Catalog
Peer to Peer

LaTurbo Avedon, Mitchell F. Chan, Entangled Others, Simon Denny, Amir H. Fallah, Sarah Friend, Auriea Harvey, Rhea Myers, Osinachi, Casey Reas, Anne Spalter, Itzel Yard aka Ix Shells, Sarah Zucker

Curated by Tina Rivers Ryan

Buffalo AKG Art Museum
21 November 2022
On the Museum as Cultural Protocol
by Tina Rivers Ryan

One of the most-discussed cultural shifts of the past two years is the unprecedented surge of interest in digital technologies in the arts and culture fields. This has prompted museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions to re-examine their traditional roles and develop new strategies for engaging with audiences in the 21st century.

The exhibition Peer to Peer, presented by Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly the Albright-Knox) in collaboration with Rhea Myers, Sarah Friend, Simon Denney, and Simon Avellan, was curated by Rhea Myers with Iris Long and Carol Sabbadini and premiered in Spring 2020. The exhibition features works by Mitchell Chan, Amir Fallah, Auriea Harvey, Sarah Friend, Simon Denney, and others, and explores the possibilities and social consequences of new media technologies in the arts.

In computing, “peer to peer” networks decentralize centralized repositories that are controlled by a single authority. The exhibition’s title is thus also a provocation about the future of museums: how might the large social sphere? Autonomous agents of decentralization that will make between artists and their contemporaries, technology itself, whether by pioneering new technologies, or organizing Peer to Peer, an exhibition of new artworks.

Building on the history and history, this has propelled the AKG has an important opportunity—and even—to help identify the artists who are shaping art history. Many of these artists are even shaping their practices, and we are witnessing the emergence of a new “generative” art after algorithms have infiltrated “figurative” art after processes like photography try to create new markets and financial models for art. Importantly, the artists in this show are innovating and critically exploring the aesthetic potential and social consequences of these new media technologies, whether by pioneering new approaches or by using blockchain-based tokens and smart contracts.

At the same time, they are reshaping the way we think about museums as facilitators of encounters between artists and their contemporaries, technology itself, and the Internet. Mirroring the global networks of digital art, the exhibition features algorithmically-generated abstract compositions. Today, it is a diverse field that includes not only digital images, videos, and 3D printed sculptures, but also networked, interactive experiences ranging from websites to virtual worlds, online games, and social media performances.

In a world where “peer to peer” connects individuals and ideas, the AKG has an important opportunity—and even—to help identify the artists who are shaping art history. Many of these artists are even shaping their practices, and we are witnessing the emergence of a new “generative” art after algorithms have infiltrated “figurative” art after processes like photography try to create new markets and financial models for art. Importantly, the artists in this show are innovating and critically exploring the aesthetic potential and social consequences of these new media technologies, whether by pioneering new approaches or by using blockchain-based tokens and smart contracts.

To foreground these questions, Peer to Peer stages a new “peer” to art’s ever-expanding network of ideas. To adapt) new technologies to continue supporting the collection art works over generations, thanks to its commitment to conserving cultural heritage. The exhibition also highlights the important role of the historical “peers,” pairing each new work with an exchange between these artists and their contemporaries and predecessors. The collection art works includes a Surrealist landscape by René Magritte; an Avedon; a list of algorithms; and a final third as conceptual works.

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La Turbo Avedon is a non-binary avatar artist who exists and makes work on the internet, including social media platforms and online digital games. In 2012, they created their first "Club Rothko," a virtual environment inspired by the artist's many hours spent inside the "Afterlife" night club within the game Mass Effect 2. Club Rothko looks like a night club, with rooms, a DJ platform, and lighting and sound systems. But it is also an interoperable "exoiverse"—Avedon's preferred term for the increasingly corporate idea of the "metaverse"—in which the multiple avatars of Avedon from different platforms can coexist and socialize, prompting us to consider how we construct our identities and experience immortality in cyberspace.

Club Rothko’s name derives from its digital wallpapers of paintings by the Abstract Expressionist Mark Rothko, whose large, floating fields of color are known for absorbing their viewer’s and triggering strong emotions—responses that many now associate with "immersive" virtual experiences. In Avedon’s exoiverse, which treats modernism with both reverence and irreverence, Rothko’s blurry, visually unstable contours become a metaphor for the freedom found beyond the limits of existing technological systems: "At a certain point there are restrictions on what you can do in virtual (and online) environments, edges of where games are intended to go or not," Avedon once stated. "When I am building in my own software those edges disappear, and I am able to render anything I am looking for."

