



ANAT MAGAZINE

:: Joystick Cinema

:: Can games ever be documentary?

:: The Invisible City

:: Spotlight on Troy Innocent

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TEXT://REBECCA CANNON

ANAT is very pleased to have as special Guest Editor for this issue of *Filter*, Rebecca Cannon. Based in Melbourne, Rebecca is engaged with a diverse range of emerging digital media practices. With a particular interest in computer games as an artform, software licensing and censorship we knew that Rebecca would put together a great issue of *Filter*.

Rebecca has commissioned a fantastic selection of articles that explore the interest that Australian artists have in subverting and diverting game culture. Computer games as art has developed into a prominent genre in its own respect with much interest both in Australia and internationally. Recent events such as dlux Media Art's *Plaything*, the Nova Media event *Gametime* and Next Wave *Free Play* highlight the imaginative and critical approach that artists are taking towards gaming. ANAT would like to thank Rebecca for putting together such a strong issue of *Filter* that will no doubt contribute to the ongoing debate about computer games as art.

Sadly, this will be my last introduction to the *Filter* magazine, as I will be leaving ANAT in July 2005. After five years in the Executive Director's Chair, it's time to move on and hand the mantle on to another Director. I have very much enjoyed working with ANAT and have worked with many fantastic artists during my time here. ANAT is a small organisation yet its impact is felt far and wide. It has been a pleasure to lead the organisation and to see it grow over the last five years. Together with a team of fabulous staff members, I have been able to develop a range of programs that have supported both emerging and established artists.

We have established many new partnerships and networks across the cultural sector, science, digital media, education and other industries and have created opportunities for diverse individuals and organisations to work together. The field of art, science and technology and new media arts is incredibly vital and dynamic in Australia and some of our most interesting and visionary artists are working in the field. New media artists are incredibly resourceful and tenacious and despite recent changes at the Australia Council and the dismantling of the New Media Arts Board the field will continue to develop and flourish.

I would very much like to thank the staff and Board of ANAT whom I have worked with over the last five years and in particular ANAT Chairs Vicki Sowry, Kate Richards, Caroline Farmer and Linda Carroli. I would also like to thank our funding bodies Arts SA and New Media Arts Board of the Australia Council and in particular Alex Hurford and Andrew Donovan for their ongoing support of and commitment to ANAT.

I look forward to continuing dialogues and working relationships with ANAT members, new media artists and colleagues. My next 'project' is curating Artists' Week for the Adelaide Festival 2006, so I look forward to seeing many of you in Adelaide in March next year and at future new media arts events!

Julianne Pierce
Executive Director, ANAT



Australia's peak network and advocacy body
for artists working with science and technology

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THE ART OF BREAKING THE RULES

WRITTEN BY REBECCA CANNON



✘ RULE 1:
Adults do not play games, therefore Australia does not require an adult rating on computer games, and any game requiring an adult rating will be automatically banned in Australia.

+ GAME HINT:
Breaking this rule requires supporting the Electronic Frontiers of Australia in their efforts to 'protect and promote on-live civil liberties', by amending current OFLC games censorship legislation to provide a desperately needed Adult computer game rating, and a better understanding of intellectual genres of computer games such as conceptual, literary, educational and documentary. In doing so we might hope that Kirsty Baird's educational documentary game *Street Survivor*, will not be banned before reaching its target audience: teens at risk of homelessness - unlike the game *NARC*, which also incorporates drug use as an element of game play, and as a result was banned in Australia before it was even completed. <http://www.efa.org.au/>

✘ RULE 2:
According to Microsoft's Chief Strategist, releasing source code into the public domain is "unhealthy", causes security risks and "as history has shown, while this type of model may have a place, it isn't successful in building a mass market and making powerful, easy-to-use software broadly accessible to consumers."

+ GAME HINT:
Linus Torvald's revolutionary operating system Linux has provided millions of software consumers with a stable, secure, reliable alternative to Microsoft's software oligopoly. Richard Stallman's ground breaking Free Software Foundation has developed a legally binding GNU licensing alternative to the traditional, limited notions of Copyright and software patenting. These and other efforts of the open source community have resulted in valuable applications such as Open Office (Office suite), Inknote (Illustrator), Gimp (Photoshop), Blender (3D modeller), Ogre (3D engine), Python (media-based scripting language), allowing game developers and modders to produce new, inventive and robust games and game-based artworks. With the freedom to edit open sourced game wares and generally experiment with code innovation, artists Julian Oliver and Pix have been able to develop internationally applauded experimental virtual environments like *fjuu*. Importantly, this provides any artists who are interested in using their tools with a free, new locale for extensible collaborations / permutations / and unions in live 3D audio-visual performance.

✘ RULE 3:
Capitalism is the only sustainable economy.

+ GAME HINT:
Mixed Economies are set to become the Industrial Revolution of the 21st Century. Adopted no where else as fervently as within the independent computer games market, a Mixed Economy which allows Free Market exchange whilst valuing the long term sustainability of Fair Trade practices, is rapidly being identified as a profitable method for increasing product longevity. First recognised by early game developers, this hybrid market has already spread to the clothing and food production industries. One of the first, most powerful examples of an intelligent Fair Trade / Free Market economy, was the release of Valve Studios' commercial Half Life code. This open sorcery saw a resurrection of interest in the game, as players warmed to the abundance of new maps and scenarios that were quickly available in the modding community. Not only did this technique extend the shelf life of the product, it also produced a highly skilled, unpaid workforce who generated new games of such high quality that their work could be bought back by Valve and re-released as commercial products in their own right.


✘ RULE 4:
Games are not art.

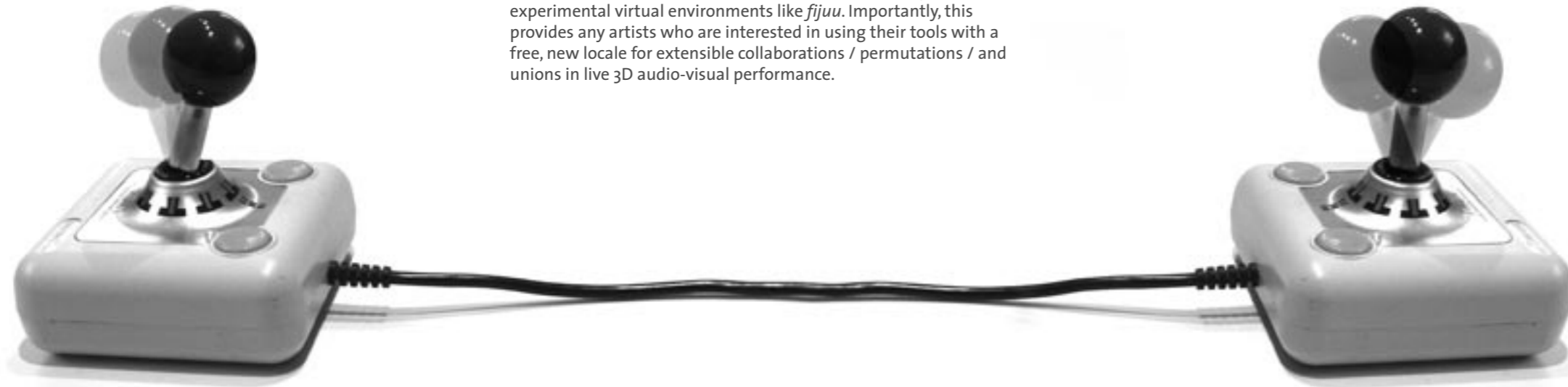
+ GAME HINT:
Despite the Australian government's naivety towards the digital arts, our arts culture is respectably the greatest supporter of computer games as a significant, digital art form. We spawned the first online archive of art games (<http://www.selectparks.net>). We can boast the first public library with an accessible collection of computer games (<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/visiting/spaces/experimedia>). We are proudly home to the world's first permanent, dedicated museum for exploring game culture (http://www.acmi.net.au/games_lab.jsp). We instigated the world's most genuine, independent games developers conference (<http://www.free-play.org/>). And we have provided a cultural environment in which the largest collection of artists working in this field can produce the most innovative games and game-based artworks.

