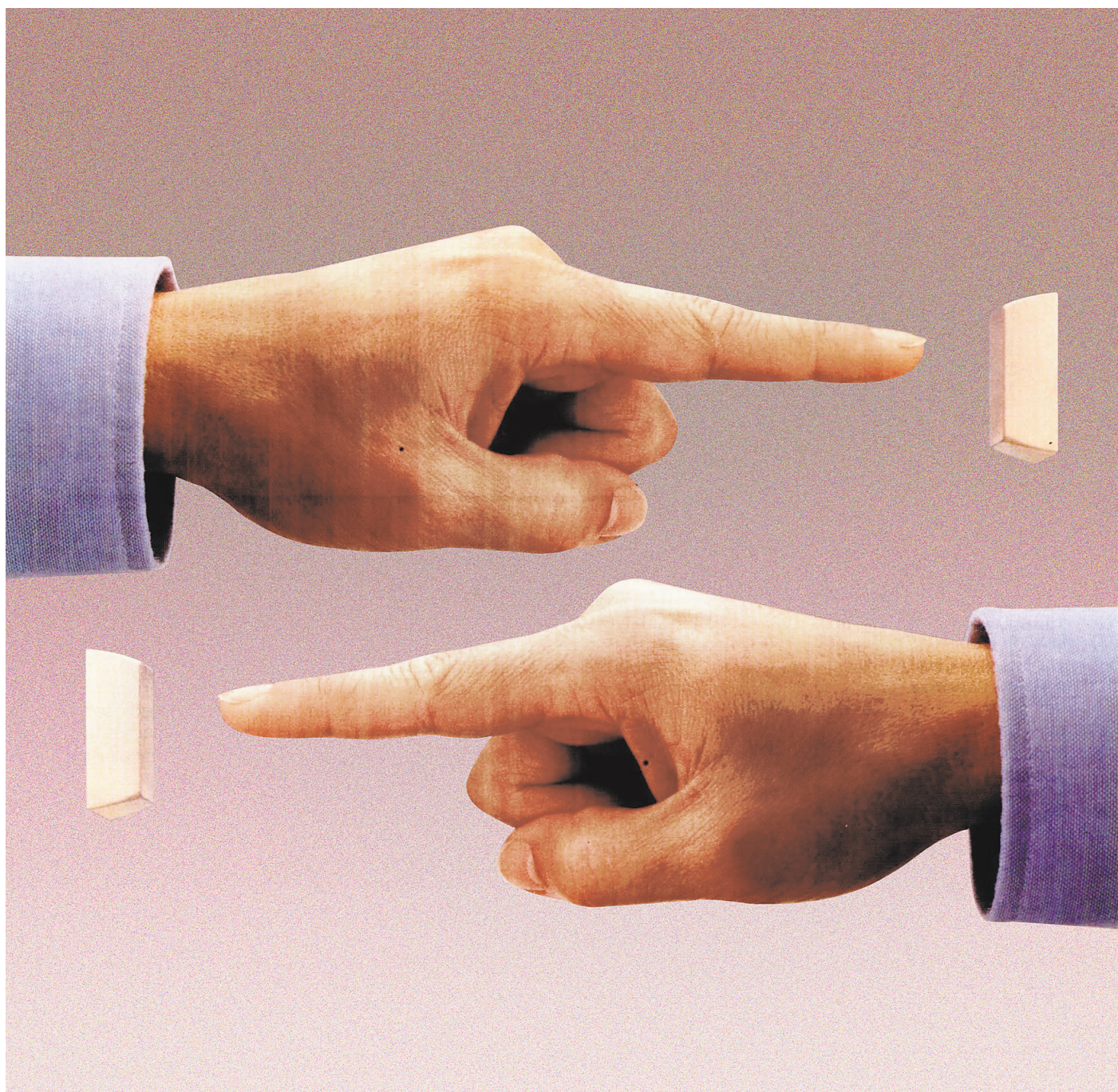




Ever Gold Projects photos

Internet Archive artist in residence Jenny Odell's "Don't Press the Button" (2017) is part of the Ever Gold Projects show.

ART REVIEW

Virtual archive treasures

Cache of vintage Web pages inspires creation of contemporary works

By Charles Desmarais

If you are a researcher, a classic film aficionado, a journalist or an Internet civil libertarian, you have probably benefitted from the work of the Internet Archive, based in San Francisco. With the digital equivalent of 10 billion books stored — in duplicate — and cataloged, the nonprofit, 21-year-old library is accessed by several million people daily from around the world.

