transtechnology research

Flavia Amadeu -
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Annual Report 2010

Convenor:

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Transtechnology Research is a transdisciplinary research group situated in the Faculty of Arts. Its constituency is drawn from historians, philosophers, anthropologists, artists and designers and is led from a historical and theoretical perspective with the objective of understanding science and technology as a manifestation of a range of human desires and cultural imperatives. Its aim is to provide a doctoral and post-doctoral environment for researchers who need to undertake academic research informed by their own and others creative practice. Its overarching research project concerns the philosophical aspects of science and technology and the history of popular arts.

The key objective is to understand the significance of creative agency in the process of technology acquiring meaning both before and after it enters into the public domain. Using a range of practice and theory based methods the group is concerned to make apparent evidence of human desire and cultural imperatives as they are manifested in the way that science and technology is practiced, innovated by entrepreneurs and interpreted by its users. Topics currently being researched concern the historical and philosophical aspects of nineteenth century media and contemporary digital technology, early cinema and the technological imaginary, cognitive issues in industrial design (esp. ageing), affective interaction and instrumentation, perceptual aspects of audio-visual media, the concept of space and the representation of the sublime, software ubiquity and affect, intellectual property and creativity, the global distribution of sound, the significance of space exploration for particular communities of users, and the interaction between experimental, advertising and amateur film in the mid twentieth century.

In this context it is leading a three year research project funded under the HERA JRP call 'Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation' in collaboration with the VU University, Amsterdam, the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, the Eye Film Institute Netherlands and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. It also currently holds doctoral and post-doctoral research grants from UK, EU, Brazilian and Portuguese Research Councils.

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Transtechnology Research is a constituent member of AZTEC, a University of Plymouth wide consortium of researchers concerned with the interface between the Arts, Sciences and Technology. It is also the UK editorial office of *Leonardo* and the international office of *Leonardo Reviews*. (www.leonardo.info)

Contributing Researchers:

Convenors:
Prof. dr. Michael Punt
Dr. Martha Blassnigg

Research Fellows:
Dr. Martha Blassnigg

Visiting Researchers:
Edith Doove
Jim Laukes
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Joanna Griffin
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Marcio Rocha
Natacha Roussel
John Vines
Martyn Woodward

RESEARCH

Technology, Exchange and Flow: Artistic Media Practices & Commercial Application

Transtechnology Research at the University of Plymouth in collaboration with the VU University, Amsterdam, the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, the Eye Film Institute Netherlands and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision will be undertaking a major three year project approved under the HERA JRP call 'Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation'. HERA is a joint programme of national science foundations, set up to derive new insights from humanities research in order to address major social, cultural, and political challenges facing Europe. The theme 'Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation' called for "proposals that addressed creativity in all its aspects in the expectation that new research, whether it be disciplinary or interdisciplinary, into the processes and conditions of human creativity will add new understandings of the value systems of the humanities and the practices and conditions of the creative, performing and visual arts, and a much better understanding of how these values and processes might contribute to cultural, social and economic innovation."

Through a series of distributed projects and subprojects 'Technology, Exchange and Flow' will explore the relationship between creativity and innovation within the contemporary European media sector. The project asks how traffic between cultural forms in Europe, such as industrial film and new media arts on the one hand, and commercial exploitation of audio-visual media on the other hand, is radically transformed at key moments. As such it is intended to prepare the way for thinking about new media environments when the distinctions between kinds of producers and the consumer and the producer are no longer valid or viable distinctions. The project brings together three expert teams and two significant archives in a research partnership which focuses on three distinct European examples of artistic practices and their commercial applications: early advertising and experimental film at a moment when the technologies of production become more widely available, post-war industrial films & early television commercials, and finally the emerging category of prosumers in contemporary distributive media consequent on games culture. The project examines the connections between the arts and their application from a Pan-European perspective by combining philosophical, historical, and practice-based approaches. The crucial question is how can we understand the relationship between commercial applications and implementation of artistic media practices in Europe? Is it determined by technological opportunity? Or the exchange between artists, producers and consumers? Or an interweaving of cultural and media formats (film, video, internet) which carry reproductive and distributive possibility?

