The Australian National University
Institute of the Arts

Canberra School of Art

MASTER OF ARTS (VISUAL ARTS)
by Research
1997

Bronwyn Coupe

REPORT
PRESENTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
MASTER OF ARTS (VISUAL ARTS)
ABSTRACT

The space of the screen:

Research into the modes through which the space of the screen is experienced by audiences engaging with interactive multimedia art. The Sub-thesis argues for the importance of historical precedents from the nineteenth century in establishing aesthetics and forms of subjectivity relevant to the consumption of technological culture. Emphasis is given to modes of spatiality pertaining to listening and touching, as well seeing.

A study taking the form of three installations, exhibited in five galleries, which comprises the outcome the Studio Practice component (67%), together with a Sub-thesis (33%), and the Report which documents the nature of the course of study undertaken.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

I would like to thank all the people who have supported me over the long period of study.

Staff and visiting artists at the Canberra School of Arts have been invaluable sources of advice and encouragement, especially Michael Le Grand, Nicholas Stranks, Josephine Starrs, Leon Cmielewski, Bronwyn Platten, Alan Koeninger, Gilbert Riedelbauch, Gordon Bull and Helen Ennis. Paula Dawson and Liz Ashburn, my supervisors at the University of NSW College of Fine Arts where I began my studies, alerted me to useful approaches to artistic practice. David Watt, a generous teacher and admirable artist, gave me inspiration, wise counsel and good humour.

My fellow students have been a wonderful source of information, feedback and encouragement. In particular I would like to thank Shane Breynard, Stephen Holland, Noni Nixon and Nien Schwarz. For their time and energy in assisting with the installation of my work I thank Jane Barney, Canberra Contemporary Art Space; Shiralee Saul and Sally Tulloch, Experimenta; Sarah Waterson, Sydney Intermedia Network; and Lucina Ward, Canberra School of Art Gallery. Neil Roberts generously made his gallery space available for work in progress.

The work would not have been made without practical and technical assistance. Thanks to Alex Reddaway for the carpentry for You Are Here. Aidan Macdonald produced the metal work and Michael Finucan the thoughtful sound design for Come to Grief. The video component of Come to Grief was made possible through the resources of the Centre for Networked Information and Publishing, facilitated by Mark Corbould and Garnet Znidaric. Finally for support in all kinds of ways, thanks to Martyn Jolly.

Supervisors:
Sculpture: David Watt.
Theory: Gordon Bull and Helen Ennis.
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Abstract ......................................................................................................................... 2
- Acknowledgments: ......................................................................................................... 3
- Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... 4
- Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 5
  - Context - art versus media ......................................................................................... 6
  - Footnotes to Introduction ............................................................................................ 8
- The Inside of Houses ....................................................................................................... 9
  - Spatiality of the screen ............................................................................................... 10
  - Installing the screen in a space .................................................................................. 12
  - Footnotes to Section 1 .................................................................................................. 14
- You are Here ................................................................................................................... 15
  - Ways of interacting ...................................................................................................... 15
  - Footnotes to Section 2 .................................................................................................. 17
- Come to Grief .................................................................................................................. 18
  - Speed, time and sound ............................................................................................... 18
  - Footnotes to Section 3 .................................................................................................. 21
- Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 22
- Bibliography .................................................................................................................... 23
- Addenda ........................................................................................................................... 24
INTRODUCTION

I proposed to examine the relatively new cultural form of audio-visual computer based interactive multimedia both through a theoretical project and through experimenting with my own artworks. The aim of both processes is to develop an understanding of the way the space of the screen in multimedia interactives is constructed and experienced by the audience.

The links between the theoretical research and the work, and between the works themselves have been very important. In many respects this can be summed up by the issues I raised in revising my MA program at the start of 1996, when I changed to studying full-time:

The studio component of my MA will be spent producing a number of works that try out ways of constructing effective interactives. While I will begin and concentrate on computer based interactives I will also be experimenting with placement of screens within installations.

Following initial discussions with David Watt, I propose to produce a series of works during my studies, works that will form "visual notes" towards a larger work and enable me to experiment with combinations of media and form. Following completion of the first version of *The Inside of Houses* as a desktop interactive I propose to work on some physical installations. I expect that all works will retain the "screen" as part of the assemblage, whether it be computer screen or film/video screen.

My previous experience has been largely in the time based media of film and video. My work in this area has been partly in what might be considered the visual or film arts and partly in the semi-commercial area that is referred to as 'the industry'. The latter in particular involves working in teams with more or less rigid hierarchies and divisions of labour. Part of my motivation for learning about interactive multimedia was to work in a context and a scale where I could be more involved in creating all elements of the work, or at least having artistic control over them. I was also interested in working in a way that allowed for experimentation, unhampered by the requirements of funding bodies, other people's timetables and the need to put out a 'product'.

I have achieved my intention in completing an interactive multimedia artwork that has been well received by audiences and curators. In addition, I have been fortunate in studying within the sculpture workshop at the Canberra School of Art, as I have been introduced to a range of different concepts and working methods, and particularly to interesting ideas about installation. It is not common for film and video makers to have much control over the way in which their works are exhibited and distributed. The interaction with teachers, fellow students and visiting artists has encouraged me to take a broader approach to what is possible in making screen based work, and widened my focus to include what is happening in the physical space occupied by the audience as well as the virtual space of the screen.
In this report I will discuss the three major pieces of work I have completed during my MA: The Inside of Houses, a multimedia computer interactive; You Are Here, an interactive light work and Come to Grief, a sculptural/video installation. The main emphasis will be on The Inside of Houses, as it was the most complex and time consuming of the works.

My MA program and the works made through it have all been completed over a long period of time and with several interruptions along the way. It is useful to quickly explain this as it has had a significant impact on the way my thinking and practice has changed in that time. Over this period a rapid development of interest and sophistication in interactive multimedia occurred. This has been of benefit in increasing the opportunities for seeing other artist’s interactive works. It has also upped the ante in terms of expectations for this kind of art and the speed of learning required, as the rate at which tertiary institutions have upgraded software and hardware has increased.

I commenced an MA in Visual Arts at the University of NSW College of Fine Arts in 1993. I was based in the 4D Department and had the use of the considerable resources of the Computer Research Laboratory. Although intending to undertake this study full-time, my subsequent move to Canberra meant I changed to part-time (and 300 km is a long way to the computer lab). I commenced The Inside of Houses at this point. In 1994 I stopped working on the MA due to full-time work commitments and the death of my mother which made continuing with a work based on family memory difficult. I started in the MA program at the Canberra School of Art part-time, finishing two semesters in 1995 and exhibiting a work in progress version of The Inside of Houses in October. In 1996 I went full-time and began some smaller works, of which You are here was exhibited in June. A finished version of The Inside of Houses was shown in October, and I also shot and edited the video for Come to Grief in this time. I was intending to finish that year but then needed to defer once again (from October 1996 - May 1997). A film I had been developing over the past four years received funding from the Australian Film Commission requiring my move back to Sydney for six months for production. So the final stage of this program has been undertaken partly part-time from Sydney and full-time on returning to Canberra in July this year. The Inside of Houses was shown in Sydney in April and Melbourne in June/July 1997. Come to Grief will be installed for examination and as a graduating exhibition in August 1997.

