

Sim Street Journal

EXPLORES THE RELEVANCE
OF VIRTUAL TO REAL
COMMERCE AND CULTURE

<http://www.simstreetjournal.wordpress.com>



- stories and tributes
- perspective and advice
- critiques and lessons

ISSUE #4 • 2013

“Second Life® is not a place to just roll in and make easy money. It is a place to learn, and meet interesting people. It takes time to build. Don't give up when one thing fails. Keep your head up and try something else until you find the right combination. Be good to everyone, and karma will reward you with success.”

—Katya Dirval, W Real Estate



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Telling Stories

by Eleanor Medier

Second Life® is a creative stage. As many social interactions migrate to Skype and Facebook, SL is a presentation platform. Granted, avatars live in the virtual world. Dream houses are built. Businesses grow. Relationships flower. Stories sprout.

Seeking those with the most to tell, the older, accomplished avatars have an edge—longevity gives perspective. To create in SL is to stand on the shoulders of the pioneers. Discussing collaboration and independence, they know how to be tough and how to be sensitive, how to innovate and how to protect.

The Blake Sea brings all SL issues together—the free sharing of open waters (thanks Linden Labs' generosity), successful clubs, stunning estates, and a solid community of loyalists. Here, find stories within stories!!

Further perspective is shared by Russell who knows how to survive as a virtual musician. Columnists Tara and Ann bravely take on challenges no other publication will touch. Heavy speaks his mind about fine art, cars, and fun, at the expense of his oblivious wife.

in-world to out

- Ty Lomes pays tribute to the past while he is realistic about the future. Founder of Snug Harbor with his father (and help from their friends), he leads the community in entertainment, events, and hospitality.

"Legacy and Longevity"
PAGE 20



pioneer profile

- Sudane Erato exemplifies the balance between community and solitude. Owner of the New England estate sims bordering the Blake Sea, she combines independence and collaboration.

"Nature as Redefined"
PAGE 30



critic's choice: musician

• Russell Eponym combines two art forms to advance tradition. As a musician, he performs classics and originals. As a poet, he brings the same sensibility to the written word, charming his audience with readings. "Tributes and Tales"
PAGE 38



moody's musings

• Through these walls Moody looks at the practical. In her ongoing quest to discover an economic foundation in the music industry, she examines social media and its role in promoting careers—pros and cons. "Social Media as Music Support"
PAGE 46



ask ann advice column

• Ann SLanders focuses her critical attentions on those beleaguered by conflict. Welcoming all who suffer from relationship challenges, she generously speaks to the heart. Like the real life legend, defines etiquette. "Ask Ann"
PAGE 52



the aesthete & the amateur

• Eleanor Medier, publisher, and Heavy Writer, contributor, banter about visual art in SL. They take on the 3d installation, "House of Memories" (with works by Almut Brunswick, Moeuhane Sandalwood, Lilia Artis, and Haveit Neox). Large and complex, Eleanor leads Heavy through the boldest segments of the collaborative work, but is distracted by a work from neighboring Chapter Kronfeld. Debating the literal versus the abstract, experiences versus stories, vagueness versus clarity, the unlikely couple is full of surprises.

"The Accident and the Albers" PAGE 58



social media manager

Quistis Shippe is the Communications Director and social media master. She contributes to marketing and promotion. She brings a varied background in sales, garden design, and learns more about SL sectors than anyone!



Sim Street Journal

Through advertising, kiosk offers, popular website, and Group Lists, an advertisement in *Sim Street Journal* reaches those who make culture in SL happen. Each profile and review imparts useful ideas and techniques won from experience. Entrepreneurs and creators, presenters and sponsors, share what it means to achieve significance in virtual worlds.

The magazine for those who seek significance, achievement, and relevance from the virtual to the real. In a world of complete freedom, limited only by time, discover the choices and the motivations that define international exchange.

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Issue #4 2013 Second Life.*

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- The Last of Humanity* page 15
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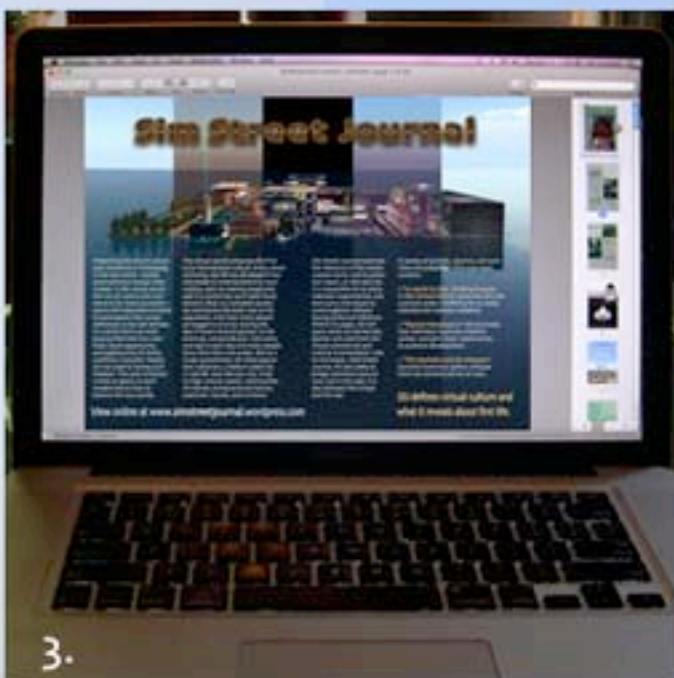
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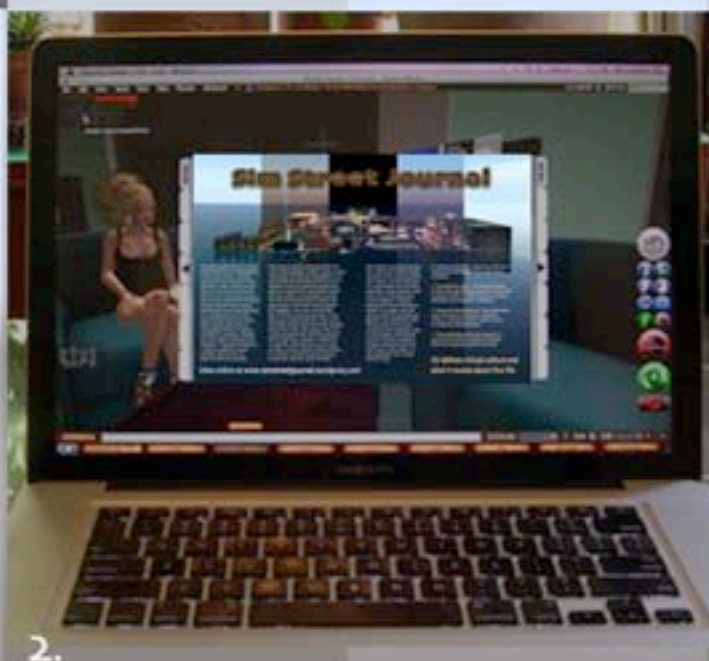


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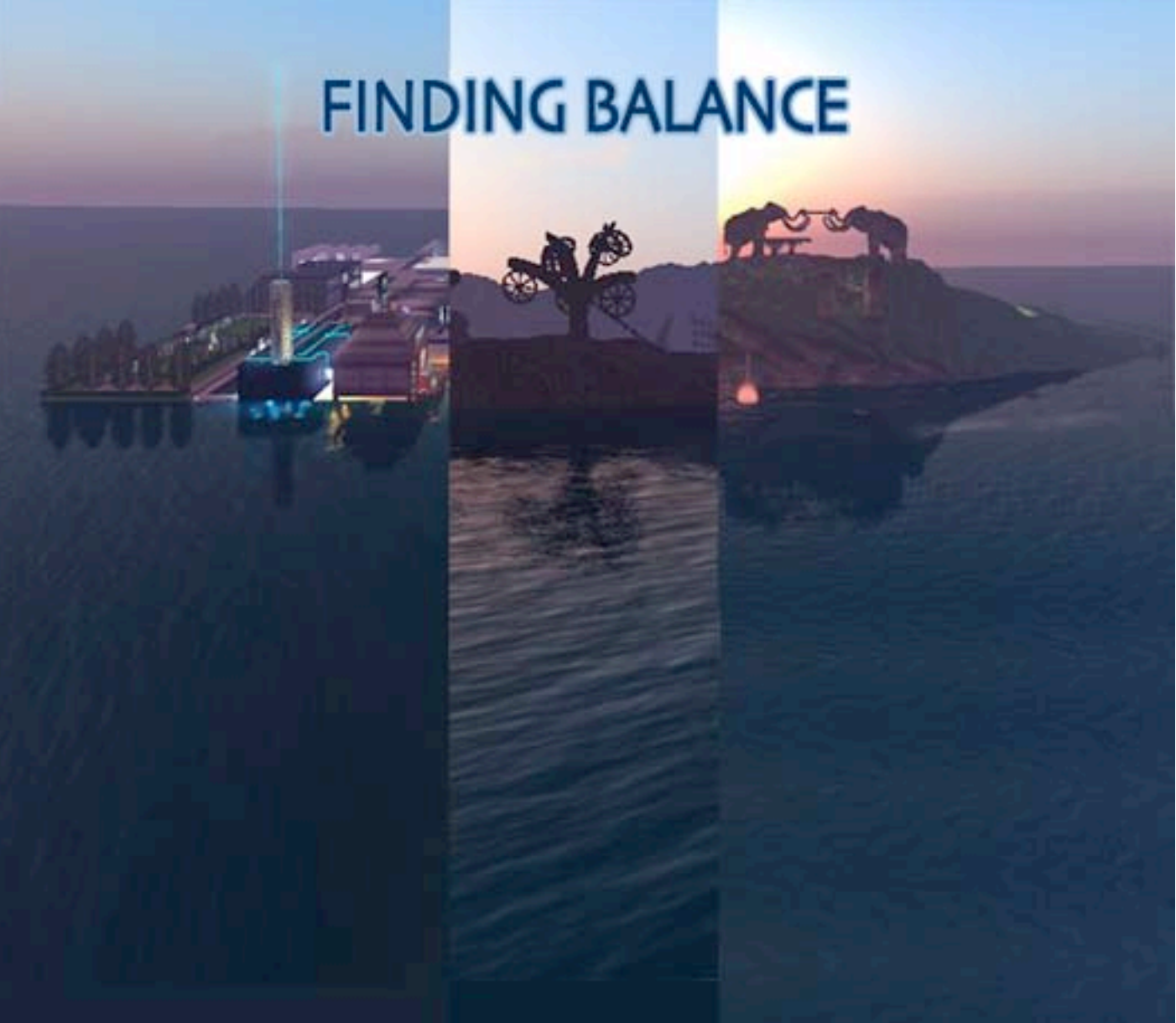




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Ramirez Torrance

FINDING BALANCE



Readers of *Sim Street Journal* are fascinated by the virtual world culture and how it relates to the real one. They are serious about both their second and their first lives, and how each is enhanced. Authors, and those profiled in the journal, speak from the heart. They share, from experience, how they integrate their two worlds.

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Rates by position in the journal are affordable and negotiable. Contact: Quistis Shippe.

Sim Street Journal

explores virtual commerce, culture, and relevance to first life • www.simstreetjournal.wordpress.com

Locations of photos: Business Park, Cica Ghost's "Rust", and Second Life's 10th Anniversary Celebration Island.

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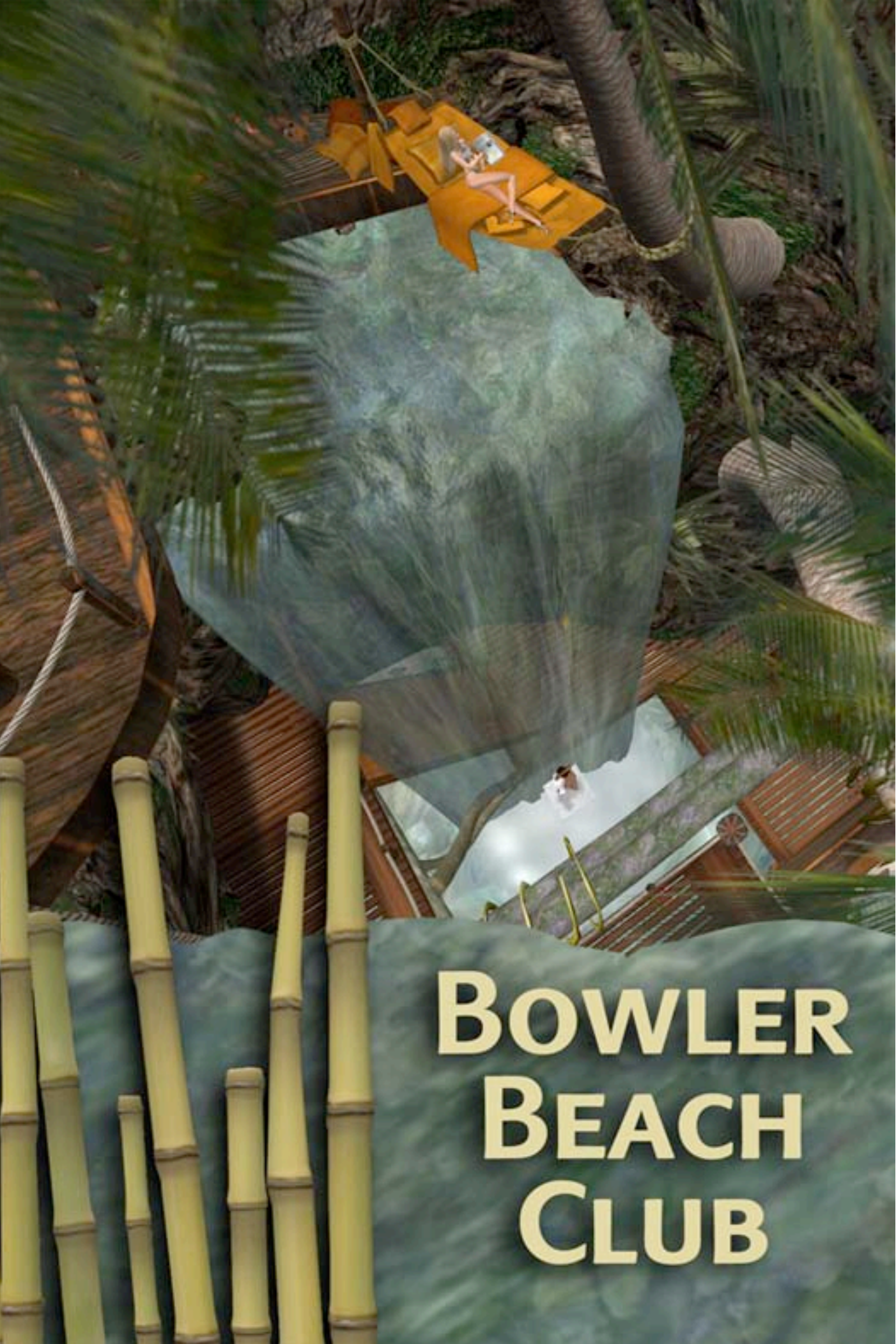
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"Ok. This is a very quiet photo. Maybe even mundane. But surreal and serene.

