E.motional Perturbations

Title	E.motional Perturbations
Subtitle	Not provided.
Lead-in / Abstract	As digital culture and media develop and re/shape experience, they also colour e.motions. The aim of this paper is to explore e.motions in media(ted) experiences of digital culture. Emotion, or e.motion, can be understood as the movement of embodied affect-- within and between bodies-- as feelings that are in bodies and that move bodies. We jump with joy, we recoil with fear and when sadness weighs down our hearts, our limbs turn to lead. E.motions also move between bodies and machines and relay through networks, perturbing everyday life. We will engage with these perturbations through two or three case studies of electronic and new

media artwork, including our own work in the 'pataphysical new media art project, The Perpetual E.motions Project. In this project, we have set up a fictive institute -- the Institute for the Study of Perpetual E.motion. The Perpetual E.motions Project involves both a networked performance and an internet art work, which take as their starting point an understanding of e.motions as physical as well as cultural. We are also interested in the way recent neurobiological attention to emotion is reminiscent of an earlier concern with measurement of motion –in particular the work of Etienne-Jules Marey. Many of the e.motional machines in the internet work are Marey machines– that re-map the e.motions which were left out of Marey's original motion studies. The Perpetual E.motions Project also involves a networked performance, Séa.nce, which focuses on emotions in networked relay. Séances and ouija boards, which historically were popular 'parlour games,' can also be understood as 'networked' events (networking across the ether between the living and the dead). In the discussion of The Perpetual E.motions Project we will focus on the ways that networking and media(tion) perturb and are perturbed by the relays of e.motion.

Participants and speakers	Neumark, Norie ("Doktor Rumor") (AU)
Short biography of participants	Maria Miranda (aka Max) is a visual/new media artist. Recently she completed her MVA at Sydney College of the Arts. She has worked as a graphic designer, been involved in community radio and drawn comix. In 1989 she co-edited Drawing Away: an australian women's comic book. For the last ten years Maria has collaborated with Norie Neumark, as Out-of-Sync, making CD-Roms, installations, and internet art works, which have been exhibited internationally. Out-of-Sync has an artist studio on Turbulence.org (http://turbulence.org/studios/rumor/)
	Norie Neumark is a sound/radio and new media artist. Her radiophonic works have been commissioned and broadcast by the Listening Room, ABC Classic FM in Australia and broadcast by New Radio and the Performing Arts in the US. Norie is Associate Professor in Media Arts and Production at the University of Technology, Sydney. She co-edited At a Distance: precursors to internet art and activism. (forthcoming MIT Press, 2005). For the last ten years Norie has collaborated with Maria Miranda, as Out-of-Sync, making CD-Roms, installations, and internet art works, which have been exhibited internationally. Out-of-Sync has an artist studio on Turbulence.org (http://turbulence.org/studios/rumor/)
Full text	This paper is in two parts. The first half discusses some theoretical ideas about emotions and new media art. In the second half, we present our own 'pataphysical work, which explores networked emotions.

Part 1: E.motion perturbs media art

Emotion is a well-known part of art -- the desire by artists to make the audience experience emotion -- the desire by the audience to be moved. Emotion in this sense may be understood as feeling that is experienced as bodily -- feelings that are in bodies and that move bodies. Our take on e.motions is to stress the kinetic aspect -- e.motions as motion, jumping for joy etc, and that this motion of emotion is not just within individual bodies but also **relays** between bodies and machines.[1]

In thinking about emotion in new media art, one of the things we want to explore here, as in our work, is the issue of *instrumentality* -- To think of how emotion can work in perturbing ways rather than as 'added value.' To do this, we'll start by taking apart the concept New Media Art, which seamlessly puts together three terms with very different trajectories.

New. New is reminiscent of futurology, with its endless pursuit and valorization of the next new thing, the latest technology. Must new media art always/only work with the newness of new technologies? Is its destiny to be a beta testing domain for the military industrial complex? Does 'new' mean that cultural content is irrelevant? Does it necessarily demand costly high technology driven work or can there be a place for low tech and conceptual work?