Unfortunately, given the latest strange twists in public funding for computer games, (where dollars are now only going to projects which can prove they don't actually need it; by having already sold their product to a distributor) of our most experimental and innovative games, few will see the light of post-demo production. Significantly, most of the artists who have produced these experimental demos have left for foreign shores, where they may be freed of insanely high tax rates, and yet still receive a professional level of funding to continue their current games research full time.

✘ RULE 5:
The Rules cannot be broken.

+ GAME HINT:
You only play life once; write your own rules.

 Rebecca Cannon is an Australian digital media artist, curator and writer with a keen interest in computer games as an art form, the politics of software licensing, censorship, and freedom of information. She currently curates the online archive of art games, Selectparks, works in research and development at Ericsson, and enjoys curating and editing cultural projects in her spare time. <http://www.neopoetry.org/rebecca/>





→ The following article about the influence of game engines on contemporary, experimental cinema can be summarised in two points:

1. Although frequently typecast as a jungle of flickering light sabres, the ecology of possible moving image actually covers a much vaster, mostly unexplored terrain.
2. Game-buffs tend to be corruptible, ultra-violent gang-members, and they are busily hacking away at this terrain.

WHY YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID

→ Beyond the multiplex galaxies, moving images roam freely in a wild variety of configurations - from backyard projections to live-edited, multi-screen, immersive environments; audience triggered, site-based installations; net-native video remixes; and the motion blur of pixels on handhelds. Handhelds in particular however, allow game-buffs to gather as gangs at night, despite the brutal link between on and off screen violence, and taunt wayward cinema goers with lines like 'Our empire is bigger than Hollywood'. Trouble is, while the oft-repeated fallacy about games outselling movies doesn't consider the full economic reach of cinema (ticket sales, DVDs, TV sales, etc), game culture has undeniably infiltrated the very production and distribution of the moving image.

→ In other words, some of the more adventurous hacking of new cinematic terrain just happens to be by game-engine-fuelled auteurs who are uniquely interrogating just what, where and how the moving image might be. Appalled cinema scholars at this point may choose to change pages (it was all a dream), rewind the tape - or insert another coin.

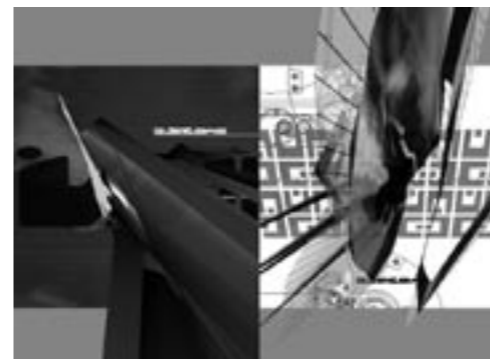
ENGINE MECHANICS

→ Fans of music that is glitchy, textural, stutter-core - married with wildly deconstructing 3D graphics, will love the possibilities suggested by the audiovisual tool *fijuu*. *fijuu* is an impressive 3D, audiovisual performance engine built by Pix & Julian Oliver, Aussie ex-pats new-media slumming it in Europe. *fijuu* allows dynamic manipulation of 3D instruments using Playstation2 style gamepads to make improvised music - which, combined with the tightly synchronised motion graphics and spatial explorations, forms a highly compelling and unusual audiovisual experience. And at the bleeping heart of *fijuu*? - the open source game engine *Nebula* running on Linux.

→ "During performance, you quickly start to think in terms of the sound and the image and not the interface in between," explains Julian, who also helps maintain the game portal selectparks.net. "Game interfaces are designed to be somewhat transparent, and when you are very involved in a game you don't think of yourself as moving a stick or pressing a button on a gamepad, but in terms of the game you are playing - running, jumping, etc." Building a live audiovisual composition and musical tool has brought unusual challenges, but also delivers unusual rewards.



↑ Images from fijuu system



↑ Images from fijuu system

→ "There is little in the way of 'visual meaning' in *fijuu*, more hedonistic splashes of happy coincidences that produce sensorial indiscrete experiences. We rely quite heavily on the graphics to motivate improvisation. When attention is focused on one aspect, you will often have your attention snared by an unintentional discovery in the other."

→ *fijuu* will eventually include a non-linear beat pattern sequencer, granular synthesis tools and a graphical filterbank, and be released as a live CD Linux project, meaning players will be able to boot up a PC and play *fijuu* with a PS2 style gamepad (without installing anything). Until then, a very impressive 5omb movie at <http://www.fijuu.com> demonstrates some of *fijuu*'s wild potential.

VIRTUAL CINEMA

→ Machinima is the much touted utilisation of game engines for a slightly less abstract purpose - creating virtual sets to 'film/record/enact movies within. RMIT Masters student Chris Dodds is a devout machinima enthusiast, launching the MachinimaAU portal in mid 2005 to help nurture the local Machinima industry.

→ "Compared to traditional filmmaking, equipment is relatively cheap and most people already have access to a fast computer and appropriate games. Moving quality real-time game play from screen to hard-drive for editing is a little problematic" explains Chris, "But next generation in-game capture and edit tools will offer machinima production to a broader community. With this comes volume and the most creative producers will rise to the top."

HONEY, I AUGMENTED THE KIDS

→ Yet another use for game engines? 'Augmented Reality' is the catchphrase for overlaying game graphics onto the 'natural' field of vision of a player / audience member, usually via some sort of visor or VR helmet. While Blast Theory (UK) & PacManhattan (US) are already Augmented Reality luminaries, Adelaide's A-rage are hoping to join the list with their development of wearable hardware enabling existing game consoles to be plugged in, and overlaid/played on top of the world around. Beyond the commercially appealing first person shooters, Creative Director of A-rage, Joe Velikovsky sees much potential for location based, historically immersive and 'edgy, artistic' augmented productions.

→ "We want to get the hardware out to the marketplace with a 5-game bundle in about 18 months, then we'd like to get other developers porting their stuff to the A-rage peripheral. Maybe then we'll look at open source. Looking waaaay forward, it'd be great to have a free dev kit so that people could make machinima and play them back inside their A-rage headset. This really opens up possibilities for new forms of narrative for digital media artists - and their audiences."

<http://fijuu.com>

<http://www.a-rage.com>

<http://www.machinima.com.au>

<http://www.blasttheory.co.uk>

<http://www.collapsicon.net> - Brisbane's resident Nintendo circuit-bender & game-engine hacker



Andrea Blundell is a visual effects coordinator currently based in Adelaide, and previously a member of Selectparks.

→ Currently a Research Fellow at The Banff Centre in Canada, 25 year old Australian media artist and digital game designer Anita Johnston boasts an impressive folio of art-based games, projects that persistently explore the dialogue between overlaid and enhanced realities. Five years of commercial and arts-funded experience have seen her receive multiple international residencies and commissions, and her game development collective, *Yumi-Co*, have exhibited their games in galleries and festivals across Australia, England, Prague, the United States and Canada.

→ Johnston began her game development experience in 2001 after receiving a scholarship to study game design at Brisbane's *Qantm*. There she and fellow *Yumi-Co* member Luke Illett created a prototype for a non-violent, online, musical game. *Spookyville* was a Wild Tangent mod that allowed players to sample and compose sounds in a gritty, urban, 3D environment. Scrounging around the graffiti-smearred maps, players collected sound samples and engineered their own music tracks to complete game objectives. *Spookyville* allowed Johnston to fuse her background in photography, graffiti, illustration and music videos with her passion for digital games, and pushed the theme of aesthetic exploration as a device to unravel game play; a paradigm more fully explored in her subsequent game designs.

→ Upon graduation Johnston was hired by Krome Studios as a designer on Playstation2, Xbox and Nintendo titles, but after two years commercial experience, she began what has become an ongoing relationship with The Banff Centre in Canada. During a 2003 residency program there, she produced a candy-themed game prototype that eventually grew into *Yumi-Co*'s gorgeous online game *Underland*. Commissioned by digital art magazine Horizonzero, and developed in Axel, a commercial web-based 3D engine, *Underland* is part fairytale, part nightmare. A contemporary but macabre interpretation of traditional stories of Alice in Wonderland and Hansel and Gretel, players embody Alice as active participants in an illusionary world, and are encouraged to explore the nonsensical environment to locate new lands hidden within the game.

