

# Cave Writing Presentations

## SPRING '15 PRESENTATIONS

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### Location & Details - SPRING '15

Showings will take place at the Brown University  
Granoff Center for the Creative Arts  
154 Angell Street (please enter from entrance off the Campus Walk to the west)  
Monday May 4, Tuesday May 5, Wednesday May 6, 2015  
7:00-10:00pm - in three scheduled presentations each evening: 7:00, 8:00, & 9:00.  
Please use ...  
<http://bookwhen.com/dlaevents>  
to book a show time seat using Book When (dot com).

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### VIRTUAL BROWN

Johanna Kincaid (Applied Maths '15)

*Virtual Brown* is an approximation of the Brown University Main Green. Using several mediums, viewers are taken by the Main Green buildings and given a quick lesson about the function and history of each location. It is a guided tour intended to give add another dimension to the university-published interactive campus map. Rather than simply looking at pictures of these places, the viewer stands at their base and travels along actual foot paths. This enhanced experience hopefully leads the viewer to better understand the heart of the Brown campus.

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### VISUALIZING A COMPLETED PORTRAIT OF PICASSO

Marley Rafson (CS '17) and Sophie Schwartz (MCM '17)

*Visualizing a Completed Portrait of Picasso* is a twisting, audio-visual interpretation of Gertrude Stein's poem, "If I Told Him, A Completed Portrait of Picasso." Gertrude Stein accomplished verbalizing a portrait of her friend, the cubist painter, Picasso, through poetry in the same distinctive style of Picasso's own work. The result of this is a loose but complex narrative.

This piece adds a level of completion to the *Portrait of Picasso* by incorporating visuals that utilize the immersive nature of The Cave. The Cave allows for integration of image, text, and audio through which the viewer can interact with Stein's poem. In an homage to Stein and Picasso's own styles, this piece draws inspiration from the cubist aesthetic and even incorporates works by Picasso himself. The text is split into distinct stanzas, each building upon one another while living in different worlds within the cave. Viewers will navigate their way through *Visualizing a Completed Portrait of Picasso*.

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## WONDERLAND

Pia Struzzi ('18)

*Wonderland* is a loose interpretation of Lewis Carol's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* which draws on the user's familiarity with the story to construct a space made almost entirely out of words. Minimalist in its approach, the black, white, and red aesthetic is intended to allow the user to impose their own expectations of a Wonderland-like space on the 3D world of the Cave. At times, exploring *Wonderland* can be tricky – the user might have trouble figuring out what to click or when interaction is needed, which is intended to create the illusion that every object in the project has potential for interactivity.

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## DAILY

Sarah Im (RISD Graphic Design)

*Daily* is a piece centered around the idea of mirroring, double messages, and abstraction. What is meant to appear as a self-constructed journey by the viewer is actually a finished, immutable composition by the artist. The piece is based loosely on the poem "I Saw You Tomorrow" by Alberto Rios, which expresses the illusive quality of people in today's fast-paced world. The poem uses repetition, line breaks, and rhythm in order to create a pace the reader struggles to keep up with; in the same way, *Daily* is meant to keep the viewer searching for hidden words or meanings. The ability to catch all of these messages, or the failure thereof, allows for a unique experience specific to each user. The viewer's goal is to discover this hidden message before moving on to the next segment.

Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure established now readily accepted categories regarding language: reflective, intentional, constructionist, and relational. What is commonly recognized as the artist's job falls under the "intentional" category, as the artist attempts to impose his or her own meaning on to her work. However, in the study of semiotics, this category is often turned down in favor of the constructionist approach: to accept that meaning is arbitrary and depends on the symbolic function give to a particular object. *Daily* pokes fun at the intentional artist and tries to veer into this constructionist approach. If a piece supplies only a nondescript, monotonous message, is the reader able to create a more engaging one on his own? Is it really necessary to impose a glaring "focus" upon the audience? Using a wide variety of techniques, this piece tests the balance between the abstract and concrete, autonomous interpretation and confused chaos. The reader is enveloped in more and more disorder and confusion as the piece progresses, until finally reaching "home" and returning to the starting point. Regardless of how many messages the viewer is able to find, the piece hopes to invoke from its viewer some form of conclusion about the fast-pace of society.

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## SEA SIGNS

Shannon Ward (CS '18)

*Sea Signs* is a combination of poetry, language, and media that creates an underwater environment that highlights the effects of ocean pollution. An underwater scene is created using words and symbols of various fonts with few images. It is influenced by visual aquatic environments that create a sort of virtual aquarium for a user. All the objects within the "tanks" are created from text and are as readable as the user wants them to be. The short poems before each tank provide contrast from the immersive underwater scenes and also propel the idea of the cave as a reading machine. Underwater sounds and noises will enhance the feeling of being underwater and create a more holistic and enveloping experience. The interactivity is completely user driven and this allows for the user to decide when they feel they have had a full cave experience. The environment is lively and easy to navigate, but also interesting and inviting. It is made even more user specific by the fact that unless you are in the cave for the full piece you never get the full experience. It is not a piece that you can watch from outside even with glasses on. The world looks distorted until you step inside, much like the underwater world.

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## JUMP!

Joshua Lu ('18)

*Jump!* explores what follows after an individual's death. God, who interacts with the subject through the Cave, is deciding whether or not the subject deserves to go up to heaven or down to Hell. To do this, God guides the subject through his or her life, and through the decisions the subject makes, one side of the moral scale will turn out to be heavier.

*Jump!* is strongly narrative-driven, and the user's decisions influence which scenes are projected onto the Cave. Multiple run-throughs are necessary to witness the consequences of all the possible routes. However, varying decisions may not necessarily lead to appropriate endings.

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## CU

Devika Girish ('17) and Noah Picard ('18)

*Cu* is a cave presentation by that imagines the Cave as an anthropomorphized, lively and curious entity, Cu, and simulates a two-way interaction between Cu and the user. *Cu* leads the user through a series of three short episodes that parallel the interactions and conversations between two people who've just met, but Cu's self-awareness of her capabilities and limitations makes things interesting. Project *Cu* explores the immersive possibilities of the cave by creating complete environments, such as a coffee shop and a beach, with which the user can interact through Cu. Through conversations in which Cu reveals details about her history and inner thoughts, it also attempts to explore how a user's engagement with the Cave changes with the addition of a personality to the cave. Cu is also imagined as a very culturally aware entity, and the presentation is embedded with pop-cultural references, especially to famous artificial intelligence entities in movies.

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## WATER NIGHT

Christopher Bey ('17)

*Water Night* is a visualization of the song of the same name composed by Eric Whitacre and performed by the Brown University Chorus. The project incorporates the lyrics of the song, its music, and additional aesthetic elements in order to bring the song to life in a visual manner. The song is ethereal, complementing the 3D virtuality of the Cave. The author of the visualization has a personal connection with the musical performance, since Bey's is one of the many voices heard within the audio. It is important to note that the lyrics and impetus of the song itself is based on an English translation of Octavio Paz's poem 'Agua Nocturna.' *Water Night* is simply a further step in one process for bringing Paz's poem to life. Initial inspiration for *Water Night* was derived from watching a video of Eric Whitacre conducting his own musical rendering.

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MORE PROJECT DETAILS COMING SOON !

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## FALL '14 PRESENTATIONS

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### SUPER CHILDHOOD DELUXE

Clara Beyer (Linguistics '15)

The user steps into an immersive 3D experience that bears a striking resemblance to a familiar 2D environment: the world of Super Mario. Given the same choices Mario has, running forward and jumping, the user must navigate this world, its dangers, and its rewards. Using an object-oriented Ruby interface for scripting Cave XML, the world of Mario has been recreated within the Cave. But instead of gold coins, players receive unpaid internships. Instead of Goombas, they must vanquish piano recitals. By contrast with the original game environment, players can see in all directions around them, however they still only have two choices: run or jump.

It seems appropriate, considering that immersive 3D technology is still difficult of access, that this project would be reminiscent of the early days of video gaming. Super Mario Brothers was bundled with the NES system when it was released in North America in 1985, and was immediately wildly popular. The author remembers playing Super Mario Brothers Deluxe on her Gameboy Color sitting in the car on her way to piano lessons. Her dedication to hitting the right keys on the Gameboy was far greater than any interest in playing the correct keys on the piano. As video game technology matures, we are developing more ways to interact with it, but in the beginning we were limited to only a handful of buttons. The bright, colorful aesthetics from an earlier era are deployed to evoke nostalgia, and to create a playful atmosphere.

*Super Childhood Deluxe does not speak merely to the generation it describes. Rather, the crucial impact of this piece hinges on something so obvious it becomes almost invisible. Namely, the piece shows us these little fragments of childhood through the lens of a game. We are asked to make sense of the bizarre upbringing of a generation by literally situating ourselves as a character in the games that that generation used to help make sense of their own childhood. The absurdity of a floating cloud of parental admonition matches perfectly with the absurdity a child might experience upon hearing those same words. And we could well imagine that a child having just set down an NES control might make sense of (and try to cope with) her world by identifying duties and obstacles with pleasantly squashable Goombas.*

*... Far from a mere anthropological exploration of childhood at a specific time and under specific circumstances, Super Childhood Deluxe puts its viewers in a position to learn what it's like to see the world through the lens of digital games. While this sensation may be familiar to some, it is of even more worth to those with limited contact with such literature. As gaming and algorithmic dimensions of text become increasingly important, work like Beyer's will help to illustrate (and investigate) just how these new fields affect our collective worldview.*

- Will Hicks

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## SPECTACLE!: THE GAME

Victor Bramble (Modern Culture & Media '17)

*Spectacle!: the game* is an audiovisual experience meeting common definitions of interactivity consistent with the label 'game'. The titled makes explicit reference to Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* and, implicitly, to the long history of white settlers making black and queer bodies hypervisible. It features interactive elements reminiscent of those found in text based or point-and-click adventure games where one makes procedural choices which alter the 'game' environment. Within the game, the player/viewer/reader is unable to freely move around except in the confines of the cage-like environment produced by the Cave apparatus. The player/viewer/reader experiences the effect of being dissected by a violent gaze, an othering gaze, in a simulated environment resembling that of high art galleries complete with light classical music in the background. The scene becomes more and more chaotic until the entire scene 'breaks'.

*Spectacle!* is about being Black and Queer, and the entailed fundamental failure of ontology. It exists to reproduce the effects which are created by certain experiences of marginalization in America. *Spectacle!* does not place majoritarian subjects into the proverbial shoes of minoritarian subjects. This would put far too much faith in the majoritarian subject and ultimately in a form of liberalism which would do more harm than good. Instead it demonstrates a fundamental failure of subjectivity. Seeing and speaking in space and time are things which the Cave has the potential to exceed at exploring. *Spectacle!* is about what is seen and what can be said about it. *Spectacle!* conveys ideas and feelings attached to experiences of the Black and the Black Queer, or a window into such experience for other subjects, a window which is always bracketed by the impossibility of comparing the suffering of the master and the slave. In its artificiality it does only as much as it can for these subjects. It may be amusing or technically interesting, and then only in the most limited sense, but in so far as it is important to understand and to feel the distribution of the sensible and the make-up of the political space, *Spectacle!* will at least demonstrate certain ways in which these concepts fail and backfire.

*Bramble's work represents and allegorizes the effects created by experiences of marginalization in America, more precisely, experience of being black and queer and the violent hyper visibility associated with this. It will leave you feeling exposed and anxious - as it should. Step into the Cave and take your part in the Spectacle!.*

- Cesar Guerrero

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## SEE//HEAR

Ada Dolan-Zalaznick (Modern Culture & Media '17)

*see//hear* creates an immersive audio visualization experience, exploring the relationship between spectator and lyrics in James Blake's song 'Retrograde.' In his music, Blake often pairs ambient soundscapes with truly haunting lyrics. Song lyrics, in terms of their importance, are often subjugated to the art of sound. Lyrics as statements deserving to be read go all unrecognized. *see//hear* moves counter to this tendency, creating spaces for the lyrics within which their presence and importance are reestablished and supported. *see//hear* speaks to issues concerned with the ubiquity of hyper-entertainment in our society, and to difficulties that many of its author's generation experience in standing still or releasing control even for just a short time. *see//hear* tells its viewer/hearer/readers that it's O.K. It's O.K. to stop moving for one second and just experience.

*see//hear is more of an audiovisual than an interactive experience. It starts simply, matching the simplicity of the opening notes of the song 'Retrograde' by James Blake. The piece immediately signals what it is and what is about to happen to you as a reader. It plays on an already established knowledge of music, music videos, and music visualizations. This understatement however, leads one on to be caught almost by surprise within the piece's intricacies of visual experience. As the song grows, so too does the reading experience, but far from a simple presentation of lyrics, see//hear allows one to step inside the physical space of the song. The music surrounds and envelops you in the immersive environment of the cave, carrying you along for something more akin to a musical journey, rather than a visual representation of the song. ... The author presents us with something unique, something which, while seemingly quite familiar, takes advantage of the Cave as a technical apparatus and a specific medium in order to present an almost unrivaled experience, blending sound and image superbly. see//hear is a must//see.*

- Victor Bramble

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## SALIENTOLOGY

Reed Gaines (Literary Arts MFA - Digital Language Arts '16)

*Salientology* places the viewer in a cave made of text which is normally easy to scroll past or ignore - the social media postings of the briefly or chronically sad. Those active on Facebook or Twitter see these kinds of posts once and a while: vague expressions of grief, calls for sympathy or camaraderie sent out into the ether, rarely responded to and quickly buried by algorithms which implicitly, by way of the "like" and "favorite", prioritize positivity. The cave makes this burial literal. The viewer uncovers text by utilizing shovels and picks, revealing legible snippets with a flashlight. The light can't illuminate all the text at once, forcing the viewer to regard each relic discretely.

Recontextualizing the substance of social media in this way is vital. It helps highlight for viewers the artificially constructed underpinnings of social media systems. It is difficult to argue with writing on walls, as enduring monuments to ancient law imply. *Salientology* asks viewers to rethink their notions of the who, what, and why of socially mediated text by stripping away the interface, the endless feed, the hubbub of conversation, smarm, sarcasm. It asks for a moment of quiet regard and empathy. Then, inevitably, the moment ends and the cave collapses. The words remain in memory, free from the fetters of their original form. They are now sacred artifacts.

*Using a thoroughly realized metaphor of excavation - complete with shovels, pickaxes, and the words of a archaeologist's assistant - Gaines unearths expressions of depression, desperation, inadequacy, and futility. The artist seems to be providing a counterpoint to the place from which he drew his 'artifacts' - the Internet - where positivity is celebrated and reinforced, and negativity is often, as on the Facebook newsfeed, ignored and therefore buried. The viewer is given control over the rate of revelation and over which wall to illuminate, enhancing his or her connection to the material and deepening his or her response. In this quietly powerful work, Gaines monumentalizes everyday tragedy.*

- Jonah Newman

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## ESCAPE

Cesar Guerrero (Computer Science '16)

Essentially, *Escape* is a game in which the player, and an accompanying group, must escape an ambiguous area of cyberspace through a sequence of rooms. Each room audio and visual cues that will help the player along. The work is inspired by the genre of Internet games known as escape games. Traditionally, solving puzzles - reasoning your way out of a room - allow players to 'win' such games. This Cave version is similar with the exception that the player is able to explore more than one room, and has the option to solve puzzles together with her or her group.

How will collaborative puzzle solving work itself out in larger groups - especially where differences of perspective are determined by the fact that only one person or interactive point of view is being 'tracked'. *Escape* will serve as a first demo installment of an escape game that can be navigated by a group, and the author's chief interest is in the dynamics of collective play. In the end, the rules of the game do not change. You (who?) must - escape.

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## FIG

Kristin Hayter (Literary Arts MFA - Digital Language Arts '16)

FIG asks the participant to explore multiplicity of meaning through interdisciplinary codification. A complex system of organization is represented through original text, visuals, and sound. The spatial "room" of the cave is utilized as an environment where FIG can present multidisciplinary information in simultaneity.

The participant is presented with an orb-like figure comprised of conceptual strata. Each layer of strata is assigned an integer, and each integer corresponds to a fragment of text. The participant is able to interact with the FIG and create his/her own aurally represented narrative. The participant may then experience multiple FIGs with predetermined narratives in various states of functionality and decay.

