Pushing Boundaries: New Media Artists Changing the Art Landscape

Top Lists, Digital Art

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Balasz Takac

appropriating new media such as photography and film. The experiments of the Futurists and Constructi

Kinetic Art, but also what became defined as new media art in the 1970s.

The earliest examples of the intersection of art and science can be found in the practices of Robert Rauschenberg, Wolf Vostell, and Nam June Paik. Alongside exploring sound, a major source of inspiration was television, the most dominant media after WW II, especially in the Western hemisphere. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, many artists combined traditional media with video art and computer technology, creating captivating works that most often defied categorization.

New media art eventually grew to include all sorts of electronic media, but also robotics and, most recently, augmented reality and artificial intelligence. The scope of themes the artists are exploring is vast, yet social and political activism, feminism, Afrofuturism, and queerness frequently permeate new media art. Well into the 21st century, numerous new media art master's and Ph.D. programs have emerged worldwide, confirming the status of this form of artmaking.

This is our selection of **nine leading new media artists** that continue to affect the art landscape.

Featured image: TV Garden, the installation by Nam June Paik at the National Gallery Singapore during The Future Is Now exhibition, via Choo Yut Shing

Nam June Paik

The development of new media art is unimaginable without the contributions of Nam June Paik, a legendary practitioner and the official father of video art. Before experimenting with new media that would define his oeuvre, he studied classical music in early post-war Germany. Paik was one of the founding members of the Fluxus movement, and his epic recording of Pope Paul VI's US visit screened live at Café A Go Go in New York in 1965 is considered the first video artwork made. Ever since, the artist has explored the multiple possibilities of screens and live recordings, working with the latest technology, numerous video pieces, installations, closed-circuit sculptures, and environments. His works can now be seen in

Refik Anadol

A Turkish-born American artist, **Refik Anadol** made a name for himself with multidisciplinary projects based on machine learning algorithms. He explores the possibilities of technological advancement through his three-dimensional, dreamlike environments. His achievements have been widely acknowledged as the artist continues to search for new solutions at the intersection of science, media, and technology. Recently, Anadol received more attention after his artworks from *The Machine Hallucination* series, offered at a Sotheby's Hong Kong auction, became the most expensive NFT collection sold by a single artist in Asia.

Cao Fei

One of the leading Chinese contemporary artists, Cao Fei works across the media exploring an overt alienation caused by rapid urbanization in her native country. She develops a compelling body of work reflective of contemporaneity by fusing social criticism, popular culture, local youth subcultures, and Surrealist legacy. Fei skillfully confronts real and virtual worlds to create tension between utopia and dystopia while addressing the evolving notion of body and technology. Aside from exhibiting worldwide, this artist is also active as a professor and a master advisor of the School of Experimental Art at the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

iMirror by Cao Fei, doppelgänger exhibition on Portrait Island in Second Life at National Portrait Gallery, Canberra Australia, 23 October 2009 - 23 March 2010, via National Portrait
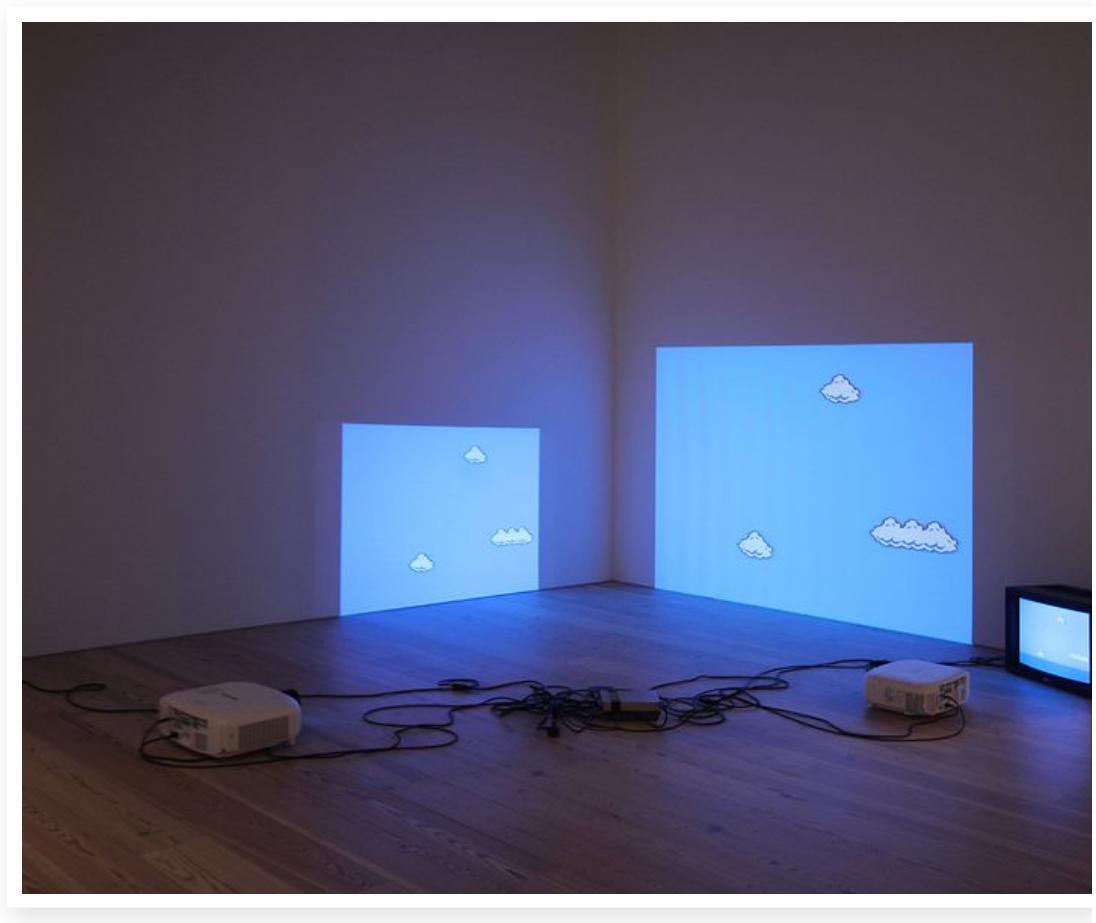

