

# SCALE



*Thank You*



## **Scale Vol.01, No.03, April 2004.**

### **Table of Contents:**

**Stuber, Neil.** "Scale Cover." 2004.  
<http://www.neilstuber.com>

**Borevitz, Brad.** "Dear Mother or Longing in the form of a Turing Machine." 2004.  
<mailto:bborevitz@ucsd.edu>

**Hope, Matt.** "Context Projection." 2004.  
<http://www.matthope.org>

**Manovich, Lev.** "New Media as Remix Culture." 2004.  
<http://www.manovich.net>

**Schultz, Brett.** "Pissing on Duchamp: Interactivity Gets the Firehose." 2004.  
<mailto:brettschultz@nyu.edu>

**DeMaison, Nicholas.** "Assorted Meditations." 2004.  
<mailto:ndemaison@ucsd.edu>

**Goguen, Joseph.** "Confessions from a Travel-worn Briefcase." 1997.  
<http://www.cs.ucsd.edu/users/goguen>

**Colbert, Corrie.** "Trimming." 2004.  
<http://www.corriecolbert.com>

**Hadis, Pablo.** "Digital Snapshot Dynamics." 2004.  
<mailto:phadis@ucsd.edu>

**H.** "Very Freedom." 2004.  
<http://www.neilstuber.com>

**SIKESTYLE.** "Medley." 2004.  
<http://www.sikestyle.com>

### **Guest Editor: Temenuga Trifonova.**

From 1999 to 2002 Temenuga Trifonova was co-editor of [theory@buffalo](mailto:theory@buffalo), an international journal of literature, philosophy and visual arts published by the Comparative Literature department at SUNY Buffalo. She is currently working as an editorial assistant for *Inquiry*, an interdisciplinary journal of philosophy edited by Wayne Martin (Department of Philosophy, UCSD) and published by Routledge. She has published articles in various journals (*Postmodern Culture*, *CineAction*, *International Studies in Philosophy*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *SubStance*, *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, *Kinema: A Journal for Film and Audiovisual Media*, *Janus Head*) and is currently pursuing an M.F.A in Visual Arts at UCSD.

### **Scale contributors:**

Patrick Deegan, Jon Phillips, Neil Stuber, Brad Borevitz, Corrie Colbert, Nicholas DeMaison, Matt Hope, Joseph Goguen, Lev Manovich, Brett Schulz.

Dear Mother or Longing in the form of a Turing Machine by Brad Borevitz

(No. 20) 16/2/50 West Hill House  
 M. Borevitz  
 [Assistant house-master] Sherborne Dorset

Dear Mother

I wrote to H<sup>rs</sup> Morcom as you suggested & it has given me a certain relief. Ben very kindly sent me a note on Thursday saying he had heard there was bad news & to be prepared for the worst. They had the funeral at dawn yesterday, to prevent any one coming according to G. O'H. Perhaps you sent flowers when you got my letter.

I feel sure that I shall meet Morcom again somewhere & that there will be some work for us to do together & I believed there was for us to do here. Now that I am left to do it alone I must not let him down but put as much energy into it, if not as much interest, as if he were still here. If I succeed I shall be more fit to enjoy his company than I am now. I remember what G. O'H. said to me once "Be not weary of well doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not" & about Bennett who is very hard on these occasions "beginners may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning. Rather Plymouth brotherhood perhaps. I am sorry he is leaving. It ~~did~~ never seems to have occurred to me to try and make any other friends besides Morcom, he made every one seem so ordinary, so that I am afraid I did not really appreciate our "worthy" Blaney & his efforts with me for instance.

Fortunately I kept his letters & one or two other little souvenirs. He destroyed that map of the streets when I showed him its imperfections. I asked H<sup>rs</sup> Morcom if she would find me a little snapshot of him. I am sure she won't mind. I do wish you had seen him to see how what he was really like.

your loving son  
 Alan

Thank you for papers & map. Has nothing to

1930 ...

I feel sure that I shall meet Marcom again somewhere and that there will be some work for us to do together just as I believed there was for us to do here. Now that I am left to do it alone I must not let him down but put as much energy into it if not as much interest, as if he were still here. If I succeed I shall be more fit to enjoy his company than I am now.

