

FRAMEWORK

#13 | VIRTUAL . IDENTITY . DISPLAY

EDITORIAL

The 'Virtual . Identity . Display' issue of Framework explores our digital identities and virtual realities. These written pieces explore the ramifications of a post-internet world in which the boundaries between the virtual and the physical grow increasingly blurred. They put a mirror up to our curated virtual identities, holding a gaze through the screen and allowing a chance to analyse the implications of digital identities have on our physical selves. With the exponential rise of networked computing, our lives and environments are increasingly broadcast into the public digital sphere. Social media is a key example, aiding the giddy celebration of identity flux as it releases the user from their physical body in order to curate themselves as anyone or anything. In this new digital environment, individuals are able to play with their identities and the spaces in which these identities function, to the point where 'life' seems to become more intense online than off.

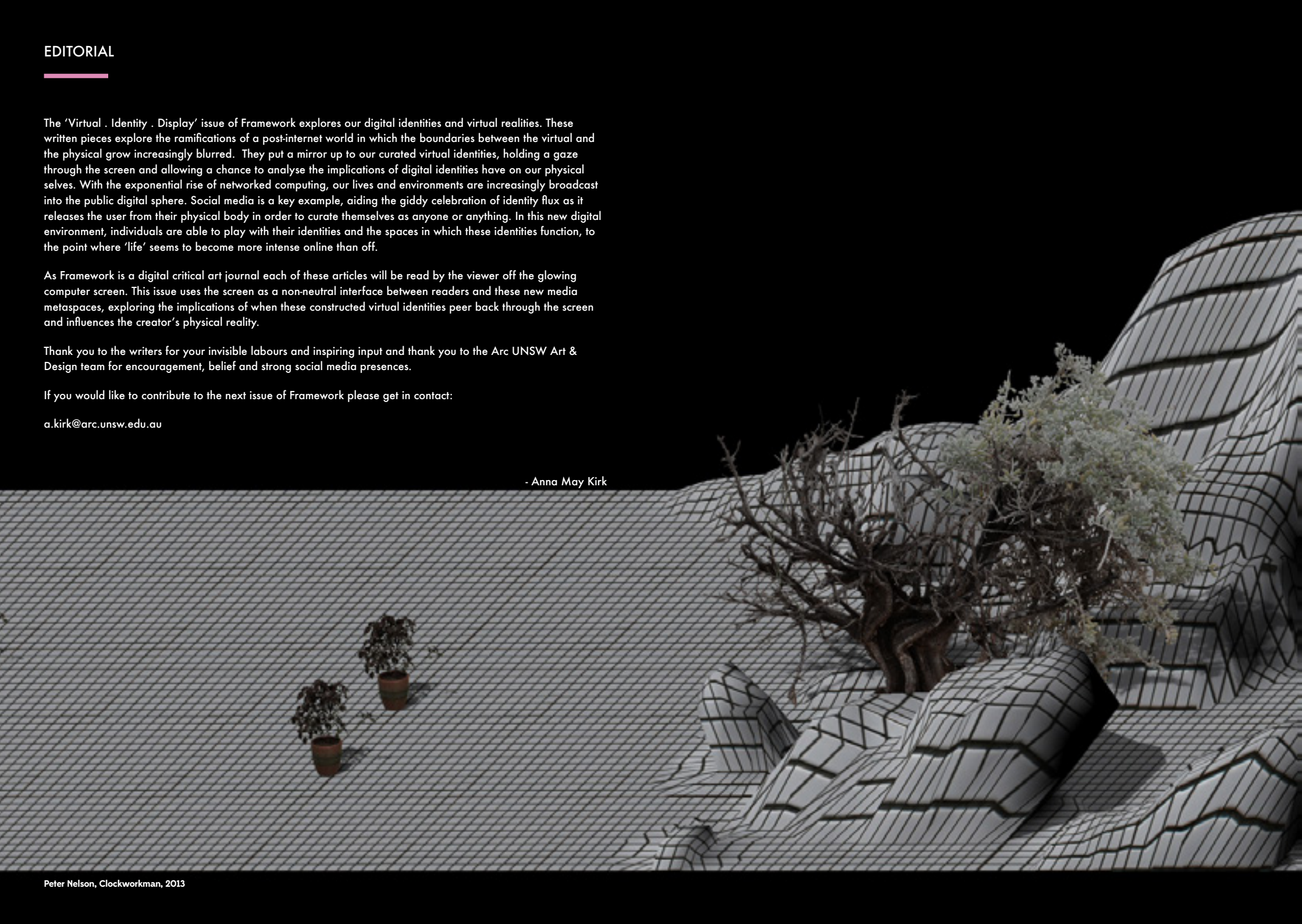
As Framework is a digital critical art journal each of these articles will be read by the viewer off the glowing computer screen. This issue uses the screen as a non-neutral interface between readers and these new media metaspaces, exploring the implications of when these constructed virtual identities peer back through the screen and influences the creator's physical reality.

