

In 2009, curator Paul Young opened YoungProjects in Los Angeles, devoting two 372-square-metre gallery spaces exclusively to moving imagery and creating an exceptional platform for experimental art. Run like a project space rather than a conventional gallery, YoungProjects has exhibited artists across generations with approaches as varied as those of Jim Campbell, Harun Farocki, Eva & Franco Mattes, Heather Phillipson and Harm van den Dorpel. When it comes to Post-Internet, Young can break down the movement in terms of content and context, with the personal experience to back up his claims. But he finds the label (and its younger sister, Post-Analogue) too limiting. In fact, ‘many artists and curators dislike it,’ he tells me. In a conversation that sheds light on the best qualities unified by the shorthand ‘Post-Internet’, Young demonstrates why the expression actually falls short.

1

**THERE CAN'T BE POST- WITHOUT A PREDECESSOR**

Post-Internet Art was initially used to describe a moment between 2006 and 2010 when a next generation of ‘Internet’ artists came of age and began producing work. But earlier Internet artists, who mostly made digital work for the web, were rarely noticed by the mainstream, so there was never really an initial Internet Art movement to derive a ‘Post-’ movement from.

2

**‘INTERNET’ IS TOO BROAD**

These second-generation artists articulate the logic of digital culture, with a particular emphasis on online lifestyles, but they often do so through paintings, photo-based works and videos—sellable objects, which aren’t necessarily digital works. In other words, many of

**10 IDEAS: PO-MO-POP**



PAUL YOUNG tells Katya Tylevich about Post-Internet Art’s best qualities—despite its bad name.

IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ZACH FEUER GALLERY, NEW YORK

them aren’t ‘Internet artists’ at all. We live in the digital age, so a contemporary artist, and especially a Millennial artist, can’t help but be digitally minded. That’s now second nature to an entire generation. Besides, I think these artists are simply making a postmodern form of Pop Art, and it won’t be long before the market treats it as such. So perhaps the term ‘po-mo-pop’ might be more accurate?

3

**‘ART’ IS TOO BROAD**

You can expect to see a lot of found images in so-called Post-Internet Art, whether from corporate branding, social media posts,

porn sites or even cat videos. Everything is fair game. But these artists have a slightly different relationship to the found image than some of their predecessors. The combination of globalization and the internet has demolished age-old notions about hierarchy, history and regionalism—the basic building blocks of culture. So words and images are generally used by these artists in a radically decontextualized, dehistoricized, deliberately empty way. That means you can expect a lot of kitsch, craft and everything previously deemed ‘uncool’ in Post-Internet Art. Many of these artists transform kitschy photographic images into skins that are applied to 3D objects, as in the work of Jon Rafman, Aude Pariset

and Harm van den Dorpel. The object sometimes begs the question, ‘Where is the art?’ It might look like art, but not always, and for many artists, this subtle distinction is absolutely crucial.

4

**‘POST-INTERNET’ WORKS ARE NEVER COMPLETE AND USUALLY SUBVERSIVE...**

I overheard a conversation between two young artists on the subject of immutability. One artist was arguing for permanence: the artwork, once finished, should be totally unique and timeless. The other was arguing the opposite: change should be a critical factor in an artwork. The latter is the Post-Internet attitude: a finished piece is only a version or a copy, which can be updated at will. That doesn’t just apply to time-based media such as videos, but also to objects, which are regarded as multiples. For instance, Van den Dorpel creates websites that he fills incessantly with images, and he draws from those same websites to create objects, such as sculptures and collages, which are then photographed and uploaded again to his websites. So the ‘real’ work always remains the website itself, while the objects are simply versions—or ‘detritus’, as Van den Dorpel calls them—of the original. Artists such as Oliver Laric use similar methods to raise ideas about authorship and authenticity, which have been totally subverted by the web.

5

**THEIR FORM AND MEANING CAN'T BE PINNED DOWN OR TIME-STAMPED**

The art world will eventually catch up to an idea already well known to companies, which is that everything can be online 24/7.

