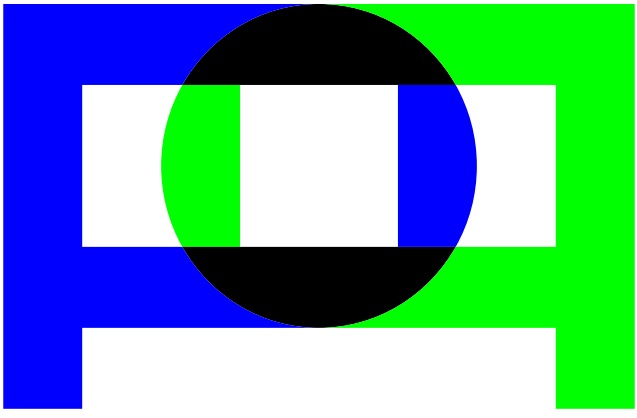
BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM



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 art. Although galleries, museums, and festivals have been publicly exhibiting digital art for decades, its sudden popularity is tied to the relatively new phenomenon of trading digital assets (including artworks and also cryptocurrencies, collectibles, and memes) via blockchains, or distributed ledgers of digital records secured by cryptography. Formerly known as "computer art," digital art first emerged in the 1960s, when artists and technologists began using computers to create novel aesthetic forms, such as 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. Despite their technological novelty, many of these works explore the same themes that recur throughout modern and contemporary art, including the relationship between abstraction and figuration, the creativity of the unconscious mind, and the definition of art as a conceptual system. Inarguably, blockchains have helped create new markets and audiences for digital art; in rarer cases, blockchains have become a new medium, as some digital artists use blockchain-based tokens and smart contracts just as painters use canvas or sculptors use marble.

Since its founding in 1862 as one of the world's first museums devoted to the art of the present, the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery) has helped define artistic movements as they emerge. For example, the AKG presented the first major museum survey of photography in 1910 (organized by Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession), helping to legitimate these new images as examples of fine art that deserve to be displayed alongside paintings and sculptures. As digital technologies increasingly influence every aspect of our lives, the AKG has an important opportunity — and even responsibility, given its mandate to operate in the public trust — to help identify the artists who are creatively and critically exploring the aesthetic potentials and social consequences of these powerful new tools. Museums regularly organize group exhibitions to map the terrain at the cutting edge of art; singling out key digital artists from the broad field of those who have experimented with blockchains amplifies those approaches that are shaping the evolution of not only art markets, but also art history. Many of these artists are even shaping technology itself, whether by pioneering new applications or questioning its supposed "neutrality."

Building on its history and mission, the AKG has organized *Peer to Peer*, an exhibition of new artworks made by 13 of the leading artists who are exploring the impact of blockchains on the production and distribution of digital art and the future of the internet. Mirroring the global networks of digital art since the 1990s and blockchains since the 2010s, these artists are from not only North America and Europe, but also Central America, South America, the Middle East, and Africa. Their works similarly exemplify the rich diversity of digital art: they were produced with a variety of technologies and applications, from Artificial Intelligence to 3D modeling and Microsoft Word to Processing. The resulting works exist in a range of formats, from PDFs and PNGs to GIFs, MOVs, software applications, and smart contracts. Importantly, the artists in this show approach their respective tools and mediums as productive constraints, thereby drawing our attention to their capabilities.

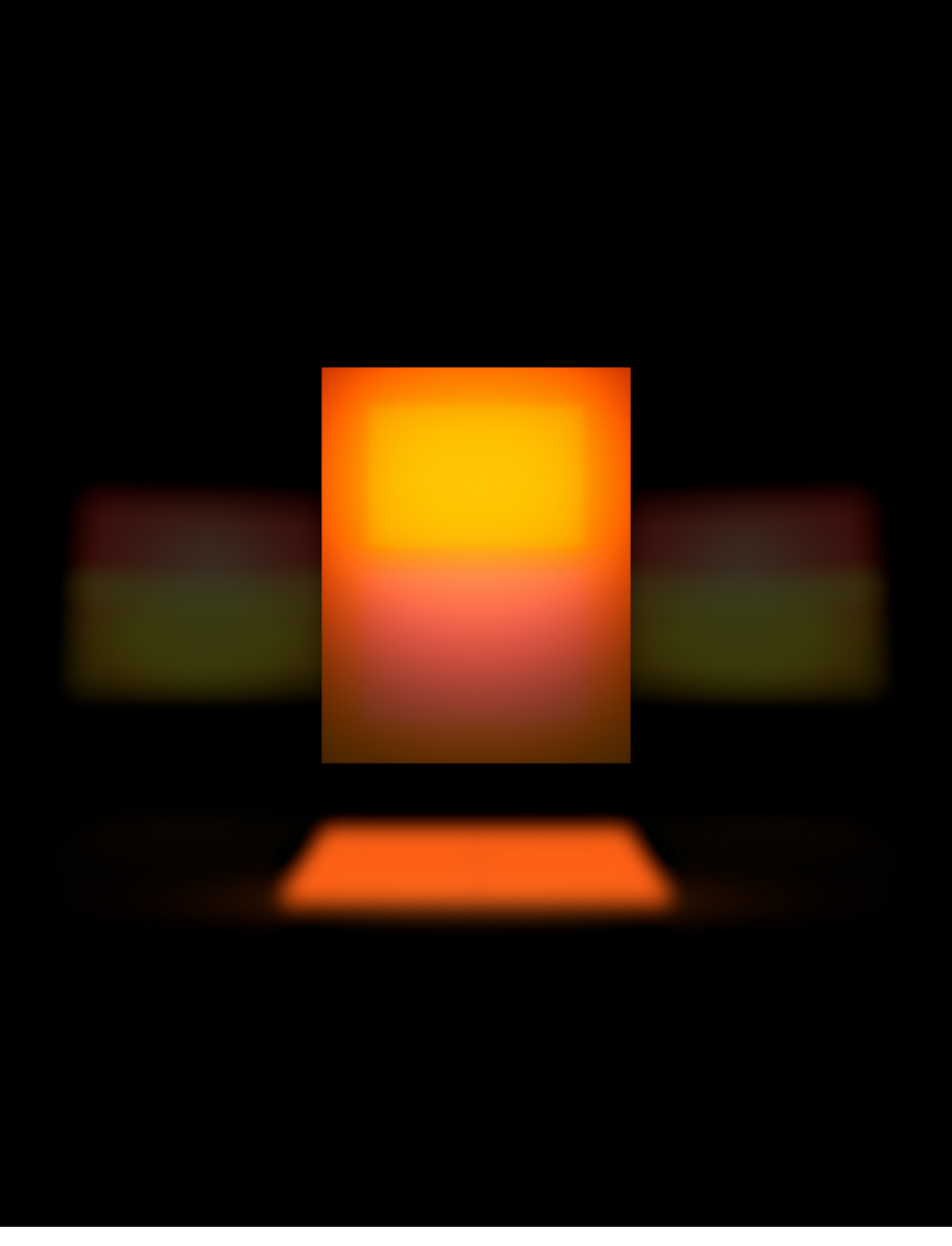
At the same time as they contribute to a larger conversation about technology, the works in *Peer to Peer* also update or expand our notion of different artistic genres and aesthetic strategies. For example, one might classify roughly a third of the works as figurative (Mitchell Chan, Amir Fallah, Auriea Harvey, Osinachi, Sarah Zucker); another third as generative (Entangled Others, Casey Reas, Itzel Yard/Ix Shells, Anne Spalter); and a final third as conceptual works dealing with blockchains and the metaverse (LaTurbo Avedon, Simon Denny, Sarah Friend, Rhea Myers). But they also prompt a reevaluation of those art-historical paradigms: what does it mean to make "figurative" art after processes like photogrammetry have transformed how we model volumes in space, "generative" art after algorithms have infiltrated every moment of our lives, or "conceptual" art after the dematerializations of the information economy?

