

Whitechapel Gallery
Electronic Superhighway
2016 – 1966

Exhibition Guide
29 January – 15 May

whitechapelgallery.org

Electronic Superhighway artist list

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Cory Arcangel | Experiments in | Jill Magid |
| Roy Ascott | Art | Eva and Franco |
| Jeremy Bailey | and Technology | Mattes |
| Judith Barry | (E.A.T.) | Model Court |
| Wafaa Bilal | Harun Farocki | Manfred Mohr |
| Zach Blas | Joana | Vera Molnar |
| Olaf Breuning | Hadjithomas | Jayson Musson |
| James Bridle | and Khalil | Frieder Nake |
| Heath Bunting | Joreige | Joshua |
| Bureau of | Celia Hempton | Nathanson |
| Inverse | Camille Henrot | Martine Neddham |
| Technology | Gary Hill | Katja Novitskova |
| (B.I.T.) | Ann Hirsch | Mendi + Keith |
| Antoine Catala | Nancy Holt and | Obadike |
| Aristarkh | Richard Serra | Albert Oehlen |
| Chernyshev | JODI | Trevor Paglen |
| Petra Cortright | Eduardo Kac | Nam June Paik |
| Vuk Ćosić | Allan Kaprow | Jon Rafman |
| Douglas | Hiroshi Kawano | Evan Roth |
| Coupland | Mahmoud | Thomas Ruff |
| CTG (Computer | Khaled | Alex Ruthner |
| Technique | Oliver Laric | Jacolby |
| Group) | Jan Robert | Satterwhite |
| Cybernetic | Leegte | Lillian F. |
| Serendipity | Lynn Hershman | Schwartz |
| Aleksandra | Leeson | Peter Sedgley |
| Domanović | Olia Lialina | Taryn Simon |
| Constant | Tony Longson | Frances Stark |
| Dullaart | Rafael Lozano- | Hito Steyerl |
| | Hemmer | Sturtevant |
| | Jonas Lund | Martine Syms |

Thomson &
Craighead
Ryan Trecartin
Amalia Ulman
Stan
VanDerBeek
Steina and
Woody
Vasulka
Addie
Wagenknecht
Lawrence Weiner
Ulla Wigggen
The Yes Men
YOUNG-HAE
CHANG
HEAVY
INDUSTRIES

Electronic Superhighway

2016–1966

Gallery 1

This major exhibition surveys the relationship between art and the Internet over five decades, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the possibilities dreamed up by over 70 artists experimenting with technology.

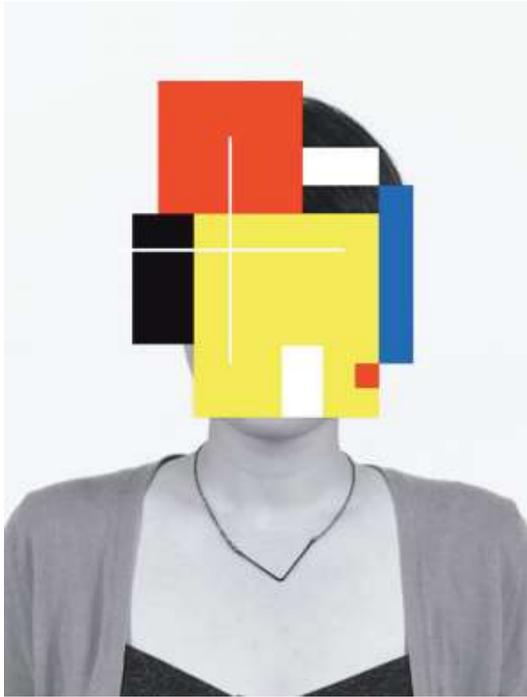
The title *Electronic Superhighway* is taken from a term coined in 1974 by Korean video art pioneer **Nam June Paik**, who foresaw the potential of global connections through networked technology. The show summons visitors on a journey back in time, beginning with works made between 2000 and 2016, and ending with **Experiments in Art and Technology's** (E.A.T.) series of groundbreaking events initiated in 1966. Spanning 50 years, key moments are examined, as viewers are invited to consider: how is the Internet changing art?

The exhibition's themes of appropriation and re-imagining are explored on first entry, with **Olaf Breuning's** manipulated digital imagery in gargantuan form in *Text Butt* (2015). Meanwhile, **Albert Oehlen's** large scale painting *Deathknocko* (2001), an inkjet-printed canvas layered with oils, offers a rendering of the visual cacophony of daily life in the information age.

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Ideas of resistance are explored in the work of artist and author **Douglas Coupland**, who presents solutions for avoiding digital facial recognition, and by **Trevor Paglen**, whose post-minimalist sculpture *Autonomy Cube* (2014) functions as an open Tor Internet connection which encrypts gallery visitors' virtual identities.

