

Transcription for Conversation with Nancy Baker Cahill and Charlotte Kent, PhD

Okay. Hello, and welcome everyone. My name is Jamie, and my pronouns are she her hers, and on behalf of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery we are thrilled to present today's conversation with COLA 22 visual arts fellow Nancy Baker Cahill and Assistant Professor of Visual Culture at Montclair State University and arts writer Charlotte Kent, PhD. As a public and civic institution, we acknowledge that our gallery resides on what was historically the homeland of Kizh, Tongva and Chumash peoples who were dispossessed of their land. We respect both the historic culture and the contemporary presence of indigenous peoples throughout California, and we are grateful for this grounding today. Before I hand it over to Nancy and Charlotte, I just have a few requests for folks to create the best experience for the program. We kindly request that everyone keep their microphones muted during the conversation. We'll have time at the end of the program for an audience Q and A. And we encourage you to use the chat function to enter your questions directly at that time, and I will read out the questions as they appear in the chat. We are recording today's program so that it can be made available online at a later date, and we are also really grateful to have sign language, interpreting services and live captioning services provided by the Department on Disability, and my colleague, Stephanie, entered the stream text link and the chat if you would like to check out the live captions as they are happening. And Nicole is our sign language interpreter today, so feel free to pin her window if you need that service. And with that I am extremely honored to, and excited to welcome and hand it off to the incomparable Nancy Baker Cahill and Charlotte Kent for today's conversation.

Thank you. Thanks, Jamie. It is really wonderful to be here. Thank you. It's so wonderful to have you here. To explain for the audience where we are, we are actually in the piece that Nancy produced for this project, and we're getting a sense of some of it, I can tell you from being in it, it continues to go around. It is really an immersive piece, and this has been fascinating to me because I might have the pleasure of talking with Nancy about this work and all the things that come out of it, and if we can get a chance to talk about a little bit. But it's really remarkable, because I think about the fact that Nancy had been during several years, um, all this work in virtual reality and augmented reality. All of these, you know technological tools that made it possible to experience each other and artworks mediated by technology. And then, and the sort of maybe stubborn, maybe resistant, I don't know what to call it. But at this moment, when we all started to go, we were all online and there so much excitement about technology and the way in which you continue to connect us as we were experiencing increasing isolation and having this very unexpected experience, Nancy decides to make a work with paper in tangible physical reality, and so I think that that's a really interesting choice, and move, and you know I just was wondering it to start us off and sort of help the audience into what this project was, to talk a little bit about why you would given the context of your knowledge of technology, move into paper and into the 3D realm in this way.

That's a fantastic question. Thank you so much for asking, actually to give this piece a little context. When I first applied for the COLA grant, my proposal was to create

essentially a VR experience, an immersive experience that would otherwise with that experience with technology, um, but using strictly paper, graphite and light, and I imagined it in the round. I imagined it three hundred and sixty above below. So, what we're in now. But that was just the sort of seed of the idea, and I came up with that idea, because I felt and still feel, that the hardware required for VR, basically precludes a lot of ah it doesn't preclude, you know, precision, but it's not accessible. So, there's a there's a barrier to entry. You literally need to have access to this hardware to experience it. And the other thing that I've been thinking a lot about as I built and sculpted and created in 3D space. In virtual reality, I was grappling with a lot of questions that I've been thinking about in terms of sensory engagement in terms of haptics in terms of the literal architecture of an immersive experience. And I really wanted to challenge that because when you're drawing in 3D and you're drawing digitally, you just you press a button, and it disappears. But what if it were more permanent? What if it were or not permanent, because paper couldn't be more ephemeral. But but what if I could literally materialize it and and test those challenges in person in an embodied state where our haptic relationships would work. You know how close it is to us, how it makes us feel how we experience it in our bodies could be kind of further explored, and I really wanted to share that with a broad audience and a diverse audience and an audience that maybe thought about VR one way and thought about immersive media one way, but but it might be, you know, as ah as a as an invitation into a more accessible experience that this might be the way to go about it. So that's really where it came from, I would say, broadly speaking. But of course, it involves many other things.

So, there's a bunch of things that I want to sort of unpack here, because I think it's really one of the first things that I always think about when I think about drawing right is the um, you know, for me, my childhood books would be drawing books right, and they were worlds I got lost in right. And then you go into chapter books, and there's little drawings from the chapter books, half a page or whatever they they bring you into the story, and they create this whole world for you. So, drawing for all that, you know, it's so easy because of technology now, to be like "Oh, drawing, flat, 2D, right?" But actually, most of us have memories of how significant the drawing. But the the space of drawing is whether we've drawn ourselves or make pictures and felt like we got lost in them. Whether, for someone like me, I'm a terrible artist. It's one of the reasons I love art, there's many people who can do it well. It is just remembering like that world of you getting immersed in those stories or getting immersed in that realm, and the drawings here, you know there's so many ideas to unpack. But even before we get that, the difference here represents a decade of work that has been reformulated. So, can you talk a little bit about like, what is this drawing practice that you decided to tear up?

