



080808 UpStage Festival

Stories of identity and histories that connect countries, cultures and centuries are among the performances selected for the 080808 UpStage Festival, which takes place on 8 August 2008.

The festival features 14 live online performances by artists in 14 time zones, and will be accessible to anyone with a standard internet connection and browser. People in London, Munich, Oslo, Los Angeles and Wellington can also attend 'real life' access nodes.

A story of bridges unites the cities New York and Munich, while another performance brings together the every-day lives of women 100 years ago in Turkey, Canada and a Portuguese immigrant to the USA. Other performances feature a digital ego, a miniature biome based on climate-warming data from the internet, live audiovisual mash-ups, the celebration of the birthday of Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, and much more.

One performance has already begun: "Calling Home" by activelayers introduces four characters who are trying to find their way home. As well as the 080808 festival performance, a build up of performances and appearances in UpStage and other online environments is taking place. For more information, visit www.activelayers.net.

UpStage is software that allows audiences from anywhere in the world to participate in live online performances, created in real time by remote players. Audiences need only an internet connection and web browser and can interact through a text chat tool while the players use images to create visual scenes, and operate "avatars" – graphical characters that speak aloud and move.

Last year's festival, 070707, featured thirteen performances and was screened at the New Zealand Film Archive as well as online. This year most shows will be performed twice, and there will be 'real life' access nodes in London, Munich, Oslo, Los Angeles and Wellington.

The artists involved range from experienced cyberformance practitioners such as The Plaintext Players and activelayers, to children: the youngest performers are six years old. In Belgrade, children attended a workshop before the festival to create their own show.

The full list of performances, artists, performance times and RL access nodes is on the UpStage web site: www.upstage.org.nz. Live links to the stages will be accessible from the UpStage web site on August 8; online audiences just need to click!

UpStage is supported by CityLink, MediaLab and Auckland University of Technology.

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