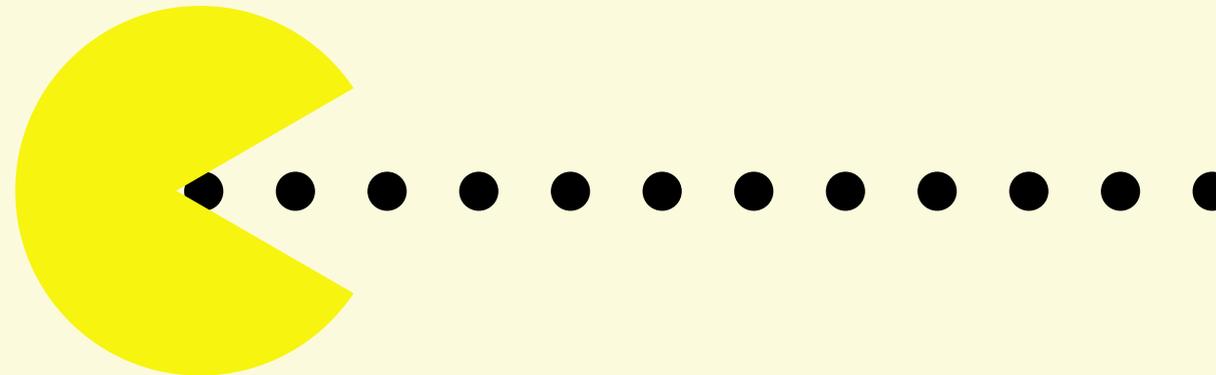
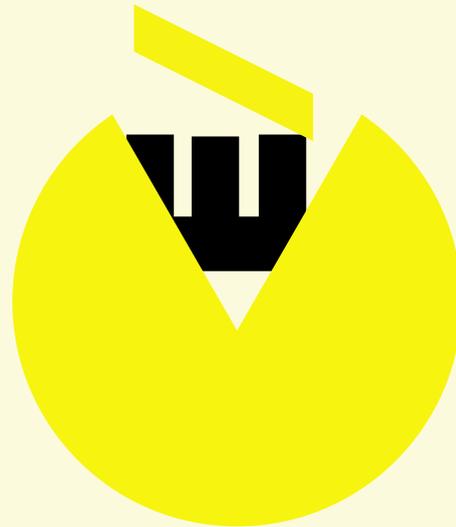


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Christiane Paul, Thomas Petersen, Andy Polaine,
Simon Poulter, Andrew Stern, Nathaniel Stern,
Tale of Tales, Jonathan Willett*

<http://www.game-play.org.uk>



**GAME!
PLAY**

Game/Play

Goal orientated gaming and playful interaction explored through media arts practice – A networked national touring exhibition.

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35 – 36 Queen Street
Derby DE1 3DS
<http://www.q-arts.co.uk>

HTTP Gallery, London

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FOREWORD/ GILES ASKHAM

Game/Play is initially constructed as a dialogue between two venues, two organisations, exhibiting two sets of artworks that explore notions of playing and gaming in the context of media arts practice. The venues, networked together for the duration of the initial exhibition, will also invite their audiences to play with one another via works positioned on the Internet and others, whose interface can be accessed online, but which also have a physical presence in the gallery.

Game/Play is an exhibition co-curated by Q Arts, Derby and HTTP, London, two organisations brought together in the spirit of collaboration. Q Arts is about to morph into a new entity, amalgamating with an independent cinema to become QUAD, and relocating to a new purpose-built arts venue at the heart of Derby's city centre in 2008. HTTP is an artist-run gallery and production space in the vibrant and culturally diverse Green Lanes area of North London. Run by Furtherfield, its founding members share a background in arts activism and networked media arts. Two very different organisations are exploring new ways of engaging with their existing audiences and developing new ones.

The works exhibited in Game/Play call for a collaborative approach. It is in the nature of much media art to invite active participation from its audience, and in some cases, the audience is prompted to direct the nature of the work itself. Game/Play explores the transformative zones between technologically enabled artwork and active participant. Many of our exhibited works invite playful exchanges, and the online aspect of the show offers entry points for new audiences who may not normally visit galleries. The individuals and groups who are exhibiting with us come from diverse backgrounds and support their projects in many different ways. One particular selection highlights an independent production scene that exists as an alternative to the commercial gaming world. These projects explore many themes, producing spaces for social engagement and evocative environments and imaginative narratives. Other works playfully provoke the audience to engage with critical and social issues, or provide a humorous commentary on contemporary relationships with technology.

The collaborative process can provide a richness of experience that is difficult to audit. Mutual understanding and the recognition that we can all learn from one another are particularly positive features of this mode of working. Game/Play's curatorial team have endeavored to develop the project in this spirit of cooperation. There is a playful approach to the territory, balanced with a critically rigorous examination of its themes. The essays presented in this publication offer fruitful insights by contemporary writers into the works presented in the exhibition, as well as informed perspectives to the wider, social and critical context of the project.

The different components of Game/Play will come together and tour the UK in 2007 and 2008. The website www.game-play.org.uk will be constantly updated throughout this period to reflect the continuing exchange between artists, works, writers and venues.

“Play is the exultation of the possible”¹

Game/Play relies on the creative participation of our audiences. Many of the works enable an intuitive, exploratory and open-ended engagement. This relationship is intended to enable our participants to act as contributors and catalysts in a dynamic creative process that we intend to be as accessible and fun as it is philosophical and theoretical. The works allow enterprise, dissolution of predictable rules and creative judgement – play – not united by a single political agenda but by an appreciation of complex relational self-directed choice.

Fluffy Tamagotchi by Paul Granjon repurposes and reanimates seemingly obsolete machinery. Granjon’s aim is to embrace the opportunities made available by new technology while playfully subverting the familiar domestic arena of the techno toy. *TAG* by artists Low Brow Trash tests our understanding of the virtual/physical and digital interface. In a one on one with computer generated ‘real life’ scenes, the physical actions of participants activate the work and these are rewarded with responses in real-time via the screen. Characters within *TAG* respond to these interactions in an unnervingly realistic manner. It is through this process of exploration, predetermined choice and control that a new understanding of technology emerges. *TAG* provides a glimpse towards a future utopia where we can choose to play in a place where the edges are seamless, where the generator of the image is hidden and where the image becomes the world.

In Game/Play we intend to allow participants to gain multiple perspectives on the creation of meaning within, the constructs and anarchy of structured and free-form engagement in a variety of works and environments. Artists group Ermajello have adapted their performance work – *Plankton* for Game/Play, which uses live music performance coupled with an intuitively responsive projection of a digital, magical underworld, that reinstates a sense of awe within media art, akin to that of the works *Samorost* and *Aquaplayne*. Throughout the project we have created frameworks by which the roles of communication and participation are explored. A communication between participant and artwork, mortal with machine, at one moment directing the narrative, the next being directed by it, and in-between – when a mutually creative symbiosis occurs. Simon Poulter’s new work

The Golden Shot (revisited) offers an opportunity to question the processes of communication, morality and political accountability. In the work an anonymous (paintball) gunner is directed, by remote instruction via the Internet, to fire on command at a target bearing the names of infamous countries in the western news. In the role of participant or visitor to the gallery we are inexplicably drawn into the decision-making process of a TV show style game of global war – would you go to war, would you pull the trigger – who is directing the show?

In 2005, Q Arts/QUAD, invited young people in Derby to contribute their ideas, towards the creation of a season of work for Q Arts. The response was overwhelmingly in favour of computer games and play. The consultation has since initiated an ongoing programme exploring what media art has to offer in engaging with new audiences.

As a consequence of the consultation, Q Arts’ media artists² have been working with diverse groups and individuals – from disabled and excluded young people, emerging artists and refugees and artists in exile, to create artworks that reference computer games. Production workshops explored narrative, storyboards, examined and played with genres and created characters and content. In the process of devising the games participants reflected on the power and control relationships they were creating, the representation/dissolution of social constructs, gender, accessibility for the player and gaming aesthetics.

Games created by PRU, Q Club and other young people from Derby have both subverted and been inspired by classic arcade and contemporary games such as Pac Man, Worm, Space Invaders and others. Long Journey Home artists mixed Kurdish song with their own artworks to create an interactive interface examining the transience of dispersion, global community, identity and the practical impact of UK Home Office Policy.

Since 2005 Q Arts have taken diverse groups of people on a journey through playful and ‘interactive’ media art practice via participation, production and exhibition, Game/Play marks a further development in this ongoing project and we are proud to have had the opportunity to work with the curatorial team to achieve something larger than all the sum of our parts.

During Game/Play groups of young people in Q Arts Derby and HTTP Gallery London will meet each other online in VisitorsStudio to take part in live, networked art production workshops, becoming at once, participants, producers, performers, and audience. Other groups will be taking part in the season through related workshops. Much of the methodology of the project will inevitably remain hidden and even the language we use to describe it cannot fully express the creativity, conflict and meeting of minds that occurs with a live partnership process, however, we trust that the material of the project will reflect its strength and communicate the depth of our engagement with it.

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¹ *Buber, M. (1878-1965) – philosopher, story teller, pedagogue*

² *Q Arts artists Darius Powell, Martin Sommerville, Sophie Powell and Angela Terris worked with Long Journey Home, Newtons Walk Pupil Referral Unit, Q Club and young people in Derby from 2005 – 2006*

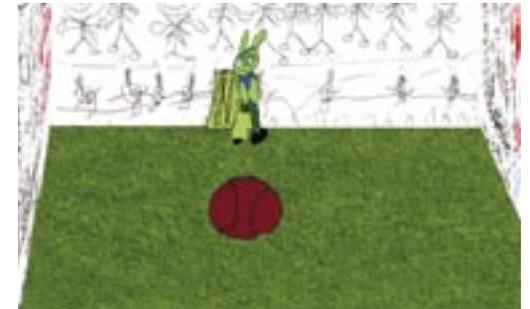
Images (from the top)

Bryan ‘Rapid Robots’ Newtons Walk PRU

Mubeen ‘City Shooter’ Q Club

Bon ‘Curse of the Were-turtle’ Q Club

Damir & Zishan ‘Whizz Cricket’ Net:Reality Group



Play, technology and ethics

“The aeon is a child at play with coloured balls”
Heraclitus, 54th Fragment, 500 BC

“What has changed dramatically is the emergence of a military culture that accepts computer games as powerful tools for learning, socialisation, and training”.
Michael Macedonia, chief scientist of US Army Simulation, Training and Instrumentation Command (STRICOM), 2002¹

Between Heraclitus and Macedonia, you have the dilemma – the energy and the ambivalent potential – of play and technology.

Play is one of the constitutive processes of the material universe,² and most certainly of complex mammalian development. The ludic scholar Brian Sutton-Smith calls play “adaptive potentiation”. The many games, simulations, imaginings, experimentations, tricks and rituals that comprise play, in their sheer fecundity and diversity, are what keeps a human capable of responding to the challenges of social living, beyond the moment of sheer survival.³

Yet return to Heraclitus’s child at play – “adaptively potentiating”, no doubt, with her coloured balls. From idly sifting the balls through her fingers, holding them up to the sun or the late afternoon moon to compare sizes, or talking to them as imaginary friends, she suddenly decides to throw one ball against the other – and a flake of colouring comes off the sphere. Delightedly, she collides another pair of balls, and produces another little rainbow of disintegration. Until she is exhausted with this form of play, we will find the aeon in a storm of creative, violent, gleeful destruction.

Stanley Kubrick’s mind-wrenching jump-cut in *2001: A Space Odyssey* – where a tossed bone, rising from the percussive, exploratory ecstasy of a group of early humans, rotates into an orbiting spacecraft – is the most elegant modern expression of how play’s open processes have driven our technological imagination.⁴ Yet it’s always worth remembering that the Cold War was only at a point of rapprochement in that future scenario (hammer and sickles meeting stars and stripes on the moon flag).

The agonism of play – the way that its core psychology of “taking reality lightly” (Friedrich Schiller) empowers us to strategise, outmanoeuvre, move on a field of possibilities with other contenders, and achieve victory (or court defeat) – deserves just as much consideration as plays more carefree and expressive forms. Indeed, in a world where a ‘military-gaming complex’ has been forged in the US, where the current military narratives of a new art form (computer games) meets the recruitment and legitimacy agendas of an imperial superpower, we are forced to take play with as much seriousness as we can muster.⁵

Of course, not all play is win-lose play. For at least twenty years, Tim-Berners Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, has talked of his momentous construction as a “play project”, from inception in the labs at Cern in 1989, to his present ambitions for the Semantic Web.⁶ The internet has been best described by the American legal thinker Lawrence Lessig as an “innovation commons” – a shared, robustly constructed mutual space which enables a multitude of users to express themselves, create their projects, share them with others.⁷ Doesn’t that sound like the ultimate playground to you?

And while there’s always the possibility that little Aeon can use her balls to subvert or disrupt on the Net – leaving them out in the yard so that a lumbering adult can slip on them; distributing a virulent virus that can just as easily bring giants crashing to the ground – there is at least as much constructive, sociable and reciprocal activity in this play-space too.

This can be the consistent generosity of open-source software writers, for whom a modality of ‘sharing nicely’ (as we tell our kids to do in the park) sits easily alongside their involvement in a proprietorial market economy.⁸ Or it can be the huge participation in online game worlds, where all the tensions of the social contract get played and gamed out across fantasy realms and inhuman avatars.⁹

The point is, as the old hippies used to say at the Whole Earth Review (and using a cosmic metaphor of play in the process), “we are as Gods, and we might as well get good at it”. Play and technology is part of that ‘history of abstraction’ noted separately by both McKenzie Wark and Mark Pesce.¹⁰

“Our ability to move atoms”, says Pesce, is a chart that starts with Neolithic obsidian tools (say, a billion billion billion), and ends up with nanotechnology (our ability to move one atom at a time).

