

Personal Statement

I began to work as a graphic designer in 1992. When I started to study my profession, the digital world was still in its infancy. As a designer from conventional media I had to survive the changes experienced by our field as a consequence of a lightninglike technological revolution. The personal computer emerged, and with it the replacement of photomechanical methods by electronic processes. In my earlier years of work I limited myself to use the computer as a tool but I was able to appreciate that it was hardly than simple. New techniques began to merge traditional design elements with computer-generated imagery, profoundly affecting media and the evolution of the aesthetics of the visual arts.

I started to experiment with the computer when I got my first Macintosh in 1992. A couple of years later I installed my first modem. I found myself studying basic HTML but it wasn't until early 1998 that I started to work on a project building an Intranet of Human Resources for a system development consulting company. Since the completion of that work, my interest in human computer interfaces has only grown greater. For this reason I started to look for a ground for experimentation. In 1999 I decided to come to New York to pursue graduate studies. I was admitted in the Computer Graphics and Interactive Media MFA Program at Pratt Institute. I graduated in May 2004.

Several experiences enriched my educational life at Pratt, as a visit to the MIT Media Lab and the international computer graphics conference SIGGRAPH. These experiences exposed me to expressions which merge science, technology and art. They also introduced me to cutting-edge interactive technologies. On April 2002 I had the opportunity to start learning about micro-controllers as a participant in The PIC workshop taught by James Powderly at Pratt Institute. A month later I help organizing the Cricket Workshop at Pratt taught by Dr. Fred Martin, the inventor of the Cricket. I was also interested in applying projections on irregular physical surfaces. I visited Spitz, Inc. with a group of Pratt students and professors to learn about dome construction and projection technologies. All these experiences reflect my deep interest in merging the digital/ephemeral with the physical/corporeal.

My interest as an artist is to continue developing interactive installations and to explore non-traditional interactive metaphors applied to environments. I am exploring geometrical structures that may react to presence affecting light. My MFA Thesis, an Interactive Installation presented at the Sketches & Applications Program session "Defining Space" at SIGGRAPH 2002 in San Antonio Texas, reflects my current interest in physical interactive applications as well as my current skills that include among others, proficiency in programming, proficiency in common desktop imaging/publishing, interactive and 3D tools, and familiarity with different interface controllers.

My goal as an educator is to continue teaching in my field, to develop new curricula in the area of experimental computing and to encourage the creation of cross-discipline programs in Fine Arts Schools. I am interested to explore the new theories in learning and education that are grounded in the idea that people learn in a more effective way by building artifacts. Current curricula in Computer Graphics tend to separate concrete handling of objects from abstract learning or sometimes limit the results to a final product rather to focus on the process of experimentation. Artists and designers typically work in the domain of sensuous experiences of objects. I propose to put together the real space of physical objects and the computer space of numbers. Physical and sensory experiences are important for the acquisition of knowledge and they play an important role for cognition. Our manual skills and intellect interact when building things. On the other hand computers are useful tools for analysis and can help us to better understand the abstract and complex.

Last fall I proposed a new course title "Sensing and Media Control" to the Computer Graphics Department at Pratt Institute. This was my first attempt to explore my research in the classroom. The class is designed as a studio, encouraging creative thinking and hands-on learning. It brings students from architecture, computer graphics and industrial design together to design and build collaborative physical computing projects. This is also an attempt to create a dialogue between people from different departments who are interested in this area.

Last year I also taught several graphic design and computer graphics courses in the Computer Graphics Department at Pratt Institute and in the Fine Art Department at New York Institute of Technology in New York. At the present moment I am a graduate student at New York University in the Interactive Telecommunications Program. I found in this department an excellent graduated program, which seems ideally adapted to my future research objectives. I believe that this program will complement what I learned through my past work and research.

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