The project asks what happens when visual credibility replaces function. Its almost-products borrow the promise of practical design while withholding its usefulness. Familiarity invites trust; malfunction interrupts it. Through this tension, HACKEA examines the persuasive power of product imagery and the relationship between consumer desire, automated production, and real human need. Generative AI is both the medium of the work and part of its subject: a technology capable of producing convincing appearances invites us to reconsider what those appearances actually promise.

Selected works from the HACKEA digital series.

## THE PROCESS

The HACKEA process begins with extracting familiar design modules and separating form, function, and material. These components are deliberately misaligned through controlled mutation, disrupting expected relationships between use and appearance. Through recombination, they are reassembled into hybrid objects that retain visual coherence while losing usability. The malfunction is subtle, intentional, and integral to the design.

The series was developed using multiple generative AI models and platforms, including Spaces, ChatGPT, Magnific, and Google's Nano Banana. The conceptual framework and the principle of deliberate malfunction guide the work. Rather than treating visual plausibility as proof of successful design, the project uses it to expose the distance between an object's persuasive image and its practical logic.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gilad Edelstein is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher working with new media, digital culture, and generative systems. His practice engages with post-modern Judaica, examining the intersection between ancient tradition and contemporary visual culture through data-driven and algorithmic processes.

Graduating in 2003 from Camera Obscura's Digital Media and Interactive program, Edelstein founded MediaLab in 2009, alongside an independent artistic practice presented in exhibitions in Israel and internationally, and recognized through design and new media awards.

In recent years, his work has focused on Generative Art, exploring the tension between control and unpredictability, structure and emergence. Through systems that cannot be fully anticipated, his practice questions authorship, automation, and meaning in the age of artificial intelligence.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

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| **Artist** | Gilad Edelstein (Israel) |
| **Title** | HACKEA - Malfunctioning by Design |
| **Year** | 2026 |
| **Medium / materials** | Digital images created using generative AI; digital files. |
| **Tools & platforms** | Spaces; ChatGPT; Magnific; Google Nano Banana. |
| **Dimensions** | Variable across the series and according to presentation.<br>No fixed physical installation dimensions. |
| **Presentation** | Digital image series, with the option of a printed presentation. |
| **Credits** | Concept and artistic direction: Gilad Edelstein. |
| **Website** | https://hackea.art |

## OPTIONAL INSTALLATION EXTENSION

The digital series can be extended into an interactive installation featuring an autonomous production kiosk and an accumulating archive of generated images. Visitors would activate a generative process, with printed outputs added to an Archive Wall. This is an optional installation proposal, not a description of an existing operational kiosk or a requirement for presenting the digital series.

## CONTACT

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