NOWN exhibits animation, which, in my definition, means work representing the action of an animated Person, Place or Thing. The use of the term, ***NOWN***, is a word play on "now" and "noun," meant to imply a question about permanence in the current generative virtual landscape. If all is animated, what then can be in the "now?"

The works presented are of recognizable forms, such as video, printed matter, computer games and sculpture. ***NOWN*** accesses the space between fantasy and the fragmented nature of reality implied when viewed through or by an animated object, person or place. The definition of animation in this context is in terms of the effect of communication platforms, mass media and artificial environments, on the experience of "now." The "noun" of the title may be viewed in terms of personal perspectives of the artist's intent and the curatorial approach.

When dealing with cinema and games in the context of animation, narratives are often misconceived, as the use of the medium is set in the forefront of the works. Gaming in particular has developed certain narrative structures that have been absorbed into a kind of cultural subconscious. Gaming landscapes have become like childhood memories similar to the "block in a cityscape or rural neighborhood where the kids are playing." And now artists have begun to do the same. In this exhibition, there are three different approaches to the subject of a narrative, whether that be landscape, character or object. Firstly the game: the new technologies of the appropriated game or the game landscape, the game engine and the influence of gaming avatars or icons. Interestingly enough, a game is generative by nature. Artists today show the impact of the game in their studio practice even when they are not literally producing games. We generally define the game as a competitive activity, limited by a particular set of rules. The game as an artistic medium also creates a protocol or a rule-driven narrative structure, resulting in an artificially-conceived situation. However, it must be noted that all art is preconceived to some extent in this way by the mere fact that it is made to be exhibited - the exhibition itself being an artificial, conceptual environment.

Karl Ackermann and Kinya Hanada present ***Mumblehop***. The Hop plays like an animated board game and infers an interactive cinematic experience. When presented in the context of the game, ***Mumblehop*** is a great example of the merging of art forms occurring in early film and now in the evolution of contemporary computer games. Cory Arcangel's ***i shot andy warhol*** is an 8-bit game hack. The game cartridge is a modified version of the interactive light gun game in which a trigger directly connects participants to the hacked game of Hogan's Alley. In ***i shot andy warhol***, players are asked to shoot various 8-bit versions of Andy Warhol while being careful to avoid other characters, such as the Pope, Flavor Flav and Colonel Sanders. The icon development is interesting, particularly in terms of the artistic approach typically tied to the category of new media. The destruction of the main character, Warhol, is actually homage to the idea of art-making with the redistribution and reuse of commercial products made common by Warhol. Hence the hacking of the Nintendo game done by Arcangel is here likened to Pop Art practice - which lends another meaning to the common practice of hacking or sampling that has become so common in contemporary music and other mass forms. Cory Arcangel's use of 8-bit, low-res aesthetics also reflects the basic structure of digital production.

Tobias Bernstrup's approach to animation is similar to that of Arcangel in that he incorporates computer code as a "readymade" with which he intervenes. Bernstrup collages various gaming platforms and utilizes the found images and facades of European suburbia. He loops these, creating the effect of animation by using an existing computer game and/or it's engine. I have written in past publications about the avatar in relation to Surrealist art history. With ***NOWN*** I would like to explore the avatar in relation to mass media. The actions of an avatar define the trajectory of a narrative in all gaming work. This action emerges from the collaborative nature of gaming and from well-known cinematic structures. Bernstrup's magnification of landscape and the multi-dimensional aspects of each character employs the game as a reflection of psycho-social gaming as a metaphor of human nature and of the current social and political situations.

Michelle Handelman presents her ***candyland*** as a social narrative and also implies the impact of video game culture on society at large in terms of the magnification of normal human traits to the level of those of mythical gaming characters. The ongoing ***Adventures of Lucky M*** explores persona and high adventure through the actions of a female protagonist - a super action hero. Activating cultural memories of the superpowers possessed by past heroes, Handelman's character, M, transforms herself through the use of narrative elements reminiscent of Popeye, who ate spinach to gain strength to exude a kind of hyper-machismo. Lucky M transforms and exposes her strength through seduction, a typical strategy of femininity. M's power of seduction is implied by her voyeuristic relationship with the camera, in other words through certain tropes of cinematic language. Handelman has stated "…and throughout it all the camera lens remains the ultimate object of my affection."

Three themes on the landscape narrative are embodied by the work of Craig Kalpakjian, Yael Kanarek and Miltos Manetas, all of whom represent the landscape of by using technology to make physical the "virtual" realm. Miltos Manetas appropriates landscapes from *Doom* by Playstation in this series of prints. Editing and/or the personal style of the player become the tool of the artist. Just as a landscape artist might look for a pretty sunrise, the video game in itself provides for Manetas a location, and the artist utilizes the actions of gaming in a similar way that "gesture" is applied in painting.

