

Technology Institute at UC San Diego Names First Artist in Residence

Visual Artist Sheldon Brown to Merge Personal Aesthetic and Calit2's High-Tech Vision

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In a rare effort by technologists to give artists an important role in the evolution of multidisciplinary research in science and engineering, one of California's highest-profile technology institutes has named its first Artist in Residence at the University of California, San Diego.

The UCSD Division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) appointed Sheldon Brown to the new position for an initial two-year term. He is a professor in UCSD's department of visual arts and director of the university's Center for Research in Computing and the Arts (CRCA), which is housed in Atkinson Hall, Calit2's headquarters at UCSD.

The 43-year-old artist has played an instrumental role as leader of the institute's new media arts efforts on the La Jolla campus since Calit2's creation in 2000.

"As someone who was involved from the early stages, I wondered how Calit2 would grow given that the arts, the hard sciences, engineering, and medicine all represent very disparate cultures," said Brown. "The appointment of an artist in residence underscores Calit2's belief that it can be a viable mechanism for engaging an artist to address in their art the kind of unique context that the institute is creating."

"Sheldon Brown has been an influential contributor to Calit2 by bringing the arts and hard-science faculty together to spur new ideas that lead to research collaborations," said Ramesh Rao, director of Calit2's UCSD Division and a professor of electrical and computer engineering in the Jacobs School of Engineering. "I believe the role of the Artist in Residence will bring a new, intellectual and cultural dimension to the institute that I hope will inspire the organization."

Continued Rao: "The technological advances made through research in computer science and engineering are driving rapid social and cultural change, and the artwork of Professor Brown explores and reflects this transformation."

The UCSD artist's work examines the relationships between mediated and physical experiences, and crosses a wide variety of art forms, from sculpture and painting on canvas, to virtual reality and video.

Acclaimed for his work in new media, Brown has consulted for organizations including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Legoland, videogame maker Electronic Arts, and Praja Inc. His largest current art installation is *In the Event*, a public piece in Seattle's Key Arena with nine computers choreographing multiple video streams across 28 monitors in a real-time constructive engagement with the spectator's act of envisioning the events of the arena. Two of his largest museum shows in San Diego to date involved interactive environments combining virtual reality and game technologies to explore social issues. *Smoke and Mirrors* - funded in part by Calit2 - was staged at the Fleet Science Center in Balboa Park, and *Mi Casa Es Tu Casa* at the San Diego Children's Museum/Museo de los Niños.

Brown's largest current project is *Scalable City*. "It is a multi-user virtual environment that is technologically very complicated, and a lot of technology has to be developed to make it happen," said Brown. "I hope to complete the bulk of the work in winter 2007, and people will be able to download a client version to experience it online." Even before that game-like virtual world is complete, Brown is delivering elements of *Scalable City* in other art forms, including digitally produced prints, a digital video installation, a sculptural piece, and a super-high-resolution cinema version. He is also developing *Istoria*, a series of sculptures that explore the intersection of virtual and physical worlds, created with a variety of computer-controlled processes.

For more about Sheldon Brown, read a Q&A with Calit2's new Artist in Residence online at <http://www.calit2.net/newsroom/article.php?id=833>.

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