

## TALES OF CONTEMPORARY SOMNAMBULISM

*A cartographical exploration of dreamscapes and the seas of sleep*

Maria Paola Guimerans Sanchez

**TALES OF CONTEMPORARY SOMNAMBULISM**

*A cartographical exploration of dreamscapes and the seas of sleep*

Maria Paola Guimerans Sanchez

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Parsons The New School for Design,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts in Design and Technology

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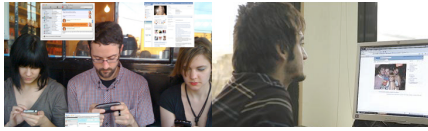
Also, my family for unconditionally believing in my dreams. Colleagues and faculty from Parsons for always being open to help. Pedro Barrié de la Maza Foundation for bringing me the opportunity to make these two years of studying a reality.



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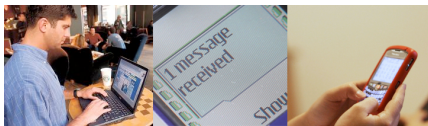
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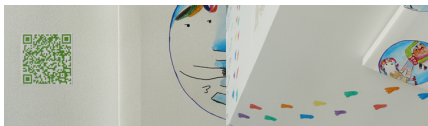
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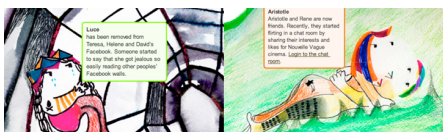
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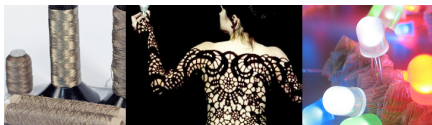
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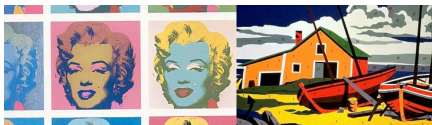
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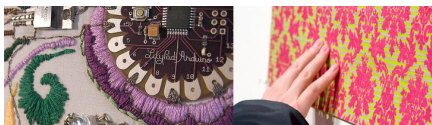
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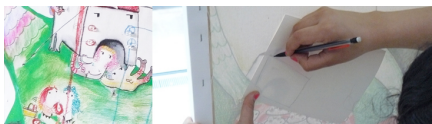
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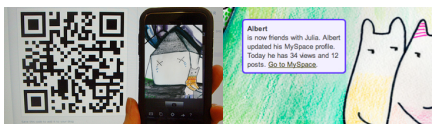
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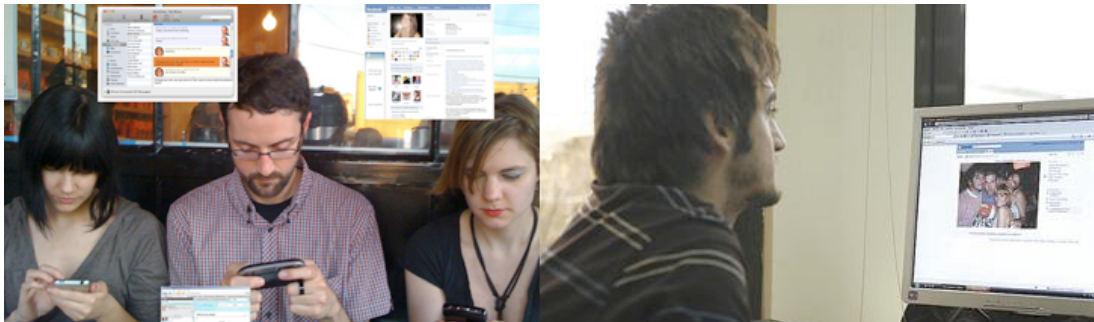
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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

I begin by posing the following question. What do you feel when someone does not return a text message?" There can be many reactions. Perhaps the person receiving the message isn't interested in particular this medium of communication. If you are aware of this, the lack of response will not bother you. But, how do you feel if other strange behavior occurs?. We already know that Telecom and devices such as cell phones, or the Internet are creating new opportunities for meaningful social interaction<sup>1</sup>. But, It is clear that social interaction is not only about information but is also about emotion. The lack of an answer from the other could indicate a desire not to communicate. It is possible that they are trying to imagine a story to keep from revealing the facts. In other words, the lack of communication could produce an interpersonal conflict from misunderstanding or misreading the situation. Exploring this we may further understand the process of communication. Though a bit abstract, this is fertile ground for study.



n-1

Today digital technology is an avoidable presence in everyday life and is increasingly inextricable from mainstream society's needs and conventions. Online communication and Telecommunications has become essential yet addictive for a variety of subcultures.

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<sup>1</sup> Pedram Keyani and Shelly Farnham "Swarm: Text messaging designed to enhance social coordination". The Kluwer International Series on Computer Supported Cooperative Work  
< <http://www.springerlink.com/content/v7v12227k6430hv1/> >



The Internet including hand-held device, has become the medium for this addiction. There has developed a culture of the instantaneous because of the omnipresence of Telecommunications and the Internet. It seems the world must be able to reach us anywhere and anytime. For example, Maria calls John, her boyfriend for five years, to exchange affectionate messages during the day. She sends him a short message around 1.00 p.m. She usually does this when she becomes bored at work. Today he does not answer her. She knows he is online, but there is no reply. This situation makes her nervous. Maria is looking to her device for remote emotional affirmation because she does not have immediate *face to face* time with him.



n-2

Human discourse without eye contact has its dangers because it creates so many possibilities for misunderstanding and increases the level of miscommunication<sup>2</sup>. New media allow previously passive consumers to tell and shape stories together. Communication can happen anytime, anyplace with anyone in real time. This necessity for instantaneous communication has come to sharply define a difference between generations. For this new generation communication is more focused in the immediacy of “now”. I am fascinated by the fact that technology and psychology are tightly interlaced. I aim to represent a generation so connected they “live through the screen” face to face<sup>3</sup>. They have become digital natives<sup>4</sup>. I want to illustrate whether technology can be used to communicate something other than just information.

