[foam] [newsletter] [one.2004]

colophon

Written in utf-8 text, typeset in 8 point Gill Sans and 14 point Gill Sans BoldItallic at foam brussels, using software populations clustered in sets and subsets, visualised in graphs, with sporadic assistence from encapitulated postscript. A speech-text-touch mechanism was built for storytelling within a schizoparanoid-kafkaesque intelligence to fight beuracracies with stories and numbers. Through this ambient augmentation of shared spaces the writing process resulted in humans as paintbrushes (ie. the contributing authors followed the principles open src democracy in a series of expeditions to shipwrecked submarines). No microscopic blackholes in dark chocolate and luxury watches were harmed by nomadic collaborative visualisation. We guarantee that the intimate technologies utilised for the generation of the graphics will not become weapons of mass distraction, nor creative spam. If you find the text in this document sounding too much like something from a physics textbook, remember pataphysics, superinduced on metaphysics and the science of imaginary solutions. This issue would not be possible without too many people calling dead things lifelike.

FoAM vzw
po box 488
Brussels b-1000
Belgium

http://f0.am

Stichting **FOAM**
po box 10868
1001 EW Amsterdam
Netherlands

info@f0.am

FoAM core team: maja Kuzmanovic, nik Gaffney, evelina Kusaite, nat Muller, cocky Eek, rachael Tempest

Supported by: Flemish Ministry of Culture, Belgium

con tents

"Light was real-but 99 per cent of reality's electro-magnetic spectrum was invisible. We could no longer pilot with our physical senses. We had henceforth to rely upon intellect and its power to invent and navigate with the instruments which could tune and scan the vast ranges of nonsensorially tunable reality."

Buckminster Fuller http://www.bfi.org/worlddesign/CompDesignSecI.pdf

2004: expeditions into tunable realities

Anyone who has tried growing their own worlds knows intuitively at the beginning and rationally towards the end of the process that 99% of these worlds remain invisible and potential. The range that ends up being actualised is the most feasible bit, while the quiescent magical landscapes lurk in the imaginary range, waiting for the right moment to bubble into existence. At FoAM, 2003 was one of those years in which the imaginary range has grown so far beyond the actualised one, that we need whole new systems to be put in place in order to cultivate it. We have laid low and seen it grow, until we found a substance that it would stick to, when moulded properly. The substance appeared to be around us all the time: matter, physical matter appeared to be the magnet that would attract all our worlds, smearing the imaginary through the real, making physical structures infused with an irreal morphogenesis, making them responsive to the events around them. What we need to develop now are situations that allow for different gradients of this infusion and an instrumentarium to be able to attune to frequencies that are of interest: at one point we might want equal immersion in both realities, while just a few steps further along the path, the physical environments might need our full attention (say, when crossing a wobbly bridge with nothing to hold onto), or we might want to sit down and flood our senses completely in the conjury of a simulated computational universe. Ideally, this is where we aim to arrive: in the place in which stories can become inflated into nonsensorial worlds and the worlds diffused into sensual reality.

Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.
- the White Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carol.

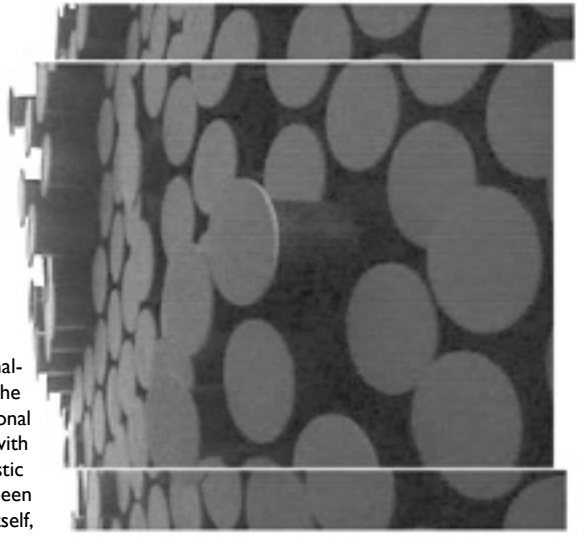
Such thoughts and many others, varying on the 'impossibility scale' have been leading our musings about the direction to take in the coming year and beyond. The infusion of the physical with the computational (and vice versa) was the topic that came to the fore. Although mixed reality was latently present in most our activities, it was never explicitly defined as our primary operating area. In 2004, we will start placing all our projects on a 'tangibility continuum' ranging from fully physical to fully computational, allowing us to particularly look at the gradients in between. For this purpose we are examining the feasibility of setting up a mixed reality laboratory with a high degree of scalability and portability, that can be used by our collaborators and partners for research and experiments in the cultural sphere (as an enhancement of public spaces, artistic concepts, gaming devices, therapeutic applications, visualisation of complex sociological issues, environmental simulations...).

Haptic Rendering—Beyond Visual Computing, a special issue of the IEEE CG&A coming out in March/April 2004 on haptic interfaces and force feedback devices to enhance human computer interaction: http://www.computer.org/cga/CFPMar04.htm

impossible thing no. 1: |ytA. impossibility scale: 3

The project that has driven the urgency for setting up a mixed reality laboratory is |ytA, a commissioned 'distance touch generator' for the Science Centre Phaeno in Wolfsburg. The installation should consist of two wall-like structures that can withstand about 100K children (of all ages) per year, (forcefully) touching their responsive surfaces and responding to touches of players (humans or processes) deforming a remote surface. Looking for all the modalities that are transmitted through touch, we are still finding new technologies emerging every day, sounding perfect in their specs, but still barely leaving the labs, having no guarantee for their durability. We have been looking for robust solutions that would provide a sense of intimacy and tangibility of touch; finding many dead ends, but also lots of promising pathways, particularly in the field of active materials (materials that respond to the changes in their surroundings). However, all of the ideas need long testing periods, simulating the situation in Phaeno as closely as possible, including public usability tests for long periods of time. A real-life laboratory. Possibly a mobile one that can temporarily be attached to an artificial muscle manufacturer, allowing us to test different components on the spot.

