Inter/Actions/Inter/Sections:
Art Education in a Digital
Visual Culture / ROBERT W. SWEENY, EDITOR

Table of Contents

Section 3: Prior Practices

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Critical Agency: Wired, Jacked, and Plugged-In

Some *body* is sitting in *its* room texting another *body* via cell phone… while listening to rhythmic rants of hip-hop through a headset wired to an MP3 player… while surfing the Internet on a laptop computer… while occasionally glancing at scenes from *Terminator* on a nearby DVD player as the movie's violent actions and sounds command attention. On the adjacent counter a video game console is turned on but its game left in mid-play… a high-tech titanium mountain bike leans against the wall with a GPS (Global Positioning System) navigation device attached to its handlebars… a pet dog lies on the floor, sleeping with an RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chip imbedded in its neck… the door of a small microwave oven is open, its light illuminating an open box of processed food, its contents, cheese and meat turnovers, waiting to be "nuked"…a digital picture frame, with programmed music, loops through a series of snapshots of bodies posing alone or together at techno-geek social events… a 52-inch high-definition LCD flat-screen television mounted on the wall faces an unmade bed with five remote control devices aligned on its adjacent night stand. This techno-designed "smart bedroom" is also outfitted with its own wireless port for Internet connectivity… quadraphonic speakers of a complex sound system are tucked into each of its corners… a control panel to operate a motion detection system for turning on/off high intensity track lighting, and a security alarm for warding off burglars and unwanted intruders, is mounted on the wall adjacent to the door… in one corner of the room, an unobtrusive, stealth robotic vacuum system awaits, its timer set to go off daily and begin sweeping the floor for unwanted dust balls, food crumbs, spat fingernails—even though the real purpose for its purchase was to satisfy a desire, an obsession, a fetish with technology and, if for no other reason, than to provide the other artificial agents in the room with company.

This not-too-absurd, fictional narrative characterizes the ubiquitous presence and overwhelming consumption and naturalization of technology by the human body and the body politic. Since its industrialization in the 19th century, its mechanization in the early 20th century, and digitalization in the latter 20th and early 21st century, an exponential increase in the mechanical, analog, and electronic mediation of the cultural body has taken place. Today, television, advertising, the Internet,

and other mass information systems whose academic, institutional, and corporate assumptions and practices are delivered through vast networks of electronic technology continue to manufacture the body's insatiable desire and consent for leisurely and pleasurable efficiencies.

As the cultural imperative for its connectivity has increased, so has the body's dependency on the latest and fastest hardware, the most stimulating and challenging software, and a surfeit of miscellaneous electronic gadgets and gizmos. As conspicuous consumption and facility with attached or imbedded electronic devices enhances the body's proficiency and efficiency, such obsessions impede its critical agency. In other words, when the circumstances of the body's colonization by technologically mediated culture define its raison d'être, its creative and political agency is put at risk. Connectivity at this extreme level constitutes the body as cyborg, a plug-in, ready-at-hand to function on demand.

What does it mean to be connected, connected electronically; to consume, consume indiscriminately; to multitask, multitask neurotically; to exist and find purpose solely within the parameters of technologically mediated culture? What is the saturation point, the point at which the body is overwhelmed and anesthetized by technological efficiency; the point of unrelenting pleasure at the expense of criticality; at what point should the sublime ideology of technology be held in check? Ironically, as we are experiencing an increase in the isolation of the body through the use of electronic technology, a reciprocal desire for greater socialization is taking place in the form of cyber communities such as Facebook, MySpace, and Second Life. Isolated by their preoccupation with technologies, bodies are reaching out through these same technologies to build virtual relationships and virtual communities. While learning to use new technologies is imperative to functioning in contemporary culture, equally important are emancipatory pedagogies that enable users to expose, examine, and critique the totalizing and oppressive assumptions of technology and its academic, institutional, and corporate mediations of the body.

The contributors to this volume of essays are educators and artists who use new technologies in the art studio and classroom while transgressing the academic, institutional, and corporate parameters of technology. The purpose of their transgressions is to provide themselves and their students with transformative experiences. Their critical teaching strategies are inclusive in that students are not deprived the pleasure of their various technological devices and processes. On the contrary, given that the ubiquity and necessity of these devices have been assimilated into private and public memory and cultural history, the authors have developed pedagogical strategies—exploratory, experimental, and improvisational modes of addressing technological culture—that will enable their students' creative and intellectual agency, and their development as critical citizens in a cultural democracy.

Charles Garoian
2009 / Penn State University

I ♥ Technology, Always and Forever /

ROBERT W. SWEENY

I LOVE TECHNOLOGY, NOT AS MUCH AS YOU, YOU SEE.
BUT STILL, I LOVE TECHNOLOGY, ALWAYS AND FOREVER.

–*NAPOLEON DYNAMITE* (HESS, 2004)

This anthology deals with digital technology and art education. Each of the essays found within explores some aspect of each of these overlapping areas, whether concerned with the teaching of specific aspects of a software or computer program, the analysis of the methodologies that are most appropriate when incorporating digital technologies in the art classroom, the historical underpinnings of current technological practices in a variety of art educational settings, or the general possibilities for art education in a digital visual culture.

Each essay may be considered a 'line of flight' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1977) that begins by discussing the shared territory, that of art education and digital technology, and then leaves the orbit of its categorization, forming new combinations of thoughts, words, actions, and images, sketching the outlines of a digital visual culture. Because the authors deal with the field of art education, the more appropriate phrase may be 'lines of sight' (Sweeny, 2004), as these lines of text on the printed page provide new perspectives on how images and actions are seen, interpreted, resisted, and reflected in a digital visual culture.

