"Found Collaboration," and the Art of Leaving Things for Others to Find and Use

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ABSTRACT

In my current practice-based PhD, my video art and printmaking both informs and is informed by the research. My research on creative communities online is tied to visual image practice within the virtual world of Second Life; however, I also bridge outside of the virtual space to reconsider the dynamics between realities and technologies. This approach rejects "digital exceptionalism" by playing with how the digital, analog and digitized have become defined, and by reworking their historic meanings across time.

My video art practice is experimental rather than based on narrative or a simple record. The latter is what "machinima," the name given to videos made within games worlds, has mainly become. My work uses *found collaboration,* where people make work available for reuse without knowing who might use it, or for what purpose. This is different from conventional collaboration, planned by a group of people with shared vision. Found collaboration uses material that crosses both time and space, deliberately playing with challenges, trying to make new connections, giving old ideas a new significance, and exploring non-realistic glitch and error.

"Found collaboration" depends on the spaces outside of copyright, in particular Creative Commons and public domain. Creative Commons allows the work to have designated conditions for reuse, with an obligation for users to credit and apply similar conditions to the new work that has been made; ethical rather than commercial concerns prevail. Public domain allows free use of material, though the extension of copyright for commercial reasons has restricted its breadth.

INTRODUCTION: REMIX AS CREATIVELY EXPLORING A RESEARCH AREA

As a practice-based researcher and artist I work in a superficially *digital* place, the virtual world of Second Life. It is "digital" in the sense that it is online and displayed on computer screens, but I would claim that most of the content within it has come from outside, both physically and intellectually. For this reason, it is better seen as blended content, merged or remixed. This is not to deny a difference between the digital and analog, or between actual and virtual,[1] but to argue that it is not a binary opposition; what matters more is how content is created, worked and blended together,[2] and so it is more an "entangling"[3] than a classification. This view of complexity and

different balances is echoed by Daniel Miller and Heather Horst; "There was never a non-mediated, non-cultural pre-digital world, and the perception of fast-changing digital environments today does not mean we are more mediated or cultural now: from an anthropological perspective, all people are equally cultural, it is how it is expressed that changes."[4]

For my Second Life avatar, I remixed my own identity, first by adopting a pseudonym; after eleven years Tizzy Canucci is a name almost as familiar as Tess Baxter. I work across these spaces and worlds because I have a curiosity in both, and using my creative video practice, I want to see how they relate as a part of human cultural processes that are historical and contextual, with a sense of the sociological imagination of C. Wright Mills.[5] I recognize my position as a "resident" in Second Life, a word adopted in that space rather than "user," and I am also a participatory "fan" in the sense that Henry Jenkins described it,[6] in the context of ethnographic research.[7] However, my approach can be seen more specifically as autoethnographic, in that I wish to research the space from the position of an insider and communicate it to those outside. This is autoethnography as described in particular by Françoise Lionnet[8] and Barbara Christian,[9] and based on the combined anthropological and artistic approach of Zora Neale Hurston.[10] The value of these approaches, fan or autoethnographer, is to recognize that direct knowledge and experience of place and people can give deeper insights than academic distance, while always recognizing the need to be reflexive[11] and not simply dispassionate.

The context of research is changed through a practice-based methodology that centers on exploration and innovation rather than following a conventional methodology, and as I work in both space and time, it is cartographic in nature rather than experimental. It is about discovery and charting based on informed venturing into the uncertain but not entirely unpredictable, "like a pilgrim and a cartographer at the same time."[12] This uncertainty and unpredictability, combined with experience, links to *serendipity,* in the original meaning reclaimed by Sebastian Olma—not just luck, but a knowing combination of *sagacity* and *accident*.[13] Sagacity is the knowledge and experience that leads to choosing places where fortuitous accidental events are more likely to happen. The result is *novelty*, innovation and interesting outcomes.

