Streaming the Performer's Body:
An Interview with Downstream

Jason Farman

My first opportunity to view a performance by the San Diego-based performance-art company, Downstream, took place at an academic conference on corporeality. Computers lined the back wall of the auditorium and a large screen covered the stage space. Projected onto this screen was an image of one of the Windows-based computer's desktops. The lights dimmed and the mouse pointer on the screen clicked on a program to connect to the Internet. At that instant the actors appeared, virtually speaking, that is: the performance, titled *Bring Your Own Body*, took place almost entirely in the virtual realm of the Internet. Downstream performed the piece from a remote location on campus that was filmed and broadcast via Internet streaming into the audiences' theatrical space. The actors took on the theme of the body's relationship to texts and improvised movements within the virtual space (which also contained a large screen with which the actors could interact). On this secondary screen in the remote location was a projection of Downstream's first piece, titled *Downstream::Media*, thus the actors were interacting with pre-recorded images of their own bodies. This process of recycling—a staple of each of their performances—troubled the distinction between real-time and pre-recorded performance. Throughout the performance, images of texts were broadcast onto screens that dominated over the bodies of the actors in size and scale. Through improvisational movement, the actors' bodies became caught up in various spatial and semiotic relationships to the images of the text. The bodies, placed up against the screen, seemed to disappear into the screen as another mark or line of the enormous text. As the correspondence between bodies and texts emerged, the image of the text began to be destroyed through cutting and tearing by the off-stage media designer.

The boundaries that Downstream breaks through are one of the most compelling attributes of their performances. In *Bring Your Own Body*, the boundary between actor and audience was amplified through the decision to stage the performance in a remote location and broadcast it to the theatrical space. As the performance continued, this distance seemed to recede until finally at the end of the performance "live" actors came into our theatrical space to bridge the spaces of the virtual and the actual (or perhaps even further complicate the idea of proximity in performance art).

The following interview with members from the performance-art group took place in a threaded online chat format on Yahoo messenger. As I began the discussion with three members from Downstream—Kristine Diekman, Karen Schaffman, and Tony Allard—our only connection during the four-hour interview was the Yahoo messenger interface and Kristine's webcam. In this publication of the interview, the specificity of the chat-based medium has unfortunately been mostly erased to make it accessible for

readers. The unedited version of this interview is, like most online chat discussions, a meandering of syntax-free fragments and ideas bound together in a specific moment in time. Though I would love to find a way to publish this article with this fragmentation in tact (while still privileging reader access), to ease the reading process I find it necessary to take editorial liberties and compile these fragments into a format more suited for this journal.

Jason Farman: To set the stage, could you each briefly describe what roles you play in Downstream?

Kristine Diekman: I think in the spirit of downstream we should all respond at once. I usually act as "artistic director" or as "technical director," pulling together the overall structure, both technically and artistically.

Tony Allard: My role is primarily mixing live and prerecorded audio which is then sent from the board to the streaming server.

Karen Schaffman: Originally, I came as the movement director and invited students to perform in this collaborative experiment. I helped to stage different scenes and performed in it myself.

Kristine Diekman: I think we work very laterally, so I don't want to presume a leading role in the traditional sense.

Tony Allard: I also am involved with developing the performance aspects and the live video mixing. In the future I would like to be involved more as a performer and this might take the form of me actually mixing on stage. I like the idea of moving the essentially private, typically solo activity of editing and mixing into a live, performative activity.

Jason Farman: How did Downstream as a performance group begin? Who conceived of the project to create a theater that blends Internet streaming video and technology with live performance?

Kristine Diekman: I am very interested in audio, and wanted to set up an experiment that had to do with how the production of audio could choreograph dance, or how dance could be choreographed around the sounds (amplified sounds) it might make. Karen brought together a group of people. The dilemma was how to do the work live: how would amplified audio work in a very acoustic live space of a concert hall? I thought that maybe the audience could experience the work completely on headphones in a complex stereoscopic space. This eventually led to the idea of a stream, a live Internet stream.

