

not
in
of
along
or relating to
a
line



This publication accompanies the exhibition *not in, of, along, or relating to a line*, organized by The Art Gallery at New York University Abu Dhabi.

The exhibition is co-curated by: Heather Dewey-Hagborg (Visiting Assistant Professor, NYU Abu Dhabi) and Maya Allison (Executive Director of The NYUAD Art Galleries).

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Addie Wagenknecht
Cao Fei
Eva & Franco Mattes
Lee Blalock
Maryam Al Hamra
micha cárdenas
Ramin Haerizadeh
Rokni Haerizadeh
Hesam Rahmanian
Sophia Al-Maria
Zach Blas

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List of Artworks



From the Instagram of
Cao Fei
© Cao Fei, 2020

Lee Blalock
*Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV
(Season 2: 5cu84)*
2020
Video, sound,
animation

micha cárdenas
*Redshift and
Portalmetal*
2015
Website

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*AlHamra National
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*The Odyssey of Li Nova,
Episode 2: Tai Chi*
2020
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Ramin Haerizadeh,
Rokni Haerizadeh,
Hesam Rahmanian
*From March to
April...2020*
2020
Video, sound

Addie
Wagenknecht
*opsec for the impending
coup and LARPing lip
fillers*
2020
Video, sound

Eva & Franco
Mattes
My Little Big Data
2018
Video, sound

Cao Fei
*When the World
Breaks my Heart*
2020
Video, sound

Lee Blalock
*Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV
(Season 1, Episode 2:
Gr00mL1ght)*
2019
Video

Addie
Wagenknecht
Alive Still (series)
2020
Digital photographs

Eva & Franco
Mattes
Riccardo Uncut
2018
Video, sound

Zach Blas
*Contra-Internet
Inversion Practice #3:
Modeling Paranodal
Space*
2016
Video, sound



Introduction



Addie Wagenknecht and Aiala
Hernando, *Alive Still* (series),
2020. Digital photographs

A line is a direct path, the most efficient route between two points. A line is straight and narrow, evoking a sense of movement forward, progress, time's arrow, modernity. The proposition of this exhibition is to curve the line, to use this virtual moment to offer a different view of contemporary art in our post-internet, post-corrona, post-post-modern world.

A line is also a boundary, and a threshold: in 2020 we crossed the threshold of the global pandemic, and yet these were multiple crossings over multiple lines, depending on the individual's context. The idea of individual context, of experiential relativity, threads together the works in this exhibition, and structures its form and its content. The visitor is invited to travel a branching, non-linear, virtual path through works by artists who explore the transformation of individual identity that digital tools and internet connectivity have co-produced in our lives.

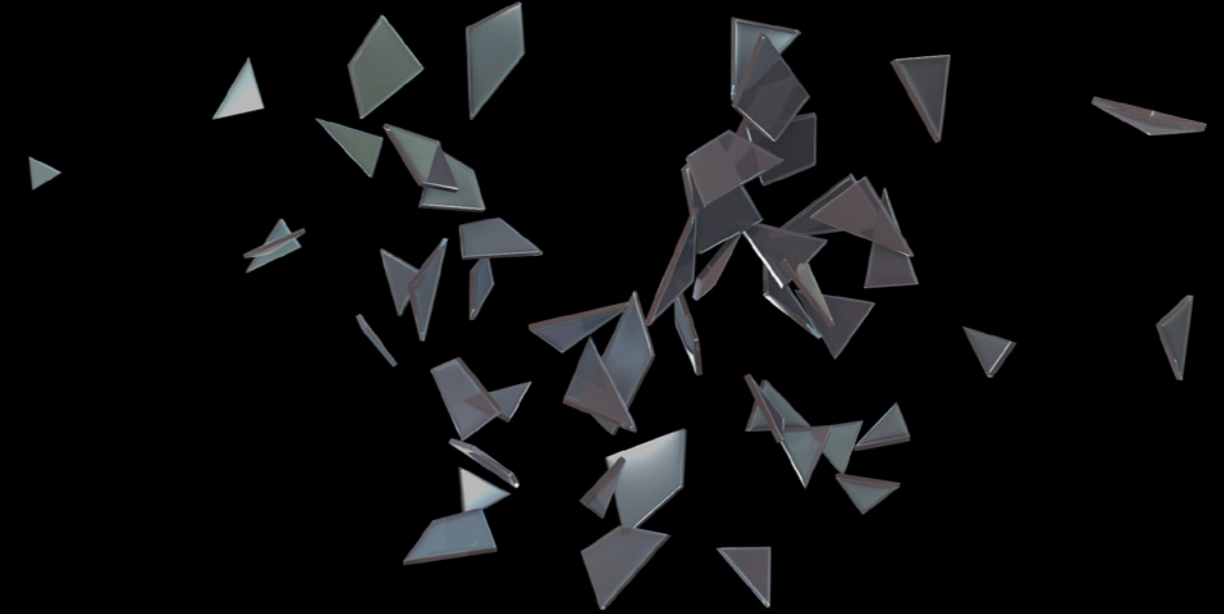
In this exhibition, nine artists and art collectives employ technology for self-expression and self-fashioning. In making visible both the restrictions and the freedoms of digital culture, they explore how identities and histories

are created, transformed, or invented. For some, technology is a means to an end: a memoir, a fictional history, an intimate view of a person's life. Others interrogate the power relations of these same tools, from virtual gaming and 'big data' consumer portraits to facial recognition software. The artists appropriate technologies to narrate, alter, augment, or invent their identities and histories.