The problem, and the challenge, is that we need an ethical consciousness that’s adequate to this awesome creative-destructive power – neither Luddism nor technophilia, but the beginning of a consideration of our true complexity as human animals. A ‘play ethics’, I would argue, that faces squarely our increasing capability (but often incoherent motivation) to ‘play with’ our materiality.

But as the redoubtable Mr. Macedonia demonstrates, the stakes are high around its formation. Those who play with technology need to be aware that a vision of the good life is implicit in their activities, and need to become explicit about how to realise it.

Heightening awareness of choices and possibilities? Surely, this is where the artists come in...

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- ¹ ‘Games, Simulation and the Military Education Dilemma’, Michael Macedonia, *Publications from the Forum for the Future of Higher Education* (2002) <http://www.educause.edu/in/library/pdf/ffpiu018.pdf>
- ² ‘Play is a natural phenomenon that has guided the course of the world from its beginnings. It is evident in the shaping of matter, in the organisation of matter into living structures, and in the social behaviour of human beings’. *Laws of the Game*, Manfred Eigen, Ruthild Winkler, (Princeton, 1993), p.3
- ³ Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Harvard, 1997).
- ⁴ It’s worth noting just how playful Kubrick’s aliens/non-humans were, both as the psychedelic reality-warppers in 2001, and as the gentle android simulators of mother-child play in 2002’s *A.I.*
- ⁵ Pat Kane, ‘Toy Soldiers’, *The Guardian*, Dec 1, 2005. <http://technology.guardian.co.uk/weekly/story/0,16376,1654070,00.html>
- ⁶ <http://www.digitaldivide.net/articles/viewphp?ArticleID=20> <http://www.cnn.com/TECH/computing/9910/21/berners.lee.interview.idg/>
- ⁷ <http://www.the-future-of-ideas.com/>

⁸ Yochai Benkler, “Sharing Nicely”: *On shareable goods and the emergence of sharing as a modality of economic production*, <http://www.benkler.org/SharingNicely.html>
I like this quote: “toys are shareable goods, and provide the first and central mode of cultural transmission of the values of sharing the excess capacities of one’s possessions. Anyone who sits in a New York City playground can only marvel at the paradoxical phenomenon of Wall Street traders admonishing their children to “share nicely”, and will appreciate our deep cultural commitment to sharing some of our private, rival possessions as a mode of social provisioning”. See also his magnum opus, *The Wealth of Networks*, http://www.benkler.org/wealth_of_networks/index.php/Main_Page

⁹ See my collection of links and reviews on Edward Castronova’s *Synthetic Worlds* at http://theplayethic.typepad.com/play_journal/2005/12/almost_forgot_t.html

¹⁰ McKenzie Wark, http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors0/warktext.html, and his *A Hacker Manifesto* (Harvard, 2004). Marc Pesce, interview with R.U.Sirus at Neofiles, <http://www.life-enhancement.com/neofiles/default.asp?id=32>

Playculture is my term for the arena of ordinary, day-to-day computer-based activities that have passed as invisible and unimportant – even left out of – historical accounts of everyday life. It is particularly important, given the proliferation of computers in both the work and home domains of the general public (in technology driven nations, at least), to note the migration of ‘play’ from the doll’s house to the virtual house, and the concurrent shift of the performance of public life from the traditional arena of the town square or church, to the new performative space of the screen and the Internet portal. Playculture is not only characterised by the blending of work and play, but in addition, by two key characteristics introduced by computer users and players: first, the way in which participants engage in acts of subversion of many computer systems, and second, the way in which players perform and play with, in, and on such sites. Play is a social act, and computerised play makes actual technologies into ‘locations’ for play.

As already mentioned, much of contemporary everyday life takes place on and through the computer, and this permeates expressions with technology with both the dramatic (cinema special effects, virtual characters, spectacle games) and the banal (email, web searching, simple graphics, computer hardware such as the mouse and keyboard, etc.). If one considers how de Certeau described the everyday as a political site, artists and activists may find a good deal of power in the area of expression that falls into the banal. After all, everyday activities are not homogenous across race, ethnicity, class, or gender lines, but rather are distinguished by a range of social differences; thus the technological everyday, or Playculture, is a site for work, gaming, communication, and, if necessary, tactical resistance (de Certeau 1984).

“Everyday life is the measure of all things: of the fulfillments or rather the non-fulfillments of human relations; of the use of lived time; of artistic experimentation; or revolutionary politics” (Debord 1961, p.69).

As philosopher Langdon Winner, scholar Diane Butterworth, and many others have argued, technological artifacts influence social order and embody political ideologies (Winner 1980, Butterworth 1999). Computer games, part of the essential fabric of everyday technologies, thus should be seen as vehicles for social and political paradigms. They are

also mired in their own troubled history – being associated with both military technologies in origin (thus tied to combat in language, form, and narrative) and antagonistic themes in terms of interaction and content (violence and gore, genocide, problematic representations of bodies in terms of gender and race, consumerist-driven interaction, etc).¹ Often, the ‘narrative’ of computer game origins follows a predictable, and one-sided, pattern which emphasises technical origins. Such a history, for example, would most likely tell the story of the birth of the computer game in the United States at MIT in the form of the game *SpaceWars* (1961); then, computer game history might document Atari’s first arcade game, *Pong* (1972). Due to the lack of regard for participation by women, people of colour, and underprivileged groups, this history must remain only one part of the story. More important might be the historic changes in play practices, and an arts focus on this history, utilizing examples from Dada and Surrealist games (Exquisite Corpse, group games), Fluxus (game boxes, large instruction-based event/performances, and the game-art work of Yoko Ono’s such as the series of all white chessboards, “Play It By Trust”) (DeMaria & Wilson 2003). After all, computer gaming now involves an increasing number of educators, designers, scientists, and artists. How are artists countering or contributing to the growing number of computer games ‘out there?’ How can we articulate the methods by which social and political outcomes can be integrated as goals into the day-to-day practices of game design and artistic creation?

By now, there are many examples of alternate, artist’s games and ‘subversions’ of game norms by artists, where critique is generated through the practice of making and playing.² As historian Carolyn Marvin has noted, technological invention comes in waves, and with each new technological shift, there has always been liberatory rhetoric associated with such transformations (Marvin, 1990). Yet there also have been artists critically experimenting with given media at exactly these kinds of shifting junctures: experimental filmmakers, writers, and video artists to name some of many categories of practitioner who came upon a new technology as a means of expressing something embedded in the surrounding culture that the new medium alone could occupy. Think of the atonal, chance based music of John Cage, the algorithmic poetry of Alison Knowles, Tony Conrad’s *Flicker* film,

Joan Jonas’ *Vertical Roll* video – to name just a few of the works which mark momentous shifts in art practice and technological development, where the technology of the time inscribes itself into the meaning of the work. So, too, do computer games make their mark: they flesh out the intricate relationship between individual and group; they ask, in the act of playing, important questions of collaboration and individual agency as they increasingly occupy spaces outside entertainment, such as education, health care, training the military, etc. From arcades to consoles to MMORPGs,³ the way the public engages with a game is in fact largely a social matter.

Thus contemporary computer games create and reflect popular culture in fascinating ways which can inscribe, but also alter, social and political paradigms. Theorists and anthropologists note that games provide a site of fantasy, escape, a “safe” space to explore fears, desires, and even simplified versions of human life within finite rulesets. But if, as I’ve argued, games are primarily social, then the implications for social life-interaction, communication, representation, goals, autonomy, equity – must also come under scrutiny in relation to them. Whenever games are created, difficult questions arise, for example, concerning character representation (including gender and race), social and hierarchical rewards (advanced players acquire wealth and power), interaction styles (killing vs. protecting), visual perspective, and a host of related values intersections requiring analysis. Yet it is taken as an assumption in many studies of game design that both the technology and the mechanics of game design are culturally neutral. Here is where we must politicise the everyday notions of Playculture; Play is a social act, and computerised play makes actual technologies into ‘locations’ for play.

If play is a social act, artists and scholars must find a way of theorising about the impact of games and rewriting the direction games might manifest, in order to challenge social, political, and economic norms that most currently embody. This is the key contribution artists working with games can make – ours is a practice-based challenge, in that we endeavour to create alternatives, to offer novel encounters and exchanges, to see the world always with fresh eyes, hands, and in the case of [*giantJoystick*], the body and the community.

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² Defined according to various accounts of subversion: Among the theorists called to this task are Butler and her work on subversion and identity, the work of Foucault on his query into power and subversion, Phalen’s notion of feminist subversion and performance, and Negri and his recasting of subversion in light of postmodernism. Gramsci, Deleuze, and de Certeau are also utilised in the analysis. Additionally, ‘intervention/disruption’ methods are culled from tactical media, critical Marxist and post-structuralist theories of tactics, disruption innovation (a business approach), and feminist intervention tactics.

³ An abbreviation for “Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games”, such as the *Everquest* game series or *World of Warcraft*.

GAMES, PLAY AND CONNECTIVITY/ MARC GARRETT AND RUTH CATLOW

The particular skills that we evolve with different kinds of play help to construct and shape who we are, how we view our world and what we become capable of as individuals and societies. Among other things play informs our ideas about agency, social relations and the technologies that we develop. The works in the Game/Play exhibition subvert and extend the logic of everyday play and games. They invite audience members (individually and collectively) to take the role of players and contributors to their meaning. When interacting with these pieces in physical space or across digital networks, audiences/players generate alternative, active 'social spaces' through their experience of the work and dialogues with each other. The aesthetic experience is primarily "based on the dynamics of communicated consciousness rather than visual criteria" (Larner, C. et al. 1995).¹

Much of the thinking that dominated the 20th Century had conflict at its centre; consider Darwin's descriptions of the competitive struggle for life, Marx's class struggle, Freud's neurotic patients at war with an internalised parent (Zeldin, T. 1994).² In the 1990s it appeared that the age of networked culture might provide an opportunity to use the new abundance of information and connectivity to construct a more holistic, bottom-up view of the world, and that this would make us more able to prepare for (and maybe even to avert) its natural and human catastrophes. So it's been a bracing start to the 21st Century as governments, corporations and terrorists alike race to exploit networked and mobile technologies, seeking an asymmetric advantage over their competitors and enemies (with political and commercial institutions leveraging legislation to monitor and control the behaviour of the multitude, often in the name of national security). Parallel to this, a proliferation of progressive file-sharing and collaborative knowledge-building enterprises continue to thrive.³ In this context, writers, artists and musicians continue to explore digital networks as a free and open medium and distribution channel for an art of relationship, connectedness and participation.

The world's first computer video game, *Spacewar*, was created in 1962 by a small team of computer programmers led by Steve Russell, at MIT⁴ to test and demonstrate the limits of a new technological product, the PDP-1. Its operating system was the first to allow

multiple users to control the computer simultaneously through a visual display and keyboard input. The makers of this demo set out to make something interesting within a "consistent framework" that would run differently each time and that would "involve the onlooker in a pleasurable and active way – in short, it should be a game".⁵

To this end *Spacewar* was built. In the spirit of the 'Atomic Age', the game pitted two spaceships in a battle to the death whilst resisting the gravitational pull of the sun; two protagonists at war in a hostile environment. So what kind of game/play art does our contemporary 'Networked Age' of ongoing, asymmetric 'War on Terror' inspire and facilitate?

Here at HTTP the now ubiquitous 'shoot 'em up' takes three very different forms. [*giantJoystick*] offers a humorous reworking of the multi-player game. The competitive goals of these classic arcade games are already familiar, however the dramatic change in scale of the joystick necessitates both an encounter of the whole body with the artwork and co-operation between a number of players in order to reach them. In the same way that Flanagan's earlier online game for two players [*six.circles*],⁶ explores themes of cooperation and decision-making with incomplete information, [*giantJoystick*] has players explore and question their notions of agency in a contingent environment – all whilst having fun!

Two of the independent video games selected by Corrado Morgana are also 'shoot 'em up's; Kenta Cho's *Noiz2sa* and *2nd Person Shooter*, which its creator Julian Oliver describes as "a displacement of agency and a crisis of control". Oliver's game-demo places the gamer behind the eyes of a murderous bot over which they have no control and which is set on destroying them. It's a disorientating experience. The player is not only hunted, but also finds themselves in the nightmarish position of having to quickly adopt a new logic for operating; where their perspective is no longer attached to their body, the customary instrument of their will.

In this exhibition two works use the Internet as a networked, platform for real-time (live), collaborative play and online performance events. In addition to the other works installed in HTTP and Q Arts galleries, Tale of Tale's *Endless Forest* and Furtherfield.org's

VisitorsStudio provide the context for interaction between audiences online and at the galleries involved in this touring exhibition.

The artists of both Furtherfield.org and Tale of Tales⁷ have grown up with the Internet as an experimental space for creating multi-user art projects. *VisitorsStudio*⁸ is an online arena for real time, multi-user mixing, networked performance and play. Where *VisitorsStudio* consciously activates audiences to participate and collaborate in acts of collective creation, *Endless Forest*, does not ask its online participants to exercise any skills or contribute their ideas. They just ask them to be there – it is about a state of being. Described by the artists as a "social screensaver", audiences join other players, in real-time down time to inhabit the bodies of deer, roaming in a lush virtual landscape.

In keeping with *Wirefire*⁹, an earlier project involving a series of intimate live, online performances (usually on the theme of love), the artists intermittently appear as the 'gods' of the *Endless Forest*. Using a system they call Abiogenesis the virtual woodlands become a mutable stage for the artists' performances. Their avatars resemble two halves of Brancusi's famous sculpture, *The Kiss* who have the power to spectacularly transform the landscape around them with a mystical dance of harmony and conflict, while deer chase them, watching and huddling with each other.

In addition to the programme of real time online performances that accompany the gallery exhibitions Ele Carpenter will be exchanging thoughts with participating artists via the Game/Play forum. The conversations and intersections between game-play and art cultures, explored in exhibitions, conferences, fairs and festivals over the years, have often exposed conflicts in philosophies, economies and aesthetic priorities. Protagonists stake out new territories in the theories of game and media arts and at the extremes of technological development. Our approach as co-curators of this project, to the selection and presentation of these works, is that of enthusiasts, connecting up and exploring relationships between works that have sparked our imaginations.

