
Curating the Digital: Spaces for Art and Interaction

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Abstract

This workshop intends to use the key strength of the CHI Community, research linked to practice, to design an Art Catalog for CHI. The workshop will start with an examination of current research in curating interactive art. The outcomes of the first phase of the workshop will then feed into Design Charrette exercises that will involve prototyping an Interactive Art Catalog and developing ideas for presenting a future Art Gallery event as part of the CHI conference. The results from the workshop will then form the basis of an agenda of a Spotlight SIG meeting where we will discuss the nature of the CHI Art Catalog. Workshop outcomes will also be disseminated to a wider audience.

Author Keywords

Digital Art, Performance Art, Interaction,
Interdisciplinary, Collaboration

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI):

A CHI Digital Art Catalog and Future Gallery

As part of the CHI2014 Art and Interaction Spotlight submission we put forward a proposal for a CHI Art Catalog at CHI 2015, and a CHI Art Gallery to be developed for a future CHI conference. Modeled on the SIGGRAPH Art Catalog and Gallery, the CHI Art Catalog and Gallery will focus on interactivity in Art that is situated within the CHI context of an aesthetics of use, in contrast with the focus on graphical rendering that has been the mainstay of artwork at SIGGRAPH.

The Art Catalog, which has been proposed to the CHI Executive Council, can likely be created without the need for large-scale changes to conference organization. Budgetary concerns associated with producing an Art Catalog can likely be dealt with via the use of on-demand printing services to print only the number of catalogs needed, with the price for the catalog set at or just above cost. Our workshop committee will experiment with these services prior to CHI in order to present the results at the workshop and to leverage these outcomes as a basis for Catalog design. Our intent is to develop a CHI Art Catalog at CHI2015 by testing a model with low organizational and logistical overhead. This workshop will invite relevant community members to participate in design and prototyping principles for the Catalog so that it becomes a unique participatory expression of our community and our work.

While the creation of an Art Gallery venue could be considered logistically extravagant we are interested in workshopping a set of collaborative planning and operational research strategies to support this goal. By introducing the creative and methodological approaches of curatorial practice, we can unpack the logistical

challenges that CHI events such as the Interactivity venue place on the organizational production of the CHI conference. Our intention is to frame digital Art Curation as a productive model that can delve into issues involved in interactive digital art Curation and brainstorm ideas for the design of a CHI Art Gallery that enhances conference experience, provides a venue for the presentation of interactive art, and manages logistical expectations and pragmatic resources at the conference organizational level. Because an Art gallery is a more complex undertaking than an Art Catalog, the Gallery option will be explored developmentally and in step-wise refinement, implemented in a future CHI conference year (yet to be determined).

The focus on interactivity 'in situ' presents challenges, familiar to any CHI researcher and practitioner. Through a participatory curatorial forum we can address the needs and nature of our audience and their user experience. Hence we propose a participatory approach to the design of the Catalog and Gallery via the CHI mechanisms of a workshop, SIG meeting and publications. In the workshop we take a research-informed approach by attracting relevant participants to lend their expertise to the design of the Catalog and gallery.

The Art Curators' traditional roles have included the selection, display, and archiving of works as well as the development and education of audiences. The introduction of digital art presents several challenges. There are practical challenges in the presentation of technically complex (or temperamental) artworks. There are similar technical challenges to archive digital works. More importantly, there are production challenges because an interactive work only exists

when being interacted with. Prototyping and evaluation become important elements in the process. There are additional intellectual challenges given the conceptual nature of modern digital art works. Many of us who have exhibited and performed at similar HCI-focused events can attest to the amount of work and thought that goes into curating dozens of installations and performances - and how it takes someone who is well-versed in this area to strike a balance between academia, industry and art. Due to these considerations, we expect that the planning of a potential Art Gallery venue will take some years of work by community members supported by conference activities, such as this workshop.

There are several research strands that can be brought into the conversation on design of both the Catalog and the Gallery:

- Reflection – how can the experience of interactive art help conference attendees to understand relationships between technologies and cultural contexts in our research?
 - Inspiration – how can the interactive art best be presented so as to provide inspiration to technologists and HCI researchers for new technologies or new ways to use technology or new ways to study technology?
 - Broadening of participation – how can the Catalog and Gallery attract interactive artists to participate in the CHI community, especially given the associated expenses?
 - Aesthetics education – how best to design the Art Catalog and Gallery in order to educate the CHI community on aesthetics?
- Promotion evaluation – how might a CHI-endorsed Art Catalog and/or Art Gallery give credence to interactive art works evaluated by tenure and promotion committees in tech departments?
 - Fostering collaborations – how do we foster new collaborations between artists and technologists via the Gallery and Catalog?

The outcomes of discussions around these themes will form the design framework for the Catalog, and a future Gallery.. We will call for participants to produce either a 4 page standard position paper, or an extended 6-8 page paper which will form the basis of a book chapter on *Curating the Digital* to be published as part of the Springer Cultural Computing Series.

Workshop Organization

Leading up to the workshop, we will host discussions around the topic of Curation of digital interactive work on the Workshop blog. These discussions will be seeded weekly by the seven workshop organizers, with each organizer posing a different question during one of the weeks leading up to the workshop.

Day 1/Part 1

The first day will start with an opening presentation from a keynote speaker, as well as short presentations by the participants. Participants will be charged with addressing the Art Catalog and Gallery goals directly. The rest of the morning will be spent in group discussions agreeing upon the key research themes and their relative importance to the gallery. The afternoon session will involve group activity and discussion where each group will be tasked with initiating design and

prototyping activities for an Art Catalog, within the context of the research themes.

