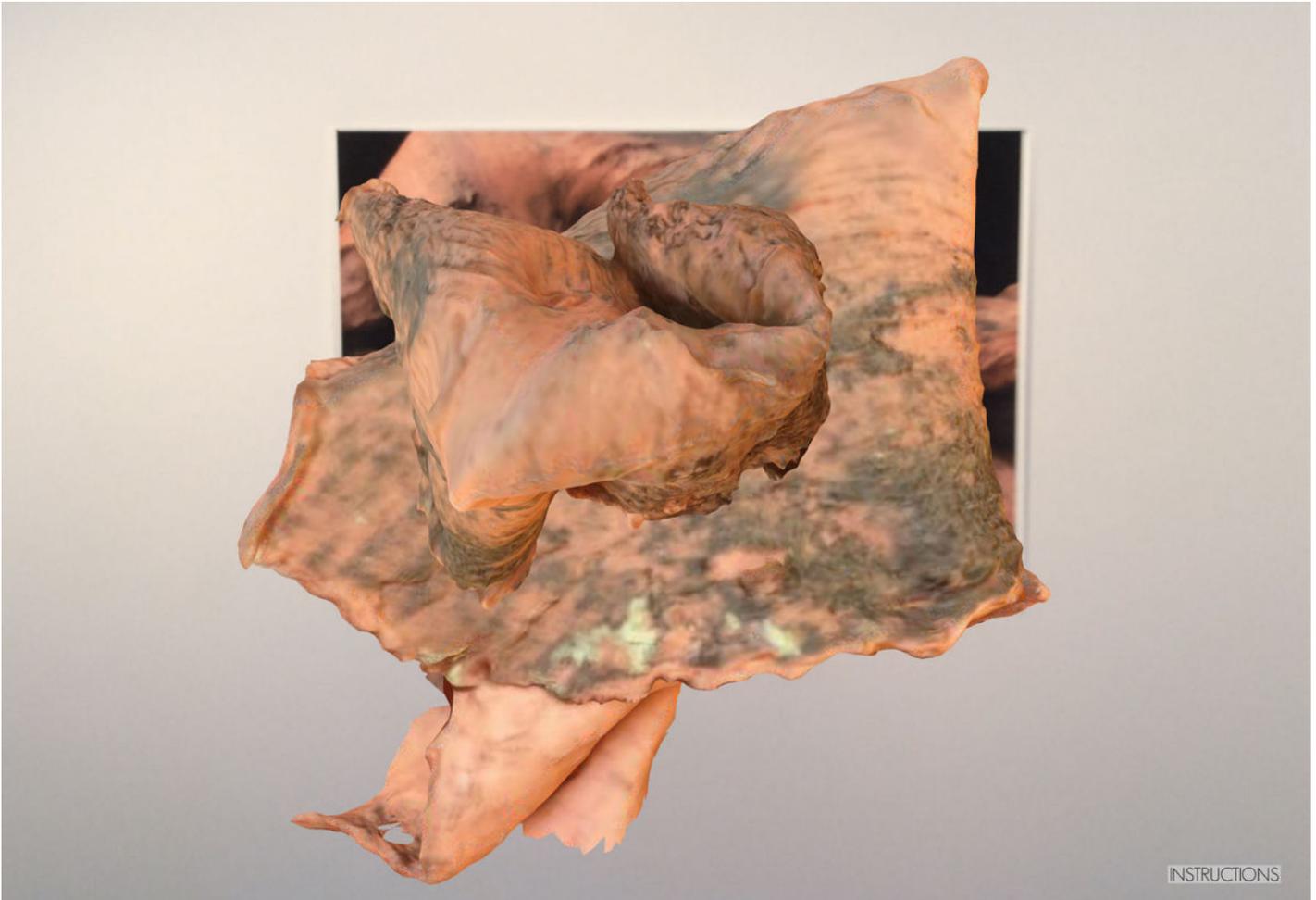


[http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/attheshore/arts/reality-becomes-virtual-at-rowan-s-inverted-normals/article\\_7bf5ec9c-74b4-11e4-906e-8f8b8ee72998.html](http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/attheshore/arts/reality-becomes-virtual-at-rowan-s-inverted-normals/article_7bf5ec9c-74b4-11e4-906e-8f8b8ee72998.html)

## Reality becomes virtual at Rowan's 'Inverted Normals'

By PAMELA DOLLAK, At The Shore Nov 25, 2014



Artist Chris Manzione's two-dimensional prints become three-dimensional sculptures with the help of a clever smartphone app.

Photo provided by Chris Manzione

For artist Chris Manzione, reality — both physical and virtual — has always been interchangeable.

"I've been working with augmented reality, or mixed reality, for years," says Manzione, both an artist in and the curator of "Inverted Normals," the current show at Rowan University Art Gallery in Glassboro. "There's no distinction for me between a virtual object and a real one."

That explains a lot when it comes to his show at Rowan. However, it isn't fully justified until one witnesses the exhibit in person.

What the exhibition does is explore the transformative shifts between digital and physical spaces. How it's done, is through a smartphone or tablet.

In a scaled-down example, large digital prints hang on the gallery's walls. Viewers are then invited to download a free app called "Manzione." The app creates a special camera lens which you then point to the flat image. That two-dimensional print becomes a three-dimensional "sculpture" emerging from the wall — seemingly by magic.

"I had always been doing 3-D modeling on my computer, but for some reason never really considered it in the same way ... I didn't think computer work was equivalent to my studio art. It was more of a way to think through my ideas," Manzione says. "As soon as I saw that smartphones were capable of doing these things, I kind of changed the way I thought. I thought of all the possibilities of what I could do on my computer to be something that I could physically interact with."

Rowan had invited Manzione, a former teacher there, to create his own exhibit at the gallery. He initially developed Inverted Normals as a solo show, but quickly realized that he wanted to be in contact with other artists who do similar work, so the show ultimately became a group exhibition with works by nine other artists along with Manzione's.

The various artworks included provide access points to different ways of understanding relationships between digital and physical spaces. The works were created with a range of digital fabrication techniques and various forms of interactive mobile applications.

Aside from this show, Manzione has conceived a public arts project in conjunction with New York City's MTA MetroCard. "Activatar" is in the same vein as Inverted Normals. The difference here is that the art is handheld. An original image is right there on the MetroCard. Just download another free app — Activatar, in this case — and the image comes alive right in the palm of your hand.

“With this project, I don’t need to print or hand out things for people to access,” Manzione says. “It’s as they (viewers) want. They’re holding it in their hands. It quickly lets me and other artists engage a really large audience almost instantaneously.”

This month’s MetroCard artist is Benjamin Phelan, who is also involved in Inverted Normals. The MetroCard artist will change monthly, and the project will go on indefinitely.

Inverted Normals, however, is slated to close Dec. 20. The show, which also includes large sculptures, three-dimensional works and an interactive station where guests control and adjust objects on a screen, is free to the public.

Devices are available at the gallery for those without a smartphone or tablet. Rowan University is located at 201 Mullica Hill Road in Glassboro. The Art Gallery is on the lower level of Westby Hall. Regular gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, with extended hours to 7 p.m. Wednesdays; and noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

Call 856-256-4521 or go to [Rowan.edu/artgallery](http://Rowan.edu/artgallery) or [ChristopherManzione.com](http://ChristopherManzione.com).

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## Pamela Dollak

Worked in public relations in Philadelphia and NYC on national pharmaceutical and consumer accounts. Owned an award-winning boutique in Philadelphia. Became a freelance writer for The Press, ultimately coming on board full time in May 2014.