

web [www.leoalmanac.org](http://www.leoalmanac.org)

email [info@leoalmanac.org](mailto:info@leoalmanac.org)

phone +90 216 483 9292

address Sabancı University, Orhanlı - Tuzla, 34956 Istanbul, Turkey

Lea

**LEONARDO ABSTRACT SERVICES (LABS) 2008-2009**

**THE EXPERIENCE OF INTERACTIVE ART: A CURATORIAL STUDY**

**By Elizabeth Muller**

Interactive art exists through the participation of its audience. There is an increasing awareness amongst artists, critics and curators that the audience's experience is of central importance to the understanding, creation and exhibition of interactive art. Because of its emphasis on experience and participation, as well as its engagement with science and technology, interactive art offers challenges and opportunities for curatorial practice in museums and galleries. The research reported in this thesis investigates the audience's experience of artworks in order to develop a critical framework for, and a curatorial approach to interactive art. It draws on insights, methods and techniques from the interdisciplinary field of Human Computer Interaction (HCI) for studying and working with people's experience of interactive technologies. The research approach of the project is reflective curatorial practice, based on close collaborations with artists during the creation and exhibition of their work. The research centers on two case studies: *Cardiomorphologies*, by George Khut, a physiologically interactive artwork that creates real time visual and sonic representations of the participant's heart and breath; and *Contagion*, by Gina Czarnecki, a multi-user installation based on a complex interactive representation of the spread of disease within populations. Both of these artworks were publicly presented in Beta space at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, a dedicated venue for "prototyping" interactive artworks developed as part of this doctoral project. The first outcome of the research is an experiential approach to curating interactive art, which integrates the exhibition of prototype artworks with the creative process. The approach adapts techniques from HCI for use in artistic contexts. The second outcome is a critical framework for the experience of interactive art, which draws on the work of pragmatist philosopher John Dewey and artist David Rokeby. An examination of the participants' experiences of the two case study artworks demonstrates how the framework can be used by curators, artists and researchers to understand the aesthetic impact of interactive artworks. Together these two outcomes demonstrate how direct engagement with audience experience contributes to interactive art research and curation. The thesis concludes by exploring future directions for this experience-centered approach, including the impact on documentation and archival practice and the curation of group exhibitions.

web [www.leoalmanac.org](http://www.leoalmanac.org)

email [info@leoalmanac.org](mailto:info@leoalmanac.org)

phone +90 216 483 9292

address Sabancı University, Orhanli - Tuzla, 34956 Istanbul, Turkey

Lea

Degree: PhD

Year: 2009

Pages: 295

University: University of Technology, Sydney

Supervisor: Prof. Ernest Edmonds

Email: [ernest@ernestedmonds.com](mailto:ernest@ernestedmonds.com)

Supervisor 2: Prof. Ross Gibson, Ass. Prof. Toni Robertson

Language: English

Dept: Faculty of Information Technology

Copyright: UTS

Lang\_author: English, French

Email: [lizzie@lizziemuller.com](mailto:lizzie@lizziemuller.com)

Keywords: Curating, Practice Based, Interaction, Aesthetic Experience, New Media, Digital Art, Human-Computer Interaction, Interaction Design, Audiences, Museum Studies, Pragmatist Aesthetics

## LEONARDO LABS

Leonardo LABS is annually peer reviewed by an international panel of reviewers. This year the panel selected the following abstracts to be published on Leonardo Electronic Almanac (LEA) in order to bring attention to the outstanding work of these authors by the international community interested in the intersection of art, science and technology.

The Peer Review Panel for 2009-2011 are: Yiannis Colakides, CoDirector, New Media (NeMe), Limassol, Cyprus, Christo Doherty, Chair, Digital Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, PhD., Chair, Department of Media and Audiovisual Culture, University of Lodz, Poland, Tom Lesser, Director, Center for Integrated Media, California Institution of the Arts, Valencia, California, United States, Rachel Mayeri, Assistant Professor of Media Studies, Harvey Mudd College, Claremont, California, United States, Andrea Polli, Director, Interdisciplinary Film and Digital Media (IFDM) and Mesa Del Sol Chair of Digital Media, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, United States, Sheila Pinkel, Professor of Art, Pomona College, Claremont, California, United States.