Chapter 16
Digital Arts Entrepreneurship: Evaluating Performative Interaction

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Abstract Evaluation is key to understanding Digital Arts Entrepreneurship. In this chapter, I explore my own experience of performing Digital Arts Entrepreneurship and how evaluation is vital to turning creative ideas into business opportunities from the boardroom to the muddy fields of music festivals. My goal is to provide criteria for others to use as a lens for evaluating their own performance in the emerging field of Digital Arts Entrepreneurship. I show that this process can be described through free-flow narrative reflection of one's own creative thinking and practice and I give practical examples of selection criteria for the evaluation of Digital Live Art. I describe how performing entrepreneurship is about the boundless pursuit of high-risk yet perceived low-value opportunity and turning it on its head. Additionally, this chapter provides a useful background discussion of the field of entrepreneur scholarship and of some of the emerging initiatives in the United Kingdom that are incubating this creative field. This chapter addresses those working in the Digital Arts, in both industry and academia, but especially those working somewhere in between.

16.1 Introduction

My goal in this chapter is to describe why evaluation is key to understanding Digital Arts Entrepreneurship. As such, I have not set out to define the attributes of a Digital Arts Entrepreneur. Merriam Webster defines *entrepreneur* as "a person who starts a business and is willing to risk loss in order to make money.[1]" Does one ever start a business not to make money? (Even a charity must cover its losses). My position is

[1] http://www.merriam-webster.com/

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that defining the attributes of an entrepreneur is akin to defining the attributes of an artist. Like artists, most 'entrepreneurs' identify with inventing, developing, creative thinking, making, problem solving and researching (among many other things) – and the label 'entrepreneur' is what other people use to describe them. Indeed, I agree with Williams (2010) that entrepreneurs do not exist but rather that one *performs* entrepreneurship. So rather than setting out to characterise the attributes of an entrepreneur, in this chapter I focus on *performing entrepreneurship* within the context of Digital Arts. My assertion is that Digital Arts Entrepreneurship and its key evaluation criteria can only be described through free-flow narrative reflection of one's own creative thinking and practice, and as such, it is necessary to turn our attention from the *what* to the *how* of Digital Arts Entrepreneurship – *how does one perform entrepreneurship*?

My narrative approach borrows from Entrepreneurial Narrative Theory, which Gartner (2007) loosely defines as a text (in its broadest sense) written by entrepreneurs about entrepreneurs. In using a quasi-Gartner approach, I attempt to pinpoint the key evaluation criteria that I created while successfully transitioning into the world of entrepreneurship. Note: dedicating time to write this chapter was not easy – it is usually not part of a CEO's day job! But that is exactly the point: we are only beginning to understand that Digital Arts Entrepreneurship is an emerging practice itself and so it requires much deeper consideration and reflection. In this chapter, I will provide readers with a first-hand account of how I performed entrepreneurship whilst transitioning from academic-focused practice to industry-focused contexts, and in doing so, start the dialogue about how Digital Arts Entrepreneurship is performed. As my perspective comes from growing a successful Digital Arts business in the United Kingdom, I begin with brief description of the recent initiatives in the UK that are giving rise to entrepreneurship in general.

16.2 Background

Entrepreneurship in the UK is on the rise. In 2011, The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)[2] reported that for the first time since GEM records began (1999), more than a fifth of working age individuals either intended to start a business within the next 3 years, were actively trying to start a business, or running their own business. Over the last few years, the UK government's small and creative business initiatives, such as the UKTI Global Entrepreneur Programme,[3] the Tech City[4] initiative and the SIRIUS programme,[5] continue to attract internationals with creative talent and skills to the UK. In cultivating these initiatives, the UK has seen a rise in: the expansion of venture capital financing; successful incubation spaces such as Tech

[2] http://www.gemconsortium.org/

[3] http://www.ukti.gov.uk/

[4] http://techcity.io/

[5] http://www.siriusprogramme.com/

Hub and The Trampery; multiple accelerator programmes such as Springboard, Seedcamp, and The Bakery; and, a growing list of public events for exploring Digital Arts such as Digital Shoreditch and the Tech City Entrepreneurship Festival among others. However, while these creative business initiatives are gaining momentum, we know little about Digital Arts Entrepreneurship itself.