→ Johnston's 2003 residency was followed by a year at The Banff New Media Institute's Mobile Lab, working again with Illett to create a commissioned series of educational games. Their online series explored science and physics, and the games were eventually delivered to isolated, rural students.

→ Throughout this period *Yumi-Co* expanded, incorporating Canadian artists and programmers Mike Pelletier and David Gauthier. The enlarged collective produced the Unreal Tournament 2003 mod, *CuteXdoom*, a single player, single level game which matured the collective's thematic appreciation of hyper-mediated convergence in popular culture. *CuteXdoom* explores contemporary culture's obsession with cuteness and fabricated entities; a cultural facet once particularly Japanese but now wholly global. Familiar gaming mechanics are enacted by the player, however the content is simultaneously satirical and embracingly saccharine. In *CuteXdoom* your biggest fear is a robotic panda 'eck!', who you must appease with toys collected from the forest wilderness. This deified cultural icon rewards the player with a personal



↑ Smart fashion, the armband embedded with accelerometer and bluetooth, worn to play *Trickster*

horoscope, but the news is not always the best.

→ For 2005, Johnston is again based at The Banff Centre, collaborating with the Mobile Digital Commons Network, a collective now developing a series of inter-connected, location based games and cinematic experiences for specific sites in Montreal, Banff and Finland. Banff's contribution to the project, *Trickster* is a content-rich game for the mobile platform that concentrates on lush cinematics in the game's cut scenes. The sophisticated graphic treatment is in stark contrast to the familiar pseudo-80's graphics, and text-based interfaces more frequently seen on the low-end mobile platform. This is ground breaking technology so don't expect it to be on your phone next week.

→ The real life (RL) physical landscape of the Banff National Park forms a springboard for the *Trickster*'s narratives. Players must assume the role of a native animal, either a raven, wolf or bear. Trekking through the 5kms of wilderness mapped out in the game, players engage in a series of minigames and character-driven objectives. The majority of game play relates to specific areas of the game, for example, characters can only eat where the RL animals' food sources are available. Each character is harassed by a coyote who intermittently decreases health points. Several narratives are overlaid in *Trickster*, interweaving local ecology with parks management challenges and environmental issues.

→ The technology used to drive *Trickster* is being developed by the Mobile Lab/ Wearables Lab at the Banff Centre. Sensor-based technologies such as accelerometers (which measure acceleration and the effects of gravity), and G.P.S. form the game interface, a highly sensitive, gestural interface which can measure movement, breathing and heart rate, among others things. To put this technology into a usable format, custom boards with an accelerometer and bluetooth chip were produced by engineers, and couture armbands were produced by a fashion designer.

→ This armband measures player location and movement, and determines your status based on what the player is up to. These states are reflected in the actions of the on screen character. For example, the screen character moves when you do, and remains stationary as you pause, and when used in the presence of other players, a 'throw' gesture causes audiovisual responses in their handset. The position locators inform you of the range of other players, and whether or not you can engage in play with them.

→ This gesture based play moves away from combat style VR games where you could watch player's pound or thrash around in a gaming enclosure punching and grunting against the invisible opponent. In *Trickster* the clunky gear is gone and you might say

you wouldn't look out of place in a RL environment articulating the actions that drive the game.

→ When considering games played in RL, particularly in a natural environment such as Banff, one finds it quite natural to be carried away by utopian dreams of inhabiting a game space with the power of hyperreal projection, such as portrayed in Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*. In *eXistenZ* the game was a VR projection, where player's bodies stayed grounded, and they were mentally projected into the cinematic game experience. In Cronenberg's projection, gamers were subjected to a dystopian reality as RL and the game world imploded on each other – leaving the players disorientated, paranoid, and trapped.

→ In *Trickster* one sees a realised example of the gamer physically placed in the great outdoors, and within a game experience of at least cinematic detail, completing a mental and physical loop. The relationship between RL and the game space is distinguishable from that of VR games in that the trail beneath your feet is no longer paved with well-trod polygons but granite and turf. Through *Trickster* there is the potential for the game, a RL environment, and player's realities to become interlocked, each enhancing the other.

→ The result of pushing wireless gaming content into a natural environment driven through sensor and gesture based technology, is intriguing. The *Trickster* prototype will be completed in June 2005.

<http://www.sikofshadows.com>



↑ Sally Sanrio faces the CuteXdoom temple

CAN GAMES EVER BE DOCUMENTARY

WRITTEN BY JIM BATT



Jim Batt is a freelance designer with *Game Mechanic* consultants. j.batt@thegameconsultants.com



↑ Playing *Street Survivor* one must interact with this surly drug dealer, whose offerings have the potential to both help and hinder game play, depending on active scenarios

→ Digital games are nearly thirty years old and played by an ever widening demographic. They permeate our culture, with annual sales figures approaching that of the film industry - yet most only address a narrow range of topics. The significant majority of digital games focus on relatively simplistic, often aggression-based entertainment, as if 9 out of 10 cinemas only showed action films featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

→ There are the occasional tall poppies rising above this generalization – games with unique style like *Ico*, *The Sims*, *Riven*, *Katamari Damacy*. But at the end of the day, most games are based around driving, combat, sport, or jumping around like a cane toad on a hotplate.

→ But things change. The tentative green seedlings of emergent sub-genres are starting to show in the cracks. Games as art. As politics. As educational media. Games as culture.

→ Eventually all popular media reflects and comments on politics. So it's no surprise that as creators and audience increasingly perceive games as art, they too become politicized. As cinema before them, games are starting to offer “documentary experiences”, but can an interactive medium really present a factual interpretation of a political, historical, or social issue?

→ The makers of *9-11 Survivor*, *Escape From Woomera* and *Waco Resurrection* (see sidebar) think so. One of the highest profile documentary games is Australia's Woomera, and now a Melbourne-based game documenting the homeless experience is in production. *Street Survivor* attempts to simulate the homeless experience, forcing the player to survive challenges both mundane and exceptional.

→ Kirsty Baird, *Street Survivor*'s originator, is the first to admit inherent problems with applying the documentary label to an interactive experience, “Originally documentary is exactly what I thought it was. I was really excited by the idea of a documentary game. Even though I knew very little about gaming it seemed like a novel and interesting concept. But what I want now, is not ‘reality’ as such, I want to enable people to practice in this interpretation of reality and learn from it.”

→ All documentary media is filtered through authorial bias, the very desire to educate people implies belief in one's perspective. In games the player is immediately politicized, forced to interact within constraints built by the creator's notion of valid actions. In passive media the audience simply views, but games force the audience to participate, make choices, become directly involved in the creator's opinions and therefore become politically implicated. The *Grand Theft Auto* series allows players to commit all manner of social harm but no social good. One cannot steal money from a gangsta and give it to the needy. This was a simple playability decision, but it constrains the player within specific behaviors.

→ So why make a game instead of a traditional media documentary? “The interactivity of games, the nature of game worlds and play enable a directness of experience and agency that film can't

possibly offer”, says Kirsty. “It seemed completely logical for a game to be used so as to communicate on a number of levels, rather than just as entertainment.”

→ Given that many expect only amusement from games (some theorists insist that if a game isn't “fun” it's somehow not a valid experience), the decision to use a medium known for light-hearted, apolitical entertainment to communicate serious issues is unusual. However Kirsty believes this is the key to *Survivor*'s potential success, “We always knew that we didn't want to be didactic. We didn't want people to be *forced* to learn. We want them to play it because it's fun and to learn in *spite* of themselves.”

→ *Street Survivor* emphasizes player learning and education, and this could take it beyond the scope of a simple documentary on the plight of homeless people. “It took me a long time to realize, but I am really trying to making an educational game. It is documentary, it's political, but it's about information and promoting ‘help seeking behavior.’” Kirsty reveals.