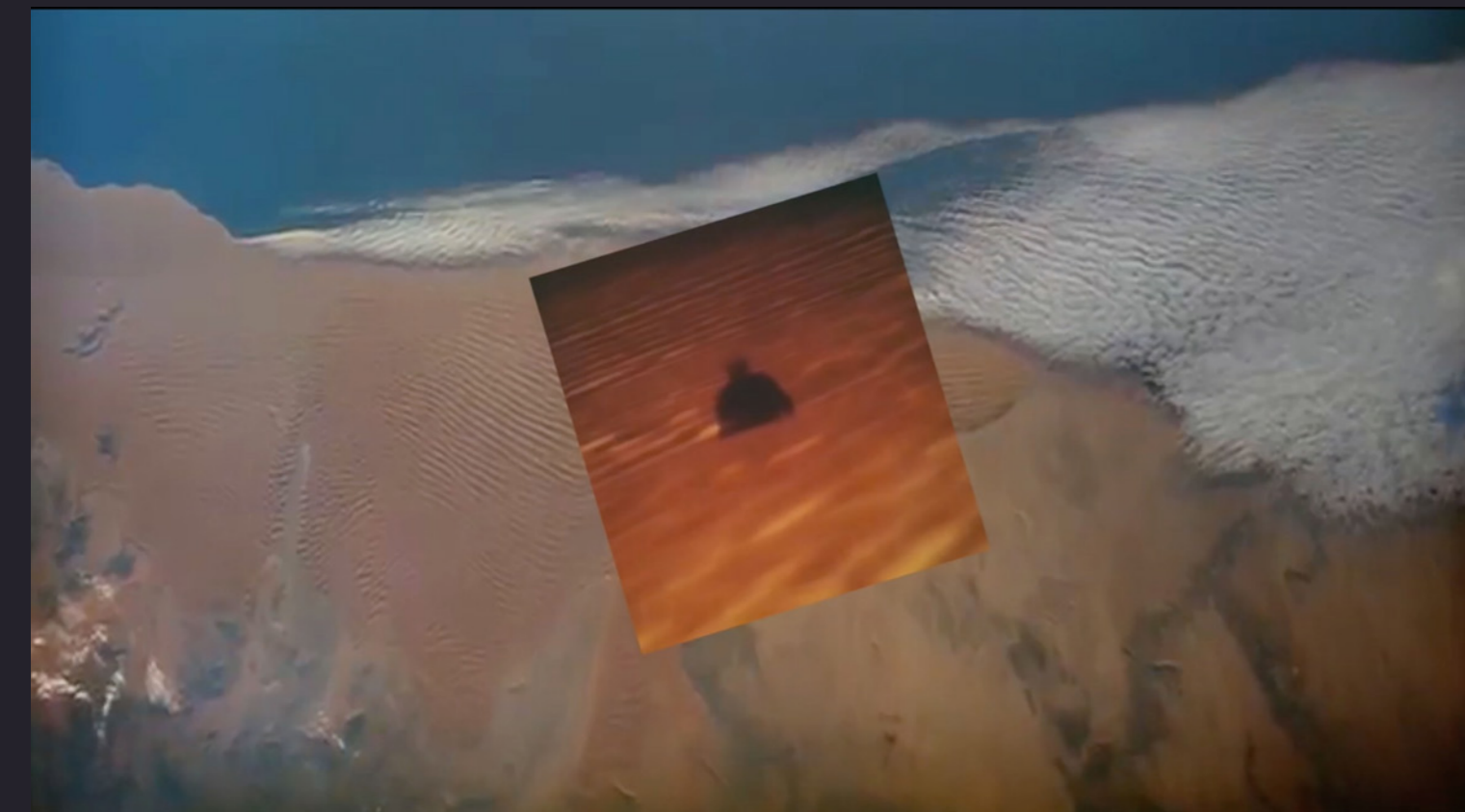
We began our curatorial process with a question: what might a virtual exhibition be?

In the pre-pandemic norm of exhibitions, you and your body physically enter the exhibition hall, to be surrounded by, immersed in, art. However, most digitally-born art doesn't enter that physical exhibition hall so easily. As a non-object, it lives always behind a computer screen, between what we might call the "object-ness" of the monitor, and the "virtual-ness" of the digital artwork's original form.

Conversely, when we enter a virtual space, we do so through a computer screen, and our bodies stay behind in the physical world. Often now, we hold that screen,



Zach Blas, *Contra-Internet Inversion Practice #3: Modeling Paranodal Space*, 2016. Video, sound. Duration: 3 minutes, 2 seconds



Sophia Al-Maria, *The Future Was Desert, Part I*, 2016. Video, sound.
Duration: 5 minutes, 17 seconds.
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line, Dubai

that world, in the palm of our hands. The smartphone, so easy to carry and pocket, has become a natural extension of our physical body, and an always-open door to the virtual world.

This exhibition is curated to be viewed in the palm of your hand. In a time when many suffer from “zoom fatigue” and pandemic isolation, the smartphone persists as a site of diversion, escape, and the meaningful pleasure of discovery. And, crucially, more of our audience has access to a mobile phone than to a desktop or laptop.

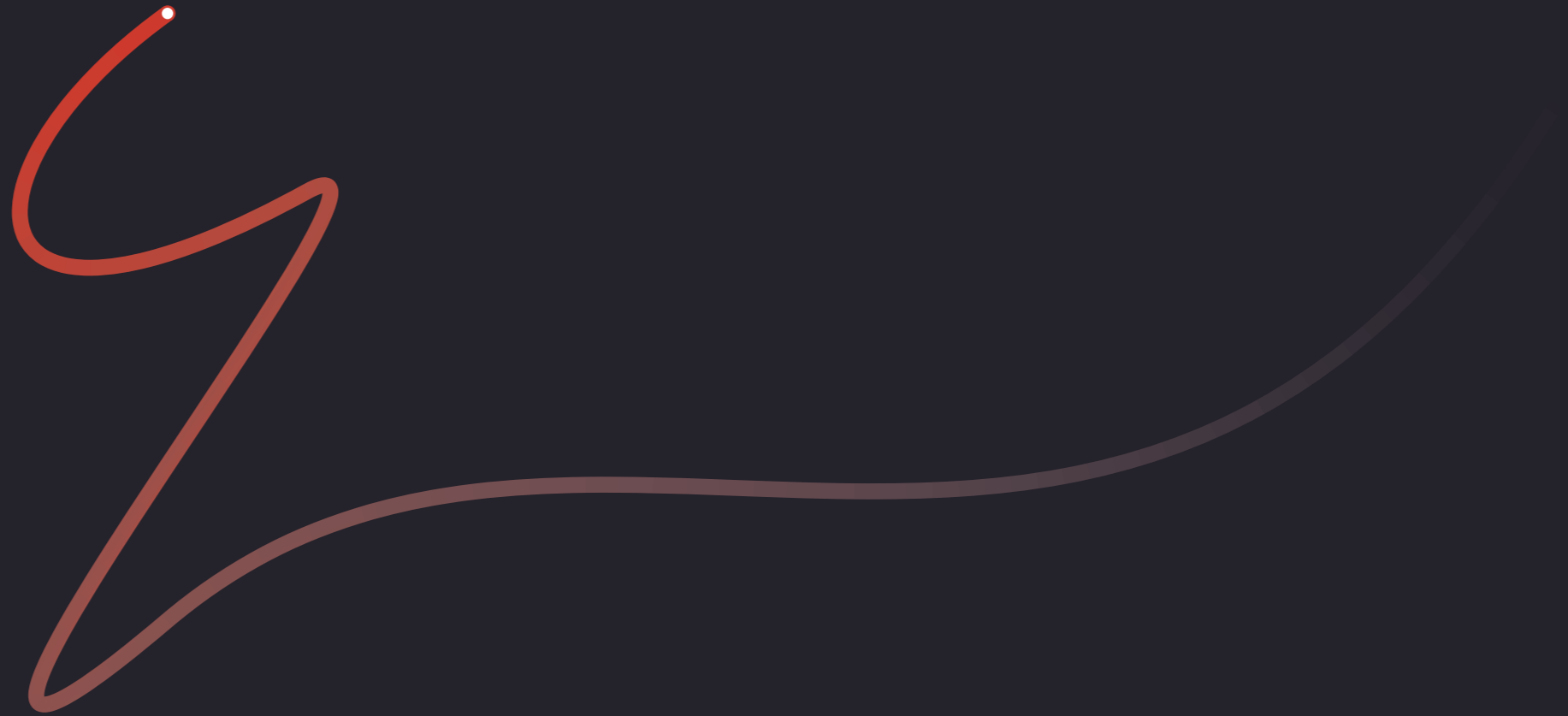
Instead of a list of links, or a sequence of screens, or a 3D render of our gallery, this exhibition is structured as a series of forking paths through born-digital artworks, a decentralized network diagram, the traversal of which is serendipitous. No two visitors will have the same experience. Its structure is inspired by early internet history and its anticipatory cultural predecessors: Borges’ *Garden of Forking Paths*, and Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concept of the rhizome (as a metaphor for non-hierarchical thought). These ideas

speak to visions of an earlier time, when the internet was fresh and new and seemed, to some, so full of potential.

