

Electronic Superhighway: Exploring what technology has done for art

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 **COMMENTS**

An exhibition of over 60 artists exploring the impact of technology on art has opened at the Whitechapel Gallery.

Electronic Superhighway (2016-1966) features multimedia works, paintings and drawings showing the impact of computers and the Internet on artists from the mid-1960s to the present day.

Artist Zach Blas displays a “Queer Technologies” collection, which includes the Engendering Gender Changer, which seeks to challenge the assumption that technology should be gendered male or female.

Blas said: “Why are plugs gendered male and female based on pinhole configuration? This means that when a plug works, a pin has to go into a hole, so that means electrical connectivity is understood through the metaphor of heterosexual intercourse.

“Queer Technologies was really inspired and influenced by the legacies of tactical media, hactivism and cyber feminism.”

Omar Kholeif, the curator of Electronic Superhighway, said: “The one thing that I would say about this exhibition is that it is a history that is incredibly fluid and one that is continually evolving.

“The strategies that artists use change so dramatically based not only on technology that is available, but also on what artists can imagine.”

Electronic Superhighway, a term originally coined by South Korean video artist Nam June Paik in 1974, explores the impact of technology in reverse chronological order as the exhibition travels back in time.

Artist John Thomson exhibits his personalised karaoke machine that displays lyrics inspired by bogus emails.

Thomson said: “They come from unsolicited emails that we have received over the years, usually trying to extort money from us.

“If I am absolutely honest, I think the creative base that London is globally famous for, is thinning because it is such an expensive place to live. So you are actually finding a lot of young artists moving out and there is a term for it in the art world: post-London.”

Electronic Superhighway (2016-1966) is open until 15 May 2016.

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