

Staten Island Museum  
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**For Immediate Release**

## **GESTURE: IN PAINT and SOFTWARE**

An intergenerational exhibition at the Staten Island Museum

**Exhibition Dates:** July 7, 2011 – January 8, 2012

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, July 7, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

**Location:** Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Place, SI, NY 10301

**Admission:** Exhibition: Free with Museum admission (\$3/\$2 seniors and students with id)

(Staten Island, NY - July 2011)The Staten Island Museum proudly presents an inspiring multimedia exhibition that captures the colorful improvisational paintings by abstract painter **Helen Levin**, and interactive art works by her son, **Golan Levin**, who is known internationally for his real time computer applications and innovative collaborations. Visitors to the Museum are invited to enjoy both the visual and the hands-on experiences of the "gesture" within ten large abstract paintings by Ms. Levin and through opportunities to compose their own creations using original, customized software by Mr. Levin on four iPads as well as a visual projection which allows the viewer to interact with their entire body.

Enjoy the visual and the hands-on experiences of the human gesture from **July 7, 2011 through January 8, 2012.**

Because this kind of collaboration – to our knowledge – has never been done before, the interactive exhibition constitutes a world premiere and reflects the Museum's commitment to present art shows of significant importance in general, and in particular, of enhancing the pride and participation of the Staten Island community.

### **About the Artists**

**Helen Levin's** paintings are comprised of color saturated strokes and shapes that emanate from the brush-in-hand; they are inspired by architecture, nature, and improvisational music. Her work demonstrates how paint, the artist's eye and physical actions interpret space, light, and dynamics within the picture plane. Her method of *automatism* – allowing the subconscious to lead her saturated brush – creates mature and highly energized artworks.

Influenced by the tradition of gesture painting but employing modern technology, **Golan Levin's** interactive software creations provide participatory art experiences generated from digital "motion capture" techniques. The results are animated shapes, lines, and sounds that contain humor, whimsy, and drama through movements that are all initiated by the viewer/participant.

Mr. Levin's art and research are concerned with the medium of response, and the conditions that

enable people to experience “flow” or sustained creative feedback with reactive systems. His artwork, which is informed by research in human-computer interaction design, has led him to try to expand the vocabulary of human communication, and to help art viewers discover their own creativity.

The exhibition will contain Golan Levin’s *Yellowtail* and *Meshy* pieces (currently available as iPad apps) which are designed for touchscreen technology. A third work, *Ghost Pole Propagator* (GPP) a projection based work which inspires the audience to involve their entire body.

Mr. Levin is also known for performances, virtual environments, installations, and other internationally presented collaborations, and can be perused on his website: [www.flong.com](http://www.flong.com).

“At the Staten Island Museum the paintbrush and the computer are not just artistically compatible, they are part of an ongoing dialogue in Art”, says curator Diane Matyas. “We invite visitors to share our delight in this “nonverbal” communication, both painted and algorithmic”

Ms. Levin, who moved to Staten Island in 1970 and says, “I have much admiration for the great parks and open spaces of the South Shore, plus its shoreline and the good friends I met there. I still love to take long walks in nature.” In addition to painting, Helen creates collages and *wallbooks* – a term she invented.

A proud mother, Helen remembers young Golan as a creative “Montessori kid” who showed promise playing with blocks as a toddler, an Atari videographer as a youngster, a composer and artist at (Stuyvesant) High School, and finally, a creator at MIT. Likewise, Golan Levin recalls “sharing” his mother’s painting studio, painting next to her while she worked, and the profound influence of her highly gestural paintings in his early visual world.

Both mother and son embrace analysis and abstraction. Golan Levin explains, “I am fascinated by how abstraction can connect us to a reality beyond language, and the ways in which our gestures and other signals can reveal unique signatures of spirit.”

His mother adds, “This exhibit points to a synergy between the past and the future - paintbrush and the computer. It ties our work together. I am gratified that my son is committed to new ways of thinking and expressing himself and ideas –and using new media in order to do so.”

