

School of Art & Design, University of Salford

Prof. Paul Sermon: Summary of achievements over past five years and current work

1. Current and Previous Roles and Positions since January 2006

Associate Head of School of Art & Design (Research & Innovation) from January 2010 to present.

Member of College of Arts & Social Sciences from October 2010 to present.

Member of Faculty of Arts, Media & Social Sciences from June 2000 to October 2010.

Member of School of Art & Design from June 2000 to present.

Full Member of Adelphi Research Institute for Creative Arts & Sciences from June 2000 to December 2009.

Full Member of Creative Technology & Communications Research Centre from January 2010 to present.

Full Member of Art & Design Research Centre from June 2000 to December 2009.

2. Research Profile Summary

Since the early nineteen-nineties my practice-based research in the field of contemporary media art has centred on the creative use of telecommunication technologies. Through my unique use of videoconference techniques in artistic telepresence applications I have developed a series of celebrated telematic art installations that have received international acclaim and have been cited on numerous occasions amongst my peers in this field:

"...a leading figure and pioneer of telematic artworks, having worked in the field for nearly 20 years"

(<http://johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au/exhibitions/archive/2004.cfm>). *"...a leading pioneer of telematic art and performance"*

(<http://www.storyrooms.net/sermon/>). *"Paul Sermon is an interactive media artist internationally known for his early experimentation with telepresence"* (<http://presence.stanford.edu:3455/collaboratory/356>). *"...a leading figure and pioneer of telematic artworks"* (<http://www.shang-pool.com/>).

The artistic results of this research have been widely exhibited throughout Europe, East Asia, the United States and Australia, including first prize awards at the Interactive Media Festival Sparky Awards in Los Angeles, the Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica Award in Linz, as well as nominations for the San Francisco World Technology Awards, the ZKM International Media Art Prize Karlsruhe and twice Prix Ars Electronica runner up.

3. Research Leadership

As Associate Head for Research & Innovation I am responsible for the management of research activities for approximately 35 members of staff across the School, which includes mentoring around 12 early career researchers, three of which are currently VC research scholars. Through the establishment of three new research centres I have been able to appoint research centre heads, which continue to play a key role in developing our research activities and management within the centres and via the School Research Committee. Through the recent mock REF exercise there are early indications that these new management structures are successfully growing and developing our research. The Art & Design mock submission included approximately 30 members of staff with almost all of them producing nationally and internationally recognised research outputs. This increase in staff indicates a significant power ranking improvement since the RAE 2008 when Art & Design submitted 18.7 FTE staff and secured a national power ranking of 38 out of 68.

- **Creative Technology & Communications Research Centre**
- **Heritage & Design Innovation Research Centre**
- **Contemporary Fine Art & Critical Theory Research Centre**

4. Research Funding

I have maintained a consistent level of research income since 2006 that has been awarded from a wide range of funding organisations through competitive bidding for artist commissions, research grants and awards. Current and completed research projects and research grants obtained since 2006 include: AHRC Fellowship Tapio Makela (239K), JISC ICT Methods Network (28K), Arts Council England Second Life Landscapes (4K), AHRC PGR Research Training REACT (10K) Arts Council England Artist-in-Residence programme (10K) and AHRC Fellowship Drew Hemment (131K) totalling £422,000.00 in research funding.

5. Research Outputs

My research outputs are predominantly practice-based gallery exhibited artworks that are further contextualised by exhibition catalogues, reviews, journal articles and conference papers. Through a sustained research funding income in the form of grants, commissions and acquisitions I have been able to continue to produce, exhibit and discuss my work extensively at an international level through these channels. Since January 2006 I have produced thirteen new gallery installation artworks and exhibited both new and existing installations on eighteen occasions at venues such as the Nabi Art Centre Seoul in 2010, the MASP Museum of Contemporary Art Sao Paulo in 2010, the Glastonbury Festival in 2009, the Kunsthalle Vienna in 2008, the Singapore Science Centre' in 2007, Laboral Spain in 2007 and the SIGGRAPH Art Show Boston in 2006. For a full listing of exhibitions and project descriptions please see my personal web site (<http://www.paulsermon.org>).

