

You are here

Luc Courchesne

Artist, Professor, Director of the Art and Design Center, University of Montreal.

Abstract. The continuing expansion of the visible domain, increasingly including and giving force (and reality) to the creations of our imagination and to formerly inaccessible places and dimensions of our unfolding universe, has produced a radical shift of the shared concepts of time and space. Suddenly, the statement « you are here » has a very different meaning. Thanks to the proliferation and increased mastery of interactive, immersive and socially engaging media, we have passed beyond the simple curiosity for technologies to find ourselves, as MacLuhan professed, dressed and immersed in them. Immersed indeed we are, collectively engaged in a « reality jam » with the physical, the artificial, the augmented, and the virtual. In the process, we have turned from spectators to users, visitors and now inhabitants of our own crafts. Questions such as « Who am I? », « Who are you? », « Where are we? », « How are we supposed to behave? », are now being asked with new relevance and urgency. Survival skills such as conversation, posture, attitude, or simply what to wear, are being reformulated on the fly by the natives and immigrants of this new territory that does not always perfectly accommodate the biological features we inherited from evolution.

The Author: Luc Courchesne took part in the emergence of new media arts in the nineteen eighties when, as a videographer inspired by a generation of experimental filmmakers such as Michael Snow and Hollis Frampton, he was introduced to computers and interactive video technologies. Initially, his work focused on portraiture which he attempted to renovate with his use of interactive technologies to simulate conversation. He later moved toward landscape art which he made interactive and immersive with the Panoscope 360°, a system and method he invented to, in his words, « transform the spectator of the artwork into a visitor ». He created to date over 30 installation works that were exhibited in close to 100 venues the world over including the ICA in Boston in 1983, the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1994, The ZKM/Karlsruhe since 1997, Paris's La Villette in 1999, Helsinki's Kiasma in 1997 and 2003, The Museum of New South Wales, in 1996 and 2001, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 2007 and the National Art Museum of China in 2008. He was awarded the Grand Prize of The ICC Biennale in Tokyo (1997) and an award of distinction at Prix Ars Electronica in Linz (1999).

Courchesne, who graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (1974) and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1984), is now director of the School of industrial design at University of Montreal, a board member of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and a founding member of the Society for Arts and Technology.