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THE BUS PROJECT: TECHNOLOGIES, SPECTATORS AND LOCATIONAL PRACTICES

This paper interrogates the claim made by many users of super-technologies in the field of theatre entertainment that these trap-pings redefine audience perception in entirely new ways. What this explosion fails to address is the relationship between technology and the spectating body and how interactivity poses questions that address the specificities of the spectator in the twenty-first century. In relative magnitude, *The Bus Project* described here, was low tech. Nonetheless, it illustrates the use of interactive technologies in integrating performance into our everyday lives, how new audiences may be reached and how preconceived notions of spectatorship and identity may be productively troubled through locational and site-specific practices.

The Bus Project was a collaborative, media-based, public art installation undertaken by theatre and intermedia artists, computer scientists and graduate students at the University of Regina in June 2004. The central focus of the project was to open up the idea of multiculturalism and the anxieties that have grown up around the multiple coding of this term by investigating issues of immigration in the local communities (Regina and Saskatoon). As the project moved from planning to implementation, the nature of interdisciplinarity, community collaboration and assessment became central to the investigation.

Bien des utilisateurs de super technologies au théâtre déclarent que ces « ornements » font en sorte que les spectateurs perçoivent les choses tout à fait autrement. Or, l'explosion de ces moyens ne dit rien du rapport qu'entretient le public avec eux et n'interroge pas l'effet de l'interactif sur la spécificité du spectateur au XXI^e siècle. En termes d'importance, The Bus Project, le spectacle qui sert d'exemple ici, employait des moyens relativement rudimentaires. Et pourtant, il montre comment l'on peut user de technologies interactives pour intégrer la performance à la vie quotidienne, atteindre de nouveaux spectateurs et remettre en question de façon productive nos idées préconçues sur le spectateur et l'identité au moyen de pratiques localisées.

The Bus Project est une installation média à laquelle ont participé des artistes de théâtre et des artistes multimédia, des informati-

ciens et des étudiants de deuxième cycle à l'Université de Regina en juin 2004. Le projet avait pour principal objectif de présenter l'idée du multiculturalisme et les anxiétés qui entourent la codification complexe du terme en examinant les enjeux liés à l'immigration dans les villes de la région (Regina et Saskatoon). Au cours de sa réalisation, l'enquête s'est centrée peu à peu sur l'interdisciplinarité du projet et la participation des membres de la collectivité, devenus collaborateurs et évaluateurs.



In Canada's foremost national English language newspaper we find the following description of Cirque du Soleil's production *KA* at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas: "Imagine a Broadway stage that can rise, fall, float, become completely vertical, or tilt, often at alarming, gravity-defying angles, and you'll have some idea of what [director Robert] Lepage has conceived" (Posner). Commenting on this marriage of super-technology and the performing body, Lepage states, "the 19th century conception of the proscenium stage was based on a vertical world—with God above, man in the middle and the devils below the trap doors. [...] But the new world is horizontal, as much as vertical. [...] So it should be possible to have a theatre where everything is possible, where there is no floor, no ceiling, no gravity" (qtd. in Posner).

Certainly in Cirque du Soleil's mega-million dollar production, technology is foregrounded: "all the theatre's innards lie exposed—[w]inches, cables, conduits" (Posner). However, with all the technological trappings that purport to redefine audience perception in entirely new ways, the emphasis on spectacle and its conventions remains unaltered. What this explosion in entertainment technology, exemplified by *KA*, fails to address is its relationship to the spectating body and how techno-interactivity poses questions that address the specificities of the spectator in the twenty-first century.

In relative magnitude, *The Bus Project* described in this article falls at the opposite end of the scale of technologically-enhanced entertainments. Nonetheless, *The Bus Project* departs from *KA* in illustrating how interactive technologies may be used to integrate performance into our everyday lives, how new audiences may be reached, and how preconceived notions of spectatorship, identity, and gender may be productively troubled through locational and intermedia practices. In provocative ways, both projects stake out a postcolonial, postmodern perspective and experiment with an

aesthetic of multiplicity and heterogeneity, which make comparisons not entirely spurious.

