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Creative Simulation & the Gender Link

A More Comprehensive Collective Intelligence

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This paper surveys the continuance of the cyberfeminist critique of oppression using playful, but powerful, self-expression in both the sensual realm of the body, as well as the concrete world of the built environment as reflected in the work of contemporary artist/researchers, Stephanie Rothenberg, Anne Marie Schleiner, Sylvia Rusanka, and Kathleen Ruiz. Each artist uses simulation technology and/or game art to show ways towards more potent openings to the fuller spectrum of what it is to be human in a technological culture. We pose the question: could we look to contemporary feminist artists who are working in simulation and game technologies to see new openings beyond fps and military type game and simulation experiences?

Could we create a cyberfeminist game & simulation web portal so that trans–dissiplinary feminist artist who work in social activist games can feature their work and link to the history of cyberfeminism while they create new history?
Introduction

“It must pulsate, it must explode
...at any cost” Luce Irigaray

Mass Effect: new happenings
gendered representation
FemShep & lesbian romance

Frustration with the Real World

Collective Intelligence

The Military Hangover

Brief Laments

Artistic Prophesies
Art as the mother of all things
Art’s Mission: N. Katherine Hales
Laslo Moholy Nagy
Ana Mendieta

A Selection of Feminist Game Artists the Industry should learn from:
Stephanie Rothenberg: Invisible Threads: a mixed reality performance installation exploring labor and emerging virtual economies
Anne Marie Schleiner: Velvet Strike, Madam Poly, Plum Blossom Garden
Silvia Rusanka: Kinect games commenting on food culture
Kathleen Ruiz: inverting FPS, commenting on technological culture, sexy simulations
VNS Matrix: brilliant cyberfeminists

Ideas for the Future:
Artistic Activism
Intentionality
Interactivity
Invention
Industry Discussion of the Future
Can we use simulation and game technology towards approaching a non-colonizing understanding of “other”?
The Feminist Artist as Philosopher

- Feminist artists bringing into consciousness non-military uses of simulation and games
- Exploring the fuller range of what it is to be human.

- Art showing Ways to Untried Territories: Heraclitus: war as the father of all things, but perhaps Art is the mother of all things.

- “art is a place of struggle against a dominant threat of conformity and passivity.” Theodore Adorno
Mens’ Science/ Mens’ Simulations: “It must ‘pulsate’, it must ‘explode…, and at any cost, otherwise it goes limp, it falls apart.”

- Luce Irigaray, the Belgian feminist philosopher, linguist, and cultural theorist, had portended this kind of stasis (or stagnation) for the “real” world when, in 1989, she said that technology is tied up with our senses: “But what of this possible sublimation of our senses today? The energy involving tension, release and return to homeostasis is competitive with technology, but as the return to equilibrium and stability is increasingly problematic, the energy seeks to become more and more intense, faster, and faster.
Mens’ Science/ Mens’ Simulations: It must ‘pulsate’, it must ‘explode’, etc., and at any cost, otherwise it goes limp, it falls apart. These drives tend toward an increasingly strong release, according to a competitive model. But the escalation towards human and technological entropy makes us forget our condition as living beings. This pathos of increasing energy, of economic growth, both individual and collective, out of harmony with natural rhythms, sacrifices us little by little.” [1]

Explosive scene from *Mass Effect 3: Take Earth Back* 2012 by BioWare, the video game developer founded by 3 Canadian medical doctors.
In *Mass Effect 3* deeper relationships and more interesting interplay, including same-sex relationship options for both male and female Shepards.


