

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Shaken & Stirred

Subject: Scott Snibbe

Discipline: Visual Arts (Installation/New Media)

SECTION I - OVERVIEW	2
EPISODE THEME	
SUBJECT	
CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS	
OBJECTIVE	
STORY SYNOPSIS	
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES	
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	
EQUIPMENT NEEDED	
MATERIALS NEEDED	
INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED	
SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT	3
CONTENT OVERVIEW	
THE BIG PICTURE	
RESOURCES – TEXTS	
RESOURCES – WEB SITES	
BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS	
SECTION III – VOCABULARY	6
SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK	7



Artist Scott Snibbe works on his new piece Blow Up.
Still image from SPARK story, December 2004.

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

EPISODE THEME

Shaken and Stirred

SUBJECT

Scott Snibbe

GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts, Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to installation and interactive art and their underlying concepts through the works of Scott Snibbe

STORY SYNOPSIS

SPARK follows Scott Snibbe at work on an installation piece Blow Up at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, and through his studio as he discusses his installation, interactive, and net art projects and some of the ideas underlying them.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Individual and group research
Individual and group exercises
Written research materials
Group discussions

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To acquaint students with the expression of ideas in the installation and interactive art
To provide a forum for students to consider the role of the art spectator as an important participant and aspect of creative artwork
To encourage students to think about the role of spirituality and philosophical concepts expressed through Conceptual art

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story about Scott Snibbe on DVD or VHS and necessary equipment
Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sounds card, printer
Cassette player, CD player, or computer audio program

MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
Pencils, pens, and paper

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Linguistic - syntax, phonology, semantics, pragmatics
Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects
Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems
Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



See more information on
Multiple Intelligences at
www.kqed.org/spark/education.

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

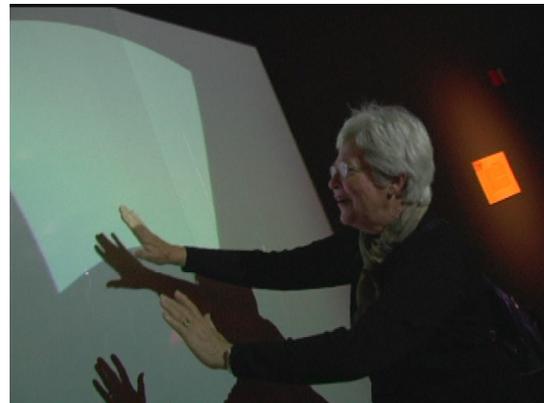
Since the mid-1990s, Scott Snibbe has been fusing interactive computer technology with Eastern philosophy to create artworks that are at once technologically sophisticated and hauntingly lyrical. In “Human Interface,” SPARK takes a look at some of Snibbe’s recent work, including his latest piece, the large scale interactive sculpture Blow Up.

Each of Snibbe’s works depends upon the participation of its audience. Using a digital projector, a camera, a loop recorder and Snibbe’s own recognition software, several of Snibbe’s pieces produce different forms of video based on the actions of the participants. His piece Depletion enables audience members to produce projected silhouettes that trace their own movements, while in Shy, a projected geometrical form timidly withdraws when participants approach.

Snibbe attends several classes a week at the Tse Chen Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies in San Francisco and many of his ideas are rooted in Buddhist philosophy. Snibbe’s concept of interactivity is closely related to the Buddhist belief that the central delusion of human existence is that each of us exists independently of everything around us. Snibbe’s interactive works demonstrate that all things are connected since their very existence is dependent the input of participants.

Snibbe’s Blow Up was designed specifically for San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Although It is his first large scale sculptural piece, it is conceptually continuous with the works that came before it. In this piece, participants blow into a set of sensors, which then activate a corresponding grid of industrial fans. Through the movement of the fans, the participant’s breath is audibly represented and amplified. Blow Up links the human breath to the wind, connecting the personal with larger natural world and the inside of the body with the world around it.

Snibbe's work has been shown at international venues including the InterCommunications Center, Tokyo; Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria; Eyebeam, New York City; New Langton Arts, San Francisco; ICA, London; and The Kitchen, New York City. He holds Bachelor's degrees in Computer Science and Fine Art, and a Master's in Computer Science from Brown University. Snibbe studied experimental animation at the Rhode Island School of Design and has taught media art and experimental film at Brown University, RISD and UC Berkeley. He has held research positions at Adobe Systems Inc. and Interval Research.



