

Control

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Nate

Boyce:

Polyscroll

January 23 – April 5, 2015

ybca

Shape Shifters

Ceci Moss

The title for San Francisco artist Nate Boyce's first museum solo presentation, *Polyscroll*, suggests an unrestricted, free movement on the part of both the viewer and the art object. It implies navigation that is omnidirectional, where the image on the screen, or the object in space, can be positioned and observed in multiple ways.

Released from the usual scrolling motion in which the user may move only up or down through lines of code or content in a smartphone application, *Polyscroll* puts forth something more open-ended, variable, and adaptable. Animation, sculpture, and environment become pliable material for an experience that sets the viewer adrift.

The phenomenological effect of Boyce's artworks in many ways relates back to the artist's early interest in the moving image. Structuralist filmmakers such as Paul Sharits, who explored the basic properties of film and its relationship to affect, are touchstones for his practice. Sharits used techniques such as strobing, looping, and repetition to examine film's formal characteristics and its visceral hold on the viewer, particularly in the context of the theater. By creating a scenario or space for the viewer to experientially occupy through the constraints

of the medium, Boyce takes the formal concerns present in structuralist filmmaking and extends them to CGI and sculpture. Works such as *Polyscroll (daylight)* call attention to the command a large flatscreen has on its surroundings, while the pace and flow of the animation mimics the touch screen, drawing the viewer in. The screen no longer recedes from the moving image, but is forefronted as surface and structure. Boyce's process for creating works such as this distills the moving image into its perception-bending qualities,

becoming a wrap and a means for sculpture. He creates his sculptures by hand, which he shoots in a green-screen box and imports into 3D software programs like Maya. He then manipulates the footage and uses it as a basis for 3D prints, sculptural designs, and animations. Moving images become forms, and

forms become moving images—not simulacra of physical objects, but something other.

The uncanny quality of Boyce's work relates to his reliance on computer-generated imagery. In her writings on the morphing special effect used to seamlessly transition digital images into one another, the media theorist Vivian Sobchack describes the eerie quality of the morph as a "shape shifting formlessness that devours all forms."¹ Sobchack argues that while film is a sequential medium beset by questions of linearity (think of techniques such as the cut, dissolve, or long take), the digital morph is endlessly malleable and temporally reversible. This versatility is characteristic of computer graphics in general, where the image is not created through the sequential organization of a filmstrip but rather through the manipulation of multiple data points. Sobchack reads the tendency for computer graphics, as evidenced in the digital morph, to assert an equivalent status to all elements as they are transformed as indicative of a dissolution of boundaries between ontological categories such as animate and inanimate, human and animal, in our times. Shape shifting produces anxiety while also revealing new ways of being. In a similar vein, Boyce collapses textures and effects in his work, creating a visual vocabulary that is not legible as artificial or natural but as a morph, a mutation itself.

While computer-generated imagery allows Boyce tremendous versatility, he is also attentive to the role of light in his compositions, both in the gallery and on the screen. Older works in the exhibition, such as *Untitled (2014)* and *Untitled (2014)*, use feedback from analog



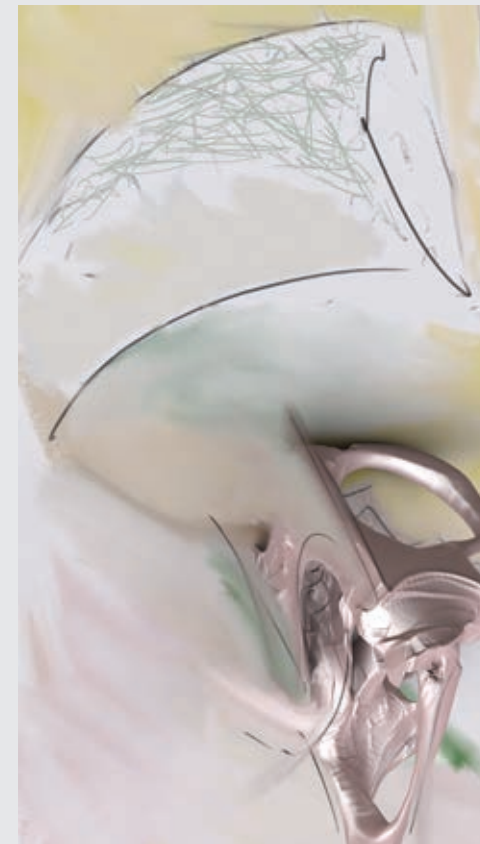
Nate Boyce, *Polyscroll II*, 2014
HD video, 5 min.
Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