Karen Schaffman: Downstream.

Tony Allard: I jumped into the Downstream flow by way of Kristine's interest in getting the OSX streaming server up and running and to do so by starting a group exploration of this new venue/performance space.

Karen Schaffman: Originally, images emerged from artists working in different mediums played with materials. I found it interesting to be working/creating in front of live audience—while another performance was being created by the "mix-master" for the on-line performance (who mixes both the live images with the pre-recorded images, creating the final edit of the internet video). So, in a sense, two performances emerged. At the same time, I was (and am always) interested in spatial environments. The closed circuit video brought another layer and element to the performance.

Tony Allard: In terms of online performances, I have been working with the fledgling technology of streaming to present live streaming performance. The early days were touch and go at best. But now, as is evidenced with the ease to which we set up this chat interview, the technology and access are up to speed and we can respond quickly to a need to get a performance netcast.

Jason Farman: What is involved in creating a Downstream performance?

Kristine Diekman: Usually Karen, Tony, and I get together and brainstorm an idea or a situation.

Tony Allard: …In the space, usually.

Kristine Diekman: When we feel confident about the focus of that, we invite in collaborators to flush it out through workshopping it.

Karen Schaffman: Having a musician for the first round was very helpful and key to the aural environment we created.

Kristine Diekman: After we workshop it once or twice, we get feedback from everyone involved as to how to focus or structure it. After we did our first performance, *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA*, we met with the group and asked them how much they wanted to focus the idea. They said that they like how the concept grew out of the work itself and didn't feel comfortable with creating one idea and then demonstrating that.

Jason Farman: How much directing is involved in rehearsals? How much is improvisation?

Kristine Diekman: We kind of break up into our respective areas. Karen is off with the performers working on choreography, I am mostly working with people doing things with camera and sound, and Tony is mixing. I think that the dancers/direct performers get the most direction.

Karen Schaffman: As a choreographer, I give them a task and have them work on it. Then I edit their work. With other movers, I stumble upon their unique quality and use what's often awkward to direct them. Currently we are thinking about ways we can hone in on content—now that we share a working vocabulary with one another.

Jason Farman: What would you consider the content of Downstream to be?

Kristine Diekman: For me, content is always central...but I often allow it to come out of the material. It can be edited through the mix and content can be produced live.

Tony Allard: Content of Downstream is derived from dipping into the media streams and responding to what jumps out.

Karen Schaffman: So far, I see our work as an exploration of how ways the performers/technicians react to sensorial stimulus and how we receive mediated information. Issues of what is absent and what is present are central to our content.

Kristine Diekman: In general, for me, Downstream is about experiencing a situation in the personal space of the home computer first and foremost. When there is an audience, it is different. It is about experiencing the mediated/live event. In particular each performance has content—*BYOB* really was about the audience bringing their own body to the performance, as our bodies were mostly absent.

Jason Farman: Liveness seems to be a key concept to your performances, at least in the tension between the live and the mediated inherent in digital performance. Can we discuss your performance BYOB: Bring Your Own Body and its relationship to the live and the mediated. For example, the performance began with the audience entering a theater, where the performance was broadcast via Internet from a different, remote location. At the end of the performance you had several actors walk into the "live" space with water jugs. The actors then began pouring water back and forth between water jugs in the material space. For me, I experienced a strong tension between the mediated and the live and I was wondering how you conceptualized this: was it an affirmation of the live (in the sense that the aural experience was sensuously quite different) or was it a disruption of the boundaries between the live and the mediated?

Karen Schaffman: The image of the water was an improvisational moment. I suddenly realized that the sound had to be brought forward. This created a bridge—mediation—between spaces.

Tony Allard: This created a hybridized analogue and virtual space and time. Developing *BYOB* involved finding these bridges between the mediated spaces and "real" spaces.

Kristine Diekman: I think that it is a disruption, although I do like Jason's idea of the affirmation of the live. I think that you cannot get away from the cultural experience of the camera as a representational device. We can, I think, talk about liveness as also

"thereness," so there are several "theres" created through the camera (and other related devices such as microphones, mixers, etc.).