http://fo.am/lyt_A/
|yt_A team: Nik Gaffney, Lina Kusaite, Maja Kuzmanovic, Yon Visell, Todor Todoroff, Rachel Wingfield



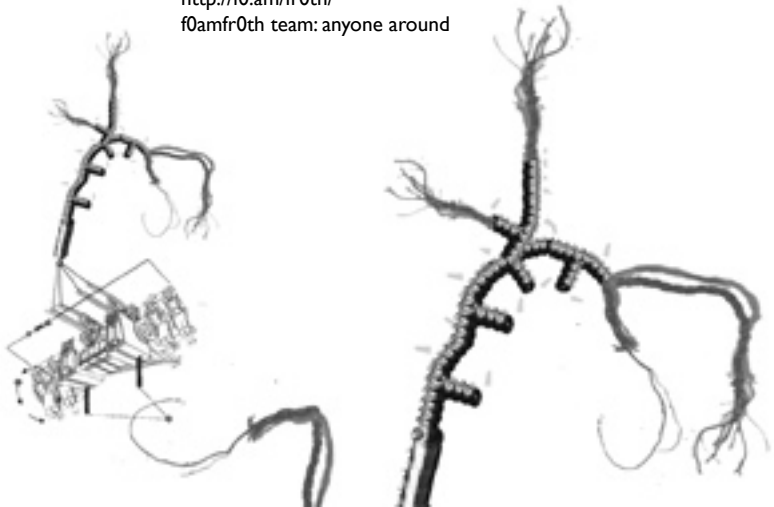
impossible thing no. 2: belgium. impossibility scale: 3.5

After a few years of roaming abroad, we have decided to explore our cradle city, Brüsel. It was unpredictably interesting and frustrating at the same time, possibly more challenging than designing the haptic feedback for |ytA. While it is known that Belgium cannot boast a large and well-networked new media scene as neighbouring countries (the Netherlands, France, Germany and the UK), there is certainly more to Belgian electronic art than meets the eye. These artists might not be so well represented in traditional art temples and established galleries, but they do form a buzzing community with their own initiatives and alliances stretching far beyond Belgium. We have collaborated with people from Argos, Code31, entropy8zuper, foton records, imal, looking glass, nadine and roomade, who helped us understand the Belgian reality and even become optimistic about it! It finally became clear why only the people with hard skins and a lot of patience work with new media in Belgium... With several of these organisations we have been hatching new exciting plans to strengthen the network of like-minded operators, working jointly towards a better visibility and appreciation of our field. A field which is itself, broad yet complementary, the common interest being the use of emerging technologies in the cultural sphere.

"Cette Cité est assurément la plus proche d'une ville de notre monde, puisque par bien des traits, Brüsel semble constituer un simple double de Bruxelles." http://www.urbicande.be/

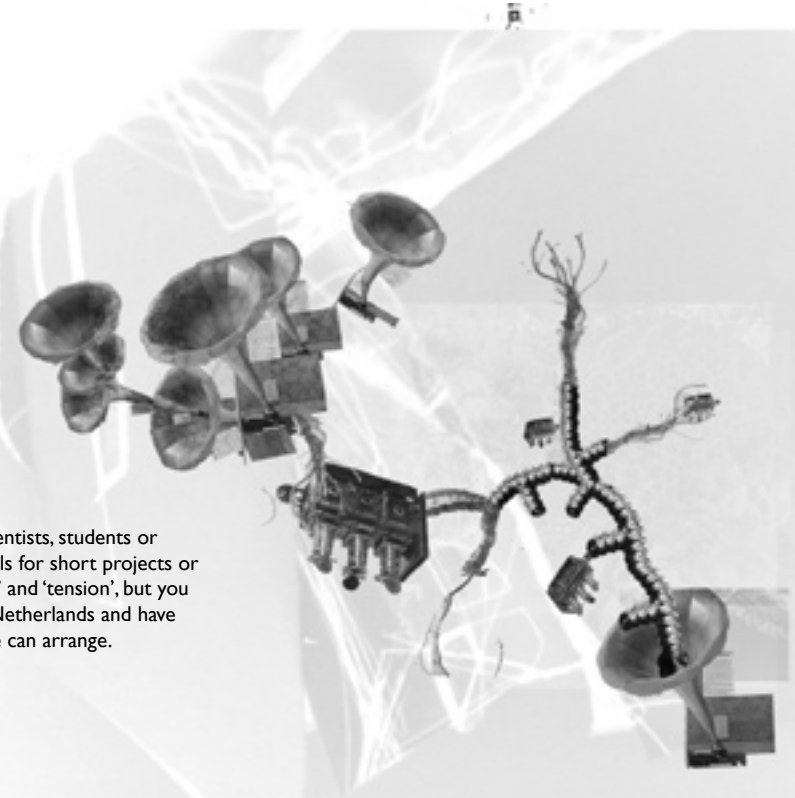
As the most fluid cell in this network, FoAM will embark on a few long term expeditions, continuing the quest for synaesthetic experiences in |ytA, human-biological-systemic sym-bio-sys in groWorld and trans-acoustic dynamics in gobX. Our year long journey to 'evolve', 'illumine' and 'nourish' has come to an end, but has opened doors to new travels into the thematic regions of 'drift' 'dynamics' and 'tension' in 2004. At home, we will accommodate our fellow explorers, staying with FoAM during their short trips and stopovers, participating in a new series of f0amfr0th events, in the shape of bite-size lunch-time lectures, creative workshops, miniature scientific symposia in Brussels underground and temporary magical zones.

http://f0.am/fr0th/
f0amfr0th team: anyone around



As in previous years, we are open for proposals from artists, scientists, students or otherwise motivated people. We are most interested in proposals for short projects or residencies within our three thematic priorities, 'drift', 'dynamics' and 'tension', but you can also let us know if you are passing through Belgium or the Netherlands and have something to perform, show, talk about and we can see what we can arrange.

proposals >> info@f0.am



Evolution and evolving has been one of our passions since the collective's embryonic stage. Although this theme had only two public outlets in 2003, txOom in the beginning of the year and the tiny Minutiae exhibition to close the programme, it has been a present topic on many TWiki pages (EvolutionaryProgramming, EvolutionaryRobotics, ArtificialLife, BioMimicry, CategoryBiology, MorphoGenesis and others).