In 2007 my creative practice took on a new direction to explore the concepts of presence and performance within Second Life. This work further examines the notion of telepresence in Second Life and first life spaces, through a blurring between 'online' and 'offline' identities and the signifiers and conditions that make us feel present in this world. My artistic practice in this field questions how subjectivity is articulated in relation to embodiment and disembodiment. It explores the avatar in relation to its activating first life agent, focusing on the avatar's multiple identifications, such as gender roles, human/animal hybrids, and other archetypes, identifiable through visible codes and body forms in Second Life. One of the most significant creative outcomes of this research was produced for the ISEA 2009 in Belfast (<http://www.paulsermon.org/urban/>). 'Urban Intersections' was an interactive public installation incorporating Second Life users in a first life public space. Located on the regenerated landscape of Belfast's Waterfront Plaza directly outside the newly developed concert hall building, this utilitarian environment was used as a stage set to represent an augmented garden that explored the concept of perimeters and territories as a metaphor of Belfast's social history. As the participants walked through this urban landscape, both first and Second Life inhabitants came 'face-to-face' on a large format video projection onto the façade of the Waterfront building, displaying its Second Life counterpart; a virtual plaza encapsulated by the ironies, contradictions and obscurities of a divided city. Reliant on both user interaction and input the audience formed an integral part of this installation that aimed to transcend these boundaries through interactive storytelling and memory building in a post-conflict society. This project perhaps best describes my current research identity as a senior member of the academic community at Salford and the particular discourse I bring to the opportunities at Media City.

6. Current and Completed Research Projects since January 2006

Translocal Urban Mobilities: Situating Location Based Media (Tapio Makela Fellowship)
AHRC Fellowship Programme, £238,774.00. Award Date: June 2008 to May 2011. Investigator: P Sermon (100%).

Situations and Collaboration between Second Life and Consensual Landscapes
Arts Council England, £4,000.00. Award Date: Jan 2007 to June 2008. Investigator: P Sermon (100%).

REACT - Research Engine for Art & Creative Technology, collaborative postgraduate training programme with MMU
AHRC, £10,000.00. Award Date: Jan 2005 to Sept 2007. Investigator: P Sermon (100%).

Art & Design / Centre for Virtual Environments Artist-in-Residence
Arts Council England, £10,000.00. Award Date: June 2005 to Jan 2006. Investigator: P Sermon (100%).

ICT Methods Network in the Arts & Humanities in collaboration with DeMontfort University
JISC, £28,235.00. Award Date: Jan 2004 to Sept 2006. Investigator: P Sermon (100%).

Pervasive and Locative media (Dr Drew Hemment Fellowship)
AHRC Fellowship Programme, £131,000.00. Award Date: April 2003 to March 2006. Investigator: P Sermon (100%).

7. Research Publications since January 2006

7.1 Refereed Journal Articles & Book Sections:

Sermon, P 2007, 'The Teleporter Zone - Interactive media arts in the healthcare context', *Leonardo, The International Journal for the Arts, Sciences and Technology*, The MIT Press, Vol. 40, Issue 5., pp.0. Nov 2007.

Sermon, P & Gould, C 2010 'Liberate your Avatar; The Revolution will be social networked (Consciousness Reframed 11)', in: Ascott, R & Gangvik, E & Jahrman, M (eds.), *Making Reality Really Real*, Consciousness Reframed (11) edition, TEKS Publishing, Trondheim, Norway, pp.181-183. Sept 2010.

Sermon, P 2010 'Telematic Practice and Research Discourses: Three Practice-based Research Project Case', in: Gardine, H & Gere, C (eds.), *Art Practice in a Digital Culture*, First edition, Ashgate Publishing, London, United Kingdom, pp.153-164. Aug 2010.

7.2 Exhibitions:

Sermon, P & Gould, C 2010, 'Shang-pool, Picnic in Arcadia (Urban Picnic)', exhibited at: Bluecoat Gallery Liverpool & Shanghai University, Fine Arts College, Liverpool & Shanghai, UK & China, 23/10/2010.

Sermon, P 2010, 'Telematic Dreaming at Borderless Reality', exhibited at: Nabi Art Centre, Seoul, Korea, 13/10/2010 to 12/11/2010.

Sermon, P 2010, 'GloNet Front Room', exhibited at: Contact Theatre Manchester & MASP Sao Paulo for FutureEverything 2010, Manchester/Sao Paulo, United Kingdom/Brazil, from 13/05/2010 to 14/05/2010.

Sermon, P & Gould, C 2010, 'Urban Picnic', exhibited at: Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, United Kingdom, from 21-25/04/2010.

