

2005 International Digital Art Award New Media Exhibition @ QUT Creative Industries Precinct

2005 IDAA Directors Statement:

The IDAA is an integrated exhibition program presenting both printed and new media art. It is an alternative, planet-wide forum for digital artists and a dedicated program within a fine art context, rather than a prescribed industrial and/or academic platform of events.

In 2005 we implemented a new directive to invite artists who we felt were contributing important work to the time-line as well as supporting a public call. In this exhibition we are presenting the work from eminent careered artists such as David Em, Jerry Uelsmann, Istvan Horkay & Peter Greenaway (film maker), Mark Amerika, Roman Verotsko, Peter Callas, Jack Davis, Jody Zellen, Jean-Pierre Herbert, Paul Brown, Stephen Jones, David Harley, Leah King-Smith, Juliet Martin, Sabrina Raaf, Mark Wilson, Joel Slayton, Daniel Brown, Mary Flanagan and Alicia Candiani.

We are also highlighting the art of Jerry Uelsmann whose traditional methods of art making have helped form the conceptual language (photomontage) over the past 40+ years. In this exhibition we have Uelsmann's work dating back from 1969 as a comparative document to current technology.

The IDAA list reflects a historical note and one that continues to add to the contemporary landscape. The collective value of this important exhibition is something that audiences are not likely to see in one exhibition.

Tom Chambers, Co-Director new media, has assisted in curating an extraordinary list of new media artists for our online presentation.

About Digital Art:

Major institutions have acknowledged that computers have not only revolutionized traditional genres (ie painting, photography, film, installation) but have also generated new art forms to include but not limited to net art, virtual reality, online gaming and animation. The collaborative partnering with other disciplines such as science, ecology, philosophy and engineering continues to build a new contextual language within the digital aesthetic. Digital art is an interdisciplinary work and is a hybrid process in which artists engage with practices and outcomes that go beyond any single artform. Important exhibitions and many coming from the IDAA list have featured at MoMa, MCA, Guggenheim etc. This support has also been reflected in both primary and secondary art markets as evident from the Venice Biennale, Art Basel as well as major auction houses.

We would like to thank everyone who entered the 2005 IDAA. More than 2,000+ entries were received. We could have extended this exhibition to include several hundred images and many more new media works as the

standard and integrity of the art was so high. This year we are presenting sponsor awards rather than nominating an overall winner. We believe it would be inappropriate to make such a definitive statement about any one work. The IDAA committee make their selections without bias.

We would like to acknowledge our sponsors for their continued support and look forward to 2006 and beyond.

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Steve Danzig - Founder/Director IDAA

2005 IDAA New Media Artist List:

Mari Velonaki:

Interactive/Installation

Name Pin Cushion
Supporting and Collaborating Organisations
Newton Research Labs, USA
College of Fine Arts COFA (UNSW)
Australia Council for the Arts
Newton Research Labs
Cochlear Ltd

Artist/Interface Design: MARI VELONAKI Software programming: Gary Zebington Sound design: Shannon O'Neill

Originally trained in performance art, Mari Velonaki has been experimenting with interactive installations that involve engagement with digital characters since 1995. Intrigued by the effect of fascination that projected characters have on spectators beyond the space of cinema, she has been devising installations that engage the audience with her characters in interplays stimulated by sensor triggering interfaces. Many of these installations are inspired by pre-cinema experiments of the 19th century such as magic lantern shows, animated toys, and Theatre Optique. Each of Velonaki's projects has required the development of custom-made technological interfaces.

In Pin Cushion, a digital female character is projected onto a rubber cushion with eight Chinese acupuncture needles embedded in it. From a distance the image appears as a luminous face glowing on the wall with people hovering below it. A spectator/participant has an option to either change the face of the character by touching the needles or abstain from interaction. The range at

which the instantaneous morphology the degrading face assumes, depends on the physiological properties of the viewer: surface electrical conductivity, resistance to electrical currents, and the latent charge of the participant's own body. The character's life-span and well-being are dictated by the collective intentions of the participants over the exhibition period.