The Internet Archive's 2017 Artist in Residence Exhibition:

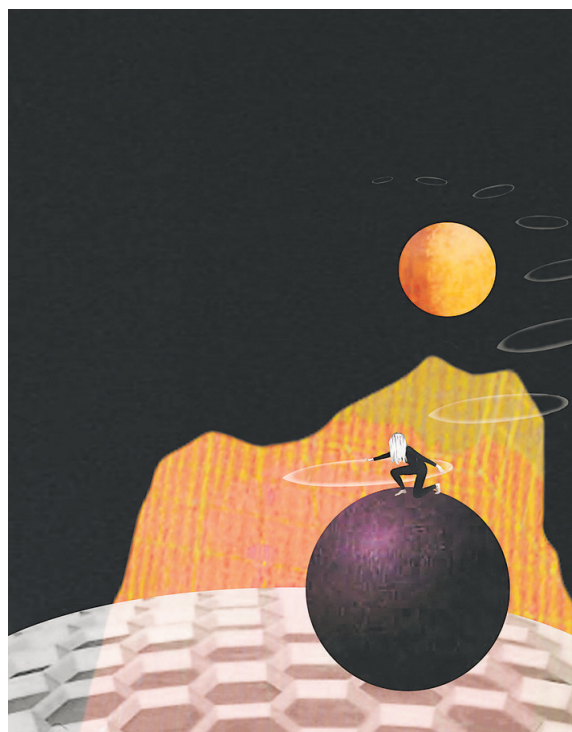
Noon-5 p.m., Wednesdays-Saturdays. Through Aug. 26. Free. Ever Gold Projects, 1275 Minnesota St. (Suite 104), S.F. (415) 254-1573. <http://evergoldprojects.com>

must intentionally visit. That's why I was intrigued to learn that the archive has instituted an artists-in-residence program, where original, contemporary works are being created out of heaps of history.

Some of those products are currently being presented by the gallery Ever Gold Projects in a show with the uninspired title, "The Internet Archive's 2017 Artist in Residence Exhibition." It runs through Aug. 26.

The archive's legendary Wayback Machine allows anyone, for free, to call up any of 302 billion Web pages that have been saved over time — pages that might have been modified, routinely or nefariously, and would otherwise exist nowhere else. (The archive has lately been in the news as the site that posted in January a draft report on global warming that the New York Times reported on last week as a supposed scoop.)

For all its usefulness, however, the Internet Archive mostly stores materials created by others, and it is a virtual place one



Ever Gold Projects

"A New Legend Begins" (2017), by Laura Hyunjee Kim, is also part of the exhibition.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Artwork created from virtual archive

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The compact exhibition is best thought of as a kind of interim research report, rather than as a polished final unveiling. Just the thing for an August presentation, a time when most private galleries, if they don't close entirely, introduce emerging artists or try out new ideas.

Three Bay Area artists were selected for this first year of the program. They spent time at the archive headquarters in San Francisco's Richmond District, and also accessed archive resources from their studios.

Video, a medium akin to sketching for many digitally savvy artists, abounds in the exhibition. All but one work are presented on wall-hung monitors with earphones — never the best viewer experience, but these are blessedly short.

The exception is a theater-style projection of "HFWM: The Exploration" (all new works in the show are dated 2017) by Laura Hyunhee Kim. The work is "based on audiovisual ephemera published in the years 1987 to 1991," a handout tells us — around the time of the artist's birth, in other words. Kim's conjured Hyper Future Wave Machine owes much to videos by early '80s bands like the B-52s and Devo — and, perhaps through them, to decades-earlier films by Bruce Conner. But there's a pleasant New Wave feeling to it that feels right as a retelling of



Ever Gold Projects

"Browser History (Twitter)" (2017), clay tablet, by Jeremiah Jenkins.

the myth of a cyberparadise.

Jeremiah Jenkins uses video to document both the sources and the final disposition of a series of clay tablets he created. They are rough-hewn reproductions of Web pages — earthenware devolutions of glassy, glowing, virtual images. Each — the original and the reproduction — has its own kind of fragility, its own claim

to permanence.

Jenkins boxed sets of his plates into crates he buried at sites throughout California. If undisturbed, they will likely outlast their models by millenia — though it is likely that anyone who could make sense of the information impressed upon them would have other, more complete original sources available to them.

Of the three artists, Jenny Odell made the most of her residency. She is clearly taken with the surreal sensibility illustrators and advertisers brought to early conceptions of computer technology — indeed, she calls her series of 32 appropriated pictures from the 1970s and '80s "Neo-Surreal."

She went the next step, though, by searching out the

📺 To see an original work of video art by Jenny Odell, "Polly Returns" (2017), available exclusively through The Chronicle for a limited time: <https://vimeo.com/229033673/dcd03391a0>

people who concocted such imagery. Her brief email interviews with Robert Tinney, who painted more than 100 oddball cover images for the magazine Byte, and Shelly Lake, an early computer animation specialist, are compiled and presented as limited-edition books. They are models of simplicity, brevity and substance.

Odell revives Lake's three-minute animation, a six-year effort called "Polly Gone" (1988), which lampoons the future by drawing upon early concepts of the idea of "modern."

Odell's own tribute to "Polly Gone" is her "Polly Returns" (see the box for an Internet link, available for a limited time exclusively to Chronicle readers). "Polly Returns" is a send-up of listicle journalism, from "Two Ways to Boost Social Security Benefits" to "16 Ways to Manage Your Anger" — though you might never need the latter if you would only employ the "Five Ways to Smell Like the Beach."

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