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A Crucible for 21st Century Art: Boston Cyberarts Festival 2007.

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Untitled 5 from *Animated Gestures*, Camille Utterback

The Boston CyberArts Festival attracts over sixty organizations, hundreds of artists, and audiences in the tens of thousands. George Fifield, organizer and founder, explains: "This festival is a celebration of art using new technologies. It is not a conference but a crucible: a place where people may share their emotions and emotive powers through exhibits and performances."

Events range from visual art, dance, music, technology, and combinations of all of these. Artists, collectors, curators, critics, and enthusiasts with a mind for technology descend upon Boston for this biennial, three-week festival. Audiences begin at Cyberarts Central at Art Interactive, and then fan out to events in all parts of the city. At the Festival finale, the Cyberarts Gala at the Hotel@MIT, three artists received IBM Innovation Awards for outstanding contributions. Merit awards went to *Animated Gestures* by Camille Utterback and to Brian Knepp's *Aging: Works in Progress* from the Harvard Medical School Residency, while the Grand Award went to *Moonwalk*.



Untitled 6 (with user/viewer) from *Animated Gestures*, Camille Utterback

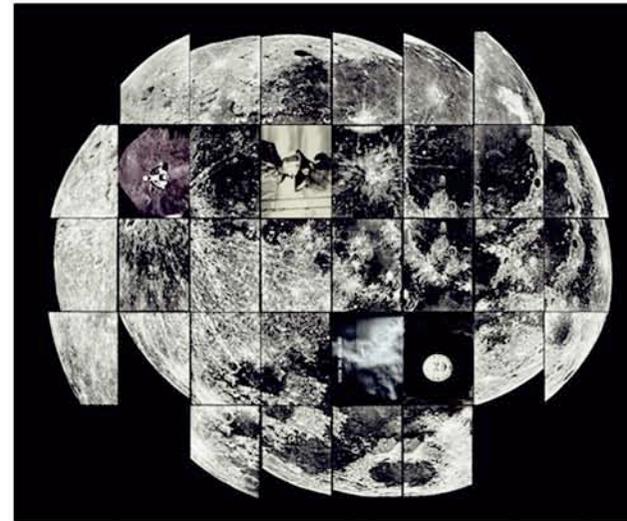
Clea T. Waite

Clea Waite studied 3D graphics and animation at the MIT Media Laboratory, and has produced a catalog of almost twenty new media works, many of which tour continuously. Her award-winning artwork, *Moonwalk*, presented by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study with music by Helga Pogatschar, is an eleven minute unfinished piece.

Decidedly multicultural, the work begins with the word "moon", written and spoken as a mantra in thirty-four different languages. Proceeding from the raw material of countless photos, which comprise lunar atlases, Waite shatters the moon into pieces, and then rebuilds it. She characterizes this placid heavenly body as a living, scintillating force. Adept with imagery, she evolves the moon from it's familiar pregnant blackness to a jittering hive of voices and sounds, then into a frightening sliding wall which fully exploits the planetarium medium to encircle and entrap the audience. Waite weaves together "poetry, science, and strong imagery" into a form best described as a grand audiovisual hyperlink. Utilizing every song you've ever heard about the moon and many of the films, television shows, and news broadcasts, Waite succeeds in reminding us of the moon's ubiquity. These references are amorphous and non-narrative, compelling the viewer to reconstruct their own personal history of the moon. The work reaches beyond idealized childhood daydreams of the heavens, past the well-worn Apollo footage, and into the tender roots of culture, which weave throughout our daily personal lives. Watching *Moonwalk* we are reminded, as if for the first time, of the power, presence, and emotional gravity the moon commands.

When complete, the latter half of the work will delve into the moon's craters, named for renowned scientists and authors, such as H.G. Wells and Cyrano De Bergerac. With part two, Waite threatens to seduce the intelligentsia with her moon's siren song. Expected completion is in the Summer or Fall of 2007.

After such a lengthy "collage process" of existing footage, Waite looks forward to returning to original material. "I miss making my own images". She describes her creative process as an "intellectual, scientific searching, while open to what ideas this opens up... and I let the poetry find me." Speaking to the New Media Arts community, Clea T. Waite says, "I hope that the ghettoization of new media art is coming to an end. We work with hardware. code. and technical stuff. but we strive for content. beautv. and meaning."



