Recoding CripTech
Curated by Vanessa Chang & Lindsey D. Felt

January 24 – February 25, 2020
ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Recoding CripTech reimagines enshrined notions of what a body can be or do through creative technologies, and how it can move, look, or communicate. Working with a broad understanding of technology, from prosthetic tools to the built environment, this multidisciplinary community art exhibition explores how disability—and artists who identify as such—can redefine design, aesthetics, and the relationship between user and interface. These artists engage with technology in manifold ways from conception to production and beyond. Technologies range from accessible software and hardware, such as the Eyewriter, an open-source eye tracking and drawing system designed for artists with ALS and other movement disabilities, to a bespoke artificial intelligence built as a prosthetic memory. As the term “crip” reclaims the word for disability culture and recognizes disability as a cultural and political identity, so too do artists hack technologies to make them more accessible and inclusive.

Recoding CripTech fosters new dialogues about disability’s role in technological design and art, reframing the vibrant history of disability activism in the Bay Area within the broader movement of technological innovation in Silicon Valley. Challenging prevailing ableist narratives that technology serves to normalize or rehabilitate disability, artists and disability justice advocates take playful, transgressive, and critical approaches to reimagine this cultural history.

By cripping the camera’s gaze, Todd Herman asks us to reevaluate how we look at others. Spanning organic and virtual prostheses, M Eifler, Chun-Shan (Sandie) Yi, and Jillian Crochet make visible the private, and intimate lives of disability that intertwine care and memory. Jennifer Justice reveals built space as a technological incarnation of access and privilege, inviting us to reorient our relationship to these spaces. Sara Hendren, Alice Sheppard, and TEMPT ONE recreate urban spaces and movement through unexpected mediums. Darrin Martin and Allison Leigh Holt formulate a crip eco-consciousness that situates prosthetic technologies in natural environments and landscapes, and Sonia Soberats and Pete Eckert redefine the relationship of sight, touch, perception and the image. Together, these artists inscribe new movements and navigations through private, public, virtual, and natural spaces and places.

By creating new kinds of social and sensory interactions with technology, these artists portend a crip aesthetic for media arts that honors the diversity of human bodies.

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Exhibition Run
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Opening Reception Artist Panel & Discussion
Thursday, January 23, 6–9pm

Tactile Explorations
Thursday, February 6, 6–9pm

Neurodivergent Media Workshop
Thursday, February 20, 6–9pm

Learn more at somarts.org

Exhibition at SOMArts Cultural Center
934 Brannan Street | San Francisco, CA

Gallery Hours
Tuesday–Friday: 12–7pm & Saturday: 12–5pm
somarts.org
ABOUT THE CURATORS

VANESSA CHANG
As a curator, writer, scholar, and educator, Vanessa Chang builds communities and conversations about art, technology, and human bodies. She works with artists, dancers, scholars, technologists, coders, and choreographers to understand how we might live and move in a technologically mediated world with humor, grace, play, and care. She is a lecturer in Visual & Critical Studies at California College of the Arts, and lead curator with CODAME Art & Tech. Chang holds a Ph.D. in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University, where she researched emerging media, embodiment, and art. At Stanford, she was a Geballe Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center, and also ran the Graphic Narrative Project, a research workshop and event series dedicated to comics. Recently, she curated Intersections at the Leonardo Convening, and Artobots, a festival of art, automation, and artificial intelligence. Her writing has been published in Wired, Slate, Los Angeles Review of Books, Journal of Visual Culture, Popular Music, and Animation: an interdisciplinary journal, among other venues.

LINDSEY D. FELT
A Bay Area native and disability justice advocate, Lindsey D. Felt is a lecturer at Stanford University in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric, where she teaches courses on disability, technology, futurity, and media. She received her Ph.D. in English from Stanford University, where she was a DARE Fellow. Drawing on her experience as a recipient of bilateral cochlear implants, Felt’s research explores a cultural history of human-machine systems that explains how disability crucially shaped the development of information theory and electronic communication in the postwar era. Her research has been published in a special issue on Crip Technoscience in Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience. She is a founding member of Stanford’s Disability Initiative, and has given several talks on assistive technologies, and designing for disability and accessibility. Felt has also worked as a journalist for ESPN the Magazine, ESPN.com, and Yahoo, and won a gold medal with the U.S. Women’s soccer team in the 2005 Deaflympics.
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Note: Artists listed alphabetically by last name or team name, with exhibits numbered according to tactile map.

JILLIAN CROCHET
Jillian Crochet is an artist working in sculpture and performance. Her performative sculptures use haptic and embodied aesthetics to challenge the hierarchy of the senses. The unceasing work of self-advocacy informs her practice, which seeks to liberate the disabled body from normalized marginalization and oppression. Familial artifacts, found objects, textiles, medical supplies and natural elements become haunting amorphous surrogates. She is a part of the Useless Initiatives Collective, which stages new encounters between bodies through performance. She is working towards an MFA at California College of the Arts.

