



We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

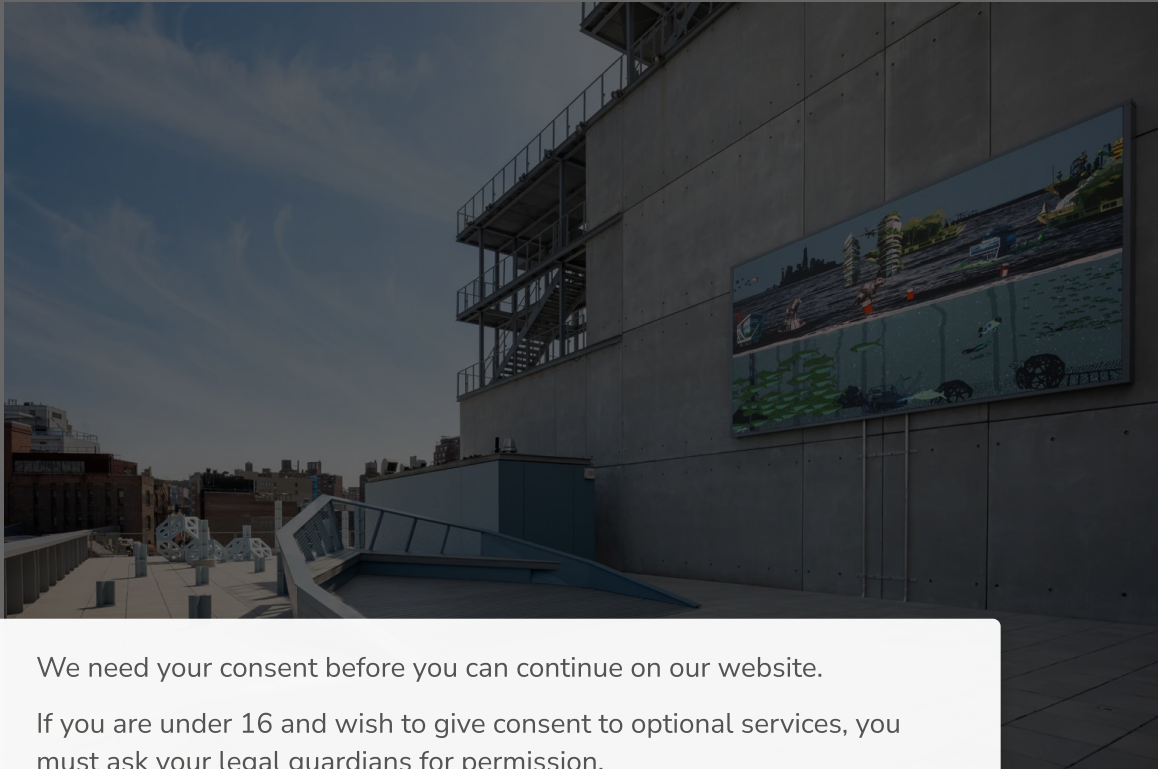
If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

[Hyundai](#)
Museum of
American Art, Los Angeles, features artist Peter Bauman (b. 1965) speaks
with Whitney Curator of Digital Art [Christiane Paul](#). Paul expands on how
Bauman's work challenges the traditional definition of art and offers a
definition of AI art before discussing broader questions of art's place
in the digital age and the evolving relationship between institutions and the
art market.

This interview was originally published on April 23, 2025, by [Le Random](#), a digital generative art institution that contextualizes and elevates the most significant work from iconic generative artists. Le Random's rich editorial section "provides insight into on-chain generative art's role in art history, enabling our community to understand its past, curate its present and celebrate its future." Text courtesy of Peter Bauman and Le Random.



We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

Peter Bauman: Your exhibition with Marina Zurkow recently opened at the Whitney. Why did you choose her work as a way to speak to our current

moment?

Christiane Paul: I think it's important to look at the work around

the annual Hyundai Terrace Commission—the second in the series. When you're
looking at this public art piece

because an outside location is part of a larger environment. So what was important to us in terms of the selection of the artist was site specificity.

As a first step, I compiled a list of artists. Then every exhibition has to go through a proposal and selection process. The chief curator and director have to greenlight it. We landed on Marina because her work had high potential to do something really interesting with the location of the meatpacking district. She had already created two earlier pieces called *Hudson Follies* (2022) and *Does the River Flow Both Ways?* (2022) in collaboration with James Schmitz that showed a view of the Hudson River split into a world above and below the water. It is this software system that Marina built on to create a site-specific, software-driven, hand-drawn animation about the meatpacking district for the Whitney terrace.

Then we decided to extend the exhibition into the Kaufman Gallery, which is adjacent to the terrace and has windows with a view of it. We're showing two more software-based animations of Marina's in that gallery. One is a collection work called *Mesocosm (Wink, TX)* (2012).

