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## Third Space Network: Theatrical Roots

Randall Packer<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This essay provides an overview of artistic work and experimentation leading to the concept of the Third Space Network: a live Internet broadcast and performance project for connecting artists, audiences, and cultural perspectives from around the world. The concept of the third space suggests the collapse of the local (first space) and remote (second space) into a third, socially constructed networked space. The third space can be viewed as a new realization of the community of theater in a globally connected culture: performance space for broadcasted live art, a forum for the aggregation of artist streams of media art, and an arena for social interaction. The following is a personal artistic history and contextualization of nearly thirty years of live performance, interactive media, installation, Internet art, and the spaces they inhabit. This essay connects early work in Music Theater from the late 1980s and early 1990s to more recent networked projects to frame the idea of the Third Space Network as a new theatrical environment rich in potential for live performance and creative discourse.

**Keywords:** Media art. Creative discourse. Live performance. Networked space. Third space network.

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## Terceiro Espaço em Rede: raízes teatrais

Randall Packer<sup>2</sup>

**Resumo:** Este ensaio fornece uma visão geral do trabalho artístico e da experimentação que leva ao conceito de Terceiro Espaço em Rede: um projeto virtual de transmissão ao vivo e de performances para conectar artistas, audiências e perspectivas culturais ao redor do mundo. O conceito do terceiro espaço sugere o colapso do local (primeiro espaço) e remoto (segundo espaço) em um terceiro espaço socialmente construído em rede. O terceiro espaço pode ser visto como uma nova realização da comunidade do teatro em uma cultura globalmente conectada: o espaço de performances para a arte transmitida ao vivo, um fórum para a agregação de fluxos de artistas de arte de mídia e uma arena para a interação social. O seguimento é uma história artística pessoal e a contextualização dos quase trinta anos de performance ao vivo, de mídia interativa, instalação, arte na Internet e os espaços nos quais eles habitam. Este ensaio liga os primeiros trabalhos no *Music Theatre* desde o final da década de 1980 e começo da década de 1990 aos mais recentes projetos em rede que enquadram a ideia do Terceiro Espaço em Rede como um novo ambiente teatral rico em potencial para performance ao vivo e para o discurso criativo.

**Palavras-chave:** Media Art. Discurso Criativo. Performance ao vivo. Espaço em Rede. Terceiro Espaço em Rede.

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## New Music Theatre

“Making music with the media of the stage.”  
Arnold Schoenberg (1914)

“Theatre is obligatory eventually because it resembles life more closely than the other arts do, requiring for its appreciation the use of both eyes and ears, space and time.”  
John Cage (1963)

The roots of my work in new media, electronic music, and live performance date back to 1988, when I returned from Paris to my home base in San Francisco after a two-year post-graduate stint as a visiting composer studying electronic music at IRCAM / Centres Georges Pompidou (Institute for Research and the Coordination of Acoustics and Music). In those heady, youthful days, I was ready to tear down and reinvent what I considered the anachronistic format and spatial configuration of the musical concert stage.

I began researching interdisciplinary histories of experimental music theater and performance art to expand my musical vocabulary through the concept of the media of the stage: an idea borrowed from the work of Arnold Schoenberg (1914) and John Cage (1963), analyzing their compositional approaches to the *gesamtkünsterk* (total art work) and the fusion of interdisciplinary artistic forms. I formed Zakros InterArts as a media arts company to create, produce, and present a series of historic works of the avant-garde to conceptualize new forms of my own, new methods for staging multimedia performance through emerging practices and technological resources.

For the debut event of Zakros InterArts in 1988, I organized the San Francisco Tape Music Center Retrospective[1], bringing together pioneering composers and multimedia artists, Tony Martin, Pauline Oliveros, Ramon Sender and Morton Subotnick, who in the early 1960s organized seminal concerts, music theater, dance and film events at the San Francisco Tape Music Center. They also established one of the key electronic music studios on the West Coast, collaborating with engineer and instrument designer Don Buchla in the creation of one of the first modular synthesizers. Their work not only sparked performance art communities in

the Bay Area, but helped shape emerging interdisciplinary currents during the 1960s in live electronic music, film, projection, performance, and electronic theater.

**Figure 1-** Ramon Sender's *Desert Ambulance*, performed by Pauline Oliveros, San Francisco Tape Music Center Retrospective, Victoria Theater, San Francisco, 1988.



Source: Randall Packer

In Ramon Sender's multimedia theater work *Desert Ambulance* (Fig-1), a collaboration with Pauline Oliveros (accordion) and Tony Martin (projections), the performer is embedded in a projected electronic space composed of film, slide, and liquid images: seamlessly integrating her physical presence within the space of the imagery to form a composite whole. The projected image no longer functions as background or purely scenic design, rather, it serves as *an immersive spatial environment to enter into and inhabit*, blurring and confusing the real, physical presence of the performer with the projected image. Here, the theatrical space is expanded and transformed by the virtuality of the electronic image as an integrated, hybrid medium.