Let us compare the launch trailers of the male Shep and the FemShep:

**Mass Effect 3: Official Launch Trailer [HD] Take Earth Back**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nC_eF3Na1U8

**Mass Effect 3 – "Female Shepard" Launch Trailer (2012) FULL HD Take Earth Back**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYDmq1TeDFs

And let us not forget how far games have come with

**Mass Effect 3: Lesbian romance with Liara**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R6sqiamV1I&feature=related

What we see is a huge step forward in the acceptance of the spectrum of genders, and in the – performance of gender, but we are, in effect, in *Mass Effect*, still mainly blowing things up and always preparing for war. We seem to love to do this, but there are indications that we may be collectively getting tired of it.
Could it be the frustrations that many have with the ‘real’ world? Many are exiting en mass to virtual worlds from what may have been the “real”. The world seems broken, as Jane Mc Gonigal states in her work, “Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World”. She poses the idea that the type of massively multiplayer problem solving done in *World of Warcraft* could give players the means to save worlds, and incentive to learn the habits of heroes. How can we harness gamer power to solve real-world problems? This is something many feminist media artists are dealing with in their work.
What could be considered is “Collective Intelligence”. This is precisely what a group of psychologists in the “Human Groups” research by Anita Williams Woolley, Christopher F. Chabris, Alex Pentland, Nada Hashmi, and Thomas W. Malone are doing. They state, “Psychologists have repeatedly shown that a single statistical factor—often called “general intelligence”—emerges from the correlations among people’s performance on a wide variety of cognitive tasks. But no one has systematically examined whether a similar kind of “collective intelligence” exists for groups of people. In two studies with 699 people, working in groups of two to five, we find converging evidence of a general collective intelligence factor that explains a group’s performance on a wide variety of tasks. This “c factor” is not strongly correlated with the average or maximum individual intelligence of group members but is correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members, the equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking, and the proportion of females in the group.”

See: http://www.cogsci.rpi.edu/files/20064
Or http://www.sciencemag.org/content/330/6004/686.abstract
Could social sensitivity be the factor missing in on-line MMOs? Do we ignore, or insult back, or simply drop out? But wait, why don’t we use this collective intelligence to help solve problems as Jane says? For instance, gamers solved a molecular problem that baffled scientists for years in the online puzzle game **Foldit** that deals with protein structure prediction and protein design. Possibilities abound for crowdsourced cures for AIDS, other diseases and beyond.


(accessed 5/3/2012)
It has also been found by some researchers that testosterone levels influence the levels of human collaboration. See: *Testosterone disrupts human collaboration by increasing egocentric choices* by Nicholas D. Wright, Bahador Bahrami, Emily Johnson, Gina Di Malta, Geraint Rees, Christopher D. Frith, and Raymond J. Dolan © 2012 The Royal Society

http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/279/1736/2275.abstract
The Military Hangover

- It is greatly apparent that the “military hangover” into culture, society, game industry, and the academy is draining the collective “us” dearly in terms of the human toll of lives lost in war, as well as lives lost in endless and costly research draining of the public for its. As Dwight D. Eisenhower said in his American presidential exit speech in 1960, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. ...risking the loss of ... spiritual heritage. ...we must also be alert to the ... danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific technological elite.”


- Beside the loss of life and our collective souls in this endless real and virtual war, there are deep concerns about the degradation of the natural environment. While many are pre-absorbed in virtual space, a space ladened with pathways set by the military mindset our earth is degrading at an alarming rate. Why would it not? We are neglecting it. It is not surprising that most gaming technology emerged from military research. Has it been true as far back as 400 BC when Heraclitus, the obscure, enigmatic and weeping “riddler” Greek philosopher said that “War is father of all and king of all; and some he manifested as gods, some as men; some he made slaves, some free.” Heraclitus (DK22853) Diels, H. and W. Kranz, 1974, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, three vols., original edn. 1903; reprint of 6th edn., Berlin: Weidmann.
We lament

- The lack of female game developers, designers, producers (could it be because of the hostile nerdy frat environment?)
- The lack of engaging stories in games
- The lack of in depth character development
- The environments
- The action or lack thereof
- The time & energy-draining extraterrestrial parasites, (not metroids,) but life’s demands on women
- How many females have extra time to “play” games in the first place?
Jennifer O’Neal from Activision mentioned to me recently that women will rock it on new types of tablet games that can deal with time constraints of female players who, it seems, have much less “leisure time” than their male counterparts. Hummm

We can lament all this, but let us look to new possibilities:
Artistic Prophesies:

