



press release  
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## Rebecca Allen wins the DAM Digital Art Award 2023/24

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DAM Projects is delighted to announce that Rebecca Allen is this year's recipient of the DAM Digital Art Award. The international jury, consisting of **Douglas Dodds** (senior curator for Digital Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2003-2021), **Leslie Jones** (curator at LACMA, Los Angeles, 2001-2023), **Melanie Lenz** (curator for Digital Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), **Tina Ryan** (curator at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo) and **Wolf Lieser** as moderator, decided following a detailed and intensive debate that **Rebecca Allen** (born 1953) would be the recipient of this year's award.

**Rebecca Allen** receives prize money of 20,000 euros from DAM Projects as well as the opportunity of a solo exhibition organised by DAM Projects, Berlin, and the publication of a catalogue.

### Jury's statement:

"Rebecca Allen is the recipient of the 2023/24 DAM Digital Art Award. We, the jury, selected Allen for her significant contributions to the fields of digital art and computer animation over the past fifty years. Allen has been a digital innovator since the mid-1970s, when as one of the few women working in computer animation, she asserted the importance of the human body as a subject for technical development and as a means to humanize (and politicize) an art form that was at the time largely devoted to abstraction. Among her earliest innovative works were *Girl Lifts Skirt* (1974), a short animation made with punch cards that addressed sexism in the field, and the landmark *Swimmer* (1981), one of the first three-dimensional computer animations of a human body in motion. Bodies in motion were the focus of her critically acclaimed collaborative videos of the 1980s, such as those made with choreographer Twyla Tharp and musician David Byrne (*The Catherine Wheel*, 1982) and electronic band Kraftwerk (*Musique Non-Stop*, 1986). These technologically groundbreaking projects also demonstrated Allen's openness to working across mediums and genres, proving her intuition for the expansive cultural impact of digital art. In the early 1990s, Allen was one of the first to explore the potential of gaming technologies for interactive art, leading to the development of the Emergence software with her research team at UCLA, where she worked for more than thirty years (1986-2019) in various roles, including Professor, Chair of the Department of Design Media Arts, and Founding Co-Director of the UCLA Center for the Digital Arts (CDA). With Emergence, Allen created a series of art installations called *The Bush Soul* (1997-99) that allowed viewers (via avatars) to maneuver through a virtual world based on feelings by using a joystick. Her commitment to interactivity continued with VR works like *The Tangle of Mind and Matter* (2017) that explore consciousness and reality. These works thereby reflect on the medium itself and address the question central to Allen's practice: "as we spend more and more time in virtual worlds, what happens to the body? Where is the body within technology?" By foregrounding the body in her digital work, Allen has engaged with issues of gender, identity and humanity's relationship with nature, laying the technical and conceptual groundwork for other artists.

The DDAA was first initiated in 2005 and honours major pioneers in the digital art field, recognising their exceptional achievements and contributions. Previous winners include Vera Molnar, Manfred Mohr, Norman White, and Lynn Hershman Leeson, whose influential efforts have shaped the landscape of digital art. As we enter a new era, DAM Projects proudly continues the esteemed tradition of the DDAA, reaffirming the commitment to celebrating excellence in digital art. The DDAA, last presented in 2012, remains a platform of recognition for international artists whose work embodies creativity, innovation, and transformative potential.

Nominated for the DDAA 2023/24 were **Rebecca Allen** (nominated by Domenico Quaranta, Milano), **Frieder Nake** (nominated by Dominique Moulon, Paris), **Christa Sommerer** and **Laurent Mignonneau** (nominated by Pau Waelder, Palma de Mallorca), **Jennifer Steinkamp** (nominated by Tina Sauerländer, München/Marseille) and **Mark Wilson** (nominated by Wolf Lieser, Berlin).

**DAM Projects**, founded in 1998 and led by Wolf Lieser, aims to make digital art accessible and comprehensively available, encompassing a wide range of artistic positions and contentions, from plotter drawings to software art, with a conceptual focus on the impact of coding and the digital on culture and society.

For more information about the DDAA and the Digital Art Museum, please visit our website at [www.ddaaward.org](http://www.ddaaward.org) or contact Viktoria Hilsberg.

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