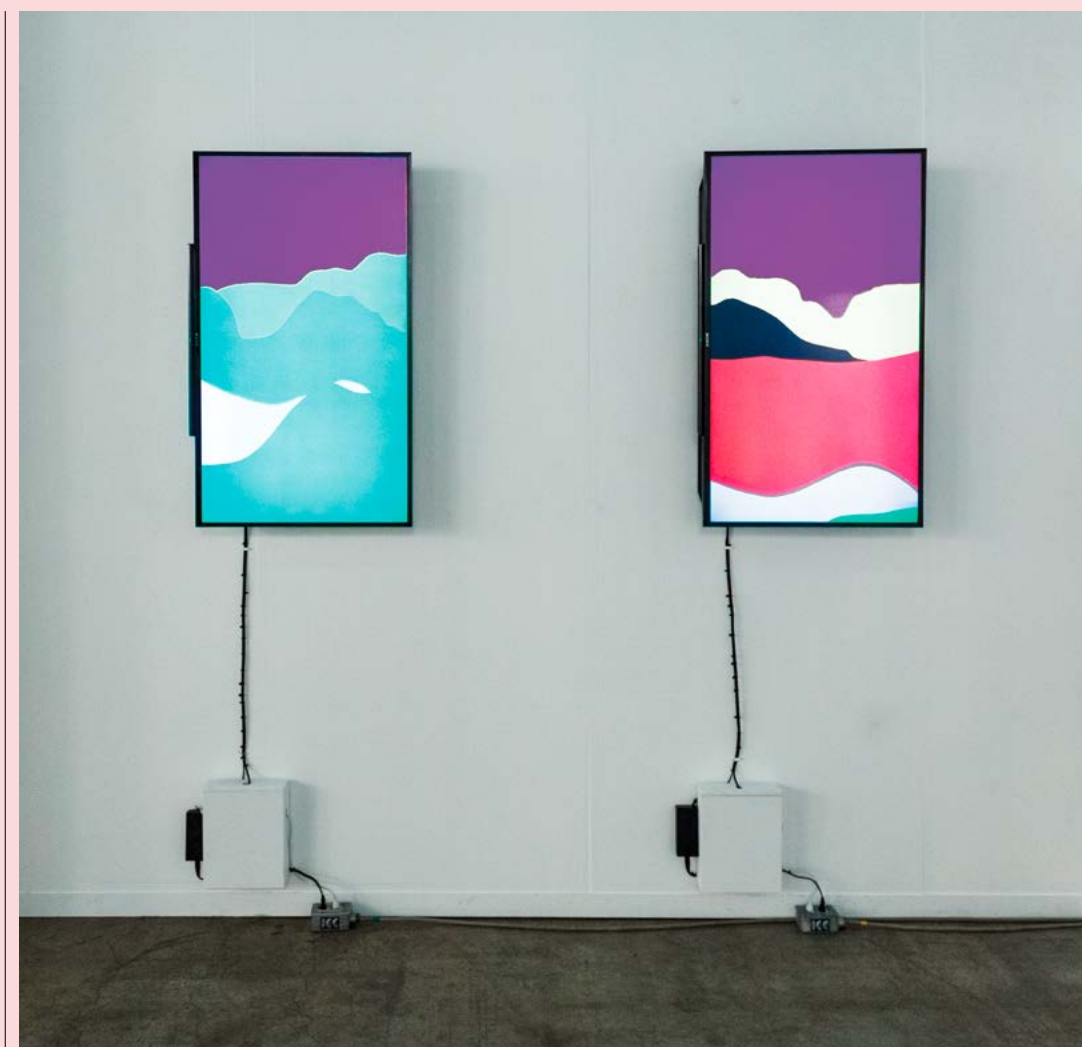
An increasing number of artists are coming around to the idea of live-streams that hang on walls like paintings. The Italian artist Carlo Zanni created an early version of this in 2006 when he uploaded a short film to a website he created. Google analytics had just been launched, so he was able to collect data on each viewer and change the content accordingly. For one year, he adjusted the content every 24 hours. More recently, artists such as Rafaël Rozendaal and Van den Dorpel have been creating websites that are displayed on flat panels in collectors’ homes, which means they’re ‘live’ and streaming 24/7. These works tend to look like painterly video art, but what’s important is that they’re live, not canned. Just because an artwork is hanging on your wall doesn’t mean an artist can’t change it at any time.

