Arts in the digital age online forum

The arts in the digital age forum is commissioned by the British Council in Jordan and curated by FutureEverything.

21 to 23 February 2022
18.00 to 20.30 (Jordan) and 16.00 to 18.30 (UK)

www.britishcouncil.jo
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Introduction

Artists have experimented with computers, computational processes and digital technologies for many decades now.

In recent years we have seen technology taking an ever more prominent role within the arts, from artificial intelligence and machine learning, mixed realities, gaming environments to blockchain and NFTs. In their turn, artists are also making an impact in the tech sector engaging with digital technologies in creative, playful and experimental ways.

And as society finds it almost impossible to live without the aid of digital devices, computing, or the internet, artists are also responding in critical ways to how these systems are making an impact in our lives, culture and the world.
In this three-day exchange forum, we are exploring how artists use digital technologies in creative and critical ways, how audiences engage with digital artworks, what the opportunities and challenges are for practitioners today and in the future, and the role of curators and art institutions in engaging with, commissioning and presenting digital art. Bringing together art professionals from the UK and Jordan we will share groundbreaking new work, digital art definitions, case studies and ways of working with arts and digital, but we will also enable artistic development opportunities and art-technology sector collaborations.

The programme offers participating artists opportunities to connect, get inspired by leading creative practitioners, and a preview into the British Council in Jordan’s commissioned research into the use of digital technology in the creative scene in Jordan. Conducted by artmejo, the digital platform promoting art and culture in the Arab world, the research - including conversations with local arts practitioners and creatives across all art forms as well as those working in multi-disciplinary arts - will present findings on the local understanding of digital art and to what extent actors in the arts and culture sector use digital technology.

Forum participants will get a chance to hear more about the findings and how this research project will inform the future plans of the British Council in Jordan’s arts programme in building a lasting benefit to the Jordanian arts and cultural sector through evidence-based programming that builds mutually beneficial partnerships and exchanges with the UK cultural sector.

The Forum is suitable for artists, cultural practitioners and art professionals with an interest in digital art and culture, including artistic practices and the digital art scene in Jordan.

Book a place by visiting the FutureEverything website.
Day 1 - Monday 21 February

18.00 (EET) Arts in the digital age - welcome note and forum overview including brief presentation by Irini Papadimitriou, Creative Director, FutureEverything
The British Council Jordan and FutureEverything

18.15 Setting the scene: Arts in the digital age - Research mapping of Jordan
Speakers: Hind Joucka (founder artmejo)
A sneak preview of the British Council in Jordan’s newly commissioned research report conducted by artmejo, the digital platform promoting art and culture in the Arab world. Find out how digital technology has been impacting artistic and creative practices in Jordan, its key stakeholders and domains, the opportunities in building audiences and what the future holds.

18.45 Digital art and why it matters
Speakers: Semiconductor and Kit Monkman (KMA)
Is technology impacting creative outputs and how? Are artistic practices having an influence in technology and science sectors? Leading practitioners share ways of working with digital technologies and interdisciplinary approaches, and why digital art matters. From artistic practices that entangle with live data, virtual worlds, artificial intelligence and the internet, what are the challenges and opportunities for digital art practices and how do curators and art institutions respond?

19.45 [Digital] Transmissions - Professional exchange session
Session facilitators: Vicky Clarke (Associate Artist, FutureEverything)
Join fellow artists and creative professionals in a facilitated exchange session, focus groups and peer review that aims to share best practices, as well as support and advice working with digital technologies. Digital art practices often involve multiple skills and teams, and access to specialist equipment and production budgets that can be inaccessible to many artists or challenging. This session will enable participants to ask questions, get practical tips and advice on working with digital, share learnings and insights, and discuss needs and challenges.

