



screen arts|science|technology

12-28 november 1998



## interactive installation

# Troy Innocent's ICONICA -->

presented with the cooperation of Artspace

## forum

## **Immersive Conditions**

presented in association with Powerhouse Museum

## computer animation art

# Mousetrap

presented in association with
Cinemedia and Melbourne International Film Festival

## introduction

Alessio Cavallaro, Director dLux media arts

futureScreen is an annual dLuxevent dedicated to exploring the possible futures of screen arts as shaped by the cross-influences of new media art theories and practices, and scientific and technological developments.

The intellectual and material exchanges between art, science and technology oscillate in a long-established continuum of experimentation, adoption, refinement, transgression and cultural discourse and diffusion. Increasingly, artists' access to and critical engagement with recent 'information technologies' have greatly expanded their use and contexts beyond the original applications envisioned by military, scientific, industrial and commercial developers. In particular, new experiential imaging technologies now enable the most fantastical visual concepts to be realised (consider the use of phantasmagoria in the early history of filmmaking).

In electronic, visually fixated – though no less aurally determined – cultures, and, particularly in digital screen arts, the screen mediates metaphorical constructions of limitless imaginaries. In many cases, however, the externally visible screen frame will soon disappear as cyberapparatus will situate the user within the very matrix of 'artificial' realities.

futureScreen 98 highlights and examines some of the stunning advances in and creative use of visualisation techniques, immersive virtual environments, interactive installations, and 2D/3D computer animation art. These developments are the focus of the day-long forum in which prominent artists and academics will demonstrate and discuss some of the design processes, iconic languages and mimetic realms constituted by new media, and aspects of subjectivity experienced within various immersive conditions.

For this inaugural futureScreen, dLux media arts is especially pleased to present the Australian premieres of two significant projects: Troy Innocent's ICONICA, and the screening of 'fly-through' documentation of Char Davies' ÉPHÉMÈRE; plus, the first general public installation of THE WEDGE Virtual Reality Theatre, developed at Australian National University (ANU).

We thank Powerhouse Museum, ANU and Artspace for their generous involvement in futureScreen, and thank you for your continuing interest in this and other dLuxevents.

direct from SIGGRAPH 98 \* dLux media arts presents the Australian premiere of *Troy Innocent's* 

# **ICONICA**



an interactive artwork of artificial lifeforms featuring sound and music by Ollie Olsen programming by Troy Innocent and Stephen Taylor presented with the cooperation of Artspace

# thursday 12-saturday 28 november

Artspace, 43-51 cowper wharf rd woolloomooloo

free admission

#### abstract

Iconic elements are the basic building blocks of a world literally made of language. Six elements from this language relate to unique pictorial styles and soundscapes used to represent the world, ranging from plastic knowbots and surreal iconography to electronic abstraction and the dirt of the real world. These elements are used as the base of an artificial life model which runs the world, the behaviour of the objects and lifeforms within it.

The work has the capacity to evolve, change and mutate through human interaction and its own evolutionary process. Visitors to the world can create, construct and manipulate objects, influence the evolution of societies, and discover new language elements. The multiplicity of Iconica is experienced simultaneously as a cyberspace, a mindspace, an abstract world, and a stylised reality.

### artist's statement

ICONICA is a three stage project exploring the codes of contemporary reality through the construction of a metaphorical world. Structures such as space, lifeform, object, and language are defined in the world to allow viewers and participants ways to relate to it. In using these structures, the goal is also to examine how they influence our own experience of reality and construction of identity.

Form 1: Untitled 'introduced an abstract library of shape and form which act as the building blocks of the constructed world. Each animated image was assigned a particular 'voice' and allowed to 'breed' (share information) with the others, resulting in a constantly shifting soundscape.

Memetic Mutation <sup>3</sup> and Memespace <sup>3</sup> involved the addition of language and an artificial life model to this library of image and sound. This language is purely iconic, and can be used to describe any object or event within the world. It combines a collection of symbols with grammatical rules for their combination, allowing for a wide range of possible expressions.