This phrase best suits the discussions that are contained within this volume. As compared with the many writings in the field of art education that have covered similar ground, these essays deal with a widened range of gestures, actions, and influences. This expanded field is not simply more to see, feel, and experience; it is increasingly interconnected. When compared with earlier writings dealing with art education and digital technology, the authors in this anthology are describing networked forms of creativity, collaborative models of production and distribution, and educational approaches that are digital, dynamic, and distributed.

Digital visual culture should be understood not only as forms of visual culture that are digital in nature, but also as interconnected cultural products that reflect the complexity of life in a network society (Castells, 1996). While this may seem like a simple adjustment to the now-familiar term, it is, as we will see in the essays collected herein, not as simple as looking to the means of production. While images produced through digital means are easily assimilated into this category, what of images that are produced through non-digital means, and are

reproduced in a digital manner, such as compact discs that carry acronyms such as ADD (analog recording, digital mastering, digital reproduction)? Are there levels to digital forms of expression that make some more digital, while others are less digital? If so, what do these varying levels of digital-ness have to say about how digital images are made, consumed, refused, and reproduced?

In these technologically complex times, it is increasingly difficult to make distinctions between the analog and the digital. As Brian Massumi (2002) argues, these distinctions are convoluted, as with the case of the actual and the virtual, which are folded together in social interactions, personal identifications, and technical processes. Challenging as it may be, it is crucial for art educators to look more closely into these foldings, as the forms of visuality produced blur the binaries upon which much of the Modernist core of art education is based.

These essays describe complex digital visualities that are currently in the process of being formed, becoming virtualities. Oftentimes, interactions with digital technologies are framed in the language of emotions central to the human condition: hate, fear, and love. The epigram indicates such a relationship, drawn from contemporary popular culture. In the song from the popular film *Napoleon Dynamite* (Hess, 2004), Kip is serenading LaFawnduh, the woman that he met online, indicating his love for both her and the technology that brought them together. While he announces that he loves LaFawnduh, he still must reaffirm his love for technology, 'always and forever.'

Existing in an unidentified time, one where 'moon boots' and the Internet coexist, Kip's admission points to the current use of digital networks for personal expression, social interaction, and individual fulfillment. It also raises issues of sociocultural difference within these interactions; LaFawnduh comes from another town, and as an African American, is racially distinct from the homogenous European-American population represented in the film. The Internet, which has long been described as a space in which identities are malleable and shifting, allows for the physical connection between these two individuals, extending the potential for new layers of identity to be added. As a popular film, *Napoleon Dynamite* exists within and refers to the complex networks of what will be referred to throughout this text as 'digital visual culture.'

Following just one exegetic path, one can look to the production of the film for an indication of the complexities entailed by the discussion of digital visual culture. *Napoleon Dynamite* was shot on traditional film stock, and was later converted to digital format common for film distribution. Two of the main storylines of the film deal with 1) drawing as a form of subjectivity, and 2) online dating and representation. As a viewer, I have access to the DVD version of the film, which is supplemented by director commentary, subtitles, and a variety of languages. Accompanying the film is the original short film that preceded the feature length version. This inclusion allows the viewer the ability to compare

scene similarities, shifts in dialogue, and cinematography, and to follow the creative process of the director and crew.

The film has led to numerous popular cultural offshoots, including 'Vote for Pedro' t-shirts, and numerous spoofs available for viewing on YouTube. *Napoleon Dynamite* is by no means the only example of this diversification. As media theorist Henry Jenkins (2006) suggests, one characteristic of contemporary media forms is that they are composed of multiple layers. It is within this layering, Jenkins suggests, that the individual has the opportunity to not only personalize content, but to generate content, and participate in these media networks in a meaningful way.

It is the responsibility of art educators living within networks of digital visual culture to determine how best to personalize, generate, and participate—to take the relevant methods and materials and make them meaningful in an age of participatory media. It is a matter of identifying forms of interaction and examples of intersection that take place within digital visual culture.

INTERACTIONS/INTERSECTIONS

The past practices, current pedagogies and potential applications of digital visual culture can be described by the terms *intersections* and *interactions*. These are both terms used when discussing digital technology, though *interactivity* may be more common. As Manovich (1999) suggests, the interactive properties of new media are actually just as confining as prior media forms. The ability to choose from numerous options merely provides more choice within parameters that are ultimately determined by the designer.

While Manovich (1999) debunks the myth of interactivity, I would rather explore the construction of the words themselves, as they may tell us much about the ways in which we use technology, and also the ways that technology uses us. The terms share the same prefix, *inter-*, meaning between, sharing common attributes. The differences in the base term will be the most instructive for the discussions of digital visual culture that follow; *action* implies movement, connection, synthesis, while *section* involves a breaking apart, a dividing. As I will suggest, these terms can be used to represent the poles of technological use, the positive and the negative. They also represent two broad categories that, if connected, might help to describe how digital visual culture is produced, consumed, destroyed, and understood.

Interaction is one of the most common terms used in discussion of digital technology. Computer menus are described as 'interactive,' as are most of the technologies that link together in contemporary digital networks. The participatory media described by Jenkins (2006) derive their strength from their interactivity, the ability for users to approach content through numerous points of access, rearrange to his or her liking, and add content that is self-generated. As mentioned

xii   INTRODUCTION

earlier, much of the value placed upon interaction within new media is overrated; new media art, in particular, simply offers more choices. When presented as liberatory practice, new media work might be deceptive at best; at worst it can actually restrict or repress the user.

