

THE STATE OF NONPRESENCE

by Craig Stam

Brief

What is the weight of existence? What is most important about any experience is simply being there. *THE STATE OF NONPRESENCE* is the existence of nonexistence: be it with what may appear to be but is, ultimately, not there or with once was present but no longer is. *NONPRESENCE* is inherent within digital and interactive medias and cultures. The no longer visited dead website, the afk-player to a videogame, or the anonymous viewer of an embedded video. Moreso, *NONPRESENCE* seeks to bring work done in, with, by, and for digital and interactive means and audiences to galleries in order to occupy spaces which they are often neglected, mistreated, or undervalued.

THE STATE OF NONPRESENCE features seven (7) artists exhibiting work under the theme of *being while absent* or *absence, though once been*.

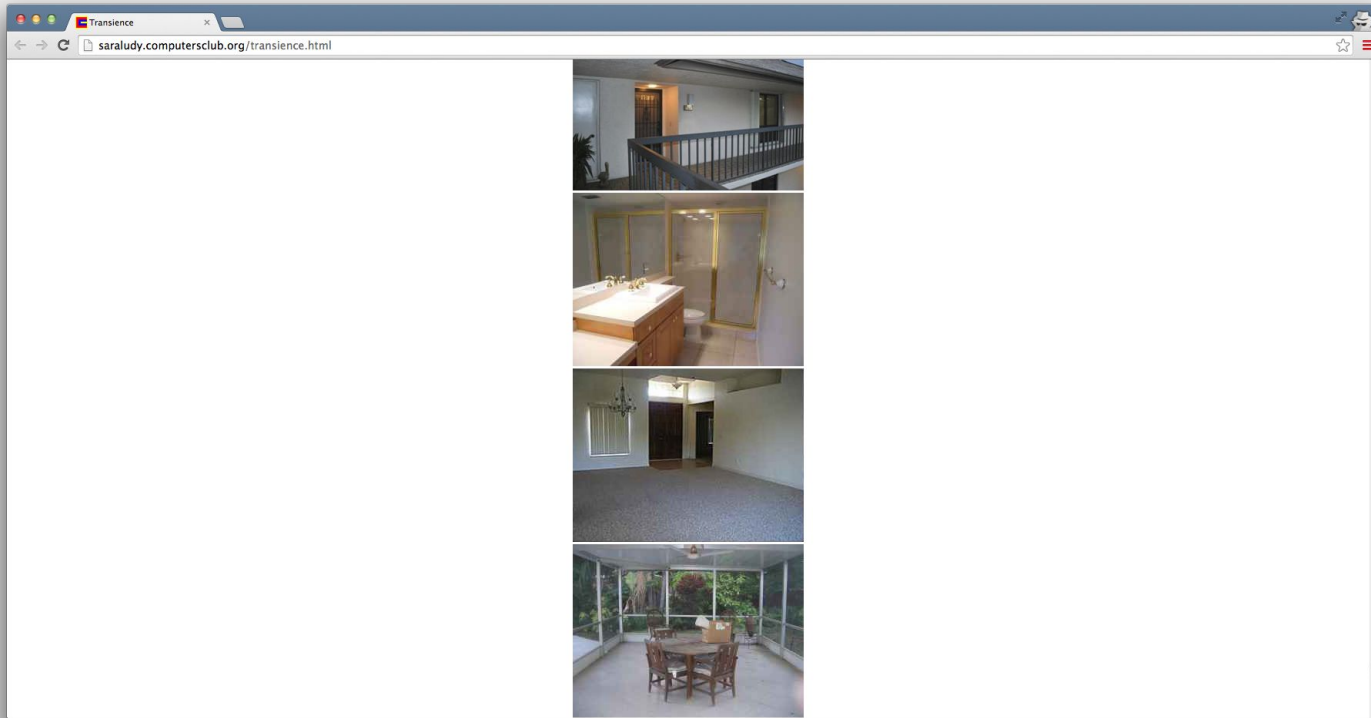
Exhibition Statement

What is the weight of existence? What is most important about any experience is simply being there. *THE STATE OF NONPRESENCE* is the existence of nonexistence: be it with what may appear to be but is, ultimately, not there or with once was present but no longer is. *NONPRESENCE* is inherent within digital and interactive medias and cultures. The no longer visited dead website, the afk-player to a videogame, or the anonymous viewer of an embedded video. Moreso, *NONPRESENCE* seeks to bring work done in, with, by, and for digital and interactive means and audiences to galleries in order to occupy spaces which they are often neglected, mistreated, or undervalued.

