

**Museum Public Program Proposal:**  
**Virtual Gallery Tour of *Twilight of the Idols* Exhibition**

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ADE-618-01: Contemporary Museum Education

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## Public Program Outline

### **Presentation:**

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1snoTUAGy8lelAU6IfAXNXHJPk8uDHCksq\\_QpOijlsw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1snoTUAGy8lelAU6IfAXNXHJPk8uDHCksq_QpOijlsw/edit?usp=sharing)

**Program Type:** Virtual Gallery Tour

**Title:** *A New Epoch-making Relationship Between Artists and Machines*

**Audience:** Adults

**Duration:** 1 - 1.5 hours

### **Exhibition:**

*Twilight of the Idols - Art and AI as Aesthetic Discourse in the Age of Trans- and Posthumanism*

\*Virtual exhibition room: <https://goetzendaemmerung.kuenstlerverbund-hausderkunst.de/galerie/>

### **Theme/Essential Question:**

Can machines produce art as the artists create art by themselves?

Can machines assist the artists to create art?

Can machines create art without human artists' involvement?

### **Goals:**

Audiences will be able to understand various artistic approaches that involve machines; get to know about the relationship between humans and machines in an aesthetic context; critically think about the assumed connection between man and art.

### **Educators:**

German educators, as well as educators who speak other languages at the museum

### **Description of the Program:**

The program is a series of virtual gallery tours of the *Twilight of the Idols* exhibition. To increase the accessibility of the program, the theme and duration (1-1.5 hour) of the virtual gallery tours remains the same, but they are taught in different languages including German, French,

Spanish, and English. The target audiences are adults who ideally have certain knowledge about art history and have some sort of interest in new media art. They need to enter the virtual exhibition room of *Twilight of the Idols* to participate in the program. The tour route will be based on three essential questions: Q1. Can machines produce art as the artists create art by themselves?; Q2. Can machines assist the artists to create art?; Q3. Can machines create art without human artists' involvement? Each question will invite audiences to deep dive into two artists' works. At the end of the tour, the educator will organize a group discussion around the question - Can/will art gradually be replaced so that eventually it is overcome by the abolition of man?

**Materials:**

Each educator and audience needs a computer/laptop that connects to the Internet.

**Anti-Racist Principles:**

This public program supports two anti-racist principles: 1. Honor multiple narratives and diverse ways of knowing; 2. Prioritize people over objects, which were introduced in Keonna Hendrick's MLK Keynote 2020. Since the program is for audiences in different geographic locations, the first principle drives the gallery tour to customize the content for specific visitor groups and create a lab space for free choice of exploration to increase discourses around art rather than just using one method of integration. The second principle suggests the educators carefully think about how they talk about the people associated with the artwork and how they introduce the provenance of the work. It also encourages the learners to interpret the art a bit more freely to support them as they develop more mature interpretations in their artistic journey.

## Public Program Proposal

*Twilight of the Idols - Art and AI as Aesthetic Discourse in the Age of Trans- and Posthumanism*<sup>1</sup> was a group exhibition that took place at House of Art<sup>2</sup> from September 24, 2020, to October 1, 2020. The exhibition addressed a new epoch-making relationship between artists and machines (Pauly, 2020). To make the exhibition accessible to people who missed visiting the physical gallery space, House of Art invited audiences to visit the virtual edition of the exhibition from October 15, 2020. As in the real version, the remote visitors can move through the virtual exhibition rooms<sup>3</sup>. This proposal is suggesting House of Art to take a step further, which is launching a virtual gallery tour program of *Twilight of the Idols* exhibition. The Virtual Gallery Tour program will be able to let the exhibition reach more diverse audiences, and the program's model has the potential to be permanently implemented by the museum based on various benefits it could generate.

