

# ELECTRONIC LITERATURE IN/WITH PERFORMANCE

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## **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

*The Context of the Research and the Seminar at Arnolfini Bristol hosted by Falmouth University within the ELMCIP research project, May 3rd/4th 2012*

A significant element of electronic literature as a field of practice and inquiry has been its relationship to liveness and the body. This has taken a number of forms, ranging from embodied gestures required to access a digital text; to public readings of digital text from the interface or projected into a specific space; to live performances involving one or many performers in concert with, or in response to, a computer-generated text. Some of these performance modes have links to recognizable practices such as theater or, within the literary world, the live reading. Others are more specific to e-literature such as the mouse gesture, the haptic gesture of the touch screen, the embodied interaction with motion capture, etc. Initially, this delimited the area of digital text practice interrogated by the Falmouth University (UCF) project. However, the course of the project broadened the area of interrogation to open up new questions about the relationship between performance and electronic literature.

While retaining the focus on the embodied, live performance, a wider conception of the notion of performativity was developed during the course of the research and applied to works of e-literature. This wider concept sought to give an account of performativity across the whole range of the digital device. Another way of looking at this is that the word “performance” can be applied to the hardware (the computer as machine), the software (the operating system, the programmable codes), as well as direct human interaction at the interface and beyond. For this reason the Falmouth seminar sought to attract not just academics but engineers, coders, and programmers as well.

## ***PRACTICE-AS-RESEARCH AS A METHODOLOGY***

In addition to an extended notion of performativity, the Falmouth research was interested in examining the extent to which practice-as-research can usefully play an explanatory role in the emerging field of e-literature. E-literature is by its very nature interdisciplinary, and it is often the case that academic researchers of digital texts are not only practitioners but also technicians in that they are closely involved in the practical development, programming, and application of digital text works. Needless to say, the notion of practice-as-research is a contentious and ill-defined issue in the humanities and requires a certain amount of framing.

Electronic literature is a complex process. Language is embedded in a “noisy” environment of hardware, software, sound, image, video, interface, etc. In order to be realized, e-literature needs to mobilize at a minimum the forces of computing, writing, performance, visual art, and design. Because of this mix of discourses and practices, much of the knowledge that emerges from e-literature is an embodied knowledge and a knowledge that crosses back and forth between theory and practice. In other words, it is a *praxis*. Much of e-literature is also processual. In order to give a full account of a piece of digital text, researchers have to be aware of the processes by which the work was created. Because of all this, it was important to make the Bristol seminar, above all, a dialogue not between thinkers and doers (in e-lit, as stated above, these are often one and the same person) but between thinking and doing. A further aspect of this dialogue is an attempt to break down the distinction between these two modes such that thinking becomes a form of doing and vice versa. This approach is well summarized by Barbara Bolt in the following passage:

Praxical knowledge takes a number of forms and it is this multiplicity that provides creative arts research with its distinctive character. Whilst the artwork is imminently articulate and eloquent in its own right, tacit knowing and the generative potential of process have the potential to reveal new insights; both those insights that inform and find a form in artworks and those that can be articulated in words. It is here that the exegesis offers a critical role. Rather than just operating as an explanation or contextualisation of the practice, the exegesis plays a critical and complementary role in revealing the work of art. (Bolt 2005, 7-8)

One final comment as a pretext to an account of the seminar: the event itself was located at Arnolfini Bristol. This is an internationally recognized art and performance venue with strong links to digital media work. Given the interdisciplin-

ary nature of e-literature and its practitioners, and, mindful of the importance of impact and outreach, it was decided to locate the Falmouth seminar off-campus in order to attract a larger and more diverse public, especially to the performance events held in the evenings of the seminar.