In dialogue with the other curators, artists and writers for this project we are exploring how this fertile field generates different perspectives on how audiences/players engage with both pleasurable and critical approaches to the media artwork, technology and broader social considerations.

References

¹ Larner, C., et al., "javascript:void%200;"Hyper-aesthetics: the audience is the work [cyber-art]. *Architectural Design* (London, England) v. 65 (November/December 1995) p. profile 24-5

² Zeldin, T. (1994) *An Intimate History of Humanity*. London, England: Mandarin Paperbacks, page 15

³ Examples of Internet file-sharing would include *Limewire* <http://limewire.com/>, and *BitTorrent* <http://bittorrent.com> and collaborative knowledge-building, *Wikipedia* <http://wikipedia.org/> a free, collaboratively written, online encyclopedia and *Del.icio.us*, online social bookmarks <http://del.icio.us/>

⁴ MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

⁵ For a short history of *Spacewar* <http://www3.sympatico.ca/maury/games/space/spacewar.html>

⁶ [*Six.Circles*] was commissioned in 2005 by Wooloo organisation for an HIV awareness project called Thank You. <http://www.maryflanagan.com/sixcircles/default.htm>

⁷ *Tale of Tales*, formerly *Entropy8Zuper*, is the name of the company run by net artists and game artists Auriea Harvey & Michaël Samyn.

⁸ *VisitorsStudio* <http://www.visitorsstudio.org/> a furtherfield.org project co-initiated by Marc Garrett, Ruth Catlow and Neil Jenkins who also designed the interface and did the backend programming for the project. This exhibition coincides with the launch of *VisitorsStudio Version2*.

⁹ *Wirefire* utilized technology, termed a "live online performance engine" by its developers *Entropy8Zuper* <http://entropy8zuper.org/wirefire/>

THE SLOW DECLINE OF THE RULE OF RULES/ KEIRON GILLEN

What are games? Any dictionary definition you'll find will include at least one reference to them being a competition governed by a set of predetermined rules. This only shows how dead paper can't keep pace with what it means to play games in a world that's been emancipated by the microchip. It fails to understand that when a gamer comes to a game, they come to /play/ – which includes everything up to and including the rules.

This is a tendency as old as video games which offered sufficient freedom to disobey them. As soon as a racing game existed in a real 3D world, the first thing players did was to turn around and drive the wrong way around the track. This, like many activities of this sort, both breaks the rules of the game and the rules of society, so giving a dual subversive thrill. Developers understand this. It's arguable that the success of Rockstar North's *Grand Theft Auto* games is due to it marrying the "Murder-simulator" transgressive kick of law-breaking with a design which leaves enough room for a player to express themselves in ways of their own devising (For example, seeing how large a multi-car pile up they can create).

The move of games into an online space full of thousands of interacting players has only intensified this. Much of this sort of game-defying behaviour becomes more interesting (for the thrill-seekers) or worthwhile (for those trying a little agitprop) when you have an audience more responsive than a silent games machine. For an example of the latter, take Associate Professor at the University of Nevada Reno Joseph DeLappe's riposte to *America's Army*. The game was developed as a recruitment tool for the US military, and takes the form of a militaristic online multiplayer shooter. When he logs on, rather than playing, he just types in the names of the latest US casualties in the Iraq occupation into the public chat channel in effective counter-propaganda to the inherent propaganda of the game itself.

Then there's always sex. In the same way as when you walk through the streets of your hometown, someone is almost certainly having sex behind those closed curtains, as you run across the countryside of Azeroth in the body of an Orc in *World of Warcraft* that immobile Paladin you're passing could be exchanging furtive and provocative private messages with someone else. Perhaps even for cash. Since in-game currency

for all the major online games are traded on Ebay for real money, we've seen the rise of cyber-prostitution: players exchanging sexual favours for in-game currency. In games where many players are under age and playing characters of genders other than their real one, the list of real world transgressions accumulates rapidly.

But some of the more interesting conflicts are based around the conflict between what are game and real-world transgressions. Take the recent furore over a funeral in *World of Warcraft*. Online memorials for the real life death of players are nothing new, and have happened as long as communities have formed through these new means – though they are of course, in themselves, an emergent event that breaks the strict game rules. However, this particular one was raided by the Serenity Now clan of the opposing Horde alliance, disturbing the mourning by slaughtering all the defenceless characters.

This precipitated a wide scale debate. The Funeral organisers argued that while it wasn't part of the game, the second you deal with people it becomes human and people reacting to a genuine urge to pay tribute to a friend is entirely natural. Serenity Now's supporters argued that the game environment was just that – a game environment, and any attempt to bring any other considerations into it was tasteless and cheapening to the deceased, and so they deserved to receive such an attack as education. What Serenity Now's argument misses is that their urges to deliver this discipline is as much of an out-of-game consideration as their target's grief. It's based on their disgust at what they considered unwarranted sentimentalism. If pure in-game motivation was the issue, they'd have never had done it due to the lack of in-game rewards for trekking half way across a continent to kill a group of undefended targets. They're as guilty of exactly the same crimes as those they wished to punish.

The popularisation of the internet has also expanded the possibilities of single-player transgression, leading to player devised meta-games and activities. For example, take the phenomena of "Speed Runs" where players post a video-recording of the quickest time they can get through an entire game for the admiration of the disbelieving masses. These break all a game's illusions, exploiting glitches to circumvent huge parts of the level and ignore the game's created purpose in

favour of treating it as the users own obstacle course. When something as expansive as the hundred-hours-plus fantasy role-playing game *Morrowind* have been cut down to an acrobatic short-cut of ten minutes, it's clear that the games gamers play are always of their own devising and the choice of playing according to a designer's desires is in fact a choice like any other. The rule of rules is over.

Gaming's independent scene offers a critical edge, comparable to indie music, art house or alternative cinema. It offers something other than the usual mainstream tropes, a vibrant scene exists where creativity and experimentation not commercial viability is key. It provides an arena that challenges the stereotypical genres. In a gaming culture obsessed with photorealism, endless expansion packs, sports gaming licences and big budget Hollywood tie-ins, indie gaming is like a breath of fresh air, a challenging, innovative, reflexive and critical practice that questions the nature of the medium.

Artists are producing highly politicised works – *September 12*, *The anti-Bush Game* and *Disaffected* are good examples. Developers are exploring innovative game mechanisms such as 'one switch gaming', games that use only a one button interface. Non-interactive-gaming is a phenomena which overturns the whole ethic of gaming as participatory and turns it into a spectator sport, a wry riff on the endless hours spent within gaming environments. Conversely *Massively Multiplayer Pong* turns the idea on it's head taking a 2 player game and turning it into consensual gaming (if there are enough players!) The visual language of indie games reflexively draws on the history of gaming with nods to retro graphics. There are a number of witty 2 dimensional remakes of 3D environments such as *Halo Zero* and *Codename Gordon*. The list goes on...

Distribution is also under scrutiny by practitioners, developers and theorists. Since developers id (*Doom*, *Wolfenstein*, etc.) arguably, kicked off the shareware games phenomena in the 90s, indie gaming has survived and flourished through distribution methods other than the usual retail outlets. Freeware, Shareware, Open Source distribution have radically different modus operandi than commercial games. Freeware software is just that, free. Shareware allows access to early levels with payment allowing access to further content. Open Source can be distributed with the code itself open to redistribution and community development. With little or no advertising to sucker punch the casual gamer, indie games have virally infected the gamers consciousness. However this may be set to change...

The whole marketing and distribution of indie games is currently undergoing a minor revolution championed by, surprisingly, Valve a developer turned distributor/publisher. Valve's Steam online content distribution system, much maligned in its initial stages, has been used to distribute indie games to a more blockbuster obsessed gaming audience. *Darwinia*, for instance which won much critical acclaim, but achieved poor sales through traditional outlets, is now offered through Steam. Steam was initially presented to those who purchased the immensely successful *Half Life 2* and taps into that potential audience.

The gaming press has recently expanded it's remit to support and give coverage to independent gaming. Many column inches have recently been devoted to independent gaming, reviewing exceptional exponents alongside commercial products. Websites such as selectparks.net, ludology.org, watercoolergames etc. review and present critical gaming praxis to an expanding audience.

There are some pertinent examples of Open Source methods, *Yoda Soccer*, an Open Source community developed update of the classic *Sensible Soccer* and *Freeciv*, a multiplayer version of *Civilisation* for instance. Developers commonly release older game engines under Open Source licences and community development is rife. There are many modding (modifying) tools for commercial games; tools which allow users to create their own content, content that is sometimes wildly and ingeniously different from it's source; tools that turn consumer into producer. Without the modding of commercial game engines by the community we wouldn't have *Garry's mod* for *Half Life 2*, the many genre extending mods for *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake* or the many games based arts projects that use these engines, Tom Betts' QQQ for instance.

Continuing with the indie film analogy, there are festivals to rival Sundance. Indie Gamejam, billed as an "event designed to encourage experimentation and innovation in the game industry" has been running since 2002, SlamDance is an indie film festival that has opened it's doors to indie gaming and recently The Experimental Gameplay project, which started out as a highly successful student project at Carnegie Mellon University has expanded its remit to all comers.

It's not all bad news for innovation in commercial gaming though, Will Wright's *Spore* is an exciting proposal and recently David Cage and Quantic Dream's *Fahrenheit*, attempted some very different approaches to the interface of narrative gaming.

Eastern commercial developers have offered the critical gamer something else... something very different to the Western genres. *Katamari Damarcy*, *Ico*, *Shadow of the Colossus* and *Animal Crossing* are highly inventive and somewhat genre-busting examples.

So who's the audience? The bored, the critical gamer, the developers themselves trying out wacky and experimental ideas, the games theorist etc... With this in mind the Game/Play selection attempts to present four exponents of the art.

Jetro Lauha's somewhat transgressive, *Truck Dismount*, ostensibly a physics demonstrator, presents us with a simple premise, a wall, a truck, some ramps and a crash test dummy... Dismount!

Kenta Cho's psychedelic, high speed, retro styled shoot 'em ups have attained a cult status amongst critical gamers. Currently included in the Debian distribution of the Linux Open Source Operating system. *Noiz2sa* is an early example of his frenetic, minimal stylings.

In *Façade*, a 'one act interactive drama', Trip and Grace are having a domestic dispute. Using a simple 3D engine and a highly sophisticated text interpreter and artificial intelligence, the player tries to settle the dispute, ease the tension, take sides or give them a hard time. *Façade* took the Grand Jury prize at the Slamdance 2006 indie games festival.

Julian Oliver's *2nd Person Shooter*, *Missing in Action* overturns the traditional first person and third person perspectives commonly found in action games and inverts it so the players avatar is only visible from the opponents viewpoint, Julian Oliver wryly states that 'in this little experiment you are on the outside looking in and to my great amusement, it's a complete and total pain in the arse!'

Enjoy....

Links

Political Games

September 12th: <http://www.newsgaming.com/games/index12.htm>

Disaffected: <http://www.persuasivegames.com/games/game.aspx?game=disaffected>

The Anti Bush Game: <http://www.emogame.com/bushgame.html>

One-Switch Gaming

Strange Attractors: <http://www.ominousdev.com/>

Non-Interactive Gaming

Tetris 1D: <http://www.tetris1d.org/>

Progress Quest: <http://www.progressquest.com/>

2d Gaming

Halo Zero: <http://www.halozero.new.fr/>

Codename Gordon: <http://www.halfjife2d.com/>

Steam

Steam: <http://steampowered.com/>

Darwinia: <http://www.darwinia.co.uk/>

Critical games websites

Select Parks: <http://www.selectparks.net/>

Ludology: <http://www.ludology.org/>

Water Cooler Games: <http://www.watercoolergames.org/>

Open Source Games

FreeCiv: <http://www.freeciv.org/>

Yoda Soccer: <http://yodasoccer.sourceforge.net/>

Indie Games Festivals

Slamdance: <http://www.slamdance.com/>

Indie Game Jam: <http://www.indiegamejam.com/>

Other Sites of Interest

Multiplayer Pong: <http://pong.flash-gear.com>

id software: <http://www.idsoftware.com/>

Tom Betts: <http://q-q-q.net/>

Experimental gameplay awards: <http://www.experimentalgameplay.com/competition.php>

Garry's mod: <http://gmod.garry.tv/>

Fahrenheit: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fahrenheit_\(video_game\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fahrenheit_(video_game))

Spore: <http://www.spore.com/>

Ico: <http://www.icothegame.com/>

Shadow of the Colossus:

<http://www.us.playstation.com/Content/OGS/SCUS-97472/Site/>

Katamari Damarcy:

http://www.nlgame.com/nl/asp/id_1237/nl/reviewDisp.htm

Animal Crossing: <http://www.animal-crossing.com>

Play. We all know it when we see it but, rather like love and pornography, it is very difficult to precisely define. Most of us have some understanding when play is no longer playful but something else, like a competition or something 'serious'. How is it that we seem to be able to recognise an 'invitation to play' (Pesce 1996)¹ almost instinctively and what does this mean for artists and designers working in this area, what can guide the creation of their work?

Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1955)², was arguably the first comprehensive attempt to develop a definition of the "play element in culture" It is also perhaps the most un-playful. Twenty years later French philosopher and writer, Roger Caillois, built on Huizinga's work in *Man, Play and Games* (*Les Jeux et les Hommes*, 2001) and declared enthusiastically:

"A characteristic of play, in fact, is that it creates no wealth or goods, thus differing from work or art [...] Nothing has been harvested or manufactured, no masterpiece has been created, no capital has accrued. Play is an occasion of pure waste: waste of time, energy, ingenuity, skill, and often of money..." (2001, p.5 – 6).³

Caillois is, surprisingly, not dismissing play with this sentiment, but rather challenging us to reappraise the contemporary view of play as worthless. Wasting time might be worthwhile after all, thank goodness, but drawing play away from any particular rhetoric, whether one of progress and biological development or of competition and socialisation is surprisingly difficult. The reason why humans play remains ambiguous despite our best efforts (Sutton-Smith 1997).⁴

At the same time, the boundary of gaming, play and art is becoming increasingly blurred as artists and designers explore new technologies. Art has always had a playful element, of course, but there is still a tendency for galleries to stick to being the white-box "shrine for contemplating sacred objects" (Paul 2005).⁵ Yet I believe most engaging interactivity is based on play and play is based in such ideas as physical movement, humour, noise, activity and often transgressive behaviour (play is usually something set apart from 'real world' rules, after all). Most of these forms of behaviour will result in you being swiftly escorted from a gallery by security officers.

The conundrum for artists working in the Game/Play arena is exploring playfulness and games as an important aspect of culture, whilst avoiding the common dismissal of the Big Fine Art world that they simply turn the gallery into a playground (Huhtamo 2004,⁶ Polaine 2005⁷). The danger when game art tries to subvert typical gaming categorisations and clichés to bring our attention to a particular issue, or to comment on videogame culture itself is that they fail to engage with the very medium they are trying to subvert. Often these are neither terribly interesting games nor particularly successful artworks.

Creating a seductive invitation to play is critical to those working with interactive media. Without this, audiences do not even begin to engage with the rest of the work, its meanings, its depth. Going retro, simple, small and lowbrow often works better than trying to emulate the technical sophistication of contemporary videogames, which is beyond the resources and programming skills of all but a few artists. Many successful examples are noticeably kinaesthetic, which is a defining aspect of play (Winnicott 2001).⁸

Ultimately, like the secret to falling in love, perhaps the secret to play will forever remain slightly mysterious, and therein lays its charm. A generation of artists and designers have grown up with video games and as they cease to be a novelty and simply part of the palette of culture from which to draw, the boundaries will blur even further. This is already evident when we trace camera-based interaction from Myron Krueger's pioneering *Videoplace* (1974)⁹ to the massive popularity of the *EyeToy* camera on Sony's Play Station 2.

Perhaps the real exhibition space for video games is the lounge room or arcade, not the gallery. When we extract games from this environment we risk viewing them as anthropological specimens examined under glass in the museum. Games and play do not require the playfulness to be sucked out of them to make them 'serious art' nor does art need to be serious to say something important about the human condition. Games should not need to apologise for being games, nor play for seemingly having no purpose.

Play is important to culture – more so in the current global political climate – even if we struggle to define exactly why. We can easily understand this by imagining a world without play. It is time for galleries and museums to relax a little and let them become playgrounds without apology. You can start by enjoying the Game/Play exhibition. Have fun and most of all, you are invited to play.

References

¹ *Pesce, M. 1996, Three Panels in Two Days, Hyppereal.org, viewed 24th May 2006 <http://hyperreal.org/~mpesce/tpitd.html>*

² *Huizinga, J. 1955, Homo Ludens, The Beacon Press, Boston.*

³ *Caillois, R. 2001, Man, Play and Games, trans. M. Barash, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago.*

⁴ *Sutton-Smith, B. 1997, The ambiguity of play, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.*

⁵ *Paul, C. 2005, Challenges for a Ubiquitous Museum: Presenting and Preserving New Media, viewed 20th April 2005 <http://www.mediaarthistory.org/Programmatic%20key%20texts/pdfs/Paul.pdf>*

⁶ *Huhtamo, E. 2004, 'Trouble at the Interface, or the Identity Crisis of Interactive Art', Framework, The Finnish Art Review, vol. 2004, no. 2.*

⁷ *Polaine, A. 2005, 'Why Big Fine Art doesn't understand interactivity', REFRESH! First International Conference on the Histories Of Media Art, Science and Technology, Banff New Media Institute, Canada, http://www.banffcentre.ca/bnmi/programs/archives/2005/refresh/conference_docs.asp*

⁸ *Winnicott, D.W. 2001, Playing and reality, Brunner-Routledge, London.*

⁹ *Krueger, M. 1974, Videoplace, http://www.aec.at/en/archives/prix_archive/prix_projekt.asp?iProjectID=2473#*

For psychologist DW Winnicott,¹ the space between a mother and young child, which becomes the space between the individual and society, is the space where play begins and develops, and which eventually leads to cultural life. Game/Play foregrounds this transitional space as a cultural place, and it is this essence, as explored by the works exhibited, the spatial and critical relationships set up between these, and the organisations involved, which is the subject of our project.

Many of the works exhibited aim to engender a kinesthetic, creative or affective response from the audience as active participants. They employ playful mimesis; or create spaces in which to engage through physical action and response or creative collaboration. Works have been selected from a range of contexts, and include those that require a critical engagement as well as others that humorously comment on contemporary social transactions. Game/Play explores the transformative zones between technologically enabled artwork and active participant, the works exhibited providing a space in which to play.

The Endless Forest is a multi-user online 'game' that creates a tranquil woodland landscape in which visitors can meet up and spend time with their friends, rub the odd tree and, in a playful manner, butt heads. It is a space for non-purposive engagement: there are no rules and very little game-play. And yet, it creates emotionally rich spaces, even for those who would never consider playing computer games. *The Endless Forest* constructs a stage that exists conceptually in a pre-enclosure, and possibly even pre-arable epoch while utilising a contemporary private space and the tools enabled by modern communications technology. The work provides us with opportunities for social interaction, a common ground, which elsewhere, due to the continual privatisation of public space, is being taken away from us.

Samorost 2 creates an online environment which has a similar feel, to that of *The Endless Forest*; here though an interactive quest, redolent of European fairy tales, is embarked upon. In *Samorost 2* we guide our hero on a journey through mysterious alien landscapes, populated by uncanny creatures. We help him to engage with strange donors in order to gain the magical objects he needs to continue his journey and in so doing help construct the game's narrative. As with *The Endless Forest*, *Samorost 2* inspires a

reflective approach from its audience. The rules of engagement need to be intuitively discovered through the playing of the piece and perseverance is rewarded. We become lost in the texture of the work, its visual aesthetics and the complex order in which tasks need to be performed. This prompts a subtle shift in our expectations of the game; time seems to slow as we explore these alien environments and develop a feel for the terrain.

When one is fully and completely at play the experience can be described as blissful. 'Unmediated', unstructured and consisting of only those rules that are developed through the particular playing, a state of mind can be approached that the French term 'Jouissance'. Beyond mere transgression, this heightened sense was described by Walter Benjamin² in his unfinished opus, '*The Arcades Project*', as potentially revolutionary.

Aquaplayne provides a space for play, the nature of which is socio-dramatic and creative. The user's relationship to the work is that of significant, active participant, and the interface is definitively physical and kinesthetic. In order to engage with the work, the audience must occupy a space that is mapped out on the gallery floor. *Aquaplayne* provides a space for transaction, a surface as an interface in which the physical is united with the cognitive. By 'playing' with one another via the installation, the users of *Aquaplayne* create abstracted visual imagery and complex soundscapes that represent phenomena of playing, splashing over the surface of water.

"Fluxus is a creation of the fluid moment. The transformative zone where the shore meets the water is simple and complex." *Forty Years of Fluxus*, Ken Friedman.³

Fluxus, from 'to flow', describes art that is intermedial, which is created at the intersection of different media and physical spaces. Fluxus artists always experimented with the technology that was available to them at any given time, and made full use of the communication systems that this enabled, including international telecommunications and postal networks. Contemporary media artists have taken up this baton, using the further developments of the Internet to enable people from diverse regions and countries to come together, to have a dialogue, to create work collaboratively, and in so doing to be artists.

In the post-industrial world, communication technology provides the tools by which much of our work is done. While this technological implementation has ultimately failed to provide us with more time away from work (unless of course you count being permanently out of work), it has enabled us to develop our relationships across physical boundaries and has changed how and with whom we play. *VisitorsStudio* takes notions of collaborative production to new heights by providing a real time, online platform for social, creative practice. Multiple users are able to upload files to the website and create an audio-visual mix from this and other material residing in the *VisitorsStudio* database. It provides an online space for networked performance, and its collaborative nature breaks down divisions between audience and viewer. Active participants are thus able to create an ever changing, and in some senses, negotiated online montage, which serves on one level as documentation of these transactions.

Further playful provocations are made by other Game/Play works that necessitate our engagement with various critical and social issues. *TAG* examines urban transitional spaces such as underpasses and waste grounds and recreates them in the gallery setting. These places in which we do not normally linger are populated by an assortment of characters that the audience is forced into a discourse with. *TAG* thus creates an uneasy dialogue where normally there is none. Confrontation is the subject of *Façade*, although the setting this time is initially a more comfortable middle class domestic one. *Façade* places us at the heart of a domestic dispute and asks that we referee the conflict in which even our best efforts do not always bring our friends back together. *The Golden Shot (revisited)* in a similar vein examines the spaces between viewing and playing, and asks us to consider the consequences of action or inaction.

Critical psychological positions are considered in *Second Person Shooter*. The game plays with notions of first and third person agency by inviting the gamer to witness their own demise, as observed through the eyes of the assailant. Notions of objective truth are shattered. The space between, as with *TAG* and *Façade*, is emphasised.

Game/Play is constructed as a project that engenders a dialogue between different organisations, occupying different geographical and cultural spaces. It has been curated in the spirit of communication and collaboration, while also critically examining its themes. Game/Play explores the physical, cultural and psychological spaces between us all. It is our interface and our invitation, our means of communicating with, and our invitation to our diverse audiences. It is our call for playful exchange and engagement via the transformative possibilities provided by technologically enabled artworks.

References

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- ¹ Winnicott, D. W. (1991) *Playing and Reality*, Brunner-Routledge.
- ² Buck-Morss, S. (1990) provides an excellent insight into Benjamin's unfinished project in "*The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*", MIT Press.
- ³ A full version of Friedman's text can be found at: <http://www.artnotart.com/fluxus/kfriedman-fourtyyears.html>
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FURTHERFIELD/ VISITORSSTUDIO



Artist: Furtherfield.org

Title: VisitorsStudio

Date: Version1 – 2004, Version2 – 2006

Keywords: collaborative, audio-visual, remix, online, real-time, channel
<http://www.visitorsstudio.org>

When placing Furtherfield.org's *VisitorsStudio* in the context of a 'work' (sic) in the traditional sense, one might have a problem with definitions. For example, *VS*, an interesting acronym upon reflection, is formally a 'stone soup' model. That is, *VS* acts as a container, connector, and root node for artists and performers wishing to virtually get together and 'jam' online. This is a brilliant metaphor for an artspace informed by elements of rave culture, where in many cases, the participants network, do their own performances, like fire-dancing, trade 'props', and share one another's presence. In many ways, it almost creates a networked 'Temporary Autonomous Zone'¹ in which the participants freely trade media, perform, and chat under the loose rules of behaviour established upon entering the *VS*.

A loose analogue to the rave can be brought to bear in describing the *VS* artspace. When entering the *VS*, participants upload and trade their JPG, SWF, MP3 and other media clips that they can use in the application's 'mixer'. With Version2 released, June 2006, performers can represent themselves through a profile 'pagelet', with image, homepage information and brief notes. And in addition, they can engage in chat directly on the screen as typed input appears either directly beneath their screen name in the space, or within an online IM-style pane.

But what is interesting about the parallels between *VS* and the rave metaphor is behaviour. Both cultures require a form of kindness. In *VS* large numbers of participants can theoretically call up large numbers of media clips, creating a potentially competitive media performance. In this writer's experience², the converse is the case, in that performers often confer about content: who will 'VS' with whom at what time,

References

¹ Bey, H. T.A.Z. *Autonomedia*, New York, NY
Anti-copyright, 1985, 1991. http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz_cont.html

² I have been part of a few 'performances' using the *VS*, such as the *Dissension Convention performance at Postmasters' Gallery (NY) in August 2004*, <http://www.furtherfield.org/dissensionconvention/> and witnessed several others. During these events, I never saw any disrespect for collaborators' creative space'.

³ Although a new version of the *KeyWorx* platform is in development, a version is available at <http://www.keyworx.org/>

mainly as the other observers have not wanted to miss what the other performers are going to do. So, in considering the culture that the *VS* creates, it is reminiscent of elements of DJ, hip-hop, and rave culture, creating a community of interaction/performance through the remixing of cultural signifiers.

While this writer, as a performer as well as critic, has 'jammed' with other excellent platforms like *Quartz Composer* and *Keyworx*³ that allow for distributed server-client events, *VS* has the virtue of its minimalism. That is, *VS* operates over a standard Web browser with a Flash plugin, as opposed to more dedicated/stand-alone software platforms. In their defence, there are advantages to external MIDI, DMX, webcam controllers and so on. But what is interesting about this space is that it can be used with a modest machine with even a phone modem. In this way, *VS* creates a Beuysian mediaspace or channel for the (relative) masses in which openness and access override technical specificity. Of course, with the private sector's current Web 2.0 models of audience-created intellectual property, the very openness of the *VS*'s content model raises issues around creative freedom that are larger than this short missive. What is important is that the *VS* offers a readily accessible channel for collective creation and community building with minimal toolsets, and this, while not unheard of, is a highly valuable asset in the New Media world.

By Patrick Lichty

TALE OF TALES/ THE ENDLESS FOREST



Artist: Tale of Tales

Title: The Endless Forest

Date: 2005

Keywords: Multi-user, online, non-purposive, social screen saver, bucolic

<http://www.tale-of-tales.com/TheEndlessForest/>

The Endless Forest by Tale of Tales is a game about beauty, wonder, calm and peace. There are no stealth missions, no guns to swap, no armour or enemies. Taking on the role of a somewhat dreamy deer who wanders through an endless forest imbued with magical powers that seem as unpredictable as mesmerising, players of *The Endless Forest* are invited to hang out and roam amidst beautiful trees, old mysterious ruins, an idyllic pond and happy flower beds. Without a goal of any sorts, they soon find that there's more to the forest than just mere eye candy. There are other players in this forest, all of them male deer with different, human-like Hayao Miyazaki styled faces, majestic antlers and their own distinctive fur patterns, and that's where the fun starts.

