

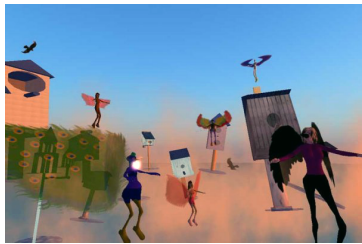
SPECIAL PROJECTS: Performa[c]tivity: Playing Liveness

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The Birds Project: (2009)



The Birds Project explored the conventions of dramatic performance and artistic practice in the revisionary context of emerging and innovative digital media forms and practices. Growing out of faculty research into digital performance conducted by Lissa Holloway-Attaway and myself in the fall of 2008, the project involved adapting Aristophanes' classical Greek comedy *The Birds* and reconstructing it as a live/mediated performance.



In the context of the Special Projects course, students explored concepts of liveness, materiality, play, and performance through seminar and media workshop sessions, examining the relevance of these in hybrid live/mediated performances, and how interactive and programmable media can intervene in traditional performing arts. Students worked in a variety of digital media and technologies, including augmented reality, Second Life modeling, image editing, video production and editing, and application development. Original music, live and recorded, was also developed.



Support for the project included collaborations with research faculty and students at Georgia Tech in the Digital Performance Initiative Group, ethnographic research on linguistics and communication at Virginia Tech, and technology support from the Augmented Reality Lab at York University in Toronto, Canada.



The resulting performance combined elements of Aristophanes' *The Birds* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Live actors interacted with prerecorded video and live Second Life avatars operated both locally and remotely. Three separate Flash applications were developed to supply scenic and interactive materials, and augmented reality fiducials were utilized for transformations of environment and cast.



Following the performance students were required to produce an essay reflecting critically on the process and key concepts discussed during the seminar sessions.