Yes, um, and I want to just quickly, before I answer that question just concur that I actually, in my opinion, graphic novels and every graphic novel probably are perhaps the most immersive reading experience you can have. I find that that coupling of text to image tends to land in a way that you know it really does feel like a collapsing of cinema and and and narrative. And so, I just want to you like, plus one, that yeah, it's a complicated thing to tear up ten years of drawing. There is a lot to unpack there, and one of the things I would say from the jump, and it is connected to a certain

anthropological interest, but it's also connected to obviously personal interests and to technical interests. You know, when I, when I draw this large scale and most of what you can't see. But on the wall, there is a large scale, immersive drawing that leads into this experience, because when we originally talked through COLA we thought about: How do you on board an audience that is unfamiliar with this? And how do you bring them, you know, into a 3D experience from 2D experience. Now, when I draw on paper, I've always felt I may be a positive sculptor, I suppose, but I've always felt like I am extracting forms from a point that the white paper, the void of the white paper, is infinite, and so it is always felt that the forms have always been very biomorphic and sculptural, so it seemed. It's not an unnatural transition for me to then translate that, mediate that into something like this. And you know, I think, even in my graphite drawings I've always played with a tension between stillness and and a kind of frozen moment, and tremendous unbridled energy, and holding those two things in tension by tearing them up. And I'll talk about that in a second, but by rendering them re-rendering them essentially into this format, you still have that sense of frozen, you know it is a still sculpture. It is not moving actively, although although more to come on that with projection. But but my hope and my intention is that it captures even more a kind of amplified sense of energy, of movement, of a visceral kind of engagement, both in the act of tearing it, you know. Ah, we talked about chaos. I consider it's it's also an act of violence. It's it's quite a thing to tear up your work. On the other hand, knowing that it is going to be reconstituted, knowing that it will then generate something else, or be iterated differently, or be differently manifested is liberating, in a sense. It doesn't mean that I did it without emotion at all. I mean there were times when it was extremely difficult. And, as I said, there's history. There's ten years you're essentially recomposing and recombining histories, but that, you know, felt important to also view the work with a certain visceral emotion with one that doesn't you know these aren't, I could have torn up, I could have thrown up anything, but I really wanted to tear these up. So yeah, so that I don't know if that answered the question.

I think one of the things that's interesting for me about this project is the fact that it has generated so much. Also, other projects have come out of this particular one work that you produce. And, because Nancy and I have spoken about this a bit, because, you know, I wound up having gone over it in the catalogue essay, which if you haven't seen I highly recommend. Not just because of me, because of all the essays in it. And because it is beautiful to look at and really gives you a sense of all the artists in this year's IMAP. But I think one of the things that happened in the process is this is. You know, this is a work, and part of it is because it's abstraction. One of the challenges in art with abstraction is, you know, trying to pinpoint like where you put into it, and what the idea is that you can then move with but one of the things that happens also is the reminder of the fact that you know really interesting art, great art has so much going on. And with this project this it's like it, one of the forms of chaos for me. It's like I almost don't even know where to begin. I want to talk about drawing, I want to talk about sculpture, I want to talk about immersion, I want to talk about the history of immersion, I want to talk about architecture, I want to talk about tactility, I want to talk about bodies, I want to talk about you know, phenomenology. I want to talk about politics. I want to talk about biography. I want it like there's all of these different threads that can be pulled, and I have even

touched on media and technology, which is one of the major ideas that then forced this project into this, this material right? And I think it's really, you know, challenging some friends when there's so much. And so, I'm going to put you on the spot, and I'm going to say one of those. Can you pick one of those and trace for us, right, that sort of that thought line that through line for you with this work, like, whether it's architecture or whether it's phenomenology, or whether it's the body or whether

