BlackBOX:
Painting a Digital Picture of Documented Memory

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Certificate of Authorship

I certify that this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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Preface

"It is inscribed as on Pandora's Box … do not open …passions … escape in all
directions from a box that lies open …
(Bruno Latour, 'Opening Pandora's BlackBox', 1987.)[1]

Figure 1. *blackBOX* interface screen depicting Rochéle the Creole/Indian girl
and Nina the Russian/ Greek girl

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[1] Bruno Latour, "Opening Pandora's Black Box", *Science in Action: How To Follow Scientists And Engineers Through Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987, pp 1-17.

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[2] *Baglamas* from Holst op cit p70.

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[3] Image from *Templenet http://www.templenet.com/Orissa/konakona.html* [accessed 10 June 2005].

Abstract

This study investigates and records the production of a digital media artwork *blackBOX: Painting A Digital Picture of Documented Memory*, generated through the media technologies of interactive multimedia, exploiting the creative potentials of digitally produced music, sound, image and text relationships in a disc based and online (Internet) environment. The artwork evolves from an imaginary electronic landscape that can be uniquely explored/ played in a non-sequential manner. The artwork/ 'game' is a search for the protagonist Nina's hybrid cultural identity. This is mirrored in the exploration of random, fragmentary and non-linear experiences designed for the player engaged with the artwork. The subjective intervention of the player/ participant in the electronic artwork is metaphoric of the *improvisational* tendencies that have evolved in the *Greek Blues (Rembetika), Jazz*, and *Hindustani* musical and performative dance forms. The protagonist Nina's discovery of these musical forms reveal her cultural/ spiritual origins. As a musical composer arranges notes, melodies and harmonies, and sections of instruments, so too, the multimedia producer designs a ensemble of audio-visual fragments to be navigated. *Dance* also becomes a driving metaphor, analogous to the players movement in and through these passages of image/ sound/ text and as a movement between theories and ideas explored in the content of the program. The central concern is to playfully reverse, obscure, distort the look of the dominating/colonialist gaze, in the production of an interactive 'game' and allow the girl to picture herself.

One of my objectives is to explore the ways in which social research can be undertaken by the creation of an interactive program in the computer environment utilising interactive digital media technologies. The study reveals that, through the subjective intervention of the (player) *user*[4] with the digital artefact, a unique experience and responsiveness is produced with the open ended text. The work is comprised of a website *http://www.strangecities.net*; an interactive CD-ROM; a gallery installation; digital photomedia images; and a written thesis documenting and theorising the production.

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[4] The term *user*, while widely debated has been in usage from the 1980s to refer to the unique human interaction with the digital artefact, electronic screen work, and computer interface.

Introduction

blackBOX: Painting A Digital Picture of Documented Memory is an experimental interactive work created for delivery on the computer, the Internet, and site-specific gallery installation. This immersive digital story emerges from the protagonist Russian/Greek girl's movement through the metropolis. The objective for the player/participant is to explore this computer mediated interactive Metropolis, through the digital experiences and sensations of the girl, and to discover three metaphoric 'Boxes' that contain three symbolic performances. The girl is documented making a digital journey from the interior of her urban apartment into a symbolic city. The cityscape becomes haunted by traces of her past, her memories projected onto the surfaces of her city. What is the girl searching for and what does she discover in the metropolis? She finds performances from three 'imagined' Australian diasporic communities; these resonate for the girl, creating a bricolage of the identities with which she grew up. The participant/player is encouraged to discover performances from (i) *Rembetika* – a politically engaged Greek blues; (ii) classical Indian dance and music (*Odissi* and *Kuchipudi* traditions); and (iii) fragments of Australian jazz performed by *Russian* musicians from China.

Figure 2. *blackBOX* menu interface screen depicting Rochéle the Creole/Indian girl

The focus has been to document Nina's (mine) cultural identity through random fragments, objects, musical memories and ethnic dance forms, which create for her a sense of unity and meaning in relation to her hybrid sense of self. These fragments suggest the development of interdependent and intertwining relationships involved in becoming a social subject, "…it is precisely this very sense of identification, interdependence and community that are the key elements in the development of women's identity…"[1] amongst others. The girl's specific 'melting pot' of cultural forms is a metaphor for the ways in which cultural productions and artefacts blend in the contemporary urban metropolis. The metaphor is extended by a heightened global awareness with access to network technologies and the Internet that have enabled new forms of creativity and communication. My objective in this study is to link social research with the ways in which the interactive, non-sequential narrative structure, mediated through the digital technological environment of the computer interface, can articulate feminine identity, and the notions of self/selves and Others that are refracted through this virtual space.[2]

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[1] Susan Stanford Friedman, "Women's Autobiographical Selves: Theory and Practice", in *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, Routledge, London, 1988, p36.

[2] "This exegisis is an amalgam of design and social science research. Given the current sequestration of social science form the creative arts…this thesis/artwork is a watershed which should be noted as an exemplar of new forms of literacy in scholarship." Professor Stephanie H. Donald, Director Institute for International Studies, University of Technology, Sydney comments on *Black Box* thesis, 5 October 2005.

Figure 3. *blackBOX* installation KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts,
University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004[3]

The interface design metaphor for *blackBOX* is an electronic stage/screen surface where performances appear as if conjured from a dream. The participant/player can explore the digital surface of the stage to reveal musical and dramatic performances, revealing interviews with the musicians and dancers, documentary fragments of performances and statements by artists. She can also uncover hyper-textual documents, newsprint articles and radio archival material, through the devices of iconic symbols and hotspots exposing layers of material beneath the surface of the experimental documentary.

Traditional modes of story-telling and music are challenged in the interface design because the user/player must engage with the music and performances. In the contemporary technological environment, convergence has delivered new possibilities for the creation of non-linear programs in terms of their production, distribution, and reception. The Internet as a site for the broadcast of digitally produced interactive media has created new ways of conceptualising programs, mapping interactive content and producing non-linear narrative experience, where the participant/player is able to participate in screen events.

In addition to the exploration of identity, this research project examines the ways in which discrete traditional musical and dance forms transmute in the current Australian context. This work simultaneously becomes a digital archive and a critically reflective documentation of the metamorphosis of traditional cultural forms, thus exploiting the creative potentials opened up for cultural producers in the digitally manipulated performance, sound, image, and text environment of interactive multimedia. Moving between narrative and documentary, the performances are discovered through the exploration of four interactive 'compositions', choreographed so that the player/participant can move in and out of the electronic text.

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[3] *blackBOX* installation KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004, photograph courtesy of Geoffrey Weary.

The creative component involves the production of *blackBOX* interactive CD-ROM, a medium capable of articulating fragmented experience; a digital video DVD documentation of the installation of the *blackBOX* interactive work in the gallery space[4] as means of reportage; and an Internet site *http://www.strangecities.net*. These media have been utilised to both archive and distribute the creative material and information. By virtue of their structures, they provide an analogous virtual environment for the theoretical research where *memory* and the piecing together of *fragmentary* material has a mysterious resemblance to the way in which electronic spaces can be designed for wandering through the computer text.

Figure 4. *blackBOX* installation KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004[5]

This thesis is constructed in two main parts. PART ONE: *Virtual Archive of Cultural Memories* contains a theorisation of the general historical, cultural and methodological concerns framing the creative production, as well as a 'think piece'. PART TWO: *blackBOX Creative Production* examines the specific way in which this particular creative work was produced materially and technically.

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[4] KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004.
[5] Photograph courtesy of Geoffrey Weary ©2004

PART ONE
Virtual Archive of Cultural Memories

Chapter One

1. My Story

My project is an autobiographical and inter-disciplinary one. In it I draw on personal, spiritual, philosophical, historical, and cultural resonances to question the uniqueness of the art object in the production of a creative digital program. The pursuit of knowing and recording oneself can never be a transparent act. It projects an illusory sense of self-mastery because it is political and subjective, an articulation of one's culture, mythologies, imaginaries.[1] The writing of women's lives, amongst others, has not always complied with the Aristotelian trajectory of narrative, where there can be a response to a demand put forth in the beginning. *blackBOX* extends the limits and conditions of the narrative structure in a non-sequential, fragmentary, and interactive environment, thus revealing the ways in which that structure engages with identity in and through representation.

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[1] Joanna Woodall (Ed), *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, Manchester University Press, New York, 1997, p1.

Figure 5. Portrait of my grandmother Xenia (Ermoll) Ermolaeff in Shanghai,
a Russian from China, circa 1930s

This interactive project traces an imagined history between the musical forms of *Rembetika*, *Hindustani* and *Jazz* music and dance cultures, by virtue of the protagonist Nina[2]. The player's movement through the 'game'/ interactive work reveals Nina's hybrid origins. The metaphoric *dance* between *pandorasBOX*, *jewelBOX*, and *chineseBOX* sections experienced by the player in the program, simulates Nina's own discovery of these cultural forms, which in turn enables her to engage with her cultural origins.

Figure 6. Ileana Citaristi, Italian born
classical Indian *Odissi* dancer 2002[3]

The objective of this creative research is to extend and complicate my earlier experiments with the music of the Russian diasporic people in China, through the production of an interactive non-linear multimedia work *Strange Cities CD-ROM*. This work is part of my on-going investigation into 'the song' as a mode of cultural

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[2] The name *Nina* is serendipitously common to Russian, Indian, and Greek traditions.
[3] Digital film of still Ileana Citaristi by Tatiana Pentes 2002.

expression, political persuasion, and propaganda, particularly in ethnic minorities. The daughter of a Russian from China and a Kytherian Greek émigré, growing up in Australia, I was disconnected from my parents' mother cultures. Early in my life, my parents separated and since then I always moved between two households, many languages and different worldviews. My engagement with 'otherness' began at a very early age with exposure to my father's practice of *Karate*. Growing up in Japanese occupied Shanghai, my father Serge Ermoll Jr learned and later taught *Shotokan Karate*, and it influenced many of his free improvisational jazz compositions. He often named the musical movements after the *kata* or bodily forms in *Karate*. Indeed, *Free Kata* the name of his spontaneous jazz ensemble, means *free* (as in improvised) and *kata* as in *Karate* movement (bodily form).

Figure 7. Serge Ermoll *Free Kata* album cover

My mother Matina Pentes worked from time to time in Indonesia and Malaysia, so I moved between and across those cultures. In 1981 I travelled to Ipoh, Malaysia with my mother and stayed with an Indian family. On this trip, I experienced my first classical Indian dance class in the *Bharata Natyam* form in an old school hall. I also experienced South East Asian ancient and contemporary émigré Indian culture, visiting

the ancient Buddhist monument Borobodur Temple (built circa 7th/8th Century AD), and many Hindu temples on Java and Bali.

In secondary school during the 1980s, my friend Padma Raman's family virtually adopted me into their South Indian Australian home. Padma studied classical Indian dance. Padma had always seemed very 'Indian' to me, but intimate access to her family made me realise that, her 'Indian' culture was something her whole family worked at maintaining in Australia.

Figure 8. Borobodur, Dhyani Buddha statues and stupas[4]

Padma studied classical Indian dance and I participated in these dance classes and also learnt south Indian vocal music from her mother. I began to understand that this was what other Indian Australian families were facing with their own children, the struggle to maintain and pass on the language and the heritage of an 'Other' culture. Later I joined the *Odissi Dance Company* School under the tutelage of Nirmal Jena and Chitritta Mukerjee. The sense of disconnection with my cultures of origin and their 'otherness' and my search for identity was to some extent satisfied through the study of the *Odissi* dance. The spiritual and physical aspects of *Odissi* provided me with a way of expressing my inner doubts and conflicts. In the exploration of a culture other than my own, I found a way of re-discovering my own hybrid cultural mix. The rebellion against my own culture, and the seeking out of the Indian culture was a choice based in my earlier exposure to 'difference' as a place of refuge.

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[4] "The Borobodur Temple…built between the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century A.D…in Java (Indonesia archipelago)…the structure is in the form of a lotus, the sacred flower of Buddha." From Buddhist Art and Architecture *http://www.buddhanet.net/boro.htm* [accessed 10 June 2005].

These adolescent experiences had a significant impact on the production of *blackBOX*, where improvisation in dance and music are metaphors for the player/participant's movement through the electronic text. The form of the computer program has been designed specifically to embody these theoretical concerns of the research.

In an earlier work, I focused on an album recorded by my Russian grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff, which I stumbled upon after his death, "Strange Cities" (*Stranyie Garadnye*). This vinyl record formed a body of original compositions and folk ballads from pre-revolutionary Russia. Most songs, and the title track "Strange Cities", were the laments of people in diasporas, looking back to 'home-land' or in this instance to a 'home-town/city' St Petersburg, nostalgically longing for 'motherland', a place that was no more, *an imagined space*. Sergei, a stateless person, composed these in exile in the treaty port of Shanghai, China, and went on to record and play these songs in his adopted home Sydney, where he was a foreigner once more. *blackBOX* extends this investigation by incorporating the cultural expressions of the Greek and Indian diasporic experience through the music of these displaced peoples – *Rembetika* the Greek blues; the expression of 'Sanskrit' culture through the dance and music culture of *Odissi* and *Kuchipudi*. In *blackBOX*, the protagonist Nina discovers how these forms inform her cultural and spiritual origins.

In the production of a program that articulates expressions of the émigré Russian, Greek, and Indian music/ dance traditions, I have composed a creative work that incorporates and synthesises these cultural forms, to suggest the way in which music/ dance and ethnic traditions blend and become hybrid in cosmopolitan cities. This signals the specific cultural resonances that articulate the protagonist Nina and my own subjective ethno-cultural heritage.

In many ways old Shanghai, for me, symbolises this synthesis, as a cultural *locale*, historically and in film and literature. My grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff recalled, that in Shanghai during the revolution in China, before his immigration to Australia in 1950, all

references to decadent Western culture, music, literature, film and political ideas were banned by the new Communist government.

Figure 9a. Serge Ermoll and His Orchestra plays for Pathe Label, China, c. 1930

The existence of a French record label for Russian jazz music provided a material vestige of this period in Shanghai. Pasted with glue to Sergei's music room wall, peeling off after his death, the existence of this historical material culture articulates the East/West cultural dialectic providing a trace, a fragment of this decadent transient whirligig of "joy, gin and jazz"[5] in the East.

Figure 9b. Portrait of Mao Tse Tung in the former Russian Orthodox Church spire, Shanghai circa 1998[6]

Memory and the piecing together of *fragmentary* material history, stories, and evidence have an uncanny resemblance to the way in which we input randomly accessed information using computer data-bases to construct non-linear/ non-sequential narratives in software programs such as Macromedia Director. These bring animations, digital

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[5] Lynn Pan, *SHANGHAI: A Century of Change in Photographs 1843-1949*, Hai-Feng Publishing Co, Hong Kong, 1996.
[6] Portrait of Mao Tse Tung in the former Russian Orthodox Church spire, Shanghai circa 1997, photograph courtesy Geoffrey Weary.

movies, sound fragments and texts together in an assemblage or collage, just like the collages of photographs my grandfather Sergei glued to his music room walls in suburban Australia.

Opening up the virtual box in *blackBOX*, the player/participant is invited to 'play' with artefacts and objects that inform the player/reader of this new 'text' about the cultural forms represented in this program. Audio signatures of the respective 'songs' become associated with the various cultures (i) *jewelBOX*, or, *Sanskrit* culture; (ii) *pandorasBOX*, or, *Rembetika* culture; and (iii) *chineseBOX*, or, pre-revolutionary popular Shanghainese and Russian émigré culture. This strategy has been devised to explore the ways in which readers of the new digital text weave in-between/ in and out of the boxed narratives.

The 'song' and musical phrases are pieced together by the participant of this 'game', creating a genuinely unique musical representation with each rendition of the program every time the game is played. The musical phrases, derived from the three genres of ethnic music, are East/West hybrids in their derivations. Contrary to the concerns of European composers using 'orientalist' themes in opera, theatre, ballet or contemporary new music, these three ethnic genres have been used to represent my own ethno-cultural and spiritual heritage and development. The musical ensembles in this digital work are composed as referents to the dis/connected surfacing of immigrant *memories* and to examine the process of reflections on time past.[7]

In the search for my cultural origins, I realised that the choices I made were often arbitrary and personal. What had seemed 'foreign' to me and outside my understanding was now becoming integral to my experience and informing aspects of my own life world. At the same time, these 'discoveries' revealed the East/ the West distinction as a dialectical relationship and analogous to that of Self and Other. At this point I returned to my father's place of birth as a point of departure, Shanghai, China, the quintessential 'melting-pot', and modern cosmopolitan hybrid city.

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[7] "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past…", in Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, Great Britain, 1983.

2. Writing the Self [1]

> The moment of self-portraiture becomes the coincidence of the beautiful and the
> macabre, and of self-love and self-loathing.[2]

> The first image was a portrait. In classical mythology, a lovely youth named Narcissus
> lay beside a pool gazing in adoration of his own reflection…In the bible St Veronica
> compassionately pressed a cloth against Christ's face as he stumbled to Calvary, and
> found His true image miraculously printed on the material…St Luke became a painter
> because having expressed a vision of the Virgin Mary, he was inspired to produce a
> faithful portrait of her.[3]

As explored in *Cruel Beauty* (1999), the autobiographical project to record and paint

oneself falls into the category of self-portraiture. The genre of portraiture in the west has

historically been regarded as a Renaissance invention, charting the emergence of

masculine individuality. Patricia Simon discusses the assumption that a universal concept

of individualism is a cultural precondition for the European portrait.

> A particular kind of modernist, western, autonomous individualism is assumed, a sense
> of unique and publicly staged selfhood, so that the masculine agency is universalised as
> the norm…in an over-determined patriarchy, audiences were predominantly male and
> chiefly saw members of their own gender and class populating the spaces of the
> Renaissance city…[4]

This trope can be extended beyond gender to incorporate class and ethnicity into

the cultural dimensions of portraiture. This search for self-definition and representation of

identity is articulated in *blackBOX*. However, the project also tries to extend the

traditional generic codes of self-portraiture drawn around the modernist Western canon,

as derived from a uniquely masculine post-Enlightenment self.

Tracing a historical map of the Western portrait genre consistently leads to the

Renaissance re-discovery of the portrait in western antiquity and the early Christian

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[1] This research began in Tatiana Pentes, (unpublished) Master of Letters thesis *Cruel Beauty*, Art History
and Theory/ Women's Studies, University of Sydney, 1999.
[2] Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, The University of
Chicago Press, London and Chicago, 1993, p242.
[3] Joanna, Woodall (Ed), *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, Manchester University Press, New York, 1997,
p1.
[4] Patricia Simons, "Homosociality and Erotics in Italian Renaissance Portraiture", in Joanna, Woodall (Ed)
op cit p29.

world in the form of statues, busts, coins, sarcophagi and wall paintings.[5] The Renaissance notion of Man as created in the image of God is idealised in Durer's *1500 Self-Portrait*, where he is both created in the image of God and through the artistic production creates as God. "Durer mythicises the identity between image and maker… (celebrating) himself as a universal subject, whose all-seeing gaze is subject to none".[6]

The legacy of Durer in self-portraiture is manifest in the close analogy between bodies and texts, the artist's self-portrait and the holy image. The Renaissance painter's ascent from craftsman to artist celebrated art as the *Vera icon* (truth icon) of personal skill. In *Cruel Beauty,* I framed my analysis of the modernist paintings of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, and her repeated image of the incomplete and searching feminine body, within the Renaissance project to represent the human form as masculine subject. Kahlo's work influences the artistic creative production in *blackBOX.* I have sought to subvert the masculinist/individualist form of Renaissance self-portraiture by place the girl protagonist Nina at the centre of a universe[7] composed of intertwining cultural threads, as universal all-seeing subject. Nina's search for self is articulated in the creation of a hybrid identity that is always incomplete and partial. This fluid identity, composed from her hybrid cultural origins is designed to be interpreted from many perspectives, and is thus embodied in the non-sequential 'game' structure of computer artwork.[8]

The title *blackBOX* gestures towards the photographic apparatus of the camera, and its visual elements have been influenced by modern photographic portraiture, extending into the post-modern realm of digital imaging and electronic painting. Digital media technologies have profoundly altered perception, creation and distribution and the truth-value of the image, contrary to the opinions expressed in Roland Barthes' modernist seminal piece *On Photography*. In his words: "Painting can feign reality without having seen it. Discourse has its signs which have referents…Contrary to these imitations, in

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[5] Joanna Woodall op cit p1.

[6] Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, The University of Chicago Press, London and Chicago, 1993, p242.

[7] See Terry Smith "Frida Kahlo: Marginality and Modernity", *Making the Modern*, University of Chicago Press, London, 1993, p247-p281.

[8] This research began in Tatiana Pentes, "Impulse to Represent the Self", in *Cruel Beauty*, Master of Letters thesis, Art History and Theory/ Women's Studies, University of Sydney, 1999.

Photography I can never deny that a thing has been there."[9] This notion, always problematic, has been vitiated in the wake of virtual reality and digital collage aesthetics. *blackBOX* makes a collage of everyday imaginary and material objects, like the Mexican Catholic folk *retablos* mentioned in Frida Kahlo's secular self-portraits, where the village artisan pins an object from an accident to the votive offering, eg. strands of a victim's hair, or samples from a vehicle wreckage. The lens is turned back upon the viewer who is forced to apprehend the subjective gaze of Nina the protagonist. Thus the observer becomes observed, the personal becomes political, the interior self moves into the public domain. In examining the impulse of self-portraiture, the process at work in authorship reveals the autobiographical and *digital* writing of the text.

Figure 10a. *blackBOX* menu screen interface screen by Tatiana Pentes

Figure 10b. *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale* by Frida Kahlo
In secular ex-votive style from Martha Zamora, *Frida Kahlo: The Brush of Anguish*

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[9] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Flamingo, Great Britain, 1980, p76.

Chapter Two: The Colonising Gaze

Slow Boat to China
…Sometimes you suffocate when you think of the past; a life that never was, flashing up in sepia. Memory which is creamy-yellow, cracked; composed of protogallic acid, protosulphate of iron, potassium cyanide. Let's not get too technical. Not right now. It makes for too much exposure. Still in the dark, you remember Shanghai…Like this story. Like the way everything in history is always wrapped in a tissue; of words, of memories, of lies. Dancing. Now that's another matter. You have to have infinite patience with that. Time and timing. Grace and desire. Swaying back and forth like the tide until something is washed up; something always washed up. Shanghai-dancing…To cast a line from an old spool: it is the attainment of disorientation and instability…It is hard to track my father down. He stayed at this hotel once…the Cathay on the Bund.
Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*, 2003.[1]

Figure 11a. Serge Ermoll and His Orchestra, the Cathay Hotel,
Shanghai, China, circa 1930

...the new book demands the new writer. Ink-stand and goose-quill are dead...The printed sheet transcends space and time. The printed sheet, the infinity of the book, must be transcended...
El Lissitzky [2]

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[1] Brian Castro*, Shanghai Dancing*, Giramondo Publishing, Australia, 2003, p3-6.
[2] El Lissittzky, "The Book: The Electro-Library, Topology of Typography", *Merz*, No. 4, Hanover, July 1923, in *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts*, Thames and Hudson, Great Britain, 1992.
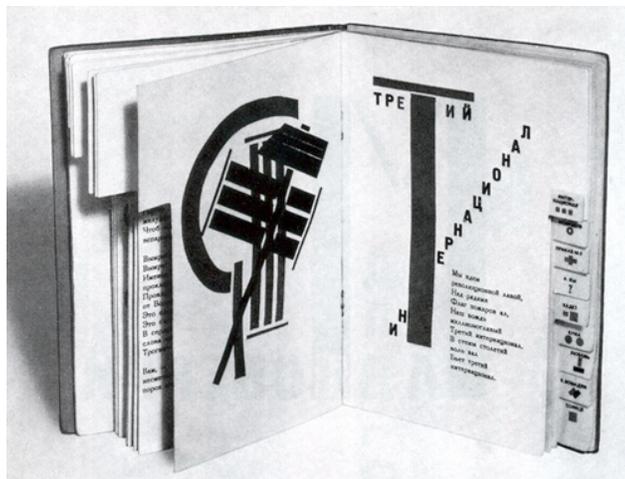
Figure 11b. Constructivist Mayakovsky's *For The Voice*, Soviet Russian
poetry to be spoken[3]

My slow boat to China began with chance discoveries and curiosities which found their way into my writing and the production, methodology and theoretical concerns involved in creating an interactive multimedia work and articulating the negotiations involved in representation of ethnicity, gender and identity. This project of image making has another ideological agenda: to interrogate the "… colonial constructions of racial, cultural, and geographic difference…(examined) …through the channels of photographic production and consumption…" [4]achieved through the creation of a sensation of loss and in-authenticity which permeates the work. The parallel discourse weaving its thread through this creative work and writing is to make visible the construction of identity as a fragile relationship between observers and observed. The colonising/ dominant gaze conceives of the marginalised ethnicity of the subject as both racial inferior and object of fascination.[5] In the famous words of Jean-Paul Sartre:

> The picturesque has its origins in war and a refusal to understand the enemy: our enlightenment about Asia actually came to us first from irritated missionaries and from soldiers. Later came travellers – traders and tourists – who are soldiers that have cooled off. Pillaging is called shopping…the basic attitude has not changed…the aristocratic

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[3] From El Lissittzky op cit p95.

[4] (Eds) Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, Routledge, London, 2002, p3.

[5] Hight and Sampson op cit p1.

pleasure of counting differences is savoured. 'I cut my hair, he plaits his…he uses chopsticks; I write with a goose quill, he draws characters with a paintbrush…"[6]

My paintbrush/ stylus is electronic and my canvas/ stage is networked, the objective is to interrogate these polemics through the production of an interactive creative digital text. In using new media to represent my own subjective ethno-cultural identity, as image-maker I am disrupting the subject/ object dichotomy, even if playfully. Simultaneously, by articulating my own hybrid *masala*[7] mix, I am attempting to reveal the construction of racial stereotypes as a cultural, social and political fabrication.[8] Inside this inter-textual work, fascination with the 'spectacle' of the Other is manipulated – through fetishisation and repetition where

> …The image of the colonial Other becomes a trope of desire for the Western viewer…through repetitive, fetishistic dissemination of stereotypes, the colonized subject becomes "mummified"… [9]

In this artful game, the player/participant is encouraged to engage with a program that makes visible the artifice of representation.

> Historically, the representation of the marginal can be traced back to essentialising "scientific" recording methods of physical anthropology, especially the hierarchical categorization of human specimens, to the popular commercial formats of collection and display: *cartes-de-visite*, tourist postcards, photograph albums, photographically illustrated books, and magazine advertisements… [pervasively used for the] symbolic and scientific uses of photography for the verification and justification of colonial rule, [addressing] the complex ways in which photographs assist in the construction of a colonial culture. [10]

blackBOX reflects on the construction of Nina's hybrid East/West identity, through virtual classical Indian dance pieces, her father's stories of growing up in Shanghai, Russian jazz music, and the modal improvisational influences (*taximia*) that she experiences in fragments of *Rembetika* Greek blues music.

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[6] Jean-Paul Sartre, "From One China to Another", Preface to "D'une Chine a l'autre", by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Jean-Paul Sartre, Editions Robert Delpire, 1954 in, *Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism*, Routledge, London, 2001, p2

[7] *masala* a Hindi Indian word denoting spice mix, having culinary usage.

[8] (Eds) Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place,* Routledge, London, 2002, p3.

[9] (Eds) Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, Routledge, London, 2002, p6.

[10] (Eds) Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, Routledge, London, 2002, p2.

Some years ago I had the task of packing away my grandparent's possessions after their death in Punchbowl, Sydney. Overwhelmed by the idea of sifting through his father and mother's personal effects, my father Serge Ermoll Jr asked me to empty the house of family objects. In the process I discovered many valuable documents, musical scores that my composer grandfather had written, letters, portraits, family photographs and objects from their temporary home Shanghai, China.

Figure 12. Sergei and Xenia Ermolaeff on a city bus
Shanghai, China, circa 1930s

Shanghai had always conjured many emotions for me while growing up. It was an idealised space in my grandparent's eyes and many stories were passed down to me as a child about the metropolis, the struggle to survive and the ultimate expulsion. My grandparents were fortunate to obtain passage on the *Chan Sha* ship[11] to Australia with sponsorship through the International Refugee Organisation in 1950. It transported my grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff, his wife Xenia and their son Serge Jr (my father) via Hong Kong to Sydney.

