

The Creators Project

Sculptures Explore How Digital Culture Impacts Human Perception

Andrew Nunes — Mar 28 2016



James Clar, Folded Space, 2016; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar

There have been undeniable changes in how we perceive the reality that surrounds us in our hyper-digital, smart-phone centric age, but it is incredibly difficult to concretely articulate where exactly these shifts occurred and continue to. Multimedia artist [James Clar](#) explores these newly modified perceptions of reality in *False Awakenings*, his ongoing exhibition at NYC's [Jane Lombard Gallery](#)

With a unique background in both animation and interactive telecommunications, the artist is able to expertly construct visual and technological systems in his works. At times these are simple but effective systems, as in *Nobody's Home* (2016), where the artist placed a door with LEDs emanating from underneath next to a wall. A shadowy sliver occasionally slides through the light, suggesting the presence of an individual on the other side of the door who is ultimately nonexistent.



James Clar, False Awakenings (installation view), 2016; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar

In other moments, the systems are more complex and reveal the artist's technical capabilities afforded to him by his educational background, as can be seen in

Simulation of a Simulation (New York) (2016). This piece incorporates a miniature snow globe of NYC placed in an apparatus constructed by the artist that constantly shakes the globe while recording its inner landscape. The footage is amplified and shown on a screen by its side, which reveals a micro New York constantly under snowfall.

Despite the impressive range of technological systems created and used by the artist, these are but a means to an end: “How to realize a concept comes before I think about how to achieve it technically,” Clar tells The Creators Project. “Some media art often uses technology to try to push technology, but I’m trying to approach my art more like film and storytelling, in that the idea and how it affects the viewer are the main considerations.”



James Clar, Nobody's Home, 2016; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar

The visual vibrancy and amount of beaming light throughout the exhibition is another element embedded within Clar’s practice. Whether through LED monitors, laptop screens, neon lights, or projections, digital light is ever-present. “With people using things like Oculus Rift where you have the artificial screen implanted in front of your eyes, we are becoming like Plato’s *Cave*, where we are seeing ‘shadows off of the wall’ and thinking that it is reality,” the artist explains. “I’m using technology, light, and media to critique technology, light, and media; using the medium to critique the medium itself.”



James Clar, Simulation of a Simulation (New York), 2016; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar



James Clar, Simulation of a Simulation (New York) (camera module detail), 2016; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar

Clar believes his work has a different core objective than those of other media artists: “I think a lot of media artists are trying to create a virtual world within a screen, but I’m trying to create a virtual world within our physical world. Instead of working within the screen, I’m trying to pull things out from there, into our world, as a way to comment on it.”



James Clar, This Fire Won't Stop, 2016; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar



James Clar, LINE, 2003; Courtesy of the artist; Jane Lombard Gallery, New York, © 2016 James Clar

False Awakenings will be on display at Jane Lombard Gallery until Saturday, April 2nd. To view more of James Clar's system-based works, visit his website [here](#)