I'm going to such juicy topics, it's like an impossible choice. But I would want okay. I'll pick one. Okay? Well, I actually want to talk about narrative, and one of the things that I think is because that becomes somewhat critical to everything that follows. If we think of this as the progenitor, everything that comes after is related to that conversation, and one of the things we talked about earlier off-screen was um was this idea of a ten-year span, essentially being a history, being a narrative, and because I'm really interested in invented narratives, it too, could count. It could qualify as an invented truth, as Clarice Lispector says in *Água Viva*, so in a way this is, this is in effect an invented truth, but it's also a record and a narrative, and I think that the impulse toward kind of collective storytelling and visual storytelling is one is an invitation to communion, and to consider our shared storylines. And one of the things that's been deeply inspiring to me and is connected to where this work went and what followed is a really deep and abiding interest in Paleolithic cave paintings and the connection between drawing. I know the connections are that wasn't really an option, just this is a classic, yeah, political pivot. There is a direct correlation between drawing and cinema that dates back to those caves, and it was only recently discovered, you know, originally, when these archaeologists and and all just went in. You know they brought their western lights, and they saw these these animals with, you know, maybe three heads or two legs. And all these strange striations, and they were mystified by it. And I think there was a certain sense that, "Oh, wow! They really didn't understand anatomy, those silly early sapiens. They really didn't get it." And more recently, when they they kind of stayed with it, they started to explore the caves, using the tools of the time, AKA a torch. Meaning literally, like a, what do you call that? Fire. Yeah, a torch with fire on it. As you would back then walk through and experience these caves, and what they realized is they moved the torch back and forth in front of these drawings is that they were animated. It was a means of animating, so they deeply understood movement, as it relates to drawing. So these very still images become these moving images, and that feels really important to me, and and even more broadly and sort of zooming out a little bit from that. The the idea that you would enter one of these caves, and I often refer to my studio as a cave, because it really feels like a cave um as a, and we don't know exactly why, and I would never presume to to claim why. But there are theories that that this was an invitation into transcendence and into a transcendent experience, and I know that in my um in my application, or in my grant proposal, I referenced the scholar and artist Margaret Wertheim's book *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace*, and she talks about cathedrals beings with early VR and early immersive space, and I would argue, include the caves in that, and that it represents a very human desire to understand something beyond the sort of quotidian and the exigencies of daily life. And so that also undergirds a lot of my interest in creating immersive experiences. How can we either see more, learn more, discover more, feel more with these added elements. And I just want to add one thing to

quite sorry, you can't shut me up now. Um, architecture. One of the great one of the great um inspirations for me is an architect, a named Juhani Pallasmaa, and anybody who has read or heard of *The Thinking Hand* also probably knows of this book called *The Eyes of the Skin* which was once recommended to me by another architect and collector of my work, and it really cracked open for me a kind of um blueprint, a metrics for creating immersive experiences. And considering the sensorial responsibility we have in making space and in shaping space, to engage all of the senses, and not to succumb to the hegemony of the visual, that we live this life that is so visually mediated. And what happens when we at the same time engage on a spatial sense or an oral sense. The sense of haptics, our position, positionality, relationality. How? What does that mean for an architect of this experience, and that feels equally salient and urgent to me in creating these spaces.

So that actually leads... I mean you've already sort of began to touch on it, but that was one of the questions I wanted to ask is: What are the politics of immersion? Right? Because you've been mentioning these cases, these caves, these cathedrals, and these all you know, to the degree that you know. Well, we know something about the cathedrals, but with the caves like these are our ritualized spaces. They would designed, you know they were formed their designed, they were um adopted in order to produce certain types of experiences, certain types of affects, certain types of socio-political belief, right? Yeah. And so I think it's it's...right now with immersive technology it's becoming more and more... I'm excited for people who get really excited about them, and the possibilities of them, but people are likewise by terrified of them. Right? Yes, and so I think, to have this focus on the immersive, both as it's mediated technologically, but also as it's mediated in this, you know tangible realm. How do you perceive those politics, and what's the stake in it for you?

Well, I I sense where I I feel, and I hope that I adopt a profound sense of responsibility. For example, there's a lot of theory around like. What do you like? And I think this has to do a lot with the but when we're in the VR realm and around gaming. But how much do you dictate or control someone's, I guess a viewer's experience, and I've never wanted to do that. I mean, even in my earliest VR drawings. It was, I really wanted people to move through them by their own curiosity. But I didn't want to dictate anything for them, and certainly have no association with any organized religion or overarching ideological, virtual reality. Not too because oh, yeah, it's a code-based system. And you are required as the artist to put in the parameters and to design the experience. Yes, and so. And this is what's crucial. It's a crucial point, because and that's actually what became the subject. And the focus of this work is, what are, one what are those responsibilities? But how is immersive media used to manipulate? And what does that manipulate? How is that manipulation. How is it manifest? How is it deployed. How is it weaponized? And and I would argue that you know it's like a hackneyed conversation around the metaverse. But these are all inflected with these decisions and the decisions of the corporations and people who are making these decisions. And so that's why I wanted to, in a way either reclaim or wrest that from that objective, from the objective of mass manipulation and of misinformation, which was so rampant during the during the pandemic, I mean, it remains so, I mean. But if we really came to the fore, I think it really

because we were so glued to these devices and communicated through these vectors that owned by these very few corporations. Yeah, I didn't even get into it.

But let me just take this for a moment like this is one of those places where, even before the pandemic is an issue with you for you, with VR. And it's one of the reasons that you shift it over into augmented reality, into AR, and so maybe you can just touch on that briefly? yes, to this, to this larger point of surveillance capitalism, and surveillance, I mean?

You no? Ah, the most commonly the the one VR headset that is most, but I think has had the greatest market share. Quote Meta, anyway, it's Facebook basically about Oculus. This is a device that is used for biometric surveillance. So, in addition to being inaccessible to you know most people, it is also this weaponized tool of surveillance capitalism and that felt way too repellant to me.. And so that did inform the decision to and actually the Fourth Wall App came long before this. But the idea that there would be any kind of mediation and intermediation was not okay with me. So, anyway, and we all have to work with. We have to work with certain tools and platforms and technologies that that may be have complicated. Yeah.

