



Online residency programme

Curated by Justin Allen (Switch Performance)

Curator's introductory notes

What have we gained and what have we lost by being digitally connected? Can the Internet create space for deep connections and rich collaborations?

These questions have been a starting-point for my curation. Beyond superficial talk of 'tribes' and 'communities' there is a profound human desire to connect, to achieve a deeper sense of community. Through the artists I've chosen and the questions I've posed, this programme invites us to consider what these powerful technologies mean: for our art and for our lives.

The disembodied nature of online communication both helps and hinders our desire to connect. It allows us to reach beyond our physical limits in ways never previously dreamed of; but it has implications for the body that we are only beginning to understand.

I'm a great example of this. I'm a wannabe digital native, hooked on being connected. With the constant stimulation and information overload my mind never stops whirring. I process data as fast as my iPhone; yet I treasure stillness, silence and presence, things I find it increasingly hard to attain. I wonder if always being in touch is making me lose touch with the simple things.

I have darker thoughts still, things that keep me awake at night. I worry about the volume of information out there about each of us. I'm sure my digital dossier could become a weapon in the hands of those more brutally efficient than the bumbling bureaucrats who manage my country now. To what extent are we giving up our freedom tomorrow for ease and convenience today?

With these and other thoughts in mind I am delighted to introduce the first three artists-in-residence for the 09/10 programme.

Aug / Sept 09: Justin Allen

I will be the first artist-in-residence during my year of curation.

I am curious about uses of technology we haven't imagined yet - particularly the less likely ones. I will use my residency online to explore some very human interactions: entrusting someone with your secrets, sharing silence with others, focussing group intention to affect change.

In order to do this I will invite members of the network to participate in different ways during the residency. I hope you will take some time to engage

The ART of Engagement

online network



with my work during this time, and share time and space with me online. Please keep an eye on the site in early August for more information.

In the meantime, to find out more about my practice please visit [my page on The Art of Engagement](#).

Oct / Nov 09: Clare Adams

During this time Clare Adams will be in the last two months of her pregnancy, with her baby due at the end of November.

This is an exciting and challenging time to bring a new life into the world. Ecological and environmental issues loom large, and it's hard for any of us to fully imagine the world in 20 years' time. Meanwhile staggering advances in communication technology mean that every newborn arrives with a digital dossier never previously imagined.

I am very excited to have Clare on the programme, and look forward to her residency during the last two months of her pregnancy. I have also asked her to continue engaging with the network after November if she wishes.

<http://www.energy-of-clare.tk>

Dec 09 / Jan 10: Ania Bas and Ewelina Kolaczek

I have invited Ania Bas and Ewelina Kolaczek to enter into an online collaboration using the Art of Engagement and other Web tools to engage with each other. They have never collaborated before, and have agreed to this experimental way of working as part of the online residency programme.

Ania and Ewelina share some interesting common ground. They were both born to Polish families and live in the UK now. They will be in different parts of Poland for some of their residency period. In both cases their practice asks interesting questions about communication, collaboration and the live moment.

I am very much looking forward to their "blind online collaboration".

<http://www.aniabas.com>
<http://www.switchperformance.co.uk/artists>

The rest of the programme will be announced towards the end of this year. I look forward to seeing what emerges during the residencies, and encourage everyone on the network to engage as fully and deeply with the programme as possible.

Justin Allen (<http://www.switchperformance.co.uk>)



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