The project findings will be presented in publications, symposia and conferences culminating in a major public exhibition using gaming feedback strategies. By examining media, human interaction and the imaginary, affective dimensions of technology and media, it will challenge the traditional concept of a top down hierarchical flow from artistic creativity to the commercial sector triggered by the stimulus of new technology. The collaborative research will lead to a number of publications, seminars and conferences concluding with a large-scale interactive exhibition in Vienna in 2013.

International Network for Trans-disciplinary Research (INTR)

> '[...] trans-disciplinarity', by which is meant the mobilization of a range of theoretical perspectives and practical methodologies to solve problems. But, unlike inter- or multi-disciplinarity, it is not necessarily derived from pre-existing disciplines, nor does it always contribute to the formation of new disciplines. The creative act lies just as much in the capacity to mobilize and manage these perspectives and methodologies, their 'external' orchestration, as in the development of new theories or conceptualisations, or the refinement of research methods, the 'internal' dynamics of scientific creativity.'
>
> HELGA NOWOTNY, PETER SCOTT and MICHAEL GIBBONS INTRODUCTION 'Mode 2' Revisited: The New Production of Knowledge, Minerva 41: 179–194, 2003.

Description and purpose:
This proposal is intended to initiate an international network of research organisations concerned with post-doctoral and early career, practice based research.

Its purpose is to collate and cascade best practice at postdoctoral level in order to:
(i) support early career researchers (ii) to enhance the provision and experience of PhD students working particularly with trans-disciplinary practice.

Its outcomes will be:
(i) a consolidated network and international exchange programme (ii) international doctoral supervision teams (iii) national and EU funding applications (iv) grey literature.

The network builds upon and extends the current international collaborations at Transtechnology Research in order to develop methods, pedagogies and resourcing strategies for trans-disciplinary practiced based research at the highest level. The structure comprises five network meetings financed in collaboration with participating institutions and the outcome will be a joint funding application to extend the network and a joint research proposal.

Outcome:

The network is intended to address trans-disciplinary research at the highest level in order to develop methods, identify concerns and propose procedures appropriate to post-doctoral research by early career researchers in particular. Through this we also expect to dissolve some of the more consuming problems reiterated in the H. E. PhD sector and, more significantly open new perspectives for trans-disciplinary research. In particular the network will consider why practice based research might be valuable and where its issues and lessons might be applied to University research strategies in the widest sense.

The key activities of this international network will be five meetings; an initial structural meeting at Plymouth, followed by Budapest, Amsterdam, Berlin and finally a round-up meeting at Plymouth. The proposal is that UoP will substantially contribute to subsistence and mobility. In return each venue will host a four-day event, facilitate a supervisory PhD master-class (in order to exchange academic styles) and produce a short report of the event. The meetings will be formally structured in two parts. (i) To consider presentations of ongoing research by the network, and seminars to develop policy statements and collaborative proposals. (ii) The participants will also offer master-classes and consultation with registered PhD students at the host institution as both a contributory and research exercise. The initial participants of the network have been selected against the criteria of the wide range of their uses of trans-disciplinary practices in research with world-class outcomes as well as previous successful collaboration with Transtechnology Research.

PhD Research

Using a range of practice and theory based methods the group is concerned to make apparent evidence of human desire and cultural imperatives as they are manifested in the way that science and technology is practiced, innovated by entrepreneurs and interpreted by its users. Topics currently being researched concern the historical and philosophical aspects of nineteenth century media and contemporary digital technology, early cinema and the technological imaginary, cognitive issues of industrial design (esp. ageing), affective interaction and instrumentation, perceptual aspects of audio-visual media, the concept of space and the representation of the sublime, software ubiquity and affect, intellectual property and creativity, the global distribution of sound, the significance of space exploration for particular communities of users, and the interaction between experimental, advertising and amateur film in the mid twentieth century.

All supervisory teams include members with substantial track records of practice in the arts, design or filmmaking who also have significant publishing profiles in at least one other academic discipline. These currently include Film and Cinema Studies, Media Philosophy, Digital Media, Media Anthropology, Design Theory, Interaction Design and Interactive Art. Registered students currently hold full doctoral research grants from AHRC, EPSRC, UoP, and Brazilian and Portuguese Research Councils. Transtechnology Research also holds and oversees Post-Doc research grants from the EU.