Images and sounds were assigned meaning in the artificial life model, based on definitions derived from elements of the iconic language. Thus entities and forms in the space move about and interact with each other based on these meanings. The result is a world which mutates and evolves uniquely in each instance, each time offering an alternate view of the material contained within it. *Memetic Mutation* monitored this evolution through an attached Web site (updated daily) and daily printed output reporting on the activities within the space. *Memespace* enabled a first person view and an overview 'map' of the entire world. This offered a new perspective on the work, allowing both direct engagement with the world and an overall observation of it's evolution and dynamics.

Iconica, the final form of this project, develops and focuses the themes of the previous works.

The collection of forms, animations and sounds have been expanded to cover six distinct views of 'reality':

the NATURAL: reality the ICONIC: ideal archetypes the CODED: information the ABSTRACT: digital abstraction

## interactive installation

Troy Innocent ICONICA 19





A generative model is used to recombine libraries of images, sounds, and animations representative of these realities. This recombination process is based on a genetic algorithm, resulting in endless variations of image and behaviour.

The six views of reality are represented by species of artificial life which shape the space according to their beliefs. This space does not model a real-world space or biological model, but instead intends to model a metaphorical space with it's own rules of existence and being. Lifeforms from the space essentially 'speak' their own audiovisual language, and so visitors to the space must learn parts of this language to communicate with the lifeforms.

The dual-screen installation presents one possible world and the lifeforms that exist within it. During the period of installation the space evolves, changes and mutates through visitor's interaction and through it's own artificial evolutionary processes. Genetic programming is used in the behaviour of the lifeforms within the space, so that they may evolve and adapt to new situations. Parts of the world die and decay, others thrive bringing new lifeforms into the space.

A high level of interaction with the world is central to the experience of the work. Visitors to the installation can build and manipulate forms in the space. They can communicate and interact with entities, influencing a lifeform's knowledge of their environment. They may also discover new language elements and 'memes' to expand the possibilities of the world. Through this navigation of the space and the engagement with the forms and entities within the iconic world, the visitor develops a complex relationship with a constructed reality.

- Troy Innocent, november 1998
- CyberCultures, Casula Powerhouse, Sydney, March 1997
- <sup>2</sup> Screen, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne, July 1997
- <sup>3</sup> Altered States, Experimenta Media Arts at Interact 97, Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, October 1997

#### artist

Troy Innocent has been exploring new aesthetics enabled by computers since 1989. Troy sees interaction as a key element of the multimedia experience, be it between an audience and the work, or within the electronic space of the computer itself.

Troy's interactive installation, Idea-ON>!, 1994, comprised five virtual worlds. It used a collection of personal, abstract symbols as the interface, and also explored popular cultural iconography. Idea-ON>! was exhibited at SIGGRAPH 94, USA; ISEA 94, Finland; and Australian Perspecta 1995, The Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Troy continued his investigations into the synaesthetic relationship between sound and image in the 1996 Psy-Vision animation project. This resulted in a visual language of iconic figuration and synthetic abstraction unique to the electronic space of the computer. Troy's current work furthers these ideas by attempting to establish a working, evolving, artificial life system in which six species of 'media based life forms' exist and interact.

Troy completed his Graduate Diploma of Art in Graphic Design at Swinburne University in 1991, and a Post Graduate Diploma of Animation and Interactive Multimedia the following year. He is currently undertaking Masters Studies at RMIT, Melbourne.

