

Press Release

Cory Arcangel



21 June—29 July 2023

Thaddaeus Ropac
Seoul Fort Hill
2F, 122-1, Dokseodang-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul



Cory Arcangel, *Related to Your Interests*, 2020.
Archive of bot generated single-channel MPEG-4 digital audio and video files (<https://rtyi.coryarcangel.com>),
screening room (variable), artist software. 2 weeks.

*Energy is the foundation of our world,
it makes everything go.*
— Cory Arcangel, 2023

For his first solo exhibition in South Korea, American-born artist Cory Arcangel assembles a group of works that embodies his enduring interest in technological developments, the digital realm and how images and commodities circulate in a global context. Presenting video, performance, wallpaper and wall-mounted works, the exhibition encapsulates the breadth of Arcangel's practice, and asserts his position as a pioneer of digital technology-based art.

In 2020, using a machine learning technology, Arcangel programmed a bot to scrape clickbait gossip websites. The artist explains that by 'toggling between two

different articles, as if weaving sites together,' this bot would identify key themes in the articles, passing them through Google Images to create a series of slideshows. These slideshows were accompanied by an automated voice that reads a nonsensical text generated by the bot using material sourced from the articles. From 2020 until late 2021, the videos were then uploaded to YouTube by the bot without the artist's intervention.

Related to Your Interests assembles the entire 800+ video archive in a 2-week-long, single-channel video, presenting a bizarre, indecipherable blend of celebrity gossip, pop-cultural trends, tabloid snippets and related imagery. The audio track spills into the gallery space, providing a sensory backdrop to the exhibition that acts as a commentary on the 'amalgamations of people and algorithms' observed by the artist in recent technological developments.

I see celebrity, fast fashion, branding and supply chains as connected and part of internet/IRL junk space today. How far away are those three Adidas stripes in any given Instagram feed, or that matter, just outside our doors?

— Cory Arcangel

The iconography of leisurewear has permeated Arcangel's oeuvre for 15 years as a reflection on the global circulation of commodities and imagery. In a new body of wall-mounted metal works known as *Alus* (2022–23), a robotic laser cutting machine is used to cut abstract shapes from thin plates of aluminium. The shapes are derived from iPhone photographs of tracksuits laid on the floor of the artist's studio. Cropping and enlarging details of these images, Arcangel generates a sequence of lines, curves and lettering that renders the motifs of the leisurewear brands unfamiliar, transforming the imagery of fast fashion into the visual realm of abstract painting.

A result of Arcangel's experimentation with new techniques and materials, the *Alus* embody the artist's recent thinking about energy, which he sees as 'the foundation of our world.' Moving from New York to Stavanger in 2015, Arcangel found himself living in the onshore epicentre of Norway's booming oil and gas industry. Due to the availability of cheap energy, Scandinavia has also become a site of high-intensity aluminium production. What Arcangel describes as the 'all-pervasive and all-encompassing' nature of these industries, informed his decision to start making works using local materials and fabrication methods, resulting in the laser-cut *Alus*. In a nod to Apple's computer line, which is produced in a range that targets amateur to professional consumers, the plates appear with finishes in three tiers: raw aluminium, powder-coated aluminium and gold anodised aluminium, the latter described by the artist as a 'deluxe model'.

With his signature sense of humour, Arcangel references Apple once more in the site-specific performance *9to5mac*. Post-It notes will be placed on the glass doors of the gallery, citing the actions of anonymous Apple employees who sought to prevent further injuries after several people walked into the glass walls of the technology giant's new multi-billion-dollar headquarters in Cupertino, CA.



Cory Arcangel, *Apple-3.2022.057~2x1.2~E6*, 2022.
Gold anodized aluminium plate (BWB-Bausilber 2 E6).
200 x 120 cm (78.74 x 47.24 in).
Photo: Stefan Alternburgher

Serving as a conceptual backdrop to the exhibition, a life-sized image of a section of mega-yacht *Lionheart* will extend across the gallery wall. The wallpaper, especially designed for the Seoul gallery, is the second in the *Flying Fox* series, a body of work that features the world's largest mega-yachts as photographed by Arcangel's team. Showing only a small part of the boat, the wallpaper confronts viewers with the overwhelming scale of the vessel. Juxtaposed with the aluminium supports of the *Alus*, the yacht stands as a symbol of the hierarchical distribution of resources and wealth across the globe. 'On one end of the spectrum, aluminium is dug out of the earth and transformed using a huge amount of energy,' says the artist. While, 'at the top of this chain you have mega-yachts... you have people floating around in aluminium shells – the full spectrum of modern life.'



Cory Arcangel. Photo: Tim Barber

About the artist

Born in Buffalo, New York, Arcangel now lives and works in Stavanger, Norway. In 2004, his work was shown at the Whitney Biennial, New York. In 2011, he became the youngest artist since Bruce Nauman to hold a full-floor solo exhibition, *Pro Tools*, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Between 2016 and 2017, the exhibition *Asymmetrical Response*, devised in collaboration with Olia Lialina, toured to Western Front, Vancouver, The Kitchen, New York and Art Projects, Ibiza.

Further solo exhibitions have been held in distinguished international institutions, including the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland (2023); Kunstverein in Hamburg (2022); Cc Foundation, Shanghai (2019); Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo (2015); Reykjavík Art Museum (2015); Herning Museum

of Contemporary Art (2014); PHI Foundation for Contemporary Art, Montreal (2013); Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2012); Barbican Centre, London (2011); Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, Berlin (2010); Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2010); and Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich (2005).

Early and recent work expanding on the notion of video games, including *Super Mario Movie* (2005), made in collaboration with Paper Rad, and */roʊ'deɪoʊ/ Let's Play: HOLLYWOOD 2021-06-08T22:58:00+02:00 11082* (2021), are on view concurrently with Cory Arcangel's presentation at Thaddaeus Ropac Seoul in the group exhibition *Game Society* at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul until 10 September 2023.

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