

Hello-

First, thanks for your interest in this collaborative writing/digital design project for the New River Journal (<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/journals/newriver/07Spring/index.html>). While the New River prides itself in our outstanding showcase of digital art, we, the editors for the Spring 2008 issue, want to see what will happen when we join the work of literary artists who've achieved much acclaim in the realm of paper-based text with the web-design talents of experienced and innovative digital artists.

We don't have the faintest how much attention any of you pay to new media writing, digital writing, hypertext, and all the other names this type of work goes under, but, from what we've seen, one of the base ingredients, either the writing or the visual assemblage, is forced to take a backseat to the other. The end result is often stylized, pretty, graphic-intense stuff, or text on a page with links between webpages that might as well be the turns of a page in a book. We want the new media writing for the Spring 2008 issues to be examples, not of what this work often is, but of what it should be: great writing and a compelling visual experience that simply cannot be achieved with ink and paper.

The idea for all this came from a consideration of mash-ups—songs that feature, for instance, a vocal track from Cat Power layered over the music of Clipse (an actual song, that, from www.thehoodinternet.com). What we thought was: what if we did that with words and images via new media writing?

We have no idea how this will work. Certainly it'll be more work than we now realize, otherwise we wouldn't be so excited at the idea of it. But what we'd like to know is: would you be interested in doing something for a project like this? Writers, we're asking you to simply write something and let us hand over your work to a digital artist or two, or however many are necessary, to work with it and make it a hypertext something or other. Designers, we want you to find an interesting way to present the written work on the web...following three (and only three) conditions:

- Do something amazing with the text you're given. It's amazing on its own, but think of what it could be if the right visuals accompanied it...
- Don't let the text become lost in the graphics. Again, we want the words and the visuals to have equal standing (and impact) in the works you produce...
- Allow for reader interaction. The type of work we're interested in relies (we think, maybe) on multiple linking options per page to create a nonlinear and reader-directed reading experience. If you've got other ideas about what digital/new media/hypertext work should be, pitch them...convince us.

If this sounds at all like a project you'd be interested, we'd love it. If you've got more questions, please ask: we probably don't have answers, but we'll try our best. And if you have ideas of anything you'd like to do in this sort of venue—online, text and graphics (and music or whatever else), or if you have someone you think would like to do something like this as well (another writer, a digital artist, whoever), please let us know that, as well.

We'd like to hear from all of you—writers, designer, multi-talented folks, etc.—as soon as possible. And we'll be looking for the completed new media works in late March or early April.

Like the flyer and webpage say, we'll publish the best pieces in the Spring 2008 issue of New River. So have fun with this and impress us, and your work might get a seat front and center on the New River homepage.

Take care,

The Editors: Weston Cutter, Lauren Jensen and Carrie Meadows
newriverjournal@gmail.com