



Donald R. and Joan F. Beall
Center for Art + Technology
University of California, Irvine

University of California, Irvine
Claire Trevor School of the Arts
712 Arts Plaza, Irvine, CA 92697
(949) 824-6206
beallcenter.uci.edu

Hours: Mon.–Sat., 12-6 p.m.

Press Contact: David Familian, Beall Center Artistic Director: dfamilia@uci.edu

For Immediate Release



Ian Ingram at the Beall Center for Art + Technology

October 9, 2021 - March 5, 2022

Image: "Longing Evans," 2019



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The Beall Center for Art + Technology presents a mid-career survey by artist Ian Ingram. Ingram's art explores animal morphology, robotic avatars, interspecies communication, and technology in natural environments.

This exhibition will present work from 1998 to 2021, with a particular focus on new works created during his residency at the Beall Center's Black Box Projects.

Ingram's residency work grew out of collaboration and conversation with UCI neuroscience professor Steve Mahler and in thinking about Mahler's love for rats. In the process, Ingram's focus narrowed around the synanthropic animals, the animals most closely tied to ourselves and our places.

Themes running through this new work include the panoply of stories we tell about rats. The actual lives of synanthropic animals and the spaces they occupy in our built environment, the bonds Disney princesses have with animals, the ever-present mechanical eye in the urban environment, and an inchoate yearning for ancestral landscapes. A yearning assumed to be shared both by humans and by the other animals who find facsimiles of those landscapes in our constructed places.

But the linking thread between these projects has seemed to be the "flashbulb memory," the type of episodic memory where even seemingly banal details about a moment are frozen into our heads by the onset of an intense experience, whether traumatic or joyful. There is some mechanism in the brain through which our quotidian experiences are flowing that is always at the ready to lock down the particulars of what preceded each and every instant at the trigger of a sufficiently emotionally-charged stimulus.

Ingram's robots have frequently been designed to function similarly when the subject of their focus (whether it be raven, lizard, or worm) appeared on the scene. This was often driven by pragmatism: there is always limited space in a robot's memories to store the images, sounds, and other vestiges of their experiences from the time they spend out in wild places. But with this new work, Ingram attempts to bring that element of the Umwelt of his robots right to the forefront.

The result, in essence, is a collection of objects that get desperately excited when they sense a rat.

The Ian Ingram exhibition is supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Beall Family Foundation.



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Fact Sheet

Free Admission

Iteration Dates:

October 9, 201 – March 5, 2022

Events:

Opening Reception: October 9, 2–5 p.m.

Beall Center for Art + Technology

Gallery Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 12–6 p.m. Closed: Sundays

Free admission and docent tours

Holiday closures: Nov. 11 & 25-28, 2021; Dec. 14, 2021 – Jan 3, 2022; Feb. 21, 2022

Location:

712 Arts Plaza, Claire Trevor School of the Arts, UC Irvine, Irvine, CA 92697

Parking:

Student Center Parking Structure*: 311 W. Peltason Drive, Irvine, CA 92697 Mesa Parking Structure:
4000 Mesa Road, Irvine, CA 92697

**all campus parking requires payment; \$2 per hour (in numbers spaces), \$10 half-day, \$15 full day, credit and debit cards accepted. Press passes available with advanced notice.*

For maps, driving directions and parking information go to: <http://www.parking.uci.edu/maps/imap.cfm>

Ian Ingram is a Los Angeles-based artist who is interested in the human-made body's future as a willful entity and the nature of communication. He builds robotic objects that borrow facets from animal form and behavior, from the shapes and movements of machines, from our stories about animals, and from our struggle to come to terms with our place in and effect on the natural environment.

The resulting works—often intended to cohabitate, commune, and communicate with the animals in their own places—explore our relationship with non-human animals, behavior and object performance as artistic media, and the interface between the built and the grown.