As one description of the influence of digital technology, interaction should be seen as representing a general feeling of optimism with regard to the impact of digital technology upon the user. As with Kip, the interaction allowed by the Internet brings him in contact with his true love (to which technology is a close second). As anyone familiar with digital technologies can attest, not all such interactions bring about such fulfillment, such passion. In fact, for every example of technology as savior, there is one that shows its dystopian potential.

If interaction represents the utopian tendencies in digital technology use, then intersections might be seen as its opposite. If interaction represents the coming together of diverse individuals, materials, or experiences, then intersection should be understood as the breaking apart of these connections. If taken from the common usage, intersections are zones that are established for rerouting. Traffic intersections allow drivers to slow down or stop, to change direction, for turns to be made, and for potential collisions to occur. Intersections can also be thought of as the combining of different materials, or directionalities, in the sense of two roads coming together. But, when compared with interaction, the intersected always produces a remainder that then allows for further expansion, redirection, and synthesis.

In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977), Deleuze and Guattari develop the notion of the 'body without organs,' which is a form of identi-fication that is always partial, always in the process of formation, similar in many ways to the body described in the preface by Charles Garoian. The 'machinic assemblages' that constitute the body without organs frame the operations of the individual as one that sections off or allows for various flows: organic (blood, feces, urine), mechanical (use of technology, art, science), and social (develop-ment of morals, language). In the process, modern subjectivity is fragmented, an action that Deleuze and Guattari see as directly tied to the destabilizations inher-ent in capitalism; this process is potentially empowering, if one is willing to break from outdated (Oedipal) forms of identification.

When viewed through the framework of the machinic assemblage, all social interaction, and certainly all technological interaction as the term is discussed previously, involves the constant sectioning and resectioning of information and matter, the perpetual action that brings together dissimilar material only to redis-tribute it, in a recursive manner. If art educators were to think of the operations of digital technologies in these terms, as a continual process of combination and fracturing, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, consisting of both positive and negative, often simultaneously, then the complexities of production, distribu-

INTER/ACTIONS/INTER/SECTIONS: Introduction

tion, and consumption in a digital visual culture might be better understood. Each digital interaction entails an intersection, each connection a limiting of alternate linkages—utopian possibility coupled with dystopian potential.

The intersections that are described in this anthology are multiform; they involve individuals, classrooms, educators, and technologies, which come together and move apart, changing all involved. The collection of essays is formally divided into four sections: Media Forms, Methodologies, Prior Practices, and Potentialities. Within these sections there are numerous examples where ideas, individuals, and images interact and intersect. These categories allow for general classifications to be made, though there are additional thematic relationships to be found between the chapters. In order to provide another organizational structure, I will now provide an overview of each chapter as determined by thematic connections; you, the reader, are of course encouraged to make your own connections, or disconnections, as you see fit.[1]

Many of the chapters deal with the development and maintenance of identity in a digital visual culture. Taylor, Ballengee-Morris, and Carpenter discuss the possibilities for the pedagogical exploration of the virtual world Second Life, in "Digital Visual Culture, Social Networking, and Virtual Worlds: Second Life and Art Education." This chapter describes how the boundaries of the real and the virtual are playfully blurred, as the authors discuss the relationship between the virtual and the physical self, and how Second Life can productively unsettle traditional teacher/student roles. Identity is also the theme of the chapter by Lián Amaris; in "Fragmented Self-Portraits: How the Historical Avant-Garde Foretold Online Identity Construction," she describes the influence of Peter Bürger's (1984) *Theory of the Avant-Garde* in the understanding of identity in networked technologies. Reading the popular social networking site Facebook through the Cubist practice of montage, Amaris suggests the educational potential of art historical theory in the understanding of current digital visual culture.

Another author looking to the identities represented by avatars in Second Life is Christine Liao. In "Avatar as Pedagogy: Critical Strategies for Visual Culture in the Virtual Environment," Liao analyzes the visual characteristics of avatars, and looks to artists who use physical representation as a form of expression and cultural critique. She proposes the notion of the 'critical avatar subject' that might allow for the questioning of identities. Mary Stokrocki and Sandra Sutton Andrews explore the possibilities for both critical reflection and constructive action in virtual worlds, in "Empowering the Disenfranchised: Explorations in Building Sites and Futures in Second Life." Through qualitative research involving three homeless youths, the authors suggest possibilities for social justice through the use of social media forms. Though their study does not focus on the development of avatars, David Darts, Juan Carlos Castro, Anita Sinner, and Kit Grauer build upon similar themes, discussing possibilities for digital art education that takes place

outside of the traditional classroom setting. In their chapter, titled "New Media Arts Education: How Community-Based Programs Can Reshape Teaching and Learning in the Age of Web 2.0," the authors suggest that the education taking place in community-based arts centers might serve as an instructive model for art educators looking for creative critical models for teaching digital technologies.

Many authors discuss the relationship between digital visual culture and Constructivist learning theories. Melanie Buffington, with Kathryn R. Helms, Jan A. Johnston, and Sohhyoun Yoon, present options for art educators interested in utilizing social media in "Web 2.0 and Social Constructivism." Outlining the use of sites such as del.icio.us, Second Life, and blogs, the authors argue that the inclusion of these elements of digital visual culture supports constructivist learning principles in public schools and university settings. Nicholas Hostert also provides an overview of the educational possibilities for blogging in "Uncommon Dialogue: Digital Critique Beyond the Art Classroom." Hostert describes a qualitative research study carried out in a Chicago area high school, comparing interactions that take place online and in class, and suggesting numerous benefits generated through these forms of communication.

