

Appendix 2: Ascott's Professional History

Roy Ascott

The biographical material was prepared by Roy Ascott and currently appears either at Wikipedia or at his Plymouth University website. He verifies that the material from Wikipedia is correct as of August 2018 and authorizes its presentation here. We have made small alterations, replaced some Wikipedia paragraphs with material from his website, and added a description of the Planetary Collegium.

Roy Ascott¹

Roy Ascott is a British artist, who works with cybernetics and telematics, on an art which is technoetic, focusing on the impact of digital and telecommunications networks on consciousness.

Ascott exhibits internationally (including the Biennales of Venice and Shanghai), and is collected by Tate Britain and Arts Council England. He is recognised by Ars Electronica as the “visionary pioneer of media art,” and widely seen as a radical innovator in arts education and research, having occupied leading academic roles in England, Europe, North America, and China, and currently establishing his Technoetic Arts studio in Shanghai, and directing a worldwide doctoral research network.

He is President of the Planetary Collegium, Professor of Technoetic Arts Plymouth University, and the De Tao Master of Technoetic Arts at the DeTao Masters Academy in Shanghai. He is the founding editor of the research journal *Technoetic Arts*, an honorary editor of *Leonardo Journal*, and author of the book *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology and Consciousness*. University of California Press.

He is recipient of the Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica award for Visionary Pioneer of Media Art 2014. The award is for “those men and women whose artistic, technological and social achievements have decisively influenced and advanced the development of new artistic directions.” He is a Doctor Honoris Causa of Ionian University, Corfu, Greece; Honorary Professor at Aalborg University Copenhagen; Honorary Professor at University of West London.

From 1955–1959 he studied Fine Art at King's College, University of Durham (now Newcastle University) under Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton, and Art History under Lawrence Gowing and Quentin Bell. He was awarded the degree of B.A. Hons Fine Art, Dunelm in 1959. On graduation he was appointed Studio Demonstrator (1959–1961). He then moved to London, where he established the radical Groundcourse at Ealing Art College, which he subsequently established at Ipswich Civic College, in Suffolk, working with artist tutors such as Anthony

1. This material is a condensed presentation of Dr. Ascott's Wikipedia page. He has permitted its presentation here.

Benjamin, Bernard Cohen (painter), R. B. Kitaj, Brian Wall, Harold Cohen, and Peter Startup. Notable alumni of the Groundcourse include Brian Eno, Pete Townshend, Stephen Willats, Roger Ruskin Spear, and Michael English.

Ascott taught in London Ealing, and was a visiting lecturer at other London art schools throughout the 1960s. Then briefly was President of Ontario College of Art, now OCAD University, Toronto, then Chair of Fine Art at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, before moving to California as Vice-President and Dean of San Francisco Art Institute, during the 1970s. He was Professor for Communications Theory at the University of Applied Arts Vienna during the 1980s, and Professor of Technoetic Arts at the University of Wales, Newport in the 1990s, where he established the Centre for Advanced Inquiry in the Interactive Arts. He established the Planetary Collegium at Plymouth University in 2003.

He has advised new media arts organisations in Brazil, Japan, Korea, Europe and North America, as well as UNESCO, and was Visiting Professor (VI), Design|Media Arts, University of California Los Angeles (2003–07) at the UCLA School of the Arts. Ascott was an International Commissioner for the XLII Venice Biennale of 1986 (Planetary Network and Laboratorio Ubiqua).

He is the founding president of the Planetary Collegium an advanced research center which he set up in 2003, with its Hub currently based in the University of Plymouth, UK, and nodes in China, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland. In March 2012 he was appointed De Tao Master of Technoetic Arts at (DTMA), a high-level, multi-disciplined, creativity-oriented higher education institution in Shanghai, China. In 2014, he established the Ascott Technoetic Arts Studio at DTMA [8] creating the Technoetic Arts advanced degree programme, taught jointly with the Shanghai Institute of Visual Art. The DeTao-Node of the Planetary Collegium was established in 2015. He is a Doctor Honoris Causa of Ionian University, Corfu, Greece.