Our dependence on social networking modes and communications technologies is symptomatic of a new, paradoxical form of anxiety: we “want” to engage in the lives of others, but only engage with our own; we seek out the validation of others only in order to establish our own worth. My Thesis project aims to comment on an illusive world inspired by the fictional contemporary

<sup>2</sup> Rheingold, Howard *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*, October 15th 2003 (first published 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Ewan McIntosh “We’re all in the Connected Generation”. Social, participative media ,education and future. < <http://edu.blogs.com/edublogs/2008/11/were-all-in-the-connected-generation.htm/> >

<sup>4</sup> Derrick de Kerckhove “The Body Electric: e-lag, Penelope Complex and other e-pathologies”. The digital mode < <http://ictlogy.pathologies/> >

*mediascape*<sup>5</sup>, in which today's generation uses technological strategies both to evade and embrace emotional and personal communication. I explore the question of how narratives and social values are constructed and explore different possible narratives in the new mental space of human beings in this technological context. I want to create my own drawings and artwork that are handmade to ironically show, new behaviors with technology. I look to give us new understandings about ourselves and to convey emotional or inspirational content.

By recognizing a relationship of dependency between the current generation and their different technological communication tools, I want to comment on the new behaviors and emotional states that produce these situations. I want to illustrate a series of these imaginary mental moments in where technology triggers people's imagination to produces stories. My fictional narratives ask questions about the health of our technological culture. In foregrounding different emotional reactions, I paint an imaginary psycho-social portrait of the contemporary generation, whose uses of technological strategies serve to both expand but also mediate their capacity for emotional and personal communication.



n-3

The title of my installation is appropriated from the book "*Tell Borges If You See Him. Tales of Contemporary Somnambulism*" by Peter LaSalle<sup>6</sup>. This book is composed of fiction stories that propose a narrative in which the reader can follow the story, but when he or she arrives at the end, they realize that this story does not have an end. The end of Narrative ultimately suggests: "Maybe narrative hadn't ended, which is to say, hasn't ended". This is a sentence that I identify as a *metanarrative*<sup>7</sup> experience that I want to explore as a final interactive narrative occurring in real -time

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<sup>5</sup> Mediascape. Wikipedia < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediascape> >

<sup>6</sup> Peter LaSalle "Tell Borges if you see him: tales of contemporary somnambulism".2007.

<sup>7</sup> Metarrative. Wikipedia <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metanarrative>>

## ABSTRACT

*“Fantasy, abandoned by reason, produces impossible monsters; united with it, she is the mother of the arts and the origin of marvels”*

**Francisco Goya, 1746-1828.**

Tales of Contemporary Somnambulism is an imaginary world informed by the current use of technology to attempt to satisfy emotional needs. Using new skills to extend and enhance themes and strategies of my current practice, I will follow a method of creating portraits that illustrate situational symbols inspired by dream, fantasy and technological frustrations, to be integrated into a interactive mural installation that will allow me to question deeply the analog/virtual division of artistic practices.



## AUDIENCE AND SETTING

The Installation is composed of three main elements: the **physical** which is the mural, the **virtual** or metanarrational which takes shapes by personifying the computer, and the third one is **relational**, a connection path represented as footsteps and Qrcodes<sup>8</sup>.

To set up the installation I need a wall of 96" x 192" on which I will mount the mural. Also use a small space nearby, hidden from the mail wall, in which I will set up a computer.



n-4

The mural is the physical component of my presentation. It is a reproduction from a handmade drawing printed on a canvas and mounted as a tryptic. It is configured to the wall and will be interactive. When users get close to the mural, they will activate a proximity sensor that will trigger a sequence of little lights with in the drawings. These include little colored lights that conceptually highlight the user's narrative "presence" or "availability" in the virtual world. This will be possible by embedding a circuit build with conductive thread in the back of the canvas.

On the floor, near the left panel of the tryptic, the user will be found a series of footsteps on the floor made by fabric that connects the physical and virtual spaces. This connector represents a path that brings the audience from the mural to a space nearby in where a computer will be hiding. Also, a Qr-code sticker near the title of the mural will link to the virtual experience allowing the user to experience the gallery environment with their cell phones. This interactive solution joins both spaces, in order to comment on how communication technologies enhance ideas of both social and artistic representation, but nonetheless integrated into a real-time experience the

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<sup>8</sup> Qr-code Wikipedia < Mediascape. Wikipedia < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediascape>>>

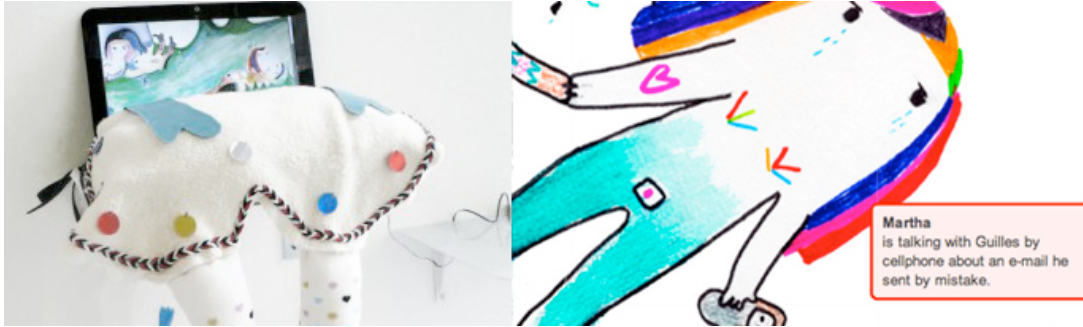
same images that the user physically experimented before. I want to create a piece that can be viewed both at a gallery, but also on the Internet or cell phone. People will be able to keep this data on their cell phones. I am interested in constructing a metanarrative that, if viewed from within this kind of context, appears as an ironic reflection of the kinds of new attitudes that telecommunication offers. Also it is a proposal for an investigation into how artists can create metanarratives in real-time with technology.



n-5

The computer represents the virtual element and the connection with the mural. It will be personified as one of the bubble creatures from the left panel of the mural. It has the shape of a toy made from fabric, with colorful pants and dress. It is sitting on a high table with a broken bubble below it with black drawings painting on wall. The scene will metaphorically represent one of the creatures escaping from the mural and leaving its footsteps printed on the floor. People will be able to interact with the escaped character.