...

In Cambridge I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was different. It was the work of crossing glances.

In London I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was strange. It was the work of mingling waters.

In Princeton I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was erroneous. It was the work of wrestling angels.

In Brighton I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was peculiar. It was the work of inserting affections.

In Sheffield I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was eerie. It was the work of removing impediments.

In Leeds I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was confounding. It was the work of smoothing hackles.

In Edinburgh I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was difficult. It was the work of dreaming solutions.

In Newcastle I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was complicated. It was the work of decoding desperation.

In Liverpool I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was problematic. It was the work of combing hounds.

In Dover I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was awkward. It was the work of riding out yearnings.

In Leeds I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was embarrassing. It was the work of enigmatic expression.

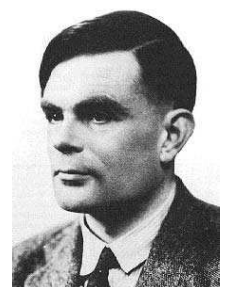
In Manchester I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was upsetting. It was the work of sleeping in solvent.

... 1952 ...

In Manchester I met a boy and I thought of Christopher but the work we did was different. It was the work of my undoing.

... 1954 ...

There is nothing left for me here. I have eaten the poison apple. Dear Christopher, there will be some work for us to do together.



# Context projection: *Social space and the Horn Massive*

Case study 01, where and how can this device work?



## Space 1

Context: Urban Utopia  
Location: Inner city  
Available: Yes  
Environment: Exterior  
Duration: 4-8 hours  
Cost: Substantial

### Expected problems:

*Noise pollution*

### Resulting in:

*Confrontation, Arrest, Violence*

## Space 2

Context: Super Art show  
Location: Variable  
Available: Yes  
Environment: Interior  
Duration: 1-2 hours  
Cost: Unknown

### Expected problems:

*Noise pollution*

### Resulting in:

*Confrontation, Offense, Insult*



## Space 3

Context: Free Festival  
Location: Variable  
Available: Unknown  
Environment: Exterior  
Duration: 1-3 Days  
Cost: Minimal

### Expected problems:

*Noise pollution*

### Resulting in:

*Confrontation, Arrest, Confiscation*

## New Media as Remix Culture

Looking back at my 2001 book *The Language of New Media*, one thing I would definitely change is its title. The “language” of new media that this book aims to map out – or, more precisely, numerous separate “languages” – are always hybrids, incorporating memories, expertise, and techniques of already well established cultural forms such as cinema, theatre, printed books, and so on, as well as new more recent techniques that come from the new engine of global information society – digital networked computer. Every section of the book therefore takes up a particular dimension of new media and examines it as a meeting ground - a field of struggle, competition, and creative tension – between the energies of the past and present.

A few years ago such an approach appeared strange to some participants and observers of cyberculture. Why dig the references to the old culture when the Internet was supposed to bring us all into the new brave world as painted in *Wired* and similar publications? Yet today this perspective that positioned new media in a longer historical context looks already quite natural. Our culture is undergoing computerization, and every one of its layers is changing as a result - but these changes can take a very long time to become visible. (Geological metaphors are not out of place in this respect.) Think for instance of a culture which accompanied the development of the new industrial society in the nineteenth century. If we time the beginning of this society to the introduction of the engine in the first decades of the nineteenth century, we see that it took about one hundred years for the cultural super-structure to catch up. It was only in the 1920s when artists, designers, and architects clearly formulated new sets of aesthetic forms and principles that together formed the new twentieth century culture of “industrial modernism”: spaces made of geometric forms devoid of ornament, aggressive use of type, compositions made from simple abstract elements, new color schemes, and so on. I do have a strong sense that many cultural phenomena and styles which surround us today are equivalents of academic painting or architectural eclecticism of the nineteenth century – something which does not at all belong to the twenty first century and which one day, when we will find proper cultural responses to a new global information society, will look hopeless irrelevant. Yet today it is not easy to say which current impulses are messages from the future, and which are simply here through inertia.

