

Playwright, blogger, phd student, geek -
I work with arts companies -tech
world-walker.

talk to you RE exciting new. between the worlds of tech and perf.

Before I begin it all though, I just want to go around the room and get to know you a bit, so if you could tell me who you are,

particular dramatic interests, kind of work you do

how you're currently using technology in your work and processes - it's ok if you do just email, or even if you don't.

RESPOND TO REACTIONS

I believe 2 ways that tech and the arts- in practice, and to proliferate and promote process and product

First I'm going to be focussing in a more formal manner on why I believe tech+arts need each other, then we can do some questions, and then break before looking in a much more practical way our day to day work can use tech to open up process and promote the final product.

Explain <http://bit.ly/HNspeech>

Why do the arts need working with technology?

To investigate our lives. Because whether the arts wants acknowledge it or not, we are living in exponential times.

this world is changing fast, and it's changing us too. Art is a vital way of investigating the world, it needs to be looking at all of it.

This is a quote from Guy Debord - one of the main players in the Situationist movement in France that culminated in May 1968

The situationists came out of nothing. Literally.

They developed out of Dadaism,

horror of the world wars, made art out of nothing, and nothing out of art.

Dada had seen life treated as nothing,

the situationists, coming out of the 1950s saw their world changing, they saw the beginning of this nothing being

replaced with a bigger, newer, shinier absence:

they called this the spectacle.

The situationists talk about a life built on spectacle,

a virtual world built of everything we're told we should think, say and feel,

by the spin of modern politics, by the narrative of modern life, by the dreams we're given and happily ever afters we're taught to crave.

The situationists saw this. But they also saw that we are united. because the world was changing for all of us

The situationists said that we're all oppressed by these lives where we are not ourselves - buy the goods we purchase, the lives we buy into

The solution? The reclamation of our world, the subversion of the spaces dominated by narratives not of our own making.

If all the world is a continually remade spectacle, we need to remake our own world every day to counter that.

The situationists suggested that art was the answer - as a way of constructing views on the world, of re-playing meaning, of re-figuring a space, we could use art as a weapon against this spectacle, and regain a sense of our true selves

They were didactic, they were big, brash, they laughed lots and wanted to change everything.

The situationists tackled the oppressive desires being pressed on us by the spectacle through a style of art they claimed would not be art, because everyone would do it - they looked to examining the world of the spectacle by highlighting it's tools.

They proposed the *dérive*, the random fluctuating movement through urban spaces, as a way of reclaiming as real things places of pleasure and play, not means to an end, the middle of a journey

They also used *détournement* - a subverting of the cultural material of adverts, conventional narratives, of celebrity and fame, as a way of making us look at the world in new ways

Their ideas culminated in May 1968, and were carried forth by punk, can still be seen in subvertising and flashmobs of today,

I think the situationists are important, because they express the exact understanding that our world is constructed, and that art is a way to look at that.

But the world has changed since then, and so has the way we construct it.

To continue with the situationist outlook -there is a new threat from the spectacle of the 21st century - embeddedness

this idea of embeddness is, I think incredibly important to how theatre and the arts are changing in the wake of the technoculture we're building.

The embedded spectacle works in new and more dangerous ways;

The example drawn by Causey contrasts the illusion of Gulf War I – of cut together clips, narrators, and news packages – to the rolling embedded coverage of Gulf War II. ‘This is happening now’, the spectacle says, ‘there is no room for editing or cutting, we use embedded reporters, there is no room for simulation; this is reality’.

In this age of celebrity and self-deluding X factor hopefuls, we no longer only find our desires maintained as needs, we find our dreams regulated too.

This corruption of the data-flow of contemporary life extends beyond ‘reality TV’ to 24-hour rolling news, the advent of the ‘real-time’ and ‘social’ web.

We are led to believe that the data we receive is live, uncut, and true.

Through these tools the spectacle - the vision of the world that maintains the status quo - embeds itself not just in our lives - in our selves too.

In our Technoculture capitalism has a new currency: information. Facebook, Google, Youtube, we are now data packages, not only are we consumers, but we are consumed.

Our selves are changing.

ask the questions.

I asked a group of about 200 second years...

Facebook account? untagged a picture?