As a secondary corollary, this paper addresses how creative interdisciplinary collaboration blurs the lines between art practice and research and problematizes critical evaluation of these processes. While these are “meat and potatoes” issues in a university environment where peer-reviewed assessment is linked to advancement, they are equally relevant in professional arts practice where funding depends on juried proposals and measurable standards of excellence. While a key variable in assessment is inevitably the space between intention and results, *The Bus Project* illustrates the impossibility of foreseeing all possible outcomes in research driven by multiple agendas and cultural perspectives. Results rarely reflect the initial designs of its authors, and this can be advantageous for the creative process.

Organized under the rubric of Interdisciplinary Research, *The Bus Project* was a collaborative, media-based public art installation undertaken by theatre and intermedia artists, computer scientists, and graduate students and funded through the University of Regina in June 2004. The project offered an opportunity for academics to work across disciplines and with communities that are not usually linked.¹ Collaboration was central to the project as a means to connect scholarly research with local issues and to encourage joint approaches in an environment where single authorship is the norm.

While the research aims were multiple, the central focus of the project was to open up the idea of multiculturalism and the anxieties that have grown up around the multiple coding of this term² by investigating issues of immigration in the local communities of Regina and Saskatoon. In particular, the focus was on the diverse experiences of women from racial and cultural minorities and on how individuals cope with and articulate displacement in relationship to their adopted homes. By focusing on so-called “immigrants,” we were also pointing to the two-facedness of Canada’s multicultural policy in relationship to aboriginal women, many of whom experience similar problems, not as a result of global economic shifts but as a result of abuse, isolation, and lower self-esteem. The Canadian myth of a benevolent multicultural society imbedded in Canada’s Multiculturalism Act is debunked by the fact that, historically, Native peoples were excluded from it. Karpinski writes that throughout the Act “multiculturalism emerges as a site of ideological power struggle and contestation of meanings, often polarized between traditional assimilationist,

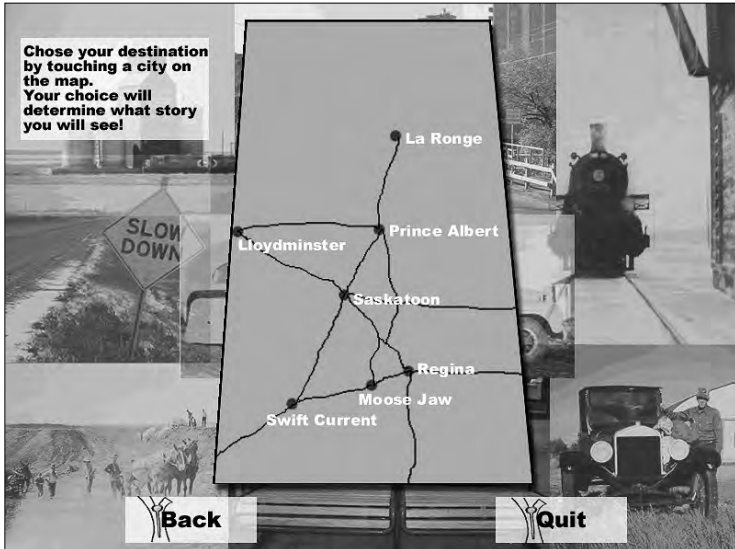
liberal pluralist, or anti-racist rhetoric” (122).

As the project moved from planning to implementation, questions around the nature of interdisciplinarity, community collaboration, and assessment also became central to the investigation. These ideas forced us to look beyond the initial research parameters and continually renegotiate our terms of reference. To provide some background, *The Bus Project* was part of a public art festival called SPASM II: The Couture of Contemporaneity, organized and curated by PAVED New Media Gallery in Saskatoon. The event was a significant one that brought together regional and national intermedia, installation, and performance artists. Invited to participate, Rachel Viader Knowles and I proposed an installation that spanned Regina and Saskatoon, two cities considered adjacent by prairie standards (275 kilometres). The venues chosen were two bus terminals, operated by the Saskatchewan Transit Company (STC), and an intercity bus. Funding was obtained through the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the University of Regina, and other researchers, artists, and students were brought on board as needed to assist in conceptualization, design, and installation. Reflecting the disciplines of the participants, the project was simultaneously conceived of as a site-specific performance/installation and as technological fieldwork.