Following the San Francisco Tape Music Center Retrospective I continued to investigate seminal experimental music theater works that re-imagined the concert

stage. I was particularly interested in the work of John Cage, a composer who challenged musical convention by embracing not only any kind of sound or noise, but also non-musical elements that included actions and gestures drawn from everyday life. Cage was instrumental in blurring the distinction between art and life, his music tending towards theater as a more inclusive arena in which *any media or performative event could be incorporated into the composition.*

**Figure 2** - CageFest, performance of John Cage's Musicircus, Willie Winant and Don Baker performing, Cowell Theater, San Francisco, 1989.



Source: Randall Packer

In 1989 I directed a realization of John Cage's Musicircus [2] (Fig-2), a two-hour multi-layered collage of works by the composer scored precisely in time and space, performed at the Cowell Theater in San Francisco with the composer attending. As part of the work, two percussionists perform various sounds (amplified cactus) and actions (climbing a ladder, etc.). Here, the theatrical space is conceived as a time-space continuum, with musical gestures and performance actions superimposed, collaged and sequenced compositionally in relation to the spatial

configuration of the stage, using chance operations to determine the beginning, duration, and location of each performance event.

In 1990 I directed Karlheinz Stockhausen's seminal music theater work *Originale* (1961), a classic avant-garde Happening that had not been performed since its initial stagings in 1961 (Cologne) and in 1964 (New York). *Originale* treated all aspects of everyday life, actions, gestures, and unconventional props (such as a live chicken) as compositional elements integral to the performance, organized according to a rigorous musical score that treated a range of performance actions as musical events situated precisely in time and space.

**Figure 3** -Karlheinz Stockhausens *Originale*, performers Pamela Z (foreground), Chris Maher and Diane Robinson (center aisle), Theater Artaud, San Francisco, 1990.



Source: Randall Packer

My 1990 production of *Originale* [3] (Fig-3) explored the dissolution of the arbitrary, invisible divide of the fourth wall that traditionally separates the audience from the stage as an impermeable barrier in theater. As with the Happenings of the early 1960s by artists such as Allan Kaprow, Robert Whitman, Jim Dine, et. al., which

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influenced Stockhausen's *Originale*, the performance explored the *social intermingling between performer and audience* to eradicate the hierarchical paradigm of theater that traditionally separates the viewer from the stage. In my production of *Originale*, the actors carry out actions that dissolve this separation, such as photographing the audience with instant Polaroid cameras to draw the viewer directly into the action. This form of interaction between performer and audiences precedes and influenced the reciprocal nature of interactive media as a form of viewer engagement.

**Figure 4-** *Arches*, a music theater production performed by Judith Bettina, soprano (background) and Deborah Slater, choreography/dancer (foreground), Theater Artaud, San Francisco, 1991.



Source: Randall Packer

The following year I created my first original large-scale music theater work, *Arches* (1991) [4] (Fig-4). In this production, which took place in the cavernous, modular space of Theater Artaud in San Francisco, I re-configured the seating area by *shifting the audience into a surround configuration* or theater in the round, situating the playing area of the stage in the center where the performers traversed a labyrinthine mediascape with interactive sensors. Each member of the

audience had a unique proximity to the stage, with contrasting vantage point and perspective, thereby creating a multiplicity of interpretations appropriate to the form of the maze with its circuitous path leading to the center.

The labyrinthine stage configuration was designed as an interactive, virtual environment consisting of a layering of projections, video monitors, sensors, and surround-sound: embedding the performers into the space of the media as a visceral simulation of the immersive nature of the contemporary electronic landscape. The narrative of *Arches*, organized according to a series of 'scenes' or 'vignettes' each exploring a unique interaction between the performers and the media, thus formed a microcosm of our digital lives, rendered with all the technological complexities, revelations, wrong-turns, and contradictions inherent in contemporary media culture.

**Figure 5** - John Cage Memorial Concert, Fort Mason Conference Center, San Francisco, 1992.



Source: Randall Packer

In my ongoing research of the work of John Cage, I produced another performance of *Musicircus* [2] in 1992, the John Cage Memorial Concert (Fig-5), an



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event that took place just weeks after the composer's death. In this Cage production I further altered the relationship between audience and stage in order to more dynamically activate and engage the viewer. I re-imagined the *performance environment as a theatrical space without a stage*, enabling the viewer to walk through and explore and navigate the performance area according to their own discretion. The result was an integration of live performance and installation, a more complete breakdown and transformation of the formality of the concert space, thus removing the boundaries that traditionally delineate time, stage, performer and viewer, resulting in an entirely *free and open experience of the work*, allowing the viewer to essentially compose their own experience.