David Gill also addresses the principles of constructivist learning in his analysis of the teaching of 3-D Computer Graphics, in "Vertex Mode: Situated Use of 3-D Modeling and Animation Software." This qualitative study outlines the influence that digital visual culture holds on those interested in learning digital technologies in the art classroom. In a similar manner, Carleton Palmer describes the challenges and successes in teaching digital imaging technologies for incarcerated populations, in "A Digital Visual Culture Course for Incarcerated Youth." Palmer provides the reader with a useful overview of his program as he describes art educational practices in this unique site.

Building upon the work of educational psychologists such as Vygotsky (1978), Marissa McClure argues that the inclusion of digital video in the Kindergarten classroom represents a rhizomatic destabilization of traditional teacher/student roles, in "Digital Visual Childhood: Preschoolers and the New Narratives of Digital Video in the Blogosphere." Also making reference to traditional learning theories, in this case media literacy, Sheng Kuan Cheng argues for a 'critical cyberliteracy' in "Cybermedia Literacy Art Education." Where Buffington, et al. present numerous potential opportunities for educational application of social media, Chung offers a thought-engaging critique of cyberspace, one that replaces optimism with careful consideration of experiences that reflect corporate interests and capitalist manipulation.

The relationship between culture and digital technologies is discussed in many of the chapters. In "Developing ChinaVine.org: Educating Inside and Outside the Site," by Kristin Congdon and Doug Blandy, the challenges of representing Chinese folk art and culture in an online environment are outlined.

The authors present a number of useful technical, sociological, and educational suggestions for art educators who wish to explore and honor world folk art traditions. Looking to the Talmud, the ancient Hebrew religious text, Mel Alexenberg makes cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparisons, in "Space-Time Structures of Digital Visual Culture: Paradigm Shift from Hellenistic to Hebraic Roots of Western Civilization." Alexenberg asserts that Hebraic thought is more closely related to the multilayered nature of the Internet, and the understanding of this worldview might help art educators to better understand the hypertextual qualities of contemporary digital visual culture. Kevin Tavin offers a personal narrative that describes the technoculture of the preservice art educator and elementary educator, and his use of hypertext theories, in "From Story-Space to PowerPoint: Searching for an (In)Adequate Space to Make a Point." Building on the work of critical pedagogues such as Joe Kinchloe and Henry Giroux, Tavin frankly discusses the benefits as well as the constraints found within both programs, reviewing a 10-year period of exploration and frustration, and offering suggestions for those who seek to explore hypertext theory and pedagogy.

Another theme that runs through many of the essays in this anthology is the updating of traditional media and methods through digital means. Sara Wilson McKay addresses the unique challenges that digital information represents for art educators, in "In Search of the Public Domain: Addressing the Threat of Copyright Laws in Art Education." Wilson McKay outlines these challenges, while suggesting numerous constructive options for art educators reproducing digital images. Shei-chau Wang describes the potential for electronic portfolios in "Digital Journals: The Past, Present, and Future of Electronic Portfolios for Visual Culture Learners." In this chapter, Wang shares the results of two studies of e-portfolio use, and also discusses the potential for networked portfolio that use the blog format, providing the reader with numerous suggestions for the successful use of these technologies. Ryan Shin also discusses the differences between traditional media and digital media, in "Four Digital Media Art Practices: Moving Beyond Drawing and Painting on the Computer." In this chapter, Shin shares his experiences with teaching digital technologies to preservice art teachers, describing their struggles and successes, and providing the teacher educator with a number of helpful pedagogical strategies. Shin also makes the argument that digital media rely upon a unique set of methods, which art educators must acknowledge if digital art is to be made a relevant part of art educational practice in the 21st century.

Along similar lines, Mara Jevera Fulmer and James W. Shurter discuss the development of podcasts and an e-zine (electronic magazine) in the teaching of graphic design, in "Thinking Big, Creating Small: Podcast Tips for Graphic Design Students." This chapter describes in detail the processes and pitfalls of utilizing developing digital technologies to provide content that builds upon and complements traditional classroom instruction. Selin Ozguzer also deals with the transla-

tion of traditional teaching methods and themes in the teaching of graphic design, proposing that the introduction of interactive Flash-based games can provide art educational content in a dynamic, educationally sound manner. In "Educational Applications of Flash in Graphic Design Education," Ozguzer suggests that the visual and interactive qualities of the program make it far more accessible than the traditional activities found in Graphic Design classrooms.

Yet another theme that runs through the text is physicality and the ephemeral in digital visual culture. Ryan Patton and Matt Kenyon discuss the potential for video games in art education in their chapter "Physical Computing and Video Game Art Education." While authors such as Taylor, et al. point out that virtual environments such as Second Life may be considered video games depending on the intent of the programmers and the participants, Patton and Kenyon clearly outline new territory for art educators interested in the physical, interactive nature of video games. Michelle Tillander presents a theoretical reading of the notion of invisibility in her chapter, "Digital Visual Culture: The Paradox of the [In]visible." In her analysis of the concept of the interface, she suggests that "…art educators and artists illuminate a range of [in]visible new media conversations for art education, which can be used in developing innovative art and technology curricula." Karen Keifer-Boyd engages the reader in a multilayered exploration of identity and digital technology, in "Masquerading the Immateriality of Materiality." In this chapter, Keifer-Boyd intertwines the narratives of future art educators and students with discussions of avatar construction and identity deconstruction, shifting between past, present, and future in a destabilizing and provocative manner.

