

Patient Pursuit of
Smoothness
By Neil Chapman

The proprietor in the café on the hilly corner, on the road leading up to the park, is happy to have a customer at five-thirty. Things are quiet. Here is an opportunity for him to demonstrate his expertise. The Americano, he explains, was never a very good idea. Coffee is an emulsion. As such it cannot be diluted without spoiling its structure. He will not labour the point—sees the other a little embarrassed. His customer is ill-prepared for conversation, it seems, less interested in the purchase than in the moment of rest it will allow her. She has been working intensely and in isolation on a design problem requiring a solution by the end of the day—her job, to coax out of a company name a new logo. Coaxing is how the designer's work must be done—no imposition of form but a pause before the name, Slopek. She has seen that it contains the description of its own italic typeface. Like letters that contradict the structural linguist and insist on a relation between their shape and their sound. 'O' for instance describing the muscles of the face; 'E' the lower jaw exposed by a drawing back of the cheeks, nose pronounced, eye in the so-called Open Counter socket above. Next: 'colon' in round brackets. Take the parentheses and rotate them through ninety degrees. Bad enough to be bald; to be bald and speechless... OK, let's say 'OK' is the signal that everything's going to change. Big full stop followed by 'is less than' jammed against a wall. It points the way to the entrance. In the museum there's a basement display devoted to the history of vibrating instruments of all kinds. Bang up to date, we'll see a range of pneumatically powered industrial vibrators. One is used to shift granulated products down a chute—animal feed, for instance. In dusty places the older technology of conveyer belts is less practical (wheels need to be lubricated, lubrication attracts the dust and clogs the wheels, and so on). Or we'll see the vibrator used to move unset concrete. It works by instating fluidity where otherwise the material would have none. Then further back, highlighting practices of dentistry in the 1970s, a device seen frequently back then looks for all the world like a toaster except for the grips protruding from its slot. After it's done its minute of noisy vibrating something is seen to have formed ex nihilo in the grips. The dentist then removes the item for purposes unspecified. You strain to see but your movements are limited by these dumbly self-imposed constraints to keep your arms flat against the chair's arm rests, hands gripping the ends. Relax your grip, God-damn-it. Just the idea that vibration alone could cause something to materialise in that way. Brilliant. What was the thing? A capsule of some kind, small, white, polypropylene container; no concern of a patient to ask what. It's not implausible that the bald and speechless one could be the dentist. (Or is it a partnership: Bald & Speechless?) Mouth a

an event when it happens is mute to its meaning —

the something

achievement must be exploited

for a change to occur

for knowledge to discover its own validity

> a moment along the historical ^{some} ~~adventure~~ of

knowledge

a positive fact looking at a reliable witness

□

...what matters is looking

artyfact!

an event must matter, but to whom does it matter?

...how do we relate to a practice without sharing its

value system?

silence the impossible

• an experimental device ^{to} ~~is~~ ^{able}

mute reality

of

the impossibility ~~between~~ the adequate

correspondence between the place

and the speech and ~~the~~ very body of

the witness goes to the heart of the

elimination ~~the~~ to be represented

it touches the incredible character of

the event

programmed by the very logic of the

~~extermination~~ and confirmed by

negationist logic: even if one of you

survives to bear witness, no one will

believe you - that is to say,

no one will believe in the filling of

this void by

what you will say...

unknown ref

From Colm Lally's notes on E:vent

vent for words. The mouth is not given but it's seen all the same—seen as peculiarly closed. Analytical philosophers have puzzled over just such holes, asked what it means to speak of such things. 'A hole,' they have observed, 'is a thing, perhaps, but a bit mysterious [...] it does not seem to be made of anything.' Be that as it may, if there is air it will pass. Pressure difference makes it happen, intensive state of the gas on one side of a divide equalising with its partner-body on the other when the duct, the mouth, is opened. Is there not a quality of the human physiology to act as store, to inhibit venting (or to work against the equalisation of pressurised particles)? Pressure can be put against the cheeks or swallowed to be felt by the ribcage. Then again, intensified particles can impact on the body in other ways. Sleep in the afternoon. Set the fan with its blades pointing to the bed and the body will accrue charge. Later it can be dispersed by that body bringing itself into contact with a bath tap, for instance, where the current can run to earth. Other holes. Dark holes. The dark space inside the camera, an old camera—even more like a theatre with its black drape, oak and brass details, large format plates pushed in through the slot like a cutting tool. Sheep have the fleeces of their hind-quarters sheered with a similar gesture. Specific attention is paid to the rear—it aids copulation—fleeces cut back, the word 'format' truncated by its terminating letter likewise to give a new quality to the following space (assuming it doesn't come directly before a stop or other punctuation). We would have spoken of so-called 'new spaces' first. Only now it occurs to us how to do so. New space is a way of describing that experience of the city when normal mercantile activities are suspended, when the national team is playing for instance, or on a bank holiday. Those whose work is of a kind not partitioned by such conventions set out knowing there are resources to be tapped in the Square Mile. But straying find themselves in Bethnal Green perhaps, crossing the junction onto Roman Road. With the people missing and the traffic missing they notice what they had not seen before. The road dips in a curious way to flatten out a little on the lower level before rising again, all articles of street furniture, road and pavement surfacing seeming to affirm the shape like hands pressing fabric to a surface. New space is produced by a shifting constituency of bodies, an alteration in the rhythms of bodies passing. They would choose not to participate, those with an eye on the city's hidden side, all the better to notice what others fail to notice. All the same they would participate in their way by framing and presenting their insights, to be commentators or observers on matters of city space. It is done paradoxically by drawing an audience to what can be seen only when the crowds have dispersed, pointing attention as if with an arrow (>) or two (>>) so

falling

Galileo, (*Falling Bodies Experiment*, 1589), inclined a ramp at various angles, effectively slowing down the acceleration of the balls enough for him to measure the distance they travelled in relation to the time elapsed.

382 years later, at the end of the last Apollo 15 moon walk, Commander David Scott restaged Galileo's experiment in zero atmosphere.

"Well in my left hand I have a feather and my right hand a hammer. I guess one of the reasons we got here today is because of a gentleman called Galileo who made a rather significant discovery about falling objects. And we thought where would be a better place to confirm his findings than on the moon. So we thought we'd try it here for you..."

Commander David Scott drops the hammer and the feather and seconds later they both land on the moon's surface at the same time.