20.45 Day 1 closing note and briefing for Day 2
The British Council Jordan and FutureEverything
Day 2 - Tuesday 22 February

18.00 (EET) Day 2 welcome note and programme outline
The British Council Jordan and FutureEverything

18.05 What the NFT?
Speakers: Julie Freeman and Matthew Plummer-Fernández

While the art world went on a standstill during a global pandemic, NFTs skyrocketed. When global traditional art market sales fell, NFT sales suddenly boomed, and many artists excluded from mainstream art markets found a way to sell their work. Are NFTs transforming the art world and impacting the way we create, sell, buy or experience art, or are we witnessing a short-lived trend?

Join artists Julie Freeman and Matthew Plummer-Fernández sharing their experiences with NFTs and demystifying minting, marketplaces, as well as opportunities, challenges and risks.

18.50 Curating digital art
Speakers: Hannah Redler Hawes (Curator, Director, Data as Culture Art Programme, Open Data Institute), Tom Higham (Creative Director, York Mediale) and Khaldoun Hijazin (Director, Art and Cultural Programs, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts)

How are curators and art institutions responding to digital art practices? How can they be equipped to support, commission, produce, display, acquire, maintain and preserve digital art? And how can they adapt to stay relevant, reach younger, tech-savvy audiences and respond to changes, and emerging technologies adopted by artists today and in the future? Embracing digital art can be challenging for many museums and galleries, especially if there is limited support, knowledge and technical expertise, however as we have seen in recent years, digital art spaces, experiences and exhibitions are attracting a lot of interest and growing audiences receptive to new art mediums. Artists engaging with digital technologies can create new and critical ways through which we see the world and understand contemporary (technological) society.

Join this panel of experts and museum/gallery professionals as they discuss exhibiting, commissioning, acquiring digital art and supporting artists, as well as opportunities for museums and galleries to present multi sensory experiences, interdisciplinary work and connect with new audiences.

19.40 Day 2 closing note and briefing for Day 3
The British Council Jordan and FutureEverything
Forum programme and schedule (Masterclass)

20.20 - 21.50 (EET) Digital Transformation Limited number masterclass

Led by: Alex May with FutureEverything, the British Council and Hind Joucka (artmejo)

An opportunity for a limited number of participants to take part in an artist-led creative masterclass focussing on topics such as getting started with digital technologies, artistic development tools for creative practitioners interested in digital and approaches for making art using digital and electronic media. During the session, participants will also have a chance to explore how to start with collaborations, exhibition and commissioning opportunities, and selling work. The session will present both international and local contexts.

The masterclass is suitable for emerging artists and creative practitioners in Jordan with an interest in digital media.

If you are interested in attending the masterclass then register [HERE](#) to take part (numbers are limited).
Day 3 - Wednesday 23 February

18.00 (EET) Day 3 welcome note and programme outline
The British Council Jordan and FutureEverything

18.05 Digital art for all?
Speakers: Louise Hargreaves (Abandon Normal Devices), May Abdalla (Anagram) and Eddie Hasweh

Digital technologies can enable cultural organisations and artists to reach audiences in unconventional ways and create immersive experiences, and new engagement opportunities. They also have potential in attracting new, younger audiences, enabling collaboration and playfulness, but also critical thinking and new perspectives engaging with artefacts and environments.

Technology can act as a marketing tool, a conversation starter, sometimes also an attention-grabber that could nonetheless lead to deeper and meaningful engagement.

This session brings together leading art practitioners and experts sharing case studies of digital art practices and experimental work that creates outstanding audience experiences, as well as examples of engaging with audiences with immersive, multisensory, interactive, and socially engaged experiences (online and physical).

19.05 What happens to art during a pandemic
Speakers: Rachel Gadsden, Andrei Snobar and Suha Lallas

The past couple of years, as the pandemic hit us, the arts turned to the internet to continue activity and pre-pandemic operations, and keep connected to their audiences.

Although it’s well known that art institutions and artists have been active and creating online long before the pandemic, with ongoing lockdowns and restrictions for two years now, the internet presented an opportunity to suddenly move the whole art world online, from exhibitions, performances, screenings and talks to commercial art fairs and sales.

With an increase of art activity and digital spaces online and a focus on hybrid ways of working - and if the internet is where one can find work by most artists - what is the impact on artistic practices and what does the future hold for traditional art spaces and experiences?

