

AHST 4342-001 (85802)
History of Media and New Media Art
Fall 2012
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
University of Texas at Dallas
Arts & Humanities
M-W 1:00-2:15
Class Location: AH2 1.204

December 5, 2012

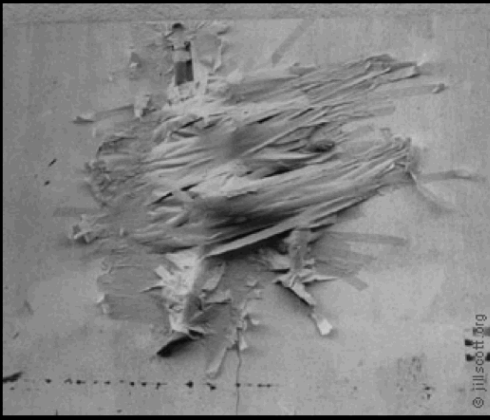
Simulations and Simulacra

N. Katherine Hayles
Embodied Virtuality: Or How to Put
Bodies Back Into the Picture [1996]

Cyberspace, we are often told, is a *disembodied* medium. Testimonies to this effect are everywhere, from William Gibson's fictional representation of the 'bodiless exultation of cyberspace' to John Parry Barlow's description of his virtual reality (VR) experience as 'my everything has been amputated.' In a sense, these testimonies are correct; the body remains in front of the screen rather than within it. In another sense, these testimonies are correct; the body remains in front of the screen rather than within it. In another sense, however, they are deeply misleading, for they obscure the crucial role that the body plays in constructing cyberspace. In fact, we are never disembodied. As anyone who designs VR simulations knows, the specifications of our embodiments matter in all kinds of ways, from determining the precise configurations of a VR interface to influencing the speed with which we can read a CRT screen. Far from being left behind when we enter cyberspace, our bodies are no less actively involved in the construction of virtuality than in the construction of real life.

