ABSTRACT

Histories of New Media: The Contemporary Discourse of Digital Arts

Art has always existed in a dialogic relationship with the history of science. Both art and technology share the Greek root *technē* that evinces a mode of production involving skill and knowledge, a kind of hands-on problem-solving. The emerging field of "new media" or "digital arts" has become a pressing topic for artists and art historians alike in recent years, but this discourse—the statements surrounding digital art practice and the artifacts that result—is anything but novel. Techno-scientific events are already represented in language and images that predate them. New media involves the use of digital technologies and tools of mass communication, including virtual and interactive forms of art. The problem that arises when art students remain disconnected from this history is that they use these new tools without fully understanding them and thus make art without understanding the pre-existing discourse that their works enter into. Digital media pedagogy lacks any standard structure among more accessible universities, contributing to a problematic disconnect between studio and art history courses. My research addresses this pedagogical gap by analyzing the ways in which new media reframes longstanding art historical discourse. As a result, I have created the syllabus for a new media art history seminar and studio hybrid course at the undergraduate university level. The proposed course investigates themes of art and technology, authorship and appropriation, automation, the desire for mimesis, and the relationship between digital media and non-digital fine arts. This inquiry demands a theoretical and pedagogical approach that avoids absurdism about the "end of art," particularly in the face of contentious new media discourse such as the emergence of AI art. This approach reveals a transformation of the intimate relationship between art and science rather than a simple rivalry or novelty.

Histories of New Media: The Contemporary Discourse of Digital Arts

Art has always existed in a dialogic relationship with the history of science. Both art and technology share the Greek root *technē* that evinces a mode of production involving skill and knowledge, a kind of hands-on problem-solving. Thus, as technology evolves, so does the means of art-making. The emerging field of "new media" or "digital arts" has become a pressing topic for artists and art historians alike in recent years, but this discourse—the statements surrounding digital art practice and the artifacts that result—is anything but novel. Techno-scientific events are already represented in language and images that predate them. For my thesis project, I chose to explore the intimate relationship between art and science by analyzing the history of new media and revealing an ongoing transformation of its related discourse rather than reducing it to a simple rivalry or novelty.

I have created the syllabus for a new media art history seminar and studio hybrid course at the undergraduate university level. New media involves the use of digital technologies and tools of mass communication, including virtual and interactive forms of art. It encompasses disciplines such as animation, video art and film, sound art, digital photography, robotics and interactive platforms like websites, VR, and gaming. The rise of social media and more accessible computer software has promoted a growing interest in this field as it transforms artmaking. Yet many art students remain disconnected from its history. Young artists use these new tools without fully understanding them and thus make art without fully understanding the discourse that they are contributing to. Digital media pedagogy lacks any standard structure among more accessible public universities, contributing to the problematic disconnect between studio and art history courses.

With a hybrid approach, my research addresses this pedagogical gap and challenges the idea of "newness" implied in this field. My syllabus is arranged into five units that each investigate a theme of new media art practice and how it relates to preexisting art historical discourse. Each unit consists of a description, a list of key texts, key artworks, key innovations pertaining to the theme, and an accompanying studio assignment. Establishing standard pedagogy that merges art and history is crucial in educating and supporting art students. It will help them better approach their craft and more thoughtfully interact with prevailing contemporary technology. An undergraduate course such as this will teach students how to think critically and creatively about new media artwork and its historical context, reviving the relationship between studio art and history.

Unit one is called "Art & Technology: Defining New Media". It acts as an introduction to the history of digital arts. The unit serves as an overview of the relationship between art and technology, establishing foundational knowledge for the subsequent units. This covers topics ranging from early animation, film, and photography to the introduction of video games, computer-generated images, and new media gallery installations. 19th-century artists like Eadweard Muybridge, whose photography documented the scientific study of locomotion, influenced the development of motion-based artwork. His work contributed to the rise of devices such as zoetropes, which utilized a series of still images to convey the illusion of movement when viewed in rapid succession. The concept of these "key frames" then led to the development of film and animation, which each progressed in complexity through experimentations with depth, color, and special effects. Nowadays, the use of CGI and highly rendered 3D models have become commonplace in television, cinema, and video games. The work of new media artists such as Nam June Paik explores the impact of such technological developments, particularly on

how people communicate. These topics form a line for students to trace new media throughout history but only represent a portion of what that history truly covers.

Unit two, "Authorship & Appropriation", delves into the longstanding approach of appropriation in art and its implications on the labeling of artists. It compares contemporary, digital means of image theft to similar historical practices, including Marcel Duchamp's readymades, Hannah Hoch's photomontages, and Andy Warhol's Pop Art. Duchamp's sculptures, such as *Fountain* from 1917, were made from prefabricated objects that became recontextualized through their presentation in art galleries. With the "artist" taking no part in the physical creation of these objects, Duchamp's work led to ample debate on what it means to be an artist and in what context something is coined as artwork. His experimentation with authorship influenced kindred trends to come. In Pop Art and photomontage, artists would similarly use images from preexisting visual archives to generate new meaning. Cultural acceptance of this theft varies, dependent on factors like degree, intent, and timing. These historic examples of appropriation serve as a reminder that the debate over authorship is not unique to new media.

The contemporary relevance of AI art has reignited and reframed the longstanding debate over authorship. AI brings into question the legitimacy of "machines as artists" and the moral implications of algorithmic appropriation. With the rules surrounding human authorship already vague, as seen in the case of Shepard Fairey's *Barack Obama Hope Poster*, the incorporation of machine-made images further muddies the water. There is a current lack of legislative and academic regulations regarding AI that leaves artists and students feeling uncertain. Prolific online AI use is generally assumed to be immoral, most often utilized to copy other artists' styles, but programmers such as Mario Klingemann use AI with more nuance. Klingemann's *Uncanny*

Mirror, for example, uses an algorithm trained on the very gallery viewers that interact with the installation instead of an unregulated online database of artwork. Rather than generate an entirely novel subject of inquiry, new technology and the accessibility of the internet have simply transformed and expanded the environment of appropriation.

Unit three, "The Automation of Robotic Artwork", extends the discourse of authorship by specifically focusing on automatic operations. It investigates the contemporary use of mechanical and digital tools in artistic creation, relating them to the mechanical processes of historical artmaking. I specifically focus on the intersection of art and robotics—the notion of "machine as artist." Jean Tinguely explored this concept in his *Meta-matics* from the 1950s and 60s. His kinetic sculptures would physically produce artwork through engineered gestural marks. In this case, is the resulting artwork that of the original artist or of the robot? This question persists in similar contemporary "drawing machines" created by So Kanno and Takahiro Yamaguchi, Patrick Tresset, Leonel Moura, and so-called "AI artists." My analysis of automation also reveals how our feelings toward contemporary art tools are repetitive of the same feelings expressed by predecessors. One of Kodak's earliest advertising slogans for their cameras was "You press the button, we do the rest"—a tagline implying that the user has no real authority over the creation process, reducing photography to mere mechanical automation. It took time and creative experimentation to truly elevate photography to the status of high art, reclaiming the title of "artist" for the human user rather than the machine. While today's artists worry about being replaced by AI, historic painters feared the same during the rise of photography. Painters worried about the relevance of their medium in the face of an increasingly instantaneous means of replicating reality, and yet painting is, even now, by no means a dead medium.

The desire to perfectly replicate reality is not a craving unique to the contemporary age. When photography was first popularized, many assumed that the camera achieved that very goal—to capture reality in its entire truth. But in actuality, the deliberate staging, framing, and editing of photos have always imbued image creation with an inherent bias—factors further complicated by the manipulation capabilities of digital tools. Unit four is called "The Desire for Mimesis: Fearing & Fetishizing Newness". This unit further explores viewers' and users' complex feelings towards technology. For example, Henry Peach Robinson's *Fading Away* (1858) photo initially incited public outrage for intruding on such a private family moment of grief. When revealed to be an entirely fabricated scene, viewers were instead outraged about being deceived. Though we are often wowed by the possibilities of technology, fetishizing its role in our culture, we also fear its fabrication capabilities.

This unit discusses an increasing preference for the erasure of edges. Both traditional and digital photomontages often attempt to generate seamless imagery, wherein the boundaries of the original images are imperceivable. This also follows the dream-like generation practiced in Surrealism. We see the lines of reality begin to blur more and more, with the development of AI-generated videos, deepfakes, and virtual reality practically eliminating the edges of our screens altogether. Consumers yearn for these advancements while simultaneously dreading their dystopian consequences. To mitigate our fear of technology, I have discovered a tendency to rely on preexisting imagery and non-digital language that facilitates comfort. We call collections of digital information "files" that are opened on "windows" and still save things using a floppy disc icon. We replicate the styles of historic artists, follow time-honored visual traditions, and utilize pre-established norms of communication. Comfort is found in the reliance on preceding media due to its sense of familiarity in a world of increasingly intangible information consumption.

Lastly, unit five is called "The Relationship Between Digital Media & Non-Digital Fines Arts". It discusses the historic commercialization of art, the traditional presentation modes of gallery spaces, and how the rise of the internet has transformed those factors. This includes the evolution of graphic design, net art, freelance digital illustration, and the short-lived cultural interest in NFTs. Like art and technology, art and commercial culture, consumerism, and entertainment share an intimate and longstanding relationship. What was once driven by the patronage of wealthy middle-class merchants is now often driven by the endless exchange of online commissions. Net Art in particular saw a transformation of artistic consumption during the early days of the internet, moving means of presentation from the gallery to the computer. Websites themselves were introduced as artwork and formed the precedent for social media-based artists today. While reliance on gallery traditions is certainly still apparent, there is also a disconnect found between digital art, museums, and educational settings.

This increasing digitization of artwork also emphasizes the falsity of permanence that the internet implies. William Basinski, for example, explores this concept through sound art. His most famous work, *The Disintegration Loops*, consists of the sound of 20-year-old tapes slowly decaying. The decay was caused when Basinski attempted to transfer audio recordings to a digital format, which accidentally began to deteriorate the tapes and distort the sound. This unit investigates how the true longevity of digital formats relates to traditional preservation of artwork, and how digital and non-digital media may interact.

My thesis project included an intensive research and literature review process. As a multimedia artist and Digital Media student, I gained valuable insight into the history of my field and a better understanding of the sociocultural discourse surrounding technology that I use every day. Each unit in my syllabus has the potential to form a college-level course by itself. My

findings only scratch the surface of what this history fully entails, meaning therein lies the

natural opportunity for further development and revision in my research. A new media syllabus

has the potential to be taught in a variety of manners due to the complexity and breadth of the

topic. By utilizing this art history seminar and studio hybrid approach, I hope to reconnect these

creative disciplines and emphasize the importance of new media history in contemporary

pedagogy.

Histories of New Media: The Contemporary Discourse of Digital Arts
Undergraduate Course Syllabus

Course Description:

This course will examine the discourse and artistic practices of new/digital media within contemporary art history. It will introduce students to the cultural issues involved in the creation and consumption of new media artwork. This includes disciplines such as animation, video art and film, sound art, digital photography, robotics, and interactive platforms like websites, VR, and gaming. The course challenges the idea of "newness" implied in this field and investigates the ways in which technoscientific progress and visual culture transform one another. Major contemporary artists and key innovations related to new media history will be covered. We will also discuss the relationship between new media and other disciplines along with contemporary topics such as generative AI.

Student Learning Outcomes & Expectations:

- Students will learn how to think critically and creatively about new media artwork and their historical context.
- Students will analyze both historical and contemporary discourse, and they will evaluate their ability to respond to said discourse.
- Students will apply their understanding of new media discourse through the creation of artwork and writing in studio assignments.
- Students will thoughtfully engage in class discussion

Texts & Materials:

Select essays and readings will be provided. Required materials for assignments vary. Students will need software for photo editing, video editing, and digital illustration (ie. Adobe Suite).

Unit 1 - Art & Technology: Defining New Media

Description:

Art has always existed in a dialogic relationship with the history of science. Both art and technology share the Greek root technē that evinces a mode of production involving skill and knowledge, a kind of hands-on problem-solving. The emerging field of "new media" or "digital arts" encompasses disciplines such as animation, video art and film, sound art, digital photography, robotics and interactive platforms like websites, VR, and gaming. Though implied to be "new," this discourse—the statements surrounding digital art practice and the artifacts that result—is anything but novel. Techno-scientific events are already represented in language and images that predate them.

This unit explores a brief overview of some of the technological developments that have contributed to the emergence of contemporary new media. This includes the predecessors of modern animation, early photography, and the advent of cinema. With the arrival of digital technology and the internet, we also touch on the evolution of animation and computer graphics both in the entertainment industry and gallery settings. This overview serves as foundational knowledge of art and technology for the subsequent units.

Key Texts:

- James J. Hodge, "Chapter 1 - Out of Hand: Animation, Technics, History." *Sensations of History: Animation & New Media Art*, 2019
- Lev Manovich, "Chapter 1 - What is New Media?" *The Language of New Media*, 2001
- Michael Rush, "Introduction." *New Media in Art* (2nd ed.), 2005

Key Artists, Artwork, and Innovations:

- Eadweard Muybridge, *The Horse in Motion*, 1878
- Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Walking Downstairs*, 1887
- Étienne-Jules Marey, *Man Walking*, 1890
- Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1912

- The Magic Lantern
- Eadweard Muybridge, paper zoopraxiscope disc, 1893
- The Phenakistoscope and The Zoetrope
- Kevin Holmes, *Forever Jumping Frogs*, 2018
- Barrier-Grid Animation or Scanimation
- Louis Daguerre, *Paris Boulevard (or View of the Boulevard du Temple),* 1839
- The Stereograph
- Louis le Prince, *Roundhay Garden Scene*, 1888
- Auguste and Louis Lumière, *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat*, 1896
- Georges Méliès, *A Trip to the Moon*, 1902
- J. Stuart Blackton & Albert E. Smith, *The Humpty Dumpty Circus*, 1908
- Walt Disney, *Steamboat Willie*, 1928
- Walt Disney, The Multiplane Camera
- Technicolor in Film
- Russell Kirsch, first digital photo/scanned image, 1957
- William Higinbotham, *Tennis for Two*, 1958
- Ivan Sutherland and Bob Sproull, *The Sword of Damocles*, 1968
- Don Rawitsch, Bill Heinemann, and Paul Dillenberger, *The Oregon Trail*, 1971
- Atari (company), *Pong*, 1972
- John Whitney and Saul Bass, *Vertigo* opening sequence, 1958
- Steven Lisberger, *Tron*, 1982
- Walt Disney Pictures, *Toy Story*, 1995
  - Walt Disney Pictures, *The Incredibles 2*, 2018
- Mainframe Entertainment (company), *ReBoot*, 1994-2001
- Nam June Paik, *Zen for TV*, 1963
- Nam June Paik, *Participation TV*, 1963
- Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*, 1974
- Nam June Paik, Electronic Superhighway: Continental US, Alaska, Hawaii, 1995
- Refik Anadol, *Interconnected*, 2018

Unit 1 Studio Assignment: At-Home Animation

Overview:

In this assignment, you will be creating a zoetrope influenced by a preexisting motionless, non-digital artwork. The zoetrope will include your own looping sequential illustrations, which should create the illusion of motion when the zoetrope is spun. This could be a walk cycle of a person or animal, a moving object, or something abstract. The illustrations can be made digitally or traditionally, but the final product should be physical.

Concepts:

- Understanding the development of non-digital, early animation practices
- Applying the principles of animation
- Analyzing and re-interpreting pre-existing artwork
- Evaluating your own creative process

Process:

1. Choose a motionless, non-digital artwork to influence your project direction. Your professor must approve your selection.

2. Develop 5 thumbnail sketches of sequential illustrations based on your research.

3. Produce your own set of illustrations (digital or traditional) for a zoetrope, inspired by the motionless artwork that you chose. There should be about 10 individual illustrations to create a successful illusion, so keep these designs simple.

4. Construct a zoetrope with your illustrations by following the instructions of the video linked under "resources," using an online template as a reference. You may print out a template or construct your own, but be mindful of craftsmanship.

5. Write a 150-250 word response about your zoetrope after it is complete. Discuss how your chosen artwork informed your decisions, explain challenges during your creation process, and reflect on the success of your work.

Resources:

- [The 12 Principles of Animation](#)
- [Zoetrope Template Example](#)
- [Zoetrope Instruction Video](#)

Assessment:

1. Completion of requirements:
   a. Zoetrope, complete with roughly 10 simple original illustrations based on a pre-existing motionless, non-digital artwork
   b. A 150-250 written response explaining your process
2. Creativity and risk-taking in the illustration designs
3. Effectiveness of the illusion of looping movement created
4. Craftsmanship of zoetrope and illustrations
5. Analysis of influence and process in the written component
6. Participation in critique

Timespan: 3 weeks

Unit 2 - Authorship & Appropriation

Description:

The discourse of authorship is a longstanding problematic in art history. For centuries, artists have practiced appropriation with varying degrees of cultural acceptance. Marcel Duchamp's notorious readymade sculptures scrutinized notions of authorship, with works like *Fountain* (1917) questioning the traditional role of artist by recontextualizing prefabricated objects. Pop artists like Andy Warhol and photomontage artists like Hannah Hoch would commonly appropriate imagery from mass culture, generating new meaning from preexisting visual archives. Photographers and filmmakers contributed to this same discourse, examining the artistic implications of technological reproduction.

In the context of digital art and new media, the artist/author concept has again been transformed. Rather than generate an entirely novel subject of inquiry, the accessibility of the internet has simply expanded the environment of appropriation. Contentious topics such as generative AI reframe preexisting art history discourses and further complicate the assumptions of authorship. From the earliest photomontages to the latest Photoshop collages, this unit attends to the commonalities of appropriation involved in new media artmaking and its preceding practices, analyzing what questions regarding authorship arise as a result.