Thank you to the writers for your invisible labours and inspiring input and thank you to the Arc UNSW Art & Design team for encouragement, belief and strong social media presences.

If you would like to contribute to the next issue of Framework please get in contact:

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- Anna May Kirk



VIRTUAL IDENTITY . DISPLAY

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS:
THE PHYSICAL &
THE VIRTUAL

CATHERINE WOOLLEY



DATABAE

JENNY
ANAGNOSTOPOULOS



A REGULAR RHYME
REGARDING REC ROOM
RUCKUS

CLARE POWELL



PETER NELSON
IN DIALOGUE WITH
EMMA-KATE WILSON



HYPERTEXT
JACLYN FENECH

FRAMEWORK
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THANKS

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ENQUIRIES

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Front cover image:

Cécile B. Evans *Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen*, 2014 HD video
Courtesy the artist

Back cover image:

Kynan Tan, *Polymorphism (Data Centre Simulation)*, 2015 projected
computer-generated simulation, 2ch
sound, still

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& Design

Between Two Worlds: The Physical and The Virtual

By Catherine Woolley



Lee Bul, 'Willing To Be Vulnerable', 2015-16, heavy-duty fabric, metalised film, transparent film, polyurethane ink, fog machine, LED lighting, electronic wiring, dimensions variable. Installation view of the 20th Biennale of Sydney

“POSSIBILITY OF A POST-HUMAN FUTURE IN WHICH THE BODY BECOMES OBSOLETE”

This year's Sydney Biennale takes a quote from science fiction author William Gibson, "The future is already here—it's just not evenly distributed" as its point of departure. A central site to this overarching theme is Cockatoo Island which has been transformed into the 'Embassy of the Real,' a space to explore the ramifications of a post-internet world in which the boundaries between the virtual and the physical are increasingly blurred. Twenty-one artworks are dispersed around the island, each innovatively contemplating notions of digital identity, virtual reality, and future utopias in our rapidly advancing technological world. Throughout the exhibition, the audience is continuously prompted to reconsider the impact that living in the digital era is having on our perceptions of physical reality, as well as our ideas of the future.

Cockatoo Island as a site itself exists somewhere between reality and fiction, possessing a rich history. Over time, the island has transitioned from a convict settlement to a prison, a reformatory, a shipyard, a film set and since 1998 a major venue for the Sydney biennale. Artworks lie alongside historical artefacts and film props, leaving the visitors to continually question, what is real? Many pieces are site-specific, intimately interacting with the space and aspects of the island's historical context. Further accentuating the ambiguity of where the island ends and the art begins.

In his video installation *Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3*, Korakrit Arunanondchai further explores the great dualities we confront in our digitised, globalised world: religion versus science, nature versus technology, body versus machine. Most significantly, Arunanondchai studies how his identity as an artist has been constructed and developed. In the digital era, the possibilities to formulate and project identity have been vastly transformed, and we now have the opportunity to display multiple digital identities to the world through the creation of avatars in virtual online worlds such as 'Second Life,' and even through everyday social-media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Performance artist boychild presented a one-off performance, *Untitled Lip Sync #225*, on the opening night of the Biennale in collaboration with Arunanondchai. Physically embodying the fictional serpent character Naga from Arunanondchai's video, Boychild became a conduit between physical reality and the virtuality of the screen. Boychild's performances are often distinguished by jerking movements which become reflective of a digital glitch, and she often describes her body as a cyborg. By discussing the effect the digital world has had on the physical body, boychild reflects on the anxiety towards the possibility of a post-human future in which the body becomes obsolete.

