



Playful
Interface
Cultures

IC EXHIBITION AT ARS ELECTRONICA 2010
2 - 11 SEPTEMBER 2010 TABAKFABRIK LINZ

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Author: Georg Russegger

This years exhibition of the Interface Cultures Department is showing emerging artistic ability profiles transformed by heterogeneous sets, tools and methods of creation deriving from interactive media and interface technology. To take advantage of disciplines related to communication technology, bio-science, physical computing, interaction design, fashionable technology or information visualization, artists are focusing on new ways to combine these complex frameworks within test environments and experimental concepts. This origin is supporting group and project-based developments and inspires a flexible and multi-perspective sharing of knowledge and abilities within the process of artistic creation.

In this way, the ability of playfulness is becoming a powerful tool and mindset for individuals to overcome existing patterns and standards of culture, art, science and technology. This programme can be applied to every person who derives joy from discovering ways to circumvent limitations. Here, the meaning »Play« is quite different to »Entertainment«. Playful behaviour can be valid even for people who are not very much involved in gaming, giving them a chance to try things out. »Play« thus is a method to deal with reality and to encourage, to look at the world in different ways. »I am playing« means I can do something that I am not otherwise doing. The creation of play experiences may deal with existing resources in new ways, by operating on the intersections of different fields and disciplines.

The presented works have been contributed mainly by members of the master and doctoral programmes at the Interface Cultures department of the University of Art and Industrial Design Linz. In addition to this, some of the shown projects have emerged from collaborations with networks and communities related to the department. The selected projects and artworks embody the different transformations and approaches of playful interaction with devices, algorithms, fashion, emotions, theories, political issues as well as junk. These different vectors have been taken into account to show a change-intensive, mistake-friendly and by as a result open and flexible environment, to get a closer look at new forms of dealing with creative developments and artistic design and production.

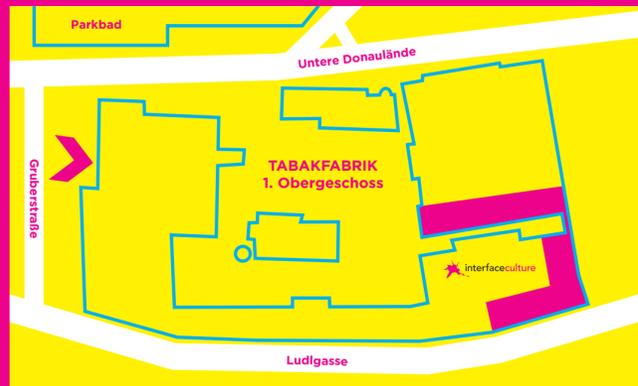
www.interface.ufg.ac.at
www.aec.at

INSTRUCTORS

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CREDITS

Design: Vesela Mihaylova, Henning Schulze, Onur Sönmez, David Brunnthaler
Production: Anika Hirt, Reinhard Gupfinger, Gertrude Hörlesberger
Coordination: Varvara Guljajeva, Tiago Martins
Technical Support: Mar Canet Sola, Anika Hirt



Newsleak

Tim Devine, Jayme Cochrane, Shervin Afshar



Newsleak is not an art project. It is a motivated functional hybrid of real and digital cultures and media. Press a button on a pink box in the urban environment to instantly receive a printed summary of the latest news from around the world, news from your current location, news of internet cultures, events, trends and social media.

Our aim is to cultivate a functional exchange between the real space and the virtual space. Think of Newsleak as you would any other print media publication: it has a target audience, a distinct style and type of content, and specific intervals and methods of distribution. Most publications are fundamentally focused on the target audience and the target audience is defined by the content and distribution. This project was developed at Kitchen Budapest.

www.timdevine.net/news-leak

Mohr SMS

Hugo Camargo, Veronika Pauser

Mohr SMS is an interactive installation in which the screen of a mobile phone is used as a canvas in order to produce generative art, allowing people to add graphical elements in real-time by sending text messages. The resulting images are based on Manfred Mohr's early works (generative algorithm images), especially the program P18 (1969/1973). When the first SMS is received, its graphical representation appears on the screen. By receiving further text messages it builds up to the final image, which consists of ten text messages. The canvas then turns itself to the initial state again and another picture can be made.