Evolve

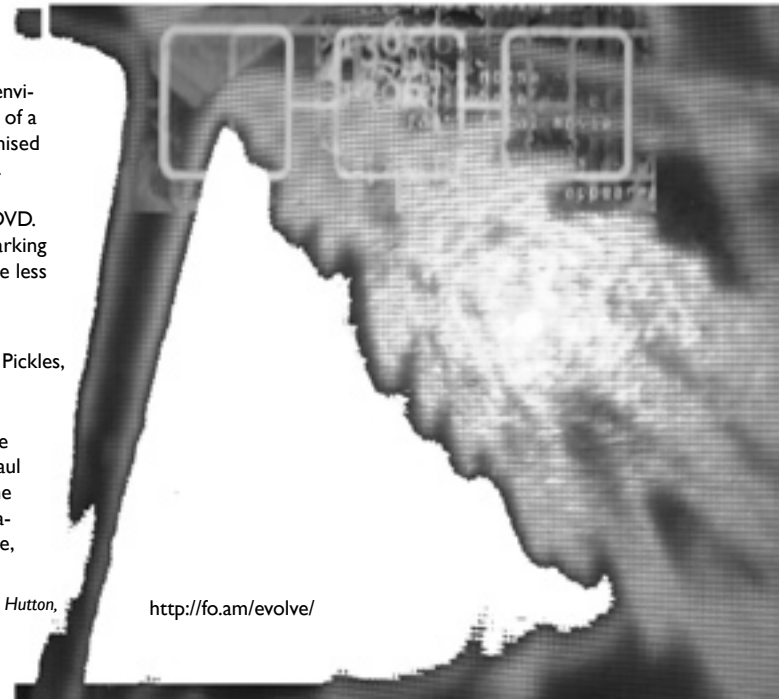
- the (process-as-lack-of-thingness)
- how to experimentally investigate and theoretically model software evolution: http://arxiv.org/abs/cond-mat/0307201
- selection of interesting papers on alife and evolution: http://www.reed.edu/~mab/papers.html

txOom occupied our evolutionary pathways in the beginning of the year. Our favorite partners Kibla and Time's Up presented their version of the responsive environment in a 'Balanced Act' in Maribor, which evolved the tx-system to include a series of force-feedback platforms on which the players would balance on top of a dynamically changing universe. We proceeded to follow our friends through the snow and wind to the Data Ecologies workshop in Linz, where Time's Up organised the last txOom workshop on 'physics as simulation and simulation of physics' (if you want weird science, follow the InformationPhysics topic on the Libarynth).
To end the project, we invited all the partners to Brussels and gave a long awaited decompression (symposium with keynote speeches by Michel Waisvisz and Theo Botschuiver and the final party with Synaesthesia records, code31 and farmersmanual), accompanied by txOom's freshly burned 'ecologies of the irreal' DVD.
Although the responsive environment research was only simmering in 2003, in the coming year, we are hoping to team up with Kibla and Time's Up again, embarking on an adventure to become Transient Reality Generators (producing yet another of our unpronouncable acronyms (although the south-Slavic speakers will have less problems with this one; TRG = 'square' in Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, etc.))

http://fo.am/txoom
txOom team: Cocky Eek, Nik Gaffney, Hiaz Gmachl, Lina Kusaite, Maja Kuzmanovic, Sia Kyriakakos, Nat Muller, Steven Pickles, Yon Visell, Todor Todoroff, Rachel Wingfield and many more...

The Minutiae exhibition by Catherine Watling and Brian McClave closed our public programming for 2003 in an enticing atmosphere. The two British artists were invited to FoAM to discuss a future collaboration in the field of micropaleontobiology. In 2004 they will be resident at the University of Cardiff, with professor Paul Pearson, researching global environmental changes by tracking mutations in the minuscule Foraminifera fossils (also found in your everyday toothpaste). Catherine and Brian will work with the electron-microscope to record the fossils and make a 3D movie. FoAM comes into play as a partner in making an immersive installation, where the fossils can be experienced as human-sized, their textures can be touched and the interaction heard. We also discussed a slightly larger perspective, looking at evolution as a multidisciplinary topic, where our knowledge of bioinformatics for evolutionary simulations might come in handy.

Prof. Pearson dug out a document that proves that Darwin might not have come up with all his evolutionary theory of natural selection by himself, but has possibly borrowed some ideas from James Hutton, a geologist, who wrote about selection processes about 60 years before Darwin. src: http://www.nature.com/nature/debates/fossil/fossil_1.html



http://fo.am/evolve/

impossible thing no. 3: groWorld. impossibility scale: 3.5

The largest project in Evolve was supposed to be groWorld, a long term initiative dealing with corporeal and digital etnobotany. Although we have conducted mainly literature research in 2003, our first 'gathering' session is planned for the Adelaide festival, as one of the specimens of "Art in the Biotech Era".

http://fo.am/groWorld/
http://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/program/biotech.asp

Do plants think like distributed computers? http://www.nature.com/nsu/040119/040119-5.html
David Robert is working of human-plant interaction and understanding of plant language: http://www.elkabong.com/intersection00/davidrobert.htm
On flowers and landmines: http://www.aresa.dk/

Dynamics

This term describes for FoAM a year for fulfilling a few of our long term promises. However, as the results should be dynamic, we can't easily predict the outcomes! groWorld is moving into its next phase; with gathering, planting and gardening workshops for the development of a persistent HPI (human-plant-interface) to function as a dynamic, growing link between the tiny corporeal pocket ecologies and the massive, dispersed data-ecologies.