-pruning online identities, building an online version

Profile/character/avatar, whatever – actively constructing versions

bet none of you - adverts

Also battling 1000 different people are telling you better/prettier/successful.

We need tools to understand what is us, and what has been built in by others

Click through

These trends in narrative consumption bring us back to the first quote

The people we make art for, the people we want to show it to, our audience is changing.

here's a quote from one of the 6-10 yr olds surveyed

-----People want to take back the narratives, take back control over the construction of their selves - of what's real and what's not

These are the people who will be consuming the narratives we build.

This boy isn't an audience, he's a participant

fear - working with artists -- performance - virtual/bodied.

arts and tech need each other.

>>arts need tech in order to carry on telling stories that are relevant,

>>tech needs the arts as a way of looking at it.

NEXT SLIDE

Theatre has always dealt in death, in the void, in the space between belief and reality. It has always been a window into another world, a way of reflecting on this one

I believe theatre is a perfect way to reflect on the new lives we're living

Cultivating digital versions of ourselves.

Personal data, buying habits, images, memories, thoughts+feelings

more than the goods / money / time - Selves

Regulating that investment.

question isn't why should the arts wading into these worlds

question is why on earth aren't we there already

Here's a final (slightly more mercenary) reason

<set up joke>

explain keyboard cat

4,921,991 views.

Cats on youtube more views - but my blog gets / academic journal

This cat. Is you competitor. Seriously

why your 4 walls?

What are you saying about their lives that will make them?

NEXT SLIDE

Our art needs to change to reflect the world that we're living.

If people are embedding themselves in new worlds, we should be embedding them in our art too.

Questions?

I'm going to be looking at three narrative strategies that are coming out of the crossover between arts and tech. The first is Pervasive gaming.

Characterises the move from audience to participant

CLICK

exciting revolution crossing video game ethic of the player as protagonist + theatre

Narrative experiences where you are at the centre of the story, you enact it.

NEXT SLIDE

Hide and Seek - major UK pervasive gaming company

“social games and playful experiences”

apply the ethics of computer games -- that is to have the player controlling their experience, combine them with the playful and creative aspect of games you used to play as a child

Games played by Hide&Seek never for prizes

Every player is an associate artist - and anyone can edit >> software development

This is some of their work in their own words.

Next Slide

The root of this is assuming characters, and playing,

You could say that they are still closer to games, than they are to theatre

They don't tell a story, they play with them

So I wanted to look at a particular example of their work, which I took part in last Autumn which does move much closer to theatre

Next slide

This was Moveyhouse by Andy Field.

Andy Field is really interesting new artist,

as well as writing for the guardian theatre blog,

and working on exciting new uses of space and interaction with the excellent Forest Fringe.

He's working with the Hide and Seek Collective

This is him talking about movey house

This was very definitely theatre

Moveyhouse was a conversation about reiteration, about cultural experience, memory, and tropes. It was messy, and bits went wrong, but there were moments when I was more wholly involved in it that I have felt in a conventional theatre for a long time.

It was the audience which created the remembering of somewhere else, which in turn remembered a happening from somewhere else. This is an incredibly difficult thing to explain, but something that came naturally from the doing. And speaks an awful lot of our reported, replayable worlds where the record often takes precedence over the action.

Hide and seek's have followed this line of player-as-protagonists, in collaboration with the excellent Punchdrunk

'Multiplatform Immersive Theatre Experiences' or MITE

exploring narrative using virtual and real worlds simultaneously

NEXT SLIDE – watch video – don't skip slide to finish

Don't skip to finish

heavily interactive and personal experiences

players in these MITEs control their experience,

whole narrative is curated by the artists.

This is theatre, and this is art,

using the real world and the virtual to explore a world created.

This kind of art works with active participants - not a passive audience.

This is the kind of thing people will get out of their seats to do

This is people are using the video game ethic of player-as-protagonist in designated drama spaces, constructed narratives, full third worlds.

There is somewhere that this technique of putting the participants at the centre of drama has been used for a long time - TIE.

NEXT SLIDE

C&T are an excellent, West Midlands based company who work primarily with schools

And here too, technology is being used in combination with traditional TIE processes to enhance their work.