For further information prospective candidates are advised to contact Professor Michael Punt in the first instance: michael.punt@plymouth.ac.uk.

Ongoing and recently completed PhD Research titles:

Advertising and Experimental Film: Synergies and Differences in the Context of European Exchange.

Affect and the Cognitive Models: the Cultural Implications of Software.

Affective Wearables: for a Technoecology of Fashion.

Ageing Futures: Towards Cognitively Inclusive Digital Media Products.

Changing Space: the Social and Experiential Culture of Spacecraft and the Public Domain.

The Cinema and its Spectatorship: the Spiritual Dimension of the 'Human Apparatus'.

Copyright Law and the Re-distribution of Archival Film.

Earthsound: Listening to The Planet.

Enacted Creativity and Audio Visual Media.

Gestalt Biometrics and their Applications.

Khôra and the Essence of Space.

Laughter, Curation and the Infrathin.

Modelling the Moving Image: Moving Image Archives; Illustrating, Documenting and Eliciting Radical Conceptions of Representation, Perception and Knowledge.

Transtechnology Research Seminar Series 2010/2011

Reinstating the Visual: Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas.

The 2010/11 Transtechnology Research Seminar Series "Reinstating the Visual: Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas" began in October 2010. It follows on from the previous two series "Technology, Mind and Contingency: Matter, Models and Metaphors" and "Realism and its Discontents".
Each seminar will focus on a single panel of Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas and be led by researchers at Transtechnology Research. Each seminar leader will examine one selected image panel in relation to their ongoing research. In advance of each seminar a copy of the relevant Mnemosyne panel together with an abstract will be posted on the Transtechnology website and participants are expected to familiarize themselves with the context and detail of the particular panel and the background reading relevant to the seminar. The seminar series 2011/2012 will deal with the topic of technology and precognition.

Research Collaborations 2010/2011:

Culture Lab, University of Newcastle

Eye Film Institute Netherlands

Gdansk University of Technology

Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest

International Graduate Center for the Study of Culture (GCSC), Justus-Liebig University Giessen

Mediterranean Institute for Advanced Study

Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision

Plymouth Age Concern

South West Film and Television Archive

TVP Kultura Gdansk

TwoFour TV

University of Amsterdam

VU University, Amsterdam

Recent research outputs:

2010   Blassnigg, M. 2010. Revisiting Marey's Applications of Scientific Moving Image Technologies in the Context of Bergson's Philosophy: Audio-Visual Mediation and the Experience of Time. Medicine Studies. *Springer*. DOI: 10.1007/s12376-010-0049-x.

Cachão, R. 2010. 'Disclosing Space: Order and Mediation from Hand-Drawn Scientific Illustration to Geometry.' *Space: The Real and the Abstract.* The Centre for Art, Design, Research and Experimentation (CADRE) School of Art and Design, University of Wolverhampton, 6 July 2010.

Egbe, A. 2010. 'Approaches to Representing the Unrepresentable in Moving Image Archives'. British Comparative Literature Association XII International 'Archive' Conference, University of Kent, UK, 6 July 2010.

Griffin, J. 2010. 'Finding Meaning'. 2010 Global Lunar Conference, Beijing, China, 1 June 2010.

Op den Kamp, C. 2010. '*De overval*, the Film and its Dissemination: a Resistance Against a Dominant System', British Comparative Literature Association, XII International 'Archive' Conference, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK, 6 July 2010.

Op den Kamp, C. 2010. 'Is Audiovisual Archival Public Domain Material Really Freely Available?', Besides the Screen Symposium, Goldsmiths College, London, UK, 21 November 2010.

Punt, M. 2010. Accidental Machines: The impact of Popular Participation on Computer Technology. IN: *The Designed World: Images, Objects, Environments.* Victor Margolin (Author, Editor), Dennis Doordan (Author), Richard Buchanan (Author, Editor), Dennis P. Doordan (Editor). Oxford: Berg. pp. 167-188.

