



RACHEL ROSSIN

MAGENTA PLAINS

Rachel Rossin has mounted recent solo exhibitions at the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK; 14a, Hamburg, Germany; Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH; Signal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Tennis Elbow, The Journal Gallery, New York, NY; and Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia. Her work has been included in group exhibitions and projects at the Louvre Museum Auditorium, Paris, FR; Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH; K11 Museum of Art, Shanghai, China; Kiasma Contemporary Museum of Art, Helsinki, Finland; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; and more. She has been a guest lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; St. delschule, Frankfurt, Germany; New Museum, New York, NY; and at MIT, Cambridge, MA. Her work is currently on view at Hyundai Motorstudio Beijing in "World on a Wire," the first exhibition in a new partnership between Hyundai Motor Company and Rhizome, the New Museum's digital art affiliate, subsequently travelling to Hyundai Motorstudio Moscow and Hyundai Motorstudio Seoul.

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The New York Times

13 May 2021

The New York Times

4 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Hassan Hajjaj's "My Rockstars"; Hanne Darboven's matrix of digits; Patty Chang's list of fears; and Rachel Rossin's painting-projection blends.

Rachel Rossin

Through May 22. Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, Manhattan; 917-388-2464, magentaplains.com.



Rachel Rossin's "Figment of a Fugue State" (2020), oil and airbrushed acrylic on panel with embedded holographic display. Rachel Rossin and Magenta Plains

Rachel Rossin, a self-taught digital tinkerer who began coding at age 8, has made art out of seemingly everything: deepfake videos, canaries trained to sing dubstep, electronics submerged in mineral oil. Her solo show “Boohoo Stamina,” at Magenta Plains, features 17 new paintings made this year and last. Rossin’s media of choice? Oil, acrylic, enamel and the occasional [hologram fan](#). (Think spinning helicopter blades mounted with LED lights.) These items more often serve as flashy digital signage in back-alley electronics shops, but Rossin embeds them into her canvases, where they project digital images just inches away from the paint itself.

In a lesser artist’s hands, these pieces would come off as gimmicks. But Rossin’s take is strangely compelling. At times, her compositions evoke the visionary, spray-painted works of the Romanian-American artist Hedda Sterne, to terrific effect. At other times, Rossin somehow gets her brush marks to replicate the pixelated feel of virtual-reality worlds.

Largely abstract, the paintings nonetheless also feature enigmatic symbols drawn from the digital sphere. The staff of the Greek god Hermes appears in one hologram fan. Hazy, airbrushed catlike figures lurk in several works — paeans to the internet’s most beloved characters. Are memes, avatars and emojis Jungian archetypes, too? Rossin seems to think so. The paintings’ dreamlike qualities work well, as do the unusual ways they both invite and repel touch. Normally, any impulse we might have to run our hands across a painting’s thickly impastoed surface is quickly curbed by the anticipated scorn of a gallery attendant. Here, stray fingers might jam up a hologram fan, obstructing its projected image and earning a disciplinary whack from the fan’s blade. That threat imbues the show with a hum of cool, violent energy, in bracing contrast to the paintings’ balmier scenes. DAWN CHAN

Artillery Magazine

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OUTSIDE LA: Rachel Rossin

Magenta Plains, New York

by Annabel Keenan | May 11, 2021



Rachel Rossin, installation view downstairs at Magenta Plains, 2021

While the intersection of art and technology may be new for some, artist Rachel Rossin has been a pioneer in the field for nearly her whole life, having taught herself programming at a young age. Her practice includes painting, sculpture and digital art, as well as hybrid combines that incorporate elements of different disciplines. In her latest exhibition, “Boohoo Stamina” at New York’s Magenta Plains, Rossin presents a new body of gestural paintings that explore loss and methods of self-repair.

Pushing the boundaries of traditional and digital art, these recent works seamlessly weave together elements of both the physical and virtual worlds. A clear marrying of the two; some of her paintings include embedded holograms. One such combine, *Boo-hoo (brain)* (2020), features a close-up of a pink face with bright blue tears pouring out of the eyes. Above the eyes is a hologram of a brain that rotates continuously. While the inclination might be to search for a projector or hidden screen, the holograms are installed in the works themselves.



Rachel Rossin,
"Boo-hoo (brain)," 2020

The figure in *Boo-hoo (brain)* is one of many avatars from the digital realm depicted in both the painted and holographic elements. The pink figure is joined by others from Rossin's digital library, including cats and harpies, perhaps avatars of the artist herself. The allusion to sadness in both the tears and the title of *Boo-hoo (brain)* set the tone for the exhibition.

Addressing the theme of self-repair, Rossin explores the tools we use to heal in both the physical and virtual worlds with images of crutches, braces and the staff of Hermes or Caduceus. In *Tall Cat on Mend* (2021), the artist has painted a cat that appears to be propped up on crutches. The cat, another avatar or a nod to the proliferation of internet cats, is ethereal with its soft, washy colors. Avatars are useful tools to act as proxies for our physical selves, an idea the artist has investigated previously in her practice. Related to the concept of a sentinel species, like the canary in the coal mine sent to detect danger, avatars and our internet-selves are vehicles through which we grow, heal and even test out different identities.



Rachel Rossin, *Set Elements for a Tome To Me* and *Tall Cat on Mend* (installation view), 2021

Next to the cat is another feline figure in *Set Elements for a Tome To Me* (2021). Whereas the tall cat's crutches were painted, Rossin has attached an aluminum brace to the surface of this second painting, introducing another tool to patch the figure together. Slightly robotic, the brace hints at VR equipment and prosthetics, again marrying digital and physical methods of repair.

While the works themselves blur the boundaries of digital and physical, the exhibition as a whole takes this even further. From the flickering images and whirling hum of the holograms to the blue light in the den-like bottom floor of the gallery, there is no beginning or end to Rossin's physical and digital worlds. Instead, she weaves the two together to the point where their defining characteristics no longer exist and the viewer finds themselves surrounded by avatars in a glowing, buzzing, hybrid space.

Rachel Rossin: "Boohoo Stamina"

[Magenta Plains](#)

New York, NY

Runs thru May 22

Cultbytes

8 May 2021

Cultbytes

Interviews

Rachel Rossin's Virtual World: How the Invisible Infrastructure of Technology Helps to Parse Reality

Annabel Keenan
May 8, 2021



Rachel Rossin. Image courtesy of the artist.

Rachel Rossin is a New York-based multimedia artist, virtual reality savant, and self-taught programmer whose works blend the boundaries between the physical and the digital. In her current solo show at Magenta Plains, Rossin presents a body of new gestural paintings that are at once captivating, yet disorienting, subtly weaving together digital and traditional art-making methods. Titled “Boohoo Stamina,” the exhibition addresses themes of loss and healing, and explores how the invisible infrastructures of technology and the internet have come to define how we’ve experienced life—the good and the bad—over the last year.

Speaking with Cultbytes, Rossin gave us a close look into her practice, including how she first became involved with virtual reality, the ways in which technology can be both therapeutic and escapist, and her view on the current makeup of the NFT market.

Annabel Keenan: *Your current exhibition at Magenta Plains is a great showcase of your work, as well as a more personal look into loss and self-repair. Before diving into the show, can you explain how you became involved with VR and programming?*

Rachel Rossin: It really started with my great grandfather, who was a mechanic for Burroughs Adding Machine and then IBM and was a really intuitive person when it came to hardware and technology. He left a lot of these old machines when he passed. They were really just old parts and, as a child, I got into putting them together and breaking them apart, which built my understanding of computing and hardware.