Located in the island's eerie Dog Leg tunnel, Cecile B. Evans continues this contemplation of a bodiless existence in her virtual reality experience *Preamble to a Prequel (of sorts)* and video work *Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen*. Evans creates a great juxtaposition in this piece, as although your mind is transported to her virtual world, you maintain an awareness of your body within the tunnel as you are required to walk through the space. This ultimately manifests our current attempt to inhabit both physical and virtual realities simultaneously, recalling the way we will often be physically walking down the street, yet are mentally situated within the virtual world behind the screen of the iPhone. At the end of the virtual reality experience, viewers remove the headsets to watch a film narrated by a CGI version of the recently deceased Phillip Seymour Hoffman who is astutely aware of his bodiless, digital existence. This conjures a questioning of what will happen to our digital identities after we die, yet also raises the notion that in the future we may be able to upload our mental existence to a digital space and ultimately continue living without a body.

Technological advancement is often perceived as a path to future utopia in its ability to achieve a sense of global interconnectedness. However, linking back to the overarching theme of the Biennale, this notion disregards the fact that technological resources are not evenly distributed, and therefore under-developed countries are ultimately excluded. Lee Bul examines the failings of technology in achieving utopia in her overwhelmingly large installation *Willing to be Vulnerable*. This installation features a large balloon redolent of the Hindenburg airship which was designed as a symbol of modernity and progress, yet ironically crashed and burned in 1937. Bul's installation therefore becomes more of a dystopia, representing the limitations and vulnerabilities of technology.

Although many of the artworks situated at Cockatoo Island thematically explore the possibility of a post-body virtuality, they simultaneously deliver a powerful phenomenological experience, consistently directing an awareness back to corporeality. The viewer is therefore constantly reminded of this dichotomy between the virtual and the physical that now so heavily permeates our post-internet world.

20th Biennale of Sydney: Embassy of the Real,
Cockatoo Island, 18 March – 5 June 2016.

20bos.com



DATABAE

A perspective view of a server room aisle. The room is dimly lit with a strong blue hue. On both sides, there are long rows of server racks. Each rack has a series of horizontal slots, and some have small green lights. Above the racks, there are bundles of black cables and some yellowish-green components. The floor is a light blue color, and the ceiling has a grid pattern with a central light fixture.

By Jenny Anagnostópoulos

ANNUAL SALARY OF \$153,000

PURCHASES FIVE CUPS OF COFFEE PER DAY

BASED ON SOCIAL CIRCLE, LIKELY TO REPAY A LOAN

SEARCH ENGINE RECORDS INDICATE COMING DOWN WITH THE FLU

PREGNANT BUT DOESN'T KNOW IT YET

RECENT SHIFT IN TEXT-MESSAGING PATTERN; NEW GIRLFRIEND LIKELY

JUST APPLIED FOR A SEVENTH CREDIT CARD

ACCORDING TO CELL-PHONE GPS DATA, WALKS 5.7 MILES PER DAY

WEB AND PHONE RECORDS SUGGEST DISSATISFACTION WITH PHYSICIAN.¹

Before the above was typed and embedded in this PDF file, before it was featured in Alex Pentland's article, and before it was harvested as data, this information existed as a series of conditions, actions and interactions. Mindless, mundane routines that were captured and recorded by a third-party. Private performances—a record of which may seem useless to the individual. These actions were not curated or carefully selected to be published by the subject of each line. In light of discussions surrounding the construction of the virtual self, what value is given to the unwilling, unsuspecting construction of identity left behind by our data?