As a matter of principle in my practice, I do not simply wish to record places or events, but to add something from my own imagination to them. This is partly about discovery, but also an ethical approach; working alongside my subject as a fan or autoethnographer rejects the idea of taking a set of observations of what others do as a passing "dispassionate" outsider. My approach to my work varies, as creativity does not perform on demand. Of my recent work, *Waiting Edges*[14] is experiential and aesthetic; what I add is a "feel," and as close to a recording as I would want to make. On the other hand, *Flames Tear the Soul*[15] (Figure 1) forges connections between Beethoven's *Heiligenstädter Testament,*[16] my own comparable personal experience of injury and facing death last year, and the aesthetics, performances and expressions of politics within Second Life. It crosses between what might be labelled digital and analog, or digital and pre-digital; it is conscious of the differences yet tries to make a divide irrelevant. I enter creativity with an idea of what I want to do and through the process of making, those ideas are developed. I leave with thoughts and ideas which are returned to the academic through a more developed sense of meaning.

***Figure 1.** **Still from** **Flames Tear the Soul.**[17] **Heiligenstädter Testament**[18] *overlaying Second Life imagery. The avatar in the background is Tizzy Canucci, with a "red dragon" body.*

As Nathan Jurgenson argued,[19] the digital augments existing technologies. Tom Boellstorff[20] and Sarah Pink et al.[21] all take a similar view, positioning the online and offline as complimentary and mutually constitutive. However, while the digital is now "in" everything and entangled with it, and the digital has produced change,[22] as there are new possibilities for doing things. But a decision to use new technologies in certain circumstances is quite different from endowing technology with an independent power to shape the world.[23] New technologies tend to displace rather than replace, and obsolescence does not happen evenly[24] as technologies are chosen for perceived usefulness in "doing things," which are not always predictable.

"Digital exceptionalism"[25] puts the emphasis on the technology, when what matters is what humans do and the choices they make. However, as Kenneth Goldsmith argued in an art context,

> Subjectivity, or individual expression, is not just the synthesis of influences that an author uses in his work (we know that originality does not exist, only the boldness of combining elements in a new way). Instead, it comes through in the choice, and in the combinationatory skill of the curator or installation artist, in what we could call a "second hand" expression.[26]

Taking the argument further, a work of art always relates to something outside of art,[27] and so imitation *is* creation, and cannot simply be dismissed as copying. This is the basis of my remixing in my video art.

MY PRACTICE: INWARD LOOKING MACHINIMA, OR OUTWARD LOOKING VIDEO ART?

"Machinima" as an art form originated in 1996, but the term followed in 2000,[28] as a contraction of machine-(and)-cinema.[29] Machinima have been described as a compound media form, as "things that look like videogames that act like cinema,"[30] and as such have an inherent capacity for variation, and once had a promising future as an artistic form, as alluded to by many academics.[31] While this resulted in innovative works at the time and shortly after,[32] by 2011 Katie Salen observed that while the number of machinima was increasing, the form was not maturing—it was "running on the spot."[33]

Machinima started as a subversive use of games worlds to call out a contentious relationship with games companies;[34] but with the takeover of Machinima.com, it was increasingly channelled to promote product for a media giant, Warner Bros., and for games studios. It fell into the "gamer ghetto" that the founder of Machinima Inc, Hugh Hancock,[35] feared, dominated by often macho displays of prowess and a fascination with gameplay. Writing at about the same time, Tracy Harwood argued that the increasing volume of gameplay machinima, at that time on YouTube, reduced the visibility of more imaginative approaches, stultifying the development of machinima as an art form.[36]

Arguably, what did not help was a denial of the connection between games and other art forms, notably cinema and literature,[37] a reflection of "digital exceptionalism," where video games were seen as something new and completely different. Indeed, digital exceptionalism has "less to do with the characteristics of the internet and more to do with the needs… of intellectual projects."[38] This is not to say that different art forms are the same, for example moving images are not the same as novels, plays or paintings,[39] but they have in common being creative interpretations of "reality" from the human imagination.