### ***DAY ONE: RECOGNIZABLY THEORETICAL PAPERS***

Jerome Fletcher (Associate Professor of Performance Writing, University of Falmouth) gave an introductory paper that framed or contextualized many of the points made above. The paper began from the observation that “performance” was a word that permeated the discourse surrounding e-literature but was nowhere properly theorized. Building on N. Katherine Hayles’ distinction between the “event” of digital text as opposed to the “object” of the literary text, the paper sketched out what e-literature inflected by performance theory might look like. It would comprise a series of integrated multimodal writing practices set within a field which would provide a context for understanding performance in relation to:

- language (speech act theory, ordinary language philosophy, integrational linguistics);
- writing and embodied performance (theater studies and performance art theory);
- programming (software studies) social and ritual interaction (Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, Judith Butler et al.);
- philosophy (contextualism, A.N. Whitehead, Badiou and Deleuze on the event); and
- interactivity (games theory).

This was presented as a cartographic exercise rather than a fully worked-out program. It sought to provide an extensive but delimited framework for investigating how e-literature might be configured with the theory and practice (praxis) of performance.

As a computer engineer and former member of Hewlett-Packard Research Labs in Bristol, John Lumley (University of Nottingham) was interested in what the computer scientist understands by the word “performance” with reference to the machine. His paper looked at the history of computing and in particular the exponential growth in demand for improved performance. The focus of his presentation was the notion of speed and time, the subtitle being “Why Things Take

Time and How We Make Them Faster.” At the same time, he touched on the question of size. As the demands for still and moving graphics and sound grow, data gets bigger and bigger, requiring increased performance from the machine. There are limits, however, on both the amount of data that can be processed and the speed at which it can be processed, due to the sequentiality of tasks and the fact that each one takes time. This led to two questions: if we can’t do X, Y, and Z faster, can we do them simultaneously? And if we can’t do X faster, can we do many X at once? These questions introduce the notion of parallel processing and from there forward to the possibility of quantum computing. These issues of computer performance feed directly into e-literature discussions about the way in which changes in technology affect changes in the way digital text works are displayed. Thus, work that was made for a particular device some time ago will run faster on modern machines, and, if pace and rhythm are important aspects of the performativity of digital text, then this can have an adverse effect on the work.

Clive Fencott (writer and computer scientist) gave a paper entitled “Performance as a Categoriser.” This was inflected by games theory and at the same time examined the overlap between experimental page-based literature and e-literature. Here, he was looking at the “SPaRring (Scripton Presentation and Removal) process” which is enacted between the sparring partners “playereader” (the reader who is willing to play) and text. He argued that the multiple acts of bringing-into-being produce the phenomenal from the literal. The many forms that technology can enable, from the pBook (paper book) to the potentially unlimited forms of the e-book of e-literature, now constitutes an open field.

The Inside-Out Code—a once taken-for-granted instance of the Hermeneutic Code, the enigma of the text machine—becomes an equally playful aspect of SPaRring. The playereader becomes aware of the signifying potential of interactive forms.

Alternative SPaRring forms are often more unsettling in pBooks where the rigid alignment of ascending page numbers and narrative potential has often seemed to characterize all that a book could be. But alongside digital texts, many pBook authors such as Mark Z. Danielewski, Kim Newman, and Milorad Pavić have offered similar disturbances to the playereader.

Offering up some alternative terms, Fencott argued that the category that transcends the print-digital divide might be referred to as the “interactive” and

maybe the electronic book as the “ie-book,” in other words. And the variable that characterizes this category is performance.

For Fencott, this raises a number of questions around performativity and the text. If the playereader’s performance with the text is no longer a given but a conscious act of discovery, then what are we enacting? Are we different SPaRring with these novel forms? Are we less the consumer, more the explorer, playereading more into our selves? And what happens when SPaRring is brought into public performance?