Break (5 minutes)

20.00 Better together? Partnerships in art and technology
Speakers: Anna Dumitriu and Raya Sharbain (Jordan Open Source Association)

Art can play a significant role in helping us see the bigger picture, expand our horizons, and interrogate the world and society. When art is taken outside art domains and being part of wider conversations and other layers of society, it can become a powerful tool and catalyst for change. Partnerships and interdisciplinary collaborations are vital in opening up new possibilities and ways of thinking. But what makes art and technology partnerships or collaborations work? What are the benefits for bringing together people from different disciplines and sectors and what could the potential challenges be?

This session explores partnership and collaboration models by sharing case studies in the UK and Jordan, as well as learnings and lessons for successful future arts and tech collaborations.

20.40 Forum closing note and next steps
The British Council Jordan

Please note, as we have a mixture of UK and Jordan speakers the forum conversations will be conducted in English, however if you require Arabic translation then please contact info@futureeverything with a request and we will accommodate you.

Remember, to attend this event you must register. Book a place by visiting the FutureEverything website.
Facilitators and speakers

**Title:** Creative Director at FutureEverything  
**Short Bio:** Irini Papadimitriou is a curator and currently Creative Director at FutureEverything. She was previously Digital Programmes Manager at the V&A and Head of New Media Arts Development at Watermans.

Irini is a co-founder of Maker Assembly, a critical gathering about maker culture, an Industry Advisory Group member for SODA (School of Digital Arts) at Manchester Metropolitan University, and an Advisory Board member for ONX Studio, a new major collaboration between Onassis USA and New Museum’s cultural incubator NEW INC.

She has been a recipient of curatorial research programmes including MOBIUS (Finnish Institute), Art Fund, Mondriaan Fonds and the British Council, and has served as a jury member for Prix Ars Electronica, D&AD Awards, Lumen Prize, EU STARTS and ACM Siggraph.

**Name:** Irini Mirena Papadimitriou  
**Link:** [https://futureeverything.org/people/irini-papadimitriou/](https://futureeverything.org/people/irini-papadimitriou/)  
**Twitter:** @irini_mirena

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**Title:** Founder of Artmejo  
**Short Bio:** Hind Joucka is the founder of the platform artmejo that works with local emerging artists and covers the art and culture scene in the Arab region. She merges her love for writing with her appreciation for art. She is currently continuing her masters in Arts & Culture Management at Rome Business School.

artmejo’s work focuses on providing Art Consultation & Curation services to businesses, galleries and individuals. Our team consults on projects ranging from book publications and organizing campaigns for social change through visual art, to hosting events, competitions and art symposiums and creating art murals around Amman. We host various activities suitable for kids and adults such as art and crafts workshops as well as tours around galleries in the city, offering insight into the local art scene.

**Name:** Hind Joucka  
**Link:** [https://hindjoucka.com](https://hindjoucka.com)  
**Twitter:** @hindjoucka
**Title:** Artist and founder of KMA

**Short Bio:** Kit is a leading and prolific innovator across screen-based art and interactive media. He directed the visually experimental UK feature Macbeth (2018), described by Peter Holland (Chair of the International Shakespeare Association) as ‘the most innovative rethinking of what it means to put Shakespeare on film for decades’, and co-directed Universal Picture’s The Knife That Killed Me (2014). As a founder of KMA, Kit has also worked as an installation artist in the interactive, public realm creating works that have dramatically transformed many iconic spaces from London’s Trafalgar Square to Shanghai’s Bund, and as a theatre and show designer with artists as diverse as Prince and DV8. Kit’s most recent work includes People We Love, a five screen video installation that premiered in York Minster before it tours the US in 2022.

**Name:** Kit Monkman
**Link:** https://www.kma.co.uk/

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**Title:** Artists

**Short Bio:** Semiconductor is artist duo Ruth Jarman and Joe Gerhardt who are known for their artworks which explore the material nature of our world and how we experience it through the lenses of science and technology, questioning our place in the Universe.

