CAL-LING ALL FUTURES

an overview of futureplaces. past, present, and

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BEYOND "LIKE"

THOUGHTS ON PSYCHIC OCTOPI, SOFT SUPERSTITION AND WISHFUL ACTIVISM

Heitor Alvelos

Recent media activity during the 2010 world cup was indelibly marked by the presence of *Paul the psychic octopus*, who correctly predicted the outcome of eight games - having been challenged to do so the same number of times, that is. These things would happen, that much we understand, given the sheer amount of people (and other

living creatures, it seems) engaged in world cup predictions at such times - and besides, a fairly accessible lesson in statistics would probably wipe out whatever residual magic sprinkles we could be holding on to in this regard. We obviously understand the octopus has no clue, but we chose to engage in a game of collective fiction (anthropologists no doubt have a better name for this), one that flourished in the most extraordinary hypernarratives, covering the whole spectrum of social and political references.

From the innocuous and inevitable Facebook pages to home-printed octopus posters in the *calles* of Madrid on victory night, from death threats to restaurant chains withdrawing octopus from their menus, from alleged state protection to public TV channels broadcasting Paul´s predictions as breaking news, from pop-up ads in peer-to-peer websites to news that a Spanish aquarium was preparing to bid for the acquisition of Paul (and subsequent prospect of arm-wrestling with the Russian Mafia in this endeavor). Quite extraordinary, come to think of it - but in a way we´ve seen it all before, in countless shapes, contexts, guises, websites, tweets. It´s all become a bit tired, it seems.

So why would Paul be any different from, say, *Bert is Evil´s* sudden appearance next to the image of Osama Bin Laden in a demonstration in Bangladesh? Or from the good old days of Chris Crocker screaming "Leave Britney Alone" on YouTube - and, for a brief while, becoming more Britney than Britney herself?

Because the fiction of Paul is rooted on futurology. And at times of uncertainty and slow-motion catastrophe, when the vertigo of digital totality is only matched by randomness to the point of cynicism, when five years from now is pretty much impossible to even

begin to reveal itself in any possible respect, superstition may once again become the driving force of our contemporary ethos.

Gibson´s *Pattern Recognition* (2003) was itself an oracle of things to come - a glimpse of social media *before* social media, the soft triumph of amateur video over the Hollywood blockbuster (low-definition fragments of daily nothingness, now fostered and woven by Ridley Scott et al), the allure of meaning where there is none, the *need* for meaning where there is none. The truth is, Paul only became a star psychic because he rose from that primal soup of randomness where most others failed, his rise itself a random occurrence. This we know, but this reading would not have inspired.

The slight twist is, the same blueprint of collective dream sequences that hailed Paul as the World Cup Messiah is at the same time inspiring a kind of "wishful activism" that may end up paralyzing the very same social involvement it proclaims. A quick scan through recent activist groups on Facebook could reveal: *Stop the Bullfights; Save Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani from being Stoned to Death in Iran; One Million Against The Death Penalty for Homosexuality; We Don´t Want the State to Pay for the Pope´s Visit; Animal Rights; Against Chauvinism; End Child Slavery; Extend Unemployment Benefits*. The list could go on pretty much *ad infinitum*, and full of worthy, honorable (or at the very least *interesting*) causes it would be. Yet most of these social media groups tend to invite us to simply press the "Join" or "Like" button of the cause at stake and feel oh-so-socially-involved in the process. The heart may warm up, but the world surely won´t change a heartbeat just because you clicked on that "Like" button: fine, an ocean of "Likes" will show up on some statistical radar somewhere and may somehow eventually produce some kind of effect - but we´d have to agree this would all be a bit too

Chaos Theory for the sake of the above causes, their worth and urgency. The future will not be built on "Likes", Beavis, that much we can be sure of. That much we *choose* to believe.

Ultimately, Paul´s legacy was a revised version of another entity´s words, a version that resonates as the vertigo of overabundance intensifies: "believing is seeing". What comes after clarity, then? Action. Maybe Paul *did* give the Spanish team that extra bit of poise to go and get that trophy (a self-fulfilling prophecy, understood). But those players sure acted on it. So forget the ball and look up the above causes. Follow them through, find out what you can *do*. Go beyond "Like". We will look forward to the future you will build.

Heitor Alvelos, September 2010.
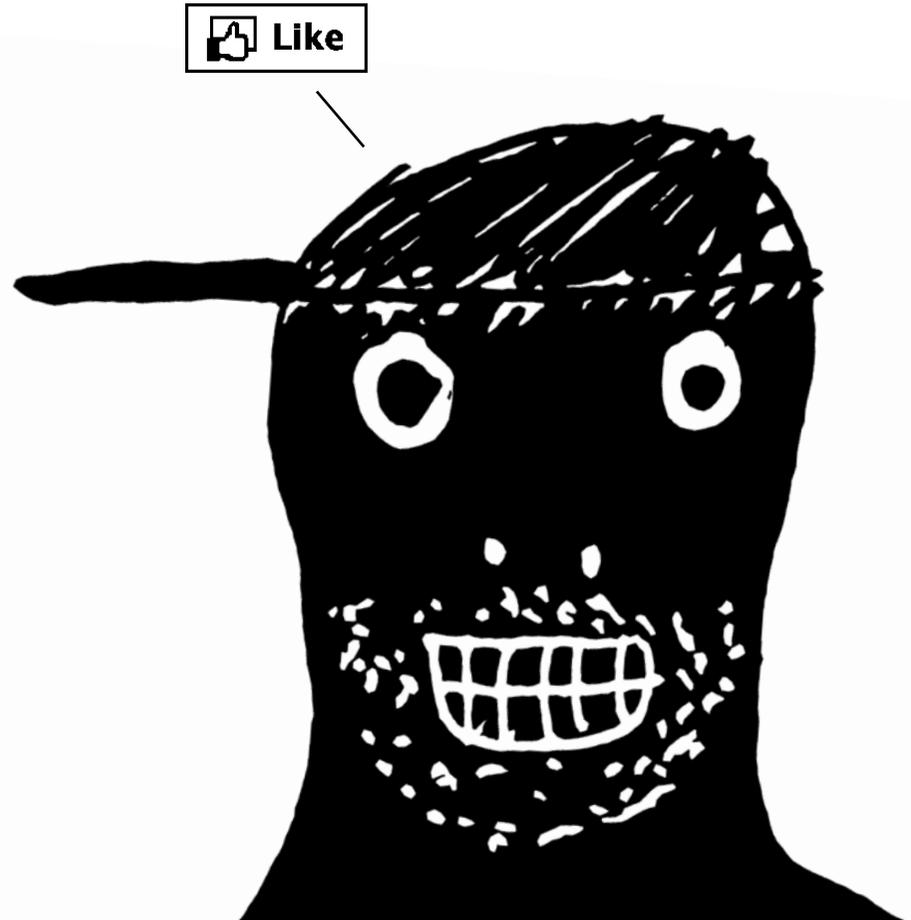
DESIGN FOR MOBILE DEVICES AT FUTURE PLACES IN PER- SPECTIVE

Mónica Mendes and Nuno Correia

Perspectives

In our contemporary digital media world, mobile technologies are key on contributing to local communities growth and empowerment. Again, we are working on reinforcing connections and congregating the most diverse cultures, and we are witnessing the potential of a bottom-up approach where local communities communicate in a global scale.

This essay follows the "Interface Design for Mobile Devices" published in the first Future Places proceedings edition [2009], where guidelines are presented and described. This is now an overview with the experience from the two editions and the perspective of time. The goal of the workshops was to introduce designers, artists and technologists from diverse backgrounds to interface design in the context of mobile devices by providing a hands-on approach where the guidelines and examples presented were applied.

We retrospectively reflect on the two editions of this workshop to spot specific trends in each of them and the overall experience in the scope of Future Places, and we present the participants proposals.

The Challenges

For both workshops, going through all the stages of interface design in an intensive two day program was a challenge in itself. The case studies presentation set the context for the participants' challenge — to develop a project proposal in two days in multidisciplinary teams. The elements that were requested for each project were the concept, structure diagrams and the visual interface.

To define the application, features and functionality had to be set by highlighting what really matters to users *in motion*. Reminding that the mobile device is very responsive and is always on, applications had to be simple and direct, easy to use in short periods of time. Programming tools, network infrastructures, and access to geo-referenced information had a major role in the design process. Although different devices have specific requirements, general guidelines apply to the design of interfaces. Asking "what is important now?" helped to just keep on the screen what was really critical at that time. The result is certainly different from the desktop computer interface.

Previous workshops proposals were also a motivation for the participants to realize what it had been possible to accomplish and to go further. Sharing comments and suggestions during the process triggered the optimization of the final proposals. Additionally, we presented the workshops outcomes at the main Future Places conferences, which represented an opportunity for feedback from the audience and awareness for the other participants of the workshops.

And The Outcomes!

Realizing the workshop for two consecutive years was an interesting opportunity to assess the different priorities and themes of society in distinct moments. The possibility to confront the outcomes allows us to obtain interesting conclusions from the analysis of ideas generated simultaneously that reflect the contexts where differences and similarities arose.

Participants comprised diverse backgrounds, and the range of proposals generated in the workshops intrinsically related to the motto and the environments where each of them took place. Both workshops happened in Porto; while the first edition took place at the inspiring grounds of Serralves Foundation and proposals explored features related the geographical and cultural space, the second version took place at the Journalism School campus and proposals were then experimenting with the complex world of social networks.

Most interfaces were designed for iPhone, adaptable to other platforms, such as Android, Symbian and Windows Mobile. Proposed fea-

tures explored the use of the mobile devices hardware components, especially the GPS (to identify current location, to choose destination, to record paths), camera (to add media – photos and videos – to the system, to recognize visual patterns, markers, fiducial marks), and sensors (such as motion for performance).

Here's an overview of participants proposals presented in 2008: *B aware* is an "environmental awareness" web and smartphone multi-channel application combining environmental information and territory planning for the community; *SIM Serralves* – "Art and Landscape in a Contemporary View" - is a Museum Interactive System that offers support to the use of mobile devices to explore the physical space of Serralves and art exhibitions, allowing the creation of narratives by the users; *Insider* proposes a vision from the inside through an information service focused on city nightlife to complete the usual lists of places to go. It captures and spreads what people in the places have to say and show about it; *Porto 360º* – "update your photos in our world" – is an interactive tourist guide for mobile phones that enables the users to visualize and participate with panoramic images of the Porto city on each of the covered places.

The 2009 participants proposals were: *Upost*, an "urban manifest" to enhance individual localized intervention through a physical portal for one's thoughts. A bottom-up communication tool where markers are physical objects merged into our everyday life, becoming links to digital resources through the use of mobile devices; *Hurly-Burly* is a social network metaphor to "mic up your world!". It is based on acoustic relations of friends' soundscapes collected and shared in real-time through mobile devices. The result is a mixed sound-located map with correspondent visuals of the description of each au-

dio stream; *iPass* is a "mobile solution for local mobility" system integrating the local network transportation by metro, bus and train. This geo-referenced eco-solution provides both real-time location tracking interface and database information with maps, schedules and services; *DareMeUp!* is a challenge game to "get users off their bottoms and improving their mood" though adrenaline-inducing sports. Upon users' request, "dares" are issued either by friends or by the system. Points are awarded to the users according to the performances measured by the mobile device's sensors, and then to the senders, based on user's positive mood change, which informs the system to generate new dares. Users can use the points to buy equipment and services from affiliates, allowing publicity in return; *Teaser* is a "travel teaser" application game allowing two different user-experience modes for two users to simultaneously share their personal views of a geographic space populated by multimedia information. While in the "follow" mode users share their geographical displacements through live video and interact with other users' pathways, in the "tease me" mode they receive multimedia footprints left by other users in that area.

A general overview allows us to realize the idea of community present throughout the proposals, as well as the sharing of information, although in different ways – the mobile device works as a device for geo-location info sharing – an example is *Insider*, telling where you are tonight, another is *Porto 360º* displaying where your photo was taken, and also *Upost* ticking tells where you passed by and marked. Proposals like *SIM Serralves* and *iPass* bring us the issue of information consuming through content aggregation. There are also applications that provoke, challenging the users to undertake experiences

that required unusual settings for interaction design, such as *DareMeUp!,* or the *SIM Serralves*, encouraging task completion through the exploration of space.

In its first edition, workshop proposals explored geo-location features, information sharing, and social causes. In the following edition, proposals were more subjective and experimental, somehow influenced by the rise and dissemination of all kinds of social networks.

Participants feedback was extremely positive during and after the workshops. The *CoLab* newsletter report on the Future Places festival remarks that participant surveys reveal that "the reviews sent by the attendants have been very enthusiastic, as participants from a variety of backgrounds described how the short classes gave them the opportunity to explore new design ideas, network, and learn from experts", and reporting that "they enjoyed the practical and hands-on nature of the meetings, and also valued the opportunity to meet others in this emerging communications field".

"On The Move" From Future To Prospective Places

Wrapping up the workshops we led at Future Places – the result was a set of useful, playful and ambitious proposals – that we hope will find their way into real world projects.

The interfaces of the participants' experiences were achieved through intensive team cooperation that brought apropos ideas to the mobile platform. These experimental interfaces are prone for implementation, enabling communities growth.

We are now looking forward to take these challenges to broader geographical and multicultural contexts while keeping contents

accessible to a wide range of audience, designers and developers. The idea is to inspire and empower local communities, where mobility is essential and limitations foster agility.

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Links

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http://colab.ic2.utexas.edu/futureplaces/2008/10/outcomes-from-the-interface-design-for-mobile-devices-workshop

http://www.monicamendes.info/lib/IDMDworkshop_2008Outcomes.pdf

http://www.monicamendes.info/lib/IDMDworkshop_2009Outcomes.pdf

Workshop Projects and Participants

Upost by Joana Dias, Paolo Battino, Paulo Ricca and Sérgio Mendes | *Hurly-Burly* by Ana Parada, João Cordeiro and Katerina Marková | *iPass* by Kátia Sá, João Beira and João de Melo | *DareMeUp!* by Adriana Pereira, Pedro Messias and Vítor Silva | *Teaser* by Andreia Sousa, Daniel Santos and Jorge Marques | *B aware* by Pedro Tavares, Rossana Santos and Patrícia Soares | *SIM Serralves* by Carlos Silva, Joana Machado and Pedro Góis | *Insider* by Moisés Coelho, Sofia Oliveira and Rui Mascarenhas | *Porto 360º* by Joana Duarte and Mário Ventura
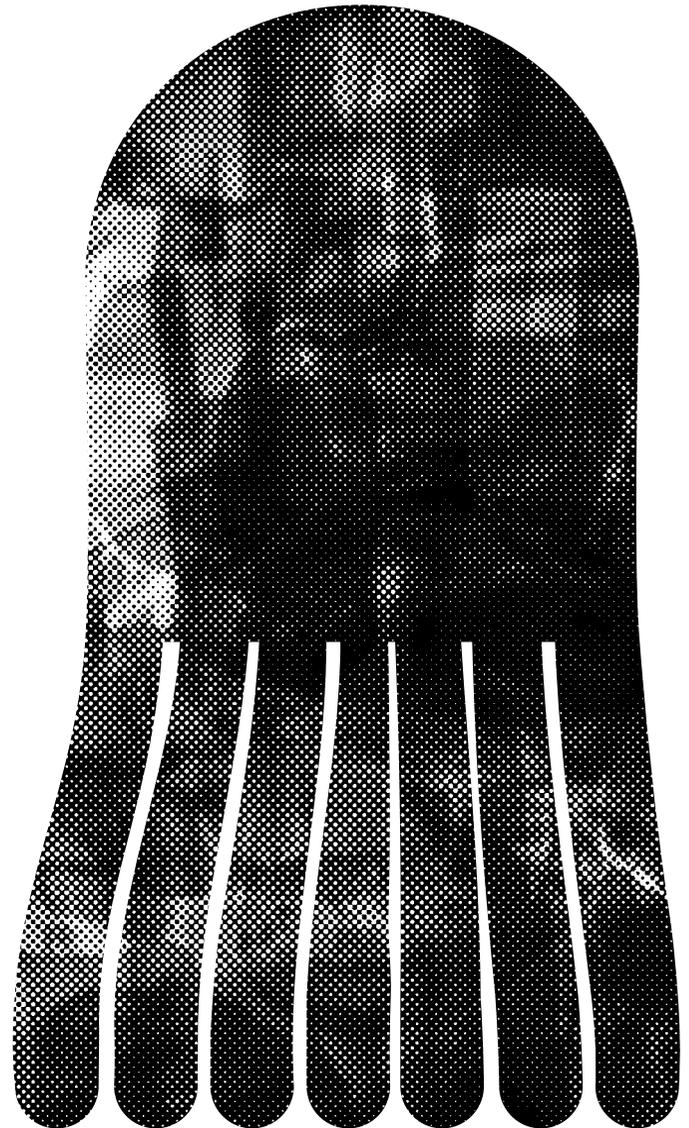
EMER-GING DIREC-TIONS

Karen Gustafson

In 2008, futureplaces was created as a venue for exploring how digital media can support local culture. The past two festivals have hosted installations and performances that have approached this topic in a variety of ways, from different geographic, cultural, and artistic perspectives. The festival program itself has changed over time as we playfully investigate new ways to interpret, celebrate, and interact with the local.

Digital media is often conceptualized as an ephemeral, "space-binding" communication medium, to draw upon Harold Innis (1951)[1]. This space-binding quality, according to Innis, fosters the building of empires, as the ideas and images of dominant political

and cultural structures are spread globally. These media bring authors and viewers together across wide expanses of geography, potentially encouraging cultural homogeneity through well-promoted blockbuster films that can be streamed around the world, global advertising campaigns, or social network applications like Facebook that attempt to culturally interpellate users in particular, predetermined ways. Online political activity is also suspect: Websites and blogs may encourage a profusion of animated discussions focused on the issue of the day, but does daily online debate translate into sustained offline activism or is it merely a simulation of participation?

At the same time, digital media has empowered a diverse flowering of authorship, allowing creators around the world to mold images and text in new ways and make their work available to anyone with an online connection. While traditional broadcast technologies have historically been limited by spectrum scarcity and huge infrastructure expense, digital media production is hailed as a way to bypass these hurdles and create sophisticated content, directly communicating with the world from one's PC, laptop, or mobile device. The flexibility of digital media encourages new forms of production, participation, and consumption to emerge. This ability to publish works, perspectives, and opinions is not equal, however, but is still determined by issues of access including infrastructure quality and online cultural capital—the faculty to reach out to audiences and employ social networking sites, mobile technology, and engaging design.

Futureplaces complicates and interrogates these conceptualizations, experimenting with different approaches, venues, and themes. Every year's program has been marked by its diversity, but each year

has also had common themes. In 2008, the festival began by looking at how digital media has been approached in academia and in other media festivals. Representatives of the Transmedia program at the Sint-Lukas Academy of Brussels and MediaLab Helsinki presented their curricula and student projects. The MAPA panel continued the mission of the previous year's education conference, featuring representatives of different Portuguese institutions discussing how their programs are approaching digital media. Additionally, the first futureplaces hosted some of the best work from existing media festivals, such as U Frame and the Black&White film festival, and invited Pedro Custódio of SHiFT to discussion that festival's approach to local culture. Many of the talks and exhibits of the brand new festival were hosted in University of Porto's Rectory Building, which provided a grand beginning to the enterprise. This choice of venue also provided some wonderful visual contrasts, including festival attendees, surrounded by the stately trappings of traditional education, videoconferencing with a cultural activist in Brazil and discussing the uses of digital media in preserving community memory.

The first production of futureplaces was fortunate to take advantage of other rich, diverse sites of Porto culture as well, including the world-renowned Casa da Música concert hall, the Serralves Foundation, STOP, a musicians' space converted from a former shopping mall, the Passos Manuel theater, and Maus Hábitos, one of Porto's foremost venues of the local arts and culture community. The latter two spaces hosted most of the festival's 28 finalist exhibits, many of which came from Portugal and the United States. The first top prize went to Filipe Pais' "Living Room Plankton," a project featuring an artificial organism than responds to environmental stimuli. Pais'

work examined how digital media allows new forms of interactivity, and offered a highly innovative exploration of self/other boundaries—a microcosm of the negotiations and dynamics that evolve within local culture. Other significant work appearing in 2008 included Shlomit Lehavi's "Time Sifter," an interactive installation incorporating traditional cultural artifacts and new technologies to explore how we experience others' memories, and Rudolfo Quintas' "Burning the Sound," an interactive sound performance focused on emotion, ritual, and control.

The 2009 festival focused its geography around the Passos Manuel neighborhood, drawing upon the area's existing cultural energy while effectively creating a temporary "local culture." While the festival included concerts at the Casa da Música and talks at the University Rectory Building, the focus of the festival exhibitions and interactions largely shifted to Maus Hábitos and the neighboring Passos Manuel theater, as well as another memorable evening at STOP. This tighter organization of space offered participants greater opportunities to socialize and take part in planned and ad hoc discussions and performances, while experiencing an established, culturally active neighborhood of Porto.

The festival featured fewer entries in 2009, with 15 finalists being invited to exhibit. First prize was awarded to Brian Cohen and his team at TRAX Arts, an arts company based in Melbourne, Australia. Cohen's team presented "Outhouse" a portable lavatory re-fitted on the inside to resemble a tiny Victorian drawing room. Within this intimate atmosphere, participants were invited to seat themselves and react to a series of questions on video, giving insight into their memories, expectations, and personal philosophies. This confessional

booth was only semi-private, however, in that participants could choose to make their responses available to all, on an outside screen. Like Lehavi's 2008 installation, Cohen's piece incorporated historical, "analog" references, employing them as cues to trigger emotional memory, while also investigating the lines drawn between personal and public: How do we produce meaning from another person's expression of local culture, and from another's personal or community memory? Second prize went to "Oporto-Brooklyn Bridge" an interactive sound installation created by New York-based artists Naomi Kaly and Alyssa Casey that drew on recordings created at two landmark sites of transit.