*Kristen Hayter's Fig is a machine built to fail. It is a closed network of channels, and therefore familiar and instantly meaningful as technology. At the same time, it's spare, severe, even jarring. We chart a way through its scaffolding and consider the placement of each node. We combine component parts. We hear it react to our prodding. Our natural curiosity to understand the system and its patterns is risky. In fact, we are destroying as we explore, neglecting one part of the system as we engage with another. Inevitable collapse. What remains is haunting sonic gravel and brilliant cyborg language.*

- Reed Gaines

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## CONSOLATION

*conSolation* is a digital performance piece which directly confronts the necessity of multimodality in certain forms of expression. Situated as it is in a medium which provides a near-limitless potential for spectacle, *conSolation* works in a conscientiously restrained mode. In the first section of the piece, a performer works with simple gestures to present a series of texts. These texts consist of individual words (in white) hanging at the vertices of a geometrical solid in three-dimensional space (with a uniformly black background). The performer then exits the Cave and allows audience members to interact with the piece if they so choose. Once the audience enters the Cave, the piece is far less tightly determined. They may encounter a variety of texts, all of which are presented in a similarly minimal style and all of which make use of three-dimensional space in unique ways.

This simple surface brings up a number of issues relevant not only to digital literature but to any multimodal practice. Specifically, it deals with the extent to which work in multiple modes is essential as opposed to merely decorative framing for an underlying text. *conSolation*, through its minimalist aesthetic, provides a useful example for these considerations. Putting aside the performative aspects of the piece for the moment, the minimalism in the presented text raises the question of what has been gained by working in the digital realm. After all, if a digital poem isn't a screaming fanfare of images, videos, and animated interactive text, what's the point? By its very existence, *conSolation* hopes to answer this question and thereby draw attention to the very real value of other digital work that might otherwise be dismissed under this heading of "screaming fanfare."

*conSolation* could not be experienced without the participation of the artist who constructed it, and *conSolation* could not exist as a poetic artifact without the medium which houses it. *conSolation* directly confronts the problems and possibilities that arise with digitally represented language. The artist alone is aware of how to interact with his work, and takes to the Cave's 'stage' to summon words from the darkness with predetermined gestures. The words assume positions at the vertices of Platonic solids and then are swept away with more gestures. All the while, the artist is kneeling as if in silent devotion and reverence for the forms he has created. With its emphasis on Greek cosmology while using a complex arrangement of voice recognition software, gesture-controlled interfaces, and the Cave 'stage', *conSolation* seamlessly intertwines traditional forms and new media in a breathtaking and performative display.

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- Kristin Hayter

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## AMBUSH AND ESCAPE

Jonah Newman (History '16)

'Ambush and Escape' is a transmediation of one chapter of Newman's graphic novel, *Breaking the Eagle*, a work of historical fiction set in Napoleonic Europe. This particular scene takes place in Spain, March 1811, where the protagonists, a small band of political rebels, are laboring as slaves for the French army. However, when it is discovered that the British are close by, the slaves are called away to help the soldiers move cannons through difficult wooded terrain. But the French are ambushed by British light infantry, and in the midst of the bloody chaos, the slaves slip away into the trees.

The piece is first and foremost a linear narrative, moving forward briskly with the assistance of viewer-controlled 'next' buttons. Second, it is an amalgam of media. The presence of certain conventions of the comics medium - such as speech bubbles and bordered frames - nods to the story's original format, while other elements (movement, sound, and three-dimensional images) break from the original medium in order to make fuller use of the Cave's capabilities. Some portions read like a film, with the viewer a removed observer, while others suggest that the viewer is present, immersed in the world. Bold and colorful, 'Ambush and Escape' deviates vividly from the typical text-based Cave project.

*Ambush and Escape reimagines an excerpt of the artist's original graphic novel, Breaking the Eagle, as a three-dimensional artwork. The Cave environment provides a new set of tools to tell this story, but the visual language of comics is not forgotten. Instead, the artist carefully transmediates original drawings into the virtual space, making the viewer feel that they are truly inside the world of the graphic novel.*

*The project explores questions of narrative in a virtual reality environment. Unlike the big screen, which has hosted graphic novel adaptations since Captain Marvel's debut in 1941, the Cave does not force strictly linear exploration. Here, the artist strategically takes advantage of the four walls of the cave, which can each play an important role in the storytelling, even when they are not the focal point of the action. In the forest, the thick trees loom around you. On the beach, sounds of grueling labor come from every direction. When chaos erupts, you are immersed in it.*

Where this piece succeeds is in its balance between the graphic novel design choices and the Cave's technological abilities. When the sun sets behind the hand-drawn trees, and you feel the forest growing darker: it is easy to lose yourself in the world of *Breaking the Eagle*.

- Clara Beyer

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## A LINE, [CRYSTAL SCAFFOLDING]

Katarah da Silva (Literary Arts '15)

The project is a literary performance of potential and experiential translation. Manipulating the poetic space while unfolding the various ways in which one can experience transmission of word, narrative and space. a line, [crystal scaffolding] uses literary architectures to move through the act of translation and the subsequent built spaces these transmissions produce. With the CAVE UI software and XML, a reality is created in the artificial 3D that allows for the reader to experience the agency one is afforded in maneuvering through built infinite systems such as language. In a seemingly infinite space, the reader has agency in determining the overall narrative. Incorporating game and "Choose Your Own Adventure" book features, the reader takes an active first-person role; however, the text and sound is still moved through the reader to consider the passivity of translation.

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## THE RUBAIYAT

Jeneen Naji (Visiting Fulbright 'Tech Impact' Scholar, a Digital Media Lecturer from Maynooth University, Ireland)

*The Rubaiyat* used Brown University's interactive and immersive stereo 3D audiovisual environment (Cave) to make a digitally mediated work of poetic language art, while studying the Cave as a media system for digital literary practice. This project used the Cave to explore notions of translation, multiculturalism, and the impact of technological affordances on literary expression and reception. This was done through creating a digital version of the poem *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, one that allows the user to experience, simultaneously, different translations that exist for this work. Potentially, this provides the reader with an opportunity to gain equal access to alternative versions, some of which may fall outside the mainstream. For example, the digital Cave version not only includes the well-known translation by Edward Fitzgerald but also a relatively little-known version by a Mrs H. M. Caldwell, a Persian scholar who dedicated her life to this translation and the study of the Persian language. The Arabic translation of the poem by Egyptian poet Ahmed Rami is also included as well as the original text in Farsi and an Irish version intended to represent the research-author's multicultural identity.

Video documentation of the piece is available [here](#).

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## SPRING '14 PRESENTATIONS

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### CONEY ISLAND OF THE MIND

Michael Pack ('17) and Saskia Morgan ('16)

'A Coney Island of the Mind' exists to offer a cohesive aesthetic that makes reference to both the page and the computer screen. Hand drawings and print-like text are put in contact with digitally processed images and algorithm-generated particle streams, coming together in the 3D world of the Cave as an intersection between the physical and the digital.

The title text, a book of poetry by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, has been adapted in our piece for the Cave, transforming the linear experience of the original work to a spatial, exploratory one. Users are encouraged to wander and pick things apart as they wish.

Acknowledgements:

*A Coney Island of the Mind* by Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1958),

'Polyveil' by Chris Novello, see: <http://www.paperkettle.com/home/polyveil/> (and viewable from selected Cave Writing works).

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## SAPPHOS' BROTHERS

Julieta Cardenas (Hist of Art & Architecture '14)

*Sappho's Brothers* is a project by Julieta Cárdenas, using two English translations of the most recently discovered fragments by the seventh-century BC Greek poetess Sappho. 'The Brothers Poem' when found had a rip in the papyrus that obfuscates one word that in the English translations has either been replaced by a likely guess or an ellipses. Cárdenas has been troubled by this and is interspersing her own narrative based on the ancient greek text with the two English translations to create a project specific to the medium of the Cave.

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## TELEPHONE

Annabel Ruddle (RISD Film/Animation/Video '14)

'Telephone' is an investigative venture into variations of human auditory perception, and explores the making meaning from nonmeaning. It attempts to show differences in perception on a physical, auditory level in a simple, minimalist fashion.

'Telephone' makes reference to the popular children's game of the same name where a message is passed from person to person and is changed in the process.

Part social experiment, part art – the audio was created by playing an unfamiliar one-second clip to a number of different individuals, and having them repeat back what they thought they heard. The gathered responses were organized in relation to the visual structure of a telephone keypad. Each number denotes a different person and their particular response.

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## WALK

Dan Zhang, Christopher Burke, and William Allen-Dupraw

'Walk' investigates the degree of immersion can be attained within virtual reality, more specifically the extent to which one can create an immersive experience that is chiefly dependent on the graphic display of textual material. The artists are also interested in what can be achieved with structures of words, words in motion, and language.

An important motivation for the design this piece was the desire to make a visually spectacular construction in the Cave. A constraint at the heart of this endeavor was the fact that the Cave Writing software is biased in favor of the display and manipulation of text. Threaded into the spectacle of 'Walk,' there are subliminal messages - the structures through which the user/reader travels are all made of language, which can and should be read, although initially this may not be evident or straightforward.

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## WATERLOGGED

Jason Fedor, Julia Tatiyatirong, Judge Ryan, and Andy Chen

'Waterlogged' addresses the discomfort of humans beings immersed in water. We are out of our element in the water, and this project aims to provoke similar emotions of discomfort. It places the user/reader within a narrative revolving around a shipwreck. The world of 'Waterlogged' gives the illusion of a freely explorable underwater environment. But as the user/reader ventures further from the world's center and closer to its periphery the experience becomes less and less interesting. Immersion-constrained breathing is simulated by having the screen flash red whenever the user stays immersed. There will be an irritating tone that gets louder the longer the user is underwater. Objects such as kelp and fish will be placed within the environment. Some of these objects are clickable so as to provide interaction. Text is displayed, as if written on old parchment, to represent messages from sunken bottles. The messages, seemingly, are written by a weary shipwrecked individual. Upon reading through all the bottled messages the user will learn the answer to a riddle they've been given at the outset. Solving the riddle takes them to an island where they 'blackout' and awaken in a hospital room. The user/reader is left with an open-ended experience. They do not know whether 'they' were in a dream or if the shipwreck was a real story.

Simulations of water and near-drowning evoke many emotions. User/readers are invited to explore feelings of being inquisitive, trapped, suffocated, fearful, relieved, and hopeful at successive moments. Leaving the cave the audience should feel both content with their exploration and frustrated with its 'nautical nonsense.' Encapsulated micro-fictions stimulate the curiosity of its explorers, and allude to an event whose details become clearer and provide a clue for further interaction. The challenge is to create a highly stylized and artificial experience that resonates with

the fears and discomforts of actually being underwater, while allowing, in time, some relief upon escaping from an experience of drowning.

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## FRAGMENTS (of anything you like)

Kathleen Ottinger

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## FALL '13 PRESENTATIONS

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### THE ARCADE

Aaron King, Elizabeth Powers, and Adam Scherlis

*The Arcade* seeks to explore displacement in time and space through the interaction of visual elements of early computer gaming systems with philosophical themes from William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Three characters from the novel - Benjy, Quentin, and Miss Quentin - are displaced into a 'digital wasteland' reminiscent of 1990s video gaming graphics, and leave notes and diary entries throughout the three-dimensional space to be discovered and read by the Cave viewer.

The title of this piece, *The Arcade*, pays tribute to three different conceptual and aesthetic components which underly its construction. The first is the architectural reference to a building which contains numerous shops, usually connected by a passageway with an arched roof. The second is an allusion to the late twentieth-century video game arcade. The ironic imagery and textures used throughout the piece are intended to create the effect of an outdated video game environment and the technical complications of its use today. Finally, *The Arcade* acts as a literary play upon the word archaic. As outdated technology is explored through the use of 1990s graphics throughout the Cave piece, the 'primitive' culture of the American South, as depicted in *The Sound and the Fury*, is analyzed via the medium of the Cave. Ultimately, the fate of outdated technology and the fates of Faulkner's characters, who are unable to adapt to the modern world, are examined in the same space: a space without time, without linearity, and without free will. These philosophical discussions are greatly enhanced through the unique capability of the Cave to overlay characters, writings, and graphics in the same virtual space in order to explore their interactions and nuances.

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### (IN)VISIBLE

Tania Sarfraz

*(In)Visible* is a piece designed as an exploration of two related concepts: meaning and translation. Fragments of an English translation of Forough Farrokhzad's poem, *Another Birth*, originally in Persian, are positioned in a walled space inside the Cave. The walls bear Persian text and the piece opens with the reader having to penetrate a door, or sheet, bearing a Persian word. As the reader travels through this space, they can encounter the text fragments in various ways and to varying effects; depending on where the reader is positioned inside the walls, they will be able to see some text but not the rest. This is achieved by the use of images, some of which are transparent with respect to other objects and some not. So, as the reader explores different positions within the Cave, the text becomes visible in different combinations, generating different reading possibilities.

This piece draws its focus on meaning from John Banville when he writes, 'We set up a word at the point at which our ignorance begins, at which we can see no further.' This claim is intriguing because of its use of a metaphor of vision in imagining the relationship between language and meaning: words appear in order to aid vision, at the 'point ... at which we can see no further.' *(In)Visible* explores this idea with its use of differently visible text, where what one can see determines the sense one can make of the poem, and this is always shifting. Further, the sense the reader can make of this piece is in to some degree a function of their knowledge of Persian; being able to read the words on the wall and on the initial door, versus encountering them as foreign objects, are two distinct positions to occupy with regards to the piece. However, the text fragments inside the space are taken from an English translations of the Persian poem, and in addition to this linguistic translation, the project also involves translation between different media: from written word into sound, and from the two-dimensional page into the Cave. *(In)Visible*, then, attempts to explore the nature of meaning not only through Banville's metaphor of vision, but also through the use of translation – between languages and between media – and in the final sense, asks whether the affect of the original poem can be translated into this Cave piece.

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## NAIL FILE

Samantha Clark

This piece is made up of original digital photographs taken in a lighting studio depicting a white pedestal, a presumably young female hand with painted nails, a triangular grater, and a dark background. The images are taken in such a way as to create a stop motion - the only difference between each photograph is the placement of the hand. These images address semiotics in the use of a grater in place of a nail file. Placed within the cave environment as png image files with the dark backgrounds converted to transparencies, they produce a seemingly single flat image in their overlap as if created in a program like photoshop. In this way, they are used to form a single plane within the virtual 3D space. The images are then animated in a sense; what first appears to one single photoshopped image is revealed to be made up of many separate images that move in prescribed moves that are assigned to varying images randomly as determined by the cave program. After some time, the images begin to fade out and a crumpled sheet of paper fades in. This time on a white background. The paper says: 'the picture falls flat.' A few moments later, the text fades from the piece.

The utilization of the Cave software's ability to choose random objects within a group allows the experience for the viewer to be different each time the piece is viewed. In that way, too, it is just about impossible for the images to animate 'correctly' as they are always at the will of the random selection of the program. In this way, the animation always fails but there is always a slight hope that it could randomly work correctly. Joseph Kosuth and John Baldessari influenced this work. Kosuth's work deals very heavily with ideas of semiotics. Though perhaps less direct, I have attempted to use the use of grater and the use of planes within the cave to also function around issues of semiotics. John Baldessari often works with text on a canvas to illustrate an image that the viewer must picture on their own. His text is often cynical and makes a commentary on the art world itself. I find his irreverence to the medium he is utilizing, painting, really interesting. In some ways I see my own use of the cave - as a vessel to comment on the failure of virtual 3D spaces - somewhat similar in its irreverence. As a whole this project begins to question dimensionality within a 3D space. What is surface in a 3D environment? How do planes exist and interact in virtual space? How can the depiction of a seemingly 2D surface be broken down and be revealed to be more layered? In what ways do we as a cultural attempt to grapple with virtual 3D environments? How do they often merely mimic the ways in which the 3D world is represented in virtual 3D?

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## UNTOLD: a poem written for Brown's CAVE VR environment

Kathleen Ottinger

Untold is a transformation of linguistic objects, a piece of writing designed to exist within a simulated three-dimensional space: Brown University's Cave. The piece takes advantage of the Cave's capacity to take the reader inside letters (rendered with depth). These letters then create a 'literal interiority' or architecture determined by the typographic shape of the letters.

The poem introduces themes of proximity and intimacy, as well as repressed desires, the things that go 'unsaid.' However, the poem was also written specifically for the Cave, and the way in which Cave pieces are typically viewed: in small groups, with people usually standing in close proximity to one another, in order to view all four screens. The language seeks to increase readers' awareness of their physical closeness to others.

