

affectiveCinema

Texts from the CD

Idea

Inventions are often there to expand human capacities. As a car is a physical protease and improves transport speed and comfort a computer can be seen as a mental protease which speeds up calculations. Marshall McLuhan considers all media forms as expansions of the human senses and the global network as an extension of the nerve system. Our intention was to make the first little steps towards the emotional protease that could allow us to influence on our surroundings by means of affective input – a new way of non-reflected and unconscious decision making.

By putting their hands into the sensors of the installation emotions get measured by means of galvanic skin response. As a consequence the visitors get a personalised performance when watching the video flow by influencing on the character of image and sound, the order and the rhythm.

The user follows different branches of the non-linear structure and enters an emotional-technological dialog.

affectiveCinema is difficult to be categorised. It is somewhere in the field between art, game and science. There could be interesting comparisons made with people from a different cultural and social background as much as with people of different sex and age. The game part could further be developed by adding a point counting system to it, which honours emotional strength.

The idea of emotional navigation can be very close to inter-human communications, which include many more factors than the spoken language. The first production made with affectiveCinema could be interpreted as the encounter with someone strange, someone virtual or in fact as a meeting oneself. Because there are life takes of the visitors face included the frontiers between monitor and visitor get even blurrier.

The installation

The appearance of the installation is rather functional and can be adapted to different productions. For the first production there is no need to hide the technical equipment because it represents the actual physical appearance of character.

The installation consists of two main elements: the sitting and background unit for the visitor and the display element for the technical equipment. Furthermore there is a lamp which guarantees optimal light conditions for the built-in camera.

It's meant to be set up in a quiet part of an exhibition hall, with no special separation elements. The minimal measurements are 300x300cm but some additional space for access and ambience is needed.

The light shouldn't be too bright but affectiveCinema doesn't need a dark room.

Technical basics

"affectiveCinema" is a video installation that deals with unreflected human reactions and perceptions.

The affective content sent from a video gets answered by the human. The amount of emotional response is being measured by sensors and the resulting signal sent to a computer. Each person follows different branches of the non-linear structure of video-clips because of different ways of perception and reaction. Furthermore the parameters of image and sound shown on the video are influenced according to the emotional input sent by the visitor. A camera built into the system allows taking life-video from the visitor being built in real-time in some occasions.

The resulting personal video can be recorded and documented on a CD-Rom.

Production

"affectiveCinema" is an international co-production of Switzerland and the Netherlands. The production has been divided into two main parts: the sensor treatment and the design of image and sound. The project started in May 2000 and was finished in January 2001.

Sensor techniques:

Scientific support and technical co-ordination:

Michel Durieux
Prins Bernhardlaan 216
2224VM Katwijk
The Netherlands

Technical support:

Royal Conservatory Den Haag
Juliana van Stolberglaan 1
2595 CA The Hague
The Netherlands

Design of image and sound:

Audio-visual design and technical co-ordination:

Jan Torpus - Apodal Productions
Hammerstrasse 102
4057 Basel

Michel Durieux
Prins Bernhardlaan 216
2224VM Katwijk
The Netherlands

Technical support: Steim (studio for live electronic performance)
Achtergracht 19
1017 WL Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Financial support: Fachausschuss für Film, Video und Fotografie
BS/BL, Erziehungsdepartement Basel Stadt,
Münsterplatz 2
Postfach
4001 Basel

Perspectives

The first application with affectiveCinema has been done but it can be reused as a tool or new kind of cinema-furniture to feature invited artist's works.

affectiveCinema measures the intensity of emotion and distinguishes different emotions by interpreting the affective amount according to the emotional value of the displayed scene. Other sensor types are often not suitable for a public auto-sufficient installation but the team has already been researching and experimenting on sensors that get closer to human emotion and perception and make the decisions of the authors less important. The shape and type of media will again be dependent on primary human affections.