

WORDS

UNSTABLE

ON

THE

TABLE

Words Unstable On The Table

The exhibition *Words Unstable On The Table* has been arranged in conjunction with the E-Poetry [2013] Festival Kingston-London, which I have had the privilege to convene at Kingston University alongside additional events taking place at Tate Britain, the Poetry Centre and the Watermans Art Centre from the 17th to the 20th of June 2013. The works were selected from the submissions to the festival and taking into account the Riverside Gallery's space at the Watermans Art Centre.

It has now been twelve years since the first E-Poetry festival took place in 2001 in Buffalo, USA. According to Dr. Glazier, the artistic director of the E-Poetry Festivals, *this is the longest-running festival celebrating the new, innovative, and leading works in digital poetics*. It is a multicultural festival, gathering creators from all continents, to present artists' talks, scholarly papers, and performances and it is celebrated biennially at different international host institutions.

The Electronic Poetry Centre in Buffalo (EPC) and the Electronic Literature Organisation (ELO) are the most significant institutions promoting works of e-poetry and e-lit through their publications and events. Many academic programmes all over the world cover these studies, as well as some instrumental databases EPC (Buffalo), ELMCIP (Norway) and Hermeneia (Barcelona) where materials are constantly updated. Notwithstanding, this is a field that still lacks visibility in the UK. Traditional humanities departments are slowly welcoming digital media and it is now that this creative practice and research can become more relevant in their academic programmes. Due to its interdisciplinary nature many discussions have taken place about where to position this work, whether in the arts, literature or new media and this becomes apparent in the works in the show. Questions such as, what is literary in these works? -What are the roles of the reader, the writer, the author? -What is the actual text? Is it the language? The images? The sounds? Is it the combination of all three? Is it the programmable language? The software used? -What are the grammars? These are all questions, which have been in the minds of many of us for years, and still are, but we have also moved on. We have embraced new technologies, and the new possibilities electronic platforms are bringing to the new reader/writer, we are eager

to investigate and explore aesthetic and poetic possibilities, methods of interaction, engagement and participation. In a medium in flux, the whole point is about questioning the stable and focusing on the process of producing, creating and evolving in/with the unstable. Words such as medium, unstable, malleable, in flux (R.Lanham) become the familiar as opposed to words such as stable, linear, centered.

This is the reason behind the title for this exhibition. It highlights a communal characteristic in all the works; words are in flux inhabiting fluid spaces, they generate, erase, delete and fade away to generate again. There is an infatuation with language and, at the same time, an obliteration of it. We should then question: What are the new languages? How can we explore different writing styles and interactive poetics/aesthetics? What are these new technologies and networks offering for writing and creative practices? The works in the exhibition touch upon a variety of themes, literary, cultural, social and historical aspects such as nature, identity, gender, multilingualism, reading, remixing, translation, e-vanescence, online communication and digital culture. And they do so by combining different software, programming languages, mobile technology, network possibilities and new media tools, to produce a wide spectrum of creative practice in the form of game like structures, videos, digital-poems, net.art and language new media art.

Practice has always been the leading force of e-poetry and hopefully this exhibition gives the multimedial and multimodal reader the opportunity to explore and experience the works of this inspiring and constantly emerging field.

Special thanks to Irini Papadimitriou, Head of New Media Arts Development at the Watermans Art Centre; Dr Loss Pequeño Glazier, Artistic Director of the E-Poetry Festivals and Director of the Electronic Poetry Center; Dr Laura Shackelford, Proposal Coordinator for E-Poetry [2013] Festival Kingston-London; Kingston Writing School (KWS); the Practice Research Unit (PRU); the School of Performance & Screen Studies; the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FASS), Kingston University and The Watermans Art Centre. The following texts are written by the artists.

María Mencía Ph.D 31 May 2013

Johannes Heldén

Elect (Evolved)

Elect (Evolved) deals with nature and narrative, the future and how we perceive patterns in time.

