

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘THE REACTION GIF: MOVING IMAGE AS GESTURE,’ CROWDSOURCED INSTALLATION, ON VIEW AT MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

March 12–May 15, 2014

Astoria, New York, March 12, 2014— *The Reaction GIF: Moving Image as Gesture*, a new installation featuring 37 animated GIF images crowdsourced from the online community Reddit, opened today at Museum of the Moving Image. The exhibit foregrounds how the animated GIF has emerged as a form for communicating with short moving images, often culled from popular movies and television shows, in response to, and often in lieu of, text in online forums and comment threads. Understood as gestures, they communicate more nuance and concision than their verbal translations. The installation is on view in the Museum’s lobby through May 15, 2014, and was organized by Associate Curator of Digital Media Jason Eppink.

“Reaction GIFs are an open form with evolving rules determined organically by the communities that use them. Many are created, deployed, and rarely seen again. But some reaction GIFs have entered a common lexicon after being regularly reposted in online communities,” said Eppink. “In *The Reaction GIF: Moving Image as Gesture*, the animated GIF is understood not as an artistic medium but as an element of nonverbal communication: as performed language.”

On Tuesday, February 25, Eppink posted this question on Reddit:

Comment with what you would consider "classic" reaction gifs (e.g. Michael Jackson eating popcorn in *Thriller* or Orson Welles clapping in *Citizen Kane*). Then briefly explain what it means when you use it. Think of it this way: if you had to describe how reaction gifs are used in Reddit comment threads to your grandmother, which ones would you show her and how would you describe what they mean?

In the threads that followed, Redditors contributed more than a hundred comments and suggestions that shaped the installation. The selected GIFs include [David Tennant in the rain](#), a GIF “used to express a quiet but deep sadness”; [Kermit the Frog in “ecstatic celebration”](#); [startled baby](#), used “when something particular startling or unexpected occurs out of nowhere”; [Homer disappearing into a hedge](#), used when “the poster wants to distance themselves from what’s going on....because a fight has broken out, or because things have got weird and uncomfortable”; and many more.

Read the Reddit threads [here](#) and [here](#).

In conjunction with this exhibition, the Museum plans to offer GIF-making education programs for young people. (Details to be announced soon.)

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Tickets for regular film screenings are included with paid Museum admission and free for members.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free.

Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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