To a player, the game and its rules are the focus of attention, but to the artist the game offers affordances, as materials with the possibility for exploring wider meanings.[40] Writing earlier about the history of art, John Hospers argued that the word "aesthetic" lacked clarity of definition, in part because it was about an attitude rather than the object. He defined "thin" aesthetics as being about surface appearances, whereas "thick" aesthetics engaged with feelings based on previous life experiences.[41] So, making machinima gave me a way of presenting my interpretation of the virtual world through a close reading of it, to create a "thick aesthetic." This is particularly the case when I mix it with material from both the virtual world and the actual world. It goes deeper than the games world's "thin aesthetics" and surface appearances.[42] This reflects my fascination with the space, and my desire to innovate and express imaginatively; to consider "games, players, and most importantly, of the way we see ourselves,"[43] as a form of cultural performance.[44]

However, having referred to machinima so far, my shared concern about it failing to develop as an art form has led me adopt the term "video art" for my work.[45] It makes a distinction between my creative work and the commercial interests of stylistic conventions, and makes an explicit link to previous art forms. Machinima is now just a subtitle I use, recognizing the label videos made in game worlds were given but also its limitations described earlier. Importantly, video art recognizes that I envisage my practice as working out of, rather than in, the virtual world of Second Life. That

space becomes an environment where I can create places myself or, more often, where I can reinterpret places made by other people and connect them with work made in other spaces.

As a result, I am working in multiple spaces, mixing and remixing, as a means of commenting as well as creating aesthetic works. Stories will be read out of them, even though I explicitly resist writing narrative into them, with a few exceptions. I use software tools that are flexible and generate unpredictable outcomes, often as rough iterations. It is not simply a question of learning the technology and software but of having the necessary inventiveness to find "an unknown reality latent with possibility."[46] This too connects back to the origins of machinima: video was not something that was originally offered to users but was a "found technology"[47] that created an alternative use for a "readymade" game product.

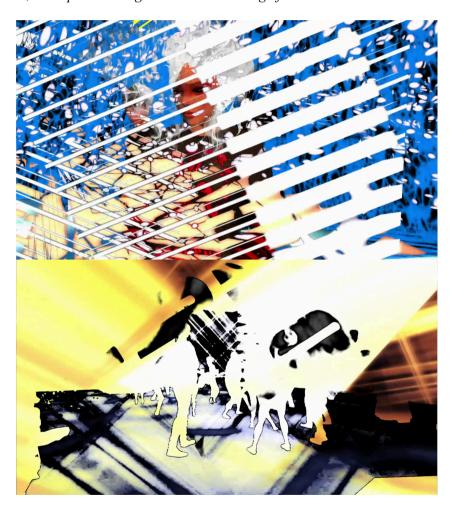## MY PRACTICE: SPACE, CHANGE, AND COMMUNICATION

Second Life is interesting artistically for being ambiguous, contradictory and limited, and a place where realism and non-realism interact. As Kathleen Irwin claimed, "Virtual places, activities, and parallel worlds, representations and performances coexist and are composite, conflictual, and diverse."[48] Linden Lab provides land, sea and sky, which is then filled by the "user created content" of many contributors,[49] so the space has identity rather than visual theming.[50] None of it is fully planned, perfected or designed, in contrast to commercial products made in games studios by design teams. Much of the imagery in-world is imported, using textures and shapes that give an impression, or link creatively rather than precisely or realistically—a kind of reality sampling or "good enough" representation. Frankly, if I wanted to write and tell my own story as realistically as possible, it would be easier to use a dedicated animation engine than Second Life.[51] My practice is based on finding work, and then collaborating with the intent of the original maker in an interpretative, not literal, way.

This untidiness, inconsistency and incompleteness parallels fandom as a folk culture practice that works on mass culture content.[52] It is "a mediation between the predictable and the unpredictable elements of the situation… not about [them directly], but a part of this situation in its entirety."[53] Furthermore, the untidiness and unpredictability of virtual worlds means they are not passive performance spaces;[54] indeed, the content is constantly changing and also has to be downloaded and interacted with in real time. "Good enough" is important in my practice, as by "mining… the shortcomings of the visual forms produced by games engines…we get to see how far that visual language can be stretched and what happens when it breaks."[55] To echo Derek Jarman, it is about seeking value in "the anonymous, the cobbled together, the hand-me down, the postscript, collaborations between strangers that marry together jubilantly, but don't quite fit."[56] Indeed, the experience of failure and error in digital games provides a productive space for a "playful sense for potential deviations and alterations."[57]