Ingram has exhibited internationally, including at the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh, USA); Nikolaj Kunsthal (Copenhagen, Denmark); Ars Electronica (Linz, Austria); the Museum of Modern Art (Toluca, Mexico); Yada Gallery (Nagoya, Japan); Bedford Gallery (Walnut Creek, USA); Eyelevel Gallery (Halifax, Canada); Purdue University (West Lafayette, USA); Zone2Source (Amsterdam, Netherlands); Hasbro (Pawtucket, USA); Popular Science Magazine; Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam, Netherlands); the Beall Center for Art + Technology (Irvine, USA); and the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, UK). Ingram has a B.S. in Ocean Engineering and MS in Ocean Acoustics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and an M.F.A. in Visual Art from Carnegie Mellon University.

More images, videos, and texts related to Ingram's work can be found at www.ianingram.org



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About the Curator

David Familian is the Artistic Director and Curator for the Beall Center for Art + Technology. He began working at the Beall Center in 2005 and was appointed Artistic Director and Curator in 2009. An artist and educator, he received his B.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts in 1979 and his M.F.A. from UCLA in 1986. Familian has taught studio art and critical theory in art schools and universities for the past thirty years, including Otis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Santa Clara University, San Francisco Art Institute and UCI. Familian initiated Black Box Projects in 2013 at the Beall Center, which produces collaborative exhibitions in which artists work with scientists and other experts in areas such as Cognitive Robotics, Computational Genetics, and Information Science. He has curated one-person exhibitions of artists Shih Chieh Huang, Golan Levin, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Chico MacMurtrie, Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, Nam June Paik and others. He has also curated numerous group exhibitions that explore topics such as data visualization, new forms of gaming and narratives, real-time data, interactive installations, and sound art.

About the Beall Center for Art + Technology

The Beall Center for Art + Technology is an exhibition and research center located on the University of California, Irvine campus. Since its opening in 2000, the Beall Center's exhibitions, research, and public programs have promoted new forms of creation and expression. For artists, the Beall Center serves as a proving ground — a place between the artist's studio and the art museum — and allows them to work with new technologies in their early stages of development. For visitors, the Beall Center serves as a window to the most imaginative and creative innovations in the visual arts occurring anywhere. The Beall Center promotes new forms of creative expression by: exhibiting art that uses different forms of science and technology to engage the senses; building innovative scholarly relationships and community collaborations between artists, scientists and technologists; encouraging research and development of art forms that can affect the future; and reintroducing artistic and creative thinking into STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) integrated learning in K-12 to Higher Education. The Beall Center's curatorial focus presents a diverse range of innovative, world-renowned artists, both national and international, who work with experimental and interactive media. Many of these artists have shown their works primarily within group exhibitions or have a limited number of solo exhibitions in the US. The Beall Center is committed to exhibiting these artists in a way that more fully expresses their individual body of work. We strive to present a direct connection between our programs and the larger trajectory of the history of video, installation art, kinetic and cybernetic sculpture. Our approach is not to exclusively emphasize the technological aspects of works, but to present experimental media projects that are equally strong aesthetically, conceptually and technically. The Beall Center received its initial support from the Rockwell Corporation in honor of retired chairman Don Beall and his wife, Joan; the core idea being to merge their lifelong passions - business, engineering and the arts - in one place. Today, major support is generously provided by the Beall Family Foundation.

About UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts

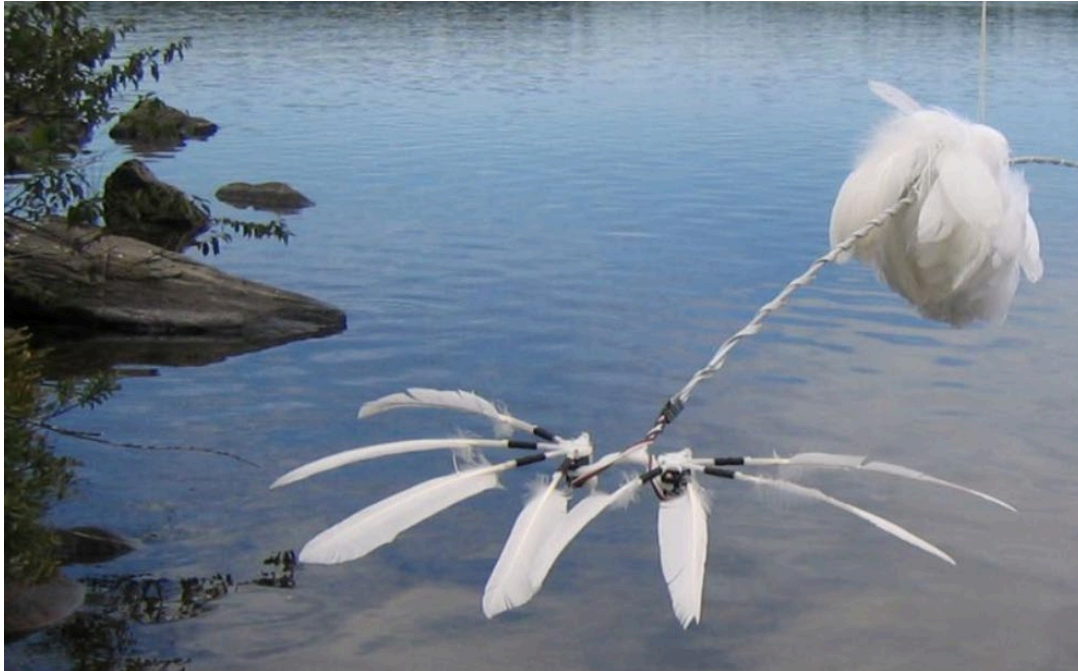
Times Higher Education ranked UCI first among U.S. universities under 50 years old and fifth worldwide. Since its founding in 1965 as one of UC Irvine's original schools, the School of the Arts (renamed for actress Claire Trevor in 2000) has become one of the nation's leading educators in visual and performing arts. Awarded "Best Arts Organization" in Orange County 2014 by the Coast Community Awards, the School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Art, Dance, Drama and Music, a minor in Digital Arts and Digital



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Duck, Duck, Goose (2007)

A mating pair of feathered robots perform a nesting ritual. Spins powered by motor-driven feathery propellers are followed by glides wherein particular tail-flicks are executed at each cardinal direction. The flight feathers on the propellers are duck, the ones on the tail are duck, and the contour feathers housing the electronics are a goose.

The two robots are *On Beyond Mother Goose* and *On Beyond Father Gander*. While miles apart—one on a lake, the other in a pasture—they each can feel the Earth's magnetic pull and have synchronized clocks, allowing their ritual dance to occur in distant unison.



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Danger, Squirrel Nutkin! (2009)

Danger is a frequent subject in the communication of prey species which often have signals for general danger, for specific predators, and even for the direction whence danger comes.

In squirrels, tail-flicking is the primary alarm signal, the intensity of the flicking growing with the threat. When installed in an urban park, "Danger, Squirrel Nutkin!" attempts to warn nearby squirrels of approaching dogs, foxes, hawks, and people using a version of their own tail-flick alarm signal, amplified via the supernormal stimulus of a trio of tails. Machine-learning-backed computer vision is used to detect possible predators in the surroundings, a threat level determined, proportional tail-flicking initiated, the central boom rotating to indicate the direction of the predator.

Mostly, the squirrels respond appropriately by running up into the canopies of the trees. Occasionally, however, a squirrel will approach the robot, watch the tail-flicking for a brief moment, and then respond with tail motions of its own far more complex than I have ever otherwise seen.

One is left wondering if the lexicon of squirrel tail gestures is more elaborate than so far realized and that the robot has made a statement much different than what it had intended, bewildering the inquisitive rodent. Perhaps instead, the squirrel is using the opportunity to question the tendency of techno positivists to believe every problem has a technical solution.

Additional images available upon request.