

A 20x20 PK style presentation of art practice and scientific study as research methodology in the C3RI Method conference 2015

GENT, Susannah <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0091-2555>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/9799/>

This document is the Accepted Version [AM]

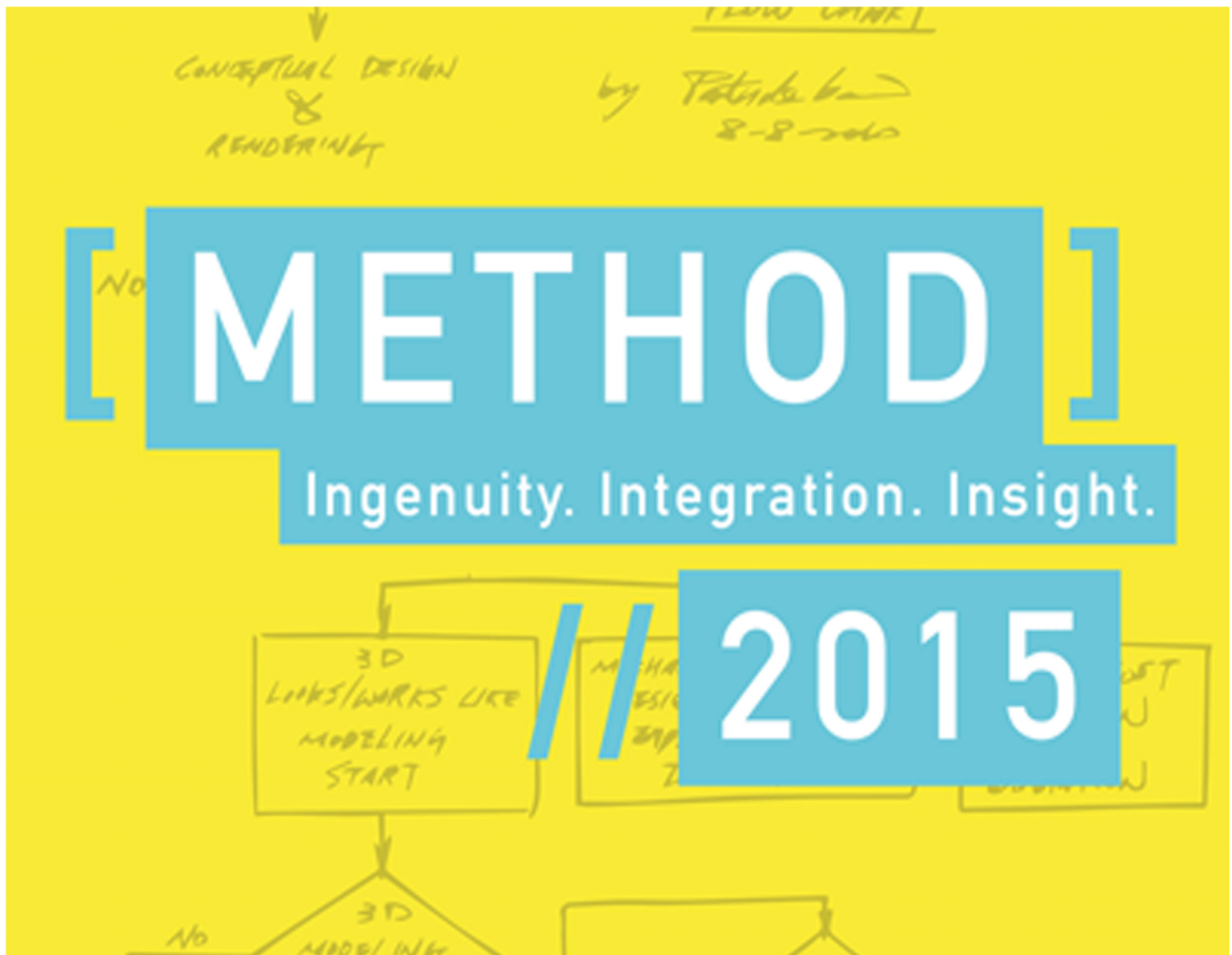
Citation:

GENT, Susannah (2015). A 20x20 PK style presentation of art practice and scientific study as research methodology in the C3RI Method conference 2015. In: METHOD: Ingenuity, Integration, Insight. 2015, Sheffield Hallam University, 28 April 2015. (Unpublished) [Conference or Workshop Item]

Copyright and re-use policy

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

Sheffield Hallam University
C3RI Research Centre



Post graduate research students presented their methodology at this interdisciplinary conference.

As a first year part-time PhD student, I presented a 20x20 PK outlining the method I employ in my research including film making, scientific studies.