The curation of our online profiles allows control over which aspects of our lives are disclosed. This ultimately leads to distortions as one can omit various realities and interweave exaggerated or even fake information. 'Big' data produced through the GPS in our phones, shopping/eating habits, medical logs, social media and online patterns records with accuracy real-time events and behaviours. Our hard drives, iClouds, Facebook/Twitter/Gmail accounts are oozing with it. Their porous surfaces sweat with the information we feed them only to be lapped up by retailers, government bodies and advertisement companies. We are the producers of our own digital footprints, but in this new digital ecology that churns data into an economy we are left on the periphery of the discussion.

Since October 2015, when Australia's metadata went live for over 80 government agencies to access, we have witnessed politicians struggle to grasp basic definitions and understandings of data retention, particularly that of metadata. Metadata—data about data. Information about information. The GPS tag on your latest Instagram post, the composer details on an iTunes track, and (as George Brandis ineptly explained) the IP address, date and time of access on your web browsing. Government retention policies have consequently not just instilled fears of online surveillance, but triggered frustrations due to the lack of knowledge, skills and authority we possess over our own data. Too big for us to comprehend or aggregate, it ultimately becomes an obscure digital shadow hanging off our virtual footsteps.

Amelia Dale's chapbook *Metadata* (2015) features a series of blanked pages omitting everything but letters spelling *m e t a d a t a*, respectively. The letters appear scattered, gravitating around each other. Sometimes they form small groupings horizontally, vertically or diagonally as they float around the negative space of their deleted context. The typographic arrangement creates a concrete poem that drags our gaze across the page until it stumbles upon a character. Hyphens, brackets, full stops and commas string some of the characters together whilst creating a visual and oral glitch.



Intuitively, it is a tempting riddle framed within notions of censorship and privatisation. Despite this, Dale expresses that the work is more about the distinction between metadata and content. Extracting the metadata (literally) from the original text, we are left with the abstracted versions of 18th century literature that Dale originally incorporated. In its orthodox form, metadata exists as the outer edges of a document – the title, recipients, date of exchange, author, but not the content. In a phone bill, this may include call logs and duration of calls, but not the content. In these instances, and in Dale's Metadata, is it the content that even matters?

These political and social implications of data retention are consequential of the ever-present data ecology. In a generation where the smallest of actions are collectively tracked in a complex network of servers and wires, the logistics of these processes are not generally in the fore of discussions. The data generation isn't powered by a series of iClouds and Dropboxes in the sky. Abstracting complex systems and networks that are connected in virtual spaces, monitoring, recording, feeding and receiving are all intricate computational activities that feed off physical systems located around the world.

Kynan Tan explores these otherwise silent and often classified data centres in 3D rendered accuracy. His work *Polymorphism* (2015) illustrates in hauntingly deep blue hues the inner working of facilities that house the data centres for Facebook to computer infrastructures for government bodies. As data itself is amorphous (continuously expanding and multiplying) Tan illustrates the physical complexity of the rigid databases that populate entire warehouse spaces. The 4:33 minute video work is never punctured by human presence as it glides around the systems, acting suspiciously autonomous. A continuous static noise can only conjure the imagination of how many millions of bytes the systems are processing, and perhaps are being listened to. The simulation ultimately gives a materiality to an immaterial form that is only ever described as a virtual abstraction.

Ultimately, these approaches to notions of data demonstrate a need for a holistic engagement with what is being produced and how exactly that is happening. Though much of this may appear to us as 'junk' data—digital dumps produced by a culture of physical and virtual excess—a lot is salvaged and harvested to study cultural and social habits. This utopic outlook is inevitably entangled with the dystopic paranoia of surveillance, requiring an understanding

of data in order to contribute to its debates. So perhaps it's not a question of how to stop worrying and love your data, but instead a matter of speaking its language. After all, it speaks yours. And it knows all about you.

¹ Pentland, Alex. "The Data-driven Society." *Scientific American* 309.4 (2013): 78-83. Web.

² Sky News. "George Brandis has no clue about metadata". Youtube. August 6 2014

³ Dale, Amelia. E-mail conversation. June 6 2016.