The poem was also written keeping in mind that access to the Cave is limited and exclusive. The piece will never reach a wide audience based on the constraints of the system. This serves as an additional metaphor: on top of the literal interior, the act of viewing the piece implicates the reader in a kind of institutional or cultural interior, calling into question the exclusivity of the institution in comparison to the psychological interior of individuals, which is often similarly inaccessible.

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## ASCENSION AND DECENSION

Phoenix Pleasant, Martin Tsornev, Lizzy Gregory



A collaborative transcendental Cave piece, divided into two spaces and exploring the concepts of Ascension and Descension. Progression through the piece will loosely follow that of Dante's *Inferno*, in which Dante travels through the nine circles of hell and then is able to visit heaven. The viewer will set out from a neutral purgatory space, envisioned as tedious, transitory, interior - evoking an airport - with signage displaying the first lines of the *Inferno*, rolling between the Italian and English.

When considering an abstraction of fundamental ideologies (such as those underlying right and wrong), do we find ourselves leaning towards particular sets of symbols over others? What kind of process are we engaging in when making connections between what we experience presently, remember previously, and expect latterly? By reducing an enormous set of choices to a few simple geometric shapes, we may discover something about our ideologies and how our being can be informed by perceptions of seemingly external spacetime realities. Consequently, we (as experiencers) may have more opportunity to engage with form and meaning in ways which do not necessarily conform to contemporary symbolic convention. Thus, this Cave experience may open us up to more possibilities for expressive experimentation in any circumstance.

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## VIRTUAL COMIC(ISH) SAFARI ZOO

Uday Shriram

An immersive 3-dimensional Cave work that integrates aspects of an open-world virtual sandbox experience with a comic book style, JPEG-based, text-in-space landscape. All the animal photography and foliage photography is original, taken by the author at various safari parks and sanctuaries — in Gir National Park, Corbett National Park, and Kerala, all of which are in India.

The expectations of a 'zoo of legend' are satirized within the constraints of a media system and its culture, playfully responding to those disappointments encountered when we visit real-world zoos, in which human needs and desires predominate over those of the animals. The *Virtual Safari Zoo* is a lighthearted attempt to represent a comic(ish) graphic world in which the constraints and cages have been brought down and the animals have been given some space, figuratively, to roam free. No cages. The viewer can still see the animals, without making them uncomfortable, other than provoking their slightly pseudo-dismissive, animal-narcissism. The project seeks to address the ethics of zoos and their role in contemporary society. Perhaps one day 'virtual' zoos will be easily accessible from our personal 'Caves,' once this technology has replaced television and species like the Asiatic Lion have become extinct.

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## Complete linked list of all presentations, including previous semesters:

(scroll down for project documentation)

- [SPRING '15 PRESENTATIONS](#)
  - [Location & Details - SPRING '15](#)
  - [VIRTUAL BROWN](#)
  - [VISUALIZING A COMPLETED PORTRAIT OF PICASSO](#)
  - [WONDERLAND](#)
  - [DAILY](#)

- SEA SIGNS
- JUMP!
- CU
- WATER NIGHT
- FALL '14 PRESENTATIONS
  - SUPER CHILDHOOD DELUXE
  - SPECTACLE!: THE GAME
  - SEE//HEAR
  - SALIENTOLOGY
  - ESCAPE
  - FIG
  - CONSOLATION
  - AMBUSH AND ESCAPE
  - A LINE, [CRYSTAL SCAFFOLDING]
  - THE RUBAIYAT
- SPRING '14 PRESENTATIONS
  - CONEY ISLAND OF THE MIND
  - SAPPHOS' BROTHERS
  - TELEPHONE
  - WALK
  - WATERLOGGED
  - FRAGMENTS (of anything you like)
- FALL '13 PRESENTATIONS
  - THE ARCADE
  - (IN)VISIBLE
  - NAIL FILE
  - UNTOLD: a poem written for Brown's CAVE VR environment
  - ASCENSION AND DECENSION
  - VIRTUAL COMIC(ISH) SAFARI ZOO
- Complete linked list of all presentations, including previous semesters:
- SPRING '13 PRESENTATIONS
  - DIRECTION
  - THE OLD AND STORIED PATH
  - //:diRected NoNseNSe:
- FALL '12 PRESENTATIONS
  - CURVE INTO YOU
  - DEASCENSION
- FALL '11 PRESENTATIONS
  - Location & Details
  - IAMWOMYN - Chantel Whittle (TAPS '12) and Helen McDonald (LitArts & CompLit '14)
  - CLOISTERED - Madeleine O'Neill (Literary Arts '12.5)
  - RENDER - Michelle Han (CogNeuro '13) and Alex Oberg (MEME '13)
  - WAVER - Nalini Abhiraman (LitArts MFA '12) and Jeffrey Pfau (CS '11.5)
  - LIFESTREAM - Pete Ciullo (CS '12)
  - BREAD ALLEY - Sarah Tourjee (LitArts MFA '12)
  - HAVE ME and BRAZZAVILLE: ALL KINDS OF TREES - Victor Cazares (Playwriting MFA '13)
- SPRING '11 PRESENTATIONS
  - TV 2.0 and CLIMBER - Dash Spiegelman (Lit Arts '13)
  - EX NIHILO - Jeffrey Pfau (CS '11.5)
- FALL '10 PRESENTATIONS
  - ONE WAY TO BOSTON - Sabrina Boyd (Literary Arts/MEME '11)
  - THE HYDRA - Hector Ramirez (Literary Arts '12), Jak Konig (Visual Arts '12), Theo Goodell (Playwriting MFA '11)
  - THE BOARDWALK - Frances Kao (RISD Furniture '11)
  - CRISIS - Scott Mitchell (CS '13)
  - THE CONTEXT PRINCIPLE IN THREE DIMENSIONS - Shoma Nishikawa (Economics '11)
  - GRASP - Sanford Student (Philosophy/CS '13)
- SPRING '10 PRESENTATIONS
  - APHASIA - Claire Kwong (Modern Culture & Media / Computer Science '13)
  - CANTICLE - Samantha Gorman (Literary Arts Grad '10)
  - CUBES^3 - Adam Veal & Ian Hatcher (Literary Arts grads '10/'11)
  - DIORAMA - Emily Martin (Visual Arts / Literary Arts '11)
  - NUCLEAR DEFENSE - Zach Davis (Computer Science/Literary Arts '13)
  - OZYMANDIAS - William Cheung (Computer Science '11), Aimee Lucido (Computer Science '13), Ethan Hammerman ('13)
  - - Ben Swanson (Computer Science grad)
  - STEPPING - Drew Raines (Environmental Studies '10)
- FALL '09 PRESENTATIONS
  - ANTARCTICA - Joe Waechter (MFA Playwriting '10)
  - BLINK IN THE ATMOSPHERE - Lin Zhang (RISD D+M '10)
  - THE CITY - Evan Chamberlain and John Verdery (RISD glass '10, RISD illustration '10)
  - SEBASTIAN'S CAVE - Sebastian Gallese (MCM '10)
  - A TRACE - Joanne Wang (MCM / Biology '11)
  - POLYVEIL - Chris Novello ('11 MCM)

- DOMINO - Luke Angelini (Computer Engineering '10)
- DESCEND - Jack Schow (RISD Photography '11)
- WONDERLAND - Soo Jin Rho (RISD Digital+Media '10)
- SPRING '09 PRESENTATIONS
  - DREAMS - Terrence Ma ('12)
  - ENLARGED TO SHOW DETAIL (720 DOTS) - Mary Choueiter (RISD D+M grad '09)
  - TO BEGIN - Ben Nicholson (MEME/LitArts '11)
  - SOME CHROMANENT RESIDUES OF AN O-OVERLOAD IN Z - Justin Katko (LitArts Grad '09)
  - CANTICLE - Samantha Gorman (LitArts Grad '10)
- FALL '08 PRESENTATIONS
  - CONTRAST - Alex Dupuis (MEME/Math '10), Michael Johnson (LitArts '11), Max Mankin (Chem '11)
  - GLITCH - Jason Lee (MCM '09), Benjamin Nicholson ('11), Jinaabah Showa (EA/LitArts '10)
  - GROTESQUE - Paul Huber (LitArts/Econ/AppMath '09), Martha Grant (RISD Film/Anim/Video '10), Ben Lichtner ('12)
  - MURDER IN THE WATCH FACTORY by NOMIND - Alex Kruckman (MEME/Math '10), Paul McCann (CS/Eng '10), Katherine Reardon ('12)
- SPRING '08
  - BIG GRID - Alex Arruda ('11) with Tyler Odean (CS MSc '09)
  - THE MEMORY PROJECT - Gabrielle Frackman (Independent Concentration '08), with Jesse Butterfield (CS MSc '08)
  - VIRTUALEYZ - Claire Harlam (MCM '08)
  - TEXT SPACE - Gabriel Heywood (Urban Studies '08)
  - ODE - Carman McNary (LitArts '08)
  - TREES - Kelly Sanford (Architectural Studies '10) with Tyler Odean (CS MSc '09)
  - SPELL - Emily Segal (CompLit '10)

## SPRING '13 PRESENTATIONS

### DIRECTION

Ian Callender (Architectural Studies '15), Ryan Glassman (MEME '15), and Sylvia Tomayko-Peters (LitArts & MCM '14)

*Direction* seeks to explore user interaction through subtle coercion in a maze-like environment where the viewer is given the opportunity to explore and make decisions, all the while in fact being led along by the system.

The spaces in *Direction* progress gradually from the rigidly geometric to the dynamically organic. When taken at face value, this metamorphosis reflects what could be seen as a transition from the machine to the organism. However, *Direction* works to turn this assumption on its head. At the center of the maze and at the heart of the CAVE's computer there resides a living, breathing, form. As a viewer travels closer and closer to the center of a machine-built (built by a machine and built out of a machine) structure, the expectation is to progress similarly towards a more structured, discrete, and 'computerized' environment. Yet, this relationship is inverted. Instead, the further into the maze, the more the space around the viewers becomes flexible, unpredictable, and seemingly alive.

By capitalizing off of the 'first person effect' of the Cave's tracked glasses, we are hoping to achieve an experiential discrepancy between the performer and the audience. Because of the interactive nature of *Direction*, only the performer will be able to control the narrative, and even then only partially. By wandering, or being directed, through the environment, the performer will be immersed in the landscape. However, at each step their actions will be thwarted and their expectations overturned. The environment around the performer will change as a very result of their interaction with it, and thus they will never be able to fully grasp the larger picture of the maze around them and what they are searching for.

### THE OLD AND STORIED PATH

Michael Marttila (LitArts & CS '13), and Alexia Stylianou (BioMed Eng '15)

The Old and Storied Path is an exploration of our storytelling heritage. It immerses its viewers within the worlds of familiar stories from the literary tradition while simultaneously deconstructing those stories in order to visualize an appreciation and awareness of discourses that are shared by humanity's many tales. Viewers journey through worlds rendered from three iconic stories: the Grimm Brothers' "Rapunzel", J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*. The worlds are constructed with three-dimensional concrete poetry composed of the original authors' prose as well as thematically related content written by the projects' authors. The viewers are able to interact with some of the objects in their environment by clicking on them, causing changes in their surroundings such as the shifting of text objects to the characteristic aesthetic and prose of another story world. As slowly or as quickly as their desired narrative experience dictates, viewers are able to move from one selected scene to the next until they reach the end of the path, where they can reflect on their reading and writing experiences, and may consider laying down their own words to continue the path.

One aim of this project is to create in the viewers a greater respect for our storytelling heritage and an increased awareness of the resonant links that connect all of our stories. Many readers never bother to read stories as old as those collected by the Brothers Grimm, perhaps discouraged by what seem to them to be antiquated writing styles. Our hope is that this unique presentation of a small selection of stories spanning several centuries will help them to see for themselves the threads that bind even the most recent stories to those basic elements that composed the stories of our forbearers.

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### //:diRected NoNseNSe:

Celine Katzman (Undecided '15), Elizabeth Kripke (NeuroSci & RISD Painting '14), Lukas Bentel (MEME & RISD Furniture '14), and Sydney Island (Music & Entre '15)

//:diRected NoNseNSe: is an explorative application of flarf poetry through Cave Writing technology. Poet Gary Sullivan is generally accepted as coining the term 'flarf,' defining it in 2003 as "a quality of intentional or unintentional 'flarfiness.' A kind of corrosive, cute, or cloying, awfulness ... wrong, awkward, stumbling, semi-coherent, fucked-up, un-P.C." Practitioners of flarf often seek to bring out these qualities through found text mined from the internet. Accordingly, we are interested in flarf as an extension of relational aesthetics in the contemporary Google age. While flarf poetry emerged through the manipulation of text, it has more recently been applied to various, alternative media, including sound and visual art. Our work, //:diRected NoNseNSe:, uses the Cave to integrate these multi-media elements within a singular, experiential space. Not only does this more accurately convey the interwoven, multi-media nature of flarf as it actually exists in culture, but it also embodies it within a 'virtual reality' space. This draws a connection to the internet as a space of 'virtual reality,' calling that term, and how we may interact with it on a daily basis, into consideration.

We selected 8 seemingly random words through a process of stream-of-consciousness brainstorming: *camel; sometimes; Spain; the Dentist; avocado; Ronald Reagan; Molotov cocktail; skin lightening cream*. We perused the internet to establish links between these words. //:diRected NoNseNSe: is our flarf interpretation of these links.

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## FALL '12 PRESENTATIONS

### CURVE INTO YOU

Joanna Jacobs (Independent '14), Simon Jones (? '16), Natalie Klotz (CS '14.5), and Stephen Olsen (LitArts/MCM '13.5)

An abstract portrayal of love and "the relationship," which chronicles the journey of two disembodied entities as they fall for each other, feel vulnerability, and express that vulnerability. Their vulnerability brings pain and subsequently, a vulnerable return to allowing the exchange of love again.

The CAVE provides an effective medium, for this particular project, for several reasons. For one, this piece aims to express love that is both inescapable and fleeting, as is the CAVE itself. Once the project begins, the reader will likely go through the experience, without quitting. However, like a fleeting love, this unique experience cannot be easily returned to at will. Another reason is that the CAVE provides an intimate experience, in which, a very large constellation can be constructed around the reader, via a narrative progression that can use space and time in a way that is unique from most other literary media. Love, distance, time, and particularly, interaction, is the only way we can express this particular project in a literary form.

Curve Into You's intended art direction/mise en scène, if you will, is intended to exist within a 3D, distant constellation of stars and nebulas, from which loose sketches of the human form, emerge from abstraction to lucid and back to abstraction. Hopefully, the forms will continue to exist in the mind of the reader as his/her mind seeks to recreate them, after the forms return to merely stars.

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## DEASCENSION

Derek Gromadzki (LitArts MFA '14), Griffin Hartmann (NeroSci '15), Rohan Katipally (AppMath-Bio '14), Luke Fraker (? '15)

Through an extended spatio-textual metaphor, this project investigates the experience of cognitive overload. Cave participants are placed within an open, stable field of repetitive text, which simulates the complacency and stasis attendant to readerly interactions with texts and text-objects that make sense and cohere in traditional ways. As participants traverse this field, further auditory and textual stimuli begin to vie for their attention. Upon exiting the field and entering a closed space, the content of the surrounding textual architecture becomes denser, more recondite, often seeming to loop or repeat. Participants are slowly led up a flight of stairs that fracture and give way piecemeal beneath them. Atop the stairs, a platform of text almost impossible to reconcile in terms of normal language coding awaits, but only to disintegrate and precipitate a descent into a chaotic experience of reading, conditioned by the loss of traditional sense. Participants fall into a room constructed of morphing text. The text fluctuates and is stable in so far as it may be counted on to be unstable. Can the progression from content to non-content, which may initially seem a harrowing collapse, become as conducive to complacency as the original textual stability with which the piece began?

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## FALL '11 PRESENTATIONS

### Location & Details

To be shown at the Brown University, Center for Computation and Visualization (CCV) CAVE  
180 George Street (NE corner with Brook)

Wed Dec 14 and Thurs Dec 15, 2011

7:00-10:00pm - in three scheduled presentations each evening: 7:00, 8:00, & 9:00.

Please use ...