The study of entrepreneurship is defined as *entrepreneur scholarship* and while multiple theoretical and methodological traditions exist in entrepreneur scholarship, there is a lack of common agreement of the definition of entrepreneurship (Davidsson 2004; Hill and Levenhagen 1995). However, recent scholarship is revisiting a social theory of entrepreneurship (Down and Reveley 2004). Peverelli and Song (2012) describe entrepreneurs as social actors "who 'create, discover, and exploit value-adding opportunities'" whereas Down and Warren (2007) describe entrepreneurial identity as the interaction between the individual, society and culture, rather than any individual identity. They suggest that those who make a living from their own endeavour will do so on the basis of interaction with others.

> If we want to gain insight in entrepreneurship, we need to focus on the social identities of the entrepreneurs, the social influences from other actors that together make certain persons decide not to derive their income from employment, but from his or her own enterprise (Peverelli and Song, p. 17).

Others suggest that the purpose of entrepreneurship is about "driving changes in the historical context of business, industry, and the economy" (Jones and Wadhwani 2006). As Candy discusses in Chap. 3 ("Evaluation and Experience in Art") (2014), evaluation involves understanding the value of something. To understand the value of Digital Arts Entrepreneurship, I propose constructing my narrative around the following questions:

- Who are the performative actors involved in the Digital Arts Entrepreneurship eco-system?
- How are creative value-added opportunities explored?
- How does one make a living through Digital Arts Entrepreneurship?
- How does Digital Arts Entrepreneurship signal historical change, if at all?

16.3 Low-Risk and Gestating the Unconventional

The narrative begins in 2001, when I began a PhD in a traditional Computing Department at a campus-based university in northern England. Whilst the university itself did not offer any formal programmes in Digital Arts at the time, I had the support of supervisors whose track record and reputation in Computing provided a low-risk environment in which to gestate and seed unconventional and creative ideas. Being at a campus-based university meant that students from different departments mingled regularly so that individual research was often discussed through the lens of different disciplines. From this blended environment emerged a loose network of people interested in cybernetics, and in that context I proposed the idea of hosting a

live and Public Art event which explored the performative in cybernetics. I contacted the Performance Artist Stelarc[6] to champion the event and when he agreed, I developed Art-Cels: A Three-Day Celebration with Stelarc (2002).[7]

As my core research interest was in wearable computing, Live Art and club culture (e.g. interaction at festivals or nightclubs), I called on local Live Artists, Arts centres, and several free-party decorators, DJs and musicians to participate. For the performance event, I mobilized a team of computing experts from within my Computing Department and we called ourselves .:thePooch:..[8] We shared roles and responsibilities equally, including programming, designing, building, purchasing, prototyping, etc. However, in addition to building and performing, I took sole responsibility as event director. A small amount of funding from the Computing Department was used to cover minor costs such as venue hire and security staff however the majority of services and resources were voluntarily supplied. My approach was to have a few planned performances (like those described in Chap. 7 ("Intimate aesthetics and facilitated interaction" by Loke and Khut (2014)) but more importantly, my purpose was to encourage performance artists to simply turn up to the event and perform in any manner that they wished. In this way, the event was structured as a "happening"[9] – focusing on *liveness* and the unanticipated performances that emerged between the artists and the audience.

My open-ended approach baffled more than a few people at the time. Some of asked *Is this Art*? or *What is the value for Computing?* And both the Arts community and the Computing community wanted to know – *Who is leading this Art/research*? To my knowledge, my own Computing Department had never participated in a Live Art event. In this sense, both the Arts and Computing communities did not immediately see the value in my ambitious plan.