- If War is the father of all things,
- perhaps Art is the mother of all things.
- Art creating the possibility, not simply the theoretical, but bringing into a type of reality
It is *artists* who can see and express fundamental shifts in a context free from the restraints of conventional thinking systems. In *How We Became Posthuman*, N. Katherine Hales states, “Science reveals the foundational assumptions that give theoretical scope and artifactual efficacy to a particular approach, while literature” [and Art] “often reveals the complex cultural, social and representational issues tied up in conceptual shifts and technological innovations.” [6]

For instance, Hales points out that Gibson’s *Neuromancer* foresaw the vast socio-cultural and political issues of the internet well before they occurred.
The Australian female artist collective, did this as well, but from a feminist perspective, poking fun at and aiming a multilayered critique towards the overarching powers that created their very tools and would deliver their message! VNS Matrix and other cyberfeminists aimed to corrupt the informatics of domination, the term, borrowed from Donna Haraway’s *A Manifesto for Cyborgs*, in her chart of transitions from the comfortable old hierarchical dominations to the new networks. [7] Many feminist artists are continuing this fight in their work. (There we go again, fighting that is.)
VNS MATRIX A CYBER FEMINIST MANIFESTO FOR THE 21st CENTURY
a dynamic collective of female artists including Josephine Starrs, Julianne Pierce, and Francesca da Rimini, created a number of riveting artworks including the game, *All New Gen*. In this game their character “Big Daddy Mainframe” [8], a logo-headed business suited entity, symbolically represented a trans planetary military–industrial–imperial data environment. He cavorted with Circuit Boy, “a dangerous techno–bimbo” [9] imagined as a counter to the usual visions of mechanical women as fembots. The player measures his or her energy in the stores of G–slime accumulated and is aligned with a feminine–coded cyberspace inhabited by the amorphous All New Gen (variously described as a hostile mist, intelligent slime, and so on) and receives assistance from DNA mutant sheroes. Starkly and strikingly close to the truth of the origins of technoculture, *All New Gen* used the safety of a game with humor and sarcasm to drive home a very strong critique. VNS Matrix portended the military and cultural landscape of what much of the digital world was and would become, but now with the pervasive insertion of the feminist dialog(s). They sought to subvert and deconstruct the dominant codes of power while infecting the patriarchal structure of dominance with radical thinking. [10] The meme of cyberfeminism was spontaneous, global, adaptable and flexible. It gave feminist thinkers a point of departure for further exploration in the critique of technology. It showed that rather than being anti–technology, cyberfeminists were, on the contrary, “technophiles and geeks who can’t get enough of their machines.”
Noted artist/teacher/inventor said of art in 1923, “Art is the senses’ grindstone, sharpening the eyes, the mind, and the feelings. Art has an educational and formative ideological function, since not only the conscious, but also the subconscious mind absorbs the social atmosphere which can be translated into art. ...art, I thought, creates new types of spatial relationships, new inventions of forms, new visual laws – basic and simple – as the visual counterpart to a more purposeful, cooperative human society.” [37]
Ana Mendieta

Ana Mendieta Untitled (Grass on Woman), 1972
Chromogenic print on paper 8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm)
The importance of the role of the artist in culture is highlighted again in the Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta’s statement in 1982, “art, although it is a material part of culture, its greatest value is its spiritual role and the influence that it exercises in society, …and its greatest contribution is to the intellectual and moral development of man.” [38]
(And woman)
Stephanie Rothenberg