First published in 2008, as an online version in Swedish. Here shown in an extended, sculptural version.

As the work is loading a quote appears: "It's not safe out here. It's wondrous."

The work is part of the ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature (2012).

anthology.elmcip.net/works.html

www.johanneshelden.com



Martha McCollough

Two Birds, I Spy and Fugue: F

These three video poems, are open-ended meditations on identity and self awareness, on the idea of the self-aware machine, and on technology as extension of identity, and the trauma of losing identity.

I make videopoems without shooting video. I sometimes use found footage, but it most often functions as background or texture. Mainly I work with animation, using collage techniques in text, sound and visuals.

Often the temptation when working with animation has been to too faithful illustration of a text.

As with film, there's the tradition of storyboarding, which tends to nail down

visual possibilities before they are fully explored, treats the text as primary, and can hardly help being linear. But in film or video, even when script driven, there's always a surplus of imagery — more than is required by the text — which enriches the viewer's experience and creates a sense of depth.

In animation nothing is on the screen but what is deliberately placed there, and so it's not as easy to create nuance, or the sense of an incompletely known space.

With current animation software it's possible to create layered sequences which can then be fragmented, scaled, converted to 3D and explored by virtual camera. You have a freedom to experiment that was hardly possible in the past, so it's easier to resist the impulse to narrative efficiency.

vimeo.com/album/2073565
blog: <http://marthamcc.me/>



María Mencía

Programming by Reda Yacouby and Jalal Miftah

Transient Self-Portrait

Transient Self-Portrait is an artistic research project questioning notions of reading and the electronic medium while exploring the possibilities of coding to interact with the work. I take as the point of departure two pivotal sonnets in Spanish literature that are normally studied alongside each other, *En tanto que de rosa y azucena* by Garcilaso de La Vega, a 16th Century Spanish poet, using Italian Renaissance verse forms and *Mientras por competir con tu cabello* by Luís de Gongora, a 17th Century Spanish poet from the Baroque

period. Gongora's sonnet is a homage to Garcilaso's and the styles and the cultural aspects that appear on the sonnets are very different reflecting the attitudes from the Renaissance and the Baroque.

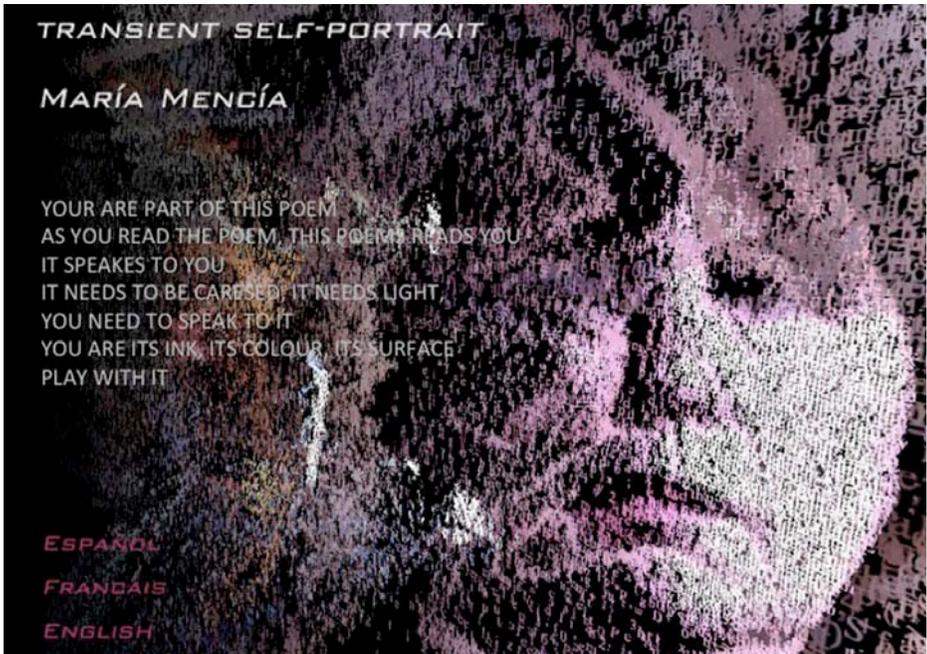
This project is a response to some of the concepts that emerge from these sonnets; ephemerality of life, consummation, transient entities, fragility, which are also relevant to our age and the electronic world we inhabit. The creative process is that of producing, reflecting, programming and testing the medium to explore

