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A Crucible for 21st Century Art: Boston Cyberarts Festival 2007.

Boston, Massachusetts April 20-May 6, 2007

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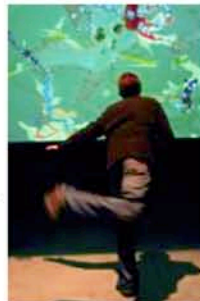
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Untitled 5 from *Animated Gestures*, Camille Utterback

The Boston CyberArts Festival attracts over sixty organizations, hundreds of artists, and audiences in the tens of thousands. George Fifield, organizer and founder, explains: "This festival is a celebration of art using new technologies. It is not a conference but a crucible: a place where people may share their emotions and emotive powers through exhibits and performances."

Events range from visual art, dance, music, technology, and combinations of all of these. Artists, collectors, curators, critics, and enthusiasts with a mind for technology descend upon Boston for this biennial, three-week festival. Audiences begin at Cyberarts Central at Art Interactive, and then fan out to events in all parts of the city. At the Festival finale, the Cyberarts Gala at the Hotel@MIT, three artists received IBM Innovation Awards for outstanding contributions. Merit awards went to *Animated Gestures* by Camille Utterback and to Brian Knepp's *Aging: Works in Progress* from the Harvard Medical School Residency, while the Grand Award went to *Moonwalk*.



Untitled 6 (with user/viewer) from *Animated Gestures*, Camille Utterback

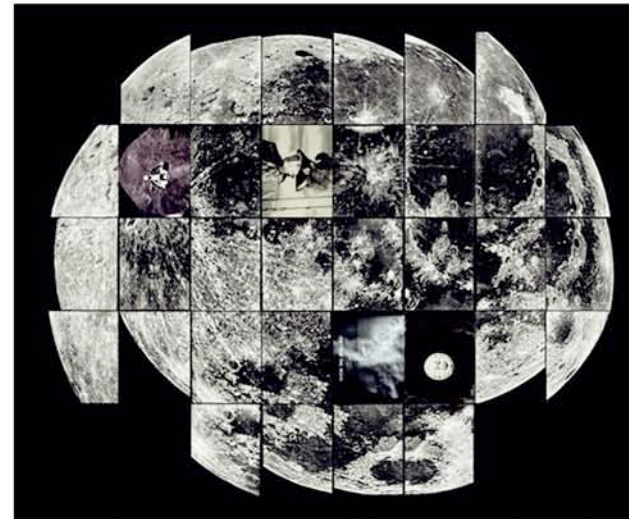
Clea T. Waite

Clea Waite studied 3D graphics and animation at the MIT Media Laboratory, and has produced a catalog of almost twenty new media works, many of which tour continuously. Her award-winning artwork, *Moonwalk*, presented by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study with music by Helga Pogatschar, is an eleven minute unfinished piece.

Decidedly multicultural, the work begins with the word "moon", written and spoken as a mantra in thirty-four different languages. Proceeding from the raw material of countless photos, which comprise lunar atlases, Waite shatters the moon into pieces, and then rebuilds it. She characterizes this placid heavenly body as a living, scintillating force. Adept with imagery, she evolves the moon from it's familiar pregnant blackness to a jittering hive of voices and sounds, then into a frightening sliding wall which fully exploits the planetarium medium to encircle and entrap the audience. Waite weaves together "poetry, science, and strong imagery" into a form best described as a grand audiovisual hyperlink. Utilizing every song you've ever heard about the moon and many of the films, television shows, and news broadcasts, Waite succeeds in reminding us of the moon's ubiquity. These references are amorphous and non-narrative, compelling the viewer to reconstruct their own personal history of the moon. The work reaches beyond idealized childhood daydreams of the heavens, past the well-worn Apollo footage, and into the tender roots of culture, which weave throughout our daily personal lives. Watching *Moonwalk* we are reminded, as if for the first time, of the power, presence, and emotional gravity the moon commands.

When complete, the latter half of the work will delve into the moon's craters, named for renowned scientists and authors, such as H.G. Wells and Cyrano De Bergerac. With part two, Waite threatens to seduce the intelligentsia with her moon's siren song. Expected completion is in the Summer or Fall of 2007.

After such a lengthy "collage process" of existing footage, Waite looks forward to returning to original material. "I miss making my own images". She describes her creative process as an "intellectual, scientific searching, while open to what ideas this opens up... and I let the poetry find me." Speaking to the New Media Arts community, Clea T. Waite says, "I hope that the ghettoization of new media art is coming to an end. We work with hardware. code. and technical stuff. but we strive for content. beautv. and meaning."



Moonwalk, Clea T. Waite

Epilogue: Fifield's Three Stages of Artistic Development

Regarding the development of new forms of art, the Cyberarts Festival founder George Fifield says, "There are three stages: First, the Gee Whiz stage. This is where the artist discovers a new technology and tries to demonstrate how cool it is. Second, there is a Developmental stage where the artist begins to realize the emotive power of the tool and endeavors to create a strong work of art. Last, there is Mastery, where the artist succeeds in using the tool to create a fully emotive and intellectual experience." The Cyberarts Festival provides a crucible in which the creative forces of artists may interact with curators, critics, and audiences to negotiate together these stages of artistic development and forge new directions for art and technology.