

## Six Pieces That Stuck Out at the New Museum's Triennial

Adam Lehrer 2/25/2015

The primary criticism towards the New Museum's Triennial is that it is, quite simply, A LOT to take in at once. This criticism is fair, but it also might be missing the point. As I skulked around the opening last night, snapping photos on my sad point and shoot camera, I was overwhelmed with sensory and hyper aware of the setting. Trying to navigate through swarms of people, from young New School students to the elder statesmen of the art world, was like trying to escape from a straight jacket. The venue was packed, and there were hundreds of good looking artsy types adorned in fashionable clothing of one style or another that were clearly feeling the density of the production as well. Attendees were more often found schmoozing and boozing than taking in any single piece for any length of time. It was a little uncomfortable, a little unnerving, and perhaps that was the entire point.

"Surround Audience" was aimed towards exploring the way we live in this mega-connected and technological world. And in this world, we are overwhelmed constantly. Even if we wanted to unplug, most of our jobs wouldn't let us. It's hard to appreciate beauty when you are plugged into the Matrix. The exhibit explores that notion teetering on sensory chaos. That being said, there were some pieces that sucked me right out of the pandemonium. Curators Lauren Cornell and Ryan Trecartin could certainly have kept the exhibit tighter; showing 51 artists at once is no easy accomplishment. But these six pieces took me out of the chaos; for a moment I could look closely and appreciate.



Josh Kline, "Freedom"

### Josh Kline, "Freedom"

Philadelphia's Josh Kline thinks about the way humanity has been commodified and controlled through various means of technological surveillance, and judging from his piece at the Triennial, he has a lot of fun doing it. "Freedom" consists of sculpted and life-like stormtrooper-looking police each equipped with their own screens attached to their bellies. Almost as if the guards are protecting him while watching the audience, a screen projection of an Obama lookalike giving a speech plays in the background. Standing from the corner of the room, it looked as if the museum attendees were blended into a crowd with the cops.



Antoine Cala, "Distant Feel"

### Antoine Cala "Distant Feel"

French artist Antoine Cala examines the gadgets of the information age and illuminates their decay, darkness, and essentially, their life. In his piece, "Distant Feel," he examines the issues he's interested in with humor, with an object that resembles a fish tank. Of course, there are no fish. But looking at the piece you get the sense that life exists within the space. It's bright neon colors highlight the ugliness and rotten appeal of the mold growing within the tank. I'm always a sucker for neon.