

COLLISIONten*

Art Interactive

130 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA

Curated by Jonathan Bachrach and Dan Paluska

Exhibit: Nov 18 - Dec 3, 2006

Opening Reception: Thursday, Nov 16, 2006, 6.00pm-9.00pm

Introduction

The Collision Collective and Art Interactive present *Collision Ten*, an experimental exploration of art and technology. Collision Ten, the tenth event in the Collision series, showcases art from artists from MIT and beyond who use new technologies in their work. Featuring: Jonathan Bachrach, Leonardo Bonanni, Benjamin Bray, Nell Breyer, Michael Epstein, Chris Fitch, Rob Gonsalves, Vanessa Harden, Guy Hoffman, Jeevan Kalanithi, Jeff Lieberman, Kevin McCormick, Roy Pardi, Hayes Raffle, John Slepian, Fran Trainor, Ruibing Wang, Bayard Wenzel.

In general, Collisions are a showcase of envelope-pushing artwork in an interactive workshop/laboratory format. The artwork often involves never before tried technologies, concepts and installation approaches. It is an opportunity for Collision colluders to experiment and show new ideas and techniques and to discuss their work with and gather feedback from the public.

Thanks to Marcus Flood and Brian Knep for their production assistance.

Dedication

This show is dedicated to Kevin McCormick. He inspired, taught, and encouraged us. He was a true innovator. He is missed.

Exhibits

Bubbles (2003)

Chris Fitch

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Wood, spring belting, washers, electric motor
24in x 32in x 5in

Washers spin down spring belts, knocking into each other as the belts pull them ever upward against a comb of stops. The effect is reminiscent of shimmering bubbles rising in a column of water.

*<http://www.collisioncollective.org>

Caged (2006)

John Slepian

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<http://www.johnslep.net>



interactive sculpture
15in x 12in x 18in

When the viewer encounters caged, a small creature on screen is breathing deliberately. As the viewer approaches, the creature begins to breath more quickly, becoming more anxious or excited as s/he comes closer. When the viewer reaches a threshold distance, the creature lunges towards the viewing plane, screeching loudly. At what appears to be the moment of impact, the screen of the piece is physically thrust forward where it hits the cage wall in front of it. If the viewer remains still, the creature relaxes and returns to breathing. As the s/he retreats, the creature returns to its original state.

The piece is intended as an exploration of captivity, our often-ambivalent response (fear/empathy) to captive beings, as well as our complicity in such situations.

ChopShop (2006)

Rob Gonsalves

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<http://www.deepdevices.com>



Video Camera, Computer with Custom Software,
Video Projection
3' x 6' x 3'

ChopShop is an interactive video installation that allows the viewer to change body parts in real-time. Similar to the Dada game "Exquisite Corpse", ChopShop allows the viewer to change his/her head, torso, or legs by manipulating three rollers mounted on a stand in front of the screen.

The effect is achieved by using a webcam connected to a computer utilizing real-time image processing to track and replace the body parts of the viewer. Six sets of previously recorded body parts are available in addition to the live video stream. The viewer therefore has a choice of 7 heads, 7 torsos, and 7 sets of legs, for a total of 343 possible combinations.

The video projector is rotated 90 degrees for a portrait style. The projection screen is mounted on a steel frame. The web camera is mounted over the screen. The sliders on the command console are connected to an OOPIC controller to be read continuously by the CPU.

ChopShop is the third installation in the "Controller Series" by Rob Gonsalves following ChromaScape HSL and PixelPusher.

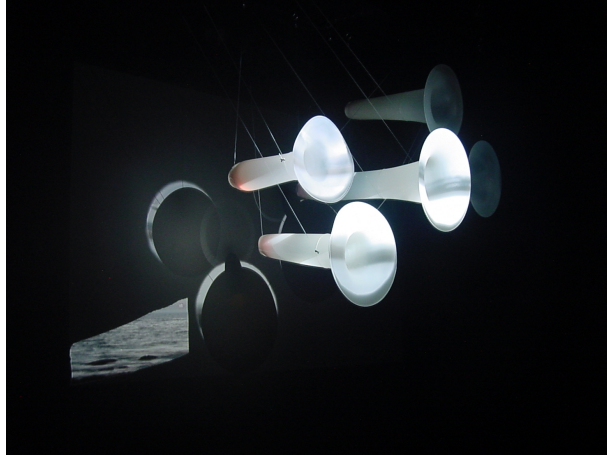
Coasts (2006)

Benjamin Bray

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glass, video, sound
variable, depending on venue; 5'W x 2'D x 4'H minimum

Drawn in / cast out, tide in / tide out, plane in / plane out, intimacy with glass sculpture, and singers for a community of machines that fly.

