CyPosium Book Presentation @ Transmediale - 1 Feb 2015

Excerpts from *CyPosium - the book* were selected by the readers, then arranged by Annie Abrahams and Helen Varley Jamieson. The text was performed by the readers, with improvisation in and around the selected paragraphs.

The readers: Adriene Jenik (USA), Christina Papagiannouli (UK), Clara Gomes (Portugal), James Cunningham (Australia), Liz Bryce (Aotearoa New Zealand), Miljana Perić (Serbia), Nathalie Fougeras (Sweden), Suzon Fuks (Australia) and Vicki Smith (Aotearoa New Zealand).

The text:

Technology is not just about computers and movement is not just about dancing bodies. Both are about communication across people in a rapidly advancing technological age in which the relations traversing bodies, art, image technologies, and the marketplace need to be continuously evaluated and changed if necessary.

My dream or image of what the virtual's supposed to be, has a kind of eternal smooth surfaces, surfaces like the screen itself, with a little bit of corruption that's exciting beneath. In fact I think it's the corruption that is really what determines or characterises the digital. The digital decays just as much as the analogue does.

Because technology changes us, and if we want to get an idea of where is the limit between manipulating and being manipulated, we should make an effort to think about our own practice; we should try to practice close reading of it (or find other people to do this).

We wanted other people to share in our joy. To recognize that this also was the web... That it wasn't about technology alone and that interactivity is an expressive medium. The web is a metaphor for the strands that connect us all. We are not alone, we are not the individuals we think we are.

We are not alone, everyone in their country or region; we meet others like us, exchanging questions and answers: How real is real? How virtual is virtual? How impracticable are the borders? Or perhaps they do not exist? Are we network artists or a network of artists? Or both?

CHAT DAEMON
Hello! Welcome to the Everyone Online Server System! Please select from our wide choice of menu options!
(We hear a click.)
You are entering the Adult Arena, the Everyone Online Chat System. If you are offended by sexually explicit material, or are under the age of 18, please disconnect now. Otherwise, choose enter.
(We hear a click.)
Hello! Welcome to the Adult Arena's Internet Chat Room! Please enter a name you'd like to be known by!
(We hear typing and a click.)
"Please select a Chat Room!"
(We hear a click.)

***
SEXY FEMALE VOICE
Chat Room -- NetSeduction!
***
ALLAN

Hey, all, I heard about this, and thought I'd check it out. Anyone else there?
***

The body can travel at the speed of light and locate itself wherever it is interacting.

... the virtual and the real are interpenetrated ... the body is always virtual, the worlds we live in are virtual, the symbolic is virtual, the real itself, the real world is what Clement Rosset calls 'idiotic', it can also be called the practico-inert from Sartre, it's an inert world, it's a dead world, it's a world that's substance, it's a world that just is. So as soon as you start speaking about the world you start implying symbolic systems, and as soon as you do that you start entering into virtual worlds.

Culture is not just something that's human, the virtual isn't just something that's human.

Can Jamieson's definition of cyberformance survive the introduction of new forms, new technologies and new platforms, like Second Life and game spaces, with all the new questions that this shift raises ...? Is it still cyberformance?

ciao fr, indeed, nothing is written in stone; but we must be realistic about what we can achieve, as a small group of unfunded & busy people attempting our first cyposium. we don't have to do everything all at once. i would rather use my energy to do something smaller really well, than exhaust myself trying to do something massive & in the process missing important details.

We shouldn't be afraid to operate a 'niche', where we are 'just' our own audience. It might be a prerequisite for new discoveries, for the creation of a situation where we learn together what it means to be connected.

Audience question: Did you write your performance before playing it?
Suzon: yes – we improvised and then selected some bits that we collated; but not all of it.

does having fun on-line replace the feelings of nostalgia, loneliness and shame?

zuper: (private) sleep with me
zuper: (private) close your eyes
womanonfire -> zuper: eyes are closed
zuper: (private) mine too
womanonfire -> zuper: i am
womanonfire -> zuper: with you
zuper: (private) yes
zuper: (private) bones
womanonfire -> zuper: i can hear your heartbeat
zuper: (private) muscles
zuper: (private) I can hear yours
zuper: (private) I can feel it
womanonfire -> zuper: sleep
womanonfire -> zuper: dream
zuper: (private) I think I'll stay awake just a little bit
zuper: (private) and watch you
zuper: (private) breathe !
zuper: (private) memories
womanonfire -> zuper: feel the memories
zuper: you're making exactly the same gestures as I am: holding your head, stroking your hair,...
womanonfire -> zuper: :

womanonfire -> zuper: it is you stroking my hair
zuper: (private) my hand follows the shape of the side of your body without touching it

Both the ways threaded by these performers reinforced the idea that technology is not the most important – its connection with people's desires and aims is.