AK: *How did the art side of things evolve?*

RR: It evolved more specifically out of the only machine that he left that actually functioned – a dot matrix printer that was command line, which is just text on the screen without a virtual space. Those are my first memories of how art became involved by making these drawings with the dot matrix printer. I have an [Art21 documentary](#) that came out on May 5th and I talk about this a lot because my mom actually found these first drawings that I made – and the date on them would mean I was six. It's crazy to think that I was using command line at age six, but I was just doing what children do – playing and accidentally breaking things.

It gave me the advantage in terms of access to understanding early computers and programming. When Windows 95 came out, which was the first graphic user interface for an operating system that I was introduced to, I knew exactly what was behind there and I was able to then see code as something completely familiar. It felt very native and very much like home to me.

AK: *What made you want to actually create virtual art and virtual spaces? Understanding the technology is one thing, but your dedication to the craft has spanned nearly 30 years.*

RR: For me it has to do with escapism, which in a lot of ways can be a form of therapy. I think this is the same for other people as well. Of course, this can also be very unhealthy, but it can also be a necessary way to parse reality or to cope with reality where you need a break. I grew up in South Florida in a pretty frenetic environment with a lot of siblings and my parents were stretched thin financially, which led to pretty consistent uncertainty. This really contributed to my wanting to make art as virtual spaces that were proxies for home.



Installation view of "Rachel Rossin: Boohoo Stamina" at Magenta Plains, New York, 2021.

AK: *This brings me to my next question about the works in "Boohoo Stamina." This idea of loss, healing, and self-repair is evident in the exhibition title, and it really comes through in the works themselves with imagery, like the Caduceus, crutches, crying eyes, and the aluminum braces. There's definitely a sense of the show as a kind of proxy and a venue through which you can heal. How did this show come to fruition?*

RR: Thank you for that question and for really looking into the content of the works. It's one of my more vulnerable shows. It might not seem like that on the surface, but when you really get into the material, you see the repeated imagery of the harpies, which is an avatar I frequently use, as well as the Caduceus, which I've been using for about a year. I like the Caduceus because it's so ubiquitous and has persisted for as long as through human history, which makes me feel small. I love it as a symbol that has hung around and more or less stayed the same visually, but how did we get here? It's so archaic and it's been passed down across cultures and reached beyond language.

There's this imagery related to loss and healing, and, as you mentioned, the title "Boohoo Stamina," of course points to that as well. This past year has been difficult for everyone with all that we've been through, and I've lost five people that were very close to me. At our core, we're all going through things and working on processing these bigger human feelings. It's been interesting to see the role that technology has played. That's the question that the show is posing: what is this invisible infrastructure that's put this grid on top of all of us and how has it served us in times of tragedy when we've been so isolated? I'm interested in the way that I lean on technology now and the way that I leaned on it when I was younger. Now there's this fatigue that really came over the last year, which is why I decided to make the larger paintings in the show, which are symbolically me leaning into the body and leaning into the language of painting using expressionistic marks – marks that really hold time. There's something interesting to me in how expressionistic paintings hold time, you can see where the artist stood, how they held the brush, which contrasts heavily with the language of technology. There's a sterility and stiffness to technology, even if there are time-based elements.

AK: *This exploration of the digital and the physical spans across your practice. You often incorporate elements of your digital creations in your physical works, and in turn your digital art takes cues from the physical forms. Can you explain what's involved with this process?*

RR: It's funny, I really can't tell you how this happens. I can track some things when I look back on them, like the Caduceus started as drawings and they turned into a sculpture that I made in a VR application. A lot of the VR space that the paintings are based off of are spaces I make on reflections about embodiment, but they're made when I can't see my own body. There's this real sense of déjà vu of how the body feels. From there it can become a simple, playful, mindspace where things just come up. I use this VR space the same way that I use my sketchbook, but the difference is that in a virtual space, I'm able to move around more freely. I used to lucid dream frequently in high school and it's very similar to that where you're able to move the light around and control things and sketch in a way without this flatlander approach. In contrast, when I am making actual VR works I approach those as project-based. My virtual reality works are self-contained ideas. There's not a lot of chance that can be blown into them. They're executed in much more of a game-developer approach, which is pretty straightforward.



Rachel Rossin, "Figment of a Fugue State," 2020, oil and airbrushed acrylic on panel with embedded holographic display. Courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

AK: *A few of the works in “Boohoo Stamina” embody a close weaving of the digital and the physical with holograms embedded in the actual surface of the paintings. The exhibition is somewhat disorienting in that sense, where the visitor struggles to understand where the physical ends and the digital begins. When did you start experimenting with holograms in your work?*

RR: Around 2018, but what’s really interesting is that it’s essentially an old technology, a zoetrope with LED. I spoke recently with Zachary Kaplan from Rhizome and Scott Fisher, who was at the forefront of inventing VR, and we were talking about his fascination with stereoscopic images and how a lot of these technologies have existed for so long, but you just wait until you need to use them. It’s almost like persistent amnesia. In a way technology is so frail, but it’s also very familiar and always around even if you’re not using it, much like the image of the Caduceus. There’s this sense that we need things to be novel for them to be relevant when they are just essentially tools that we already have. I like exploring that.



Installation view of “Rachel Rossin: Boohoo Stamina” at Magenta Plains, New York, 2021.

AK: *The holograms contribute to the blurring of the physical and digital spaces of the gallery itself. They add an unexpected layer with the flickering images and constant whirling noise. Then, when you go downstairs, the whole lower level is cast in a blue light that completely transforms the viewer, as if they’re one of your avatars in your virtual world.*

RR: Absolutely, I’m so glad you got that. I really wanted it to work. I was worried that putting the gels on the lights would cast blue on the paintings, so we had to be careful about finding the right type of spotlights that could cut through the blue to still properly light the works. That was a bit of a quest that I thought was really worth it, even though it’s so subtle. I wanted it to feel like you were a part of this virtual, foggy blue space.

The first time I went down to the lower floor of the gallery to see if the blue light would work, I felt instantly small, like I was in some sort of simulated environment. And I was like, yes, yes, yes, yes. This smallness, and even sadness, that comes through is associated with virtual spaces in general when you're separated from people, which we all are now in real life. That's really how I'm feeling right now, because of how much my social interactions and relationships have had to lean on virtual spaces. I felt that it's necessary to express this, as well as our perseverance and stamina.



Rachel Rossin, "Boohoo (brain)," 2020, oil, airbrushed acrylic, and graphite on panel with embedded holographic display. Courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

AK: *In your previous works, you've explored the concept of the sentinel species, like the canary sent into the coal mine to detect danger before people enter. The avatars in your works at Magenta Plains take this idea even further. Can you talk about how "Boohoo Stamina" relates to your earlier explorations of this idea?*

RR: Oh, I'd love to. "Boohoo Stamina" is sort of the sequel to a show that I had in September at 14A, my gallery in Hamburg, that was called "[The Sentinel \(tears, tears\)](#)", where I actually trained a canary to sing dubstep. I had been learning about the finch family of birds and the way their neurology works from a whitepaper on birdsong and electronic music. Essentially, when they are learning a new song, usually when they are still young, there's a pattern rhythm that makes them take to EDM and dubstep quickly, as the beats per minute is similar to birdsong. I've been training finches with electronic music for years. As we were leading up to the pandemic I kept hearing people talk about sentinel species and the canary in the coalmine, and I decided to make a video of me training the bird titled "The Sentinel" to accompany the show. The whole idea feels to me like two parts, the first with the canary project and then this second part with avatars as these sentinel beings.

My most recent NFT relates to this work and [you can see the canary that I trained](#) is scoring this larger virtual reality simulation, but the longer video of me training the bird is 20 minutes and really works better in a gallery setting.