...How about that - Mr Galelio was correct!"



that reader and commentator together >> participate on account of the banderilleros of commentary. What are they? Little flags stuck in the flank of a city. Alternatively, consider the Mortar Rake. These abrasive grit bits fit angle grinders, and cut sideways as well as down. Usually used as mortar rakes, they can also drill holes in hard substances such as cast iron. With grit on the sides of the bit as well as on the tip, hole size and shape is anything from poor to a total mess if not carefully controlled. Consequently they're not usually used to drill holes. Want a good analogy for collective work? Think of the way contiguous peaks of abrasive grit work together during sanding to loosen material. Perhaps there is a threshold where the observation made by the commentator on matters of urban space does not rise sufficiently to be taken as a peak of incisive revelation. Then a certain kind of force has to be implemented giving the lie to that common gloominess that, despite time spent looking, nothing has been seen. It is not a strategy without risk—it's a strategy requiring another, perhaps. Partition that time of resistance, bracket that time of the day during which common sense identification of paucity is simply refuted. Allow the mantra to be repeated: look, with all your eyes, look. For justified fear of mind-boggling most of us (bodies in the rhythm of the city's mercantile pulse) will allow ourselves that view and be happy to say there's nothing to see—at least, nothing worth mentioning. Meanwhile the one spotted standing by the untidy bank where the old road opens into an artery of the city, where the ice-cream van stops and there is scant reason for any other vehicle, that one spotted standing will be looking barely aware that he is looking. Of course, he is not simply standing. The idea of him stationary amidst passers with his view cast into a corner where all sensible people would agree there is nothing, is an idealising of something altogether less remarkable. It has been during a slow and ordinary trudge back from the supermarket that an eye cast uselessly (why not?) towards the new building on the left (they go up so quickly) has precipitated ideas of an unusual kind. Without this frame of mind being described they would never have peaked into the zone of identifiable thought. What does it say about such thought that it should 'peak'? What kind of matter is it that contiguous peaks of thought work on together to result in loosening? They would never have peaked into the zone of identifiable thought, but there they inscribe themselves now like grit making their little scores with the motion of the abrasive brushed backwards and forwards in the patient pursuit of smoothness. This building on the left: of it, what might be said? It inherits something from a Continental European fashion of architecture. Bright colours are given to add liveliness, to add playfulness supposedly; to beautify the urban

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Day 2

01 08 17 28 CDR Okay.

01 08 17 30 CMP Put all the shades up and turn out all the lights inside.

01 08 18 18 CDR We came all the way out here for some poor guy, we might as well try and do his experiment right.

01 08 18 27 CMP Is this for "Dim Light" Dunkelman?

01 08 18 29 CDR Yes. Bob Mercer.

01 08 18 31 CMP Oh, yes.

01 08 18 33 LMP Try and do it right.

01 08 18 57 LMP You sure that other cable won't work on that camera? The one for the EL?

01 08 19 03 CMP No.

01 08 19 04 CDR Let's try it.

01 08 19 05 CMP Try it and see. It's -

01 08 19 12 CDR This here?

01 08 19 13 CMP It's always been my understanding that it wouldn't. It's not long enough anyway, I don't think.

01 08 19 19 LMP We really can't do a thing.

01 08 19 32 LMP See if it'll hook to the bottom one.

01 08 19 54 LMP No, it's too short.

01 08 19 55 CMP Certainly.

01 08 19 56 LMP Shit, it's not even close.

01 08 19 58 CMP Sure.

01 08 19 59 LMP ...

01 08 20 00 CMP Sure.

01 08 20 01 CDR You can't - can't fit them together.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

space. These architects experiment with the potential of diverse textures. Here as its foundation carefully sourced rocks are held contained in wire cages. Why not? Walkways pass floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors providing opportunities for neighbours to meet in a shared space. There are balconies. They make no pretence to be grounded. If they appear precarious it will be said the decision is well measured, all the better to wake passers from their commodity-induced hypnosis. The space below the walkway is like a bank cut away by a river in spate. Again, this inflection of vulnerability given to the walkway—and so given to the walker—is well measured. Such architectural tropes are seen elsewhere in pillars of reinforced concrete. Though strong enough to hold their load, they cause doubts to be inscribed in the minds of those looking (doubt: another name for the abrasive's score, then), an uncomfortable sensation that these houses are anything but safe. Let's say the inscription does not rise into narration; does no more than to draw thoughts that way again and draw eyes that way when the supermarket customer passes. Thinking it through again, to pass one's gaze over the top-heavy shape or over the walkway without solid foundation is a subtle strength added to architecture. The idea is one Buckminster Fuller took to a farthest point when he proposed that human thought has a function in 'Universe' that answered the most puzzling fact of cosmology, that matter should hold together. The force in Universe equal and opposite to entropy, or terminal heat-death, is none other than human thought. No thought is excluded, not even the thought that remains below the threshold of self-reflection. All thought adds up to become the great conserving force holding time-space together as if on a giant elastic. Panels of steel elsewhere on the building's façade disguise their fixings. They themselves are forms of disguise. If scrutinise closely then can be seen damaged during their installation. The damage is only visible from a sharply oblique angle but there's no question that this surface, supposed to be flat, has dents. A decision was made by the foreman to leave it in case remedial action made things worse. An attempt to push it further might result in even more noticeable undulations; time and resources forbade installation of new panels—without retraining the team new panels would only be dented in the same way. This problem is in part an industrial design fault, better to be satisfied with how things are. The best is the enemy of the good and so on. Where is he walking, our ideal character, who epitomises the deviant gaze of every pedestrian? Auster has asked the question and given his character Peter Stillman a programme for his gesticulating and auto-conversing drift through Manhattan, to spell out letters, or to

a sound pushed
through the body
vibrating
an optical instrument - the
aperture or vent is
an adjustable opening that limits the amount of light
passing through a lens or onto a mirror
a duct (*chink* \clef\crack
slit/slot
)
passing from the interior to
the exterior
(atmospheres)

condensation

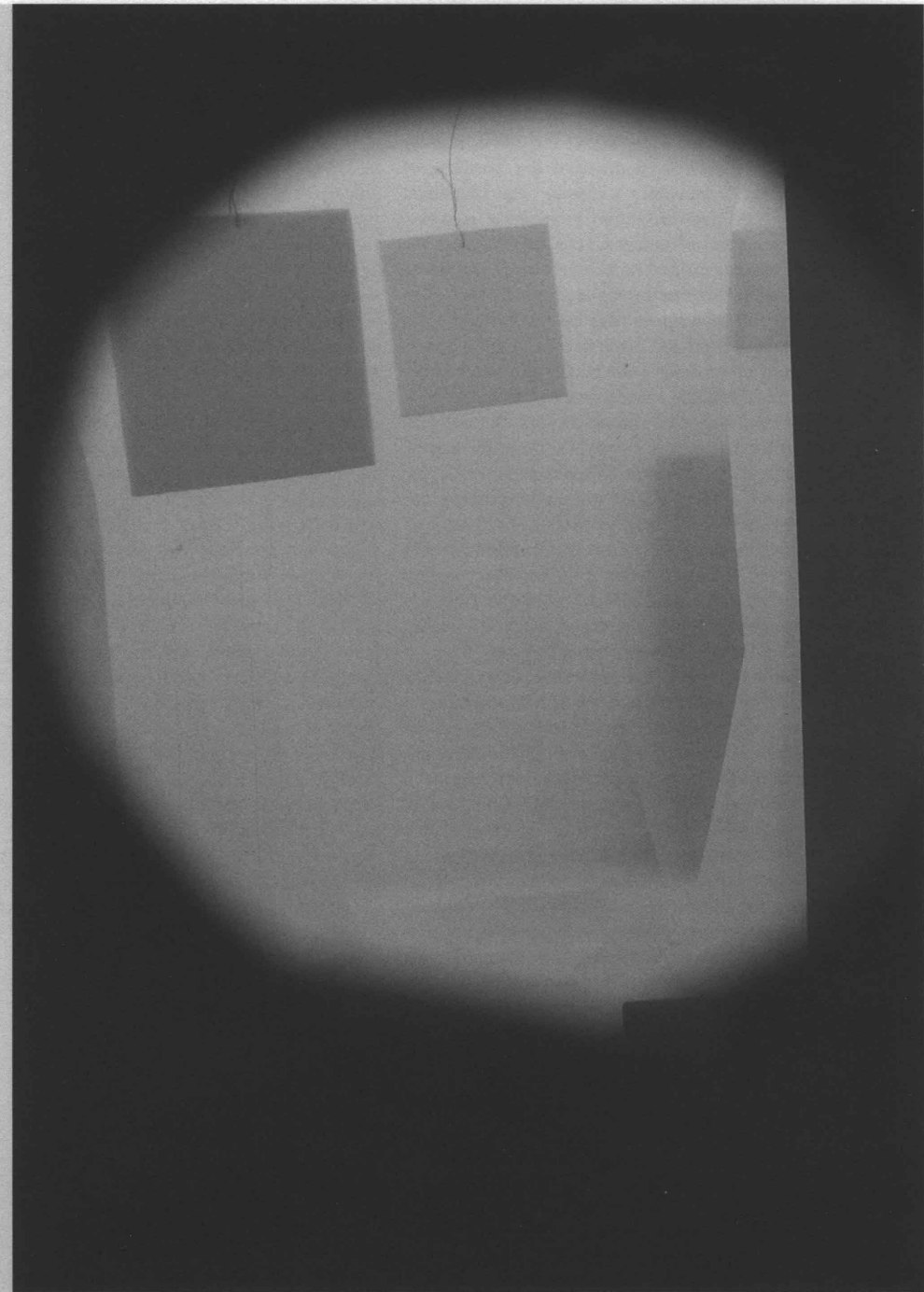
I was thinking that the activities might be like
different moments of exposure or
different intensities of exposure
the totality of these exposures being the one action
or intention – the intention to set up conditions, over
a period of time, of visibility of (here) an art scene...
this art scene in the Bethnal Green.