While many artists, like Rothko, have found freedom in abstraction, detractors have accused it of being "meaningless"—like a pretty wallpaper. Digital artists today similarly suffer from the suspicion that their work is as decorative as a screensaver. Despite its commercial success, Club Rothko is meant to prompt us to question the cultural values that frame how we respond to different kinds of aesthetic experiences—and especially those, like games, that involve technology and are rarely seen as "art." For Peer to Peer, Avedon has created a new Club Rothko inspired by the Buffalo AKG’s iconic Rothko painting Orange and Yellow, 1956. A video preview of the Club takes viewers on a tour through the space, which culminates with a close-up of a digital painting that mimics Rothko’s pastel effects as a haze of luminous pixels. Collectors of the CLUB ROTHKO—and YELLOW AND ORANGE STARTER PACK—can now purchase multiple files created by the artist—including three orange and yellow abstract videos, an ambient sound track, a customizable DJ "head-up display," and two older files of DJ sound effects—that they can use to create their own Club Rothko, in either their own exoiverse or physical space. Despite the utopianism of 1990s cyberculture, the internet has become a space of commerce, surveillance, and discord; CLUB ROTHKO upends the avant-garde dream of integrating art and life for our networked present, asking us to once again imagine networked and virtual environments as utopian spaces where we can experience communion, transcendence, and freedom.

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**Artwork Description**

**Artist Bio**

La Turbo Avedon is an avatar and artist, creating work that emphasizes the practice of non-physical identity and authorship. Avedon has spent the past decade developing a body of work that illuminates the ever-growing intensity between users and the virtual, pursuing creative environments that deepen the meaning of immaterial experiences. They curate and design Panter Modern, a file-based exhibition space that encourages artists to create site-specific installations for the internet. Avedon’s process of character creation combines through gaming, performance and exhibitions. Their work has been exhibited and collected internationally.

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Mitchell F. Chan  
Winslow Homer’s Croquet Challenge  
4K UHD app for Mac/Linux

Artwork Description

Winslow Homer’s Croquet Challenge is a digital game that can be played by anyone on the internet or by collectors as an application on their computer. Toronto-based artist Mitchell F. Chan not only coded the game art and mechanics, but also wrote the dialogue, recorded the sound effects, and even created the shaders that calculate the lighting levels on each texture in real time. The first in his new series of immersive fictions called Beggar’s Belief, this game transforms Homer’s painting *The Croquet Players*, 1865, into a digital “physics game” (like Angry Birds), in which the player uses their cursor to aim and swing their mallet towards the ball. The characters are modeled after the figures in the painting; the action takes place on a lawn that is bounded by a recreation of the painting’s gilded frame; and landscape scenery from Homer’s other paintings provide the backdrop.

Homer first became famous for his images of the Civil War, which were popularized in the press and helped the Union’s cause. Painted shortly after the war’s ending, his idyllic rendering of a friendly croquet competition may represent the desire for reconciliation after an intense period of social and political division—or perhaps a skepticism that such a thing is possible, given the ambiguous relationships between the figures. Chan amplifies the painting’s undertone of conflict by giving the characters dialogue that emphasizes the historical context of the Civil War, as well as making Homer’s genre painting of privileged leisure into an actual game with winners and losers. Given that physics games are descended from ballistics research during World War II (which contributed to the invention of modern computing), the game play particularly highlights the military history haunting this scene.

Beyond contextualizing *The Croquet Players* as an antebellum painting, Chan’s game reminds us that art—like games or politics or war—takes place within a defined arena according to a set of rules, and that certain ideas, facts, or people must be included or excluded for this arena to be maintained. Using your cursor to lower the in-game camera reveals a chain gang of formerly enslaved African Americans laboring in the fields beyond the lawn, suggesting the Jim Crow laws then forming on the horizon—as if the tenor of Homer’s painting depends on keeping knowledge of these events “outside the frame.” The political and social realities of this era, which saw the birth of the women’s suffrage movement, Homer’s painting reflects that croquet was one of the first co-ed sports, which contributed to its surge in popularity in the 1860s. Chan’s game uses Homer’s same co-ed figures, but we can only define them as “women,” and only the men are allowed to speak—and to win.

