

SIM STREET JOURNAL

EXPLORES THE RELEVANCE
OF VIRTUAL TO REAL
COMMERCE AND CULTURE

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- ready learners
- teachers as students
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ISSUE #9 • 2014

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Every enterprising resident in Second Life® is here to learn. When asked “**What do you like best about the virtual world?**” the top responses include: “friends, learning, and events.”

How do they learn? The contributors in this issue exemplify ways to learn, and expose the gaps between.

The entrepreneurs tend to learn in the trenches. They increase skills as they go. **Chriscloud Loon, Ferre Howlett, and Arkad Baxton** all began their virtual journeys with sketchy preferences. They each experienced a discovery of self as they formed their purposes and direction.

The educators follow the direction of formal education. Universities, with their degree-bound focus, mostly use virtual worlds not for teaching students, but for relating to each other.

Conferences, connections, and demonstrations might also include classes, delivered to real life students. They provide basic avatar assistance and integration. **Lorraine Mockford, Thinkerer Melville, Lorraine Stanton** offer varying points-of-view, but all agree that the future of virtual education shines brightly. There is a renewed optimism that is more realistic to virtual culture advantages.

Between these two methods of learning are those institutions that offer skill-building classes in-world such as **Rockliffe**. Conferences, events, and presentations explode on countless sims. SL supports a society the size of a real life city. Educators with information centers serve the higher than real capita population of entrepreneurs, designers, and artists per capita than in real life.

As education evolves, there is sure to be more offerings in-world for students. Conferences that draw the most attendance help to point the direction of comprehensive learning. Focus needs to be on how learning progresses versus what technology is used. Fortunately, this is one goal all the contributors embrace.

— **Eleanor Medier**, publisher





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Motivated Learning

by Eleanor Medier

Enterprising people know that continuous learning is a life-long process. Virtual pioneers all confess that a large motivation for having a "second life" is to learn, develop ideas, test talents, consider potentials, and to be inspired by friends.

Learning, both through the entrepreneurial informality and the professional formality, is stretched to new horizons in the virtual landscape. All those committed to the environment's advantages over other platforms, agree that the potential is far from utilized, but will be.

Through a shakeout, virtual schools are evolving to best use the medium. With so many uses virtually, the delivery of classes to students is just one on a list of applications. How Second Life® and Opensims evolve will divide or bridge the communities in the next phase.

Learning varies by intent. The entrepreneurs make their own way, usually without much assistance. Learning in the trenches may be one method, but each tends to do it alone, not taking advantage of others' conclusions. The educators have full virtual plates as they adapt to a new learning genre. Hence, SSJ is penetrates what is learned from others, and connects the entrepreneur to the educator.

virtual visionary

- Chriscloud Loon — represents the consummate host. Having worked in many virtual capacities, he follows his talents like sign posts on the highway. A student of human nature, his community-building skills also provide residents what they most want. "A Path to Popularity" PAGE 20

entrepreneurial experience

- Ferre Howlett — represents the quintessential entrepreneur. Taking advantage of opportunity, he adds pursuits like climbing stairs. Patience allows him vision, purpose, and flexibility. New skills and business strategies continually inspire him. "Patience to Grow" PAGE 30



pioneer profile

• Arkad Baxton — represents the comprehensive executive. With an interconnected horizontal range of businesses, he is motivated by a master plan. The specifics may vary, but his overall direction is consistent. Mastering both SL and social media, he makes them work. "Axioms Applied" PAGE 36



in-world to out: educators' experiences

• Lorraine Mockford — represents the instructor who recognizes the strength of virtual conferences and events. Realizing that there are many avenues for delivering educational content, she has a historical perspective on what educators have learned. "Experience from Evolution" PAGE 45



• Thinkerer Melville — represents the sagastic view of a retired professor who now studies the virtual culture and educational developments. He survived the tumultuous history of virtual education, and, as he observes, he makes sense of developments in his regular blogs and postings. "Experience from Expectations" PAGE 46



in-world to out: educators' experiences, continued

- Lorraine Charron — represents the researcher and the practitioner. Assisting a nursing community, participating in activities, and conveying her work into her PhD, she is a student of the students, an expert in how learning is best achieved virtually. "Experience from Integration" PAGE 48

- Phelan Corrimal — represents the educator that addresses the demands of in-world students. Offering classes, integrating volunteers, and supporting a library of resources, he fills the needs of residents building skills and a foundation in the virtual world. "Experience from Adaptation" PAGE 54

the aesthete and the amateur

- Eleanor Medier — concludes from what educators contribute and her experience: "Experience through Serving" PAGE 56

With Heavy Writer, she discovers a sculpture to debate the validity of abstraction. The winner of the debate is obvious to each. "Seeking Visual Enlightenment" PAGE 64



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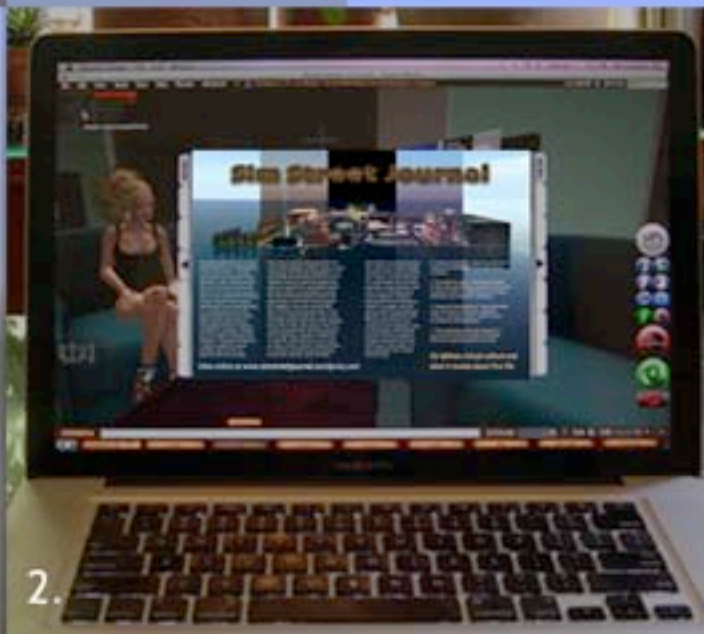
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virtual-visionary

A Path to Popularity

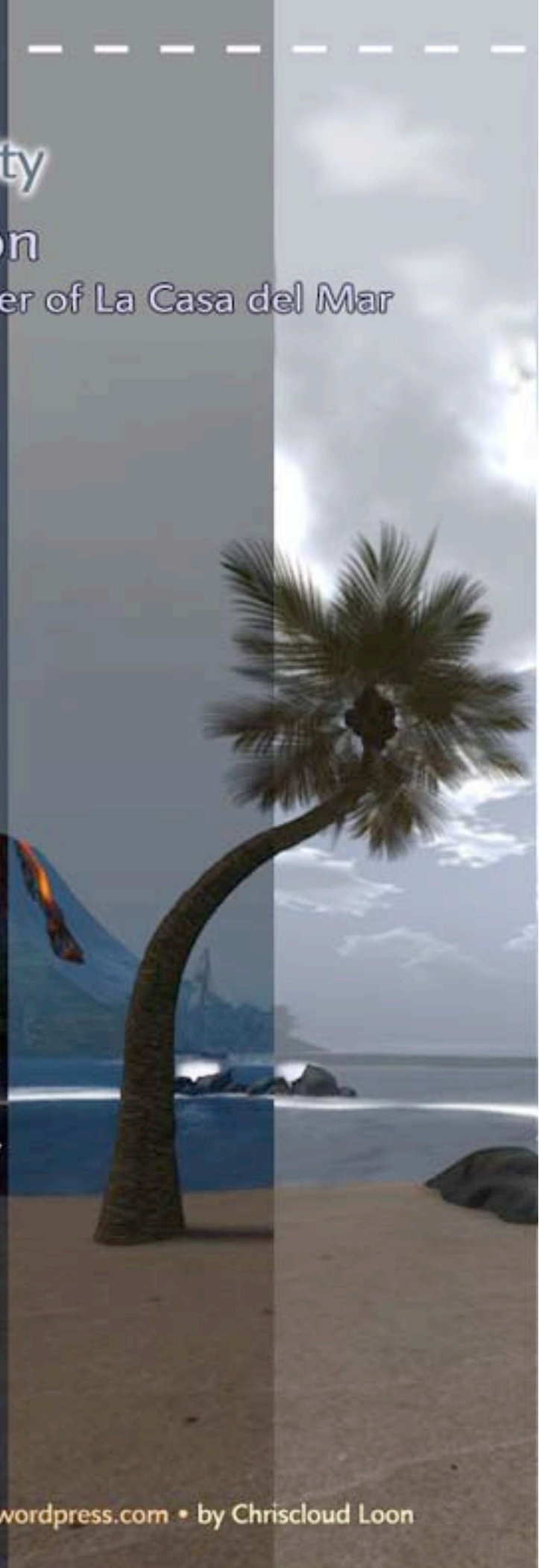
by Chriscloud Loon

entrepreneur, DJ, and owner of La Casa del Mar

Communicate through Technology

When I finished high school, I left Romania. It was 1989. And because I really missed my friends, I used voice chats—first FireTalk, and then PalTalk. They only had voice and video, but listening to friends from my country, seeing them even using webcam, gave me the feeling of home. It was there at any hour, day or night. I am a night owl... so my neighbors were happy!

I found out about Second Life® in a magazine called *STERN*. I could not imagine communication as a pixel avatar. I don't like to play computer games. So I thought that SL must be a game—to win, and go to next level. Well. The magazine told about those who bought islands and created new worlds—living in the sky—like Madmax. I saw pictures of fantasy places that I wanted to see. Once in-world, I also wanted to create. That was in 2007.





Find Affinity

In exploring, I found the beauty of the best creators. I started to make pics. And I wanted to make guitars. Spending nights in sand boxes, trying to change prims, was amazing!

Soon, I rented a place, made a studio, and shot pictures of crazy, amazing avatars. One day, I found my studio full of naked females. They asked me if I wanted to work as photographer for some sexy fashion ladies. We made a deal: I needed models for my gallery, and they had my work for free. It was fun to experiment with many models and learn more about photo technique. But, after a while, drama started. When it became too much, I closed it all, and make pictures exploring from sim to sim.

One day, I did a keyword search for "blues," and I was shocked! There was a lot of Blues in SL! In real life, my dad was a musician in the 60's. I grew up with his guitars, and friends visiting to play. So I took some LMs, and FOUND MY WORLD!

At a club, Kevin Oh was playing LIVE. I knew his name from Paltalk, and I found him in SL two years later! He said that there are more friends in SL from the old chats. I was in heaven! Many of those friends are still here.

Choose Direction

For fun, I made some stuff to sell. So I tried having a shop at Crossroads, but I left it after few weeks. That was not mine. But to start a Blues Museum at Crossroads? That was like a BIG BANG! I collected information to make it right. It was my own Blues lesson. I was mad about knowing more and more!