AK: *Speaking of NFTs, you've always been working with digital art and in this hybrid space of digital meets physical, but, for a lot of people, this is a new topic. As we've all seen, the NFT market has gone wild over the last few months with an increase in minting and buying from seasoned digital artists, young artists, as well as speculators. How do you feel about this increase in mainstream NFT popularity?*

RR: I think technology is here to stay, but this is an interesting time. Unfortunately there are a lot of similarities to an MLM (multi level marketing) or Ponzi scheme kind of thing going on where you do see some younger artists that don't have a market trying to enter the space and not do well. The people who are doing the best in NFTs already have big art markets or are famous or have some sort of footprint like a lot of followers. I think about my friend Rafaël Rozendaal, who has been making digital art for some 15 years and is doing extremely well with NFTs. For someone like Rafael who has been putting in the work over years and years as a completely dedicated artist and has finally been able to make money from this new popularity, that's amazing and completely deserved. This is his medium and this is what he cares about. But then you have people without any established market coming in and spending like \$300 on gas fees, depending on how Ethereum fluctuates, and they're hoping that they'll make that money back.

It reminds me of those art competitions in the backs of magazines where if you send in your drawing of the dog copied perfectly, they would give you some sort of elaborate prize. You'd have to pay five dollars or something and hope to win. A total Ponzi scheme. That's the unfortunate part of people jumping into NFTs remind me of and that makes me worried for them.

Artnet

6 May 2021

artnet

Art World

‘It Was Like Making Homes’: Watch Artist Rachel Rossin Build Entire Worlds in Her Hybrid Digital Artwork

As part of a collaboration with Art21, hear news-making artists describe their inspirations in their own words.

Caroline Goldstein, May 6, 2021



Production still from the Art21 "New York Close Up" film, "Rachel Rossin's Digital Homes." © Art21, Inc. 2021.

SHARE



Growing up in West Palm Beach, Florida, artist [Rachel Rossin](#) was often desperate to escape. Since that's not particularly easy when you're a kid, Rossin, like so many others, found escapism through the internet.

As a kid, Rossin taught herself the basics of computer programming, and soon moved on to hacking, losing herself in multiplayer video games like *Call of Duty*. Those early formative experiences set the groundwork for what would become her mature artistic practice blending computer imagery and new technology with analog painting methods.

"The way I was making art before I knew it was art, it was like making homes," Rossin says in a new video as part of [Art21's New York Close Up series](#).

In her pursuit of always "trying to find a home," [Rossin](#) found a sense of safety and care within *Call of Duty*, adopting a male avatar "to sort of live inside." The neutral anonymity of her avatar stood in contrast to the male-dominated gaming culture she was in, acting as a sort of shield from threats of harassment.



Production still from the Art21 “New York Close Up” film, “Rachel Rossin’s Digital Homes.” © Art21, Inc. 2021.

In the video, which is part of [Art21’s](#) participation in the collaborative Feminist Art Coalition Initiative, Rossin is at work in her Brooklyn studio preparing for a group exhibition called “[World on a Wire](#)” that is organized by Rhizome and the Hyundai Motor Company.

In Rossin’s work *I’m my loving memory*, Plexiglas sculptures with virtual imagery printed on them are melted into humanoid figures distorted by color and shadow. The futuristic images represent the dual aspects of Rossin’s process, combining virtual iconography with a personal touch.

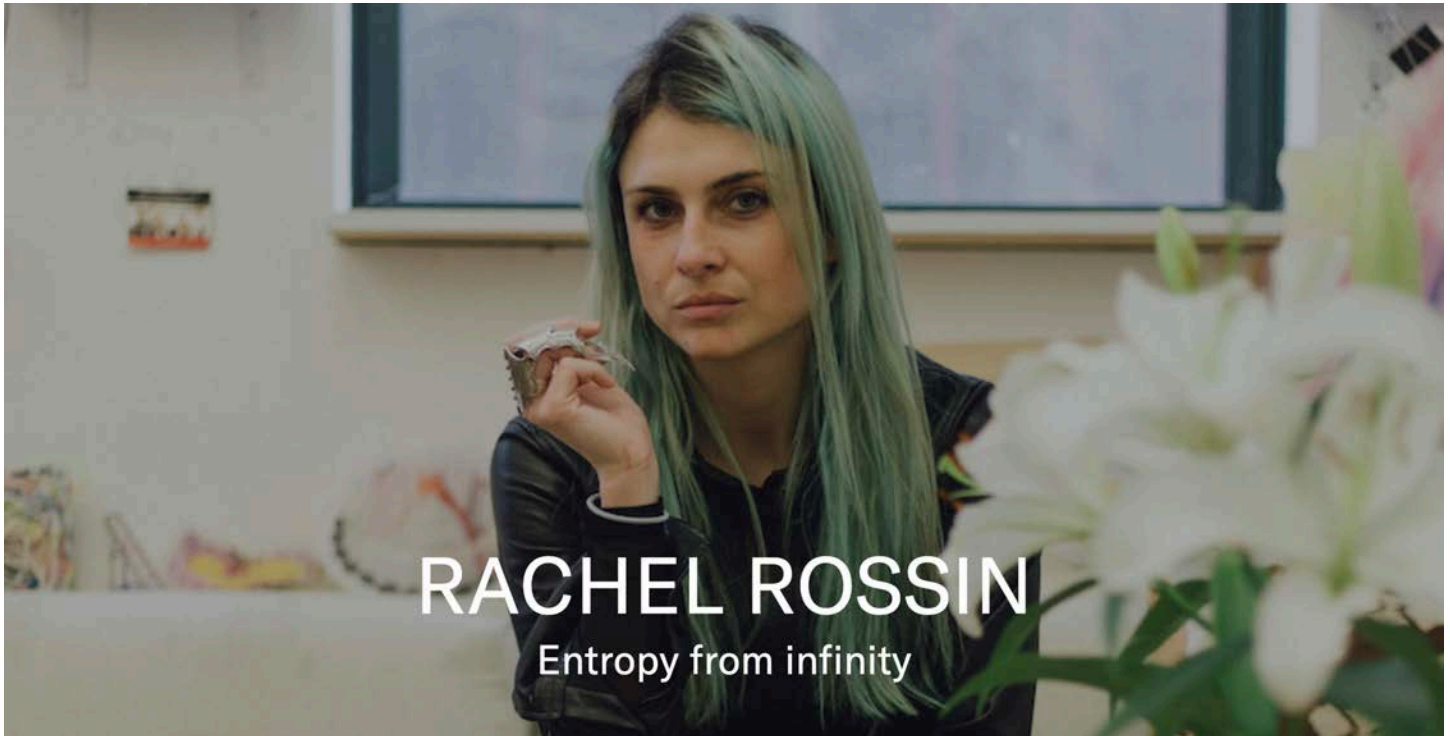
One of the avatars Rossin keeps to herself is a creature she calls a “harpy,” which is half human, half bird. “She speaks to a reality that most people feel,” Rossin tells [Art21](#), “which is so much of our emotional and cognitive space lived in virtual spaces, but still... tethered to a mortal coil.”

More of Rossin’s works are on view at Magenta Plains in the solo exhibition “[Boohoo Stamina](#)” (on view through May 22). The show continues the artist’s pursuit to answer questions about how technology and alternate realities can extend, enhance, or limit the nature of being human.

Killscreen

18 February 2021

KILLSCREEN



RACHEL ROSSIN
Entropy from infinity

February 18, 2021 / Interview by Alex Westfall | Photography by David Evan McDowell



How do we account for the tension between technology's infinite, unrestricted promise and the impermanence of being human? Rachel Rossin interrogates this slippage. Floating between painting, VR worlds, holograms, and more, the Brooklyn-based artist carries with her the essence of what it means to be alive. Rossin's work meditates on and pushes the boundaries of human perception, the tenderness, and the vulnerability of empirical experience. Here, she speaks with us on her childhood underwater, the illusory nature of immersive technology, and the need to return to entropy.