Visitors engage with Snibbe’s interactive artwork.
Still image from SPARK story, November 2004.

THE BIG PICTURE

Scott Snibbe is one of many artists working in the rapidly expanding field of digital art, which is characterized by the use of computers in film, video, and photography. Digital or new media artists also produce virtual reality art - net.art – as well as automated and/or robotic art.

Although the use of digital media in art is receiving more and more attention in the last decade, the relationship between the two is not a recent phenomenon. In fact, the marriage of science and art happened almost immediately after the scientific

method had been established in the Renaissance. Really since the first persons made images and fashioned sculptural objects, artists have developed, used, and adapted new technologies. What is new are the ways in which art has struggled in recent years with its existence in what is often called the "information society," a world in which the primary cultural, social, economic, and political mode is the organization and exchange of information rather than objects.

In a very direct way any work of art that incorporates new media is engaging with technologies that have come to shape our culture: electronic financial transactions facilitated by credit cards, global ATMs and online transfers; entertainment provided by DVDs, CDs, the Internet, and video on-demand; and communications with friends and colleagues via email, cell phone, and instant messaging. These interactions express the many forms that virtual and electronic products and environments are woven into our daily lives.

In one sense, these technologies connect us as individuals, forming new kinds of virtual and on-line communities. Snibbe emphasizes this aspect of the digital media in his work, underlining the new interconnectivity between us. By contrast, other new media artists represent these same technologies that connect us as also those that render us subjects of greater degrees of surveillance, as more and more of our financial, social, and cultural interactions are recorded, organized, and exchanged.

RESOURCES – TEXTS

Ascott, R. "Connectivity: Art and Interactive Telecommunications." Leonardo 24(2), 1991: 115-117.

Cornwell, R. "Interactive Art: Touching the 'Body in the Mind'." Discourse 14(2), Spring 1992: 203-221.

Oliveira, Nicolas de, Nicola Oxley and Michael Petry. Installation Art in the New Millennium: The Empire of the Senses. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.

Dove, T. "Theater Without Actors--Immersion and Responses in Installation." Leonardo 27(4), 1994: 281-287.

Goldberg, Ken, ed. The Robot in the Garden. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.

Grau, O. Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003.

Howard, Philip N. and Steve Jones, eds. Society Online: The Internet in Context. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press, 2004.

Mastai, M.L. d'O. Illusion in Art. New York: Abaris Books, 1975.

Metzger, William, "Art and Spirituality," The Quest July/August 2000.

Morgan-Spalter, Anne. The Computer in the Visual Arts. Addison-Wesley, 1999.

Paul, Christiane. Digital Art. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003.

Rosenthal, M. Understanding Installation Art. New York: Presel Press, 2003.

Scholder, Amy and Jordan Crandall, eds. Interaction: Artistic Practice in the Network. New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2001.

Shaw, J. and Webel, P. Future Cinema. Karlsruhe: Center for Art and Media, 2003.

Sheldroff, N. Experience Design 1. Indianapolis: New Riders Publishing, 2001.

Snibbe, Scott. Body, Screen and Shadow. SMAC Journal, 2003.

Stallabrass, Julian. Internet Art: The Online Clash of Culture and Commerce. London: Tate Publishing, 2003.

Sunderburg, E. Space, Site, Intervention. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Wilson, Stephen. Information Arts. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

<http://www.yerbabuenaarts.org>

Art and Robotics Group (The) - An artist collective that produces artwork using robots and the Internet - <http://www.interaccess.org/arg/arg-on.html>

Center for New Media @ UC Berkeley - <http://cnm.berkeley.edu>

Digital Art - A substantial online gallery of digital art - <http://digitalart.org>

Digital Art Center @ Stanford University - <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/art/SUDAC>

Net Art Review - An online magazine dedicated to Internet art - <http://www.netartreview.net>

Scott Snibbe's Website - <http://www.snibbe.com>

Tate Gallery (London) – Section of the Web site dedicated to net art - <http://www.tate.org.uk/netart>

Tse Chen Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies - <http://www.tsechenling.org>

BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

Exploratorium
3601 Lyon Street
San Francisco, CA 94123
415.EXPLORE
<http://www.exploratorium.edu>