6

**‘POST-INTERNET’ IS STILL FINDING ITS SHAPE —LITERALLY**

For the better part of the past 20 years, artists have been moving away from the cinematic. Rather than referencing movie images or language, the vast majority of young artists today are looking to amateur videos, social media and blogs. Many younger artists are breaking away entirely from the cinematic rectangle by projecting directly on to objects, which comes from a long tradition; but they’re also embedding screens into sculptures and objects. This embedding or augmenting can be as spectacular as the projection mapping projects of young Turkish artist Refik Anadol, or as modest and roughshod as the complex installations of the French artist Neïl Beloufa, who routinely embeds screens into his large, handmade sculptures. This area will only continue to grow, and we will soon see digital screens that can be made into any physical shape imaginable.

**“IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE ART, BUT NOT ALWAYS”**



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND STEVE TURNER. PHOTO BY DANIEL SROOR

7

**POST-INTERNET METHODS AREN'T JUST FOR POST-INTERNET ARTISTS**

Museums are already using augmented reality as learning tools for viewers. You can point an iPad at a painting on the wall and get more information about it instantly. Many artists are using that same idea for aesthetic purposes, which are far less didactic but more exciting. In particular, street artists have been at the forefront of this. Wolf Lane, Ryan McGinness, Shepard Fairey and many others have been encouraging people to download the app Re+Public, which allows someone to point a mobile-phone

camera at an artist’s wall and have the graffiti come to life, moving across the wall in full animation. In the past, more politically minded artists such as Krzysztof Wodiczko needed huge projectors, permits and funds to project controversial and highly revealing images on to public monuments. Now artists can do far more at a fraction of the cost.

8

**‘POST-INTERNET’ TRANSCENDS THE ART WORLD AND ITS INSTITUTIONS**

By deliberately seeking out large corporations and other artists for their work, some of the most interesting Post-Internet artists are upending the very

fundamentals of art making, distribution and exhibitions. For instance, in the work of LuckyPDF, a London-based collective, there is no individual and no unique work or gallery show to speak of. Instead, they’re attempting to interject themselves directly into popular culture in a way rarely seen before. For them, operating at the level of a system, or a large organization, rather than as an individual, is crucial to what they’re trying to convey. Rather than using the traditional gallery model, they want to leverage relationships with major brands and use popular and cultural vehicles, such as movies or mass performances, to reach large audiences. In other words, this is the kind of art that Jay-z or Live Nation would understand.

“JUST BECAUSE AN ARTWORK IS HANGING ON YOUR WALL DOESN'T MEAN AN ARTIST CAN'T CHANGE IT AT ANY TIME”

