MASS MoCA

Mashinka Firunts Hakopian with Dahlia Elsayed, Andrew Demirjian, and Danny Snelson
ԲԱԺԱԿ ՆԱՅՈՂ *(One Who Looks at the Cup)*, 2024

MASS MoCA's *Technologies of Relation* brings together twelve artists who reframe how we relate to each other, to digital devices, and to our future

On view February 21, 2026 through Spring 2027
The Robert W. Wilson Building (B6.3)

Opening Celebration, February 21, 2026 at 5:30pm

Press Images

North Adams, MA, October 30, 2025 — Responding to the rapidly-advancing technologies that are shaping our daily lives and social fabric, the artists in *Technologies of Relation* examine how we relate to each other, to machines, and to our future. These creators see the complexity of our relationships to the digital, avoiding the binary views that frame technology as good or bad, as tool or monster, and choose to instead embrace how technology, including algorithms and Artificial Intelligence, can both connect us and further marginalize and oppress us at the same time.

Exhibiting artists include: Morehshin Allahyari; Pelenakeke Brown; Taeyoon Choi; Neema Githere; Mashinka Firunts Hakopian with Dahlia Elsayed, Andrew Demirjian, and Danny Snelson; Kite; Lauren Lee McCarthy; Analia Saban; and Roopa Vasudevan.

“Artists have long been key to identifying the colonialist logic, racism, and violence embedded in, and produced by, corporate-developed technologies and datasets in addition to offering a vision of a technological future that is inclusive and liberatory,” said Susan Cross, MASS MoCA Senior Curator and Interim Director of Visual Arts. “In this exhibition, the artists demystify technology, reminding us that it is neither neutral, nor authoritative, or beyond our scope of influence. Though most are skilled technologists, they often choose simple materials to give shape to their ideas and work across mediums, addressing technology both with its own tools and through analog means.”

Artists in the exhibition envision technology as a vehicle for connection, care and equity, while inverting assumptions of digital technology’s hold over our lives by illuminating its reciprocal relationship to humans. They bring it even closer by relating emerging technologies to the ancient arts of weaving, tattooing, and divination, using these models of accessible technologies as vehicles for imagining (or remembering) how we can employ more ethics and care in the technological sphere.

Tayeoon Choi creates a conceptual introduction to the show with a sprawling wall drawing titled *Towards the Uncomputable,* 2026 that explores the tension between computability and uncomputability. Choi emphasizes the historical relationship between computing and textile machinery, referencing both the museum’s history as a textile mill and his grandfather’s work as a tailor in Korea. His installation includes jacquard knit banners that feature a poem in binary code.

Analia Saban’s ten-foot wide blackboard-like painting *Flow Chart (Painting a Portrait)*, 2023 imagines how an algorithm might be produced to teach AI to make a painting, specifically a portrait. It is left to us to wonder if art is indeed computable, if the creative spark can truly be programmed or learned from a data set, and if A.I. can go beyond verisimilitude to capture a subject’s intangible essence.

Lauren Lee McCarthy situates technology firmly within the intimacy of relationships and within the domestic space with *LAUREN: Anyone Home?,* 2024-2026 an installation which imagines a futuristic home. The artist replaces an *Alexa*-like smart home device with human caregivers/performers who can converse with museum visitors, adjust the lighting in the gallery, or play music. The interactive work contemplates service, surveillance, privacy, labor, and care while provoking questions about the distinctions between human and A.I.. McCarthy’s new conception of the installation for MASS MoCA introduces performers other than herself, including

museum attendants, who McCarthy will train to play the role of LAUREN throughout the run of the exhibition.

Rethinking the “A” in A.I. as “Ancestral” instead of Artificial, **Mashinka Firunts Hakopian** looks to her Armenian roots. Training A.I. in the art of tasseography (fortune-telling with tea leaves or coffee grounds) with *One Who Looks at the Cup / Բաժակ նայող,* 2025 Hakopian examines who is shaping A.I. and with what kind of intelligence and biases. The large language model for her work includes Armenian poetry. Hakopian’s installation, created in collaboration with Dahlia Elsayed, Andrew Demirjian and Danny Snelson, is set in a futurist kitchen, furnished with wallpaper, rugs, and a tablecloth based on traditional Armenian textile designs combined with digital design elements. Visitors to the museum can have their coffee grounds read by A.I.. This traditionally feminine space, as a site for the sharing of coffee and spiritual knowledge passed down through generations of women, challenges the male dominated tech sphere.

Pelenake Brown's new work *Reverb*, 2025–2026 also looks to ancestral teachings. Combining traditional Samoan tapa cloth making and Crip theory, Brown uses digital printing technologies and the language of the computer keyboard to share stories in the visual language of Ta Tau (tattooing). The artist traveled with her mother to their ancestral village to learn the art of tapa making and to create large-scale cloths made from mulberry bark. Audio recordings of the process will be incorporated into her installation.

