

AHRC ICT Methods Network Student Bursary Awards

DRHA (Digital Resources for the Humanities and Arts) Conference Dartington College of Arts, 3 - 6 September 2006

CONFERENCE REPORT

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I greatly enjoyed my experience of the DRHA 2006 conference at Dartington – and that is not just because the setting was beautiful and the food delicious. The moonlit walks back to my room across the grounds were a tranquil interlude in what was a very busy and varied programme.

I found the key-note speakers very stimulating and their talks gave me an insight into ideas about the technological/digital world that were both new and challenging – at times even controversial. The plethora of choices for the parallel sessions made for difficult decisions with venues so spread out over the Dartington campus. There were also a number of valuable presentations from organizations like the AHRC ICT Methods Network and INTUTE. The JISC Oxford-based initiative 'Building a Virtual Research Environment for the Humanities' (BVREH) was also very helpful to me – as were my conversations with some of the participants working on this programme.

As a maker I valued the presentation from Rebecca Roke of Melbourne on the 'crafted' sensibility and the application of technology to developing large-scale public artwork. The use of video, technology and dance was a new area for me as my background is practical craft/art and this gave me some ideas about performance that might relate to the public display of my own work.

I particularly enjoyed making contacts with the many artists present for the first time at this conference. The work displayed was of a very high standard both in concept and execution. Among the digital installations on show, I was particularly impressed by the beautiful new media art installation by Michael Takeo Magruder of the King's College 3D Visualization Unit. *DATA_COSM* streamed the BBC's Internet news into a continuously changing 3D virtual globe of fractured images and strange ambient sounds. Also impressive was *WILL-o-WISP* in which video tracking of the viewer allowed a transient presence in sparks of light to move and explode across the screen. At once both human and immaterial.

I think the partnership of art and the humanities could have fruitful consequences once the practical difficulties of integrating the two presences into the proceedings are overcome. It was a case of *so much to do and so little time*. I would have liked two days more to cover all the areas offered and I am still absorbing the ideas I gained from the new fields of work I encountered.

I am thankful to the Methods Network for giving me the opportunity to attend DRHA.