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Cave painting for the 21st century

Bell Gallery, CAC host new interactive exhibit

by [Mary Jo Curtis](#)

The University's newest art exhibition has a decidedly 21st century flavor: Its works are three-dimensional and interactive.



The David Winton Bell Gallery and the Creative Arts Council will present a limited exhibition of "Works from the Cave" in the University's virtual reality lab – the Cave – at the Technology Center for Advanced Scientific Computing and Visualization. Screenings will be offered from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on April 26 and May 3; due to the size of the Cave and the interactive nature of the exhibit, reservations are required.

Dan Keefe working on "La Guitarrista Gitana" in the Cave

The exhibition, which is being offered in conjunction with the 2003 Boston CyberArts Festival, will feature

artworks created within the Cave. Powered by a high-performance parallel computer, the Cave is an eight-foot cubicle with high-resolution stereo graphics projected onto three walls and the floor to create a virtual reality experience. When entering the Cave, visitors remove their shoes and don special shutter glasses to synchronize the vision with alternating stereo projections on the walls; special hardware and software keep track of visitors' positions and movements, changing the images in a way that allows them to feel immersed in the virtual space.

Each exhibition screening will include several works. "Screen," a collaborative work by Noah Wardrip-Fruin, Andrew McClain, Shawn Greenlee and Joshua J. Carroll, is the story of a man who, while standing in a room full of screens, sees into the dreams of others. As the viewer reads the story, words peel off the walls at a dizzying rate and hover around him.

Daniel Keefe's "Sailing a Dhow in Tanzania: A Cave Painting" depicts a dhow, a boat commonly used for fishing along the coast of East Africa, as it floats in a sea of blue and green waters. Viewers will be able to walk through the water and around the dhow, viewing it from all angles and from beneath the water's surface. The painting was created using custom software developed by Keefe with David Laidlaw, Daniel Acevedo, Tomer Moscovich, David Karelitz and Joseph LaViola.

"This is Just a Place" is an interpretation of a A. R. Ammons poem created by Vesper Stockwell, Bryant Choung, Dmitri Lemmerman, Edwin Chang and Shawn Greenlee. The work translates a poem of space, memory and mourning through images of a fluidly transforming environment, moving from night sky to forest clearing, from patterned sphere to wiggling bacteria, and from floating words to sepia-toned photographs.

Highlights from work under development by Carroll, Chang, Choung, Greenlee, Michelle Higa, Lemmerman, Talan Memmott, Noah Norman, Stockwell and Joe Winter will also be included in the

exhibition.

This is the first time the public has been invited to view artworks within the three-dimensional environment of the Cave; this is also the first exhibition to include Cave works that focus on the word. The use of language in the Cave is an artistic area that was almost unexplored until Robert Coover, adjunct professor of English and noted novelist, taught the first Cave Writing Workshop at Brown in the spring of 2002.

Brown has been a pioneer in electronic writing since the 1960s, when Ted Nelson and Andries van Dam built the first hypertext system here. Since its opening in the spring of 1999 with support from IBM and the National Science Foundation, the Cave – located at 180 George St. – has been used by graduate and undergraduate students in chemistry, geology, cognitive and linguistic sciences, physics, archaeology, biology, computer science, applied mathematics and creative writing in a wide variety of interdisciplinary projects.

To reserve time to view “Works from the Cave,” call 863-1362. For more information on the exhibition, contact the Bell Gallery at 863-2932. For more information about the Boston CyberArts Festival, call (617) 524-8495 or visit the [Web site](#).

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