→ So for this game, the primary audience is mainly those it documents, the homeless rather than those who are simply interested in the issue. “Yes, ideally you play the game, then when you return to the streets you know about real-world equivalents of the game's locations. Places to get free food or clean needles. For a secondary audience of school goers it could serve an informative, advocacy role. It is recognizably Melbourne, and is loosely based on real stories but it is important that the distinction is made between the content of this or any game, and the real world.”

→ As an educational game, rather than a deliberately political, documentary piece intended to inform about issues of homelessness, there is an obvious pitfall here; the future of game distribution is full of possibilities for expanding the potential for documentary, political, and art games. “Free” download, mobile phone access, computer/TV convergence, but given that few of the homeless have access to game hardware, how will they access this educational advocacy experience? The *Street Survivor* team will test a working prototype via the knot@home sites in welfare and community centers, with the final game sold or distributed to welfare agencies and schools. “It's part of a raft of material being pitched to teachers as learning tools, targeted at the educational market,” says Kirsty.

→ Once an educational game reaches its audience, what can it be expected to actually teach? Much is made about negative behavior learnt from games - violence committed by those obsessed with particular games, ethically shaky games weakening real world morals - but can games teach positive behavior? Kirsty hopes so,

ESCAPE FROM WOOMERA.

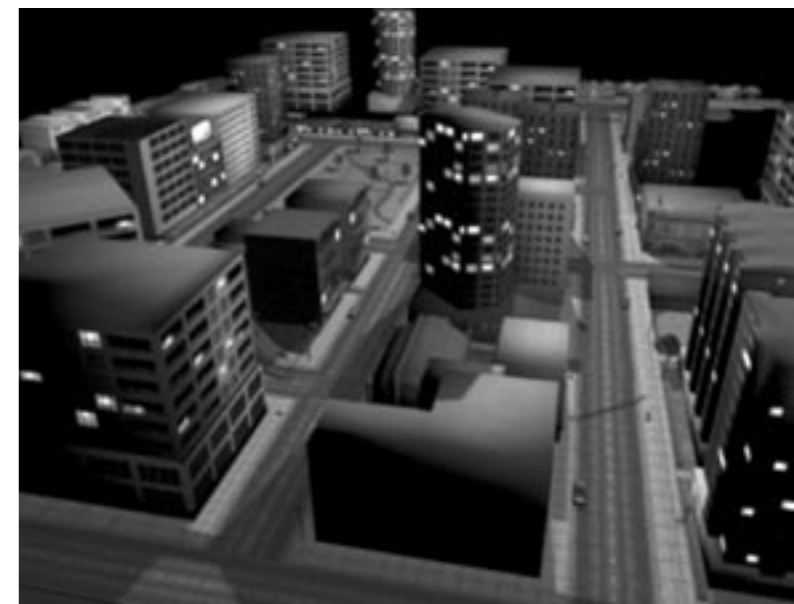
You thought escaping from Castle Wolfenstein was hard...this adventure-centred Half-Life mod was designed by a group of anonymous “industry veterans” to highlight the plight of asylum-seekers. Funded by the Australia Council, it drew the ire of the federal Liberal government and was a minor cause célèbre in Europe. See <http://www.escapefromwoomera.org>

9-11 SURVIVOR

Coming soon, Holocaust Sims... this Unreal mod by students at the University of California-San Diego puts the player in the Twin Towers on September 11. Questions of taste aside it's arguably (of the current crop of doco games) the concept best suited to traditional gameplay models; running, jumping, exploration etc. See <http://www.selectparks.net/911survivor/>

WACO RESURRECTION

Described by its makers as a “subjective documentary” this is the equivalent of cinema's “inspired by real events.” It starts with the facts then veers wildly into unusual territory. Not only can the player's David Koresh avatar run, jump and shoot, but he also gains special abilities from Bible pickups. Understandably Branch Davidian survivors are taken aback, one has been quoted as saying “It's not a game. What happened there was real and real people died.” See <http://www.waco.c-level.cc/>



↑ *Street Survivor*'s gothic cityscape incorporates Melbourne's landmarks

“*Street Survivor* is about homelessness, drug addiction, crime and destructive cycles that are difficult to break. Really, everyone is to some extent vulnerable to these cycles and the game shows how to survive despite these kinds of behaviors as well as trying to overcome them. It’s also about the kinds of things you can do to help yourself and be helped.”

→ Unsurprisingly both *Street Survivor* and *Escape from Woomera* are arts body funded and fall outside the traditional distribution model. Is there any chance that documentary gaming will ever be profitable enough to move into the commercial arena? If profit raises its head, it will bring with it the possibility for compromise. The recent controversy over *America’s Army*, a US military-funded game that purports to show the reality of war is a spectacularly ironic example of where this can lead.

→ But even as a non-commercial niche medium, documentary games have a lot to offer. The subjectivity that makes games easily politicized is also a strength. Film can only show how others live, offering vicarious experiences through proxy. Documentary games could offer understanding of different cultures or lifestyles from an inside, first hand experience. There is vast potential to be explored, and with the current growth in cultural game content, we may see more games from this direction. After all, as enjoyable as they might be, you can only watch so many action films before you need something more substantial with your popcorn.

TECH

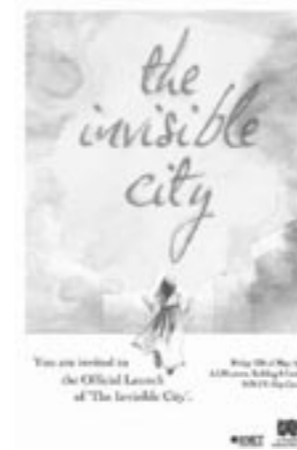
→ *Street Survivor* is being developed in a custom game engine built with Macromedia Director 3D Shockwave (SW3D). The SW3D engine can import models from 3DS Max, and its web browser plugin is available on Linux, Windows and OSX, offering surprisingly high quality, browser-based, 3D performance.



↑ The female protagonist of *Street Survivor* quickly encounters the harsh reality of life on the streets.



↑ A familiar rundown building on Spencer Street houses squatters in *Street Survivor*



→ In his 1978 novella, *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino describes imaginary conversations between Kublai Khan and Marco Polo; conversations in which the Italian explorer relays his experiences of the world’s great cities. As Polo recounts a multitude of urban centres, it becomes apparent that he is relating the different urban experiences of his own native Venice.

→ Calvino’s metaphysical treatise on the nature of memory and experience seems an unlikely starting point for a modification, or ‘mod’ of the classic 3D shoot-em-

up *Unreal Tournament* (UT), but it’s fair to say *The Invisible City* is no ordinary mod. Developed over a lightening-fast five-week period, the project was produced by RMIT postgraduate animation and interactive media students, to simulate the experience of a production studio.

→ While project coordinator John Power stresses that *The Invisible City* was conceived as a mechanism for giving students “a simulation of a complex, role-based production”, the underlying nature of the project - in which the guns-and-glory world of UT is disarmed - makes it easy to view *The Invisible City* as a comment on the violent nature of computer games, or even the world at large.

→ However, it’s a view Power readily rejects. “Everybody talks about that”, he said. “But it’s been written into the game in a meaningful way. We didn’t say ‘Oh look, it’s non-violent’. It’s part of the structure. You don’t think about it one way or the other.” Power’s assertion is quickly backed up after a turn at the controls. His team have altered UT’s arsenal, so instead of, say, picking up a 12-gauge to blast an ungodly monster, you grab an old photograph to help piece together the game’s atmospheric mystery. Instead of ammunition packs, there are quotes from Calvino’s surreal text littering back alleys of the eerily empty town.

→ Power, who enjoys the odd blast on UT, was attracted to the game as an educational tool because of the GUI that shipped with the 2004 edition. This “Lego kit”, as Power describes it, made

it a “cheap, accessible and fairly robust” way of bringing Calvino’s themes of memory and identity to a 3D environment. The free model editor, skin painter, script authoring and debugging software have inspired an extensive, supportive community of UT modders. Their shared online tutorials provided a how-to manual for Power and his team.