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\* Iconica was premiered at SIGGRAPH 98, USA, and recently won the Foreign Title Award, Theatre and Exhibition category, Multimedia Content Association of Japan 13th Multimedia Grand Prix 1998

Iconica was produced with the assistance of



production sponsored by Alias wavefromt

presented with the cooperation of artspace

dLux media arts presents in association with

Cinemedia and Melbourne International Film Festival

# Mousetrap

curated and introduced by Ian Haig the latest and freakiest international digital screen art program duration: 82 mins

# monday 23 & tuesday 24 november 5.45pm

chauvel cinemas cnr oatley rd and oxford st paddington \$10 full / \$8 conc / \$6 dLux members

## introduction \*

'Digital media' is a fragmented and disparate collection of concerns, industries, and agendas. The most radical and compelling of digital works aren't necessarily always coming from the personal voice of the experimental digital artist, nor from the computer games and special effects end of the cultural spectrum, but from somewhere in between: from the exciting synergies and collaborations emerging between comic culture and digital filmmaking, music videos, and whacked out digital cartoon worlds.

Many of the works in Mousetrap employ digital tools to fuse cell animation, stop motion animation, live action, comics and found imagery, often producing new hybrid forms of animation which were not possible previously. For example, Ascher and Garon's densely layered Somebody Goofed, which literally re-animates comics, web pages and record covers; and Adam Gravois' spooky, low-fi Golden Shoes, which digitally reworks underground comic artist Dame Darcy's handmade dolls and audiovisual iconography.

Mousetrap exposes some of the results possible from the fusion of computer hardware, software and a certain kind of artistic sensibility and attitude - an attitude which embraces the culture of underground comics, contemporary anime and weirdo cartoons, as much as it embraces the potential of the new digital tools.

#### curator

lan Haig is an artist working across the mediums of video, computer animation, and installation. His work has been widely exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at VideoBrasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Pandemonium Festival of Moving Images, London. Ian teaches Video Art in the Department of Media Arts, RMIT, Melbourne. He likes monster movies. email i.haig@rmit.edu.au

\* edited version. Original text was published as part of the program notes for the 1998 Melbourne International Film Festival.





computer animation art

Adam Gravois GOLDEN SHOES 1996



#### Sakurati

1997 Japan 4'00"

dr Koji Matuoka, mus Jun Miyake, pd with the cooperation of Imagica Corporation BetaSP, bow, 3D computer animation, source Imagica

Groundbreaking, atmospheric work which transcends the generic look of 3D computer animation, bringing it into a new realm. Tiny Robots made from springs and gears march across a Japanese garden as particles cascade out of a doorway, emerging from the belly of an android chosen to receive human emotions. Set in the future, but the image itself is basically analogue and the expression is nostalgic and uniquely Japanese. - Ian Haig



## Somebody Goofed \*\*

1997 USA 9'00"

dr Rodney Ascher + Syd Garon, sd Garon/Ascher, mus various, pd John O'Grady

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation, source Garon/Ascher

Ultra Religious Fundamentalist Comics by Jack Chick (or Chick Tracts) are re-animated and set against a background of found imagery from childrens' encyclopedias, record covers, magazine ads and car enthusiasts' web pages. Watch it, and then take a few moments to reflect on your own life. Have you goofed?

### Adrenalin / Adrénaline ...

1996 France 3'20"

dr Marine Poirson + Lionel Richerand, pd Aii ENSAD (Paris)

Umatic, colour, 2D computer animation, source Heure Exquise

Super funky French monster computer animation. A terrible night during which Francine learns to her cost that she should never take money from the ATM machine while a monster from outer space terrorises the city...



#### Sexy Boy 1998 France 3'47"

pd Air

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation, courtesy Virgin Records

Animated music video for Air's Sexy Boy. Air come across a small toy monkey with a T-shirt which reads 'sexy boy'. They then dive into a 2D cut-out animated world of floating cityscapes, giant monkeys and air guitars ...

#### The Magic Hat

1998 Australia 1'20"

dr Jim Knox

Umatic, colour, animation, digital video

An exploration of the virtues of the 'primitive' cinema. An attempt to restore rightful amounts of autism and violence to childrens' animation. Computer processed animation, complete with noise, scratches, hiss and glitches - the way it should be.

