Table of Content

The Writing Machine Collective
From Writing Ball to Writing Machine
‘Writing’: its support, affordance, and computational thinking

12 / Kenny CHOW + D. Fox HARRELL
14 / Mary FLANAGAN
16 / Enrica HO
18 / HO Yue-jin + Iras TAM
20 / IP Yuk-yiu
22 / Linda C. H. LAI
24 / Vasco PAIVA
26 / Hector RODRIGUEZ
28 / Zoei SO
30 / Winnie SOON + Helen PRITCHARD
32 / Told TO
34 / Justin WONG

WMC.e4 Production Team List
WMC.e4 Video as Writing Machines (Screening I, Screening II)
The WMC is a HK-based media art collective with a research-based orientation, explicitly engaged with new media issues. The following keywords demonstrate some of our key concerns:

* Cyber-text over hyper-text, poetry over narrative, syntax over semantics
* Writing systems as the creation of codes and symbols, writing as inscription versus writing as performance
* Computing as an artistic medium, as a thought process, machine as space, as process, and as an organism
* User interface, compression, dictionary, data structure, information theory, codification...

The Writing Machine Collective (WMC), since its inception, has published three exhibitions between 2004 and 2008. The first edition, WMC_e1 (2004), was an attempt to solicit for solicitation on how coding can be the conjecture of literature, machine and visual creation. A large part of the research process was about clarifying concepts for our intellectual curiosity, and at the same time looking for handy solutions for technical problems of realization from existing software packages.

WMC_e2 (2007) explored writing as multiple sites of cultural engagement. The idea of writing was explored via diversity in user-interfaces – writing as a generative process, a bodily event, a form of artistic intervention and so on. WMC_e3 (2008), part of Digitalogame, a historical retrospective of media art in Hong Kong curated by Ellen Pau on behalf of the HK Museum of Art, focused on writing as a digital art. Although there were only five workshops in WMC_e3, they uphold the centrality of codes and codes writing in new media, and subsequently forced us to open up once again the idea of art beyond the object of aesthetic judgment. In this sense, none of the completed works physically displayed could be considered final, but they were a tentative object articulating only some of the many tangential relations display methods may bear to the coding process.

In the 7th year of its existence, the WMC maintains programming literacy as a core mission, and code-writing at the core of creative activities. With three exhibitions or showcases completed, WMC has gained some basic experience in dialoguing with the contemporary art community and reviewed questions of community art-making. It remains the collective’s main aesthetic issues to find adequate forms to present the process-oriented character of computational, code-base creative works. We also maintain the effort to, in our Research Director Hector Rodriguez’s words, open up the “black box” of the creative processes. To examine digitality and computational thinking philosophically in nondigital works with an interdisciplinary vision remains high on our agenda.

WMC favours flexible organization. We also choose to focus on gathering local artists. While half of the artists in the current WMC_e4 had participated in previous exhibitions, our general practice is to freely invite interested artists and programmers to present their work in a coherent concept. While we seek to explore the positive side of “circle of acquaintances” in networking, our “participation-by-invitation” model has proven successful in open calls for works in order to keep our community open. In the current exhibition, we have invited works and works solicited from an open call.

In the current edition, WMC_e4, we have specifically included a video program to show works sent in from an open call just as an experiment to see how computational thinking could be expressed in this familiar art form. Lectures, workshops and student laboratories are also part of our program. (Linda C.H. LAI, Artistic Director and Founder of WMC)

Official website: http://www.writingmachine-collective.net
In early 20th century, the Hansen Writing Ball, invented for general use since 1865 by Rasmus Malling-Hansen, finally lost its popularity to Sholes' box-shape writing machine, or what came to be known as the typewriter. It was no pure commercial battle. Sholes' typewriter was a way re-defined writing by establishing an instantaneous seeing-upon-writing mode, which remains dominant in today’s LCD-screen culture. The visual orientation of writing in Sholes’ machine stood in contrast with the Hansen Writing Ball, which, designed by people of hearing and speech disability in mind, spatially separated typing on paper and reading of the typed text into two isolated steps. Imagine the Hansen Writing Ball had remained dominant, or suppose the writing ball and the typewriter had equally significant parallel development – what would our writing experience have become? Not seeing immediately what one has written could be fascinating.

Almost all works in the current WMC_e4 are concerned with the question of mediated perception in writing activities due to the presence of tools, as much as how machine processes produce new forms of writing logic. Machines are not only the extension of the human hands that write; they endow our hands with rules, procedures and algorithms. Machines are the place-holder of authorship and author’s identity. What is generated by machines, however, exceeds the initiator-artist’s design. Some of the WMC_e4 artists seek to re-produce the machine process, while others translate the outcome of machine work into a different medium, or via spatialization. And yet some machines are editors, inviting decoding and interpretation.

The Writing Ball is a thing like me; of iron
Yet twisted easily – especially on journeys.
Patience and tact must be had in abundance
As well as fine [little] fingers to use.
Computational thinking…

On Thursday, December 16, 2010, “without much fanfare, Google made a mammoth database called from nearly 5.2 million digitized books available to the public…for free downloads and online searches, opening a new landscape of possibilities for research and education in the humanities.” (International Herald Tribune, December 17, 2010, lower front page) As new media theorist Janet Murray suggests, a turning point in the closing of the gap between computation as a science and computation as a human reality lay in the need to archive and retrieve bulk information as it grew in boundless quantity especially in times of war in the first half of the 20th century. The Google story of 2010 then seems no particular wonder except that storing and retrieving huge amount of data is no longer just a projected reality. Or perhaps more than that: the 2 centuries of works Google puts on the web should present to the everyday person new challenges in forming views about human existence. Consider the infinite number of search and the scope covered via a 5-word string. Consider the fact that meta-knowledge, as well as the constructed-ness of knowledge, is now a necessary object of learning: with a click, one “can instantly see how ‘women’ are rarely mentioned in comparison to ‘men’ until about 1970,” and cultural trends in history is something even an 8-eight year child can acquire in a browse. Consider the 500 billion words “contained in books published from 1800 to 2000 in English, French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Russian and Hebrew” available at one’s disposal. And this takes me back to the WMC_e4, to computational thinking in art and for the everyday person in multifarious manifestations.