these notions in an electronic media society of dialogues with self-images, engaging the participant in a reading experience of 'in' and 'out' of language, via webcams and interactive aesthetics.

The sonnets pass from different stages of written, visual, aural, language and code to dissipate into nothing.

Funded by Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Kingston University, London, UK Residency hosted by Technologies and Human Sciences (TSH) Department, Université de Technologie de Compiègne (France).

www.mariamencia.co.uk



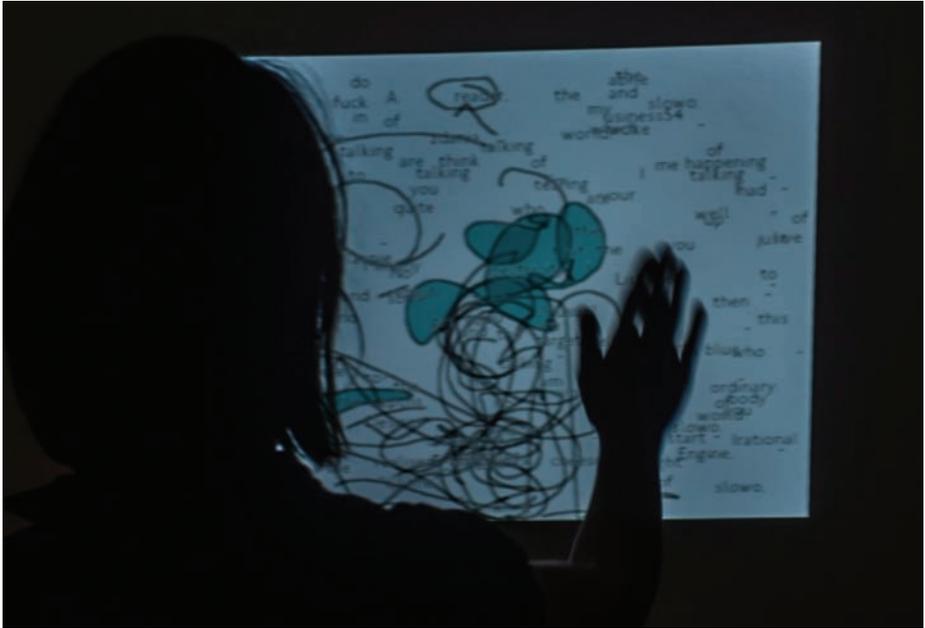
Zuzana Husárová & Ľubomír Panák

I : * ttter

I : * ttter is a multimedia (text, visuals, sound) artistic project using the Kinect 3D sensor. Thanks to the sensor, the user can easily browse, erase or mix dialogues that resemble (online) communication of persons /machines on a projection screen. The text is remixed from selected textual fragments of digital works belonging to European Net.Art.

The project refers to the constant remixing of the textual as well as media material. It also questions the use and perception of the text that is excluded from its original media environment. It wants to direct the attention to the history of media art in Central Europe and bring to the public the possibility to remix the works in real time.

The goal of the work is also to entertain – besides remixing the works people can also get into the drawing mode and combine the text with visual images that float and fall depending on the gravity. The text is multilingual – referring to the plurality of discourses.



The user can control the pitch of the sound – similar to the fundamentals of the theremin. Thanks to the possibility to activate a drawing mode, she can “enter” the individual pieces with her own drawings.

