

TALKING MELENTIE PANDILOVSKI April 04**WEB3D ART WORKSHOP**

Web3D art is a rapidly developing concept. International artists have used Web3D (called VRML – Virtual Reality Modelling Language) since 1996-97, when offered the first chance to use this open source software to create artistic, personal, and creative 3D communications environments, ie: 3D spaces on-line. Previously, this work was in the domain of large companies with extremely expensive computing power. There has been an increase in the experimentation by artists as works have (slowly but surely) made their way into the gallery and museum world, and as they grab the attention of youth culture audiences, through their occasional similarity to 3D games. Since then quite a few different softwares have appeared on the scene. There is a widespread interest in this field of inquiry among scientists, researchers, geographers, city planners and architects as well as artists – as the methodology allows for the real time manipulation of objects in virtual space, and over the internet.

The actual WEB3DART Exhibitions began in 1999, when Karel Dudesek, (leading the MA course in Interactive art and communication at Ravensbourne College, Kent, UK, and Director of Van Gogh TV, Hamburg, Germany) and Kathy Rae Huffman (Director of Corner House Gallery in Manchester) organised the first VRML Art Show, the ‘hit’ of the Paderbourne VRML Conference/Symposium in 1999 (Germany). WEB3DART has since expanded and been shown in several festivals, including the European Media Art Festival, Germany, Transmediale Festival in Berlin, Art Show of the SIGGRAPH Conference in New Orleans, SEAFair Festival, Macedonia, as well as Monterey, California, Manchester, UK, etc. These exhibitions have demonstrated the digital language of international artists, who express themselves with dynamic interactive simulations of physical systems.

The Web3D Art Workshop is a follow up to a series of events organised by the Experimental Art Foundation in this field starting with the WEB3DART2003 exhibition in June last year, simultaneously with several other international art centres. The international juried show of 25 online projects from artists, researchers, and students from more than 10 countries, featured multi-user environments, soundscapes, experimental architecture, and narrative, exploratory works investigating virtual space.

Subsequent to this, I gave a lecture/presentation at the Mercury Cinema in September—*WEB3D - On Modes of Our Age*—dealing with phenomenological interpretations of virtual reality and Web3D in general, but taking into account recent theoretical work as well.

The process continued with the staging of a comprehensive Web3D Art Workshop which aimed to introduce and train artists in software programs, and to provide practical demonstrations and assist in the development of concepts and artworks in Web3D models. The EAF held the Workshop 2-5 February with Martin Thompson as Workshop Leader, successfully negotiating to use one of the computer labs at the University of SA’s City West Campus, in collaboration with the Louis Laybourne-Smith School of Architecture and Design. We are very thankful to Gini Lee and Stephen Loo for enabling us to use the labs and also to Elena Rebuli from NextByte for providing free copies of the necessary Carrara Software.

The Workshop, the first of its kind in South Australia, served as a theoretical and practical introduction to the creation of virtual worlds and virtual communities, also urging the creation of new projects in South Australia and nationally. There were 9 participants: Teri Hoskin, Francesca da Rimini, Levon Hudson, Michael Blackwell, Margaret Dodd, Megan Rainey, Ali Graham, Claudia Raddatz, and Sarah Miney, who had the opportunity to use the equipment (and complete their projects) in the lab for a period of two weeks after its official ending. The Workshop resulted in the participants being skilled in Web 3D, as well as in the creation of new artwork which the EAF is now working to promote both nationally and internationally. One result was the inclusion of Martin Thompson’s work in the WEB3DART2004 Exhibition in Monterey, California recently.

<http://www.web3dart.org> (standard web3D software required – can be downloaded)

Martin Thompson’s work: <http://www.web3dart.org/ctxt3.php?lid=1&sid=922>

Other Australian projects: <http://www.web3dart.org/ctxt3.php?lid=1&nid=250039&xid=1000063>

Projects from other countries: <http://www.web3dart.org/ctxt3.php?lid=1&nid=250039>

The Experimental Art Foundation is planning to continue the process with a follow up Workshop led by Professor Karel Dudesek in 2004/05.

ART OF THE BIOTECH ERA

The speed with which the fields of bioscience, biotechnology, genomics, and genetic engineering have developed over the past few decades, has urged artists, cultural theorists and critics, historians, theorists of science, and activists to respond, each through their own distinctive discourse. The intensity of responses indicates that these fields are extremely potent with social, ethical, philosophical, and cultural implications. Even more, this indicates the need for them to become a part of the broader cultural discourse.

