

Proposal for the Fourth Annual Nebraska Digital Workshop

Corpus Corvus:

Exploring Contemporary Mythos Through Immersive Media Poetics

Submitted by:

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Proposal Abstract:

For the Fourth Annual Nebraska Digital Workshop, I propose to deliver a work-in-progress presentation of my doctoral dissertation: a groundbreaking interdisciplinary digital/performance artwork and accompanying electronic text.

Entitled Corpus Corvus (explanation forthcoming), this multi-faceted artwork addresses a broad spectrum of issues and questions relevant to 21st century digital humanities, including immersive media poetics, contemporary mythos, posthuman embodiment, and expressive forms emerging from convergences of art, science, humanities, and experimental media.

The electronic text accompanying the artwork illuminates the *neopoetic language system*, which underscores my approach to digital/performance composition. The foundational ground for this system is the *Poetics* of Aristotle and its relation to the ancient Greek theater as a practical ideology for the Greek drama. As Aristotle's *Poetics* posits six foundational components for the construction of drama (plot, character, thought, diction, song, and spectacle), this neopoetic language system has six constituent aspects. They are: *expanded embodiment*, *experiential metaphor*, *technoetic mythos*, *matrix architecture*, *perceptual resonance*, and *the rheomode*. Corpus Corvus is a manifest articulation of the neopoetic language system.

The construction of Corpus Corvus is also informed by an original model for development and documentation of digital artworks called the *sketchspace*. A *sketchspace* is a dynamic, fluid electronic writing space that generates, supports, catalyzes, documents, and reflects upon the creation of new digital/experimental artwork. Macrocosmically, it probes the semiotic systems engaged in the generative digital arts process, and explores how those semiotic systems can be most effectively engaged and represented in an etext context. A *sketchspace* is a catalyst for the development of idea into manifestation, an electronic artifact of the artwork, and a semiotic space that allows and absorbs reflection on the art as research. It integrates elements of cultural research, technical foundations, historical connections, experimentation, scientific documentation, and critical reflection.

I propose to utilize the sketchspace for my doctoral work as the foundation for the workshop presentation. A working version sketchspace can be explored at www.heatherraikes.com/corpuscorvus

Description of Artwork:

Corpus Corvus is an experimental augmented reality performance artwork that utilizes an integrated physical/media choreographic vocabulary, stereoscopic 3D projection, motion capture-generated animation, electroacoustic audio composition, and spatialized ambisonic sound. The work is inspired by a synthesis of string theory, special relativity, constructal theory, Australian Aboriginal Dream painting, Pacific Northwest Native American mythology, futurist performance, and innovations in immersive media technologies. The title Corpus Corvus refers to the body of the raven. Loosely based on the Native American myth of the raven as creator/thief who steals the sun and moon, the stereoscopic-ambisonic performance space consists of *somatic media architectures* both extracted from and inhabited by the physical body. The cumulative instantiation of performative embodiment spans a poetic spectrum from the animalic to the virtual.

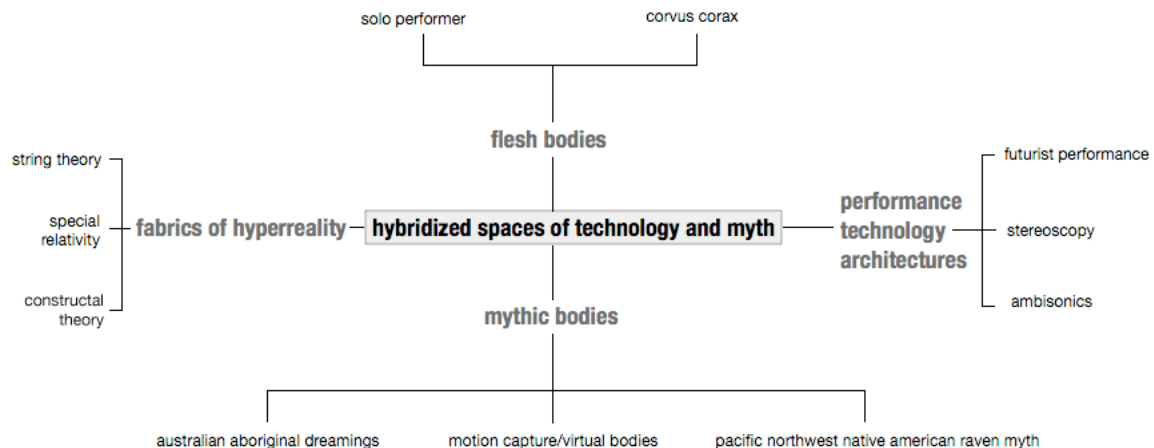
The Corpus Corvus is a Dreaming of the Australian Aboriginal tradition: a mythic body that is literally landscape, environment; imbued with a complex tapestry of forces and patterns – human, natural, bestial, archetypal, cosmological, technological, and metaphorical. It is an animal-human-virtual-mythic body, constructed through a synthesis of physical and digital form. The piece traverses the landscape of the Corpus Corvus through dilations into ten corporeal dimensions: formation, throat, wing, eye, talon, belly, heart, spine, brain, dissolution. Each of the ten segments articulates a densely integrated 3-dimensional kinesthetic-audio-visual composition.

