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What Makes Us HUMAN

An Art + Genomics Convergence

Exhibition showcases multifaceted approach of artists, humanists, and scientists working across disciplines to investigate art and genetics

Opening reception and launch on

November 12, 2020

12:00–1:00pm PST via Zoom – RSVP required

Whatmakesushuman.org

To coincide with the 20th anniversary of UC Santa Cruz posting the assembled human genome to the internet, the exhibition ***What Makes Us Human: An Art + Genomics Convergence*** assembles contributions from researchers at the cutting edge of their fields in the arts, the humanities and the sciences.

Reception November 12, 2020, 12:00–1:00pm: The launch will feature a tour of the virtual exhibition hub, website, and a panel discussion with artists **Angélica Dass** and **Gina Czarnecki** signing in from Spain and the UK, and **David Haussler**, Scientific Director of the Genomics Institute at UC Santa Cruz. Moderated by curator **Jennifer Parker**, UCSC Professor, with introductions by **Shelby Graham**, Sesnon Gallery Director.

This exhibition will showcase the multifaceted approach of artists, humanists, and scientists working across disciplines to investigate art and genetics. Spearheaded by OpenLab Collaborative Research Center in collaboration with the Mary Porter Sesnon Gallery in the Arts Division, UC Santa Cruz. This initiative is designed to establish a platform for researchers to collaborate and exchange ideas.

The unfolding pandemic has triggered an existential reckoning over our conceptions of place and human encounter. Twenty years after UC Santa Cruz posted the assembled human

genome to the internet, we find ourselves redefining and expanding genomics while masked and socially distanced. Simultaneously, the uprisings for Black lives and all silenced and underrepresented identities have brought visibility, urgency and profound pause.

What Makes Us Human takes the doors off the traditional gallery, imagining a space which transcends those walls. Visitors will see connections between diverse academic disciplines from unique and collaborative lenses of the arts, sciences, and humanities.

“*What Makes Us Human* features an impressive collection of diverse projects mashed together in one virtual space curated to mirror the multiplicity of art and life,” said UC Santa Cruz Professor of Art Jennifer Parker who curated the exhibition. “In some ways it is an attempt to de-silo academic programs and departments - to shake things up a bit and create new perspectives literally and figuratively - just as the pandemic has shifted our thinking and understanding of the world, this exhibition promotes a nuanced approach to *search* information and ideas *inside* the internet.”

Some of the inquiry conducted by these collaborators examines what it means to be something other than human, simultaneously helping reveal what makes us human. How do we talk about our humanness? Which of our taxonomies intersect? And how can (virtual) space facilitate more of these intersections? How are humans furthering creative, scientific, and scholarly research while responding to the pandemic in our institutions, in our bodies, in our environments and in our communities? How can researchers be alone together and work collectively -- questioning, testing, and collaborating during COVID to educate communities at the intersection of art, culture, science, and politics?

“I designed the exhibition to be immersive, to engulf and surround participants as a means to explore and browse ideas - like being lost in a library or antique store - you never know what you are going to find - the exhibition creates unique opportunities to navigate exciting new ideas and discoveries,” said Parker. This virtual exhibition will evolve over time to include additional participants. For more information, please visit: Whatmakesushuman.org

Collaborators:

A.M. Darke, Alexa Burrell, Amy Youngs, Angélica Dass, ASSIST Lab, Avital Meshi, Brad Necyk, Center for Public Philosophy, Danielle Siembieda, Dorothy Santos, Enrique Leal, the UC Santa Cruz Genomics Institute, Gina Czarnecki, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Jenny Reardon, Jessie Kendall-Bar, Karolina Karlic, OpenLab Collaborative Research Center, UC Santa Barbara Gaucho OpenLab Initiative, Paloma Medina, Phylum (Carlos Castellanos, Johnny DiBlasi, Bello Bello), The Algae Society, The Kenneth S. Norris Center for Natural History, UCSC Astrobiology, UCSC Earth Futures Initiatives, UCSC Institute of the Arts and Sciences, Zac Zimmer, Zach Corse

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