Friends from the southern USA came to help with knowledge about Blues. That was where I made my best friends in SL. And we are still the same, like years ago. Blues people are true. If you go to modern clubs, you can't find people and make friends like in Blues places, and I say this from heart.

The Museum started officially on June 29th 2007 — my Rezz Day — that was in January 2007.

At Crossroads, I also got experience DJ'ing, and learned how to talk on a mic. I was shy about my English language. Yet, I nobody said 'GO HOME,' I was very happy! I wanted to DJ again and again.

Then, in a rock club, I asked a girl if I could take some pics of her for my gallery. That was fine. I took the photos and sent her copies. But, when talking, she said: "I talk only with people who speak fluent English." So, that killed me a little. But at Crossroads I could fly, just like I am. Nobody had a problem with my English, fluent or not.



Help Others

There are many kinds of people who come into SL. Some look for the 'one and only' partner—that dream person. Others look for having fun, adventure, music, creations. But, there are many lonely people in real life. I think most of them do look for a real life partner in SL, to feel for real.

Everyone finds drama. People can make things complicated with only two words! For those who give much, others will want to take much. SL and real life are the same. But, in SL, people can jump to real life very fast. Difficulties are easier to escape than in real life.

I am open to helping others, but that leaves me open to hurt sometimes. Hurt comes with the desire to own, and I cannot be owned by anybody.

In real life, I work as massage therapist with very sick people. Every day, I help from twelve to fifteen for 30 minute sessions.

This work seems quite a contrast from SL, but I love to help others. I prefer the craziest of people. They are not afraid to tell about their real life character. The part I like best here is meeting people from everywhere. So many are the same. And so many are different, its like a painting of your life.



Those who need peace must take care about how they explain things. Everyone needs some wisdom! Use instinct and experience. There are some very sensible people here. Last weekend, on a real life restaurant wall, I saw a saying of Einstein's: "Fantasy is more important than wisdom, because fantasy has no limit."

It often helps others to tell them a fantasy. It gives them something hopeful and works very well.



Make Commitments

DJ'ing started to work very well. I was in more Blues clubs. After a while, I wanted to DJ other music styles. It is in me. The real Chris is a mix of Romanian, Hungarian, and German. I wanted to go deeper in Music, and here, there are many World Music places.

Crossing Culture started with the first Feed a Smile charity in SL. It helps to feed hungry children in Kenya. The event lasted one week. I get vacation from my real life work for this. Weeks in advance, I connected with friends to come, DJ, or to play live. They all came and it was magic!

I continue to help Feed a Smile. When my Dad and I fled Romania during the night, we ran over the border into Serbia without papers. After one month, we came to Germany. We wanted to breath freedom. We talked of the future and made plans. Dad asked me, "what will you do if you get rich?" I said I will give money to help the poor kids in Romania. Dad was scared. He asked, "Why Romania? Because they are yours? Why don't you help kids in Africa? They need it more than Romanian kids." He was right: there are more poor kids in Kenya than in my own country. Someday I wish to visit those I help to feed.



Seek Balance from Danger

Crossing Culture and the group ran well. I made hundreds of friends. But now, I need to go another way. I spent too much time of my real life for the music and party fun. For a few years, I got only two or three hours of sleep each night... I had only SL on my mind.

Then, about two years ago, my real life body got sick. I had surgery for cancer. Now, I need to take more care of myself and relax. So, I come here to enjoy time, create, and make a place for art and music, but not for an all-week party. It was very a expensive lesson, but I learned it.

Actually, I have lost many friends in SL—virtual junkies who died—real life DIED. SL is crazy, amazing. But getting lost here can kill the immune system, just like smoking or taking drugs. People stay here all night. I did that, and still do sometimes on weekends.

Now, I rent a camping place in Alsace for real life weekends, just to feel the sun. And, I am not alone in real life. I have a great family. But lonely people are in danger. I tell them to go out and dance. Meet people, so not to be the prisoner of a lonely heart.

Connect to Feelings

Just like in real life, everything that is too much can kill. Only one thing does not: too much love never kills. Set limits on everything else, but not on love, which opens a greater dimension of feelings and connection.

The cosmic vibration to feel friends through communication in SL can be real. Music ties people together through feelings. It is the best sharing. When I hear the same music as you, in the same moment, and we see the same picture in SL, we can be on the same wave.

One day, a friend was playing live in SL. When she talked, her voice was totally different—the vibration was too high. I asked after her what is wrong? She said, "my mother died yesterday." So, I can *feel* friends—if they are happy or sad—only after few words, even in writing chat.

A long time ago, I met friends in real life from other online chat rooms, and it was a catastrophe. But with all the friends from SL which I've met in real life, the feelings are the same, like meeting old real friend after years.

Ghandi said: "There is no way to peace. Peace is the Way." Just do that, and understand it in everything. There is no path. Those at peace never need to search.

A virtual world scene featuring a central fountain with a statue, surrounded by palm trees and a modern building with large windows. A person is sitting on a bench in the foreground. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent text box.

Nurture Creative Efforts

Many of my friends are great artists — but are afraid to show their art because they don't know who they are. I wish to give these talented friends a little push into cold water, to help wake them up. Art should be shared, and encouraged.

The mother of one friend, a real life painter, was old and very sick. We did an exhibit of her real life paintings in SL. My friend put her mama on the PC, so she could see the avatars looking her exhibit in-world before she died.

Similarly, I have many real world patients in wheel chairs. I've brought some of them into SL, and it is magic for them — a dream! This is a true second chance for them. It is great to share with those who are ready to get or give.

The saying "When the student is ready, the teacher appears" are words that changed my life. And my teacher came — from the other world. But I need to change my real life too. It is a progression. In the game of life, I need to find the next level. The material world makes me tired; it is too much all around. By spiritually experiencing SL, there is no more distance, or time. It is all here and now.

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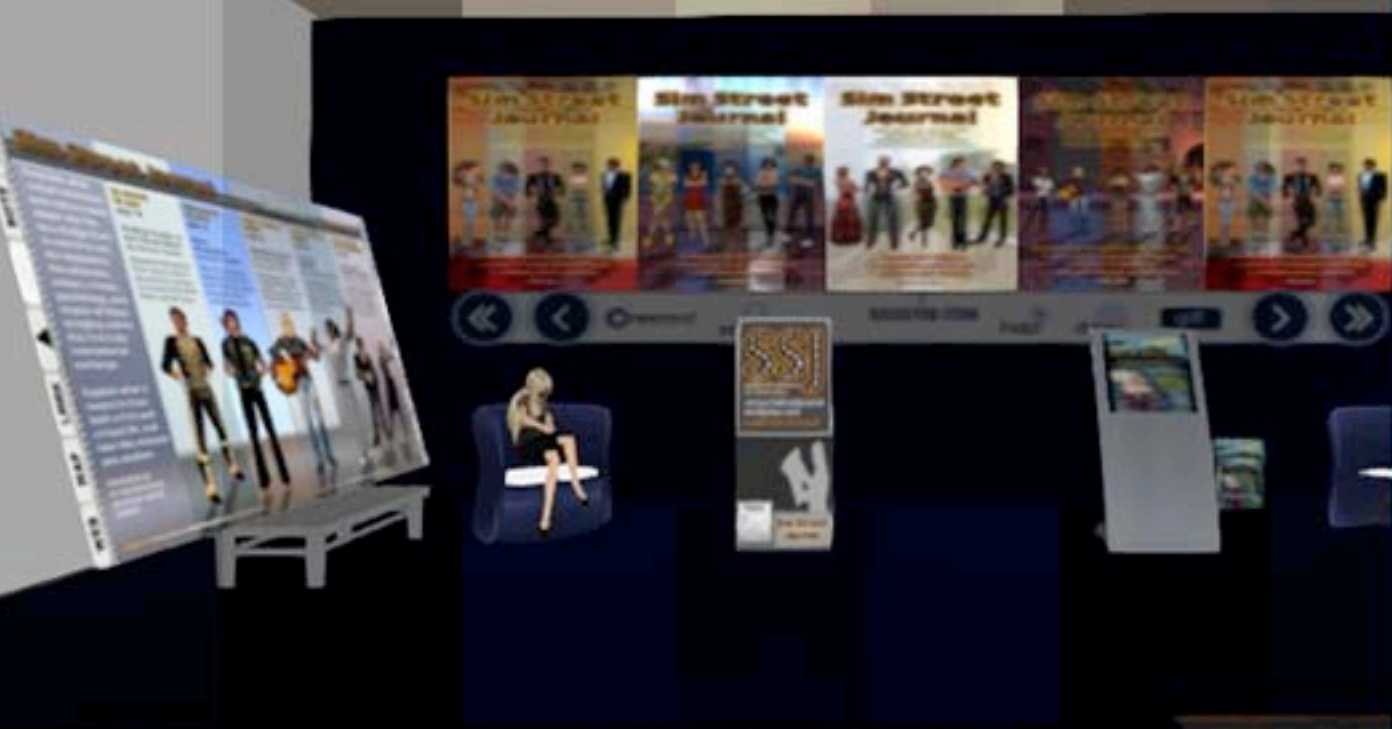
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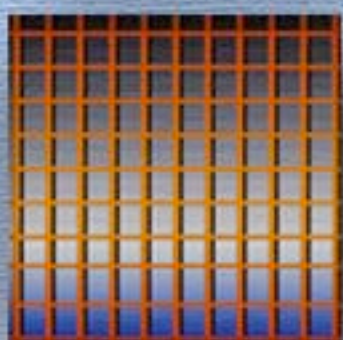
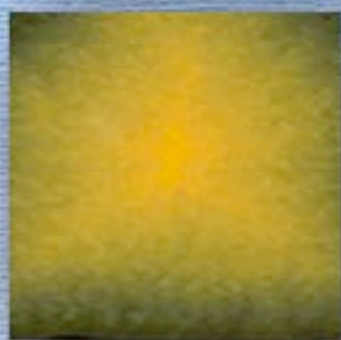
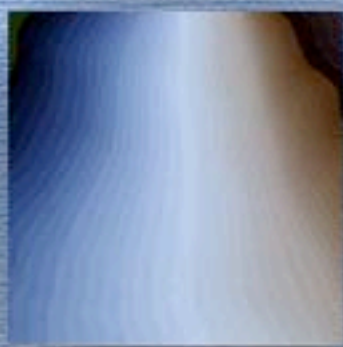
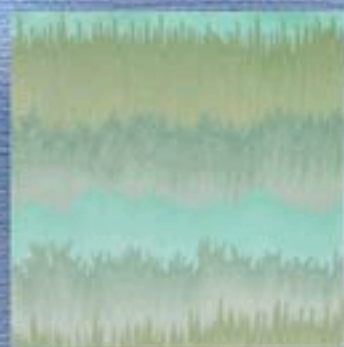
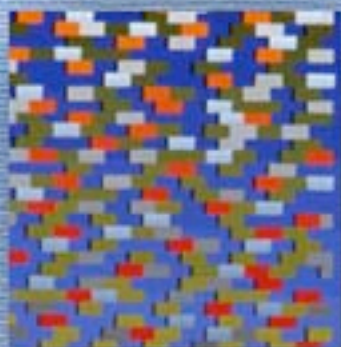
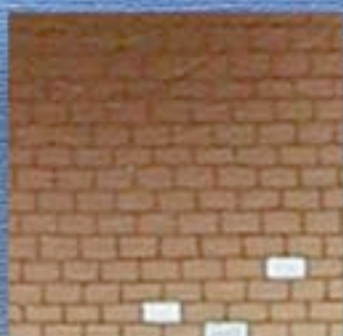
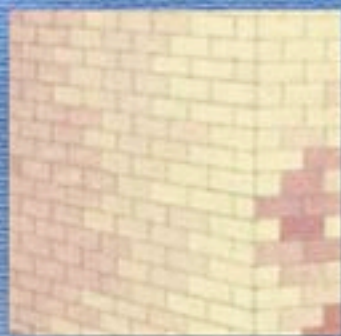
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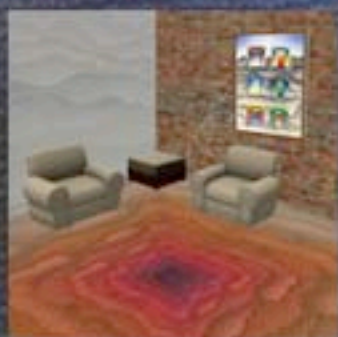
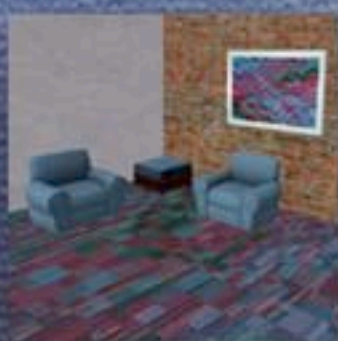