In my practice, I want to see what emerges from my fascination, rather than setting out a plan in advance; as Brad Haseman said of this research approach, "an enthusiasm of practice… exciting… unruly… of which they cannot be certain."[58] The "unruly" aspect reflects how I gather a range of material together, and the idea of how it can be mixed develops. As I bring it together, it starts to "speak back,"[59] which leads to adjustments and realignment, and to the search for more material. "Filming" the moving images in Second Life is technically "screen capture" with software, which is then edited with video editing software, in a process of "reassembly" that leads to the discovery

of a "path,"[60] as with film. This can be seen as a "soft mastery,"[61] using Evelyn Fox Keller's idea of working close to the subject, getting familiar and listening to what it is saying, then reworking it, as if inside it. Sally Potter described her own process of filmmaking similarly: "You think you know what you're doing, you try and know what you're doing, you try and get to know what you are doing – like knowing a person almost, the identity of the film evolves and seems to take on its own life, its own character almost."[62]
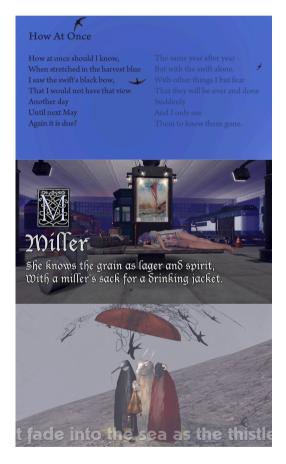
Peggy Ahwesh also echoes Sebastian Olma's view of serendipity as the combination of sagacity and accident: "You can go out and shoot… [casually] but in editing you have to be smart because … you're actually making this participatory meaning of the video."[63] In my own work the most overly dense videos are those based on performances by SaveMe Oh, with error, glitch and coincidence reworked repeatedly from performance through recording and editing. Four examples are *The Very Discrete is Now Visible*[64] and *OK, OK*[65] (Figure 2, above and below), and *Here Is Your Sandwich, You Spoiled Thing*[66] and *The Colouring of Snow.*[67]

Figure 2. **Still from** **The Very Discrete Is Now Visible**[68] **(above) and** **OK, OK**[69] **(below). A dense overlaying of screen capture made at Second Life performances.**

However, my practice always involves some assessment, using sagacity, of whether or how to cut, retain or build upon the accident of "error." In any case, fine control and precision are almost impossible in virtual worlds, and so the outcome is unpredictable; as with street photography, "[y]ou are looking for that brilliant moment that 99% of the time you don't get."[70]

It is this process of experimentation with unpredictable outcomes that leads me to cross boundaries, of academic disciplines, art and music, visuals and audio, and to be distinctive in my approach to my video art. In these mixed works, I draw from material that I can work into a creative idea, taken from a range of sources. For example, *Edward Thomas*[71] and *The Digital Pilgrims*[72] (Figure 3, above and middle) draw from literature, the former from the poetry of Edward Thomas the latter, from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales,* and both include spoken word and text. *The Digital Pilgrims* also includes digitized decorated initials from old publications of *Canterbury Tales* now in the public domain and scanned by the British Library.[73] As in *Innominate*[74] (Figure 3, below), type does not just form readable words, but also the visual translation of text and images.[75]

Figure 3. Above: still from Edward Thomas,[76] *with one of his three poems used. Middle: still from* The Digital Pilgrims.[77] *This text, for "The Miller," was an adapted version of Chaucer; some remained the same. I used all four of my avatars in this work; this is Katja Torkelsonn. Below: still from* Innominate;[78] *here I refused the invitation to "tell a tale," knowing that meaning would be read into my words.*

A work that regained relevance after the events of May 2020 was *Falling Between Worlds*[79] (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Still from **Falling Between Worlds.**[80] *Both avatars are mine, Sam Purple (left) and Tizzy Canucci (right).*