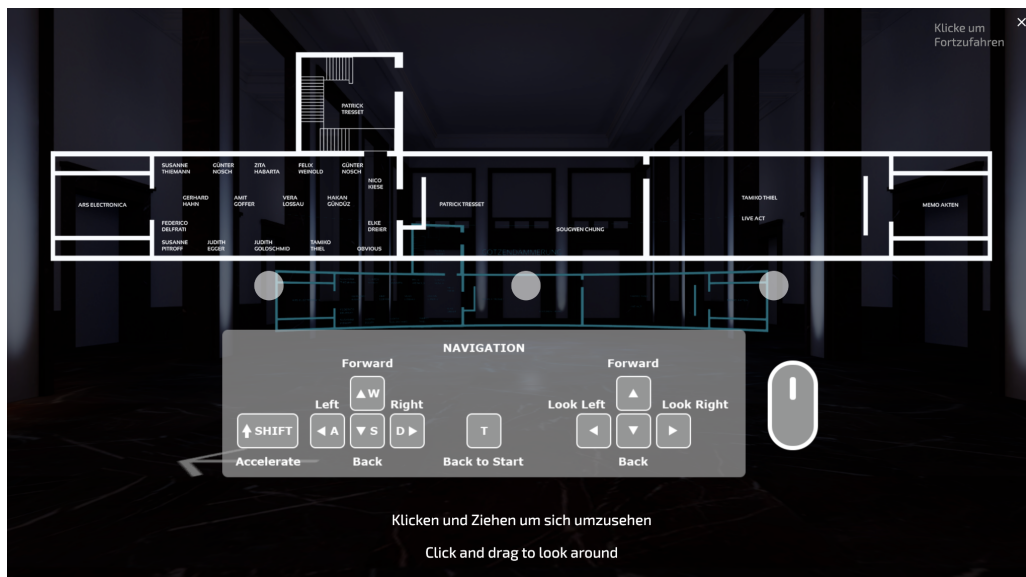


Figure 1. Visual exhibition lobby

<sup>1</sup> Exhibition page: <https://kuenstlerverbund.org/goetzendaemmerung.html>

<sup>2</sup> House of Art is a non-collecting modern and contemporary art museum in Munich, Germany. It is located at Prinzregentenstraße 1 at the southern edge of the Englischer Garten, Munich's largest park.

<sup>3</sup> Virtual exhibition room: <https://goetzendaemmerung.kuenstlerverbund-hausderkunst.de/galerie/>

Each of the virtual gallery tours in the public program will be approximately 1 - 1.5 hours long and offered in the language that the audiences speak in their geographic locations. To participate in the program, the only required material for each of the educators and audiences is a computer/laptop that connects to the Internet. After audiences register for the program, they will receive an email that contains detailed information about the program and a technical guide. Right before the tour, they will pick their avatars & adjust their audio connection. Then, they will gather in the virtual exhibition lobby and the educator will stand there welcoming them. The gallery tour will officially start with a community circle led by the educator. The educator will let audiences briefly introduce themselves and talk about what they would like to learn/experience in this tour. The purpose of starting this way is to break the ice and help the educator to customize the tour based on the participants' needs.