Each chapter offers practical suggestions for those art educators who wish to add new methodologies to their teaching, or to rethink existing practices, while presenting the reader with the challenges that accompany teaching, learning, and producing in a digital visual culture. In the process, art education and digital technology are rethought, and re-viewed, through these developing notions of identity and virtuality, modifications upon traditional learning theories, reconceptualizations of culture, translations of prior practices, ludic interfaces, and the relationship between physicality and the ephemeral. Each adds a node to the expanding network that is current art educational practice, indicating the places where these practices have initialized, and pointing toward numerous possibilities for future art educators. This is a network that will continue to expand as technologies and individuals interact, cultures and communities intersect, and educators and students respond to and help to create new forms of digital visual culture: always and forever.

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ENDNOTE

1   I have also presented the reader with yet another form of classification; the 'word clouds' that introduce each section are visual representations of word frequency within each section. This was done using the applet 'Wordle,' found at http://www.wordle.net. Wordle.net by Jonathan Feinberg is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

Masquerading the Immateriality of Materiality / KAREN KEIFER-BOYD

Avatar masquerade is a technology of identity. From the premise that humans are not discreet entities but are an entanglement of social, technological, discursive, material, and haptic activity—which mutually articulates subjectivity—identity formation is the encoding of social-technological practices. The creation and performance of avatars in virtual environments can stretch open the borders of comfortably incorporated frames of knowing.

I present my thesis through a speculative fiction[1] about a collaboration of two art educators, Afridom and Billows, and their students in the mid-21st century who are producers and consumers of digital visual culture. The fictitious students (Jo, Syd, and Cory) are composites of students with whom I have worked in motivating intertextual critical new media art, social activism, and public pedagogy projects (e.g., see Keifer-Boyd, 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008). Feminist theories of masquerade inform this speculative fiction of art pedagogy, which takes place in 2050.

Jo: Is a mask an identification or a deception?

Syd: It's in the masquerade—the enactment—that you can reveal or conceal.

Cory: If I don't have an essential core then I am always becoming.

Syd: But you have a past. Isn't that your essential self that you either reveal or conceal?

Cory: My past is made of today's consequences of my previous actions, as well as from the memories of places, people, and things.

Billows: Let's go to UpStage to perform an identity to help you understand the interplay of your subjective experience and the cultural historical "stages" in which it is performed.

Afridom: Keep in mind that all manifestations of yourself are neither authentic or a deception. Your masquerade reveals, if you are paying attention to the immateriality of your materiality, the multiplicity of identity. Masquerade is both a hiding and revealing of self.

The immateriality of identity is materialized through masquerade. Materiality

for new media theorist N. Katherine Hayles (2004) refers to "what performances the work [i.e., in this context, the avatar] enacts" (p. 71). How individuals desire to be identified is often through extravagant enactments (Wollen, 2003), i.e., signifying strategies that construct meaning. Masquerade can be a form of critique through performance of unmasking or exposing, or a way to compensate embodied experiences. Feminist film theory posits that masquerade signifies "not only a masking but also an 'unmasking' in the deconstructionist sense of exposing and criticizing" (Smelik, 1999, p. 358). Social psychologist Efrat Tseëlon defines masking as "fundamentally dialectical," and uses the concept to refer to "a 'technology of identity' and as means of interrogating it; the tool for self-definition and deconstruction" (2001, p. 11). Masquerade both conceals and produces femininity, as well as other identities, because identity is a subjective process created from social, technological, and embodied actors, human and non-human, that entangle in a multitude of networks.[2] Identity is contextual and collectively created.

From a feminist theory of masquerading the immateriality of materiality, I envision a future technologically infused ecopedagogy that guides students to deconstruct notions of authentic self. Masquerade dissolves binarisms of self and other; it bespeaks of relationalities.

> Afridom: Freedom for the night is not to masquerade self to achieve dominant standards of worth, but to release oneself from such trappings.

Students create themselves, realizing their creation is in relationship to their movement with physical, biological, and digital interplay.

REGARDING FEMINIST SPECULATIVE FICTION

> Only the impossible is worth the effort.
>
> Are you a fanatic or an idealist?
>
> Why do you need to label me?
>
> I need to understand.
>
> No, you want to explain me to yourself. (Winterson, 2000, pp. 54-55)[3]

A strategy in the tradition of feminist speculative fiction is to use "ironic humor to make sobering comments about the insidious nature of patriarchy" (Barr, 1987, p. 22; Keifer-Boyd & Smith-Shank, 2006). An imaginative text "change[s] the sense and substance of reality itself" (Edwards, 1984, pp. 148-149). My goal is to open possibilities through a vision of the future of art education, as well as to critique current trajectories of art education. Informed by feminist speculative fiction and feminist theories of masquerade, this chapter is an interchange between theoretical and imaginative texts.

The vehicle to space travel has changed. No longer does speculative fiction occur primarily on other planets than Earth (interstellar). Millions of authors create speculative fiction in cyberspace travel including fictions of sports teams, simulated lives (e.g., The Sims®, Second Life®), structured adventures (e.g., Doom®), and in open-ended Net play such as Regender (Yee, 2004), Verbarium (Sommerer & Mignonneau, 1999), and Frig Magnet Game (Clark, 2007). Mind and body are integrally one with all else in the Net—an interspecies system, no matter if bathing in cyberspace or H_2O.

PALIMPSEST BORDERS

Afridom: Since the 1970s, feminists have created "borders of their cross-
ing" (Broner, 1978, p. 289). And, there have been many borders
crossed, and re-crossed differently, until all borders are marvelous
palimpsests layered deep with hybridity of active traversing.