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[11] *Australia AdLib*, *Chan Sha*, Interview with Serge Ermoll Jr. by Jon Rose, Australian Broadcasting Corporation *http://www.abc.net.au/arts/adlib/stories/s877113.htm* [accessed 20 February 2005]
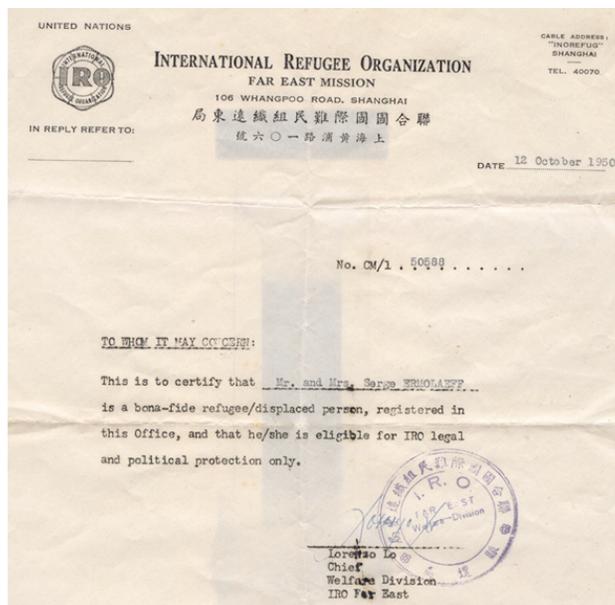
Figure 13. International Refugee Organisation Far East Mission (IRO) document granting Mr and Mrs Sergei Ermolaeff and son eligibility for legal and political protection as refugees, Shanghai, China, 1950

As I sifted through my grandparent's personal effects, photographs and documents, I realised that the stories I heard growing up were not the wild ramblings of senile refugees, who had been one too many times in and out of mental institutions. Xenia had received electro-shock therapy for depression following her arrival in Australia and Sergei had also been admitted to Callan Park Hospital (now known as the Rozelle Hospital), Sydney for depression. Rather, these vivid memories painted a picture of pre-revolutionary Shanghai. My grandfather's musical scores took on a more abstract patina, offering a window into a larger picture of twentieth century revolution and the quasi-colonial outpost of the International Settlement and concessions of Shanghai in China.[12]

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[12] Discussion of Russian Jewish refugees in the International Settlement Shanghai bringing Western music to China, in the Kofman family story, *Menorah of Fang Bang Lu* online documentary (Andrew Jakubowicz, writer/producer, and Tatiana Pentes, multimedia design) *http://www.cts01.hss.uts.edu.au/ShanghaiSite/rpath/rgetting/rgetting.htm* [accessed 10 July 2005]

Figure 14a. Russian from Shanghai - Sergei Ermolaeff Snr collage Sydney, Australia, c1980s

A personal collage on the wall of Sergei's Punchbowl home consisted of a photograph of Sergei with a cut out picture of Generalissimo Chiang Kai Chek pasted on to his heart. As an elderly man he claimed to have played with Whitey Smith's band at Chiang Kai Chek's wedding to Mei-Lie Soong.[13]

The piecing together of many old photographs from his Shanghai days became, in his old age, a means of expressing his displacement from China, which was a direct result of the communist revolution. Chiang Kai Shek represented the government prior to this displacement and this personal collage reveals Sergei's political inclinations.

For me, it was at that moment that Sergei's music and pre-revolutionary Chinese pop music became powerful articulations of these wider historical events, a Chinese modernity that was suppressed and re-surfaced in contemporary times.[14] I didn't know

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[13] Whitey Smith with C.L. McDermott, *I Didn't Make a Million*, Manila, 1956, p51-52.
and *Tales of Old Shanghai*, _www.earnshaw.com/shanghai-ed-india/tales/t-wedding.htm_ [accessed 10 July 2005]

[14] "The Russian revolution sent thousands of White Russians in flight to China. In musical matters…the Russians were demonstrably less racist than most of the treaty port Caucasians. While the most impoverished of this group scandalized other Europeans by working as bodyguards and prostitutes for the Chinese, others supported themselves as musicians. White Russian bands played in Shanghai, Harbin, Qingdao. More classically minded players gave piano or violin lessons to young bourgeois Chinese When the Shanghai conservatory was established in the 1920s, several Russians joined its faculty." In Richard

in what form or medium I wanted to represent this story; however, a discovery that coincided with my computer based art studies at University pointed the way.

At the University of Sydney Library, I chanced upon a book entitled *Shanghai: A Century of Change In Photographs*[15]. An uncanny event occurred, I opened the book and staring from its pages was a portrait of my grandfather and his orchestra pictured circa 1930 at the Majestic Hotel, Shanghai. I also found a copy of this photograph in Captain V.D. Jiganoff's *Russians in Shanghai*, 1936. At a later date, I traced the reproduction of this photograph to its original, which I discovered in my grandfather's possessions. The presence of this photograph underscored the historical fact that the Majestic Hotel was demolished after the revolution and no longer exists. Haunting the colonial hotel ballrooms, entertaining the foreigners, a foreigner himself, Manchurian Chinese born Russian, this photograph of my grandfather Sergei seemed part ethnographic relic and part Eastern Hollywood publicity still.

Figure 14b. Sergei Ermolaeff, permit to drive an automobile in the French Concession, Shanghai, China, 20 October 1930

Another fortuitous event occurred in this journey. A friend and colleague of my parents gave me a book entitled *Sky High To Shanghai* by Frank Clune, an account of his Oriental travels in the Spring of 1938, when he visited Tokyo, Japan, Harbin,

Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: middle class ambitions and the struggle over western music*, Oxford University Press, 1989, p5.
[15] Lynn Pan, *SHANGHAI: A Century of Change in Photographs 1843-1949*, Hai-Feng Publishing Co, Hong Kong, 1996.

Manchuria and Shanghai, China. My friend had stumbled upon this book in a second hand bookshop and opened the pages directly to read this passage:

> I salved Christian conscience by handing out a few *sen* [to the White Russian beggar] before entering the bright lights and blare of Serge and His Music Masters, who were hitting up Hot Cha Cha, with red-hot rhythm. If Jimmy Bendrodt was up this way, I'm sure he'd have grabbed Serge and His Music Masters for a season in Sydney. The Fantaisie Cabaret has a fame which goes back to the dramatic days of 1905, when the tsarist officers of high degree wickedly waltzed and merrily mazurka'd here with cosmopolitan *demi-mondes* while the defenders of Port Arthur waited in vain for the relief that came not. The cabaret is a large hall with tables surrounding the dancing floor to cater for cabareteers. No need to feel lonely here; a score of taxi-dancers are available…their fee for a dance is whatever you like to give them…Olga…This cultivated girl, and hundreds like her in Harbin, are at their wit's end to know how to sustain the fading courage of their hearts…The only difference she said between White and red Russians is that one has a passport and one has a soul…The cabaret got merrier and merrier. But I got more and more unhappy as Olga unfolded her tale of tragedy. Serge's Hot Cha Cha band hit up the rhythm and a singer with a splendid tenor voice made the Russian rafters rattle. [16]

Figure 15a. Sergei Ermolaeff and His Orchestra, The Majestic Hotel,
Shanghai, China, circa 1930

My father told me that my grandmother Xenia had made her way to Shanghai via Harbin, with her three sisters from Moscow in the early 1920s, to find a husband. Sergei and Xenia met in a nightclub; there is a family story that she was a dancer or singer there. Thus *dancing* began to connote for me a means of survival, performing, and a way of making a living. The ballroom of my imagination was becoming a space of economic exchange.

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[16] Frank Clune, *Sky High to Shanghai*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1948, p197 –199.

Figure 15b. Russian Taxi Dancers from General Jiganoff's, *The Russian of Shanghai*[17]

These vestiges of material history form an archive tracing the arrival of western modernity in China. Leo Ou-Fan Lee traces this "flowering of a new urban culture in China" in his publication *Shanghai Modern*[18]. Lee does this by investigating modern Chinese popular literature, film advertising, urban spaces, architecture, and fashion. He analyses the dialectics creating a unique Chinese modern culture, a melting pot of foreign influences of the west in the International Settlement of Shanghai, along with the impact of Chinese intelligentsia, commercialism, and traditional Chinese political and social culture. My grandfather Sergei's jazz orchestra contributed to this modern culture. Sergei; Chinese born and ethnically Russian, possessed no passport and was legally a displaced person, a liminal space occupied by many in those times.

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[17] Mr Sokolsky's Ballet, in Captain V.D. Jiganoff, *Russians in Shanghai*, (private publication). 1936, p272.
[18] Leo Ou-Fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China 1930-1945*, Harvard University press, Cambridge, MAA, 1999.

Chapter Four: Methodological Concerns

My research methodology is focused on imaging and representing my hybrid cultural origins through the recording of cross-cultural music/dance *performances*. These *performances* are framed in the creation of an interactive and non-linear multimedia work *blackBOX*. The performances have been documented through my own participation and observation, using digital film, video, and sound to record and interrogate the following propositions:

(1)'the box' as symbolic reference to hardware/aesthetics and the possibilities of the interactive environment. Additionally, the 'box' marks 'one' from 'others' as part of a distinct group, or scientific categorisation;

(2) 'the song' as a mode of cultural discourse/ cultural expression, political persuasion, propaganda, particularly in relation to ethnic minorities;

(3) 'dance forms' as a symbolic strategy for moving in-between theories and cultural practices;

(4) the 'digital journey' as a metaphor for discovery of digital media and different cultural forms;

(5) image/sound/text assemblages, juxtapositions, arrangements as analogous to the compositions both musical/painterly and choreographic;

(6) a self-reflexive program articulating the 'open', ambivalent', and fragmentary' qualities of the non-sequential narrative;[1]

(7) 'migration' as migration of people, music, memories, and the migration of the old media into the new media.[2]

blackBOX utilises the Internet, CD-ROM and gallery installation to investigate, publish, and exhibit elements of the digital work, and to document the installation of the artwork. This research also contributes to the study of 'migration and cultural change', by looking at the relationship between immigrant cultural production, the host nation,

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[1] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity", in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London, 1996.
[2] New Media Fellow, Australia Council for the Arts, the artists/academic John Conomos discusses these ideas in a conversation conducted at *Sydney College of the Arts*, University of Sydney, September 2004.

and cultural change.[3] It explores the genre of 'electronic writing', arranging the ensemble of fragments into image/sound/text 'compositions', using the musical analogy as an apt metaphor for the processes involved in the creation of the new media text.

Dance and dancing are central to the formulation of my methodology. Dance is used in a literal and metaphoric way to signal the construction of my hybrid cultural origins, and as a performative form documenting the dance between shifting musical genres and cultures, sanity and insanity. The dance between as a research method was sparked by the discovery of a portrait of Serge Ermoll and His Orchestra[4], a 1930s dance band in the dance halls of Shanghai. In an attempt to understand my grandparent's negotiation between their cultures of origin and their adopted nation, Australia, I formulated a way of moving between the real and the artificial. Truth about the past, historical certainty became a piecing together, a fabrication of the traces that remained after their death.

Figure 21. Serge Ermoll and His Orchestra postcard, Shanghai circa 1950

These kinds of cultural expressions provide a projection of an imagined ethnic 'identity', a desire for the whole, the complete, and 'the same', as distinct from the

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[3] Robert van Krieken, Philip Smith (et al), "Migration, Ethnicity and Australian Aboriginality", in *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* (2nd Edition), Australia, 2001.
[4] My grandfather's Russian name Sergei Ermolaeff was anglicised to *Serge Ermoll to cater to the American and British market in the Shanghai International Settlement.*

feelings of 'otherness' experienced by ethnic minorities in their adopted homelands.[5] Their 'imagined community' fulfils their need for cultural pride, positive ethnic representation, and self-expression. It allows a space for their struggle for identity and to recuperate fragments of their cultural expression. It allows social dissidence and the dreams, hopes, aspirations and sorrows that are an intrinsic part of living. Finally, it allows vestiges of cultural traces to be transported so that these refugees/migrants can find temporary unity by participating in these music/ dance forms.

blackBOX explores Russian émigré, Indian, and Greek 'imagined communities' via the device of the virtual unfolding of three digital boxes: *chineseBOX, jewelBOX,* and *pandorasBOX.* It focuses on the musical idiom as a language that speaks of the experience of dislocation and migration. Black American *Jazz* travelled across the Pacific to Japan, and the treaty port of Shanghai, where Eastern European, Philippino, Jewish and other immigrants took it up. There are many comparisons between the cultural conditions for the evolution of *Rembetika* (Greek blues) and the evolution of African American music and jazz culture. The roots of both forms evolve from songs of 'struggle', where the music forms a kind of political resistance and allows the musicians and audience to transcend the realities of oppression. Jazz music, has its roots in the black music culture of the United States, and in many ways the Greek blues is a comparative form, an articulation of struggle. Ironically, both jazz and *Rembetika* originated in a traditional 'folk' form but have evolved into more abstract 'classical' forms of music in the contemporary context.

Taximia in *Rembetika* is the elaborate improvisational introduction to a song; in the same way that Hindustani music has an introductory *Alaap*. *Rembetika* (the Greek blues), travelled to the United States in the 1930's with the Greek economic migrants/refugees. It developed in the urban Greek ghettos of the United States and like modern jazz has seeded many contemporary local variations.

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[5] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1987.

Figure 22. *Rembetika* dancer in contemporary Athens
Taverna (tavern) from Gail Holst's *Road To Rembetika*[6]

Rembetika music consists of songs created to express the joy and despair of Greece's urban refugees and ghetto dwellers in the first half of the 20th century. *Rembetika* songs, passed along by word of mouth, were a major way of communicating emotions such as patriotism and comradely union among émigré Greeks in Australia and the U.S.A. The *Rembetika* blues tradition is thus a popular musical form and performance style.[7] In the words of Elias Petropoulos "…*Greece is diaspora*, scattered all across the world, as communities of political and economic migrants…In a very real sense, as much as a fixed geopolitical entity, *Greece is an 'imagined community'*…[8]

As *blackBOX* research developed from an investigation into multimedia and musical forms, particularly the East/ West dialogue (dialectic), I discovered that one of the reasons I was drawn to Hindustani music was that it is based structurally on musical systems that are very close to my own Greek *Rembetika* culture. Indeed, *Rembetika* is the amalgam of modal and tonal forms of music and sounds 'oriental'. The song that encapsulated this search is one recorded by Roza Eskenazi entitled "Rast Gazal" where the two-way relationship between Asia Minor and Greece is vibrantly clear. "Rast Gazal"

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[6] Gail Holst, *Road to Remetika: music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow and hashish*, Denise Harvey Publisher, Limni, Evia, Greece, 1994, p12.
[7] Elias Petropoulos, "Introduction" in *Songs of the Greek Underworld: The Rembetika Tradition*, (Translated by ed Emery), Saqi Books, London, 2000.
[8] Elias Petropoulos op cit.

reminded me of the patterns of many *Odissi* dance music items that I studied, particularly the introduction (*Alaap*). *blackBOX* contains my reflections on the *Odissi/ Kuchipudi* dance forms and *Hindustani* music.

Broadly speaking, classical Indian dance and music, specifically *Odissi*, while having religious origins in temple worship, re-emerged in modern Indian society after British suppression of the '*Mahari'* or '*Devdasi'* traditions, where the form was employed by temple dancers attached to religious deities. *Odissi*, an oral tradition handed down from teacher to pupil is derived from its Indian epic basis in mythic and folk tradition, having connections with the village *Chhau* and martial arts practice. This links it with the *Rembetika* form, an urban Greek tradition, descended from Asia Minor. *Hindustani* classical music was brought by the *Mughal* emperors to India from Central Asia and Turkey. Like Jazz, both these melodies of the 'modal' type[9] are not based on scales, in the Western sense:

> …but on modal types which can be written out in the form of a scale but which have characteristic phrases and patterns of movement. Certain notes are more important than others; certain relations between notes are stressed. In classical Arab music, there were hundreds of these modes or *makams* and each was felt to have a special character suited to a particular emotion, mood or time of day. Just as a classical Indian musician has a large number of modal types at his disposal from which he can choose a rag and build a complicated pattern of improvisation, so the Arab or Turkish musician has a repository of *makams*. Having chosen, he can then explore its possibilities in a *taxim*, or semi-improvised piece. Early *Rembetika* musicians still used the word *makam* for the modal types but they soon became known as by the Greek word *thromi* – literally roads. The word *taxim* acquired a Greek form *taximi* (plural *taximia*)…[10]

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[9] Gail Holst, *Road to Rembetika: music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow and hashish*, Denise Harvey Publisher, Limni, Evia, Greece, 1994, p64.
[10] Holst op cit p65-66.

Figure 23. *blackBOX* interface still from *pandorasBOX* depicting
Greek diasporic musical and personal effects

blackBOX aims to negotiate and translate media representations of race and ethnicity by exploring the cultural productions of minority groups. It also provides a means of participating in these representations by taking up "new media" to expose creative gaps, limits, and margins.[11] In many ways this work is an attempt at an independent challenge to media institutions and imagery that have tended to be a white domain, lacking black or marginal representation in their structures and images.[12] *blackBOX* seeks to subvert such institutions by a production that engages with difference, where the production and outcome become a 'participation', a point of struggle, negotiation, and site of resistance by ethnic minorities to the power of dominant forces.[13]

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[11] Linda Leung, "Tactics and Technologies of Resistance: the Web as Minority Media", in *Where Am I? Locating Self and Ethnicity on the World Wide Web*, PhD Thesis, University of East London, May 2001, p48.

[12] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from margin to centre*, South End Press, U.S.A, 1984, p2.

[13] Linda Leung, "Tactics and Technologies of Resistance: the Web as Minority Media", in *Where Am I? Locating Self and Ethnicity on the World Wide Web*, PhD Thesis, University of East London, May 2001, p48.

Chapter Three: The Computer Mediated Text

The new media text is simultaneously non-linear and inter-textual, having its origins in modernist collage and montage aesthetic practices. A number of traditional media paths can be brought together in this new form of electronic writing. The modernist practice of visual montage can be traced to the film concepts espoused by Sergei Eisenstein in the early 20th century in Russia. Film theorist Anna Chen discusses Eisenstein's seminal work in the early development of film art, referring to him as the founding father of montage editing techniques. These foregrounded the ideological dimensions of cutting sequences of film and the meaning thus created by the formal construction of camera angles forming the frame. Editing sequences in film, utilising cutting strategies that juxtaposed images, sounds and texts to create dramatic meaning within the cinematic frame are now synthesised in the virtual editing environment of computer software non-linear editing interfaces.[1]

According to Chen, traditional theatrical methods were not really transformed in the adaptation of stage productions to film by the early cinematic techniques of foundation practitioners, such as George Méliès and the Lumière brothers. Their *mise-en-scène* was passive and stationary. It was not until the revolutionary methods of Sergei Eisenstein and American D.W. Griffith that camera position, movement, and angles began to be consciously used to construct an ideological space for the viewer. In the creation of moving images, camera zooming and tracking, close ups and extreme long shots of actors and objects, and editing (montage) produced juxtaposition and meaning, a film language expressing intellectual and political statements.

> …Eisenstein traced the origins of montage back to literature. Parallel montage - cutting away to simultaneous action - can be summed up simply by the literary device, 'Meanwhile, back at the ranch...' As for the close up, Eisenstein cites Dickens, who opened *The Cricket on the Hearth* with a Griffith-esque close up: 'The kettle began it...'[2]

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[1] Lev Manovich, "Avant-garde as Software", From *New Vision to New Media*, *http://www.manovich.net/ ARTICLES* [accessed18 November, 2003].
[2] Sergei Eisenstein, 'Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today', *Film Form*, Dennis Dobson, 1951, p195, quoted in Anna Chen op cit. *http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj79/chen.htm* [accessed 14 January 2005].

> Meanwhile, back in Russia, the young revolutionary directors - including Pudovkin, Kuleshov and Eisenstein - studied the old masters and then resolved to step up the director's degree of control over his material:
>
> They planned, by means of new editing methods, not only to tell stories but also to interpret and draw intellectual conclusions from them... [they] saw themselves as propagandists and teachers rather than as conventional entertainers. As such, their task was twofold:
> to use the film medium as a means of instructing the masses in the history and theory of their political movement; and to train a young generation of filmmakers to fulfil this task. [3]

As new media theorist Lev Manovich argues, imaging and audio software programs such as Adobe Photoshop, special effects programs such as Adobe After Effects, Director MX, Flash MX and SoundEdit or Pro Tools audio editing software simulate the multi-track environment codified and theorised by Eisenstein in his early stylistic and innovative film work. The convergence of media into the software environment has transformed the capabilities for digital media production. It is possible to shoot a digital film/video and post-produce the media on the desktop of a multimedia computer.

Manovich discusses the return of the word "new" in the 1990s. This term, though non- aligned with a specific media type, such as photography, electronic print, or cinema/film but used for generic media[4] is now perhaps replaced by the term 'digital media'. It began to refer to the potential neo-avant garde practices and radical cultural innovations inherent in these forms of electronic media - CD-ROM, DVD, URL web sites, computer software games, hypertext and hypermedia applications [5] such as cinematic, design, architectural, graphic and textual experiments. Examples are Dziga Vertov's quick cutting film techniques in *The Man with a Movie Camera* (Soviet Union, 1929), and split screen experiments. Imaging programs and moving image (compositing) editing software programs, such as Adobe After Effects, re-interpret, coalesce and mingle montage film making techniques in the televisual, video and Internet spheres.[6] The

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[3] Anna Chen, "In Perspective: Sergei Eisenstein", in *The Eisenstein Collection*, Tartan Video, Faber and Faber, U.K, July 1998 *http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj79/chen.htm* [accessed 14 January 2005].
[4] Lev Manovich, "Avant-garde as Software", From *New Vision to New Media*, *http://www.manovich.net/ ARTICLES* [accessed18 November, 2003].
[5] Manovich op cit.
[6] Manovich op cit.

design, arrangement, composition, and assemblage of fragmentary media types in a virtual system to be uniquely explored by each player/participant, can be likened to the improvisational qualities inherent in the diasporic musical forms explored in the *blackBOX* program.

These ideas inform my creative work, whether Internet or disc based. My central concern is to acknowledge the parent media and cultures, as well as, to engage with these forms in the production of a new digital text. The software programs that I use metaphorically unleash the 'genie' from the 'lamp'. The 'genie' becomes the generically coded other. Sanskrit, Greek, and Russian (Chinese) cultures stand in for the orient, the 'foreign', as represented in orientalist styles in Western music, film and literature. However, the 'lamp' becomes the 'box' – the *jewelBOX*, the *chineseBOX*, the *pandorasBOX*, and the 'black box' of the program that I am creating. Metaphorically, the player/ participant simulates the mobile agents moving through the electronic service frameworks, entities consisting of code, data and control information[7], migrating between different nodes in the system.

The objective of *blackBOX* is to deploy interactive media in the production of a creative work (image/text/sound) that reflects on the construction of self, representation of identity and the documentary form of the new media environment. In this process I analyse existing representations of ethnicity on the Internet, and I pay attention to the creative component in the production of a program that is self-reflexive, that expresses the 'open', 'ambivalent', 'ambiguous', and 'fragmentary' formal qualities of the non-sequential narrative.[8]

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[7] Fritz Hohl, "Time limited Blackbox Security: Protecting Mobile Agents from Malicious Hosts", in Giovanni Vigna (ed), *Mobile Agents and Security*, (Lecture notes in computer science; Vol.1419), Berlin, 1998, p92-109.
[8] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity", in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London, 1996.

In the contemporary Australian context, the project of representing the dance and music culture of diasporic communities in relation to other forms of émigré music culture, namely the incorporation, appropriation, and expropriation of non-Western musical and cultural forms and Western representation of jazz, reveals 'the West'/'the East' distinction as not purely a *geographical* terrain, but a cultural *locale* upon which complex desires are played out.[9]

Figure 16. *blackBOX* interface still from *chineseBOX* pathway

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[9] Hall op cit.

1. Hypertextuality/ Intertextuality

In the quest for characterisation of the non-sequential narrative, Eastgate Systems[10] online journal *http://www.tekka.net/* defines the fragmentary and open ended hypertext as prefigured in medieval manuscripts and attributes to it the following characteristics:

> a. **Non-linearity**: multiple choices in the viewing order of blocks of text, illustrations, marginalia, and the links between the items.
> b. **Multi-vocality**: the several relationships that are possible between the text and the illustrations, i.e., whether illustrations provide a literal equivalent of the text, or whether they provide additional information not included in the text.
> c. **Inter-textuality**: references to other sources mentioned explicitly in the text or implied in the text.
> d. **Decenteredness**: the lack of one dominant, unifying centre and the ability of the text to offer different paths of investigation to different readers.

This online journal, a portal for creative hypertext work and criticism, argues that medieval manuscripts

> …act as agents of historical and spiritual illumination, possessing a human feel and touch, with each one being a unique creation of a unique scribe and illuminator, a piece of art, and, frequently, its creator's masterpiece.[11]

This enables them to resemble contemporary 21st century electronic Internet hypertexts, because they:

> …like hypertextual Websites or electronic books, consist of composite works of different layers of texts, illustrations, marginal and interlinear glosses and annotations. Medieval Bibles, chronicles, works of the Law, and textbooks present examples of a high level of hypertextuality.[12]

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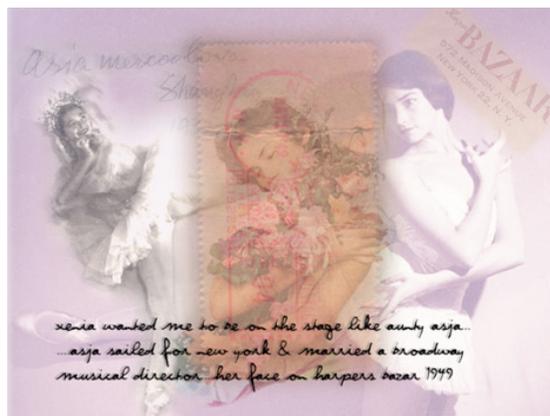
[10] *Tekka* online journal, 134 Main Street, Watertown MA 02472 USA. email: editor@tekka.net info@tekka.net   voice: +1 (617) 924-9044 (800) 562-1638.
[11] *http://www.tekka.net* [accessed 2 October 2003].
[12] *http://www.tekka.net* [accessed 2 October 2003].

Figure 17. Russian ballerina Asja pictured in *blackBOX* interface still from *chineseBOX*

2. Aesthetics of Interactive Multimedia

Melanie Swalwell argues in her thesis *Aesthetics and Hyper/aesthetics: Rethinking the Senses in Contemporary Media Contexts*, that the 'immersive sensory experience' of the interactive environment of convergent media is mediated through the intelligent technological systems of the computer and has produced new kinds of artificial (virtual) engagement:

> …[The] ability to provide a greater range of sensory stimuli, all at once. As a result, claims were made by promoters of various media – new and old – that consumers were 'driving' convergence by their demands for "more realistic and 'immersive' (multisensory) experiences…[13]

Swalwell explores the implication that immersion resulted from stimulating all the senses, often to heretofore-unimagined degrees. The production of creative and experimental art draws from a multitude of disciplines and has a number of various outcomes which include cyberart, digital art, web art, information art, interactive art, active art, reactive art, and connective networked art[14]. However, these categories, compiled under the rubric 'digital artifact' and non-material art object, can be traced back to experiments in modernist avant-garde conceptual art:

> …interrogating the relationship between ideas and art, conceptual art de-emphasizes the value traditionally accorded to the materiality of art objects. It focuses, rather, on examining the preconditions for how meaning emerges in art, seen as a semiotic system.[15]

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[13] No author given (press release) "Philips Digital Convergence Product Defines Multimedia Home Cinema", *http://www-us.sv.philips.com/news/press*, August 1997, [accessed 18/7/00], quoted in *Aesthetics* and Melanie Swalwel*l, Hyper/aesthetics: Rethinking the Senses in Contemporary Media Contexts*, PhD Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney, 2002, p3.

[14] Gerhard Bachfischer, "A Constant Flow of Thoughts", unpublished creative journal, Master of Interactive Multimedia, IML, University of Technology, Sydney, 2002, p12.

[15] "…the "dematerialization" of the art object theorized by Lucy Lippard and John Chandler in "The Dematerialization of Art", Art International (February 1968) and reinscribed in Lippard's *Six Years: The dematerialization of the Art Object*, 1966-1872 (1973), [where] "dematerialization of art" can be seen as a "strategy for repositioning art in relation to politics – not a shift from material *per se*, but a shift from an artworks value as an object of commercial exchange to its value as aesthetic and political interchange", in Edward A. Shanken, "Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art", *Art and Culture Papers*, *Electronic Art and Animation Catalog: SIGGRAPH*, 2001, p8-9.

In the late 1960s, one of the pioneers of the experimental meeting of "software', "information technology" and "art" in the *museum* environment was Jack Burnham. His focus was the design of software to function as a testing ground for public interaction with "information systems and their devices". His curation of the exhibition *Software, Information Technology: Its New Meaning For Art* at the Jewish Museum in New York (1970) exemplifies his project.

