

# SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

SAN JOSÉ MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS  
NEW COMMISSION BY TREVOR PAGLEN

*Beta Space: Trevor Paglen will feature *There Will Come Soft Rains* (2021),  
the artist's first sound commission.*



For Immediate Release

**San José, California** (August 25, 2021) — The San José Museum of Art (SJMA) announced a new commission by Trevor Paglen. Organized by Kathryn Wade, SJMA assistant curator, this new site-specific work will be presented as the seventh installation of the Museum's ongoing commissioning program, "Beta Space" and will be on view from November 5, 2021 to November 6, 2022. For *Beta Space: Trevor Paglen* the artist will create a timepiece installed in SJMA's historic clocktower and resounding into the streets of downtown San José. It will be his first sound commission.

"When this clock was built in 1908, it represented a kind of public truth—time was a social pact that we agreed on. The past year has underlined a shift in my conception of time, which no longer feels like a progressive march into the future, but rather, a perpetual sense of loss," Trevor Paglen shared. "This project explores time as marked by what used to be and no longer is, and what it means to be living against that backdrop when the idea of shared knowledge, or facts, is increasingly elusive."

“To present Paglen’s new commission this fall is a gift to San José and the larger Bay Area art community, after a year of isolation, distance, and limitations,” said S. Sayre Batton, Oshman Executive Director, San José Museum of Art. “With this new commission sounds relating to our current moment will resonate through downtown San José, inviting the community to return to public spaces and come together.”

Several times a day, Paglen’s sound piece will emanate real-time temporal and environmental facts. Beginning with the current time and weather, a voice synthesizer reads dynamically generated text from “official” data sets like satellite navigation systems, the UN critically endangered species list, and Cal Fire updates. Resonating through the streets, aural information recasts the texture of the city for approximately 45 seconds each time the work sounds. This project joins other artworks such as *The Last Pictures* (2012) and *Trinity Cube* (2015) that explore the ethics and politics of human interventions into geologic time.

“Trevor Paglen is known for a wide-ranging approach to exposing that which is seemingly invisible. For this “Beta Space” commission, which offers artists opportunities to explore and exhibit new ideas, materials, and modes of working, Paglen investigates the triangulation between sound, time, and truth, shared Kathryn Wade, SJMA assistant curator. “Passerby may recall the now obsolete time-by-phone lines that represented a kind of authority. Emitting from SJMA’s clock tower into the public space, this piece considers how sound relates to time and constructs certain truths.

## **PROGRAMMING**

Artists in Conversation: Hito Steyerl and Trevor Paglen

October 12, 2021 | 12pm PDT

Online at [sjmusart.org/steyerlpaglen](https://sjmusart.org/steyerlpaglen)

Artists Trevor Paglen and Hito Steyerl share a conversation on AI, art, and the future. Both artists, who are occasional collaborators, have solo exhibitions at SJMA (*Beta Space* and *Factory of the Sun*, respectively). This virtual program takes place over Zoom; advance registration required.

## **SUPPORT**

*Beta Space: Trevor Paglen* is supported by the SJMA Exhibitions Fund.

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**SAN JOSÉ MUSEUM OF ART**

SJMA is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San José, California. The Museum is open Friday through Sunday, 11am to 6pm and until 8pm or later on the first Friday of each month. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and free to members, college students, youth and children ages 17 and under, and school teachers (with valid ID). For more information, call 408.271.6840 or visit [SanJoseMuseumofArt.org](http://SanJoseMuseumofArt.org).

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**PRESS IMAGES**

[flickr.com/gp/sjma/xQZt4u](https://www.flickr.com/photos/sjma/sets/72157628920000000/)

**IMAGE CREDIT**

Trevor Paglen, courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel, San Francisco. Photography by Christine Ann Jones.

Interior of San José Museum of Art's clocktower. Photo by Richard J. Karson.