Mitchell F. Chan produces a diverse body of work, performed in both physical and digital public spaces. His blockchain-based work posts crypto as a harbinger of a fully dematerialized world, and conceptualism as a tool for understanding it. Examples include 2017’s Digital Zones of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility, one of the earliest non-fungible token artworks, and 2021’s Lith Generalizer Generator, on Art Blocks. In physical spaces, he has produced permanent large-scale public projects across North America, most recently Monument to United Nations Peacekeeping Veterans (2022). His work has been discussed in numerous media outlets including Artforum, Kunstforum, VICE, Canadian Art, Slate, the Toronto Star, Gizmodo, and Art In America.
Entangled Others

Artwork Description

Entangled Others was founded in 2020 by Sofia Crespo (a generative artist who works with neural networks) and Feileacan McCormick (a generative artist and former architect). Their "entangled" practice acknowledges the creative and ethical entanglements between people, and also the eerie entanglements between humans and more-than-human machines and natural forces. Their work Swim takes as its point of departure Arturo Herrera's Walk, 2009, a series of fourteen independent sculptures of abstract lines, which in turn were inspired by Paul Klee's whimsical idea that "a line is a dot that went for a walk." Herrera's foot-tall steel objects are placed in a ten-foot row on a wall, suggesting the progressive linear movement of narrative forms like ancient friezes or modern-day filmstrips. Like Klee, Herrera embraced the creative potential in allowing a line "to move freely, without goal" (as Klee wrote in his 1925 Pedagogical Sketchbook).

In Swim, Entangled Others uses artificial intelligence to "take a line for a swim." They trained their neural network to iteratively morph a vector line to match images of aquatic subjects, resulting in fourteen doodles of abstract blue shapes that evoke life forms such as jellyfish and coral. While their works are produced with AI, they emphasize that these systems are not their "collaborators," have no "agency," and are not "alive." In fact, they see their works as helping to demystify these technologies and promote technological literacy. By training algorithms on open-source databases of scientific information, Entangled Others draws attention to what we choose to study in nature and how we describe it using data—and how this information might be shaping the natural world in turn.

The output for Swim is captured as an animated SVG file in which the lines seem to "draw themselves," as well as a video recording. The final series of images also has been printed on paper by using a plotter printer—an early digital printer in which a computer controls the movement of a pen over paper, like a seismograph. This again evokes the specter of the (absent) "artist's hand," further pushing the long history of abstraction into a future increasingly shaped by so-called "intelligent" machines.

Artwork

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Artists

Berlin, Germany

Entangled Others is the shared studio practice of artists Feileacan McCormick and Sofia Crespo. Their work focuses on ecology, artificial lifeworlds and generative arts, with an emphasis on giving the more-than-human new forms a presence and life in digital space. This involves exploring questions of relationship, biodiversity, and awareness through biology-inspired technologies. They highlight how, through an environment of arts and new technology, they can be used to bring attention and awareness to the unseen that we are tightly intertwined with. Entanglement is a complex state one where no single entity can be said to be separate, or somehow unaffected, by any other present entangled, we cannot consider ourselves without others, act without interacting, speak without being heard.
Simon Denn y’s recent work examines how claims to ownership are reconfigured in today’s media-saturated, technologically advanced, and politically charged context. Denn y’s multi-faceted “Metaverse Landscape” is more transparent and egalitarian. It potentially transforms ownership into something that is no longer tied to symbols of capitalism, including colonialism—even as it is thoroughly integrated with the strategies of the technology industry and the rise of social media. His work unpacks the social and political implications of the technologies that are seen as celebrating their beauty. These tropes are seen as manifestations of the rise of social media, and the rise of social media is itself—isn’t as divorced from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces that seem divorced from our visible reality. The art itself—isn’t as divided from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces that seem divorced from our visible reality. The art is thoroughly integrated with the strategies of the technology industry and the rise of social media.

Denn y’s Metaverse Landscape comprises both physical and digital components. The physical component is a paper wallet, dynamic ERC-721 NFT; physical object: UV print and oil on canvas, wood, MDF, Plexiglas, ETH. The digital component includes time-based components. The address(es) that hold these tokens are represented symbolically as ownership in this landscape. Denn y’s recent work examines how claims to ownership are reconfigured in today’s media-saturated, technologically advanced, and politically charged context. His work unpacks the social and political implications of the technologies that are seen as celebrating their beauty. These tropes are seen as manifestations of the rise of social media, and the rise of social media is itself—isn’t as divided from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces that seem divorced from our visible reality. The art itself—isn’t as divided from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces that seem divorced from our visible reality. The art is thoroughly integrated with the strategies of the technology industry and the rise of social media.

