

## SOFT CINEMA: Navigating the Database DVD Now Available

Navigating the Database is Lev Manovich's first Soft Cinema DVD, recently published and distributed by The MIT Press (2005). Although the three films presented on the DVD reference the familiar genres of cinema, the process by which they were created and the resulting aesthetics fully belong to the software age. They demonstrate the possibilities of soft(ware) cinema - a "cinema" in which human subjectivity and the variable choices made by custom software combine to create films that can run infinitely without ever exactly repeating the same image sequences, screen layouts and narratives.

The DVD was designed and programmed with collaborator Andreas Kratky so that there is no single version of any of the films. All the elements - including screen layout, the visuals and their combination, the music, the narrative, and the length - are subject to change every time the film is viewed.

The development of the Soft Cinema project has been made possible by commissions from ZKM Center for Art and Media and the BALTIC, The Centre for Contemporary Art and support from CRCA. The resulting computer-driven installations and films have been exhibited in museums, galleries, media and film festivals around the world, including ZKM, Karlsruhe; the ICA, London; SENEFF, Seoul; the ICC, Tokyo; DEAF, Rotterdam, Transmediale, Berlin; and Chelsea Art Museum, New York.

Lev Manovich is the author of *The Language of New Media* (The MIT Press, 2001) which is hailed as "the most suggestive and broad ranging media history since Marshall McLuhan." He is Professor of Visual Arts at UCSD and a CRCA researcher at the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2).

SOFT CINEMA: NAVIGATING THE DATABASE is available through The MIT Press, online resellers ([www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), etc.) and selected bookstores.

[www.softcinema.net](http://www.softcinema.net) [www.manovich.net](http://www.manovich.net) [mitpress.mit.edu](http://mitpress.mit.edu) [www.calit2.net](http://www.calit2.net)  
[visarts.ucsd.edu](http://visarts.ucsd.edu)

## Ecce Homology @ SIGGRAPH2005

CRCA researcher, Ruth West, is the project director for *Ecce Homology*, an innovative, interactive art installation that gives new meaning to the adage "art imitates life." *Ecce Homology* has been selected for presentation at this summer's SIGGRAPH 2005 - the 32nd International Conference on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques, to be held at the Los Angeles Convention Center, July 31 - August 5. The piece is part of the SIGGRAPH Art Gallery and the conference's Emerging Technologies program.

The installation uses calligraphy to depict genetic sequences as images, or pictographs, and a whole-body computer vision interface and immersive

projection to allow visitors to interact with genomic data. Aptly named after Friedrich Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*, a meditation on how one becomes what one is, *Ecce Homology* explores human evolution by examining similarities between what scientists call "homology" between genes from human beings and the rice genome. Central to the exhibit is audience participation. By moving their bodies slowly within the 40-foot wide immersive projection visitors create shimmering light-filled traces that trigger bio-informatic comparisons between human and rice genes using an algorithm called BLAST (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool). The BLAST analyses are made visible in real-time and shown as changes in the genetic pictograms, which are cast onto the walls of the exhibit by five video projectors.

*Ecce Homology* will also be featured in an article in the August 2005 issue of *Leonardo*, MIT's journal for the application of contemporary science and technology to the arts and music. *Ecce Homology* is supported at UCSD by Sixth College, CRCA, the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) and the National Center for Microscopy and Imaging Research (NCMIR).

[www.insilicov1.org/](http://www.insilicov1.org/) [www.siggraph.org/s2005/](http://www.siggraph.org/s2005/)

### Reynolds motion Project at ASU

The motion project of the Arts, Media and Engineering (AME) program at Arizona State University, ASU, brings together a UCSD Composer, Roger Reynolds, and collaborators for the creation of two ground breaking, interactive multimedia works, new motion analysis systems and interactive technologies. *motion* premiered at ASU's Galvin Playhouse on April 9, 2005. The project utilized the skills of music grad and CRCA researcher Pei Xiang, who was Reynolds's Musical Assistant. Other collaborators include: Bill T. Jones, choreography and performance; Paul Kaiser, Shelley Eshkar, and Marc Downie for interactive imagery; Robert Wierzel, lighting designer; and the AME Motion Analysis and Interactive Systems team for technical support. The project director is Thanassis Rikakis.

*motion* is a joint project of the Arts, Media and Engineering Program through the Herberger College of Fine Arts and the Fulton School of Engineering. It is co-presented by ASU Public Events and has received support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Science Foundation, Motion Analysis Corporation, Lincoln Center, Arizona Public Service (APS) and City of Tempe Cultural Services.