16.3.1 Validation

So with this encouragement came a request for validation. In order to legitimize the research, it was necessary that I performed some kind of evaluation. My scenario presented an interesting problem; since I was not conducting a conventional scientific study, I was unsure as to how to collect and evaluate my data. Conventional empirical research seemed inappropriate for this type of study.

As mentioned above, my goal was to investigate the intersection of wearable computing, club culture and Live Art. Live Art is a term that is often eclipsed by its more popular parent term Performance Art and emerged as an 'unconventional' art form after Allan Kaprow coined the term happenings. It focuses on presence or liveness: the Live Artist, her body and her bodily actions rather than on material objects

[6] http://stelarc.org

[7] http://www.art-cels.com

[8] http://www.thepooch.com

[9] Allan Kaprow first coined the term "happening" in the spring of 1957.

(Schimmel 1998), as well as the relationship between the artist and audience. Importantly, in Live Art, the performer *is* the artist (Goldberg 2001) not a character and content rarely follows a narrative.

Despite a lengthy literature search, I was unable to find any examples in the field of Human-Computer Interaction that described similar research within the context of club culture (Sheridan et al. 2004) and as such, I saw an opportunity to create new methods and theories in this area. As a result, I decided prior to the event that I would not only observe interaction between participants, performers and observers and record the data on paper and with a video camera but, more importantly, I would embed myself and others as part of the performance, using wearable computers as tools for mediating these interactions.

16.3.2 The Birth of Wittingness

In the few weeks leading up to Art-Cels, .:thePooch:. developed two wearable computing performances: (1) A planned performance between several members of the collective where one user (or 'cyborg') was outfitted with an electronic communication display and yet this display was visible to others not the cyborgs themselves; (2) my own planned and individual performance where I wore a wearable computer with a head-mounted display (HMD – not unlike a Google Glass[10] display) and interacted directly with the audience (Fig. 16.1).

As discussed earlier, the intention of both performances was to model the interaction that occurred between observers, participants and performers and I have described this at length (Sheridan et al. 2004). More importantly, it was a third performance which I had not planned, but which I was implicated in, that had the most impact not just on my own research going forward, but would be adopted by many others.

During Art-Cels, as I was talking to a bystander, I noticed that my wearable computer started 'acting funny.' In my HMD I observed that my cursor seemed to be drifting across the screen, and folders seemed to be jiggling back and forth. Since I had had my HMD on for a good part of the day and the evening, I assumed that the problem was probably that the hardware was overheating. Rather than break away from conversation, I decided to continue my conversation and to fix the problem later. I continued monitoring the situation in my periphery but as the problem intensified, I began to lose track of my conversation with the bystander and to become completely distracted by what was happening on my HMD. Although I thought my distraction was undetectable to the spectator, he noticed, and then asked me if something was wrong. I said that my wearable computer was overheating and we simply continued on with our conversation.

[10] http://www.google.co.uk/glass/start/

Fig. 16.1 My wearable computer with a MicroOptical head-mounted display (*HMD*) (*top left*) used at Art-Cels; platform boots with battery power (*top right*); and interacting with witting participants (*bottom*) (©2002 .:thePooch:.)

Shortly afterward, and quite suddenly, a personal message appeared in my HMD: "Hello Jenn," it said. I froze. Before I could respond, my cursor moved backwards deleting the message as quickly as it appeared and another message replaced it:

"Who is that you're talking to with the moustache?" My confusion suddenly changed to a feeling of overwhelming excitement and I let out a yelp. The bystander cocked his head to one side and asked me about the problem.

"I'm being hijacked," I said very matter-of-factly. He laughed. I continued, "No really. Someone is watching us and has taken over my wearable computer." He let out a nervous laugh, paused and glanced about around the room in disbelief. Then he squinted and pointed at my HMD and said,

"What, with that thing?"

One has to remember that the year was 2002 and even having access to a laptop, let alone the promise of Wifi and the idea that someone could walk around a room and wirelessly communicate with others on a computer that they were wearing was to the average person the stuff of science fiction.

