

## **Let's Play Majerus G3**

a project by Cory Arcangel

April 27, 2024 – March 15, 2025

Opening: April 25, 2024, 6-8 pm

*As culture itself becomes increasingly digitized, more and more of it will end up in drawers like this — discarded, forgotten, and inoperable.* – Cory Arcangel in Artforum, Summer 2014

At the center of *Let's Play Majerus G3* is a previously unexplored aspect of Michel Majerus' estate and archive: a Macintosh PowerBook G3 used by the artist until 2002. An initiative by artist Cory Arcangel, in cooperation with digital-art and culture organization Rhizome, *Let's Play Majerus G3* reactivates the laptop using emulation software. Drawing on the style and structure of YouTube "Let's Plays," Arcangel creates a series of videos showcasing Majerus' digital workspace, allowing unprecedented access to a virtual studio and the lesser-known aspect of his process that it represents. With this revolutionary development, Arcangel shapes a uniquely first-hand glimpse, through the eyes of a fellow artist, into Majerus' artistic process through this rich primary source and a selection of works by both artists exhibited at Michel Majerus Estate.

While their respective practices began nearly a decade apart, Majerus (1967–2002) and Arcangel (b. 1978) are united by a core interest in the aesthetics of the digital, the creative potential of new technologies, critique of said technologies and the free traversal of analog and digital worlds. Arcangel, whose practice often finds origin in the legacies of others, first encountered Majerus' work as part of his 2002 exhibition at Petzel Gallery in New York. It was only in 2014 that he began engaging with Majerus' oeuvre. This led him to the Michel Majerus Estate, where he learned of Majerus' laptop, difficult to access as a result of its age and condition, and developed the concept, together with Rhizome's Preservation Director Dragan Espenscheid, for its emulation.

Once Espenscheid succeeded in restoring Majerus' laptop, booting it in emulation, the PowerBook G3 proved itself to have been a key tool for the artist, taking the place of his extensive handwritten notebooks. With it, he was able to conceptualize works, plan exhibitions, maintain his archive, communicate, draft texts and modify the environment to his liking. The restaged system now acts as a time capsule of the months between 2000 and 2002, with digital sketches that detail processes of development and production illuminating the close links between device and aesthetic decision making. It was, in all senses of the term, his mobile studio — his primary mode of accessing the then-burgeoning internet: a nonhierarchical, global portal for imagery and information, the speed, accessibility, utility and appearance of which made an early impression on Majerus.

Arcangel's work is driven by the temporality and technological dependence of aesthetics, with modern-day technology constituting, in a broad sense, a key advancement in human history — a chronology and engagement that includes everything from musical instruments of the Renaissance to video games. He at once acts as artist, curator, musician, author, archivist and entrepreneur. Artifacts of our technologically shaped present — computer games, Instagram feeds, advertisements — are interrogated, unveiled, modified and reverse engineered, digitally generated for electronic and analog manifestations that span video, print, sculpture, fashion, performance and composition. Among a generation of artists situated at the outset of the digital age, Arcangel distinguishes himself with his research-based, often collaborative analysis of a digital present.

His engagement with archival computing builds upon a 2014 project in which he, in collaboration with the obsolete-technology specialists from the Carnegie Mellon Computer Club, accessed over 30-year-old floppy discs from the collection of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, rescuing a group of long-lost digital experiments by the artist. This discovery closed a notable gap in Warhol's oeuvre that saw him employ Commodore Amiga computers.

*Let's Play Majerus G3's* emulation component opens doors not only within the context of Arcangel's practice, but for the Michel Majerus Estate's archival work. In exposing a key set of previously unexplored records, each step of Majerus' process becomes traceable, illuminating the tact of an artist at the forefront of a dawning digital age, continuously negotiating the integration of this position into his work.

Majerus installed not only the latest photo, video and audio-editing software on his laptop, but also emulators for games from the 1980s. His hard drive housed photographs, scans, screenshots, texts and Photoshop files. Together, they form a born-digital chronicle — one that is crucial for his Estate, expanding its extensive archive and foregrounding the challenges posed as archival structures and models for reception develop into art history's next generation.

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The presentation and its videos find site across a number of platforms and venues, including the Michel Majerus Estate, Arcangel's YouTube channel and Rhizome's website as part of their "Artbase Anthologies" program. Each YouTube episode draws their format from "Let's Plays" — screen-recorded gaming walkthroughs, commentated by a picture-in-picture player.

The Estate's exhibition also places work by Majerus, created between 1996 to 2002 and selected by Arcangel, in dialog with those by Arcangel dating back to 2004. Both artists' deft balancing acts between the analog and the digital stand as crucial moments in recent art history — a history that stretches from the 1990s' internet-influenced streams of imagery to art's digital shift in the 2000s — as the complexly intertwined natures of two once-disparate worlds fuse to shape our present.

The accompanying program started with a conversation between Cory Arcangel and Dragan Espenschied at the Michel Majerus Estate during Gallery Weekend Berlin in April. For Berlin Art Week, a new iteration of Arcangel's performance *The AUDMCRS Underground Dance Music Collection of Recorded Sound* (2015 – ongoing) was presented in September during Berlin Art Week in the Kuppelhalle at silent green. At Arcangel's invitation, Lena Willikens (Salon des Amateurs, Germany) curated and performed a selection of about 60 minutes drawn from the collection of records in a classical concert setting, using turntables from Technics' iconic SL-1200 series.

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*Let's Play: Majerus G3* was created in cooperation with **Rhizome**, an artist-founded platform for presenting, researching, and preserving digital art. The emulation of Majerus' computer, developed by OpenSLX, was overseen by Dragan Espenschied (Preservation Director at Rhizome) and Mona Ulrich. The project is supported by grants from the **Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA)**, from the **Institute for Contemporary Art Research (IFCAR)** at the **Zurich University of the Arts**, and from **Arcangel Surfware**, a software and merchandise publisher founded by Arcangel in 2014.

**Cory Arcangel** (b. 1978, Buffalo, US) is an artist living and working in Stavanger, Norway. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg (2022); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2011); Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2012); The Barbican, London (2011); Reykjavik Art Museum, Iceland (2015); Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2010); Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2010) and Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2005).

**Rhizome** champions born-digital art and culture through commissions, exhibitions, scholarship and digital art conservation. Founded in 1996 by artist Mark Tribe as an email discussion list including some of the first artists to work online, Rhizome has played an integral role in the history of contemporary art engaged with digital technologies and the internet. Since 2003, Rhizome has been an affiliate in residence at the New Museum in New York City.

Housed in the artist's former studio, the **Michel Majerus Estate** is dedicated to researching, presenting and contextualizing the work of Michel Majerus (1967 – 2002), and preserving the cultural legacy of an extensive oeuvre created during a short period that began in the late 1980s. In this time, he developed a pioneering visual language that freely drew upon subcultures, mass media, nascent digital technologies and a wide array of art-historical sources, sampling their component parts and reintegrating them into his compositions and installations. Since 2012, the Michel Majerus Estate has invited guest curators, scholars and artists to engage with Majerus' practice through exhibitions and projects staged at the Estate. Previous collaborators include Brigitte Franzen, Fabian Schöneich, Joseph Kosuth, Laura Owens and Jordan Wolfson.

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Press images for *Let's Play Majerus G3* are available [here](#) or contact:

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