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Preliminary Workshop Proposal 5/25/99

Text Electronic: Media as Performer & Publisher

part of the **Art Is an Emergent Phenomenon** series developed by Burning Books
for the Santa Fe Media Institute, Summer 2000

Original works of fiction and philosophy, previously “unpublished,” will converge with new media, developed on the spot to explore innovative ways of distributing perceptions and thought. Possible avenues for exploration include:

- multi-media performance
- gesturally stimulated writings
- movement as language innovator
- spatially enriched spoken word visualizations
- alternate approaches to “publishing” on the web, such as erasable digital tablets (with analog initiators), downloadable scrolls including voice emulators, and viewer-interactive holographic international “tele-grams.”

Writers, singers, semanticists, theorists, and software / hardware designers will work together to expand non-linear and non-commercial avenues for verbal communication. In the tradition of Homer (not Simpson) and Native American elders, myth and practical wisdom might be effectively soft-wired into the human system through its sensory ports: sight, sound, skin, enzymatics, and musculature. Two facts to explore: 1) emotions by themselves create all the necessary glandular and metabolic changes that actions require [William James, *Principles of Psychology*], and 2) languages, vocabularies, and information -structuring patterns presage emergent phenomena [J. P. Crutchfield “Is Anything Ever New? Considering Emergence”]. It may be true that the more words for things the more ways to be; and art — chaos and order working together — quintessentializes the concept of emergent phenomena.

Multi-lingual and multifarious, this workshop engages a variety of interpretations of “the code” [Woody Vasulka’s use of the word] to devise alternative approaches to an expanded notion of the encoding and decoding processes.

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Invited participants to include:

Laurie Anderson, one-sentence novels,

Robert Ashley, avant-garde opera for television

Marghreta Cordero, waving the wand of electriccharisma

Paul De Marinis, low-tech / high effect “readable” installations

Kyle Gann, rhythm-based voice activators in composition

Marie Goyette, philosophical dances with samplers at hips and feet

George Lakoff, Cognitive Sciences, University of California – Berkeley, useful questions

Ana MacArthur, hologramatic texts generated by participants

Larry Polansky, chance-accessed texts with music hyper-strings

Laetitia Sonami, performance stories utilizing the digital “ladies glove”

Mark Trayle, macho-spiritual guitar automatism

and others to be announced, including distinguished workshop designers from 1999

Joan La Barbara, James Crutchfield, Steina Vasulka, and David Dunn.

Workshop designer is writer / bookmaker Melody Sumner Carnahan, M.F.A. graduate (Center for Contemporary Music) from Mills College who has worked with electronic music composers and performers for twenty years, including Robert Ashley, John Cage, and Yoko Ono. She has created texts that formed the basis for award-winning works, including the compilation audio compact disc (*The Time Is Now*, Independent Publishers Award Finalist, Unabridged Audiobooks, 1999); performances (Laetitia Somani, *Has/Had*, Honorary Prize, Ars Electronica, 1997), and films (Laetitia Somani, *What Happened*, Juror’s Prize, Black Maria Festival, 1995). Originating editor of *Burning Books*, she has published over thirty short works in magazines and anthologies, and has three books in print. She has received acknowledgments for her work from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and Tamarack Foundation. Charles Shere, the *Tribune*, wrote, “There have been few precedents to this kind of sustained avant-garde literature with a moving, human content.” Kyle Gann, the *Village Voice*, recently described Carnahan’s work as “the most musical prose since Gertrude Stein.”

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To read samples and reviews of Sumner Carnahan's writing, visit the website:
www.readsouthwest.com/bbooks.html