

Alexander Reben

b.1985, New York

Lives and works in Berkeley, CA

Alexander Reben is an artist whose work probes the inherently human nature of the artificial through a conceptual and process-driven approach. Reben uses experimentation and prototyping to delve into our intricate relationships with algorithms, automation, and amplification through the lenses of absurdity, humor, mischief, and play. His artwork aims to engage the public with complex ideas in technology in an approachable way and to bring to light our inseparable evolutionary entanglement with technology, which shapes our existence. Reben studied social robotics at MIT where he researched human-machine symbiosis. For over a decade, he has been an artist working closely with cutting-edge technology and companies, developing artwork spanning multiple mediums. He has exhibited internationally at cultural institutions, galleries, and museums and is regularly invited to speak at conferences and universities worldwide.

The artist has exhibited at Vitra Design Museum, MAK Museum Vienna, Design Museum Ghent, Vienna Biennale, ARS Electronica alongside IDFA, Tribeca Film Festival, TFI Interactive, Camden Film Festivals, Doc/Fest and the Boston Cyberarts Gallery. His work has been covered by CNN, NPR, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Washington Post, Fast Company, Filmmaker Magazine, New Scientist, BBC, PBS, Discovery Channel, Cool Hunting and WIRED, among others. He has lectured at TED, SXSW, TTI Vanguard, Google, UC Berkeley, SMFA, CCA, MIT, and other universities. Reben has built robots for NASA, and is a graduate of the MIT Media Lab, where he studied human-robot symbiosis and art.

EDUCATION

- 2010 MS, Media Arts & Sciences, The Media Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2008 BS Applied Math, Cum Laude, State University of New York, Stony Brook

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *AI-Mazing*, GAZELL.iO Project Space, London, England
2019 *Creative Work as Adversary: The AI Art of Alexander Reben*, Emerson Media Art Gallery, Boston, MA
Contrasts in Action Still, stARTup Art Fair – Special Project, Los Angeles, CA
2018 *strange/r/evolution*, SPRING/BREAK Art Show, New York, NY
2017 *wax chromatic*, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2015 *Engineering Psychology*, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Let's Talk About Text*, Gazelli Art House, London, England
Hello Robot, Hyundai Motorstudio, Busan, Korea; Beijing, China
2020 *CURRENTS New Media Festival*, Santa Fe, NM
Hello Robot, Neues Museum Biel, Biel, Switzerland
2019 *Hello Robot*, V&A Museum of Design, Dundee, Scotland; Museo San Telmo, San Sebastián, Spain; MAAT, Lisbon, Portugal.
Post City, Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria
2018 *Seeing Eye Awareness*, Galerija Vžigalica, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Gray Area Festival, San Francisco, CA
CODAME, San Francisco, CA
ARTOBOTS, The Midway Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Hello Robot, Gewerbemuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland
Robot Art, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL
LAST Festival, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
2017 *DEMO DAY*, Kunstraum, Brooklyn, NY
Post City, Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria
Hello Robot, Design Museum Ghent, Ghent, Belgium; MAK Contemporary Art Museum, Vienna, Austria; Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany
Robots. Work. Our Future, Vienna Biennale, Vienna, Austria
Hierophant, Nicodim Gallery, Bucharest, Romania
The Basilisk, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2016 IDFA, Amsterdam, Netherlands
WIRED 2016 UK, London, England
Chicago Ideas Week, Chicago, IL
Camden Film Festival, Camden, ME
Perception & Time, Long Now Member Summit, San Francisco, CA
Seattle Art Fair, Charlie James Gallery, Seattle, WA
Cineglobe, CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
2015 *Happy Machine*, Ottawa Maker Faire, Ottawa, Canada
LAST Festival, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
SPEIF, Special Project Space, San Jose, CA
2014 *COLLISION*, Boston Cyberarts Gallery, Boston, MA
Robots in Residence, Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen, CO
Sonic Gorilla, Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick, UK
TFI Interactive, Tribeca Film Festival, New York, NY
New Works, Culture Shock Project Space, VOLTA, New York, NY
2013 *Robots in Residence*, 1MSQFT, Miami, FL; Sheffield Doc / Fest, Sheffield, England; Nordisk Panorama, Malmo, Sweden; Storyscapes at the Tribeca Film Festival, New York, NY
2012 *COLLISION18:Present*, Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media, Jamaica Plain, MA
Robots in Residence, IDFA, Amsterdam, Netherlands
2011 *ArtBots*, Ghent, Belgium
Solar absurdities, Bumpkin Island Art Encampment. Bumpkin Island, Boston, MA
IDENTITY ELEMENT: WORKS FROM THE NEW AXIOM GROUP, Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media, Jamaica Plain, MA
Defy Gravity, MIT Media Lab, Cambridge, MA
You Are My Sunshine: Axiom At Bumpkin Island Closing, Axiom Center for New and Experimental Media,

