

Sydney College of the Arts
The University of Sydney

MASTERS OF VISUAL ARTS
2006
RESEARCH PAPER / DISSERTATION

New Media and Interactivity

By
MICHELLE JENSEN
ETA: Multimedia
December 2006

This volume is presented as a record of work undertaken, for
the Degree of Masters of Visual Arts at
Sydney College of the Arts

List of Illustrations	5
Introduction	7
Chapter one	
Game Art	12
❖ Game Art: Container	16
Chapter two	
History	20
❖ Games Method: as a way to understand the historical and theoretical aspects of video games	26
Chapter three	
Interactivity	
❖ Interactivity: Feedback loop and <i>Prosthetic Head</i>	27
Chapter four	
Concept	
❖ Fear of Evil	31
❖ Exploring “uncanny” in Horror and Van Sowerwines’ work	33
❖ Resident Evil 4	35

Chapter five

Shadow: PowerStation to Shadow	38
❖ Installation room one 2005	39
❖ newspace 2005	41
❖ Graduation Exhibition 2005	42
❖ Resolution: PowerStation	45

Conclusion	48
-------------------	----

Bibliography	53
---------------------	----

Appendix 1	60
-------------------	----

❖ Games Method	60
❖ Games Diary	65

Appendix 2	
-------------------	--

❖ Larger Images	87
-----------------	----

Appendix 3	91
-------------------	----

❖ Images of Graduation show mid year 2006	
---	--

Illustrations

- 1 *Master Chief*, Scanned Image. Front page *Icon*, Sydney Morning Herald, 11-12 June 2005
- 2 Cao Guimarães Brazil 2004. *Concerto para Clorofila*
Screen dump <http://www.dlux.org.au/dart06/index.html>. Visited 13/5/06
- 3 WiFi: Art Cache device (2002). Screen dump.
<http://www.techwondo.com/projects/artche>. Visited 18/05/06
- 4 WiFi: Art Cache (2002). Proposed audience artist impression. Screen dump. <http://www.techwondo.com/projects/artche>. Visited 18/05/06
- 5 *Container (2002, 2003)*. Stephen Honegger & Anthony Hunt ,
Screen dump. <http://www.gertrude.org.au/exhibition.php?id=40>.
Visited 20/3/04

- 6 *Container*, Stephen Honegger & Anthony Hunt .Screen dump.
<http://www.gertrude.org.au/exhibition.php?id=40>. Visited 20/3/04
- 7 *Action Half Life*, the game, Screen dump.
<http://www.planethalflife.com/features/articles/actionhl/>. Visited 15/8/04
- 8 *DE_CCP* (2002) Stephen Honegger.Screen dump <http://www.ccp.org.au/>.
Visited 12/4/06
- 9 *Space War (1962)*, Screen dump. <http://www.wheels.org/spacewar/>.
Visited 10/4/04
- 10 *Pong (1972)*, Screen dump. <http://www.pong-story.com/odyssey.html>.
Visited 12/4/04
- 11 *empyrean | soft skinned e_escape*, (2000-2002) Melinda
Rackham <http://artists.banff.org/melinda/empyrean> .Visited 19/05/06
- 12 *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness* (2003), Screen dump.
<http://www.gamespot.com/finder/findgames.html>. Visited 28/6/05
- 13 *Prosthetic Head*. Stelarc. Screen dump. <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/>.
Visited 26/8/04
- 14 *PowerStation* (2006). Michelle Jensen, still from interactive Flash.
- 15 *Play with me* (2002) Still from interactive animation, Screen dump.
<http://www.vansowerwine.com/installation/installation.html#e>. Visited
17/11/05

- 16 *Coming Soon: 6 December 2005 @ SCA* (2005) Digital photograph.
- 17 *Shadow: PowerStation* (2005). Michelle Jensen, Digital Stills Graduation show
- 18 *Shadow: PowerStation*. Michelle Jensen, Digital stills, Opening
- 19 *PowerStation* (2006). Michelle Jensen, still from interactive Flash.
- 20 *Shadow: PowerStation* (2005). Michelle Jensen, Digital Stills.
- 21 Projected PowerStation (2006). Michelle Jensen.
- 22 Projected PowerStation (2006), Michelle Jensen.

INTRODUCTION

Digital/video games¹ have entertained for 40 years and are a medium with the ability to reach a vast audience. In an article published in the Sydney Morning Herald, Charles Purcell reports that; “Globally, Halo 2 has sold more than 7 million copies. Both in the US and Australia it broke the film box-office record for the most earnings in the first 24 hours of



release. The worldwide Halo 2 Image 1, *Master Chef from Halo 2* community on X-box Live has about 400,000 players... at the World Cyber Games in Seoul. Last year, gold medallist Matthew Leto won \$US20,000 (\$AUS27,000) after his second consecutive Halo title.”². Game consoles have become a part of many lounge rooms just as the television did before

¹ I refer to the term digital/video games in regards to console and computer games. Video games are those that convert the data from a disk to the television, usually requiring a console. Digital games are those that require the use of a computer to play. Both are essentially the same in regards to game play and graphics.

² Charles Purcell, *Masters of their Universe*, Sydney Morning Herald, (Icon) June 11-12 2005, p. 6.

Halo is a strategic war game where players can battle as a team online against other teams. It is playable on your own but success is reached through teamwork.

Halo is played at many games tournaments around the world. Teams enter and play a round-robin style tournament to establish the best team, playing for cash prizes. There is also a single tournament for experienced players, where the best player is established.

them. Games are even commonplace in many coat pockets and carrying bags.

This dissertation is concerned with the medium of digital/video games in relation to its effect on Game Art. It is also concerned with the concept of my studio work that deals with “evil” and the “uncanny” which are discussed in chapter four. My research looks at games and how they have developed and the relationship to contemporary art. A history of this development is explored in chapter two. My research will help me in developing an interactive piece. Throughout my current research the thoughts of author of *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* Sherry Turkle resonate: “...not what will the computer be like in the future, but instead, what will we be like? What kind of people are we becoming?”³ It is interesting to consider the video/digital games as experiments of who we are or who we would like to be, little fantasies of empowerment. In a game we are able to live out our frustrations or fantasies in a closed and predictable experience.

It is during one of these fantasies that I was inspired to explore commercial games further. The game *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2000) intrigued me; never had I experienced such a dynamic game. This inspired me to explore interactive media. I was excited and impressed by the experience of playing *Tomb Raider*, the level of interactivity was phenomenal. Through the course of my research, I explain interactivity and how artist Stelarc has used the feedback loop in his work *Prosthetic Head*. Chapter

³ Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1984, p. 13.

three discusses this work and develops an understanding of what the feedback loop is in relation to interactivity.

We live in a world that is consumed by fear, driven by interruptions with reports on catastrophes in faraway lands or accidents just around the corner. Fear is delivered so easily into our living rooms, offices or even straight into our pockets. Information is everywhere and fear is a commodity. Chapter four describes fear and relates the description to Van Sowerwines work and the commercial game *Evil Dead 4* (2006). Sherry Turkle explains that many people liken video/digital game play to a conversation but gamers explain the experience as “more like inhabiting someone else’s mind.”⁴

The game world is familiar, almost like home. “The subject of the ‘uncanny’ is a province of some kind. It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening –to what arouses dread and horror...”⁵ The word ‘uncanny’ used by Freud is translated from the German word ‘unheimlich’ literally meaning “unhomely”.⁶ Freud’s work on the uncanny resonates with games. I can relate it to all digital/video games, that by their very nature are uncanny, as they operate as an inversion of the familiar. Curtis Bowman explains: “The main element of the uncanny is not-being-at-home in the world. We lose, so to speak, our ontological balance and become unsure of ourselves and of our understanding of the world around us. The main form that this can take is the

⁴ Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1984, p. 71

⁵ Sigmund Freud, ‘The “Uncanny”’ in Trans. James Stracey, *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955, p. 219.

⁶ *ibid.*

realization that more possibilities exist for action and understanding than we ever thought. Perhaps we revise our ideas in light of experiencing the uncanny: perhaps our ideas remain the same. The point is that the experience of uncanniness forces us to appropriate or reject accustomed ways of thinking and acting. In this way, we make some small step towards authenticity.”⁷

This statement characterises my studio work that is an audio/visual interactive work created using *Macromedia Flash*. This work explores concepts regarding the world around me in relation to evil. I want to slightly skew the user’s perception of the world to foreground the question: What is to be evil? “Heidegger’s concept of the uncanny essentially relies on the overthrow of our ontology, even if it lasts for only a moment. As an aid to self-understanding.”⁸ It is through self-understanding that humans are able to comprehend the world around them. I have used my studio work to seek some sort of understanding of the world.

I have sought to examine the type of responses contemporary artists have made to video/digital games. Chapter one describes how Anthony Hunt and Stephen Honegger have reacted and used available technology to explore new interactive media, in what is often referred to as new media art or even art games. Commercial games today are an established part of our culture and thus a valid cultural object that to be critiqued. My research has

⁷ Curtis Bowman, ‘Heidegger, the Uncanny, and Jacques Tourneur’s Horror Films’ in Steven Jay Schneider and Daniel Shaw. (ed), *Dark Thoughts: Philsophic Reflections on Cinematic Horror*, Maryland and Oxford, The Scarecrow Press Inc, Lanham, 2003, p. 72.

⁸ *ibid*, p.73

served as a tool to further understanding of how I can communicate through new media to an audience. I also have sought to understand how artists employ game based approaches and techniques and how the commercial video/digital games industry, have successfully engaged an audience.



Image 2 Michelle Jensen, Alison Macgregor, Catherine Stuckings. 23, 2006 .

Chapter One

Game Art: looking at Container

Art critiques society, often questioning aspects that are of concern such as the current political situation or culture and even everyday life. Similarities can be drawn between the relationship Game Art has with the broader Games Industry and the relationship Video Art of the 1970's had with the language of film. Game Art draws on the current gaming industry as its inspiration, often using the tools available from this industry to create new media projects. The relationship between the idea of game and artistic practices has a long and rich tradition. Many key practices of the 20th Century drawing direct inspiration from the idea of the "Game": "...games such as the Exquisite Corpse the instructions of Fluxus artists such as La Monte Young, Yoko Ono or George Brecht, that often read like rules of games...."¹ as stated by Tilman Baumgaertel.

Recently in Sydney a group of 100 artists participated in an exercise that draws its origins from *The Cadavre Exquis* other wise known as Exquisite Corpse. The major alteration made was that the artists didn't meet. Instead the art works arrived at the artist's houses via the post. Each artist received a folded paper and each paper required three artists to draw one section of the body. None of the artists had any idea as to what the preceding body section

¹ Tilman Baumgaertel, *Games as art, art as game. Games, Computerspiele von KünstlerInnen*, Germany, Published by Hartware Medien Kunstverein, 2003.

contained. The project was called *Post- it: an exquisite corpse mail art project*. Exquisite Corpse was “among the most widely enjoyed of the surrealists’ games, sought to unleash the unconscious in a merry chase of the imagination.”¹ Ingrid Schaffner describes this game as an irrational, automatic drawing, that emerges as though from a dream. Although this dream like element was not one I experienced through my experience with *Post-it: and exquisite corpse mail art project*. What I gained was a sense of anticipation and excitement as we must all wait to see the end results. The interactivity was an important aspect of the project to myself and other participating artists I have spoken to. As explained above this is a surrealist game, an art game that uses little technology.