This is yeah, I mean, if I'm going to deviate here for a moment, and I will bring you back. But I I think it's really important because one of the things that's challenging, especially if you're someone who's working with technology, and as someone who, you know writes about it and thinks about artists working with technology is the recognition that we are all culpable. Yeah, right. There is no out, you are not pure of this technology because we are all immersed and dependent on it. Yeah, um. And mediated by it. And we have these experiences in part, because we've been socially redesigned and found certain ways around it. People complain about the way it's present at the dinner table, and at the same time I'm so grateful for the fact that they can look things up right. It's invasive, and at the same time it's a security measure right like just yesterday. I was walking down a dark road, and all of a sudden, I got quite nervous like, because I had this device that I did not have available to me 25 years ago I felt safer because I could call someone and have a connection that I was in this space that felt not safe to me. It's possible, you know, so it's, it's this very difficult thing. But we have to recognize the way in which we are immersed in a technology that is imperfect. We are culpable of the responsibility for engaging with it. And so that puts on us the question: What can we do with it? And how can we push it. How can we make commands socially, politically, design-wise, and technologically to have it be a technology that feels like it's a tool for better living as opposed to we are it's tool, which is what happens with surveillance capitalism.

Yeah, I think it's a yeah, it's what Cathy O'Neil calls it, algorithmic behavioral training. I mean, that's what we are always it becomes involuntary, and we become, our sensitivity completely equipped to and mediated that way, and I think that that? Yes, and so, for example, I mean, that's why the Fourth Wall App, which is my separate platform, but it is related to this because of the AR, and what we did with projection mapping is really ultimately a tool, it's a subversive tool. It's a tool that operates in that in between space and that beautiful poetics of AR, which is both there and not there. And I've been really

fortunate to collaborate with so many rigorous artists, whose concerns feel deeply urgent to me, and who with whom I can collaborate to to situate their work and enliven their work, in otherwise inaccessible contexts and contexts, that where it had might have added meaning or resonance. And that feels really meaningful to me, because it it, it removes the answer to the institutional permission and removes permissions altogether. And yet and yet, you know, and I don't collect any user data. And yet, GPS, we know as a is a great capture tool, for people who are being tracked and watched. and criminalized, and so none of it is uncomplicated. And we've talked about standards of purity, and I think that you know, particularly as they apply to artists, and I think that as an artist I just always want to be incredibly critical, as critical as I am curious, and to be, and to engage those questions thoughtfully and intentionally, and not to sort of do something because it's. You know it's cool. It's been on some like big spectacle effect that there's always a consideration really every step along the way of what that means, both in the production and creation of the work, but also in the consumption of it and metabolization of it.

And I think this is one of the reasons why the way in which the project has evolved into different iterations. I actually think of it, even though the term iteration is music. I think of it more as expanded. It's, expanded into these new dimensions, and its new forms. And I think that that's an important thing, because it's one of the things that that actually allows us to remember. And I think it's one of the ways that artists pretty much use technology in this process of iteration can actually remind us rest of us who aren't, you know, necessarily obviously involved in that is that we are almost all doing that in the sense that we learn from the thing we just did. Or at least, ideally, we do haha. And that that means we have to recognize and accept the way in which we are always also never quite getting it right, and that that's okay, yeah, and that that rightness isn't about, it's not about a good or bad. It's not about some kind of moral judgment, but that it's about the fact that this is what we get to do in this experience that we have is to push ourselves to the next possible level. And so, knowing that this piece that we're in right now, then, did iterate into these new forms? I'm just wondering if you could speak to how, since this wasn't for the alternative project, and it was working on this that became these other things you could just touch on that a little bit.

Yeah, and I yes, I would love to. Because this to me is sort of the lonely soil. This is this is where it all continues to to to generate, and and so it will. I will describe as many iterations. I will also say that I tend to think of this body work as a kind of a Ship of Theseus, that it that the question remains of what of the original remains, and I would argue that you know the 2D drawing on the wall is every bit as present in the cinema 4D render, as it is in the print that comes out of the Cinema 4D render as it is in the projected version of this that looks like AR, so they're they're to me they're, and I'm not being essentialist, I actually just think it's a matter of trace and history and intention.

But for some of the audience may not understand what these different versions we just described are.

