

# From Digital and Back

Curated by  
Magdalena Sawon,  
founder, Postmasters  
Gallery

July 10

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September 9, 2017

Pratt  
Manhattan  
Gallery

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# Foreword

The eight artists featured in the exhibition *From Digital and Back* represent a small portion of the amazing talent that emerges from Pratt Digital Arts.

Graduates emerge as critically informed and skilled creators actively shaping our digital future.

Alumni continue to build on their education to respond to a diverse and networked culture, and to produce experiences that provide audiences agency to explore critical issues.

The work in this exhibition demonstrates a mastery by these recent alumni with interactive installations and objects, digital images, video, animation, and digital mixed media that they began to explore while at Pratt.

We are proud of the accomplishments of this group and of all our digital arts alumni whose work can be found featured in important publications, in galleries and new media institutions, and contributing to major creative industries.

Congratulations to all our alumni, and a special thank you to Magda Sawon for curating the exhibition.

Sincerely,  
Peter Patchen, Chair  
Digital Arts and Animation

# Introduction

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Art has always been a transformative reflection of reality and its moment in time.

Why artwork produced today could not be made before goes far beyond new technologies.

Today, the screen acts as a window to experience and engage in the world; the proliferation of digital tools has led to new forms of creative expression. And yet medium is neutral, newer is not better or more current, not more interesting or relevant in itself. Artists choose the language that best fits the intention of the work. Touch and texture may be absent from digital output, but this leads to devising alternative ways of infusing emotion and humanity into these new formats, and may also lead to a return to traditional object and mark making.

*From Digital and Back* brings together eight artists engaged in our digitally shaped culture, with each work carrying a distinct time stamp of today.

There is no language or aesthetic overlap. From emotionally charged machinima video, manipulated photographs of a near future, finding the soul in obsolete hardware, and fantastical wearable devices to handwritten poems, drawings, and a video chain of single moments to visualizing emotions of finding one's home and place in the world, the message always shapes the medium.

*Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* Paul Gauguin's grand troika of existential doubt and one's consciousness is always relevant; in this very moment, it is loaded with the radical changes taking place, and also calls for specific inquiries: How real is virtual? How do new communication tools and smart technologies affect culture, politics, and socioeconomics? What happens to contemplation in the times of speed? What are sustainable strategies for contemporary life? How does one navigate between connectivity and disconnect, instantaneity and rapid obsolescence, and the digital/analog divide.

The future may only bring more questions. The past may hold some answers.

From digital and back.

Magdalena Sawon,  
founder, Postmasters Gallery

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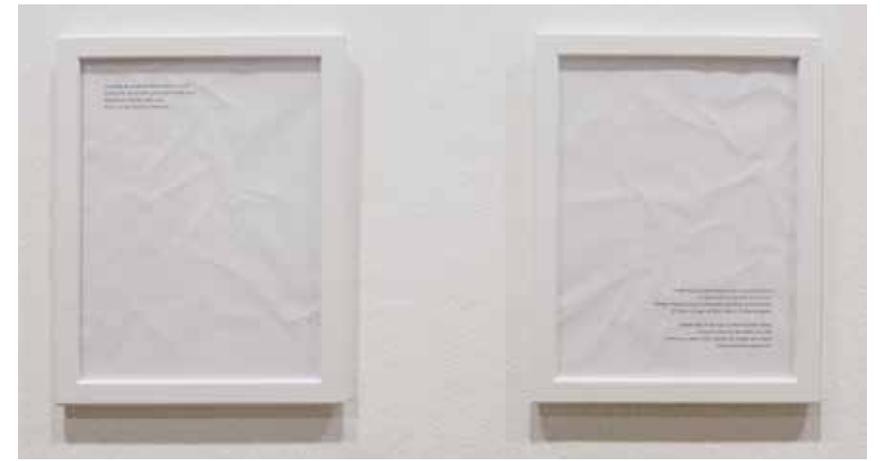
Magdalena Sawon is a contemporary art gallerist and art world figure who founded and owns New York's Postmasters Gallery (with her husband Tamas Banovich), a gallery for young and established contemporary artists, especially those working in new media, in the Tribeca neighborhood of New York City. The gallery is considered to be one of the "leading experimental galleries" in New York City.

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Jacky Connolly, *Anhedonia*, 2017, digital video, 18 minutes, still from video

Bryce Grates, *Untitled (Poem 1)* and *Untitled (Poem 2)*, 2017 digital print 12 x 26 inches



Takehito Etani, *Transparent Footprints of Invisible Giants*, 2013–2016, wood, rawhide, plastic, felt, video cameras, LCD video screens, steel pipes, video, 96 x 32 x 32 inches

Qin Han, *Home*, 2015–2016, silkscreen, fabric, animation, projection, 3:30 minutes, still from video





Cesar Kuriyama, *1 Second Everyday, Age 30-34*, Feb 20, 2011-Feb 20, 2016, video, 30 minutes, still from video

Taezoo Park, *Digital Being: TV Being 010-01*, 2017, CRT television, Arduino, Raspberry Pi, Transistor, and Relay, 87 x 35.5 x 14.75 inches



Dakota Pailes-Friedman, *The Walker*, 2014, animation, 2:05 minutes, still from video

Nick Pedersen, *Guiding Signs, Ultima series*, Edition of 5, 2014, digital photo montage, archival inkjet print, 22 x 28 inches



# Artist Bios

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Jacky Connolly (M.F.A. Digital Arts '16, M.S.L.I.S. '16) creates dystopian videos and sculptures using graphics from gaming technology. Her work explores conventions of narrative cinema, animation, and literature. Recent solo exhibitions include *Life Simulations*, Microscope Gallery (Brooklyn); *Shadows on the Hudson*, Kimberly-Klark (Queens); and *Hudson Valley Ruins*, Atlanta Contemporary (Atlanta). Her work has also been featured in *Art Agenda* and *Artforum*. Recent group exhibitions and screening programs include *Post-Apocalyptic Realism*, Museum Brandhorst (Munich); *Dreamlands*, Whitney Museum of American Art; and *3. The Set*, Holiday Forever (Jackson, Wyoming). She lives and works in New York.