Human Allergy

Hugo Martínez-Tormo

(Nanorealism, Conceptual Interaction)



This project aims to analyze the human being from a physical and psychological point of view, the study of the human mind and body through science. On one hand, a series of colours that refer to human body components are shown. The representation of the human being based on the colour of light emitted by atoms that make up our bodies in the nanoscale, and thereby showing that we are all composed of the same "material" and we are equal. And on the other hand, cases of anthropophobia or social phobia, social isolation or people avoiding social interaction are constantly growing - it may become a common disorder during the 21st century. One of the clearest examples are the young Japanese hikikomoris, who live isolated from society, not leaving their rooms for years keeping only in touch with the world through the Internet. In this project, the sneeze and the allergy are used as a metaphor of an individual's social behaviour, intending to show a global and actual picture of social interaction, where the individual tends towards isolation.

Playfulness

Mar Canet, Jayme Cochrane, Travis Kirton

In the field of interactive installation artwork, GameArt interfaces have been extremely popular means of expression. In most cases GameArt pieces take single concepts, standardized and popularized throughout the history of computer gaming, and expand on them through new forms of interface design, computational design, or enhanced graphic environments. With Playfulness we are creating new, fullbodied interfaces for classic Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) games. The artistic purpose behind the design of these installations (PunchOut!!!, Super Mario Treadmill, capGunsmoke) is to explore the possibilities of expanding old games and old technologies to create new experiences using low-level technical approaches for interactive media artworks.

Shopping in 1 minute

Varvara Guljajeva, Mar Canet

"Shopping in 1 minute" is an artgame that is playfully criticizing the increasing desire of society for consumption. Our inspiration for creating the artgame came from the craziness of people during the sales period: huge cues in front of supermarkets, stone-age-style behavior, lots of useless products, etc. Thus, we are inviting audience to train for the next sale period. A player has to scan as many products as possible during a minute. As a reward each player will receive a ticket with bonus points according to his score.

www.varvarag.info, www.mcanet.info

Endotastic Voyage A20.10

Reinhard Gupfinger

The Endotastic Voyage A20.10 is an interactive audiovisual experience that deals with various aspects of representation of the human intracorporeal space, and intends to bridge the gap between art and human medicine.

The project invites users to take part in a creative dialog with the human body by using endoscopic and laparoscopic cameras for an indirect examination of human organs. A modified overhead projector functions as an intuitive user interface that allows users a tactile, visual and sonic exploration and personal increase of body awareness.

Der Beweis für Dinge die nicht gesagt wurden

David Brunnthaler, Henning Schulze, Shervin Afshar



For "The Evidence of Things Not Said" coin-like tokens would be distributed in many public spaces in Linz. These tokens have some information on them about how to find a specific location in the city. In this location, a prepared phone-booth is installed. By using the tokens in this coin-operated phone, the users would hear recorded accounts of racist incidents in Austria documented by ZARA (Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit, www.zara.or.at). The booth forms a capsule of privacy in the middle of public space and bears symbolic meanings to circumstance in which the racist encounters may happen, as private experiences in public. The voices being heard by the user can be considered metaphorically as "distress calls" from victims of racism. The only method of experiencing the piece is taking action. As the result, it would materialize as a process in the city and joins the viral dynamics of people talking and hearing things in an urban landscape.

The voice-recordings in the telephone-booth are only in German.

www.derbeweis.at

Lovely Machine

Anika Hirt

The Lovely Machine harnesses chaotic forces and uses them for locomotion. This unpredictable and fickle behavior is due to the presence of visitors, sensors, and signals sent to the motor. The Lovely Machine is eager to meet you.