It is my strong feeling that the emerging “information aesthetics” (i.e., the new culture of information society different from the old culture of industrial society which I am trying to map out in the new book I am currently completing) has or will have a very different logic from “industrial modernism.” The latter was driven by a strong desire to erase the old, visible as much in the avant-garde artists’ (particularly the futurists) statements that museums should be burn, and in the dramatic erasure of all social and spiritual realities of many of people in Russia after the 1917 revolution, and in other countries after they became Soviet satellites after 1945. Culture and ideology of industrial modernism wanted to start with a “tabula rasa,” radically distancing themselves from the past. It was only in the 1960s that this move started to feel inappropriate, as manifested both in a loosening of ideology in communist countries and the beginnings of a new post-modern sensibility in the West. “Learning from Las Vegas,” to quote the title of a famous book by Robert Venturi and et al (published in 1972, it was the first systematic manifestation of new sensibility) was to admit that real, organically developing culture had a very different

rhythm and logic than Bauhaus-grown “international style” which was still practiced by architects world-wide at that time. We can say that in 1990 when the Soviet Empire collapsed post-modernism had won world over.

Today there is a very real danger of being imprisoned by a new “international style” - something which we can call the “global international.” The cultural globalization, of which cheap international flights and Internet are just two among other carriers, erases certain cultural specificity with the energy and speed impossible for modernism. Yet we also witness today a different logic at work: the desire to creatively place together old and new in various combinations. It is this logic, for instance, which in many ways made a city such as Barcelona. All over the city, architectural styles of many past centuries co-exist with new “cool” spaces of bars, hotels, museums, and so on. Medieval meets multi-national, gaudy meets Dolce and Gabana, Mediterranean time meets internet time. The result is the incredible sense of energy which one feels physically just walking along the street. It is this hybrid energy that characterizes, in my view, the most successful cultural phenomena today. This book then is a systematic investigation of a particular slice of contemporary culture driven by this hybrid aesthetics: the slice where the logic of digital networked computer intersects the numerous logics of already established cultural forms.

In conclusion let me offer you a different metaphor to think with about this cultural slice that we also call “new media.” This metaphor is that of “remix.” I often look at contemporary culture in terms of three key processes – three different kinds of remixes. The *first* remix is what already for a few decades we referred to as “post-modernism” – the remixing of previous cultural contents and forms within a given media or cultural form (most visible today in music, architecture, and fashion). The *second* type of remixing is that of national cultural traditions, characters, and sensibilities intermingling both between themselves and also interacting with a new “global international” style. In short, this is the remix of “globalization.” “New media” then can be thought alongside these two types of remixes as the *third* type. It is the remix between the interfaces of various cultural forms and the new software techniques – in short, the remix between culture and computers. Its cultural logic is new not because this is the “modernist new” which tried to erase the past – on the contrary, it is new because of the scale of the remix process at work, its speed, and the components themselves involved. Some of the results, which are being generated, are trivial, some are OK, and some are brilliant. While the computer is a very powerful remix instrument, what comes out from it is ultimately up to the creative individuals who are at the controls of the computers – you.

Welcome to the hybrid!

Lev Manovich is a Professor in the Department of Visual Arts at UCSD.  
<http://www.manovich.net>

## Pissing on Duchamp: Interactivity Gets the Firehose

“All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.”

-*Marcel Duchamp, April 1957*

“...[O]n 21 May, [Yuan Cai and Jian Jun Xi] ... made a contribution to Marcel Duchamp’s seminal work, the Fountain, a factory-made urinal he chose to autograph in 1917 and call art. Cai and Xi urinated on it for over a minute, their contribution kept away from Duchamp’s porcelain by the work’s Perspex case.”