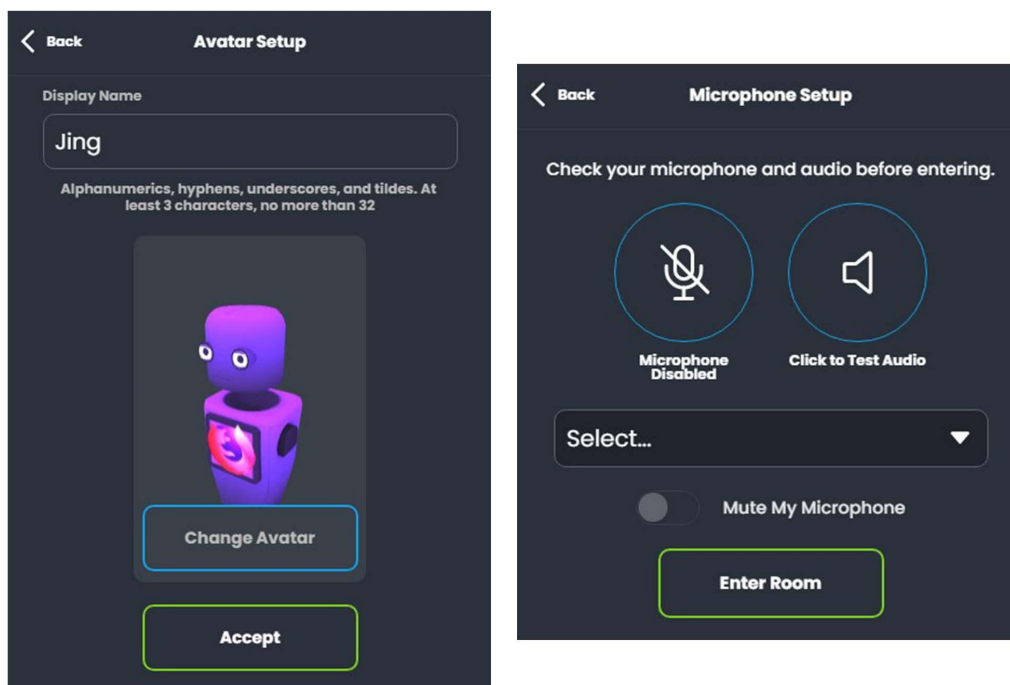


Figure 2. Avatar & microphone setup windows

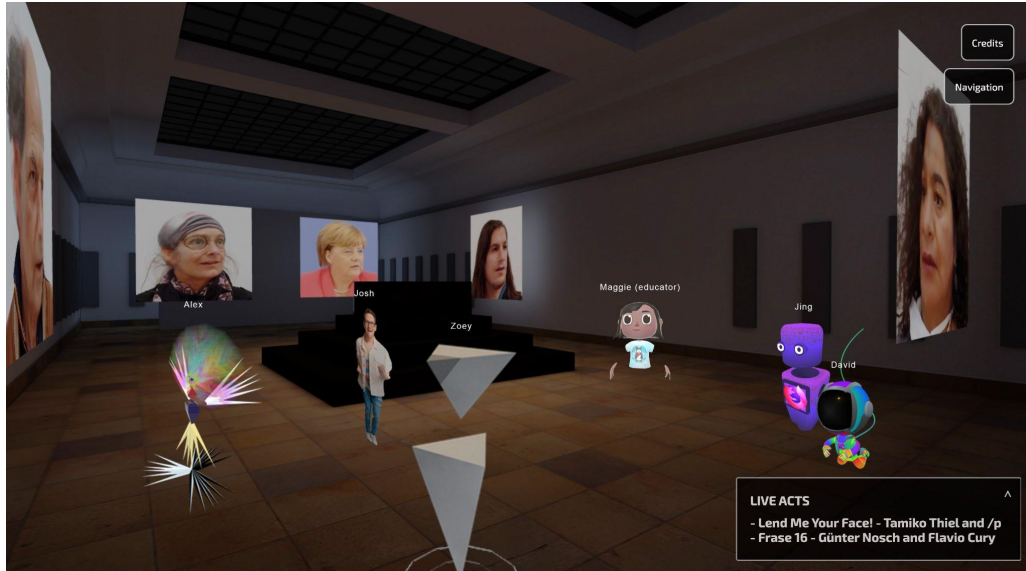


Figure 3. Virtual gallery tour mock-up

The *Twilight of the Idols* exhibition consists of twenty artists' works, which could make it hard for the audience to digest the information if the tour covers all the artworks in it. To give audiences an enriched visiting experience and also make the theme more understandable to them, the tour will still allow the visitors to walk through every section of the exhibition, but its focus will be narrowed to six artists' works. The route will be based on three following essential questions: **Q1. Can machines produce art as the artists create art by themselves?; Q2. Can machines assist the artists to create art?; Q3. Can machines create art without human artists' involvement?** Each question will invite audiences to deep dive into two artists' works. For question one, the educator will ask the participants to stand by Patrick Tresset's *Human Studies #2*<sup>4</sup> & *Human Studies #5* and Songwen Chung's *Flora Rearing Agriculture Network (F.R.A.N.)*<sup>5</sup>. By observing these three installations and hearing contextual information offered by the educator, audiences will get to know how the self-trained robots produce paintings in the style & technique of their artist owners. Afterword, Zita Habarta's "*ROD*

<sup>4</sup> See Object 1 in Appendix for detailed information

<sup>5</sup> See Object 2 in Appendix for detailed information

2”u.”ROD 4”<sup>6</sup> and Felix Weinold’s *Bartleby*<sup>7</sup> will be introduced to the visitors, leading them to think about the second essential question. In “ROD 2”u.”ROD 4”, Habarta experimented with her computer. Assisted by the computer, she achieved the result that opened up a new association, formal language and space of perception. While Habarta depended on the computer to help her create, Weinold made *Bartleby* to discuss the question of the mutual dependence of man and machine. Finally, carrying the third essential question, the educator will lead the audiences to experience Hakan Gündüz’s *Artifact*<sup>8</sup> and Tamiko Thiel & /p’s video installation - *Lend Me Your Face!*<sup>9</sup>, which all used AI to generate the visual works without the human artists’ involvement.