The other thought I had about this is that
by considering the whole programme as one event it
creates the possibility of understanding the event in
this case to be less of a sudden thing and more of a
slow burn exposure or series of exposures.

On the one hand the organisation (E:vent) undertakes
the daily routines that are necessary to maintain
its operation as a company, on the other hand its
operations are constituted in a mist of counter-
constitutions issued by (unaccountable) events. The
events themselves risk a different form of suspension
by means of filing systems. This proliferating scheme
of erasure creates the conditions for things to happen
always afresh, from scratch. Under these conditions
E:vent becomes a place-holder for an always different
taking-place.

The Event takes place as the relentless dispersal
(movement) of a counter-constitution undermining
that which has been, or can be established in time and
place
- 'an unaccountable zero of a new timeplace'
Edward Slopek, 2007

...or, the contrapositions of the locatability of the
document, and the forever moving operations of the
Event maintain a mutually antagonistic dynamic.



appear to do so—letters that can only be read when traced on a plan of the city's streets. It is an image made more vivid on account of there being no hills. The figure-of-eight, on the other hand, that Leopold Bloom walks in one day around Dublin seems open by comparison to varied geographical altitudes. All the same, a great effort in city building is put into the business of constructing horizontal surfaces. As reinforced concrete is the informed choice, so gravity is used as a natural generator of flatness. Look askance and see where it has been poured, no foundation dug, shuttering used to follow the slope turning earth and rubble incline to horizontal. Its surfaces have been smoothed. Vivid mosses make a difficult place to walk. When it is wet, even more so. We dreamt of a building's interior where rubble was deposited unaccountably, the arches of its ceilings constructed in concrete sections. Our walkway was a great beam. It was hardly a place for bodies. Perhaps it was the inside of a complex foundation, rooms mere contingency of the platform above our heads on which was situated some terrifying skyscraper or futuristic transportation link. Whole predicaments penetrated the place like prodding-rods. The concrete was stained with sulphur, views of the walls made poisonous by light from fluorescent strips that mixed with alien light from the horizon, radiation from an exploding sun—no difference of intensity, only a shift in the colour temperature from one part of the room to another. The natural light seemed devoid of conspiratorial voices by comparison. On the continent in the early 1950s two young men embarked on a cycling holiday. One evening having failed to find lodgings they resigned themselves to a night in a haystack. As the sun went down they arranged beds of straw. The air was filled with dust and tiny living things that caught the amber light and made of the countryside before them a great, golden volume. With no dust illuminated in the air in the space beneath concrete arches, the first fact of standing and looking was that one's eyes were no longer their usual spherules. Instead they were a skin coextensive with that sulphurous scum coating the walls. If it thinned in patches, the lime-white of the concrete took up the continuity. The foundation interior was one brain-eye. To turn, to look away, was to put dangerous stresses on vision-thought-substance. It was to risk its tearing. Having said that, with caution a re-establishing of twin-point perspective could be achieved. We looked down. The beam-walkway was cast with bevelled edges. Maybe after all it had been envisioned for bodies to scramble over. Acid water dripped. Scum bloomed in increasingly vivid greens. Now you try: see if it makes the surface too slippery for walking. Slide one foot sideways with weight resting on the other sufficient to maintain balance. Then with confidence built attempt a more audacious move to

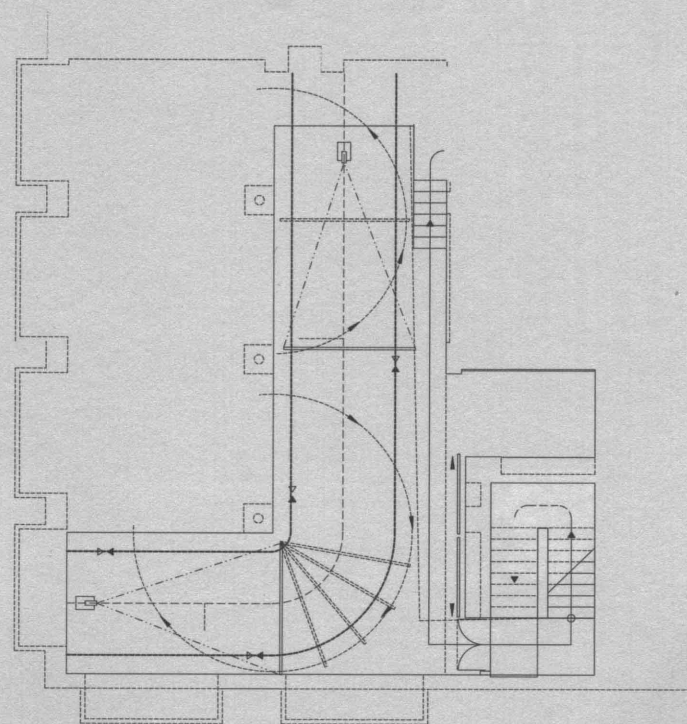
[on the construction of an event space]

> a fluid system that activates the eventnetwork
productive, generative, gaining particularities inside
it by the way the surface operates;
an energetically equipped environment
it operates responding to various functions and is
continuously adapting
choreography of the unconscious
a formless system
a membrane!

a criteria rather than a fixed
top down attitude towards materials
reasoning of scales, time, vocabularies, rhythms,
cycles, environments
capable of being bent, twisted, deformed and
differentiated while maintaining continuity
the primary motivating forces of the system is
performance

the system will establish a criteria anew each time,
determining critical levels of integration
at points the enterprise related to a context,
referential, and then becoming independent from it,
leaving all of the weight behind
forces that demand a body of a fluctuating condition
/ acting as a filter and performing in relation to the
particular, while maintaining an integrated whole
i learn through my body
mechanism of incorporation of material of different
natures

emergent patterns from variable pulleys/gravities
concentric and linear
recognising the value of constant flows and changes
and drawing the platform where that potential
energy can generate sediment knowledge and in
return generate an ongoing infrastructure