(once you arrive at the calendar you will want to click on the 'Day' view)

... [this link](#) to book a time via Google Calendar

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## **IAMWOMYN - Chantel Whittle (TAPS '12) and Helen McDonald (LitArts & CompLit '14)**

IAMWOMYN is a piece that continues the long tradition of studying, (re)examining and exploring the expectations of a woman and her femininity.

Is femininity a metaphor?

Where does this construct of what it takes to be a woman come from?

Is there a right woman?

What's she like?

Is she:

Sexy?

Demure?

Rebellious?

A bitch?

What is:

A good girl?

A bad girl?

A real girl?

Does this "real girl" even exist?

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## **CLOISTERED - Madeleine O'Neill (Literary Arts '12.5)**

'Cloistered' explores the idea of a labyrinth as space and symbol, as well as a narrative form of suspense. Drawing inspiration from Borges' short story 'The House of Asterion' and Kafka's 'The Burrow,' the piece is constructed as a journey through these two texts.

Both stories are written as monologues from the point of view of a hyper-rational, self-deceiving, and enigmatic protagonist. Boredom and loneliness are key themes, as the characters rationalize their (self-)isolation by constructing fantasies of privilege and safety in their labyrinthine homes. Their lack of control is embodied by the viewer's inability to navigate through the Cave, as it moves independently along a winding path. This pre-orchestrated journey is both repetitive and unsettling, as temporality is unevenly stretched and condensed for an air of suspense. The accompanying music, a song called 'Marla' by Grizzly Bear, adds to this creepy atmosphere. What is at the center of this labyrinth, neither the reader nor the narrator himself knows...

Links:

Project XML: </share/cavewriting/students/moneill/cloistered.xml>

Path to fonts: </share/cavewriting/students/moneill/>

Fonts used: Bordofix.ttf, Handage AOE.ttf, ANaRcHy.ttf, webdings.ttf, wingding.ttf

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## **RENDER - Michelle Han (CogNeuro '13) and Alex Oberg (MEME '13)**

Render explores concepts of creation and myth in regards to the use of language. Using one of the world's most widely read pieces of literature as a template, we have created an environment steeped in translation, visually and sonically, parts true and other false.

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## **WAVER - Nalini Abhiraman (LitArts MFA '12) and Jeffrey Pfau (CS '11.5)**

'Waver' explores the idea of the translation as interactive art form: using a musical performance and poetic translation of the 18th-century classical Carnatic song 'Alaipayudhe,' composed in Tamil by Ootthukkadu Venkata Kavi, the piece installs the viewer in place of the lyrics' intended audience. (Special thanks and fingersnaps to Peter Bussigel for his invaluable help with sound.)

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### **LIFESTREAM - Pete Ciullo (CS '12)**

Lifestream takes a look at the idea of passionate nostalgia and re-exploring the memories of youth, through the lens of video games. This highly visual piece use text both based on and culled from various game sources and reproduced to create a narrative.

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### **BREAD ALLEY - Sarah Tourjee (LitArts MFA '12)**

Bread Alley is fiction piece adapted for the Cave. It was written through a fairly constrained process in which the story was outlined in 12 sentences. All other sentences of the story were formed using only the words found in one of the main sentences. The story thus reveals itself through a kind of self-analysis, an exhaustive interpretation of the implications in its own language. The result is a repetitive, fragmentary, and unstable text-- quite appropriate for a story about kidnapping. Though here again the story is inverted-- the kidnapper is a teenager, the victim a grown man.

Links:

Project XML: </share/cavewriting/students/stourjee/breadalley-final.xml>

Path to fonts: </share/cavewriting/students/stourjee/fonts/>

Fonts used: ORGAD.ttf, NEWYORK.ttf, Lucida.ttf

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### **HAVE ME and BRAZZAVILLE: ALL KINDS OF TREES - Victor Cazares (Playwriting MFA '13)**

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### **SPRING '11 PRESENTATIONS**

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### **TV 2.0 and CLIMBER - Dash Spiegelman (Lit Arts '13)**

TV 2.0 is trying to speak to the incredibly high-pressured attention being paid to entertainment in our culture. Not too long ago entertainment was something you would scrap together with your friends, and when it happened to be manufactured for you by someone else (a radio program or a movie lets say) it was a much bigger deal. Though that may once have been the case, in the past few decades the spread of TV and the development of the internet have helped transform entertainment into 'Entertainment'- the industry. With the rate of progress continuing at this lightning fast-speed, or even accelerating, i predict 3D virtual reality wont stay limited to iMax movies. Many games that have become popular over the course of this entertainment boom have a common thread: Sims City, World of Warcraft, even all of the first-person shooters out there--all have created a world in which the player can enter and become one of the characters. The appeal of being able to shed your reality and become someone else (or many someones) is huge and has struck a chord with people across the globe. The world of 3D virtual reality opens a pandora's box that we might need to be wary of... By itself VR is simply something you grasp at in front of you while wearing glasses, but when the behemoth of entertainment shifts its gaze towards the cave and its friends that might change. Virtual reality is already so compelling that when it fuses with the insidiously persuasive lure of the video game or TV industry we're in for some trouble. In short TV 2.0 is trying to be one of those games your grandchildren will be buying or one of those programs they'll be watching in the years to come.

In "TV 2.0" the user is begins by being placed in front of a neutral menu screen similar to that of many games (think maybe a very simplified version of a TV guide). They are then given the choice between several options (credits, info about the piece, etc) and are left to their own devices. The buttons (other than 'play') on this menu are really just there for show, the 'options' menu lets you change the color of the buttons your choosing ,and hidden in either the 'credits' or the 'about' section there will be a last little rap/poem/spoken word piece. To really start the experience click on the play button. That brings you to another menu screen for the game 'Sims Life 4.0'. From here you have to choose between one of three 'life-maps'. The three options are: Rapper, Climber, and Watchmaker. Depending on the option you selected the menu screen should fade away and whichever world you chose should come into focus.

Climber:

In the climber piece you start out on an elevated path with a large building in front of you. The voice over starts and the camera pans to the roof of the building as the words of the piece appear in front of you and move around. As you walk towards the building along the path the cadence and delivery of the words, and the way they move, is rather tame. Once you get to the building the camera pans once more to the roof as the piece begins in earnest. The actual climbing phase, the camera very close the building, is hectic and you don't climb consistently upwards. As the piece ends you reach the top of the building and watch the last word 'Jungle' fade out in front of you.

Path to project:

/share/cavewriting/students/dspiegel/TV2.0/Crafters2.xml

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## EX NIHILO - Jeffrey Pfau (CS '11.5)

Ex Nihilo is a visual and textual representation of the birth of the world. The main focus of this project is to create a framework around the Cave Writing software that can present a more "cinematic" view of the project, instead of the very "fixed" constraints that using the Cave Writing text editor usually entails. These visuals will be used in assisting visualization of the story, hopefully in a "cleaner" and more advanced way than the constraints of the Text Editor currently present as plausibly done by hand. Although the project is still bound by the constraints of the Text Editor, the Editor does not present any good way of working on things based on patterns. Everything must be crafted manually, which presents problems when working on large sets of information. For example creating "batches" of objects that can be operated on in sequence, or creating an object that moves smoothly along the Cave, instead of sharply going from point to point. This framework will expose the ability to write "scripts" using Python to express the timelines and interactions presented in the Cave.

The work being created with this scripting system is called Ex Nihilo, and will present many of the features of the scripting system. It is a visual and textual representation of the birth of the world, presented as a mock creation story. As the Cave is being used to present the story, the story will be more than simply a collection of words, and much of the story will be presented with the text visually representing parts of the creation.

Although the project attained the goal of creating a Python script that generates the project in its entirety (save for resources) when the script is run, it is slow and memory intensive, using up to about 800MB and taking over 40 seconds when run. This may be able to be improved in the future. The code itself is also not well designed, although it is fairly functional, if one can get around the quirks of the bad design.

The project "Ex Nihilo" proved to be a lot of work to script, and the script itself is almost 800 lines of Python. As such, not all of the scenes were scripted, and most were not given as much attention as they should have received. The voice work is done by Professor John Cayley, and all of the sound effects I used are either created by me, or short samples found online.

### Source code

Source code for generating the XML can be found on [GitHub](#). Examples are in `examples/` and the core library is in `cwwriting/`. When running the script, make sure that the folder that CONTAINS `cwwriting/` is in `$PYTHONPATH`. A version with the full code and a generated version of `exnihilo.py` is attached: [exnihilo.zip](#).

### Instructions to run the project in the cave

The XML is located at `/share/cavewriting/students/jpfau/exnihilo/exnihilo.xml`, however it must NOT be run with the Cave Writing Text Editor, as the text editor contains a bug that will destroy the file when it is saved. As such, you must run it from the command line directly. To do so, open up a command line and change directories to `/share/cavewriting/CW2` and then run the command `./run 0 /share/cavewriting/students/jpfau/exnihilo/exnihilo.xml`. If this doesn't work, try omitting the 0.

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## FALL '10 PRESENTATIONS

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### ONE WAY TO BOSTON - Sabrina Boyd (Literary Arts/MEME '11)

'One Way to Boston' is a physical interpretation of a poem I had previously written, depicting two very different journeys on a train to Boston in one linear piece. You can read the poem itself in an attachment to this page, by clicking [here](#).

The piece uses the Cave to bring the poem into a physical space, to bring the viewer/reader on a physical journey as the text evolves in relation to a written journey. It also takes advantage of the Cave's ability to present text in many ways and many places at once: particular lines are repeated in multiple forms and locations, and text is manipulated in order to reinterpret certain lines.

The Cave piece opens as if in a train station, with atmospheric hustle and bustle type sounds and an arrivals/departures board on the front wall.

When the viewer chooses the departure to Boston, they are taken down to the train tracks.

From there, the piece travels on the tracks, stopping every now and then to read a stanza of the poem on either the left or right wall, moving through the physical world of the poem. In the background are atmospheric train sounds.

This piece emphasizes the opportunity to see text change in front of you in the cave, manipulating text and changing words so that a phrase can be read in many different ways. See the attachment to see how the end of the poem is written on paper, compared to how I have expressed it in the cave:

'won't' fades in and out with 'can't,' and 'watch' fades in and out with 'make.'

Clicking on 'won't' then takes the viewer back along the tracks and up to the station, where they can repeat the journey or explore on their own.

Run xml file from: /share/cavewriting/students/siboyd/CaveTransfer/Train.xml

Sound files located in: /share/cavewriting/students/siboyd/CaveTransfer/

A zip file containing all files necessary to run the project (if you have the CaveWriting editor installed) is also attached to this page. Click [here](#) to download.

### Instructions for running the project in the Cave

The piece will take you through the 'journey' once using clicks. When in doubt, search for something on the walls of the cave to click on. You won't need to move the cave at all yourself.

At the opening, click on the departure to Boston.

When the cave moves down to the train tracks, click 'board the train.'

From then on, click each stanza of text on the left or right wall to initiate the next move.

At the end of the tracks, click 'never leaving' and then 'never taking a train again.'

After the next move, click 'won't.'

This will return you to the beginning of the piece. Clicking the departure to Boston again brings you down to the tracks, where you can repeat the journey, jump to a stop using the table of contents on the left wall, or explore by moving the cave on your own.

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## THE HYDRA - Hector Ramirez (Literary Arts '12), Jak Konig (Visual Arts '12), Theo Goodell (Playwriting MFA '11)

This project began with a desire to toy around with the question of what it means to write a Cave-narrative. What we realized, in short, was that any conception of a Cave-narrative is one that seems necessarily to be very aware of the literal space that it creates. All narratives, whatever the medium, do seem to be somehow spatially dependent, at least in a metaphorical way: we speak of plots being "shaped" in certain ways, of readers "constructing" interpretations, of narrative being "built" by certain units that interrelate with one another in certain ways (units like words, sentences, chapters). The Cave allows for the unique opportunity to literalize this space, to allow the narrative to construct an architecture that can be felt as well as read. For this reason, spatial concerns were on all of our minds when we decided to create *The Hydra*.

*The Hydra* itself is an amalgamation of two seemingly disparate ideas: the myth of Hercules and the Hydra on the one hand, and the genre of the murder mystery on the other. The three of us were drawn to each idea on its own, but the reason why we decided to bring the two together was precisely the notion of space---we felt that there was a strong relationship between the act of constructing a literal Hydra in the Cave (a visual/linguistic beast that can be interpreted semantically and experienced as a figural representation of the monster itself) and the more metaphorical act of "building a case", of gathering up clues to create the structure of a narrative that tries to answer the question "whodunit?"

The way the piece is intended to work is that the viewer progresses through a series of rooms and engages with her surroundings. By clicking on certain objects (which remain constant: the door, the picture frame, the letter on the table, the radio), texts and sounds confront the viewer in a way that begins to develop the sensation of being immersed in a "whodunit", with the viewer taking the posture of the detective. However, it becomes immediately clear that the entire scenario is contrived, as the voice of the detective demonstrates his inability to make sense of his surroundings. And as the viewer gets closer to the final room, the presence of the Hydra's voice becomes increasingly apparent: this voice is one of chaos, a voice that pollutes the detective's narrative and makes it impossible for the detective to remain intelligible, let alone find the culprit of the murder (note: we have some preconceived understanding of the trajectory of the viewer's progression through the rooms, but the viewer will also be able to explore and re-explore the rooms to some extent in the order of her choosing). In the final room, the presence of the Hydra becomes the most clear, and one is forced to cinematically re-experience the battle between the two forces, with a swarm of words clouding one's vision until they can all be reduced to something single and unitary (the final, immortal head of the hydra). Thus, the story is the product of a war between metaphors that may be described as "dialectic": it is at once a struggle to see whether the myth or the whodunit will become the dominant interpretation in the end, and also an experience of the myth that lies inside of the whodunit and vice versa. In the end, the extent to which the myth and the whodunit are to be understood as metaphorical, as well as the extent to which they are literal, is left undecidable.

A quick note on the composition: the "whodunit" text (that which is aligned with the voice of the detective/Hercules) was generated creatively, while the Hydra in this piece is essentially Google. Our task is to make it clear that there is a struggle going on between two disparate ideas, which can be understood in a variety of ways (whodunit vs. myth, linearity vs. multiplicity, reading vs. experiencing, creativity vs. Google, etc.). All the while, there is the simultaneous presence of a surface story (the overtly artificial murder mystery) and the subterranean, nefarious presence of the myth "beneath" that surface (the way the two interrelate is to be constructed by the act of reading). And we also hope to tell a good story in the process.

### Located at:

/share/cavewriting/groupprojects/hydra/Hydra.xml

/share/cavewriting/groupprojects/hydra/Sounds/

### Download:

[hydra\\_files.zip](#)

---

## THE BOARDWALK - Frances Kao (RISD Furniture '11)

As we head down the path of gradual indetermination what happens in the previous space of definition? *The Boardwalk* simulates the aftermath that exists in a hyperreality where ultimate desire, symbolized by being on an island paradise, is fulfilled within a world of virtual pleasure, relaxation, and infinite possibility.

The letters in *The Boardwalk* form an abstract landscape, where elements are able to rotate 180 degrees with the click of a link, maximizing the contexts and orientations in which it can be understood. But in the end, the regularity of *The Boardwalk's* finite square path and the limited set of clickable links only emphasizes the limitations of the cave, of simulation, and of our current perception of reality, which harkens back to a Nietzschean "cyclic unity of eternal return."

*The Boardwalk* not only becomes a critique to find paths in a real, living social context (instead of the conceptual paradise of the Cave) but also, a critique of the misconception of a liberated reality which is thought to be a better alternative to the postmodern break from binary logic.

After experiencing the banality of *The Boardwalk*, the visitor may feel the need to go beyond replacing one reality with another reality (of a liberated postmodern break) and attempt to break with all logic itself.

In a world where letters do not need to correspond to linguistic features, actions do not need to make sense or be seemingly connected to anything; humans have an excuse for spontaneity.

### Instructions:

Click "start" to begin a short tour of the Boardwalk. Most objects are clickable, and will rotate even on your tour. You are encouraged to click on the links as much as you'd like. If you get bored too quickly see if you can find the two hidden objects within the brown brackets of the Boardwalk, they are a smiley face and a ring.