Stephanie Rothenberg is a performance, video and net-based media artist who creates interactive situations that question relationships between individuals and socially constructed identities, lifestyles and public spaces. Her work merges popular forms of advertising and market research with participatory experience involving role-playing and fantasy, in a critique of corporate models and their infrastructures. [39]
Invisible Threads

by Jeffrey Crouse and Stephanie Rothenberg, ©2008 interactive virtual reality artwork
Stephanie creates provocative interactions that question the boundaries and social constructs of manufactured desires. Through participatory performance, installation and networked media, her work investigates the mediation of the physical, analog body through the digital interfaces of commodity culture. For instance, *Invisible Threads*, a mixed reality performance installation created by Jeff Crouse and Stephanie Rothenberg, explores labor, emerging virtual economies and real life commodities through the creation of a designer jeans sweatshop in the online, 3-dimensional world of Second Life. [40] She is gifted in her seamless traversing of the concrete world of the sweatshop into the ideational world of simulation and back out again into the active participatory role of the audience.
Stephanie states, “Adopting the role of cultural anthropologist, the medium of the techno-sphere itself becomes a laboratory for raising critical questions about our interpersonal relationship to technology and its broader socio-political implications.” [42] Stephanie creates work that gives us an astute, heightened awareness to question the acceptable. She playfully adapts the commonplace into the examined reminding us that behind the virtual is a mediated real that involves the real lives of many. Stephanie’s use of virtual reality and simulation technology to convey her artistic research emanates out of the history of critique, through the use of technological means, established by the dialogs of cyberfeminism(s).

Like Harraway, Stephanie ultimately suggests an optimism about the potential of the machine human combination – a new kind of creative cyborg located in and emanating out of a humane terrain, devoid of domination and inequity.
Anne-Marie Schleiner
Her «Velvet–Strike» is a collection of spray paints to use as graffiti on the walls, ceiling, and floor of the popular network shooter terrorism game «Counter–Strike.» It also intervenes in actions that take place inside online «Counter–Strike» servers. «Velvet–Strike» was conceptualized during the beginning of George Bush's «War on Terrorism» as a kind of anti-war game modification [46] and it invited others to submit their own virtual graffiti relating to this theme.
Anne-Marie Schleiner is an artist/scholar engaged in gaming and net culture in a variety of roles as a writer, critic, curator, and gaming artist/designer. Her work investigates avatar gender construction, computer gaming culture, hacker art and game design. She has curated online exhibits of game mods and add-ons including the exhibits "Cracking the Maze: Game Patches and Plug-ins as Hacker Art" [43] and "Mutation.fem". [44] Her work and curatorial projects have had far reaching effect as they brought into focus critical issues and ideas in the game world. Her work has even been used by corporate promotions and game culture. She has designed many innovative games and game patches including Heaven711, a two player music game where players remix songs and rhyme well in order to score more points set to the beats of all female international VJs. She runs a site focused on game hacks and open source digital art forms called opensorcery.net and has been actively involved in the anti-war game performance art initiatives Velvet-Strike and OUT." [45] Her writing has been published in various art and game anthologies and journals and she has taught at universities and artist workshops worldwide. She has influenced many younger artists and gamers to resonate new ideas about identity, gender, society and technology. Anne Marie’s work goes right to the heart of the militaristic, xenophobic halls of domination and changes them – virtually and psychologically.
“Feminist film theorists have already articulated ways which viewers identify with certain actors in films through camera positioning, and the ways in which women are fetishized through cinematic tropes such as fragmentation and close-ups. Games offer differing subject positions like 1st person or 3rd person or godlike "camera" positions. Feminist film theory can also be helpful in looking at these subject positions in computer games.” [48] Anne-Marie articulates various ways that cross-gender identification occurs between players and avatars and presents an opening for exploration and experimentation.
Image from *Snow Blossom House*, vvoi ©2001 meta
http://www.opensorcery.net/snowblossom/meta.html

*Snow Blossom House* is a curatorial project by artist/scholar Anne-Marie Schleiner
In her curatorial project *Snow Blossom House*, Anne-Marie Schleiner creates a sensual place, “…in the midst of a blinding pink snow petal rain. Snow Blossom House breathes in and exhales the romantic fantasies of fifteen year old Japanese girls who build web sites like "Carrot House" and "Strawberry House" to house their favorite anime characters and home drawn KiSS dolls. Snow Blossom girls construct their own Snow Blossom boy dolls…. They like to pretend to be non-human, to grow tails, fur, and octopus arms. ...Snow Blossom House is willful immersion into a world of uncanny cuteness and sweet dark dreams.” [50] She creates a space for sensuality and gender experimentation in an online community of users. “To play is the answer. To change clothes is the method. Foreplay ist alles. To transgender, to overlay, to uncover is the tease. Welcome to Snow Blossom House.” [50] These highly sensuous worlds are creative expressions, works of art that give voice to the unheard sensuality of youth and reflect the continuation of the cyberfeminist dialogs.
Silvia Rusanka
in conjunction with Katherine Behar and Marianne M. Kim