Ask Umberto Eco, or Raymond Queneau: how many possible sentences, poems, books and volumes can one produce with an archive of 500 billion words, based on permutation and combinatorial principles? The answer is ‘infinitive’ – but that is not a very interesting answer. Fascination comes in when happens to every single moment of writing against the backdrop of infinite possibilities and immense amount of raw material at hand. What Gerard Genette called intertextuality, architectonically and hypertextuality are the main attributes of any textual activity. Between the occurrence of a thought to be written down and the final pinning down as a piece of work lies the drama of computational thinking.

According to the mission statements of Centre for Computational Thinking at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), computational thinking is primarily “a way of solving problems, designing systems, and understanding human behavior that draws on concepts fundamental to computer science,” and yet it is also “a fundamental part of the way people think and understand the world.” Computational thinking has three core features: first, creating and working with levels of abstraction; second, thinking algorithmically, which highlights methods of induction; and third, working with the awareness of the significance of scaling. (http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~CompThink/) CMU Professor Jeanette M. Wing’s grand vision is that “computational thinking will be a fundamental skill used by everyone in the world by the middle of the 21st century – just like reading, writing, and arithmetic,” and something to add to every child’s analytical ability. In her manifesto of computational thinking, computer science is not just computer programming. Computational thinking emphasizes conceptualizing, not programming.

Performing computational thinking in WMC_e4: the works…

Many of the WMC works have set out to move beyond the semantic aspects of writing to address the above issues. The present continueous tense of writing is a shared feature among all works. Highlighting the continuous, performative process of writing is also to open the possibilities of intervention, interruption, re-writing, and thus highlighting the precarious and contingent state of interpretation.

Writing as a performance is most explicit in Yue-jin Ho and Iiras Tam’s Mouse-click Notation, a piece of micro-writing that is the sonification of mouse activities. Permutation as a mode of computational thinking is explored in Justin Wong’s generative comics, City Forum, which may churn out potentially infinite animated comic narratives based on a library of graphic prototypes archived across the time-span of 3 years. Zoë So’s sculpture (Mediated Facial) and Linda Lai and Gary Ng’s dispersed installation (Scriptorium) both concern with connectivity and procedures, highlighting computational thinking’s algorithmic nature.

The writing process as intermediary translation subverting semantics-based encoding-decoding is explored in the works of Told To, Entica Ho, and Vasco Paiva. Whereas Ng’s (Visual Diary Generator) turns image into text, Ho’s (Le montage de l’émotion) desires meaning-laden text to relax to become visual prints of pure color sensations. Paiva’s (Sea of Mountain) calculates pixel values in a video clip and turns them into a sound score.

Winnie Soon + Helen Pritchard’s just code and Mary Flanagan’s (Borders) engage with computing as social media and on-line communities. While Soon and Pritchard’s playfully and indiscernibly encode, decode and re-code messages on Twitter to subvert and stretch the limits of ‘meaningful’ messages, Flanagan indulges visitors in the virtual world of apparently boundless drifting as far as code-writing and algorithmic rendering allows.

A few artists in WMC_e4 focus their effort in revealing the linguistic nature embedded in the architecture of the
computer, especially Hector Rodriguez (Gestus), Kenny Chow and D. Fox Harrell (Coding Landscape, Crossing Metaphors), and Ip Yuk-yiu (abbreviated Double Indemnity).

Taking another perspective, more than a few works announce new species of cinema, and playfully fill the screen with new writing material, overcoming the hegemony of mainstream narrative cinema. “Twenty is one is twenty” could be a way to describe the multi-window found-footage work of Rodriguez’s Gestus. Chow and Harrell’s highly pictorial Coding Landscape invites visitors’ fingers to contribute to the work, the missing protagonists of a landscape excavation. Ip’s Double Indemnity, using one mainstream Hollywood genre film as its raw material, allows the “back kitchen” of the celluloid construct of the movie to take over the screen space. Lai’s Scriptorium is a long-in-check enquiry of where visible material on a screen comes from, and if anything that moves qualifies for moving image. Wong’s City Forum proclaims itself generative cinema, exploring the infinite internal self-sufficiency of a fixed library of visual images. All of these works in one way or another build upon the notion of archive, library and database, presumed features of computation.

The critique of culture is the explicit objective of the many writing exercises in this exhibition. In addition to Rodriguez’s critique of mainstream narrative cinema, Justin Wong’s work is primarily caricature of local politics and social scandals. Ho and Tam’s Mouse-click notion, originally titled “two-word poem”, pays tribute to the forgotten laborers of ancient China, the evidence of whose existence survives only in the inexpressive utterance of the 2-word poems. Lai Lai’s Scriptorium directly addresses de-humanization in assembly lines and, in response, re-creates the assembly-line experience with computational authorship, re-defining productivity as personal engagement.

**Macro Objectives…**

As we arrive here in the WMC e4, we find ourselves negotiating our artistic creation within a trajectory of contradictory positions:

At one end of the trajectory, we have Prof. Wing’s manifesto of computational thinking: computer science is not just computer programming; computational thinking hones conceptualizing, not programming.

At the other end of the trajectory, there is the imperative to work with code-writing as a unique artistic medium. American artist Golan Levin outlines the necessity for an artist to grapple with its own programming abilities.

“I believe individual artists should dictate the possibilities of their chosen media, and not leave it to the Adobes and Macromedias of the marketplace. The notion of artists creating their own tools is as old as art itself. For centuries, artists ground their own pigments, twisted pig hairs to make their own brushes, and printed their own canvases with glue made from boiled rabbits. Instead of distracting artists from their true purpose, these crafts actually tightened artists’ connections to their materials and processes.” (Designing with Code: One Artist’s Journey)

**WMC e4 artists need no single consent. But within the broad trajectory, we share the following concerns:**

* To promote programming literacy among artists: to treat technology as an “artistic medium” instead of a “tool”;
* To promote the appreciation of computational art among the general public by foregrounding computational thinking in the exhibited works; and
* To embrace interdisciplinary artistic research, especially to rediscover generative/computational elements in contemporary art practices.

(December 28, 2010)
Coding Landscapes, Crossing Metaphors

「編」風景，
「渡」喻意

Kenny CHOW 周嘉年 + D. Fox HARRELL

D. Fox HARRELL

D. Fox HARRELL is a researcher and artist exploring the relationship between imaginative cognition, computation, and expressive digital media. He is Associate Professor of Digital Media at MIT in the Comparative Media Studies Program and in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL). He earned his B.A. in Art, then a B.S. in Logic and Computation at Carnegie Mellon University, with a minor in Computer Science. He is a Ph.D. in Computer Science and Cognitive Science from the University of California, San Diego, after receiving his Master’s degree in Interactive Telecommunication at New York University.