To foreground these questions, *Peer to Peer* stages an exchange between these artists and their historical "peers," pairing each new work with an existing work in the AKG's renowned collection of modern and contemporary art. The new works are less digital recreations of their analog antecedents than responses that speak in more or less direct ways to their concepts or composition. Of course, the practice of citing other artists is itself a time-honored tradition in art, as each generation works through (and defines itself against) the achievements of its peers and predecessors. The collection artworks selected by the artists in *Peer to Peer* are as varied as their homages, including a genre painting by Winslow Homer; neo-classical caryatids by Augustus Saint-Gaudens; a Surrealist landscape by René Magritte; an abstract composition by Mark Rothko; and a language-based work by Joseph Kosuth. The exhibition thereby celebrates both the continued relevance of the historical "peers" to our contemporary moment and the contributions of the new "peers" to art's ever-expanding network of ideas. The exhibition also highlights the important role of the museum as a facilitator of encounters between artists over generations, thanks to its commitment to conserving cultural heritage.

*Peer to Peer* is an online exhibition presented in partnership with Feral File, which has emerged as a leading platform for curated exhibitions of file-based artworks. Although it has an end date, it will in fact remain viewable on the Feral File website — a new model for making museum exhibitions more accessible. After the first week, the works in the show will be offered for purchase as limited editions sustainably registered on the Ethereum blockchain. Half the proceeds from the sales will benefit the museum, which reopens in 2023 with a state-of-the-art gallery dedicated to media art and a hands-on digital technology lab. As the Buffalo AKG's first fully-online exhibition and fundraiser, *Peer to Peer* is an experiment in how the museum might adopt (or adapt) new technologies to continue supporting those artists whose practices expand the practice of art, as well as art's audiences.

In computing, "peer to peer" networks decentralize file-sharing, allowing users to send and receive files directly between computers, without relying on a centralized database that is controlled by a single authority. The exhibition's title is thus also a provocation about the future of museums: how might our institutions change if we imagine them not only as centralized repositories, but also as a kind of cultural protocol facilitating the open exchange of ideas between artists and their contemporary peers, historical predecessors, cultural workers, and public audiences? We may then also want to ask the inverse about the future of technology: how might blockchains change if we imagine them not simply as autonomous agents of decentralization that will make existing institutions obsolete, but also as public infrastructures embedded within — and accountable to — the larger social sphere?

1. *Peer to Peer* itself pays homage to A20, or "Artist to Peer," a project initiated by Feral File founder Casey Reas, in which artists were invited to swap free editions of their work with each other via the Bitmark blockchain. The first edition (V1) was curated by Reas with Addie Wagenknecht, Rick Silva, and exonemo, and transpired in Fall 2019; the second edition (V2) was curated by Reas with Iris Long and Carol Sabbadini, and transpired in Spring 2020.



LaTurbo Avedon

*CLUB ROTHKO – ORANGE AND YELLOW STARTER PACK*

ZIP folder containing MOV, WAV, PNG, and PSD files

## Artwork Description

LaTurbo 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" nightclub within the game *Mass Effect 2*. Club Rothko looks like a nightclub, with rooms, a DJ platform, and lighting and sound systems. But it is also an interoperable "exoverse"—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 intimacy 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 viewers and triggering strong emotions—responses that many now associate with "immersive" virtual experiences. In Avedon's exoverse, 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 "merely" decorative—like a pretty wallpaper. Digital artists today similarly suffer from the suspicion that their work is as decorative as a screensaver. Avedon leans into the idea of abstraction as decoration, prompting 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 reimagines Rothko's painterly effects as a haze of luminous pixels. Collectors of the *CLUB ROTHKO – ORANGE AND YELLOW STARTER PACK* are given multiple files created by the artist—including three orange and yellow abstract videos, an ambient soundtrack, a customizable DJ "heads-up display," and two folders of DJ sound effects—that they can use to create their own Club Rothko, in either their own exoverse or physical space. Despite the utopianism of 1990s cyberculture, the internet has become a space of commerce, surveillance, and discord; *CLUB ROTHKO* updates 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.

## Artist Bio

LaTurbo 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 Panther Modern, a file-based exhibition space that encourages artists to create site-specific installations for the Internet. LaTurbo's process of character creation continues through gaming, performance and exhibitions. Their work has been exhibited and collected internationally.

