Info about the installation

affectiveCinema proudly presents the new production affectiveCinema2 after the positive reactions and feedbacks we got for affectiveCinema1 at several festivals and exhibitions like for example transmediale02 in Berlin or at Siggraph02 in San Antonio, USA.

Technical basics

affectiveCinema2 works on an improved hard and software version of affectiveCinema1 – navigation is still done by unconscious decision-making of the players using a GSR-sensor.
By putting their hands into the sensors of the installation human 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 users follow different branches of the non-linear tree-structure and enter an emotional-technological dialog.
We went on measuring many people's emotions while they were watching different types of movies, and analysed the possibilities of narrative structures according to the emotional responses. One of the positive results was that for example laughter or cognition have strong emotional effects like scare or tension. How ever the scale of interpreting sensor sensitivity can always be adapted to more silent situations. Furthermore the new system is auto calibrating itself. Every time a player delivers new sensor values they get included in the calculation of the old thresholds to find the most accurate average values necessary for the decision-making. AffectiveCinema2 is programmed with Max/MSP/Jitter and ColdFusion.

Structure and content

affectiveCinema productions are difficult to be categorised. They are somewhere in the field between film/video clip, game and science. While the first production was more about communication with someone strange or in fact with oneself, the new piece has a more narrative structure. The players discover step by step the connections in a social system with abstract characters and unknown objects. Like in a game the players get offered different entrances and hints to reach different locations, but unlike most computer games it is not experience and skill that make a winner but the emotional response that opens new horizons. An important achievement in this second production is that the players recognize the impact of their emotional input.
The different discovered elements can be put together mentally. Scenes with more important information and content connections are more difficult to reach: they appear just after a succession of clips, with upgrading amount of content. The narrative situation looks funny or somehow strange on the lowest levels but the entire significance can only be discovered by getting emotionally involved. Like in the real world much can get lost in our closest neighbourhood without us noticing it or being able to react in an adequate way. Winner is how entirely discovered the secret social system. Therefore the story shouldn't be written down anywhere.
For the connection the widely established film language succession of cuts are used. You can for example get connected to another character via the telephone or follow associative visual links. Each clip (measurable item) can be followed by the next one without any recognizable interruption, because adjoined sound atmospheres don't get cut with the images. Starter-clips are always chosen by random after a small break and have little information value. Every clip gets played only once per session and might cut off information (if it can't be reached by a cross-link). If the user drops out of a succession of clips, because of low emotional input a slow fade out of video and sound indicates the fact. There is a total amount of 60 clips (of which different parts get used in different situations) with a total length of 35 minutes.

Style (image and sound)
The moving images are all taken on a set in a black box and were later light inverted (but not colour inverted) and time remapped. Life actors are playing the characters, who sometimes partly disappear, because of the lack of light. Compared to black the white space is much closer and not as deep. The scenes appear out of that dense fog and fade back into it. There is an abstract architectonic situation: only elements like windows, doors, cupboards, etc. are placed in the wide unlimited space – no walls no landscapes.
Sound has the important function to create those atmospheres, which leave it up to the player to create her/his own mental sceneries. Sound significantly supports emotional situations. It can even be used for audioSolo-links, when the players just here but see nothing else than a white screen until the image joins the sound after a high emotional input.

Production
AffectiveCinema2 was produced in Switzerland with the financial support of "Fachausschuss für Film, Video und Fotografie BS/BL". The following people were involved:
Script, direction, camera, video editing: Jan Torpus
Programming: Michel Durieux
Sound: Niki Neecke
Décor and scenery: Heidy-Jo Wenger
Light design: Raphael Zehnder
Acting: Hugo Buser, Thomas Hostettler, Markus Mathis, Ana Pita, Nils Torpus, Herwig Ursin, Nora Vonder Mühll

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Yvonne Vogel, Claude Hidber, Orlando Fleury, Sara Bellamy, Christian Rohner

Installation (spatial situation)
The appearance of the installation can be adapted to the exhibition situation. Optimally the video image gets projected as a retro projection or wide flat screen allowing a wider public to follow the moving images. Sound can only be heard on the headphones – it guaranties a more intense and intimate experience for the active player. The player sits on a director chair (as she/he is responsible for what she/he gets to see) placed in front of the screen. To one of the armrests the GSR-sensor is attached.
The exhibitors should dispose of the display (beamer and projection screen or wide flat screen). For exhibitions out of Europe transport costs can be held down if the exhibitors dispose of a powerful Macintosh computer and a director chair too. The rest of the installation can be transported with hand luggage.