Context - art versus media

The nature of the social and architectural space, or apparatus, in which an experience is taking place impacts powerfully on the experience. Audiences, even those do not normally engage with art, are not naive. They are aware of and usually conform to the social and historical conventions that predicate the way we view art and use particular forms of media. They are trained in regard to the behaviour expected in different social spaces. This training may be conscious or unconscious, produced by social pressure or by the deployment of architectural or other physical constraints.
Much of the art that critically employs mass media forms trades on the familiarity the audience has with the “uses” of different kinds of media and employs this familiarity to comment on this “normal” use. However, the “bleed” of expectations from one use of media to another also accounts for the difficulty of audiences encountering a familiar form in a new environment, or an entirely new form in a familiar environment. As Penny notes of interactive art:

... the techniques of the user are also in a nascent stage. Into this vacuum pour paradigms from other areas, most commonly those from electronic gaming arcades, from the desktop computer, from television and from the art gallery. Not only in the artworks themselves but in the response of the users we find a curious condition of “paradigms in collision”.

As another example, single channel video works presented on a monitor in an art gallery are often dogged by difficulty of reception because of a confusion caused by viewer expectations of television. The intermittent and passive way in which television is generally viewed may not work for a video that requires close and active attention.

A bleed of expectations similarly impacts on the reception on desktop multimedia artworks when used by people trained by “twitch” games, that is video arcade games that require a fast automatic response in order to win - the shoot first before your character is killed approach. This rapid, often random reaction to a computer interactive may not be what an artist wants their audience to do. Alternately, interactors familiar with application software may find interactive art works confusing in their lack of clear purpose or instruction.

Other issues arising in gallery exhibition of interactive multimedia and other screen work include that of acoustic isolation, the willingness of audiences to switch modes to accommodate time based works and the dreaded distraction of technical novelty (people only want to know how it works rather than why). It is important to consider whether the audience is taking part in a singular or ‘consensual hallucination’. Can a work be experienced by many as opposed to only one person at a time? If only one, how long will each person need to have with the work?

There may then be some confusion as to whether the user finds themselves in the public or private domain. Subtle differences in scale and interface design can connote a relation to the personal viewing of television at home or to the functional software programs the audience might use at work, school or home in their everyday lives. Large screen presentations of interactive work, while allowing more people to see (and hear if the work has audio that is played through speakers) often connote the cinema. Intentionally or unintentionally this may cause unease. For example, some users find interacting with a work in a gallery in front of others akin to public performance.

In creating each of my works I have tried to come to an understanding of what mode or modes of experience are involved for the audience entering a space that includes a screen. Are they to be observers inspecting an artwork, participants engaged with another recognisable subject, or users immersed in an
environment? I have attempted to resolve these questions and to make works that effectively bridge a physical space and the space of the screen.

Footnotes to Introduction

THE INSIDE OF HOUSES

As mentioned, I came to the MA program of the CSA having completed a few semesters part-time at the University of NSW College of Fine Arts. I originally conceived my MA program as one that worked towards the completion of a single major work. This work was to be a large scale computer controlled interactive installation exploring contemporary ramifications of cartography. I soon realised that the scope and resources required for this work were such that I would be better to approach both the concept and the installation in stages. I began work instead on a desktop computer interactive. A CD-ROM version of the completed work is included with this report.

For the previous few years I had been interested in developments in art and theory that focussed on cartography. In particular the following thesis interested me:

In the West the dominant paradigm for knowing and controlling space is the map. If the way in which we remember or imagine space is influenced by desire, official maps can be considered as images of the unconscious of social history. Most people carry with them a personal version of this map that is subtly distorted. Notions of size, distance and direction are influenced by each person’s individual mythology.

The Inside of Houses is a desktop computer interactive which deals with cartography on a personal/domestic level. This work however retains a focus on the historical, social and political influences on perceptions of (even familiar) space. The Inside of Houses explores memory, imagination and space. It is based on floor plans I asked members of my family to draw, from memory, of a house we all lived in about 30 years ago. Each of the floor plans is quite different. In interviews, each member of the family had very different recollections of the place.

Notions of house and room size, distance, direction and connection vary in each person’s personal recollection. Unique connections link particular (and often peculiar) narratives to place. Synaesthetic recollections temper the way a space is recalled. In constructing this work I have included and manipulated video, drawings, photography, sound and computer programming to represent the stories I have been told. Starting from the floor plans, I have tried to construct the world that each of these people carries in their head.

The recollections of the house encompass activities of decorating, building, playing, leaving and the emotionally ambiguous struggles between child and parent. On a very simple level, the kind of confusion of memory, imagination and the images we see in media representing our collective past has contributed to the way I’ve constructed The Inside of Houses. On another level this work is a very personal one and one that has been pretty much felt through in its construction.

In scaling the work down to the personally political it was necessary to make a decision about the level of disclosure, that is how much literally of myself, and
The Inside of Houses Screen stills
Above: Sister’s house
Below: Brother’s house
my family, I wished to put into the work. This question, one of biography, returned as I made each of the ‘houses’ within the work. At the simplest level it informed the decision to focus on one house (when in fact we moved on average once every couple of years throughout my childhood). It also informed decisions as to whether to include actual family photos, home movies and to name names. While others have taken an intense interest in these issues, in the end I found I was more interested in creating a ‘universal’ kind of work about memory which meant maintaining a certain distance from the material. Hence the ‘houses’ that the user can explore are identified (by one voice) as “Mother’s house’, “Brother’s house’, ‘Sister’s house’ and ‘Father’s house’. There is some actual home movie footage of my family, recorded by my aunt, and a wedding photograph of my mother. However, I use these images in much the same way as the illustrations from magazines of the period and the contemporary video and photographs that have been art directed or digitally manipulated to suggest the same period.

Material that deals with representation of the family has a long history in painting and became a site of intense activity in photography in the seventies, for example for Jo Spence and other English feminist artists. I have not been so interested in exploring the politics of portraiture or family snapshots in this way. While sections of the work allude to power relations between children and adults, I am more interested in how such events mark the space of memory than the ugly flipside of happy family photos. Aesthetic questions of what and how to represent the memories each person had of the house have been the main issues rather than an analysis of why those recollections surfaced.

**Spatiality of the screen**

The house, quite obviously, is a privileged entity for a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space... For the house furnishes us dispersed images and a body of images at the same time....¹
And the poet well knows that the house holds childhood motionless “in its arms”.²

The most important problem this work presented was how to conceive and represent the spatiality interior to the work itself. That is, creating the navigation and animation which moves the user around and between the different ‘houses’.

I have used the relationships between family members as metaphors for constructing the ‘architectural’ links in the work. After a linear introductory sequence, the viewer comes to the screen from which all the houses can be entered. It is also possible to move between some of the houses via links outside of the drawn outer wall of each house. You can move between the ‘Brother’s house’ and ‘Sister’s house’ via the yard, the shared space of play. A dog guarding the fence separating the different yards of the Brother and Sister must be stopped from barking before the user can choose where to go next.

It is also possible to move between the ‘Mother’s’ and ‘Father’s’ house. To go from the Mother’s house the user chooses the path leading from the patio. This
The Inside of Houses Screen stills
Above: Father's house
Below: Mother's house
activates the playing of a snippet of a home movie in which two formally
dressed children run up the path after being kissed goodbye by a bare chested
man. The man, the father, waves goodbye. The user can then choose to go back
to the house they have come from (Mother's) or go to the house of the Father.
From the Father's house, a journey represented by a series of maps overlayed
with the sound of a car can take the user to a local swimming spot. Here more
Standard 8 footage is used to show the mother playing with the children in the
water. I have used these bits of footage to signify a 'point of view' - the mother's
of the father and visa versa.

Each house has a similar 'geography' - it is a space represented by a hand-drawn
plan and aurally by the sound of the movement of the 'person' occupying the
house. Images and sounds representing memory fragments are found within
some of the rooms of the house. The user can choose, witness and interpret
these fragments. The way in which the user moves and knows 'where' the
fragments are is conveyed by conventional cursor icons - a pointer shows where
you are on the screen, a little hand tells you that you can activate a particular
spot. I had experimented with a range of these navigational devices and decided
to keep to a consistent convention in order not to confuse. The meaning of
these cursor icons has been established in interactive multimedia over the past
five years. While I had trialed using my own personal icons, a conventional
symbology was more useful because what might 'happen' in each of the houses
varies.