Karen Schaffman: I see it as both. At once, the ambient sound came alive ("an affirmation of the live") and at the same time it was a disruption. Suddenly the audience realized that this was not pre-recorded, but rather living and breathing.

Kristine Diekman: Telepresence is created through all of the strategies of representation. It is the "there-ness" created through point of view, sound, camera position and movement, resolution, etc.

Tony Allard: Video telepresence is much less dependent on traditional representational conventions of cinema.

Karen Schaffman: The camera is the body of the director.

Kristine Diekman: Usually cinematic telepresence is dominated by aesthetics which foregrounds the actual characteristics of the place perceived. In the case of *BYOB*, the place perceived (for the audience) includes the lecture or performance hall the audience sits in…so brining the actual sound/image (previously mediated) into actual space disrupts the notion of what the actual space is.

Karen Schaffman: Also, I think mediating spaces have the possibility to ask the audience "where are you sitting?" I'm interesting in ways that performance can stir the audience to their location. So there is already a kind of disruption of the expected, an interruption of the normalized theatre and a disjointedness of space.

Jason Farman: Does it disrupt the opposition between mediated and live spaces, or simply operate as an affirmation of the "live"? Perhaps you can comment on this Tony as far as the audio in this performance is concerned: the audio of the Internet broadcast into the theater was starkly different than the audio of the water being poured in the material presence of the audience.

Tony Allard: Sound, as it is received by the listener, is all actual. The disruption comes when the listener realizes where the source is coming from. The distinction between virtual water sounds and actual water sounds disappears when the listener closes their eyes. And this is one of the core inspirations for Downstream.

Karen Schaffman: I see it similarly to Jason, that the material space is heard/seen/felt differently that the virtual water image. I think that it might be a subjective experience.

Tony Allard: In radio they call it "imaging" the sound.

Karen Schaffman: I recall that decision emerged improvisationally: "Grab the water and buckets!"

Tony Allard: "All hands on deck!"

Karen Schaffman: I recall it being necessary—let's bring in the elements, so to speak. I also see it as another aspect of the layering that has become essential to the Downstream projects.

Kristine Diekman: Telepresence over the web is a bit tricky because there is audio and video. In most cases, streaming media privileges the audio over the video. When the video goes bad (low resolution, low frame rate) the audio keeps up the good work. So in a sense, if we consider what is transmitted live over the Internet in terms of image as low resolution, static camera position, audio is everything the opposite. So the liveness or thereness of the audio might be almost the same for the mediated audience as the direct audience.

Jason Farman: So the water being poured in the material theatrical space should be experienced as a purely aural sensation, and thus a reading that emphasizes the boundary between live and mediated privileges the visual (witnessing the various locations and sources for the sound). Could it be argued that perhaps the theater and performance culture we live in (as well as our technological culture) is visually dependent instead of moving toward a more tactile or aural experience as Marshall McLuhan argued for?

Tony Allard: Yes, the water sound, regardless of its source, is purely aural and the addition of the POV of the video camera begins to form a distinction.

Kristine Diekman: I think that yes, Western culture does privilege the visual, but I think that that I am (we are) interested very much in the aural.

Tony Allard: Again, in traditional radio plays, it is called imaging the sound.

Karen Schaffman: Sound is the image—tactility is more challenging. In terms of sensing touch and kinesthetics—how does the audience feel "moved" emotionally, psychologically, and physically?

Tony Allard: The eyes edit, the ears don't.

Kristine Diekman: Or maybe the audio is actually HYPER REAL.

Karen Schaffman: Audio as "hyper-real" is accurate.

Kristine Diekman: *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA* was a performance that was based almost entirely on the audio in terms of how it was conceived and structured. It did have a visual component, but that wasn't of the first order. We then we turned our attention a little more towards the visual in *BYOB*. In *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA* we placed microphones on the stage and various places on the bodies of the performers, so the audience was listening to movement amplified. We worked a lot with scale—small

movements creating large audio spaces and small movements creating larger than life images through projection. So projection and amplification were very important.