Central themes of *The Bus Project* were displacement, leave-taking, and arrival. Conceptually, we aligned bus travel with virtual travel by integrating the device of a video game into the public transportation network. Here the provincial bus system worked as a metaphor and a means of disseminating people and their “baggage” along the Regina—Saskatoon corridor. To highlight the actual mode of transportation and to connect the two primary locations through a third element, we installed a pair of upholstered seat covers in an intercity bus. Designed by fabric artist, Wendy Allard, using appliqué, dye, and resist, the surfaces were marked with playful and culturally significant images illustrating what migrant women might bring or leave behind. The appliqué was vibrantly coloured and textured suggesting the cultural and aesthetic value of such material objects. These seats took up the coveted front-row positions. Hence, watching the view and viewing the art (at least sitting on it) were concomitant.

Game stations, loaded with *The Bus Project* video game, were placed in the waiting areas of the Saskatoon and Regina bus terminals. Designed by sculptor John Reichert, they represented an abstract, non-gendered human shape and were built for durability using brushed steel. Displaying them alongside rows of fast-food

and commodity dispensers encouraged interaction with their tactile exterior and familiar computer screens; they attracted a steady flow of curious travellers. Our hope to install video monitors on the bus was abandoned at an earlier stage when the plan was deemed too invasive by the STC management from whom we sought permission.



Mapscreens for *The Bus Project*.

Designed by Computer Science student Melissa Buhler.

Upon entering the game, a player encountered a stylized road map of Saskatchewan, the main routes superimposed with exit signs representing bus stops within the province: Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Swift Current, etc. By touching the screen, the local destination dissolved into a point of origin: South Korea, New Delhi, Afghanistan, Ukraine, South Africa, Wales, etc. Another touch triggered the image of a woman who recounted her arrival or departure story alternately in English and in her mother tongue. A player could choose the arrival narrative by playing the game in the Regina terminal. To hear the departure segment, the player had to become a traveler, in his or her own right, by completing the bus trip to Saskatoon and continuing the game there. Extracted from interviews with eight women affiliated with the provincial organization, Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, their stories of choice, chance, and transformation illustrate the strength and

resilience needed to confront another culture and fit in. Taken as a whole, the stories reflect and trouble the unifying rhetoric used to describe the Canadian mosaic. In opposition to this, our game plan aimed to infuse the undifferentiated idea of multicultural assimilation, Canada's unifying narrative of cultural multiplicity, with local specificities.

The placement of the game stations in the arrival and departure areas of the depots underscored the paradox of public space where private and emotional moments are frequently played out in full view of other travellers and where watching others is sometimes synonymous with the tedium of waiting. When, out of curiosity or boredom, a player approached the game station, he or she became complicit in an act of eavesdropping or witnessing highly charged, highly personal anecdotes. These, we hoped, might encourage players to empathize, compare local circumstances, and consider the meaning of located identity from other perspectives.

When we initially approached the STC to discuss the project, they brushed us off by deferring our requests to higher authorities. We responded by repeatedly insisting that the STC was, in fact, a crown corporation (thus publicly owned and publicly accessible). After numerous meetings, we were finally allowed to set up the game stations and install the upholstery. While bus travelers readily accepted the presence of these devices, management representatives continued to be suspicious of our reasons for wanting to use STC property. Their primary consideration was for customer well-being and they were insistent that the game kiosks be unobtrusive and that playing the game be completely voluntary. Behind their concern, we speculated, was a fear that the central idea of the game might threaten, disturb, or subvert the "proper" activity of the bus depot. Central to this institutional anxiety were issues of race, education, and underemployment, currently front and centre in Saskatchewan, where demographics indicate a growing aboriginal population. Here, the public transit system represents an affordable means of transport for a frequently itinerant population. The idea that a video game, addressing issues of global migration might at best confuse or rankle, or at worst inflame was their central unspoken anxiety. Paradoxically, this was precisely the political imperative that underlined our desire to locate the game stations where we did.