⁴ Boyd, Danah, and Kate Crawford. "Critical Questions for Big Data." *Information, Communication & Society* 15.5 (2012): 662-79. Web.



A Regular Rhyme Regarding Rec Room Ruckus Or, RRRRRR@msn.com

A prose response to REC ROOM- Curated by Hana Hoogedeure,
Interlude Gallery, May 2016.

Written by Clare Powell

The year is 1999.
A cyberfeminist group chat ensues.

breathe deep as you enter,

you could close your eyes
but, definitely sigh;
for these are your imaginings...

c00tgr4evz@hotmail.com [11.11pm] says:

within our house,
is a dedicated game zone
your very own playground,
hissing aloud, and with sound

a Recreational space
of meditative whirs
journeys through interfaces
and every possible world

blg_b01_3000@yahoo.com [11.13pm] says:

blue moons and amour,
puff princesses, beasts
smileys in colour,
a plethora of saturated visual treats
through your own Rec Room Ruckus,
you're naive and you wait
for the dialup transferral
of your cyborg interweb date
may you be dressed to the nth,
in all pixels and pearls
as long as you're offering
proper dollars, pounds and girls

c00tgr4evz@hotmail.com [11.17pm] says:

through data-basements you gander,
past pop-ups and glitch,
you spell new words lyk ROFL and,
find urself in some unexplained, social media ditch

a Rumpus of trance states,
with endless, forever screens
there's pseudonyms and anagrams,
woah! the downloads you glean!

blg_b01_3000
types fuchsia arial font,
c00tgr4evz is simple black
she's tradish and well-read

big_b01_3000@yahoo.com [11.21pm] says:

within palaces of hyphens
and extended 3rd lives
we sift through the motherboard,
each click at a time

our enchanted characters
with anthropomorphic style
remind us of dreamings
elders had as a child

and you dream on



dahreal_cyber3mm3@msn.com [11.30pm] says:

through swirls of cryptic jargon
you edge closer to bliss
your own world is joyous
there's nothing physical to ever miss...

in the year 1995,
we're young, and we chat
about leg hair and torrents
we're liberal, cyber brats

10 years in future,
you find us, even still,
using the last dollars of arts grants
to recreate the imaginings you see here

for this is our fortress
a collective homage to hope
we welcome you, visitor
join us in our own gloat



c00tgr4evz@hotmail.com [11.33pm] says:

<3

big_b01_3000@yahoo.com [11.34pm] says:

and dream on
~~~~~



REC ROOM  
@ Interlude Gallery: 12-28<sup>th</sup> of May 2016  
Curated by Hana Hoogedeure

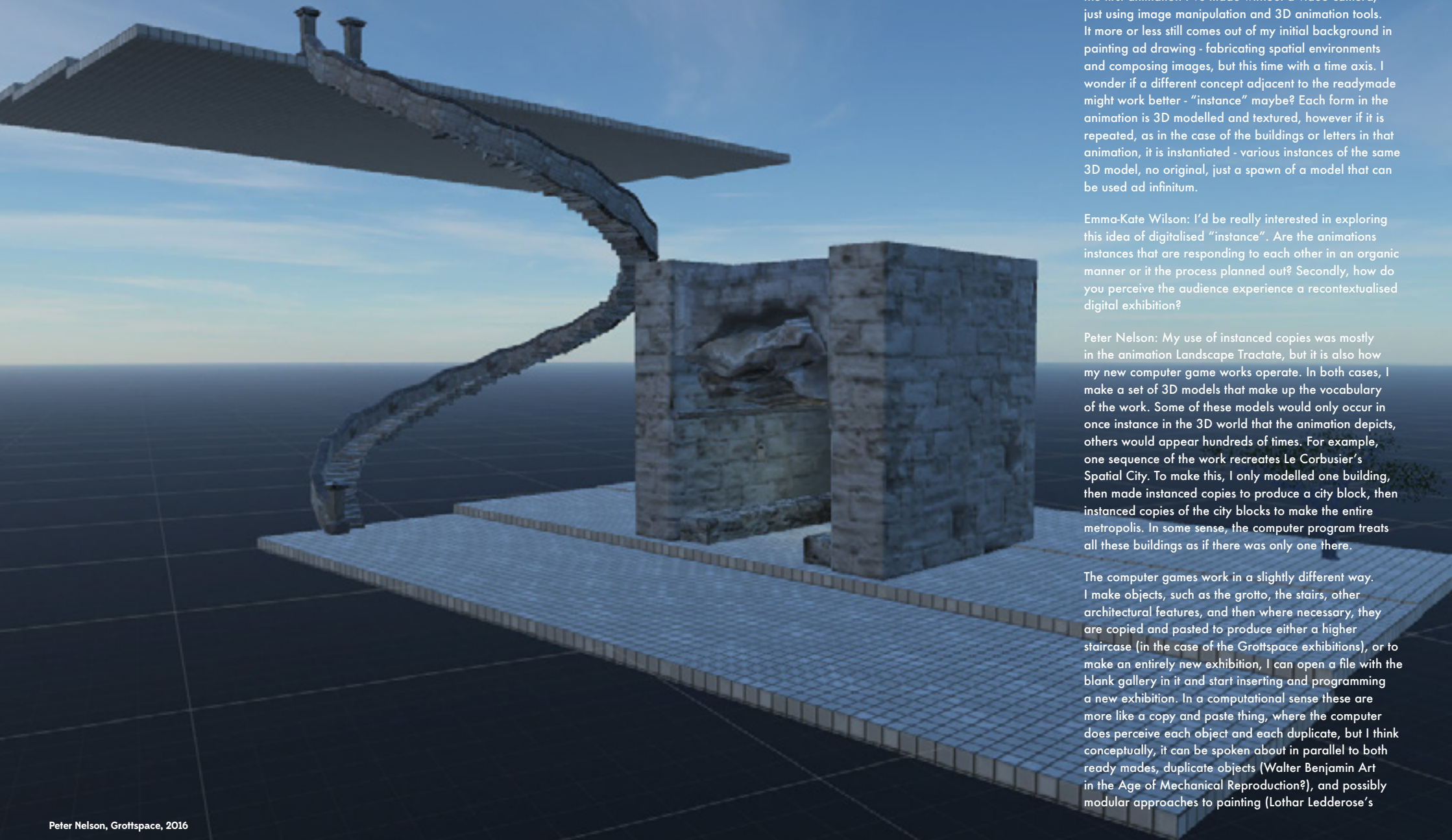
Featuring Atong Atem, Eko Bambang Wisnu, Dylan Batty, Julien Bowman, Get To Work, Ida Lawrence, Yelyah Nalhgoc, Clare Powell, Julian Talarico and Phillippe Vranjes.

# Q & A PETER NELSON

By Emma-Kate Wilson

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Emma-Kate Wilson: How did your practice start to develop into the digital hyper reality? Moving beyond the physical space of known objects, completely restructuring the ready-made?

Peter Nelson: The MOP Projects show SHOW TITLE was the first animation I've made without a video camera, just using image manipulation and 3D animation tools. It more or less still comes out of my initial background in painting ad drawing - fabricating spatial environments and composing images, but this time with a time axis. I wonder if a different concept adjacent to the readymade might work better - "instance" maybe? Each form in the animation is 3D modelled and textured, however if it is repeated, as in the case of the buildings or letters in that animation, it is instantiated - various instances of the same 3D model, no original, just a spawn of a model that can be used ad infinitum.

Emma-Kate Wilson: I'd be really interested in exploring this idea of digitalised "instance". Are the animations instances that are responding to each other in an organic manner or it the process planned out? Secondly, how do you perceive the audience experience a recontextualised digital exhibition?

Peter Nelson: My use of instanced copies was mostly in the animation Landscape Tractate, but it is also how my new computer game works operate. In both cases, I make a set of 3D models that make up the vocabulary of the work. Some of these models would only occur in once instance in the 3D world that the animation depicts, others would appear hundreds of times. For example, one sequence of the work recreates Le Corbusier's Spatial City. To make this, I only modelled one building, then made instanced copies to produce a city block, then instanced copies of the city blocks to make the entire metropolis. In some sense, the computer program treats all these buildings as if there was only one there.

The computer games work in a slightly different way. I make objects, such as the grotto, the stairs, other architectural features, and then where necessary, they are copied and pasted to produce either a higher staircase (in the case of the Grottspace exhibitions), or to make an entirely new exhibition, I can open a file with the blank gallery in it and start inserting and programming a new exhibition. In a computational sense these are more like a copy and paste thing, where the computer does perceive each object and each duplicate, but I think conceptually, it can be spoken about in parallel to both ready mades, duplicate objects (Walter Benjamin Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction?), and possibly modular approaches to painting (Lothar Ledderose's

argument for how Chinese painting repetitively recycles modular motifs to create an infinite variation of landscape images).

So to answer your initial question about instances and planning, often I start by making objects, which turn into environments, which turn into either time-based animations, or real-time environments such as computer games. For Landscape Tractate, Sydney sound artist & musician Peter Farrar made a sound composition for me, based on our conversations regarding the content of my 3D environments, and then I animated sequences using the timing inspired from his music. For Grottspace, the timing is based on the navigation of the player/audience, and the arrangement of 3D models in the space is based on my relationship with the artists and how their work was curated into the digital gallery.

