AHRC ICT Methods Network Student Bursary Awards

CHArt (Computers and the History of Art) Conference
Fast Forward - Art History, Curation and Practice after Media
Birkbeck College, University of London, 9 – 10 November 2006

CONFERENCE REPORT

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CHArt was a great experience for meeting practitioners, scholars and PhD students. I had the opportunity to exchange information with them, to see conceptual developments and also to contribute to ongoing research. For example, I talked to Francesca Franco (Birkbeck College, University of London, UK, *Steps of New Media Art at the Venice Biennale, 1960s to 1990s*) about the experience of 'La Bienal de Venecia en Bogotá', an event of vital local importance and impact, and was able to provide information which Ms Franco hopes to include in her research.

Attending the conference helped me to contextualize my research/art work within contemporary digital art, e.g. to locate it as an artwork which involves a process with an audience. In the case of my research the artwork is supported by extensive ethnographic work. Especially pertinent was the conceptualization of interaction, as developed by Beryl Graham (Panel Session - *Approaches to the Practice of Curating New Media Art*, Sarah Cook, Beryl Graham and Ele Carpenter, CRUMB, University of Sunderland, UK). In my research it is not easy to find a broad perspective about interactivity. Beryl Graham is very thorough in describing the experience of interactive art and art using computers. She also invited me to read her PhD thesis, which is available on the Internet. I have now begun this comprehensive study which defines interaction, including analysis and case studies of interactive art and interactions with computers. Interactivity has become a central aspect of my research, that is, the relations between real-world (physical) and virtual experience. I am also interested in the relationships between collective space (shared) and individual space which are extremely important in the 'Interactive Sonic Environment'. My proposal is about interaction with sounds and images on a screen that has been structured as a 'shared' space. This is the result of my experiences of listening to and remembering the soundscape of the London Underground. The interactive process is formed by the actions of listening and remembering.

Another important aspect of the conference was the contextualization of digital art. It has previously been difficult to 'label' my work. Now, I have more of a framework with wish to identify it, not necessarily with a 'label' but as part of the ongoing process of using technology within contemporary art practice, a tendency with also involves interacting with real-world experiences and communities.