Since the 1960s, Roy Ascott has been a practitioner of interactive computer art, electronic art, cybernetic art, telematic art and systems art. Ascott built a theoretical framework for approaching interactive artworks, which brought together certain characteristics of Dada, Surrealism, Fluxus, Happenings, and Pop Art with the science of cybernetics. He was also influenced by the writings of Gordon Pask, Anthony Stafford Beer, William Ross Ashby, and F. H. George.

The historian of art and technology Frank Popper writes of Roy Ascott: “Roy Ascott was among the first artists to launch an appeal for total spectator participation ... At present, Ascott is one of the most outstanding artists and theoreticians in the field of telematics” (Popper, 2007, p. 77).²

In his first show (1964) at the Molton Gallery, London, he exhibited Analogue Structures and Diagram Boxes, comprising change-paintings and other works in wood, perspex and glass. In 1964 Ascott published “Behaviourist Art and the Cybernetic Vision” in *Cybernetica: Journal of the International Association for Cybernetics*. In 1968, he was elected Associate Member of the Institution of

2. Popper, Frank (2007). *From Technological to Virtual Art*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Computer Science, London (proposed by Gordon Pask). In 1972, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Ascott's Creative Practice and Artistic Projects³

- 2016: *Electronic Superhighway*. Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.
- 2013: Roy Ascott: *The Analogues*. Plug-in Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg, Canada.
- 2012-2013: Roy Ascott: *Syncretic Cybernetics*. 9th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China.
- 2011: Roy Ascott, *The Syncretic Sense*, (retrospective 1960-2011). Hackney London.
- 2010: Roy Ascott, *Mobile Art (Retrospective 1960-2010)*, International Festival of Digital Art, Incheon, South Korea.
- 2009: Roy Ascott, *The Syncretic Sense*, (retrospective 1960-2009) Plymouth Arts Centre, Plymouth, England.
- 2003: *New Technologies*. Ascott, Bolognini, Forest, Kriesche, Mitropoulos. Museo del Sannio Benevento, Italy.
- 1999: *Art-ID/Cyb-ID. Identities in Cyberspace*. WWW project. Biennial do Mercosul. Porto Alegre, Brazil.
- 1996: *Apollo 13. Interactive elevator (Televator)*, permanent installation. Concept design by Roy Ascott. Linz: Ars Electronica Center.
- 1996: *Identity in Cyberspace: WorldWideWeb and CD ROM project* between artists in Newport, Barcelona and Dublin. Directed by Roy Ascott. Newport: CAiiA.
- 1995: *Roy Ascott's telematic art projects from 1984-94*. Video documentation. Milan: Triennale di Milano.
- 1994: *Gasflow*. Telematic project, Internet and walkie-talkies in a text/sound interchange. Directed by Roy Ascott. Amsterdam: Mission Impossible, Gashouder.
- 1992: *Telenoia: A global networking project for the eighth day of the week*. Telematic project using vidphone, fax, BBS, EARN. Directed by Roy Ascott. Hertogenbosch: V2 Organization.
- 1992: *The Geometry of Silence*. Distributed sound installation. Directed by Roy Ascott. Vienna and Innsbruck: Museum Moderner Kunst and Ferdinandeum.
- 1991: *Virtuelle Werelden*. Documentary exhibition of computer communication projects by Roy Ascott (also work by Peter Beyls and Hugo Heyrman). Antwerp: Internationaal Cultureel Centrum.
- 1991: *Texts, Bombs and Videotape*. (Slowscan TV, digital image and fax exchange between artists in Vancouver, Pittsburgh, Vienna, and Bristol. Directed by Roy Ascott. Bristol: Watershed Media Centre.
- 1989: *Aspects of Gaia: Digital Pathways Across the Whole Earth*. Interactive art installation and telematic project with artists in three continents. Directed by Roy Ascott. Linz: Ars Electronica Festival of Art and Technology.
- 1988: *Making the Invisible Visible*. Telematic image/text exchange between artists at University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Carnegie-Mellon University and University College London). Directed by Roy Ascott. Vienna: Hochschule für angewandte Kunst.