An integral component of the work is the visual effect produced by stereoscopic animation projected onto a theatrical scrim – creating a synthesis of stereoscopic 3D depth space and live theatrical depth space, contextualized by the physical body. This technical innovation – in conjunction with the totality of the performance context – represents an evolution of theatrical form, encompassing a synthesis of immersive visual, aural, and kinesthetic media, in conjunction with live performance and theatrical design. The piece is performed by a solo male dancer. Estimated duration for the work is 18 minutes.

Diagrams:

The following diagram depicts the Generative Matrix for the artwork, identifying the foundational elements that coalesce to inform the process of artistic manifestation. For additional generative matrix explanation, please visit http://www.heatherraiques.com/corpuscorvus/Site/Generative_Matrix.html

Generative Matrix



The following diagrams describe the innovative stereoscopic-ambisonic performance infrastructure.

Diagram of Augmented Reality Theatrical Playing Space

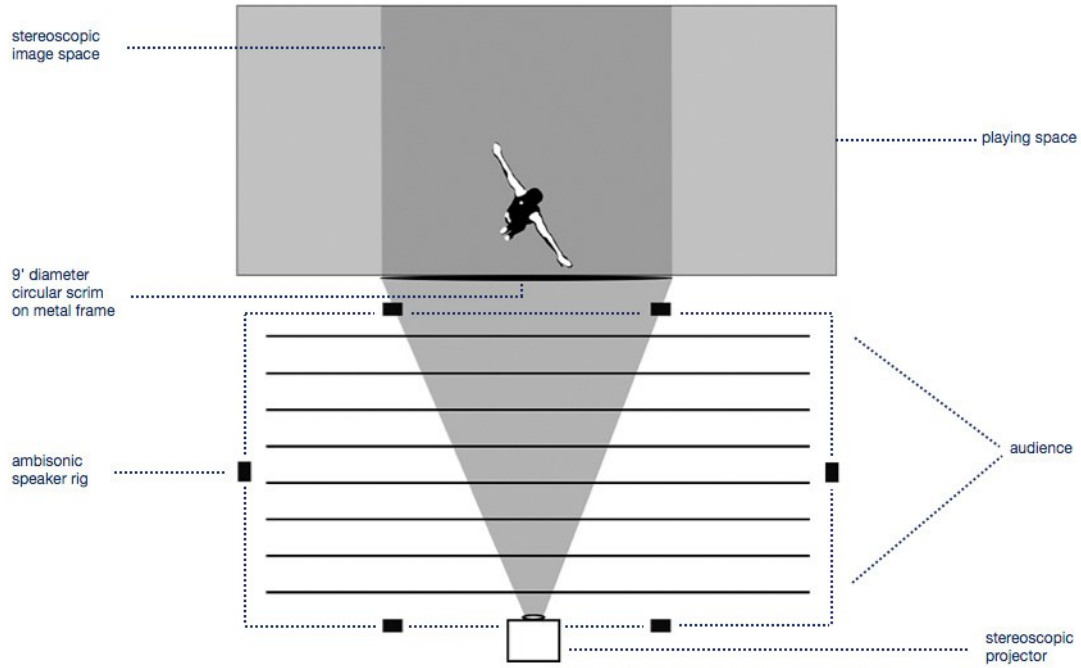
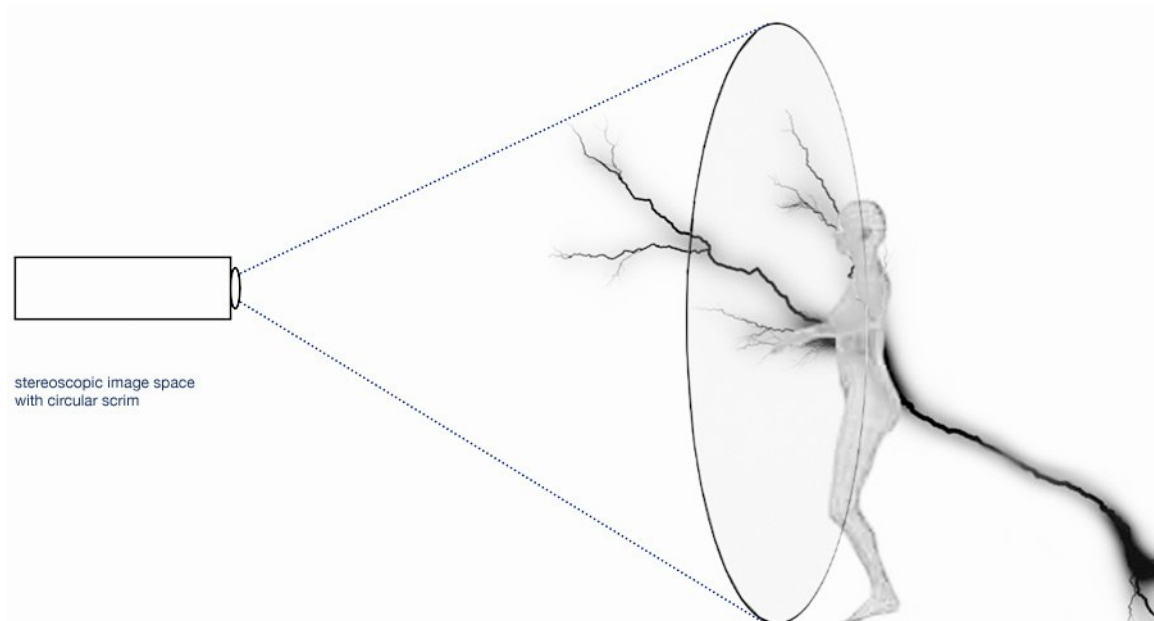


