

ALEXANDER REBEN
strange/r/evolution

curated by Amy Kisch + Charlie James
SPRING/BREAK Art Show

4 Times Square
rooms 2239 + 2240 + 2241
new york, NY

march 6 - 12, 2018

@artBoffin
@AKArtImage
@charliejamesgallery

strange/r/evolution

Conceived for the 7th edition of SPRING/BREAK Art Show, New York City's curator-driven art fair, Amy Kisch and Charlie James present *strange/r/evolution*—a solo exhibition of works by Alexander Reben. We live in an age where technology is learning about people at an exponential rate. The idea of a true 'stranger' is becoming obsolete. Everything from our credit card numbers, voices, pulses, brainwaves, and biometrics of our faces (surveilled with or without our permission), tells our stories. Bay Area-based artist and roboticist, Alexander Reben, explores these and other aspects of our humanity, through the lens of art and technology. As an actual 'stranger' coming to town—the towns being the context of the art world and the city of New York—Reben's artwork deals with human-machine relationships, synthetic psychology, artificial philosophy, and robot ethics. Using 'art as experiment,' he allows the viewer to experience the future within metaphorical contexts.

For the SPRING/BREAK 2018 theme 'Stranger Comes to Town'—which is based on the proverb "There are only two stories: a hero goes on a journey; a stranger comes to town"—a series of Reben's artworks focus on the notion of our increasingly intimate relationship with technology—exploring how it learns to 'know' us—and by extension, how humanity is required to activate such technology. This technological symbiosis, represents the future evolution of humanity. In Reben's control-by-oration installation [wax chromatic](#), viewers are able to transform the room's environment by imagining and verbalizing almost any color imaginable. Upon speaking the name of their preferred hue, the room—and the synergetic relationship between humanity and technology—is illuminated with the articulated color. The work continues the artist's exploration into how through intelligent manipulations of our surroundings, we are becoming ever-more integrated into our environments—and they in turn, are increasingly becoming extensions of ourselves. 'Us' and 'them,' 'personhood' and 'place,' dissipate in this externalization.

The artist's [Deeply Artificial Trees](#)—featured as an [ARTFORUM Critics' Pick](#)—utilizes vocal and visual detection to create unique translations of personhood, in this case, of Bob Ross. The dreamlike auditory outcomes demonstrate the unreasonable effectiveness and strange inner workings of deep learning systems, upon which we are relying more and more as a culture. In *ARTFORUM*, Janelle Zara describes: "Using a Google visualization program designed to replicate our neural functions, a kind of ... for artificial intelligence, Reben's piece taps into our deepest fears and warmest fuzzies simultaneously... preoccupied with the eternal search for higher consciousness and divine light (whether that's inward, upward, or digital)."

In the "flame fractal" series, the artist leverages his own stranger-ness, while still rendering his art as personal. He starts with a program which generates phrases for him to visualize, such as "obtrusive grass." Reben then thinks about the phrase while EEG (brainwaves) and other sensors read his brain's reaction to the phrase. This data is then used to feed a generative program which outputs an artwork—the color palette of which is chosen by the computer, based on the phrase's Google-image search results. Ultimately, the computer displays different versions of the artwork, measures Reben's biological reactions to the images, and makes its final selection based on his surveilled feedback. It 'knows' what he likes.

In Reben's *CC to maze print* our fiscal identity is alchemized into one of custom automation, utilizing a credit card as springboard. The interactive piece takes participants' credit card data and generates a unique artwork. In this manner, any individual with a credit or debit card—a defining object for personhood in the 21st century—is able to manifest a personal artwork, that visitors can take with them.



wax chromatic

2017

installation

mixed media

dimensions variable

edition of 5 + 1 AP

\$25,000

a room that becomes the color commanded



Deeply Artificial Trees

2017

video

5 minutes 35 seconds

edition 2/5 + 2 AP

\$7,000

an AI shows what it thinks it sees
and what it knows it hears using
"DeepDream" and "WaveNet" algorithms.
*this work is not endorsed, supported
or recommended by Bob Ross Inc.