The smartphone was already an extension of our bodies before the pandemic. We exist on multiple planes through these technologies that extend our bodies into the virtual world, and conjure an image of cyborgs. Wittingly or not, we have embarked on a journey of self-modification through technology. Through these works, each artist here takes as their subject this matter of agency, self-determination, and technology’s promise of liberation or threat of suffocation.

Together, the works and our curatorial experiment might constitute a revisiting, a haunting, of the technological past, which has structured our experience of the present. Many of the artists here appropriate technology, and re-fashion it as a means of taking agency, offering a view of technology’s past and present through different eyes, with all the knowledge of how history has unfolded.

The Artists



Addie Wagenknecht, *opsec for the impending coup and LARPing lip fillers*, 2020

In Addie Wagenknecht's series of Youtube "Beauty Hacks" she teaches methods of cybersecurity, in the guise of hair and makeup lessons. Through humor, she subverts the make-up tutorial, repurposing it to dismantle the patriarchal and alienating status quo in information security. This work was commissioned by The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi, for this exhibition.

Addie Wagenknecht



Video, sound.
Duration: 3 minutes, 43 seconds.
Commissioned by the NYUAD Art Gallery



In her work, Addie Wagenknecht (b. 1981, Portland, OR, US) explores the tension between expression and technology. Blending conceptually driven painting, sculpture, and installation with the ethos of hacker culture, Wagenknecht constructs spaces between art, object, and lived experience.

A member of the Free Art and Technology (F.A.T.) Lab, Wagenknecht was the recipient of a Warhol Foundation Grant (New York, NY, US, 2014), which she used to found Deep Lab, a collaborative group of researchers, artists, writers, engineers, and cultural producers interested in privacy, surveillance, code, art, social hacking, and anonymity. As an active leader in the open source hardware movement, she also co-founded NORTD Labs, an international research and development collaborative with Stefan Hechenberger, which produces open source projects that have been used by millions worldwide.

Wagenknecht has held solo exhibitions at DAM Projects (Berlin, Germany, 2020); the Reflector Gallery (Bern, Switzerland, 2018); Haus der Elektronischen Künste (Basel, Switzerland, 2016); MU (Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 2016); Singapore Art Museum (Singapore, 2016); and Bitforms Gallery (New York, NY, US, 2014). Her work has been exhibited in group exhibitions internationally, most recently including 24/7, The Somerset House (London, UK, 2019–2020);

The Situation Room, Museum of Moving Image (New York, NY, US, 2020); *Topologies of the Real*, inaugural CAFAM Techne Triennial, CAFA Art Museum (Beijing, China, 2020); *Embedded Parables*, Bitforms Gallery (New York, NY, US, 2019); NEoN Digital Arts Festival, Abertay University (Dundee, Scotland, 2019); *Technocare*, Kunstraum Niederösterreich, (Vienna, Austria, 2019); *Behind the Screen*, KINDL Center for Contemporary Art (Berlin, Germany, 2019); *Data Dating*, Watermans Art Center (London, UK, 2019); *Brave New Virtues*, Austrian Museum of Applied Arts (Vienna, Austria, 2019); *Extract*, Bitforms Gallery (Los Angeles, CA, US, 2019); *As We May Think: Feedforward*, 6th Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou, China, 2019); *POSTCENTRAL*, NOME Gallery (Berlin, Germany, 2019); *Spot On. Toilettengeschichten*, Alte Fabrik Rapperswil (Rapperswil, Switzerland, 2019); and NEMO Biennale (Île-de-France, France, 2019).

Her work is in the collections of Google, Inc. (New York, NY, US); Reinhard Storz (Basel, Switzerland); Thierry Tilquin (Brussels, Belgium); Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (Tokyo, Japan); and the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY, US).

Addie Wagenknecht and Aiala Hernando, *Alive Still* (series), 2020

Addie Wagenknecht and Aiala Hernando's *Alive Still* series updates an instantly recognizable form, the still life, for our contemporary locked-down lives (or "still lives"). These highly romanticized photographs incorporate newly-familiar items, such as hand sanitizer and COVID test results, alongside airpods, doughnuts, phones, and pills, presenting them as items of surprising beauty. In so doing, the images offer the comfort in recognizing the stress and coping mechanisms of others.



Digital photographs



Cao Fei

Cao Fei, *The Odyssey of Li Nova*,
Episode 2: *Tai Chi*, 2020

In this video, the artist documents an augmented reality (AR) experience being had by her son. In AR, we see the boy transformed into a 3D model, sipping on soda with a ring of turtles circling overhead. The “imaginary friend,” a longstanding phenomenon of childhood, finds its digital kin here: the boy literally plays with a virtual representation of himself. This surreal scene is embedded within an everyday moment on a plaza in a city in China, where Tai Chi practitioners perform their daily routines. This play of virtual and real, and the collapse of our ability to distinguish between the two, is a key theme of Cao Fei’s work. This work was commissioned by The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi, for this exhibition.



Digital video, sound.
Duration: 2 minutes, 16 seconds.
Commissioned by The NYUAD Art
Gallery

Cao Fei (b. 1978, Guangzhou, China) is one of the most innovative Chinese artists to have emerged on the international scene. Currently living in Beijing, she mixes social commentary, popular aesthetics, references to Surrealism, and documentary conventions in her films and installations. Her works reflect on the rapid and chaotic changes that are occurring in Chinese society today.

Cao Fei's works have been exhibited at a number of international biennales and triennales, including Shanghai Biennale (Shanghai, China, 2004); Moscow Biennale (Moscow, Russia, 2005); Taipei Biennale (Taipei, Taiwan, 2006); the 15th & 17th Biennale of Sydney (Sydney, Australia, 2006, 2010); Istanbul Biennial (Istanbul, Turkey, 2007); Yokohama Triennale (Yokohama, Japan, 2008); and the 50th, 52nd & 56th Venice Biennale (Venice, Italy, 2003, 2007, 2015). Exhibitions and screenings of her work have taken place at Serpentine Gallery (London, UK, 2006, 2008); Tate Modern (London, UK, 2002, 2013, 2014); New Museum (New York, NY, US, 2009); Guggenheim Museum (New York, NY, US, 2011, 2018); MoMA (New York, NY, US, 2015, 2016); Fondation Louis Vuitton (Paris, France, 2016); Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2005, 2017); and Centre Pompidou (Paris, France, 2003, 2004, 2019). In 2016, Cao Fei held her first solo exhibition in MoMA PS1 (New York, NY, US, 2016). In 2017, she became the first Chinese artist to receive the BMW Art Car Project.