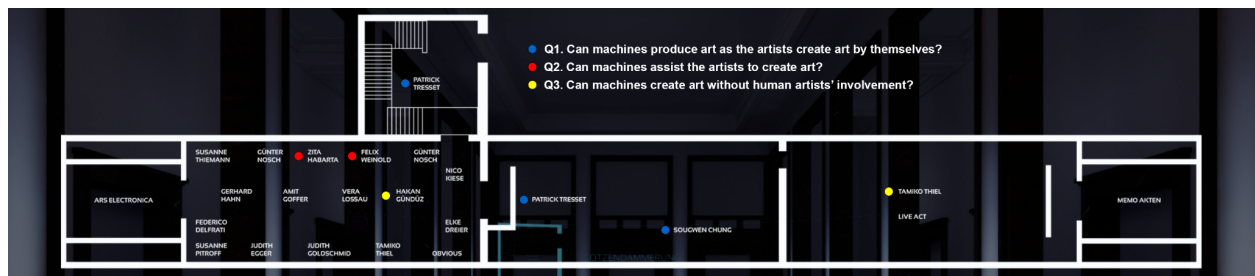


Figure 4. Virtual gallery tour route

The tour will end by a group discussion around the question - **Can/will art gradually be replaced so that eventually it is overcome by the abolition of man?** For this question, the curator mentioned in the exhibition introduction, “It assumes a permanent cohesion between man and art. Logically, the end of man would coincide with the end of art. This suggests that the trans-and post-human Cyborg is no longer in a position to notice art, to value art, to enjoy it or to gain knowledge from reflecting on it. And it assumes that the Cyborg has its own non-humanoid genetics, according to which it makes judgments (Karpát & Ludwig & Oßwald-Hoffmann, 2020).” What the exhibition showed us is another point of view, which is that art can free itself from its

<sup>6</sup> See Object 3 in Appendix for detailed information

<sup>7</sup> See Object 4 in Appendix for detailed information

<sup>8</sup> See Object 5 in Appendix for detailed information

<sup>9</sup> See Object 6 in Appendix for detailed information

humanoid connection and condense itself to a large, independent, creative whole. The purpose of inviting audiences to discuss this question at the end is to drive them to critically think about the assumed connection between man and art by using the example they saw in this exhibition.

After the virtual tour, the museum will send email survey<sup>10</sup> to the participants. The survey allows the audiences to discuss how they were viewing and engaging with the exhibition, how this enhances their experience, and should more exhibitions invest in becoming virtual galleries. The data collected by the surveys will be available to be visualized and analyzed by the museum's digital team afterward. It would be a critical step to measure the performance of this virtual program and a reference of improvements based on the understanding of the audiences.

Overall, this public program will try to create a gallery tour experience through a need-based lens. In a typical museum visit, the audiences regularly select settings to visit that afford them specific opportunities to satisfy specific needs (Falk & Dierking, 2012, p. 31). The gallery tour will be executed based on the understanding of the group's specific needs expressed by them during the beginning of the tour. The educator will provide visitors with a moderately customized but basically predictable set of experiences. Meanwhile, the educator will use Visual Thinking Strategy as the teaching method, which consists of three steps: invite audiences to look at the art of increasing complexity, ask them to respond to developmentally-based questions, and let them participate in group discussions that are carefully facilitated by the teacher. The purpose of it is to raise visitors' abilities in observing, speculating, aesthetic thinking, and reasoning on the basis of evidence (Visual Understanding in Education, 2009, p. 2). Finally, the gallery tour also believes that appropriate contextual information can foster more detailed perception and open up viewers' appreciation. It can change, guide, and develop the way people see, deepening and enriching their experience

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<sup>10</sup> Google forms will be the ideal format of the survey.

(Hubard, 2007, p. 18). Thus, based on the audiences' responses/questions, the educator will provide particular pieces of knowledge that are important to the understanding of a work.