Giving the game a try at a recent festival, we didn't know what to expect from *The Endless Forest*. We knew that the game had to feature a forest, given its title, and had heard something about deer. We took a seat behind two different computers. We started walking around the forest, asking each other where are you? After some running around we found each other and some other deer too. Icons at the bottom of the screen told us we could interact with each other. For example, we could dance. Music would start and your stag would bend down one leg after the other, shaking his head left and right. When other deer joined us, the music changed because they all brought in their own tune. There was the feeling that this is what we liked to do, all of us. On top of that we exchanged antlers and fur patterns and some of us rolled over the forest floor on our backs. After a while the group of deer dissolved again and disappeared

into the forest. Running around some more we found we could change into frogs when drinking from the water in the pond (and change back to a stag just as easily), that we could become invisible if we wanted to, that we could moo like a real stag, which is just plain nice, and pay our respects to the Forest Gods – turning us white for some reason. At certain moments, at specific places, new actions became available. Crossing a flower bed, a new icon showing a bowed deer's head would appear. And indeed, when selecting it the deer bowed its head, raising its antlers only to show them covered in little purple flowers.

So the game brings back dancing into play. And running. And looking good. And socialising with other deer. Playing this game, you cannot help but notice that something has changed in what you considered was playing. In *The Endless Forest*, playing is no longer goal-oriented, about finding and bending out or working towards an end, but about hanging out and spending time in a place without end.

By Maaike Lauwaert & Martijn Hendriks

JAKUB DVORSKÝ/ SAMOROST2



Artist: Jakub Dvorsky

Title: Samorost2

Date: 2005

Keywords: fairy-tale, psychedelic, poetic, quirky, quest

http://www.samorost2.net/

"She stretched herself up on tiptoe, and peeped over the edge of the mushroom and her eyes immediately met those of a large blue caterpillar, that was sitting on the top, with its arms folded, quietly smoking a long hookah, and taking not the smallest notice of her or of anything else ..." Lewis Carroll:
"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland".

An interactive poetic expression

You are in a strange landscape. You remember you are on a mission, but for now you want to stop and contemplate the rugged surface of an impossibly odd rock face. You touch a leaf to make it gently drift away and brush against some paper-thin mushrooms scattered across the forest floor, making them twitch. In the distance you catch a glimpse of a school of walrus-like creatures drifting across the starry sky. It's really quite simple. Our hero, a gnome-like character, witnesses some aliens kidnapping his dog. He gets into his spaceship to free his best friend. All in all a straightforward interactive story with an easy point-and-click interface. Solve a number of quirky puzzles to complete the game.

However, most players immediately recognise that a major part of *Samorost2* lies beyond the string of problems leading to the final solution. Some might say that the progression of the plot is merely a framework for an entirely different goal: a mental journey through a sequence of independent time bubbles, each of these being an intricately designed audio-visual poetic statement.

A journey through a strange world

The story is obviously constructed as an archetypal fairy tale. It contains all of the essential character types and structural elements that we can find in the Russian structuralist Vladimir Propp's analyses of the folk tales of his native country. In a nutshell the hero is forced to leave the stability of his home, embarking

on a journey, encountering magical helpers and villains, solving difficult tasks, and being rewarded in the end. Countless variations of this narrative model have become commonplace in modern folklore. *Samorost2* is a contribution to a literary tradition that communicates equally well with children as with adults. But as the case is with most fairy tales, there is something more to it.

The game is equally in debt to modern classics as Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* and the psychedelic masterpiece *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Something seeps through the cracks in the seemingly banal surface. We are in a literally *unreal* world put together from fragments of well-known objects. Chunks of moss, plants and forest debris are digitally recombined and infused with new life. Tying with our sense of scale and place, tiny roots become giant cliffs, bits of wood and old mushrooms are assembled into planets and old tin cans become spacecrafts. All around us we find explicit references to mind-altering substances – from glowing mushrooms to opium poppies and a familiar guru character preoccupied with his smoking utensils. To play *Samorost2* is to delve into the strangeness of our surroundings – experiencing, listening and interacting with the world around us, flowing with the crooked logic. Through simple technical means and great skill, *Samorost2* explores the potentials of computer games as original artistic expressions without sacrificing playability and humour. Turn up the volume, pay attention to your surroundings, and explore the world of *Samorost2*.

By Thomas Petersen

MARY FLANAGAN/ [GIANTJOYSTICK]



Artist: Mary Flanagan

Title: [giantjoystick]

Date: 2006

Keywords: multi-user, social sculpture, collaborative, physical, agency

http://www.game-play.org.uk/giantjoystick

For the past few years, computer games have become one of the most fertile grounds for artistic exploration in new media art. Ranging from games developed by artists to mods (modifications of existing games), the spectrum of 'game art' has critically examined the architecture, politics, and aesthetics of its commercial counterpart. (Massive) Multi-User games, in particular, have increasingly gained attention and, intentionally or not, have nurtured the emergence of new forms of collaboration, governance, and economy in their respective virtual worlds. Yet the hype of collaborative endeavour surrounding the buzzword 'Multi-User Game' tends to distract from the fact that the 'territory' one occupies in playing the game is characterised by various disconnects. As opposed to the good old board or card game, which is framed by shared physical space, the communicative exchanges and group experiences occurring in computer games take place in virtual worlds that are (a few exceptions aside) accessed by individual players from the privacy of their home through the use of devices such as game controllers, mice, keyboards and joysticks. These interfaces themselves exist on the periphery of perception, as translators that extend users' hands and movements into dataspace.

It is precisely in this space of the 'in-between' and disconnect where *[giantjoystick]* looms large. Inviting users to play classic arcade games by collaboratively moving on and controlling a 9-foot-high joystick (modelled after the 1980 Atari 2600 one), Mary Flanagan highlights the spatial and social role of the interface. The joystick itself becomes a social sculpture and territory for inter-personal communication.

Mary Flanagan's work has consistently focused on the exploration of the cultural and sociological effects of technology, in particular, the merging of the private and public sphere in commonly used technological tools and products – from interfaces to games. The tension between private and public is an underlying narrative of her projects [collection] and [domestic], a game engine modification that transforms the scripted, shared narrative of the public game environment into a narrative space inscribed with personal memories. *[giantjoystick]* takes the investigation of everyday technological tools to the next level by subverting a common interface and highlighting its function in both a social (public/private) and physical/spatial context. The joystick's traditional role is that of a spatial translator of space, which transmits its (physical) angle to the 2D or 3D virtual world: movement along the X-Y-Z axes of 'the world' is signalled by moving the joystick left or right (X axis), forward or back (Y axis) or twisting it left/counter-clockwise or right/clockwise (Z axis). *[giantjoystick]* requires players to collaboratively 'perform' their movements in order to engage with the game and thus makes them acknowledge not only the notion of shared space but also the necessity for shared strategies and approaches in order to pursue their goal.

[giantjoystick] provides a much-needed artistic redefinition of technological conventions, which are revealed and re-engineered in a poetic and aesthetic way. The exaggerated scale of the installation emphasises the physicality (and absurdity) of interfaces in their relationship to the human body and human interaction. Rather than treating the joystick as mere access point

to the 'other' of the virtual world on a screen, the project highlights the joystick's role in and connection to the physical world and the social nature of play.

By Christiane Paul

GILES ASKHAM/ AQUAPLAYNE



Artist: Giles Askham

Title: Aquaplayne

Date: 2006

Keywords: kinaesthetic, fluidity, interplay, action, surface

<http://www.askham.org/aqua.html>

"The structure of play absorbs the player into itself and thus frees him from the burden of taking the initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence". Hans-Georg Gadamer. Truth and Method.

The 'strain of existence' is the work of responsibility. We are tested, evaluated and determined by a world that would prefer to know everything and leave nothing to chance. In the work of art though we find relief from the burden of knowledge, the need to know loses traction in the flux between sign and substance. We are absorbed into play as the artist is carried along by the creative process, it has a momentum all of its own, the happenstance of discovery where one thing leads to another. Art emerges as the unpredictable condition, between order and chaos it lays out permutations and activates them. The artistic mode is the creative 'set up', a fluidity of experience whose only burden is the sheer weight of possibility. The artistic composition is a calibrated form of that experience, replayed in the viewer through the perception of forms. There is a moment of stillness for contemplating the work of art, precisely because it has the power to move; to be moved is to be played by the work.

There are art movements and there is the movement of art. For art historians the dynamic of a work can be observed in the conventions of effect. There is a play of light and colour, the interplay of forms, the gesture, the stylistic progression, the school, and at some point a movement. Conversely, the movement of art as a creative event replaces recognition with action. In the case of Abstract Expressionists like Jackson Pollock art literally becomes a movement. To create was to move directly into experience, to become in

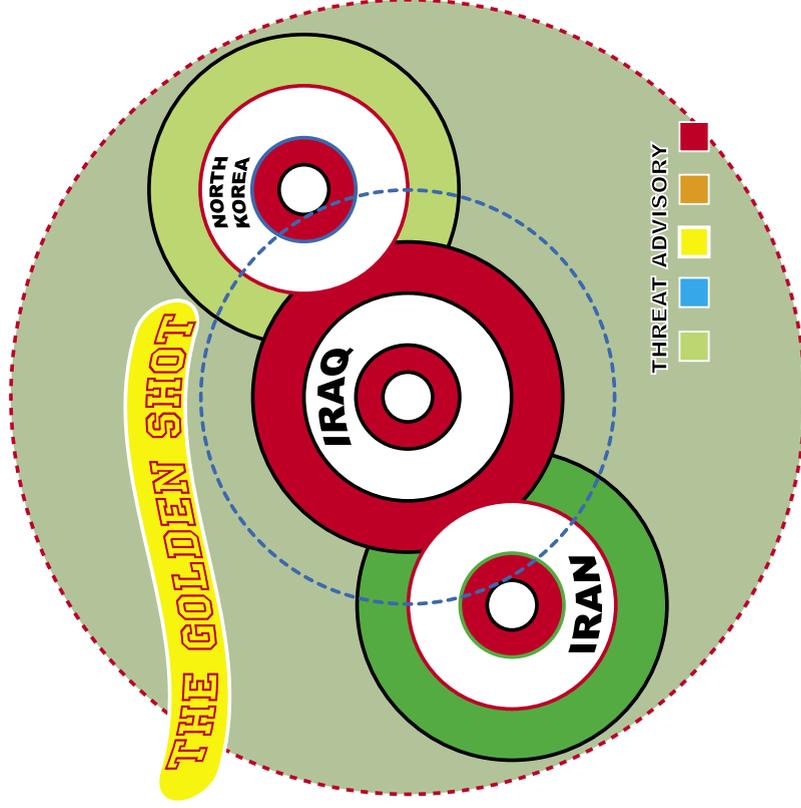
play by 'getting into the picture'. Pollock would layout his canvas on the floor to feel closer to the painting, walking or even dancing around it in a painterly performance. The pouring, dripping, skimming and splashing of patterns across the surface, capture the immediate forces of intention; 'When I am in my painting I am not aware of what I am doing'. The unconscious gesture emphasised the physical act of creation [in German spiel, 'to play' originally meant dance]. The unthought experience of 'automatic painting' is the play of composition, a sign not of representation but of the event. As Paul Klee once remarked 'not to render the visible, but to render visible'.

Aquaplayne lays out a new field of expression by extending the framework for immediate experience. The horizontal plane bypasses recognition and 'sets up' an interactive surface, making a play of art by providing the viewer with instant access to the creative flow. In the movement from observation to participation we interface with an intelligent canvas through the automatic rendering of action into effect. The 'body in motion' plays across a field of sensation, making the ripples of possibility appear as an ever-changing artwork. Unlike the action painter, whose technique is to offload creative energy in the painterly gesture, the activator retrieves what has already been deposited as data and brings it to the surface, aquaplaying on a stream of information. The virtual is restored to the actuality of expression, brought back to life in the flux between cause and effect, between code and composition.

The calibrated experience of *Aquaplayne* is the art of permutation, the programmed initiative played and replayed as the artwork in formation.

By Jonathan Willett

SIMON POULTER/ THE GOLDEN SHOT (REVISITED)



Artist: Simon Poulter

Title: *The Golden Shot (revisited)*

Date: 2006

Keywords: *interactive, TV, geopolitical, military, behaviour*

http://www.game-play.org.uk/thegoldenshot_revisited

The Golden Shot (revisited) by Simon Poulter employs the strategies of media, iconic and semantic transformation and the reuse of a form of mass entertainment from the history of television to establish a critical praxis of interactive media art. It creates a situation in which the original unease of observing and participating, repressed by the trivial splendour of the TV spectacle, returns subversively in an unexpected form. Here, taking pleasure in a banal and harmless game show is transformed into an ambivalent gesture, a cruel, symbolic demonstration, of the exercise of political power.

The online project *The Golden Shot (revisited)* is structurally based on the scenario, phenomenology and context of the reception of the popular TV show in the UK during the 60s and 70s. However its effects reach beyond that of a simple comment on different social, political, economic and technological conditions and implications of the 'new' and 'old' media systems of representation and communication. The viewers of the original live TV show gave instructions to a blindfolded cameraman who was supposed to hit the target with the help of 'telebaw'. For a successful hit they were awarded money and a faked studio applause. Simon recreates this game on the Internet and in the gallery space, where there is an actual target and a person operating an equivalent 'weapon' as an extension of the web camera, while the participant's access to the game is enacted through Internet and digital technology.