I spent the rest of Art-Cels playing a subversive game with my hijacker who was commenting on and directing me to engage with the unwitting bystanders around me. Unwittingly, I was pushed into a live performance. This was my first real experience of tripartite interaction in Digital Live Art – or rather the interactions that occur when one transitions from unwitting observer to witting participant and then on to performer (Sheridan et al. 2004). The performative experience, and my reflection of it, became the underpinnings of the evaluation methods and theories of performative interaction, wittingness and the Digital Live Art framework that I still use today. I elaborate on these methods and theories in the next Section.

16.3.3 Modelling Digital Live Art

My experience at Art-Cels introduced to the field of HCI two performative concepts: first, the concept of performance framing; and second, a description of the transitions in observer-participant-performer interaction in Digital Live Art. The concept of performance framing was first identified by Gregory Bateson in 1955, although Goffman's (1974) ethnographic research of performance framing is the most widely referenced in HCI. In using Bateson's description of the performance frame (e.g. a cognitive context where all the rules of behaviour, symbols, and their interpretations are bound within a particular activity within its own structure) against the backdrop of the Art-Cels wearable performances, I proposed the following fundamental questions for evaluating Digital Live Art:

- How are observer, participant and performer relationships negotiated using digital technology?
- How does one transition between observer, participant and performer with and without using digital technology?
- What effect does context and environment have on these negotiations and transitions?

I created a visual representation of these questions called the Performance Triad Model (Fig. 16.2).

For the next several years, I collaborated with academics to expand and improve the Performance Triad Model and to introduce a descriptive framework for considering people's wittingness, technical skill, and interpretive abilities (Table 16.1) (Sheridan 2006; Benford et al. 2006) in the fields of: formal methods (Dix et al. 2005); human-computer interaction (Sheridan et al. 2007); tangible interaction (Sheridan and Bryan-Kinns 2008); pervasive and ubiquitous computing among others. The evaluation criteria can be used at any stage of the design process or even when reviewing submissions for a live performance event. For example, when thinking

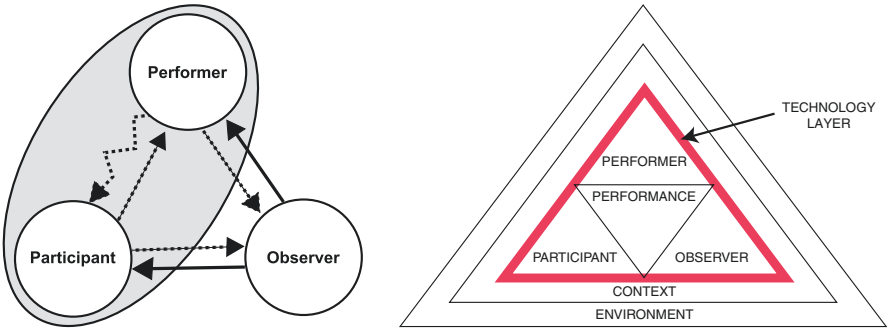

Fig. 16.2 Model of tripartite interaction (*left*) and the Performance Triad Model (*right*) first introduced in (Sheridan et al. 2004) which formed the evaluation criteria of performative interaction, wittingness and Digital Live Art (Sheridan 2006)

Table 16.1 Criteria for evaluating transitions in performative interaction

	'Front of house' behaviours		
	Wittingness	Technical	Interpretive
Performing	How does one manipulation the performance frame?	What are the skills required to manipulate the frame?	How does one make the performative activity uniquely their own (embodiment of skill)?
Participating	How does one choose to enter into framed behaviour?	How does one acquire and execute simple routines to interact with the system and others?	How does one lack the interpretative skill of performance (do not attempt to convey meaning through interaction)?
Spectating	How does one become aware of the performance frame, and why do they choose to enter as an observer?	What are the indications that one is choosing not to demonstrate any skill with respect to the performance frame?	What are the indications that one is choosing not to attempt to convey meaning with respect to the performance frame?
Bystanding	What are the indicators that one is unaware of performance frame?	What are the indications that no technical ability is being applied?	What are the indications that one is not making attempts to convey meaning?

about how to design a performance one can use the criteria to evaluate how a person who is unaware of the performance frame might become aware of the frame and thus choose whether or not to join in the performance. The criteria works equally well when applied after the performance to consider whether or not the design was successful in encouraging this transition.