Modernist traditions are deconstructed in **Hito Steyerl's** comment on global politics in *Red Alert* (2007), while the canons of painting are also reconfigured by **Celia Hempton** and **Jonas Lund**. In addition, three major video installations by **Camille Henrot**, **Ryan Trecartin** and **Jacolby Satterwhite** punctuate the ground floor gallery. Collectively, these works examine how the hyperbolic culture that emerged with the rise of the Internet has affected the space between private and public life in the twenty-first century.



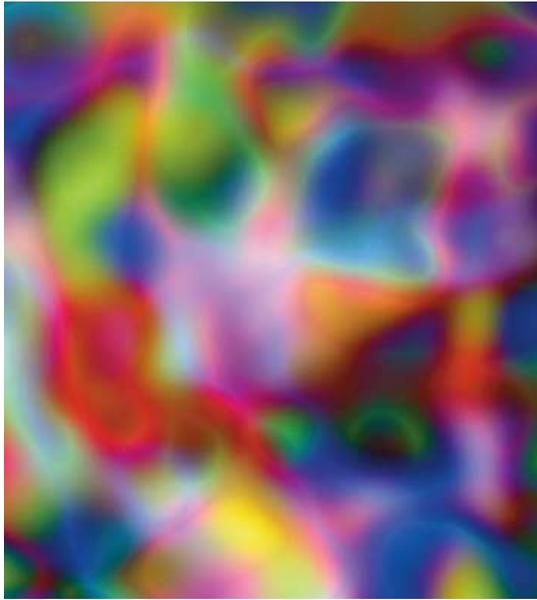
Douglas Coupland

Writer, artist and designer Douglas Coupland's books and visual works synthesise high and low culture, commenting on changes in human existence and beliefs caused by modern technologies. His first novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* (1991) has now become a contemporary classic. These largescale monochrome headshots show facial features obscured by brightly coloured shapes reminiscent of pixels, targets or text redactions, as well as abstract painting. These works critique Facebook's development of facial recognition software, employed with or without user consent.

Douglas Coupland

b. 1961, CFB Baden-Soellingen, Germany.

Deep Face, 2015. Acrylic on black and white photograph, mounted on dibond. Courtesy the artist and The Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto. © Douglas Coupland.



Thomas Ruff

This work by German artist Thomas Ruff, appears like a kaleidoscopic abstraction, but its title 'substrate' implies there is more to discover under the photographic surface. Here, he has used obscure found images from Japanese anime and digitally manipulated their neon colours. In this way he opens up the possibilities of abstract photography through digital means, asking in the process how important is a photograph's referent? Ruff employs photographic darkroom techniques alongside computer-generated images, photographs from scientific archives and print publishing as well as those taken from the Internet to create 'camera-less' images that often question the veracity of the documentary image.

Thomas Ruff

b. 1958, Zell am Harmersbach, Germany.

Substrat 34 I, 2007. Chromogenic print.

Courtesy David Zwirner New York/London. © DACS 2015



Constant Dullaart

Examining Internet and computer software languages in his practice, Dullaart presents his works both offline and online. Through installations, performances and websites, his work adopts a political approach that is critical of corporate systems. 'Jennifer in Paradise' was the first picture supplied with early Photoshop software and manipulated by its users. Though synonymous with early versions of the programme, the original image has now become hard to track down. In Dullaart's series of prints, he loops the picture back through Photoshop's various filters to create visual effects such as 'Plastic Wrap' and 'Glowing Edges'.

Constant Dullaart

b. 1979, Leiderdorp, The Netherlands.

Jennifer in Paradise, Liquify WhiteChapel, 2015. Custom wallpaper.

Plastic Wrap_20.15.15, 2014. Lenticular print, framed.

Glowing Edges_7.10, 2014. Lenticular print, framed.

Courtesy the artist and Carroll/Fletcher, London.

© Constant Dullaart.

Gallery 9 (Victor Petitgas Gallery)

This gallery presents nine key Internet artworks selected in collaboration with New York-based Rhizome, a pioneering online organisation and archive of Net art, or art that is engaged with the Internet as its medium, subject matter or context.

Net art came to prominence following the release of the first widely used web browser in 1993, with collaborative duo JODI's *wwwwwwwww.jodi.org* (1995) which was among the first websites to explore the Internet as an artistic medium. Several artists shown here tackle the aesthetic and formal possibilities of the browser itself. **Heath Bunting** uses the hyperlink and the URL as raw materials, while **Jan Robert Leegte**'s *Scrollbar Composition* (2001), exhibited on three different browsers, reveals how the same work 'performs' differently as software and hardware evolves. Making use of the browser as canvas, **Olia Lialina**'s *best. effort.network* (2015) resembles a GIF, a looping animated image, but is in fact a clever new format devised by the artist.