> …Burnham conceived of "software" as parallel to the aesthetic
> principles, concepts, or programs that underlie the formal embodiment
> of the actual art objects, which in turn parallel "hardware". [16]
> [See "The Aesthetics of intelligent Systems"; "System Esthetics" (1968);
> and "Real Time Systems" (1969)[17]

Are the modernist experiments that foregrounded new media relevant to all cultures, particularly in the era of technological "have" and "have-nots", and can they be read cross-culturally? *blackBOX* attempts to extend new media to incorporate representations of groups and content that call attention to *ethnicity* and to piece together the disparate threads of identity, as represented by the protagonist Nina's quest for self-understanding. I have drawn upon my reading of Jacques Derrida's theorising of the hypertext, and his recognition that montage like textuality marks or foregrounds the writing process.[18] The assemblage of Nina's cultural identity, through exploration of the program,
has been designed as an inter-lacing structure, weaving together the different threads, which bind her into a multi-layered and multi-valent subject.

George P. Landow explores these ideas in his seminal text "Hypertext as Collage-Writing", where he traces contemporary aesthetic impulses in the *hypertext* to the

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[16] A. Shanken, "Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art", *Art and Culture Papers*, *Electronic Art and Animation Catalog: SIGGRAPH*, 2001, p9.

[17] Jack Burnham, "Notes on Art and Information Processing", *SOFTWARE*: 10 quoted in Edward Fry, *On the Future of Art*, Viking, New York, 1970, p119.

[18] Jacques Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena* quoted in George Landow's "Hypertext as Collage-Writing", in Peter Lunenfeld (Ed), *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media*, MIT Press, Massechussetts, 1999, p151.

modernist avant garde practice of collage, in particular the painterly works of Picasso and Braque, specifically Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912).[19]

> COLLAGE. 1. The action of gluing. *Collage d'une affiche*. State of what is glued. – Arts. *Papiers Colles*, a composition made of elements glued on a canvas (possibly integrated in the paint). *Les collages de Braque, de Picasso*. – Techn. Assemblage through adhesion…
>
> …At this point, some of the similarities between hypertext and collage will have become obvious. Having first appropriated Jois's materials by placing them in a web, and then adding materials that they seemed to demand. I found that, like all hypertexts, it had become open-ended, a kind of Velcro-text to which various kinds of materials began attaching themselves. First, I included the discussion of Derrida and appropriation from the electronic version of my book, *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (1992) that I used as an epigraph to this essay.
> I also added definitions of hypertext and a list of qualities that it shares with collage.[20]

When the American computer scientist Vannevar Bush published his conceptualisation of "Memex" (memory extension)[21] in his posthumous article "As We May Think" in the *Atlantic Monthly* (1945)[22], could he have imagined that a version of *Memex* would prefigure and perhaps influence the formation of the contemporary Internet? "Bush was the first to realise the potential of storing items of information with built-in associative links to other data. He never actually built a real *Memex*, but the idea of such a system was a driving force in the development of hypermedia."[23] Michael K. Buckland discusses the visuality and the role of photography in the *Memex* system of document retrieval.

> Bush's *Memex* draws on two main sources: His view of *associative* trails as the mechanism by which the brain works; and *photographic* and other technology available in the late 1930s. The features noted above, and other refinements such as the small camera strapped to the researcher's forehead to photograph anything he or she looked at, were more or less feasible individually with the technology of 1939, and although combining them into a single workstation would probably not have been practical.

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[19] George Landow, "Hypertext as Collage-Writing", in Peter Lunenfeld (Ed), *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media*, MIT Press, Massechussetts, 1999, p153.

[20] Landow op cit, p152.

[21] *Memex and Beyond* http://www.cs.brown.edu/memex/ "…research, educational, and collaborative web site integrating the historical record of and current research in hypermedia. The name honors the 1945 publication of Vannevar Bush's article "As We May Think" in which he proposed a hypertext engine called the Memex…" [accessed 10 July 2005].

[22] Bob Cotton, and Richard Oliver, "Media Chronofile", in *Understanding Hypermedia 2000: multimedia origins, Internet futures*, Phaidon Press, London, 1997, p22.

[23] Bob Cotton, and Richard Oliver op cit, p22.

In 1939 Bush was, in fact, responsible for the design and construction of a document retrieval machine much faster and technologically more advanced than anything previously attempted. This prototype formed the context, the recognizable technological basis (recognizable in Cimi's drawings), and, presumably, the stimulus for his think-piece "As We May Think." [24]
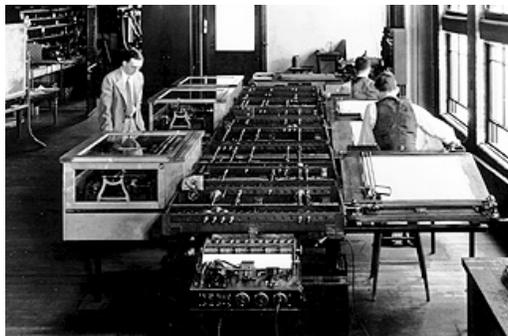
Figure 18. Vannevar Bush's *Differential Analyzer*, 1931
http://www.acmi.net.au/AIC/BUSH_BERRNIER.html [accessed 2 February 2005]
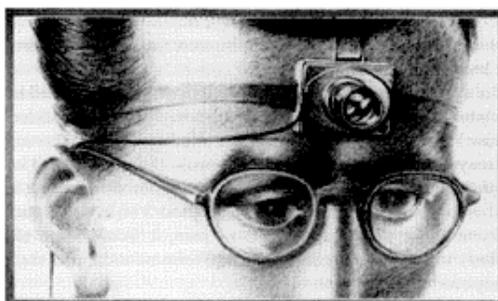
Figure 19. Vannevar Bush's *Memex* head camera
http://www.acmi.net.au/AIC/BUSH_BERRNIER.html [accessed 2 February 2005]

In Vannevar Bush's words from "As We May Think" he explicates his theory of associative thinking in the human mind.

> The human mind does not work that way [i.e. linearly]. It operates by association. With one item in its grasp, it snaps instantly to the next that is suggested by the association of thoughts, in accordance with some intricate web of trails carried by the cells of the brain. It has other characteristics, of course; trails that are not frequently followed are prone to fade, items are not fully permanent, memory is transitory.[25]

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[24]Michael K. Buckland*, Emanuel Goldberg, Electronic Document Retrieval, And Vannevar Bush's Memex,* School of Library and Information Studies, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA *http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/~buckland/goldbush.html*, [accessed 14 January 2005].
[25] Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think", *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1945, Part 6, *http://www.theatlanticmonthly.com/unbound/flashbks/computer/bushf.htm* [accessed 14 January 2005].
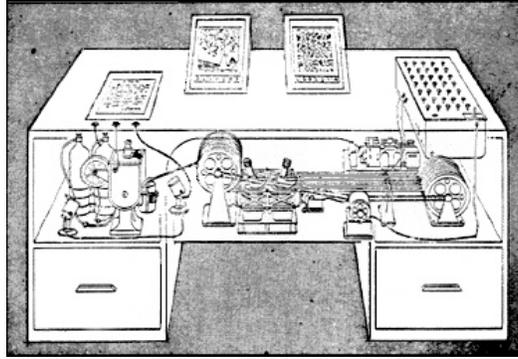
Figure 20. Vannevar Bush's *Memex*
http://www.acmi.net.au/AIC/BUSH_BERRNIER.html [accessed 2 February 2005]

In the contemporary media setting, traditional media forms such as radio drama have been significantly affected and transformed by the hypertextual structure. An example in traditional media is the program *The Wheel of Fortune*[26], the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) debut interactive radio drama. Audiences tuned in and had the ability to switch randomly, between key points in the narrative, the program responding to the listeners input, opening up the potential for multi-various non-sequential combinations in apprehending the radio drama program.[27] The objective of *blackBOX* has been to create a similar non-linear narrative that is constructed to operate using associations as a structural device in the non-sequential unfolding of the program.[28]

These non-sequential associative links provide a structural model for new cultural forms, interactive devices and media, and are foregrounded historically in literary innovations. Professor Ross Gibson draws an analogy between the evolution of interactive media and the rise of the novel in his paper "The Rise of Digital Multimedia Systems". Investigating Ian Watt's analysis of the rise of the novel (1957), Gibson is more interested in examining the psychic, political and philosophical transformations that prefigured the development of new electronic cultural forms. Gibson argues that:

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[26] *The Wheel of Fortune http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/wheel/* authored by Nick Fisher, British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio 3 and 4, 19 and 20 September 1999.
http://www.eastgate.com/HypertextNow/archives/Fisher.html
[27] *Eastgate Systems http://www.eastgate.com/HypertextNow/archives/Fisher.html* [accessed 14 January 2005].
[28] This research was inspired by the teaching program developed for Megan Heyward's
Writing and New Media subject, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney, 2004.

> …We can gain insight into periods of psychic, political and philosophical flux by studying how aesthetic and semantic systems engage with the intellect and the *sensorium* of the user, we can understand the temper of the times. When a new form of art or popular communication arises and takes hold, it reflects changes that have recently occurred or are presently occurring in psychology and society. Equally important, the rise of a popular new cultural form not only reflects but also adds momentum to the changes that define the turbulent times … Through this process, the novel was eventually superseded (which is not to say eliminated) by a new predominant form, cinema, which emerged at a time when individual psychologies were changing yet again, this time to absorb the modern world's kinetics (hence the name: cinema). Here was a cultural form able to represent and analyse the tumult of sensory 'attack' that assailed every individual psyche once the speedy, mechanical modes of transport, communication and commodity production became widespread during the industrial revolution.[29]

Thus a parallel can be drawn between the psychological transformations that have evolved from contemporary technological innovations in capitalist cultures and the kinds of cultural shifts in thinking, art, literature and architecture that Marshall Berman elucidates in *All That Is Sold Melts Into Air*.[30] Berman's analysis details the cultural articulation of modernity and the political and demographic dimensions of this shift. These reflections on previous technological transformations and their cultural implications have interesting resonances with present day situations.

3. Tracing a digital media map

In the production of *blackBOX*, the legacy of contemporary practitioners, scholarship, and critical thinking in the field have shaped the ideas, conceptualisation, and production process. In the current Australian setting, the publication of *new media* has emerged from the seeds of public sector funding and academic research. The Australian Film Commission, the Australia Council for the Arts, and the Australian Research Council to name a few, have created a fertile ground for the cross-fertilisation of traditional and new forms of interactive media and for their publication on the Internet, disc-based CD-ROM, and DVD. A digital media map of recent interactive works published and distributed in Australia clearly shows a boom during the 1990s of titles authored for an audience with interactive participation as the primary artistic mode.

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[29] Ross Gibson, "The Rise of Digital Multimedia Systems", in Ross Gibson and Ernest Edmonds (Eds), *INTERACTION: Systems, Practice and Theory*, A Creativity and Cognition Symposium, Dynamic Design Research Group, Creativity and Cognition Studio, Powerhouse Museum and University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, 16-19 November 2004. [my italics]
[30] Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Verso, United Kingdom, 2000.

The recent decision by the Australia Council for the Arts in December 2004 to dismantle the New Media Arts Board prompted heated debate regarding public funding policy for "new media art forms", creating a lively polemic by theorists, artists, policy makers and other stake holders about the identity papers of "new media arts". Clearly the term and genre of "new media" have to respond to the ways in which different cultural producers take up creative digital technologies to enable communication and information technology, as a means of story-telling in the production of digital film and artworks. This cultural debate raises questions of ownership, control and definition of the means of production of new media.

Like the evolution of all new technologies, historically, this particular debate reveals "new media" and "digital media" as a site of contestation. Can we speak about these new forms as a single genre, or is it more fruitful to understand them as analogous to other communication revolutions taken up by different sectors for different purposes? The following electronic conversations sourced from this contemporary debate reveals the issues addressed by some of the more prolific and high profile Australian and expatriate thinkers and producers in this field.

Document (1)

A public Internet posting on FibreCulture List by Geert Lovinck

From   geert@xs4all.nl
Sent   Monday, January 31, 2005 8:40 pm
To   fibreculture@lists.myspinach.org

Subject Re: ::fibreculture:: OzCo responds to New Media Artists

(Theses written for a Future of the Arts project, but perhaps also useful within the current new media arts debate. /Geert)

Three Answers to the Question: What is Future Art?

I. Leaders of future art institutions will have to be truly multi-disciplinary and multi-platform. They will reconcile local, regional, national and global flows of creativity. Future art will be both individual and collaborative -- in collaborative ? In fact, it will be hard to distinguish the two. In order to get there, dominating prevailing categories such as 'visual arts' and 'contemporary arts' will have to be abolished. These are cold war terms, invented to compete with neighbouring forms of artistic expression. What will count is quality, aesthetics and above all, a critical approach to society. The locality will be able to synthesize interests in art as objects and the ever-growing rapidly expanding variety of networked, mediated forms of expression.

II. There is a growing tension, not to say open rivalry between art forms and their institutions. This can mainly be blamed largely on the outgoing post-war 68-generation and their greedy careerism that is now aimed at maximizing their superannuation. Their collective metamorphosis from progressive and experimental to a defensive, conservative attitude is phenomenal. Why should most of the funding these days go to opera? Can somebody please explain this? Why should techno and 'urban culture' be left to the market? There is, for instance, no philosophical ground to distinguish so-called contemporary from so-called new media art. They have so much common ground. The successful integration of 70s and 80s video art into the artistic mainstream is a good example is and a hopeful sign. Perhaps Luhmann and Bourdieu can help us out here. Art struggles these days can no longer be understood in metaphysical terms because they primarily grow out of petty politics. Art can only be understood within institutional contexts. Even the market plays a secondly role. Most art historians and critics are useless to inform us [sic] about these underlying tendencies, because they are part of the existing system and only reproduce existing tensions and confusions.

III. The true potential of new media art will lie in its ability to disappear. New media arts is a Hegelian project, aimed at its own transcendence. It is not a goal in itself, even though it obviously has self-referential tendencies, like all activities in society. In the short term, new media arts sets out aims to discover the inner logic, standards and architectures of new technologies, but that process can only last for a while. The phase of experimentation will necessarily come to an end. Its findings will dissipate in society.

::posted on ::fibreculture:: mailinglist for australasian
::critical Internet theory, culture and research
::(un) subscribe info and archive: http://www.fibreculture.org
::please send announcements to separate mailinglist:

Document (2)

From   Melinda Rackham <melinda@subtle.net>
Sent   Sunday, January 30, 2005 2:39 pm
To   fibreculture@lists.myspinach.org

Subject ::fibreculture:: ozeculture conference

the Ozeculture suggestion is a good idea and yes, education, rather than confrontation of
an uninformed audience is absolutely the way to go. As a networked artist / independent
content producer I wouldn't mind talking about the situation with net art and the decline
of Australian online arts, and the booming situation in other countries where state or
private donors are investing in them. I don't believe people don't like or don't care about
media art… *its that they don't know what it is.*

Once exposed to a *genre* people start to think differently about it. It becomes familiar, un-
threatening, useful, entertaining and absolutely worth keeping. We do live in a nation
obsessed with border control…
so networked, distributed and media art has to be on the inside of that perimeter. I have
attended one Ozeculture as a participating artist,
and I must say that the art sessions seemed to be attended in the
majority by people I already knew….

So it's no wonder that we *independents* aren't out there informing other sectors of what
we do… and maybe that has to change... and one way to do that is with the assistance of
the funding organisations, ANAT, oz co, state, etc who might like to review their
conference funding strategies to maximise Australian artists opportunities of appearing
and promoting locally by having separate local and international funding categories.

Melinda

Dr Melinda Rackham
artist | curator | producer
www.subtle.net/empyre
-empyre- media forum

Document (3)

Online Interview with McKenzie Wark by Tatiana Pentes

From   Ken Wark <warkk@newschool.edu>
Sent   Friday, December 10, 2004 2:11 am
To   Tatiana.Pentes@uts.edu.au

Subject Re: some thoughts

McKenzie Wark ~~~~~~~A Hacker Manifesto http://www.hup.harvard.edu/
>>> Tatiana Pentes <Tatiana.Pentes@uts.edu.au> 12/07/04 8:28 PM

dear ken

[tatiana]---one of the things that i am exploring in my creative research is the possibility of integrating the social research into an audiovisual interactive online form.... in you opinion have researchers in the field started to produce this kind of work...can you point my cursor to some such projects?

[ken]---- I can't say I've found much along these lines, although i do like the work of Chris Csikzentmihalyi: http://web.media.mit.edu/~csik/research/

[tatiana]---in your own theoretical writing you speak of new kinds of existence in the communications spheres....is this [post-human] virtual engagement a third space...or do you understand this to be connected with the lived experiences of grounded cultures?

[ken]---- I never liked the term post-human. It leaves intact the assumption that there was once a humanism. It seems to me we made our pact with the nonhuman 10,000 years ago, with the beginnings of agriculture.

I do argue that we have created a third nature. Second nature was the struggle to wrest freedom from necessity by collective labor. It produces the built environment. But it also produces new necessities, new alienations. Third nature, starting with the telegraph, telephone, television -- all the way to telecommunications, tries to overcome the contradictions of second nature by building a third, based on the techniques of telesthesia -- perception at a distance. This of course brings a new series of contradictions in its wake. But just as second nature dominates nature, so third nature dominates second nature. The materiality of nature does not go away, it is just subjected to ever more abstract forms of power.

[tatiana] you are famously quoted as saying something such as...."we no longer have roots we have aerials [antennae] how has this philosophy evolved to encompass the kinds of engagements that now occur in real-time on the Internet?

[ken]---- We no longer have roots, we have aerials. We no longer have origins, we have terminals. We no longer have the family silver, just the satellite dish. The anxieties about identity, roots, authentic culture arise precisely because these things are no longer possible.
Of course they were never really possible, but now even the illusion is wearing off. Modernity was a one-way ticket. There's no getting off the roller-coaster .

McKenzie Wark

As these three documents attest, the genre of new media and digital media art is being widely debated in the Australian public sphere. As editor of *RealTime* magazine Keith Gallasch reports in *Australia Council Restructure: Australia Council Unplugged* [31](Appendix ii), a meeting of new media and digital media artists and theorists[32] heatedly debated the notion of what constitutes this form of cultural production and how it should be funded in the public sector and the future direction of public policy on 'new media'. Digital media has been taken up across all sectors of the community inter/nationally, by government, corporations, and community players including artists. It is no longer an emerging form and the discussion is perhaps more about where control and ownership of these media reside, both economically and aesthetically.

Creative digital media technologies constitute a communications revolution with the development of new cultural artefacts. They are also being used to communicate in existing traditional media forms such as radio, television, and print. The explicit and specific capacities of these convergent media are not exclusive to the creative realm of the arts. As Gallasch's article explores, new media and digital media constitute a field constantly being re-defined and re-negotiated. Gallasch's cultural commentary suggests that it has become anachronistic to refer to the production of digital content through the technologies of interactive multimedia as 'new media'. This is clear from the ways in which government policy defines its public agenda and funding. While there may be a strong negative reaction to political change by sections of the creative sector in Australia, perhaps this transformation is in response to the global culture defining the borders and boundaries between traditional media and the ways in which they are converging to generate, perhaps not a 'genre' that makes claims to "new-ness', but rather incorporates the various ways in which the parent media and art forms take up these new technologies in the production, creation, distribution and exhibition of digital content. Perhaps we need

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[31]Keith Gallasch, "Australia Council Restructure: Australia Council Unplugged", *RealTime*, February/ March, 2005. (Appendix ii)
http://www.realtimearts.net/rt65/gallasch_ozcorestructure.html [accessed 6 June 2005]
[32]Meeting convened by the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT), dLux media arts, Performance Space, Experimenta, MAAP (Media Arts Asia Pacific) and *RealTime* magazine at the Paddington (Returned Servicemans League) RSL, Sydney on January 24, 2005.

to refer to this convergence and the new cultural artefacts emerging from it as "digital media" as distinct from "new media". It seems there no longer exists a specific category of digital cultural artefact, rather there are hybrid forms emerging from within the various traditional media that exploit digital potentials. Artists will continue to take up all manner of materials in the production of creative work. Inter-disciplinary and collaborative art production across genres and media will also continue. The political debate surrounding the branding of a "new media" genre in the local Australian context signals a wider debate about ownership and access to the means of production and takes place whenever the evolution of new technologies has implication for new forms of cultural production.

4. Think Piece

The gestures of the body in interactive cross-cultural storytelling

The objectives of *blackBOX* are twofold in regard to the narrative perspective. On the one hand the program is revealed through the user/player's touch and interaction with the electronic screen space. On the other hand the story uncovers the subject of the narrative through *dance* and the *movement of the human body* as a mode of expressing stories of diaspora. The program unfolds from the perspective of the protagonist Nina. The player/participant discovers her "otherness" and culture through her eyes. Nina narrates the story observing and relating her interpretation of that cultural performance. The structure of the story resembles the way in which memories surface for us in a non-sequential manner.

Cassell and McNeill argue that storytelling is structured on multiple levels, drawing together perceptions of time and space, perspective, distance between narrator and narrated, and the integration of the sequential and the non-sequential, the verbal and the nonverbal in the structuring of the narrative:

> …When we add gestures to speech, we shed light on many of the same questions that have been the focus of attention by narratologists. By adding the dimension of hands in motion, we clarify the issue of perspective, in that the speakers, by way of use of their hands may convey…the issue of point of view…. Hand gestures clarify whether or not the performer is narrating as the subject herself or whether she is narrating as observer.[33]

"Gesture and the Poetics of Prose" explores the idea that narrative language has a 3-D structure that is 'imagistic', both visual and kinesic and either holistic or analytic. In summary, the paper argues that narration has many properties that remain unchanged regardless of genre; storytelling is a social activity; physical gestures are as much part of narrative communication as speech; gestures provide a more complex and complete shape of the narrator's speech, because gestures are not merely the a translation of speech into a kinesic medium but provide something supplementary to the verbal storytelling. For example, in the exploration of *blackBOX,* the player/participant is

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[33] Justine Cassell and David McNeill, "Gesture and the Poetics of Prose", *Poetics Today*, 12: 3, Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, U.S.A, Fall, 1991.

experiencing the story through the subjective intervention of their own hand/ cursor/ mouse and thus by the sense of *touch*.[34] Cassell and McNeill's thesis is that analysis of language combined with gesture provides a binocular vision, a new way of seeing, perceiving and understanding storytelling. I propose that physical actions accompanying speech patterns, and dramatic gestural movements in dance forms (Eastern and Western), spontaneous or choreographed, resemble the interactive design of an electronic space, a choreographed terrain for the player to explore through tactile engagement with the program using the movement of the hand/cursor/ mouse.

"Gesture and the Poetics of Prose" defines narrative as the representation of real, hyperreal, and fictitious events experienced by the subject in time and space, presupposing a 'macrostructure' from which those events are narrated. When designing an electronic text, in the interactive medium, the notion of the 'macrostructure' is provided by the architecture of the computer program and realised in the interface design, where movement from screen surface to screen surface (and the design of this experience) can be likened to the role of the narrator in traditional forms of media.

> …the represented events, agents, times, and places are selected from the "paradigms" of such possible structures, in order to be combined in the "syntagma" of the discourse. No choice is innocent: all that takes place on the linear axis of the narrative produced in real time draws from and also participates in the atemporal, a linear organization that we may call simply narrative structure….[35]

When designing a multimedia game/ program the primary mode of apprehension occurs through the *haptic* (hand) and thus the bodily activity and sense of touch (*tactility*) makes more complex the traditional delivery of the narrative experience. The material is triggered by the player/participants *responsiveness* to the programmed content. As distinct from reading a text or apprehending a performance, the player/participant must learn a set of preconceived strategies/devices designed by the program makers before there can be meaningful engagement with the cultural artefact.

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[34] A more social interactionist work on gesture as an alternative to the social psychological treatments of Cassell and McNeill can be found in Charles Goodwin's 'pointing as situated practice' at *http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu.clic/cgoodwin/* [accessed 22 December 2005].
[35] Cassell and McNeill op cit p378.

…In the case of primary learning, the child learns at the same time to speak the language (which is only ever presented in action, in his own or other people's speech) and to think *in* (rather than with) the language… *Belief* is thus an inherent part of belonging to a field. In its most accomplished form – that is, the most naïve form…That is why one can not enter into this magic circle by an instantaneous decision of the will, but by birth or by a slow process of co-option and initiation which is equivalent to a second birth…Practical belief is not a 'state of mind', still less a kind of arbitrary adherence to a set of instituted dogmas and doctrines ('beliefs'), but rather a state of the body…Enacted belief, instilled by childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automation that 'leads' the mind unconsciously along with it', and as a repository for the most precious values, is the form par excellence of the 'blind or symbolic thought' (*cogitatio caeca vel symbolica*)…The body believes in what it plays at: it weeps if it mimes grief. It does not represent what it performs, it does not memorize the past, it *enacts* the past, bringing it back to life. What is 'learned by body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is…[36]

If the body is an amalgam of the traces of its enacted past, its physical, psychological and spiritual experiences, then these experiences are resurrected and ordered in the construction of narrative text. I am interested in how this understanding of the body can inform the production of narrative, and its implications for the development of interactive storytelling in the digital environment, particularly in representing physical performance.

Malcolm Le Grice argues in "A Non-Linear Tradition – Experimental Digital Cinema"[37] that 'interactivity' and 'non-linearity' are not separated in the realisation of new digital cinema. In the search for a precursor to 'interactivity', Le Grice identifies the player/participant's ability to *modify* the cultural artefact as *genuinely new territory*. However, 'non-linearity' is prefigured in oral myth, cinematic and literary structures that break with 'single-track', 'single-resolution narrative' as exemplified in experimental film, video, and writing genres. Le Grice identifies the technological ability to edit moving-image in a non-linear and networking[38] environment has enabled the production of specific interactive cultural objects, such as: online documentary, information websites, commercial and art CD-ROMs, DVD, and computer programs. Additionally, it

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[36] Cassell and McNeill op cit p378.
[37] Malcolm Le Grice, *Experimental Cinema In The Digital Age*, British Film Institute, London, 2001.
[38] Lev Manovich, "New media versus cyberculture", in "New Media from Borges to HTML", (commissioned for *The New Media* reader, edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, MIT Press, 2002.

is the 'responsiveness' of the program to the player/participant and the development of narrative options that have transformed the possibilities of narrativity in the digital environment.

Le Grice also asks the big question, is linearity synonymous with narrative? Are there forms of sequential structures that are linear but not narrative? Can concepts of dramaturgy be applied to linear structures that are non-narrative? He answers this by identifying two broad directions in experimental cinema that relate to non-linearity: (1) abstraction (anti-narrative), in the form of non-representational imagery or work derived from 'painting' and 'music', based on colour and shape, movement and rhythm, and works resisting narrative, for example, the theoretical writings of Fernand Leger or Dziga Vertov, which are radical interventions, aesthetic, ideological, and political, and (2) the break with dominant narrative forms, for example, those incorporating photographic representations which refuse depiction of physical space adhering to perspectival conventions, where the narrative coherence is conveyed by sequential connections to represent temporal events and their 'causal' relationships. Thus the story or plot may become a schema made up of the events of 'causal' sequence.

> …The narration…may re-order the disclosure of these events, through representation by recollection, premonition, or separate exclusive viewpoints – flashback, jump cut, parallel action – and may incorporate the represented subjectivity of the narrator or the subjectivity of the reader. Both plot and narration may conform to structures of dramaturgy – the controlled psychological effect of phasing the release of information to create intrigue, suspense, apprehension and pleasure in resolution.[39]

The argument is that these narrative devices *structure* for the viewer/ audience the experience of the cultural object. The identification of the audience with the characters' *point of view* is part of the ideological inevitability of the filmmaking process. Interactive media and the technological ability to pre-program non-sequential participation and responsiveness within the program have opened up the potential for representation of multiple perspectives and points of view, different relationships of engagement with the digital data, the foregrounding of tactile response with computer interaction, and the

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[39] Le Grice op cit p291.

expression of text on screen and sound, music, and the spoken word, which have been absent in traditional film and video practices.

This situation has produced a different kind of engagement with the digital material. This engagement is at a fundamental level 'physical' and is distinguished from other kinds of sensorial experiences by the ability of the programmer/ program maker to relinquish absolute control over the apprehension of the program and the spatial relationship of the data on the screen. The unfolding of the material is designed from the assemblage of 'fragments' with which the player/participant can engage, enhancing the juxtapositions created in the montage, producing meaning and creating 'motivation'. Le Grice argues that film experiments, once acts of resistance, have formed new formal models, foregrounding the kinds of screen events experienced in interactive media, such as mathematical systems, randomness, musical analogy, unconstrained subjectivity, "creating conditions which counteract and create alternatives to narrative structure."[40] He traces a lineage of non-narrative but representational work from Dadaist and Surrealist films such as Rene Claire's *Entr'acte* (1924), Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'or* (1930) and Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928). He also points to the coincidence of this cultural production with the emergence of psychoanalysis in works such as Alain Resnais' *Last Year At Marienbad* (1961), and Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943). These films employ 'spiral', 'matrix', 'psycho-associative' devices, and the exploration of 'verticality' as distinct from the horizontal trajectory of conventional narrative.