Proposal for event space with sliding screens fixed to central rail
Drawing by Lorena Camisuli (2004)



An experiment using the mechanics of a gondola to structure a performance. Brewster Tours agreed to slow the speed of the gondola down to sync with our musical score, (Banff, 2007).

slide both feet apart and together. These might be the beginnings of dance steps. On the far side there is water to thigh height. You'll need to wade. If you have company bodies will fall into symmetry in their movements, arms set as if describing bulky packages, legs pushing against the weight of water then given momentum in their stepping as a current floods to fill the volume vacated by limbs. Momentum is a fence of a word, all poles in a line driven into soft mud with its bars of rough branches slotted horizontally, arching, making pens in an estuary through which to drive fish. From this elevated viewpoint the estuary does not reflect the sky, except to say by highlights as the gentle chopping of its surface throws a myriad of suns into the lens. Otherwise it is dark. It is blue no doubt but dark—a darkness into which thought penetrates like something shot. An arrow is drawn to store the potential of a bow, then cast back as if though the eye into the brain. Feeling the smooth dish of the retina the projectile will venture out once more and be cast back. On the bank, shacks are constructed from silvered driftwood. They are on stilts. They have decks. There is a shock to come. It will be a phenomenon of that deck at its centre point just as 'o' breaks the word's progression like a mouth opened or eyes surprised. Under the relentless sun a great diversity of textures and colours of timber are unified into the blanched silver of the shacks. The timbers are worn and eroded and in that way seem rendered authentic, somehow. There is a drum in which cooking oil was packaged to be sold in bulk. Its purpose has been redirected. It sits as the obstacle midway between one end of the deck and the other. In this climate the doors of a shack can be a mere opening, boards and batons to make it secure if they should be needed stashed inside behind other things. On its outer circumference it is printed with ideal scenes. The convex inner wall is tin-rolled. It appears gold almost tending towards green. Its base is crimped and stamped with grooves for rigidity. Someone has polished the interior. There he is. He has knelt and rubbed with persistence using a rag until the surface seems to hold the light. So a figure crouches to work, half bent over and reaching into the drum, one hand on the lip, elbow bent acutely, one leg flexed to tip the body further and to extend his reach. No humming accompanies the work. It is on account of some discomfort, which is temporary—it helps in any event, adding to his resolve. The polishing should be done well so that the drum's interior will shine in the sun. No sound except the scuff of his heel accompanies the work as his foot finds traction on the boards. Three points—the ball of the foot, the knee, the toe; shifting for relief so that he can persist until the work is done. There are sounds of breath held then released, diaphragm making the airways a pressure chamber, mouth a valve to regulate

release, intensifying that work-moment; there are rubbing sounds. With a little stealth the head and body are lifted, extracted from their containment. An alteration is suffered as circulation normalises. Inside the shack, on the table, related preparations of a more precise kind involve a Petri dish and concern the relations of two liquids with different densities in contact. It is an experiment to assess how two liquids behave, to see if the densities of their preparations are correct. One liquid creeps under the other like a tongue. Where they meet the colour disperses. The thicker of the two is thinned showing the threshold between fluids and time's part in the experiment. The cleaning of the drum done, he can stand and wipe his hands. He will do so while engaging the other, who has now returned after seeing to matters of business. Their labour is one thing; its presentation is another. Like the illustrated scene on the repurposed cooking oil container, an adequate image is sought. Three words will be chosen and considered for their tensions, the efficiency with which pressure is generated in their relations, their consistency and imperviousness, the control they afford for the equalising of pressures. Water, time, maps. Water, the great resource giving locality to an enterprise; time, that which bites into matter and forces us to decide; maps, mysterious and immaterial knowledge possessed by those whose vista is ocean. Watch how concepts fall into threes: events/time/memory, control/power/history. Each sequence is a weather system incorporating the geographical features around which it emerges. The features will be the generators of these weather systems. At the foot of a slope, temperature inversion forces water vapour to condense. First held invisible, now it actualises as droplets, as mist that sits close to the ground enveloping fruit bushes. Meanwhile warmer air is held at a distance. It will lick in beneath later in the day. When conditions permit an equalising takes place. First mist and clear air remain distinct bodies, except in that zone of contact where mist is thinned. In fact, what is called mist is nothing but such thresholds. If it should be seen as consistent, that is so precisely due to the time which it stands for in the concept-triplet having been taken out of the equation. Mist is an obscuring that at the same time shows. How could it be so if not for thresholds with clear air penetrating deep into it like the folds confounding a body's interiority with exteriorities? Still we say the mist has rolled in and there it sits. It can only be so because it sits in a theatre marked by perimeter hedges, which obey the laws of perspective gesturing to a vanishing point, thus making a stage, the stage in turn plotting a viewing point in front. A body of mist stands impaled on fruit bushes. Its interior will not be known so easily, the volume obscured, barely disturbed by negative shapes of leaves and stems that penetrate.