I will walk them. Yes, exactly. Okay. So as these. As we said, um, yeah, we we start with don't have to be too linear in here. But we start with the drawing on paper a large scale. Imagine two, eight-foot-tall graphite big, bold, graphite drawings. This is just in this particular installation, but also generally, which becomes this iteration of this installation, which has been installed in multiple locations, and is only growing so, as Charlotte says we, you can't see this, but there's quite a bit hanging from the ceiling, and it's growing like Kudzu, and it will continue to um. And so, from this raw material, from that lonely soil I have started, and I I started during the pandemic, essentially photo, taking creating a 3D model of this work which we do through photogrammetry. And I, basically to take multiple pictures from multiple angles, bring them into this AI that then interprets all of that data into a 3D object, and for any digital artists who are listening, if they are I definitely have a polygon problem. I've been often told to get on a polygon diet that goes for VR, AR, and this work I'm a maximalist when it comes to polygons, and then from with that with that raw material. With that digital sculpture. I bring it into a 3D software called Cinema4D, for which to me kind of changed my life. When I started working, because one: it allows me to light and animate and treat these objects, or, I shouldn't say, treat them to subject them to laws of physics that simply would never be possible in any other context, and that goes for the lighting as well, and that, I mean, you know, this is another term that gets thrown around a lot, but that I resist for a number of reasons, too many to go in here. But this becomes a kind of world that is built, and a kind of imagination, and an invitation into my consciousness, such as it is, where it gets warped. You know, in all these different ways. Those become in some cases discrete animations, and we add sound, and they're very immersive, and they're and they literally have well, any way to get into how they end up being shown. But also, it was really interesting to me back to stillness and motion, to isolate moments in these animations, because, as we all know. Animations are simply a series of frames of still frames, a series of photographs, essentially, and I see, or drawings or drawings exactly or yes, exactly no disrespect to yes, stop motion, and then to isolate those, and then print them. And I have a great fortune of printing a lot of these stills with a master printer here in Los Angeles, Lapis Press. Unequaled quality. And so, they almost come full circle and back to this idea of the Ship of Theseus. It's really a paper-to-paper cycle. But if you think about the journey, that that original mark, and the intention of that mark. Where that went, what it went through, how it was mediated. It's more than just a game of telephone. It really like, where or how does that meaning get mutated, transmuted, and what comes of it ultimately? And those are those to me are really urgent and interesting questions because of the level of mediation, of technological mediation to which we are subjected on a daily basis, and the ways in which those types of mediation have been used toward manipulative events. And of course, I would like to use them for more inventive, and I hope um less manipulative events. But at the end of the day you're still, you know, proffering if not an, if not not an like an explicit idea or opinion, an impression, a vision, a portal into a consciousness that is, you know you have some agency in that.

So, I think one of the things that I just want to emphasize here, though, is the experience as someone who, you know, interacted with the work and and how to do so. This is *Slipstream*. This is the work. This is the original *Slipstream* it were, and there's been. All of these, you know, expanded versions of it, and but I think you know you for you it will

only be yours in some way, because you know that whole lineage that it's gone through. But as a as an audience. Right. It's the abstraction of it allows me to have it be my experience and it's. And I would, you know, I would say, I think it's one of the things that's really challenging about is that it's the way in which it is confounding. Part of that is the impossibility of what the computer allows. It makes possible these impossible things. And so that's a sense of unexpectedness, of my own reaction to it. And I think that's one of the things that people often, because we have such designed experiences with technology on the day-to-day level, one of the things that's really remarkable about experiencing artists working with technology is the way they surprise us with a different experience of technology. And what I really value in that is the way it opens up my imagination right the way it makes me start to think about "Well, what could I do differently in relationship to my computer screen the way I sit with it the way I stand with my phone." Right? It's. You know, all of these embodied relationships that we have with it in my pocket where I have it, you know. Like, where am I touching it to myself? All these different things? It only become lived questions, in part because of being confronted with it through these types of experiences, and then being able to see the work as paper as sculpture as AR as print as right. So um, just because I realized what you know getting close to kind of there's so much of what I want to talk about. But you had mentioned projection mapping. Oh, yeah. And I just think that we should say a little bit about that.

Yeah, it was. It was this very, I am so glad you brought that up, because that actually, if you go on the COLA website you'll see. Hmm. This looks slightly different. There would seem to be some colors dancing across it. Um over the pandemic by I I had a long-standing um interest in projection mapping and got my hands on a couple of you know, not DIY exactly, but you know, a couple of things that you could have easily in your home. Projections about, and just started playing around with it. And back then this was a much smaller sculpture, an earlier iteration. I started projecting video onto it, just just playing around. And what was astonishing is that, and I am in a space with no natural light, so this also really helped is, it became animate in this way that felt like AR. So, as someone who's worked with AR for five years, and is so accustomed to imagining it in a given space, and designing it for that space to have something complex, material, I shouldn't say material, but.. But concrete like this, tactile that we could feel on the wall, suddenly alive and yet equally dissociated from the wall. But it became off the wall, and it appeared like it was floating in space. It appeared like one of the AR pieces. It was just this astonishing kind of inversion, and I thought, and for me it opened up all kinds of not just conceptual possibilities, but also provided yet another blueprint for how could I use this very complex surface, project onto it, and almost extract even more um motion, content, meaning from it and include an audience that didn't have to use the you know, the visual prosthesis of the phone, or a headset that this could be a kind of amplification of the work that could be, then, of course, recreated in an installation, and that that could be shared and experienced by a number of people. And it was very illuminating, no pun intended, and I think that that was also part of what triggered me to think like. "Oh, wow! But what if it weren't just a matter of projecting onto a surface, but what if these themselves were animate? What would that look like?" How could that, how could that, what would that feel like? You know there's a safety in how still this chaos is. That safety

is not present in the animated works, and when you put them on an 8K, you know, panoramic screen, and you stand in front of it, or in a dome, an LED dome. You become a part of it, and your body is in it. And you feel it in your body, and it becomes this whole other experience.