-*Nick Paton Walsh, June 2000 (for The Observer)*

Like an Eastern Bloc refugee driving a New York City cab while his worthless medical degree collects dust at home, Marcel Duchamp’s urinal was stripped of its intended social purpose and left to live out its days in existential mire. Perhaps we *should* praise Yuan Cai and Jian Jun Xi, these momentary liberators of a conflicted urinal, for at least now *La Fontaine* knows that it is still fit to serve. With a golden stream of answers, the two Chinese-born artists rather boldly resumed the dialogue Duchamp began in 1917 when he first presented the work. In spite of the Tate gallerists’ outrage over the incident, one can imagine Marcel would have approved – he, himself, proposed using a Rembrandt as an ironing board. The potential for meaningful, (though not necessarily desirable) destructive interaction exists in every work of art.

In their act of urination, Cai and Xi materialized the (typically) internal dialogue between artist and spectator that Duchamp trumpeted in his 1957 lecture, “The Creative Act.” Anticipating Roland Barthes, he described a two-part construction of meaning in art: first, being the artist’s original intent and, second, being the unintentional meaning ascribed to a work by its audience. Thus, while some critics condemned Cai and Xi for misunderstanding *La Fontaine*, the duo could justify the action with the laconic explanation, “The urinal is there – it’s an invitation.” This tongue-in-cheek subjectivity perhaps betrays a stronger understanding of Duchamp’s theoretical teachings than their detractors might afford them.

French art critic, Nicolas Bourriaud, believes that Duchamp’s lecture was among the most powerful and sophisticated assertions that interactivity in art far precedes the era of gadgets, gizmos, and screens (*Relational Aesthetics*, 44). Lev Manovich, in *The Language of New Media*, takes similar aim: “All classical, and even moreso modern, art is ‘interactive’ in a number of ways. Ellipsis in literary narration, missing details of objects in visual art, and other representational ‘shortcuts’ require the user to fill in missing information” (56). Cai and Xi’s atypical interaction is noteworthy because it favored physical form over the cerebral, making tangible the audience’s contribution to the creative work.

There are, of course, regrettable, if not dangerous, aspects inherent to this method of interaction. This becomes especially clear if we return, for instance, to the Rembrandt ironing board, or the very real blue vomit that Jubal Brown issued forth upon a Mondrian at the Art Gallery of Ontario, or Gerard Jan van Bladeren's 1986 slashing of Barnett Newman's "Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue?" at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Cai and Xi's stunt seems harmless in comparison but one must recognize that the impulse driving these actions can be one and the same as that which leads fascists to burn books. I emphasize their methodology here only because it represents a generally ignored interactive practice that threatens widely adopted notions of 'Interactive Art.'

Unfortunately, definitions of 'Interactive Art' offered by many of the primer texts on new media, for lack of a better term, fail to account for such possibilities. We can take Frank Popper's *Art of the Electronic Age* as one example of this misdirected group. Popper argues that an 'interactive artist' tries "to stimulate a two-way interaction between his works and the spectator, a process that becomes possible only through the new technological devices that create a situation in which questions by the user/spectator are effectively answered by the art work itself" (8). Beyond his insistence on the work's dependence on 'technological devices,' this definition inexplicably limits the role of an art work to that which answers questions rather than raises them. Obviously, this flies in the face of Duchamp's theory of constructed meaning. It implies that the user/spectator cannot provide any answers him or herself. It disallows Cai and Xi to assert, "You are a urinal. See? I am going to piss on you," which was one of many acceptable answers to the questions raised by *La Fontaine*. And, again, their engagement with the work was interactive without being bound to any technology per se. It was quite simply a realization of the potential that was always there.

Randall Packer and Ken Jordan, in *Multi-Media: From Wagner to Virtual Reality*, define interactivity as "the ability of the user to manipulate and affect her experience of media directly" (xxxv). They elaborate, "Reading a text is *not* an interactive experience; interactivity implies changing the words of the text in some way — adding to them, reorganizing them, engaging with them in a way that affects their appearance on a screen" (xxxvi, emphasis mine). They might thus see the Burroughs-Gysin cut-up method as interactive, but would differ with Manovich, Duchamp, Roland Barthes, Stanley Fish, and many others over the inherent interactivity of reading/viewing any creative work, even text on paper. Yet still they concede that interactivity is "an overused word in danger of losing its meaning." In this instance, they seem not to see the forest for the trees.