### Networked Space

“Today after more than a century of electric technology,  
we have extended our central nervous system itself  
in a Global Embrace, abolishing both space and time  
as far as our planet is concerned.”  
Marshall McLuhan (1964)

By the mid-1990s, the Web emerged as a significant medium for experimental new media art as Marshall McLuhan's vision of a globally connected networked social space took specific form. I began to explore the network and its potential as a new space for live media, performance, and immersive audience experience. In 1998, together with media artists Ken Goldberg and Gregory Kuhn, we received a commission from the InterCommunication Center (ICC) in Tokyo to create Mori [5] (Fig-6), a networked installation conceived as an Internet earthwork.

Mori, which debuted at the ICC Biennial Exhibition in 1999, connected the viewer with the earth as a living medium via the Internet transmission of seismic signals between the University of California, Berkeley Seismographic Center and the installation in Tokyo. The live seismographic data was used to control audio samples of the earth's movement, along with light traversing optical cables and a display monitor at the center of the space visualizing the “trace” of the earth's activity. The viewer, immersed in the live audio-visual fluctuations of the seismically-driven

installation, *experienced an expanded sense of networked space* from a physical location through the immediacy of the transfer of the earth's real-time oscillations via the Internet.

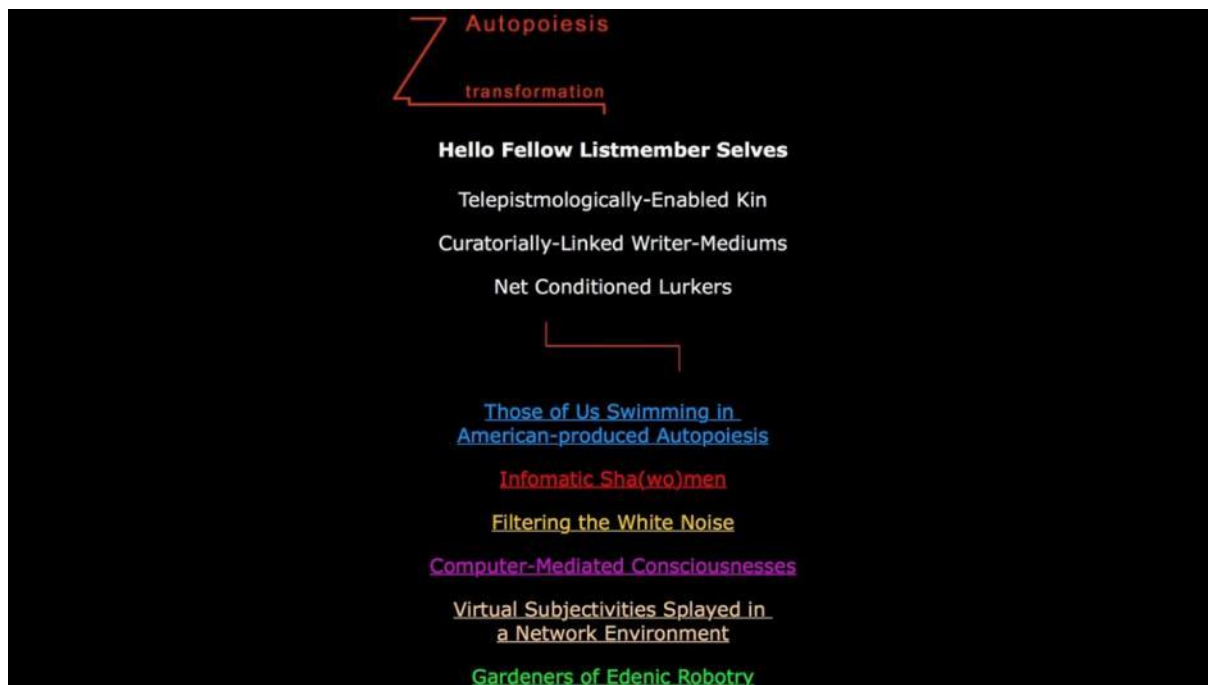
**Figure 6** - Mori, InterCommunication Center (ICC), 1999.



Source: Randall Packer, Ken Goldberg, Gregory Kuhn

In my next Internet art work, the Telematic Manifesto [6] (Fig-7), I was interested in the network as an *online social space*, with viewers distributed via the network from remote locations, which was fundamental to the concept of the Web since its origins in the early 1990s. In 1999, just prior to the millennium, I was invited to participate in the ZKM Center for Art & Media's (Karlsruhe, Germany) online exhibition *Net\_Condition*, creating the Telematic Manifesto as a "participatory, collectively-generated Net Document that articulated a vision for the future of Telematic Art as a socio-cultural force in the 21st Century."

Figure 7 - Telematic Manifesto, Net Condition, ZKM Center for Art & Media.



Source: Randall Packer

The Telematic Manifesto was compiled from an email list group discussion that took place over a three-month duration, involving an international consortium of net artists and new media scholars: later published online as a hypertextual, interactive Web archive. Nearly 10 years before social media enabled Web-based conversation, the Telematic Manifesto evolved into a *networked communications space*, what I refer to as the third space, where local and remote viewers participate in a shared electronic environment. In this way, the Telematic Manifesto constituted a collective writing space, a distributed, virtual forum for collaboration and creative dialogue. During the three-month period of the exhibition, the community of artists and scholars discussed a broad range of topics on networked media – autopoiesis, infomatics, computer-mediated consciousness, and virtual subjectivities – as threaded, hypertextual online discourse.

