



**STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 7PM SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> 2018**

2018 Lumen Prize Winners Announced  
A.I. Portrait claims top prize

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In a first for a global art prize, a portrait created by a machine has won the 2018 Lumen Prize Gold Award, it was announced Thursday night at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Lumen Prize Awards Ceremony in London.

The world's pre-eminent digital art prize gave away \$11,000 in prize money at the ceremony, honouring artists from around the world who are creating their work with the latest digital tools. The Gold Award winner, Mario Klingemann, from Germany, used Artificial Intelligence tools to create his stunning portrait, *The Butcher's Son*.

Commenting on the work, created by GANs (generative adversarial neural networks), Danielle Siembieda, Deputy Director of Leonardo/ISAST and a member of Lumen's International Selectors Committee, said: "It conveys the intense color, stroke and composition quality of a portrait while adding to the mystery of the human body."

Carla Rapoport, founder of the Lumen Prize, added: "There's a lot of fear and worry today about how A.I. will affect our lives. At the same time, these same tools can create real joy when artists engage with them. This is what art is all about. Each year, Lumen Prize winners break barriers in the art world, and 2018 provides another excellent example."

Other winners include a VR experience which transforms the viewer into a majestic rainforest tree, bio-digital fungus that can tweet and a work which incorporates 40 speakers playing the sounds from the artist's heartbeat.

Artists from the United States, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, Great Britain, and Germany were this year's recipients of the 2018 Lumen Prize awards, selected by a jury of eminent members of the contemporary art scene, including Louise Lawson, head of new media conservation at Tate, Irini Papadimitriou of the V&A Digital Programmes and Fei Jun, Head of the Media Lab at China's Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Carla Rapoport, Director & Founder of The Lumen Prize commented:

“Each year, I get the breath knocked out of me by the power and beauty of the Lumen Prize Shortlist. This year, I feel the Jury Panel had the toughest job yet choosing the winners. This is because the range and types of work submitted is broader and more stunning than we could have imagined. Once again, it's simply a privilege to bring this group of artists to the world's attention and to begin opening doors for some of the very best art being created with technology today.”

Bruce Wands, Lumen Jury Panel member and former head of the Computer Arts MA programme for the prestigious School of Visual Art in NYC, commented: "The Lumen Prize has a finger on the pulse of new forms of digital art and creative self-expression."

Also new this year is the Rapoport Award for Women in Digital Art, created to boost the visibility of women artists engaging with technology. The first winner is Felicity Hammond for her work *In Defence of Industry*.

For more information, please email Céline on [celine@lumenprize.com](mailto:celine@lumenprize.com).

Notes to Editors:

The Lumen Prize for Digital Art is owned by Lumen Arts Projects Ltd, which is based in Wales. The competition has distributed over \$60,000 in prize money to date and produced over 40 exhibitions, commissions and events globally.

Descriptions of each award follows:

### **2018 LUMEN PRIZE GOLD AWARD**

*The Butcher's Son*

Mario Klingemann (Germany)

[Link to work here](#)

“Francis Bacon as reimaged by an A.I.” Brian Runciman, British Computer Society, Chartered Institute for IT and member of Lumen's International Selectors' Committee

The 2018 Lumen Prize Award this year goes to German artist Mario Klingemann for a work that breaks new ground by incorporating A.I. techniques to produce a life portrait. The artist comments on his work: “This portrait is a neural network's interpretation of the human form. It has been generated entirely by a machine using a chain of GANs (generative adversarial neural networks). A randomly generated stick-figure was used as an input to the first GAN, which produces a painterly-looking low-resolution proto-image. In several steps, the low-resolution image is enhanced by another GAN increasing the resolution and adding

details and textures. I controlled this process indirectly by training the model on selected data sets, and eventually by making a curatorial choice, picking among the thousands of variations and choosing the one that spoke to me most.”

### **MOVING IMAGE AWARD**

*Avyakrta: The Unanswered Questions*

Sungjae Lee (South Korea)

[Link to work here](#)

This work is a 10-channel digital painting in which the images of real materials and imagined materials constantly change their appearance while repeating their movements for 12 minutes of playing time. Sometimes the images change in a routine manner and other times, passionately. At one point, a single, changing image is played on 10 screens. The image is then played at different times, for 1 minute and 12 seconds per screen. These 10 images then change their appearance while following each other, matching each other at times, but not others. They are all fundamentally the same as one another, but they look different at every moment. They constantly try to reconcile but get farther away and they become something completely different when they get closer.

The work has a mesmerising intensity that aims to take moving image art to a new dimension.

### **3D/INTERACTIVE AWARD**

*Fidgety (In between up and down)*

GayBird (Hong Kong)

[Link to work here](#)

Fidgety is defined as a nervous and jumpy feeling. Normally people will see that is a bad feeling. But the artist treats this as a musical idea. The Chinese character 「忐忑」 was designed like a pictograph, which uses the words 「上」 “up” and 「下」 “down” over the word 「心」 “heart” to describe this feeling. The design of this installation was inspired by the construction of this Chinese character. Built with a 40 channel-speaker system, the setting of the speakers looks like a path resembling the veins. All 40 speakers are playing the sound of the artist’s heartbeat. When the speakers start to play one after another, they are producing a range of various rhythms and musical compositions. Even though the heartbeat is the most important element in this work, it’s not easy for the audience to hear it, since it was designed as a triggering force in the whole work rather than an audible element. The low frequency of the heartbeat causes the speakers to vibrate, which then triggers the kinetic installation to make sounds.