Takehito Etani (B.F.A. Digital Arts '03) invents fantastical wearable devices, installations, and toys that he refers to as spiritual prosthetics. He explores the relationships between body, consciousness, and technology in contemporary daily life. Selected festivals and exhibitions include VIPER Basel Festival for Film, Video, and New Media (Switzerland), the Stuttgarter Filmwinter Festival for Expanded Media (Germany), and the Taro Okamoto Memorial Museum (Kawasaki, Japan), where he was a nominee for The 7th Taro Okamoto Memorial Award for Contemporary Art. Etani was an artist-in-residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2006. He currently lives and works in Oakland, California.

Bryce Grates (B.F.A. Digital Arts '16) is an artist and curator. Recent curatorial projects include *The Fates* at Interstate Projects (Brooklyn), *The Earth is a Trampled Garden*, and *Our Holiday in Reverie* at 269 Kosciusko (Brooklyn). She currently lives and works in Brooklyn.

Qin Han (M.F.A. Digital Arts '17) is a printmaker and digital artist. Her work adapts a traditional approach to our digital era, but is formally grounded in painting, drawing, and printmaking. The work *HOME* questions the experience of transition and relocation. Based on her experience, her images and layers explored the patterns of migration. Han has exhibited in the United States and China, including the 2016 Long Island Biennial, Zhejiang Art Museum, and Alex Ferrone Gallery (Cutchogue, New York). Han holds a BFA and an MFA in Printmaking from the China Academy of Art. She is based in New York and Hangzhou, China.

Cesar Kuriyama (B.F.A. Digital Arts '04) is a math and science nerd who accidentally ended up going to art school. He is a director, producer, and animator with a lifelong passion for storytelling and making things. His work has been featured in publications such as *Fast Company*, *Wired*, *CNN*, *BBC*, and *The New York Times*. After directing a music video in his spare time that went viral, he built the confidence to quit his job and pursue his own creative endeavors. A year later, he spoke at TED 2012 about an idea he called *1 Second Everyday*. This led to the creation of a tech company by the same name. He lives and works in New York.

Dakota Pailes-Friedman's (B.F.A. Digital Arts '15) works have been featured in a multitude of spaces all over the country and the world. He has shown works at the Atlanta Independent Film Festival, Marches du Cannes (Cannes, France), New York City Independent Film Festival, and LA Cinefest. He has shown in the *My Shirt is Breathing* show at the Beit Ha'Ir Museum (Tel Aviv), the Katharine McKenna Recognition Event (Brooklyn), and has had multiple screenings at the BAMcinématek (Brooklyn). Pailes-Friedman has also been featured in multiple group shows, including *West Street Showing* at 67 West St. (Brooklyn), *Stranger Things* (Easton, PA) and *Byziness* (Brooklyn). He lives and works in New York.

Taezoo Park (M.F.A. Digital Arts '12) is a new media artist whose work explores analog and digital technologies. Park pushes new artistic forms through his unique use of digital media, emphasizing the existent "character" within abandoned technology. Park was awarded "The Best Project" of the DUMBO Arts Festival in 2014. His work has been featured throughout New York at SciArt, SPRING/BREAK Art Show, The New Museum's Ideas City Festival, Governor's Island Art Fair, Mark Miller Gallery, Cornell University, Lower East Side Ecology Center, Northside Festival, World Trade Gallery and the Made in NY Media Center by IFP. He is based in Brooklyn.

Nick Pederson's (M.F.A. Digital Arts '11) work is inspired by his experience with nature and environmentalism, and motivated by his concern for the impact of climate change and other environmental impacts. Recent shows include *Swallowed by the Jungle*, Arch Enemy Arts (Philadelphia); *Image-Based Art in the 21st Century*, Philadelphia City Hall; and *Truth to Power, Rock the Vote* at the Democratic National Convention (Philadelphia). He currently lives and works in Philadelphia, PA.

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## Acknowledgments

This exhibition and its programming would not have been possible without the dedication of the Department of Exhibitions staff: Kirsten Nelson, Assistant Director; Kate Ryan, Gallery Coordinator, Travis Molkenbur, installation manager; Paul Matvienko-Sikar, Installation Technician; and our student assistants.

Many thanks to the artists for making their work available; and we are grateful to Magdalena Sawon, founder, Postmasters Gallery who was generous with her time and expertise in choosing the work for this exhibition.

The assistance of Peter Patchen, Chair; Carla Gannis, Assistant Chair; and Linda Lauro-Lazin, Adjunct Associate Professor, each from Digital Arts and Animation is greatly appreciated.

Nick Battis  
Director of Exhibitions

Digital Arts Alumni Artists:

Jacky Connolly

Takehito Etani

Bryce Grates

Qin Han

Cesar Kuriyama

Dakota Pailes-Friedman

Taezoo Park

Nick Pedersen