Media. Media recalls communication with a listening and viewing audience. As a communication work, must new media art pursue **clarity of communication** with its audience? Does the audience demand a **transparent** documentary window onto reality from its media? Or might media remind us of the complexity of **screens** and the ways in which screenal reality has become as real as 'reality' for a popular (en) culturated audience?

Art. Art brings to mind a long history and weighty set of traditions -- including often a focus on the expressive needs of the artist or the formal needs of the medium.

However, art also offers a discourse, even if not singular -- indeed thankfully not singular --, which can help, find a space outside of the even heavier instrumental imperatives of global capitalism. And 'art' is also a reminder that new media *art* might work with intensities and affects.

Our interest in emotions has spanned 4/5 years and a number of new media art projects. In an earlier paper[2], Norie Neumark developed four figures, *affection, oscillation, projection*, and *contamination*, to explore the literal, physical and metaphorical emotional connections between people, animals and machines.

Affection re(p)lays **psychological** factors or affects. Within cultural studies, affect suggests a "layering and constant mutual interruption of biological and machine models."[3] A particularly affecting robotic art work we'd like to show is **Louis-Philippe Demers** and **William Vorn's** *La Cour des Miracles* -- a sort of robot freak show from the 16th century, figured via a sordid post-industrial future.[4] Via sensors, e.motion relays back and forth through robots and audience, as they sense *your* movement and presence, and you sense their effect/affect:

The robotic assemblage trembled and vibrated with the irreducible intensity of affection, but its e.motion took them nowhere. A moving expression of non-utilitarianism.

Oscillation, a second analytical figure, provides a model for examining **physical** forces, relay and e.motion.[5] Oscillation resonates **Gilles Deleuze** and **Félix Guattari's** focus on forces and intensities rather than intentions or fixed meanings.[6] The next work we'd like to show you is **Kenneth Rinaldo's** 2000 installation, *Autopoesis*, which creates a multiplicity of moments of oscillation of emotion between and within the audience and the pieces that make up the installation.

Rinaldo's sensors transmit and amplify emotions between the audience and the multiple arms. As partial objects these arms -- pathetic reminders of war-torn and severed limb? -- have their own life and also somehow become our arms as the emotion oscillates between us/them. In both the works the oscillation of e.motion is a motion of becoming *within* and *between* rather than to a fixed destination.

The figure of **Projection** addresses **psychoanalytic** dimensions of the **cultural imaginary**: the movement of desires between persons, animals, and machines.[7] According to **Charles Grivel**, "A machine corresponds necessarily to a call of the imaginary" ... affirming the subject's "unthought, its unthinkable."[8] " We only invent machines that are bodies; we invent machines after our bodies; we recognize ourselves through them...Machine-mirrors....[9]

Projection also mirrors *doppelgangers*, strange yet familiar doubles, onto which emotions are projected.[10] Doubles are uncanny - they are threatening in being both so like us, but also different, according to Margaret Morse[11].

Contamination[12], the final figure, suggests movement through the air, and the airwaves. In the ether, ghosts and spirits are airborne contaminants. With the birth of the telephone, **sound** waves from the mechanized voice bounced through a ghost filled ether, where they were contaminated by emotional encounters with the spirits, according to **Avital Ronell**.[13] Today, it is the web, which is contaminated with the relay of networked e.motions[14] -- as we explored in *Séa.nce* a work shown on the ISEA2004 ferry.

Part 2 The *Perpetual Emotion Project*

Séa.nce is part of a larger internet work, the Perpetual E.motion Project, which we'll turn to next. The Internet is swamped by the needs of those using it for sales purposes -- their concerns increasingly define aesthetics and 'usability' in an instrumental way. We have here what Critical Art Ensemble call a 'profit machine.' In *The Perpetual Emotions Project* we are working in the space of non-instrumentality -- to experience e.motions as relays that are noisy, excessive and ambivalent.

