

Imago

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ABSTRACT

Imago is an interactive system representing an "alien" that has a unique communication method of movie projection. Imago's body consists of projector turning, projection and human detection system using ultrasonic sensors. Imago projects its messages in the form of movies on the participant's body in response to their position and speed. Imago aims not to make a system simulating human gesture detection, but to represent the communication situation between two creatures having different/limited communication ways as artwork. Participants experience the Imago's method of communication and ruminate human communication requiring efforts to understand differences. Furthermore, Imago is expected to evoke image-communication, which has been less emphasized since Gutenberg Galaxy [1], in the participant's mind.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

J.5 [Computer Applications]: Arts and Humanities: Fine arts.

General Terms

Performance, Experimentation, Languages

Keywords

Media art, art, imago, interactive, installation, projector, motion tracking, human detection, ultrasonic sensor, communication, alien, unknown zone, image, language, movie, emotion

1. INTRODUCTION

The title "Imago" originally means "image" in Latin. Since Jung introduced this term into physiology, it has meant "the individual forms a personality by identifying with imagos that emerge from the collective unconscious, a shared reservoir of mythical figures and scenarios." In Lacan's the Mirror Stage theory, Imago is the image that the infant sees in the mirror, which is the starting point of identifying "I" as the result of an encounter with an other.[2] The title is used to emphasize the Imago's method of communication using movies and the participant's experience as a metaphorical representation of human communication. However, as an art experience completed in many different ways by participants, the connotation of Imago is not restricted to the meaning of the term "imago."

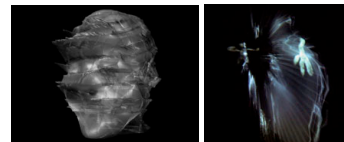
2. RELATED ART WORK

Alien, metaphorically inaudible speech and new forms of communication are themes of my art works. Many pieces in 'the unknown zone' series represent what being alien is and document their feeble attempts to communicate with "normal" people. Site-specific video installation methods are used to give participants immersive experiences. The theme has been explored through more media art projects. Siren III is a sound visualization project in 2005 that displays a three dimensional head which is deformed according to a pre-recorded voice. Symbolically, the Siren sings this inaudible song through her own body. Sound samples deform a 3D head, which was volumetrically constructed from MRI scan data of the artist. SeoNang is an international telematic project between Seattle (USA) and Seoul (Korea) that uses video and sound interaction by participants' shape and motion as a communication interface. [3]



Chrysalis (2002)

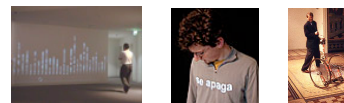
Struldbrugg (2002)



Siren III (2005)

SeoNang (2005)

In a similar ongoing approach, Imago attempts to communicate with participants in movies. As an interactive installation using motion-tracking devices, it suggests a new way of communication between artworks and participants. Other media art projects sharing similar approach are: *Transitional Spaces* created by George Legrady in 1999 that uses camera tracking and the participant's movement spins the wheel of information projected on the wall [4]; *Subtitled Public* by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer in 2005 that uses infrared surveillance system and project texts onto participants' bodies [5]; Simon Penny's *Petit Mal* that follows the participant as if it wants to talk to people and it has emotions. [6]



Transitional Space

Subtitled Public

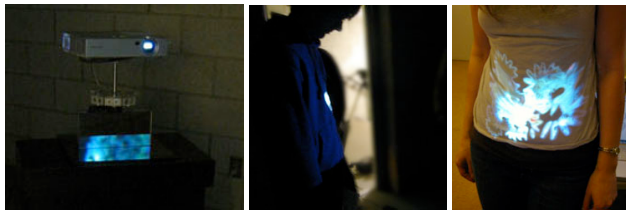
Petit Mal

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MM'06, October 23-27, 2006, Santa Barbara, California, USA.
ACM 1-59593-447-2/06/0010.

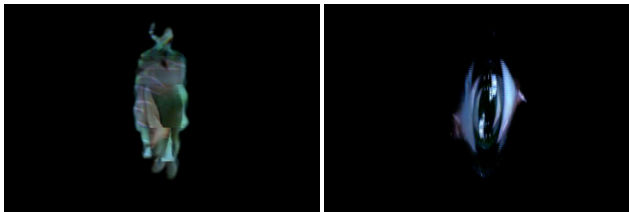
3. TECHNICAL DETAILS

3.1 The Imago's method of communication

The Imago's method of communication is movie projection on the interlocutor's body. The message appears as moving images without frame as it has a black background. As the participant stays still to read a movie, Imago projects another movie to express its appreciation of the participant's friendly gesture to understand itself. The participant's body shape, clothes' colors, and distance from Imago distort moving images projected on their body. The participant's way of looking at movies on their chest or abdomen reflects how people project their own perspective onto interlocutors such as interruptions occurred in face-to-face human communication. For multiple participants, Imago detects the closest person. Imago's infrequent confusion by very fast movement or multiple participants is accepted as a part of its humanoid nature in communication. Movies are created mainly in Final Cut Pro and Adobe Photoshop.



Installation & Participant's Interaction



Movie: the Imago's way of communication

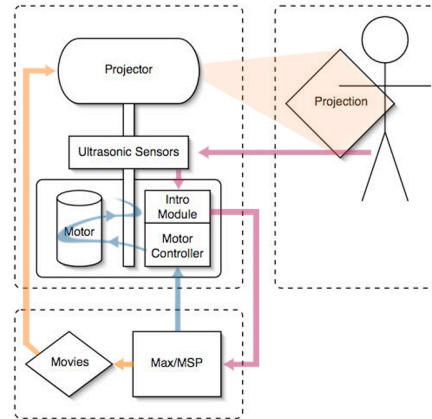
*For more photos & movies:

<http://www.dxarts.washington.edu/~eskang/Imago/photo.htm>

<http://www.dxarts.washington.edu/~eskang/Imago/movie.htm>

3.2 Body components

Imago's body consists of a projector turntable, a human detection and a projection system. 5 Ultrasonic sensors detect humans in the angular range of about 240 degrees. The data goes into the Teleo Introductory Module and is transferred to Max/MSP/Jitter. The Max/MSP/Jitter patch analyzes the data and sends commands back for motor control and movie selection. Short wires network the Teleo Intro Module and Motor Controller. Two switches limit the rotation range of the motor. The projector is separately connected to a Jitter patch in the computer via a RGB Monitor cable.



* For more information:

<http://www.dxarts.washington.edu/~eskang/Imago/system.htm>

4. CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE WORK

The idea for Imago was conceived from 2004 winter to 2005 spring. The first prototype was built by May 2005 and the second adjustment was done at April 2006. Current system seduced people by images and movements at first but less people stayed long enough to enjoy the Imago's method of communication. Overall, while it reflects the reality of human communication, it remains as future work to engage people to communicate with Imago for a longer period of time. A child participant called Imago a robot and gradually approached it as if he met an interesting stranger. However, the projection hit children's face when they are close to Imago unlike adult participants. The length of leg will be adjusted to make projections be on an average adult abdomen for ACM exhibition. The next step for the later future will be to make the projection part moves up and down to consider human beings having various heights. In general the development of a more biologically, linguistically evolved form of Imago will be the focus of future work.

5. REFERENCES

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