

THINK ALOUD EXHIBITION FOR INTERACTIVE MEDIA ARTWORKS

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ABSTRACT:

Contemporary artworks, Media artworks deliver intention of artist and make audiences feel emotional feeling by employing interaction between the works and spectators. Intended intent of artworks can be properly conveyed to the audiences and totally different and new idea can be de notified. Even though all kinds of feelings and emotions occurring in the mind of audiences worthy, there can exist better exhibition methodology to present interactive artworks. Three different exhibition methods were evaluated in the study and Think Aloud were proved to increase interests of audiences.

Keyword: Think Aloud, Media art, exhibition

1. INTRODUCTION

As an industrial society changes to a digital society, various forms of media appear. The traditional and classic media are replaced by various media styles based on high technology. Artists started to pursue interaction with an audience and media art in a representative contemporary art to new art. Artists acquire a unique way of expression in creating a distinct method or a specific technical integration with the media. In these processes, the machine media arts have been called various names, and Media Art is a well known term for the art(Lee, 2004).

Interactive Media Art is characterized by interaction between artist and audience. As a piece of art and a spectator communicate with each other, the spectator's activity change the shape of the works. It is interactive media that the spectators participate in.

The most important factor in the media art in images controlled and changed by programmed system.

An interactive work has the merit of transient drawing front of the spectator. When audience understand the works, intimacy and bonding can be developed connecting audience and the works. The spectator is to be both performer and controller working together with the author, directly participating as a major element of interactive art,- these being the largest merit of an interactive installation work(Oh, 2002).

Zakia (2001) expressed artistic expression represents more intense than the thought and feelings of social members. Traditional arts have the author as the center of the creative activity. However, the spectator's role is not only simple expropriation nowadays, as he or she aspires to participate directly in a work of art and freely interpret it.

Artist's intention is often not well delivered to audiences and not intended ideas even can affect emotion of audience. Unexpected and different understanding different from artist's intention is also valuable and meaningful. It's still required, however, to develop methods to deliver the intension of artists to audiences which can enrich the value of works.

Uncertainty of the author's intention can be a persistent feature of Interactive Media Art. To properly deliver the intension of artist Think Aloud can be applied. Think Aloud technique were examined to be applied to interpret interactive Media Art. In this study, the Think Aloud method was applied to influence the spectator's perception of an Interactive Media artwork.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. MEDIA ART

A paradigm of the media changes when a new media form appears, and a new name is created for the paradigm to be applied to art. The 20th century saw the emergence of the a traditional 'Machine Art' of cinema and photography. The name 'Kinetic Art' was used until the beginning of the 20th century. 'Light Art' that used neon lighting appeared after World War II. In the 1960's, the names 'Electronic Art', 'TV Sculpture' and 'TV Art' were replaced by 'Video Art', ' Holography Art', 'Computer Art', ' CG Art', 'Laser Art', and 'Multimedia Art'. After that, new names like 'High Vision Art' and 'VR Art' continue to appear, and it was a result of technology allowing 'light' and 'movement' to be recorded, revised, processed and transmitted. The names 'Technology Art' and 'Hightech Art' were used to emphasize the integration of human author and technology.

After experiencing two devastating world wars in the 20th century, often regarded as a bitter outcome of the purely techno and mechanical facets of civilization, artists started to develop techniques combining science and nature which gave root to a new art tradition and artistic genres using the new media. This integration of the mechanical and the humane especially spread during the 1960s. (Lee, 2004)

In the 1970s, with the development of communication technologies, 'Telecommunication Art' and 'Satellite Art' were explored, and in the context of the information revolution these gave birth to 'Communication Art' and 'Network Art' in the latter half of the decade(Jo, 2001). These in turn led to the emergence of ASCII art, from monochrome to color and animated.

'Information Art', 'Cyber Art', 'Psytech Art', 'Hyper Art', 'Psybernetic Art', 'Technoetic Art', and 'Web Art' constituted a new rising paradigm of modern art – 'Interactive Art' relying on new communication methods that were pursued in all the above genres. These forms of art, though somehow different, were all based on the concept of 'Media', thus 'Media Art' came to be the universal term to refer to them(Lee, 2004).

