Immersing ME — the Disappearing Digitized Presence

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ABSTRACT

Artists try to represent existence and indicate the meaning of presence by a variety of practices. However, when a figure is created by bits and composes hypereal information, the existence information has become fragments of fake existence. Presence has become a form of absence. Absence has become a form of presence. The work 'Immersing ME' is an interactive art work inviting participants to perceive the process of dissolving from presence to absence.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

J.5 [Computer Applications]: Arts and Humanities: Fine arts D.1.7 [**Programming Techniques**]: Visual Programming I.4.8 [**Image Processing And Computer Vision**]: Scene Analysis – *Color*

General Terms

Experimentation, Measurement, Theory

Keywords

Interactive Installation, Digital Art, Body Measurement, Presence, Absence

1. ARTISTIC MOTIVATION

1.1 Introduction

In the digital era, we live with digital information. The virtual ways of living have affected the knowing of the people's presence in different ways. Life becomes a dramatic shift in our notions of self, machine and the world. People change identity, play different roles and simulate a virtual life via the Internet. Sokolowski utilizes the perception of a cube to explain a conscious experience; when we see a cube we see only three faces of it at any given time, as where the cube gives itself (intuition). Through subjective completion we add intentionally to the concept cube [1]. However, our intention of objectivity is vague and uncertain in a virtual life. The authenticity of image has been exaggerated in digital media. In the book of Jean Baudrillard "La guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu", he claimed that the golf war is a collective illusion created by mass media. [2] The meanings of information have been regenerated and then create a fake reality in the digital era. Humans own memories and existing intentions

granted by digital apparatus. We fantasize the existence experience and believe the illusion.

1.2 Multiple Electroplate

"ME" is an objective complement of "I". In the digital era, humans exist through the digital images and live by digital apparatus. We are infiltrated by bits. Thus, "ME" is not with only one single meaning. "ME" is the abbreviation of "Multiple Electroplate" which possesses indefinite and multiple existences. "ME" is created by bits and composes hypereal information to establish visionary existence. The existence information created by digital signals is fragments of fake existence. Thus human owns an illusion in the floating images and acquires a habitual but faint recognition beyond being and nothingness. The existence intention is beyond measurement.

1.3 Body Measurement

Throughout art history, body measurement has played an important role in art practices. Measurement is a method to represent objects with precision. Following the instruction of measurement, we can conform to the principle of beauty. The ratio for length to width of rectangles of 1.618 has been considered the most pleasing to the eye. This ratio was named as the golden ratio by the Greeks. Many artists have used this proportion to create the divine beauty. In1464, Alberti (1404-1472) created the method 'exempeda' to draw the human form. In exempeda, the total height of the figure is divided into six equal portions. In 1490, the renowned 'Homo Vitruvianus' proposed by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) is a study of proportions with the human figure inscribed in a circle and a square. In 1977 in Martha Rosler's performance 'Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained', a nude woman whose body was measured and evaluated by the team of "experts" in white coats. In 'Immersing ME', human body will be measured by a computer. In this digitized process, the body is deciphered, analyzed, and has become particle elements. It has transformed into a fuzzy and unidentified figure.

2. INTERACTIVE PROCESS

2.1 Body Measurement Room

The "Body Measurement Room" is set up to acquire and analyze the bodies of participants. In this room, there are six web cameras and a LCD screen. Each participant will be asked to fit his/her body into a frame, to pose in the form of cross, and to face to the LCD screen. (see Figure 1) When the screen shows "Preparing

for capturing images", the time of exposure begins. During 8 seconds of exposure time, the participant has to stay still until the time is up. The cameras will take photos automatically during the process. Six web cameras will take the photos of the body's head, chest, left arm, right arm, waist and feet. The figure is divided into six portions. The system analyzes the six images and then creates and prints out the annular color chart of RGB value in real time. The RGB values are also become the parameters of sound effect.

2.2 Presence and Absence

Outside the "Body Measurement Room", six LCD monitors are composed into a cross. According to the position of a human figure, the presence of the participant is divided into six segments showing in the monitors.(see Figure 2) A recomposed figure represents standing high above and looking down. The method of measurement is in responses to the paradigm in art history. However, the dimension of figure is no longer based on length or width but the volume of color pixels. The annular color chart reveals the RGB volume of participants' semblance at that certain moment. (see Figure 2)

In another screen, a projector shows the combination figure of the six segments. The computer generates the figure into particles immersing with the previous particles and fusing into a fuzzy figure. (see Figure 3) It is the accumulation of all the participants' particles that no longer presents an individual but unintentional and unconscious one. Each particle represents a partial whole. The presence of being becomes an absence existence.

Figure 1. "Body Measurement Room".

Figure 2. Left: The annular color chart. Right: Six LCD monitors are composed into a cross.

Figure 3 : The computer generates the figure into particles fusing into a fuzzy figure.

3. SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

With java as a programming language, there are four parts of the program to control the process. The first part controls six web cameras to take and show the newest images on the screen every 5 seconds to complete the shooting process. The second part draws out the R.G.B values from the photos taken, adds these values up and averages to get the final result. The different radius of annular color chart will be drawn and printed out according to the RGB values. The third part will get the images from the web cameras in a certain time and present the images on the six LCD monitors which were controlled by two PCs. The fourth part of program presents the composed image on the screen. The image transforms the image into a set of pixels. The pixels will be scattered randomly toward different coordinate. It takes 4 minutes to complete the whole interactive process.

4. CONCLUSION

"ME" as a Multiple Electroplate, by ways of the process, viewer establishes his/her new perception of human body. As a trick, the "Body Measurement Room" induces participant to go through an insignificant process and to get a nil being. The experience will be the same as Paul Virilio's indication in the "Aesthetics of Disappearance": In the process of vision, we should remember, objects are not given as realities and what is directly sensed by the eye……And so Huxley, under narcosis, receives when awakening a series of visual impressions that seem meaningless to him; he writes 'they're not mine, they simply exist….' [3] In the interactive experience, participants perceive the process of dissolving from presence to absence.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

6. REFERENCES

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