Our own positions as privileged academics from the dominant culture placed us, however, in a vexed relationship in regards to our mediating role between the cultural groups. The intellectual ground that we were attempting to cultivate was a place of opposi-

tions and paradoxes, asking questions about inclusion and exclusion. As Eva C. Karpinski writes in “Multicultural ‘Gift(s): Immigrant Women’s Life Writing,” “The principles of selection and compilation of ‘representative’ voices parallel the politics of multiculturalism as a site of power struggle over the definition of what constitutes Canada’s commonality as a nation, a struggle often fuelled by assimilation, benign pluralist or racist tendencies” (113). The points of intersection among the women we profiled in the game and in our spectator community acknowledged a shared experience of cultural, racial, and gender differences. All of these stories emphasized the women’s relatively smooth transition into Canada (specifically Regina) and the strong government support offered to them, underscoring how the quality of their lives had been improved by migration. Quotes from the women’s narratives include, “We were very happy”; “I am here with my family; everyone is so good to me, everything is established and beautiful”; and “Happy things were coming to me.” These stood in stark contrast to statistics reflecting the high rates of aboriginal single mothers and children who live off-reserve and well below the poverty line.³ Thus, we presented a multi-ethnic mix of women (Ukrainian, Russian, Korean, Indian/Hindi), not to support the notion of the Canadian mosaic but rather to foreground those—specifically First Nations—women who remain largely absent from the discourse of multiculturalism. While projects such as ours leave themselves open to critique around issues of misappropriation, misrepresentation, and oversimplification, they also help to invigorate discussion around local situations that are frequently neglected or ignored and assist in developing models of cross-cultural encounter that are more complex and productive.

Another way of addressing the marginalization of culturally displaced women was through the location itself. The installation fit within the utilitarian aesthetic of the bus depot, a space already rich with symbolism regarding these issues. As a place of leaving and arriving, it is full of potential; as a border crossing marking “home and away,” it is a place where identities can be questioned. In this environment, seats are hard and do not invite relaxation, a video camera surveys the area, and fluorescent lights are harsh. The television is tuned to all-news or all-sports channels.

The bus depot is, superficially, a male space, wholly characterized by an absence of female indicators. Thus, the insistence of a woman’s perspective, inserted through digitized narratives and the reworking of the serviceable bus seats with handcrafted seat



The Kiosk located in the Regina STC Bus Depot, designed and constructed by John Reichert.

Photo by Kathleen Irwin.

covers, was incongruous, ambiguous, and compelling. As Elizabeth Wilson writes in *The Sphinx and the City*, what women's presence represents in a controlled, rational male environment is feeling, sexuality, and chaos (157, 87). Within the schedule-bound atmosphere of the bus depot, the women's voices were also dislocating and threatening. Their stories illustrated that identity formation is not fixed or static, illustrating Stuart Hall's description of identity: "identities are never completed, never finished; [. . .] they are always, as subjectivity itself, in process" (47). Within the context of the bus depot, the narratives suggested alternative perspectives,

inviting a reconsideration of spatiality that blurred the binaries of private/public, personal/political, male/female. The depot became an “identity space” where notions of “selfhood” and “worldhood” might be addressed, where issues of race and gender might be articulated, and where a woman’s perspective might be considered the norm (Friedman 76). In the process, the space shifted from performing one function to performing multiple functions: as news spread, people called in to inquire about the arrival time of the upholstered bus. In other words, the stations could be seen as provisional galleries or theatres—spaces of reciprocity and interactivity.

What role did technology play in this project? In the rampant drive towards a totally tech-supported lifestyle, in which BlackBerries proliferate and cell phones provide fingertip access to the internet, the use of the bus signalled a relatively “low tech” option of communication. The role of technology here was to interrupt the routine of bus travel and create an interface for the traveler that offered a more random and ludic trip around the province than the one on which he or she would normally embark. In the video mapping game, played at the stations set up in the bus terminals, each mundane destination became a portal to an alternative world. The strategy was, to a degree, inspired by current experiments in algorithmic psychogeography in which the notion of the random stroll or drift is elaborated into a systematic practice codified into set patterns. The arbitrariness of the experience, the desire to satisfy one’s curiosity about what is around the next corner, is key to the psychogeographic experience, and we wanted the same gentle pleasure of discovery to be part of the video game.⁴

