DAC99 Closing Reception:  
An Art Party Featuring Interactive Entertainment

8 TO 11 PM, OCTOBER 30, 1999  
MACQUARIUM INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATIONS

Closing Reception Organizer: Ellen Strain  
Conference Chairs: Jay Bolter and Terry Harpold

The evening will consist of:  
Catered food and a cash bar (unless alcohol is donated)  
A Video Program (curated by Abla Hamilton and Ellen Strain)  
Interactive Installations (Ryan and Berman)  
Performances (PTRL, Jenik, Serrano)

List of Involvement Opportunities:

Artist’s Assistant (4 individuals required -- will assist artist in bringing any equipment from Colony Square to Macquarium and will assist in the set-up of equipment if necessary)  
• Adriene Jenik (San Diego)  
• Ana Serrano (Canada)  
• Tim Ryan (Australia)  
• Joshua Berman (Georgia Tech)

PTRL Performers (as many individuals as are interested)

Equipment Schleppers and Clean-up Crew (3 individuals required -- some equipment may need to be brought from GCATT over to Macquarium; clean-up should be minimal)
"Santaman's Harvest" by Adriene Jenik

For over two years I have been experimenting with the use of online graphical chat rooms as a public theater space. These experiments derive from my longstanding commitment to and practice of creating live television events that question and confront mass media audiences. Graphical chat rooms, in this instance those of The Palace (www.thepalace.com), represent anticipatory spaces which are ripe for dramatic play. Here, everyone is simultaneously static (seated in front of their terminals) and in motion (on screen), silent, yet speaking, alone, yet crowded into a small space. Those of us challenged with breaking down the barriers between audience and actor find immediate interest in the arrangement of participants sharing the same arena, already masked and performing a version of themselves.

In these experiments, story and narrative is enacted through a logic of gestures and positions boundaried by the simple 4"x6" postcard size stage or "room." Each room is a networked space, with access granted to a maximum of 16 participants at any particular time. Here, theater is stripped down to its simplest possible components: the word, the face, the bounded space. The performances take place "doubly live"; as activities within The Palace where palacians are enfolded within the drama, and as projected and amplified events at festivals and conferences. The first of these experiments, "waitingforgodot.com" premiered at the Third Annual Digital Storytelling Festival in Crested Butte CO. Since then I have continued to develop and apply various scripts, dramatic voices and improvisatory techniques to the chat spaces.

Santaman's Harvest represents the next step in developing these chat spaces as theatrical environments. Researching the structural and formal qualities of Morality Plays and Interludes, popular forms of theater in 16th century England, I have grown interested in how these forms lend themselves to contemporary themes and contexts. Morality Plays were purposeful sites of learning; vividly illustrated and subtly argued theater written by men concerned with the next world and its effect upon this one. Existing just prior to the institutionalization of theater within an architecturally fixed and commercialized space, Morality Plays travelled through unlocalized public space during their performances. Santaman's Harvest combines the allegory, pantomime and political insinuation of this theater, with strategies taken from the improvisatory techniques of August Boal to create an arguable new theatrical experience, which engages its audiences on its own terms.

Performance time: 40-45 minutes Technical needs: 3 networked Mac computers (PowerMac or higher processor) 1 of these Macs needs output to projector & sound system in theater

Please send any further questions & reply mail to me at: Adriene Jenik Asst. Prof. of Computer & Media Arts Visual Arts Dept. UC, San Diego ajenik@ucsd.edu (858) 822-2059
“The Turing Game : An Exploration of Cultural Identity in Online Environments” by Joshua Berman and Amy S. Bruckman

Do men and women behave differently online? Can you tell who is a man and who is a woman on the Internet based on how they interact with others? Can you tell how old someone is, or determine their race or national origin? In the online world as in the real world, issues of personal identity affect how we relate to others. Culture in online environments is created by these understandings and misunderstandings. As the net grows not only in size but in diversity, we must take these issues into account as designers and citizens of this new medium.

The question of what parts of our heritage and culture accompany us when we go online has been examined in depth by researchers for more than a decade now. Our research, building on this body of work, takes an active constructionist approach. We examine the question of what we bring online as something which might be actively controlled as well as passively understood. For instance, as a community member, is my gender salient? Are there ways for me to conceal or authenticate it? For community designers it is an even more crucial question. Is it possible to create a genderless classroom? A raceless courtroom? A rich environment where a user can be not just a pseudonym, but a person with a rich history of culturally-bound experiences? These are some of the questions our research addresses. We believe that these issues are affected not only by choices in community architecture, but also by interface and other factors. We have created a participatory collaborative learning experience to help us understand these phenomena. In this environment, which we call <http://www.cc.gatech.edu/elc/turing/>The Turing Game, a panel of users all pretend to be a member of some group, such as women. Some of the users, who are women, are trying to prove that fact to their audience. Others are men, trying to masquerade as women. An audience of both genders tries to discover whom the imposters are, by asking questions and analyzing the panel members' answers.

