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Seeing Signals: Jordan Shaw Turns Data Into Art

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, Nova Scotia (August 26, 2026) – What does your phone reveal about you without you ever saying a word? Toronto-based artist and creative technologist Jordan Shaw explores that question in “Data as Material", which opens at ARTSPLACE Gallery in Annapolis Royal on September 12 and continues through October 31, 2026.

Shaw turns invisible wireless activity into physical artworks. Using custom scanners and software, he captures signals from nearby Bluetooth devices and other digital networks, recording their presence, strength, proximity and time. The resulting data becomes the basis for paintings, prints, electronic textiles, sculptures and interactive installations.

“The exhibition offers audiences a way to see the digital activity that normally passes unnoticed. A phone in a visitor’s pocket, a smartwatch on a wrist or a pair of wireless earbuds can become part of the artwork. In pieces such as ‘Pulses’ and ‘Constellation’, the gallery itself becomes a source of data, with works responding to the devices and activity around them”, said Gallery Director Sophie Paskins.

Shaw’s “You Had to Be There...” series takes a snapshot of wireless activity at a particular place and time. Custom software records Bluetooth packets in real time, translating the resulting data into layered marks on canvas. Each painting is tied to a specific date, time and location, creating a visual record of people and devices that were present, even though they may never have known they had become part of the work.

The “(in)visible” series similarly transforms unseen transmissions into hand-embellished data prints. Together, these works raise questions about how much information is generated simply by moving through the world and what happens to that information once it has been collected.

There is also a distinctly Nova Scotian thread running through the exhibition. Shaw spent summers in the Margaree Valley on Cape Breton Island, where he learned rug hooking from his grandmother. His “Connected Landscapes” series combines ethernet cable with printed circuit boards, adapting a traditional textile process to contemporary digital materials. Landscape imagery drawn from photographs taken during trips to Nova Scotia connects this work to both place and family history.

Shaw’s interdisciplinary practice combines sculpture, electronics, generative code, data visualization and textile craft. His work has been exhibited internationally and commissioned for public art events, including Nuit Blanche, Lumière and igNIGHT. He holds a B.I.T. in Interactive Multimedia and Design from Carleton University and Algonquin College and an MFA in Digital Futures from OCAD University.

“Data as Material” presents data not as something abstract or distant, but as a record of everyday life. The exhibition asks viewers to consider the digital systems operating around them, the traces they leave behind and the increasingly blurred boundary between physical and digital experience.

“Data as Material” opening reception Saturday, September 12, from 12 to 2 p.m. Artist Talk & Demo 1 p.m. Light refreshments will be served, all are welcome. Exhibition continues through October 31, 2026.

ARTSPLACE is a public Art Gallery that is operated by the Annapolis Region Community Arts Council, a registered charitable, community organization dedicated to encouraging and promoting the arts. Supported through the Province of Nova Scotia and the Canada Council for the Arts.

ARTSPLACE Gallery is located at 396 St. George Street in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia

For more information please contact:
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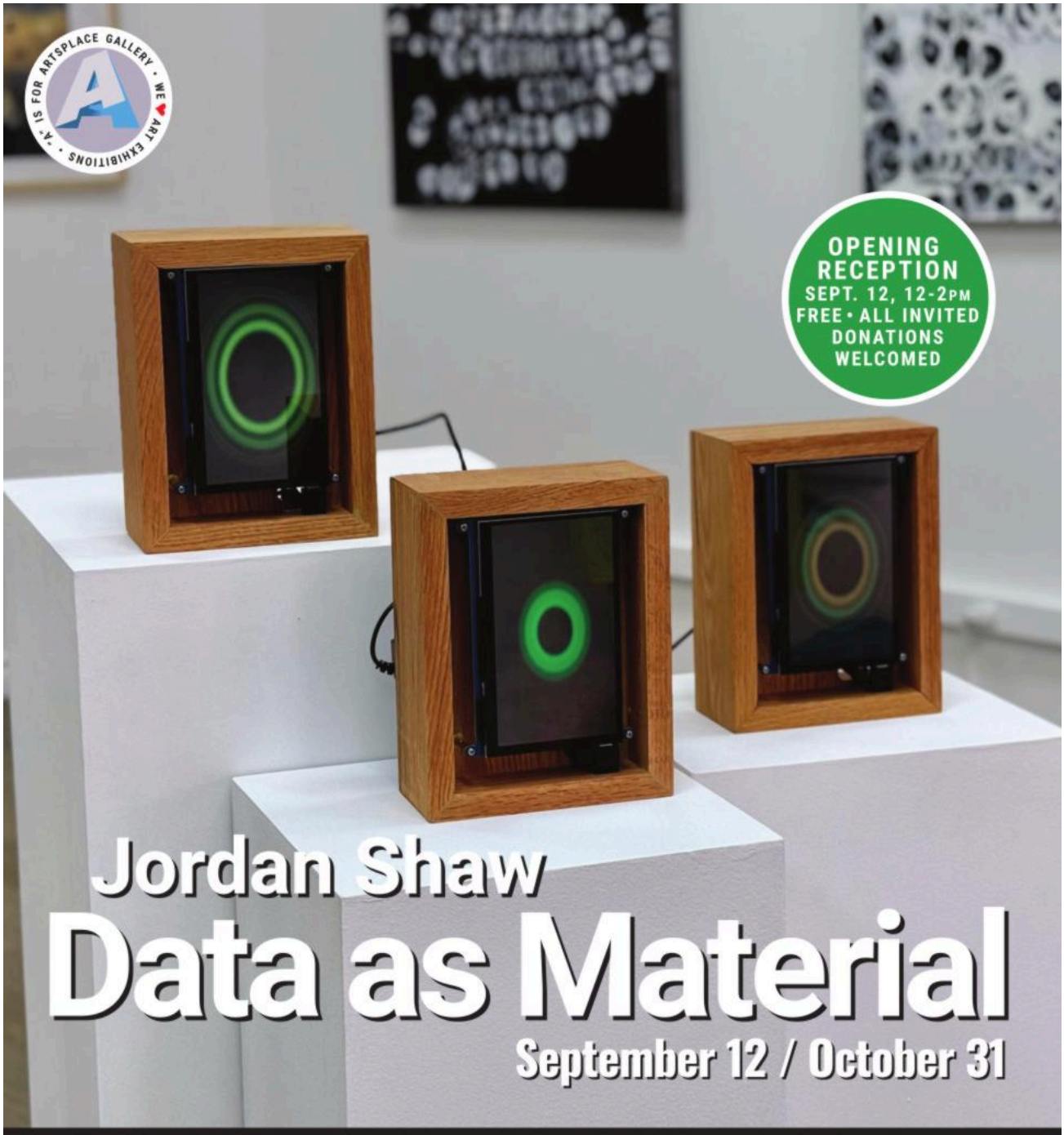

ARTSPLACE 396 St. George St. Annapolis Royal, NS ▪ 902.532.7069

ARTIST TALK & DEMO, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12 / 1 PM • FREE TO ATTEND

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