The unpredictable behavior of the machine is directly related to the random procurement of materials used in its construction. Over the course of one day, a washing drum and motor were collected, resulting in the emergent design of a walking machine. The unintentional movement of the washing machine in the laundry room is transformed into a locomotive motor, following a transformative practice of the adaptation and modification of artifacts using found objects and functions.

Initial prototype realized with Dolo Piqueras and the help of Times Up
Technical assistance: Dan Wilcox

Urban Mood

Mahir M. Yavuz

Urban Mood visualizes the real-time mood of Linz's citizens. It is a projection and sound installation situated in a small room. The installation continuously collects the data from tweeters in Linz, analyzing and summarizing each post in a single word. Through this keyword, the source tweets will create a typographic animation on the floor of the room, while colors and sounds will change to suit the content of the keyword. By sharing their personal thoughts on twitter, every Linzer becomes a part of this collective mood production.

The Mexican Standoff

Tim Devine, Onur Sönmez

The Mexican Standoff removes the physical link between the persons thoughts and actions; people are directly thinking about what they are doing - creating a hyperreality. Two players stand facing each other in a long room wearing EEG headsets. The first-person view of the other player from Counter Strike is projected onto their opponents body. A player will fire their weapon when headsets detect if the player is relaxed.

What constitutes an immersive gaming environment? An augmented-reality underwater pervasive game staged in the crystal blue waters of the Raa Atoll in the Maldives? Maybe a Japanese trading card game such as 'Yu-Gi-Oh!' offers more than just competition but fantasy and narrative. The Wii platform uses gestural interaction relative to the actual movement in reality and the game. Games will no longer be only immersive or extensions of our actions but infusive; our bodies are literally infused with the content of the game. The Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) affects heart rate, digestion, respiration rate, salivation, perspiration, diameter of the pupils, micturition (urination), and sexual arousal.

The Mexican Standoff aims to further this discourse about how the sense of immersion in a game will change when we are not only being blasted by light, sound and vibrations but are feeding our own autonomous and semi-autonomous bodily functions into the games.

www.timdevine.net/the-mexican-standoff-creating-a-hyperreality

Rambler Shoes

Ricardo Nascimento, Tiago Martins

This project presents a pair of sneakers that take microblogging one step further, by literally posting your steps on a Twitter account. Messages are comprised of repetitions of the word "tap" and "." respectively symbolizing the wearer's steps and time in between these. Rambler is a critical take on near-obsessive microblogging habits and elicits reflection on the personal nature, amount and usefulness of information generated everyday through blogging and social platforms such as Twitter. It aims to bring the practice of microblogging to one of many possible extremes, turning it into an automatic, thoughtless act of diffusing large amounts of slightly ambiguous, repetitive and arguably useless personal information. The name Rambler was chosen for the double meaning of the word "ramble". On one hand, to ramble is to take a pleasant, even aimless walk; on the other, it is also to digress when talking, losing clarity or even turning aside of the main subject.

www.popkalab.com/ramblershoes.html

Augmented Photography

Varvara Guljajeva

When it is spoken about interactive or augmented photography then immediately one has in mind the representation of photos in digital format (on computer or phone screen, projection, etc) that are manipulated through software or any other code. Yes, the interactive pictures can react on our touch, voice, weather, or whatever. But those interactive photos are still just pixels. My artwork – Augmented Photography – is not about pixels. It is about re-thinking printed photography. Current artwork is more than a framed picture – it has its behavior and it is able to react on observers. I am adding liveliness to a doll on the picture through eye movements. If none is looking at the picture the doll's eyes are closed. Only time-to-time, she is waking up and asking for attention. When the photograph is approached, the doll on the picture opens her eyes and starts to blink to a viewer or just stare on him/her for a while. Hence, the artwork has different behaviors that could be explored by observing the picture for a while.

