

Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman features 17 artists working with both analog and emergent technologies to visualize the interrelationship between humanity, other species, and the earth itself. Using imaging tools such as digital animation, augmented and virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, artists Ian Cheng, Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, Marguerite Humeau, Josèfa Ntjam, Jacolby Satterwhite, Saya Woolfalk, and others challenge the view of human superiority that can prevent an ethics of care for the planet. Like the surrealists, these artists tap into the transformative agency of the marvelous, the uncanny, and the unpredictable. In their fluid and floating creations, images morph, flicker, and dance, forming psychologically charged archetypes within a new collective unconscious.

While providing otherworldly moments of awe and enchantment, the exhibition is centered on real-world disciplines. The first section, taking a biological and ecological perspective, focuses on such subjects as extinction, evolution, and interspecies entanglement. The second, relating to psychology, offers visions of guiding avatars, “angels in the machine” who help distract, redirect, or open intellectual boundaries. The third relates to ontology—the philosophy of being. Bridging ancestral and contemporary belief systems, particularly those beyond modern Western traditions, artists in this section employ new technologies to reawaken humanity’s sense of interconnectedness with the earth.

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Saya Woolfalk. *Floating World of the Cloud Quilt* (detail), 2022. Three-channel video projection, natural and synthetic fibers, digitally printed vinyl flooring, plastic, paint, paper, beads, notions, and gel medium; 406 × 72–144 (variable) × 108 in. Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects. © Saya Woolfalk. Photo: Etienne Frossard

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Shimmer is not simply the random generation of images; it also suggests beautiful new life forms that show future evolutionary possibilities. These shimmering works of art imaginatively draw people into a realm where past, present, and future are collapsed and the relationship among humans and the natural world is fluid and intertwined.

Saya Woolfalk’s multimedia installations fuse art, science fiction, and technology to emphasize the multidimensionality of existence.

Floating World of the Cloud Quilt is a multichannel video projection that shows a figure in a moment of transformation. The figure is surrounded by repeated shapes, symmetry, and colors that create an otherworldly or unrealistic environment. The artist is interested in bringing together nature, history, and technology in ways that link the future with ancient, preindustrial cultures.

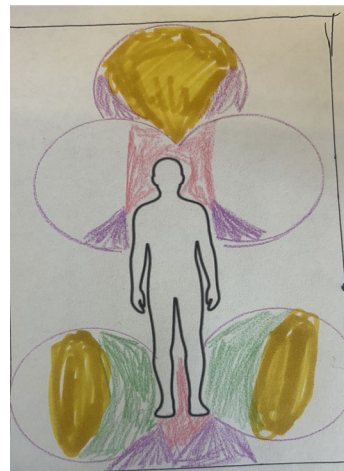
In this piece, biology and myth are connected with spirituality and culture in an image of a multifaceted organism. The artist uses new media to represent a flow between the ancestral past and a future that technology could help bring to life.

Questions

- Which parts of your hybrid figure are human or inspired by nature? Do any parts come from technology, dreams, or your imagination?
- What special power does your figure represent?
- How do the images you include represent connection or transformation?



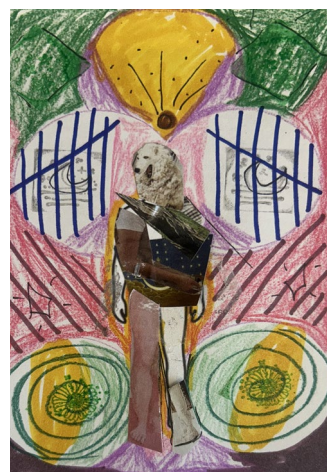
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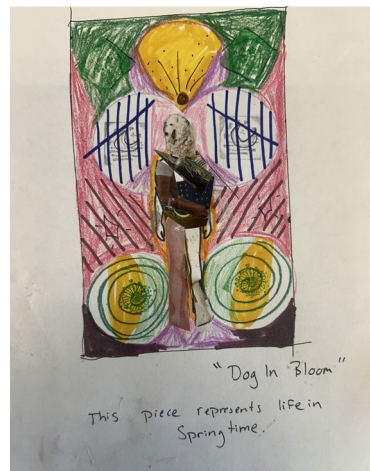
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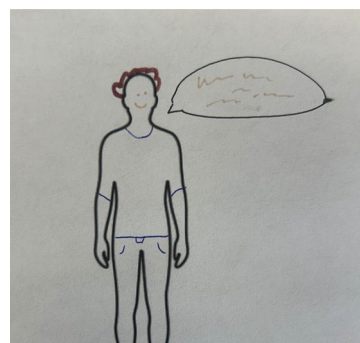
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Age Group: 5th–8th Grade, Teens, Adults