It is only recently that technology has enabled artists to use the tools that capture the essence of games today. This is possible due to the use of the computer. Artists are able to create powerful works that draw on the nature of digital/video games. New developments in portable devices will see artists create art that reaches audiences immediately. Developments such as the *Game Boy Dual Screen* and the *PlayStation Portable (PSP)*, will see a significant shift in the way games are played. These devices allow users to not only play games but in the case of the *PlayStation Portable* listen to MP3 (music), watch MP4 (video), play movies

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 2 *Concerto para Clorofila*

¹ Ingrid Schaffner. *The Return of The Cadavre Exquis.*(ed) Jane Philbrich. New York. The Drawing Centre. 1993

from a disc, access the internet, play games with a multiplayer option and use the device as a portable PC. A competition was held in conjunction with the Australian release, *Exposed* (2005) it called for artists to create short films that are now available to be played on the *PSP*. Being able to communicate to audiences straight to their pockets offers artist a unique opportunity. New mobile phones offer these types of services too. Image two is an example of digital art it is a part of d/Art/2006 Festival, 12 April- 6 May at the Sydney Opera House. The festival is a dLux Media Art's annual showcase of international video, mobile and web art. With the development of new technologies artist are able to reach wider audiences. Portable Internet-ready games consoles and new mobile phones have been used by artists to create new innovative works. I attended last year's annual showcase and conference called Mobile Journeys that was held in March 2005, it was truly inspiring. Artists and Mobile industry officials attended. As stated on the Mobile Journeys web site; "Mobile Journeys will inspire and challenge you to change



Image 3. WiFi:Art Cahe (2002)

the way you think about and use your phone.”¹

Wireless communication was of major interest at this year's dLux annual showcase. Artists have developed projects that communicate

with an audience surrounding them. One artist who has developed an artwork or art project using a WiFi system is Julian Bleecker. As a part of Eyebeam

¹ <http://dlux.org.au/mobilejourneys/about.html> visited 20/03/06

Atelier, *Beta Launch* show 2003 Bleecker exhibited his work *WiFi: Art Cache*. Eyebeam is a gallery and research facility housed in New York that supports artists using developing technologies. *WiFi: Art Cache* takes advantage of the idea of reaching a small area via his WiFi device. Audiences are able to download Macromedia Flash animations created by artists

responding to social concepts. “The Cache is “free floating” 802.11 WiFi node purposely disconnected from the public internet.”² To connect to the cache the audience must be physically in the presence of the cache. The limitations are the only constraint of this type of project as

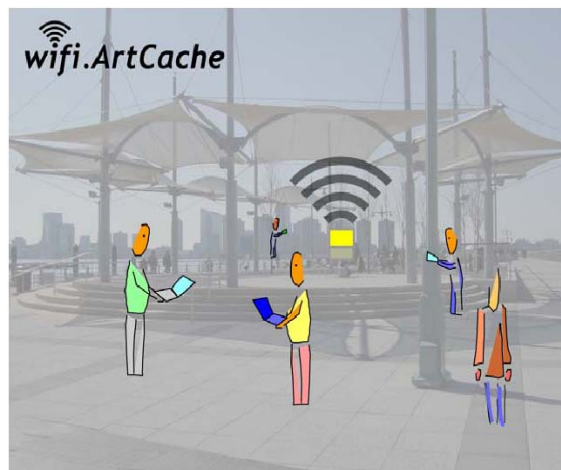


Image 4, WiFi: Art Cache.

the audience must be technologically literate to participate. The audience must also have a WiFi-enabled device with Macromedia Flash capabilities in order to “...download, view, and interact with digital art as if it were a wireless gallery.”³ For the audience members who didn't have a WiFi device, a LCD screen displayed aspects of the project being some of the Macromedia Flash animations. These sorts of projects explore the ways artists can interact with audience in different spaces. As demonstrated in image 4 the need for a gallery is not necessary. It is imperative that the audience is aware that the device is going to be at a location. The audience must physically be near the *WiFi: Art Cache* to be able to download the artworks. Or the artists could randomly appear at locations in hope that people would have WiFi devices.

² <http://www.techwondo.com/projects/artche>

³ *ibid*

Container (2002)

Stephen Honegger and Anthony Hunt

Melbourne based artists who have

“both participated in a wide range of

individual collaborative and curated

exhibitions and projects in Australia and

overseas”⁴, Honegger and Hunt have worked with the theme of game culture

for several years collaboratively and individually. Honegger aspires to work in

the game industry and is open about this ambition. Honegger and Hunt

exhibited a Sony Play Station on a platform at Grey Area in Melbourne. It was

played by whoever was minding the gallery. It was titled *Gameplay* (1998) this

work allowed viewers to watch game play but not play. Just as *Container*

allows the viewer to watch put not play.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 5, Container

Stephen Honegger and Anthony Hunt exhibited *Container* at Gertrude

Contemporary Art Space, Melbourne in 2002. The container is constructed out

of wood and is a scale replica of a shipping container. It is a visual motif used

in a lot of video games. It's original conception would have been “three screen

video projection...”⁵ The pair decided it would be easier to build a container as

a dark enclosed space was needed.

⁴ <http://www.mca.com.au> visited 20/03/06

⁵ Daniel Palmer. www.realtimearts.net/rt48/palmer.html Visited 10/08/05

The DVD projected inside the container was generated using the games software *Worldcraft*, the software that was used to make *Quake* and *Half Life*, very popular video games. To recreate the gallery using this software every inch of the gallery space was meticulously measured.⁶ Chad Chatterson describes the experience as: “ an eerie yet comical loop, the movie and the container explain each other, while they are simultaneously contained within each other.”⁷ What was interesting about this piece was its constant referencing. The container was a physical representation of the much used Online FPS (First Person Shooter) game.

You leave the gallery to enter a ‘game’ space. Here you are transported via a projected representation of outside the gallery. Beginning a journey, much like that needed to enter the gallery, this experience is a little eerie even uncanny. The projected DVD explains how the container originated in the gallery space. The DVD then switches to a FPS perspective and now the whole experience is sinister. Unlike the games experience where the gamer has some control over the experience, there is no control over the DVD projection. This work explores the crossover of the real into the virtual and vice versa. It is a vicious circle that eats itself until the boundaries are blurred and smudged. *Container* is consciously exploring the gallery space and the crossover of art and popular culture.

⁶ <http://www.hunthunthunt.com/mtsite/NewContainer.html> Visited 10/08/05

⁷ Chad Chatterson, 2003, Catalogue essay, Published, <http://www.hunthunthunt.com/mtite/text.box.html> Visited 10/08/05

The work uses the games aesthetic and reversed or switched the experience. The gallery is a physical representation of a scene from the projected DVD. The DVD is references the space in which the container is situated, but via games software. *Container* has in a sense



Image 6 DVD still, Container

switched the whole experience. By simply entering the gallery the game has begun. The gallery space is the site of the game. Honegger and Hunt have physically recreated a typical game scene. Compare image 6, taken from the

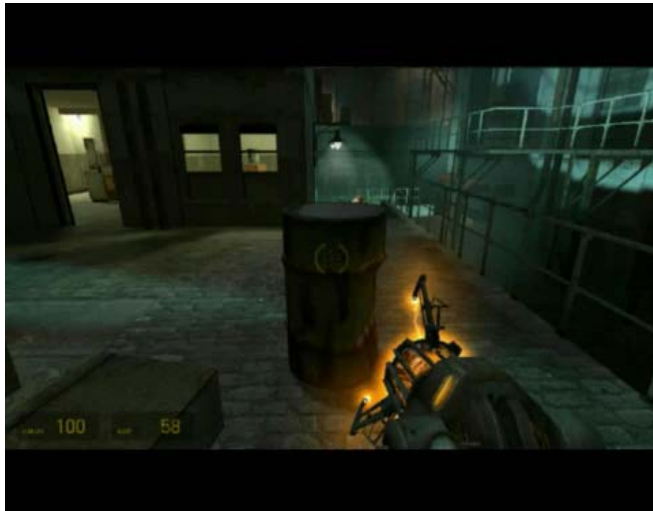


Image 7, Action Half Life the game

DVD exhibited inside the wooden container, with image 7, a still taken from the game *Action Half Life*. By comparing the images one can see how the gallery has been transformed via the software used to develop both stills. It is the

free availability of this complex 3D environment building software that has allowed artists like Honegger and Hunt to develop complex installations that explore the expectations of multi player first person shooter games.

New Media is often explained as an audio visual feedback loop and it is a phenomenon that occurs in all interactive experiences not just new media ones. Chapter three gives a detailed explanation. *Container* is able to take the audience to another environment, one that is similar to the gallery the viewer just entered; a space that relies on interactivity or the illusion of interactivity. As I stated, *Container* is creating a feedback loop. *Container's* loop relays on the entering of the shipping container. But once entered the senses are confused as an image of the space entered earlier is visualised via 3D games software. It calls upon a memory of an experience just past for the viewer, the entering of the gallery. Chatterton explains "the movie and the container explain each other, while they are simultaneously contained within each other."⁸ Once the viewer leaves the container the loop is not finished on the contrary its real impact begins. It is due to the sinister nature of the end experience, a figure is shot in the container. On the wall of the container is a dark stain in the same pattern as the one in the 3D DVD container. Thus on leaving the container the viewer becomes the hunted. It is now the memory of the sinister DVD that is being played in the mind of the viewer as they leave a physically similar space as to the one just experienced in the container.

Container was also exhibited at Primavera 2003 at the MCA. Primavera is an annual event held at the MCA, the 2003 theme was "new media". An exhibition that focuses on young Australian artists, 35 and under working with "new media technologies. Curated by Julianne Pierce, Director of the Australian Network for Art & Technology (ANAT), it explores a range of

⁸ Chad Chatterton.2002. www.hunthunthunt.com/mysite/text/text_box.html Visited 10/08/05

concerns through screen and projection-based media, as well as digital photographs, sculpture, installation and sound.”⁹ The MCA and Gertrude St. Contemporary Art Space, where *container* was previously shown share common expectations. Both spaces have an audience that is tolerant to experimental art forms. The MCA however has the larger general public viewing its exhibitions. Some changes were made to the DVD component to adapt it to the MCA. These changes were made due to the site specific nature of the DVD. *Container* is an installation that “...the viewer participates as both spectator and assailant...”¹⁰ This sort of demand is only possible because of the nature of the exhibition.

Container offers many possibilities for theoretical debate but has situated itself in a critique of gallery space as the “...viewer is engaged in a bizarre dislocation of time and place: after entering the gallery you ‘leave’ into the container replica watch a movie, in which you proceed to re-enter the gallery...”¹¹ Chad Chatterton made this account of the experience of *Container* on the Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces web site . Chatterton is an employee of Select Parks that writes a lot of the theory component for the web site. Chatterton creates machinima, the name given to movies made using the 3D software used to create multi player online role playing games like the one projected in the wooden container.

Honegger exhibited *DE_CCP* in 2002 at the Centre for Contemporary

⁹ <http://www.mca.com.au> Visited 10/08/05

¹⁰ www.accaonline.org.au Visited 20/04/06

¹¹ Chad Chatterton .2002. www.getrude.org.au/exhibition.php/id=40 Visited 20/04/06

Photography. Exhibited after *Container* but similar in theme Honegger has recreated the Centre for Contemporary Photography using the same software used in *Container*. Exhibited in the e-Media gallery *DE_CCP* was a part of the Digital 2002 Art Program curated by Daniel Palmer for the Centre for Contemporary Photography. Daniel Palmer is an academic and writer who wrote a review about

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 8 *DE_CCP* (2002)

Container for frieze.com and realtimearts.net. Palmer was also a casual lecturer at RMIT who has “explored contemporary modes of individualised spectatorship within digital visual media.”¹²

¹² <http://www.artdes.monash.edu.au/about/profiles/dpalmer/activities.html> Visited 20/04/06

Chapter two

HISTORY OF DIGITAL GAMES (video games)

Humans need to participate in game play. In all parts of the world humans play many different games.