Key Texts:

- Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", 1967
- Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", 1969
- Joanna Zylinska, "Chapter 4 - 'Can Computers be Creative?': A Misguided Question." *AI ART: Machine Visions and Warped Dreams*, 2020

Key Artists & Artwork:

- Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917
- Hannah Hoch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, 1919
- Raoul Hausmann, *Dada Siegt*, 1920

- Richard Hamilton, *Just What is it That Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?*, 1956
- Martha Rosler, *Vacation Getaway* from *Bringing the War Home*, 1967-72
- Alan Schechner, *It's the Real Thing (Self-Portrait at Buchenwald)*, 1993
- Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)*, 1993
  - Katsushika Hokusai, *Travelers Caught in a Suggen Breeze at Ejiri*, 1832
- Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953
- Cory Arcangel, *Super Mario Clouds*, 2002
- Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962
- Andy Warhol, *Brillo Boxes*, 1964
- Sherrie Levine, *After Walker Evans* 1981
- Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (You Invest in the Divinity of the Masterpiece)*, 1982
- Shepard Fairey, *Barak Obama "Hope" Poster*, 2008
- Michael Noll, *Computer Composition with Lines*, 1964
  - Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Lines*, 1917
- Gene Kogan, *Experiments with Style Transfer*, 2015
- Obvious (Paris-based arts collective), *Edmond de Belamy*, 2018
- J. Walter Thompson Amsterdam (advertising company) *The Next Rembrandt*, 2016
- Mario Klingemann, *Memories of Passersby I*, 2019
- Mario Klingemann, *Uncanny Mirror*, 2020

Unit 2 Studio Assignment: Steal Like an Artist

Overview:

In this assignment, we will explore the degree of theft that an artist is allowed. You will implement strategies of appropriation to challenge the notion of authorship in your artwork and discover what "theft" works or doesn't work. First, you will select another artist's pre-existing image object and use it in the creation of a new artwork. Then, you will swap image objects with a classmate who will then generate something new from your first appropriation.

Concepts:

- Understanding basic fair use copyright laws and Creative Commons licenses
- Applying strategies of appropriation without copyright infringement
- Evaluating the strategies of appropriation that are most and least effective
- Analyzing and re-interpreting pre-existing artwork

Process:

1. **PART ONE**: Select a pre-existing image object. This could be a historical or contemporary artwork. Your professor must approve your selection.

2. Use that selected image object and create a digital photomontage or illustration that reimagines your selection. You may use other images from the internet, your own photos, text, or other illustrative elements.

   a. Any additional images you use from the internet must fall under a Creative Commons license or fair use. See "resources" for more information.

   b. AI generation is allowed in part one but not part two of this assignment.

3. **PART TWO**: Find a classmate to swap digital photomontages/illustrations with.

4. Now, reimagine your classmate's work. Use their work in a transformative way that generates new meaning or parody. It should not be a one-for-one copy but can use elements directly from the original version. Develop 5 thumbnail sketches during your research. Part two can be completed in any media (another collage or illustration, animation, video, model or sculpture, etc.).

5. Looking at your two completed artworks, write a 150-250 word self-evaluation. Discuss which of your works is more successful and transformative. Evaluate what strategies of appropriation are working and what is too derivative.

    a. The two-part nature of this assignment encourages failure so that we can learn what appropriation does not work or is not transformative enough. Only part two is required to be effectively transformative.

Resources:

- [Creative Commons Licenses](#)
- [Fair Use Information](#)

Assessment:

1. Completion of requirements:
    a. A digital photomontage or illustration that includes appropriation of at least one selected image-object
    b. A second artwork in any media, appropriating the work of another classmate
    c. A 150-250 written self-evaluation on the success of your appropriation
2. Successful transformation of appropriated work in part two
3. Creativity and risk-taking in both artworks
4. Craftsmanship in both artworks
5. Self-evaluation and analysis in the written component
6. Participation in critique

Timespan: 4 weeks

Unit 3 - The Automation of Robotic Artwork

Description:

Extending the discourse of authorship, the increasing automation of artmaking practices continues to question the role of artist. Mechanical and digital tools have made creation faster, easing some of the labor once burdened by humans while challenging traditional notions of authenticity. Automation shifts our perception from human artist to machine, triggering discomfort and leading to absurdisms about "the end of art."

The relationship between mechanics and artwork is no recent development, revealing the historic precedence of machines in the art world. Photography saw the advent of the camera, once thought to be a tool that does all the work for the user. Printmaking similarly demonstrates a well-established history of increasing automatic reproduction. Jean Tinguely experimented with machine-made artwork via his kinetic sculptures coined "meta-matics" in the 1950s and 60s. In the digital age, programs such as Adobe Photoshop further automate and digitize both the process of creation and its consumption. AI-generated artwork and the digitization of this "robotic art" somehow complicate our perception of machines as artists, obscuring where the act of creation lies behind the intangibility of a screen.

Key Texts:

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", 1935
- Joanna Zylinska, "Chapter 5 - Artists, Robots, and 'Fun'." *AI ART: Machine Visions and Warped Dreams*, 2020

Key Artists, Artwork, & Innovations:

- The Printing Press
- Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, *View from the Window at Le Gras*, 1827
- Kodak, *You Press the Button, We Do the Rest* advertisement, 1888
- Honoré Daumier, *Nadar Elevating Photography to the Height of an Art*, 1862
- Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, *Anatomy of an AI System*, 2018

- Nicolas Schöffer, *CYSP I*, 1956
- Jean Tinguely, *Meta-matic no. 10*, 1959
- Jean Tinguely, *Meta-matic no. 17*, 1959
- André Masson, *Automatic Drawing*, 1924.
- Harold Cohen, *AARON: Untitled*, 1977
- Harold Cohen, *AARON: KCAT*, 2001
- So Kanno and Takahiro Yamaguchi, *Senseless Drawing Bot*, 2011
- Patrick Tresset, *Human Study #2, La Vanité*, 2014
- Roman Verostko, *Algorithmic Poetry*, 2010
- Sougwen Chung, *MEMORY (Drawing Operations Unit Generation 2)*, 2017
- Leonel Moura, first drawings with the Ant Algorithm, 2001
- Leonel Moura, *Bebot* series, 2017
- Jean-Pierre Hébert, *Roughness 4*, 1988
- Jean -Pierre Hébert, *Sand Installations*, 1998-2019
- Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, *Can't Help Myself*, 2016-2019
- Stelarc, *Body on a Robot Arm*, 2015
- Stelarc, *Reclining Stickman*, 2020

Unit 3 Studio Assignment: Becoming Android Artists

Overview:

In this exercise, groups of three will create a short video that explores the concept of mechanical, automated artwork through performative play. At least one of you will act as a robot, or use a tool of automation, and engage in "automatic" artmaking. Whatever you choose to use or portray should include some sort of repetitive action that generates visual artwork. The genre of video can vary, ranging from conceptual, surreal, parody, mockumentary, advertisement, etc.

Concepts:

- Understanding the discourse of automation and robotics in new media
- Analyzing the sociocultural implications of the relationship between art and technology
- Applying knowledge of new media discourse through play/performance

Process:

1. Form groups of 3 and brainstorm video concepts. Create a script and/or storyboard during your research and development.

2. Film a 1-3 minute video exploring the concept of automotive artwork, demonstrating some commentary or insight about the topic. Either have someone act as a robot or have the actor use a tool of automation to generate art.

   a. Your "robot" or tool should demonstrate repetition and create some sort of visual artwork. The use of AI generation is allowed for this assignment per approval.

3. Edit the video for clarity. Editing choices should match your narrative concept. Include any credits, titles, and audio necessary.

Assessment:

1. Completion of requirements:
   a. 1-3 minute video exploring the concept of automotive artwork
2. Creativity and risk-taking in concept
3. Craftsmanship in filming and editing

4. Clarity and thoughtfulness of narrative and concept

5. Participation in critique

Timespan: 2.5 weeks

Unit 4 - The Desire for Mimesis: Fearing & Fetishizing Newness

Description:

The desire to perfectly replicate reality is not a craving unique to the contemporary age. When photography was first popularized, many assumed that the camera achieved that very goal—to capture reality in its entire truth. But in actuality, the deliberate staging, framing, and editing of photos have always imbued image creation with an inherent bias—factors further complicated by the manipulation capabilities of digital tools. The evolution of photomontage has demonstrated an increasing preference for the erasure of edges. Through dream-like imagery, Surrealism prefers a similar "seamless" approach. Nowadays, with the creation of AI-generated images and videos, deep fakes, and virtual reality technology, the borders of the frame (or screen) are more blurred than ever.

The ability of modern technology to fabricate a convincing visual reality is something that people both fear and fetishize. Consumers yearn for these advancements while simultaneously dreading their dystopian consequences. To mitigate these fears, we often rely on the verbal and visual language of pre-existing concepts. We call collections of digital information "files" that are opened on "windows" and still save things using a floppy disc icon. We follow pre-established norms of communication—things that are familiar to ease the tension of the things that are not—and continue to intertwine the relationship between technology and art.

Key Texts:

- Thomas A. Carlson, "Facial Recognition." *Image: Three Inquiries in Technology and Imagination*, 2021
- Jonathan Crary, "Chapter 1 - Modernity and the Problem of the Observer." *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, 1992
- Lev Manovich, "Chapter 2 - The Interface." *The Language of New Media*, 2001

Key Artists & Artwork:

- William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Open Door*, 1844

- Henry Peach Robinson, *Fading Away*, 1858
- David Hockney, *Pearblossom Hwy., 11 - 18th April 1986, #2*, 1986
- Erik Johansson, *Full Moon Service*, 2017
- Erik Johansson, *Road Closed Unexpectedly*, 2019
- Erik Johansson, *Dreaming of Snow*, 2023
- Gregory Crewdson, *Untitled (Ophelia)* plate 48 from *Twilight* series, 2001
  - John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1852
- Ori Gersht, *Big Bang*, 2006
- Umberto Boccioni, *The City Rises*, 1910
- Andre Masson, *The Metamorphosis of the Lovers*, 1938
- Carolyn Janssen, *Prescience*
- Gene Kogan, *Neural Synthesis*, 2017
- Mike Tyka, *Portraits of Imaginary People*, 2017
- Refik Anadol, *Unsupervised* from *Machine Hallucinations* series, 2022
- Rene Magritte, *The Human Condition*, 1933
- Simulation Games (The Sims)
- The Louvre and VIVE Arts (company), *Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass*, 2020
- The Dali Museum and Goodby Silverstein & Partners (company), *Dali Lives*, 2020
- The Wachowskis, *The Matrix*, 1999
- Trevor Paglen, *It Began as a Military Experiment*, 2017
- Trevor Paglen, *Behold These Glorious Times!*, 2017
- Open AI (company), *Tokyo Walk*, 2024

Unit 4 Studio Assignment: Fear & Familiarity

Overview:

In this assignment, you will engage with both the fearing and fetishizing of new media technology. You will generate two images: one exploring fear and one exploring familiarity or fetish. Both images must be the same size and incorporate similar imagery. They should be thought of as a unified diptych, complimenting each other while depicting two conflicting perspectives on the same subject.

Concepts:

- Understanding the sociocultural implications of new media technology
- Analyzing pre-existing visual trends and language
- Applying the elements and principles of design to create two unified compositions

Process:

1. Select a concept related to technology that people may both fear and find comfort in.

2. Develop 5 thumbnail sketches of your diptych based on your research (10 total images).

3. Create one image that explores FEAR related to your concept of technology. This could relate to worries about the future, health or environmental impacts, etc.

4. Create one image that explores FAMILIARITY or FETISH related to your concept of technology. This could relate to the exciting aspects of technology, aspects we may find comforting or nostalgic, etc.

    a. Both images should demonstrate visual unity and be the same size.

    b. At least one digital component should be present in your diptych.

Assessment:

1. Completion of requirements:

    a. One image that explores FEAR related to your concept of technology

      b. One image that explores FAMILIARITY or FETISH related to your concept of technology

2. Creativity and risk-taking in concept
3. Craftsmanship in both images
4. Unity between both images
5. Participation in critique

Timespan: 3.5 weeks

Unit 5 - The Relationship Between Digital Media & Non-Digital Fine Arts

Description:

The popularization of online culture has transformed the environment of artistic creation and consumption, separate from the traditional spaces of museums and galleries. The rise of Net Art in the early days of the internet challenged norms of visual presentation, introducing websites themselves as artwork and forming the precedent for social media-based artists today. While reliance on gallery traditions is certainly still apparent, there is also a disconnect found between digital art, museums, and educational settings.

Despite the change in environment, both digital and non-digital arts continue to share an intimate relationship with commercial culture, consumerism, and entertainment. What was once driven by the patronage of wealthy middle-class merchants is now often driven by the endless exchange of online commissions. NFTs have attempted to establish a more traditional, capitalistic approach to selling digital art and formalizing digital ownership but have since declined in popularity and value.

With this increasing digitization of artwork, the worry of preservation is also apparent. The internet is thought by many to be a place of permanence. But in other ways, the constantly evolving formats of digital technology leave much documentation obsolete and lost to time, as evidenced by media like tapes and CDs. This flawed idea of permanence questions the longevity of digital archives as opposed to tangible, non-digital records.

Key Texts:

- Clea Bourne, "Chapter 6 - The Future of Media Work: Our Platformised Future." *The Future of Media*, 2022
- Lisa Gitelman, "Chapter 4 - New Media </Body>." *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture*, 2008

Key Artists & Artwork:

- Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434

- Pierre Bonnard, *France-Champagne*, 1891
- Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Aristide Bruant*, 1893
- Salvador Dali, "Salvador Dali's View on Television" *TV Guide* cover, 1968
- Lois van Baarle ("Loish"), *Popcorn*, 2023
- Yuga Labs, *Bored Apes*, 2021
- Mike Winkelmann (Beeple), *EVERYDAYS: THE FIRST 5000 DAYS*, 2021
- Injective Protocol (company), *Burnt Banksy*, 2021
- Invitations to the *Computer-Generated Pictures* Exhibition, 1965
- Georg Nees, *Polygon of 23 Vertices (23-Ecke)*, 1964
- Leon Harmon and Ken Knowlton, *Computer Nude (Studies in Perception I)*, 1967
- Mark Amerika, *GRAMMATRON*, 1997
- JODI, *wwwwwwww.jodi.org*
- Vuk Ćosić, *Psycho* from *ASCII History of Moving Images* series, 1999
- Vuk Ćosić, *Venus* and *Warhol* from *History of Art for Airports* series, 1999
- Vuk Ćosić, *File Extinguisher,* 1998
- Rafaël Rozendaal, *fatal to the flesh .com*, 2004
- Rafaël Rozendaal, *le duchamp .com*, 2008
- Rafaël Rozendaal, *Abstract Browsing 17 03 05*, 2017
- John F. Simon, *Every Icon*, 1997
- Willaim Basinski, *The Disintegration Loops*, 2002-2003
- Willaim Basinski, *On Time Out of Time*, 2019

Unit 5 Studio Assignment: New Media Exhibition Proposal

Overview:

In this assignment, you will assume the role of museum curator and propose an exhibition of new media artwork. You will select the artwork you want to include in your show, write a curatorial statement, and pitch details of the exhibition including venue and method of presentation. The artwork you select should all follow a cohesive theme, which you will explain and support in your written statement.

Concepts:

- Understanding recurring themes of discourse in new media
- Analyzing new media artwork by comparing historical and contemporary work
- Evaluating traditional and digital modes of artwork presentation
- Applying your knowledge of new media through the curation of artwork

Process:

1. Select a theme you have observed during this seminar in new media artwork. If this theme is based on a specific course unit, do not simply include all work from that unit.

2. Create a slideshow presentation of 20-25 artworks that relate to your chosen theme.

   a. 5-10 of these artworks should not have been discussed in class. Your professor must approve your selection of outside artwork. The rest of the artworks should be sourced from class, but ensure they are not all from the same unit.

   b. Not all your artwork must be visual art. You can also include examples of music/audio, architecture, books/written work, performance, etc.

   c. Include a variety of historical and contemporary examples.

3. On your first slide, create an appropriate title for your exhibition

4. After your title slide, create a 500-800 word curatorial statement to explain your theme. Provide reasons as to why you chose the artwork that you chose. Discuss at what venue your exhibition will be held and what methods of presentation you will implement. This can be a real or hypothetical place.

Assessment:

1. Completion of slideshow requirements:
   a. Exhibition title and curator information
   b. 20-25 themed artworks, of which 5-10 are sourced from outside of class
   c. A 500-800 word curatorial statement that explains your theme and choices
2. Unity and clarity of theme
3. Clarity and thoughtfulness of written statement

Timespan: 3 weeks

Histories of New Media Bibliography

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." 1967.

Beiguelman, Giselle, Melody Devries, Winnie Soon, and Magdalena Tyzlik-Carver. *Boundary Images*. The University of Minnesota Press, 2023.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility." 1935.

Bourne, Clea. "Chapter 6 - The Future of Media Work: Our Platformised Future." *The Future of Media*. Goldsmiths Press, 2022.

Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. MIT Press, 1992.

Gitelman, Lisa. *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture*. The MIT Press, 2008.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" French Philosophical Society, 22 Feb. 1969. Lecture.

Hodge, James J. *Sensations of History: Animation and New Media Art*. University of Minnesota Press, 2019.

Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*. The MIT Press, 2001.

Parikka, Jussi. *Operational Images: From the Visual to the Invisual*. University of Minnesota Press, 2023.

Rush, Michael. *New Media in Art (World of Art)*. 2nd ed, Thames & Hudson, 2005.

Taylor, Mark C., Mary-Jane Rubenstein, and Thomas A. Carlson. *Image: Three Inquiries in Technology and Imagination*. The University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Virilio, Paul. *The Vision Machine*. Indiana University Press, 1994.

Zylinska, Joanna. *AI ART: Machine Visions and Warped Dreams*. Open Humanities Press, 2020.

HISTORIES OF NEW MEDIA

Unit 1 - Art & Technology: Defining New Media

Art & Technology: Defining New Media

Art has always existed in a dialogic relationship with the history of science. Both art and technology share the Greek root technē that evinces a mode of production involving skill and knowledge, a kind of hands-on problem-solving. The emerging field of "new media" or "digital arts" encompasses disciplines such as animation, video art and film, sound art, digital photography, robotics and interactive platforms like websites, VR, and gaming. Though implied to be "new," this discourse—the statements surrounding digital art practice and the artifacts that result—is anything but novel. Techno-scientific events are already represented in language and images that predate them.

This unit explores a brief overview of some of the technological developments that have contributed to the emergence of contemporary new media. This includes the predecessors of modern animation, early photography, and the advent of cinema. With the arrival of digital technology and the internet, we also touch on the evolution of animation and computer graphics both in the entertainment industry and gallery settings. This overview serves as foundational knowledge of art and technology for the subsequent units.