#### Pipou the Nice Louse / Pipou Le Joli Pou

1993 France 2'30" dr Pacal, pd Aii ENSAD (Paris)

Umatic, colour, 2D computer animation, source Heure Exquise

Freaky animated Mania by French comic artist Pascal, creator of the infamous Theodore Death Head comics and also known for his work which featured in early RAW magazines. Pascal brings his scratchy graphic style to 2D computer animation. It is warm in the subway and everybody scratches their head, Jojo Hobo scratches his head because of the lice...

## Golden Shoes 🔣



1996 USA 2'40"

dr Adam Gravois, art + mus Dame Darcy, pd Adam Gravois + Dame Darcy

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation

Fleeting images from a melancholy dream. Golden shoes are the fantasy of a little girl who longs to shed the bonds of her bleak rural existence and ascend to an after life of luxury. A collaboration between computer animator Gravois and artist/musician Darcy, this is a low-fi and spooky work that finds it's inspiration in Edward Gorey, bluegrass music and The Brothers Quay.

### Exponential 200 / Exponentiel 200

1997 France 1'38"

dr Stephan Kosinski, pd Sup Info Com

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation, source Heure Exquise

Eat, Sleep, Work and Watch Television.

Eat, Sleep, Work and Watch more...Television.

## Huzzah (Bobaloo The Beast Boy)

1997 USA 4'00"

dr Larry Lamb, mus Michael Sommers + Kevin Kling, sd Cine Sound 2, pd Audrey Robinson

BetaSP, colour, 3D computer animation

Introducing Huzzah, a misshapen carnival barker, and his muse, the sideshow freak Bobaloo the Beast Boy, Huzzah utilises motion capture software with which the actors' expressions and movements are captured and passed onto computer animators to produce the final images.





#### Wood Technology in the Design of Structures

1997 USA 9'00"

dr + pd Eric Henry, mus Jim Coursey, sd Keefe San Agustin

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation

A spin on the genre of educational and scientific documentary, crossed with a comic, experimental sensibility sits perfectly in this strange and unusual piece concerned with alienated desire - that is, the possibility of coveting the desire for something which one fails to experience directly for oneself. The consequences are played out in a universe where people long to eat wood.

#### Xanadu City

1992 France 3'00"

dr + pd Jerome Estienne + Xavier Duval BetaSP, colour, 3D computer animation

Depicts a universe that draws it's inspiration from Pigall's fantasies, peep shows, sex shops, video games, cartoons, moviedom and Jean Paul Gaultier (who designed the costumes worn here). Dark and striking; hyper glossy, shiny and sexy.

#### **Donor Party**

1993 USA 4'00"

dr Laurence Arcadias, title seg + sp eff Lance Williams, rend + ed Peter Litwinowicz, sd Richard Millward BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation, sponsored by Apple Computer Inc. USA

A documentary report which examines the obstacles at the cutting edge of medical technology before the development of power tools.

#### Lure / Leurre

1997 France 2'00"

dr + pd Vanessa Sarazin

Umatic, colour, 2D computer animation, source Heure Exquise

Simple 2D computer animation; a hunter who knows how to hunt has to know how to hunt without his duck...

#### Memoir of My Reproduction

1996 Australia 3'25"

dr + pd Tina Gonsalves

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation

Computer re-animated mania of characters/monsters made of human body parts.

1997 Japan 4'00"

dr Kouji Morimoto, mus Ken Ishii BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation

Futuristic computer animated music video for techno artist Ken Ishii. Anarchy has overtaken an unidentified metropolis; a young antihero rides around on an aircycle, committing random acts of ultraviolence at one million miles per hour. A fusion of anime graphic styles with high energy computer animation.

#### A Drug Against War

1993 USA 3'25"

dr Ben Stokes, Eric Koziol + Eric Zimmerman, anim Ben Stokes, Eric Kozicl, Adrian Dimond + Jon Shnepp Brute,

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation

In-your-face comic book style animated music video for hard rock outfit KMFDM, produced by Chicago based video/computer production company H-Gun (music video: also for Ministry, Front Line Assembly and Public Enemy, amongst others).