Show *The Perpetual Emotions Project*
http://turbulence.org/studios/rumor/emotion/

The Perpetual Emotion Project is a fictive work, which establishes a research

institute, *The Institute for the Study of Perpetual E.motions* --under the direction of Dr Rumor (aka Norie Neumark) and Professore Rumore (aka Maria Miranda). (www.turbulence.org/studios/rumor/emotion) The Internet does seem to be the perfect place for fictive and 'pataphysical works. The term 'fictive' is borrowed from the literary theorist Wolfgang Iser. He outlines a theory of the fictionalising **act**, which can be thought of as 'the real, the fictive, and the imaginary.' Quoting from Iser "…the fictive becomes an act of boundary-crossing which, nonetheless, keeps in view what has been over-stepped."[15]

An inspiration for us here, as in other works, has been the 'pataphysics of Alfred Jarry. His neologism 'pataphysics was a play on metaphysics, the science of being and ontology.[16] Jarry's 'Pataphysics sits **beside** science playing with and against its truth effects. It revels in the fragmentary and the exception, in non-sense and the anomalous.[17]

We began the Project for the internet by making a series of small machines, e.motion machines. These are play with the 19th century motion machines of **Etienne-Jules Marey**, in order to re-map the e.**motions** that were left out of his famous motion studies. In the beginning our urge (as **new** media artists!) was to find new e.motions emerging in digital culture as people merged in a moment of *affection* with their machines. We did this by interviewing subjects about incidents in relations with machines and then putting their material through our specially constructed Marey machines.

Demo Research: Subjects A and B

As the project developed, we became more interested in developing 'pataphysical theories of emotions. For instance, we mathematically modelled e.motions using String Theory, which posits that on a subatomic level matter and force are vibrational strings. (Vibration *oscillates* at the heart of string theory and of course, for a sound artist, vibration is always a very sympathetic figure.) Through this model, we can now understand the way that previously unnoticed e.motions, which are at a lower level of complexity, are different from familiar emotions, which operate at a higher level of complexity. We wanted to make these lower level emotions visible or audible.

Research: string theories

We were also interested in what was happening in the world of neuroscience, where the focus on emotions reverts to the brain, in an often blatant ignoring of cultural difference, indeed of culture in any sense.

Research: the walks.

Sotto voce: You'll notice the sound here is a variation on one sound, which is a play with the reductive nature of these scientific theories, the loss of cultural difference and of singularity.[18]

People: Doktor Rumor and Professore Rumore

We spoke earlier about *projection* and Doubles. During the work, our doubles took on a life of their own, crawling through the web, looking for other identities to contaminate their own. The project became a baroque folding of these identities as their detail multiplied and the borders between their multiple realities leaked together.

People: Doktor Rumor and Professore Rumore -> Moscow state school.

During the process of making the work, the idea of relay on the net took on ever-greater meaning for us. PhP *contaminated* our lives. As we struggled with it (not being programmers) it gave rise to a moment of software art.

People: Doktor Rumor -> software art

Which then provoked hardware art

People: Professore Rumore -> hardware art

Finally, we'd like to discuss *Séa.nce*, which is part of the project that we made together with **Greg Turner** (assisted by **Alastair Weakley**) for the ISEA Ferry.

Séa.nce:
Séa.nce is a 'pataphysical experiment to demonstrate the relays of perpetual emotion on the internet. It is a multi-user performance event, which takes place

simultaneously in a site-dependant location and on the Internet. Our concern with *Séa.nce* was to have a networked performance where local and remote players communicated with each other through a medium and a media, so that the e.motions in the network could manifest. Again Marey was an inspiration. In the 19th century, he, **Henri Bergson**, and **Marie Curie** met to investigate "'the manifestations of yet undefined forces'" through scientific investigations, using Marey's graphing instruments -- they studied telepathy and levitation etc and, of course, held seances.