I entered this photo in the SL Photo Contest because it exemplifies one thing so great about the virtual world for me.

When I was shooting the photos for the Blake Sea articles (pages 18 through 35) I came upon this scene, in Sudane Erato's back yard. It struck me visually, but also, LAUNDRY IS ONE THING I LOVE NOT HAVING TO DO IN SL!! I even wear a lot of white in SL because I can't keep it clean in real life. Sudane captures such heightened realism! Never did I expect to see laundry in SL, or find it beautiful!"

What do you love most in Second Life?

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"Backyard at the Blake Sea" by Eleanor Medier, contest entrant





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in-world to out

Different Yet the Same

by Eleanor Medier

Special thanks to Nez Darkfury

Freedoms in Second Life® allows residents to create any kind of world they desire. Many reproduce reality—places they love or places they wish to live. Others create fantasies—environments impossible in real life. For any community to build and last, no matter what kind, there needs to be an identity, which means rules.





The communities surrounding the Blake Sea exemplify some of what residents most love in the real world. Its sandy shores boast quaint towns of various themes, mansions house boat lovers, and residents share the best in SL from clubs to shopping to open seas for sailing.

The **United Sailing Sims** is comprised of the major owners, each with a unique cluster of properties, but all with common goals. Their impressive longevity means that they know how to navigate in more ways than just on pixellated water!

The entrepreneurial spirit is deeply engaged here—plus a harmony of vision and approach. The sims all boast character because their leaders do not shy away from defining their kingdoms. They display a combination of sensitivity and toughness needed to succeed in any world.

All are long veterans of SL. To examine how they balance creativity, individuality, collaboration, and community reveals great advice for those newer. Discussing past, present, and future with two members, **Sudane Erato** and **Ty Lomes** of New England and Snug Harbor, respectively, demonstrate that the USS has a solid direction and unity. Even through many challenges of evolution, the shared vision and quality of life remain both constant and protected.

in-world to out

Legacy and Longevity

by Ty Lomes,
Snug Harbor,
Blake Sea

Blake Sea is a free resource provided by Linden Labs for boating and flying in Second Life®. Why have themed communities? To get maximum benefit from such a resource. Having high quality development around Blake's borders makes sense. Sailing and boating promote such activity.



We are part of the United Sailing Sims, a cooperative coalition of independent owner/operators that have agreed to abide by certain quality standards. When we started, there were not many large 100+ prim boats, and not many aircraft. Now, all this is part of regular traffic on the Blake.

The demand for space on the Seas is on the upswing. I am fully rented. If the economy would just improve, I think the roof would come off the place! Linden Labs' commitment affects both the purpose and potential of this resource. We are dependent on what they do and support the connected openness of free seas.



My real life father was a visionary. An industrial designer by profession, he also built houses, and that put him within just a few credit hours of being an architect too. He first came into SL at the behest of my step mother, who was concerned that my step sister might be involved in a cult of some kind (SL), lol. He was taken by this virtual world as a new medium for him. He wanted me involved too. Because I am a software developer in real life, he thought I might like it.

Dad had sold his design business when around the age of 36, and ran a marina for 25 years on the Chesapeake. So I grew up around boats since the age of 12. He and I thought it would be fun to do something like Rehoboth Beach DL, where our family long frequented. But this is not a re-creation. The real place, a hodgepodge of various building kinds, provided the major influence on what we built at Snug Harbor. With the help of friends, the core facility only took about six months—and then we moved to the Blake in record time for a project of this size.

Tragically, in 2011, I lost my real life father. Snug Harbor was the final project of a very creative man that had three real life careers. He constantly reinvented himself. At age 85, with no more computer skills that what is required to open email, Dad conceived of Snug Harbor, drew up plans, formed a team (with my help) to build much of the core, then taught himself how to build well enough to create a museum and a score of original island homes on four more sims.



"In today's real life business environment, I could not do what I did in my career as a designer and builder—the liability insurance, as well as the regulations, would eat me up! The nice thing about SL is I don't have to deal with all that. And I can build so much faster, as well as create an exciting community! So I came here at the right time—lucky to experience this at the end of my life!"

—Huber Grantly, immortalized

This room is a bit of my Dad's persona. My mother was my father's first wife, married over sixty years. After she died, his second wife, shown on the mantle, was new to sailing, but a good sport. On the drawing board are his early concept sketches of Snug Harbor, before he knew how to build in SL. That building was full time work!

For years I had a 33 foot Cat Ketch on a lake here in Texas. But although I don't sail too often in real life, I do when I can get a boat to play on. I don't race; I sail to relax.

I was here for months, and even started the Snug Harbor project, before I ventured out in a virtual sailboat! SL does a very good simulation. You can actually learn to sail in real life by sailing in SL! The wind simulation and the sailing software makes the boat respond like a real one would if the wind hits it the same way in real life. That's what you want.

Snug Harbor is the embodiment of Dad's last project in life—as avatar Huber Grantly. I shared that year with him, working electronically side-by-side. SL preserves his work which lives on.



To attract traffic here, Dad launched this museum, designed to educate. He shows displays of what everything is called in real life. Inside the work building is a display of life saving/boat safety. He built many large historical boats you can walk in. The sailboat in the harbor is a Skipjack, the only boat allowed for oyster dredging. That boat was the last thing he built here.

Here is a display of different kinds of nautical markers. The navigational aids expand to include lighthouses, an explanation of radar, and different kinds of anchors with

“The secret of a good partnership is: have skills that compliment each other, have a shared vision, and always, always a 50/50 split, or you own it”

—Huber Grantly, immortalized

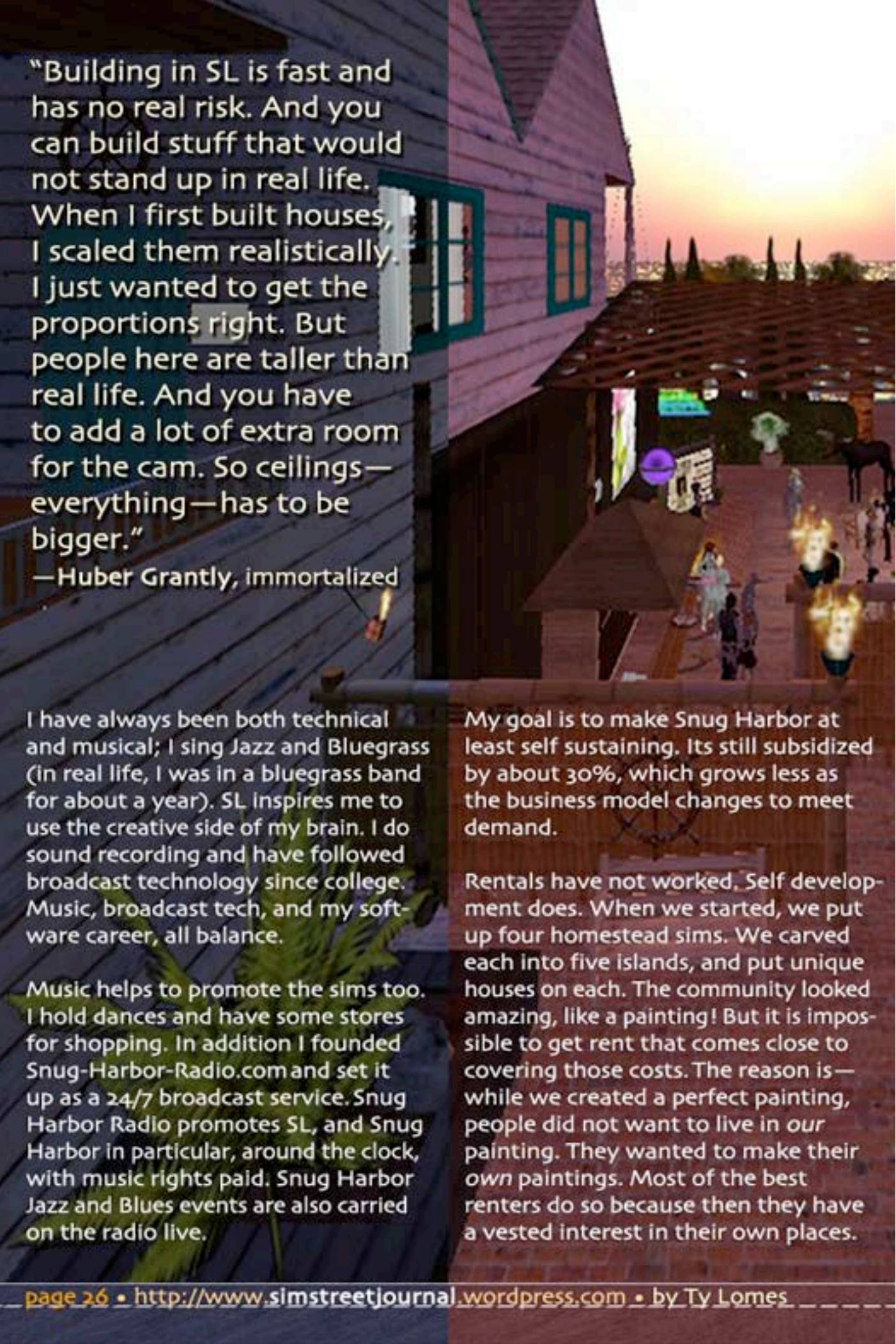


One of SL's strengths is as an educational tool, if people use it.

how they are used. Over here is a course on propulsion and hull design. I have a 24 hour stream here that plays ocean sounds and real sea chants performed by old sailors to preserve them.

Operations and management in SL is time consuming. I spend about six hours a day—all day today—trying to get retail traffic. The only help that I use are hosts at dances, and a few builders. With a long career in software, SL is an easy, familiar place for me—it was even on Day One!

Staff management is similar in both real life and SL, but the regulation and paperwork associated with real employees is gone. Scheduling is a significant task, but there is software available at low cost to help handle it. For example: if you own and rent property, you need not keep track of the rent due amount and when. There is rent software that does it all. Just set the price and the payment durations and you are good. Renters will still contact you for this or that though, just like in real life. You still might have to help a new tenant get settled in or handle an eviction.



"Building in SL is fast and has no real risk. And you can build stuff that would not stand up in real life. When I first built houses, I scaled them realistically. I just wanted to get the proportions right. But people here are taller than real life. And you have to add a lot of extra room for the cam. So ceilings—everything—has to be bigger."


—Huber Grantly, immortalized

I have always been both technical and musical; I sing Jazz and Bluegrass (in real life, I was in a bluegrass band for about a year). SL inspires me to use the creative side of my brain. I do sound recording and have followed broadcast technology since college. Music, broadcast tech, and my software career, all balance.

Music helps to promote the sims too. I hold dances and have some stores for shopping. In addition I founded Snug-Harbor-Radio.com and set it up as a 24/7 broadcast service. Snug Harbor Radio promotes SL, and Snug Harbor in particular, around the clock, with music rights paid. Snug Harbor Jazz and Blues events are also carried on the radio live.

My goal is to make Snug Harbor at least self sustaining. Its still subsidized by about 30%, which grows less as the business model changes to meet demand.

Rentals have not worked. Self development does. When we started, we put up four homestead sims. We carved each into five islands, and put unique houses on each. The community looked amazing, like a painting! But it is impossible to get rent that comes close to covering those costs. The reason is—while we created a perfect painting, people did not want to live in *our* painting. They wanted to make their *own* paintings. Most of the best renters do so because then they have a vested interest in their own places.



For those wishing to learn virtual development, take classes in building that emphasize prim minimalization, and land management. Learn about parcels within sims, subdivisions, property layout planning, and the "bonus factor." Learn about vertical property rights and renting, the difference between ownership and a land sale, and various virtual business models in SL.

We moved from "it is all set, just park your boat and live here," to "build your own place, but follow our construction rules." We changed so tenants could be given near-owner property rights yet not be able to hurt other tenants, or the public facilities, by making incompatible choices enforced by a land covenant. We have made each island have its own group and is protected from the development of others.

I have tried preserve all of it the way my father designed it. But the goals isto make it self sustaining, so it has to pay. The rent model would not pay, so the model had to change. The houses had to go. However, I have kept this main sim as it was and I enhance what he would most value. I am very careful to hold the mood and theme, even though tenants might like to alter it a bit at times.