GALLERY
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Rotating exhibit of paintings and textures that transform interior landscapes by Eleanor Medier.

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Patience to Grow



by Ferre Howlett
entrepreneur, owner
Verballis Translation
and surf4ls.com

Joining Second Life® in August 2007, several friends were making money. I joined because they were here. I first worked in security and hosting. I also rented out some small shops from land that I shared with a friend. So I had income to invest; I made about 10kL\$ a week, at that time. Then I discovered the stock market at the end of the year.

The first company that I bought shares of, Verballis Translation, kinda had died because the previous owner didn't have time to run two companies. Although I had three years of investment experience, it was a major jump for me to take it over in 2011. Later on, I found out that it was founded by another Belgian!

I don't have real life professional experience that helps — I'm actually an all around construction worker, specializing in electricity, but I used to do flea markets. Working in SL is a big contrast, especially when I took over VBL. I had to learn basic accounting, since we are required to post a quarterly financials report. And I still am learning.



There are a few reasons why I started Surf4sl, the newest of my businesses. Advertising in SL is not cheap to start, and I am a member of a similar real life website. Its good for business owners, but also for everyone involved with SL, because we basically show what can be done within this virtual community. It is a networking business. I also want to give SL'ers a chance to earn some lindens on the side. So the website came online late 2012 in beta phase, and went official early March 2013. We just had our first anniversary!

Some clients from Verballis have joined Surf4ls and even some shareholders. Several of my staff from VBL are also members.

All three of my ventures are growing. Surf4ls takes a lot of my time, but since a few years ago, I don't have a real life job anymore, due to injuries. SL has become a part of my real life income. I spend about ten to twelve hours a day on it. And I'm always on the look out for expansion. Surf4ls has the potential to eventually grow the largest. It can reach my real life goals. Since I cannot work in the construction business anymore, I don't have to leave my home to go to work. And, there is no boss telling me what to do.



TELEPORT TO THE NEXT LEVELS

I'm not only an entrepreneur, but also an investor. The investment part is still the biggest part of my business, my base. But I'm sure that Surf4Us will become bigger than VSIF and VBL combined. My goal is to become bigger than ADS advertising.

Patience is one of my strongest skills. It is particularly valuable in a place like SL where things move fast.

I am thinking to expand into other virtual worlds, since we already do allow links from them, like Entropia or Marketglory. Also, my intention is to have several ways of advertising to offer clients. At some point we will have in-world

adboards. But I think this new way of advertising, and making some lindens at the same time, is the best way to get it started. And it is wise to offer the same clients more.

I do keep thinking of new or extra revenue streams. When possible, I will leverage those too.

I look for more staff members, but its not easy to find the right people.

The hardest is finding really good scripters. Just because they script in SL doesn't mean they know php and all that stuff. Not everyone can work with both, and those who do have either have enough work, or are expensive.



I have so many ideas to be added, but sadly, I'm not a scripter.

Translation is not an easy business. I have enough translators, but finding work for them is a marketing challenge. Fortunately, we do have a good returning customer base. Again, staff for such positions are not easy to find in SL.

The business advertising idea I had back in 2009, but it took till 2012 to get this project online and connected with SL. VBL was an opportunity which I could jump into. Same with VSIF in 2012. But with advertising, again it was hard to find the right scripter. I've talked to maybe thirty to fifty

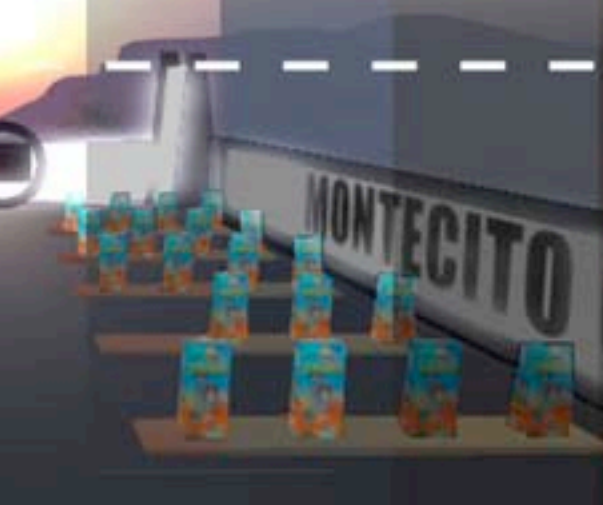
scripters before I found my first one, and then he decided he had no time anymore. So I had to find another one, who in the meantime, hasn't got time anymore as well. But that was easier because it was Redux Dengaku. He re-appeared in-world to save his company, so he could use all the work he could get. We could help each other. But now, he is overloaded with work, so its an issue again. This all takes huge patience!!!

The greatest reward is that, despite staff problems, the companies are running and growing. And I will find another good scripter again.


One of my first friends is still a partner in the game. But the one that invited me left a few years ago to live with his SL, and later, real life girlfriend. They eventually married, and still are. That does happen sometimes, but so does heart break. Maybe it is balanced between. Yet, I do think it is easier to hurt someone in SL than in real life, because of anonimity. Fortunately, it is easier to mute them. Some people wear masks. If they get in trouble, they just create another avatar and start over!

But, in a way, it is a source of pride to have a rezz date of 2007, because it seems that a lot of the successful business owners are from around that year, like Skip Oceanlane of CapEx, to name one.


Scammers are a big reason businesses fail in SL. Scammers can do it more easily due to the anonimity. People hate to be scammed. Most will loose faith and leave.



To invest wisely in SL, research the companies as much as possible. I spend a few hours a day catching up on the forums and other relevant places. Investors that do not know anything about the companies, and just care about the numbers, usually end up selling with a loss. I have seen a few hard years, but like I said, patience is very important, and, for me, it pays off. And, I was one of the lucky few that bet on the right exchange from the beginning.



If you're willing to learn as I did, you can do things you don't normally do in real life. I can't even start a real life business because I don't have the degree or diploma for it. But in SL, I run three businesses with success. And I have a substantial side income from affiliate programs. Income diversity matters—don't bet on one horse.



Have patience and always be honest and straight forward. Don't promise what you can't deliver and take care of your customers.

Axioms Applied

by Arkad Baxton

entrepreneur and owner of AP Products, Prim Mall, and Avatar Social Network

Few entrepreneurs demonstrate virtual commerce at its best. Arkad Baxton outlines his successful strategy online.

The managerial challenge is determining what to delegate, teach, let go of, or find someone who can do things better. For example, I am not a genius programmer. But when I look at a php code, I can understand how it operates. This enables me to supervise others most effectively.

Most of my focus now is on the Avatar Social Network because it is the most visible and public part of my enterprise. It is the "container" where people can promote, connect, and compete. Sharing blog entries, showing off products, playing games, creating contests, and posting events, all open topics for discussion. We are strict about moderating so that bullies, spammers, and trouble-makers are eliminated.

The community becomes stronger by having more ways to communicate than just in SL. Avatars need a network that is specialized:

1. No real life information is needed.
2. Activity and content is rewarded.

This makes ASN the first virtual world related website to do this.

The network also ties together the other growing virtual worlds. ASN is designed to survive SL's closing, if that happens.

Cross-selling between products works well. AP, my product and design business, now has higher sales as ASN grows. AP has a page and an ad on ASN, which is like the horse before the carriage that carries the production and entertainment businesses.

AP's presence has also grown on the stock market. Investors are optimal, if you wish to expand beyond your own pocket.

Don't start a business if your goal isn't profit, or it is not a business, but a charity, a hobby, or a passion. Yet the best business combines these approaches.



SEE ARKAD'S AXIOMS ONLINE

page 37 • <http://www.simstreetjournal.wordpress.com> • by Arkad Baxton



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WOODLAND LAKE

The logo for 'Homes at Woodland Lake' features the word 'Homes' in a large, white, serif font. Below it, 'at Woodland Lake' is written in a smaller, white, cursive font. The background is a vibrant, abstract design with purple and blue light trails and a stylized green and blue landscape.

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educators' experiences

After the End — a New Beginning for Virtual Education

A revolution is predictable. But the outcome is not. Propelled by technology, educators leaped into the virtual arena early. Visionary professionals knew instantly that this was the future, and embraced its possibilities that required fast adjustments. And led to misperceptions.

Now that the bubble has burst on the early enthusiasts' expectations and the dust has settled on the unrealistic hype, survivors of the shakeout can get down to the real business of education: making the tools work for the students. Led by those willing to experiment, adapt, and stand up to misperceptions, the future looks bright.

Views from virtual educators in the trenches:

- **Lorraine Mockford:**
Experience from *Evolution*, page 45
- **Selby Evans/
Thinkerer Melville:**
Experience from *Expectations*, page 46
- **Lorraine Stanton/
Lorraine Charron:**
Experience from *Integration*, page 48
- **Kevin Feenan/
Phelan Corrimal:**
Experience from *Adaptation*, page 54
- **Liane Sebastian/
Eleanor Medier:**
Experience from *Serving*, page 56

*See the full articles online
but first, enjoy these excerpts.*

Experience from Evolution

by Lorraine Mockford

Virtual Worlds Best Practices
in Education Committee Chair
and Instructional Designer at
Nova Scotia Community College

(Excerpt from the article online)

Using Second Life® solely
for marketing led to the
re-creation of physical cam-
puses, that no one visited.

