APPLICATION: FACE FOUNDATION FOR ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Submission Proposal

Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence (ESAA),
and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC)

Introduction

The *Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence* (ESAA) is embarking on a partnership with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Art and Technology Studies (ATS) and Sound departments. We propose to create an academic network that harbors current technological research in sound, immersive environments, telecommunications, kinetic art and robotics, while identifying complementary coursework and co-validated curriculum. The cooperative will generate faculty and student exchanges and collaborations, collective teaching practices, and reciprocal evaluation of students. We have identified educational content specific to this mission that is relevant to each of our goals. Our ultimate aim is to develop an agenda which involves equal commitment and participation between us in order to award, over a three-year span, an integrated Master's Degree and, if possible, joint validation. The training covered by these collaborations will offer a unique educational context, correlating art and research—articulating common methodology that spans the sciences and arts; indeed defining research in a studio art context—and fostering professionalism within an environment of cultural exchange. A prelude to this project began through a relationship with the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art Villa Arson Nice* and the SAIC between 1999 and 2003, under the auspices of the *SCAN (Studio Création Arts Numériques),* which was discontinued in July 2003 by the *Villa Arson* (see history below). Today, we hope to expand the faculty visits and the activities we successfully began into a post-graduate research program for exchange students, led by the same professors Jérôme Joy (at Aix and Nice) and Peter Gena (Chicago), along with Peter Sinclair in Aix and Benjamin Chang in Chicago.

Ecole Supérieure des Beaux Arts d'Aix en Provençe (ESAA)

Since the creation of its research program, positioned at the intersection of art, science and technology, the Aix-en-Provençe School of Art has been exploring the potential of sound art and music; whether autonomous, interdisciplinary or of an interactive nature, as found in physical or virtual installations or within the exploration of creative online networking. Integrated into ESAA, **Locus Sonus** is a research facility with a program of study specializing in audio arts and hybridized developments between sound and other art forms. Led by Jérôme Joy and Peter Sinclair, it explores the vast area open to creative experimentation between visual art and musical practices. The program utilizes resources made available at ESAA. In addition, there is a growing network of local, national and international partners engaged in closely related activities. Locus Sonus functions on a yearly basis, recruiting students whose previous work shows an engagement in the areas quoted above. Likely candidates are French MFA (DNSEP) post-graduates and American graduate studio art students, but there is also an interest in those qualified in music, architecture, sociology, etc. As often as possible, Locus Sonus' activities are made available to the public through concerts, symposiums, exhibitions, webcasts, databases publications etc.

LOEIL (Laboratory Object Space Intelligence Language) is an experimental lab that employs diverse technologies to touch on questions concerning, movement, behavior, autonomy, automation and robotics. It emphasizes a practical approach to art, science and technology. Like Locus Sonus, LOEIL is a part of the ESAA that advances interdisciplinary projects through the coordination of an assembly of specific studios originally created within the school to cater to its needs. The structure is interactive, covering a range of activities such as robotics, remote robotics, artificial life, light, interactivity, networks, etc. The studios encourage a dialectic centered on mechanical construction, interactive structural envelopes, electronics, and digital technology. LOEIL is a crossroads for ideas. The permanently evolving relationship between its different studios endows the facility with a capacity for flexible adaptation. A group consisting of artists, engineers, and technicians is enriched by the presence of visiting artists, totally caught up in the process of research and art making. An offshoot of LOEIL, the **Hypermedia Lab,** specializes in 2D interactive environments.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Recognized as an innovator in the arts since its inception more than 125 years ago, and internationally esteemed as a school of art and design, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago offers a comprehensive college education centered in the visual and related arts. Believing that the artist's success is dependent on both creative vision and technical expertise, the School encourages excellence, critical inquiry, research, and experimentation. **Art and Technology Studies (ATS)** is an interdisciplinary program in which students explore the application of both standard and emerging technologies to art making in the widest possible context. Graduate students in ATS possess a strong background in technology, electronics, computers, and technical experimentation and should be prepared to integrate these skills into the creative process. The art and technology studies department enhances this process by providing an innovative forum for trrans-disciplinary research in the arts. Founded in 1969, the Kinetics and Electronics area is the oldest of its kind in the nation, and the more recent Robotics, Telecommunications, and Immersive Environment laboratories are among the most active. Similarly, the **Department of Sound,** created in the early 1970s, offers a unique program among art schools in the creative use of sound that goes well beyond the