Internet

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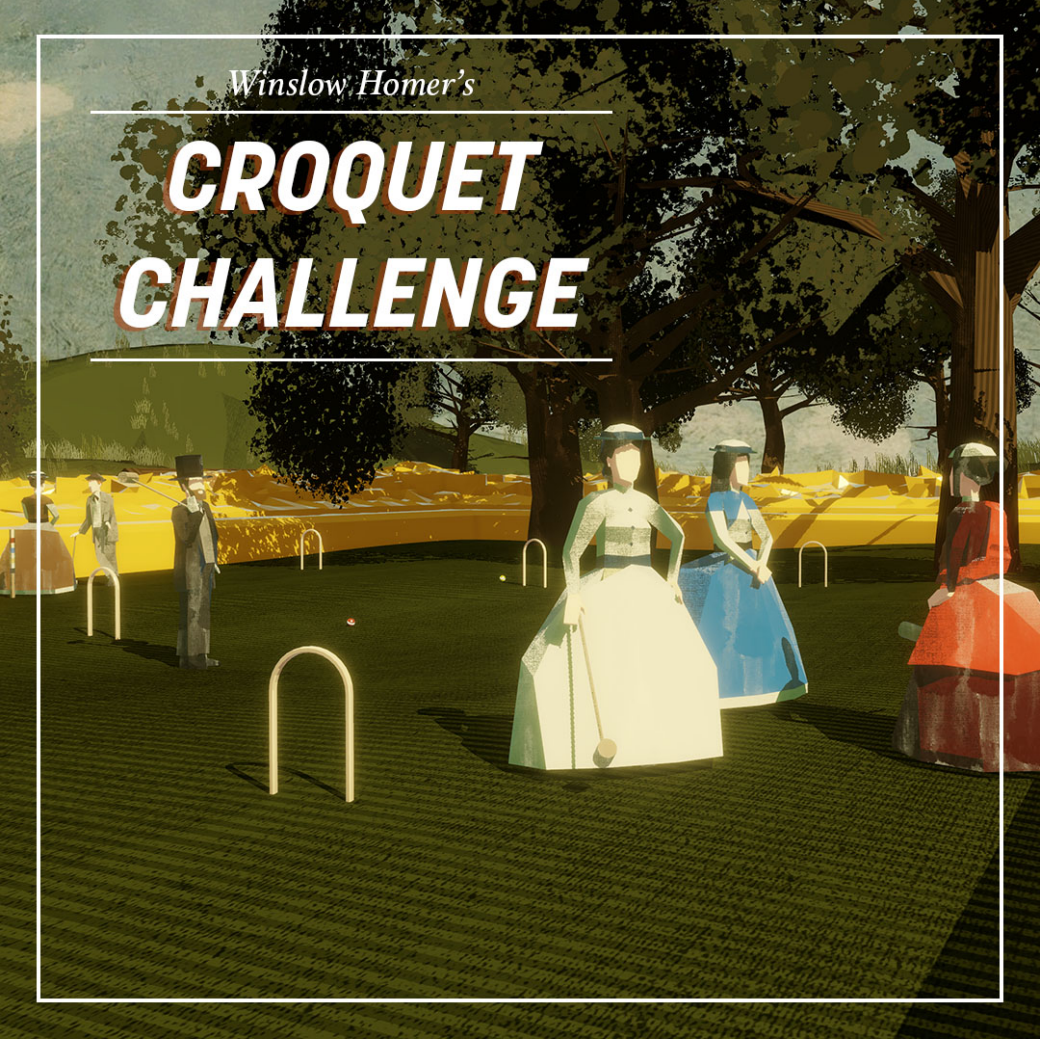


# Mitchell F. Chan

## *Winslow Homer's Croquet Challenge*

4K UHD app for Mac/Windows/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 *Beggars 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 undercurrent of conflict by giving the characters dialogue that emphasizes the historical context of the Civil War, as well as by 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 game also touches on the sexual politics 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 1850s. Chan's game uses Homer's same co-ed figures, but we can only play as the women, even though only the men are allowed to speak—and to win.

### Artist Bio

Mitchell F. Chan produces a diverse body of work, performed in both physical and digital public spaces. His blockchain-based work posits 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 LeWitt Generator 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.

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# Entangled Others
## *Swim*

Plotter print on paper (dimensions TBD)
HTML file; SVG file; PNG file; MP4 file (silent, running time: 1 minute, 40 seconds, looped)

### 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 lifeforms 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.

### Artist Bio

Entangled Others is the shared studio practice of artists Feileacan McCormick and Sofia Crespo. Their work focuses on ecology, artificial lifeforms 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 conscious efforts, new technology can be used to bring attention and awareness to the unseen that we are tightly interwoven 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.

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TITLE DEED
DECENTRALAND PARCEL -81, -17
METAVERSE LANDSCAPES

## DECENTRALAND PARCEL TOKEN

OWNED BY:

*Wallet address of Decentraland Parcel -81, -17 holder*

## LANDSCAPE PAINTING OF TOKEN

OWNED BY:

*Wallet address of 1st Title Deed token holder*

## TITLE DEED TOKEN

OWNED BY:

*Wallet address of 1st Title Deed token holder*
*Wallet address of 2nd Title Deed token holder*
*Wallet address of 3rd Title Deed token holder*
*Wallet address of 4th Title Deed token holder*

This token tracks the owner of the metaverse property stated above, the owner of the landscape painting depicitng that property and the holders of this title deed token.

# Simon Denny

## *Metaverse Landscape: Decentraland Parcel −81, −17*

UV print and oil on canvas, wood, MDF, Plexiglas, ETH paper wallet, dynamic ERC-721 NFT; Physical object: 1274 × 1224 × 62 mm, framed

### Artwork Description

In the nineteenth century, landscape painters like Albert Bierstadt traveled what is now the American West, producing picturesque images of the frontier that were seen as celebrating its beauty. These images also resonated with the idea of "manifest destiny," a term coined in 1845 as an expression of the belief that Americans are destined by God to settle across the continent and claim its natural resources.

Simon Denny's recent work examines how claims to ownership are articulated and "naturalized" (that is, rendered legitimate, reasonable, or even "destined"), through means that include images of landscapes. Denny's *Metaverse Landscape 1: Decentraland Parcel −81, −17* focuses on Decentraland, a platform that uses the Ethereum blockchain to allow users to purchase parcels of digital "land." Is the rush to "colonize" the "metaverse" a digital update of nineteenth-century manifest destiny? Or is the very idea of ownership being transformed by blockchains, which allow people to "own" assets that are otherwise freely available for everyone to view, scrambling the distinction between private and public property?