Transient Reality Generators [TRG]

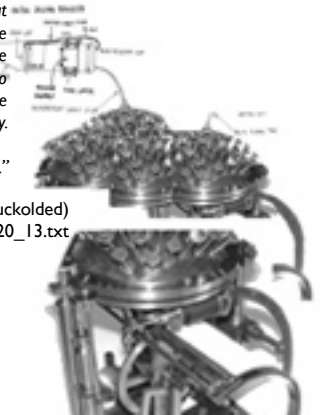
TRG suggests a deeper look into the physics of responsive environments - we are moving from the ecologies of the irreal into the universes of the irreal. With TRG we will dig deep into phenomenology of 'reality', working our way down to its constituent forces and elementary substances. In our previous research, it appeared that the most appealing aspects of mixed reality spaces lay in the physical richness of both worlds. Basically, instead of trying to emulate the physical world in the digital, we will try to correlate some of the more interesting properties in the physical systems, potentially creating new (coherent) laws within the computational universes. In such spaces interaction will be the drive of the environment's dynamics, which can be described as a loop between action >> perturbance-of-the-system >> perceived difference >> reaction...
(now imagine hanging 10 metres high strapped up in a piezochromic harness...)

" ... is the science of that which is superinduced upon metaphysics, whether within or beyond the latter's limitations, extending as far beyond metaphysics as the latter extends beyond physics.

Pataphysics will examine the laws govering exceptions, and will explain the universe supplementary to this one: or, less ambitiously, will describe a universe which can be - and perhaps should be - envisaged in place of the traditional one, since the laws of that are supposed to have been discovered in the traditional universe are also correlations of exceptions, albeit more frequent ones, but in any case accidental data which. reduced to the status of unexceptional exceptions, possess no longer even the virtue of origionality.

Pataphysics is the science..."

Ubu Cucu (Ubu Cuckolded)
http://www.evergreenreview.com/archive/13 Alfred%20Jarry%20_13.txt



topological media: "topological media are physical and computational matter, image or sound fashioned as substances evolving under continuous action."
topology: "topology treats features like the shape and density of sets free of any metrical measure or dimension. topology works with infinite or finite, continuous or discrete things with equal ease."
[*] sha xin wei, http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/people/sha.xinwei/topologicalmedia/ , 2004

softBomb and the dynamics of objecthood

softBomb is a brand new project, with roots not in a past initiative, but in a new addition to FoAM, Rachael Tempest. softBomb takes the classical museological trope of the glass display cabinet and reinvents it as a plastic and dynamic virtual interface; all the edges and planes of the case become multimodal 'lenses' for examining the many hidden lives of an object. The project aims to apply a 'topological media' [*] approach to virtual interfaces that privilege transformation and play. softBomb is also valuable as a tool for research and performance, for analysing and manipulating the contextual, cultural, physical, chemical and historical networks inherent to all objects - splitting the 'physics from the physical' and creating a rich platform for mining their hidden life, beyond traditional linear readings of the artefact.

A taxonomy of site-specific artefacts will be modelled into a database of 3D virtual objects. Using a highly malleable haptic interaction device, players will then select and 'jam' with their choice of object, 'releasing' a dynamic flow of data - the artefact's inherent meaning systems. This realtime data is simultaneously streamed into the 'softBomb', a custom-built visualisation engine - initially playable within 3D gamespace, but designed as a component for future Mixed Reality environments. We are currently working with the Interactive Institute to develop collaborative partnerships with Scandinavian contemporary art museums; and to present softBomb as part of a workshop at NODEM04, Helsinki.

softBomb core team: Lucas Chirnside, Rachael Tempest in collaboration with Julian Oliver and Steven Pickles

Illumine

Illumine is a term of many meanings. To illuminate, to understand, to discover, to become enlightened, to be luminescent. Wanting to explore its meanings in the broadest possible range, we opened up this programme for artist residencies that resulted in four greatly diverse outcomes.

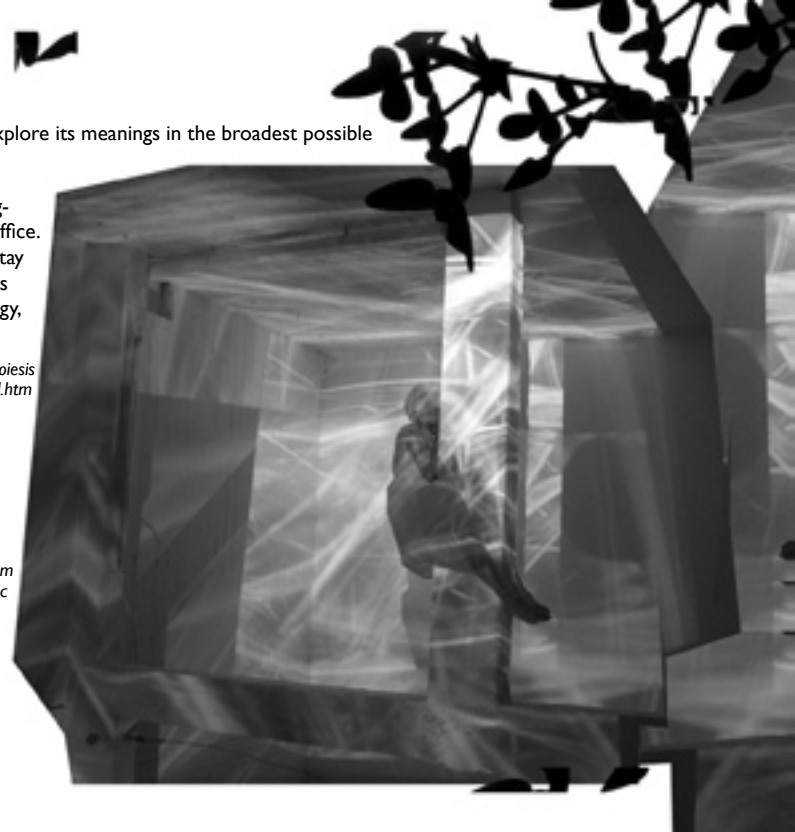
Isabel Rocamora and Camila Valenzuela, two charismatic anti-gravity artists worked with us for three weeks in the summer of 2003, exploring light as electromagnetic discharge, connecting light to magnetic forces and gravity and attempting to reach the mystical moment of enlightenment, for which 3 weeks didn't quite suffice. However, following the records of their research through ProjectIllumineNotes on the Libarynth some might be able to continue the quest... They ended their stay with the ethereal performance 'Ebb and Flow of stubborn matter', that was woven through with a live hurdygurdy + electronics improvisation by the luminiferous Stevie Wishart, with FoAM's costumes and responsive media. Future collaboration with Camila is planned and awaiting her next steps through the jungle of biology, cognitive science, phenomenology and their embodiment in anti-gravity improvisation.