Rachel's new project, *I'm my loving memory*, is in Rhizome's traveling show, [World on a Wire](#).

Was there something about growing up in Florida that drew you to virtual worlds?

Many young people are attracted to technology in the first place because there's usually something to escape from. My community and my home environment were both really intense environments. To cope with that, my young mind went towards spaces that felt safer. There was a very therapeutic necessity.

Also, I grew up so close to the ocean and spent a lot of time underwater. It just felt so similar in a way. There's this thing that was just out of reach beyond this surface. The surface tension of the water felt very similar to the surface tension of the virtual screen. When we first had dial-up internet, I moved into coding and doing small visual experiments online. That's probably why it felt so native.

My great-grandfather worked as a typewriter mechanic, and then that he was at the Burroughs Adding Machine company. He was a high school dropout—a mechanic when that turned into IBM. He was given a bunch of IBM computers that were then just left in our garage once he died. Those were things that I could tinker with—basically garbage. Especially in the 90s, people didn't know what to do with something like that. That's how I started building hardware.

The first experiments were small drawings with the dot matrix printer. I was making shapes on the computer and then printing them out and making drawings. I was also breaking things, doing ASCII art, which I didn't know at the time. Trying to open the operating system, then I'd have to figure out how to fix it, or I'd get in a lot of trouble. I was fascinated with the world that came with the Windows 95... those maze or pipe screensavers. I was trying to figure out how to make simulated environments.

What was the BFA program like at Florida state? Were there particular professors or classes that helped shaped your practice?

It's a football school, so the teachers are doing their best—my Professor [Owen Mundy](#) showed me Ryan Trecartin's and Jordan Wolfson's work. I started to understand that there was a dialogue that was happening with artists that were alive. Before that, I thought that Leonardo da Vinci was the same as Bruce Nauman. For me, there was more access to spaces like DeviantArt or manga.

Luckily, I was encouraged to do experiments, but the program was very separate in the practices. I was secretly making AR experiments with image-based recognition. I would show the painting an image, and it would recognize itself. Those were my first early hybrid works.

You cite Hannah Arendt and Robert Smithson as influences. What draws you to those thinkers?

I think a lot about Gretchen Bender's and Susan Sontag's writing. Robert Smithson's ideas go beyond the novelty of the medium. That's the essence of all writers that I'm attracted to working in the language of what it means to be human.

I don't work in the language of technology. When you think about it, technology is the promise of being able to live forever, ideas of utopia. Whereas being human is very much rooted in loss...which, in shorthand for Smithson, is entropy. It's the tender, vulnerable, and fleshy experience is of being alive. I'm looking for something that's essential to our lived experience—what it's like to have a body, what it's like to lose people that you love, what it's like to be a part of the messiness and contradictions of that. It goes beyond the medium. That's why those people are compasses.

When you were starting out working with these ideas, were there biases in the technology that you had to get around?

I look at where the most resistance is and try to press on that. I think about the piece *Man Mask*, which was this piece where I led a body awareness meditation from inside an avatar I hacked from *Call of Duty*. With Lauren Cornell, who curated that series, I was talking about this experience of pretending to be male because it was just easier to hide in plain sight instead of being harassed. Looking back on those experiences, I was thinking, where are the pressure points or the points of pain, where's the knot in the muscle?

With virtual reality, when I made *Ghost Hand*, I felt like there wasn't enough. People were putting on these bubbles on their heads, and they weren't able to express their embodiment—they're on these rides. So to combat that, I was having the user scrape part of the piece away as they burrowed through it.

With all technologies and media in general, the most interesting thing for the medium usually is the thing it's most suited for. The question that I had was, why was I using virtual reality? If I was just using it as a novelty or trick, there was no point if I was just going to be making something that could be a film. They wanted 360 videos for the virtual reality piece because of the app's constraints and the amount of money they had. They couldn't really host interactive things.

The reason a lot of new media work never touches people is that they get seduced by the novelty or the newness of something without expressing anything that comes from its core.

For projects where you have both a digital and a physical component, are there challenges in the translation that you come up against? Do you think about moving between these two spaces as translation?

Form follows function. So much of the way that I'm working or making the reference images for the paintings or just any of that is in a virtual space.

It's the same way that you'd make a maquette. I'm using a lot of 3D software already. It's quite easy for that to be the kombucha starter for what the other parts of the piece will be. It's the most effective way to communicate on that level is to show the different facets of the practice. It's pretty natural.

For *Stalking the Trace*, the presentation at the Zabłudowicz Collection, I wanted the video piece on the outside and the structure of the installation to feel like the lobby or the waiting room or the opening to the VR work. That was a challenge because there's no way to elegantly program interactive things in the physical space. To solve that, I used the zoetrope format, so that when you walked around physically in that area, there would be the illusion of a before or after image or walking through what felt like an animation device. It was an optical illusion—a sleight of the hand.

That worked nicely for me because it's talking about the body—the inherent frailty and how easy it is to fool ourselves into believing that all we need is an accelerometer in this virtual world. VR is very different from what it is to be in reality. We all know that because of how uncomfortable it is to have a headset on.

That was a nice way of talking about the guts of the piece; the sleight-of-hand of what a lot of visual-based technologies are doing to us.



Is there a binary between observation and embodiment that you're trying to collapse?

When I'm starting paintings, I do an exercise called recursive live drawing. You sit with your body in virtual reality. If I'm stuck on a problem, what I'll do is I try to draw or represent the body the way it, the way it feels instead of the way it looks. I can feel when I do a scan really fast. It's like, For some reason, the backs of my lungs are more prominent than the rest of the body, so it's like drawing. And how do I express that? This very internal space that's really based on recursion or using the language of technology to understand something further.

Your process involves the physical act of painting or the corporeal experience of existing in a virtual environment. Could you talk more about the body and corporeal movements as important to you?

Time moves differently in the virtual world. I love programming, the puzzles in making something interactive. Most of the interactive pieces that I make always have the user or the viewer as the arbiter. So in *The Sky is a Gap*, the viewpoint and the physical position of the user drove the piece. It was tracking the viewer's gaze and progress to move time forwards and backward, for instance. The viewer's gaze acts as this entropy laser eating away parts of the piece. You would leave the piece with a different experience—there's this element of the interactive work, this intrinsic human quality, of what it is to move through space.

When it comes to the painting, it teeters into a seesaw where the work influences itself or each respective aspect. It literally becomes, what is painting? It's marking my own time and my perspective. When you learn how to read a painting, you can see where the painter is standing. You can see the way that they're moving through time, based on the style they have, but then it becomes very literally about embodiment.

When I'm working in those spaces, the arbiter is myself instead of the viewer. The hologram combines become these annotations or windows in an even more literal way, like filters layered on top of the paintings. The holograms combine what's happening in a lot of my interactive works as tone poems. That's exactly what the works are about—the relationship between the perception of this fleshy, vulnerable thing, and then this idea of infinity, which is totally a farce.

