

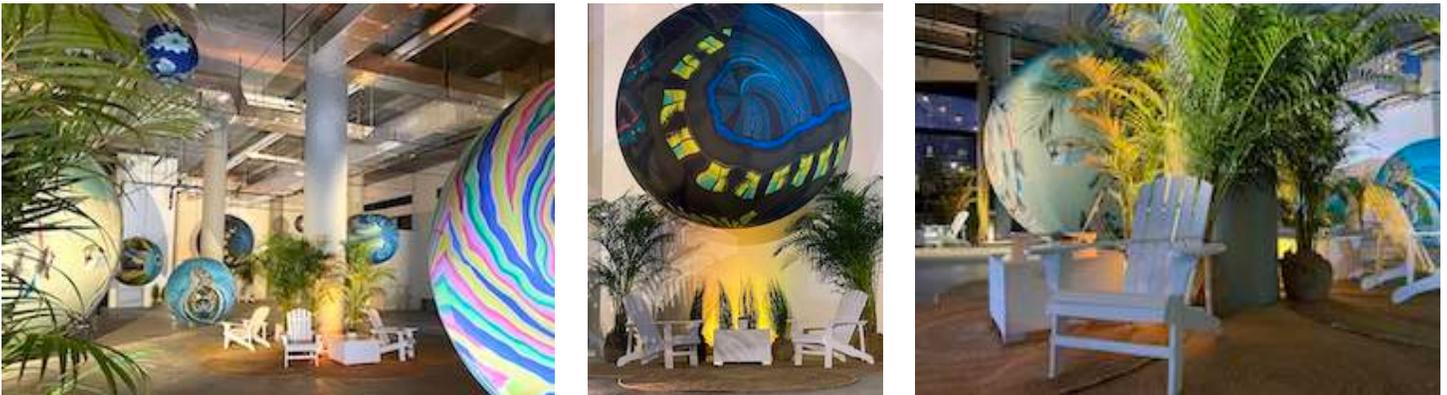
**Anne Spalter: *Vacation Planet***  
Presented by Wallplay  
25 Kent Avenue in Williamsburg  
January 11 – February 4, 2020  
Open 11am – 7pm, Weds. – Sun.

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## **Brooklyn artist transforms 8,300 square feet of raw space in Williamsburg into an immersive, psychedelic indoor art installation featuring real palm trees and tropical greenery**

*Vacation Planet, a free-to-the-public indoor art installation, offers a “tropical escape” from the NYC winter—complete with real palm trees and lush greenery*

Adirondack-style beach chairs atop natural jute carpets beckon guests of all ages to enjoy the scenery, which includes fourteen massive spheres (ranging from three to 16 feet in diameter) that are printed with algorithm-based digital reworks of footage the artist captured in vacation locales like Miami Beach



**New York, NY — January 2020** – Brooklyn-based digital mixed media artist Anne Spalter, academic pioneer and founder of Brown’s and RISD’s original digital fine arts programs in the 1990s, has taken over an 8,300 square foot space on the ground floor of a mixed-use building at 25 Kent in Williamsburg. The immersive artwork combines digital and analog art practices to present a cross-media art installation featuring components like real tropical plants and an ocean soundscape, combined with sun-emulating washer lights and digitally printed spheres up to 16 feet in diameter.

For the exterior of *Vacation Planet*’s giant orbs, Spalter used custom, algorithm-based software to transform high resolution source footage of vacation destinations into the swirling, psychedelic, vibrantly rendered prints we see in the installation. Some of the fourteen spheres are suspended from the ceiling, while others rest tethered to the ground. The ceiling height of the space is 22 feet, and the resulting effect of the spheres’ size and placement variance is as if someone threw a set of giant marbles and a freeze-frame were captured mid-bounce.

Spalter intends the installation to be extremely accessible to the public, both conceptually and logistically. The space welcomes all, from a local worker on their lunch break to families or friend groups who want to have a weekend picnic.

