



Fig. 8. William Cobbing, *Will.ni.naiz*, 2022, video

But whereas Robert Morris was disgusted by the substance he used and uses the adjective ‘shitty’ in his journal to express his revulsion at this ‘brute dirt’,²⁰ claymaniac Cobbing in a number of works starting with *Eating My Teeth* (2004) (p.102) and more recently – initiated during the lockdown of the Covid pandemic – with *Will.ego.sum* (2020), *Will.yo.soy* (2022) (fig.7), or *Will.ni.naiz* (2022) (fig.8), continues to relish a close, indeed intimate, contact with his slimy material, and the tactility, smell and sound of clay. The action, however, now focuses on the head. For instance in *Will.ni.naiz* we see the artist wearing a gigantic round lump of brownish, wet clay on his shoulders: one might call it a claustrophobic mask or a cocoon, since the artist has an ‘intense feeling of sensory deprivation, where I (...) am very aware of my own breathing and sense of touch’.²¹ He cannot see and is cutting away the three protruding cones at the front with a wire; this action frees liquid paint hidden inside that recalls the ‘glazes of Minton Majolica, produced in Stoke-on-Trent in the Victorian era’.²² Through this process, two eyes and a mouth seem to appear, while liquid colours with a cheerful, innocent connotation such as yellow, purple, light green and turquoise continue to ooze out of the holes. The face seems to cry and scream silently, while destruction gives rise to identity. At the same time, the clay used in *Will.ni.naiz* is a three-dimensional sketch, the stuff of drafts, a temporary state.²³ What is at stake here in *Clay Brains* (2023)