The Mother's house is largely about decorating and furnishing the house. At
one stage I began constructing a more active model that allowed users to choose
a room, along with its wall colour, floor covering and furniture. The furniture
could be 'arranged' in the room. I abandoned this when feedback I got was that
it seemed strange to be able to rearrange someone else's house.

The Father's house is the one which the user can never 'enter' - in that there are
no representations of the inside of the house, and the sound is of someone
gardening and building. This is meant to convey my Father's experience as he
related it to me - he recalls travelling to and from the house and how on
weekends he built a retaining wall and gardening. He worked two jobs, as an
engineer and draftsman, and could only describe the interior of the house in
terms of its measurements and architectural features. In some ways for him any
house is a composite of a lived space and an object of professional interest. It
thus loses a certain amount of its particularity.

The Sister's house contains sounds and videos of ambiguous gestures. We see a
child being taken by the hand by an adult - an act either guiding and protecting
or removing and constraining. Similarly a child put on a high chair may be
elevated to the centre of attention or isolated in a position from which they
cannot escape. Thrown high into the air the child screams in either or both
thrill and terror.

The Brother's house by contrast is a more playful look at the negotiations
between adults and children. The user must first choose a philosophy of life:
"Life is a mess - stuff just happens" or "Life is a game - if you play by the rules
you get what you want". The user's philosophy sets up the consequences of
The Inside of Houses
Installed in Cube gallery,
Canberra Contemporary
Art Space
28 September - 27
October 1996
their following actions - either arbitrary or rule governed respectively. Now they can visit areas of the house and choose to behave in a number of ways in a given scenario. If your life is rule governed, behaving well will earn pats, behaving badly will get smacks.

The final module in the work is ‘Your House’. This space is only available after two of the other houses have been visited. Here, I was interested in allowing for a more open kind of interactivity. In ‘Your House’ the user finds simple drawing and writing applications with which they may contribute their stories about a place they have lived in. The contributions are saved, along with the person’s name, which then appears so that others can view these stories. This part of the work has been very satisfying both for many who have engaged with it and for me as it provided excellent means of knowing how people are responding to it. I have been delighted with the generosity and poignancy with which people have shared their memories. It seems that a strong connection is made between the virtual space of memory in the interactive and the space of reverie of the user. Sets of drawings contributed when the work has been exhibited are supplied on the attached CD-ROM.

Installing the screen in a space

As already indicated, I have had the opportunity of installing the work a number of times and in slightly different versions. This iterative exhibition practice is common practice for interactive works for fairly obvious reasons. Two of the installations represent different, if somewhat typical ways in which interactive multimedia work may be treated in galleries.

*The Inside of Houses* was shown in the Cube gallery at Canberra Contemporary Art Space. There were no constraints as to what I could do with this small multi-purpose gallery space. I was interested in making the work fit the space and appeal to those who were not particularly interested or literate in computer based work. I had the opportunity to get advice from an artist who very effectively utilises ‘commercial’ media in his work - Alfredo Jaar. He suggested that the computer be imagined as part of the scene within the screen world as a way of offering a connection from the real world to the screen world.

My interpretation of this was to put a fairly standard home use computer into the space, playing up the gallery’s domestically scaled room and window. The window adjacent to the gallery was dressed with a curtain and a 1960s table and chairs were arranged in the space, lit with a small lamp. The opening screen of the work (to which it reverted if no-one had used the work for some time) showed the installation as it was arranged. On looking into the space the viewer would see the room reproduced in the screen. Every so often a 1960s Australian pop song would start playing, alerting the audience to the presence of the work in the space. I tried to avoid a staged feel by selecting furniture that was not too precisely period or kitsch. It was more of a kind that might be found in an ordinary house, either in the 1960s or today. The low light level, relative privacy and comfortable chairs encouraged users to participate, often in small groups where people would take turns to navigate the work or contribute to it.
The Inside of Houses
Installed in e-media gallery,
Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne.
The work has been most recently shown as the first in a series to be presented in a newly created space called e-media. This collaboration between Experimenta and the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne aims specifically to show CD-ROM works (although my work was in fact running off hard disk so that the contributions could be saved). The space then is generic with a computer installed in a fairly straightforward way in a small space, opening off a larger gallery. The management of the gallery had also decided to contain the sound of the interactive, and maintain the (mythical) contemplative space of the gallery by attaching headphones to the computer. This space required a new approach. The opening sequence of The Inside of Houses was modified to silently play an animated loop to attract the eye of the audience in the next gallery. I found it more difficult to deal with the sound. As Sean Cubitt has remarked:

Sound in installation ... defines a space, as sculpture and architecture do. To reduce sound to this Cartesian solipsism [by headphones], anchored to the ears rather than the whole, resonant body, and focused at the mystical seat of mental governance midway between the ears, this is to erase the sculptural specificity of sound...the Cartesian headset militated against the sociality of moving through sound.³

While I was documenting the work I watched two young women interact, swapping between using the mouse while the other listened through the headphones, with a constant questioning of “what is it doing now?” While I had made this piece mainly thinking of a one to one relationship with a user, it remains the case that many people visit galleries with friends. Also, some people prefer to observe someone else interact than ‘drive’ the work themselves.

While I will probably continue to modify this interactive, I am wary of expanding it much further. It is not important for every user to explore all parts of the work in one go. However, I feel that users enjoy having a relatively complete picture of what constitutes its parts. As an art work there is no need for hours of ‘play time’.

On a technical level the interactive was an enormous learning experience, one that involved teaching myself a range of computer programs (at some times without the aid of a manual) and processes that included:

- scanning and manipulating drawn and photographic still images (mainly in PhotoShop and DeBabeliser)
- digitising, editing and manipulating video images (using Premiere and MovieShop)
- constructing three dimensional images (using Infini-D)
- digitising, editing and manipulating audio (using SoundEdit Pro)
- animating and programming these elements into a coherent, navigable artwork (in MacroMedia Director).

To code with the sophistication required for the level of interactivity I wanted the work to have I also audited a course offered by the Computer Science faculty at the ANU: Introduction to Programming and Algorithms.
Footnotes to Section 1

YOU ARE HERE

I was invited to show in the Digital Arts Festival by Lucina Ward. This took place at a time when I was revising my thoughts on both the nature of interactivity and the way in which interactive work could be presented in a gallery space. This was after *The Inside of Houses* was shown as work in progress at the 1995 Canberra Festival of Contemporary Art. It was one of many CD-ROMs that the audience of the "Multimedia Moot" could choose to 'play' on a number of computers set up on benches in a 1930's room in Gorman House. It was a heavily trafficked, visually and aurally noisy space. I became aware of some of the contingencies that impacted on how the audience might project themselves into the space of the screen.

Ways of interacting

Canadian artist David Rokeby has proposed that interactive artwork acts as a mirror of the self: "technology and art are interactive when they reflect our actions, interpretations and decisions back to us". There are a number of ways in which they perform this mirroring. Navigable structures such as *MYST, Handsight* and *The Inside of Houses* present the audience with an articulation of space and a method of navigating within it. "The sequence in which the spectator experiences these vistas form a unique reading of that space." Limited media, such as Toshio Iwai's *Music Insects* or Myron Kruger's *Videospace* blur the line between artist and audience. Here the audience become creators in a medium designed by the artist. Other kinds of interactives include automata, such as those used by Jon McCormack in producing *Turbulence*, and finally works that explicitly invoke the idea of a mirror. In these "transforming mirrors" the interactor's image or silhouette is often an active component of these works. Alternately, a representation of the interactor is seen on the screen, following their movements like a shadow. "In such work the content is contained in this difference between the gesture and its transformed or recontextualized reflection".

