

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW: Constructing LIVENESS in space-time

Name of studio leader 1 –

Caroline Vains (6 hours per week): caroline.vains@rmit.edu.au

Name of studio leader 2 –

Sean Healy (3 hours per week): sean.healy@rmit.edu.au

Design Studio statement

In this studio we will use technologies of light projection, sound and digital mapping to design and construct audio-visual environments that explore the experience of 'liveness' in space-time.

Liveness is an intense experience of here (in space) and now (in time) directly felt in all its immediacy, and unmediated by thought or interpretation.¹ The passage of time seems to stop and the present moment dilates and becomes palpable. Environment and self are perceived as emergent, and in a state of mutual becoming. Mitchell Whitelaw describes liveness as way of knowing the world 'characterised by intense moments of encounter or revelation – aesthetic experiences that place us in the world, and of it, rather than observing from the intellectual distance of interpretation'², or meaning.

As a primarily aesthetic experience, liveness is frequently triggered by phenomena, natural or artificial, that cause us to 'lose ourselves' in contemplative pleasure. Such phenomena often possess a kind of 'evanescent materiality'³. They are performative, variable, unstable, and highly responsive to even the most subtle and fleeting changes in the environment.

Liveness also refers to interactivity in real time. In having the capacity to interact with an environment or situation and transform it, or leave our personal imprint upon it, we are drawn into an immediate 'live' engagement with it that animates both the thing and us. This kind of interaction can generate conditions for what Max Carfard calls 'deep play', a kind of play in which we are utterly absorbed by, and share in, the becoming of the things with which we are engaged. A kind of play in which we step outside of the relentless progressivism of time and access 'the anarchist moment' of wu wei (effortless doing).⁴

This studio explores liveness in both these interpretations; as an evanescent aesthetic experience and an interactive 'game of events'

¹ 'Liveness is the sense of living presence', Pia Ednie Brown, <http://liveness.corpuseclectica.net>

² <http://teemingvoid.blogspot.com.au/2009/10/right-here-right-now-hc-giljes-networks.html>

³ <http://teemingvoid.blogspot.com.au/2011/04/after-screen-array-aesthetics-and.html>

⁴ Max Carfard. 'Deep Play in the City', DRAIN Vol. 5, No. 2, October, 2008. http://drainmag.com/index_psy.htm

Technology component

New media and associated technologies have given us the tools to explore the evanescent aesthetics and interactivity of liveness in ways not previously available. Drawing on these technologies, this studio will investigate ways of generating spaces of liveness. We will use technologies of light projection, sound and digital mapping to design and construct audio-visual environments that are performative, emergent, variable, unstable, absorbing, contemplative, sensitive, responsive and interactive. They will be situations constructed as 'a game of events'⁵ that draw us into deep play and a palpable sense of RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.

Significant words & concepts:

- liveness
- light projection
- sound
- digital mapping
- audio-visual environments
- performative
- emergent
- variable
- unstable
- absorbing
- responsive
- interactive
- continuum vs moment
- deep play and presentness
- lived time: Surrealist eruption of the marvellous, Benjamin's blasting open of the continuum of history, Lefebvre's moments, Situationist unleashing of lived time.
- RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.

Readings and/or texts:

- Teeming Void blog: <http://teemingvoid.blogspot.com.au/search/label/presence>
- <http://liveness.corpuseclectica.net>
- http://www.sial.rmit.edu.au/Projects/Liveness_Manifold.php
- Tobias Harris, 'Liveness: Designing for Audiences and Interaction', 2012, <http://tobyz.net/tobyzstuff/sites/default/files/tobyharris-livenesshci.pdf>
- <http://tobyz.net/tobyzstuff/sites/default/files/tobyharris-phd-oneyearreview.pdf>
- <http://tobyz.net/tobyzstuff/diary/2011/05/live-live-cinema-4000-words>
- Lev Manovich, *Language of New Media*, (MIT Press), 2002.
- Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema*, (P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York), 1970. Part 2, Synaesthetic Cinema: the end of drama.

References and/or precedents:

- http://www.acmi.net.au/wn_screening_room.htm
- HC Gilje - <http://hcgilje.com>
- Anti-VJ - <http://blog.antivj.com>
- 1024D - <http://1024d.wordpress.com>
- Rafael Lozano Hemmer <http://www.lozano-hemmer.com>
- White Night 2013, <http://whitenightmelbourne.com.au>
- Dark MOFO 2013, <http://darkmofo.net.au>
- Experimenta 2012, <http://www.experimenta.org>
- United Visual Artists: <http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/united-visual-artists/meet-uva>
- <http://www.aho.no/en/AHO/News-and-events/News/2011/Seen-by-nearly-600000/>

⁵ Guy Debord (1958) *Definitions*. Internationale Situationniste #1 (Paris, June 1958). Translated by Ken Knabb.