One Caress,[81] as a location in Second Life, was a place of constant rainfall and could have been recorded as such. However, I had an idea of making a love story, and early in 2017, while watching the inauguration of Donald Trump, I noticed that the Rev. Franklin Graham began with an ad lib: "Mr. President, in the Bible, rain is a sign of God's blessing. And it started to rain, Mr. President, when you came to the platform."[82] In American folklore, adopted from British folklore going back to the 16th century or before, rain is not a universal blessing but an event specifically at funerals.[83] I also recalled that Hurricane Katrina and the flooding of New Orleans occurred during the last Republican presidency, that of George Bush.

This was not a connection I intended to make, but is an example of how creative remixing leads beyond the original idea. Of Trump's appointments, Steve Bannon as "chief strategist and senior counselor"[84] was significant. While head of Breitbart News he positioned the online publication as the mouthpiece of the alt-right;[85] it became central to the viciously racist, misogynist and transphobic online hate campaign, GamerGate.[86] Going back to Pierre Lévy, the virtual and actual are connected realities,[87] and while Second Life may be seen as a virtual world apart, it remains connected to social media and other online spaces, and consequently to the politics running through them.

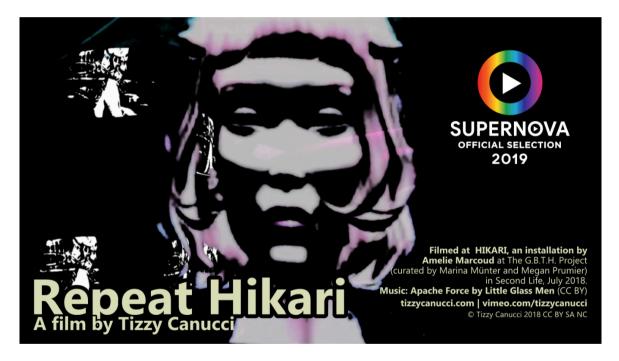## "ORIGINALITY" AND COPYRIGHT; "FOUND COLLABORATION" AND CREATIVE COMMONS

Linked to his view on serendipity, Sebastian Olma described creativity as an "act of joyous resistance that pushes the world forward,"[88] that works counter to the predictability of internet commerce. This view of the creative act means it can never be neutral or totally impersonal and, as with being a fan,[89] it requires a close and deep engagement. In academic writing, too, one should consider one's "tangle of background, influences, political perspectives, training,"[90] for "to write critically in English, even to write a little introduction, is to aspire to neutrality… [yet] one's loves never seem partial or personal."[91] I enjoy working with both creative works and academic texts, though they often feel as if they are organized in different parts of my mind. The academic is primarily a conscious reorganization of material, a re-synthesis, whereas creativity demands a period of letting go of everything, which encourages the emergence of something unexpected. It is like being "soulful," where one allows oneself to "fall in line with a feeling, to go where it takes you and not to go against its grain."[92]

While Dan Pinchbeck and Ricard Gras[93] claimed there was a typology of the "individual" and "collaborative" in machinima, it is not so easily divided. Individual authorial intent remains present in the mind, so it is more how the working arrangements are perceived. In my own case, production involves only myself, even if other work has been drawn on or in. However, I always try to credit beyond what is strictly required, and to offer words alongside the visuals so that the interaction is recognized. The credits at the end of *Art Tartaruga*[94] (Figure 5) are a good example, with all the artists' names and works shown in sequence at the end, whether or not they had individual attention in the work.