### **AR/VR AWARD**

*Tree*

New Reality Company (UK)

[Link to work here](#)

'Tree', a location-based virtual reality experience, transforms you into a majestic rainforest tree. With your arms as branches and body as a trunk, you'll experience the tree's life from a seedling to its fullest form, and witness its fate first-hand. Users enter the tree's body and perspective, beginning the installation as a virtual seed and growing to the highest point in the forest before being slashed and burned by industrial loggers. To fully immerse you into the experience, it is enhanced with sensory elements such as a scent track, wind, heat and haptic vibrations to simulate growth. With 'Tree', we wanted to personalize the effects of global climate change and deforestation. Climate change feels more prominent when it appears as something that is happening to you. To ensure that 'Tree' encourages not just awareness, but action, we partnered with The Rainforest Alliance, a non-profit with 25 years of experience working with local communities, governments, and corporations to end deforestation. 'Tree' is a fully immersive experience. We use custom scents, heat elements, air movers, and bass transducers which activate during key moments of the experience to engage both the body and mind into the tree's narrative. Our extra-sensory partners include Subpac (providers of the vibrating vests), plus Scent Communication and International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF), who helped create the unique "scent" tracks of 'Tree'.

#### **STILL IMAGE AWARD**

*Overload (Consequence)*

Mark Lyons (UK)

[Link to work here](#)

'Overload (Consequence)' utilises Google's Deep Dream artificial neural network. The programme was first given a scan of a black ink wash that it interpreted figuratively based on the images within its network. In an attempt to recreate the properties of a drawing, the image was separated tonally, half-toned, and then mechanically re-drawn with an XY plotter. The machines deal with a large amount of information and the process takes time. Time and complexity tend to produce variability, unanticipated errors: ink runs low and pens drip as they are reloaded; paper buckles creating inconsistencies in the line; the machines glitch, cutting indiscriminately through the composition. The result is mechanical, visibly systematic but also humanised by its errors and its tactility, raising questions around labour, authorship and intentionality.

#### **RAPOPORT AWARD FOR WOMEN IN DIGITAL ART**

*In Defence of Industry*

Felicity Hammond (UK)

[Link to work here](#)

This work focuses on the relationship between the industrial history of the northwest of England, in particular the area's mining history and the subsequent shift towards the nuclear industry during the mid-20th century. Referencing continuing political issues surrounding the area which is where nuclear submarines are built, the work raises themes

around defence, secrecy and the unseen earth below the surface. The image imagines the unknown effects of the fusion between the nuclear and the natural, whilst exploring ideas around excavation and mining from the area's iron-ore mining past. The image depicts a landscape filled with nuclear sheds amongst the ruin of the iron-ore mining past, pointing towards both the growth and collapse of industry, and the potential transformation of the landscape.

Carla Rapoport comments: "Like Andreas Gursky and other eminent photographers using the powers of digital manipulation, Felicity's work splices open the traditional landscape shot and makes it a narrative about politics, industry and people's lives. Her work is visually arresting and powerful. I couldn't be prouder to award the first Rapoport Award for Women in Digital Art to Felicity.

### **PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD**

*Aerobanquets RMX*

Mattia Caselegno (Italy, based in US)

With Flavio Gignoni Cartestia (food art), Mattheu Cherubini (coding), Martux\_M (audio), Fito Segrera (tech assistance)

[Link to work here](#)

The 'Aerobanquets RMX' is a series of immersive, augmented sensorial experiences focused on taste and perception. Loosely based on the Futurist Cookbook, the (in)famous Italian book of surreal dinners and recipes first published in 1932, the project is a collaboration with chef Flavio Ghignoni Carestia, who created an original menu based on the futurist cooking style. Part-manifesto, part-artistic joke, the Futurist Cookbook is a collection of recipes, experiments, declamations and allegorical tales: here are recipes for ice cream on the moon; candied atmospheric electricities; nocturnal love feasts; sculpted meats. The Futurist Cookbook is a provocative, visionary work on the future of nourishment, which well ahead of time touched on issues of post-capitalistic societies and labour that are so relevant to our times. Aligned with the futurist notion of a 'total work of art', the 'Aerobanquets RMX' are veritable multi-sensorial journeys encompassing all the senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch.

### **BCS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AWARD**

*Degenerative Cultures*

Cesar & Lois

An artwork by Cesar Baio and The League of Imaginary Scientists (Lois). Contributors: Scott Morgans (biologist)

[Link to work here](#)

This work creates a biological-technological network in which living microorganisms, digital networks and artificial intelligence work together. Replicating the logic of so-called intelligent microorganisms, the artists blur the limits between biological and artificial intelligence. Mapping and corrupting the predatory knowledge frameworks that have

consistently driven how humanity deals with nature, their goal is to learn from the bio-hybrid interactions across biological, social and technical networks.

In an interactive installation, physical books are used as the substrates for fungi. The text is destroyed in a physical sense, and this destruction is visible through the disappearance of legible text on the surface of the pages. The A.I. component analyzes the living microorganisms' growth and feeds an algorithm linked to cellular automata and natural language analysis. This bio-digital agent searches the internet for texts that follow similar predatory patterns by describing humanity's efforts to control nature. Just as the physical book is consumed by the microbiological culture, the digital database is corrupted by the degenerative algorithm. Readouts from the consumption of the physical book and the digital database are visible in the twitter feed of @HelloFungus and printed out onsite on a thermal printer.

## **MEURAL STUDENT PRIZE**

*The Punishment of Tantalus*

Ziwei Wu (China)

The inspiration of this work derives from the images of torture in Hieronymus Bosch's painting, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. The legend of Tantalus, who was a son of Zeus, tells that he offended the gods and was punished in hell. Ziwei created an Arduino controlled kinetic work with 3d printed pieces that move in a twitchy, paranoid way using loudspeakers. In this way, the work aims to explore and reinterpret the phenomenon of individual behaviour being controlled and watched by external perspectives and sounds.