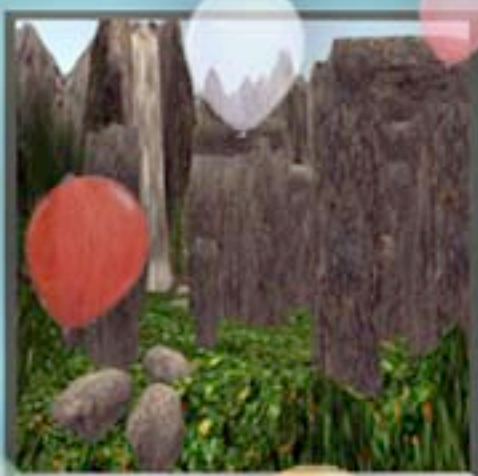


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pioneer profile

Nature as Redefined

by Sudane Erato
New England Estates,
Blake Sea



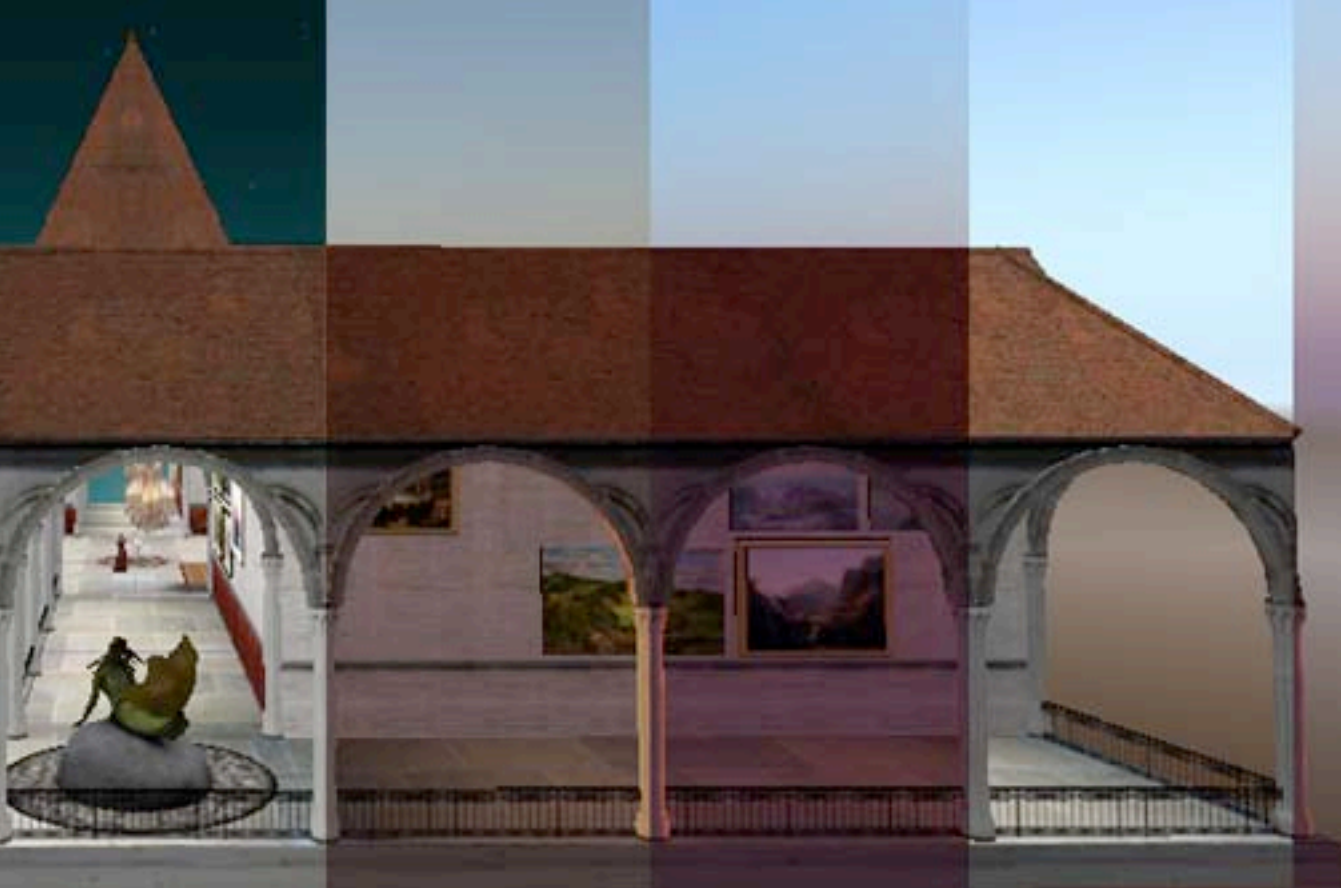
Getting my feet wet

Eight years ago, fascinated, I watched over my nephews' shoulders as they played *World of Warcraft*. But I knew that games were not for me. Then I read a story in the *New York Times* about *Second Life*®. I knew *that* was it. I spent two weeks on Orientation Island before I had the courage to enter the Real SL.

There was a lot here in 2004—just fewer sims. At first, I explored, and after a month, I joined a community (called then Neualtenberg, now the Confederation of Democratic Sims). I still belong and serve as EO, but I am not the owner. A democracy—a community who sets their own laws mutually while owning their own sims—is like a real town meeting. The group has found it needs LOTS of laws.

I bought New England later, which is a simple, normal estate. I own it, and I have maybe four or five very loyal, long term residents who help as EMs. We have shared principles, so we support each other in those.

The owners in the United Sailing Sims also go back before Linden Labs established the Blake Sea. We are one of the first group and share a clear common purpose. It keeps us together, even though we have plenty of differences. We can resolve these differences because we are mature adults. Also, we will exclude new applicants who seem immature and not capable of common action.



For a community to last a long time, principles and goals must both align and be consistent. This close group has been together six years—a very long time in SL! Although the land is expensive, we value what we do together. We all want a beautiful and peaceful estate to enjoy, so we are willing to work together to get it.

Yet we struggle to keep our sims and break even. New England had 45 sims in 2009-10; now we have 25. We can never again grow back to what we once were. We depended on the tier grandfathering to stay alive. I've slowly had to give sims up—too expensive, even at the grandfathered rate. A homestead resident has to pay \$110US/month—that's much! It would be hard for me if I wasn't able to make a business of it. I fear the expense may someday cause SL its end.

With a small group of four or five people, we work hard to attract and help new residents. There are two fairly equal sized groups in New England—those who stay for years, and those who stay only for a month or two. Sometimes new people flood in, and then some-times they flood out. It's hard to predict.

Both communities in SL keep me really busy. A bit restricted by real life responsibilities, I normally spend a few hours each day logged in, and all day on the weekends.

In RL I'm a finance person for non-profit companies, and that's basically what I do in SL as well. Managing people and money flow together. But I have never been so involved with so many people as I am here, and the people relationships.... I've learned a whole lot!

SL mirrors RL

I love New England, and I have always lived in adjacent New York City. But I am not a sailor. I'm very good at riding with someone else. However, I DO understand why people love it, and I'm happy to share a place where sailing is so wonderful. I like swimming too—not much good at it in real life—but I love it here!

Many sailors in SL are also sailors in real life. When they just can't get to *really* sail, they log in here. We work to make sure the sims are adjusted for the best sailing. With the connection to the Blake Sea, you can literally sail for hours!

The owners of properties bordering the Sea support that kind of use long-term. However we control our lands, we can't control what activity is on the seas.



Today there is a new kind of problem on the open water—it can become a battleground that blocks sailors. We set up defense lines for our own lands against such warfare. We also share information when there are griefers. If people want wars, there should be designated areas for their battles, and not blow up peace-loving sail boats.

Rules are for a reason

We are committed to preserving the advantages here. Maintaining a truly beautiful environment requires a lot of rules. Many will chaff at them, but they are necessary for theme and harmony. The culture of SL is very much "Do things your own way." We restrain that here. Many love it, and say how



Many leave SL because they are unrealistic about “community.” They feel that the virtual world should be utopia—that everyone should love everyone.

But people are people—same in real life and SL. This is not a game.

beautiful it is—but then don't wish to follow the rules to keep it beautiful. Those people should not live here.

New England is the strictest. We feel we must be. Many users are very self-centered, and have no concern for the ability of others to enjoy sailing here too, i.e., some bring in HUGE boats which block entry to everyone else.

Although I would love to expand, adding new USS estates is very hard. New estate owners must be of like mind, and accept all of our principles, and there must be a place to put them. Linden Labs has its many challenges. It is our premise that USS estates offers the kinds of activities that LL seems to encourage.

To do well in SL, realize that you are on your own. Despite the LL attempt to build playgrounds, find your own enjoyment... it won't be handed to you.

This is a world community. Be open minded. There are people from all positions, opinions, religions. I love how this is like an extreme New York! Now, I have dear friends in every corner of the globe.

Passion for greater reality

Perhaps I express my "mother-side" when caring for community members. I have no children in real life, so they are substitutes! Yet, though I deal with a lot of people, and dearly love many close to me, I'm a recluse.

My favorite place in New England is on my beach with its little house. It is inspired by Great Island, which is a real place in Wellfleet on Cape Cod. I love it now in both real life and in virtual life. The seagull is my spirit bird—nasty, noisy and beautiful.

Because I love shaping nature, I built most of New England myself. My preference is to be authentic. This is a dream of what we imagine to be real.

But I feel differently about my avatar. This is my real size and approximate shape, though I am not black. Rather, I'm a mix of German and Greek. This skin was so beautiful, I adopted it years ago. The original was much too young. The artist who created it has aged it along with me. I commissioned this adjustment when I was 63, two years ago. I have no desire to pretend to be 29. I am who I am, and very happy to be 65. But I do think the artist is too flattering! :)

One way or another, we all wear masks in the virtual world. These masks are fascinating! SL is real life—don't kid yourself. We are real people with real feelings. People are just as complex as in real life.

Nothing is easier here—except moving earth and building houses. The evidence is that I have more close friends here than in real life. There must be something to this environment that is so healthy. It has two sides, like everything, but with greater choices. I do wonder why more people are not willing to voice. I wish we had better gestures and expressions. I am part Greek—body language is everything!

Many people I meet are mature and generous, but those coming to New England are self-selecting. I'm sure we emanate a "mature vibe," and many may want nothing to do with that, except maybe to sail through.



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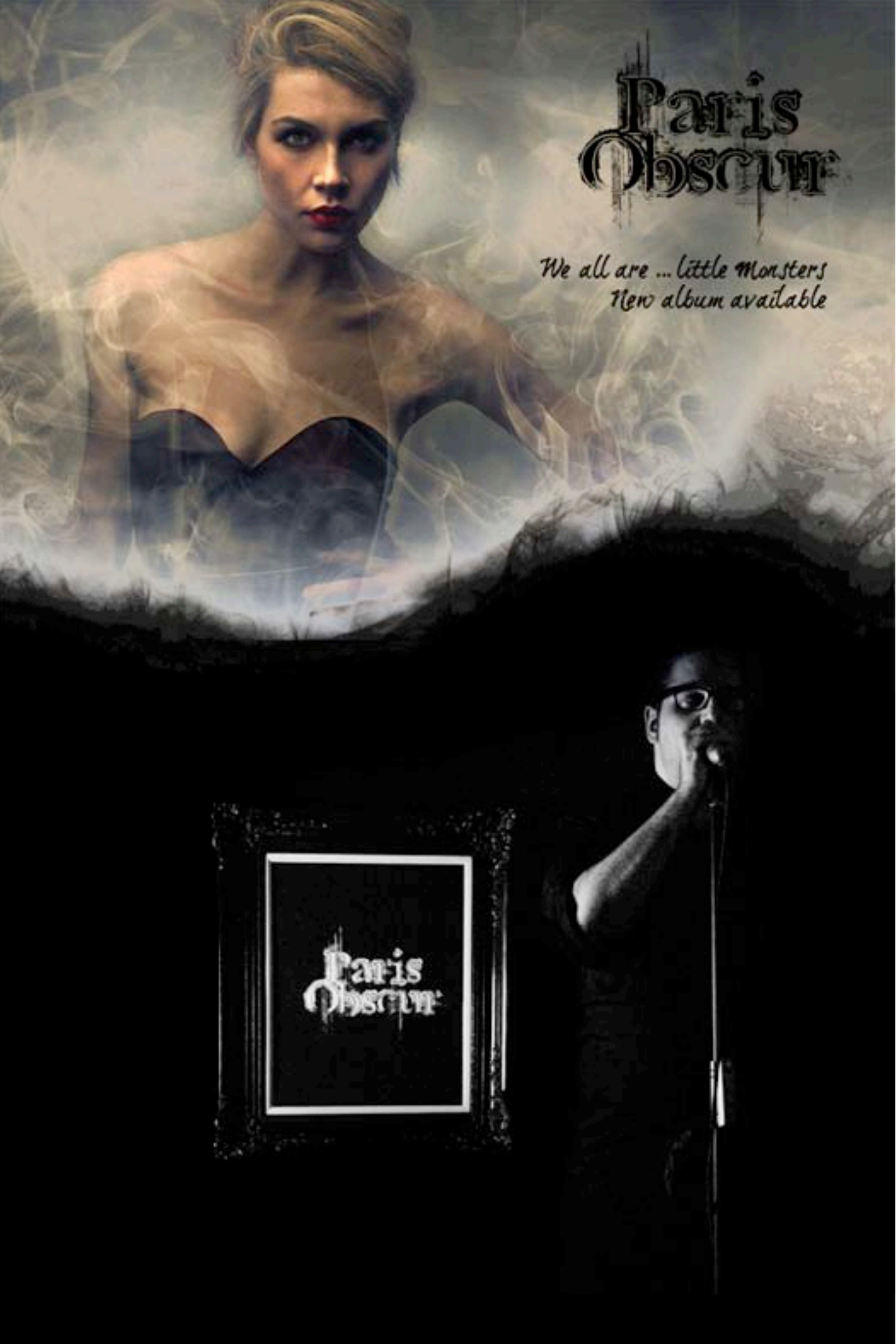
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A promotional poster for the band Paris Obscur. The top half features a woman with blonde hair styled up, wearing a dark strapless corset, looking intensely at the viewer. She is surrounded by wisps of smoke or ethereal light. The bottom half is dark, showing a man with glasses singing into a microphone. In the lower-left, a framed picture contains the band's name.