http://disorientalism.net/projects/brown-bagging/
Brown Bagging, 2012
The Disorientals

- a collaboration between Asian–American artists Katherine Behar and Marianne M. Kim, studies the disorienting effects of technologized labor, junk culture, and consumerism. Through live performance, video, and photographic projects, Disorientalism explores how these forces mediate race, gender, and bodies. In character, the Disorientals expose our hapless submersion in junk culture, and our failed attempts to rationalize it by mistakenly resorting to industriousness and work. In Wendy’s Brown Bag factory, where the mismatch of material and immaterial labor, industrial and post–industrial production, work and game, self and commodity plays out on the factory floor.
In *Participation May Vary*, a Kinect video game created in collaboration with Silvia Ruzanka, participants play along with Wendy at work, but gamification contaminates the factory. Taylorism meets Mario when repetitive gaming maneuvers meld with the repetitive tasks of factory food production. Between working shifts as Wendy, players learn Tai Chi and advance toward Nirvana. Three videos show the Disorientals gleaning ketchup bottles, pushing a giant brown bag, and practicing Tai Chi. It’s a disorienting mash-up in which participating as a “productive” member of contemporary global culture erodes the line between producing commodities and producing self.
This project is a chapter in The Food Groups, a five-part series focusing on race and labor in American food production and promotion. One-by-one, the Disorientals encounter five historical food industry characters: Wendy of Wendy’s Old Fashioned Hamburgers, Aunt Jemima, Land O’Lakes’ Indian Maiden, Sun-Maid and Chiquita Banana. In their encounters with these iconic identities, the Disorientals undertake efforts to erase the distinction between the depersonalized production and the personalized promotion of industrial food.
work poses questions about the oxymoron of virtual violence, catharsis, and desensitization in simulated space

how are our mental conceptual constructs built?

current research is centered on simulation, perspective and empathy
My own early artistic virtual reality work was, among others, influenced by the sexy, playful, brave, and intense VNS Matrix. Their work had an impact on me as an artist, researcher, philosopher and scholar. I created *Bang Bang (You're not dead?),* [51] a satirical interactive three-dimensional game that looks at the "oxymoron of virtual violence" in a humorous and open forum while also raising questions about catharsis and desensitization in virtual space.
Bang, Bang, you’re not dead?

- *Bang Bang (You’re not dead?)* was directly linked to the VNS Matrix’s challenge to invert the dominate metaphor of virtual violence. Instead of killing, you would bring people back to life. A radical thought in 2000! I even received email from a Sony sponsored website with diehard gamers telling me they not understand why I would invert the fps metaphor in my work and that they felt threatened by this inversion. However, a few years later Sony would support my work with a large grant, when they realized that games were a permanent and important part of culture making.
access game
From the installation, Bang Bang, (you’re not dead?) c. K. Ruiz 7 x 10’ digital photographs on canvass
Big Daddy Mainframe, the Old Boys Network and other cyberfeminists enabled me to think about the full emergence of the military mindset and its influence on gesture and the impact of the 1st person intentionality offered in FPS (first person shooter) type games. Celia Pearce’s “Beyond Shoot your Friends” greatly influenced me as well.

