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Tiny Dancers and Singing Fish: "Being There" as Healing Art

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What can we learn from tiny dancing in cyberspace? from a virtual dog crossing digital streets? from a boy with autism whose best friend is the shadow of his hand? How can embodied presence in virtual worlds lead us to greater and more authentic efficacy and wholeness in the world around us? Artist/avatar Galen Brandt will speak of her work performing with artificial reality pioneer Myron Krueger in the VIDEOPLACE responsive environment and with the BioMuse biocontroller as Tiny Dancer and Blue Person. She will show her work with cybertherapy pioneer Dr. Dorothy Strickland to create animated songs and VR games that enhance skills training, neurosensory integration and social presence in children with learning and perceptual challenges. She will share her current project designing tech-enabled "Bio-Musical" theatrical environments -- all embodied collaborations with machines to re-link mind and body, re-animate space and re-humanize self. Engagement as aesthetic, response as therapy, virtual worlds as new medium and new medicine -- this is the power, practice and promise of presence.

Bio. Galen R. Brandt is a writer, musician and performing artist who specializes in new media content creation and interactive, bio-triggered live performance. A new product marketing expert in pro-social uses of new technologies, she concentrates on immersive VR systems as applied to art, performance and medicine, with a focus on healing and mental health. As Creative Director at DigitalSpace Corporation, she oversees visualization projects with NASA, Adobe, and numerous research and educational institutions. She is also President/Founder of Piglet Opera Productions, creating award-winning digital media for children, including those with learning and perceptual challenges. She speaks, organizes presentations and writes on new media, especially in the areas of artistic practice, new medical practice, and the implications of digitally mediated interaction.