I had decided to explore some of these modes of interactivity and to do so outside of the computer laboratory in the hope that this might prove a faster way of 'sketching' a work that could then be trailed with interactors.

The first of these 'sketches' was taking up the notion of the automata - *Penultimate or Automatic Pen Machine (APM)*. My idea was to construct a simple model of machine mediated interactivity - you push a button and something happens. In the case of this machine - modelled on drink and condom dispensing machines and ATMs - it would deliver a second hand pen, which might or mightn't work. It was a humorous metaphor for computer use characterised by the fact that: you would need to follow a set of instructions (or protocols); it promised you something good (ie: a free pen); the mechanism of the event was hidden; and the outcome may or may not be useful (ie: the pen might not work). Once completed I wanted to install the machine in a fairly public space and monitor the way people interacted with it.
You are here
Installation
Digital Arts Festival, Canberra School of Arts Gallery
14 - 23 June 1996
This work was unfortunately never completed as I was unable to solve the problem of engineering a feeder that could cope with the many differently sized and shaped pens that were to go into it. Neither a gravity fed or spring loaded mechanism would work. Using a batch of new, uniformly sized pens would have destroyed the metaphor. However the process of planning and thinking through the issues of how to get an audience to interact was very useful. It was also an excellent exercise in developing some basic (physical) installation planning and construction skills in preparation for later works.

A ‘transforming mirror’ was the type of interactive I chose to make for the Digital Arts Festival. The idea of making a work where the content was essentially limited to the interaction appealed to me as a way of being able to understand something about how people were responding to a screen simply as itself. You are here, was an attempt to draw attention to the nature of interactivity. In keeping with the curatorial theme of ‘digital’ the mirror reflection was created by lights that were either on or off. It was also designed to be used by a number of people at once.

The work comprised two hundred and eighty six light sensitive night lights which I wired in parallel on a black board. Each light is equipped with a sensor diode that turns the light on if it is dark and off if light falls upon it. The shape of the board and layout of the lights in lines reflects the scan lines of TV and computer monitors. The board was mounted opposite a bright security light in a specially made light proof room. A motion detector monitoring the narrow entrance triggered the security light when some one entered. The light then cast the shadow of any people in the room onto the board, lighting up their silhouette - putting not their names but their shapes up in lights. Any large movement in the room would re-trigger the motion detector and a timer would turn the security light out after a few minutes.

The opening to the room allowed viewers to see a small portion of the bank of lit red lights as they approached the entrance, attracting them to it. Once passing the threshold the security light ensured that their moving shape was lit up opposite as they entered the room.

I spent some time watching the interaction and asking people about their response. From my observations I found younger and more technologically interested people found the interactivity of prime interest. I was surprised that others would spend quite a bit of time in the space but preferred to stand in the dark rather than in the stark light to interact. The painterly aspect of the work - which I had thought about but was not important to me - was sometimes very appealing to these people. Some preferred to watch others interact.

Over the period the work was up there was a bigger than expected decay of the lights. People said they enjoyed the less than perfect operation of the piece, especially the flickering of the lights, which I can only describe as nervous. Some felt the irregularity enhanced the depth of the surface, others that it made the work friendlier and more organic. That is, when a machine is not perfect it is easier to anthropomorphise its ‘behaviour’ as it can’t be explained by its design. People liked the flickering and the fact not all the lights were on. One person said it reminded her of switchboards and old fashioned mainframe
You are here
Installation
Digital Arts Festival, Canberra School of Arts Gallery
14 - 23 June 1996
computers, the flickering signifying that some kind of communication or information transfer was taking place.

Footnotes to Section 2

For more detailed descriptions of the works quoted see my sub-thesis.
COME TO GRIEF

This work is strongly influenced by my reading on the way in which the contemporary subject is able to project themselves into an imaginary or virtual space. As my sub-thesis demonstrates, the postmodern subject is able to do this with ease. Many modes are available for engaging in an audio-visual space for the subject shaped by the particular sets of experiences that predominate in Western culture. Important amongst these are the conditioning of perception through rapid transport (as a stationary passenger), the use of instantaneous communications technologies (allowing for telepresence) and saturation in a field of media. The subject is equally well trained in classical identifactory relationships with cinema and television and the more visceral prosthetic involvement common to action and ride sequences.

Speed, time and sound

The way in which sound alters the experience of temporality is of particular importance to this work. Any person who has worked in music, radio, video or film editing is aware of the radical shifts in the received time that occur through alteration of sound. The impact on the perceived pace and length of a visual presentation is as strongly influenced by the sound track as the emotional impact was proved by Eisenstein to be affected by visual montage.

Interestingly, most explorations of detemporalisation of the contemporary subject do not take the aural aspects of media into account but rather focus on the change in space and time brought about by the image. This includes propositions about the collapse of space and time bought about by the instantaneous transmission of images; discussions of the detemporalisation of the postmodern subject whose relation to history has been substituted by a relation to images (real and simulated) of history; and accounts of the derealised temporality bought about by the ‘mobilized virtual gaze’ that pervades all aspects of both public (shopping, tourism, cinema attendance) and private spheres (home TV and VCR) of contemporary life.

While these are undoubtedly powerful effects, I would argue the derealised subject is also one who is familiar with aural experiences that double this detemporalisation in different and significant ways. Sound recording technologies from the phonograph to the CD are capable of bringing the past into the present (including the very voices of the dead). The telephone allows us to be simultaneously in two time zones while conversing with a friend who is both spatially and temporally elsewhere/elsewhen to us. Answering machines and voice-mail have accustomed the contemporary subject to dealing with the past and future as if it were the present. To this I would add the effects of “pace” described above which are experienced and actively performed on an everyday basis when people drive through a landscape to their favourite tape, work with the radio on, or work in a busy, noisy offices in close proximity to other peoples’ conversations.
Source image for *Come to Grief*

Photograph by Martyn Jolly
I would argue that the separate and combined visual and aural temporalities have us living with a multiple sense of time wherein individual segments can go faster or slower. Indeed the contemporary subject, more than at any other period in history, lives within a multitracked audio/visual environment that streams images and sound into temporal channels, any of which may be playing at a variety of speeds.

Paul Virilio and Anne Friedberg, among others, talk about the significance of the change of perspective achieved by the subject moving at speed in a vehicle, be it train, car or plane. A very interesting depiction of this, as an altered state of consciousness for the nineteenth century subject, is given in the long opening train travel scene of Jim Jarmusch’s film *Dead Man*. Johnny Depp is shown travelling by train across the American West. The views from the train of the landscape are shot to enhance the peculiar sensation of the landscape passing by the sedentary traveller and appearing both to be moving fast and yet surreally slow. A real sensation of passing through the landscape is achieved.

The interior of the locomotive is also a bizarre theatre with a passing parade of characters who share part of the days long journey with Depp. A large part of the heightened sense of alienation and passivity of the viewing subject - here Depp - is due to the overwhelming sound of the engine, the wheels against the track and the rattling of the wooden carriages. Depp does not converse with anyone, and a more engaged relation to events on the journey only occurs when very loud sounds (such as gunshots and other explosions) interrupt or sound synchronous with events are restored when the train stops.