You can learn more about Jillian’s work at: jilliancrochet.com
Or on social media @jilliancrochet

ARTWORK
Beating Heart
2014
Steel, acrylic yarn
6’ x 10’ x 6’
$8,000

PETE ECKERT
Pete Eckert is a totally blind photographer who uses sound, touch, and memory to render images in his mind’s eye. He was originally trained in sculpture and industrial design, and has also earned an MBA and two black belts. His photographic work uniquely remakes the practice of light painting. Eckert’s work has been exhibited and recognized internationally and featured commercially by VW, Playboy, Swarovski, and in the television series NCIS. He was most recently in an ad for Google, and was awarded the grand prize in the Artists Wanted “Exposure” contest in New York.

To learn more about Pete’s work please visit: peteeckert.com

ARTWORK
Bone Light (Series)
2018
Chromogenic prints on sintra
30” x 37”
$1000 each
M EIFLER AKA BLINKPOPSHIFT & STEVE SEDIMAYR
M Eifler makes chimera. Working with sculpture and installation, AI and virtual environments, street art and performance, they experiment with in-betweenness, expectation, and duration. An XR designer and researcher, M is a vocal disabled, non-binary, and queer person interested in inbetweens and grey areas. Their work has been exhibited at SFMOMA, YBCA, the Wattis Institute in San Francisco, and the Smithsonian.

You can learn more about their work on Instagram: @blinkpopshift or by visiting blinkpopshift.com

SARA HENDREN

To learn more about Sara’s work please visit: sarahendren.com
Or on social media @ablerism
TODD HERMAN
Todd Edward Herman's films and photographs address themes of the body and transience, representational taboos and spectatorship, difference and the historic consequences of othering. He is the co-founder and project advisor for Sins Invalid – a performance project that celebrates artists with disabilities, artists of color, queer and gender-variant artists. Todd has been the recipient of many awards for his work including the San Francisco International Film Festival's New Vision Award, the Art Council of Northern Ireland's Artist in Residence Award, Grants from the San Francisco Film Arts Foundation, a Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowship, and the San Francisco Art Commission's Emerging Curator Award.

To learn more about Todd's work please visit: toddedwardherman.com

ARTWORK
When I Stop Looking
2013
Video, 15 Minutes
NFS

JENNIFER JUSTICE
Jennifer Justice is a multimedia artist, writer, and educator, whose art practice explores the epistemologies that shape understanding of disability, technology, science, and art. She develops speculative sculptural environments that invite multi-sensory, performative encounters with handmade, machined, and computer-generated artifacts. Her work has been exhibited at StoreFrontLab and the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, the Chicago Cultural Center, Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, and the Birmingham Museum of Art.

ARTWORK
The foot knows the foot when it touches the earth
2019
New media installation
8’ x 8’
$3500
ALLISON LEIGH HOLT
Allison Leigh Holt is a multidisciplinary artist whose research-based work uses Light and Space Movement and expanded cinema techniques to model divergent ways of sensing, processing, and exchanging information. Among her numerous awards, Holt is a Fulbright Scholar, a past resident artist at Djerassi Resident Artist Program, and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. She exhibits, performs, and lectures internationally. Her article "The Conversation: Feedback Systems, Ways of Knowing, and Neurodivergence" is in the current issue of PUBLIC Journal: Interspecies Communication.

ARTWORK
A Living Model of Hyperbolic Space
2017
180" x 2140" x 6"
Glass, water, steel, neodymium magnets, mirrored acrylic, parmotrema lichen
$20,000

Tactile samples available on request

Neurodivergent Media
Video
2013-2020
NFS
Kinetic Light

Founded in 2016 under the direction and artistic leadership of Alice Sheppard, Kinetic Light is a project-based ensemble of three disabled artists: Sheppard, Laurel Lawson, and Michael Maag. Working in the disciplines of art, technology, design, and dance, Kinetic Light creates, performs, and teaches at the nexus of access, disability, dance, and race. Through rigorous investment in the histories, cultures, and artistic work of disabled people and people of color, Kinetic Light promotes disability as a creative force enabling new understandings of the moving world. Kinetic Light’s repertoire is guided by disabled artists who create and perform works that speak to and emerge from disability aesthetics and disability culture.

To learn more about Kinetic Light’s work please visit: kineticlight.org/

Artwork

Revel in Your Body
Single Channel Video
6 minutes
NFS

A film by Safety Third Productions
Alice Sheppard: Executive Producer, Artistic Director, Choreographer
Katherine Helen Fisher: Director
Shimmy Boyle: Director of Photography
Laurel Lawson: Choreography collaborator and costume design
Lisa Niedermeyer: Producer
Missy Mazzoli: Music Composition
Cheryl Green: Audio Description

The Ramp
2017, Reprinted 2020
3d print: 12” x 7.5” x 2.8”
Chromogenic print on Sintra: 19” x 30”
ORIGINAL STAGE DIMENSIONS: 24 feet by 15 deep 5’8” high at the peak
NFS