Cao Fei's recent projects include the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chinese Art Initiative at Guggenheim Museum (New York, NY, US, 2018), a retrospective at K21 Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, Germany, 2018), and a solo exhibition at Centre Pompidou, (Paris, France, 2019), an Augmented Reality Art Project by APPLE and New Museum (New York, NY, US, 2019). Her most recent project is a solo exhibition at Serpentine Gallery (London, UK, 2020). In 2021, Cao Fei will have her first major retrospective in mainland China at UCCA Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, and a solo exhibition at MAXXI in Rome.

She was a nominee for the finalist of Hugo Boss Prize (New York, NY, US, 2010) and the Future Generation Art Prize (Kyiv, Ukraine, 2010). She received the Chinese Contemporary Art Award (CCAA) Best Young Artist Award and Best Artist Award in (Beijing, China, 2016). She was also the recipient of Piedra de Sal Award at Cuenca Biennale (Cuenca, Ecuador, 2016). Cao Fei was the Jury of The Selection Committee for the Curatorship of the 8th Berlin Biennale (Berlin, Germany, 2014), the Jury of The Bonnefanten Award for Contemporary (Maastricht, the Netherlands, 2016), and the Jury of Hugo Boss Asia Art Prize (Shanghai, China, 2019). She was also the nominator of the Rolls-Royce Art Programme Muse (Goodwood, England, 2019).



This video from Cao Fei's Instagram feed uses dark humor to capture the COVID lockdown experience. A figure runs their gloved hands across a screen depicting a beautiful sunset at the beach, while a real houseplant brushes against their shoulder, reminding them they cannot leave home.



From the Instagram of Cao Fei
© Cao Fei, 2020

Cao Fei, *When the World Breaks my Heart*, 2020

In this work, posted to the artist's Instagram feed, we have a brief glimpse of the outside world from the bathroom window before panning to the shower floor where we encounter a message of comic desperation: S.O.S. Through social media, Cao Fei uses dark humor to capture the COVID lockdown experience. Inside we are quietly losing touch with reality.



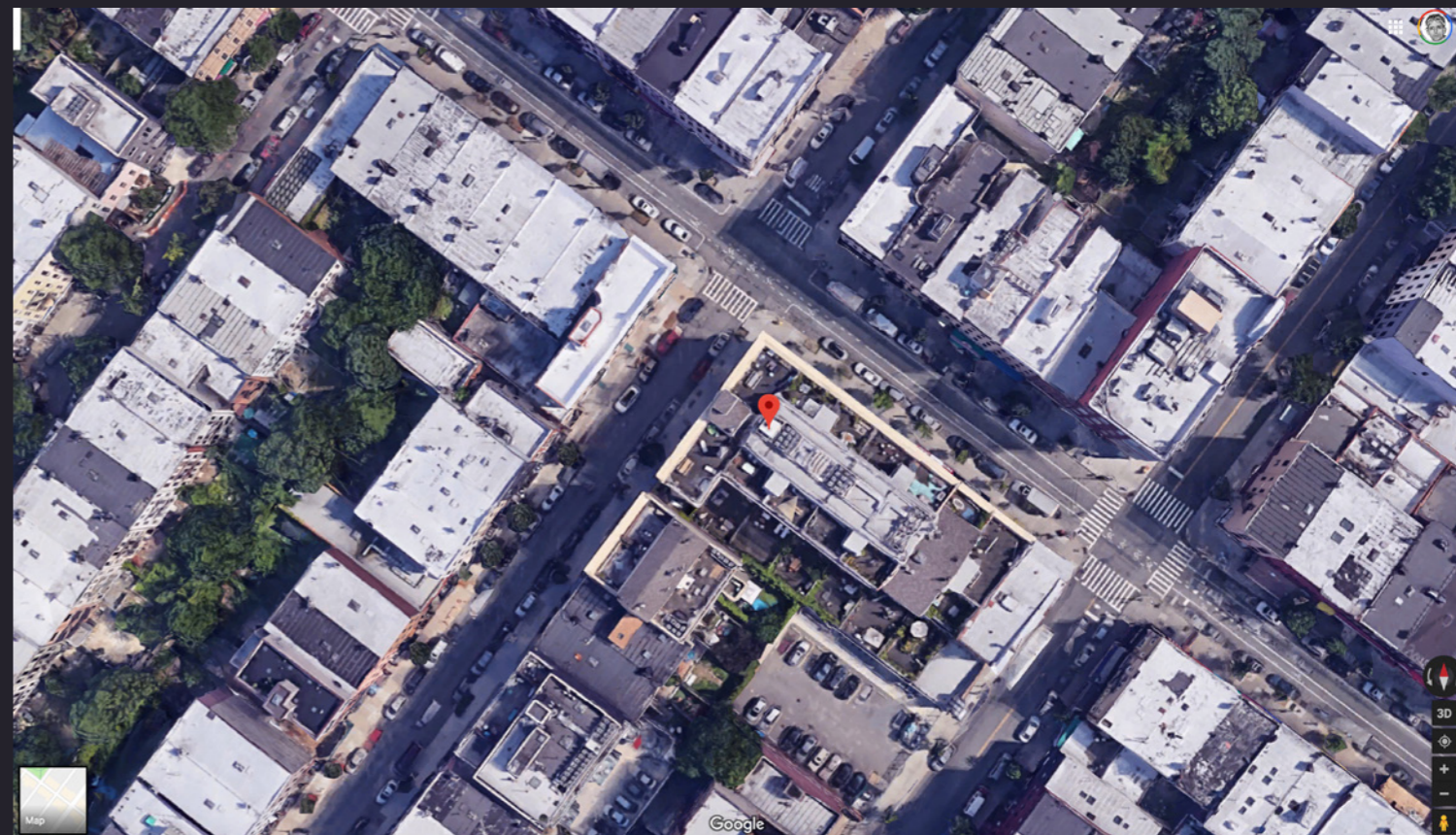
Video, sound. © Cao Fei, 2020.
Duration: 39 seconds.
Courtesy of the artist, Vitamin
Creative Space, and Sprüth Magers

Eva & Franco Mattes, *My Little Big Data*, 2019

The exhibition includes two works by Eva and Franco Mattes, known as the collaborative duo 0100101110101101.org. The two works act as signposts along two different paths through the exhibition.

In *My Little Big Data* the artists invited “data investigator” Vladan Joler in a sense to hack them – to enter their space of digital data: 13 years of email metadata and several months of browsing history, and from this to construct a portrait of what he found. *My Little Big Data* narrates his process of discovery revealing how informative this seemingly abstract metadata really is.

Eva & Franco Mattes



Video, sound.
Duration: 24 minutes

Through their work, **Eva & Franco Mattes** (b. 1976, Brescia, Italy) analyze and respond to contemporary digital life, approaching its ethics and politics with dark humor.

The artist duo received numerous awards including the Whitney Museum's Artport Commission (New York, NY, US, 2018); the NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow at the New York Foundation for the Arts (New York, NY, US, 2017); the Prix Net Art at the Rhizome and Chronus Art Center (New York, NY, US, 2017); and the Creative Capital Award (2016).

