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Entertainment & Life

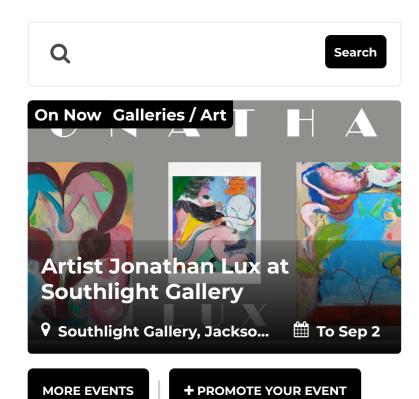# Internet browser history inspiration for MOCA exhibit

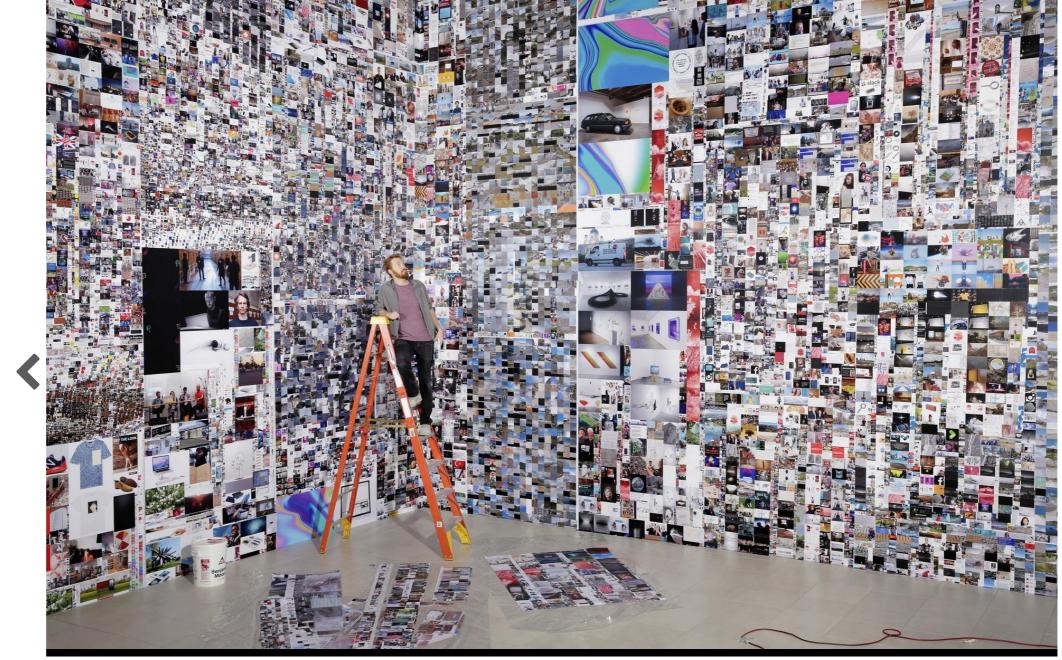🛒 BUY PHOTO          ▲ HIDE CAPTION

Berlin-based artist Evan Roth's 'Since You Were Born' fills the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville's Haskell Atrium Gallery. [Bob Self/Florida Times-Union]

  

By **Charlie Patton**

Posted Mar 17, 2019 at 2:01 AM

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Evan Roth, who was born in Michigan, initially intended to pursue a career in architecture.

After earning a bachelor's degree at the University of Maryland, he spent a couple of years working at architecture firms.

But what he soon realized was that he was much more interested in exploring the internet and its possibilities for creating art than he was in architecture.

"I was having so much fun poking around on the internet," he said during an interview this week.

So he abandoned architecture to pursue a master's degree at the Parsons School of Design in New York City. He followed that by spending two years with the Eyebeam Residency, a program aimed at people who engage with "technology and society through art."

He became an artist. For the last six years the 41-year-old Roth has been doing a series of what he calls his "Internet Cache Self-Portrait" series, artwork consisting of images from his computer's browser cache. The images are stored on a computer's hard disc as a user browses the internet.

Images on the browser cache don't remain there permanently. But Roth learned to archive those images and eventually print them, creating a kind of self-portrait.

His most ambitious "Internet Cache Self-Portrait," "Since You Were Born," now covers the walls and the floor of the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville's Haskell Atrium Gallery, the 40-foot-high three-walled gallery located on MOCA's first floor and visible from its second and third floor galleries.

"This is the perfect place for this piece," Roth said.

The images show what Roth was looking at on the Internet during the first four months after his daughter Aya, now 2, was born on June 29, 2016. He did a similar but smaller exhibit, which included a book also titled "Since You Were Born," after his oldest daughter, Octavia, now 5, was born.

Both girls were born in France after Roth and his wife, Michele Walther, moved to Paris from Hong Kong about eight years ago. Walther is a former corporate attorney who now manages the careers of Roth and other artists.

About a year ago the family moved from Paris to Berlin because it offered bilingual education opportunities for the children that Paris did not.

Caitlin Doherty, MOCA's director and its acting curator, said it was Jaime DeSimone, the former curator who left MOCA last July, who first identified Roth and his "Internet Cache Self-Portrait" series as a strong candidate for a Project Atrium exhibit.

Roth did not physically see the Atrium Gallery until he arrived to install the exhibit last week. But he was sent a model showing the gallery's dimensions and said this week that the model proved very accurate.

Of all the Project Atrium exhibits that have filled the Atrium Gallery since the first in July 2011, none has completely utilized the gallery space as Roth 4,200-square-foot exhibit does.

"It's immersive," Doherty said. "... [It] engulfs the viewer, confronting us with the magnitude of information we gather through casual internet browsing as well as the personal narratives woven through that activity."

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