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

holes in the Earth, war machinery appears, clad in the metals for which the Earth

resonant.

What attracted me to Marina's work, aside from the potential for site specificity, was how she had sheers about our present condition. Marina's work has always

been focused on ecologies and ecological systems. As we are struggling currently with redefining environmental protection in the face of a climate crisis and economic turmoil, awareness of ecologies has become ever more important.

The River is a Circle (2025) on the terrace takes you through six time periods of the meatpacking district's history, starting with the Lenape. The Whitney is actually built on a former Lenape tobacco field and there was a Lenape trading post nearby.

Then we move through colonial times and the 19th century—through the 1970s and the decay of the piers, when all of the art and nightlife happened there—on to a period of gentrification. Finally, we see two possible futures. It is not a chronological work. The assets representing the different periods appear as what Marina calls “gangs of time,” intersecting with each other in ever-new configurations.

The work emphasizes the occurrence of these cyclical social systems, the extinction of species and the effect of trade and economics. I think it's incredibly important to look at these structures today and evaluate the world we're living

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).



Installation view: “Marina Zurkow: Parting Worlds”, Whitney Museum of
American Art, New York
Photograph by Ron Amstutz

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).



Marina Zurkow, with James Schmitz, "The Earth Eaters" (still), 2025
Courtesy of the artist, bitforms gallery and the Whitney Museum of American
Art © Marina Zurkow

Peter Bauman: *It shows how software, generative and AI art can engage with the issues of our time rather than just producing novel visuals. Another artist sensitively engaging with issues of our time is Maya Man, whose work, A Realistic Day In My Life Living In New York City, you also recently commissioned for Whitney's On the Hour series. Can you talk about the selection of Man and how the work rethinks net art today?*

Christiane Paul: *On the Hour* is a relatively new series but it is a continuation of *Sunrise/Sunset*, which has been running since 2009. *Sunrise/Sunset* was a 30-second intervention into whitney.org that would play at sunrise and sunset times in New York City. While we loved the series, it gave limited exposure to the artwork, which is why we switched it to *On the Hour*. Now you can see these works hourly for thirty seconds.

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

redemption is ongoing

Maya's work is particularly interesting to me because her practice is so deeply web-based, as opposed to many artists right now who are broadening their

work across different media. Maya is really focused on the web and the exploration of social media platforms.

Peter Bauman: *You mentioned that in Zurkow's work, The Earth Eaters, the artist trained an AI model on old images. I'm fascinated by Joanna Zylińska's critique of generative AI in her book AI Art (2020). She likens much of it to spectacle-based art and compares it to a glorified version of Candy Crush. Comparing it to Candy Crush implies superficiality on both the aesthetic and conceptual level—all slop, in other words, to her.*

Her viewpoint spotlights a seeming rift emerging in digital art around AI. As a curator deeply engaged with digital practices, what do you think of Zylińska's critique? When you're curating work that is telling our digital story, how do you navigate between technological novelty and critical inquiry? And how do you even define AI art?

Christiane Paul: I very much appreciate Joanna's book and her fantastic work in this area. One thing the book does not do is provide a deeper definition of AI art, as opposed to Martin Zeilinger's book Tactical Entanglements (2021), which includes what I think is an excellent one. By my definition of AI art, I would not even call a lot of what Joanna refers to as "AI art."

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

Casey Reas to LIA have created formally beautiful work, as have many artists in more formal qualities. There's a huge difference between the work of these image generators.

As a curator, I'm not looking for any specific markers of quality. I evaluate digital art, including AI art, always on the same basis—that is, how does an artist engage with the medium conceptually and practically in a sophisticated way? That is the main criterion. I find technical novelty deeply uninteresting. Of course, I do look at what artists are doing with the newest technologies. But I'm not coming to the work thinking about how "it's new. It's the first." That's a completely overused yardstick. It's really all about how an artist engages with the technology.

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).



Courtesy of the artist and part of the Le Random Collection

Peter Bauman: *What I found disappointing about Zylinska's critique is that she largely collapses a diverse field of deep generative practices into a single critical frame—of Candy Crush. She does express some fascination with the artists she discusses—Gene Kogan, Mike Tyka, Memo Akten and Mario Klingemann—but ultimately portrays their work as complicit in a spectacle-driven, corporately aligned vision of AI art.*

Christiane Paul: Joanna focuses more on examples and not on a close reading of the artists' complete body of work. Memo Akten's *Learning to See* is not Candy Crush. His PhD thesis, in which it is included, critically investigates deep learning models as an artistic medium for new modes of performative, creative expression.

You can always single out a work by an artist to dismiss it. You could even disregard work by the most revered artists on that basis. I could easily find works that are “only” visually beautiful by artists who have done a lot for the digital medium and are deeply critically engaged with it.

Joanna's book is not an art-historical deep dive into AI art, which wasn't the

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.