While the geographic scope of the festival activities was tightened and the number of finalists less than in 2008, the opportunities for participation in 2009 grew, with more speakers, including local digital media students, and with more workshops, including three that addressed different aspects of location aware devices and mobile technologies. Nuno Correia and Mónica Mendes reprised their well-subscribed workshop on interface design for mobile devices, while Valentina Nisi and Ian Oakley led participants in exploring the construction of interactive mobile narratives and David Gunn and Guillermo Brown organized a mobile recording session across parts of Porto. Golan Levin's two-day intensive on Computer Vision also proved extremely popular.

In 2010, months of work are about to culminate in another intense five days of workshops, discussions, performances, and parties. This year continues some of the trends from 2009, focusing many activities within the creative space of Maus Hábitos and the surrounding area. The 2010 workshop opportunities reflect the festival's con-

tinuing commitment to the innovative use of mobile technologies, through sessions on mobile application development, narrative experiences via mobile devices, and mobile radio streaming. In addition, MediaLab Prado's workshop on "neighborhood science" explores opportunities for new forms of civic involvement and community participation, themes that take the festival closer to one of its sister programs, the International School on Digital Transformation. While still a very young festival, futureplaces is addressing some of the most important digital media trends today from a variety of fresh perspectives. In doing so, the festival engages in the important activity of capacity building, creating an environment conducive to future opportunities for community involvement, artistic experimentation, technological innovation, and economic development.

Karen Gustafson, co-curator

Notes

1   Innis, H, (1951). *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
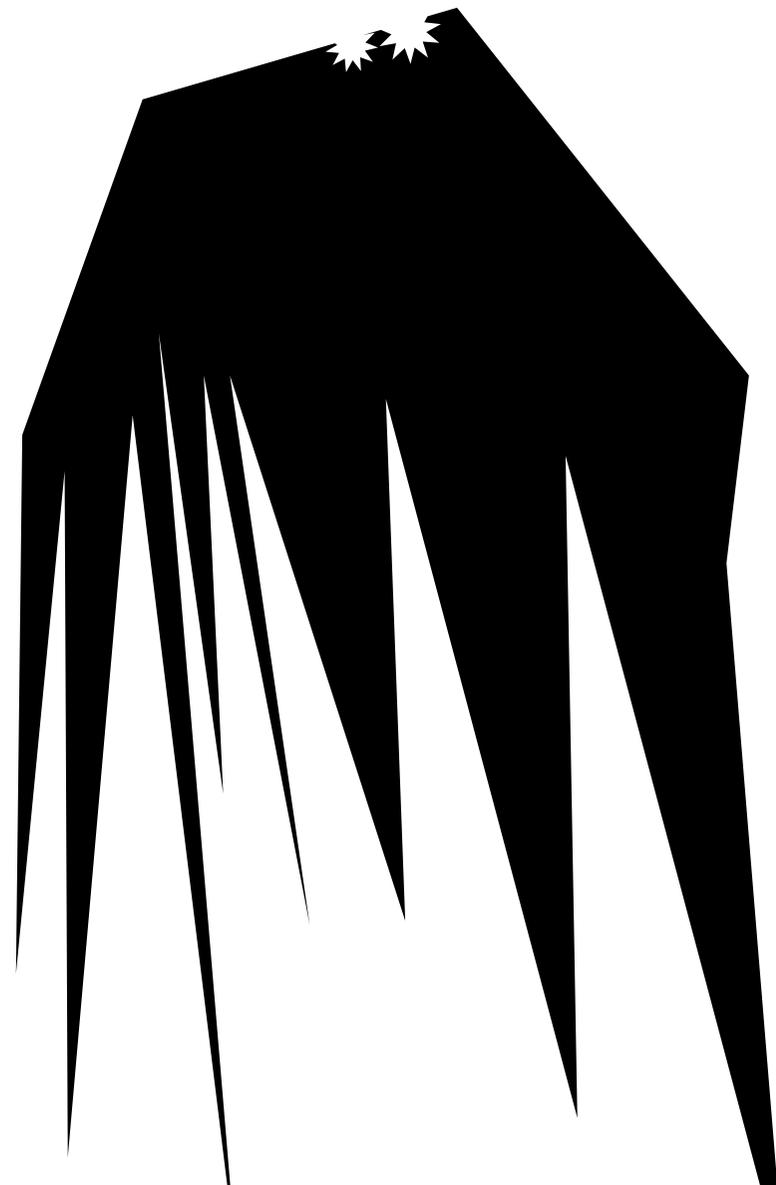
"FUTURE PLACES"

Dagmar Kase

The base of this essay is reality that I define as the world of every-day life which is a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition - we cannot 'wish it away'. There are multiple realities, of course. What is real to Europe may not be real to USA. What is real to a philosopher may not be real to a businessman. What is real to a woman may not be real to a man. But there is one reality like a mother ship for all of them, and our "consciousness is capable of moving through different layers of reality - waking up from a dream illustrates this shift most simply". [1]

Sigmund Freud called a dream 'the royal path to the unconscious mind'. A dream can be named 'the guard of the sleep', as a dream tries to design all the irritators that threaten the sleep and the sleeper onto the images of the mind. From our experiences we know how the need to urinate can appear in our dream in a distorted shape instead of waking us up.

But the most important factors that stimulates the dreams are not from outside world but impulses that aim to ground and satisfy the Self that has no way out to the consciousness while wide-awake.

In his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud said that while presenting our desires as dreams, the dreams lead us above all to the future. But the future rendered by a dreamer as our present, has been modified by the indestructible desire for something that can be called 'the perfect past'. Here Freud says that a desire is a try to restore, repeat or experience again the satisfying feeling of some early situation. Thus the dreams and the symbolics of the dreams bring us to the future, but to the future that is determined by our past.

A human being tries to reach the pleasures throughout the whole life and dreaming can help one to reach this playground of desire. We apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality that we experience as self-evident and normal in the state of being wide-awake, and - this reality we share with others. Put simply, we are alone in the world of dreams, but we know that the reality of everyday life is the same to everyone. A human is a social product, one cannot exist in everyday life without interaction and communication with other human beings and therefore, in order to prove that one really does exist, one mirrors the dreams, feelings and visions from the world of the dreams onto the reality where they all can take shape - cities, landscapes, buildings etc.

Every dream is open for translation and the way we translate it, can change us and our tomorrow, meaning - any dream possesses the power to not only change the future and build 'futureplaces', 'the places we want to go in the future', but also expand and contract it in different ways. We have multiply repeated chain model between

1. our ideas and day-dreaming
2. the space and the society
3. our dreams dreamt at night

Two components have to work, whether the first and the second (our day-dreaming and the society) or the second and the third (our dreams and the society), otherwise the chain will break and the world will fall apart.

It is important to point out that through the powerful tool of creation, distorted images of reality can be born. Deception and self-deception, and illusion are socially significant as a necessary condition of life. We could take our everyday life as a sort of a cipher, a secret code where every single sign could be translated into another sign with certain meaning. If we would do that, I suggest that we should view the reality not as a whole but as details of content in instalments, similar to any dream interpretation. If to ask what one remembers about a dream, one usually hardly says anything. But if a dream is presented one piece at a time, one can recall thoughts on every fragment or element.

We have reached this place of experiencing everything through predetermined thoughts and dreams, we can never return to the state of raw reality, the real. As we know, the child can not leave the reality defined by the parents. We can never experience things as they truly are, we can never cast off these mental constructions. To go further - we have no way of knowing exactly what it is we are longing for.

We all have a dream being God, shaping and transforming the world as we wish, doing everything without the responsibility and without the need to report. As Mattew Aaron Taylor puts it, "our life

is a bust, our life too short, our brain too slow and small, our bodies too fragile, and our field of activity incredibly limited, and that God (whatever it might be) has done a poor job and we can make a better job out of it." [2] No wonder why we humans are incapable of accepting reality as it is, turning places into 'futureplaces' where places transform reality according to the ideas and images of what we think reality ought to be.

The reality borders upon the visions of the *Dreamachine* (1959) by Brion Gysin that makes visible the fundamental order presented in the physiology of the brain.

"You are the artist when you approach a Dreamachine and close your eyes. What the Dreamachine incites you to see is yours… your own. The brilliant interior visions you so suddenly see whirling around inside your head are produced by your own brain activity. […] Dreamachine visions usually begin by the meteorically rapid transit of infinite series of abstract elements. These may be followed in time by clear perception of faces, figures and the apparent entractment of highly colored serial pseudo-events. In other words, dreams in colour." [3]

These dreams can be interrupted and brought to an end simply by opening our eyes and then we are back to our everyday life of dreams in color. Or perhaps not? The Future Places festival might help us to go on dreaming and shaping both visual and physical 'futureplaces', being the meeting place of psyche and the society that helps to make sense both of ourselves and of others.

Dagmar Kase: Media artist and guest lecturer of Estonian Academy of Arts, and Baltic Film and Media School at Tallinn University.

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FUTURE PLACES, VIRTUAL SPACES AND THE SLIPSTREAM

Sharon Strover

I have spent much of the past year thinking about networks and broadband connectivity, especially about what that connectivity means in rural areas, places more remote from the wifi and plentiful computer access that we enjoy in urban areas. The announcement in the U.S. in March 2010 that more spectrum soon would become available for increased wireless connections across the country hints at the next stage of broadly available connectedness in our country, namely the possibility that we can be connected to the Internet and to each other at all times, and in all places. When combined with the onslaught of new, smart, portable devices such as iPads, Kindles, home-based health monitoring apparatuses, GPS instruments or smartphones - tools that effectively extend intelligence from our locations to the far reaches of the network - a more seamless personal electronic presence becomes possible. The mobile, continuous self afforded by these networks will alter how we use space and where resources are located, even as they alter our sense of self. So too how we work and live, the resources we use, and the way we interact with people both locally and far afield will shift.

That is not to say that technology *determines* our social experiences or that it erodes our local roots. For some time I've been critical of the

research that approaches each new technology as if it can profoundly alter basic social structures, or conversely those grumpy critics who think each new technology subtracts something valued from our existing lives. Both wield their predictions as blunt instruments of technological determinism. In the first camp are economists such as Frances Cairncross who discount the significance of place, arguing that new technologies mean companies can locate anywhere and that neither distance nor place need to shape our social or economic transactions, essentially suggesting that locations are homogeneous. Of course, since the publication of her 1997 book <u>The Death of Distance</u>, we have seen no fundamental changes in the hierarchy of locations that evidence economic vitality. The major "network centers" such as London, New York, Hong Kong, remain vital nodes even as locations proximate to major roads still realize the benefits of transportation access. Distance still exists and it remains consequential, even if in not quite the ways Cairncross details. The unique social qualities and cultures of *places* likewise matter.

In the second camp are legions of studies examining "the impact" of new technologies, whether they are videogames, cell phones, wireless connectivity, or computers. The driving assumption behind too many of these studies is that to do or use something new, we must give up something old. If we are playing video games, we are losing time with real life friends. If we are chatting online, we are neglecting the people with whom we live. Spending time online means we are socially inept and even lonely, as some myopic research in the 1990s reported. Or even that we are entirely different people online than we are offline. This deficit model overlooks another way to think about these capabilities: Instead of looking for the negative impacts on older patterns, we might cultivate an orientation that is alert to the benefits and possibilities of new patterns or new ways of being. Technologies *afford* certain opportunities, and it is the social setting, the people, and the context that mobilize them. It is in that spirit that we might consider our mobile and virtual selves from a different vantage point.

The metaphor of the *slipstream* captures an essential quality of the relationship between the virtual and real self as our embeddedness in networks becomes deeper and more pervasive. A slipstream in scientific argot describes something traveling in the wake of another moving object, but moving at the same speed. The object inside the slipstream requires less power to move forward, in effect, "drafting" on the first object. A commonplace example of this occurs in cycling, in which riders draft on leaders in order to maintain speed but exert less energy. Riders take turn drafting on each other to maintain speed and to save their energy. Additionally, the first entity actually can move faster when there is a slipstream because the second entity moving in its close wake reduces the drag of the "low pressure region" created by the initial movement.

I find this term increasingly apt to describe our relationship with the Internet. In Anthony Hopkins' poorly received movie of 2007 titled *Slipstream*, the major character slips in and out of his "real life" and a "virtual life," the two becoming increasingly indistinguishable from each other. While in the cinematic case one "life" interferes with the other, our more contemporary experience of the slipstream in our Internet engagement, particularly as access to it becomes ubiquitous and 24/7, suggests something different. I suggest the slipstream encompasses our virtual presence, the one that

remains in the networked communicative space even as we move on to doing other things and being in other places, and it exists alongside our physical life. We have intense periods of engagement in both domains (or in multiple domains, since the virtual self can occupy or be present in so many different virtual environments), and we bring our physical locations with us. We document these places, we comment on them, we invite other people from them to join us, and we build upon them.

The Internet slipstream deemphasizes the specific mode or technology used to engage the capabilities resonant with "The Internet"—it doesn't matter whether you are using a phone, a computer, or whether you are at home or in a public place. Instead, it underscores the relocation of a seamless communicative self located simultaneously within multiple networks. In these environments, it might be forgiven if we ourselves do not distinguish the differences between behavior in "real" life and within the Internet. We are simply *there*, present, sentient, cognizant, and receptive. Whether we state something or write it or blog it or tweet it, it is part of an identity that is ascertainable, researchable, and knowable. The slipstream metaphor's quality of speed likewise implies the converged communication environments' nimbleness, and the impact of simultaneity. It conveys a merged sensibility and a stochastic relationship between attention, time, and function.

The network – call it the cloud, the Internet, or a communicative space - speeds up various transactions as well as collapses a range of functional understandings that used to enable us to talk about separate media such as radio, television, and the newspaper, or even separate content such as news, music or meeting friends. It provides a mediating plane of opportunities, what architect William Mitchell referred to as "fields of presence" when he discussed how wired networks loosen the requirements of location.

What does the slipstream mean for place? Rather than suggesting that places, our sites of shared cultural production, become irrelevant, the slipstream implies democratization. It allows us to have it both ways: In contrast to Cairncross's argument, more people can see and hear us, and interact with us virtually, even as we can bring our experience of place into the mix. It is not just the individual whose personal presence is shared, the broader environment is also shared. If the significance of distance is attenuated, the significance of place is exaggerated. The robust networks of future places, in urban regions and in rural regions, should mean that we have better access to understanding what life is like in many places. It won't mean that share just the Big Moments such as demonstrations in Seattle, riots in China, and death in the aftermath of a mudslide. It will mean we share the small moments, the wacky and humorous and tender and sad qualities that comprise our sense of humanity, urban and rural, city and town.

If the networks are up to this task, then the question remains whether we can meet the challenge of sharing our lives and cultures by harnessing the power of the network. Let us remember the network is a technology, and what is important about it is not its infrastructure and capabilities so much as what we do with it. How do we mobilize culture so that we grow toward a shared sense of place? The Future Places festival explores some exciting answers to this question.

Sharon Strover, Philip G. Warner Regents Professor of Communication. University of Texas at Austin.

GLIMMER

Mike Harding

1 Vislumbrar

De modo a fugir ao calor, fomo-nos gradualmente deslocando para debaixo da terra. A água arrefece-nos, mantém-nos, alimenta-nos. Mas este é um mundo afogado...

Demorou o seu tempo, mas já não é possível voltar atrás. À superfície o calor é insuportável, e os milhões que aí ficaram já não existem. Primeiro perdendo energia, depois incapacitados, tornaram-se presa fácil de qualquer entidade que entretanto pudesse ter tomado conta desse novo mundo. Mas esse mundo já não serve para seres humanos, embora alguns consigam subsistir.

Quando partimos, deixámos para trás não só as nossas casas mas também as nossas memórias, o passado propriamente dito. Foi como se o passado nunca tivesse tido lugar, colocando-nos num estado intermédio, como que esperando para forjar os nossos próprios futuros. Uma espécie de um limbo permanente. Um purgatório, mais propriamente.

No mundo à superfície havia sinais do antigo por toda a parte: em nomes de locais, apelidos, palavras e espaços físicos. A forma da própria terra não só se organizava a partir dos locais de habitação, mas também os nossos sentidos e a nossa consciência, como se uma parte de nós sempre lá tivesse estado, há tanto tempo quanto a própria geografia. Tão antigos como os montes... Aqui, tudo tem o cheiro infeliz do novo; sem referências, sem confiança, estranho. Nós próprios sentimos suspeitas, como nos primeiros momentos num quarto novo de hotel. Onde colocamos as nossas coisas? Onde nos colocamos a nós?

2. Olim

A estrutura plana e baixa que distribui o peso da água também fornece a única privacidade que podemos encontrar, no refúgio dos enormes pilares que sustentam o telhado. Mas deste modo não temos horizonte, e portanto não vemos o futuro. Este local já não espelha a nossa paisagem interior, e por isso temos de a criar de raiz. Esta deslocação pode demorar gerações a curar (se é que alguma vez o fará), mas para nós existe apenas o agora; povoados de medos e alertas, sem alegria, procuramos extrair o familiar do estranho. E precisa de ser cuidadosamente escavado e esculpido, re-formado e re-aplicado ao que pensávamos conhecer. Quase tudo começou a partir do

zero, memórias residuais de como as coisas eram e de como desejávamos que voltassem a ser. O familiar tornou-se uma ameaça e o exótico tornou-se apetecível, e as nossas mentes desintegram-se tentando resolver este paradoxo.

E um edifício vazio é um lugar perigoso... a coesão social deriva da nossa pertença à psico-geografia que habitámos ao longo dos séculos. As passagens e becos escuros são mais do que uma metáfora para as nossas mentes. São onde mantemos os nossos seguredos e formamos os nossos pensamentos que informam as nossas acções. Aqui necessitamos de luz tal como de escuridão, de forma tal como de espaço.

No entanto, a luz muda imperceptivelmente... a tonalidade calma e banhante treme e vislumbra-se, movendo-se lentamente como se uma mão gigante rodasse uma lâmpada. É impossível escapar completamente aos efeitos do Sol; no único local onde isto seria possível, seríamos esmagados pelo peso da escuridão.

Flutuamos, saindo e entrando, como uma agulha em vinil antigo, nunca verdadeiramente atingindo o ponto onde pretende chegar. Permanentemente frustrada, cria o seu próprio mundo de repetição, como um rio a desembocar perpetuamente no oceano.

3. Houve e não houve...

No entanto, nada alguma vez sucede. É verdade que tratamos do nosso quotidiano (ou tentamos), mas estamos ainda em choque pelo que está a suceder à superfície. E ninguém se atreve ainda a desfiar o estado das coisas por muito tempo - tudo é demasiado precário e surreal. Um trauma individual é uma coisa, mas um trauma colectivo... é

diferente. Muito, muito diferente. A pressão subaquática pesa no peito e na cabeça, mas também na mente. É comparável ao clima mais denso, mas ao fim de meses nesta condição, reza-se por ar. Ar limpo, fresco, puro. O peso afunda-se em ti, esmagando-te, suficando.

Quando há uma tempestade, o ruído é ensurdecedor e consome tudo. A comunicação torna-se impossível. Existe-se num meio estado de torpor peganhento, privado de sono, do qual se leva dias a recuperar. É como ser-se sugado por um redemoinho, chocalhado num contentor rotativo e cuspido fora, encharcado em suor e espremido como um trapo.

A seguir, os grilhões são retirados e tudo é possível. As tuas defesas estão em baixo, e acontecem coisas inenarráveis. Noções de indentidade ressurgem e exprimem as necessidades mais antigas. Mas estes são frequentemente os melhores tempos, tempos em que nos esquecemos o que ocorre acima e abaixo de onde estamos. Uma estranha luz de energia dá-nos poder. E, de repende, sacudimo-nos, saciados, e lembramo-nos de como as coisas têm de ser. Os controles são finíssimos, mas todos aceitamos a necessidade. Um erro e todos desapareceremos.

Informe e transparente, a ligação foi quebrada e não pode ser restaurada até nós abandonarmos este local e regressarmos, e isso não poderá acontecer. Pelo menos ainda não. Assim, começámos a criar a nossa própria cultura, parte recreação, parte amálgama, parte inovação. Há uma tristeza prevalente nesta comunidade, uma vez que fomos separados das nossas próprias memórias, e não fazemos ideia de como procurar recuperá-las. As gentes far-te-iam crer que são as fibras físicas, estruturais, que nos mantêm juntos, mas não é

assim. As pessoas aqui são urgentes e paranóicas, mas não há local algum onde ir. Acima de tudo, é a ausência de vento, é saber que a Terra roda e saber que já não fazemos parte dessa rotação que nos rompe o coração e paralisa.

4. O silêncio interior e o som inexistente

O ar é rarefeito. O céu é pesado e cinzento. É como se o mar e o céu se fundissem, refractando a luz até esta deixar de queimar. Mas aqui temos um deleite visual, um banquete para os olhos. Vermelhão pálido, rosa salmão, malvas escuros e verdes prata. Nada permanece imóvel, tudo se move lenta e graciosamente, movimento deslizante interceptado por olhos penetrantes e caudas intermitentes. Ocasionalmente um leviatã ameaça e desestabiliza a superfície, mas de um modo geral tudo está tranquilo... o stress está no interior, a beleza que contemplamos neste mundo semi-exótico e inexplorado. E por vezes um som quase familiar pode ser ouvido, algo anterior, mas não de agora. Ondas de rádio residuais passam pelos nossos sistemas de comunicação. Ninguém sabe de onde vêm - reflexos de um satélite há muito desaparecido, talvez, ou um transmissor automático reactivado. Talvez seja isto o que restará do empreendimento humano, estática e vozes no eterno.

Mas aqui temos a nossa própria acústica, pessoal e interior. Sentimos os ouvidos como se estivessem permanentemente bloqueados, com aquela sensação irreal e contundente de pressão desequilibrada. Cambaleamos em vez de andar, sem certezas quanto ao que vemos ou ouvimos, inseguros das nossas percepções. É uma meia-vida. Os sons ajudam-nos a equilibrarmo-nos. Erguemo-nos quando ouvi-

mos um som que reconhecemos. Quando o som passa, caímos de novo no torpor.