Alexandra Saemmer’s (Associate Professor for Information and Communication Sciences at University Paris 8 and vice-director of Labex H2H Laboratory) paper, “Hypertext Reading: A Retro-Projective Performance,” was the first attempt of the seminar to engage with a performative/theoretical hybrid. According to Saemmer, “a tissue of potentialities surrounds any real-life situation. Before it is activated, any hypertext has us dream about this tissue.” Surveying hypertext from its earliest history, Saemmer argued:

Hypertext is a powerful generator of imaginary worlds because it holds out on the reader: before it is activated, the reader often has no concrete idea what will happen. After it is activated, the reader certainly notices that most hypertexts invariably link a text to another text. The original text that I propose to call “parent text” has, however, at least temporarily disappeared from the screen. That is how hypertext plays with our expectations, before and after its activation.

Saemmer further described hypertext through the image of “a projection room where parent texts and related texts succeed and overlap each other, where more or less blurred memory traces ‘silt-up,’ meet or deceive our ‘horizon of expectations.’” Saemmer also argued that hypertext could be seen as a risky “toy”:

In its extreme stage, hypertextual reading becomes the symbol of a society characterized by its fleeting attention, a society lacking concentration. It illustrates in a powerful, literally “palpable” way the extent to which the obsession with “frenetic clicking” is grounded on a failure to remember: a failure exploited by a “compulsive capitalism” that has invaded the digital networks.

In these circumstances, Saemmer called for “[a] new culture of interpretative reading” but expressed concern as to whether readers are ready to engage with anything more complex than the notion of hypertextuality as the “confirmation of information.”

Saemmer turned to some key concepts from the “reader-response” theory in Anglophone research to engage this question, largely derived from Wolfgang Iser and Hans Jauss. For Saemmer, “Hypertext not only establishes a relation between a parent and a related text, it is also an interactive, ‘manipulable’ element that combines at least two different semiotic systems through the same active support: a text and a ‘manipulation gesture.’” This latter has been widely ignored.

Certain reading practices emerged from her analysis, such as “‘pro-stimulative’ reading, which may ideally stimulate the most prolific, alert, hyper-attentive minds, driven by an unquenchable curiosity.” She also referred to a “retro-projective” reading, which is interpretive and performative. This is a reading which requires time. By taking the time to examine the relationship between parent and related text in order to better understand that relationship, the retro-projective reading flies in the face of one of the fundamental tenets of the information society, which is the constant accrual of new data in an onward rush. According to Saemmer, “[i]n a society of impatience, the methodical retro-projective, interpretative reading therefore becomes a militant act.”

Aiming to reverse claims for the “death” of the hypertext, Saemmer’s amalgam of semiotics and pragmatics seeks to show to what extent hypertext is still “alive,” and worth the time we invest in exploring it.

In conversation with J. R. Carpenter, Jörg Piringer (programmer, sound poet, live performer, and teacher at the University of the Arts, Vienna) explored the notion of the performativity of code. Carpenter herself, although not trained as a programmer, creates her own code through adapting that of others or working with programmers. The central question they discussed is the extent to which code can be thought of as performative in the same way that aspects of natural language can be thought of as performative according to J. L. Austin’s formulation. The conversation hinged on questions of social context. Does code (which is certainly performative in that it is executable, i.e. it brings about certain actions) have a sufficiently developed social context to count as performative in the same way as natural language? The performative might then provide a context for talking about writing at the level of code and at the level of the interface within the same mode of analysis.

Maria Engberg’s (Assistant Professor at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden) paper was in some senses a companion piece to Saemmer’s as it was concerned with the aesthetic explorations of tactility and sensuality that

contemporary multi-touch gesture technologies offer. She explored the provocative performative space that is created in the feedback loop of the (popular) modernist interface design and engineering of Apple's various iPhones and iPads and the multifarious aesthetic, musical, graphical, and textual interfaces of applications created by musicians, artists, and writers. Her paper focused on a comparative analysis of interfaces, specifically the "dance of gestures" and its tight link to representation via digital touch, the movement of the device, and the interfacial aesthetic elements of sound, image, and text. Engberg presented three interfaces/experiences: Jörg Piringer's *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy*, Björk's *Biophilia*, and Eric Loyer's *Strange Rain*.

