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The Blanton Museum Presents a Landmark Exhibition of Digital and New Media Art in Collaboration with the Thoma Foundation

Featuring interactive and immersive works of art by leading artists—from teamLab to Refik Anadol—the exhibition explores the algorithms, code and data behind creativity.



Madeline Hollander, *Heads/Tails: Walker & Broadway 4*, 2020. 73 Automobile headlights and taillights customized with LEDs and real-time software program Infinite, Display: 120 x 240 in. Courtesy of Carl & Marilyn Thoma.

AUSTIN, TX — February 5, 2025 — The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin presents ***Run the Code: Data-Driven Art Decoded by Thoma Foundation X Blanton Museum of Art***, a group exhibition exploring the technologies shaping our time, and how artists use them to create a new visual language that goes beyond its corporate, extractive use. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with—and features works from—the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation in Dallas, which holds one of the most comprehensive private collections of digital and media art. The exhibition is organized by Hannah Klemm, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Blanton Museum of Art with Kathleen Forde, Director and Curator of Media Arts, Thoma Foundation.

“Carl and Marilyn Thoma have helped shape how digital and media art is collected and understood,” said **Simone Wicha, Director of the Blanton Museum of Art**. “As long-time supporters of the Blanton, we’re proud to bring their visionary collection to Austin, a city that is a leader in innovation and technology. The artists featured in *Run the Code* creatively turn lines of code into acts of expression, revealing that the digital age, at its best, is still profoundly human.”

Bringing together leading figures in generative and data-driven art—including **Refik Anadol**, **Daniel Canogar**, **Jenny Holzer**, **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**, **teamLab**, **Siebren Versteeg**, **Leo Villareal**, **Marina Zurkow**, and others—*Run the Code* offers a reflection on the ways we use, consume, and respond to current technologies. Through **immersive installations, real-time data visualizations, and responsive environments**, the exhibition reveals how data-driven art can reflect the unpredictability and emotion of human experience.

“Today’s artists are writing code the way others have handled paint or clay,” said **Hannah Klemm**, **Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Blanton**. “Their works show that technology can be both analytical and poetic—making visible the patterns, biases, and chaos embedded in the data that shapes our world.”

Organized in five thematic sections—**Technological Archaeology, Interactivity, Data-Driven Systems, Remixing Art History, and Landscape Reimagined**—*Run the Code* traces how artists employ digital systems to question authorship, perception, and connection in an information-saturated world.

At the exhibition’s heart is **teamLab’s *The World of Irreversible Change*** (2022), a panoramic digital environment that unfolds across a large, freestanding wall in a darkened gallery. Animated figures move through a luminous city that changes with the real time and weather in Austin—its light shifting from dawn to dusk as life continues in endless cycles. Yet when visitors activate the surface, their actions permanently alter the work’s course: everyday calm gives way to conflict, then to destruction, until the city burns and nature slowly reclaims its ruins. Created over five years, *The World of Irreversible Change* captures the poignancy of our era—an allegory of ecological and social precarity where even digital worlds bear the mark of human intervention.

Other artists explore how algorithms absorb and reinterpret the world around us. **Refik Anadol’s *Machine Hallucinations – Study 1*** (2019) uses a custom AI model trained on thousands of images of Gothic cathedrals to generate endlessly transforming architectures of light and color, visualizing the dreams of a machine. **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s** works, including *Pulse Index* (2010), extend this idea of technological embodiment: by capturing visitors’ fingerprints and heartbeats, the artist creates a communal portrait that makes visible the data trails we leave behind.

In dialogue with these generative systems, **Madeline Hollander’s *Heads/Tails*** (2020) translates New York traffic patterns into a chorus of flickering headlights and taillights, turning the everyday flow of cars into a collective performance. **Siebren Versteeg’s *Daily Times*** (2012) converts the live front page of *The New York Times* into a continuously evolving abstraction, revealing how information overload can blur into painterly chaos.

Jenny Holzer’s *Red Tilt* (2002) fractures her iconic text into illegible cascades of light, reflecting on how meaning disintegrates under technological pressure. **Marina Zurkow’s *Mesocosm (Wink, TX)*** (2012) compresses years of environmental data into a 146-hour animation of a Texas landscape cycling through weather, industry, and regeneration—a meditation on time, ecology,

and human persistence. Together, these works reveal how code can serve not only as a technical process but also as a poetic one, transforming data into emotion, and systems into stories.

As our lives become increasingly defined by automation, *Run the Code* invites reflection on the human impulse to create, even within the systems that shape us. The exhibition underscores the Blanton's commitment to presenting art that speaks to the present moment—works that merge technological innovation with timeless questions of imagination, authorship, and connection. In tracing how artists turn lines of code into acts of expression, *Run the Code* reveals that the digital age, at its best, is still profoundly human.

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PRESS PREVIEW

Thursday, March 5, 3pm.

Press are invited to a first look at both Spring exhibitions, *Run the Code: Data-Driven Art* and *American Modernism from the Charles Butt Collection*, with Blanton curators.

PRESS IMAGES

Available [here](#).

About the Blanton Museum of Art:

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with more than 22,000 objects. Recognized as the home of Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary U.S. and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

About the Thoma Foundation:

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation was founded on the knowledge that access to the arts and education enhances lives and communities. The Foundation makes art collection-related grants to institutions and individuals and lends and exhibits its collection to museums and galleries worldwide.

The Foundation focuses its education funding on the rural Southwest United States, offering scholarship opportunities to students in the greater Texas Panhandle and surrounding areas. Through its giving programs, the Thoma Foundation strives to foster leadership, innovation, and equal opportunity.