They are preparing for their first museum solo, *Dear Imaginary Audience*, Fotomuseum Winterthur (Zurich, CH). Their work has been featured in several solo exhibitions internationally, including Phi Foundation for Contemporary Art (Montreal, Canada, 2020); Team Gallery (Los Angeles, CA, US, 2019); Carroll / Fletcher Gallery (London, UK, 2016); Essex Flowers Gallery (New York, NY, US, 2015); and Postmasters Gallery, (New York, NY, US, 2010). Among their group exhibitions are *Art*

in the Age of Anxiety, Sharjah Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE, 2020); *Playmode*, MAAT (Lisbon, Portugal, 2020); *Snap + Share*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco, CA, US, 2019); ANTI, 6th Athens Biennale (Athens, Greece, 2018); *Catastrophe and the Power of Art*, Mori Art Museum (Tokyo, Japan, 2018); *I Was Raised on the Internet*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (Chicago, IL, US, 2018); Biennale für Aktuelle Fotografie, Raum für Gegenwartskunst (Mannheim, Germany, 2017); 20th Biennale of Sydney (Sydney, Australia, 2016); and Artists' Film International, Whitechapel Gallery (London, UK, 2016).

Their work can be found in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco, CA, US); Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY, US); Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN, US); and X Museum (Beijing, CN); among others.

Eva & Franco Mattes live and work in New York.

Eva & Franco Mattes, *Riccardo Uncut*, 2018

Riccardo Uncut is almost the inverse of *My Little Big Data*. Created as a commission for the Whitney Museum, Eva and Franco put out a call on the internet to pay someone \$1,000 for their phone – but it had to be handed over with all images and videos untouched. *Riccardo Uncut* is the outcome of this experiment, a one and a half hour chronological reveal of a man, Riccardo, as told by 3,000 images taken between 2004 and 2017, stored on his mobile phone. We see Riccardo with his family, on vacation, at home, at work; the mundane becomes an intimate portrait of a single person's data. Together with *My Little Big Data*, these works serve as a reminder of just how fragile our connection is to the corporations we trust with our most personal information.



Video, sound. Duration: 1 hour, 27 minutes, 29 seconds.
Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art



Lee Blalock, *Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV*
(Season 1, Episode 2: *Gr00mL1ght*),
2019

In her web series, *Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV*, Lee Blalock develops a cyborg character, with electronic, sculptural modifications to her body. The artist is “interested in how technologies support the idea of impossible anatomies, behaviors and performances.” She also thinks of it as a metaphor for the diasporic experience. The narrator notes that the cyborg, “doesn’t do much to maintain its physical appearance, but realizes that any attempt to fit in lets it get on with its life without much bother from others.”

Lee Blalock



Video.
Duration: 10 minutes, 37 seconds



Lee Blalock, *Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV (Season 1, Episode 3: L0:F1 loop)*, 2019

Lee Blalock gives us a personal glimpse into the intimate home life of a cyborg, in her web series, *Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV*. In this episode, the caption notes, “Lately, it listens to lo-fi playlists on youtube while it does research. It adapts to its environment quickly by identifying and mimicking what it sees in popular culture (lo-fi images: cat, laptop, person with headphones studying perpetually).”



Video, motion graphics, sound.
Duration: 1 minute, 24 seconds loop

Lee Blalock (b. 1972, Chester, PA, USA) presents alternative and hyphenated states of being through technology-mediated processes. Interested in how technologies support the idea of impossible anatomies, behaviors and performances, her work is an exercise in body modification by way of amplified behavior or “change-of-state”. Lee also works under the moniker of L[3]^2, whose most recent live work embraces noise and fissure as a natural state of being for bodies living in hybrid states.

Blalock has exhibited her work in major institutions including Ars Electronica (In Kepler’s Gardens, online, 2020); Hudson Gallery (New York, NY, US, 2019); Experimental Sound Studio (Chicago, IL, US, 2019); Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia, PA, US, 2018); Elastic Arts (Chicago, IL, US, 2018); Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, IL, US, 2017); Hyde Park Art Center (Chicago, IL, US, 2016); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (Chicago, IL, US, 2014); Art Gallery of Mississauga (Mississauga, Canada, 2013); Leitmotif/Nuit Blanche (Toronto, Canada, 2011); Chicago Public Access Television (Chicago, IL, US, 2011); Kepco and Gallery Dot (Ulsan, South Korea, 2011); and Le Flash!/Nuit Blanche (Atlanta, GA, US, 2008, 2009).

Blalock lives in Chicago, and works as Assistant Professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the Art and Technology Studies Department.

Lee Blalock, *Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg TV*
(Season 2: 5cu84), 2020

In this new work from Blalock's cyborg web-series, the pandemic has changed everything, and the cyborg transforms in an eerie scuba ritual. The voice over tells us, "From the moment that time meant nothing, we were set free from precedent. What you are about to see is a merging of kinds, to form something... else. An elsekind..." This work was commissioned by The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi, for this exhibition.



Video, sound, animation.
Duration: 6 minutes, 7 seconds.
Commissioned by The NYUAD Art Gallery

*Jumairy, AlHamra Sacred Tree
Activated, 2019*

Maryam Al Hamra



Digital collage. Commissioned by
AlHamra National Museum



Maryam Al Hamra (b. 1988, AlHamra) is Director and Head Researcher of the AlHamra National Museum, which exists in another dimension, in AlHamra. She is also a scholar on the history of the AlHamra civilization. During her early career, Maryam's research centered around the artifacts and the influential history that the AlHamra civilization had on neighboring civilizations. However, ever since it has been theorized that the Ruby gem had significantly accelerated the AlHamra civilization's power, her focus has recently shifted towards the powers of the Ruby gem and its important role in the Al Hamra family's rise to power.

Maryam lives and works in AlHamra.

AlHamra National Museum: The Queens and History of AlHamra Civilization, 2020

This exhibition, now on view at The NYUAD Art Gallery, features five recently-discovered sculptures, on loan from the AlHamra National Museum. Originally built as a castle for the AlHamra tribes, the AlHamra National Museum holds the world's largest collection dedicated to the AlHamra civilization, holding over 3,800 artifacts that date back to Prehistoric times and as recent as the 21st century. In the first room of the exhibition are five sculptures of queens from the AlHamra civilization, transformed into an interactive 3D experience. The curatorial narrative highlights the civilization's three most significant eras: The Renaissance era, The Golden era, and The Ruby period. This tour was commissioned for this dimension by The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi.