Games utilise all sorts of specialised equipment. In

recent times computers have become a part of game

play. As early as 1958 Willy Heiginbotham, a

physicist at Brookhaven National Laboratory,

incorporated digital game play as a part of a visitors'

day display, Tennis for Two.¹The first digital games were developed by

mathematicians, programmers and scientists and took countless hours to

create. These first games were created as side projects; they were not the

primary work of the creators. It was at MIT during 1962 that Steve Russell, a

student, programmed *Space War*, the first computer game.² He wrote the

programme on the DEC– PDP–1, (Digital Equipment Corporation.)³ *Space*

War was a two-player game of duelling space ships firing photon torpedoes

against a field of electronic stars.⁴

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 9, *Space War*

Video games have changed the way games are played in society, and

have influenced our culture. Ralph Baer, an engineer, developed the first 'TV

Game' using a Television set to display games. A prototype *Brown Box* was

produced in 1968. This *Brown Box* and its games laid the foundation for

further gaming development, in the first generation of video games. *Space*

¹ Van Burnham, *Supercade*, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2001, p. 60.

² J.C. Herz, *Joystick Nation*, New York, Sage Publications, 1995, p.14.

³ Van Burnham, loc. cit.

⁴ J.C. Herz, loc. cit.

War was freely distributed across America, allowing many people to play it. It spread to most universities and military organisations. Its universal reach thus influenced the next wave of game development, as did the games played on the *Brown Box*.⁵ Nolan Bushnell was just one of the many who encountered *Space War* while at university. He was one of the founders of Atari. His initial concept was to put a game not too different from *Space War* into arcades via a coin-operated machine. He realised this dream whilst working as an engineer in Silicon Valley in 1971.⁶

During that same year the *Brown Box* received a makeover. Magnavox licensed it and repackaged it as *Magnavox Odyssey*, the first home video game system ever released.⁷ In 1972 Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney in Santa Carla, California founded Atari. *Pong* was Atari's first coin operated game. It was an

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 10, *Magnavox, PONG*.

electronic table tennis game and within a year it had sold 6,000 nation-wide at a cost of \$1000 each.⁸ Then in 1975 Magnavox launched *Odyssey*, based on Baer's *Brown Box*, the first game console to be played on the television. By 1976 over twenty different companies were making video games for home use.

⁵ Van Burnham, loc. cit.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Eugene.F. Jr, Provenzo, *Videokids: Making Sense of Nintendo*. England, Harvard University Press, 1991, p.1

Online games emerged in a similar manner. As computers became networked so too did games. PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations) was introduced in 1961 at the University of Illinois. This system was originally designed as a time-sharing system for exploring new education. Rick Bloome used it in 1969 as a gaming platform. Bloome wrote a multiplayer game that worked on a remote network, a two-player version of MIT's *Space War*. Over time many more multiplayer games regularly appeared on the PLATO service.⁹

Video/ digital games developed as a direct reaction to the hardware. However, advances in computing have seen marked changes in the way we play. During 1977 the Apple II computer was introduced to the commercial market, and caused a revolution in personal/home computing.¹⁰ Now after 40 years of development since *Space War*, video games have become a staple part of our culture. To date, games have been driven predominantly by the available technology. At present there are three categories of hardware, Console, Coin-operated and P/C. The Internet offers a new way to experience Console and PC games in a multiplayer environment. As this way of playing is becoming widely used by gamers it challenges the myth of the antisocial gamer.

Multiplayer environments offer a sense of communicating. Melinda Rackham an Australian network artist has explored ways of using the network. In her online work *Empyrean*. Rackham offers a new way to

⁹ Markus Friedl, *Online Game Interactivity Theory*, Hingham, Massachusetts, Charles River Media Inc
2003, p.4.

¹⁰ Eugene.F. Jr, Provenzo, p. 9

experience the internet. Rackham describes her work "...'empyrean' scape is constructing what I see as a precolonised virtual space, a place of code and void and emptiness..."¹¹ *Empyrean* is a multiuser VRML, (Virtual Reality Modelling Language), internet site that is changing in response to user interaction. Rackham describes *Empyrean* "...it's a living entity and I think it feeds off us as we sit in front of the screen. We become the animating fluid of cyberspace."¹² Rackham has been able to successfully create an interactive space that allows an audience to experience the internet in a new way.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 11, *Empyrean*. Melida Rackham

¹¹ Melinda Rackham. The Animating Fluid of Cyberspace, An interview with Mark Amerika and Melinda Rackham. Mark Amerika. <http://rhizome.org/object.rhiz?3256> Visited 19/09/05

¹² *ibid.*

Games Method: as a way to understand the historical and theoretical aspects of video games

As a part of my research I set out to explore many of the games I had read about and those currently available. My aim was to understand what commercial games offer and what makes them so successful, what is it that draws so many people to interact with them. Beginning in Image 12, *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness* arcades around the middle of October 2003. Towards the end of 2004 I purchased a Playstation 2 and Nintendo consoles. By March 2006 I had played 32 games on both Playstation 2 and Nintendo platforms. Available in the Appendix 1 is a documentation of my experience with many games I played on the PS2 and Nintendo platforms. I found that the experience enlightened my understanding of the theory related to this dissertation. I was able to understand what many of the theorists were discussing in relation to games they were referencing. The interaction I experienced helped me to understand the development of games. By interacting with a diverse range of games I was able to ascertain a broad understanding of interface problems and resolutions. The intensity of playing games for hours a day was exhilarating. This experience was a spring board for understanding interactivity.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 12, *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness*

Chapter three

Interactivity: Feedback loop and *Prosthetic Head*

Prosthetic Head (2005) by Stelarc is an example of an artist using a feedback loop in New Media.

Stelarc uses the notion of “conversation- like interactivity.”¹ On

entering the back gallery at Sherman Galleries I could hear a digital Stelarc talking. What I found so interesting about this projected software of a 3D

rendered head of Stelarc were the

Image 13, *Prosthetic Head*, Stelarc

facial expressions and the detail of the skin. It reminded me aesthetically of many *PS2* games . The gallery is dark, in the middle is a chair and a table with a keyboard, used for typing questions or answers to the prosthetic head. The head is projected on the wall in front of the desk at around 2 meters by 2 meters: it sits in the centre of the wall much larger than life. The prosthetic head responds to the questions you ask and it asks you questions. It's a conversation with Stelarc's 2 meter high head. In reality it's just a sophisticated database that stores the words typed in. Thus there is an evolutionary effect, the personality or responses evolve as its database is increased. It becomes the sum of its interrogators, each interrogator supplies

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

¹ David Kirsh. *Interactivity and MultiMedia Interfaces*.
<http://icl-server.ucsd.edu/%7Ekirsh/Articles/Interactivity/brock-single.html#what> Visited
15/04/06

the data needed to expand it. This is what Stelarc calls the process of interaction. With this work the viewer is the interrogator. On request the prosthetic head will also create a poem or sing a song, drawing from the database. By creating a head that seems to creatively sing or recite a poem on request gives an impression of creative thought but the program is simply randomly choosing words from its database.

Garry Barker comments on his experience with *Prosthetic Head*: “It is slightly eerie to be interacting with a huge computer database of words, experience and software on the edge of artificial intelligence.”². Stelarc is able to take the audience to another environment, one that is similar to our own. A space that relies on interactivity or the illusion of interactivity. As I stated at the beginning of this chapter *Prosthetic Head* is creating a feedback loop. This is defined by the interactivity required for *Prosthetic Head* database to exist. The interrogator is asked by the *Prosthetic Head* to interact with it by typing text into the keyboard. The interrogator is given a goal; to ask the *Prosthetic Head* a question. A question is then formulated by the interrogator and thus typed on the keyboard. The interrogator then “compares what happens with what he thought he wanted to happen. This process is interactive because the environment reacts to the user’s action and if well designed leads him into repeatedly looping through this decision sequence in a manner that tends to be successful.”³ David Kirsh goes on to discuss that if the environment meets the user’s cognitive needs then the experience becomes more “toward the

² Garry Barker, *Meet Stelarc, the face of artificial intelligence*, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/12/09/1070732211017.html> 26/09/05

³ David Kirsh. *Interactivity and MultiMedia Interfaces*. <http://icl-server.ucsd.edu/%7Ekirsh/Articles/Interactivity/brock-single.html#what> Visited 15/4/05

social sense of interactive.”⁴ It is this social sense that Barker finds slightly eerie it is almost real. The database has tricked the interrogator into feeling as if a tacit interaction has occurred. But for this to accrue the two participating in the interaction need to be intelligent. This debate about intelligence in computers has been addressed by tests inspired by Alan Turing and is best left for a whole thesis.

Returning to Kirsh’s thoughts; “computer interfaces are rarely interactive because the programs that drive them are rarely intelligent enough to behave as tacit partners.”⁵ Thus not being able to cooperate, the user must always adapt to the computer. To be truly interactive both parties must adapt to accommodate to each other. Yet *Prosthetic Head* is described by Barker as interactive. It is the perception of the interrogator that *Prosthetic Head* depends on to establish interactivity. Kirsh describes perception to be a not passive process in which the senses extract information about the world. It is an active process in which the perceiver moves about to unearth regularities.”⁶ The database that is used to help animate *Prosthetic Head* is extremely predictable by drawing on the text gathered by the database a pattern of conversation emerges. This is perceived as interactive by the interrogator thus leading to further interaction creating a feedback loop.

The *Prosthetic Head* has enough of a likeness to Stelarc that the “interrogator” accepts the interaction taking place to be a conversation. This is

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

due to the immediacy of the database's response that makes it a successful new media interface. It is the visibility of the action taking place that creates the feedback loop. The Interrogator gains an intense experience that is similar to social interaction. *Prosthetic Head* is able to personalise the conversation the longer it lasts as the database reuses the text the interrogator typed. As the interrogator is typing questions or responses to questions the database is increasing in size.

Chapter four

Concept: Fear of Evil

"We need more understanding of human nature, because the only real danger that exists is man himself. He is the great danger, and we are pitifully unaware of it. We know nothing of man, far too little. His psyche should be studied, because we are the origin of all coming evil."¹



Image 14. PowerStation (2006)

My studio work questions the presence of evil in society. Through my research into the uncanny, exploring Freud's work and Jung's concept of the shadow I have understood my own perception of evil and how to frighten an audience. My studio work is a visual realisation of my understanding of evil by employing the uncanny to create a sinister environment. My studio work is my description of evil I have developed a visual style to represent my viewpoint. My studio work explores evil creating tension. Here the uncanny is represented by a familiar urban environment inhabited by bats. What draws me to the uncanny is the slippage it creates between reality and insanity. In my studio project the Shadow is the main protagonist in the journey to the power station, in search of the lost love. The bats are a lurking evil that

¹ C. G Jung, *Jung on Evil: Encountering Jung, Selected Introduction by Murray Stein*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.1995, p. 1.

threatens to destroy the shadow. The lost love has been taken to the power station by the head vampire. The Shadow once at the power station must drive a wooden stake through the heart of the head vampire. My work is an examination of self-knowledge. The resolution of my studio work, this is once the shadow has driven the wooden stake through the heart of the head vampire, bats descend over the metropolis. The shadow is a concept that Jung explains in his writings.

Jung believed it takes a considerable effort to resolve shadow issues. The shadow deals with moral problems. In my work I explore moral issues, but through visual expression. Jung wanted to affirm the value of treating evil as real, as a genuine force to be reckoned with in the world. According to Jung, evil is primarily a category of conscious thought, a judgement of the ego, and is therefore dependent for its existence upon consciousness. So one cannot “be evil, as it is not a physical state, but a category of thought.”² Thus it is not until someone casts judgement that evil exists; until then there are just “raw fears”.³ Once judgement has been made, social, shame or friend/family pressure about certain aspects of human nature create what Jung called “shadow”, this is where evil thoughts hide in the unconscious, “condemned to a more or less underground existence.”⁴ The shadow is made up of the personalities, tendencies, motives and traits that a person considers shameful for one reason or another, and seeks to suppress or actually represses unconsciously. If they are repressed, they are unconscious and are projected

² *ibid*, p.95

³ *ibid*, p.6.