### Path to Project:

/share/cavewriting/students/fkao/BOARDWALK-1.xml

### Download:

[BOARDWALK-1.xml.zip](#)

[boardwalk\\_files.zip](#)

---

## CRISIS - Scott Mitchell (CS '13)

My inspiration for this piece is the relation between the signifier and the signified, currently in the specific case of onomatopoeia. Written media attempts to convey sound through text - we as readers connect written signifiers with sounds according to the conventions we are given. Bang makes us think of a loud abrupt sound, Vroom may bring to mind the sound of a car engine rumbling. But in many cases the connection between these signifiers and their signified sounds is nothing more than convention built by use and reuse. The cave is a space that above all else allows the integration of sound and spacial visuals. I intend to explore cases of the signifier-signified relationship by creating with simultaneity both the signifiers and the signified.

Crisis explores the struggle between the constructed, literal world and the figurative world of readable narrative. The cave reader/user is first presented with a blank space where a figurative vehicle - a bus - stops in front of the user. This bus is a member of a figurative world - its sounds onomatopoeic, arranging themselves around it. The user then enters this figurative bus, literally entering the letters that form it. Therein, the user is presented with a change in the reality of the space around them. Inside the letters of the figurative bus are letters that construct a literal bus around the user; walls and windows formed in space by letters and their positioning, not in any way respective of their signified meaning as language. On the walls of the bus is algorithmically generated language. On one side, lies a Markov text drawing from Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, and on the other lies a Markov mirror text (see scripts attached on my page) of the other processed text. This algorithmic language seeks to come close as possible to creating literally "constructed" language, as their processes are explicit and more "essential" than the texts themselves.

Eventually, this constructed, literal, signified space is invaded by fragments of the figurative world. When the user chooses to exit the bus, they find themselves in a city that at first glance appears to be a constructed landscape. However, as the cave explores the environment, it becomes clear that the world the constructed bus has left the user in is not the world of the signified, but rather a disguised figurative world. At this point the user loses control of the cave, and the implied character of the narrative chooses to fling themselves from the top of the tower from which they can see the figurative, garbled world they are left with, the bus having disintegrated behind them as the city fades away around them

### Source Materials:

*Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino

*City of Glass* by Paul Auster

### Path to Project

/share/cavewriting/students/spm/Crisis/Crisis.xml

### Downloadable .zip:

## THE CONTEXT PRINCIPLE IN THREE DIMENSIONS - Shoma Nishikawa (Economics '11)

### LINK TO GENERATOR

This piece is the culmination of two separate pursuits: a technical undertaking to address specific limitations of the CAVE and a philosophical inquiry into the identity of words.

To this end, I have created an online XML generator that takes a single-word query and returns a CAVE-ready XML file. Upon user-input, my script pulls real time tweets from Twitter that contain the query. When the resulting file is run in the CAVE, these tweets are separated by word, alphabetized, and dispersed along a three-dimensional "hallway". Any individual word can be clicked to display the full-tweet that it is contained within along the left wall. The right wall displays navigation options to jump directly to a specific letter. The scale of the words are altered to correspond to the frequency in which the word appears in the result tweets. The placement of the words is random within a 8'x8'x4' box for each letter of the alphabet. The color of the words is completely random (based on RGB values).

The technical pursuit of this project relates to the CAVE's ability to only run static XML files; all content must be prearranged into a strict XML structure. The file itself cannot be changed while it is being run in the CAVE and thus all actions and content must be predefined. I created this piece as a response to this limitation, by attempting to alleviate the problem as much as possible (while providing no actual solution). I accomplished this by creating an online generator for the piece; it allows the user to define an input-query and take a "real-time snapshot" of data pulled from Twitter. This snapshot of data is thus "real-time" up to the point of creation. The results are then run through a script that immediately formats this data into the proper format for the CAVE piece. This XML file is available to download and run as soon as the page loads. While this does not actually fix the "static-ness" of the CAVE, the online "snapshot" of data and autonomous object-oriented generation of the piece simulate a "dynamic" cave.

While the tangible implementation of the project followed this technical agenda, the ideological backbone of the piece is a philosophical inquiry into Identity. Specifically, this visualization of data is a direct reflection on Frege's context principle; The principle that insists on deriving meaning from words never in isolation but always in the context of a sentence or proposition. Thus the central aim of the piece is to analyze the identity of a given word (preferably a proper noun) by allowing the user to traverse through a three-dimensional visualization of the context in which the word exists. This visualization allows the user to view the associations of the word they provided, and see which words occur more frequently in the "identification" of the given word. By clicking on any of the words, the user can view the full sentence (tweet) from which it came to see specifically how it was used in relation to the query-word. Thus, the traversal and investigation of this space allows the user to inquire into this philosophical question of Identity on their own terms, as an attempted direct extension of the mental processes of philosophical inquiry.

While Twitter was used mostly because of convenience and effectiveness, its use inherently makes some further conceptual points. The Twitter API is a convenient source because it pulls from a large pool of constantly updated data from around the world. It is effective because every tweet is essentially a sentence, and is (optimally) an expression of a thought from a single individual. The fact that there is a good amount of "spam", repetition, and complete nonsense on Twitter results in a data-set that is "distorted" by the community itself. This distortion carries over to the piece itself as the visualization of identity becomes "clouded" with unrelated words. However, Frege makes no exception for "spam" in the contextual identity of a word, and thus the resulting distortion can be seen as part of the philosophical question at hand.

A note on generating interesting results - Due to the real-time nature of Twitter, uber-relevant cultural topics (political issues, celebrities) will generate many results and interesting visualizations.

### Sources:

Gottlob Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic*;  
Michael Dummett, *Truth and Other Enigmas*;  
Twitter Search API (<http://search.twitter.com>).

### Paths:

Pregenerated pieces- /share/cavewriting/students/snishika/finalproject/pregenerated/  
Font- /share/cavewriting/students/snishika/finalproject/fonts/Skyhook.ttf

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## GRASP - Sanford Student (Philosophy/CS '13)

*Grasp* is a sequenced collection of found texts, represented visually as well as aurally in the Cave. These texts are segments of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, Robert Bolano's *2666*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight*.

The Joyce segment of the piece involves the sequenced appearance of text as Joyce's voice (from the only recording of his voice ever made) narrates the passage over Explosions in the Sky's "Remember Me as as Time of Day." The text appears as a stairway, or sloping wall, starting high and far from the viewer but making its way downward and forward until it almost moves behind a viewer standing centered and roughly two feet into the Cave. Behind this text is a particle system that ejects random lines of the text away from the viewer, which are nearly impossible to read alone but serve to distract the viewer from the main text, thereby somewhat simulating the difficulty I had with Joyce's text; namely, my eyes constantly wandered forward and backward from the line I intended to read. My main intent for this segment was to draw attention to the text itself, so I included no images and used tranquil music, which serves more as a pretty metronome more than it informs the actual piece.

The Bolano segment focuses on two medium-length passages from *2666* and one very short (one line) passage. The two passages deal with two male characters (Pelletier and Espinoza's) realization of their desire for their female colleague in academia, Liz Norton. I found the writing in the translation of *2666* I read (and am culling my excerpts from) to be noticeably assertive despite its constantly verging on rambling. I have a similar feeling about the paintings of Max Ernst, the German Surrealist, and so I made "walls" for the Cave during this segment out of two paintings of Ernst's: 1937's "The Barbarians" and 1921's "Approaching Puberty." While both paintings are rife with cultural and political symbolism, both aspects of both paintings are largely irrelevant to my piece. I used them because when they z-fight, the woman in *"Approaching Puberty"* appears between the two barbarians. *The degree to which she appears changes at even the slightest movement, which informs Liz Norton's role as the desired and attainable, but not entirely attainable. Her role as such can stand in direct contrast to Edward Cullen's role in the Twilight* excerpt, which features completely static emotions on both sides of the relationship. There will be no z-fighting in the Twilight portion.

As of this writing, the *Dracula* and *Twilight* pieces are not finished, though they will be by the time final presentation happens. The *Dracula* portion will feature a verbal narrative culled from Lucy Westerna's memorandum concerning the last night of her life, during which a wolf attacks her, causing her mother's death of fright. The text of this narrative does not appear on screen; rather, the Cave is initially populated with images from the memorandum that will disappear at appropriate points in the narrative until all that remains is a single painting of a Victorian woman. This painting links to the final section.

I have no shame in admitting that the intent of my *Twilight* piece is, at least in part, to make fun of the book. So, I tracked down the silliest-sounding passage I could find (it includes the line "you're *exactly* my brand of heroin") and will record completely over-dramatic vocals for it. Part of what I so dislike about *Twilight* is its lack of development- everyone stays the way they are when first introduced, at least in the parts I've read- so I don't plan on there being any dynamic visual component to this section. Rather, the viewer will be presented with some images that stay in place throughout the section.

**Paths to project:**

XML: </share/cavewriting/students/sstudent/project/cakehat.xml>

All required images can be found in: </share/cavewriting/students/sstudent/project/Images.xml>

All required sound can be found in: </share/cavewriting/students/sstudent/project/Sound.xml>

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## SPRING '10 PRESENTATIONS

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### APHASIA - Claire Kwong (Modern Culture & Media / Computer Science '13)

*Aphasia* is a character study of an anguished writer as he struggles to express himself. He is paralyzed by his inability to write, to move, and to remember. With one look, you as the viewer plunge into the writer's subconscious. You become trapped in your own words. Lost in a hazy city of names. Seduced by a tenuous memory.

I wanted to make a narrative work, perhaps reminiscent of art cinema, in which the character's consciousness is projected onto the form and style of the piece. The solely textual aesthetic addresses the inability of words to fully capture thoughts, emotions, and memories. As writers, our thought processes are shaped by words, yet they also imprison us.

The piece uses the interactive possibilities of the CAVE to convey the flow of consciousness. Looking and moving are more intuitive than the alienating gesture of clicking, and allow the viewer's actions to reflect those of the writer so that they can assume his perspective. The interface also takes away user determination, leading to sensations of being trapped, lacking will and control. This attempts to express the involuntary, meandering nature of cognitive processes like writer's block, contemplation, and memory. As the piece progresses, the writer breaks the chains and begins to rediscover movement, memory, and expression.

/share/cavewriting/students/ckwong/FinalProject/aphasia\_part1.xml

/share/cavewriting/students/ckwong/FinalProject/aphasia\_part2.xml

Instructions: Run part I first, then part II when that finishes.

Link to Claire's video documentation of *Aphasia* [here](#).

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**CANTICLE - Samantha Gorman (Literary Arts Grad '10)**

"Canticle" is a form of concerto, it is composed in three Movements and arranged for a collaborative performance between a solo user and the CAVE. Movement 1 will be shown in this performance. In "Canticle" The CAVE system and its users operate in concert:rendering the world through alternating interactions of cooperation and opposition.The underlying tone of "Canticle" is the intentional result of bringing together Movements (Acts) with an all but over-saturated aestheticism that is visually spectacular despite employing only simple greyscale letterforms as imagery.

To this end, I sought out evocative text and audio: "The Song of Solomon" and Nico Muhly's album MotherTongue. "Song" resonated with the project's themes:the seduction of spectacle and awareness of a physical body within immersive spaces of illusion.The content of "Canticle" reflects these themes, since the Movements were written in response to spectacles that are native to the CAVE. Description of each movement

refers to the specific spectacle it explores: periphery, reactivity, stereoscopy, interface, depth or immersion. Along with my original texts, the piece is also comprised of selections from "Song" that have been processed by a computer program written by the author and then rewritten by hand or edited for form and content. However, because Cave Writing promotes spatial hypertext, the text is not likely to be encountered in the CAVE in a linear order.

A performance of "Movement 1: When the Eye" has been included in the link below. Dancer, Asmina Chremos, improvises in concert with "Canticle". This improvisation reveals the physical gestures of reading through the interface. Her exquisite movements focus on the discrepancy between what the person wearing the tracking glasses sees and what the audience reads. For example: midway through the performance, the text is programmed to evade the dancer as she tries to engage with it — the text becomes only legible to the audience.

code: /share/cavewriting/students/gorman/thesis\_version/thesis\_version3.xml

[Dance Performance of \*Canticle: Movement 1 the Eye\*](#)

CREDITS:

Dancer: Asmina Chremos

Music: Nico Muhly "Showers"

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## CUBES^3 - Adam Veal & Ian Hatcher (Literary Arts grads '10/'11)

This project consists of an interconnected cyclic complex of concentric cubes constructed in the cave. Each cube is cave-sized (8x8x8) and clicks between them are constrained. The text is taken from the Borges tale, "The Library of Babel". We are concerned with the charge the chronicle carries contra the containment of a core conveyance in language, in its conceit that there is no exterior to language, the crafting of the story as a mere copy of some coexistent codex from the comprehensive collection, and the cannibalistic cataclysm it creates for the canon.

Code: /share/cavewriting/students/ihatch/cubic/cubes.xml

[\*\* Note: free movement is not allowed, but you may rotate your vantage point using the center button on the clicker. ]

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## DIORAMA - Emily Martin (Visual Arts / Literary Arts '11)

*Diorama* is a representation of infinite yet enclosed space, multiplied yet intimate environments. By moving him/herself through a multiplied domestic space and a garden, the viewer/user will be immersed in an intimately private yet expansive environment. The viewer/user will sit in a 'reading chair' inside the CAVE as they experience the piece; ideally alone in the space. The act of sitting in the chair (de)activates the space; it speaks to the user's imprisonment by the screen: s/he is immobile.

In a domestic space of repeated imagery, the viewer/user is forced to question the paradox of an expansive yet intimate space: the marriage of excess and privacy. Further, one questions the weight of the physical chair versus the intangibility of virtual furniture.

The illusion of infinite space in the garden is achieved by placing natural imagery into particle systems, which randomly generate thousands of multiples within a specific area. Though the scene seems infinite, it is in fact a bounded region. Further, the garden particle system speaks to the ordered chaos of nature and human versus technological control: nature is inherently uncontrollable, yet a garden is a human-made, -manicured, -choreographed natural space, outside, yet private. By placing garden imagery into a particle system, control is taken away from both humans and nature; the code randomly places each image, thus, the code has ultimate control.

The piece ends with a screen of three three-dimensional blocks of text, superimposed upon one another to render them illegible. The viewer/user/

reader must move each block by clicking on it, thus translation is achieved through motion.

Each object in the diorama faces the viewer, mirroring one's relationship to a traditional screen. While each image exists on a two-dimensional plane, each text object is three-dimensional: a reversal of perception outside of the CAVE.

</share/cavewriting/students/emartin/garden/diorama.xml>

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## NUCLEAR DEFENSE - Zach Davis (Computer Science/Literary Arts '13)

*The city is under nuclear threat.*

*You have been equipped with a prototype laser-aimed anti-missile defense system.*

**YOU ARE OUR ONLY HOPE.**

Nuclear Defense opens with a cliché, tongue-in-cheek description of the the player's task, along with a sample bomb for the player to practice on. When the player has exploded the practice bomb, the title and description fade out, and a cityscape surrounding the player is revealed, in addition to a "Bombs Destroyed" counter. The player then faces a seemingly endless onslaught of various bombs and missiles raining down on the city, all of which the player must shoot down; if a single one is allowed to hit the ground, the player fails in a way that forces them to take responsibility for their inaction. If the player manages to protect the city until no more bombs remain, they are rewarded accordingly.

Although the arcade-like feel and ASCII aesthetic of Nuclear Defense (as well as its general theme of a torrential rain of nuclear bombs) provide clear imagery of the Cold War, it is actually aimed at conveying the fragility of the peace (and the difficulty of maintaining it) in the face of the threat of modern nuclear terrorism. Metaphorically, the player is acting as an intelligence agent, stopping nuclear plots before they can be carried to completion. If a single plot were not to be stopped, it would cause millions to die and a deal a serious blow to humankind.

Path:

</share/cavewriting/students/zdavis/nucleardefense/nucleardefense.xml>

Dependencies:

No additional fonts or files outside the XML file's directory should be required.

---

## OZYMANDIAS - William Cheung (Computer Science '11), Aimee Lucido (Computer Science '13), Ethan Hammerman ('13)

Unable to render embedded object: File (feelingthumb2.png) not found.

This piece is inspired by the Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem of the same title.

### OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

*Since reading this poem, I have always wondered...What events could have transpired to lead to this ironic depiction?*

This narrative piece is the journey to the past, through the use of various memories. Some of these are Ozymandias's memories while others are remnants that people have left behind.

The piece begins by placing the audience into a dimly lit hall: the entrance of Ozymandias's Monument of Memories. The audience is transported from memory to memory through a set of rooms and objects tied to particular memories. The raw pieces of memories and recollections gathered throughout the various locations of the monument build the narrative and heads towards the eventual ending.