There's a natural instinct to admire, but not touch glass. I'd like to motivate people to get closer to glass sculpture, to experience it unlike they normally do. There are things that you feel up close that you don't far away.

Aircraft landing and taking-off are coming from and going to many places, are of different shapes and sizes, and use different engines. They are like different birds with different bodies, different people with different bodies, different beings with different lifestyles and different voices, meeting at a venue with its own acoustics and sounds of activity.

Evaporation (Tipping Point) (2006)

Roy Pardi

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toys, digital audio, custom electronic hardware and software, plexiglass, wood
36in x 36in

Evaporation (Tipping Point) is a response to the war in Iraq. It examines the political rhetoric through which this war has been promoted by sampling the unedited speeches of President George W. Bush. It creates a soundscape of these speeches randomly intermixed through triggering events every bit as arbitrary as the reasons presented for going to war.

The work is comprised of a 4 x 4 grid of 16 "drinking bird" toys. This toy is an example of a thermodynamic heat engine, converting heat energy into kinetic energy. The blue fluid inside the toy is methylene chloride, a chemical with a very low boiling point. When the head of the toy bird is saturated with water, the playback cycle begins. As the water evaporates, the head cools and the methylene chloride vapors inside it condense. This creates a pressure differential between the head and the body which forces fluid up through the body into the head. Once enough fluid has passed into the head, the center of gravity shifts and the toy tilts, taking up more water from the glass and allowing the internal fluid to flow back down into the body. The cycle then repeats.

Each toy is wired with a tilt switch controlling the playback of an audio file of a significant speech on Iraq by George W. Bush. Each toy controls its own audio file and when it tilts audio playback begins. The audio "spins up" from zero to full speed at the start of each tilt event and then "spins down" once the event is over. The next tilt event starts playback from where it last stopped so each speech is heard in its entirety. A light beneath each toy highlights which one is currently playing.

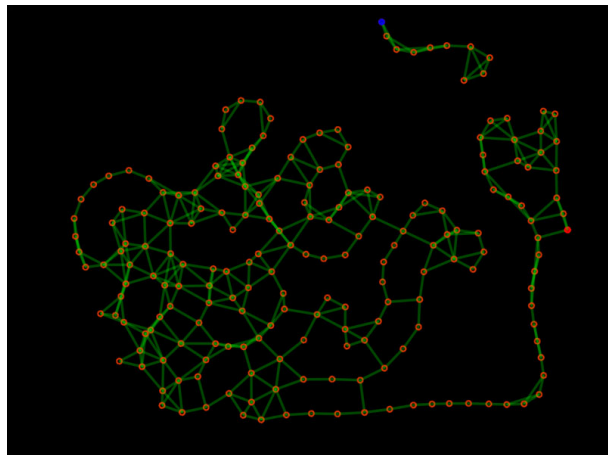
Follow the Leader (2006)

Jonathan Bachrach

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LCD panel, PC, custom programming language called Proto.

24in x 36in x 3in

Leader following structured improvisation formed over 200 simulated robots. Each robot runs an identical program and communicates only with nearby robots. Orange circles depict robots, red and blue dots designate leaders, and green lines designate local communication. Movement occurs through distributed and collective decision making: leaders are elected, chains are formed, and personal space is maintained. This is the second in a series of social studies where collective behaviors are distilled and rendered within a dance framework. Thanks to Jake Beal for collaboration on Proto and to Jake Beal and Tony Grue for assistance on the algorithms.