The Tech Museum of Innovation
201 South Market Street
San Jose, CA 95113
408.294.TECH
<http://www.thetech.org>
Robotics - <http://www.thetech.org/robotics/robotart>

Tse Chen Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies
399 Webster Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
415/621.4215
Email: office@tsechenling.org

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415/978.ARTS (2787)

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Amplified

Greater than before, improved, better, enlarged

Animation

Series of drawings or images that are projected in rapid sequence such that they appear to move; the act of bringing to life

Installation art

The combining of elements into a singular artwork that is specifically located in one place; an artwork that only exists in the place it was/is installed, and is not able to be relocated like a painting.

Artifact

An object produced or shaped by human craft, especially a tool, weapon, or ornament of archaeological or historical interest.

Artwork

A work of creative production, usually visual in nature, such as a painting, drawing, print, photograph, video, sculpture, or installation

Buddhist

A follower of the Buddhist religion based on the teachings of Buddha who maintained that if one lives in the right way one can attain a life free from desire, suffering and pain

Delusion

False belief or opinion

Dexterity

Skill in using the hands, body or mind

Dynamic

Forceful, energetic

Engage

Take part, active involvement

Intellect

High mental ability, power of the mind

Interaction

A mutual or reciprocal action

Interactivity

The dialogue or interaction between a computer program and a human being

Intrinsically

Inherent, natural to, essential

Karma

A term from Buddhist and Hindu thought meaning fate, destiny, fortune or providence. Supposed to determine a person's fate in the next stage of existence

Reactive art experience

Art only exists in relation to viewer response or interaction

Recognition software

Computer programs that recognize movements or responses from human beings

Sensors

Device for receiving and transmitting a physical stimulus, such as heat, light or pressure

Social interaction

The way people act together and relate to each other in a group or social situation

Streamlined

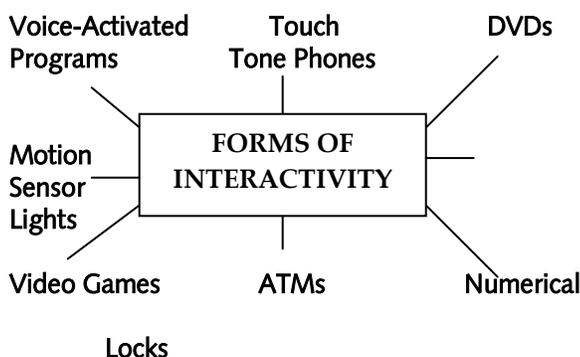
Efficient, smooth

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring Interactivity in Art

Introduce the concept of interactivity to the group. It may be helpful to talk about different forms of human interaction first and then distinguish them. For instance, interactivity is a term used in relation to human interaction with technology. How is interactivity different from interpersonal communication – communication that occurs directly between two or more people? Challenge students to brainstorm a list of different forms of interactivity and to identify examples. Chart their ideas on a mind map on the board. For example:



In their examples, ask the class to identify:

- main characteristics of the interaction
- purpose(s) of interactivity
- impact of technology on activity – Does the interaction change the activity? If so, how?
- how might these ideas apply to artwork?

Show the SPARK story on Scott Snibbe. Pause on each of the 4 artworks and ask students to respond to the following questions about each:

- In what way(s) is the piece interactive?
- What concept the artist exploring?
- What is the artist’s purpose or intention?
- Does human interaction change the piece?
- Does the piece work (or exist) without human engagement?
- Is the audience part of the piece?

Invite students to respond to these questions in small groups first, and then by writing a 300 word reflection. Then reconvene as a group and watch the Snibbe story again allowing time for students to think through their ideas - especially their thoughts on the last 3 points. Then discuss the student responses as a group.

RELATED STANDARDS VISUAL ARTS

- Grade 8
- 1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION
- 1.1 Use artistic terms when describing the intent and content of works of art.
- 4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING
- 4.2 Develop a theory about the artist's intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions.
- 4.3 Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work.