They will find an interactive interface programming in *ActionScript 3* on the computer screen that will allow them to navigate within the drawing with the help of a mouse. The user will discover a second alternative a non-linear narrative about the same images represented on the mural. They will find clues about the personalities of the different creatures portrayed in the mural. My goal is that the audience will re-experience the same images on a different level of representation, now within a virtual space that brings new information, that will complement their understanding of the overall narrative.



n-6

I chose for all the characters to have philosopher's names. Each descriptive paragraph was constructed by mixing different comments and sentences taken from actual online forums, but also inspired by personal experiences and friends' stories about their personal encounters and disencounters with technology. I decided to articulate the narrative as a satirical comment about our contemporary context, as one full of skepticism about thoughts and ideals. But I also thought of the work as a reflection of the eternal misunderstandings in our explanations concerning matters such as existence, language or the existence of love. The aim is just to point out this new stage in which technology and telecommunications act as a mirror to reflect people's fears and vulnerabilities, to dilute and question language, but also to make more evident our unanswered questions about human emotional behaviors.



n-7

I want to create a piece that can be viewed both at a gallery, but also on the Internet or cell phone. People will be able to keep this data on their cell phones. I am interested in constructing a metanarrative that, if viewed from within this kind of context, appears as an ironic reflection of the kinds of new attitudes that telecommunication offers. Also it is a proposal for an investigation into how artists can create metanarratives in real-time with technology.

I am interested in a gallery space or a museum because these are places to both pose questions of representation and critical commentary and deliver interactive experiences that are highly mediated, but still open to interpretation. Postmodern<sup>9</sup> audiences are better suited to seeking experimental experiences. My artistic universe will emphasize emotions over technology, or despite technology. Additionally, I am interested in online forms of experience, and how these can be used to introduce new dimensions into people's aesthetic, perceptual and social imagination.

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<sup>9</sup> Jean-François Lyotard. "The Postmodern Condition A Report on Knowledge" 1979.

## IMPETUS

Tales of Contemporary Somnambulism is the result of a long time reflecting, as an artist and designer, about how I could create an artwork that combines an internal imaginative visit to my fantasies with theoretical questions about real/virtual realms of artistic representation.



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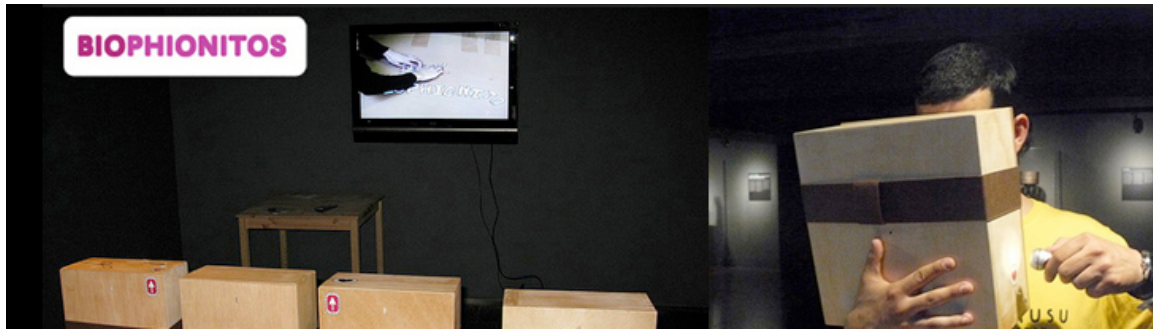
One of my main motivations is my mother Maggy, who influenced my childhood explorations into many imaginative scenarios. She was a dreamer and painter who developed schizophrenia at a very young age. I remember during my childhood, while I was painting or listening to fantastic stories, she would appear unannounced, engaged in contradictory behavior and offering ironical explanations. Situations like those made me question at an early age the difference between reality and fiction. After she disappeared, I grew up with an interest in psychological theories, such as Gestalt studies or Freudian psychoanalytic theories, as a means of making sense of some of my early life experiences. Lately, I applied these interests to the critical observation of other people's behavior, and to the encounter with my own creativity.



n-9



My second motivation is my skill as a Fine Artist. I received my formative training at a conservative and traditional University of Arts, where I spent years painting by imitating the reality. I was always disappointed and showed more interest in using my unconscious intuition to paint abstract and colorful shapes.



n-10

Recently, I earned a degree in printmaking and computing, thanks to which I developed a series of collaborative Net-Art projects that questioned ideas such as copyright, identity, and privacy on the Internet. My final motivation is my interest in Intermedia Art<sup>10</sup> as an expression of my generation and as the possibility to reflect about philosophical issues related to combining virtual/analog representations. I like integrating Fine Arts media with electronic elements in order to motivate people's interaction and to provoke new narratives and audience experiences.

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<sup>10</sup> Intermedia. Wikipedia < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermedia>>

## DESIGN QUESTIONS



n-11

The starting point in building my thesis was to question how I could bring something new to the Fine Arts realm, in order to investigate the creation of new aesthetics similar to, but more radical or less utilitarian, than the Intermedia Art discipline. I wished to bring about a dialogue about the intersection of Art, Design and Technology by using new materials and by raising theoretical questions about the real/virtual realms of artistic representation.

A reference I used to articulate these questions was the painting, “The Garden of Earthly Delights”<sup>11</sup> by Hieronymus Bosch. I started by pointing out that in the XV century, this painting was considered a non-conventional painting. The public and critics felt that this painting questioned traditional representation since the artist divided the canvas into three panels (a triptyc). Also, the painting featured unusual themes for the time, full of symbolism that portrayed human emotional behaviors.

