TERRY FLAXTON, HIGH DEFINITION IMAGING - SCHEDULE OF WORKS

To explore the developing aesthetic arising from the introduction of High Definition Imaging equipment I shall be creating a series of Installations for public exhibition which will be made with High Definition equipment.

This work will be characterised by a blurring of the lines between actual and virtual, performance and audience. These installations are conceived of as a cumulative series of experiments each of which will test out the exhibition and performative potentialities of high definition imaging.

I shall try as much as possible to exhibit standard definition versions of the works in close proximity to the HD equivalents so that I might question the audience on what they have witnessed to try to extract a sense of difference that may articulate the developing aesthetic. There are many problems associated with any methodology that tries to gather information, and as this is in fact a creative fellowship I have undertaken I shall not try to create an archaeological representation of the documentation. In fact I might take the 'data' and turn that into an installation if I feel that that might unveil greater truths than any standard statistical fact finding methodology.

One problem in exhibiting two versions of a work is the overall lessening of impact two will produce. One will convey the central idea of the work - two may dilute the effect. However, I shall be reflecting on what is to be achieved and how I achieve that over time and experience.

In addition, in making observations of the effect of the work on the audience I will be trying to create fertile material to assist in theorising the work. Whilst previously exhibiting *The Dinner Party,* I noticed the appearance of an accidental moment when some members of the interacting "audience" caught sight of a monitor showing the output of a security camera that happened to be trained on the room. I noticed that the audience became fascinated with the surveillance of the acts of others (and therefore themselves) while engaged with the work. Here I can sense a further layer of performativity and aim to look more deeply into the nature of audience response.

By producing a series of related works within the same landscape, I aim to give myself multiple, yet subtly different, opportunities to observe audience response, and thereby formulate a deeper theoretical understanding.

What follows is the proposal made to the AHRC which will of course change over time if I feel I can get further, faster into the research area. It strikes me immediately that I can accomplish some of the earlier goals by combining the Dinner Party outlined below and In Other People's Skins. I already have agreements from Wells Cathedral, Bristol, Gloucester, Winchester Cathedrals and Bath Abbey to exhibit In Other People's Skins in its HD form from February 2008 which will necessitate production of the piece in autumn 2007. I will of course exhibit the standard definition version of the Dinner Party at Bristol this autumn. Another possibility is taking the HD version of the

Dinner Party to UCLA and the American Society of Cinematographers and collaborating with British companies like Quantel and American companies like Red Technologies to exhibit an industry testing platform. I would also like to involve Lucasfilm and Industrial Light and Magic.

Other concerns are already arising: I have a proposal in with various institutions to accomplish a telematic version of the Dinner Party in three places around the world - Bristol, Milan and San Francisco, so, though telematics through web streaming technologies is outside of the current proposal, some preliminary work on standard definition telematics may eventuate an HD version before the end of the Fellowship, which will have greatly expanded the level of outcome over and above that already proposed to the AHRC.

All installations will be initially exhibited in the UoB Department of Drama. I am currently developing the following proposals for this project :-

- To begin the creation of a High Definition version of my previously exhibited piece, *The Dinner Party*.

  The Dinner Party is a projection from above a table of a dinner party.
  On the actual 'physical' table there is only a white table cloth and white plates - the knives and forks, the food, and the interacting hands of the guests are virtual. Eight chairs are placed around the table and the live audience are invited to sit and 'take a meal'. A dinner party strikes up naturally, social boundaries are crossed and dinner party conventions - of affable discourse, mainly concerning both the real and the virtual, ensue. For a description, images and short QuickTime movie go to.:
  http://www.ignitionfilms.org/aglmovie7.html

  I will re-shoot this installation in High Definition, in order to articulate much more strongly all of the virtual artefacts on the table. The suspension of disbelief is one of the central issues in visual representation. I wish to engage the students and staff of the Department Of Drama to explore and develop further performative elements of *The Dinner Party,* so that it becomes a devised performance in which the same actors can interrelate in both the virtual and the "live" realm.

- The results of this experiment will then be carried forward into the industrial sector. I will re-shoot *The Dinner Party* on three competing High Definition Formats: Varicam HD 720 line, HD Cam 10 bit on SR recorder and Viper Filmstream 12 bit - these represent a current hierarchy of High Definition formats which have never been screened side by side. With the collaboration of industry partners through the BKSTS, I will convene the first ever side-by-side test. Three dinner tables means that attending cinematographers can sit at and view the presentation, inches away from the images. I have previously presented research into High Definition at the National Film Theatre and will seek to extend the discourse with my industry colleagues. In addition, I aim to

use industry networks to mount the experiment in Los Angeles and/or New York through the American Association of Cinematographers.

- *Bed*. A bed on which the 'viewer' will be invited to lie. On the bed next to them, under the covers, an image of an old man sleeping (alternated with an old woman). Here (with reference to Paul Sermon's 1990 work, Telematic Dreaming), I wish to introduce another element into the installation: a performer who will improvise the role of an audience member and thus become an agent provocateur. He/she can engage the other audience members; they might, for example, climb under the covers and start speaking to the virtual image as if they were a relative that has passed on. The installation now becomes performance.