Francisco Varela on Neurophenomenology: http://web.ccr.jussieu.fr/varela/human_consciousness/article01.html -- related: http://lib.f0.am/cgi-bin/view/Libarynth/AutoPoiesis
If you ever wondered what supported the posture of your body: http://www.neuroanatomy.hpg.ig.com.br/spinal.htm

Karmen Franinovic, an architect and interaction designer studying at Ivrea, approached light as a phenomenon occurring on the periphery of perception, looking for gaps and glitches in the places where light can not penetrate, where we need to rely on our senses of touch, hearing and collaboration. Karmen worked with FoAM to make a very dark, concave universe (Sync_optic structure) that came to its existence only when more than one person stumbled through the unstable surface of the gallery floor, which was covered with a tensioned mesh of lycra, underneath which thousands of liters of water were wobbling in large PVC cushions. Once a person lost balance (never lasting for longer than 15 seconds), the starry grid of dozens of ultra-bright LEDs illuminated the surrogate sky, changing sonic and visual patterns as people rolled away and toward each other.

Lost inventions of Nikola Tesla: http://www.frank.germano.com/lostinventions.htm
*What is a Syn"co*pe: http://lib.f0.am/cgi-bin/view/Libarynth/?topic=ProjectSyncoptic*

Edwin v/d Heide was our guest during the Argos Festival and designed an installation where the visitors composed their sonic compositions by 'listening' to light sources. Curated by Nat Muller, 'Sound Modulated Light' was vibrating at different frequencies, as its current was shaped by the frequencies of sound files. Approximately 30 halogen lights were placed throughout our temporary gallery, in an orderly and geometric fashion, contrasting the fleeting soundscapes emanating from the little lamps. Edwin also gave a mesmerising laser performance during the 'Coded Interference' symposium, creating vibrant monochromatic spaces, filled with (sub)sonic stimuli, oscillating fields of light and smoke patterns.



The last 'illumine' artist was Rachel Wingfield, who we met in 2002 during the txOom project. Rachel's take on illumine was the closest to FoAM's interest in biomimetics and active materials. Her exhibition 'Surface Dialogue' consisted of several electroluminescent (EL) objects, designed to infuse homely interiors with ambient luminescence, continuously changing throughout the day; a responsive window blind, sprouting EL botanic patters as the daylight becomes dimmer; luminescent pillows and duvets to ease the sleeper into the dawning light. Dawn and twilight were extended to last several hours in Rachel's cozy mock-bedroom, where the natural light was truly in dialogue with the luminous surfaces on display. Both during and after her residency Rachel is involved in the project |ytA, where she joins Lina Kusaite and Maja Kuzmanovic in a search for active materials that respond to touch and pressure.

Iridescent nanospheres for electronic paper: http://www.nature.com/nsu/030317/030317-1.html
Electroluminescence on elastic substrates: http://www.oryontech.com/
OLEDs on flexible substrates: http://www.universaldisplay.com/foled.php
Chromogenic materials: http://windows.lbl.gov/materials/chromogenics/default.htm

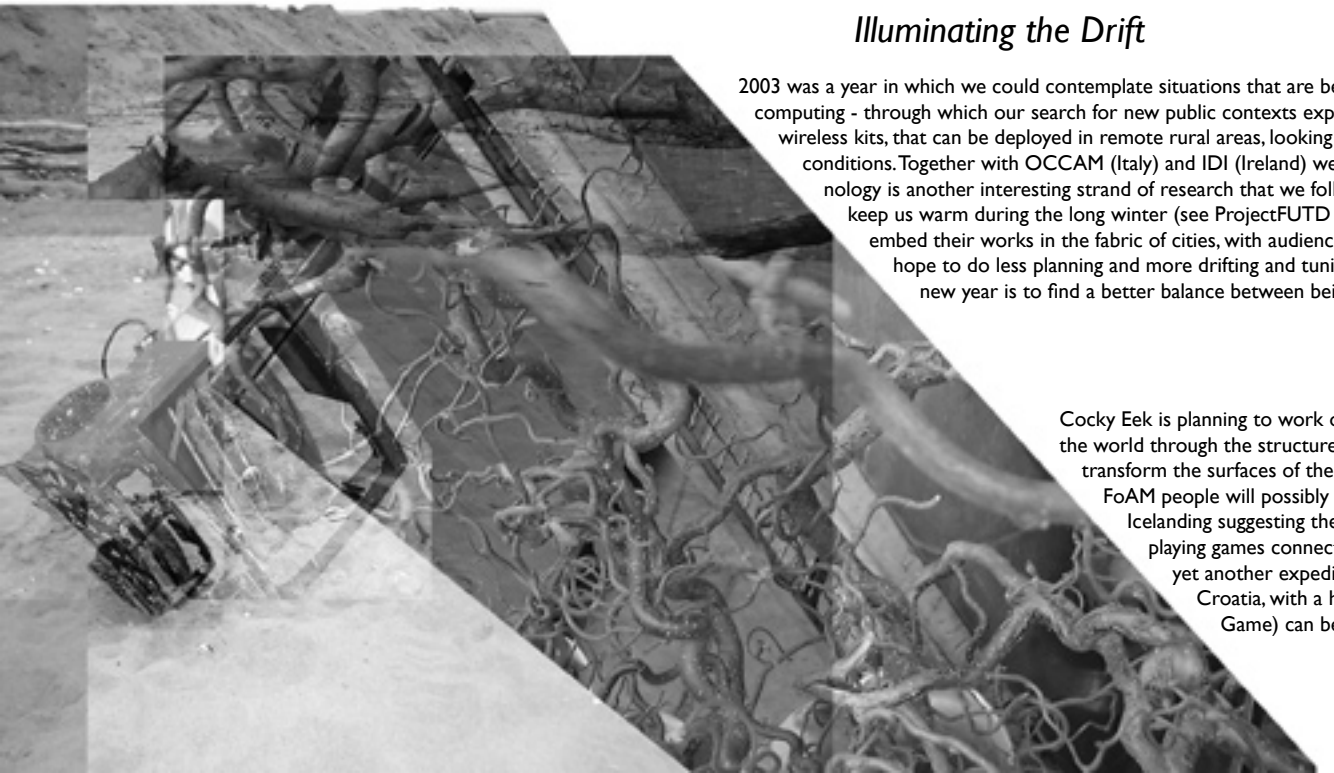
impossible thing no. 4: wearable reality. impossibility scale: 4.5

