

# EYEBEAM

Book of Ideas (2016)

**This book collects ideas dreamed up in the studio by alums who have made incredible things in the Eyebeam residency.**

**Eyebeam is a nonprofit studio for collaborative experiments with technology toward a more imaginative and just world.**

**By providing generous support to artists for research, production and education, Eyebeam makes ideas real.**

A

Kaho Abe

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**How do we empower ourselves  
to be curious, remain critical,  
and make our world become the  
world we hope to live and play  
games in?**

In 2011, Kaho Abe founded Playable Fashion, a groundbreaking youth program that combines gadgets, games, and garments.

A

Jamie Allen

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**Think of how essential the  
electron is to our type  
of civilization.**

**There is never nothing.**

In 2008, Jamie Allen assembled Speaker Sketch, a machine which uses very loud music to move a drawing implement.

A

Salome Asega

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**Black Virality is everything  
from Henrietta Lacks to  
the dab.**

In 2015, Salome Asega started the Iyapo Repository, a museum of African technological artifacts from a distant future.

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**If the internet were built upon peer-to-peer, trustless storage networks, then contemporary online cultures could outlive today's web servers.**

In 2011, Benton C Bainbridge combined live dancing with lasers, underwater lights, and projections on screens made of water and fog into a multimedia spectacle called Infinite Light.

B

Stefani Bardin

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**E=mc<sup>2</sup>**

**Eyebeam=(matter × creativity)<sup>2</sup>**

In 2011, Stefani Bardin's Commodity Cropism reappropriated footage from commercials to expose the three big monocultures: corn, soy and sugar.

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**We are all susceptible to hacking, to external control, to accidental matches and manipulation, visualization and/or obsolescence. This is neither good nor bad news.**

In 2012, Chloë Bass managed a central bank that issued certificates of self-recognition—people's ability to look into the mirror and recognize their reflection.



B

Tega Brain

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**How can we build systems  
that embody more than just  
human agendas?**

**How can we redesign our  
infrastructures based on  
mutualism with other lifeforms?**

In 2015, Tega Brain networked wi-fi routers that responded to the phase of the moon, the flicker of a flame, and the health of a house plant.

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**Handheld devices are relied upon by millions of people daily, simultaneously surveilling and marketing to them.**

**It is therefore becoming more and more important for artists to carve out a space for aesthetic experience through these devices.**

In 2007, Jonah Brucker-Cohen engineered a toolkit for users to “liberate” pay-per-use wifi networks into free, open nodes.

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**There is no going back to a Garden of Eden, free of technology. Actually, there has never been such a place.**

In 2015, Mattia Casalegno put strangers face to face with a series of sculptures that turned private chats into public spaces.

C

CHiKa

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## Is interactivity magic?

In 2013, CHiKA created symphonies in light that reacted to the sounds of the audience.

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**Networking platforms and media sources that we engage with shape our habitual behaviors and modes of attention.**

**How can we take an active role in shaping our daily rituals of information consumption?**

In 2015, Lisa Kori Chung co-created a toolkit for interactive performance that combined dance, song, and projection.

D

Andrew Demirjian

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**Create a wristwatch with two faces that tells the time one minute in the past and one minute in the future to remind the wearer to be present.**

In 2011, Andrew Demirjian publicly installed a surveillance camera with a screen showing old footage from the same site, like a tripwire into the past.

D

Heather Dewey-Hagborg

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**Resist all authority and question  
all knowledge.**

In 2012, Heather Dewey-Hagborg generated a series of portraits of strangers from genetic residues that had been left on the streets.

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**Bacterial living tissues operate in a symbiotic ecosystem with the external environment.**

**Can we draw inspiration from their behavior to design and manufacture body skins that can adjust to variations in internal metabolic processes?**

In 2016, Nancy Diniz grew garments out of bacterial cellulose and coconut husk that could respond to slight shifts in the environment.



D

Torkwase Dyson

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## **Isn't dignity a human right?**

In 2015, Torkwase Dyson finished Studio South Zero, a solar-powered mobile studio that could take artists of the grid and put them into nature.

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**Zooming creates a paradoxical conflict between our obsession of getting to the bottom of things and our capacity to make sense of it all.**

**Do we find truth in increased resolution and granularity?**

In 2015, Frederic Eyl invented algorithms to nest images inside each other, creating a picture that can endlessly zoom.