The Korabile Bibloran

2017 - 2018

printed and spiral-bound book

8.5 x 11 inches

open edition of unique books

\$200

an AI reads the Bible and Koran
and then writes a new religious text
based on both



YXX0N.htm

2017

acrylic on canvas
32.7 x 24 inches each

Unique

\$5,000

a canvas painted with code which generates the rendering on the second canvas in the Chrome web browser



cc to maze print (sculpture)

2017

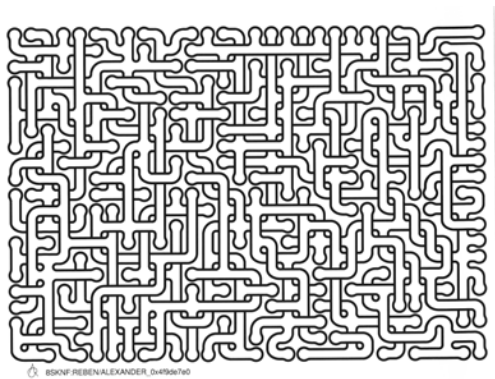
mixed media

16 x 15 x 7.5 inches

edition of 5 + 2 AP

\$5,000

prints a unique piece of art for every person based on their fiscal identity



cc to maze print (print)

2017

inkjet print

8.5 x 11 inches

open edition

\$0

a unique piece of art for every person based on their fiscal identity



populace guise

2018

video

24 hours

edition of 8 + 2AP

\$7,500

several million photos of faces used to train
face recognition systems without the person's
consent. the faces are played back at 60 faces
per second with their eyes aligned.



Florida man

2018

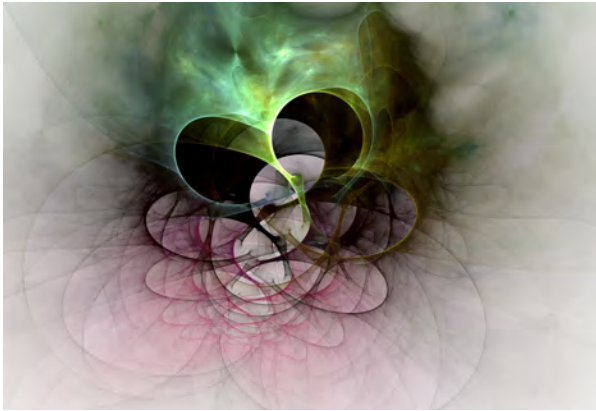
video

5h 29m 07s

edition of 8 + 2AP

\$5,500

over a million mugshot photos from
Florida played back at 60 faces
per second with their eyes aligned (all
suspects are innocent until
proven guilty in a court of law)



disobediant_strawberry

2017

archival inkjet print on

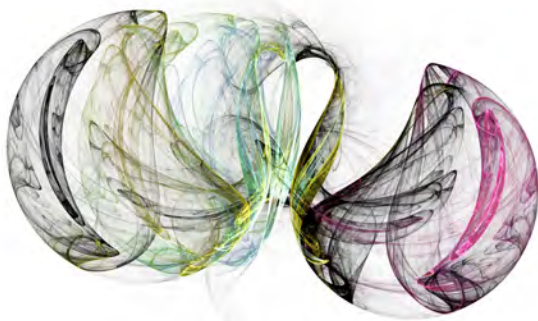
Canon pro platinum

13 x 19 inches

edition of 5 + 1 AP

\$500 (unframed)/\$650 (framed)

artwork generated by a collaboration
between the artist and a computer using the
artist's brain waves and biometric signals