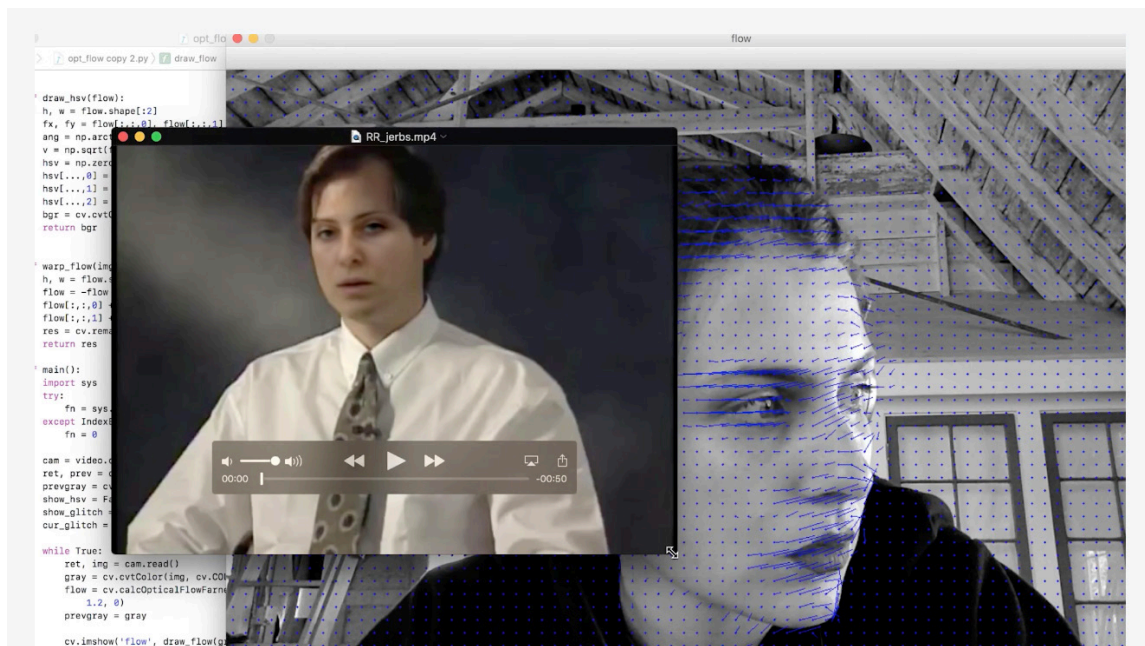
Rhizome

26 June 2019

RHIZOME

Glitches in the Simulation

The Phillips x Daata artist commissions

By [Michael Connor](#)
Jun 26, 2019

Rachel Rossin, *Recursive Truth*, 2019. Still frame from digital video.

In Jeremy Couillard's *HOTR Home Furnishing*, an IKEA-like warehouse store serves as a re-education camp for billionaires following the Earth's salvation at the hands of aliens. As a necessary condition of the transition to a more equitable and climate-friendly society, the aliens are attempting to retrain the billionaires of the old world to perform humble and useful tasks—specifically, to assemble prefab furniture.

This work, along with Rachel Rossin's *Recursive Truth*, was commissioned as part of a partnership between [Phillips auction house](#) and [Daata Editions](#), an initiative that aims to cultivate a market for born-digital art. Exhibited at Phillips's galleries in New York in April and June respectively, both works probed the possibilities and limits of worldbuilding and simulation as political gesture.

Rossin's *Recursive Truth* puts particular focus on worldbuilding as a material practice. The work feels at once like a collaged composition and a documentary glimpse into the artist's practice, a glimpse of the labor involved in working with digital materials. As Rossin records her computer's desktop, she opens a series of windows, creating a dense and layered composition of code, video clips, music tracks, and image processing.

Rossin herself appears on a webcam, a studio-like environment in the background; lines of code emerge on a text editor in an adjacent window. Room tone and the sound of typing can be heard. The computer is processing Rossin's image, attempting to track the displacement of pixels from one frame to the next using a machine vision technique known as [optical flow](#). This gives way to a clip of a forest on a windy day, where a similar visualization is performed—but in this case, the computer seems to struggle to reduce the motion in such a complex scene to a manageable schematic. This processed imagery soon gives way to examples of scenes that are syntheses generated by these kinds of analytical processes: deep fake videos, in which a machine learning system is used to superimpose live video of a person's face, and clips from CGI fantasy realms which call to mind Fortnite, a massively successful online videogame which commands the money and attention of vast communities of players.

"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" begins to play: "*They used to tell me I was building a dream/ with peace and glory ahead.*" Suddenly, Billie Eilish interrupts Bing Crosby: "*I wanna end me*"—alluring death drive replacing wistful regret. A convertible crashes, its motion carefully measured by the optical flow visualization; a rendered scene seems to melt, disaster is upon us. At this point, Rossin's face appears superimposed on Steve Jobs' in a clip taken from an interview conducted during his NeXT Computer days, every bit the surly and misunderstood genius.

The references in Rossin's video sit in dynamic tension with one another, revolving around the social realities surrounding synthetic worlds: the labor that goes into them, the underlying mathematical processes, the legislation, the founding of tech empires, their potential impact on viewers, and the artist's role within that. Ultimately, the quotidian feel of the clips and the melancholic musical choices contrast with the supposedly transformative power of the tools portrayed. "Technology is just a reflection of ourselves," Rossin asserts in [a video interview accompanying the commission](#), and in her video simulation is less a way of visualizing a radical break from our existing reality, an opportunity to reinvent and disrupt, than an exploration of the very relationships that govern it.

The works by Rossin and Couillard from the Phillips and Daata Editions collaboration represent variations on the philosophically rich question of the relationship between world and worldbuilding. For Couillard, rapid prototyping of alternate utopian realities becomes a way to isolate dystopian aspects of the present. For Rossin, worldbuilding is a way of engaging directly and materially with the dense technocratic systems that structure much of our reality. (*"They used to tell me I was building a dream..."*) Both of their positions have a great deal to teach us about our current reality, in which simulation plays an important role.

Faced with news cycles that seem increasingly apocalyptic and unbelievable, social media users have frequently made reference of late to the simulation hypothesis—the idea that our lives are actually playing out inside an artificial simulation by some incomprehensibly powerful supercomputer: *"There's a glitch in the simulation."* It's a kind of ironic humor, intended to signal how powerless we all are in the face of this technocratic system—and in this respect, it's also a kind of fantasy: those without power have no responsibility to act. Couillard and Rossin might concede that in some ways we do live in simulation, but their work reveals the simulation as real, material, having political import. That's no dream you're building; it's our world.

Frieze

26 April 2019

FRIEZE

Possibilities of Creation

Daniel Birnbaum, curator of the first Frieze VR exhibition, *Electric*, speaks to artist Rachel Rossin about VR's past, present and future

D

BY DANIEL BIRNBAUM IN FRIEZE WEEK MAGAZINE | 26 APR 19



Daniel Birnbaum You work in installation, painting and virtual reality. Do your physical works anticipate what you realize in VR?

Rachel Rossin Sometimes a discovery in painting ends up being something that can lead into a virtual reality piece. My understanding of spaces completely changed once I started making paintings from virtual reality. I look now at the Hudson River Valley painters and there's almost this... it's not a smell, but you know that quality in those paintings? An openness, an uncanniness, a sense of the screen...

DB I believe certain artists have anticipated the capacity of VR before it was even a concept. Marcel Duchamp included mathematical dimensions in his work, invisibly. We've spoken about Hilma af Klint, who thought she was painting things that cannot be seen, and translating her works in VR. Is that something you would actually want to do?

RR Because I love and appreciate her work so much, it's very easy to want to do that. I've been talking about how painters capture space. Af Klint is thinking about this too. The shallowness of those paintings. There's something that feels like it's working from the wake of a movement through space or something: a sort of recursiveness.

DB She had this utopian idea of building a spiral structure for displaying her work, that she refers to as a temple. With VR, one could actually help her finally realize it.

RR It's very straightforward. She already left us directions: it's just executing something in technology that she didn't have access to.

DB I think once or twice in every century there's an innovation that changes the possibilities of creation, and there's a little window of opportunity before we define how it's used or not used. Do you think we're at the beginning or the end of that window for VR?

RR Very much at the beginning. There's still so much more ground to explore. Right now we're dependent on rendering. On the technical side, things are moving very fast. Our methods are all going to shift very quickly, and the electronics themselves too.

DB You are perhaps unusual because you're an artist but also a programmer and coder. You have basically created these works in this high-tech medium yourself. Are you self-taught?