Figure 5. _Four stills from_ Art Tartaruga,_[95] each showing the work of multiple different artists. The work of all 37 was shown in rapid succession at the end of the video, in the format shown top right and bottom left, as my avatar, Tizzy Canucci, stands to the right._

Jenna Ng described machinima as "operating in the aesthetic playground of its own medial richness… [and in] intense dialogue with other media forms… [and] all other realities,"[96] as I do in my practice. I think of additional material as "found collaboration," which includes video, still images and sound from internet sites such as Soundcloud,[97] Free Music Archive[98] and Internet Archive.[99] This is work that is clear of copyright restrictions for the purposes of reuse or remixing, as it has been assigned a Creative Commons license,[100] or else it is in the public domain. In my video art, I almost always use Creative Commons music, and sometimes public domain archive film. As "found collaboration," I work with things deliberately left by creators in places where they know others might find it, with an invitation for (re)use. The creators do not know in advance who will use it, in what context it will be used, or what the user will find valuable. It is a social act, a way of circulating creativity, out of which unexpected and unusual uses may emerge. In turn, I publish my work under a Creative Commons license, so that it too becomes available for reuse.[101] This is usually a requirement of use of Creative Commons material, but I see it as participating in the circulation of creative acts rather than as a duty, as an ethical position. That my work contains shared material is always explicitly stated in the credits in the video, but also on the publicity "poster," for example as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. *Poster for* **Repeat Hikari,**[102] *showing credits.*

Copyright was initially introduced into law in the early 18th century in Great Britain and Ireland,[103] to protect the rights of the author to copy their own work. However, the much newer term of intellectual property represents a very different emphasis, relating also to tradeable commodities, including brands and trademarks. Copyright represents creativity-as-practice (or creativity-as-process) to protect the activity of the maker, whereas intellectual property represents creativity-as-property, and the commercial rights of those buying creativity from others will be protected. The extension of the length of copyright has shifted the emphasis towards property, even if the word "copyright" is retained, as it extends the reward outside of the lifetime of the artist or immediate
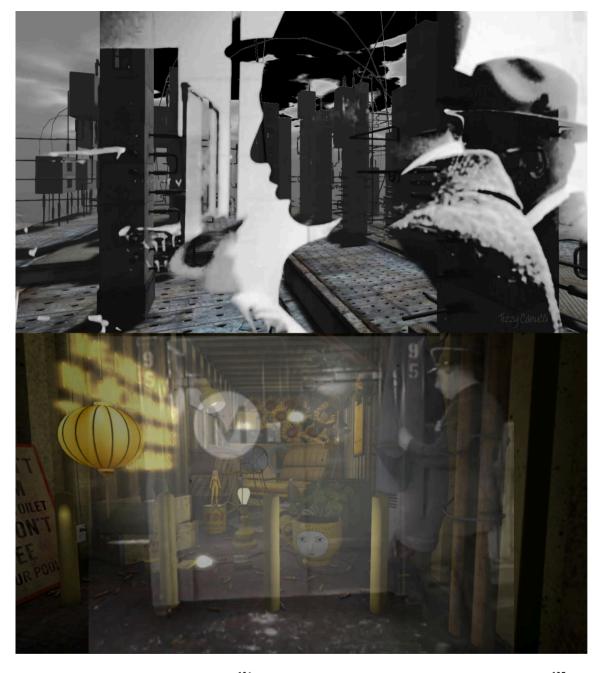
family. It results in the locking up of a large body of work, which becomes increasingly irrelevant over time, so that profits can continue to be made by the corporations holding copyrights on a small portion of that work.[104] This prevents many artworks from being given a "second chance," as will be discussed shortly.

On the internet, copyright has a different dynamic, in part because of its theoretically infinite space, but especially when it comes to games.[105] While games companies asserted property rights as the makers, gamers claimed rights for creativity as users, arguing that, as interactive products, games companies would have nothing without users.[106] This leads to struggles over game ownership,[107] user rights[108] and transformative usage into art.[109] While participation is still essential for cinema, with the audience, or for a book, with a reader, the tension is heightened in video games, as they developed within an internet that was an interactional space more widely open and available for performance and protest.[110]

The choice of sources, of where to work, and with what, is a political act. I choose to place my work on Vimeo and pay an annual fee as users are not tracked and Creative Commons designations are fully recognized.[111] Machinima makers frequently use copyrighted music without permission, which is detected by music rights agencies after upload,[112] and I would argue that this is more accurately referred to as infringement and should be monetized rather than authorized. However, on YouTube no penalty is imposed on those agencies if they make false claims on material outside of copyright. That is why I left YouTube; they do not arbitrate and will ban users for failed appeals, and so it is extremely difficult to successfully contest a false rights agency claim where the rights holder continues to maintain the claim, no matter the level of evidence, without the expense of taking it to court.[113] This process of "copyfraud" is how Creative Commons is eroded, or "enclosed."[114]