While the game was used to provide a menu of playful possibilities for defining personal routes/roots, it also engaged with the traditional content of the video game. Typically in game environments, one encounters only virtual presences, ciphers, or cyborgs engaged in violent or aggressive activity. Embedding “real” people in the game posed questions not only about the conventional representation of virtual space but about the veracity of the stories told there. Does this game represent a world where such stories are verifiable or are they merely staged? Do I, as the player, empathize with these women or do I merely play the game? These questions are indeed critical for trying to understand the nature of spectator response to the immigrant narratives imbedded in the game stations. While the project cast “immigrant women” as participants, they were, of course, not simply defined by this designation. One of the women was an actress, two were intermedia artists, one

was raising children, and one seeking employment; all were aware of the mediating camera and their own ability to manipulate it to optimal effect. Each was asked to tell a story, not necessarily adhering to the facts; embroidering was allowed, even encouraged. Each was videotaped against carefully chosen backgrounds, the lighting was controlled, several takes were done, and the stories written and edited by the women themselves. In post-production, certain words and phrases (“coming home,” “I was lonely,” “lost”) were extracted and superimposed graphically across the screen, in comic book style. In other words, a performance was created that recalled other performative forms such as storytelling, documentary, and reality television. The level of veracity that first-person narratives assume shifts according to the nature of the media that frames the event. While news broadcasts and documentaries strive for a level of authenticity, video games by no means attempt to make such claims; and the apparent incongruity might, I suggest, destabilize the experience of the viewer in productive ways and encourage a questioning of the language frequently employed to describe multicultural policy in Canada.

In the relative scale of technology-supported entertainment, *The Bus Project* was not a grand event. Part theatre performance, part installation, part research, it attempted to address local issues of race, gender, and immigration in a compelling and ambiguous way to a non-conventional audience. In doing so, it reassigned meaning in a place of prescribed activity and encouraged spectators to situate their immediate surroundings in a local/global context of interlocking networks and immigration patterns, where migrancy is the result not of choice, but of economic and political contingencies.

Too frequently, the spaces where we live and work are overly commercialized and controlled. Within these spaces debate and dissent are neutralized. Perhaps the overarching achievement of *The Bus Project* was recognizing that public art can engage people in innovative ways and can challenge, in the process, conventional notions of appropriate time and place. It recognized that we live in a highly mobile society that engages in both low-tech and high-tech systems of communication and that these can be harnessed as metaphors to stimulate contemplation, conversation, and debate about the communities we inhabit. As well, it underlined the essential role that such performative events play in building and sustaining an urban community by foregrounding diversity and showing how single stories may overshadow multiple powerful narratives.

In dramaturgical terms, there are, of course, many differences

between *The Bus Project* and *KA*, and the way each structures form and content is subject to discrete rules and traditions. I use the example of *KA* to illustrate how technology, however much it pushes the envelope, often merely supports performance as spectacle, appealing to a viewer who has learned over generations how to decode the work and its form. Technologically enhanced entertainments such as *The Bus Project*'s game environment illustrate how the standard two-way communication of the conventional theatre is now joined by the operation of new interactive processes. The latter is defined by operating instructions and user rules that must be learned on the basis of new metaphors. Heide Hagebölling writes,

[. . .] the network among user groups that online media creates opens additional dimensions of exchange and competition on an extremely abstract level. In addition to the development of contents and characters or avatars, these programs are chiefly concerned with the development of a conception of dramaturgic rules that, in an open multi-user system independent of time and location, provides a binding operational context for an unknown user community and also wins their acceptance. Communication in these systems is defined by a high degree of anonymity and abstraction that practically presupposes the formation of interculturally acceptable metaphors and codes. (2)

This kind of interactivity anticipates an active participant whose ability to read the event is based on choices, interruptions, and jumps that distinguish individual communication from a more linear reception that takes place in groups. *KA* does little to redefine audience perceptions or shake up sedimented attitudes and ideologies. This is illustrated by its conformity to a liberal pluralist discourse of global multiculturalism characterized by a levelling out of difference and an aesthetic of homogenization. The cast of *KA*, representing a diversity of races and cultures, suggests a unified global community; its narrative, based on a legend of “the conflict and love of imperial twins who are separated at the prime of their youth and have to undergo the rite of passage of self discovery” (Lepage) might spring from any number of traditions. The show is marketed as a perception-changing experience that has the potential, through the extraordinary technology used to package it, to transform social perceptions—a faulty claim, indeed.