Simon Denn y (b. 1982 Auckland, New Zealand) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He makes exhibitions and artworks that are held in institutional collections such as Minneapolis), Kunsthalle Zürich (Zürich), Sammlung (Düsseldorf), MoMA (New York), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Biennale in 2015. His works are represented New Zealand at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2019.

Simon Denn y studied at the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland and at the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main. Denn y has curated significant exhibitions about blockchain and art such as Modernism, that unpack the social and political implications of the technologies that are seen as celebrating their beauty. These tropes are seen as manifestations of the rise of social media, and the rise of social media is itself—isn’t as divided from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces that seem divorced from our visible reality. The art itself—isn’t as divided from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces that seem divorced from our visible reality. The art is thoroughly integrated with the strategies of the technology industry and the rise of social media.
Amir H. Fallah’s immediately recognizable style is a kind of universal, mystical motif that appears in his works from the 1980s to the present day. The artist has worked in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Phoenix Art Museum; The Milwaukee Art Museum; The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; The University of Michigan Museum of Art; The National Museum of Mexico; The University of Iowa Museum of Art; The Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University; The Chazen Museum of Art, Madison; The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Ammons香水 Museum, Dallas; The New Orleans Museum of Art; The University of California, Santa Cruz; The21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa; The Cleveland Museum of Art; The University of North Carolina Asheville; The Columbus Museum of Art; The University of Kentucky Art Museum; The National Portrait Gallery, London; The University of Virginia Art Museum; The Minnesota Museum of American Art; The Arizona State University Art Museum; The San Diego Museum of Art; The Oakland Museum of California; The Des Moines Art Center; The重心 Museum of Contemporary Art, China; The Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; The Pohang Museum of Art, South Korea; The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Valparaiso, Chile; The Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Malaga, Spain; The Bourse de Commerce— Pinault Collection, Paris; The Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; The Fondazione Prada, Milan; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The UCSD Museum of Art & Architecture, San Diego; and the Nerman Museum of Art, Olathe, Kansas.

In 2015, the artist was chosen to participate in the Whitney Biennial, New York, with a solo show at the Whitney Museum of American Art. In 2016, the artist was included in the exhibition “Multiples” at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and the first edition of the biennial “Art and Humanity” at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp. In 2017, the exhibition “Painting the Body” at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, selected Amir H. Fallah as a featured artist in the exhibition “Food for Thought.” In 2018, the artist was included in the exhibition “Art & Humanity” at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp. In 2019, the artist was included in the exhibition “Art & Humanity” at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp. In 2020, the artist was included in the exhibition “Art & Humanity” at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp. In 2021, the artist was included in the exhibition “Art & Humanity” at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp. In 2022, the artist was included in the exhibition “Art & Humanity” at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp.

Amir H. Fallah received his Bachelor of Fine Art degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, and his MFA in Fine Art from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The artist’s works are represented by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Contemporary Austin, Austin, Texas; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Honolulu Museum of Art, Honolulu; The Asia Society, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Krannert Art Museum, Urbana-Champaign; The University of California, Santa Cruz; The University of British Columbia, Vancouver; The University of Chicago, Chicago; The University of California, Los Angeles; and The University of California, Berkeley.

Amir H. Fallah’s “Wheel of Life” is a digital painting that explores the concept of the universe as a celestial body, with the artist’s signature use of bold patterns, particularly those he has become known for their meticulous brushwork, and the prominent use of greens, purples, and oranges. His familiar use of pink light over the left figure’s shoulder. In this PNG, the digital processing of images. For example, the artist makes for each of his paintings. These paintings are more refined versions of the digital sketches that he produces in Photoshop and outputs as PNG files, sold in American stores—takes on an additional meaning. Because of its visual properties, the artist has suggested that the work be seen as a digital painting, and that the digital format and not as a physical print. Collectors of any form. Please contact Ferai File for more information.
Sarah Friend
Evolutionary Games and Spatial Chaos, Letters to Nature, 1992

Is this a .com
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Auriea Harvey is an artist and game designer deeply engaged with 3-D modeling and immersive storytelling. She is also a classically trained artist who has studied academic methods of creating forms with traditional materials like pastel and bronze. Most recently, she has been methodically creating digital figurines that are viewed either in a browser, via Augmented Reality (AR), or as 3-D printed sculptures. These figurines often are based on photogrammetry scans of her own face and body; she then digitally combines these scans with references to mythological characters and Western art history, creating hybrid creatures that support her own movements between cultures.