pharmacological_mutant

2017

archival inkjet print on

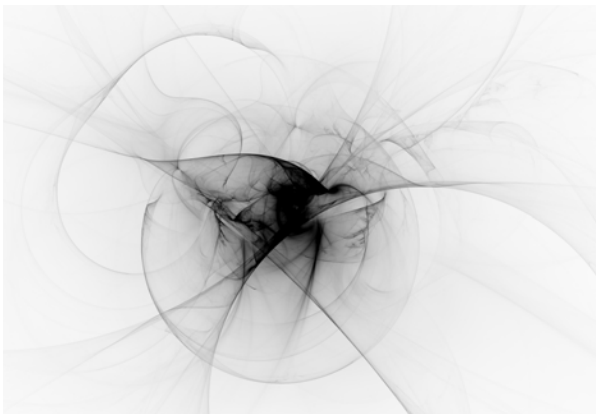
Canon pro platinum

13 x 19 inches

edition of 5 + 1 AP

\$500 (unframed)/\$650 (framed)

artwork generated by a collaboration
between the artist and a computer using the
artist's brain waves and biometric signals



unenterprising_black_olive

2017

archival inkjet print on

Canon pro platinum

13 x 19 inches

edition of 5 + 1 AP

\$500 (unframed)/\$650 (framed)

artwork generated by a collaboration
between the artist and a computer using the
artist's brain waves and biometric signals



terrific_causality

2017

archival inkjet print on

Canon pro platinum

13 x 19 inches

edition of 5 + 1 AP

\$500 (unframed)/\$650 (framed)

artwork generated by a collaboration between the artist and a computer using the artist's brain waves and biometric signals



randy_south_carolinian

2017

archival inkjet print on

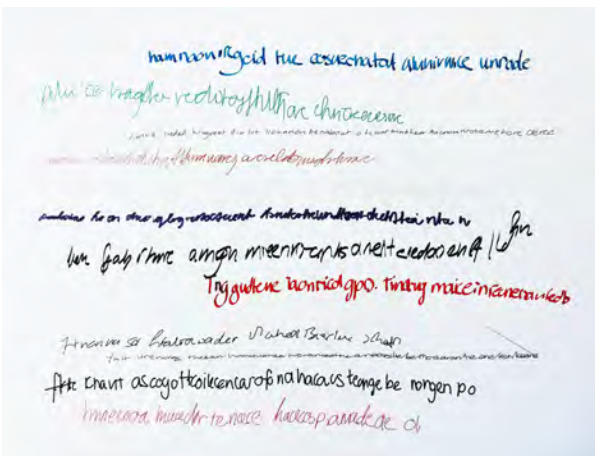
Canon pro platinum

13 x 19 inches

edition of 5 + 1 AP

\$500 (unframed)/\$650 (framed)

artwork generated by a collaboration between the artist and a computer using the artist's brain waves and biometric signals



hamnaon

2018

pen, marker, and pencil on

Bristol paper

14 x 11 inches

unique

\$750 (framed)

an AI-connected robot learned human handwriting which it then tries to emulate with various writing implements

ALEXANDER REBEN

EXHIBITIONS

Solo Shows

- 2018 strange/r/evolution, SPRING/BREAK Art Show, New York, NY.
2017 "wax chromatic", Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles CA.
2015 "Engineering Psychology", Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles CA.