For other artists, complex online platforms are a key focus. Artist **Taryn Simon** and programmer **Aaron Swartz**'s *Image Atlas* (2014) allows users to compare online image search results sorted by country, while **JODI**'s *Geogoo* (2008) misuses the familiar Google Maps and Google Earth platforms to produce a jittery depiction of the world online.

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Above all, the web is a place where users come to understand themselves and others. **Ann Hirsch's** *Twelve* (2013) and **Martine Neddham's** *Mouchette.org* (1996) present interactive narratives about teenage-girl users – figures for whom the web holds great potential but also serious threats. Questions of subjectivity and race emerge in works by **Martine Syms**, whose *Reading Trayvon Martin* (2013) offers a personal bibliography of online articles following mourning in the U.S. in the aftermath of the fatal shooting of an African-American adolescent, and **Mendi + Keith Obadike**, who put the former's 'Blackness' on sale in a preciselyworded eBay auction in 2001.



Taryn Simon

Created by artist Taryn Simon in collaboration with programmer Aaron Swartz, *Image Atlas* indexes top image results for given search terms across local engines throughout the world. Visitors can refine or expand their comparisons from the 57 countries currently available and sort by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or by alphabetical order, thereby investigating cultural differences and similarities. *Image Atlas* interrogates the validity of a universal visual language and questions the supposed innocence and neutrality of the algorithms upon which search engines rely.

Image Atlas was first produced and piloted as part of Rhizome's Seven on Seven Conference in 2012, an event inspired by E.A.T.'s 1966 pairing of artists and technologists.

Taryn Simon

b. 1975, New York, NY, USA.

Image Atlas, 2012. Net project, <http://www.imageatlas.org>.
Courtesy the artist. © Taryn Simon.

Gallery 8

Continuing on this journey back in time, the potential of networked technology is explored in one of the first ever major interactive art installations, *Lorna* (1979–82) by **Lynn Hershman Leeson**. Here the artist presents a fictional female character that stays indoors all day watching TV, anticipating the mediated culture of virtual avatars.

The gallery includes **Nam June Paik**'s major installation *Internet Dream* (1994), a video-wall of 52 monitors displaying electronically processed images forming a kaleidoscopic composite. It carries on from an earlier work, *Good Morning, Mr. Orwell* (1984), which consisted of a multi-national television collaboration involving artists from Laurie Anderson to John Cage, broadcast to 25 million viewers worldwide. We also find work by **Roy Ascott**, who initiated the first global computer fairytale in the manner of a collaborative 'exquisite corpse' in 1983, and **Allan Kaprow**'s work for live television broadcast, *Hello*, connecting multiple sites internationally in 1969.

Artists such as **Vera Molnar**, **Frieder Nake** and **Stan VanDerBeek** experimented with computer programmes to create abstract and geometrical works during the 1960s and 70s, including **Manfred Mohr** who produced early plotter drawings.

The exhibition concludes with artefacts and documentation recording the formation of **Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.)** in New York in 1966–67.

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A series of performances over nine evenings – from artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage and Yvonne Rainer working together with engineers from American telecommunications company Bell Laboratories – it was one of the first major collaborations between the industrial technology sector and the arts.



Nam June Paik

Dubbed the 'Father of Video Art', Paik created videos, sculptures, installations, performances and television productions and was part of the experimental group Fluxus along with composer John Cage and artist George Maciunas, among others. *Internet Dream* consists of a video-wall of 52 monitors that form a large unified shifting collage of electronically processed images, originally commissioned by the German television broadcaster RTL for its Cologne headquarters. Paik believed that the medium of television could elicit viewer participation, as well as foster intercultural understanding. The work's title demonstrates Paik's interest in what was then the relatively new medium of the Internet and the possibilities it offered. The title of this exhibition, *Electronic Superhighway*, is borrowed from a term Paik coined in relation to the potential of telecommunication systems in 1974.

Nam June Paik, b. 1932, Seoul, Korea; d. 2006, Miami, USA. *Internet Dream*, 1994. Video sculpture. © (2008) ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe. Photo: Steffen Harms / © Nam June Paik Estate.



Lynn Hershman Leeson

Acclaimed filmmaker and artist Hershman Leeson's work explores the relationship between humans and machines. *Lorna* was one of the first installations to employ laser-disc technology. The participant is offered the opportunity to select a fate for its central protagonist, Lorna, and to interact with the piece through the use of a remote control and a domestic television set – an important object in Lorna's life and her only window to the world. The interactive video element is placed within the setting of a 1970s apartment belonging to the agoraphobic character. Viewers are invited to find logic in a labyrinth of scenes and unravel Lorna's story, anticipating virtual avatars and computer gaming.