Manovich clearly disregards the term 'interactivity' as being "too broad to be truly useful" (55). Indeed, the term is overused precisely because interactivity, be it cerebral *or physical*, is an inherent — if invisible — characteristic of the work of art. Yuan Cai and Jian Jun Xi have done us the favor of harmlessly demonstrating the potential for interactivity's physical manifestations within works created long before the era of 'Interactive Art.' With this understanding, we can either work toward a new definition or lay the bothersome category to rest once and for all. If we choose the latter, perhaps we ought to let the ball continue to roll over the countless other inept terms that describe the

various currents of 'new media' work (and let that one be the first). For if useful insight can be gained through destructive engagement with art, perhaps its vocabulary could use a shower as well.

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**Author:** Brett Schultz

**E-Mail:** [brettschultz@nyu.edu](mailto:brettschultz@nyu.edu)

**URL:** [http://stage.itp.nyu.edu/~bws225/cv/schultz\\_cv.html](http://stage.itp.nyu.edu/~bws225/cv/schultz_cv.html)

**Bio:** Brett Schultz is working on his Master's degree in the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University. He is interested in the creation of provocative and often ironic works that address contemporary issues of politics, culture, human relationships, and technology.

## ASSORTED MEDITATIONS

### I. It's important to have a gripping opening

#### A. Primacy

##### 1. Take The Fifth

###### a. There's only one Fifth

###### i. Any cab driver could sing you the opening of The Fifth

aa. Though I've been told the cab drivers in Sydney are in the know with the hippest from Darmstadt

bb. Phil Glass was a cab driver before becoming Famous New York Minimalist Composer Philip Glass

###### b. Sure, Schubert, Schumann, Mahler, and Shostakovich had fifths, just not The Fifth

###### c. Brahms chose not to incriminate himself

###### i. He stopped with Four

aa. Brubeck took Five, but he didn't go anywhere with it

##### 2. I remember much of my childhood

###### a. My friend Karen doesn't believe in free will, which is an interesting position to take considering she remembers very little of her childhood

###### i. Everything is a result of something else

aa. Freud would have us believe that we are a result of our childhoods

###### ii. Of what, then, is Karen a result?

#### B. Recency

##### 1. Anywhere I lay my head down, I will call my home

###### a. Seeing old friends is like going home

###### i. Yesterday old friends helped me move my home from Kansas to Hayes (initially the Governor of Ohio)

aa. Though I ended up sleeping near the beach

bb. After watching Tom Waits in Down By Law

cc. Which is not to say it was a frame job

###### ii. Seeing old friends in places foreign to both of you creates a transient sense of home

###### b. Driving across country one's home is transient

###### i. Assuming one sleeps in one's car

###### ii. Or drives with old friends

##### 2. Repetition is your friend

###### a. You can't go back to the beginning, unless you write a *da cappo*, but even still, and though it may look like the beginning on paper, it's not actually the beginning because you are someplace in the middle

###### i. Like Kansas

ii. Trying to take back time warrants an automatic five minutes in the penalty box

- aa. Hayes got four years in the White House
- b. Recent primacy

## II. The body of the work should be structured to support the central ideas

### A. More elaboration is called for

1. Just know: Nobody is going to remember the details of the body save those who invented or outlined the details (you), and those for whom the details are directly related to their own work
  - a. We are, after all, obsessed with ourselves
  - b. A part of which is our body
2. Repetition may be allowable, though its better if in the form of a permutation or variation
  - a. Said in as many ways as possible, it will relate to as many people as possible
    - i. And become a part of them
      - aa. Which is a good thing
      - bb. Because you want there to be as much of YOU in the world as possible, and as the part of the world that most dramatically affects human life seems to be other people, you want you to be in as many people as possible

