

SEPTEMBER

09.24.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**How Not to Be Seen**

**Hanna Rose Shell**, a historian and media artist, is an Assistant Professor in the Program in Science, Technology and Society at MIT. She will discuss the history of camouflage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, at the intersection of the histories of biology, military strategy, technology, and film media practice. Shell's book *Hide and Seek: Camouflage and the Media of Reconnaissance*, will be published by Zone Books in the spring of 2010.

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09.17.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks**

**Ethan Gilsdorf** will discuss some of the themes of his new book, *Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks: An Epic Quest for Reality Among Role Players, Online Gamers, and Other Dwellers of Imaginary Realms*. Writing a blend of travelogue, pop culture analysis, and memoir, forty-year-old former D&D addict Gilsdorf crisscrosses America, the world, and other worlds—from Boston to Wisconsin, France to New Zealand, and Planet Earth to the realm of Aggramar. He asks: Who are these gamers and fantasy fans? What explains the irresistible appeal of such "escapist" adventures? How do the players balance their escapist urges with the kingdom of adulthood? Gilsdorf will talk about the culture's discomfort with the geek/nerd/gamer stereotype and will look at society's ambivalent relationship with gaming and fantasy play, and the origins of that prejudice, as well as the author's own past misgivings and final acceptance of his "geek" identity.

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09.29.09 | 5-7 PM | TBA

**CMS Town Meeting**

*Restricted to CMS faculty and students.* What is the state of the CMS program as a whole? Who are we? What are we doing? Where are we headed? CMS director William Uricchio will lead the department's semiannual Town Meeting.

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OCTOBER

10.08.09 | 5-7 PM | Bartos Theater

**Communications Forum: Race and Politics in the Media**

The election of an African-American president in November 2008 has been hailed as a transforming event. But has Obama's ascension transformed anything? Many people's answer to that question changed this summer when a famous Harvard professor was arrested at his home in Cambridge. Are the harsh realities of race and class in the U.S. clearer now or murkier, following the media tsunami of Gatesgate? And has this polarizing event given greater visibility to racial minorities in the media's coverage of politics? How are race issues and racial politics covered in our national media, and what are the implications of the demise of major city newspapers for the coverage of race and politics? **Juan Williams** of NPR and Fox News will discuss these and related questions in a candid conversation with Philip Thompson, associate professor of urban politics in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. This forum is the first of two this term in our ongoing civic media series, a collaboration of the Communications Forum and the Media Lab's Center for Future Civic Media.

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10.15.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**Political Remix Video: A Participatory Post-Modern Critique of Popular Culture**

Remixers are on the front lines of the battle between new media technologies and impeding copyright laws that threaten to obstruct the public discursive space for critiquing popular culture. These spaces are abundant with meticulously crafted and articulate video remixes that deconstruct social myths, challenge dominant media messages and form powerful arguments reflecting the participatory nature of both pop and remix cultures. We'll deconstruct these videos, honor the history of female fan vidders and the influences of African-American hip-hop cultures and debate the remix's ability to effect actual change. **Elisa Kreisinger** is a video remix artist, hacktivist and writer. She co-edits the blog, PoliticalRemixVideo.com, teaches new media to Cambridge teens and is currently working on her first screenplay.

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10.22.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**Transatlantic Acousmatics**

The year *The Invisible Man* was published, Marconi filed his patent and established the first station for wireless telegraphy, what would become radio. H.G. Wells's novel reads as if it were an instruction manual for the uses and abuses of the nascent radio voice. MIT Victorian Literature Professor **John Picker** will argue that, in conjunction with the racist basis of much *fin-de-siecle* anxiety, the acousmatic status of Wells's protagonist allows for a conspicuous if incoherent racial performance.

