StoryLab
Anglia Ruskin University

Workshop 2
Thu 25 01 2018 | 2-5pm | RUS 110

Format:

// Presentation length: 10 min + 5 min Q/A;

14:00 Introduction

14:15 *Session 1.*
Martin Zeilinger: *Appropriating Generative Art*
Paul Rhys: *New Musical Resources*
Marques Hardin: *Novel Approaches to Composing Music using the Internet of Things*

15:00 Break (15min)

15:15 *Session 2.*
Kerstin Hacker: *Visual Self-Governance*
Joo Hong Low: *Picturebook as Art: An Autoethnographic Approach*
Sophie Jackson: *Could Try Harder*

16:00 Break (15min)

16:15 *Session 3.*
Helen Marshall: *Everything Born: Hybrid Novel Writing in Higher Education or How to Serve Two Masters*
Anja Housden-Brooks: *Transgressive Fiction: The Accuser Theory*
Anna Salamon: *Organic Unity in Wladyslaw Strzeminki's writings – a post-humanist perspective*

5pm - Wine & nibbles

Any questions or comments, please email krisztian.hofstadter@anglia.ac.uk.

Abstracts:

Martin Zeilinger: *Appropriating Generative Art*

Keywords: digital art, drawing, appropriation, algorithmic authorship

In this project, I experiment with reproducing well-known works of early digital art using self-built drawing machines. It might be argued that in creating these reproductions (or copies), I violate a number of exclusive author rights held by the artists (or owners) of the works in question, governed by copyright and other aspects of intellectual property law. The goal of the project is to explore the validity, relevance, and usefulness of such assumptions in contexts of computer-aided art-making. I am also interested in developing reproduction technologies as analytical tools that open up new ways of seeing digital artworks. My approach is to try to inhabit all steps and aspects of the reproductive process as fully as possible. I begin by contemplating the original artworks until I am able to recompose (from scratch) the algorithms on which they are based. I then use self-built drawing machines (you might call them drawing robots) to render new versions of the works I copied. Finally, I experiment with producing minutely (or radically) modified iterations of the originals. The process is so long-winded and elaborate that ultimately it makes little sense to say that I am "copying" an "original." Instead, questions arise about the contours and limits of "originality" in creative contexts in which creativity and artistic agency become externalised and vested in algorithms, electronic devices, and other technological tools.
In the presentation, I will demonstrate the functions of a self-built drawing machine, discuss my creative process, and introduce some critical questions it raises.

This project was first developed during a residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart/GER), and has been exhibited at GPL contemporary in Vienna/AUT in autumn 2017.

Paul Rhys: *New Musical Resources*

The author will describe two new approaches to musical composition. Both approaches are reliant on computer technology, though in very different ways.

The first approach uses the computer for direct sound generation by the technique of granular synthesis, using a novel interface that permits sound clouds to be constructed as a fractal micropolyphony. This research has recently been published in the Computer Music Journal and presented at the International Computer Music Conference (Rhys, P., 2016. Smart Interfaces for Granular Synthesis of Sound by Fractal Organization. Computer Music Journal, 40(3), 58-67; Rhys, P., 2017. Granular Synthesis as Fractal Micropolyphony. Proceedings of the 2017 International Computer Music Conference, Shanghai, pp.20-23).

The second approach is the composition of music in 19-note equal temperament. The idea of composing music based on such a division of the octave has a very long history, dating back at least to the Renaissance. With the publication of recent work by Yasser (1932), Mandelbaum (1961) and Blackwood (1985, 1991) the approach is now gaining close attention. The author will describe his research in this area, including the composition of a new musical work for Chinese guzheng, computer-controlled keyboard and four singers, which has received three public performances to date.

Marques Hardin: *Novel Approaches to Composing Music using the Internet of Things*

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a major paradigm shift that has introduced the concept of ubiquitous interconnected devices; any device, anywhere across the world can be connected to other devices via wired and wireless computing networks to accept, collect, and exchange data and information. IoT applications have made great strides in areas such as smart businesses and housing, as well as encouraged new methods to approach industrial and commercial task, but there have been gaps in understanding how it can influence new, innovative developments within creative industries, such as art and music.