This underlies a very important point regarding the nature of speed and its impact on perception. Virilio notes ‘later physiologists were to discover that the faster we move (in a car, for instance) the further ahead the eye focuses.’ The “later” here is interesting and reminds us that it should in no way be expected that humans, as creatures not able to move faster than their, or a horse’s, legs could carry them until the eighteenth century, should “naturally” be able to perceive and comprehend an environment through which they are moving at very high speeds.

However I am also interested in what happens to sound when the body is accelerated through space. The effects are quite different to the dynamic adjustment of vision. With sound there is not an acceleration or distortion of normal environmental sound so much as a replacement of it. The sounds emanating from the environment which is being moved through are masked by the sound of the travelling machine. This may take the form of the cacophony of engine and vibration noises that accompanied most nineteenth century modes of travel and continue in older automobiles. However through the development of transportation technology there has been a movement to shield the passengers from these sounds associated with movement.

Advertisements for vehicles of all kinds (car, train, ship and plane) emphasise the joy of silent travel, where the passenger is acoustically isolated from these mechanical sounds. The passenger is also then isolated from the sounds of the environment exterior to the vehicle. In the second half of the twentieth century other sounds have been introduced to then “fill” the empty aural space, from
Come to Grief  Screen stills
tour announcements to a selection of ‘listening pleasures’ provided by mobile sound systems. The longer and faster the journey, the more likely it will be accompanied by a sophisticated artificial sound track comprising one or a mixture of voice, music and sound effects.

A white man driving through Chicago ghettos in a plush rental car on a hot Saturday evening with the AC and stereo on, with tinted windows and the doors automatically locked, is in virtual reality.\(^3\)

I would argue that the linking of the (relatively) sedentary body, accelerated vision and an artificial sound track is crucial to the formation of the postmodern subject and a real and important determinant in its ability to rapidly shift modes between the physical being in the world, centred in the body, and a projection into a space mediated by apparatuses of media. Further, while both sound and vision contribute to both, the difference could be that vision projects us more into the “elsewhere” of a virtual space but it is sound that produces the radical “elsewhen”. The disconnection of the sound of travel truly makes the distance of a journey different to the elapsed time of our travel in the same way that the music in a film or the voice of a long dead recorded artist suggests to us that we are in another time.

I wanted to create a work investigating the issues and experiences that intersect in this field. I originally proposed to create a mixed media installation work comprising a ramp covered in car tyre strips leading up to a large screen. Projected on the screen was to be a digitally enhanced and manipulated video image endlessly repeating a journey along a short strip of highway. Images from the road, memory, television and computer were to be woven through this journey that starts in day and ends in night. The sound of a travelling car and music, the noise of a projector, fragments of conversation and other sounds evoking the theatre of the mind of the long distance driver would fill the space. I had been offered an opportunity to exhibit this work in the Canberra Contemporary Art Space Manuka gallery, one of the few spaces in Canberra in which it is feasible to make a dark enough space for exhibiting a video projection.

_Come to Grief_ then seeks to talk about the relationships between space, speed and subjectivity. It also has strong emotional significance for me as a personal piece about the pain of separation from loved ones by physical distance and death. It asks, if images and sounds travel faster than we can move, and thoughts flicker faster still, what is the time it takes to drive across the state?

The video, with its soundtrack, is an essential part of this work. I am collaborating with a sound designer, Michael Finucan, in making a soundtrack that utilises stereo to spatialise the audio and to evoke alternatively the road, the car interior, the cinema and a series of telematic spaces. The piece is an investigation using a non-traditional narrative and non-synchronous sound. It will be projected in a wide screen format to better evoke the notion of the cinema and the car windscreen. By carefully positioning of screen, the speakers, the rubber road and other sculptural elements I hope to create a charged environment that works to merge the virtual and physical spaces of the installation. In the process of making the work some aspects of the original
proposal have been altered. Largely this has been a process of simplification and abstraction. As the work is still under construction and not yet installed I will not attempt to further describe its final form, although I look forward to the results of this experiment.

Footnotes to Section 3


2 I am aware of the fact that physiologically distortion from movement is an important cue that humans use to decode sound and make aural judgements regarding an object’s position in space. I am also aware of that a large amount of research into these processes has been undertaken, largely in order to perfect the (stereo) recording and reproduction of synthetic sound. However here my specific interest is in the impact of travelling at speed in vehicles. It is interesting to note that one of the most familiar sounds connoting speed - a “whoosh” that often accompanies cinematic or radio dramas where a vehicle is moving at great speed, is actually a sound derived from that of the rapid displacement of air that would be evident to someone listening to the passage of the vehicle from outside of it.

CONCLUSION

Working in the sculpture workshop at the Canberra School of Art has given me unexpected opportunities to examine and experiment with what is happening both ‘outside’ as well as ‘inside’ the screen. I have explored how the spatial relationships created by installed screen work can influence the audience differently to the way in which an audience responds to a screening in a cinema, at home or at work. In becoming more aware of the issues pertaining to material space I have refocussed my studies and been alert to the impact of these issues on other artists’ work as well as my own.

The meaning of a screen work presented on a monitor can be considerably altered by appropriately contextualising the screen within the architectural space it is occupying. Further, more creative interaction can be achieved, even with a work that is limited to standard mouse based rolling and clicking, when the artist thinks about the metaphoric implications of a body moving through space and the ways in which the subject can be engaged in the space of the screen.

By creating a number of works I was able to explore more fully the possibilities for the relationship of the audience to ‘new media’ or ‘electronic’ or ‘time based’ art in general. I have expanded my practice to presenting screens, be they electronic, computer or video in a variety of installations. I look forward to further iterations of some of the pieces I have already made and to continuing to work with the enhanced and fresh perspective I have gained.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ADDENDA

Original Study Plan 1994

Revised Study Program 1995

Curriculum Vitae

Instructions for use of CD-ROM

CD-ROM of The Inside of Houses
A. RESEARCH PROGRAM

CONTEXT

I came to the MA program of the CSA having completed a few semesters part-time at the NSW College of Fine Arts. I original conceived my MA program as one that worked towards the completion of a single major work. This work was to be a large scale computer controlled interactive installation exploring contemporary ramifications of cartography. I soon realised that the scope and resources required for this work was such that I would be better to approach both the concept and the installation in stages.

I began work on a desktop computer interactive The Inside of Houses which deals with cartography on a personal/domestic level. This work however retains a focus on the historical, social and political influences on perceptions of (even familiar) space. It incorporates still images - drawn and photographic; video; audio and computer programming.

While at COFA I had the good fortune to be working with other multimedia artists such as Linda deMent (Tales of Typhoid Mary), Brad Miller (Rhizome) and Michelle Barker (Queerography). I also have discussion and contact with Josie Starrs (VNS Matrix) and Troy Innocent (IdeaOn). These are all prominent in the relatively new field of multi-media. Their work is strongly influenced by other media they have worked in - largely photography and computer graphics.

I feel my work is evolving in a different direction through my previous experience in the time based media of film and video. There is a continuation of certain concerns I have worked with - particularly in the naturalisation of political processes. Interest in the construction space in electronic media was also a key in certain earlier video works and installations. The Bicentennial Will Not Be Televised, in particular examined the construction of the Australian nation/nationality through television in 1988. This collaborative video was made by a group we called Television As Performance Space.

I intend to use the remaining period of my studies to work in stages, producing a short theses and a number of computer interactives and installation works.
I want to undertake computer based multimedia work incorporating video, film, digitised still images and audio. I am interested in researching the heuristics and structures of multimedia interactives as well as creating specific work which is also related to the way in which three dimensional space is represented in two dimensional electronic media.