Sermon, P 2009, 'Telematic Vision - Permanent Installation Exhibit for Experimenta Science Museum', exhibited at: Experimenta - Science Center der Region Heilbronn-Franken gGmbH, Germany 21/11/2009.

Sermon, P 2009, 'Telepresent Embrace - Permanent Installation Exhibit for The PUBLIC Gallery', exhibited at: The PUBLIC Gallery, West Bromwich, United Kingdom, on 16/10/2009.

Sermon, P & Gould, C & Appleton, P 2009, 'Urban Intersections - An interactive urban installations in contested virtual spaces', exhibited at: ISEA 2009 Waterfront Building , Belfast , UK, from 26-29/08/2009.

Sermon, P & Gould, C 2009, 'Picnic on the Screen', exhibited at: BBC Big Screen Glastonbury Festival, UK, from 23-28/06/2009.

Sermon, P 2008, 'AVATARIUM - A CONSUMER PARADOX', AMBER08 Media Art Festival Istanbul. Exhibited at City's Shopping Mall, Istanbul, Turkey. December 2008.

Sermon, P 2008, 'They Live (in Second Life)', *Futuresonic Festival 2008 Manchester*. June 2008.

Sermon, P 2008, 'Peace Games', Games, Art and Politics KUNSTHALLE Vienna, project space. June 2008.

Sermon, P 2007, 'Telematic Dreaming at Singapore Science Centre', Ars Electronica External Exhibitions 2007 'Digital Art & Technology' at Singapore Science Centre. December 2007.

Sermon, P 2007, 'Liberate your Avatar', The Urban Screens Festival Manchester. Nov 2007.

Sermon, P 2007, 'Telematic Dreaming', Laboral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial, Universidad Laboral, Gijón, Spain. May 2007.

Sermon, P 2006, 'Hidden Voices: Memoryscape ', Taipei Children's recreation Centre, Taiwan. Dec 2006.

Sermon, P & Fuchs, M & Steve Dixon (Brunel Uni) & Andrea Zapp (MMU) 2006, 'Unheimlich - SIGGRAPH 2006 Art Show ', *Telematic Performance in Collaboration with Steve Dixon (Brunel Uni), Mathias Fuchs (Salford) and Andrea Zapp (MMU) between The University of Salford and SIGGRAPH Boston USA*. For The SIGGRAPH 2006 Art Show, September 2006 (catalogue printed).

Dixon, S & Sermon, P & Woods, N & Fenamore, A 2006, *Unheimlich*, (Telematic Performance), Chameleon Group, Salford University, Brunel University, Performance Studies International, Providence, Rhode Island, USA. Aug 2006.

Sermon, P 2006, 'HEADROOM', Paul Sermon as the successful recipient of the 2006 Taiwan Visiting Arts Fellowship award. This residency programme is a joint initiative between Visiting Arts, the Council for Cultural Affairs Taiwan, British Council Taiwan and Arts Council England, aiming to establish an exchange between artists from Taiwan and England who are engaged in contemporary arts practice. May 2006. http://www.visitingarts.org.uk/training/06taiwan_england.html.

7.3 Key Impact Case Study:

Sermon, P 2005 to date, *The Teleporter Zone*, a permanent commission for the Evelina Childrens Hospital at St Thomas' London. "The Teleporter Zone in the ground floor Ocean outpatients area is the first interactive work of art to be developed specifically for a hospital. What we love most about this piece is seeing patients and visitors laughing out loud and playing whilst waiting for their appointment. Visitors, staff and patients can transport themselves via a television screen to a pirate ship, an aeroplane, a spaceship, a throne, or even visit the Taj Mahal. They can also swim in the ocean, sit in a room filled with soft toys, or relax while floating in the clouds. The installation was created by Paul Sermon and uses chroma keying technology - used by weather forecasters who stand in front of a blue screen, which appears as a changing map on the TV screen. Live video images relayed between the two televisions show visitors sitting in different places on the screen at the same time." Karen Sarkissian, Director of Art and Heritage Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital London, 2006 (<http://www.gsttcharity.org.uk/arts/ECHArts.pdf>).

7.4 Papers in Published Conference Proceedings:

Sermon, P 2010, *Puppeteers, Performers or Avatars - A perceptual difference in telematic space* , in: 'ISMAR 2010 "Borderless', 9 edition, ISMAR 2010, Seoul, Korea, pp.48-49. Conference details: ISMAR 2010 The IEEE International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality (ISMAR 2010) Oct. 13-16, 2010 at COEX/Art Centre Nabi, in Seoul, Korea.