The Opensim grids have
more collaboration between
institutions sharing resources,
so they are better utilized.

There is a considerable body
of research that looks at the
benefits of virtual worlds in
education. Now at the bottom
of the hype cycle, we are
creeping our way back up.
The hype cycle is a natural
part of the adoption process.

SL must work hard to win
back all the educators. But
education can, and will,
take place in virtual worlds.



Experience from Expectations

by Selby Evans/ Thinkerer Melville

*Consultant and retired
Professor of Psychology
at Texas Christian University
(Excerpt from the article online)*

For those who want to learn about virtual worlds, SL is *the* go-to place. Educators will find lots of help, and many will recommend Opensim as *the* place to build a facility.

Educators have special advantages in virtual worlds. They can specify what grid their students are to use, and how those grids are to be used. SL is a bit like Manhattan—living there is expensive, but the cultural amenities can make up for that. Educators can use space in the low-cost Opensim and send students to other relevant places anywhere on the hypergrid. The students benefit from the multiple-grid eclecticism. They learn the advantages of shopping around. Breadth of experience is valuable to all the students.

Many educators develop their own grids for their institutions that are more suited to their needs than SL, and at lower cost. Yet, virtual worlds expand and shift out from SL. Linden Lab has three business plans: the plan they are currently abandoning, the plan they are currently announcing with great expectations, and the plan they are going to announce when they abandon the current plan.

**For schools to best use
SL to promote education:**

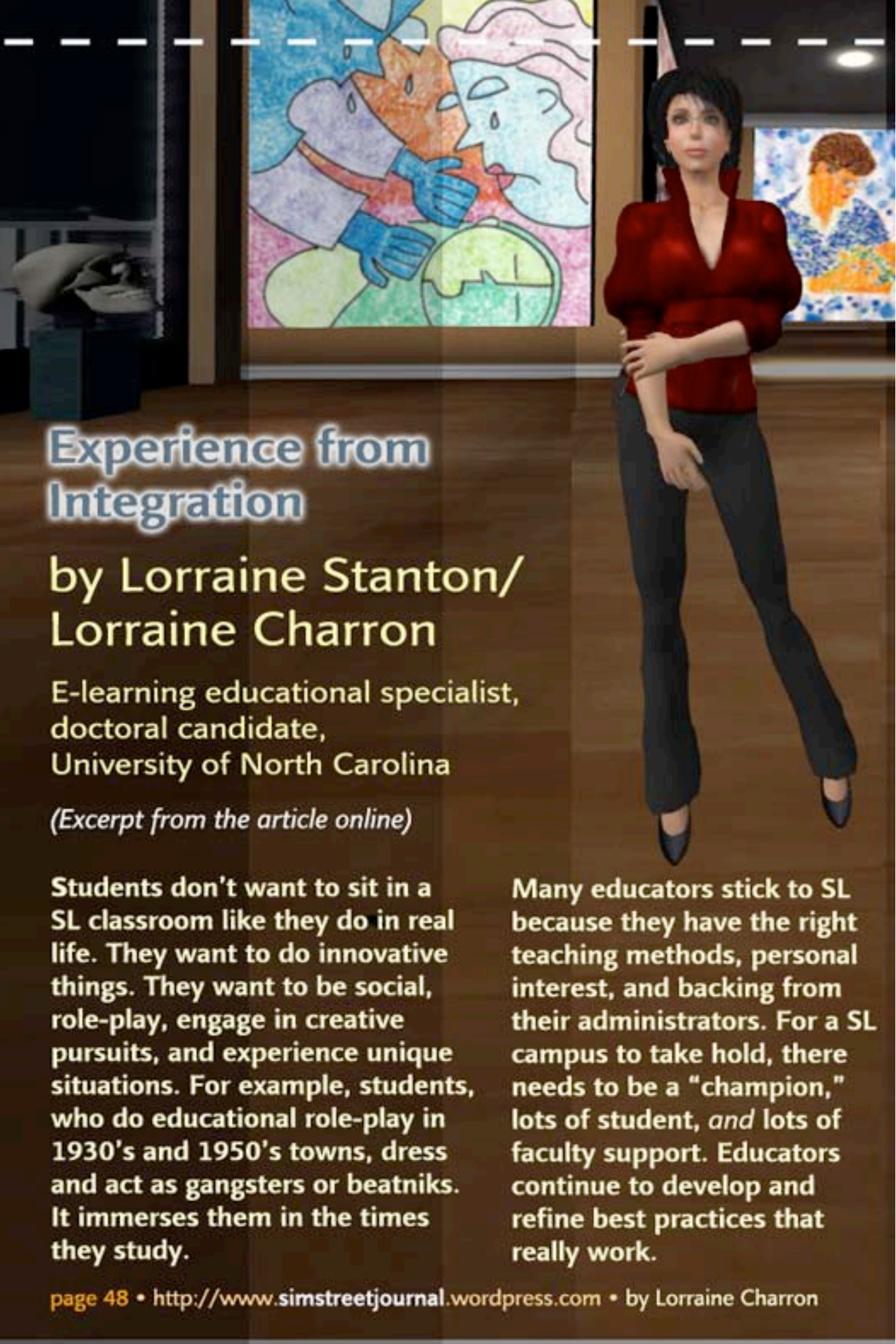
1. Do not waste time and money on buildings and/or classrooms. Instead, build models that represent what you will teach. Look at the textbooks and ask what can be better represented in 3D than in pictures and narrative text.

2. Use holodecks and rezzers to store builds when not in use. Collaborate with other educators to make maximum use of the space. You pay for a sim 24/7. Try to use it 24/7.

3. Use the programming and testing capabilities of virtual worlds to add game features into instruction and research. Learn the aspects of interaction that increase the learning experience.

4. Hire a consultant for recommendations on using SL and for helping educational content take advantage of virtual world potential. Do that first, using the money you would have spent on a sim. You can build later, as needed.





Experience from Integration

by Lorraine Stanton/
Lorraine Charron

E-learning educational specialist,
doctoral candidate,
University of North Carolina

(Excerpt from the article online)

Students don't want to sit in a SL classroom like they do in real life. They want to do innovative things. They want to be social, role-play, engage in creative pursuits, and experience unique situations. For example, students, who do educational role-play in 1930's and 1950's towns, dress and act as gangsters or beatniks. It immerses them in the times they study.

Many educators stick to SL because they have the right teaching methods, personal interest, and backing from their administrators. For a SL campus to take hold, there needs to be a "champion," lots of student, *and* lots of faculty support. Educators continue to develop and refine best practices that really work.



This gallery shows paintings from the nursing students. Each is about theories they study. (If you click them, you can get the essay.) Many of these students have never painted before, much less been in a virtual world. Here, they are with classmates live, in voice, and talk about their paintings. They always have an emotional experience when they present their art to each other. They cry, talk about dealing with the very ill, families, and how the expression relates. They connect. Usually, after this class of sharing their paintings, they love SL. Before that, they did not get it or see its value. They have to directly experience the possibilities. It is hard to just tell them; they need to see it for themselves first-hand.

Part of a University's 'visibility' is comprised of their faculty's scholarly research, published articles, and presentations at conferences. Perhaps increased research in education, psychology, sociology, or economics, will help increase the published journal articles and conference presentations, thus increasing awareness of SL's educational potential within the larger

academic community. For educators to believe in this tool, hard evidence must confirm that SL is valid and useful in education. It must define the kinds of things that are valuable for learning in SL, and what helps students become comfortable and skillful enough to focus away from the technology, and attain immersive learning without barriers.

Though a lot of the sex has been cleaned up or taken elsewhere, there is a sense that SL is still a place of lechers, hookers, and easy infidelity. Many still think it is 'game' and thus could not *also* be a place for a high-quality learning experience. Lastly, a lot of people think it's too hard to navigate. Every semester, these misconceptions must be overcome until students have their first worthwhile immersive learning experiences.

The increased sense of immersion that virtual reality provides—where the student can actually feel physically **there**—will help many educators see the expanded benefits in using it. Ideally, it takes a team (the instructor, an instructional designer to help develop virtual content in line with the instructor's teaching needs, and dedicated technical support staff) to really make it happen—and keep it going.

There is still no other tool that can provide the detailed and customized content to engage students so deeply, or where an instructional designer can truly help bring the educational vision of the instructor to fruition. Essentially, the capability exists to immerse the user in a customizable, highly-detailed interactive scenario which is only limited by imagination and the technical skills to create it.

SL may finally get past the hype curve, out of the “trough of disillusionment,” and into a new period of educational enlightenment and productivity that is better than imagined.





Though not considered “formal” education like an officially accredited degree program, “informal” creative and professional offerings (that are for SL users by SL users), have the greatest potential right now in SL.

There is a great appeal in the educational community for free, online conferences and professional development workshops. And it is a huge “selling point” to campus administrators when they don’t have to send people to expensive real life faculty development conferences or workshops.

The University of Washington has a program called “Certificate in Virtual Worlds,” aimed at



educators, game developers, web designers, entrepreneurs, and more—it is offered mainly in SL.

Most involved in SL education (for professional development, personal improvement, or other reasons) seem to already be SL users... or they know active SL users who coax them in. This is how innovations typically spread before they gain wide adoption—from person to person. The

dedicated individuals that keep pushing for acceptance by volunteering their time to teach in SL, share their SL experiences with real life colleagues and friends. They make efforts to demonstrate the worthiness of SL education through research, conference presentations, and workshops. There is a lot more published research now that affirms SL's educational benefits than there was just a few years ago. Interconnecting SL with other social networks, multimedia outlets, and blogs also helps credibility. Strong connections with real life organizations (such as the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life) certainly expands the platform's legitimacy. And the adoption of virtual reality technology will be another strong push in a positive direction. If these types of pushes (which are all marketing in the sense that they promote SL for education) continue to happen, one day the fully accredited college degree programs and the formalized, for-credit, continuing education offerings will be a regular virtual occurrence.



Although I still put together courses for real world clients, teaching is teaching, whether it is in a virtual environment or in 'real life.' The skills used, and the learning developed, have practical real world applications. Fundamentally, its not about 'teaching in SL.' Its about sharing experience to help others gain knowledge—everything else is simply a tool used to help that process.

The lack of bias in SL is one of the biggest teaching advantages. Here, people don't judge for what others look like (except furries—smiles). Rather, people are judged based on words and deeds. It does not matter if you are in a wheel chair or blind or able-bodied or black or white or latino or gay or straight or Muslin or Christian or anything else that we use in terms of normal world demographics.

Experience from Adaptation

by Kevin Feenan/
Phelan Corrimal,
Rockliffe University
(Excerpt from the article online)



The link between education and business is critical. Misunderstanding between them is not limited to SL. It stretches from the normal world. Business must understand that to compete, it needs a staff able to handle high-knowledge-requirement technology. You don't get that without a solid educational system to provide for both general training and ongoing development.

