

SITE SANTA FE

SITE SANTA FE PRESENTS SITELAB 18: *INTERPLAY*, AN INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION OF NEW MEDIA AND DIGITAL ARTWORKS

November 17, 2022 - February 12, 2023

(Santa Fe, NM, Nov 10, 2022) – SITE Santa Fe is pleased to present *INTERPLAY*, an immersive, interactive exhibition of new media and digital art by artists by Neil Mendoza, Iván Navarro, Camille Utterback, and Robert Rauschenberg.

INTERPLAY features four innovative artworks selected from the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation Collection.

Activated by the body, these installations enhance, disrupt, and alter perception, calling attention to the dichotomy between art and technology. The role of the audience is unique to the ever-changing composition of each art piece, creating an interdependent relationship between artist, artwork, and viewer.



“It’s exciting to witness the way interactive art promotes engagement—how it can transform the role of the viewer from observer to contributor, and bridge symbiotic relationships between audience, artwork, and artist. The works included in *INTERPLAY* offer alternative ways of defining and experiencing art through curiosity, play, and reflection.” –Curator, Brandee Caoba

About the Artworks

Neil Mendoza, *Robotic Voice Activated Word Kicking Machine*, 2016

Interactive generative custom software animation (with sound), computer, projector, robotic foot, transmitter and receiver (horns, tubing, microphone, speakers)

Neil Mendoza’s *Robotic Voice Activated Word Kicking Machine*, 2016, is an exploration of language and our strange relationship with talking to machines. We talk to these devices, from customer-service bots to “intelligent assistants,” as if they were our friends, ignoring the trail of data that we leave behind. The piece combines projection and robotics to blur the line between the physical and the digital. Viewers speak into the hanging horn. Their words are then converted into text and launched into the virtual world. They accumulate there, sometimes kicked by a robotic foot and sometimes funneled back out into the world as sound through the horn on the floor.

Ivan Navarro, *Reality Show (Black)*, 2010

LEDs, aluminum, wood, mirror, one-way mirror, electronics

Ivan Navarro's *Reality Show*, 2010, lets viewers feel the mind-bending illusion and sensation of stepping into infinity, although they have only stepped into a simple telephone booth with glass and mirrors. Surrounded by an infinite tunnel of light, viewers are disorientated, unable to grasp a sense of reality. Interestingly, those outside the booth can see the expression of the person inside, but, due to the enclosure's one way glass, the participant is unable to see outside the walls.

Robert Rauschenberg, *Eco-Echo VI*, 1992-93

Acrylic and screen-print acrylic on aluminum and Lexan, sonar-activated motor, steel, bicycle wheel, chain

Robert Rauschenberg's *Eco-Echo*, 1992-93, is a part of a series of windmill-like structures that Rauschenberg began fabricating at Saff Tech Arts in Oxford, Maryland. Of particular concern to Rauschenberg were that these works should not waste energy and that the viewer should play an integral role. Thus, these sonar-activated sculptures respond to the presence of a viewer moving nearby and stop when no one is directly in front of them. Rauschenberg created the *Eco-Echo* series to illustrate how viewers are complicit in electrical-energy production, its global industries, and our environment.

Camille Utterback, *Untitled 5*, 2004

Interactive installation with custom software program, video camera, projector, and lighting

Camille Utterback's *Untitled 5*, 2004, invites visitors' movements in the gallery space; the movements are run through computer software written by the artist, which translates them into an animated digital painting that constantly evolves. Although thoroughly contemporary, *Untitled 5* builds on a rich lineage of artwork that records or transforms human movement, including the abstract expressionists Utterback considers her creative forebears.

About the Artists

Neil Mendoza (b. 1959)

Neil Mendoza, born in the UK, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mendoza combines sculpture, electronics, and software to bring inanimate objects and spaces to life. By combining found objects with technology in unexpected ways, the different elements of his work can be looked at from a new perspective. He explores themes of the absurd, the humorous, the futile, and the surreal. He has exhibited work and talked at conferences around the world, taught classes on art and technology at UCLA and Stanford, and co-founded the art collective *is this good?*

Iván Navarro (b.1972)

Currently based in New York, Chilean artist Iván Navarro uses light as his raw material, turning objects into electric sculptures and transforming the exhibition space by means of visual interplay. His work is certainly playful but is also haunted by questions of power, control, and

imprisonment. The act of usurping the minimalist aesthetic is an ever-present undercurrent, becoming the pretext for understated political and social criticism.

Robert Rauschenberg (b.1925, d. 2008)

Born in Texas, Robert Rauschenberg was an interdisciplinary artist who didn't just break a few rules of the art world; he threw out the rulebook and rewrote it.

Over the span of his six-decade career, he was considered by many to be one of the most influential American artists, due to his radical blending of materials and methods. Working in a wide range of subjects, styles, materials, and techniques, he did not restrain himself to one movement, and his oeuvre ranged from paintings to photography, mixed media, and even avant-garde performance pieces.

His unique approaches to painting, sculpture, print, photography, and performance shaped the art world. Rauschenberg lived and worked in New York City and on Captiva Island, Florida, until his death on May 12, 2008.

Camille Utterback (b.1970)

Currently based in California, Indiana-born artist Camille Utterback stands at the fore of interactive art. Utterback programs custom algorithms for the purpose of "embodiment," where viewers can sense their bodily presence in a virtual environment. Utterback uses her digital tools to generate a style of art known as Digital Abstraction, which updates a previous generation's innovations in traditional media with data computation and the processing power of microchips. Utterback said, "The rules of *Untitled 5* are carefully constructed to create an overall composition that is organic, open, and evocative, while still being completely algorithmic."

Thank you

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Image Credit

Camille Utterback, *Untitled 5*, 2019 installed in *Set in Motion: Camille Utterback and Art That Moves* at Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, TX, Collection of the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation

About SITE Santa Fe

SITE Santa Fe nurtures innovation, discovery, and inspiration through the art of today. Founded in 1995 to establish the first international contemporary art biennial in the United States, SITE Santa Fe is a non-collecting art institution committed to supporting new developments in contemporary art, encouraging artistic exploration, and expanding traditional museum experiences. Since its launch, SITE Santa Fe has presented 11 international biennials, more than 95 contemporary art exhibitions, and works by hundreds of emerging and established artists from around the world and right here in New Mexico. SITE Santa Fe also presents a wide range of public and educational programs that include conversations with artists and curators, performances, film screenings, concerts, hands-on workshops, and collaborations with dozens of local schools and community organizations.

About The Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation

The Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation recognizes the power of the arts to challenge and shift perceptions, spark creativity, and connect people across cultures. We lend and exhibit artworks from our collection and support innovative individuals and pivotal initiative in the arts.

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