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**1995–2005 took us from DV  
tape to YouTube.**

**2005–2015 took us from the  
first version of openFrameworks  
to Unreal in a Github repo.**

**Where will new media take us  
in 2025?**

In 2012, Nick Fox-Gieg developed many new ways for filmmakers and animators to use motion capture through a Kinect.

D

Carlos Gomez De Llarena

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## **How can we integrate art and technology to design more inclusive public spaces that humanize our cities?**

In 2002, Carlos Gomez de Llarena transformed the city into a playing field with Noderunner: two teams raced to access the most wif nodes.

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**I dream that the visual codes which designers use could link collaborations between peers and brands. Imagine that we all have a micro P2P atelier in our homes. Networked sewing machines, 3D printers and more let us produce designs ourselves from images we find online. It'll be a plug-and-play system based on code found in this DIY fashion network.**

In 2006, Giana González hacked couture, by creating an open-source genome of fashion brands that anyone could remix and recode.

H

Claudia Hart

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**Technology is the pulse of  
corporate capitalism and  
technocratic bureaucracy.**

**It must be resisted; therefore,  
it is the driving force for art.**

In 2014, Claudia Hart designed an experimental fashion show, *Alices Walking*, steeped in the clichés of data, punk, and Romanticism.

H

Brian House

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## **How does the temporality of computation play through the rhythms of everyday life?**

In 2013, Brian House thought up a way to make two people's internet browsing experiences identical—perfectly in time. He called it Tanglr.

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**How can Eyebeam help people make graceful connections between seemingly incompatible systems in the areas of technology, culture, commerce, and politics?**

In 2009, Tom Igoe revamped parts of the core of Arduino, a platform that he helped develop.



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**Existing communities have unacknowledged resources, tools, and wealth that have resisted traditional modes of valuation.**

**Activating them through experimental community-run banks can help create and foster new forms of currencies and relationships.**

In 2011, Fran Ilich created Spacebank, a Latin American virtual community investment bank that's still trading..

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**Parties are social spaces that permit a temporary differencing in the behaviors and identities we exhibit in our everyday lives. Perhaps they could inspire lasting change, too.**

In 2007, David Jimison created a robot that could tend bars, crack jokes, and monitor your sobriety.

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**The assumption that recorded music will be the same every time you hear it is an artifact of an age when recordings were plastic (vinyl, polycarbonate), rather than plastic (malleable, changeable).**

In 2015, Kenneth Kirschner popularized variant, the first series of interactive audiovisual artworks in the App Store.

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**What can artists working with technology do to make it more accessible to the public—to help others have the same opportunity they do to understand and express themselves with those technologies?**

In 2015, Gene Kogan wrote a curriculum about how machine learning could be used for artistic practice..

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**Artists continue the tradition of appropriation online by uploading more and more content to social media platforms. Should a host platform's terms of service override an artist's right to critique popular culture?**

In 2013, Elisa Kreisinger took a nationwide survey, Fair Use(r), of content creators on the legal challenges of publicly uploading their work.

L

Steve Lambert

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**Imagine success.**

**Imagine it beyond what anyone  
could ever reasonably expect.**

**Start from Utopia, then  
work backwards.**

In 2007, Steve Lambert released an app to replace advertisements with artworks, called Add-Art.

L

Karen Lancel

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## **How does your kiss feel in E.E.G. data?**

In 2003, Karen Lancel created a semi-transparent, infatigable Isolation Pillar, that allowed people to escape into solitude in crowded public spaces.

L

Jonas Lund

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## Why be yourself, when you can be someone else?

In 2013, Jonas Lund made a platform for users to draft paintings on a virtual pizza canvas, sign it, and buy it custom-made for delivery to Eyebeam.



M

Bryan Ma

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**Society relies upon the  
instrumentalization of chaos.**

In 2016, Bryan Ma wrote code to create pseudo-random images. Small tweaks in parameters can summon order out of the seeming noise.

M

Michael Mandiberg

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**Roughly 10% of all Wikipedians  
are cis or trans women.**

**If Wikipedia is to live up to its  
utopian Open Source/Free  
Culture ideals, it has to reflect  
the society it represents.**

In 2007, Michael Mandiberg made the real costs of e-commerce visible through a plugin showing emissions data for all purchases.

M

Amelia Marzec

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## **Are we sharing and hiding information in an effective way?**

In 2011, Amelia Marzec advanced mobile democracy with her project Signal Strength, a modular system for untraceable, of-grid networking using cell phones.