> Psychoanalysis itself questions the way in which linearity in the narrative is capable of representing the underlying causal structures. Its reference to dreams and free association are both instances where dominant forms of causal representation are *loosened* or dissolved to permit the cross-reference between layers of memory in turn to create different connective hierarchies.[41]

The cultural conditions of modernity, producing creative and political movements that sought to disrupt one single spatial/ temporal viewpoint, or a single unifying form (eg. experimental cinema), begins to enable the articulation of difference from within

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[40] Le Grice op cit p294.
[41] Le Grice op cit p295.

their dominant cultures. In the digital and interactive media domain, this remains the key challenge; how can developers create 'content' that can be comprehended across cultural divides? Instead of a radical intervention, these discussions produce multiple viewpoints and perspectives. They attempt 'authoring' or content development that is comprehensible beyond the local environment and across cultures, particularly in the global context of distribution of digital content on the Internet.

PART TWO
BlackBOX: Creative Production

Chapter Five: blackBOXES – digital media as
a journey of discovery

Figure 25. *blackBOX* interface still from *jewelBOX* [1]

Fritz Hohl defines the *blackbox* idea as an agent where only input and output can be observed. Hohl also refers to "…the blackbox test, its aim is to determine characteristics of the inside of a "blackbox" by executing the box with different input parameters and by watching the effects. The recorded reactions can be formal results like output values or characteristic "activity patterns".[2]

The creative text moves across and draws from a complex of disciplines, discourses, and references. These however, are realised primarily through the lens of visual arts practice. The term *black box* resonates with notions of flight, the voice and aircraft instrument data recorder that archives all flight data[3], in the event of

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[1] Interface still from *jewelBOX* depicting a silver spice box from North India (courtesy Dr. Devleena Ghosh), a classical Indian *Odissi* dancer, Chitritta Mukerjee performing *Konarak Kanthi* dance item.

[2] Fritz Hohl, "Time Limited Blackbox Security: Protecting Mobile Agents from Malicious Hosts", in Giovanni Vigna (ed), *Mobile Agents and Security*, (Lecture notes in computer Science; Vol.1419), Berlin, 1998, 92-109.

[3] The 'black box' "was invented by Australian Dr David Warren in 1953. He was part of a team working to uncover the cause of a series of British Comet jet airliner crashes when he came up with the idea of using a continuous wire recorder to capture the cockpit events leading up to an air crash. He encased the recorder in a thick, fireproof asbestos box to be anchored in the tail of an aircraft."
http://www.phm.gov.au/scripts/webdbs/collone.idc?id=15andcat=6 [accessed 18 February 2003]

misadventure. It contains the key to questions about 'what went wrong'? 'blackBOX' is an emblem of a *container for meaning* of symbols, and is a symbol in itself:

> …the content of a symbol…what it means – is often far from clear, and it is precisely because it is a communication from the unconscious that its meaning remains shrouded in mystery. At the same time, symbols possess a universal imagery and thus address themselves to the needs of specific individuals or cultures, but in a mythological and psychological language. [4]

These ideas form the heart of all program development in a computer environment, specifically in relation to legibility across cultures. The strategy of mobilising a series of myths cross-culturally is at play in the inner workings of the game device. The fact that the icons, signs and symbols from outside western culture are legible inside and can be interwoven into the storytelling and narrative process, suggest that there may be a reservoir, deeper than our dreams and imagination that can be tapped into and that shapes societies' myths. A central theme operating in *blackBOX* is *the quest*. The quest has long motivated narrative progression within the trajectory of storytelling. This is examined in Joseph Campbell's cross-cultural investigation into ancient hero myths and the struggle for identity is in his seminal text *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*.[5] And in many ways the *quest* in *blackBOX* is unabashedly the quest for self-understanding.

Mapping a history of the term 'blackbox' incorporates an investigation of the *technological* implication of the notion 'box', a device, an instrument, and an *idea* created as a piece of *equipment*, a vessel for cultural artefacts, in the contemporary sense, in the physical, virtual, and thinking realms. As I referred to before, Lev Manovich argues in "Avant-garde as Software"[6] that the software and windows environment of the computer is indebted to the techniques invented in the 1920s by the Russian avant-grade artists. Their techniques:

> …became embedded in the commands and interface metaphors of computer software. In short, the avant-garde vision became materialized in a computer. All the strategies developed to awaken audiences from a dream-existence of bourgeois society (constructivist design, New Typography, avant-garde cinematography and film editing,

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[4] Like Hockey,"The Objective Psyche and Archetypal Patterns", in *Cinematic Projections: The Analytical Psychology of C.G Jung and Film Theory*, University of Luton Press, U.K, 2001.
[5] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Fontana Press, Great Britain, 1988.
[6] Lev Manovich, "Avant-garde as Software", From *New Vision" to New Media*, *http://www.manovich.net/ ARTICLES* [accessed18 November, 2003]

photo-montage, etc.) now define the basic routine of a post-industrial society: the interaction with a computer. For example, the avant-garde strategy of collage re-emerged as a "cut and paste" command, the most basic operation one can perform on any computer data. In another example, the dynamic windows, pull-down menus, and HTML tables all allow a computer user to simultaneously work with practically unrestricted amount of information despite the limited surface of the computer screen. This strategy can be traced to Lissitzky's use of movable frames in his 1926 exhibition design for the International Art Exhibition in Dresden.[7]

…the transformation of the 1920s avant-garde techniques into the conventions of modern human-computer interface (HCI) such as overlapping windows…now function as the strategies of computer-based labour, i.e. different ways we use to organize, access, analyse and manipulate digital data (for instance, discrete data representation, 3-D data visualization, and hyper linking)."[8]

Lev Manovich also discusses the development of interface metaphors in contemporary computer environments where abstract data is visualised as compartmentalised 'windows' and 'boxes'. But can we take this analogy back in time and across cultures? Are these visual metaphors, the bases of operating systems worldwide, legible across cultures? Visual literacy and perception exceed the boundaries of language. The ability of the "icon" to convey meaning and convey narrative is comparable to the religious icon and the contemporary digital icon (emptied of any spiritual connotation). While readable text inside the frame remains linguistically expressed in the national language, the *lingua franca* of the conventions of the computer screen have become specific and multiple, less trans-national, with the hegemony of Western computer design.

This theorising can be carried through to the religious "icon" as a window into spiritual meaning, and the picture space as a window into an imaginary landscape in Western modernist abstract and figurative painting. However, the new environment of digital media imparts a different ability to images, sounds, and texts - *interactivity*. Interaction is extended beyond eyes and hands on the page, to the creation of a text where the hands electronically manipulate the new image/sound/text. *blackBOX* utilises non-religious icons for movement through its narrative, and unfolds through active engagement with these screen icons. According to Lev Manovich the emergence of 'new

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[7] See El Lissitzky, "Exhibition Rooms," in Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lisstzky. Life - Letters – Texts*,Thames and Hudson, London, 1968, 366-368.
[8] Lev Manovich, "Avant-garde as Software", From *New Vision to New Media*, *http://www.manovich.net/ ARTICLES* [accessed18 November, 2003]

media' as a European term was referred to by "European artists, designers, architects and photographers: Jan Tschichold[9], Laszlo Moholy-Nagy[10], and Le Courbusier[11]. Thus:

> Although nobody, as far as I know, published something called New Cinema, all the manifests written during this decade by French, German and Russian filmmakers in essence constitute such a book: a call for a new language of film, whether it was to be montage, "Cinéma pur" (also known as "absolute film"), or "photogénie." Similarly, although not declared in a book, a true visual revolution also took place in graphic design thus "making it new" as well (Aleksander Rodchenko, El Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, etc).[12]

Ridley Scott's Blade Runner also influences blackBOX, a Hollywood a science fiction *film noir* "…set in Los Angeles, 2019, with a narrative that is structured and centred round Chinatown."[13] Like *Blade Runner's* hero Deckard, Nina the protagonist of *blackBOX* unveils aspects of her self and cultural origins in the course of the project. While Deckard's quest comes in the guise of 'retiring' replicant humans that stand in for aspects of himself, Nina's journey is a struggle and search for virtual objects that represent characteristics of her outer world and inner self. This search mirrors for the player/participant his/her own search for self–understanding. We are thus invited to consider the cultural artefacts that shape us and our deeper reservoirs of mythological ruins.

> *Mythological Pandora and her Box*
> The first mortals lived on earth in a state of perfect innocence and bliss.…when Pandora expressed a strong desire to peep into the contents of the mysterious box…the noise seemed to increase, and she breathlessly applied her ear to the lid to ascertain whether it really proceeded from within…Jupiter had malignantly crammed into this box all diseases, sorrows, vices and crimes that afflict humanity and the box was no sooner opened, than all these ills flew out…in the guise of horrid little winged creatures…pricking and stinging them mercilessly. They flew through the open door and windows… It was well for Pandora that she opened the box a second time, for the gods with a sudden impulse of compassion had concealed among the evil spirits one kindly creature HOPE![14]

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[9] Jan Tschichold, *The New Typography: a Handbook for Modern Designers*, trans. Ruari McLean (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995);

[10] Although Moholy-Nagy's *New Vision* exhibition took place only in 1932, it was a retrospective of the 1920s movement in photography and which was largely over by the time of the exhibition.

[11] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells, Architectural Press, Praeger , New York, London, 1963.

[12] Lev Manovich, "Avant-garde as Software", From *New Vision" to New Media*, http://www.manovich.net/ARTICLES 18 November, 2003. [accessed January 2005].

[13] Like Hockey,"Re-reading Blade Runner", in *Cinematic Projections: The Analytical Psychology of C.G Jung and Film Theory*, University of Luton Press, U.K, 2001.

[14] H.A. Guerer, *The Classical Myths of Greece and Rome*, Senate, London, 1994, p17.

Figure 24. Contemporary map of Greece and Islands and Pandora and her box[15]

One of the aims of this research was to investigate the connections between the elaborate *taximia* music of *Rembetika* Greek blues and the improvisational musical pattern in north Indian melodies and Middle Eastern music. The *modal* drones of the Greek Orthodox Church combined with Arabic *modal* 'roads' brought to Greece with the mass migration of people from Asia Minor following the civil war in Turkey. The lyrics speak of the hopes, dreams, joys and sorrows of Greece's urban refugees:

THE BAGLAMAS (1928)[16]

In the upper districts, two dervishes
are siting smoking joints…
It's the "*loulas*" and "*kalami*"
that have reduced me to this sorry state
the weed, that a widow taught me to smoke
she turned me into a tramp and an addict

Figure 25. *Baglamas* a miniature stringed *Bouzouki* shaped instrument[17]

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[15] Guerer op cit p21.

[16] *Baglamas* is a miniature stringed *Bouzouki* shaped instrument, traditionally hidden under a prisoner's coat. These lyrics are traditional and sung by Antois Dalgas from Gail Holst, *Road to Remetika: music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow and hashish*, Denise Harvey Publisher, Limni, Evia, Greece, 1994.

[17] *Baglamas* from Holst op cit p70.

IF I DIE ON THE BOAT (1920)

Ah if I die what will they say?
some fellow dies
a fellow who loved life
and enjoyed himself
Aman! *Aman*!
Ah if I die on the boat
throw me into the sea
so the black and salt water
can eat me ! *Aman*! *Aman*![18]

Figure 26. A Greek woman *Stavroula Petala born Athens 1926* in *blackBOX*
Cairo, Egypt was her home until she migrated to Australia 1948

Odissi dance comes from the state of Orissa in east India, bordering the Bay of
Bengal. *Jagannatha*, the Lord of the universe, is worshipped as the reigning deity
of *Odissi* dance.[19]

> Hindu art is like a pictorial script which expresses the subtle thought of its mythology
> and philosophy. Idealistic and symbolic, it exudes a deep sense of mysticism. The solid
> rock is made to live and give the impression that nothing is static. Ideas of space and
> time are woven into rock…The Hindu artist regards man in his spiritual, intellectual and
> physical attributes only as the microcosm in the macrocosm…his subjects are classical
> themes, the passive and active forces in the Absolute…in fact, everything from creation
> to destruction of the Universe…[20]

Lord Jagannatha is :

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[18] *Zembekiko*, Anonymous. Several versions exist. *Katsaras* recorded these two verses circa 1920, USA,
from Gail Holst op cit, p85.

[19] Before the performance any *Odissi* dance begins, icon statues of *Lord Jagannatha*, who, with his
sister *Subhadra* and brother *Balabhadra*, form a version of the Hindu holy Trinity, are placed on the
stage. This is distinct from the *Bharata Natyam* dance style where *Shiva* is the lord of the dance in
his manifestation as the *Nataraja*.

[20] Mathuram Bhoothalingam, *Movement In Stone*, Soumani Publications, New Dehli, 1969, p1.

…the fusion of more than twenty religions and cultural trends. He is claimed as a *Savara* God . The *Savaras* (*Saoras*) numbering more than one million, now living in Orissa claim themselves to be the earliest inhabitants of Orissa and according to them, an old Saora tended the image of *Jagannatha a* before it found its way to its present home in the great temple at *Puri*. This legend also finds mention in the later *Puranas*.

Some ascribe *Jagannatha a* to be a Buddhist image; some ascribe him as a *Jaina Tirthankara* and *Chaitanya*; the great *Vaishnvite* prophet called him an avatar (incarnation) of *Vishnu*. The priests who serve in *Jagannatha* temple are both *Brahmins* and non-*Brahmins* including the tribal (*Daitapati*). People of all classes are treated equal inside the campus of this temple . This is the unique characteristic of *Jagannatha* religion.[21]
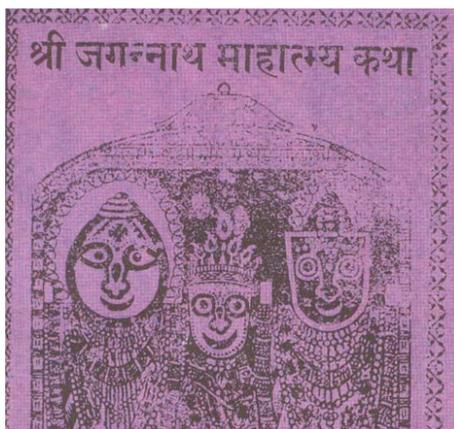
Figure 27. *Lord Jagannatha*, along with his sister *Subadhra*, and brother *Balabadhra*, forming the holy *Hindu* Trinity

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[21] Odissi Dance *http://www.odissidance.com/Heritage/People.htm* [accessed18 November 2003]

Figure 28. Map of the state of Orissa, Indian sub-continent[22]

In the research and documentation of the *Odissi* form of dance, I worked with Ileana Citaristi[23], an Italian born classical *Odissi* dancer. I videotaped her performance of an *Odissi* dance item, *Mangala Charan* at the Tom Mann Theatre, Surrey Hills, Sydney, Australia, 2003. This recording was incorporated into *blackBOX* and formed one of the performances discovered by the protagonist Nina. At this time, I also conducted an interview with Ileana in which she talked about her philosophy concerning the cross-cultural performance of dance.

> Tatiana: "You are from the outside. You are not indigenous, you are not Indian. There is a term as it is referred to in linguistics – the third term- a third space created, have you created a third space or have you entered this dance form?"

> Ileana: "…well actually the personal interpretation is the third space [as it is referred to in linguistics]…these things come together and what comes out of it?…[Tatiana: is there is any Italian in there?] Yes. I was happy when you said, you can make us understand because you come from the outside…"

In many ways, Ileana Citaristi resembles my own relationship to *Odissi*. The act of learning and participating in the dialectical process of dance created a space for my own understanding. I was taught that classical Indian dance is an ancient form of worship, a spiritual offering to God. In traditional terms, dance emerged as a devotional offering to the divine. The act of watching this dance, and participating in it is understood as a form of *Bhakti* (devotion) that would provide salvation and purification.[24] I, however, entered into a relationship with my dance teachers with an open mind and from an aesthetic point of view, concerned with formal, musical and bodily representation.

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[22] Maps of India *http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/orissa/orissalocation.htm* [accessed 22 February 2005].

[23] Ileana Citaristi's Internet site *http://www.kalinga.net/ileana*, Address. Dr.Ileana Citaristi 1965, Bindusagar (West) Bhubaneswar - 751 002 Tel/Fax: 91-674-2433779.

[24] "Spirituality is the core of Indian art. Evolved out of spiritual passions, art in India has gone hand in hand with religion since time immemorial. Be it sculpture, architecture, painting, dance, music, the theme of the artist is rooted in religion; the urge is as much spiritual as aesthetic. While religion is a matter of faith, spirituality is a divine experience of communion with the divine."
www.odissidance.com/Heritage/Tradition.htm [accessed 18 November 2003]

The reinterpretation of this form of dance in the digital domain, the existence of a living ancient form in the face of 'modernity', and its survival within the diasporic communities of Indian heritage is crucial. Indeed, the majority of Ileana's audience in Australia was made up of immigrants of Indian ancestry from South Asia, Fiji, Malaysia and South Africa. Ileana herself was born and brought up in Venice, and, after a successful academic career as a scholar of Eastern mythology and experimental theatre arts performance, she left Europe to pursue a dancing career in Orissa, India with India's acclaimed dancer Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. She states on her website:

> I was in search of a land where I could express in a total and unrestricted way those inner questions of the soul that could not find satisfaction in any of the solutions offered by the present patterns of living of this western civilization. After completing my doctorate in philosophy and having worked for some years in both traditional and experimental theatre in my own country, Italy, I followed the callings of ancestral and inexplicable paths and reached this land of Orissa. Here, completely dedicated to the sacred art of Indian dance at the feet of my guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, I am able to give shape to the inner striving of the soul and overcome the anxiety of human existence.[25] *http://www.kalinga.net/ileana/index.htm.*
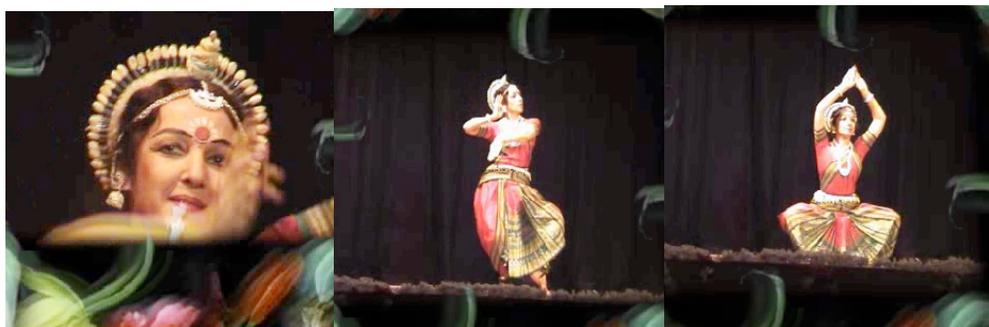
Figure 29. Ileana Citaristi performs *Odissi* dance *Mangala Charan*, Sydney, 2003[26]

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[25] Ilean Citaristi *http://www.kalinga.net/ileana/index.htm*
[26] Performance Text, *Mangala Charan* (Odissi Dance) performed by Ileana Citaristi, choreography by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Tom Mann Theatre, Surrey Hills, Sydney, Australia, 2003, Cinematography Tatiana Pentes, Direction Tatiana Pentes.

Chapter Six: Mythic and Musical Structure

1. Memory Boxes

The project explores the narrative potentials of new electronic and digital technology in the production of non-sequential and non-linear creative work, specifically for the construction of *blackBOX*. Malcolm Le Grice's writing on the history of digital media in relation to cinema has informed the production of *blackBOX*. Le Grice describes the production of the digital creative work of art as "Hydra-Media" a many-headed beast.

blackBOX unfolds from a set of virtual *memory boxes* which are configured inside 'performative' frames, marking them as "ritual and that all things operating within these frames represent serious things."[1] The animation of collected *objects*, from the Russian, Indian and Greek 'imagined communities', are framed inside these series of *memory boxes*. The narrative trajectory of the story is triggered and controlled by the gestural actions of the player. The player's subjective intervention with the program, represented as Nina's hands opening the boxes, and interaction with the objects inside the boxes, produce an identification with the icons and symbols, and thus, with the means by which the story is told. Also, these *memory boxes* and their objects are configured to resonate with recollections and to reveal the creative research:

(i)   songs of Sorrow/ Absence (thesis) [The Father "Russia"] performances from Russian jazz culture in China

(ii)   songs of Longing/ Presence (antithesis) [The Mother "India"] performances from classical Indian dance/music

(iii)   songs of Love/ The Meeting (synthesis) [The Child "Greek"] performances from *Rembetika* (the Greek Blues) culture

Inside these choreographed electronic spaces, I have developed a set of recollections which frame the subjectivity or point of view of Nina, a woman reflecting on her past. Recollection of events connected to the sets of objects displayed inside the performative memory boxes, through the use of voice-over, produce an emotional

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[1] (Ed), John J. MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Towards a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, 1984, p259-260.

engagement in the player and evoke an emotional response. These factors have been considered in the design of these digital spaces, so as to manipulate the behaviour and interaction of the audience. This has been a strategy employed in traditional media and performance such as the theatre arts, literature, and cinema.

2. Overview of Areas of Content

PAINTING A DIGITAL PICTURE OF DOCUMENTED MEMORY

Interactive structure

...the Russian(Greek) girl explores her City
what does she discover?

the City, Composition, & Migration

opening titles sequence

SPLASHPAGE

From the black screen surface emerges three horizontal continuously moving strips of animated stills from city locations

representing the journey into the cosmopolitan City

the player/ participant's subjective identification with the girl Nina

- looking out the window at the city
- a Hindu Temple
- the Chinese Gardens
- the top of a high rise building
- a trip on the monorail

THE PRESENT

- inside a fashion shop
- inside a bar
- on a bed in the bedroom
- walking through the city

LOCATION   CITY   The girl   THE CITY   LOCATION
NINA

three "Chinese" Boxes hidden in the landscape of the City holding three diasporic performances

INTERACTIVE DEVICES

Black Chest "Pandora's Box"

Jewellery Box

Photo Box
Photos of a Russian woman in China

A Greek woman's passport

Indian dance jewellery

MUSIC/ DANCE PERFORMANCES

Rembetika - the Greek Blues Performance

Sanskrit Frame

Russian Jazz music from China Performance

Byzantine Frame

Classical Indian Dance/Music Performance

Chinese Frame

FRAMED IMMERSIVE SCREEN ENVIRONMENTS

- seeing my Greek grandfather smoking cigar & drinking Metaxa (worry beads)
- lighting candles in the Russian Orthodox Church with my grandmother
- as a child visiting a Hindu temple
- witnessing a cremation (Hindu)

FLASHBACKS (Black & White)

Figure 30. Overview of *blackBOX* CD-ROM areas of content

3. Script Development and Production

blackBOX interactive multimedia work is an exploration of three genres of dance and music: *Rembetika* the Greek blues; *Odissi/ Kuchipudi* classical Indian dance and music, and émigré Jazz and pop tunes from the Russian diaspora via China. *blackBOX* aesthetics and history draws on the 'imagined communities'[2] that exist in contemporary Australia in song and music, and on mythic and religious texts influencing these cultures for inspiration in the interface design. The representations of culturally diverse Australian ethnic identities are encapsulated in the icons of the various musical instruments, which act as artefacts and entries into the narratives and performances.

In writing the script for *blackBOX* I wanted to metaphorically dance across the musical genres of *Russian jazz* and *Chinese pop* tunes from Shanghai in the 1930's and 1940's; classical *Indian* dance/music; and *Rembetika*, the Greek blues. I approached the process of script writing through social and cultural research into these various genres of music/dance to find a way to create a structure that would integrate these forms. *blackBOX* is the exploration of my own cultural origins, so it became relevant to speak from the first person, that is my own perspective and subjective experience. My overarching point of view and perspective binds these fragments together into a cohesive narrative, and this led to the writing of a voice of reflection, Nina's voice, which transforms into an Indian woman's voice and includes an older
Greek masculine voice.

(1) *Metropolis*

Metroplis is the first electronic chapter of the interactive narrative. The character Nina stands in for my own hybrid cultural experience and looks through my eyes. I wanted to use the motif of *Shanghai* in the 1930's as the metropolis that the girl moves through in the work, though the metropolis could be any city in the world, a metaphoric and an imaginary virtual city.
Michael Dear discusses some of these ideas in his text:

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[2] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1987.

> ...Cities - large and small, global and local, north and south - have become (for better or worse) the principal material expressions of contemporary human civilisation...what happens when the representational cities of cyberspace displace urban reality. Yet virtual realities perforce remain grounded...[3]

The idea of a fixed geopolitical location and the notion of the stable text both get disrupted in the electronic virtual environment. The problem I wanted to investigate was precisely this, and the objective was to produce a creative work that could articulate these polemics. Helen Hilton's words seemed to strike a chord in me, particularly her writing on the computer text, once this was redirected to the multimedia text:

> ...If the computer text is in essence unstable, will this not have two consequences; (i) a redefinition of the relative temporal status of experience and representation; (ii) a challenge to the concept of [representation/thinking] itself...? In this sense the knowledge base seems to resemble much more closely the human memory system than the remote storage device of the book...In this way text may actually rediscover some of the properties of oral narrative (one of the modalities of performance) which in its formulaic nature offers an infinite number of ways of telling the same story...[4]

The voice of Nina (my voice) provides the perspective in *blackBOX* through which the player makes sense of the story. The player gains access to cultural memories, which in turn provide Nina's with a sense of self.[5]

(2) chineseBOX

> ...Sergei and Xenia Ermolaeff never really fit in Sydney. Their fancy suits, fur coats and heavy Russian jewellery seemed out of place in the Australian suburbs. So did their outrageous yarns about living it up on the jazz-club circuit in pre-revolutionary Shanghai, where they supposedly rubbed elbows with the likes of Chiang Kai-Shek. Even family members never really believed their stories…That is, until granddaughter Tatiana Pentes, a
> multi-media artist, began sifting through the Ermolaeff's belongings after their deaths. What she found – hand-dyed photos, music scores, letters,
> vinyl records and documents in Russian, Chinese, Japanese and English – confirmed their tales. The memorabilia became the inspiration for Pentes' CD-ROM, *Strange Cities*.[6]

I was interested in developing, in an electronic context, the themes that were explored in the *Strange Cities* CD-ROM. I wanted to re-figure Sergei and Xenia

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[3] Michael J. Dear, *The Postmodern Urban Condition*, University of Southern Califormia, Balckwell, USA, 2000, p7-8.

[4] Helen Hilton, "The Three Dimensional Text: Computers, Writing and Performance", in *The Machine As Metaphor and Tool*, Springer Verlag, Berlin, 1993.

[5] I am indebted here to the seminal work of new media artist Megan Heyward, *I Am A Singer, CD-ROM,* produced in association with the Australian Film Commission, 1996.

[6] Rose Tang and Yasmin Ghahremani, "Forgotten Exiles", *Asiaweek*, September 1999.

Ermolaeff, focusing on the objects they brought with them to Australia, the traces of their past experience. The material objects represented in the virtual environment became the visual icons that opened up the various stories within this chapter.

The virtual exploration of the digitised objects produces a playful environment for the player to interact with. As a child learns through discovery and play with its world, the adult (or indeed child) player of this game/ story pieces together a coherent understanding of the narrative structure, revealing the history of Russian jazz from Shanghai, China.