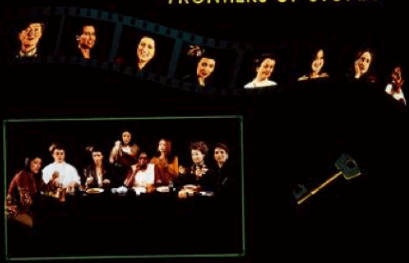


Jill Scott, Taped, 1975

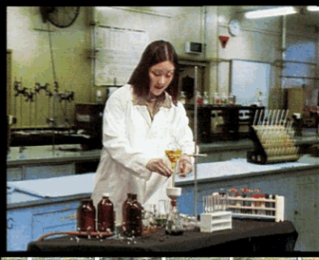




FRONTIERS OF UTOPIA



Jill Scott, Frontiers of Utopia, 1995



<http://www.virtualart.at/database/general/work/frontiers-of-utopia.html>

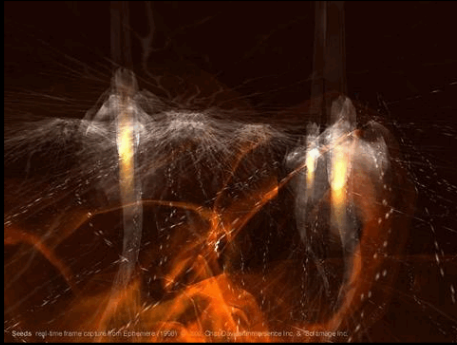


Maurice Benayoun, So. So. So., Somebody, Somewhere, Some Time, 2002

<http://www.benayoun.com/projet.php?id=25>

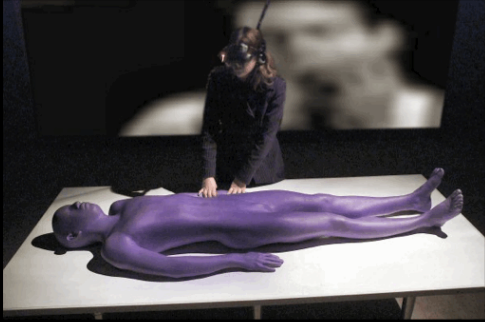


Char Davies, Osmose, 1995



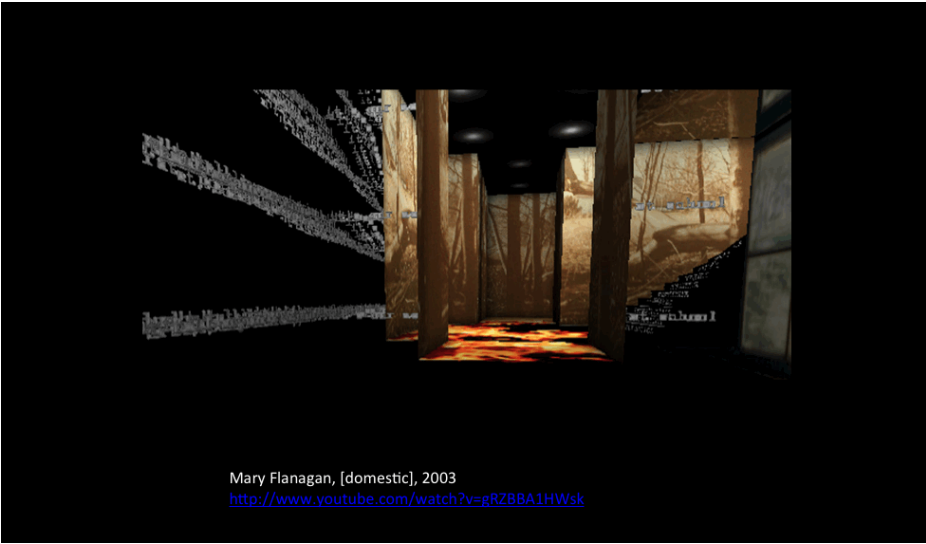
Char Davies, *Éphémère*, 1998

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa_aiw7yhpI



"[B]odies are never event bound and event defined, but event defining -- and always at the point of becoming. This is a continual shudder across our work -- the body as an ever-receding event horizon. A hole in the fabric of the world, a non-alibi, a white hole."
-- *Einstein's Brain Project*

Alan Dunning and Paul Woodrow, *Einstein's Brain: The Bodies: Mnemonic Body*, 2000
<http://people.ucalgary.ca/~einbrain/new/main.html>



Mary Flanagan, [domestic], 2003
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRZBBA1HWsk>

Welcome to the Desert of the Real

Slavoj Žižek [2001]

The ultimate and defining experience of the XXth century was the direct experience of the Real as opposed to the everyday social reality - the Real in its extreme violence as the price to be paid for peeling off the deceiving layers of reality. Already in the trenches of the World War I, Carl Schmitt was celebrating the face to face combat as the authentic intersubjective encounter: authenticity resides in the act of violent transgression, from the Lacanian Real - the Thing that Antigone confronts when he violates the order of the City - to the Bataillan excess.

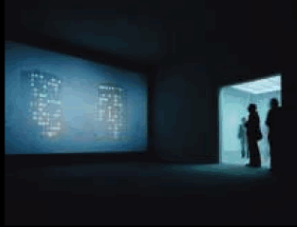
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And was the bombing of the WTC with regard to the Hollywood catastrophe movies not like the snuff pornography versus ordinary sado-maso porno movies? This is the element of truth in Karl-Heinz Stockhausen's provocative statement that the planes hitting the WTC towers was the ultimate work of art: one can effectively perceive the collapse of the WTC towers as the climactic conclusion of the XXth century art's "passion of the real" - the "terrorists" themselves did not primarily do it to provoke real material damage, but FOR THE SPECTACULAR EFFECT OF IT. The authentic XXth century passion to penetrate the Real Thing (ultimately, the destructive Void) through the cobweb of semblances which constitute our reality thus culminates in the thrill of the Real as the ultimate "effect," sought after from digitalized special effects through reality TV and amateur pornography up to snuff movies. Snuff movies which deliver the "real thing" are perhaps the ultimate truth of virtual reality. There is an intimate connection between virtualization of reality and the emergence of an infinite and infinitized bodily pain, much stronger than the usual one: do biogenetics and Virtual Reality combined not open up new "enhanced" possibilities of TORTURE, new and unheard-of horizons of extending our ability to endure pain (through widening our sensory capacity to sustain pain, through inventing new forms of inflicting it)? Perhaps, the ultimate Sadean image on an "undead" victim of torture who can sustain endless pain without having at his/her disposal the escape into death, also waits to become reality.



Pierre Huyghe, Les Grands
Ensembles, 2001

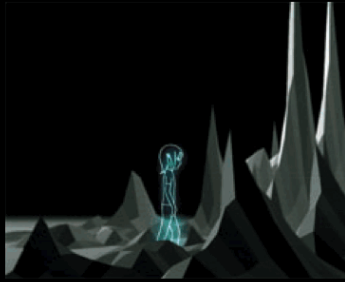
[http://www.dailymotion.com/
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Pierre Huyghe, *The Third Memory*, 2000



Annlee – No Ghost Just a Shell, 2002

Pierre Huyghe, One Million Kingdoms,
2001

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3E8ioPg8xQ>

From Simulacra and Simulation
To Simulations and Simulacra

From Picture
To Space

From Object of Unidirectional
Communication
To Responsive Environment

From Postmodernism to ???