The shift, which reflects the hypocrisies inherent in the paradigm of globally totalising media industries, is implemented in the game by the introduction of reality: geopolitically marked targets – territorial names of countries that are a current political threat

to world stability. While here the TV studio tension becomes less publically visible and chronologically and spatially dissected, both the position and emotional involvement of the player are transformed. The fact that from a distance, a subject with a hidden identity is controlling a weapon aimed at a target representing a specific country just for the pleasure of playing the game and winning (a symbolic, electronically transferred award), shifts the focus to the ethical role of the player through his forced appropriation of the position of a political enemy.

It is possible that no one would wish to play such a game, in which case the technologies implemented here remain dormant. It is more likely that people will attempt the game but be faced with uncomfortable choices. This is how the artist himself imagines the result of the simulated militant action. He is interested in the context of the relation between man and technology, questioning the behavioural issues that are raised when a 'game' becomes an 'experiment'.

While in reality long-range weapons are controlled by sophisticated military technologies armed with apparatus for registering reality, in the online remake of the TV show, as the game reveals, the weapon-as-extension-of-the-camera-as-extension-of-the-networked-machine-as-extension-of-the-eye is controlled by an imperfect, defective, accidentally established 'cyborg': a digitalised amalgam of the physical, indirectly seeing and the 'virtual', directly seeing human subject. In this hybrid clash, this subject cannot avoid finding themselves with disturbing, mixed-up feelings.

By Ana-Marija Koljanin
Translation by Ivana Bago

LOW BROW TRASH/ TAG



Artist: Low Brow Trash

Title: TAG

Date: 2003, new version 2006

Keywords: narrative, urban, control, power, encounter

<http://www.lowbrowtrash.co.uk/work.html>

Tag is played by children all over the world, dating back to ancient Egyptian times. Tag requires no teams, no scoring or equipment just a group of people chasing around tagging each other to be 'it' by simply touching them with their hand. Its inherent simplicity makes the game of Tag popular in the playground arena.

In Game/Play "Low Brow Trash" invite us to a gallery playground to engage in a 'one on one' game of Tag with an interactive computer programme, but things may not be as anticipated... TAG is played in front of a giant widescreen projection. A participant's first encounter with TAG is that of three seated figures who remain motionless. As you traverse the play area their heads and eyes follow you, they are your Judges, this is not the game that you initially signed up for, you are being monitored, surveillance is in play, you are 'it' and you have been 'tagged', but it feels like an electronic tag used for Home Detention curfews – Big Brother/Sister is here and all three are watching you.

During the first scene you get verbally instructed to approach the man on the far right who is wearing a tie. On getting there the participant initiates a branching narrative of different scenes. In each 'game' a participant will only ever experience 7 of the selection.

The second scene encountered is a lush amber neon street lit, urban environment, a camera is tracking our movement in more ways than one. Have we entered not a game but a Panopticon as described in Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon Principle* of 1787, where the central idea was to enforce behaviour and a sense of control over us in 'our' space. At this stage the software branches,

the narrative of scenes that the participant will experience on this encounter with the game will be different to the previous and future player.

Within this branching of experienced narrative there exists the possibility of role reversal. From the initial feeling of being relentlessly watched by another we have the potential to interact and tag back. Power is returned to the user, we control the screen, we can 'tag' the computers world. In another scene this ability of the participant being 'it' and 'tagging' back is very literal. The participant is transported to a dirty brick wall, their body functions as a spray can, as they move they 'tag' the wall with their paint.

TAG employs motion tracking as the interface through a variety of ways depending on the scene a participant is playing with. Sometimes it is just lateral movement, as with the 'Judges', at other times proximity to the screen will also make a change, as in Graffiti, and sometimes specific zones change what happens – "walk towards the 'hoody' in the underground car park"... TAG encourages exploration of the full play arena by the participant.

We play with TAG, TAG plays with us, roles of power are challenged reversed, social commentary is made, play is allowed and the question of who is playing/ being played with remains.

TAG was commissioned by the Arnolfini in 2003, the same year the Criminal Justice Act and the use of electronic tagging became law. TAG was later reworked, in collaboration with Peter Bowcott, and for Game/Play Low Brow Trash have been commissioned to create new scenes drawing from the locations of Derby and London.

By Pete Bowcott

PAUL GRANJON/ FLUFFY TAMAGOTCHI



Artist: Paul Granjon

Title: Fluffy Tamagotchi

Date: 1998

Keywords: automata, cannibalised, absurd, bestiary, love pet

<http://www.zprod.org/~Lab/FluffyFrame.html>

Paul Granjon's robotic creations are evocative of the images of chimera found in medieval bestiaries – collections of allegorical descriptions of animals, both real and fabulous, that illustrated the correct way to behave from a Christian perspective. Mythical creatures were depicted as amalgamations of body parts from different animals, for example, the manticore which had a man's face, a lion's body and a scorpion's stinger. These gilded pictures, sometimes humorous, were intended to illuminate, both literally and metaphorically, the accompanying text and draw out its moral significance:

"To improve the minds of ordinary people, in such a way that the soul will at least perceive physically things which it has difficulty grasping mentally: that what they have difficulty comprehending with their ears, they will perceive with their eyes."¹

Granjon creates three dimensional, behaving automata, tinkering them together from children's toys, other consumer goods and electronic components. In his 'bestiary' we find creatures such as: the *Cybernetic Parrot Sausage* (made from a wurst and a cannibalised toy parrot), which repeats recorded phrases while partially rotating; the male and female Sex Robots, the latest and most technically advanced of his machines, that seek each other out and mechanically couple until electronic orgasm occurs; and *Fluffy Tamagotchi* (teddy bear material, Chicco toy TV set, 25 year old BBC microcomputer and some sensors), which can sing, wave its arms around and shit blue turds. These works address a post-Darwinian, post-industrial Western society, in which nature no longer exemplifies a divine order and where our lives are more influenced by Moore's² – rather than God's

-Law: a place in which we are free to consume – as long as we work more hours a day than feudal serfs did.³ Granjon's alter-ego, RobotHead, a programmable robotic mask that he uses in performances, explains its role as being: "to help you humans face the activities of everyday life despite our feelings of the moment."⁴

The artist does not have a doomsday vision of technology accelerating out of control, rather, his work engages with it hands-on, reveals its workings and celebrates a world that can produce such fabulously absurd automata. In the *2 Minutes of Experimentation and Entertainment* series of films, Granjon presents seven of his creations in a humorously deadpan manner. Only once does he crack up in laughter when, in film number 4, the remote controlled anti-gravitational vehicle for cats, he fails to persuade either Merle or Tabby (pet cats) to sit in the device and he has to use a stuffed toy instead. In 1998, waiting to hear whether the films were going to be bought by a TV company, Granjon thought that it was taking so long that everybody would have forgotten what a tamogotchi was. He needn't have worried – 10 years after they were first produced "a plague of brightly coloured beeping mini toys"⁵ is spreading through infant and junior schools once more. Granjon dedicated *Fluffy Tamagotchi* to the parents who have to look after their children's virtual pets while they are at school. A sign of technological progress is that version 3 has a pause button, but even leading edge automata are pale imitations of the autonomous behaviour shown by Granjon's pet cats. In the words of RobotHead: "Rororo, Bobobo Headheadhead, headheadhead Boot me up, don't worry Put me on, c'est parti."

By Jon Bird

References

¹ *The Aberdeen Bestiary, Aberdeen MS 24, f25v. There is a fully digitised version of this book at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/bestiary.hi>*

² *In 1965 Gordon Moore, a co-founder of Intel, predicted that the complexity of integrated circuits would double every two years. This rate of technological development has continued over the ensuing 40 years if complexity is measured by the number of transistors in the circuit.*

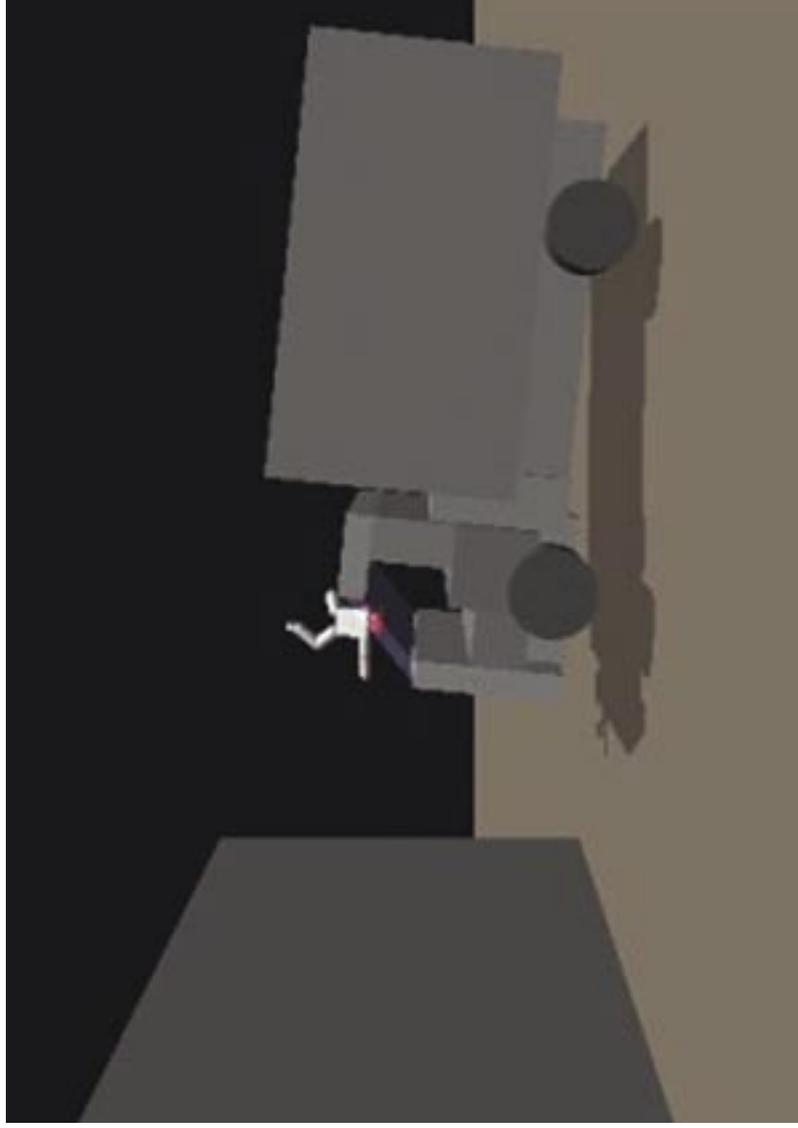
³ *James E. Thorold Rogers (1949) Six Centuries of Work and Wages, Allen and Unwin, London.*

⁴ <http://www.zprod.org/~Lab/rHtroFrame.html>

⁵ *Fluffy Tamagotchi, number 7, Two Minutes of Experimentation and Entertainment*

⁶ <http://www.zprod.org/~Lab/rHtroFrame.html>

JETRO LAUHA/ TRUCK DISMOUNT



Artist: Jetro Lauha

Title: Truck Dismount

Date: 2005

Keywords: physics, kinetic, ragdoll, crash-test, agency
<http://jet.ro/dismount/>

Truck Dismount is an excellent demo in the genre of physics games; a genre which harnesses powerful programming techniques to elicit visceral game play experiences. Wikipedia defines this category as including ‘computer and video games and simulators where the principal element of game play involves laws of physics; for example, predicting paths of moving objects, colliding objects, or estimating structural integrity. Excluded are games such as flight simulators or cue ball games where physics are simulated but are not the most defining factor of the game play, or the “selling point” of the game’.

A strategic example of this style of game,

Truck Dismount focuses game play interaction on the provision of Graphical User Interface tools like optimisation sliders to allow user control of the kinetic properties driving the physics engine. These tools facilitate exploration of the experiential potential of rag doll physics, a procedural animation and simulation technique used to realistically represent the movement of a character under the influence of physical force. *Truck Dismount* employs an innovative process to facilitate this experience, whereby the player first configures, or authors the world’s physics, and then sits back to view the results. Action and experience are linearly separated resulting in a more studied meditation on experience as the rag doll crumples and flashes red to emphasise bodily damage. Perhaps surprising for proponents of embodiment, passivity to the slow-motion reaction heightens player identification with the virtual character’s corporeality. While the player concentrates on the corporeal effect, a strong identification with the virtual experience occurs, one which does not require the player to consciously

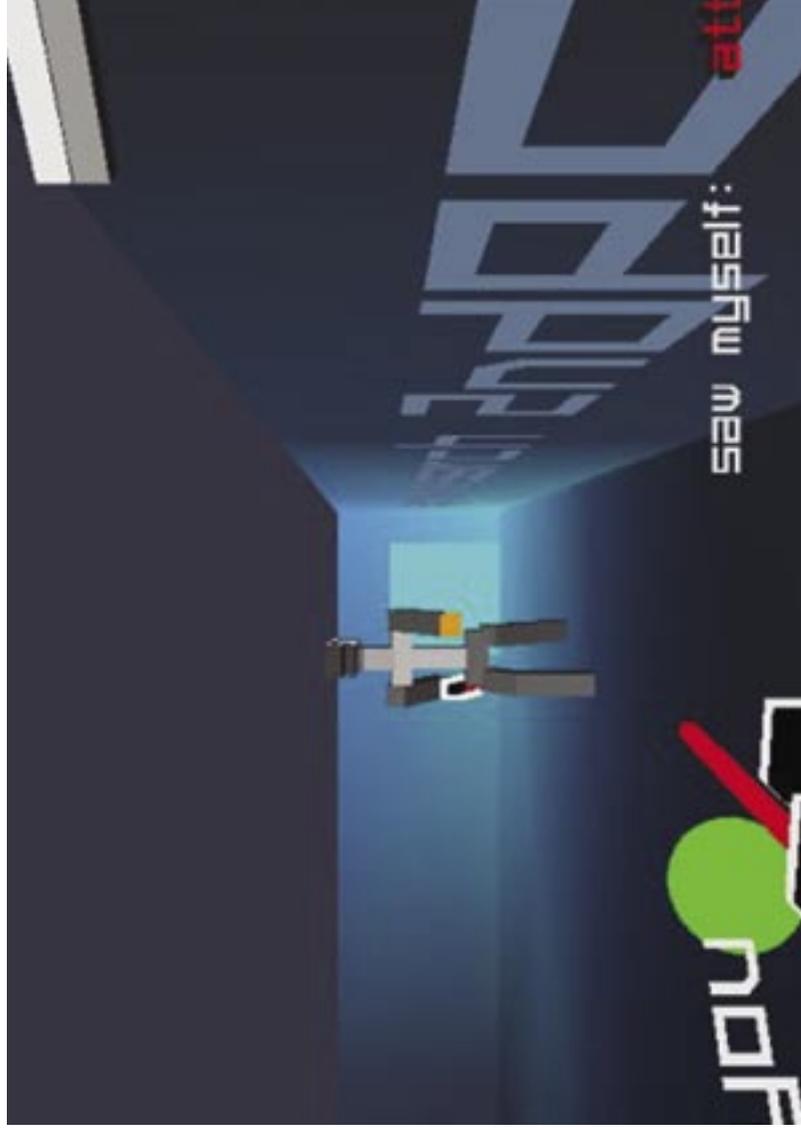
perceive that they embody the crash test dummy avatar – the most common method by which identification with virtual experience occurs in first and third person computer games. *Truck Dismount* leverages the filmic convention of signifying corporeal authenticity through bodily danger to achieve this result.