1.1 Nature of Research Project

i. Interactive multimedia

Computer controlled multimedia interactives are an emerging form in both art and industry. They are largely familiar as works developed as a part of larger exhibitions, as the hands on piece within an educational museum show, a promotional tool at conferences and trade shows, or as one of a number of games in an arcade. When exhibited as art works in a gallery space, they have suffered similar difficulties of reception that have vexed video works. These include audience confusion due to expectations associated with their industrial counterparts, poor acoustic isolation, unwillingness of audiences to switch modes to accommodate time based works and the dreaded distraction of technical novelty (people only want to know how you did it rather than why). Add to this the difficulties of negotiating an appropriate haptic interface, thinking through the implications of a work that may only be experienced one on one etc.... While many works to date also suffer from the technical problems encountered by new forms, the development of any practice is also dependent on the ability of users to think in new ways, to literally create.

I want to examine the relatively new cultural form of audio-visual interactive multimedia both through a theoretical project and through experimenting with interactive works. The aim of both processes can be expressed as wanting to develop an understanding of the way the "space" of/in the screen is constructed and experienced. The aim is to develop an understanding of the existing ways audio-visual interactives are structured and to apply this to a new structure that can be applied to a specific works, or prototypes thereof.
Representations of space

For the last few years I have been engaged with developments in art and theory that have focussed on cartography. In particular the following thesis interests me. In the West the dominant paradigm for knowing and controlling space is the map. If the way in which we remember or imagine space is influenced by desire, official maps can be considered as images of the unconscious of social history.

In constructing The Inside of Houses I have been investigating what could be described as the domestic level of this thesis. That is, I am working with the maps people carry in their heads of spaces of they are familiar with through lived experience. Using the floor plans drawn from memory of a house members of my family once lived in, I am working with the subtle distortions of architectural space that constitutes the personal map. Notions of size, distance and direction are influenced by each person’s individual mythology.

Working on an entirely computer based work has also prompted certain questions about the specific spatiality of the screen. I expect to continue in this direction, narrowing my exploration of cartography to aspects specifically relevant to the content of individual works.

1.2 Studio Practice and outcomes

Following initial discussions with David Watt, I propose to produce a series of works during my studies, works that will form "visual notes" towards a larger work and enable me to experiment with combinations of media and form. Following completion of The Inside of Houses as a desktop interactive I propose to work on some physical installations. I expect that all works will retain the "screen" as part of the assemblage (whether it be computer screen or film/video screen).

Objectives for the studio work are to:
• Become adept in using computer programs for authoring multimedia interactive works. This will also involve importing, creating and manipulating sound and still and moving images.
• Experiment with the incorporation of screen based work as an element of installation.
• Build structures that will allow users to creatively interact with a work, that is to develop possible new ways of structuring paths through an interactive space.
• Experiment with forms of storytelling using audio-visual and textual messages deployed in space.
• Work with positioning the audience/participants in relation to physical and electronic installations.
• Experiment with configurations for encouraging different ways of interacting with work - eg: single person at a time, many people at one time. This could explore ways of encouraging intimacy, play etc

In summary, I am interested in exploring possible new ways of structuring paths through an interactive, and also new forms of storytelling using audio-visual and textual messages. The objective of this is to project new forms of narrative and non-narrative construction and new ways of deriving meaning from such forms. I hope the process of making a series of works and evaluating the response to them will be an effective way of making progress in a fairly unmapped area. A certain degree of self-reflexivity will exist in the final work, enabling and challenging the audience/participant to approach the interactive in a fresh way.

I have begun this work in the partly completed interactive The Inside of Houses.
The topic of my thesis is the way in which the space of the screen in multimedia interactives is constructed and experienced. Reading in this area has prompted the following questions:

- Is there a difference in the social construction of architectural/physical space and virtual/screen space? If so, in what way are they linked or do they influence each other?
- What are the links between spatiality and temporality in/on the screen? This question has been theorised in a number of ways such as the "narrative space" of cinema theory to the proposal that time and space are collapsed in the "electronic city" of Virilio.
- What is the screen if it is not a surface?
- What is the relationship (beyond metaphor) of a body moving through space and the mouse hand driving a representation of space moving through time?

In order to address these questions I propose to read and consider:

1. The existing body of theory surrounding the production and interpretation of multimedia work
2. Theories about the way in which space is constructed, especially the space of the screen
3. Other relevant historical and philosophical theories that might be applied to analysis of new media, for example, those informing the emergence and meaning of photography, video, cinema, and sound recording.
4. Theories of the imagination and memory of space, such as psychoanalysis.

I intend to examine the presuppositions and usefulness of these writings for supporting and critiquing multimedia works.

While I initially nominated to do only 20% of my work as thesis, I feel it is likely that I will produce a more substantial theoretical piece as part of my degree (probably up to 33%). However, as I will be studying part-time I feel it is best to stage this work. I intend to present the first part of the research paper as a
This way of working will be particularly useful because of the way that writings about computer interactives, and new media in general, seem to divide easily into certain categories. One approach (typical of computer journals, certain new technology art collections and some of the rhetoric that surrounded early video work) is to invent a new language and future in which to position this type of work. This kind of writing ignores or discounts existing theory, and focusses on the unique nature of, for example, interactivity in order to come to unique claims for the effects and potential of new work. This can result in prophesy of technological utopia/dystopia.

An alternative approach is to build on theory relating to more mature media. In some cases this can becomes a form of historicism, constructing a paternalism that places new work in the authentic lineage of an accepted tradition (a trend discussed by Rosalind Krauss). One example of this in recent times is the revision of the history of film that valorises the "cinema of attractions" as a neglected tradition overshadowed by classical Hollywood narrative film. This alternative cinema driven by the visceral and experiential (as opposed to catharsis and suture) is traced back to zoetropes and the first exhibitions of a train pulling into a station, through wide-screen and 3-D movies to large screen immersion cinema such as I-Max. Now this tradition of "ride" movies are being claimed as the natural ancestors of games and interactives.

I don't wish to sound overly critical of what I see as two valid approaches to theorising and speculating on a new media. Both an analysis of what is singular and what is derived from other forms are essential to its understanding. I only want to identify the edges of the terrain I expect to cover. I trust that I will be able to navigate a course through, using these points and guided by theory developed to account for the previous emergence of new media, and arrive at a conclusion as interesting as the journey.

2.2 Studio Practice

The studio component of my MA will be spent producing a number of works that try out ways of constructing effective interactives. While I will begin and concentrate on computer based interactives I will also be experimenting with placement of screens within installations.
As part of my research I will continue to examine multimedia interactive installations and talk with practitioners. In addition to examining computer based multimedia works I am interested in more closely examining the work of artists such as Alfredo Jaar. In particular I admire his ability to orchestrate coherent but disjointed narratives through the display of images in space and his evocation of personal stories using technology and media associated with the entertainment and advertising industries. I feel closer examination of his work would be beneficial to my work.

The construction of electronic and physical installations "works towards" will involve the following activities:

* sourcing images, including archival material
* shooting original footage on video and/or film and scanning and manipulating these images
* sourcing, recording original audio and mixing audio effects and music
* researching and writing scripts
* directing and editing sequences of sounds and/or images
* briefing and working with other artists to create images and sounds (eg: music)
* designing and constructing spaces for interactivity

I expect the content of individual works will take as starting points images and sounds found in:

* Historical representations of three dimensional space, particularly cartography (especially re their political uses in relation to colonisation).
* Personal representations of imagined and remembered space.
* Scientific methods of approximating space, both ‘actual’ and theoretical.
* Representations of space in non-Western cultures, especially those of indigenous cultures of Australia and the Pacific. The use of forms other than coded two dimensional representations, such as performance and song, is of particular interest.