As the game has provided the landscape in the previously-mentioned works, Yael Kanarek has generated a fantastic desert landscape by evoking memories of the ***World of Awe***, a virtual world of her own design. Kanarek binds narration and documentation of an imaginary world, which also includes the viewer's own experiences mixed in with the identity of the narrator. Kanarak's story is a symbolic reflection on the idea of sentiment, like a child opening a trunk in the attic to find Grandma's love letters and imagining the realities of the main character, filling in the spaces with the fragments that she finds. Kanarek's landscapes are images seen through the eyes of the narrator; fragments, like the love letters and maps also found on her site, which are particles of a landscape of the imagination, symbolic of the lonely journey every man and woman makes through life.

Craig Kalpakjian's work articulates the juncture between reality and memory in a sterile language of technology, mediated through sentiments of actual ~~real~~ human experience. Kalpakjian develops computer renderings instead of photographs proper. The narrative he uses is distinct in that it imposes the viewer's position and his or her own experience of the animation on a corporate habitat. I have chosen three pieces, ***Closet***, ***Doors*** and ***Monitors***, to create an abstract narrative of entrances and exits into the fictional space of the exhibition. Craig Kalpakjian illuminates the fictional, metaphoric space used in modern architecture and technologies accessing a narrative through the recollection of the human experience.

Michael Rees, Robert Lazzarini and Willy Le Maitre & Eric Rosenzvieg, all employ a cinematic and narrative approach in relation to the realization of sculpture, which is not literally narrative at first viewing. Willy Le Maitre and Eric Rosenzveig's video examines the space between the past and present by using technical manipulation employed in the animated process to simulate the experience of memory. Le Maitre and Rosenzveig's narration is grounded in the generated effects of the manipulated image, leading the viewer through a journey of abstract narratives in response to preexisting audio and visual architecture.

The displaced narrative of Rosenzveig and Le Maitre is abstract in comparison to the more literal approach of that of Robert Lazzarini. Lazzarini's ***Skewed Studio*** is a conceptual reconstruction of the artist's subjective perspective of his own studio and places the viewer within this space to create a physical memoir of the artist's own intimate gaze. Like Michael Rees, Lazzarini uses a hybrid sculptural form, employing digital interfaces to create animated objects invested with space and time. Rees' monster series presented here are animated objects which freeze moments in a serial timescape and therefore must be defined as time-based works, although they are not literally

moving. Like the avatars described above, these animated objects, although static sculptures, are being approached as examples of animation fragments from larger narratives that emerge from each artist's complex, conceptually-based studio practice. Lazzarini, however, explores the temporality of objects, which are cinematic; the end result of a collapse of time and space first examined in Cubism. Lazzarini's distortions oscillate between two- and three-dimensionality, creating unsettling spatial paradoxes. His sculptures appear to expand and contract as one's vantage point shifts, suggesting something both static and moving at the same time. In the exhibited installation, media is used to create effects capturing an emotionally-charged space of the artist himself.

Rees' animations recall sculptural tradition and are fragments of the permutations from which every animation arises. They are not, however, created for a movie house, although his use of physical humor employed in his figuration may be assumed to be a form of entertainment. Is this cinema? Is it cinematic? Rees' sculptures exist in a neutral space that essentializes any concept of narrative and the idea of form and function assumed in traditional Modernist sculptural practice.

In reaction to defining and redefining their works on a variety of platforms, the concept of sculpture and art-making itself is obviously changing. In saying this, I must clarify that if art-making is evolving, so too must the parameters by which we judge it. Rees has a conceptual practice, taking a familiar subject (classical figurative sculpture) and placing it in a different context by pushing the medium of sculpture through the vise of animation and a constructed narrative, thereby articulating the multi-dimensional of the animated object.

As prime examples of new tendencies in artistic practice, each work in this exhibition captures the moment of "now" in a real-time historic context. These works are the ephemera of a process in an animated "now" and adopt ideas culled from the new medium of cinematic gaming about the uses of character, space and narrative.

NOWN as an exhibition presents a collection of artists exploring the nature of the human experience through the animation of identity, memory and spatial structure. Each artist embraces various uses of evolving technologies, sub-cultures, mass media and communication platforms, expressing the merging and dissolution of the nature of the real and unreal. **NOWN** is a narrative of "now," the action of Person, Place and Thing.