Of course, the technology comes from the military for training in simulators, but the FPS armature reached very far beyond that.
Still from the video Continue?
by Kathleen Ruiz

Continue? movie
Bang Bang (you’re not dead?) was a direct response to my field research and my reactions about this. Even though the project was a humorous critique of fps type games, at the time I found it very difficult to create any more powerful interface than the “hand with the gun” and succumbed to its intensity, but instead of shooting to kill, the user would shoot at gibbs or giblets (body parts and organs) to bring the deceased characters back to life.
Stunt Dummies

Stunt Dummies, ©2004
Kathleen Ruiz, Virtual Reality Game Installation
Stunt Dummies, [53] uses an interactive multimedia game installation format that presents ideas about engagement, embodiment and the power to activate. This artwork explicitly uses videogame interfaces, iconography and conventions to explore the promise of technology as well as its frightening, fascinating and humorous contradictions. Issues about misinformation, surveillance, consumption, obsolescence, control, addictive technologies, and information technology overload are experienced humorously, and paradoxically, yet directly.
As an adventure simulation artwork, it also presents a proposal that is at once intriguing disturbing, and comical. Concerned with the duality of the promises of technology, while also illustrating aspects of control and manipulation, *Stunt Dummies* poses the question, are we controlling technology or is technology controlling us? Do we humans ask too much from our technology? Or does our technology ask too much from us? Ultimately do we ourselves become the stunt dummies, stunted by our use of technology? Or can we become more aware of how we are being changed by technology ideologically, physiologically, socially and culturally?
These works were influenced by cyberfeminists who, seven years earlier, presented us with the idea that social control and the “matrix” were so overwhelming that they were humorous, and that humor could be used as a potent vehicle for communicating and challenging this very fact.
Access Stunt Dummies Game

Stunt Dummies movie
Playful but odd, the numbered breasts of *Double Life*, are part of a larger body of work, *The Enumerated Repositories* created in 1991 in an attempt to explore the seemingly incomprehensible randomness in accidental situations in life – the statistics of who is born when and where, and for how long do they live? What are the strange factors which determine the course of these events? When I first created *Double Life*, I was entirely concerned with the Hebraic idea of the number 18 representing life, and double 18 making 36 – double life. I wanted to create a construct of a budding breast. It was not until I completed the work that another issue of numeric importance, breast size emerged. Quite by accident, I once again realized the importance our society and culture have placed upon the value of numbers. [54] At the time I was greatly influenced by the writings of Luce Irigaray, the work of the cyberfeminists, the philosopher Jean Baudrillard, and the philosopher, urbanist, and cultural theorist Paul Virilio who acutely observed the strangely growing importance of numerical value in everything from the requisite social security number that ensures a reflection of our existence, to statistical phenomena in quantum physics. Although sensual, *Double Life* refers back to a mechanistic virtuality. The breasts are poised to meet in a seemingly physical locus in space, but incapable of doing so because of their lack of inherent virtual weight. In the long-run are they really sensual or are they taking position to aim at each other in yet another virtual war?
Conclusion

In conclusion, (and in keeping with the hyperreal, anti-theses of cyberfeminism’s permission to be “in a state of becoming”), there is no conclusion. There are, however, many ideas, and questions that emerge as the cyberfeminist dialog continues, permutates and grows. Among them are intentionality, interactivity, and invention. It will be artistic activism and intervention that will reveal more of the current hegemonic order and will play a critical role in informing and presenting concerns for the symbolic reordering of social relations and make visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate. [55]
It will be the realm of art, and specifically feminist art, that will expand what first person experience will become. FPE (rather than FPS first person shooter) is actively being explored by the artists mentioned above. They are exposing the reflection of many harsh realities in their concrete simulations, while also creating abstract sensual spaces that speak to a physical situated within the virtual that does not forget the body, but rather celebrates its ecstasy with the imaginary. They are showing Irigaray’s idea of interpersonal touch and intentionality as part of the central structure of experience itself. They are communicating important messages and proving, ultimately that we do not necessarily need to shoot (or be shot) for a compelling virtual experience in the virtual – unless we want to! The technological power of Big Daddy Mainframe has been harnessed by the artists here through their unique use of the virtual environment for their means of expression and dialog. Young generations of artists and activists are also using the technology in revealing power structures not only through virtual reality, but through social media, performance, installation, projection, poster art, and other forms of engagement that act as catalysts to engage concrete simulations. The Occupy movements and street movements worldwide show artists and activists developing a language of unity instead of one of competitiveness or divisiveness. [56] Perhaps a harbinger of a new world to come, these practices resemble the work of the OBN’s 100 anti-theses and clearly reflect decentralized, creative, nonrestrictive cyberfeminist thinking.
The body is being reawakened, especially as new interfaces such as Kinect, Wii, and other full body interfaces emerge. What can females contribute, hack, and create with this revolution that is going beyond the traditional game controller, a device, like most, that was *not* designed by or for females? In research with young female 11th graders in the *ErGoGenic Games Research Group* we have found that generally many of the previous game control interfaces were not very appealing to females.
ErGoGenic Game Research
The body as interface will attract more female players. In turn, there is an overwhelming need for more artists, designers, engineers, and theorists who can create more aware and informed hardware, software and content. What will the future look like after the patriarchal structures of dominance in interface design are subverted and deconstructed? Perhaps there will be interfaces that are more joyful, smooth, fun, and pleasant to hold, or simply disappear as the body becomes interface.