#### Weary Sons of Freud 👃

1997 Australia 5'00" dr George Stajsic, mus Tim Catlin, sd Jennifer Sochackyj

Umatic, colour, 2D computer animation

From Freud to Lacan to Derrida and back up the rear end of Foucault. A million academics and wanna-be psychoanalysts, converting cinemas into couch sessions, images into signs of the self. A cultural industry of boring exposition, telling us that every image must mean something meaningful. Well, suck on this inversion of Little Golden Books and its mutation into a pornographic sonorum of fuzzy clitorial goop. Lick it, swallow it, and see your doctor if pain persists. - Philip Brophy



### Simp's Indian Adventure

1996 Australia 12'00"

dr + pd Kim Sansovini. production company Simptoons

BetaSP, colour, 2D computer animation A whirlwind tour of India...TV cartoon-style; complete with the right sound effects, music, timing and dumb gags. The result of watching too much Tex Avery, Warner

Brothers, Tom and Jerry and Scooby Doo cartoons on a full stomach. - Ian Haig

## Come to Daddy

1998 UK 4'00'

dr Chris Cunningham

BetaSP, colour,

courtesy Warner Brothers Music

Infamous clip for Aphex Twin's Come to Daddy, in which little kids have their faces digitally rearranged. Director Chris Cunningham (who has previously worked on Judge Dredd comics for 2000 A.D. and the Alien movies) puts violence and horror themes back into music video.

The curator thanks Jonathan Wells of Res Fest, Bart Cheever of D.Film Festival, Rosemary Dean and Tetsuro Shimauchi.

# **Immersive Conditions**

# saturday 21 november 10am-5pm

\$25 full / \$20 conc / \$15 dLux members

10.00 introduction 10.15

10.55 **Justine Cooper** 

11 30

11.45 Professor Paula Swatman

12.15

Senior Lecturer in Computer Science, Department of Computer Science and Supercomputer Facility, Australian National University, Canberra case study +demonstration of The WEDGE Virtual Reality Theatre specially installed for futureScreen

02.00 Troy Innocent

03.00

03.15 Dr Anna Cicognani

Char Davies' ÉPHÉMÈRE (1998)

04.20 discussion

05 00



Dr Anna Cicognani is Researcher, The Key Centre of Design Computing Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney, specialising in design and architecture for virtual spaces. Anna worked as an architect in Milano, Italy, and recently in Australia she has been involved in research projects exploring the effects of new media on architecture and design processes. She is author of numerous books, papers and articles on design, art and architecture and their relationship with new technologies. In 1997, Anna organised and chaired the first international conference on virtual communities. abstract: 'In cyberspace, language is the fundament for the design of networked objects: web pages, interfaces, content, software - anything in cyberspace has an underlying linguistic basis. Design, intended as the organisation of relationships between parts, can refer to linguistic structures in order to find metaphors and referents to use in cyberspace productions. This perspective on design in virtual worlds is based on the constructive power of language. Using examples of virtual places, I will show how artists and designers can utilise technologies for communication to build creative environments. email anna@arch.usyd.edu.au

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stine Cooper is a multimedia artist who worked in photography before utilising new imaging technologies. She is interested in producing work at the intersection of art and science. Justine currently teaches multimedia arts at University of Sydney. The focus of her work *Rapt* (as computer animation and gallery installation) lies in the integration of the virtual body into a physically and spatially immersive environment. The virtual body emerges as a site of experience - explorable, interactive and uncontained. Rapt's virtual body is built from Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans of the artist. MRI scans map the water content of the body to produce axial slices. These were used to create a 3D body accessible on any plane, making it possible to navigate through the body and to view it both internally and externally. Rapt (video) was recently awarded First Prize at the 1998 National Digital Art Awards. The installation version of Rapt will be exhibited at Artspace, Sydney, until 28 November.

