



Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology (Leonardo Book Series)

Susan Kozel

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In *Closer*, Susan Kozel draws on live performance practice, digital technologies, and the philosophical approach of phenomenology. Trained in dance and philosophy, Kozel places the human body at the center of explorations of interactive interfaces, responsive systems, and affective computing, asking what can be discovered as we become closer to our computers--as they become extensions of our ways of thinking, moving, and touching.

Performance, Kozel argues, can act as a catalyst for understanding wider social and cultural uses of digital technology. Taking this one step further, performative acts of sharing the body through our digital devices foster a collaborative construction of new physical states, levels of conscious awareness, and even ethics. We reencounter ourselves and others through our interactive computer systems. What we need now are conceptual and methodological frameworks to reflect this.

Kozel offers a timely reworking of the phenomenology of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This method, based on a respect for lived experience, begins by listening to the senses and noting insights that arrive in the midst of dance, or quite simply in the midst of life. The combination of performance and phenomenology offered by *Closer* yields entwinements between experience and reflection that shed light on, problematize, or restructure scholarly approaches to human bodies using digital technologies.

After outlining her approach and methodology and clarifying the key concepts of performance, technologies, and virtuality, Kozel applies phenomenological method to the experience of designing and performing in a range of computational systems: telematics, motion capture, responsive architectures, and wearable computing.

The transformative potential of the alchemy between bodies and technologies is the foundation of *Closer*. With careful design, future generations of responsive systems and mobile devices can expand our social, physical, and emotional exchanges. Susan Kozel is Associate Professor in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada.

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