



Critically Acclaimed Exhibition Examines the  
Intersection of Art and Technology  
at Wrightwood 659 in Chicago this Fall

WHAT

In response to ongoing conversations about systemic inequities, ***Difference Machines: Technology and Identity in Contemporary Art*** presents a diverse group of seventeen artists and collectives who reimagine the digital tools that shape our lives. The exhibition includes projects that span the last three decades, ranging from software-based and internet art to animated videos, bioart experiments, digital games, and 3-D printed sculptures. Together, these works explore the aesthetic and social potential of emerging technologies and the essential question: What does it mean to live in a digital world?

WHERE

Wrightwood 659, 659 W. Wrightwood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614

WHEN

October 13 – December 16, 2023

OVERVIEW

The forerunner of the computer was called a “difference engine,” as it was used to calculate the differences between numbers. Today, we are surrounded by “difference machines,” or computers being used to encode the differences between us. The artists in ***Difference***

***Machines: Technology and Identity in Contemporary Art*** examine how digital systems and algorithms contribute to the exclusion, erasure, and exploitation of marginalized people, while others repurpose digital tools to tell more inclusive stories. Dynamic and interactive, these projects transform the exhibition space into a laboratory for experimenting with these increasingly powerful “difference machines,” as we strive to invent a more equitable future.

***Difference Machines*** earned the 2022 Curatorial Award for Excellence from the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC), making it the first major survey of art and technology to be acknowledged by AAMC.

The exhibition is presented by Alphawood Exhibitions at Wrightwood 659.

ORG/TOUR      Organized by the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery) and co-curated by Paul Vanouse, University at Buffalo Professor, and Tina Rivers Ryan, Buffalo AKG Curator, *Difference Machines: Technology and Identity in Contemporary Art* opened at AKG, October 16, 2021–January 16, 2022. The national tour includes the Beall Center for Art and Technology in Irvine, California, January 28–April 29, 2023; Gray Area in San Francisco, California, July 7–August 31, 2023; and Wrightwood 659 in Chicago, Illinois, October 13–December 16, 2023.

### **About Wrightwood 659**

Founded in 2018, Wrightwood 659 is a private, non-collecting institution devoted to presenting architecture and to socially engaged art, including issues facing LGBTQ+ community. That focus has come to also include aspects of Asian art and architecture, as well as under recognized artists. Wrightwood 659 was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tadao Ando, who transformed a 1920s residential building with his signature concrete forms and poetic treatment of natural light. Located in Chicago’s Lincoln Park neighborhood and acclaimed as “a hidden treasure,” Wrightwood 659’s soaring and light-filled galleries offer both intimate and monumental experiences as visitors engage with the pressing issues of our time. Exhibitions are presented by Alphawood Exhibitions at Wrightwood 659. For additional information: <https://wrightwood659.org>.

### **About Alphawood Exhibitions**

Alphawood Exhibitions is an affiliate of Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago-based, grant-making private foundation working for an equitable, just, and humane society.

### **About Buffalo AKG Art Museum**

Founded in 1862, the Buffalo AKG Art Museum (formerly the Albright-Knox Art Gallery) is the sixth oldest public art institution in the United States. For 160 years, the Buffalo AKG has collected, conserved, and exhibited the art of its time, often working directly with living artists. This tradition has given rise to one of the world’s most extraordinary collections of modern and contemporary art. The museum’s collection spans some of the greatest moments in art through the centuries, beginning with *Marina Piccola, Capri*, 1859, by Albert Bierstadt—both the first painting and the first work gifted by an artist to enter the museum’s collection—and is especially rich in postwar American and European art. On May 25, 2023, the Buffalo AKG opened a renewed and vastly expanded campus designed by OMA/Shohei Shigematsu.

### **National Media Contact**

Ennis O’Brien

Betsy Ennis: [betsy@ennisobrien.com](mailto:betsy@ennisobrien.com) | +1 917.783.6553

Stephanie Markovic: [stephanie@ennisobrien.com](mailto:stephanie@ennisobrien.com) | +1 347.628.4688

Chicago Media Contact

The Silverman Group

Beth Silverman: [beth@silvermangroupchicago.com](mailto:beth@silvermangroupchicago.com) | +1 312.560.4783

Louise Yingduo Liu: [louise@silvermangroupchicago.com](mailto:louise@silvermangroupchicago.com) | +1 312.961.9290

*Image Credit:*

Installation view of *Difference Machines: Technology and Identity in Contemporary Art* (Albright-Knox Northland, October 16, 2021—January 16, 2022). Art © AM Darke. Photo: Tina Rivers Ryan for Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York