

DIGISCAPE: UNEXPLORED TERRAIN

ABOUT US: Pace University's Digital Gallery is the combined initiative between Pace's Center for Advanced Media (CAM) and Digital Arts. It was inaugurated in Spring 2003 as a collaboration between the School of Computer Science and Information Systems and the Fine Arts Department.

LOCATION: Located at 163 William Street, a few blocks from City Hall, The Brooklyn Bridge, and Wall Street, Pace's Digital Gallery is part of a vital downtown NYC art scene that includes historic architecture and national museums.

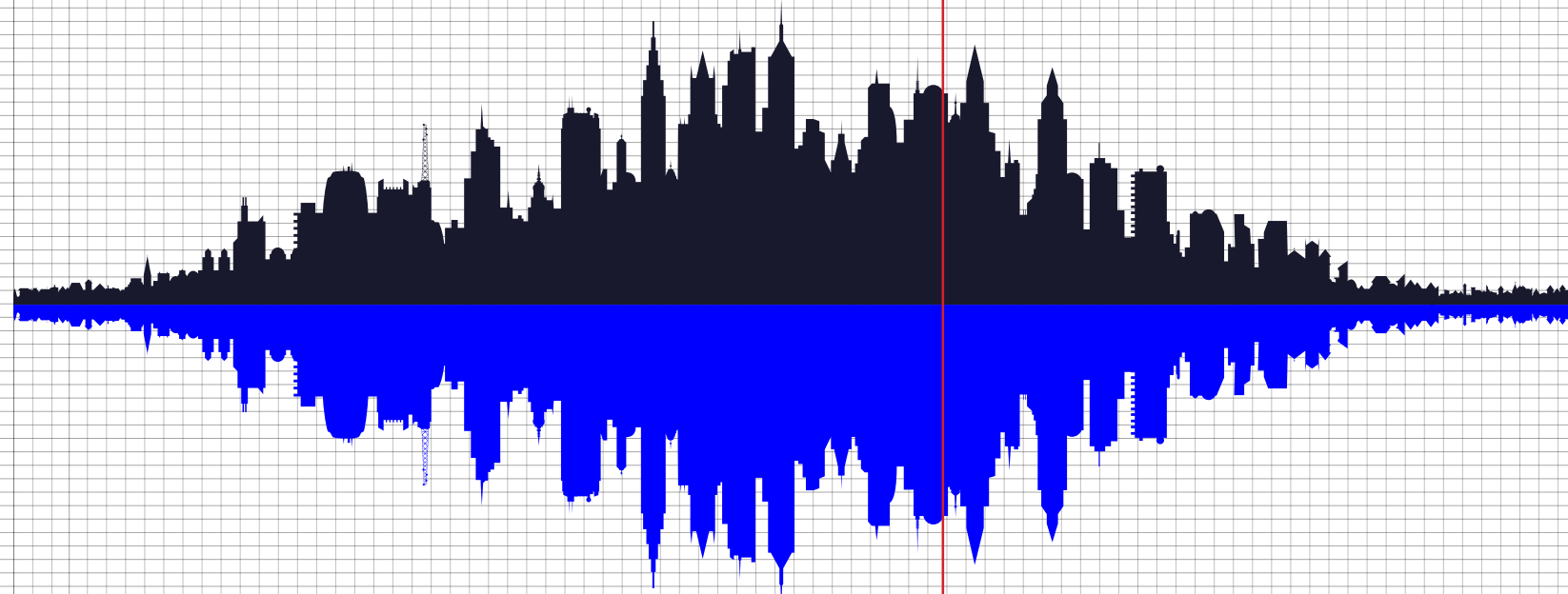
MISSION: The goal of Pace's Digital Gallery's is to foster the creation and understanding of digital art for the benefit of Pace University, the surrounding community, and the general public. It furthers Pace University's commitment to educational excellence, diversity, and civic involvement by exhibiting the work of Pace faculty and students, and regularly exhibiting curated work of leading digital artists. It sponsors lectures and symposia on digital art, an artist-in-residence program, and publication of materials for its documentation and promotion.

