



News Release

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Virtual Reality Brings Interactive, Immersive Art to the 2009 Festival

Boston, MA — The artistic possibilities of virtual reality are on display at this year's Boston Cyberarts Festival, taking place **April 24 – May 10**. Virtual reality artwork utilizes technology that allows users to immerse themselves in and interact with a computer-simulated environment, whether that environment is a simulation of the real world or an imaginary world. The 2009 Festival features a range of works that participants can experience online as well as exhibitions at non-virtual locations around the Boston area.

Traversing Sweet Illusions: Boston Cyberarts in Second Life

Boston Cyberarts' presence in the virtual world takes place in Second Life, the popular online environment, in the "Artropolis" artist colony, courtesy of Jeffrey Lipsky (aka Filthy Fluno in Second Life). Artropolis is a Second Life island of visual and performing artists. The exhibition is organized by Carmin Karasic and Melita Podesta.

One particularly intriguing work, entitled "Traversal for Faneuil Hall" by John Fillwalk and Jesse Allison, is a live performance that allows avatars to actually ring the Faneuil Hall bell tower in Boston. Other featured works include "In the Sweet Bye & Bye" by Philip Jones; "Land of Illusions" by Lily & Honglei; "Adventures of Filthy Fluno" by Jeffrey Lipsky; "I'm Not Here" by Lance Shields; "Hostile Space" by D.C Spensley; and "Artropolis" by Todd Tevlin. The opening reception takes place April 26 in Second Life and includes live SL music performances and artist talks.

Works from "Traversing Sweet Illusions" are also available for viewing in the non-virtual world. CounterPART Gallery in Lowell hosts the entire Festival Second Life exhibition from April 24-May 2, with a Cyber-flavor Mashup reception and artist talk on April 26. Lily & Honglei's Second Life artwork is on view at Design Gallery 154 at UMass Dartmouth.

Virtuelle Mauer / ReConstructing the Wall

The Goethe-Institut Boston is the site of a recreation of the Berlin Wall by Tamiko Thiel and Teresa Reuter. This interactive 3D installation investigates the impact of the Wall, which divided West and East Berlin during the Cold War from 1961 to 1989. A digital reconstruction of a segment of the dismantled Wall and its surrounding neighborhoods creates a place of remembrance that users can explore in order to experience and reflect on this time in history. Viewers navigate through the virtual world, weaving stories and events through their own movements and choices.

Children of Arcadia

The Cambridge Arts Council Gallery is transformed into a large-scale, seventeenth-century Baroque-style painting that has come to life. With panoramic visuals and high-quality surround sound, gallery visitors use a game controller to explore a real-time virtual Arcadia. The work gathers and translates real-time information from the Internet related to the American economy as well as current events and societal issues, and translates this data into either a view of apocalyptic ruin or an idealized utopia. "Children of Arcadia" was developed by Mark Skwarek, Joseph Hocking, Arthur Peters, and Damon Baker.

Unnatural Disasters

"Unnatural Disasters" is a 3D animated environment created by Boston University College of Fine Arts students. Using 3D glasses and a game controller, visitors explore the themes of financial meltdown,

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interspecies conflict, and planetary exhaustion. The exhibition is presented by the Boston University SCV Computer Graphics Lab (HiPart).

Boston is Watching

On April 25 the Boston Public Library hosts a full afternoon of interactive talks and presentations by art critics, art historians, curators, and artists about the world of virtual art in Second Life. Featured speakers include Lori Landay and Jay Van Buren, plus Second Life artists Tuna Oddfellow, Shava Suntzu, Alizarin Goldflake, Filthy Fluno, Penumbra Carter, and Misprint Thursday.

Navigating Cyberworlds: Creative Practice in Virtual Reality

On April 27 Boston University's SCV Computer Graphics Lab hosts a panel discussion hosted by Boston Cyberarts Director George Fifield. The panel features artists associated with several of the VR exhibitions, including Mark Skwarek, Tamiko Thiel, Honglei, and Jeff Lipsky.

Virtual Reality Exhibitions and Events at a Glance

Traversing Sweet Illusions

Boston Cyberarts in Second Life. slurl.com/secondlife/Artropolis/81/126/25

April 24-May 10. Opening reception April 26. Also at:

- CounterpART Gallery, 128 Merrimack St, Lowell
April 24-May 2. Mashup reception and artist talk April 26, 5-8 pm
781-541-0470, counterpartgallery.art.officelive.com
- Design Gallery 154, UMass Dartmouth, North Dartmouth
April 24-May 10. 508.999.8551, transition.turbulence.org

Virtuelle Mauer / ReConstructing the Wall

Goethe-Institut Boston, 170 Beacon St. Boston

April 24-May 6. Opening reception April 23, 6-8pm,
617.262.6050, www.goethe.de/boston

Children of Arcadia

Cambridge Arts Council, 344 Broadway, Cambridge

April 24-May 15. Reception May 4, 6-8pm.

617.349.4380, www.cambridgema.gov/CAC/

Unnatural Disasters

BU SCV Computer Graphics Lab, 119 Cummington St., Boston

April 25-May 9. 617.353.7800, scv.bu.edu/hipart

Boston Is Watching

Boston Public Library, 700 Boylston St., Boston

April 25, 1-4:30 pm, 617.536.5400, www.brooklyniswatching.com

Navigating Cyberworlds: Creative Practice in Virtual Reality

BU SCV Computer Graphics Lab, 8 Saint Mary's Street, Boston

April 27, 7pm. 617.353.8269, scv.bu.edu/hipart/

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