Contemporary art has provided work to stand its ground through content, context, and concept. Digital and interactive art allows us to further detach ourselves from the work as it is often detached from the physical human hand. This disembodiedness is ingrained in the system of digital and interactive worlds as experiences and events are pre-determined and manufactured. Within these mixed realities, new technologies open up the possibility of the presence of an *other*, that is- the existence of something not our own, or the feeling and aura of the past presence of an *other*. But perhaps we need to fill that gap- that the *other* existence is fulfilled with our presence.

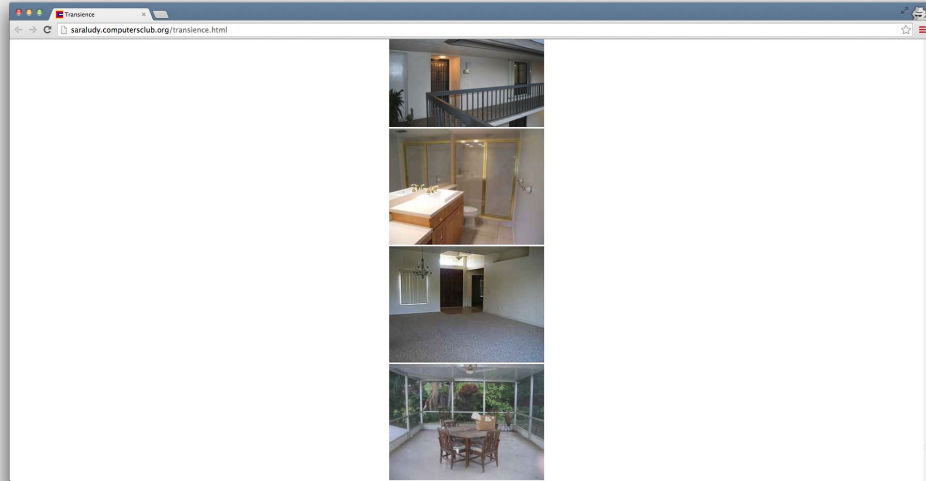
As the art world (and, as a result, the art market) expands it is imperative to look for ways to expand the types of work and backgrounds of artists who are exhibited in it. Digital and interactive work, sometimes referred to as multimedia, has only recently become accepted in the world of contemporary art and is still often overlooked by museums and galleries alike. The *NONPRESENCE* of the work exhibited by Sara Ludy, Matteo Bittanti, Tristan Espinoza, Angela Washko, Cheryl Acuna, Patrick Lemieux, and Pippin Barr extends past the content of the work itself but serves also as a reference to the lack of presence work done in similar fashion has within these spaces.

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Ludy, Sara. *Transience*. 2011

<http://saraludy.computersclub.org/transience.html>



Sara Ludy
Transience, 2011
Website

As one searches for companionship they may often find themselves looking in places vacated of all life. Ludy's *Transience* is a long-form visual essay consisting of photos taken from *Craigslist* ads with empty homes and apartments for sale/rent. The emptiness of a home is inviting in the sense that it yearns to be filled- with the presence of furniture and action and people. However, the state which it documents and exists until the ads are edited or taken down are that they are unoccupied- removed from activity and gutted of most personal belongings. Within this, the audience (both of the work and of the listing) takes on the role of a voyeur, peering into the still-life of the currently unused home.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| HAS ANYONE ENCOUNTERED THESE PROBLEMS | FOR THE HIGH HIGH PRICE OF ONLY \$10 | THEN I BECAME DILLIGENT AT BULLDOZING |
| ANOTHER WORK AROUND IS BULLDOZE EVERYTHING | THE ZOMBIE DISASTER EVERY DAY A LITTLE BIT | SORRY FOR MY BAD ENGLISH. |
| OTHER THAN TO MAKE YOUR CITY BETTER | (WHICH PREVENTS THEM FROM EVER TURNING ABANDONED). | NOW THERE ARE ZERO HOMELESS IN MY CITY! |

Bittanti, Matteo. *How to get rid of homeless*. 2015.