Kenny CHOW 周嘉年

Kenny CHOW is a researcher, educator, and designer interested in generative art, interactive narrative, film, animation, and digital media. He obtained his Ph.D. in Digital Media at the Georgia Institute of Technology, M.F.A. in Media Technology from the City University of Hong Kong, and M.S. degree from the University of Hong Kong. He has extensive practical experience in motion graphics design, animation, and film. He has also produced independent videos, including Play Again, in the collaborative film The Moon, which was selected for the 6th Hong Kong Asian Film Festival 2009.

Crossing a contemporary landscape we often encounter rhythmic repetition of parking lots, train stations, construction sites, and occasional amusement parks. Punctuating these environmental rhymesexecuted in bland architecture are rivers, mountains, forests, and cultural artifacts. The possibility of poetry composed of these visually echoing but conceptually differing icons has inspired this work. Since the industrial age, modularity has inundated our everyday life. Things and activities are shaped into mass produced interchangeable units, including our furniture, our commuting, our consumptions, our entertainments, and our identities. Sometimes we are desperate for a getaway. This work generates fanciful landscapes using modular graphics. It Ironically articulates the nuanced interplay between modular and organic objects that saturate our everyday landscape.

This work is an example of Generative Visual Reniku, a new form of computational visual art introduced by the artists, generating evocative compositions of visual images through an interface that unites users and a pre-coded computational art system with author-created rules. The system responds adaptively to users’ preferences and invites them to other possibilities. On the other hand, a user of this work types on the keyboard with the nostalgic command-line completion feature, “coding” poetic landscapes. On the other hand, one walks fingers across the touchpad along with animated human figures, “crossing” back and forth between metaphors and images.

停車場、火車站、主題遊樂園等是常見的當代風景；河、山、樹則點綴著這些刻板的場面。兩類概念不同但視覺上聯繫的圖案組合而成這件作品。今天，工業風格化佔據了我們的日常生活，家具、娛樂、消費，甚至身份都被製成可重複或可互換的元素。每位修剪齊整的現代人的收藏，本作品以詩義的方式，利用不同的樣板圖案構成兩種亞洲的風景，以表現現代和理想世界之內的微妙關係。

本作品是《生成視覺遊戲》(Generative Visual Reniku)，一種由作者開創的計算視覺藝術新形式。計算系統分析用戶對風景的偏好（如自然或是城市），然後把視覺元素組合成新圖案。誘導用戶作出不同的選擇，利用和計算系統之間的交互作用，決定隨之而來的畫面和後面的旅程，在這作品中，用戶一方面在電腦上“編編”出詩意的風景，另一方面以手指在觸摸板上與動態圖像人物一起走，透過“工業化”與“人性化”並存的兩個操作界面，反覆“橫渡”於虛與實之間。
American writer Henry David Thoreau extolling going forth in the world to experience its bounty and characteristics through the simple act of walking. Thoreau avoided highways, choosing instead to wander with indifference in order to understand the spiritual possibilities of the landscape: "Walking for three hours will carry me to a strange country as I expect..."

In "Borders: Aquaintain Castle" walking exposes inherent truths and glitches of the virtual by testing its edges. Walking through real wilderness leads one to see beyond the boundary of both mental and physical. In virtual worlds owned by thousands of players, there appear to be seamless landscapes as far as the eye can see, appearing to some extent as the "common" of old. One can find, however, and walk along invisible boundaries of ownership, breaking up the illusion of a cohesive landscape. In following the invisible virtual property lines separating one player's property from another, the walker may become stuck in stones, forced under water or pushed stepping at the edge of the world — exposing the algorithmic nature of landscape rendering and the cut-off points between subscribers or those who have virtual ownership. Thus, this border-walk dwells on the limitations of virtual property ownership and the way in which behavior and point of view are affected when interacting with these invisible disruptions in the seamless world, exposing its constructed nature.

Mary Flanagan is an artist, scientist, and humanist whose innovative methods bind research with cultural production. She examines the boundaries between the personal and the public, perception, power, and what technology can teach people about themselves. Her artwork ranges from game based systems to computer viruses, embodied interfaces to interactive texts, and has been exhibited internationally at venues including the Labor Art Center, Whitney, SIGGRAPH, Beall Center, Steinschneider Herbst, Ars Electronica, Art's Space, Guggenheim, and others. As a researcher into popular culture, digital studies, and computer games, she examines issues of representation, behavior, equity, and process. Her critical essays are widely published and her books include Reload: rethinking women + cyberculture (2002), re:SKIN (2007), and the most recent, Critical Play (2009), all with MIT Press. She is the Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Professor in Digital Humanities at Dartmouth College.
Le Montage de l’émotion
(Version 1)

Enrica HO

Enrica HO

Salute the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky, the creator of Abstract Expressionism. This work responds to Kandinsky’s thinking in a computational way.

The written text is the most common of communication tools but also a barrier. Communication through text involves a process from cognitive representation to text, then back to cognitive representation. The former involves the producer or communicator’s own use of language and literacy, which is the basis of textual production. The latter also involves literacy, but the reader/receiver may bring her own experience and perception to the linguistic form of representation. Her interpretation may or may not exactly be the ‘original intended meanings’ of the producer. Cultural and intellectual differences also affect text production and understanding. What seems to be ‘misinterpretation’ can be understood as forming a different perception based on one’s experience.

Considering inherent communication barriers as described, I draw upon Kandinsky’s principles in abstract expressionism to make a work that translates text into a more open form of representation – colors. I have borrowed the Chinese Telegraph Code (CTC), which turns characters into a set of numbers, to create my own set of rules for the work of text-color translation. My machine would take into consideration the amount of input characters which are decoded into shapes of specific colors, sizes and position with spatial coordinates which will be printed on blank paper to form a painting.

I encourage visitors to participate in my work as message-senders. Their input will be generated into message-paintings printed out on paper. The ‘paintings’, therefore, are ephemeral letters sent by the visitor-messengers. One can imagine my work to be a telegraph machine, translating messages from text to codes and from codes to paintings.

According to Kandinsky, art at the first level is for self-expression, second level for connecting with the viewers, and third level with society. This work of mine is meant for my interaction with viewers – I want them to contribute to my work in order to connect with the community. I also want the public to experience art that is also part of everyone’s life, and not something just reserved for artists.