The paper explored what an aesthetics of gesture and touch might be, realigning the rhetoric to address the applications as sensory, intellectual, and aesthetic experiences rather than "interactive" or as game/play. She analyzed the interfaces and the experiences they shape through their "complex surfaces" (a phrase coined by poet and theorist John Cayley) and through their "pliable" and "rhythmic" qualities of aesthetic interaction (using terms from interaction designer Jonas Löwgren). The dialogue between interface design and engineered interaction of the iPad's LCD touchscreen extends to the user, who through sensory engagement participates in the aesthetic event. The works that the paper focused on were not exclusively centered on writing; rather, they foregrounded the contemporary penchant for multimodality and, by extension, polyaesthetic creation and reception.

The title of David Prater's (postdoctoral researcher in electronic literature and pedagogy at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden) paper was "Davey Dreamnation and the Performance of Self." He set out to explore questions of personal identity and performativity in the digital context. This was done through an account of a series of personal websites featuring a fictional character, Davey Dreamnation, a failed rockstar and comic alter ego. The performance of this character (a form of avatarism) brings with it various notions of play, irony, and humor. The presentation sought to engage with performance of the self with reference to (and critical appraisal of) theoretical ideas of performance as expounded by Judith Butler et al. The performance of character in a heavily mediated online space raises questions about human interaction with personal websites, which "perform" as actors in their own right—that is, as co-creators. This performance influences other users' readings of character and iden-

tity. The presentation took on some of the issues raised in the call for papers, specifically the usefulness of performance studies in blog environments.

Under the title “Jesurun’s Digitalist *Firefall*: Staging the Analogical Relation as Cognitive Performance,” Christophe Collard (Lecturer in performing arts and a postdoctoral research fellow at the Vrije Universiteit, Brussels) looked at the work of American filmmaker-turned-theater-practitioner, John Jesurun. He argued the following:

Recent technological developments have led to what Jesurun once called a “troubled tension” between an overall sense of greater efficiency and the confusion caused by their sophistication. Accordingly, the cultural contribution of digital media to contemporary theater productions precisely resides in the explicit *staging* of the mediation itself. In more concrete terms, it implies that even if the coming of digital coding virtually imploded the material basis of cultural conventions, it would still prove scientifically relevant to develop a critical perspective capable of what performance theorist Gabriella Giannachi called “the ‘happening’ of the interface” (Giannachi 2004)—in this case: the *dramatization* of the theater’s “hypermedial” capacity to incorporate an unlimited number of signifying systems in digitalist productions.

In John Jesurun’s recent work *Firefall* (Phase 1 2006; Phase 2 2009), he performs the hypertextual interaction between the reader and the writer of a digital text within an artistically conceived framework. In this production, the performers are continuously seen reciting from memory while surfing the web and conversing in virtual chat rooms displayed on various screens, thereby *operationalizing* the notion of digital (inter)activity as cognitive performance.

Unfortunately, Cristophe Collard was not able to make it to the seminar at the last minute. His paper was read, but no opportunity afforded to interrogate it.

## **DAY TWO: PRACTICE-BASED PRESENTATIONS AND PERFORMANCES**

Christine Wilks (digital artist/writer) presented “Out of Touch,” a digital text performance. “Out of Touch” is a series of musings on the paradoxical and often poignant nature of human relationships in the midst of networked life. It forms an ongoing project of playable and performable media.<sup>18</sup> Both the online project and its live presentation are an exploration of the performance of touch in remote

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18 Archived at <<http://crisscross.net/oot/indexoot.html>>.

communication—the hand touching keyboard, touching screen, touching pen and paper, and touching to explore and to feel remotely. It also entails a performance of an absence of the hand, an absence of touch.