If the technology in Cirque du Soleil's *KA* does not redefine audience perception and cognitively engage the spectator in

provocative ways, does *The Bus Project* come any closer to realizing this lofty goal? In considering community-based art practices, Lucy Lippard writes, “[t]o affect perception itself, we need to apply ideas as well as forms to the ways in which people see and act within and on their surroundings” (286). She argues that the challenge of redefining perception is best addressed by reaching out to participant communities and marginalized audiences by whatever means possible and “allowing the art idea to become, finally, part of the social multicenter rather than an elite enclave” (286). Reaching out in this way will inevitably result in crossing perceived boundaries and exploring new territories. Here the notion of “actual place” is fundamental. She suggests that shifts in perception are achieved when a work engages spectators on the level of their own lived experience; is collaborative to the extent that information, advice, and feedback is sought from the community in which the work is realized; is generous and open-ended enough to be accessible to a variety of people from different classes and cultures; is appealing enough to engage the imagination; is simple and familiar enough on the surface not to confuse or repel; is complex enough to offer layers of experience to those who participate on different levels; is evocative enough to jog memory and emotions; and is provocative and critical enough to make people consider issues beyond the scope of the work. Most importantly, the event that successfully redefines audience perception is unobtrusive; it differs least from the space in which it is situated (Lippard 286). In the example of *The Bus Project*, it was, effectively, the technology that enabled us to locate the installation in the inhospitable environment of the bus depot and, in so doing, embrace a new spectator constituency.⁵

In the end, having overcome their initial distrust, the Saskatchewan Transportation Company wholeheartedly endorsed the project and opened the door to further collaborations with the arts community. In the process, they redefined the bus depot not merely as a place of arrivals and departures but as “art space” and “identity space.” This was in itself a positive research outcome. For those of us involved in the project, our final assessment of the work was more ambivalent. Initially the project aimed to investigate representational strategies in non-traditional spaces, engage diverse spectatorships, and consider how technology might support the universal aims of conjoined research. Inevitably, in assessing the project, there arose other issues that merited consideration. While collaboration broadens a work’s intertextual scope, the nature of this work is chaotic and inconclusive. The process of

intersecting with multiple partners and constituent communities is, in many ways, as important as are the quantifiable and visible results. Where people and ideas meet and chafe are the defining sites of research, the “excess” that is never intentional and can never be planned for nor repeated. This tumultuous process is not easy to negotiate: the big picture is never available to everyone at the same time. For this reason, end results are difficult to evaluate by traditional yardsticks and are often disregarded as lacking merit. While intentions alone are not an accurate or definitive indicator of merit, they do suggest contexts and criteria useful for evaluation. They are important indicators of the values and meanings the artists/researchers attach to their work. Results-based evaluation does not take into account the multiple, sometimes unconscious, levels on which much art and community-based projects operate.

Within the academy, stringent criteria are placed on the evaluation process, yet this process is discipline-specific. While a project of this nature ideally exhibits the richness and depth that results from diverse input, at the same time its very hybridity makes it difficult to assess by such standards. In scientific or academic terms, the question begging to be asked is, “Are the goals of interdisciplinarity best served when individuals retreat to their own disciplines to assess and measure results or should a new model be considered?” In artistic terms, the question begging to be asked is, “Is it art and, if so, in what category should it be classified, critiqued and funded?” Any assessment must ultimately ask the question, “Is the work a substantial and meaningful addition to the cultural, social or scientific sphere?” In the case of multidisciplinary projects, a way of considering these questions may eventually be found in assessing, to the degree possible, the range of experiences and outcomes available to the wide spectrum of individuals who participated in or viewed the work. If intentionality is used as one yardstick for attributing merit, then it must also be understood that, in such events, there is an excess of meaning well beyond that intended or imagined by the authors at the outset, and this may itself exemplify a successful outcome.

In order to discuss the changing intersection of performance and entertainment practices, I have attempted to weave several disparate threads: new performative technologies, community-oriented practices, and interdisciplinary methodology. For artists and researchers who deal with visual representation and audience perception and who look to technology for future directions, these considerations and the hurdles they present constitute ongoing sites of inquiry. This juncture marks, Richard Loveless writes,

a most significant moment in time for performing arts and technology. [...] [O]ur challenge is to imagine a future for the arts that extends well beyond the human imagination that has shaped them in our lifetime. No matter what the time or place of our birth during the first half of this century, we all arrived as analogue babies, enriched and yet encumbered by traditions in the arts that were formed by a myriad of cultures. These traditions gave way to new trends, and in time were embraced by the immigration patterns that formed our nations. The last half of the century is another story; the new arrivals are digital babies. (283)