2009   Blassnigg, M. 2009. *Time, Memory, Consciousness and the Cinema Experience: Revisiting Ideas on Matter and Spirit.* Amsterdam: Rodopi Press.

Blassnigg, M. 2009. 'Time, Memory and the Philosophical Dispositif of Cinema: The Mirrored Metaphor of Culture and Technology'. *REAL Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature*, Vol. 25, eds. H. Grabes, A. Nünning, S. Baumbach, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, pp. 299-314.

Op den Kamp, C. 2009. 'Towards a More Accurate Preservation of Colour'. Panel presentation, Colour and the Moving Image Conference, University of Bristol, UK, 11 July 2009.

Punt, M. 2009. 'Swing Time as/&/as Metaphor'. IN. *REAL Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature*, Vol. 25, eds. H. Grabes, A. Nünning, S. Baumbach, Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, pp. 315-328.

Thomspon, S., Vines, J. 2009. 'Enacted Experience and Interaction Design: New Perspectives'. In: Ramduny-Ellis, D., Dix, A., Hare., J., and Gill, S. (eds.). *Proceedings of the Third International Workshop on Physicality*. Lancaster: Lancaster University Press. pp. 49-54.

Vines, J. 2009. 'The Ageing Present: Neurophysiological Change and the Relational Affordances of Technological Objects'. Doctoral Colloquium of the International Association of Societies of Design Research 2009: Rigour and Relevance in Design, COEX, Seoul, 18-22 October 2009.

Vines, J. 2009. 'Embodied and Ecological Cognition and the Design of Engaging Technological Artefacts for Older Individuals'. Nordes 2009: Engaging Artifacts, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Oslo, 30 August – 1 September 2009.

Vines, J. 2009. 'The Failure of Designers Thinking About How We Think: The problem of Human-Computer Interaction'. Failed Design: What were they thinking, Bard Graduate Centre, New York, USA. 24 April 2009.

2008   Op den Kamp, C. 2008. 'Digital Post-Production Tools as a Means of Restoration: the Restoration of *Pandora's Box* (1929)'. Panel presentation, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto Collegium, Pordenone, Italy, 10 October 2008.

Punt, M. 2008. Synchrony and the Semi-Material Object. In Ascott, R., et al. *New Realities: Being Syncretic*. Springer: New York. pp. 224-228.

Punt, M. 2008. Play Orbit: Jungando con la Historia del Juego, and: Play Orbit a Play on the History of Play. In: Dragona, D., et.al. (eds). *Homo Ludens Ludens*. Gijon: Laboral. pp. 134-149 and pp. 254-260.

Punt, M. 2008. Reflections in a Laser Disc. In: Kooijman, J., Pisters, P., Strauven, W., (eds.) *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts according to Thomas Elsaesser*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. pp. 267-276.

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Transtechnology Research Reader:

Technology, Mind and Contingency: Matter, Models and Metaphors

Contributors: *Martha Blassnigg, Rita Cachão, Amanda Egbe, Hannah Drayson, Joanna Griffin, Robert Jackson, Claudy Op den Kamp, David McConville, Michael Punt, Stephen Thompson, John Vines, Martyn Woodward, Brigitta Zics and Jonathan Zilberg.*

Editorial Team: *Martha Blassnigg, Hannah Drayson, Michael Punt, John Vines and Brigitta Zics.*