Sermon, P & Gould, C 2009, *Liberate your Avatar; The Revolution will be social networked* , in: 'Digital Arts & Culture Conference Proceedings 2009', University of California Press, Irvine, USA. Conference details: Digital Arts & Culture Conference University of California, Irvine December 12 to 15, 2009 Conference Director: Prof. Simon Penny.

Sermon, P 2009, *Puppeteers, Performers or Avatars - A perceptual difference in telematic space*, in: 'CHArt 2009 - OBJECT AND IDENTITY IN A DIGITAL AGE', Birkbeck, University of London, London, United Kingdom. Conference details: CHArt COMPUTERS AND THE HISTORY OF ART Seeing, Vision and Perception in a Digital Culture CHArt twenty-fourth Annual Conference, Thursday 6 - Friday 7 November 2008, Birkbeck, University of London, Clore Lecture Theatre, Clore Management Centre, Torrington Square, London, WC1 7HX.

Sermon, P 2009, *Telematic Practice and Research Discourses*, in: 'Re:Live - Media Art Histories 09', 09 edition, University of Melbourne Press, Melbourne, Australia. Conference details: Re:Live - Media Art Histories 09 Third International Conference on the Histories of Media Art, Science and Technology 26-29 November 2009, Melbourne, Australia.

Sermon, P & Gould, C 2009, *URBAN INTERSECTIONS - Panel discussion and presentations of interactive urban installations in contested virtual spaces.*, in: 'ISEA2009: The 15th International Symposium on Electronic Art', The University of Ulster Press, Belfast, United Kingdom. Conference details: ISEA2009: The 15th International Symposium on Electronic Art.

Sermon, P 2008, 'LIBERATE YOUR AVATAR - Paper', *CREATING SECOND LIVES: READING AND WRITING VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES* Date: 24-25 October 2008, Venue: Bangor University.

Sermon, P 2008, 'HEADROOM - A space between presence and absence', *ISEA 2008 Singapore - the 14th International Symposium on Electronic Art*.

8. Postgraduate Research Student Supervision

Through my role as a PhD supervisor in the field of Creative Technology I have established a practice-based postgraduate research community that are developing interactive media arts practice as a research method. I am currently first supervisor to five PhD students at Salford, with two full-time student aiming to complete in 2013 and a further three part-time students due to complete between 2014 and 2016. Since 2006 I have had one PhD completion in 2008 and also have two external PhD students, to whom I am second supervisor, due to submit in 2011. As a co-director of the AHRC funded REACT (Research Engine for Art and Creative Technology) collaborative postgraduate training programme with MMU every effort is being made for this postgraduate community and its resources to grow extensively in the coming years particularly in relation to the opportunities at Media City.

8.1 Current and Completed Postgraduate Research Student Supervision since January 2006:

Sophia Crilly (Full Time PhD), Mechanisms of association; archival, editing and sampling impulses, Completion: 2013/14.

Emma Dibb (Full Time PhD), Digital set design, A new narrative paradigm, Completion: 2013/14.

Ian Patterson (Part Time PhD) Machinima: Can media creation within virtual environments create new opportunities for access and creativity unavailable in traditional media production? Completion: 2014/15.

John Rooney (Part Time PhD), Visible Narratives: mapping the path of a gesture, Completion: 2016/17.

Peter Wardle (Part Time PhD), The Development of Identity in Virtual Worlds, Completion: 2016/17.

Amani Al-Halwachi (Full Time PhD), Investigating the Role of Internet Artworks in Formulating a New Communication Model in the Internet, Completion: 2008.

Birgitta Hosea (Part Time PhD), (Second Supervisor), Substitutive bodies and constructed actors: A practice-based investigation of animation as performance, University of the Arts London, Completion: 2011.

Lorna Moore (Full Time PhD), (Second Supervisor), Touching the other, University of Wolverhampton, Completion 2012/13.

9. Influence on National and International Research Policy

As well as holding internal academic positions including full membership of the Creative Technology & Communications Research Centre and the Postgraduate Research Studies Sub-committee, I also hold a number of external research appointments that play a significant role in influencing research policy. Since June 2004 I have been a member of the AHRC Peer Review College (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/about/peer_review.asp) and currently review approximately ten AHRC applications per year. Since June 2009 I have also been a member of the AHRC Panel for Fellowships in the Creative & Performing Arts scheme. Other positions include membership of the North West Art & Design Research Group, a consortium of HE Art & Design institutions in the North West and Chair of [ma-net] Media Arts Network North West, an Arts Council England funded network of media arts and artists.