文字是日常的传递工具，當中牽涉到知識和見識的過程——由文字表達文字，再由文字回到知識和見識，是文字的意義和作者（發信人）的解讀與接收者的解讀，文字的編造及解讀過程需要適當能力及語言知識，過程橫跨多個知識層面，作品煽動接收者思考並重新詮釋文字的意義。

透過這件作品，作者希望把文字轉化為基於文字的影像表象，參與者輸入的數字數據編成中文電報碼，而作者則按電報碼計算出一套圖片圖案，應用漢字創意的抽象表象，理論，並利用中文電報碼以語言分類的原則，將隨機的數字序列和樓層圖案，透過顏色、大小及位置在紙上表現出來。中文電報碼是一個歷史悠久的文字符號系統，而參與者輸入中文時所扮演的電腦發送人的角色，作品本身是一個虛擬電報機，為接收人將訊息編排成電報碼，再由電報機翻譯成畫面，再由畫面繼續編成畫面。
Mouse-click notation

a sound installation

Unlike the modern "two-word poem" from the west, such as the works of Eli Siegel, which explore the generative possibilities of meanings created by juxtaposing two words, the ancient Chinese two-character poem in its earliest form was a record of sounds.

Inspired by the "two-character poem," our work records sounds of mouse-clicking produced by different computer applications, and we use such material to create a sound installation. We want to preserve and play with the most common working sounds in our digital age.

Graduated from Goldsmiths' College, he has taught cultural studies, art history and creative writing at IVE, the Hong Kong Art School and City University of Hong Kong's School of Creative Media. He is now an editor, writer, translator and media artist.

"Art is my true passion," says Iris. So far, she has maintained her principle of working in multiple media and moving between traditional and new media forms. A recent focus of hers is on possible dialogues between Chinese ink painting and digital installation. She is particularly interested in seeking ways to transport Chinese artistic modes and conception via contemporary media, and how this could be achieved via multi-media applications and programming. After receiving her BA in Creative Media from the City University of Hong Kong, she has carried on with her art practices as a multi-media artist and in art administration. Her works have been exhibited and sold to collectors.

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Technical Artis (技術監製): Tony TAM 楊振榮

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Between the threshold of good and evil: film noir no.1 (Double Indemnity)

Ip Yuk-yiu 賀詠歲

The frame-to-frame luminosity variation of a noir classic, Double Indemnity, was analyzed digitally. The visualization of the changes seems also like the quantification of ambiguities of good and evil in the noir stories, or else viewers find themselves combed by alternating light and shade, a moral void or its metaphor.

The endless iteration of the analysis is a re-imagination of the American film noir tale of crime and deception as a one-bit moral drama... [Linda Lai]

犯罪與欺騙。上世紀的美國黑色電影以黑白影像詮述人性的善惡界。透過分析黑色電影《雙重保險》中每格畫面的光暗差，觀眾需經歷在善與惡之間的流動。這種流動歸結為人物在真實世界中的善惡界，而觀眾則需經歷在善與惡之間的光暗差，感受在善與惡之間的觀影體驗。《雙重保險》中的人性掙扎被重新影像化，成一個無盡的道德模擬。[何雁龢]

Ip Yuk-yiu 賀詠歲

Ip Yuk-yiu is an experimental filmmaker, media artist, art educator and independent curator. His works, ranging from experimental videos to live film performances and media installations, have been showcased extensively at international festivals including Ann Arbor Film Festival (US), European Media Art Festival (Germany), New York Film Festival (USA), the Image Festival (Canada), VideoBrasil (Brazil), Transmediale (Germany) and Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (Japan). He has lectured extensively on film, video and media art and has taught at Emerson College, Massachusetts College of Art and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Currently he is an Associate Professor and the Master of Fine Arts Program Leader at the School of Creative Media, the City University of Hong Kong. His recent works explore emerging and computational forms of cinema.

葉詠歲，實驗電影導演，媒體藝術家，藝術教育及獨立策展人。作品曾於安娜堡電影節（美國）、廣州媒體藝術節（中國）、紐約電影節（美國）、溫哥華電影節（加拿大）、慕尼黑電影節（德國）、聖塞巴斯蒂安電影節（西班牙）及山形國際紀錄片節（日本）等地展出。曾任教於愛默森學院、麻省藝術學院及香港理工大學，現為香港城市大學創意媒體學院海教授。
Two images have been swelling in my mind during my entire period of creation. The first is a faithful scrawl diligently copying, line by line, page after page, day and night. The second image is that of local female workers by the side of an assembly line, repeating the same set of operations in a textile or garment factories in the 1960s.

Female factory workers weaved their quotidien grievances into the strictly mechanistic rhythm of the partially automated assembly line, at the end of which their employers collected products in bulk, whereas their input at each station, mechanically integrated into the final product, would deem untraceable. A scrawl might spend months to duplicate manuscripts considered worth reproducing. But once the palimpsest had to be reused, his writing would have to be scraped off before new texts could be written over. The destiny of a writer's work is 'erasure'.

Hong Kong female factory workers of the 1960s and 1970s of the medieval time in Europe are somewhat connected: their labor was spent to contribute to the grand advancement of culture and economy while their individual contribution was simply assumed for cooption.

The invisible accumulation of steps in a work process in strict sequential order leading to the completion of a set task reminds me of the meaning of algorithm in computing. Each operation has to be executed with superb precision. The slightest change in the order of steps or irregularities at any step would result in the interruption of the work process or a totally different output.

I decided that my work *Scansion* should be a kind of paradox. It is an automated system that churns out new literature and multimedia based on its own hidden rules. At the same time, I want to subvert the dummy assembly line by turning each work station into an independent site of play and authorship.

One needs to look for our *Scansion* as it is not sitting at the crossroad, but once found, it can be a spectacle. This scansion is not only a room for the production of massmedia, it preserves the past, and examines the preservation of the past critically.

Scansion, literally 'a place for writing', purposefully integrates installation art, collage/découpage, code-writing (computational algorithm), critical investigation of textual production (cultural studies) and media art—to playfully engage with the 'compression of texts' (Don McKenzie, 1960s and 1970s) and the history of the books (Robert Darnton and Roger Chartier, 1980s and 1990s).

