

AHRC ICT Methods Network Student Bursary Awards

**CHArt (Computers and the History of Art) Conference
Fast Forward - Art History, Curation and Practice after Media**
Birkbeck College, University of London, 9 – 10 November 2006

CONFERENCE REPORT

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PhD Title: What is the Social Focus of Interactive Digital Art?

This short report summarises the benefits obtained from the bursary award supporting my attendance of CHArt.

It was good to be able to attend a conference with so many Ph.D. students giving papers. Many of the conferences I attend as a research student can feel slightly inaccessible to students with little or no experience of presenting. It was also beneficial for me to see the ways in which other students disseminate their ideas, and through this process highlight some of the methods they are using in their research.

It was interesting that many of the presentations were not contextualised through personal practice, but were theory-led and referenced specific projects as cases of support. This approach offered me a greater insight into historical and curatorial approaches to presenting research and practice. Within my own research, I focus on ways of evaluating my work from a practitioner's perspective, contextualising it with theory. I gathered knowledge of other approaches to this from the CRUMB panel session (*Approaches to the Practice of Curating New Media Art*, Sarah Cook, Beryl Graham and Ele Carpenter, CRUMB, University of Sunderland, UK), and also Simon Pope's presentation (Cardiff School of Art and Design, Wales, *CHARADE: The Peer-To-Peer Distribution of Media Assets Into the Public at Large*). Both presentations discussed practice as being inherently social, and looked at ways in which dialogue could be developed through practice. Maria Chatzichristodoulou's presentation (Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK, *When Presence and Absence Turn into Pattern and Randomness: Can You See Me Now?*) had many parallels with my own research in her approach to evaluating and defining states of presence and absence. I was particularly interested in the way she looked at performance and understood events to be 'live' works.

Apart from the presentations, CHArt gave me the opportunity to meet my peers socially, and make contacts that will be useful in the future.