The narrative unfolds from a virtual 'Chinese Box' containing a set of virtual émigré objects: (i) Jade ring; (ii) Soviet passport; (iii) Pathe photograph; (iv) Willow pattern plate; (v) Chinese cabaret dancer; (vi) Silver bracelet;
(vii) Red chinese fan; and (viii) Russian ballerina. These icons are real objects obtained from my Russian grandparent's home that trace their history back to Shanghai, China. Through interaction with these artefacts a non-sequential narrative is revealed.
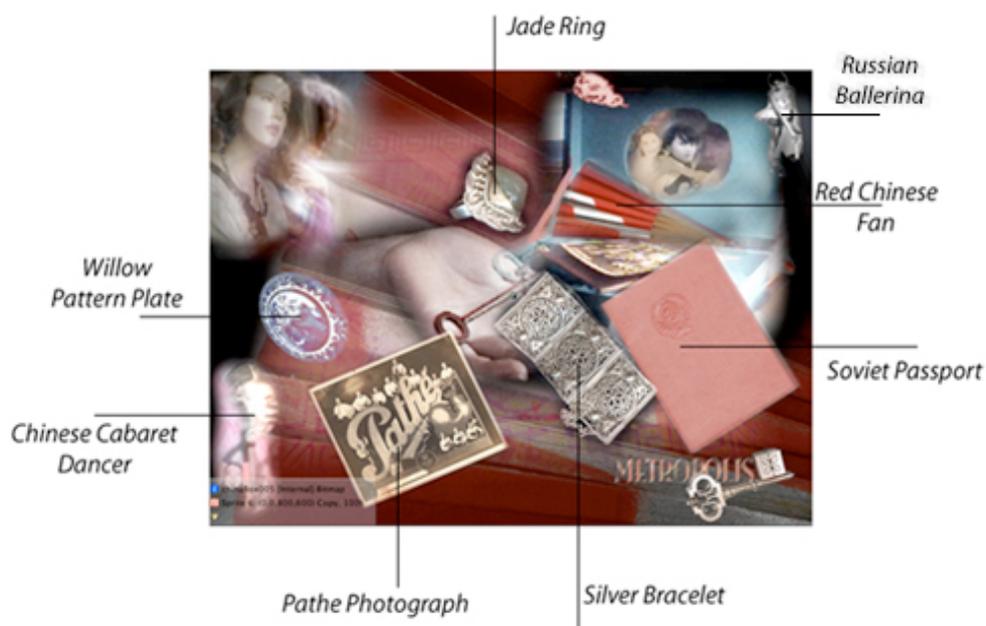
Figure 31. *chineseBOX* interface still detailing virtual objects

chineseBOX Visual and Audio Research

The 'imagined' Jazz community is visualised in fragmentary sequences of simulated film footage, composed from digitised photographs and includes some Super 8 footage of Sydney suburbs. The moving image documents Russian émigrés from China, my grandfather *Sergei Ermolaeff* and his son *Serge Ermoll Jr*. Both musicians and composers of jazz, they are imaged through portraits and relics of their musical paraphernalia. The *chineseBox* narrative is constructed through the eyes of a young Chinese woman. We gain access to the *chineseBOX* narrative through images of the Chinese girl opening a *box* and examining the émigré objects which belonged to my grandmother *Xenia (Vladimirovna) Ermolaeff.* They consist of studio portraits of the possessions she brought to Australia. The objects imaged refer to her passage to Australia and evoke memories of the Russian jazz music. Also, the visual material is composed through the digital re-construction of a 1930s Chinese cabaret performance by Rose Tang; and the digital animation of archival photographs of Russian taxi-dancers in Shanghai circa 1930s. This visual material has incorporated elements from an archive of photographic portraits of émigré musicians and materials sourced for my previous production *Strange Cities* CD-ROM.

(3) *jewelBOX*

jewelBOX is the second electronic chapter of the interactive narrative. Through Nina's eyes, the player engages with a silver spice box[7] from India. The dance jewels open up narratives revealing classical Indian dance performances, across the forms of *Kuchipudi* and *Odissi*.

In developing this storyline, I worked with some footage shot in Sydney of my friend Padma Raman's *Kuchipudi* performance *Krishna Shabdam*. I researched this tradition in classical Indian dance more broadly to understand its roots and origins. This chapter of the creative work is about engaging with difference and attempting to

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[7] This silver box is a traditional North Indian *spice box*, loaned to this project by Dr Devleena Ghosh, and provides the signature motif for *blackBOX.*

understand a non-Western culture, so that I could incorporate and translate elements of these performances into the fabric of *blackBOX*. I began this journey by looking into the *Kuchipudi* dance tradition and found numerous Internet sites that offer some different perspectives on this classical Indian dance form. However, these are more useful as resources for searching hardcopy publications, historical and cultural papers, and books.

Of all the Internet sites I researched *www.abhinaya.com* provided the most detailed information. Though one is always skeptical about material sourced from the Internet, it did give me some broad themes to investigate in relation to the particular religious and mythological subjects for the dance. The existence of this Internet site, and the proliferation of many others like it, provided evidence that a virtual community of classical Indian dance lives. *Kuchipudi* originated in a small village of the Andhra Pradesh state in India and dates back to the South Indian devotional (*Bhakti*) movement of the 17th century.[8] It was generally performed in the open air at night, and is literally named after the place from which it originated. [9] It was established by two Telugu speaking Brahmins of Andhra Pradesh, Tritha Narayana Yati (master) and Sidhyendra Yogi (pupil) from the study of the ancient texts, *Natya Sashtra* (Dramatic Science)[10], *Abhinaya Darpana* (Mirror of Gesture by Nandikesavara)[11], *Vishnu Dharmottana Purana*, and the *Bhagavata Mela Nataka*, and inspired by the *Gita Govinda* stories of *Jayadeva* built around the legendary life and exploits of *Krishna*, the Blue God. Sidhyendra Yogi codified everything into his own dance drama technique. He is said to have had a vision of *Krishna* the Blue God after which he composed the *Parijatapaharana* (Sacred Flower dance). It was also said that with the performance of

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[8] *http://www.delhitourism.com/dance/* [accessed 17 January 2005]
[9] Ragini Devi, *Dance Dialects of India*, Vikas Publications, Dehli, 1972, p67.
[10] (Trans.) Adya Rangacharya, *Natya Sastra*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Dehli, 1996.
[11] (Trans.) Ananda Coomaraswamy and Gopala Kritnayya Duggirla, *The Mirror of Gesture: Being the Abhinaya Darpana of Nandikesuara*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Dehli, 1917 – a shorter compendium to the *Natya Sastra* (Dramatic Science)."The dramatic scriptures of India were framed by *Brahma* at the request of lesser gods, at the beginning of *Tretra Yuga*, the last aeon before the present. This event is described as follows in the first chapter of the *Natya Sastra* of *Bharata* (India)…the other *Devas* said to *Brahma*: We desire a pastime to be seen and heard…*Brahma*: so let it be…let me make a fifth *Veda*, to be called *Natya* (Drama), combined with epic story, tending to virtue, wealth (pleasure and spiritual freedom), yielding fame – a concise instruction setting forth the events of the world…" p 1.

this dance, in true *Bhakti* (devotional) tradition, the dancer, other participants and the audience would attain spiritual liberation and salvation.

> The region of Div Taluq where Kuchipudi village is situated has been the centre of music and dance for many centuries. The name Kuchipudi is a contracted form of Kuchila Puri – the village actors (derived from the Sanskrit *kusilava-puram*). The *Kusilavas* were wandering bands that sang and enacted episodes from the Ramayana epic. The itinerant actors living in Kuchipudi village came to be known as Kucheelu (actors).[12]

Krishna Shabdam is a typical middle item in the *Kuchipudi* repertoire and is based on a play written by Usha Parinayam. A '*shabdam*' is a pure dance item (aesthetic movement or rhythm), accompanied by a poetic composition in praise of some deity or patron.[13]

Krishna Shabdam depicts the *nayika*, or beloved, all dressed up waiting for *Krishna* to come to her. This theme is interconnected with the 'the Cowherd *Krishna*' as depicted in the *Bhagavat Purana*. *Radha* and the *gopis'* longing for their Lord is usually depicted as the *Ras Leela*[14]

> …Hearing the love-call of *Krishna's* flute, the *gopis* (milkmaids) left their husbands and went in search of him…The allegory concerns the response of the human soul to a call to the Divine…the dance dramas of Andhra Pradesh, known as the *Bhagavata Mela Nataka* are recorded in sculptures and manuscripts, of 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries…Built in the 12th century by Chalukya Kings, the Thousand Pillared Temple sculptures, ceiling, and carvings depict the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*…The *Yakshagana* (*Ramappa* Temple Sculptures) are inspired by the *Gita Govinda* stories of *Jayadeva*, built around the legendary life and exploits of *Krishna*.[15]

In the representation of this desire (in painting, sculpture, and literature):

> …the lover might express his longing by cryptic references to Nature, the Indian artist employed poetic symbols to charge his subjects with romantic ardor. Flowers were never merely flowers, nor clouds, clouds. The symbols of Indian poetry – the lotus swaying in a stream, the flowering creepers suggest passion-haunted ladies. The mingling of clouds, rain and lightening symbolized embraces of lovers and

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[12] Ragini Devi, *Dance Dialects of India*, Vikas Publications, Dehli, 1972, p67.

[13] Mohan Khokar, *Traditions of Classical Indian Dance*, Clarion Books, New Delhi, 1984, p160.

[14] "…both dance and its static interpretation in sculpture should convey *rasa*. *Rasa* pervades all classical Indian arts…and results from awakening of latent psychological states (*sthayi-bhavas*) in the beholder by the use of appropriate formalized imagery.", from Anne-Marie Gaston, *Siva in Dance, Myth, and Iconography*, Oxford University Press, Dehli, 1982, p14.

[15] Kay Ambrose (revised by Ram Gopal), *Classical Dances and Costumes of India*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1983, p17.

> commonplace objects such as dishes, vases…lamps were brought into subtle
> conjunction to hint at 'the right true end of love'.[16]

Krishna is characterised by a crown of peacock feathers, he is clad in a golden (male cloth wrap) *dhoti*, he is blue skinned, a lady is often bowing at his feet, the setting is a forest with flowering trees, his companions are cowherds, illustrations are often inscribed with *Sanskrit* text where the "blue skinned lover *Krishna* is an incarnation of God and there is ecstatic release in his worship."[17]

The *Gita Govinda* by the Bengali poet Jayadeva composed towards the end of the 12th century describes *Radha's* longing and *Krishna's* love-making with glowing sensuality:[18]

> If in recalling Krishna to mind there is flavour
> Or if there is interest in love's art
> Then to this necklace of words – sweetness,
> Tenderness, brightness - The words of Jayadeva, listen……

And later….

> Sandal and garment of yellow and
> lotus garlands upon his body of blue,
> In his dance the jewels of his ears
> in movement dangling over his smiling cheeks,
> Krishna here disports himself
> with charming women in love.
> He embraces one woman, he kisses another,
> and fondles another beautiful one.
> He looks at another one lovely with smiles,
> and starts in pursuit of another woman.
> …The sweet nectar of lips kept flowing
> notes of his luring melodious flute,
> …Whose brow had a perfect sandal spot,
> as among dark clouds the disc of the moon

I continued this journey by looking into the *Odissi* dance tradition. In 2003 I recorded a live performance of classical *Odissi* dance by the Italian born protégé of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Ileana Citaristi in Sydney. Her item *Mangala Charan* (Invocatory Item) provided a powerful link between the genres. I had access to a recording of the

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[16] W.G. Archer, *The Loves of Krishna: In Indian Painting and Poetry*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1957, p13.
[17] Archer p13.
[18] Archer p76.

Odissi Dance Company School performances at The Performance Space, Redfern, Sydney 1993, where I had been a student. To create a contrast with the *Kuchipudi* form of dance, I recorded a version (rehearsal) of Nirmal Jena's *The Power of the Feminine*, performed at the Studio Theatre, Sydney Opera House, as part of the *Asian Music and Dance Festival 2002*. Nirmal Jena has described this performance as a parallel performance, as distinct from *fusion* work, incorporating the *Marta* style of *Odissi* with contemporary Western dramatic theatre.

Playwright John Hughes developed *The Power of the Feminine*, a three act *multimedia* play composed of projected film sequences, projected textual elements and performance work with actors and non-actors. The sets are a series of contemporary paintings by John Wolsley. The piece, as the title suggests, is worked around the idea of a universal feminine power and juxtaposed with three traditional *Odissi* dance items. The play involves numerous art forms or references to these forms in the performance text (dance, poetry, painting, music, literature, sculpture) and employs many media in its diagesis. It amalgamates, appropriates and expropriates, different cultural expressions, drawing them together to create meaning derived from both eastern and western traditions. In this form of new theatre, the western play appropriates the classical Indian dance form while the classical Indian dance performance appropriates the western play. This theatrical dialogue between cultural forms influenced the production of *blackBOX*. *The Power of the Feminine* employed multi-media in a more
physical real time sense, whereas *blackBOX* translates these many media into virtual objects.

Dance Item (1) Matru Pranaam (Invocatory item)

> *aradhya parama shakti*
> *sarbe rapi sura sure*
> *nadang param taram kinche adhika*
> *bhubana traya satyam satyam pura satyam*
> *veda shastradi nirnaya*
> *puja niya para shakti niguna saguna thaba*

> Translation from the Sanskrit (from the program notes)

> Oh! The reverent, divine absolute mother power, you prevail in gods and demons alike.
> You have spread yourself to this unlimited vastness and yet you are so little and limited
> You have prevailed through all three worlds

(physical, emotional, spiritual)
I come to the conclusion this is the only revealed truth
…as all the holy scriptures
Speak of your glory
Again I bow down Oh divine absolute mother, you are the formless, you are the form,
you are the darkness and you are the light…
So seek beyond that good and evil

Dance Item (2) Aatman (Soul)

This traditional dance item depicts "the path to self realisation of the experience of the inner, and its relation with the outer, which prevails in infinity…known as *Aatman* or Soul. It evolves and seeks union with the self and the supreme. This is the dialogue between Heaven and Earth (between *Krishna* and *Radha*), where Earth is trying to reach Heaven. In dance, the imagery of *Vedas* and *Upanishads* is translated into concrete principles and form. The body and the senses are most abstracted into pure design to suggest and evoke in the listener and onlooker the ideas of the universal, the cosmic and the infinite."[19]

This dance item included *Konarak Kanthi*, an ode to the great Sun temple of Konarak[20] in Orissa, India and is inspired by the temple relief sculptures.

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[19] Program Notes, *The Power of The Feminine: Parallel Performances, Untitled: A Play in Three Acts* written and directed by John Hughes, Three Dances by Nirmal Jena in Indian Odissi Style, Asian Music and Dance Festival 2002, The Studio, Sydney Opera House.

[20] Konarak Sun Temple at Konarak (Orissa) is dedicated to the Sun God *Surya*. "This temple, now in ruins, is a colossal monument, a temple to the Sun God built in the 13th century. An original structure dating back to the 9th century once stood here. In its original form, the *deul* was 235 feet high and the *jagamohana* was about 150 feet high. The temple was representative of the Chariot of the Sun with 12 pairs of huge wheels and 7 horses. This temple, massive in scale, is considered to be the masterpiece of Orissan architecture. The temple abounds in sculptural work." From *Templenet http://www.templenet.com/Orissa/konakona.html* [accessed 10 June 2005].

Figure 32. The Konarak Sun Temple at Konarak, Orissa, INDIA[21]

  The physical forms represented in the dance item are interpretations of the ancient temple sculptures, displaying various bodily postures. These postures signify a repertoire of motifs that create a language in dance, for example
(i) placing a dot on the forehead whilst combing the hair; (ii) playing the horn; (iii) lighting the lamp. These bodily gestures have everyday as well as great spiritual significance. At one time they would have been performed inside the temples as a form of devotion to the deity.

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[21] Image from *Templenet http://www.templenet.com/Orissa/konakona.html*
[accessed 10 June 2005].

Figure 33. *blackBOX* interface still from *jewelBOX* pathway picturing dancer
Chitritta Mukerjee, performing *Konarak Kanthi Odissi* dance item.

The narratives unfold from a virtual 'Jewel Box' containing a set of virtual émigré objects: (i) Dance bells; (ii) Gold necklace; (iii) Earrings; (iv) Gold bracelets; (v) Red powder; and (vi) Hair comb. These icons are real objects obtained from my classical Indian dance studies and trace a history back to India. Through interaction with these artefacts a non-sequential narrative is revealed.

Figure 34a. *jewelBOX* interface still detailing virtual dance objects

jewelBOX Visual and Audio Research

The 'imagined' Indian community is visualised in documentary video material of classical Indian dance and music performances in Australia. These performances are framed inside images of a silver Indian *spice box*. The *jewelBox* narrative is constructed through the eyes of Rochéle, a young Indian/ Creole woman. We gain access to the *jewelBOX* narrative through images of Rochéle opening the *spice box* and examining the émigré dance objects.

The visual material is composed through the digital animation of photographs and performance sequences of Rochéle and digital video documentation of classical Indian dance performances (*Odissi/ Kuchipudi*) by Ileana Citaristi, Chitritta Mukerjee, and Padma Raman. The generation of digital animation sequences from the temple reliefs and sculpture that depict the ancient dance and music culture include imagery from the *Konarak Sun Temple* at Konarak, Orissa, India. This imagery forms an archive of graphic design motifs and artefacts used in *blackBOX*. These objects include letters from India sent back to Australia and postage stamps; photographic documentation of performances of the dance form; popular Hindu imagery depicting the Sanskrit narratives informing the dance; traditional Indian fabric and the dance costumes; Hindu bronze sculptures; and digital images of the stone sculptures at the Konarak Sun Temple. These ancient sculptures have been studied by contemporary *Odissi* choreographers, as the sculptures preserve a record of the dance gestures and traditional musical instruments in stone.

Texts informing *jewelBOX* have been sourced from literature on classical Indian dance (*Odissi*/*Kuchipudi*); ancient mythological and religious texts informing the dance forms; a collection of letters sent home to Australia from a young woman describing visits to religious sites and temples; the song lyrics that accompany theses dance forms. It is also informed by research of Internet sites on classical Indian dance, portals for musicians forming an online community, many of these profiling of Indian performers, musicians, and organisations.

(4) *pandorasBOX*

pandorasBOX is the third electronic chapter of this interactive narrative. The player, having moved through the *jewelBOX* phase, is then presented with a set of objects emanating from a stone Greek sarcophagus (tomb). The discovery of my Greek past is indelibly caught up in an idealisation of ancient Greek mythology and a longing for a contemporary understanding. The Greek Olympics 2004, and a photo album of a recent visit to Athens and the island of Kythera, Greece by my mother Matina and sister Alexandra also plays
a major part.

In developing this chapter, I worked with old family photographs and émigré objects from Greece. I have never been to Greece and my understanding of the culture has always come from strange objects and stories passed down by relatives. Growing up, I associated Greek culture with my grandparents, and the sounds of their favourite music. My grandfather Antonis Pentes smoked cigars and listened to *Rembetika* music. He drank strong Greek coffee and accompanied by sweet biscuits. I remember he played with a set of worry beads (*komboloi*) and always wore a suit with a sharp grey hat when he went out about town. Family lore had it that my grandfather came here by ship in the 1930s and married my grandmother, who was working at her Greek parents fish café in Port Macquarie. My Greek great grandfather opened the first fish café and cinema in Port Macquarie; as economic migrants these ancestors formed part of an entrepreneurial class that developed Australia's Café culture. These facts have left an indelible trace upon the production of *blackBOX* that has been influenced by these memories of cinema and cultural life.

I wanted to evoke these memories and longing in this electronic chapter by incorporating my family's material culture that had survived the immigration. The music, songs and movement of the body provided an emotional connection with this past. My link to Greece seemed to be severed; in generational terms, I felt disconnected from Greek culture, not having the language and little connection with family members. There

was also a feeling of 'shame' about being Greek. Greeks did not occupy a position of status in Australian society. Even those who were financially successful were well known as 'shop keepers'. In many ways I identified with my Russian side much more keenly; however, in this creative work I wanted to articulate the *split* between and the *fusion* of the Greek and the Russian. The sounds of the *Rembetika* blues seemed both oriental and urban. But it was the music I seemed to feel a connection with; its modal tones generate an emotional response inside of me and conjure an *imaginary* landscape of the urban Greek tavern.

The narratives unfold from a virtual 'Pandora's Box' containing a set of virtual émigré objects: (i) Isis necklace; (ii) Madonna and gold cross; (iii) *Bouzouki*; (iv) Kytherian woman; (v) Acropolis pendant; and (vi) Grecian urn. These icons are real objects obtained from my Greek grandparents and trace a history back Greece. Through interaction with these artefacts a non-sequential narrative is revealed.
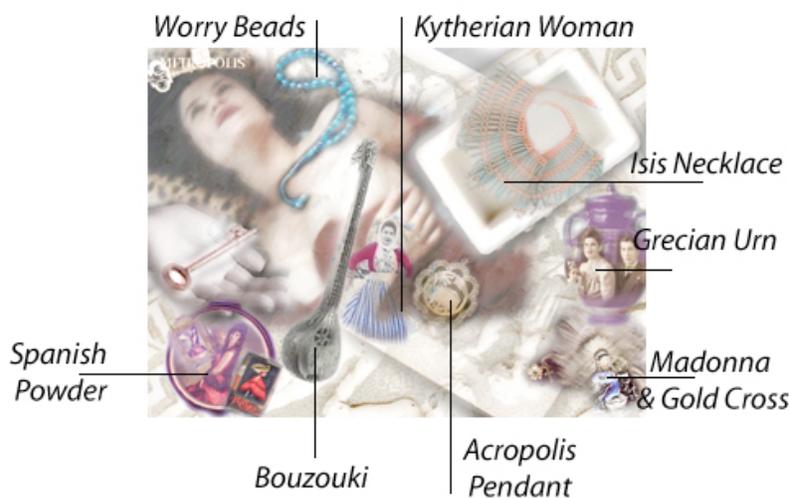
Figure 34b. *pandorasBOX* interface still detailing virtual émigré objects

pandorasBOX Visual and Audio Research

The 'imagined' Greek community is visualised in fragmentary sequences from an archive of Super 8 'home-movie' footage and family photographs. The material sourced includes excerpts of Greek dancing at the Enmore Theatre, Sydney. The footage includes fragments of my sister Alexandra Ermolaeff performing *Tsiftateli* (Greek belly dancing),

digital video recording a pan across the mirrored wall of candies in a Greek milk bar and images of a family group dancing shoulder-to-shoulder. My grandfather Antonis Pentes worked as a milk bar proprietor all of his life. Visual memories of my grandfather Antonis playing cards and drinking *biriki* (Greek) coffee and *metaxa* (Greek brandy) and smoking his cigars have influenced the construction of the narrative. The audio material was sourced from an archive of *Rembetika* 78" vinyl recordings, courtesy of my grandmother Frances Pentes and contemporary *Rembetika* recordings of the old songs by an Australian group *Rebetiki Ensemble*.

The Greek visual material that was collected and digitised forms an archive of graphic design motifs and virtual artefacts used in the work. These objects include a *Narghile* (water pipe for smoking hashish); antique Greek plate with graphic designs that were appropriated; sweets in a Greek cake shop in Marrickville, Sydney; Greek woven fabric; hand crocheted items; photographic representations of ancient Greek jewellery; a baptismal Orthodox cross and evil eye; an Orthodox icon depicting the Madonna and child); *komboloi* (worry beads); Easter egg coloured powder; consumer product packaging; frankincense burned in the church; a medallion inscribed with the *Acropolis*; photographs of a tavern on the Greek island of Kythera; photographic portraits of 1930's and 1940's *Rembetika* musicians collected from Gail Holst's *Road To Rembetika*, these include Roza Eskenazi, Sotiria Bellou, Nikos Mathesis (Crazy Nick), the *Kalamata* group 1948 (one of the most famous *Rembetika* groups); a group of musicians and refugees in the fish markets at Piraeus 1937; a *laterna* (piano organ covered in decorations) from Constantinople; a great quartet of early *Rembetika* musicians; a Greek pre-Lenten carnival 1930's; a portrait of a *manga*, a 1930s 'Republican' sporting a moustache, a false mole on the cheek, a grey cap; and *Rembetika* instruments and musical handwritten scores.

The textual sources function in the work as fragmentary texts to be read on the screen surface and also form the script for voice-over sound elements providing mythic narratives that inform the creative production. Texts informing *pandorasBOX* have been obtained from literature on *Rembetika*; ancient Greco-Roman myths; testimonials of

Australian *Rembetika* musicians and family members; my mothers journey back to Greece and the collection of letters and postcards sent home; and the popular lyrics from *Rembetika* songs that speak of the diasporic experience. Research for *pandorasBOX* included examining Internet sites that are portals forming an online community and profiles of *Rembetika* musicians and organizations. Gail Holst's *Road to Rembetika* provided crucial material and her own testimonial about first encountering this music in Greece provided an inspiration.

> …When I first came to Greece in 1966, I had hardly heard any Greek music and couldn't understand a word of Greek…but I settled in the Plaka quarter of Athens, and it was the music of the city I got to know best…The jukeboxes in Athens were my real introduction to *Rembetika*. I had always felt a snobbish antipathy to jukeboxes until I came to Greece. Now I regard them with affection, and feed drachmas into them like a Las Vegas addict…In 1965 you could find jukeboxes all over Athens, which were full of good *Rembetika* records. Young men would come into a Taverna, feed a handful of coins into the juke box and begin to dance…This solo dance was unlike any dancing I'd ever seen – not exuberant…The music would begin, the rhythm insistent, the voice harsh and metallic, and the dancer would rise as if compelled…Eyes half closed, in trance-like absorption, cigarette hanging from lips…[22]

I remembered my grandfather listening to this music, but I did not understand its cultural significance. Holst's research provided a pivotal point of entry into an understanding about this music, because she approached her study as an outsider visiting Greece and engaging with cultural difference. I found myself in the same position, trying to form an understanding of a culture with which I was disconnected.

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[22] Gail Holst, *Road to Remetika: music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow and hashish*, Denise Harvey Publisher, Limni, Evia, Greece, 1994, p64.

Figure 34b. *pandorasBOX* interface still detailing my grandparents
Frances and Antonis Pentes and their child my mother Matina (Stamatia) Pentes

The experience of *jewelBOX*, the process of studying a culture not my own, gave

me a model for engaging with Greek culture, which contained for me its own strangeness.

Chapter Seven: Design of electronic surfaces for the interface

1. Surface Design and Interaction of Pathways

The interactive screens appear as a virtual stage upon which image/sound/text arrangements appear as if conjured from a dream or recollection. The surface of the screen represents dramatic action where the user making choices triggers transitions between content areas. Every screen place can be likened to the refrains of a musical composition, waiting to be played by the user.

The transition from page to screen, from the printed script to the electronic, creates the need to design the surface of the screen. This includes typography, layout of text and graphics that are visible in the frame, and the interface design or the system structuring user access and navigation of these surface elements. The arrangement of information on the screen and interactivity with that information triggers movement through the stories. Navigation of *metropolis*, *chineseBOX*, *jewelBOX*, and *pandorasBOX* stories are motivated by the player/participant's response to the screen environment. Slippage between and across these interactive screen surfaces, through participation in actions with the interface, provides for the player an experience that challenges traditional modes of narrative in audiovisual presentation and their perception of musical structure.

These traditional modes of narrative are also challenged in the interface design, where the user's desire to move through the image, sound and text arrangements produce a subjective interplay of textural meanings thrown up through the digital manipulation of photographs; digitised film footage; graphic and sonic representations of musical score; voice-over; and the creation of hypertext links. Furthermore, these interactions create a questioning of the relationship between the biographical, historical and musical narrative possibilities produced in the multimedia environment.

The *metropolis*, *chineseBOX*, *jewelBOX*, and *pandorasBOX* pathways are composed as a series of interactive screens and are designed to interact dynamically with

each other. These screens are produced using the combination of multimedia software programs and create the seamless transition from one screen to the next. Every screen is designed to have a pathway element present, not visually, but concealed as an interactive hot spot triggered by mouse.

The designer/producer's orchestration of image, sound, and text relations and the player's navigation of these arrangements are analogous to the relationship between the composition and the performance of music upon the musical instrument. Composition is thus rendered as soundtrack, melodious vocal lyric and musical composition and referred to by graphic representation of the music scores and instruments. The significance of the musical compositions are both visual and auditory where individual notes and musical phrases are treated as icons which open up and into the different narratives. The graphic and sonic representations of the musical scores provide the transitions between past and present.

2. Interactivity

The primary modes of interaction involves the passing of the cursor across image and text and the clicking of the mouse on images on the screen that are programmed to precipitate dramatic action and the downloading of digital video and audio fragments.

3. Aesthetics

The use of Colour and Black and White Imagery

The audiovisual material was recorded and sourced from an original archive of material from my personal collection of documents and artifacts from my grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff; related to Russian jazz culture in Shanghai in 1930s and 1940s. This material has been enhanced by interviews with my father Serge Ermoll Jr. who is also a jazz pianist. Material has been sourced from the documentation of classical Indian dance performances and interviews with the artists (*Odissi*/ *Kuchipudi*); and documentation of performances and interviews with Australian *Rembetika* group *Rebetiki Ensemble*. Additionally I have used existing archival material such as vinyl recordings of original

music, and digitised recordings of vinyl, black and white photographs, news text, publicity material and concert posters, and film footage. Through the process of digital manipulation of these visual materials it has been possible to simulate film footage sequences. This has involved animating still photographs, tinting images and colourising in post-production.

3.1 Treatment of image

Digitised photographs

The digital manipulation of scanned photographs utilising Adobe Photoshop software effects and modifying details of the image have enabled the exploration of meanings thrown up by them as traces of the past, historical documents and sentimental objects. These photographic images consist of portraits of the musicians and artists; original artwork; publicity photographs of jazz entertainers; political icons and leaders; actors and actresses; performers; artists; family photographs and studio portraits; and specifically the documentation of the performances of *Odissi*/*Kuchipudi*, *Rembetika* and Australian Jazz.

Digitised film footage

The digital editing and manipulation of appropriated film utilising Adobe After Effects and Flash computer software has enabled me to experiment with the temporal flow of the moving images by altering the timing of frames per second; modifying motion by altering the moving image in motion settings and utilising filters; and in the layering of image sequences using cross dissolves, pixel dissolves and additive dissolves to refer to the passing of time and to act as transitions between sequences and interactive screens. The digitised film footage includes reportage; Super 8 home movie; and documentary material.

