

Editorial

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This special issue of the CITAR Journal includes the extended version of some works presented at the Third International Conference on Computation, Communication, Aesthetics and X (xCoAx 2015), which took place in Glasgow, Scotland.

All the selected works tackle the most fundamental question that rises when creativity and technology intersect. It may sound puzzlingly simple but it is indeed a question worth asking: What happens?

What happens when human creativity is required to follow the algorithmic constraints of a computing system? Is it hindered or enhanced? What happens when electronic circuitry becomes part of the craftsmanship of an artist? Are old processes made more efficient or are new ones created or both? The works in this issue take different approaches to investigate these topics.

Both Hernández-Ramírez and Koltick aim at laying the theoretical foundations first, and make remarkable attempts to define a new conceptual framework with which we may try to understand and talk about the disruptive results of the use of computers in art: Hernández-Ramírez has a particular interest for the concept of 'medium', whereas Koltick focuses on the concept of 'agency'.

On the other end of the spectrum are the works by Faubel and by Vones, who start their inquiry from physical artefacts. In particular, they both enhance very traditional instruments with the performance provided by electronic devices: Faubel uses LEDs to enrich the spectacle of animations on an overhead projector, while Vones creates jewelry with smart materials.

Somewhere in between, on a territory where the coexistence of material artefacts and narratives is made explicit, we find the works of Beyls, Bernardes & Caetano, who apply the emergent complex behavior of multi-agent systems to interactive music synthesis, of Carvalhais & Cardoso, who discuss how users observe and interpret interaction, when actual interaction with an artifact is not possible, and of Sosnowska, who provides an insight into Japanese multisensory digital art.

Whether we are formulating theories or building artefacts, the overlap of physicality and interpretation mentioned above is nothing new: it has characterized every artistic endeavor since the dawn of mankind. Computational devices seem to provide a new kind of physicality, but we may not have found the right instruments yet to fully interpret it. The works in this issue are meant as further steps in this search.