

REVERSE ENGINEERING

Technology is never given; it's made. The artists in this gallery actively explore the materials and construction behind different technologies. They highlight the physical infrastructures that drive machines and networks, examining how these systems came to be, how they work, and how they can be undone.

In other words, the artworks shown here all engage engineering—whether the engineering of the body and identity, video game engines and machine learning, 3-D graphics and 3-D printing, rapid prototyping and structural engineering, or surveillance systems and the internet of things. They deploy and reshape a wide array of materials and components: glass, plastic, plasma, copper circuit boards, servers, LEDs.

Taking apart tools and techniques, these artists question the technologies we use—and how technologies use us in turn.

STRANGER THINGS

Technology is transformation—the conversion of matter into energy, data into things, the real into the virtual and back again. Such shifts become visible in the artworks displayed here. Holograms startlingly oscillate between two and three dimensions. Digital renderings simulate material phenomena like shape, scale, and volume, wresting phantom pictures from solid bodies. Yet no matter how fugitive or ephemeral, all the technologies that produced these works rely on physical substances and devices that typically go unremarked or are taken for granted.

By making plain the material dimensions of modern technology—whether the silicon in the semiconductors and transducers behind all digital media, or the ordinary plastics that we see here 3-D–printed or vacuum-formed, laser-sintered or extruded—these artists make technology strange. They don't accept technology as it is but confront what it does, mounting powerful critiques of the military-industrial complex, social networks, and mass surveillance. But their works are also speculative, posing technology as a realm of possibility, even wonder—a realm of the unprecedented and unforeseen.