Paris Obscur

We all are ... little Monsters
New album available

A square logo with the band's name 'Paris Obscur' in a gothic font, enclosed in a white border and a dark, ornate frame.

Paris
Obscur

Tributes and Tales

by Russell Eponym

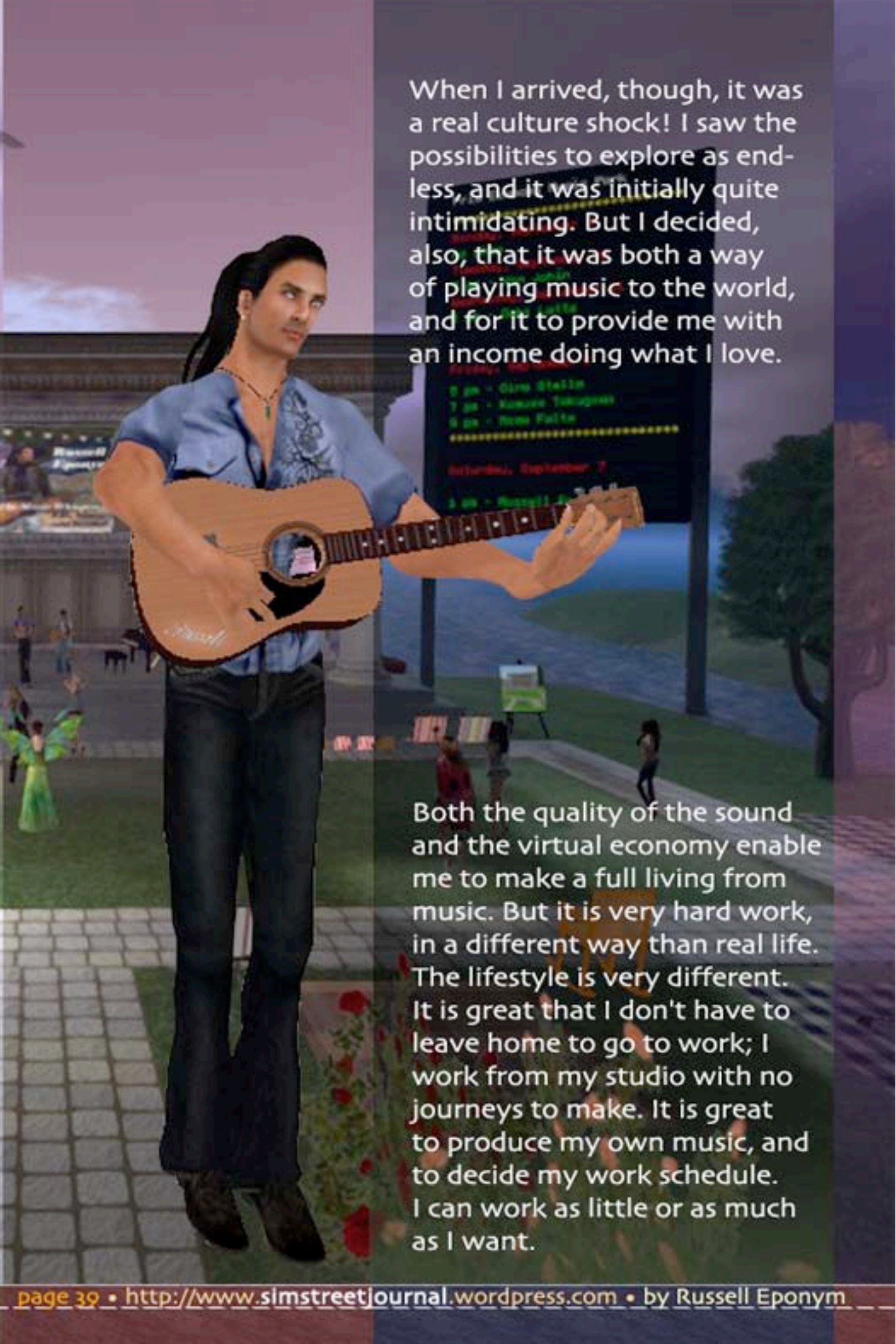
Mainly because it is so convenient to play Second Life® concerts and I have a full program, I tend to do more virtual shows now than real life ones.

I was a teacher for a number of years, then actually was a school principal. I decided to leave the profession and to take up music, before it was too late. It was always a dream to live through my music. Plus, I had played in many bands and ensembles, as a solo artist, and as a street singer in many cities. And always a writer.

I joined SL in 2006 January, having heard of the superior quality of the sound. So I streamed on my first day—within the first few hours actually. I came from Paltalk first. So performing here was my *raison d'etre*.....so to speak, my sole intention. There were very few live musicians here then.

critic's choice





When I arrived, though, it was a real culture shock! I saw the possibilities to explore as endless, and it was initially quite intimidating. But I decided, also, that it was both a way of playing music to the world, and for it to provide me with an income doing what I love.

Both the quality of the sound and the virtual economy enable me to make a full living from music. But it is very hard work, in a different way than real life. The lifestyle is very different. It is great that I don't have to leave home to go to work; I work from my studio with no journeys to make. It is great to produce my own music, and to decide my work schedule. I can work as little or as much as I want.



In the first few years, I did a lot more shows, and built a fan base. I complained about my fingers hurting from playing the guitar so much! Through hard work, I have a wonderful community, approaching 1300 members.

Promotion has always been high on my agenda.



I manage myself. Only I know what I am able to do. But I do have a brilliant team of five that look after the group and the venue, leaving me to perform. They are self-motivated and highly efficient, and have all been with me for years. We get on well and they understand my needs. The secret of good collaboration is good communication, common aims, documentation.


SL has become very complex. Population growth brings greater diversification. So I concentrate in developing my Eponymous Family. The loyal fans form the main stay of my audiences. This is not just an issue of talent either. It is offering more.

I both perform music and do readings. It is so encouraging how the readings have become popular—sometimes thirty-plus in the audience! It seems that adults have come full-circle from being read bedtime stories to now enjoying the relaxation of listening. Many have said to me that my readings have reopened many doors for them. I just love to engage people in some way with ideas, words, nostalgia... whatever it takes. And I do like to talk.

I am fortunate I came here when I could grow with SL. Today there is an increasing number of venues and an ever increasing number of musicians. Many came and went—mainly because they were not ready for the challenge. And some, sadly, expect overnight success.







As winter approaches my schedule will increase, I want to do more shows which combine different performance styles. Poetry and music combines so well—they are perfect bed partners. Some of my poems have been made into songs.

I like to perform a combination of original, traditional, instrumental, and cover songs. These are the songs that have been around for a century; they are our history texts. And they are the ones I learned to sing and play to. I started playing guitar at the age of 14. I have been writing most of my life.

I grow my listening audience by increasing the number of virtual grids I play in—now five. Many of my audience grid-hop with me. (I don't expect my audiences to attend two or more shows in such quick succession. That is not fair.) I can play in SL, and an hour later, be playing in another grid. This is one reason I do perform less in SL than I used to. I can also play in multiple grids at the same time to multiple audiences—stream to three worlds simultaneously. Most grids are stages to me, and I only participate in SL personally. I spend little time in any world doing anything other than performing.

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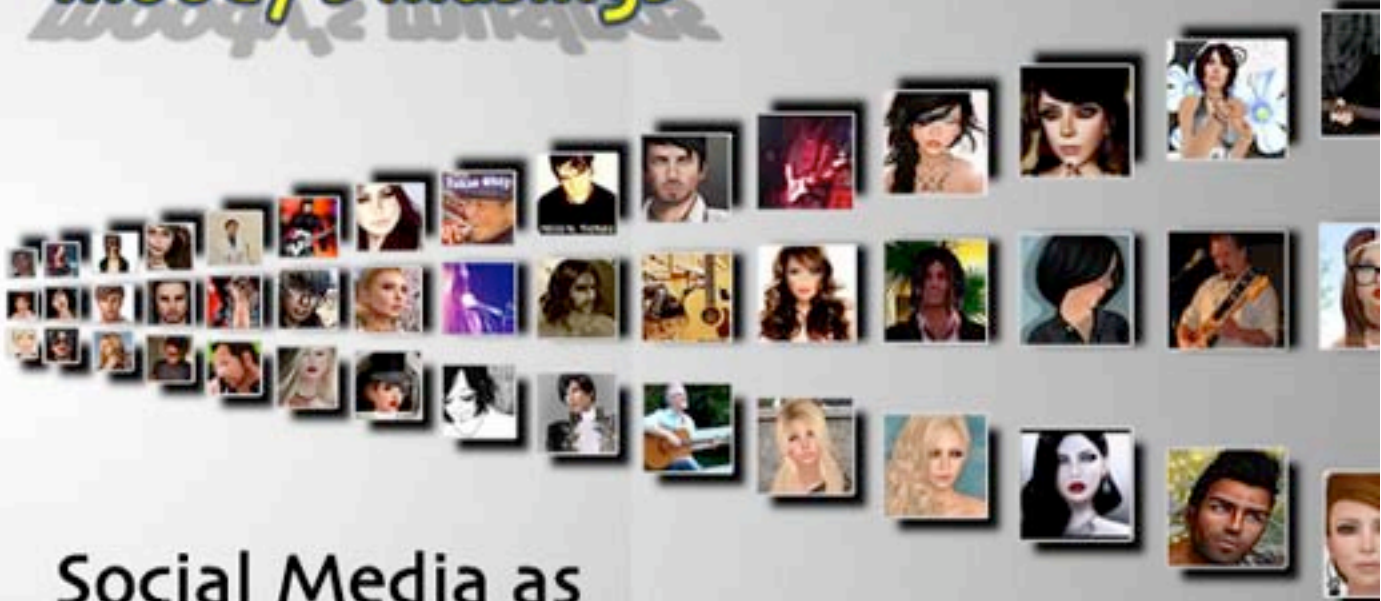


TRAX

LIVE MUSIC RESOURCE CENTER

Live music, listening booths, agents,
booking calendars, venues,
information, events, streaming

moody's musings



Social Media as Music Support

by Throughthewalls
Moody (Tara)

Social Media.

Is it worth it?

Does it work?

How does it work?

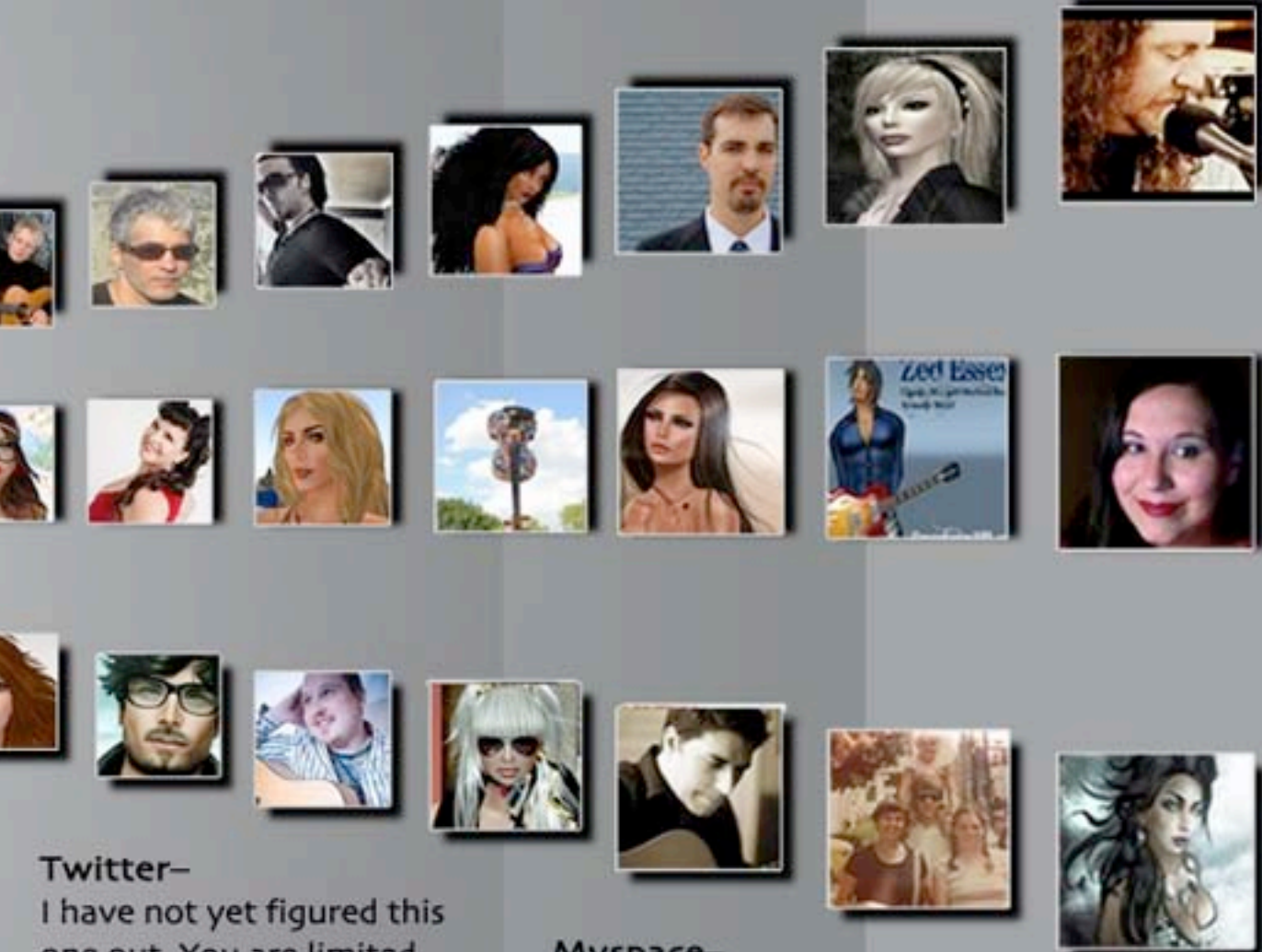
What options are there?