Artists have been responding to such challenges and trying to develop relevant bio-art projects that redefine the connections between the artwork and living organisms by working with tissue culture, genetic engineering techniques, etc.

Few art institutions around the globe have similarly felt the need to explore and support this newly developed realm. The Experimental Art Foundation joins their number by instigating and organising the project ART OF THE BIOTECH ERA, which took place 26 February-3 April, 2004 as part of the Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts 2004.

The project in practical terms incorporated an exhibition, symposium and workshop and dealt mainly with investigating the cross-issues of art, culture and biotechnology.

There are many criteria upon which you can judge an art project, but ART OF THE BIOTECH ERA was a real success by most yardsticks including that of the quality of the promoted artwork, the theoretical discourses offered and discussed, the comprehensiveness of the 'hands on' approach in the workshop, coverage in the Australian and international media, the responses of the public, the networking between local artists and the national and international artists and speakers who attended, etc. The work of 11 artists and art groups was presented in the exhibition, 10 speakers delivered their talk at the symposium, and 14 participants attended the workshop.

BIOTECH Exhibition

The exhibition was quite demanding for art critics as it has become very difficult for them to define the increasingly developing corpus of biotech artwork, let alone find a consensus or common ground regarding the values they seek to find in the new artworks. How do we define new art that utilises the merging of biotechnology and genetics, art and information technologies, and which is augmented and accented through the interaction of these fields, in the process replacing bio-textuality and bio-imagery with a wide ranging 'moist visualisation'? Answers, anyone? It is difficult to say at this point. In any case biotech art seems to be assisting the process of changing critical viewpoints – away from the passive relationship often associated with art and in the direction of artwork through which we can experience the connection between the engineered and the biological.



Eduardo Kac Genesis

Organisation-wise we had tremendous difficulties in putting the show on. It was dependent upon many outside factors: budget, availability of artists and theorists, transport, customs, quarantine, travel grants, in-kind sponsorship, *and more*. However the stars were on our side—the project was ready in time for the opening.

Conceptually the exhibition was aimed towards investigating the current 'phenomenon' of 'biotech art'. A very broad range of art was presented by leading international and Australian artists dealing with biotechnology—The Tissue Culture & Art Project (Oron Catts, Ionat Zurr) in collaboration with Stelarc, Gina Czarneski, Eduardo Kac, Heath Bunting, Andre Brodyk, Mez, Adam Zaretsky, George Gessert, FOAM (Maja Kuzmanovic, Nik Gaffney), Diane Ludin, Michalis Pichler.

Eight of these travelled to Adelaide to install their work.

Although the exhibition presented a quite broad and heterogenous group of artists—grasping very differently the concept of biotechnology—it is still possible to sort out a few common elements. In general, for the artists to develop relevant bio-art projects, they had to pass through the following basic sequence: the developing of concept, compilation of data (bio, genetic, electronic or other), and establishment of a relation with scientists (biologists/geneticists) or technologists.

As soon as this relation is established, an apparatus satisfying various parameters needs to be implemented. This involves: adaptation to technical requests, consideration of as many as possible effects and side-effects of the projects, the generation of various bio-contents and bio-forms, creation of a set of connections within simple or complex bio-systems, networking (in some of the projects), immersion in the processes of bio and genetic exploration, virtuality, interactivity, superior representation (through graphic programs, etc).

In this process the selected artists were engaged in discovering the constraints of biotechnology and genetic engineering while bringing the viewer to an increased awareness of the artwork – represented by samples which could be experienced or interfaced by the viewers as they were absorbed in intrinsic or hidden possibilities of interaction with the bio-artwork. Further, the biotech artists, engaged in the process of altering the concept of personal and community bio-space, attempted to organise it along the lines of a relationship between biotechnology, genetics, real space and a personal (or collective) view point.

A few other general points about the work are:

- that even though biomaterial had been used, it could not be treated as based simply on live or dead cells, as it had a conceptual content beyond its corporeality;
- that even though coding was used (in program languages or in the genetic information of organisms), it could not be treated solely as software action, because the aspects of life in the production of moist art gave a much greater rigour to the creative processes of the new work;
- that it was not image-based, even though the image was used as such: artists had engaged in a process by which the artworks outgrew the concept of images (and in fact the experience of the image increased);
- that although utilising text, it could not be considered as text-based. Similarly, neither was the web itself text-based, though it was textually overloaded.