www.varvarag.info

OPENING

September 2nd
The opening time will be announced on our website: www.interface.ufg.ac.at/ars

OPEN STAGE

September 3rd - 7th
Open Stage is an interface to present and discuss contemporary ideas and issuesrelated to works, research and projects related to the Interface Cultures Lab. For programme details and schedule please see exhibition area INTERFACE CULTURES at TABAKWERKE AUSTRIA

Or our exhibition website: www.interface.ufg.ac.at/ars

OPEN LAB

Open Lab is an experimental set to explore prototypes, present future visionsand to try out things and techniques in a collaborative and cooperative way. Further details of the program will be announced soon on our website: www.interface.ufg.ac.at/ars

Artificial Stupidity

Bager Akbay, Ana Cigon



Artificial Stupidity is a project loosely defined on multiple levels. We have chosen a flexible context in which we are considering a variety of subjects, such as humans, art and interaction. The pieces and events in the exhibition are presented for the purpose of inviting visitors to collaborate.

The Heartbeat Pajamas

Vesela Mihaylova, Sotiris Katsimpas, Myrssini Antoniou

Human contact and interaction evolves in multiple ways. People tent to employ all their senses, in different modes, in order to express their feelings and enhance their relations. Sharing ones heartbeat is often considered a way to offer relaxation and comfort moments: A mother hugs her baby over her chest to calm it down, couples hug and lay their heads over each others hearts. Heartbeat however can also imply anxiety, stress or fear if it bits on a high rate and is also a immediate way to detect life or death. The heartbeat pajamas are a paired wearable device aiming to create remote intimacy between two distant individuals. Each pajama detects and transmits the heartbeat of it's owner and receives and reproduces the heartbeat of it's paired one.

With this project we are interested to explore the possibilities to feel remote intimacy. Can the exchange of heartbeats enable couples of people to share an intimate moment without the physical contact and presence of each other? Can it serve as a bridge over distance?

Thumb Fu!

Tim Devine, Vesela Mihaylova

Thumb Fu! is super enhanced thumb wrestling. We use conductive fabric and thread to create thumb suits. When the characters touch sound effects are triggered. If somebody is pinned down a count-down begins and then a winning fanfare is played.

www.timdevine.net/thumb-fu

nanoCup

Hugo Martínez-Tormo

(Nanorealism)

Glass is made of Silica (SiO2). In this interactive installation, the visitor can interact with a glass object generating a visual and acoustic representation of the Silica components by touch. This representation is based on the colour of light emitted by the Silica atoms on the nanoscale, which is red and violet because the Oxygen and Silicon atoms emit light in that specific wavelength. The sound corresponds to a mathematical equation that relates the wavelength of the light (nm) with the frequency of the sound (Hz). So, the visitor can travel to the world of atomic nanoscale and discover new behaviours of matter. What colour does matter have in the nanoscale, and how does that colour sound like?

Nicafreeware

Mar Canet, Julian Staden

Nicafreeware is a mixed reality audiovisual photo that explores the hyperreality of success through a novel system that engages the viewer with the experience of winning a Golden Nica at Ars Electronica. The audience faces an augmented reality utopia where a Golden Nica simulation appears in their hands, viewed on a mirrored screen interface. Sound and visual effects further augment the simulation. The work references the emergence of open source freeware, particularly social applications.

Open source software (Freeware) exists as a utopia of shared ownership and production through the creation of shared environments of playful engagement and exchange. Social applications create authorless/ownerless worlds, through the public involvement in their production and the virtuality of representations within them. The free accessibility to these environments can however lead to the questioning of legitimacy and integrity of openly accessible situations and experiences with them.

Nicafreeware explores the theme of 'owned' experiences, creating a mixed reality simulation of a utopian moment in an Ars Electronica based narrative. By offering public access to an experience usually reserved for just a few each year Nicafreeware presents a viewer mediated "freeware" intervention that crosses the intersections of authorship over real and virtual utopian experiences.