The variety of activities the normal visitors would engage in this work range from book-making, narrative construction (story-making), script design/invention, typographic fixing, and the tracing of original writing on a 'palimpsestic' surface. Employing traditional techniques in printing and writing, the work flow can be understood analogically as follows:

- Source from the codes: *Punching* → *Scripting* → *Compositing* → *Writing* → *Preparing the exemplar* → *Stereotyping* → *Printing* → *Recovering*

The work flow, made possible only with visitors' participation, is hidden from the Scansion, but scattered around the WMCE4 exhibition venue, and disintegrated into independent graphic and writing events.

Notes: all Chinese-language manuscript material is from Chinese local newspapers in 1994 Hong Kong, whereas English-language material is excerpted from the late American artist-photographer, Joe Spence's book *What can a woman do with a camera?*

References:


 nigeria (Gracelyn Kay) Ng。

Linda LAI (LAI Chiu-han)Received her Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from NYU, and has been seeking meaningful extension from the discipline to engage in new media and cultural investigations. Lai is a Hong Kong-based interdisciplinary artist and curator, and founder of the new media art group *The Writing Machine Collective* (2004). Her works have a strong concern for language and narrativity, grounded in a feminist methodology that integrates critical theory, film theory and visual ethnography. She has a broad interest in image and text in the context of archiving. Her experimental video works have been exhibited in various experimental and documentary film/video festivals in Oberhausen, Berlin, Vienna, Birmingham, Barcelona, Paris, Hong Kong, Eindhoven (Netherlands), Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Taipei, Koehu, Seoul, Macao, Hong Kong, and a few cities in the United States. Her digital interactive works include *PUSH: the Quest for a Voice* and *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale.

Linda LAI (LAI Chiu-han) received her Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from NYU, and has been seeking meaningful extension from the discipline to engage in new media and cultural investigations. Lai is a Hong Kong-based interdisciplinary artist and curator, and founder of the new media art group *The Writing Machine Collective* (2004). Her works have a strong concern for language and narrativity, grounded in a feminist methodology that integrates critical theory, film theory and visual ethnography. She has a broad interest in image and text in the context of archiving. Her experimental video works have been exhibited in various experimental and documentary film/video festivals in Oberhausen, Berlin, Vienna, Birmingham, Barcelona, Paris, Hong Kong, Eindhoven (Netherlands), Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Taipei, Koehu, Seoul, Macao, Hong Kong, and a few cities in the United States. Her digital interactive works include *PUSH: the Quest for a Voice* and *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale, *In Search of a Body* (2001-4), with Theresa Junco, Miku Ikuma, Hong Kong Art Biennale.
In the form of an audiovisual installation, *Sea of Mountains* seeks to reveal the infinite possibilities within a framed parcel of an ocean.

A digital video input is turned into the score for a generative music piece. By its openness and yet with a rich microscopic variation, the part of the harbor kept within the frame creates a constant flow of diverse sound sequences through pre-established rules of translation.

*Sea of Mountains* is water, formless and powerful. It is also a living proof of that natural force, the variations in water, captured on video. *Sea of Mountains* becomes a loop of infinity demanding the visitors’ contemplation. In the simplest terms, *Sea of Mountains* is a glimpse of natural structure.

In *Sea of Mountains*, the viewer perceives the vast and the intimate, the fluid and the solid, the abstract and the concrete, all coexisting in a harmonious balance. The experience is both soothing and stimulating, inviting the viewer to explore the endless possibilities within the frame.

João Vasco Paiva

João Vasco Paiva is a Hong Kong-based artist interested in the specificity of the medium and how it processes information. His main focus is the boundaries between realism and abstraction, representation and interpretation, and the usage of apparently random elements for the creation of visual and sonic compositions.

Paiva graduated with a Fine Arts Degree from Oporto Art School (Portugal) and, in 2008, obtained a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Media from the School of Creative Media, the City University of Hong Kong.

His works have been shown in festivals such as The Creators Project, Moscow Young Art Biennial, Art Beijing, FILE International Festival of Electronic Language, Microwave New Media Festival (Hong Kong), the Hong Kong Art Biennial, London Exploratory Music Festival, Athens Video Art Festival, and other venues and locations in Beijing, Hong Kong, London, Porto, Hangzhou, Sao Paulo and Vienna, among others.

João Vasco Paiva是一位香港為基點的藝術家，感興趣於各種媒介的特質與它們處理訊息的方法，他主要探討寫實主義與抽象之間的界限，再現和詮釋，以及把看似隨機的元素應用於視覺和聲音創作。

João Vasco Paiva先後於波爾多藝術學院 (Oporto Art School) 及香港城市大學創意媒體學院獲得藝術學士及藝術碩士，作品曾於多個國際性藝術節展出，如The Creators Project (倫敦), 藝術北京博覽會, FILE 5th International Festival of Electronic Language (巴西), 香港國際數碼媒體藝術節, 香港藝術雙年展, London Exploratory Music Festival (英國) 和Athens Video Art Festival (希臘), 參展在香港及其他城市於北京、香港、倫敦、阿姆斯特丹、聖保羅、華沙等地展出。
Gestus is a project about cinema as an art of gesture. It consists of an archive of found footage from various genres and periods, all depicting body gestures. Each sequence has been digitally processed using a custom software that analyzes its movements, compresses them with the motion content of other footage in the archive, and uses this information to reedit the footage. The algorithm is a machine that (re)writes the gestures. The processed sequences can be exhibited as a multi-channel video installation.

Gestus was inspired by 19th-century motion studies and by the simple actions recorded in early silent films. This tradition documented and displayed gesture as such, often against neutral or dark backgrounds. Isolated gesture from any spatial or temporal location and focused attention on its intrinsic kinetic properties. The original vocabulary of cinema was the purification, analysis, and exhibition of gesture. Its subject was those repetitive body movements that philosopher Henri Bergson regarded as the essence of comedy. The hegemony of Hollywood narrative cinema, however, marginalized this gestural obsession. As character-driven story-telling came to dominate mainstream films, the purity of gesture was subordinated to narrative structure.

The Gestus project returns to gesture as the fundamental aspiration of cinema.

Hector RODRIGUEZ 謝漢德

Artistic Concept (藝術理念) : Hector RODRIGUEZ 謝漢德
Computer Programming (電腦程式) : Hector RODRIGUEZ, Philip KRETSCHMANN
Research Assistant (研究助理) : Janice LIUNG

Hector RODRIGUEZ 謝漢德

Hector RODRIGUEZ is a digital artist and theorist. His animation Res Extensa received the award for best digital work in the Hong Kong Art Biennial 2003 and has been shown in India, China, Germany, and Spain. His essays about film theory/history and digital art have been published in Screen, Cinema Journal and Game Studies, and he has participated in various art and technology conferences. He was Artistic Director of the Microwave International Media Art Festival (2005), where he has also taught workshops on Java programming and organized an exhibition on art and games. He is currently Associate Professor at the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong, where he teaches courses in Visual Studies, Contemporary Art, Play and Game Studies, Film Theory, Composition, and Critical Theory. He is also a member of the Writing Machine Collective in Hong Kong.