→ Although drawing on the experience of more traditional modders, the finished product stands on its own as a unique artistic work. Helping to emphasise the game’s theme of urban dislocation is the union of two-dimensional hand-drawn animation with the 3D environment. While only part of the world of *The Invisible City* - seen in ghostly characters and in the facades of buildings - the inter-meshing of media gives the game a tactile and organic dimension that shifts the boundaries of the 3D gaming experience.

PRODUCTION

→ Most production was performed using the UT editing tools, but team-member Darren Ballingall provided some original tech fixes, such as the removal of weaponry. While UT encourages modding of their games, they prohibit unauthorised commercial usage of their engine. For artists, this makes selling a stand-alone version of *The Invisible City* impossible, although it can be distributed for free, and played by anyone who owns a commercial version of UT. The actual use restrictions don’t prevent the team from showing *The Invisible City* at any future art exhibitions, however they would be legally obliged to obtain permission if they were to receive an artist’s fee. Epic Games have not been known to chase up commercially insignificant usages like these.



Tim Campbell is a visual artist, designer and journalist, providing commentary on popular culture, sport, film and games.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Interested in all things art and technology? Why not become an ANAT Member! Keep yourself abreast of events, opportunities and developments by joining the network of artists, artworkers and art organisations working at the nexus of art, technology and science. Accessibly priced membership affords you the following benefits:

- Filter magazine published 3 times a year
- Fortnightly email digest
- Eligibility to apply for Conference and Workshop funding
- Updates and invitations to labs, masterclasses and all other ANAT initiated projects
- Links to your website
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- Inclusion on the ANAT Database Voting rights at AGM's
- The knowledge that you are supporting innovation and dynamism within Australian art and technology

To join simply go the ANAT website, download a membership form and send it in to us or complete one online.

Australian membership fees listed below are GST inclusive.

INDIVIDUALS	AUD\$30.00
CONCESSION	AUD\$15.00
ORGANISATIONS	AUD\$60.00

*concession rates are available to relevant card holders (student, health care, pensioner) and low incomes (below \$25,000 per annum)

ANAT FAREWELLS JULIANNE PIERCE ↓



After five years at the helm of ANAT, Julianne Pierce has decided to leave ANAT and re-ignite her career as a curator, artist, producer, cyberfeminist and as the infamous Russian singer, Madame Ivana.

And despite what appears to be a tumultuous time for new media arts in Australia, Julianne is leaving ANAT in an extremely strong position. Julianne's work on transforming

ANAT into a highly-regarded, ground-breaking, national and international art, science and technology organisation has meant

that ANAT is well on the way to being one of Australia's most vital and important cultural organisations. Not only is ANAT continuing to benefit from the programs and initiatives developed by Julianne, but is also in a healthy financial position. Core revenue to the organisation has increased by almost 50% during Julianne's tenure and ANAT has recently secured funding from the Australia Council for the next three years.

Julianne has secured a range of ongoing partnerships across the diverse science, education, industry and government sectors. All of these have expanded the reach of digital media and new media arts as well as consolidated research in areas such as art and science. Her focus on artist's research and development has meant that ANAT has been responsible for the creation of many unique opportunities for ANAT's members.

Julianne's highly innovative art and science programs have included:

- world-class masterclasses with leading practitioners such as the adventurous UK new media artists Blast Theory as well as the internationally renowned Australian projection artist Craig Walsh.
- two ground-breaking Indigenous New Media Laboratories in Adelaide and Brisbane.
- the Synapse Art and Science Residency with host organisations including the Centre for Marine Research in Hobart and Centre for Plant Biodiversity in Canberra.
- miniSeries, the creative content for mobile phones project that she initiated with numerous national partners.

Julianne has successfully promoted ANAT as an international organisation by contributing to international initiatives including the UNESCO Digi-Arts Portal and the Arts and Cultural Jury of the World Technology Network. As an ANAT representative, she participated in many diverse and significant international events, including the Multimedia Art Asia Pacific conference in Beijing, 2002 and Innovations in Education symposium in Qatar, 2003.

Julianne will now join the 2006 Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts as the Visual Arts Co-ordinator and Curator of Artists' Week where we will continue to see Julianne thrive as a significant and prominent member of the contemporary arts sector.

We sincerely thank Julianne for the enormous contribution she has made to ANAT and wish her all the best for her future endeavours. We look forward to following the success that inevitably lies ahead for her and we only hope that we don't have to wait too long to see another performance by Madame Ivana.

ANAT Board (Chris Joyner, Sue Skinner, Julian Knowles, Simon Hackett and Linda Carroli)

ANAT WELCOMES NEW GENERAL MANAGER, HEIDI ANGOVE ↓



This full time role is responsible for overseeing general management and finances at ANAT. ANAT is very pleased to welcome Heidi Angove who started on March 21. Heidi comes to ANAT from a technical management role at Internode, a national Internet Service Provider. Over the years she has architected technical rollouts for organisations like the Adelaide Fringe, The Adelaide Film Festival and WOMAD. Heidi has over 8 years of experience within the ISP sector, is a member of the open source community, is well versed in wireless, streaming, web based infrastructure, and other emerging technologies. Heidi is also an active participant with the performance ensemble, "the unreasonable adults". Much to the chagrin of her financial advisors, she is a self professed gadget freak.

ANAT WELCOMES NEW MEMBERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICER, JEN BRAZIER ↓



This role provides general administration support to the organisation, as well as coordinating membership services. ANAT is very pleased to welcome Jen Brazier who started the position on May 3 and is currently working 3 days per week. Jen graduated in 2003 with a Bachelor of Visual Art and Applied Design at the Adelaide Centre for the Arts, majoring in Photo/Digital. She is a practicing artist, individually and as part of the Adelaide artist collective 'Shoot'. Jen has exhibited at the South Australian Museum, several Adelaide Fringe exhibitions and was a commissioned artist (in Shoot) for the Luminosity project. Jen will be Assistant Project Officer with the exciting upcoming Mobile Projection Project, run by ANAT through the Adelaide City Council. She is also currently involved in an exciting collaborative new media project, due to debut early next year - keep tuned!

NEW MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR POSITION AT ANAT, MIMI KELLY ↓

ANAT's previous Membership & Administration Officer Mimi Kelly has taken up the newly developed role of Marketing and Communications Coordinator. The role is responsible for developing marketing and communications campaigns for ANAT. Mimi Kelly started the position on May 3 and is currently working 4 days per week.

ANAT THANKS MEMBERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEER, HUGH SULLIVAN ↓

ANAT greatly appreciates the Membership & Administrative volunteering undertaken recently by Hugh Sullivan. Hugh is volunteering 2 days per week. Hugh has worked previously at the South Australian Film Corporation. He is currently working with Producer Daryl Watson, writing a short film for mobile phones as part of the miniSeries production initiative.

MOBILE PROJECTION ART PROJECT, SURFACE TENSION (ADELAIDE) ↓

ANAT is very pleased to announce a new program of mobile projection art in Adelaide, *Surface Tension*, following on from the inaugural Luminosity Program presented in 2004 on walls and shopfronts throughout the city. The new program aims to take projection art to the audience with the provision of a mobile projection van, giving artists the opportunity to create projection artworks suitable for 'guerrilla' style presentation. That is, short, un-programmed, unannounced artworks presented to unsuspecting and incidental audiences. A specially fitted van will be supplied for use on the project and artists are free to develop hybrid approaches to projection art proposals, for example integrating other mediums (i.e.: sculpture, performance, sound) to create experimental temporary public artworks. Keep your eye out for unannounced van and projection activity throughout the city in the next few months!

The Mobile Projection Art Project is part of Adelaide City Councils Public Art program, and will be project managed by the ANAT.

Keep checking the ANAT website for further details

EMERGING PRODUCERS IN COMMUNITY (EPIC) INITIATIVE ↓



ANAT is pleased to announce it was successful in its proposal to host an emerging producer to develop an EPIC new media arts project throughout 2005 and 2006. The initiative, which started in 2004, is an Australia Council project that has been assisted by the Australian Government's Young and Emerging Artists Initiative. ANAT is very much pleased to welcome emerging producer Sasha

Gribich, who ANAT will be mentoring as part of the internship program. Sasha will be responsible for the development and delivery of a community based new media arts project. The project will provide young people living in regional South Australia with an introduction to the potential of mobile phones and wireless devices. This will take place through a series of workshops and mentorships, equipping young people with the digital media skills to create and distribute their own content for mobile phones.