With regard to music production and composition, many musicians still rely heavily on large, immobile, rare and expensive analogue hardware that cannot simply be replaced by digital software emulations. This research investigates novel IoT-based approaches to analogue sound production and music composition practices, ultimately enabling physical audio systems to be controlled in a hybrid manner, bringing the 'best of both worlds' in terms of analogue and digital benefits.

Benefits of these applications include empowering new creative workflows for music production, such as remote access to rare equipment, improved collaboration, adding unique acoustic spaces to real-time music production, and the opportunity to provide greater value to under-utilised technology and locations.

Kerstin Hacker: *Visual Self-Governance*

Zambia is presented to the West through prevailing visual narratives of Africa's uncontrolled population growth, epidemics and poverty. This continual overexposure to similar images creates a familiarity with a visual narrative which does not get questioned and often feeds into a narrative of 'Afro-pessimism'. Everyday life, however, as experienced by Zambia's growing affluent middle class in its urban centers, could not be further from these preconceived images. I have been photographing the series Generation Z in Zambia's capital Lusaka since 2016, and am documenting the rapidly developing city. It is critical that new photographic work contributes to investigates the visual stereotypes and that it asks the viewers to contemplate more diverse narratives of a country. In my series Generation Z, I attempt to combine the acknowledgement of my own Western visual heritage with the experience of extended stays in Lusaka. I ask viewers to contemplate change in Zambia and dismantle neocolonial visual discourses. I contend that it is important not to return to the limited visual research material available, and to not use outdated reference material from the 'colonial libraries', as that in itself would not acknowledge the 'uncited' recent developments. The lack of research about photographic image production in Zambia in itself does not mean that there was no image production. As this research still has to be done, we still might find new icons of African photography. There is therefore a need to invest in national photographic institutions, which are able to build the foundations for a discourse about Zambia's media image.

Joo Hong Low: *Picturebook as Art: An Autoethnographic Approach*

My research objective is to study the potential of picturebook as a medium for Art-Practice through Autoethnography. Through a practice-led approach, I wish to explore and open up possibilities to two issues. The first is to challenge the conventional notion of the picturebooks being a sole proprietary of children materials. Through my practice, I wish to demonstrate that the picturebooks are an expressive and creative medium that is capable of engaging their readers in highly sophisticated and intellectual ways – without, undermining the complexity involves when children read pictures.

The second, and perhaps more important issue, is to produce picturebooks that are inspired by my lived experience as a form of autoethnography to connect "the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political." (Ellis 2004). Underpinned by G. Sullivan's framework for Art-Practice as research, I hope to cultivate a space for artistic inquiry that is both, subjective and objective, reflexive and reflective, direct and complex, one that provokes questioning, thinking and leads to a deeper understanding of the human experience.

In sharing my own picturebook, I hope to engage my readers cognitively and viscerally; encourage them to compare and interrogate their own mindsets, identities and experiences; and to think with open-mind and be partners in expanding human understanding. To this end, I will be tapping on my background as a published picturebook author-illustrator; an educator; and a Singapore citizen. I will also be sharing some interesting commentaries from its readers while inviting workshop participants to give their thoughts as well.

Sophie Jackson: *Could Try Harder*

A work in progress, Could Try Harder will be a multilinear interactive documentary. The project was conceived around the possibility of capturing genuine memory moments on screen and creating something of a shared memory experience. The project uses our old school reports as the central memory artifact. Participants have been filmed responding to their secondary school reports as they read them for the first time after many years. The aim was to capture something of the memory event experienced by the reader, not simply to the words written by our teachers long ago but to the physical and tactile qualities of the reports; some in booklet form with school crests, others on thin almost transparent paper, the handwriting of individual teachers and grading systems in A's, B's, %, averages, class positions all quantifying a lived and remembered experience. Further questions that have emerged relate to education and pedagogy. The project explores the Klynt platform from a creative perspective and its rich potential to present practice based filmed research.