⁴ *ibid*, p. 6.

onto others, other people's behaviours.⁵ It is this righteousness that leads to moral crusades. Harsh judgements are made against others in response to a suppressed shame, or shadow. Good and evil make up a pair of contrasting discriminations that is then used by ego consciousness to differentiate experience.⁶ By changing something a little, altering the perception of the shadow in my interactive work. Alluding to self-understanding this is the only resolution through out the work its subtle but constantly referenced in the voice over.

Exploring “the uncanny” in Horror and Van Sowerwines’ work

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Image 15, *Play With Me*

In my studio work the power station is the centre of the source of evil; it is where evil lies, an unearthly source. I hope to create a tension between realistic depiction of the landscape and an uncanny evocation of supernatural presences. I want to create a world that is very different, a world that is uncanny. Using play to communicate to an audience allows artists to meet, in a sense, on a common ground. In this I am stating that video/digital games are a familiar cultural medium. By employing video/ digital games techniques in the creation of art audiences are able to understand how to interact with the interactive game art. Van Sowerwine, a Melbourne based New Media Artist, has employed

⁵ ibid, p.17.

⁶ ibid, p.16.

some games techniques in many of her works. See image 12, *Play With Me* (2002).

“*Play With Me* is an interactive installation that uses stop-motion animation and sound to create an uncertain reality. Events quickly escalate away from the viewer's control and a terrible scene unfolds...” stated on the basic festival site.⁷ Sowerwine creates environments that allow the audience to interact with her work but the audience soon loses control as the piece becomes disturbing. *Play With Me* allows the audience to click on items that are available for the doll to interact with. Once clicked an animation begins and it is not possible to stop the event set into play. For example if the teapot is clicked the doll pours a cup of tea and a cup of Drano. The audience is able to click to make the doll drink the Drano, the doll then dies. This type of sinister visual interactive expression incites my creativity. By using interactivity the audience is required to stop and think as well as respond to the events that have been triggered by a mouse click.

The way that Sowerwine employs technology as a tool to create uncanny feelings in the audience inspires my work. I am drawn to the “uncanny” aspect of technology. Martin Heidegger explores: “modern technology as a novel and disquieting way of knowing or revealing; the way power and control are imbricate...”⁸ The layering of power and control that Heidegger refers is thus related to Freud’s reading of uncanny, “... the

⁷ <http://www.basics-festival.net/exhibition/playwithme.php> Visited 10/09/05

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Confronting Mass Democracy and Industrial Technoogy*, John P. Mc Cormick (ed), Durham, Duke University Press, 2002, p.114.

temptation to identify technology as something “demonic’: a fixation on the sense of “homelessness’ or the *unheimlich* feelings engendered by technology; and also, quite simply, the use of the term “uncanny’ to describe technology.”⁹ It is the *unheimlich*, that inspires me to use screen-based technology to express my moral dilemmas, as I enjoy the fact that it is never physical, but represents my daily environment in an unhomely way to create an uncanny feeling. The viewer must to some extent create his or her own way of dealing with the space on the screen. As Marvin Minsky so elegantly states: “Because each new representation suggests a new way of understanding and if you understand something only one way, then you scarcely understand it at all.”¹⁰ Using the medium now developed by games designers artists are able to represent in a playful way, a new way.

Resident Evil 4

Experiencing horror in games is an exhilarating experience as one can become uneasy but slaughter the zombie that represents the fear. *Resident Evil 4* has all the tropes of a horror film. It uses sound familiar to me from horror films. It employs black and white graphics as well as sepia toned graphics that are grainy to build up the tension. It has the male hero, a damsel in distress, and a town of possessed zombies. The introduction movie moment was great it completely immersed me. The game play was extremely fast past it goes straight into shooting axe welding zombies. Curtis Bowman refers to a “...self-understanding. They slowly turn us toward different ways of

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Marvin Minsky, *The Future Merging of Science, Art and Psychology*
<http://www.aec.at/en/futurelab/products.asp> Visited 10/04/05

looking at the world; they confront us with characters in situations progressively shown to be far different from our own. The characters are always faced with mystery; frequently, with the supernatural and genuine evil; ...”¹¹ *Resident Evil 4* has all these requirements stated by Bowman in his evaluation of the uncanny in horror. The supernatural in *Resident Evil 4* is a type of black magic that summons parasites to possess the town’s people creating possessed zombie creatures with amazing strength.

What is paramount in these experiences is not living the lives of the people reflected in the horror genre but the battle between good and evil. It is the fear that is represented by the threat of evil. It’s the struggle as Bowman articulates “ Their struggles are artistic expressions in dramatic form of a more ordinary activity which, according to Heidegger, we are engaged in all the time.”¹² From my experience with *Resident Evil 4* I have found that after a game session I am less stressed. *Resident Evil 4* is the goriest game I have engaged in for a long period of time. I find the fact that it is a horror game easier to deal with the amount of gore. I don’t find myself transferring my life onto the game and I don’t find my dreams filled with the zombies from the games but I don’t have nightmares. I have explored the elements in *Resident Evil 4* that make it a horror mainly the backgrounds and sound. In doing this I have been able to transfer this knowledge to *Shadow: PowerStation*. It is through this artistic expression that I am able to reach a new self-

¹¹ Curtis Bowman. *Heidegger, the Uncanny, and Jaques Tourneur’s Horror Films, in Dark Thoughts: Philosophic Reflections on Cinematic Horror*. Steven Jay Schneider and Daniel Shaw.(Ed). Lanham, Maryland and Oxford, The Scarecrow Press Inc, 2003. Pg 81

¹² *ibid*

understanding. My struggles and fears are visualised in this new media experiment.

Chapter five

From Shadow: PowerStation (2005) to PowerStation (2006)

My initial concept for the studio aspect of my MVA was to create a work exploring levels of fear, starting from 1, being a low level of fear moving to 5 being a high level of fear. I used this example to explain what sort of sound I needed to the two sound engineers I have worked with on this project. My experience with both these sound people helps to understand the journey I experienced dealing with new media. Initially I employed a classically trained musician to create 5 levels of fear. This was in March 2004 he finished the work around November of the same year. By the time he had finished I had imagery that I showed him but this didn't influence his outcome. I was unable to use any of the sound he created as it was too light in tone. The second sound engineer I employed has a career spanning twenty years in the rock industry in Sydney. I gave him the same information as the first but he needed to create around 27 short sound pieces the longest being 5 seconds and the shortest being 1.5 seconds each had a level of fear indicating a 1 to 5 scale as before. I have used this sound in the work.

The sound operates as crucial part of the work functioning as a tension building device. It is able to build up tension or tone down the tension. I have used a mixture different sounds that represent different types of tension throughout my final studio work, *PowerStation*. In this work I have created an evil and forbidding place. The sound helps to build on the presence of danger.

The danger in *PowerStation* is always implied through both the narration and the sound. The narrator explains what the shadow must do but gives no clear explanation of the outcome. It is through this mystery and anticipation that an inevitable doom is implied. The sound works as a structuring device and suggests a forward trajectory in relation to what level of anticipation the user should expect. *PowerStation* is made up of around 27 short flash animations often the images don't establish what sort of fear the user should experience. This is why the sound works as a forward linking device. It allows the user to understand that tension is either building thus the implied inevitable doom is close or the tension has decreased so the evil fate is not near. The sound was one of the hardest aspects to accomplish and it took many attempts to understand how it could work as I have described.

Throughout my studio practice I had many discuss with many colleagues and audiences in relation to the development of *Shadow:PowerStation* to *PowerStation*. What follows is a detailed discussion of this development process.

Installation room one (2005)

Having been inspired by interactive new media and the way that audiences respond. I set out to create a similar experience to ask the audience to stop, think and respond. A dialogue is created between the art and the audience, push a button and the artwork will talk. *Shadow:PowerStation* was exhibited as a work in progress in Installation room 1 at

Sydney College of the Arts titled a *talk with Michelle Jensen*. The audience was encouraged to comment and respond to *Shadow: PowerStation* a work in progress. The feedback was constructive, many participants gave technical advice and others questioned my intentions. Arrangements had been made to have two groups view the work in the Installation room at different times. The room was open two hours a day to enable others to experience *Shadow: PowerStation*. From this two types of audiences experienced the work. One had knowledge of it and the other had none. Both types of audience offered different perspectives and comments. Audiences gained knowledge as to how I created the interactive new media environment and were able to view working sketches and storyboards. The audience I interacted with was eager to see the final work and helped me come to many final decisions.

At this stage of my studio project I was naïve although I had already experienced technical set backs the biggest realisation was to come. This being what I could realistically achieve in Flash, I didn't want to create another version of a game already existing. My studio project called for a new sort of experience realised in Flash and calling on the influences of commercial games. Unfortunately at this stage I had been struggling just to keep up to date with the updates of Flash. Simon Penny in his book *Critical Issues in Electronic Media* relates his experience of having to always update software packages to painting; "Imagine if every two years the tools of a painter went out of date and the painter had to retrain..."¹ I refer to this as technology often becomes a major concern when working with new media. Of course this is a

¹ Simon Penny. *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*. New York. State University of New York. 1995. pg 51

factor that must be understood at the outset of any project that uses technology but the constraints imposed on the artists in relation to time are real as it is often a struggle just to get the project to work. At this stage of my studio project this was an issue. The resolution of my studio project has drawn on my struggle and used the experience gained by exhibiting at different stages.



Image 16, *Coming Soon: 6 December 2005 @ SCA*

newspace (2005)

The feedback I received from the initial installation led to the exhibition of the teaser, a DVD of scenes from the interactive new media work. The DVD is titled *Coming Soon; 6 December 2005 @ SCA* exhibited on a large television screen in the front window of *newspace*. The questions I had on opening night were very different from those received for the work in progress. The work was received quite differently as a linear non-interactive video. The audience responded very differently due to the majority not being artists and not being familiar with my work. This is in comparison with the audience to the work in progress, all were artists and most had a knowledge of my work. From this exhibition I found a new enthusiasm a freshness in the responses and a naivety to ask and comment freely about simple aspects of the work. It is

imperative to note that in this second showing the work was a part of a group show titled *Armchair Collective*. Exhibiting in this way takes a lot of the responsibility for creating a cohesive show away from the individual.



Image 17, *Shadow: PowerStation*. At SCA 2005 Graduation Show
Larger Images on Page 88, Appendix 2

Graduation Exhibition (2005)

From discussion with the audience and colleagues I decided to tweak the interactivity and sound of the work exhibited for the 2005 Graduation show. More work was needed so armed with this insight *PowerStation* was born. From my experiences of different audiences and the use of different media it is important to consider “the cultural training that a viewer brings to an artwork is critical in that person’s experience of the work.”¹ Penny also explains that the behaviour at a football match is different to behaviour at the ballet. Relating this idea to my work I can understand how *Shadow: PowerStation* interface design was not understood. I assumed that the audience had the same knowledge as I did. This was not a practical assumption to make and an arrogant one as I had played hours of video

¹ Simon Penny. *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*. New York. State University of New York. 1995. pg 54

games and interacted with many new media art works. In saying this though there is also as Penny explains a responsibility relating to the use of these interactive works as “...the codes and conventions required to “read” the work have not been culturally established.”² Penny warns that the new audience must not make critical judgments. When working with a medium that is establishing its codes and conventions it is often hard to communicate with an audience that is trying to relate the experience of an older media like cinema or painting with that of the new media. When creating a new media art work it is important to take this relationship with the audience into consideration and try to help the audience through the choices made in

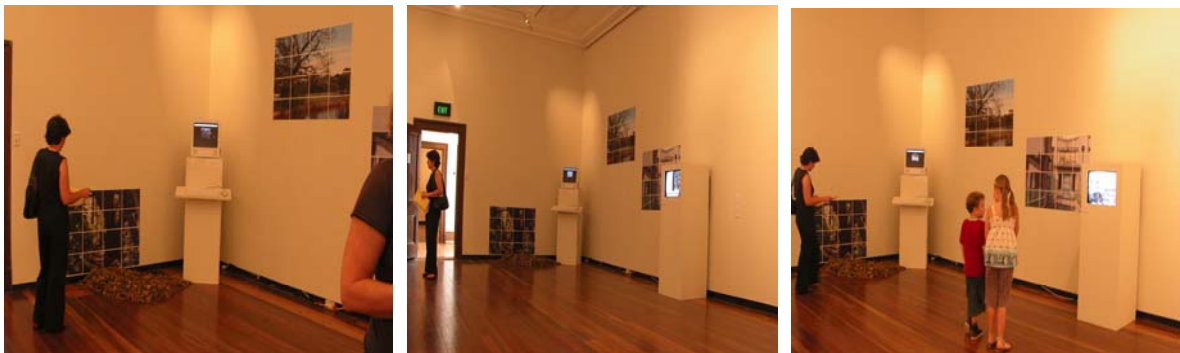


Image 18, *Shadow: PowerStation*. SCA 2005 Graduation Show Opening
Larger Images on Page 87, Appendix 2

designing the interface and interactivity. *Shadow: PowerStation* I didn't consider how the audience would feel when faced with a confusing interface.