<https://vimeo.com/116082707>



Espinoza, Tristan. *Banna, Ilocos Norte*. 2015-2016.

[null]



Washko, Angela. *Her Longing Eyes*. 2011-2012

<https://vimeo.com/47479517>

Angela Washko

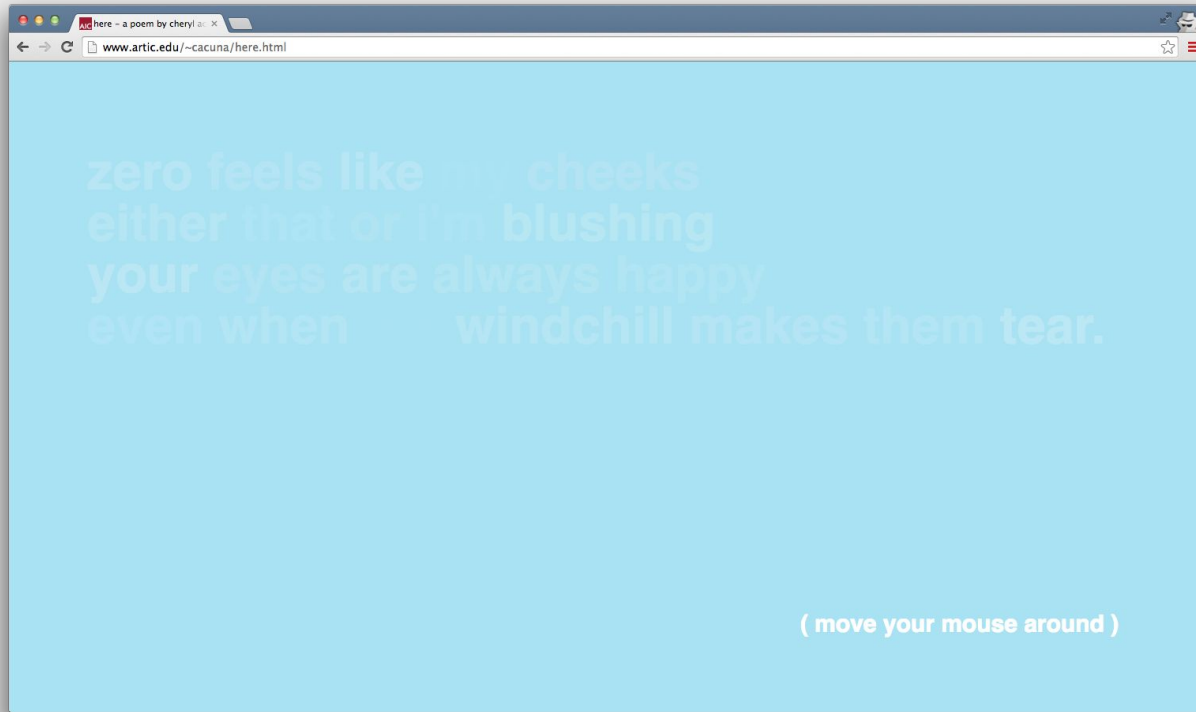
Her Longing Eyes, 2011-2012

2-Channel Color Video (1:53), Audio



Washko dissects imagery of female and male protagonists from the role-playing game series *Final Fantasy* in order to critically analyze the effect which gender is portrayed and plays a role in developing these characters. The female protagonist, with glassy eyes, yearns for the presence of her male counterpart. More often than not, in the *Final Fantasy* series, these female characters are unable to continue their journey or return to a conscious state of mind until eased and calmed or become accompanied with the male protagonist. The absence of the male characters, for a short period of time, render these women stunned, useless, and emotionally unstable- the men become the heroes who restore stability, holding or watching the women.

