

JONAH KING

ARTWORK

All My Friends Are In The Cloud presents a video-sculpture and new interactive installation by New York-based Irish artist and filmmaker Jonah King. In the artist's words, the work "celebrates the resilience of human tenderness within the sleepless mechanisms of digital technology." The project examines the contradictions of connection in an age when human intimacy is often at odds with our "always-on" digital realities. The show centers on an ever-expanding digital archive viewed via a pillar of monitors. Images of people embracing gently spin and scroll upward like video clips in a social media feed. As the images ascend, they unfurl into a whirl of digital fragments. By the time each embrace reaches the top of the screen, its image has disintegrated completely.

This exhibition is titled for King's ongoing project of the same name, but this installation dramatically expands the scope of the project. The embrace that is central to this work is no longer one that is merely witnessed on-screen but instead enacted by participants. As part of this exhibition, King has been working with University Galleries' staff and students in the College of Fine Arts' Program in Arts Technology to develop a new interactive artwork that will allow members of the public to participate in this process. Participants—whose images will be joined with those in the adjacent gallery—will also see their own likenesses ascend, unfurl, and disintegrate.

King's work prompts visitors to reflect upon the physical embrace itself, and also, by way of the camera documenting them, the services to which we willingly grant our data and the technological surveillance under which we willingly put ourselves in the name of "connectedness." By doing so, the artist states, "this work places human vulnerability center stage." Through simple everyday gestures, University Galleries' visitors will actively share in a greater conversation about the ways we engage with the digital world.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jonah King (b. 1985) is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker working between Dublin and Brooklyn. Their films, sculptures, essays and projects explore technology and intimacy. King's work has been exhibited at institutions including the Irish Museum of Modern Art, The New York Jewish Museum, and Fotografiska Stockholm. His films have received official selections at the Oberhausen Film Festival and London International Motion Pictures Awards. Recent solo exhibitions include *Clima* (Milan), *Weekend* (Seoul), and *Meyohas* (New York). This year he is coproducing his first theatre production at the Dublin Fringe Festival. Jonah received a BFA in Fine Art Media from NCAD (Dublin), an MFA from Columbia University, and attended the Skowhegan School.



All My Friends Are In The Cloud, 2019. Video sculpture and interactive installation. Photo credit: University Galleries of Illinois State University. Courtesy of the artist.

subjective frame

- Do you have an immediate desire to participate in the work?
- If you have participated, how do you feel witnessing yourself on screen?
- How does the subject matter breaking apart make you feel? What does it make you think about?

structural frame

- What formal qualities of the video sculpture and the scanning booth are similar? How are they different?
- What do you think the significance is of the video sculpture and scanning booth being placed in different spaces?

cultural frame

- Do you see parallels between the video sculpture and technology you use in your everyday life?
- How often do you find yourself engaging in use of technology with a loved one?
- Does the booth remind you of a time you were recorded? What was the context? Were you alone, with strangers or a friend or a loved one?

VOCABULARY

CONTEXT

the situation in which something happens

INSTALLATION

artwork that responds to and alters a space

SUBJECT MATTER

what is being depicted in an image or artwork

SUBJECTIVE

something that is open to interpretation; up to the viewer to decide

FORMAL QUALITIES

refers to elements and principles of design such as line, shape, color, balance, movement, contrast, and unity

ART-MAKING ACTIVITIES

- Imagine a social media network where people can post images but nobody can comment, "like," or share. Create a series of images of what you think would still be worth sharing.
- Research a historical artist and find examples of their work. Individually list qualities that define the artist's work. Pretending you are the artist, continue your practice and create three new artworks with defining qualities of your work using only a smart phone or ipad.
- As a class, analyze King's documentation of human connection in *All My Friends Are In The Cloud*. Discuss in small groups where you see examples of human connection in the world around you. Does technology play a role? How so? Individually create an artwork inspired by technology's impact on your personal relationships.
- Analyze King's *All My Friends Are In The Cloud*. Ask students to consider the question: Do you find connective online experiences comparable to face-to-face interactions? Direct students to partner with a classmate and use a computer, tablet, or phone to discuss their thoughts on the question for 5 minutes. Then switch to verbal discussion. Audio record the 10-15 minute interaction. As a group, listen to the recording and then discuss the experience.



All My Friends Are In The Cloud, 2019. Video sculpture. Photo credit: University Galleries of Illinois State University. Courtesy of the artist.

EVENTS

- **Friday, September 13, at 1pm:** Workshop with Jonah King. The Big Project: Making work that won't fit in a studio.
- **Friday, September 12, from 5pm-7pm:** Opening reception at University Galleries
- **Monday, September 16, at 12pm:** Public conversation featuring artist and filmmaker Jonah King and exhibition curator Zach Buckley at University Galleries
- Field trip program, curator-led tours, and workshops available by appointment. Please contact Tanya Scott at 309.438.5488 or tmcot3@ilstu.edu to register.

*Field trip stipends are available thanks to a Town of Normal Harmon Arts grant.

***ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

g UNIVERSITY GALLERIES
of Illinois State University
11 Uptown Circle, Normal, IL 61761
309.438.5487 · galleries.ilstu.edu