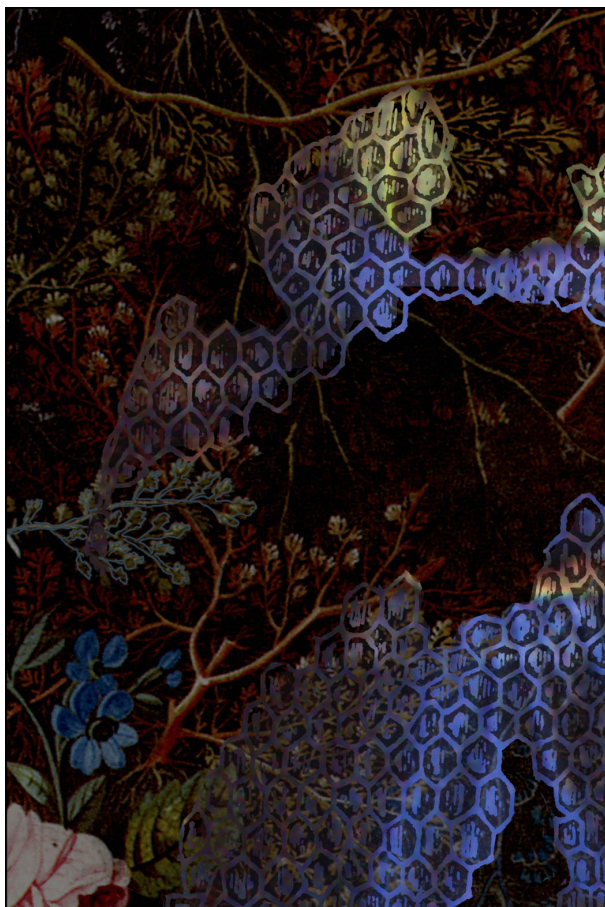
Human Cell Structure Story #1 (2006)

Fran Trainor

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digital prints

66in W x 7in H

Does the growth of culture have a pattern? Does this pattern or patterns mirror the growth patterns we see in nature? Can we step back far enough to enable us to see the difference between the stuff of our making and the organization that may or may not link all the stuff together?

A few years ago I was reading an essay on the future of psychopharmacology where the author was arguing that it was this field and not genetics that would have the greatest impact on human development in the next twenty years. If we could pop a pill and change our feelings, or our intelligence, or our behavior, or any other aspect of our character how could we then know what was essential in the idea of self. It set me down a path were I began to ask questions of where the line was, if that line even existed, that divided human culture from general nature.

The artworks I make do not offer concrete answers to any of these questions I am asking. The artworks act, and this is about the entire body of work contained within the cell structure series, as a slow process to develop a vocabulary that is capable of tacit suggestion. Art is not science. This vocabulary is being developed using traditional composition. The Cell structure project will perhaps fail because of this constraint but is the challenge I

have set myself.

A lot of serious art thinkers suggest that artwork whose foundation is traditional composition is no longer of contemporary relevance. This is essentially discounting the history and power of beauty as a primary content for works of art. These critics would ask of whose beauty do you refer, enthrall to what power, reinforcing what master narrative. These I agree are valid and significant criticisms but I tend to look at beauty in a different way that relates back to the driving patterns of cultural production. Perhaps the objects that bring us pleasure are of less importance than the biochemistry that is triggered by their response. Suggesting a relationship of visual form to human function. If the same biochemical response occurs when we look at a painting as when we look at a wide- open vista from atop a mountain, would this mean that these two experiences are, in many ways, serving the same physiological purpose? Is there a difference between the visual impression of a work of art of a mountain view and the visual impression of a mountain view just because one is manmade? Is this comparing apples and oranges? We are invariably humancentric and want always to draw lines between culture and nature. Clearly a picture of a mountain and a mountain are not the same things but if the bodily response is the same then what conclusions can we draw?

Jabberstamp (2006)

Hayes Raffle and Ruibing Wang

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pens, paper, computer, wacom technology, stamps, etc

16in x 13in x 0.5in and computer inside

Jabberstamp is the first tool that allows people to synthesize their drawings or paintings with their voices. To use Jabberstamp, you create drawings, collages or paintings

on normal paper. You press a special rubber stamp onto the page to record sounds into their drawings. When you touch the marks of the stamp with a small trumpet, you can hear the sounds playback, retelling the stories you have created.

Lady Coy (2006)

Leonardo Bonanni and Vanessa Harden

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Mixed Media(paper mache, surveillance equipment, television)
2'x2'x6'

Lady Coy explores the threshold of male stupidity as well as the persistent sexism endured by women of western society. This experiment adopts an approximation of the female form made from wire, cloth, papier-mache and surveillance equipment.

Lady Coy can be found in the alleys and streets of Boston, witnessing the nightly occurrences that surround her. In the gallery, she brings you her account of a night on the street - the boredom, the car horns, and the confused harassment. Lady Coy is at once an experimental platform, a piece of performance art, and a statement on the state of the sexes. She is both a test of perception and a system for examining the world from particular perspective. Standing alone in the city, she performs for a ruthless audience. Lady Coy illustrates an experience of harassment, and the meaning to treating someONE like someTHING

Paperless Post (2006)

Michael Epstein

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iRiver iClix mobile device, recorded voice, music, ambient sound, coincidence, and street signage.
10x7 devices (3) on neck straps

