**Digital Bodies: Creativity and Technology in the Arts and Humanities** Editors: Broadhurst, Susan, Price, Sara London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 270 pp. ISBN 978-1-349-95240-3

As highlighted in Steve Benford’s preface to the book *Digital Bodies: Creativity and Technology in the Arts and Humanities*, the human body has been for some time now a key frontier for creating deeply engaging ways of interacting with computers and digital technology. This collection is informed by the shared belief of the editors and contributors alike, regardless of discipline, that we need embodied experience to fully understand the benefits and potential drawbacks of the long list of technologies that we use in our everyday life.

The collection offers a truly multidisciplinary perspective on how digital technologies relate to bodily interaction and creativity across the arts and humanities. The editors draw theoretically and practically on their collaboration on the ESRC funded project: Methodological Innovation in Digital Arts and Social Sciences (MIDAS). This project brought together expertise from various disciplines across the arts and humanities, and indeed this is one of the strongest elements of the collection: the wide variety of methodological approaches to digital creativity. At the same time the editors interrogate the use of the term ‘creativity’, which, according to them, in the technology industry ‘has become a familiar portmanteau term for ideas that spawn commercially successful products’ (2017: 2). However, they ask, does this have any bearing on how the term is used in the arts and humanities in relation to digital technologies? This is indeed one of the most valuable questions raised by this collection. Through various case studies, from design, fashion, performance, and social science, the contributors scrutinise, elaborate and reflect on the process of creation through technological and physical means. There is also a clear editorial interest in presenting work that merges technology with the body in order to alter and recreate our experience of the world. The collection therefore represents an intersection between digital artworks showing the body in flux, and social science research focussing on the use of technology to change the very notion of communicational space (2018:3).

Editors Sarah Price and Susan Broadhurst have arranged the material into four sections: The Performing Body; Designing, (Re)Designing; Digital Aesthetic; and Identity and Embodied Interaction. This division does not entirely work editorially and, while certain sections, like The Performing Body, are well connected conceptually, other sections, like Designing, (Re)Designing stand rather at odds with the designation set out in the section title. An explanation of the editors’ intentions in dividing the volume in this manner would had offered me, as a reader, more clarity on the aims of this publication.

Some of the most exciting contributions in this volume come from researcher-artists (Daniel Ploeger, Michaela French, and Camille Baker) who use practice as a research methodology to undergird their enquiries into embodied technologies. Ploeger’s essay ‘Making and Breaking: Electronic Waste Recycling as Methodology’ is a sharp, timely contribution focused on e-waste in terms of its socio-cultural as well as its ecological dimension. In resonance with the wider concerns raised in the book, Ploeger also offers a wider rethink of practice-based research involving researchers from artistic and other disciplinary backgrounds. The contribution is the outcome of a longer research networking project, Bodies of Planned Obsolescence, which allowed Ploeger to develop a series of workshops and exchanges with researchers, artists and e-waste workers over a period of two years. This collaborative process allowed individual participants to rethink/redo aspects of their research within their discipline due to what Ploeger names a ‘digital performative turn’ in the cultural and scientific study of e-waste. I fully agree with the author that there is a need for further exploration into interdisciplinary embodied methodology that grounds scientific exploration in an artistic process.

Michaela French in her essay ‘Bodies in Light: Mediating States of Presence’ examines the concept of presence by drawing on her practice-based artistic research into the relationship between light, body, and technology across a range of art forms (moving image, performance etc.). French thoroughly establishes the depth of the concepts of presence and light, and how they are entwined with our embodied experience of light, before she guides the reader into her own practical exploration of these tensions and dynamics. What I found especially valuable is her exploration of the role of light in mediating spaces through art and how light as a whole ‘remains satisfyingly enigmatic’ (2017:93) as a source of embodiment, despite rapid technological progress in its measurement and quantification.

In a similar way, Camila Baker in her essay ‘Critical Interventions in Wearable Tech, Smart Fashion and Textiles in Art and Performance’ elaborates on embodied wearables in the context of performance. Baker draws on her ongoing collaboration on personal data collection with media artist/choreographer/researcher Kate Siccio for the project Hacking the Body 2.0 (HTB2.0). The project questions how data is used in corporate and government agendas and proposes the use of body data locally (not ‘in the cloud’). After workshopping ideas with dancers who explore their bodies in interaction with wearables, Baker concludes that we must sublimate technology rather than conform to its inherent limitations and that we need to work intentionally on the development of disruptive technologies.

Baker’s questioning of the economic and social power dynamics that underpin the relationship between the body and technology is something that is also a consistent undercurrent in this edited collection. Many contributors look into how they can empower audiences to directly confront and engage with some of the ethical and political debates that proliferate around technological development (big data, corporate use of personal data, data harvesting etc.). Chatzichristodoulou and Atkinson eloquently elaborate on how artists like Blast Theory or Caroline Yan Zheng incorporate the capacity to critique and question the practices of oversharing data within the design of their artwork. Consequently the entire volume *Digital Bodies* illustrates how diverse these new horizons of interdisciplinary exploration of embodied technologies are. A better- developed editorial intervention would had made the volume more accessible to outsiders; however, the collection is well calibrated to provide thought-provoking reading with both theoretical and practical gravitas. This collection will benefit art students and humanities scholars with interest in various ways that technology merges with the body in order to alter and recreate our experience of the world.

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