DIRECTORS: Francis T. Marchese, Jillian McDonald



pace digital gallery **PACE** UNIVERSITY **C** **A** **M** | fine arts dept

DIGISCAPE: UNEXPLORED TERRAIN



pace digital gallery

CHINA BLUE | SUZAN DIONNE | MARK ESPER | JAAKKO HEIKKILÄ | RICHARD HUMANN | DAVID OPDYKE | MARCIN RAMOCKI | MARINA ZURKOW

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CHINA BLUE

SUZAN DIONNE

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RICHARD HUMANN

DAVID OPDYKE

MARCIN RAMOCKI

MARINA ZURKOW

ESSAY BY JILL CONNER

1 FEBRUARY - 24 FEBRUARY, 2007

15 FEBRUARY, 3:30 - 5:00 PANEL DISCUSSION, OPENING RECEPTION: 5:00 - 7:00PM

pace digital gallery

163 William Street, New York, NY 10038

digitalgallery@pace.edu

A special thanks to Francis T. Marchese and Jillian McDonald, Directors of Pace Digital Gallery; Richard Humann; Jill Conner; and the participating artists for without their help and contributions this show would not be possible.

Curated by China Blue

Design: Edward M. McKirdy

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DIGISCAPE: UNEXPLORED TERRAIN JILL CONNER

Just as the 19th-century's development of the photograph advanced a new and different future for the image, recent innovations within technology have been changing the face of contemporary art by drastic measures, often confusing the boundaries between art and entertainment. Historically, movements were established by a group of artists who experimented with the formal limitations of the plastic arts, bringing it all very close to society before collapsing into appropriation. At present, communication systems create instant transmissions that allow the progression of the avant-garde to become more singular and global. "Digiscape: Unexplored Terrain," at Pace Digital presents a collection of art by China Blue, Suzan Dionne, Mark Esper, Jaakko Heikkilä, Richard Humann, David Opdyke, Marcin Ramocki, and Marina Zurkow. Ranging from photography, sound or video – the selection elucidates the importance that new media has upon the advancement of cutting-edge art.

The concept of rapid electronic movement appears in the work of Mark Esper and Richard Humann who separately use the entire color palette as a visual metaphor that courses through powerful current. Humann's, "Ghost Trails," (2003) for example, uses the abstract grid as a framework to suspend one's view within an open-ended, seemingly futuristic environment. When abstraction developed prior to the Second World War, the grid was initially used by Piet Mondrian as a symbol of physical movement within the new urban environment of the Modern era. Keeping with this idea, Humann's video captures the paths of six people that are then channeled into abstract form, appearing as a rainbow colored ribbon that slowly winds itself

throughout the gray layers, routes that each person took over the course of the exhibition, depicted on the screen. "Weaver," (2006) by Esper also explores random, colorful movement. However this piece is centered around the sculpted form of a hand shaped like a spider which reflects and receives a variety of programmable light combinations, rendering a multitude of hues. Inspired by folk myths that portray the artistic hand as a spider that weaves the heavens with art of human kind, this installation suspends itself between the past and future.

Limitless pictorial space saturates the photograph by Suzan Dionne. Titled, "All Things Being Equal," (2006) the artist presents a murky blue cloud that fades to dark purple. In addition to the subtly placed text that reads, "If equality there cannot be: Let the more equal one be me," Dionne offers up an image that is intended to hint at Orwellian fatalism. Breathless and cloudy, one's gaze is led nowhere beyond this particular atmosphere. In stark contrast, the work of Jaakko Heikkilä explores lived space and sets visual content within a personal narrative. "Peter In His Room," (2005) captures a man reclining upon a bed, on one side, while the other half features a white wooden cross planted within a swath of grass. Taken at a recovery center in Los Angeles for drug addicts, Heikkilä captures his sitter at a most vulnerable moment.