Wilks explains the following:

In our world of perpetual connectivity, touching interfaces that keep us out of reach, we form attachments whilst remaining detached, by turns kindling and dampening emotions. [...] Our words perform in our absence and others' words touch us in theirs. But we risk being typecast by the insidious pressure of social networking and its insistence on the perpetual typing and tapping out of our everyday experiences and emotions into the networked social arena. Individual episodes of "Out of Touch" express via playable procedures and games the tension between "the public performance of social texts and the off-screen story of private rehearsal, unspoken words, hidden feelings and innermost thoughts."

Martin Rieser (Professor of Digital Creativity in the Institute of Creative Technologies at De Montfort University) gave a short presentation on some of his projects from *Labyrinth*, a work that comprises drama, digital image, virtual environments, and interactive video. Also included were the interactive video dramas *Understanding Echo* and *Triple Echo*. Other works presented by Rieser included *Hosts*, which uses mobile and positional technologies combined with interactive sound and video, and an authored book on locative technology called *The Mobile Audience*. His most recent piece, *Secret Garden*, is a virtual reality opera/ballet. Rieser also looked more specifically at two concepts: sticky video and sticky sound, where audience movement drives the nuances of narrative via the spatialization of story. He also discussed the constructivist approach to narrative forced on the audience by nonlinearity, which grows the poetic story world by multiple trajectories through the material.

Paula Crutchlow (digital artist/performer/writer) presented her ongoing, multi-authored project, *make-shift*, which was developed with Helen Varley Jamieson and Furtherfield, a digital community located in London and run by Ruth Catlow and Marc Garrett.<sup>19</sup>

The *make-shift* project is an intimate networked performance and discussion event that reimagines the private actions of domestic lives as multiple, interconnected, and with global consequences. Each event takes place simulta-

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<sup>19</sup> Furtherfield was the subject of an ethnographic study carried out by Dr. Penny Travlou of Edinburgh University as part of the ELMCIP project.

neously in two ordinary houses connected through an online interface, accessible through the live stage link on the website to anyone around the world with Internet access. Not just telematically connecting artists in two different spaces, nor working in a purely online chat/graphic format, *make-shift* combines these, creating real-time dialogue between houses and people across the globe. Everything that happens in the houses is streamed to online audiences who can also join in the activities and contribute text chat visible on the interface to everyone participating. The event ends with a sharing of food in the houses and a discussion around the consequences of global connectivity and consumption. In that sense, *make-shift* is a pretext for digitally-engaged social debate and action, linking the local with the global.

## **WORKS-IN-PROGRESS**

In addition to the three artist's presentations, there were five work-in-progress showings. The original proposal for the Falmouth research project within ELMCIP was to use the Falmouth seminar to provide a work-in-progress moment for some of the performers who would be making work for *Remediating the Social*, which was the final conference and gallery/performance event in Edinburgh.<sup>20</sup> In this way, the writers/performers/artists would be given the opportunity to present their creative thinking about their work, and the delegates to the seminar would be allowed to interrogate them from a more theoretical perspective. Significantly, the performers are also academics/teachers in their own right, used to articulating their creative processes and therefore very capable of bridging the theory/practice divide. The Bristol seminar allowed them to gauge responses to the piece and to take on board feedback for the participants.

Annie Abrahams (a France-based Dutch artist who has been working in the digital environment for a number of years) collaborates with dispersed performers across a networked system, each in a different country but linked by the Internet. The piece that she was developing in Bristol was based on the fragility of the networked system. In many ways, she was testing the robustness of the system both technically and communicatively. Each iteration of the performance was posited on the technology working properly but, over and above that,

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20 For a fuller account of the performance event there, read Simon Biggs' report included in this volume.

on how the performers who participate communicate with each other. Each was only allowed to talk in one language, which was often incomprehensible to the other performers. The goal of the research was to find ways in which they could communicate successfully with each other in such a way that they began to perform as an ensemble. The work she presented at *Remediating the Social* was entitled *Huis Clos/No Exit*.