RR Yes. But I think all programmers are self-taught. And you continue to be self-taught because it's always changing. The first things that I was making were really small applications: video games, but also non-games, like a sandbox or some sort of experimental world. Virtual reality for me is the intersection of programming games and installation art.

DB There's a tradition in contemporary art of creating immersive environments in vast spaces like Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in London. Do you think the spread of VR will make achieving this kind of effect too easy?

RR I don't know if there's such a thing as 'too easy', because then that just starts to move what the threshold is. It is becoming very easy to make things look really lovely in VR. The harder things are the ideas, of course.

DB What can you say about the piece you'll show in 'Electric'?

RR In *Man Mask* (2016), I'm performing a body-awareness meditation from inside of a *Call of Duty* character. It's my voice speaking, but you're inside this exploded video game world, where I've hacked all of the assets. It's actually the only passive 360 piece I've made.

DB On one level, one could say the medium is only fully explored when it involves all kinds of interactivity. But then, we couldn't show it to thousands of people, which is the plan here.

RR I think this is a good plan.

DB I've often seen VR being presented in art contexts in a marginal slightly sad way. Do you think VR will disrupt traditional ideas on where art is shown, and how it can reach audiences?

RR In Paul Valéry's 'The Conquest of Ubiquity' (1928), he talks about being able to recreate an orchestra as if you're sitting in front of it. That is a very large appeal for live virtual reality as a medium for experiential art. But there are more radical possibilities. I've been doing a lot of experiments with VR chat, and there's so much empathy in the way people are communicating with each other. Those types of interactions will change access to art, yes.

DB There is sometimes a critical impulse attached to VR, that it's somehow solipsistic; I always say that reading a novel is also something you do alone. Do you think it's just a misunderstanding that VR is somehow a lonesome medium?

RR I think right now it can be. In VR chat, you can tell the people who are just looking at it and aren't very engaged, and those people are not just engaged, but even take on added qualities: someone who's appearing as Kermit starts to act like Kermit. So it is social. Also, and maybe this is a little too grandiose, but I know that there are major companies having VR conferences so that people don't have to fly across the world. Think about the environmental impact of that...

DB I've been thinking about that too, being one of the worst when it comes to going everywhere for biennials etc. In the future, maybe there can be another kind of international dialogue through this omnipresent medium. The art world as I know it will always want moments of commonality where we meet and gather and have real exchanges. Speaking of exchanges, who are the people in this field who push you in some direction or inspire you?

RR Gretchen Bender is amazing. The amount of presence she brings to her work. She has an awareness of this terrain's potential for 'evil', and puts that into a place that is hopeful and not didactic. You were talking, earlier, about the Duchamp... what piece specifically?

DB It's to do with the Large Glass (1915–23). Actually, there's a group in Frankfurt who've turned the work into machinery, so it comes alive. Even people who spent decades thinking about the Large Glass understood it anew when they saw this version. So if artists anticipate the possibilities of technology, technological developments also sometimes show us new sides of art we think we already know.

The New York Times

1 May 2019

The New York Times

FRIEZE WEEK 2019

Want to Check Out Frieze? All You Need Is an App and a Headset

The art fair introduces virtual reality so the curious can view some works from afar.

By **Sophie Haigney**

May 1, 2019

'Man Mask' by Rachel Rossin



[Rachel Rossin](#) has long been thought of as a wunderkind of virtual reality-based art. Unlike many artists in the field, Ms. Rossin is a self-taught coder who works directly with the technology. Her work “Man Mask,” which was previously shown at the New Museum, draws from the worlds of gaming and guided meditation. She takes landscapes from “Call of Duty,” a military video-game franchise, but reframes them, as a woman’s voice drones dreamy mantras in the background: “Peace and cheerfulness are now becoming my normal state of mind.” The soldiers take on trippy, spirit-like qualities and the world becomes washed-out and strange.

Mr. Birnbaum said: “She has taken the violence away from the game and created a dream world.”

Hyperallergic

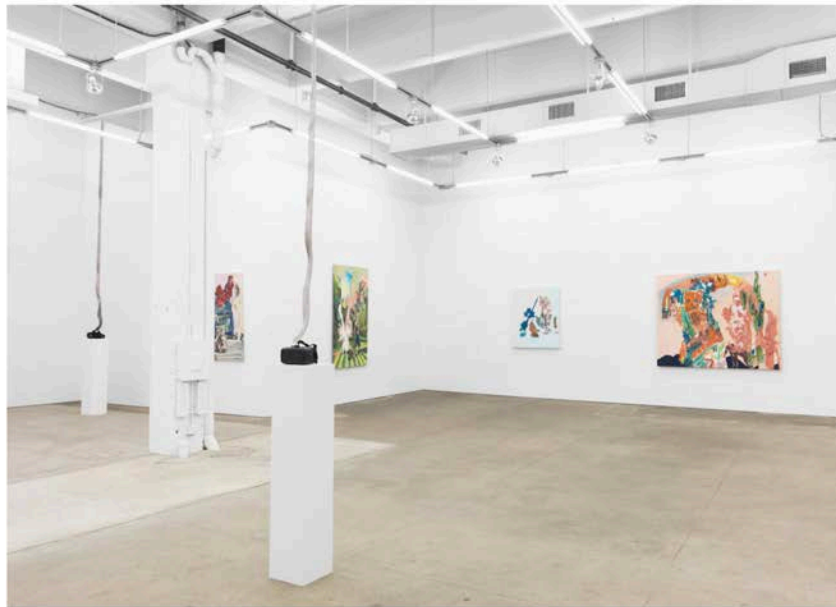
6 January 2018

HYPERALLERGIC**Painting as Total Environment**

Laura Owens, Keltie Ferris, Rachel Rossin, and Trudy Benson are exploring hybrid paintings that rival sculpture in their tactility, illusion, and physical depth.

**by Jason Stopa**

January 6, 2018



Rachel Rossin, "Lossy" (2015, installation view, image courtesy Signal Gallery)

The promotional material on the website of the virtual reality developer Oculus Rift makes some lofty, near-utopian claims, promising users an experience unlike anything else. I would argue that a similar claim with respect to painting could be made for the work of these four artists: Trudy Benson, Keltie Ferris, Laura Owens and Rachel Rossin.

Rossin is one of many recent artists, though the only one of these four, to actively engage with VR, yet she remains a painter. For a 2015 solo show at Signal Gallery, she scanned bits of her paintings — quasi-abstractions with some recognizable imagery — and other images from her studio and apartment to create a short video. Viewers had to use a Rift headset, through which they were thrust into a disparate environment of fragmented forms that occasionally dissolve into white, negative space. Attempting to locate themselves somewhere between the painting/apartment, the negative space, and their own bodily experience as they navigate the virtual space, viewers enter a fourth dimension that goes beyond traditional conventions of a physical encounter with a static, painted object in space and time.

Fold Magazine

January 2018

FOLD
MOLESKINE

AGENDA BY NADJA OERTELT

Rachel Rossin's Virtual Realities

How we lose touch with our bodies in virtual spaces.

PEAK PERFORMANCE



Over the past few years, Rachel Rossin has established herself as a pioneer of virtual reality art. Her last show, “Peak Performance” at Signal Gallery in New York, was a reflection on her experiences with the form. The work she created for it is like wreckage salvaged from the virtual world for our earthly study: beautiful paintings and sculptures based on VR renderings, and vivariums preserving slices of it. The larger point to these pieces is the inherent disembodiment of virtual reality — the sensation we get in VR that our physical bodies are irrelevant. Nadja Oertelt (science producer, documentarian, and co-founder of Massive Sci) caught up with Rossin to discuss the show, and together they delved into a deep conversation about art and humans caught between Virtual Reality and the supposedly real world.