5. O era uma vez e o futuro

E eu? Estou aqui. Durante quanto tempo? Eles necessitam de mim vivo - sou tudo o que eles têm. Um milhar de passados e nenhum futuro. A tecnologia destruiu a genética da memória, e eu sou assim o último reduto de uma memória colectiva. Todos envelhecemos entretanto, mas recordamo-nos de tão pouco. Choro por sonhar. Flashbacks rápidos trazem um desejo súbito, mas não me satisfazem e deixam-me vazio. Eles desaparecem no mesmo isntante em que os reconheço. Estou a tornar-me em algo parecido com eles. Memoria Technica.

Eles virão buscar-me em breve, tenho a certeza. Mas não há problema. Não é viver quando não se pode respirar. A minha maldição é recordar-me de como tudo era no passado. Estas memórias assombram-me como uma velha amizade que azedou. Os pensamentos coagulam e infiltram os outros sentidos. Cheiram e sabem mal, vagamente metálico.

A vida veio do mar e a terra sacudir-se-á e regenerar-se-á. Longos ciclos geo-psíquicos irão impor a sua rotina smagadoramente lenta sobre um planeta insípido e moribundo. Por isso, quer ardamos à superfície ou floresçamos abaixo desta, o futuro é brilhante, um ponto minúsculo e imperceptível de puro calor branco.

Sempre foi o fim do mundo.

Mas o mundo é muito, muito mais antigo do que pensávamos.

Mike Harding, 2010.
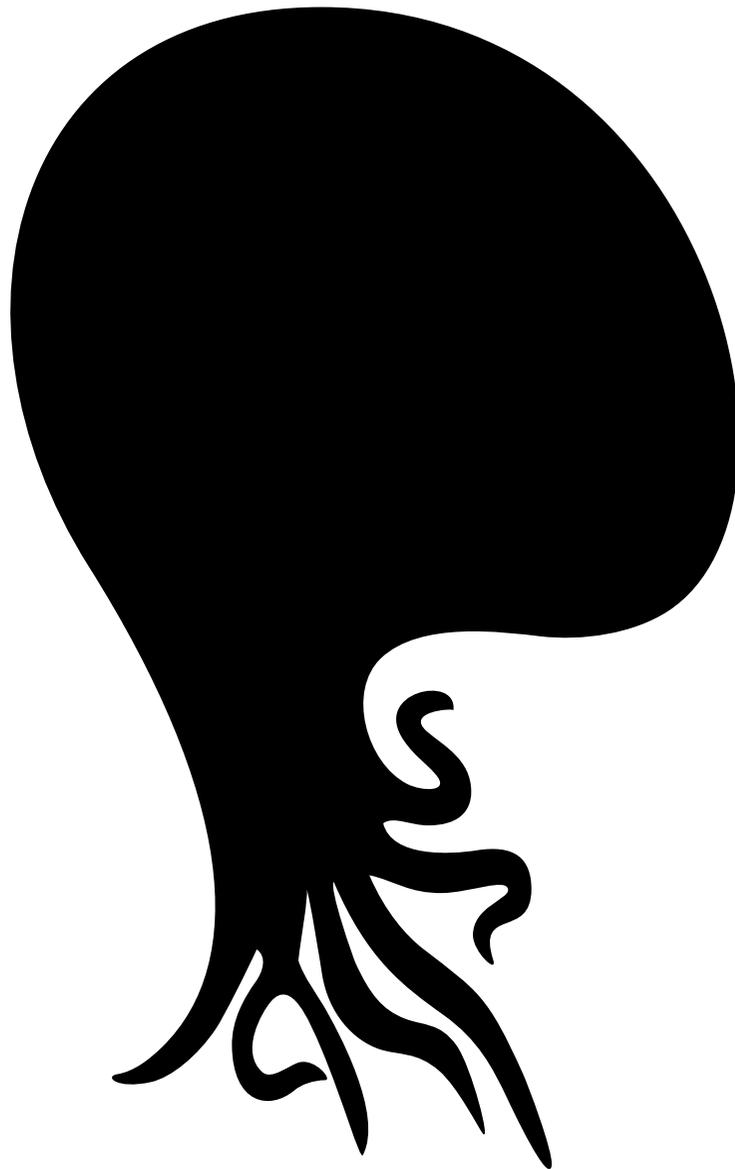
IT'S THE ECOSTOPY, STOPID!

Anselmo Canha

On October 2nd 2010, the night of a concert by rock band U2 in Coimbra, the musicians of the Stop Shopping Mall performed a unique musical event at Casa da Música, in Porto. Ninety-one musicians, carriers of repertoires, styles and experiences as diverse as heavy metal, pop and folk music, rock, experimental, classical music and jazz, shared a stage in defense of the ecosystem in which they rehearse every day, and whose continuity is threatened by legal problems. However, and with this issue as a catalyst, they provided one of the most exciting musical events ever experienced in Porto. Spoken and visual testimonies all agree that everything expanded and changed from this point onwards - both for the Stop community and a significant part of the event's spectators.

Regardless of the future of Stop Shopping Centre, the course of these 91 artists and others who were at Casa da Música cannot ignore what happened. That is, the course of music in Porto opened up a path.

However, the members of the press, even the shrewdest ones that announced this event in Porto, all went to Coimbra. In the future, anyone researching newspapers for the 3rd of October 2010 will ignore one event and report the other. The 9.998.000 Portuguese citizens who did not witness the Stop event at Casa da Música will continue to believe that the future lies in U2 @ Coimbra.

At times of economic crisis, when there is so much talk of developing and enhancing self-competence, innovation and the exportable assets, these options become fatal inconsistencies.

The relationship between the Stop Shopping Centre and the Futureplaces festival has been marking the recent years of community development at Stop. The events in 2008 and 2009 set the path to the 2nd of October 2010 event. Although the former were meant for a digital media festival, digital was never the essential instrument, as the mobilization and experience of these events were always cemented in a relationship that was biological rather than analogue – simply because this appeared to be the only possible relationship. However, today, if we want to reconstruct the recent history of Stop we will find it in digital bits, and the images that follow convey some of them. Currently, a site launched at the 2009 Futureplaces event begins to be a casual place for meeting and tuning in.

We work by goals. Supported by this online tool, our target for the coming year is to reduce the deficit of the Portuguese individuals who do not know Stop to the figure of 9,993,328.

Notes

1   For further details about Centro Comercial Stop, please see Future Places Proceedings 2008 (text available at futureplaces.up.pt/fp2009/stopstoppedstopping.pdf) or access www. poststop.pt.

4,096
shades
possible

5 stops
of light
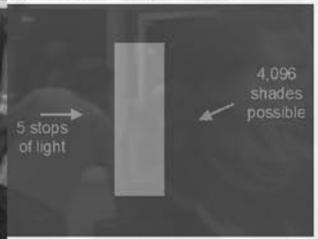
Fumo branco sobre as cinco bandas que irão à Casa da Música, em conjunto com a Stopestra, dia 2 de Outubro.
São elas Sektor 304, The Mad Dogs, Ghosts of Port Royal, Plus Ultra, OliveTreeDance.

Falatório

PESQUISAR

POST

13 Junho, 2010 /// Server

Compromisso anti-ruído

LOJA   LOJA
RDITA   INTERD

GRESSÃO   TRANSGRES
A A COIMA. SUJEITA A C

Texto colocado no Metalpoint, Telhadinho e Stopstore para recolha de assinaturas em 13 de Junho de 2010.

OS MÚSICOS QUE ABAIXO ASSINAM, RESIDENTES NO CENTRO COMERCIAL STOP, DECLARARAM CUMPRIR AS SEGUINTES REGRAS:

1. NÃO PRODUZIR RUÍDO PARA O EXTERIOR DO CENTRO COMERCIAL STOP APÓS AS 20H DE QUALQUER DIA DA SEMANA.

2. NÃO PRODUZIR RUÍDO PARA O EXTERIOR DO CENTRO COMERCIAL STOP AO SÁBADO E AO DOMINGO DE MANHÃ.

NÃO QUEREMOS QUE O STOP FECHE. ESTAS REGRAS SÃO

Falatório

PESQUISAR

POST

31 Dezembro, 2009 /// Server

Babe, please, do.

29 Dez 2009.
Reuniram-se no CCStop 30 músicos, representantes de cerca de 1/3 das salas do Stop, e discutiram factos recentes e preocupantes.

1. Ruído.
As autoridades públicas foram claras: se continuarmos a incomodar os

!

Desde Dezembro, foram organizadas reuniões de músicos do Stop
para discutir o problema do ruído e as cartas da Câmara Municipal
que ameaçam fechar o Stop.

Levantou-se a necessidade de uma Associação de Músicos do Stop.
Considerámos que o Stop não pode continuar tão disperso.
Necessita de uma voz colectiva que lhe dê força para resolver
problemas e para trazer melhorias para a comunidade de músicos.
Na última reunião foi definida uma equipa para tratar dos
estatutos dessa Associação, que já escrevera um esboço desses

PESQUISAR

POST

11 Setembro, 2010 /// Server

*Brigadas Stop @ Porto
1 Outubro actualizado
e final!*

Falatório

PESQUISAR

13 Junho, 2010 /// Server

Manifesto

Babe
please
do
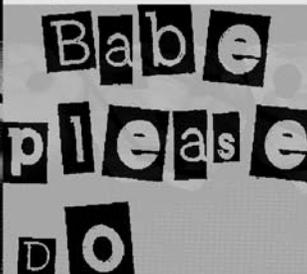
Texto colocado no Metalpoint, Telhadinho e StopStore para
abaixo-assinado, em 13 de Junho de 2010.

Com **som** nos sondamos. Com som nos entendemos.

Neste caso muito particular, entendemo-nos no Centro Comercial
Stop e graças ao **Stop**. Estamos entre os mais de trezentos
músicos que formam mais de 100 bandas neste lugar. Se o Porto é

POST

O STOP NO FUTURE PLACES 2009

MASTER AND MARGARITA

AN INTERACTIVE AUDIOVISUAL ADAPTATION OF BULGAKOV'S NOVEL

Nuno N. Correia

Abstract

This paper presents *Master and Margarita*, an interactive audiovisual project adapting Mikhail Bulgakov's novel of the same name. Initially it was presented as performance, and later it was released as a website. The project aims to address two main research questions. First: how to integrate music and motion graphics in an interactive audiovisual project, in a way that is easy to use and engaging to experience? Second: how to adapt a novel into an interactive audiovisual project, not only being faithful to the narrative, but also creating a coherent and autonomous work, expressing the artistic vision of its authors?

In this paper, the project is presented, focusing both on the performance side of the project and on the website version. The collaborative process between the authors of the project - a musician/programmer and a designer/animator - is discussed. The project is

framed within the fields of new media art, audiovisual art and interaction design. It is also put into relation with past interactive audiovisual projects by the same authors. The novel is briefly presented, as are previous adaptations to different media, such as TV and graphic novel. A conclusion follows, assessing the answers to the research questions, and presenting further reflections on the relation between the novel and the interactive audiovisual adaptation. Future work is also discussed.

1. Context

Master and Margarita is a project by Video Jack, a duo composed by the author (musician, designer and programmer) and André Carrilho (illustrator, designer and animator). *Master and Margarita* can be contextualized within a series of works that aim to create integrated sound and image artworks.

Already in ancient Greece, philosophers such as Aristotle, Pythagoras and Plato speculated that there is a correlation between the musical scale and colors (Moritz 1997; Van Campen 2008 p. 45).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, various attempts were made to correlate music with colors. One of the earliest and most notable examples is the "Ocular Harpsichord", a "color organ" with 500 candles built by Jesuit Father Louis Bertrand Castel, which consisted of "a 6-foot square frame above a normal harpsichord; the frame contained 60 small windows each with a different colored-glass pane and a small curtain attached by pullies to one specific key, so that each time that key would be struck, that curtain would lift briefly to show a flash of corresponding color." (Moritz 1997)

The development of "color organs" and other integrated audiovisual instruments would continue in the 20th century.

Richard Wagner idealized a type of artwork that would combine different arts—a "total art work" (*gesamtkunstwerk*). Wagner described it as an operatic performance that encompasses music, theater, and the visual arts: "the true Drama is only conceivable as proceeding from *a common urgence of every art* towards the most direct appeal to a common public". To achieve this, "each separate branch of art can only be fully attained by the reciprocal agreement and co-operation of all the branches in their common message" (Wagner 1849, p. 5).

Several explorations in the first half of the 20th century developed further the integration of sound and image in art, notably within Bauhaus (with works such as *Reflectorial Color Play*, by Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack and Kurt Schwerdtfeger) and the Futurists (for example, with the direct paintings on film by Arnaldo Ginna and Bruno Corra) (Moritz 1997).

The development of cinema allowed for experiments in combining abstract animation and music, often classified as "visual music", such as the work of Oskar Fischinger and Walther Ruttman (Moritz 1997). The development of electronic technologies inspired other authors to pursue new ways of synthesis of the arts. As Roy Ascott asserts, "in the attempt to extricate human content from technological form", artists increasingly "bring together imaging, sound, and text systems into interactive environments that exploit state-of-the-art hypermedia and that engage the full sensorium, albeit by digital means" (1990, p. 307). Ascott called this convergence "gesamtdatenwerk", inspired by Wagner's concept of "gesamtkunstwerk".

Electronic music has played an important role in exploring the

possibilities of digital art in the late 20th / early 21st centuries, and is a broad creative area, which often incorporates a visual element: "artistic digital sound and music projects are a large territory that includes pure sound art (without any visual component), audiovisual installation environment and software, Internet-based projects that allow for real-time, multi-user compositions and remixes, as well as networked projects that involve public places or nomadic devices" (Paul 2003, p. 133). As Christiane Paul states, many of the projects within this area "stand in the tradition of kinetic light performance or the *visual music* of the German abstractor and painter Oskar Fischinger" (Paul 2003, p. 133).

Dieter Daniels suggests that the close interrelation between visual and sonic media since the 1990s is due to the advancements in digital technologies, and "the synthesis between image and sound technology when working digitally" (Daniels 2005). Since the introduction of the Macintosh and Windows computer operating systems in the 1980s, common used software for composing electronic music rely on a graphical user interface (GUI).

2. Motivation And Aims

The *Master and Margarita* project intends to develop further concepts and approaches explored in two previous works also by Video Jack: *Heat Seeker* (2006; online version 2009) and *AVOL* (2007). In their projects, Video Jack aim to combine visuals with sound in electronic music performances, restoring a visual element that is lacking in laptop-based music performances, and creating an engaging hypermedia experience for the audience. By making the user inter-

face visible (and sometimes interactive) to their audience, they wish to bridge the gap between performer and audience, between author and user. Video Jack also aim to explore other channels to present their projects, such as the Internet.

Master and Margarita pursues the objective, common to other Video Jack projects, of creating a tool for manipulating sound and visuals that would have a similar flexibility as a music instrument, and that could allow for the same kind of improvisation and expression. As in previous projects, Video Jack aim to make the act of manipulating the audiovisual material apparent to the audience, similarly to how the audience views a musical instrument being played live in a performance (an additional parallel to musical instruments). The combination of the audio and visual content with the visualization of its manipulation should ideally result in an engaging experience for the audience.

Master and Margarita came about from the desire of creating a follow-up project to *Heat Seeker* that would be visually and sonically more coherent, and that would incorporate some of the sound manipulation and audio reactivity aspects of *AVOL*, while maintaining the playfulness of both projects. Video Jack also aimed to create a web version of the project with more visual manipulation capabilities than *Heat Seeker*. In order to develop a project with a higher narrative and visual consistency, and also musical coherence, Video Jack decided to adapt a novel. They chose *The Master and Margarita*, by Mikhail Bulgakov (2006). A book adaptation raised a new challenge: to strike a balance between being faithful to the narrative and universe of the writer, while maintaining an autonomous artistic vision, in line with previous Video Jack projects.

The author resides in Helsinki, and travels frequently to nearby Tallinn. During one of those trips, he was introduced to *The Master and Margarita*. The novel is popular in Estonia, as in many ex-USSR countries. At the time when the author read the novel (early 2008), Video Jack had finished their *AVOL* project, and wanted to develop a new narrative-based project, similarly to *Heat Seeker*, but with a more coherent audiovisual content. Resemblance with themes explored in *Heat Seeker* (*film noir*, fantasy, sexuality, violence, humor), together with a highly visual writing style and several musical references, made the book an ideal candidate for adaptation to a Video Jack audiovisual project. The prospect of an adaptation of the novel became more attractive following a proposal for performing in St. Petersburg later that year (at Electro-Mechanica festival, in November) – it seemed appealing to witness the reaction of a Russian audience to the material.

The concept of "adaptation" is familiar to the author and his partner in Video Jack, André Carrilho. The author has a background in composing soundtracks for theatre, and André Carrilho is an illustrator. Therefore, both have previous experience in converting works from one medium to another.

Video Jack's *Master and Margarita* is not a full adaptation of the book, as will be presented later. It is a work inspired by the novel, which borrows a substantial quantity of elements and situations from it. However, for convenience of expression, the word "adaptation" will still be used together with Video Jack's project, meaning loose or partial adaptation.

3. Previous Work By Video Jack

3.1 Heat Seeker

The *Master and Margarita* project shares common points with *Heat Seeker*. The main common aspects are that both have a narrative element, and use the same software engine (which was further developed for *Master and Margarita Online*).

Heat Seeker came about following the development by Video Jack of an application "for controlling digital animation to use along with music performances" which "would allow for the control of different types of animated and 'behavioral' modules that could be combined to create, in real time, a unique visual 'experience' for each event" (Correia 2004, p. 2).

Most of the music in *Heat Seeker* was composed previously to the visual element. The preparation of visual material involved a discussion regarding the themes and inspiration behind the music, between the author and André Carrilho. Animation, cinema and comic books were the main sources of inspiration for the project. The movie genres "film noir" and "nouvelle vague" were particularly emphasized, as were concepts related to "heat". André Carrilho developed animations for use in *Heat Seeker* based on that discussion, and his own interpretation of the music. *Heat Seeker* has been showcased as performance, video (DVD, online video, screenings) and as interactive web-based project [1].

With *Master and Margarita*, the author intended to try to solve some of the limitations detected in *Heat Seeker*: absence of audio reactivity in the graphics; audio manipulation not being integrated in the software tool for graphics manipulation; lack of cohesion in

both music and visuals; and limited graphical manipulation in the web version of the project. Some of the solutions to solve these limitations were inspired by the previous Video Jack project, *AVOL*.

3.2 *AVOL*

AVOL (AudioVisual OnLine) is an audiovisual project that allows the manipulation of virtual "objects" to create an integrated sound and image experience. These "objects" are a combination of audio loops with animation loops that react to sound. Each object has graphical user interface (GUI) elements, which blend with the animated visuals. There are seven objects in total, each of them with four different variations in terms of audio and animations. The user can combine those seven objects, in their possible variations, to create different arrangements of music and visuals. Basic sound manipulation is possible (on/off, "solo", volume). Unlike *Heat Seeker*, it does not have a narrative element − all visuals are abstract, in the tradition of early 20th century "visual music" artists such as Oskar Fischinger.

AVOL was originally created as a web-based project, but has also been showcased as performance and as interactive installation.

Master and Margarita aims to incorporate part of the characteristics and functionalities of *AVOL* into the software engine behind *Heat Seeker*. Among these elements is the "interactive audiovisual objects" approach of creating integrated units of sound and animation loops, with audio-reactive visuals, and including GUI elements for controlling sound and graphics.

4. The Novel And Previous Adaptations

The Master and Margarita has three main storylines: "the Devil and his retinue show up to make mischief in 1930's Moscow", "the love-stricken Margarita bargains with the Devil to be reunited with her lover, the Master, a tormented writer-hero who pines away in an insane asylum" and "Matthew the Evangelist attempts to uncover the truth about Pontius Pilate and the Crucifixion of Jesus in Jerusalem in A. D. 33" (Sonne 2005). Bulgakov progressively integrates these threads, while "exercising devilish lampoonery and wit to satirize Soviet life under Stalin" (Sonne 2005). Each of the three planes "provides a commentary on the others" (Milne 1998, p. 202). The tale of the Master mirrors the life of Bulgakov in some points: "in many ways, *The Master and Margarita* is a book that tells the tale of its own composition" (Milne 1998, p. 2002).

The Master and Margarita has been adapted to several different media, such as cinema, TV, theatre, opera and graphic novel. Two of these adaptations will now be presented, because of their usefulness in framing Video Jack's audiovisual adaptation.

In 2005, a TV mini-series of 10 episodes adapting the novel was released in Russia, with a total duration of 8 hours and 40 minutes. The director and screenwriter of this adaptation, Vladimir Bortko, decided to make a mini-series instead of a film in order to "adhere to the novel, to include its psychological depth as well as its mysticism and sharp wit", since "it would be impossible to fit all the scenes from the novel into a single film" (Sonne 2005). Therefore, the mini-series closely follows the book. As Bortko states, "I didn't write one word of the screenplay from my own ideas (…) it is Bulgakov's text" (Sonne 2005).

A graphic novel adaptation of *The Master and Margarita*, by Andrzej Klimowski and Danusia Schejbal, was released in 2008. The graphic novel does not attempt to be a full adaptation of the novel, but instead "to recast a simplified and flattened-out version of the novel in a new form" (Mukherjee 2008). The narrative based in Moscow is executed by Klimowski, "in pen-and-ink and watercolour that has the uncluttered, poetic beauty of a black-and-white Bergman film" (Mukherjee 2008), while the biblical sections are done in color by Schejbal with gouache.

With their adaptation, Video Jack aimed more to achieve a "simplified" version of the novel (as Klimowski and Schejbal's graphic novel), than a full conversion (as Bortko's TV series). However, they did not wish to "flatten" the novel, but add new layers to the work.

5. Project Development

5.1 Content development

After an initial discussion regarding the book and how it could be adapted to a Video Jack project, the author and André Carrilho decided to concentrate on the more action-based chapters of the book. Therefore, the biblical part of the novel was omitted. It was also decided that the adaptation should not be a literal one, but an audiovisual "collage" inspired by the book.