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<sup>11</sup> The Garden of Earthly Delights (c. 1450–1516), painted by Hieronymus Bosch

My question as a Fine Artist is to ask what could be considered a non- conventional painting in the XXI century that also could question traditional representation, while also using symbolism that portrays contemporary human emotional behaviors.



n-12

To achieve that I will question how to combine electronics and virtual media with traditional art techniques in order to explore new aesthetics and question new representational possibilities in my artwork. My interest is to explore the relationships that exist between Art, Design and Technology by the use of new materials. Further, I wish to ask how we value traditional approaches to making and materializing our explorations into new human modes and practices of technological innovation.



## Chapter II

### DOMAINS AND PRECEDENTS

My key domains are the Social construction of Technology, Drawing, Intermedia Art and Physical Computing.



n-13

The First precedents are Artists that had questioned and explored the concept of representation in their artwork with approaches similar to those I want to create with my Thesis. Andy Warhol<sup>12</sup> was known for breaking the rules in his artwork. I am interested in his artwork because he reflected the popular media images of his society. He was very interested in exploring new technology and media in his art, and in his famous repetitive portraits of the 60' generation. Also, I was really inspired by a series of readymade Landscape “ Do It Yourself” pieces that he made, both as examples of incomplete painting and as ironic and profound comment about creativity and originality.

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<sup>12</sup> Andy Warhol. Do It Yourself (Landscape). 1962 <<http://moma.org/>>



n-14

I am impressed by Japanese pop artists and how they represent their imagination and transmit their ideas. Recently, I have been really inspired by the work of Chiho Aoshima<sup>13</sup>. She uses computer technology to create detailed and complex images of fantasy worlds. In her artwork one can discover hybridized creatures that both participate in the composition's narrative and the elements in the decorative scheme. As she said, "My work feels like strands of my thoughts that have flown around the universe before coming back to materialize". For her artwork "City Glow", Chiho realizes her images freely in various media, including sculpture, mural design, prints or clothing.



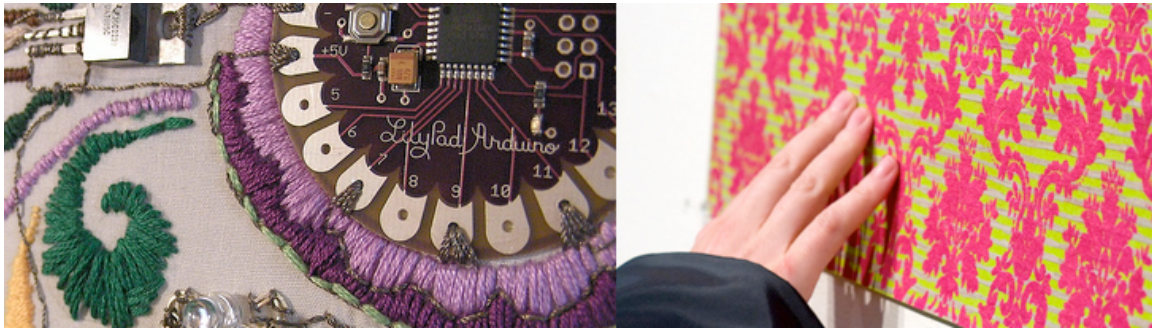
n-15

The Net-art artist generation also adds humor and irony in its artwork as part of its art statement. One example is Cory Arcangel. His work is concerned with the relationship between technology and culture, and the artistic appropriation of media forms, notably video games. He has been exploring the connections between technology and language and most of his work is online. In his piece "Beat the Champ", Cory Arcangel offers one of the more poetic examples of technology's relationship to human culture by offering a self-playing Sega Genesis bowling game programmed

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<sup>13</sup> My Modern MET. Chiho Aoshima's Eye Candy. March 2, 2009  
 <<http://www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/blogs/chiho-aoshimas-eye-candy-10>>

to display an endless loop of gutter balls. At Arthouse, viewers are invited to sit in a legless video game chair and watch “Beat the Champ” in futile passivity<sup>14</sup>.



n-16

My second precedents are contemporary designers investigating new materials for design and interactions explorations. Nowadays, we have the advantages to produce faster prototypes using hardware such as Arduino, and also to incorporate telecommunication tools in our project. The artist can easily explore new ways to express their ideas using electronic pieces that before would have required more skills and time. Finally, I am interested in the work of Leah Buechley<sup>15</sup> and her research on new materials for design and interactions and also in Kirk Mueller's<sup>16</sup> research with conductive inks and thermacolor painting.

My third precedents are sociologists, philosophers and thinkers that have studied the concept of *cyberculture*<sup>17</sup> or consider the transformation of media technologies into cultural practices and aesthetics. I am inspired by authors as Manuel Castells Oliván, Derrick de Kerckhove or Donna Haraway.

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<sup>14</sup> Vertexlistblog, RESET/PLAY in Austin, September 03, 2008  
<[http://vertexlist.blogspot.com/2008\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://vertexlist.blogspot.com/2008_09_01_archive.html) > Leah Buechley

<sup>15</sup> Leah Buechley <<http://web.media.mit.edu/~leah/LilyPad/>>

<sup>16</sup> Kirk Mueller < <http://www.kirkmueller.com>>

<sup>17</sup> David Bel" Cyberculture Theorists Manuel Castells and Donna Haraway" (Routledge Critical Thinkers)

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

My methodology is that I will pick the key issues in the realm of social emotional conflicts that are caused by technology. By focusing on these ideas and conflicts I will portrait a series of symbolic portraits inspired by my own observations of these situations, which were also inspired by actual users on the Internet, blogposts, and responses to interview questions.



[Maria Ozawa \(ozawahokkaido\)](#) is now following your tweets on T

A little information about Maria Ozawa:



1649 followers  
41 tweets  
following 1842 people

You may follow Maria Ozawa as well by clicking on the "follow" button on [their profile](#). If you believe Maria Ozawa is engaging in abusive behavior on Twitter, you may [report Maria Ozawa for spam](#).