C&T are a company who mix participatory drama, learning, digital and social media, to not only explore issues and ideas in active ways, but also providing their participants with a voice, and a platform.

This is best exemplified by their Living Newspaper project.

“Re-creating the classic documentary drama form for the internet age”

Three columns of content. News/Documentary: starting points for making Living Newspapers.

Video/Drama: work made by you from the drama of world events.

Action/Guides: Meet us, learn techniques, make things happen.

This is a manifesto, and a platform from which to speak it.

For a new generation growing up, self-publishing is becoming second nature. opening up TIE work like this gives it worth in their eyes. That it's recorded is important.

This is simple, very simple to do, also incredibly empowering.

Please do take a look at it,

Finally look at how digital ethics are being used in locative performance work

Next big thing in interactive technology - augmented reality

between real/virtual / iPhone apps<explain>

I believe augmented reality is an incredibly exciting place for arts

Imagine looking at a painting/ Imagine sitting in a theatre

This movement, too, can be applied to site-specific work,

taking player-as-protagonist game ethics, concept of augmented reality, and the locative aspects of GPS technology and site-specific theatre.

The work of duncan speakman is site-specific, participant central storytelling, it's artistic augmented reality

>> introduce video

Mscapes overlay digital sight, sounds and interactions onto the physical world to create immersive and interactive experiences.

participants equipped with a mobile device running the mscap player can move through the physical world, triggering digital media - including images, text, sounds, audio and video - in response to physical events such as location, proximity, time and movement,

unpredictable, memorable and entertaining. Mscapes can be anchored to a specific location or work in a generic space, like a large playing field.

‘always something somewhere else’ is a GPS based soundwalk that builds itself as you experience it.

Hewlett Packard in Bristol and their new mscap software (<http://www.mscapers.com>).

In the work the listener is asked to locate various substances that form the contemporary urban environment (glass, stone, concrete etc.). As they mark the location of each one they begin to hear interwoven stories connecting them to remote locations around the world, soundtracked with a generative music score.

The narratives are progressed and concluded as the listener returns to the locations they chose.

The piece is reflective and sometimes melancholy, it touches on issues of climate change and global awareness, but ultimately encourages the listener to treasure the moments around them...

you may not feel like you have the resources to create rich immersive interactive virtual experiences of the MITE.

Well this is augmenting reality, not creating another.

This piece involved stories, directions and actions recorded to mp3, and then set to trigger at certain locations.

The final example is even simpler.

A breathtaking experience I undertook in December

As if it Were the Last Time = another example of Pervasive story-telling.
devised by Duncan Speakman in association with co. called SubtleMob.
flashmobs that no one is supposed to notice,
Soundwalk-come-performance

30 minute MP3, map, etc. >

one piece of info - someone who died.

imagine it's your last half hour.

person seeing the world as they'd never see it again,

travelled that journey with them

Not linear narrative

Our lives- now -collage

building a whole person.

And it hurt. And it was wonderful. And you felt like your heart might break. Or maybe only I did.

Next slide

For each person the experience was theirs. Entirely.

not, in staged theatre, receiving

each participant doing.

The movements, gestures All yours, Of your making.

You weren't just interacting -

embedded in a new world entirely. Incredibly powerful.

Moments when it didn't fit / Willing it back / Avatar of the narrative

That word 'avatar' = interesting

NEXT SLIDE

Theatre has always dealt in death, in the void, in the space between belief and reality. But in our lives now we are dealing with a new kind of nothing, the void of endless reproduction.

using these new narrative strategies in live contexts, we can learn a lot about the new worlds we're creating. we can also learn about how we, our selves are changing.

wrote on my blog after returning :

"Those thirty minutes were the most vivid, most high contrast of my week. It was true augmented reality, and I want to take my friends and loved ones back to share it. It hurts that I can't. But that's kind of what being is, isn't it?"

In our continually recorded and replayed worlds, it's easy to forget that.

I think that is what theatre should be reminding us.

That's why I believe the arts should be investigating technology

Thank you.

Questions --

- in groups of 2/3 discuss which of examples appealed to you most, and how you could see technology - or the ethics of it applying to or changing your own work, or if you can't, why not.