Eadweard Muybridge, *The Horse in Motion*, 1878
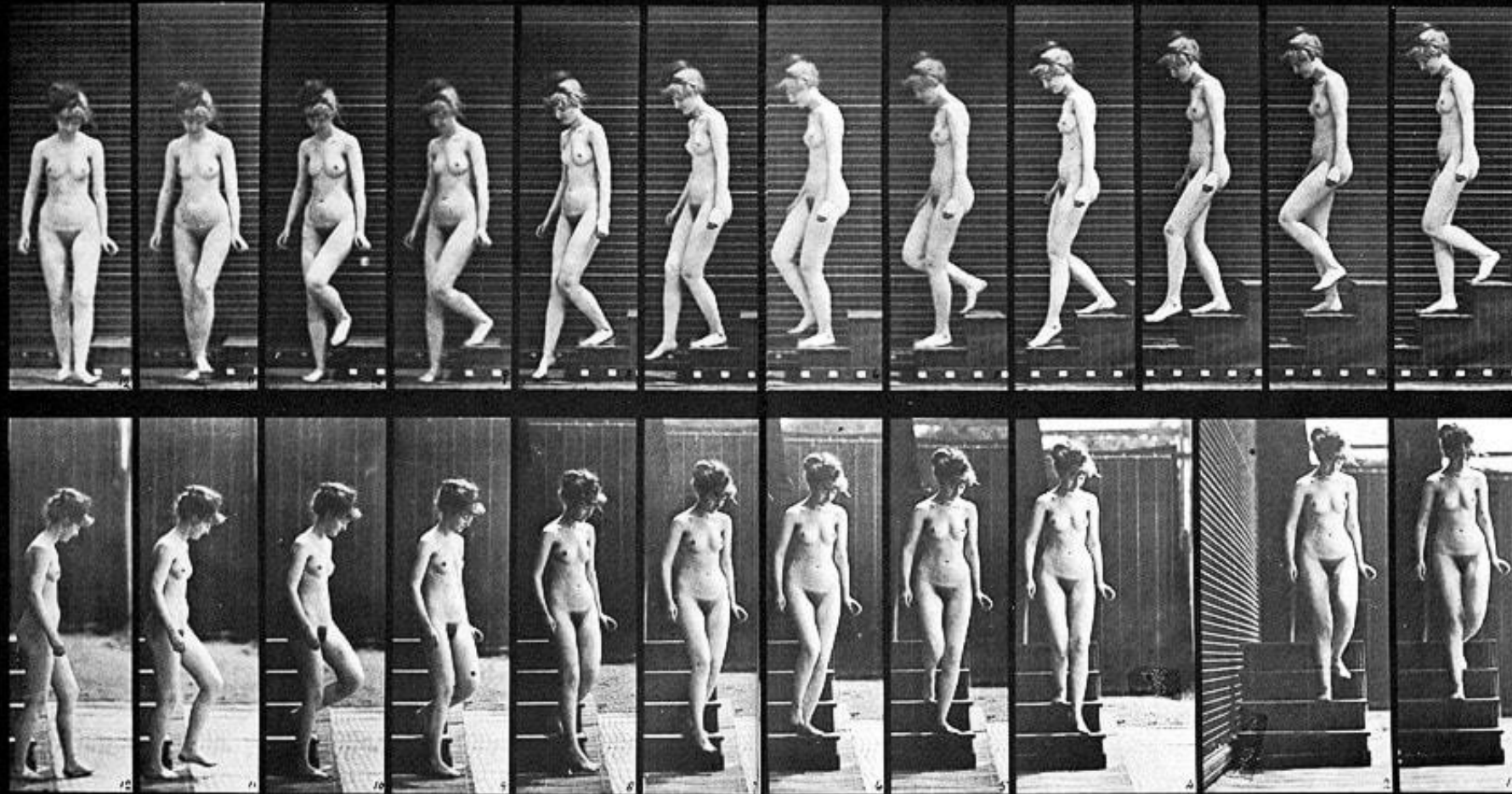
Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Walking Downstairs*, 1887
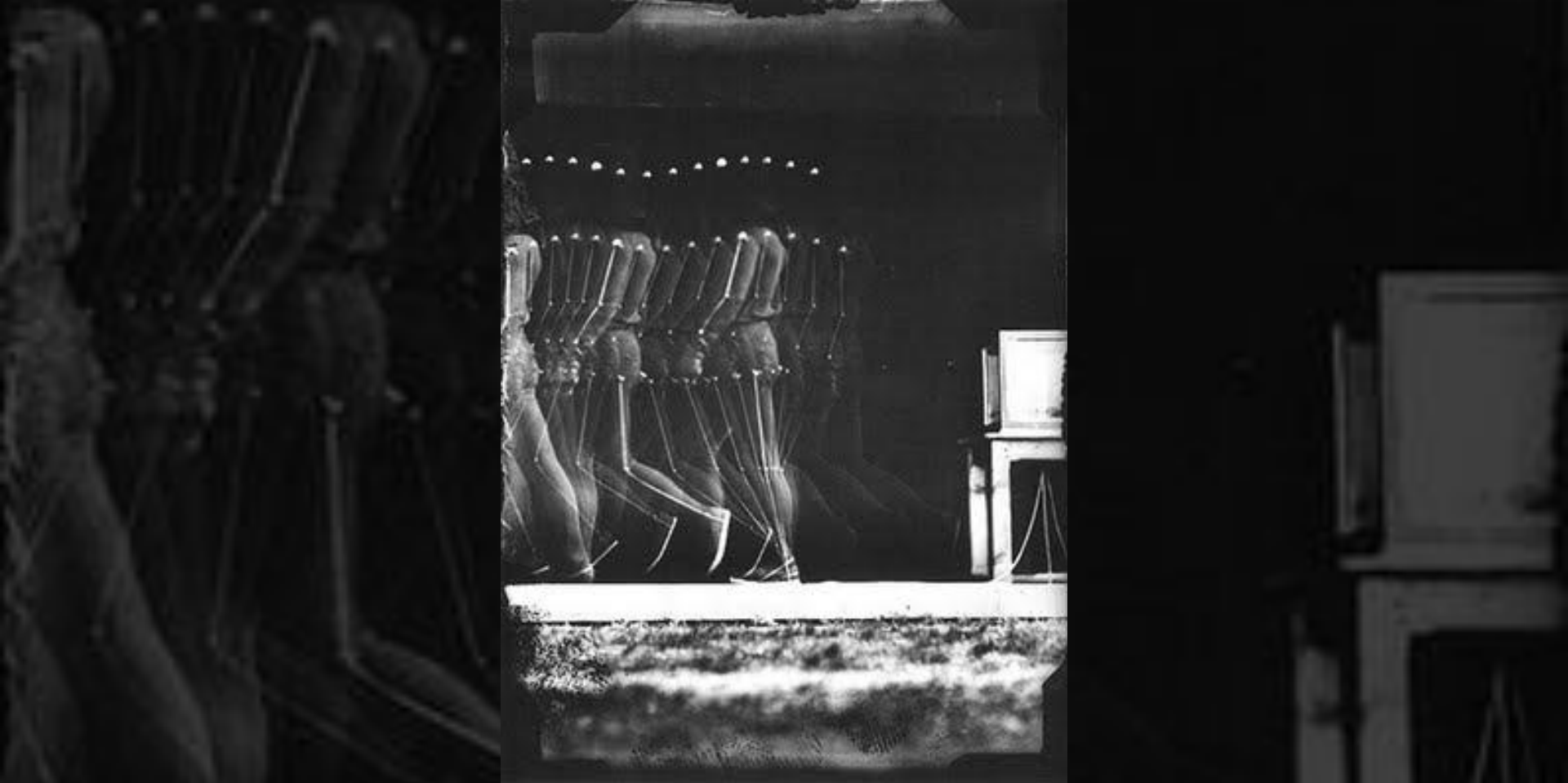
Étienne-Jules Marey, *Man Walking*, 1890
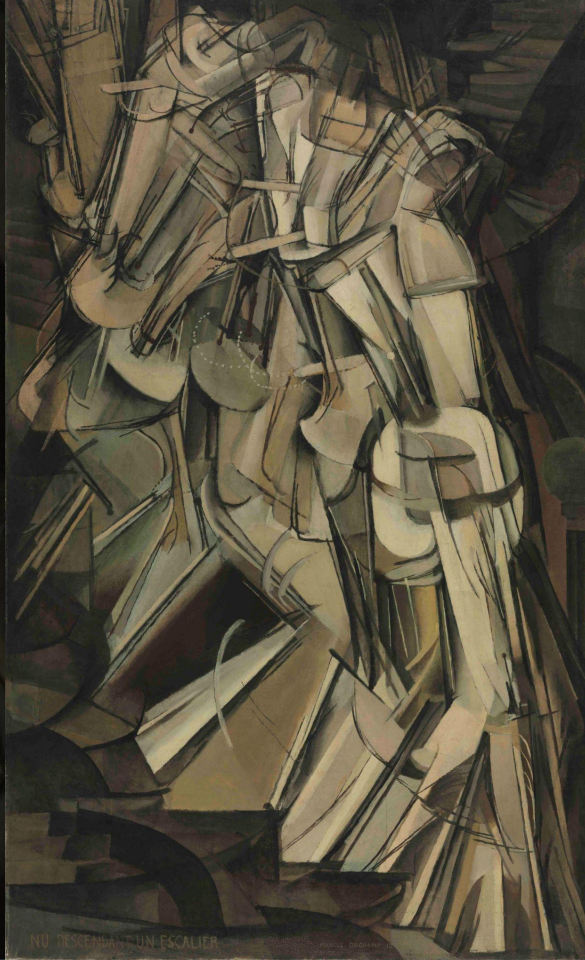
Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912
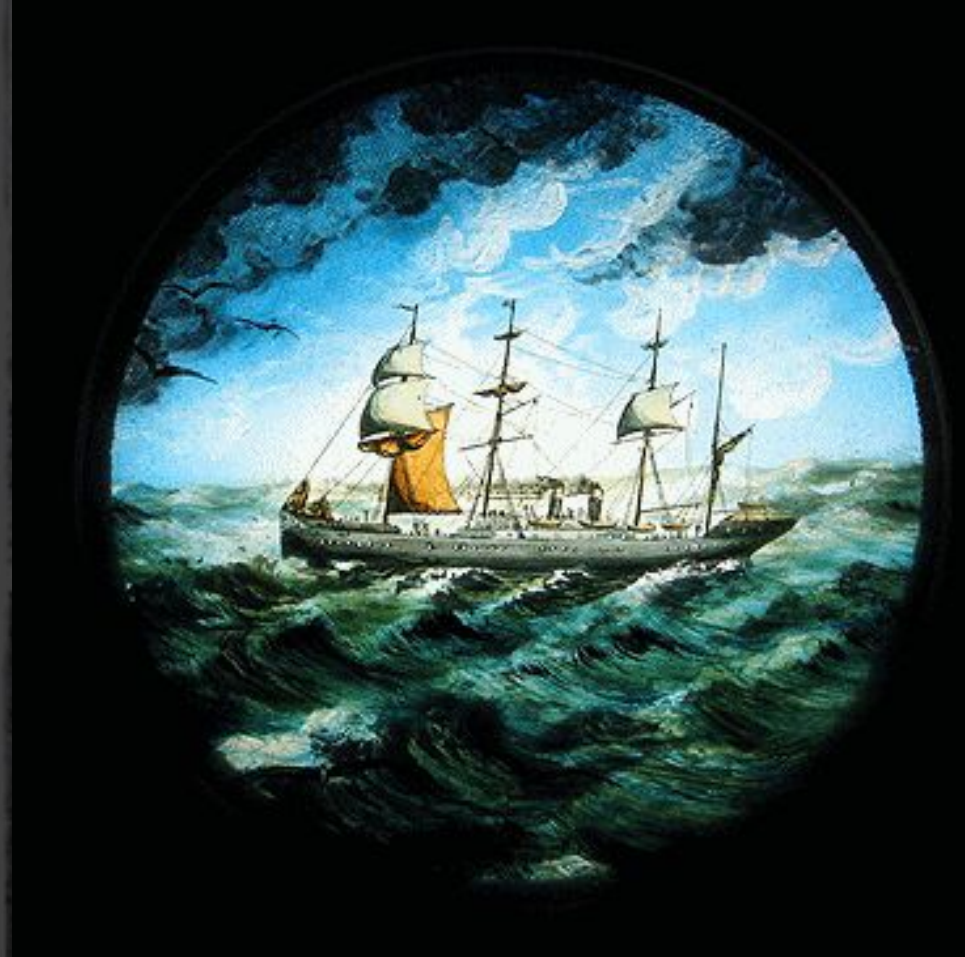
The Magic Lantern

Eadweard Muybridge, paper zoopraxiscope disc, 1893

The Zoetrope

Kevin Holmes, *Forever Jumping Frogs*, 2018
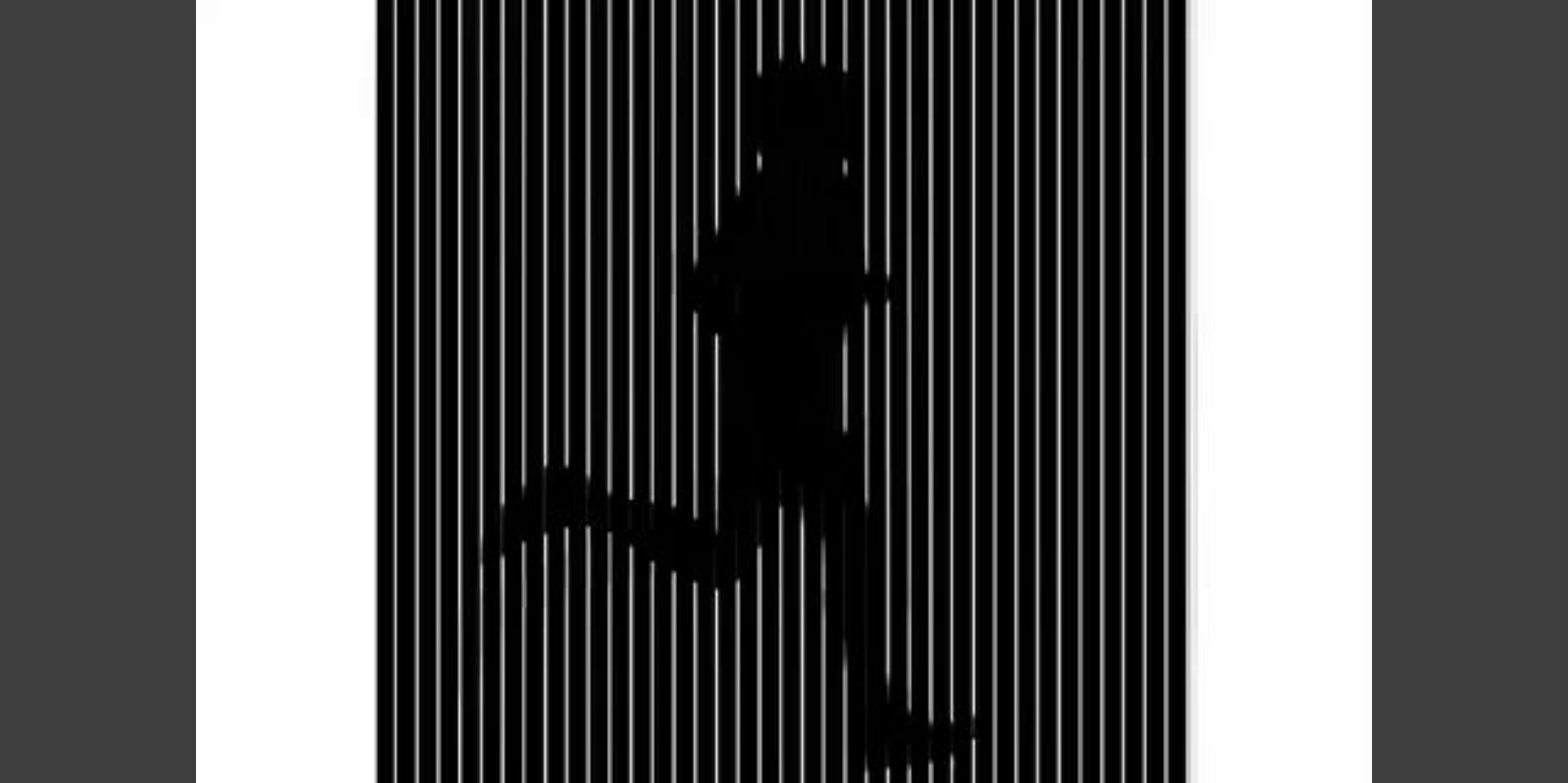
Barrier-Grid Animation or Scanimation

Louis Daguerre, *Paris Boulevard (or View of the Boulevard du Temple)*, 1839
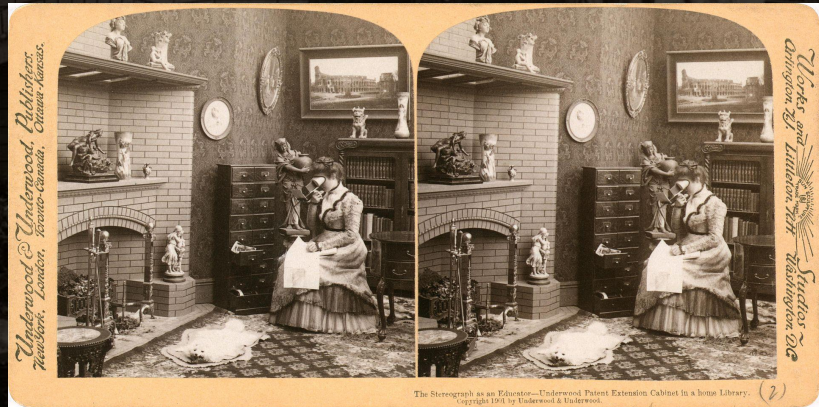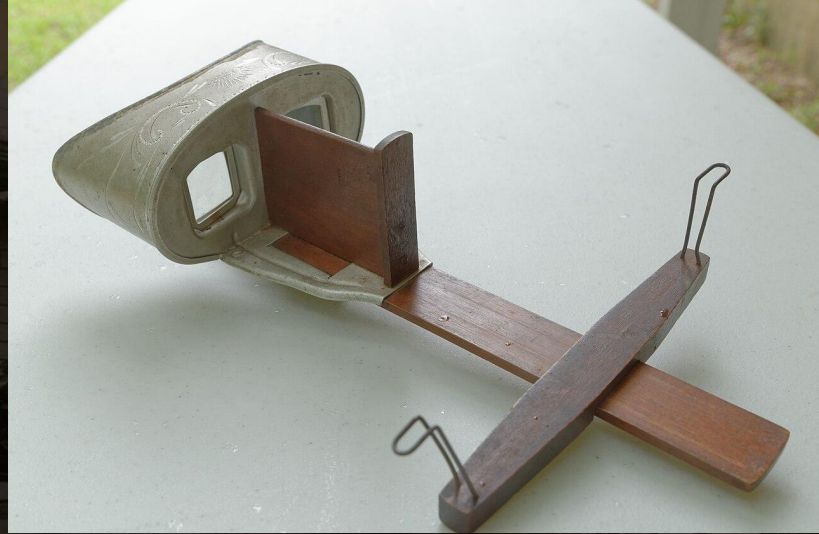
The Stereoscope

"The history of technology is also the history of the human mind."