Beyond solely hardware interfaces, how will the interactivity of social media be affected? And how will that carry over to broader ideas of interfacing with each other directly? We are seeing a glimpse of this in the horizontalism of the General Assemblies of the Occupy movements worldwide.

One female student is working with interactive video cinema, a hybrid of cinema and game interactivity to direct multiple narratives.

Perhaps the rise of more Indy game startups will also help change the face of gaming.
Designing new game ideas at the ErgoGenic Games 11th grade Design Your Future, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
From “Synergy”
From “Above the Clouds”
IR wii custom goggle interface created by a trans-disciplinary team of engineers, computer science, and arts students in EGD From “Laser Ski Delivery”
Maria Montenegro

Number Mission

http://numbermission.com/
Invention

- We must not be content with simply being players. We must be creators, innovators and inventors. We need more female makers of interactive art, simulation, and game design. What other wonderful places, complex issues, and realms of possibilities will the larger spectrum of gendered artists and designers bring us to? As we certainly move beyond pink games, will the games and toys of today become the realities of tomorrow? Will we move into a world where ranges of possibilities exist for arrays of individual genders? Additionally, we are starting to see an active practice of direct democracy on a scale not seen in generations through the Occupy movements. Perhaps the foundations for a revitalization of democracy are being formed – a space to create post-territorial interconnections in, where spheres of multiplicity and difference are celebrated. [58] If this sounds like the cyberfeminist discourse reverberating through history, it is!
What the future could look like

- More tablet based games
- Locative based games
- Multiple platforms for the same game
- Games going DIY
- Games becoming democratized
- Highly digital distribution channel
- More analytics: your experience will become more personalized
- More perspectives
Creative love simulation genre with sexuality and romance

– Evolving landscapes enriched by diversity: racial, cultural, ethnic, gendered experiences

– sudden openings to the aporias (perplexities or difficulties) to the cultural inbreeding of the same people, making the same games, for the same audiences. High power breast physics are fine, but can we do more with the technology? Can we make a real difference in the world?

– strong creative vision and leadership is needed
- Deeper analytical voices
- games that enlighten and ignite active learning, curiosity and engagement with the world, games that promote intellectual openness, awareness of personal, cognitive, cultural, and disciplinary biases, games that increase the ability to question one’s own and others’ beliefs and values, that heighten one’s understanding of diversity, understanding and capacity to act on ethical responsibilities (awareness of consequences), games that enhance the capacity for leadership and innovation, games that develop technical and analytical skills that apply to real world problems, games that promote openness to multiple solutions, tolerance for ambiguity, games that develop collaboration and teamwork. In short, widening one’s capacity for creativity and expression and increasing one’s depth & breadth of understanding and imagination
We owe much to the previous femininst dialogs. Their work, and ours, continues the on-going struggle “…to investigate and decipher the narratives of domination and control which surround technological culture and explore the construction of identity in social networked spaces… .” [59] In both the abstract sensual worlds of the imaginary and in the physical realities of concrete simulations, the influence of cyberfeminism(s) continues.
“myme” 2006