Tony Allard: *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA*, from my perspective at the mixing board, was very much an improvising process. I had eight channels of audio being mixed down to a stereo field. The audience in the space heard both the live sounds from the source and my stereo mix. The online audience heard only the stereo mix and the ambient sounds of their environment.

Kristine Diekman: When we conceived of *BYOB*, we re-used some of the material from *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA*. We actually performed against the pre-recorded video and audio which we mixed live with the live action and sound. I think that connecting sounds to the actor (or not) is very, again, traditionally cinematic. It gives the audience a space to either be conjecturing about what they are seeing or about to see or confirming what they are seeing. In this sense it creates an imaginary space—when audio isn't synchronized.

Tony Allard: So several layers of the "sonosphere" are combined in the live mix.

Karen Schaffman: The video component allowed for the disconnection/disruption of a normative visual/theatrical space.

Tony Allard: Representation disrupts actual presences of bodies on stage: text-based, scripted actions, places, and times. Performance is always, in some way, trying to get around the baggage of the sign in favor of the gut response.

Karen Schaffman: I think the body can receive more messages and create multiple semiotic understandings at once—especially in "nearly" postmodern moments of embodiment.

Jason Farman: Can we take these ideas of embodiment and semiotics and connect them to the spaces these bodies inhabit, thus creating a reading of theatrical space and the use of bodies and signs, or bodies as signs?

Karen Schaffman: For me one of the most interesting images we created was in *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA*, where a large text was projected on a wall and performers became part of the text through their spontaneous—though composed—relationship to the camera. Here, disruption clearly took place because of the extreme micro-macro scale that was created.

Jason Farman: The body, which was staged in front of that text, seemed to be caught up in the signs and their destruction as the projection of the text was cut. Can you discuss this moment?

Kristine Diekman: In the first work, it was created live, so in a sense, although what the viewer was experiencing was disjunct and surreal in scale, the experience was somewhat "smooth." That is, they didn't have to do a lot of navigation on their own. The actors, on

the other hand, I think, (although I would defer to Karen) had to navigate a scale they couldn't quite perceive themselves in.

Karen Schaffman: I'm drawn to this moment because of the way the body in relation to the text becomes the body 'of' the text. The performers—absent and live—interact in a dialogue with the bodies behind the camera (cutting) is at once coincidental and choreographed. The juxtaposition of the print image on top of the humans moving triggers issues that the politics of media invokes. What is static and what is moving? The cutting was a disruption of the space—disturbing of the media—an interruption of human behavior. I don't think the dancers knew what they were involved in. Though the choreography was first, then the "side effects" camera went to work.

Kristine Diekman: The "side effects" are a group of people who do miniscule live action and sounds which are projected huge in the space. They cut, tear, disrupt, and place random text and images in front of a live camera. They are on stage, but not moving or acting much.

Karen Schaffman: Surgical work.

Tony Allard: On the psyche.

Karen Schaffman: The actors/dancers were in the process of making sound against the wall, with their hands and heads. The cutting of the text was laid or layered upon them, so they were inadvertently caught up in the destruction of the image, although they do survive since they are not part of the projected image. Their survival for the audience is their exit off stage. The exploration of scale visually is similar to sound amplification—what is "real," what is manifested, what is metaphoric? I'm interested also in the way a set is established through the recycled material. *BYOB* had this odd set within a set feeling throughout. After viewing it, I felt it was kind of a nostalgic atmosphere.

Jason Farman: Nostalgia seemed to be a very important trope for the performance, perhaps even a nostalgia for presence?

Karen Schaffman: "A nostalgia for presence" is interesting in light of the ending of *BYOB*: by entering the space we re-member. As a performer, I felt I was remembering and re-membering often in *BYOB*. That's also the job of the improviser, to track what came beforehand in order to compose.

Jason Farman: In regards to the performance space, of central concern to me are the ways the actor navigates spaces, both virtual and material, as seen in your performances. Does the idea of "navigating the performance space" relate to this notion of spaces in which we remember?