In the film installation, *Speculations on Capture*, 2024 **Morehshin Allahyari** documents technological developments in Iran and Pakistan, from astrolabes to the telegraph and the camera, that were co-opted by colonial agendas. Allahyari imagines an alternative future through the return of the earliest astrological technologies to the peoples and cultures that created them from European museums like the V&A which have long held these instruments. This work asserts that knowledge — particularly astronomical knowledge — along with many technologies that were developed in the MENA region long before colonial intervention and symbolizes the intersection of decolonial and feminist resistance past and present.

Roopa Vasudevan’s *Requiem for the Early Internet,* 2022/2026 mines her formative memories of the internet as she experienced it in her youth, contrasting it with today’s internet. Looking at what was loved about the more democratic web of the past, and sites like Geocities and My Space, she hopes the viewer might be able to imagine — and create — better possibilities for its future. Her series of 100 hand-drawn QR codes, titled *Slow Response I (Drawings)*, 2021-2022 questions the speed and instant gratification associated with technology and our quick adoption of new technologies

—and even their failures — while asking how interchangeable human and digital labor is or isn't.

Neema Githere invites us into rest by bringing her ongoing *Data Healing Recovery Clinic* into physical space for the first time as part of the exhibition. Conceived as an architectural ritual space for repairing the psycho-somatic toll of data trauma, this work uses materials such as copper, water and clay to invoke a lineage of African Indigenous wellness techne as ingredients towards repair. Drawing formal and philosophical inspiration from the Bakongo cosmogram, the installation is organized around a circular altar-structure that mirrors the liminal axis between spiritual and material worlds, known as the Kalunga Line. Two hammocks invite visitors to sit and contemplate the relationships we have to our devices and to A.I. while situating contemporary technology within a long history of exploitation. The installation features a durational exchange between the artist and their A.I. "obsidian mirror," Nkisi: a re-imagining of ChatGPT as mimicry-oracle and poetic counter-intelligence. These dialogues surface the emotional and ceremonial dimensions of human–machine entanglement, complicating dominant narratives of artificial intelligence as a neutral tool or static capitalist commodity.

Kite's multimedia installation *Wicȟáȟpi Wóihaŋbleya (Dreamlike Star)*, 2024 illustrates the artist's relational approach to technology through Lakȟóta ontology and ethics. This work grew out of the artist's translations of her dreams into a Lakȟóta visual language. Geometric forms, often used in women's quilting, are at the center of a video projection pulsing with images of earth, water, stones, stars, and sky. Doubled in a reflective floor below, these visions create an interconnected universe that includes an expansive constellation of stones that serve as a score, giving sound to the relationships between land, cosmos, human, and non-human. In a 2021 essay *Making Kin with Machines,* Kite and her co-authors wrote: "Stones are considered ancestors... stones speak through and to humans, stones see and know. The agency of stones connects directly to the question of A.I., as the technology is formed not only from code, but from materials of the earth. To remove the concept of A.I. from its materiality is to sever this connection. In forming a relationship to A.I., we form a relationship to the mines and the stones."

Amidst this collection of works is a series of online projects and resources presented on multiple monitors that share information and strategies for change and resistance, including *We Refuse, We Want, We Commit: Manifestos for Creative Resistance through Technology* by Vasudevan et al, and *Indigenous Protocols and Artificial Intelligence* by Lewis et al, the Mimi Onuoha's *People's Guide to A.I*. and numerous others.

Technologies of Relation is accompanied by public programming that empowers

audiences to interact with digital technology as an active participant, and connect traditions of making globally with digital tools. It will be augmented by a series of workshops and performances that make digital technologies more accessible, cultivating an understanding of the ways we *can* impact the future of technology including:

- A conversation on ancient technological futures with exhibiting artists on February 21 at 4pm.
- A performative lecture by **Taeyoon Choi** in November 2026 that will explore ways to engage with the internet and digital webs of relation through embodied group choreography.
- Data healing teen programming with artist **Neema Githere** as a way to cope with the sometimes hidden trauma that social media engages us in.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest centers for making and enjoying today's most evocative art, and is an indispensable home for artists who stretch toward what has yet to be created. From its beginnings as the major textile mill Arnold Print Works in the mid-19th century, to its days as the Sprague Electric Company in the mid-20th century, to its current iteration as a globally renowned contemporary art museum and fabrication center, the 24-acre MASS MoCA campus has a rich history of serving as an economic engine of the city of North Adams and the surrounding region. With vast galleries and a stunning variety of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, MASS MoCA is able to embrace art in all forms. For more information visit massmoca.org or follow on Instagram at @massmoca.

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