

A SYMPOSIUM ON AI AND THE ARTS BEYOND

Presented by
USC Arts Now.

Co-sponsored by
USC Visions and Voices
and
USC Center for
Generative AI and Society.

THE HUMAN?

FROM THE METAPHYSICAL TO THE PHYSICAL

CO-CURATED BY

ARTIST

CAI GUO-QIANG

USC VICE PROVOST FOR THE ARTS

JOSH KUN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 • 9 AM - 4 PM • BOVARD AUDITORIUM

ARTS NOW

USC University of
Southern California

Beyond the Human?: From the Metaphysical to the Physical explores the impact of AI on the arts, focusing on a set of key questions:

- What is the role of the artist in a computational future?
- What are the promises and perils of AI's expansion of what it means to be human?
- What is AI's potential for moving us beyond human exceptionalism into realms of inter-species and inter-materialist consciousness?
- Can AI move us beyond a singular self?
- How does AI impact our sense of the physical?
- How does AI imagine and enact the metaphysical?
- How can artists use AI to build new worlds?

ORDER OF SPEAKERS

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

9 AM - MORNING SESSION

- Welcome by Josh Kun
- Cai Guo-Qiang
- Catie Cuan
- Burçin Becerik-Gerber
- Zoë Hitzig
- Aroussiak Gabrielian
- Troy Therrien

12-1 PM - LUNCH

Generously provided by Tigawok,
powered by Next Robot AI Cooking Robot.

1:05 PM - AFTERNOON SESSION

- Refik Anadol
- Minne Atairu
- Kira Xonorika
- Harry Yeff aka Reeps100
- Nancy Baker Cahill

POP-UP FILM SCREENINGS

CURATED BY HOLLY WILLIS, USC PROFESSOR OF CINEMATIC ARTS

The short videos gathered for Beyond the Human serve as interstitial bursts of sensation—from the poetic to the provocative to the uncanny—and showcase some of the diverse AI tools and techniques that artists use in creating moving image artworks. They also touch on the event's framing question, considering the notion of the human and beyond, both in their thematic concerns and through explorations of AI as it intersects with the creative process. Finally, given that there is a powerful connection among cultures, technologies, and the stories we can and want to tell, in a world increasingly surveilled, militarized, and governed by artificial intelligence, is it any surprise that our storytelling would similarly turn toward AI, with artists exploring its capacities, strangeness, and limitations?

- *Manifesto* | Black7even (Vincenzo Scorza) | 2023 | 1:03
- *Flamingo Dreams* | Sandunes | Parag Mital and Sourya Sen | 2024 | 1:48
- *Cores* | Bacará | Patrick Hanser | 2023 | 3:52
- *Baroque Bodies (Ambient Portals #1)* | Laura Splan | 2022 | 1:23
- *Unicellular Impressions, Complex Systems, and Fleeting Symmetries* | Sofia Crespo | 2024 | 1:28
- *Everything Exists Without Me* | noper | 2024 | :46
- *On These Streets* | Andrea Ciulu | 2024 | 2:11
- *Idle Hands* | Irina Angles (choreography/dance) and Dr Formalyst (video art/audio) | 2023 | 5:00
- *Anonymity / Insecta ex Machina* | Grit Wolany | 2024 | 3:00
- *Wet Summer* | Möрмаid | KAKSI (Alam Ali & Anna Karlsson) | 2024 | 3:07
- *Plane of Incidence I* | Sabrina Ratté | 2024 | 6:24

BIOS

Refik Anadol is an internationally renowned media artist, director, and pioneer in the aesthetics of machine intelligence. He currently resides in Los Angeles, California, where he owns and operates Refik Anadol Studio and RAS LAB, the Studio's research practice centered around discovering and developing trailblazing approaches to data narratives. Anadol's body of work addresses the challenges, and the possibilities, that ubiquitous computing has imposed on humanity, and what it means to be a human in the age of AI. His global projects have received a number of awards and prizes including the Lorenzo il Magnifico Lifetime Achievement Award for New Media Art, Microsoft Research's Best Vision Award, University of California Institute for Research in the Arts Award, SEGD Global Design Award, and Google's Artists and Machine Intelligence Artist Residency Award.

