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Rethinking what you see: Exhibition bringing machines to life at Halifax art gallery



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By: [alythomson](#) Metro, Backstage Pass Published on Wed Jan 28 2015

Hundreds of tiny rusted steel tiles teeter back and forth, dancing as artist Daniel Rozin waves his arm in front of the tall rectangular wall at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

When the room is empty, the panels click and ripple like raindrops running down a coarse wall. But as the New York-based artist moves, the shadows on the mechanical installation's 768 panels project his silhouette.

"All of my pieces are centered around the idea of mirroring or reflection," said Rozin as gallery members listened intently, smiling and gasping as the pieces followed his body movements.

"The power of computation and mechanics and electronics to create a reflective surface — that seemed to me to be an interesting idea."

Rozin's installation, called 'Rust Mirror,' has come to the gallery as part of RAM: Rethinking Art and Machine, a collection of new media art from around the world that explores the humanization of machines.

The exhibit also includes the work of four other acclaimed international artists: Angela Bulloch, Jim Campbell, Manfred Mohr and Alan Rath.

Curator Marla Wasser said RAM isn't just for art lovers because it offers an interactive element of surprise.

"This is entertaining," said Wasser above the bustle of the gallery as members mingled with artists at the exhibition's opening.

"You just have to get in the door and then the magic happens on its own. You actually don't need to know a lot about art."

In Campbell's section, long rows of tiny light blue lights hang down vertically from the ceiling, forming a rectangular cube.

Up close, the lights appear to be flickering at random. But when standing at a distance, silhouettes of people can be seen walking across the twinkling lights.

Wasser said Campbell, an engineer and filmmaker, took video of people walking and then depixelated it.

"Using very sophisticated software that he's written and created and patented, he depixelates film," said Wasser of the San Francisco-based artist.

"He actually forces you to participate when you're looking at his pieces. With the depixelization, subconsciously you're actually forced to go into your memory to make some sort of association that will then create the reality of the piece."

In the next room, 10 large mechanical hot pink feathers open and close like a clam shell turned on its side — Rath's newest interactive sculpture.

They appear to make measured movements, but as someone in the crowd moves closer, the feathers start behaving erratically, pulsing back and forth and then closing as if to hug the viewer.

"It just has this beautiful movement with a complete sense a humour," explained Wasser.