video hardware such as video mixers and color processors to bend the light within simple geometric compositions composed through those tools. Light again is a reference in newer works such as *Polyscroll (daylight)*, where light settings within computer imaging software are skillfully manipulated by the artist.

Boyce very intentionally employs a polychromatic color palette for these animations to mimic the hues found in painting as well as the many frequencies of light. He explores how the simulation of color and light in 3D space connects to long-standing ideas regarding artists' attempts to represent reality within the history of art. His works draw a parallel between artists' renderings and CGI renderings, where

software translates a computer-generated model into a final image. In both cases, a pictorial illusion is achieved through the use of viewpoint, geometry, texture, et cetera. But Boyce is not trying to achieve a close representation of reality. Rather, he emphasizes the affective dimension and intensity of "paint" on a "canvas" through incremental iterations. Layers of simulated color and texture become a means, or, as the artist puts it, "Each painting begins with a drawing or a linear motif that becomes an initial scaffold for the fleshy viscous application of color that gets carved back into the white ground."

Gestural marks, handmade and mediated, appear throughout *Polyscroll*, an aspect that underscores the human trace within computerized simulation. Objects, moving images, and environment take shape from an algorithmic approximation informed by a human imprint, making our place within the ubiquity of simulation uncomfortably tangible.



Nate Boyce, *Polyscroll (daylight)*, 2014
HD video, 5 min.
Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

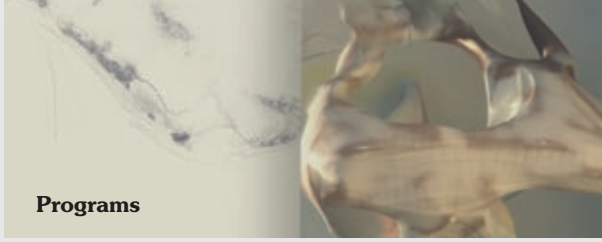
Artist Bio

Nate Boyce was born in 1982 in Kansas City, Missouri, and currently lives and works in San Francisco. He earned a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute in 2006. He has had solo exhibitions at Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha (2012); San Francisco Film Society in San Francisco (2012); Altman Siegel Gallery in San Francisco (2012); IMO Projects in Copenhagen (2012); Noma Gallery in San Francisco (2010); and Partisan Gallery in San Francisco (2009). He has been included in group exhibitions internationally and nationally such as *Equations of Sight-Similarity* at On Stellar Rays in New York City (2014); *Rematerialized* at New Galerie U.S. in New York (2013); *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things* at Nottingham Contemporary in Nottingham, UK

(2013); *The Extension* at Vilma Gold, London (2011); *California Biennial* at the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA (2010); and *Stray Alchemists Sessions* at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2008). Boyce is also actively involved in the experimental music scene, collaborating and touring with musical acts including Matmos and Oneohtrix Point Never with whom he has performed at venues such as the Museum of Modern Art, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Barbican, London; Royal Festival Hall, London; and The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, among others. He has been an artist in residence at Headlands Center for the Arts, the Millay Colony for the Arts, and the Exploratorium.

Above: Nate Boyce, *Suspension Screen (Casper Copper)*, 2014
Powder coated aluminum, polyjet 3D print, urethane clear coat, epoxy
Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

¹ Vivian Sobchack, "Introduction," in *Meta Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000), 8.



Programs

Nate Boyce, *Polyscroll (daylight)*, 2014
HD video, 5 min.
Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

Opening Reception

Fri, Jan 23, 2015 6–8 PM

Youth Arts Lounge & Upstairs galleries
Free with gallery admission

Celebrate the opening of Nate Boyce's solo exhibition *Polyscroll*, part of the ongoing exhibition series *Control: Technology in Culture*.