Marisol/Daphne/Auriea is the first in a new series of works that Harvey is developing around the myth of Daphne. According to the ancient Brizo-Roman tales recorded in Ovid's Metamorphoses, Daphne is the beautiful, virginal daughter of a river god who is chased by the god Apollo. She calls to her father to save her, who responds by turning her into a laurel tree, from which Apollo fashion the crowns of victory that are worn by rulers and champions. The story was famously depicted in marble by the Baroque artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini; the sculpture now resides in Rome, in one of the many museums that Harvey regularly frequents for inspiration. Like Bernini, Harvey is drawn to stories of transformation, which are particularly challenging to render in a single image. As an artist and a woman, Harvey chooses to represent the terror of this story by arming herself with joy: Bernini's Daphne makes a gesture of self-defense, but Harvey shows her as dancing as her entire body liquifies in a riot of colors.

Harvey sees the joyfulness of her figure as a response not only to Bernini's rape scene, but also to the sensuality (and even perhaps violence) suggested in a series of drawings by the Venezuelan Pop artist Marisol. To make her unusual untitled drawing from 1978, from which Harvey's work draws its color palette, Marisol traced parts of her own body without allowing them to cohere into a realistic figure. Harvey echoes this in the use of her own body scans to create a shape suspended between two and three dimensions, which furthermore seems to bear its insides on its outsides. (The use of photogrammetry itself plays into this confusion, as it reduces three-dimensional volumes to two-dimensional surfaces or "skins" draped over a void.) The colors of this ambiguously defined figure shift slightly each time the work is reloaded, thanks to the unpredictable iterations of Harvey's custom shaders. Furthermore, the work exists in three iterations with distinct backgrounds, representing the three characters who compose this chemical figure. Ultimately, the formal constraints and arbitrariness of Marisol/Daphne/Auriea suggest the ongoing struggle of women to quite literally define and transform themselves—a struggle well-suited to the iterations of digital art.
Rhea Myers

Titled (Information as Property as Art) [Ethereum Null Address]

In the 1960s, Conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth became renowned for his philological investigations into the nature of art. The artist’s collection of texts, known as A Index, was first published in 1967. Kosuth’s work on the term “nothing” is a prime example of how he approached art as a language and a discourse. His work with “nothing” is not just a word, but a way of framing the nature of language itself, and especially how our perception of value is never fixed but is shaped by context and history.

Kosuth’s work on “nothing” is shaped by its cultural context. As Sadie Plant’s 1997 book “No Things” argues, “nothing” is fundamentally a language of “no thing” and not simply a matter of objective quantification. Just as Kosuth’s “No things” invite us to consider the nature of language itself, and especially how our perception of value is never fixed but is shaped by context and history.

Rhea Myers updates Kosuth’s Conceptual paradigm with her own artistic practice. As Myers’s work is the idea of no thing and its definition. The work turns the unownable into property by proxy, as material and social terms, and ones, we can say that code itself is a way of framing the nature of language itself, and especially how our perception of value is never fixed but is shaped by context and history.

In these works, art is symbolically via depiction. In this way, Myers uses her text-based work Titled (In information as Property) to re-stage the conundrums of Kosuth’s work. In this context, it is interesting to note how the rise of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) has triggered a re-definition of the nature of both art and language, Myers’ “Null Address” evokes the idea of no thing and its definition. The work is the idea of no thing and its definition. The work turns the unownable into property by proxy, as material and social terms, and ones, we can say that code itself is a way of framing the nature of language itself, and especially how our perception of value is never fixed but is shaped by context and history.

On the Ethereum blockchain, the null address is nowhere, it is the empty address, the invalid address, the address that no one can own or control. As Myers’s work is the idea of no thing and its definition. The work is the idea of no thing and its definition. The work turns the unownable into property by proxy, as material and social terms, and ones, we can say that code itself is a way of framing the nature of language itself, and especially how our perception of value is never fixed but is shaped by context and history.