Interestingly, my models and criteria were initially rejected from several Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) conferences; despite comments on how well written, the reviewers did not see the research as adding value to the field of HCI (see *Discussion* in Sheridan et al. 2004). One reviewer asked how the interaction was different to interaction with an ATM machine (!), and another asked how the interaction was different to wearing a 'kick me' sign on one's back. Despite how ridiculous these comments seem now, what is important to note here is that these reviews confront an important aspect of evaluation: perceived value. In my initial attempts, I was unsuccessful in convincing the reviewers of the value of the emerging research, and as such, the reviewers in turn saw accepting the paper as a too high-risk. But…

16.4 Where There's Rejection, There's Opportunity

At this point, I could have abandoned this line of inquiry but instead, my experience with the actors involved, the overwhelming attendance figures, and my background research convinced me that there was indeed an opportunity worth pursuing. I recognized that what was missing was greater legitimacy of the value of the research to both the Arts and Computing communities.

The Arts and Humanities has a history of theoretical writing on performance-technology crossovers, for example Auslander's (1999) discussions of live performance and music; Saltz's (1997) and Rush's (1999) descriptions of interactivity, performativity, and computers; and, Hill and Paris' (2001) research on guerrilla performance and multimedia. In addition, Art-Cels gave me the opportunity to meet and invite a local university lecturer writing about technology and Art to interview Stelarc (Giannachi 2004). I realised that in order to further validate my research, I would need to reach out to someone from the Arts and Humanities who would champion the work in that particular field. As such, I enlisted a researcher from the Arts and Humanities to assist in re-writing parts of the paper and it was accepted a year later (Sheridan et al. 2004).

16.4.1 Public Acceptance as a Measure of Value

In Public Art, the value of public acceptance (and in some cases rejection) cannot be underestimated. Although timing is an important factor, it an element that is hard to predict and as such external influences can categorize potential innovative research as too high-risk. For example, when funding is released for a particular area of research or pushed by a particular agenda, then unless one shifts with these movements, one risks being unfunded or underfunded. However, part of Digital Arts Entrepreneurship is to use evaluation to convince others that what one is doing is a low-risk activity, whilst still being valuable. This requires one to be resourceful,

and is a hallmark of Digital Arts Entrepreneurship; my work with the collective .:thePooch:. is a good illustration of being resourceful to increase value.

.:thePooch:. continued its collaborative activities for several years, producing a growing body of artwork, exhibits, and network of people. Yet several attempts to obtain funding through the usual academic routes were unsuccessful, as the work was seen as too risky to fund. We collectively had an unwavering determination to continue our activities despite the rejection, so we either self-funded our work, or funded our activities with 'left-over' bits of funding from other people's projects. In the latter case, the sharing of resources often meant a sharing of ownership. In other words, if we agreed to take a bit of funding to exhibit the artwork or activity, then we agreed to whomever gave us the funding that they could communicate their involvement in our activities. Perhaps I'm stating the obvious here, but it is indeed a very important point in Digital Arts Entrepreneurship and one that must be addressed going forward:

> To be successful in Digital Arts Entrepreneurship one needs to understand how to manage risk and opportunity with ownership.

Why is this important to evaluation? Well, with each new funded exhibition, artwork or performance, I was able to conduct an evaluation and therefore not only improve the evaluation criteria first explained in the Performance Triad Model but also integrate it with research that was following a particular agenda or research area (as in Table 16.1). Doing so increased the acceptance of my activities among researchers in field of HCI and the work began to be seen as a low-risk activity.