Semiconductor have been artists in residence at internationally renowned science laboratories, including: CERN The European Laboratory of Particle Physics (2015); Mineral Sciences Laboratory, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C (2010) and The NASA Space Sciences Laboratory, UC Berkeley California (2005).

Semiconductor have exhibited their work internationally including at: John Hansard Gallery, UK; The 14th Media Art Biennale Santiago, Chile; City Gallery, New Zealand; Science Gallery London, UK; FACT, UK; 21st Biennale of Sydney, Australia; Mori Art Museum, Japan; ZKM, Germany; ArtScience Museum, Singapore; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, USA; Royal Academy of Arts, UK.

**Name:** Semiconductor
**Link:** www.semiconductorfilms.com
**Twitter:** @Semiconducting
Title: Artist
Short Bio: Vicky is an Associate Artist with FutureEverything, she works on the design and delivery of their in house creative projects. Bringing her art-tech-noise skills and experience to the team, you’ll find her tinkering with creative coding, designing sculptures out of e-waste or devising engagement activities involving technology and citizens. Outside of FutureEverything Vicky is a sound and electronic media artist based at Rogue Studios. Working with sound sculpture, DIY electronics and human-machine systems, she explores our relationship to technology through sonic materiality; creating performances, installations and objects. Vicky won the Oram Award 2020 for innovation in sound and music technology from PRS Foundation and New BBC Radiophonic Workshop. She is currently artist in residence at NOVARS, University of Manchester exploring musique concrete and machine learning in collaboration with PRiSM, RNCM. Her work has also featured on ‘SONIC FUTURES: How technology is guiding electronic music’, the British Council and FACT magazine, MUTEK and CTM.

Name: Vicky Clarke
Link: https://vickyclarke.org
Twitter: @vickyclarke_

Title: Artist
Short Bio: Julie Freeman is an established digital artist who works in deep collaboration on art, science and technology projects to create data informed art experiences. Her interest is in the use of data as an art material, specifically exploring time-based data from living systems.

Julie considers data the foundational element that enables communication between the natural world and ourselves, while digital technology interprets that data to allow humans to experience and understand phenomena that exist beyond our own sensory perception. Her work ranges from site-specific installations to kinetic sculptures to online works. Julie holds a PhD in Media and Art Technology from Queen Mary University, and an MA in Digital Art from Middlesex University. She is a TED Senior Fellow, and a member of the first Low Carbon Design Institute residency programme. She has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally.

Name: Julie Freeman
Link: https://translatingnature.org/
Twitter: @joz_freeman
Name: Matthew Plummer-Fernández
Link: https://www.plummerfernandez.com/
Twitter: @M_PF

Title: Artist
Short Bio: British/Colombian artist Matthew Plummer-Fernández’s interest in the interrelation of algorithmic systems, popular culture, and contemporary issues, forms a varied body of work influenced by the traditions of Generative Art, Critical Design, and Internet Art, that he describes as algopop.

Plummer-Fernández’s work has been exhibited extensively, and commissioned by institutions including the Victoria & Albert Museum and Somerset House in London, AND Festival in Manchester, and ZKM in Karlsruhe. His works Digital Natives and Disarming Corruptor are in the collection of Centre Pompidou in Paris, and in 2014 Disarming Corruptor received an award of distinction at Ars Electronica. He received an MA from London’s Royal College of Art in 2009, and completed his practice-based doctorate at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2019. Plummer-Fernández is currently the course leader in BA Fine Art - Computational Arts at Camberwell College of Arts, as well as a senior lecturer at the Creative Computing Institute, University of Arts, London.

