

Digital media across the arts

Traditional art forms have embraced new media in varying degrees, at different speeds. In most, progress has been stop-start, cautious, more so than with artists who work direct to screen without the variables of, say, performance to take into account. New ways of working (programming, scoring), of presenting work (positioning screens in a performance space, in an installation, in a gallery, in relation to the bodies of performers and audiences), of researching, have had to be learnt from scratch by many artists wanting to explore the multimedia effect of other forms on their vision.

The term 'multimedia' has been challenged, at least in principle if not in usage by 'intermedia' (Darren Tofts, "Cutting the new media umbilicus", *RealTime/OnScreen* #27 page 22), suggesting the importance of interplay (rather than the mere multiplicity) of forms and new technology, of the material and the virtual, and the importance of open-ended collaboration.

Under these circumstances, traditional forms blur, intermedia experiments generate hybrids and new works become difficult to categorise. For example, works by Norie Neumark, Philip Samartzis (see page 11), Nerve Shell, Rodolphe Blois and Randall Wood promise striking visual and environmental experiences but have sound well and truly at their centre, framing and driving their works. It's not surprising that the word installation has risen to such prominence (and been treated with such critical wariness). The installations listed on these pages are variously sound or video responsive but require participant movement, hopscotch or breath (quite different from the interactivity via mouse and click listed elsewhere in *Working the Screen*).

In dance and performance, the number of intermedia ventures is steadily multiplying, with notable contributions from Arena Theatre Company, skadada, The Party Line, Company in Space, Brink Visual Theatre, Salamanca Theatre Company, Doppio-Parallelo and others. Dance company Chunky Move have just released a CD-ROM, and choreographers Garry Stewart and Chrissie Parrott are engaged in new media investigations. Visual artists have not been slow to turn to the screen: galleries and contemporary art spaces have become first homes for a large number of new media works, either with one-off exhibitions like Mike Leggett's *Burning the Interface* for the MCA, or Artspace and PICA's continuing hosting and curating of new media shows, or the Bendigo Art Gallery's current exhibition, *byte me*, with conference (speakers: Troy Innocent, Jon McCormack, Kevin Murray, Patricia Piccinini, Darren Tofts, James Verdon, Peter Hennessey). There's *Globe e* the online journal/gallery. Michael Keighery explores 'digital ceramics' at the University of Western Sydney. And recently there's been an impressive surge in innovative writing 'in' the web (tracked in *RealTime*'s regular hyperfictions and writesites pages) with some significant Australian contributions, prize-winners, and an Adelaide Festival presence in 2000. Public art too has taken to the digital with Patricia Piccinini's *Protein Lattice—Subset Red, 1997*, a huge digiprint on a Melbourne building; Robyn Backen's work-in-progress, *the building that speaks*, detailed on these pages; Melbourne's Federation Square outdoor screens; and David Chesworth's sound installation for the Olympic site (see Keith Gallasch, "Game to play" *RealTime* #29 page 42). The promise of new media across the arts is steadily being realised—we offer only a few of the many works to be seen shortly.

Performance

Triple Alice

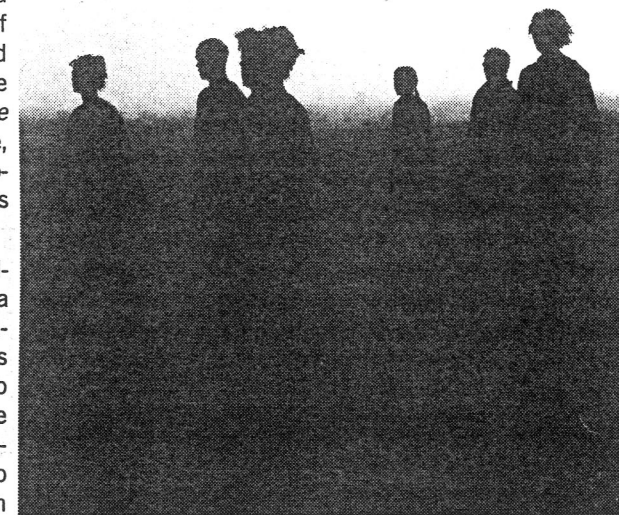
Tess de Quincey

A gathering in hard space and virtual space, *Triple Alice* engages with Australia's Central Desert as a burning point in its mapping of the future of artistic, cultural and media practice. Held over three years 1999 - 2001, *Triple Alice* convenes a forum and three live, site and temporally-specific laboratories staged over three weeks each year.

We are finding that remote broadcast and networking demands a cultural delicacy but also a technical capacity which as yet is under-resourced in its ability to meet the vision of this event. The KOZ online Community Publishing System will be fundamental to the project. Linked to the main site, KOZ creates an online congregation minus html phobia, and gives each visitor or, rather, 'online resident' their own web page and email address.

Triple Alice is initiated by Tess de Quincey, current recipient of the Australia Council Choreographic Fellowship. She has worked extensively in Japan, Europe, India and Australia as solo performer, teacher and director. *Triple Alice* is a partnership between BodyWeather, Desert, Centre for Performance Studies (University of Sydney) and The Performance Space.

www.triplealice.net September 20 - October 10. Workshop component Australia Council funded.



Lake Mungo 1991

Heidrun Löhr