The texts of the works get grouped into new relations, depending on the user’s hand gestures.

www.delezu.net
www.zuz.husarova.net
www.soundcloud.com/vrtacka

Nick Montfort, Jesper Juul, and Amaranth Borsuk

The Deletionist

The Deletionist, a system that uses erasure to reveal an alternate Web of poems. In the "Working Note" for Nets, Jen Bervin explains her impulse to play with Shakespeare's sonnets "to make the space of the poems open, porous, possible." This 2004 collection presents bolded words from sixty sonnets, creating a new "net" of meaning, a visually and lyrically emergent poetic constellation. The technique of erasure, in which words are removed from a source text to reveal poems latent within it, came to prominence with the work of Ronald Johnson and Tom Phillips in the 1960s. It has come back into fashion in recent book-length poems, including Srikanth Reddy's Voyager, Janet Holmes's The MS of My Kin, Jonathan Safran Foer's Tree of Codes, and Mary Ruefle's A Little White Shadow. Such work inspired The Deletionist, a project that asks what might happen if the text being erased were itself already a net. The Deletionist is a JavaScript bookmarklet that automatically creates erasures from any Web page. The project is in dialogue with works like Ji Lee's Wordless Web, which removes all text from Web pages, as well as applets that turn webpages into Katamari Damacy or Space Invaders levels

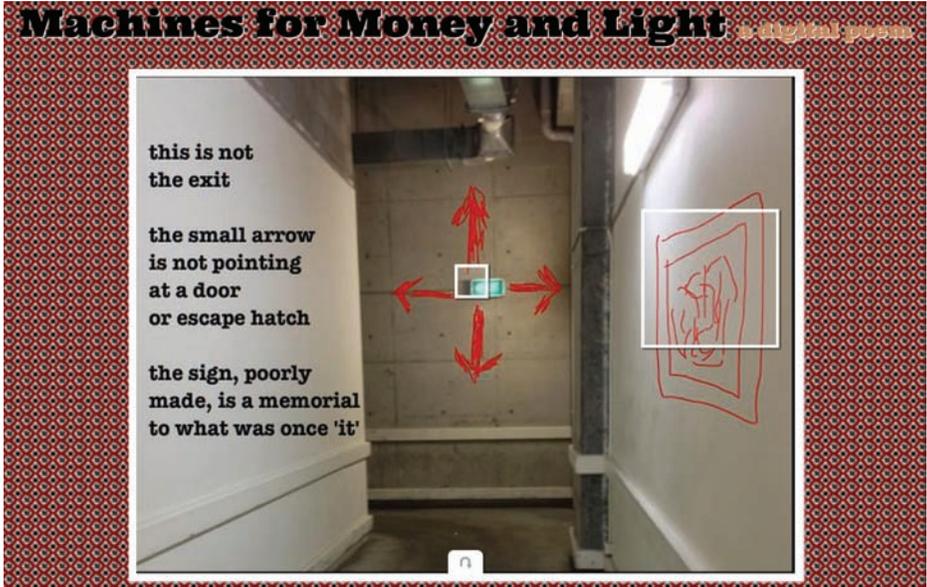
to make a game of destroying language. Between such extremes and the everyday Web, The Deletionist finds a space of texts we have named "the Worl" that amplify, subvert, and uncover new sounds and meanings in their sources.

A collaboration between Borsuk (author of the chapbook Tonal Saw, which was created by erasure from the tract National Sunday Law), Juul (developer of the conceptual game 4:32 and other computational provocations), and Montfort (author of the ppg256 series and other small-scale poetry generators) the project will be available online at E-Poetry. Readers will be invited to use the Deletionist to access the Worl and reveal poems in their own frequently-visited pages on the Web.

www.thedeletionist.com
Nick Montfort - www.nickm.com
Jesper Juul - www.jesperjuul.net
Amaranth Borsuk - www.amaranthborsuk.com



