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EVALUATION REPORT:  
Final Jury

## Combine24: Generative art competition hosted by the Finnish National Gallery

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Final Jury Meeting

Date and time: 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2024, 10am-2.45pm (UTC+3)

Venue: Sturenkatu 16, 00510 Helsinki

Present: Martin Grasser, Leevi Haapala, (Chair) Luka Piškorec, Diana Velasco, Melissa Wiederrecht  
Anna Puhakka, competition secretary

Experts consulted: Licia He, external expert, Shortlist Committee member and generative artist (*time stamp for participation 10.00-11.00 am*)

Jury Chair opened the meeting at 10.10am

### 1 Legality and quorum

The Chair noted that the meeting was duly convened and quorate.

### 2 Review of Competition Programme and Rules

The Shortlisted artists were informed of their selection on June 26, 2024.

It was noted that the artworks by artists/groups selected for the second stage were the following:

A Dance with History by Newyellow, BodyArtLab by Nahuel Gerth, Inventory Numbers by Andreas Rau, Loom of Reality by Ilmo Kapanen ja Aarni Kapanen, Perseverance by Blas.v, Portrait Robot by Roni Kaufman, re-frame by Agoston Nagy, Repetition and Noise by Jeremy Schoenherr (Jeres), The Artist Code by Arttu Koskela (Shaderism) and Wunderblock by Tuomo Rainio.

Shortlisted artworks in phase II of the competition are on display in the pop-up exhibition called *Remix the Archive*, at Teollisuuskatu 9 D, Helsinki 19.9.–26.10.2024. The jury work was not influenced by the exhibition presentation of the works and each shortlisted work was evaluated in the form they were presented on the Highlight platform.

The public was able to vote for their favourite artwork 1.9.-1.10.2024, the vote determined the winner of the Audience Favourite Prize. The result of the

audience favourite vote was revealed to the jury after they had finalised their deliberation and selected the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winners of the competition.

Before evaluating the shortlisted artworks, the jury reviewed the Combine24 competition programme and rules and evaluation criteria.

### **3. Satisfaction of competition criteria**

It was noted all entries satisfy the criteria set out in the competition brief.

### **4. General assessment**

The following was recorded as a general assessment of the shortlisted artworks:

All of the shortlisted artworks are of an exceptionally high standard. It was noted that the competition assignment was difficult, but all of the shortlisted artists successfully interpreted and created new generative artworks that are both inspirational and of high conceptual and technical quality. The artworks portrayed a wide variety of generative genres that interact with the Finnish National Gallery's collection in a refined manner, leaving a vivid impression on the viewer. The range of concepts, from playful to meditative, brought new connections and life to the historical artworks, objects, and metadata in the Finnish National Gallery's CC0-licensed copyright-free collection.

The jury's assessment focused particularly on the artistic and technical quality of the artworks, the innovative use of the Finnish National Gallery's collection data, and the strength of the artworks' concepts in relation to the collection data

### **5. Assessment of individual shortlisted artworks**

The following were noted as assessments of the individual proposals:

#### **A Dance with History by Newyellow**

The jury considered *A Dance with History* to be of exceptional technical and programming quality. The use of the collection data and the specific use of extracted poses and the non-linear interpretation between the poses was found to be interesting. Conceptually the artwork explores the intricate relationship between time, history, and human expression and is a poetic interpretation of the Finnish National Gallery's collection. The work aims to look at the essence of human gesture as a medium to traverse the passage of time. The ability to trace the origin of each pose by hovering over the image and so revealing the artworks that contributed to its creation, was seen as a nice way of bringing out the use of the collection.

#### **BodyArtLab by Nahuel Gerth**

BodyArtLab is very different compared to the other shortlisted artworks. It is an interactive and immersive artwork that explores the convergence of art, science and technology. The artwork uses a generative system that randomly combines body parts that the artist has selected from the collection to create a new digital collage. The jury noted that that the playful nature of the work was exciting and had "meme" like qualities. The works potential in museum led pedagogy with implications for the future of digital interaction with art and cultural heritage was seen as a strength. The artwork was inspired by the playful and explorative 1946 children's book "Heads, Bodies & Legs" by Richard Chopping and Denis Wirth-Miller.

### **Inventory Numbers by Andreas Rau**

The jury considered the artwork to be a masterful example of technical and conceptual craftsmanship with the use of generative sound as well as visual elements. The artwork is an exploration into the interconnectedness of human existence across physical and digital realms, merging historical art with contemporary technology to uncover new narratives that bind our collective human culture. The use of personal photographic works interconnected with figures from the Finnish National Gallery's collection adds to the emotional dimension of the work creating an emotive and personal journey. Aesthetically the work has links to constructivism and a retro feel that is representative the time we live in now. The aspect ratio used also recalls religious artworks that strengthens its link with art history. Through *Inventory Numbers*, the artist invites viewers to reflect on the ways our lives are catalogued and remembered, both through traditional museum practices and modern digital technologies.

