

May 11, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ART HOUSE TO OPEN NEW INSTALLATIONS
COLLECTING DIGITAL ART:
HIGHLIGHTS + NEW ACQUISITIONS FROM THE THOMA FOUNDATION

SANTA FE, N.M. – *Collecting Digital Art: Highlights + New Acquisitions from the Thoma Foundation* opens June 1st with a public reception June 17th, 5-7 p.m., and will feature the first rotation of ongoing seasonal installations, showcasing significant artworks from the digital art collection that include new acquisitions of historic importance. The new installations feature artworks by Guillermo Galindo, Beryl Korot, Brigitte Kowanz, Vera Molnar, Laura Splan and Steina Vasulka.

The summer installations will include works by video art pioneers Beryl Korot and Steina Vasulka. Korot's *Dachau 1974* explores themes of the Nazi concentration camp as a tourist site, with an interplay of images across four monitors, resembling a basic hand-loom weaving pattern. Vasulka's *Violin Power, 1970-1978*, a visionary work within the early history of experimental audiovisual art, uses recorded sound from her violin performance to generate optical video effects. In this innovative work, Vasulka adapts her training as a classical violinist, taming her instrument to convert sound waveforms into electronic signals that, when synthesized with video, produce abstracted imagery. Additionally, nine plotter drawings from the 1976 *Transformations* series by Vera Molnar, a 2016 Jacquard tapestry by Laura Splan that explores the use of computerized loom techniques to weave patterns derived from electromyography (EMG) readings, and *Waveform Coded Landscape, 2015*, by genre-defying performer, visual and sound artist Guillermo Galindo, will be on view.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation's digital art collection spans the global history of computer art of the past fifty years. The collection includes some of the first algorithmic plotter drawings on paper, digital animation, software-driven, generative, and custom coded artworks, interactive works based on real-time gaming platforms, virtual reality, internet-based or networked art, and works that utilize LED and LCD displays. The Foundation recognizes the cultural and intellectual value of artworks that make use of experimental and innovative technologies.

GUILLERMO GALINDO (born in Mexico City, 1960; lives in San Francisco Bay Area)

Waveform Coded Landscape, 2015

24 x 44 inches

Acrylic ink and archival inkjet on cut Hahnemuhle photo rag paper



Guillermo Galindo created a conceptual musical score from data collected along the U.S.-Mexico border, including the names of people who died attempting to cross into the U.S. Their names have been translated into code that could be read by a player piano, cut into the paper like a computer's punchcard. Also visible are sound-waveforms from recordings made along the border, such as the Rio Grande River and cicadas. The music of the composite soundscape must be imagined rather than heard.

BERYL KOROT (born in Queens, 1945; lives in New York City and Pound Ridge)

Dachau, 1974, 1974

8 x 10 x 4 feet

Digital video and sound on four monitors and custom wall



Beryl Korot was at the center of New York's video art community in the 1970s. She created one of the first artworks to address how Nazi concentration camps had become a tourist destination. On four monitors one views tourists browsing the former labor and death camp. The artwork reveals how traumatic historical events are remembered, memorialized and presented among contemporary audiences.

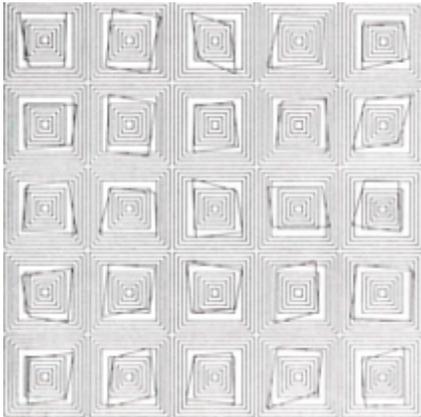
The artist refers to *Dachau 1974* as a weaving. Four video channels represent the minimum number of strands for weaving thread into textile. The alternating channels—one and three, two and four—become a textile's warp and weft, crossing under and over each other, emerging then dissolving like the flow of memory. Prior to visiting Dachau, Korot learned weaving in the Navajo tradition. Like video, a tapestry can record and memorialize a communal experience.