Hope that the recording will be better than the one I am hearing...its not that bad, you can follow the presentation...but still is annoying...

Suzon: We had landmarks and themes, but the third part is really improvised a lot.
James: Yes the third part; but the first part was pretty set, the script – each of us developed more of a script for our characters' stages. Not completely, but generally.
Liz: Often we developed our character's script without knowing what the others were doing with their characters.

We eventually let other people see skinonskinonskin. It was a story, we felt, worth telling.

it's possible that cyberformance made by bots will *simulate* imagination and that we won't understand what happens and so... it will *stimulate* our human imagination.

IMPROVISATION

basically it was already out-dated in some ways when we started doing it, because we're all living in the future and the past at the same time.

... the use of game spaces (…) and of games technology (…) and even wearables to open up the field cyberformers work in ... are games the future of art in the internet? During her presentation Auriea Harvey answered it indirectly: «The internet is not the future – we are»

But it seems that the voice is more intrusive than texting.

What is so specific? What can we communicate and how? How do we perceive our bodies when performing? Why does it have such a special energy? Why is it so demanding? How come we feel so close to others, so included and often so extremely exhilarated? Is it because online performance makes the borders between the performers and the audience fluid? Is it because it lacks hierarchy? Because it goes against total control? Why is this so important?

I'd be walking down the streets of New York City and seeing people and thinking I could click on them and get information. This work inhabited my psyche and physical body in a way that I didn't anticipate. I lost 8 pounds, I had this connection to my avatar that I really did not anticipate. The experience was profound in a manner that I had not anticipated in conceiving the work.

We were really conscious of wanting to engage the audience more, because quite often you could see that there were large numbers in the audience, but nobody was saying a lot. We also felt that there was a big audience out there that should be able to be swept into UpStage and interact with us.

So the second part ... was to try and contact this imagined huge number of interesting people around the world that would love to come and see us ... We advertised on all the digital web sites that we knew had members interested in digital media and performance. We set the blogs up to work with people who might be curious.

We actually sent out real invitations, I tried to distribute some around Dunedin in places that may

capture a new media audience. We were trying to bring the audience in, and then, getting them to react by going and following the blog and seeing what was happening online. But the reality is a little bit different.

bonemap: I don't understand – if we invite an audience into our spaces, don't they become a part of the work. The public is where in this contract?
Helen: for me also, the audience completes the work
marc: depends who the audience is!
Helen: it isn't finished without the audience
alberto: SURE.AUDIENCE CAN CHAT AND PARTICIPATE
asondheim: A lot of avant-music has literally no audience at all but can still be fantastic
mem: "we love our audience"
isabel: sometimes the work really is made only for an active participant audience
asondheim: @JamesBomd: What are you doing in the bush???
helen: I suppose another way to describe performance is an action with intention
yann: #audience is the pilot on the net, and in a society driven by statistics
JamesBomd: @asondheim: intentional action
Clara: I agree Helen – the audience is part of the work, has to be...
marc: no audience, no critique!
Jrd2U: this is going the wrong way
vickismith: james, your audience was your doctor looking at the xray scan
helen: no audience, no conversations
asondheim: helen, every action has an intention – it becomes circular, I intend to do a performance, therefore...
MaJaSo: or maybe james, it's a performance but not (yet) artistic one.
helen: in french you don't go to "watch" a show, you go to "assist"
chpapagi: audience are replaced by participants
suzon: well audience and chat are two strange words
vickismith: great term
mem: you sitting in audience, and figure out in some moment that live art encyclopedia is sitting the next seat
helen: we are all "assistants" here
helen: intermedial assistants
hadzi: I enjoy this discussion from my living room

We felt that this network that brought us together, on which we both worked and played since 1995 was a place, a destination, a location where we lived and loved.

Part of it for me is always about who gets to connect, and what actually is happening with the connection is really one of the most important things for me.

But what I was thinking, and the musicians said something similar as well, that their musical space is the music. It's not some sort of cyberspace or networked space other to where they are, but actually it's the music that they are in and that provides the space, they don't see any other networked space or cyberspace.

... if you were not present, you missed the experience of being part of it, of being a witness and an active member of an historical event ...

Digital performance, cybertheaters, cyberformance or whatever you might want to call it, one thing is clear: the genre is alive and kicking in terms of creative outputs; it is becoming increasingly well established in its reach; and it continues to innovate in dramaturgical, aesthetic, conceptual and also

social terms.

Thus, we can conclude that cyberformance is not confined to a form, a platform or a type of technology and that it will go on, evolving. The new possibilities of the virtual and the development of interfaces open new perspectives for a cyberformance even more creative, interactive and participated.