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## NZ Artist Simon Denny in Berlin and New York on NFTs, meta landscapes and space colonies

From [Culture 101 \(/national/programmes/culture-101\)](#), 2:00 pm on 3 March 2024



[Mark Amery \(/authors/mark-amery\)](#), Host and Producer of Culture 101

Berlin-based New Zealand artist Simon Denny's work has long explored the culture of new technology and the dreams tech entrepreneurs sell us.

Back in 2016, Denny was one of the first artists to look at the complex politics behind blockchain technology and cryptocurrency. His work has looked critically at the boom and bust of the NFT (or non-fungible token) as a way of creating ownership of digital art.

With a nod to the history of settler-colonisation of his homeland Aotearoa, Denny's work shows a fascination with the exploitation of new territories, digital and physical. And digital spaces aren't the only frontier of interest for the world's tech billionaires - the likes of Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk have also extended their interest to outer space.

Augmented Reality view of Optimism in Auckland Art Gallery atrium Photo: supplied

Simon Denny's latest New Zealand commission, *Optimism* at Auckland Art Gallery (on until October) explores the drivers behind the technology that enables space travel, satellites and speculative interest in future space colonies.

Large hanging sculptures in the gallery's atrium are 3D printed variations of patent diagrams filed by American New Zealand company Rocket Lab for rocket engine parts. Visitors to the gallery can then pick up iPads and see - via augmented reality - projections onto these sculptures of visualisations of future space colonies.

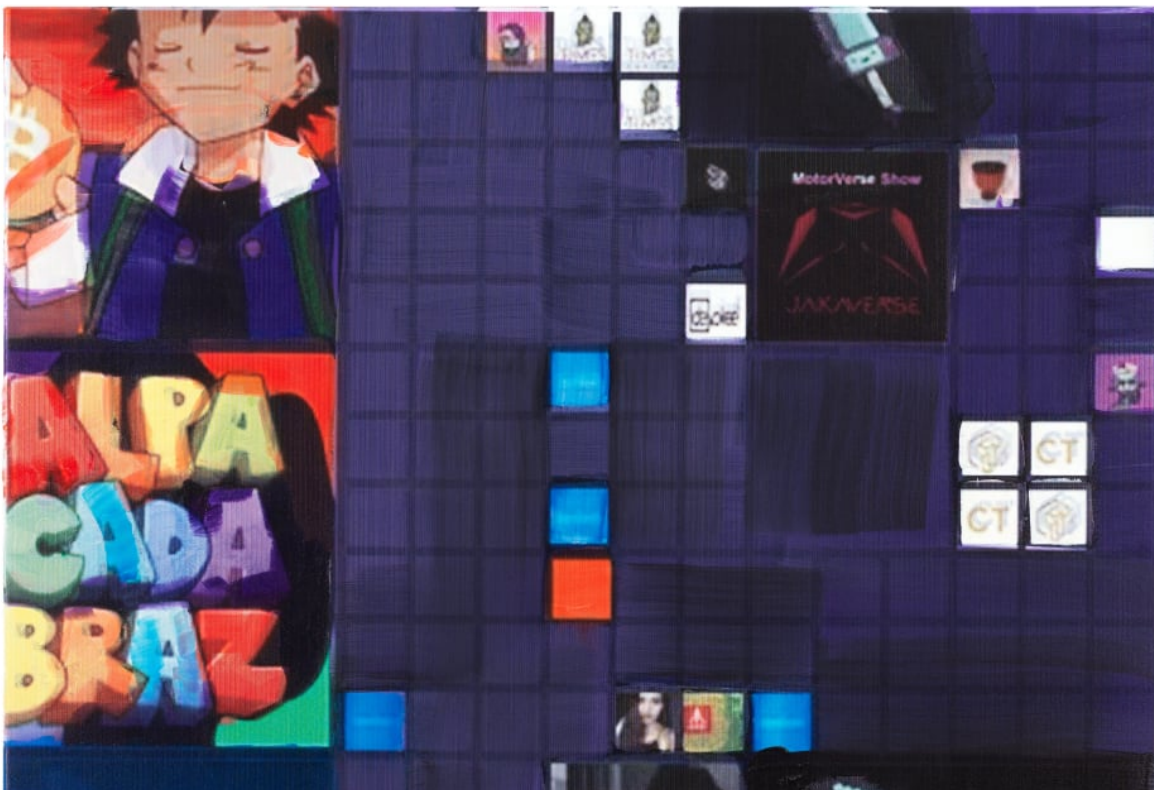


One of several Augmented Reality views in Optimism Photo: Simon Denny

A speculative colony also features on a special edition cover of the latest issue of magazine *Art News New Zealand*.

Denny continues to exhibit widely internationally. Currently on in New York are no less than three exhibitions.

At artist-run space Dunkunsthalle (<https://www.dunkunsthalle.com/>) in New York (in a former Dunkin Donuts), Denny is showing paintings from his 'Metaverse Landscape' series, alongside sculptures made using white boards from the Twitter office furniture liquidation sale initiated by Elon Musk.



Simon Denny, 'Metaverse Landscape 37: The Sandbox LAND (-135, -34)' 2023. Oil on canvas, UV print, Ethereum paper wallet, dynamic ERC-721 NFT Photo: Nick Ash

At Petzel Gallery, Denny has curated a group show, *Multi-User Dungeon (MUD)* (<https://www.petzels.com/exhibitions/multi-user-dungeon-mud>) which takes as its starting point early form text-only multiplayer online games that prefigured contemporary internet gaming. He is also, in parallel, at Petzel staging a solo exhibition, *Dungeon* (<https://www.petzels.com/exhibitions/simon-denny5>).

Simon Denny talked to *Culture 101*'s Mark Amery about his recent work and interests.