Selected Group Shows

- 2018 CODAME, San Francisco CA.
Hello Robot, Gewerbemuseum, Winterthur Switzerland.
LAST Festival, Stanford University, Stanford CA.
- 2017 DEMO DAY, Kunstraum, Brooklyn NY
Post City, Ars Electronica, Linz Austria
Hello Robot, Design Museum Ghent, Ghent Belgium.
Robots. Work. Our Future, Vienna Biennial, Vienna Austria.
Hello Robot, MAK Contemporary Art Museum, Vienna Austria.
Hierophant, Nicodim Gallery, Bucharest Romania.
The Basilisk, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles CA.
Hello Robot, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein Germany.
- 2016 IDFA, Amsterdam Netherlands.
WIRED 2016 UK, London England.
Camden Film Festival, Camden ME.
Seattle Art Fair, Seattle WA.
Cineglobe, CERN, Geneva Switzerland.
- 2015 Happy Machine, Ottawa Maker Faire, Ottawa Canada.
LAST festival, Stanford University, Stanford CA.
SPEIF, Special Project Space, San Jose CA.
- 2014 "Pulse Machine", COLLISION, Boston Cyberarts Gallery, Boston MA.
"Robots in Residence", Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen CO.
"Sonic Gorilla", Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick UK.
"Phone Face Photo", TFI Interactive, Tribeca Film Festival, New York NY.
New Works, Culture Shock Project Space, Volta NY, New York NY.
- 2013 "Robots in Residence", 1MSQFT, Miami FL.
"Robots in Residence", Sheffield Doc / Fest, Sheffield, England.
"Robots in Residence", Nordisk Panorama, Malmo Sweden.
"Robots in Residence", Storyscapes at the Tribeca Film Festival, New York NY.
- 2012 "Presence", COLLISION18:Present, Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media, Jamaica Plain MA.
"Robots in Residence". International Documentary Film Festival. Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- 2011 "Acquired Knowledge". ArtBots. Ghent, Belgium.
"Solar absurdities", You Are My Sunshine: Axiom At Bumpkin Island Closing, Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media, Jamaica

- Plain MA.
 "Solar absurdities", Bumpkin Island Art Encampment. Bumpkin Island, Boston MA.
 "NO(0)JEWELS UNADJUSTED" IDENTITY ELEMENT: WORKS FROM THE NEW AXIOM GROUP. Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media, Jamaica Plain MA.
 "Ubiquitous Sensor Network Navigator" Defy Gravity. MIT Media Lab, Cambridge MA.
- 2009 "Ubiquitous Sensor Network Navigator" ARS Electronica Festival. ARS Electronica, Linz Austria.
 "School of The Streets" Photography Exhibit. MIT Weisner Gallery, Cambridge MA.
- 2008 "James Chimpton" Whitney Biennial. The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY. (Part of Neighborhood Public Radio(NPR) group).
 "Edible Excess" EYEBEAM. EYEBEAM Art + Technology Center, New York NY.
 "Suspect Device" URECA Exhibition. SAC Gallery, Stony Brook NY.
 "A Break" LICA Long Island College Art Competition. SAC Gallery, Stony Brook NY.

SPEAKING / APPEARANCES

- 2018 AI Creativity in Art, Neuroscience, and the Law, Panel, SXSW, Austin, TX
 Using Art and Design to Investigate Humanity, Berkeley Institute of Design, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
 Design Field Notes, Jacobs Institute, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
- 2017 Living in a Robot?, MAK Museum, Vienna, Austria
 Future Humanity, Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria
 "Ethics and Artificial Intelligence", CIIS university, San Francisco CA.
 "Judah vs. The Machines", Digital web series.
- 2016 "Emotional Arcade Live", IDFA, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
 "From cute droids to robots that stab you, it's time to get personal with machines", WIRED UK, London, England.
 "The Implications of Artificial Intelligence", Chicago Ideas Week, Chicago IL.
 "Internet of Things and Memory", Camden Film Festival, Camden ME.
 LASER art lecture, UC Berkeley, Berkeley CA.
 Guest lecturer, California College of the Arts, San Francisco CA.
 "Philosophy and The Future of Technology", Stanford University, Menlo Park CA.
 "Art and Social robotics", Guest lecturer, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA.
 "How Robots Mess With Our Minds", MIT Club of Southwest Florida, Naples FL.
- 2015 "Homo Digitalis", LAST Festival, Stanford University, Stanford CA.
 "The BlabDroid robots", Global Technology Symposium, San Mateo, CA.
 "The Rise of the Social Robot", Panel - SXSW, Austin TX.
- 2014 "Human-Machine Empathy", Guest lecturer, UC Berkeley Philosophy Department, Berkeley CA.
 "Film making Robots and Human-Machine Relationships", Dorkbot, San

