The Arts in HCI Tapestry: Networking, Making, and Reflecting Together

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, the arts and creative practices have played a pivotal role in HCI. They serve as inspirations, challenges, and innovative avenues for learning and extending HCI methods. While HCI often prioritises empirical evidence and outcomes, the art world emphasises diversity, process, and personal experiences. As generative AI and interdisciplinary collaboration grow, the relationship between art and HCI is undergoing a transformative shift, affecting how we make and think. Tapestries have long recorded changing narratives, practices, memories, and identities, capturing transformation. By tradition, they are collaborative productions of skilled craftspeople. Inspired by this, the meetup invites artists, designers, makers, technologists, researchers, educators, and others to create a shared tapestry 'beyond warp and weft'. Attendees may contribute sensory elements to a paper surface (warp), including visual, tactile, auditory, kinaesthetic, gustatory, olfactory, cross-sensory, and social aspects (weft). The completed tapestry serves as a collective narrative that encapsulates the shared experiences of participants.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing → Human computer interaction (HCI)**.

KEYWORDS

HCI, Arts, Tapestry, Meetup

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Human Computer Interaction (HCI) is a hybrid practice built on cross-pollination from various fields and disciplines, utilising human and non-human experiences. Though there's no single definition, HCI encompasses diverse special interest groups, from sociological computer-supported cooperative work to experiential soma design or first-person research. HCI underpins our technological world and supports all its users. As part of this rich practice, HCI has embraced the creative arts through embedded research, borrowed strategies, and even a technological lens on creators. This facet of HCI offers talented individuals with diverse narratives that support and extend our field's methodologies, moving beyond the

'traditional', [3]. As generative AI and interdisciplinary collaboration rise, the art-HCI relationship shifts, affecting how we make and think, art- and research-making processes, ethics, accountability, and philosophical research views and conceptions of rigour, e.g., [12, 30, 39].

Figure 1: (1a left) Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Medieval and Renaissance Galleries. Photograph by Dr. Makayla Lewis, 2025. Inclusion of subject shown with permission. (1b right) Arts in HCI Tapestry Setup: Top Left - Space Plan; Top Right - Simplistic GAI visual meetup concepts; and Bottom - Tapestry deconstruction and construction.

Tapestries, as artefacts, embody history. From medieval storytelling textiles to contemporary woven artworks, they've functioned as decorative, narrative, and documentary media, encoding culture, practices, identities, and memories, see Figure 1a). They've recorded transformative shifts and captured narratives of transformation, storing and processing data in their woven images, warps, cartoons, and wefts, [45]. Tapestries have changed due to technological advancements and AI, affecting their production and art-making process, similar to the transformative shift in arts and HCI. Despite these changes, tapestries remain "communal, requiring collective labour, and durable, often passed down for generations.", [39]. And, though they have been described as "seem[ing] anachronistic in the [fast] world in which we live", they are still making an impact by "tak[ing] the time to do things with humanity and soul.", Marie-Hélène Bersani in [23]—which resonates with the 'slow design' and 'slow science' tenets championed by embodied design and arts in HCI, [26, 27]. Tapestry's symbolism and parallels in technological developments resonate with our effort to map the evolving relationship between art and HCI, e.g., [34].

2 GOAL OF THE MEET-UP

Similarly to [46], who explored tapestries of trust in design research, the informal Arts in HCI Tapestry meetup is designed to encourage active networking through the art of making, to "work as a team [and] embrace a mutual responsibility for the tapestry", [39]. Attendees will co-create a physical tapestry (see Figure 1b)—of their visual [6, 8, 13, 15–17, 19, 20, 29, 33, 35, 51], tactile [34, 44, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 58], auditory [4, 5, 9, 22, 24, 25, 34, 47, 55], kinesthetic [1, 7, 34, 43, 51, 57], gustatory [43, 56], olfactory [2, 10, 34, 38, 40, 42], cross-sensory [14, 18, 34, 36, 41, 43], and social [28, 31, 34, 37] works. The tapestry, a visual and material representation of our collective HCI practices, serves as a boundary object and shared artefact, [21]. It is a story of "us" that can be carried forward and shared beyond the meetup.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY

The *Arts in HCI Tapestry* meet-up brings together artists, researchers, educators, industry professionals, students, and others interested in art practice within HCI.

4 SCHEDULE OF THE MEET-UP

The *Arts in HCI Tapestry* meetup balances making, networking, and reflection. Float times ensure smooth running: **Part 1: Welcome, Introduction, and Prompt (10 minutes)**. Organisers introduce the guiding prompt: your artistic practice in HCI. **Part 2: Creating the Tapestry (60 minutes)**. Attendees contribute to a shared paper tapestry (Figure 1b, right). Attendees can view others' contributions, discuss AI, artistic identity, and interdisciplinary collaboration, network, and reflect on their practices. Organisers provide art supplies, instant cameras, and printers, but attendees can bring their own artefacts. **Part 3: Collective Reflection (20 minutes)**. Organisers and participants reflect on the completed tapestry, sharing insights and new collaborations. The meetup is inclusive with adaptable spaces for quieter participation, wheelchair users, and seated engagement (Figure 1b, right). It welcomes diverse contributions, including from attendees with children.

5 ORGANISERS AND SUITABILITY

The interdisciplinary organising team, comprising educators, artists, students, makers, and researchers, bridges the gap between the arts and HCI. With organising and facilitating meetups, workshops, courses, and panels. **Makayla Lewis** Senior Lecturer and Artist in Computer Science at Kingston University, London. Her interests include accessibility, UX design, and integrating sketching/arts in designing emerging technology., e.g., [30, 32, 35]. **Denise Lengyel** Visiting Researcher at Newcastle University, UK, and a Consultant for HCI and Interaction Design. Her research explores arts-based methods like drawing, storytelling, and dance using empirical and theoretical approaches. e.g., [29, 34]. **Miriam Sturdee** Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews, UK, specialising in sketching to design complex technologies and arts-based approaches in STEM, focusing on future interactions and user experiences. e.g., [50, 52]. **Nick Bryan-Kinns** Professor of Creative Computing at the Creative Computing Institute, University of the Arts London. He researches the intersection of AI and the Arts focussing on Responsible and Explainable AI for the Arts, [11, 12]. **Mafalda Gamboa** Lecturer in Interaction Design at Chalmer with an Architecture master's, contributing to research in Interaction Design, Game Design, Architecture, and Virtual Reality. **Gabriella Di Feola** Interdisciplinary artist with an MFA in Design from HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg, her research explores social norms, cultural heritage, and reality perception, examining the dynamic relationship between art and its audience. **Swen Gaudl** Senior Lecturer in Interaction Design at the University of Gothenburg, co-founded Seam CoLab, interested in novel interaction mechanisms, robotic movement expression and dance movement sonification. **Silvia Carderelli-Gronau** Movement artist, filmmaker, teacher, researcher, dance-movement therapist. She's been developing her practice and research in somatics, embodiment, improvisation, relational practices, and dialogue with creative technologies. **Joseph Lindley** Senior Research Fellow at Lancaster University where his

work orients around a passion for the value art, design and practice as key enablers in research. **Sarah Fdili Alaoui** Reader at the Creative Computing Institute at the University of the Arts London, teaching Interaction Design, HCI, and Dance and Technologies. **Gerard Nolan** First-year PhD student at Kingston University, UK, his research focuses on neurodiversity and mental health, using art therapy, especially sketching, as a therapeutic approach.

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