Digital Graphics

The digital graphics are composed of digitised musical score, personal letters and documents such as the imaging of the musical score as a pictorial script representing

notes, chords and the imaging of hand writing in the form of intimate letters as a representation of the personal; the imaging of government documents, passports and identity papers. The digital manipulation of graphic resources involved the layering of images; cropping of images; zooming into details of images; altering the image sizes (dots per inch and dimensions); and altering the image hues and saturations, levels, and colour balance. Other items digitised were record labels; postcards; billboards; film posters; maps; stamps; bus tickets; corporate logos; political propaganda; consumer product brands from the ethnic community; currency (notes and coinage); newspaper imagery; and street signs.

Shockwave, Flash and QuickTime animations

Adobe Photoshop images and digital video sequences have been combined to produce QuickTime animations which have then been transformed into Shockwave and Flash movies. Digital image, sound and text resources are generated to produce moving image sequences that are edited together. During this process further effects, filters, transitions and tempo modifications alter the appearance of the image. In this important stage of production it is crucial that the most effective compression is utilised when combining these multimedia elements and exporting for use in the interactive programming environment of Director MX.

3.2 Treatment of Sound

The soundtrack elements have been generated and mixed utilising Pro tools computer software. Original musical performances have been recorded on digital video. Sound atmospheres have been recorded and sourced through accessing an audio archive and film soundtrack fragments and sound effects have been incorporated. The voice-over and interviews have been recorded and edited in the digital software environment. *blackBOX* enables the player to listen to and to re-play audio fragments within the program.

3.3 Treatment of Text

The textual elements are derived from Sanskrit and greater mythic and religious texts and jazz and *Rembetika* lyrics. The Sanskrit texts researched include the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and *Vedas*. The ancient Greek texts researched include Ovid'*s Metamorphosis*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and allusion to ancient Greek culture in British literature, for example the poetry of Shelley

and Byron. The texts researched for the *chineseBOX* section include Baptist and black suffragist texts relevant to the jazz genre; formal historical narratives; biographical texts, memoirs and personal papers; passports; documents; letters; reportage; newspaper clippings; and musical script. These texts form visual elements of the screen surfaces, inform the production of the soundtrack, and are able to be read as text, they also appear as graphic components in animation sequences.

3.4 Treatment of Time

Due to the nature of interactive digital media, narrative is no longer based on a fixed temporal flow where there can be an arrow through time that leads to a single goal. Interacting with the interface has dramatically altered the perception of time in experiencing the unfolding of a given plot. Each user will navigate the work at their own pace, and make decisions about how the story will unfold. This potential of infinite options is to a certain degree illusory, given that every screen is programmed to have certain outcomes in terms of the trajectory of plot. Nonetheless, these media do enable the player/participant to make the decision about the duration of images explored on each screen and the ability to move to another screen and area of content in the program or on the Internet. *blackBOX* invents a series of options for the player that draws attention to the ways in which events in time are represented, recalled and embellished, specifically in relation to the temporal possibilities offered by these media.

3.5 Emotional Engagement with Multimedia

Michael Davis was engaged by the Institute for Interactive Media and Learning (2002) to develop a model of *emotional tagging* for the University of Technology's

website *www.uts.edu.au*. In his model Davis plots emotional responses on three axes that capture user's emotion at various stages of engagement with the University of Technology website.[23] Davis's model proposes a psychological approach in understanding human interaction with multimedia products. Davis defines our experience of a new multimedia product as our *First Impression* and associates this with our sense of *Being and Identity* in the world. We emotionally respond to the product in terms of our personal feelings of *Fear and Safety* in relation to interacting with the product. Davis defines our active participation with the product as *Doing/ Action* and associates this with an emotional response to the product in relation to the extremes of *Anger and Love*; and finally Davis identifies engagement with the product as resulting in *Having/ Accomplishment* and he associates the emotional response to the product as moving between *Sadness and Joy*.

Michael Davis's[24] model of *emotional tagging*[25] was enhanced in an unpublished paper (2002) by postgraduate student Jackie Morgan. Students were assigned various multimedia products and asked to analyse them using Davis's model of *emotional tagging*. Morgan developed her own personal theory of interaction design entitled "*Designing successful interactive experiences*". According to Morgan's paper, the intuitiveness of interaction with the multimedia product, its visual design and the user's familiarity with the media could be aligned with Davis's *Being/ Identity* axis. She pinpointed the area where the user considered navigation, consistency of interaction style and design in the context of media as aligned with Davis's *Doing/ Action* axis. The area where the user is influenced by *emotional* response in regard to a multimedia product is related to how well the media met his/her expectations. The content of the product, and the success of the user in achieving his/her

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[23] R. Krstof and A. Satran, *Interactivity by Design*, Adobe Press, California, 2001.

[24] Jackie Morgan (unpublished) *Personal Theory of Interaction Design*, Digital Information and Interaction Design paper, Master of Interactive Multimedia, Institute for Interactive Media and Learning, University of Technology, Sydney, May 2002, p25. Morgan engages with Michael Davis's model of *emotional tagging*.

[25] "In amnesic patients (hippocampal damage) it appears that…showed enhanced recognition memory for emotionally arousing story elements compared with the non-emotionally arousing elements, in Richter-Levin G, Akirav I, "Emotional tagging of memory formation-in the search for neural mechanisms", *Brain Research Reviews*, Vol. 43, No. 3., 247. *http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/els/01650173/2003/00000043/00000003/art00224* [accessed 14 June 2005].

goals in interacting with the media are associated with the *Having/ Accomplishment* axis.

Taking into consideration Davis's concepts, the designing of a multimedia experience[26] moves the program developer from '*outcome*' focussed planning to '*motivating*' experience.[27] Students learned that the key concern in creating an interactive experience was the ability to influence the emotional experience of the player/participant. Morgan's paper focused my attention, as her teacher, on the idea of 'emotional engagement' when approaching the development of an interactive script for my project *blackBOX*. The player/participant needs to be instantly interested in moving into the program, there needs to be initial *Attraction*; the screen environment should invite the player/participant to reveal the material, this allows for active *Engagement*, and finally there needs to be some feeling of satisfaction, accomplishment in the task/experience of playing, a sense of *Achievement*.

Thus the visual design of the program needs to be a familiar and recognisable screen environment, where one can intuitively engage with and be motivated to navigate successfully through a set of electronic events and tasks that provide the player/participant with a sense of their expectations either being met or challenged or where there is a sense of accomplishment in the conclusion of the experience. [28] The player first needs to be attracted to the surface design and motivated to engage with the program, there has to be a set of tasks engaging the player to motivate movement through a recognisable environment that had a consistent set of visual and sonic cues. The opening up of the narrative was created so that it might be triggered through movement across these electronic screen surfaces. While the orientation to emotional engagement is central to the success of the design of the *blackBOX* program, (the visual screen design, the interaction design, and the navigational design), this can't be reduced to the kind of simple taxonomy proposed by schema's like Davis' 'emotional tagging'.

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[26] N. Shedroff, "Experience Design", *Experience Design 1*, New Rider, 2001 and Jesse James Garrett *http://www.jjg.net* [accessed 10 July 2005]
[27] Jackie Morgan op cit p25.
[28] Jackie Morgan op cit p25.

Chapter Eight: Installation
Exhibition of *blackBOX*

The interactive 'audio-visual' artwork *blackBOX: Painting A Digital Picture of Documented Memory* was installed in the KUDOS gallery space, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September – 2 October 2004. The concept in the exhibition design was to invite the audience to initially view the material objects representing the various music and dance cultures used in the electronic work. After the visitor passed through this space of the exhibition they moved into a (digital) cinematic space. In this space the *blackBOX* computer program was projected cinematically onto a large white screen at the rear of the gallery via a data projector. The real objects, viewed initially, could then be recognised as virtual artefacts in the interactive work.

The interactive work was created to enable participation by the audience. The installation produced a new form of engagement with the artwork, where every visitor 'played' the electronic game to produce a subjective instance of the work. The light from the data projector painted representations onto the artificial wall, forming a new kind of canvass.

The conceptualisation of this installation was influenced by the traditional cinematic conventions. Indeed the projection of the audio-visual data, reflected onto a screen surface mimics early filmic projection of light through celluloid. However, the 'active' participation of the visitors and audience with the *blackBOX* installation offered the possibility of a subjective intervention with the artwork and the ability to alter the sequential flow and duration of the audio-visual material.

Figure 35. *blackBOX*, KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004[29]

The subjective intervention of the viewer/user was heightened by the visibility of the computer technology enabling the operation of the *blackBOX* exhibition. A G4 Macintosh laptop computer was positioned directly in front of the data projector and opposite the screen/ wall/ canvass. The computer screen surface formed an additional frame within which to explore *blackBOX*.[30]

Figure 36. *blackBOX*, KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004[31]

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[29] Photograph courtesy of Geoffrey Weary 2004.
[30] See Attachment (iii) *blackBOX* installation DVD documentation
[31] Photograph courtesy of Geoffrey Weary 2004.

Figure 37. *blackBOX*, KUDOS Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 28 September to 2 October 2004[32]

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[32] Photograph courtesy of Geoffrey Weary 2004.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

blackBOX: Painting A Digital Picture of Documented Memory explores the potentials of interactive non-linear story-telling to articulate, through the meeting of scholarly research and artistic creation, a hybrid cultural identity. I aimed to construct an interactive text that could reveal the multiple cultural threads creating my identity. The imaginary protagonist Nina, a name serendiptously common to the Russian, Indian and Greek cultures, stands in for my ethnic and spiritual persona. The bricolage of the identities with which I grew up is revealed in the discovery of performances from three 'imagined' Australian diasporic communities: (i) *Rembetika* Greek blues; (ii) classical Indian dance and music (*Odissi* and *Kuchipudi* traditions); and (iii) fragments of Australian jazz performed by *Russian* musicians from China. *Dancing* between and across these cultural forms and theories in *blackBOX* is the method I have employed to structure this research.

The objective of *blackBOX* is to explore and make sense of the cultural influences that formed my cultural, emotional, and spiritual identity. However, the more connections I made between the genres and cultural forms the more gaps became visible. I have woven together these disparate threads to form an virtual collage of media, however this is a fabrication. The production of *blackBOX* confirms that interactive multimedia is an appropriate medium to create a program that is self-reflexive and expresses the 'open', 'ambivalent', 'ambiguous', and 'fragmentary' formal qualities of the non-sequential narrative [1], where the navigable text enables multiple points of view to be conveyed, and multiple perspectives to be programmed into the work to produce an open-ended text, but which admits of neither closure, nor resolution.

Nina's hybrid identity suggests the ways in which all individuals may be made up "of many threads", the digital archive providing a collision of narrative and documentary forms that playfully reverse, obscure, and distort the look of the dominating/colonialist gaze. The metaphoric 'composition' and 'choreography' in the design of *blackBOX*

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[1] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity", in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London, 1996.

gestures towards the telling of one's own story as a biography, revealed through the unpacking of three virtual ' Boxes', containing émigré artefacts and music/dance performances. The songs and musical phrases pieced together by unique participation with this 'game' refer to the dis/connected surfacing of immigrant memories.

The musical motif is symbolic of the way in which the multimedia artist assembles a range of media with software tools, just as the composer arranges musical notes and the conductor orchestrates the rendering of the musical score through musical instruments. Like music, digital media is a time-based medium, where events and actions take place in a spatial and temporal sequence. *blackBOX* experiments with and tests the relationship between the language of music and the production of image, text and sound, utilising multimedia tools programmed for interactivity.

Through exploration of the 'foreign', and incorporation of the 'other' into my understanding, I am aware of the dialectical relationship between self/other and East/West. Returning to my father's place of birth, Shanghai, China; examining the photographic collages of my grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff' Shanghai jazz orchestra; engaging in documentation of classical Indian dance; and re-discovering my Greek grandparents favourite *Rembetika* music have provided me with a lens through which to piece together the dissonant threads of my own fragmentary cultural identity as an interactive story.

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Glossary of Terms

Alaap
Classical Indian (Hindustani) musical term depicting the slow introductory passage of improvisational melodic material before the establishment of the main *raga* composition.[2]

Bharata Natyam
Bharata Natyam is an ancient and religious/ devotional South Indian classical dance form. It developed in the Hindu temples and courts culture, later transforming into a more secular form of entertainment and was "… codified and documented as a performing art in the 19th century by four brothers known as the Tanjore Quartet whose musical compositions for dance form the bulk of the *Bharata Natyam* repertoire even today. The art was handed down as a living tradition from generation to generation under the *Devadasi* system under which women were dedicated to temples to serve the deity as dancers and musicians forming part of the elaborate rituals. These highly talented artists and the male *gurus* (*nattuvanars*) were the sole repository of the art until the early 20th century when a renewal of interest in India's cultural heritage prompted the educated elite to discover its beauty."[3]

Gopis (Milkmaids)
"According to the Hindu belief, *Krishna* was a reincarnation of lord *Vishnu* himself….[legend had it that] Krishna used to play pranks by drenching the village girls, with water and colours. At first it offended the girls. But they were so fond of this mischievous boy that soon their anger melted away." This humorous and impish behaviour colours "Krishna's courtship with his soul mate Radha and playing pranks with the *Gopi's*. The girls in the 'dairy' village of Gokul were mostly milkmaids, and, hence locally known as the *Gopis*. The same tradition has transpired through the ages, turning it into a community festival [*Holi*] of the masses. The *Holi* play of Krishna is documented in hundreds of ancient paintings, murals, sculptures and scriptures found across the subcontinent. *Holi* is also associated with the immortal love of Krishna and Radha."[4]

Interactive engagement
The unique and subjective experience of human-computer meeting/ rendezvous, where the physical and corporeal human senses (sensorium) touch and intervene with an electronic computer based environment. Lucy Suchman discusses after Donna Haraway[5] that technologies "…are forms of *materialised figuration*; that is, they bring together particular assemblages of stuff and meaning into more and less stable arrangements.

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[2] Gerry Farrell, "Reflecting Surfaces: the use of elements from Indian music in popular music and jazz", *POPULAR MUSIC: South Asia and the West*, Vol. 7 No. 2, May 1988, p192.
[3] Art India Net, *Bharata Natyam*, *http://www.artindia.net/bharata.html* [accessed 2 February 2005]
[4] FESTIVALS *http://www.indiaeducation.info/festivals/Holi1.htm* [accessed 22 July 2005]
[5] Donna Haraway, *Modest Witness @Second_Millenium.FemaleMan_Meets OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience,* New York: Routledge, 1997, p11.

These arrangements imply in turn particular ways of associating humans and machines."[6] Suchman positions the conversational machine as the object of her critique, arguing against

"… intelligent, interactive machines – interactive not just in the sense that …they can engage in conversation with us…"[7] , in favour of *interactive* machines in the sense that that term references the particular dynamics of a new computational media"[8], a reading consistent with the *Black Box* project. Theorist McKenzie Wark refers to this as a *Third Nature*, "starting with the telegraph, telephone, television -- all the way to telecommunications…based on the techniques of *telesthesia* -- perception at a distance. This of course brings a new series of contradictions in its wake. But just as second nature dominates nature, so third nature dominates second nature. The materiality of nature does not go away, it is just subjected to ever more abstract forms of power."[9]

Interface

"That boundary, or 'interface', delineates two separate bodies, one organic, the other artifactual."[10](virtual/artificial). The relationship between the human and the computer.[11]

Figure 38. The Prokopoff Perceptron, circa 1968[12]

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[6] Lucy Suchman, *Plans and Situated Actions II: Human-Machine Reconfigurations,* Cambridge University Pres, 2007.

[7] Lucy Suchman op cit p2.

[8] Lucy Suchman op cit p2.

[9]Interview with McKenzie Wark by Tatiana Pentes Friday, December 10, 2004 2:11

[10] Lucy Suchman op cit p 1.

[11] "When applied to computer software, User Interface Design is also known as Human-Computer Interaction or HCI."User interface Design and Usability Testing *www.usernomics.com/user-interface-design.html [accessed* 2 February 2005]

[12] Chris Csikzentmihalyi "The Prokopoff perceptron, circa 1968, has been reanimated as "Character Input," the second part of a five year project to reconstruct three obscure technologies from the history of computing. The first reconstruction, "Species Substitute," was an autonomous robotic entity created by the American Hydropower Institute in 1977. It was presented at Helsinki's MuuMedia Festival in 1996. "Character Input" is being unveiled at 1997's International Symposium on Electronic Art…. In 1968, a

Jazz [13]

"[Jazz] has its roots in both European and African musical traditions, mixed and baked in the cotton fields of the American south. It relies heavily on syncopation, which means the players slide the notes into the framework of the beat wherever it happens to feel right. That doesn't tell you much about the music, though. So I thought it might be best if I simply let musicians explain it:"
What is jazz? *http://www.stmoroky.com/reviews/music/jazz.htm* [accessed 18 January 2005]

"I'll play it first and tell you what it is later." - Miles Davis[14]

"What we play is life." - Louis Armstrong

"Music is your own experience, your own thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn. They teach you there's a boundary line to music. But, man, there's no boundary line to art." - Charlie Parker

Figure 39. Serge Ermoll Jr (piano) Quintet, El Rocco Jazz Cellar,
Kings Cross, Sydney, c. 1968

"I say, 'Play your own way. Don't play what the public wants. You play what you want and let the public pick up on what you're doing - even if it does take them fifteen, twenty years'." - Thelonious Monk.

"Never play a thing the same way twice." - Louis Armstrong

Soviet scientist from Moscow University, while working on simple *perceptron* systems, came across a profoundly significant discovery. His research involved the recognition and discrimination of human faces. Funded mostly by a branch of the MVD for organizing criminal databases, Dr. Ilya Prokopoff was hoping to catagorize faces through the use of perceptrons, machines built on models of the architecture of the brain, extremely facile at pattern recognition." *http://web.media.mit.edu/~csik/research* [accessed 2 February 2005].

[13] What is jazz? *http://www.stmoroky.com/reviews/music/jazz.htm* [accessed 18 January 2005]
[14] What is jazz? *http://www.stmoroky.com/reviews/music/jazz.htm* [accessed 18 January 2005]

"Bebop was about change, about evolution. It wasn't about standing still and becoming safe. If anybody wants to keep creating they have to be about change." - Miles Davis"

Kuchipudi

Kuchipudi is a classical Indian dance drama form connected with the *Bharata Natyam* style, incorporating, gestures, speech and song, originally performed solely by men. This dance performance, founded by Siddendra Yogi, originated in small village in the Andhra Pradesh state, and dates back to the South Indian devotional (*Bhakti*) movement of the 17th century.[15]

Lord Jagannatha

In the Hindu religion *Jagannatha* is the Lord of the Universe and an *avatar* (manifestation) of Vishnu, who along with his sister *Subadhra*, and brother *Balabadhra* forms one version of the holy Hindu trinity.

Figure 40. Lord *Jagannatha*, *Subadhra*, *Balabadhra*, the holy trinity

Macintosh computer

"January 24 saw the twentieth anniversary of perhaps the most important computer advance of the personal computer age - the release of the Macintosh computer by Apple Inc in 1985.You would have had to used a computer before the Macintosh to realise what an advance it was. For a start, it was the first personal computer to bring to market the 'Windows' software invented by the Xerox Palo Alto Laboratories. (PCs waited until 1995 to adopt the same basic technology). It did many other things as well – it was probably the first computer with a friendly interface, the first to play music, the first to allow you to draw pictures and to introduce voice technologies. It was a remarkable step forward which, when accompanied by the desktop publishing software Apple introduced a few years later, saw the personal computer revolution take a giant step forward. To celebrate, Wired Magazine published a number of articles … *http://www.wired.com/news/mac/0,2125,61730,00.html* as a starting point."[16]

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[15] *http://www.delhitourism.com/dance/* [accessed 17 January 2005]
[16] Internet History Newsletter *http://www.nethistory.info website* [accessed 22 February 2005]

Nataraja

"*Because You love the Burning -ground, I have made a Burning-ground of my heart - That You, Dark One, hunter of the Burning-ground, May dance Your eternal dance.*"
~ Bengali Hymn~ [17]

"The significance of the *Nataraja* (Nataraj) sculpture is said to be that Shiva is shown as the source of all movement within the cosmos, represented by the arch of flames. The purpose of the dance is to release men from illusion of the idea of the "self" and of the physical world. The cosmic dance was performed in Chidambaram in South India, called the centre of the universe by some Hindus. The gestures of the dance represent *Shiva's* five activities, creation (symbolized by the drum), protection (by the "fear not" hand gesture), destruction (by the fire), embodiment (by the foot planted on the ground), and release (by the foot held aloft). As *Nataraja* (Sanskrit: Lord of Dance) *Shiva* represents apocalypse and creation as he dances away the illusory world of *Maya* transforming it into power and enlightenment." [18]

Figure 41. Hindu Lord of Dance – *Nataraja* (details of bronze sculpture)

New Media Art/ Digital Media Art

The production of creative cultural objects that are enabled, exhibited and distributed by digital media technologies, including electronic networking, the Internet, and computer based technologies.

Odissi

A classical form of Indian dance, originating from the state of Orissa, India. The dance was developed as a form of devotional Hindu worhip in the temples – Puri and Jaganatha, Orissa, where *devdasi* (Hindu temple dancers) performed this sacred ritual dance as an offering to the Lord.

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[17] Lotus Sculpture *http://www.lotussculpture.com/nataraja1.htm* [accessed 17 January 2005]
[18] Lotus Sculpture *http://www.lotussculpture.com/nataraja1.htm* [accessed 17 January 2005]

Figure 42. *Maya Darpan* and *Odissi* dance drama by Ileana Citaristi[19]

Participant/ Player
The active engagement of human intervention and involvement in the unfolding of a computer game, computer program, electronic environment, or online Internet or networked experience.

Retablo "… referred to as "*laminas*" in Mexico, are small oil paintings on tin, zinc, wood or copper which venerate a multiplicity of Catholic saints. The literal translation for "*retablo*" is "behind the altar." This genre of folk art, deeply rooted in Spanish history, represents the heart and soul of traditional religious beliefs in 17th, 18th, and 19th century Mexican culture…. Counterparts to the retablo, ex votos are devotional paintings on canvas or tin that offer thanks to a particular saint in the form of a short narrative. In many events, a small child becomes ill, a favourite animal finally wanders home or a family narrowly escapes the clutches of death after their small house burns to the ground. The petitioner, grateful for a miracle received, dedicates a small painting (with a short testimonial) to the respective patron Saint. "[20]

Shanghai (quoted from Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*)
"The formerly wide-spread use of unscrupulous means to procure sailors for voyages to the orient] 1a: to put aboard a ship by force often with the help of liquor or a drug…b: to

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[19] *Maya Darpan* and Odissi dance drama, Year of production – 1993, Choreography - Dr. Ileana Citaristi Concept and script - Sri Jivan Pani, Music - Sri Partho Das, Light and sound - Arun Madkaikar, Dancers - 6 females and 1 male, Duration - 53 min. "The concept of Maya in Indian philosophy is as metaphysical as poetic. Maya Darpan, the choreographic composition based on the *Odissi* style has been inspired by the poetic treatment of the concept of Maya in various Upanishads. In the first scene we are facing the watery surface of the Timeless Being; the moment 'Time' or 'Rhythm' creeps in, the dimension of 'Space' takes shape and 'Prakruti' or Nature is born. *http://www.kalinga.net/ileana/maya.htm* [accessed 2 February 2005]
[20] Mexican *Retablo* Art *www.mexicanretablos.com/information.htm* [accessed 20 July 2005] and Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era*, 1920-1980, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1989.

put by force or a threat of force into or as if into a place of detention…2: to put by trickery into an undesirable position…"[21]

Shanghai-dancing (quoted from Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*)
"To cast a line from an old spool: it is the attainment of disorientation and instability."[22]

Figure 43. Rose Tang, Cabaret Taxi Dancer performance, blackBOX interface still

Raga
A *raga* is a classical Indian musical expression. "A *raga* is a detailed exploration of a particular musical mode in a sectionalised manner – in free time, with regular pulse and with meter. Each *raga* is identified by characteristic ascending and descending in order of notes, phrases, important tones which have special relevance to the *raga* and an aesthetic dimension…"[23]

Taximia
Taximia is the elaborate improvisational introduction to a song in *Rembetika* (the Greek Blues), in the same way the Hindustani music has an introductory *Alaap*.

Taxi-Dancer
"Tens of thousands of Russians fled to China after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, many of them aristocrats or White Russian army officers. By 1932, there were about 25,000 Russians living in Shanghai. They were stateless, disowned by the communists and ignored by the rest of the world. They brought a new kind of style to Shanghai, but also through their poverty and desperation, gave the native Chinese a glimpse of the fact that white people were not necessarily the infallible master race. There were Russian musicians and dancers and poets. Some of the men became bodyguards to Shanghai's rich, while the stylish, desperate White Russians girls in the ballrooms and bars of the city were famous for their beauty." Many Russian women danced in the clubs with men who paid with tickets. [24]

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[21] Stella Dong, *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City*, Harper Collins, New York, 2000, p2.
[22] Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*, Giramondo Publishing, Australia, 2003, p6.
[23] Gerry Farrell, "Reflecting Surfaces: the use of elements from Indian music in popular music and jazz", *POPULAR MUSIC: South Asia and the West*, Vol. 7 No. 2, May 1988, p191.
[24] Tales of Old Shanghai *www.earnshaw.com/shanghai-ed-india/tales/t-russ.htm*

"Nowhere in the world, I should think are there so many cabarets in proportion to the total white population. They range from the cheap and respectable *palais de danse* to more select resorts with exotic names like 'Paradise,' where beautifully dressed professional dancers, mostly Russian, obligingly dance with all comers on the sole condition that they order champagne."[25]

Rembetika

The origins of the word *Rembetika* can be traced to: *rembet* – an old Turkish word meaning "of the gutter"; (b) *rebenok* – the Serb word meaning "rebel"; (c) *rebet asker* – Turkish phrase referring to/meaning "people who would not submit to authority:' (d) *re, rab, ruba'a* – the Persian/Arabic meaning "four", "quatrain"; (e) *rab* – Hebrew meaning from which the word "*Rabbi*" is derived; (f) *rembetiko* – corruption of the archaic modern term *Remuastikos* (meditative) derived from the word "*remvo*" or "*remvazo*" – meaning to wander, or literally *"my mind is wandering in an anxious mood."*[26] The *'fragmentary'* qualities of "*wandering' through* the interactive text and the idea of music of the *ghetto* connect with the broader concerns of this project.[27]

Figure 44. *Rembetika* musicians (refugees) at fish market at Piraeus, Greece, 1937[28]

[accessed 18 March 2005]
[25] *From an English Journalist in 1927* www.earnshaw.com/shanghai-ed-india/tales/t-russ.htm
[accessed 18 March 2005]
[26] Elias Petropoulos, "Introduction" in *Songs of the Greek Underworld: The Rembetika Tradition*, (Translated by ed Emery), Saqi Books, London, 2000.
[27] Gail Holst, *Road to Remetika: music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow and hashish*, Denise Harvey Publisher, Limni, Evia, Greece, 1994, p64.
[28] Gail Holst op cit p28.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

blackBOX: Painting A Digital Picture of Documented Memory explores the potentials of interactive non-linear story-telling to articulate, through the meeting of scholarly research and artistic creation, a hybrid cultural identity. I aimed to construct an interactive text that could reveal the multiple cultural threads creating my identity. The imaginary protagonist Nina, a name serendiptously common to the Russian, Indian and Greek cultures, stands in for my ethnic and spiritual persona. The bricolage of the identities with which I grew up is revealed in the discovery of performances from three 'imagined' Australian diasporic communities: (i) *Rembetika* Greek blues; (ii) classical Indian dance and music (*Odissi* and *Kuchipudi* traditions); and (iii) fragments of Australian jazz performed by *Russian* musicians from China. *Dancing* between and across these cultural forms and theories in *blackBOX* is the method I have employed to structure this research.

The objective of *blackBOX* is to explore and make sense of the cultural influences that formed my cultural, emotional, and spiritual identity. However, the more connections I made between the genres and cultural forms the more gaps became visible. I have woven together these disparate threads to form an virtual collage of media, however this is a fabrication. The production of *blackBOX* confirms that interactive multimedia is an appropriate medium to create a program that is self-reflexive and expresses the 'open', 'ambivalent', 'ambiguous', and 'fragmentary' formal qualities of the non-sequential narrative [1], where the navigable text enables multiple points of view to be conveyed, and multiple perspectives to be programmed into the work to produce an open-ended text, but which admits of neither closure, nor resolution.

Nina's hybrid identity suggests the ways in which all individuals may be made up "of many threads", the digital archive providing a collision of narrative and documentary forms that playfully reverse, obscure, and distort the look of the dominating/colonialist gaze. The metaphoric 'composition' and 'choreography' in the design of *blackBOX*

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[1] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity", in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London, 1996.

gestures towards the telling of one's own story as a biography, revealed through the unpacking of three virtual ' Boxes', containing émigré artefacts and music/dance performances. The songs and musical phrases pieced together by unique participation with this 'game' refer to the dis/connected surfacing of immigrant memories.