Whilst maximising destruction of the crash test dummy character ‘DJ’ is the aim of the game, there has been little criticism of the violent aspect of the game scenario. DJ’s obvious crash test dummy visual style somewhat limits association and humanisation of the character, as does his lack of AI. These visual qualities help reduce the possibility for players to associate guilt with their indulgence in the destruction of human life; despite the simulated real world physical properties of the character’s motions. The simplistic visual style also aids the comedic aspect of the game. Game developer Jetro Lauha made aesthetic decisions within the code as well as the graphics. Whilst modelling the rag doll from physics primitives Lauha limited the amount of required joints to improve processor usage, creating a careful balance between the game’s believability and performance.

Albeit a simple extrapolation of the genre, *Truck Dismount* makes visible the immense potential of the dynamism of physics engines in computer games. *Dismount Levels* is a follow up to this work that offers users world editing tools. The strong fan base for high-quality physics games has resulted in many mods of *Truck Dismount*. More information about physics based games can be obtained from Fun-Motion.com

By Rebecca Cannon

JULIAN OLIVER/ 2ND PERSON SHOOTER



Artist: Julian Oliver

Title: Second Person Shooter Missing in Action

Date: 2005

Keywords: second person, dislocated, perspective, disjunction

<http://www.selectparks.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=284>

What is it about second person perspective that is, to quote a blogged comment regarding Julian Oliver's *Second Person Shooter*, 'creepy'? First and third person seem comfortable positionings; we are born locked into a familiarity with our own view point, and the third person omniscient provides a reassuring visibility of the very human desire for Godlike power. Second person perspective on the other hand provides the 'creepy' view of ourselves as others see us. In gaming this usually translates to the point of view of our enemy. The view of the hunter seeking to exploit our vulnerabilities. A view that exposes the harsh truth (or lack thereof) of our representation in reality; the paranoiacs obsession; the disjunction between how we are perceived by others and how we perceive ourselves. Our experience of reality oscillates precariously between the two perceptions. Which, one wonders, is the truth?

Where previous games have manipulated the technique of second person perspective to enhance moments of game play, for example a battle in *Metal Gear Solid* lands you in your antagonist's point of view watching your own avatar, no prior game or game sketch, as is the format of *Second Person Shooter*, has solely explored the existential crisis implicit in this dislocation. This crisis results from a rupture in the grammatical framework of thematic roles – the basic lexical semantic representation upon which the logic of experience is defined. In game play this logic translates fluidly to the knowledge that I am the agent of my own experience, the Proto-Agent of my own experience and you, as my game play opponent, are the recipient or Proto-Patient of my attack. Through the game's

mediated characteristic of extended embodiment, this basic natural premise can be broken. In *Second Person Shooter* Game law overrides Natural law as our primary sensory input, vision, is dislocated external to self in the avatar of Proto-Patient. Our playable knowledge of the game's laws, founded in the premise that we want our Proto-Agent avatar to win, here fight with the corporeal experience of Proto-Agency embodied in the reassigned role of Proto-Patient. The challenge therefore in *Second Person Shooter* is less to kill your opponent than it is to intellectually override your history of biological cognition. Which rules do you play by, those of the mind or the body? Which agent will your ego partner with when You as you biologically perceive yourself to be, are no longer the priority of agency? The game in this sense becomes a difficult task of negotiating the strength of ones intelligence against the formidable power of ingrained biologism.

The simplicity of this demo's graphic style at first appears to assist one's interpretation of its special laws. Large block letters replace an avatar's head with the word 'ME' announcing the elementary condition that Proto-Agency is external to first-person perception. Similarly the word 'YOU' is strategically positioned in the bottom left hand corner of the screen to provide a constant reminder of the embodied Proto-Patient's otherness. Game play commentary such as 'Saw myself attack' and 'Shot by me' further reinforce these difficult game laws. However these textual elements when encountered during game play confound, rather than assist one's ability to perceive agency. They enunciate the inherent fallacy of first person virtual embodiment by dually reminding us that first person experience of virtual embodiment is already a second person

perspective. In *Second Person Shooter* the label 'YOU' not only suggests the second person perspective in the game, 'YOU' also designates second person perspective to the game, as you sit at your computer, outside the screen.

Second Person Shooter takes the simple format of a game sketch to exercise the experiential potential of the computer game format, in particular to highlight its privileged position as a dense media of virtual embodiment to corporeally illustrate complex logical arguments. Public discussions resulting from this demo have also contributed to a formal articulation of computer games' structural perspectives.

By Rebecca Cannon

MICHAEL MATEAS AND ANDREW STERN/ FACADE



Artists: Michael Mateas and Andrew Stern

Title: Façade

Date: 2005

Keywords: AI (Artificial Intelligence), Interactive, negotiation, relationship, narrative.

<http://www.interactivestory.net/>

Relationships are never easy things to negotiate, whether between companies, countries or individuals. The ones that cut the deepest into our psyches are those between individuals. Always the hardest and often the least logical, all our mental strength is required to negotiate our way through them. Constantly on edge and trying to react accordingly to keep at least some kind of dialogue going between all involved parties so that things don't end in despair. At least, that's the hope!

In *Façade*, developed by Andrew Stern and Michael Mateas, we're asked to deal with such a relationship between an arguing couple. In this single act drama, the player or participant is one of the three and the other two are computer generated. We have to negotiate our way through a minefield of personal interactions with two characters called Trip and Grace, who just so happen to be celebrating their ten-year marriage.

They appear to have everything, successful careers and a good relationship, but behind the façade, (as in all good dramas) things are not what they seem.

Where and what is the façade, in *Façade*? Is it in the interface between their world and ours, and the fact that everything we see is actually just the outward appearance of a software program, despite the apparent realism of the relationships between all three characters? This game operates at a level that makes us consider our own relationship to the software, as much as it does the relationship between the couple and ourselves as their friend. *Façade* is somewhere between a Turing machine and a therapy session. How can we relate to each other as human beings and not just machines?

One of the things Stern and Mateas are exploring here, in the form of art, is one of the oldest issues surrounding computing, namely the Turing machine, a thought experiment that determines the next action in a process, based on the current state of the 'device', and the current action being performed.

At the time of conception, Alan Turing, the British mathematician envisioned the machine as a form of tape being fed through a read/write head. What modern thinkers in Artificial Intelligence, such as Stern and Mateas, and many game developers, are doing, is translating these basic principles into digital narrative form. In some ways, this allows us to perceive our own social interactions as Turing machine thought experiments. If I am in THIS relationship, and we do THAT, where will it LEAD us? Of course, the mathematical development of the concept is far deeper, but the façade of *Façade* gives us a chance to explore this. Beyond soap drama notions, and not quite as much a spectacle as cinematic experiences, *Façade* works because of its apparent simplicity, leaving the player/viewer space to develop their own reactions to the experience.

Façade is playful and allows for some creative manipulation of scenarios. If you input sexually provocative comments, you'll unnerve the other two characters, causing them to stop mid conversation and even ask you to leave. If you take a different approach and offer words of support, you might find yourself being taken into one side or the other of the argument. What matters as much as anything is the ongoing drama that we contribute to.

This kind of interactive narrative pushes beyond what we expect of 'games', and doesn't fall into the trap of being 'worthy' in the way that some games can be when they try to address adult issues such as relationships. What *Façade* does require of the player is multiple sessions, to fully understand how their actions can affect the outcome.

By Mark R Hancock

Ermajello Plankton performance Game/Play launch

Date: Saturday 22nd July
Time: 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Venue: Q Arts – Gallery, Derby
Free all welcome

Nottingham based Artists Paul Deats and Ben Mawson-Harris will premiere a new audio-visual performance, improvising with digital systems to create live music and dynamic interactive video at Q Arts – Gallery.
<http://www.ermajello.co.uk>

Abiogenesis

Date: Thursday July 27th
Time: 7.00pm – 8.00 pm
Venue: Online in the Endless Forest
Free all welcome

'Abiogenesis' online performance by Tale of Tales in the Endless Forest.
<http://www.tale-of-tales.com/TheEndlessForest/>

Young People link with Furthfield VisitorsStudio

Date: Friday 28th July
Times: 11.00am – 12.00am Midday,
2.00pm – 3.00pm
Venue: Q Arts – Gallery, Derby
and HTTP Gallery, London
Free all welcome

Young people from local schools, Pupil Referral Units, youth clubs and Q Arts participation programme in Derby will collaborate with young people in London to create a new live online performance within VisitorsStudio. Live link and transmission to HTTP Gallery and the Game/Play website.

Feedback #1: Artist's talk, Paul Granjon

Date: Thursday 31st August
Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Venue: Q Arts – Gallery, Derby
**Free all welcome, no booking necessary,
refreshments provided**

Paul Granjon's interests lie in the co-evolution of human and machine. He builds robots and automata that are activated in performances, films and exhibitions. Through a playful and often humorous approach, his work questions our relation to technology. This feedback session will focus on how his work has progressed from Fluffy Tamagotchi's to sexed up robots.

VisitorsStudio performance

Date: Saturday 2nd September
Venue: HTTP Gallery, London, Q Arts, Derby,
Premises Gallery, Johannesburg and online
Free all welcome

VisitorsStudio performance by Nathaniel Stern, Marc Garrett and Ruth Catlow followed by open laptop mixing at the Premises Gallery, Johannesburg, HTTP, London and Q Arts, Derby.
Please see www.visitorsstudio.org for details of times

Artists' Game/Play Conversations

Ele Carpenter will bring together the 12 Game/Play artists from across 8 different countries together in one conversation to discuss their work in relation to the exhibition. How do the works enable or configure patterns of play? What are the ethical or utopian frameworks of the game? Is there a point at which the player can go beyond constraints of a game as defined by the artist/programmer? Could one game or character intervene in another artists' game? The evolving dialogue will be posted weekly on the Game/Play website.

A – C

Giles Askham

Giles Askham is an artist and curator. Previously the curator of peterborough digital arts he now chooses to work independently and to collaborate with artists and organisations on arts projects that explore the social implications of technology and communications networks. He is currently interested in the possibilities that technology affords us to communicate, interact, and play with one and other.
<http://www.askham.org>
<http://game-play.org.uk>

Jon Bird

Jon Bird is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Computational Neuroscience and Robotics at the University of Sussex and a co-founder and organiser of Blip, a Brighton-based arts, science and creative technology forum. He is currently working on the AHRC funded Drawbots project which is investigating creativity by artificially evolving robots that can draw. His daughter, Laura, has been hounding him for a tamagotchi for the last 6 months.
<http://www.blip.me.uk>

Peter Bowcott

Peter Bowcott's arts practice is concerned with the creation of interactive installations, this work builds upon his previous experience including creating computer music. His projects concentrate on the exploration of computer generated music/video that is manipulated subject to events happening in real time and in real space. Peter Bowcott lectures in Fine Art at the Nottingham Trent University.

Javier Candeira

Javier Candeira writes on art, culture and technology for El Periodico De Barcelona and Rolling Stone Spain. He writes in Barrapunto, the Spanish Free Software news website; teaches about Free Software at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, and runs the Madrid chapter of Dorkbot, the worldwide network of "people doing strange things with electricity". Lately he employs his vanishingly scarce free time working with the Debian GNU/Linux project packaging games and software art pieces, including Kenta Cho's. His Free Software Art Manifesto has been published in the proceedings of the Runme 100 Software Art Festival.
<http://barrapunto.com/>
<http://dorkbot.org/dorkbotmadrid/>
<http://runme.org/project/+sustainability/>

Rebecca Cannon

Rebecca Cannon is an Australian media artist/writer/developer, working professionally in online service delivery, with an academic interest in the history of artistic computer game modification. Rebecca has written papers relating to artistic computer game modification which will be published in the books 'Reskin' by MIT press and 'Anomalie: Video Games and Art' by Intellect Books, both forthcoming.
<http://www.selectparks.net>
<http://www.selectparks.net/rebecca>

Ele Carpenter

Ele Carpenter is a curator currently undertaking Doctoral Research with CRUMB at the University of Sunderland. Her research into the relationship between socio-politically engaged art and new media included curating RISK: Creative Action in Political Culture, CCA Glasgow, 2005. Ele was Associate Curator with: CCA 2002 – 2005; PVA 2003 – 2004; Star & Shadow Cinema (formerly Side Cinema), Newcastle, 2002 – 2005. She was previously Curator, NGCA, Sunderland, 1997 – 2002.
<http://www.crumbweb.org>
<http://www.elecarpenter.org.uk>

Ruth Catlow

Ruth Catlow is an artist working with a DIY attitude in networked media, online and in public, physical and social spaces. As co-founder, with Marc Garrett, of Furtherfield.org and co-curator for HTTP [House of Technologically Termed Praxis], London's first dedicated gallery for networked and media arts she was involved in the collaborative realisation of Node.London Season of Media Arts as a 'networked, open and distributed event'.