Afridom and Billows, the art educators in this speculative fiction, have been working on ways to encourage youth to situate themselves in these palimpsest borders for the vantage perspectives such spaces provide. As an example of masquerading the immateriality of materiality, they refer to art critic Cheng (2002), whom they describe as providing a starting point for enacting perpetual displacement strategies from his interpretation of the 1960s edge paintings of Sam Francis.

Billows: Perpetual displacement, as an intertextual strategy of inquiry into
sites of meaning in contemporary visual culture, uncovers rhizom-
atic connections.[4] The hidden is exposed, centered, and displaced
forming endless centers and margins. Perpetual displacement
strategy is a way to infiltrate the space inside the binary physi-
cality/virtuality in order to create the rhizomatic connections
between its nonbinary alterities. Thus the virtual does not exist
as a privileged side of the binary physical/virtual removed from
the consequences of embodiment, materiality, and their political
consequences.

Afridom: Cheng questions the "color chronology" and "territorial negotia-
tions" and how the edge colors conventionalize the white expanse
of emptiness. This focus on peripheral colors surrounding the
uniformly white center of the canvas suggests an ambiguity toward
the homogeneous center. Cheng's interpretation provides an
analogy of the political potential of perpetual displacement as a
generative and interpretative strategy. There is generative potential
in Sam Francis' painting where the edge colors stimulate questions

concerning the meaning of center. What frames the edge, now the center of attention, perpetually persists in displacing assumptions of the normalcy of the center.

Afridom and Billows ask students to resist defining finite borders of contexts, and instead to identify the edges in order to recontextualize, again and again.

Afridom: Perpetual displacement proposes to tie infinite regression to present effects in practice by leaping over the abyss into the immediacy of experience. This process must be perpetuated and not end with one particular petrified reconstruction.

Billows: The frame and center share meanings born of each other. Their distinctions are fabricated by their relationship, which is too often erroneously perceived as a relationship of opposites.

Afridom: Furthermore, by perpetually displacing the center, relationships change and minimize the normalization of stagnate dominance and subordination. For example, normative heterosexuality structures enforce invisibility concerning other views of sexuality (Calhoun, 2000), yet a perpetual displacement of the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality viewed appositionally creates a fluidness in which meaning of each category is situational.

Syd: Categories such as gender, race, nationality, and sexuality ascribed to a person, for instance, normalize these social constructs rather than contextualize a person's situation.

Jo: Yet our situations frame us with numerous categories.

Billows: Critical social theorist Iris Maria Young (2003) notes a conceptual shift, a perpetual displacement, "when we understand the concept of gender as a tool for theorizing structures more than subjects" (p. 12). Perpetual displacement as a theoretical position in critically questioning visual culture provides a way to acknowledge materiality and physicality without placing it in a fixed category, but instead focuses on the embodied situation.

Afridom: Perpetual displacement strategies both acknowledge and break the frame. Artists such as Orlan use perpetual displacement strategies to challenge dichotomous worldviews, appositional/oppositional binaries, and bivalent logic.[5] Orlan displaces the romantic myth of individual genius, and a host of other notions of patriarchal conditions related to sexual difference.

Billows: Orlan displaces male imaginary of women with its own abject content in the series of facial operations from patriarchal art-historical references, which incorporate the chin of Botticelli's *Venus*, the lips of Gustave Moreau's *Europa*, the eyes of Gérôme's *Psyche*, and the brow of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Orlan's performances in the 1990s, *Reincarnation of St. Orlan*, displace religious structures such as moral notions of carnal sanctity and the Christian logocentric principle of the "word made flesh" into "flesh made word."

Afridom: Orlan's art raises the question, "Is identity for sale?"

Cory: Orlan in her manifesto of "carnal art" defines it as "not interested in its final, plastic result but in the surgical operation-performance and in the modified body as a site of public debate" (Hirschhorn, 1996, p. 2).

Billows: Such sites of public debate, such sites of meaning, are not located in any one resultant fixed identity but in the dynamic betwixt spaces. They are not in the naturalized notion of matter but in the process of materialization. The "natural" face becomes displaced into representational structure. Philosopher of education Ilan Gur-Ze'ev's ideas of counter-education, which involves "the possibility of a struggle for dialogical self-constitution and moral responsibility to the otherness of Other and of the subject's struggle to overcome herself as constituted by normalising education" (2000, p. 222), could describe Orlan's performance of masquerade. Gur-Ze'ev highlights dialogue as "the space where the struggle over reflection as an open possibility can take place. Within it, the otherness of the 'external' and 'internal' Other as a reflection of the infinity and the openness of being allows the realization of transcendence in the immediate moment" (2000, p. 226).

TRANSFORM: AVATAR CO-ORDINATES

Afridom and Billows team teach classes not organized by time, or grouped by students' age. Alphanumeric grades have been obsolete for almost 3 decades. Instead, public schools are learning centers in which students select where to go and how long to stay. All K-12 graduates are given an equal lump sum of money upon graduation. Graduation is determined with an evaluation, based on criteria set by the student in dialogue with others in the areas of student interest, of an e-multimedia portfolio reflecting learning and thinking.

In 2050, educators theorize that motivation by alphanumeric grades can be an obstacle to learning, and by teaching in situations that do not require a grade

nor result in the reward of a degree, more genuine ways to motivate are part of the pedagogical praxis. Students select where to go and how long to stay on a project, in which time is no longer partitioned according to disciplines. Long periods of time to work are necessary for engagement in learning that materializes in new forms and ideas responsible to diversity.