新海徳是一名數碼藝術家和理論家。他為2003年度「香港藝術雙年展」的數碼作品獲獎。他設計的遊戲系統Co-Perspective於2006年度在紐約Barthopologies會議Games Meets Graphics比賽中入選決賽，他撰寫關於數碼藝術、數碼藝術和遊戲研究的文章曾於Screen, Cinema Journal及Game Studies中刊載。新海徳參與過多個大型藝術及科技會議，亦曾擔任數碼國際新媒體藝術節藝術監，現為香港城市大學創意媒體學院副教授，教授當代視覺藝術、遊戲研究、數碼藝術、電腦程式設計和批評理論。
Mediated Facial

Interactive Sculpture: wooden structure & elastic ropes

Zoie SO

The sculpture I have made is a ‘human face’ in the form of a self-designed weaving system. Employing a digital 3D application to mimic sequential variations in ‘muscle activities’, the system allows more than forty ‘muscles’ to join action to form rich facial expressions. Participants are invited to use the woven system by pulling the elastic ropes in order that they may control the expression of the face. This indirect manipulation of emotional expression is a metaphor of how techno-forms of all kinds pull the strings of our everyday communication and personal expression.

一笑一笑，脸上四十多根肌肉各自拟如分控服摆妖娆，组成本面。以模维微妙的瞬时变化，组成各种的微妙表现：笑，哭，笑、哭无常、说笑间，悲愤间，忍笑微笑......本作品利用数底立体模型及自制的织物结构，建立一种模仿面部表情运作的互动而语。作者透过复杂的拉扯动作，以手部控制嘴部。间接操控，让「面谱」尝试表达情感。反正，我们习惯透过/隔着各种电脑程式互相沟通，......

Zoie SO

Zoie So is a local Hong Kong artist whose art practice is primarily addressing the reality of digital technology, as befits her technologically dependent life as a metropolis. Her work explores the materiality and opacity of human-computer interfaces. So constructs intimate, playful and intellectually challenging spaces, using methods such as appropriation, encoding and programming, and a diverse range of media.

Zoie So is currently a teaching fellow at the Visual Studies Department, Lingnan University, where she teaches digital imaging and electronic art. She earned her MFA in Studio Arts: Open Media from Concordia University in Montreal, while teaching video history and electronic art. She completed her Bachelor’s degree in Creative Media at the City University of Hong Kong in 2004.

蘇發怡是香港 NAMES大學光學研究系教授導師，曾任數碼影像及電子藝術等課程。蘇氏於加國多倫多大學電子藝術及藝術實踐，獲榮譽文學士文憑，並於多倫多大學 Concorvia University) 色彩及人數像文化與電子藝術學士學位。曾在加拿大溫哥華 Hexagram 藝術與科技研究中心及加拿大文化及The Sense Lab(實驗室)實驗室內工作。

蘇氏的作品探討人類如何利用技術互動、信任及關係的多義性和複雜性，她透過操控，編輯，編程程式的方式，以多種媒介結構，包括充滿遊戲感和啟發性的空間。
‘just code’

Winnie SOON 董詩詩 + Helen PRITCHARD

just code is a collaborative installation in which participants are invited to decode electronic texts written by a collective of distributed writers.

In this work, the artists set up a structure in which the activities of reading and writing by human and machine can take place. Statements on life and death are gathered in real-time from the social media site Twitter and displayed as geometric images. Viewers encounter a continuously updating feed as the machine translates language to image and twitter message to QR code (a matrix bar code). The QR code "carrries" a language of pattern and meaning, which is to be activated by the reader. Participants are invited to decode these images through the use of a smart phone or a QR reader.

The activity of reading in just code is a collaborative performance between human, machine and code within a space that is at once physical and virtual. The installation explores a continuously evolving and mutating text which moves beyond and between languages.

just code is a collaboration between the artists, Winnie Soon and Helen Pritchard. The project has been exhibited in London, New York, Hong Kong and elsewhere.

Helen Pritchard is an artist and writer. Her work often takes the form of videos, performance, texts and radio work, which explores ideas of physical presence/absence within systems. In 2009 Helen was artist in residence at part of Project Club at Space and launched the project Drawing Exercises that broadcast on the RADIA network. In 2008 Helen was the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation award (for excellence in visual art) to attend the Digital Arts Residency at the Atlantic Centre for the Arts, Florida USA. Helen has shown her works internationally, including the Transmodern Festival Baltimore (USA), UKS Oslo (Norway), Conical Gallery (Australia), ACA Florida (US), and National Review of Live Art (UK).

She is currently a PhD student at the HighWire Doctoral Training Centre.

HYPERLINK "http://www.helenpritchard.info"

Acknowledgements:

Polly Poons Communication Associate @ InNoPo.com

HighWire Doctoral Training Centre
Scientists have been exploring many forms of artificial intelligence, and much effort has been devoted to understanding the human mind via images we made. Vision tracking research is one such attempt. Whereas applied research is in the mode of turning technological discovery to the service and benefit of human desires, there could be room to let go of our pragmatic concern a little bit to allow machines to show us what they could do without a fixed agenda from us. In response, this work allows the machine to 'express freely' the meanings of images purely on a pre-scripted rule-based program, breaking away from the demand for syntactic-semantic mapping in artificial intelligence research.

Visual Diary Generator is an experimental installation that transforms pixels extracted from moving images into words and phrases. This work is a real-time generative diary. As visitors place a note pad on the desk, pixels turn into sentences line by line on the blank pages, disclosing the secrets of the artist’s video clips.

Technical consultant (技術顧問): Kim WONG 黃勝洋

Told TO 傅嘉生

Told TO has dedicated himself to the new media design industry for over seven years. His works have been exhibited in England, North Ireland, Taiwan and Hong Kong, including WMC. His creative interest focuses on visualization of "meaning" and "human body". In recent years, his works mainly include commercial art. He was the selected artist for Louis Vuitton flagship store motion graphic design for two years. He was also the interactive consultant for World Expo 2010 Hong Kong Pavilion, also co-founder and Director of New Media design for Studio 430 Limited.