Name: Hannah Redler Hawes
Link: https://theodi.org/person/hannah-redler/
Twitter: @hannah_redler

Title: Art Curator and Researcher
Short Bio: A contemporary art curator and researcher, Hannah enjoys bringing together artists and other experts to create projects which raise social, cultural and ethical questions within the fields of art, data, science and technology. A specialist in media art and participatory practice, she works with museums, galleries, universities and audiences across the world. Alongside her independent practice she is the Director of the Data as Culture programme at the Open Data Institute. She developed her love of interdisciplinary narratives as Head of Arts Programme at the Science Museum Group, where, between 1999 and 2014 she curated art interventions, exhibitions and events, establishing the contemporary art collection, which notably includes some of the first ever media art acquisitions by a national museum in the UK. Hannah regularly lectures, speaks and writes on interdisciplinary art and curating practices. She trained at Norwich School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London.
**Title:** Artist and cultural manager  
**Short Bio:** Khaldoun Hijazin is a Jordanian visual artist and cultural manager currently working as the director of art and cultural programs at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts. He also worked for several years as a faculty lecturer at the School of Arts and Design at the University of Jordan.

Hijazin received his BA in Visual Arts from the University of Jordan in 2010 followed by an MFA from SMFA at Tufts University, Boston in 2014.

In addition to his artistic practice, Hijazin has developed a complementary practice as a researcher and curator of workshops and exhibitions that aim to cast new light on the varied cultural and sociopolitical conditions of his community both locally and beyond.

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**Title:** Creative Director of York Mediale  
**Short Bio:** Tom Higham is a creative director and producer who works with artists, developers, designers, arts organisations and policy makers all over the world to produce ambitious artworks and creative projects.

He is currently creative director of York Mediale, a brand new biennial arts festival which will bring world premiere commissions from leading artists to the city.


Tom is a fellow of Salzburg Global Forum for Young Cultural Leaders and Clore’s Emerging Leaders programme.
Name: Alex May  
Link: https://alexmayarts.co.uk/  
Twitter: @alexmayarts

Title: Artist  
Short Bio: Alex May is a British contemporary artist questioning how our individual and collective experiences of time, and formation of memories and cultural record, are mediated, expanded, and directed by contemporary technologies. His work forges creative links between art, science, and technology through a wide range of digital new media, including virtual and augmented reality, photogrammetry, algorithmic photography, interactive robotic artworks, video projection mapping, generative works, performance, and video and sound art.  

His international exhibition profile includes Ars Electronica, ZKM (Germany), LABoral (Spain), IMPAKT (Netherlands), FACT (Liverpool), Furtherfield (London), WRO Media Art Biennale (Poland), HeK (Basel), The Francis Crick Institute, Bletchley Park, Eden Project, Science Gallery in Dublin (Ireland) and Bengaluru (India), ZHI Art Museum (China), and the Beall Center for Art + Technology, University of California, Irvine.

Name: May Abdalla  
Link: https://weareanagram.co.uk/  
Twitter: @maydayblues

Title: Director and co-founder of Anagram  
Short Bio: May Abdalla is the director and co-founder of Anagram, an award-winning creative studio specialising in thought-provoking interactive storytelling and immersive experience design. With a background in documentary film, animation and interactive game design, the studio specialises in exploiting the most recent advances in immersive technologies - including VR, AR and other XR tools.  

Winners of the Grand Jury Prize for Best VR Work at the 2021 Venice International Film Festival, Anagram have also been awarded the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival Storyscapes Award, the 2019 Sandbox Immersive Art Award, part of the Best VR in 2019 at the Venice International Film Festival.  

Anagram were named in the Createch 100 ones to watch for 2020 by the Creative Industries Council and selected twice for Columbia University’s Digital Dozen Breakthroughs in Digital Storytelling (in 2015 and 2019).
Title: Senior Producer at Abandon Normal Devices
Short Bio: Lou started working with AND as a freelance Producer in 2013 and has since worked on a number of events and projects for the organisation including 3 editions of AND Festival. As a freelance producer Lou has worked on projects for Liverpool Biennial, a-n, the BBC, and the National Trust.

Lou works as Senior Producer at AND overseeing the production of the programme which includes the UK’s only roaming biennial festival and annual commissioning programme which can take the form of public art, site specific film happenings and cross platform productions.

