Curatorial Statement

Nicole Wong

- Animatronica presents a platform for us to witness technology as critical challenges to our pre-conceived notion of existence, presence, control, power, time and sustainability.

- The festival has invited seven new media artists who use surveillance devices to create interactive works. It facilitates a fun process that brings us closer to a new consciousness. In most culture, life entails movement and interaction with the environment. In Animatronica, machines move and interact with the environment as if they are animated, given lives. As a result of people's movement, the works generate images, light and sound.

- The curators set out to investigate the use of surveillance devices in new media arts, in an attempt to seek how these works facilitate the understanding of technology-enhanced space in contemporary society.

- Surveillance mechanisms, sometimes perceived as elements of intrusion to privacy, is being presented to the audience in a fun, enigmatic manner. The devices, mobilized by artists' creativity, allow viewers to witness expansion of their physical existence.

- The exhibition space is constructed as a technological laboratory where the public is invited to engage and experiment in a playful manner.

The artists intent is to encourage audience participation: the show could not be defined without the active participation of audiences. The exhibition would not be complete without the interaction of the public.

- Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Glories of Accounting Subsculpture 5 is an installation that traces audience presence by a 'show of hands.' The surveillance system detects the position of the public in the exhibition hall. As someone enters the space, a hand will appear on the screen. Through the visualization of electronic detection, this piece creates a simple yet powerful dialogue with the visitors; while acknowledging the presence of the individual in the environment, it also singles out the participants and make them the centre of attention.

- Lozano-Hemmer's classic work Surface Tension is an another installation that focuses attention on the visitors. The interactive devices are made of animated photos that change their arrangements on the screen: simulating an eye that follows the movement of one individual audience. In everyday life, we are exposed to many surveillance devices often without our conscious awareness: passing through the lobby of a building, shopping in a mall, walking into a bank, dining in a restaurant, riding an elevator, etc. In this work, the artist turns the supervision device on its head and makes it fun for the public to come face to face with its nature and implications.
策展人語
Nicole Wong

- 走在時代尖端的新媒體藝術家，採用先進的程式為創作的依歸。『靈感影響』展覽選取了用監視器加上電腦程式所製成的作品；嘗試探索這些作品如何讓我們多思巧人與科技的關係，及科技帶給我們對空間的啟示。

- 魯洛傑里（Rafael Lozano-Hemmer）的作品《光箐的點算雕塑5號》（Glories of Accounting Subsculpture 5）是一套裝置；該裝置通過“舉手表決”的形式來強調觀眾的存在。當觀眾進入展覽空間時，一隻手便在屏幕上，監視系統主導的畫面與觀眾形成了最簡單有效的對話。

- 展覽場地也是一切科技實驗室。我們邀請參與者在展覽互動式的空間中，沒有界限的參與性。藝術家在創作時考慮了觀眾的參與性。創作中一種非常重要的元素：因此，參與者必須主動參與，這個展覽及創作的實踐理念才能完全成立。
A conversation
between
José Luis Barrios
and
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

JLB 1:
Without a doubt the evolution of electronic arts, or new media arts, presents new challenges for both the theory and philosophy of art. In general, these challenges are analyzed using conceptual perspectives that deal with relations to social, political or cultural facets. However, the connections that these artistic explorations have with aesthetics and epistemology are little explored. In this context, and to get us started, what are the theoretical lineages that nurture or inspire your work?