### **Achievements**

Helen Levin received her MFA from Columbia University, and has paintings and artist books in many public and private collections including: Janco Dada Museum (Israel), the Staten Island Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Museum of the City of New York. Her artist books are found in museum libraries such as: the Guggenheim, MoMA, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Ms. Levin has written numerous articles about art. Credits include: *Leonardo Magazine*, *New York Arts Magazine*, *Women Artist News*, and *the Staten Island Advance*. Recent Gallery exhibitions include: Ezair Gallery, 2010 (Paintings), Espace Culturel (BNP Paribas, Nice, France) 2008, Andre Zarre, NYC 2009, Mikst Media in Woudrichem, the Netherlands; Broome Street Gallery, Micro Museum, Brooklyn, 2008, Paper Slam I & II: Innovative Paperworks. NY Law School, NYC, 2007-2006, Pleiades Gallery, 2008, and in 2006 at Ceres Gallery (Collage solo), and the Broome Street Gallery.

Golan Levin’s artwork is represented by the **bitforms gallery**, New York City. His work has been presented in the Whitney Biennial, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Kitchen, and the

Neuberger Museum, all in New York; the Ars Electronica Center in Linz, Austria; The Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei, Taiwan; the NTT InterCommunication Center (ICC) in Tokyo, Japan; and the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, among other venues. His funding credits include grants from Creative Capital, The New York State Council on the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Rockefeller MAP Fund, The Greenwall Foundation, the Langlois Foundation, and the Arts Council of England.

Mr. Levin received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the MIT Media Laboratory where he studied in the Aesthetics and Computation Group. Between degrees, he worked for four years as an interaction designer and research scientist at Interval Research Corporation, Palo Alto. Presently Levin is Director of the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry and Associate Professor of Electronic Time-Based Art at Carnegie Mellon University, where he also holds Courtesy Appointments in the School of Computer Science and the School of Design.

### **Related Museum Programs**

#### ***Lunch & Learn: French Songs and Paintings by Helen Levin***

Wednesday, July 20, 12:00pm

At the museum in St George

Light French fare, and songs with musical accompaniment – then visit Gallery A and enjoy the new exhibit with the artist. For location, cost, & registration call at (718) 483-7135.

#### ***Meet the Artists: Helen & Golan Levin***

Sunday, September 25, 2:00pm

Free with museum admission

A discussion and tour of the gallery

#### ***New Media artist Presentation with Golan Levin***

Friday, December 9, 7:00pm

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For 130 years, the Staten Island Museum has been fostering and sustaining scientific and cultural heritage on Staten Island. Founded in 1881, NYC's only general interest museum explores the arts, natural science, and local history through permanent and changing exhibitions and welcomes about 80,000 adults and school children to a comprehensive array of programs every year. Located two blocks from the Ferry Terminal, visitors can embark on a voyage through time in the Staten Island Ferry exhibit; see rocks glow in the dark in the Hall of Natural Sciences; and experience the lives of Staten Island's first inhabitants. Down the road in Building H on the Snug Harbor Campus, visitors can explore the latest exhibitions in the History Center Gallery, or make a research appointment for the History Archives & Library. Staten Island Museum is owned by the City of New York and benefits from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. For current exhibitions, visit [statenislandmuseum.org](http://statenislandmuseum.org).

### **Staten Island Museum (St. George)**

75 Stuyvesant Pl.

Staten Island, NY 10301

#### **Museum Hours:**

Monday: 11am– 5pm

Tuesday-Friday: 11am – 6pm

Saturday 10am–5pm

Sunday 12pm-5pm

**Main number: (718) 727-1135**

**The museum building is wheelchair accessible. Call (718) 727-1135 for assistance.**

**Admission**

Adults \$3.

Students and Seniors: \$2.

FREE to members and children under 12.

FREE Lunchtime Break: Every Tuesday between 12–2pm

**History Center & Archives \*New Location\***

1000 Richmond Terrace, Snug Harbor Campus, Building H, Staten Island, NY 10301

**Hours:** Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 10am – 4pm by appointment

Please contact Cara Dellatte at (718) 727-1135, ext. 122

**Gallery Hours:** Tuesday – Friday, 1pm – 4pm (FREE ADMISSION)