Helen Marshall: *Everything Born: Hybrid Novel Writing in Higher Education or How to Serve Two Masters*

My research emerges out of the recent interest in "weird" fiction, a sub-genre of fantasy which blends supernatural, mythical, and scientific writing popularized by Kelly Link, China Mieville and Jeff VanderMeer. It follows several interrelated strands. Firstly, using modern theories of cognition, it posits "weird" texts as "emotion machine[s]" designed to generate specific kinds of affect such as defamilarization and horror. Secondly, it finds antecedents for these narrative operations with the Middle English penitential texts of the mid-fourteenth century, which encouraged readers to process trauma firstly by reflecting on images of supernatural violence, and secondly by channelling their fabricated horror into salutary processes. Thirdly, it uses these studies as the underpinning for my own creative practice, which seeks to bring the past into conversation with the present. This presentation will discuss the practical challenges I faced when negotiating both the demands of the publishing industry and the research frameworks of Higher Education when writing of my novel, Everything Born, a hybrid science fiction text forthcoming from Random House Canada in 2019.

Anja Housden-Brooks: *Transgressive Fiction: The Accuser Theory*

Transgressive fiction is renowned for its non-conformist interplay of form and content, refusing to uphold objectivity, ideology and classic literary structures of form. In the voidance of a moral optic, the transgressive mechanism works to vicariously entrap a reader whilst simultaneously making her accountable for her response. The lack of authority in the text bestows the reader's role a vitality further charged by its use of conventionally offensive motif. In the advancement of an exemplary transgressive text the reader experiences catharsis that radically expose a layer of dogma entrenched in society. The realisation of deceit is felt to unprecedented levels, and proximate to historical points of production.

Despite the potential of such texts to assist as dissembling tools of the current literary constitution, the signifier 'woman' is still used to the detriment of itself. By re-envisioning Saussurian and Peircean semiotics, my aim is to constitute post-structuralist theories that uncover literary binary oppositions to unveil how contemporary Western transgressive fiction gravely belies patriarchal discourse and supports conservative means of oppressing women. Through the ambits of literary repressions explored via psychoanalysis, the gender-identity politics of neo-liberalism is revealed as seeking to erase women as a sex-based class. It is my belief that degradation pornography's socio-contextual saturation through the convergence of culture has altered simulacra and enabled a condition called autogynephilia, whereby men identifying as women as a sexual orientation is blurred as transgenderism. Abuse pornography and its normalisation are re-hegemonizing women's experience to nefarious levels, reflected in male-authored transgressive texts. Language is being used to further oppress women through so-called transgressive texts through a refusal advance the abject. I argue that contemporary transgressive fiction is in fact regressive.

Anna Salamon: *Organic Unity in Wladyslaw Strzeminki's writings – a post-humanist perspective*

This work-in-progress presentation will focus on the concept of 'organic unity' in theoretical writings of Constructivist painter Wladyslaw Strzeminski (from 1920s and 1930s). 'Unity' was for Strzeminski the paradigm which could effect social change that avant-garde artistic movements of the early 20th century aspired to instigate. Contrary to his Russian Contructivist colleagues, Strzeminski did not think that utilitarian social application of arts was needed – rather he thought of painterly practice as a laboratory in which models for new social
forms could be generated. His method of working was in this sense a model for painting as artistic research.

'The organic' in his work was, counter-intuitively, not linked to biology or natural forms – it was instead a system equivalent (and equal) to nature, an alternative regime of the construction of painting through which painting could break away from geometry which Strzeminski thought was also mimetic (representational).

This presentation will outline the main propositions of Unism, in relation to Strzeminski's later work and unresolved questions it presents. Strzeminki created only a dozen of paintings which he designated as Unist, subsequently developing a variety of pictorial solutions. As a utopian theory of 'pure painting', his program can be considered as a prime specimen of Modernist thinking – progressive and essentialist.
As such, it has been pointed out by a number of scholars, it anticipated (if we follow this chronology) 'autonomy' of mid-century American Minimalism. Strzeminski's work at large, however, presents paradoxes and creases which dismantle the neat 'monadology' of Modernist painting.