

The Lives of Others: An Interactive Installation

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ABSTRACT

“The lives of others” is an interactive audiovisual installation that is based on a voyeuristic approach of the binomial inside / outside and private / public, between the finished product presentable to the public and the mechanism that generates it. This mechanism consisting of physical devices and logical-mathematical instructions usually remains in the private sphere, is the interior of the work that is not seen, which belongs only to the creator / author. “the lives of others” quest for demystify the separation of the visual apparatus and the mechanism that generates this external system, making both visible and bringing to the public sphere the elements usually hidden.

KEYWORDS

Arduino, Interactivity, Media Digital Art, Sensors, Video Installation

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes an audiovisual participatory installation, combining audiovisual content with interaction design and user experience, named “*The Lives of Others*”, that allows spectator tracking, using an ultrasonic sonar sensor and a custom application for video and audio manipulation. Spectator can interact and freely explore around the installation, seeing in this way the inside and outside of the installation, seeing the finished product presentable to the public and the mechanism that generates it. Physical devices and computer instructions are both visible. Once exposed, these elements become part of the work in the visible field and become part of the strategy of installation exposition. Spectator becomes a voyeur by listening to the conversation of others and also assumes that role when exploring the installation space and thus scrutinizes the procedural mechanism.

We find here a parallel between Virilio’s (2000) pessimistic and anti-technological theories, particularly in the construction of the contemporary man and society today. The control societies (Deleuze, 2003) are replacing the model of disciplinary societies¹ and their main characteristics are the invisibility and the nomadism (Maffesoli, 2001), exacerbated by widespread telecommunications, creating the virtual surveillance. As stated Gilles Deleuze (2003): “These are the societies of control, which are in the process of replacing disciplinary societies. “Control” is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future. Paul Virilio also is continually analyzing the ultrarapid forms of free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system. (...) There is no need to ask which is the toughest regime, for it’s within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another...”

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Immersed by the space-time split of teletechnologies (direct television, social networks, etc.), the contemporary man seems to have some difficulty in distinguishing here and now, precipitating certain confusion between private and public (Virilio, 2000; Silva, 2010).

In the following Section is presented the state of art and the concept of the interactive audiovisual installation “*The Lives of Others*,” addressing the binomial interior / exterior and public / private, the installation mechanism as well as the voyeuristic aspect inherent in the work. Section Technical Description presents technical components and space requirements for the installation. In Section Conclusions will be discussed some notes on the public presentation of the installation and relationship / public feedback regarding interactivity and installation. Finally, in last Section future work will be presented.

Since the project “*The Lives of Others*” is an experimental artistic work, it is legitimate to consider that it fosters the epistemological reception of metaphors and artistic languages. Taking into account the artistic aspect and the strong digital technological component as a basis for the creation of artefacts and subsequent generation of new knowledge in this project, the methodology practice-based research is proposed.

RELATED WORK

The use of sensors has been used in many artistic interactive installations to augment the interaction between the public and a specific environment. Audience participation and sensor technology can create visualizations and sound.

Previous work (Antonio et al., 2017) has explore interactive movie installation with the project “Characters looking for a spect-actor” that seeks to explore new forms of non-intrusive interaction in interactive movies, while at the same time aims to give the spectator on-the-fly control over the film editing. “Characters looking for a spect-actor” explore the possibility of using 3D sensors and mobile devices as interfaces to generate effective interaction mechanisms in interactive films.

THE LIVES OF OTHERS

“*The Lives of Others*” is an experimental interactive audiovisual installation that intends to show both sides of the installation, the finished product and the mechanism that generate it. This mechanism is hidden, which seeks to make transparent to the spectator / user. Since the invention of Engelbart² who demand this invisibility as a way to involve more and more human senses, releasing the spectator / user of the apparatus responsible for sensory experiencing. “*The Lives of Others*” is looking to demystify the separation of the visual apparatus and the mechanism that generates this external system, making both visible and bringing to the public sphere the elements usually hidden.

The resulting device, which can be experienced by audience, has two elements, an audible and visual those cohabit in dissonance.

The Sound and the Visual Element

The sound element transports the spectator to a coffee talk about other people’s lives, in this case, about the experiences of different people in a television reality show. By analogy to the dissection presented in the installation, which inside and outside is presented, also in this conversation there is a dissection of the experiences of the participants in that television program by spectator that manifest themselves in the form of reports in some coffee shop, redefining interpersonal relations related to systems rooted in society and causing the distance between the public domain and private domain disappears.

The visual element has a swimming pool scene. The viewer is confronted with a swimming footage captured from a subjective point of view, see Figure 1.

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