2. 2. THINK ALOUD

Think aloud method involves test participants in thinking aloud as they perform a set of specified tasks. They are asked to articulate whatever they are looking at, thinking, doing, and feeling, as they perform their tasks, which enables observers to see first-hand the process of task completion. The observers are required to objectively records everything that the participants say, without attempting to interpret their actions or words.

The results of this method's application are analyzed by a researcher, and potential problems or significant issues are recognized as they unfold in the subjects' words (Foraker Design, 2005). Think Aloud has been used to gather data on the education process and its effect in relation to pedagogy, psychology and a range of social sciences. This method can be applied to identify the characteristics of a stimulus to the participants in an experiment.

Think Aloud was also believed not proper for the art exhibition audience since it can give a burden to audience to express his or her private and personal emotion, feeling, evaluation, etc.

2. 3. PERCEPTION & IMAGING

All the senses of the human body are connected to the memory system. Human remembers not only visual experience but also sound, smell, taste and touch. Visual memory, a basic element in memory, also works in sequences(Schnell, 2005). A piece of information received is able to stimulate the sense and memory paths. Perception involves general information communicated through with all the senses and collected in our mind. We grasp experiences indirectly through our senses like smell, touch, taste, and hearing, and all the senses communicate with each other.

Media art is created by human beings. It also affects individuals' perceptions, influences spectators' behaviors and in the process changes its form. Just 'seeing' art works does not happen any more. Nowadays perception is indirectly transmitted by the media (Schnell, 2005).

In the virtual space programmed with the computer, the spectator can immerse in artworks beyond present time and space. This happens the moment the spectator experiences the disappearance of the boundary between the virtual and the real. The spectator interacts with the images changing while staying in self-control, and can become a single co-working artist together with the author (Zakia, 2001).

3. MEDIA ART AND AUDIENCE

Artistic creation is no longer belong to only artists. By under the influences of post-modernism and informatization, our society requires diverse value and flexible thinking to go beyond standard ways of thinking. A spectator shall respect his or her own values and ways of thinking when seeing an artwork, and interpret it. A art work generally involves relations and interaction with other factors, it is distinct from the work of art's aesthetic effect on society (Kim, 2006).

If a spectator cannot see and feel any valuable and emotional things from art works, he or she can be bored and will not visit and see art works.

From this point of view, the spectator needs to be educated to artworks to the trained to gain insights in interactive Media Art and insights in Interactive Media Art appreciation because it is different in perspective from traditional arts (Nam, 2005). Modern art breaking the frame of pure art is often connected to the mass media and created in various forms. Modern art usually goes beyond traditional values of artworks and makes spectators ask philosophical questions.

Modern art invites the spectators to interact with the work itself. The meaning of an artwork is never decided once and for all, as the spectator doesn't react passively to it (Kim, 2006). The intention of the artist is extended in close relation to the spectator, and the comprehension process is realized in series of acts of communication, as Interactive Media Art in essence constitutes a communication system.

4. EXPERIMENT

4. 1. STIMULUS

We used personal art works of media artist Camille Utterback and her co-worker Adam Chapman (obtained from www.camilleutterback.com). All the selected works are originally designed to interact with the audience.

Selected works for the experiment were believed familiar to the Korean audience and easy to understand. Six particular works were selected for the experiment (Figure 1): <External Measures, 2003>, <Potent Objects, 2003>, <Liquid Time Series, 2001-2002>, <Crossing, 2001>,

<Composition, 2000>, <Text Rain, 1999>. Expected and possible interactions by audiences for the chosen works were direct and easy to understand intention of the artists. While looking at the works in a gallery, the visitors ‘play’ with them, using their bodies for interaction.