Yeah, it's. I think that's one of the things that you know, is really remarkable about the I don't just, you know, give kudos to COLA for supporting this work in the sense that so much came out of it. Right? Oh, and yeah, and I haven't gotten a chance to talk about any number of the issues that I want to talk about you know. Nancy keeps talking about stillness, and yet it's also a time-based medium when you're in the technology, right? And it's, you know, this is a data set of ten years of some experience that you had that then became something else right? Like, it's a body of information. It's also so much about the body's relationship to it. So there's endless things that I wish we could have talked about. But I know I know I I I hear it. We, we get to have other questions now, not just mine. So I'm wondering if I should hand it over to you, and you want to pull some of the questions.

Yes, yes, thank you so much. Ah, Nancy and Charlotte! Um, there is ah one question we have so far in the chat. I just wanted to clarify what the titles were for the architecture books you mentioned earlier, Nancy.

Yeah. Well, one of them isn't necessarily architecture. So, one of them is about drawing, and it's about the connection. And again, it's an embodied connection obviously between the brain and the hand, and it's called *The Thinking Hand*, and one of the things that really interests me when we talk about a data set of a body and a corpus, which is a data set. And the, this connection is this idea of an embrainment not just embodiment, but embrainment. And I think *The Thinking Hand* really kind of engages this idea that you have embrainment, and the other one is called *The Eyes of the Skin*. These are very, I mean, they're such body books which makes perfect sense. Given what he's talking about, and the and the author's name, and the architect's name is Juhani J. U. H. A. N. I., Pallasmaa, and there are definitely like two a's and two L's, in the last name, but I don't know where they are. So um, yeah, I highly highly recommend those books, particularly for any artist or anyone who thinks about the connection the connective tissue when you're when you are creating from a body or other bodies in space.

If I may, I'm just riffing on that, and you can just stop me any time, if we need to move on but I I'm just going to keep going because I I have a lot. So, um I think you know, you are so interested in the body. And I think that that's just always, it's such a complicated topic. It's such a strange topic to expect from someone who's working with technology the way you are, and in abstraction the way you are. So I wonder if you might. You know I've said a little bit about why I think you know this stuff on the body and technology and stuff. But if you might just say a little bit about the why technology, these could be software, these programs, these devices are for you your best way to help audiences grapple with their experiences as a body.

I wish we had that quote from that book. What is it called? *Carnal Cinema*, or something that that there's nothing technological about technology. I can't remember, it's a Heidegger code. It's so good. I mean look it's.. a pencil is technology. Some people argue our bodies themselves are technologies. I don't, I tend to think these particular tools that I use are just slightly more sophisticated... not sophisticated but. They're more complex. I can do more complex things with them. I never use anything arbitrarily.

And so, these particular softwares allow me simply to achieve a larger goal. But what I'm asking you is, what is my role? Such that these technologies are the best way to get them.

Hmm. Well, I mean, I think that's part of that gets to the heart of this project actually, because at the end of the day, even without those technologies, my hope and my intention and my my my fondest hope actually is, that you could stand where we're sitting now and still feel some of what you might feel using these other things. But there is something more to this experience that is merely amplified in those and these those more sophisticated technologies allow for a broad dissemination and for broader engagement. I can't invite the public into my nest, you know? What I can do is invite them to Luminex in downtown Los Angeles, where they can experience one of these things in the open air on the side of a building, you know, and hopefully, you know, in their own bodies, and in that moment feel into what this is about.

But when you say what this is about, what's the this?

The this is, I would say a larger consideration to me. OK, this is.. This, and I'm going to sound very grandiose, and I don't mean it to okay, but it is. I I guess I won't, apologize for it. All of this when we think about the body, and as the body is at the heart of all of these conversations, it's also a consideration of consciousness. And for me moving through the world, I'm constantly navigating my own consciousness. Whether I am aware of it or not, and how that consciousness is mediated. So it's in kind of sharing these brief glimpses into that consciousness. I am also seeking connection with other people, who might also be aware of that consciousness being both a fragile and a robust thing. That these bodies, we have are both sites of great resilience and struggle. And now today, public intervention by the State and government, and to kind of reclaim some of that by this is getting very abstract, but by entering a different type of space, one that is in the imagination. One that is created of fiction, *Slipstream*, something that is uncanny and familiar. People when they encounter this, they say: Oh, my God! They either say, Oh, it's um! Oh, they'll say it's it's chaos, or whatever they say. It's feathers. Oh, it's leaves. And that, that simultaneous, its ability to occupy all of those things at once is very exciting to me, and also to me indicates that there is something that is relational about it, and that people relate to. And, and to recognize perhaps in themselves. And that that may sound... I don't mean that to sound like pride. I'm saying that's part of the goal.