Information about individual works in ART OF THE BIOTECH ERA are accessible via the EAF's website at <http://www.eaf.asn.au/biotech/biotech.html>



Oron Catts feeding the ear – daily at 4pm 27 Feb-5 March 04

BIOTECH Culture Symposium

In the context of the overall project, and in order to stimulate the work of cultural theorists, curators, artists, and scientists, dealing with the theme of biotech culture, the Experimental Art Foundation instigated and organised a Biotech Culture Symposium at the Mercury Cinema 11am-4pm on 27 February.

The speakers at the Symposium (ranging from scientists to cultural theoreticians, art critics, writers, lecturers, and new media artists), provided a cultural and artistic response towards the emerging disciplines of biotechnology and genetics, by addressing the politics of these disciplines, the ethical implications of genetic engineering, the relationship between ethics/aesthetics/biotechnology, and the complex relationship of science and culture, as well as the wider political and social context surrounding these fields. We regard their reflections on these quite pressing issues as timely and important: current research within the broad fields of biotechnology and into aspects of genetic engineering (GM food, Human Genome Project, etc) may, in a cultural and a social sense, assist us in analysing not just our present situation but also in visualising our future.

The second session of the Symposium focused on the artistic and cultural codes appearing in our age. The exhibiting artists presented to us the processes in which they engage in their practice.

We received very valuable presentations by Dr. Stuart Bunt, Dr. Anna Munster, Ionat Zur, Gina Czarnecki, Oron Catts, Heath Bunting, FOAM: Maja Kuzmanovic, Nik Gaffney, Michalis Pichler, and Mike Stubbs.

The symposium abstracts are available on the EAF website at: <http://www.eaf.asn.au/biotech/symposium.html>

The integral texts, alongside texts from other invited international theorists and artists, will be published by the EAF in a comprehensive catalogue of the project later in 2004.

BIOTECH Art Workshop

Also as part of the project, the EAF organised and hosted a 5-day intensive workshop (1-5 March) for 14 local, national and international artists, theorists, and curators. The workshop leaders were Oron Catts and Gary Cass on behalf of SymbioticA: the Art and Science Collaborative Research Laboratory, School of Anatomy and Human Biology, University of Western Australia. The workshop was organised in the EAF upstairs office space (formerly ANAT's location) which was converted into a science laboratory for the purposes of the project with the participants treating it as a real laboratory— among other things everyone was advised to wear closed shoes! It proved a great venue, providing an intimate space within close proximity to the exhibition and logistical requirements. Oron and Gary carried out a rigorous and fantastic workshop on behalf of SymbioticA in addition to providing the expensive and necessary equipment. Other equipment was made available through in-kind sponsorship from Coherent Scientific Pty Ltd and AES Environmental Pty Ltd and we thank them very much for their support.



BIOTECH Art Workshop: Gary Cass and participants, Nik Gaffney, Anna Munster, Maja Kuzmanovic

The workshop served as a theoretical and practical introduction in the creation of biotech art and provided hands-on exploration of biological technologies—and of issues stemming from their use, including sessions in molecular biology, microbiology, DNA extraction, lab safety, ethics in biological research, bacteria plating from body and environment, breeding/plant manipulations, cell and tissue biology, plant tissue culture, tissue engineering and stem cells.

The workshop had a good concept and realisation and the atmosphere was very enthusiastic. The trip to the Roseworthy Campus of the University of Adelaide, and the encounter with the scientific world, made this even more obvious. The feedback of the participants was excellent.

The EAF believes that the effects of the workshop will be felt in the long-term, as the artists, critics, curators and theorist who took part, besides having learned a great deal, will continue to work on their biotech art projects, and on their critical and theoretical work, during 2004 and beyond.

Performance: I have to single out the performance by the Tissue Art & Culture Project, titled KILLING OF THE EAR, that took part on 5 March, as an especially successful and well-attended event.

The Experimental Art Foundation is preparing a follow-up Biotech Culture Workshop, and public lecture, by Dr Eduardo Kac for the first week of December 2004.

An event of this size would have been impossible without extreme efforts by the staff, Board, collaborators, and partners. I would like to especially thank Julie Lawton, Michael Grimm, and Ken Bolton. I would also like to thank Linda Cooper, for the efforts she put into securing the In-kind equipment.

Thanks go also to those who assisted the project including the South Australian Government through Arts SA; SymbioticA: the Art and Science Collaborative Research Laboratory, School of Anatomy and Human Biology and the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Science, University of Western Australia; AES Environmental Pty Ltd, Adelaide; Adelaide Bank 2004 Festival of Arts; the Administration for Culture, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Brussels; Coherent Scientific Pty Ltd, Adelaide; Media Resource Centre and Mercury Cinema, Adelaide and also to the artists who participated – many of whom funded their own national and international travel especially to take part in the workshop.

