

The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery's "born digital" exhibition opens to the public -- virtually: *not in, of, along, or relating to a line*

- Virtual show invites a new perspective on screen-based contemporary art, of particular relevance during COVID-19
- The curators commissioned a series of new artworks specifically for the mobile phone format, from globally acclaimed artists, with a wholly new web platform developed for this presentation

Abu Dhabi, January 20, 2021: The NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) Art Gallery, the University's academic museum-gallery, has opened its first-ever virtual exhibition, titled [*not in, of, along, or relating to a line*](#). On view until July 10, 2021, the exhibition invites a new perspective on virtual and screen-based contemporary art, of particular relevance during COVID-19. Co-curated by Chief Curator at NYU Abu Dhabi and Executive Director of The NYUAD Art Gallery Maya Allison, and NYUAD faculty member and artist Heather Dewey-Hagborg, the exhibition unveiled four new commissions, alongside fourteen existing artworks.

In this exhibition of "born digital" work, artists make visible both the restrictions and the freedoms that a digital landscape offers. Four newly commissioned works also respond, directly and indirectly, to the pandemic's role in our technological lives. In her new commission, **Cao Fei** uses augmented reality to create an imaginary friend, a doppelganger of her son, who interacts with her real-life son. **Lee Blalock** continues her *Ev3ryd4y Cyb0rg* series, bringing her human-machine hybrid character into the COVID-19 lockdown present. **Addie Wagenknecht** takes on the YouTube makeup tutorial, using it to teach cybersecurity in an accessible and humorous way, with particular attention to the events in the US recently. The Art Gallery's Executive Director, Allison, describes a mysterious fourth new commission, "like other museums and galleries, we are proud to present a virtual tour of our physical space, where **Maryam Al Hamra** has curated an exhibition of sculptures from a museum in an alternate reality."

These commissions, together with existing works by **Sophia Al-Maria, Zach Blas, Eva and Franco Mattes, micha cárdenas**, and the collective of **Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian**, explore how identities, histories, and futures are created, transformed, or invented.

In the web platform specifically developed for this exhibition, for ease of viewing on a mobile device, visitors use their touchscreen to move from artwork to artwork, along a series of forking paths. Dewey-Hagborg explains: "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*, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical concept of the rhizome. These ideas speak to visions of an earlier time, when the internet was fresh and new and seemed, to some, so full of potential."

Commenting on the virtual format, Allison said: "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. Today, we often hold that screen, that world, in the palm of our hands. The smartphone was already an extension of our bodies before the pandemic -- in a way, we have all already 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.”

Dewey-Hagborg concludes: “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.”

For detailed information on the artworks and the artists’ biographies, please see here: [LINK TO BROCHURE TO BE ADDED](#)

For more information, please visit nyuad-artgallery.org/

Listings

Exhibition Title: *not in, of, along, or relating to a line*

Exhibition Dates: January 20 - July 10, 2021

Admission: Free

Link to page: <https://www.nyuad-artgallery.org/not-a-line/>

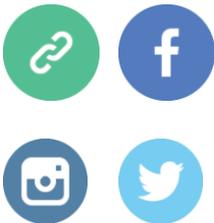
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For more information about the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, please contact:

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Notes to Editors

About The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery

www.nyuad-artgallery.org



Established in 2014, The NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) Art Gallery is the Gulf's first and only university gallery with a 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.

About NYU Abu Dhabi

www.nyuad.nyu.edu

NYU Abu Dhabi is the first comprehensive liberal arts and science campus in the Middle East to be operated abroad by a major American research university. NYU Abu Dhabi has integrated a highly-selective liberal arts, engineering and science curriculum with a world center for advanced research and scholarship enabling its students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent world and advance cooperation and progress on humanity's shared challenges. NYU Abu Dhabi's high-achieving students have come from 115 nations and speak over 115 languages. Together, NYU's campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai form the backbone of a unique global university, giving faculty and students opportunities to experience varied learning environments and immersion in other cultures at one or more of the numerous study-abroad sites NYU maintains on six continents.