J.R. Carpenter (writer for networked programmable media; research student at Falmouth University in a practice-led PhD articulated around performance writing and digital textuality) has been working on the web since the mid-90s and is hugely experienced in this area. The project she was developing for Edinburgh, *The Broadside of a Yarn*, involved embedding digital text performatively in locative media, maps, and visual displays. This project drew upon a number of nineteenth century literary sources and sought to open up a debate on the use of found and digitally generated text. The work was also remediated as a polyvocal performance piece. An area of particular interest to Carpenter is the relationship between digital textuality and dramaturgy.

Dr. cris cheek (Associate Professor at the University of Miami at Oxford, Ohio) is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and performance poet; his work spans a variety of performance modes. The work he presented at Bristol was designed to raise the question of the location and position of the body in relation to e-literature. In this instance, he worked very specifically with digital text projected onto the performing body and with how a spoken text might emerge from the interaction between the two. He also interrogated the boundary between digital text and image. At what point does an image become a text and thus susceptible to a reading? This is an important area for e-literature and deals with a greatly extended notion of what constitutes a digital text. The work he presented finally in Edinburgh was entitled *B A C K L I T*.

Much of Dr. Donna Leishman's (academic and web artist/writer; course leader for the BA in Illustration at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, University of Dundee; supervisor of PhD and masters students) practice-led work combines critical writing and research into digital text. Her particular area of interest is interactivity and its relationship to the performance of narrative. This includes an investigation of what stories are being told on the network and what digital literature potentially offers. In collaboration with Steve Gibson she devel-

oped *Borderline*, a performative piece for two-handed digital interface, described here in her own words:

[It] adds to current debates on immersion and interaction within Electronic Literature—it challenges the solo reader and the gaming win/lose paradigm by designing a new dual interaction system where two users via improvisational action interact together within an audio-visual environment. The narrative is based on borderline personality disorder (visualizing the problems of disassociation and hysteria through image, movement and narrative structure).

Although not part of the final performance program at *Remediating the Social*, Jörg Piringer's presence at Bristol was significant. Much of the work he showed centered on the remixing of language at the atomic level of single sounds or phonemes. This combined projected visual text with mediated and digitized voice. In addition, Piringer presented some of the apps that he developed which mix the visual and the verbal. A central concern of his work is to examine the materiality of digital text not only as written language but also as sound. In addition to the live performance and the animated textual performance at the level of the interface, Piringer's work engages with source code as a location for performative poetry, thus blurring the lines between the poet and the technician. For e-literature, insisting on this distinction makes little sense.

## **PUBLICATION**

The initial intention was not only to upload the content of the seminar to the ELMCIP Knowledge Base but also to publish the papers of the seminar in a dedicated issue of *Performance Research Journal*. Alongside the publishing of the proceedings, the intention was to include some artists' pages drawn from the workshop/presentations given by practitioners on the second day of the seminar. In the event, it was decided to widen the call for papers so that a broader range of theorists could be drawn upon. Of the final twenty-two papers accepted for the *Performance Research Journal* issue, four were papers that were delivered at the ELMCIP Bristol event. This will have the effect of widening the inclusions within the ELMCIP Knowledge Base. At the time of writing, the following papers were in preparation:

## **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE RESEARCH JOURNAL 18.5: WRITING AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