Activity Title: Hybrid Figure in a Portal

Objective

Participants will create a mixed-media artwork using collage, drawing, and stamps to create a figure in transformation.

Materials

- Bristol board
- Collage materials
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Stencils
- Stamps
- Glue

Vocabulary

Portal: a doorway, gate, or other entrance

Radial symmetry: symmetry in which similar parts are arranged in a balanced way around the center of a composition

Transformation: a change in composition, structure, or outward appearance

Steps

1. Look at the example of Saya Woolfalk's work. What colors, patterns, symbols, or repeated shapes do you notice? Are there elements of nature, technology, the body, or the imagination?
2. Begin by creating the background or "portal" around your printed silhouette. You may choose to include repeated shapes, radial symmetry, or patterns to create a transformative space or symbolic environment. Use markers or colored pencils to create the desired background.
3. Inside the printed figure, begin adding collage elements. These might be related to nature, technology, or the human body. While the images may not be recognizably human, the overall shape will suggest a hybrid figure.
4. Use stamps or markers add details that show the figure's special power. Consider what this figure represents and how symbols like stars, lightning, or waves can tell us more about it.
5. Give your artwork a title and describe the special power it represents. Consider the various pieces it is made from, how it fits into the environment, and what it can symbolize.
6. Discuss the figures you have created and how they might interact with the digital or physical world.



Rachel Rossin. *I'm My Loving Memory*, 2020–21. Plexiglass sculptures embedded with digital paintings and augmented reality program; dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.
© Rachel Rossin. Image courtesy of the artist

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I'm My Loving Memory is a 3D work of art that features digital paintings encased in plexiglass, which was formed around the artist's body. This work explores *embodiment*, the tangible or visible form of an idea or feeling.

Embodiment gives a form to ideas that are usually not physical, like friendship, feeling scared, or excitement.

Rachel Rossin uses sculptural forms and augmented reality to explore the feeling of being in two places at once, existing in both virtual and physical worlds.

This artwork reflects the artist's interest in the effects of technology on human psychology. An augmented reality piece depicts mysterious creatures that float in and around the sculptures, while the central image in the painting is a half-woman, half-bird avatar based on the artist's existence in both material and virtual spaces.

Questions

- What are some emotions you have seen "embodied" in art?
- Have you ever played a game or used an account with an avatar?
- How do you balance existing in the virtual and physical world at the same time?

Age Group: All Ages
Activity Title: Embodied Paintings

Objective

Participants will create a fluid painting between two sheets of plastic film and use stickers to add found images as avatars to embody something that inspires them.

Materials

- Plastic film sheets
- Tempera paint
- Brushes
- Stickers
- Transparent tape or washi tape

Vocabulary

Augmented Reality: a technology that superimposes a computer-generated image on a user’s view of the real world.

Embodiment: the representation or expression of something in a tangible or visible form.

