



Sweep, Swipe, Flick, Fold.

Through photographs and sculpture, Susan Giles and Jeroen Nelemans investigate individual gestures within the digital realm. Each artist considers how visual experience or memory can take physical form. As the name of the exhibition suggests, both artists explore the intersection of the personal and the collective that ultimately reflects a desire for individual expression within a homogenized platform.

With a wealth of parallel experiences available at our fingertips, what distinguishes individual encounters? Interested in iconic monuments and how they embody national or official histories, Susan Giles seeks to discern in what ways personal narratives might intersect or diverge. In large scale time-lapse photographs printed to human scale, she records her subjects as they describe their memories of visiting historic monuments. The marks they leave behind with the movement of their hands trace an inherently personal memory of the site that may differ from fact. These gestures produce a sculptural light-writing that hints at a connection between human neural pathways and digital platforms.

Giles additionally incorporates Google Earth to source the working material for her related sculptures. The corporate crowd-sourced platform layers parallel individual experiences into a communal archive, which she then 3D-prints. The resulting sculptures become physical talismans or micro-monuments that illustrate the collective desire to record a memory or experience of place. Giles also highlights how the digital platform freezes time through shadows, that while fleeting in real time, become a permanent part of the structure of the recorded site in these online images.

What do we want from these platforms and how do we coexist with new technology? For *Swipe*, Nelemans examines how personal gestures dictate what we might desire from a device. Using a translucent gelatin to highlight RGB color filters, he swipes his finger across a digital screen capturing a lasting record of his marks. He flattens the resulting image and removes any trace of identifying fingerprint to create a universal abstraction. Digital media, unlike analog materials, is valued for precision and regularity often producing sharp, focused images. Here, Nelemans subverts its intended use to create a flattened kaleidoscopic abstraction that still traces the history of his own hand on the surface of the screen. This physical swipe gesture suggests that our primal imperatives persist even with access to the most advanced devices.

Nelemans takes on a different kind of icon in his sculptural works, using as his starting point Constantin Brancusi's *Bird in Space* (1923). He investigates how physical space is translated into RGB subpixels by scanning a computer screen that projects an image of Brancusi's work and manipulating the output into a sculptural photographic print. *Bird As Space* suggests the desire to translate the closed circuit into a physical object. Whereas Brancusi, inspired by Modernist principles, used vectors to suggest the freedom of the bird's flight, Nelemans instead encloses the sculptural work within an acrylic box effectively caging the bird.

Together these works communicate a shared desire for human connection in a digital platform. Could the insistence on personal gesture fight the advance of digital homogeneity? Despite the near infinite archives available online we continue to tell stories that give voice to our individual experiences. Although digital platforms have attempted to standardize human output the works in this show suggest the continued need for human inspiration and vision, with all of its flaws and idiosyncrasies.

Catalogue Essay – Lisa Sutcliffe, Curator of Photography and Media Arts at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

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What do we want from these platforms and how do we coexist with new technology? In his *Saape* series, Nelemans examines how personal gestures dictate what we might desire from a device. Using a translucent gelatin to highlight RGB color filters, he swipes his finger across a digital screen capturing a lasting record of his marks. He fatens the resulting image and removes any trace of identifying fingerprints to create a universal abstraction. Digital media, unlike analog materials, is valued for precision and regularity often producing sharp, focused images. Here, Nelemans subverts its intended use to create a fatened kaleidoscopic abstraction that still traces the history of his own hand on the surface of the screen. This physical swipe gesture suggests that our primal imperatives persist even with access to the most advanced devices.

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**Lisa Sutcliffe**  
*Curator of Photography and Media Arts*  
*Milwaukee Art Museum*

**Jeroen Nelemans**  
detail of *Saape 4* (B-7832) (swipe) 2017  
fatened image print on Dibond  
40 x 29 in.  
edition of 3