Shadow:PowerStation as exhibited as a part of the 2005 Graduation show at Sydney College of the Arts, see image 14 and 15, was an installation. Comprising of three digital images on the walls, a computer with an interactive audio visual flash animation and a television playing a DVD. Near the

² *ibid.*

computer and the first image hung close to the floor where leaves piled like a path leading to the computer. The placement of all these aspects was important in creating interactivity between each of the elements. In recent year I had noticed that when I displayed work on a computer not many people interacted with it. I decided to try to lurer people to the computer. The first aspect would be the sound coming from the DVD playing on the television as this sound could be heard from the hallway. The screen flickering would be the next aspect people would notice. Then the images on the way would bring peoples attention to the computer. The images on the wall where the same locations as the DVD and the interactive audio visual flash animation. The images where hung at different highs the reason for this is so that the images would create a visual path to the computer.

When I observed people interacting with Shadow:PowerStation I noticed their eyes following my visual paths. I noticed that people would walk to the television and watch the DVD. Then they would notice the leaves on the ground and look at those for some time. Some would move around the installation looking at each component. The feedback I did get about the interactivity of the Flash work was that it was confusing. I enjoyed watching people exploring the space created by the installation especially the way they moved around the space. In relation to this physical interactivity the installation achieved exactly what I had aimed to do.

Resolution: PowerStation

This chapter explores how each development in my studio project needed to take into consideration the technology and the audiences responses to each development. In



Image 21, Projected PowerStation

relation to *Shadow:PowerStation* as exhibited as an installation I found that I spent so much time on luring people to the computer that I ran out of time to tweak the interactivity, sound and over all design of the work displayed on the computer. Responding to this *PowerStation* will be exhibited as a projected computer piece in a dark room with external speakers. I have been able to concentrate entirely on the work. I have taken into consideration all of the feedback I have received about every aspect of this long process. I made a conscious decision to have input from different audiences. The reason for this is that I didn't want to create a work that would not have an audience interact with it.

As I expressed earlier it is also the audiences' responsibility to try to view art made in the new media environment with patience. Art is an evolving practice. Penny explains " Attempting to make art with these technologies may require redefinition of precisely what we imagine "art " to be."³ Penny is talking about art made with computers he also describes how "Cinema did not

³ ibid.pg 69

find its place in museums; it evolved a new cultural context and a new code of behavior.”⁴ Penny is referring to a situation where artists are using materials that create new contexts and new codes that viewers are not familiar with. “Art in the modern period has propagated itself by continually disproving itself, by continually reinventing itself in response to changes in culture and technology.”⁵ During the development of my studio work I found myself constantly reworking my ideas as in response to the technology I was using. I would then discuss this with my peers and revise again. My experience has been extremely empowering for my art practice due to the enthusiasm I have received from my audiences and the understanding I have gained.

PowerStation is the harsh reality of Jung’s shadow living in Freud’s “uncanny”. All of society’s dirty little secrets are embodied in the head vampire and its guard bats, ready to descend on the metropolis, the Shadow is the hero. This is somewhat hypocritical, as according to Jung⁷ the Shadow is all those hidden moments, the moments that the conscious cannot deal with due to social conditioning, the moments that cause guilt. The Shadow is evil: it hides in the unconscious and is not dealt with until one seeks out self-knowledge. It often manifests in particular behaviour and causes people to dislike those aspects in others. *PowerStation* is my window, a journey through my daily haunt, a trek I take often, two or three times a day on the road to salvation. Self- knowledge creates a shadow that can be a hero. It is a

⁴ ibid.

⁵ ibid.

⁷ For a detailed description of Jungs’ shadow see C. G Jung, *Jung on Evil: Encountering Jung, Selected Introduction by Murray Stein*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.1995, p. 6.



Image 22, Projected PowerStation

paradoxical environment that the shadow lives in *PowerStation* as it can never be realised in a physical sense. It is not hidden in the unconscious but empowered to discover the “real” source of evil. That is within the context of an artwork, an interactive new media art work.

PowerStation has used the loop as a device to create a staggered non-linear narrative. Manovich describes “...different spaces do not have to be matched in perspective, scale, and lighting: individual layers can retain their separate identities rather than being merged into a single space; different worlds can clash semantically rather than form a single universe.”⁶ Relating meaning through clashing looped segments of audio/visual movement is how I created the universe that is *PowerStation*. As I described at the beginning of this chapter it is the sound that holds the tension of *PowerStation*. The sound works as a trigger of the awaiting danger. The visuals describe a journey through and urban space. *PowerStation* is broken into twenty seven looped sections of audio/visual data. Manovich asks the question “Can the loop be a new narrative form appropriate for the computer age?”⁷ In *PowerStation* I have used the loop as a device to help create a non-linear narrative.

⁶ Lev Manovich. *The Language of New Media*: United States of America, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001Pg 5

⁷ *ibid.* Pg17

Conclusion

It is the playfulness of the video/digital games medium that allows for audiences to understand how to interact with the medium. It took less than a year for me to become annoyed with all the games I played. I used the experience gathered during my immersion into commercial games to inform the creation of *PowerStation*. I was initially inspired by new media artwork I viewed at galleries that were also concerned with the cultural object, video/digital games. With the developments available due to technology I can see both video/ games and game art moving forward in a parallel fashion. I can only hope that just as independent filmmakers influence the commercial film industry that independent games developers influence the games industry.



Image 16, PowerStation, interactive.

To truly understand commercial games, being video arcade, free Internet games and *Playstation 2* and *Game Boy Advanced SP*, it was necessary to play as many as possible. In doing this I was able to gain valuable insight into how the games are designed and marketed. I not only played the games but followed developments in the games industry via magazines and various Internet sites. By using techniques already existing in video/ digital games artists are able to reach new audiences. Using play as a device to deliver art is like a half waypoint, a common ground.



Image 20, *Shadow:PowerStation*, digital prints.
Large Images Page 89. Appendix 2

My Masters studio work explores violence and fear employing aspects of the games language. I set out to encourage the audience to interact with the work to explore new media art. In the exhibited versions of the work I have experienced a receptive audience. It was the experiences I had with interactive work that I used as a starting point for *Shadow: PowerStation* then incorporating the experience of immersing myself into the commercial games. What I ended up with was a work that explored the relationship between art and entertainment media, *PowerStation*. This work has used the loop and interactivity as a part of the content. These aspects of *PowerStation* are just as important as the graphics and sound. *PowerStation* employs a device that I

noticed in video/digital games being staggered motion. Each short section of audio/visual sound comprise a stagnation in the play back. I have used this stagnation in play back as a cinematic device.

I exhibited my studio work in three stages before the final stage currently being completed. Each stage influenced the next. What I have tried to do in my studio work is persuade the audience to explore interactive computer based work. To become a part of the art experience by simply pushing a button or clicking a mouse. I have tried to make the transition for the audience from old ways of understanding art to a new way of understanding art one that creates a sense of interactivity. I have cited examples of other artists using similar technologies as I have. The works of these artists were a starting point for my own development each of these artists has created an artwork that has pushed the viewers idea of art.

Each artist has worked with technology but as Lev Manovich explains in his book *The Language of New Media* " ...we monkey around with new technology in an effort to see what they can do, to make them do things the engineers never intended, to understand what they might mean, to reflect on their effects, to push them beyond their limits, to break them."¹ Manovich is referring to artists when he uses a collective we in this statement. Art History is ripe with examples of artists using technology to develop and explore ways of communicating with an audience. Manovich reiterates how "Art has always been bound up with technology, and artists have always been among the first

¹ ibid. pg xi

to adopt new technologies as they emerge.”² So although the current technologies are relatively new the relationship artist have with technology is not. Throughout this dissertation I have outlined artists relationships with emerging technologies and related these developments to my own studio practice. My relationship with the artist’s works has been as a stepping stone. As I have viewed the works represented by the artists in this dissertation and seen their art practice as one that has inspired my own art practice.

From this initial curiosity I have been able to gain an understanding of the developments in commercial games and how artists and the public have responded to the games industry. The knowledge I have gained from this experience has affected the way I constructed my studio work. By exploring the way I interact with commercial games and comparing this to the way I interact with many artist’s interactive art works. I have been able to learn and develop an understanding of how to develop my artwork in a manner that gains a positive response from the audience. This positive response has been a major concern for this project. I am not relating the positive response to an aesthetic appreciation but to an interactive relationship with an audience. Just to get the audience to come over to the computer and engage with the work. By understanding commercial methods of using technology, such as video/digital games, artists can explore how to employ similar strategies. The audience of video/digital games is one that is well educated in the use of developing technologies. They are an audience that is always upgrading and learning new ways to interact with the gaming environment. Each new game

² *ibid.*

and each new hardware demands its user to learn how to interact with it. There is a general gaming language that is employed across all games platforms. It is this language that I have explored and developed. Using existing languages and strategies to gain an audience's understanding of what is expected of them when interacting with a new media artwork is an important communicating device.

When using technology in art it is important to understand that the audience may not be as responsive as you wish them to be. Through my constant communication with an audience I was able to ascertain what they were not comfortable with. In relation to what they enjoyed I found that the audience responded to the graphics and sound. This led me to further research into interactivity. From this research I have gained an understanding of what it is to interact through audio/ visual new media. The most important aspect of my experience and research is that art can be a form of communication. For communication to accrue the two seemingly intelligent parties must engage in a form of conversation. Both have expectations and for the interaction to accrue and both must understand what is expected of them. Of course this analogy is a kind of metaphor as one of the parties in relation to my studio work is a computer. But the important factor in this is that the audience must have an understanding of what is expected of them. When creating the work I must have an understanding of what the audience expects from the computer. When all this is taken into consideration a form of communication can then be experienced by the audience.

Bibliography

Aisbett, Kate and Durkin, Kevin. *Computer Games and Australians Today*.
Sydney:Office of Film and Literature Classification, 1999.

Amerika, Mark. *The Animating Fluid of Cyberspace, An interview with Mark
Amerika and Melinda Rackham*. <http://rhizome.org/object.rhiz?3256>

Visited 19/05/06

Barker,Garry. *Meet Stelarc, the face of artificial intelligence*,
<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/12/09/1070732211017.html>

Visited 26/09/05

Baumgaertel, Tilman. *Games as art, art as game. Games, Computerspiele
von KunstlerInnen: Germany*, Published by Hartware Medien Kunstverein,
2003.

Burnham, Van. *Supercade: Massachusett*, The MIT Press, 2001.