In 2001, after moving from San Francisco to the nation’s capital in Washington, DC, I created the virtual government agency, US Department of Art &

Technology (USDAT) [7] (Fig-8) as a networked performance project. The Web was used to construct an imaginary, artist-driven bureaucracy parodying government systems, a virtual online space for articulating a post-9/11 call-to-action.

**Figure 8** - Press release from the US Department of Art & Technology (USDAT), in which Secretary Randall M. Packer delivers a speech at the Transmediale International Festival of Media in Berlin.



Source: Randall Packer

As the Secretary of USDAT, I used the Web as a virtual platform to deliver the message of the artist as a “mediator on the world stage,” situating myself spatially and conceptually into the role of a cultural minister. The project brought together a collective of artists participating as USDAT staff in the appropriation of political symbols of control and power through techniques of media and virtualization: involving speeches, proclamations, manifestos, installations, and online manifestations of artistic expression. The Web thus afforded the space to construct an *illusionary theatrical edifice* through which to model, visualize, perform and convey an artist perspective concerning social and political issues such as the use of propaganda and disinformation in the Iraq War, corporate control of broadcast

media, and the impact of government security on individual rights: dispersed freely and openly via the network. USDAT and its use of fabricated press releases was a form of parody foreshadowing the use of fake news and propaganda in the 2016 Presidential election.

### **The Artist-Journalist**

“The role of the media... forces us to ask what kind of a world and what kind of a society we want to live in, and in particular, in what sense of democracy do we want this to be a democratic society?”  
Noam Chomsky (2002)

In 2003 I introduced real-time, streaming video into my work under the auspices of the USDAT with the Media Deconstruction Kit (MDK) [8] (Fig-9). The project was my initial foray into the emerging idea of the citizen journalist, those who use alternative media to challenge the mainstream media by expressing and publishing opinion as an independent voice. In the case of MDK, I used the medium of live streaming to critique the role of cable news through the alteration and disruption of the broadcast. As an act of citizen journalism, the MDK aspired to give greater access to artistic voices generally excluded from cable media as a critical challenge to corporate-controlled media giants: who through moneyed power and mechanisms of propaganda drive the narrative of our political and social discourse.

The project appropriated a live feed from cable TV news, distorting its contents, and instantly rebroadcasted and redirected the manipulated signal back to the Web in real-time: converging broadcast media with Internet streaming years before this confluence became popular. As a form of resistance to the systems of control that govern broadcast television and its propaganda, the MDK reconfigured and amplified the disinformation of broadcast media into an immersive, sensorial, multimedia experience: intended to expose the seductive and manipulative effects of mainstream cable news.

**Figure 9** - Media Deconstruction Kit, a collaboration with Wesley Smith, 2003-2004.



Source: Randall Packer

In the early 2000s social media was emerging, with blogs becoming popularized as one of the earliest new online forms of alternative online media and independent, citizen journalism. The blog platform essentially opened the artist's studio to an immediate audience, a new publishing platform that provided for instantaneous distribution and publishing of writing, media, and projects as they unfold: collapsing the temporal distance between the germination of a work and its worldwide dissemination. My first blog project was a collaboration with artist Jeff Gates, *We the Blog* (2003) (Fig-10), under the umbrella of the USDAT project, in which a group of participating writers, artists, and media theorists responded to the outbreak of war in Iraq. Unlike the *Telematic Manifesto*, the blog platform enabled participants to instantly publish to the medium of the Web without requiring additional authoring.

The blog brought a number of significant enhancements to online discourse through its systems of taxonomies (topics) and shared database, enabling public discussion through commenting, the organization of posts into expressive

categorization, and providing searchable archives. We the Blog demonstrated how an online discussion space could generate a historical record of discourse critiquing critical issues as a collaborative artistic project.

