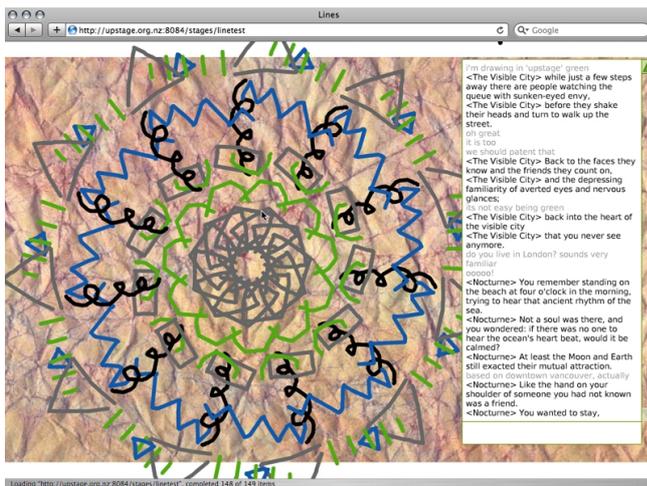# 101010

UpStage Festival

presents

Murder 2.0
by Virtual Theatre, Canada

It is 1931 in the United States and Halle, a young private eye, has been asked to investigate some shady business dealings. But when the target of her investigations turns up dead, Halle must work quickly to find the killer and clear her own name.

But behind this mystery hides an even greater truth: the outcome of this adventure depends on you.

Virtual Theatre are a group of artists based in Vancouver, Canada, who have been creating cyberperformances in UpStage since 2008. Initiated and lead by cyberperformance artist and researcher Ben Unterman, the group includes Daniel Silverman, Kristin Carlson, Jack Yeh and Stephanie McDonnell.

Murder 2.0 is the third in a series performances which have experimented with and pushed the technical limits of the UpStage platform. The first, *Merznet* (2008), explored the potential of complex Flash animations to expand the animation potential of UpStage avatars. *Lines* (2009, pictured at left) featured an interactive drawing tool which audience members used to visually express their own reaction to a poetic meditation on city life.

This year, with *Murder 2.0*, the group aims to create a truly interactive cyberperformance. Using Flash, they have created a tool which allows different audience members to see different avatar images – effectively enabling each individual viewer to have a different experience of the performance. Following the exploits of Halle, a private detective, audience members will be able to click on active screen elements to determine the direction of the investigation and, ultimately, discover the identity of the killer.

This type of live interactivity has required a great deal of innovation from the entire team, especially writer Daniel Silverman, programmer Jack Yeh and animator Stephanie McDonnell. New writing and animation strategies have had to be developed to support the interactivity. But the most challenging part of the process has been finding the ways that ActionScript can interact with UpStage to allow the experience itself to come through.

Murder 2.0 is one of 18 cyberformances that will be presented at the 101010 UpStage Festival, taking place on 10-11 October 2010. Visit www.upstage.org.nz for a full list of performances and times, and further information about the festival and UpStage.

Virtual Theatre Biographies

Ben Unterman is a researcher and artist working out of Simon Fraser University just outside of Vancouver, Canada. His curiosity about the potential of live performance on the internet began in 1998, but it wasn't until 2001 that he actively started participating as an artist in this growing community. Currently, he is experimenting with various creative processes in order to expand the technical and expressive limits of cyberformance and build new platforms for artistic expression. Ben's PhD research examines the social context of cyberformance and the ways we can bridge the distances implicit in the internet to create a sense of copresence (being together) through artistic expression.

Kristin Carlson is a choreographer/ technology junkie orignially from Midwest USA. She is currently enrolled in Simon Fraser University's Interactive Art and Technology graduate program and is, as always, bouncing from one place to another. Kristin has presented shows in all of the previous UpStage Festivals, but this is the first time she has collaborated with the Virtual Theatre group.

Daniel Silverman lives in Vancouver and writes in his spare time. He has worked with Virtual Theatre for the past three years and written two scripts for the Upstage Festival, *Lines* and *Murder 2.0*.

Jack Yeh is a student of interactive design and interface design in School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT). He has passion for Flash programming and a wish to work on Flash projects.

Stephanie McDonell is a 20-year-old Simon Fraser University student in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT) with a design concentration. She is the illustrator and animator of the avatars in *Murder 2.0*.