This piece is intended as a single user experience, where the lone audience member is addressed to as Ozymandias. The narrative advances only with the interaction by clicking and examining doors and other objects. Although the audience has a first person point of view, he or she will have no control of what will occur. The lone audience member can only advance in one direction. Everything is linear, set in stone.

**Perhaps** Ozymandias had no control of what he had done.

**Perhaps** he lost control of himself.

**Perhaps** he was a great general, but a damned despot.

*What can you conclude from examining these old memories?What other pieces could we have been missing?*

The final version of this piece will be located in the directory below:

/share/cavewriting/

No additional fonts are necessary.

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- Ben Swanson (Computer Science grad)

While it is unfortunately impossible to make Tetris using the Cave Text Editor, Tetris pieces are relatively easy to model and skin with open source software.

The blocks form the plate shown above, which then becomes a platform where you orchestrate their chanting by reading their text.

Four character idioms ( ) appear frequently, as do longer idioms and phrases that I like. Many of these phrases are only clearly viewable from certain vantage points in the CAVE.

The modern Chinese word is constructed by the selection of single character symbols, each with their own meaning. The crosswordish layout of the grid highlights the shared characters of different words or phrases in a more informative way than a crossword puzzle for a language with an alphabet.

/share/cavewriting/students/bswanson/ShanZhaiDuFu/ShanZhaiDuFu.xml

Made with free software - GIMP / Blender / <http://www.chinese-tools.com/tools/calligraphy.html>

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## STEPPING - Drew Raines (Environmental Studies '10)

The project explores the use of physical movement within the 8x8 room to trigger larger movement within the universe created inside the CAVE. Physical rules of the real world do not hold true in the CAVE, therefore there is no logical reason why spacial movement within the cave need to be a 1:1 ratio with the movements of the humans interacting with it. Using a 'transportation' system that translates physical movements of the user into much larger movements around the virtual environment, I will explore frozen moments in time. Each of these moments will center around some piece of spoken word, consisting of speeches and pop songs. The speeches/songs and the period of their address will be represented by a nebulous cloud in space. This cloud will consist of the words of the speech moving around, and images from the moment mixed in with them. Stepping on the correct place in the 8x8 room will put the user directly into the center of this cloud, and immerse them in the environment of the moment in time the speech represents.

My project will consist of five pieces.

One exists below floor of the cave, and primarily within the 8x8 confines of the cave itself. This piece makes up the stepping stones. In their current ideation, these stepping stones are four columns, approximately evenly spaced in the four quadrants of the room. I am also playing with the idea that the columns have different heights, so that you have to actively step up and down onto them. The columns have depth as opposed to being flat stones, because I want to take advantage of the feeling of looking down at great heights that the CAVE does so effectively. It's kind of a cheap trick, but I think it will be an effective way of drawing the user further into believing in the almost infinite dimensions of the space.

The other four pieces will be the speeches or songs. Each one will consist of a particle system that creates a nebula around the center of the cave. An audio file of the speech/song will play, starting at a few 'random' places within the speech. Some words will also be individually controlled objects, so that by staring at the right place, the user could read the part of the poem being read aloud. Image from the location the speech was given, and images that are relevant to major themes of the work will circle around with the words, probably farther away from the user. If possible, I would like these images to be shaped into rings.

The floor always stays the same, the clouds 'come to' the user. I want to give these columns the feeling that they are made of an entirely different substance than the clouds, so that it makes sense for them to exist on a different physical system.

As the speeches will not be my own writing, I want to add something that makes this project more my own. One option would be to write one of the speeches myself. This could be especially effective if I write it in such a way as to directly relate to the other three. The other is to allow the user some type of ability to make connections between the different speeches, pulling words/themes from each and creating a portmanteau of sorts. This will not be true user control, and the combination will be already made.

**Sources of the speeches (apart from the author's own)**

Mary fisher, "A whisper of aids," August 19 1992, Republican national convention, Houston, TX.<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/maryfisher1992rnc.html>

Winston Churchill, "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat," May 13, 1940.<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/usa/winston-churchill-blood-toil.htm>

Elie Wiesel, "The Perils of indifference," April 12, 1999, White house, as part of the Millennium Lecture series.<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/ewieselperilsofindifference.html>

Edward M. Kennedy, "Faith, Truth and Tolerance in America," October 3, 1983, Liberty Baptist College (Liberty University), Lynchburg, VA.<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/tedkennedytruth&tolerance.htm>

**Path to project:**

/share/cavewriting/students/araines/Stepping/Stepping.xml

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## FALL '09 PRESENTATIONS

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### ANTARCTICA - Joe Waechter (MFA Playwriting '10)

*Antarctica* is a document, maybe even a documentary, about failed escapes from loneliness. But in this piece, failure is not always an end, but sometimes a foundation for discovery - the discovery of sexuality, of a place or secret, and especially a discovery of self.

*Antarctica* is an exploration in two parts. It begins as a nature documentary about our most remote continent then devolves into an imagined landscape made entirely of text. In the first part, we wander through a lagoon of icebergs built from fragments of sexual nostalgia. And in the second part (activated by the descending handle), bits of a travel journal combine with quotes from Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* to form a large orbital mass, a mobile that mines secrets from underneath the frozen ice. Throughout the piece, the audience is surrounded by arctic winds, calving icebergs, and the moans of shifting glaciers.

<share/cavewriting/students/jwaechte/FinalProject/Antarctica.xml>

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### BLINK IN THE ATMOSPHERE - Lin Zhang (RISD D+M '10)

This piece of writing on the Cave walls is based on a Zen (Chinese: Chan) parable or koan (Chinese: gong'an).

*At a Dharma gathering once, the Suzong Emperor of the Tang Dynasty put many points of inquiry to National Teacher Nanyang Huizhong, but the Zen Patriarch refused even to look up at his inquirer. Suzong became angry and said, "I am the Emperor of China, and yet you refuse even to look at me?" National Teacher Huizhong answered right back to Suzong of the Tang without facing him, "Has your majesty ever look up at the void?" "Of course I have!" "Well then, did the void wink back?" Suzong was speechless.*

*In day-to-day human life, we are entangled in feelings associated with its incidents: who treats us well and who badly; the daily account of our gains or losses. if we're not fretting over money, we're fretting over relationships. And then, apart from money and relationships, there are questions of respect. Day-long we want others to praise us, treat us well, give us attention by looking up at us. But when we face up to the void,*

*it's not even going to wink at us. Why do we want the void to wink at us? As a matter of enlightened principle, the Dharma body addresses us in the same manner as the void.*(Freely translated by John Cayley from materials supplied by the artist. Source unknown, not in the best-known collections - Blue Cliff Record, etc. - although the personages mentioned in the story are referred to in this and other collections.)

Image reproduced from (Daoist) murals in the Yongle Palace ().

Project Path: /share/cavewriting/students/lz2/txc.12eyeswork.xml

[Link to some video documentation of an earlier version of the piece.](#)

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## THE CITY - Evan Chamberlain and John Verdery (RISD glass '10, RISD illustration '10)

The city is a visualization of the passage of time and the way that memories combine themselves in a place where people are forced to live in close contact with each other.

Project Path: /share/cavewriting/students/efchambe/FallingCityFinal.xml

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## SEBASTIAN'S CAVE - Sebastian Gallese (MCM '10)

I wasn't sure what to make for a cave piece... I started cobbling together bits and pieces of what I think I'd want in a cave. At this advanced stage in my life, I sure as hell couldn't risk my artistic reputation by letting creativity get in the way, so I then tried to think of what the 16-year-old me would want in a cave. That was the dude that believed life should consist of things like witty banter, constellations, collages, and chilling out in your room. Or at least that's to the best of my memory what the old me did all day.

Trust me, I'm not a fan of painterly expression either, but you can still take some of that idealism and avoid building a clusterfuck cave. Here's how:

Part 1.

As a venture capitalist, I was inspired to bring the first ever version of Google to the cave. As a former Javascript code monkey, it rekindled those long, lonely, sweet nights inside of the Netscape browser as the web 1.0 quiz came to fruition. As I am forever haunted by my past life as a failed amateur magician, I become overly overjoyed as I set each booby trap.

Then all you have to do is step out from the cave.

Part 2:

Kiss to your left and I play a few conceptual tricks. While the older-me created much more of this than the inner-me would have liked, it works, and not surprisingly, this piece makes my chief claims concerning visual representation.

Part 3:

Kiss to the right and we take a look at what dimensionality and text have in common. Just walk around and you'll see what I'm talking about.

Part 4:

Walk to the back of the ballroom and spin around to see what it's like when diegeses collide! One could try to spin something about augmented reality 3.0, but it's quite limiting.

Part 5:

Lie down on the floor, making sure your body is outlined like a victim at the scene of the crime, and just chill the heck out. If you want to take away one thing from this piece, you can focus on this last part.

Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/sgallese/finalproject/xmls/sebastianscave.xml

to run in desktop preview, download this archive: [finalproject.zip](#)

NB: if given the option, choose to save these files locally

It takes about a minute to load. It uses a variety of images, one .wav file, and no special fonts. Just open up the finalprojects folder, then xmls, then run sebastianscave.xml

This zip file also has all my scripts and previous versions.

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**A TRACE - Joanne Wang (MCM / Biology '11)**

Explained very simply, this piece is a story about a man being presented with a mysterious object that is either 1) directions upon which he must act or 2) documentation of his own origins. If they are the former, then the events that proceed in the story are the events that proceed. If they are the latter, the events that proceed are his re-encounter with how he came into being not as an organism (what is that even?), necessarily, but as a someone who believes in space, physicality, reason, etc.

The piece alternates between two locations: "in here," which is where the narrator builds a space in order to orient himself in relation to the question the mysterious object presents, and "that sort of place," which is where the narrator is presented with new information that both helps and antagonizes him. The juxtaposition of the closed, structured space of "that sort of place" with the open sprawl of "in here" invokes the question that the narrator circles around - whether he can recreate or reconstruct his own beginnings or origins to the point of creating the closed, structured space in which he exists now.

Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/jhw1/final/final4

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## **POLYVEIL - Chris Novello ('11 MCM)**

*Polyveil* is a simple exploration of a gestural hand-drawn aesthetic in the cave environment. In a sense, it is meant to match the way I "write." I do not identify as a writer, yet I do produce a large quantity of text-based material. For me, these writings are not concerned with organization or incorporation into a larger body of work or a piece for presentation - they are personal, reflective, expressive, and ceaselessly unfolding. They are play. *Polyveil* incorporates this into a cavespace, and artifacts with transparent layers. It creates a corridor design to be explored in a spirit of curious openness and a space in which the viewer may consider the technological capabilities of the cave medium as it currently exists.

Chris Novello has lived in Providence, RI for 8 years. He is an overthinker, and is engaged by explorations of spatial and interactive media.

/share/cavewriting/students/cnovello/polyveil

Extra Instructions: Be patient - it has a long loading time

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## **DOMINO - Luke Angelini (Computer Engineering '10)**

Drawn in a path of dominoes is a brief description of life in terms of simple day to day tasks. The path illustrates how we glide through time, ever moving and always going forward. *Domino* displays these tasks as a series of blocks; moments in time, interrelated, causing the next and effecting its outcome. Life is built from these blocks - some bright, others dark. Sometimes it pays to step back and look at the big picture instead of getting caught up in the the little moments of day to day tasks.

Project Path: /share/cavewriting/students/langelin/domino/domino.xml

Extra Instructions: It takes a minimum of 4 minutes and 11 seconds to load due to the multitude of models in the piece.

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## **DESCEND - Jack Schow (RISD Photography '11)**

*Descend* is a piece that uses the Cave's inherently immersive characteristics to explore the nature of different kinds of literal and figurative descent. I wanted to use the Cave to tell a traditionally structured narrative story, with the intention of involving the reader more personally than traditional text is able to do. The piece considers a situation where death is an attractive option, not as a rejection of a life, but rather as a purely visceral experience.

Jack Schow is a Californian Photographer and Artist studying at the Rhode Island School of Design. He likes to eat gelatin based snacks, and could probably beat you at scattergories.

Project Path: /share/cavewriting/students/jtschow/descend.xml

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## **WONDERLAND - Soo Jin Rho (RISD Digital+Media '10)**

I would like to represent an ideal land in Taoism. It is a land of balance of opposites such as Yin and Yang, man and woman. I want to describe the scenes where the different forces in the world reconciled and integrated. I used the text of Tao Te Ching and other symbols that represent harmony and wholeness.

Project Path: /share/cavewriting/students/srho/wonderland.xml

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## **SPRING '09 PRESENTATIONS**

### **DREAMS - Terrence Ma ('12)**

*Dreams* is a piece about three dreams I've had that all share the common theme: the dreamer is alone in a particular environment. The first is based on a vision of being stranded on a platform in the middle of the ocean, the second mimics a turbulent airline flight, and the last depicts a beautiful desolate city by night. These dreams left deep impressions on me. Their apparent reality was overwhelming and then gave me contradictory feelings of serenity and anxiety. Ironically, they also left me with a sense of security in solitude even though the scenarios seemed hopeless or inescapable. I believe they are representations of my subconscious mind searching for rejuvenation, tranquility, and freedom from my deepest fears. In *Dreams*, I portray these feelings through writing and the creation of worlds (all made from linguistic material with a few digital photographs). This piece is not narrated because a feeling can't be said. Rather, I want the viewer to become absorbed in these dreams moments that I have reproduced to best of my abilities, in the media of Cave Writing and on the basis of my recollection. The viewer will use the actual text in these worlds as guides to the emotions that will evoked by these dreams as if they were having them themselves.

When the piece starts, the viewer is given the opportunity to choose between the ocean and plane dreams. Finally, after these two dreams have been experienced, the city dream is 'unlocked' and can be experience by the viewer. This piece is best presented for one or two viewers.

The path *Dreams* is:  
[/share/cavewriting/students/tma/Dreams/Dreams\\_Final.xml](/share/cavewriting/students/tma/Dreams/Dreams_Final.xml)

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**ENLARGED TO SHOW DETAIL (720 DOTS) - Mary Choueiter (RISD D+M grad '09)**



In this rendition of my work the audience is surrounded by pitch blackness. As the faint sound of a music box plays it resonates in the CAVE while a single white strip, like a pianola roll, appears and glides in front of the viewer. It reads:

Orbit ADA 14 PIECES JUST BRUSHED CLEAN FEELING...

These words, quoted from packets of Orbit gum, are formed by holes, now appearing as black dots, punched into a strip of paper. The paper roll was threaded through a mechanical music box, the holes catching on tiny hooks as the music box is cranked. The hooks are flexed and then released to strike tuned metal strips that create harmonious sounds in the scale of C major. This music intermittently accompanies the viewer throughout the experience of the piece.

The roll of scored music disappears and the music box falls silent. A mass of colored dots fade into view, surrounding the audience and extending in all directions.

The colored dots, related to the text, were punched from Orbit Gum packages in ten different flavors with associated color palettes. As such they are not flat but textured color surfaces bearing variations in color, form, and lettering, cropped from the original packages. The world of this piece begins from a simple formal element: the dot. The dots are reproduced and translated as lines, planes, and surfaces in the volume of the CAVE. The arrangement and permutation of the dots plays on notions of randomness and intentionality, order and chaos. The world successively recreates itself, expands, contracts, moves away from the audience or towards them. The world surrounds them. The dots twist along their axes and explode in the virtual space of the CAVE. They are still for a while and the CAVE is silent. During these moments the audience is free to explore the current world. Then the sound of the music box resonates in the silence. The dots translate and rotate to new positions. The world changes, and settles again. The music box resonates, the dots float and fly around the audience.

The experience culminates with the dots converging into one point and then fading into the darkness. The music box is silent again.

The path *Enlarged to show detail* is:

</share/cavewriting/students/mchoueiter/toCave2/dotsCave31.xml>

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**TO BEGIN - Ben Nicholson (MEME/LitArts '11)**

*to begin*, as prepared for these Spring 2009 presentations, is the first two sections of a larger work based on Samuel Beckett's final novel, *How It Is*. My piece combines excerpts from Beckett's narrative with writing of my own. The Cave, darkened and self-contained, provides appropriate media with which to address many of the concepts represented in *How It Is*, a tale of crawling through a world of endless mud, torment, and solipsism.