- Jamaica Plain, MA
- 2009 *Human Nature*, ARS Electronica Festival, ARS Electronica, Linz, Austria
School of The Streets, MIT Weisner Gallery, Cambridge, MA
- 2008 *Planet in Peril: Artists Sow Solutions*, EYEBEAM, New York, NY
URECA, SAC Gallery, Stony Brook, NY
 LICA Exhibition, SAC Gallery, Stony Brook, NY

FELLOWSHIPS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2021 Facebook Open Arts, Artist in Residence
- 2015-17 UC Berkeley Psychology, Visiting Scholar
- 2016 WIRED Innovation Fellow
- 2014 Current, Stochastic Labs Residency
- 2013-14 MIT CMS Doc Lab Fellow
- 2010 MIT Art Scholar
- 2009-10 MIT Center for Future Storytelling Fellow
 Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society
 Golden Key International Honor Society

PEDAGOGY

- 2014 Current, Stochastic Labs, Berkeley, CA
- 2011 *Interactive Technology Design*, MIT, Cambridge, MA
- 2010 *PATD Promoting Art Through Design*, MIT, Cambridge, MA
- 2009-10 Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Advisor, MIT, Cambridge, MA
- 2008 WISE (Women In Science and Engineering) Program, SUNY, Stony Brook, NY
- 2004-08 F.I.R.S.T. Robotics Competition, Patchogue, NY

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2018 *Artist as Technologist*, TTI Vanguard, San Francisco, CA
5 Dollars Can Save Planet Earth, TEDx San Francisco, CA
A.I. Fortunes, Dorkbot, San Francisco, CA
Art and Science, The Exploratorium, San Francisco, CA
If an AI makes it, is art still Art?, CODAME, San Francisco, CA
 Artist's lecture, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL
AI Creativity in Art, Neuroscience, and the Law, SXSW, Austin, TX
Stories of Song, Art & Tech, me Conference, Austin, TX
Using Art and Design to Investigate Humanity, Berkeley Institute of Design, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Design Field Notes, Jacobs Institute, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
- 2017 *Living in a Robot?*, MAK Museum, Vienna, Austria
Future Humanity, Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria
 LASER Lecture, Stanford University, Melno Park, CA
Ethics and Artificial Intelligence, CIIS University, San Francisco, CA
Judah vs. The Machines, TechCrunch, Digital Web Series
- 2016 *Emotional Arcade Live*, IDFA, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Thinking Digital, Gateshead, England
From cute droids to robots that stab you, it's time to get personal with machines, WIRED UK, London, England
The Implications of Artificial Intelligence, Chicago Ideas Week, Chicago, IL
Internet of Things and Memory, Camden Film Festival, Camden, ME
 LASER Art Lecture, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
 California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA
Philosophy and The Future of Technology, Stanford University, Melno Park, CA
Art and Social Robotics, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA
How Robots Mess With Our Minds, MIT Club of Southwest Florida, Naples, FL
- 2015 *Homo Digitalis*, LAST Festival, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
The BlabDroid Robots, Global Technology Symposium, San Mateo, CA
The Rise of the Social Robot, SXSW, Austin, TX
- 2014 *Human-Machine Empathy*, UC Berkeley Philosophy Department, Berkeley, CA
Film making Robots and Human-Machine Relationships, Dorkbot, San Francisco, CA
Robotic Art, California College of the Arts, San Francisco, CA