boundaries of a typical program in visual art, music, or multimedia. Students in Sound may pursue the creation and recording of audio work; the composition of music in numerous genres; live performance, improvisation, and audio installation; the integration of sound in other media, such as video, film, performance, and web-based art; designing and building software and hardware instruments; and distribution technologies (radio, Internet, etc.).

Strong conceptual relationships exist among art and technology, sound, video, computer-aided art and design, filmmaking, electronics, kinetics, and performance, and students may freely select advisers and courses from these time-arts areas and more traditional studio departments to pursue ideas that are larger than the scope of any one medium. The SAIC promotes an active, international visiting artist program that brings several artists weekly to present lecture/demonstrations, give informal concerts, and participate in critiques with students.

Historical time-line:

• **May 1999:** Danielle Brughera, French cultural attaché in Chicago, sponsored a mission to France for **Peter Gena (professor, SAIC)** to visit prospective collaborators in Paris, Lyon, and Nice. One of Peter's goals was to meet Professor **Jérôme Joy** at *L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Nice* (Villa Arson). Over several days, Jérôme and Peter toured the school and exchanged ideas.

• **May 2000:** Peter Gena taught a Summer Study Trip class for the SAIC in Nice and Florence). Jérôme arranged for free lodging at the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art* for Peter, and twenty-two students! Jérôme and Peter met with the directors of the Villa Arson and the school, introducing research and exchange ideas.

• **April 2001:** School of the Art Institute of Chicago
   Jérôme Joy (*L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Nice*), Visiting Artist
   April 3, *Sound Art, a play-list*, History of Sonic Arts class: 9:30 AM - 12 noon.
   April 4, AM: met with the SAIC foreign study coordinator. **5 PM:** Northwestern U.: *homestudio.thing.net*.
   April 5, AM: SAIC: Intro to Sound class. **PM:** listened/critiqued student work.

• **October 2002**: *L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Nice*
   Peter Gena (School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Visiting Artist
   October 3: Villa Arson - SCAN – AudioLab, **1)** Lecture Topic: *The Art & Technology Department at the SAIC and new investigations in music,* including a presentation of Peter's recent work, using Max/MSP. **2)** Peter and Jérôme met with the co-directors of student exchange at the Villa Arson.
   October 4: Research discussion with Jérôme and assistants.

• **February 2003:** School of Art Institute of Chicago
   Jérôme Joy, Visiting Artist
   February 18: *NETSOUND,* discussion in the Introduction to Sound class.
   February 19, AM: *FREEMODULOPHONICS, pacJAP/picNIC* (digital Sound and 4D classes) - description of the projects and the Max/Msp patches. **PM:** Jérôme and Peter met with Anthony Jones, president of the SAIC.
   February 20, AM: *FREEMODULOPHONICS, pacJAP & picNIC* (ATS, Interactive Multimedia and Introduction to Sound classes) - presentation of the projects and description of the Max/Msp patches. **PM:** *AUDIOLAB, AGGLO & SCAN,* Presentation to SAIC students about exchange with the Villa Arson.
   February 21: *PIZMO* (Immersive Environments class) - presentation of the collective project and listening.

• **May, 2003:** *L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Nice (SCAN (*Studio Création Arts Numériques*)*
   Benjamin Chang (assistant Professor, SAIC), offered a workshop on the basics of a virtual reality environment.
   May was the preferred month because of the RadioMatic workshop scheduled at that time.

• **June 2003:** School of the Art Institute of Chicago, AudioLab Villa Arson, Nice, RadioStudio Bauhaus-University of Weimar, Musabi Musashino University, Tokyo, ESAA, Aix-en-Provence, EBA, Avignon, ESBAM, Marseille.
   Radiomatic/Streaps: School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Art and Technology Studies.
   Christopher Sorg (part-time instructor, SAIC), successfully tests streaming with the above institutions.