Name: Louise Hargreaves
Link: https://www.andfestival.org.uk
Twitter: @ANDfestival

Title: Digital Marketing and Communications Expert, Co-Founder of Basita.com & Basita.live
Short Bio: With 13 years of experience in high level social media management, digital marketing and communications, his experience spans a varied spectrum of fields that include telecommunications, cultural organizations, arts and music festivals, and community engagement initiatives. For the past seven years he has been promoting sold out cultural events and performances in UAE for the Abu Dhabi Festival. Events included ‘The Paris Opera Ballet Jewels by George Balanchine’, ‘Tosca – A Concert Production’, ‘Korean Symphony Orchestra’, ‘Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia – Rome’, ‘Queen of Fado Mariza’, and ‘The Silk Road Ensemble With Yo-yo Ma’, among other world-class performances. Recently, he co-founded Basita Company, and Basita.live virtual theatre.
Title: Artist
Short Bio: Rachel Gadsden is a British multi-award-winning visual and performance artist who exhibits and performs nationally and internationally. Expressionist in approach, she creates solo exhibitions, performances and collaborative social engagement art projects with disabled, vulnerable, and mainstream individuals and communities, through painting, performance, digital film, and animation, with the object of developing cross-cultural dialogues considering universal notions of humanity. Her artworks are represented in private and major art collections across the Globe including HM The Queen Royal Art Collection, UK Parliament, Mandela's Walk to Freedom, SA, Fédération Internationale de Football Association Switzerland, The National Paralympic Heritage Trust, Hyundai, South Korea and Roche, Switzerland. Gadsden has received major award commissions for five Paralympic Games, Beijing, London, Sochi and Brazil and Tokyo, and has undertaken four commissions for UK Parliament. Rachel was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from London South Bank University, 2016, and in July 2021 she was awarded a scholarship to undertake PhD doctorial research at Loughborough University.

Name: Rachel Gadsden
Link: www.rachelgadsden.com
Twitter: @RachelGadsden

Title: Founder of Wadi Finan Gallery
Short Bio: Founder of Wadi Finan Gallery in Jordan, Suha Lallas. Established in Amman, Jordan in 2008, the gallery sits as a major cultural vehicle locally and abroad. Seeking to drive an appetite for Middle Eastern visual arts and showcase the work of esteemed Arab artists internationally, Wadi Finan Art Gallery brings a heightened contemporary and modern aesthetic to its surrounding heritage, hosts public exhibitions, workshops and leads special community collaborations.

Name: Suha Lallas
Link: https://www.artdubai.ae/gallery/wadifinanartgallery-2017/
Title: Artist
Short Bio: Andrei Snobar is a multidisciplinary architect and visual artist, currently living and working in Amman. He is the founder of Andrei Visuals, a creative company specialized in 3D mapping, interactive installations and augmented experiences.

Andrei works in exploring the space among digital and physical forms by creating a symbiotic relationship between architecture and media arts.

Name: Andrei Snobar
Link: https://www.andreivisuals.com/

Title: Artist
Short Bio: Anna Dumitriu is an award winning internationally renowned British artist who works with BioArt, sculpture, installation, and digital media to explore our relationship to infectious diseases, synthetic biology and robotics. Past exhibitions include ZKM, Ars Electronica, BOZAR, The Picasso Museum, HeK Basel, MOCA Taipei, LABoral, Art Laboratory Berlin, and Eden Project.

She holds visiting research fellowships at the University of Hertfordshire, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, as well as artist-in-residence roles with the Modernising Medical Microbiology Project at the University of Oxford, the National Collection of Type Cultures at the UK Health Protection Agency and the Institute of Epigenetics and Stem Cells at Helmholtz Zentrum in München.

She was the 2018 President of the Science and the Arts Section of the British Science Association. Her work has featured in many significant publications including Frieze, Artforum International Magazine, Leonardo Journal, The Art Newspaper, Nature and The Lancet.
Title: Programme Coordinator
Short Bio: Raya Sharbain works with JOSA (the Jordan Open Source Association), a civil society organisation that aims to promote open source technologies and defend the rights of technology users in Jordan. Raya has worked in digital fabrication and in her spare time, she enjoys design and photography.

Name: Raya Sharbain
Link: https://josa.ngo/