Collage was invented by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, who "methodically reexamined painting and sculpture and gave each medium some of the characteristics of the other". They put great value "on commonplace materials and objects and on subjects drawn from the everyday world". The Futurists and the Dadaists also em-

ployed collage, as did the Russian avant-garde, who "used photomontage, an outgrowth of collage, to demonstrate their support for a progressive world order" (Waldman, n.d.).

Collage was, therefore, a key concept behind Video Jack's adaptation of *The Master and Margarita*. Visually, they intended to mix photos and other found or non-drawn elements (such as blots of ink) with 2D and 3D animation. This was a departure from *Heat Seeker*, which did not use photography or found elements. It was also a way of matching the writing approach of Bulgakov, its rawness and mixture of elements — his "dazzling display of different styles, from the austerely laconic to the richly ornamented" (Milne 1998, p. 203). Additionally, it serves as a visual reference to avant-garde artists contemporary of Bulgakov, such as Rodchenko and El Lissitzky.

Sonically, the collage is achieved by mixing different types of sound: field recordings of sounds related to the narrative (mainly from the online database Freesound [2]); samples of music related to the themes of the book, and to the collage aesthetics; additionally to electronic percussion and synthesizer sounds. Again, this distinguishes *Master and Margarita* from *Heat Seeker*, where no field recordings or music sampling has been used. The objective, both visually and sonically, was to create a saturated and multi-layered work that would capture the surreal, almost demential, universe of Bulgakov. Video Jack wanted a departure from the "clean" vector-based images and synthesizer-based sounds of *Heat Seeker*, into a "dirtier", more organic and detailed approach. Some techniques for generating randomness were used, such as "action painting" type of techniques on the visual side, and random granular sampling on the sonic side.

Video Jack borrowed the idea of different planes commenting on

each other from the novel, and expanded it to the visual and sonic layers. The visual elements comment on the narrative, on different levels of realism and symbolism, from the realistic full- screen animation to the iconic elements. The sonic elements also provide comments to the narrative, mainly through the use of field recordings. These different layers – both on sonic and visual spheres – echo the multi-layered writing approach of Bulgakov.

As in Bulgakov's work, Video Jack also emphasize process – Bulgakov, by writing on the act of writing itself (and the parallelism between his life and the character of the Master); and Video Jack by showcasing the user interface and the performer's actions. *Master and Margarita* shares resemblance with works such as Emergency Broadcast Network's *Telecommunications Breakdown*, as described by Bolter and Gruisin: "the Emergency Broadcast Network's CD-ROM conveys the feeling that we are witnessing, and in a way participating in, the process of its own construction (…) by emphasizing process" (Bolter and Gruisin 2000, p. 54).

The first step in the content development was the script, written by the author in the summer of 2008. The script summarized parts of the book that would be suitable for the animation style of André Carrilho, based on previous experience of working together. The final decision regarding which chapters to adapt was also based on the relevance of the chapter to the understanding of the whole novel (with the exception of the biblical part).

Nine chapters were chosen for the adaptation [3]. Video Jack aimed to have the complete adaptation ready for the first *Master and Margarita* performance, at Electro- Mechanica festival (November 2008, St. Petersburg), however that proved to be impossible due to time re-
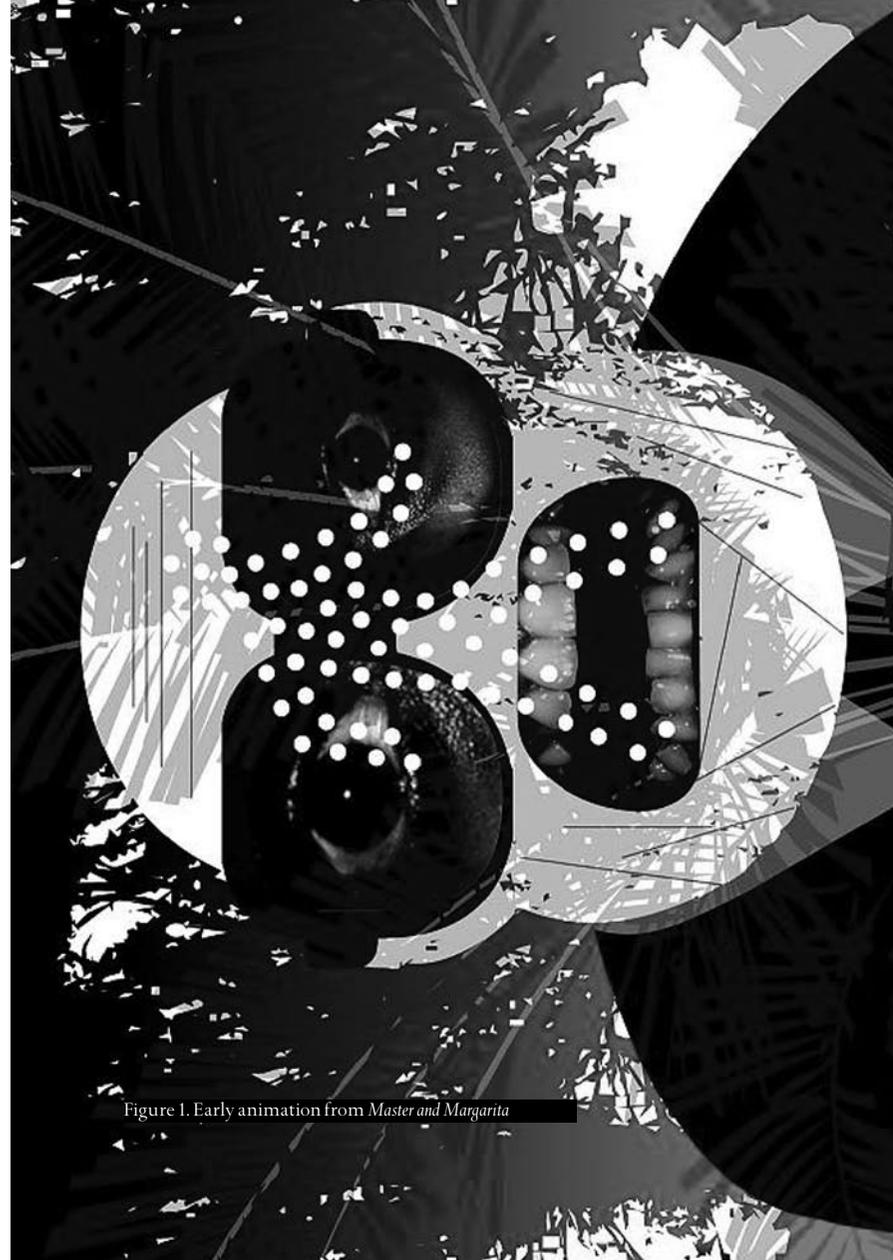
Figure 1. Early animation from *Master and Margarita*

Figure 2. *Master and Margarita* performance at PixelAche Festival, Kiasma, Helsinki. Photo by Antti Ahonen.

strictions. For that performance, only four chapters where adapted and shown. Video Jack agreed on the four chapters to be adapted, and started developing content for them. The first two chapters to be adapted were "The Seventh Proof" (Figure 1.) and "Black Magic and Its Exposure". The visual adaptation by André Carrilho preceded the sound adaptation, and it set the tone for the music and the remaining adaptations. As in *Heat Seeker*, the start of development of the content alternated between the visual side and the music side.

The preview showcase of *Master and Margarita* at Electro-Mechanica Festival, with an audience composed of Russians familiar with the book, was useful for obtaining feedback in an important point of the development of the project. After the performance, Video Jack had a discussion with the audience. The reactions of the audience often concerned the faithfulness of the adaptation. Several members of the audience manifested that Video Jack's version was true to the "spirit" of the novel, and understood that it was not intended to do a literal adaptation. One member of the audience provided a valuable comment – that the adaptation so far focused only on the more violent elements of the narrative, and that the relationship between the Master and Margarita was missing. Indeed, Video Jack felt that the four chapters previewed in St. Petersburg lacked thematic diversity, and that the remaining chapters should address that.

5.2 Performances

The next development stage for *Master and Margarita* took place prior to the premiere of the full project, at PixelAche Festival (April 2009, Helsinki). Five additional chapter adaptations where developed (Figure 2.).

In 2009 and 2010, it has also been performed in Geneva (Mapping Festival), Porto (Future Places Festival), Tallinn (PÖFF Festival), Pärnu (Pärnu Film and Video Festival) and Prague (Lunchmeat Festival). The project won an honorable mention award at Future Places Festival, Porto, 2009. The jury of the festival justified their prize with the following text:

"(Video Jack's) performance piece mixes music, video, and digital technology to give a fresh interpretation of Mikhail Bulgakov's classic book about Stalinist Russia. This ever-evolving piece reinforces our understanding of how narratives change every time they are performed and every time they are re- visited."[4]

5.3 Videos

Video Jack recorded the video and audio outputs from their computers during their PixelAche Festival performance (April 2009, Helsinki). The resulting videos were uploaded to Internet video sites YouTube [5] and Vimeo [6].

5.4 Performance software

The software engine used for the *Master and Margarita* performances was the same as the one used for the *Heat Seeker* performances, without any adaptation. However, a large number of functionalities were added for the web version.

In the software engine used by *Heat Seeker* and *Master and Margarita* performances, the interface "is visible to the audience, and is part of the visual experience" (Correia 2004, p. 2), in order for the audience to see how the visuals are being manipulated in real time. Buttons distributed in the edges of the screen, organized in a nine-by-nine grid, activate and deactivate four different types of animations (Correia 2004, p. 2).

One type of animation is particularly flexible—small animations ("animated icons"), which can be placed on the screen by drag-and-drop or by random positioning. The cursor is present on the screen, revealing the editing choices. Most types of visual manipulation are apparent to the viewer (with the exception of a few functionalities which rely on keyboard presses). By showing the cursor and the interface in the performance, Video Jack share the immediacy of manipulation with the audience: "the mouse and the pen-based interface allow the user the immediacy of touching, dragging, and manipulating visually attractive interfaces" (Bolter and Gruisin 2000, p. 23).

For sound manipulation, the author would play music using a laptop, equipped with a hardware controller, and running a music sequencer (Ableton Live), while André Carrilho would manipulate *Master and Margarita* visuals. This set-up was again similar to the one used for *Heat Seeker*, although sonically the author used smaller and more modular sound elements (loops), in anticipation of the next development stage for the project (the web version).

5.5 Web version

Similarly to *Heat Seeker*, Video Jack decided to develop an online version of *Master and Margarita*, based on the performance version. For the web version of *Master and Margarita* (*Master and Margarita Online*), Video Jack aimed to improve on the web version of *Heat Seeker* (*Heat Seeker Online*), by adding more visual manipulation options in the graphical user interface; and also to add audio-reactive graphics and sound manipulation. *Master and Margarita Online* was released in December 2009 [7] (Figure 3.).

In the online versions of their projects, Video Jack are creating tools designed not only for themselves as users, but also for their au-

dience on the web. With the online version of *Heat Seeker*, Video Jack aimed to achieve a simpler user interface (compared to the performance version), where all the functionalities would be visible to the user as part of the GUI. To accomplish that, keyboard-based functionalities where removed. The design of other user interface elements was improved to convey its affordance. As Donald Norman's states, "affordances provide strong visual clues to the operations of things" (Norman 2002, p. 9).

For *Master and Margarita Online*, Video Jack wanted to reintegrate some of the functionalities lost in *Heat Seeker Online*, adapting keyboard-based functionalities to the GUI. By making those functionalities visible in the interface, Video Jack aimed to implement the concept of "perceived affordances": "a good designer makes sure that appropriate actions are perceptible and inappropriate ones invisible" (Norman 2002, p xii). Among those functionalities are opacity and size controls for animations, converted in the online version to sliders in the left, right and bottom edges of the screen. A full screen option was also implemented. To add an extra image manipulation possibility, the animations corresponding to the left edge buttons were converted into "masks" that would show and hide parts of other animations.

In order to add audio manipulation capabilities and audio reactivity, Video Jack decided to use the "animated icon" type of graphic. These elements are similar to the "interactive audiovisual objects" in *AVOL*—animations that are audio-reactive, contain GUI elements to control sound, and that also can be placed on the screen either by drag-and-drop functionality or by activating a random position option. In turn, these animations in *AVOL* had been influenced by the "animated icons" in *Heat Seeker*. However, instead of the seven audio-

visual objects in *AVOL*, the author decided to implement only four audiovisual loops, in line with the four audio loops being used per chapter in performances.

In *AVOL*, audio reactivity functions in the following way: the amplitude of the audio loop affects the size of the correspondent animation, proportionally to the volume it is being played back in. A change of volume changes the overall size of the animation (when volume reaches zero, the animation would nearly disappear). The author wanted to implement audio reactivity in *Master and Margarita Online* similarly to *AVOL*, while maintaining the possibility, within the *Master and Margarita* performance software engine, to change size of icons independently. The solution was to maintain the same type of reaction to audio amplitude, but allocate volume change to a different visual property of the animations. Opacity control seemed to be a good option, as it also allows for establishing a correspondence between visibility and audibility (when volume reaches zero, the animation would nearly disappear).

The *Master and Margarita* environment, however, is more saturated of GUI elements than *AVOL*. Additionally, Video Jack wanted to maintain the possibility, present in *Heat Seeker,* to create multiple instances of each animated icon, which adds an additional saturation. Therefore, they wanted to implement a simpler audio manipulation interface than *AVOL*. Ideally, this would be achieved with one or two buttons within an animated icon at a given time, instead of the nine buttons present in an *AVOL* audiovisual object. In *AVOL*, these nine buttons correspond to: loop selection (four buttons); volume control (two buttons); mute and solo buttons; and a random positioning button. Loop selection was not to be part of the *Master and Marga-*

rita animated icons interface – each chapter would have their own set of four loops (one per animated icon), and these would not be interchangeable with loops from other chapters. Therefore, a single play button would be needed, instead of the four loop selection buttons in *AVOL*. There should be also a mute button, but Video Jack decided to omit the solo button, in order to simplify the interface.

Volume control was needed, and additionally Video Jack wanted to implement an independent size control per animated icon. In order to include these different functionalities in a simple and unobtrusive way, Video Jack decided that volume, size and mute controls should appear only after play had been pressed. In order to keep the GUI in each icon to a minimum, the author conceived a drag and drop GUI element (a "draggable pad") that would move in the horizontal and vertical axis, therefore affecting two different sets of parameters: sound volume and opacity, in the vertical axis; and size of animation, in the horizontal axis. The mute button would double as a reference point and boundary for the movement of the "draggable pad". In case there were different instances of a given animated icon on the screen, a change in opacity would affect all the animations of the same type. However, a change in size would affect only the individual animation, allowing for multiple instances of the same animated icon to have different sizes (as was intended).

6. Conclusions

6.1 Coherence

The author considers that the aim of achieving a greater coherence of content than in *Heat Seeker* was accomplished in *Master and*

Figure 3. *Master and Margarita Online*
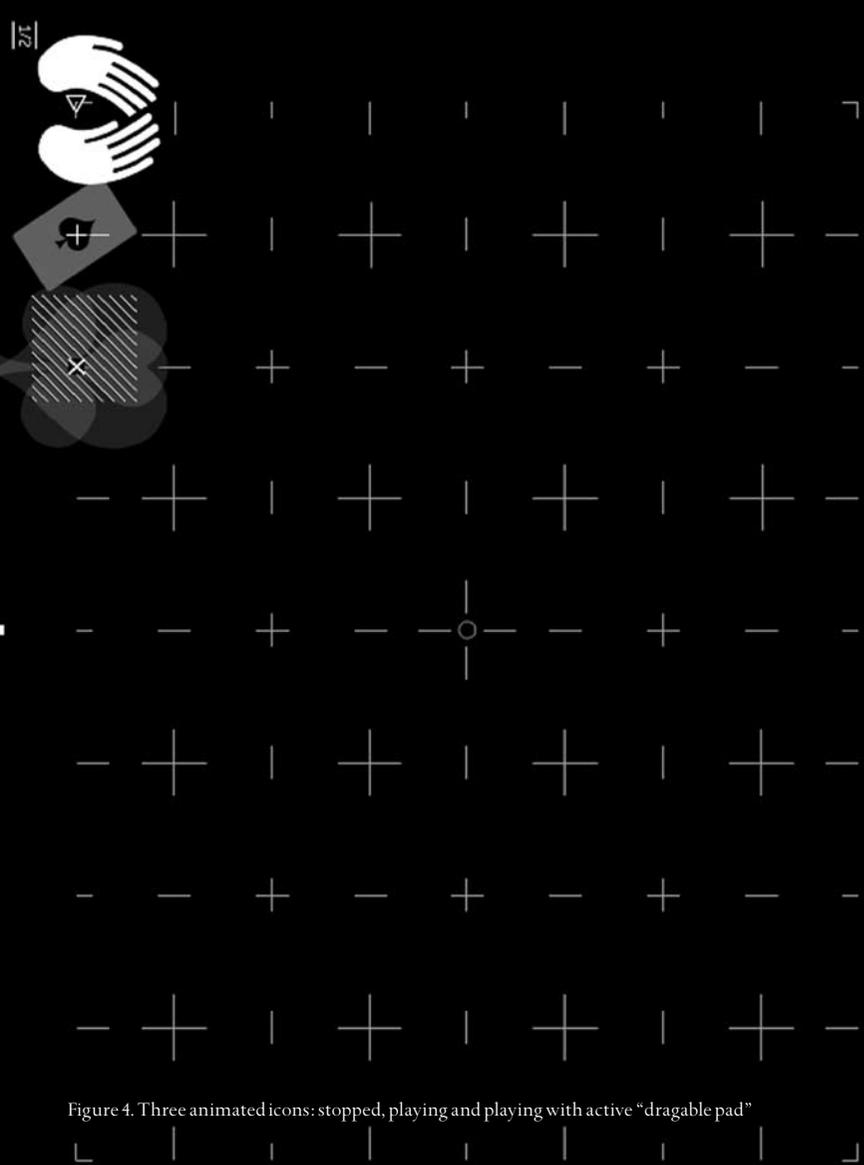
Figure 4. Three animated icons: stopped, playing and playing with active "dragable pad"

Margarita. Adapting a novel helped establish a set of guidelines and aesthetic directions from the start of the project, both visually and sonically. Besides the mutual direct influence of the narrative, there were several shared concepts between the two fields, such as: collage, dementia, saturation, "dirtiness", and randomness.

6.2 Adaptation

The intention behind the *Master and Margarita* project was not to do a full adaptation of the narrative, but to convey an alternative vision of the piece, which would be true to Bulgakov's work. *Master and Margarita* intends to bring upon its audience the same emotional response as the novel. In the author's opinion, the adaption was faithful to the spirit of novel by exploring the conceptual level of the book; delving into the themes, style and atmosphere of the work; and presenting an artistic interpretation of these elements as visual and sonic media. The novel's stylistic approach of different levels commenting on each other was adopted and expanded by Video Jack – the different visual and sonic layers also comment on each other, and on the book.

Audiences who have not read the book are introduced to the work, and hopefully will be motivated to read it. Those who have already done it can compare their own interpretation of the novel with Video Jack's.

6.3 Audiovisual expression

As designer and user of the software, the author believes that the GUI additions to the web engine behind *Master and Margarita Online*, inherited from *Heat Seeker*, allow for a richer visual manipulation and a more fluent expression than the previous project. The

audio-reactive animations and audio manipulation capabilities add a higher degree of audiovisual integration than previous narrative-based web project, *Heat Seeker*. It also opens the possibility for users to create a much larger number of audiovisual variations of the project. The audio manipulation component allows for a higher sonic flexibility than *Heat Seeker* online, as was intended. It brings the project closer in terms of audio manipulation to previous Video Jack project *AVOL*. The added features of the web version combined the visual manipulation aspects of the original version with the audio capabilities of *AVOL*, while maintaining the playful aspect of both.

In the author's opinion, the added audio and visual manipulation capabilities came with a cost: the GUI became more complex, and the discovery and learning process became longer for new users. The added complexity of the interface demanded that instructions had to be set up [8].

More audio-manipulation functionalities could be introduced, such as sound effects. In the author's opinion, this should be done only if a solution is found to add those functionalities without creating excessive user interface complexity.

6.4 Future developments

A non interactive, "linear" version could be created. It could output motion graphics and sound out of automated random selections of visuals and music loops. This alternative version could work as a "demo" for the functionalities of the system, and also as an alternative way to experience the content — based not on choice and interaction but on randomness.

Ideally there could additionally exist a possibility for users to record their interactions with the project, and save that session as a separate file that could be viewed or shared online.

The project could be also transposed to other platforms, such as mobile touch-screen devices.

The author is pleased with the results of the adaptation, since it has brought a higher audio and visual cohesiveness to Video Jack's work than their previous narrative- based project (*Heat Seeker*). Video Jack are interested in continuing this approach by developing other adaptations into interactive audiovisual projects – not necessarily from literature, although this is also a possibility. Video Jack also wish to continue to add audiovisual functionalities, without adding to the complexity of the interface.

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Master and Margarita: Honorable Mention @ futureplaces 2009

Notes

1 http://www.videojackstudios.com/heatseeker

2 http://www.freesound.org/

3 Never Talk to Strangers; The Seventh Proof; Black Magic and Its Exposure; The Hero Enters; Azazelo's Cream; Flight; The Great Ball at Satan's; The End of Apartment No. 50; It's Time, It's Time.

4 http://colab.ic2.utexas.edu/futureplaces/2009/10/and-the-winner-is/

5 http://www.youtube.com/videojackstudios

6 http://www.vimeo.com/videojackstudios

7 http://www.videojackstudios.com/masterandmargarita/

8 http://www.videojackstudios.com/projects/master-and-margarita/

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ON RADIO FUTURA

Ricardo Reis

For the first time since the early 90s someone is broadcasting a full schedule of improvisation, freestyle open radio in FM in Portugal. Radio Futura graced the radio waves in Porto, at 91.5 FM, under the banner of the Future Places festival and manned by the Rádio Zero team. Besides the FM frequency, it also set sails on the digital waves, with a full takeover of Rádio Zero usual streams.