Installation view: Her Royal Highness Queen Maryam VI, 2020. Marble statue. Commissioned by The NYUAD Art Gallery





micha cárdenas

micha cárdenas (b. 1977, Miami, FL, US), PhD, is Assistant Professor of Art & Design: Games + Playable Media, and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she directs the Critical Realities Studio. cárdenas is writing a new algorithm for gender, race and technology. Her book *Poetic Operations*, forthcoming from Duke University Press, proposes algorithmic analysis as a method for developing a trans of color poetics. cárdenas's co-authored books *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities* (2012) and *Trans Desire / Affective Cyborgs* (2010) were published by Atropos Press. She is a member of the artist collective Electronic Disturbance Theater 2.0. Her artwork has been described as "a seminal milestone for artistic engagement in VR" by the Spike art journal in Berlin. She is a first generation Colombian American.

cárdenas is an artist/theorist who was the winner of the Creative Award from the Gender Justice League (Seattle, WA, US, 2016). She was the recipient of the inaugural James Tiptree Jr. fellowship (Santa Cruz, CA, US, 2014); a fellowship to provide support and recognition for the new voices in science fiction who are making visible the forces that are changing our view of gender today. She has been described as one of "7 bio-artists who are transforming the fabric of life itself" by io9.com.

cárdenas completed her Ph.D. in Media Arts + Practice in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. Her solo and collaborative artworks have been presented in museums, galleries, and biennials including the Stamps Gallery (Ann Arbor, MI, US, 2020); Thessaloniki Biennial (Thessaloniki, Greece, 2019); Arnolfini Gallery (Bristol, UK, 2019); De La Warr Pavilion (Bexhill-on-Sea, UK, 2019); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (Chicago, IL, US, 2018); House of Electronic Arts Basel (Münchenstein, Switzerland, 2018); Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen (Friedrichshafen, Germany, 2018); Henry Art Gallery (Seattle, WA, US, 2017); the Museum of Modern Art, New York (New York, NY, US, 2015); ZKM Center for Art and Media (Karlsruhe, Germany, 2014); Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (Los Angeles, CA, US, 2011); Centro Cultural del Bosque (Mexico City, Mexico, 2015); CECUT, Centro Cultural Tijuana, Mexico (Tijuana, Mexico, 2009); the Zero1 Biennial (San Jose, CA, US, 2012); and the California Biennial (Newport Beach, CA, US, 2010). She has given keynote talks at the Allied Media Conference, the Association of Internet Researchers, the Digital Gender Conference at Umea University in Sweden, the Dark Side of the Digital Conference, and the Vera List Center at the New School in New York. She is on the advisory boards of FemTechNet and the York University Center for Feminist Research.

Micha Cárdenas, *Redshift and Portalmetal*, 2015


Through this interactive website, the artist takes the visitor into an imagined dystopic future, with the tensions of intergalactic border crossings, toxic planets, and body modifications made possible by the science of the future. At once electronic literature, poetry, and video game, the project tells the story of Roja, whose planet has become too toxic to inhabit, and the challenges of migration, seeking refuge on other planets. The artist writes, "as climate change forces us to travel to the stars and build new homes and families, how do we build on this land, where we are settlers, while working to undo colonization?"



Website



"c u soon"



**Ramin Haerizadeh,
Rokni Haerizadeh,
Hesam Rahmanian**

Ramin Haerizadeh (b. 1975, Tehran, Iran), **Rokni Haerizadeh** (b. 1978, Tehran, Iran), and **Hesam Rahmanian** (b. 1980, Knoxville, TN, US) work independently and together, propagating a form of collaboration that doesn't suppress individualism. The seeds of their language were sown as early as 1999, back in Iran. Their practice offers up a novel redefinition of the collective, as theirs is constantly growing and contracting to incorporate friends, writers, and artists at large. Their individual practices differ stylistically while political and social commentary become inherently subversive in a common reflection. The exhibitions they conceive are as much insights into their daily practice, which they designate as the ritual of living and working together.

The collective has presented solo exhibitions at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (Frankfurt, Germany, 2020); Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA, US, 2019); Officine Grandi Riparazioni (OGR) (Turin, Italy, 2018); MACBA (Barcelona, Spain, 2017); Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) (Boston, MA, US, 2015); Kunsthalle Zürich (Zürich, Switzerland, 2015) and Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art (Copenhagen, Denmark, 2015). They have participated in group exhibitions such as *I Prefer Talking to Doctors About Something Else*, 22nd Biennale of Sydney, The Powerhouse Museum and Campbelltown Arts Centre (Sydney, Australia, 2020); the inaugural Toronto Biennial of Art (Toronto, Canada,

2019); *Homeless Souls*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Humblebaek, Denmark, 2019), which won the 6th Global Fine Art Award in the Global Humanity category; and *The Warmth of Other Suns*, the Phillips Collection in Partnership with the New Museum (Washington DC, US, 2019); *The Creative Act: Performance, Process, Presence*, Manarat Al Saadiyat (Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2017); the 9th Liverpool Biennial (Liverpool, UK, 2016); and 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Gallery (Brisbane, Australia, 2015). In 2019, they curated BEYOND: EMERGING ARTISTS with Ayesha Hadhir, Shaikha Al Ketbi and Rawdha Al Ketbi in a show entitled *Neither Visible, Nor Concealed* in Manarat Al Saadiyat (Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2019).

The artist trio received the Fundació Han Nefkens/ MACBA Award (Barcelona, Spain, 2015).

Their works are held in the collections of The Städel Museum (Frankfurt, Germany); Le Centre National des Arts Plastiques (Paris, France); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA, US); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Humblebaek, Denmark); Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA, US); among others.



Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni
Haerizadeh, Hesam Rahmadian,
From March to April...2020, 2020

These three artists share a studio and living space in Dubai. During the first months of the lockdown, they documented their table, where the daily cycle of working and eating unfolds. The result captures the poignant repetition and isolation of lockdown, as well as hallucinatory stop-motion glimpses of the art taking on a life of its own.



Video, sound. Duration: 7 minutes, 46
seconds. Courtesy of the artists and
Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde

Sophia Al-Maria



Sophia Al-Maria, *The Future Was Desert, Part I*, 2016

Sophia Al-Maria is known for her digital media work that engages with her experience of the Arabian Gulf region. Of note, she coined “Gulf Futurism,” a concept that she describes as “a very specific set of ideas around the warp-speed development from pre-agrarian life to hypercapitalism.” Here, with the eye of a science fiction writer, she looks at time scales, from geologic time to human time, linking present-day deserts to images of a future planet that may be all desert.



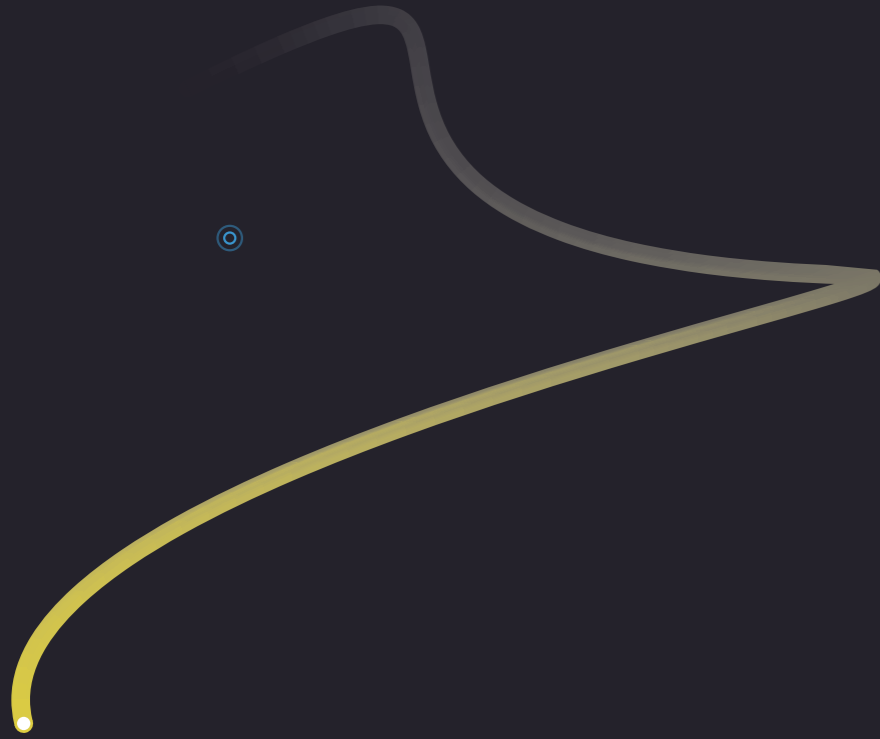
Video, sound.
Duration: 5 minutes, 17 seconds.
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line, Dubai