Because from the start creative tools were provided and user-generated content was encouraged in Second Life, Linden Lab has largely avoided these issues.[115] The terms of service require that images imported into Second Life be free of copyright restrictions, so that they may be reproduced freely to all users on screen. Audio is different, and music is normally streamed from online radio stations or Shoutcast,[116] who deal with licensing. Photography (referred to as snapshots) is permitted anywhere in-world except where it is expressly refused, but the reverse is true for video capture;[117] a dated policy[118] that reflects the novelty of online video in the early days of Second Life, in contrast to its domination of internet traffic today.[119] Regrettably, in my view, the emphasis on user creativity is diminishing, with new content creation increasingly reliant on other software.

As described earlier, some of my work is quite contained within Second Life, such as the examples shown in Figure 2. However, in more experimental work, I have chosen a wider range of material that shares a creative idea in terms of its emotional and aesthetic qualities. I referred to both *Edward Thomas*[120] and *The Digital Pilgrims*[121] earlier (Figure 3). However the richest interchange is with archive film, examples being *Future City*[122] and *The Safe Shipment of Small Cargo*[123] (Figure 7, above and below), *Breaking Ice: A 70 Year Story*[124] (Figure 8), and *Neither Paris nor Sweden*.[125]

***Figure 7. Stills from* Future City[126] *(above) and* The Safe Shipment of Small Cargo[127]
*(below), where archive and Second Life material were overlaid.***

As John Stezaker concluded in an interview, reuse and remixing is a way of rescuing images to give them a "second chance."[128] They also represent "salvage narratives," as "restorations of one moment in time, or adaptive reuse," that bring "the past and present together in continuous narrative."[129] In a wider interpretation from photography, the original image, created in one place and set of circumstances, is viewed in another, where its meaning is transformed by the "discursive

system of which… it bears a part."[130] Taking this view, digitized film is not simply a reproduction of an original film, but a reinterpretation with a new set of meanings. Indeed, from a museum's perspective, "virtual objects can be seen as illuminating the potential meanings of art and other objects… virtuality should be understood as a complex cultural interpretation of objects that forces us to rethink the tangible and intangible imprints of our cultural history."[131] Relating this to Creative Commons, Giacomo Poderi took a historical perspective and viewed commoning in today's online environments as reconsidering "neglected things," something that also required an "ethos of care."[132] However, it is important to avoid a romantic view of the "Internet Commons" as something paralleling a pre-capitalist utopia, when the commons existed on the margins of a feudal order.[133] They are sites that mostly remain small and marginalized, as they do not scale up, being financially uncompetitive against platform capitalism.[134] Platform capitalism promotes itself as connecting users and bringing different groups together. But essentially, the platforms are about data, monitoring and extracting interactions between groups to gain monopoly advantage over competitors. What they provide, as product or "social media" is just the means to acquire data.

At an aesthetic level, this remixing of past and present supports John Dewey's view that "[art] celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is."[135] However, it is not just about a digital new to be set against an analogue old,[136] as it is the montage of interacting virtualities that prompts cultural interpretation. Turning to the academic, Adrian Martin and Cristina Álvarez López[137] argue that film academics should use visual methods of analysis, to present film in its own visual language on its own terms, rather than adopting the conventions of writing, as a kind of essay film. *Breaking Ice: A 70 Year Story*[138] (Figure 8) is where I applied this most clearly, with the visual comparison of archive film and virtual world material above written text that explores the historical and social issues of place, but does not attempt to totalize a narrative for the film. Rather, in contrast to documentary or narrative, it works with the "the doubt, consideration, sense of failing and the thinking out loud that one can do in an essay film."[139]

Figure 8.** Still from* **Breaking Ice: A 70 Year Story.[140]*
The avatar is one of mine; Sam Purple, in an "aged" body.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