*Metaverse Landscape 1* comprises both physical and digital components. The physical component is a painting of a single plot of Decentraland labeled "Parcel −81, −17" (which Denny does not himself own). By depicting the plot in a painting, Denny highlights how its visual representation echoes the tropes of modernist art, including the use of the monochrome and the grid, which were used to create worlds that seem divorced from our visible reality. The comparison is strategic: while Decentraland also uses these tropes to present itself as an autonomous system, perhaps the metaverse—like modernism itself—isn't as divorced from reality as it is sometimes claimed to be, especially when it comes to the forces of capitalism.

*Metaverse Landscape 1* also includes a dynamic NFT tied to a digital Monopoly-like card that displays the wallet addresses of the owners of both the Decentraland parcel and the painting of the parcel. The listed addresses on this "Title Deed" update in real time whenever the parcel or its painting change hands, pointing to the importance of provenance and speculation in the blockchain-based market for digital assets. The work also includes a kind of interactive, social performance: between November 29 and December 2, 2022, anyone can purchase a token that represents symbolic ownership in this project. The addresses that hold these tokens will be reflected on the Title Deed and will update as the tokens are traded between wallets. If Bierstadt's painting of *Laramie Peak*, 1870, depicts a pristine mountain awaiting the arrival of American settlers, Denny's multi-faceted "Metaverse Landscape" depicts the digital landscape as one that is already thoroughly integrated with the strategies of capitalism, including colonialism—even as it potentially transforms ownership into something that is more transparent and egalitarian.

### Artist Bio

Simon Denny (b. 1982 Auckland, New Zealand) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He makes exhibitions that unpack the social and political implications of the technology industry and the rise of social media, startup culture, blockchains and cryptocurrencies, using a variety of media including installation, sculpture, print and video. He studied at the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland and at the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main. Denny has curated significant exhibitions about blockchain and art such as Proof of Stake at Kunstverein in Hamburg (2021) and Proof of Work at Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2018). Recent solo exhibitions include Dotcom Séance on folia.app, www.dotcomseance.com (2021), K21–Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2020); the Museum of Old and New Art (Mona), Tasmania (2019); MOCA, Cleveland (2018); OCAT, Shenzhen (2017); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2017); WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2016); Serpentine Galleries, London (2015); MoMA PS1, New York (2015); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014) MUMOK, Vienna (2013); Kunstverein Munich (2013). He represented New Zealand at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. His works are held in institutional collections including Hamburger Kunsthalle (Hamburg), Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, (Düsseldorf), MoMA (New York), Walker Art C entre (Minneapolis), Kunsthaus Zürich (Zürich), Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Berlin) and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Wellington). He co-founded the artist mentoring program BPA//Berlin Program for Artists and serves as a Professor of Time-Based Media at The Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg.

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# Amir H. Fallah
## *Wheel of Life*

PNG file

### Artwork Description

Amir H. Fallah's immediately recognizable style is a kind of post-internet pastiche, mixing elements of Middle Eastern and Western high and low culture to convey the experience of being culturally hybrid. Many of his works particularly reference the works of Minimalist artist Frank Stella, as these appeal to Fallah's appreciation for the powerful visual pull of geometric abstraction across cultural contexts. Here, Fallah has combined elements of Stella's work *Lac Laronge III*, 1969, with imagery culled from across the internet, as well as his own staged studio photography. The circle recurs throughout the work as a kind of universal, mystical motif that appears in both art and nature. As Fallah explains,

> an archaic cosmological chart points toward humanity's ever-changing view of our position in the universe, a cow's skull foreshadows the specter of death that foregrounds all of humanity's questions, a seashell and images of the early universe taken by the Hubble Space Telescope reveal the rhythm and harmony of patterns in nature, all self-repeating at vastly disparate scales.

Stella's own circles—which are larger than life in person but elastic in scale when presented as a digital image on a screen—appear here as yet another iteration of the geometric "Wheel of Life" that Fallah imagines spanning all of existence, from the microcosmic to the macrocosmic. Fallah also plays with Stella's color palette of complementary colors; the prominent use of greens, purples, and oranges subtly reinforces the circular motif by suggesting movement across the color wheel.

Fallah began his career as a graffiti artist, going on to found *Beautiful/Decay*, a cult magazine for street art and design. His recent series of digital works, which he produces in Photoshop and outputs as PNG files, are more refined versions of the digital sketches that he makes for each of his paintings. These paintings are known for their meticulous brushwork, and Fallah's file-based works similarly explore the materiality of digital images: the high-resolution format allows viewers to observe the pixilation of his downloaded source materials as well as digital effects that are difficult to recreate in paint, such as the halo of pink light over the left figure's shoulder. In this PNG, his familiar use of bold patterns—particularly those he finds on the mass-produced "ethnic" textiles that are sold in American stores—takes on an additional resonance with algorithmic patterns associated with the digital processing of images. For example, the dotted pattern found in the teal areas suggests dithering, which is used to compress images and make them easier to share on the internet. In this way, Fallah's work emblematizes the quickening circulation of culture in digital formats, while highlighting the various technological mediations and cultural translations that such a traffic in images requires.

*Because of its visual properties, the artist has requested that this work only be shown in a digital format and not as a physical print. Collectors of any edition will have the unique option to purchase a dedicated 10" screen for displaying this work from Infinite Objects. Please contact Feral File for more information.*

### Artist Bio

Amir H. Fallah received his BFA in Fine Art & Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art and his MFA in painting at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions across the United States and abroad. Selected solo exhibitions include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tucson; South Dakota Art Museum, Brookings SD; Schneider Museum of Art, Ashland OR; San Diego ICA; and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland KS.

In 2009, the artist was chosen to participate in the 9th Sharjah Biennial. In 2015, Fallah received the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. In 2019, Fallah's painting Calling On The Past received the Northern Trust Purchase Prize at EXPO Chicago. In 2020, Fallah was awarded the COLA Individual Artist Fellowship and the Artadia grant. In addition, the artist had a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson, accompanied by a catalogue, and a year-long installation at the ICA San Jose.