Seems like the choices are limitless and they are! For a career-booster, musicians must take it seriously.

So let's start with the big boys:

Facebook—

An awesome place to share with friends, family, fans and people with similar interests. You can post as many characters as you want and can share photo's, videos and more. You can create your own page and a group page and a fan page. Seems to me a lot of folks on Facebook tend to play any of way too many games to choose from. It's a great way to gain "friends" who will also see your posts. How do you know what apps to play? Well choose ones that attract the type of folks your music attracts. Every genre has it's own demographic, once you know what yours is you can find games on Facebook that attract that same demographic. Once you play the games you can add other players as friends. If you don't know your demographic well, then you need to stop and check out your fan base. Talk to them gather information about who they are and what they do.



Twitter—

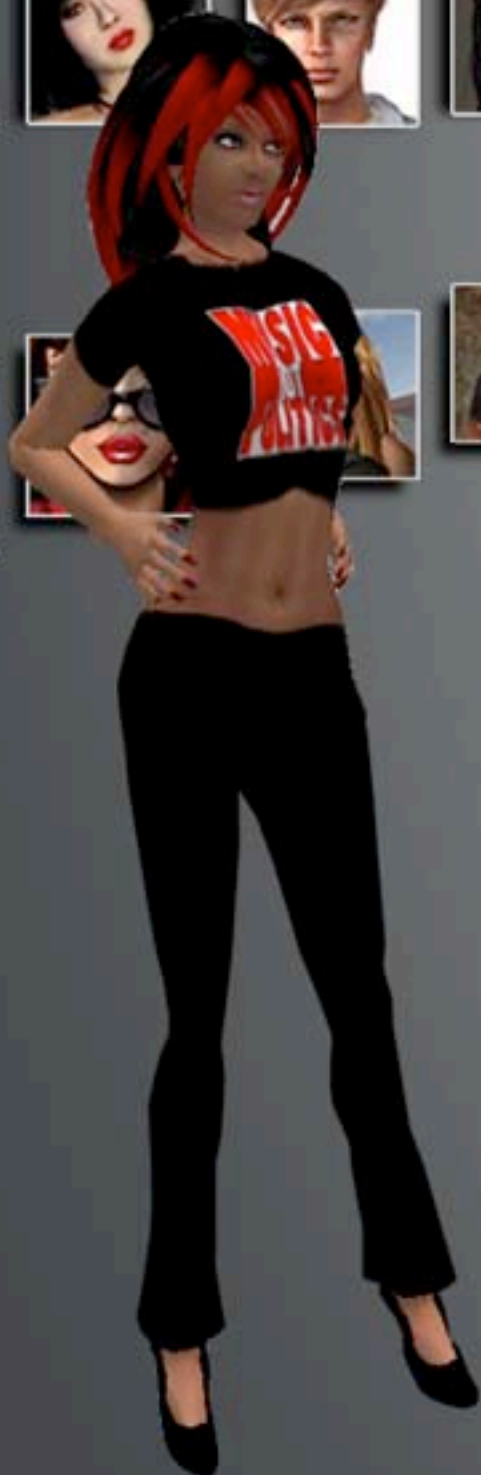
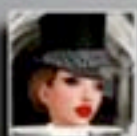
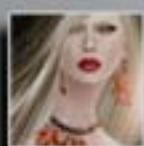
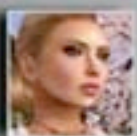
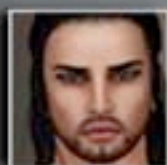
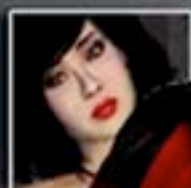
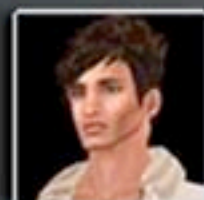
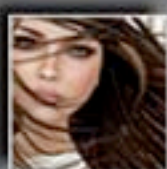
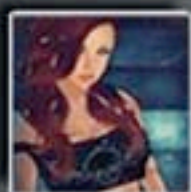
I have not yet figured this one out. You are limited on the amount of characters you can type so you can never really get a full thought across. You get followers and you follow others but you miss most of the posts because people seem to post constantly on it. Honestly I am not sure how effective it is. We ran a few experiments with it but were not happy with the results in terms of interest in the music we offered. I am not saying it does not work but I found it to be a small return on time invested.

Myspace—

Well that's just a dead duck. It was great at one time but lost it's luster. From what I have seen of it these days, it's mostly youngsters. Maybe worth a look if your music appeals to the younger generation but I can't see a reason to invest much time on it.

Instagram—

I have not had access to this though I understand it is growing rapidly. I would love some feedback from anyone who has used this medium to promote their music and any return they have gotten from it.



Youtube-

Not so social but a great place to share your music and get comments. Important to answer comments and when people subscribe to your channel, check to see if they have a channel and subscribe back. This seems to be a way of sharing back and forth, and perhaps gaining access to other musicians fans as well thus giving you more exposure.



MeetMe–

Most have not heard of this site. It was started as MyYearBook for mostly younger kids, but grew into a social medium people go to actually communicate and of course, find dating partners. While I would not suggest only being there to promote music, they do offer musicians fan pages, and they work ok. I would definitely say I have gotten return worth my time investment.

These are just a few of the more popular places to promote yourself. But when using these mediums, there is an expectation of exchanges. It's not just about getting on and promoting a show or song and leaving.

You need to truly put effort into talking to people who "like" your song. You need to make sincere connections and truly involve yourself with the folks who like what you do. Superficial doesn't work when trying to build a loyal fan base.

The new age of music demands social interaction between performer and followers. It will take time, and a lot of it. That is the investment you must commit to, and if you can't commit to it, no matter how good your stuff is, you won't build loyalty within the followers.



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from the desk of
Ann Slanders



So great at giving advice, the real life Ann Landers created a profession doing so! As a pioneer of human emotions, she gave sound and life-changing advice to the love-weary, confused, grieving, and anyone needing perspective in her famous *Chicago Sun Times* column that ran for 45 years. She reached millions with her clear, witty, and often sarcastic responses. *SSJ* recreates this legend in Second Life, a society often rife with drama, questionable ethics, and lovers who struggle for identity. Let help you with your dearest difficulties. All queries will be kept anonymous to protect the identities of the guilty. If you wish for her expert advice, please drop a notecard to Ann Slanders.



ASK ANN

Don't struggle alone- Ms Ann Slanders will help settle all virtual queries.

Dear Ann,

I've been seeing a gorgeous woman in SL for a few weeks, but am starting to worry. My friends comment a lot as she is quite the stunner with both her SL avvy and her RL profile photo.

They say it's not really her and that she must be a man, as she is uncomfortable using voice or a webcam. I'd like to partner her as she is brilliant and clever, but can't of course if she's really male. I need the truth!

Yours,

"In Love but Terrified"

Dear Mr Terrified,

She may well be, and she may well not be.

In SL, it's very easy to let doubts creep into an otherwise good relationship, and the doubt can be very damaging as there is no real way to settle your questions.

Many women (and men) are uncomfortable about risking their privacy and safety on the net by revealing too much, and you need to respect that need for caution. Also, many people, despite possibly being fabulous in every way, enjoy the chance to have a different identity to their RL one. There are lots of valid reasons why, and most will not welcome pestering about their RL identities.

The most important question for you is one you must ask yourself. Do you really care, and why? Some end relationships over this and move on, while some people learn to accept others for who they are in SL and have worthwhile relationships.

Perhaps try to listen to yourself, not your friends.

Ann

Ms. SLanders will answer all inquiries if placed properly addressed in a notecard and personally Instant Messaged to her in-world. Queries will be kept confidential, changing names to protect the guilty and support those wronged by inappropriate behavior and etiquette.





ASK ANN

Don't struggle alone- Ms Ann Slanders will help settle all virtual queries.

Dear Ann,

I met a really nice boy at a dance. He insisted we go to a beach that very night, but it didn't seem like such a very nice place after all. He wanted me to sit on some poseballs, saying they were nice romantic poses, but the people around us were doing very intimate things. He told me to relax and stop worrying, but I left. He was then very rude to me in IM. Did I overreact?

Sincerely, Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

Certainly not! There are some young gentlemen who's chief hobby is to take advantage of young ladies. They can often be found on the sidelines at popular ballrooms, and will try to engage you in private IM, usually with just the word "hi". If you answer, they will try to engage you in a brief -but-dull conversation before flitting you off to their favourite "romantic beach", which more often than not proves to be nothing more than one of Second Life's free sex beaches. These are places where nasty old pose balls can be found, as these gentlemen never have a private apartment of their own.

In order to avoid getting caught up in such a situation, here's a quick checklist to look for-

- an empty profile, excepting free sex groups and picks
- a default avatar straight out of the box (often sporting the ubiquitous freebie black tux with blue bowtie)
- conversational skills of a clam
- almost immediately ask if you have a webcam.

Next time, say to him "Yeahhhh let's get naked, baby and I'll show you my favourite place!" then teleport him to Governor Linden's Mansion.

Better luck next time,

Ann



BACKWATERS

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We don't either!! Our DJ's enjoy it!

JOIN US ON THE BAYOU FOR A BLEND OF
MUSIC, ROMANCE, BEAUTY, AND FUN!



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Poster Credit:
Eliza Wierwight

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Show how virtual worlds have helped yourself or others.

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Please submit
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See details at:
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the aesthete & the amateur

by Heavy Writer,
edited by Eleanor Medier



Each morning, I have my ritual—coffee and a couple of cigs on the porch. I settle in the comfy chair, and stretch my legs out, enjoying the silent garden. But on one recent morning, my dog Muddy began barking with a frenzy. I went to see who was disturbing the peace, and found the family lawyer, who looked at me and said, “Heavy, you should feed this dog sometimes.”

I shook his hand and answered, “I’ll feed him right now if you are bringing me bad news.”

He took a step back, and replied, “Well I have good *and* bad news... Good news is we won the trial against your so-called ‘cousin.’ And the bad news is that the bank will take over the property on your Uncle’s garage in one week if you don’t pay the mortgage on it.”

The Accident and the Albers





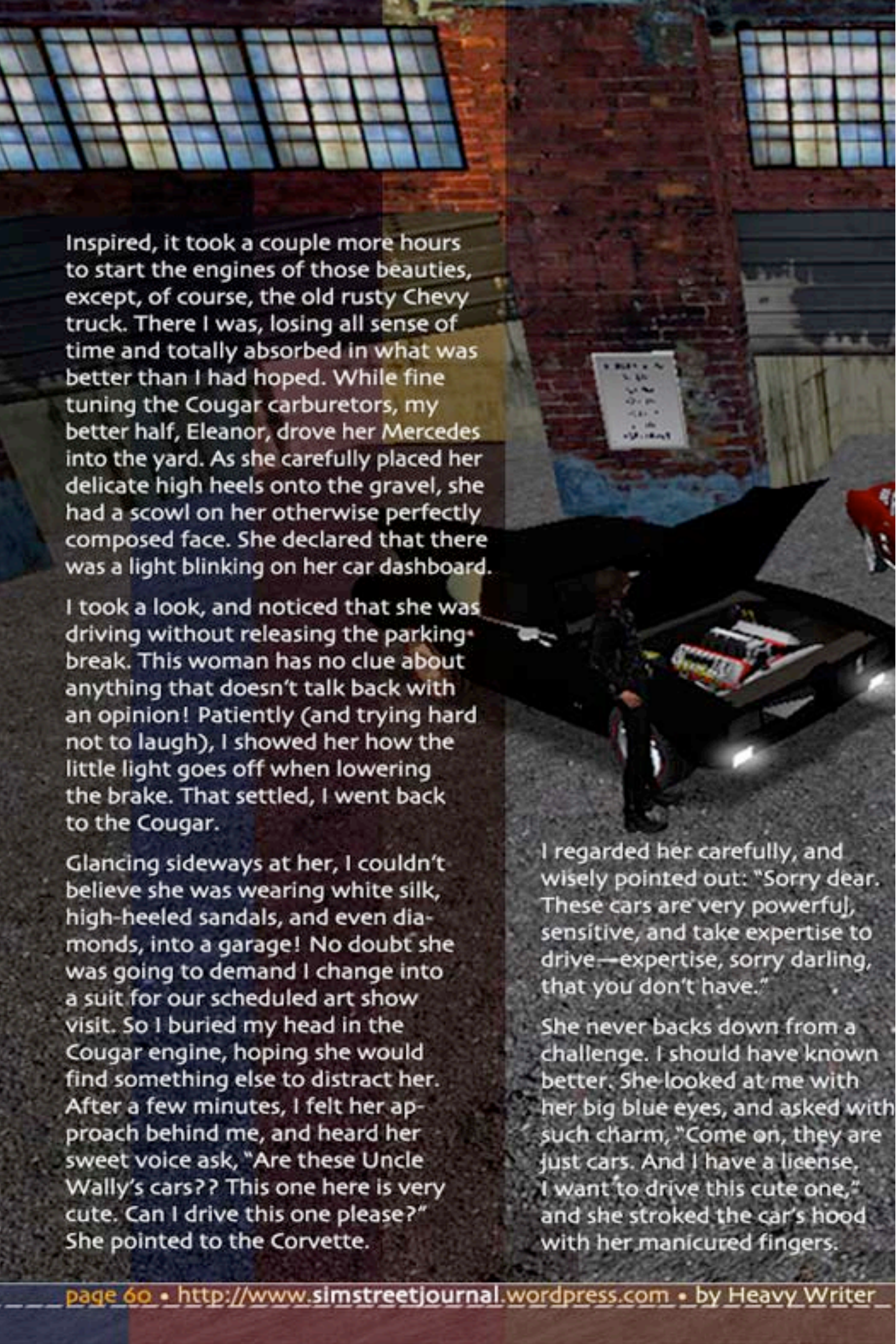
After thanking him, I watched his back leaving, calmed the dog, and made another pot of coffee—I needed it!