Afridom and Billows encourage students in their avatar creations to resist standards of beauty in defining human worth. Such standards of worth may lead to shame, self-hatred, destruction of body, or suicide.

> Afridom: What does it mean to be fully human? Are there borders encasing a fully human, human? Unfortunately, the social fictions posit that yes, clothes matter, yes, skin color matters, yes, body shape matters. Today, we can still hear phrases that infer to be human is to be a man (e.g., mankind, man-made).

> Billows:　In Cyborg Web Shop (Andreja Kulun i, 2004), trajectories of speculative fictions concerning constructions of virtual selves redefine what it means to be human.

Afridom and Billows send students to the Cyborg Web Shop for prosthetic body revisions. Once "freedom for the night" is created through disguise, the art educators send students to Upstage,[6] a free-downloadable software developed for cyberformances that also enable impromptu audience participation. Creators "encourage you to use it for creative, educational and social purposes" in performances for global audiences (Upstage, Download, ¶ 1).

Upon entering the cyber art class, a quote from a 50-year-old print-bound book, *The PowerBook*, circulates students as they enter their virtual classroom:

> Undress. Take off your clothes. Take off your body. Hang them up behind the door. Tonight we can go deeper than disguise. (Winterson, 2000, p. 4)

Intrigued with the directive, students transport into a space in which others already there are trying on avatar co-ordinates.

A greeter asks: Male or female?

[Cory:]　Does it matter?

[Greeter:] It's a co-ordinate.

[Cory:]　This is a virtual world.

[Greeter:] OK. OK—but just for the record—male or female? (Winterson, 2000, p. 26)

Liao:　I have been trying for many years to create a gender ambiguous avatar. I am just finishing my skin and remaking my body: it is now short and rather fat. However, I think I still look like an old lady,

that is, not yet gender ambiguous enough. When I notice that a staff model from the store is in the dressing room, I realize that my focus on the task at hand has been so intense that I am unaware whether she has just walked in or if she has been watching me for a while. She says, 'plz leave here immediately.' I am stunned. She continues, 'this is a place for women only.' I want to reply that I am a woman, but I do not want to cause an argument. Afraid that she will file an abuse report[7] and that Linden Lab will kick me out of SL [Second Life®], I leave. (Liao, 2008, p. 34)

Afridom: "We are not accustomed to seeing woman as 'person' (man) and man as 'other'" (Barr, 1987, p. 10). Purposeful disguise of gender has been a ploy in fiction since Shakespeare's plays (e.g., Rosalind in *As You Like It*; Imogen in *Cymbeline*; Miranda in *The Tempest*) to James Tiptree, Jr.'s (i.e., Alice B. Sheldon's) *The Screwfly Solution* (1987/1977), as well as in life with the changes of artists' names to gender ambiguous names that lack gender-marking tags (e.g., Lena Krassner to Lee Krasner).

Jo: The disguise typically hides that one is female by taking on the mask of masculinity.

Syd: Masquerading typically derives from desire for a power not possessed. Gender forms the "co-ordinates" that guide social interaction.

Billows: What is the purpose of human existence today, to elders and youth, to people of different tribes and positions in those tribes? Let's imagine that it is socio-political equity for all. If this is human purpose, then use of technology to make bodies "attractive" will not promote social equity. The trajectories in Hawthorne's (1846) *Birthmark*, Tiptrees's (1989) *The Girl Who Was Plugged In*, and movies such as *Death Becomes Her* (Zemeckis, 1992) suggest as such. Diversifying standards of beauty is one potential solution.

DIRECTIVE

Afridom: Imagine a beginning of your civilization, i.e., a cultural narrative in which the society in which you exist did not come from destruction, hatred, and misunderstanding. What would occur in such a beginning?

Jo: I am going to create a fictional cultural narrative in which poverty is not present in the United States by looking at the social systems of the Nordic countries.

Billows: Fiction writer Jeannette Winterson advises to "break the narrative. Refuse all the stories that have been told so far (because this is what the momentum really is), and try to tell the story differently—in a different style, with different weights—and allow some air to those elements choked with centuries of use, and give some substance to the floating world" (Winterson, 2000, p. 53).

Syd: Such a cultural narrative would need to undo the trajectory of global warming.

Cory: Renewable resources several times over in a human lifespan would need to be the staple of humans.

Jo: Oil is not renewable in a human lifespan. It takes hundreds of thousands of years for the Earth to make oil from organic matter.

Syd: Thankfully, the ecopedagogy movement after the turn of the 21st century has begun to turn the destruction of the Earth around. While forest, fish, wetlands, soil, and water have been irreversibly destroyed on a global scale, the civic responsibility in regulating livestock, fisheries, and mining non-renewable energy resources enable our existence today. In my floating world, I will gesture toward reviving interconnected diversity.

TRANSPORT IN SPACE AND TIME

Jo: If I don't know who is behind the mask, I am lost without this orientation, without this coordinator of markers of the categories that I am familiar, that have oriented my responses to people, places, and things.

Cory: What I don't know is how to respond based on what is behind the masquerade.

Syd: My question is how can I respond to the masquerade seeing the co-ordinates that I have already codified as knowledge?

Billows: Reflexively respond in your own masquerade, and reflect on your performed response.

Afridom: Rewind the play and re-view.

Jo: My endowed sexual triggers in my masquerade made me comfortable in conformity with the others roaming in cyberspace but conversation was limited to desires and strategies of how to increase hypersexuality.