不知不觉，從事創意技術設計已有七個年頭，當中經歷不少辛酸和不易的苦盡！只因對互動設計的熱愛，才能一直堅持到今天，夢想著創作一件能感動人心的作品，但至今尚未成功，仍需努力。以電影形式呈現心中所想，是本人的主要(難)任務。於某年於香港設計學院完成設計學士學位，隨即創立個人工作室進行獨立創作。近期於創作單位430的合作伙伴創作基礎，近年積極投入於商業藝術企劃的工作，作品曾在英國、台灣、上海等地展出。
City Forum 應該是從作者從事於電視製作的六期政治漫畫《機械格格》之中發展出來的作品。《機械格格》本身是一個資料庫為主的漫畫創作，作者利用所有用過的圖像循環使用，並不斷重複使用這些圖像庫中的材料於新的漫畫中。這不斷重複的圖像來自漫畫本身的題材：我們周圍每天都會接觸到的各種政治與社會議題。此外，這種機械性的創作過程也提供了很多靈感，讓人探索漫畫之中的衍生性思想。

《城市論壇》追查資料庫創作的筆記，將填寫的流程和電腦指令結合成為一個新穎的敘事形式。從而試圖超越傳統的界限，它是一個「敘事環境」，當中包含了事件、敘事、圖像和從漫畫中獲取的文字。故事因為角色的體現與遇，與及物件和文字的意外發展而被描述和重複描述，當故事在如此不斷演進的方式產生時，新的圖像便開始構築起來。

Justin Wong received his BA (Fine Arts) from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1996 and his MA (Interactive Digital Media) in London in 2002. After his graduation, he participated in the Art Electronics award-winning web 2.0 project, Last. Jn in London. Upon his return to Hong Kong, he taught at the School of Creative Media, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and after that he was Art Director in an interactive media design company. Around the same time, he began working for local newspapers as comic writer and started his political comic column Geti Getak Guak in Ming Pao Daily in 2007. His portfolio also includes graphic design and interactive art. Currently he is a Lecturer at the Hong Kong Baptist University's Academy of Visual Arts.
**The Writing Machine Collective 文字機器創作集**

Linda LAI 黎思鴻  
Artistic Director, Founder 創辦人 / 藝術總監

Justin WONG 黃柏達  
Co-Artistic Director 藝術總監

Hector RODRIGUZE 蘭海德  
Research Director 研究總監

**WMC_e4 Production Team List 文字機器創作集第四輯製作團隊**

Linda LAI 黎思鴻  
Project Chief / General Editor 負責總編輯 / 總監

Justin WONG 黃柏達  
Art and Technical Director 美術及技術總監

Michelle ROCHA 魯絲欣*  
Producer 制片

Jolene MOK 莫楚麗  
Deputy Producer 副制片

Howard CHENG 鄭志偉  
Exhibition Designer 展覽設計

WAN Ka-nok 沃家諾  
Deputy Exhibition Designer 副展覽設計

Edith YUEN 袁麗蓓  
Graphic Designer 創意設計

HO Yue-jin 何思靜  
Executive Editor (Proceedings) 執行編輯（論文/通訊）

Daniel CHONG 陳志華  
Art Instructor (Primary School Program) 美術導師（小學教育活動）

CHOI Sai-ho (S.I.) 崔 salir  
Image-and-sound Artist (Opening) 開幕禮表演藝術家

* Appears throughout the courtesy of the Hong Kong Dance Company 承蒙香港舞蹈團惠允參加

**Youth Square 青年廣場**

LAM Yuk-lan 楊玉蘭  
Customer Relations & Marketing Manager 客戶關係及市場總經理

CHAN Pui-ying 彭佩英  
Assistant Customer Relations & Marketing Manager 客戶關係及市場助理經理

Tony LAW 劉偉杰  
Customer Relations & Marketing Executive 客戶關係及市場經理

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Videoage  
Youth Square

**Participating Artists 參展藝術家**

CHOW Ka-nin Kenny 黃家年 / D. Fox HARRRELL

Mary FLANAGAN

Enrica HO 何佩珊

Programmer (程式設計員) : TSUI Yee-lok 朱樂 / Research Assistant (電腦程式員) : LO Ling-kong 魯令經 / LAM Kwan-yin 林均欣 / HUI Ka-yan 葛嘉欣 / Technical Assistant (技術協力) : LEE Jin-yong 林賢永 / LIN Yuen-kai 林均傑

HO Yue-jin 何思靜 / Iris TAM 隋思心

IP Yuk-yiu 賴思輝

Linda C.H. LAI 黎思鴻  
Technical Artist 技術協力: NG York 伍奕思

Scribes 撰稿員: Doris POON 蘇詩怡 / WONG Chun-hoi 王鴻華 / Frank LAM 林健恒

Coordinating for manuscript production 講寫協調: Jolene MOK 莫楚麗

Joo Van PAIVA

Hector RODRIGUEZ 蘭海德  
Computer Programming (電腦程式) : Philip KRETSCHMANN

Research Assistant (研究助理) : Janice LEUNG 梁美薇

Winnie SOON 孫詠怡 / Helen PRITCHARD

Zoe SO 蘇思怡

Told TO 涂采生  
Technical consultant (技術顧問) : Kim WONG 温泳洋

Justin WONG 黃柏達

**Video Screening 錄像放映**


**Exhibition Helpers 展覽助理**

有好嘢
青年廣場設有表演場地、商業單位、餐飲及150間旅舍客房給予青年團體及其他人仕租用。
- 影音、劇場、展覽平台、多功能室可作不同類型的表演、講座、會議、小型展覽及電影播放
- 特定用途場地如「舞蹈室」、「鋼琴室」、「樂隊室」、「拍攝室」、「服裝設計室」、「影片後期制作工作間」等適合教學、練習或活動之用
- 商業單位匯聚多元智能、音樂及教育元素和相應零售
- 旅舍套房可提供港交流的青年人、本地交流團或海外人士租住

齊齊享
Youth Square combines innovative design with comprehensive facilities (such as theatre, exhibition platform, studio, multi-purpose areas, commercial units and 150 hostel rooms) is available for youth groups and other organizations/individual for hire.
Video as Writing Machines
a video program from an open call for works on image-text dialogue and
generative process (Curated by Linda Lai)

Screening I
January 22, 2010 (Saturday) / 17:30-18:40 / Y-Studio

Broken machine
Carla CHAN 陈好彩 / 3m / 2010
We type what we think. Internet communication makes us type more and more. Typing makes sound, but as we type we lose the sound of our actual speech. I therefore created the Broken Machine: direct contact with people is broken, our voice is broken.