Kristine Diekman: I think that Karen is talking about a kind of navigation here.

Karen Schaffman: As a performer, the space was actually quite restricted. Nevertheless, I trusted the "master-mixer" to track what was in the frame. Knowing that the previous performance was part of the environment allowed for a certain kind of knowing—this was the material, the layer. In addition, there was another "side effect" camera station, adding another layer that was usually unknown. I didn't completely surrender into my own exploration—I was very conscious of the space configured and was also busy checking monitors. The "side effects" station actor, Chuck Bailey, brought in his own collection of images which I didn't always see. I didn't know what virtual environment my body was moving within.

Jason Farman: So the technology, in a sense, did not merely frame the actor's body and the performance space, but actually created that space?

Karen Schaffman: Absolutely.

Tony Allard: Both, simultaneously.

Kristine Diekman: Yes I would agree with that in *BYOB*. The sound technologies did so in *DOWNSTREAM::MEDIA*.

Karen Schaffman: The off-screen performer/creator modifies and transforms the space.

Kristine Diekman: Finally the "master-mixer" sends it out, and the stream itself, with its bandwidth limitations, finishes up the job.

Jason Farman: Yet the actor is often unaware of the virtual space that he or she is inhabiting, is that right?

Kristine Diekman: Yes, most often the performer doesn't have that view of the virtual space.

Tony Allard: On and off screen spaces were only visible to the audience.

Jason Farman: So, although the actor may improvise, agency somehow escapes them in that regard?

Karen Schaffman: Yes. Again, I see the "master-mixer" (we need a better term) as the ultimate director.

Kristine Diekman: Yes, in that regard, the actor has less agency when he or she is aware of being trapped in the frame.

Tony Allard: Or they can resist the grasp of the lens.

Kristine Diekman: However, the traditional director is almost absent in this kind of performance.

Karen Schaffman: *BYOB* had more a sense of the "trapping" of the actors than the previous performance. This is an interesting issue to consider for our next round: what kind of autonomy can or does the actor have?

Jason Farman: Jacques Derrida once said in an interview: "It's not easy to improvise, it's the most difficult thing to do. Even when one improvises in front of a camera or microphone, one ventriloquizes or leaves another to speak in one's place the schemas and languages that are already there…. And so I believe in improvisation and I fight for improvisation. But always with the belief that it's impossible. And there where there is improvisation I am not able to see myself. I am blind to myself." In improvisation, which you employ quite a bit, there is a resistance to a "scripting" of the performance. However, in your performances, you are constantly having to contend with another type of script—that of the computer and its text. In your experience with Internet and hypermediated performances, how has the implementation of computer technologies affected the ways you improvise and the tension between body and computer script?

Tony Allard: I totally disagree that it is impossible to improvise.

Kristine Diekman: However, we are prisoners of the languages through which we improvise.

Karen Schaffman: With improvisation one is always working with the known in the unknown. There's a myth around being able to be purely spontaneous. Improvisation is a skill, and improvisers bring their tools into the unknown to create something.

Jason Farman: Well, in the same way that we have to employ the languages available to us to improvise, there is also a sense that computers—through the ways the programs are scripted (thus there is an author in a sense) that we have limited options when we employ computer technology or are at least subject to the ways the systems are scripted. So, is there a way that improvisation has to contend with these various agents and thus is limited? Or do you find that computer technologies have enabled your improvisation in ways that extend beyond a sense of these authorial agents?

Kristine Diekman: We are all aware of the terrible constraints of the computer, that unless we are advanced programmers, we are stuck with the language. However, I think that most of us, even casual computer users, approach the computer with a necessary sense of experimentation. We try things out because we don't know what to do or how make it work. So all of us are improvisers in a sense, if improv can be thought of as a kind of trial and error.

Karen Schaffman: There's a need to let go of knowing what is being seen and yet a need to construct the image through and for a frame. So, it's a paradox of freedom and restriction. Is the "master script" the limitation of what we know to employ into the unknown?