The Turing Game is played on the Internet. Games can cover aspects of gender, race, or any other cultural marker of the users’ choice. For Digital Arts and Culture 1999, we propose to take advantage of this Internet user base in an interactive demonstration. In this session, one or two users can join into existing games at a station in the artists' salon, or use the station to peruse interesting logs of previous games. In addition, we will provide a research poster showing our work. Finally, we will give short informal talks about The Turing Game, and our findings relating to online identity.

This presentation and demonstration will require two desktop personal computers, running the Windows 98 or Windows NT operating system, and with connections to the Internet.

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“SIV - Surfing Interactive Video” by Tim Ryan

The subject of Masters research at RMIT University in Australia, SIV - Surfing Interactive Video was produced with the assistance of Cinemedia* and the Australian Multimedia Enterprise*. (*Australian Arts funding agencies)

SIV is an interactive application developed to explore the cultural, creative & commercial potential of interactive sports video entertainment, and to exploit the middle ground between live action sports on television and simulated sports played on video game consoles.

SIV is the world's first interactive video compilation of re-produced surfing footage, set to an original music soundtrack. SIV contains sixty-nine channels of surfing video entertainment from different genres and eras, collected from around the world. This includes; extreme surfing action footage, historic documentary and interview footage; skateboarding, skysurfing and bodyboarding crossover footage, 8 Coca-Cola surfing television commercials dating back to 1967, David Attenborough Great White Shark footage......... etc. SIV also contains 3D animated icons and animated titles.

Some Surfing Trivia  Primarily a youth sub-culture, modern surfing extends across three generations.  Now a US$5.4 Billion a year industry, Surfing is a major world sub-culture in which Australia plays a leading role.  Three of the four largest surfing companies in the world are Australian.  Surfing is the root of many adventure and extreme sports.  Surfer's explorative nature opened the way to many of today's exotic holiday locations around the world.  Bodyboarding is the second highest participant sport for women in Brazil.  280 000 spectators attend the Miyaki Pro surfing contest in Japan each year.  Surfing is Australia and the United States closest cultural affinity.

Some SIV Technical Trivia  SIV is an interactive video product, that emulates the performance of emerging digital video standards for interactive television and DVD.  SIV was created using a proprietary digital video authoring tool developed specifically for this project. It is played by a PC using a high end MPEG card for video output.  Having used film and broadcast television production techniques, SIV is broadcast quality MPEG1 with a bandwidth of 3.5Mbits/sec.  SIV features 'seamless jumping' between video streams.  SIV's total running time in linear form, amounts to 1 hour and 22 minutes.  There are 314 possible combinations of viewing the 69 channels of content.  SIV will play combinations of probability based video channels indefinitely until stopped.

Presentation Technical Requirements: Living room emulation - Large TV (video) screen, stereo amplifier and hi-fi speakers. A PC monitor and equipment housing.

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Timothy Ryan
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“esc” and “Revelation” by MediaLinx h@bitat

MediaLinx h@bitat at the Canadian Film Centre is a new hybrid educational institute committed to developing emotionally engaging new media prototypes. Through our four month intensive New Media Design Programmes, we put together professionals from a variety of disciplines into teams and produce some of the most compelling interactive prototypes in Canada. Our focus is storytelling and we examine and develop new story models for this new medium. To date we have completed four sessions of the New Media Design Programme and have produced nine prototypes ranging from interactive documentaries to episodic web-based sitcoms. As part of the Digital Arts Conference, we would like to present our most recent prototypes -- "esc" a digital suspense thriller modelled after an interactive play framework; and "Revelation" an exploratory narrative about amnesia and post-apocalyptic society.

esc
"Esc" is a prototype about five characters who only know each other through through text on a computer screen, yet they were the best of friends. Five very different people separated by cyberspace but close like family -- or so they thought. When the group decides to meet in person in a bar, they are hurled into an undefined world of lies, manipulation and techno-panic. Trapped together, every imaginable piece of technology seems to conspire against them, terrorizing the group at every turn. Filled with suspicion, they are forced to come together in an attempt to save their lives and escape.

The project "esc" is a user empowered narrative journey. The viewer does not change the course of the story itself but, instead, directs their experience of the story. They are able to select the technological perspective from which to view the action and they may also interact at certain plot points in order to push the narrative forward. They can be curious and switch perspectives frequently, or they can sit back and watch the action enter and exit from any given perspective. The story unfolds regardless of the user's path but nobody can be in two places at the same time. When the user makes a choice to follow a character, they miss the simultaneous action happening in other rooms in the story. Additionally, no matter what they do, the user cannot stop the plot or the passage of time.