This public program supports two anti-racist principles: 1. Honor multiple narratives and diverse ways of knowing; 2. Prioritize people over objects, which were introduced in Keonna Hendrick's MLK Keynote 2020. Since the program is for audiences in different geographic locations, the first principle drives the gallery tour to customize the content for specific visitor groups and create a lab space for free choice of exploration to increase discourses around art rather than just using one method of integration. The second principle suggests the educators carefully think about how they talk about the people associated with the artwork and how they introduce the provenance of the work. It also encourages the learners to interpret the art a bit more freely in order to support them as they develop more mature interpretations in their artistic journey.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of museums globally. Meanwhile, many institutions have taken advantage of the digitization and digital communication work done on existing collections i.e online collections, 360° tours, virtual museums, online publications, digital exhibitions to showcase them more effectively (Krishna, 2021). The digital transformation breaks the limit of museum physical space and enables the content to reach diverse audiences groups from different geographic locations. In this context, the model of this public program discussed in this proposal has the potential to be used permanently at the art institution. And, if it becomes a charged event, it can bring revenue to the institution. It might seem challenging to do, but it isn't that difficult. The 3D model of the virtual exhibition room is built based on the real gallery space. Thus, every time there is a new exhibition in the same physical space, there is no need to re-modeling the exhibition room, only the artworks in it. Apart from mimicking the real exhibition, virtual tours also can include artworks

that can't exhibit in physical space, such as artworks that break the physical law of gravity. Also, for the audiences, instead of reaching the destination on foot, they are able to teleport in the virtual space. Lastly, since the virtual tour doesn't attach to the gallery space anymore, the tour's timeline would be no longer limited by the exhibition dates. Even though the real exhibition has ended, as long as the virtual one is hosted on the museum website, the museum can continue to offer virtual tours to the public.

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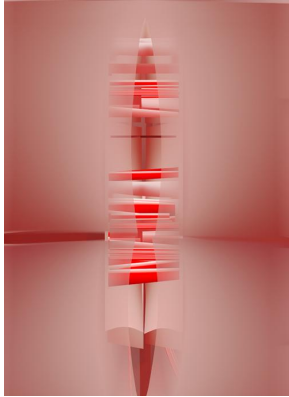
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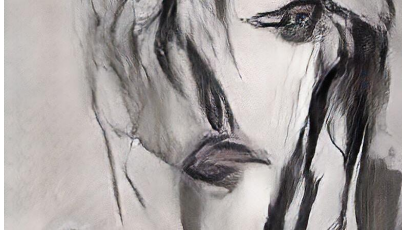
Object 3.  
Zita Habarta, "ROD 2"u."ROD 4"

In "Götzendämmerung", Zita Habarta shows two digital works ROD 2 and ROD 4, created in 2020/19, each 178 x 110 cm, as pigment prints on Hahnemühle Rag paper. The monochrome, seemingly organic-technical, spatial body fragments, visions are the result of many experiments on the computer creating digital building blocks, parts. Zita sees her new creations as a new way of seeing known or apparently familiar images that open up a new association, formal language, and space of perception. She has her artistic roots in drawing and plastic design. With the means of modern technology, she adds a new dimension to the ability. It turns the computer into an experimental tool and thus creates unique access to the omnipresent correlation between humans and technology.



Object 4.  
Felix Weinold, *Bartleby*

The installation *Bartleby* refers to a story by Herman Melville (1819–1891) from the year 1856, which tells of an office clerk who at first does his job diligently and reliably, but then increasingly refuses to work with the same answer over and over again: "I would prefer not to." The installation deals with the questions of the mutual dependence of man and machine and the consequences of possible attempts at autonomy by artificial intelligence. Does the machine serve the people, or does the person already serve the machine? And what if the machine refuses to meet the wishes of its creator? If Artificial Intelligence maybe because of its calculations comes to the conclusion that working with humans does not make sense?



Object 5.  
Hakan Gündüz, *Artifact*

*Artifact* is a real-time human-computer interactive artificial intelligence application, which creates unique oil painting visuals by detecting the basic emotional situations (fear, peace, happiness, misery, etc.) of visitors via their facial expressions. It aims to transition between emotional situations via producing visuals according to the facial expression.



Object 6.  
Tamiko Thiel and /p, *Lend Me Your Face!*

In *Lend Me Your Face!*, a neural network animates a single photo of each participating visitor's face to match "driving videos" of leading public figures.\* The deep fakes are displayed in large projections surrounding the public. The visitor is confronted with a very personal encounter of how the most intimate and yet public part of the self, the face and the emotions it expresses, can easily be manipulated and placed in contexts out of their control.