Kristine Diekman: But we are always poking at it.

Karen Schaffman: Yes—pushing its limits and trying to disrupt its predictability.

Kristine Diekman: We also do, in a sense, design our own systems even if we don't program our own computers. Our systems are an amalgam of things that we aren't even sure work together—old analogue mixers combined with very sensitive wireless mics. So in our own unique and changing design, we can frustrate the machine.

Karen Schaffman: Downstream—through its recycling process—reveals its systems, like this conversation, streaming new perspectives on our work. We're scripting as we discuss.

Tony Allard: Agency beyond the script, from a postmodern, recombinant cultural point of view, comes about through the collision of multiple, unrelated signs, time frames, spaces, images texts, etc.

Karen Schaffman: I think we agree that we're interested the surreal, which yes, Tony, is kind of collision of mediums, creating representations that explode our normative ways of sensing.

Kristine Diekman: Then, in a sense, agency is thrust upon the viewer/audience if he or she is to navigate or piece together the collision we are creating.

Jason Farman: Downstream created a proposal for a performance called Desert. *This performance seemed to have as its trope the border between California and Mexico. I am interested in the idea of borders in the performance spaces of Downstream. How are they manipulated, erased, or reinscribed?*

Tony Allard: The border as trope is interesting. In the desert the border is not visible but in San Diego it is.

Kristine Diekman: One way I think of the border in traditional theater is, of course, the fourth wall. Although this is so present, it is clearly absent. The viewer doesn't see it, just feels it. But with desktop of virtual theater, the fourth wall could be the screen space.

Karen Schaffman: How can we cross the fourth wall? We've discussed the idea of having it be interactive.

Tony Allard: The camera's zoom lens is one way. The zoom lens and the shotgun microphone are ways to break down the fourth wall by accessing untouchable information that the body cannot get to.

Kristine Diekman: Yes, Tony is right. Any kind of camera movement might disrupt— but not erase—the screen space. You have the possibility of erasing the screen space, because it is truly there to be acted on, through the kind of ending in *BYOB*, through

creating interactive possibilities for the viewer, but mixing in audio from other live sources.

Jason Farman: Do you also feel that the manipulation of the border between the performance streamed via the Internet and the performance broadcast for the material audience in the theater on campus is mirrored in the fact that the performances are broadcast and archived for a global audience online? The performers are in an alternate locale, yet are transmitted as performers into the material space of the BYOB audience, thus troubling the notion of proximity. At the same time, there is a virtual audience in a completely different locale. The idea of intimacy in theater, as seen in Downstream's performances, is completely altered.

Karen Schaffman: Yes. This brings to question what is community, since theatre was developed as a community gathering.

Jason Farman: So Downstream is performing, in a sense, the idea of proximity and community?

Karen Schaffman: That connects to our interest in scale.

Kristine Diekman: Yes, it is also performing the idea of proximity in the ways the images are manipulated.

Tony Allard: Is mediated proximity proximity? Teleported presence. Parataxical virtual. Virtual parataxis. Sandy Stone contends very convincingly that, yes, there is presence in the virtual.

Kristine Diekman: Yes, there is intimacy in the virtual.

Karen Schaffman: We're working with distorting and magnifying scale which challenges/questions human perspectives and relationships. If Downstream is performed both locally and distally, this confounding is doubled in terms of proximal relationships.

Kristine Diekman: I am interested in the context in which the audience watches the work, being most interested in the virtual audience. The real—or material—audience is for me a confirmation that the work is at least being seen, in a sense that it is happening and that the performance and performers need to abide by some rules of presentation. The virtual audience can only be guessed at. That is why I am very interested in audience participation in the future, for one reason among many.

Karen Schaffman: I agree in the presence of the virtual but still the tactility is missing, not to mention scent. My point is that the virtual presence isn't complete. But what performance is?

Tony Allard: On the other hand, virtual presence is totally complete as a virtual experience, exempt from the demands of real space.

Karen Schaffman: I mean, if we were having this conference in the same space, we'd be having a totally different, not better/worse, conversation.