The installation's digital face is a composite hybrid image, intentionally devoid of any single cultural, social or historical certainty. In the work familiar archetypes are consciously blurred. 'The female body/face, states Velonaki, is often used as a site of essentialism, domination and control. It is often used to represent land, nature and ideas. The concept of homeland, too, is represented as feminine in many languages. In Theresa Cha's Dictee a Western medical diagram and an Eastern acupuncture chart (which literally display a mutilated body, one cut in half in the name of science) are juxtaposed over a map of the Korea that was divided by the Axis and Allied powers after World War II. The map shows a similarly mutilated Korea, one cut in half in the name of world security, harmony and peace'.^[1]

[1] Mari Velonaki, PhD Theses, "Experimental Interfaces: Physical Placement and Participation of the Spectator in Interactive Installation Environments", College of Fine Arts, University of NSW, Sydney, 2003 (Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung (1982). Dictee, Tanam Press, New York; Lowe, Lisa, Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of Dictee Writing Self, Writing Nation: Essays on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's Dictee, Eds. Elaine Kim and Norma Alarcon (1994). Third Woman Press, Berkeley.)

Mark Amerika – animation/video

The Society of the Spectacle (A Digital Remix) is a ten-minute DVD art-loop that uses source material from the writing, images, recordings, and other psychogeographical wanderings of arch-Situationist and French philosopher Guy Debord. The art work is composed by members of DJRABBI, a digital art collective of political activists, and includes visual remixes by Rick Silva aka Cuechamp, the sonic detours of Trace Reddell aka the pHarmanaut, and original subtitles by Mark Amerika aka Kid Hassid.

The artists filter the Situationist icons, concepts and strategies through an eclectic mix of contemporary software and "net art ideology", a space of mind where the society of the spectacle becomes hostage to "the virtual condition." But locating a post-Leftist pleasure politics of new media hactivism and social engagement does not require an overturning of terror; rather, it demands an improvisational detour into the spiritual unconscious. Here, an emerging model of the network-distributed art collective decomposes the raw elements of a runaway information economy in order to resituate the role of the artist as intellectual sabateur. Using hyperimprovisational methods and techniques to invent a provocative style of digital poetics, the artists encounter the immediate presence of terror and fear in both political and media culture. Offering neither a spectacular critique of the spectacle nor an apology for their own tendencies toward spectacularly accidental juxtapositions, the artists behind the SOS remix host a polysensory potlatch of conceptual and material resistance against the official, separatist amnesia of historical practice.

This digital remix of the notorious SOS stands on the other side of communication, where it appeals against advertisement culture's perpetual reconciliation of the dominant State with Hollywood blockbusting in order to accelerate the official, and flagrant, destruction of language, image, and sound across the planet. The function of the spectacle is to make culture forget history. It won this war long ago. Now that history is forgotten, preemptive strikes of the reigning oilgarchy merely tear the stitches apart, reopening the old wounds of the defeat of '68. Which brings up the question: what are artists to do?

The visual images of the DVD are an accelerated remix of pictures generated from Google searches on the Internet. The Google "search terms" come from Debord's writing. Each image that is found on the Internet is trimmed and spliced into Debord's original collage of black and white stock footage. Thousands of manipulated images are then compiled into a stream of agit-pop iconography that challenge the viewer's capacity to see the world anew.

The DVD's soundtrack is scored by the pHarmanaut and adopts a new situationist form of détournablism. Part diversion, part quotation, loops from an undated 7" EP of Debord's proto-human beat boxing and rudimentary organ playing slam into slices of deep house, dub, and punk-disco. The orchestral elements derive from a series of databending scans of Debord's writing. As word count and other data become the notes of a minimal MIDI score, entire chapters of Debord's scathing polemic transform into the varied ambiances of a new sonic psychogeography.