Kinetic Light’s design team, TeamRAMP Olin College
Sara Hendren, Yevgeniya Zastavker, and Katie Butler, Daniel Daugherty, Duncan Hall, Andrew Holmes, Erica Lee, Scott Mackinlay, Apurva Raman, March Saper, Alexander Scott, Kimberly Winter, Rachel Yang, Jingyi Xu, with support from Olin College. Ramp Engineering and Fabrication: Rooster Productions, LLC a small employee-owned scene shop located in Martinez, CA.
DARRIN MARTIN
Darrin Martin engages the synesthetic qualities of perception through video, performance, sculpture, and print-based installations. Influenced by his own experiences with hearing loss, his projects consider notions of accessibility through the use of tactility, sonic analogies, and audio descriptions. He has held artist residencies at Cité Internationale des Arts, Eyebeam, Experimental Television Center, and Signal Culture. Martin also occasionally curates exhibitions and video screenings. Most recently, he co-curated the Photography and Video Retrospective of Recology Artist-in-Residence exhibition at SF Camerawork. He currently resides in San Francisco and teaches art at the University of California, Davis.

To learn more about Darrin’s work please visit: darrinmartin.myportfolio.com

Ancestral Songs
2020
39’ x 9’3” x 9’
Video Installation, Stereoscopic Viewers
NFS

Special thanks to chaNorth Artist Residency and Wassaic Project for their support, and to Conrad Meyers for help in designing and fabrication of stereoscopic viewers.

SONIA SOBERATS
Sonia Soberats is a blind photographer who uses light painting techniques to render the body structures of her subjects. A Venezuelan citizen, Sonia came to the United States for high school and college. At the Jewish School for the Blind, Sonia learned Braille and photography. After she was introduced to light painting by Mark Andres, Sonia has taught this technique all over the world, most recently in Mexico.

To learn more about Sonia’s work please visit: flickr.com/people/seeingwithphotography

ARTWORK
Manna
2006
30” x 38”
Chromogenic print on sintra
$1000 each

Ben
2005
30” x 37.5”
Chromogenic print on sintra
$1000 each
Death Watch
2006
30” x 37.5”
Chromogenic print on sintra
$1000

Self-Portrait
2017
23” x 34.5”
Chromogenic print on sintra
$1000

TEMPT ONE (Tony Quan)
Tony "TEMPT" Quan is an American graffiti artist whose style fuses cholo writing culture with New York style writing to create a uniquely Los Angeles style. Diagnosed with ALS in 2003, TEMPT uses the Eyewriter, an eye-tracking technology developed in collaboration with Not Impossible Labs, to continue his art.

You can learn more about Tempt One’s work at: temptone.wordpress.com

ARTWORK
TEMPT ONE (Tony Quan) in collaboration with Sam Flores and Ronnie Buders
Tempt
2011, canvas 2020
Carved foam, canvas, spray paint, cinder blocks
3’ x 8’ x 8’
NFS

TEMPT ONE (Tony Quan)
TEMPT
2011-2020
Single channel video
NFS
CHUN-SHAN (SANDIE) YI
Chun-Shan (Sandie) Yi was born and raised in Taiwan. Yi received a MFA degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a MA degree in art therapy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is a disabled artist whose work focuses on wearable art made for and with disabled bodies; her art explores intimacy, desire and sexuality of the disabled bodymind. Currently, Yi is a Ph.D. candidate in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research interests include Disability Arts and Culture; disability fashion; accessibility design and programming for arts and cultural venues; and social justice based art therapy.

To learn more about Chun-Shan's work visit: cripcouture.org

ARTWORK
Re-Fuse Skin Set
2011
Latex, rubber, plastic, & black thread
Chromogenic prints
NFS

Em-Brace
2011
Latex, cork, plastic, fabric & black thread
12" x 11" x 3"
Chromogenic prints
Model: Sunaura Taylor
Photo by Louisa de Cossy
NFS

Dermis Footwear
2011
Latex, cast human scar and thread
12" x 8" x 5"
Chromogenic prints
Model: Sadie Wilcox
Photo by Louisa de Cossy
NFS
Hairy Undies
2018
Fabric, thread, and donated hairs
19” x 9”
Chromogenic prints
Tactile samples available upon request
NFS

Skinny
2014-present
Human skin flakes, silk organza, thread, embroidery threads and lotion
Various, framed on 11” 17” foam cord
Collaborator: Rahnee Patrick
NFS

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ABOUT SOMARTS

SOMArts Cultural Center, founded in 1979, cultivates access to the arts within the Bay Area by collaborating with community-focused artists and organizations. Together, we engage the power of the arts to provoke just and fair inclusion, cultural respect and civic participation.

SOMArts plays a vital role in the arts ecosystem by helping activate the arts citywide. We do this by providing space and production support for non-profit events, as well as fairs and festivals throughout the Bay Area, and offering a robust program of art exhibitions, classes, events and performances that are affordable and accessible to all. SOMArts’ exhibition programs receive critical support from the San Francisco Arts Commission and The San Francisco Foundation, and are sponsored in part by a grant from Grants for the Arts.

SOMArts is located at 934 Brannan Street—between 8th and 9th—within 2 blocks of 101, I-80, Muni lines and bike paths. For public information call 415-863-1414 or visit somarts.org. Stay connected by following us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

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