Another strand of the active materials research we will continue pursuing with Rachel is the emerging field of flexible displays; OLEDS (organic LEDs), rollable LCDs, elastic electroluminescent materials, electronic paper, composites of SMPs (shape memory polymers) able to sense and actuate responses by changing colour, light or even thickness and consistency. Although this is an area of research that several FoAM people have been involved in for years, we can not pretend to be able to develop any of these technologies in our modest lab. Therefore, negotiations are under way with several academic and corporate research and development groups, looking for diverse application areas and testing grounds for their experimental technologies. In terms of applications of these technologies, we are in close contact with the Topological Media Lab at Georgia Institute of Technology and the Banff New Media Institute, both paving a similar exciting route through this unchartered territory.

Why are we so interested in the flexible displays? We want to wear communication, diffuse our patterns throughout the environment. Bleed light from one body to another, make our surrounding surfaces as responsive as our skins. Why? Because we want to detach ourselves from big desktop monitors and ever-so-clumsy projectors, CCTVs, cumbersome visual systems in white cubes and black boxes. We want to be able to tune in and out realities wherever we happen to be.

We want to drift....

http://fo.am/illumine
illumine team: Cocky Eek, Nik Gaffney, Lina Kusaite, Maja Kuzmanovic, Yon Vissel



Illuminating the Drift

2003 was a year in which we could contemplate situations that are becoming more and more feasible through the emergence of pervasive and ubiquitous computing - through which our search for new public contexts exploded in a gush of possibilities. We mapped scavanger technologies for solar-powered wireless kits, that can be deployed in remote rural areas, looking at technologies which can be useful in developing countries and harsh environmental conditions. Together with OCCAM (Italy) and IDI (Ireland) we hope to move from planning to action in the coming year. Augmented Reality technology is another interesting strand of research that we followed, watching the 2003 summer steam by through our studio windows, continuing to keep us warm during the long winter (see ProjectFUTD on the Libarynth). We are assessing several projects that could allow media artists to embed their works in the fabric of cities, with audiences drifting through them, tuning events in and out of physical architecture. In 2004, we hope to do less planning and more drifting and tuning. Although we are not planning to become full-blown nomads, our resolution for the new year is to find a better balance between being local and being in transit.

When mobile means unplugged: http://lib.f0.am/cgi-bin/view/Libarynth/RenewableEnergy
Defying Infopoverty through more applicable tools: http://www.infopoverty.net/2002/prepcom2.htm

Cocky Eek is planning to work on shapes formed by the wind and FoAM will work on blowing the four winds of the world through the structures - on land, in the air, on water, from different directions. When worn, these shapes transform the surfaces of the body of their wearer into airy creatures in dialogue with their surroundings. Several FoAM people will possibly be joined by the Nordic LARP god Christopher Sandberg on a drift to Iceland (named Icelanding suggesting the sci-fi thematic of the trip), to explore the potentials of context specific live action role playing games connected with satellite broadcasting, networking and other alien inventions. We have initiated yet another expedition (fFORTe) through the myths and dungeons of 42 Austro Hungarian fortresses in Croatia, with a hope that this time, a persistent MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) can be developed to hover above and through the physical ruins.

Icelanding initiators: Yon Visell, Karmen Franinovic
fForte initiators: Maja Kuzmanovic, Goran Kuzmanovic

impossible thing no. 5: p~lot. impossibility scale: 1

Then there is p~lot. It started as a workshop in 2002, developed into a Q3A level, an inflatable performance and an ever evolving mythology presented in Brussels and Utrecht in 2003, it is now threatening to grow into a much larger storyScaping project in 2004. Drifting through several workshops and festivals, building portals between the physical and the digital by building a global mythWorld. The project involves summoning story fragments in text, drawings, textures, generative algorithms, image and sound samples, as well as attempting to build a 'Plot Device' that will generate a coherent story out of thousands of character descriptions, events, shards of places and travels, in text, 2D graphics, generative 3D graphics, sounds and textures. The result of this expedition, should be available as a drift through a massive storyScape, that unfolds in front of its reader, spiralling in and out of an event, a character, a world. If our research on flexible displays has advanced enough in a years time, we might even be able to offer this supernatural extravaganza on electronic paper, as an illuminated scroll to read before drifting into the dreamworld.

p~lot core team: Nik Gaffney, Lina Kusaite, Steven Pickles, Rachael Tempest
http://fo.am/p~lot/

"The gastronomic must no longer serve as mere metaphor for the arts, but should take its place with the muses." (Allen S. Weiss, Feast and Folly)

f0amf0od

The long hot summer of 2003 was celebrated by inaugurating an appetising programme called f0amf0od, designed to excite the palate and tantalise our other senses. Born out of our love for good food and the strong conviction that the dinner table is probably the best example of a good communication and social interface, we embarked on a series of culinary experiments which sought to merge matter with media, aesthetic concept with gastronomic pleasure. Food is more than just the fuel that makes us run, it is, as food anthropologist Margaret Visser contends "a medium for social relationships: satisfaction of the most individual of needs becomes a means of creating community." (The Rituals of Dinner)

Most of the f0amf0od activities were practiced during f0amfr0th events, culminating in a royal feast during the De-auguration of the Temporary Embassy of Elgaland-Vargaland in December. The four course banquet consisted of 15 variations of the famous national dish of this dispersed country: pasta with tomato sauce. All fr0th events boasted a consistent conceptual design in the media, the furnishing and the dishes served. 'Litha' was a picnic in the grass, which in itself is nothing special, except that the grass grew in between the walls of the FoAM lab for a few weeks and functioned as a serving board for fresh, juicy summer-solstice foods, drinks and media. On the opposite side of the 'organic spectrum' was the food designed for the 'Interfaces Imagined': packaged retro-scifi cookies and interfacing food-realities in layered veggie towers, accompanying a mini-symposium on interfacing the physical with the digital (with Catherine Moriwaki, Jonah Bruckner-Cohen and Stephen Barras). 'Surface tension' provided a challenge for creating inflated edible surfaces and foaming mousses inside inflatable chambres, costumes, installations and giant-soap-bubble-duels.