—James J. Hodge, *Sensations of History: Animation & New Media Art*

Louis le Prince, *Roundhay Garden Scene*, 1888

Auguste and Louis Lumière, *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat*, 1896

Georges Méliès, *A Trip to the Moon*, 1902

J. Stuart Blackton & Albert E. Smith, *The Humpty Dumpty Circus*, 1908

Walt Disney, *Steamboat Willie*, 1928

Walt Disney, The Multiplane Camera

Technicolor in Film

Russell Kirsch, first digital photo/scanned image, 1957

William Higinbotham, *Tennis for Two*, 1958

Ivan Sutherland and Bob Sproull, *The Sword of Damocles*, 1968

Don Rawitsch, Bill Heinemann, and Paul Dillenberger, *The Oregon Trail*, 1971

Atari (company), *Pong*, 1972

John Whitney and Saul Bass, *Vertigo* opening sequence, 1958

Steven Lisberger, *Tron*, 1982

Mainframe Entertainment, *ReBoot*, 1994-2001

Walt Disney Pictures, *Toy Story*, 1995

Walt Disney Pictures, *The Incredibles 2*, 2018

Nam June Paik, *Zen for TV*, 1963

"Someday artists will work with capacitors, resistors, and semiconductors as they work today with brushes, violins, and junk."

—Nam June Paik (1965)

Nam June Paik, *Participation TV*, 1963
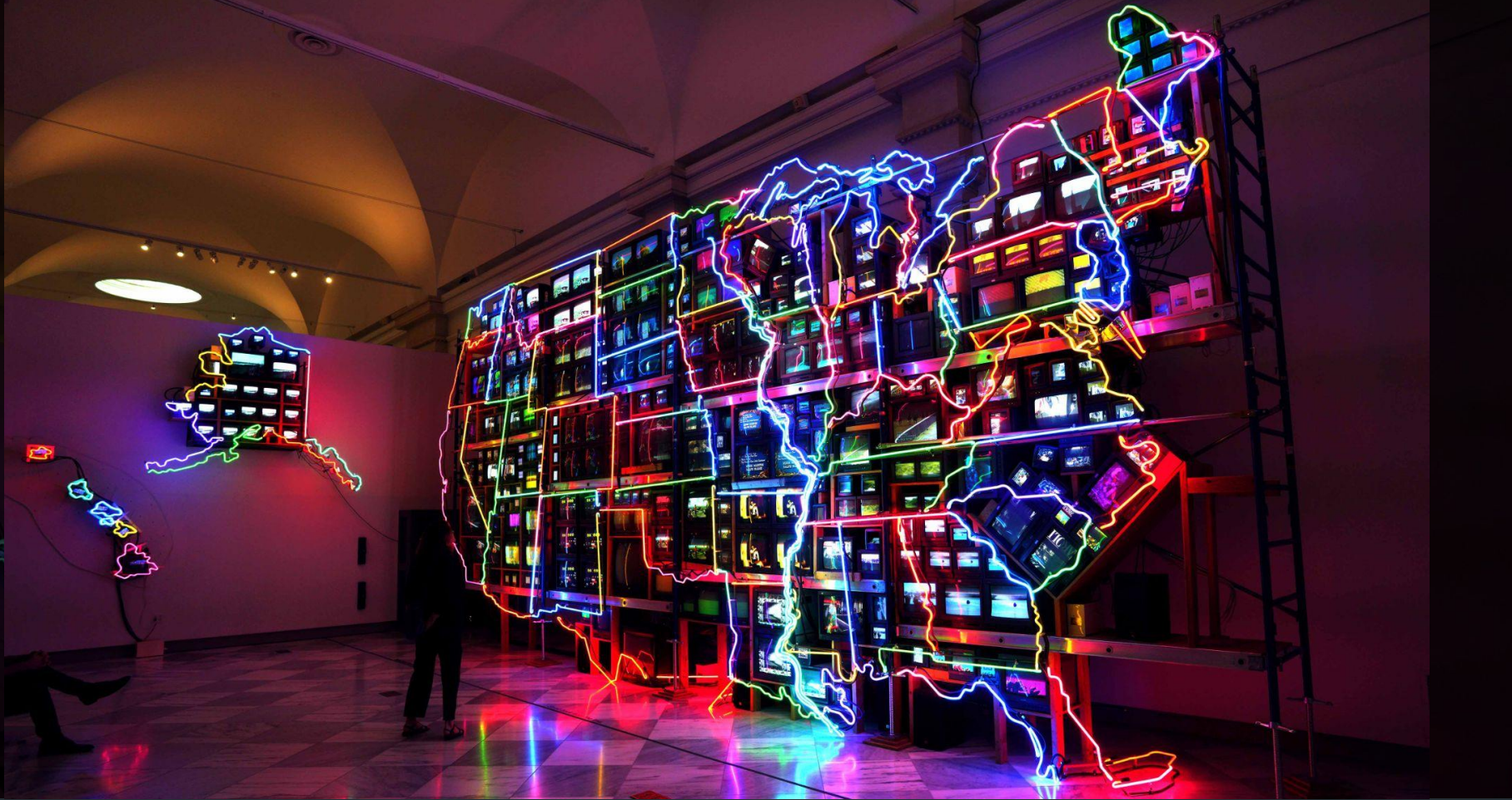
Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*, 1974

Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway: Continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii*, 1995

Refik Anadol, *Interconnected*, 2018

📝 Unit 1 Assignment

AT-HOME ANIMATION: In this assignment, you will be creating a zoetrope influenced by a preexisting motionless, non-digital artwork. The zoetrope will include your own looping sequential illustrations, which should create the illusion of motion when the zoetrope is spun. This could be a walk cycle of a person or animal, a moving object, or something abstract. The illustrations can be made digitally or traditionally, but the final product should be physical.

*See syllabus for more details.

HISTORIES OF NEW MEDIA

Unit 2 - Authorship & Appropriation

Authorship & Appropriation

The discourse of authorship is a longstanding problematic in art history. For centuries, artists have practiced appropriation with varying degrees of cultural acceptance. Marcel Duchamp's notorious readymade sculptures scrutinized notions of authorship, with works like Fountain (1917) questioning the traditional role of artist by recontextualizing prefabricated objects. Pop artists like Andy Warhol and photomontage artists like Hannah Hoch would commonly appropriate imagery from mass culture, generating new meaning from preexisting visual archives. Photographers and filmmakers contributed to this same discourse, examining the artistic implications of technological reproduction.

In the context of digital art and new media, the artist/author concept has again been transformed. Rather than generate an entirely novel subject of inquiry, the accessibility of the internet has simply expanded the environment of appropriation. Contentious topics such as generative AI reframe preexisting art history discourses and further complicate the assumptions of authorship. From the earliest photomontages to the latest Photoshop collages, this unit attends to the commonalities of appropriation involved in new media artmaking and its preceding practices, analyzing what questions regarding authorship arise as a result.

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917

Hannah Hoch, *Cut with a Kitchen Knife*, 1919
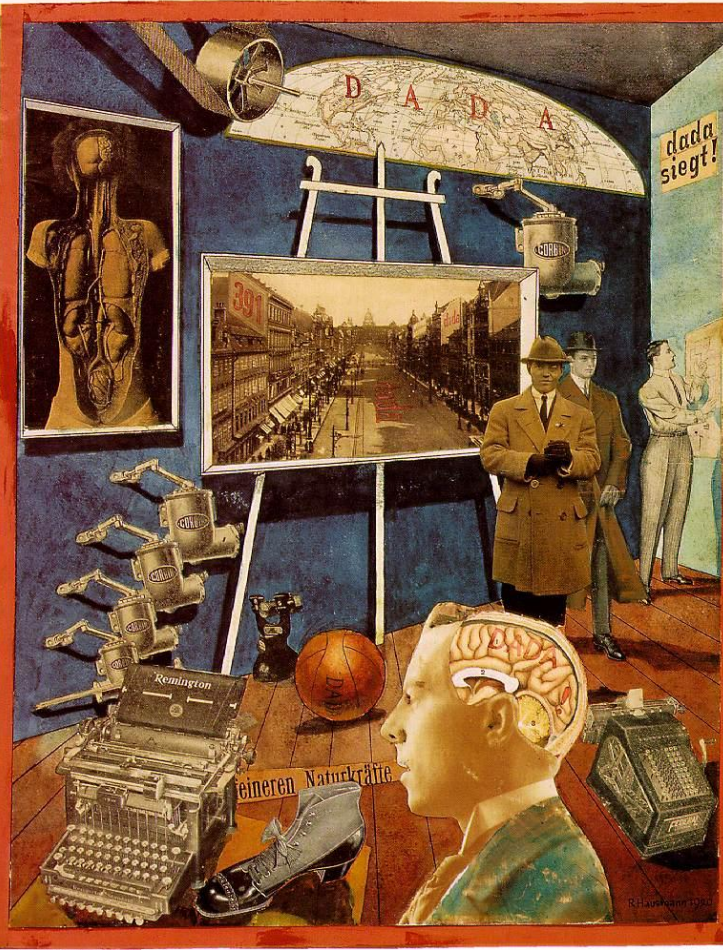
Raoul Hausmann, *Dada Siegt*, 1920

Richard Hamilton, *Just What is it That Makes Today's Homes so Different, So Appealing?*, 1956

Martha Rosler, *Vacation Getaway* from *Bringing the War Home* series, 1967-72

Alan Schechner, *It's the Real Thing (Self-Portrait at Buchenwald)*, 1993

Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)*, 1993
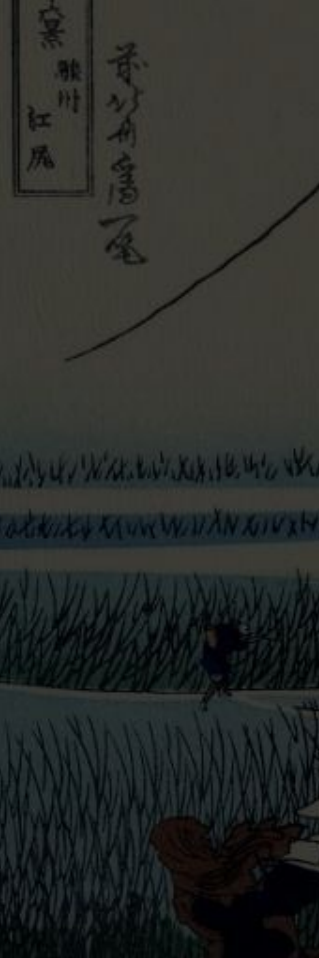
Katsushika Hokusai, *Travelers Caught in a Sudden Breeze at Ejiri*, 1832

Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953

Cory Arcangel, *Super Mario Clouds*, 2002

Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962

Andy Warhol, *Brillo Boxes*, 1964
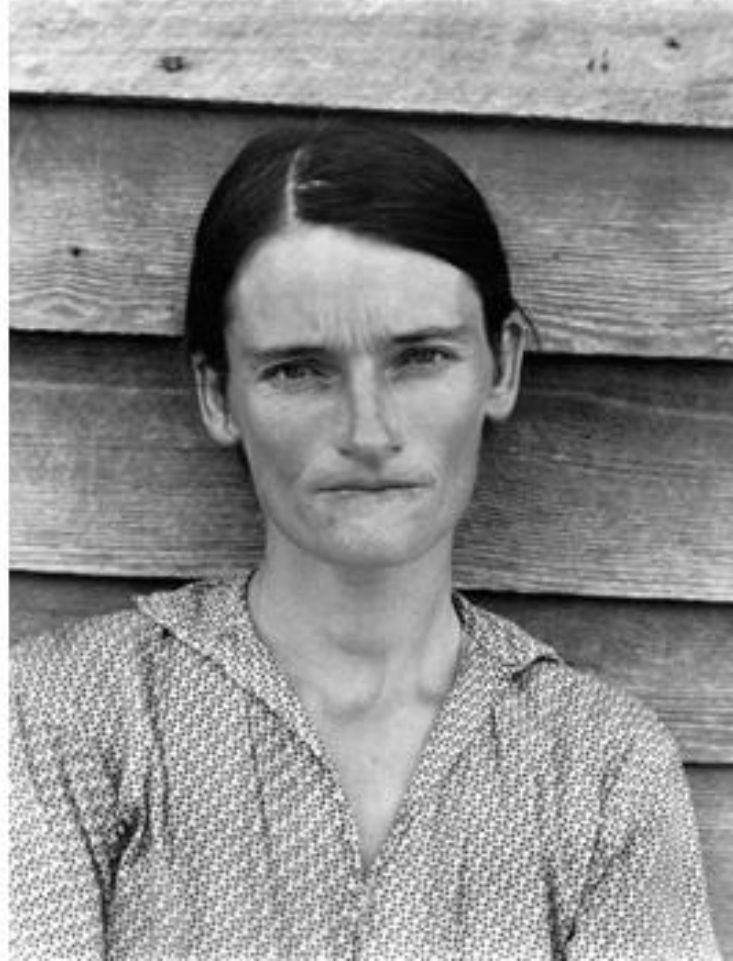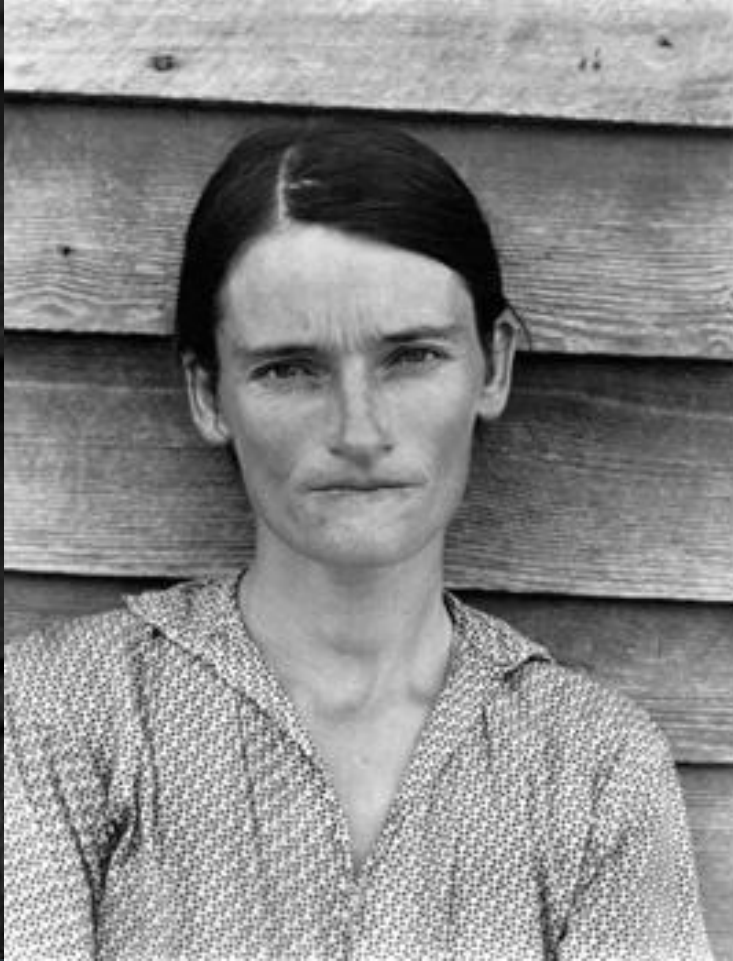
Sherrie Levine, *After Walker Evans*, 1981 [right]

"As a result, we must entirely reverse the traditional idea of the author. We are accustomed, as we have seen earlier, to saying that the author is the genial creator of a work in which he deposits, with infinite wealth and generosity, an inexhaustible world of significations. We are used to thinking that the author is so different from all other men, and so transcendent with regard to all languages that, as soon as he speaks, meaning begins to proliferate, to proliferate indefinitely."

—Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?"
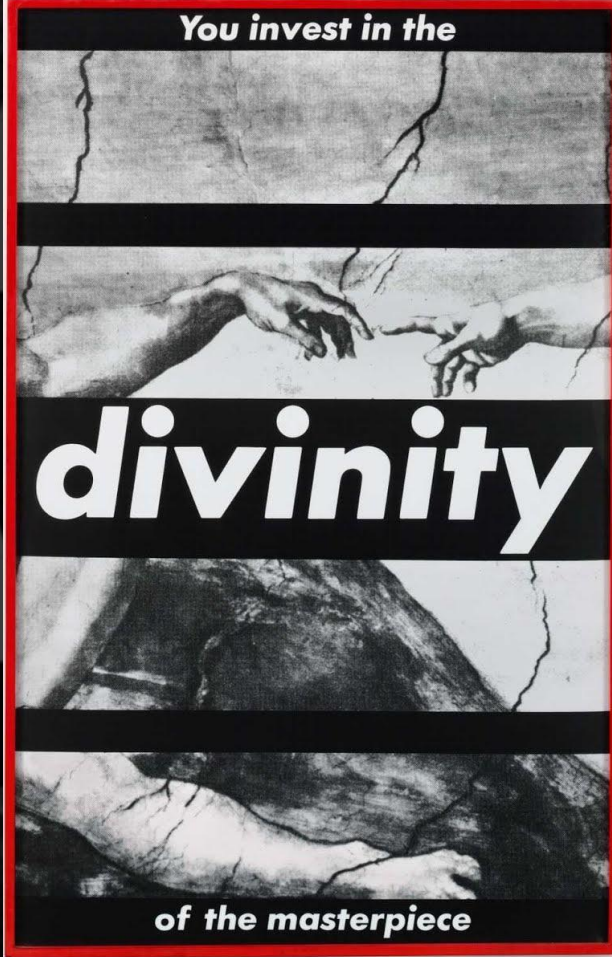
Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (You Invest in the Divinity of the Masterpiece)*, 1982

Shepard Fairey, *Barack Obama "Hope" Poster*, 2008

Michael Noll, *Computer Composition with Lines*, 1964
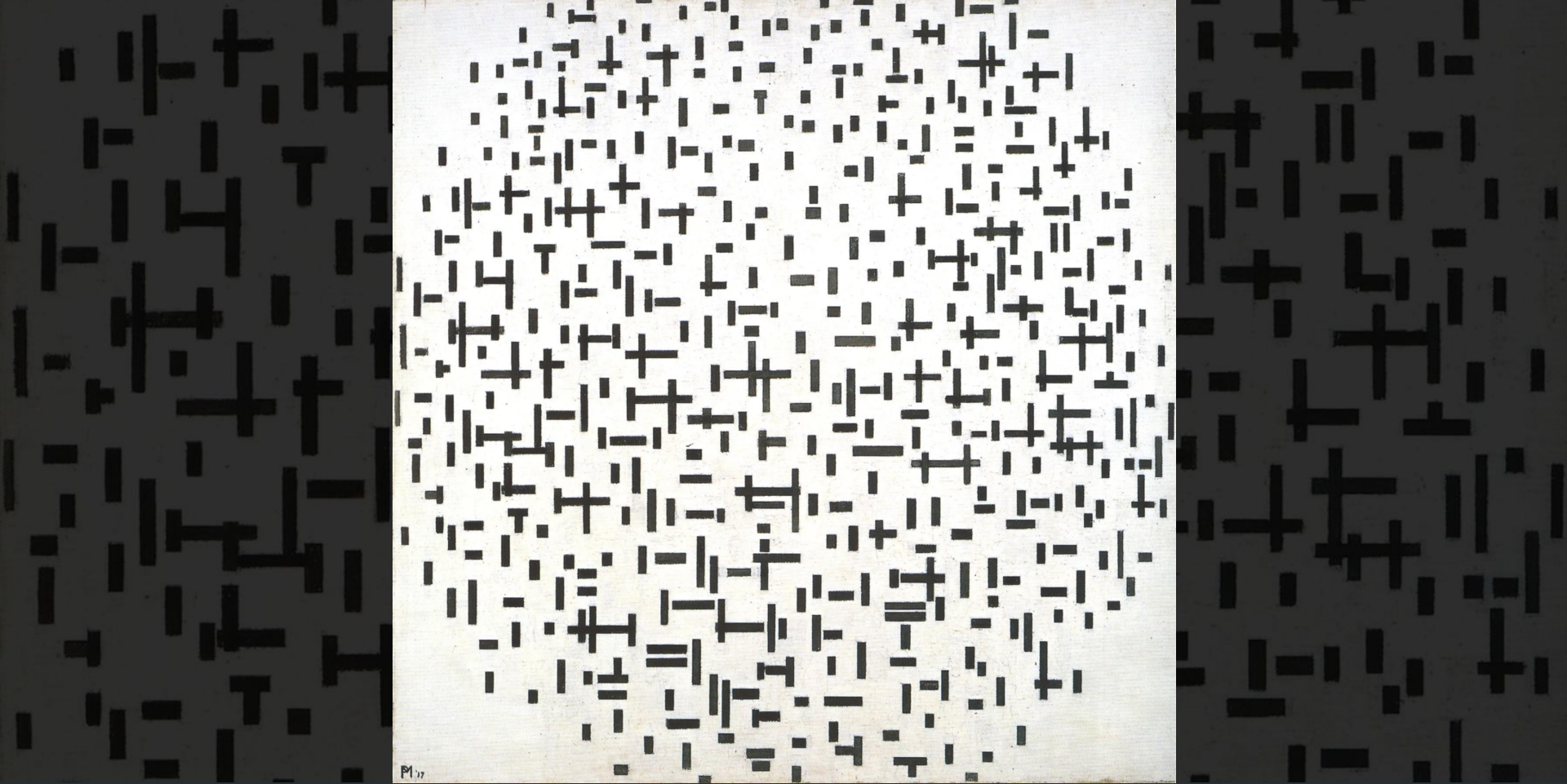
Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Lines*, 1917
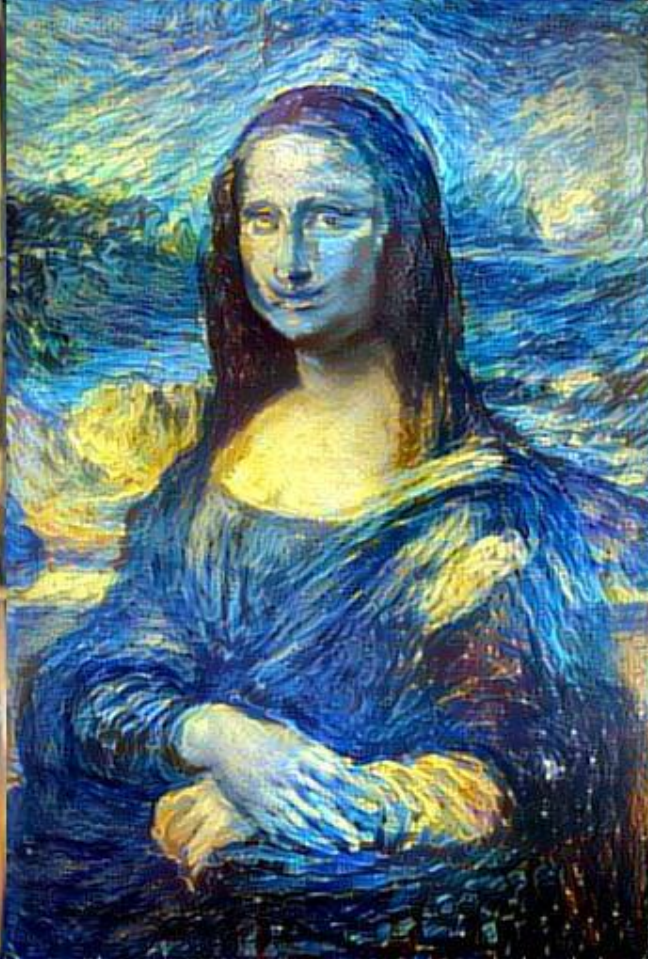
Gene Kogan, *Experiments with Style Transfer*, 2015

Gene Kogan, *Experiments with Style Transfer*, 2015
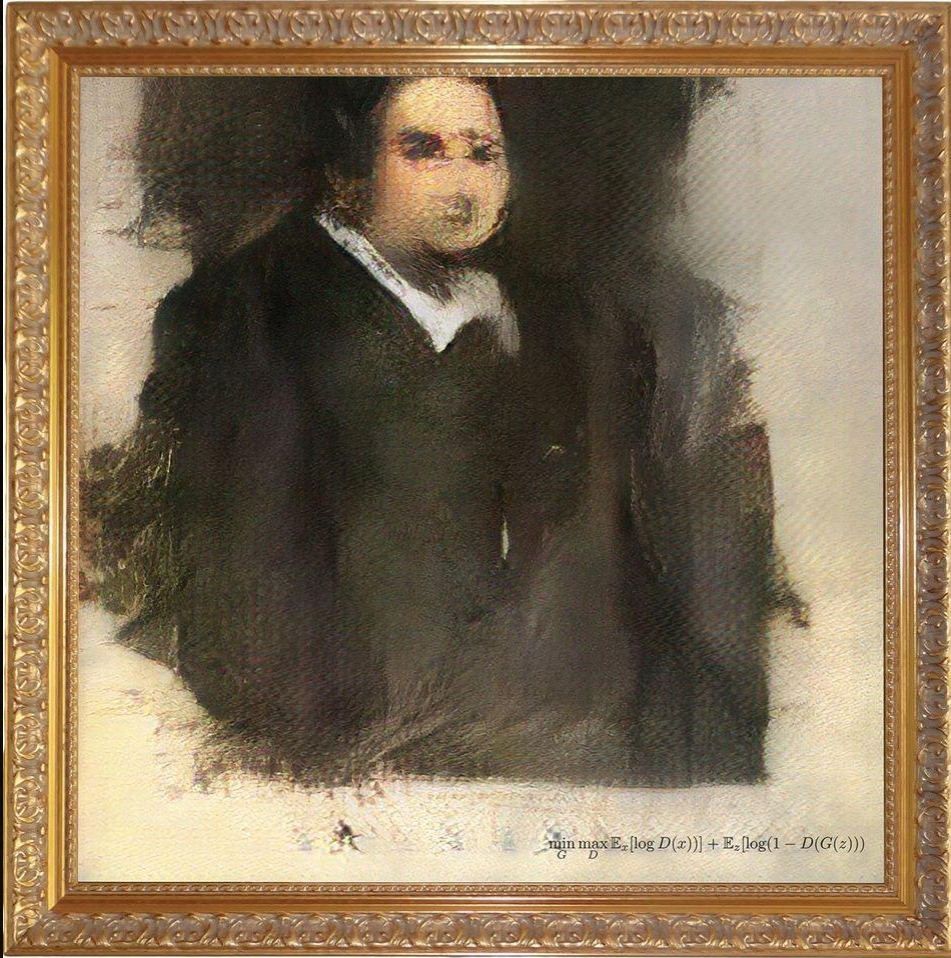
Obvious (Art Collective), *Edmond de Belamy*, 2018

J. Walter Thompson Amsterdam (Advertising Company), *The Next Rembrandt*, 2016

"If it is so easy to break down the style of some of the world's most original composers into computer code, that means some of the best human artists are more machine-like than we would like to think."

—New Scientist, taken from Joanna Zylinska's *AI Art: Machine visions and Warped Dreams*

Mario Klingemann, *Memories of Passersby I*, 2019

Mario Klingemann, *Uncanny Mirror*, 2020

📝 Unit 2 Assignment

STEAL LIKE AN ARTIST: In this assignment, we will explore the degree of theft that an artist is allowed. You will implement strategies of appropriation to challenge the notion of authorship in your artwork and discover what "theft" works or doesn't work. First, you will select another artist's pre-existing image object and use it in the creation of a new artwork. Then, you will swap image objects with a classmate who will then generate something new from your first appropriation.

*See syllabus for more details.

Unit 3 - The Automation of Robotic Artwork

The Automation of Robotic Artwork

Extending the discourse of authorship, the increasing automation of artmaking practices continues to question the role of artist. Mechanical and digital tools have made creation faster, easing some of the labor once burdened by humans while challenging traditional notions of authenticity. Automation shifts our perception from human artist to machine, triggering discomfort and leading to absurdisms about "the end of art."

The relationship between mechanics and artwork is no recent development, revealing the historic precedence of machines in the art world. Photography saw the advent of the camera, once thought to be a tool that does all the work for the user. Printmaking similarly demonstrates a well-established history of increasing automatic reproduction. Jean Tinguely experimented with machine-made artwork via his kinetic sculptures coined "meta-matics" in the 1950s and 60s. In the digital age, programs such as Adobe Photoshop further automate and digitize both the process of creation and its consumption. AI-generated artwork and the digitization of this "robotic art" somehow complicate our perception of machines as artists, obscuring where the act of creation lies behind the intangibility of a screen.

Jan Collaert I, after Jan van der Straet, called Stradanus, *The Invention of Book Printing*, plate 4 from *Nova Reperta (New Inventions of Modern Times)* series, c.1600

Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, *View from the Window at Le Gras*, 1827

Kodak, *You Press the Button, We Do the Rest* advertisement, 1888

Honoré Daumier, *Nadar Elevating Photography to the Height of an Art*, 1862

Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, *Anatomy of an AI System*, 2018

"Art has always been reproducible. Objects made by humans could always be copied by humans."

—Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
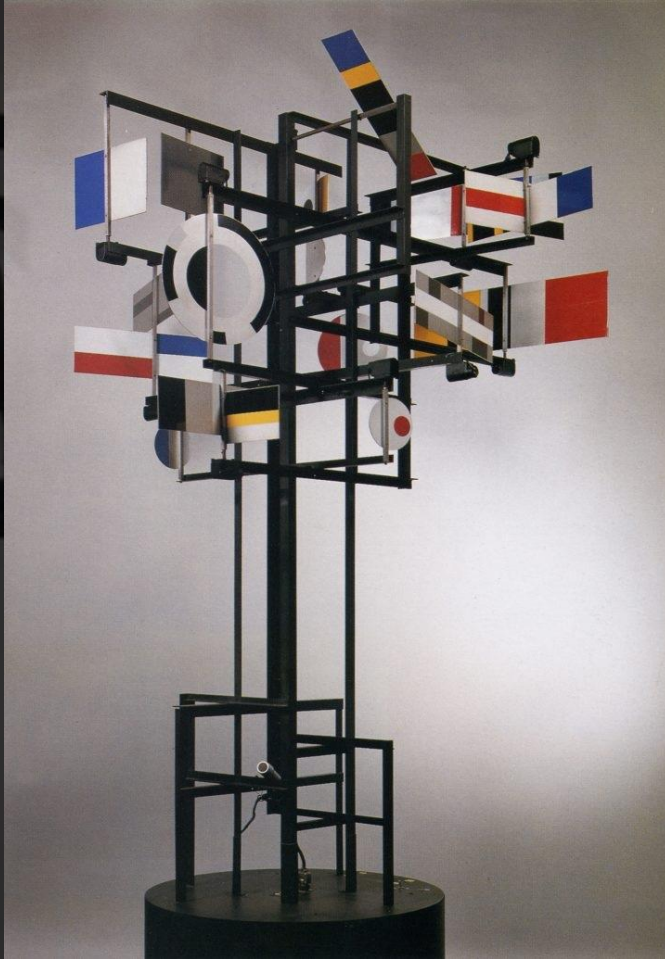
Nicolas Schöffer, *CYSP I*, 1956

Jean Tinguely, *Meta-matic no. 10*, 1959

Jean Tinguely, *Meta-matic no. 17*, 1959

"The robots don't replace the artist or art: they invite us to ask what makes a world of art – and what makes an artist."

—Artistes & Robots exhibition catalog, taken from Joanna Zylinska, *AI Art: Machine visions and Warped Dreams*

"The artist no longer creates work; he creates creation."

—Nicolas Schoffer, taken from Joanna Zylinska, *AI Art: Machine visions and Warped Dreams*
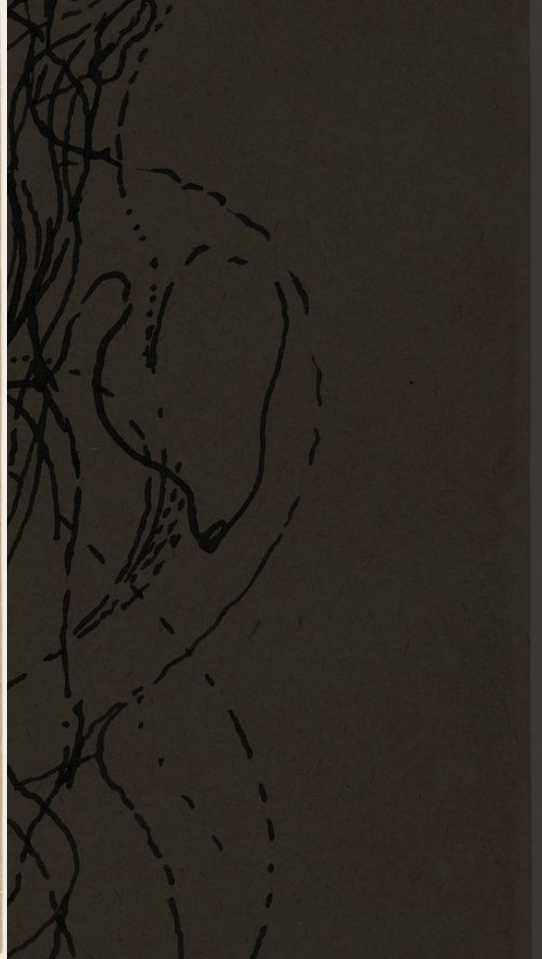
André Masson, *Automatic Drawing*, 1924

