

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
March 1996

## **TECHNOLOGY IN THE 1990s: THE HUMAN/MACHINE INTERFACE**

Video Viewpoints Symposia on Video and Digital Media

April 8 & 15, May 13 & 20 at 6:30 p.m.

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

Artists are in the forefront of the current technological revolution -- pioneers in designing video games, producing original work for the Internet, writing computer software, and creating robots and other forms of artificial intelligence. As part of the **VIDEO VIEWPOINTS** program this spring, The Museum of Modern Art presents **TECHNOLOGY IN THE 1990s: THE HUMAN/MACHINE INTERFACE**, a series of symposia that showcase several pioneering new media artists, organized by Barbara London, Associate Curator, and Sally Berger, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Film and Video.

In this Monday-evening series, held April 8 and 15, May 13 and 20, Jane Veeder, Benjamin Weil and Julia Scher, Jim Campbell, and Simon Penny present and discuss their own work as it elaborates on the fusion of art and technology.

"Artists have been swept into the maelstrom of technological development," says Barbara London. "They enjoy unique abilities that are important in shaping society's technological future. **TECHNOLOGY IN THE 1990s** brings to the public the work and ideas of five acclaimed artists and thinkers."

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April 8, 6:30 p.m.

**Jane Veeder, "The Digital Artist and Tool Development Trends"**

Digital artists are creatively involved in developing new art forms within a rapidly evolving electronic environment. In this symposium, Jane Veeder traces the role of the digital artist within the entertainment economy, and its ever advancing technological basis. She recaps the history of 3D animation, outlines the development of multimedia tools, and elucidates new trends, such as object-oriented scripting environments for interactive media -- and explains how all of this affects the work of individual artists.

Veeder also presents her work-in-progress, *JG3D (Jane Goes 3-D)*, computer animation that weaves personal history into a formal investigation of three-dimensional space and motion.

April 15, 6:30 p.m.

**äda'web with Benjamin Weil and Julia Scher, "The Artist and the Internet"**

äda'web is a group that works with artists to create artworks for the Internet, and presents these works on its World Wide Web site. It functions as a research and development resource, enabling artists to explore the Internet as a new medium and participate in its artistic definition. In presenting these projects, most of which are works-in-progress, äda'web offers Web site visitors exposure to the evolving ideas of the artists and the creative process.

äda'web was founded in 1994 by John Borthwick, a business consultant, and Benjamin Weil, a writer and curator. They were joined soon after by artist and computer programmer John F. Simon, Jr., and launched their site in May 1995 with *Please Change Beliefs*, a project by Jenny Holzer, which was followed by Julia Scher's *Securityland*.

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In their presentation at the Museum, Scher and Weil delve into the intricacies of creating artwork for the Web and elaborate on the way they collaborate with cultural institutions -- including, notably, how äda'web is presenting on its Web site a bulletin board discussion on the Museum's **TECHNOLOGY IN THE 1990s** series.

**May 13, 6:30 p.m.**

**Jim Campbell, "Delusions of Dialogue: Issues of Control and Choice in Interactive Art"**

Jim Campbell's installations use live imagery and computer memory to create environments in which the viewer's response becomes an essential element of the work. During his discussion, Campbell examines various interfaces used in interactive art -- where interactivity is defined broadly as a dynamic spectrum with responsive systems at one end and controllable systems at the other -- and invites speculation on issues of objectivity and subjectivity in electronic art.

Campbell's artwork is exhibited widely in North America and abroad, and is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the University Art Museum, Berkeley, as well as several corporate and private collections. Campbell is also an electronics engineer who holds patents in the field of image processing.

**May 20, 6:30 p.m.**

**Simon Penny, "Reflexive Engineering, Embodied Agents, and Culture as a Domain"**

Simon Penny employs robotic technologies to produce quasi-intelligent artworks. In his presentation he screens a video of his latest robotic project, *Petit Mal*, in which an autonomous creation serves as an actor in social space. *Petit Mal*, a work of "reflexive engineering," embodies a critique of conventional engineering. Penny discusses this

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critique and examines the aesthetic and theoretical issues that arise in the artistic use of autonomous agents and self-organizing systems.

Penny is an Australian artist, theorist, and teacher in the field of electronic and interactive art. He is associate professor of art and robotics at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, editor of *Critical Issues in Electronic Media* (SUNY Press, 1995), and curator and producer of "Machine Culture," an international exhibition of interactive and robotic art, at SIGGRAPH93 in Anaheim, California.

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programs will be listed on the bulletin board of äda'web at <http://www.adaweb.com>.

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For more information, please call Graham Leggat, Film and Video Press Representative, at 212/708-9752.