- Francisco CA.
 "Robotic Art", Guest lecturer, California College of the Arts, San Francisco CA.
 "BlabDroids", Engadget Expand, New York NY.
 "Drones, Phones, and Robotic Friends-Where Is Emergent Technology Taking Us?", Panel - Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen CO.
 "Big Ideas", Opening session Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen CO.
 "The Needy Robot and Our Relationship with Emotional Machines", TTI Vanguard, Boston MA.
 "Social Robotics - Interaction and Design", Robo Forum, Moscow Russia.
 "Igniters: BlabDroid", NBC and SyFy, Las Vegas NV.
 "Will Robots Take Over The World?", HuffPost Live, Internet.
- 2013
 "BlabDroids - Self-Learning Social Cloud Robots", TEDx, Boston MA.
 "BlabDroids - Self-Learning Social Cloud Robots", Google Solve for X, Boston MA.
 "Control your legal landscape", Robo Business conference panel, San Jose CA.
 "Transmedia and robot filmmaking, Doc/Tech", Points North at Camden Film Festival, Camden MA.
 "BlabDroids around the world", Nordisk Panorama, Malmo Sweden.
 "Transmedia and technology", Transmedia Meet Up, Malmo Sweden.
 "BlabDroids, art as research", Ignite at FOO, Sebastopol CA.
 "Robots in Residence", Sheffield Doc / Fest, Sheffield England.
 "Robots as journalists", Columbia Journalism School, New York NY.
 "Emotionally Evocative Robots", Thinking Digital, Gateshead England.
 "Interactive Technology in Media", Media Future, Dun Laoghaire Ireland.
 "Robots in Residence", Storyscapes panel at the Tribeca Film Festival, New York NY.
- 2012
 "Robots in Residence, screening and theory ", DocLab at IDFA, Amsterdam Netherlands.
 "Boxie, The Story Gathering Robot", Ignite Boston, Boston MA.

EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Master of Science in Media Arts & Sciences (The Media Laboratory), 2010.

State University of New York, Stony Brook. Bachelor of Science in Applied Math. Cum Laude, 2008.

FELLOWSHIPS / APPOINTMENTS / MEMBERSHIPS

2015 - 2017 UC Berkeley Psychology Visiting Scholar.
2016 WIRED Innovation Fellow.
2013 - 2014 MIT CMS DocLab Fellow.
2010 MIT Art Scholar.
2009 - 2010 MIT Center for Future Storytelling Fellow.
Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society.
Golden Key International Honor Society.

TEACHING / MENTORSHIP

2014 - Current Business and design mentor, Stochastic Labs
2011 Instructor for MIT semester class: Interactive Technology Design
2010 Instructor for MIT semester class: PATD Promoting Art Through Design.
2009 - 2010 MIT Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) advisor.
2008 Mentor for the WISE (Women In Science and Engineering) Program.
Mentor and volunteer for high school students through the F.I.R.S.T. Robotics Competition (6 years).

ALEXANDER REBEN

Alexander Reben is an artist and roboticist, who explores humanity through the lens of art and technology. His work deals with human-machine relationships, synthetic psychology, artificial philosophy, and robot ethics, among other topics. Using "art as experiment," his work allows for the viewer to experience the future within metaphorical contexts. Reben's artwork and research have been shown and published internationally, and he consults with major companies, guiding innovation for the social machine future. He has exhibited at venues including The Vitra Design Museum, The Vienna Biennale, ARS Electronica, VOLTA, TFI Interactive, IDFA, ArtBots, The Tribeca Film Festival, The Camden Film Festival, Doc/Fest, and The Boston Cyberarts Gallery. His work has been covered by *NPR*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Fast Company*, *Filmmaker Magazine*, *New Scientist*, *BBC*, *PBS*, *Discovery Channel*, *Cool Hunting* and *WIRED*, among others. He has lectured at TED, SXSW, TTI Vanguard, Google, UC Berkeley, SMFA, CCA, MIT, and other universities. Reben has built robots for NASA, and is a graduate of the MIT Media Lab, where he studied human-robot symbiosis and art. He is a 2016-2017 WIRED innovation fellow, a Stochastic Labs Resident, and a visiting scholar in the UC Berkeley psychology department.