With that in mind, a key component of *Vacation Planet* is Spalter’s incorporation of six seating areas with Adirondack chairs and wicker coffee tables. Visitors are invited to sit down and hang out as long as they want within the installation; there is free Wi-Fi, and each of the six seating areas is

outfitted with its own power strip. Guests can also enjoy three custom Instagram Stories filters featuring animated versions of the spheres. (When visitors follow @annespalter, the *Vacation Planet* filters will automatically show up as swipeable options in the “Stories” feature on the most updated version of the Instagram app.)

“I want visitors to experience their own personal vacation planet by entering a ‘sun-lit’ art installation offering a summertime respite from the winter in New York City,” explained Spalter. “*Vacation Planet* is meant to be a fun, surrealist immersive public art environment that mixes the semiotics of the tropical beach vacation with the mystery, wonder and loneliness of outer space by way of these planet-like orbs.”

The source footage of the spheres is intentionally unidentifiable in terms of location, and, collectively with the other installation components, is meant to evoke a surreal quality when one enters the space. Said Spalter:

“In more fantastical terms, I want the jumbo spheres to be as if someone had dipped a bubble wand into a moment at the beach or poolside and blown ‘memory bubbles’ that became planets in a galaxy of the mind. While the bright colors and palms evoke pleasurable getaways, the planetary-like orbs devoid of people (or with barely discernible teeny figures) and vast expanses of sand suggest something otherworldly.”

Spalter continues: “Stroll through or stay to eat lunch, work on your laptop, or take an Instagram. Full spectrum lighting and ambient sounds help to create welcoming space in which to spend an afternoon. It’s at once familiar and yet dreamlike and surreal. Are you floating or flying?”

*Following an opening reception on the afternoon of Saturday, January 11, Vacation Planet will be on view at 25 Kent through February 4. Opening hours are 11am – 7pm on Wednesday through Sunday (closed Monday and Tuesday).*

#### **ABOUT ANNE SPALTER**

Digital mixed-media artist Anne Spalter is an academic pioneer who founded the original digital fine arts programs at Brown University and The Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in the 1990s. With a decades-long goal of integrating art and technology, Spalter has authored over a dozen academic papers and the seminal, internationally taught textbook, *The Computer in the Visual Arts* (Addison-Wesley, 1999).

Spalter’s artistic process employs a hybrid arsenal of traditional mark-making methods and innovative digital tools. A new body of work, further developed at a Winter 2019 residency at MASS MoCA, combines artificial intelligence image algorithms with oil paint and pastels.

Spalter’s classical arts education (she received an MFA in painting from RISD) combined with her foundational command of digital art theory and practice suited her well when she transitioned from academia to a full-time studio practice in 2009. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (London, UK); the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo, NY); the Rhode Island School of Design Museum (Providence, RI); and others. Her New York exhibitions have included *Atmospheres* at the Children’s Museum of the Arts.

Spalter is also noted for her large-scale public projects; in 2016, MTA Arts commissioned Spalter to create a 52-screen digital art installation, *New York Dreaming*, which remained on view in one of its most crowded commuter hubs (Fulton Center) through Fall 2017.

Having studied mathematics as a Brown undergraduate (and with additional cross-disciplinary masteries including a 2010 black belt and 2011 Sensei designation in Kenpo Karate), Spalter’s eclectic influences in the studio are as diverse as Buddhist art, Jungian archetypes, Surrealism, and pure mathematics.

For the digital art component of her mixed media practice, Spalter uses custom software and algorithms to transform both still and video source footage—which she captures during multisensory experiences such as riding the Coney Island Cyclone; walking through an open-air flower market in Bangkok; and gazing down from a helicopter over downtown Dubai—into psychedelic, vibrantly rendered “Modern Landscapes.”

Spalter regularly lectures on digital art practice and theory, with recent speaking venues including the National Arts Club (New York) and Design Miami, for the latter of which she discussed the cultural impact of new technologies.