This discussion has laid out an ambiguous future for remixing. Digital technology makes more things possible, working with the digital and the digitized and through Creative Commons. Personally, I intend to continue, but the future of remix lies with the curious and creative, which is not the interest of platform capitalism. It is more likely that creativity will be suffocated rather than being replaced or directly eliminated, through the competition from more profitable capitalist projects and the dominance of certain players through monopoly. The most obvious is the online presence of Facebook and Google, but in my own practice, it is with (macho) attitudes to "play like a boss"[141] and the domination of YouTube. Suffocation also comes from not being able to imagine possibilities; when I see my own university's almost total shift to Microsoft, I wonder whether the space and will for being innovative with computer technology has been lost. I see computers as a means of doing things, not merely a way to be "efficient," although I do not miss the "blue screens of death" of Windows 95 or 98.[142] However, I use my own choice of technology, software and office space: I saw the difficulty of getting what I needed, as I would have to go outside the easy and familiar products offered by Microsoft.

Arguably, the idea of a free internet is a romantic notion that has now disappeared because of its exploitation by capitalism. Remixing depends on the human will to want to do it, having spaces in which it can be developed and shared, and a resistance to political and commercial power structures that suffocate it.[143] So, the crunch question may be wider: whether the time has come for greater regulation of multinational corporations and if so, how and by whom.

As for Second Life, its stability and longevity largely relie on user-generated content, rather than being a studio-created game. Second Life Marketplace[144] was a result of that, where residents could buy and sell items they had made. Linden Research's profit comes from supplying currency for those transactions, as Linden dollars (L$), now through their subsidiary Tilia Inc.,[145] as well as premium memberships, and virtual space as land and sea. While tech giants may develop similar concepts, it is difficult to see how they could do so within their current business models, which depend on being able to collect user data to sell on, as demonstrated by Facebook's acquisition of Oculus.[146]

And as for machinima? Enjoy the game run-throughs and the gamer prowess if that is what you want to see. Otherwise, expand your mind in the crossovers for art and expression, through digital animation[147] or video art.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ENDNOTES

1. Pierre Lévy, *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age*, trans., Robert Bononno (London: Plenum Trade, 1998), 23.

2. Daniel Miller and Heather A. Horst, "The Digital and the Human: A Prospectus for Digital Anthropology," in *Digital Anthropology*, eds., Heather A. Horst and Daniel Miller (London: Berg Publishers, 2012), 3–5.

3. Karen Gregory, "Structure and Agency in a Digital World," in *Digital Sociologies*, eds., Jessie Daniels, Karen Gregory, and Tressie McMillan Cottom (Bristol: Policy Press, 2017), 3.

4. Miller and Horst, "The Digital and the Human: A Prospectus for Digital Anthropology," 12–13.

5. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

6. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 24–46.

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weblinks can be very long, and my view is that clarity is a better credit on a poster than a long web link.

Creative Commons licensing has a range of conditions available, and one can adopt one or several of them: "BY – Credit must be given to the creator; NC – Only non-commercial uses of the work are permitted: SA – Adaptations must be shared under the same terms; ND – No derivatives or adaptations of the work are permitted." Creative Commons, "About CC Licenses," *Creative Commons* (blog), 2020, https://creativecommons.org/about/cclicenses/. Most commonly I find music which is CC BY-NC-SA, and my work carries the same designation. I cannot use anything with an ND license in video work.

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AUTHOR BIO

Tess Baxter is a video artist and printmaker who blends different technologies and worlds. Her latest development in practice is to take her video work into traditional printmaking, to explore the relationship between digital production (and light) and mechanical production (and ink).
Tess has a creative background, having made a living from photography, graphic design, writing, and model making. She was also in politics, as an elected councilor for eleven years. These experiences inform her current practice, along with her interest in music, poetry and literature.

Academically, she has a BA in Sociology with Independent Studies from UCLan (Preston, UK), an MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture from Manchester University. She has just submitted the thesis and practice for a PhD in Contemporary Art at Lancaster University.