Methods of Entanglement Showcases the Intersection of Art and Technology
TACC’s Second Art Exhibition Attracts Diverse Audience, Generates Strong Interest

Digital technology is increasingly embedded in our everyday lives. It was only a matter of time until a distinct brand of art emerged that grappled with the content, structure and aesthetics of technology. On Sept. 9, 2010, TACC hosted its second art exhibition, Methods of Entanglement, in the ACES Visualization Laboratory to showcase this new milieu.

The event was co-presented by the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC), a nationally renowned supercomputing center at The University of Texas at Austin, and MASS Gallery, a non-profit art collective based in East Austin. Though strikingly different in size and purpose, both organizations share a similar mission—to enable researchers, be they scientific or artistic, to explore, communicate and make discoveries in ways they cannot elsewhere.

Methods of Entanglement presented the digital and interactive work of eight artists who use scientific programming, custom software, hacked video games, and the Internet to respond to rapid advances in technology and to address questions of beauty, pop culture, and digital omnipresence.

Leigh Brodie applied feature detection and decision-making algorithms to analyze notions of beauty in photographic and video imagery. Sam Sanford used scientific algorithms and multi-dimensional algebra to represent the kaleidoscopic essence of growth and decay.

Ali Miharbi and the collaborative team, ExCorporation, addressed the vast archival space of the Internet in unique ways. Miharbi leveraged an extensive database of movie trailers found on the web to match live video stills with frames from Hollywood blockbusters; ExCorporation’s TomorrowNowForever integrated web cameras worldwide to create a perpetual sunrise.

Duncan Malashock presented a series of Flash-based interactive games with a minimalist sense of beauty and humor. James Willard Pierce’s hacked video games stripped away the goal-oriented, violent worlds of Doom and transformed them into an interactive free-for-all.

Filmmaker Jeanne Stern screened The Museum of Touch and Feel, a stereoscopic animation that used small dioramas and 3D cinematography to tell the stories of an abandoned museum.

Robert Boland, an Austin artist currently travelling on a Fulbright fellowship in Japan, presented a live webcast from the buses and temples of Kyoto while following a modern pilgrimage route.

The Methods of Entanglement exhibition presented work that touched on the full range of questions raised by digital immersion. As the feedback loop between technology and the lived experience quickens, digital and interactive art will become increasingly relevant, providing the aesthetic parameters for our engagement.

Artist Biographies
Robert Boland is currently on residency in Japan on a Fulbright scholarship. His work involves the ceremony of religious and secular content and is expressed through video, photography and installation. His pieces combine polarities in the content and media, pushing the viewer to question what they are seeing as they are drawn in by the visual beauty of each piece.

Leigh Brodie is a 2007 MFA graduate of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Her recent exhibitions include the Texas Biennial at the Mexican American Cultural Museum in Austin; Double Take at Eyebear in New York; Pixel Pops: Wide Open at the Krannert Museum at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Circuitry at Axiom Gallery in Boston. She received an NEA Grant in Extending Creativity and Digital Media in 2008 and the SMFA’s Karsh Prize in Photography in 2006.

ExCorporation is a collaboration of Brooklyn-based artists Aaron Gemmill and Angie Keefer. TomorrowNowForever captures live webcam images at sunrise from successive locations around the
The real-time feed is displayed on connected devices, along with geographic and temporal coordinates indicating the viewer’s displacement from the sunrise.

Ali Miharbi questions the social influences of emerging technologies and looks at older paradigms in light of current technological advancements and practices. He uses computational techniques to reflect on how our lives and perceptions are transformed in an increasingly ubiquitous technological environment. He also uses new technological concepts as metaphors for social issues that remain unresolved. His work has been exhibited in Turkey, Mexico, South Korea and the United States. He recently completed an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Duncan Malashock's work explores the imprint of the personal on technological media. His work in interactive design, video and installation sympathizes with the ideals of the early computer era while admitting its hubris. His work has been shown at Duve in Berlin, NOMA in San Francisco, and the Axiom Center in Boston. He received his BFA from Bard College in 2005. View the interactive version of Malashock's Pile with Pedestal (right).

James Willard Pierce is a new media artist who lives and works in Austin, Texas. He uses a mixture of video, performance, software and installation to “junk up” the division between digital and physical space.

Sam Sanford received a BA in Religion from Reed College in 1999. His thesis presented a behavioral analysis of totalistic ideologies and brainwashing in religious cults. Sanford has been painting pictures since 2003, and his work has been exhibited in many Austin galleries with solo shows at MASS in 2009 and at SOFA in 2010.

Jeanne Stern creates microcosms with a hybrid of film, puppetry and animation. Her work has screened at a variety of festivals and galleries including the Smithsonian, Dallas PBS, and the Orlando Museum of Art. Jeanne received her BA from Connecticut College where she studied studio art and computer science. She earned her MFA in Film at The University of Texas at Austin.

Jenny Vogel works in video, photography and computer arts. Her art explores the world as viewed through new media technology using web cameras, blogs and Google searches as source material. She is a 2005 NYFA fellow in Computer Arts and is an Assistant Professor of New Media Art in the College of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas. Her work has been exhibited in group and solo shows in numerous locations and galleries including San Francisco, New York, the United Kingdom and Russia. She received her MFA from Hunter College in 2003.

Published September 23, 2010