Sea.nce, following these earlier experiments, is based on the Ouija Board a popular 19th century parlour game for lovers, which was an early 'networked' event (across the ether between the living and the dead). The original Ouija Board was also known as the Talking Board or the Message Board where one would search for answers from the spirit world.

As we were working on *Séa.nce*, looking at historical 'talking boards', the need to make the board talk became inevitable. But what language would it speak? As English has now become the preferred language of international networked communication, it seemed inviting to let loose many of the other alphabetic sounds that lie hidden behind this linguafranca, that have in a way become virtual. There are more than 20 different languages used in the current version of *Sea.nce*. Through a system, which relays the collective motion of the avatars, the planchette is moved around the board from letter to letter. When the planchette lands on a letter it responds with the sound of the spoken alphabets randomly chosen from these 20 languages. The result is a sort of networked glossalalia.

Glossalalia is an excess beyond interpretation, meaning, rationality. Following **Artaud** it is about force, not form[19]. It brings to mind (or should we say body) **Bataille's** idea of excess -- things which are not productive in the capitalist sense. So the glossalalic is the excess that has refused sublimation into language (narrative, meaning). It is also a theatrical performance that does not subordinate the theatrical to narrative logic. Glossalalia in this non-sense is an expression of the *singular* self, which is not the bourgeois individual hero, constituted through mastery of the body and entry into the symbolic of language.

Glossalalia thus resonates with 'patahysically absurd theatricality. In *Séa.nce* there is not enough plot and too many characters. Each performance is shaped by the emotions of the players, which collectively determine the movement of the planchette. By this we don't mean collectively as in a team sport, but rather an uncanny collectivity that is outside any individual's control.

To finish, we'll just talk briefly about the process of making the work. The process happened collaboratively across the network, with **Greg Turner** in Sydney and us located in Paris, it shaped the work. Séancing together, in the morning for us, and at night for him, we found ourselves expressing our emotions and developing our ideas through the Message Box (a live chat box): so the Message Box became a larger part of the work than initially planned. The Message Box became a performative part of the networked event. The next part of the process… is to be continued… we want to develop the work further in response to the emotional relays that took place on the ferry thanks to the generous and delightful participation of ISEA players. Thank you.

Acknowledgements:

■ 1. By machines we are referring to objects -- from tools to vehicles to media instruments -- as well as Deleuzian (literal) *assemblages* of the organic and the mechanical.

■ 2. Norie Neumark, "E/motional Machines: Esprit de Corps," Affective Encounters:

rethinking embodiment in feminist media studies, Turku, September 2001 (Anu Koivunen and Susanna Paasonen, eds. *Conference Proceedings*, downloadable from http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/proceedings.html

■ 3. Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank (eds.) "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins," p.15.

■ 4. The work seems to be figured via post-apocalyptic films such as *Bladerunner* and Terminator that help shape this work's sensory imaginary. Apropos of *Bladerunner,* by the way, it's interesting how affective encounters between humans and machines... and animals...are the central and starting point of the book which inspired the movie, **Philip K**. **Dick's** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, yet these seminal and powerful episodes are absent from the movie.
Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, New York: Ballantine Books, 1968.

■ 5. Electromagnetism and its oscillations have attracted interest throughout the 19th and 20th centuries from scientists and artists trying to understand the connections between people and machines.

■ 6. They expressed their concern with "movement and rest, slowness and speed," particularly as qualities of machinic assemblages ….The plane of consistency of Nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations. There is therefore a unity to the plane of nature which applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the artificial and the natural…. It is a fixed plane, upon which things are distinguished from one another only by speed and slowness." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* (transl. Brian Massumi) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1987, 254.

