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"Being There and Here: New Forms of Interactivity, ARCO 2003, 15 February 2002", *ABC Infoarco 103*, Madrid, January 2003, p. 43.

During the Renaissance the perspective window became a tool simultaneously for recording the world out there accurately and for separating subject and object. Paradoxically the 20th century, which saw the first systematic historical and philosphical studies of the subject-object distinction (e.g. Cassirer), also saw a series of experiments to transcend its limitations. Artistic movements such as cubism played with and delberately broke the formal rules of perspective to get beyond the divide symbolized by the window. Literary critics wrote books such as *The Broken Window* to capture this trend. In the 1960s artistic groups such as *Laterna magica* (Prague) consciously created illusions of going from the ludic space of the stage into the spectator's space and back again. The *Purple Rose of Cairo* explored the same idea in the context of film.

The advent of computers brought a return to the windows metaphor and thus a renewed separation between us (here) and a separate world (there). At the same time, a small group of thinkers has been working on going beyond the limitations of the subjectobject distinction in a digital context. In general terms, this quest is linked with trends towards virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality; with buzzwords such as immersion, immersive reality, interactivity and even video-conferencing.

At a more specific level two trends can be discerned. On the one hand, there is a growing fascination with linking a group in one space (here) with other groups in spaces elsewhere (there) and providing them with means to affect each other. Those on the other side of the screen are no longer just there. It is as if we were there while we are here and as if we could affect there as much as here. This is leading to new kinds of experiments in what might be called group entertainment, whereby there are no longer a number of spectators here passively looking at persons and events there, but rather a sense of being there and here simultaneously and having an effect on both. The first panel discussion will bring together four individuals who are at the frontiers of this trend. One could argue that this trend is fascinated by the phenomenon of going beyond the barrier, but does bot in a sense gets stuck in the process rater than the consequences.

A second trend goes beyond the barrier but with a further purpose of exploring new kinds of personal expression and creativity. Perhaps the simplest way of doing this is by means of avatars, using symbols of oneself to enter fictive spaces and thus share psychologically with others (Damer). Or one can use electronic means to play delibrately with the usual laws of refraction and reflection in windows and mirrors to create new interplays between here and there (Fleischmann, Strauss). Alternatively one can use motion capture technologies such as video to record a person (here) and project them (there) into the fictive space of a comic, or some other narrative such that the two become intertwined in new ways (Nandi). Or one can go further still and bring a number of persons (here) entirely into the fictive space of a play so that they can be there and here in new ways (Johansson). The second panel will focus on this trend to raise the question: What new forms of experience and creativity are potentially possible through such experiments?