Life-long-learning is everyone's responsibility. But, that can't happen if business, government, and education don't work together. This collaboration gives people the opportunity to keep pace with the technology on which competitiveness is based.

The rules of business are still the rules of business. It can only build up as far as the customer base will allow, and upon revenues from those inspired to open their wallets.

Most new people will initially try to duplicate things they are already familiar with before they embark on doing things in a whole new way—things that can never be done in a normal classroom setting.

Experience from Serving

by Liane Sebastian/
Eleanor Medier

Author, editor, designer
with an extensive portfolio
for educational, nonprofit
and entrepreneurial clients,
Editor, designer, publisher
for *Sim Street Journal*

Rockcliffe I (190, 190, 59)

Rockcliffe Library (Mature)

Rockcliffe I (Mature)

CJ EdTech (Mature)

You are here


Rockcliffe Conservatory (1) (Mature)

U Wisconsin Milwaukee (85, 164, 24)

I AM Columbia (127, 129, 22)


U Wisconsin Milwaukee (Mature)

I AM Columbia (Mature)



Sim Street Journal requested contributions from several educators who understand the issues from different points of view. Though conclusions vary, the opinions here are independent of theirs, and reflect the perspective of a marketer, not an educator.

What can educators do to make SL a useful resource?



1. Plan from inside out. Address a SL audience to expand the reach and influence of education. Every university has a continuing education branch to bridge with the community. SL can both augment skill-building for degree-students and continue to address an expanding in-world experience. A great majority of SL residents wish to try new things, grow businesses, increase creativity, and the more relevant to their real careers the better.

2. Strategize to the medium. The SL society is strengthened by social media. The international community continually evolves, and educators have the opportunity to bridge from the virtual society to the virtual class, testing content approaches.

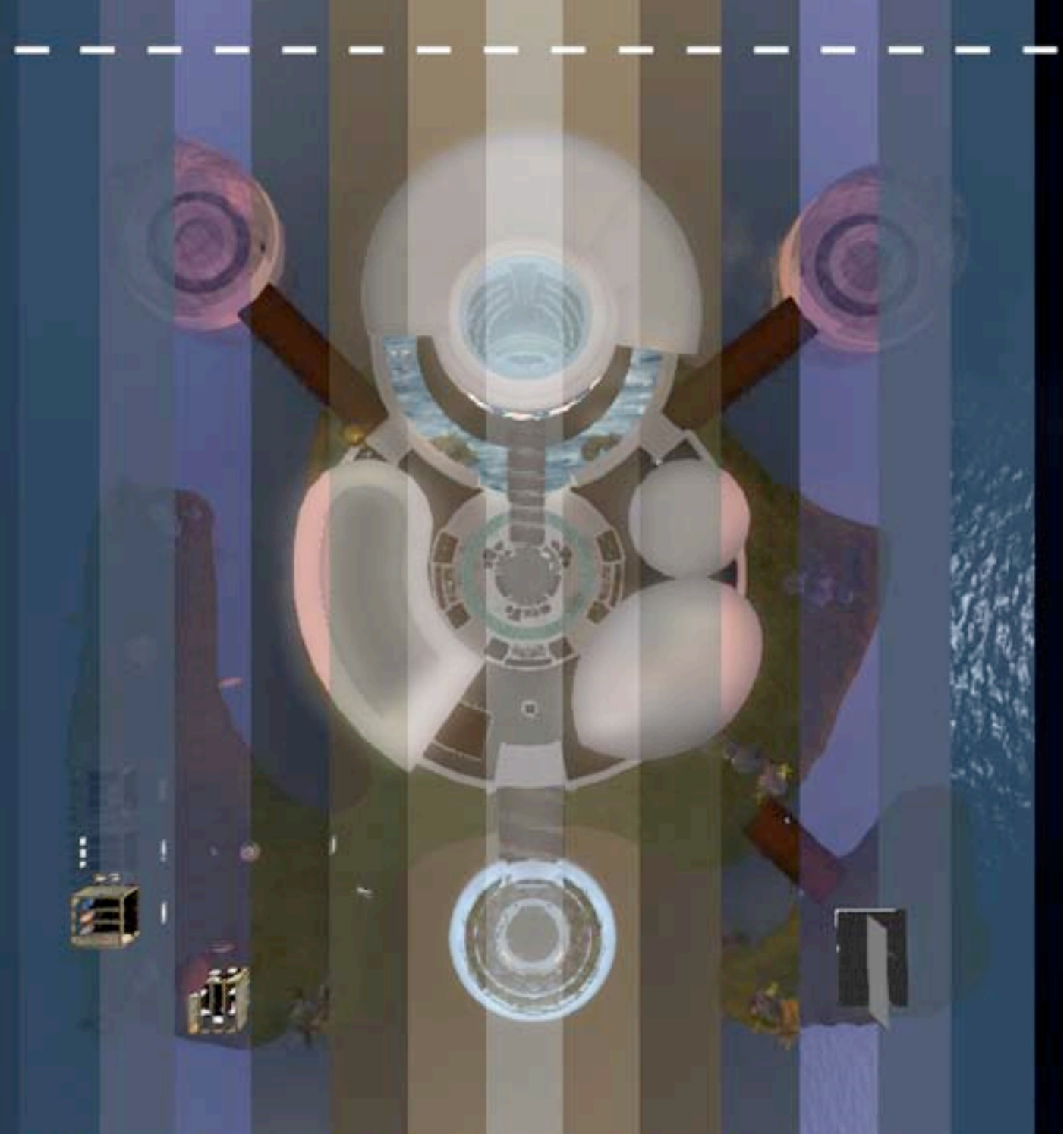
Four Bridges Project (Mature)

3. Technology and technique distract. Rather than what new technology can do, or what techniques are effective to convey content, the priority is how to reach those who wish to learn—to focus on the “why” instead of on the “what” or the “how.” The research grows on the virtual advantages. But if all that is explored relates to control, security, content creation, sharing, management, and appealing to an outside student, then a disconnect continues and potentials are undeveloped.

4. Define success. The recent educational conference proved the interest within SL for greater exploration and content meaning. Speakers attracted the general SL population. Between the famous keynote presenters and the incorporation of arts, the sims were full to capacity, sessions streamed to hundreds. Now, videos are watched by more than the formal education community. Will this larger audience be further addressed and served?

5. Refine information exchange. Update time-sensitive content in all presentation vehicles. Websites, SL’s Search windows, profiles, press releases, information notecards, social media pages, and signage. Use representation from avatars that are active.

6. Tie-in with thriving communities. Many businesses hit the pulse of what residents want. The arts are extremely active, and simulations powerful. Games and role play also can compliment. But SL does have distractions, traps, even dangers as it is equally a renaissance of international idea exchange and learning. Entrepreneurs within the virtual context define it by discovering what resonates. Similarly, virtual worlds, as learning environments, use the immersive and interactive features to advantage.



SL remains the social hub of the metaverse and defines the international subculture. Learners in SL wish to improve connections, careers, and sophistication. Virtual worlds suits the convenience and accessibility that

students will continue to demand. Those schools that embrace this connection can help define what that subculture will continue to be. It is a matter of use, not technique or technology.