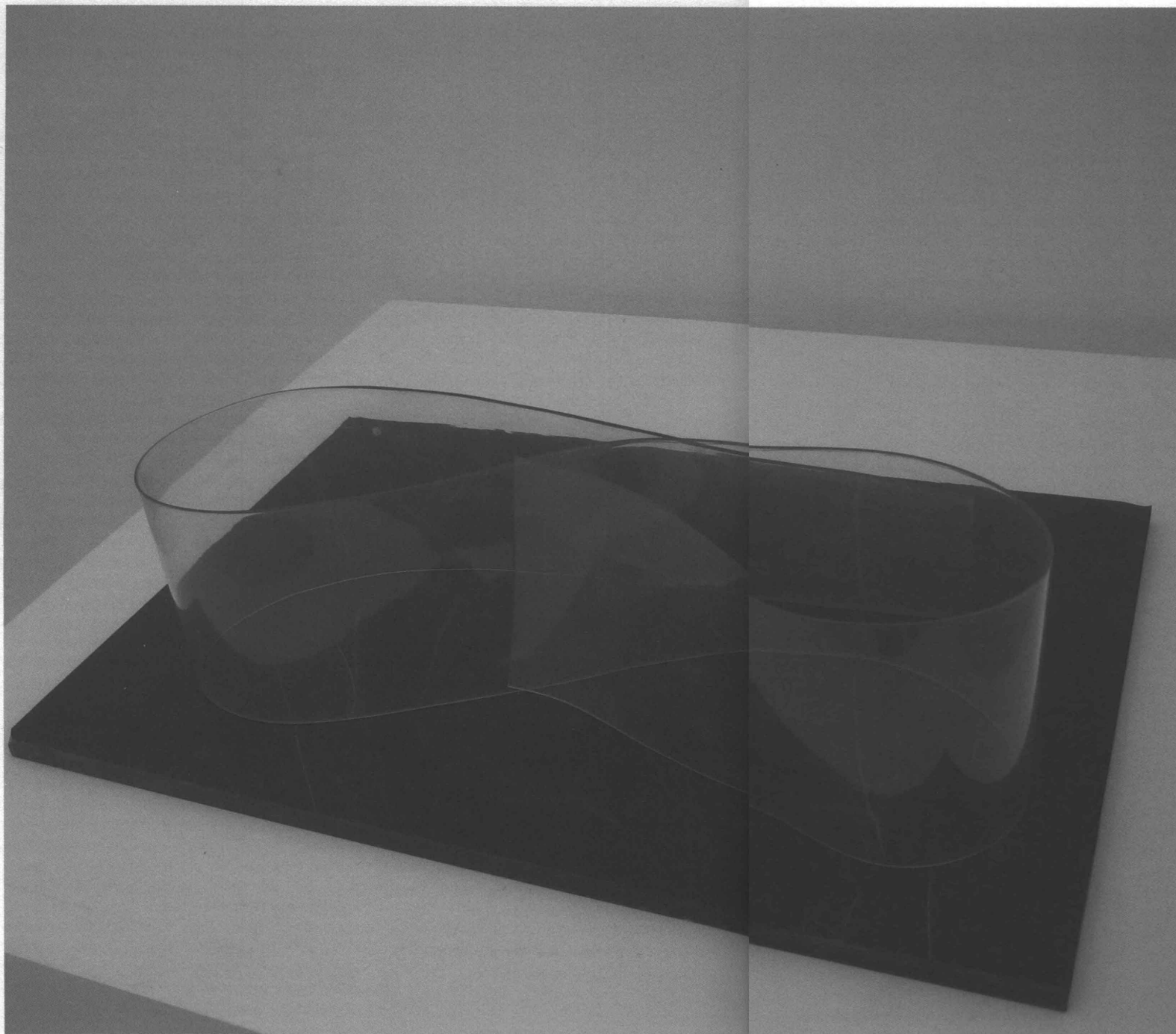
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>> ----- Original Message -----
>> From: Colm Lally
>> To: Tom McCarthy
>> Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2005
>> Subject: Finding a space for 'Location,
location, location'
>>
>>
>> Dear Tom,
>>
>> I am writing to see if you are interested in
a project I have in mind...
>>
>> Pete Gomes and I want to put together
documentation of the his exhibition at E:vent
>> and I would like to try to experiment with
this. My interest is to find a more
>> suitable space for presenting the work. I am
proposing the idea to redo the exhibition from
scratch. And to construct
>> new space for the presentation of the work.
>>
>> Taking the idea that some artworks exist
more completely in book
>> format rather than in the gallery space,
that the actual creative work is
>> contained and presented with more success in
text/image and through
>> reference to the artworks rather than
through the presentation of the
>> actual works in the built environment of the
gallery - thus avoiding the
>> necessary artist/curator/architect
collaboration. This can be the case even with
>> art objects... Indeed some artworks exist
more fully through witness report.
>>
>> The title piece for Pete's show, 'location
location location' spanned 1km
>> sq. around Bethnal Green. My proposal is to
experiment activating the artwork
>> in a space created using text rather than
the gallery space.
>>
>> Let me know if it sounds potentially
interesting to you.
>>
>>
>> Best
>> Colm
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>> ----- Original Message -----
>> From: Tom McCarthy
>> To: Colm Lally
>> Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2005
>> Subject: Finding a space for 'Location,
location, location'
>>
>> Dear Colm,
>>
>> Thanks for your mail. How exactly did you
think I might be able to
>> participate? Let me know...
>>
>> Tom x

> ----- Original Message -----
> From: "E:VENT" <root@eventnetwork.org.uk>
> To: "Tom McCarthy" <tom@envoi.demon.co.uk>
> Sent: Monday, May 23, 2005
> Subject: Re: Finding a space for 'Location,
location, location'
>
> Hi Tom,
> Thank you for your reply.
> I guess i'm asking you if you would take the
role of the architect and build
> a space to present the work in.
> ...i'll be perfectly honest with you Tom I
don't want to do an 'art
> catalogue' of the show, so I was thinking of
examining what happens to
> artworks in different spaces...i enjoy your
work and I had in mind anyway to
> make contact with you and the more I thought
about this idea of containing
> networked artworks, the vastness of the GPS
networks...the mind-boggling
> leaps in scale/distance...the more I thought
it would be worth running the
> idea by you and seeing if you could be
commissioned to create a topology
> through narrative, that could attempt to
contain 'location, location,
> location'. ...i was thinking of a narrative
structure that was 1km sq...
> Have I lost my mind?? ;p
>
> Colm
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>> ----- Original Message -----
On 24/5/05 17:02, "Tom McCarthy" wrote:

> Dear Colm,
>
> The two things that immediately come to
mind are:
>
> 1. the fact that Leopold Bloom's
movements around Dublin throughout the
> single day on which 'Ulysses' takes place
form a huge figure of eight.
>
> 2. that when the Luther Blisset multiple-
user name was launched in the
> late nineties it came wrapped up in a story
about a non-existent artist
> Harry Kipper who had been cycling around
Europe in such a way as to spell
> out the word 'ART', then had supposedly
disappeared.
>
> Then there's the whole psycho-geography
angle, and the
> situationist-back-to-surrealist tradition of
urban drift or derive, sliding
> sideways through regimes of signs... As far
as pete's project goes I think
> that something could be imagined.
>
> Tom
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E:vent gallery model

Conspirators watch from a distance, their view organised by the disc-vignette of a viewfinder. Boy and man; not father and son but the more ambiguous pair with vitality altogether different. The older, though his bodily mass be extensive by comparison, is allowed to be the youngster he was. Meanwhile, in turn, belying his relative slightness, the younger adopts a measure in his words. The bulk of the first—whose jacketed side appears like a veritable wall as they lie here on the dyke—is not so different from that of a fat friend in the playground, whose tentative affability is affecting in being a confession of need—the same need that any boy of any shape will have, of course. Any child's measured and thoughtful words are equally affecting. Such is the bond as each takes turns with the scope, one rolling towards it, the other rolling away to allow his comrade the necessary space. When class resumes the boy will have his thoughts sent into reverie. Though the teacher's comments are matters of fact they assemble with the traits of the afternoon to invoke unsanctioned images of how a membrane works. It filters on a cellular scale allowing a highly selective communication between the egg and its environment—such as exchange of moisture and ventilation. To put that another way, something passes though and something is held. As it happens all seems to take place rather slowly. The particles are in a dream-world. Those that pass provide an image of exquisite passivity, a world in which is found no conflict. Those that do not pass, that are repelled by the membrane, seem to exhibit a kind of compliance by their languid pace. But don't be fooled. The authority of the membrane is precisely that it makes its choices while seeming to deny agency. The money that politicians are said to 'throw at a problem' shows the same property, to pass right through and be lost in the void beyond. Or money bounces back, likewise leaving the problem unaffected. Whatever is said to have been 'thrown at a problem'—money, methodology—the point is to denounce brute gestures and call instead for engagement resulting in synthesis, transformation. Now we are talking about evolutionary processes, mutation as the membrane transforms on account of particles with which it is in contact. It will be something to think about again as another friend approaches with his Tupperware. A dozen or so of them are scattered throughout the cohort on a Tuesday afternoon. To track the pupils in possession of a Tupperware container of baking would provide some kind of data regarding the turbulent movements of bodies in a crowd. Beginning in the same place—let's imagine the scene in plan, or plotted on an animated graphic—in Home Economics, filtering through the door like corpuscles when the bell rings, crowding then spilling through in a fan-shaped group before getting caught, each in his or her different flows as they find