When .:thePooch:.'s work began being perceived as a low-risk activity, we were pursued by Arts agencies wanting to manage us; photographs of our work began appearing in university PR campaigns; and, academics began writing about us in textbooks and papers. In other words, our repeated activities convinced my communities that my research was not only worth pursuing but valuable. Around the same time, similar performance-technology explorations in the UK, such as mixed-reality games (Koleva et al. 2001; Flintham et al. 2003) as described in Chap. 13 ("Evaluation in Public Art: The Light Logic Exhibition"), by Alarcon-Diaz et al. (2014) were gaining wide support not just in Computing and academia, but more importantly, winning attention from the Arts and the general public. This endorsement from the Arts and the general public signalled a shift change:

> Performance-technology crossovers have shifted from high-risk to low-risk activities and have emerged as a way of demonstrating value in Digital Arts.

And then a curious thing happened.

16.5 Stranger Things Have Happened

What happened next, signalled a step change and the chance for seeding new ideas and opportunities: .:thePooch:. experienced a period of organic growth where people who weren't even part of our collective began saying that they were. I became a

"witting observer" (Sheridan 2006) of our success. These transitions in performative behaviour (Sheridan 2006; Sheridan et al. 2007) signalled an awakening of my entrepreneurial thinking.

Unwittingly, after several years of developing unfunded and mostly self-directed research, I turned rejection into an opportunity. I was driven not just by a belief or thinking that what I was doing was significant, but more importantly by having to convince others that an opportunity existed and bringing those on board who were ready to support my claim. In any case, armed with my now established network of respected actors, and the general perception that my activity was low-risk and popular – I began the laying the groundwork for defining the field of Digital Live Art (Sheridan 2006), and unwittingly, Digital Arts Entrepreneurship.

This success signalled the next significant turning point in my entrepreneurial journey: the question became: *Can I make a living by doing and creating Digital Live Art?* For some people, the thought of leaving behind a steady income, an emerging academic career, and even the idea of becoming a 'corporate' producer of Digital Live Art was being a 'sell-out' and undesirable. For me however, my entrepreneurial spirit kicked into high gear and what was once a body of informal research now became a full-time pursuit. BigDog Interactive[11] was formed.

Soon after, interest and funding for the Digital Arts in the UK increased almost overnight with new platform grants, centres and training programmes emerging across the country (see Chap. 13 "Evaluation in Public Art: The Light Logic Exhibition", Alarcon et al. 2014). As I continued to publish my work in academic circles, combining my original model with my collaborative work emerging through Equator (Dix et al. 2005; Benford et al. 2006) I noted that the number of lines of inquiry, particularly in the area of performative interaction in HCI, were both increasing and splintering at the same time (Jacucci 2004; Reeves et al. 2005). This signalled another opportunity. Despite the amount of theoretical writing going on, there was an opportunity to develop new design thinking and practice. During this time, I came up with the idea of Chindogu Challenge[12] (2005) – an extreme unuseless prototyping event, after running several internal events through .:thePooch:. such as Scrapcomp Challenge (2002) and No One Opens Attachments Anymore (2003). The event was a kind of 'hackfest' for human-computer interaction academics with the purpose of challenging them to use an unfamiliar creative framework to develop Chindogu (Fig. 16.3). Importantly, each team was asked to perform at several points during the event; at least one member of the group had to participate in a 'Boast Off', which meant that they had to stand in front of all of the other groups and boast about how they were going to win the challenge because their design was fantastic. This proved to be a hugely popular and quite a humorous part of the event.

Once again, I became the witting observer of my success: Chindogu Challenge caught international attention. In seeding the concept, it was starting to get repeated by others without my involvement – it was growing organically and with it, its value. This shift in value and growth, i.e. the perception that high-risk activity was

