

## BROOKE

Well, even though I vehemently proclaim ... why represent RL exactly the way it is in a virtual world?, I understand that there needs to be recognizable metaphors, or people would simply be confused all the time and not be able to maneuver through this virtual world. That said, I like to use the fact that the constraints of the real world do not limit us in this virtual world—for example, gravity, weight, oxygen. I love building in the sky and underwater—I love participating in art exhibits that literally transform me into another being or another place or literally tie me in knots (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Brooke in knots. Photograph by Pamela G. Taylor.

## RAIN

Brooke is an example of the virtual disruption and possibilities that Holtzman (1997) states are elements that define this type of aesthetics, which serve as an attraction to be a part of this world as a creator.

## CHRISTINE

Timelessness is a creative motivator for me. I struggle with the idea of aging in RL, and the idea of being able to escape the gray skies in *SL* is enticing. And possibly the word *escape*, is not correct, but actually an obsession with *transcending age* is better stated. As a middle-aged woman and a grandmother of 4, the idea of being *sexy* and *desirable* seems to be fleeting with every ache and pain with which age rewards me, so an ageless, forever-young avatar is alluring and eases me into accepting the inevitable.

## RAIN

I could be a grandmother, but in *Second Life* wearing one's age is not mandatory or possible. Identities are easily transformed and transcended, but there is a limitation regarding how old I can be or how heavy I can be due to technology.

## CHRISTINE

I was reading the *International Herald Tribune* when I was in Japan on August 11, 2008, and Aaron Britt wrote, "*Second Life* avatar does and is precisely what the player wants, not just a little Mario who can be made to run and jump or a shapely diva gyrating of her own programmed will, it comes far closer to being a full fledged virtual persona" (2008, p. A10).

## RAIN

I heard that there was a conference this past August in the Netherlands at the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the participants explored identity in virtual worlds. I understand that the central focus was that spaces, such as *Second Life*, give those in RL the possibility to become someone completely different or, conversely, expose oneself to the world. One can explore questions, such as: How is identity created in