Jason Nelson



Machines for Money and Light

Within every land/cityscape, all built environments are hidden stories, strange poetics. Everything we see is a sign, a stanza of wall cracks and clocks, of escalators and fast food, ATM machines and glass lights flying down from the ceilings. *Machines for Money and Light* is a digital poem built from fifty poetry/image tiles. Each of these tiles is marked-up, drawn and written from the scenic evidence. Together they form a complex maze, pathways which branch and shift, a walkway through a contemporary mall. Thematically this interactive poem is built from hidden places and landmarks found in the modern mall, a cathedral

of messages, a shrine to social purchase and brightly lit monetary connections.

www.secrettechnology.com/mfml/

Mysterious Basement Machines of the Prairie

Having worked in Adobe Flash for almost a decade, the persistent death-drum beat from all corners has been disconcerting. How does an artist and digital poet rethink their creative practice, outside of the multi-dimensional/media/layered wonderments of the Flash Environment. *Mysterious Basement Machines of the Prairie* is an experimental artwork which uses a variety of flash conversion tools to create responsive, gesture/mouse driven

net-art spaces. Each of these small worlds are playthings examining what happens in the basement of the prairie, the mythical creatures hidden in our lost narratives/poetics. Through sounds and movement and image, MBMofP offers the reader the ability to drive their experience through image and sound and movement. It pulls in objects found in lost buildings of the prairie, those ignored towns hiding curious treasures and magical machines.

www.secrettechnology.com/semantics2/drea-ture11.html
www.heliozoa.com

Ottar Ormstad

natyr

'natyr' is the third video (HD 18:9/ 4:45) in which Norwegian artist Ottar Ormstad combines concrete poetry, images, and music/sound. This time the video is based on a work by the Norwegian painter Knut Rumohr (1916-2002) who mostly created abstract tempera paintings inspired by the nature of a fjord at the Norwegian west coast. Ormstad once again continues mixing words

from different languages, intentionally without translation. The word 'natyr' may not exist in any language, but may be experienced with different associations to nature.

Except for the animation made by Ina Pillat, everything is directed and created by Ormstad, photography and music included.



www.elmcip.net/person/ottar-ormstad

Martin Rieser

Riverains

Riverains was first developed for the B.Tween festival in Manchester, predicated on the concept of underground presences derived from the city's past, which lingered in the underground spaces riddling our cities. These presences can both be detected and unlocked by the public, using mobile devices. It was further modified for the Illumini Festival in Shoreditch, where personalised history was layered along Shoreditch High Street and Old Street.

Both Manchester and London have rich underground worlds of hidden or "lost" rivers, Victorian sewers and underground railway systems. They also have an archaeology going back through medieval to Roman times. The Riverains were drawn from this rich history of poverty, industrial revolution, immigration, political protest, commerce and innovation and crime. Riverains was run in Pilot form at the Illumini Festival in September 2010 tracing a portion of Old Street and Shoreditch High Street. The video-poems by Martin Rieser and Ximena Alarcon can be triggered by photographing QR codes distributed on posters, carrying visual clues as to locations associated with the video content.

The rich history of Shoreditch is explored with pieces on early Shakespeare's plays Henry IV and Romeo and Juliet; verbatim readings from the coroner's report of the

Finally there were reflections on the early history of underground rivers that criss-cross the area and notionally drew the historical presences, which are the Riverains.



