The Practices of Art and Science

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THE PRACTICES OF ART AND SCIENCE

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This dissertation explores the question of how art and science work as categories to circumscribe bodies of knowledge. People engage in rhetorical positioning through the creation of texts, style choices, making and unmaking the meanings of objects. Objects can be made to fit into the knowledge networks of art, science or combinations of both. For different practitioners and audiences, what counts as art or science and their association varies in interesting ways.

The categories of art and science serve many purposes. They indicate the kind of attention people, objects and ideas want to elicit from readers, viewers and thinkers. They serve to demarcate resources, to delineate interests and to separate social groups. This dissertation contains three core case studies: the story of the Blaschka's nineteenth-century glass scientific models, the story of the 1990s tactical media movement, and the story of bioart as practiced in a biological wet lab in Australia.

By unpacking the ways actors have used these categories, the author complicates the division between the realms of art and science, examines their relative power in different contexts, and shows that science studies tools can be applied to artistic practice with fruitful results that offer new ways of thinking about people and objects that have often fallen outside the scope of science studies research. The author's analysis details the forms of knowledge produced by art and science in these contexts.

SymbioticA Lab at the University of Western Australia, 2009. (© Hannah Star Rogers)

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EXECUTING LIVENESS

An Examination of the Live Dimension of Code Inter-actions in Software (Art) Practice

Winnie Soon

With today's prevalence of technology, enormous quantities of data are generated and disseminated in real time through a highly networked, programmable and distributed environment. Networks of machines and the circulation of data mediate our sense of time. The sensation of "liveness" is deeply reconfigured by complex technological infrastructures behind ubiquitous screens and interfaces. This thesis explores how real-time computation reconfigures the immanent sense of liveness, examining the complexity of our current computational environment as evident in the increasing use of data queries, the instantaneous transmission of data streams and the seamless running of automated agents.

A materialist framework for liveness is presented with the use of three main vectors, namely: unpredictability, micro-temporality and automation. By drawing together the methods of reflexive practice, close reading, iterative trials and cold gazing in the fields of artistic research, critical code studies, software studies and media archaeology respectively, this thesis presents three artistic and experimental projects along with the written manuscript. Together they examine barely visible code operations and consider the cultural implications of the reading, writing, running and execution of code, which the author refers to as "reflexive coding practice." This methodology provides an applied approach to computational processes, invisible architectures and a means to reflect on cultural issues through experimentation and practice. The analysis and discussion contributes to a widening of critical attention to software (art) studies and includes a nuanced examination of liveness beyond immediate human reception.

Winnie Soon, *Hello Zombies* networked installation, custom software, 2014. (© Winnie Soon)

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