[ame.asu.edu/motion/](http://ame.asu.edu/motion/) [www.rogerreynolds.com](http://www.rogerreynolds.com)

### UCSD Computing Arts Alumni Chapter

A group of CRCA and UCSD alumni from the departments of visual arts and music has started conceptualizing a new type of "virtual" Alumni Chapter that represents the interests of UCSD graduates with professional

involvement and/or interest in computing and the arts. This chapter will connect alumni from the arts and other academic areas due to their interests in arts and technology, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary work, and the use of the Internet for presenting, documenting and sharing projects. In addition the virtual chapter will serve as a global network and portal for sharing current innovations in the field advanced by the Center.

The chapter will provide information and connections for artists and alumni seeking future collaborations and information about leading edge technologies and their uses. An associated website will offer a window to events and activities supported by CRCA and UCSD. Annual activities will be planned to combine professional and social gatherings with art exhibitions, guest artist presentations, discussion panels, symposia, live streaming of art events, and other events at CRCA's new digital art gallery, and presentation and performance spaces in the new media arts wing of Calit2. Interested alum from UCSD should contact Carol Hobson for more information: [chobson@ucsd.edu](mailto:chobson@ucsd.edu).

[crca.ucsd.edu/people/alumni.html](http://crca.ucsd.edu/people/alumni.html) [alumni.ucsd.edu/chapters/index.htm](http://alumni.ucsd.edu/chapters/index.htm)

#### New Faculty Joins UCSD History Department

Emily Thompson is a historian who studies technology of the early 20th century in the United States.

She recently joined the UCSD History department as an associate professor. Thompson is the author of *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (MIT Press, 2002). Her current research focuses on the transition from silent to sound motion pictures in the American film industry, 1925-1930.

[historyweb.ucsd.edu/](http://historyweb.ucsd.edu/)

#### After Land Art

CRCA visual arts researcher Brett Stalbaum has recently published an essay, "After Land Art: database and the locative turn," in *Intelligent Agent's* online magazine. This essay asks whether we might learn something from the history of land art that might be important for any re-evaluation of the ontology of art after modernism and conceptualism. It examines the tensions between the 20th century notions of modernism and conceptual art, underscoring their constant interoperation as art system. After exploring the history of database in computation, and tracing how the concepts and implementations of database in computer science were taken up by artists, the essay proposes that the binding of abstraction to material actuality allows us to move on to a 21st century model of art practice that focuses on producing located-actions instead of visualization.

[www.intelligentagent.com/archive/Vol4\\_No4\\_freerad\\_afterlandart\\_stalbaum.htm](http://www.intelligentagent.com/archive/Vol4_No4_freerad_afterlandart_stalbaum.htm)

## UCSD Presence in Rhizome ArtBase 101

Several UCSD faculty and alumni are part of the RHIZOME ArtBase 101, on display at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City from June 23 - September 10, 2005. RHIZOME ArtBase 101 presents the diverse areas and approaches to Internet based art-making including software, gaming, websites and installations. The exhibition draws from the Rhizome.org's online archive of new media art, and showcases forty artworks. CRCA/UCSD alumni involved in the show include Mark Daggett's (2001) "Carnivore Is Sorry" project within the theme of Data Visualization and Database, and Brody Condon (2001) under Games for "Adam Killer" (2000).

Also featured are visual arts faculty member, Amy Alexander for "theBot" (2000) under the Software Art theme, and current PhD candidate in VA, Eduardo Navas who re-contextualized selections from "The Andy Warhol Diaries", is included in the Online Celebrity category.

[www.newmuseum.org/now\\_cur\\_RhizomeArtBase101.htm](http://www.newmuseum.org/now_cur_RhizomeArtBase101.htm)  
[www.flavoredthunder.com/get.php?page=carnivore-is-sorry](http://www.flavoredthunder.com/get.php?page=carnivore-is-sorry)  
[www.tmpspace.com/ak\\_1.html](http://www.tmpspace.com/ak_1.html) [thebot.org](http://thebot.org) [www.navasse.net/star/](http://www.navasse.net/star/)

## BLOWHARD

BLOWHARD is a custom hardware/software interactive game-art system developed by Sky Frostenson (1993) and Ryan Schoelerman. The project is an investigation into the rhetoric of fear culture, exploiting this carefully crafted atmosphere of anxiety by redeploying it in a two-player game format. Players compete by breathing into a specially crafted CPR mask, where a breath sensor translates cumulative respiration into the player's current level of anxiety, shown on the screen in the same friendly color-coded system used by the Department of Homeland Security's Threat Advisory System. Simply hyperventilating won't work -- players must increase their anxiety level gradually, moving up one stage at a time. As the level increases, the media responds, with the video becoming more intense in an effort to match the player's state of mind. The first player to get to the top, wins! Then get prepared for a special advisory alert message from the President of the United States of America!

[quasi-cause.com/blowhard/](http://quasi-cause.com/blowhard/)