Diagram of Visual Effect Produced by Stereoscopic Projection, Scrim, and Body



The following diagrams illuminate elements incorporated in the compositional process, from both technical and aesthetic perspectives.

Flowchart of Technical Components

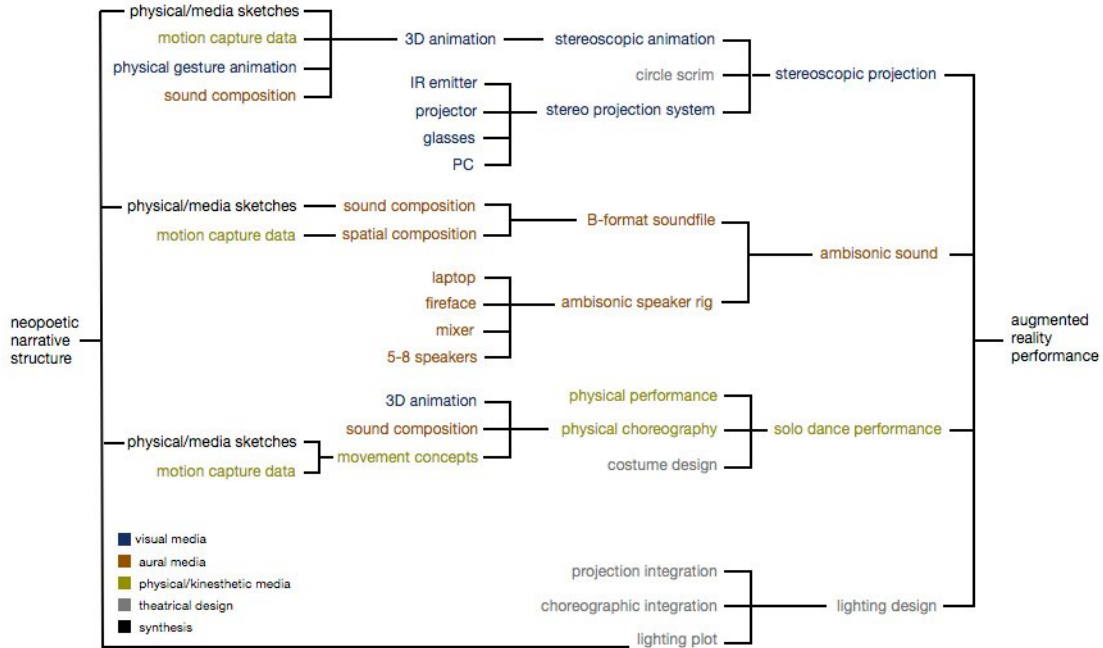
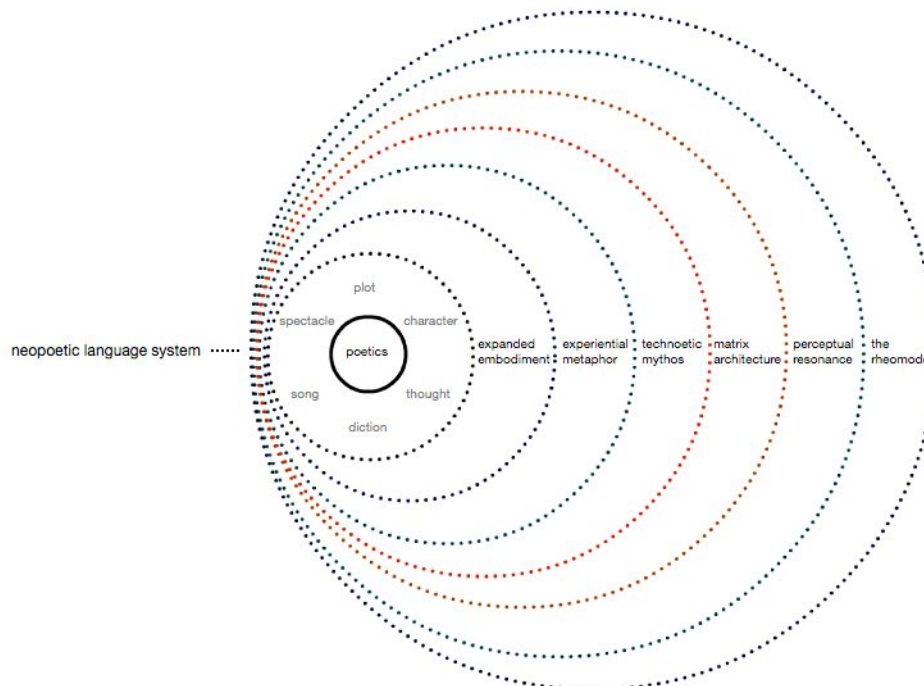


Diagram of Neopoetic Language System



Research Objectives:

The foundational research questions informing this artwork probe the domains of dance, theater, digital performance, contemporary embodiment, augmented/virtual reality, immersive media poetic systems, and interdisciplinary humanities. The work is expected to produce research methods, technological innovations, and aesthetic strategies relevant to 21st century dance and theatrical performance, digital arts, experimental media, human-computer interaction, information design, humanities, and beyond.

The primary objectives for the art/research process are:

- Manifest an instantiation of sensate embodiment that spans a continuum from the animalic to the virtual.
- Construct *somatic media architectures* that are both extracted from and inhabited by the body.
- Refine compositional techniques for immersive media integration of body, image, and sound.
- Building upon the historical foundations of futurist performance forms, develop a technical framework for an augmented reality theater using stereoscopic projection, ambisonics, physical/media interface, and live performance.
- Explore and refine innovations in stereoscopic 3D animation, merging stereo depth space and physical depth space in a live theatrical context.
- Explore and develop experimental applications of motion capture data.
- Investigate the nature, manifestation and experience of a *posthuman creation myth*.
- Create an artwork generated through the *neopoetic language system*, incorporating principles of *expanded embodiment, experiential metaphor, technoetic mythos, matrix architecture, perceptual resonance, and the rheomode*.

For additional research information, please visit <http://www.heatherraiques.com/corpuscorvus/Site/Research.html>

Production Information:

This project is currently under development through generous support from DXARTS: Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media at the University of Washington; CARTAH: Center for Advanced Research in the Arts and Humanities at the University of Washington; the University of Washington Department of Computer Science & Engineering; the University of Washington Dance Program; CRCA: Center for Research in Computing & the Arts at the University of California San Diego; and the University of California San Diego Department of Theatre & Dance. The artwork is expected to premiere in Spring 2010, with derivative documentary materials and electronic text to be published in Summer 2010.

Additional Project Information:

For additional project information, including work samples, score, research foundations, and documentation of experimental performances utilizing the technical framework, please visit www.heatherraiques.com/corpuscorvus