The artist has works in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama; Jorge M. Pérez Collection, Miami; Deste Foundation For Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece; Xiao Museum Of Contemporary Art, Rizhao, China; McEvoy Foundation For The Arts, San Francisco; Nerman Museum, Kansas City; SMART Museum of Art at the University of Chicago; Davis Museum, Massachusetts; The Microsoft Collection, Washington; Plattsburg State Art Museum, NY; Cerritos College Public Art Collection, CA; Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, CA; and Salsali Private Museum, Dubai, UAE.

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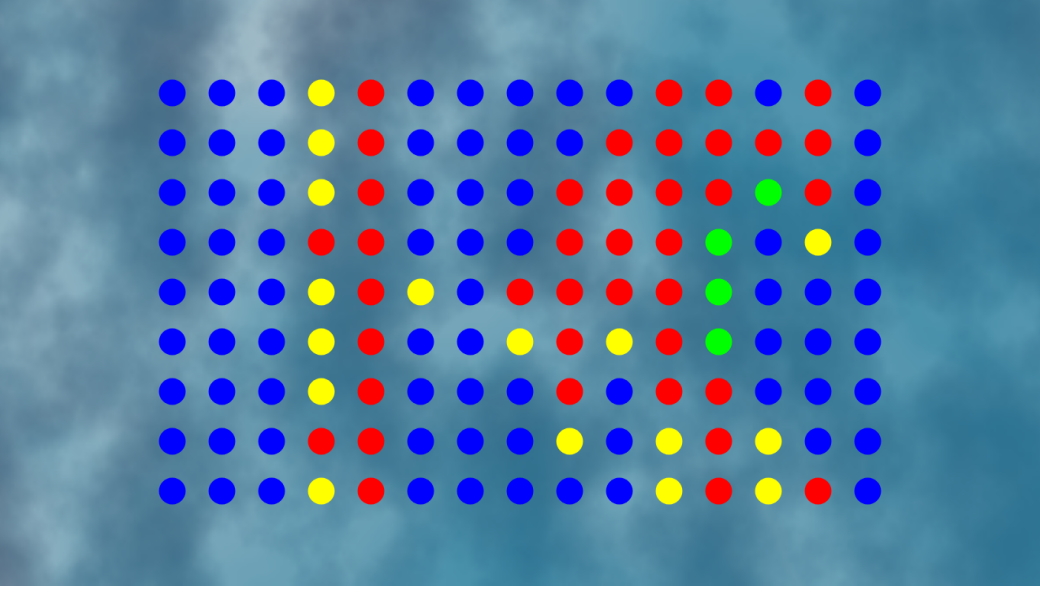

# Sarah Friend

## *Evolutionary Games and Spatial Chaos, Letters to Nature, 1992*

Javascript, HTML, CSS, and GLSL files

### Artwork Description

In 1992, the mathematical biologists Martin A. Nowak and Robert M. May published a letter in the scientific journal *Nature* called "Evolutionary Games and Spatial Chaos." In it, they provided a simplified model for the so-called "Prisoners' Dilemma," a thought experiment that was developed by the RAND Corporation during the Cold War and was used to demonstrate how individuals who choose to act in their own interest instead of cooperating with each other ultimately can make things worse for themselves. Their model assumes only two kinds of players: "those who always cooperate and those who always defect." As they noted, their spatial model, in which "every individual 'plays the game' with their immediate neighbors,"

> can generate chaotically changing spatial patterns, in which cooperators and defectors both persist indefinitely [. . .] If the starting configurations are sufficiently symmetrical, these ever-changing sequences of spatial patterns—dynamic fractals—can be extraordinarily beautiful and have interesting mathematical properties.

In her work of the same title, artist and programmer Sarah Friend creates a digital version of this "spatial model." It takes the form of a dynamic grid made of colored dots that are animated in real time by code that runs in the viewer's browser. Each dot is playing against its neighbors and can only do two things: cooperate or defect. Blue dots are cooperators; red dots are defectors; yellow dots are cooperators who converted to defectors; and green dots are defectors who converted to cooperators.

The model is set against a backdrop of moving clouds that are generated by a pixel shader, which is a program that runs on a graphics card and composes each pixel in a gridded pictorial field simultaneously, instead of calculating the position of the digital objects represented within that field. (Here, the white clouds are essentially mathematical noise—technically, Perlin noise with fractional Brownian motion applied.) In addition to pointing to the history of commercial digital animation—which has evolved to more convincingly portray natural forms like waves and human hair—the clouds recall the words used to describe modern computing as a kind of immaterial medium, from "cloud storage" to "Ethereum." These word choices are not without irony, given that the technologies they describe depend on the mining of natural resources and consumption of electricity powered by fossil fuels. Floating in parallel—as if they exist in the same frame, but not in the same space—the digital clouds and game-theory dots remind us that we are failing to cooperate on a global scale in the battle against climate change. The question is whether the same digital technologies that have contributed to the problem might also offer a way out of this "prisoner's dilemma," such as through blockchain-based cooperative organizations.

With its triangulation of nature, technology, and abstraction, Friend's work extends the conceptual commentary of Sherrie Levine's *Equivalents: After Stieglitz 1–18*, 2006. To make this gridded series of eighteen black-and-white images, Levine used pixilation to further abstract the "painterly" images of clouds shot by the early twentieth-century photographer Alfred Stieglitz, who helped elevate photography into a fine art (in part by organizing the first museum exhibition of photography at the Buffalo AKG in 1910). Levine's work raises the question of whether the technologies we use to "capture" nature (from photography to fracking) might be making nature ever-more "obscure." By pairing her own digital clouds with a mathematical visualization of the prisoners' dilemma, Friend further blurs the line between abstraction and figuration: are the dots representing models of human behavior more or less "abstract" than the clouds based on mathematical noise? That is—what does it mean to make "abstract" art when "reality" itself is becoming a series of zeroes and ones?

*Note: This work is not optimized for viewing on mobile devices, as the grid is dynamic and responds to the configuration of your browser window; please view it on your computer's browser. The artist's proceeds from this work will be split with Galerie Nagel Draxler.*

### Artist Bio

Sarah Friend is an artist, software developer and researcher from Canada and currently based in Berlin, Germany. She is Visiting Chair of blockchain art at The Cooper Union. She is also a participant in the Berlin Program for Artists, a co-curator of Ender Gallery, an artist residency taking place inside the game Minecraft, and an organiser of Our Networks, a conference on all aspects of the distributed web. Recent solo exhibitions include Off: Endgame, curated by Rhizome, Refraction and Fingerprints at Public Works Administration, New York, USA and Terraforming at Galerie Nagel Draxler in Berlin, Germany.

