ABOUT CARLA GANNIS

Carla Gannis is known for her pioneering work that fuses technology and traditional media, producing multilayered narratives that challenge societal norms and immerse viewers in visually engaging experiences. Gannis’s art is characterized by a commitment to experimentation. Throughout her career, she has worked with an array of mediums and tools, including drawing, painting, video, extended reality, and machine learning models. Her multilayered narratives engage with the loci of identity within the context of hyperreal 21st century conditions.

Gannis holds an MFA in painting from Boston University and a BFA in painting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Today she teaches “healing-edge” technology as an Industry Professor at NYU’s Tandon School of Engineering in the Department of Technology, Culture, and Society. Her work has been exhibited in the Whitney Museum of American Art, Artport, New York; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Moscow Museum of Applied Art, Russia; Modern and Contemporary Art Museum, Byblos, Lebanon; and many others across the globe.

ABOUT C.A.R.L.A. G.A.N.


RELATED EVENTS

All events during this exhibition will occur in person in the Halsey Institute galleries, subject to change. Events are free and open to the public, unless noted. Check halsey.cofc.edu for up-to-date information.

OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, May 19, 6:30 - 8:00 PM
Free for Halsey Institute Members, suggested $5 donation otherwise

ARTIST TALK
Saturday, May 20, 2:00 PM

ANNEX DANCE COMPANY
V3: A DANCE INSTALLATION
Thursday, June 1, 5:30 PM
Friday, June 2, 11:30 AM
Thursday, June 8, 6:30 PM

CURATOR COFFEE CLUB
Friday, June 2, 9:00 - 11:00 AM
Open to Halsey Institute Members

HALSEY AFTER HOURS
Wednesday, June 21, 5:00 - 7:00 PM
Free for Halsey Institute Members, suggested $10 donation otherwise

SIT A SPELL: COFC’S COMPUTING IN THE ARTS PROGRAM
Thursday, June 29, 12:00 PM

FAMILY DAY!
Sunday, July 9, 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Free for Halsey Institute Members, suggested $5 donation otherwise

THE HALSEY INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
at the College of Charleston School of the Arts

LOCATION
The Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts
College of Charleston
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING
Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS
During exhibitions
Monday - Saturday, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Open until 7:00 PM on Thursdays
FREE FOR ALL

CONTACT
(843) 953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

IMAGE CREDITS:
this side, left: Carla Gannis, Honeycomb Library, 2023. Digital print on vinyl, 38x30”
reverse side, left: Carla Gannis, wwwunderkammer Lobby, 2020-ongoing, social VR experience
reverse side, center: Carla Gannis, wwwunderkammer Main Cabinet, Cabinet of Endangered and Emerging Species (detail), 2020-ongoing. Digital print on Xanita reverse side, right: Carla Gannis, Cosmos, 2023. Digital print on vinyl, 39 x 39”
cover: Carla Gannis, Video Game Cabinet Castle (detail), 2023. Digital print on vinyl, 156 x 88”

All works © Carla Gannis

GET SOCIAL WITH US!

HALSEY INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
halsey.cofc.edu
halseyinstitute
halsey@cofc.edu

CARLA GANNIS / C.A.R.L.A. G.A.N.
wwwunderkammer

May 19 - July 15, 2023
In what will be a new art viewing experience for many, Carla Gannis has crafted a mezzanine between the physical worlds of our walking bodies in the Halsey Institute galleries and the new realm being built in the digital universe beyond. Gannis’s wwwunderkammer was first built in 2020 as a social VR (virtual reality) experience and has accomplished the feat of translating to the physical world in this exhibition. What began as a desktop computer or web experience has been brought to tangible life via vinyl installations, drawings, sculpture, video, and holograms. Through VR and AR (augmented reality), viewers will stand in the galleries but also project into digital space, and there find a congenial guide in Gannis’s avatar C.A.R.L.A. G.A.N. (Crossplatform Avatar for Recursive Life Action Generative Adversarial Network). She will guide you into the wwwunderkammer, a hybrid place where seemingly flat images morph into 3D objects and forms, moving and turning in their display frames and cases with the aid of iPads. It may feel foreign, but take care to relax and have fun, explore and be open to the new, and wonder at the strange new art forms and creatures to encounter in this 21st century Wunderkammer.

The exhibition has pulled out into physical space some of the key places and components in Gannis’s virtual wwwunderkammer: the Lobby, Video Game Cabinet Castle, performances by avatar Virtues and Vices, and a recreation of The Main Chamber. Think a bit like Las Vegas hotel glitz, with the charm of the new and exciting. Gannis and C.A.R.L.A. G.A.N. detail some of the objects that have been created for the new realm; objects that might remind us of things we’ve seen before but that are decidedly not just like things are back here in the “real world.” When using the provided VR headset, cheekily perched atop a skull, we notice we also have a different body on the other side, one that moves freely and floats quickly through space. We can see and encounter more when we take on our new digital skins.

Gannis has corralled for us some of the latest specimens that she is working on bringing into being, species and denizens for this realm we sometimes call digital space, webspace, the computational realm. Think of it as the networked and interwoven spaces within and between our machines, the vast space that you cut through when you designate a path to a particular point via your web browser. It is an ever-growing realm, being generated by not one entity but between and among all while building and communicating through our machines. There’s a lot of computational space out there; And sometimes it’s helpful to have a guide. Gannis has long operated in this role, with a body of work concerned with wayfinding in this digital realm and introducing us to some of the new denizens, as well as those who have been historically marginalized.

Gannis has corralled for us some of the latest specimens that
she is working on bringing into being, species and denizens
for this realm we sometimes call digital space, webspace, the
computational realm. Think of it as the networked and interwoven
spaces within and between our machines, the vast space that you
cut through when you designate a path to a particular point via
your web browser. It is an ever-growing realm, being generated
by not one entity but between and among all while building
and communicating through our machines. There’s a lot of
computational space out there; And sometimes it’s helpful to have
a guide. Gannis has long operated in this role, with a body of work
concerned with wayfinding in this digital realm and introducing
us to some of the new denizens, as well as those who have been
historically marginalized.

Gannis is an artist working in new media, a broad term that is
used to indicate an artist working with technology, specifically
technology that is computer-based and focused on visual or
verbal communication. She teaches in a program that trains other
artists in their use of technology and expression. Gannis has a
wicked sense of humor, and places herself front and center as the
creator of this little pocket of the digital realm she has dubbed the
wwwunderkammer, even asking the Virtues and Vices in the video
installation to answer the question “Who is Carla Gannis?” Gannis
provides us with a key clue in a reference to Margaret Cavendish’s
17th century short work The Blazing World, one of the first
examples of what would come to be known as science fiction. In
that work, the characters slip into an alternative world somewhere
up around the North Pole, where divisions between sky/ground,
east/west, day/night become too thin to hold. This blazing world
is like but decidedly not like our daily world; it’s different and it
demands our attention. In a similar vein, Carla Gannis invites us to
see and experience a new world in the wwwunderkammer if only
we have the courage to step right in.