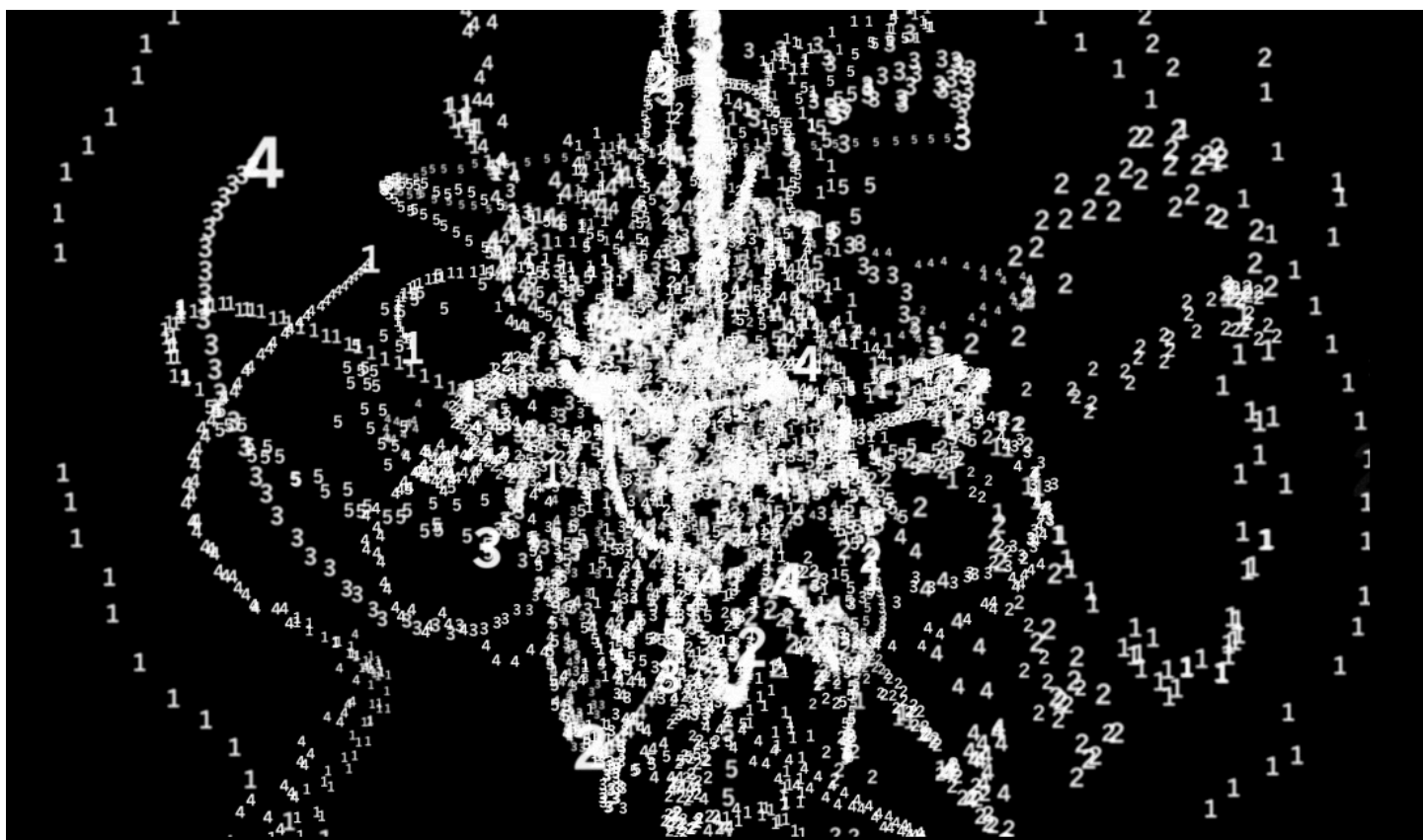




# Charles Atlas: Painting by Numbers



Charles Atlas, *Painting by Numbers*, 2011. Three-channel synchronized video projection, site-specific architectural installation. 8:21 minutes (silent). © Charles Atlas; Courtesy the artist and Luhning Augustine, New York.

In a career more than four decades long, St. Louis native Charles Atlas has produced pioneering videos and films, and engaged in vital collaborations with esteemed visual artists and choreographers including Marina Abramović, Leigh Bowery, Lady Bunny, Michael Clark, Merce Cunningham, Mika Tajima / New Humans, and Yvonne Rainer, among others. He has done so while continuing to innovate with a personal practice that extends the boundaries of technology and moving imagery.

The title of Atlas' video, *Painting by Numbers*, is an inventive riff on the popular hobby painting kits. Rather than suggesting a composition to be filled in, the artist

has programmed a dynamic animation where endless flows of numbers suggest galaxies of connections that exceed the frame, time, and space. Originally created in 2011 as a three-channel synchronized video projection, *Painting by Numbers* has been reconfigured for its Street Views presentation, which viewers can see projected on the museum's facade every night from dusk to midnight.

Charles Atlas moved from St. Louis to New York in 1970 at the age of 20. He worked closely with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and eventually became their first filmmaker-in-residence. Atlas coined the term "media dance" to describe the way he and his camera

moved with, in, and around moving dancers. *Painting by Numbers* resonates with this approach: It resembles a digital choreography of numbers moving through space.

*Charles Atlas: Painting by Numbers* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Dean Daderko, Ferring Foundation Chief Curator.

This exhibition is generously supported in part by Emily Rauh Pulitzer and Clever Little Girl Foundation. Street Views is generously supported in part by the Whitaker Foundation.

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**Charles Atlas** (b. 1949, St. Louis, MO) has lived and worked in New York City since the early 1970s. In October 2024, the ICA Boston will open the first U.S. museum survey devoted to Atlas's work; the presentation will run through March 2025 and is accompanied by a major new publication. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Mathematics of Consciousness*, a 100-foot long video installation commissioned by Pioneer Works, Brooklyn, NY, and supported by a grant from the VIA Art Fund (2022); *Charles Atlas: Ominous, Glamorous, Momentous, Ridiculous*, Fondazione ICA Milano, Italy (2021); and *Charles Atlas: The past is here, the futures are coming* and *The Kitchen Follies*, The Kitchen, New York (2018). Atlas's work is included in the permanent collections of major institutions worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Tate Modern, London; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich; and De Hallen Haarlem, The Netherlands. In 2024, The Getty Research Institute acquired the archive of Charles Atlas.

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#### Learn More

Visit [camstl.org](http://camstl.org) for more information about *Charles Atlas: Painting by Numbers*, including an **audio guide** by the curator.



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