The English subtitles are an on-the-fly remix and overwriting of the original text from the Society of the Spectacle film directed by Debord.

An image of Castro fills the screen. Soon, multiple Castros appear, digital clones of the image - not the Man - and a visual ideology is born. The subtitles say:

"The virtual stripped bare by
all of its political bachelors

seeking a connection."

Later in the DVD, we see images of the City. The soundtrack slips from a loopy carnival theme into subharmonic dub beats. The subtitles read:

"Mobility is what makes us nomadic,
and in moving we become-memory,

momentary light beings accelerating
our bio-mass through the concrete jungles,

spaces structured to dam up our movement
even though we ourselves are leaking."

Peter Greenaway & Istvan Horkay - Bolzano Gold (Tulse Luper) – Video/DVD

"The Tulse Luper Suitcases is an ambitious attempt to enter fully into the Digital Age. A project of large geographical and historical scope, it encyclopedically examines in feature films, DVD's, theatreplays, exhibitions, installations, Web sites, and books, the life of Tulse Luper, professional prisoner, collector, and collator from 1911 to 2003. The investigations are centred on 92 packed suitcases collected from all over the world, which, when examined and unpacked, reveal more and more accumulated evidence of his life and times. The Tulse Luper Suitcases is mastered and edited on digital HD, with a desire to be a true product of post-celluloid cinema, entering into all the exciting potential of image and sound proliferation that the new media of the moving image are offering." - Peter Greenaway

Synopsis:

"This is a map made by an exiled pianist, as a directive to the members of his band. He could not foresee that his musical and topographical instruction should be used backwards. As a cartographer, he was not appreciated in his own country."

Luper believes that the gold has been stolen from the victims of the Third Reich, smelted down from their gold possessions. He provides a story and a case history for each bar, all the time tracing Harpsch's car ride - creating his exact journey from maps discovered in the Bolzano restaurant. The cafe owner is a renegade and a malcontent fomenting Fascist trouble, trying illicitly to offload the gold for his own profit. Luper as he writes a story for each gold bar moves it from one pile to another on the floor of his attic prison. One of the cafe customers is Primo Levi returning from his concentration camp ordeal. He had met him before in Turin and they discuss the significances of the atomic table - most pertinently with the element 92 of uranium.

With the miller betrayed over an infidelity escapade involving his wife and his daughter, and US military police about to recover the gold and with the 92 stories finished, Luper, to his very great surprise - for his reconstruction of Harpsch and his life and journey is entirely fictitious - discovers Harpsch's daughter Fidelia in the cafe - happy and healthy and well-looked after by a devoted Italian childless couple. With both her parents dead, Luper reveals nothing of her background, fact or fiction, and presents her with her father's mended watch as a gift. With his business in prophetic fiction completed, Luper makes his escape on his whitehorse back into the pine forests and into the mountains.

There are three layers to the project, like transparent skins of an onion, lying one on top of the other, each one showing through the other. 1. Luper's story. The background and incidents and events of Luper's imprisonment in the Bolzano cafe for eleven weeks, from May to August 1945, where he writes the Gold Bar stories, and invents a fictitious life for Harpsch. The day by day

events of this Luper imprisonment can be related to an exact calendar of dates, days, weather reports -and maybe a day-by-day textual and visual account of the events of the post-war world.² Harpsch's story.

The story of Harpsch's life, invented by Luper, most pertinently an account of Harpsch's robbery of the goldbars and subsequent journey to Bolzano.

The 92 Gold Stories.

The 92 stories (plus 9 others) that tell of gold appropriated by supporters of European Fascism from the Third Reich's victims, mainly Jews.

"SETS" There are many "sets" or ambience/location backgrounds to the narrative, related, again as above, to the three layers of plotting. And these can be manufactured by multiple still images manipulated in very sophisticated ways by Photo-shop techniques, often simulating movement.

Onto these we will insert pieces of moving film activity, either to be shot or from the copious material already filmed for the Tulse Luper films.