RLH 1:
I read critical theory primarily for pleasure, as a catalyst, but I never consider it to be a recipe or a manual, nor do I presume to know how any theory might interpret my work while in the process of creating it. I was educated here in Canada where during the 80's and 90's I studied post-structuralist theory on the one hand, and the theory of information and complexity on the other. Through the guidance of Brian Massumi and other teachers, I witnessed the takeover of North America by French thinkers like Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Barthes, etcetera. For three years (1986-1991) I directed a radio show called "The Postmodern Commotion" that was dedicated to putting into practice what we considered to be post-modern activist tactics. We interviewed a number of thinkers such as Frederic Jameson, Jean-François Lyotard and Terry Eagleton. In early 90's the term "post-modern" dissolved and became clear that the new trend was toward the "virtual". In keeping with this shift I turned to thinkers like Geert Lovink, Tim Druckrey, Donna Haraway, Siegfried Zielinski, Peter Weibel, Sandy Stone, Simon Penny, and others who helped me form more critical ideas on virtualization. These days I mainly read about science: Chaos Theory, uncertainty, the strange world of Quantum Mechanics and non-linear phenomena, — authors like Mexican writer Manuel DeLanda and Ilya Prigogine. I think the science of complexity, for example, offers us very fertile terrain for creativity. Unfortunately, the humanities continue to maintain a rather antiquated, almost 19th century vision of science in general.

Within "Canadian" traditions there are authors to whom I feel a great affinity. Above all with respect to the idea of understanding technology not as a tool, or as something that is separate from us, but rather as a "second skin" to use the words of Marshall McLuhan. After the end of phenomenology people no longer wondered about the nature of pre-linguistic consciousness. In the same way, we now consider it impossible to think about our world without technology simply because technology has become the language or the unavoidable medium for our thoughts. I work with technology not because it is original, but precisely because it is inevitable and commonplace in our global society.
JLB 2:

There is a distinguishing factor that defines modernity and that has to do with self-awareness, or the ability of the subject to both represent and represent self-reflexively his activities and relationships with the world. An important aspect of this is expressed in the Foucaultian concept of the gaze. Throughout the history of art and visual culture, various strategies of the gaze have existed. How do you distinguish and conceptualize those strategies that belong to the present and how are they manifested in your work?

RLH 2:

New visual experiments have always been aided, or even initiated, by technological advancements. For example, perspective during the Renaissance, anamorphosis as part of Mannerism, or Eugène Chevreul’s color theory for the Impressionists. In this context my contribution is the following: Walter Benjamin spoke with great clarity about the birth of modernism. For him the image is that which can be reproduced mechanically, a condition that eliminates the aural quality from a work of art. Mechanical reproduction democratizes art, popularizes it, and takes away that privileged point of view born of singularity. However, with digital technologies I believe that the aura has returned, and with a vengeance, because what digital technology emphasizes, through interactivity, is the multiple reading, the idea that a piece of art is created by the participation of the user. The idea that a work is not hermetic but something that requires exposure in order to exist is fundamental to understand this "vengeance of the aura".

Today digital arts, — actually all art —, has awareness. This has always been true, but we have now become aware of art’s awareness. Pieces listen to us, they see us, they sense our presence and wait for us to inspire them, and not the other way around. It is no coincidence that post-modern art emphasizes the audience. In linguistic theory, Saussure would say that it is impossible to have a dialogue without being aware of your interlocutor. Exactly the same thing was said, almost 100 years ago in the art world by Duchamp, for example, when he said, “I regard fuit le tableau” (the look makes the painting). What we see happening is that this concept of dependency is reinforced by digital technology. Pieces of art are in a constant state of becoming. It’s not that they “are” but that they are “changing into”. I think the artist no longer has a monopoly over their work, or an exhaustive or total position over its interpretation or representation. Today, it is a more common idea — an idea that I defend — that the work itself has a life. The work is a platform and yes the platform has an authorship, but it also has its points of entry, its loose ends, its tangents, its empty spaces and its eccentricities. In this sense, artworks tend to be eclectic which for me signifies the liberation of art, the freedom to reaffirm its meaning.

