

Nic Hamilton pushes imagery "a little too far"

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Nic Hamilton pushes imagery "a little too far" in the hope he breaks it Comparing his process to the way artists make music, the video artist's work combines impressive digital renders with raw elements. Share Nic Hamilton's portfolio exhibits all the hallmarks of someone who's been working with computers since day one. It's slick and full of realer-than-real digital renders. Interestingly, he actually only started using a computer "reluctantly" during his second year of studying architecture, describing himself as a "late starter". Once he discovered this new way of working, however, that was it and he "got interested in the image making side of things over the pretence of academia pretty swiftly." Having grown up in Tasmania, Nic is now based in Melbourne where he works as a video artist, producing work for the likes of Actress, Boiler Room, Red Bull and Kenzo. On what keeps him excited about his medium he tells us: "I love applying the technical side and constant acceleration of what's possible using 3D. There are new tools allowing new ideas coming out at a fast rate. I find it fascinating, and it makes me question the idea of 'creativity' that so much of our advertising, art and brand aesthetics are drawn directly from software features." While his portfolio features myriad projects, Nic's work often features music as a strong central element, whether that's through the client or the output. "I identify with the process of making music and, in a way, mirror that when I work," he explains. "I see video editing and animation software the same way a producer might use Ableton, you spend time arranging disparate elements into a cohesive whole and then giving it a sonic or visual character." In one of his most recent projects, Nic worked with a friend Leonce, a musician from Atlanta, on the music video for his single Tripwires. Having collaborated previously on the artwork for this latest "12" Fade to Mind, this continuation was only natural. "I instantly loved Leonce's super tough but delicate percussive tracks," Nic adds. The resulting video features CCTV cameras, drones and an altar in a jungle with a fountain spilling out red liquid. It's an aptly futuristic yet antiquated and dystopian world for Leonce's electronic track to inhabit. "When [Leonce] said he had a jungle scene in mind with ideas about surveillance it just clicked and I made it," Nic tells us. This kind of aesthetic is representative of Nic's portfolio at large, with pieces often featuring "detailed natural and architectural environments, atmospheric and abstracted simulations as digitised nature montages, and generative and pattern based phenomena." He also works hard to "eternally push footage and imagery a bit too far and break it a little." And while his imagery is clearly technically impressive, Nic enjoys keeping his work a bit raw by stripping some of the commercial gloss of the top. "I'm not making car ads, its moving image for electronic music so needs to reflect the spirit of the music its based on," he adds. He cites his work with Actress as a great example of this: "Making the video was the visual equivalent of bashing out a drum track in one go, adding a sample and big 808 and releasing it, done in one long night. It was just rough render pre passes and I filmed the screen with my phone giving it a 2012 phone video look." In another recent work, Nic was commissioned by Pitch Festival to create a five-screen video work for an installation at the 2019 edition, taking place outside the Grampians in Victoria. Again, he pulled on the idea of a natural environment: "My video depicts nine moments in a drought. Twisting landscapes reduce to carbonised particles as water washes endlessly over digital granite and pixelated fires burn in an infinite loop." But, as is his signature, he made sure everything wasn't completely perfect. "My work ended up being about 20 minutes of detailed water and physics simulations that were sometimes not quite right visually and introducing noticeable Artifacts that I ended up being more attracted to. So in post production I wore down the polished originals into worn out montages." Nic is currently working with the festival for 2020's event, bringing together ten "really great artists" to display work at next year's festival "using a screening payment approach, giving artists a chance to get paid to display their work in a unique setting." He concludes: "It's a great festival in the way they support and involve visual artists." GalleryNic Hamilton Share Article

Further Info About the Author — Ruby is Senior Creative at It's Nice That, overseeing our visual output across platforms and projects. Before that, she was associate editor on the editorial team, after joining in September 2017 following graduation from Central Saint Martins.