

EDITORIAL

On the technology of Liveness

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The diversity of submissions for the 2016 International Conference on Live Interfaces has demonstrated that there is a demand for an interdisciplinary conference that focuses on the role of technology in artistic expression. The biennial ICLI conference was first held in Leeds in 2012 and then Lisbon in 2014, chaired by Alex McLean and Adriana Sá respectively. The conference has engaged with how artists apply interface technologies (a word equally denoting methods and objects) in live performance. The question is one of the interface and its manifold relationships, for example between the performer and the work, between a composer and the audience, between a choreographer and a dancer, or indeed between audience members. With the omnipresence of digital technologies in artistic practices, questions regarding the real-time become increasingly pertinent, as the technology itself can be embedded with intelligence, script, or learning mechanisms.

When employing computational interface technologies in the performing arts, we face diverse problems in relation to how meaningful the performance technology is to the audience. Topics of liveness, immediacy and presence, as well as mediation, signification and expression are critical and questioned in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role contemporary technologies play in contemporary human expression. With this conference on live interfaces we explore the philosophy of interface design in its instantiation in the diverse art forms, convinced that an interdisciplinary gathering of people will produce insights and dialogue difficult to achieve otherwise.

Following the broad themes and concerns enveloped by live interfaces, our call for participation carried an expansive list of conference topics. We felt the breadth of this list was necessary to cover the rich spectrum of practices in live interfaces, and also to reflect the wide interests of our keynote speakers, coming from fields as diverse as those of puppetry, dance, magic/illusionism, and musical instrument design. The call attracted a large volume of submissions, 142 in total across all submission categories. We felt that each submission should have at least three reviewers in order to maintain a high standard, so we sought additional reviewing expertise from the community of academics and artists who submitted work to the conference. With this fresh influx we were able to give at least three peer reviews to all submissions, and we would like to extend our gratitude to all of our PC members for contributing their time and expertise to the peer review process.

For us, it has been a privilege to see the quality, creativity and diversity of work that is presented at ICLI 2016. In particular, different interpretations of 'interface technology' challenge our preconceptions of how digital media and computing might shape the future of live performance. This raises questions of how interface technologies establish themselves as integral parts of performance and where in the creative process they sit. The presentations, performances, and installations during ICLI 2016 explore the concept of 'interface' through many forms of expression; including philosophy, design, craft, sound, music, visual art, sculpture and dance. We are excited to be involved in creating this platform for an interdisciplinary dialogue on topic so essential to contemporary artistic practice.