[11] http://www.bigdoginteractive.com

[12] http://www.thepooch.com/Events/chindogu.htm

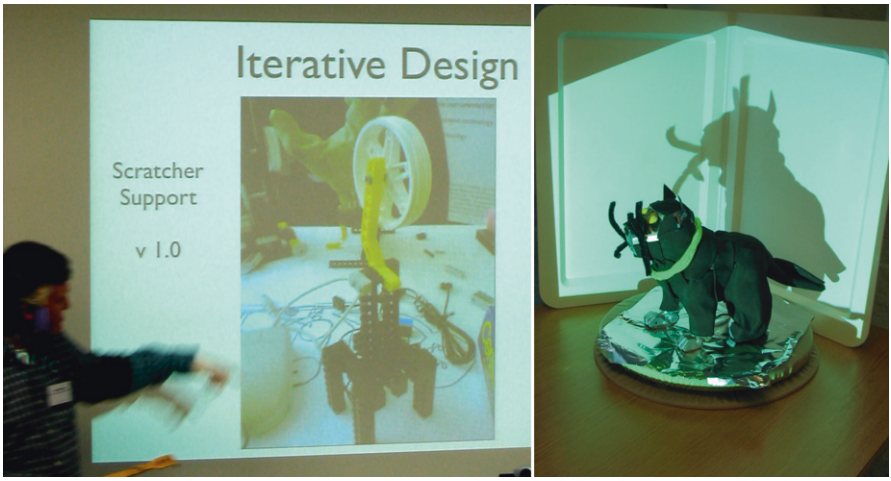

Fig. 16.3 Chindogu Challenge is a hackfest of creativity, computing and Art and includes the performative 'Boast Off' (*left*) and results in designed Chindogu (*right*) (©2005 .:thePooch:.)

beginning to shift to low-risk, signalled to me that it was perfect time to do something high-risk that would be perceived as low-risk. So, I took my body of research and created a new opportunity – the (re)Actor Conference Series on Digital Live Art.[13] Without any funding to support the events, I found venues that would provide the space, and approached the people who were echoing my research: in the first instance the leading annual human-computer interaction conference in Europe (British Computer Society Conference on Human Computer Interaction, BCS-HCI established in 1985), which could then provide a high-value network of people. More importantly, doing so allowed me to provide small commissions or subsidize some artists to attend and perform at the events.

This is a key point. Often the number of unfunded and underfunded people with high quality and high-risk Digital Arts performances and installations far outweigh funded people who come to the event and show poor quality, low-risk demonstrations. Digital Arts demonstrations often feel like a sideshow, rather than the work being an end in itself. The problem here is that presenting poor-quality (but often well-funded) demonstrations as Digital Art devalues Digital Art in general. It is absolutely vital to begin to use evaluation criteria, like those presented in this chapter, for critically analysing, selecting and teaching about work that best represents high quality Digital Art, or we risk devaluing the field.

Indeed, in creating (re)Actor, I was selecting, reading, watching, hearing (essentially living and breathing) Digital Live Art. Over time, I was unwittingly developing a keen sense for not only spotting an opportunity, but also evaluating the opportunity for others. In performing entrepreneurship, I was balancing the perceived risk and value for all people involved, quite a heavy (and often thankless)

[13] http://www.digitalliveart.com

task, and not unlike the curatorial activities described in Chap. 15 ("Curating Digital Public Art") by Turnbull and Connell (2014).

Although the Digital Live Art conference series was originally intended to be more like Art-Cels where anyone could turn up and perform in any manner they wished, because I had sought to fund the conference by running it in partnership with a larger conference series (BCS-HCI), the submissions went through a vetting process. It was then that I (and the other reviewers) began applying my own evaluation criteria to select the best work. The evaluation process applied the criteria from the Performance Triad Model, and most importantly that the work must allow for tripartite performative interaction:

- How does the work allow for people to experience the transitions between observing, participating and performing?
- If it does not, how can we suggest they change the work to do so?

In many cases, the artists and academics who submitted work requested that their work be shown as a demonstration, interactive installation or an exhibition piece, but certainly not a performance. Indeed when I suggested that they re-submit the work as a performance, most immediately rejected the idea or expressed discomfort at the idea. However, it simply did not make sense to me to curate an event deemed 'Digital Live Art' where most of the works were interactive installations or demonstrations without any real performance at all. And using my own Performance Triad Model, it was easy for me to see how many of the submissions would benefit from being pushed into a live, performative context.