### B. But questions arise:

1. Freedom or Formalism?
  - a. Standing between a cliff and the ocean it was brought to my attention that another interesting aspect of this environment is the meeting of the sound of the ocean and the silence of the cliff. I hadn't much thought about the silence of the cliff, but it was true. The silence was palpable, despite the raging surf.
  - b. Clearly I've made my choice
    - i. I am obsessed with my body
    - ii. This morning I went running along the ocean
      - aa. Having found my home, upon waking, to be near the beach
    - iii. It was in the shower after my run where I made it
      - aa. The choice, that is, not my body, nor my home
2. Is brevity the soul of wit?
  - a. Foucault had some interesting things to say about that
  - b. Groening carries his gags into comedic oblivion
    - i. His answer is no
    - i. Logic taken to any extreme becomes absurdity
      - aa. And ceases to be logical
3. Where is my mind?
  - a. Where are the minds of my students?
    - i. My Grandfathers were a Train Engineer and Shipping Clerk
      - aa. I don't know what My Grandmothers did, if anything, other than raise 6 and 7 children, respectively

ii. My Father is a Mechanic, My Mother Fixes Computers  
iii. I was raised in the Not-Culture of middle class suburbia, and am only just barely able to change the oil in my car

iv. There is an onslaught of information attacking each of us every day. Somehow we have to filter it. In academia we filter via specialization. In the filtration process we come to know and love and cherish particular ideas, traditions, understandings, stories, anecdotes about historical figures? AS THOUGH THEY WERE OUR OWN? as though the stories that were told to me by my composition professor about his composition professor?

aa. Richard Hoffmann (mine)

bb. Arnold Sch? nberg (his)

? were stories about my great grandfather, as though Vienna is where my family is from and not Rochester, NY, via Buffalo, NY, via Germantown, PA, via Canada, from some farm in France? as though Sch? nberg's correspondences with Gustav Mahler are somehow closer to me than the meager savings bond left for me by my grandfather? my decision to be a composer has given me a rich cultural heritage (inheritance?) not available to my parents and grandparents who did not decide to become composers.

aa. I've decided to call this phenomenon

Pedagogical Pedigree

b. The minds of the students with whom I attempted to engage in a discussion about this very topic were someplace other than a place that allowed them to engage in said discussion

i. Their minds were elsewhere

c. My parents, who are saddened that I no longer refer to Rochester as my home, and when old friends call my parents' house in Rochester must tell them that I live in California, probably find *my* mind elsewhere most of the time

4. Is cleanliness next to Godliness?

a. "Next to" might mean "the next best thing to," or "in close proximity to" and if the latter, and if opposites do attract, then cleanliness may actually be the opposite of Godliness

b. The devil is in the details

c. I came up with the details for this piece while in the shower

III. A brief conclusion bringing together all of the disparate ideas, resolving conflicts, and reflecting upon what we've gained in the process is most praiseworthy

A. Recapitulate

1. If I had been planning ahead, I would have made sure that we gained something in this process, like for example a symphonic form

a. This no doubt would have tied together the scattered metaphorical material on a deeper structural level

i. Except that nobody but me would get it



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## Confessions from a Travel-worn Briefcase

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1. Bodies move through time & space on the curved edge of the Earth. We travel to be not here: no email, voicemail, memos, faxes, taxes, pagers, no cellphones, no bills; we travel from possessions, relations, wives, lovers, ex-wives, ex-lovers, onto the vivid open road.

Early bland spring San Diego  
airport bardo rush  
behind me  
palm tree surfers.

747 to Edo,  
LCD show duty free  
champaign, sake, whisky,  
gold, silk, leather:  
symbolic consumption  
above the great sky-blue Pacific.

Narita. Rice fields resist jet-noise, tourists fatigue, machine guns terror. Tokyo bullet express. Speed is everything.

Basho walked years for a few page journey, his days, months, years eternal travelers, with simple sandals, cotton clothing, only attached to poetry & friends. Now each golden moment rides a rocket-driven hearse. Instant links subvert time & place, nothing fast enough. Yet we are always here & here is always different; we cannot escape.

2. Saitama hotel, past white-on-white dress, red floral dress, cloth flower cluster, makeup center, bluewhite ribbon hallway, photo-op lobby,

Newgreen buds crack  
aging concrete pool &  
full silver moon echoes  
drunken wedding party.

Our algebra's lost here, no fancy clothes, no useless gifts, & the cherry blossoms holding back.