It's hard to say how audiences will respond to the exhibitions in Grottspace. At this early stage in the project, it is sort of an experiment for me, one to see how accessible the gallery is to people, and how they navigate through the environment, and then to see how it is perceived, and these are co-dependent. In terms of navigation, I tested the work with a bunch of people before releasing it to SafARI, and it is a steep learning curve for me to understand. A work like this requires an audience to both work out how to, and have the motivation to want to explore the exhibitions and find things that might not be immediately apparent. The degree to which the space is explored fully, as well as how this process relates to the audience's perception

of the decontextualised digital exhibition, is something I am still learning about, based on what people report back to me.

Emma-Kate Wilson: Grottspace is a curious concept, how did you find the making of a digitalised show? How was SafARI was received in the end?

Peter Nelson: Ledderose ideas are quite interesting, the repetition of line and form being a distinct motif throughout traditional Chinese art. I found Hong Kong, as a city, has that feeling, the constant duplicating of buildings. Has living there influenced your work? To quote Ledderose: do you find yourself adopting "a distinctly Chinese pattern of thought"?

By recreating a historical site I am creating a disjuncture between the representation and the represented. Because it is a navigable interactive space, perhaps it exaggerates the liberties and differences we can enjoy between the image and its referent. Because so much of the history of the grotto is tied up in colonialism, property and wealth, stealing the site into a digital realm where I can really do whatever I want with it allowed infinite liberties, little things like putting TV screens in the grotto was fun, because I didn't have to pay for the TVs, or worry about a source of electricity. It sounds weird, but maybe it's because I used to run a small art installation business, that these things are such a paramount concern in instaling media art, but when it is in a virtual realm, you just put stuff wherever you want.



That's also the simple side of it, because as you start to program more interactivity into the space, objects cease to be objects in the represented sense as they might appear in an animation or still image, and their interactive properties assert a hierarchy of importance. At that point the distinctions between the real world object and its represented other certainly become more distinct.

Honestly, it's hard to know how the Safari work was perceived. I was in Hong Kong at the time of the festival, so I can only really tell from people who played the game and recounted it back to me. I know that people found some aspects of navigation difficult and finding the other exhibitions, which gave me pause for thought in how I could better design future versions. Others I think enjoyed the idea of the digital 'other' to the works also physically exhibited in Safari. Out of interest, have you downloaded and played it? [you can do so here: <http://www.xn-0ee91b2i4c8jrd.com/grottspace> ]

Living in Hong Kong has had an influence on my work, but it is hard to trace exactly how that has worked. I am here in a PhD program, living on campus, spending half my time researching, half the time making digital work and the night times painting. That rhythm is so

different to how I was living before I left Sydney, so this change in routine changes so much before I can even think what Hong Kong has done specifically. I've been living and working between Australia and East Asia (Taiwan, Hong Kong, China) on and off for about 5 years, so there are certain rhythms I'm adapted to living in, however each of these places are so different to one another, so I think I just live in a sort of flexible rhythm, informed by familiarity of these places, but I don't think that would equate to a Chinese pattern of thought. Perhaps a sympathy and an ambient understanding of what that might be, but happy to admit and own my outsider visitor status in all of these communities. A curious and grateful guest.

[www.peteracnelson.com](http://www.peteracnelson.com)





# HYPertext

By Jaclyn Fenech

# HYPertext

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By Jaclyn Fenech

Evan Roth, Whenuapai, New Zealand, 2015. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Evan Roth  
Evan Roth, Whenuapai, New Zealand, 2015. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Evan Roth





