

# locustprojects

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Locust Projects presents  
Jeff Thompson:  
*Human Computers*

**Exhibition Dates:**  
February 22-  
March 21, 2020

**Public Opening Event:**  
Saturday, February 22  
7-9pm

**Related Programs:**  
Durational performance  
Saturday, February 22  
12-6pm

**Public Hours:**  
Tuesday to Saturday  
11am – 5pm

LOCUST PROJECTS PRESENTS NEW WORK BY JEFF THOMPSON  
Opens Saturday, February 22, 2020  
with a durational performance 12-6pm and reception to meet the  
artist 7-9pm



Locust Projects is proud to present *Human Computers*, a new large-scale site-specific installation and durational performance by New Jersey-based artist Jeff Thompson. *Human Computers* Thompson's first solo exhibition in Miami, gives physical form to an otherwise invisible process, utilizing data and mathematics as raw materials for artistic creation rather than paint or canvas.

The exhibition kicks off with a performance starting at noon on February 22. The durational performance is a profoundly slow, intricate inhabitation of a single computer .png file. Over the course of six hours, a group of thirteen performers will decode a single digital image entirely by hand using only pencils, paint and paper worksheets. Visitors are invited to come and go as they please, entering a typical 1950s office space to view performers seated at custom furniture working away on historically-based worksheets, slowly decoding the printed streams of zeroes and ones in order to paint each individual pixel that the image is comprised of on squares of paper, approximately 2,400 in total. Each pixel takes 67 steps to decode by hand, reversing filters that .png uses to reduce data size, converting the pixel's color to

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CMYK for display, and calculating the pixel's x/y position in the overall image. *Human Computers* explores the early history of computing, office culture, automation of labor, and the layers of abstraction and standardization found in technological systems.



Before they were digital machines, computers were people who performed calculations by hand on paper worksheets. The term "computer" was originally used to refer to "one who computes" in the early 17th century, transitioning into a cottage industry for scientific work in the early 1900s, and continuing into the 1950s even as human computers were replaced by the machines we use today. For women and people of color, working as a computer was a pathway into the sciences, something that they might not otherwise have been able to do. This complex weaving of social, political, and technological inspires Thompson's project as do the physical spaces and labor required for this work. Thompson's work seeks to make visible the friction between data, labor, and the immense abstraction created when we reduce things-- objects, people, ideas-- to systems.

*Human Computers* will be performed on February 22 from 12–6pm followed by a reception. The results of this labor will be installed in the space for the duration of the exhibition through March 21, serving as documentation of the computations and providing context to the "office" existing in the gallery space. Both the performance and exhibition are free and open to the public.

*Human Computers* was commissioned by Locust Projects and the University of Nevada, Reno, where it will travel after its presentation at Locust Projects in Miami.

Top image: Human computers working in Edward Charles Pickering's lab at Harvard College Observatory. Courtesy Harvard College Observatory.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jeff Thompson is Assistant Professor and Program Director, Visual Art & Technology, Stevens Institute of Technology, one of the oldest technological universities in the United States and was the first college in America solely dedicated to mechanical engineering. The artist's project at Locust continues Thompson's investigations into the poetics of technological systems and his explorations of how their functionality can provide access points for meaningful exploration. Past solo shows include: *First There Is A Mountain, Then There Is No Mountain, Then There Is*, King's College, University of Cambridge; Cambridge, UK (2018); *I Touch You And You Touch Me*, Harvestworks, NYC (2017); *White Noise Boutique*, Commissioned by Brighton Digital Festival; Brighton, UK (2015); *Impossible In Another Form*, George Mason University Gallery; Fairfax, Virginia (2014); *A Very Deep Saxophone And A Very Long Guitar* with Damon Lee, Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE (2013); *Seam Sorting*, LEVEL Gallery, Lawrence Technological University; Detroit (2013); *Glistening Waves*, Harvestworks; NYC (2011)

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Lamination, Local Project; Long Island, NY (2008); Wavering Cedar and 100,000 Blades of Grass Department of Safety, Anacortes, Washington(2007); Recording Exchange, Hogar Collection Gallery, Brooklyn (2006).

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## ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national and international artists. We invest in South Florida's arts community by providing artists with project grants and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through an onsite artist resource hub and access to pro bono legal services.

Locust Projects 2019-2020 exhibitions and programming are made possible with support from: The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; The National Endowment for the Arts Art Works Grant; Hillsdale Fund; the Albert and Jane Nahmad Family Foundation; The State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; Kirk Foundation, Funding Arts Network, the Wege Foundation and Locust Projects Exhibitionist and Significant Other members.

**ART HAPPENS HERE.**