

EVENTS

A VR Exhibition Pays Tribute to a Long-Gone Vegas Casino

The Sands, opening on August 12, features works by 15 artists on rotating display in a one-to-one virtual replica of the Lower East Side gallery Essex Flowers.



Benjamin Sutton August 9, 2017



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Screen capture of a VR work by Justin Berry (all images courtesy Essex Flowers)

From Jean Baudrillard and Hunter S. Thompson to Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, Las Vegas has a way of inspiring imaginative, expansive, and magical — or, some might say, virtual — thinking. One of Las Vegas Boulevard's original hotel-casino complexes, the Sands, serves as a shorthand for Sin City's hyperreal qualities in *The Sands*, a virtual reality (VR) exhibition opening on August 12 at Essex Flowers.

Like that legendary entertainment complex, which famously hosted Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and other members of the Rat Pack — serving as the setting for the original *Ocean's 11* film — and in the 1960s was bought and expanded by billionaire inventor Howard Hughes, *The Sands* aims to offer a virtual buffet of aesthetic experiences. Curated by members of the Blended Reality Crew, works by the 15 participating artists will be on view in a virtual, one-to-one scale recreation of Essex

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artists will be on view in a virtual, one-to-one scale recreation of Essex Flowers that visitors will explore in VR as they walk around the empty brick-and-mortar gallery space.

The display will rotate throughout the show's nine-day run, creating new juxtapositions and interactions between different works. Visitors will be able to interact with and move through the virtual works, allowing for unexpected and intimate experiences. After all, to paraphrase a cliché, what happens in VR stays in VR.



Screen capture of a VR work by Antonia Kuo



Screen capture of a VR work by Jonathan Ehrenberg

When: Opens Saturday August 12, 6–9pm; continues through August 20

Where: Essex Flowers (19 Monroe Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan)



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