Cassell, Justine and Jenkins, Henry (ed). *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat*.
America,The MIT Press, 1998.

Darley, Andrew. *Visual Digital Culture*: New York, Routledge, 2000.

Doom Promotional Web Site:

<http://www.idsoftware.com/games/doom/doom3/index.php?id=5bdbf907fb7be3d28f283dd1709c8b7c> Visited 12/11/05

Greenfield, Patricia Marks. *Mind and Media: The Effects of Television, Video Games, and Computers*: Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1984.

Friedl, Markus. *Online Game Interactivity Theory*. Hingham, Massachusetts, Charles River Media Inc, 2003.

Herz, J.C. *Joystick Nation*: United States of America, Sage Publications, 1995

Hunt, Anthony: <http://www.hunthunthunt.com/mtsite/NewContainer.html>
Visited 10/08/05

<http://www.basics-festival.net/exhibition/playwithme.php> Visited 10/09/05

http://www.mca.com.au/default.asp?page_id=12 Visited 10/08/05

<http://dlux.org.au/mobilejourneys/about.html> Visited 8/13/05

<http://www.gamerankings.com/htmlpagesscreens/914828.asp>
Visited 14/02/05

<http://www.splintercell.com/us/splintercellchaostheory/screenshots.php?page>

≡1 Visited 14/11/05

<http://www.artdes.monash.edu.au/about/profiles/dpalmer/activities.html>

Visited 20/04/06

<http://www.techwondo.com/projects/artche> Visited 18/05/06

Jay, Steven Schneider and Shaw, Daniel. Ed, *Dark Thoughts:Philosopic Reflections on Cinematic Horror*. Lanham, Maryland and Oxford, The Scarecrow Press Inc, 2003.

Jung, C. G. *Jung on Evil: Encountering Jung, Selected Introduction by Murray Stein*: Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1995.

King, Lucien, (Ed). *Game On: The History and Culture of Video Games*: London, Laurence King Publishing Ltd, 2002.

Kirsh, David. *Interactivity and MultiMedia Interfaces*.

<http://icl-server.ucsd.edu/%7Ekirsh/Articles/Interactivity/brock-single.html#what> Visited 15/04/05

Lovink, Geert . *Uncanny Networks; Dialogues with the Virtual Intelligentsia*: United States of America, The MIT Press, 2003.

Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*: United States of America, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001.

Mc Cormick John P. (Ed), *Confronting Mass Democracy and Industrial Technology*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002.

Minsky, Marvin. *The Future Merging of Science, Art and Psychology*:
<http://www.aec.at/en/futurelab/products.asp> Visited 02/03/05

Penny, Simon. *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*. New York. State University of New York. 1995.

Philbrich, Jane.(Ed) *The Return of The Cadavre Exquis*. New York. The Drawing Center.1993

Plaything: future screen, Catalogue: Australia, dLux Media Arts, 2003

Poole, Steven. *Trigger Happy: the inner life of Videogames*: London Fourth Estate,2000.

Provenzo, Eugene.I Jr. *Videokids: Making Sense of Nintendo*: England Harvard University Press, 1991.

Purcell, Charles. *Masters of their Universe: Australia, June 11-12 2005*,
Sydney Morning Herald, (Icon)

Sigmund Freud, *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*: London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955.

Sowerwine, Van. <http://www.vansowerwine.com/installation/installation.html#e>
Visited 20/09/05

Stelarc: <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/prosthetichead/> Visited 17/06/05

Turkle, Sherry. *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit*: New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984.

Van Burnham. *Supercade*: Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2001.

Virilio, Paul. *Art and Fear*. New York. Continuum.2000

Wolf, Mark J. P. Perron, Bernard. *The Video Games Theory Reader*. New York, London Routledge, 2003.

Games list

PlayStation 2

Garfield (2004)

Space Invaders Anniversary (2004)

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness (2003)

Final Fantasy X (2001, 2002)

Underworld: the eternal battle (2004)

Lemony Snicket's: A Series of Unfortunate Events (2004)

Alias (2004)

Grand Theft Auto 3 (2001, 2003)

Fifa: football 2003 (2002)

Metal Gear Solid 3 Snake Eater (2005)

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (2005).

The Sims (2002)

Singstar 80's (2004-2005)

Singstar Party (2004)

Van Helsing (2004)

Need for Speed Underground (2003)

Quake 3 (2001)

4 Resident Evil (2005)

Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas; Oogie's Revenge (2005)

Lara Croft: Tomb Raider: Legend (2006)

Game Boy Advance games

NES Classic Donkey Kong (2004)

NES Classic Super Mario Brothers (2004)

The Incredibles (2004)

Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets (2002)

Pokemon Fire Red, Leaf Green (2004)

Pokemon Emerald (2005)

The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap (2005)

Sponge Bob Square Pants Battle for Bikini Bottom (2003)

Elf the movie (2004)

Nintendo DS

Nintendo Dogs Dachahund and Friends (2005)

Nintendo Dogs Lab and Friends(2005)

MARIOKART DS (2005)

Appendix 1 : Game Method

As a part of my research I decided to formulate some methods of research. I decided to play games and watch my children play games to document this process I kept a loose diary.

Arcades Method

I started playing in arcades around the middle of October 2003. My children love to play games from which they receive tickets. The point of this is that they get a prize in exchange for the tickets. It works like this: each prize has an amount displayed on a card next to it in the display case. When you give the games attendant the number of tickets stipulated on the display card next to the prize, you earn the prize. The games that hand out tickets as you play are quite physical, such as mini-basketball and virtual bowling. These types of incentives are important to engage a young market. At first I used to play a game that included three of my favourites, Pac Man, Galarger and Frogger. I got to a point when I would even go to the arcade and have a game on shopping day, as the supermarket is on the ground level of the complex. I love these games in the arcade. Unfortunately the game was taken away around March 2004. I then tried other games, but no names have stuck in my mind, as I have not found a favourite. Once I had enough games at home I lost interest in the arcades around July 2005. I had no incentive to play no familiar ground to work from. I was not intimidated by the arcade I just did not find any games I liked once I had my own at home.

First purchase, step one: Console Method

Christmas Summer Holidays, 2004-2005

I set out to rediscover commercial games after a break of two years. I last played *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2000) on a *PlayStation One*, around 2000. I played this not long after it was released. At the time I was in second year at SCA, discovering CD-ROMs. On playing the game I decided it was not dissimilar to what I was working on in *Macromedia Director*, creating an interactive CD-ROM. I understand today, after collecting and testing quite a lot of Action Script for Flash, that I was very naive to think this. What I decided to do is go to Intensity and a few other Video Arcades and play whatever took my fancy. I also purchased a *Playstation 2* and two *Game Boy Advance SPs*. I started with the classic games, Super Mario and Donkey Kong. The reason for this is to understand the language of video/digital games as it developed. For the Game Boys they are actually in the classic series, which means that they have been re-released. For the Playstation they are called "Platinum" indicating again that they sold well but have been re-released. Of these I purchased *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness* (2003) and *Final Fantasy X* (2001, 2002). For the *Game Boy Advance* I purchased *Pokemon Fire Red* and *Leaf Green* versions on release. In this way I was able to get involved with the hype of the game world. I have *The Incredibles* (2004), also purchased on release before the movie was released. I have *Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets* (2002), bought out of a bargain bin for \$10. I had read a lot about *Donkey Kong* and *Mario* so I bought Classic versions of these games of the *Game Boy Advance*, *NES Classic Donkey Kong* (2004) and

NES Classic Super Mario Brothers (2004) it was beneficial to play these as these two games help define how games are designed and played today. For the *Playstation 2* I have the 20th Anniversary collection edition of *Space Invaders Anniversary* (2004). *Garfield* (2004) was purchased after seeing the new movie. I have *Lemony Snicket's: A Series of Unfortunate Events* (2004), purchased after seeing the movie, on release. For adults I have *Underworld: the eternal battle* (2004), with a vampire theme made in response to the movie of the same name, and *Alias* (2004) a newish release at the time of purchase both disappointing. It is evident to me that the cheaper games are often not as enjoyable as the dearer ones. It is also clear that games that are a part of a series are extremely well developed but often are very similar to the last version.

Step two: Continuation of Console Method

Started May 2005

This step was influenced by my experience gained during step one. I also read games magazines. *Hyper* is a games magazine that influenced my purchases, such as the *Game Boy Advance* purchased on May 5 for my son's birthday, and *The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap* (2005). We decided to buy it as I had read a lot about the *Legend of Zelda* games. At the swimming pool my son and I read a review of the game in the *Sunday Herald Sun*; we promptly ordered a copy, phoning from the pool. On May 20 I purchased Platinum games *The Sims* (2002) for the PS2. I had read a lot about this series. I paid \$69.99 for the new games for the Game Boy. These were all

presents to my children except the *Pokemon*, which I read about in Hyper and had to have. On the July 9 a new version of *Pokemon* was released, *Pokemon Emerald Version* (2005). I bought it on the release date. I had made a few bad purchases during step one to eliminate this I found reading reviews helped. I didn't find I was disappointed by any of these purchases. I wanted to explore all types of genres available to games. I have been interested in other ways to interact with the game environment, other than controller, so I purchased two microphones for the *Playstation 2* a new type of game/ karaoke is played using these. This adds a party vibe when playing. It is still a game thus is still very competitive, players are scored. *Grand Theft Auto* is a series that has had a lot of publicity and many academics have written about the games. I purchased *Grand Theft Auto 3* (2001, 2003) and *Fifa: football 2003* (2002) a sports simulation. Both these games require a lot of time to understand the game environment and the different types of play required. During October 2005 I decided to try the combat style games in a last bid to stay committed to my PlayStation2, I choose *Metal Gear Solid 3 Snake Eater* (2005) and *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory* (2005). *Metal Gear Solid 3 Snake Eater* is a combat army game based around World War Two. The character has been dropped behind enemy lines and must not be seen. This is a game for the patient as a lot of waiting and not moving is required; this is called a stealth mission. Just like *Metal Gear Solid Snake Eater*, *Snake Eater* for short, *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*, *Chaos Theory* for short, has complex controls. It still requires stealth mission movement that is creeping around in a crawl position. *Chaos Theory* is an army based mission game, the missions being like levels. Unlike *Snake Eater* it is not set in the

past and it is not just crawling around in grass. *Chaos Theory* has a tutorial section that shows what the controls are capable of these are not interactive. Interactivity would have allowed the gamer to grasp the information a little easier.

Step three: Further Continuation of Console Method

Christmas 2005

Purchase of the *Nintendo DS*, A two screen portable console. Its capabilities include touch screen and voice recognition. It has a wireless communication system. That works with other *Nintendo DS* consoles and wireless internet to the *Nintendo* web site. Purchased with these consoles was three games two *Nintendo Dogs Dachahund and Friends* version and *Lab and Friends*(2005), and *MARIOKART DS* (2005). This console has been able to reach a broader gender group amongst my children's friends as many of the boys and girls of both age groups have been drawn into these consoles this Christmas. Last Christmas my daughter was the only female amongst her friends and my sons that had a *Nintendo* console. My daughter has spent the hole summer with her friend playing a dog simulation pet game together, *Nintendo Dogs*.

Watching and Playing Method

Games Diary started Jan 20th 2005

January 20th 2005

Pokemon: Fire Red Version (2005)

Completely frustrated, about two weeks of constant play, some days all day and until 3am. I don't know if this is a blessing or a Pandora's box. I bought a Hyper magazine; this was an edition that had walkthroughs, hints and cheats for the most popular games of 2004. On reading this I decided to buy one of the games listed for Game Boy Advance and put myself to finishing the game as quickly as possible, it is school holidays for my children. Up till now it has been great giving me little treats to help me navigate the game. But I have followed what I decipher as the instructions to no avail. I have all up been playing for 34:23 hours. I have captured 41 Pokemon and have 5 badges and the secret gift. I have become extremely agitated. The visuals are 2D images for my game it is helping a lot. The characters are interesting and detailed. If you are bored with the Pokemon you have you simply catch some new ones. I have been prompted to bye leaf green so I will have to start again. This time with different Pokemon, other than the Pokemon the game is the same. The reason I bought another version of the game is because after a certain point in the game I will be able to wirelessly connect the games and battle each other and trade Pokemon.