NO: Your latest show “Peak Performance” deals with disembodiment in VR.

What got you thinking about your own body in relation to virtual space?

RR: I had been working for a year on a Virtual Reality series [“*The Sky is a Gap*”]. “Peak Performance” was created in response to the disembodied feeling I got while sculpting in VR. The sketches I made for it felt like body awareness exercises. Instead of looking at a reference image, I was recalling the memory of what having a body was like. In VR, you feel like the memory of a body, the emotional memory of a body. I thought about what parts of my body I remembered. Like, in one instance, I’m just lungs with a keyboard — a disembodied state of consciousness on the Internet, with residue of these extremely primitive and emotional interactions. I just kept coming across that feeling. I missed my body.

Was it nostalgic?

Yes, there was a nostalgia for the body, but through a digital lens. It was almost like I was already a digital entity, a proxy of myself recalling what it was like to have a body. So, the paintings and the virtual reality environments were about that, and in tandem I made plexiglass pieces, which were 3D prints of those environments. I printed out the paintings and then used a blowtorch to form these substrates. I put on a flame-retardant suit and folded the plexiglass around my body, giving it these kind of impossible hugs.

How did it feel to hug warm plexiglass?

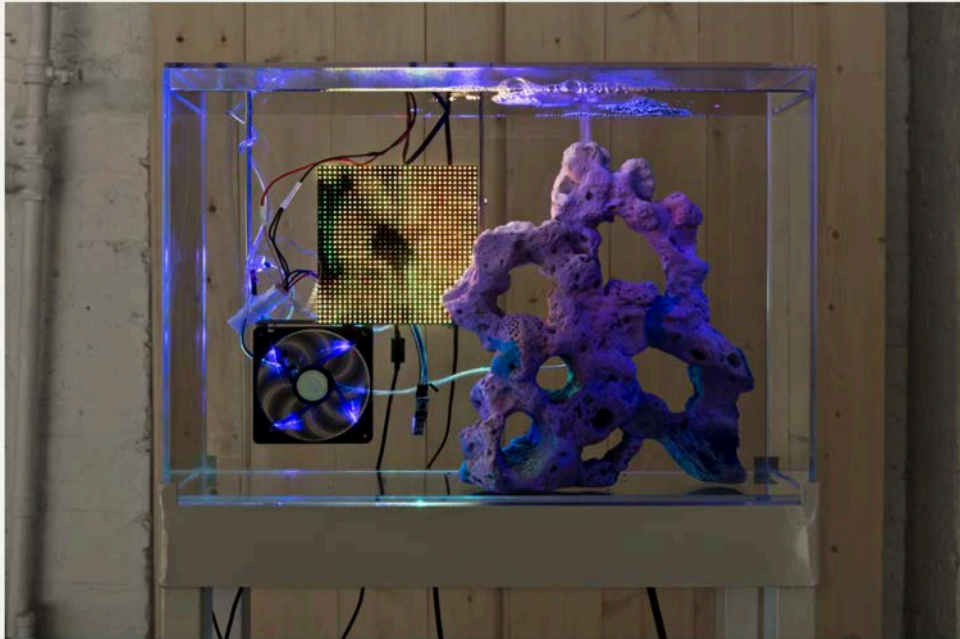
It was soft in this weird way, and then it hardened. I would heat the entire piece of plexi, burn it and then curl it around myself. It's sort of like a safety response or something. There's a sadness to those sculptures.

It's like you have to grieve the process of having lost something in VR because you can't be embodied. The whole thing is like a big memento mori for reality.

That's the internet too. It's all about death! [Laughs.] The medium itself is about death. It's like a facsimile of reality.

Do you remember the first time that you had a disembodied experience in VR?

It was pretty stupid, actually. I was just saying "Where's my body?" over and over again. It started off as that, at least: "Oh this is interesting, oh cool weird. Where's my body? Oh, look at that dog over there! Where's my body?" But then, if you stay in VR long enough, you eventually get used to it and then you feel sad about it. I was working on the roll-out for a Tilt Brush ad campaign. I spent a 10-hour workday in VR doing a piece for them, and I felt the ghost of my physical body overlaid in virtual reality after working so many hours. It was sad! I took the headset off and like I felt like a piece of metal. I felt so alien. I also ate too much candy that day so maybe it was not a totally normal experience, but I knew I had done a bad thing as soon as I got out onto the street. It was something I hadn't felt before. It reminded me of when people come out of deprivation tanks. I had had a lot of visual input and a marker for where my hands were in VR, which kept me tethered, but it was like I had lost all sense of my legs. It was hard to walk and I remember thinking, "I need to take a shower and get my body back." I love computers, of course. I want to be inside the computer. But after that I was like, *I want to be outside the computer now.*



Do you think VR is uncomfortable enough that it will prevent us from staying in those spaces for too long?

Yes, and I hope that virtual reality doesn't get better. I think it should stay uncomfortable and ugly and awkward. The fact that it's uncomfortable is a good thing for now. The risk with VR turning into something easy or something that feels like a part of our body, or even when it's no longer screen-based—that's where I start to get a little uncomfortable. Because I think that's when it will become an experience where people start forgetting how to walk.

How many hours a day do you spend in VR?

When I am developing on a piece, I like go in and check it out for 10 minutes at a time. I take a lot of breaks when I'm doing a lot of developing. Spending 10 hours in virtual reality is definitely not part of my routine!

If VR was more comfortable, would you be happy spending more time in it?

I'm happy being in between the two worlds. Or rather, I'm happy being based here in reality. I think we're also forgetting that virtual reality will probably seep into this reality more than we will go into it — in the sense that biotech will allow us to change our own bodies. The reasons you would want to transcend this reality would be because of time and space, or the limitations of gravity. If we get to a place where we're able to grow a new heart for ourselves — that's when VR seeps into our reality. That's actually when it's sneakier and scarier.

How do you think about the relationship between the internet and VR as mediums?

It's funny, because the internet is like the Id. It's a place where we can dissociate. We have primitive or reptilian brain reactions on the internet, anger and lust. We are evolutionarily wired to find negative patterns because it's evolutionary advantageous. It's fascinating that you have this reservoir — the internet — and it still elicits those responses even though we're disembodied. VR is a medium. The Internet isn't a medium because it doesn't have a single author. VR is more like a video game. So it's like saying "What is the link between the internet and video games?" They're in the same aisle at the Best Buy, but they're not the same thing. I've benefited personally from being able to change my identity, in order to feel safe, or in order to make money. The way that I first started making money was as a programmer and a web designer, and because I couldn't get any jobs with a female name, I had to change my name to Robert or Ray. So, I've reaped the benefits of being anonymous. We have this idea that technology is sort of aspirational, like the Internet is a pretty high-tech thing but we can't figure out empathy on it, and that's what everybody is calling on VR to solve. It's like they want it to be the empathy provider.

But how can VR be an empathy machine if it's replicating a reality where we have trouble empathizing?

Yeah, that's true. Of course, expecting VR to be an empathy machine when we can't even figure that out in this world is silly. I think it's dark, you know: what is the impact of technology on our consciousness and our sense of ethics and how we will be able to relate to each other? Certainly social media does not seem to improve things and I think people are waiting for VR to seep into social media.

We want love from VR. We want it to save us!

Well, we also want to be God. It's what people talk about in their hopes for the singularity.



For people who are thinking deeply about technology and using it for their art, these questions seem important.

I mean, it's almost like, why do painters paint? We still don't think of technology as a medium in the same way that painting or sculpture is. I grew up making paintings on top of Dot Matrix printers. While learning to program, I was learning how to paint, so it does feel like second nature. Using technology is playing with entropy in a metaphorical way. Technology is a metaphor or a lens for the human experience, for the way that we perceive reality. That is at the heart of what's fascinating and complex and paradoxical about it. It's the promise of immortality while still being so frail, so errant, and so dumb, you know? And that's what drives certain artists to use the medium that they use. I love painting for similar reasons. But right now, I'm actually in the process of building hardware and neural networks. I'm teaching it how to make work like me. And that's super funny because it's really bad. It's adorable.