The digital dialogue continues in the work of David Opdyke. His double shockwave projection titled, "Debateable," (2004) consists of two plasma screens that reflect typed script taken from political debates. As American icons, such as the flag, are seen in the background, Opdyke's work attempts to reach a point of absurdity, stripping enlightened rationale away from logical

argument so that we are only left with a series of humbling, fragmented ideas. Marina Zurkow focuses less on the exchange of ideas and more upon figurative form. Known for her interactive installations, the artist presents two pieces in this exhibition of animated, caricatures of human forms. Placed within the corner of the gallery, "Fissure," (2006) captures anonymous individuals falling from a larger crevice. However since each figure is either tilted or introverted, there is no way to tell exactly how these figures should be interpreted. "Hole," (2006) features a similar paradox. In this case, however, a feminine form attempts to pull herself out of a hole. Seen from a monitor that is placed upon the floor, Zurkow's depiction of the anonymous form leaves this piece speaking on a variety of levels.

Marcin Ramocki pushes the envelope of digital art further and layers sound with the visual in an interactive installation titled, "History/Techtonics,"(2003-2004). Presenting a screen populated with a landscape of letters, Ramocki puts a twist on the act of data mining and invites viewers to input their own ideas upon the screen, using the keyboard provided. As words are added, the letters randomly infiltrate the screen and continue the drawing that was started by the artist. The act of typing is also accompanied with the sound of handwriting, which is incidentally turning into an archaic phenomenon as the digital age continues to progress.

China Blue, however, turns the notion of technological advancement into a paradox. "The Calls,"(2006) is a sound piece that centers around the World Trade Center attacks that took place on September 11, 2001. Voices of the control tower dispatchers with the pilots are mixed with dial tones echo range of

musical scale that sounds pleasant but eerie. The dial tones were derived from available statistics about the World Trade Center: how tall it was, how much it cost to build it, how many square feet of office space was available per floor, when it was hit, how many people died etc. Voices from the airplanes and control tower can be heard faintly in the background, preserving the fatal last minutes in a shroud of mystery.

These examples of digital creativity have moved the underlying concept of art closer to the senses by appealing to sound in addition to sight. Current histories of this new field place new media, as it is also known, within an evolutionary scope, suggesting that these creative, technological developments follow the early photographic advancements by artists such as Man Ray and Yves Klein, in addition to Marcel Duchamp's transformation of the two-dimensional art object that he titled, "The Large Glass (The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors Even)," (1915-23) served to push the threshold of art at that time. The shift of art beyond the tactile, third dimension currently serves as the new threshold for the avant-garde. In this exhibition photography interlaces with both video and digital projections that animate and stimulate. Together, the artists clearly convey that the significance of networks, both social and technical, now are central to the production and dissemination of contemporary art.

JILL CONNER is an art critic based in New York City. She writes for *Afterimage*, *Performance Art Journal*, *Sculpture*, *Whitewall*, and teaches at Parsons New School of Design.

The Calls, is a sound piece that is an ode to the World Trade Center. The piece is based on actual recordings of phone calls and dispatches made during and after the attacks and, air traffic controller recordings just prior to the impacts. Dial tones form the overlying sound structure. The tones selected are all derived from available statistics about the World Trade Center: how tall it was, how much it cost to build it, how many square feet of office space was available per floor, how many underground levels there were, the numbers of the floors of the sky lobbies, when it was hit, how many people died etc. As an acoustical element, the usage of dial tones is central because the cell phones were the only mode of communication available during the search and recover phase.

The creation of this piece was very important to me because it is only now that I can distance myself, somewhat, from that event on September 11, 2001. My office at that time was on the 86th floor of WTC #1 for 3 years. We had moved out of the building only 2 weeks prior and we were still in the process of moving into our new quarters a few blocks away when 9/11 occurred. This piece underscores the failure of communication.

CHINA BLUE THE CALLS



THE CALLS, 2006

Speakers, Sound piece & MP3 player

Photograph by Seth Horowitz

SUZAN DIONNE "ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL..."



ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL..., 2006

Photograph, 20 x 28"

This work depicts a beautiful, abstract landscape where things appear to be going up in purple flame. It makes a sardonic and timely reference to Orwell's Animal Farm, and in particular to the pig's statement at the end of their long and arduous adventure that "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

MARK ESPER WEAVER

Weaver is a project in development for several years. It is a poetic reflection combining certain folk myths concerning the spider that weaves the heavens, and imagery of the human hand. It expresses some of my observations about human creativity.

Technically, *Weaver* is a hollow sculptural form with many holes drilled into it. The large version which is five feet across, has about a hundred thousand holes.

The inside surfaces of the hollow form is white in order to reflect light which is generated by blue and red light emitting diodes. There are thirty three individually controllable positions for each color. The effect is of an ever changing night sky.

Control of the thirty three positions in each color is by the PIC 18F452 forty pin programmable microcontroller. The program used is PIC BASIC PRO.



WEAVER, 2006

Sculpture imbedded with a complex circuit and a large array of leds, circuit designed and programmed by artist.

JAAKKO HEIKKILÄ PETER IN HIS ROOM



PETER IN HIS ROOM, 2005

Photograph

I feel that my photography is more or less an appreciation of the fragility of life.

Photography is often like an assault—an act of aggression; you only need to look at the newspapers or TV to experience that intrusion into people's lives as way of marketing a story or event.

The principal of my work is non aggressive, I say that because having experienced the miracle of walking away from the hospital fifteen years ago, having survived cancer, only to have my wife unable to survive leukaemia—it made me see the world through the eyes of a child in wonder.

When I think about that time now; of returning from the monthly trips to hospital—it's somehow that I miss that feeling of having the permission to live.

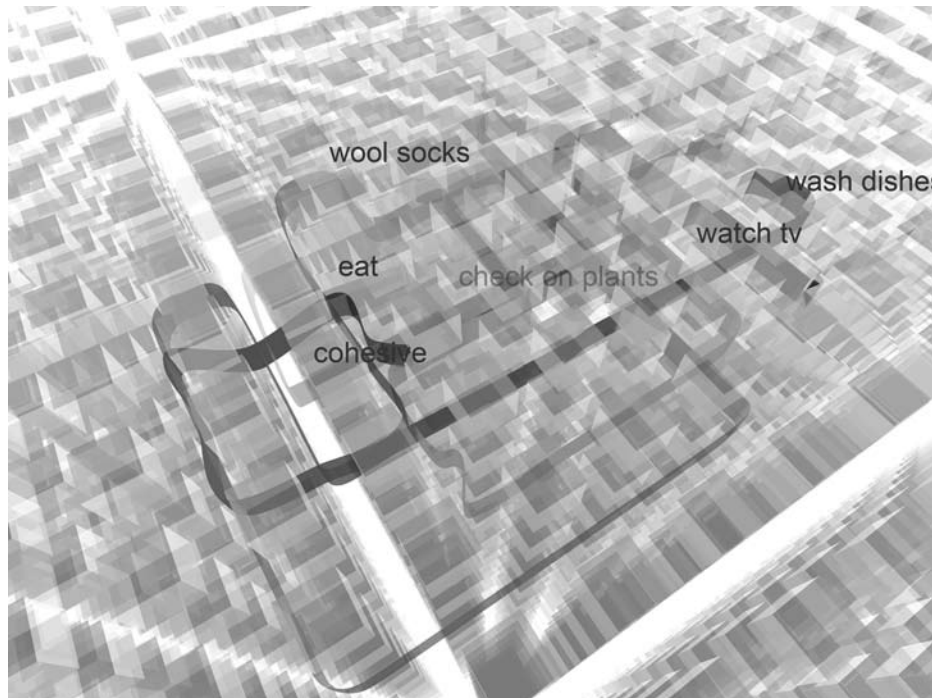
I try to remind myself of the seriousness of the situation—it makes life more endearing.

I want to embrace those people with whom I come into contact.