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# Auriea Harvey
## *Marisol/Daphne/Auriea*

GLTF model

### Artwork Description

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 naturalistic forms with traditional materials like pastel and bronze. Most recently, she has been meticulously crafting digital figures that are viewed either in a browser, via Augmented Reality (AR), or as 3-D printed sculptures. These figures 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 suggest 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 Greco-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 fashions 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 respond to the terror of this story by arming herself with joy: Bernini's Daphne makes a gesture of self-defense, but Harvey shows herself 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 bodily 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 comprise this chimerical figure. Ultimately, the formal openness and undecidability of *Marisol/Daphne/Auriea* suggests the ongoing struggle of women to quite literally define and transform themselves—a struggle well-suited to the iterations of digital art.

### Artist Bio

Auriea Harvey is a sculptor living and working in Rome. Her practice encompasses virtual and tangible sculptures, drawings, and simulations that blend digital and handmade production including 3D printing, AR, and VR. She is primarily concerned with making the mythological world visible through form, interaction, and immersion. Her works are a synthesis of art historical reference and imagination. And she is engaged across time, media, and material to define what sculptural production means in the present moment. She is half of the artist duo which over time has been known as Entropy8Zuper!/Tale of Tales/ Song of Songs, award winning for their pioneering works in Internet art, video games, and mixed reality. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of institutions such as Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Walker Art Center, KADIST Collection, RF.C Collection, and Rhizome's Net Art Anthology. Her videogames and VR works have had international success, including exhibitions at the Tinguely Museum, Basel; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the New Museum, New York; Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York; and ZKM, Karlsruhe.


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0x0000000000000000000000000000000000000000

# Rhea Myers

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

PDF file

### Artwork Description

In the 1960s, Conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth became renowned for his philosophical investigations into the nature of art. The Buffalo AKG collection includes a set of six panels by Kosuth called *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)* from 1967–68, which each feature reproductions of the dictionary definition of the word "nothing" in a different language. In these works, art is literally "nothing"—but also a way of framing the world that has the power to transform "nothing" into "something." Ultimately, Kosuth's conceptual games invite us to question the nature of language itself, and even of seemingly fundamental concepts like "nothing." For example, the dramatic variation between the Danish, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish panels may prompt us to wonder if "nothing" is less of a universal concept than a social construction that is defined and experienced differently across cultures.

Rhea Myers updates Kosuth's Conceptual gambit for the blockchain age. Her text-based work *Titled (Information as Property as Art) [Ethereum Null Address]* presents what is known as the "null address" on the Ethereum blockchain. While the presentation here takes the form of a PDF that mimics the visual style of Kosuth's works (with white text on a black background), the "work itself" is the idea of the null address and its expression in text, just as Kosuth's work is the idea of nothing and its definition. The work therefore can be presented by the collector in other ways, such as in vinyl lettering on a wall. As Myers explains about this address,

> It is the empty address, the invalid address, the address that no-one can own or control. On the Ethereum blockchain it is nowhere, it is nobody's, it is nothing. There should be nothing there. But whether by accident or by design, thousands of Ether and thousands of NFTs have been sent to the null address, from where they can never return. They may have been sent by human error. Or they may have been sent there to be "burned," to be destroyed and put out of circulation. For NFTs, the null address is their inferno.

Paradoxically, the null address is both the richest address and also the one with the lowest value, as its contents can never be claimed. By symbolically turning it into an artwork that is listed for sale, Myers re-stages the conundrums of Kosuth's work: what does it mean to "own" "nothing"? How does the simple act of calling something "art" give value to it, in both aesthetic and economic terms? As Myers observes, "The null address cannot be owned, but art turns the unownable into property by proxy, symbolically via depiction." In this way, Myers uses Conceptual strategies to contribute to the current discourse on the value of digital art. Her work concretizes (or perhaps "dematerializes") the thorny conversations around property and ownership triggered by the rise of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs): Is owning an NFT like owning "nothing," or like owning "something," or perhaps like "owning" both nothing and something?

Just as Kosuth's "Nothings" invite us to consider the nature of both art and language, Myers's "Null Address" ultimately raises questions about the nature of both art and code, and specifically, how we might understand code as yet another language (like English or Spanish, for example). In fact, to the extent that all digital code boils down to a series of zeroes and ones, we can say that code itself is fundamentally a language of "nothing" and "something." Like all languages, this binary language is shaped by its cultural context: Myers often cites Sadie Plant's 1997 book *Zeroes and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture*, which argues that zero is culturally coded as feminine and one as masculine. In this light, *Titled*—with its long string of forty consecutive zeroes, turning "nothing" into a very assertive "something"—is also about gender politics, and especially how our perception of value is never simply a matter of objective quantification.

*Collectors of any edition will have the unique option to purchase a dedicated 10" screen for displaying this work from Infinite Objects. Please contact Feral File for more information.*

### Artist Bio

Rhea Myers is an artist, hacker and writer originally from the UK now based in British Columbia, Canada. Her work places technology and culture in mutual interrogation to produce new ways of seeing the world as it unfolds around us. Since 2014 she has been using the blockchain to do so.