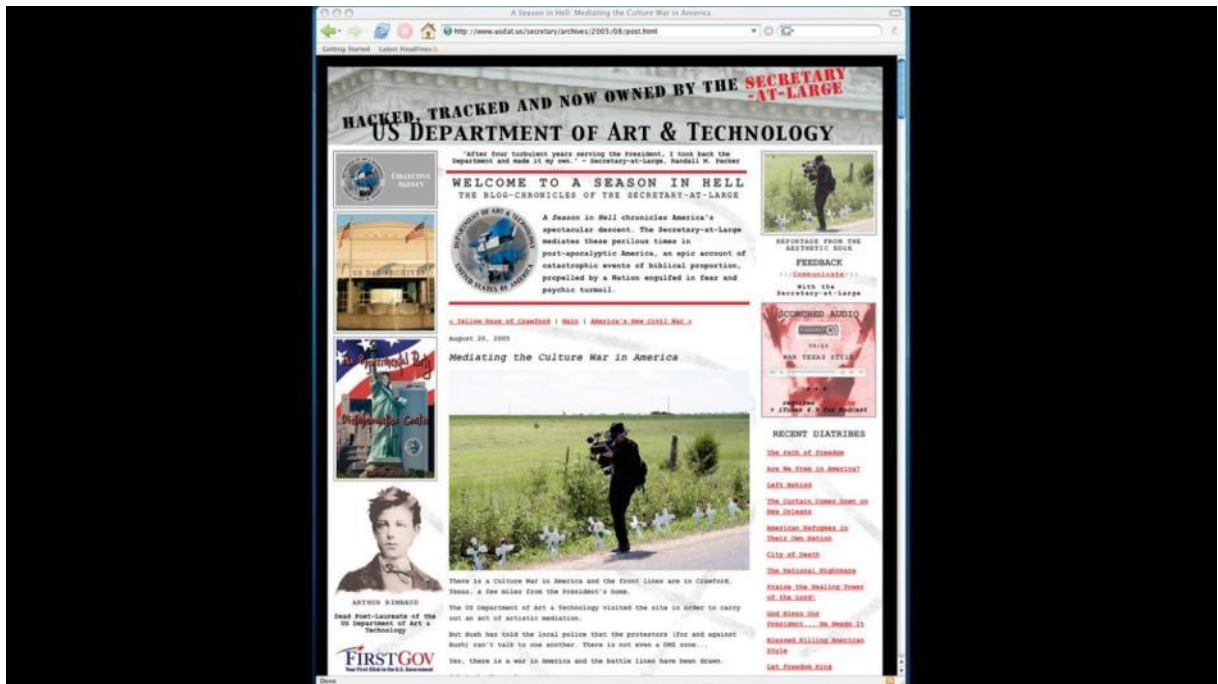
Figure 10 - We the Blog, in collaboration with Jeff Gates and participating artists, 2003.



Source: Randall Packer and Jeff Gates

Two years later in 2005, I worked on a new blog project, The Blog-Chronicles of the Secretary-at-Large (Fig-11), an online journal intended to archive texts and media derived from site-specific performances filmed throughout the US in collaboration with the Los Angeles Opera tenor Charles Lane. These performances took place in the Arlington Cemetery (Fig-12), Washington, DC, Crawford Texas, the Bible Belt, and Death Valley, California. The medium of the blog served as an archival platform for the development of narrative construction in a project that required an extensive database of documentation of creative writing, photography, video, and other research.

Figure 2 - Blog-Chronicles of the Secretary-at-Large.



Source: Randall Packer

Figure 3 - Charles Lane performing the role of Orf in the Arlington Cemetery.



Source: Randall Packer



The Blog-Chronicles would eventually culminate in the large-scale music theater work, *A Season in Hell* (2010) [9] (Fig-13), in which I returned to my theatrical roots to stage a performance mythologizing the USDAT project as a semi-fictional autobiographical descent into the Underworld of America. *A Season in Hell* was a historical portrait of political and social turmoil in the post-9/11 George W. Bush era, a spectacle of America as a vision of Hell. The performance chronicles a journey through America as told by the artist and his doppelganger, the rogue government official: Secretary-at-Large of the virtual government agency, US Department of Art & Technology, with tenor Charles Lane playing the role of Orf, based on the legend of Orpheus, who guides the Secretary-at-Large through his Underworld journey. The title of the work is borrowed from Arthur Rimbaud's 19-century farewell poem, *A Season in Hell*, a depiction of the artist's struggle to confront the deterioration of humanity.