Method Conference 2015

Sheffield Hallam university C3RI

As a member of the Sheffield Hallam university media arts walking research group, I set myself the task of simply filming a walk. Rather unimaginatively I taped a Gopro to my leg. I hadn't seen what one leg walking, looked like before. As I have two legs I made it two with a mirror effect. This creates a vanishing point into which things disappear and re-emerge reminding me of the experience of trying to recall a dream, it's there but you can't quite grasp it.

In Artists with PhDs, Henk Slager, in discussing 'Art and Method' suggests;

The artist compels us to see the world in a different way... art proposes polymorphic kinds of observation...Through merely visual means, the artist succeeds in making visible what ordinary vision fails to see.

I am intrigued by the audio/visual nature of thought and the possibility of making filmic representations of what might be called qualia. Although likely to fail, attempts at rendering a subjective experience, however abstract, metaphorical or conventional, never the less open up the potential for a dialogue around what might otherwise remain invisible.

The audio is stream of consciousness, recorded on the first walk. It is intended to capture an aspect of the subjective viewpoint. I increasingly manipulated this file and found that even with extreme distortion the recognition of the human remained.

According to recent neuroscientific study by Antonio Damasio, the mind may have come about as a result of the "spectacular consequence of the brain's incessant and dynamic mapping"

The use of maps to navigate landscape and the use of maps of the body within the brain suggest novel approaches to tackling the problem of filming a walk.

This piece is comparatively normal as you can see the full body. In film analysis it is well known that the high angle offers the subject a perceived position of power. This fact and the extremity of the angle may prove useful as a technique in a hauntological film I will briefly discuss later.

These images are from a behavioural study, a survey which asked participants to rate images according to how eerie they found them. This is intended to produce an uncanny image set using scientific method. I included control images, ones unlikely to produce an uncanny response and collated the images into sets so we could look at the response across a range of dolls for example, or hooded figures, or figures without heads . I also included images of art works described as uncanny, images on student blogs, posted as research into the uncanny, images from horror films, ones appearing in Google searches for the uncanny, eerie and creepy, images to which I had an uncanny response and simplistically manipulated images to identify basic approaches which might work best. I am currently collating the data and the next phase will use these in an fMRI and eye tracking surveys. I am working with neuroscientist Dr Yael Benn at Sheffield University. I intend to make an experimental documentary which describes the experience, process and findings of the study through interviewing participants and digitally manipulating the footage to produce the uncanny response whilst describing it in artistic and scientific terms. While this may enable me to scientifically study the uncanny and which images most induce it and the methods outlined above may allow my films to be framed and analysed in a manner that approaches some sort of objectivity, with this third production, a hauntological film, I am most confident in my simple intuitive artistic approach. Both bodies of new work outlined above are informing this project but primarily at the point of critical reflection and analysis.

Method Conference 2015

Sheffield Hallam university C3RI

. This third film is a multi-stranded narrative which combines story-telling, interview footage and experimental approaches intended to capture a subjective experience and explore the mood of these times. The practical approach will combine green screen, CGI, animation and the soundtrack will be made from recorded interview, historical accounts, narrative voice over and stream of consciousness.

Ramachandran, a neuroscientist contributing to the field of neuroaesthetics, defines a metaphor as a mental tunnel between two concepts that appear grossly dissimilar on the surface, but instead share a deeper connection. (17)

He suggests that

"... what the artist tries to do (either consciously or unconsciously) is to not only capture the essence of something but also to amplify (it)... (3)

My experience as an artist has taught me that 'knowing that' is different to 'knowing how' and understanding the neural mechanisms at work in making art doesn't necessarily assist in its production, in fact it may be a hindrance. If one is dancing or playing a musical instrument, it is advantageous not to think about what one is doing, rather to allow the activity to flow.

Irving Massey states

"...if the purpose of the ... arts is to encourage me to say what I, and only I, can contribute to human experience, then a private language says it best, even if, paradoxically, no one will be able to tell what it means. That is the language of dreams." (Massey 83)

And that, in brief, is how I intend to employ a diverse methodological approach in my PhD. It is practise based and part time with the title;

The Neuroscientific Uncanny: A Filmic Investigation of Twenty First Century Hauntology

I'm Susannah Gent. Thank you for listening.

References

SLAGER, Henk, Art and Method, in Artist with PhDs: On the new doctoral degree in studio art. ed. James Elkins. USA. New Academia Publishing, 2009, pp. 54.

DAMASIO, Antonio Self Comes to Mind, London: Vintage, 2010

RAMACHANDRAN, V.S. and William Hirstein, The Science of Art: A Neurological Theory of Aesthetic Experience, Journal of Consciousness Studies, 6, No. 6-7, 1999, pp. 15-51.

MASSEY, Irving, The Neural Imagination: Aesthetic and Neuroscientific Approaches to the Arts, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2009, pp. 83.