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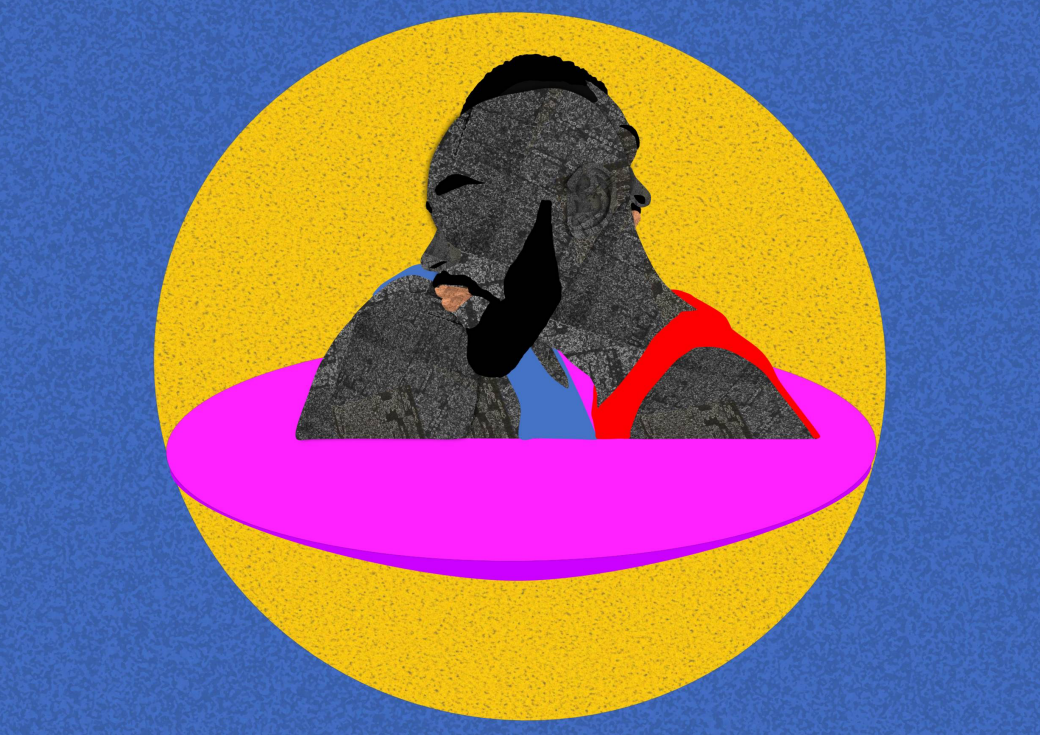

# Osinachi

## *+rave-sing (traversing)*

GIF file

### Artwork Description

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."

### Artist Bio

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'.

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# Casey Reas
# *METASOTO*

Javascript (p5.js), HTML, and CSS files

## Artwork Description

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," instead of screen recordings—that is, the work always should be generated in real time by a computer executing his instructions. (This is somewhat analogous to the difference between listening to a symphony live 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, the forms of 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 Plexiglas. 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 using nontraditional 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 reloading the work will begin the same cycle over again), and each edition of the work presents an entirely different set of configurations. While Reas's work reiterates Soto's embrace of technology to activate the viewer, it also invites us to consider what it means for the viewer to activate technology—or even create their own digital systems.

## Artist Bio

Reas' software, prints, and installations have been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions at museums and galleries in the United States, Europe, and Asia. His work ranges from small works on paper to urban-scale installations, and he balances solo work in the studio with collaborations with architects and musicians. Reas' work is in a range of private and public collections, including the Centre Georges Pompidou and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Reas is a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. He holds a master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Media Arts and Sciences and a bachelor's degree from the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning at the University of Cincinnati. With Ben Fry, Reas initiated Processing in 2001; Processing is an open-source programming language and environment for the visual arts.

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# Anne Spalter
## *The Bell Machine*

MP4 file (sound; running time: 19 minutes, 39 seconds, looped)

### Artwork Description

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 Dali 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 underscores 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 AI can tell us about Surrealism, and perhaps more urgently, what Surrealism can tell us about the seemingly "unknowable" mystery that is AI.

### Artist Bio

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 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 methods and innovative digital tools. Her crypto 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 V&A Museum (London), the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (Buffalo, NY), the RISD Museum (Providence, RI), The Museum of CryptoArt, and others. Alongside her studio practice, Spalter continues to lecture on digital art practice and theory. She recently completed an alumni residency at MASS MoCA.

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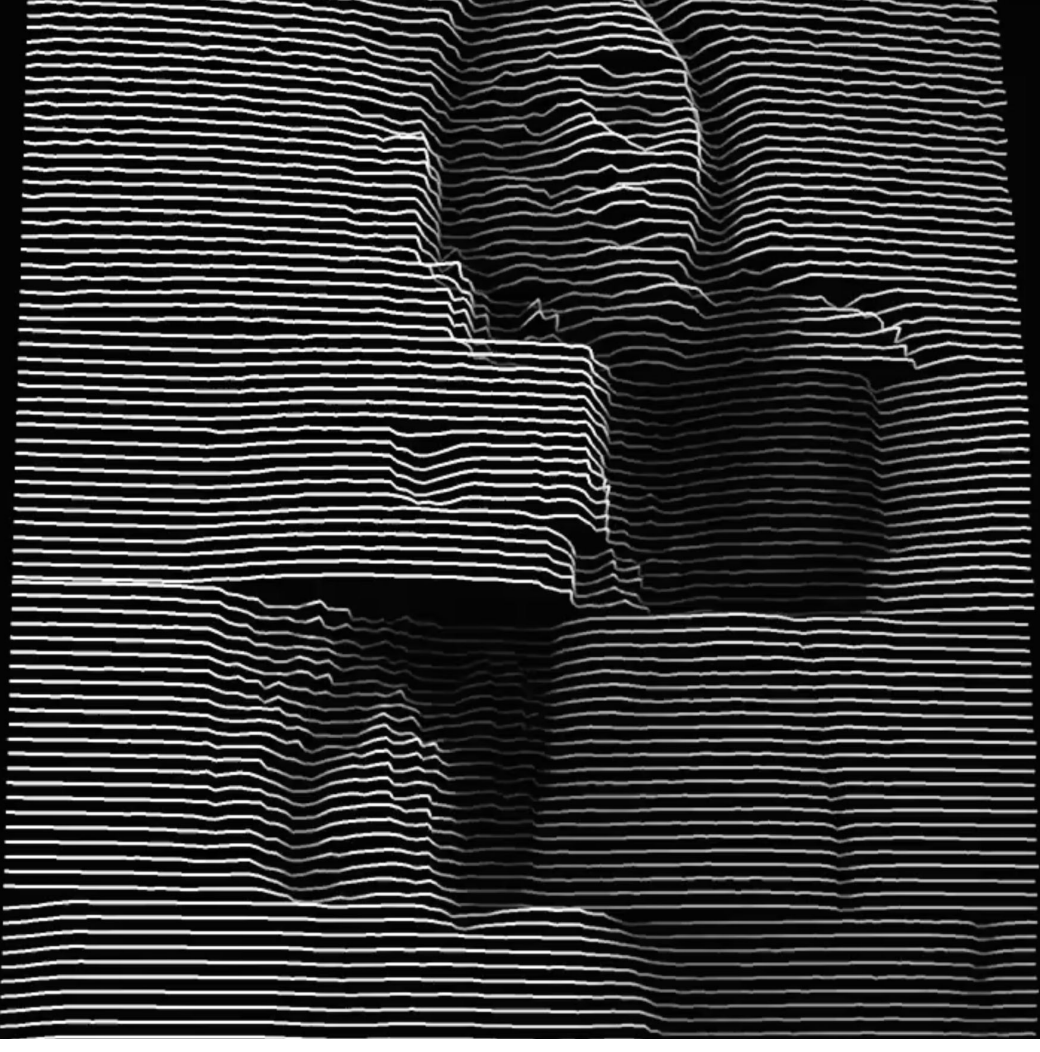