And I think if.. Can I keep going? Is this okay?

There are a couple of questions. Um, no problem. I'm going to read the questions in order as they appeared. So the first question is: What new tech tools are you curious about such as AI, DALL-E, generative art, or any others?

So I actually okay. I am.

She has strong opinions about things, can you tell?

So, and I know that I'm good. I have strong opinions too, I have to. I don't engage with any new technology without doing research in advance and thinking about some of the larger potential externalities of that engagement. And I think that the conversation on MidJourney and DALL-E is a really rich and interesting one, and one that I'm still chewing on. One that I'm not clear yet exactly how I feel. I will say that I have experimented with both, that in my upcoming, I have a solo show coming up at Bel Ami LA on September 15th, and for some of the, and it's all new *Slipstream* work, and in some of those pieces because I wanted to push this idea of mutated truth even further, and of maybe an unreliable narrator. I collaborated on a few pieces, using GPT-3, which is a text AI, and it was both an illuminating and sobering and unnerving experience, and one that remains very experimental in my case. I know a lot of people, we we know a lot of artists who are collaborating, and have collaborated for years successfully with AI. And I think they are the ones we should look to for guidance and for inspiration in many cases. I, we, this is like a whole separate that just opens a whole other can of worms and Pandora's Box.

And I will just add into it, I think one of the things that's valuable here is to take into account the fact that the excitement around these technologies is often precisely why they're dangerous. I, I sort of say that the excitement and the repulsion, both of those extremes are problematic. Um, once a technology is here, it's unlikely to go away, we need to confront it and deal with it. And yet at the same time that doesn't mean launch into it headfirst. You know, it's sort of like, or rather, it does maybe mean launching into it a little bit, but like, think it through. What does it mean? What are the externalities? Where does it come from? Who's benefiting from your use of it? These are important questions when we adopt these things, and we have not always asked those questions in the past. And I think it's part of the reason we find ourselves in a really disconcerting position that we are with so many of the really available technologies. But there's more questions.

Yeah. So and I let you. Okay, all right. I so much more to say about that but...

Well, great, Thank you. Ah! Next question is, do you find the analog quality of this project as a warmth or an imperfection not evident in a work created solely, or does your work generally included input from the physical world, which is then manipulated digitally?

I think I understand the question um what I will say is that one of the things I love most in the if we call it procedural workflow. When I photograph this work, there's and then and then bring it into this translation program. There is so much information that is lost, and so much that is added, and what is lost is really interesting to me that absence is really really interesting, but equally interesting is what's added, which is pure fiction. It

picks up on light refractions, and they become material. They become part of the piece that I can't see with my naked eye, and it's just part of that interpolate interpolation, and I think that's a beautiful thing, and I think it gets into back to this idea of consciousness and reality creation. How we create reality. We don't see certain things, we add certain things, and to have that materialized and manifest and really played out. Confronted with in this technology means it's a kind of a critical tool in that process, and in that next step into that added sort of cinematic space where you actually could. You can remove all the flaws and all the imperfections. Of course you can. I'm definitely not interested in that. In removing those flaws. I think they're all part of the part of the piece.

Great. Thank you. Um. I also wanted just to reiterate. If if somebody feels more comfortable, taking themselves off mute to yeah, ask questions directly, please. Please do so. It's totally whatever you're comfortable with. Um. And as I say that we have another question in the chat that I'll read out. It goes: Hi, Nancy and Charlotte! This is from Sharsten Plenge. I just wanted to mention that I find your work the most compelling when there is a sense of reciprocation, the systems you teeter between, whether that be objects and processes the observer and the site, the natural and built- designed world, et cetera. Do you have any additional comments on why your work gravitate towards continually procuring these sites of agency? And speaking of architecture, Midnight Moment was so effective for how it activated these sort, the sort of relationships and interdependencies.

Wow! I mean, that's just such a gorgeous comment. I'm a little bit gobsmailed by it. Thank you so much for those generous yeah, that generous comment and complex comment I I'm not even sure I know how to answer. I think I think part of what animates me is an abiding obsession with systemic power, and how that plays out in any number of contexts. And I know that sounds sort of broad and general, but to the degree, to the to the the degree to which I can in my own tiny, tiny, tiny way interrupt some of those, some of those patterns, and invite a more communal or excessive accessible engagement with the work and conversation. Really, ultimately, what I want to do is from conversation. I love to chat as you can tell we both do. I want to talk about ideas all the time, and it's why I read voraciously, and it's why I love learning from other people. So I would say that that is what ultimately animates me and animates the work. But generally, I would say the underlying, the the bone that Thoreau talks about, that you have to chew on as an artist the one that you bury, and then you dig up, and then you chew on it again, and the thing you can't quit the thing that, like just keeps you up and quickens your pulse, an interest in in the abuse of power and resistance to power. And so how that plays out in any of these different contexts, through any of these different media, whether it's AR, immersive media drawing itself, which I think can be a deeply subversive medium as well. That's what interests me. So thank you so much.