RICHARD HUMANN GHOST TRAILS

Ghost Trails is a work by Richard Humann that deals with the path followed. A video projection of a live web site charts, the path of six different and unrelated people over the course of the exhibition, creating a concise picture of our unerring ability to create patterns out of nothingness, and in this way to make our world smaller, known, bearable. It creates a live and constantly changing picture of, ironically, the smallness and intimacy of pattern and habit, of the little routines of trajectory that make the vastness of possibility tolerable.

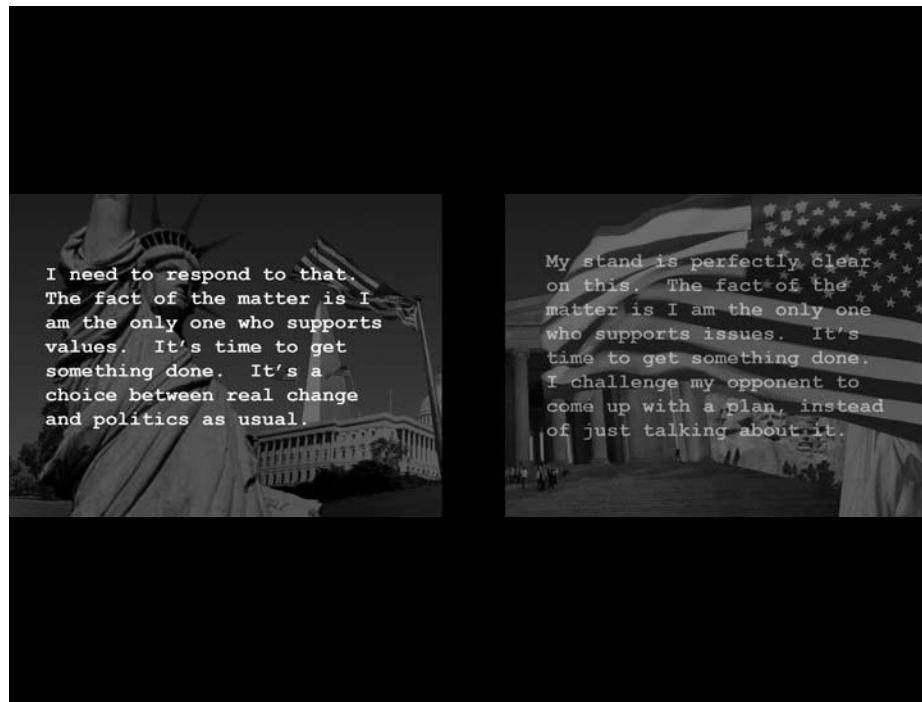
And then where there are deviations from those patterns, they seem to be huge, daring forays that go of the radar. By picturing trajectory in this way, *Ghost Trails* allows us to see exactly how big those deviations are, and that perhaps our habits are function of necessity, of sanity. It also captures an idea of the trace, of one's passage through time and space that touches others, leaving behind a ghost trail.



GHOST TRAILS, 2003

Live video projection from web site. Variable dimensions.