3. Aoyama Dori business buildings, heavy Palace wall, police HQ mock-medieval concrete fort, Sogetsu Kaikan, almost missed it, so blends-in steel & glass; 6 story lobby, hardhat chainsaw Ikebana, whole bloody blooming trees.

Two foreigners first lesson, fifth floor view Imperial roofs & gardens. Thai princess with embassy minder, heavy denim skirt & jacket, awkwardly aging, one more in a lifetime of lessons, cannot balance hikae, bowl keeps tipping. Minder taking notes, so eyes on her pad serious, not to smile.

Underground CyberScapeCafe, ten thousand yen internet access, 500 yen coffee; Java lessons & sex adventure logo. Newest technology meets oldest human drives.

4. Rural near Kanazawa, graduate new all computer science school,

Wallsized window, black, large, floating,  
Hawk,  
hunting, as we plot our  
software.

Perhaps enlightenment is great passion with great detachment.

5. Not so large, central Kanazawa, aristocratic craftwork, samurai house district & green tea microgarden. Jazz cafe, vinyl disks & double ancient MacIntosh gunmetal gray & polished silver glass vacuum tube amps, cappuccinos & 60s pop music. Nothing is stable.

Inner Kanazawa, large apartment numbered blocks on concrete riverbed, uniform schoolkids. Pierrette casual cafe, 98-3999, rough tables, slickpaper napkins, 150 yen mug coffee.

Once wanted cars, kids, homes, debts, investments, friends & honors. Now wants come & go like winds, & simple things seem best: clouds, shadows, grass, the glue on the back of a chair.

6. Kanazawa International Hotel lobby cafe, delicate cakes, fragile cups & cinnamon sticks, high ceiling windows.

Cardboard roof concrete box house hillside vista  
sluggish every blue-gray shade of cloud,  
tiny lighted tree parking lot,  
European wedding chapel.

Never saw such status awareness.

7. Holiday weekend Ueno, Aizu trains no standing room. Far from elegant deep under ground transport cafe, waiting with Mori-san, talk of tea, guitars, tourists, soft drinks, emptiness.

Train uncrowds & snow appears `tween ugly square ski resort hotels. Late nothing open semi-rural Aizu, not even the railway restaurant. Tiger, lion, guruda, dragon railway square underpass tunnel mosaics. Hotel so near not worth taxi, wide smiling driver; wedding dress & gifts again; computer science school, lecture & banquet again. Such cold nights.

8. Hazy-hot backstreet Shinagawa: steep step paths, old stones, small gardens & gravesites, fresh white blossoms, hidden gems of houses. Lost, late & sweating. Distant huge hotels. Old persons stream towards temple; building site workers -- no English. Accidental taxi to Toni-san's Sony robot learning cardboard mazes with basins of attraction & autonomous closure. The artificial gains one step more on the living.

Sogo fifth floor Franco-Turkish tres elegant cafe, 5 foot graceful brass curving urn, ornate little tables, tiny French paper flags, 2 pretty tea girls surprised to see us, rugs, tapestries, paintings, sipping thin inlaid cups in wingback chairs. Such intense shopping outside mahogany frame no glass window, tiring just to see it.

9. Tokyo BlueNote, Tokoro-sensei host.

Such lovely so tight  
such fine-dressed girls,  
such lovely so loose  
Ron Carter quintet.

Delicate octopus salads on crowded shared tables. I am a hermit within my own life.

10. Cafe Arabica, back alley central Shinagawa, huge black wrought iron gas flame lamp, yellow stucco descending wooden staircase, large empty room, heavy wooden tables. Coffee & small orange cake, 2400 yen. Research chemist barista, thick black horn rims, thin black tie, white lab coat, brass balance coffee weight, beaker water, Bunsen burner background Mozart floor show, old man head on back corner table one cup more please. I wonder what crowd comes here in the night.

