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LEA – DAC Special – Embodiment and Presence
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Keywords
Embodiment, presence, digital environments, new media

Abstract
Guest editors Andrew Hutchison and Ingrid Richardson provide an overview of six papers on the topic of embodiment that were presented at the Perth Digital Arts and Culture conference in 2007.

The seven papers presented here from the perthDAC (Digital Arts and Culture) 2007 conference together offer a different perspective on embodiment in environments - virtual or tangible. These were selected for this special edition with the intention of broadening the notion of "embodiment" as it is commonly used in the field of digital/new media. As you will see, here the discussion is often less about the specific media and technology. Rather, the social and phenomenological challenges that influence embodiment are brought forth, drawing on a wide range of fields of study and experience.

All of these perspectives are well informed by a knowledge of the history of representation and experience – and each show us how it does (or might) manifests in current applications.

For example, Julianne Chatelain gives us the phrase "multi-subject experience" to understand copyright and intellectual property issues in games or art that are somehow collaborative in production.

Allison Kudla draws a parallel between formalism in "traditional" art and the tendency for new technology art (including bio-art) to produce non-screen based experiences that actually physically incorporate the user.

Ragnhild Tronstad employs Freud's notion of "the Uncanny" in an examination of new media art works, and how this can be used to increase the aesthetic impact.

Anders Tychsen and Michael Hitchens compare the temporal aspects of pre-digital role playing games with their current digital descendants, to discover a multitude of simultaneous "times" that exist in complex environments.

Claudia Müller-Hermann identifies that digital representations of space are merely part of a change in spatial awareness that has been undertaken by artists, filmmakers, architects, designers, scientists and engineers during the during the 20th century.

Truna (aka J.Turner), David Browning and Nicola Bidwell use indigenous peoples' perceptions of the landscape to identify that digital representations tend to detach the user from experiencing the natural world, instead perpetuating existing games

motifs that separate users and virtual world.

And finally, Stewart Woods invokes both Huizinga's magic circle, and the experience of specific classic board games, to challenge the field of videogame design to incorporate a greater degree of social risk in game play.

We hope that you find this to be a thought provoking collection.

We would like to thank Leonardo Electronic Almanac for the opportunity to present this unique combination of papers, and also, the over two hundred scholars who were involved in the double blind (abstract AND full paper) reviewing process that produced these papers (see the perthDAC website at http://beap.org/dac/). And of course, congratulations go to the authors of the papers themselves.

Citation reference for this Leonardo Electronic Almanac Essay

MLA Style
Hutchison, Andrew, and Ingrid Richardson. "Introduction: Embodiment and Social Presence," LEA Special Issue: DAC---Embodiment, Leonardo Electronic Almanac Vol. 16, No. 2-3 (2008). 15 Oct. 2008 <http://leoalmanac.org/journal/vol_16 /lea_v16_n2-3/intro.asp>.

APA Style
Hutchison, Andrew, and Ingrid Richardson. (Oct. 2008) "Introduction: Embodiment and Social Presence," LEA Special Issue: DAC---Embodiment, Leonardo Electronic Almanac Vol. 16, No. 2-3 (2008). Retrieved 15 Oct. 2008 from <http://leoalmanac.org/journal /vol_16/lea_v16_n2-3/intro.asp>.