



**WINNERS OF \$60,000 IN ARTS WRITING AWARDS IN DIGITAL ART
ANNOUNCED BY THE THOMA FOUNDATION**

Santa Fe, NM / Chicago, IL (May 3, 2016) – The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation announces today the winners and the selection committee for its second annual Arts Writing Awards in Digital Art. The awards are merit-based and recognize the achievements of both an established and an emerging arts writer who have contributed significantly to the field of digital art. The Arts Writing Awards are the first of their kind to target the importance of arts writing that directly advances the scholarship, criticism and theory of digital art and evolving technologies within contemporary art.

The recipients of this year's awards are:

- **Christiane Paul** who will receive \$40,000 in the established arts writer category (\$30,000 unrestricted, merit-based award + \$10,000 project grant)
- **Nora Khan** who will receive \$20,000 in the emerging arts writer category (\$15,000 unrestricted, merit-based award + \$5,000 project grant)

Christiane Paul is Adjunct Curator of New Media Arts at the Whitney Museum of American Art and Associate Professor and Associate Dean in the School of Media Studies at The New School, New York City. Her work – including her recently published book *A Companion to Digital Art* – aims to historically bridge diverse communities in the field while placing digital art in a larger art historical context. She has authored and edited four books and written more than 100 articles, which have been published in anthologies and magazines such as *Artforum*, *Frieze* and *Artpulse*.

The selection committee emphasized that Christiane Paul has made enormous contributions to the field through the unusual scope of her writing projects, curation and artwork commissions. Her commitment to educating the next generation of scholars through her curating, teaching, publishing of textbooks and providing an overall contextual framework for the field is unprecedented. Her writing has addressed issues ranging from the presentation and curation of digital art to the historical evolution of its specific forms. Christiane Paul has been generous to the field serving emerging and established artists, addressing pressing conservation and preservation issues in the field, and bridging gaps between often-siloed fields in contemporary art.

Nora Khan is a writer and editor, and currently contributing editor at *Rhizome*. She writes fiction and creative essays about digital visual culture, the poetics of artificial superintelligence, the hidden affective life of Facebook emoji; belief in games; intelligent personal agents built on ambient neural learning systems; and the use of simulations to critique neoliberalism. Her writing has been published in *Rhizome*, *Kill Screen*, *Conjunctions*, *After Us*, *AVANT*, *DIS Magazine* and *American Literary Review*. She was a contributing critic to the Guggenheim's *Ázone Futures Market* exhibition and co-managed *Futures Along the Blockchain*, a *Rhizome* fall commission.

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The selection committee was impressed by Nora Khan's deep engagement of digital culture that bridges art history and contemporary culture, and explores a broad range of issues, from cyberfeminism to surveillance capitalism. Her writing challenges traditional concepts of what writing about art can be by experimenting with new expository forms.

Christiane Paul and Nora Khan were selected from a pool of 23 nominations solicited from a dozen prominent curators, writers and educators across the United States and Europe.

The selection committee that reviewed the nominee applications was comprised of three well-respected arts professionals with extensive knowledge of writing about digital art. This year's selection committee included **Steve Dietz**, President and Artistic Director of **Northern Lights.mn**; **Orit Gat**, art critic and Features Editor at **Rhizome**; and **Omar Kholeif**, Manilow Senior Curator at the **Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago**.

The selection committee members were proud to choose two women who exemplify very different ways of addressing art in the digital world. "Their diverse practices as authors on digital art and culture complement each other beautifully; together they suggest a speculative future history for our joint field of practice – one that is inclusive and historically rigorous and generous to the community of digital art and art history more broadly speaking," said Omar Kholeif.

Carl Thoma, co-founder of the Thoma Foundation, said, "We are thrilled with the selection committee's decisions. Christiane Paul and Nora Khan embody the mission of the awards, which is to advance the scholarship and broaden awareness of the field of digital art, and we are excited to support them and their innovative work."

This is the second year of a three-year pilot program. The winners of the inaugural Arts Writing Awards in Digital Art in 2015 were Jon Ippolito and Joanne McNeil. Ippolito, who received the award for an established arts writer, is Professor of New Media and Director of the Digital Curation program at the University of Maine, and from 1991-2006, was Associate Curator of Media Arts at the Guggenheim Museum. McNeil, who received the award for an emerging arts writer, is a New York-based writer who was both a resident at Eyebeam in 2014 and a 2012 USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism fellow.

About the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation was established in 1986 to fulfill the Thomas' broad commitment to philanthropy. In 2014, the Thomas went on to found the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation to distinguish their initiatives in and support of visual art.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation recognizes the power of the arts to challenge and shift perceptions, spark creativity and connect people across cultures. The Foundation lends and exhibits artworks from the collection and supports innovative individuals and pivotal initiatives in the arts. The Foundation's collection spans three broad fields: Modern & Contemporary (including a digital art collection), Spanish Colonial and Japanese Bamboo.

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For more information, visit www.thomafoundation.org

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