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Disclosures of any kind will allow the unique option to purchase a digital artwork for design sharing. Please contact [email for display] for more information.

Vancover, Canada

Instagram @rheaplx
Twitter @rheaplx
Osinachi’s stylized images, GIFs, and generative projects are created with a surprisingly familiar program that is rarely used in digital art: Microsoft Word. He uses a digital stylus and the photo-editing features that are built into this word-processing program to manipulate and augment existing imagery, such as scans of printed newspapers, which he uses to portray the tones of Black skin. Like a painter who works within and against the limitations of oil and canvas, Osinachi has spent several years exploring the capabilities of this unique tool. The result is an instantly recognizable visual style, which he typically uses to depict sharply-defined gay Black men dressed in brightly colored or patterned clothing. These are collaged against either abstract or everyday backgrounds without a horizon line, creating the illusion of limitless space.

In previous works, Osinachi has paid homage to the queer scenes painted in a flat style by Pop artist David Hockney, who himself has turned to using an iPad to create digital drawings in recent years. Here, Osinachi responds to a work that is itself technological: Mona Hatoum’s kinetic sculpture and -2004. Its continuously rotating motorized arm has two hands: one with a jagged edge that draws symmetrical rows in the sand and another with a smooth edge that immediately erases them. The result is a hypnotic visual and aural pattern that evokes the steady rhythm of waves crashing on a sandy shore—a visceral representation of the eternal cycle of creation and destruction and the perpetual tension of “positive” and “negative” forces. These are universal themes, and yet the use of sand also recalls the specific terrain of Hatoum’s native Palestine, which has been reshaped continuously by settlement and displacement, memory and erasure. Osinachi reimagines Hatoum’s work as a touching portrait of intimacy, using the looping rhythms of GIF files to depict a gay African couple that is continually coming together and moving apart, in a single movement as fluid as the tides. As he writes, “Life is about coming and leaving. With each movement, the slate is wiped clean and there is a new chance to begin anew. In most cases, the idea of coming is positive while the idea of leaving is seen as negative. However, one cannot exist without the other.”

Osinachi is the first and foremost crypto artist out of Africa. Based in Lagos, Nigeria the 31-year-old creates figurative portraits that mirror his personal experiences through a unique visual language that he has perfected over 15 years. His practice has led to conversations around NFTs and how works being produced in the space speak to a larger humanity. He is the creator of the widely successful pfp/avatar project ‘Across the Face’.
Casey Reas
METASOTOG
JavaScript (p5.js), HTML, and CSS files
Casey Reas has been making abstract artworks with code for over twenty years. Crucially, he prefers that viewers experience his dynamic images as live performances and that viewers experience his dynamic images as live performances, instead of screen recordings—this is some what analogous to the difference between listening to a symphony in a concert hall and as a recording. In this way, he invites us to appreciate not only the outputs of his code—which are visually related to modernist art—but also the material and conceptual foundation of his work in the language of computation, which is his chosen "instrument." In recent years, Reas has used the popular software language Processing, which he coauthored in 2001, to produce a series of works that pay explicit homage to the icons of twentieth-century abstraction. As he notes, these works refer to movements ranging from "concrete and non-objective art to color-field painting and minimalism." In METASOTO, Reas offers a "meta" reflection on the work of Jesús Rafael Soto, a Venezuelan Op and kinetic artist of the 1960s who explored the aesthetic possibilities of industrial and synthetic materials such as nylon, steel, and Perspex. Soto’s sculptural construction Bois-tiges de fer, 1964, is a Masonite board measuring over five feet wide and painted with vertical black lines, in front of which are hung thin steel wires bent into varying arcs. As the viewer passes in front of the work, the visual interference between the actual and painted lines creates a dizzying optical confusion. In the 1960s, this kind of "activation" of the viewer’s body through non-traditional materials was understood by some as a political act, insofar as it rejected the bourgeois model of art as expensive objects to be passively consumed.
In METASOTO, Reas uses live code that we experience via our browsers to reimagine Soto’s sculpture as a dynamic composition of black and white intersecting lines. The black lines remain static, while the white lines move over them in ways that can make the black lines appear to be animated. Clicking on the image reveals a new pattern (although instead of screen recordings—that is, the work always should be generated in real time by a computer executing his instructions, this is analogous to the difference between listening to a symphony in a concert hall and as a recording). In this way, he invites us to appreciate not only the outputs of his code—which are visually related to modernist art—but also the material and conceptual foundation of his work in the language of computation, which is his chosen "instrument." In recent years, Reas has used the popular software language Processing, which he coauthored in 2001, to produce a series of works that pay explicit homage to the icons of twentieth-century abstraction. As he notes, these works refer to movements ranging from "concrete and non-objective art to color-field painting and minimalism." In METASOTO, Reas offers a "meta" reflection on the work of Jesús Rafael Soto, a Venezuelan Op and kinetic artist of the 1960s who explored the aesthetic possibilities of industrial and synthetic materials such as nylon, steel, and Perspex. Soto’s sculptural construction Bois-tiges de fer, 1964, is a Masonite board measuring over five feet wide and painted with vertical black lines, in front of which are hung thin steel wires bent into varying arcs. As the viewer passes in front of the work, the visual interference between the actual and painted lines creates a dizzying optical confusion. In the 1960s, this kind of "activation" of the viewer’s body through non-traditional materials was understood by some as a political act, insofar as it rejected the bourgeois model of art as expensive objects to be passively consumed.
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The Surrealist painter René Magritte is known for his images of everyday objects and scenes that are transformed in unexpected and unsettling ways. The imagery in La voix des airs (The Voice of Space), 1928, is reminiscent of the region of Belgium where Magritte grew up—the Pays Noir (Black Country). The floating forms were inspired by the silver bells hung on horses' collars, the sound of which Magritte remembered reverberating through the night air over great distances. Slits in the spheres reflect the artist's obsession with concealment and the mystery of human experience, which in his view could not be fully explained.