Radio Futura... a possible future for radio? Or a call for a radio future, criss-crossing the power brought by digital media, their easiness of access, low-cost of content production and the recent-not-so-recent but ever increasing high-speed digital highways, fast connecting and information exchanging enablers. One of the purposes of Art is to raise questions. But unlike textbook exercises, no solution is readily found at the end of the volume or will promptly jump after an internet search.

Radio Futura could be a first ripple to shear the current use of the radio waves, reserved for "proper radio". "Proper" by commercial parameters, "proper" by public service considerations mediated by a State organization.

The Internet and associated technologies made possible a new dimension and magnitude of what is called Globalization. The cultural diffusion process was accelerated, mixing symbols and, at the same time, personalization, individualization, also reached a new height. But if mainstream symbols appear everywhere it is still and mostly the search for difference that propels one's interest. So, in the globalized world, we longer for local references. I listen to a station from London to hear London's voice. If I connect to Berlin, it's the heartbeat of the reunited city I desire. And if I take Radio Futura on my radio I want to hear… Porto? Well, Porto was the starting point. We plugged the microphone for three hours, one lonely mic in a window in Porto. Seagulls. Traffic. Voices. But Radio Futura is not a Porto radio. It is the Future Places Festival radio station, a radio of a virtual space, a confluence of individuals sharing interests in Digital Media, exploring and questioning it's possibilities, framing and experimenting it's connections with Local Cultures. So, if you tuned Radio Futura you could get one pure hour of the São Bento train station, a live concert in New Zealand, 12 hours in the future, or jump to another live improvised radio concert from Japan. You would listen to perambulations off the streets of Porto, by foot, on the bus, on the subway in a myriad of voices or go live again for a flash mob performance at the Lions Square followed by a local artist speaking to it's lions, giving voice to lesser known authors of the city.

Radio Futura set up an international call for live a pre-recorded submissions. Around 40 submissions, from international and national artists were broadcast, an interesting and broad spectrum of approaches to the theme of Future Places Festival. In addition, live concerts and performances were sent to the radio waves, from the Opening Ceremony concert to the STOP anthem, form the Future Places All-Stars Impromptu Orchestra to a live radio piece by Paulo Raposo about the streets of the city, or the "@C" special private concert exclusive for Radio Futura… and the list goes on.

Future Places radio station was a beam knocking on radio receivers, asking for attention. But who still listens to the radio, anyway? A big crowd, if you consider what people generally do when sitting in a car. The possibilities brought by the use of radio for establishing new connections, for sending ripples of wake up calls, surprising people for being alive, just asking them "Flash the car lights, now", a command of irreverence that like a chemical in the darkroom has the possibility of revealing another listener on the same frequency. Radio reveals but it needs reviving, it slumbers under what some think everyone should hear, a policy of distributing products in supermarket shelves, of sequencing the listener by types for better publicity placement. Radio Futura is then a much needed experience, establishing connections and showcasing some of what can be done with all those tools made available by digital platforms, going beyond the mere repetition of current models of radio. The purpose is to sow the seeds of questioning and those of action. For a Future with Radio.

OPEN CITIES / PORTO.
AN AFTERWORD

Guillermo Brown and David Gunn

And 1913: Charley Patton sits, exhausted, in the boarding houses of Will Dockery's plantation. Playing for a crowd of workers, dancers and drunkards. Playing all night straight, singing songs he does not own. Singing fragments known to all, age-worn couplets and tired bawdy jokes. Resequenced volk. Playing from early evening to mid-morning the next day, to an audience hopped up on booze, crown and opiates. To an audience that does not care. By the end of it, his hands are bleeding and he can no longer play, reduced to simply banging his guitar rhythmically as the crowd dance on, oblivious to his "art", to his intention. Oblivious so long as the party keeps on going.

Cadiz carnival, 2002. My first time in the city, and everyone brings drums. There are musical performances, of course, but these are side events, irrelevant details. Sat with strangers and friends, drinking

until I find myself in the first light of morning, in the middle of hundreds of people, clambering onto the monuments of Plaza de España. Everyone has a drum, banging maniacally. There is no wrong beat. Each individual action is simply one more element, infinite offbeats and deviations in the writhing muscle of rhythm. There is no audience, nothing that sits outside of the moment, of that shared sound. Dancing until we fell off and the world returned.

Artists, galleries, ticketed venues, the commissioned work, the artistic vision. These are specific occurrences situation in space and time. Arriving before us, they often seem so familiar as to be immutable, but things were not always so. There are other balances, other powers. Dockery, 1913. Cadiz, 2002. The dominant modes of contemporary popular performance should not occur as a natural given, as they so frequently do. The phemomenon must be interrogated as a historically situated concept. Tested and changed. Undermined and overwhelmed. Exhausted and left for other lands.

Open Cities is a little project. It is one approach to this idea, constructed from performances occurring at infrequent intervals and in different places. And each show is contingent, partial, failed. Each show is an attempt, an experiment that leads a little closer to the imaginary centre.

For a long time, i have been asking the question "what does a digital folk culture really look like?" And i'm not thinking about postured brut or outsider art, about breathless Wired aesthetics or the thin walls of Adobe veneer. I'm talking about the accidental pirates in all of us, inadvertently rip, burn and linking ourselves out of the sad pact of the 20th century, waltzing back to some future land where creativity is not an occupation and the owning isn't the all.

That, i guess, is sorta where we came from. Where we are trying to get to. OC Porto was show number two. It went like this:

Recording devices of varied quality are distributed amongst project participants. Phones, dictaphones, field recorders. Participants wander their city, each free to document any sounds and images they find. Interviews with street vendors, the sounds of water and of fountains, of unidentified machinery. The fragments they record are collected and a show is constructed using only these raw materials. During the performance, real-time decisions are juxtaposed with stochastic fragments and sequences drawn from the same source. Performances within performances. Intentions within intentions, and always something that escapes, always a spilling over, always another who walks beside you. And so forth and so on.

Some things are probably too obvious to say, but here goes: process matters. The process is as valuable as the result, always, and one is unavoidably coloured by the other. The thing is not the thing. So we were there with long-time residents of Porto, we stood around with them, asking them to record the things they ignore every day, to re-adjust patterns of habitual response. And doing the same for ourselves - always avoiding the rote paths of institutional soundwalk and facilitated action, the creative practicner sales programme LLP. Trying always to find once again the play in your lost world. In many ways, the performance is only the pale afterglow of these moments, the necessary pretext for the real deal. Wandering around bashing wood and locks, splashing water, stalking rabid dogs through the confusion of the Ribera. Locating phased reverberance in empty dustbins. Starting conversations with people you have passed every

day for years without a word or glance. A rediscovery of street-level scale. Distant rivers echo passages underground.

"Open cities" ... there is an ideology here. More than anything else, it is about the importance of maintaining a certain contingency at a structural level. The ability to remain at a variable angle of incidence to the conditions that surround you. Or follow Bataille: figure out how to spend the excess before it spends you. Or maybe even the old Gysin / Burroughs ramble: cut out cut in cut up. Old clouds on the predestinate river. And so on and so forth.

There was a show. And sure, to some extent the old audience / artist dichotomies returned. But lets be realistic: no one project can do it all, nor should it. We run other projects, and each has its own vector, its own logic. Sometimes inside out, and others outside in. Or as old man Frazer wrote it - contagious magic / imitative magic. Each has its place and each its power. And i'd almost even go as far as to say the old performance paradigm is qualitatively no worse nor better than any other, given the right time / place / morals. Maybe. Though my instincts always lean towards the gradual disassembly of the ArtistKoncept. But beyond that, it is simply a question of maintaining the angle of incidence, keeping the valencies intact and visible. Like Heitor says: calibrate. Keep things at a distance from themselves and never forget the shtick. Nothing is natural and there is always a shtick.

We had fun. We think and hope that everyone else did, too. Fun is important, too important to be ignored. Critique is deathless and bored, pale through over-use and distance, too tangled in the whole morass of late capital, critical distance, the aesthetic milieu. Bad drone, endlessly dislocated from people, places, from love. Bad credit and bad dirge. This does not interest us and never has. We are interested in an aesthetics of celebration. Degenerative disco, smudged and blazing. Cthonic hydro-boogies and troubadour ghosts. "Wierd dancing in all-night computer-banking lobbies". And so forth and so on.

Other versions are always possible. Other openings, other cities. But what it comes down to is this: figuring out how to cultivate a certain sense of constant play. Figuring out how to dislocate yourself and the walls around you, how to keep moving towards the imaginary centre. So get the hell out there - record your cities and hit the streets, literally. Beneath the pavements the beats.

David Gunn , London, July 2010

OPORTO-BROOKLYN BRIDGE

Naomi Kaly & Alyssa Casey

"Based on their observation that the Dom Luis I Bridge and the Brooklyn Bridge roughly reflect one another across a horizontal access, their elegant project explores the thin line where two different linguistic and cultural territories can connect and engage in conversation. The engaging and very tactile project allows for user created conversation, as well as deep reflection on the metaphor of wire in today_s digital society."

Jurors Hugh Forrest, Karen Kocher and Cristina Sá

Inspiration

Oporto-Brooklyn Bridge is an interactive installation, making room for a "thought bridge" that creates a hybrid Oporto-Brooklyn community. The fruit of an ongoing collaboration between Naomi Kaly, an Israeli New Media artist, and Alyssa Casey, an American painter and paper maker, the installation explores ways in which technology fosters new forms of communication, meant to bridge cultural, linguistic and ethnic gaps. Based on the observation that the Dom Luis I Bridge and the Brooklyn Bridge roughly reflect one
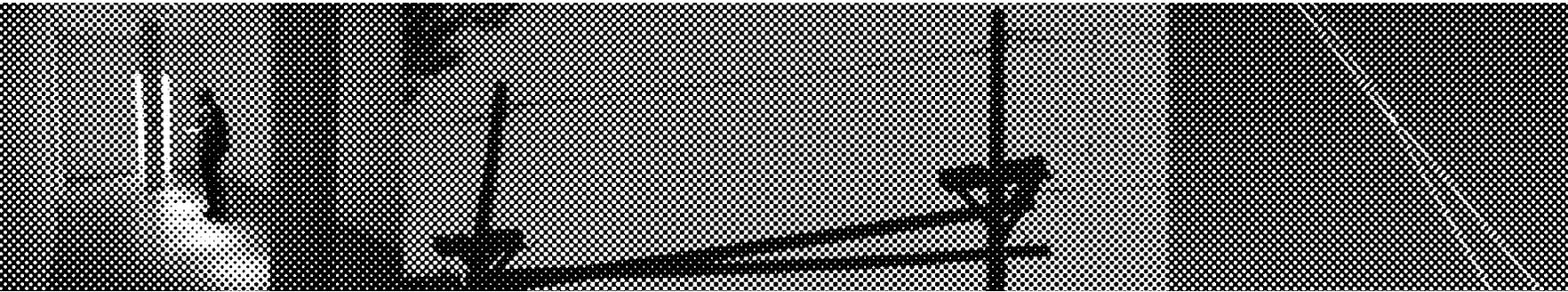
another across a horizontal axis, the installation for Future Places evokes a confluence of voices from both locations. In place of the horizontal "roadway" of each bridge are conductive threads with encoded audio that symbolically connects the two remote sites.

Production

Prior to the festival, and in consideration of Heidegger's interpretation of a bridge ("The bridge is a location)," a group of pedestrians, representing a diversity of cultures, genders and ages, were asked to stop for a short interview while crossing the Brooklyn bridge. Questions were designed to reflect personal interpretations of the notion of bridge. Individuals were encouraged to go beyond the actual definition, to imagine and describe their fantasy bridge: "Given unlimited resources (time, materials) what would be your fantasy bridge? Where would it lead? What would it be made of? What would be the shape? How would you call it?" Upon arriving to Oporto, we conducted the same process over the Dom Luis I Bridge. Final fragments of audio—syllables, words and sentences- collected, processed, and edited— were merged into a hybrid conversational space: local visitors bring to life distant people and remote locations, challenging notions of community, proximity, connection, and interaction.

Design

Homage to the histories of communication, Oporto-Brooklyn Bridge is designed as two poles, between which a system of lines is suspended. Conductive threads, which look and feel like conven-tional thread, yet conduct electricity, replace the standard phone and electric wires. One wooden pole contains a custom-made circuit, responsible for decoding the exact location of the silver bead on the threads. At the heart of the circuit is an Atom microcontroller, programmed to analyze the participants' movement, select the language and playback the specific audio track. Amplified, the designated track is played through the proper speaker (one in each pole) depending on the language.

Interaction

Sliding a small bead along the conductive threads, participants trigger a program that scans, deciphers, and plays the encoded audio; walking to the west or east reveals sections of English or Portuguese audio respectively. The conductive thread is mapped into sections each encoding a pair of English and Portuguese audio tracks that creating a dialogue carefully selected according to content, identity of the speaker, or voice intonation. For example, the final Portuguese track, spoken by an elderly gentleman, "Now I'm waiting for the last bridge to take me to the other side" pairs with a young woman, "To see the people from your past". The illusorily continuous audio offers points of transition; hardware and software allow readers to explore and manipulate the usually inaccessible intersections between two tongues: unfamiliar sounds emerge, new language is born. Sliding the bead along the conductive strings, visitors construct the Oporto-Brooklyn Bridge: linear gesture is translated into a non-linear sonic narrative; the audience decodes the hidden audio, unfolding a multilingual and multicultural intricate oral web of urbanism.

Future places

Ever geared toward higher efficiency, technology elevated the computer as the main arena for communication. Virtual human interaction is instant and immediate: to 'chat', 'share', and 'meet' occurs over the network, predominantly remaining, however, within familiar social and cultural boundaries. The installation suggests an alternative form of connection: "From right here we may even be much nearer to that bridge and to what it makes room for than someone who uses it daily as an indifferent river crossing"… (Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking"). First in a series of installations that connect pairs of remote locations around the world, the Oporto-Brooklyn Bridge makes room for a "thought bridge": a productive platform for freedom, tolerance, and mutual exchange. We envision a unified "fantasy bridge", coalescing these linear bridges into an organic, multi-axial network.

Porto-Brooklyn Bridge: 2nd Prize @ futureplaces 2009

Interactive Sound Installation. Conductive thread, custom electronics, speakers, wood, silver bead 270H x 400L x 25W cm. http://futureplaces.up.pt/2009/doku. php?id=exhibition:naomi_kaly_alyssa_casey

www.naomikaly.com   www.alyssacasey.com
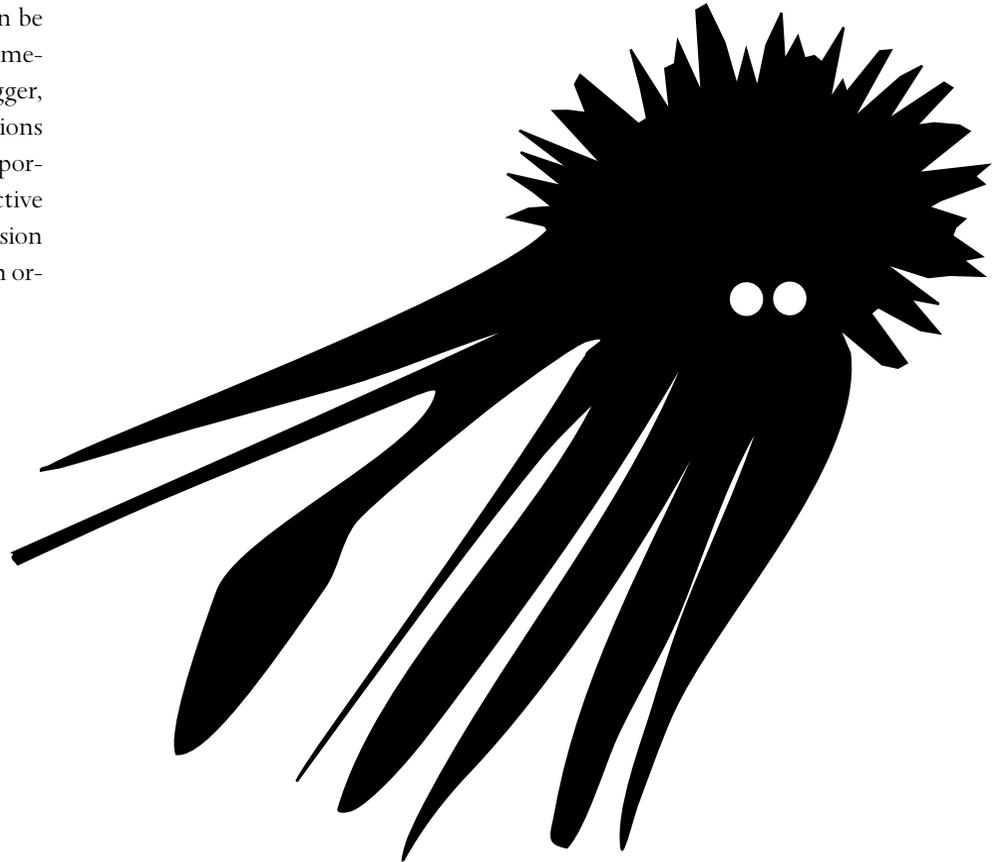
SOME THING FROM EVERY THING

João Cruz

Every single morning after waking up I go through my daily routine of digital connectivity. Sleeping, seems to be just an hiatus on the state of ubiquitous connection that some of us experiment on a regular basis, it appears as a mode very similar to the one present in the cluster of machine apparatus with which some of us currently engage to perform our daily existence of talking, listening, working, or making sense of our surroundings. Some of us log out at night only to reconnect a few hours later, in the meantime, during our few hours of unconsciousness rest, the world keeps spinning like it always did, with the exception that in current times, the inexorability of the time-timeline in the form of a global conversation is as present as it ever was.

Waking from my sleeping mode and sensing my surroundings, as one imagine it would be in memorial times or as still is in the wild-life, starts with a quick look at the *twitterverse,* which at times, can also be a pretty wild environment. My personal network is not that big, in fact I think it´s the smallest type of twitter networks, it´s so small I don´t even bother to parse it in groups, and as far as I´m concerned it's as big as I want it to be, it´s what I call a sustainable network of friends, a few popular thinkers, and some specific blog-output related to personal research. Of course, a small network also as its downsides, you can hardly ask her questions and hope for diverse input on any subject, it´s a limited information source, the upside is that friendly and noise-free trusted advice is at the tip of the keyboard. You might say that I´m at stakes with what I want my twitter experience to be, a simple streamlined and unadulterated flux of thoughts of my own curatorial choice, and what twitter can be, noisy, dense, complex but, maybe more interesting and challenging in its unfiltered plurality.

My own efforts in keeping my personal feed clean, minimal and sober, are in line with a strong desire of manageability. How much can one take of everything all the time? How much data is too much to turn information useless to personal knowledge or wisdom? Where to draw the line without blacking out or isolating important voices? When and how is the global conversation of any use to me, or to some of us, sitting right here, right now? Data is on its way to be free—they say, its sensing as information is as rich as its context let it be, it seems that more context is what we need, more context that means something to us, more local context to fuel our local existence if, after all, it still is indeed local.

The quest for context, twitter-wise, is right in between the personal and the public timelines of the conversation flux. I´ve been enjoying a lot, and this is twitter-talk, the nearby feature on my regular twitter client. The nearby feature displays nearby tweets based on my current location, so after looking at my personal, uncluttered and custom-built network, I go on to lurk on the nearby timeline hoping to turn the global experience into a more familiar endeavor, one that is full with local flavors and colors. The nearby timeline it's an open door to a representative sample of my surroundings' zeitgeist, an extended neighborhood of thoughts and rants, more or less conscious of their public nakedness. While some of the liners are well aware of their audience of followers and tweet in some sort of news-cast model, others are really conversing they're tiny banalities, and it is precisely this plural informality, so rich, resourceful and charming, that is so in harmony with what a free and vivid exchange should look like.

A gigantic public timeline is as private as its scale, there, your personal thoughts are as distinct as a salmon swimming upstream. Now, the nearby timeline it's more like a small pond and as such it's soaked with local context and atmosphere. Thinking about *dochakucha,* which is the japanese origin of the term glocalization, and that I would loosely translate as taking something generic and adapt it to local use, I don´t even know if this specific client feature can still be seen as a step in glocalization as a marketing tool, it appears more of a natural current condition, wether one is a mere recipient or an active player. In the words of sociologists Hampton & Wellman (1990), as common glocals, and deeply immersed in glocalized environments, some of us are actively involved in both local and wide-range activities, wether by friendship, kinship or commerce, when

not everyone of them at once, because as I see it, the difference be-tween these genuine human activities is once again blurring, now as an outcome of the social networked economy.

So, I ask myself, is the networked culture something we can actu-ally use to build communities and activate local economies? In the social-network model, and from a corporative point of view, it's a lot harder to keep the cake and eat it, the network as proved to be highly unstable and acutely critical, it's not so easy to spread your corporate preaching in such an environment. On a personal perspective, It's also true that in making sense of what my peers are saying, think-ing or doing, really creates an awareness that can also be understood as some sort of social glue. It surely beats any other established cor-porate media, many times so strongly biased and deeply manipula-tive. Multicasting is then both as extremely resilient and highly crea-tive channel model, but is any collective action already resonating from such environments? Are we, and lets not forget for a moment that those we are most of the time no more than the few lucky net-work empowered, already doing something for our local cultures? It is precisely this conundrum of the global-everything turning into local-something that as a festival, in its second edition, Future Places is once again audaciously addressing. As a former future place, and as the new journey begins, I wish them all godspeed!