Sasha is an emerging producer, writer and artist and has recently completed a Visual Arts (Honours) degree at Adelaide Central School of Art and Screen Studies at Flinders University. During 2004 Sasha undertook a Flinders University Research Assistant placement with ANAT. Sasha's studies focused on new media, video, installation and interactive narratives and site-specific projects. Sasha is interested in the possibilities of new distribution platforms for artwork such as mobile phones and the internet. Sasha has exhibited in galleries including Downtown Art Space Adelaide and Peth Institute of Contemporary Art, with work featured in Artlink and Realtime. She is a current participant in Global Visual Dialogues; a project of Montclair State University (USA) exploring the use of the Internet as a collaborative tool.

Keep checking the ANAT website for updates on the EPIC project.

For further information on previous EPIC projects, visit : http://www.ozco.gov.au/arts_in_australia/projects/projects_new_media_arts/emerging_producers_in_community_-_epic/

ANAT NEW MEDIA LAB 2005, *Create Space* MELBOURNE 3 – 15 OCTOBER ↓

ANAT is pleased to announce it will be hosting a two-week full time intensive laboratory for Australian new media arts practitioners. The Lab will be staged in the newly refurbished Meat Market in North Melbourne, and will enable practitioners to work with national and international Facilitators, develop skills, and investigate the possibilities of emerging media. The Lab will focus on research and development, experimentation, collaboration and project development. The theme of the Lab is Create Space enabling investigation into the design and utilisation of space in game architecture, sound design and locative media. Melbourne-based Jane Hindson will be working with ANAT as the Lab Project Manager. ANAT has assessed applicants, and a list of those who are successful will be posted on the ANAT website.

About the Facilitators

Three internationally renowned new media arts practitioners have been confirmed as Facilitators for the Lab. Jonah Brucker-Cohen and Katherine Moriwaki, who are both based in the US, and Adam Nash who is based in Victoria, Australia.

Jonah Brucker-Cohen is a researcher, artist, and Ph.D. candidate in the Disruptive Design Team of the Networking and Telecommunications Research Group, Trinity College Dublin. He also worked as a Research Fellow in the Human Connectedness Group at Media Lab Europe. His work and thesis focuses on the theme of "Deconstructing Networks" which includes projects that attempt to critically challenge and subvert accepted perceptions of

network interaction and experience. He has written for numerous international publications, and has exhibited at organisations and festivals worldwide.

Katherine Moriwaki is an artist and researcher investigating clothing and accessories as the active conduit through which people create network relationships in public space, and is a Ph.D. candidate in the Disruptive Design Team of the Networks and Telecommunications Research Group, Trinity College Dublin. After receiving her Masters degree from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University, Katherine co-developed and taught the ground-breaking collaboration studio "Fashionable Technology" at Parson's School of Design. Her work has appeared in numerous international publications, festivals and conferences.



↑ Image from the *UMBRELLA.net* project. Artists: Jonah Brucker-Cohen and Katherine Moriwaki

Adam Nash is a new media artist, composer, programmer, performer and writer. He works primarily in networked real-time 3D spaces, exploring them as live audiovisual performance spaces. At present, he is undertaking a Master of Arts by Research at The Centre for Animation and Interactive Media at RMIT University, Melbourne, researching multi-user 3D cyberspace as a live performance medium. He is currently Program Coordinator and Teacher of the Advanced Diploma of Arts (Multimedia) at RMIT University. His work has been presented in galleries, festivals and online in Australia, Europe, Asia and The Americas. He recently worked as director, programmer, and composer for the 3D multi-

user live performance *Scorched Happiness*, exhibited at ACMI, NGV as part of *2004-Australian Culture Now*.

For more information on the lab, visit the ANAT website: <http://www.anat.org.au>

To view a previous Lab website, the Indigenous New Media Lab 2004, visit: <http://www.anat.org.au/inmlo4/>

PVI COLLECTIVES TTS: AUSTRALIA ADELAIDE PERFORMANCE, TTS: ROUTE 21 ↓

From Thursday 28 April – Friday 27 May 2005 ANAT hosted a residency by WA's pvi collective as part of their premier tts: australia tour to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The tts: australia performances sought to explore the current climate surrounding terrorism and national security in an insightful, satirical, and challenging way. The Adelaide performance titled tts: route 21, was a first for South Australian audiences to experience pvi collective's fantastic and highly entertaining performance work.

tts: route 21, as with its comrade performances tts: route 26 Sydney and tts: route 30 Melbourne, was developed as a specialised and site-specific series of performances throughout the city. Individual soundscapes by sound/new media artist Jason Sweeney were developed for each city, and here in Adelaide, the performance was devised in collaboration with the artists group Drive by Shooting.

Audiences were given an alternative tour of some of Adelaide's terror hot spots, including the West Terrace Cemetery, South Parklands, and for some of us, a visit to the men's toilets at Hindmarsh Square. Yes, the city certainly morphed into a strange creature of unfamiliarity. This was particularly highlighted by the disturbingly detailed commentary of our madly giggling tour guide who was dressed in nothing but red Speedos, green goggles, with blood dripping from his mouth...

pvi collective also gave audiences an opportunity to discuss tts: australia and some of the interesting and highly significant issues the performance raises, during an artists talk held at ANAT on Monday 16 May. It was fantastic to host pvi collective during their tts: route 21 performance and we look forward to seeing them back here in the near future. They certainly are, brave young cubs.

You can check out the review for tts: route 21 in dB Magazine at: <http://www.dbmagazine.com.au/358/tr-TTSAustralia.shtml>

View the tts: australia website at: <http://www.ttsaustralia.com>

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5TH CREATIVITY AND COGNITION 2005 CONFERENCE

WORDS AND IMAGES BY
KELLYANN GEURTS

Goldsmiths College, London University
<http://research.it.uts.edu.au/creative/>

11-15th April 2005

The main theme of the 2005 conference was the creative process and the creation of artefacts: understanding creative practice, art works employing digital media and creativity support tools.

Abstract from my paper...

→ A Theory of Error explores notions of art and corporality, and in particular art representing the brain and mechanisms of thought, reflections about exploring the creative process and considering thought when the brain is simulated through digital imaging. Forming a theoretical background to the project are various interwoven theories from cognitive psychology, neuroscience, art and technology that examine the mechanisms of creativity in relation to mutation and disorder, chaos and abstraction.

→ The papers of the conference appear at: <http://portal.acm.org/portal.cfm>

- The program of the conference was separated into 3 streams:
- central, scientific and technology orientated work on creativity
 - an expanded coverage of creative art practice
 - historical development in this area.

THE ART COMPONENT:

→ The reflective practice and practice based research chaired by Janis Jefferies (Dept of Art, Goldsmiths College). The aim: *To provide a platform for a new type of a multi-disciplinary worker: the artist as researcher, participating in trans-disciplinary practices and pioneering research in the development of technologies at the cusp of creativity and cognition.* To further develop my research and to establish appropriate relations, this is exactly where I need to be.

→ The exhibition represented collaborative art projects from performance art, sound art, visual arts, musicians, technologists and scientists... presenting new models for engaging in and exploring the nature creativity. Interactive art & collaborative projects placed emphasis on the artist as “a node in the network of creativity” and the combination of thought matrices to develop a project was the strength in artistic practice and the creative process, whatever the discipline.

→ I was especially engaged in the art demonstration titled: *Tech-tiles* (Tim Blackwell & Janis Jefferies). The *tech-tiles*, visually, are rectangular portions of an image, and aurally, portions of a sonic event or stream. The whimsical sounds reacted to the density of textured image and various textural forms were created from spontaneous sounds mapping of textile images into sound. The association and correlations became both harmonic and disturbing *sonic improvisation*.

