# Conclusion: Towards a Digital Avantgarde

This thesis began with a personal exploration, seeking to harmonize my engagement with unstable media and interactive practices with the more conventional realm of "Expanded Painting" encountered at the Rietveld academy. Delving into avantgarde art theories and examining the aesthetics of digital art through a cybernetic lens set the stage for contextualizing the nuances that rendered my practice seemingly incongruent within the framework of "Expanded Painting."

In short, aesthetic theories rooted in cybernetic thinking embraced the dynamism, instability, and transformative potential of the digital art object, challenging the established norms of a historical art continuum where the art object is static, stable, and placed “above” the viewer.

In the pursuit of reconciling these divergent ideologies, it became evident that the core tenets of avantgarde movements, such as questioning artistic autonomy, rejecting institutional norms, challenging the status quo, and redefining art's role in everyday life, resonated strongly within the fabric of digital art practice.

The thesis also highlighted the pitfalls encountered by digital art when attempting to replicate traditional paradigms, emphasizing that these challenges arise precisely from the attempt to digitize physical art objects rather than embracing their inherent digital nature. Institutions like the Rietveld and DogTime, by resisting the assimilation of digital practices, perpetuate a divergence between art theory and digital art practice rather than fostering convergence.

Drawing inspiration from Carl Sagan's wisdom, the thesis reframes his words, suggesting that in a society reliant on science and technology, a lack of understanding in these domains is a perilous path that will herald the end of art[[1]](#footnote-1).

Yet, amid this divergence, there are beacons of convergence emerging within the Netherlands. Organizations like V2\_, Creative Coding Utrecht, Acid Soldier Club, and the Waag embody the spirit of the Digital Avantgarde, actively bridging the gap between digital art practice and established art institutions.

In conclusion, the Digital Avantgarde emerges as the contemporary movement, seeking to establish the autonomy of digital art practice on its own terms, free from constant comparison to traditional counterparts. It echoes the sentiments of the V2\_ 1986 Unstable Media Manifesto:

"WE DO NOT WANT TO BRING EXISTING ART TO THE PUBLIC,

WE WANT NEW ART AND A NEW AUDIENCE."

The Digital Avantgarde, in its quest for innovation and independence, charts a new trajectory for the evolving landscape of artistic expression in the digital age.

1. The original quote is: *“We live in a society absolutely dependent on science and technology and yet have cleverly arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology. That's a clear prescription for disaster.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)