Kristine Diekman: Does the screen space of the virtual work differ from the stage presence, in that with stage presence we are aware that we are separate (because we truly physically are) but in the virtual stage there is no real body to feel separated from? Hence, more intimate.

Jason Farman: Can you describe what you are working on now? What ideas are floating around?

Karen Schaffman: We're working on a piece were simultaneous narratives will take place.

Tony Allard: …In the same webpage. Three projections on stage.

Kristine Diekman: We decided that we would work with material at hand in our own separate works (I am working with a woman in prison, making a documentary about the institution of motherhood and infanticide). We would come together with our ideas, find the connections, or interstices, and create a work from there.

Tony Allard: I am writing a musical remembrance of my mother.

Karen Schaffman: I've been working on material regarding constriction/limitation/survival. A crossroads between personal material and my recent work with students on a piece where history of breast support systems (corsets/bras) are metaphors for societal constriction.

Kristine Diekman: We will combine movement (dance/performance) between three different streams, spoken text (the reading of a narrative based on letters from a women in prison), and live audio. We want to experiment with narrative, and also audience interaction. This would all be live, again, that is, not prerecorded.

Tony Allard: It would be interesting to invite the real audience to mix live on stage and also the audience online.

Karen Schaffman: Yes, ideally, the virtual audience would be able to mix their own performance of the material.

Kristine Diekman: The viewer participation may be in the form of a live chat or response area, or perhaps sending audio live. I think that the visual will be very minimal in contrast to *BYOB*.

Karen Schaffman: The *Desert* is still on the shelf and we hope to revisit that as well.

Tony Allard *is a teacher, performance artist, electronic media artist and poet. He taught performance and installation and related courses and workshops at the Kansas City Art Institute from 1989 to 1997. In 1997 Allard moved to San Diego where he now lives and works. He is currently Visiting Instructor at the University of California, San Diego and also teaches digital media course and theory at California State University, San Marcos. He has received grants for his work and has published his poetry in Exquisite Corpse , First Intensity , and The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism. His most recent performance works include the monologue, "Corpse and Mirror," a typing performance collaboration entitled "The MOBIUS Text" at Beyond Baroque in Los Angeles, and "world_mix_nagayo", a live radio and internet broadcast from Nagoya, Japan. He has also produced live radio and internet broadcast performances in Europe, Canada and the United States. In 1996 Allard began making single channel video topes which have been screened nationally and internationally. Recent tapes include Corpse and Mirror, Ship of FooLs, and From Here To LA. Current projects include a single channel video tape entitled "Seesto", a collaborative multimedia performance and installation at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, and, DOWNSTREAM, a collaborative, ongoing net-based performance collective.*

Kristine Diekman *has worked for several years in video and new media. Her work includes "Drift to Dust", "Super Ocho", "Corpse and Mirror", "Corn, Kitten, Sox and Knot", amongst others. She has received awards from New York State Council on the Arts, New York Foundation for Arts, Paul Robison Foundation, Rhode Island State Arts Council, and is a 2001-2002 recipient of a Media Fellowship from California State Council on the Arts. Her work has shown in festivals and on television throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. She is currently Associate Professor of Video and New Media and Department Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Depart ment at California State University, San Marcos, where she has developed The Community Video Project. She also is on the Board of Directors of Media Arts Center, San Diego. Contact:* kdiekman@csusm.edu http://www.csusm.edu/diekman

Karen Schaffman *is Assistant Professor of Dance and Performance at Cal State San Marcos where she enjoys working in an interdisciplinary environment and fostering collaborative projects. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of California basing her research on contact improvisation in relation to choreographic analysis, identity politics, and cultural studies. Her writing has been published in Taken By Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader (2003, Wesleyan Press) and she is currently moving her*

dissertation to book form. In 1994, she co-founded Lower Left, a teaching and performance collective known for bringing postmodern dance perspectives to San Diego. With Downstream, she embarks into collaborative terrains that foray into new sensorial experiments with technology.