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New album available



Paris
Obscur

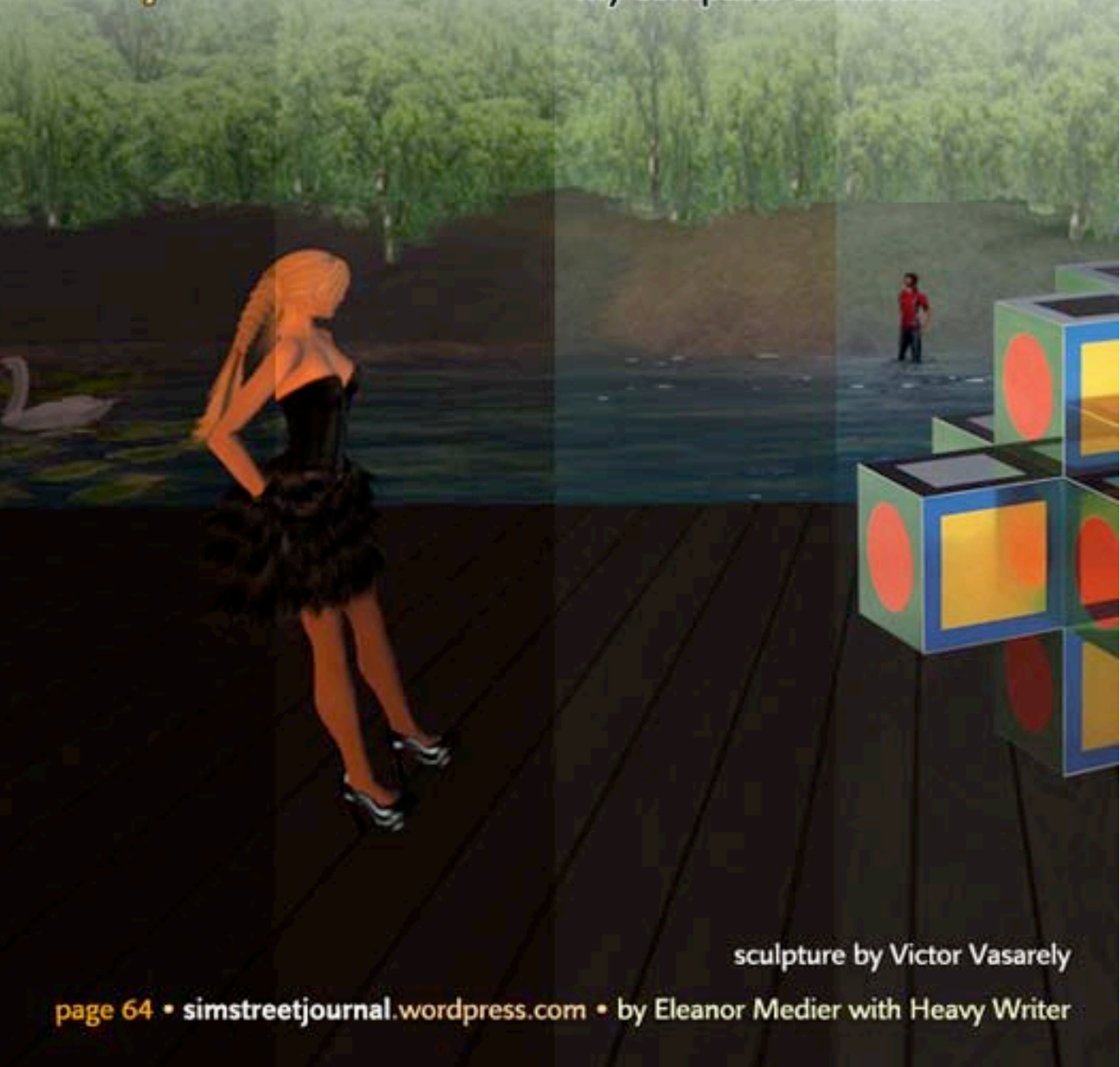
the aesthete & the amateur

Seeking Visual Enlightenment

by Eleanor Medier

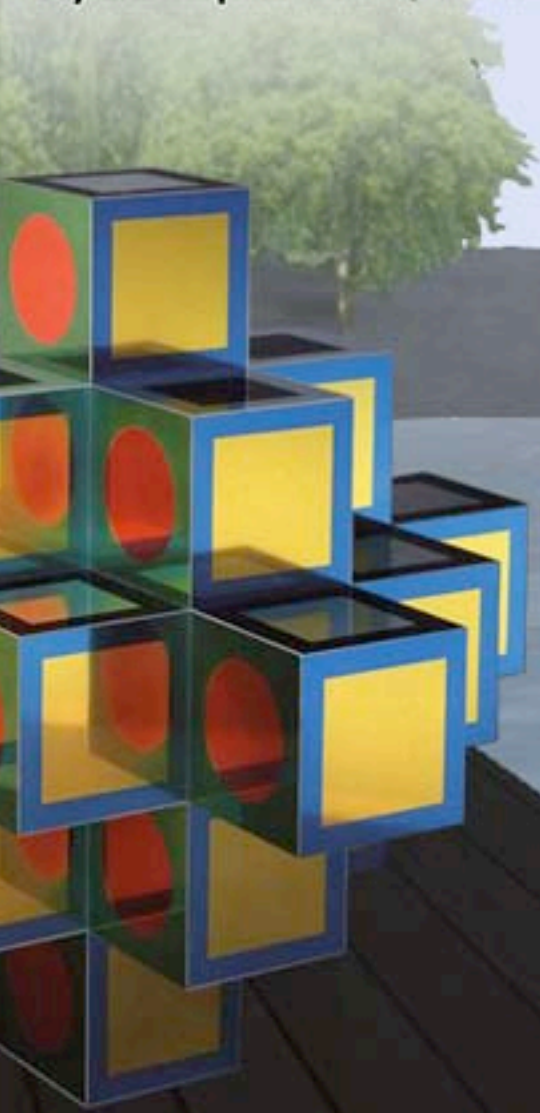
Fictitious on-going series of gallery and art reviews by a credentialed art critic, Eleanor Medier, and her less-than-professional (and proud of it) husband, Heavy Writer.

Sometimes when Heavy goes fishing, I go along. Though I don't like to fish and he throws back most anyway, we both enjoy getting away. So I plan my dock-reading, pack my oldest high heels and newest jeans, then recharge my computer batteries.



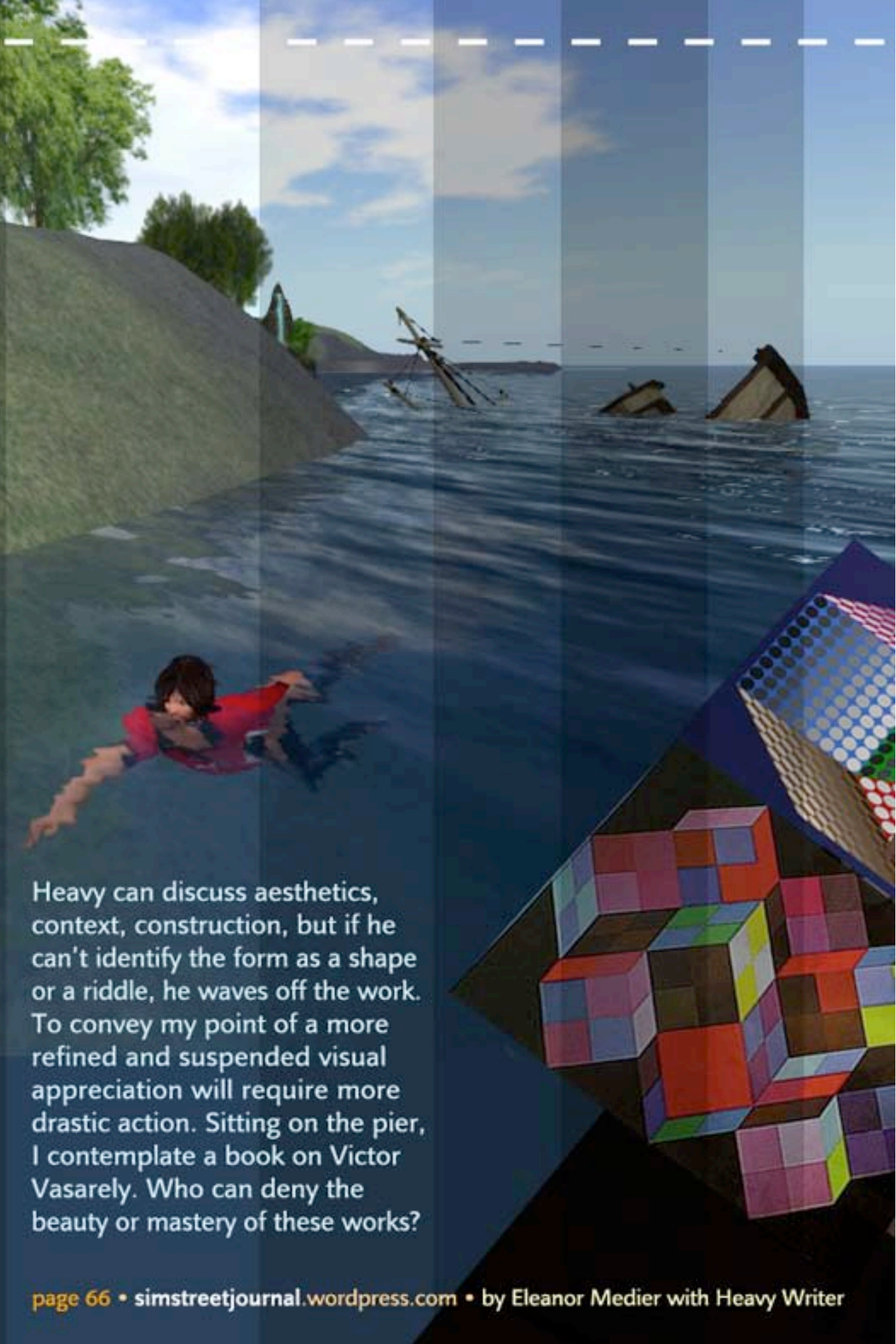
sculpture by Victor Vasarely

After months of showing Heavy great art, he still does not understand abstraction. This is due either to a flaw in my teaching ability, or in his inability to comprehend. Responding to abstract form may be impossible to teach.

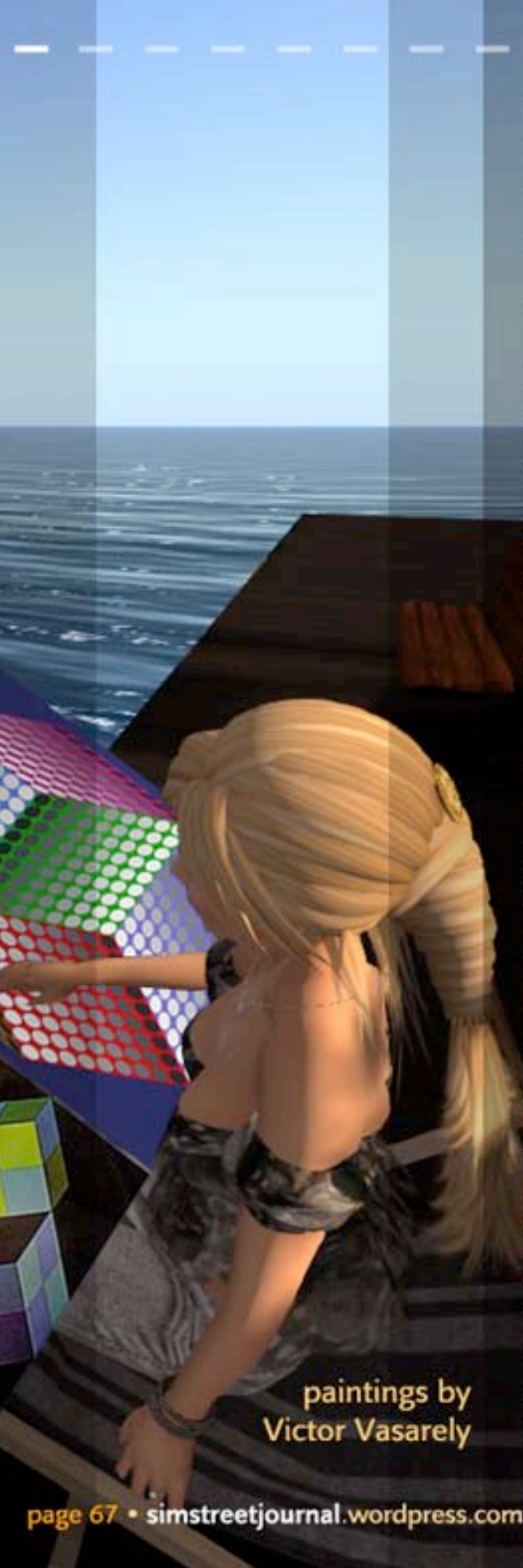


What comprises visual literacy?

- **Aesthetics** — whether the artist intends an image to be beautiful or disturbing, most people enjoy art for its appearance. Color is the first trigger, then scale, composition, and identifying with the subject.
- **Context** — emphasis, dichotomy, contrast, and tension contribute to visual power. If there is no contrast or conflict, the work is easy to forget and have no impact.
- **Construction** — craftsmanship and execution skills can delight and impress, judged separately from content portrayed. Mastery means combining a strong idea with an affecting delivery. To understand formalism such as figure/ground, perspective, proportions, and depth. all increase appreciation.
- **Symbolism** — literal thinking assigns recognizable references to forms, such as interpreting a yellow circle as a “sun.” Non-literal thinking accepts the yellow circle as a warm form contrasted against its background, which could signify overwhelmed if the circle is small, or powerful if the circle is large. The literal assigns meaning, the nonliteral assigns feeling. Are the two views mutually exclusive?



Heavy can discuss aesthetics, context, construction, but if he can't identify the form as a shape or a riddle, he waves off the work. To convey my point of a more refined and suspended visual appreciation will require more drastic action. Sitting on the pier, I contemplate a book on Victor Vasarely. Who can deny the beauty or mastery of these works?



The last time we were here on the island, I was mad at Heavy because he sold a painting from my collection, using the money on fixing his garage.

To get even, and teach him a lesson, I sunk his old fishing boat—with him on it. He had to swim back to our dock, which did not make him very receptive to intellectual pursuits. Sadly, it didn't knock any sense into him. So, I need to focus him again on higher pursuits.

Seeking the perfect abstract work for Heavy's potential enlightenment, I strike a deal with artist Doncoyote for a *perfect* sculpture! Then I set up a new platform complete with mountains and sand to match the artist's installation. Unfortunately, the garden is now inventoried to make room. Heavy will notice that. So I place the new acquisition in an "off" state.