Harold Cohen, *AARON: Untitled*, 1977

Harold Cohen, *AARON: KCAT*, 2001

So Kanno and Takahiro Yamaguchi, *Senseless Drawing Bot*, 2011

Patrick Tresset, *Human Study #2, La Vanité*, 2014
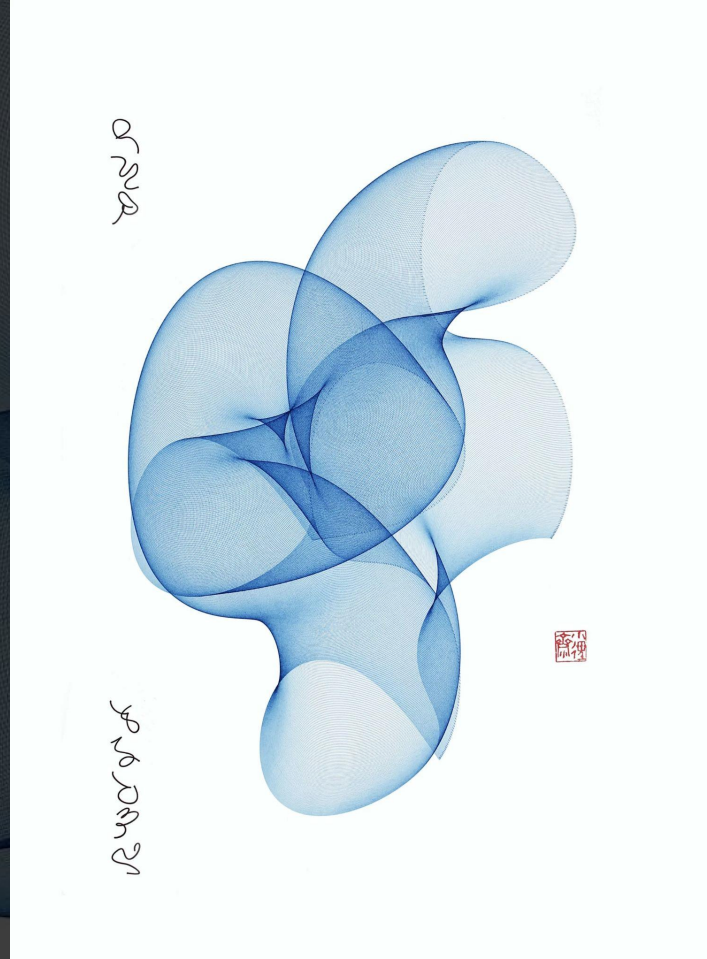
Roman Verostko, *Algorithmic Poetry*, 2010
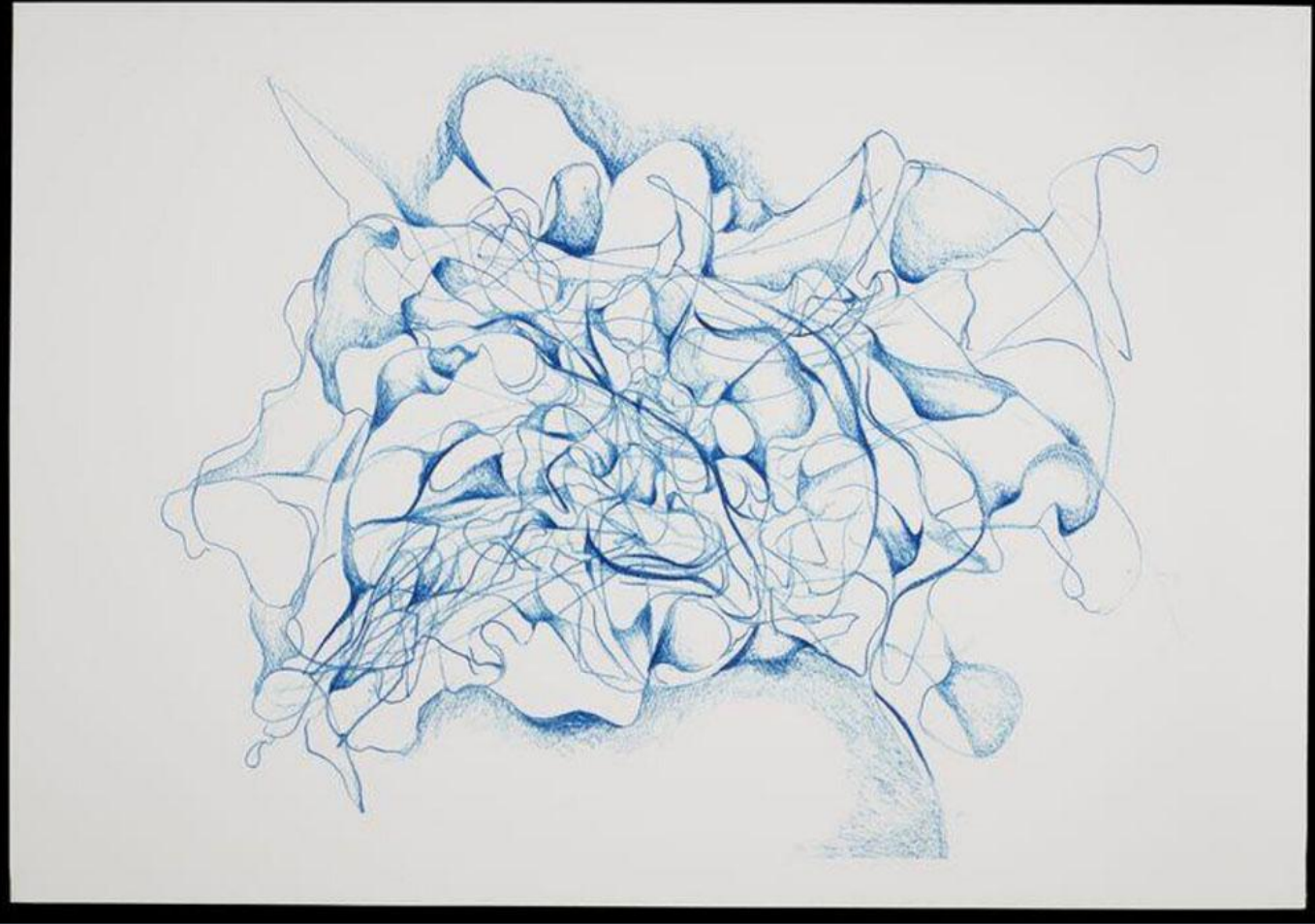
Sougwen Chung, *MEMORY (Drawing Operations Unit Generation 2)*, 2017

"It has been understood since at least the birth of abstraction that the main issue in art is neither its production nor the individual artistic sensibility by which it is guided. The main issue of art is art itself: its history, evolution, and innovative contributions. Anything can be considered art if validated by one of several art world mechanisms including museums, galleries, specialized medusa, critics, curators, and/or collectors. Only in this way has the Duchampian readymade and most of the art produced since been accepted and integrated into the formal art realm...

...Whether a work of art is made directly by a human artist or is the product of any other type of process is nowadays of no relevance. Recent art history shows many examples of art worlds based on random procedures, fortuitous explorations, objets trouves, and arbitrary constructions. Surrealism, for example, even tried to take human consciousness out of the loop. More decisive is whether or not a new art form expands the field of art. Since the advent of modernism, innovation has become a more important criterion in evaluating artistic projects than personal ability...

...Since robots like those I use are able to generate novelty, it must also be recognized that they have at least some degree of creativity... The algorithm and the basic rules introduced thereby via the robot microchip are not so very different, furthermore, from education. No one will claim that a given novel is the product of the author's school teacher. To the extent that the author, human or machine, incorporates new information, the artwork becomes not only unique but also the result of the author's own creativity. In short, I teach the robots how to paint, but afterward, it is not my doing."

—Leonel Moura, taken from Joanna Zylinska, *AI Art: Machine visions and Warped Dreams*
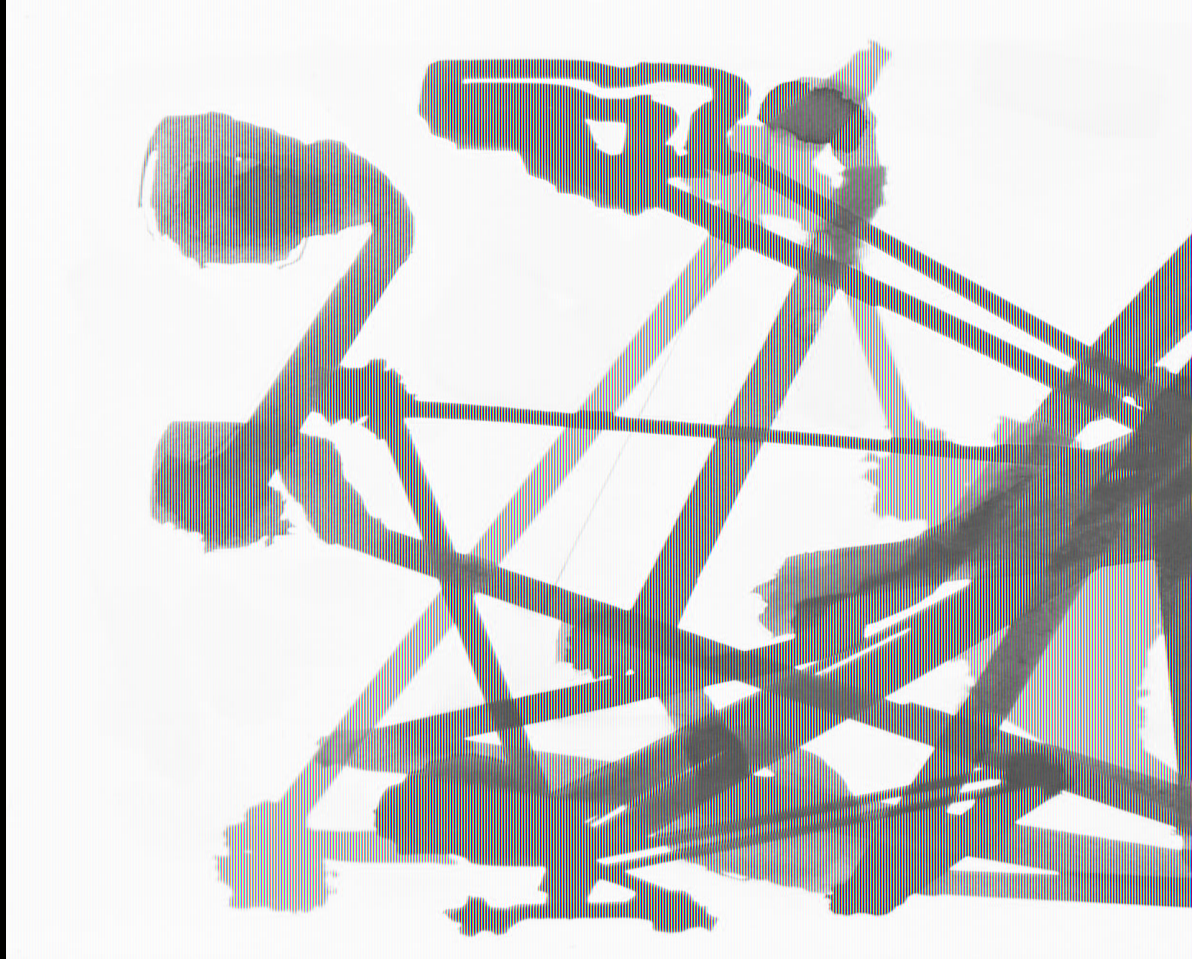
Leonel Moura, first drawings with the Ant Algorithm, 2001
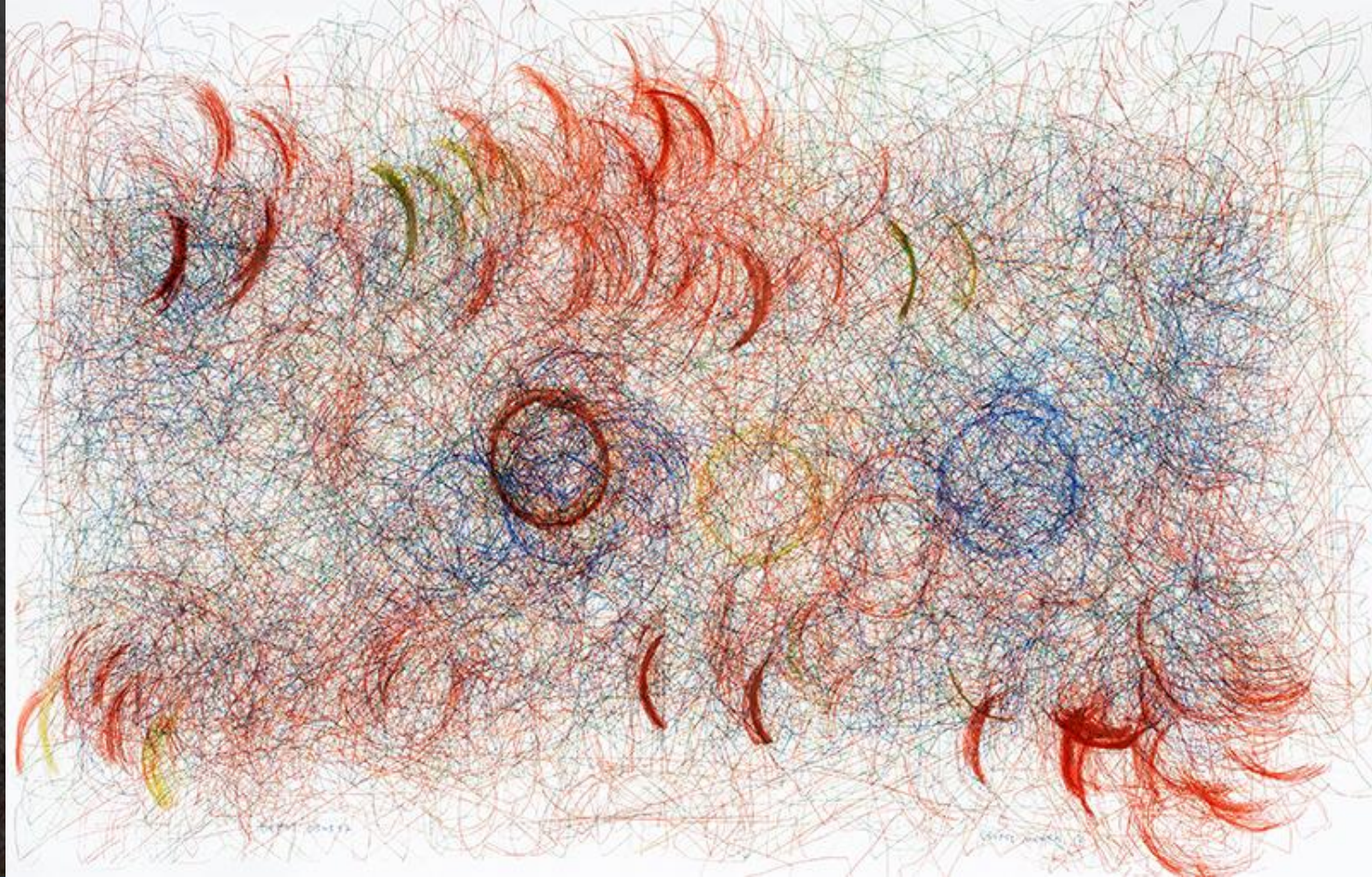
Leonel Moura, *050517* from *Bebot* series, 2017
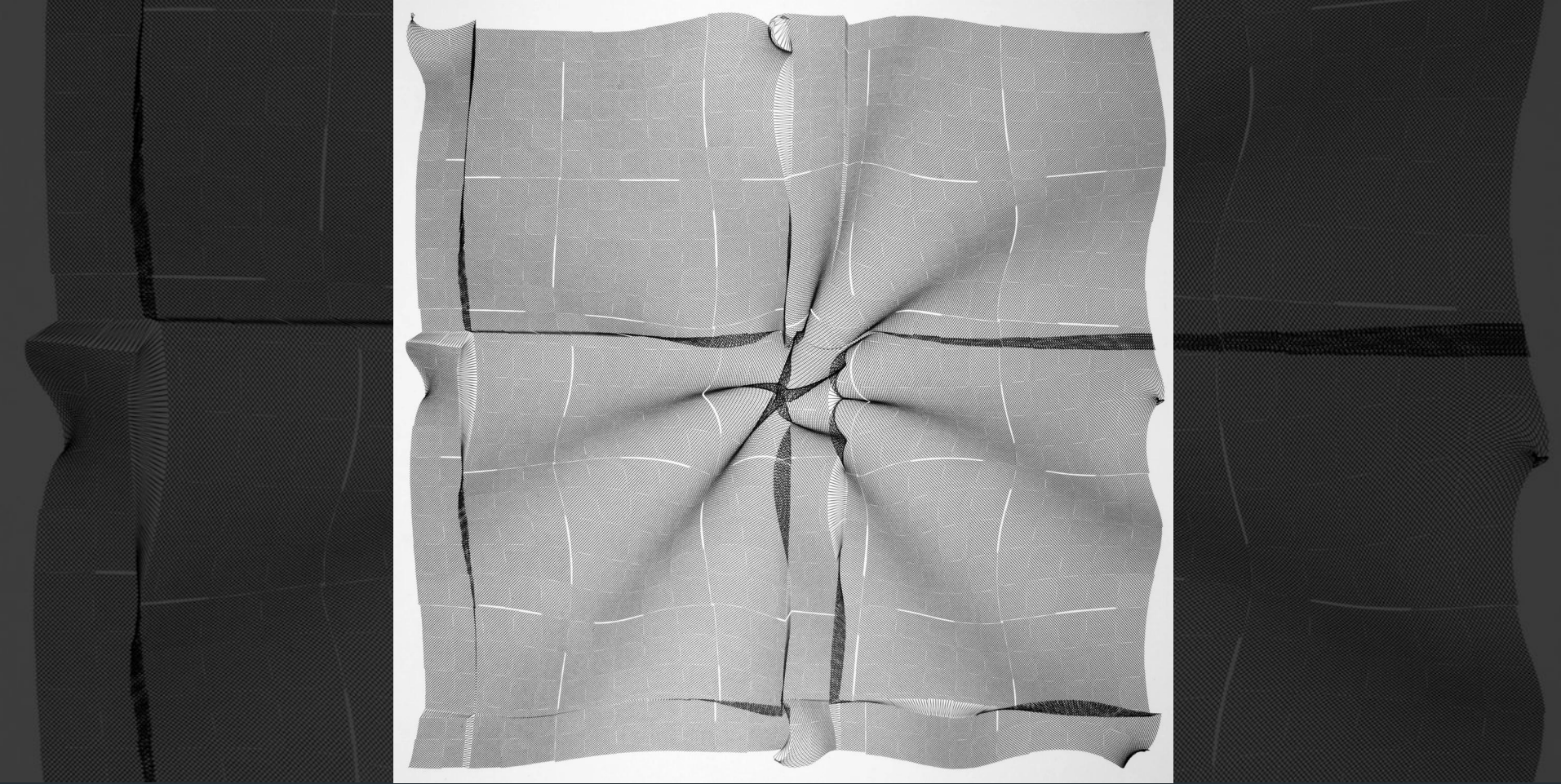
Jean-Pierre Hébert, *Roughness 4*, 1988

Jean-Pierre Hébert, *Sand Installation* series, 1998-2019

"I have been working with the conviction that to gain power and beauty, drawing should become a pure mental activity, rather than a mere gestural skill. I have endeavored to make it so by banning the physical side of drawing."

