

Chapter 10

Discovering Art using Technology: The Selfie Project

Alexiei Dingli

University of Malta, Malta

Dylan Seychell

St. Martin's Institute of Higher Education, Malta

Vince Briffa

University of Malta, Malta

ABSTRACT

The Selfie project was not only inspired by the long history of the self-portrait, but also intended to create a genealogy between the self-portraits of masters from the Modern art era and the selfie. The project, designed as a walkthrough experience, consisted of three major engagement areas. On entering the space, children were directed into a 'transformation' area – a typical theatrical wardrobe, where they could dress up in a variety of costumes, including hats and wigs. Once garbed, children were given smart phones and led to the area where they could take a selfie with a celebrity such as Gauguin, Cézanne, Monet, Van Gogh, Modigliani and Munch. Finally, they could manipulate the selfie using gesture-based technology and post it online. The attraction proved to be extremely popular and the children who participated were extremely satisfied with the experience.

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a day and age where the word selfie is an integral part of a young person's vocabulary (Senft, 2015). A selfie can be described as a photograph that a person takes of oneself, typically using a mobile device and which is shared via social media. On the other hand, famous personalities such as Van Gogh, Monet, Cezanne, Munch, etc and their contribution towards art is rather unknown to these

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0016-2.ch010

people. Inspired by the numerous self-portraits in the Modern Art period (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997), the Selfie project is a walkthrough where children are exposed to the works of famous artists, they can take selfies with them, edit them and eventually post them online.

The Selfie project was created for ŽiguŽajg¹ 2014. ŽiguŽajg is the annual International Arts Festival for children and young adults in Malta, which has as its vision, that of positioning the creative arts for children and young people at the core of Malta's creative ecology. It has established itself as the most influential and important festival of the arts in its category and this has been achieved through its vision, which sees a demographic normally assumed to be disassociated and detached from art taking center stage in a variety of artistic happenings.

The Selfie Project was one of the most popular attractions hosting an average of 120 visitors per day during the whole duration of the festival. Each visitor had to go through a process that lasted around 30 minutes and was divided, into the following phases.

The first phase was the Transformation phase. Visitors were provided with various props (these included costumes, makeup, wigs, etc.) and they were free to use them. Essentially, the visitors could transform themselves into whatever they wanted in order to express their emotions or to pass on a message.

With this transformation, the visitor could proceed to the second phase where they could take a selfie together with a self-portrait of a celebrity (Figure 1). The celebrities available were cutouts of the following six artists; Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet, Paul Cezanne, Edvard Munch, Paul Gauguin and Amedeo Modigliani. A small bio, underneath each artist, was provided to introduce the visitors with their story. Since they were cutouts, the artists could be moved around and the visitors had all the liberty to take the picture in any pose they wanted. Some of them hugged the artist whilst others made funny

Figure 1. Example Selfies taken with the six paintings, which were provided as backdrop. In some cases, the artist also features in the photo.



15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/discovering-art-using-technology/148571

Related Content

Rapid Prototypes as Openers of an Innovation Block

Erno Salmela, Ivar Vimm, Marika Hirvimäki and Pasi Juvonen (2017). *International Journal of Art, Culture and Design Technologies* (pp. 19-39).

www.irma-international.org/article/rapid-prototypes-openers-innovation-block/181837

Randomness, Chance, & Art

Ethan Ham (2009). *Handbook of Research on Computational Arts and Creative Informatics* (pp. 85-102).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/randomness-chance-art/19713

CulturalNature Arga #2

Tiago Cruz, Fernando Faria Paulino and Mirian Tavares (2014). *International Journal of Creative Interfaces and Computer Graphics* (pp. 21-31).

www.irma-international.org/article/culturalnature-arga-2/113782

Creative Interfaces: Development of New Integrated and Visual Solutions

Ioana Armiano (2012). *Innovative Design and Creation of Visual Interfaces: Advancements and Trends* (pp. 192-219).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/creative-interfaces-development-new-integrated/64055

Liquid Views and the Unconscious Perception

Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss (2015). *Analyzing Art, Culture, and Design in the Digital Age* (pp. 18-25).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/liquid-views-and-the-unconscious-perception/138525