

mary flanagan | artist statement | 2001

My work can loosely be described as digitally influenced methodologies and artifacts at the intersection of art, science, and gender, where inquiry into areas of convergence between art, science, technology, and gender in contemporary culture dominates the secondary material or non-material elements of the work. I utilize virtual technologies, networks, physical spaces/objects, artifacts of popular culture, and collaborative technology-driven systems as materials and methods by which to explore these boundary zones, involving both intellectual hypotheses and the commonplace as locations and manifestations of socio-technological phenomenon.

Deploying installation/environments, bio-physical interfaces, virtual space, generative art, viruses, games, writing, and performance techniques, central questions driving the work are formulated and realized around the role of gender under technological conditions, the duality created around nature and the technological, and the way science and art can effectively be interrogated and inform each other's processes, ideologies, and results.

In the majority of my interactive works, the work itself is not "created" unless a public is engaging with the work or the artist is engaging with the work. Strategies are viral, relying as often on tactics of gaming and chance as much as experimental narrative and conceptual formulations. In this way these conceptually driven works become a blend between research, process, and performance. Because of these conditions, I negotiate away from the notion of a final event, product, or art object and instead create recipes, scripts, and methodologies a structure of practice highly informed by the social and economic realities of electronically driven media as a format and framework. The critiques generated out of this process become a "hack" -- of systems, of code, and social structures and norms embedded in cyberculture.

Theoretically the work draws a great deal from the projects of feminist geographers and scientists as well as cultural theory circles. Influencing my approach are my own involvements with cyberculture studies and specifically my interest in the role of hierarchical and gendered architectures embedded in cybercultural practices, economies, and systems. The space of production and consumption of cyber artifacts is my specific focus, including subjectivity in cyberspace, the mapping of the space as a political paradigm, and the meaning of virtual bodies and the role of desire in cyber systems.