@artBoffin
Areben.com
alex@areben.com

AMY KISCH

Amy Kisch is the Founder + CEO of AKArt—an art advisory agency, as well as an independent curatorial platform—and Collect For Change™—an initiative which collaborates with artists, offering artwork with a portion of sales benefiting a charity personally selected by each artist. Kisch is an independent art consultant, curator, and strategic specialist, whose expertise includes arts programming, development, marketing + PR, publishing, and collection management. Her recent curatorial projects include *Object Action: The “F” Word in a Post-Truth Era*, featuring Ana Teresa Fernández, Chitra Ganesh, Michelle Hartney, Angela Hennessy, Nadja Verena Marcin, Sanaz Mazinani, and Michele Pred; and the two-year global tour (Miami, New York, San Francisco, Bolivia, Germany, Italy) of Nadja Verena Marcin’s live performance + video sculpture installation, *OPHELIA*. Kisch previously ran Sotheby’s global VIP program for the auction house’s top clients—curating and producing VIP programming including the Sotheby’s Preferred Museum Programme, Art Fair Programme, and *The Economist* Lecture series in cities including New York, London, Los Angeles, Paris Chicago, and Hong Kong. Prior to that, she worked winning property from the company’s major private, institutional, corporate, and museum clients. While at Sotheby’s, Kisch concurrently held the roles of Executive Director and Corporate + Community Liaison for the Williamsburg Gallery Association in Brooklyn—developing programming and partnerships with, and for, area galleries, non-profits, artists, corporate, and government agencies. Having spent six years in clinical and community social work, her projects are underscored by efforts to democratize access within the art world, while upholding integrity and quality in curatorial vision and programming. Kisch made her start at *Parkett*, Thread Waxing Space gallery, and at Umbra Editions, and has served as a curator, contributing writer, editor, presenter, and producer of numerous successful initiatives, including collaborations and partnerships with: ABC TV, The Armory Show, ARTLOG, Artnet, ARTnews, ArtTABLE, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Chicago, Arts Gowanus, Art Markit, Art Production Fund, Assouline, AT&T, Brooklyn Tourism, *Canvas Magazine*, caribBEING, The Carlyle, Venture Capitalist Tim Draper’s Draper University, *The Excellent People Magazine (The EP)*, Fabergé, Flatbush Film Festival, Hard Press Editions, HERE Arts Center, Jim Jarmusch, Leila Heller Gallery, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, New York City Opera, Northside Music + Arts Festival, New York Foundation for the Arts, PULSE Art Fair, SCALO Verlag, *PREGAME Magazine*, Sotheby’s Diamonds, Sotheby’s Institute, Sotheby’s International Realty, Williamsburg Every 2:ND Friday, among others. A member of ArtTable, Kisch also serves as Director of Partnerships + Strategic Initiatives at California Bay Area tech + science + art residency, Stochastic Labs, and on boards and committees for Headlands Center for the Arts, Art & Abolition, NURTUREart, sparks & honey, and Time In Children’s Art Initiative.

@AKArtImage

AKArt.com

Amy@AKArt.com

CHARLIE JAMES

Charlie James is a collector and gallery director based in Los Angeles, CA. He has cultivated a program of nationally and internationally known artists united by their profound cultural sensitivity and renowned for the presence of their work throughout contemporary social, political, and creative dialogue. He has curated independently at private galleries in the United States including the Gildar Gallery of Denver, CO ("TAKEOVER," 2014). His core project, the Charlie James Gallery, established in 2008, has championed the work of artists such as William Powhida, Steve Lambert, Ramiro Gomez, Patrick Martinez, Sadie Barnette, and many others. The gallery has also become a curatorial hub for LA-based artists, having hosted over 25 artist-curated projects since 2013. James has lectured at the University of Notre Dame, UC Santa Barbara, the College Art Association, and others. He is based in Los Angeles, CA.

@charliejamesgallery
cjamesgallery.com
Charlie@cjamesgallery.com