

Frist Art Museum Presents Immersive Exhibition of Contemporary Artists Who Reimagine Humanity's Relationship with the Environment

Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman

September 25, 2026–January 3, 2027



Jacolby Satterwhite. *We Are in Hell When We Hurt Each Other*, 2020. Digitally animated video; 24 min., 22 sec. Courtesy of the artist, Morán Morán Gallery, and Mitchell-Innes & Nash Gallery. Image courtesy of the artist and Morán Morán

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (August 4, 2026)—The Frist Art Museum presents [*Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman*](#), an exhibition of works by 17 contemporary artists who use both analog and emergent technologies to visualize the vital interconnectedness between humanity, other species, and the earth itself. Organized by the Frist Art Museum, the exhibition will be on view in the Frist's Ingram Gallery from September 25, 2026, through January 3, 2027.

Shimmer explores intersections of dreams and reality, the physical and the virtual, and human creativity and nonhuman intelligences. Using physical media ranging from deer hides to glass as well as digital tools such as CGI, augmented and virtual reality, motion capture, and generative software, artists **Ian Cheng, Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, Marguerite Humeau, Josèfa Ntjam, Jacolby Satterwhite, Saya Woolfalk**, and others offer new ways of seeing the biological, psychological, and philosophical entanglements between humans and the more-than-human world.

Curated by Frist Art Museum Chief Curator Mark Scala, *Shimmer* is the final project in a career-spanning series of contemporary exhibitions he has organized including *Matthew Ritchie: A Garden in the Flood* (2022), *Chaos and Awe: Painting in the 21st Century* (2018), *Phantom Bodies: The Human Aura in Art* (2015), *Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination* (2012), and *Paint Made Flesh* (2009).

Though the title may suggest the aftermath of our species' extinction, the term *posthuman* refers to a philosophical rejoinder to the belief that human exceptionalism gives us license to destroy and exploit nature for our short-term benefit. Scala writes, "Although humans do have an outsized ability to control our environment, we have not always understood that this brings with it an ethical charge for care."

The title of the exhibition is connected to the 2018 film *Annihilation*, directed by Alex Garland, which is loosely based on the 2014 novel of the same name by Jeff VanderMeer. In the film, "the shimmer" is a

wavering, iridescent portal. Upon crossing its threshold, the genetic materials of various life-forms combine and undergo metamorphoses. The results, whether marvelous or monstrous, signal future evolutionary possibilities; they are premonitions of bliss or terror. When conceiving the exhibition, Scala was also inspired by the use of the word shimmer by anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose and her fellow researchers, who describe the transformation of the physical into the metaphysical in Australian Aboriginal sand paintings. When finished, these mystical maps lead into the Dreamtime, a sacred Indigenous continuum where relationships among species are fluid and connected.



Marguerite Humeau. *Kuroshio*, 2022. Biological and synthetic resin and polymers, salt, algae, seaweed, bone, pigments, mineral dust, ocean plastic, glass, and stainless steel structure; 111 1/2 × 110 3/4 × 128 7/8 in. The Rachofsky Collection, courtesy of the artist, C L E A R I N G, and White Cube. Photo: Kevin Todora

“The works on view convey the quality of shimmer—a transient glow that makes things appear immaterial and otherworldly,” writes Scala. “In the gallery’s luminous space, extinct species virtually reappear; machines become entwined with amoeba, slime, and microbes; mysterious light-filled avatars float and dance through fantastic landscapes; and the earth reveals itself to be a living organism.”

While providing otherworldly moments of awe and enchantment, the exhibition is centered on real-world disciplines. Exploring biological and ecological ideas, artists in the first section, “Endangered Species,” raise the question: If we knew that creatures ranging from single-celled organisms and termites to large mammals have complex mental abilities like problem solving, communicating, and remembering, would this lead to a greater sense of empathy with them? With her elegant white-and-gray sculpture *Kuroshio* (2022), the French artist **Marguerite Humeau** represents a life-form resembling a marine mammal. She suggests that this creature has become aware of its own mortality, possibly because of climate change and mass extinctions—a recognition, the artist speculates, that may

signal the birth of spiritual consciousness in nonhuman animals. **Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg** collaborated with scientists to digitally recreate an extinct white rhino for the video installation *The Substitute* (2019), while, in their mixed-media work *ArchaeaBot* (2018–26), **Anna Dumitriu and Alex May** imagine the offspring of a primitive single-celled life-form and an advanced robot, which could take over the planet long after humanity is gone.

The following section, “Dreams and Metamorphosis,” relates to psychology. Like surrealists did a hundred years ago, artists in this section use enchanting imagery to upend patterns of habit and convention. At once playful and thought-provoking, their technologically generated dreamscapes offer visions of individual life-forms magically morphing together. In Libby Heaney’s two-channel video projection *slimeQrawl* (2023), humans are permeated with oozing green slime. Dreams become poetry in **Chalet Comellas’s** multimedia installation *We interpret the dream, and the dream interprets the real* (2024). And, in **Jacolby Satterwhite’s** 3D animation *We Are in Hell When We Hurt Each Other* (2020), female robots vogue furiously across the landscape, defying the pain of the world with vitality and joy.

Artists in the final section, “Everything Is Connected,” link emotions and science, human creativity and nonhuman intelligence, and Indigenous beliefs and speculative futures. **Nancy Baker Cahill’s** augmented reality installation *Stone Speaks* (2022) tracks the life cycle of a planet facing an accelerating climate crisis—living, dying, and, through positive human-machine collaboration, being reborn as a lush and fertile world. In *I Would Like to Be Midnight / I Would Like to Be Sky* (2023), **Amelia Winger-Bearskin**, a member of the Seneca–Cayuga Nation, explores the power of technology to counter the legacy of settler

colonialism by using artificial intelligence to strip all signs of modern human habitation from footage of landscapes she filmed while driving across the United States. **Saya Woolfalk's** *Floating World of the Cloud Quilt* (2022) features hypnotically spinning projections of computer-generated imagery, including floating clouds and psychedelic floral wreaths. In this immersive environment, Woolfalk depicts a world in which boundaries between life forms and philosophies meld in an interspecies blur symbolized by the presence of human-plant hybrids she calls Empathics.