Cory Arcangel

An American multidisciplinary artist, Cory Arcangel gained a wider reputation for his outstanding video game modifications made of scraps from the digital realm, such as Photoshop gradients and YouTube videos. By using techniques such as appropriation, digital hacking, and recycling and creating reduced environments deployed of the human presence, Arcangel highlights the self-sufficiency of technology in a post-digital world. His works have been showcased in solo and group exhibitions worldwide, and, in 2006, the artist

Featured image:

Cory Arcangel - Super Mario Clouds, 2002; Whitney Museum, vi _____
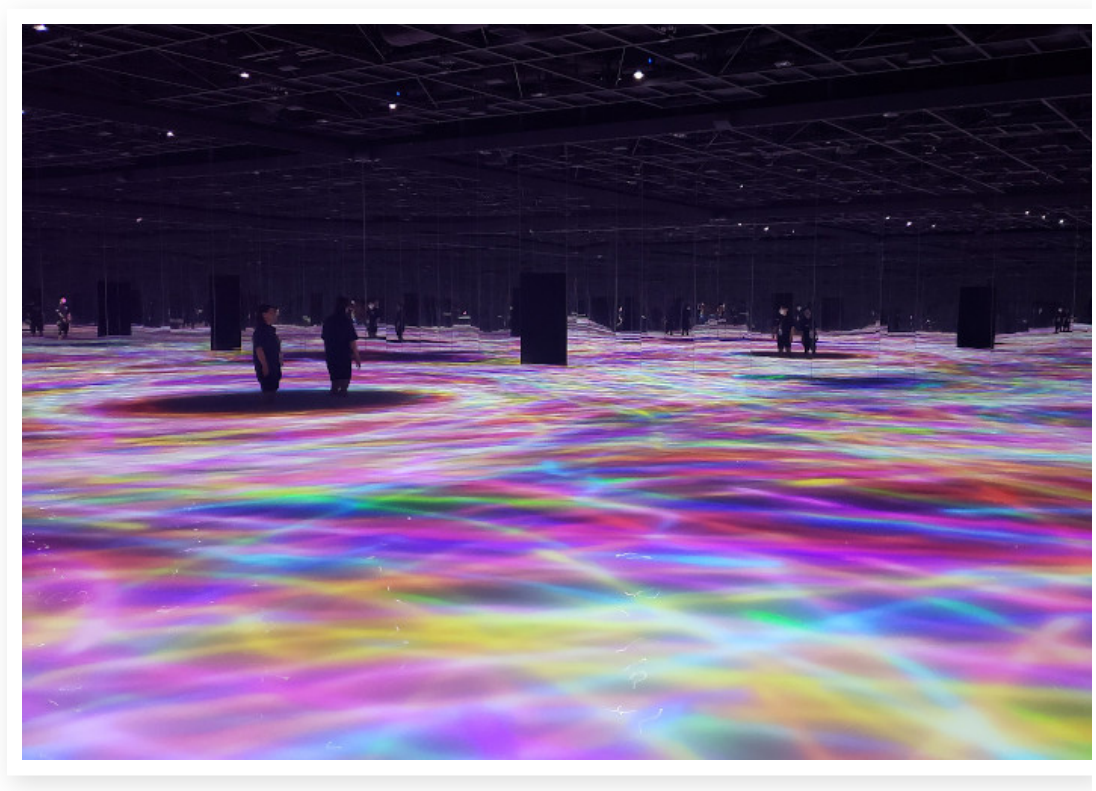
teamLab