Forming the basis of the site specific curatorial archetype of the 20th Sydney Biennale is the collaboration between; the ideological particularities of the location, the themes surrounding each Embassies of Thought or In-Between Space and the concepts explored in their featured exhibitions. This triad form part of a flow of meaning to and from other aspects with which they are compared. That is to say that in this collaboration; works form part of the commerce of ideas created through the thematic aspects of the site. Rather than just physically mapping the location, site specificity contextualises a particular understanding of the site which is more than a mere location. The presentation of works in a setting curated to confer significance on them enables the exploration of spatial identities framed by the Biennale.

Much in the same way, Evan Roth's Biennale iteration translates this locational specificity within the context of the digital. *Internet Landscapes: Sydney*, visualises and documents Roth's ongoing investigation into the physical infrastructure of the internet: a research that brought him to various submarine fibre optic cable landing locations all around Sydney. These locations, where the national or local network infrastructure join the global internet, are often remote locations, not easy to reach and not meant to be visited. These works are portraits of the internet's physical infrastructure, the real-world intersections between nature and contemporary technology.

*Internet Landscapes: Sydney* exclusively occupies the site of internet through its web-based articulation. Roth's work is intrinsic to its location, being an element which aims to offer simultaneous experience of the internet's associated physical and cultural landscapes. Enabling the viewer to visit the internet physically, in an attempt to make visible the mysterious infrastructure of the internet, it explores warped perception of place and physical distance in the digital age. It's through this revelation of networked realities that the immaterial concerns of the Post-Internet are explored. These 'internet pilgrimages', seek to better understand the networked identity of the digital by exploring its physical manifestations but through a purely web-based project. Through understanding and experiencing the Internet's physicality, one comes to understand the network not as a mythical cloud, but as a human made and controlled system of wires and computers.

In order for the footage to reach the screen, it's converted into infrared light, which coincidentally travels through cables at the same location depicted in

the videos. This link between the physical location and digital iteration strive to make the invisible visible and thus demystify the illusory boundary between digital life and IRL. This blending of the physical and virtual is very much in line with the In-between Space's interest of accessing the space where these two realms fold into one another. Roth's series connects the viewer to an infrastructure that disappears entirely under the ground and oceans, they are simultaneously the space between land and sea, digital and virtual, past and present, and freedom and control. In this regard, the examination of the threshold between; (1) the slowly eroding optimism and egalitarian values that characterised earlier incarnations of the internet space and (2) the centralised and monetised space that is used increasingly as a mechanism for global surveillance, is apparent.

*Internet Landscapes: Sydney*, displayed in a space curated to confer with its conceptualisation, both visually and physically examines particularities of the contemporary digital landscape. The complexities of the Internet and Post-Internet space are mediated through the site specificity of the work and curatorial agency that the 20th Sydney Biennale enables. Perhaps considering its display in a gallery space, through relative to its online display, its digital location becomes truly part of this work's identity. Rather, this doesn't prevent enjoying it as a simple aesthetic experience: as an exercise in immersion, contemplation and slowness - aspects arguably similar to the Internet epoch.

