

RE-FEST

LA Exhibition Guide

With Visual Descriptions

CULTUREHUB

Re-Fest 2023 LA

Exhibition Guide

This guide is a compilation of descriptive text and visual descriptions for the artworks included in CultureHub's Re-Fest 2023 Gallery Exhibition at Hot Shot Muffler.

On view April 28 - 29, 2023.

The guide also exists as an audio playlist available at soundcloud.com/culturehubnyc and via the QR code below.



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Las Memorias Del Sol (The Sun's Memories)

Álvaro Rodríguez Badel

Photogrammetry, 3D animation, and diffusion models (AI)

2022

Looking at the sun through the treetops, I think about how light connects the multiple natural systems that give us life. Then, I close my eyes and begin to levitate through the forest, recognizing the universes that inhabit it, how many things have happened for us to be here. No matter how far we've come, we always end up back in the same place, looking at the same sun.

Visual description of the work:

Las Memorias Del Sol (The Sun's Memories) is a color projection on the wall. The projection depicts slowly shifting, dreamily moving images of natural ecologies and systems—forest floors, interconnected waterways, networks of lights and electricity, treetop canopies, and animations and models of the structural energies and particles that compose these systems in large and miniscule scales. The projections of these systems glow, grow, pulsate, turn, dilate, and morph into one from the other in elongated and disorienting sequences that diffuse the more legible forms and components into blurs of color, light, and shadow.

Wókiksuye

Bobby Joe Smith III (Lakota)

2023

Wókiksuye is a contemporary Native American jingle dress adorned with digitally embroidered ribbon and metal flash drives in place of the traditional bell-shaped rolled lids from tobacco tins. The jingle dress is a form of regalia worn at indigenous gatherings. An Ojibwe man in the early 1900s received the design of the jingle dress in a vision, which along with a corresponding dance, would become a medicine to heal his ailing daughter. This legacy is honored and upheld today by many tribes across turtle island. In the artist's Native language of Lakota, *wókiksuye* means remembrance. *Wókiksuye* could be a memory, a recollection, a reminiscence, or something that invites memory and other cross-temporal connections—a place, a smell, a memorial, an heirloom, a myth, a feeling of *deja-vu*, a tradition. Each flash drive on the jingle dress holds virtual memories, prayers, and desires for the future of the artist and of the relative for whom the dress was fashioned. The embroidery contains Lakota words and phrases using glyphs drawn from the traditional aesthetics and design vernacular of *Océti Sakówin* (Lakota/Dakota/Nakota) women in bead and quill work. The artist repurposed these forms to replace Latin glyphs as a speculative decolonial orthography (or writing system) for the Lakota language, which is yet to possess a standardized visual representation.

Performance on Friday, April 28th at 7:30pm PT by Laundi Keepseagle (Océti Sakówin)

Visual description of the work:

Wókiksuye is a garment adorned in digitally embroidered ribbons and metal flash drives that, as it is worn and moved through dance, shifts, jostles, and folds the words and materials attached to and embroidered within it. There are four CRT TVs on the floor behind it.

FUTURING : Portable Park

Caco Peguero

2023

“Green time” is a growing concept that emphasizes spending time in nature for physical and mental well-being. This idea is not new, as earlier health practitioners recognized the importance of fresh air. However, our modern lives involve spending increasing amounts of time indoors, leading many to seek out more ways to add green to their routines. Welcome the *Portable Park*, your personal source of fresh air.

Visual description of the work:

Portable Park is an object-based and digital installation resting upon two small tables draped in black fabric placed a few feet in front of the gallery wall. One smaller table on the left supports a round terrarium contained by a transparent vessel shaped like an egg. A small live ecology of bright green leaves and sandy-colored mosses grow inside the bubble which is flanked by a live fern placed alongside the small table. The taller table to the right supports a monitor screen and a keyboard, the monitor displaying a verdant green garden which a viewer can navigate through using the keyboard.

Coral Reef

Kira Xonorika

The use of textile plants in Guaraní communities represents an intricate and delicate dance between materiality and ritualistic practice. By weaving together fibrous materials obtained through a sequence of procedures and methods, we engage in textile practices that not only serve the purpose of care and adornment but also expanding collective imaginaries. This production is not interested in a 'neo-primitivist' agenda or reimagining stereotypes linked to the 'traditional'. Instead, it aims to collaborate with AI from indigenous and gender-expansive epistemologies to invoke constellations of possibility.

Visual description of the work:

Coral Reef is a video of an AI rendering of a figure adorned in tendrils, spines, whisps, strings, tissues, and layers of glowing, colorful, luminescent materials somewhere between fabric and oceanic coral. These colors and textures envelope the figure's face and body. The moving images of this floating figure of color, light, texture, and motion are displayed across three separate yet contiguous screens that, together, assemble the full picture of dynamic movement.

Conversations with My Deepfake Dad

Sarah Sweeney

2022

My father died when he was forty-four and I was seventeen. When I turned forty-four I wanted to talk to him again. I contacted Resemble AI, a company that creates clones of voices using machine learning, and we worked together to create an AI model of my father's voice. This project is a series of six conversations created through my interactions with the audio deepfake of my father.