YBCA:You Exclusive Nate Boyce: Polyscroll Reading Group

Tue, Mar 3, 2015, 6 PM

Second Floor Hub
YBCA:You Free w/ RSVF

For this event, YBCA:You members will read and discuss essays on sculpture by artist Charles Ray and art historian Michael Fried before a short tour of the exhibition lead by YBCA's Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, Ceci Moss.

YBCA:You Exclusives are FREE for YBCA:You members. Not a member of YBCA:You? Call 415.978.2787 or visit ybca.org/you to sign up!

San Francisco Cinematheque presents: Polyscroll Screening Curated by Nate Boyce

Tue, Mar 3, 2015, 7–8 PM

YBCA Screening Room
Free w/ RSVP

In conjunction with his solo exhibition, artist Nate Boyce will curate a screening of short films that have influenced his practice, ranging from the structuralist film of Paul Sharits to experimental animation by Robert Breer, and many others. The artist will provide an introduction and context to the works screened. This event is a co-production with the San Francisco Cinematheque. sfcinematheque.org

About YBCA

Founded in 1993 out of an expressed need for an accessible, high profile arts center devoted to contemporary art of all genres, YBCA presents contemporary art from the Bay Area and around the world that reflects the profound issues and ideas of our time, expands the boundaries of artistic practice, and celebrates the diversity of human experience and expression. YBCA is an integrated site for creative endeavor; a unique fusion of art, innovation, and ideas in a social environment. It serves as a curated platform for the dynamic convergence of artists, inventors, thinkers, producers, and the community, working together to sustain multiple levels of participation, propel short-and long-term social change, and ensure contemporary arts and living artists are vital to our society. YBCA's artistic

YBCA Young Artists at Work (YAAW) Exhibition Production Workshop

Thu, Mar 12, 2015

Assistant Curator of Visual Arts Ceci Moss and Chief Preparator Tesar Freeman will lead a workshop reviewing the ins and outs of exhibition planning and design for members of YBCA's YAAW program. Young artists will receive professional training on all facets of exhibition production, from an artist's original proposal to the final realization of an exhibition, in preparation for their year-end exhibition at YBCA on Friday April 17th in the Forum and Front Door Gallery.

The YBCA Young Artists at Work (YAAW) program is a paid, year-long, multidisciplinary arts-as-activism residency for Bay Area high school aged youth at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. The YAAW program is designed for young people who are interested in exploring the most pressing issues of our time while expanding their artistic craft, connecting with local communities and the contemporary art world. Learn more at youngartistsatwork.tumblr.com.

Exhibition Credits

YBCA Exhibitions 14-15 are made possible in part by Mike Wilkins and Sheila Duignan, Meridee Moore and Kevin King, the Creative Ventures Council, and members of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

YBCA Programs 14-15 are made possible in part by Adobe and Gaia Fund.