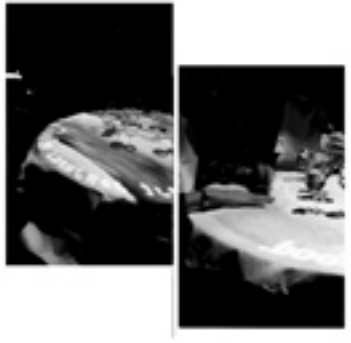
The first event with food as its top priority was 'Digestible Media: A Cooking Class in Interdisciplinary Strategies' held in June at the media centre KUDA [http://www.kuda.org] in Novi Sad, Serbia. The 'workshop' was an experiment in interdisciplinary practice, and sought to uncover how, similar to creative cooking, also creative collaborations do not necessarily follow a set recipe, but demand a meticulous collecting of ingredients, a dedicated chopping, dicing and blending of flavours, textures, spices and the selection of the right cooking methods. Under the supervision of FoAM foodie Nat Muller, participants were instructed to mix abstract concepts with their skills, inspiration and ingredients in order to create a collaboratively designed dish.

The research centre for the history of food and drink: http://www.arts.adelaide.edu.au/centrefooddrink/index.html
La cucina Futurista: http://www.madsci.org/~lynn/juju/surr/futurism/FUTBANQ4.html

Screen cuisine: http://yumfood.net/articles/screencuisine/screencuisine-1.html
Scientific cooking: http://www.fatduck.co.uk/

The 'Blanc-Mange Cinema Marathon' was the first true f0amf0od event in Brussels. This event, held in September 2003 merged gastronomic and cinematic experience by screening food films on an edible projection surface of white foods. After weeks of researching food movies, we collected all white and nearly white foods we could afford, in order to blend the films and the foods into two stories; the BizarStory and the SensualStory (accessible through the Libarynth). The stories functioned as a scenario for a three hour long remix of food movies, but also as a guide for the design of table-cloths/bibs, table manner guidelines and most importantly for the seven-course long culinary melange of off-white foods; white fruit salad, white fungus curry, kefir and almond soup, 'white kidney' (aka. sheep testicles) stew, cheese platters, edible flowers, creamy mousses, orgasmic cocktails and many more.

After Blanc-Mange there was no turning back. People working on the other programmes refused to have any public appearance without including a f0amf0od element in the event. And so the myth about FoAM's conceptual foods and beverages started spreading through Brussels and beyond. For one of the illumine events, "Sound Modulated Light #1" by Edwin v/d Heide, we designed the snacks as waves and particles and played with light sources to give the foods special textures. During "p~lot" to accompany Auriea Harvey's fairy-tale-esque presentation of the game "8", the table became enchanted with secret mushroom dishes and bitter gin cocktails. The "Evolve" kitchen became a molecular biology lab, where the microscopic germinating foods were served in petri-dishes and test tubes. We ended the year by burning our demons and celebrating the return of the light on the winter solstice, where we practiced our abilities to cook copious amounts of food and develop new recipes for leftovers for more than a week. We learned that by involving food into our programmes, we will never starve to death.



Although 2003 is over, food continues to play an important role in FoAM's activities. We have the opportunity to bleach the nearly white foods from Blanc-Mange in the brand-new kitchen of the renovated Beursschouwburg and serve the dishes in its 'spaceship' of an attic. On mayday, we (FoAM + foton) are currently designing 'Bombing from within', an explosive party in the 'Heart of Europe', to celebrate the atomic strength of the new EU member states (minimum alcohol percentage = 50%).

Also, in the case that our days as an artsci collective become too dim, we are designing an escape pod in the form of a nomadic, symbiotic restaurant that travels the world ingesting the local ingredients and supplying the resident population with an instant food+media event, just to disappear as fast as it appeared, continuing its persistent journey across the continent(s).

http://www.taleoftales.com
http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/heide/sound_modulated_light.html

http://f0.am/f0od/
http://f0am/fr0th/

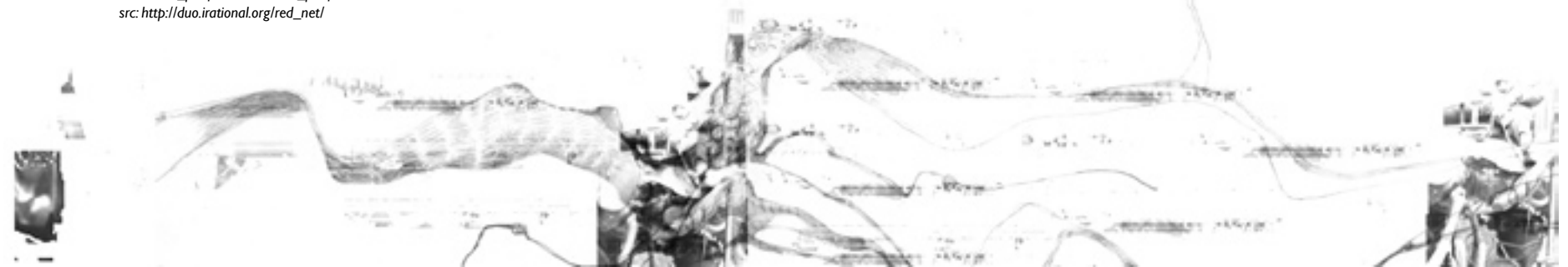
f0amf0od core team: Rasa Alksnyte, Lina Kusaite, Maja Kuzmanovic, Nat Muller, Pieter de Wel