SPARKLERS:

- * Robotic artist Ken Goldberg introduces new technologies into the production of art through inviting the public into social interaction and participation in the creative process. Invite students to visit his Web site at <http://www.ieor.berkeley.edu/~goldberg/art/> or watch his story on SPARK at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/artists-orgs/kengoldber.jsp>. Ask students to write a comparison of Scott Snibbe and Ken Goldberg, discussing the similarities and differences in their work and their ideas about interactivity.
- * Watch the Snibbe story, pausing on each of the 4 artworks featured. Talk about the materials used to create each one. Discuss why Snibbe chose those particular materials and/or equipment? The choice of materials based on concept is a defining characteristic of all Conceptual Art. Could other materials work the same way? Why or why not?

Creating an Interactive Sculptural Piece

Scott Snibbe’s work explores the ways the human body are connected to the physical world; how we are interdependent with other people, the environment, and the systems of living. In his 2003 artist statement, Snibbe writes “Many of my works do not function unless the viewer actively engages with them - by touching, breathing, moving, etc. The works present systems in which the viewer is an essential component [...]”¹

Encourage students to work together as a group to create a collaborative artwork exploring the idea of connectedness. Begin with discussion, asking students to name examples of how humans are interconnected with each other and the world. If many ideas are generated, vote on the top 1 or 2 to use to develop artwork.

Once the idea(s) and the group(s) have been identified, brainstorm about the materials to build the piece. Begin by asking students what kinds of materials are appropriate to the idea.

As an additional challenge ask students to think about how they might make their sculptural piece interactive – how can they engage the viewer?

A useful approach to this activity might be to allocate roles to subgroups within the larger group. These subgroups could contribute different skills to the enterprise encouraging students to work on the area they most enjoy, for example:

- A **research** subgroup can identify artists who incorporate interactivity into their work to glean ideas from other sources
- A **materials** subgroup can take responsibility for assembling the materials
- A **design** group would draw the concept and develop proposals for the interactivity component
- A **publicity** subgroup plays to the strengths of students who enjoy writing. This group can work on a publicity statement or brochure about the sculptural piece to distribute throughout the school. It would include an invitation to preview

the work or a special viewing date and should also include photographs of the piece.

Nominate a coordinator to ensure the sub-groups communicate regularly and share their ideas.

NOTE: The intention is to build human interaction into the creative process and the artwork should emerge from this cooperative and collective spirit – very much part of Scott Snibbe’s artistic mission.

RELATED STANDARDS

VISUAL ARTS

Grades 9-12 Proficient

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

3.2 Identify and describe the role and influence of new technologies on contemporary works of art.

Grades 9-12 Advanced

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

2.1 Create original works of art of increasing complexity and skill in a variety of media that reflect their feelings and points of view.

2.3 Assemble and display objects or works of art as part of a public exhibition.

2.5 Use innovative visual metaphors in creating works of art.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

4.1 Describe the relationship involving the art maker (artist), the making (process), the artwork (product), and the viewer.

4.2 Identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

5.1 Speculate on how advances in technology might change the definition and function of the visual arts.

¹ Scott Snibbe, Artist Statement (1999-2003), as published on <http://www.snibbe.com/scott/statement.html>.

Spirituality in Art

Talk about the concept of spirituality in visual art. Ask students what they think about expressing spiritual ideas, concepts or beliefs in visual artwork? In addition to Snibbe, introduce students to other contemporary Western artists who address spirituality in their work, such as Ann Hamilton, John Feodorov, Shahzia Sikander, and James Turrell. (NOTE: These artists are featured on PBS's contemporary art program Art:21 in the program about "Spirituality & Contemporary Art" - See **Resources**.) Break students into small groups to write a short 300-500 word research paper on one of the artists, addressing the questions below and assembling images of the artworks that best illustrate their findings.

- How does the artist address or incorporate spiritual concepts or ideas in her/his work?
- Are the concepts or ideas related to a specific belief system or religion?
- Is spirituality present in all of her/his work?
- What materials communicate the ideas most directly?
- What is said about the artwork by museums, galleries, writers, and the public?
- What do they think about the work? Is it important? Does it change how they think about art? About spirituality?

Reassemble as a large group and share the answers to the questions from each group, noting them on the board. When all groups have presented, discuss the similarities and differences between how the artists express spirituality.

RELATED STANDARDS LANGUAGE ARTS

Grades 9 & 10

1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES

1.1 Formulate judgments about the ideas under discussion and support those judgments with convincing evidence.

1.0 WRITING STRATEGIES

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.