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EXHIBITION PRESS RELEASE

DIGITAL BOUNDARIES: Multiculturalism, Identity, and Awareness

ACM Multimedia, the premier multimedia conference, in conjunction with **Macy Gallery of the Art and Art Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University** is pleased to announce "**Digital Boundaries: Multiculturalism, Identity, and Awareness**," a group exhibition of interactive multimedia art featuring the work of 16 international artists and their collaborators. The exhibition opens on Wednesday, September 29 and closes on Friday, October 15 with a reception for the artists on **Tuesday, October 12 from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.** Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

At no time in history has technology had the prospect of making a stronger cross-border impact on culture. Technology can be used to create or reinforce boundaries (being fingerprinted and photographed at an airport—a multimedia experience), as well as to dissolve them (we are bombarded by images and sounds from all over the world). Many of us are being empowered with the ability to easily create digital content, document and share our own experiences and those of others, challenging the roles of art (passive vs. interactive) and revolutionizing the way we see and hear the world. At the same time, only a small percentage of people have access to technology (boundaries of the haves and the have-nots).

Multimedia content and technology are of special consideration because they appeal directly to our senses, elevating the age-old dilemma of the distinction between reality and representations of reality. Does this new proliferation and imbalance of multimedia technology help reinforce boundaries and cultural differences? Does it contribute to define cultural identity in a new age in which everyone talks about multiculturalism? Does it raise cultural awareness or simply numb our senses making us take deep cultural differences for granted because what we "see" or "hear" is commonplace in this "new" multicultural world? Does it create new boundaries in art or help unify multiple art forms? How can art, in its many roles, make use of the same technology that raises these issues to address them?

The following artists are featured in the exhibition: **Carroll Parrott Blue, Marc Böhlen, Sheldon Brown, Bob Gluck, Michael Hohl, Brian Ireson, Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo, Shawn Lawson, J.T. Rinker, Cynthia Rubin, Andrew Senior, Patrick Tarrant, Roxanne Wolanczyk, Stephen Wilson, Winston Yang, and Ricardo Miranda Zuñiga.**

The works selected span a wide range of artistic practices, techniques, and methods to address different issues related to the exhibition theme. **Blue** intermixes traditional print and electronic interactive multimedia in an autobiographical reflection of racism's impact on one African American mother and daughter's relationship and invites the viewer to co-create its narrative and dialogue about its issues. **Böhlen** and **Rinker** use the whistle as a form of trans-cultural communication. **Brown** seeks a digital representation of urbanization in an area in which two cultures are in constant flux. **Hohl** detects participants' presence on a world map and plays radio stations from different parts of the world. **Ireson** uses motion sensors to augment the volume of competing videos, exploring the apparent notion of the inherent conflict between Christian West and the Muslim East. **C. Lawson Jaramillo** uses the web to present participants with a "mixed reality" and explore issues deeply rooted in contemporary Colombian identity. **S. Lawson's** computer vision interface questions our conceptions about interactive art: the participant's non-motion shows the video details of a traditional Japanese scroll painting. **Rubin** and **Gluck's** work is based on a Medieval Hebrew biblical manuscript that reflects on the convergence of cultures in Islamic Spain. **Senior's** work explores the cultural barriers enforced by pronunciation differences of culturally charged words. **Tarrant** uses a personal multimedia collection to explore issues of memory and narrative. **Wolanczyk's** work questions vertical cultural barriers as represented by an imaginary character that makes a living creating junk mail. **Wilson's** work investigates the image search process and keywords associated with images in relation to culture. **Yang** finds a spatial digital representation for images that is based on research into architectural grids and culture. **Zuñiga** places multimedia content in a physical space (a video game in a food vendor cart) to raise questions about culture assimilation by immigrants to the U.S.

Works in the exhibition underwent a rigorous selection process by an international technical committee and by the curatorial committee: **Mark Tribe** (Columbia University, USA), **Christina Yang** (The Kitchen, USA), **Pamela Jennings** (Carnegie Mellon University, USA) and **Alejandro Jaimes** (FXPal, Fuji Xerox, Japan).

For further information please contact **Hugo Ortega** (ugo_a_o@yahoo.com Tel. +1 917-861-8525), exhibition coordinator and Macy Gallery Director, Teachers College, or **Mark Tribe** (mark.tribe@columbia.edu Tel. +1 212-854-8882), member of the curatorial committee.

Macy Gallery - Teachers College, Columbia University Art and Art Education Program

444 Macy Building - 525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027

Phone: +1 212-678-3296