Moonwalk, Clea T. Waite

Epilogue: Fifield's Three Stages of Artistic Development

Regarding the development of new forms of art, the Cyberarts Festival founder George Fifield says, "There are three stages: First, the Gee Whiz stage. This is where the artist discovers a new technology and tries to demonstrate how cool it is. Second, there is a Developmental stage where the artist begins to realize the emotive power of the tool and endeavors to create a strong work of art. Last, there is Mastery, where the artist succeeds in using the tool to create a fully emotive and intellectual experience." The Cyberarts Festival provides a crucible in which the creative forces of artists may interact with curators, critics, and audiences to negotiate together these stages of artistic development and forge new directions for art and technology.



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NEWS RELEASE

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IBM Innovation Awards presented at 2007 Boston Cyberarts Festival

Grand Award of \$5000 goes to Clea T. Waite's *Moonwalk*

Boston, MA — Three new-media artists are the recipients of the first-ever IBM Innovation Awards for artistic creation in art and technology, given in recognition of the outstanding exhibitions and events featured in the 2007 Boston Cyberarts Festival. The awards were presented this evening at the 2007 Cyberarts Gala at the Hotel @ MIT.



Left to right: Clea T. Waite, Brian Knep & Camille Utterback

The Grand Award of \$5000 went to ***Moonwalk* by Clea T. Waite**, seen at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. *Moonwalk* is an experimental film designed for projection on a traditional planetarium cupola, composed of found footage, astronomical photographs, sound bites, poems, stories, and drawings. Recent technological advances have made it possible to project high-definition video onto a hemispherical surface, and *Moonwalk* takes advantage of this technology. *Moonwalk* will be screened at the Radcliffe Gymnasium, 18 Mason Street in Cambridge on May 5 and 6.

A Merit Award of \$500 went to ***Animated Gestures* by Camille Utterback** at Art Interactive. Utterback is a pioneer in the field of interactive installation, and the *Animated Gestures* exhibition contains three of her works. In these works, the viewer moves through a space in front of a screen on which an art work is projected, and this movement both alters the works and creates a temporal history of the movement. This work can be seen at Art Interactive, 130 Bishop Allen Drive in Cambridge through May 13.

A second Merit Award of \$500 went to **Brian Knep's *Aging: Works in Progress from the Harvard Medical School Residency***, which was on view at the Judi Rotenberg Gallery from April 21-28. Knep has been artist-in-residence at Harvard Medical School for two years. Working with one particular lab that focuses on the aging process, he observed and filmed frogs in the lab over their lifespan and created videos in which the frogs swim up and down the gallery walls as they age.

George Fifield, Founder and Director of the Boston Cyberarts Festival, said: "We are delighted to be able to recognize the outstanding contributions these artists have made to the 2007 Festival." He added, "We are very grateful to our friends at IBM for their support in making these awards possible."

The award recipients were selected by a three-person jury of leaders in the art and technology community. The jurors were **Pattie Maes**, an associate professor in MIT's Program in Media Arts and Sciences and interim head of the Program in Media Arts and Sciences; **Michael Rush**, the Henry and Lois Foster Director of the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis

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University and a widely recognized authority on new media; and **Martin Wattenberg**, a well-known artist and a researcher at the Collaborative User Experience Group of the IBM Watson Research Center in Cambridge.

About the Boston Cyberarts Festival

Exhibitions and performances by artists who use computer technology as an integral part of their work are on display at the fifth Boston Cyberarts Festival, taking place April 20-May 6, 2007. The Festival, which brings together visual and performing artists, cultural organizations, educators, and high-technology professionals, takes place at locations in and around the Boston area, at selected other locations around New England, and online at www.bostoncyberarts.org. A searchable list of events and exhibitions is available on the Festival's website, and is being updated continually as events are added to the roster.

The biennial Boston Cyberarts Festival has become an eagerly-anticipated part of the Boston-area arts and technology scene since the first event took place in 1999. The Festival is the largest collaboration of arts organizations in New England and the only Festival in the world that encompasses all art forms, including both visual and performing arts, film, video, electronic literature, and public art. Boston Cyberarts is the recipient of the 2007 Commonwealth Award, given by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Cyberart encompasses any artistic endeavor in which computer technology is used to expand artistic possibilities — that is, where the computer's unique capabilities are integral elements of the creative process in the same way that paint, photographic film, musical instruments, and other materials have always been used to express an artist's vision. The Greater Boston area has long had an international reputation as a center of cyberart, dating back to pioneering work done by such world-class institutions as the New Television Workshop at WGBH and the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) at MIT.