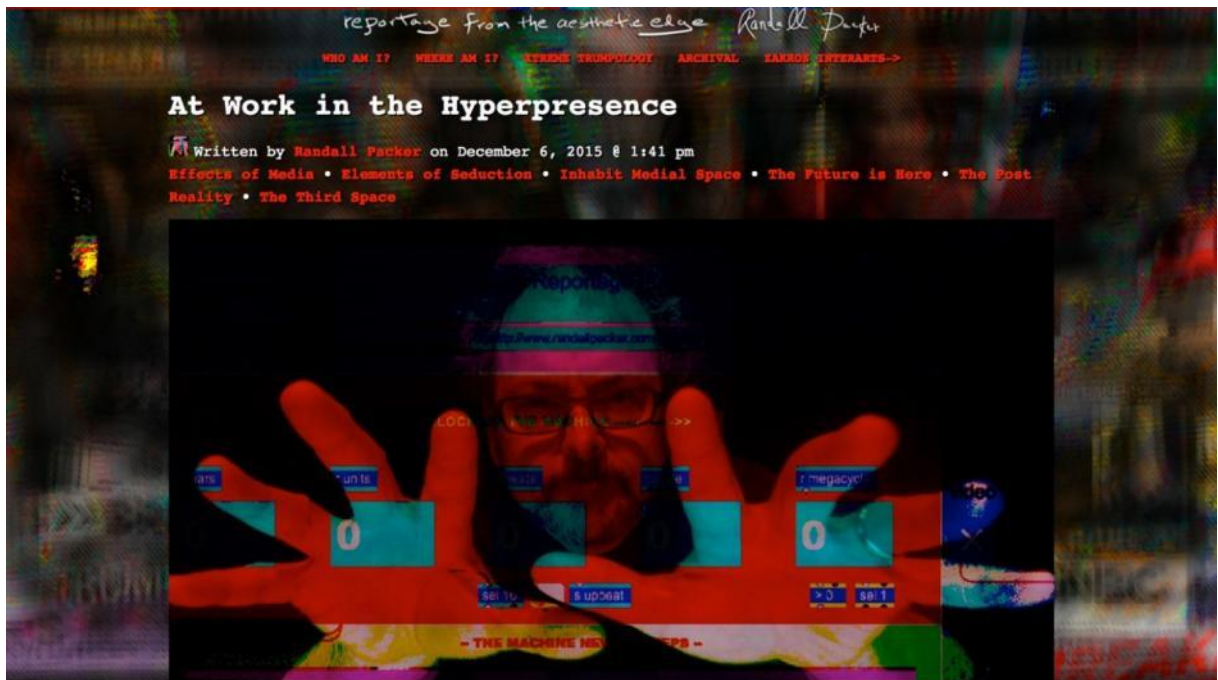
**Figure 4** - Randall Packer performing in *A Season in Hell* as the Secretary of the US Department of Art & Technology at San Jose Stage as part of the 2010 ZERO1 Biennial Festival.



Source: Randall Packer

In 2009, the Blog-Chronicles of the Secretary-at-Large transitioned to my current blog, Reportage from the Aesthetic Edge [10] (Fig-14), which to this day is a writing-medium for documenting studio production, observations on social and political events, as well as new media culture. Reportage from the Aesthetic Edge now serves as an extensive database archive and online repository with nearly 1000 posts, which I frequently draw from for the creation of larger media works, essays, and projects.

**Figure 5** - Reportage from the Aesthetic Edge, 2009 – present.



Source: Randall Packer

## The Artist-Broadcaster

“This is a glimpse of the video landscape of tomorrow, when you will be able to switch to any TV station on the earth, and TV Guide will be as fat as the Manhattan telephone book.”  
Nam June Paik (1973)

In 2010, influenced by the work of video pioneer Nam June Paik, who envisioned the future of television as a medium for artist-driven broadcasting, I

began to explore the network as a space for live performance. This led to the redesign of my Washington, DC studio as a space for online performance and Internet streaming. All the various threads of my artistic work were shifting to the network, deep within the confines of what I refer to as my “underground studio bunker,” where I could deliver performances instantaneously anywhere in the world: collapsing the boundary between creation and audience: *the studio as production environment, stage, and mis-en-scene*. (Fig-15)

**Figure 6** - Broadcasting from the underground studio bunker in Washington, DC.



Source: Randall Packer

In 2012, I performed a workshop edition of *The Post Reality Show: TALK MEDIA!* (Fig-16), presented in conjunction with the 7th Annual Capital Fringe Festival in Washington, DC, the first ever netcasted, online performance presented by the Fringe. Ten shows were broadcast live over a two-week period, featuring artist interviews via Skype focusing on topical, experimental and controversial areas of artistic investigation and media culture. *The Post Reality Show: TALK MEDIA!* was broadcast over Livestream with audience interaction via chat, emphasizing the

participatory nature of live Internet media and its integration with and insertion into existing online social media spaces: to catalyze critical dialogue within the context of performance art.

**Figure 7-** The Post Reality Show: TALK MEDIA!, with guest artist Eve Andree Laramee, Capitol Fringe Festival, 2012.



Source: Randall Packer

I have since continued to develop The Post Reality Show [11] (Fig-17) as an Internet performance project and critical investigation challenging “post real” conditions in media, political, and popular culture: the confusion of the real and the imaginary. The project was influenced by Jean Baudrillard’s seminal book, *Simulation and Simulacra*, and the notion of “hyperreality”: in which through the effects of media and its simulation of reality, the distinction is blurred between that which is real and that which is not.

It is from the vantage point of the studio process – an artist’s immersion into the “media flow” – that I perform as host of The Post Reality Show, chronicling the effects of my own exposure to the 24/7 assault of information and the loss of the

real: which I describe as a *performance of critique through ingestion*. This form of artistic critique is the direct result of *immersion in the media space*: analyzing, manipulating and transmitting the contents of the media flow from the visceral and subjective vantage point of being immersed in its effects and transformations.

**Figure 8** - The Post Reality Show performed live and broadcast from the underground studio bunker in Washington, DC.



Source: Randall Packer

### **Third Space Network: Social Broadcasting**

“It is presently advantageous to experiment by gradually widening the distances between the events within a Happening. First along several points on a heavily trafficked avenue; then in several rooms and floors of an apartment house where some of the activities are out of touch with each other; then on more than one street; then in different but proximate cities; finally all around the globe.”

