
ELECTRONIC SPACE & PUBLIC SPACE: MUSEUMS, GALLERIES AND DIGITAL MEDIA

**Panel members: Annick Bureauud,
Steven Bode, Mike Leggett (Chair),
Jill Scott**

Introduction. Mike Leggett With respect to the theme of the Festival, we need to look away from 'virtual' spaces for this session and return to some 'real' spaces in which, to quote Roy Ascott, ours is "an art which is emergent from a multiplicity of interactions in electronic spaces."

Now there is a certain irony in quoting Roy in the context of this Panel because in the 20 years I've admired his work he has of course been the champion, and has almost defined "telematic culture", or art on the wire - Homo Telematicus and the connectivist manifesto.

A multiplicity of interactions in electronic space can of course be encountered in the three dimensional space of a public gallery as well as the private space of "computus domesticus". Indeed the actual presence of people along with the virtual presence of those on-line could constitute a chance for divergent forms from within the emergence that Roy proposes.

This Panel session will focus on the institutional forms that need to be developed in order that the widest possible multiplicity of interactions can occur in electronic space in the most public way, for others to experience, in particular tax-payers and sponsors. We will discuss the practice of gallery and museum spaces providing access to, and information about art, and extending their function to a dynamic educational role that will ameliorate, or reduce, the tendency which divides the information rich from the experiential poor. To accelerate the movement away from an attitude revealed in this quote from a young fogey Sydney-based arts commentator who said: "Peering at a monitor is an impoverished aesthetic experience."

Organisations concerned with exhibition practice will need to:

- mediate between the artist and the consumer to engage with these political issues;
- address the logistical problems associated with the exhibition of 'the artwork of the electronic spaces';
- and anticipate the other issues that will emerge because of the complexity of negotiations involving so many people and interests - this is not just a matter of dumping a few files on a Web server!

I draw your attention to the related Panel session on Friday morning, Between Exhibition & Network. In the abstract for that session reference is made to: "Long standing relationships between the artists and their audience, the curatorial process, and entrenched cultural institutions, neither apply to, nor nurture the development of contemporary art-making as it increasingly occurs in this radically reconfigured terrain." The session this morning will avoid this kind of conjecture and focus on some experience and evidence about what some of the exhibitional institutions are doing in an effort to reflect contemporary art practice. I should add that my background is as an artist working with film, video and photography, and now interactive multimedia. Part of my practice has always been in exhibition and curation - I was a founding member of the London Film-makers Co-operative Workshop, the first cultural institution to integrate the production, distribution and exhibition of artists' film.

Before we start I should also make at least two corrections to what is printed in the Abstracts:

- The title of this session is not correct.
- In the second paragraph, when it says the

exhibition "contributed greatly to our appreciation of the dynamics of the development of the new medium" refers to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and not the cosmic'our'. - And the Web address now should be: www.mca.com.au

Museum of Contemporary Art CD-ROM Exhibition 1996: Mike Leggett "I have raised the issue of the dynamic educative role of public galleries and museums because this was, fundamentally, my own motivation for researching and then developing the exhibition Burning the Interface<International Artists CD-ROM> which took place in Sydney between March and July of this year." Presentation about the mounting of this exhibition, with slides and videotape. Points covered: Research, Motivation; Sponsorship 1; Definition and Planning; Sponsorship 2; Design; Marketing strategies; Preparation and Installation; Media; Merchandising; Educational strategies; Market Research. New Exhibition Practice in Australia: Phase 2 of MCA; Exhibition and curation agencies - Experimenta in Melbourne, and SIN Sydney Intermedia Network; Co-operative Multimedia Centres - Ngapardji in Adelaide; Access Australia in Sydney; Starlit and another in Brisbane; Melbourne and Perth.

Zentrum für Kunst und Medien (ZKM) Museum - Jill Scott Jill Scott is an Australian artist currently based in Germany and after working in the mediums of video and performance she began working with digital installations in the mid-80s and currently has the work Frontiers of Utopia in the exhibition that is part of V2 DEAF. She described in detail the plans for the 'hybrid' museum that is shortly to open at ZKM in Karlsruhe under the directorship of Hans Peter Schwartz using the Web site that describes the exhibit to illustrate her points. (<http://www.zkm.de/departments/medienmuseum/main.en.html>)

ASTN and CHAOS: Annick Bureauud Annick Bureauud is the President of Art Science Technology Network Inc (ASTN) which publishes FineArt Forum. She is the editor of the International Directory of Electronic Arts (IDEA) published by CHAOS. She spoke in relation to a consultancy she has recently completed for the French Ministry of Culture about the future for museums and their object-based structures, their architecture, the intellectual patterns of the staff. She raised the issue of 'cultural worth' in relation to the space available for creation, the narrativisation effect of art historical traditions. The novelty of technology in some contexts, for instance science museums, avoided content problems associated with time-based media. Artists' fees and commissions in this area needed urgent attention. Curatorial practices of themes and surveys needed to give account to the flexibility of forms that electronic media produced, which in itself raised problems of conservation for museum culture. Flexibility was the key for the future, along the lines of theatre possibly: Ars Electronica Centre may become a model. <http://www.mit-press.mit.edu/Leonardo/astn/whatis.html>

Film and Video Umbrella - Stephen Bode This London based organisation has been operating for nearly ten years and concentrates on researching and curating exhibits by British artists working with video and digital media. The presentation covered the logistics of running such an organisation and detailed a major exhibit held last year at the Natural History Museum in London. (<http://kit.trdkunst.no/Projects/vabi.html>)

BURNING THE INTERFACE<International Artists' CD-ROM>
On-line info: <http://www.mca.com.au>