Sophia Al-Maria (b. 1983, Tacoma, WA, US) is an artist, writer and filmmaker. Her primary interests are around the possibilities of storytelling and the whitewashing of history. Her work draws on themes and imagery from many places but in particular the global myths of Science Fiction.

Her work has exhibited in solo exhibitions in prominent institutions including the Julia Stoschek Collection (Düsseldorf, Germany, 2020); Project Native Informant (London, UK, 2019); Tate Britain (London, UK, 2019); Fondazione Pomodoro (Milan, Italy, 2019); Whitechapel Gallery (London, UK, 2019); Mercer Union (Montreal Canada, 2018) The Third Line (Dubai, UAE, 2017); and the Whitney Museum (New York, NY, US, 2016). Selected group exhibitions include *Our World is Burning*, Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2020); *Age of You*, Museum of Contemporary Art (Toronto, Canada, 2019); *I Was Raised on the Internet*, Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago, IL, US, 2018); and *Mondialite*, Villa Empain Boghossian Foundation (Brussels, Belgium, 2017). Al-Maria’s work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY, US); Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago, IL, US); Art Jameel (Dubai, UAE); MATHAF (Doha, Qatar); and Barjeel Art Foundation (Sharjah, UAE).

Al-Maria lives in London where she writes screenplays for a living.

Zach Blas

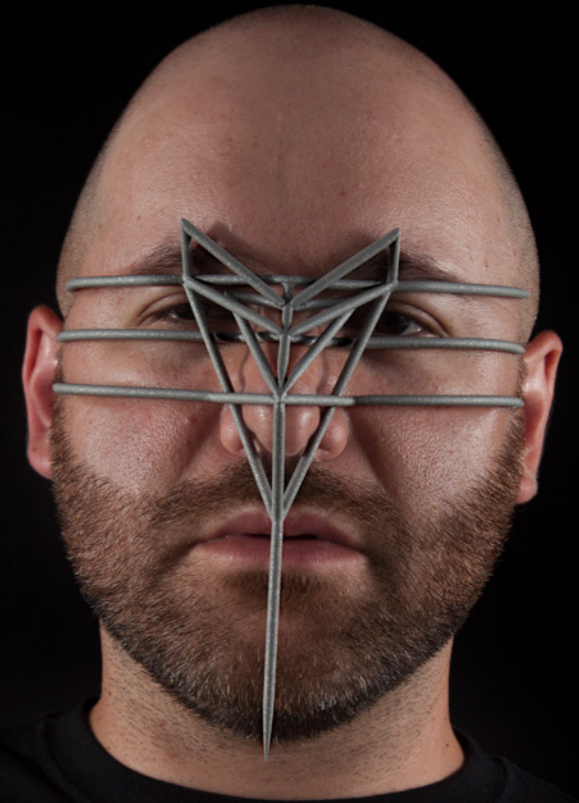


Zach Blas, *Face Cage 1*, 2015

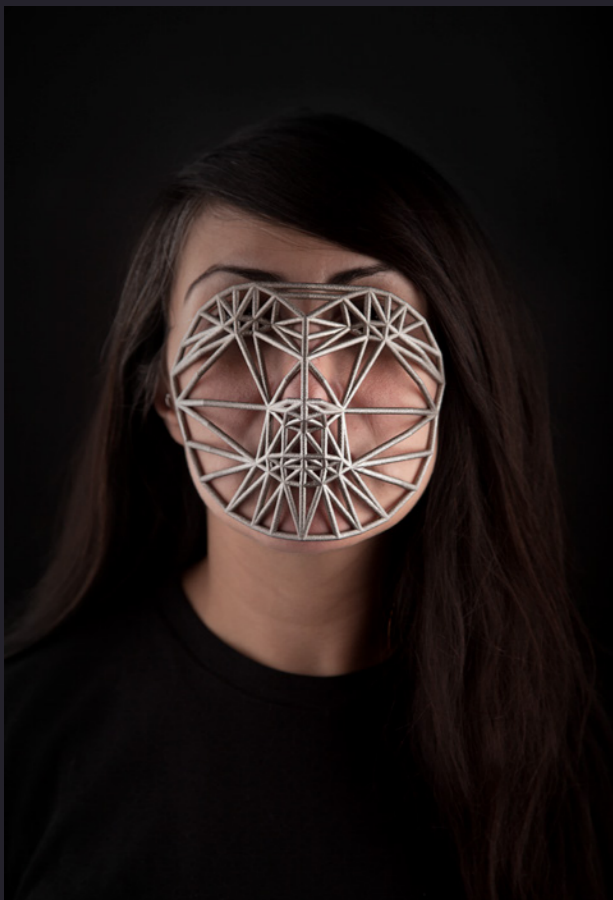
In facial recognition software, biometrics map the landscape of a face using geometry points. These performers endure literal metal cages fabricated in the form of a biometric map. Here, the artist's sculptural *Face Cages* make tangible the 'biometric gaze' and its oppression of marginalized populations. Performers include the artist, Elle Mehrmand, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, and micha cárdenas (whose work is also featured in this exhibition).



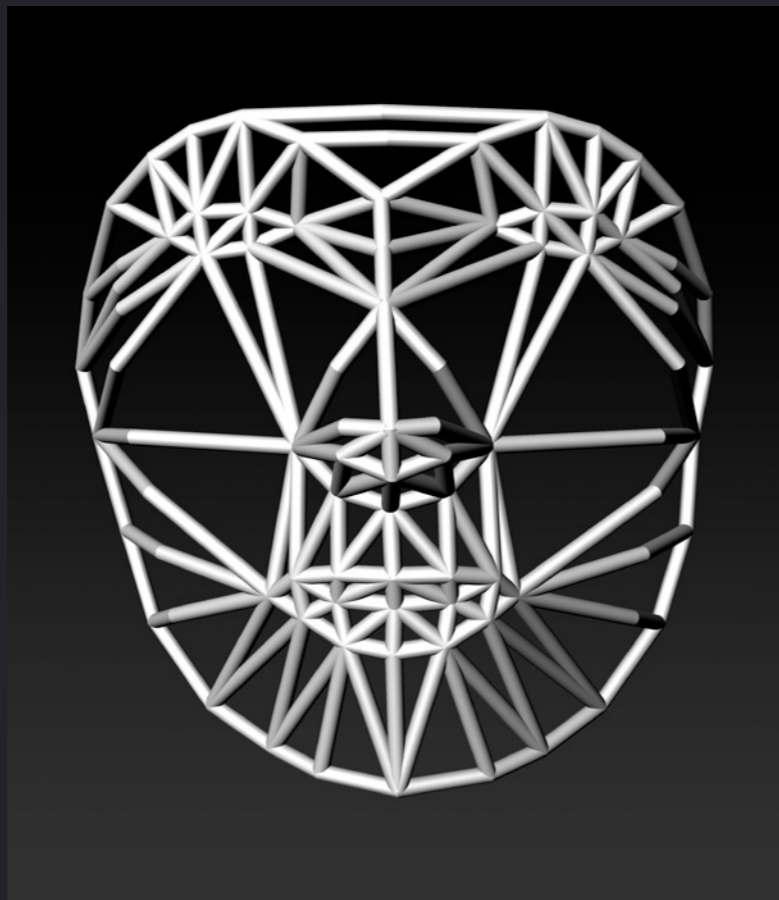
HD single-channel video, color, 16:9.
Duration: 12 minutes, 1 second, loop