The studio component of the project will involve the activities outlined in 1.2 Studio Practice and I will require access to:

- a powerful Macintosh computer with colour screen and authoring and graphics and
- audio manipulation software.
• a digital scanner with image manipulation software
• audio recorder and digitiser for inputting to computer
• video and 16mm cameras
• lights and occasional use of a video studio
• sound recording and mixing equipment
• tools and studio space (from second semester 1995)

4. TIMEFRAME

As I am applying for the parttime MA, I propose the following schedule:

Year 1 Session 1 Part-time
   Orientation
   Continuation of theoretical and practical research, further work on The Inside of Houses
   Completion - to initial stage of The Inside of Houses

Year 1 Session 2 Part-time
   Further research
   Further work and exhibition of The Inside of Houses. Evaluate Construction of installation work(s). Exhibition and evaluation.

Year 2 Session 1 Full-time
   Outline of Dissertation
   Writing and delivery of first part of dissertation as seminar paper
   Continuing research and writing of thesis
   Broader exhibition of work to date. Evaluation.
   Experimentation with structure and forms of interactive media, including placement in installation
   Development of structural model for larger interactive
   Scripting and recording image and sound sequences for the interactive work

Year 2 Session 2 Full-time
   Write up Sub-thesis
   Construct and test interactive
   Exhibit interactive
   Evaluation of work
A. RESEARCH PROPOSAL 1994

1 AIMS/SUBJECT

I want to undertake computer based multimedia work incorporating video, film, digitised still images and audio. I am interested in researching the heuristics and structures of multimedia interactivity as well as creating specific work which is also related to the way in which three dimensional space is represented in two dimensional electronic media.

Advanced Standing

I have commenced a Master of Fine Arts at the NSW College of Fine Arts in Sydney, having completed three semesters part-time. However I would like to continue this work at the Canberra School of Arts. For this reason I request Advanced Standing equivalent to the semesters I have studies.

1.1 Nature of Research Project

i. Interactive multimedia

To date, apart from the work of a few artists, interactivity has mainly been developed as a part of larger exhibitions, usually as an educational tool within museums. Many of these works have been simply structured through an index, replicating the 'chapter and section' model familiar from books or card index catalogues. The images and sounds of each section have been "info clips", which, while utilising sophisticated production and editing techniques, at the most present themselves as mini-documentaries, mimicking the conventions familiar from television magazine programs. At the least, there appearance is like a slide show on a single carousel. While some of these limitations are undoubtably due to the technical problems encountered by new forms, the development of any practice is also dependent on the ability of users to think in new ways, to literally create.

I want to explore this growing field through the aims of this project which are:

* To examine the relatively new cultural form of audio-visual interactive multimedia.
* To consider the existing body of theory surrounding the production and interpretation of multimedia work, its presuppositions and usefulness as a tool for supporting and critiquing multimedia works.
* To survey existing works and the way in which they have been constructed.
* To investigate other relevant historical and philosophical theories that might be applied to analysis, for example, those informing the emergence and meaning of photography, film, and sound recording.
The objective is to develop an understanding of the existing ways audio-visual interactives are structured and to apply this to a new structure that can be applied to a specific works, or prototypes thereof.

ii. Representations of space

For the last few years I have been researching the representation and interpretation of three dimensional space in two dimensions. I have focussed on "official" representations and those most commonly used for screen based media eg: documentaries, television news, educational interactive programs. In the West the dominant paradigm for knowing and controlling space is the map. If the way in which we remember or imagine space is influenced by desire, official maps can be considered as images of the unconscious of social history. Most people carry with them a personal version of this map that is subtly distorted. Notions of size, distance and direction are influenced by each person’s individual mythology.

In the same way, the world map, an “unpeeling” of the globe according to the rules of longitude and latitude laid out by Geradus Mercator over 400 years ago, makes Northern Europe and America appear much larger than they should be on the basis of their land mass. The area of nations near the equator are disproportionately small.

World maps are documents that literally illustrate the popular world view. They are used to teach children: about the globe, they accompany our news of the world both in the press and on TV. They form our image of where we are - our identity expressed as place. They are generally made and distributed by the powerful and are often used as confirmation of possession or political control of an area. It could be said that if you can’t picture something in your mind’s eye, it doesn’t exist for you.

Continuing this project, I will focus on analysing the following areas:
* Historical representations of three dimensional space, particularly cartography, and their political uses especially in relation to colonisation.
* Personal representations, imagination and memory of space.
* Scientific methods of approximating space, both ‘actual’ and theoretical.
* Representations of space in non-Western cultures, especially those of indigenous cultures of Australia and the Pacific. The use of forms other than coded two dimensional representations, such as performance and song, is of particular interest.
* Theories of the imagination and memory of space, such as psychoanalysis.

Overall the aim is to understand how space is conceptualised and coded by our own and other cultures and to reveal the assumptions underlying our sense of what is natural. This work will inform the content of the studio work.

Master of Arts Application Bronwyn Coupe 4
1.2 Studio Practice and outcomes

iii. Interactive multimedia

Inseparable from the research outlined in (i) above will be the exploration of available computer packages designed to author multimedia works. I would like to continue expanding my current knowledge and practice to:

* Become adept in using computer programs for importing, creating and manipulating sound and still and moving images.
* Explore the limits of the available technology.
* Build a fluid structure that will allow users to creatively interact with a work based on the concerns above, that is to develop possible new ways of structuring paths through an interactive.
* Experiment with forms of storytelling using audio-visual and textual messages.
* Understand the processes and limitations involved in communicating interactive material on-line.

iv. Representations of space

The audio, visual and theoretical research described above will be applied to creating the narratives, expressed in audio-visual form, that make up the body of the work. This will include:

* researching and writing scripts
* sourcing images, including archival material
* shooting original footage on video and/or film (to be telecined) and scanning and manipulating these images
* sourcing, recording original audio and mixing audio effects and music
* directing and editing sequences of sounds and/or images
* briefing and working with other artists to create images and sounds (eg: music)

I see this as an extension of my considerable experience in film, video and multi-media production.
In summary, I am interested in exploring possible new ways of structuring paths through an interactive, and also new forms of storytelling using audio-visual and textual messages. The objective of this is to project new forms of narrative and non-narrative construction and new ways of deriving meaning from such forms. As the theme of this work revolves around how we encode three dimensional space and interpret two dimensional representations of space, the four elements of the project (i-iv) are interlinked and the final work will reflect the results of the structural and practical research. A certain degree of self-reflexivity will exist in the final work, enabling and challenging the audience/participant to approach the interactive in a fresh way.

I have begun this work in the partly completed interactive *The Inside of Houses*.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1 Dissertation

The research component of the project will include methodologies such as

* A review of the literature on interactive multimedia and the selected theoretical areas indicated in 1.1.
* Examining multimedia interactive installations publicly available
* Interviewing multimedia interactive practitioners
* Extensive visual, sound and archival research in the area of cartography

2.2 Studio Practice

The studio component of the project will involve the activities outlined in 1.2 Studio Practice and I will require access to:

- a powerful Macintosh computer with colour screen and authoring and graphics and audio manipulation software.
- a digital scanner with image manipulation software
- audio recorder and digitiser for inputting to computer
- video and 16mm cameras
- lights and occasional use of a video studio
- sound recording and mixing equipment

What I am proposing will undoubtedly involve many new challenges but I believe that my previous training and professional experience in research, film, video, exhibitions, and computers will equip me to successfully undertake this project. (Please see curriculum vitae).
3. CONTEXT

In my studies to date at the NSW College of Fine Arts I have the good fortune to be working with other multimedia artists such as Linda deMent (Tales of Typhoid Mary), Brad Miller (Rhizome) and Michelle Barker (Queerography). I also have discussion and contact with Josie Starrs (VNS Matrix) and Troy Innocent (IdeaOn). These are all prominent in the relatively new field of multi-media.