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#### colophon

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Dedicated to Allen Ginsberg, died 5 April 1997 during the trip described, and taught me poetry. Fevered beat poets dug Basho's open Buddhist road, intense compressed style; used common US speech, made poems from lists; Kerouac riding his breath with dank nightclub saxes, Ginsberg donning a tie for the picket line, Burroughs reciting on pop records, Basho trudging backroads dressed as a monk, fusing verse-prose to catch passing moments, linked by subtle likeness & difference. Basho & beats dug crazy old Han Shan Cold Mountain man. Though I cannot write like them, I hope respect shows through my clouds of ego. Travel supported by CafeOBJ project. Writing completed 23 September 1997, La Jolla, California.

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#### chronology

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- 1: 11-12mar: SAN -> LAX -> NRT -> Tokyo
- 2: 13-15mar: Saitama
- 3: 17mar: Akasaka, Tokyo
- 4: 19mar: Japan Advanced Inst Science & Technology
- 5,6: 19-23mar: Kanazawa
- 7: 23mar: Kanazawa -> Aizu
- 8-10: 27-29mar: Shinagawa, Tokyo

Joseph Goguen is a Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at UCSD.



**W**ITH THIS HELPFUL BOOK as a guide, any woman can soon make her own lovely and original bush arrangements.

Its step-by-step lessons—its clear drawings and photographs (twenty-eight of them in superb natural color)—make bush trimming so easy that even a child can follow. The author, Edna Whitsitt, enjoys a national reputation as a judge, lecturer, and teacher in the field.

Nothing essential to your success as a bush trimmer is omitted here. The author explains what bushes are best suited for trimming, season by season.

Here too is a remarkably clear explanation of the basic designs of bush arranging—the triangle, the circle, the Hogarth design, and other essential elements.

## Digital Snapshot Dynamics

Review the slide show once again. Between image 397 and 399 there's one that you didn't see; but wait, here goes again from the beginning. Look at the Polar bear, look at Ana standing next to the giraffe. And when was that? That was the same day we went to the Spanish restaurant. Images tour the computer monitor, context and meaning are drowned in a sea of impressions, landscapes, smiling faces and the occasional spontaneous gesture.

During the last few years, digital cameras have been deployed to the four corners of the world. As their capabilities for storing image data have increased, their function as witnesses and storytellers of exceptional moments has been dramatically transformed, Jeff no longer makes a one-time special appearance in front of his birthday cake; now he opens the door to each of his guests, walks around the apartment, sits down, hands a dish, a fork, a glass, poses with his dog and offers a piece of cake to the camera.

Social events have been transformed by the appearance of these digital tools for image-making. As soon as a large-enough group of people have assembled for a festive event, the social gathering turns into an activity with the dynamics of a press conference. Cameras, flashes, people posing, smiling. Cameras register, modify and become part of the event. Communication melts in the experience. When any circumstance that could be considered out of the ordinary takes place, everyone must grab a piece. We all feel the urge to get our own snapshot, our own trophy of "reality". The amount of images collected becomes disproportionate, and the time required for seeing each series of images recorded during the event forcefully turns into an event in itself.

I want to concentrate further on the irruption of cameras in social events and their function as interfaces. In these social gatherings, those embarking on the use of cameras withdraw from participating in conversations for a given time (and may occasionally disrupt them). The camera is used as a tool, but also as a trigger for an occupation, an excuse for performance and sometimes for drawing attention. In extreme cases it may also function as a shield, a protection for those shying away from communication. Safety can be found in a device that permits looking from but not looking to, that provokes responses but does not elicit significant communication with others. It allows for "being together" without building real bridges, a way of experiencing the moment through an object with defensive properties, at a reasonable distance, disengaged and in the role of the documenter/spectator.

So what is left of the social event when a significant number of people adopt the role of photographer/spectator? What is the objective of accumulating such an enormous (humanly unprocessable) amount of visual material? How much time will we dedicate to reliving events through these representations? How will the experience of socializing and documenting the event evolve as still cameras adopt even more features from film cameras? If we look for answers in our recent past, experience teaches us that such novelties wear away quickly and end up adopting a more functional role (and in this respect, it must be said, digital cameras excel in many activities). But they may very well, of course, be replaced by the next one in line.

**Author:** Pablo Hadis

**E-Mail:** [phadis@ucsd.edu](mailto:phadis@ucsd.edu)



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