*to begin* incorporates a curious element that is not usually present in Cave pieces: a small white table. It is the surface of this table that holds my writing, a rupture in the immersion of the Cave with reference to \_\_\_. My piece also contains a collection of letters called 'pim'. Pim is a skeletal representation of \_\_\_. Other notable elements in *to begin* are: a swirling ball of trash-like words and photographs, other images that evade the gaze and attention of the solitary reader, and the requirement to be complicit in the very torments that these images depict.

*to begin* is not merely an attempt to retell Beckett's story inside the Cave, rather it is my attempt to engage in a dialogue with Beckett's text. After reading *How It Is*, I found myself feeling indignant and a little frightened. What Beckett proposes in *How It Is* is bleak yet hard to disavow. The sense that people are fundamentally alone, trapped in the inescapable 'dark' of their own minds, is an experience common to us all in our lowest moments. Yet in light of this deeply buried notion, we still seek each other out. Despite our knowledge that we are each separate, we still work to become closer. I believe that there is something vital in this.

The final version of *to begin* will be shown in the fall of 2009.

The path *to begin* is:

/share/cavewriting/students/bnicholson/pim/PIM\_FINAL/pim\_spring.xml

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**SOME CHROMANENT RESIDUES OF AN O-OVERLOAD IN Z - Justin Katko (LitArts Grad '09)**

This project description is a constituent component of the project itself, accompanying one MOV file and one XML file. What does the actual space of the CAVE give us that the Desktop Preview of the Text Editor (the general CAVE-writing interface) does not? This question may be reversed; answers to both should be useful for an empirical account of the economy of audio-graphic effects made possible by CAVE-writing. Quality of graphics (where for my purposes the Desktop Preview exceeds that of the CAVE) may be counterposed against quality of audio (where the CAVE exceeds that of the Desktop Preview). There is something of a paradox here: while algorithmic functions may be run upon the graphical representations of the linguistic data of a literary text (as may be seen in the scaling and translation operations in the Timeline of my XML file), no such operations may be conducted upon the *sonic* data of that text. Which is to say, the audio-programming capabilities of the Text Editor (barring more direct programming of the CAVE via e.g. Max/MSP), may be described as sound file playback glorified by positional surround sound. This is indeed a powerful tool.

What is perhaps more powerful, for graphical writing, are those chromatophoric residue vectors synthesizable by means of depth buffer overload (i.e. "Z-fighting"). This technique, as modeled in the quasi-spontaneous form represented in the MOV file (I say spontaneous because I do not fully understand the mathematical functions which I have brought to bear upon my textual Objects), reveals the genetic character of a stochastic process, that is, the nature of that frenzied computation of the depth buffer, whose effect is beyond prediction (i.e. direct computation) at the level of exact spatio-temporal dynamic. The kinetic properties of spectral volumetric architecture compressed in upon itself (as modeled here semi-arbitrarily with a chain of the letter 'O', each with a quantitative depth of "400") is perhaps of some interest to the economy of illuminated textual production. What might it mean if the very stuff of graphical writing is subject to indeterminacy of the type known as Z-fighting? The inability of the CAVE itself to render the visual effects present in the MOV file speaks to the high instability of the substrate upon which this writing takes place. The implied question for writing is now *which* CAVE and *which* Desktop?

NB: The MOV file has undergone some dynamic color processing, but is otherwise a pure video capture of the Desktop Preview of the XML file.

[MOV file](#) (25.1 MB)

[XML file](#) (224 KB)

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**CANTICLE - Samantha Gorman (LitArts Grad '10)**

*Canticle* emerges from three distinct aspects of composing work for the CAVE. It is involved with these more theoretical engagements and also inspired by my desire simply to create 'an enchanting experience' using the affordances of this unique medium. *Canticle* aims to unfold in manner that is rich in the kind of spectacle that the CAVE can produce, in my experience. Why put text in 'space'? Why the CAVE? What is specific to these media?

These questions prompted three movements: Peripheral, Convergence and Perspective.

The text for each movement focuses on one of the three aspects, infusing rich language into a corresponding sonic environment that inflects the viewer's experience during each 'spectacle.' The movements unfold as follows:

Movement 1: When the Eye (spectacle: Peripheral)

The core elements of Movement 1 are poetic lines inspired by the process of reading on the periphery of the reader's sight. The lines constantly evade the gaze of the primary point of view, driving the piece, always skirting away from a position in which they could be read. The reader's gaze also triggers the lines to produce a audible 'reading' that is only partially construable.

Movement 2: Duality (spectacle: Convergence)

The CAVE system generates two - stereo - visual channels in order to produce the illusion of a single visual channel that has depth and three-dimensional contours. The duality is revealed by finding places and moments when the illusion of convergence fails. As text rendered in space intersects with the 3D glasses of the primary point of view, it will separate and can be seen as the two channels of a would-be stereo image. The spectacle may then lie in what is undone, or its undoing. The dual channels of text streaming at the user from all three walls first reveal their distinction and then intermix their stereo components.

Movement 3: A Canticle, A Spectacle (spectacle: Perspective)

The CAVE was originally constructed for a single user. As such, the primary point of view determines the perspectives that are rendered, which other displaced users see differently. It is possible for these others to see graphics that are rendered in the CAVE but that the primary point of view - although driving the CAVE - cannot see. It is also possible for the primary point of view and other users to be in different locations. They are literally and figuratively separated from each other by their perspective on the objects in the CAVE.

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## **FALL '08 PRESENTATIONS**

Shown at the Brown University, Center for Computation  
and Visualization (CCV) CAVE  
Dec 8, 9, and 10, 2008

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**CONTRAST - Alex Dupuis (MEME/Math '10), Michael Johnson (LitArts '11), Max Mankin (Chem '11)**

This piece explores contrast between two different worlds through language, color, space, and sound. The viewer starts in an open, natural area, with soothing music playing in the background. It is a meadow, filled with bright, inviting trees, a breeze, and pure white clouds in the sky, as the sun lazily sets over the horizon. The user is able to explore the space by 'clicking' on objects in the environment, rotating his or her view, and traveling over to the different trees to appreciate the textual representations of nature positioned around the peaceful world. The visual representation of nature is bright, cheery, and eloquent, accompanied by light and free sounds, which play as the user selects the text at each tree. Traveling back to the well triggers a transition that thrusts the viewer into a constraining, man-made world, presented through dark, gloomy colors and cacophonous sound. This world is at the bottom of a well, one of the first ever structures devised by man. There is selectable text in this environment, although it is man-made, demanding, and blunt. As the viewer spends more time in this unnatural world, he or she is constrained ever more by the constantly shrinking environment. The claustrophobia elicited by the bottom of the well encourages the viewer to rethink his or her preconceptions of society and how it relates to the world around us. Finally, the well contracts uncontrollably, as the constraints placed upon the natural world become unsustainable.

The piece relies on the user's preconceived notions of the relationship between man and nature. The contrasts that are portrayed in the piece would be nonsense if not for the already existing preference for nature over man-made buildings. The lush greens of a grassy meadow are undoubtedly preferable to the steely grays of civilization, and the soft, light music of the meadow is undoubtedly preferable to the gloomy drippings of the inside of a well. The piece does not fool the user into believing something that is false; rather, it simply extends their already held preferences for color, sound, and space into a more obviously noticeable form.

#### Credits:

Alex Dupuis: Mixed all of the sounds, created the tree objects, created ending 'cinematic.'

Mike Johnson: Created all original text, and arranged all existing text into their present forms.

Max Mankin: Chief programmer- created the environment spatially, and programmed all timelines and events. His *well* project served as the inspiration for the piece.

#### Citations:

Robert Frost Poems:

Grass objects: "The Valley's Singing Day," "The Road Not Taken"

Tree objects: "In Hardwood Groves," "Dust of Snow," "Birches," "God's Garden"

Mike Johnson Poems and Text:

Sun: "The Sun"

Clouds: "Visions"

End text: "Time's Flame"

Tree objects: "Untouched Meadows," "Nature's Embrace"

Inside Well: "The State of Nature," "Pacta Sunt Servanta"

Edgar Allen Poe:

Text inside well (falling): "Down, down..." -The Pit and the Pendulum

Text inside well (clickable): "The nitre hangs like moss..." -Cask of Amontillado

John Milton:

Begin quote: "The mind is its own place..." -Paradise Lost

Hammurabi:

Inside Well: "An eye for an eye..." -Hammurabi's Code

To run in the cave:

/share/cavewriting/students/mmankin/well/well13.0.xml

Note that to run Contrast locally or on the cave computers, the [wingdings](#) font is needed.

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**GLITCH - Jason Lee (MCM '09), Benjamin Nicholson ('11), Jinaabah Showa (EA/LitArts '10)**

GLITCH grew out of several different ideas coming from three minds, ranging from a play with familiarity and jarring de-familiarity, movement through space, user agency, minimalism, and of course, computer errors or 'glitches.' Our piece is roughly divided into four segments, opening with a pre-programmed machine 'speech' to the user that directly addresses the person in the cave and the walls of the space. After that, the piece goes through three similar iterations of a hallway sequence where the assumptions and notions in the introductory segment are challenged and interrogated. We do so by pre-programming 'glitches' that throw the user off and display the machine acting unexpectedly or throwing the user off. However, on a deeper level mimicking the glitch or creating a glitch like effect is not the same as actually creating an actual computer error, which is why at the end we force the piece to actually crash the cave program.

We came back to the idea to the glitch as an aesthetic and theoretical point of reference in this piece because there is something slightly romantic and troubling in idealizing what a glitch is. All three of us felt that whatever piece was in the cave had, in some way, to raise awareness of the space and address it instead of disowning the presence of the cave and its walls in order to create a different or other world. And, in particular, the glitches and unintended effects of the cave are particularly unique to that space, and its particular technologies. Glitches, in short, are when the computer doesn't do 'what it's supposed to do.' But whatever a machine is 'supposed to do' is only in relation to the users intentions anyway, and if the user were removed, then meaning is there in a machine process? Rather, it is when two hard-coded processes interact, they create something new, an error or a crash or some sort of 'defect' but that glitch is a new product, to some extent a creative or imaginative act of the machine. Our question in making this piece is how we could literalize this concept, and also to a certain extent subvert it by trying to make the piece challenge its own constructed nature and goals.

Personnel:

Jason Lee: hallway animation, heart-room writing, glitch hallway animation, final scene animation and writing, animation director

Ben Nicholson: introductory scene animation and writing, all sounds, sound designer

Jinaabah Showa: hallway animation and writing, heart-room walls, writing director

Citation:

Twin Towers image: [snarfd.com](http://snarfd.com) <<http://snarfd.com/2008/01/21/top-5-creepiest-pop-culture-foreshadowings-of-911/>>

To run in the cave;

/share/cavewriting/groupprojects/glitch/Glitch\_Final/GLITCH\_FINAL.xml

Lichtner ('12)

Our project is an attempt to examine the idea of the grotesque within the cave by thoroughly discomforting the viewer. To create this discomfort, we used combinations of sound, image, and text objects.

Our project consists of a narrative based on one man's traumatic journey through a train station. This narrative revolves around Paul Huber's poem "En Museo del Prado" which is inspired by Goya's painting, "Saturn Devouring His Son." The man's adventure bridges reality and his own terrorized subconscious by mixing comfortable real and bizarre surreal imagery relating to his son's death and his own death as well.

A preliminary example:

In the first scene, the user is exposed to a photo of a simple train board that changes unnaturally and at a more rapid pace than usual. The board becomes more chaotic as the words transition from locations or track numbers to become the pieces of "En Museo del Prado." Finally, the board transitions into the very abstract first piece, which is based on the concept of "I" or this protagonist's image of himself.

A further summary of individual scenes can be found below.

Credits:

All group members collaborated on each scene in this piece. That is, no scene was made by one member alone without feedback and tweaks from the other members. Some scenes, however, were worked on substantially more by certain group members:

Paul Huber: responsible for the scenes "Train Station", "Ticket Booth", "Outside the Station", and "I, eating my own shell"; Paul also was responsible for much of the text used in the project including the poem that the project is based off: "En Museo del Prado," which is based on the myth of Saturn devouring his children with Goya's painting as the main inspiration for the vision of the poem and for the project's tone.

Ben Lichtner: responsible for the scenes "Train Station", "Ticket Booth", "Outside the Station", and "My eyes bulging with clarity"; Ben was responsible more than any of us for putting the project into one piece as well as for both contributing and collaborating on both the text pieces and photo pieces.

Martha Grant: responsible for the scenes "Train Station", "Ticket Booth", "Outside the Station", and "Forgotten to forget the smiling son", and "In the foreground I stood, five times"; nearly all of the photos used in this project can be credited to Martha.

The poem:

*En Museo del Prado*

I eating my own shell, hungry with thought  
forgotten to forget the smiling son.  
My eyes bulging with clarity and  
in the foreground I stood, five times.

*Scene 1: "Train Board"*

In the first scene, the user is exposed to a photo of a simple train board that changes unnaturally and at a more rapid pace than usual. The board becomes more chaotic as the words transition from locations or track numbers to become the pieces of "En Museo del Prado." Finally, the board transitions into the very abstract first piece, which is based on the concept of "I" or this protagonist's image of himself.

We have a photo-realistic image of the train schedule board and hear ticking sounds of the board changing accompanying the changes in the train schedule board. Additionally, we hear background noises of the train station such as the footsteps and chattering of people. The board begins to change more unnaturally, more rapidly, and more chaotically until finally the board transitions into interlaced text that is the poem our piece is based on, "En Museo Del Prado".

*Scene 3: "I, eating my own shell"*

The piece begins with the poem and the "I" becomes larger and larger leading to a world of horizontal I objects rotating and bending at random. The "I" objects are interlaced with "I" sounds that set a heavy industrial tone to the piece. This then leads to two pieces of text and a particle system of Goya's "Saturn Devouring His Son" images. The piece is supposed to reflect the grotesqueness of I, the individual, who is capable of such brutal acts of madness like eating one's children as well give the viewer the inspiration for our project. The grotesqueness of puking sounds is put together with Goya's painting to disturb the viewer as the viewer delves into the protagonist's mind.

*Scene 4: "Train Station"*

There is an image of the ticket booth ahead with sounds of people walking by and people have commentary appearing over or around them. You then hear train track sounds and people talking on the train; you see the train interior. Additionally, there is an interior dialogue of the protagonist

given in addition to interior text thoughts of the protagonist as well.

*Scene 5: "Forgotten to forget the smiling son"*

This is a project based on making a snoring man's face (the protagonist's) entirely from text, disturbing in and of itself but also fascinating. The protagonist's snores echo his interior thoughts and we are drawn into his world. The face comes at the viewers slowly and disappears; we are only left with a light far away in the distance leading to the next scene.

*Scene 6: "Outside the Station"*

You hear distant city sounds like wind going through a tunnel and are led to a street lamp.. You see a cold barren concrete alleyway pr underpass and a beggar in the distance. You hear footsteps walking towards the beggar, and the beggar mumbled and asks for money. The street lamp fades into 'O's leading to the next scene.

*Scene 7: "My eyes bulging with clarity"*

This will be a project incorporating a sense of guilt on the user using a mixture of distinct, discomfoting sounds as well as the sight of 'O's (eyes). The project also is incorporating the idea of clarity of purpose as its theme in an abstract sense by showing the protagonist's inner "paintings" and thoughts on what he will do next with himself. The piece involves text and interrupted patterns to both draw the viewer's attention and cause tension.

*Scene 8: "In the foreground I stood, five times"*

The viewer sees a ghostly form walk past text and stand behind the overall scene, then the viewer hears very distant train. As the train sound approaches, the text fades and 'five times' flickers into places in tandem with the sound of the train, the words five times repeat around the walls, building and almost entirely white space, the screen flashes white, then returns to the complete blackness of the beginning.