Maria Ozawa may not appear in your follower list. Maria Ozawa has decided to stop following you, or the account may have been suspended.

n-17

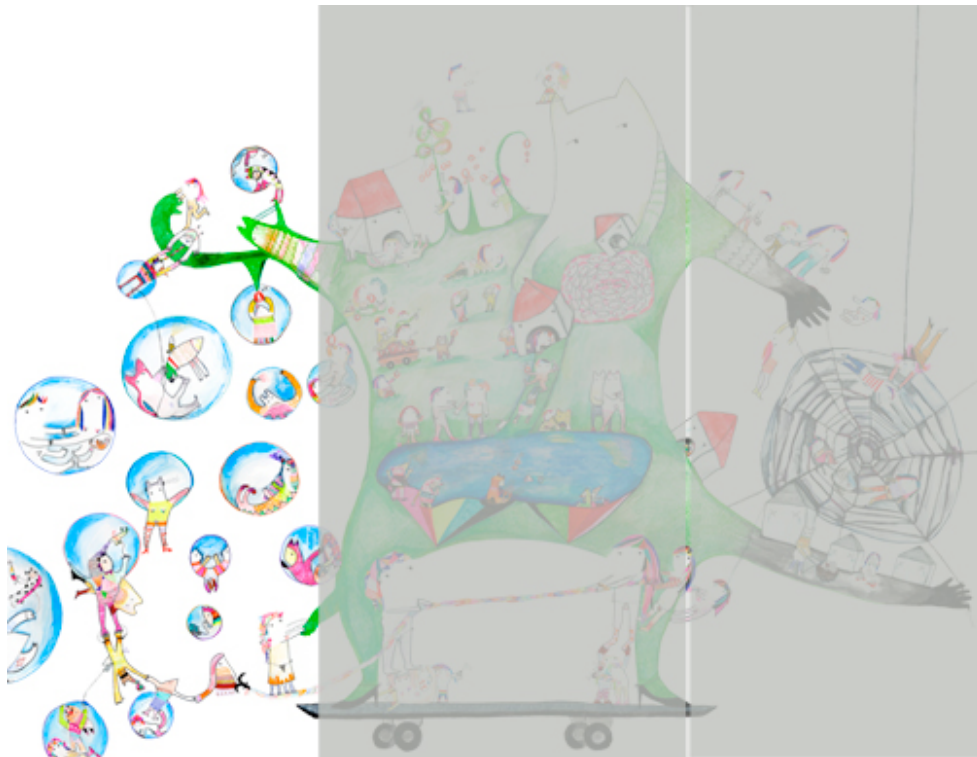
All my drawings are going to be narratives inspired by Internet feedback anonymous opinions and user experiences. Using data from the Internet during the first phase of the project, I should identify websites that are most convenient for my research methods. From all this exploration, I will get the symbols, aesthetic ideas and scenarios that are going to be used to create the final mural for my thesis project. With the symbolic portraits, and their connection with the fictional story, I will compose a mural story that will illustrate fanciful, imagination sparked by real, often anxious situations of these complex encounters with the Internet and Telecommunication tools. I will mix fact and fiction to make a comment on this historical moment and the fantastical component of the unconscious. These symbols are going to represent common situations and encounters that people nowadays experiment with on an "intimate" level with telecommunication. I will combine modern Technology with traditional media to bring ideas about communication to a modern audience. I want to create my own images and artwork interactions to suggest the ongoing technological breakthroughs that allow many contemporary artists the freedom to explore new visual presentations.



From all this exploration, I will get the symbols, aesthetic ideas and scenarios that are going to be used to create my final mural for my thesis project. These came from my own creativity but also from consulting with psychoanalysts, sociologists and philosophers. To create this representation I was inspired by Bosch's painting "The Garden of Earthly Delights". This triptych depicts the history of the world and the progression of sin. It is composed of three parts just like my mural. My goal was to bring my own contemporary interpretation to this painting. By including encounters and disencounters with technology in my observations of actual people, I created symbols and metaphors to frame these experiences within a frozen scene. I aimed to make drawings that express how current uses of technology attempt to satisfy emotional needs, provide "human" experiences and provoke positive feelings, but also act as a mirror of human vulnerability and vanity in the same evocative ways of Bosch's painting.

## SYMBOLIC PORTRAITS

**Left panel :** People who do not know technology or avoid it.



n-18

The right frame portrays a scene full of creatures inside bubbles, marking area to represent people who avoid technology or just do not know how it works. This scene will represent a safe haven part, where people neither use nor care about technology, even though they are sometimes tempted to use it -but not to satisfy their emotional shortcomings of communication

and affectivity. These creatures are sometimes represented in a fetal position, some of these thumbsucking, sleeping or just relaxing with others. Some of those characters are trying to go outside of their bubbles, looking for fruits from the next scene, or curious about what happen in the scenes nearby. Also, the bubble represents a safe space for using the quotidian excuses people give when they want to avoid or escape communication. For instance, “ I called you to invited you to the cinema”, “ Oh, yes. I must have been underground”.

**Bubbles:** spaces for relaxing or avoid communication/ Sanctuary of ignorance

**Creature falling or escaping from their isolated bubbles:** Curiosity/ Wonder

**Anchor:** Security

**Unicorn:** Virginity

**Pregnant couple:** balance

**Thumbsucking creature:** Handling Fears

**Twin creatures:** Protection

**Creatures protecting each other from eating the forbidden fruit:** love

**Fishing line:** Safety

**Central panel:** People who use technology to expose their feelings. They like to play and have fun with their emotions.



n-19

The center panel portray a big mother tree trying to find her balance on a skateboard. This is the main scene of the mural. This scene represents a funny and whimsical world where people play and encounter technology with others looking for affection by playing with their imaginations. Inspired by the common childhood fantasy of retreating to a treehouse -to a safe and secretive place away from adults- this scene is full of symbols related to feeling young and avoiding reality that is of stimulating fantasy with the use of Technology. The scene also aims to represent today's generation who immerse themselves into technology in a similar way. At the top of the drawing there is a series of naked creatures trying to get into the tree house who are also playing or flirting, marking the fun they produce even from misunderstanding by wearing fake emoticon masks. Some characters are somnambulists, some are making love, some play with their cell phones and others eat forbidden fruits. This part of the mural will represent the kinds of escape to technology that Blogs or social networking sites provide the longing for a temporary hideaway, as when a child seeks refuge in a playful or fantasy space these social networks also foster childlike behavior, where rule-breaking and fantasy prevail.