Minne Atairu is a researcher and interdisciplinary artist interested in generative artificial intelligence. Utilizing AI-mediated processes and materials, Atairu's work critically examines and illuminates understudied gaps in Black historical archives. Minne's academic research focuses on Generative AI, Art and Educational policy in urban K-12 Art classrooms. Minne has exhibited at The Shed, New York (2023); Frieze, London (2023); The Harvard Art Museums, Boston (2022); Markk Museum, Hamburg (2021); SOAS Brunei Gallery University of London, London (2022); Fleming Museum of Art, Vermont (2021). Minne is the recipient of S+T+ARTS Prize Africa (2024), The Graham Foundation Grant for Research (2023), Community Engagement Grant from Columbia University's Center for Science and Society (2023), Columbia University's Artistic Dialogue Across Disciplines Grant (2022), the Lumen Prize for Art and Technology (2021).

Dr. Burçin Becerik-Gerber is a professor and Chair of Sonny Astani Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and founder and Director of USC Center for Intelligent Environments

(CENTIENTS). During the last 15 years, her research focused on advanced data acquisition, modeling, visualization for design, construction, and control of user-centered responsive and adaptive built environments. She pioneered a new field: Human-Building Interaction (HBI), which is a convergent field that represents the growing complexities of the dynamic interplay between human experience and intelligence within built environments. She published her work in more than 200 peer-reviewed journal and conference papers. Her work has received support worth over \$14 million from a variety of sources, including the NSF, DoE, DHS, and DoT and corporate sponsors. Among her awards are the National Science Foundation Career Award and FIATECH's Outstanding Early Career Researcher.

Nancy Baker Cahill is an interdisciplinary artist and expanded filmmaker whose hybrid practice focuses on systemic power, consciousness, and the human body through ecological thinking. She creates research-based immersive experiences, video installations, and conceptual blockchain projects rooted in the history of drawing. Her monumental augmented reality (AR) artworks extend and subvert the lineage of land art, often highlighting civics and a desire for more equitable futures. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of 4th Wall, a free, AR public art platform exploring site interventions, resistance, and inclusive creative expression. Baker Cahill is an artist scholar alumnus of the Berggruen Institute and a TEDx speaker. Her work is held in the collections of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; The Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA; RFC Art Collection, Miami, FL; and 0x Collection, Prague, CZ.

An entrepreneur, engineer, and artist, **Dr. Catie Cuan** is a pioneer in the nascent field of 'choreorobotics' and works at the intersection of artificial intelligence, human-robot interaction, and art. She is the founder and CEO of Zenie, a consumer AI company, backed by Gradient Ventures and HF0. Catie holds a PhD and Master's of Science in robotics and AI from Stanford, where

she is also a postdoc leading the art and robotics efforts at the new Stanford Robotics Center. She has held artistic residencies at the Smithsonian, the Exploratorium, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Everyday Robots (Google X), TED, and ThoughtWorks Arts. Catie is a prolific and award-winning robot choreographer, having created works with nearly a dozen different robots, from a massive ABB IRB 6700 industrial robot to a tabletop IDEO + Moooi robot. Catie is also an International Strategy Forum (ISF) fellow at Schmidt Futures and the former co-founder of caali, an embodied media company.

Aroussiak Gabrielian is an environmental designer and bioartist working with living organisms, natural systems, and atmospheric phenomena to explore multispecies entanglements across scales. Her work aims to torque our imaginaries to help us rethink our interactions with both human and non-human agents on this planet and has received numerous design recognitions including the Emerging Designer Awards from the Design Futures Initiative and the Tomorrowland Projects Foundation Award administered through the New York Foundation for the Arts. Aroussiak is Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture + Urbanism at the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California and an Affiliate Faculty of Media Arts Practice at the School of Cinematic Arts and Founding Director of the Landscape Futures Lab. Outside of academia, Aroussiak is a member of NEW INC and Founding Design Principal of foreground design agency.

Cai Guo-Qiang (b. 1957, Quanzhou, China) has excelled in a wide range of creative mediums, including painting, installation art, video art, and performance art, and has created works utilizing new technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, NFTs, blockchain, and artificial intelligence (AI).

Major awards he has received include the Golden Lion at the 1999 Venice Biennale, the Hiroshima Art Prize in 2007, and the Fukuoka Prize in 2009. In 2012, he was honored as a Laureate for the Praemium Imperiale. During the same year, he received

the inaugural U.S. Department of State Medal of Arts. His recent honors include the Barnett and Annalee Newman Foundation Award in 2015, the 7th Isamu Noguchi Award in 2020, the Rockefeller 3rd Award in 2022, and the 74th Art Encouragement Prize by Japan's Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in 2024. Cai also served as the Director of Visual Effects and Fireworks for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

Cai's solo exhibitions in major art museums around the world include those at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 2006), his retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, 2008), the Prado Museum (Madrid, 2017), the Uffizi Galleries (Florence, 2018), and the Palace Museum (Beijing, 2020). In 2015, Cai realized the explosion event *Sky Ladder* in his hometown of Quanzhou, Fujian. The artwork became the centerpiece of an eponymous documentary directed by Academy Award winner Kevin Macdonald and globally distributed on Netflix.