Steps

1. On a sheet of plastic film, begin applying a thin layer of paint. You may choose to paint a specific image or something abstract, but keep in mind it will change later in the process.
2. When your plastic sheet has all the paint and colors you’d like to include, carefully place a second sheet on top of the paint so it lines up with the bottom sheet.
3. Smooth out the paint under your plastic sheet with your fingers. You may start to see unexpected shapes and color combinations as the paint moves.
4. Add stickers. Choose stickers that you think fit with your scene; these could be animals that live in the environment, stars in a night sky, or the glittering sea.
5. Create a border with tape. Secure your plastic sheets by adding a border of tape along all four sides. Fold the tape down the middle so it adheres to both sides. You may choose to decorate the border with markers.
6. The painting you’ve created, encased in plastic, will move and change with time. Try posing it in different ways and see if new shapes or color combinations catch your eye.



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Nancy Baker Cahill. *Carbon 1*, 2025. Video; 2 min., 30 sec. Courtesy of the artist. © Nancy Baker Cahill

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Nancy Baker Cahill is a Los Angeles–based multidisciplinary artist known for her immersive cinematic work. Cahill uses drawing, **augmented reality**, sculpture, sound, film and installation to investigate systems of power, consciousness, and the impact humanity has on the natural world.

Carbon 1 is the first in Nancy Baker Cahill’s *Carbon* series of short films that imagine environmental collapse from a variety of perspectives. The film opens on a vibrant green landscape featuring footage of real and digitally generated plant and animal life. Lining the horizon are a series of colorful fluorescent flames, which gather into a spinning fire tornado. Throughout the landscape, clusters of what Cahill describes as “**pixelated noise**” begin to fill the screen, distracting from the burning ecosystem. In the end, only the pixels are visible and the landscape disappears.

The film explores the effects our modern society can have on the environment. Through the artist’s addition of “pixelated noise,” the viewer experiences the way media and digital culture can distract from the world around us.

Questions

- Have you ever felt distracted by something you saw on your screen that made you forget where you were?
- How can your environment affect your mood? Is there a place where you feel calm or at ease?
- What would you like to see in the collage environment you create? What kinds of plants or animals will be there?

Age Group: 5th–8th Grade, Teens, Adults
Activity Title: Pixel Collage

Objective

Participants will create an imagined environment and use “pixelated” collage materials to change the focus and theme of the environment completely.

Materials

- Bristol board
- Large cut-out collage materials
- Small square or rectangular cut-out collage materials
- Glue

Vocabulary

Augmented reality: Real-time overlay of digitally generated information onto a user’s real-world environment.

Pixel: The smallest recognizable unit of a digital image. Arranged in a grid, pixels combine to produce images, text and graphics we see on digital devices.

Pixelated noise: Clusters of pixels that gradually overwhelm the screen in Nancy Baker Cahill’s work *Carbon 1*.

Steps

1. Look through the provided collage materials and consider what kind of environment you would like to create. Will you create an environment based on the natural world? Or will you create a world inspired by technology?
2. Gather a few large pieces of paper for your base. To represent a more natural environment, choose materials showing plants, animals, or people. For an artificial environment, you might choose pieces inspired by industry, technology, or the digital world.
3. Begin positioning your largest pieces on the Bristol board, then overlay smaller pieces to fill the environment you create.
4. Carefully glue your collage materials into place.
5. Think about what kinds of images, colors, or other collage materials you want to use as your “pixels” to disrupt your chosen environment. What colors, textures or images distract from the environment you’ve created? Consider what the opposite of the materials making up your environment may look like.
6. Continue adding smaller “pixel” pieces until your collage is finished. What story is your collage telling? How do the pixels change or affect the theme of your image?



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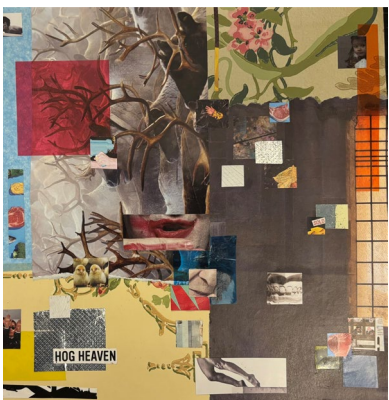
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