When ready, I cheerfully teleport Heavy to this new sanctuary. He blinks, but, he only can see a small stage. I asked him to click on the gold marker, and a triangle, with a circle inside, appears. I had spent a few hours experimenting, so I take over and click triangles, building a beautiful composition.

paintings by
Victor Vasarely

Within a minute of watching a composition form, Heavy blurts: "This is a puzzle—a pyramid prim copied over and over again at every click."

Eleanor: "Yes, the viewer can build it. So, it does remind of a puzzle or a modular toy, which makes it friendly, more accessible."

Heavy: "Is this art? What is the creative part of the artist?"

Eleanor: "The artist makes the basic aesthetic decisions. He controls the parameters: scale, structure, colors, connections, possibilities. He gives the viewer participation, but limited control. It is elegant in its simplicity and is visually intriguing."

Heavy: "You are seduced by an old SL gadget. What is the creation part of the artist if everyone uses the sculpture on his own?"

Eleanor: "The interactivity of SL allows a sculpture motion, and can include the viewer. The modules are like syllables in a visual language. The shape combinations are expressive: confronting, open, closed, loops, even recognizable forms. It uses illusion and space."

Heavy: "Materials to be used to create art is not art, and this artist offers a material so anyone can create structures with it. Is the manufacturer who makes paint an artist because he has made the colors others use?"

Eleanor: "Color selections are part of the art creating process. The manufacturer makes the paint, but the artist chooses the colors to use."

Heavy: "Is the Lego company artistic because each kid can build objects using their pieces?"

Eleanor: "Legos are a material, and many artists incorporate them. If I use Legos to create a skyline for part of my sculpture, the Legos become part of my artistic statement."

Heavy: "Glass is beautiful too. It doesn't mean everything made from glass is art. Is the one who invented the glass an artist?"

Eleanor: "No, but if someone makes glass squares that have strategic arrangements, and an organic visual quality, yes, I call that art. If the result is a pretty drinking glass, I call that craft. Does not the end result matter?"

Heavy: "You need to create something original to be called art. This piece gives the possibility to create artistic structures, as any material offers. In this case, the artists are the people clicking and creating the structures, not the one who set up the material so you can create with its pieces. This is more like a toy; each toy has boundaries. Each material has limits. I've given you enough arguments why this piece is not art :), but you don't want to see them. It is a fun colorful setup. So what?"



Hephaestus Plantonicator
Social Sculpture
by DanCoyote,
displayed at the
Linden Endowment
for the Arts Open Exhibit

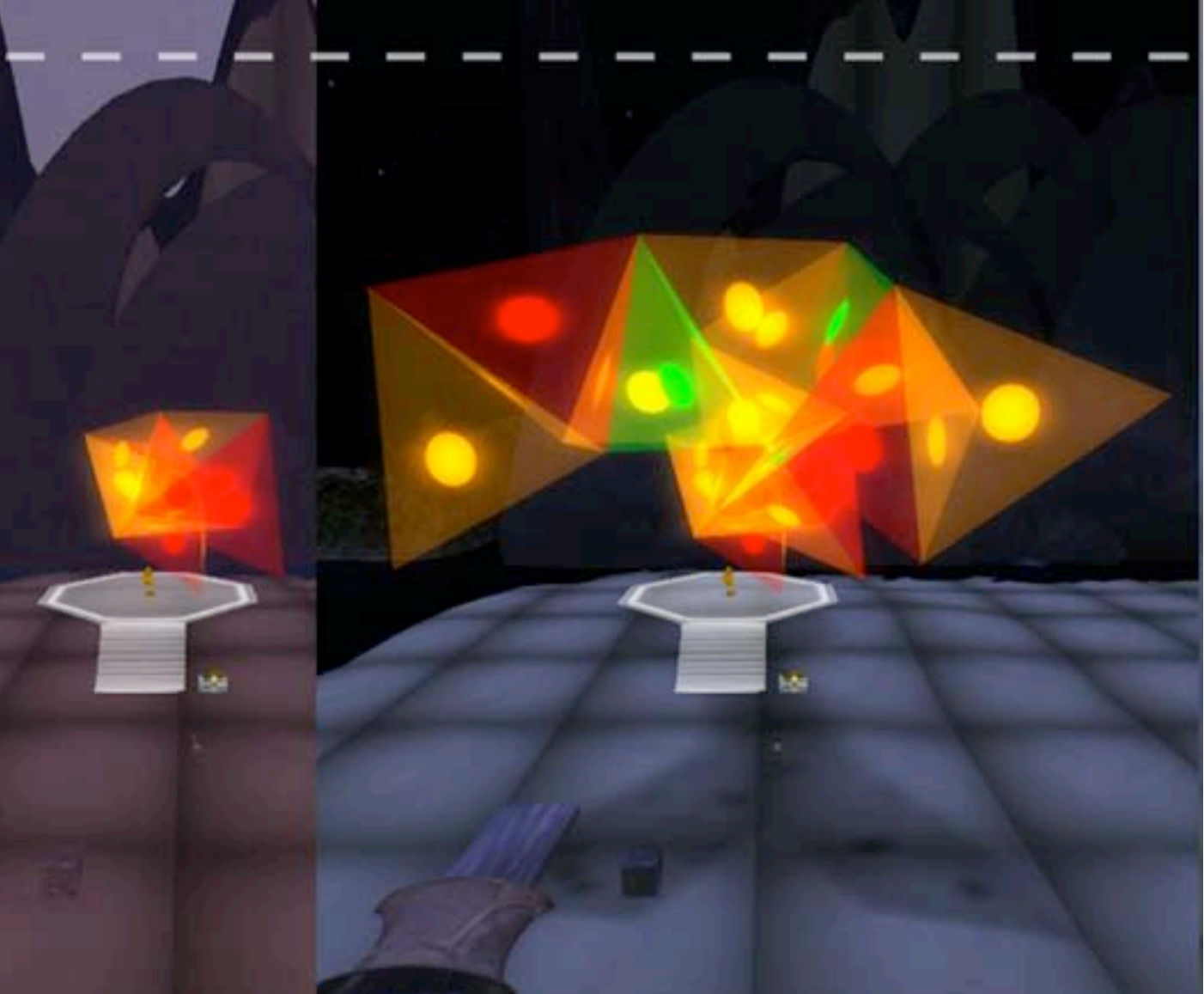
Eleanor: "Are not 'artistic structures' art? The artist is more involved in this piece than the designers of Legos are in building. Dancoyote set up the structure and determined that pieces only fit together in a specified way, with these colors in this size—he made decisions the viewer does not get to make. And it is never the same, (it would be nice if versions could be saved). But, for a viewer to customize does not change the essential visual language of the piece."

Heavy: "He set some building rules—bricks are square, so you have to work with those squares."

Eleanor: "So if the sculpture did not move, if the artist set it up in one arrangement only, then it is art? But if, as a viewer, I can arrange it, then it is not art?"

Heavy: "It is like he hands you a big pile of pieces, and he dares you to build stuff with them."

Eleanor: "Actually, you can do a lot more with Legos than what this sculpture can do. Legos are just loose pieces. This is not a bunch of triangles laying around."



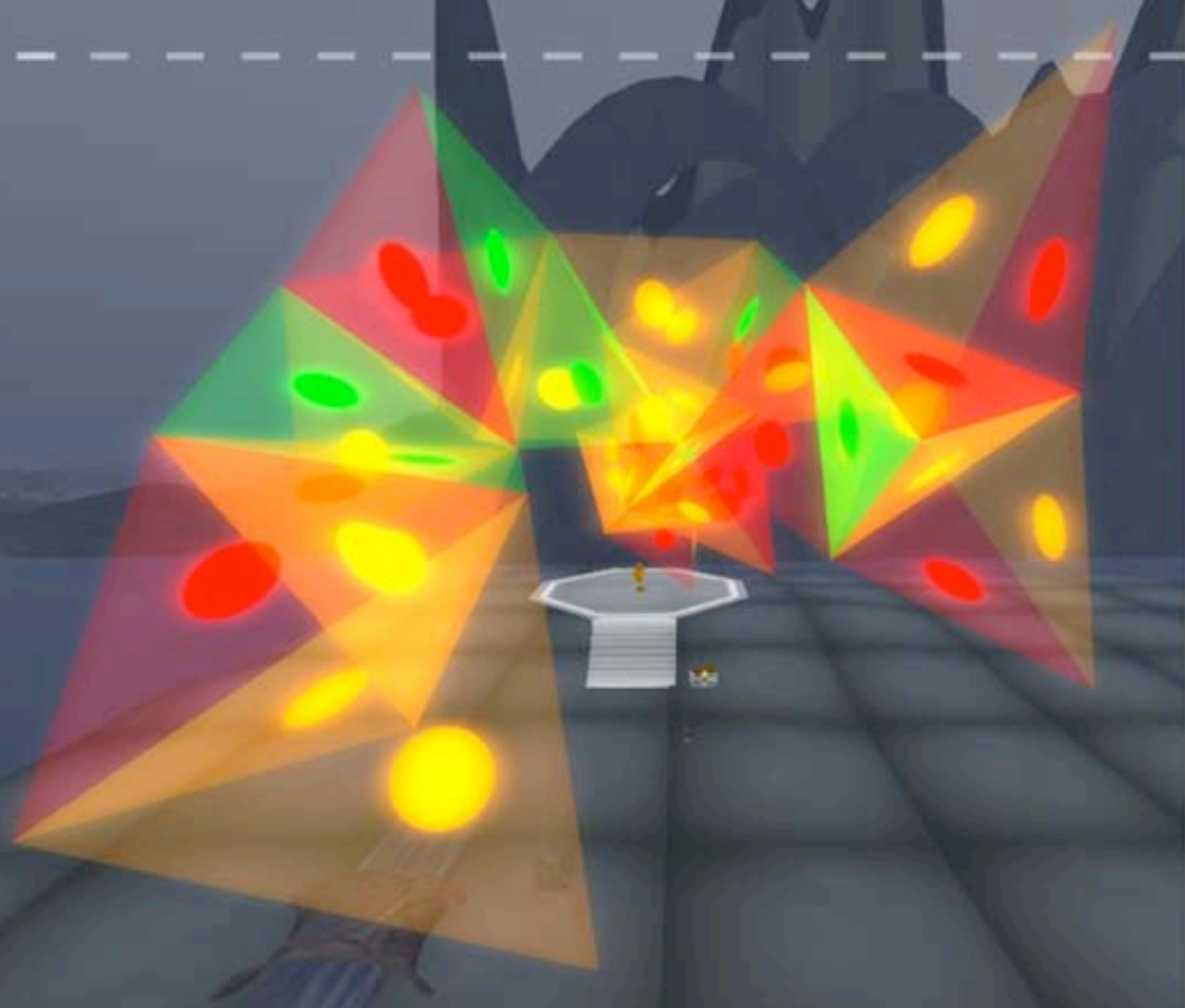
Heavy: "Am I changing your mind?"