At this point I realise what a novice I am, I bought the Game Boys and Playstation 2 on the 24th December and have spent days in the one level of

Lara Croft Angel of Darkness for Playstation 2. The graphics are 3D but Lara Croft is a pain to navigate through the space. My theory, including my experience on Playstation1 with Lara Croft Tomb Raider and a Fifa 2000 Soccer game. Is it takes a little while for the signal to reach the processor in the PS2 (Playstation 2). The cord is long in comparison to the Game Boy Advance where the controls and the console are one.

To date I have played 5 Game Boy Advance games Supermario Classic, I enjoy the simplicity of this game, could only get half way through level 2. The visual language is bright and bold. Donkey Kong classic, I can reach the run just before Donkey Kong, I don't really enjoy this game it is suffocating as all the action takes place on the one screen. This means the game becomes difficult after about 30 seconds of play. A new game The Incredible's made to coincide with the Pixar animation of the same name. Visually this game is dynamic and bold. The sound is captivating. I don't get very far in this game but my son has spent hours, it gets harder around level 3, each level is broken into 3 sections or more, so there is level 1-1-1 and so on. With this game you are able to write down codes and then once you turn it off you can't save but next time you play you type in the code and it takes you to the level you were at. Pokemon allows you to save the game.

The Incredibles and Pokemon Leaf Green and Fire Red, both released late 2004, are similar in that you fight, you collect items of importance to your characters ability to perform. I believe that you are lured into play by the basic elements to begin with lots of text explaining what to do and helping you along the way as you progress through the game these disappear, in Lara Croft Angel of Darkness these prompts are used too. Unfortunately there is a big

learning curve between this stage of nurturing and the next of independence. It is a bit like a mirror of how we progress in life. As the computer (software) takes on the role of parent and teacher congratulating you as you do well through various ways high scores, money badges ect and of course punishing you when you don't do so well, dieing bad score ect. What is superior about Pokemon is its ability to save your game. You are able to progress through the game never having to start again unless you choose. Pokemon is a bit like a Tamagoshe and a game as you must feed and battle with your Pokemon to keep them happy the game has ways of letting you know if your Pokemon like you and how much they like you. The key point is that you must care for your Pokemon. You battle and they grow in strength. You are able to purchase items with in the game to help your Pokemon in battle. After many hours of play I became quite attached to my lead Pokemon I was able to give it a nickname "Charm".

During the game you are able to capture as many Pokemon as you like but are only able to carry 5 with you at any one time the rest are stored in a computer with in the game and can be accessed at each town at the Pok center.

I share the game with my son who is 5 but not willingly. I fret as to the damage he will do to my game when he plays and won't let him save unless he has done something outstanding.

January 24th 2005

My Pokemon journey I purchased the game on January 20th had a play and was not impressed left it for the children to play with until January 24th then became addicted. I was deluded, as I believed I was a 'gamer' I played day and night with the cheats of course. Playing everywhere not putting the game down even to go to the toilet or cook dinner.

I hit a hard section because the cheats I had left some areas out I believe do to space restrictions in the magazine. At first the walkthrough was detailed but latter it left out sections of the instructions.

January 27th 2005

I went online and downloaded walkthroughs from different games sights that have many available for different games. I found that there would be two or three different versions and then all the other sights copied word of word these two or three. (I was able to finish the game two weeks after the 27th January and was disappointed as the credits rolled and that was it. You could keep playing but in the end my enthusiasm was gone and it became boring. My son and daughter love their Pokemon games now and several of their friends have them and they chat about the game play.)

Febuary 2nd 2005

Been playing two versions of the game switching and receiving a little help from my children. Have moved up levels. Game is more intense and switches between battles and exploring the environment mode rapidly. Especially if you

are looking for something rare. Battles happen more often to disorientate you. Overall I have broken the game into an experience that loosely mimics life. You wander around exploring areas of this game gaining hints on what to do by talking to as many people as possible. Some will be trainers of Pokemon too and others will be shop keepers, fisherman ect depending on the terrain. From these battles you gain experience points these build and increase the strength of your Pokemon. You also gain money or prizes when battling other trainers. (I started playing again)

Description of Pokemon Fire Red and Leaf Green

Basically you are a young male or female that is wondering through a world that has a few towns and islands. The terrain varies and as the terrain varies so do the Pokemon you catch in the different areas. The aim of the game is to obtain 8 badges that are obtained from gyms in each town. You battle the owner of the gym and receive a badge on winning. Along the way you can battle other trainers for money. Scattered around are different areas to catch wild Pokemon. Once you obtain all the badges you go to the ultimate battle arena and battle the elite 4 one after the other with no break in between. If you win you enter the Hall Of Fame. Then the credits roll and you can access some islands.

February 24th 2005

We (my family) after 12 weeks of gamming understand the language, so say if I go to a game store and use the demos there we can pick up any game pretty much straight away. This being, ways (signs) that direct you through the game

“environment” We discuss items found what they do. In POK we discuss what POK we need how we can advance what needs to be done. i.e. $a+b=c$.

I find the flat animation easier to navigate. GameBoy Advance.

I find the 3D Playstation 2 characters navigation have a bit to many areas of “nothing”. My understanding of this in the way they are programmed is that there is nothing areas. For an example we have female character 3D and a box in an environment 3D there are 100 programmed ways to get on the box but in reality to the environment there are really 1000. But only 100 are covered in the programming. This means they don't respond.

March 6th 2005

Completely over the Game Boy Advance, this is due to the fact that they strain my eyes and I recently purchased glass on the advice of an eye specialist or is it that the Game Boy DS is out.

I bought Final Fantasy X and got into it for a week or so it was a good game for the whole family to watch. In this game there is a lot of watching. Basically there are three modes to the game two of which deal with game play, being interactive the last is a watching mode. Little cut scenes, they are like advice areas you cannot stop or control the game during these “movie” moments. The other two modes of play are one that involves you controlling a male character as he explores the environment, there are things to find and do

during these “activity” moments. The last mode is a battling mode, in this mode you are able to control more than one character switching between characters as you battle.

Searched the Internet for walkthroughs to Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness. I found wondering around environments with no map a pain as Angel of Darkness is a little boring unless you can get through each level quickly, i.e. with a map. Lara Croft is clumsy and does not always respond to the controller. With the map the game is much more interesting but I have not gotten into it as much as I did Pokemon. I believe it is due to many factors one being Lara dies a lot the tasks she needs to perform are quite tricky and dangerous, climbing on the edge of buildings or barb wire fences ect. It is during the initial stage of learning a new way to control Lara that she dies, one happens in every level. Once she is dead you better hope you saved a lot so that you don't have to start so far back. It is the saving and loading of the saved game once she is dead that is a pain as it takes a while. I play this around an hour or so a night.

March 18th -21st 2005

Lara Croft Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness

Had a rather unfortunate event as I saved Lara dying. I had made it to level 11, Ancient Ruins. I saved her dying this means that I will not be able to play the saved game any more as she is just dead. I started again and find even less enjoyable the second time round. I will finish this game though.

March 25th 2005

Got to level five and repeated the save when dead trick, in Lara Croft.

March 30th 2005

Lara has become an unhealthy obsession, not as gripping as Pokemon it was my first twenty first century game. I play about 30mins to three hours a night. I am up to level 12, still using the walk through. I can't say that it is pleasurable, my research into artist games (gamestudies web site article from 2003) it brings up an issue about artist games not being pleasurable. I find this relates to consumer games. They the consumer games are repetitive, especially if you save yourself dying. Or play a game without save or save only areas. I can't say that Pokemon was enjoyable after the second day of intense play. But I do enjoy the talk with my children about the games and I enjoy watching them help each other. To add to this they fight about the games just as much as they help each other. In another book researchers noted that some children complain after finishing a game. I have noticed my son is able to get to a certain area in a game, he is so proud but then the game becomes extremely hard, most games we play have a training section usually the first two or so levels. My children get past this quite easily but then they continue and one level after the training section the games become harder and my son gets quiet angry and outwardly aggressive, he is already aggressive in nature so I don't blame the game for this it is his way of dealing with all sorts of situations. My daughter just stops playing.

April 2nd 2005

Made another games purchase

Underworld

This game is adapted from the movie of the same name. Basically both are a documentation of a war between werewolf's and vampires. In the game I am able to choose which side I am on. The vampires being all female, once you choose that you are a vampire you then get to choose from four female characters. I have not chosen werewolf's yet but assume they will all be male. This game is a bit like a maze as you run through streets that have shop fronts and walls. The aim is to run into a group of werewolf's, as well as the main character there are other characters that just follow you and shoot the werewolf's, and destroy the werewolf's by shooting or punching and kicking. There is crazy metal music playing when you run into the werewolf's this intensifies the fight. It is very hard, after three or four battles, to bet the werewolf's. It is also harder to understand then Lara Croft. There is a mission but I have not gotten past my third pack of werewolf's.

April 7th 2005

Started my sons and daughters games again this has got them both interested in Pokemon again as I had played the hole game through for them before. They both have gotten right into there Pokemon creatures.

To do this was not a small feat. For my sons version I could not let go of any of the cool Pokemon, 62 of them to be exact and it took 6hrs.

As for Lara she is stuck on a wall I have spent hours trying to get her off the wall but she just keeps falling off. She is supposed to climb up a roof. Have actually been doing this roof since the 4th April. What this has slowly done is made it impossible for me to play for more than 15 minutes basically due to the fact that each time she dies I have to wait so long to start again.

April 11th 2005

I am under the impression I have no skills at all for this darn Lara, still on the roof.

Underworld

Tried all the vampires, they are all women. Some are stronger than others. The werewolves are men so it's a woman versus men thing. If you are a Vampire you run through the game say from start to finish and if a werewolf your mission is backward so you start where the vampires finish.

General observation

Once the aim has gone from the game. Once the drive to "win" has gone in games such as Pokemon, a maze/puzzle game. Once I reached the Poke League, then credits roll here. I didn't want to play any more, you can still run around and catch Pokemon and battle.

April 27th 2005

Pokemon again, my children got up to a certain point that required complex maze solving and handed the gameboys back to me so for three days I got to play two at a time again.

28th April

Spend the last few days trying to get Lara off the wall but checking out the landing that she is to aim for I decided that once she got to the top I would need to just do a crazy backward jump. So once up the top, first try, I just pressed all the buttons and away she went and landed on the landing off the darn wall.

May 6th 2005

The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap

Purchased the game on the 5th May but did not start playing it till a few days later. Played using the walkthrough then ran out and had to wait till the next day to print more. I gave it a good go trying to play this game without, so did my son. Neither of us could work out how to get through any paths. In Zelda it is often required to perform certain tasks to open up areas of the game. These tasks usually need to be done in some sort of order, having several takes on the order of course. My son managed to explore a lot more than I did – I got bored after about two hours.

16th May

Back into Lara. Just about to finish level 19. There are only 29 levels so I am a third of the way through. It's been a battle to play a lot of the time; I have spent hours repeating the same thing over and over until I do something wild like push all the buttons and that seems to work. Risk is the key in this game, and it's not until I have just had enough or the children are talking to me as I

play that I do the unplanned moves pushing all the buttons or running at danger. Revisited Final Fantasy X with cheats, just have not got the same urge to play as I did with Tomb Raider.

Have discovered that without the cheats I just don't have the motivation to play.

