

# CENTRE FOR IMAGE AND SOUND RESEARCH

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**E**he mission of the Centre for Image and Sound Research is to support applied research in the technological and artistic aspects of image and sound, contributing to product development and to the evolution of Canadian art and culture.

CI•SR was originally conceived at the School for Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University, and developed through the efforts of a founding group of individuals which included Tom Sherman (former head of the Media Arts Section of the Canada Council), Joy Leach (then with SFU's Development Office), Dr. Tom Calvert (then VP-Research at SFU), Grant Strate and Martin Gotfrit (Professors in Contemporary Arts, SFU).

CI•SR is now an independent, non-profit organization.

With original funding from Rogers Cablesystems, Inc., the Federal Department of Communications and the BC Ministry of Regional and Economic Development, and then a multi-year commitment from Industry Canada (through the Centre for Information Technology Innovation), CI•SR was able to establish a research laboratory equipped with computer workstations as well as audio and video processing facilities. In addition the lab has been tied to a presentation area with high-resolution display and multichannel sound.

The organization initiated a Research Program to support a variety of initiatives from industry, universities, and artists. Among current and recent projects are the following:

## **Archive Interface Design Project**

Many performing arts organizations maintain historical records in multimedia archives. Imagine that this material could be digitized and made available through an interactive computer system, but instead of a simple cataloguing and searching device you are invited to explore the material in multiple modes using a graphical user interface that is an artform in itself. This is the ambition of Artistic Director Thecla Schiphorst who has created an interactive prototype which utilizes content elements provided by Cunningham Dance Foundation in New York. Choreographer *Merce Cunningham's* body of work now spans over fifty years, and the impressive collection of multimedia material which comprises the Cunningham Dance Foundation Archive provided initial inspiration for the interactive system design.

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## **Digital Optical Printer**

The motion picture entertainment industry is increasingly relying on digital image processing to create the special effects audiences now expect in all major films. Pthalo Systems, Inc., has developed a high speed, high resolution technique for transferring images between motion picture film and digital post production systems. Key features of the system include film quality resolution (up to 200 lines per millimeter) and frame rates of 5 seconds per frame. The Digital Optical Printer performs operations previously done by optical printers and provides both scanning and recording in a single machine.

## **iCube**

A small but growing number of performing and visual artists have been exploring the use of computer technology to enhance their multimedia works. iCube is a tool which has been developed by Axel Mulder specifically to address the needs of artists working with sensors as devices to drive the computer-based media in their work. The device will translate the sensor data to midi signals in a manner which can be programmed through a user-friendly software interface. The goal is to create a product which is both affordable and usable by non-technical artists.

## **Yuan Ming Garden**

The building of this fabulous Chinese Imperial Garden began in 1709 and continued under six generations of Emperors until it was destroyed by the Western Army in 1860. Xing Xing Computer Consultants has undertaken the ambitious goal of reconstructing the garden - not in plant and stone, but with the latest in 3-D modelling and animation techniques. The significance of the garden for Chinese history, culture, literature and art make this project ideal as the basis for development of educational and cultural interactive products.

Cutbacks in the Federal budget of February 1995 resulted in the cancellation of CI•SR's multi-year contract with CITI and necessitated a suspension of new research initiatives by the organization. Efforts are currently under way to identify new sources of support to allow continuation of the Research Program.