The musical motif is symbolic of the way in which the multimedia artist assembles a range of media with software tools, just as the composer arranges musical notes and the conductor orchestrates the rendering of the musical score through musical instruments. Like music, digital media is a time-based medium, where events and actions take place in a spatial and temporal sequence. *blackBOX* experiments with and tests the relationship between the language of music and the production of image, text and sound, utilising multimedia tools programmed for interactivity.

Through exploration of the 'foreign', and incorporation of the 'other' into my understanding, I am aware of the dialectical relationship between self/other and East/West. Returning to my father's place of birth, Shanghai, China; examining the photographic collages of my grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff' Shanghai jazz orchestra; engaging in documentation of classical Indian dance; and re-discovering my Greek grandparents favourite *Rembetika* music have provided me with a lens through which to piece together the dissonant threads of my own fragmentary cultural identity as an interactive story.

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Glossary of Terms

Alaap
Classical Indian (Hindustani) musical term depicting the slow introductory passage of improvisational melodic material before the establishment of the main *raga* composition.[2]

Bharata Natyam
Bharata Natyam is an ancient and religious/ devotional South Indian classical dance form. It developed in the Hindu temples and courts culture, later transforming into a more secular form of entertainment and was "… codified and documented as a performing art in the 19th century by four brothers known as the Tanjore Quartet whose musical compositions for dance form the bulk of the *Bharata Natyam* repertoire even today. The art was handed down as a living tradition from generation to generation under the *Devadasi* system under which women were dedicated to temples to serve the deity as dancers and musicians forming part of the elaborate rituals. These highly talented artists and the male *gurus* (*nattuvanars*) were the sole repository of the art until the early 20th century when a renewal of interest in India's cultural heritage prompted the educated elite to discover its beauty."[3]

Gopis (Milkmaids)
"According to the Hindu belief, *Krishna* was a reincarnation of lord *Vishnu* himself….[legend had it that] Krishna used to play pranks by drenching the village girls, with water and colours. At first it offended the girls. But they were so fond of this mischievous boy that soon their anger melted away." This humorous and impish behaviour colours "Krishna's courtship with his soul mate Radha and playing pranks with the *Gopi's*. The girls in the 'dairy' village of Gokul were mostly milkmaids, and, hence locally known as the *Gopis*. The same tradition has transpired through the ages, turning it into a community festival [*Holi*] of the masses. The *Holi* play of Krishna is documented in hundreds of ancient paintings, murals, sculptures and scriptures found across the subcontinent. *Holi* is also associated with the immortal love of Krishna and Radha."[4]

Interactive engagement
The unique and subjective experience of human-computer meeting/ rendezvous, where the physical and corporeal human senses (sensorium) touch and intervene with an electronic computer based environment. Lucy Suchman discusses after Donna Haraway[5] that technologies "…are forms of *materialised figuration*; that is, they bring together particular assemblages of stuff and meaning into more and less stable arrangements.

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[2] Gerry Farrell, "Reflecting Surfaces: the use of elements from Indian music in popular music and jazz", *POPULAR MUSIC: South Asia and the West*, Vol. 7 No. 2, May 1988, p192.
[3] Art India Net, *Bharata Natyam*, *http://www.artindia.net/bharata.html* [accessed 2 February 2005]
[4] FESTIVALS *http://www.indiaeducation.info/festivals/Holi1.htm* [accessed 22 July 2005]
[5] Donna Haraway, *Modest Witness @Second_Millenium.FemaleMan_Meets OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience,* New York: Routledge, 1997, p11.

These arrangements imply in turn particular ways of associating humans and machines."
[6] Suchman positions the conversational machine as the object of her critique, arguing against

"… intelligent, interactive machines – interactive not just in the sense that …they can engage in conversation with us…"[7] , in favour of *interactive* machines in the sense that that term references the particular dynamics of a new computational media"[8], a reading consistent with the *Black Box* project. Theorist McKenzie Wark refers to this as a *Third Nature*, "starting with the telegraph, telephone, television -- all the way to telecommunications…based on the techniques of *telesthesia* -- perception at a distance. This of course brings a new series of contradictions in its wake. But just as second nature dominates nature, so third nature dominates second nature. The materiality of nature does not go away, it is just subjected to ever more abstract forms of power."[9]

Interface

"That boundary, or 'interface', delineates two separate bodies, one organic, the other artifactual."[10](virtual/artificial). The relationship between the human and the computer.[11]

Figure 38. The Prokopoff Perceptron, circa 1968[12]

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[6] Lucy Suchman, *Plans and Situated Actions II: Human-Machine Reconfigurations,* Cambridge University Pres, 2007.

[7] Lucy Suchman op cit p2.

[8] Lucy Suchman op cit p2.

[9]Interview with McKenzie Wark by Tatiana Pentes Friday, December 10, 2004 2:11

[10] Lucy Suchman op cit p 1.

[11] "When applied to computer software, User Interface Design is also known as Human-Computer Interaction or HCI."User interface Design and Usability Testing *www.usernomics.com/user-interface-design.html* [accessed 2 February 2005]

[12] Chris Csikzentmihalyi "The Prokopoff perceptron, circa 1968, has been reanimated as "Character Input," the second part of a five year project to reconstruct three obscure technologies from the history of computing. The first reconstruction, "Species Substitute," was an autonomous robotic entity created by the American Hydropower Institute in 1977. It was presented at Helsinki's MuuMedia Festival in 1996. "Character Input" is being unveiled at 1997's International Symposium on Electronic Art…. In 1968, a

Jazz [13]

"[Jazz] has its roots in both European and African musical traditions, mixed and baked in the cotton fields of the American south. It relies heavily on syncopation, which means the players slide the notes into the framework of the beat wherever it happens to feel right. That doesn't tell you much about the music, though. So I thought it might be best if I simply let musicians explain it:"
What is jazz? *http://www.stmoroky.com/reviews/music/jazz.htm* [accessed 18 January 2005]

"I'll play it first and tell you what it is later." - Miles Davis[14]

"What we play is life." - Louis Armstrong

"Music is your own experience, your own thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn. They teach you there's a boundary line to music. But, man, there's no boundary line to art." - Charlie Parker

Figure 39. Serge Ermoll Jr (piano) Quintet, El Rocco Jazz Cellar,
Kings Cross, Sydney, c. 1968

"I say, 'Play your own way. Don't play what the public wants. You play what you want and let the public pick up on what you're doing - even if it does take them fifteen, twenty years'." - Thelonious Monk.

"Never play a thing the same way twice." - Louis Armstrong

Soviet scientist from Moscow University, while working on simple *perceptron* systems, came across a profoundly significant discovery. His research involved the recognition and discrimination of human faces. Funded mostly by a branch of the MVD for organizing criminal databases, Dr. Ilya Prokopoff was hoping to catagorize faces through the use of perceptrons, machines built on models of the architecture of the brain, extremely facile at pattern recognition." *http://web.media.mit.edu/~csik/research* [accessed 2 February 2005].
[13] What is jazz? *http://www.stmoroky.com/reviews/music/jazz.htm* [accessed 18 January 2005]
[14] What is jazz? *http://www.stmoroky.com/reviews/music/jazz.htm* [accessed 18 January 2005]

"Bebop was about change, about evolution. It wasn't about standing still and becoming safe. If anybody wants to keep creating they have to be about change." - Miles Davis"

Kuchipudi
Kuchipudi is a classical Indian dance drama form connected with the *Bharata Natyam* style, incorporating, gestures, speech and song, originally performed solely by men. This dance performance, founded by Siddendra Yogi, originated in small village in the Andhra Pradesh state, and dates back to the South Indian devotional (*Bhakti*) movement of the 17th century.[15]

Lord Jagannatha
In the Hindu religion *Jagannatha* is the Lord of the Universe and an *avatar* (manifestation) of Vishnu, who along with his sister *Subadhra*, and brother *Balabadhra* forms one version of the holy Hindu trinity.

Figure 40. Lord *Jagannatha*, *Subadhra*, *Balabadhra*, the holy trinity

Macintosh computer
"January 24 saw the twentieth anniversary of perhaps the most important computer advance of the personal computer age - the release of the Macintosh computer by Apple Inc in 1985.You would have had to used a computer before the Macintosh to realise what an advance it was. For a start, it was the first personal computer to bring to market the 'Windows' software invented by the Xerox Palo Alto Laboratories. (PCs waited until 1995 to adopt the same basic technology). It did many other things as well – it was probably the first computer with a friendly interface, the first to play music, the first to allow you to draw pictures and to introduce voice technologies. It was a remarkable step forward which, when accompanied by the desktop publishing software Apple introduced a few years later, saw the personal computer revolution take a giant step forward. To celebrate, Wired Magazine published a number of articles …
http://www.wired.com/news/mac/0,2125,61730,00.html as a starting point."[16]

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[15] *http://www.delhitourism.com/dance/* [accessed 17 January 2005]
[16] Internet History Newsletter *http://www.nethistory.info website* [accessed 22 February 2005]

Nataraja
"*Because You love the Burning -ground, I have made a Burning-ground of my heart -
That You, Dark One, hunter of the Burning-ground, May dance Your eternal dance*."
~ Bengali Hymn~ [17]
"The significance of the *Nataraja* (Nataraj) sculpture is said to be that Shiva is shown as
the source of all movement within the cosmos, represented by the arch of flames. The
purpose of the dance is to release men from illusion of the idea of the "self" and of the
physical world. The cosmic dance was performed in Chidambaram in South India, called
the centre of the universe by some Hindus. The gestures of the dance represent *Shiva's*
five activities, creation (symbolized by the drum), protection (by the "fear not" hand
gesture), destruction (by the fire), embodiment (by the foot planted on the ground), and
release (by the foot held aloft). As *Nataraja* (Sanskrit: Lord of Dance) *Shiva* represents
apocalypse and creation as he dances away the illusory world of *Maya* transforming it
into power and enlightenment." [18]

Figure 41. Hindu Lord of Dance – *Nataraja* (details of bronze sculpture)

New Media Art/ Digital Media Art
The production of creative cultural objects that are enabled, exhibited and distributed by
digital media technologies, including electronic networking, the Internet, and computer
based technologies.

Odissi
A classical form of Indian dance, originating from the state of Orissa, India. The dance
was developed as a form of devotional Hindu worhip in the temples – Puri and Jaganatha,
Orissa, where *devdasi* (Hindu temple dancers) performed this sacred ritual dance as an
offering to the Lord.

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[17] Lotus Sculpture *http://www.lotussculpture.com/nataraja1.htm* [accessed 17 January 2005]
[18] Lotus Sculpture *http://www.lotussculpture.com/nataraja1.htm* [accessed 17 January 2005]

Figure 42. *Maya Darpan* and *Odissi* dance drama by Ileana Citaristi[19]

Participant/ Player
The active engagement of human intervention and involvement in the unfolding of a computer game, computer program, electronic environment, or online Internet or networked experience.

Retablo "… referred to as "*laminas*" in Mexico, are small oil paintings on tin, zinc, wood or copper which venerate a multiplicity of Catholic saints. The literal translation for "*retablo*" is "behind the altar." This genre of folk art, deeply rooted in Spanish history, represents the heart and soul of traditional religious beliefs in 17th, 18th, and 19th century Mexican culture…. Counterparts to the retablo, ex votos are devotional paintings on canvas or tin that offer thanks to a particular saint in the form of a short narrative. In many events, a small child becomes ill, a favourite animal finally wanders home or a family narrowly escapes the clutches of death after their small house burns to the ground. The petitioner, grateful for a miracle received, dedicates a small painting (with a short testimonial) to the respective patron Saint. "[20]

Shanghai (quoted from Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*)
"The formerly wide-spread use of unscrupulous means to procure sailors for voyages to the orient] 1a: to put aboard a ship by force often with the help of liquor or a drug…b: to

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[19] *Maya Darpan* and Odissi dance drama, Year of production – 1993, Choreography - Dr. Ileana Citaristi Concept and script - Sri Jivan Pani, Music - Sri Partho Das, Light and sound - Arun Madkaikar, Dancers - 6 females and 1 male, Duration - 53 min. "The concept of Maya in Indian philosophy is as metaphysical as poetic. Maya Darpan, the choreographic composition based on the *Odissi* style has been inspired by the poetic treatment of the concept of Maya in various Upanishads. In the first scene we are facing the watery surface of the Timeless Being; the moment 'Time' or 'Rhythm' creeps in, the dimension of 'Space' takes shape and 'Prakruti' or Nature is born. *http://www.kalinga.net/ileana/maya.htm* [accessed 2 February 2005]
[20] Mexican *Retablo* Art *www.mexicanretablos.com/information.htm* [accessed 20 July 2005] and Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era*, 1920-1980, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1989.

put by force or a threat of force into or as if into a place of detention…2: to put by trickery into an undesirable position…"[21]

Shanghai-dancing (quoted from Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*)
"To cast a line from an old spool: it is the attainment of disorientation and instability."[22]

Figure 43. Rose Tang, Cabaret Taxi Dancer performance, blackBOX interface still

Raga
A *raga* is a classical Indian musical expression. "A *raga* is a detailed exploration of a particular musical mode in a sectionalised manner – in free time, with regular pulse and with meter. Each *raga* is identified by characteristic ascending and descending in order of notes, phrases, important tones which have special relevance to the *rag*a and an aesthetic dimension…"[23]

Taximia
Taximia is the elaborate improvisational introduction to a song in *Rembetika* (the Greek Blues), in the same way the Hindustani music has an introductory *Alaap*.

Taxi-Dancer
"Tens of thousands of Russians fled to China after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, many of them aristocrats or White Russian army officers. By 1932, there were about 25,000 Russians living in Shanghai. They were stateless, disowned by the communists and ignored by the rest of the world. They brought a new kind of style to Shanghai, but also through their poverty and desperation, gave the native Chinese a glimpse of the fact that white people were not necessarily the infallible master race. There were Russian musicians and dancers and poets. Some of the men became bodyguards to Shanghai's rich, while the stylish, desperate White Russians girls in the ballrooms and bars of the city were famous for their beauty." Many Russian women danced in the clubs with men who paid with tickets. [24]

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[21] Stella Dong, *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City*, Harper Collins, New York, 2000, p2.
[22] Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing*, Giramondo Publishing, Australia, 2003, p6.
[23] Gerry Farrell, "Reflecting Surfaces: the use of elements from Indian music in popular music and jazz", *POPULAR MUSIC: South Asia and the West*, Vol. 7 No. 2, May 1988, p191.
[24] Tales of Old Shanghai *www.earnshaw.com/shanghai-ed-india/tales/t-russ.htm*

"Nowhere in the world, I should think are there so many cabarets in proportion to the total white population. They range from the cheap and respectable *palais de danse* to more select resorts with exotic names like 'Paradise,' where beautifully dressed professional dancers, mostly Russian, obligingly dance with all comers on the sole condition that they order champagne."[25]

Rembetika

The origins of the word *Rembetika* can be traced to: *rembet* – an old Turkish word meaning "of the gutter"; (b) *rebenok* – the Serb word meaning "rebel"; (c) *rebet asker* – Turkish phrase referring to/meaning "people who would not submit to authority:' (d) *re, rab, ruba'a* – the Persian/Arabic meaning "four", "quatrain"; (e) *rab* – Hebrew meaning from which the word "*Rabbi*" is derived; (f) *rembetiko* – corruption of the archaic modern term *Remuastikos* (meditative) derived from the word "*remvo*" or "*remvazo*" – meaning to wander, or literally *"my mind is wandering in an anxious mood."*[26] The *'fragmentary'* qualities of "*wandering' through* the interactive text and the idea of music of the *ghetto* connect with the broader concerns of this project.[27]

Figure 44. *Rembetika* musicians (refugees) at fish market at Piraeus, Greece, 1937[28]

[accessed 18 March 2005]
[25] *From an English Journalist in 1927* www.earnshaw.com/shanghai-ed-india/tales/t-russ.htm
[accessed 18 March 2005]
[26] Elias Petropoulos, "Introduction" in *Songs of the Greek Underworld: The Rembetika Tradition*, (Translated by ed Emery), Saqi Books, London, 2000.
[27] Gail Holst, *Road to Remetika: music of a Greek sub-culture, songs of love, sorrow and hashish*, Denise Harvey Publisher, Limni, Evia, Greece, 1994, p64.
[28] Gail Holst op cit p28.

Appendix i

Reflection on Self and Process

Report on the development and production process

This is a reflective journal forming a record of the development of *blackBOX* and the way in which the creative work has evolved and transformed throughout the process of its production. The objective of *blackBOX* has been produce an interactive digital media work that can articulate the 'open, 'ambivalent',' ambiguous', and 'fragmentary' formal qualities of the non-sequential narrative.[1] The production of creative work has involved the documentation of music and dance culture incorporating Russian, Indian and Greek texts.

The working method has been to record and document contemporary performances of these cultural forms (*Rembetika*, classical Indian, and jazz music), existing in Australia in their various communities. The research methodology is one of participation in the cultural events, and to research the broad themes, motifs, and mythology articulated in the forms – searching for ways that they may be connected. I have found that *my participation* and experience in the process *provides the link between genres*. Broadly speaking, there are subtle influences (historically) between these forms, but the act of documentation and my interpretation of these performance events is the necessary connection. These audio-visual materials are then taken into the digital environment for editing and interactive composition. In addition to these materials, there is a bringing together of further elements from the dance/music culture – relevant passages of text, the appropriation of mythological texts and their reworking into a voice-over component.

Research Archive

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[1] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity", in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London, 1996.

Year 1 Research, 2002

In the first year research was focused on developing a methodological framework and rationale for this creative research, having both theoretical and creative/technical outcomes. The methodological concerns were developed around reading and writing strategies that explored the notion of (i) diaspora, (ii) dance, and (iii) music cultures, resulting in engaging in a reading program on issues of 'nationalism', race, ethnicity and the articulation of these issues in the new 'web text'. These theoretical concerns informed the planning and scripting of the work, by identifying existing writing and forms of representation on the Internet and developing a model for producing a creative interactive text (image/sound/text arrangement) that reflects on the construction of self, representation of identity and the documentary form in the new media environment. Contact was made with performers from the music/dance arts resulting in film/video/sound recordings of the artists performances for incorporation into the work including: interviews and video documentation of performances from the (i) the Greek (*Rembetika*) community; (ii) the Indian dance community (*Odissi*, *Kuchipudi*); and (iii) the location of existing sound recordings and interviews in the National Film and Sound Archive (ScreenSound Australia). The project was scoped to define the audience, context, possibilities and limits of the medium. A series of interactive digital sequences were developed from the performances.

An interactive structure for the program was developed, designing navigation of the program and the conceptualisation of the content into interactive pathways. Post production commenced with (i) digitising the collected image/ sound/ text materials, (ii) shaping these materials into an interactive structure (developing a treatment), (iii) researching and incorporating textual elements into the interactive work.

A blueprint for the operation of the program was produced to compose/ arrange/ assemble these image/ sound/ text elements: - (i) *aesthetically* (in terms of interface/graphic design and interactivity), and (ii) *technically* (in regard to

the software/hardware requirements. These were generated and prepared ready for programming in an interactive environment.

An early Internet presence was created *http://www.strangecities.net* This Internet site exhibits elements of the creative work online as a work in progress: - including digital animation sequences, downloadable word documents that form part of the written thesis component of my research, aspects of the written treatment/script.

Year 2 Research, 2003/4

This year formed the production phase of the work where the creation of a series of strategies for the 'player' to move in and between, where there are goals that need to be achieved before entry into different levels of the program. This was combined with digitally editing the sound components.

chineseBOX – Russian jazz performance from Shanghai, China was under construction. I digitized the family documents – photographs, magazine articles, musical score, letters and an old vinyl album of recording of my grandfather Sergei Ermolaeff with Mickey Kaye and Sergei Korshoon (Sydney circa 1978). I filmed the Chinese girl sequence using the actress Lou-Lou Sy in the location of the Sydney Chinese Gardens.

jewelBOX – classical Indian dance music performances (Odissi and Kuchipudi) was under construction. I worked with material shot with actress Rochelle Berwick, using the software program Adobe After Effects to create the special effect of unleashing the classical Indian dancers from the silver jewel box.

pandorasBOX – Rembetika (the Greek Blues) performance was under construction. I commenced building the image landscape for this 'pathway' – composed of found photographs, documents, and documentary material captured through filming *Rebetiki* – an Australian Greek blues ensemble performing at *Carnivale* multicultural arts festival 2003. The found photographs and

documents originate from an Australian Greek migrant from Egypt (*Stavroula Vrassida Petala*). The black and white photographs detail her sojourn through Europe and the Middle East with her male partner via ship/passenger liner in the late 1930's and then her passage to Australia where she was granted residency.

Year 3 Research, 2004/5

This year completed the multimedia production stage of the *blackBOX* Internet/CD-ROM project with a working prototype of the four areas of content - *blackBOX* titles; (i) Metropolis – the Russian/Greek girl's movement through the urban landscape to discover three virtual boxes – in turn unleashing (a) *chineseBOX* – Russian jazz performance from Shanghai, China; (b) *jewelBOX* – classical Indian dance music performances (*Odissi, Kuchipudi*), and (c) *pandorasBOX* – *Rembetika* (the Greek Blues) performance. This was achieved visually and in terms of sound atmospheres, music elements, and some archival voice-over utilising the software programs- Adobe Photoshop, creating the moving image components (digital film) in Adobe After Effects, editing the music and soundscapes in Sound Edit 16 and Pro Tools and constructing the interaction design utilizing Director MX. The digital media elements designed in the interactive treatment/script were realised including musical elements, sound atmospheres, and audio button triggers. However, after consultation with my supervisors, is was agreed that there was a need to further contextualise the social inquiry research with the enhancement of a subjective viewpoint – a voice-over for the protagonist Nina Philadelphoff. Exhibition of *blackBOX* as a multimedia installation:

BlackBOX:
painting a digital picture of documented memory
KUDOS GALLERY 28 September – 2 October 2004
College of Fine Arts (SA),
UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
http://www.cofasa.unsw.edu.au/2004/kudos/blackbox/index.php

The installation was composed of the following elements: (i) *blackBOX* interactive CD-ROM project, (ii) a *virtual* exhibition of fragments of moving

image, sound and text theorizing the production *http://www.strangecities.net*; (iii) digital photographic prints; and (iv) memory boxes archiving the *real* objects explored in the digital work.

Appendix ii

Australia Council Restructure: **Australia Council unplugged**

By Keith Gallasch

At the meeting convened by ANAT, dLux media arts, Performance Space, Experimenta, MAAP and *RealTime* at the Paddington RSL, Sydney on January 24 we hoped to hear from Australia Council staff why the Taskforce's proposed restructuring of the organisation entailed the dissolution of the New Media Arts Board (NMAB) and why there had been no consultation with the sector and, at the time of the December press release, none offered in the future.

Over 200 people gathered at the RSL, including many new media and hybrid artists, artists from other fields including music, visual and community arts, academics, curators, managers, a range of Australia Council staff, AFC staff and members of the press. Kim Machan, director of MAAP flew in from Brisbane, Artrage director Marcus Canning (also on the NMAB) from Perth (carrying a detailed response to the restructure from WA artists and BEAP), Fabienne Nicholas, manager of Experimenta, from Melbourne and visiting artists from the UK all attended. The mood of the meeting was serious, often emotional as concerned artists tried to express the depth of their feelings.

ANAT director Julieanne Pierce hosted the meeting, outlining the issues she hoped the Australia Council's CEO Jennifer Bott and Acting Executive Director, Arts Development and NMAB Manager Andrew Donovan would address. She then introduced 3 speakers: artist and academic Anna Munster, artist Lynnette Wallworth and me. I spoke about the field's response to the restructuring from replies to *RealTime's* December email and other documentation. I looked at the language of the response to the proposed changes, how the impact was felt viscerally and how metaphors of blindness, lack of vision, short-sightedness were used by correspondents to describe Council's actions along with images of regression, of their "going off the map" and "back to the dark ages." The second strongest feeling I reported was of betrayal, which the Xmas-time announcement and lack of consultation amounted to "a pre-emptive strike against innovation in the arts." Above all there were feelings of imminent loss: of identity (new media and hybrid arts were being un-named, un-represented by an art form board and at Council level), of expertise (the accumulated knowledge of NMAB), of coherence and continuity (the forms scattered to other art form boards). Finally, the restructure was felt to parallel the growing conservatism of Australian society, here with the return to the fundamentals of traditional art form categories. I described the key issue as not being about money, after all the Council was saying that the same money, even more, would be spent on new media and hybrid arts, but the very standing of the forms was at stake if their names were to be erased or relegated to the small print.

Central to Anna Munster's talk was the significant role of the NMAB in building an experimental arts culture in Australia. She also pointed to the careers enabled by the AFC's short-lived but highly significant Interactive Fund. New media art might not yet have the commercial outcomes some had fantasised for it but, said Munster, its social potential was strong, its place in universities and other institutions growing. Why then should the Australia

Council demote it…Lyndal Jones spoke eloquently, declaring that we were really discussing a conflict between identity and strategy. Here was a strategy that included dissolving the NMAB…Kate Richards thought it too late to turn the clock back and fold the complexities of new media arts into traditional art form categories. Others pointed out that without the branding and the status offered by the existence of the NMAB, artists would find it increasingly difficult to form the partnerships and sponsorships that have been typical of a field that can work with commerce, science and education … Pressure is being applied to the Council by organisations across the country to suspend any changes for a year, in which time serious consultation could be undertaken. The Australia Council, having done much to acknowledge and nurture new media and hybrid arts must not abandon them or the key role it plays in their development and dissemination around the world. To do so is to betray itself, to be blind to its own achievements as well as those of a plethora of remarkable Australian artists. As a communications industry consultant observed after the meeting, this is a moment when Council should be investing more in new media arts, let alone retaining the NMAB."[2]

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[2] Keith Gallasch, "Australia Council Restructure: Australia Council unplugged", *REALTIME* 65 February/March 2005 *http://www.realtimearts.net/* [accessed 2 February 2005]

BlackBOX
a digital media script

SPLASH page
Splash page commences and the journey begins. *blackBOX* titles appear out of the red velvet screen surface, from a silver box émigré objects tumble out.

Screen Text: What does the heart search for? *ChineseBox*, *JewelBox*. *PandorasBox*. Nina the Russian Greek Girl. The Metropolis.

Images: [a montage of images of Nina wandering through the metropolis in urban locations is projected as she is pictured in repose on a bed of exotic cushions. Dreaming of and imagining a journey into the metropolis. Russian, Greek Sanskrit texts slide across her body resembling data code that programs a computer and suggest her mixed identity. The sequence resolves with a static image of Nina emerging from a red doorway/threshold anda strip of icons depicting her journey into the city scrolling across the top of the screen (resembling film moving through the gates of a projector).

Interactivity: an image of the old Key to the gates of Moscow upon the visual surface of screen triggers entry into the program. (SFX: an old gothic Key in a lock).
[***This key icon is the trigger to all pathways opening.***]

Chinese Box Icon – interactive Voice-text: "Chinese Box"

A floating strip of icons scrolling across the top of the screen (resembling film moving through the gates of a projector)

Chinese Box Icon - interactive voice-text: "Chinese Box"
Jewel Box Icon - interactive voice-text: "Jewel Box"
Pandora's Box Icon - interactive voice-text: "Pandora's Box"
Credit Text Icon - interactive voice-text: "Credit Text"
Memory Box Icon - interactive voice-text: "Memory Box"

This digital filmstrip forms a menu of visual triggers that contextualises the/areas of narrative content, the methodology and rationale. They include the credits for this work.

Screen Image: Nina Philadelphoff passing through a red gateway/doorway. There is a note on the door that says:

Nina Voice: I am made of many threads…Russian…Asian…wandering through the streets of my city…I am in Chinatown…in an Chinese shop…I stumble upon the tiles of a Mahjong game… memories rush back to haunt of the old box in my Russian grandparents house.

Sound Atmos: the spark of electric neon turned on, sparks, lanterns tinkling in the wind, urban street sounds, Chinese chattering, a fog horn, traffic, the sounds of a metropolis.

Moving Image: [super-imposed over Nina] flashes of pictures from an Eastern journey, a Malaysian cityscape, through the window of a moving car, a paddy field in Indonesia, a Hindu temple Orissa (India), a Chinese pagoda Sydney and a Lotus pond in the Yu Yuan gardens, Shanghai.

BlackBOX TITLES

Interface Design: An oriental pattern (mandarin red, gold, silver and black) frames a digital *blackBOX* titles sequence. This creates a consistent immersive screen environment. In these screen places interaction with events occur through ornamental Chinese/ art deco (modern) window frames. The journey appears and disappears inside this set of modern Chinese 1930s inspired frames. The player/participant interacts with the surface of the screen, engaging with a series of icons revealing hotspots that unveil the narrative.

