PITTSBURGH

Cory Arcangel
CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART

When New York's Whitney Museum of American Art mounted a solo show of Cory Arcangel's work in 2011, it aimed to address the lacunae where the history of Pop and Minimalist seriality conjugates with "new media" (aka the expanded field of communications technologies, predominantly the personal computer, used to generate objects that the institutional apparatus then makes into "art," at least nominally). Arcangel's work near seamlessly delivers the hit strategies of postwar art practices via such popular forms as Nintendo and YouTube, Web interventions, and the use of other informatic materials so frequently evoked as some kind of transgressive outside to an outmoded notion of high culture. Packaging, commodity, reproduction, and immiseration are all blithely referenced (à la Warhol and Judd) in Arcangel's *Volume Management*, 2011, for example, which features a line of Vizio flat-screen boxes, installed double stacked.

The packaging reappeared at the Carnegie Museum of Art this fall in "Masters," a compact ten-year survey of Arcangel's work to date. In addition to those used in *Volume Management*, six more boxes had been installed in the museum's Forum Gallery, here supporting as many high-def screens playing a selection of six of Arcangel's best-known pieces, including *Super Mario Clouds*, 2002; *Untitled Translation Exercise*, 2006; and *Drei Klavierstücke op.11*, 2009. For many reasons, Pittsburgh's Carnegie—a museum tied to a renowned engineering school born of the city's industrial past—was an apt site for Arcangel to show his work, given the legacies of various orders of production lines, from Foxconn to Warhol (a Pittsburgher, famously, and Carnegie Tech grad), bearing upon the material historicity of his artistic support.

But moreover, Arcangel takes as his medium (or what might now be more accurately designated as "matrix") the tailings of our technological (and thus cultural) "just past." This is to say that the "new media" Arcangel employs is, in fact, not new at all, hinging instead on nostalgia. Take, for example, the *AUDMCRS Underground Dance Music Collection of Recorded Sound*, 2011–12, for which the artist lent his collection of techno and trance music to the museum's adjacent Carnegie Library: Rather than streaming his '90s–early '00s music catalogue via cloud, Arcangel brought in crates of records, a turntable, and headphones—equipment that, until just a few years ago, "real" DJs preferred. Elsewhere, BlackBerrys appear (but no iPhones), as does a copy of a 2009 issue of *XXL* magazine opened to a story on 50 Cent, named "hip-hop's biggest star"—back in 2003. In these examples of Arcangel's work and many more, nostalgia isn't just activated; it's expedited. Subjects mined from the upper reserves of our memory are refined and objectified for emotional consumption (astride the accelerations of capital) with all historical and mnemonic dimensions "preserved."

But what then of the institution, whose role no matter what it exhibits is to serve as a kind of external memory drive? Does Arcangel's display only expose the museum to be even more frumpily obsolete? An entity that loses speed, the more data it stores? Or does "Masters" somehow redeem the promise of a physical institutional space, showing the electronically mediated reticulation of a platform such as Facebook to be ultimately empty and hardly a public sphere? As the production of value seems ever more abstract—occurring on factory floors in faraway places, managed by simply moving images around handheld screens—Arcangel has left us with the impression that the artist as user, clicking his way through the digital matrix, has perhaps supplanted all other forms.

—*Jaleh Mansoor*

View of "Cory Arcangel," 2012. Foreground: selection from the artist's archive, 2002–12. Background: *Infinite Fill*, 2004.