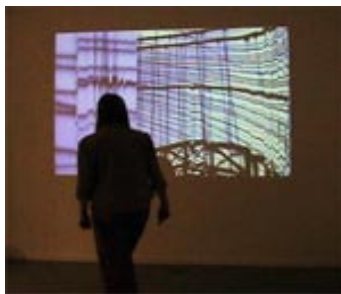
External Measures, 2003



Potent Objects, 2003



Liquid Time Series, 2001-2002



Crossing, 2001



Composition, 2000



Text Rain, 1999

Figure 1. Six stimuli: Camille Utterback and Adam Chapman's works

4. 2. PARTICIPANTS

Ten participants (2 males, 8 females) participated in the test experiment and interviewed. 60percent of participants reported experiencing Media Art more than 5 times and 40 percent of subjects had interests in Media Arts. Their experience and interests in media art were explored with a questionnaire and five of them were finally selected for the experiment based on the results of the evaluation.

The selected participants' experience with Media Art ranged from 3 to 7 times and they were interested in understanding artists' intentions. They reported having visited galleries and the Internet to experience and know Media Art. They wanted to know the artist's intention, implicit meaning and explanation in order to understand Interactive Media Arts. The participants felt more interested in Media Art works when they were related to their own experience and memories.

4.3. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Within subject design was employed and three different exhibition methods were independent variables in the experiment. Each participant was presented with the six works with different exhibition manner in random order. The following three methods of presenting the works were used: 1) Method A: showing the work only, without any additional information <Liquid Time Series, 2001-2002>, <Potent Objects, 2003>; 2) Method B: Text use explanation of the work presented before seeing the works <Composition (2000) >, <External Measures (2003) >; 3) Method C: think aloud were utilized <Crossing (2001) >, <Text Rain (1999) >.

After watching all six art works, the participants were shown the author's description of the works (obtained from www.camilleutterback.com). Then the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire to report their impressions and preferences regarding the experimental works and methods.

5. RESULTS

Responding to the post-experiment questionnaire, 40, 30 and 90 percent of the participants reported that they were excited with the method A, B, and C respectively. 70 percent of subjects evaluated Think Aloud method made them feel much more interested in the works, only 10 percent of subjects answered Think Aloud gave similar emotion and feelings. For the cases of positive participants' impression, they reported they were fascinated by expressing their own perception and imagination in detail.

Subjects imagined <rain> and <snow> falling on their bodies from <Text Rain> and they tried to put the text into their mouths, as they experienced in childhood, arranging text character, like in a word game. They imagined words like <game>, <fun>, <wing>, <candy>, <soft> and <play> while experiencing the art work.

Participants' understanding was closest to the author's intention when the method B was used and method A resulted in worst. For Method A, the spectators were expressing freely their own subjective emotions, while in Method B they thought in logical terms with the text explanation, and finally in Method C they concentrated on their feelings and subjective imagination instead of seeing the works.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study started with the question of how well audience understanding maps onto artist intent. Appreciating an interactive media work is more exciting when a spectator watches and immediately captures it visually, reflects on it in his or her heart, and immerses in an act experience of artistic communication. Being an interactive participant in the work can present to gain knowledge of the work and contributing to the aura. Spectators and the works are engaged with each other in Interactive Media Art, and the artistic impression largely depends on whether the participation is active or passive. Interactive and active audiences are the most important factor in Interactive Media Art.

The audiences can touch the work and can get different messages or realities according to its behavior. For such a work, the intention of the artist does not define the final meaning, but the participation in the interaction does. The spectators are closely connected to the creativity process in Media Art.

The contemporary artworks especially Media artworks communicate, influence the spectator and change their appearances. The results of the experiment suggested that providing prior descriptive information about a work of art enhances the correspondence between of spectators' understanding and the intentions of the author. However, more important findings are that using Think Aloud technique significantly enhances the spectator's experience and, contributes to greater excitement and more rich emotional feelings.

Modern Interactive Media Art artists may find it fruitful to encourage this particular behavior from the viewers, e.g. by providing appropriate instructions can't this approach limit the higher excitement you mention earlier for an artwork exhibited in a gallery or on the Internet. Interestingly enough, the use of this technique may be combined with the prior descriptions method, i.e. the spectators could be pre-exposed to the recorded impressions articulated by previous spectators of an artwork, thus adding an additional dimension to the act of communication.

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