STORIES IN THE MIRROR
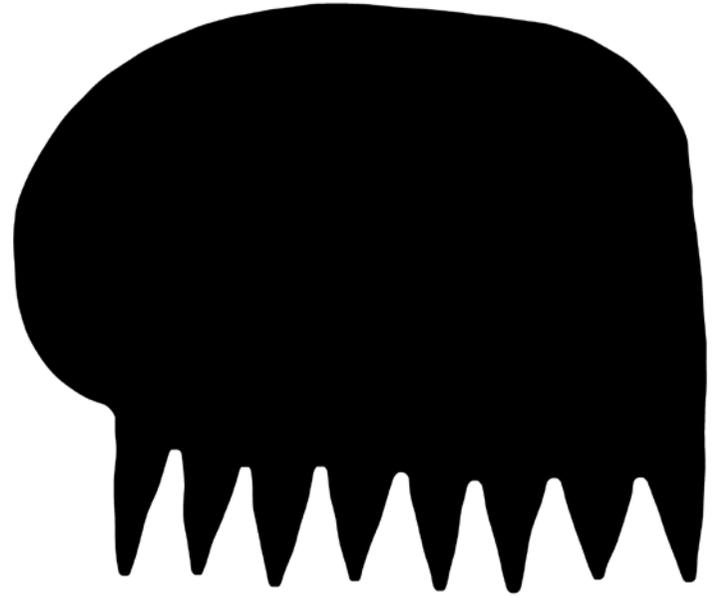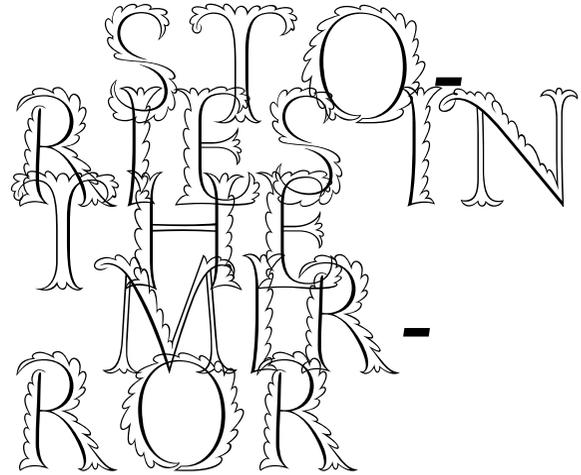
Valentina Nisi and Ian Oakley

Design related to urban environment often pursues clear-cut instrumental goals such as maintaining or improving comfort, practicality and order. But the scope of everyday lives in urban spaces is never fully occupied with the achievement of such predefined, rational objectives as getting home, staying dry or shopping. People can be capricious and unpredictable[1] and cities afford indulging in such whims.

Urban spaces and the activities that occur in them constantly generate disorder, desire, spontaneity, risk, change and exchange. People are pressed up against both each other and a polarizing diversity of content and opportunities. Urban spaces offer a richness of experience and possibility for action (1) that is unique, exhilarating and novel.

The mix of potential and challenge to be found in the city makes it an interesting environment to design for. Designing for the public space of the city requires calibrating and serving the needs of multiple individuals. It is important to understand all the uses of the city particularly if some challenge formally assigned and designated roles and functions. Indeed it is generally acknowledged that places gain their meaning from the breath of uses and variety of actions pursued there [1].

Our workshop "Stories in the Mirror" focused on a view of the city that challenges the mundane vision of its own common places. We drew inspiration for the theme of our workshop from barbershops and the rich history and culture they represent. In the workshop these establishments were explored and their role as places of tradition, change and exchange in the city highlighted.

Barbershop in the city of Porto are a traditional business that is in a moment of transition: some are retaining the old tradition of the barbers male-dominated craft while others are adapting to the new needs and rhythm of their modern costumers by, for example, opening their premises to women and to more casual clients.

At the heart of the workshop was the observation that the traditional barbershop business is not just the place to get a haircut or a shave; to change your look. Nor is it simply a place where money is exchanged for labor. In the barbershop another kind of exchange happens. Fundamentally, the human connection between the client and the barber is an intimate relationship often spanning decades and even generations.

In the intimate relationship between the barber wielding a shaving knife and the costumer sitting helpless and at mercy, a variety of exchanges take place. Conversations span from private stories not even told to family members or at the home to casual exchanges on sports and politics. At times the exchange does not require words, a mutually understood silent relationship can exist between barber and client.

The Stories in the mirror workshop aimed to uncover the unseen connection among people living in Porto by specifically exploring Barbershops as a place of exchange. Not simply of exchange of money for a service but more as a exchange of stories and close interaction between otherwise separate lives within the mutable space of a city. Barbers are known in Porto for maintaining long lasting relationships with their clients often spanning from generations. Clients who move out of the city or of a neighborhood often go back to their regular barber irrespective of the distance they have to travel. Oftentimes clients will bring their sons or nephews to their local establishment. Barbers boast that over years of cutting hair and shaving chins, a relationship is constructed with a client. Some clients talk about themselves, while others remain silent. The barbers adapts to their mood and wishes of each. Many barbers have been serving the same silent clients for decades.

While investigating the barbershops in Porto as fieldwork for a multimedia interactive story workshop we discovered that the clients stories were often likened to confessions to a priest. A bond between clients and their barber meant that none would disclose what they hear and break the unspoken privacy between them. Their clients' personal histories are sealed within the barber client relationship. But on the other hand, the barbers themselves have many stories about which they are proud and eager to disclose. These cover

themselves and their profession, how they started their business, how they performed their job and maintained their clients over the years. Many have fascinating anecdotes and about occurrences in the shop or in streets outside during their lifetime of work.

In the two day Stories in the Mirror workshop we aimed at discovering and capturing some of these stories by sending workshop participants to barber shops located in the centre of Porto, talking to them and bringing back their stories for multimedia production. While some of the barbers were not open to such an intervention, many did spend time with the participants and enjoyed the idea of recalling and relating some of their workplace stories. The participants talked with them and collected anecdotes and visual material in the first day of the workshop, through interviews, observations and pictures. The second day multimedia stories were crafted from the collected anecdotes and prepared for display on a GPS enabled mobile platform (Placeware).

Placeware[2], a location aware multimedia story delivery platform for smartphones, was loaded with a map of the centre of Porto and its barbershops. The multimedia stories were uploaded in the phone's memory and were triggered when adjacent to the specific barbershop where the story was collected. Using this system, users could roam the streets of the city centre of Porto, encountering the barber stories in form of short videoclips next to the barbershops. Through the output of the Stories in the Mirror workshop we have populated the city of Porto with intangible but vibrant fragments of histories, people and traditions that would otherwise go unseen.

Cities have a wide range of functions and serve a wide range of aspirations; Wirth defines them as large settlements of different in-

dividuals. But there is more than this to a city. The core element is the interaction among these diverse individuals, their mingling and mixing, which really constitutes urbanity and which gives city life its special character and sense of possibility (1). Through the Stories in the Mirror workshop we aimed at uncovering, exposing and promoting this richness and diversity.

Cities are typically seen as engines of modern lives, planned to optimize work. But people do not gather in cities just to meet their basic needs, they are also searching for love, self actualization, and to experience the diversity of the world, to learn and understand. In the barbershop some of these core issues are met and stories about love, learning and understanding are shared. The Stories in the Mirror workshop helped spread this intimacy beyond the walls of the stores themselves and out into the streets and to rest of the people; it providing a channel to let the city know about these stories.

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TEXT TO BE NAMED

A Conversation as Storytelling, through Questions and Answers, by

Ana Carvalho, Marc Behrens and Heitor Alvelos

Ana Carvalho and Marc Behrens wrote "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures"[1].

The conversation about this text lead to "Text to be Named", written in many voices: from within each author and between them. It is directed to many readers: sometimes to the other writers, to the

reader personally and to the undefined. Although in direct reference to one other, this text stands for itself as registration of a discovering process towards individual and collective growth, having in mind how the reader can actively participate. Each one of the writers would like to receive ten letters of constructive comments on the two texts written and on all the possibilities originated in there.

The work methodology behind "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures"

The principle is based on a system of two forces: we understood the construction of the text as a system. This is the best way to describe its dynamics, which becomes apparent only to a reader who returns to the text. Odd as it may seem, the text can be referred to by calling it "Each Minute" or "Parallel Futures". Between the two of us, the work "Draws Possibilities". It is the meeting of our complementary skills, the cross point of two trajectories, one departing from the auditive and the other from the visual. The work is defined as a joint effort. At the start of "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures" the tasks were clearly divided: one writes the fictional and the other writes the theoretic part. In each of these parts, the presence of the other is perceived: the environment is sometimes described through detailed descriptions of sounds, and the theoretic part unveils a close combination between audio and visual. References from the fictional part can be found, as references, in the theoretic part and vice versa. We find a common ground in reading and writing.

The online version of "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures" generates its own subversions by moving the paragraphs of the fictional storyline around, each time the text is accessed. The fictional paragraphs alternate with the theoretic paragraphs, which remain fixed to keep the text's structure. Juxtapositions of the paragraphs emphasize the different references between the two forces. The reader looks at the computer, looking at a familiar code, constructing his/her own landscape of meaning. The original dynamics is only perceptible in the online version. The forthcoming print version[2] will present a fixed, chosen structure.

Transfamily — collaboration — networking

The outcome of the relationship between two writers who write collectively, is a world existent in a text.

In the present social-political context in Portugal, the legislated concept of family changed. At the moment, gay marriage is legally correct. This change results from deeper social changes that have occurred throughout the past century, to which art's contribution is fundamental, especially cinema. The role-playing seen in films is fundamental for the development of this social change. The semi-immersive space of the cinema contributed to this as well, with the viewer's attention directed to absorbing the narrative without distractions, through sound and image. Nowadays, concepts such as "family", "friend" or even "co-worker" are ambiguous and multi-meaningful. The consciousness of the collective is reinforced by the way we communicate at a distance. If once we had telephone, an audio-only bi-directional device, today we can communicate with several people located anywhere on the planet, using audio, video and text simultaneously. In addition, Postmodernism came to open-

ly state through fashion and art, as well as philosophy and literature, that there is no axiomatic rule that cannot be broken. Derrida opened the discussion on the multiplicity in language. Deleuze and Guattari opened the individual unit to the multiplicity within. The intro (the acknowledged text on the Rhizome metaphor) to the book "A Thousand Plateaux" starts with the following sentence: "The two of us wrote [...] together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd"[3]. Between two writers a crowd expands, within each one and also from both of them together, to include references originated in a multitude of authors and their related networks. From a similar methodological perspective, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a reading of their books as machines made out of text, which only exist in connection to other machines. Another example, "The Process" (Kafka), exists only because of its connections with the bureaucratic machine that takes place in the non-fictional reality. In this sense, no text is purely fiction or real nor lonely, but all of them combine in different ways and proportions. The authors become authors only through the group of others who interact through them. In this light, it appears logical to work collaboratively, at the same time enhancing the multitude.

Nowadays, the multiplicity of the possible connections is clear to us, especially in the richness of collectively produced outcomes (although all human production is collective anyway). The roles of the reader and of the writer have been questioned, even killed (by Roland Barthes) and then later reinvented.

The way relationships between people are acknowledged socially has been questioned continuously and is at the verge of reformulation. Fiction is a way to explore endless possibilities. In the book "The

Dispossessed", Ursula K. LeGuin rehearses a possibility for anarchy by creating a whole planetary order under its inspiration. The plot of "He She and It", by Marge Pierce, explores possibilities on gender role, human and machine (humanoids) and the possibility in relationships between. To further expand possibilities for connections within family structures, the fictional side of "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures" introduces a family to the reader which doesn't match our biological example, except for being a combination of adults and children in an identifiable group. It is another take, between reality and fiction, on the possible combinations between us and the others.

Literature

What awakens a spontaneous curiosity in you about the writer of your favourite literary work? When the writer succeeded in getting me immersed in the book, no longer a volume of paper pages bound together. Is it possible to arouse such a spontaneous curiosity (in similar ways) about a programmer of a software application? Software is developed by groups of people, in which users (beta testers especially) are key elements, although sometimes an author is acknowledged — perhaps the person who had initiated the software.[4] In Open Source software especially, users and developers are very likely the same anonymous group of people.

It is the software that becomes known, as it results from the dynamics of their efforts.

Some abstract works, made with words for example, are capable to cause immersion in us — to the point of forgetting the surround-

ing reality. Sounds and visuals are capable of provoking this experience as well. When the reader clearly understands the code, it makes no difference if the message is simple or complex, if it refers to existent reality or to an abstraction of itself. The link between immersive technologically developed environments and literature has been the base for imagination. This is the case with the Holodeck, the inspiration for "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures". The Holodeck is a fictional role-play game, which exists aboard the spaceship Voyager, in the Star Trek: Voyager series,[5] under the command of Captain Kathryn Janeway. In fact, the inspiration for our text was not only the Holodeck itself, but also a book on narrative called "Hamlet in the Holodeck" by Jane Murray. In this book, referring to the Holodeck as a sort of ultimate immersive environment, Murray draws on developments of recent digital technology and its possibilities to interact with the environment in the construction of narratives where the user has an active role. Many times writers tried to escape the linear structure of the classical book. In the light of current knowledge and what can be envisioned ahead, they have been pioneers of present-day non-linear digital narratives.

Fiction

Fiction has the function of analysing possibilities in evolution.

All colors of flowers, all textures of leaves, thicknesses of stems, all apparent complexity of roots (visible and invisible), are answers to questions (or problems) that existed once in the history of the whole environment (not only of each specific plant). Each answer takes more time to be formulated than a human lifetime.

Each piece of technology, being it as simple as a spoon or as complex as an immersive (not-yet-possible) environment, is an answer and at the same time a question, a part of our own, human evolution. During the 1980s, kids played with electronics in garages which later produced new art forms in visual and sound cultures. Back then, each kid and her/his friends thought to be unique – so it happened that the Internet came to be the innocence breaker. Through the network kids found out that there were many many more other kids, in other garages, far and nearby, doing the same. Evolution happened at the same time in different places: teenagers + curiosity + free time + electronics = technological evolution.

We can find a parallel to this playing with technology in "Each Minute Draws Possibilities of Parallel Futures" in the way Tom, the youngster, develops skills using a Device. The principle of the Device is evolutive. The symbiosis of human and machine is complex to the point of changing its components in a process-based learning relationship. In a thread of the text, Tom is aware of what he can see is an error or a coincidence. An error in this symbiosis happened unexpectedly: when routine is broken, a question is posed and we have the chance to push forward, to evolve.

Implant, Explant

What are we considering an implant? An implant: something that is permanently put inside something else, but with a specific functional imperative, a reason to be there.

Is it simply a piece of technology in the human body? A psychic implant, does it exist? A memory constructed to fill a gap between

two moments in one's life, is it an implant? A story that one borrowed from another person and made one's own?

Besides the stories that describe the possibilities of human behavior and evolution, the world we inhabit, understand and conceive through implants, is also fictional. The border between fiction and reality is thin, sometimes translucent. This combination plays a role in evolution.

On the other side, outside of the body or mind, is the networked entity of distributed explants: the surgically removed. Cancers. Foreskins. Limbs. Organs. The terrifying vertigo of Leng T'che: the point at which the being ceases to be, death by division. The body being less than "whole", or being "too much". The absolute need to consider the body as whole, regardless of what may be missing. The body is not any longer a whole in the perception of its biological boundaries. Parts of the brain can be found outside the cranium, in its explanted form of a Device: a network, a computer, which simultaneously subtracts and extends. Out of sheer physical limits, explants are not autonomous nor permanently prosthetically connected to their original body and thus already in the present, every time a computer crashes, every time a hard drive dies, one dies a little inside. The brain, as its explanted memory dies, has to cope with reconfiguration in a moment of vertigo. Without undo.

A few decades into working with the undo function, one would make remarks, sometimes jokes, about the fact that there is no such function in physical reality. But recently, reports were recorded, in which people experienced moments in which they were absolutely convinced that there was one, not even in dealing with objects, but with situations. More vertiginous instants.

You've just entered the main reading room of the British Library. What do you see/hear around you? Pick one of the readers in the room and follow from a distance throughout the day. Describe what you see.

Read a reader like a reader reads a book. The book she/he reads might be one that you would have liked to write. Maybe it is not a conventional book, not a paper volume, not a text as in letters and sentences. We observe this one reader in the near future which makes the observation also a matter of perception, settings and conventions. We see/perceive a trail unfolding as an inverted Klein bottle,[6] above the reader's head, folding back into itself, a closed world that can nevertheless be filled from the outside and rinsed again into the surroundings. This device is of a psychomental function and looks not unlike the aura (which we can photograph, perceive by intuition). Gaining knowledge from literature or any other empirical or scientific practice, will change the precise form of the psychomental device, propelling its evolution. Our present-day brain and memory prosthetics will perhaps become part of this, in more evolved reincarnations, in a future when we understand that magic, psychokinesis and paranormal communication are achievable with vireal technologies. Back to the reader we are observing in the future library: we are aware of the device's nature, that she/he carries. It contains the context, the reader's network of ideas, conceptions, imaginations, neuronal connections. No, it is not all visible to us, but we are aware of its existence.

Knowledge is visible in old libraries — these spaces of enlighten-

ment and study where the human body is more a sustainment vehicle to the mind and spirit, than a physical actor. Over epochs of study and research, with varying methodologies and focuses, a permanent electromagnetic energy field developed, a catalyst cloud collectively generated by present and past readers. Literature (and we mean all kinds of literature) printed onto pages, created worlds of possibilities in the reader and in the cloud of the electromagnetic collective.

Narrative

When the virtual and the physically real blur, converge and become vireal, a non-separable multiplicity results, in which the old differentiation has become obsolete and impossible: this is the setting for Involuntary Narratives[7] to happen.

Much of the information in urban space is not limited to the context of a given individual. Buildings are overlaid with data: impulses to many, knowledge to few. They influence behaviour and direct or cancel attention: these narratives can only be understood as a collective flux, suddenly transported to awareness through an individual.

How an individual suddenly experiences an Involuntary Narrative: an overlay of imagery that brings remembrances of another place with the means of references to commonly familiar music overheard on someone's mobile phone, is an example of possible combinations that have the power to break the lucidity of the present and to make one jump back into the past, or towards a longed future.

This form of blurring we refer to as Involuntary Narratives can happen to anyone, it is not exclusive to an imaginary elite of art intellectuals. It is more likely to happen in an urban context because

of sheer quantity and density of information, but it will also occur in a technologically enhanced, networked, largely natural environment. When it happens, it is not a question of understanding it, and a sensitive person will more likely experience it. It takes a tuning onto, as in lucid dreaming.

We use the terminology of the Involuntary Narratives to work on micro stories that keep up connections of the fictional to the physical reality of contemporary life. We use the terminology of the Involuntary Narratives to research about the physical reality of contemporary life and construct reality-based fiction.

Reports of possible Involuntary Narratives

1) One night, while seated on the upper deck of a riverboat anchored in a lake in Amazónia, I had a cinematic experience of an amazing emotional narrative intensity. I was under the halo of the moon, the largest I had ever seen (covering half my vision s perimeter), looking at the river dolphins all around. Breath out, they sounded like humans, and adding to their curious presence, there were also frogs and night birds and many background sounds of the jungle on the faraway shores of the lake. All this caused a sense of peace in me, of stillness, of time stopping. Body and outside temperature perfectly merged: it was overwhelming. I remember sound, a kind of 360° view, smell and taste, and – happiness.

2) Memories of conflict, much stronger than any recollection of harmony. There is an almost-photographic record of various instances in my brain. I hear the sounds (or a karaoke version of what these would have been) and see a still image, frozen off the original

scene. Carnage. Soothing. Sunsets. Pain. Redemption. Resentment. All of these amplified by distance and compulsion. Boltanski knew what he was doing when he re-enacted / re-invented his past for the art world to see; he would trigger mine, and I fell into a reenactment of my own. Those pseudo-fossils of arcane toys were both metaphorical and prophetic, like laptops waiting to be created.

3) I had no more than two books at home: a bible and a Christian education manual for young couples. Aware of the inappropriateness of the available cultural references, when I was three years old, mum turned on the TV for the first time and taught me how to read subtitles: life on screen was The Real, in it there is no dust on top of surfaces, no loos, no dirty clothes. There you go, this is my thrill: the accidental surprise of finding a scene, but happening around me, to be present at the moment when the original from the screen was repeated in one of its (possibly) infinite versions. Each of these moments takes me back to childhood, and I have the same feeling of an endless first time repeated, through a love scene, an heroic scene, a dramatic separation or someone's death.

4) What would you like to have been your awakening this morning? Total utopia, of course. Sunshine, a world of possibilities, all exciting, all smooth rides and certainties, flowing and breathing. A merging of the bedroom and the street, woken up by friends calling from outside the window in the downtown *calle* of your choice. Replacing the morning papers with a meaningful online conversation with a stranger - logging onto chatrooms in the morning gives you a much higher chance of *getting somewhere*: the ones who are there at that particular time of day tend to be sober, and they tend to be there for a reason besides being bored or horny.

Future projects

Walking is already a part of a methodology, empirically developed from rewarding results (*but are we to say OURSELVES that we had rewarding results? SOMEONE ELSE can say that about us, but we ourselves? Yes, but it is about what we integrate in our methodology. Not the results of it are rewarding. It's the fact that there were RESULTS AT ALL, yes sure. Well, we walk now in a more methodological way, and we start subject of discussion related to work on purpose, as we found walking to be beneficial, right? Maybe we should replace REWARDING with BENEFICIAL? Beneficial is funny, it sounds like pharmacy. MAYBE WE SHOULD EVEN LEAVE THIS PARAGRAPH LIKE IT IS, with traces of how we worked in it?*) of experiments within everyday life.

Artists adapt, combine and appropriate research methodologies in unique ways. What will be the new, about-to-come approaches to art based research? Together, as we move forward, a unique perspective opens up, with moments of evaluation and exchange rather than end results. Within our integrative approach, virtual and physical appearances are planned: both in a human-controlled generative work online, through investigation into knowledge structures, finding in accident and coincidence moments of exchange with others, and within as many cultural backgrounds and environments as possible. Documenting the process helps to focus on the chosen subjects and to create modules of aesthetic research. Performance-Research in physical space will generate reflections onto the ongoing achievements and give us more opportunities to get into conversation, exchange an active audience. Performative moments do not function as result or final product but rather as tools for research throughout the process. Themes remain: social encounters, studies of narrative

− reflection through practice on Involuntary Narratives, audiovisual practice and a space of simultaneous theory-research-fiction.

Notes

1   An online version can be accessed through any of these addresses: http://eachminute.marcbehrens.com, http://parallelfutures.visual-agency.net

2   A printed version will be published in: «Sonic Ideas/Ideas Sónicas, Vol 3 No. 1», Magazine (Mexican Center for Music and Sonic Arts, CMMAS).