M

Mary Mattingly

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**It is necessary to reconstitute food as a public resource, reinforce water as a human right, and actively co-create interdependent forms of common space.**

In 2011, Mary Mattingly invented Flock House, a mobile housing structure that migrates through US cities—like birds, these structures are fed and cared for.

M

Joanne McNeil

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**If the internet just stopped working one day, what is the first thing we would miss?**

In 2014, Joanne McNeil relieved all Gmail users from their emotional labor by creating an app that automated smileys, exclamations, and more.

N

Nancy Nowacek

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**The body is technology. It is our primary form of knowledge; our means to reach out, learn, and manipulate the world.**

In 2016, Nancy Nowacek proved you could crowd-build a bridge between Brooklyn and Governor's Island.

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**Speculation on cultural artifacts from the future gives us insight into future cultures. We can use this insight to generate possible means to reconfigure contemporary society and plan a trajectory toward a more egalitarian world.**

In 2015, Ayo Okunseinde started to assemble the Iyapo Repository, a museum of African technological artifacts from a distant future.

O

Forrest Oliphant

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**A virtual swarm of polygons,  
evolving to fit your shape  
and motion, cut and sewn on  
demand, with prices set and  
shared by people doing the  
sewing and algorithm design.**

In 2012, Forrest Oliphant launched Meemoo, a way for people to open, hack, bend, rewire, fork and mod creative web apps—like Arduino for the web.



O

Joshue Ott

---

**Technology should make us  
more human.**

In 2015, Joshue Ott popularized variant,  
the first interactive audiovisual artworks in  
the App Store.

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**What could an alternate form of social media, based on ideas of the commons or feminist praxis, look like?**

In 2013, Laurel Ptak pointed out that it was the very first year Eyebeam had ever hosted more women residents than men and built a year long program out of this fact.

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**Teaching computer science principles to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other learning and emotional challenges will lead to significant changes in the tech field.**

In 1997, Beth Rosenberg dreamed up the first Digital Day Camp—a place for youth to get free digital know-how.

R

Evan Roth

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**What alternative communication networks might be possible that won't necessitate depending on cables and computers owned by others?**

In 2006, Evan Roth, as part of the Graffiti Research Lab, made it easier for people to use a projector to write graffiti in light on buildings from hundreds of meters away.

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**Can a telematic garden be designed to crowdsource food production equitably?**

**What would this shared platform look like as it moves between terrestrial and networked space?**

In 2010, Stephanie Rothenberg exposed the labor behind games by retooling arcade classics into exercises in mineral mining and circuit assembly.

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**Can the U.S. become a leader in social and political—not just technological—innovation by implementing policies such as a data bill of rights or universal basic income?**

In 2015, Saito Group developed a toolkit to scrape Twitter, geolocate tweets, and then combine them into conceptual poetry and project them back onto the streets.

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**What if our constructed  
enclosures operated as  
metabolic systems instead  
of inert isolationist skins?**

In 2007, Carmen Trudell found a way to modify a revolving door to turn its revolutions into an alternative energy source.

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**What would physical play look like in space?**

**What game mechanics would emerge in zero gravity?**

In 2014, Chloe Varelidi built Minicade, an online collection of mini games that are a fun and easy way to learn coding.



W

Hsing Wei

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**Culture, code, and community  
open to all to +1, -1, =**

In 2012, Hsing Wei incubated The Makery, a space for kids to learn, invent, and prototype.

W

Caroline Woolard

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## What is a work of art in the age of \$120,000 art degrees?

In 2009, Caroline Woolard co-founded a barter network, OurGoods, to connect artists, designers and activists who wanted to trade skills, spaces and objects.

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**Toys, namely Elmo TMXs, stripped of their red furry coats and re-configured to perform fierce military maneuvers, emulated the tragic consequences of imperialism and the dangers, follies and sadness of a blind rationale for obedience that creates victims out of warriors and civilians alike.**

In 2008, Adrienne Wortzel programmed *The Battle of the Pyramids*, a performance of puppets that marched exactly in time, in a parody of militarism.

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**Let's not package our lives  
in machine-readable form.  
Let's practice humor, poetry  
and art—create signals that  
inspire humans and baffle  
machines. Let's not give in  
to disambiguation. Let's  
celebrate reambiguation.**

In 2008, Mushon Zer-Aviv designed an open source layer that “foated” over any web page, allowing each browser to alter the underlying site.

**First Edition © 2016**

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