• **January 2004:** *L'Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence*
   Jérôme Joy proposed that the SAIC enter into a new project with *Locus Sonus* as a new model for Franco-American exchange. *SCAN*, in Nice, was discontinued in July 2003, and the programs already launched (RadioMatic, STREAPS, etc.) have moved to Aix-en-Provence, accompanied by Professor Joy.

• **December 2004:** School of the Art Institute of Chicago
   Peter Sinclair (Professor, *L'Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence*) Visiting Artist
   December 3, AM: Meeting with Cultural Attaché Yannick Mercoyrol, Gena, Chang, and Christian Tual (speaker phone). **PM:** presentation to SAIC students and ATS faculty on ESAA, student and faculty work.
   December 4, AM: planning session for FACE application with Benjamin Chang, and Peter Gena.
   December 8, AM: meeting regarding FACE application with Christian Tual in NYC.

• **March 2005:** *L'Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Aix-en-Provence*

Peter Gena, Visiting Artist
    March 1 to 9: Mini-workshops, critiques, and presentations, including work of SAIC faculty and students.

Shared/Networked Curriculum

The proposed areas of inquiry, Audio Art, Electronic Music, Video, Computer programming, Networked Art, Immersive Environments, and Robotics naturally lean towards trans-disciplinary practice. We intend to establish a shared art and technology platform that will dynamically enrich the curriculum of each institution. Within the structure of the proposed academic partnership, exchange students will have access to the research resources of each host facility. Moreover, faculty exchanges will extend and increase resources of the host educational program with an eye towards identifying and building upon common research and experimentation. Immersion in a less familiar environment will afford students the opportunities to enrich content and reinforce cultural references relative to their artistic projects. They will also benefit from the implementation of their work within the larger, international milieu. The benefits of cultural diversity clearly work immediately in both directions as students at the host facilities benefit from fresh input from their visiting peers.

Projected curriculum
At the SAIC, MFA's are primarily based on Graduate Projects (one-on-one private tutorials) graduate seminar classes, and art history requirements. There are no "requirements" per se in terms of course sequences in each discipline. We simply give an MFA, not a Masters in Sound, or Art and technology, etc. Hence, most of our technical courses are at the advanced undergraduate level. It is quite common for entering graduate students, who wish to hone certain skills, to enroll in these classes. The offerings include courses and workshops in immersive VR, telecommunication, robotics, 3D animation, machine control electronics, art of surveillance, internet-based art, algorithmic composition, automated composition, sound-spatialization, cognitive psychology, digital sound, hardware hacking, etc. Our graduate seminars in ATS and Sound feature a variety of topics from specialized electronic and kinetic issues, art and biology, telecommunications, sound composition, etc. We envision that visiting students from Aix would avail themselves of these courses in addition to the six to nine hours of Graduate Projects that deal with the student's own work (which would specialize in the areas that we expect to concentrate on in the exchange). Similarly, SAIC students would pursue courses and workshops at Locus Sonus in Audio and Space: installation, mobility, architectural space, virtual space, public space, interactivity, narrative, context, augmented reality; and Networked Audio Systems**:** group, experimental collectives, artistic collectives, game collectives, digital-audio marching bands, streaming, radioblogs, transfer protocols, downloading, consensual and participatory protocols, interfaces, streams, listening apparatuses. In addition we expect that the fruits of our collaborative labors will integrate the students and progress as follows.

Year 1 (2005-2006): Faculty and students will begin developing resources and platforms for tele-collaborative art at the two institutions: virtual reality facilities, tele-robotics, and systems for streaming and broadcasting digital audio and video. As each institution has expertise in complementary areas and specializations, this first phase of the project will focus on developing shared technological infrastructure, as well as aesthetic and conceptual interests for continuing research projects.

Year 2 (2006-2007): Student exchange focuses on integration of tele-collaborative technologies into specific projects. These projects will be conducted through the existing academic frameworks for graduate students at SAIC and ESAA (at SAIC, through graduate seminars and faculty advisers, and selected courses). In addition, we expect that our telecommunications infrastructure will afford us the opportunity to offer simultaneous internet broadcasts of concerts, immersive events, exhibits, etc., on both sides of the Atlantic.

