

AHRC ICT Methods Network Student Bursary Awards

**DRHA (Digital Resources for the Humanities and Arts) Conference
Dartington College of Arts, 3 - 6 September 2006**

CONFERENCE REPORT

My grappling with digital technologies, and knowledge of what they could be applied to do, was at a fledgling state when I attended DRHA and I was slightly unsure about my ability to transfer my concepts into online disseminated works. On first arriving at the welcoming reception in the gardens, I was somewhat overwhelmed by the apparent technical prowess of the other delegates who I struck up conversation with. As primarily a visual artist, and one who treats the body as material, I was concerned as to whether the internet magazine I had started publishing, and my limited knowledge of web design, would hold up in the company I was now in: the magazine agora8.org is envisaged a bridge between visual art practices and digital technologies, specifically curatorial and preservation concerns. I found the other delegates very friendly, however, and we began to have some very interesting and fruitful conversations.

I knew three of the presenters from previous meetings at performance art events, however the context of this conference was very different. I appreciated very much the opportunity for relaxed discussion about my subject concerns and was emboldened by the willingness of newly-found colleagues to explain some finer points of software or programming. In this respect it became very easy (and helpful) to be able to separate my subject proper from the tangible context. The financial support from Methods Network was invaluable in creating the ambient space that was required so that I could immerse myself in these languages that are quite specific.

I was heartened by the response of Mike Pringle (AHDS) who understood my research project from the first. Mike offered to carry agora8.org on the AHDS project website since we are both involved in the digital preservation and curation of contemporary art documents, in my case those of ephemeral and time-based disciplines of Performance, Action, and Video (from East and South East Europe). Having had initial contact I am now looking forward to further contact.

I had robust conversations and debates around funding issues and levels of support for projects engaging with digital technologies across a wide spectrum of practices. In this context I enjoyed many encounters with Leslie Sharpe, who is AT&T Fellow, Assistant Professor and Area Head of Digital Art at Indiana University.

Overall this was a valuable experience for me, and a very positive contribution to my research. I am indebted to Methods Network for supporting my application, and presenting the context to me, and especially grateful to Hazel Gardiner. On top of all that during the entire time I ate well and I slept well: sometimes people seem to know so much!