Editorial

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Introduction

Welcome to this 'DigArt' special issue celebrating the inaugural DigArt symposium hosted ... over two intensive days at Esbjerg Institute of Technology, Aalborg University, Denmark in March 2007. Papers were solicited via an open call to various dissemination points of the international digital art community. All submissions were subject of multiple blind peer review by experts and the DigArt team take this opportunity to congratulate the successful authors.

The DigArt symposium had a focus on presenting across the gamut of digital art. Speakers were Jean Detheux (Canada), Wilfried Jentzsch (Germany), Hiromi Ishii (Japan/Germany), Claire Corey (USA), Sita Popat (UK), Scott Palmer (UK) and Angelos Yannopoulos (Greece). A brief profile of each invited speaker is included at the end of this editorial. A live performance titled 'Mugenkei as a Live Dream' was given by Detheux and Jentzsch at the symposium closing hosted by The Academy of Music and Music Communication (VMK), Esbjerg. It consisted of a real-time animation/digital painting composition with transformative sound synthesis improvisation. It was presented via a large projection screen and speaker system. Special thanks in supporting the performance event are acknowledged to Ole Ellingsgaard, Head Technician at VMK; Tonespace student volunteers and the VMK management team. DigArt lectures by Detheux and Jentzsch supported the performance by demonstrating the visual animation and sound transformation techniques involved in realising the piece.

The first paper is from DigArt speaker Scott Palmer who along with co-authors Alice Bayliss, Derek Hales and Jennifer G. Sheridan report on '(Re)searching through play: play as a framework and methodology for collaborative design processes'. The paper presents the Hoverflies project, one of three subprojects of *Emergent Objects* which was funded by EPSRC/AHRC under the 'Designing for the Twenty-first Century (D421C)' initiative. Central to the paper is the questioning of performance in respect to design processes of intimate interfaces, embodied experience and cognitive understanding. The paper exemplifies how three central concepts, namely, play, composition and embodiment, played a crucial part in how the team adopted new ways of thinking about design in regards performance knowledge.

Aleksandra Dulic and Keith Hamel's 'Visual music instrument' is the second paper. It states how technical innovations are fuelling contemporary experimentation in the arts. It discusses how visual music expression through interactive computational media unites

music, visual art and animation both in terms of their phenomenal experience and in terms of their elementary structure that consists of flexible and dynamic information flows and code. Expounded is how flexibility and dynamism of coded processes readily support both performance and improvisation within interactive visual music and provides exciting compositional and expressive opportunities. The work is based upon three elementary research axes of synaesthetic composition, computational expression and dynamics of performance.

'Locating the ephemeral: capturing the fleeting moment in digital arts' is a sole authored paper by Aleksandra Kaminska from York University, Toronto, Canada. The author reports on her understanding of ephemerality as a characteristic used to describe digital art. She proposes that rather than linking the ephemeral to an immaterial nature of digitality, we should instead interpret by turning to the materiality of the languages at the foundation of digital artefacts.

In his paper, 'Up close and personal: some effects of technology on portraiture', Blake Hurt reflects on how computer technology has created new opportunities for the methods used in making portraits. These opportunities include adding elements from the hand of the sitter, as well as detailed physical measurements that are now available from technology like fingerprints. Using these new methods, the paper identifies two new perspectives – reflective and objective, in addition to the traditional point of view, subjective, as being the result. Illustrations from the author's own work provide visual examples and a review of other work in the field informs further.

'Autonomous expressionism: a framework for installation directed network arts' is the title of the paper by David A. Shamma, which examines how digital media has blurred the distinction between creator- and experiencer-centric artwork. This paper presents the imagination environment, an art installation serving as a reflector of popular culture by fusing TV and movies with photos found online. The installation embodies autonomous expressionism as a framework of network artwork based in theory and psychology where the roles of the creator are secondary to that of online communities.

Steve DiPaola shares an interactive painterly portrait space toolkit in his paper titled 'Exploring a parameterised portrait painting space'. He explains how non-photorealistic rendering allows one to parameterise the open cognitive and vision-based methodology that human artists have intuitively evolved over centuries into a domain toolkit to explore aesthetic realisations and interdisciplinary questions about the act of portrait painting as well as the general creative process.

'Aesthetic experience of proactive interaction with cultural art' is a co-authored paper by Tzu-Wei Tsai and I-Chia Tsai who present how a traditional decorative artefact (a brick sculpture) receives a transformative digital make-over as it becomes an interactive work where 'attractive and pleasurable experiences promote questioning of the value of traditional culture and aesthetics'. The work reportedly not only developed a new pleasurable approach to experience the cultural arts, but also symbolised collaborative relationships that evolved among participants. The paper informs how aesthetic experience of interactive arts was explored through the work and discusses the innate affective and interactive experiences.