Credits:

Sarah Sweeney – Lead Artist

Resemble Ai / Saqib Muhammad – Deepfake Software

Kate Sweeney – Script Editor

Kate Sweeney, Ann Sweeney, Debbie Sweeney Wick – Interviewees

Michael Strickland-Scanningforest1.jpg

Paul Davis - Carpentry

3DSelfies - 3D Modeling

Evan Halstead, Jeff Briton, Omar Gomez, Zoe Bilodeau, David O'Connell - Electronics

Andrea Casey - Printing

DeAndra Anthony – Technical Director/Projections

May You – Sound Editing

Billy Clark – Vocal Recordings for Deepfake Dad

Mattie Barber-Bockelman – Creative Producing

Visual description of the work:

Conversations with My Deepfake Dad is a multimedia work represented here by a printed image hanging on the gallery wall and a rotary telephone on a table in front of the image. The image is an approximately four by two and a half foot print of a photograph depicting a forest of tall trees perhaps signaling the Pacific Northwest. Amidst the brown of the thick trees and the green of their leaves and needles and the surrounding brush there is, in the right foreground, the ghostly superimposed image of an upright and translucent figure. The rotary telephone on the table in front of the image is a dark green reminiscent of the green in the photograph. The telephone is connected to black power cords which trails from its back side. The telephone plays recordings from the AI model of the artists' father's voice.

Untitled

Iman Person

High-fire ceramics, bio plastic, plants, plant hormones

Visual description of the work:

Untitled is a sculpture composed of ceramics, bioplastics, and plant matter installed upon a waist-height white pedestal. *Untitled* is bulbous in shape, like a textured and misshapen egg, and has three rounded petals or shells which gather to form the object on the pedestal. The petal-shells are convex and multi-textured with brown prickling spines that emerge from the smoother light teal surface. Each of the three rounded components connect at their edges and the top stays open with a triangular void into the sculpture's center. The ceramic sculpture rests upon a thin sheet of translucent-brown bioplastic lightly dotted and pressed with plant matter like petals and leaves and stems.

Archive of Digital Portraits Cast in Concrete

Blair Simmons

2022

Water, cement, rocks, dirt, glass, cardboard, used electronics, data, python, time, labor

Each sculpture is composed of a piece of discarded technology (sourced from people in my life) cast in concrete, then uncovered through hammering and chiseling. These sculptures are portraits of the person that owned and used the piece of technology.

Process: Archive of Digital Portraits Cast in Concrete has emerged out of my current pedagogy and research-driven practice where I have been exploring themes of technology, queerness, anxiety, pain and labor. This show is both informed and bound by my severe anxiety disorder, chronic pain and migraines. While working, I often need to move both quickly and carefully, in a race against time before my body shuts down. My research process is often overly laborious: collecting soft and hard data; reading and researching; teaching and discussing; making and endless iterating. The physical process of making these works mimics the daily pain of working and labor: warping, distorting, grinding and wearing down. This series of pieces is both critical of, and dependent on technology, mirroring the ways technology can be a solution to my chronic pain, and the source of the pain itself.

Visual description of the work:

Archive of Digital Portraits Cast in Concrete is an installation of three objects. Each object is a conglomerate of amorphous concrete enveloping a technological device—touch screens, a device almost entirely consumed by concrete except for one steel corner, and a personal data assistant. These modern objects are embedded within concrete as if they were fossils emerging from long-set volcanic rock or waste caught in mixing concrete which consumed the technologies and partially or entirely obfuscated their dark screens.

Ancient Futures

Nicole Yi Messier and Victoria Manganiello (Craftwork Collective)

Textiles and technology installation

2022

Inspired by the textiles that have held humanity's secrets across time and space, this triple-woven installation is made with soft electronics to collect, store and cumulatively visualize solicited secrets from viewers using sentiment analysis and long term data-textile storage.

Visual description of the work:

Ancient Futures is a sculptural installation which hangs in the middle of the space. This sculptural installation is composed of two sets of woven orange fabrics with purple accents hanging alongside each other, both interwoven with a small collection of curved, flexible rods of glowing light. The light-threaded textiles connect to a black power cord which extends from the fabric's edge. The cord connects to a small platform nearby atop which rests a small touch-display screen and microphone. The microphone is used to record secrets shared by visitors which transmit from the monitor and microphone through the cords and computer board into the lights as modulations of color determined by the verbal data collected and processed through the microphone.

Be.Longing XR

Folly Feast Lab (Viviane El Kmati & Yara Feghali)

VR

Be.Longing XR is a filmic road diary seen through the eyes of Amal, an immigrant woman from Beirut who just landed in Los Angeles. We join her on a ride through a fictitious reconstructed residential streetscape as she searches for signs of her queer community on the houses' front yards, porches, and windows.