Her Longing Eyes is an extension of Washko's research project entitled: *Heroines with Baggage*- "a study of the proliferation of subtle negative gender-based stereotypes" through videogames and its influence.



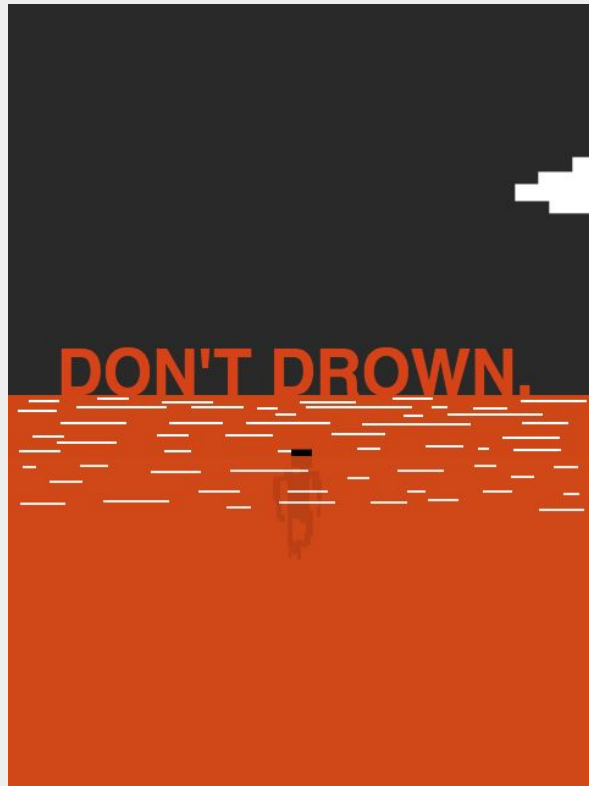
Acuna, Cheryl. *Windchill*. 2014.

<http://www.artic.edu/~cacuna/here.html>



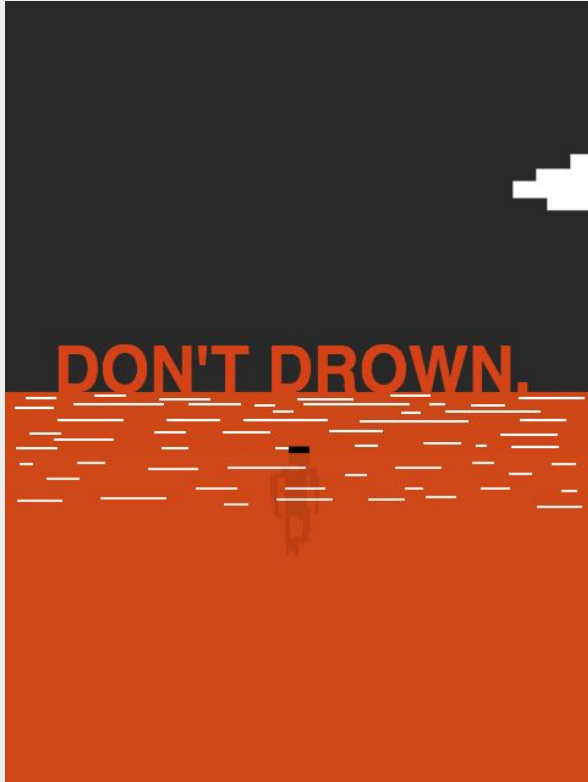
Lemieux, Patrick. *Brothers*. 2013.

<https://vimeo.com/84153228>



Barr, Pippin. *Don't Drown*. 2014.

<http://www.pippinbarr.com/games/dontdrown/>



Pippin Barr
Don't Drown, 2014
Videogame

Don't Drown consists of constant struggle and relies entirely on the presence of a player. Through constant clicks the player can keep the character afloat and, as the title implies, not drowning. However, if the player leaves or does not click within a certain amount of time the character descends, sinks beneath the waves, and loop cycles again. If left alone, the in-game character continues to drown on endless death loop. The game tracks how long the player has kept the character afloat as a reward for doing such an easy (and morally right) task, but the result always inevitably ends in the death of the character. The endurance of the character in the game is tested and correlates directly to the patience and interest of the player and audience.



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