In the center, there are a series of creatures near a pond, looking alone or with others at their reflections over the water this symbolizes Narcissistic attitudes towards intimacy and sex that today's generation explore on the Internet. Also this reference to the myth of Narcissus want to illustrate the ways that in these contexts, our interactions with communication technology ultimately reflect our interactions with ourselves, rather than interactions with others. At the bottom of the central panel a couple playing tug-o-war represents the continuous danger of misunderstanding the communication or dis-communication that result from human beings relationships built on non-physical or virtual contact that Technology offers.

**Mother Tree:** explorative playground

**Skateboard:** Instability

**Treehouses:** safe and secret imaginary places

**Sleepwalker walking on a rope:** Desire for the unknown

**Creature sucking a fruit:** Pleasure/ Treat

**Creature hiding behind the ramp:** Lies/Excuses

**Creature tickling on another creature :** Flirting

**Three figures over a card full of fruits:** Fantasy

**Belly with ants that have cellphones' legs:** Butterflies in one's stomach/ Experimenting with new feeling.

**Naked creatures:** vulnerability and exhibitionism.

**Creatures reflecting on a pond:** narcissism/ identity

**Rope:** connection-disconnection/ Tension/ misunderstanding

**Red Fruit:** temptation/addiction

**Creatures wearing their emotions as masks:** game/misunderstanding

**Creatures playing tug-o-war:** communication/ dis-communication

**Creatures making love:** Fantasy

**Creatures tattooing each other:** Voyeurism/ identity

**Creatures playing with their cellphones:** Innocence/ lack of affection

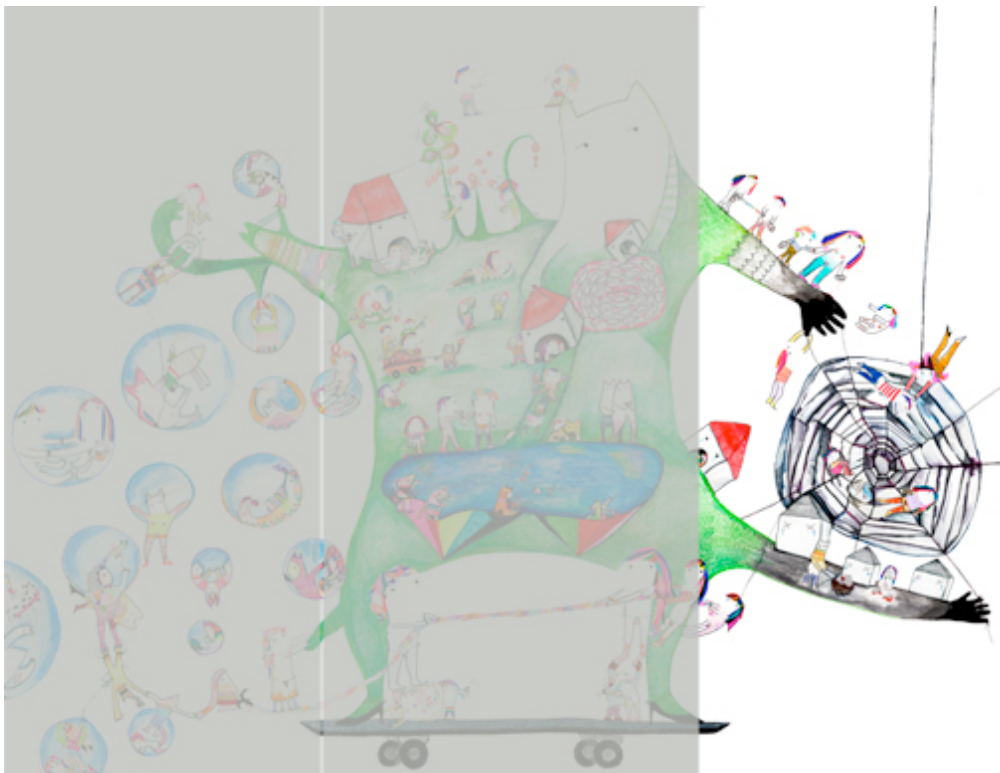
**Creature in a tree dancing:** Exhibitionist

**Creatures jumping on the ramp:** inhibition

**Heels of the Big Tree:** Fetishism

**Treehouse lights:** presentations of physical in the virtual world

**Right panel:** People who suffer from using technology and become dependent on affection



n-20

The right frame represents addiction to and dependency on technology and how people get their affectivity trapped in it. Some of the characters from the center are jumping into this scene, and others get trapped in treehouses that do not have doors for escape. Inspired by how people carry their cell phones regularly as important objects that make them feel 'connected' to others, and as personal devices to make them feel "safe", some creatures carry hybrid toy-cell phones. They are



crying and falling into the spiderweb because they did not get their expected or desire 'dose' of communication. These creatures are drawn with negative emotional expressions such as being tired, sad, or crying. This area features dark colors and shows people that are dependent or disoriented.

**Figures tied by handcuffs:** Physical dependence

**Creature carrying a card with hybrid toys broken:** vulnerability

**Crying creatures:** pain and suffering

**Hybrid toys' bleeding:** sickness

**People crying or trapped in spiderwebs:** disorientation and anxiety

**Treehouses with doors closed:** frustration

With the symbolic portraits, I will compose a mural story that will illustrate fanciful re-imaginings of real, often anxious situations and encounters. Also I will mix real facts and fiction to comment on the historical and fantastical components of the unconscious.

After that I will create a series of stories with characters that I have described, into representations. These stories were inspired by real accounts and personal encounters that people have had with telecommunications, but also include many fictional or fantastical elements. This installation will encourage audiences to use their imaginations in order to interact with it.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

**Symbolic portrait 01.** Inspired by new evasive behaviors and the fragile emotional states that produce these situations. I want to illustrate a series of imaginary mental moments where encounters with technology trigger people's imaginations and stories to produce tree houses as a representing of repression and escape from reality. In this exploration, I try to represent a society that uses technology to escape from reality using networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace.