DAVID OPDYKE DEBATEABLE



DEBATEABLE, 2004

Double Projection Shockwave movie

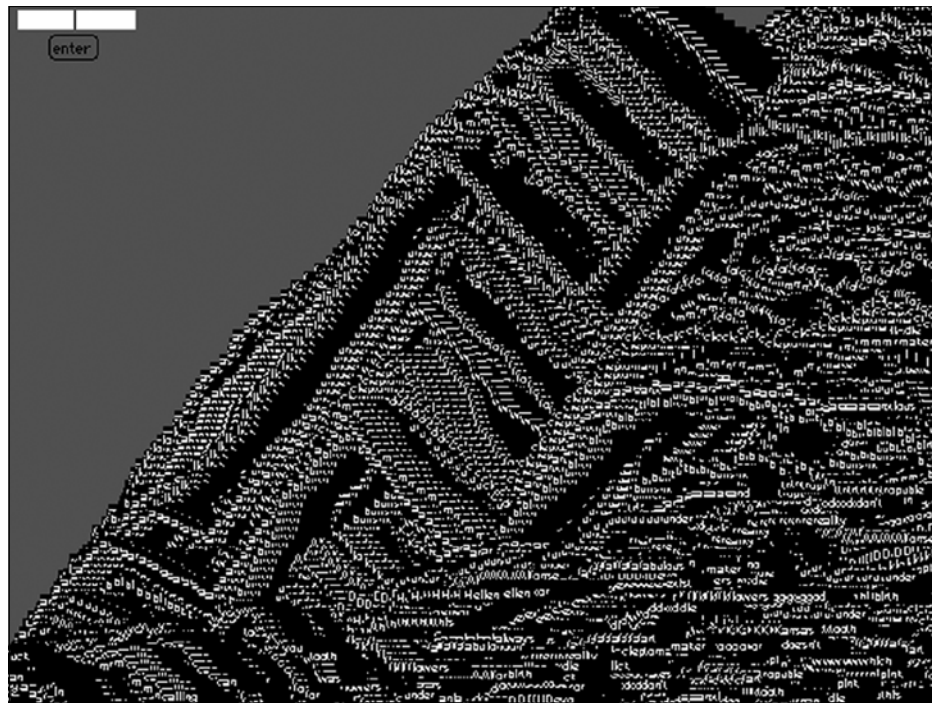
A target form or framework is chosen. A limited kit of elements and a few structural rules are chosen. The rules are followed, or bent, in an accumulation of hundreds or thousands of individual decisions about putting this part here, that part there. The goal is to find an interesting, uncomfortable balance between the complex absurdity of the process and the believability of the form.

MARCIN RAMOCKI HISTORY/TECHTONICS

History is an interactive custom, software art project created in Lingo programming language on Macromedia Director. The installation of the piece consists of a wall projection and a keyboard station where users can input data and interact with the application.

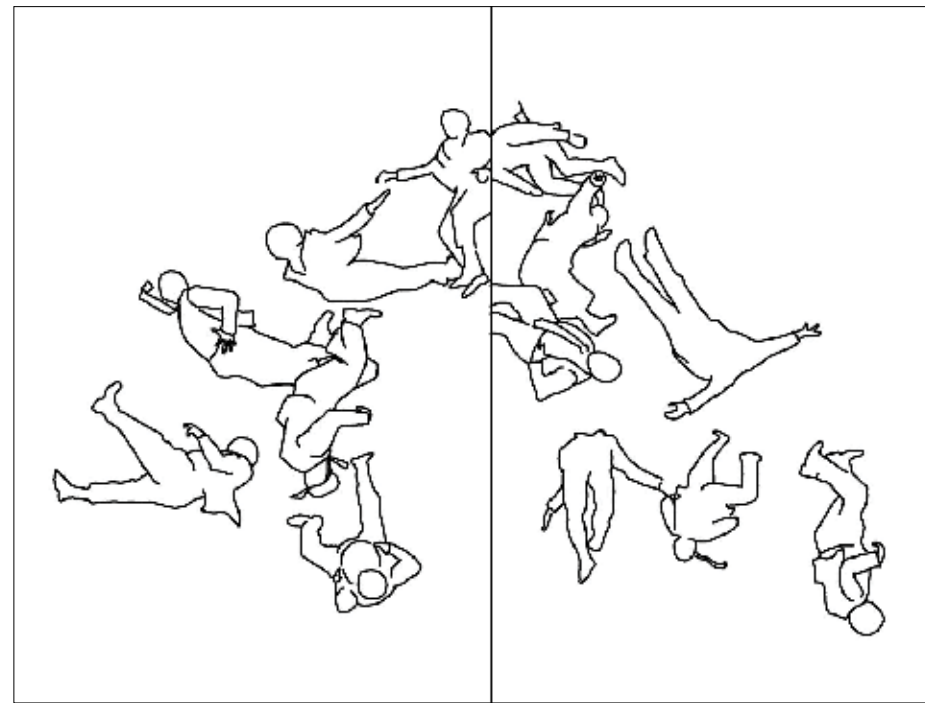
The projected image consists of a semi-random flow of words which create landscape—like composition. The words originate on the left side of the screen and move across the stage leaving behind trails of visual material, debris, accumulation. The initial set of 150 words is provided by the artist, but users are encouraged to enter their own words into an input panel on the upper left corner of the screen. The new words gradually become a part of the flow, replacing the initial set, influencing the shape and look of the new landscape. Users can also use the mouse/cursor to carve the existing landscape to any shape they desire, however the continuous flow of words will gradually cover up their designs. The soundtrack of the piece is ambient sound of hand-writing, which is modulated (pitch, speed) by the behavior of flowing words.