Transtechnology Research published its first collection of essays as the outcome of two research seminar series in 2008/09 and 2009/2010. The reader reflects an ongoing intellectual process that is both individual and collective. The essays bound together in this Reader are intended to offer a dynamic profile of the research that is ongoing among its constituents. They reflect an ongoing intellectual process that is both individual and collective; identifying and challenging themes and models of thought presented in the first series in parallel to the new concerns of the second series. As a consequence they neither replicate nor directly refer to much that was presented and discussed but can be regarded as a third text providing commentary and insight into the unfolding research agenda of the community who participate in Transtechnology Research. (PDF versions of the contributions are also available at www.trans-techresearch.net)
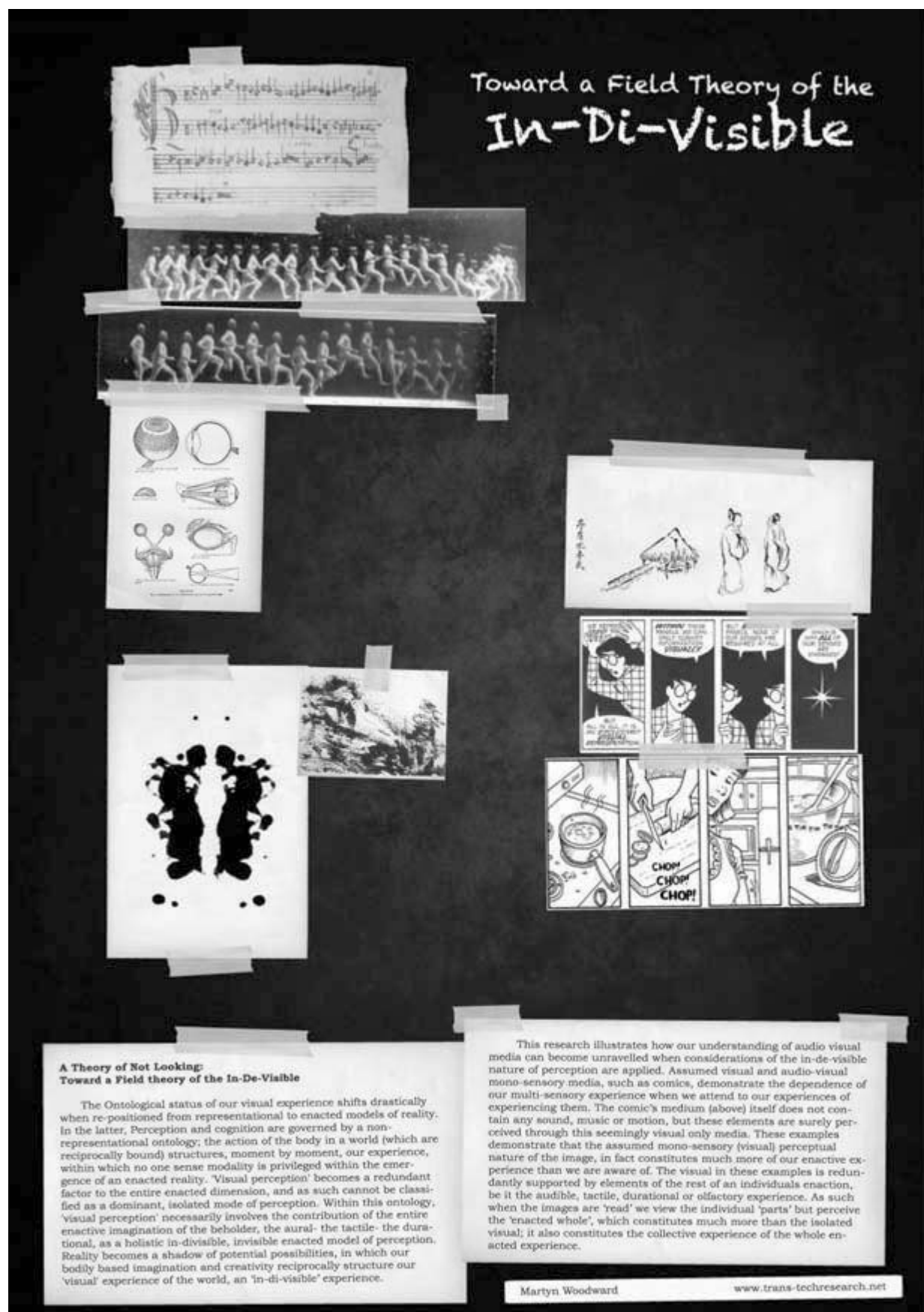
Posters exhibited at Boundary Works 1, 12-17 November 2010, Wandesford Gallery, Cork, Republic of Ireland.