Thank you, Nancy. Um! We had a hand raised from a Kathie Foley-Meyer. Kathy, do you want to go ahead and ask your question?

Sure. Um, Hi! Nancy and Charlotte really invigorating talk. I just wanted to know. You could talk really quickly, because I know there's not a lot of time left about your public projects involving local history and the connection between environment and memory.

Beautiful question. Thank you so much, Kathy, Kathy, dear friend of mine. Well, really, that was that question speaks directly to the main objective and mission of the Fourth Wall app, and that is to use augmented reality as a means, and to invite other artists and community leaders to either reclaim space or to contextualize space that has been throughout history, perhaps decontextualized, erased, ignored. And again, I've been so fortunate to work with artists who know those histories, are intimately connected to those histories, and to be able to use the AR in that subversive way to to be in a site where you feel again the soil underfoot, the texture, and the temperature and the scent in the air, and allow the work to live in a way that it simply can't in a in a sterile white cube. That seems to be... that's part of what I love about the app, and it's part of why I feel so fortunate to to work with other artists and collaborate with other artists who who share those concerns and have real insight and real knowledge of what has been erased, and really kind of bringing that into the fore, and and again giving it um, giving it context and and literally bringing it to light, literally making the invisible visible. I know that's a really hackneyed term, but when it comes to AR when it's used this way, I think that's actually where it's arguably most effective.

Yeah. I also think you're in a way you're shredding history as it's been presented. So I think there's a connection between your methodology for shredding paper, and that.

That is so beautiful, Kathy. Thank you so much.

It's really interesting, because I I also love many of those works, and I think it's one of the things that's the way you know. I hadn't thought about it as shredding, and I really appreciate that. But because of the layering right. Like places are geologic, right they, they are they have Earth history. And yet there's this way in which it's so easy because of this progressive notion we have, and wanting to like, you know, tear down old things to put up new buildings up new versions of things, but it's easy to like smooth over what's happened, and yet that doesn't serve us. And so I think one of the things that I love about some of these AR things is the way it layers the present with history in a way that's so important for us to remember that the present is always this, this this lived history, and that we are. You know the future depends in part on our awareness of lived history. Um, you know, as individuals, as as persons we know like I was saying if you forget about the mistake you make them over again. It's like you, you ruin relationships because you forgot that that was a really annoying thing you did last time with that person and they asked you not to. You know it's. I think, that AR does you know, these geological AR pieces, I think, are really important in terms of you know, bringing that, and therefore making a sense thing. What could we? What what could a future that has these multiple things being held together look like? As opposed to this idea of like erasing it, so that it's like this pretend version of something entirely new, right? Yeah. And anyway, to me. That's one of the important things about this work.

Yeah, I thank you. Those are both beautiful observations.

Great. Thank you, Kathy, and thank you and Nancy and Charlotte for that question and response. I don't see any other questions, but I do want to give folks if they feel comfortable, taking themselves off mute or raising your hand, and we can call you out before we wrap up the program. Going once, twice. Great. I think we can. I think we can end it here. Thank you so much, Nancy and Charlotte, for your really just insightful conversation, and for sharing this space with us, it's really been wonderful. I also want to acknowledge and to thank my colleague, Stephanie, and the whole LAMAG team for their support with COLA and um, and also the Department on Disability for their continued support and collaboration. I'm going to, before, don't leave quite yet. I'm going to drop the link to the COLA website. Please check it out. It's really wonderful. It also includes a link to the digital version. Thank you, Stephanie. It also included the link to the digital catalog that was designed by Louise Sandhaus and produced by our..Yes. Oh, yes, thank you, thank you, Charlotte. Holding it up. It's really wonderful. So we're really just it's always such a honor to work with the the COLA IMAP artists, and this year's cohort is just really, truly stellar. So thank you, Nancy, for sharing your work with us. It's been, and it's been an honor to work with you. And thank you Charlotte for being a part of this, and also for your exceptional words in the catalogue, too. So please, please all check it out. Check it out. Lots more to come otherwise. Have a great rest of your day, everyone, and we will see you next time.

A special hi to Nancy. I came in late, but, Nancy, I have a special special feeling for that piece behind you. I've seen it from small to to grow, and it's just enveloping you just so beautifully, and I feel such a part of that piece. For some reason.

You are a part of it! You are a part of it, I will never forget our conversation sitting right here! Thank you so much! Thank you to the entire COLA team for all of your support and extraordinary care and love that you give not just me, but all the artists I'm so grateful.

We were honored.

Thank you so much.

Thank you. Thank you. Miss Rosie Lee Hooks, and also just a, Miss Hooks is our acting Community Arts Division Director, and has provided just really steadfast and exceptional support and leadership. So we're really grateful to her and to everyone for just the continued work that we're all really really proud to do um. So I think we'll end it here. I'm going to stop the recording, but we can keep the zoom open for a few minutes more. If folks want to to chat a little bit or you can hop off it's uh let me.

Hi Kathie.