Untitled (Traces)
Vasco PAIVA / 5m 37s / 2010
Traces made in the water by the passage of a boat are treated by an algorithm that multiplies and overlaps the recorded footage. The result is an abstract visualization whereby the graphical properties of water dilute our perception of linear perspective.

Won’t be shy anymore
Step AU 卢詠欣 / 1m 59s / 2010
In the form of a poem hidden in a postcard, the artist speaks out her love and pain to her lost children.

Feeding the wolf
Step AU 卢詠欣 / 1m 53s / 2010
“I framed my mind onto a window. Simply, I was just daydreaming in class.”

Flowpoints: Kiss
Hector RODRIGUEZ 罗海德 / 8m / 2010
This is an experimental animation that deconstructs Andy Warhol’s movie Kiss using a motion tracking software the artist designed. The software computes and analyzes the micro-movements of the body in the original film. The resulting images represent motions rather than figures. The sound synthesis technique is a variant of the same algorithm that generates the images.

One strange case, two strange people
Doris POON 潘童怡 / 21m / 2009
This work shows two persons’ dialogue as a kind of “time image” (Deleuze). The lack of clean logical linearity in the conversation provides viewers with much room for interpretation. In this work, time is not objective. Each viewer forms his/her own sense of time. I am curious about how viewers construct time with my video.

Decontextualization
Kenny WONG 黃智銘 / 4m 15s / 2009
Ignore the passage of time, the varying of circumstances, and the speaker. I explore meanings by stepping backward to revisit the ‘origin’ of the text. I reduce the content to something “always true.”

Stutterer
Alan KWAN 關子鈴 / 7m 51s / 2010
Kwan Tsz-wai is a stutterer. Instructed by her doctor, she puts a speed-altering device on her mouth and looks forward to the day the treatment is completed so that she can speak normally and fluently.

Thickness of time
LI Yi-fung 李倚風 / 3m 50s / 2010
“Normally, a new shot supercedes the previous one. My piece does the opposite. All shots that have appeared will stay while new ones are laid over them – with a 10-second delay. This is a thick description of time. Actually, there is thickness in time and distance in between the layers as well as between the image and sound signal.”

Spatial pattern
Carla CHAN 陈好彩 / 5m / 2010
Is it one space or many spaces? Are the four windows one space or four spaces? I have created a unified space with four windows to merge fragments into a world that you don’t see but has emerged from a place I visited. Look for the secret rules that keep the fragments splitting and merging.
Screening II
Jan 23, 2010 (Sunday) / 14:00-15:15 / Y-Studio

Moment from moments
WONG Chun-hoi 王家衛 / 15m / 2010
Take a look at old photos buried for decades under your bed. Old on the surface, young on the skin. Human growth, plant growth. Human becomes moody. Plants become woody. What makes a moment that moment was not the content itself but its materiality. A few lived moments of mine re-generate a new moment of me, intimately, over the light box, or else they would never have the chance to overlap and dissolve into each other. By the way, how long is a moment?

β
Kenji WONG 王家衛 / 15m / 2010
β is based on the artist’s research of light-box advertisements along the Tsuen Wan Line of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR). The method was to capture all light-box advertisements at every station on 23rd February 2010. The result was 572 photos turned into a 15-minute slideshow in video form.

Map of Problematique
WONG Fuk-ken 王家衛 / 1m 45s / 2010
This work creates rhythm by regulating the motion of passers-by on the street from footage I collected in Fan Ling. I also want to explore how still and moving images work together to generate musical sense. Audience may consider this an MV, but actually I am re-writing the song Map of the Problematique by MUSE with my images.

I narrate the O
Iria YUEN 黃理議 / 10m 15s / 2010
Listen. Descriptions. Ocean. Let literature narrates the walk towards the sea.

3 stories
KWOK Chiu-han Bao 黄志強 / 3m 18s / 2010
Stories are usually read silently from a book with picture illustrations. This time, there is only my voice speaking words. Let’s see what kind of a story audience will get. I’d like to discover something about seeing and hearing.

Fish 1/2
KWOK Chiu-han Bao 黄志強 / 2m 42s / 2010
One place, One fish. This work is about a fish. It moves in and out of the camera frame randomly. I use the footage to generate a video piece with some hidden rules that instruct me how to organize the shots. Look for the logic behind.

Wide Rothko
Vaesa PAVIA / 10m / 2008
Using footage and audio recordings made in Hong Kong and in several locations in the Chinese province of Yunnan, Wide Rothko creates a new form of visualization exploring the relations between abstraction and figurative imagery.

Loss of footage: an invisible consciousness
Keith WONG 王家衛 / 4m / 2010
I lost my computer in March 2010, together with it all my video footage in the hard disk. Afterwards, painstakingly sorted out all possible sources to redeem whatever I could – some final drafts, scratched DV tapes, and clips in secondary storage systems as well as those sent via e-mail. So here is the new story I weave with the fragments at hand. I seem to discover an invisible consciousness hidden in my visual language, things I cannot talk about in my daily life.

Explosion
Alan KWAN 蘇永康 / 6m 50s / 2010
There are 3 explosion footages in extreme slow motion. Using Max/Genera/Iter, I created the effect of two explosion clouds of different colors merging to form a black one. I imagine myself doing what the capitalists do – to act as a manipulator and design images whereby real meanings and nature of things are distorted. Ironically, with the music (Dream by John Cage) and color, the explosion, originally a lethal and terrible thing, becomes poetry or a painting with spreading ink. I have also removed the context: everything except the explosion clouds has been deleted from the scene. I substitute the pleasure of seeing for the contemplation on the horror of violence. But isn’t that what advertising does?

Communication
Winnie CHUNG 朱善琪 / 4m / 2010
This work questions the normal practice of communication. We receive messages systematically through reading and listening. What would become of communication if we hear not what we see?

Live show isn’t showing live
Jolene MOJ 莫珍慧 / 5m 25s / 2010
This short video plays with the notion of what is and what is not a LIVE SHOW. To me a videographer, a ‘live show’ begins with the moment I press the record button and ends when I press it again, whereas in the editing process, there is hardly any live moment as I show the record of records, and present the presence of the completed present.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<td>10:00</td>
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