The piece is metaphorically depicting the mechanisms behind historical build-up, relationship between the individual input, inertia of the written word, limitation of language and other social/physical forces.



“HISTORY/TECHTONICS,” 2003-4
Interactive custom software, projection

MARINA ZURKOW HOLE AND FISSURE



FISSURE, 2006
Flash projection

Hole and Fissure are conceived as animated projections that fall between sketch, graffiti, and data, between private and public portraiture, and between downtown and a national condition.

Struggle against the real and imagined edges of space.

A more optimistic reading: in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Rebecca Solnit writes that “Gravity is about motion, weight, resistance, force, the most primary experience after all the touches on our skin, of being corporeal. And so it may be that gravity is a sweet taste of mortality and our strength to resist it, a luxuriating in the pull of the earth and the pull of muscles against it, in the momentum the two create, and how close you can cut it.”

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

CHINA BLUE is an artist and innovator who creates artworks in a variety of media focusing on sound and how it shapes space. Her current works are based on what she terms “urban bioacoustics,” recording activities from day—to—day life to examine sonic flow and energy. The current show will include two sound pieces. “Skratch,” uses spatial recording and post—production processing to capture and manipulate the acoustic elements of a billiards game. The manipulated sound fields will be presented with a 7.1 surround sound system to segregate the sounds in space. This creates a highly active sound environment that impresses on the viewer both the physicality and the dynamics of the game in a very primal manner. “Mikey vs. Fabio,” is a study of the acoustics of a ping pong—game presented in discrete stereo, mimicking the linearity of the two player game. It also immerses the listeners in the both the spatialized dynamics of the ball and the human conversations punctuated by the play. Her works have been reviewed by New York Times, Art in America and NY Arts to name a few. www.chinablueart.com.

SUZAN DIONNE is an artist whose work has been featured in exhibitions in the United States and in Canada. Recent exhibitions include Newzones Gallery in Calgary, James Baird Gallery in St. John’s, La Centrale in Montreal, Rome Arts in New York, and 57N Gallery in Washington, D.C. Reviews include Art in America, NY Arts, Time Out New York, the New York Times and Vie des Arts.

MARK ESPER I develop projects involving electronic circuits and mechanical devices. These are my attempts to explore and render the connections between the human condition, that is soul or psyche, and physical reality. My projects most often convey their content in what they do rather than in what they look like. They are in this way experiential rather than static, a bit like performance art. Sometimes the performance involves music that is unpredictable and self—organizing, or interacts with the viewer. I observe that what is thought of as spiritual and physical domains are not separate realities. The poetry that can be found in the connection between the plastic arts and science is my arena of interest. How and why electrons would dance on the head of a pin has more meaning, even more poetic meaning than any discussion about angels.

JAAKKO HEIKKILÄ was born in Kemi in northern Finland. He studied Civil Engineering and has been a researcher of the Finnish Academy, where he worked on the turbulence flow of rivers. He used chaos theory in his academic investigations. Since 1990 Jaakko has been an independent artist, and has exhibited in museums and galleries throughout Scandinavia, Europe and USA. Previous exhibitions have been held in Rovaniemi Art Museum, Finland 2006(Solo exhibition); “Folkshilfe”, Ludwigsburg, Germany 2006; Korean gallery, New York 2006; Arthall Hishult in Sweden 2006(Solo); Venice Biennale 2005; Museum of European Cultures, Berlin 2004(Solo); Musee de Normandie, Caen, France 2004(Solo). Jaakko’s images are a living example of the silent tenderness that enables his subjects to blossom. Jaako defines his subjects by living and recording the life events in families and communities. Interior views of the home become panoramic worlds. Faces are represented as close up observations of humanity. He often uses an accompanying text to anchor the image to the multiplicity of culture and social histories. He has published four photographic books. Three of the books are dealing with his home area in northern Finland, on the border between Sweden and Finland. One of the books is about the people who live on the shore of the White Sea in northern Russia.