Society of Neurons: An Arts/Science Project (Warren Neidich, Robert Zimmer & Thibaud de Souza) was an interactive & interdisciplinary project and one of the most inspiring. Using current theoretical frameworks emerging out of neuro-scientific inquiry, a very lively web-based mutating computational network or a “web-brain” has been created. The frameworks

were discussed further in a conference in May 05 titled: “Neuroaesthetics” chaired by Warren Neidich. And if you missed that one, you can find out more about his work at www.artbrain.org (including links to his new *Journal of Neuro-aesthetic Theory*) or his book: *BLOW-UP: Photography, Cinema and the Brain* (2003).

WORKSHOP:

→ Freedom & Constraint in the Creative Process in Digital Fine Art: an AHRB Invited workshop. Chaired by John Hayworth

→ Although I wasn’t officially on the list of attendees, John accepted me as a late participant due to the appropriateness of my work.

→ The workshop shed light on the freedom and constraints in creative process focusing on thought, technique and materials.

Key points:

- the digital greatly influences our perceptions and approaches to creativity
- computer aided art manifests a diversity of practices in which the fusion of thought and action is critical to the creative process
- The computer extends creative ability to express interactive techniques and enables the viewer to have an active role and an immediate relationship with image making.
- The digital provides fluidity in image construction.
- Digital changes the way we are creative – enhancing the process and influencing the way we view the world. Technology influences perception and thinking; while at the same time concepts, ideas and feelings influence the use of technology.
- Rather than being called a “digital artist” we can say we are “informed by the digital”

The themes are fully explored at www.embodiedmind.com

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

→ Another notable address was that of Keynote Speaker Margaret Boden (Research Professor of Cognitive Science at the University of Sussex). I had referenced Margaret throughout my Masters research and was delighted to hear her speak and to visit the new Dana Centre at the Science Museum. She spoke about new technologies, new aesthetics and new principles of aesthetics to evaluate interactive art and also presented several different ways of generating creative ideas – based on the following:

- arranging existing ideas in new combinations
- taking accepted cultured styles and explore potential, extend limits tweak styles or utilize new tools
- defining creativity as a transformative process, where the fundamental rules are altered... new structures (by mutations or otherwise). Examples were in major art movements or individuals and individuals who led them.

→ More tangible, technical measurable processes, where explored in many of the papers presented. Creativity was discussed in terms of computer functioning, computer programming and design. “Understanding Design as a Social Creative Process” (Andy Warr & Eamonn O’Neil) discussed creativity in respect to design and the emphasis being that social creativity is more productive than individual creativity. The landmark event of the “9 Evenings: Theatre & Engineering” 1966, was used as a source of historical reference into the nature of interaction and collaboration, creative dialogue and collective wisdom.

→ Thanks to ANAT and RMIT University. The opportunity to attend the conference and exhibit my art work/research to international audience has been an extremely valuable experience, mostly in terms of exposure to contemporary interdisciplinary thought in the pursuit of understanding the creative process.



↑ *Cerebrum Surface* (archival inkjet print), part of a series *Irregular by Nature* exploring the external surface and texture of the brain

Background image: *Synaptic* (archival inkjet print), part of a series *Irregular by Nature* exhibited at Dianne Tanzer Gallery in April 05. This work explores internal workings of the functioning brain intertwining photographic textural elements, spontaneous mark making and computerized interpretations of scientific theory.



↑ *Radio Astronomy*, a sound installation housed in an old astronomical observatory, Helsinki. Tuomas Finne (foreground), production assistant Helsinki program ISEA 2004

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

→ ISEA2004 was the 12th Symposium on Electronic Arts, organised for the first time in two capital cities and on a ferry that traveled between Helsinki, Stockholm, Mariehamn, and Tallinn. During this time, the Baltic Sea became the center of electronic music, new media research, art and design.

→ ISEA2004 featured a program that mixed electronic music with sound art, networking sessions, performances and interactive installations. ISEA2004 also operated to highlight the latest work in wireless, networked and wearable technologies in the cultural domain of new media. As the ISEA2004 website explained, the Symposiums key focus, was the culture of new technologies.

PROJECT OUTLINE

→ ANAT's Workshop and Conference fund enabled me the opportunity to travel to Helsinki, Finland in August 2004 where I took on the role as production assistant intern for ISEA2004, volunteering alongside the Helsinki production assistant Toumas Finne.

→ For me this opportunity had the similarities of being an artist in residence, as I was catapulted into the international new media art scene, allowing me to personally and creatively associate with international new-media artists participating in ISEA2004.

→ The ISEA2004 event and my participation in it has been an invaluable experience on so many personal and artistic levels, including the professional development of my new-media art practice.

→ The experience I gained at ISEA2004 has already greatly benefited me and has led me to create new works, build new and exciting 'international' networks and enabled me to disseminate my experiences back to my art collective SHOOT, and other fellow artists I am associated with.

→ ISEA2004 allowed me to investigate conceptual ideas related to my art practice, as ISEA2004 was based around "new communication technologies and their relevance in contemporary societies".

→ My art practice is creatively linked to many of the evolving art forms that were included as part of the artistic program, and discussed by professors, theorists, curators, researchers and architects who also attended ISEA2004, from all over the world.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED EVENT

→ ANAT provided me with an opportunity that placed me in direct collaborative relationships with the contributing artists of ISEA2004. With direction from the executive producer Amanda McDonald Crowley, and producer Hanna Harris, I was able to work alongside artists associated

with the projects in the PUBLIC SPACES PROGRAMME (City of Helsinki), the area of art practice that I have been interested in and working on in Australia.

→ Some of these artists included New Zealanders Adam Hyde and Honor Harger and the 'Boys from Bandung', Gustaff H. Iskandar, Pumpung Wratmoko, R.E. Hartanto, and Wahyu Sulasmoro who I first met on a balcony overlooking a beautiful Helsinki city lake, in an historic building owned by the government and maintained as artists residences. The Bandung artists were from the Bandung Centre for New Media Arts in Indonesia, and were undertaking a six-week residency with assistance from the Helsinki International Arts Programme.

→ Later I visited their exhibition City Tour in which they juxtaposed their hometown special environments alongside those of Helsinki's, utilisation photographs, everyday objects and video projections. "In City Tour the city is observed as a structure similar to human anatomy, which is a complex construction of numerous super-structures."

See also: <http://commonroom.info/bcfnma/> & http://www.artfactories.net/article.php3?id_article=971

→ I also worked on the Adam Hyde, Honor Harger project Radio Astronomy helping to set up the equipment required for their sound installation, which broadcasted sounds from space live, on air and online, in the darkened dome of the historical Observatory of the URSA Astronomical Association in Kaivopuisto, Helsinki.

→ Adam and Honor have created software that converts signals gathered from space by radio telescopes into soundwaves. The sounds were beautiful, eerie and amazing to hear, ranging from sharp cracks, pops and whistles to sounds reminiscing of the deep cries of whales. This project was a very moving and interesting experience.

→ I was also able to meet and assist Slovenian artist Marko Peljhan, the creator of Makrolab whose major installation was on display in Kiasma, the Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art. Makrolab is an ongoing project based around an autonomous communications, research and living unit/space, capable of sustaining concentrated work of four people in isolation/insulation conditions for up to 120 days. Kiasma also hosted Light Rain a fusion work by USA artists Rebecca Cummins and Paul De Marinis, and an interactive installation by Zona de Recreo.

See also: <http://makrolab.ljudmila.org/> <http://www.kiasma.fi/www/index.php?lang=en> http://www.isea2004.net/mainframe.php?id=xh_zona

ISEA FERRY, HELSINKI, MARIEHAMN, STOCKHOLM, TALLINN.

→ I was also a participant on the ISEA2004 Ferry program CRUISE aboard the Ferry Opera, travelling to Sweden and Estonia, both in a working capacity (delivering and loading equipment) as a participant in the conference program. Here I was able to witness live events such as Lifeboat, a functional Biological Laboratory within a fully enclosed ship's lifeboat, mounted on board, and many more artists, VJ's, sound artists and musicians.