—Jean-Pierre Hébert

Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, *Can't Help Myself*, 2016-2019

Stelarc, *Propel: Body on a Robot Arm*, 2015

Stelarc, *Reclining Stickman*, 2020

📝 Unit 3 Assignment

BECOMING ANDROID ARTISTS: In this exercise, groups of three will create a short video that explores the concept of mechanical, automated artwork through performative play. At least one of you will act as a robot, or use a tool of automation, and engage in "automatic" artmaking. Whatever you choose to use or portray should include some sort of repetitive action that generates visual artwork. The genre of video can vary, ranging from conceptual, surreal, parody, mockumentary, advertisement, etc.

*See syllabus for more details.

HISTORIES OF NEW MEDIA

Unit 4 - The Desire for Mimesis: Fearing & Fetishizing Newness

The Desire for Mimesis: Fearing & Fetishizing

The desire to perfectly replicate reality is not a craving unique to the contemporary age. When photography was first popularized, many assumed that the camera achieved that very goal—to capture reality in its entire truth. But in actuality, the deliberate staging, framing, and editing of photos have always imbued image creation with an inherent bias—factors further complicated by the manipulation capabilities of digital tools. The evolution of photomontage has demonstrated an increasing preference for the erasure of edges. Through dream-like imagery, Surrealism prefers a similar "seamless" approach. Nowadays, with the creation of AI-generated images and videos, deep fakes, and virtual reality technology, the borders of the frame (or screen) are more blurred than ever.

The ability of modern technology to fabricate a convincing visual reality is something that people both fear and fetishize. Consumers yearn for these advancements while simultaneously dreading their dystopian consequences. To mitigate these fears, we often rely on the verbal and visual language of pre-existing concepts. We call collections of digital information "files" that are opened on "windows" and still save things using a floppy disc icon. We follow pre-established norms of communication—things that are familiar to ease the tension of the things that are not—and continue to intertwine the relationship between technology and art.

William Henry Talbot, *The Open Door*, 1844

Henry Peach Robinson, *Fading Away*, 1858

David Hockney, *Pearblossom Hwy., 11 - 18th April 1986, #2,* 1986

Erik Johansson, *Full Moon Service*, 2017
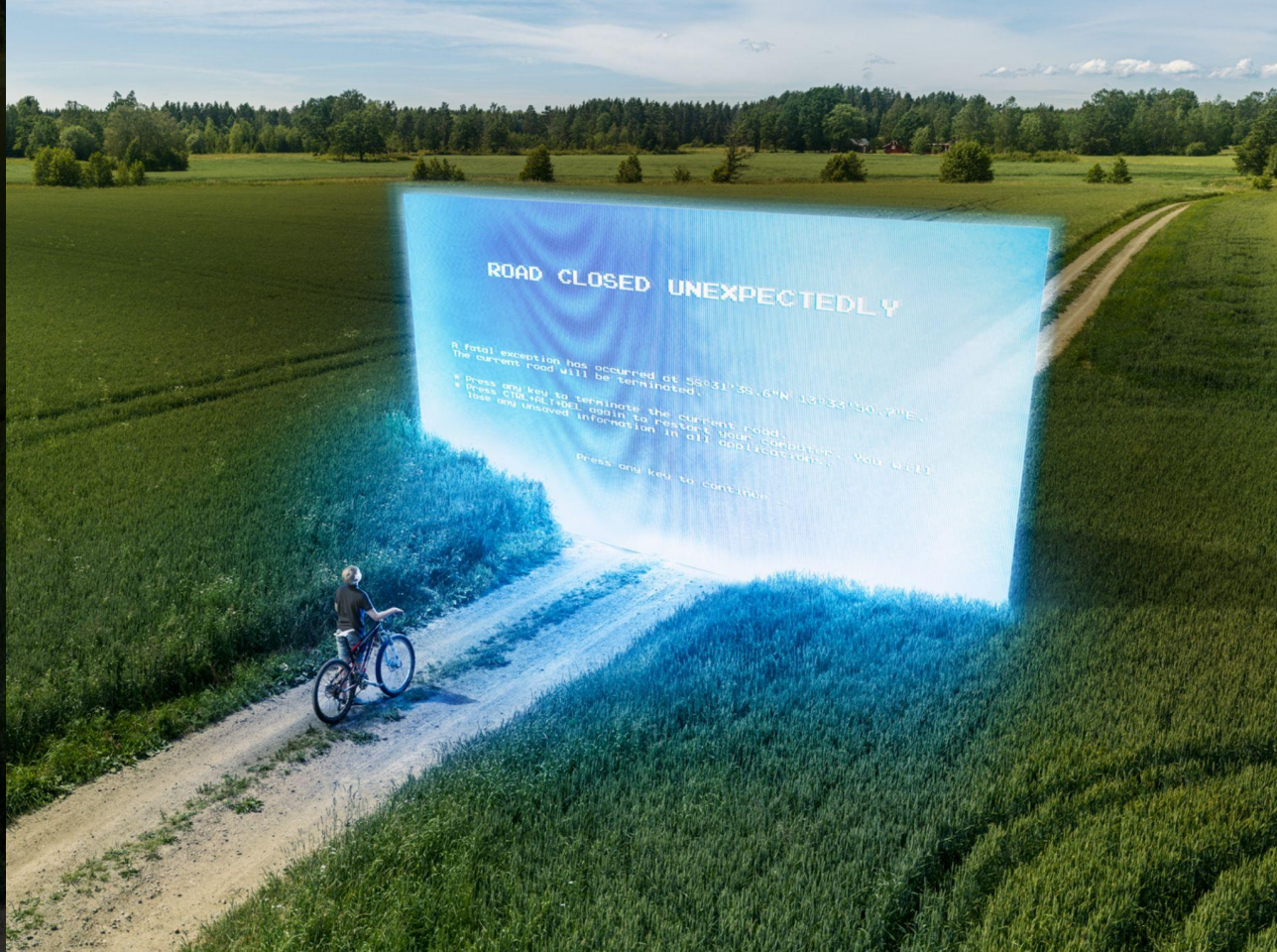
Erik Johansson, *Road Closed Unexpectedly*, 2019

Erik Johansson, *Dreaming of Snow*, 2023

Gregory Crewdson, *Untitled (Ophelia)* plate 48 from *Twilight* series, 2001

John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1852

Ori Gersht, *Big Bang*, 2006

"The language of cultural interfaces is largely made up from elements of other, already familiar cultural forms."

"Cultural interfaces try to accommodate both the demand for consistency and the demand for originality."

—Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*

Umberto Boccioni, *The City Rises*, 1910

Andre Masson, *The Metamorphosis of the Lovers*, 1938

Carolyn Janssen, *Prescience*

Gene Kogan, *Neural Synthesis*, 2017

Mike Tyka, *I See You* from *Portraits of Imaginary People* series, 2017

Refik Anadol, *Unsupervised* from *Machine Hallucinations* series, 2022

Rene Magritte, *The Human Condition*, 1933

Simulation Games (*The Sims*)

The Louvre and VIVE Arts (company), *Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass*, 2020

"Rather than disappearing, the screen threatens to take over our offices and homes [...] eventually they will become wall-sized."

—Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (2001)

The Dali Museum and Goodby Silverstein & Partners (company), *Dali Lives*, 2020

The Wachowskis, *The Matrix*, 1999

Trevor Paglen, *It Began as a Military Experiment*, 2017

Trevor Paglen, *It Began as a Military Experiment*, 2017

Trevor Paglen, *Behold These Glorious Times!*, 2017
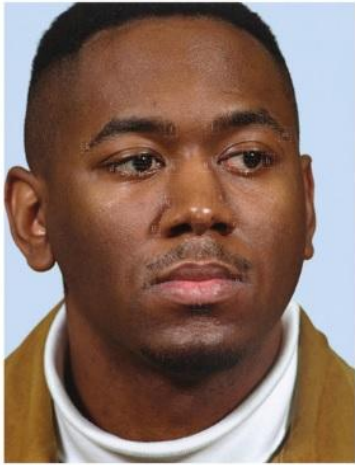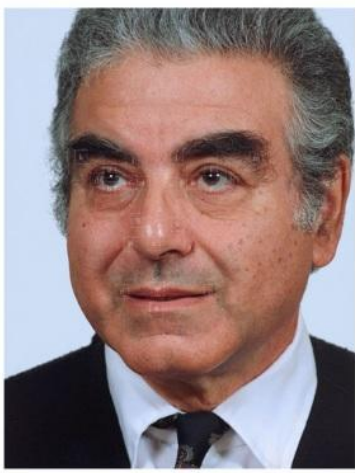
OpenAI (company), *Tokyo Walk*, 2024

📝 Unit 4 Assignment

FEAR & FAMILIARITY: In this assignment, you will engage with both the fearing and fetishizing of new media technology. You will generate two images: one exploring fear and one exploring familiarity or fetish. Both images must be the same size and incorporate similar imagery. They should be thought of as a unified diptych, complimenting each other while depicting two conflicting perspectives on the same subject.

*See syllabus for more details.
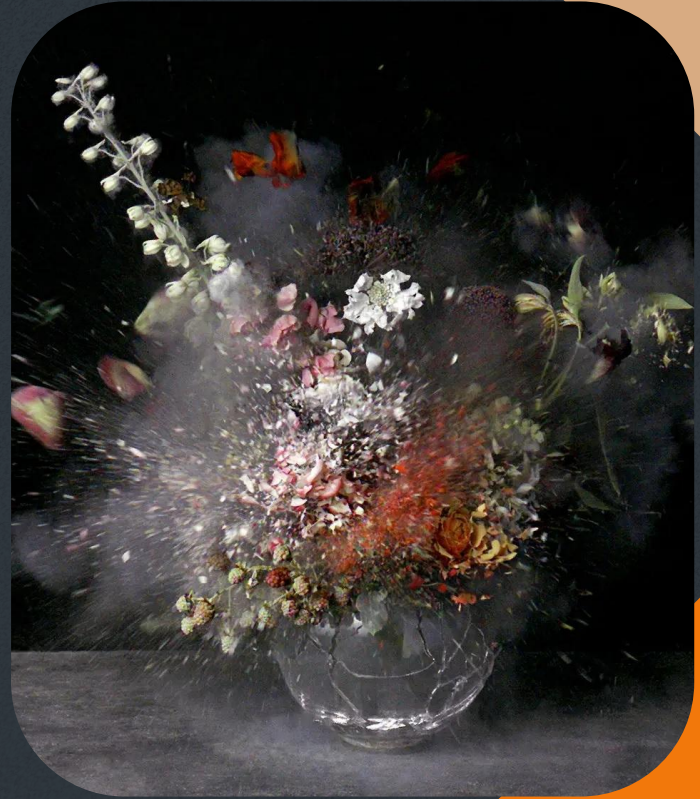
HISTORIES OF NEW MEDIA

Unit 5 - The Relationship Between Digital Media & Non-Digital Fine Arts

Digital Media & Non-Digital Fine Arts

The popularization of online culture has transformed the environment of artistic creation and consumption, separate from the traditional spaces of museums and galleries. The rise of Net Art in the early days of the internet challenged norms of visual presentation, introducing websites themselves as artwork and forming the precedent for social media-based artists today. While reliance on gallery traditions is certainly still apparent, there is also a disconnect found between digital art, museums, and educational settings.

Despite the change in environment, both digital and non-digital arts continue to share an intimate relationship with commercial culture, consumerism, and entertainment. What was once driven by the patronage of wealthy middle-class merchants is now often driven by the endless exchange of online commissions. NFTs have attempted to establish a more traditional, capitalistic approach to selling digital art and formalizing digital ownership but have since declined in popularity and value.

With this increasing digitization of artwork, the worry of preservation is also apparent. The internet is thought by many to be a place of permanence. But in other ways, the constantly evolving formats of digital technology leave much documentation obsolete and lost to time, as evidenced by media like tapes and CDs. This flawed idea of permanence questions the longevity of digital archives as opposed to tangible, non-digital records.

Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434

Pierre Bonnard, *France-Champagne*, 1891

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Aristide Bruant*, 1893
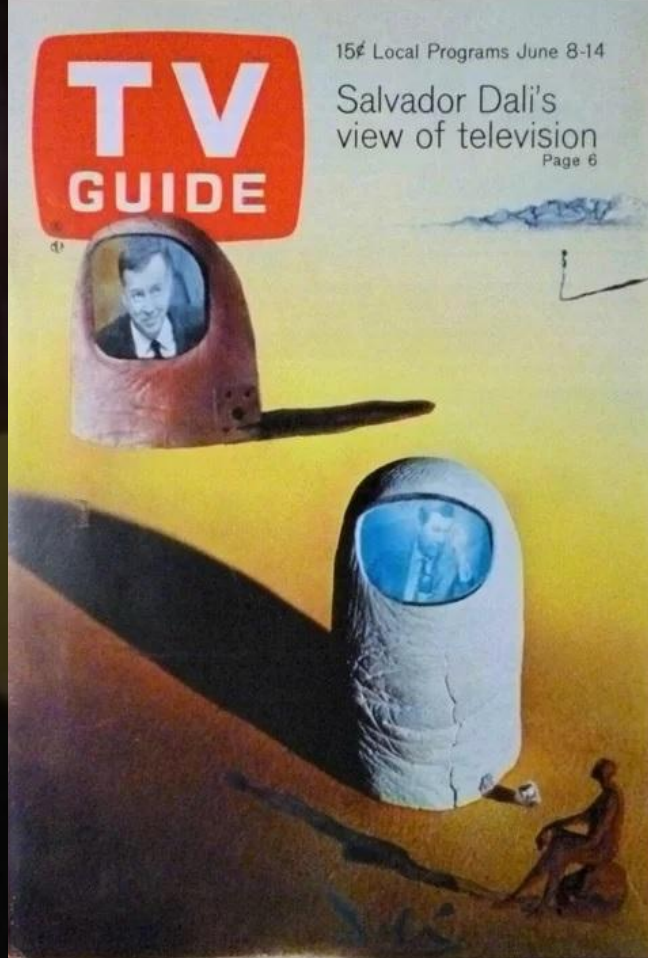
Salvador Dali, "Salvador Dali's View on Television" *TV Guide* **cover, 1968**

"Media workers not only face deskilling of their content creation in favour of metadata; they must also contend with platformised approaches to professional storytelling. Digital platforms require a relentless flow of malleable 'spreadable' content."

—Clea Bourne, *The Future of Media*

Lois van Baarle ("Loish"), *Popcorn*, 2023

Yuga Labs, *Bored Apes*, 2021

Mike Winkelmann ("Beeple"), *EVERDAYS: THE FIRST 5000 DAYS*, 2021

Injective Protocol (company), *Burnt Banksy*, 2021

"In the 1990s, as the internet progressively grew in popularity, the role of the digital computer shifted from being a particular technology [...] to a filter for all culture."

—Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*

Invitations to the *Computer-Generated Pictures* Exhibition, 1965

Georg Nees, *Polygon of 23 Vertices (23-Ecke)*, 1964

Leon Harmon and Ken Knowlton, *Computer Nude (Studies in Perception I)*, 1967

Mark Amerika, *GRAMMATRON*, 1997

JODI (Dirk Paesmans and Joan Heemskerk), *wwwwwwww.jodi.org*

Vuk Ćosić , *Psycho* from *ASCII History of Moving Images* series, 1999

Vuk Ćosić , *Venus* and *Warhol* from *History of Art for Airports* series, 1999

WEB'S FIRST FILE EXTINGUISHER

Zeitgeist | Sample | Filefighters | Legal

Permanently delete your files here:

Choose File No file chosen   Upload

Permanently delete sites here (**beta**):

http://   Preview

The numbers look like this:
so far we've safely deleted **127** files and **127** sites.
Files were mostly small, but the biggest one was **95.47 KB**. Majority was **.jpg**.
Possibly, you're interested in more stats.

