



For Immediate Release
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**THE MFA COMPUTER ART DEPARTMENT
AT THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS PRESENTS
TECHNOCULTURES: THE HISTORY OF DIGITAL ART
–A CONVERSATION**

Friday, March 6, 6 – 8:30pm
School of Visual Arts
133/141 West 21 Street, Room 101C
Free and open to the public

The MFA Computer Art Department at the School of Visual Arts (SVA) presents *Technocultures: The History of Digital Art—A Conversation*, featuring influential historical practitioners and researchers on digital art. Department Chair Bruce Wands will moderate. The panel will trace the history of digital art through vignettes and personal anecdotes of four pioneers: **Kenneth Knowlton**, **Margot Lovejoy**, **Kenneth Snelson** and **Lillian Schwartz**. They will be joined by **Jeremy Gardiner** and **Nick Lambert**, who are working with Birkbeck College, University of London, and the Victoria and Albert Museum on a project called Technocultures.

Technocultures traces the history of digital art through recent acquisitions by the Victoria and Albert Museum consisting of a collection of approximately 500 digital prints from Patric Prince, a noted digital art collector in the United States and the British Computer Art Society. “This is a historic moment in digital art,” states Bruce Wands, adding, “The Victoria and Albert Museum is taking the international lead in creating permanent archives of early digital work.” The discussion will move from how each of the panelists got involved in digital art and what attracted them to it, to what they are doing today and how digital art is viewed in relation to contemporary and future art practice.

Panelists:

Computer graphics scientist-turned-artist **Kenneth Knowlton** collaborated with artists at Bell Labs in the 1960s and 1970s, and for the past 30 years, working alone mostly with his own software tools, has been creating actual and virtual computer-assisted mosaics. He has been featured in numerous books, including Al Seckel's *Masters of Deception* (Sterling, 2004).

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Dr. Nick Lambert and **Professor Jeremy Gardiner** are partners in Technocultures, a major new study of the history, underpinnings and influences of computer-generated art under way at Birkbeck, University of London, in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), and funded by Britain's prestigious Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC). The project examines the development of computer art from the late 1970s to the 1990s based on the V&A's collection of artworks, publications and ephemera assembled by Patric Prince, an American art historian who chronicled the nascent computer art scene.

Artist and art historian **Margot Lovejoy** is known for creating installations, books and Web sites that redefine "new media." She is the author of *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age* (Routledge, 2004), among other books. A 1988 Guggenheim Fellow, she has been featured in New York exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art (the 2002 Biennial); P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center; and The Museum of Modern Art. In addition, her work has been exhibited in Spain at the Reina Sofia and Castellano Museums, and in Germany at the Center for Art and Media (ZKM).

Lillian Schwartz has created a body of work in graphics, film, video, animation, special effects, virtual reality, multimedia and art analysis. Having successfully identified the model for Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, the subject of a 500 year-old controversy, she has recently provided a new interpretation of Leonardo's *Last Supper* and identified the face on the Shroud of Turin. Her work spans over four decades, and is represented in the collection of most major museums around the world, including The Museum of Modern Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. She has contributed to scientific research on color perception and sound, and was a consultant at AT&T Bell Laboratories, IBM's Thomas J. Watson Research Laboratory, Exxon Research Center and Lucent Technologies Bell Labs Innovations. She is currently a visiting scholar at the School of Visual Arts and is a fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science. Her archive resides at The Ohio State University.

The artist **Kenneth Snelson's** interest in fundamental structure is expressed in his monumental sculptures composed of metal tubes inter-suspended by steel cables. Many of his large outdoor works stand in public sites and museums throughout the world. He is also known for a multimedia work spanning five decades, *Portrait of an Atom*, through which he shows a new visualization of the atom's electronic architecture. Since 1987, Snelson has used 3D computer graphics to create animations and digital images for his Atom Portrait. An exhibition of his sculptures can be seen at the Marlborough Chelsea Gallery, New York, through March 21.

Bruce Wands has been working in digital art for more than 30 years as an artist, writer, curator and teacher. He is chair of the MFA Computer Art Department at the School of Visual Arts, and is the director of the New York Digital Salon. He is the author of *Art of the Digital Age* (Thames and Hudson, 2006) and *Digital Creativity: Techniques for Digital Media and the Internet* (Wiley, 2001).

This event is supported by the MFA Computer Art Department at the School of Visual Arts; the New York Digital Salon; the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK; Birkbeck College, University of London; and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The **MFA Computer Art Department** at SVA emphasizes creative experimentation and a multidisciplinary approach. Dedicated to producing digital artists of the highest caliber, the department guides each student in the development of a personal artistic style and in a course of study that is individually tailored to meet his or her needs. The two-year, 60 credit MFA degree program offers several areas of specialization: animation, digital video, installation and digital fine art, interactive media, networked media and performance, or the option of a multidisciplinary track. Work by students in the department has been honored by the Student Academy Awards and appeared in such prestigious venues as the Whitney Biennial; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; SIGGRAPH Electronic Theater; the Ars Electronica Center; and the Annecy, Ottawa and New York Animation Festivals.

Since 1993, the **New York Digital Salon** has served as a catalyst for greater public awareness and appreciation of new media art, and continues to promote the creative use of technology and innovation in contemporary art. The NYDS maintains an extensive online archive and resource of digital art, artists, and essays. The NYDS contributes to cultural growth through educational and public programs, exhibitions and screenings, both nationally and internationally. A project of the MFA Computer Art Department, the NYDS has received support from the NEA, Rockefeller Foundation, NYSCA, NESTA-UK, among others. For more information, log on to <http://www.nydigitalsalon.org>.

School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York City is an established leader and innovator in the education of artists. From its inception in 1947, the faculty has been comprised of professionals working in the arts and art-related fields. SVA provides an environment that nurtures creativity, inventiveness and experimentation, enabling students to develop a strong sense of identity and a clear direction of purpose.

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