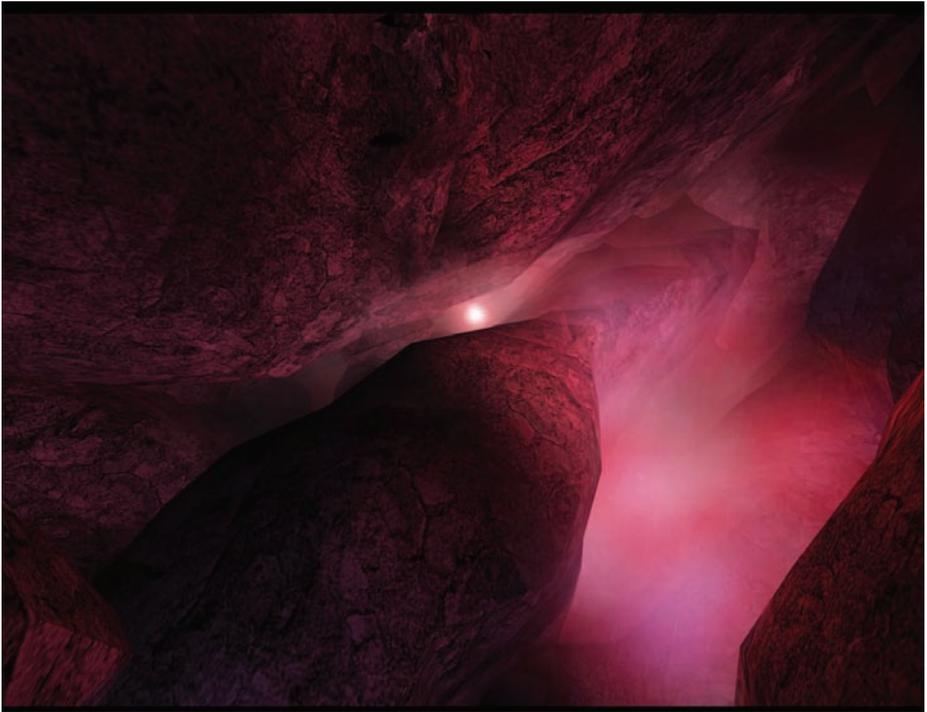
"Ripper" murder of Mary Kelly: immigrant voices in poetic form from Jewish and Huguenot narratives, and dramatised monologues based on Daniel Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year. Suffragette histories form audio-visual sound-image montages echoing their dire treatment in Holloway Prison.

Riverains was designed through collaboration with artists Ximena Alarcon and Kasia Molga, with technical development by Sean Clark and Phil Sparks (Empedia by Cuttlefish Multimedia) and Gareth Howell (using Layar).

www.martinrieser.com
empedia.info/maps/20

Christine Wilks & Andy Campbell

Inbukus



Inkubus is a first-person playable coming-of-age story, in 2D and 3D that centres on a teenage girl, immersed in contemporary digital culture. With creeping awareness, she/the player struggles with the insidious gender stereotyping, where womanhood is rendered as malleable and polymorphic as a digital doll that literally threatens to drain her of life.

In 2D mode, the story-game progresses via skewed quizzes and leading questions, designed to manipulate and distort the girl's/player's behaviour. In 3D mode, the player experiences a hunt through a visceral cave-tunnel system to confront the creature that embodies the damaging artificial feminine ideal.

Inkubus is the first collaborative digital narrative by Andy Campbell and Christine Wilks.

WORDS UNSTABLE ON THE TABLE

Riverside Gallery
Exhibition of works by

Johannes Heldén
Martha McCollough
María Mencía & J. Miftah-R. Yacouby (Prog.)
Nick Montfort- Amaranth Borsuk- Jesper Juul
Jason Nelson
Ottar Ormstad
Martin Rieser
Christine Wilks-Andy Campbell

Studio 2-17th-20th June
Zuzana Husárová - Ľubomír Panák

María Mencía (Curator)
Reception: Monday 17th June-7.00pm

E-POETRY [2013] is presented by the Electronic Poetry Center (<http://epc.buffalo.edu>), Dept. of Media Study, State University of New York, Buffalo & the kind support of the Kingston Writing School (KWS) (<http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/writing>), the Practice Research Unit (PRU) (<http://www.practiceresearchunit.co.uk>), the School of Performance & Screen Studies (<http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/schools/performance>), Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS), Kingston University London (<http://www.kingston.ac.uk>), and the Watermans Art Centre (<http://www.watermans.org.uk>).



E-Poetry [2013] Festival

Kingston-London
EPC Buffalo

Watermans Art Centre

Exhibition: 9-26 June 2013
40 High Street, Brentford,
West London, TW8 0DS