Cai has resided and worked in New York since 1995.

Zoë Hitzig is a Junior Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows. Her current research centers on privacy and transparency in markets, contracts, and other forms of communication. She received her PhD in economics from Harvard in 2023, and she holds an MPhil in history and philosophy of science from the University of Cambridge. Hitzig is also the author of two books of poetry, *mezzanine* (2020) and *not us now* (2024), the latter winning the *Changes* book prize in 2024. She currently serves as poetry editor of *The Drift*.

Josh Kun is USC's inaugural Vice Provost for the Arts, and Professor and Chair in Cross-Cultural Communication in the USC Annenberg School. His books include *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America*, *The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles*, *Songs in the Key of Los Angeles*, and many others. As a curator and artist, his projects have appeared with Prospect New Orleans, Steve Turner Gallery,

Grammy Museum, Getty, SFMOMA, California African American Museum, the Los Angeles Public Library, and more. He has been the recipient of a Berlin Prize, an American Book Award, and a MacArthur Fellowship. He is currently writing a book on music and migration in the 21st century.

Troy Conrad Therrien is a Mystery Architect, fabricating multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary innovations from mediums that are never traditionally paired. Formerly the Curator of the Architecture and Digital Initiatives at the Guggenheim, he was an adjunct professor of architecture at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation where he cofounded the Architecture Online Lab and was an editor of the *Applied Research Practices in Architecture Journal*. Initially trained as a computer engineer, and later in architecture design, history, and theory, his current research focuses on the relationship between architecture, communication technology, and political economy. Formerly an innovation consultant, his curatorial practice blends traditional exhibitions with other experimental forms of programming.

Holly Willis teaches in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, where she is currently co-chair the Media Arts + Practice program and co-directs the AI for Media & Storytelling (AIMS) initiative of the USC Center for Generative AI and Society. Her research centers on the edges of cinema, from handmade feminist film practices to the post-image, post-cinematic and posthuman, and experiments in digital image capture. She wrote the essays that comprise the catalog *Björk Digital*, and is the author of *Fast Forward: The Future(s) of the Cinematic Arts* and *New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image*. She also served as editor for *David O. Russell: Interviews* and *The New Ecology of Things*, which collects essays on pervasive computing. Her own image-based work explores alternative film and photography practices, from cyanotypes and phytograms to animation, photogrammetry, and experiments with image processing.

Kira Xonorika is a groundbreaking artist, writer, and futurist whose work operates at the intersections of technology, culture, and identity. Focused on using AI as a collaborative medium, Xonorika delves into complex themes relating to ancestry, indigenous worldviews, and a critique of artificial boundaries such as those between male and female, utopia and dystopia, and human versus machine—that have historically reinforced Western colonial power systems. By challenging our preconceptions around identity, Xonorika prompts us to reconsider these categories as fluid rather than fixed, echoing nature’s own disdain for rigid classifications. Xonorika has recently exhibited her work in Los Angeles, New York, and Berlin, and dropped a new series “AI Renders the World” on Foundation in September.

Harry Yeff aka Reeps100 is a London-born neuro-divergent artist and technologist specializing in voice, A.I., and tech-based performance art. Yeff has been visualizing the voice for 15 years and is globally celebrated as a leader in a new wave of voice technology focused experimentation. He continues to build on his world-class skillset utilizing an almost inhuman vocal range to drive his works. His performative installations and machine-like vocal control have amassed a global following, rendering over 100 million views online. He has completed three artist residencies at Harvard University, is a culture leader at The World Economic Forum, and has followed in the footsteps of John Cage and Rauschenberg by joining the legendary Experiments in Art and Technology program at Bell Labs. His multidisciplinary new-media spectacles and theory have established artist in residence roles at Factory Berlin and Sonar Barcelona.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all those who helped make this symposium possible: Gwyn Mackenzie, Euphie Ying and the Cai Studio team, Bethany Montagano, Giggs Huang, Daria Yudacufski and the Visions and Voices team, Hannah Burnham, Holly Willis, Zach Kaplan, Lindsay Lytle, Amy Cheung, Alexis Burchett, and Sara Hoffman. Special thanks to USC President Carol Folt and USC Provost Andrew Guzman for their support.

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