We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

Where do you stand on these controversies, like copyright, that have

In symbolic AI with current practices, when it comes to issues of ethics and bias,

the talk of AI has only gotten more intense—louder and more frequent.

reach based

and bias,

as is every artist working in the field.

Honestly, I have not talked to any artist engaging with AI technologies who isn't. It's something that you need to keep in mind and engage with on a level of criticality, highlighting how ethics filter in when it comes to training data in general and the process of training models on contemporary artists' work without permission or compensation.

It is one of the biggest issues we're facing today and there are many discussions about how to best approach it. I hope that copyright law will more deeply consider all of these issues. Maybe even labour law can address the problems on some level. These are some of the frontiers of AI technologies. And as curators and artists working in the field, I think we're continuously engaging with that.

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).



Harold Cohen, AARON software drawing, 1977, Victoria & Albert Museum

London

Peter Bauman: *You mentioned contrasting Cohen's symbolic, rules-based AI with current deep learning practices. I was recently speaking with Pindar Van Arman, who knew Cohen, and he mentioned how Cohen strongly distrusted deep learning. There has been this intense, historical rivalry between symbolic AI and neural network-based approaches—going back to the late '60s and Minsky.*

Today, computational philosopher AA Cavia argues that the nature of computation itself is changing in the age of deep learning. He notes a shift from the hard-coded symbolic logic of Cohen's expert systems to deep learning's subsymbolic computation—where knowledge is no longer binary or human-readable but instead operates through latent spaces.

Then I spoke recently to Gene Kogan and Tom White, who seemed to imply something similar—that the personality of programming is changing.

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

very clear to me early on is that statistical AI alone would be a dead end because it relies on training with existing data sets and is largely driven by ideal data points, merging optimization, et cetera. That can only be a dead end because there is no consideration of context.

If we look at today's AI, we see—not quite good old-fashioned expert systems but—the idea of knowledge modules returning on a larger scale. To me, this is the more successful approach: combining rule-based reasoning models with statistical ones—a real fusion.

I would say that there have been shifts in programming—but not necessarily computation. When it comes to computation, you can build a trajectory leading to quantum computing and that *will* be very different. *That* will be a major shift—a completely different paradigm.

Programming approaches are continuously changing; languages are changing. But we're still operating within the same parameters. We're constantly fusing and redefining boundaries. Today's deep learning is very different from what we have seen before and requires different approaches. But I would say that within

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

contrasts art's deliberate pace with the chaos of modern, networked life's

What role does digital expression have if limited to the slowness of a text worth

Christiane Paul: Helen's premise doesn't quite work for me, although I'm a big fan of hers. She's wonderful and has done amazing work. I would say the flaw of her argument is that it sets a pace for art. I believe art is setting the pace. The respective medium is setting the pace. Certain art media have operated at faster paces for decades—video art of the '60s for example. Artists were going onto the street with their Portapaks and engaging with ideas of instantaneous broadcasting. That's slow by today's standards but it was a fast technology back then.

Digital art is moving incredibly fast and artists working with it have to engage with the technology at that pace. That does not eradicate another part of Helen's argument—that art from a bird's-eye view certainly moves slowly and hibernates. We're definitely engaging with the same topics over centuries—but from different perspectives. You see ideas dying down or rising up again after decades. On that level, it's true that art history moves at a slow speed. There is also a third layer I would introduce: artists themselves. No matter how fast the medium they're engaging with, artists often hibernate, take their time and return to ideas.

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

— how they were changing societies as well as representation

Christiane Paul: Institutions definitely intersect with the market in many ways but they also, in terms of their mission, are operating very independently of it. Institutional collecting is not driven by market interests.

Museums do not buy and sell continuously. If they're collecting, they are focused on collection building and telling a story. We're looking at two very different operations. The fact that the art market is not doing well is unavoidable because markets are not doing well anywhere on this planet right now. That will also change again at some point. The current low point is completely understandable.

As you mentioned—and as we discussed in our [previous conversations](#)—there are always these cyclical movements of institutional interest. We had the same gap—or disconnect between market lows and institutional highs—during the dot-com bust. The big digital art shows at institutions around the 2000s were technically happening after the dot-com bubble burst.

I am not sure if the current moment of institutional interest is sustainable—if it will remain at the current level. But overall, there definitely has been progress in

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

the recipient of 2023 MediaArHistories International Award and the Thoma

Art (Thames and Hudson, 4th ed., 2023) and *A Companion to Digital Art*

Imprint & Data Protection

© 2026 DAM

We need your consent before you can continue on our website.

If you are under 16 and wish to give consent to optional services, you must ask your legal guardians for permission.



We use cookies and other technologies on our website. Some of them are essential, while others help us to improve this website and your experience. Personal data may be processed (e.g. IP addresses), for example for personalized ads and content or ad and content measurement. You can find more information about the use of your data in our [privacy policy](#). You can revoke or adjust your selection at any time under [Settings](#).

☐☐☐