



# Interactive Art and Embodiment: The Implicit Body as Performance (Arts Future Book)

By Nathaniel Stern

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## Interactive Art and Embodiment: The Implicit Body as Performance (Arts Future Book) By Nathaniel Stern

What is interactive art? Is this a genre? A medium? An art movement? Must a work be physically active to be classified as such, or do we interact when we sense and make sense? Is a switch-throw or link-click enough - I do *this*, and *that* happens - or must subjects and objects be confused over time? Is interaction multiple in its engagements (relational), or a one-to-one reaction (programmed)? Are interactive designs somehow more democratic and individualized than others, or is that merely a commercial strategy to sell products and ideas?

This book argues that interactive art frames moving-thinking-feeling as embodiment; the body is addressed as it is formed, and in relation. Interactive installations amplify how the body's inscriptions, meanings, and matters unfold out, while the world's sensations, concepts, and matters enfold in. Interactive artwork creates situations that enhance, disrupt, and alter experience and action in ways that call attention to our varied relationships with and as both structure and matter.

Nathaniel Stern's inspirational book, *Interactive Art and Embodiment*, outlines how new media has the ability to intervene in, and challenge, not only the construction of bodies and identities, but also the ongoing and emergent processes of embodiment, as they happen. It includes immersive descriptions of a significant number of interactive artworks and over 40 colour images.

The theorists, artists, practitioners and curators discussed in this text include Brian Massumi, Christiane Paul, Sarah Cook, Beryl Graham, Kelli Fuery, Theodore Watson, William Kentridge, Char Davies, Stelarc, Janet Cardiff, Carlo Zanni, Tero Saarinen, Karen Barad, Daniel Rozin, Richard Schechner, Nicole Ridgway, Rebecca Schneider, Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, VALIE EXPORT, The Guerrilla Girls, Tegan Bristow, Brian Knep, Anna Munster, Zach Lieberman, Golan Levin, Simon Penny, Camille Utterback, Jean-Luc Nancy, The Millefiore Effect, Nick Crossley, Mathieu Briand, Scott Snibbe, David Rokeby, José Gil, Erin Manning, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, and Norah Zuniga Shaw

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Nathaniel Stern's book is a marvellous introduction to the thinking and practice of this innovative new media artist, and to the work of others in the same field. Philosophically informed and beautifully written, it is sensitive to the many complex issues involved in making such work. --Charlie Gere is Professor of Media Theory and History in the Lancaster Institute for Contemporary Arts, Lancaster University, and author of *Digital Culture, Art, Time and Technology*, and *Community without Community in Digital Culture*.

In Nathaniel Stern's *Interactive Art and Embodiment*, Stern develops a provocative and engaging study of how we might take interactive art beyond the question of 'what technology can do' to ask how the implicit body of performance is felt-thought through artistic process. What results is an important investigation of art as event (as opposed to art as object) that incites us to make transversal linkages between art and philosophy, inquiring into how practice itself is capable of generating fields of action, affect and occurrence that produce new bodies in motion. --Professor Erin Manning, Concordia Research Chair, Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University, author of *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*, Director of the SenseLab and series co-editor of *Technologies of Lived Abstraction*.

In his very intelligent book, Nathaniel Stern shows how dynamics work: he mobilizes a range of theory and practice approaches so as to entangle them into an investigation of interactive art. Stern maps the incipient activity and force of contemporary art practices in a way that importantly reminds us that digital culture is far from immaterial. *Interactive Art and Embodiment* creates situations for thought as action. --Dr Jussi Parikka, media theorist, Winchester School of Art, author of *Insect Media*.

#### About the Author

Nathaniel Stern is an Associate Professor of Art and Design in Peck School of the Arts at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, and a Research Associate at the Research Centre, Faculty of Art, Design, and Architecture, University of Johannesburg.

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