This piece is not entirely finished. Some transitions between scenes (especially later ones) are not as clean as the creators would like, and the story that underlies the piece is not sufficiently clear.

to run in cave: `/share/cavewriting/groupprojects/grotesque/FinalCompilation/FinalCompilation09.xml`

to run in desktop preview, download these two archives: [fathersounds.zip](#) and [fatheronimages.zip](#)

NB: if given the option, choose to save these files locally

extract both to the same folder; the end result should be one folder containing the xml file, fatheron.xml, and three folders, Images, marthaSound, and Sounds

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***MURDER IN THE WATCH FACTORY*** by NOMIND - Alex Kruckman (MEME/Math '10), Paul McCann (CS/Eng '10), Katherine Reardon ('12)

Our piece began as an attempt to forge some kind of narrative work that would both engage the user-interactive capabilities and explore the potential for storyline in the textual environment of the CAVE. We began with a simple murder mystery storyline - a man is killed and the user is the detective assigned to the case, charged with finding and interpreting clues and interviewing suspects - but quickly realized that both the time limit and the complications involved in creating a branching storyline would make creating a literally interpreted murder mystery very difficult. What you see in the CAVE now is our attempt to streamline and simplify the idea of a murder mystery, complete with the essential elements: a murder, victim, detective and clues. Our piece now is several times over the abstraction of the original idea, with some theme adjustments that we felt would make it even more relevant to the CAVE. The idea behind our piece is that the murderer in the mystery is time itself, and that the user is solving his or her own murder at the same time they are exploring the work. Also addressed (briefly) are the mortality of the CAVE itself and all the works inside it, and the idea of time and the progress towards death as good/stasis as bad. Rather than gloss over the existence of the CAVE in an effort to create an alternate reality, we hoped to use the CAVE to highlight the actual limitations of human life.

Credits:

Sound and Sphere design: Alex Kruckman

Dialogue and Body Outline: Paul O'Leary McCann

Written text and Concept Design: Katherine Reardon

To run in the cave:

`/share/cavewriting/groupprojects/nomind/murder.xml`

To run in the desktop previewer:

download [nomind.zip](#)

Note that to run the project locally or on the cave computers, the [1942](#) and [headline](#) fonts are needed.

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## **SPRING '08**

Shown at the Brown University, Center for Computation and Visualization (CCV) CAVE  
180 George Street (NE corner with Brook)

May 14th, 15th, 16th, 2008

6:30-8:30pm

Showings are strictly by prior arrangement.

For availability, please contact: John\_Cayley (at) brown (dot) edu.

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## BIG GRID - Alex Arruda ('11) with Tyler Odean (CS MSc '09)

"Big Grid" started out with the idea of creating a model of "cyberspace", following the late-80's/early 90's popular culture aesthetic of an imagined fully interactive and virtual realm in which information can be accessed. The user is placed into a large, rotating cube-space with grid lines running along it, constantly shifting colors and filled with seemingly pointless ambient noise of beeps, dial-up sounds, etc. All of the text in the piece are constrained poems. They are composed solely out of spoken word samples from a Texas Instruments "Speak & Spell" toy, which has a very limited vocabulary.

The space is composed of four "rooms", connected by long tunnels, each with their own corresponding soundtrack and activities. While at first I wanted this to be a much more ideologically motivated piece, in the end I opted to just go with what I felt should be in the rooms I had already made, rather than trying to stick to a narrative or regurgitating played-out new media tropes.

"Interaction" is facilitated by several floating hyperlinks within the space which, when clicked, "fly" the user through the space of the cave, through one of the several aforementioned tunnels into each of the rooms, creating a "four-floor journey machine."

Each room is accessed by the YELLOW wingdings floating around in each room. Every room has its own event or activity of some sort. If nothing has happened for a long period of time, it's a sign you should click the next link. I recommend not moving too quickly through it, and trying to get a feel for all of the spaces.

- Zipped files for download and preview (16 Mb) : [biggrid.zip](#)  
Nb: if given the option, choose to save this archive and unzip it locally.
  - To run 'Big Grid' in the cave...  
Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/aarruda/  
Load "FinalProject.xml" in the "aarruda" folder into the editor to run the program.  
**NB:** This program has several fonts not in the Cave Writing program. Go to the folder "Big Grid Fonts" in the "aarruda" directory and copy all of those into the "fonts" folder in Cave Writing.
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## THE MEMORY PROJECT - Gabrielle Frackman (Independent Concentration '08), with Jesse Butterfield (CS MSc '08)

My project is an exploration of memory and the way its contents, shape, and mechanical processes work together to create the experiences it provides for us. It contains ten overarching words, each which have three separate associated words that tie them to the main word.

In total there are thirty words, each which contain an image, an age, an associated sound, and a text file of a written memory that is associated with each particular word. The images are placed throughout the cave at varying distances with the older images further away and the newer images closer to the viewer. The images used to represent the words are related to the memories associated with the words. The sound files are spoken versions of the memory, and many contain background noises that help draw the viewer into the moment in which the memory was formed.

The script used to create this project has formed associated paths, so that certain memories draw up other memories. When the viewer clicks on a memory it moves forward towards the viewer and the associated sound begins to play. Then, the words representing associated memories appear on the floor, and the viewer is able to choose which pathway to embark on in this memory box. In the meantime, the memories in the background are constantly shifting and moving. While the sound file of a particular memory is playing, the text that describes that memory displays itself on either side of the viewer, so that he or she can see the way memory might be expressed in written form within this system. The text fonts used for each memory, which are meant to resemble handwriting of different aged individuals, is determined based on the memory's age.

This piece is designed to encourage us to question the working system of our memory. Though it is based on my own personal memories, it can elicit this particular thinking from any viewer. Why do we associate some memories with other memories, even though sometimes the association seems random? How does memory shape what we think and how we think? How does it shape how we feel? What various elements compose memory? And finally, how can we visually conceptualize of what memory looks like?

- To run 'The Memory Project' in the cave...  
Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/gfrackma/final2/  
Within this folder, the file 'memoryNew.xml' should be loaded into the editor.
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## VIRTUALEYZ - Claire Harlam (MCM '08)

From Brian Massumi's *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*:

*Find a cultural-theoretical vocabulary specific to the body. Use it to express the unmediated participation of the flesh in the image (whether 'natural' or mass-mediated). Find a logic for the corporeal (body and image) that does not oppose it to the virtual, even as it distinguishes them, as dimension of each other. Find a logic for the virtual (imagelessness and potential) that does not remove it from the real; for example by equating it with the imaginary. Dis-sever, instead, the imageless from the Ideal. For an incorporeal materialism. See the body get rigged. See the flesh suffuse with artifice, making it as palpably political as it is physical. For the artifice is always cued, and the cuing is collective. Consider that there is no 'raw' perception. That all perception is rehearsed. Even, especially out most intense, most abject and inspiring, self-perceptions. (66)*

### Virtualeyz

A quasi-corporeal slow dance in the CAVE, a four-wall immersive virtual reality device for the rendering of multi-dimensional text and imagery. An interaction between the realm of the body (real, live, fleshy Jessica Laser) and that of potential (avatar brought to life and intentional deformity by Alan Sondheim) to the tune of The Flamingos' 'I Only Have Eyes For You,' layered and delayed.

A body not signifying (making sense) but itself sensing; a body freed from the burden of cognition.

The body reflecting a rejection of the possibility that it can be fixed, signified.

#### **A body existing in the moment of emergence.**

Components necessary to the staging of emergence:

Affect: That which actualizes the virtual.

Virtual: The realm of potential, Energy to the actual's Matter.

Affect: The sensation of something sensed, the moment of feeling that precedes cognitive reflection.

The CAVE: An affected space; a device for affectation. A space where the actual meets potential, a time when the body and image can touch ontogenetically.

Ontogenetic Touch: The Dance. The flesh's response to avatar in the CAVE space as manifestation of affect, as body (real) forming while being formed by avatar (virtual); vice versa. The Dance requires no physical exchange and yet the flesh is proprioceptively stimulated to respond.

#### **The visual (perception) is not paramount in this exercise or outside of it.**

The retarded soundscape issued by a coded trigger within the CAVE is thus layered and reflects the body's delay, the slowness of perception.

The perception of the body (vision) is perceived as well by the audience whose glasses are linked to Jessica's. Though the Dance is emergence for the Body, the audience sees residue, the exchange as an event, as movement retrospectively understood as Dance.

#### **Documentation**

The Dance: <http://blip.tv/file/892401>

The Conversation: <http://virtualeyz.blip.tv/file/892357/>

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## TEXT SPACE - Gabriel Heywood (Urban Studies '08)

At its most basic level, "Text Space" is a simple exploration of the relationship between language and space. The idea first arose from thinking about how we process text that we see written in space, such as text that appears on signs on buildings. From this simple idea rose the desire to figure out a way to translate the experience of reading the text of a sign in space into the animated world of the Cave. I developed an experience in which the observer sees a visual image in front of them, and from this image, text that relates to the content of the image comes out of the image to take over the space of the observer. The point of the experience is to force observers to pay attention to the actual process by which they take in information about their environment, with the ultimate goal of disorienting the observer to make them think more critically about the relationship between language and space.

The observer is further disoriented by the strange presence of stationary letters beneath the floor level, which spell out the name of the street on which the visual imagery is shot; by replacing the actual visual representation of the street with language that implies its existence, the project forces the observer to draw upon their own mental reserves for an image or idea of what the street looks like, and in so doing forces the observer to blur the line between language and visual representation. In addition, the observer is further disoriented by the strange shifting shape of the space that defines their visual field; the space of the cave is actually further defined by text, specifically the letter "I", which is so large that it contains the whole experience of the observer. The significance of the letter "I" is important in that it allows the observer to think of the role and the agency of the individual in negotiating how to interpret their experiences, whether through visual representation or through understanding of language.

- Zipped files for download and preview (1 Mb) : [final.zip](#)  
Nb: if given the option, choose to save this archive and unzip it locally.
- To run 'Text Space' in the cave...  
Path to project: `/share/cavewriting/students/gheywood/final/`  
Within this folder, the file 'GabeFinalTest.xml' should be loaded into the editor.

## ODE - Carman McNary (LitArts '08)

In this piece the viewer reads and hears a poem. As certain sounds are made - represented by A, or O for example - the cave reacts with a visual action. The thought is that the ability to tie a visual action to a particular sound gives the poet a new type of stress. In my poem I have tried to create elements or rests intermingled by elements of visual and verbal stress.

After the poem finishes I create a universe with physical structures (which are made of letters) that I used as the visual stresses. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the reader is allowed to explore what the visual stresses actually were. Secondly, while exploring the universe one can find some very unique structures that are visually appealing.

I wrote the poem, and it is entitled 'Ode.' It is dedicated to Prof. Michael S. Harper.

I created the music in the piece by recording my guitar and keyboard directly onto my laptop.

Some quick notes on viewing:

1) When you run the piece make sure that the goggles are either laying in the center of the floor facing forward. If you are running it with someone in the cave, make sure that they are standing in the middle of the cave, facing forward, with the goggles on. The reason for this is that occasionally there will be a glitch in the cave that causes a sort of "visual echo" which throws off the timing of the piece. Typically my solution corrects it, however if you notice that actions seem to be occurring twice- once in front of you and then once again on the screen beside you, restart the piece.

2) Cave movement is enabled. However I would recommend one doesn't use the wand until after the poem has been read.

3) Cave rotation is enabled. During the reading of the poem the viewer can rotate the cave to get a look at all the text (some is behind you).

- Zipped files for download and preview (7 Mb) : [ode.zip](#)  
Nb: if given the option, choose to save this archive and unzip it locally.
  - To run 'Ode' in the cave...  
Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/cmcnary/  
Within this folder, the file 'NewOde.xml' should be loaded into the editor.
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## TREES - Kelly Sanford (Architectural Studies '10) with Tyler Odean (CS MSc '09)

My piece opens with an introductory scene of multi-colored raining words accompanied by sounds of a thunderstorm. The viewer is given plenty of time to just listen to the sounds and observe the rain, reading the falling and gliding words and experimenting with the constraints of the cave. Interesting visual effects can be created when the glasses are taken off and moved to the floor or close to the wall, distorting the words.

Eventually the storm fades and the first tree appears. The trees are composed of colored words, since they've received nutrients from the words of the storm. The words of the first tree are from famous quotes. Eventually a key word from the tree drifts to the ground like a falling leaf, and a quote appears in its place. Several more words drop and more quotes appear and then fade. Eventually the first tree melts into the ground. The next tree forms, composed of sentences from *We feel fine*, an internet art project that gathers sentences from blogs across the internet with the word "feel" in them and categorizes them. The third tree is composed of my own writing, quick reflections on people and events in my life. As the sequence of falling words progress, passages appear on the floor in the distance, like patches of moss, which encourages the viewer to move around the cave (movement is enabled) and investigate.

The core concept behind my piece is growth and learning. The first two trees represent two sources of knowledge: The emotional experiences of people that we interact with, and the sometimes cryptic bundles of knowledge we get from "the wise". In addition to focusing on learning and

growth, the presence of nature is an undercurrent in my piece. I strove to create something that would imitate nature, but would be no replacement for it. I wanted my viewers to feel a sense of calm and tranquility after experiencing my piece instead of nauseous, overwhelmed, and disoriented.

- Zipped files for download and preview (3 Mb) : [FinalProjectTrees.zip](#)  
Nb: if given the option, choose to save this archive and unzip it locally.
  - To run 'Trees' in the cave...  
Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/ksanford/FinalProjectTrees  
Within this folder, the file 'LastDay45.xml' should be loaded into the editor.  
**NB:** I've used fonts that don't come with the cavewriting program. If you go into my directory to the Final Project Trees folder you just have to select AbigailRegular.ttf, AntFarm GoneCamping.ttf, and AceCrikey.ttf and copy them into the fonts folder under the cavewriting program directory. It's as simple as that! Enjoy.
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## SPELL - Emily Segal (CompLit '10)

To read only one of the dozen [OED entries for the word SPELL](#) demonstrates several important dimensions of the word. For one, spelling is a significantly spatial act, one that requires a variety of different prepositions to properly spatially orient. For another, it is an act of concentration, of meditation, of weighty focus. It is also a test: of knowledge, skill, of interpretation. This project in the CAVE seeks to investigate these relationships through a formal exploration of the alphabet.

SPELL is a reactive experience in the Cave that layers rotating fields of letters. The user is presented with two strips of letters on the floor: a positive row and a negative one. By clicking the positive letter S, for example, the user makes a plane of layered Ss fill the room. By clicking the negative letter S, the user makes that plane disappear. There are as many combinations of letter fields as there are words in language: any number of letters can be activated or deactivated any point. Once visible, the user may walk through the plane of letters, which suspended in the middle of the cave, which in turn activates the random rotation of the planes. It is key to the experience that the environment calls upon the user to select the elements of the space.

The audio element (not yet working) issues commands to the user to spell certain words by clicking on the provided strip of letters. If the user chooses to follow these commands, the result is radically different from the traditional act of taking dictation: a vast web of letters fills the room.

This project attempts to plumb the act of spelling, of selecting a series of letters to create a word. Instead of a traditional word processor, or the act of inscribing letters on a line, the letterforms in SPELL simulate a dense quilt or web. They fill the room, lap over one another; the colors striate, vibrate and "flimmer," as of hundreds of letters occupy the same virtual space.

This effect interrupts the traditional process of selecting letters to write a word - it shifts the process into an almost entirely visual one. Instead of a traditional sign, the letters create a pattern. Here the poetic effect is to call attention to the formal, physical presence of the letter, its capabilities of making shapes and patterns: the stems, curves and bowls of each letterform is an element in an entirely new and randomly-generated visual experience.

This is also an issue of scale: drawing attention to the letter brings attention to the smaller levels of writing, the individual glyphs that make up a word. At the same time, SPELL complicates this notion by activating hundreds of each letter at a time, in overwhelming color and motion that surrounds the body of the user.

Though the sea of letters generated by this act of spelling is not traditionally legible, it attempts to emphasize and activate the visual process of reading. The excessive repetition of each letter (hundreds of every sign in the series of 26 becomes apparent with each click) calls attention to the repetition of letters in writing, spelling and printing. Instead of holding these letters apart, though, SPELL clumps them together and establishes a new, concentrated, collective presence.

In a sense, the plane of letters form a mandala, a repeating, geometric pattern. In many religions, the mandala can be used to establish a sacred space or as an aid to meditation and trance induction. This relates to the Cave as a special kind of sacred space: in an immediate sense, it is treated as a sort of shrine: card access is required, and shoes must be removed. Beyond that, it is an impossible space where physical limitations are superseded. From this place comes the double meaning of the piece's title: to SPELL is an act of language but also of magic.

- XML for download and preview :[abcmay12.xml](#)  
Nb: if given the option, choose to save this file locally.
- To run 'SPELL' in the cave...  
Path to project: /share/cavewriting/students/esegalla/final/  
Within this folder, the file 'abcmay12.xml' should be loaded into the editor.