Moving Image: An image of Nina leaving her urban apartment, her face fractures into multiple identities, as the titles are composed across the screen. An antique Greek image of Pandora and her Box appears and disappears.
Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …blackBOX…
Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …years ago a speck was torn from China and became Shanghai …a legendary City…a fantasized vision…Hollywood illusion…whispered tales from this blackBOX… echo opium wars…of White Russians washed up on its shores…dance halls and gun-runners…from this glittering oriental façade….

Icon: CHINESE BOX – the North tile from a mahjong game
SFX: a Chinese gong.

chineseBOX TITLES

Location: *The Chinese Gardens, Sydney and Shanghai, China*
Performance: *Russian Jazz from Shanghai Performance*
Pathway icon: *North wind pieces from a Mah Jong game*
Visual trigger: *Nina's hands open a Chinese box of émigré objects*
Sound: *Audio montage of Serge Ermoll's "Over The Rosy Sea"*
and1930s Shanghai pop tunes

Storyline This story unfolds from observations of the protagonist/ and
the protagonist's point of view - through movement around the Chinese
Gardens, Sydney. As the girl, explores the various aspects of the garden
– a reflective pond, the Willow trees, a Pagoda, Rock gardens, and a
Tea House we are reminded of the original site in Shanghai (Yu Yuan
gardens), and the legendary Willow Pattern motif, repeatedly imprinted
upon ceramic. The design symbolizes the dialogue between the Orient
and the West. The legendary teahouse in Shanghai was the location of
the first projection of cinema in China (Lumiere Brothers 1896). The
girl's imaginary and dreams of Shanghai (her grandmother Xenia and
Rose, the cabaret dancer) haunt the surface of the garden, reflecting
imagery of a time long past. What is the girl searching for, and why the
sojourn in the garden? She finds an elaborate Chinese Box containing
photographs, in opening the box she unlocks a conjured performance
of Russian Jazz from Shanghai and the dance of Rose, a dancer in the
club

Movement No# 1 CHINESE BOX – Songs of Sorrow
Absence [The Father]
A set of red and silver fans glide across the screen to reveal
chineseBOX titles. A black lacquer Chinese box lies open, its mirror
becomes a screen. Reflected in the mirror, Nina transforms into a
Chinese girl wandering around the Yu Yuan gardens in a traditional
Cheong Sam dress. A woman's hand holds an old fashioned key in her
palm. Russian émigré objects from China spill from the box. The screen
cursor is a gold Chinese dragon.

Interaction with the mirror triggers a close-up of this simulated film
sequence and voice text: …chineseBOX…

A Chinese ornamental window frames a view of the old Shanghai
Bund. The British Angel of Victory monument (later demolished by the
invading Japanese) faces the waterfront façade andSir Victor Sassoon's
(Iraqi Jew) temple to capitalism the old deco Cathay Hotel. Digital film
sequence of the Chinese girl wandering around the Yu Yuan gardens in
a traditional Cheong Sam dress. She discovers an altar with Russian
émigré objects from China.

Text: The Cathay Hotel, Shanghai 1930's.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is intimate/confessional*]: …do you remember me…grandmother…am I Western? …am I Asian?… do you remember what I am? …are you Western?…

Interaction with the film sequence triggers a close-up a black lacquer Chinese box that lies open, from its blue interior spills a pile of objects: a Pathe photograph of a Russian orchestra, a jade ring, a red Chinese fan, a silver bracelet, a red Soviet passport, a Chinese Cabaret dancer, a Russian ballerina, and a Willow pattern plate.

Sound Atmos: a pre-revolutionary modern Chinese pop tune (with a dominant Oboe theme) is paying on the radio and the sound of film rushing through the gates of a projector.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: my father was born in China 1943 to Manchurian White Russian parents…they met in the steamy Metropolis of Shanghai…across the ballroom….my grandfather Sergei waving his orchestra leader's baton notices my elegant grandmother Xenia fresh from the Russian revolution… revolving in the arms of another big Taipan on the dance floor of the Cathay Hotel.

Nina Voice2: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: Xenia was dancing in the club… selling her Russian jewels on the steps of the Park Hotel, on old Nanjing Dong Lu…she buys a beautiful set of dance outfits and a set of studio portraits …half her life later her photos and jewels are spread across her bed, in the west of Sydney, all she could bring with her on the Chan Sha ship journey after Mao's red guards seize the Paris of the East….

Interaction with icons triggers the story pathways.

Pathe photograph of a Russian orchestra: triggers SFX fingers zoom across they keyboard of a piano…and drum solo.

Images: A newsprint article of Serge Ermoll and His Orchestra. Xenia is highlighted as "girl of my dreams".

Newsreader (archival voice): And within this city of three and half million Chinese, there's another city, a foreign settlement. Made up of

the French Concession and the well-known International Settlement. There the various powers, including Great Britain, The United States, and Japan had stationed detachments of troops to assist the police of the Shanghai Municipal Council in the preservation of peace and order and to protect the boundaries of the International Settlement.

North wind Mahjong icon: [*triggers movement to a collage of Serge Ermoll's life/ documents. SFX: Serge's trumpet solo and typing. Moving Image: A montage of Shanghai neon and Serge music documents – President of Shanghai Federation of Musicians.*] **Chinese Cabaret dance icon:** [*triggers movement to Rose cabaret dance sequence.*]

 Jade ring icon: [*triggers movement to ballroom scene.*] **Music:** Serge singing Cole Porter's "Night and Day" – "Night and day, you are the one, only you between the moon and under the sun, whether near to me or far its no matter darling where you are….Night and Day". **Images:** Xenia sitting with friends watching Serge at the club. **Moving Image:** A montage of Serge's jazz orchestra is superimposed with dancing girls and Xenia's face. **Screen Text:** Your grandfather gave me the jade ring at the Majestic Hotel, Shanghai 1933. His Band was playing Cole Porter's Night and Day…

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: Xenia kept few things…a string of Faberge eggs from Babooshka and the jade ring Serge gave her with the Japanese Sakura flower…this may have curried favour with authorities during the Japanese occupation.

Red Chinese fan: [*triggers movement to Chinese girl doing traditional dance.*] **Music:** "In Shanghai, In Shanghai", modern Chinese pop tune, lyrics describing the night lights of Shanghai. **Images:** The Chinese girl is opening the Chinese Box. The Chinese girl is dressed in a Japanese Kimono holding an ornamental shade. **Moving Image:** The Chinese girl dances about the place adorned in an ancient traditional outfit. **Screen Text:** There were many Shanghai's. There was the orientalist vision…a Hollywood illusion. The city was a melting pot of Chinese city, Anglo-American Shanghai, a prize of the opium wars – and the infamous French quarter – a mix of wealthy White Russian émigrés and mobster lair of the Chinese Green Gang.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: my father grew up in the notorious French quarter…accompanying his musician father Serge to the many bars, clubs and cafes…lying under the grand piano in the French Club…he recalls the tunes… his father pumping out the old jazz standards and the dancing girls giving him American candy and some of their tips.

Hollywood femme fatale: You need more than luck in Shanghai!

Silver bracelet icon: [*triggers movement to sepia toned colonial portraits of Xenia and collaged with Serge Ermoll's "Recordando" musical score.*] **Music:** "Pillow Book sounds", modern Chinese pop tune, legendary lyrics describing "Rose Rose I Love You". **Image:** Xenia is dressed in high modern Shanghai fashion – with a string of Faberge eggs around her neck, from Russia. **Moving Image:** Chinese couples dancing in Cheong Sam and Tuxedo suits to jazz music. **Screen Text:** Xenia Ermoll Shanghai (hand-written running writing). Your grandfather Sergei brought this bracelet for me from Harbin, Manchuria. But like me Xenia…it is Russian.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: Xenia was all haute couture and furs…attending Sergei's tea dances at the Majestic Hotel, Paramount, Ladlow's Casanova…TsingTao Café…at one time Serge toured the Dutch East Indes and played in Batavia.

Red Soviet passport: [*triggers movement to a collage of a Chinese red fan and a document from the US Navy contracting Serge in China.*] **Music:** Mournful fragment of Serge Piano solo. **Image:** Xenia is wearing a Kimono during the Japanese occupation. **Screen Text:** Soviet citizenship was a blessing in China after the war…But I was never going back to Russia. **SFX:** [Japanese troops drills and soldiers] **Newsreader (archival voice):** The small bon-fires the Japanese lit in Manchuria was to grow and spread with uncontrollable fury [*war soundscape*].

Chinese Cabaret dancer: [*triggers movement to Rose cabaret dance sequence.*] **Screen Text:** …Rose the dancer in the club where Serge's jazz orchestra played…her mother was Chinese…was her father a Russian musician? **Images:** The ceiling of the Cathay Hotel ballroom adorned with golden Chinese dragons. **Moving Image:** Rose performs a solo exotic dance superimposed over black and white film footage of a jazz orchestra band and couples dancing. Digital video sequences of the interior of a ballroom, chandeliers and stage where Serge's band once played.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: We knew granddad Serge had a girl in every port…but my father's Chinese sister remains a mystery…Rose Rose I Love You (*sing song*)….I know you are out there somewhere…I wonder where you are these days? (*sing song*)….

Russian ballerina: *[triggers movement to a collage of Asja Mercoolova the Russian ballerina.]* **Screen Text:** Xenia wanted me to be on the stage like Asja …Asja sailed for New York and married a Broadway musical director…her face on Harpers Bazaar 1949. **Images:** Collage of studio portraits of Asja in her ballet tou-tou and the cover of Harpers Bazaar magazine (1949). **Music:** Fragment from Serge Ermoll (piano), Mickey Kaye (drums) and Sergei Korshoon's crooning Eastern European singing the song "Domes of Moscow".

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: Xenia showing me studio portraits of Asja Mercoolova her neice…as we watched the gymnastic events at Sydney Town Hall was sure I was going to be a dancer!

Willow pattern plate*: [triggers movement to a Willow patterned plate.]* **Animated Images:** The design on the willow pattern plate comes to life in animation. The decorative motif of the Tea House is replaced by a colour photograph of the Yu Yuan tea house, the two dimensional Pagoda becomes a photograph of the real thing and interior shots of the blue stained glass windows. Nina is sitting inside the tea House. **Music:** "Firecrackers Shanghai", modern Chinese pop tune, lyrics a Chinese woman's voice. **Moving Image:** Through the window of a train we see a Pagoda and the girl Nina transforms into the Chinese girl. We see her looking at the Russian émigré objects.

Interaction with the Willow pattern plate triggers.

Open red door: [imagery: beautiful modern Chinese cover girls are plastered on a red door, where the Chinese symbol for Fortune should be painted, a Moa Tse Tung icon hanging where a Feng Shui mirror should be.] **Screen Text:** The Willow pattern teahouse (Huxinting Pavilion) Yu Yuan gardens…site for the greatest love story of all time…and location of the first ever projection of cinema in Shanghai, China, by Parisian brothers in early 20th century…the imagery haunts the ceramic surfaces…
Fan Icon: [SFX Chinese chimes] triggers montage of Serge Ermoll and orchestra documents, musical score, a photograph of Charlie Chaplin andSerge, Xenia smoking a cigarette, Chinese identity papers.
Screen text: my grandfather a jazz big band leader in Shanghai at the majestic ballroom, Cathay Hotel andAstor House…Russian jazz from Shanghai…China. **Music:** "Firecrackers Shanghai", modern Chinese pop tune, lyrics a Chinese woman's voice.

Shanghai Singsong girl Screen: [SFX Chinese chimes] triggers montage of Serge Ermoll and orchestra documents, musical score, a photograph of Charlie Chaplin and Serge, Xenia smoking a cigarette, Chinese identity papers. **Image:** Two red doors are open to reveal a Singsong girl playing a deck of cards at a table. (her face resembles Xenia). Behind the bar is a Western man serving drinks. Plastered on the doors are elegant Shanghai ladies names: Rose and Orchid. A Shanghai dollar floats above the scene. **Screen text:** The Singsong house…Shanghai Lily…House of Sure Satisfaction…Hall of Beauties…
Newsreader (archival voice): And the police get wind of an opium den…the suspected house is surrounded and everybody in it arrested.
Music: "Firecrackers Shanghai", modern Chinese pop tune, lyrics a Chinese woman's voice.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is dreamy/ memorialising*]: dad was mesmerized by the *wuchang* [dancehalls] ….the fairyland of pleasures… deluxe décor, cabaret performances… the haunt of wealthy Chinese and foreigners… lair of the Shanghai "taxi-dancers" …mainly White Russian exiles…that could be bought for the price of the intoxicating coloured drinks…. He sat on the steps for an eternity waiting for his father Serge to emerge…smelling of joy, gin and jazz…

jewelBOX TITLES

Locations: *The interior of an Australian Indian house (Marrickville, Sydney) and home temple, a marble and glass city department store, Sydney, and Hindu Temples, (Orissa), India.*

Performance: *Classical Indian Dance/Music Performance by artists-Italian/Indian dancer Ileana Citaristi, Art Vision Dance School, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, INDIA; Nirmal Jena and Chitritta Mukerjee (Odissi Dance Company, AUSTRALIA) and Padma Raman (Kuchipudi item Krishna Shabdam; choreography Padma Menon, AUSTRALIA).*
Pathway icon: *montage of antique Indian Jewel Box, containing Indian dance jewels (Sanskrit, Indian) and roses.*
Visual trigger: *Rochéle hands open the Indian Jewel Box to discover classical Indian dance jewels.*

Storyline: This story is revealed through the discovery of a jewel box containing classical Indian dance jewels. Nina (the Russian/Greek girl) transforms into Rochéle (the Creole girl) and is attracted to the Eastern patterns. She becomes familiar with the bangles, earrings, bracelets, dance bells, and small sculpture of Shiva depicting the dance gestures . Interactivity with virtual objects magically opens into two classical Indian dance performances and triggers the release of (i) *Krishna Shabdam* performance by Padma Raman, Leichhardt Town Hall, Sydney, 1992;
(ii) *Mangala Charan* performance by Italian Indian dancer Ileana Citaristi, Tom Mann Theatre, Sydney, July 2003; and *Konarak Kanti* performance by Chitritta Mukerjee (The Performance Space 1993) of the Odissi Dance Company - cellist John Napier).

Movement # 2 JEWEL BOX
Songs of LONGING [Presence (antithesis) The Mother INDIA]

JewelBOX titles appear. From the palm of a goddess falls a handful of golden coins. A red rose in full bloom appears. The screen cursor is a bronze statue of Shiva Nataraja. From the perspective of the Indian Creole girl adorned in a purple Sari, we see her hands open an ornate silver jewel box. Slowly as it opens the bronze statue of a god appears emerging from the box. In the palm of a woman's hand we see an antique key being offered. Voice text: …jewelBOX…

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …jewelBOX…

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: I keep wandering through the city streets…passing an Indian market the fragrant aromas of incense and spices conjure …the winds from the South… along the eastern trade route from India … they bring a silver box… I remember dance bells in an old Temple hall with my school friend Padma …my grandma wanted me to be a dancer like Asja…

Interaction with bronze statue triggers the appearance of a golden Ganesh figure floating in the blackness of the screen. Nina is pictured in a languorous state, resting on a set of leopard skin cushions. Wafting from her head is a trail of incense smoke that creates a cloud where a dreamy moving image of film sequence – upon a Hindu altar rests a box…a Creole girl's hands open this box revealing a bronze statue…the statue transforms into an Odissi dancer (classical Indian dance – Chitritta Mukerjee's Konarak Kanti). The Creole Indian girl looks across to her.

Indian poetry: [*female Indian accent echoes, the lines of legendary poet Jaya Deva*]: soft sandal winds cover quivering vines…forest huts hum…when Springs mood is rich Hari [*Krishna*] roams there…to dance with young women friend…a cruel time for deserted lovers…

JewelBox icon*: [triggers a set of dance jewels to magically appear floating from the box: - a set of dance ear-rings (Jumki); A set of gold bracelets; A gold necklace; a gold hair comb; a set of dance bells (anklets); and a container of red powder (dance make-up).* **SFX:** The opening of a silver box and fragment from classical Indian dance tune (Kuchipudi). **Moving Image:** Digital film sequence – upon a Hindu altar rests a box…a Creole girl's hands open this box revealing a bronze statue…the statue transforms into an Odissi dancer (classical Indian dance – Chitritta Mukerjee's Konarak Kanti).

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …I always new that I would be a dancer… the temple sculptures of dancers at Konarak in Orissa, opened up a longing for the spiritual…a form of devotion…a spiritual worship…and watching my friend practice her dance in the temple hall as a child in Malaysia…the singing of drum rhythms *tek tek tek*

Interaction with icons triggers the story pathways. The silver box icon opening returns the player to the main page.

Dance ear-rings (Jumki): triggers SFX a box opens and a nostalgic Hindi pop tune classic.*[triggers movement Padma Raman section – she is all dressed up in her Kuchipudi dance gear. A large set of dance ear-ring fill the screen.]* **Screen Text:** …The Mirror Gesture…the Danseuse actress adorned with Bells on her ankles…sweet toned and tied with an Indigo string and ear-rings (*Jumki*), eyes like Lotus blossoms and wearing Sun and Moon jewels in her hair… **Images:** Padma Raman is ready to perform a *Kuchipudi* dance item. **Padma Icon:** triggers movement to *Kuchipudi* performance.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …my friend Padma gave me the gold dance ear-rings…she danced for her sister Shanti's Hindu wedding…in Australia…

Krishna Shabdam Screen: A montage of Padma Raman in various dance sequences form the Kuchipudi dance item Krishna Shabdam.

Padma Raman voice: The piece I am doing tonight is called the Krishna Shabdam. In it the heroine pleads to her lover Lord Krishna to come to her. Among the Kings of the Yadav dynasty he shines forth like the moon. She prepares sandalwood paste with which to adorn him and beetle leaves with which to welcome him…She prepares a garland of flowers for Lord Krishna. Krishna is the destroyer of the evil Varsanam and the beloved of many beautiful women. **Music:** Kuchipudi dance music atmosphere. **Screen Text:** …Krishna Shabdam…Kuchipudi a classical Indian dance drama…

Gold Bracelet icon: triggers SFX a set of bracelets tinkling. **Screen Text:** …The dancer adorns the body with jewels…an armband…rings…and

bangles…the ODISSI dancer wears silver jewels while the KUCHIPUDI dancers adornments are gold… **Images:** Padma Raman is ready to perform a *Kuchipudi* dance item. Ileana Chitaristi is ready to perform *Mangala Charan*. **Padma Icon:** triggers movement to *Kuchipudi* performance.

Gold Necklace icon: triggers SFX a necklace tinkling. **Screen Text:** The dancer is adorned with a necklace…in marriage a *Mangala Sutra*…and flowers in her hair…jasmine…the aroma fresh and the petals drop to the floor as she moves her feet…leaving a trail of blossoms in time with the bells around her ankles… **Images:** Padma Raman is ready to perform a Kuchipudi dance item. A close-up of Padma's feet and flower petals on the ground. **Ileana Icon:** triggers movement to Odissi performance.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …my mother gave this to me…it is Turkish from Greece…the pattern reminds me of the Indian dance jewels.

Dance Bells icon: triggers SFX Indian dance bells. **Screen Text:** …Like one of the Gods she wears a headdress of petals…as the *Nataraja*…like the flames of fire arching across the curves of her black tresses woven… **Images:** A large close-up of the classical Indian dancers legs and feet adorned with the dance bells. **Ileana Icon:** triggers movement to Odissi performance. **Chitritta Icon:** triggers movement to Odissi (Nirmal Jena/ Chitritta Mukerjee) performance.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …my dance teacher us how to make these dance bells. We practiced the basic techniques for many months. We wove the individual bells on white ropes.

Chitritta Icon: triggers movement to Odissi (Nirmal Jena/ Chitritta Mukerjee) performance. **Screen Text:** …KONARAK KANTHI… **Moving image:** The Creole Indian girl opens the silver jewel box. A frame appears constructed from the stones of a temple at Konarak, Orissa. **Screen Images:** The door to a temple is open. Orissan mud painting adorns the walls and floor. **Music:** Nirmal Jena sings and plays the *Pakawaj* (drums) for the dance item Konarak Kanti. **Chitritta Icon:** triggers movement back to main page menu of jewel box.

Red powder (dance make-up) icon: triggers SFX a box opening and *sitar* solo. **Screen Text:** …The dancer applies red powder dye to the soles the feet and fingertips…red powder forms a *third eye* on the forehead and sun motifs on the palm of the hands and top of the dancers feet… **Images:** A large close-up of the classical Indian dancers fingertips adorned with the red powder and Ileana's eyes in dance make-up. A small image of the dancers feet with red powder dye and dance bells.
Padma Icon: triggers movement to *Kuchipudi* performance.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …this powder is painted onto the body before the dance performance…it defines the hands, fingers and feet in movement…

Gold Hair Comb icon: triggers SFX a Hindi pop tune sitar solo.

Screen Text: …A prayer of offering to the divine asking blessing for the performance to dance upon the Earth…BHUMI… **Images:** A large bronze *Shiva Nataraja* and a film still from Ileana Citaristi performing the dance item *Mangala Charan*. **Ileana Icon:** triggers movement to Odissi performance.
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Ileana Citaristi Icon: triggers movement to *Mangala Charan* performance.

Mangala Charan icon: The titles appear as the stone wheel of Konarak turns in the centre of the screen. Flower petals from a dance performance encircle this. **Screen Text:** …ancient Orissan text appears. A golden Ganesh is visible. **Images:** The spoke of a wheel from Konarak temple and the stone dance sculptures fades onto the screen. **SFX:** a sitar phrase and drums. Water is flowing down the Ganges River (swirling).

Ileana Citaristi voice: Dance is a spiritual side in itself…it is a synthesis of body and mind…so you have to concentrate…it is a discipline for the body, it is a discipline for the spirit and mind…especially Indian dance…
it starts with a ritual, it is a ritual itself and has so much philosophical meaning…we have to be appointed with this…we are interpreting ancient and sacred texts…so the environment where we learn…the respect we pay to the Guru…I mean everything is a spiritual venture…it is not separated from what I am doing.

Mangala Charan performance: Ileana Chitaristi performs the dance item Mangala Charan. Usually this is performed first in a program, as it is literally means – auspicious offering – to the Lord, in which the dancer pays obeisance to *Lord Jagannatha* and Mother earth. An invocation to Ganesha asking for protection and blessing. **Screen Text:** …ancient Orissan text appears. A golden *Ganesh* is visible.

Images: The spoke of a wheel from Konarak temple and the stone dance sculptures fades onto the screen. **SFX:** a sitar phrase and drums. Water is flowing down the Ganges River (swirling).

Ileana Citaristi Interview: I was doing experimental theatre…physical theatre…theatre which was more movement based and language through the body…so we were interested to learn some movement…but that was not to be (*laughs*) and I just stayed behind and I became a dancer and I forgot about all the rest.

Tatiana: [Begins] You are not Indigenous…you are not Indian…**[Ends]** …have you entered?

Ileana Citaristi Interview: [Begins] Well there is a sort of third space…**[Ends]** …so much research and struggle and life history…

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …the music escaping from this box weave into a Middle Eastern melody…or is that Pandora's Greek box…the voices inside whispering to set them free….

PANDORAS BOX TITLES

Movement # 3 PANDORAS BOX

Songs of LOVE [The Child The Meeting (synthesis)]

Pathway icon: montage *Komboloi* (Worry beads) and an old vinyl record (Greek).

Visual trigger: the *Komboloi/* vinyl record icon triggers the words (sound) "Pandoras Box"

PandorasBOX titles appear. A blue set of Komboloi "worry beads" spin into the frame. A stone Greek box appears with an ancient statue of Pandora. Émigré Greek objects emerge from the box with the titles.

Soundtrack: [Quotation from *nostalgic Rembetika taximia string introduction from the famous blues of the Manghes circa. 1930 Athens, Greece.*] The song is woven into SFX of scratchy old vinyl record.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: …pandorasBOX…

Storyline:
Opening Titles objects emanate from an ancient stone box...

Moving Image: Symbolic Greek icons fade into frame and spin into an animated montage sequence (1) Pandora and her Box, (2) a gold Greek cross and *evil eye* (blue with black centre), a set of (3) *Komboloi* (worry beads), a (4) *Bouzouki* and *Baglamas* (string instruments). The objects form an arrangement on the screen surface and Nina's hand holding an old key creates a hotspot triggering four narrative options. The stone surface of the box creating the background. Nina is fallen back in repose as though in a dream state.

Nina Voice: [*trans-Atlantic accent echoes, the tone is newsreader/anchor woman*]: I keep wandering through the city…through the glass of a Greek *Kafe*… old men are playing cards, drinking their *Biriki* coffee… remind me of grandfather Antonis smoking his cigars to oriental cries of a Rembetika blues singer on the radio… he gave me the marzipan figure of Pandora and her box…

Upon the screen surface are a set of émigré personal effects: a set of Komboloi "worry" beads; a *bouzouki*; a gold pendant of the Acropolis; montage of a Greek woman in traditional dress and a doily; an Egyptian necklace; a Grecian urn; montage of a gold cross and Mary icon; and montage of Maja powder and perfume.

Musical Score: interactivity with these icons triggers fragments from musical compositions by *Rebetiki Ensemble* (Australian Rembetika group)

Nina voice: I have never been to Greece. For me Greece is made of fragments from the past…caught in a net of memories of strange objects. The sounds of Greek Rembetika blues conjure the journey on the ship to Australia – songs of love , joy, hope, and sorrow – the songs of my people.

Blue Worry beads (Komboloi) icon: triggers SFX beads spinning and shaking. **Images:** Upon a Greek clothe a Manghes Greek man appears, with moustache and a walking stick. **Moving Images:** A woman opens a glass bottle and from inside a Rembetika performance morphs out.

Greek musician voice: …for me this music is about freedom……it comes from inside your soul and the movements come out…expressing emotions

Bouzouki icon: triggers a musical phrase from the strings of a bouzouki. **Images:** a swirl of Greek text, the lyrics of *Rembetika* songs. **Moving Images:** A woman in a *Taverna* gets up and starts to dance the *Zemekiko*…in a trance state…elegantly swinging her arms

Nargile pip icon: triggers the sound of a scratchy record. **Images:** a young Antonis Pentes and a cappuccino coffee cup merge with a bouzouki. **Text:** explaining Antonis experience of hearing *Rembetika* on the radio…serving another coffee to customers…and the free woman in the Tavernas…he drinks another *Metaxa*…

Maja cosmetic icon: triggers a musical phrase from Roza Eskenazi **Images:** A portrait of Turkish Jewess, the *Rembetissa*, Roza Eskenazi dominating the frame and old Maja powder and perfume bottle with the Spanish dancer on the cover. **Text:** Nina relates how her mother had dark skin and she wondered if she was a gypsy…

Nina's voice: …my mother's dark skin was so beautiful…and I loved her long black hair with its mysterious spicy fragrance…the pictures she showed me of her island – Kythera- a pile of rocks thrown down into the Mediterranean…but where was this place?

Isis necklace icon: triggers a musical phrase Arabic *tsiftateli* dancing music. **Images:** An Egyptian necklace dominates with a gold image of Isis. **Moving Image:** Nina is inter-cut with a belly dancer, dancing to a lute in the Arabic style. **Text:** description of Nina believing she would turn into Isis if she wore these jewels.

Nina's voice: as a child…I was mesmerized by this *Tsiftateli* dancing with an Arabic twist…the Greeks from Egypt brought this dance…they watch this in the night clubs…Uncle Jim was from Egypt and he still listens to Natasha Atlas and Oum Kal Sum….

Greek doily/record lady icon: triggers a musical phrase of Rembetika music. **Images:** an old vinyl record spins.
Text: Lyrics to a Rembetika song about throwing me into the sea…

Greek musician voice: …the church sounds mingle with the Arabic Turkish phrases …*Rembetika* mixes all these sounds together… the Turkish migrants returned to Greece…the music is the lament of those in exile…

A Grecian urn icon: triggers a musical phrase of *Rembetika* music. **Images:** upon a Grecian urn is superimposed a portrait of my mother and her parents. **Text:** the text describes that this portrait was taken in rural Australia during the war. And grandfather Antonis convincing me to get baptized.

Jesus and Mary icon: triggers a musical phrase of *Rembetika* music. **Images:** a Greek woman in traditional Kytherian dress is pictured alongside a sheer coastal cliff face and blue Mediterranean sea.
Text: description of the head scarf the women wear and the Turks…also the evolution of *Rembetika* from the Orthodox drones and Arabic
modal tones.

Greek musician voice: …I grew up in a fishing village…on Kythera… every day it is living for today…what will I do? Catch some calamari and drink ouzo on the beach…at night we go to the Taverna and listen to Rembetika and smoke hashish…

Acropolis icon: triggers the sounds of jewels. **Images:** a modern Greek woman and her passport reveal that she is a Greek from Egypt.
Text: a voyage from Greece to Egypt…

Nina's voice: …I found these papers in my mothers *black chest* …I was never allowed to look inside …it held the secrets of her past…

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