In contrast to the idea of creation through the gaze of the public, the other side of the coin should also be mentioned: the panoptic computerized gaze. Artistic interest in criticizing the predatory gaze of the surveillance camera is nothing new; there is for example the work of Dan Graham, Bruce Nauman or Julia Scher, to mention a few. What is new is the degree of computerization that the new surveillance systems, which
invade our public and private spaces, possession. Stemming directly from the American “Patriot Act” is a wide variety of computer-vision techniques that, for example, are intended for identifying suspicious individuals or classifying them based on ethnic traits. It is literally about technologies designed to discriminate based on a series of innate prejudices. This new intensification of surveillance is extremely problematic because, in the words of Manuel DeLanda, “it endows the computer with the power of executive decision making”.

What is also new is the amount of memory that these systems have thanks to ever-smaller storage units and increasingly efficient compression-decompression algorithms (codecs) that allow for the recording and reproduction of events from the distant past. Lastly, the widespread popularization of cameras by reality shows and the penetration into public and private spaces by means of things like web cams should be mentioned. I have no doubt that a new type of art is emerging in order to confront these technologies of the panoptic and post-optic gaze. The Institute for Applied Autonomy, Harun Farocki and the Bureau of Inverse Technology are some examples of this new line of inquiry.
雷斯·魯伊斯·巴瑞歐斯
(José Luis Barrios) 與
拉法耶·羅扎諾·漢默
(Rafael Lozano-Hemmer)
的對話

“這是2005年4月25日在墨西哥城Sala de Arte Público Siquieros (SAPS) ，由SAPS負責人Italia Schmelz主持的電話會議內容的摘錄。Rebecca MacSweeney由西班牙文原文翻譯。

雷斯 1:
無疑，電子藝術或者新媒體藝術的發展，為藝術理論和藝術哲學帶來了新的挑戰。當我們會從概念上的角度、社會、政治或者文化角度去分析這些挑戰。然而這些藝術理論與審美和知識論的關係則很少被討論。這種情況下，我們先談論什麼理論體系孕育並激發你的創作呢？

拉法耶 1:
我會講批判理論，作為一種催化劑，但我從不用它作為指針。在創作過程中，我也不認為任何理論能解釋我的作品。在80和90年代，我在加拿大一方面學習後結構主義理論，另一方面學習信息與複雜性理論。從Brian Massumi和其他老師的指導中，我留意著诸如Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Barthes等法國思想家全面影響北美的思維。1988至1991年期間，我創作了一個廣播節目，叫做“後現代絮動”（The Postmodern Commotion）。

去實踐那些被認為是後現代激進主義分子的策略。我們採訪了許多思想家，如Fredric Jameson, Jean-François Lyotard 和Terry Eagleton。在90年代初期，“後現代”這個概念主導的思維逐漸消散，“虛擬”顯然地成為新的動能。為了跟上這種轉變，我求助於Geert Lovink, Tim Druckrey, Donna Haraway, Siegfried Zielsinski, Peter Weibel, Sandy Stone, Simon Penny等人的理念，我甚至對“虛擬”建立更富批判性的見解。目前，我主要閱讀科學類書籍：混沌理論、不確定理論、量子力學的奇妙世界和非線性現象，以及諾布魯斯等作者Manuel DeLanda和Ilya Prigogine的作品。例如，以複雜性為研究目的的科學，可以提供豐富的創意土壤。可惜，人類的認知相當的陳舊，科學上的觀念幾乎還停留在19世紀。

在「加拿大」的傳統中，我認為有些作者具有吸引力。用Marshall McLuhan的說法來講，科技並不單止是件工具，我們毫無關係；它其實是相當於「第二層皮膚」。在現象學的後期，人們不再懷疑語言的意識本質。同樣的，我們現已無法想像一個沒有技術的世界。因為技術已經成為我們的語言，或者是意識上已經不可缺少的成份。我運用科技來創作，不是因為其原創性，而是因為它確實已成為世界上的常見和不可缺少的東西。
Microwave International New Media Arts Festival, exhibition catalogue, 4-15 Nov, 2006: 14, 18-23 38. Hong Kong (english, chinese)
監視系統能介入公眾和私人空間所擁有的技術是新穎的；例如，由英國「愛國者行動」引伸嘗試多樣化的電腦視覺技術，試圖從分析環境特徵來識別可疑人物。簡單說，技術被設計成為對人類的天然特徵進行評判。這種新的監察的權力結構及極端化是極其有問題的，因為正如Manuel DeLanda所言「它將極權企業的權力賦予了電腦」。