3   Deleuze G, Guattari F 1980. *A Thousand Plateaux*. Continuum, 2004 edition, 2010 printing: London/New York.

4   As being the case of Miller Puckette, Pure Data and Max/MSP.

5   To know more about the Holodeck, check the wiki specific to the three Star Trek series at: http://memory-alpha.org/wiki/Holodeck

6   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klein_bottle

7   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Involuntary_Narrative

THE FUTURE WILL GO BACKWARDS

Jon Wozencroft

"The future will go backwards" is a riposte to Althusser's famous work, "L'Avenir Dure Longtemps" (translated by his American publishers as "The Future Lasts Forever").

The seminar for futureplaces 2009 was a partial examination as to why the sense of the future seems to have collapsed in contemporary Western society. Recent art and music-related initiatives such as Jem Finer's "Longplayer" and Brian Eno/Stewart Brand's "Long Now Foundation" suggest that life will be STILL THERE in the year 2525.

One of Jenny Holzer's aphorisms is more succinct - "The future will be stupid". Of course, this is not the promise of the scientific and pharmaceutical sectors, who suggest 'smart drugs' and neural implants will accelerate the intelligence of the general population. So are we, in fact, going through the final process of "dumbing down" before emerging like a phoenix species from the ashes?

One of the more elliptical statements Marshall McLuhan made, "Anything you go deeply enough into, reverses", warrants closer examination.

'THE LO-FI PHENOMENON: ANALOGUE VERSUS DIGITAL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS'

Phil Taylor

This paper is written as a response to feedback and discussion following a presentation by the author at the 2009 **Future Places** Festival in Porto. The synopsis of the presentation was:

Phil Taylor will discuss the integration of constantly evolving digital media practices and applications within the creative environments of higher education, specifically focusing on moving image and video. How this medium is taught, how it is employed, and how it is perceived by both tutor and student, underpinned by the main question of what are the broader cultural implications of using contemporary digital media within the curriculum?

All the artists that were selected to present their work at the festival employ digital media as an integral component of their working methods and creative processes. The festival, jointly organised by the University of Porto and the University of Texas (Austin, USA), fo-

1. 'La Marseillaise' video & audio, 2008 ©Hotel Vitrine
2. 'Fortune' video & audio, 2009 ©Hotel Vitrine
3, 4. 'The Last Best Place' Photographic essay,
2010 ©Hotel Vitrine

cused upon the question of how digital media in the creative arts interrelates with local cultures. Heitor Alvelos (festival co-curator and head of Communication Design, University of Porto) wrote in his introduction to the 2009 event: "If digital media can do so much for global communication, knowledge and creativity, how can it contribute to local cultural development?" The array and diversity of participants in the festival is testament to the interest and relevance in this area of debate, practice and research within sociological, ethnological and pedagogic frameworks.

The paper presented was part of a one-day conference on the theme of 'creative uses of digital technology in curricular environments', relating to the broader festival theme of 'aspects and strategies of contemporary digital media and its impact on locality'.

A previous collaboration in a joint University of Brighton and Royal College of Art research project had informed the content of the paper. The project is entitled 'Bridging the Gap in Moving Image: connecting new and traditional technologies for enhanced communication between students, academic and support staff across art and design'. The three main points presented in this project were: 1) Analogue versus digital in the creative process. 2) 'Impatience' — the gap between expectations and experiences regarding the time involved in learning and teaching moving image. 3) What are the broader cultural implications of using contemporary digital media and technologies within the curriculum?

During field research for the project it became clear that the 'Lo-Fi' phenomenon within the application of analogue and digital technologies as part of the creative process was both topical and very much debated amongst staff and students alike. The single most clearly identifiable research outcome was the level of debate and multifarious points of view and opinions expressed by those involved in education as well as the professional world regarding the role of the 'analogue' in a predominantly digital world, primarily in process and method applications.

The term **'Lo-Fi'** encapsulates a complex phenomenon within the many and varied working processes that are integral to the creative outcomes within art, design and music (the term itself is a derivation from the acronym 'Hi-Fi' meaning 'High Fidelity' in music production terminology). It is commonly used to define 'low quality' in aesthetic and aural references, and in comparison to digital processes, analogue equates to low quality.

Undergraduate students at the University of Brighton, particularly those of a younger generation, are not drawn to using the latest technology in perhaps the same way that practitioners who received their degrees in the pre-digital 1980's era are? These students are not impressed by how fast something can be achieved digitally, or how efficient personal computers are today. A mention during tuition of the difficulties and long drawn out process of digitising film by harnessing the most powerful computers at that time (that cost upwards of £20K) is met with a polite indifference, as if the invention of the steam engine was being discussed in great detail. For them, today, the ease of use of digital technology and self-publishing is a given.

They have grown up with computers, they already know what the Wizard of Oz looks like, and which levers he pulls before the story begins. They are increasingly interested in the analogue, the 16mm Cine film, the old typewriter etc. At the University of Brighton there is a fully equipped traditional letterpress facility — it is one of

the most popular resources in the building with students from a variety of disciplines. In light of these findings the research generated two main questions:

/ Why are students in the creative arts currently so intrigued by 'old' technologies?

/ Do educators see a gap between the old and the new, where students do not?

Some of the answers may be found by looking away from the education environment towards popular culture and the Internet.

We all have heroes – as an undergraduate Fine Art student, mine were the filmmakers Wim Wenders, and Jim Jarmusch, and the painters Stephen Campbell and Adrian Wisniewski - AKA 'The Glasgow Boys'. The heroes my students cite today are Mike Mills, Shepard Fairy and Ed Templeton – AKA 'Beautiful Losers'. These 'non-art trained' artists represent a counter-culture phenomenon – they consume popular culture and spit it back out in a highly idiosyncratic way that utilises an eclectic array of analogue technologies and working methods, and most notably, the art of self-publishing. One can trace that line back to Andy Warhol of course, but the DIY approach to using the tools of creativity seems to resonate with our young, eclectic creative individuals today (who can all self-publish with ease).

There are no barriers to reaching a wider audience, the mass reproduction of art works and self-expression through digital technologies means that for the 'iPod' generation, the magic of the digital does not matter – the alchemy of the analogue is more unpredict-

able, and therefore more alluring. The same can perhaps be said of music and self-publishing. An iPhone App can become a self-contained digital recording studio, which can be employed with relative ease and the results uploaded to Last FM or any of the myriad of music-sharing web sites. The process is fast, professional and requires no intermediary to hinder the drive for personal self-expression that characterises the current generation of aspiring musicians. Many bands and artists utilise the digital avenues available to them to reach a wider audience yet they also adhere themselves to analogue instrumentation and working methods that are idiosyncratic and regressive when compared to heavily processed digital recording methods and music tools. There is undoubtedly a draw towards the more intimate, and perhaps authentic, relationship an artist can have with his or her music making equipment that is located within the analogue realm.

This is echoed in the creative professional world with a noticeable trend for young illustrators and filmmakers to increasingly explore analogue animation techniques that are less polished in their aesthetic qualities than CGI. The popularity of these techniques in the commercial entertainment industry is also undisputed with the recent highly successful film adaptation of Roald Dahl's book 'Fantastic Mr Fox' (directed by Wes Anderson, 2009) for example. One of the questions raised at the Porto conference was that if digital technology (over the last two decades) has increasingly precipitated a convergence of media and techniques encouraged by greater accessibility, ease of use and dissemination, why is there a currently a divergence of these in the creative and commercial world? This is evident in the contrast of Wes Anderson's Oliver Postgate style treatment of a tradi-

tional narrative for the big screen with the recent release of the games company Activision's technologically advanced digital game 'Modern Warfare 2' (2009). Both are set to be extremely popular, not just in a commercial sense, but also for their aesthetic visual styles and application of technique. Both employ narrative structure, yet one is reaching back to the analogue past and the other leaping ahead in digital super-realism.

'Impatience' is a topical term in our digital age, the (Utopian) expectation is that digital technology will help us to live our lives in a more fluid, efficient manner, thus freeing up more leisure time, whereas in reality we experience information overload via a mass of digital technologies that pervades our societies public and work spaces. During the research project a number of interviewees expressed impatience with digital technology (the 'tyranny of the email' for example) and constant pressure to upgrade and keep up to date.

Perhaps one of the reasons why art, design & music students are interested in analogue ways of working is that the software and hardware industry uses a relentless 'upgrade me' approach to sell their products – the latest version is always going to be better, faster – therefore an 'expectation' is built into the use of that product (as with new technology in a broader sense), and invariably, it will disappoint to some degree. For example, the students' real world experience of 'real-time' rendering within video editing is not 'real-time' at all .. so the expectation is not matched by the experience and impatience creeps in and alternative methods and technologies sought.

One cannot be impatient with a celluloid film inside a lightproof film camera – the medium itself has a time-delayed outcome.

As a lecturer in digital media I am not impatient with a video-ed-iting programme such as Adobe's After Effects, because I know how slow, expensive and difficult it was to create the same results fifteen years ago. But our students seem unaffected by this admiration of 'new' technology. They can, however, apply ample patience sitting in front of an old, poorly operating typewriter to achieve their as yet unresolved, unpredictable outcome that may involve 'happy accidents' along the route and a chance of alchemy.

Perhaps, for the curriculum, software and hardware manufacturers are concentrating too much on this 'upgrade me' approach, the performance of the tools, what they can do rather than what they can't do. An old film camera is challenging and perhaps arresting as part of the creative process because of its limitations – what it can't do contributes to the process and the outcome. When the Kodak Company stopped manufacturing Polaroid film in 2006 an Internet based community grew up to fill the gap in what was perceived as a worthwhile medium to continue using in creative photography; today there is a collectable status for vintage Polaroid equipment, although it is hard to use with inconsistent results the desire for the 'authentic' in the medium is driving the resurgence in interest in instant film types.

What are the **broader cultural implications** of using contemporary digital media and technologies within the curriculum?

In an age where digital self-publishing is ubiquitous, who are the arbiters of taste? Who are the gatekeepers of artistic merit? Of course there are the curators the panellists, the experts etc. But in popular culture the production and dissemination of virtual artefacts of self-expression is an exponential curve. Everyone and anyone can be an author, an artist, a musician.

What are the implications for our culture? Is this a welcome aspect of greater interconnectivity enabled by new technologies? If we look at the artists within the 'Beautiful Losers' group, despite their unconventional approach to creativity and their counter-culture stance, they all have benefitted from mass exposure via the internet and self-publishing.

The question is not whether the phenomenon it is good or bad, the question is irrelevant (that would be like imagining what our world be like without the mobile phone – impossible for the generation who have grown up with them) – it is the here and now and endemic in our lives. UK Art Schools *used* to provide favourable conditions and a fertile climate for the growth of non-conformist self-expression (witnessed by the many musicians who started their journey's in a studio of a 1960's Art School). That climatic environment has, now perhaps, moved beyond the confines of the Art School. The interconnectivity we all experience in contemporary mass culture has created a virtual habitat where distinctiveness is perhaps harder to locate, where a democracy of taste prevails, where there are 'cells of activity where distinctiveness can be found'.

When I first became interested in the emergence of the Internet and digital technology, the term 'MUD' (multi-user domains) used to intrigue me in a sociological and anthropological sense – it made me think of small communities living in mud huts, isolated from each other – the opposite of what the term means. Now, with our ability to interconnect with each other in vast virtual communities are we really any closer to each other? Is what we create more personal and authentic because we communicate and self-publish with ease?

Mike Mills produced a T-Shirt in the early stage of his (what now can be defined as) career that had the phrase: *"Fight against the rising tide of conformity"* printed on it. This image can be downloaded an infinite number of times from his web site.

Most of the 'Beautiful Losers' artists are now very well known and are regularly commissioned to produce high-profile advertising campaigns (Fairey created the Obama election image). The irony is that a major contributing factor to their notoriety is that they all exploited digital self-publishing, despite employing working methods and resulting artworks that are very definitely 'analogue' and non-conformist. This would suggest there is an intriguing contradiction and dilemma in this phenomenon. Many artists and designers are immersed in digital technology, if not in the creation of their work, then its dissemination. But because 'anyone can do it', there is no distinctiveness, no gatekeepers and no rebels, because the medium is ubiquitous - it is not edited, curated or selective. This is one of the main challenges for the Creative Arts and Industries operating in the new digital millennium.

Phil Taylor © 2010. Phil Taylor is an Educator, Artist and Musician based in Brighton, UK.

www.hotelvitrine.com
http://artsresearch.brighton.ac.uk/research/academic/taylor_phil/
http://www.atomgrad.co.uk

THE

OUTHOUSE

by Tara Prowse, Brian Cohen & Mandy Field

Long Drop. Dunny. Biffy. Thunderbox. These are all Australian terms for the place where some of our best thinking is done - in the Outhouse. A participatory research tool and interactive art installation, the Outhouse turns the old style photo booth on its head by replacing it with custom built digital media technology.

The booth is made from four doors that form a cabin. All four doors are open when the user approaches, it resembles an unmade box. When

they are ready or choose to participate, they must create their own privacy, by closing each of the doors. Any door in, but one door out.

Once inside users are presented with six open questions which act as prompts. Each one is in an ornate picture frame. On the reverse side of each frame is a follow up question designed to unpack the response from the first question.

The user is then presented with two choices- push the red button to record a private testimonial, or push the green button to risk comfort & anonymity by triggering a live public broadcast. The feed is sent to a projector which is trained on the largest building or wall in the vicinity. Although no one can see you, you are being watched. Outhouse is where the accidental pedestrian can close the door to the outside world whilst sitting in the midst of it.

Project Background

In late 2008 TRAX was at the tail end of a long term arts project[1] and reflecting on its engagement process. During this time, TRAX workers had consulted hundreds of people across the community in a Creative Community Consultation[2]. Despite gaining the deep trust of many community members, who shared personal & community stories during the course of garnering a super-narrative, there was a pervasive feeling that our presence as cultural investigators and artists in a sensitive community environment, was directly influencing whether or not information was shared and the subsequent shape it took. The lack of privacy that came with the territory of utilising new digital media as a medium, was also an ensuing issue.

Our subsequent community-based art project was to be in a very remote town with a small population. Understanding that trust is a precious resource, it was necessary to find a way in which local people could share community stories. A comfortable private cabin-like space, free of prying eyes was envisaged. Here they would be able to respond to a series of non-prescriptive talking-prompts which triggered memories and could spark narrative hints that might be later followed up for creative input to a broader piece of artistic work.

Thus began the life of the *Outhouse* - part participatory research tool, part interactive art installation that serves to engage communities through narrative enquiry. People are invited inside a booth, which resembles the size and shape of an outhouse, to record testimonials via a video camera embedded in the wall of the booth. From a series of questions the participant is prompted to respond in narrative form to topics or questions that have been specifically designed to address a relevant topic or issue of interest.

Between August and October 2009 the Outhouse was developed in consultation with the community, in the remote town of Ivanhoe, Central Darling Shire (CDS), NSW, Australia. It formed part of a 2 year cross art-form project; a collaboration between Melbourne-based arts company TRAX, Outback Theatre for Young People[3] and West Darling Arts[4]. The project aimed to engage young people, and through them the broader community, in a process of creative enquiry that produced a theatre show and multimedia installation.

The Outhouse as an idea and process was picked up by CAMRA, a major Australian Research Council project working in the CDS. CAMRA[5] aims to develop sustainable models of data collection and documentation that map local cultural industries and cultural assets, in order to better inform policy and local planning. CAMRA

became interested in how the Outhouse could serve as an innovative tool for community consultation and data collection, in relation to the aims and objectives of the CAMRA project in CDS and subsequently commissioned TRAX to complete this scoping study.

In October 2009, the Outhouse travelled to the Future Places Festival[6] in Portugal, a festival which aimed to showcase *"A series of exhibitions & events that address the potential and impact of digital media on local cultures"* where it collected first prize and TRAX was awarded a three month residency at the University of Austin, Texas.

"Using an outhouse to serve as a semi-public video confessional booth, this project redefines society's last bastion of privacy and intimacy. Equipped with four doors in but only one door out, this project is not just a humorous gimmick but it is a serious tool for enhancing the knowledge, development and preservation of community. Combining innovation, creativity, originality, and digital technology, Outhouse unites yesterday and today in a way that cuts to the heart of the ongoing mission of the Future Places Festival."

Outhouse, First Prize Winner, Future Places Festival 2009, Porto, Portugal

Methodology & Cultural Theory

Where does the Outhouse sit in current thinking?

The Outhouse positions itself at the forefront of current innovation in community-based art practice that values people as agents in their own research. It facilitates participatory data collection and uses non-traditional qualitative methods that focus on narrative and open-ended storytelling. The user controls their own interaction with the booth and it requires as much creative thinking from the user as it did from the designers.

Practice-based Research

I never made a painting as a work of art, it's all research. – Pablo Picasso

Creative thinking can be defined as a way of seeing and acting in the world that values lateral problem solving, the discovery of new ideas or new associations from existing concepts. The process and the products of this creativity are often considered to have both originality and appropriateness[7]. The function of creative thinking and the arts in a social research context means that fun, beauty and aesthetics are *incentives to participation* in an activity that has broader significance. Thus for a research tool to think beyond its core function of data gathering, means considering actually how it is perceived & appreciated, how it relates to the user, as well as its core functionality.

Arts-based research, or a research approach to artistic practice, has become a place of innovation and contention. New inter-disciplinary methodologies of qualitative data collection have been developed through form-based artistic and community initiatives. It is here, in this nexus between social research and participatory art, that the Outhouse lies. The form and thinking behind its design and purpose takes inspiration from a growing number of multi-disciplinary arts organisations[8] and who ensure their work is collaborative and partnership based, engaging with research and higher education organisations to develop outcomes that increase the impact and relevance of the work, beyond either specifically the academic or arts fields[9] and that seek to permeate the perceived boundaries between such organisations.

In discussing arts organisations as potential research vehicles, Thelwall identifies that cross-sectoral partnerships between Higher

Education institutions and Arts Organisations are extremely important in diversifying and strengthening the research base[10]. Rather than weaken or dilute scientific or academic approaches to questions, the diversity brought by these partnerships, encourages a trans-disciplinary approach that draws on new methods, based in 'real world' contexts as opposed to a lab-type setting.

Cross- disciplinary partnerships are one of the core elements in community-based arts practice. The Outhouse is a direct product of partnerships between the arts, community, education institutions and local government. Such relationships have the potential to lend themselves to the development of a new kind of research language, where contributions to theories and practice are informed by this diverse range of partners[11]. And here, in the context of the Outhouse and this scoping study commissioned by CAMRA, the relationship may also be seen to add value to the work of each partner interdependently.

The Outhouse as a piece of participatory installation art, can then be posited as an example of *practice-based* research, because the "*creative artifact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge*"[12] and the subsequent research generated seeks to add to a shared store of knowledge that prioritizes processes rather than just outcomes.[13]/[14] Community-based arts practice also shares many of these same aspirations; the *process* of producing an outcome is prioritized as a period of 'research' or understanding. In many ways this period is 'required' as it is seen as giving authenticity or value to the outcome. This ensures that the results have a strong research foundation, i.e. the content that is gathered is deemed important and seeks to contribute to beyond-arts research aims,[15] such as public policy or cultural discourse.

Person- Centered Research

However, practice-based research does not yet appear to be the mainstream view. The more traditional paradigm is examined by Douglas and Moustakas[16] who analyze qualitative research methods (the arena in which the arts typically functioned[17]) against the more traditional empirical paradigm, to evaluate the effectiveness of a practice-based research approach. Their findings showed that empirical research investigates a presupposed cause and effect relationship, whereas heuristic research revealed the nature and meaning of the phenomenon itself – giving it value and measure beyond direct first-person experience. So, while empirical research encourages a detachment from the subject, an heuristic approach supports the development of relationships and connection, allowing the subject to remain visible in the data.

In this way, the Outhouse's use of individual, private space and a narrative approach to data collection can be seen as an example of a research focus that is person-centred or heuristic. Here, "*one seeks to obtain qualitative depictions that are at the heart of a person's experience – depictions of situations, events, conversations, relationships, feelings, thoughts, values and beliefs,*"[18] where storytelling is the method of synthesizing memories and lived experience as valuable and relevant data.

We could also perhaps take this a step further, and say that perhaps the Outhouse finds value in respect to ideas of 'performative' (or embodied) research[19], especially if the research generated by the Outhouse (or in a broader context by community-based arts) is 'presentational' in form[20]. In this third category of research (alongside qualitative and quantitive) the data "*works performatively - it not only expresses the*

research, but in that expression becomes the research itself". Hence the act of *us-ing* the Outhouse (or participating in its performance) is experiential and in itself places *"personal narrative as situated practice"*[21].

Storytelling as Data

Narrative is the lens through which humans process the information we encounter, be it cultural, emotional, experiential, or political. [22]

The form of narrative, or more loosely 'storytelling', has a ena-bling role in contributing to a community's ability to express person-al experiences and individual perceptions, and therefore to contrib-ute to research that affects their future. The Outhouse encourages participation by way of recounting of stories, though open ended questions that invite responses that may be interpreted through the research framework. What is valuable or important about storytell-ing as data?

It highlights what is valued, and the contexts in which the values are embedded e.g. family, local community, past experiences.

Stories describe a sense of knowing — intergenerational, lo-cal, regional, national, global.

Narrative provides subtle insights that quantitative re-search cannot fulfill alone.

Methods of questioning can encourage more detail, and a layered response, giving multi-layered data.

Stories *personalise* history and events.

The value of understanding a context (or research question) through the act of telling a story has significant place in the commu-nity development and international development fields, where nar-rative and storytelling is increasingly being used as a 'methodology' in both theoretical and practical terms[23].

The Outhouse also values storytelling as data that may poten-tially contribute to broader research, such as policy or cultural man-agement. However, the process by which the Outhouse encourag-es storytelling, values the *creative act* of telling a story in and of itself (creative activity), as opposed to the story merely being the vehicle through which the data is elicited (research activity). Open-ended questions draw out deeper answers and the fact that the participant can engage with previously recorded stories, enables reflection on the process in a way that means the participants decide exactly *what* is valuable.