Lynn Hershman Leeson

b. 1941, Cleveland, USA.

Lorna, 1979–82. Mixed media installation with interactive DVD.

Courtesy the artist and ZKM Center for Art and Media
Karlsruhe © Lynn Hershman Leeson.



Ulla Wiggen

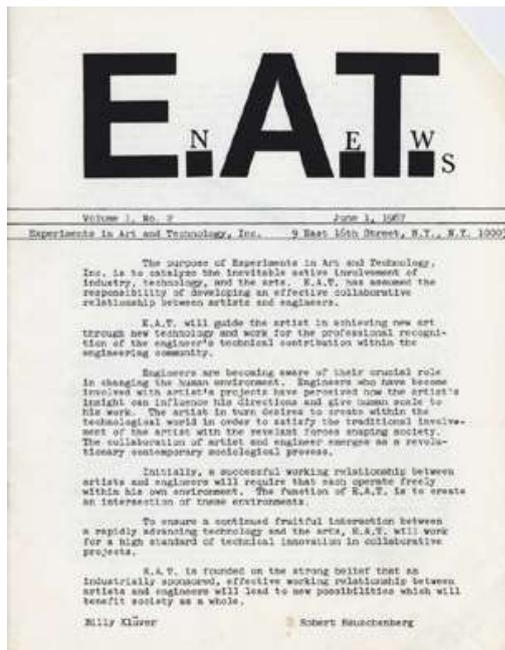
Noted for a number of paintings produced between 1963 and 1969 that depict the inner workings of electronic devices, Ulla Wiggen explores the convergence of realism and abstraction found in machines. Her painting *TRASK* (1967) draws on the first Swedish electronic computer, BESK, programmed by Gunnar Hellström in 1965. *TRASK* was also included in the landmark exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* at the ICA, London in 1968. In addition, Wiggen performed in Öyvind Fahlström's *Kisses Sweeter than Wine* in New York in 1966 as part of E.A.T.'s 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering. While Wiggen continues to paint portraits, she has been working as a psychotherapist since the late 1970s – a trajectory that continues her fascination with inner, cognitive processes, even if these are no longer those of digital and analogue machines.

Ulla Wiggen

b. 1942, Stockholm, Sweden.

TRASK, 1967. Acrylic on board. Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

Photo: Åsa Lundén. © Ulla Wiggen.



Experiments in Art and Technology (E. A.T.)

Experiments in Art and Technology was an interdisciplinary group operating in the 1960s. The collaboration was initiated in 1966 during the seminal 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering a series of innovative performances at the 69th Regiment Armory, New York. E.A.T. was officially formed in 1967 by engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer and artists Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman. The performances still resonate today as forerunners of an evolving relationship between the fields of art and technology. E.A.T. initiated projects that expanded the traditional role of the artist and was an early manifestation of contemporary interdisciplinary art practice.

Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.)

E.A.T. News – Vol. 1, No. 2. (June 1, 1967), 1967. ©

Cinémathèque québécoise, Montréal, '9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering' Fonds., The Daniel Langlois Foundation, Collection of the Cinémathèque

Québécoise/ Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.).

Also on display as part of Electronic Superhighway

Harun Farocki

Parallel I–IV, 2012–14

Gallery 2

Until 12 June 2016

Exhibition catalogue

To read more about the show, artists and works buy:

Electronic Superhighway Exhibition catalogue, £29.99

Membership

Become a Whitechapel Gallery member and get unlimited access to Electronic Superhighway for you and a friend, plus invitations to Private Views, 50% off all talks and events, and other great discounts across the Gallery:

whitechapelgallery.org/membership

Related Events

Curator Omar Kholeif on Electronic Superhighway

Tour

Saturday 30 January, 1pm

Free, booking required

James Bridle: Systems Literacy

Talk

Saturday 30 January, 3pm

£9.50/£7.50 concs

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Dafydd Jones on Electronic Superhighway

BSL Tour

Thursday 7 April, 7pm

Free with exhibition entry,
booking required

Zach Blas: Contra-internet

Performance

Thursday 21 April, 7pm

£5/£3.50 concs

Electronic Superhighway

Symposium

Saturday 23 April,

11.30am–6pm

£15/£12.50 concs

For a full list of events please visit our website.
whitechapelgallery.org/events

Access

For details on parking, assistance dogs, adapted toilets, lifts, large print transcripts and free audio described tours or any other access facilities:

T +44(0)20 7522 7888
info@whitechapelgallery.org

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