

## Naomi Herzog

### *Mined Feelds*

Interactive multimedia, Apple Mac format, 1997

"To define the parameters of the game, Herzog appropriates Mike Nichol's film of Albee's *Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, a preordained stalemate, where Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton parry and riposte through a bout of marriage. George and Martha's mutual dependency / destruction is as inescapable as our perception is prescribed and prompted by our gender and cultural contexts.

The main playing field, the 'cyber-zone', is the head, the door to all perceptive and interactive pathways. The eyes, ears and mouth appear in mechanical restraints, a comment on how our perceptions are prescribed by nature/nurture. By clicking on the eyes we are in post-production, re-editing a discrete climatic sequence from the film, where we hear Martha telling a humiliating story about George while we see him fetching a gun and aiming it at her. To activate each vignette we must turn images of the male and female heads on screen, reminding us of the plurality and non-exclusivity of perception. When we inadvertently re-edit, we rupture the dramatic crescendo that pre-ordains the narrative closure, and recontextualise the sequence's meaning. In doing so, we have engaged in a device used in The Guardian advertisement, whose slogan 'Get the whole picture' demonstrated how our perception can be questioned and challenged. Similarly within the mouth, a 'vault of text', we can play at script-editor. As we roll-over each 'strong-box', a fragment of Albee's script is illuminated and a word emitted, which is simultaneously erased from the text below. A hot spot takes us by surprise revealing an unperceivable ear which looms out, flooding the screen in a piece of interactive slapstick with a 'landscape of sound'. Herzog's method of engaging us with the interface leaves us without pathways and guidelines. The textural surfaces of *Mined Feelds* offer us no indication of which way to go, or any indication of what we might find. However, as we roam the interface we naturally search for patterns and sequences that might give our engagement meaning. Hotspots and mouse click indications, however, constantly surprise or frustrate this, and only through our active engagement with it is the structural framework that shapes our perception is revealed."

- Amanda King, MESH #11

Naomi Herzog has worked both as a visual and performing artist. She studied photography and film at the VCA and went on to train, perform and direct with the Women's Circus. Amongst others, she has worked with Ponch Hawkes, Circus Oz and Chamber Made Opera. Emerging recently from post graduate study in multimedia at RMIT, she now works primarily with film and interactive multimedia using animation and digital FX. She is currently involved in a number of projects incorporating new media technology with other artists.

*The A.C.C.A. Interactive program was curated by Experimenta Media Arts.*



*The Australian Centre for Contemporary Arts is grateful for the support of the Australia Council, through the New Media Fund, in presenting this program*

For further information please contact Miki Oikawa at Experimenta Media Arts on (03) 9525 5025