

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Vancouver Art Gallery presents
***The Imitation Game: Visual Culture in
the Age of Artificial Intelligence***

A dynamic exhibition surveying the expanding application of artificial intelligence in the production of visual culture internationally over the past seventy years



March 2, 2022, Vancouver, BC // *Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəʔəm), Squamish (Sḵwxwú7mesh Ḱxwumixw) and Tsleil-Waututh (salilwataʔ) Nations*

The Imitation Game: Visual Culture in the Age of Artificial Intelligence surveys the extraordinary uses (and abuses) of artificial intelligence (AI) in the production of modern and contemporary visual culture around the world. This dynamic exhibition examines the development of artificial intelligence, from the 1950s to the present, through a historical lens. Building on this foundation, it emphasizes the explosive growth of AI across disciplines, including animation, architecture, art, fashion, graphic design, urban design, and video games, over the past decade.

Featured artists, designers and architects include *airegan, Stafford Beer, BIG, Ben Bogart, Gui Bonsiepe, Sougwen Chung, Muriel Cooper, DeepDream, Stephanie Dinkins, Scott Eaton, Epic Games, Amber Frid-Jimenez, Neri Oxman and Patrick Pennefather, and WETA, among others.

“This exhibition is timely and compelling. The breadth of creative practices explored is core to our mandate and vision. The implication of this research is wide-ranging and breathtaking. The experience will be unparalleled and unforgettable. We look forward to welcoming the public to this deeply researched and major cultural event,” shares Anthony Kiendl, CEO & Director of Vancouver Art Gallery.

The exhibition begins with an **Interactive Introduction** inviting visitors to actively identify diverse areas of cultural production influenced by artificial intelligence. Twenty **Objects of Wonder** speak to the history of AI and the critical advances in this technology that have shaped the present and continue to influence the future. **Interactive installations** feature exemplary uses of AI in the production and presentation of visual culture— inviting gallery-goers to consider their own identity as data within the realm of AI. Two major artworks by internationally renowned artists **Sougwen Chung** and **Scott Eaton** are showcased among numerous other projects. Sougwen Chung is a former research fellow at MIT Media Lab and an award-winning innovator in the field of human-machine collaboration in art. Scott Eaton's stunning interdisciplinary work draws deeply on the history of animation, art, figure studies, machine learning and the physics of movement.

From the early moments of its creation, AI has captured the imaginations of cultural producers around the world. Unsurprisingly, much of the early research on AI engaged with human-centred ideas of imitation and emulation. The exhibition borrows its title from the mathematician Alan Turing's famous notion of the "imitation game" that could be used to test a machine's capacity to display intelligent behaviour in a manner that would be indistinguishable from natural human behaviour. Today, AI is a commonplace part of our day-to-day lives as evidenced by intelligent agents like Siri or Alexa, and cultural producers embrace it as a fundamental tool with wide creative application. Advances in deep learning profoundly affect realms including animation, architecture, art, architecture, fashion, film, games, graphics, performance, theatre, product design, urban design, industrial design and video. *The Imitation Game* dramatically traces AI's history and critically highlights AI's vast and varied creative scope and potential. Extending the exhibition's reach beyond the Gallery's walls, *The Imitation Game* is accompanied by a freely available digital publication.

Years in the making, this exciting and extensively researched exhibition is conceived and organized by **Bruce Grenville**, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery, and co-curator **Glenn Entis**, a computer animation and video game pioneer. The co-curators worked closely with advisers drawn from communities active in the research and production of artificial intelligence. In addition, they collaborated extensively with the Centre for Digital Media, a research- and production-oriented graduate program jointly administered by the University of British Columbia, the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Emily Carr University of Art + Design and Simon Fraser University. The participation of the University of British Columbia Public Humanities Hub facilitated direct connections to AI research and collaboration opportunities at UBC.

FEATURED PROGRAM

The Vancouver Art Gallery in collaboration with UBC Humanities Hub is presenting the **Speculative Futures Symposium** on April 7, 2022, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Zoom. Taking place within the framework of the exhibition, the symposium examines artificial intelligence and specific uses of technology in its multifarious dimensions. To what extent has technology and the promise of digital futures co-opted and compromised our sense of self and identity? How to decolonize digital space or build new digital infrastructure? Speculative Futures symposium attempts to address the ethical implications of technology and how leading thinkers of today address or imply pressure in facilitating these issues for urgent cultural production. Featured Speakers include: Dr. Ramon Amaro (Kings College), Dr. Safiya Umoja Noble (UCLA and MacArthur Fellowship Honoree), Jiayang Fan (New Yorker), and Nalo Hopkinson (UBC).

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Image Credit: Sougwen Chung, Omnia per Omnia, 2018, video documentation of performance (still), Courtesy of the Artist

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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ABOUT VANCOUVER ART GALLERY (vanartgallery.bc.ca)

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's leading and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is paid to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to the arts of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art that the Gallery founded in 2014. The Gallery's programs also explore the impacts of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization grateful to the support it receives by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is situated on the ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səɬilwətaʔ (Tsleil-waututh) Nations and is respectful of the Indigenous stewards of the land it occupies, whose rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Vancouver and to the work of the Gallery.

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