RICHARD HUMANN was born in Tomkins Cove, New York. He lives and works in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and is represented by the Elga Wimmer Gallery in New York City. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. His exhibitions include: The 2003 Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy; Lance Fung Gallery, New York, NY; DIA Art Foundation, New York, NY; Gallery St. Gertud Malm, Sweden; Kunst+Technik, Berlin, Germany; Leo Kamen Gallery, Toronto, Canada; Tampere Art Museum, Tampere, Finland; Karolyn Sherwood Gallery, Des Moines, IA ; Gasworks Gallery, London, England; Cornerhouse, Manchester, England; L Gallery, Moscow, Russia; Planet Art Gallery, Capetown, South Africa; Ssamzie Space, Seoul, Korea; Voorkamer Gallery, Lier, Belgium; Kemi Art Museum, Kemi, Finland and Corridor Gallery, Reykjavik, Iceland. Humann has received awards from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Brooklyn Arts Council. His work has appeared in numerous publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Village Voice, Dwell Magazine, New York Arts, ArtReview, The New Yorker, ZingMagazine, Brooklyn Bridge, Cover Magazine, Sculpture, Artforum and Art in America.

DAVID OPDYKE lives and works in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. He is represented by Roebing Hall and has exhibited extensively in New York City, nationally in cities such as Palm Beach, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, and internationally in Milan, Italy. His work embraces a wide range of scale and media, spanning from intricately detailed pen drawings through systematized landscape assemblages to room—filling installations. Reviews of his work have appeared in various publications including The New York Times, ArtNews, The Virginia Quarterly Review, and Art in America.

MARCIN RAMOCKI was born in Krakow, Poland. He received his BA from Dartmouth College and MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. He began working with digital media in 1996 and since exhibited both in gallery environment and online. Currently Marcin lives and works in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and teaches New Media at Jersey City University. His project were exhibited/presented at MoMa, Whitney, artMoving Projects, Anthology Film Archives, Foxy Productions, White Box and many others. He is also a founder and curator of vertexList art space in Brooklyn. Marcin’s most recent directorial debut: feature documentary “8 BIT” premiered in the Museum of Modern Art and opened DiVa Artfair in Miami. www.ramocki.net

MARINA ZURKOW works with character and narrative in animated cartoons, interactive installations, print and pop objects. Zurkow’s projects include the public art commission Karaoke Ice, which debuted at ISEA/ ZeroOne in 2006, and the seven—channel animated installation, Nicking the Never, which premiered at FACT, U.K. She created the episodic cartoon Braingirl, chronicling a mutant—cute girl who wears her insides on the outside; Pussy Weevil, or How I Learned to Love the War, a vile persona who lives in a medical lock box, reacting to a viewer’s proximity; and PDPal, a public art project for screen, web and mobile devices that allows a user to “write her own city” (w/ Scott Paterson and Julian Bleecker). Zurkow’s work has been incorporated into films, hotel design, lightboxes and clothing.

Select exhibitions include Sundance, the Rotterdam Film Festival, Ars Electronica, Creative Time, The Kitchen, the Walker Art Center, and SFMoMA. Zurkow is a 2005 NYFA Fellow, a 2003 Rockefeller New Media Fellow, and received grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, Creative Capital, the Jerome Foundation and the Walker Art Center. She teaches at NYU’s Interactive Technology Program and at Parsons MFA in Design and Technology. She lives in Brooklyn.