Uncle Wallace drank himself to death a couple of years ago. He was my only family. Yet after his death, out from no where, a guy claimed to be his son. It took two years in court and several thousand dollars in attorneys' fees to finally get what's mine by right. So winning was great news!

I zoomed on my motorcycle over to my Uncle's garage—now mine—in Streeterville. Indeed, on the gate, was a last-notice from the bank. And, I discovered that the place was a ruin, used and vandalized by local gangs for two years. But the bays' doors were intact. Memories flooded in, perhaps because of the gasoline and burnt oil smells. This was where I

spent my childhood with Uncle Wally, who taught me everything I know about cars.

After a couple hours of hard work, I finally pried open the rusty doors. In the first bay, I found a bunch of crates with all kinds of spare parts (that will take months to sort and identify), and a bunch of monster trucks tires. In the second bay, I found more crates and a rusty Chevy truck (that will take months to fix and refurbish). Hopefully, goods things were to come as I pulled open bays 3 and 4. There, I found, to my great delight, an old 1923 Ford T, a Mustang Shelby GT 500 fastback, a '61 Chevy Corvette, and a beautiful black Lincoln Mercury Cougar. All were in top shape! The legacy of Uncle Wally to me! Poor Uncle Wally! What treasures!



Inspired, it took a couple more hours to start the engines of those beauties, except, of course, the old rusty Chevy truck. There I was, losing all sense of time and totally absorbed in what was better than I had hoped. While fine tuning the Cougar carburetors, my better half, Eleanor, drove her Mercedes into the yard. As she carefully placed her delicate high heels onto the gravel, she had a scowl on her otherwise perfectly composed face. She declared that there was a light blinking on her car dashboard.

I took a look, and noticed that she was driving without releasing the parking break. This woman has no clue about anything that doesn't talk back with an opinion! Patiently (and trying hard not to laugh), I showed her how the little light goes off when lowering the brake. That settled, I went back to the Cougar.

Glancing sideways at her, I couldn't believe she was wearing white silk, high-heeled sandals, and even diamonds, into a garage! No doubt she was going to demand I change into a suit for our scheduled art show visit. So I buried my head in the Cougar engine, hoping she would find something else to distract her. After a few minutes, I felt her approach behind me, and heard her sweet voice ask, "Are these Uncle Wally's cars?? This one here is very cute. Can I drive this one please?" She pointed to the Corvette.

I regarded her carefully, and wisely pointed out: "Sorry dear. These cars are very powerful, sensitive, and take expertise to drive—expertise, sorry darling, that you don't have."

She never backs down from a challenge. I should have known better. She looked at me with her big blue eyes, and asked with such charm, "Come on, they are just cars. And I have a license, I want to drive this cute one," and she stroked the car's hood with her manicured fingers.



Wisdom still prevailed when I explained, "That 'cute one' has a 315 horse power engine. Such power on a light body makes that car a beast. Trust me on this dear. It has a very sensitive gas pedal! It is not like your Mercedes with all those electronic gadgets to protect you from yourself! Ok—you can drive the Ford T if you want..."

Eleanor can be very focused and stubborn. She rarely, if ever, takes 'no' for an answer. My mistake was taking my eyes off of her.

She simply slipped her elegance behind the steering wheel of the Corvette, engaged the ignition, and before I knew what happened, had squealed out of the yard in a cloud of smoke. I was so surprised, I could not react, except to know something bad was about to happen.

Sometimes I really hate being right. Five minutes later, she zoomed back into the yard with such speed that she crashed the Corvette straight into the Mustang, crunching the front ends of both cars!!



I ran towards the catastrophe, alarmed for Eleanor's safety. Quickly, I extracted her out from the bent metal. Amazingly, she was stunned, but had no scratch on her—not even a wrinkle in her white silk suit!

Once I set her on her feet, gave her a few slaps to get back her senses, I realized she more deserved to be spanked! Then it hit me what she had done. "You never listen! You have ruined two beautiful cars and put yourself in danger! Do you know how expensive these cars are and how hard it is to find spare



parts?" I sat her on the back seat of her Mercedes, and assessed the damages, which were extensive. Neither car would start, and I had to push them back inside the bays. I locked everything down and took her to the hospital for a CT scan. All was good—she was fine—such a lucky lady! I was relieved, but so pissed off that she never listens!

With her full faculties restored, Eleanor dragged me to another art review. Despite the visual intrigue, I couldn't take my mind off of the cars that she ruined, and from the bank taking over Uncle Wally's garage.

So it hit me how to get her to pay for the damage, and pay off the bank, both at the same time! Smiling to myself, my anger started to evaporate as I formed my plan. For this to work, I followed along as we investigated the installation "House of Memories." It made me remember why I married her in the first place, and how I can get what I want in the end.

(story continues page 86)

Fortunately, Eleanor was so distracted by the accident, that she forgot to direct my wardrobe choices before our gallery visit. This time the "gallery" was out in some remote country pasture, so maybe that's why she let me off easy, and I got to wear my black leather jacket. She was happy to ride silently while I drove my new/old Lincoln Mercury Cougar out on the open road for the first time since inheriting it. After her disastrous accident, I had to show her how a classic car SHOULD be driven!! It was great to find her humbled, though I couldn't wait to get even for her smashing up my two other newly-acquired classics! Such a shame!!

"House of Memories" by Almut Brunswick, Moeuhane Sandalwood, Lilia Artis, and Haveit Neox

When we arrived at the 3D show, "House of Memories," we were greeted by the connective structure of Almut Brunswick's tram and city. The rail stops were the works by Moeuhane Sandalwood, Lilia Artis, and Haveit Neox. A bit overwhelmed by the big place, I suggested we focus, choosing one section to review. But my better half rarely listens to me. Off she ran to explore, soon out of chat range. I suddenly realized I was talking to myself.



This installation has the theme of memories, which made me question how the various segments relate together. (We also got distracted by a neighboring installation.) It seems tricky to have four artists cooperate. My experience with artists is that each thinks his (or her) idea is the best. And if you ask them what they are most proud of, it is always the last thing they produced. They sure can't see context! But, I guess wearing such blinders means that Eleanor has a job, because someone has to have the perspective to make sense of all these accomplishments.

Dutifully, I followed her high heels to the entry point, and we tramped to the first station—by Moeuhane Sandalwood. In her element, Eleanor pranced right towards the door of the sketchy glass-like structure, read the sign, and cammed around. I caught up, but I don't bother reading the sign. I don't want to read when I visit something visual—at least not right away. Don't tell me what to see. Let me see what can be said without words! This attitude doesn't make me popular with the artists. But then, I don't get paid for my opinion; Eleanor does.



Moeuhane Sandalwood

"Shadow of a Nightmare Past" from "House of Memories"

Heavy: "Who would like to live in a glass house—or is this an ice house? I must admit, this is one of the coolest things I have seen in SL."

Eleanor: "It is very cool!!!
COOL AND COLD!"

Heavy: "But I'm not sure if I can call this art. If we call every crazy build in SL 'art,' we will have a lot to cover! And look how I get lost. I feel claustrophobic!"

Eleanor: "This is definitely art! It looks like a drawing that I am inside. It is like a memory—the way a memory is sketchy—how we dream of things in flashes, not complete."

Heavy: "This is a trap for innocent avatars! Honest working avatars that get stuck in an ice cage—or frozen to death. If I would name this, I would call it 'Trapped in Your Illusions.'"

Eleanor: "That must be part of the point. There is writing on the mountain side. It says 'My mind is playing tricks on me.' The room you are in is moving, things are shifting."



Heavy: "My mind is playing tricks on me ! You got to be on drugs to enjoy being inside this house. You are just trapped, sweetheart, in this illusion. It is nice looking on the outside, but inside, it is a nightmare. It makes me think of those bad Hollywood productions, when you are chased by a ghost and each door is locked; each direction is a dead end. If this is a dream, it is definitely a nightmare for me! I try to go out, but I get even deeper inside. This makes me think of Dante and his Divine Comedy, when he was entering Hell, a poster said 'The ones who enter should leave any hope behind.' It is much easier to escape from Alcatraz than to leave this house! I don't even know where I am—for for a second you believe you know where you are, then you make a step, and it all changes. In certain angles you think you found the exit, then bump your head into another wall!"

Eleanor: "You have to find the hole in the wall—like a Twilight Zone episode. Look for the doorways dear. You must admire the geometry and layout, though. It is a very formalistic approach, and distinctively monochromatic. It is even cubistic, but in a gestural, expressionistic way."

Heavy: "I give up trying to find the way out. If you still want a husband, give me a teleport and get me out of here. [Eleanor sends a teleport invitation and he joins her on the path leading up to the house.] Thank you for saving me from that black hole. This can be much more fun in real life, if done in ice. Then, you won't have much trouble finding your path."

Eleanor: "SL is a good medium for this concept—sketchy, softer, amorphous, with that recollection quality—even haunted—like trying to remember a childhood home, or somewhere you stayed a long time ago. It offers a lot of emotion. What about the violinist on the first floor? He is a ghost, a partial memory."

Heavy: "He just got frozen there like I was about to, if I didn't have you outside. I dare you to go back inside again—go to the bed on the third floor and come out. Lets let's see if you can emerge in this lifetime!"

Eleanor: "Ok, here I go!" [She scampers inside to the first flight of stairs, looks around on the second floor for the next stairs, finds them. Like a mouse in a maze, she scurries upward and discovers the bed as if a piece of cheese.]

Heavy watches her from safely outside: "For a second I thought you built this house—you went inside like you walk into our own house! It looks like you are familiar with the space."

Eleanor: "No, I never went inside before. This is no problem dear. Here is the bed, and I sleep [and lays down]." Do you see what happens? The walls change to black and there are faces in the dark."

Heavy: "Are those butterflies flying around?"

Eleanor [smiles at his incessant optimism]: "No dear, they have eyes and teeth—like goblins."

Heavy: "They can be butterflies too—that depends on what you like to see. I prefer dreaming of butterflies than faces with big long teeth! Actually, it is much more fun for me to cam in than actually go in."

Eleanor: "I like the inside—there are things to discover. Now lets see how long it takes me to get out."

Heavy: "Take your time."

Eleanor finds the shortest path down both flights of stairs and out, joining him immediately outside on the path]: "Hi dear—no problem!" [She smiles victoriously.]

Heavy: "Darn you are good! How come you don't get lost? You lose your way all the time ordinarily—or maybe because you don't pay attention—your head is always in the clouds—or in the art."

Eleanor: "I could see the doors, dear."

Heavy: "And I always think I'm the smarter one. At least I'm not blond—but you are—blond, I mean."



My mind is
playing
tricks
on me !

Eleanor: "Yes I am, in SL, anyway."

Heavy: "When you went inside I thought this will be a fast divorce without lawyers [grins]."

Eleanor, irrate: "You thought I would be lost in there forever? And you would just leave me there??"

Heavy: "Yes."

Eleanor: "Seriously?? You would abandon me? Some husband!"

Heavy: "But I must admit, you are smarter than me *this* time. Don't worry sweetheart, I give credit for achievements."

Eleanor: "Thanks."

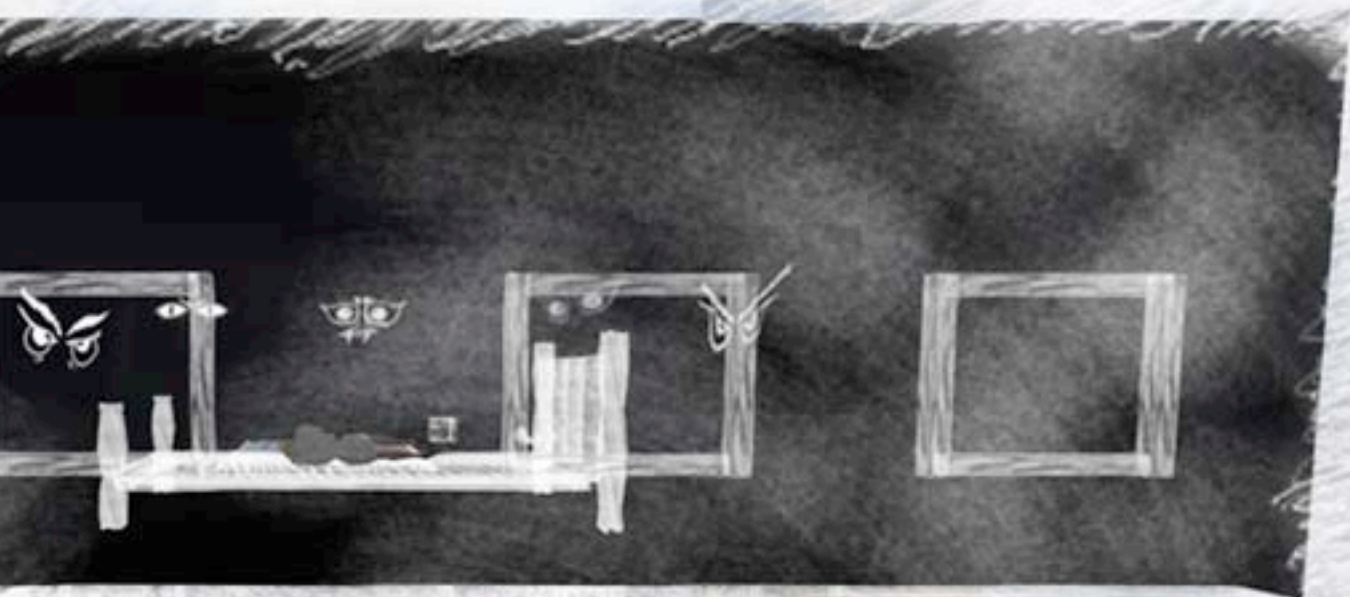
Heavy: "Look at the many small houses around this big one, falling down the hill. Among so many dreams and goals we can have, we pick one and we make an obsession of it. Such an obsession is bad because it traps you. This house is just an obsessive dream or goal, and we discard the others."