1. Ageing Futures 2. Transtechnology Research Poster 3. Toward a Field Theory of the In-Di-Visible.
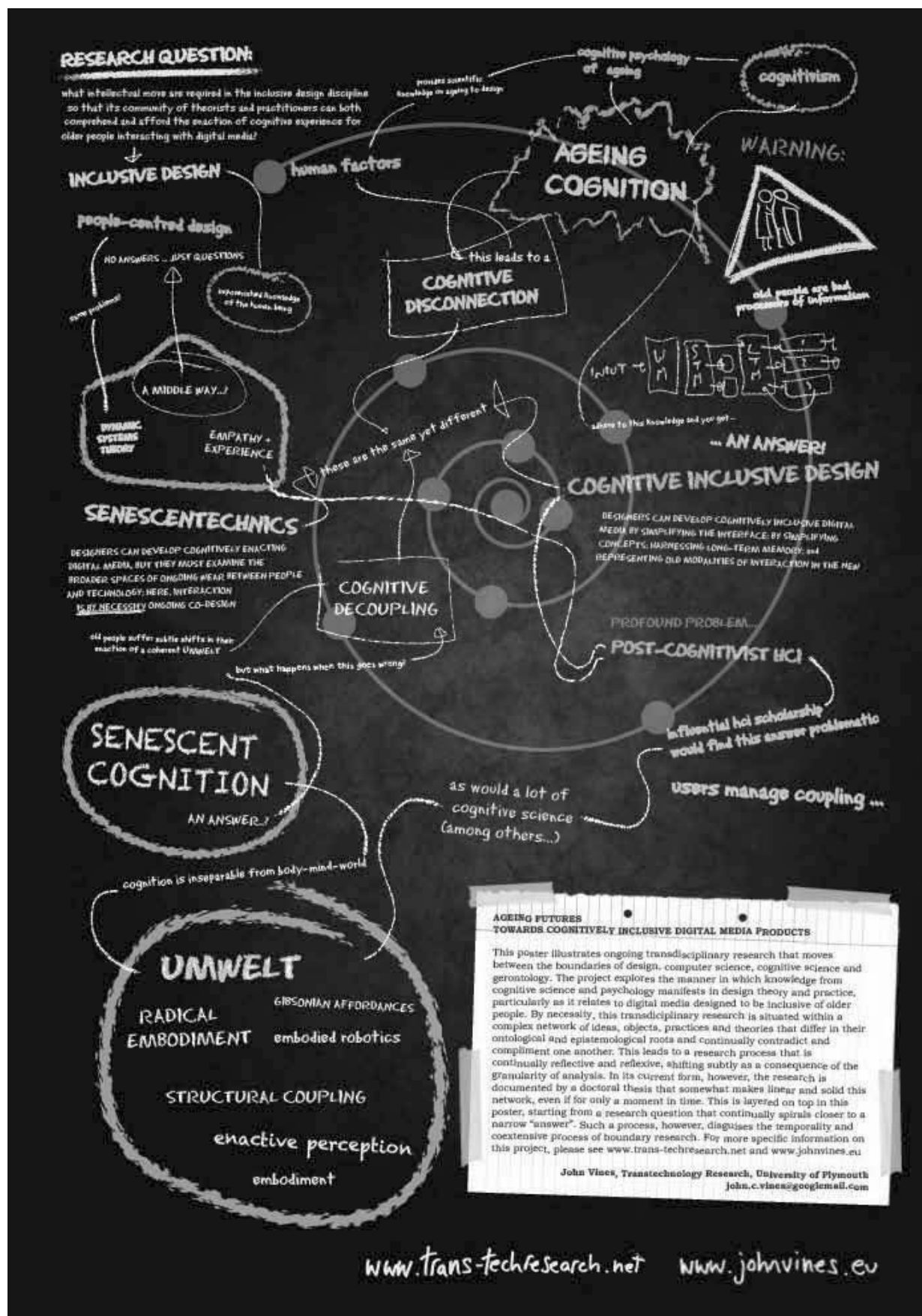
Transtechnology Research Poster. Exhibited at Boundary Works 1, 12-17 November 2010
Wandesford Gallery, Cork, Republic of Ireland.
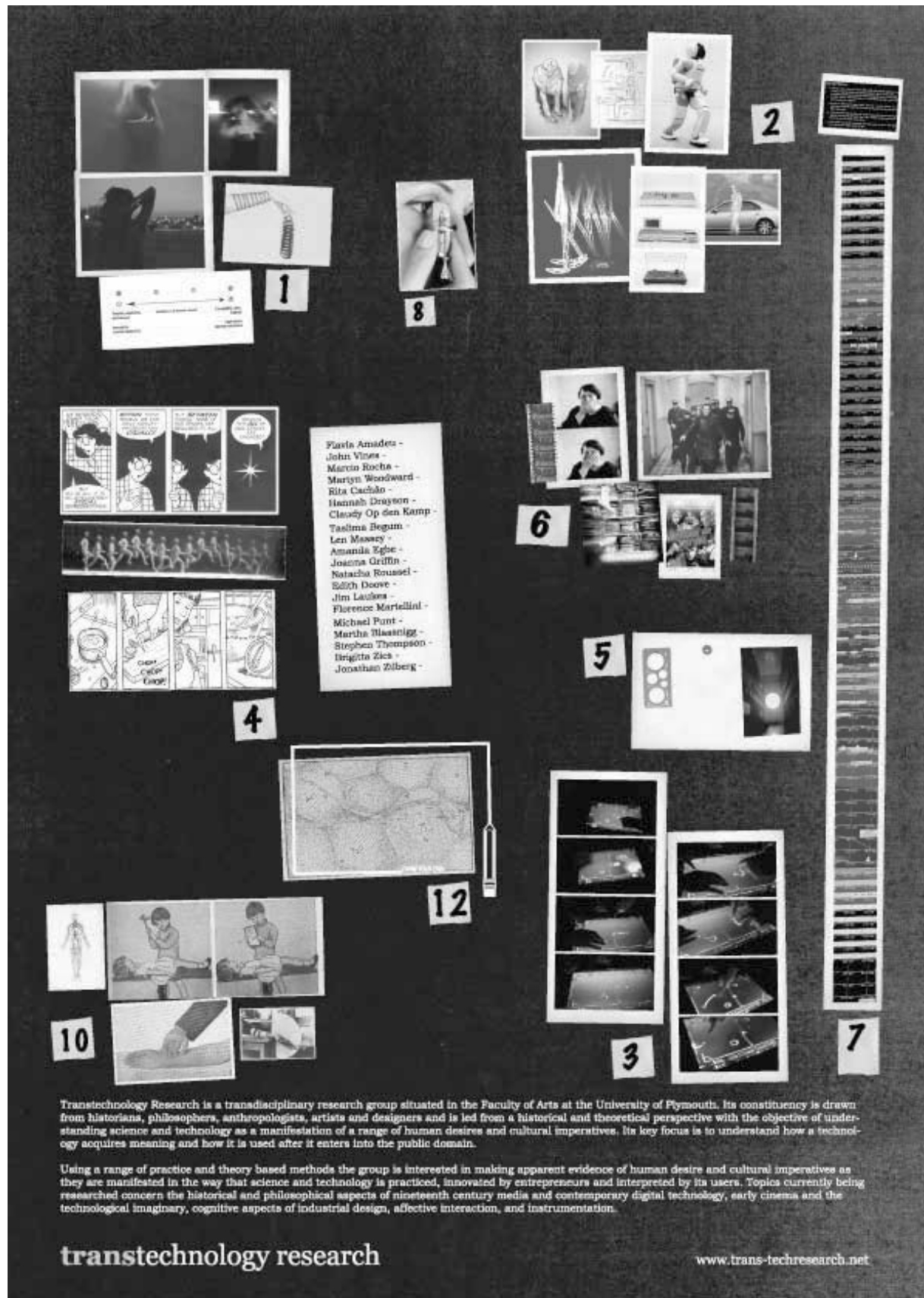
Martyn Woodward, Toward a Field Theory of the In-Di-Visible. Poster exhibited at Boundary Works 1, 12-17 November 2010, Wandesford Gallery, Cork, Republic of Ireland.

John Vines, Ageing Futures. Poster exhibited at Boundary Works 1, 12-17 November 2010, Wandesford Gallery, Cork, Republic of Ireland.