Their work is strongly influenced by other media they have worked in - largely photography and computer graphics. I feel my work is evolving in a different direction through my previous experience in the time based media of film and video.

In terms of my focus on the politics of spatial representation I am interested in more closely examining the work of Alfredo Jaar. In particular I admire his ability to orchestrate coherent but disjointed narratives through the display of images in space and his evocation of personal stories using technological and media associated with the entertainment and advertising industries. I feel closer examination of his work would be beneficial to my work.

The following bibliography encompasses the key areas of theory relevant to my project.

4. TIMEFRAME

As I am applying for the parttime MA, I propose the following schedule:

Year 1 Session 1
  Orientation
  Continuation of theoretical and practical research, further work on The Inside of Houses

Year 1 Session 2
  Further research
  Completion and exhibition of The Inside of Houses.

Year 2 Session 1
  Outline of Dissertation
  Experimentation with structure and forms of interactive media
  Development of structural model for larger interactive
  Scripting and recording image and sound sequences for the interactive work

Year 2 Session 2
  Write up Sub-thesis
  Construct and test interactive
  Exhibit interactive
  Evaluation of work
Bronwyn Coupe

Born Sydney, New South Wales

Education

1995-97  Candidate for Master of Arts (Visual Arts)
Canberra School of Art, Institute of the Arts, ANU

1988-89  Certificate in Producing
Australian Film, TV and Radio School

1983-86  Graduate Diploma in Communications
NSW Institute of Technology

1978-80  Bachelor of Science, University of Sydney

Group Exhibitions

1997  Matinaze 97  Foyer Gallery, Domain Theatre, Art Gallery of NSW
1996  Digital Arts Festival  Canberra School of Art Gallery
1995  Multimedia Salon  Canberra Festival of Contemporary Arts
1985  Cold Boxes  Bornholt Room NSW Institute of Technology

Selected Screenings

1994-97  An Eccentric Orbit  premiered at Museum of Modern Art, NY
and touring USA, Canada & Europe (curated by Peter Callas, for
the American Federation of the Arts)

1989  The Bicentennial Will Not Be Televised  Collaboratively made
video, Fukui Video Festival, Japan, Home TV Festival, USA

1988  The Bicentennial Will Not Be Televised  3rd Australian Video
Festival

Off Air #7  Mandolin cinema, Sydney; Chauvel cinema, Sydney

1987  Off Air #6: 2nd Australian Video Festival; "Site" nightclub,
Piccadilly Hotel, Sydney

Off Air #5: The Tivoli Hotel, Sydney; "Site" nightclub, Piccadilly
Hotel, Sydney; Harold Park Hotel, Sydney

1986  Sharks Can Smell Blood  1st Australian Video Festival,
Melbourne International Film Festival, Spoleto Festival and 9th
Tokyo Video Festival.

Solo Exhibitions

1997  The Inside of Houses  E-media, Centre for Contemporary Arts
and Experimenta, Melbourne

1996  The Inside of Houses  Cube, Canberra Contemporary Art Space
Publications


The Real Thing, Real Time, August 1994


The Big Picture: Documentary Film-making in Australia, Jane Yule & Bronwyn Coupe (eds), Monash University Press, 1993.

Break in Central Transmission, Scan +, Volume 1, Sept 1988


Awards and Grants

1997 New Media Fund, Australia Council of the Arts (for multimedia work)

1996 Australian Film Commission, as producer for 16 mm drama

1989 Best Foreign Documentary Award, Home TV (USA) for The Bicentennial Will Not Be Televised

1988 Visual Arts & Craft Board grant, Australia Council for The Bicentennial Will Not Be Televised

1986 Merit award, 1st Australian Video Festival for Sharks Can Smell Blood

Media

3RRR Melbourne, Art Show, Interview with Bruce Berriman and Shiralee Saul, 19 June 1997

Radio National ABC, Media Report Interview with Maria Zilstra, March 1993

Selected Professional Experience

Current I, Eugenia (working title) Producer

Experimental 30 minute, 16mm drama. Written and directed by Gabrielle Finnane. Currently in post-production with funding from the Australian Film Commission.

1994 Department Communications and the Arts Policy Officer

Research, develop and advise on Commonwealth government policy, in relation to multi-media and new technologies, museums, and heritage issues. Currently on leave.
1994  *Frontiers of Utopia*  Researcher
Video disk interactive directed by Jill Scott and produced by Laura Tricker of Monitor Information.

1993  *University of Canberra*  Lecturer
In Media Management, a course in film, television and radio production in Australia. Also in Desktop Publishing.

1988-1993  *UTS/AFTRS/ Metro TV/ Petersham TAFE*  Lecturer/Trainer
Developed and taught a range of video production workshops for beginners and advanced practitioners.

1991  *Second Australian Documentary Conference*  Coordinator
Coordination of an international documentary film conference. Editing, writing, layout and co-ordination of conference publications.

1990  *Earth Exchange Museum*  Exhibition Planner/Researcher
Created and developed exhibits integrating a range of media and interactives.

1988  *Metro TV*  Curator/Publicist
Curated a screening of videos *Break in Central Transmission* for the 3rd Australian Video Festival. Publicised this and other Metro events held during the Video Festival.
A. This CD will only run from a Power Macintosh. It is best with a quad speed CD drive and 16MB of available RAM. Running with less will mean slower playing and could cause some video files to look a little odd.

You can either copy all visible files to the hard disk or run the program from the CD drive. If using a start up program the "Inside of Houses" file can be put in the startup folder.

The section of the interactive that allows users to put their own floor plans and stories in can only work when the interactive is running from a hard disk.

* If you are running from the Projector file labelled "The Inside of Houses" the ONLY WAY TO STOP THE PROGRAM is to press the "Apple" + "=" at the same time. The "=" key that is at the right hand side of the numerals above the QWERTY keyboard, NOT the "=" on the number pad. The work will quit back to a normal Macintosh desktop. Shut down by choosing "Shut Down" from the "Special" menu in the normal fashion.

The QUIT button on the screen takes you back to the first screen, it DOES NOT QUIT OUT OF THE APPLICATION.

There is also a RESET button (THE ~button, ie: the first key on the line of numerical keys above the letters. This also takes you back to the first screen. As does the three minute timeout- ie: if no-one interacts for three minutes.

The files labelled CanberraDrawings, Melbourne Drawings, Sydney Drawings contain user's contributions from some of the exhibitions of the work. TO STOP THESE PROGRAM QUIT BY PRESSING press the "Apple" + "q" keys together.

B. IF AN ERROR MESSAGE SAYING "My House is full. Please ask the gallery staff to assist" comes up, then the drawing module of the interactive will need to be replaced.
1. Open the hard-disk folder containing "The Inside of Houses".
2. Drag the Icon labelled "DrawHouse" out and onto the desktop. Rename it by adding the date (eg: 12/4/97" to the DrawHouse label renaming the file eg: "DrawHouse24/6/97").
3. Insert the ZIP disk with the Inside of Houses program on it.
4. Copy the renamed file (eg: "DrawHouse14/3/97") onto the ZIP disk.
5. This is essential, otherwise all of the user contributions to the work to date will be lost.
6. Copy the "DrawHouse" file from the ZIP into the folder containing the "Inside of Houses" program on the hard-disk. This will contain just the original example drawings on the work and space for more contributions to be made.

C. IF A DRAWING OR STORY CONTRIBUTED BY A USER NEEDS TO BE REMOVED (because it is offensive, defamatory etc) follow the instructions for B above, including saving the existing DrawHouse file.

Any other problems contact Bronwyn Coupe: bronwync@sysx.apana.org.au or telephone 0418 436 474