About the Award Recipients

Clea T. Waite is a 2006-07 recipient of a Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Research Fellowship at Harvard University. Her experimental video works examine the meta-meanings found in unlikely correspondences between myth and science. Waite's artistic process incorporates a dual path of inquiry, giving equal weight to aesthetic exploration and innovative technical realization. Her early video works focused on synaesthetic assimilations of language, image, and music. In the 90s, her work shifted to large-scale, multi-channel, CG/video installations that explore the corporal perception of time using montage in virtual and physical space. Waite's works include computer animation, stereoscopic, multi-channel video installation, hemispherical digital-film, and a collaborative work with several hundred tropical spiders.

Waite has divided her time between New York City and Germany since 1993. She has held positions as Adjunct Assistant Professor for Computer Graphics at Pratt Institute in New York, and Associate Professor for Digital Artistic Montage at the Academy of Film and Television (HFF) "Konrad Wolf," Babelsberg (Berlin). She was chairwoman of the HFF Montage Department in 2003 and 2005-06.

Waite studied laser physics at MIT ('84) and did her graduate work in 3D computer graphics at the MIT Media Laboratory ('89).

Waite has exhibited and received prizes internationally. She has been an artist-in-residence at The Swiss Museum of Transportation and Communication in Lucerne, CERN Laboratory for Nuclear Physics in Geneva, and CICV Pierre Schaeffer in Montbeliard, and has received fellowships from the AIL Artists-in-Labs program, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, and the NEA.

Camille Utterback is a pioneering artist and programmer in the field of interactive installation. Her work has been exhibited at galleries, festivals, and museums internationally including the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the American Museum of the Moving Image, the NTT InterCommunication Center in Tokyo, the Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Netherlands Institute for Media Art, the Taipei Museum of Contemporary Art, the Center for Contemporary Art in Kiev, Ukraine; and the Ars Electronica Center in Austria. Utterback's work is in private and public collections including Hewlett Packard and the La Caixa Foundation in Barcelona, Spain.

Awards include a Transmediale International Media Art Festival Award (2005), a Rockefeller Foundation New Media Fellowship (2002), and a commission from the Whitney Museum for the CODeDOC project on their ArtPort website (2002). Utterback holds a US patent for a video tracking system she developed while working as a research fellow at NYU in 2004. She was selected as a member of the "TR100 - the top 010 innovators of the year under 35" by MIT's Technology Review (2002) and by Res Magazine as artist pick of the year for their "Annual Res 10 - Ten people who are making a difference in their field" (2000). Her work has been featured in Art in America, Wired Magazine, the New York Times, ARTnews, and many other publications. It is also included in Thames & Hudson's "World of Art - Digital Art" book by Christiane Paul.

In addition to creating her own artwork, Utterback develops long term and permanent installations for commercial and museum settings via her company Creative Nerve, Inc. Creative Nerve commissions include work for the American Museum of Natural History, the Pittsburgh Children's Museum, the Manhattan Children's Museum, Herman Miller, Shiseido Cosmetics, and other private corporations.

Utterback holds a BA in Art from Williams College and a Masters from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She has also taught in the MFA Design of Technology department at the Parsons School

of Design and in the Interactive Telecommunication Program at NYU. She currently resides in California.

Brian Knep combines art, architecture, and science in work that has been shown widely throughout the United States, Europe, and Korea. He uses custom software to create pieces that are dynamic and react to changes in their environments. Some are simply aware of the passage of time, changing, evolving and never repeating. Others are interactive, aware of the people around them – where they are walking or perhaps where they are looking – and react in response. Some of the pieces are small and intimate but most are large in scale, projected onto walls and floors. They feel organic and alive.

Much of Knep's work borrows from emergent processes in biology and mathematics. By simulating these processes on a computer, he explores the boundaries between complexity and simplicity, infinite and finite, organic and inorganic.

Knep has worked in the art and science fields for over twenty years. His career has included the film industry, where he was a member of two teams receiving Academy Awards, one for Technical Achievement and a Scientific and Engineering Award. He then moved to the exhibit design industry, and now to full-time art practice. In 2005 he became the first artist-in-residence at Harvard Medical School and in 2006 received grants from the Creative Capital and LEP Foundations. His large-scale interactive exhibit *Deep Wounds*, 2006, recently won an AICA/New England award for Best Time Based Work. Knep has had solo shows at the New Britain Museum of American Art, the MIT Museum and Arizona State University, and group shows at the University of Hartford and the DeCordova Museum, among others.

Knep lectures extensively about his work, has been published in *ACM Computer Graphics* and other scientific journals. He graduated with honors from Brown University, where he studied computer science and mathematics. He currently lives and works in Boston.

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Photos are available for download as follows:

Moonwalk at http://bostoncyberarts.org/home_hires.php?page=2

Animated Gestures at http://bostoncyberarts.org/home_hires.php?page=6

Aging at <http://www.blep.com/images/>

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