THEN KEN BOLTON

23 October — 22 November 2003

Andrew Best • *Paradise*

Andrew Best's installation *Paradise* was a simulacrum of a notional non-site somewhere in Adelaide—an alley, an abandoned industrial space. It was 'furnished' with wrecked and overturned photocopiers, some bits of chipped masonry, weeds, Nitrous Oxide capsules, a potplant. The weeds (all hand-made but successfully illusionistic) grew in the interstices of the cement grid of the gallery floor and along the walled edge, and by this highlighting of geometry & the reproducible units of urban space, suggested the 'in-principle' extension of the space beyond the gallery. It was an everyday Adelaide, alright, of drugs & dereliction, euphoria and fear and boredom. The spot lighting of some of its features created a nocturnal feel. A ghoulish head appeared beneath the intermittently flashing workings of one photocopier—an allusion to aspects of Adelaide's reputation for gruesome murders but also to the junk ethos favoured by many of the young users one supposed the space implied. *Paradise* was a further extension of Best's forays into notions & modes of narrative: earlier exhibitions had made straightforward simulacrum of a more focused event & urban myth, and an allegorized depiction of schematized romance (beer barrels rolling to a structure emulating Donkey Kong) &, in this case, a work that partook of both generalising allegorical treatment and the literal-or-simulated.

Alex Gawronski • *Abstrakt Attack Kabinett*

Abstrakt Attack Kabinett was a room/situation *within* the situation of the gallery: a purpose built three-sided room, the fourth wall left open—though the square was psychically completed by a large, easel-mounted picture taking most of that fourth wall's place. Within this small, private, studio environment were some pages opened from art history books discussing Cezanne in reverent & minute detail. These were mounted on one of the side walls. On the other side wall was a framed black & white reproduction of a Cezanne *Mont Saint Victoire* landscape transmuting into a camouflage pattern & beside that a transcription of art-world hesitation & demurrer over the possibility of 'political' art. A diagrammatized account (of a Cezanne landscape?), replete with arrows indicating compositional vectors, projected, from a central hole in its surface, video images taken from TV onto the large easel. The images were coloured explosions in the night sky over Baghdad, possibly from the Gulf War. *Abstrakt Attack Kabinett* successfully suggested the isolation & hermeticism of 'studio' art—and asked for more.

NOW to 22 May 2004 SHAUN GLADWELL and TV MOORE

Shaun Gladwell and TV Moore are Sydney-based video artists, who are currently experiencing a fast growing national and international reputation. They are both recipients of the Samstag Visual Arts Scholarships, 2001 and 2004 respectively.

Gladwell and Moore employ video to express a variety of ideas and atmospheres which engage, manipulate and extend genres of the moving image within popular, global culture. Their common focus is a critical relationship to the history and current conditions of video within contemporary art. The video portraits of TV Moore draw upon the language of music video clips, advertising and cinema in order to destabilise strategies of method acting, staging, and spontaneous documentary. Subjects are caught out of context. Shaun Gladwell's video self-portraits scrutinize civil space and public architecture through performance/interventions.

NEXT 6pm Thursday 3 June–3 July 2004 OLIVER MUSOVIK *friends, neighbours and others*

One of the more interesting young European artists dealing with social issues, Macedonian-based Oliver Musovik has had numerous solo exhibitions as well as exhibited at major important international exhibitions including Manifesta 4 – European Biennial of Contemporary Art, Frankfurt am Main 2002 and the 6th International Istanbul Biennial. His works are a part of major contemporary art collections such as World Bank, Washington D.C. (USA); 2000+ Arteast Collection, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Slovenia and Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, Macedonia.

Oliver Musovik's work deals with the theme of urban living and the scope of interactions surrounding it. He is presenting this using graphics, video, computer prints, and installations. He often uses the residential area in Skopje, Macedonia, where he lives, to investigate the constructions erected by people, with the gaze of a criminologist. The perpetrators themselves are not important for him, keeping the residents out of his documentary photos and instead researching the habits of his neighbours with a kind of photography of the scene-of-the-crime. Later, Musovik gives the pictures captions in which he describes the mood, sketches routines or adds other everyday notes to supplement the picture. Oliver Musovik will be in Adelaide for the installation and launch of his work at the EAF.

Creating a smoke-free South Australia

Isn't it great to smell the fresh air! Fortunately more and more South Australian sport, recreation and arts organisations are choosing to be smoke-free. May all South Australians enjoy smoke-free venues, and enjoy being healthy.



EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION and DARK HORSEY BOOKSHOP

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