When in 1960 Paul Baran went to propose a communication network that could survive a nuclear attack, he gave us distributed network and packet switching. Everybody knows that. What is less known is that his epochal Rand Memorandum RM-3420-PR was published with a terrible omission:

Baran insisted that the true last line of defence of any distributed network would be a file extinguisher. However, he indicated this function with a red dot; due to the limitations of 1960s-era black-and-white printing, this key element was not visible in his publication. We can now recognize that today's internet vulnerabilities are a direct result of this tragic mishap.
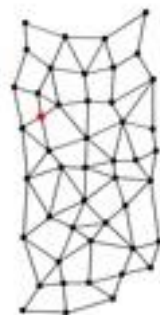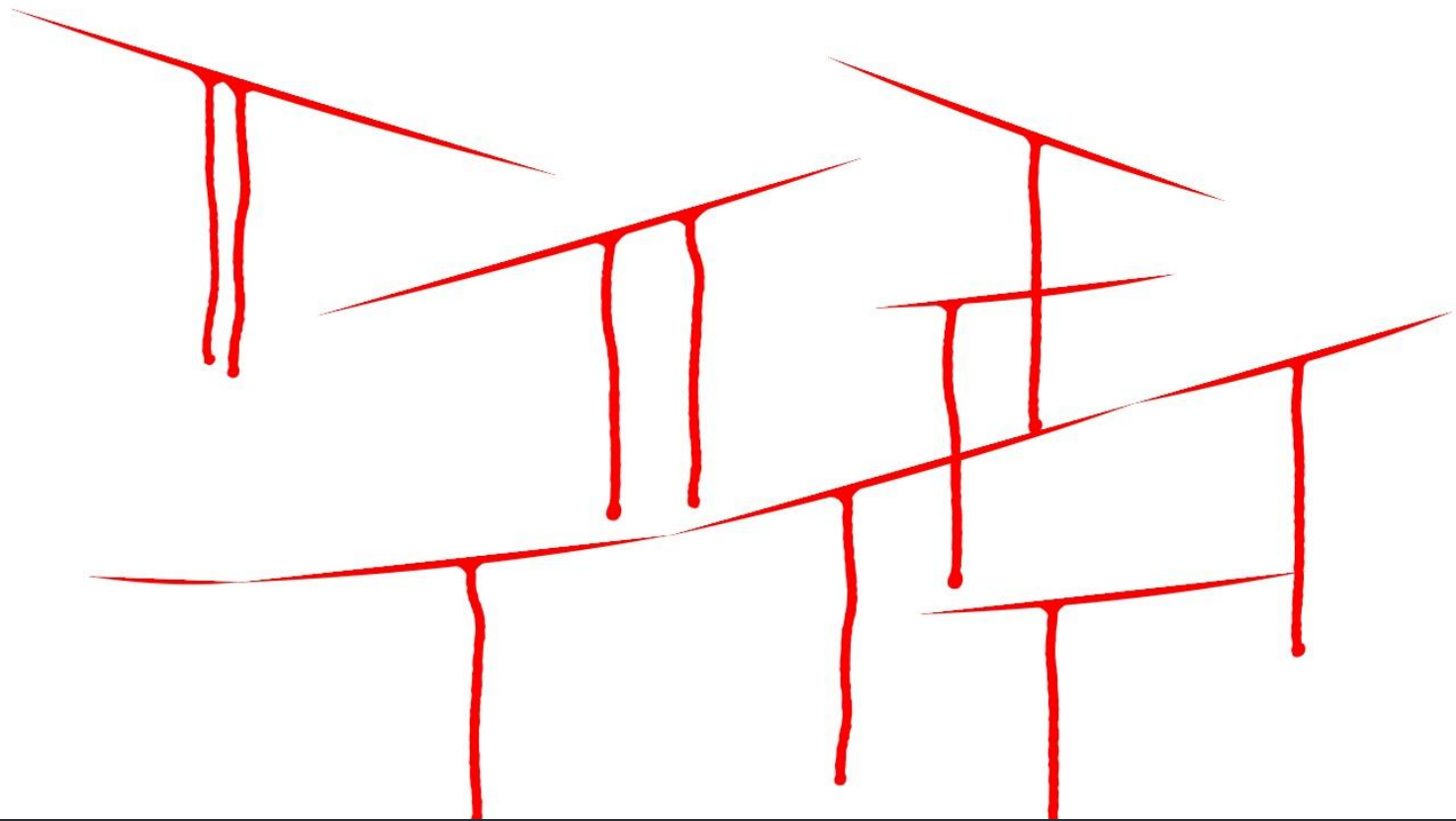
This simple web utility rectifies that error, which almost cost us the web. Now the internet is finally safe, as Baran originally intended.
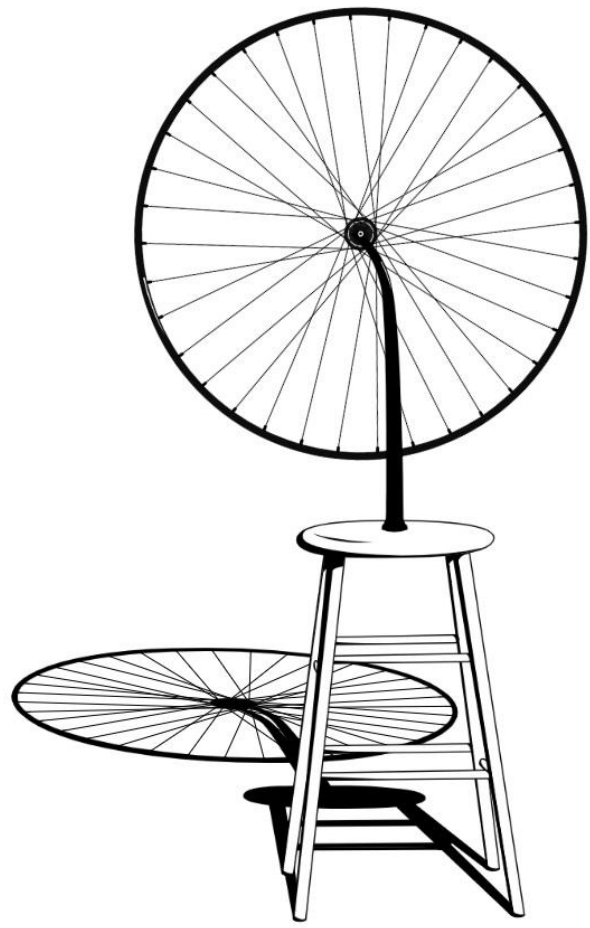
(cc) Vuk

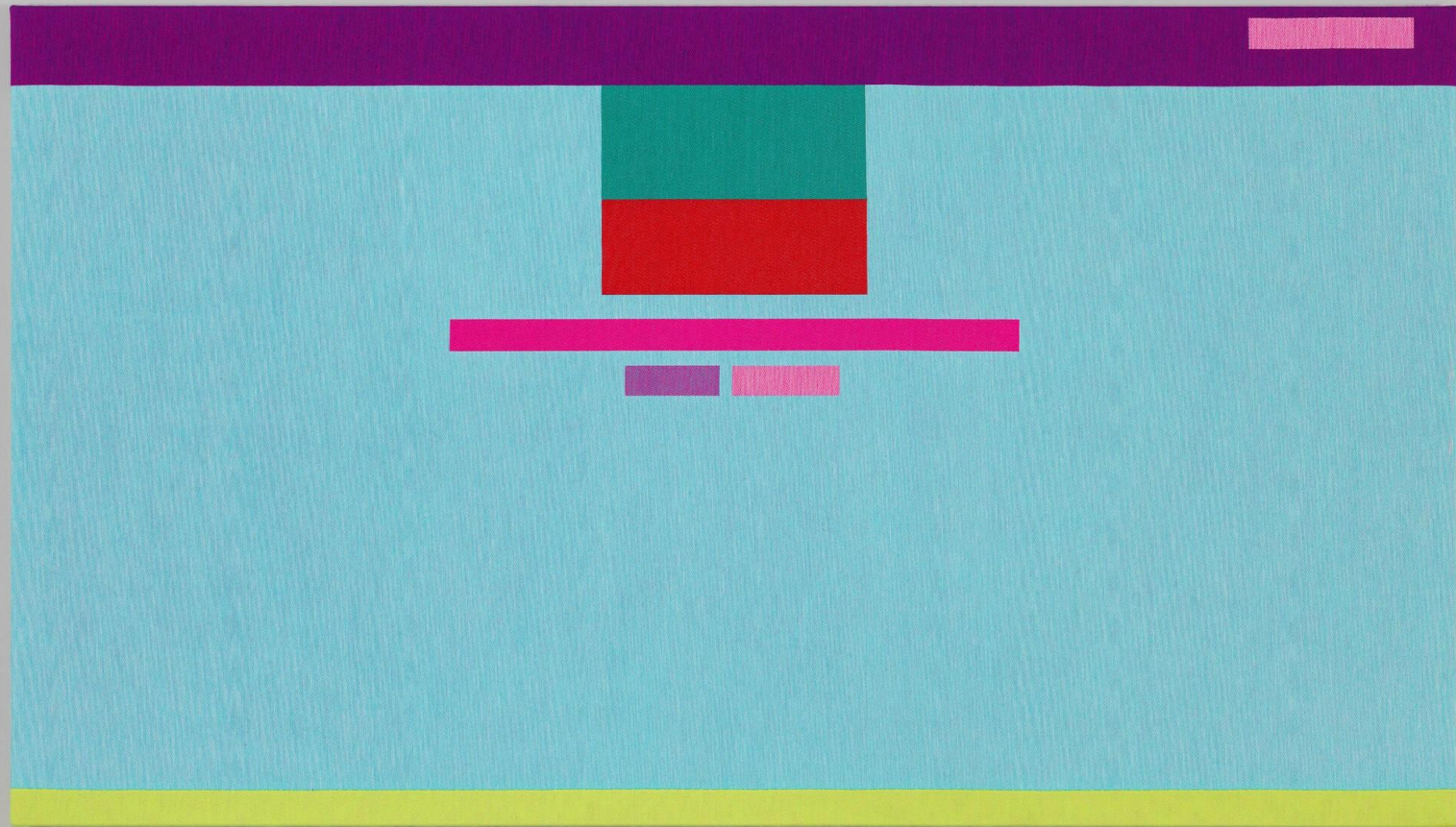ICA

Vuk Ćosić , *File Extinguisher*, 1998

Rafaël Rozendaal, *fatal to the flesh .com*, 2004

Rafaël Rozendaal, *le duchamp .com*, 2008
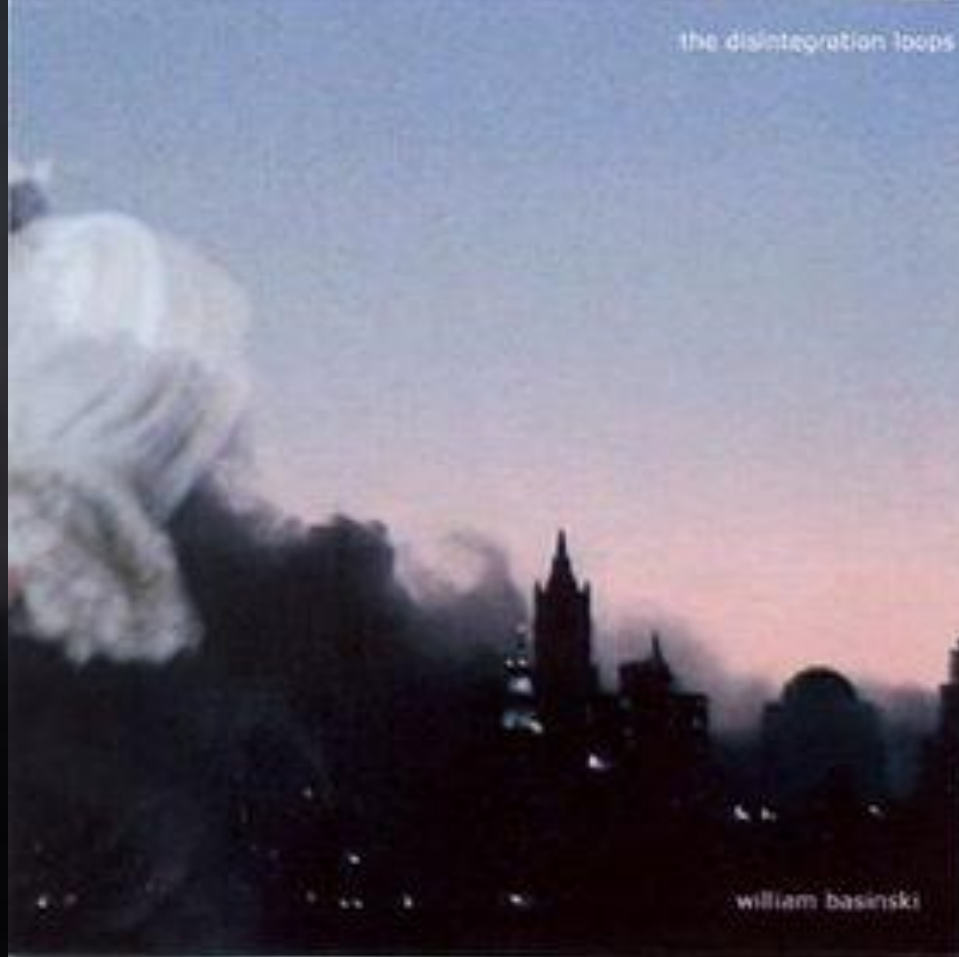
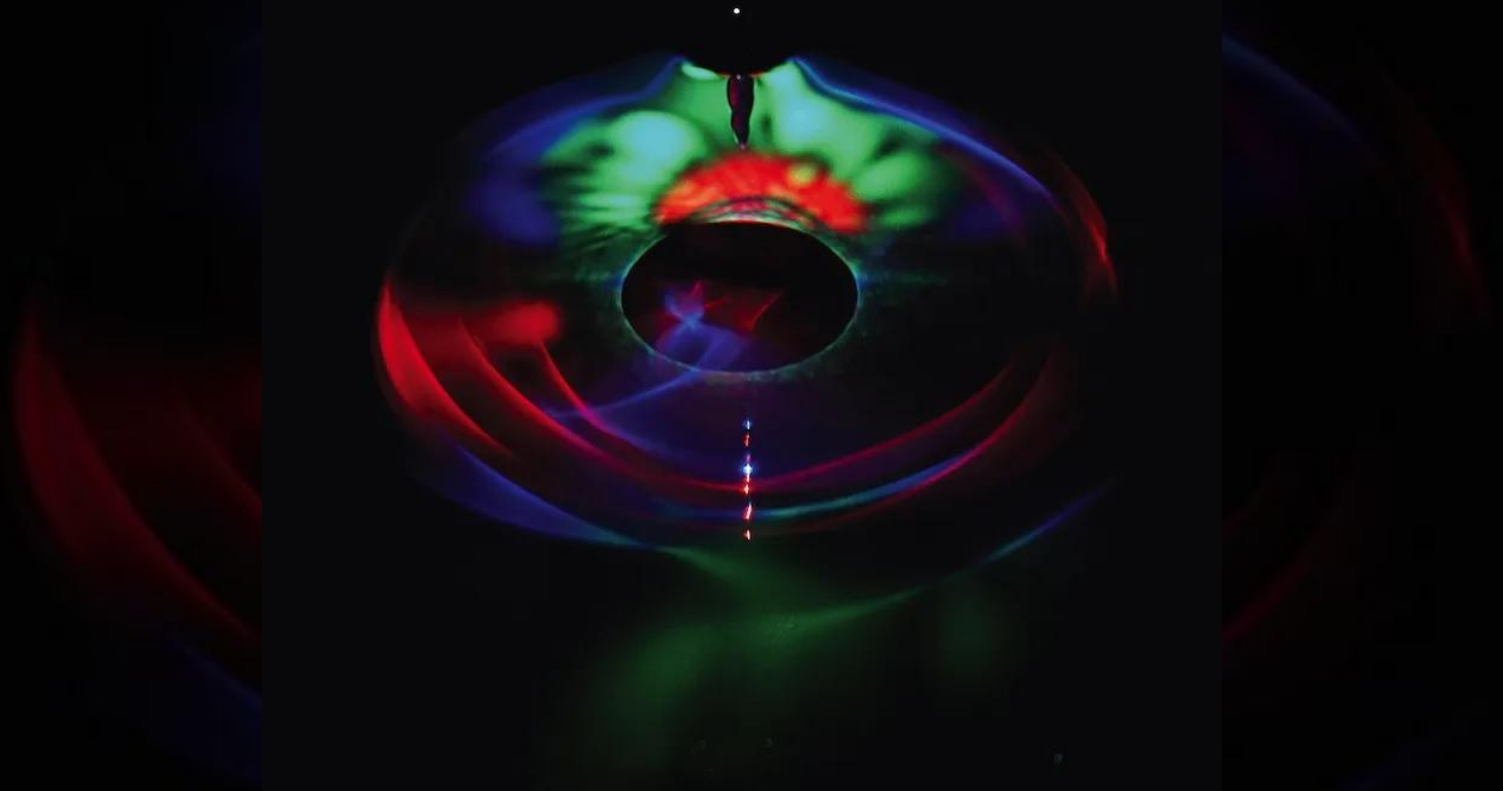Rafaël Rozendaal, *Abstract Browsing 17 03 05*, 2017
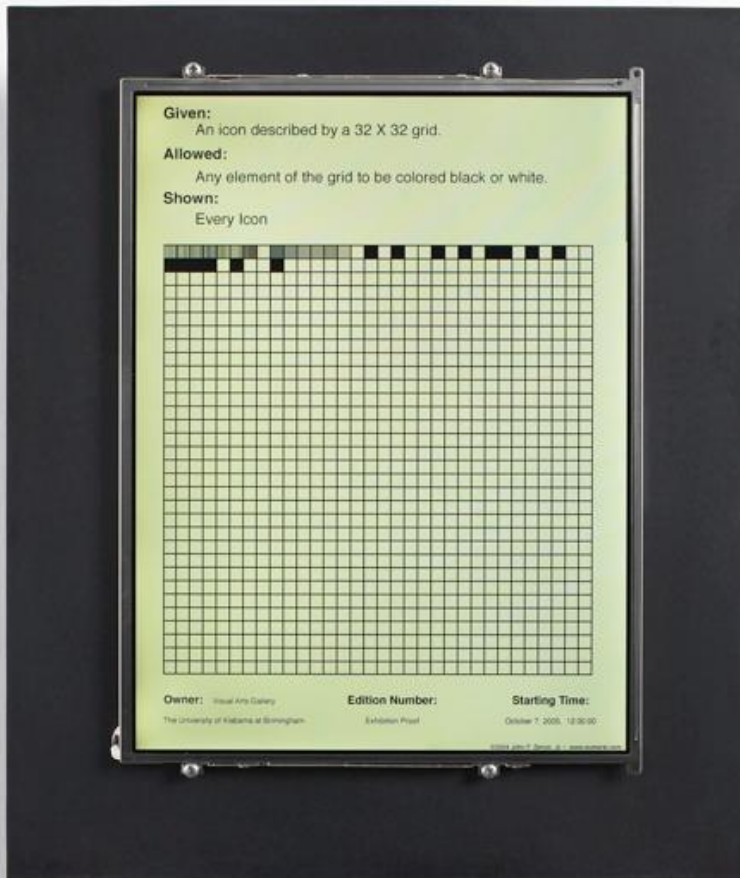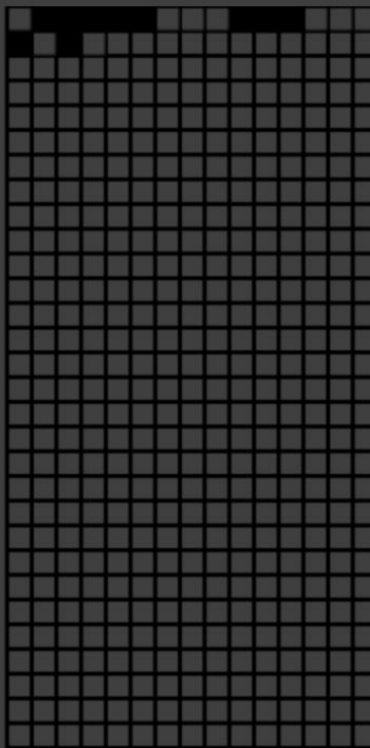
John F. Simon, *Every Icon*, 1997

William Basinski, *The Disintegration Loops*, 2002-2003

William Basinski, *On Time Out of Time*, 2019

📝 Unit 5 Assignment

NEW MEDIA EXHIBITION PROPOSAL: In this assignment, you will assume the role of museum curator and propose an exhibition of new media artwork. You will select the artwork you want to include in your show, write a curatorial statement, and pitch details of the exhibition including venue and method of presentation. The artwork you select should all follow a cohesive theme, which you will explain and support in your written statement.

*See syllabus for more details.