Year 3 (2007-2008): SAIC and ESAA offer a co-taught seminar in art and tele-collaboration. Students at both institutions, including those participating in the exchange, will produce collaborative artworks using networked video, sound, robotics, and virtual reality technologies. These same technologies, particularly videoconferencing, will be used to facilitate class meetings between students in Chicago and students in Aix. To create a process of shared distance learning, instructors at each institution will also use videoconferencing to facilitate remote lectures. Non-real-time network technologies (email lists, IRC and instant messenger, Wiki,s, etc.) will be used to supplement real-time interactions to broaden the discourse between the two groups of students, and to address practical issues of language and time zone differences. The students directly involved in the exchange will play an important role as facilitators of the dialogue between students at the two institutions.

Jointly Validated Curriculum/Diploma
SAIC students:
• can work at Locus Sonus during the first semester of the second year; or LOEIL (Bacc. plus 4) first year or first semester of the second year.
• can extend a year for an MFA (either a three-year MFA, or a post MFA year of specialization that will be jointly validated by ESAA & SAIC and that includes research and exhibition experience (professionalism).
• Exceptional undergrads could spend a semester abroad at ESAA.
• Students from both sides of the Atlantic can enroll in virtual, long distance courses taught simultaneously in dedicated VR labs at the SAIC and ESAA, e.g. weekly or bi-weekly: 9 AM – 12 noon in Chicago; 4 – 7 PM in Aix.

ESAA students:
• Fourth year (DNSEP) students can visit SAIC for a semester.
• ESAA Locus Sonus students needing to benefit from facilities specific to the SAIC can spend less than a semester, which includes research and professionalism. Specifically, at the SAIC, ESAA students can visit during the three-week Winter Interim term in January for specialized seminars. In addition, we offer four – consecutive three-week Summer sessions starting in late May.

Professionalism: All three institutions attach considerable importance to rendering students artistic work publicly visible. Locus Sonus has signed contracts with several international institutions (IRCAM Paris, STEIM Amsterdam, GMEM Marseille Avatar Quebec...) engaging the presentation of laureates' work. The SAIC possesses downtown exhibition space that can be made available for visiting students. In addition, there are several independent galleries and exhibition spaces in Chicago that are friendly to advanced students' work.

Bi-cultural issues: The SAIC faculty already offers courses on history of US Experimental Music, sound art and robotic art. They can give similar mini-courses or workshops in Aix. The French faculty will do the same regarding French culture for the SAIC. For those who wish, French lessons for American students and English as a second language for French will be made available. As student bodies from all institutions are increasingly diverse—often in different ways these exchanges will further develop multiculturalism in all three institutions. In addition, we find that students on our campuses from Asia and South America are often more savvy than their American counterparts and are more apt to investigate additional traveling abroad.

Interdisciplines and joint degrees: Both institutions inherently encourage hybridization between media and disciplines. Many of our faculty members have scientific, philosophical or engineering as well as artistic backgrounds. As stated above, the SAIC and ESAA the degrees granted are unspecific, i.e. an MFA or a DNSEP is not defined in relation to a specific media (there is no "MFA painting" or "DNSEP new media". From the SAIC's standpoint, in order to be granted an MFA, a student must meet a residency requirement of four semesters, or 45 credits (one semester, or 15 credits can be from abroad). As students from ESAA will spend only a semester in Chicago, the administration and faculty involved would need to devote a good deal of the three-year period in substantive discussion. The SAIC expects to be able to come up with a creative way to award students from Aix at the very least a specialization certificate, with an eye towards an eventual integrated joint degree or some solution thereof. In order to make any such paper meaningful, it will be necessary for us to take a joint degree proposal before AICAD (The Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design). The ESAA expects similar procedures. However, both parties involved have expressed interest in this possibility after an initial exchange program has been established, collaborative research projects have been implemented, and a substantive dialog around these issues has begun to emerge.