### **Loom Of Reality by Ilmo Kapanen ja Aarni Kapanen**

The jury considered the artwork to be a beautiful and emotional dialogue that spoke to Finnish cultural heritage creating a link between the old and the new. The artists were able to create a well-defined dataset by selecting only the landscape paintings by a Eero Järnefelt. This allowed for a strong conceptual connection to build between the collection and the generative artwork that feels anthropological in its inquiry. The jury also noted that the reference to the loom and its connection as a technical starting point for how the first computers were created was elegant. The artwork is an exploration of cultural memory, identity, and the passage of time. The work draws inspiration from the *ryijy*, a traditional Nordic wall-mounted rug known for its mosaic-like patterns, reimagining this craft in a digital format that deconstructs and reconstructs the landscapes of Finnish painter Eero Järnefelt.

### **Perseverance by Blas.v (Claudio Cassia)**

The jury considered the artwork to be conceptually and technically strong. The artwork is a generative art piece that explores the intersection of traditional art preservation and the ephemeral nature of digital media. It is born from a fascination with patterns, fractals, and the revolving emergence of complexity from simplicity, it delves into the challenges of preserving both physical and digital art in a rapidly changing world. It has a powerful performative impact that is able to expose the entropy of digital disintegration. The jury found the work innovative, with a rhythm that was able to hold the viewers interest consistently. It was noted that although the work distorts, and the original portraits selected from the collection it is still able to keep the emotional intensity that is present within the original works.

### **Portrait Robot by Roni Kaufman**

The artwork is a playful yet profound critique of modern portraiture and artificial intelligence in art, utilizing a Dada-inspired approach to challenge and reframe our understanding of generative AI's role in creative processes. The artists selected random elements—eyes, mouths, and backgrounds—from various portraits in the collection. These elements were then algorithmically reassembled onto base portraits, crafting unexpected and often humorous new visages. This work subverts traditional notions of artistic creation, merging historical portraiture with contemporary algorithmic techniques to reflect on the absurdities of AI-generated art. The jury found the work to have excellent outputs with a clear connection to the collection and strong links to PFP and meme culture with an intentional roughness.

### **re-frame by Agoston Nagy**

The jury found the artwork to be theoretically well researched and enjoyed the merging of landscape and still life works from the collection. The artwork is abstract with a strong personal visual language that evokes a connection to lithography. The work uses algorithms to deconstruct and reinterpret historical art pieces and blends them into a singular monochromatic collage. This digital manipulation strips the original artworks of their colour, reducing them to mere points of varying densities. Conceptually the artwork delves into the implications of digital technology on the preservation of cultural memory. By digitizing and altering historical artworks, re-frame acts as both a preservation and a transformation tool, blurring the lines between what is saved and what is changed. It prompts a reflection on the digital afterlife of art, exploring how artworks survive and evolve in the digital realm.

### **Repetition and Noise by Jeremy Schoenherr (Jeres)**

The jury found the artwork to be visually pleasing collection that has a strong connection to Finnish National Gallery's collection. The artwork delves into the cyclical and evolutionary nature of creativity and serves as both a meditation on and a manifestation of the way art converses with itself across time. The work examines how art evolves, reiterates, and distorts itself, becoming a complex interplay of homage, understanding, and innovation. The artwork embodies the tension between repetition and innovation, chaos and order, and blurs the boundaries between the original works used and the new work created from it.

### **The Artist Code by Arttu Koskela (Shaderism)**

The jury felt that the artwork was technically of very good quality particularly in its use of light and generated visual images. The work has a sculptural feel that is bridging the gap between classical art traditions and contemporary digital technology. This piece reinterprets the timeless genre of self-portraiture, traditionally a medium for artists to explore personal identity, through the advanced capabilities of algorithmic art, initiating a dialogue that spans centuries of artistic expression. The abstraction of the used self-portraits in the final work brings forth the question, is this also a self-portrait of the artist.

### **Wunderblock by Tuomo Rainio**

The jury considered the artwork to have a strong conceptual base that is very effective and beautiful with pleasing digital texture. The artists choice to focus particularly on sketches and incomplete pieces in the collection made this artwork stand out, also the use of metadata to generate text was interesting. The jury particularly appreciated the time-based nature of the work and its meditative quality and felt that it rendered well. The artwork is an intricate exploration of memory and perception, utilizing the medium of generative art to probe the subconscious layers of visual culture. Inspired by Sigmund Freud's concept of the "Mystic Writing Pad" (Wunderblock), an early reusable writing technology, it reinterprets this device as a metaphor to explore the fluid nature of memory and its retention of past impressions beneath the surface of consciousness.

## **4. Consultation of experts**

Expert consulted at the jury meet was Licia He, Combine24 Shortlist Committee member and generative artist (present at the meeting from 10-11am)

## **5. Deciding the winners for first and second prize.**

During the second part of the meeting the jury deliberated and made the following decisions:

The jury elected as First Prize winner: Loom of Reality by Aarni ja Ilmo Kapanen

The jury elected as Second Prize winner: Inventory Numbers by Andreas Rau

Other proposals were not ranked in order of merit.

## **6. Revealing the Audience Favourite Prize winner**

The winner of the audience favourite prize by public vote was disclosed to the jury after they had deliberated and made their final selection for the first and second prize winners. The winner of the Audience Favourite prize will be announced in conjunction with the announcement of the competition results at the Winners gala event on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **7. Publication of Result**

The result of phase II and the selected winners will be made public on Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> 2024 at the Winners Gala Event as well as on the competition website by October 7<sup>th</sup> 2024.

## **8. Closing of the meeting**

The Chair closed the meeting at 14.45 (UTC+3)