

MEDIA RELEASE

Carla Gannis: Augmented Gardens and Other Emoji Delights

Opens February 8th at the New Media Artspace,
Baruch College, CUNY



Video still from *Augmented Gardens and Other Emoji Delights*, Carla Gannis, 2017.
Image courtesy of the artist and TRANSFER Gallery

NEW YORK, NY- February 8, 2017 – [Baruch College](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu) presents *Carla Gannis: Augmented Gardens and Other Emoji Delights*, an exhibition of video works by Elise Rasmussen, curated by Katherine Behar, Assistant Professor of New Media Arts at Baruch College.

The show will open on February 8th, 2017 and run through May 5th, 2017 at the New Media Artspace gallery in Baruch's Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street. The New Media Artspace will host a casual discussion with the artist for Baruch students on Wednesday, February 8th, from 1:30-3:30 PM in the New Media Artspace and room 415 of the Library and Information Building. Members of the public who wish to attend may RSVP to [katherine\[dot\]behar\[at\]baruch\[dot\]cuny\[dot\]edu](mailto:katherine[dot]behar[at]baruch[dot]cuny[dot]edu). A public artist lecture and closing reception will be held on Wednesday, April 19th, from 6:00 - 8:00 PM, at the Baruch Performing Arts Center's Engleman Recital Hall.

Carla Gannis: Augmented Gardens and Other Emoji Delights

Carla Gannis: Augmented Gardens and Other Emoji Delights recreates Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, through detailed constellations of animated emoji. Combining animations and 3D augmented reality (AR)

imagery, the exhibition transcribes Bosch's late 15th century triptych into contemporary mobile phone pictograms. Despite disparate visual vernaculars, separated by centuries, Gannis's remix retains the eerie perversions of Bosch's masterpiece in which darkness, pleasure, humor, and absurdity cross between earthly and celestial realms.

Bosch's painting is known for its enigmatic scenes in which miniature human figures engage in inscrutable erotic dalliances, surrounded by fantastical bestiaries, otherworldly architecture, and the imaginative instruments of torturous machines. Bosch's cycle of creation, earthly human life, and damnation portrays human excesses through intricate, dense iconography. How appropriate, then, that Gannis has chosen emoji, an iconographic language that also partakes in one of the greatest excesses of contemporary life: communications media. Just as Bosch shows mortal life run amok, Gannis's animations express the wild winking and spasmodic seductions of text messaging's abbreviated emotions. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between these works. Bosch's painting mutates and multiplies bodies into ludicrous erotics and provocative contortions. Gannis marshals the flattened affect of a standardized alphabet of icons, revealing the impotent emptiness of endless stimulation for stimulation's sake.

Invented in Japan in 1999, emoji are a character set or pictographic alphabet that condenses high-bandwidth image information into a single character. Bosch's layered landscapes present an equally condensed form of encryption, but one without a defined lexicon. The language of emoji is standardized, with a limited number of characters, but the meaning of Bosch's intricate symbol systems remains unknown. Spawning new interpretations, the work's ambiguities and lasting themes provide fertile ground for Gannis. The artist writes of this project, "At times my subconscious/ collective conscious reflections are on the human tendencies, ideologies, or societal constructions that have remained unchanged for centuries, while at other times my mashups speak to the radical paradigm shifts that have occurred as a result of technology and cultural revolutions."

This exhibition is a new variation on the "emojified garden" that first appeared in Gannis's *The Garden of Emoji Delights*, which the artist began in 2013. At the New Media Artspace at Baruch College, the artist debuts a new suite of augmented reality and sound works to elucidate how mixed memes and metaphors are shifting IRL ("in real life") experience toward hybrid reality. With augmented reality, Gannis virtually superimposes historical and contemporary symbol systems, much as they overlap in our culture and consciousness.

In a collage and remix practice she calls "Internet Gothic," Brooklyn-based artist Carla Gannis cuts and pastes from the threads of networked communication, Googleable art history, and speculative fiction to illuminate potentialities of democratization and alienation in technology. Since 2003, Gannis's work has appeared in numerous solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Her most recent solo exhibitions include *A Subject Self-Defined* at TRANSFER Gallery, New York, 2016; and *The Garden of Emoji Delights* at Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT, 2015. Her work has been featured in press and publications including, *The Creators Project*, *Wired*, *FastCo*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *The LA Times*, amongst others. She has participated on numerous panels regarding intersections in art and technology including "Let's Get Digital" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2014. Her speculative fiction was included in *DEVOURING THE GREEN:: fear of a human planet: a cyborg / eco poetry anthology*, published by Jaded Ibis Press. Her augmented reality artist book *The Selfie Drawings* was awarded the Founder's Award from the 2016 Lumen Prize. Gannis is faculty and the Assistant Chairperson of the Department of Digital Arts at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York.

Carla Gannis: Augmented Gardens and Other Emoji Delights is curated by Katherine Behar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences at Baruch College. The exhibition is made possible by support from the Baruch Computing and Technology Center (BCTC) and the Newman Library. All images appear courtesy of the artist and TRANSFER Gallery. Studio Assistance by RAFIA Santana and Sound Tracks by Christopher Rutledge.

Gallery Location: New Media Artspace at Baruch College, Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

Gallery Hours: The New Media Artspace is open to the CUNY community during regular library hours. Members of the public may request access to the New Media Artspace at the security desk at the second floor entrance to the library. For this week's public hours, please check the gallery website: www.newmediartspace.info or dial a docent at 626-312-1664.

The New Media Artspace is a teaching exhibition space in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Baruch College, CUNY. Housed in the Newman Library, the New Media Artspace showcases curated experimental media and interdisciplinary artworks by international artists, students, alumni, and faculty.

About Baruch College:

[Baruch College](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/) is a senior college in the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](http://www.cuny.edu/) with a total enrollment of more than 17,000 students, who represent 160 countries and speak more than 100 languages. Ranked among the top 15% of U.S. colleges and the No. 4 public regional university, Baruch College is regularly recognized as among the most ethnically diverse colleges in the country. As a public institution with a tradition of academic excellence, Baruch College offers accessibility and opportunity for students from every corner of New York City and from around the world. For more about Baruch College, go to <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/>.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Manny Romero, (646) 660-6141, manuel.romero@baruch.cuny.edu

Celene McDermott, (646) 660-6134, celene.mcdermott@baruch.cuny.edu

