

We are surrounded by a culture replete with impressions of life, be they visual, written, or construed through data. We move through streams of chatter, swipe past pictures of other people's lives, and frame our own experiences as, all the while, our digital trails are subtly captured, tracked, and stored. This is a culture in which the radical multimedia environments envisioned by pioneering artists like Nam June Paik and Stan VanDerBeek are being lived out every day, albeit with much more complexity and compromise. With these transformations in mind, "*Surround Audience*" explores how artists are currently depicting subjectivity, unpacking complex systems of power, and claiming sites of artistic agency.

While issues around social media provide a point of departure for the exhibition, it is not the platforms themselves that are the exhibition's primary focus, but rather the ways their associated effects intersect with life. Among the many narratives and ideas emerging from the works, there are three recurring lines of inquiry: First, how representations of the body and persona have evolved in an image-laden culture in which surveillance is widely dispersed and editorializing one's life in public is the norm; second, if it might be possible to opt out of or reframe the pressures of increasingly corporatized and invasive spaces; and third, how artists are striving to embed their works in the world around them through incursions into media and activism.

The exhibition encompasses a variety of artistic practices, including sound, dance, comedy, poetry, installation, sculpture, painting, video, and one online talk show. If there is any aesthetic link between these diverse works it is in their energetic mutability of form. Together, these works speak to a newfound elasticity in our understanding of what mediums constitute contemporary art. Here, paintings evolve out of 3-D models, digital images erupt into sculpture, and sound becomes action. This is a group of works that attests to how form is continuously converted across word, image, and medium.

"*Surround Audience*" makes spaces for differing positions among a group of early-career artists. For example, Josh Kline's installation "*Freedom*" (2015) explores "our willful dissolution of privacy" via the sharing economy and social media. Eduardo Navarro's *Timeless Alex* (2015), a sculptural recreation of an extinct Galapagos tortoise shell that will be inhabited and moved gradually by a dancer at different moments throughout the course of the exhibition, reflects an escape into an alternate state of time and being. Many artists wrestle with technology's relationship to the body. Among them are Korean choreographer Geumhyung Jeong, who performs sexualized and antagonistic movements on various exercise machines in "*Fitness Guide*" (2011–15) and Aleksandra Domanović, whose new *untitled installation* (2014) continues her exploration of the history of prosthetic body parts. Included works also oscillate between more timeless questions—

such as in Basim Magdy’s single-channel video *The Dent* (2014), which imagines the rise and fall of a small town’s utopian dream for revolution—and more explicitly political interrogations like those posed by the duo Exterritory in a new video work that seeks to circulate potentially disruptive or controversial images outside of existing censorious networks.

RESIDENCIES, COMMISSIONS, & NEW WORKS

Many of the works in the Triennial have been commissioned specifically for the show. In the two years leading up to the exhibition, the New Museum has hosted research and production residences for both international and local artists: niv Acosta, Aslı Çavuşoğlu, Juliana Huxtable, Geumhyung Jeong, Eduardo Navarro, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, and Luke Willis Thompson. These residencies took different forms: Some consisted of research supported by the New Museum’s curatorial team, while others took place on-site at the studio spaces in the Museum’s adjacent building at 231 Bowery and in the New Museum Theater, which was used as a rehearsal space. Additional new works by Nadim Abbas, Sophia Al-Maria, Ketuta Alexi-Meskishvili, Olga Balema, Frank Benson, Sascha Braunig, José León Cerrillo, Onejoon Che, Tania Pérez Córdova, DIS, Aleksandra Domanović, Casey Jane Ellison, Exterritory, Shadi Habib Allah, Lena Henke, Josh Kline, Eva Kotátková, Oliver Laric, Rachel Lord, Ashland Mines, Avery K. Singer, Martine Syms, and Lisa Tan have also been commissioned or produced for the exhibition.

In addition to works featured in the galleries, the curators selected artists to mobilize sites outside of the Museum, including the means of dispersing information about the exhibition itself. Such projects include the Triennial ad campaign *Extended Release* (2015), which was conceived and designed by New York artist collective K-HOLE and serves as the group’s contribution to the exhibition. *Distant Feel* (2015)—a new symbol for empathy designed by Antoine Catala, intended as an “update to the peace sign”—was co-commissioned by the Carnegie Museum of Art and will be made available online as a GIF as well as presented within the show as a sculpture. Finally, episodes of Ovation’s “*Touching the Art*” (2014–15)—a web series by Casey Jane Ellison that will temporarily become an artwork in “*Surround Audience*”—will focus on themes broached by the exhibition and will be shot in the Museum.

PUBLICATIONS

“*Surround Audience*” will also be accompanied by an exhibition catalogue designed by Familiar and copublished by the New Museum and Rizzoli. The catalogue will include full-color, four-page spreads on each of the fifty-one artists and groups as well interviews between the artist collective

DIS and Daniel

Steegmann Mangrané, artist; Andrew Durbin, writer, and Frank Benson and Juliana Huxtable, artists; Helga Christoffersen, Assistant Curator, and Basim Magdy, artist; and Sara O’Keeffe, Assistant Curator, and Aslı Çavuşoğlu, artist. The catalogue will also include essays by Cornell and Trecartin; Johanna Burton, Keith Haring Director and Curator of Education and Public Engagement; Brian Droitcour, writer; Alexander Provan, writer and Cofounder, Triple Canopy; and Hito Steyerl, artist.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the New Museum will publish a book of poetry, researched and edited by Droitcour. Featuring works by over sixty-nine contributors, including Cathy Park Hong, Dodie Bellamy, Jenny Zhang, Mónica de la Torre, and Bhanu Kapil, with original translations and texts by Triennial artists all interwoven with transcriptions of social media statuses of many varieties, *The Animated Reader: Poetry of Surround Audience* offers an expansion of the Triennial’s themes in the medium of poetry.

ABOUT THE TRIENNIAL

The New Museum Triennial was initiated in 2009. The first edition, “*Younger Than Jesus*,” was organized by Massimiliano Gioni, Laura Hoptman, and Lauren Cornell. The second Triennial, “*The Ungovernables*,” was organized by Eungie Joo in 2012.

The 2015 Triennial was organized by Lauren Cornell, Curator, 2015 Triennial, Museum as Hub, and Digital Projects, and artist Ryan Trecartin, with Sara O’Keeffe, Assistant Curator. The catalogue was overseen by Helga Christoffersen, Assistant Curator.

The 2015 curatorial team, led by Cornell, visited over thirty countries. To strengthen their research, they enlisted a group of luminary curatorial advisors to make recommendations and debate artistic practices. These included Edoardo Bonaspetti, Founder and Editor, Mousse Magazine, Milan; Diana Campbell Betancourt, Curator and Artistic Director, Samdani Art Foundation, and Chief Curator, Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh; Meiya Cheng, freelance curator and Chair, Taipei Contemporary Art Center, Taiwan; Omar Kholeif, writer, editor, and Curator, Whitechapel Gallery, London; Hyunjin Kim, Curator and Director, Arko Art Center, Seoul; Pablo Larios, art critic and writer, Berlin; Andrew Maerkle, writer and Editor, ART.It, Tokyo; Mariangela Méndez, curator and Associate Professor, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá; Kevin McGarry, writer and curator, Los Angeles; Nana Oforiatta-Ayim, writer, filmmaker, and art historian, Accra, Ghana; Caterina Riva,

curator, writer, and former Director, Artspace NZ, Auckland; Suzana Sousa, curator and writer, Luanda, Angola; Kate Sutton, writer and researcher; and Philip Tinari, Director, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing.

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