

ELECTRONIC SUPERHIGHWAY (2016 -1966) AT WHITECHAPEL GALLERY EXPLORES THE IMPACT OF COMPUTERS ON ART

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Computer technologies and Internet have irrevocably affected our society's development, everyday life and the way we experience the modern world. A special exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery explores the way these irreplaceable elements impacted the artists from the mid-1960s to the present day. The Internet has provided material for different generations of artists, as the technology evolved, so did the artistic expression and the ways it was used to convey the creative force. *Electronic Superhighway (2016 - 1966)* is a landmark exhibition which will feature multimedia works by over 70 different artists. The show will be a celebration of global connection through **technology** and **arts**, and an exploration of the various ways the two spheres coincide and interconnect. Cory Arcangel, Roy Ascott, Jeremy Bailey, Judith Barry, James Bridle, Douglas Coupland, Constant Dullaart, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Vera Molnar, Albert Oehlen, Trevor Paglen, Nam June Paik, Jon Rafman, Hito Steyerl, Ryan Trecartin, Amalia Ulman and Ulla Wiggen are just some of the names appearing at the exhibit which will display new and rarely seen multimedia works by a variety of artists.



Oliver Laric – Versions (Missile Variations), 2010

Some of the Highlights of the Extensive Show

The name **Electronic Superhighway** was taken from a term coined in 1974 by South Korean video art pioneer Nam June Paik who foresaw the potential of global connections through technology. The show is organized in such a way that the chronological order is made in reverse, beginning with works made between 2000 – 2016, and ending with *Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T)* which started in 1966. Focusing on the themes of digital image manipulation, production, circulation and authenticity, Oliver Laric's series of paintings *Versions (Missile Variations)* from 2010, explore these issues in an interesting way. Amalia Ulman's unique work *Excellences & Perfection (2014-2015)* features a four-month Instagram project which examines the influence of social media on attitudes towards the female body. Other original and thought-provoking works will draw much attention, and among them Thomas Ruff's manipulated camera-less photography should be mentioned, as well as miniature paintings by Celia Hempton, painted live in chatrooms. Going back to the late 1990s and the "dot-com boom", the period will be explored through the work of international artists and collectives such as The Yes Men who aimed to combine art and online activism as a response to the rising commercialization of the web.



Lynn Hershman Leeson – Seduction of a Cyborg, 1994

Going back to the Origins of Internet

1989 saw the birth of the **World Wide Web** phenomenon, providing the first breeding ground for the early user-based net art, with innovators and pioneers such as Olia Lialina from Moscow, who adopted the Internet as a medium, following earlier practices in performance and video. The artist created a love story enactment via an interactive black and white browser screen in a piece called *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War* (1996). **Rhizome**, a leading digital arts organization founded online in 1996 by Mark Tribe, will present a curated selection from its archives. The organization successfully built a collection of digital artworks throughout the years with over 2000 pieces, and recently, it has developed a preservation programme around this archive. Going back furthermore through time, artists like Manfred Mohr, Frieder Nake, Vera Molnar and Stan VanDerBeek created a wave of proliferating experiments from the 1960s – 70s, pushing the boundaries of technology.



Eduardo Kac – Tesão (Horny), 1985

Electronic Superhighway (2016 – 1966) Exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery

The show will be concluded with the abstract and geometrical works from the earliest periods, going back even to the artifacts from the formation of Experiments in Art and Technology in New York in 1966. This unique event saw performances of such great and influential artists like Robert Rauschenberg, Yvonne Rainer and John Cage. Working together with engineers from American engineering company Bell Laboratories, it represented one of the first major collaborations between the **industrial technology** sector and the **arts**. *Electronic Superhighway (2016 – 1966)* exhibition is on view from 29 January – 15 May, 2016 at **Whitechapel Gallery** in London. Spanning 50 years, key moments in the history of art and the Internet will be explored and revisited in this grand show, featuring works of over 70 artists.

All images courtesy of Whitechapel Gallery

Featured images: Nam June Paik – Internet Dream, 1994; Addie Wagenknecht – Asymmetric Love, 2013; How is the Internet changing art?; Rafael Lozano-Hemmer – Surface Tension, 1992; Thomas Ruff – Substrat 34 I, 2007