the singular relation of programme (to get home, to get to the bus) and accident (chance encounters with allies or sets of allies). So this friend has the usual luggage, a bag with books and a bag with sports kit; in addition, the Tupperware container, which he will open now showing a peculiarity of the lid, that it can be flexed to give partial access while the seal remains tight round the remaining sides. The container is opened to give a tantalising glimpse—or it is opened as if to do so, while in fact it's a question of how to maintain control of these various bags and boxes. We children who take Home Economics will eat what we bake, most likely finish the whole batch. Sharing the produce with other friends, when questions of its qualities are to the fore (though in any event the baking will be judged good) a thumb pressed gently against the sponge to feel its springy resistance and test for that moment at which the crisp and sugar-dusted exterior breaks, we will think again of synthesis and of ingredients in transformation. As the contents are consumed the lights on the screen marking each container carried on its involuting journey extinguish. But before all disperse to their terminations a technical fault interrupts the graphic presentation. The spatial representation freezes then the screen reverts to lines of blinking numbers illuminated on a black ground, which scroll at imperceptible speed before, in a flurry of coding, they tumble off the screen. The business of weighing up relative benefits of one kind of screen over another is informed by commentary provided by a colleague whose knowledge of these things is impressive. He speaks in a peculiar way. When given the opportunity to advise on a technical issue he will narrate from one perspective and then from another and will give barely any signal of the shift. What he presents is knowledge uncoupled from the stakes. Perhaps a lesson is being put forward too, that for its better implementation knowledge must be used this way. Uncoupled, it has a watery quality, like dregs in the base of a drum swirled to dissolve remaining solids. To put the stakes of a given case aside—to be impelled to do so—may provoke impatience. Impatience is the anticipated error. The warning is as follows. Don't attempt short-cuts, bring to bear all the resources of knowledge for your situation. That means rendering knowledge passive, agreeing terms with the liquid interface so that for a moment the event at stake might be caused to dissolve. As they crystallise again perhaps they do so in a way that bears resemblance to their previous form, but the degrees and/or the nature of the difference will not be anticipated. We who are colleagues, we who work and discuss together, have a mascot. He sits on the shelf, presides over affairs in the office, a silent witness to all. Asked to describe his hybrid morphology it'd be necessary to think differently for a moment, so

Tuesday, October 31, 2006 10:04 "Colm Lally" wrote:

> Hi Peter
 >
 > I would like to use the opportunity of submitting to /seconds to clarify my thoughts and reasoning behind E:vent - working within this technological environment but trying to focus on what is possible in terms of art and emerging, unstable, cultural spaces, where the thresholds are fluid, the edges of the artwork become hard to define and the moment of engagement with the art also problematic. The artwork doesn't have a finished moment, no pause and no object to gaze upon.
 > The location has no horizon, the artistic gesture seeps through networked, public space to remote sites without end, like thoughts made public, like postcards sent out into the world, not relating to the private space of a private view and the green bottles of Carlsberg Export drunk to the art object with which you are only left with the option to desire to possess it.
 > maybe I'm being a bit too poetic this morning!
 > ... I'm proposing an understanding of the mechanics of events and event structures as a means for engaging with art.
 >
 > Thematic approaches to events (water, time, maps, etc.);
 > Event as performance;
 > Co-creation in art;
 > Process in art;
 > The ontology of the event;
 > The epistemological qualities of event-based work;
 > The hermeneutics of the event;
 > Translating event structures from art into daily life;
 > The philosophy of events;
 > Events, time, and memory;
 > Process in art, philosophy, and society;
 > The idea of the event: control, power, and history;
 > Events and gender;
 > Musicality and emergent order in events;
 > Algorithms and events, event as algorithm;
 > Event and homiletics;
 > Publishers of event scores and event-based books;

> Designing events: boxes, books, and kits;
 > Event scores and objects;
 > Event scores and installations;
 > Theater of the object;

Wednesday, November 1, 2006 13:45 "Peter Lewis" wrote:

Hi Colm

the poetic/politic momentum from poetic [outside] to politic [inside] = the subject as event. I read too much Badiou on the event [the most articulated of all on the subject/event] but our thinking is co-incident here.. the subject is not the ego, nor the individual vis a vis the 'social' as an epistemic discourse [I think you're onto this point] and in this sense, the poetic is the 'shock' of the outside that becomes the inside subject as exception to the rule [universal] and therein a new political space, a 'new' discourse [of the New] that is always already there but not to be occupied [void but not voided i.e 'evil'] - the void is the absent centre of the process of the event: subjectivisation

now I'm being too 'philosophical' this morning!

sits right for the issue

best

peter

The following correspondences relate to a research proposal for an online interface for E:vent.

Working title: Liquid

Collaborators: Chris Bates & Dr Chris Roast from Sheffield Hallam University and Colm Lally

Submitted by ChrisBates on Tue, 2006-04-04 12:25.

[Setting the scope](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

For this online gallery/curation tool/collaborative environment I thought that we should begin by defining a scope for the project. I wasn't, and indeed I'm still not sure how to do this. When I talked to Colm we seemed to have endless ideas, there were vast possibilities rolling around us. Every few minutes we reached into the air and picked out some fantastic new idea.

The real problem is how to make something real, something tangible from possibility. The approach which is used in software engineering is to throw a methodology at the problem. Use its tools and techniques to help out.

Since Chris and I are both software engineers and academics we really ought to eat what we bake. We ought to begin by writing some scenarios to help us identify the users and their uses of the system. These can be refined into use-cases and drawn as UML diagrams. Data, processing and, ultimately classes, will be refined from the use-cases until we have decided what the project might be. Then we'll undertake a flurry of coding to get a prototype up and running, demo it and move on to something else.

That's excellent, except it isn't happening. We, Chris and I, sit in the office and say that we ought to make a start. We say that every day but nothing happens. I think that because we're not really software engineers. Sure we teach aspects of programming and can handle UML as well as we need to but, to be honest, it's not in our hearts. We are both geeks. We can drive emacs or vi and can use LaTeX. I'm not saying that Geeks (ugly word, that) can't do stuff like software design. I'm merely saying that it might be too early in this project and that if we have a go at building something then a design might appear later, when it's needed.

Submitted by ChrisBates on Mon, 2006-04-10 16:03.

[Web 2.0?](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

The new generation of Web applications use a mix of XML and JavaScript to bring interactive functionality. If you think about something like Google Maps then you may find that your experience of using it is very similar to that of using a conventional desktop application. Google, and others, have spent a lot of money and time thinking about how this type of application can work. We need to borrow some of their ideas and apply them to our problem domain.

Although we probably emotionally want to be true to Free Software/Open Source ideals we have to be

realistic. We need to develop a prototype which will work with pretty much any standards-compliant Web browser on any platform. I mention this because it means that we can't use XUL to build a proper application since it's a Mozilla-specific technology.

Whilst I'm writing about these things... this site doesn't work using Opera 8.5 on Linux. I can view it but I can't login. Works OK in Firefox.

Submitted by Colm Lally on Tue, 2006-04-11 07:53.

[Related Software Project \[kurator.org\]](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

kurator.org extends some of the online systems that question the role of the curator in the curatorial process of selection, presentation and distribution of immaterial artworks (most notably rumne, artport or low-f). A new, open and experimental system is currently in development, that puts into practice some of the ideas and questions that the conference aims to raise.

The project recognises the recent practice and discussions around 'software art' and posits the idea of 'software curating'. In this way, it encapsulates some of the ways in which work of an immaterial nature challenges some of the orthodoxies around the practice of curating and some of the social relations it elicits.

Essentially it will speculate upon future possibilities in this emergent field of practice, in which curating and artistic expression are bound together in new ways and in which the production of software extends beyond off-the-shelf proprietary models.