- myme was created using motion capture technology and 3 dimensional computer modeling.
- It is a compilation of short animated sequences, (unused motion captures from a performance piece entitled “The AVA Project” in 2002)

- Credits:
  - Kathleen Ruiz animator / modeler / designer / director / producer
  - Sarah Plant composer (acoustic instrument segments)
  - Elise Kermani sound composition / interactive design
  - Barbara Kilpatrick set design / set objects
  - Lisa Naugle motion capture / live choreography
  - Vicky Shick live choreography
The character is an archetype or synthetic embodiment that moves almost as humans do, but she can also defy gravity, shatter apart and still function, and go on tirelessly...(until someone pulls the electrical plug.)

She becomes a compelling figment capable of transforming our imagination - somewhat like an alter ego, not exactly a shadow, but a distorted replica or clone of human movement and emotional endeavor.

She is the embodiment of those things "discarded" from memory—a technological manifestation of human movements made in past time and space.

She shows us some potent elements of our “human” nature.
“myme”
film clip
Integrated artistic research

interdisciplinary teams:
  * ErgoGenic Game Simulation
  * CapAbility Games Project
  * MultiView Game Simulation
designing games and simulation with physical interfaces for a healthier future.

**EGG** involves interdisciplinary collaborations between the arts, medical science, exercise physiology, computer science, social science, engineering and emerging technical research.

http://www.arts.rpi.edu/~ruiz/ErGoGenicGames/
"Physically Interactive Gaming: What Appeals to Adolescent and Undergraduate Women?" by Julie G. McIntyre, Sybillyn Jennings (The Sage Colleges) and Kathleen Ruiz (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) at Interacting with Immersive Worlds Conference in Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, hosted by keynote speaker Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Satiation Game

- Blasting away virtual calories
An interdisciplinary group of Rensselaer student engineers, artists, computer scientists, and AI researchers developing interactive multimedia simulation modules to help develop life skills for increased independence for individuals with disabilities.

http://www.arts.rpi.edu/~ruiz/capAbilityGamesOverview_files/capAbilityGamesOverview.htm
Still from the virtual world, 
The Lost Dimension 
Mental Picture 
by Kathleen Ruiz
Just starting a prototype
The Other" proposes a simulated space that can be a locus for expanding empathy. One can switch characters at any point in the “simulation” and see and experience that character’s reactions and pov.
Simulation media naturally lends itself towards more subjunctive thinking, thinking not in facts but, as contingencies or possibilities.

The Other rejects the Cartesian split between subject and object and the seeing of the world and others as an “it” which is “out there”. Instead, “The Other” embraces more phenomenological spatial metaphors and the idea that we are embedded in the world and in nature.
The Other

- Simulation prototypes and maquettes
Our Mother
Artistic, Scientific & Educational Simulation
Research that addresses the sociopolitical and economic constructs of the upstate/downstate NYC watershed dialog

- “Catskill Watershed Education Grant”, to increase awareness of the human and natural history of the West of Hudson Watershed and the New York City water supply system and the critical role of communities as stewards of and conservers of water
- Specifically this work is exploring
  * the causes of climate change
  * the impact of flooding
  * the need for sustainable practices in the New York City Watershed both at the source and the consumption ends
  * An exploration of new kinds of stream management practices in the “not so brave “new” world of climate change”

- Concerned about the degradation of the natural environment while many people are pre-absorbed in virtual space
- Who will make wise decisions about the future of the watershed?
- Concept is to use virtual space to educate and inspire “real world” awareness for “digital natives” through active participation
- Creating dynamic interactive simulations based on watershed geographical data and related fieldwork water testing projects (both observational and chemical)
- Creating a visual & audio database of water quality testing results, field observations, and artistic reflections/actions
- Partnering with middle schools in the watershed and NYC in conjunction with The Catskill Center and creating a downloadable game & website for other schools, community, and environmental groups to use and contribute to