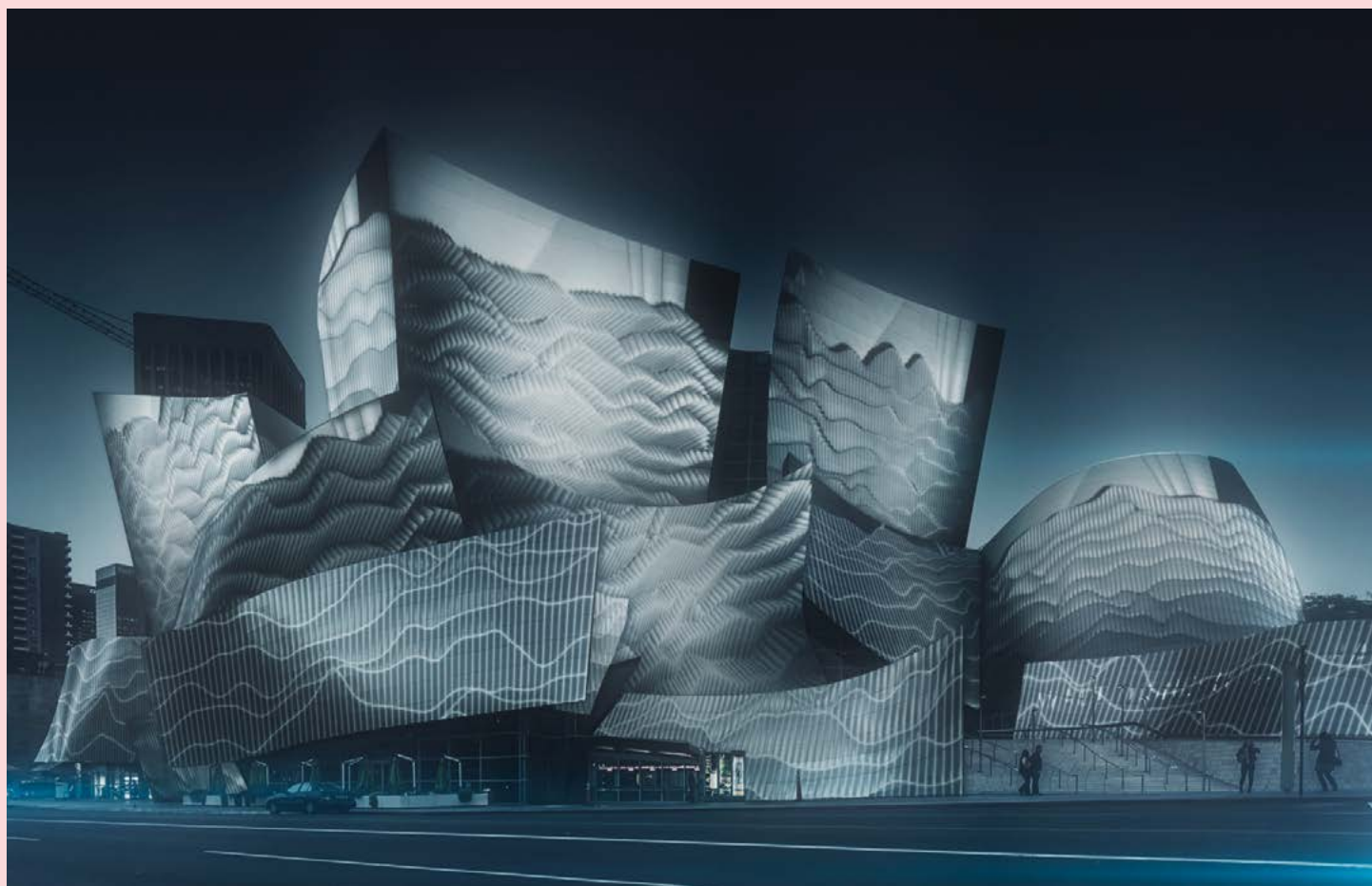


IMAGE COURTESY REFIK ANADOL

9

**ROBOTS ARE CHANGING THE RULES**

Everyone, get over the fear of robots making art! You might just like what you see! Artist-made websites are probably the most common use of algorithms, but some artists are also using algorithms to grow digital forms in their own self-designed digital environments. Washington D.C.-based artist Brandon Morse uses algorithms to explore entropy and emergence in his works. Entropy is the idea that the more highly organized something is, the higher the potential that it will collapse. Emergence is often seen as the opposite, where a given mass of active agents will eventually fall into symmetrical forms if they're all following the same rules, like a flock of birds. Morse uses both systems to produce beautiful moving art forms

10

**USERS ARE CHANGING THE RULES**

The idea of interactivity is the very essence of the web and an exciting area of exploration. Someone like the Paris-based American artist Evan Roth routinely pulls gestures, activities and events from an online context and transforms them into objects. His *Multi-Touch Painting* series, for instance, removes the smudgy, greasy fingerprints from iPhone screens and turns them into highly gestural, abstract, painterly works that are quite beautiful. The Dutch duo Erwin Driessens and

Maria Verstoppen have created a work called *Formulae E-Volver*, which is based on the 'liking' function that drives social media. The work uses a computer to continually generate abstract images in real time, which appear on a touch screen. Viewers—or 'gardeners', as the artists call them—are encouraged to vote on the images they prefer by touching a screen. The process ultimately teaches the computer to compose new images based on viewers' likes and dislikes. The abstractions that remain on the screen the longest have the greatest chance of cross-breeding with other liked forms, which in turn produce more complex abstractions that are displayed on a larger screen. As the artists told me, *Formulae E-volver* includes an unusual collaboration between man and machine, resulting in something neither party could ever create on its own.

**Previous pages, left**

Jon Rafman  
*New Age Demanded (Pushed and Pulled Resin)*  
2014

**Right**

Rafaël Rozendaal  
Tim-Roz.348  
website, from an exhibition at Steve Turner presented at Zona Maco Sur  
2015

**Above**

Refik Anadol  
*Disney Hall Projection Mapping Rendering*  
2015



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