Visual description of the work:

Be.longing XR looks at 20 different residential neighborhoods in L.A. to tease out the particularities of their domestic front porches. Stereotypical symbols of queer culture and their manifestations appear on the houses' front porch; ghostly silhouettes of the houses in neon technicolor layer over the original feed with stripes of bright colors, neon figures, faces of bright makeup, and bright balloons dot the front yards and porches. The projected, immersive experience allows visitors to maintain social distancing guidelines by remaining in their cars and watching from inside. The "drive-by" portrays a filmic diary of sorts, viewed through the visitors' own car windows as if they were themselves driving through the reconstructed queer neighborhoods.

Macho Stereo

Marcus Kuiland-Nazario

MACHO STEREO is a long term interdisciplinary work of Marcus Kuiland-Nazario created in collaboration with the public and male identified artists. The work is inspired by the legendary 1955 Mexican Novel Pedro Paramo by Juan Rulfo and the 1966 film of the same name, which hinges on the reunion of an estranged father and son. The project includes audio interviews conducted during residencies at libraries, video, vintage vinyl, and equipment from his family archive.

Performance on Saturday, April 29th at 6pm PT. The durational performance component of the work is created with collaborator Paul Donald.

Visual description of the work:

Macho Stereo is an installation in the living room area of the gallery. There are records, a record player, a photo of the artist and father, and tape players that play interviews.

Bloom AR

Kate Parsons

Commissioned by Standard Vision Studios for national and international screenings, *Bloom AR* is a lighthearted meditation on springtime and rebirth. Bloom AR utilizes the AR app Artivive to bring new layers of interactivity to a still of the original piece.

Production by FLOAT (Kate Parsons & Ben Vance)

Visual description of the work:

Bloom AR is a video work on a screen which shows digital renderings of multi-colored, multi-textured petals, blossoms, and blooms. The renderings activate and shift with meditative movement qualities and the lights and colors interact somewhere between lush and vibrant organic plant matter and visual echoes of microscopic multicellular modeling, petals and stamens moving as if they're floating in space or underwater.

Machinic Reflection

Laure Michelon

Laure Michelon's *Machinic Reflection* confronts bias in emerging technologies. A camera is placed strategically in the gallery that captures an image of any viewer in close proximity to the work. An algorithm trained on a curated dataset of categories. The proximate items on the vanity, [Mask.01.A] and [Mask.02.A] are AI-generated representations of the artist's face. The masks serve as a type of tool or prosthetic through which the user could disrupt their classification originally deemed by *Machinic Reflection*.

Visual description of the work:

Machinic Reflection is a presentational installation of objects collected atop a small rectangular waist-height table draped by white fabric which falls to the floor. Atop the table rests a catalog book of cards resting open and flat before an approximately two foot by three and a half foot mirror-like screen. A web camera device and ring light are attached to the screen's left side. To the right of the book, mirror, and mounted devices two masks rest face up, each connected to a laminated white card with black text. The camera captures the visual field of the space before it and feeds that image—specifically the faces of viewers near it—into the algorithmic dataset to output an AI-generated category based on the viewer's face. The categories appear as 'artist,' 'military strategist,' 'conspiracy theorist,' and more.

White Man's Foot :))))))

Jamison Edgar

2023

White Man's Foot is an interactive video essay that choreographs the cultural and technological legacies of one of America's oldest invasive plant species — *Plantago major*. The video weaves together performance documentation with found footage, and participatory computer animations to explore the ways in which non-human species have been assembled into technologies of surveillance and colonization throughout American history.

Huntrezz Janos – Animation Collaborator

Visual description of the work:

White Man's Foot :)))))) is a video work which depicts both the plant *Plantago major*, colloquially referred to a “White Man's Foot” and actual feet and other body parts in different choreographic movements and arrangements, weaving together these imageries in digitally layered and collaged methods.

Four larval Hydroids drifting up the water column, also known as, a four-shaft Cylindrical Loom

Emma Akmakdjian

2023

Four umbrella-like contraptions, known as shafts on a traditional loom, open and close along a 7 ft pole, exposing uniquely colored threads to concoct uniquely woven patterns. The artist is inspired by the traditional Japanese Kumihimo braiding loom and the 1960's industrial Cylindrical loom. In an amalgamation of both designs, with elements of her own, Akmakdjian creates a loom drawing from archaic technologies of the weighted loom into the incorporation of modern textiles to demonstrate the autonomy of the machine or the lack thereof. Akmakdjian chose to create four shafts with 24 threads because DNA has four base characters. For her weavings, Akmakdjian plans to perform DNA by transcribing base characters A,T,C,G into proteins to demonstrate the tension between nature and culture. Akmakdjian will weave the same pattern over and over to show how a mutation in encoding can lead to an entirely new outcome; revealing how genetic mutation is cultural innovation.

Visual description of the work:

Four larval Hydroids drifting up the water column, also known as, a four-shaft Cylindrical Loom is an object made of several moving parts with strings, rods, columns, and stones installed atop a table. The larger cylindrical structure is seven feet tall composed of a pole mounted on a thick beige round platform and supporting a thinner beige round cap at its stop. The pole that connects the base to the top is circled by threads hanging from the top disc's sides. The threads are connected to the moving weaving shafts and suspend eight stones in the air alongside the circumference of the cylindrical installation.