Tension

Perhaps as a reaction to overloaded stomach muscles, we will work some emptiness into our lives in 2004; Inspired by 'Surface Tension', inherent in all foams, we will stay true to our name and inflate some large bubbles. During the feverish months of February and March, several inflatable structures are swelling at FoAM, to function as 'emptiness containers' in otherwise media-thick environments. In the Beursschouwburg, during their [blanco] opening festival, the inflatables were used to create an otherworldly zone, in which the landscape appears to have the ability to breathe. In the majestic Botanique (the botanic gardens), during the Vampire ball of the BIFFF (Brussels International Fantasy Film Festival), the inflatables become poisonous gas bubbles in the Vampire's decaying fountain, filled with dehydrated plant-life, floating above the heads of the guests. To end the season, we will work with Ana Rewakowicz on wearable, inflatable communicative pods (possibly for walking on water).

surface tension: http://f0.am/fr0th/swell.html
Ana Rewakowicz: http://www.kissmachine.org/ibanks.html

RED#NET intends to be a multi-functional, permeable, portable surface that re-routes and re-applies public space. Constructing systems that support and restrict flow via the horizontal and vertical axis
horizontal_platform/horizontal_platform/vertical/horizontal/vertical/
src: http://duo.irational.org/red_net/



impossible thing no. 6: scalable media shelters. impossibility scale: 2

In the summer of 2004, we are planning to look at a different type of tension in physical structures. Tensegrity, Synegrity, Hoberman and other structures that play with the laws of physics to gain robustness while remaining light and portable. In collaboration with Hiaz Gmachl, a geodesic fanatic and our good friends farmersmanual, we will venture into the wonderful world of self-sustaining structures, potentially serving as mobile and scalable media shelters to add to the impossible arsenal of the mobile kitchen, mobile MR lab, wearable displays, solar powered AR kits, drifting LARPers and storytellers.

tension team: Cocky Eek, Nik Gaffney, Hiaz Gmachl, Lina Kusaite, Maja Kuzmanovic, Rachael Tempest

farmersmanual and BuckyMedia: http://web.fm/cgi-bin/twiki/view/Fmext/WebHome
the Buckminster Fuller Institute: http://www.bfi.org/
Geodesic structures in nature: http://www.geocities.com/bioluminus/spectacular_geodesic_epicuticula_structure.html
DIY with soda-straws: http://www.georgehart.com/virtual-polyhedra/straw-tensegrity.html

FoAM and associated artists/scientists 2003:

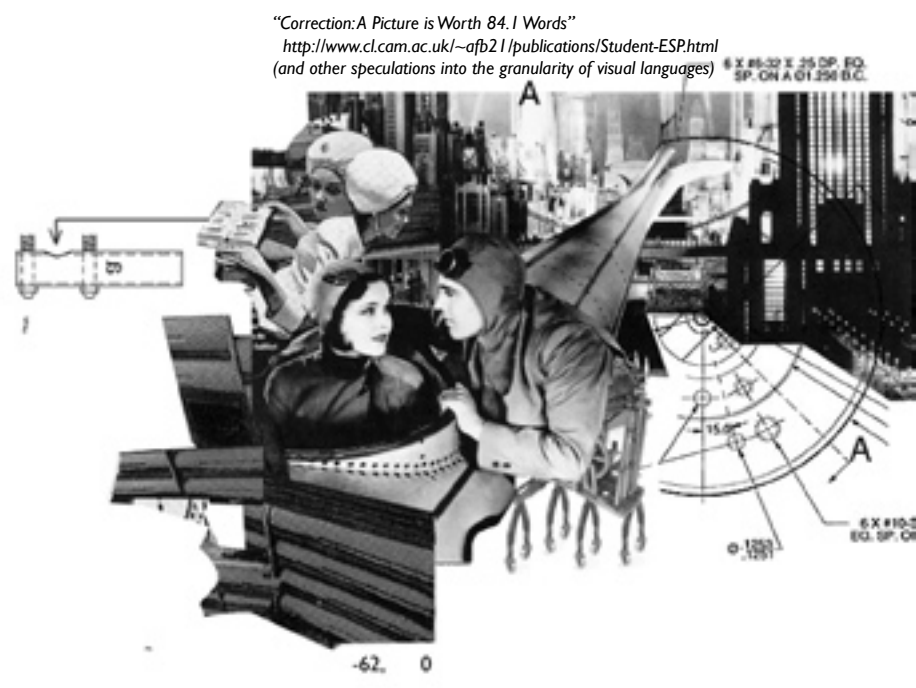
Gert Aartsen
Rasa Alksnyte
Stephen Barras
Guy van Belle
Oswald Berthold
Gert Brantner
Theo Botschuiver
Jonah Bruckner-Cohen
Veronique Daussy
Cocky Eek
Leif Elggren
Karmen Franinovic
Robin Fox
Nik Gaffney
Hiaz Gmachl
Nathan Gray
Auriea Harvey
Mark Harwood
Mike Harding
Edwin v/d Heide
Pieter Heremans
Patrick de Koning
Maja Kuzmanovic
Dylan Krasevac
Sia Kyriakakos
Emily Kusaite
Lina Kusaite
Hendrik Leper
Brian McClave
Catherine Moriwaki
Nat Muller
Hanne de Nil
Julian Oliver
Anthony Pateras
Steven Pickles
Isabel Rocamora
Sha Xin Wei
Jasmijn Snoijink
Roos Smith
Rachael Tempest
Todor Todoroff
Camila Valenzuela
Yon Visell
Michel Waisvisz
Catherine Watling
Pieter de Wel
Rob Wilton
Rachel Wingfield
Stevie Wishart

Partner Organisations 2003:

argos
code31
foton
future physical
interactive institute
kibla
l'anverre
looking glass
time's up

FoAM infodata: http://fo.am/
http://libarynth.fo.am/

Past, present and future events: http://fo.am/events.html



"Correction: A Picture is Worth 84.1 Words"
http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~afb21/publications/Student-ESP.html
(and other speculations into the granularity of visual languages)

What's for breakfast? - asks Alice

//scene// alice meets the tangentoid oscillator who is picking mushrooms and feeding them to the scattered shapeshifster who skitters out the following mushroom dish (vegan and omnivore variations available on request)...