Allan Kaprow (1966), *Untitled Guidelines for Happenings*

Through over five years of development, writing, and production for The Post Reality Show, this experimental streaming project has served as a research

laboratory for exploring the future of artist-driven broadcasting: the performance of live expression and social critique facilitated by the distributed networks of the Internet. With the integration of today’s global broadband Internet connections, social media and mobile devices, the technological possibilities for live broadcasting have advanced dramatically. Motivated by this potentiality, I have begun work on the Third Space Network [12], a new direction for live expression facilitated by networks of artists and audiences. This concept resonates with the Happenings of the 1960s, such as in the work of Allan Kaprow, in which live performances were sometimes staged in distributed locations collectively unified through collaboration between performers and audiences.

**Figure 9** - The Art of the Networked Practice | Online Symposium panel discussion and Web-conference with Randall Packer, Vibeke Sorensen, Jon Cates, Juan Camilo Gonzalez, Ruth Catlow, and Marc Garrett.



Source: Randall Packer

The idea of the Third Space Network recently crystallized during the Art of the Networked Practice | Online Symposium [13] (Fig-18) and NetArtizens Project I organized in 2015 in collaboration with Marc Garrett and Ruth Catlow (co-directors of

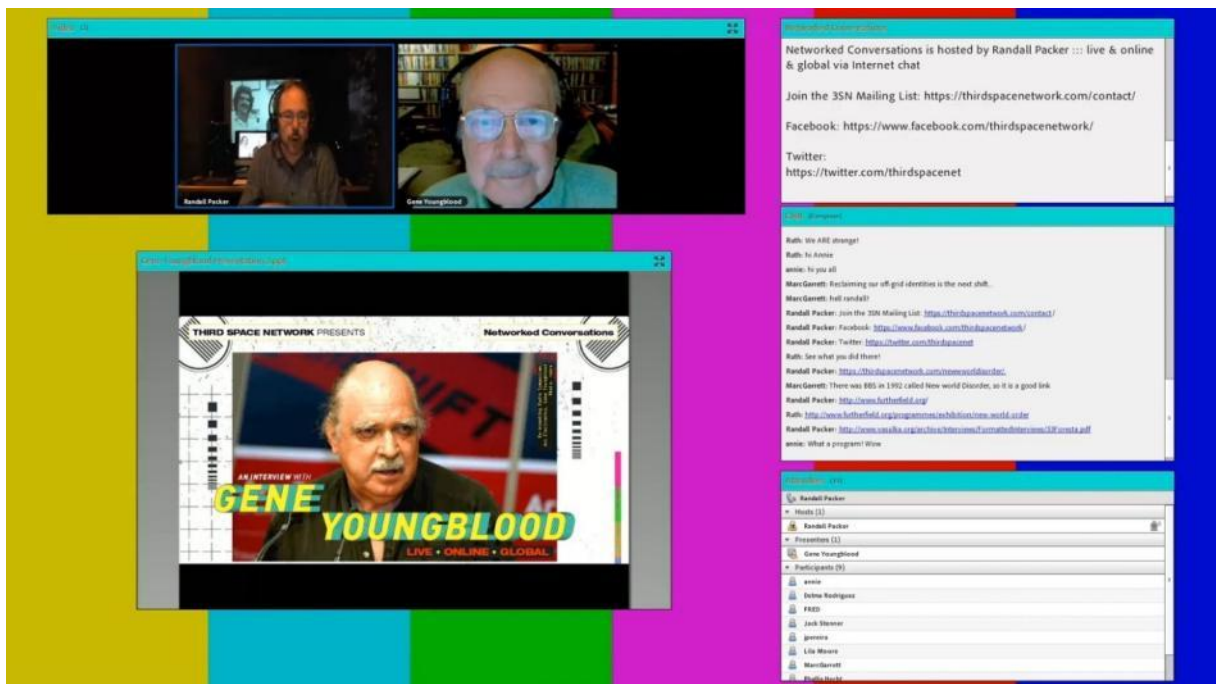
the London-based alternative art space Furtherfield), and chaired by myself along with Vibeke Sorensen, Chair of the School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University. The symposium events combined performance, exhibition, online discussion, social media, keynotes, and panels to explore and debate the role of the network in our individual and collective practice as artists, scholars, and arts educators. The project was sparked from my ongoing exploration of live, transglobal communications as a catalyst for collective art and discourse. Online attendees from over 40 countries participated in the symposium events.

The aspiration of the Third Space Network is to stimulate a new form of socially-based participatory media arts broadcasting within the thriving digital culture that has added Internet media to traditional forms of television broadcasting. I refer to this as social broadcasting, defined as a many-to-many mode of live performance that distributes performers and audiences in online spaces, globally, as opposed to the one-to-many paradigm of traditional theater and broadcasting that emanates from a single location.