The Kurator software is a collaboration between the programmer Grzesiek Sedek, and the curator Joasia Krysa.

Submitted by Colm Lally on Tue, 2006-04-11 08:09.

[Tate Conference \[CuratingImmaterialitySystems\]](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

I'm sending you a link to archives of a conference that took place last summer. This was a useful event and came at a good time as Chris and I were emailing over and back about related ideas.

This conference asks how curators can respond to new forms of self-organising and self-replicating systems, databases, programming, net art, software art and generative media, and in general to systems of immaterial cultural production. What new models of curatorial practice are needed to take account for shared, distributed and collaborative objects and processes? [Curating Immateriality Systems]

Submitted by chris roast on Tue, 2006-04-11 20:06.

[The footprints of curation](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

How about the idea that visitors and viewers of an exhibition engage in a combination of the experiences that the curator "designs" and their own experience. For virtual exhibitions the potential to develop this

combination in more flexible and interesting ways exists.

One idea would be for the exhibition to passively embody / reflect features of the previous viewers' experiences. A viewer could then not only "see" what experiences there have been, but make their own similar, different or unique. Clearly we cannot consider actual experience as that would be widely held to be unique to a viewer, but we can consider "traces" of experience.

In a physical gallery imagine the footprints of previous viewers being visible on the floor. You could follow them, see which work was rarely stopped at, see where crowds had formed round a guide, spot school parties (smaller footprints) and so forth.

Now if we think of a virtual exhibition, the works may move or around, the paths of footprints could move with them, or the works could move to make the common paths of footprints shorter, or a work no longer on show may still be hinted at by the footprints that passed where it used to be.

There are numerous possible "implementations" of such a concept, but the key elements seem to be non-prescriptive experience "traces", non-invasive "trace" gathering. Of course the curator will now have to step back from one level of control and take on another of what "traces" to show, hide, allow and manipulate.

Submitted by Colm Lally on Wed, 2006-04-12

09:31.

[Curatorial Perspective](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

I realise that I posted some information about 'Curating, Immateriality, Systems: On Curating Digital Media' without explaining my interest in this.

I think our project overlaps with the above under the headings 'presentation' and 'distribution', I am less interested in exploring ideas around 'selection' or 'the role of the curator'.

By 'presentation' i am interested in the presentation of artifacts such as software art; also the presentation of an art event, for example a live webcam of a performance; or the presentation of documentation of an art object or event.

By 'distribution' i am interested less in who controls the distribution, but more the technology, infrastructure or interface.

Chris I like your idea about leaving a trace. In some ways this is what E:vent is all about. We try to initiate discussions around the activities that happen here, at the moment we are using the functionality provided by this web interface such as blogs and online forums. These are interesting traces because they are complex and unexpected and have knowledge creation value. But I would also be interested in discovering more innovative tracing materials.

[comment 1]

Submitted by ChrisBates on Mon, 2006-04-17 18:30.

The trace idea certainly has mileage as something to prototype. I'm not sure how it works in a truly

accustomed have we become to his furry shape. Mozilla is the comfortably self-possessed presence. He will be dispensed with as swiftly as he was instated. His removal will give a breath of life to the place that perhaps his positioning on the shelf did previously. We will be reminded that we have a future, that the future of our enterprise is conditioned by just such decisive moves. Either side on the shelf soft-back publications measure its length to each extreme. The shelf below is measured too in the same way. Marked by their irregular shapes and characterless block-ends, visible as we look down with a view restricted by the other shelves, the idea of their contents provokes an exhaustion of blandness. They are slim volumes for the most part but their covers indicate contents of close-packed print, page layouts to test the capacity of eyes. It is difficult, it seems, not to imagine these publications all the same in the effect they would have if we were compelled to read them from start to finish. They are books in collection. They entreat their contents to be available and yet are no more appealing than items on a list or the audited inclusions on an inventory. Relief is sought in colour, here associated with a length of synthetic raffia of bright red on which an experiment is being conducted. Can it be broken by one person using two hands otherwise unaided? The appearance of fragility is deceptive, the point is revealed when the raffia is unravelled. What seemed to be a narrow binding is in fact a wide strip of plastic film, in this form distributing forces applied to it so that the arms set the task of snapping the strip learn immediately that their strength is insufficient. The attempt will be marked by a moment of energetically feigned anger and a flurry of further experimentation—twisting the raffia this way and that, pulling at one angle and then another. Then a smile of failure (which, in accompanying the sudden relaxation of the arms, seems to be of the arms as much as of the face). Other plastics possess similarly unexpected resistance without the deception of folds. Polyester, for instance, recognisable by a milkiness in its transparency, due to its toughness, is used for processes of encapsulation. Holding the polyester sheet between thumbs and forefingers of both hands, with a little force applied the lack of 'give'—let's say the complete intransigence—of the material makes evident the same fact, that this stuff has an internal strength far in excess of that which can be brought to bear by hands and fingers in this or any other of their possible orientations. Still, on account of its fragile appearance, imagine damage done—imagine it even as force of the gentlest kind is applied. In that gesture is the style of a mechanisation about which it can be said, capacity to destroy and apparent gentleness are combined. Pneumatic bolt cutters sheer a steel bar as thick as your finger. Looking on, the heat generated at

distributed system - but that's just implementation detail which we can thrash out.

Submitted by ChrisBates on Mon, 2006-04-17 18:17.

[Creating Exhibitions](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

This whole thing is not really a typical Web interface. It sounds more like a conventional desktop application. Having previously rejected the XUL approach I now feel it has some merit. We can use XUL components plus XHTML and CSS to do nearly all of these things. If we use XML data structures then we can also add in some AJAX so that as the state of the client changes so the server is automatically and (nearly) concurrently updated.

One difficulty that users might encounter is in finding such a rich interface within a Web application. Web apps usually have very simple interfaces with the browser providing much of the supporting infrastructure. A very rich client interface starts to break that model. In a way this is one of the advantages of XUL: nobody expects Thunderbird to work like a Web page. Everyone who uses it expects it to be like any other email/newsclient.

Submitted by ChrisBates on Fri, 2006-05-12 13:09.

[Free Culture](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

Got this from Linux User and Developer.

A group of "free culture" advocates have created a new site to promote a "Free Content Definition" as an analog to the Free Software Definition, which aims to fill the void in setting clear standards for the freedom of artistic and literary "content" as opposed to software. The group hopes to moderate a discussion leading to a consensus on a "free content definition", and possibly an alternate name for the organisation. Project co-founder Eric Möller comments, "In the free software world, the two primary definitions -- the Free Software Definition and the Open Source Definition -- are both fairly clear about what uses must be allowed. Free software can be freely copied, modified, modified and copied, sold, taken apart and put back together. However, no similar standard exists in the sphere of free content and free expressions. "We believe that the highest standard of freedom should be sought for as many works as possible. And we seek to define this standard of freedom clearly. We call this definition the 'Free Content and Expression Definition', and we call works which are covered by this definition 'free content' or 'free expressions'".

Submitted by chris roast on Fri, 2006-05-19 10:40.

[Subversion](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

Subversion is an interesting concept highlighted in initial discussions around Liquid. What would subversion mean in Liquid?