16.5.1 Pushing Performance Creates Digital Arts Entrepreneurs

The performative event that I co-curated at the Berkeley Art Museum (BAM) for Creativity and Cognition 2009, is a great example of how pushing for performance leads to Digital Arts Entrepreneurship. The evening event began in the BAM theatre – a space designed for happenings in the 1960s. Several live performances took place, however, I will highlight two that I thought worked particularly well as Digital Live Art. Jay Silver's staged performance *Nature as Interface: MacGyvering Interactivity with Trees, Pencils, Grandpa, Even the Kitchen Sink* (Silver 2009) was originally submitted as an installation but I asked him if he could create a staged performance of the work. In the days leading up to the event, Jay created a performance that invited audience members on stage with him to perform by turning everyday objects such as fruit, into musical instruments. Not only did Jay's performance prove popular that evening but also he has gone on to be hugely successful in performing Digital Arts Entrepreneurship after a very popular Kickstarter campaign).

Likewise, Di Mainstone's (Fig. 16.4) work which investigates the landscape between ad-hoc performance, communal experience and wearable architectures, first came to my attention when she submitted her work to the Third (re)Actor conference

Fig. 16.4 Di Mainstone's *Shareware* performed at (re)Actor3 (Photography by Pixelwitch ©BigDog Interactive)

series as a demonstration or installation. Again, I pushed for her to perform the work rather than simply exhibit it and she agreed and since then she has gone on to create and perform an enormous body of work including a performance at CC'09 *Addressing the Unexpected* (Mainstone 2009).

I, by no means, am taking credit for their successes! My point here is that both Jay and Di embraced the challenge to perform and were able to manage the risk and validate their work in front of a critical audience. I'm quite certain that neither of them performed the work in the context of the dictionary definition of an *entrepreneur* i.e. to make money. Yet both are shining examples of the new breed of artist who is exploring Digital Arts Entrepreneurship using a different approach to my own. However like my own practice, and from my perspective, both Jay and Di have always unwittingly performed entrepreneurship.

As the popularity and opportunities for performing Digital Live Art have increased, such the exemplified in the popularity of the (re)Actor conference series, one would expect that I would be elated to sit back and watch it grow. But oddly, I feel quite the opposite. Instead, without really understanding why, I constantly have a nagging and overwhelming craving to shift gears.

16.6 Time to Move On

Several years have passed since I began, albeit unwittingly, exploring Digital Arts Entrepreneurship. I am happy to report that in those years many of the people that I have worked with or supported have shown their Digital Art displayed at significant

venues while others have gone on to enjoy prestigious commercial, artistic or academic careers. But this is not a measure of value for Digital Arts Entrepreneurship. I, like many others actively performing entrepreneurship, am less interested in the glossy photos, citations, or even stable job that often follows success – no matter how attractive it may seem.

> Performing entrepreneurship is about the boundless pursuit of high-risk, (perceived) low-value opportunity and turning it on its head.

And this is a necessary part of the Digital Arts Entrepreneurship journey, albeit a difficult one:

> When low-risk, high value perception is achieved, it's time to move on.

With this in mind, I urge readers to consider the part that Digital Arts Entrepreneurship plays in academia, artistic practice and industry, and in the spaces in between. For me, Digital Arts Entrepreneurship:

- Provides a social eco-system for encouraging and gestating high-risk activities and flourishes in high-risk and (perceived) low-value environments;
- Uses evaluation to turn an idea into an opportunity;
- Uses evaluation to convince others that what one is doing is a low-risk activity, whilst still being valuable;
- Involves performing entrepreneurship through mediating wittingness, technical skill and interpretive skill;
- Includes curating or balancing the perceived risk and value for all people involved;
- Builds value through high-risk activities.

As I finish writing this chapter, I embark on a new stage in my Digital Arts Entrepreneurship journey, one that involves numerous emerging points, such as navigating complex legal issues and understanding investment. However, I will leave these issues for another chapter.

Because once again, I've got that nagging feeling. It's time to move on.

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