

WHITNEY

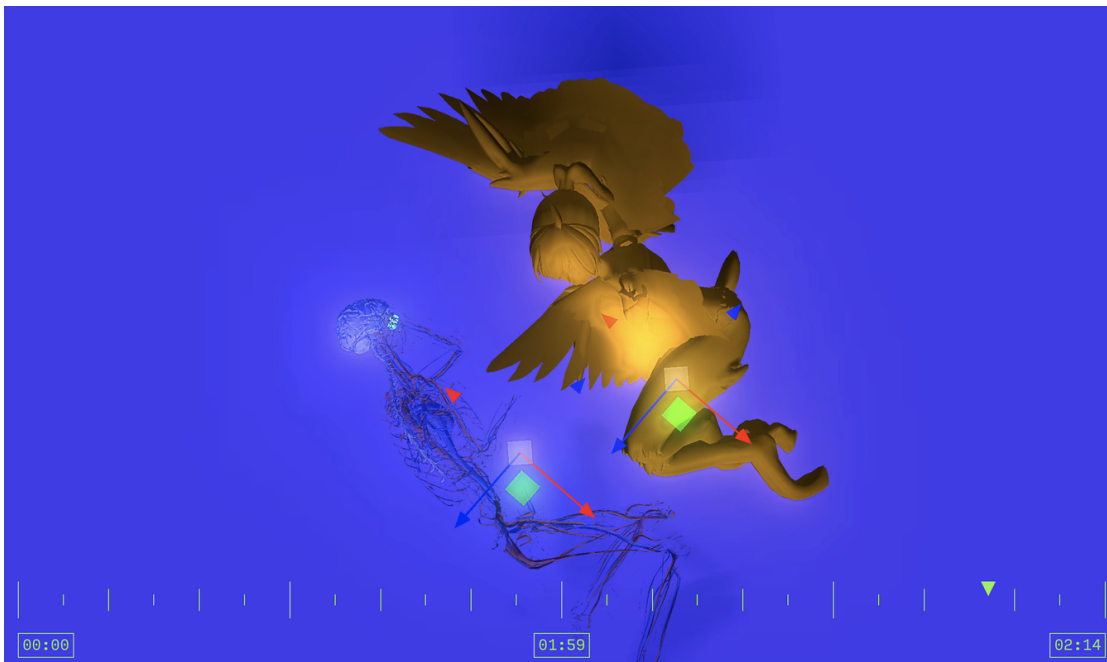
Whitney Museum
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PRESS RELEASE

WHITNEY MUSEUM PRESENTS EXHIBITION OF DIGITAL ART EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY'S EFFECT ON IDENTITIES



Opening March 3, *Refigured* showcases digital video, animation, virtual sculpture, and augmented reality from five leading artists in the field.

February 15, 2023, New York, NY — *Refigured*, opening at the Whitney Museum of American Art on March 3, brings together five installations by leading artists working in the field of digital art to reflect on the ways technology intersects with and influences our ever-evolving identities, underscoring the dynamic between digital and physical artworks and blurring boundaries between them.

Featured artists include American Artist, Morehshin Allahyari, Zach Blas and Jemima Wyman, Auriea Harvey, and Rachel Rossin. Drawing from the Museum's collection and including digital video and animation, virtual sculpture, and augmented reality, the installations in this exhibition respond to the various forces that form identity and engage with the concept of "refiguring." Sculptures are presented concurrently in digital and physical space alongside animations that escape the confinement of screens and reach into the gallery. Constructs of identity,

self-representation, structures of oppression, and colonialism are explored through a variety of lenses and mediums. Some artists investigate the ways identity is reflected in the structures of artificial intelligence and computer interfaces, while others consider how selfhood transforms in online environments and ancient cultural myths.

[Refigured](#) will be on view March 3–July 3, 2023 in the Museum’s Lobby Gallery, a space that is accessible to the public free of charge and often highlights the latest emerging talent and innovation in American art. Three works in the exhibition are also accessible on [artport](#), the Museum’s portal dedicated to Internet art and an online gallery space for commissions of net art, and can be directly launched through a QR code. This exhibition is organized by Christiane Paul, Curator of Digital Art at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

“Experimenting with the idea of ‘refiguring’ is at the core of the works presented in this exhibition,” says Paul. “Through practices of appropriating material forms and reinventing them, the artists are challenging what it means to construct or shape identity.”