3. Information in this section is from <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/roy-ascott>

- 1987: Digital Body Exchange. Digital image network between artists in Gwent, Perth, Sidney, Vienna, and Pittsburgh. Directed by Roy Ascott. Vienna: Hochschule für angewandte Kunst.
- 1986: Planetary Network: Laboratory UBIQUA. Artists in three continents interacting through computer networks, videotex, slowscan TV, fax). Directed by Roy Ascott, Don Foresta and Tom Sherman. Venice: XLII Esposizione d'Arte La Biennale di Venezia.
- 1985: *Sonart: l'image à distance par son*. Slowscan TV by short wave radio transmission, Alma - Québec, Pittsburgh. Directed by Roy Ascott and Robert ADRIAN. Alma, Québec: ANNPAC/RAC.
- 1985: *Organe et Fonction d'Alice au Pays des Merveilles*. Interactive videotex project (Minitel). Directed by Roy Ascott. Paris: Centre Pompidou, Les Immateriaux.
- 1983: *La Plissure du Texte (A Planetary Fairy Tale)*. Telematic project between artists in Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Bristol, Sydney, Vancouver, Pittsburgh, Toronto, San Francisco, Honolulu, Alma. Directed by Roy Ascott. Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne.
- 1982: *Four Wings (Planetary I Ching)*, International Telematic project. Directed by Roy Ascott. Linz: Ars Electronica Festival.
- 1980: *Terminal Art*, First International Artists' Computer Conferencing project, USA-UK. Directed by Roy Ascott. Bristol, UK.
- 1980: Solo Exhibition. Dartington Hall, Totnes.
- 1978: Solo Exhibition. Anna Gardner Gallery, Stinson Beach, California.
- 1972: Solo Exhibition. University of Guelph, Ontario.
- 1970: Solo Exhibition. Angela Flowers Gallery, London.
- 1969: Solo Exhibition. Exe Gallery, Exeter.
- 1968: Solo Exhibition. Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.
- 1968: Solo Exhibition. Laing Art Gallery & Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne.
- 1965: Solo Exhibition. Hamilton Galleries (Annely Juda), London.
- 1965: Solo Exhibition. Queen's University, Belfast.
- 1964: Solo Exhibition. Gallerie Suzanne de Conninck, Paris.
- 1963: Solo Exhibition. Molton Gallery, London.
- 1961: Solo Exhibition. Artists International Association Gallery, London.
- 1961: Solo Exhibition. St. Johns Gallery, York.
- 1960: Solo Exhibition. Univision Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Most Recent Professional Focus: The Planetary Collegium⁴

In 2003 Roy Ascott founded The Planetary Collegium at Plymouth University, a doctoral and post-doctoral program under his direction. Concerned with the advancement of emergent forms of art and architecture, in the context of telematic, interactive and technoetic media, and their integration with science, technology, and consciousness research, its aim is the production of new knowledge at the intersection of the arts and technological/scientific advances. Its name connotes a commitment to critical discourse and transdisciplinary research on the spiritual, social, and technological dimensions of our emerging planetary society, both its highest aspirations and the forces that impede fundamental transformation. Combining face-

4. Information taken from https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Planetary_Collegium

to-face individual interactions with the cross-cultural fusion of telematic communities, the Planetary Collegium has developed a worldwide network of research nodes, each immersed in and expressive of a culturally distinct ethos. The Collegium promotes outcomes associated with new systems, structures, and behaviors and expanded understanding of human identity, consciousness, and matter.

The Collegium was founded by Ascott in 1994 at what is now the University of Wales, Newport. It was originally called the Centre for Advanced Inquiry in the Interactive Arts (CAiiA). In 1997, Ascott established STAR (Science Technology and Art Research) in the School of Computing at the University of Plymouth. The combination of CAiiA and STAR brought into being a research platform that drew upon the resources of both universities. In 2003, Ascott renamed this platform the Planetary Collegium and moved it to Plymouth University, where it is now part of the School of Art, Design and Architecture. Since 1997, the Collegium has organized over seventy symposia and conferences in Europe, North and South America, Australia, China, and Japan. Especially noteworthy is the international research conference series *Consciousness Reframed: Art and Consciousness in the Post-biological Era*, which each year brings together sixty to a hundred presenters from as many as twenty-five countries. Over eighty doctoral candidates have graduated with the Plymouth University PhD since the Collegium's inception. In 2011 the Planetary Collegium received The World Universities Forum Award for Best Practice in Higher Education.

