

JON RUBIN WITH FELIPE CASTELBLANCO

The Foreigner

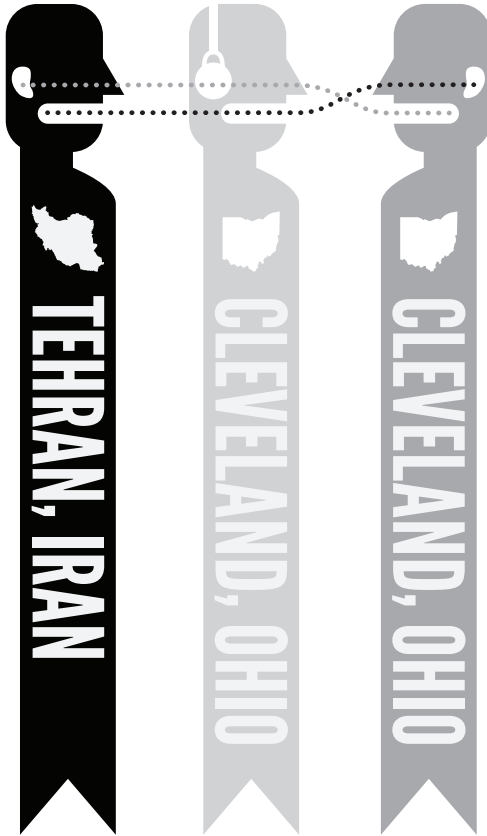
Events at Tower City Center: February 2, 9, 17; March 9, April 6



IRANIAN

AVATAR

CLEVELANDER



THE FOREIGNER

Imagine a freckled 14 year old girl at the mall who approaches a stranger and asks, “What is the weather like where you are?” The bewildered stranger cocks an eyebrow and replies, “It’s pretty cold and snowing.” The girl states, “It is 11 degrees Celsius here in Tehran.” Thoroughly confused, the stranger narrows his eyes and furrows his brow. The girl goes on to explain, “I am sitting in my home in Iran, listening to you through my computer and speaking to you through this girl in front of you. I am a 30 year-old man and a musician. What kinds of music do you like?”

The brainchild of artists Jon Rubin and Felipe Castelblanco, this bizarre scenario will play out a number of times at Tower City Center as part of *The Foreigner*. The project employs simple mobile technology that allows Clevelanders to act as physical avatars for Iranian citizens, thus enabling the general public in the mall to meet and speak to someone living in Iran through the body of a local citizen.

The Foreigner presents an uncanny circumstance where the separation between self and other, local and foreign, is collapsed and confused, and the geopolitical distance between the United States and Iran is made personal and local.

EVENTS WITH AVATARS

Opening at SPACES

Friday, February 1, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

For future event locations, visit www.SPACESgallery.org

Saturday, February 2, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 9, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 17, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 9, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 6, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

ARTIST BIOS

Jon Rubin creates interventions into public life that reinvent social and political conditions and create new platforms for agency, participation, and exchange. His projects include starting a radio station in an abandoned steel town that only plays the sound of an extinct bird, running a barter-based nomadic art school, and operating a restaurant that produces a live talk show with its customers. He has exhibited at The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Mercosul Biennial, Brazil; The Shanghai Biennial; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; The Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard, New York; The Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico; The Rooseum, Sweden; The ParkingGallery, Tehran, Iran; as well as in backyards, living rooms, and street corners. He is currently short-listed for the International Award for Participatory Art. For more information, visit: <http://jonrubin.net/>

Felipe Castelblanco is a multidisciplinary artist working at the intersection of participatory, socially engaged and new media art. His work seeks to create new experiences of publicness and coexistent (if sometimes contentious) encounters through urban interventions, video, interactivity and networked installations. Most recently, he has constructed an invisible wall connecting children across two continents (Children's Museum of Pittsburgh); collaborated with participants from 10 countries to turn the world upside-down (Future Tenant Gallery); and assembled a team of day laborers to paint houses-on canvas-in the streets of Portland, Oregon (Open Engagement). His work has been shown internationally, including at the FAD festival in Brazil and the Valenzuela Klenner Gallery in Colombia, as well as in storefronts and on street corners across Pittsburgh. Felipe attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2012. For more information, visit: <http://felipecastelblanco.com/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The R&D (Research & Development) program invites artists, curators and other cultural producers to articulate their research and development of ideas and objects through a supported exhibition or project. These exhibitions and projects may be group, solo, or collaborative endeavors.

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