The challenge is to understand and use technologies to support innovation that breaks down boundaries between disciplines and communities and makes art and performance available to new audiences in untested places. Technology is pervasive, ubiquitous, and can facilitate and support a range of creative and provocative activities in places normally considered purely functional, single-use, and too “local” for broader consideration. Such approaches to place and space concern the conceptualization of the spatial in terms of social relations. Doreen Massey writes that

[t]he spatial spread of social relations can be intimately local or expansively global or anything in between [...] there is no getting away from the fact that social is inexorably also spatial. [...] ‘Space’ is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global. (265)

An example of how this technology is being explored is seen in international networks like PLAN (Pervasive and Locative Arts Network) that consider the broader question that technology opens up: “what kinds of creative, social, economic and political expression become possible when every device we carry, the fabric of the urban environment and even the contours of the Earth, become a digital canvas?” (“Plan”). A new generation of pervasive technologies is enabling artists in every discipline to break away from traditional desktop computers and game consoles and experience interactive media that are directly embedded into the world around them. For example, students at the School of Art in Utrecht studying Game Design and Development are trained to work in a multidisciplinary game team in such a way that the playability of a game reaches a high level, on both virtual and real life-platforms, and the game finds ways to include actual audi-

ences. Such events are a hybrid of traditional performance and gaming environments and are, by no means, unique experiences.

Looking to the future, new fields of interdisciplinary research foregrounding the use of pervasive technology and locative media will support experiences and social interaction that respond to a participant's physical location and context. Together these convergent fields raise possibilities for new cultural experiences in areas as diverse as performance, installations, games, tourism, heritage, marketing, and education. Many of these projects combine practicing artists and technology developers whose early research has frequently been delivered as public artworks that have yielded new insights into the ways in which audiences experience technology. These strategies interrogate the very terms and conditions of the conventional audience and may, indeed, shape the emerging perception of digital babies. ❁

NOTES

- ¹ Kathleen Irwin, site-based scenographer; Rachelle Viader Knowles, intermedia artist; Daryl Hepting, computer scientist; and students from each area were involved in the project. These included Maki Nagisa (Theatre), Isabel da Silva (Intermedia), and Melissa Buhler (Computer Science). The women who shared their stories were Teresa Oliinik, Palwaha Humayun, Slava Gottselig, Neelhu Sachdev, Isabel da Silva, and Maki Nagisa.
- ² In her essay, "Multi-cultural 'Gift(s)': Immigrant Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Anthologizing Difference," Eva C. Karpinski writes that multiculturalism in Canada, since its introduction into public discourse by Pierre Trudeau in 1971, "has been constructed as a demographic fact, institutionalized as policy, and variously deployed as rhetoric [. . .]. Significantly a greater openness to a 'multicultural climate' coincides with the turn towards postmodernism and post-colonialism, traditionally seen as marked by the demise of unifying narratives of history; the aesthetics of political mobilization of the oppressed peoples. As a discursive construct parallel to postmodernism, multiculturalism, too, is caught up in many contradictions and competing claims that have been played out in the shifting dialectic of resistance and celebration" (111).
- ³ In October 2000, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) released a report titled "Urban Aboriginal Child Poverty Background." The report cites some alarming statistics that reveal the extent of the problem: 52.1% of all Aboriginal children are poor; 12% of Aboriginal families are headed by parents under the age of 25 years; 27% of Aboriginal families are headed by single mothers;

40% of single Aboriginal mothers earn less than \$12,000 per year; 47.2% of the Ontario Aboriginal population receives less than \$10,000 per year; and, Aboriginal people have a disability rate that is more than twice the national average. The distinct nature of Aboriginal child and family poverty in Canada is rooted in cultural fragmentation, multi-generational effects of residential schools, wardship through the child welfare system, and socio-economic marginalization.

- 4 Psychogeography can be broadly defined as the study of how physical surroundings affect mood and behavior. It is documented on websites and blogs and described as a contemporary, site-specific practice that combines art and political activism with the agreeable pastime of walking, particularly for those who like to “stroll, drift and wander simply for the pleasure of turning the next corner.” See “Shuffle.”
- 5 While this claim is speculative, it is a fair assumption that many STC clients do not participate in mainstream theatre where single-ticket prices at Regina’s regional theatre, the Globe, range from \$30 to \$35 and the season line-up generally appeals to a middle-class, white demographic. In the example of *The Bus Project*, no such barrier prohibited involvement in the event and the engagement level was observed to be high.

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