23rd May

Have played only The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap. My son is quite good at this game often not needing the walkthrough at all, his only issue is that he can't read. Many puzzles in the game require reading skills. Zelda has a unique feature. It provides editing to some degree of games. It enables you to erase games or copy them. I have on occasion copied my game for my son to play but lately have been copying his, as he is getting a lot of the tasks done.

Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness

A lot more fighting is required, up to level 21 have found the levels shorter but more tasks are required. An example is jumping and grabbing then shooting straight away.

May 31st 2005

It's winter and I have to force myself to play any game. The tasks are repetitive and tedious they no longer motivate me to play. My son is still keen on The Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap, he plays every morning before I get out of bed he turns the sound down and hopes in with me and we chat about where he is up to as a slowly wake, not a morning person. I need to finish one

PS2 game so I am driven in that sense to play I have two levels left but each level is filled with tedious tasks. I still play Pokemon Fire Red on a daily basis, I play around 10 – 15 minutes just to get all the pokemon. I play Tomb Raider about 20-30 mins daily.

At Level 23 in Tomb Raider Lara is locked in a large air tube and I am playing as Kurtis, I find this rather strange and annoying. Kurtis is low and less responsive to the controls than Lara. I found the cut scene that introduced Kurtis to this level quite derogatory to Lara.

2 June 2005

Bought Sims: busting out for PS2 and have finally found a game on this platform that my 8 1/2 year old daughter is happy with. Playing with no walkthrough. I bought this game specifically because my daughter had not yet enjoyed any games for the PS2, in fact they all made her cry after 10 minutes. She does not like it when her characters die or if she can't do a skill. The first play is after school and she is tired but she is able to start the game without me, I have only taken the controls off her after an 1 hr's play as she is getting tired. She cried after about an hour as the characters were throwing tantrums but once I fixed up the environment she played again till bed time. She states "its cool", "you get to make them do what you want" after I ask her how she likes the game and what she likes. My son so far says its "boring" and he will not even try it. I explained to my daughter that you didn't have to win the game you just had to finish tasks and care for your Sims and she was happy, this is after she cried. Basically the game is a virtual environment like

what we live in and my maintain the sim by getting it to do daily stuff, eat, go to toilet, and get a job ect plus complete the set tasks.

Whilst my daughter played the Sims I got back into The Legend of Zelda; minish cap.

June 9th 2005

On the 9th of June a new version of Pokemon was released, myself and my children rushed to the Games Wizard store and traded in Alias for PS2, Underworld: The Final War, and Garfield for Pokemon Emerald version. The look of the game is retro in comparison to Leaf Green and Fire Red. A lot of 70s inspired patterns and a softer edge of all the characters and buildings. Trees and grass are quite organic looking. I purchased on the same day a magazine Stylebook that is the Prima Pokemon Emerald Version guide. It explains the legend of Pokemon and the characters and elements in the game. It has a map and a guide for each city and a rundown of all the pokemon. Generally the game is harder and more interesting, I love the visual style.

June 20th 2005

I have been able to finish this version quite quickly, 20 July finished. I believe this is due to the amount of hours I have spent playing games. I believe my gaming skills are quite high at the moment in comparison to before I had played daily.

June 21st 2005

Have nearly completed the Legend of Zelda: Minish Cap. My son and I combined skills and took turns playing the game, as I got bored he played and vice versa. We are up to the last Boss fight. Boss in games is pretty universal and means the big fight at the end of the game and even mini-boss fights at the each of each level. Neither of us is able to finish.

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness

On level 27 playing as Kurtis trying to kill a mutant spider called Boraz. It has four pods on its body and my aim is to destroy these pods. I have destroyed two and have two left, have spent one day trying to do this only being able to play for 10-15 minutes at a time. Even cleaning the toilets was a distraction from trying to finish this game.

July 6th 2005

Arcade

Played at the video games store Intensity.

The noticeable differences of the arcade and the console:

Social (other people) this creates a "vibe" sounds, sight and the sense of being a part of a group experience.

The machines have great size and detailed large graphics and loud sound.

I played a shooting game that had a blue gun as the interactive component, joystick. I found this a lot of fun. I aimed at mummies that were coming out of a tomb. It was intense as the size was realistic, well almost.

July 8th 2005

Revisiting Final Fantasy X

It is school holidays again I am not able to buy any more games so it's a rehash of the favourites or truly the games we have not reached a point that we can't get past. In Tomb Raider I have reached a brick wall or a spider I am unable to kill. In Lemony Snickets it's pirates we can't kill. So we are playing Final Fantasy X every day. I quite like it, took a while to get the hang of the game play. It is a beautifully designed game. The game play is quite complex and we are playing the basic version so there is room for a new type of game play once we finish the basic version. It is quite different from the other games I have played. It has many different types of game play and each involves learning different skills. To add to this are many "movie moments" and a grid that needs to be maintained. This grid is like a trading area: once points are earned skills can be acquired through a swap in the grid area.

Daughter's thoughts: "lots of colour, beautiful".

She likes the dragon creature that is summoned by Lulu.

Son's thoughts: "the way the (characters) talk". The characters give hints as to how to battle each creature.

In Final Fantasy X you are able to control three players at a time in a battle and also swap for other players during battle. There are two magical female characters, both wearing dresses and the breasts are visible. The females' fighting skills are not worth a lot of attack points; it is best to use the magical powers to get the most attack points. The females don't have as physical characters as the males, and they seem to have quite stereotypical female

roles. One, Yuna, is a bitchy untrusting sorcerer. The other Lulu is a nice trusting summoner that is being protected by the others, her guardians. It has taken months but have warmed to the game.

10th July 2005

Played a video games store in the city (Sydney).

Played a flight simulator and car racing, same experience as the shooting really. The car racing game had a seat that vibrated. These items are what makes the arcade experience great.

25th July 2005

Have finished Pokemon Emerald Version again. The Game Boy Advanced console seems to be becoming unstable, my son is quite rough with it but I would like around 18 months of use out of it not 7 months. I really enjoyed the arcade experience. I tried to play the Playstation 2 but just could not. I do like Final Fantasy X but have tried many times to beat a Boss and can't so have no motivation to play. As I have stated many times, all the games are at this point except Space Invaders.

August 2005

Purchased Van Helsing and Grand Theft Auto 3. A new games store opened near our shopping centre it allows us to trade all platform of games for a very good price. After many months of Laura Croft I traded her as I could not get past the spider. The children did the same for Lemony Snicket's they could not kill all the pirates with peppermint popper. In both games we restarted many

times in hope that our skills would improve. No such luck, we all so took turns playing in hope this would work but again to no avail.

September 8th 2005

Need for speed car racing simulation. *Fifa 2005* Soccer simulation

Describe difference between these types of games. *Sims* for playstation 2 a simulation of everyday life.

October 15th 2005

Combat style games *Metal gear solid*, *Splinter cell* and *Halo*. Borrowed *Metal gear solid* from video store and *Splinter cell*. *Halo* bought and sold soon after.

November 2nd 2005

Purchased Nintendo DS. *Nintendo Dogs* came with the console my daughter loves it. It uses voice commands to call the dog. The game also uses the touch screen to touch the dog.

January 2nd 2006

Have been playing *Quake 3* for a week and I understand just why it is doing so well on the Internet. It is a great game to play as a team. This element of the game is endearing and a lot of fun in a shared experience.

February 24th 2006

Resident Evil 4

Played Resident Evil 4 have not played a horror game before, not including vampire games as horror. Resident Evil 4 has all the tropes of a horror film. It uses sound familiar to me from horror films. It employs black and white graphics as well as sepia toned graphics that are grainy to build up the tension. It has the male hero, a damsel in distress and a town of nuclear zombies. The introduction movie moment was great it completely immersed me, I was frightened. The game play was extremely fast past it goes straight into shooting axe wielding zombies. The suspense is great. Creeping around a dark forest littered with abandoned sheds. All this and I played for only 10 minutes before the tenth axe wound killed me. The experience was exhilarating, the hairs on the back of my neck were standing on end. Yet at the same time I could laugh as it was also fun to shoot the heads off the zombies and watch their heads roll and blood splatter everywhere.

April 20th 2006

Have waited for almost a year for the next Lara Croft fix. My dream was realised today when I entered the Games Boutique with my two old PS2 games and 2 old Gameboy Advance games. I traded these for the new Lara Croft Tomb Raider Legend game on the PS2 platform. I have high hopes for this game as I was unable to finish the last two levels of the Lara Croft Tomb Raider Angle of Darkness. I have had a lot of experience with different games so hope my skill base has improved. This new instalment is all I have been waiting for and more. The first environment is rich, textural and the sound is

lush. I would liken the experience to a Belgium truffle, the way it melts in the mouth with no bitter after taste. Lara is not disappointing in her action or visual depiction she is smooth and her hair has texture. In comparison to the last game as would be expected the game has improved with advancements in technology. The first few levels in all games are allocated to working out the movement and interactive elements so can't comment on the game play yet.

April 24, 2006

Playing Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend

It's an interesting game, in relation to Resident Evil 4 it has similar interface design but Resident Evil 4 has a more sophisticated aesthetic graphic style and a far superior relationship between the avatar and controller. The male character in Resident Evil 4 moves about the environment in a way that allows me to believe I am controlling him and he is actually physically in the space that is depicted. In Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness and Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend Lara is often half standing on a rock and half in space. This is a little annoying as it detracts from the environment and acts as a reminder that Lara is not really standing on a rock at all. It is a slippage in the game play and it takes a while to return tot a state of high concentration again. Lara's response to the controller is still delayed.

My daughter is still only playing her Nintendo Dogs and friends on the DS. She enjoys this and at least feeds them once a day. My son plays Nightmare before Christmas on the PS2, Nintendo Mario Chart for DS and his Nintendo Dogs and friends. We did have a chat today about trading the DS's for PSP's

as a new thin version of PSP is out as well as a thin DS. I have found generally that none of the consoles tend to last long they are definitely not made to last.

June 6th 2006

As I get ready to print this dissertation for the last time I reflect over the methods. Especially dear to me is this diary aspect. I have been able to depict another aspect of interactivity in this section. It has been extremely helpful to me in relation to my studio work. Being able to reflect on my experience as it happens has helped in understanding what aspects of games make for valuable interactive experiences. The playing of so many games has also helped me as a parent. I have been able to experience the games condemned by the media as violent. I have played the games that interest my children. I was able to experience the excitement of new games with them. The journey I embarked on was not alone my family enjoyed each aspect of this method of research. Watching how they responded helped me understand the value of interactivity and how it related to my children. I conducted little experiments along the way that unfortunately do not offer any insight to the larger field of game design but help me as a parent and artist understand how games as a cultural product operate.

So what are we playing after thirty two console games. We have come full circle *and* have all become engrossed in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider Legend* (2006). It was the *Tomb Raider* series that evoked my initial curiosity back in 2000. As this experiment comes to a close my whole family is playing Lara

finally my daughter is fighting my son to play. She is no longer passive and letting him play she argues with him to get to the *PlayStation*. We all talk about how to solve the puzzles and we all have a laugh when my son puts socks up his shirt and says ‘ I’m Lara look at me”. It is this aspect of games that must not be forgotten the play factor the laughter. Yes Lara is physically a bad role model for my daughter but both my children understand that it is not possible to look like that in reality. Just like my daughter understood no one could look like Barbie. To date *Pokemon* is the only other game that has engaged all of us. We have been playing *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider Legend* for three months and all still love the game play and the challenging nature of the game. The only other game still being played in my house is *Nintendo dogs*. The children must feed the dogs daily or the dogs will run away.

Appendix 2

Larger Images: Graduation Show SCA

Image 18



Image 17



Image 19

Screen grab from Flash Interactive *PowerStation*



Image 20 Digital Prints displayed on the wall during the Graduation Show



Appendix 3

Graduation show 2006: the end.