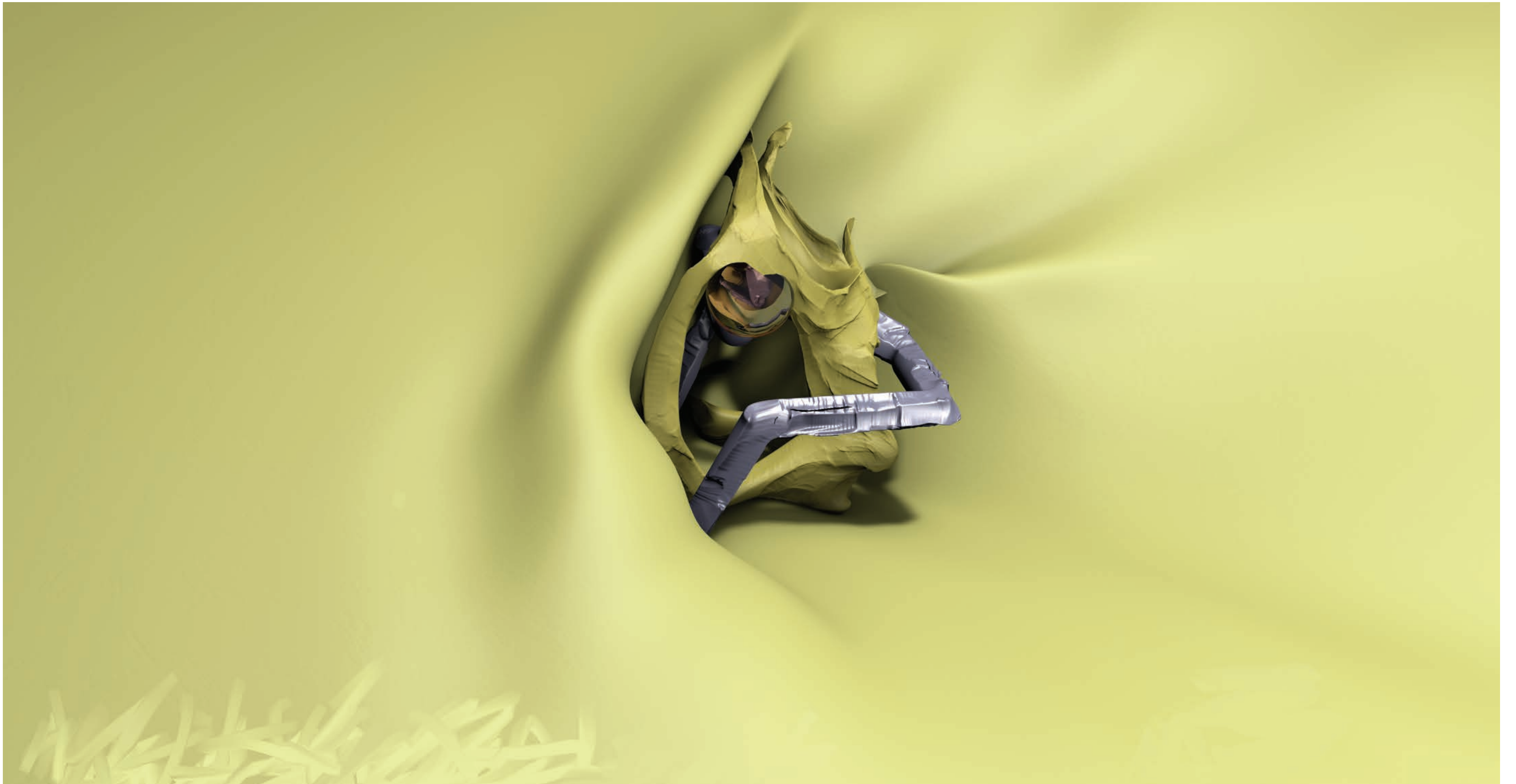
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts is grateful to the City of San Francisco for its ongoing support.

Design by Nicole Ginelli.

offerings include a year-round exhibition program, two annual performance series, a celebrated year-round art film program, a community rentals program making YBCA performance spaces available to Bay Area performing arts organizations at affordable rates, and award-winning community engagement programming. Distinguished by its widespread support of local, national, and international artists in the performing, visual, and media arts, YBCA is also recognized for its innovative approach to audience-centered programs and for its partnerships with other arts and community organizations. Through its programming, YBCA invites exploration and risk-taking, quiet reflection, and active engagement.



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Nate Boyce
Polyscroll III, 2014
HD video, 5 min.

Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco

**About Control:
Technology In Culture**

Control: Technology in Culture, curated by Ceci Moss, Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, is Yerba Buena Center for the Arts's ongoing series of exhibitions showcasing work by emerging and mid-career artists who examine the social, cultural, and experiential implications of technology. The series seeks to prompt timely questions about the profound and far-reaching influence of technology in our daily lives by focusing on artists whose work spans a multitude of disciplines and relates to a diverse set of issues, including architecture, acoustics, psychology, labor, consumerism, the environment, and the military.

The term "control" refers to philosopher Gilles Deleuze's theory that, as a result of the ever-increasing role of information technology, Michel Foucault's "disciplinary society" of the 20th century has given way to a "control society" in the 21st century. In contrast to discipline, which *molds* the individual through confinement in factories, prisons, and schools, control is diffuse, adaptable, and ubiquitous, *modulating* rather than molding the individual.