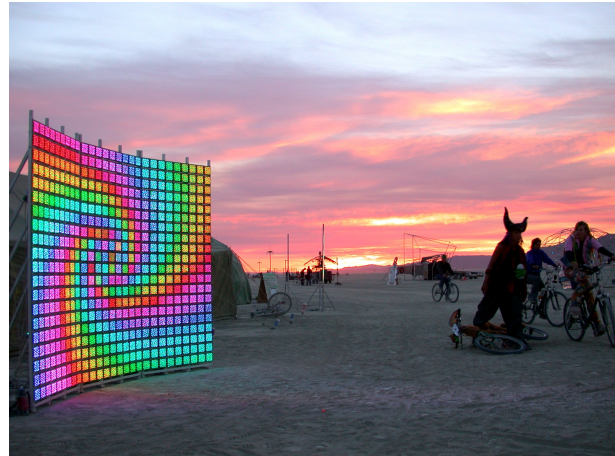
Paperless Post is a 15-minute audio/photo walk from Art Interactive to Cambridge city hall. The audio is an ambient narrative piece told from the perspective of a mailman on the first day of the paperless post office. It brings gallery to the outside and the outside into the gallery. Created by Michael Epstein. Audio editing and music by Geoff Abramczyk. Voice by Dave Giangarra. Device Platform by Maxim Antinori.

Tensor (2003)

Kevin McCormick and Bayard Wenzel

Boston, MA USA

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LED art
8'x10'x9' (free standing) or 8'x10'x2' (wall mounted)

Tensor is a 10'x8' panel of 64,800 red, green and blue LEDs, divided into 4.5 inch square groups. It could be called a "video wall", with a resolution of 27x20 pixels. But Tensor's most memorable attribute is its intimidating brightness.

Tensor consumes ten kilowatts of electricity. Of that, around a thousand watts - none of which is infrared - comes out the front as light. Standing close by, the visible light striking one's face actually feels warm. No surroundings can be seen; it is all obscured by the dazzling brightness. It is an intimate experience of the nature of light as an almost tangible thing.

The patterns Tensor displays are animated at full video speed (30 frames per second). Many of the pictures on this page show Tensor running software, written by Bayard Wenzel, which colorizes and renders parametrized complex functions and two dimensional fractals.

The Constant Demands of Necessary Labour Grew Irrksome (2006)

Guy Hoffman

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Interactive video projection
640x480 pixels

In 1988, Zbig Rybczynski produced a largely unnoticed short film called “The Fourth Dimension”. By laboriously exposing individual strips of each negative frame, Rybczynski distorted the human form in strikingly organic, yet eerily unnatural ways.

In 2002, a then-younger Guy Hoffman — following a meeting with one of Rybczynski’s collaborators at a screening of *The Fourth Dimension* — decided to explore a digital technique inspired by these ideas, resulting in a number of new distortions of people and places.

In 2006, *The constant demands of necessary labour grew irksome* explores this medium in an participatory setting, adding the audience’s personal interpretation of the relationship between the human form, time, and space. A fifth dimension, if you will.

Touch Me/Fur Cubes (2006)

Jeevan Kalanithi

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Suspended objects: furry cubes w/accelerometer, microcontroller and whisper audio
approx 10’ W x 10’ L x Ceiling Height

“Touch Me/Fur Cubes” consists of a number of small, furry cubes suspended from the ceiling. When touched, the sprites will whisper “I love you.” The piece as a whole will form a chamber of these whispers as the viewer interacts with the cloud of fur cubes.

“Touch Me/Fur Cubes” attempts to explore the interactions between space, sound and emotive traces. It aims to be both playful and ghostly; the fur cubes are meant to be animated receptacles of fleeting thoughts and feelings. As a whole, they form a network that sketches out a larger emotion.

Underground (2006)

Nell Breyer

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video projection, dvd player, mirror, vellum, viewer
18in x 18in

Underground explores how we orient ourselves with visual and kinetic cues (such as gravity and proprioception), towards a ground plane. The piece resembles a small, underground, urban theater. Looking into this underworld, are small body parts that stream into a re/oriented perspective of ourselves.

Unraveled, Marissa Floating at the Beach, and
Acrylic Dive (2006)

Jeff Lieberman

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3 photographs
3 * 24in

In these photographs, the idea and capture is only the beginning of the process. Extensive retreatment allows augmentation of normal darkroom processes, allowing wider expressivity from original subject material, and allowing the viewer to see beyond our normal perceptual limitations.

Many thanks to Marissa Lee, Cha-Ling O'Connell, and Professor James Bales for their help.