VERA MOLNAR (born in Budapest, 1924; lives in Paris)

Transformations, 1976

20 x 12 inches each

Plotter drawing in ink on Benson Créteil continuous form paper (from a series of twenty-three)



Vera Molnar is one of the first artists to compose and modify her artwork designs on a computer monitor, a practice familiar to users today but which was not technologically available for artists in the mid-1970s. Molnar had to invent a custom program to make real-time changes on-screen. The final images were drawn with a plotter—a pen attached to a robotic arm. In the series, Molnar's minimalist grid of concentric squares becomes progressively more disordered across twenty-three sheets, of which we are sharing a selection of nine. Molnar's *Transformations* is considered essential to the development of digital art for the way she used a computer as a creative tool. She was attracted to the precision of these tools, even in their systematic modeling of chaos.

LAURA SPLAN (born in Memphis, 1973; lives in Brooklyn)

Squint, 2016

70 x 53 inches

Computerized Jacquard loom woven cotton tapestry



The *Squint* tapestry is the result of the artist conducting a biometric reading of the electrical activity of the muscles surrounding her eyes (orbicularis oculi) as she squints. This data was collected using an electrode wand and electromyography (EMG). The data was input into processing software to generate an abstract pattern, and then woven into a tapestry using a computerized loom. A squinting gesture wittily reflects the artist's chosen Op art style. As a conceptual gesture, the tapestry nods to the history of people embodying their life stories, or in this case data, as quilts and weavings, which can be a physically laborious creative activity. In this way textiles are often a record of the bodies that made them.

STEINA VASULKA (born in Reykjavik, 1940; lives in Santa Fe)

Violin Power, 1970–1978

Analog video and sound transferred to digital video, 10 minutes



Steina Vasulka, with husband Woody Vasulka, co-founded The Kitchen in New York City in 1971 as an independent venue for experimental, new media art. The Kitchen became ground zero for the technological avant-garde.

The Vasulkas, now residing in New Mexico, are recognized as video art pioneers. *Violin Power* shows Vasulka playing her violin, its music processed through video editing controls to produce an abstract visual feed. As a classically trained violinist, Vasulka pairs a conventional “high art” form with the revolutionary Scan Processor, making a striking comparison between old and new, and revealing the powerful influence of electronic media. As she plays her violin that is connected to a video synthesizer, the audio is translated, in

real-time, into amplitude and frequency waves. The video edition is a documentation of that performance.

BRIGITTE KOWANZ (born in Vienna, 1957; lives in Vienna)

In Light of Light, 2011

Neon and stainless steel



Brigitte Kowanz's neon sculpture spells out in the long and short signals of Morse code: “In light of light.” The artist is fascinated by the way technology helps us communicate at the speed of light. Morse Code, for example, was the first binary communication code, and the basis for today's more complex computation systems and algorithms. The artist's message is immediately experienced by the eye yet it relies on a special decoding system to be understood. As such, her sculpture helps us explore the relationship between perception and knowledge. “Light is a form of language,” said the artist.

PUBLIC RECEPTION

*There will be a free public reception for **Collecting Digital Art: Highlights + New Acquisitions from the Thoma Foundation** on Saturday, June 17, 5-7 p.m., 231 Delgado Street, Santa Fe, NM.*

ART HOUSE HOURS & TOURS

Art House's regular public hours are Thursday-Saturday, 10a.m.- 5p.m. Admission is free, and school and group tours can be arranged in advance during both regular and by-appointment hours with Foundation staff.

MISSION

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation recognizes the power of the arts to challenge and shift perceptions, spark creativity and connect people across cultures. We lend and exhibit artworks from our collection and support individuals and organizations that make promising contributions to the areas of art we collect.

MEDIA CONTACT

Helen Colton, helen@thomafoundation.org
505.995.0231

Art House, Thoma Foundation
231 Delgado St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
www.thomafoundation.org

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