See also: <http://www.life-boat.org/welcomeboard.html>

BUILDING NETWORKS AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

→ ISEA2004 bought me into direct contact with international new media artists and administrators through working relationships, and allowed me to experience first hand this high profile event. This invaluable experience, and expansion of my international professional networks, has equipped me with skills and contacts that I am beginning to make great use of here in Australia, both as a contributing artist with SHOOT, and as project officer with the Helpmann Academy. Additionally, the experience has inspired myself and the other members of SHOOT to develop a new photo-media exhibition for the 2005 Adelaide Fringe.

→ There were so many more artists, events and experiences that I haven't mentioned including ISEA2004's participation in the amazing KONEISTO FESTIVAL. At present I am working toward taking an exhibition of South Australian artists to Helsinki in 2006, with the idea of reciprocating exhibitions every two years.

See also: <http://www.koneisto.com/>

→ My sincere thanks goes to all the ANAT staff who made it possible, Julianne, Charity, Alison and Patrick, and all ISEA2004 staff, Amanda Mc Donald Crowley, Hanna Harris, Suvi, Lars, and especially Toumas for his untiring support. v

TROY INNOCENT

WORDS BY REBECCA CANNON

Troy Innocent is a digital artist creating experimental games. Much of his work investigates the semiotics of generative meaning systems. <http://www.iconica.org/main.htm>

RC: *Can you outline your current project?*

TI: I am currently developing a game mod investigating the posthuman bodies of signs that are constructed by the contemporary game AI. Iconic projectiles in this First Person Shooter do not cause physical damage, but instead manipulate the bot's mental state to trigger changes in the AI. The project draws on models of human behaviour and psychology to generate these symbols, creating an 'illusion of mind' in the game bot.

RC: *What first attracted you to computer games as an art form?*

TI: Way back, I was inspired by their aesthetics and codes in the 8-bit days of the 80s, and then later-generation 3D systems in the 90s. My interest in digital media language led to an investigation of the code, structure, rules and logic of games.

There is an engagement with process that occurs when playing a game, an ongoing human-machine dialogue that is rich in meaning and potential expression. Computer games enable the construction of worlds and ways of being that are not only represented, but are experienced. This immediacy and capacity to animate life into an alternative world can allow an experience of the other, or an alien logic.

RC: *You often illustrate – and deconstruct - symbolic forces activating virtual environments. What makes this process so compelling for you to perform in digital games?*

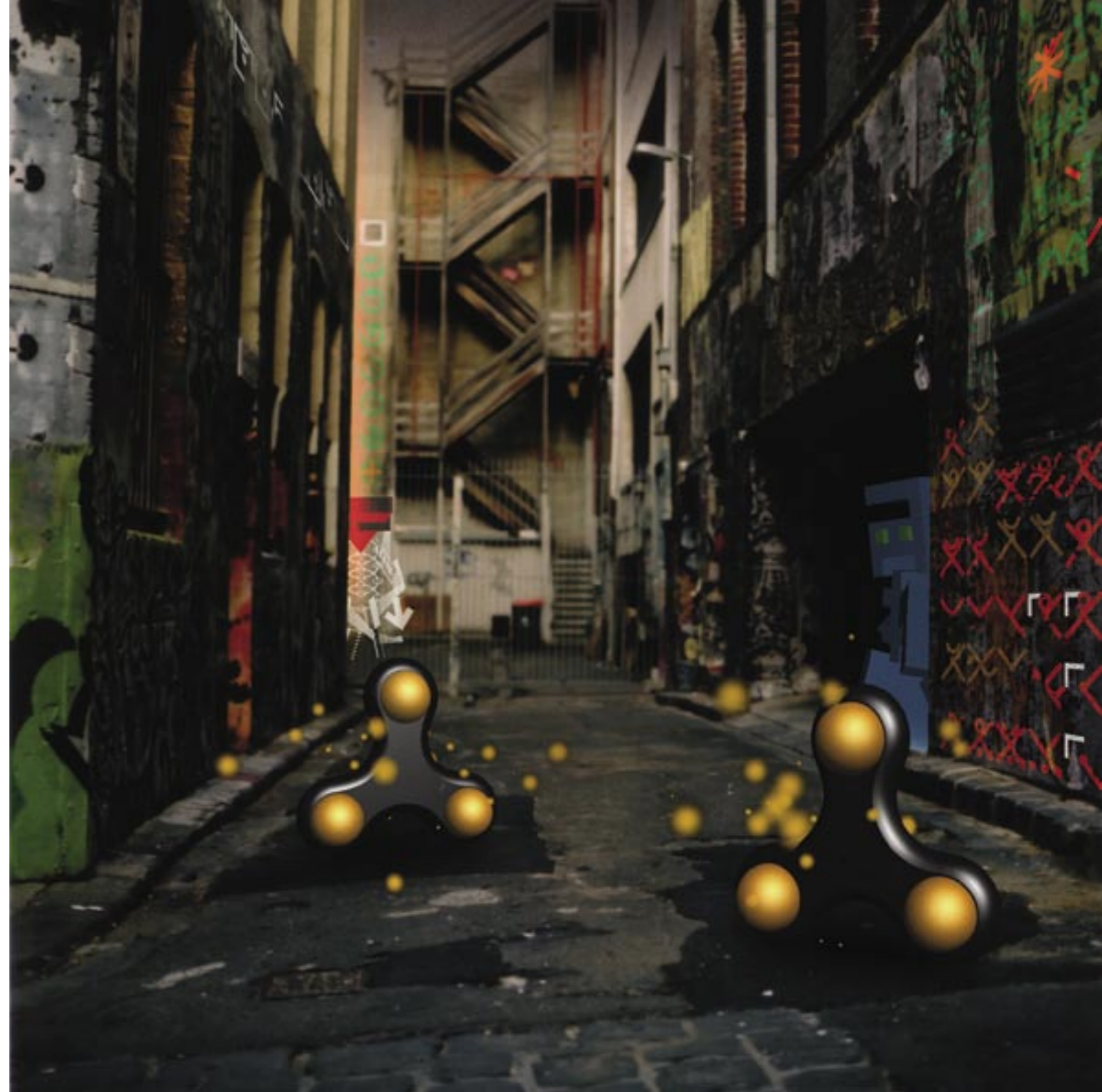
TI: I am interested in what may be described as 'generative meaning systems' - hybrid forms that blend digital games, generative systems and computational semiotics. Players in these systems become an integral part of the simulation in a series of feedback loops and couplings.

There is also a certain aesthetic beauty in data structures and their expression as musical-visual forms. *LifeSigns* explored these ideas through the construction of a persistent world that evolved and mutated in response to play. It attempted an interaction that is not only reactive, but functions as a collective conversation with its audience. Computer games are possibly one of the most complex media in terms of how they construct meaning. Even a single-player game has a lot going on; networked games increase this complexity an order of magnitude.

RC: *How do you see your outcomes informing game design practice?*

TI: The separation of a model and its expression opens up interesting possibilities. Game mods remap and mutate existing systems, allowing new interpretations of meaning. Drawing attention to the fluid, mutable nature of digital realms through freeform, synaesthetic play with meta-ontologies suggests alternative communication strategies made possible by the unique language of the space.

This shift has also impacted upon a generation that grew up with games and now has an innate knowledge of systems and processes. It has become second nature for many people to make abstractions of reality in terms of systems, processes, flows, and models. It is a very different way of looking at the world.



Habitat, Iconica, Troy Innocent →



**Australian Network for
Art and Technology**

www.anat.org.au

Synapse Art and Science Residency Forum

**A FREE forum featuring artists and scientists from the
Synapse Art and Science Residency program.**

Thursday August 18, 2005

**Forum 3 – 5pm in the Theatrette
Followed by a Networking function
5 – 6.30pm in the exhibition space**

**Australian National Botanic Gardens
in Canberra**

**Clunies Ross Street
Acton ACT 2601**

**This forum is staged as part of National Science Week 2005 and in conjunction with an
exhibition by Synapse artist Julie Ryder at the Gardens.**

**The Synapse Art and Science Residency program aims to develop dynamic creative partnerships
between scientists and artists, science institutions and arts organisations. The residency
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