Zach Blas, *Face Cage 2*, 2014



HD single-channel video, color, 16:9.
Duration: 10 minutes, 1 second, loop



Zach Blas, *Face Cage 3*, 2014



HD single-channel video, color, 16:9.
Duration: 12 minutes, loop

Zach Blas, *Face Cage 4*, 2016



HD single-channel video, color, 16:9.
Duration: 12 minutes, 2 seconds, loop

Zach Blas (b. 1981, Point Pleasant, WV, US) addresses fantasies of artificial intelligence, policing as mysticism, the crystal balls of Silicon Valley, and time travel.

His practice has been supported by a Creative Capital award in Emerging Fields (New York, NY, US, 2016); and the Arts Council England (London, UK, 2017).

Blas has exhibited in solo exhibitions internationally, including the Edith-Russ-Haus für Medienkunst (Oldenburg, Germany, 2019); Abierto x Obras, Matadero (Madrid, Spain, 2018); MU (Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 2018); Art in General (New York, US, 2018); And Gasworks (London, UK, 2017). Recent group exhibitions include *Positions #6*, Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 2020); *The Body Electric*, Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN, US, 2019); *The Ends: The Politics of Participation in the Post-Internet Age*, Gwangju Biennale (Gwangju, South Korea, 2018); *A Mechanism*

Capable of Changing Itself, Forum Expanded, 68th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlin, Germany, 2018); *Propositions for a stage: 24 frames of a beautiful heaven*, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (Singapore, 2017); and *Electronic Superhighway*, Whitechapel Gallery (London, UK, 2016).

His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY, US); National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul, South Korea); Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (Mexico City, Mexico); Design Museum Den Bosch ('s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands); and German Museum of Technology (Berlin, Germany).

Blas lives in London and works as Lecturer in the department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London.

Zach Blas, *Contra-Internet Inversion Practice #3: Modeling Paranodal Space*, 2016

This work is located at the end of one of the paths through this exhibition, ending it on a hopeful note. Here, Blas literally deconstructs a utopian vision of the internet. The term “paranodal” refers to the space in between the nodes. If we imagine each website as a “node” then Blas’s work breaks that down, and makes a new network from the spaces in between. This work is part of a series in which the artist explores how the internet has become so all-encompassing in our daily lives that it is as difficult to think “outside of” it.



Video, sound.
Duration: 3 minutes, 2 seconds

The Curators



Dr. Heather Dewey-Hagborg is an artist and biohacker who is interested in art as research and technological critique. Her controversial biopolitical art practice includes the project *Stranger Visions* in which she created portrait sculptures from analyses of genetic material (hair, cigarette butts, chewed up gum) collected in public places.

Heather has shown work internationally at events and venues including the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2019); the Daejeon Biennale (Daejeon, South Korea, 2018); the Guangzhou Triennial (Guangzhou, China, 2018); the World Economic Forum (Davos, Switzerland, 2015); the Shenzhen Urbanism and Architecture Biennale (Shenzhen, China, 2015); Transmediale (Berlin, Germany, 2015); the Walker Center for Contemporary Art (Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2020); and PS1 MOMA (New York, NY, 2011). Her work is held in public collections of the Centre Pompidou (Paris, France); the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, UK); the Wellcome Collection (London, UK); the Exploratorium (San Francisco, CA, USA); and the New York Historical

Society (New York, NY, USA); among others, and has been widely discussed in the media, from the New York Times and the BBC to Art Forum and Wired.

Heather has a PhD in Electronic Arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Interactive Media at NYU Abu Dhabi, an artist fellow at AI Now, an Artist-in-Residence at the Exploratorium, and is an affiliate of Data & Society.

She is also a co-founder and co-curator of REFRESH, an inclusive and politically engaged collaborative platform at the intersection of Art, Science, and Technology. She curated the exhibition *Refiguring the Future* in 2019 together with collaborator Dorothy Santos at Hunter College Art Gallery in New York.

Maya Allison is Chief Curator at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), and founding Executive Director of The NYUAD Art Gallery. She is Curator of the National Pavilion of the UAE to Venice for 2022. Previous posts include curatorial roles at Brown University, and The

RISD Museum. She also directed the annual international new media showcase Pixilerations, all in Providence, Rhode Island (USA). She holds degrees from Columbia University, Reed College, and was awarded a curatorial research fellowship at Brown University's Center for Public Humanities.

Allison's curatorial projects that included editing book-length publications include *Slavs and Tatars: Mirrors for Princes* (Curator, JRP Ringier/NYUAD Art Gallery, 2015), *Diana Al-Hadid: Phantom Limb* (Curator, Skira / NYUAD Art Gallery, 2016), *But We Cannot See Them: Tracing a UAE Art Community, 1988-2008* (Lead Curator, NYUAD Art Gallery, 2017), and *Zimoun* (Curator, NYUAD Art Gallery, 2019). Outside the university, she has guest-curated a number of projects in the UAE, including *Artists and the Cultural Foundation: The Early Years* (Lead Curator, with book publication, Cultural Foundation Abu Dhabi, 2018), a 30-year survey of 18 UAE artists.

About the Gallery

Established in 2014, **The NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) Art Gallery** is the Gulf's first and only university gallery with a public program of scholarly and experimental museum exhibitions. The program seeks to map new territories and ideas through presenting exhibitions by internationally established artists, curators, and scholars at its main space. Its auxiliary venue, the Project Space, is an exhibition laboratory for the university community, and for emerging artists and curators. Situated within NYU Abu Dhabi, the community of which hails from over 115 countries, The Art Gallery organizes free public programs and guided tours in conjunction with its groundbreaking exhibitions. It also produces scholarly publications, which are a core part of its curatorial frame and reflect its academic mission. Collectively, with the Gallery's Reading Room, these welcoming, intimate spaces open up artistic opportunities and initiate regional and international dialogue.

The Galleries Department oversees all exhibition activity on campus, including the main gallery (for museum exhibitions), the Project Space (for experimental projects), and the Christo Award (for emerging UAE artists).

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