Kenta Cho

Kenta Cho is famous for his 'Shmups' (Shoot-em-ups), which mostly feature abstract reinterpretations of retro classics. He created BulletML, a custom markup language for defining 2D shooter firing patterns, which has been used in a variety of games. Most of his games are written in the D programming language and use Simple DirectMedia Layers for graphics.
<http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~cs8k-cyu/windows/noiz2sa.html>

Louise Clements

Louise Clements is curator of Q Arts programme of exhibitions, events, commissions, production and participation since 2002. She is co-founder and curator of the international FORMAT photography festival and co-ordinates TRIGGER, experimental media/film/music events at Q Gallery. Exhibitions include Net:Reality, Encyclopaedia Mundi and Spectrum NTP. Louise has worked as a freelance curator, artist and writer both nationally and internationally since 1998. Exhibitions include ArtX, Henrichutte Industrie Museum, Blauhaus / MIX.e.V. Xanten, Kunstraum – Ennepetal, Germany. She is also chair of Manushi South Asian Dance Company.
<http://www.q-arts.co.uk>

Jakub Dvorský

Jakub Dvorský lives and works in Brno, Czech Republic. Between 1997 – 2003 he studied at Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (film and TV graphics, studio of J. Barta). Since 2003 he has been active as a freelance graphic designer and animator; during this period he founded the animation and design studio Amanita Design. Since 2005, he has collaborated with the animator Václav Blín.
<http://www.amanitadesign.com/>

D – G

Ermajello

Ermajello are Paul Deats and Ben Mawson-Harris. Paul Deats is a classically trained musician and artist. He has a background in recording and studio work and is currently working with new technologies to explore sound synthesis and computer-generated instrumentation. Ben Mawson-Harris is a composer and performer. His work utilises live video streaming and multi-monitor video installations, Ben has exhibited at the Bonington Gallery, Nottingham and Radiator, Nottingham's festival for new technology art.
<http://www.ermajello.co.uk>
<http://www.shod.co.uk>
<http://www.radiator-festival.org>
<http://www.iamdrifting.co.uk>

Mary Flanagan

Mary Flanagan investigates everyday technologies through critical writing, artwork, and activist design projects. In addition to her art practice, she creates educational software and games in her mission to make technoculture a more egalitarian environment. She is an active consultant and game designer, and is the creator of The Adventures of Josie True, the first web-based adventure game for girls. Flanagan teaches at Hunter College, NYC. Her research lab is called TiltFactor. <http://www.tiltfactor.org.uk> <http://www.maryflanagan.com>

Furtherfield

Furtherfield is a non-profit organisation for creation, promotion, criticism of Internet, networked and media art, collaboratively working with artists, programmers, writers, activists, curators, musicians and thinkers, locally and internationally. VisitorsStudio is a furtherfield.org project by Marc Garrett, Ruth Catlow and Neil Jenkins who designed the interface and did the backend programming for the project. <http://www.furtherfield.org/>

Marc Garrett

Marc Garrett is an artist working with a DIY attitude in networked media, online and in public, physical and social spaces. As co-founder, with Ruth Catlow, of Furtherfield.org and co-curator for HTTP [House of Technologically Termed Praxis], London's first dedicated gallery for networked and media arts he was involved in the collaborative realisation of Node.London Season of Media Arts as a 'networked, open and distributed event'.

Kieron Gillen

Kieron Gillen is an award-winning videogames journalist and critic whose writing has appeared in publications such as The Guardian, Wired, PC Gamer and Edge. He's most infamous for coining the phrase "New Games Journalism" in his idle manifesto which precipitated the wide-ranging debate on writing on games which still rages two-years on. Regrets? He's had a few. But then again...

Paul Granjon

Paul Granjon was born in Lyon, France and founded Z Productions in 1988. He has lived and worked in Cardiff for ten years and recently has been awarded a NESTA Fellowship and represented Wales in the Venice Biennale. His DIY approach involves using the ever-increasing detritus of the technological revolution to create his robots, films, installations and performances. <http://www.zprod.org/>

H – L

Mark R Hancock

Mark R Hancock is a writer and web publisher. He is Co-Editor and contributor to Furtherfield.org and the BBC arts pages and was a regular writer for NewMediaFix before it's demise in September 2005. He is interested in understanding how political activities are further realised in the networked society and is currently deep into reading Situationist Internationale papers.

Martijn Hendriks

Martijn Hendriks is a Dutch artist and writer who lives in Brussels. He currently teaches at the University of Maastricht and pursues a PhD research project there on the experience of indifference and beauty in contemporary entertainment. For this purpose, he has had to play many more hours of Grand Theft Auto San Andreas than has been good for him.

Pat Kane

Pat Kane is a writer, musician, activist and consultant. He is the author of The Play Ethic: A Manifesto for a Different Way of Living (Macmillan, 2004), runs a blog and website, consults to organisations as diverse as the Cabinet Office, Nokia and Bartle Bogle Hegarty on play, and still writes and sings with Hue and Cry. <http://www.theplayethic.com>

Ana-Marija Koljanin

Ana-Marija Koljanin (born 1975) – art critic and independent curator based in Osijek, Croatia. Graduating at the Art history and Comparative literature departments, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, Croatia. Her professional experience includes publishing essays and articles in Croatia art magazines and newspapers, curating, collaborating with artists' organisations, managing gallery programmes and teaching. anamarija_koljanin@yahoo.com

Jetro Lauha

Jetro Lauha coder, programmer, developer, artist and musician has been credited on games developed companies: Angelfish (2004), Fathammer Ltd., Fathammer Classics Pack (2004), Gizmondo Europe Ltd., Geopod XE (2004), Fathammer Ltd., Spy Hunter: Missile Crisis (2004), Tapwave, Inc., Stuntcar Extreme Advanced (2004), Dell, Men in Black II: Alien Pursuit (2003). <http://jet.ro/dismount/>

Maaik Lauwaert

Maaik Lauwaert is in the process of writing her PhD thesis at the University of Maastricht, The Netherlands. Her PhD deals with the role of technology in shaping toys and how we play with them. She also works as a freelance journalist writing about contemporary art, comics and computer games. <http://www.maaikelauwaert.com>

Patrick Lichty

Patrick Lichty is a technologically-based conceptual artist, writer, independent curator, animator for the activist group, The Yes Men, and Executive Editor of Intelligent Agent Magazine. His work spans over 15 years, dealing with media narrative/criticism and information aesthetics under many different contexts. He works in diverse technological media, including painting, printmaking, kinetics, video, generative music, and neon. Venues in which Lichty has been involved with solo and collaborative works include the Whitney Biennial as well as the International Symposium on the Electronic Arts (ISEA).

Long Journey Home/Q Club/PRU

Newton's Walk Derby – Key stage 1 & 2 Pupil Referral Unit PRU & behaviour support service. Q Club – an arts club run by Q Arts, Integrated Disabled Children's Service Outreach Team & artists Darius Powell, Martin Sommerville, Angela Terris & Sophie Powell. Long Journey Home – East Midlands cultural network for 'artists in exile' & recently arrived communities. <http://www.longjourneyhome.org.uk>

Low Brow Trash

Low Brow Trash is a collaboration between Graham Elstone and Thomas Hall. Graham Elstone has worked with Now Festival, Forma, Touch music label, Suburo Teshigawara/Karas, Dogs in Honey and Lee and Dawes. Recent work has been with inclusion/education, including Youth Offending, writing of Visual Art Plus Strategy (Youth Justice Board/Arts Council) and programmes under the LBT name. Thomas Hall has previously worked alongside Arnolfini, Bristol, South West Screen, Positive Vision, Barcelona, Goat Island, Stelarc, Kira O'Reilly and Gob Squad.

Low Brow Trash have presented work for Arnolfini, Bristol, Now Festival and Bonington Gallery Nottingham, Trampoline, Nottingham and Berlin, Green Room, Manchester and Nanoplex. Also in 2006 LBT have been commissioned by Phoenix Arts, Leicester and funded by De Montfort University/Derby University (NTI) to produce a series of New interactive digital artworks.

M – P

Michael Mateas

Michael Mateas an assistant professor at Georgia Tech in the School of Literature, Communication, and Culture and in the College of Computing USA. His work in expressive AI involves developing new forms of art and entertainment while also advancing AI research goals. His projects include Office Plant #1, Terminal Time, and, with Andrew Stern, the interactive drama, Façade. <http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~mateas/>

Corrado Morgana

Corrado Morgana is a lecturer, Media artist and electronic musician. He has been involved in various projects including Node.London, OpenCongress and Critical Practice. He has exhibited video work and performed live electronica at various international venues and has also dabbled in virtual reality research. He has worked in a variety of digital guises from web developer to computer salesman and is a self confessed geek. He is about to embark upon a videogames related PhD and is an incorrigible gamer. <http://www.nodel.org> <http://opencongress.omweb.org> <http://www.criticalpracticechelsea.org>

Julian Oliver

Julian Oliver is a New Zealand born software developer, educator, artist and media-theorist. He has presented papers and artworks at many electronic-art events and conferences worldwide. Julian has given numerous workshops in artistic game-development, interface design, augmented reality and open source development practices internationally. In 1998 he established the collective Select Parks. <http://selectparks.net/~julian>

Christiane Paul

Christiane Paul is the Adjunct Curator of New Media Arts at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the director of Intelligent Agent, a service organisation dedicated to digital art. She has written extensively on new media arts and her book "Digital Art" (part of the World of Art Series by Thames & Hudson, UK) was published in July 2003. She is responsible for artport, the Whitney Museum's online portal to Internet art and has curated new media exhibitions at the Whitney as well as other venues in the US and abroad. <http://artport.whitney.org> <http://www.intelligentagent.com>

Thomas Petersen

Thomas Petersen is based in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he is active within the field of digital art and communication. He is a founder and co-editor of Artificial – a web magazine dealing with digital art forms. Furthermore he writes, curates and produces digital artworks. Presently he works for the Danish Ministry of Culture developing an untraditional approach to the digital communication of Danish art and culture. <http://www.artificial.dk> <http://www.crossover.dk>

Andy Polaine

Andy Polaine is co-founded of the award-winning new-media collective Antioom, in London working with clients such as the BBC, Levis Strauss & Co. and The Science Museum. A Senior Lecturer in Interactive Media at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, his research examines the underlying language of interactivity through play theory. Andy currently lives in Germany and also works as an interactive designer, artist and writer and co-convenes an ethical art and design forum called The Omnium Creative Network. <http://www.polaine.com/playpen> <http://www.omnium.net.au>

Simon Poulter

Simon Poulter develops work that is political and behavioural in nature. His work explores the human use of technology in everyday life. He has recently completed 'Automated Knowledge Machine' for FACT in Liverpool and is in the process of presenting 'English Deprivation' – a web site examining statistics, regeneration and culture. He has been influential in developing media labs throughout the UK and abroad and works as a consultant iconoclast to a variety of media arts clients. <http://www.viral.info>

Q – T

Andrew Stern

Andrew Stern is a designer, writer and engineer of personality-rich, AI-based interactive characters and stories. With Michael Mateas he has recently completed the interactive drama, Façade a 5-year art/research project. He was a lead designer and software engineer at PF.Magic, developing Virtual Babyz, Dogz and Catz. He's also been doing research lately with Zoesis and USC's Institute for Creative Technologies. <http://www.interactivestory.net/>

Nathaniel Stern

Nathaniel Stern (Johannesburg / New York) is an internationally exhibited installation and video artist, net.artist, printmaker and performance poet. <http://nathanielstern.com> <http://compressionism.net>

Tale of Tales

Auriea Harvey and Michael Samyn have been collaborators since 1999, when Auriea moved from New York City to Gent, Belgium, where the couple still lives and works. They were first known as Entropy&Zuper! Specializing in the creation of immersive and engaging projects for the web. Tale of Tales is a games development studio founded by the pair in 2002. The purpose of Tale of Tales is to create elegant and emotionally rich interactive entertainment for people who are not enchanted by most contemporary computer games. <http://tale-of-tales.com/>

U – Z

Jonathan Willett

Jonathan Willett is an artist and writer researching a PhD in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. The relationship between work and text has informed his practice since studying for a History of Art degree at Leeds Metropolitan University. The concept of substance as both material and meaning, underpins his critique of the 'think systems' of everyday life; art as a spanner in the works.



Q ARTS



[furtherfield.org](http://www.furtherfield.org)



Q Arts/QUAD

During autumn 2006 Q Arts will change into a new organisation – QUAD, amalgamating with Metro, an independent cinema, relocating its successful exhibition and participatory programmes to a new purpose built arts venue at the heart of Derby's city centre in 2008. Q Arts is Derby's leading visual arts organisation with a focus on media and lens based arts. During this intense period of change towards QUAD, Q Arts and partners have been examining the essential principles that will lead the organisation. Some are new and others have endured throughout the last 25 years. The core drivers of the work are partnership, collaboration, production, presentation and participation. Game/Play marks the beginnings of the new programmes of work, in the run up to QUAD, that will continue to explore playful media in more depth.
<http://www.q-arts.co.uk>
<http://www.derbyquad.co.uk>

HTTP

House of Technologically Termed Praxis, is a Furtherfield initiative that provides a public gallery, offering a physical interface to networked media art projects thus creating a social space in which people can interact with artworks and each other. The programme is dedicated to activities, events and exhibitions with a focus on participative and collaborative works. The gallery, sited in the vibrant and culturally diverse Green Lanes area of London, works with a wide range of artists and audiences to explore the potential of current network technology to promote distributed creativity. HTTP is funded by the Arts Council of England.
<http://www.http.uk.net>
<http://www.furtherfield.org>

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