An art collective founded in 2001 in Tokyo by Toshiyuki Inoko and his friends, teamLab gathers artists, programmers, engineers, CG animators, mathematicians, and architects who use digital technology to tackle different phenomena affiliated with the virtual experience. They are also a commercially oriented collective known for producing smartphone applications, web pages, and other digital content for corporations. The laboratory for experimental creations, as teamLab describes themselves, debuted at the Singapore Biennale in 2011 upon the invitation by Takashi Murakami. Since 2014, they have been represented by the famous Pace Gallery.
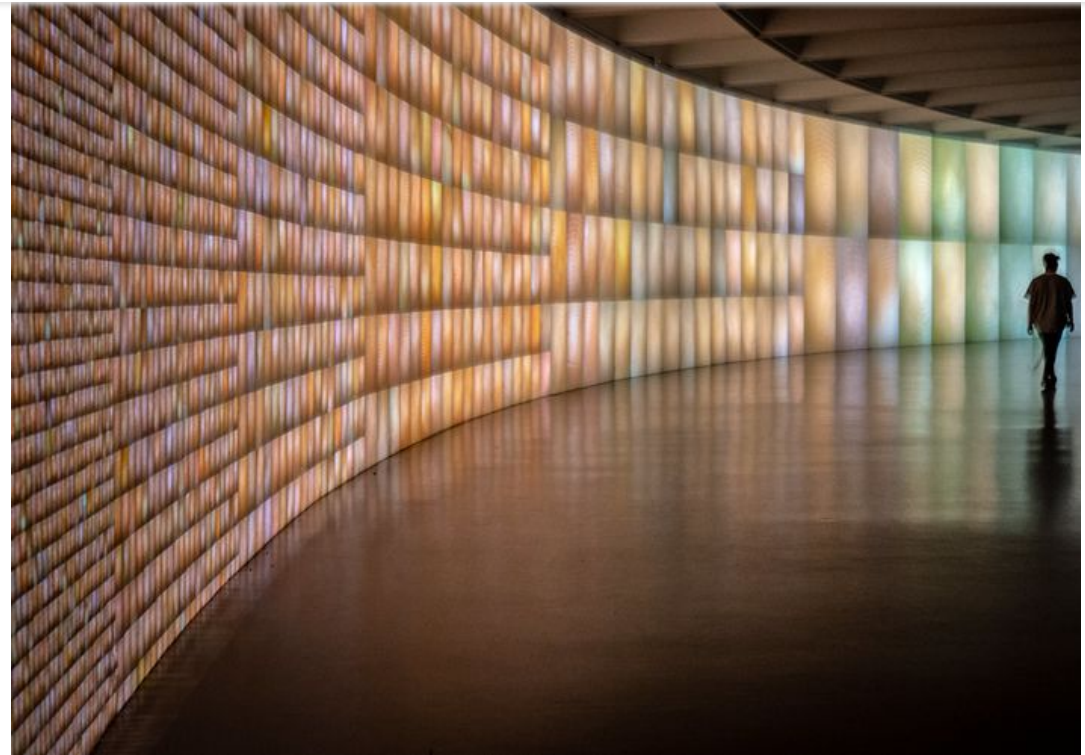
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

A Mexican-born Canadian artist, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, earned a reputation for a unique way of merging architecture, technology, and performance. His interactive platforms for a wider public consisting of digital fountains, computerized surveillance, robotic lights, and media walls, fully immerse the observer while addressing social and political structures from the real world. Lozano-Hemmer represented Mexico at the Venice Biennale in 2007, and his works have been showcased in the international context on various occasions.

Featured image:

Part of a large, interactive series of work titled Pulse by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, via Phil Roeder

Mario Klingemann

Neural networks, code, and algorithms stand at the core of the practice by German artist **Mario Klingemann**. As one of the first practitioners to use computer learning in the arts, he created a body of work appreciative of artificial intelligence. Klingemann had a noted participation at the Ars Electronica Festival, and his works were presented at the MoMA, the MET, the Centre Pompidou Paris, and the British Library. He runs a Berlin-based exhibition space with the paper artist Alexandra Lukaschewitz.

Featured image: Mario Klingemann - Memories of Passersby. Courtesy Onkaos. Image via Creative Commons.

Rafaël Rozendaal

Rafaël Rozendaal is a pioneer of Internet Art. As the founder of BYOB (Bring Your Own Beamer), an open-source exhibition concept, he enabled different artists to create media art exhibitions with or without a budget. In the early 2000s, Rozendaal started selling websites as artwork. The collector and the artist sign a contract agreeing that the work is publicly accessible, and the ownership is inscribed in the source code and the webpage's title. Using the internet as his canvas, this prolific new media artist made a name for himself, anticipating rapid digitization and the NFT craze.

Featured image: Rafaël Rozendaal - Random fear (with mirrors), 2019. Kunsthal Rotterdam. Image via Rob Oo.

Pierre Huyghe

[Pierre Huyghe](#) is a French artist acknowledged for his films, sculptures, and public interventions based on living systems. These unique systems consisting of different forms and media, including music, fictional characters, and co-dependent ecosystems, are made to pose questions surrounding the notion of exhibition and fetishism of an art object. Huyghe works with speculative fiction at large, often highlighting the connections between different life forms and technological matters that can learn, grow and evolve.

Featured image: Piere Huyghe – After Alife Ahead, 2017, Skulptur Projekte Münster. Image via [Creative Commons](#).

Cory Arcangel

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Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

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