The Third Space Network embraces the idea of social broadcasting in real-time, collaborative projects and interactions. It is my intention to rethink the anachronistic paradigm of the centralized one-to-many broadcasting modality to a shift towards peer-to-peer broadcasted art that creatively joins virtual and physical spaces with technical imagination, conceptual thinking, social sensibilities, activist voices, and aesthetic choices: live media art made by “artist-broadcasters” exploring a collective approach to Internet streaming.

In 2017, *Networked Conversations* [14] (Fig-19) was launched as the first project of the Third Space Network, a series of online interviews and dialogues featuring media artists, curators, writers, and activists exploring a broad range of social, political and aesthetic topics at the intersection of net culture. *Networked Conversations* collapses geographical and cultural boundaries via participatory Internet chat: accessible from anywhere in the world.

**Figure 10** - Networked Conversations with Gene Youngblood, hosted by Randall Packer.



Source: Randall Packer

Most recently, the Third Space Network has organized the social broadcasting project #NeWWorlDisorder [15] (Fig-20), a 90 minute, collectively conceived, global net performance performed via Facebook Live, in which the artists' feeds are aggregated on the Third Space Network live video wall. This Facebook Happening takes place on the social media stage as a collection of simultaneous performance actions streaming out via the Facebook channels of 14 participating artists: each with their own message, their own unique response to the ensuing world disorder of today's geo-political crises. I consider this global distribution of streaming acts as a socially-engaged extension of performance reach, well beyond that of a single artist.



Figure 20 - #NeWWWorldDisorder, social broadcasting Web interface with social media.



Source: Randall Packer

#NeWWWorldDisorder opens up artistic possibilities for new modes of Internet broadcasting and online performance art. Together we are exploring the potentialities of mixing and co-mingling our streams into collective, activist forms, a political statement of artistic unity (and creative disorder). In the age of Donald Trump, social broadcasting is an antidote for inspiring cross-cultural, global expression that transcends nationalist walls and boundaries. Social broadcasting is clearly the future of television, the future of the Internet, and a powerful way to take charge of the broadcast that has traditionally been governed by hierarchical control structures.

**Conclusion**

"Whereas the public, that representation of daily life, forgets the confines of the auditorium, and lives and breathes now only in the artwork which seems to it as Life itself, and on the stage which seems the wide expanse of the whole World."  
Richard Wagner (1948)

Throughout the history of theater and performance, artists have invented spaces and artistic models for live works of art that join performers and audiences in

new kinds of experiences. The composer Richard Wagner, who established the Festspielhaus (Festival House) opera house in Bayreuth, Germany in 1876, viewed the stage as a virtual world, an unlimited expanse for the synthesis of the arts, what he referred to as the *gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork), constrained only by the artist's imagination.

I have, like Wagner, constructed my own environments and devised artistic methods for creating interactive works that alter the form and social hierarchies of live performance. My research has been aimed at furthering the social and artistic potential of networked spaces for performance through an investigation of the practices of theater, net art, online journalism, tele-communications and live broadcasting. The Third Space Network is a project that attempts to further the potentialities of online performance and its practices and spaces. My research is concerned with how the live arts, including interactive performance, music, dance, theater, and other uncategorizable audio-visual works, are performed, broadcast, and experienced in participatory, networked environments.

After nearly thirty years of experimentation, I envision the Third Space Network as an arena for facilitating new forms of live expression that unite artists and audiences from culturally dispersed locations. The Third Space Network is intended to connect artist and viewer in the immediacy of the live broadcast to discover and make accessible the kinds of artworks, experiences, explorations, and interactions that can only be derived from globally networked media that collapses geographical distances and cultural boundaries.

Theater is an evolving concept that has been undergoing radical transformation since Richard Wagner. And yet, the fundamentals remain the same: theater is a space for challenging complex social and political issues; it is a social forum for catalyzing and bringing together a powerful sense of community through catharsis; and theater is a medium that brings the synthesis of language, music, and media expression to live audiences. The Third Space Network is intended as a new kind of theater that is accessible from all corners of the globe, a *theater of the future* for the performance of actions, ideas, and media broadcast from the desktop.

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## Notes

- [1] <http://zakros.com/projects/sftmc/>
- [2] <http://zakros.com/projects/musicircus/>
- [3] <http://zakros.com/projects/originale/>
- [4] <http://zakros.com/projects/arches/>
- [5] <http://zakros.com/projects/mori/>
- [6] <http://zakros.com/projects/telematic/>
- [7] <http://zakros.com/projects/usdat/>
- [8] <http://zakros.com/projects/mdk/>
- [9] <http://zakros.com/projects/season/>
- [10] <http://www.randallpacker.com/>
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- [12] <https://thirdspacenetWORK.com/>
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- [14] <https://thirdspacenetWORK.com/networked-conversations/>
- [15] <https://thirdspacenetWORK.com/newworldisorder/>

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