Approaching the logistical differences in awarding credits between US and French institutions:
• Each institution will provide a document outlining their requirements to be completed by the advisors of the host institution. There will be a formula for interpreting and transferring credits for each institution.
• Visiting faculty will advise those students from their institution who are visiting as well.
• ESAA and SAIC evaluation would require that the students produce a document outlining their study, plus finished work, and proof of public performance/exhibition at their visiting institution.
• SAIC would waive the registration fees for the French students and would provide housing for visiting students. ESAA would do the same for SAIC students.
• SAIC and ESAA will propose to their respective committees that oversee curriculum that a new paradigm be reached for awarding credit to joint, long distance VR courses in lieu of strict residency requirements.
• The administrative rules are reciprocally defined for facilitating the exchanges (see the budget and budget notes).

Distance learning and durability: As a major aspect of our relationship, students and faculty will communicate via
teleconferencing. The proposed communal group projects rely on various "tele techniques," i.e. STREAPS (multiplexer interface capable of sending and receiving multiple audio streams from multiple locations) CAVE (VR teleconferencing, and Flock of Birds (physical motion transfer via internet). In June 2003, ESAA and the SAIC, along with the Villa Arson, ESBAM in Marseille, and others successfully participated in a long distance workshop, successfully proving the flexibility of the STREAPS software. Similar experiments using CAVE technology and Flock of Birds are ready to be undertaken. Over the proposed three-year period, both institutions will be conducting research and course instruction virtually. New course and research strategies are inevitable. By '07/08, we would expect to see a different and invigorated academic syllabus and research methodology in the arts.

Distance learning is becoming increasingly widespread. Companies offering it are sprouting up in the US grabbing top-notch administrators from distinguished universities to run them and give credibility. In our research, we see telecommunications: audio and video streaming, web broadcasting, video conferencing, internet art, etc., as developments that have gained permanence. To the art world the ramifications are abundant, not the least being a reevaluation of not only what it is to be an artist, but also how one defines authorship and research. In the creative arts as in life, young artists tend to be the barometer of change and trends. Institutions are trying to define "interdisciplinary" well after the students are already practicing it. We feel that they have much to gain from the exchange program. If our students are enlivened by globalization though the internet, so too are our schools and faculty confronted with the task of running to catch up. As shown above, these interactions started in a modest form before the FACE program existed. It is therefore reasonable to presume, considering this natural convergence, that our collaboration will be long lived.

Internships: Locus Sonus depends largely on internships within partner institutions throughout Europe and the US. SAIC has an active cooperative education program with several local institutions and companies. However, it is crucial to point out that any foreign student visiting the US on a J1 visa is strictly limited in working for pay, and must be carrying a full load of coursework. At the SAIC, we reserve research assistantships for permanent, matriculating graduate students. In order to award visiting exchange students internships or work-study, we it is necessary to write the funds into the grant.

Student/Faculty exchanges
Typically, two French students (M1 or M2) will visit Chicago, while an equal number of ATS and Sound graduate students would go to Aix from the SAIC. The exchange will involve an average of 4 students per year for periods varying from two to six months, depending on their projects. Likewise, two artist-professors from SAIC will visit Aix, and two from ESAA will go to Chicago. Given that the notification of the grant announcement, if awarded, is late into the current semester, it may be that both institutions might be able to exchange only one student during the '05/06 academic year, in which case we would hope to send more than two in subsequent years. Hence, during '05/06 the Teacher/student ratio is likely to be higher as faculty will be involved in setting up durable communal projects which will evolve over the following years, successively or simultaneously on both campuses. This will enable the respective instructors to engage in these projects and subsequently be involved in remote teaching and evaluation. Cumulatively, faculty trips will represent an average of four, twelve-day trips per year.

'05/06: ESAA to SAIC – 2 students (1 semester), 2 faculty (12 days).
     SAIC to ESAA – 2 students (1 semester), 2 faculty (12 days).
     '06/07: ESAA to SAIC – 2 students (1 semester), 2 faculty (12 days).
     SAIC to ESAA – 2 students (1 semester), 2 faculty (12 days).
     '07/08: ESAA to SAIC – 2 students (1 semester), 2 faculty (12 days).
     SAIC to ESAA – 2 students (1 semester), 2 faculty (12 days).