Anne-Maree Taranto:

UNIVERSE

Synopsis

Universe

is an experimental interactive artistic project designed for exhibition in public galleries and multimedia festivals. Adapted from a series of drawings on paper collated as the *Book of the Universe*, it is a beautiful, engaging audio visual journey exploring the divine fictions of contemporary cosmology. It mingles the rich animations of award-winning artist Anne-Maree Taranto with the ambient score of sound artist Nathan Gray. *Universe* is an DVD-based digital environment programmed by interactive designer Mark Hickey.

Universe

is part of a unique body of multimedia work based on Anne-Maree Taranto's research into the conceptual resonance between contemporary and ancient cosmologies. Here she presents a gentle and evocative piece with enduring appeal that communicates sophisticated ideas with a refined visual fluency.

The architectural metaphor used to structure the interactivity is based on the oroborus - the snake that eats its tail. It is an attractive and ancient allegory for the

infinite, manifesting here in its contemporary form of a hypergeometric 3D knot.

Taking passage through this vast, haunting twisted interior, the visitors of *Universe*

get a sense of the timeless vacuum in which the *archive of mythologies of science* are stored. Wild and hefty ideas coming out of the scientific establishment are stored. Wild and hefty ideas coming out of the scientific

establishment are captured here in spacial fields, hovering in space and time, to be monitored by visitors through portals from the sparsely beautiful viewing chamber.

Fabulous creation stories and divine fictions are exhibited for spectacle and study.

They are atmospheric fields and forces brought to life - infused with power, light and

the element of time - to dance their abstract dynamics for the visitors of *Universe*

. . . Among the many subtly animated exhibits to behold are *Density is Destiny*, *Something Out of Nothing: the Story of It All*, and *Wormhole Pipedreams*. A plethora of such bizarre arcane models can be enjoyed for their curious beauty in the

weird and wonderfully imaginative world of *Universe*.

Produced in Association with the Australian Film Commission

Laurence Gartel:

Working with early electronic painting systems at the Experimental Television Centre New York circa 1978 - this presentation is located in the back area of the gallery - note there is no sound. This is the only tape in existence and needless to say how important it's historical value is to the digital time-line. Laurence's research started at the Media Study in Buffalo 1975 before going to the Experimental Television Centre.

What you will see in this video presentation is Laurence working on a Jones Keyer/Jones Colorizer, a Wobulator (an electronic video synthesizer) and a Voltage Control Amplifier which allowed Gartel to convert grey scale images and add RGB color and then distort the image. In 1981 he used an early digital computer, the Cromemco Z-2. This computer had a 12 inch floppy disk with only 2KB of memory and in 1985 the Center added a Commodore Amiga Computer. Laurence's research in painting systems started 10 years before the development of related imaging software like photoshop and his pioneering work laid the foundation for how we understand computer generated images today.

This video presentation documents early computer generated animation and several other projects including video captioning of himself "a la Warhol" as well as manipulation of live to air footage of a football game.

Nathaniel Freeman

Breath Test

The intention of *Breath Test* is to engage the viewer in a momentary contemplation of the power each of us possesses with respect to material integrity, even when faced with something so seemingly sturdy and durable as a building. The work is installed in a space empty but for a microphone hanging from the ceiling. As the viewer steps up to the microphone and blows, he or she is able to destroy a house with the force of 30-kiloton atomic bomb. Entering into this constructed environment, one gains ownership of the experience and the space, as well as the power to alter the elements within it.

Breath Test explores the idea of exchanging a space for the imprint it leaves, addressing the shadows and corners that exist within a room, a geometry based on cellular memory, reach, and need. It deals with notions of stability and temporality in an atmosphere in flux, questioning whether it is only specific human decisions that can destroy the built environment, or if shifts in economics and ideologies can possess just as much physical power.

Web: <http://www.internationaldigitalart.com/IDAA/idaafront.html>

Harries National Digital Art Prize website:
<http://www.internationaldigitalart.com/digital/harries.html>