Nature and its influence on the arts is a central aspect of 'Cinesthesis: cross-modal and cross-cultural perceptions of the Aurora Borealis for the design of an interactive installation'. This is a truly international collaborative effort being co-authored by Veroniki Korakidou (Greece), Bettina Schuelke (Austria) and Nina Czegledy (Canada). Others are also involved in the project which was established to promote collaboration

between artists and scientists from different cultural backgrounds who are active in creating interactive media art or pursuing innovative interdisciplinary research.

Fittingly, it is the closing performance of DigArt by Jean Detheux and Wilfried Jentzsch that is the subject of the final paper of this Special Issue. The process of creating 'Mugenkei as a Live Dream' is reflected upon by both performers from the viewpoint of the relationship between images and music. The advanced animation and auditory techniques that were used are detailed with sources and inspirations explained.

It is a pleasure to announce that the organising team received favourable responses from DigArt attendees and speakers in evaluating the event. Following requests by students, two of the DigArt symposium speakers, namely Detheux and Corey, have returned to Esbjerg to lecture in the Medialogy curriculum (http://www.medialogy.eu).

Profiles of the DigArt symposium invited speakers

Jean Detheux was born in Belgium. He received his academic training at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Liège. Immigrating to Canada in 1971, he taught at various art schools in Canada and the USA. At the New York School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture (NYC, NY), he was a Summer School Director and an Assistant-Dean. He has exhibited his paintings and drawings globally and his work can be found in many private and public collections. He lectures about the phenomenology of vision and the process of creation (he was elected to the Husserl Circle in 1981).

Wilfried Jentzsch was born in 1941 in Dresden. From 1976 to 1981, he resided in Paris, studying at the Sorbonne under Iannis Xenakis, where he completed a Doctorate in the field of Musical Aesthetics, while at the same time conducting research in the field of digital sound synthesis at IRCAM and the CEMAMu. He is a Member of the ISCM and a Founding Member of the DegeM (German Society for Electroacoustic Music).

Hiromi Ishii is a Tokyo and Dresden-based Composer of Electroacoustic Music and Visual Music. She studied composition in Tokyo, Electroacoustic Music at Musikhochschule Dresden and was conferred her PhD at City University London. Her research, 'composing electroacoustic music relating to Japanese traditional music', was supported by an ORS Award Scheme scholarship of the UK.

Sita Popat is a Senior Lecturer in Dance in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, UK. Her research interests centre on the relationship between dance choreography and new technologies. Currently, she is working on the *eDance* project, exploring Access Grid and other e-Science technologies as platforms for dance performance and documentation. Recently, completed projects include *Projecting Performance* in collaboration with Scott Palmer. This investigated the relationship between performer, operator and digital 'sprite' (2006–2008). She was a co-investigator on *Emergent Objects*, using performance perspectives to investigate the modelling of roles for design in a technological society (2007). Her book on online choreography is published by Routledge, titled *Invisible Connections: Dance, Choreography and Internet Communities* (2006).

Scott Palmer is a Lecturer in Scenography in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, UK. His research interests focus on lighting design and the interaction between technology and performance. He was a collaborator on *Emergent Objects* with Popat. He is the author of the Hodder and Stoughton essential guide to stage management, lighting and sound, and has published papers on technical training and

lighting design practise in the UK theatre. He is co-editor of the Association of Lighting Designer's Focus journal.

Claire Corey lives and works in New York, USA. Educated as a Bachelor of Arts at the University of California Los Angeles, California, her list of awards include the 2007 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Computer Arts, the 2001 Aldrich Museum Trustee's Award for an Emerging Artist, the 2000 Pollock-Krasner Foundation award and the 1999 Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program prize. Her work has been exhibited at galleries around the world.

Angelos Yannopoulos works at the Institute of Communications and Computer Systems, the National Technical University of Athens. At DigArt, he presented *ANSWER* (Artistic-Notation-based Software Engineering for Film, Animation and Computer Games), a European funded project in the area of *Knowledge and Content Technologies*. A new approach to the creative process of film and game production is at the core of the work as it assists the creative artist to record a distilled, clear, accurate description of the media he/she wishes to create. The project targets to produce a notion system (DirectorNotation) for describing the creation of multimedia content and to offer a bridge between digital media production and animation for game design.

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