Any artist could have the freedom to control how and when their work is positioned in the user experience. For instance, an artist may "mount" their work with a rule set that describes the "start-viewing" and "end-viewing" conditions. Such rules may

determine: that the viewer should have seen one work before having seen another; that the viewer must see another work immediately following this one; or even that a viewer must spend more than a minute viewing the work. Such rules may generate interest and also undermine the curatorial objectives. Depending upon the approach taken, the curator may be in a position of having to find and override rules that they disapprove of.

Submitted by chris roast on Mon, 2006-05-22 11:42.

[What's a work from a distance?](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

Some simple ideas below demonstrate a range of problems and possibilities, for what is a "work" for the viewer prior to engaging with it.

1. A classic approach would be to offer, an icon and/or title for a work.

2. A novel approach would be for a work to have simply a place ... nothing that defines it other than where it is in relationship to fixed features (i.e. on the south wall) and less fixed features (i.e. where everyone is standing by it). [Excuse the use of traditional gallery examples, but I think this helps avoid pitfalls of online traditions and helps with considering requirements.]

* Option 1) is a simple idea, it demands more of the artist, requiring that the icon and label be sufficient to interest or to draw viewers. It is very similar to sites that host art examples, though in those cases it is sometimes just project title that is used. Who should control the icon/label?

* Option 2) opens up interesting possibilities, it perhaps emphasises the importance of some of the values Liquid is interested in. In particular it mirrors some of the implicit trends with internet based works. For example, if a work appears to be of interest on blogs and new-groups, then it is on that basis that it is viewed - in fact in such cases the label and icon for the work is probably ignored as there is a community expression of interest that is more relevant. In this case name for the work becomes important, so that people can refer to it simply. What about something closer to the crowd in the gallery ... you can be drawn-in, experience the work, and never needing to know exactly what it is that you saw!

Submitted by Colm Lally on Thu, 2006-06-08 18:17.

[Workshop](#)

Categories: Liquid Interface

With Chris Roast, Chris Bates and Colm Lally

Proposal:

The prototype will present a series of 'Context Planes' plus an 'Alpha Plane'. These planes will be more like an 'interface set' - a set of dynamic networked components or agents. One of the agents will be the starting point (Alpha Plane). The emerging set of Context Planes will house content that relates to the Alpha Plane. From a curatorial point of view the initial set of planes will be constructed by E:vent curators in collaboration with the artist.

A typical scenario might be that we present a piece of software/art on the Alpha Plane. A guest speaker is invited to the opening night to talk and possibly open up discussion about the work. A video of the talk is uploaded to a Context Plane next to the Alpha Plane. The user can access previous Alpha Planes and construct his/her own cluster of contexts and art works on his/her desktop. Example: Mac Widgets.

the point of cutting is not apparent. There may be a little smoke. It is surface grease burning. In other respects the great forces here implemented are evident in a tick, a stutter of the movement of material movement, which might easily be attributed to banal causes and so missed. Likewise great forces are evident in a sound accompanying, a 'creak' of material the like of which one has not heard before. All the same, it is only a 'creak' and so, like the stutter, can easily be judged unremarkable. If most often such sounds are explained away, in the worlds of sensitive souls they will come again to superimpose themselves unexpectedly over a day's circumstances. Such things are seen through a keyhole. It is a poor image on the television screen, an image distorted not least by the bowl of the glass with rounded edges where pictures degenerate into grime. If there are two modes of image, one nested within the other—television set in room represented to show the griminess of a life—the keyhole-effect of visibility is produced otherwise, precisely by that double-take in which the all-too-easily dismissible is considered again and seen to be unaccountable strangeness wrapped up in the ordinary. There are colours in combination assembled with the flicker of a cathode-ray. It is an ENVELOPE in which YOU might slot yourself, although be disappointed immediately with the place. The spidery arms and legs of a renowned musician doing his thing in front of a stadium audience. How narrowly fitting are his jeans, how carefully tailored his shirt in navy-blue silk, how fine his shoes. Here he is at the centre, his world extending out in arcs from the point at which he sits. In his closest vicinity a great instrument—or is it a bank of instruments?—is laid out as the first radius, which is that of his dextrous reach. From there he controls the waves of sound that wash over the auditorium and its great sea of heads. Then the span of his reach is echoed by the blocks of seating. As the seats increase in number with distance from the stage to accommodate the greater number of his less-wealthy but equally committed fans, so with more certainty the many point to the one. The performer sits at the centre of his web. A camera on a beam dips and elevates to show him from a range of angles. As the TV audience sees the back and the profile of the performer, that shot emphasises again the point at the centre of proceedings, the performer's body, the gangling articulations of his limbs. The camera on a beam gets too close. It shows the artifice hidden from members of the audience in the instrument, or bank of instruments. The keys of his enormous keyboard light up in primary colours. With hands and with feet, he plays the music his fans know and love. But the keys that light so strikingly with the touch of his hands, with the touch of his feet, are brute controls. There is no finesse in their



This temporary music chamber was installed outside the gallery, next to the building's sewage pipe. As the daily rhythms and necessary movements passed through, the music chamber would resonate with the sound of falling water. "...It is a kind of music I often thought when she. Acoustics that is. Tinkling. Empty vessels make most noise. Because the acoustics, the resonance changes according as the weight of the water is equal to the law of falling water. Like those rhapsodies of Liszt's, Hungarian, gipsyeyed. Pearls. Drops. Rain. Diddleiddle addleaddle ooddeoddle. Hissss. Now. Maybe now. Before." [Ulyses, page 518]

operation as in the keys of a piano for instance (which these keys mimic all the same), designed for a player's virtuosity. Now it can be seen. His keys are merely buttons, on/off switches. And although the musician moves in time with the rhythms of his music in the way a player might, it is now in doubt as to whether the actions of his hands and the actions of his feet are responsible for the alteration of the sound emanating from vast banks of speakers at either side of the stage after all. The button-keys and their organisation are reminiscent of a church organ. In the church, likewise, banks of controls are available within the reach of one player. Keyboards on several levels are laid out for the ease and comfort of arms so that, even when there is no organist present, her body can be inferred. Pedals extend under her seat. They are a footprint into which her tough little shoes will line up to find the place they have been before. The accessories of her outfit coordinate in a complex way. It is not a matter of one colour matching another. Those that differ and that give the character to her outfit sit happily next to one another on account of intermediary colours and intermediary textures, through alliances each being made able to approach the other. The black of her shoes for instance and the grey leather of her handbag would be thought a mismatch if not for the dove-grey colour of her skirt and her top in pale lemon. By increments and perhaps unexpectedly the colours between allow the two leathers to agree. The handbag is made by a company able to market its products By Royal Appointment. Given the company's esteemed clientele, its premises on the industrial estate look surprisingly inauspicious. We hear that the Queen has visited recently on a tour of successful British businesses and we wonder if, on that occasion, the workers dressed more smartly than usual. Standing on a chair and looking down at a steep angle it's possible to see into their workshops. The woman who makes the handbags is organised about her work. Her table is clean and neatly arranged. She herself however is dressed rather untidily in a black sweatshirt and black jogging pants. Watching her for a moment there is no doubting her skill. She smoothes the table's covering by drawing her hands from its centre towards the edges. Then she places on the table a new set of components ready to be assembled. An impression of care and diligence is confirmed by her gestures. Now we can watch how it's done. The leather is of fine quality. It has been stiffened with a backing of some sort. The shape of this component has been cut and prepared already, probably with the aid of a template and perhaps by another of the firm's employees. Now it must be fixed to a sheet of some other sort of material, which she lays on top. Then overlaps already prepared with adhesive are turned and stuck flat.