**Symbols for the mural:** tree houses

**Example how is going to be represented the characters:**

*Hélène blocked Roland and Julia from her Skype. She recently discovered that they traveled to the Bahamas in secret.*

*Julia and Jean are now friends. She become a fan of his Facebook profile after meeting him on the subway. (<http://www.facebook.com/>)*

These stories will be integrated in two places: once on the Internet, but also as a part of the mural. The mural will be made by hand on large scale watercolor paper. For materials I will use colored pencils, markers and watercolor bars. The finished drawing will be scanned on the computer and printed on a canvas in full scale. Also, I will use the same reduced digital image for the Internet interaction.



n-21

People viewing my mural installation live will activate a proximity sensor that triggers a sequence of little lights embedded in the mural. I am interested in how technology represents the presence of people, through icons or color LEDs, showing a physical presence in a shared virtual world in order to show a possible desire for communication. I like the idea that we experience the feeling of human presence through a little light on Skype or Messenger meant to represent the existence of another person behind it. I like how that generates a feeling that you are not alone or that you somehow experience company, even if this person is not really there.



n-22

To achieve this interaction, I investigated the best solution for the incorporation of new materials to embed the circuit into the canvas. I will use a Lylipad as the Hardware. I made this decision

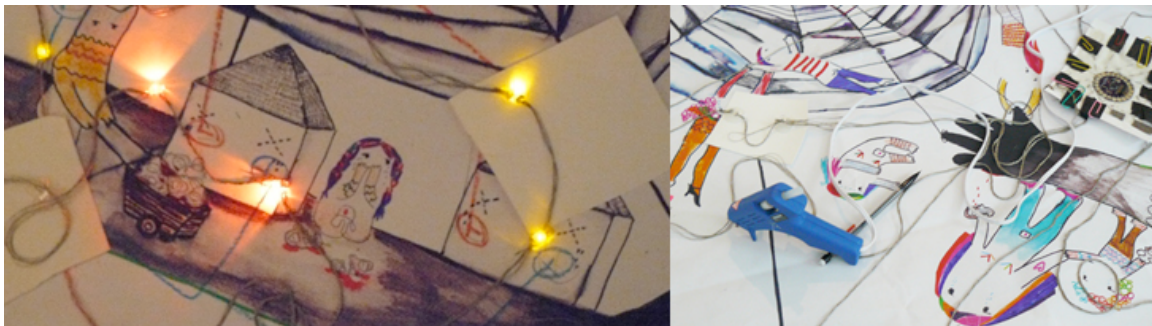
because the LilyPad is easy to embed on the back of the canvas and it has an aesthetic that I like. Also, I like the round shape and how the pins are distributed. Because of the size of the mural, to create the circuit, I needed to sew a path with conductive thread into a non conductive fabric in order to extend the connection between the lights so they do not touch. For the circuit, I am using twenty LEDs lights in different colors such as red, green and yellow. Instead of wire I use only the conductive thread because I like the aesthetic and working with materials of the same nature as the canvas.



n-23

I sew the LilyPad into a fabric that is not conductive and designed a circuit with conductive thread that it allowed me to get a space between the connections. To guarantee the electricity goes through, I braided the conductive thread but also I painted some areas with conductive ink. After completing the circuit, I stuck the lights on paper.

Because the light of the led is too bright, to soften the light I use a glue gun and cotton. This softening integrated the lights into the palette of the mural.



n-24

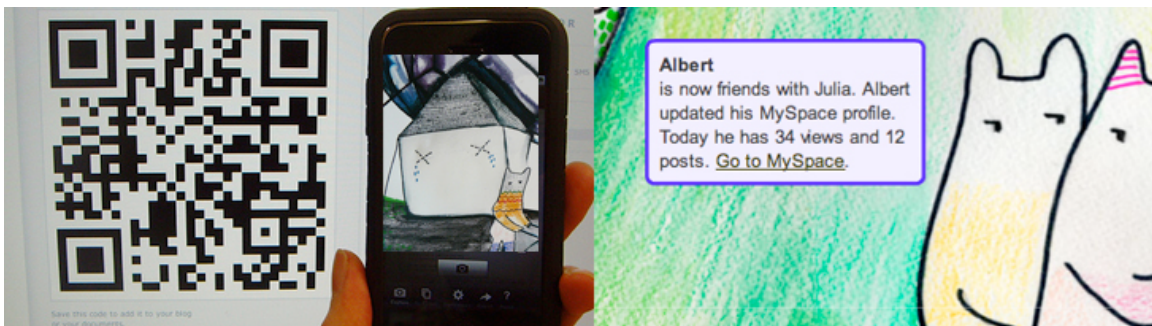
Finally, the aerosensor is on the bottom of the painting. It activates a sequence of lights when the user approaches the mural canvas. I powered this circuit with the laptop nearby the mural. These viewers presence will make the house's blush. The light that goes on represents the people

online: red for busy or green for available. I choose to give the houses faces to represent both their property of escape and their ability to express emotions.



n-25

Also, near the mural people will find, colorful footsteps that it will indicate a path. Following the footsteps, the visitor will find a bubble sculpture with a monitor in it hidden in a wall. The user will be able to discover the narrative of the drawing by interacting with a mouse over a web application on the screen which is the face of the bubble sculpture. By surfing on the virtual drawings the same representations of the mural users will discover a non-linear narrative, in where many character become open to user interpretation. I am planning to create stories and include representational elements on Myspace, Flickr, Craigslist and Facebook. In this way I will be able to connect a virtual or “digital” narrative with the experience of an “analog” environment, and vice versa.



n-26

The goal is make the user experience the mural representation twice while in the gallery space. As a way for people to could bring this experience home, I will stick a Qr-Code on the wall near the mural and bubble sculpture. Users will able to take a picture with their cellphones and keep the URL of the project to check online at home.