Eleanor: "It has an openness because of the transparencies. We question where we are and what we are doing. Nothing is certain and we must always re-evaluate where we are, and where we are going."

Heavy: "Transparency is appealing from outside, But once you are inside, it is too late, and you are trapped. Looking out, you see that you might have chosen something else, but it is too late, you are trapped inside."

Eleanor: "No perception goes further than your physical possibilities."





Chapter Kronfeld: "Purgatory - Laeuterungsberg"

Eleanor: "Right by 'House of Mirrors' looms this enormous work! I can't help but be distracted. Look how tall it goes—up into the sky! I guess we are to go up these ramps."

Heavy: "There are skeletons on each level. Rats. If you read the info book, you have nothing else to discover."

Eleanor: "I disagree—there is something to find on each platform. The skeletons are expressive and dramatic. It has the theme of sin, but it is the interpretation that is interesting."

Heavy: "Funny how I was thinking of Dante's Inferno earlier. Here it is—an inferno can have many faces."

Eleanor: "That reference fits here more."

Heavy: "I thought you are not into art that tells a story."

Eleanor: "I never said that, dear. But I don't think ALL art has to be literal—there is a case to make for pure visual."

Heavy: "This gives the entire story on a plate so any moron can understand it. Go into any Orthodox church. You'll find paintings that tell stories like this. I like art that has a riddle—a meaning that you need to look for. This piece is too obvious. It would be better without a manual. Without the signs, I might find different meanings, which would be more fun."

Eleanor: "Can you pretend you didn't read them? It holds together as one piece even though it is spread out because the skeletons give it a unity of message—a cohesion. It does work just on its visual strength. The signs are simply additive."

Heavy: "Of course you say that, because you never admit when I'm right."

Eleanor grins: "Yes I do, sometimes, dear—when you ARE right."

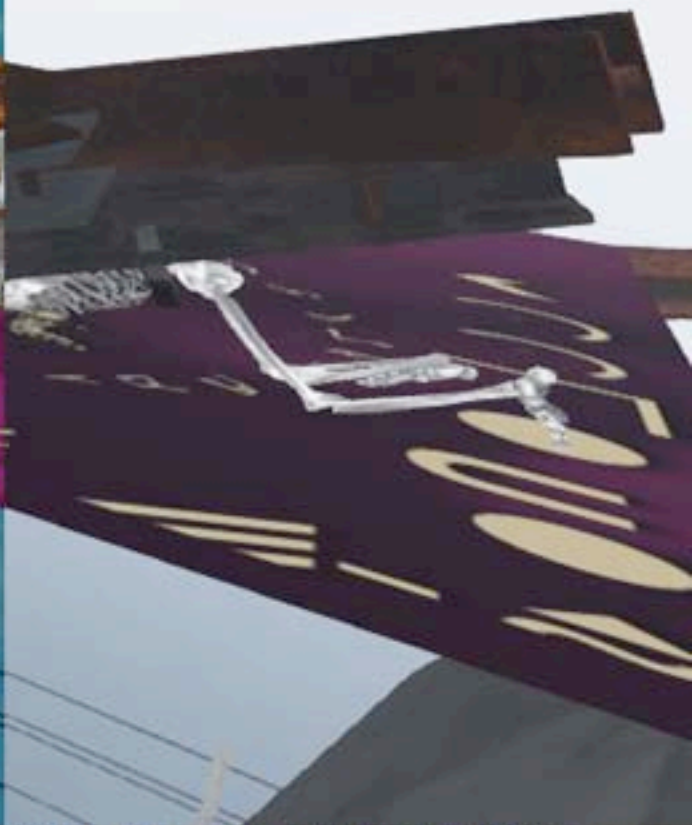
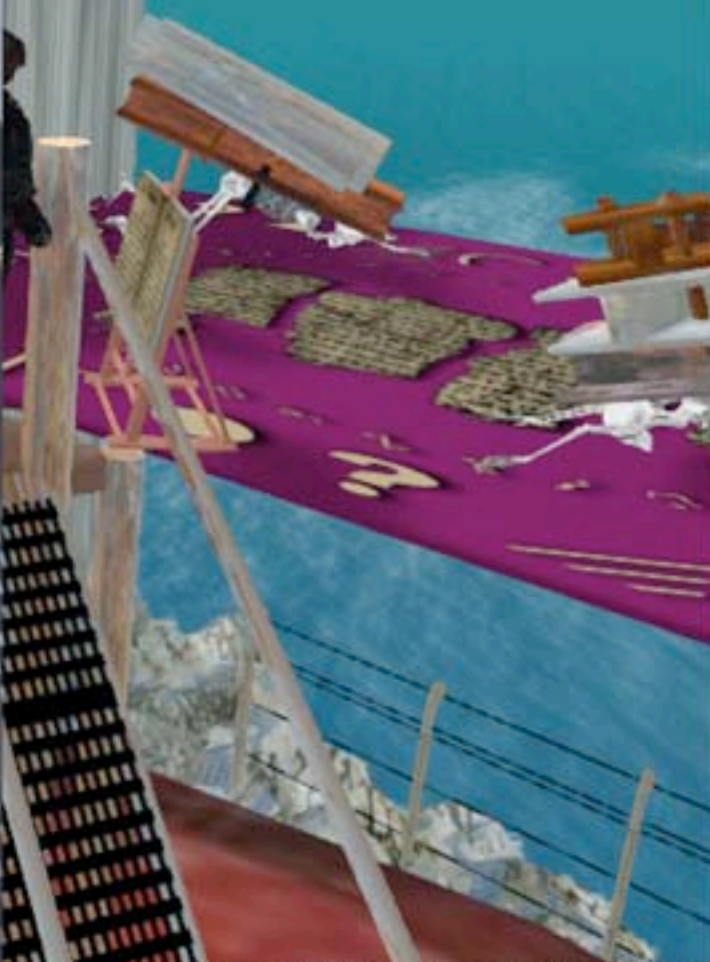
Heavy: "I was right today about you not being able to drive a muscle car. Do you listen? No—you almost get killed—not to mention that you wrecked two beautiful cars—and I'm still pissed off."

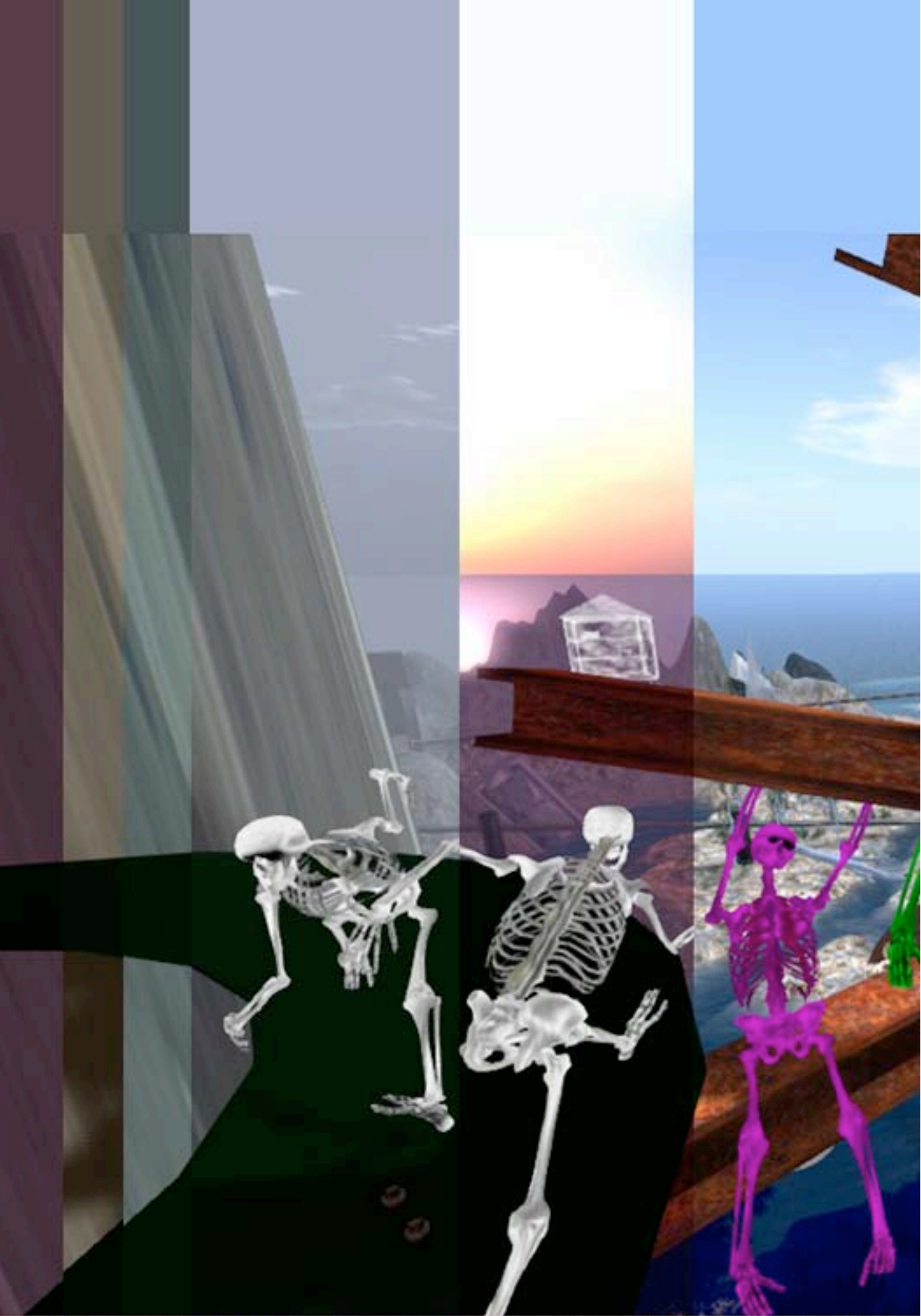
Eleanor: "I would like YOU to try driving in high heels!"

Heavy: "I told you: easy on the gas pedal! Well let's forget about it or I might get trapped here with these skeletons on the 'Wrath' level."

Eleanor: "This 'Sloth' level makes me feel hyper. All these punishments are eternal—people's skeletons last and here they are kept busy!"

Heavy: "The skeletons are pedestrians running away because you drive on the wrong side of the road! Here is my level: 'Sloth.' I'm lazy and proud of it! I am so lazy that I would love to review a more conventional art







gallery with free champagne and beautiful women in cocktail dresses!”

Eleanor: “So climbing ramps is too much work for you??”

Heavy: “You know I like hiking. But we trade hot women and free champagne for skeletons?!”

Eleanor: “Here you just get to DRINK with skeletons—on the ‘Gluttony’ level. You won’t catch me being gluttonous!! [She looked down at her perfect figure.]”

Heavy: “Why are some skeletons white and others have color? If you ask me, it is because the artist needed some variation. The colors seem to have no meaning.”

Eleanor: “The white skeletons say that those ones lost their uniqueness—the ones with color have individuality.”

Heavy: “So can you tell which one is John and which one is my Uncle Wally?”

Eleanor: “Sure. Uncle Wally is the purple one.”

Heavy: “If Uncle Wally were here, he would throw you off the platform to teach you a lesson about not listening. It must be your lucky day. And, you have an answer for every question, right??”

Eleanor: “Why not? What fun are questions if you don’t offer answers??”

Heavy: “I was just trying to find your place on this installation dear. I guess you go on the ‘Pride’ level—with those guys having big beams on their backs. So while I’ll jog forever, you’ll crawl around under heavy weights! [smiles]”

Eleanor: "Do the Sins get worse as you go higher up?"

Heavy: "You judge yourself which level is the worst. The best thing about this installation is the ramp keeps going up and up forever. Well, not forever, there is a limit of 5000 meters in SL."

Eleanor: "Why is that good? I think the ramps are scary, like I could fall off very easily, and it is a loooooong way down!! Is there an end? A top?"





Heavy: "That the the ramps go on and on makes me think there is more than just the seven levels—that there are more than seven sins.Or maybe if you go through all the levels and keep going up, if you give up your sins, you might ascent to heaven and become an angel."

Eleanor: "Does that happen? Or do you just keep trying and trying? At the top, if you set the lighting as instructed, it is turbulent like a storm up there. We go higher and higher, yet the clouds remain above us."


Heavy: "These kinds of tricky questions make me value art—when not everything is told, and there is room for more than just one possibility."

Eleanor: "Well, I for sure, don't want to feel there are more sins!"

Heavy: "Definitely there are more than seven!"

Eleanor: "There are? Name number eight then!"

Heavy: "I can give you more examples in a heart beat, but I guess 'Seven Sins' are enough for one day."



Have it Neox: “The Backyard” from “House of Memories”

Heavy: “If Bach organ music would fit the ‘Seven Deadly Sins’ installation, I would play Jingle Bells here! This is enticing. It makes me to want to find the meaning, just because it is not so obvious like what we have seen before. This tells a story.”