# Ix Shells
## *Bend*

MPEG file (silent; running time: 45 seconds, looped)

### Artwork Description

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 symbols approximating shades of grey. In addition to furthering Bell's research into 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 forward for the burgeoning movement of generative art, as well as for figuration in a digital age.

### Artist Bio

Itzel Yard–recognised 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 recalling 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 tumultuous time in her life, it pushed her 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 had 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 intends every work to act as a metaphor of internal exploration. This narrative is written within each of her works through lines of code, acting as a context-based portrait of what Yard is experiencing at the time. She explains that her home is in her head–welcoming her audience to open a digital door into the artist's own visual portrayal of self reflection. Her gentle nature, personable warmth, and sincere appreciation for the creation of her work produces a visual form of ingenuity that is unmatched.

Panama

y.at/⛓️‍💥✨

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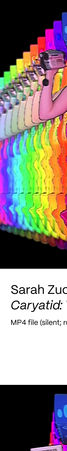
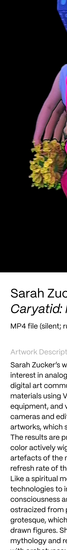


## Sarah Zucker
## *Caryatid: Vision*

MP4 file (silent; running time: 35 seconds, looped)

## Sarah Zucker
## *Caryatid: Thought*

MP4 file (silent; running time: 35 seconds, looped)



## Sarah Zucker
## *Caryatid: Wink*

MP4 file (silent; running time: 35 seconds, looped)

## Sarah Zucker
## *Caryatid: Recursion*

MP4 file (silent; running time: 35 seconds, looped)

Artwork Description

Sarah Zucker's works are emblematic of the enduring interest in analog electronic technologies within the digital art community. She produces her raw materials using VHS videotapes, analog editing equipment, and vintage CRTs; she then uses digital cameras and editing techniques to create the final artworks, which she shares as GIFs and digital videos. The results are prismatic images in which bands of color actively wiggle, exaggerating the visual artefacts of the meeting of digital cameras and the refresh rate of the scanlines on old electron screens. Like a spiritual medium, Zucker uses her outmoded technologies to induce altered states of consciousness and summon those forces that are ostracized from polite society, such as humor and the grotesque, which she taps into with cartoonishly-drawn figures. She is particularly interested in ancient mythology and religion and our enduring fascination with archetypes; characters such as Prometheus and Cassandra populate her works. She refers to many of her projects as "Video Alchemies," which is an apt term, as they result from the transformation of analog objects into digital signals; traffic in stories of metamorphosis; and turn materials that normally are perceived to have little cultural value, like the silliness of camp aesthetics, into fine art.

In the four videos that comprise the series Four Caryatids, Zucker imagines herself as a modern-day version of the *Eight Caryatid Figures*, 1906–07, that were made by the renowned American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens for the Buffalo AKG's east portico, and which still face out from the museum to this day. Four of these eight caryatids—or columns designed to look like women, which were common in ancient Greece—are allegories of the arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music; the other four are allegories of victory that flank the other figures. Each is identifiable by the symbolic attributes that she holds or wears: for example, "Painting" holds a palette and brushes, while "Sculpture" holds a small replica of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, an iconic Greek sculpture now at the Louvre.

Zucker refers to her versions as *Vision*, *Thought*, *Wink*, and *Recursion*, representing the four pillars of her own practice. Each features Zucker herself in costume; her bright pink shawl looks vaguely like an ancient garment, as well as the folds of a woman's labia. The square capitals on the heads of the *Eight Caryatids* have been replaced by large blue boxes that bear the Wi-Fi logo, and she holds in her hands the modern tools that represent her art: a camcorder and a computer keyboard. While the sculptural caryatids are forever motionless, each video caryatid makes a different gestural movement (such as side-to-side or up-and-down), which is then repeated through video feedback, forming rippling patterns. Together, these colorful, dynamic, brazenly silly caryatids upgrade our categories of art for the digital age, while also queering the idealized female body and the "heroic" values of Western art.

Artist Bio

Sarah Zucker is an artist and writer based in Los Angeles. Her work merges the gorgeous and grotesque through humor, psychedelia, mysticism, and the interplay of cutting edge + obsolete technologies.

She works across mediums, specializing in mixing digital and analog video techniques and the use of VHS. Her gif art has been viewed over 6.8 billion times on Giphy.

She has been creating NFT editions on the blockchain since April 2019. In 2021, her work was part of "Natively Digital," the first curated NFT sale at Sotheby's, and "CryptOGs: The Pioneers of NFT Art" at Bonhams. In 2022, she was named to the inaugural NFT100 list by NFTNow as one of the top artists working with NFTs.

She is a Jeopardy! Champion.

She holds a BA in Theater and Creative Writing for the Media from Northwestern University, and an MFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University.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About the Buffalo AKG

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 the art of its time, often working directly with living artists, including those engaged with technology. It presented the first museum survey of photography in 1910, acquired many Op and kinetic artists in the 1960s, exhibited experimental film and video installations in its galleries in the 1970s, and continues to support emerging artists and movements at the cutting edge of contemporary art. Its holdings include many important works 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 Art Museum will open to the public as a renewed and vastly expanded campus designed by OMA/Shohei Shigematsu.

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