In the video The Bell Machine, pioneering digital artist Anne Spalter continues her exploration of Artificial Intelligence as its own mysterious force. To make this work, she specifically used DALL·E 2, a text-to-image system from the tech conglomerate OpenAI. These kinds of systems generate an image in response to a prompt phrased in natural language (instead of code), using a training set of existing images that are already associated with specific texts. Her outputs show us bells that nonsensically float in the air, as in Magritte's painting, and are depicted in a painterly style; she adds to these images a haunting soundtrack of chiming bells, as one might hear on a clear, dark night. Magritte described his paintings as "visible images which conceal nothing; they evoke mystery, and indeed, when one sees one of my pictures, one asks oneself this simple question, 'What does that mean?' It does not mean anything, because mystery means nothing, it is unknowable." Like Magritte's paintings, Spalter's AI outputs can be thought of as "visible images" that "evoke mystery." While rationally based on code and statistics, they also can look like the unconscious hallucinations of a superhuman mind (hence the nod to the Surrealist Salvador Dalí in DALL·E's name), begging the question of what "creativity" means and whether and how we can ascribe it to both computers and humans. While AI is itself a kind of Surrealist thought experiment, Spalter's process underlines the connections between the two. She entered almost identical prompts over and over again in the attempt to produce different results, echoing the Surrealists' fascination with repetition and compulsion, which they viewed as fundamentally irrational. The randomness of the outputs also highlights the Surrealists' embrace of chance operations—as in the rolling of dice—which is amplified here by the way the images quickly scroll by in seemingly random order, as if in a slot machine. Ultimately, Spalter's work asks what it can tell us about Surrealism, and perhaps more urgently, what Surrealism can tell us about the seemingly "unknowable" mystery that is AI.

Artwork Description
Digital mixed-media artist Anne Spalter is an academic pioneer who founded the original digital fine arts courses at Brown University and RISD in the 1990s and authored the internationally taught textbook, The Computer in the Visual Arts. Her artistic process explores the imagery of the modern landscape. Spalter has drawn on the writings of Carl Jung as well as science fiction novels and movies to develop a consistent set of personal symbols using a hybrid arsenal of traditional mark-making tools and innovative digital tools. Her crypt art has been auctioned by Sotheby's and Phillips, and featured in the New York Times. She recently completed a successful 501-piece drop: AI Spaceships. Spalter is also noted for her large-scale public projects. MTA Arts commissioned Spalter to create a 52-screen digital art installation, New York Dreaming, which remained on view in Fulton Center for just under a year.