■ 7. Rather than the understanding of such desire as, say, perverse or neurotic, we want to go with this emotional flow of desire, as everyday and contributing to the aesthetic and sensual meaning people make of themselves and their worlds. The organisation of perception and the senses have changed radically and obviously in the post-industrial, information era. Yet what of the less perceptible changes to emotions? And what is happening to the connection between aesthetics and emotions through the body, which is affected and effected by sensations? As Terry Eagleton points out, "Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body" referring "to the whole region of human perception and sensation". Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, p 13.

■ 8. Charles Grivel, "The Phonograph's Horned Mouth", transl Stephen Sartarelli, in Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead (eds.), *Wireless Imagination: sound, radio and the avant-garde*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1992, p. 35; 58.

■ 9. Ibid., 31.

■ 10. For Friedrich Kittler, the Double's body comes to light through projection. According to Kittler, the double is a figure that arose with reading, as a means to identification. He describes a subsequent connection between film, mechanization, trains, doubles and psychoanalysis. He argues that this came to light in Freud's work, though Freud himself failed to see it. Friedrich A Kittler, *Literature, media, information systems: essays*, Amsterdam: OPA, 1997, p. 92. For Kittler, "[c]inematic Doubles demonstrate what happens to people who get caught in the way of mechanical media's firing line. Their mechanized likeness roams the data banks that store bodies." Ibid p. 96.

■ 11. Margaret Morse, "Gort! Klaatu Barada Nikto on Alien Intelligence", in Erkki Huhtamo (ed.), Alien Intelligence, Catalogue Helsinki: Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000, p. 35.

■ 12. Contamination recalls William Burroughs (of 'language is a virus' fame) and is useful for thinking the flows between the borders of people, animals and machines, especially through language, speech and voice. These encounters recall the becoming, including becoming animal, which Deleuze and Guattari figured as movements by contagion, movements that are "not about pity or identification, nor analogy or imitation." "Becoming is to emit particles that take on certain relations of movement and rest because they enter a particular zone of proximity. Or it is to emit particles that enter that zone because they take on those relations." A Thousand Plateaus pp. 258, 272. –273.

■ 13. "The telephone grew out of a mysterious coupling of art and occult," in a

relay of uncanny contaminations, she argues. Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology-Schizophrenia-Electric Speech*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989, p.366.

■ 14. It is little wonder that telepaths and psychics are having a major comeback on the electronic airwaves -- phone lines, television, on the web -- where psychic energy is 'constantly exchanging with electronic energy' in the words, and work of electronic artist Julia Scher, maker of numerous 'Dirty Data' works. Julia Scher speaking in Norie Neumark's, *Separation Anxiety*, The Listening Room, ABC Classic FM, 1996.

■ 15. Iser Wolfgang, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

■ 16. Jarry, Alfred "Exploits and Opinions of Dr Faustroll: a Neo –Scientific Novel" in Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor, ed. <U>Selected Works of Alfred Jarry. London: Eyre Methuen Ltd, 1980, p. 192.

■ 17. This discussion of the fictive and the 'pataphysical is elaborated in Maria Miranda, *Museum of Rumour: Fictive Art in New Media*, Unpublished MVA, Sydney College of the Arts, 2003.

■ 18. "In the hyperindustrial age, the singularity of sensibilities represents an obstacle to the unlimited circulation of goods, which is why the singular sensible, as the object of an aesthetic experience of singularity consisting in a broadening of meaning, must be replaced by an archaic, regressive condition of sensibility, which is a form of anesthesia." p. 45 importance of singularity of sensibilities [and emotions] as obstacle to unlimited circulation of goods…. Georges Collins et Bernard Stiegler, "la grande misère symbolique", *artpress* 301 mai 2004 pp.44-48.

■ 19. Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, New York: Grove Press, 1966; Edward Scheer, "Sketches of the jet: Artaud's abreaction of the system of Fine Arts" in his (ed.), 100 Years of Cruelty: Essays on Artaud (Sydney: Power Publications and Artspace, 2000).