10. Research Presence since January 2006

Keynote Speaker at Symposium - The Influence of Roy Ascott, Plymouth Arts Centre, UK, May 2009.

Keynote Lecture - Inter-active Art, Department of Intermedia, Academy of Fine Arts Krakow, Nov 2008.

Public Keynote Talk - ICA London June 2008, 'Sensual Technologies - ICA London'.

Keynote Speaker for the Tate Modern public symposium 'Disrupting Narrative' event on the 13th of July 2007.

Keynote Speaker, AHRC ICT Methods Network Lecture, King's College London, 19 March 2007.

Digital Aesthetics 2 Conference, University of Central Lancashire, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston, 16-17/03/2007.

CAST - Living in Mixed Realities - October 2001 to date - GMD Institute for Media. MARS Journal Contributions Referee.

Pixel Raiders II Conference Sheffield Hallam University - April 2004 - Conference Papers Referee.

Interactive Art Consultant for Jubilee Arts on the THEPUBLIC Arts Centre. West Bromwich. Supported by The Lottery and Sandwell & Dudley Local Government Funding.

International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media - July 2004 to date - Intellect Journals, Contributions Editor.

Chair of [ma-net] Media Arts Network - North West. [ma-net] exists to raise the profile of media arts practice through discussion, dissemination, presentation and collaborative creative opportunities in the North West. Funded by the Art Council England.

AHRC Peer Review College Member - June 2004 to date. Subject Area: Contemporary art and new media technology.

AHRC Panel Member for the Fellowships in the Creative & Performing Arts scheme, June 2009 to date.

External Examiner - MA Interactive Art and Design - 2003 to 2007. Falmouth College of Arts, Woodlane, Falmouth.

External Examiner - PhD (This is not here: Connectedness, remote experiences & telematic art), Mr. Michael Hohl, Sheffield Hallam University, October 2006, Full Time.

Guest Professor (University Politechnic of Valencia "AVM Master", Spain, January 2010 to February 2010).

Workshop Director: Interactivos Arteleku'09 held at Arteleku, Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain, July 2009.

Guest Professor and external advisor to The Media Art Histories MA programme in the Department for Cultural Studies at the Danube-University Krems, Austria, January 2007.

Member of D-Ring: European consortium of Media Arts institutions including since May 2008.

11. Teaching Commitments since January 2006

My teaching commitments since 2006 have continued to supported and forwarded the subject area of digital media. I have contributed to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including the MA Creative Technology and the MSc Creative Games through coordinating and tutoring first semester modules and supervising over 40 self directed Masters projects. Since 2009 I have contributed to the BA (Hons) Graphic Design programme tutoring level 4 students towards motion Graphics and eventual progression to Masters.

11.1 Current Postgraduate Teaching:

Degree Schemes: MA/PgDip Creative Technology & MSc/PgDip Creative Games:
Art & Social Networking, Module coordinator and tutor (100%): Paul Sermon, Level: 7, Credit Value: 15
Creative Research Methods, Module coordinator and tutor (100%): Paul Sermon, Level: 7, Credit Value: 15
Contemporary Media Art Practice: Module coordinator and tutor (50%): Paul Sermon, Level: 7, Credit Value: 30
Major Project Proposal, Module coordinator and tutor (50%): Paul Sermon, Level: 7, Credit Value: 15
Self-Directed Project, Module coordinator and tutor (50%): Paul Sermon, Level: 7, Credit Value: 60

11.2 Current Undergraduate Teaching:

Degree Schemes: BA (Hons) Graphic Design:
Professional Contexts 1, Module tutor (20%): Paul Sermon, Level: 4, Credit Value: 20

12. Key Contributions and Strengths

Over the past five years my key contributions to the University of Salford and the School of Art & Design have been in the areas of digital and interactive media arts research, teaching, leadership and development. Maintaining and furthering my artistic practice is central to my role as an academic, both as a teacher and researcher. Through a deep routed personal passion and obsession with artistic experimentation and inquiry into global networked creativity and culture, I aim to inspire, motivate and empower my students, peers and colleagues alike. For this reason Media City represents the greatest opportunity since joining Salford in 2000 to establish a new and reframed vision of media technology, creativity and networked society that contributes to Salford University's unique presence.