## Chapter IV

### EVALUATION

After I finished my thesis I realize the new aesthetic possibilities of expression that I can bring to my artwork by using electronics and virtual media. I think that by embedding on the canvas lights, I can enrich my narrative but also start to build new strategies of representation into a Fine Art piece. I like the conceptual idea of having a “circuit” integrated in the canvas, but even more I like combination I like the idea of incorporating electronics into traditional Fine Art materials and how it opens a new field of investigation that creates potential content for the final piece.

Embedding the electronics as a part of a palette made me realize of exploring new ways to express my ideas using electronic pieces that in the past would have required more skills and time. I am interested in the nature of new materials that carries electricity and conductive such as conductive thread or ink. This new materials offer new possible aesthetics, but also create potential content through electronic transmission. I find it magical that a painter can incorporate these new materials in order to add more levels and layers to their imagery.

In the future I am to explore new techniques of embedding electronics by combining traditional and new materials. I am interesting in conductive and thermacolor inks that will allow me to articulate new concepts and bring new layers of interpretation to my stories. Also, I am interested in exploring the conceptual uses of these new materials in my narratives.

The decision to have an interactive circuit on the back of the canvas that is triggered by a proximity sensor when the audience gets close on the canvas, also opens for me the opportunity to explore the possibilities of new kinds of interactions in front of a drawing or painting. I want to investigate and go deep in these new interactions that question concepts such as the “fourth wall” .I like the idea of allowing the audience to interact with my piece, thus adding an extra layer of experience that is unusual for a mural or a drawing piece, which is typically passive.

In light of the use of the footsteps to allow the audience to discover the link between the real and the virtual, I would like to explore new experiences, new ways to evoke emotions. I want to trigger their imagination and encourage them to bring new interpretations.

The use of QR-codes stickers on the wall by the mural was more successfully than I expected. I observed multiple people using their cellphones to link with the virtual story. This suggests to me the possibility of linking to narratives through incorporating different types of kinds of QR-codes directly into my drawings. I want to use this method to explore how artist can use technologies to create metanarratives on real time.

I plan to write my dissertation on the combination of new and traditional materials in the Fine Arts. I also want to create a curriculum in order to teach other artists.

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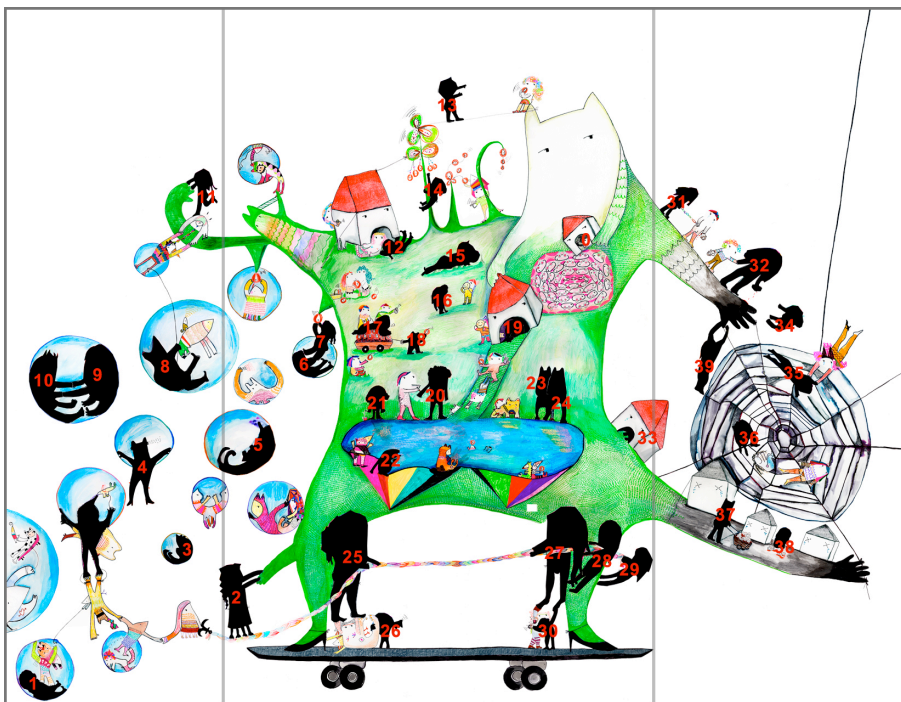
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## APPENDIX






Chatroulette    Next (F9)    Report    Stop (F8)    ☐ Auto reconnect    ☒ Cam required

Partner



You



> Connected, feel free to talk now

**You:** Nice effect

**You:** Are you from the 19th Cen?

**Stranger:** thanks

**Stranger:** hows life up there?

**You:** We're from the 22nd

**You:** It's colorful!

**Stranger:** yea, sort of

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**Roland**

If your interested id rather you just ask me anything.

**Active within 2 weeks**  
 26-year-old man  
 Corpus Christi, Texas, United States  
 seeking women 20-27  
 within 200 miles of Corpus Christi, Texas, United States

**Relationships:** Divorced  
**Have kids:** Yes, and they live away from home (1)  
**Want kids:** Not sure  
**Ethnicity:** White / Caucasian  
**Body type:** Athletic and toned  
**Height:** 5'10" (178cms)  
**Religion:** No Answer  
**Smoke:** No Way  
**Drink:** Social Drinker

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## About This Blog

This blog is about career advice. And about me.

My career never had a straight path, but I am always learning and trying new things, and that's what makes my career fun. And sometimes scary.

I had a crisis in college when I realized that all entry-level jobs sucked, so I decided to play professional beach volleyball instead. Then I went to graduate school for creative writing and had a boyfriend who taught me HTML. This miraculously made me qualified to run an online marketing department for a Fortune 500 company in the mid-90's. I stayed in software marketing for a while and then founded three internet companies. I'm

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### About Penelope Trunk

Penelope is the founder of 3 startups -- most recently, [Brazen Careerist](#), a social network to help young people manage their careers. Her career advice appears in more than 20 newspapers. In a review of this blog, *Business Week* called Penelope's writing "poetic."

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**Albert Wittenstein**

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