Saya Woolfalk. *Floating World of the Cloud Quilt* (installation view), 2022. Three-channel video projection, natural and synthetic fibers, digitally printed vinyl flooring, plastic, paint, paper, beads, notions, and gel medium; 406 × 72–144 (variable) × 108 in. Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects. © Saya Woolfalk. Photo: Etienne Frossard

In [Martin ArtQuest](#), the Frist's award-winning art-making space, new interactive stations align thematically with *Shimmer* and [Robin Vuchnich: In Search of Thoreau's Flowers—The Memory of a Season](#). At the Drawing in the Round station, a mannequin is transformed into a figure similar to the towering AR "syborg" in Nancy Baker Cahill's *Corpus* (2022/2024). The Wonder Wall station features imagery inspired by Walden Pond in Massachusetts, as referenced in Robin Vuchnich's exhibition. Elsewhere are activities using kaleidoscopes to explore radial symmetry, as seen in Saya Woolfalk's work; magnifying glasses through which to observe and sketch microscopic plant and marine life; a puppet theater; and a build-your-own-garden station.

Exhibition Catalogue

Available in the Frist's Gift Shop, the accompanying 166-page hardcover exhibition catalogue [Shimmer: Artists Dream a Posthuman World](#) is published by the MIT Press and coedited by Mark W. Scala and Nora N. Khan. The exhibition offers a timely collection of essays by today's key thinkers about art and technology. In this vital showcase that takes on some of the most salient questions of our time, authors and artists consider how a "posthuman" perspective can help inspire new ways to confront crises like climate change, species extinction, technological manipulation, and social alienation.

Exhibition Artists

Nancy Baker Cahill
Ian Cheng
Chalet Comellas
Anna Dumitriu and Alex May
Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg
Libby Heaney
Marguerite Humeau
Kite (a.k.a. Suzanne Kite)

Katja Loher
Josèfa Ntjam
Rachel Rossin
Jacolby Satterwhite
Jakob Kudsk Steensen
Amelia Winger-Bearskin
Saya Woolfalk
Marina Zurkow

Programs

Shimmer Symposium Keynote Conversation: Art, Technology, and the Posthuman Imagination

Friday, September 25, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Auditorium

Free for members and students; \$20 for not-yet members

Space is limited; registration is required and opens August 24.

This conversation features **Mark Scala**, chief curator of the Frist Art Museum, in conversation with **Christiane Paul**, curator of digital art at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The discussion will

be moderated by **Dr. Tina Rivers Ryan**, an internationally renowned expert on the history of art and technology. Together, they will explore how digital technologies are transforming artistic practice and shaping new ways of thinking about art, technology, and the posthuman. The conversation examines the promises and pitfalls of emerging technologies, their potential for social critique and cultural transformation, and the role of contemporary exhibitions in advancing discussions on environmental issues and posthuman thought.

Begin the evening with a performance in the Grand Lobby from 5:00 to 5:45 p.m., featuring local interdisciplinary artist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist [Lawson White](#). The museum will remain open until 9:00 p.m., allowing guests time to visit the galleries after the conversation.

Presented in conjunction with *Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman*, this keynote conversation precedes A Symposium on Art, Technology, and Empathic World Building, which will bring together leading artists, curators, and scholars for a day of thought-provoking conversations on Saturday, September 26.

[Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman—A Symposium on Art, Technology, and Empathic World Building](#)
Saturday, September 26, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Auditorium

\$18 for students; \$25 for members; \$45 for not-yet members

Space is limited; registration is required and opens on August 24.

Presented in conjunction with *Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman*, this symposium brings together leading artists, curators, and scholars for a day of thought-provoking conversations. Panelists will offer a contextual framework for the exhibition by discussing how, using both analog and digital technologies, art can give emotional resonance to such themes as species entanglement and extinction, dreams and metamorphosis, and the interconnectedness of the human and more-than-human, drawing from perspectives as diverse as Indigenous belief systems, philosophy, and science. With topics ranging from the promises and challenges of generative technologies to visions of ecological repair and posthuman futures, this symposium invites audiences to imagine new ways of seeing, feeling, and relating to the living planet.

A boxed lunch (vegan and gluten-free options available), parking voucher, and gallery admission are included in the registration fee.

[See the full schedule.](#)

Vanderbilt University is proud to support the symposium presented in conjunction with *Shimmer: Dreaming the Posthuman*, bringing together artists, scholars, and museum audiences for conversations at the intersection of contemporary art and technology.

Exhibition Credit

Organized by the Frist Art Museum

Supporter Acknowledgment

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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About the Frist Art Museum

Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Frist Art Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit art exhibition center dedicated to presenting and originating high-quality exhibitions with related educational programs and community outreach activities. Located at 919 Broadway in downtown Nashville, Tenn., the Frist Art Museum offers the finest visual art from local, regional, national, and international sources in exhibitions that inspire people through art to look at their world in new ways. Information on accessibility can be found at [FristArtMuseum.org/accessibility](https://www.fristartmuseum.org/accessibility). Gallery admission is free for guests ages 18 and younger and for members, and \$20 for adults. For current hours and additional information, visit [FristArtMuseum.org](https://www.fristartmuseum.org) or call 615.244.3340.