Eleanor: "No, this has parameters that a game or toy does not impose. Maybe I am changing *your* mind!"

Heavy: "No you haven't, This is just a game, a toy to create structures. Where is the statue? I see random pieces. Maybe it has a coding in how they combine to make a pleasant design, like pieces in a frame, and you need to create *in* that frame."

Eleanor: "A static arrangement is no more of a sculpture than one to move and involve the viewer. It is more like: here is a frame with a shape. If you move right, it turns blue, if you move left, it turns green. So you choose the color by where you stand, but *only* blue or green."

Heavy: "He created a *tool* to create art. You won't change my mind. So let's agree to disagree on this one. I know you are stubborn. And, I'm really surprised you see this as art."



Eleanor: "I am surprised you don't. It goes far beyond a tool, dear. Though it is simple and geometric, it *can* be a dynamic expression of shape, place, vibrancy, and composition."

Heavy: "What you just said can be put in the puzzle instructions."

Eleanor: "So which would make you more angry: 1. If I bought the sculpture to replace our garden, or 2. If I bought a few Vasarely paintings?"

Heavy: "Better to buy Vasarely. I don't like him either, but he's better than Albers. And, if you buy the sculpture, I will just return it to your inventory. It will ruin my morning view while drinking coffee on the balcony. And to cut grass around that toy *will* make me mad."

Eleanor presents him with a receipt and an inventory list: "Well, I had to put the whole garden away, and the sculpture was very expensive too."

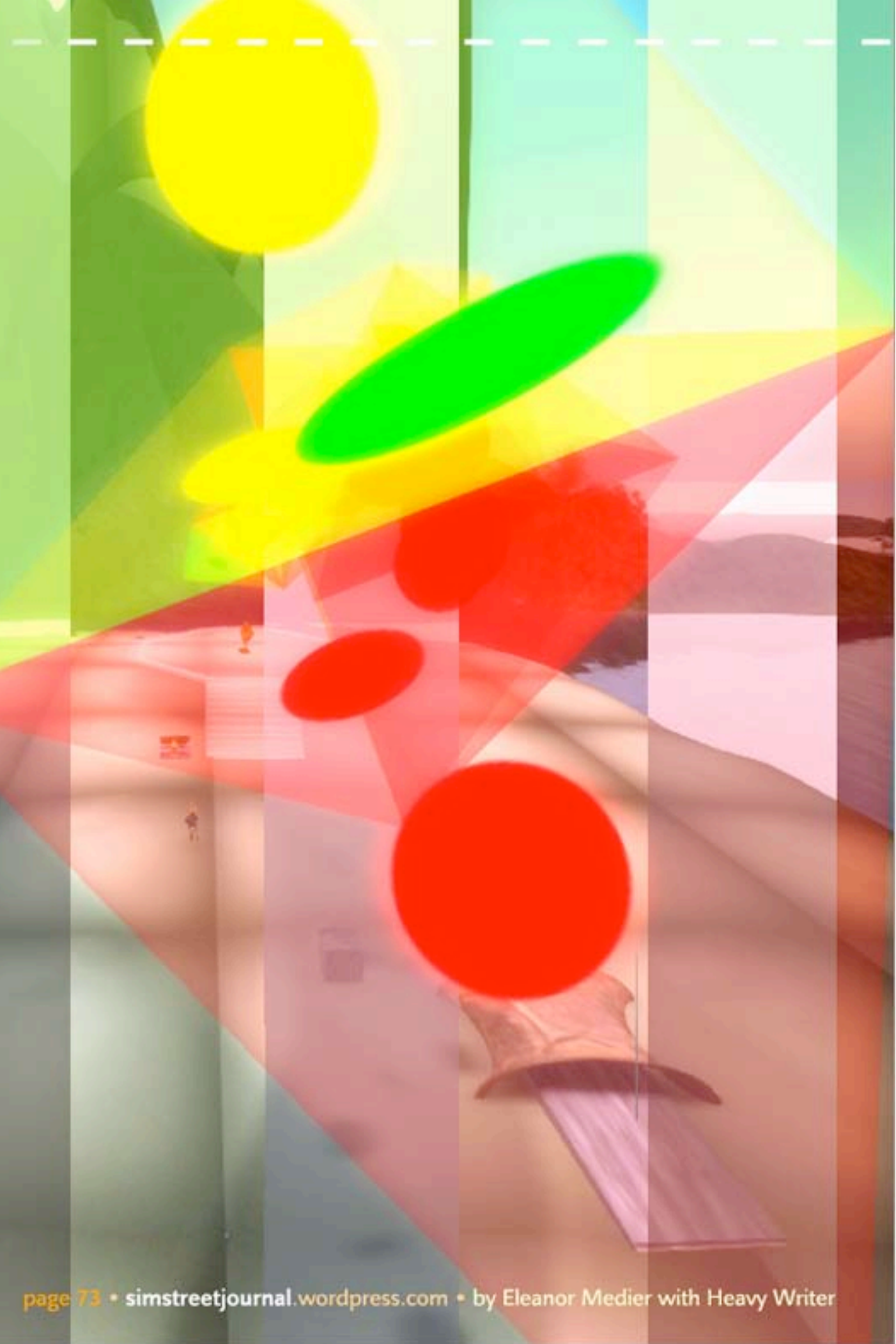
Heavy glances at the garden list, but his eyes focus on the bottom of the receipt, and he gasps: "We could have gone on a cruise around the world with that money!"

Eleanor considers that option, but refuses to be distracted from the main point of teaching Heavy the fine points of aesthetic judgement.

•••••

Heavy is so furious about how much I spent on the sculpture without asking him first (would he have said 'yes' if I asked him first??), he storms off. I know he is going to the fishing island, which certainly is better than drinking with his biker friends. To reward him for his predictability, and because I still feel guilty about sinking his old one, I bought him a new boat! Docked at the island, I hope when he finds it, he will be pleased.

However, when he discovers that I spent all of our savings on the sculpture and the boat, he probably won't be too happy. To distract him from the practical will be easy when he discovers the Vasarely paintings occupying the main cabin of his new boat. Yet, purchasing those did max out our credit cards. So I wonder how long I can hide that.



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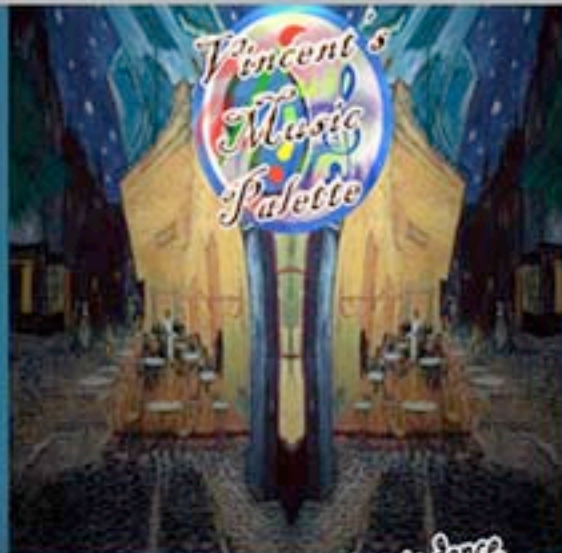
owner: Cat Boucher

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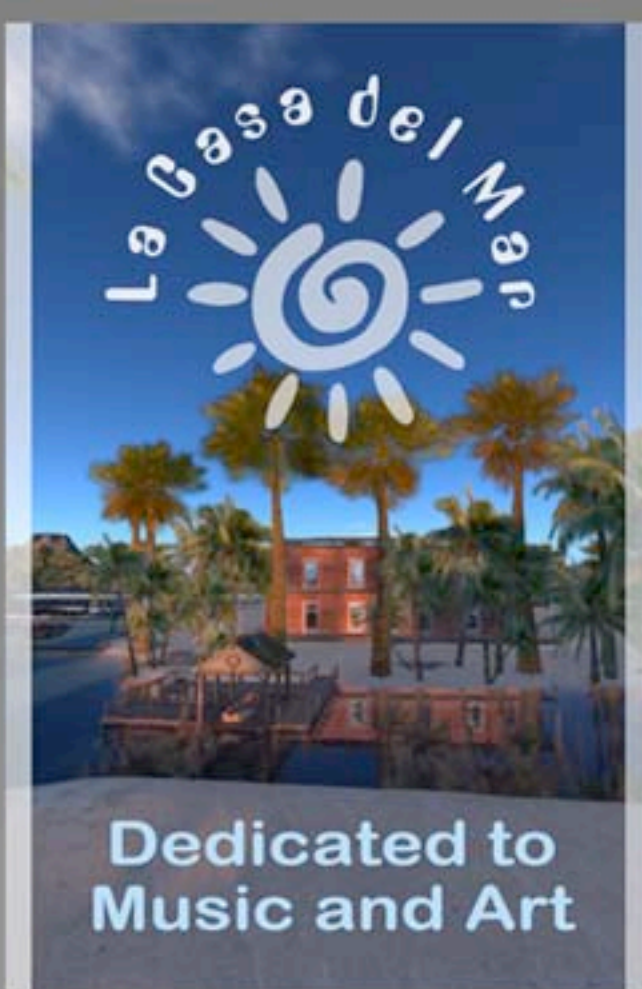
Blues, Classic Rock and Soul on the Party Pier
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Lakeside Sunday Mornings
Blues and Gospel
Blue Moon Sunday Nights
Romance at Cay's

owner: Cayleen Linette

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Mathilde Vhargon

Xirana Oxímoxi



Active Art

Eleanor Medier

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Gallery

collaborator

“Our challenge is to go beyond the virtual world as a 3D toy, into something with a solid foundation. Machinima breaks the real life/SL barrier, because it reaches a broad audience without their need to log in. We give people an idea of the vibrancy and potential of creative applications in this new society. They must want to come into virtual worlds to learn and confront the learning curve.”

—Jayjay Zifanwe, University of Western Australia

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

UWA's virtual campus is one of the most active and comprehensive in Second Life®. Leading in academia, sciences, and the arts, they are famous for their 3D Art Challenges, attracting the best and most talented virtual artists.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETERA LANDAR AND ELEANOR MEDIER

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.”

—Kaya Angel



ROSE THEATRE AND GALLERIES

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“This vision is consistent. We earn a reputation grid-wide for strength in balancing community and good business. We have set realistic expectations, built a reliable team, and have a revenue model that can cover costs. Our audience grows to attract those within SL committed to supporting cultural expertise.”

—Selina Greene

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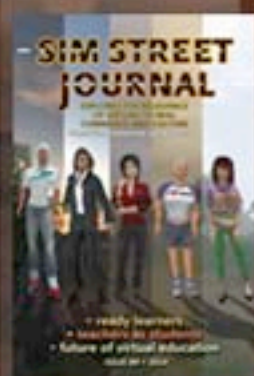


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