Does the neural net have a name?

No. But it will have a male name probably, if it ever gets a name. [Laughs] I like technology because it's a mirror of ourselves. You know, my work now is all these sterile autopsies with copper wires. They just feel like bodies! I'm working all day with these electronics and they're all naked.

Do you cover them up when you leave your studio — you know, for the sake of modesty?

Was that a Rorschach test to see how crazy I am? No, I don't.

ARTFORUM



Rachel Rossin, *After GTA V*, 2015, oil on canvas, 60 × 78".

Rachel Rossin

ZIEHERSMITH

Themes from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* loom large throughout William Gibson's 2003 novel *Pattern Recognition*, which characterizes an American protagonist's trip to the UK as a disorienting encounter with a "mirror-world." But while Carroll framed his chiral universe as the product of minds and dreams, Gibson found alterity in machines and devices. Both these modes seemed alive in "Lossy," Rachel Rossin's recent solo show, whose nine paintings and a piece experienced via an Oculus Rift virtual-reality headset—titled *I Came and Went as a Ghost Hand*, 2015—bore unmistakable traces of Carroll's dark yet innocent whimsy as well as Gibson's tech-saturated neurasthenia.

Exhibiting an Oculus Rift work is a risky business. It's apt to monopolize the attention of novelty seekers while causing skeptics—those who can't forgive the burgeoning medium for its rough edges and unresolved questions—to shuffle quickly on by. (One such unresolved question: Should an Oculus Rift headset be exhibited on a pedestal?) In "Lossy," these risks yielded rewards when the device's limitations became a foil to painting's by-now-familiar constraints. There's nothing that quite emphasizes the static materiality of paint like a virtual world that offers zero physical resistance as viewers move specter-like through fragmented forms. In *I Came and Went as a Ghost Hand*, that virtual world lay somewhere between *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *The Martha Stewart Show*: Its two-and-a-half-minute looped mix of landscape and domestic space included canned goods in a fridge door overhead, a multicolored bed seemingly underfoot, and walls and vases and shrubbery drifting in place with the languor of inner tubes on a pool.

Overall, Rossin's process is a sort of exquisite corpse played out between human and machine: To create her canvases, she scanned various kinds of images and digitally manipulated them, then painted the results as observed from a computer screen. These image deformations were more than just your garden-variety Photoshop play: For the piece *After GTA V*, 2015, the artist began with the image of a sunset from *Grand Theft Auto V* (2013), and then crumpled and wadded it up, a bit like Richard Tuttle might crumple a canvas—the difference being that Rossin did so in simulated 3-D space, using photogrammetry software (which assigns and records distances between various coordinates of an image), and then translated the on-screen results back into an oil on canvas.

A similar process led to the genesis of *Mirror Milk*, 2015, which at first seems to depict a roughly painted kitten through a filter of soft tropicalia. The feline visage within, as it turns out, is a scanned image of a drawing Rossin made as a child. (According to Rossin, the work's title nods to Carroll's Alice asking her pet cat about "looking-glass milk"; to some Gibson fans, the title also inevitably evokes the "mirror-world milk" described in *Pattern Recognition*.) Meanwhile, the seed image of *Self Portrait*, 2015, was just that—an image of the artist, around which she digitally wrapped a scanned JPEG of a painting from her previous show. After subjecting the already warped images to a software simulation of gravitational forces, she then rendered the outcome as a painting; the result looks like a melting rainbow-sherbet bust of Baphomet.

The abstract imagery in Rossin's compositions seemingly comes from two places: from her own expressionist intuition and from rule-based, algorithm-driven filters of her image-editing software. (If the former inherits something of Carroll's world, produced via the unconscious, the latter inhabits the spirit of Gibson's, constituted via technology.) The show's fireworks happened at the intersection of these two modes, where the optical gobbledygook generated by a computer was rendered by hand as oils on canvas, and framed in the evolving tradition of abstract painting. In "Lossy," there was most certainly a kid hacker flexing her muscles. But the show revealed another image of Rossin as well: a painter who, for the moment, has found a very good vantage point from which to survey the chaos of a shifting media landscape.

—Dawn Chan

June 2015



The Transformative Effect of Rachel Rossin



Rachel Rossin, Installation view, Elliott Levenshick Gallery, New York, NY

Rachel Rossin, *Shelter of a Limping Substrate*

Elliott Levenshick Gallery

40 East 75th Street, New York, NY

through June 30th, 2015

By **JEFF GRUNTHANER**, JUN. 2015

Exhibiting at Elliot Levenshick gallery through June 30th, the "virtual *en plein air* paintings" that compose New York-based Rachel Rossin's solo show function like acts of translation, if not transliteration. Titled "Shelter of a Limping Substrate," the six oil paintings on exhibit in Levenshick's single-room, Upper East Side space mingle pop-culture hermeticism-warped landscapes of floriated patterns - with a tried and true, almost codified application of Impressionistic and Expressionist technique.

A show of, yes, flowers, Rossin rendered her themes digitally, creating globular dispersions of peonies, pansies and lilies uncannily reminiscent of the Google Maps glitches collected by the programmer Peder Norrby. She then painted out these designs onto canvas. And while the actual relation between the digital originals and the tactilely painted copies is arguably more conceptual than mimetic—Rossin suggestively recreates her spectrally abstracted flowers against a pastel backdrop, rather than reproducing them in contextual detail—what's primarily beautiful about these works is their fidelity to the historic moment of 19th century *en plein air* painting.

"Shelter of a Limping Substrate" is a kind of backstabbing allusion to the boredom of landscape painting generally, and has a double-referential quality about it. On the one hand, to quote the press release, Rossin's paintings act as a mortar or substrate flourishing "the underlying layer in 3D imaging, the most fundamental surface upon which the rest is built." But they're also reflective, not like a dome of many-colored glass, but like the attentiveness that stares into a computer screen. The diffusion of light that might characterize a Monet is here a kind of luminous scrim in relation to which Rossin's pre-programmed flowers take on a decidedly ludic aspect.

The transformative effect of the way Rossin manipulates light is perhaps most manifest in her Soutinesque *Pansies in Field* (2015). Below the cartoonishly elongated flowers indicated by the title, you see what appear to be daisies that look like egg yokes trundling on a wave of carpet. This kind of interiority—both psychological and spatial—pervades the show, and is the upshot of a practice that doesn't look beyond the studio for new sources of light and inspiration, but toward a digitally constructed world where flowers and light virtually interweave.

An aura of symbolism surrounds the subject-matter Rossin has chosen to portray. One is reminded of Georgia O'Keefe and of the vaginal significance ascribed to flowers generally. There's a kind of heraldry at play in Rossin's titles. Lilies symbolize devotion; pansies, remembrance; peonies portend a happy marriage. But these literary connotations are tempered by the more formal qualities of the work. Rossin substantially translates images into paintings, while preserving the distinguishing marks characteristic of each. This is echoed in her themes; even in their wilding transformative state, the daisies that have become eggs still retain outwardly recognizable features.

The works that stem from Rossin's multimedia practice are fluxional recreations of a process where the natural becomes digital, only to become natural again. Her paintings toy with the familiar, while never falling into the trap of banality. There's a quickness, intelligence and humor to them that is very much the artist's own—notwithstanding her allusion to Impressionist and Expressionist precedents. In a world where everyone is flattening their faces against the semipermeable glass of a computer screen, searching out the same old commodified poisons, Rossin's virtual *en plein air* paintings provide an antidote. **WM**