Revelation
Revelation is an interactive narrative about a man, named Jack, who loses his memory after the "Great Crash," and begins his search to find it. It is only by recovering his lost memories that he can regain his sense of self. The user helps Jack unlock his memories by "solving puzzle pieces%, and is then able to experience Jack's memories as Jack experiences them.

Revelation encourages an open-minded, exploratory approach to storytelling, emphasizing awareness and experimentation in the user. Puzzle-like narrative sequences offer opportunities to explore the innermost thoughts of the character. As the user completes each puzzle sequence, the user unlocks a memory, and then experiences the memory as the character experiences it. Chance and randomness appear in the structure of images and relate to the randomness of experience in everyday life. The user takes chances as choices are made.

Revelation explores user feedback through an aural, visual and tactile approach. Each user action creates a reaction in the character ^ clicking through image sequences
develops the user’s understanding of the story while activating Jack’s internal responses to the action. Audio links to image sequences provide character expression and audience interaction. The user identifies with Jack, and experiences the sensation of moving between real-time and dreamtime.

MediaLinx h@bitat at the Canadian Film Centre The School of New Media at the Canadian Film Centre, currently known as MediaLinx h@bitat, identified a significant market opportunity in the area of new media content development training. Currently, the new media industry straddles three sectors: telecommunications, information technology and, what is now known as, content creation, of which the entertainment (film and TV) and education sectors are a part. The development of a vibrant and lucrative new media industry, accordingly, necessitates the creation, development and distribution of successful and compelling new media content. At present, models for creating, developing and distributing these products and services are still slowly being redefined and tested. At this time, industry players are incapable of risking a good portion of their revenues on research and development and many are hard pressed to create new products and services for a market whose new media consumption desires and preferences have still yet to be defined. In creating a new media division via MediaLinx h@bitat, the Canadian Film Centre seeks to lead the new media content training market in terms of the following goals:

Delivering one of the best new media content development training programmes whose emphasis is on creative content rather than technology.

Creating a new hybrid educational institute: MediaLinx h@bitat incorporates the intellectual rigor of university curricula with the industry and project-based practical hands-on work of private training institutions. Our programmes provide intellectual grounding in new media theory and real-world project development; our faculty consists of academics and key industry players; our environment is both a learning space and a commercial incubator for products.

Developing an extensive network of strategic alliances across a variety of sectors. Currently we have ties, through our Advisory Council and grassroots partnerships developed in the New Media Design Programme, with Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Digital Storytelling, UC Berkeley, Sheridan College, University of Toronto, and other institutions. We have formal relationships with key organizations including Bell Canada, Adobe, Apple, Compaq Inc., Macromedia, and Silicon Graphics.

Archiving, synthesizing, managing and distributing the knowledge generated through our programme offerings. MediaLinx h@bitat at the Canadian Film Centre acknowledges that its products and services include not only its training programmes, but also the intellectual property generated during discussions, seminars and lectures. This intellectual property, in turn, is repackaged and licensed to other training institutes and the private sector.

MediaLinx h@bitat’s New Media Programmes consist of three streams:
I. New Media Design Programme
II. Interactive Arena Lecture Series
III. Professional Development Series

I) New Media Design Programme
Embracing the philosophy that compelling new media products are best created with input from a variety of specialization, the New Media Design Programme is both project and team-based. It brings together people from a variety of disciplines — writers, graphic designers, computer programmers, multimedia authors, and filmmakers — in a uniquely collaborative environment out of which innovation is born. The New Media Design Programme, offered in fall and winter, provides participants with a thorough grounding in four critical skill areas: the art and craft of digital storytelling, business and financial management, leadership development and technology.

Teams spend the first two months in a series of hands-on, project-based exercises providing them with the building blocks for developing new media products. In the second half of the course, each team completes a new media project. Ranging from treatments and prototypes to finished products, these projects draw on each team members' area of expertise, providing a practical context for testing out new skills. Throughout, participants are guided by leading Canadian and international new media professionals.

II) Interactive Arena Lecture Series
The purpose of this high profile lecture series is to gather leading new media visionaries from across North America to share their insights on the emerging world of creativity, technology, commerce and new media. In addition to lecturing at the Interactive Arena, guest speakers also share their expertise with residents of the New Media Design Programme, spending time with residents and discussing the current climate of new media and how this relates to their projects.

III) Professional Development Series
The Professional Development Series is a series of short term professional development workshops that address key issues and trends in new media. The purpose of this series is to develop and enhance the skills of film, television and new media professionals, including advertising and graphic design agencies moving toward new media activities, so that they may be able to participate in the entertainment industry of the future.

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