> Syd: There is no comfortable stable viewing position.
>
> Cory: My masquerade as an oyster generated political jibberish in intertextual reference to the conversation between an oyster and a walrus in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Susan Kaiser (2001), in the foreword to *Masquerade and Identities*, describes "Oprah's 'take it off' show … [in which] … the made over, 'after' or 'true, liberated' images serve to reinforce the dominance of that order" (p. xx). Afridom and Billows, familiar with such masquerade in the guise of unmasking amongst their students, and the society that surrounds them know that the pedagogical "trick" is to critique one's own socialization of dominant normalizing practices. The intense desire to refigure embodiment in cyberspace, and the human "capacity for imagining themselves as inhabiting different corporealities" is the motivational hook for discourse amongst the students about their masquerade (Grosz & Eisenman, 2001, p. 85). Afridom and Billows believe in what Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) noted, drawing upon D. W. Winnicott's notion of transitional space, that "'augment[ation]' through invention" can allow one to "engage in political practice" (2005, p. 127).

KEYFRAME: DREAM A DANGEROUS DREAM
[Students converse.]

> Jo: I have learned about myself by not being me.
>
> Syd: I have learned about my fantasies, and question whether these are my desires or desires programmed in me over time from the experiences I have had.
>
> Cory: I am, I am, I am hesitant to reflect on my masquerade.
>
> Jo: My masquerade is doing anything but what I habitually do. This is a difficult creative challenge of emergence, to activate awareness of my masquerade.

Pervasive normalizing practices are difficult to resist or even recognize. The keyframe in one's animated life is that moment of recognizing the absurdity of perceptions of normal. Afridom and Billows' pedagogical strategies help to facilitate dreaming such a dangerous dream, i.e., they help students to keyframe[8] the intentional moment of change. "In transitional space, this someone is in a deeply interfused encounter with and at the same time in a 'differential emergence' from the materiality of the world" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 34). Transitional space, as a field of emergence then, as relationality, consists in an interactive openness "to being affected by something new in a way that qualitatively changes its dynamic nature" (Massumi, 2002, p. 224).

MERGE

> Afridom: Elizabeth Ellsworth's theorizing of a transitional space provides a theory of masquerade that we have experienced: "We are traversing the boundaries between self and other and reconfiguring those boundaries and the meanings we give them. We are entertaining strangeness and playing in difference. We are crossing that important internal boundary that is the line between the person we have been but no longer are and the person we will become" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 62).

MASQUERADING MATERIALITY

This imaginary text is not an idealization but is instead imagined resistance in hopes that by being imagined it can be enacted. While trying to find the instances of when and how creative displacement strategies become perpetual, one critical criterion is whether the goal is to displace to redefine, or to displace perpetually, in order to defer the meaning. When students of art education use perpetual displacement strategies for masquerade, the daunting task of creating a contemporary, socially and culturally significant masquerade becomes more focused, more deliberate, and ultimately more meaningful. Perpetual displacement strategies can help to defer co-opting what it critiques.

Perpetual displacement strategies combined with immaterial masquerading offers a material transitional space/object that "becomes pedagogical when we use it to discover and creatively work and play at our limits as participants in the world" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 78).

> The social body reaches the limits of the very expression of its potential and variation when the reciprocal variations and shifting characteristics of individual bodies are constrained from moving about, combining, and inflecting. The limits of the social body's expression and variation within a given context or event, then, can be said to constitute the limits of relationality. (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 130)

Teachers can facilitate a perpetual displacement strategy of masquerade in students' virtual fictions for specific circumstances in the critical and creative practices of their classrooms. Perpetual displacement strategies enable entrance to the between-ness of spaces by deferring signification. Masquerade creates ambiguity and challenges categories of identity. "The process of masking belies that there is no single or no 'true' master status identity. Masking enables the interrogation of identity" (Kaiser, 2001, p. xiv). Masquerading the immateriality of materiality can inform us about what can be changed, such as notions of race or gender as fixed identities, by occupying subject positions in innovative ways that unsettle essentialist narratives, and can trouble tropes that assume universalist claims.

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ENDNOTES

1 While there are many genres that authors posit are speculative fictions (e.g., alternative histories, contemporary social science fantasy, cyberpunk, dystopia, see Shade, 2009), my emphasis is feminist speculative fiction such as that published in *Femspec*, a feminist interdisciplinary journal specializing in critical and creative speculative fiction, and as defined by Margaret Atwood (1998) as a critical vision of the future if the cultural and technological interfaces of contemporary times continue on its trajectory.

2 See Joan Rivière's (1991) foundational 1929 psychoanalytic essay, *Womanliness as a Masquerade*, and Judith Butler's (1999) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

3 This conversation is from *The PowerBook*, which, like Winterson's other fictions, is about "Boundaries. Desire." (Winterson, 2000, p. 35).

4 Rhizome refers to a trailing root that uses a cloning strategy to propagate new life. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1981), in "Rhizome," use the term to characterize an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system.

5 For further application of perpetual displacement strategies in interpreting artworks see George Bauer's 2002 dissertation, *Perpetual Displacement as a Creative Concept and Critical Strategy of Inquiry into Sites of Meaning* (Texas Tech University).

6 Upstage® was first launched on January 9, 2004, funded by the Community Partnership Fund of the New Zealand Government's Digital Strategy, and is a collaborative project of CityLink, MediaLab, and Auckland University of Technology. It is open source and licensed under a dual-license: Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 License and GNU General Public License (GPL).

7 People can file an abuse report when seeing something or someone do something inappropriate in *SL* [SecondLife®].

8 *Keyframe* is a term used in animation to refer to the start and end point of a movement, thus framing a trajectory in which key decisions need to be made for a changed course of action.