1. “Towards a Poor (Techno)Theatre / Escritura Acto” by Aravind Enrique Adyanthaya
2. “R/W/E or CHMOD -777” by Sandy Baldwin (West Virginia University)
3. “Transcript of the Twitter Performance ‘Dawn Chorus,’ October 2011” (artists’ pages) by Joanna Brown, Natasha Vicars, Mary Paterson, Tiffany Charrington, Eddy Dreadnought, Sally Labern, and Tamarin Norwood
4. “Extending the Platform: Digital Pragmatism and Hatch Nottingham” by Wayne Burrows, Michael Pinchbeck, Nathaniel J. Miller
5. “Signature of Digital Subversion: Joseph DeLappe’s Online-Writing Performances” by Dr. Gabriella Calchi-Novati (Trinity College Dublin)
6. “The Broadside of a Yarn: A Situationist Strategy for Spinning Sea Stories Ashore” by J. R. Carpenter (Falmouth University)
7. “Reading and Giving—Voice and Language” by John Cayley (Brown University)
8. “Live Code: Notations on a Kairotic Practice” by Emma Cocker (Nottingham Trent University)
9. “Jesurun’s Digitalist *Firefall*: Staging the Analogical Relation as Cognitive Performance” by Christophe Collard (Vrije Universiteit Brussels)
10. “Touch and Gesture as Aesthetic Experience: Performing Apps” by Maria Engberg (BHK, Karlskrona)
11. “Adventures in Live Writing” (artists’ pages) by Mark Greenwood and Nathan Jones
12. “The Dance without the Dancer: Writing Bodies in Digital Texts” by Laura Karreman (Ghent University)
13. “Send: Act: Perform” by Rosemary Klich (University of Kent)
14. “Digitaland: Digital Performance in Many Dimensions” by Sebastian Melo (independent generative video artist) and Nicolas Salazar Sutil (University of Surrey)
15. “Hypertext Reading: A Retro-Projective Performance” by Alexandra Saemmer (University of Paris 8)

16. "Hacking Choreography" by Kate Sicchio (University of Lincoln)
17. "On the Screen Floor: Exploring Dances of Digital Language and Writing" by Danae Theodoridou (University of Roehampton)
18. "Virtual Dramaturgy: Critical Digital Practice in Kris Verdonck's *M*, a Reflection" by Kristof van Baarle, Kris Verdonck, and Christel Stalpaert (Ghent University)
19. "Transitional Materialities and the Performance of JavaScript" by Nathan Walker (York St. John University)
20. "Gossip Girl Goes to the Gallery: Bernadette Corporation and Digitextuality" by Heather Warren-Crow (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee)

Publication date is February 2014. Although this is beyond the end date of the ELMCIP project, these papers will also be added to the ELMCIP Electronic Literature Knowledge Base.

### ***CURATION OF THE PERFORMANCE PROGRAM AT REMEDIATING THE SOCIAL, EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF ART***

The digital performance event at Edinburgh College of Art formed a significant part of the final conference, *Remediating the Social*. A fuller description of the event is given by Simon Biggs in his report in this volume.

There were two interesting issues that emerged from this in relation to the Bristol seminar. The first was that certain artists who were initially designated as part of the digital performance event were located within the "artistic" program at Inspace, the New Media Scotland Gallery. Donna Leishman for example, (see above) performed *Borderline* in the gallery space. J. R. Carpenter's work was shown as an installation at Inspace and presented as a performance on the night of the opening. This is an indication of the extent to which performance within digital literature is a highly fluid concept. It is not easy to specify what is or is not a performance and where it spills over into other forms of verbal display. In fact, performance can and does take place in a number of different venues and contexts, each of which subsequently affects or alters the ways in which the work is received and understood.

The second issue is that there was a dedicated space for all the performances within the College of Art. This was a raised stage with lighting, digi-

tal projection, and amplified sound. This tended to homogenize the work into a specific form of audience/performer relationship. It reduced the possibility of the digital textwork engaging with the space itself and let it be determined by the space. The work was thus site-determined rather than site-specific, in Robert Irwin's taxonomy. This was largely a question of logistics and time. A performative engagement with the space requires an immersion in that space in order to respond to it. That was not possible as a performance program within a three-day conference. However, it does indicate the versatility of electronic literature performance and how it has to consider its nature, space, and context in ways in which page-based literature does not.

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