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RLWindow
Carla Gannis
The Elevated Line
October 27 – December 23, 2022

RYAN LEE is pleased to present in *RLWindow Carla Gannis: The Elevated Line*, the debut of a new landmark video work, of the artist's *Yonder* series. Based on 3D images captured along the High Line, the nine-minute looping video with original music by R. Luke Dubois is a cinematic view of a stroll down the Chelsea promenade as perceived by a cyborg with combined human and computer vision. During its walk, this character encounters a kaleidoscopic cast of characters including avatars from various past projects from 1998 to today. This video is a milestone project within Gannis's three-decade career: long interested in investigating the overlapping realities of the physical and digital worlds, she began incorporating digital elements in her painting-based practice upon her arrival in New York in the 1990s.

The Elevated Line places itself within the artist's transmedia practice, which has evolved to capture the context in which it has grown: Gannis's works are a maximalist mediation of a hyper-stimulated reality, in which individuals are confronted daily with a plethora of online and physical stimulants. Fascinated by digital semiotics and the lineage of hybrid identity, she takes on a *horror vacui* approach to her artistic practice, culling inspiration from networked communication, art and literary history, emerging technologies and speculative fiction.

The artist captured the raw material for this video using 3D Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) scans with her phone over the course of three scrolls up and down the High Line during the summer of 2022. The goal was not to capture a clean and flawless scan, but rather impressions of the physical experience of this New York City landmark—the act of digitally scanning while constantly moving resulted in fragments of reality. This reality is one in flux, that does not grasp the full picture the technology was designed to capture, thus achieving a so-called 'glitch' aesthetic. Using 3D editing software, Gannis digitally painted and animated the individual elements she captured during her walk. The artist's maximalism becomes more evident in this part of the process: using all of her original data, she layered her digital edits to create a rich universe that reflected her interior mind. She added reflectivity, shimmer, and saturation to a degree that made the scenes she captured abstract and virtually unrecognizable to the human eye.

The people that Gannis encountered during her summer walks down the High Line are transformed in this work into an array of unidentifiable characters. Are they benevolent protectors or sinister monstrosities? Are they algorithmically-coded bots, or sentient organisms traveling through their own sense of reality? The answer is never fully revealed as the viewer is left to question their motives, purpose, and consciousness. Other characters that the protagonist encounters on its virtual meanderings are representations of the artist herself: included in the video the viewer may find, like hidden easter eggs, a cast of Gannis's avatars from the 1990s to today, including Lucille Trackball, Sister Gemini, C.A.R.L.A. G.A.N., Tippoo's Tiger Victoria, and Jezebel Lanley, among others. These avatars have appeared in previous projects, such as *wwwunderkammer*, and throughout Gannis's world-building artistic practice in the metaverse, A.R., and digital artwork.

The end result of Gannis's rich and layered process is a nine-minute, infinitely looping experience. Though the protagonist of this video does in fact stroll down the elevated park, the journey that Gannis takes her character upon is not a literal walk matching with the physical realities of the promenade. This merged, multi-dimensional experience of the High Line plays into the idea of the *gesamtkunstwerk* within our digital, hypermediated age—exhibited in RLWindow, visible from the High Line itself, viewers will have the opportunity to connect with the artist's digital interpretation of the space while experiencing the physical reality of Gannis's subject.