



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Unreal: A Virtual Reality Exhibition**

*"Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away."– Philip K. Dick*

Virtual reality will be one of the major themes in 2017 - for business, the entertainment industry and for art. With its "Unreal" exhibition, the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, as one of the first exhibition venues worldwide, will inaugurate a virtual extension building, on 25 May 2017, in which purely virtual group and solo exhibitions will be presented.

Up to now, in order to exhibit digital art, many museums and exhibition venues have resorted to the, frequently, unsatisfactory makeshift solution of transferring the virtual works back into white space. The virtual room has been a scarcely used option for contemporary art. Now, at the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, a purely virtual exhibition space will be developed for the first time and visitors will enter this through a virtual reality lounge, which will be 250 square metres in size, on the upper floor. There will be several sections in which visitors with VR glasses will be able to move around freely in the virtual room.

"Unreal", the debut exhibition, will begin on 25 May 2017 and will revolve around epistemological issues. How is reality structured? Is it at all still possible to distinguish between simulated and authentic worlds? How intelligent are artificial systems already? Will virtual reality make the human body superfluous at some point? The international group exhibition will showcase works by, among others, Akihiko Taniguchi, Giulia Bowinkel & Friedemann Banz, Theo Triantafyllidis, Manuel Roßner and Tabita Rezaire. "Unreal" will be curated by Alain Bieber, the artistic director of the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, and the Net artist, programmer and founder of the virtual gallery Float, Manuel Rossner, who will also design the architecture of the virtual room.

**Akihiko Taniguchi**, artist, programmer and lecturer at the Tama Art University in Tokyo, develops detailed 3-D models of everyday spaces. The work of this 31-year-old artist, who lives in Japan, gained international attention, in 2014, when he produced a music video for the digital musician Holly Herndon.



The Düsseldorf-based artists **Giulia Bowinkel & Friedemann Banz**, graduates of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, focus on the materiality of the digital and its crossovers into the physical environment. Their works reflect the relationship between digital technologies and the human body as well as traditional modes of artistic creation. Their work was last shown at the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf in the "Virtual Body" exhibition.

The Greek artist **Theo Triantafyllidis**, who lives in the USA, combines virtual worlds with pop culture. His sculptures and video works create colourful virtual worlds and parody international consumer culture.

**Manuel Roßner** founded Float Gallery in 2012 and curated various shows in Paris, Frankfurt and Berlin since then. His interest in art is deeply intertwined with nowadays society, the quickly advancing technology and the new ways of thinking and social correlations that arise through networks and their computation power. In his own work he reflects the notions of space and simulation.

**Tabita Rezaire**, a French born Guyanese/Danish new media artist, describes herself as an intersectional preacher and health practitioner, and her artistic practice as "digital healing activism". Her works explore decolonial health and knowledge through the politics of technology and dismantle our oppressive white-supremacist-patriarchal-cis-hetero-globalized world screen.

With its digital extension, the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf will be exploring the new opportunities that are emerging for art galleries through the digital transformation and will open its virtual gates for a new generation of 'post-Internet' artists who work primarily with digital media. In 1993, Louis Rossetto, founder of Wired magazine, wrote, "the Digital Revolution is whipping through our lives like a Bengali typhoon"; he later corrected himself, he "should have said that the Digital Revolution was ripping through our lives like the meteor that extinguished the dinosaurs." It is high time exhibition venues also faced up to the digital transformation.



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NRW-Forum Düsseldorf

Curated by Alain Bieber and Manuel Roßner

**Duration:** 25.5 – 30.07.17

**Press images and further information:** <https://www.nrw-forum.de/en/press/unreal>  
<http://www.manuelrossner.de/work/nrw-forum/>

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Project partner

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