Day2/Part 2

In the morning, participants will be split into groups and presented with "Design Problem 1: The Interactive Art Catalog." They will have 2-1/2 hours to come up with design solutions for the Art Catalog. They will have the opportunity to evaluate on demand printed work that will be prepared and ordered by the workshop team ahead of time. They will also have a variety of interactive artworks to consider as samples of the type of work to be presented in the catalog. Teams will be expected to come up with holistic solutions that include a catalog prototype. Prototyping materials will be provided.

At the end of the morning, each team will be given 10 minutes to present their design solutions and catalog prototypes in a 'critique' session where the full workshop participates in critiquing the design solution.

During lunch workshop participants will decide which prototypes should be presented as outcomes at a later SIG session during the main conference.

During the afternoon, "Design Problem #2: The Feasibility of the Art Gallery" will be presented and participants will once again be split into groups. In this charrette, participants are expected to come up with solutions that are descriptive and creative, but may not be represented in prototypes. Participants will be given 1-1/2 hours for this brainstorming activity. Once again, teams will be formed based on diversity of experience, and each team-member will be asked to represent the viewpoint of one or more particular stakeholders. In

this case stakeholders include venue organizers, curators, reviewers, artists, conference attendees, site personnel, and IT support staff at the venue.

Workshop Outcomes

The workshop outcomes will be as follows

- An agenda for the Art and Interaction SIG in the main conference where the design recommendations will be presented and discussed with a wider audience
- A set of Art Catalog prototypes demonstrating the requirements and design issues around a Catalog for the CHI audience
- A set of Art Gallery ideas/solutions, again outlining some of the cross-disciplinary thinking required to stage an Interactive Art Exhibition at some future CHI conference
- A Call for Papers for an edited book "Curating the Digital" in the Springer Cultural Computing Series, based on extended position papers from the workshop.
- A report to the SIGCHI Executive committee as a follow on to our earlier proposal
- A potential article for ACM Interactions magazine again to present the Art Catalog discussion to the widest possible audience

Program Committee (PC)

The PC for this workshop will consist of the eight workshop authors, plus Beryl Graham, who has significant experience with interactive art and curation.

CfP: Curating the Digital: A CHI2014 Workshop

You are invited to submit position papers to the 2-Day, CHI2014 Workshop, "Curating the Digital".

Exhibitions are central in art but Catalogs are the most important means of preservation and dissemination. In this workshop we intend to work towards a Digital Arts Catalog, and look towards a future Digital Arts Gallery for CHI. This workshop builds on the key strength of the CHI Community, research linked to practice, to design an Art Catalog and Art Gallery for CHI. The workshop will start with an examination of current research in curating interactive art. The outcomes of the first phase of the workshop will then feed into a Design Charrette exercise that will involve prototyping an Art Catalog and developing ideas for presenting an Art Gallery as part of a future CHI event. The results from the workshop will then form the basis of an Art in CHI SIG meeting where a wider audience will discuss the nature of the CHI Art Catalog and Gallery.

Authors are invited to submit either a standard four-page workshop position paper that addresses the themes of the workshop (below), or an extended 6-8 page paper that will form part of an edited book in the Springer Cultural Computing series, following the workshop. The main themes of the workshop are

- Critiquing of the technologies and interaction techniques that we develop as part of our research
- Inspiring technologists and HCI researchers for new technologies or new ways to use technology or new ways to study technology
- Broadening artist participation in CHI

- Aesthetics education in order to educate the CHI community on aesthetics
- Promotion of evaluation, giving credence to interactive art within tech review committees?
- Fostering collaborations between artists and technologists via the Catalog

The workshop takes place in the context of the CHI Arts and Interaction spotlight and more information can be found here <http://chi2014.acm.org/communities-spotlights/art-interaction>. Please submit your position papers in ACM Extended abstract format to David England d.England@ljmu.ac.uk

Key Dates

- Paper Submission 17th January, 2014
- Notification of Acceptance 10th February, 2014
- Workshop Dates 26-27th April, 2014
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Review Committee

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Additional Information

[1] Edmonds, E., Bilda, Z., & Muller, L. (2009) "Artist, evaluator and curator: three viewpoints on interactive art, evaluation and audience experience". *Digital Creativity*, 20:3, pp141 - 151.

[2] Graham, B. and Cook, S. (2010) *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA

[3] Muller, L. and Edmonds, E. A. (2006) "Living Laboratories: Making and Curating Interactive Art", *SIGGRAPH 2006 Electronic Art and Animation Catalog*. ACM Press, NY NY, pp 160-163

[4] Turnbull, D., Connell, M. and Edmonds, E. A. (2011) Prototype Places: Curating Practice-Based Research in a Museum Context. In Ciolfi, L., Scott, K. and Barbieri, S. (eds) *Proceedings of Rethinking Technology in Museums 2011*, University of Limerick, Ireland. pp 203-214.

[5] CHI Digital Arts, Wordpress blog <http://chidigitalarts.wordpress.com/>, last accessed October 4th, 2013

- Lizzie Muller of COFA, Sydney and Caroline Langill of OCAD, Toronto on "The Living Effect - Exhibiting Lively Object"
- Deborah Turnbull of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney on "The digital, the museum and the audience"

The word *charrette* refers to

"... any collaborative session in which a group of designers drafts a solution to a design problem....the term *charrette* may refer to an intense period of work by one person or a group of people prior to a deadline. The period of a charrette typically involves both focused and sustained effort"

Invited contributors

- Beryl Graham, University of Sunderland, UK