另一個新現象便是資料儲存系統的體積越來越細小，而效率增高了的壓縮及解壓縮算法，將源自於的事件連繽與播出。最近， reality show 電視節目使用攝影及影片攝像機，深入到社會的任何公眾和私人空間。我相信一種新的藝術形式正在形成之中，應對全視覺技術和後視覺的科技。諸如The Institute for Applied Autonomy, Harun Farocki 和 the Bureau of Inverse Technology的工作便是從這些考慮出發。
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (Canada)
拉法耶·洛扎諾 - 漢墨 (加拿大)

Surface Tension and Glories of Accounting Subsculpture 5
《表面張力》和《光榮的點算 雕塑5號》

Artist Statement:
Surface Tension is an interactive installation where a large human eye follows the public in the exhibition space with Orwellian precision. The piece was originally developed in 1992 in Madrid as a set-design for the theatre group Transition State Theory. The predatory nature of the piece was meant to parallel the totalitarian optic paradigm that had just been inaugurated by George Bush with the smart bombs of the first Gulf War. The project was reconstructed in 2004 as an interactive installation, to coincide with George Bush Jr’s new war on the Gulf and on his own people.

Glories of Accounting Subsculpture 5 is an interactive installation with a surveillance system that detects the position of the public in the exhibition space. When someone enters the space, a large hand appears on the screen automatically. The hand rotates along its forearm axis, following the visitor with the open palm always facing him or her. As more people enter the room, more hands appear and follow them. Ultimately Glories of Accounting Subsculpture 5 is a visualization of electronic detection, using a metaphor that signifies both distance (as in a “stop” gesture) and inclusion (as in the expression “show of hands”).

Technical statement:
Both pieces work with plasma or rear-projection displays, and a custom-made computerized surveillance system.

技術陳述：
兩個作品同是運用等離子或者背投顯示器，以及一個特別設置的計算機控制監控系統。
Biography:

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was born in Mexico City in 1967. In 1989 he received a B.Sc. in Physical Chemistry from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. His large installations in public space have been commissioned for events such as the Millennium Celebrations in Mexico City (1999) and the Expansion of the European Union in Dublin (2004). His work in kinetic sculpture, responsive environments, video installation and photography has been shown in many cities, including Biennials in Venice, Sydney, Istanbul, Havana, Liverpool and Shanghai. His work is in private and public contemporary art collections such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Jumex collection in Mexico and the Daros Foundation in Zurich. He has received several prizes including a Golden Nica in Linz, two BAFTA British Academy Awards in London, a Wired Rave Award in San Francisco, a Trophée des Lumières in Lyon and an International Bauhaus Award in Dessau.

個人履歷


他也獲得多個獎項及榮譽，例如林茲的「金尼卡」(Golden Nica)獎、兩次獲得倫敦電影及電影藝術學院(BAFTA British Academy Awards)獎、舊金山Wired Rave獎、里昂Trophée des Lumières獎及德國「國際包浩斯建築學院獎」(International Bauhaus Award)。
Conference:
Strategies of Interactivities in Media Arts & Visual Culture

will discuss the role of new media in transforming traditional boundaries of art from didactic to interactive; from exclusive to inclusive. We used to go to museums to observe paintings and sculptures and wait for them to inspire us. Today, the art works are looking at us, sensing us, listening to us and awaiting to respond. What are some of the implications media-arts bring to contemporary society? The speakers will discuss the historical developments of these approaches and their implications in today’s visual culture. The discussion will also bring new information to the art and design community: examining expectations of the new audience as a result of placing transgressive media in contemporary life and culture. Documentary footage of Daniel Sauter’s Light Attack will be presented during this conference.