Spalter's work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Arts and Design, the SFMOMA, and the RISD Museum (Providence, RI), The Museum of Cryptography, and others. Alongside her studio practice, Spalter continues to lecture on digital art practice and theory. She recently completed an exhibition residency at MASS MoCA.
In Itzel Yard’s Bend, the appearance of the artist’s dancing body is an illusion generated by the bending of scrolling horizontal white lines towards or away from the viewer. That is, the volume of her body is neither “behind” nor “in front” of the lines, but in them, in the same way that the contours of a geological structure are represented by the lines on a topographical map. This unusual method of depicting a human figure makes it seem as if her body is less a solid presence than a kind of unstable artifact of geometry; one can imagine the lines all snapping taut and her body instantly disappearing.

Yard made this work by recording herself dancing and then processing the footage using Touch Designer, a node-based program that allows users to visually manipulate data in real time. The resulting images were then recorded off a screen, as evidenced by how the image slightly angles up and away from the viewer. In other words, Bend is a digital self-portrait in which Yard—who has spoken openly about the importance of her online friendships—depicts herself as quite literally existing in lines of code on a screen. Like a stop-motion animation, the illusion of movement relies on the sequencing of still frames, which are compiled into a looping video. Unlike most animations, however, Bend’s lower frame rate ensures that her movements are not seamless. This causes a glitch effect, as if Yard’s already ghostly body is struggling to remain coherent within—or alternatively, is being brought to life by—technological circuits.

One of the first digital images of a real body similarly depicted a female figure. Although she was not shown dancing, the woman in Leon Harmon and Ken Knowlton’s Computer Nude (Studies in Perception I), 1967, was in fact the noted Minimalist dancer and choreographer Deborah Hay. Harmon and Knowlton were both engineers at Bell Labs, which was then pioneering techniques for digitizing photographs. They scanned a black-and-white print of Hay’s nude photo and algorithmically transformed it into a bitmapped image made of approximating shades of gray. In addition to furthering Bell’s research in human pattern perception, their stated goals included developing “new computer languages which can easily manipulate graphic data” and exploring “new forms of computer-produced art.” Yard’s Bend—which replaces Hay’s reclined, passive pose with her own vertical, active dancing—continues this experimental embrace of new languages and forms, suggesting new paths for forward for the burgeoning movement of generative art, as well as for figuration in a digital age.

Artwork Description
Itzel Yard—recognized as Ix Shells—is a Panamanian-based artist and self-taught coder by playing video games during her childhood. Yard was able to tap into her creativity which prompted a deep fascination for coding at an early age. In finding her pathway towards where she is now, Yard attributes a lot of her growth to her five-year stay in Toronto, where she studied architectural technology. Though this period was a formative time in her life, she pushed to find her own voice and creativity, through the safe space of computer science. By combining her observations of patterns in nature with her appreciation for Brutalist architecture, Yard has allowed computer science research to act as a digital simulation of an extension within her own mind, ultimately translating into generative art, while her creations portray a visual interpretation of the physical world. Yard aims her work to act as a metaphor for her internal exploration. This narrative is within each of her works through the lens of code, acting as a context-based metaphorical layer. In the end, she explains that her home is in her head welcoming her audience to open a digital door into the artist’s mind, where she explores her own inner world through gentle narratives, personal worth, and strewn relationships. This method of exploration produces a visual form of intricacy that is unmatched.
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Car y a tid: Vision
MP4 file (sil en t; runnin g time: 35 seconds, looped)
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Sar ah Zuck er is an artis t and writ er based in Los
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is identifiable by the symbolic attributes that she

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Four of these eight car y a tids—or columns

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Augustus Sain t-Gaudens for the Buff alo AK G’s eas t

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Car y a tids, Zuck er imagines her self as a modern-da y

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Zuck er refers to her versions as Vision, Though t, Wink,

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She taps into with cartoonishly-gruesome, which she
draws figur es. She is particularly interested in ancien t

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Founded in 1862, the Buffalo AKG (formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery) is the sixth oldest public art institution in the United States and one of the world’s leading museums for modern art and contemporary art. The museum’s collections are especially rich in postwar American and European art. For 160 years, the Buffalo AKG has collected, conserved, and exhibited art of its time, often working directly with living artists. Presenting the first museum survey of photography in 1910, acquired many major abstract and artistic artists in the history of digital art, including Leon Harmon and Ken Knowlton’s Computer Nude I (Studies in Perception), 1967, and Leo Villareal’s first generative art project, Red Life, 1999. On May 25, 2023, the Buffalo AKG Museum will open to the public as a renewed and vastly expanded campus designed by OMA/Shohei Shigematsu.