

ICA, Boston Curator Speaks at Museum of White Mts./KDAG

By Mason Masotta; For the Clock On March 18, 2018

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(L to R) ICA Asst. Art Curator Jeffrey De Blois and PSU Art History Professor Sarah Parrish
at the Museum of the White Mts./KDAG

Art is one of the most well-known forms of self-expression. Humans have been using it to externalize internal feelings, pose questions, challenge current ways of doing things and much more for centuries. But, the benefits of art are certainly not confined to what comes out of creating or working on it. Sometimes, people get the most out of art from looking, watching, listening and overall, simply stepping back and thinking, in response to the art they come across.

On Monday, March 12, the PSU art department hosted Jeffrey Blois, assistant art curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art (“ICA”) in Boston and 2006 PSU alum. He visited the Museum of the White Mountains/Karl Drerup Art Gallery to speak about a current exhibit at the ICA, which he helped curate art for, called “Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today.”

De Blois was invited to speak by art history professor Sarah Parrish. She opened for his presentation with why she felt it was important for him to speak at the museum. “I was just so impressed with his deep intellect and warming personality,” Parrish said.

The exhibition, which De Blois has been working on putting together for over three years, features the work of 60 different artists and 72 pieces. It is a highly ambitious showcase with many diverse works of art and several thought-provoking themes about technology.

One of the major reasons behind the conception of the exhibit was to shed light on many major figures in the evolution of the internet and technology who have not always received recognition or due credit. On this subject, De Blois mentioned Ada Lovelace, who is considered to be the first computer programmer, but is widely unknown to the public.

De Blois also explained the reasoning behind the date “1989” in the title of the exhibit in Boston. During that year, Tim Bernes Lee, a computer scientist, proposed the framework for the World Wide Web, kicking off a new age of technological advancements.

Some interesting works on display in the exhibit that De Blois spoke of are in the “States of Surveillance” section. It contains a fully-set up anti-surveillance device that allows people within the museum to have completely unwatched devices. Another compelling, as well as distressing, art piece is a thermal printer that, on paper, shows all of the websites and URLs that are completely banned from access in China. The country is infamous for its internet restrictions.

Other concerning questions about people’s identities on social media and how it changes society are also depicted in many different forms within the exhibit in Boston.

De Blois urged all in attendance to be thoughtful with the internet and its day-to-day uses. “This art [the exhibit in Boston] offers a moment of pause and consideration of the larger ramifications that the internet has on our culture,” he said.

For more information on the exhibit at the ICA that De Blois helped curate art for, visit <https://www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/art-age-internet-1989-today>.