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10.29.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**Cinematic Games**

Many people talk about "cinematic" games, but what does this really mean? Over their century of existence, films have been using a range of techniques to create specific emotional responses in their audience. Instead of simply using more cut-scenes, better script writers, or making more heavily scripted game experiences, game designers can look to film techniques as an inspiration for new techniques that accentuate what games do well. This lecture will present film clips from a number of classic movies, analyze how they work from a cinematic standpoint, and then suggest ways these techniques can be used in gameplay to create even more stimulating experiences for gamers, including examples from games that have successfully bridged the gap. **Richard Rouse III** is a game designer and writer, best known for *The Suffering* horror games and his book *Game Design: Theory & Practice*. He is currently the Lead Single Player Designer on the story-driven FPS *Homefront* at Kaos Studios in New York City.

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NOVEMBER

11.05.09 | 5-7 PM | Bartos Theater

**Communications Forum: What's New at the Center for Future Civic Media**

This second civic media forum will center on several of the Center for Future Civic Media's most promising new projects. Advanced researchers from the Center will describe their work and offer live demonstrations of their computing wizardry. The forum will be moderated by **Chris Csikszentmihalyi**, director of the Center and of the Computing Culture group at the MIT Media Lab.

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12

11.12.09 | 5-7 PM | 66-110

**Communications Forum: The Culture Beat and New Media: Arts Journalism in the Internet Era**

Newspapers and magazines are reducing their critical coverage of the arts, but the human appetite to evaluate culture, to debate reactions and opinions, remains as vibrant as ever. Panelists **Doug McLennan** (editor of ArtsJournal.com) and **Bill Marx** (editor of TheArtsFuse.com) will discuss how cyberspace is transforming arts journalism, in some cases radically redefining its form and content. The forum will debate what critical values from the traditional media should survive, explore how digital media is changing the ways we articulate our responses to the arts, and point to promising contemporary business models and experiments in cultural coverage.

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11.19.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**Booklife: The Private and the Public in Transmedia Storytelling and Self-Promotion**

**Jeff VanderMeer** and **Kevin Smokler**

Fictional experiments in emerging media like Twitter and Facebook are influencing traditional printed novels and stories in interesting ways, but another intriguing new narrative is also emerging: the rise of "artifacts" that have their own intrinsic creative value. What are the benefits and dangers of a confusion between the private creativity and the public career elements of a writer's life caused by new media and a proliferation of "open channels"? In what ways is a writer's life now itself a story irrespective of intentional fictive storytelling? **Jeff VanderMeer** is the award-winning author of the metafictional *City of Saints & Madmen*, the noir fantasy *Finch*, and *Booklife: Strategies & Survival Tips for 21st-Century Writers*. **Kevin Smokler** is the editor of *Bookmark Now: Writing in Unreadable Times*, which was a *San Francisco Chronicle* Notable Book of 2005. He blogs for the Huffington Post and at kevinismokler.com and is the CEO of BookTour.com.

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DECEMBER

12.03.09 | 5-7 PM | 4-231

**Western Otaku: Games Crossing Cultures**

From Nintendo's first Famicom system, Japanese consoles and videogames have played a central role in the development and expansion of the digital game industry. Players globally have consumed and enjoyed Japanese games for many reasons, and in a variety of contexts. This study examines one particular subset of videogame players, for whom the consumption of Japanese videogames in particular is of great value, in addition to their related activities consuming anime and manga from Japan. Through in-depth interviews with such players, this study investigates how transnational fandom operates in the realm of videogame culture, and how a particular group of videogame players interprets their gameplay experience in terms of a global, if hybrid, industry. **Mia Consalvo** is visiting associate professor in the Comparative Media Studies program at MIT. She is the author of *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames* and is co-editor of the forthcoming *Blackwell Handbook of Internet Studies*.

Grayed-out dates are Thursdays without Colloquium events.

For details on speakers and events, please visit the CMS Events page at <http://cms.mit.edu/events>. Most colloquia are made available as podcasts a few days after the event at <http://cms.mit.edu>.