- Mini-documentary on projection mapping, with key artists: <https://vimeo.com/43385747>
- Article about Amon Tobin's projection mapping: <http://www.derivative.ca/Events/2011/AmonTobinVSquared/>
- <http://vjforums.com> – one of the central gathering points for VJ discussion...
- <https://delicious.com/carolinevains> For a host of AV examples
- Links from Sean: <https://delicious.com/jeanpoole/video> (wide-ranging collection of projection related bookmarks)
- A history of Australian Live Projection: <http://www.skynoise.net/2005/01/27/a-brief-history-of-vjing-in-australia>
- Examples of Sean's video: <http://skynoise.net/projects>

Student Capabilities

- Video projection and digital mapping software
- Designing and constructing audio-visual environments
- Workshop and construction skills
- Experience in working both individually and in collaborative groups.
- Opportunity to appreciate the strengths and limitations of both approaches.
- Applied theory.
- Development of skills of critical reflection on work in progress
- Practice led research

ASSESSMENT TASKS

There will be three phases in our exploration.

PHASE 1: SPATIALIZING SOUND

Due week 3 – individual work

- Each student will select a piece of music or record a soundscape.
- The spatial qualities of this sound piece will then be investigated through diagrams, models and drawings (that draw on the elementary language of design; line, edge, surface, texture, volume, mass, void, contrast, gradation, repetition, balance, proportion, juxtaposition, layers etc.).
- These sketch ideas will then be edited and resolved into a single built model.

PHASE 2: LIVENESS AS AN ABSORBING PLAY OF PHENOMENA; CONSTRUCTING SPACES THAT CHANGE OVER TIME

due week 7 – individual work

(outcomes to be installed and exhibited in gallery spaces on level 11, Wk 7, tue–fri)

- Step 1: Adapt this model for construction as an artefact, assemblage or installation. (in the workshop. No cardboard, foamcore etc.)
- Step 2: Construct the installation
- Step 2: Use projection (only light and colour) and digital mapping to express and animate the installation, bringing it to life as a space that changes over time.

PHASE 3: LIVENESS AS AN INTERACTIVE AUDIO-VISUAL EVENT; INCORPORATING SOUND AND INTERACTIVITY

due week 12 – group and individual work

(outcomes to be installed +exhibited in gallery spaces on level 11, wk 12 tue–fri)

- For the final phase students will work in groups of 2 or 3.

- You will select one of the groups designs and redesign it as an interactive audio-visual environment that integrates samples from the original sound track.
- we will redesign these installations as interactive audio-visual environments that integrate samples from the original sound track.
- The interactive elements will be lo-tech and generated by incorporating moving parts that can be activated by the body to transform the installation's existing light and sound conditions.
- each student will be responsible for devising and incorporating a unique set of moving parts that works in harmony with those developed by the other students working in the group.

TECHNOLOGY TIMETABLE

Weeks 1-4: intensive time dedicated to learning the projection, digital mapping and sound software.

Weeks 5-7: application of these software skills to individual student work on phase 2 of the project

Weeks 8-12: application of software skills to groups student work on phase 3 of the project.

Total assessment breakdown

All assessment projects are hurdle tasks

Design - 60%

Technology - 30%

Folio - 10%

Rooms & Tutors

Classes will be run out of the AV suite on level 7 (Tuesday morning and afternoon), and the 8.11.42 computer lab (Friday afternoon).

After week 4, Tuesday afternoon classes will also make use of the Gossard workshop.

Classes will be run as workshops. Students should bring necessary tools and equipment.

Caroline: caroline.vains@rmit.edu.au 0438 663781

Sean: sean.healy@rmit.edu.au

CALENDAR

MONTH 2013	WEEK BEGIN	TEACH WEEKS	TUESDAYS	FRIDAYS	ASSESSMENT
JULY	22	1	Assessment 1 briefing	Software intensive	
	29	2		Software intensive	
August	5	3	Assessment 2 briefing	Software intensive	Assessment 1 due
	12	4		Software intensive	
	19	5	Gossard workshop possibly closed all week (TBC)		

	26	6	Gossard workshop possibly closed all week (TBC)		
Sept	2		BREAK		
	9	7	Assessment 3 briefing		Assessment 2 due (outcomes to be installed and exhibited in gallery spaces on level 11, Wk 7, tue–fri)
	16	8			
	23	9			
	30	10			
Oct	7	11	CES survey		
	14	12	Last class - design	Last class - tech	(outcomes to be installed and exhibited in gallery spaces on level 11, wk 12 tue–fri)
	21	13	SWOT VAC		
	28	14	Final assessments all day		Assessment 3 presentations
Nov	4	15		Folio submission due 10am Projection night & drinks	
	11	16	moderation		