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Char Davies, based in Montreal, Canada, has achieved international recognition for her work which explores paradoxes of embodiment, being and nature in immersive virtual space. Trained as a painter and filmmaker, Char began working with 3D digital media in the mid 1980s. She was a founding director (1988–1994) and Vice-President/Director of Visual Research (1988-1997) of the software company Softimage Inc., where she developed the ground-breaking exhibition Osmose (1995). Char recently left Softimage to found Immersence Inc., as a vehicle for pursuing her artistic research. Éphémère (1998) is an interactive fully-immersive visual/aural virtual artwork which furthers the work begun in Osmose. As in that work, interaction in Ephémère is based on the wearing of a headmounted display, and a vest which tracks breath and balance, allowing the 'immersent' to glide within the iconographies of 'Landscape', subterranean 'Earth', and interior 'Body'. Éphémère had its world premier at the National Gallery of Canada in June this year.

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Henry Gardner is Senior Lecturer in Computer Science at the Department of Computer Science and Supercomputer Facility, Australian National University. He has a background in computational plasma physics and has worked in Germany, Spain, Japan and the USA as well as Australia. Since 1996 he has directed a special project in Computational Science and Engineering Education at ANU. He is co-inventor, with Professor Rod Boswell, of the WEDGE which is the first walk-in virtual reality theatre in Australia and the first in the world to be based on PC technology.

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The WEDGE, developed by Henry Gardner, Rod Boswell and Drew Whitehouse at Australian National University, is the first walk-in virtual reality theatre in Australia and the first in the world to use Windows-based PC technology. It consists of two vertical screens which are back projected in stereo. The viewing area is big enough to allow several people to view images at the same time. Each person wears a light pair of LCD shutter glasses (which resemble sunglasses) to allow stereoscopic vision and the group leader can use an ultrasonic head mounted tracking device to allow different perspectives to be projected automatically. Scientists and engineers have become very interested in using the WEDGE to visualise complicated three-dimensional data sets and for design walkthroughs. The flexibility of the system, as well as its low cost, holds the promise of significantly expanding the penetration of virtual reality into engineering, science, art and entertainment

Troy Innocent, multimedia artist, Please refer to ICONICA section for notes about the artist,

Professor Paula Swatman moved into academic life in the late 1980s, after more than ten years working in the banking and information technology industries and developing her interest in Electronic Commerce. A founding director of CollECTeR (Collaborative Electronic Commerce Technology and Research), the inter-university eCommerce research and consulting group, Paula is currently Director of RMIT's Interactive Information Institute (I-cubed), a cross-Faculty institute which undertakes research projects in partnership with commercial organisations. I-cubed has two specialist programs of activity: a Multimedia Environment and a Virtual Reality Environment. The VR Environment provides a unique approach to linking VR-based industry training with the development of 3D simulation products. The VRE has an outstanding range of high-performance graphic computing facilities and offers researchers and developers a hitherto inaccessible opportunity to invent, develop and market VR solutions for science,

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rren Tofts is Chair, Media & Communications, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. He is author (with artist Murray McKiech) of Memory Trade. A Prehistory of Cyberculture (21-C/Interface Books, Sydney, 1998). His essays on theory, media arts and new writing technologies have been published in numerous journals, including 21-C, World Art and Social Semiotics. Darren is a member of the editorial board of Continuum, and is also a contributing editor to RealTime.

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# dLux media arts

screen arts exhibitions | forums | advocacy | consultancy | touring programs | research & information

dLux media arts
(formerly Sydney Intermedia Network Inc. - SIN)
encourages and promotes the development and
critical discussion of innovative film, video,
new media and sound arts in Australia, and
exhibits this work to diverse audiences nationally
and internationally.

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## futureScreen is a dLuxevent



Justine Cooper RAPT 1998

concept, convenor alessio cavallaro

program editor alessio cavallaro

program design siobhán costigan and evan yabsley volatile design communication

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#### futureScreen

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