Eleanor: “What story? This piece seems very busy to me, chaotic even.”

Heavy: “I see beams of light, bells, fire dragons, and butterflies. There is not just fire dragons—there are ink dragons and purple dragons. People carry them on carts. Let’s follow—it looks like all are going the same direction.”

Eleanor: “It has a carnival feeling, almost celebratory—like a parade. It feels like a fantasy, a child’s dream. There is a path with what looks like pages to follow.”

Heavy: “Please don’t tell me that scroll is the solution to the entire riddle—I don’t want this ruined by words! Zoom out and look from above. There is a tall statue, and behind that, there are more large figures coming up this hill. [waited] See??”

Eleanor distracted: “Oh look! A pose ball! We can do Tai Chi! This form is Yang style. This movement is called ‘Cloud Hands’ [moved gracefully]. But I don’t know what Tai Chi has to do with this.”

Heavy: “It seems happy here—like characters from a variety of stories gather. Each bell might symbolize another story to tell. Do you see that mountain on my left? The gold one? It is like a wizard.”

Eleanor: “I can’t figure this piece out—here is a whirlwind. Different references are scattered all over.”

Heavy: “There is nothing to figure, dear. It is a dream place—or might be innocent childhood memories. I can relate to these characters. It is well realized—a bit too crowded maybe, but there is something to see on any angle.”

Eleanor: “I don’t know where to look first. Stylistically, the different parts connect together well, but are symbolically so complex.”

Heavy: “That’s the catch. When you were a little girl and your mom read you a bedtime story, you would have liked her to read *all* the stories. But you had to choose just one at a time. Same here—there are stories within stories, even mixed. But if you know *your* story, you can find it. You have recognized few characters already haven’t you?”



Eleanor: "Not really. Is it most like the Wizard of Oz? Does a skilled execution make up for a confusing idea? It seems to take study to absorb. There are clues—like the pages, the repeated figures—trying to speak without knowing what to say."

Heavy: "That's because you want to understand everything. Why don't you just enjoy the happy colors, the light beams, and the magic of the place? Go back to the innocence of a kid and forget, for a moment, that you are grown up."

Eleanor: "I want to find the story."

Heavy: "Probably if we read that scroll, we will get to know more, but I don't want to. I would rather daydream that I'm a kid again, to be read a story."

Eleanor: "Awww. I like the butterflies."

Heavy: "Darn! I couldn't stop myself to read a page. It says: 'DELIGHTED TO SEE I COULD SCULPT ONION DOME WITH MUD. I MADE MANY OF THEM AND STUCK THEM ON STAKES MADE OF TWIGS PAINTED THEM WITH BRIGHT COLORS AND



ARRANGED THEM IN THE GROUND TO ADD TO MY OLDER CITIES. TO MY EYES THESE WERE GRAND PALACES AND EXOTIC BAZAARS THE TRUE ABODE OF ALI BABA AND FAIRYTALES.' So it is not Oz, but All Baba. A kid would love this."

Eleanor: "It is made with the innocence of a child, and the skill of an adult."

Heavy: "Yes, the skill of an adult. Kids are sloppy, but have better vision. A kid can see the 'Grand Palace' from a piece of mud. He can see a magic wand in a stick found on the road."

Eleanor: "Wouldn't a kid care to put all this together to make sense?"

Heavy: "I think this piece tells how a child feels and sees the world. I love this freshness, even if you—the big shot art critic—don't like it. It takes great skill and imagination for an adult to create such innocence."

Eleanor: "It is too busy."

Heavy: "Arabian cities are crowded—palaces and bazaars. You get lost easily. So, in its ironic innocence, this piece has realism too."



Eleanor: "A chaotic bazaar. Happy or confused? Going around in circles? It is almost—but not quite—too cute. Even consistently derivative."

Heavy: "I wish I would see art like this more. I'm tired of people creating half naked vamps with suicidal tendencies."

Eleanor: "Here are large transparent figures running through the air. Maybe they got so frustrated, they jumped off the cliff. I do like things to make sense, which this piece doesn't. Here you can let go of your preconceptions, yet you can't when viewing abstractions!"

Heavy: "This makes sense to me."

Eleanor: "Perhaps it makes sense in its not making sense!"

Heavy: "Who says only abstraction gives room for speculation?"

Eleanor: "Exactly dear—so you can't suspend a literal view when looking at abstraction, but it is ok for this piece to give symbols like a riddle."

Heavy: "I can afford to be inconsistent. I'm the amateur, remember? Anyway, abstraction does a poor job telling something. Symbolism does not tell *about* feelings, but *creates* the feelings. Most of the time those expressed feelings are sad, without hope, or with an existential viewpoint. Rothko paintings do that to me."

Eleanor: "I don't see Rothko's work as negative or depressing."





Heavy: "No, it is not depressing, but warm and welcoming, even relaxing and meditative. Rothko's squares are not concentric and the edges are not so well defined like the ones of Albers. This is why I like Rothko better."

Eleanor: "Because he is ambiguous?"

Heavy: "Yes. Vague is a quality in art. Albers has a German feeling to his paintings, like he says 'this is how it is supposed to be done—this way, and only this way.' This is why I don't much like Albers. I don't want the artist to tell me what I should see—I want him to make me see it myself."

Eleanor: "Do you feel Albers tells you what to see?"

Heavy: "Yes—like he is teaching a lesson or like a scientific experiment. He says: 'you are a square and your place is here, and you need to have this color because your neighbor has that color. You must follow the rules.'"

Eleanor: "He creates the rules as he goes."

Heavy: "He wants you to play by his rules."

Eleanor: "He wants you to see what he sees."

Heavy: "No. He reduces you to a box that is contained in another box and is contained in another box—like those wooden Russian dolls that have one inside another. Who are you to question his rules? You are just a square, and not even a circle! Albers' art is too industrial—those squares are made with an engineer's precision. He measures everything. My Latin blood does not like such precision or rules."

Eleanor: "I see, and I like things to at least make sense."

Heavy: "I like a world with more shapes than just one—I like a bazaar! Chaotic, but organized at the same time—I like things to make sense too, dear. But I like to extract the sense from a pile of nonsense."

Eleanor: "This piece makes more sense to you than to me."

Heavy: "It makes me feel a child. At first, the dragons had me question if this is a happy place. But then the dragons are small, like babies. All babies are cute. There is a kid carrying a fire dragon on his cart—taking care of him. When I saw the butterflies, I knew it is a happy place. The colors and the lights are captivating too."

Eleanor: "But the figures are going around and around, and many are not really here—like shadows, or ghosts. It could be considered 'happy'—but it feels like there is something sinister underneath it all. You wonder who makes the rules here—who is in charge? It seems everyone is self-absorbed in fantasies that are secret, that will not let us in. And many of the figures are running, somewhere, but are not really here. We are here, but are they? What is real and what is not?"

Heavy: "There is a time to be literal, and a time to let go and just imagine. Why question everything? To be a kid again is magical in itself. Your studies can make you blind to the obvious."

Eleanor: "'House of Memories' could also be called 'Questions of Reality.'"





(Story continues from page 63)

Not a very complicated solution to my economic problems, all I needed was the right timing. Quiet for a few days after Eleanor wrecked my newly-inherited classic cars, I enjoyed our art review banter. I let her think I forgave her for what she did.

Everything seemed normal when I dropped her off at the airport. Because she would be gone at a conference for a week, I had the time needed to implement my plan. And, I'll test her observation skills!



Racing home so inspired, I took two stairs at a time up to the living room. There, I stood in front of the Albers paintings she had hung, when trying to convince me that pure abstraction has validity. I won that argument [SSJ #3], but I let her think she did.

Eleanor would discover how efficiently I could win all the battles! So with great pleasure, I chose my least favorite of the colorful Albers images. Because I paid attention, I knew who the good galleries were. Making an appointment with one dealer (don't tell Eleanor who), I stashed the painting in the trunk of my car and headed out.

I was amused when the art dealer met with me upstairs from the gallery. What nice digs she had! She sat on her couch, patting the empty seat beside her. But I chose to sit on the chair. Also, she didn't seem to be in much of a hurry while we negotiated a price for the painting.

However, she was sharp, and got it for about half the price listed on the Internet. I let it go for that because she paid in cash—and she had a great pair of legs. After mutual admiration and exchanging smiles, I ran right over to the bank. First I paid the remaining mortgage and then took care of all Uncle Wally's debts. With the remaining money (who would guess squares could cost so much??), I planned to fix the two cars that Eleanor had smashed.

Then I had even more fun! I always told Ele that I can paint squares as good as Albers. This was my chance to prove it! I replaced the painting with my own version that I made on wood board found in the garage. I didn't have any black paint, so instead, I used burned motor oil. It looked good, but was a bit smelly. I hoped that odor would be gone by the time Ele returned. Perhaps she won't even notice the change.

Mathilde Vhargon

Xirana Oxímoxi



Active Art

Eleanor Medier

Geejann Blackadder



Gallery

collaborator

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—Jayjay Zifanwe, University of Western Australia

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collaborator

“When new in the virtual world, you soon become aware that people make and sell items, they roleplay, and others use it as a 3D chat room. You have to ask yourself: ‘What should I do in this place?’ I build a psychology of spaces. To use them means being community-based.”

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collaborator

“I enjoy discussing the creative process. I also love when authors read to audiences. And, going to many concerts, I hear new talent all the time and want to share their music with others who might not have heard them. People are riveted learning about the artists’ real lives—how they began, what inspires them, and how they are growing in the virtual world.”

—Netera Landar,
Editor-in-Chief and Publisher

Dedicated to the “unforgettable” people who bring a little joy into our lives through art, writing, and entertainment—the best and brightest from the virtual worlds are featured.





Unforgettable

- Isablan Neva Builds Out of Love
- **Dexter Ihnen is Funkalicious**
- Morgue McMillian-Shoreland Expands Virtual Roots
- **Sweethearts' Shannon and Blake Endear and Endure**
- Kage Stratten Wraps Form in Emotion

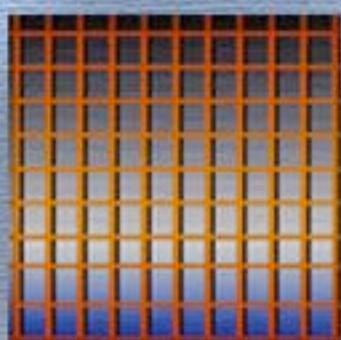
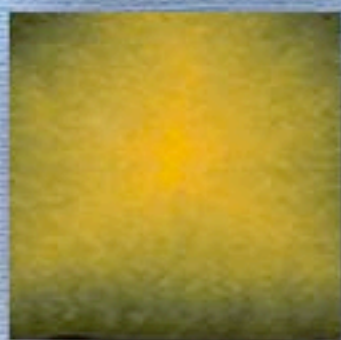
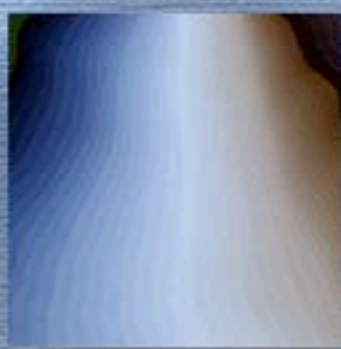
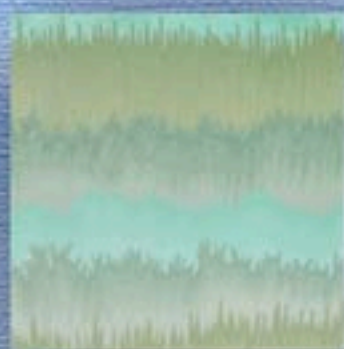
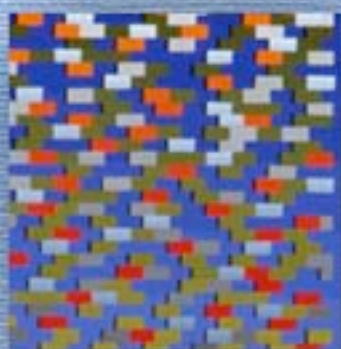
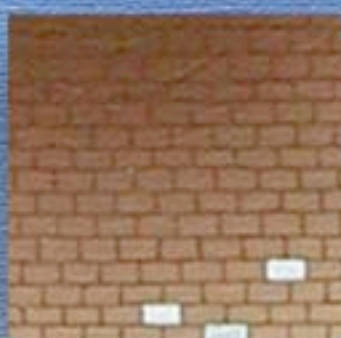
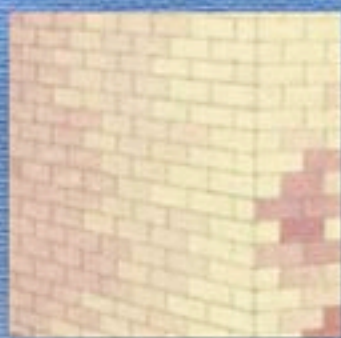


#Five

Isablan Neva

psychological scenery

Paintings by Eleanor Medier

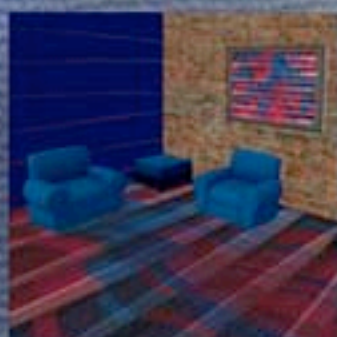
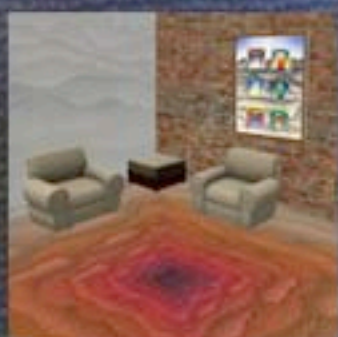


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