“Under Christiane’s leadership, the Whitney has long been dedicated to building an important collection of digital art,” says Scott Rothkopf, Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator. “With *Refigured* we will shine a spotlight on this key area of our holdings and some of the most innovative artists working in the field today.”

American Artist is an interdisciplinary artist whose work incorporates video, installation, new media, and writing to consider Black labor, visibility, and antiblackness within digital systems and the internet. Their legal name change to American Artist represents the basis for their practice and affirms blackness as descriptive of an American artist while simultaneously erasing identity in virtual spaces where “American Artist” remains anonymous online. [Mother of All Demos III](#), American Artist’s installation in *Refigured*, alludes to the historical underrepresentation of the Black workforce in Silicon Valley. The installation features a mold of an Apple II computer—the company’s last model with a black home screen—coated in dirt, with liquid seeping out of the keyboard and handprints stamped on each side. The physicality of the computer sharply contrasts with the sleekness of Silicon Valley, commenting on how ideologies influence design choices and digital interfaces.

Morehshin Allahyari’s hypertext narrative [The Laughing Snake](#) was commissioned for artport in 2018 and will be presented in-gallery as an installation including a sculptural component. The work is based on the myth of *jinn*, supernatural creatures from Arabian mythology, to explore the status of women and the female body in the Middle East. Allahyari is an artist, activist, and educator whose work addresses the political, social, and cultural contradictions we face every day. Employing technology as a theoretical toolset, the work documents and reflects on collective life struggles faced today.

A collaboration between artists Zach Blas and Jemima Wyman, [im here to learn so :\)\)\)\)\)\)](#) is a four-channel video installation centered on a chatbot examining the politics of pattern recognition and machine learning. The chatbot was developed by Microsoft in 2016, and its

learning and language imitation were influenced by aggressive trolling on platforms like Twitter. Within hours, these influences led the chatbot to use genocidal, homophobic, misogynist, and racist language, and it was shut down. For the installation, the chatbot is resurrected as an avatar to reflect on life after AI death and contemplate the experience of being stuck inside a neural network and the “apophenic” pursuit of patterns within information and algorithms.

Debuting both online and in the exhibition, Auriea Harvey’s [SITE1](#) is the latest commission for artport. *SITE1* is an illusionistic online space and the origin site of sculptural characters the artist has been working on over the course of many years. This work will be on view alongside [Ox and Ox v1-dv2 \(apotheosis\)](#), the virtual and physical sculptures that represent the “origin story” of Harvey’s online identity. The sculptures embody the artist’s virtual avatar and her working process, which combines clay sculptures, digital 3D modeling, and video game and software development. Harvey’s digital sculptures are the core of the work, and she sees the physical sculptures as an extension of the virtual pieces.

Rachel Rossin’s [THE MAW OF](#), a recent commission for artport that launched in 2022, is a transmedia story that unfolds across multiple platforms and formats and reflects on the alterations our bodies and minds experience with technology. Rossin, a multidisciplinary artist and established pioneer in the field of VR, blends painting, sculpture, new media, gaming, and video to create digital landscapes that focus on entropy, embodiment, and the effects technology has on our psyche. This work investigates the relationship between humans and machines, highlighting technology’s evolution from a tool to an extension of the mind and body.

Public Programs

A series of free virtual and in-person programs will be offered in conjunction with *Refigured*. More information about these programs and how to register will be [available on the Museum’s website](#) as details are confirmed.

PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at whitney.org/press or contact:

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EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Generous support for this exhibition is provided by the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation.

ABOUT THE WHITNEY

The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for ninety years. The core of the Whitney’s mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. COVID-19 vaccination and face coverings are not required but strongly recommended. We encourage all visitors to wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth throughout their visit.

Image caption:

Rachel Rossin, *THE MAW OF*, 2022. Web-based animation with augmented reality (AR). Commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art for its artport website and Kunst-Werke Berlin Institute for Contemporary Art AP.2022.1. © Rachel Rossin

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