- BlabDroids*, Engadget Expand, New York, NY
Drones, Phones, and Robotic Friends-Where Is Emergent Technology Taking Us?, Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen, CO
Big Ideas Opening Session, Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen, CO
The Needy Robot and Our Relationship with Emotional Machines, TTI Vanguard, Boston, MA
Social Robotics – Interaction and Design, Robo Forum, Moscow, Russia
Igniters: BlabDroid, NBC and Syfy, Las Vegas, NV
Will Robots Take Over The World?, HuffPost Live
- 2013 *BlabDroids — Self-Learning Social Cloud Robots*, TEDx, Boston, MA
BlabDroids — Self-Learning Social Cloud Robots, Google Solve for X, Boston, MA
Control Your Legal Landscape, Robo Business Conference, San Jose, CA
Transmedia and Robot Filmmaking, Doc/Tech, Points North at Camden Film Festival, Camden, MA
BlabDroids Around the World, Nordisk Panorama, Malmo, Sweden
Transmedia and Technology, Transmedia Meet Up, Malmo, Sweden
BlabDroids, Art as Research, Ignite at FOO, Sebastopol, CA
Robots in Residence, Sheffield Doc / Fest, Sheffield, England
Robots as Journalists, Columbia Journalism School, New York, NY
Emotionally Evocative Robots, Thinking Digital, Gateshead, England
Interactive Technology in Media, Media Future, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland
Storyscapes, Tribeca Film Festival, New York, NY
- 2012 *Robots in Residence, Screening and Theory*, DocLab at IDFA, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Boxie, The Story Gathering Robot, Ignite Boston, Boston, MA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2022 Benzine, Vittoria. "In Pictures: Dall-e Makes Its Gallery Debut in a Show Where All the Works Were Created with an Assist from A.I." Artnet News, November 14
Benzine, Vittoria. "Meta Continues Its Push into the A.I. Art Game, Allowing Users to Create Computer-Generated Images Based on Their Own Sketches." Artnet News, July 18
Fried, Ina. "Exhibit Aims to Present AI Images as Real Art." Axios, October 31
Person. "Gallery: When Ai Dreams of Art." BBC Future. BBC, November 28
Reben, Alexander. "The Weird and Wonderful Art Created When AI and Humans Unite." BBC Future. BBC, November 28
- 2020 Damiani, Jesse. "In This Exhibition, an AI Dreams up Imaginary Artworks That Artist Alexander Reben Then Creates Irl." Forbes Magazine, October 1
Kent, Charlotte. "Ai Am I? Yeah, We Are. Alexander Reben and the Machine." CLOT Magazine, October 2
Tarantola, Andrew. "This Is What Ai Sees and Hears When It Watches 'the Joy of Painting'." Engadget, February 20
- 2019 Hale, Tom. "Watch Artificial Intelligence Lose Its Mind While Watching Bob Ross." IFLScience. June 19
- 2018 Dieza, Josh. "This Artist Is Teaching Tech Execs How to Make Devices More Lovable." Alexander Reben. Fast Company, February 20
Holley, Peter. "The Bizarre Thing That Happens When Artificial Intelligence Tells People Their Fortunes." The Washington Post. WP Company, October 15
Holley, Peter. "This Artist Is Using AI to Paint with His Mind." The Washington Post. WP Company, December 12
Tarantola, Andrew. "'Amalgan' Melds AI Imagination with Human Intuition to Create Art." Yahoo! Finance. Yahoo!, December 12
- 2017 Zara, Janelle. "'The Basilisk' at Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles." The online edition of Artforum International Magazine, May 12
- 2016 Clark, Liat. "From Cute Droids to Robots That Stab You, It's Time to Get Personal with Machines." WIRED UK. WIRED UK, November 3
Guarino, Ben. "This Robot Chose to Injure the Man Who Built It. Here's Why Its Inventor Is Pleased." The Washington Post. WP Company, October 25
Kleinman, Zoe. "'Harmful' Robot Aims to Spark Ai Debate." BBC News. BBC, June 13
McCrum, Kirstie. "Robot Built to Break One of I, Robot's Laws of Robotics." mirror, June 13
Sydell, Laura. "A Robot That Harms: When Machines Make Life or Death Decisions." NPR. NPR, August 29
Williams, Elliot. "Robot Bites Man!" Hackaday, June 16
- 2014 Liszewski, Andrew. "The Cute and Sometimes Creepy Creations of The Willy Wonka of Robots." Gizmodo. Gizmodo, July 18
Lombrozo, Tania. "Domesticated Robots and the Art of Being Human." NPR. NPR, September 29
Walker, Alissa. "8 Real-Life Robots That Inspired Big Hero 6." Gizmodo. Gizmodo, November 6

- 2013 Anderson, John. "As You Watch, Invasion of the Platforms (Published 2013)." Tribeca Film Festival Recognizes Transmedia - The New York Times. The New York Times, April 12
Dale, Brady. "Blabdroids: 'Robots with Personality' Ask Questions." Technical.ly. Technically Media, December 16
Gardner, Ralph. "Storytelling's 'Now'." The Wall Street Journal. Dow Jones & Company, April 18
Watercutter, Angela. "These Adorable Robots Are Making a Documentary about Humans. Really." Wired. Conde Nast, April 17
- 2011 Marks, Paul. "Robot Videojournalist Uses Cuteness to Get Vox Pops." New Scientist. New Scientist, December 28

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

JP Morgan Chase Art Collection
MIT Museum