The benefits of extending the concept of storytelling beyond a 'research tool' again highlights the use (and potential) of the arts in contributing to a more in-depth experience of a research proc-ess, where the individual is valued not solely for the useful informa-tion they may elicit, but also for their innate creative ability, where they are considered participants in the future path of the research as much as agents of this research.

**The Outhouse:** 1st Prize @ futureplaces 2009

Notes

1 TRAX ran The Market Value Project in the Preston Market, Melbourne, Victoria for 2 years from 2007 until January 2009

2 see p. 8 for definitions.

3 http://www.outbacktheatre.com/

4 http://www.westdarlingarts.org.au/

5 http://www.culturemap.org.au.html

6 http://colab.ic2.utexas.edu/futureplaces/

7 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creativity

8 http://proboscis.org.uk/ and http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/bt/index.php are key examples here.

9 Thelwall, S. "*Cultivating Research: Articulating value in arts and academic collaborations*", in *Cultural Snapshots (*16) London: Proboscis, 2009, p. 4

10 Thelwall, S. "*Cultivating Research: Articulating value in arts and academic collaborations*", in *Cultural Snapshots (*16) London: Proboscis, 2009, p. 9

11 Thelwall, S. "*Cultivating Research: Articulating value in arts and academic collaborations*", in *Cultural Snapshots (*16) London: Proboscis, 2009, p. 4

12 http://www.creativityandcognition.com/content/view/124/131, accessed 16.50 on 31.3.2010

13 http://www.creativityandcognition.com/content/view/123/131/, accessed 22.33 on31.3.2010

14 Perhaps this process is more commonly recognised in the 'hard sciences' where trial, error and process make up a large part of the story of the outcome, or result.

15 http://www.vca.unimelb.edu.au/ccpabout/

16 Douglas, B.G. & Moustakas, C. "Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know." Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 1985, 25(3), p. 43

17 http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Practice-based+research:+Tracking+creative+creat ures+in+a+research...-a0212544736, accessed 00.05 on 1.4.2010

18 Moustakas, C. Heuristic Research: design, methodology, and applications. Newbury Park: Sage Productions, 1990, p. 38

19 Haseman, B. 2006. A manifesto for performative research. Media international Australia, 118:98-106, Feb. (http://eprints.qut.edu.au/3999/1/3999_1.pdf)

20 i.e it "*deploys symbolic data in the material forms of practice; forms of still and moving images; forms of music and sound; forms of live action and digital code*" http://eprints.qut.edu.au/3999/1/3999_1.pdf, p. 5

21 http://eprints.qut.edu.au/3999/1/3999_1.pdf, p. 7

22 [24]http://smartmeme.org/article.php?id=283, accessed 6.2.2010

23 Clandinin, J & Connelly, M; Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research, San Francisco, 2000, 98-115
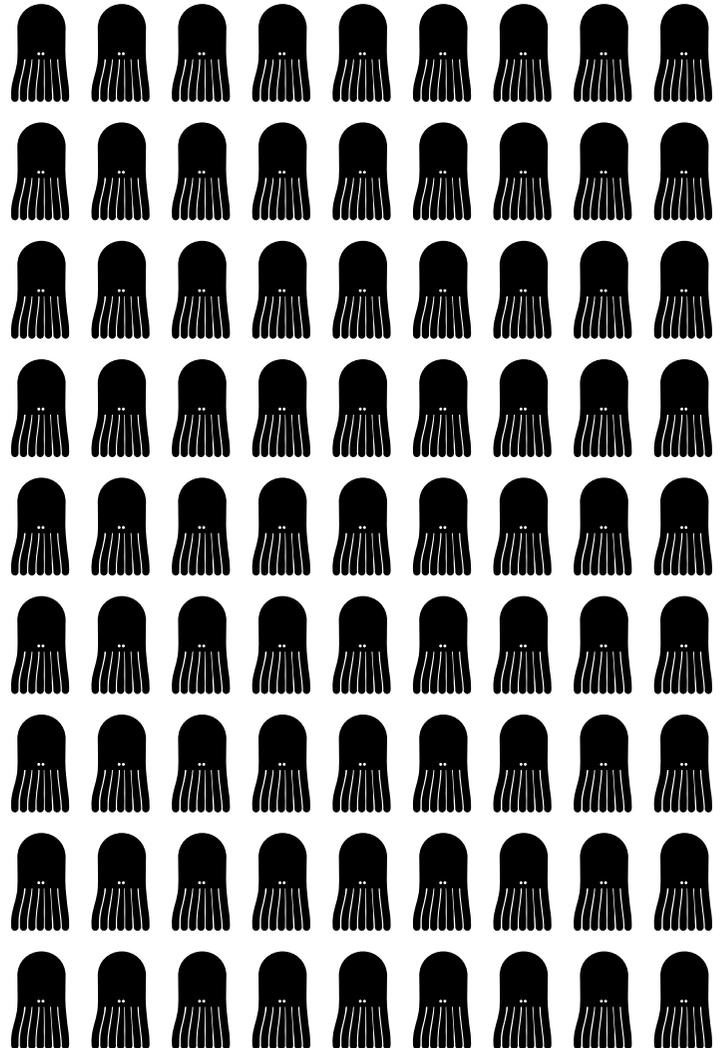
T R A N S H U M A N C E

Community-driven Flash Mob by Manuela
São Simão and Joana Mateus. Words by
Pedro Lopes and Manuela São Simão.

Transhumance[1] is a multidisciplinary work — a synergy between visual and sound artists, focusing performance and relational/social studies — that was presented as a fifteen minute flash-mob /public performance in the historical heart of Porto, at Praça dos Leões.

The project is a living structure, designed to convey a social message around the metaphors of "flock of sheep"[2] and the "transhumance" itself, as movement or interaction between communities - "Art then becomes communication. Intercommunication"[1].

The project started early, with two parallel work platforms: an open call, for the general audience, and the sound-design. For the latest, sessions of field recording were conducted by musician and sound artist, Luís Antero. Collecting sounds of sheep in various contexts (inside the corral, with the flock, individually) that would ultimately, give us enough audio material to create an audio piece, solely with sheep-related sounds.

On the theatrical layer, our "performing sheep" would play a decisive role in the presentation at the Future Places festival. The individuals that responded to the open call, formed a small community which worked closely with the mentors of Transhumance, exploring and creating a script for the public act. The group worked around the given metaphors, using the body as a mean to express their own social and political voice, ideals and thoughts – personal means political, was a motto of the group sessions.

Society, often, makes us follow trends or mobs[2]. Superimposing a global attitude on the sole individual. Therefore, we explored the possibilities offered by digital-processing of sheep sounds with noisy effects (reducing quality, forcing distortion and feedbacks), metaphorically liberating the human-communities of these social pressures[3]. The audio piece was improvised live, being projected from a hidden balcony of the University of Porto's rectorate building, driven by a thousand watt power and micro-FM transmission. Distributing the "sound" in an FM way, acts as an open-democratic way of enabling the audience to hear the sound-mutated-sheep. Hundreds of small FM receivers, were handed freely to the audience that gathered around the fountain of Praça dos Leões, as soon as the sheep sound spread through the air.

The flash mob was organized in three main stages, each itself a metaphor for the aforementioned concepts, being:

zero: radio broadcasting of sheep calling.

one: slow-motion actions of the performers, towards the fountain - sound thickens.

two: the selected actions begin to increase in both speed and intensity, so does the sound, gradually processed with more complex layers of real-time manipulation.

three: "The Sheep Mob", individual actions are no longer distinguishable from the group actions. Likewise, the pure sound of sheep is no longer distinguishable from the over saturated noise. Performers from the accompanying group are no longer distinguishable from the people that gathered around and entered the performance by their own means.

Transhumance strongly refers to relational and community, it was fundamental that, the access to this work was extended as further as possible to the surrounding physical communities (Porto inhabitants) and digital communities (such as the World Wide Web). Therefore, Radio Futura[4] broadcast the entire performance to the city of Porto, as captured in real-time by a microphone in the action place. Furthermore, on a worldwide scale, a web stream was hosted at Rádio Zero, to ensure that anyone could openly connect to this happening. The project was conducted by visual artists Manuela São Simão and Joana Mateus, in collaboration with musicians Luís Antero (field recordings) and Pedro Lopes (sound manipulation), choreographer Daniel Pinheiro and the community of Porto, whom we kindly thank.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] Transhumance is the seasonal movement of people with their livestock over relatively short distances, typically to higher pastures in summer and to lower valleys in winter.

[2] In the English language, a group of sheep is called a flock, herd or mob – thus extending our decision to create a "flash mob" around these concepts..

[3] Here we draw inspiration from Attali's concept of "mass production" of music, the "silence of the masses" in [2] and from Heidegger's rationale: "Hearing to ...is Daisen's existential way of Being-open as being-with for Others" in [3].

[4] Radio Futura is a project by Portuguese Radio Zero that hosted a 3-day nonstop radio station, dedicated to radio-art, during the Future Places 2009.

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[2] Attali, J. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music,* University of Minnesota Press, 1985

[3] Heidegger, M., *Being and Time,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1962
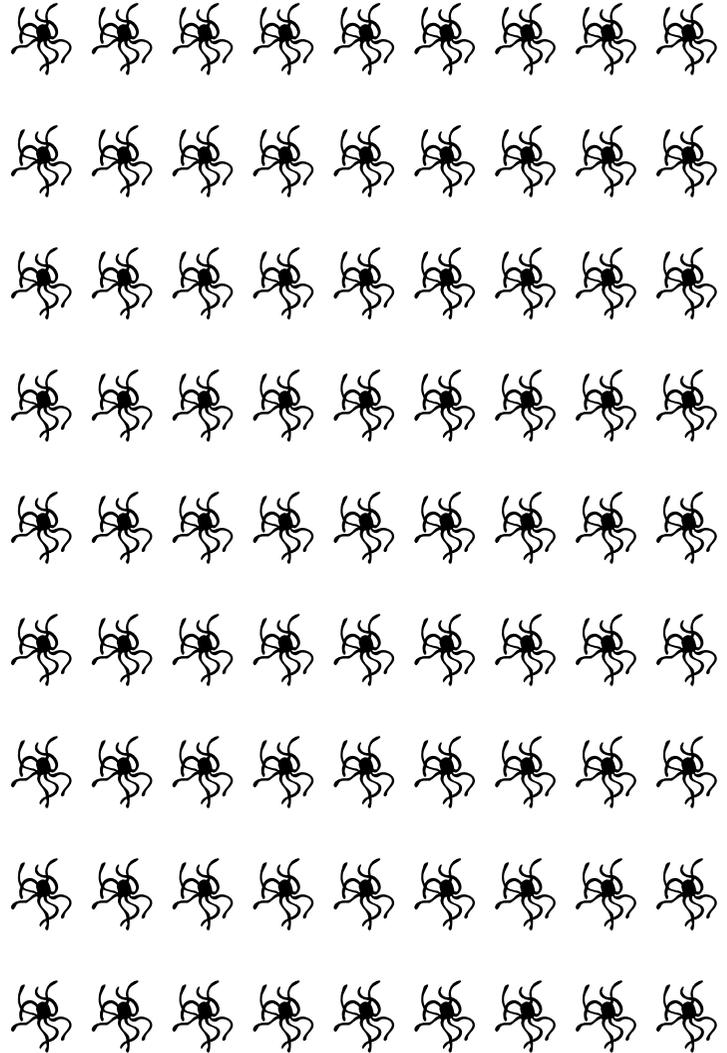
WIKIMAP GALICIA CULTURE

Silvia García González

The presentation of the Wikimap project at the Futureplaces festival was an excellent opportunity to exchange impressions with specialised international researchers. Wikimap is a research project based on the creation of an interface to consult documentary materials and was generated by the DX7 research group from the University of Vigo. It is a valuable documentary source as it includes interviews with people from fields like fashion and video who are all too often left on the fringe of the cultural analyses of Galicia in the 1980's.

Wikimap Galicia Culture aims to build a map of cultural production in Galicia. We define a timeframe centered in the context of artistic production in the 1980s, paying special attention to predominant cultural forms in those years: Fashion, video, photography. The goal of wikimap Galicia Culture is the creation of a cultural atlas of Galicia based on a graphical interface.

Our research has produced various PhD theses among group members, although we think that the Wikimap project has led other researchers to keep on working based on new analyses of the documentary sources gathered. We also think that the University should

make its achievements in the field of research more visible, because academic merit and praise from specialists should not eclipse the need for society to become aware of the complexity of the processes the University is involved in. We also hope that this first contact bears fruit in future collaboration with Portuguese and American researchers.

Silvia García González. DX7 Group. Faculty of Fine Arts. University of Vigo

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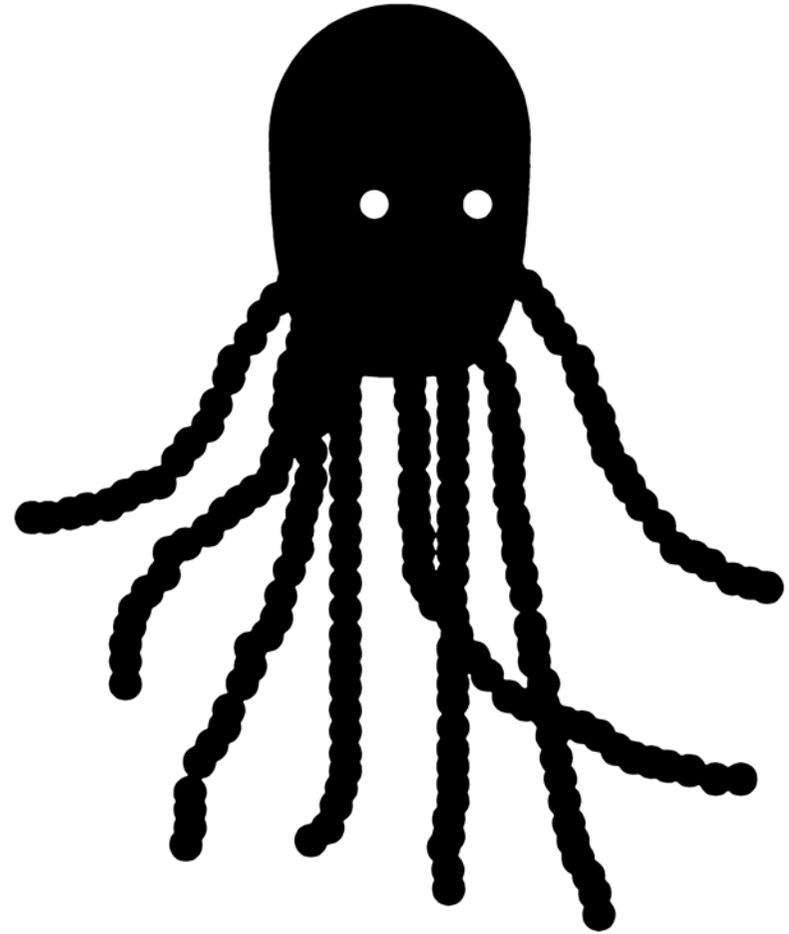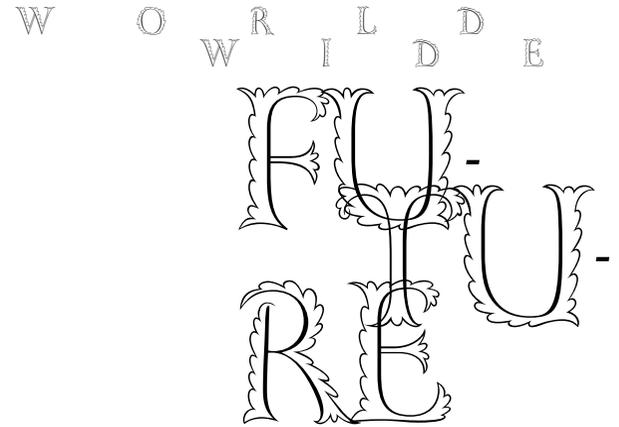
Fátima São Simão

Our lives have expanded due to increasing use of Digital Media. A whole new dimension of reality is now available virtually to everyone, increasing opportunities and threats for people. On its basis is information. Loads of data for one to absorb at the expense of time. Precious time, that is limited and which value, therefore, keeps increasing[1].

The world is not faster or smaller. But, through this new powerful tool – Digital Media, we are more aware of its size and pace. If we want, we can now perceive the world much better (which doesn't necessarily mean knowing or understanding it…). And be more and more conscious about our local circumstances.

Yet, human beings cannot assimilate and process the huge amounts of information available, exponentially growing every sec-

ond. People cannot become experts on manipulating every gadget or content. It is beyond human capability to do so. So we feel cramped, frustrated, anxious that we cannot keep up with the new life rhythm. We are too busy trying to manage our time, trying to live the present. No space left to prospect the future.

We are adapting to the new era. And this means, above all, understanding our new limits[2]. We need to educate ourselves and to recognize what is really important to us alone and what is our role in this new networked world. And the best way to do so is to meet others and share experiences, concerns, desires. In this worldwide digital surplus and randomness, we need to look for the real specific physical places that mean something to us and establish real relationships that confirm and sustain the (possibly) fragile virtual connections. We need to feel home and to feel each other through all our senses. We need to carry on inspiring and be inspired, to touch and be touched.

Futureplaces is a privileged site of meaningful inspiration and sharing, where people and ideas met, adding value and possibilities of development to them and to the places they (will) influence. futureplaces is a home, a place where people can build together our worldwide future.

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2   Douglas Rushkoff, "Programme or Be Programmed: 10 commands for a Digital Age", presentation at SXSW Interactive 2010, March 12, 2010; podcast: http://audio.sxsw.com/2010/podcasts/Interactive/2010-03-12/Program-or-be-Programmed-Ten-

Commands-for-a-Digital-Age.mp3

WRITTEN EUROPE AND CIUDAD ESCRITA : COLLECTIVE RESEARCH AND CREATION PROJECTS ON SIGNS IN PUBLIC SPACES

THE ROLE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IN OPENING CREATIVE SPACES FOR COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL NEW PROPOSALS

Belén González Riaza

A city is a fast changing and huge object of study that can be very

well approached by the wide collective research that only internet and the new technologies make possible.

Also, in trying to find the most specific characteristics of local city graphics in a city or country, it becomes very useful to compare the different ways we have written our public spaces in the past years until now: styles, type, colors, materials and reasons for writing around the world. We can discover a lot about ourselves as well as learn from the other cities.

From this research on what makes each place different from all the others, we learn and try to design new alternative graphics that have a memory of who we are but are also related to our present and anticipate the future.

These new graphics, experiments designed and reviewed by a collective mind, try to open new ways of communicating, considering many essential new subjects: sustainability, interaction, flexibility, usability, accessibility, respect for local cultures, etc.

New signs have to help us in our activities, to express each city and place history, identity and structure, to consider the need of individuals or small groups interaction and expression, to explore new ways and meanings for social communication and community development, besides institutional messages or advertising.

Reinforcing the spatial structure and visual identity of a city and opening spaces for creative activities not only improves the quality of life of its inhabitants but it also has economic and social benefits and it is important to promote the image of the city and its recognition in this competitive world.

It is possible to use new technologies to preserve our memory and our graphic patrimony and to think about and propose a new and improved future in the area we work at: graphic environment for our public spaces.

This is what we have been trying to do and want to keep doing with our collective research projects: *Written Europe* and *Ciudad Escrita*.

In October 2009 we had the chance of being invited to *Future Places* by Heitor Alvelos, to present the projects we have lead so far and now we are trying to start a new project on graphics in public spaces around the world.

It is amazing that in this time when graphics become more and more similar in all our cities and local cultures are threatened by the invasion of uniform styles, one of the main tools of the globalisation process could become one to try to find and keep the most special characteristics that make each city a place different from all the others: we use internet and our interactive websites to try to do so.

Our first project was called *Written Europe*.

Art and Graphic Design schools from Amsterdam, Madrid, Praga and Riga collaborated for three years working on one subject each year: *Written Streets* for the first year, *Written People and Things* for the second one and *Global, Common, Local* for the third.

Each year began with a research on the proposed subject and then we made many creative proposals for alternative graphics for our cities.

The tool that made possible to get to know other partners, to keep contact and show the project results was written europe interactive website. Teachers uploaded information and assignements. Each student uploaded his or her picture, data and work.

Besides the unavoidable English as common language, the website used Dutch, Spanish, Czech and Latvian to introduce partners, schools and projects.

We took pictures of streets signs, writings in cemeteries, people´s favourite t-shirts and tattoos, identity signs on cities, bodies and things, and we proposed other ways of writing them, other kind of signs we would like to see around.

Internet was the virtual public space where we met to work and to exhibit our results.

We think that this awareness on the social role of graphic design should be an important part of a future designer education.

Written Europe was a european educative project under the Socrates program, that took place from 2002 to 2005 and that was selected as one of the best 20 educative projects of all Europe between 2000 and 2007. It was published and presented as *Success Story* in Berlin during the launchment of *Lifelong Learning Programme* of the European Union. The Escuela de Arte Diez de Madrid, received the *Premio a la Excelencia Europea* because of this project.

As other people outside the educative context wanted to join the project, we started Ciudad Escrita, a collective project open to all the actors that have the power of really changing the graphics of our cities: designers, digital media experts, artists, professional associations, administrative and political entities, etc.

Ciudad escrita has organised several events like *Tapas Tipográficas*, a typographic walk along Madrid bars that had two characteristics: tapas and old signs. it was the closing act for the *II Congreso de Tipografía* in Madrid, in June 2007.

The project was also part of the opening exhibition of a new cultural centre: the Central de Diseño in Matadero Madrid.

These two last years we made a project with the students of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Madrid of an old and very interracial neigh-

bourhood in Madrid: *Written Lavapiés*.

The students redesigned shop fronts and proposed graphic interventions to interact with the people there.

We are now preparing a new international project with universities and schools from several countries, including the School of Fine Arts of University of Porto. In this new project we want to include as many social actors as possible and to work closely with local organisations and communities to get a deep understanding of the place characteristics and inhabitants needs.

Any individual or institution interested in joining us, can send a message to info@ciudad-escrita.org

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