- *Water Table.* Projected onto a table, we see images of crashing waves from cliff tops which have been stretched and manipulated digitally. The aim is to abstract the notion of the natural into formal compositions accompanied by a digitally enhanced soundtrack. The edge of the table is covered with large pebbles taken from a beach and the audience is encouraged to touch. I will again involve performers in the installation to 'disrupt' the exhibition nature of the event.

- *Dance Floor*. This installation is projected directly on to the floor (on a white plastic screen some 12 feet by 7 feet). The live audience views the real size performers from around the edges. Audience will become actual performers as they use the dance floor to interact with their virtual counterparts.

- *Falling*. Again experimenting with movement and the borders of the virtual and actual, but this time creating a dark exhibition space in which images are projected onto frosted Perspex. The audience would see 6 glowing sheets suspended at different heights between floor and ceiling at differing angles, some below, some above. On the sheets a man and a woman appear in frame and move and perform for a while before diving out of frame - this happening all around as an audience can freely move around the space.

- *White Room.* This is literally a room painted white in which common white goods stand: the table, the sofa, the fridge, a kitchen surface, the carpet. All of these will be used as screens which can be projected onto with images of domestic living - hands cutting vegetables on the kitchen cupboards and a cutting block, a cat on the sofa. If the fridge is opened it displays the virtual contents. The room is a staged space in which performers covered head to foot in white - will interrelate with the virtual objects.

- Over the period of the fellowship I will undertake three further installations to develop and explore the themes and technical potential that may have emerged. It is in the nature of this kind of artistic experimentation that the exact delineation of these projects is not yet clear. But in outline I propose: *Buffet*, a large scale extension of *The Dinner Party* in a major public space (a

railway station for instance!); *Virtually There*, a multi cultural exploration of presence and absence; *In Other People's Skins,* a virtual Last Supper (I am already in negotiation with the Bishop of Bath and Wells about mounting it in Wells Cathedral – other churches will be approached to further increase its public dissemination)

I have a clear set of targets to reach throughout each year of the fellowship which we have already agreed as an initial set of quarterly milestones:-

Sept - Dec 2007

- Audio-visual presentation explaining the aims and ambitions of the fellowship: to staff and students of Bristol University.
- Exhibit Standard Definition version of *The Dinner Party.*
- Shoot a High Definition version of *The Dinner Party*.
- Begin research *White Cities.*

Jan - June 2008

- Exhibit HD version of *The Dinner Party* - shoot coverage of this and generate a DVD to document results.
- Continue research and interviews for *White Cities.*
- Shoot the footage for *Bed* in High Definition.
- Public presentation of project at the Watershed Media Centre

July - Dec 2008

- Exhibit *Bed* in High Definition.
- Shoot the footage for *Water Table* in High Definition.
- Start some initial work on editing the interviews and footage I've gathered for *White Cities* and examine the feasibility of making more of the footage than a simple archive in consultation with Saint Martin's. From now on the shooting and editing of this footage, together with the preparation into QuickTime files for the web will be ongoing.
- Hold Seminar on High Definition at the Cube Cinema for South West filmmakers.
- Shoot footage for the industry version (High HD version) of *The Dinner Party*.
- Exhibit *Water Table* in High Definition.

Jan - June 2009

- Post Produce footage for industry version of *Dinner Party.*
- Write 1st article for the Journal Of Media Practice.
- Exhibit industry version of *Dinner Party* at appropriate site e.g. The National Film Theatre, London.
- Continue research and interviews for *White Cities.*

- Present research in papers at relevant conference (MECSSA/AMPE and SCUDD).

July - Dec 2009

- Exhibit *The Dinner Party* at the American Society of Cinematographers in Los Angeles.
- Shoot *Dance Floor.*
- Presentational event for academic and industry colleagues on the interim conclusions of my research at Bristol University.
- Write 2nd article for the Journal Of Media Practice.
- Shoot *White Room.*
- Continue research and interviews for *White Cities.*
- Exhibit *Dance Floor.*

Jan - June 2010

- Shoot and exhibit *Virtually There.*
- Write last presentation papers for the relevant subject association conferences e.g. MECSSA/AMPE and SCUDD.
- Shoot *Falling.*
- Exhibit *White Room.*
- Write third and final article in the Journal Of Media Practice (JMP), about the overall research conclusions.
- Continue research and interviews for *White Cities.*
- To bring to a conclusion the web and DVD resource.

July - Sept 2010

- Exhibit *Buffet* at Temple Meads railway station or similar venue.
- Presentational event at Bristol University for academic and industry colleagues on High Definition Imaging and the art and performance spheres.
- Exhibition at Arnolfini of collected installation work.
- Complete and deliver manuscript of *White Cities.*

<u>Publication and Dissemination</u>

1. Continuous exhibitions of performative and installation artwork for gallery audiences.

2. Three articles for publication for the *Journal of Media Practice* which chart the issues and conclusions of this research fellowship.

3. Public presentations in Year One and Year Two.

4. Presentations to academic, creative and industry colleagues at two different stages of the research, one in Year Two and one in Year Three.

5. A public exhibition of the installations at the end of Year Three.

6. A book on High Definition to be published by MiT Press at the end of year three.

Audio and video recordings over the three years made available both as an online resource and on DVD.