YOU ARE A TARGET MARKET

A MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION
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Introduction

Art has developed into many forms. With the development of more accessible hardware and software in video, audio, and computers; more artists are integrating technology into their art. A new sub genre called "New Media Art" has been created and I have grown more interested in exploring this new outlet for artistic expression.

Culminating Experience Project

My culminating experience project is an immersive large-scale installation incorporating technologies such as Max to create a final work of multimedia art. My vision was not just to create a project that aims to showcase new and different ways of presenting sound and visuals, but one that also serves as a topical art piece.

The title of my project was inspired by the role of advertising and media in our lives. In American culture, our thoughts and values are shaped by what we are told by media outlets that have decided how everyone should act, look, and feel. Through commercials, print, and television news, we are constantly barraged with the opinions others whose only intention is to turn you into a consumer of products or values. The imagery and messages used in advertising display an idea or an ideal that is unattainable by the average person and influences our conceptions about gender roles in society. In addition to the themes derived from advertising and news, I explored the methods and messages employed in politics to influence others.

I reviewed numerous commercials and news programs and selected videos and sound bites with key phrases and themes to use in my project.

How the Work Contributes to the Profession

I am hoping that my installation will reach beyond one genre and will interest people from a variety of interests. My aim is to attract the artistic community of the region, however I also hope to also produce something different to represent the Berklee community. In addition, I have been posting the progress of the project by making short videos and I will be documenting the final show and posting it to my You Tube and Vimeo page to share with others in the New Media genre.

Innovative Aspects of the Work

By incorporating visuals, themes, and sounds, I have produced a piece that displays an innovative use of music and sound technology alongside an artistic presentation.

The genre of New Media Art is built on artists using technology and multimedia in interesting ways, so for the programming of the project, I decided to use Max and Jitter. While I did use resources such as After Effects to pre-design some material, I primarily relied on programming in Max that would vary the video effects and also randomize the sounds and music being played. This type of approach is innovative as many pieces of New Media Art that I have seen are installations that are the same experience every time. By creating random programming, I have given the audience the opportunity to have different experiences.

New Skills

It will sound rather boring to say so, but the greatest new skill that I acquired during this project was that I attained a much greater ability for programming in Max. When I began my year, my skills using the program were non-existent and now that I have finished my project, I am able to not only program with more ease but I am able to do it much quicker. The ability to program within Max is not just an accomplishment in itself, but programming requires a certain way of thinking in order to accomplish the tasks you have in mind. Like math problems, programming requires you to think logically and problem solve. While programming my installation, I had to think in the language of the program in order to achieve the look and sound that I desired.

In addition to the apparent skills, I also found that the research process was an interesting study in the methods and imagery used in advertising and media. I entered into my project with the understanding of how these outlets use key words, themes and images in their campaigns, but it was interesting to see just how repetitive the messages were. For the promotion of my installation, I decided to create my own form of advertising influenced by street art and the work of the art collective Guerrilla Girls. I suppose that promotion was another skill acquired during this project, as I succeeded in creating a campaign that gained attention for the project.

Challenges

Most of the challenges that I encountered in the project were technical. The first challenge overall was coming up with an idea of what I wanted each section to look like and how I could accomplish that. By creating prototypes within Max and referencing the programs help files; I was able to solve problems with my programming. My biggest

hurdle for the project was the need to attain a much greater grasp of Jitter in order to produce the video portion of the project.

A major challenge with using Jitter is that it requires a lot of processing power in order to run smoothly. When I had completed the video programming of my sections, I had problems with my patches crashing or running slowly. In order to correct this, I had to remove unnecessary objects from my patchers as well as optimize the patch for proper frame rate playback.

The first presentation of my project presented several problems with the video. Although I had done some optimization, the amount of video being used by my patches were requiring a lot of processing which resulted in stuttered playback. The gender portion crashed many times when trying to open as the patch had over 20 videos that were being used. For my next presentation I plan to correct this by using other methods of optimization, and for the 'Gender' portion I may capture the video generated from Max and present it as a played back video in order to correctly display the section.

The sound portion of my project did not create as many challenges. I had done a prototype of how I wanted the sounds to playback with files playing back while volumes automated simultaneously. One problem that I faced once I combined all of my sounds from all four sections was timing. Certain sounds were playing more frequently than others and I spent quite a bit of time adjusting the metro objects as well as creating sub patchers to play back certain files in 'random' or 'drunk' so that sounds would not occur in the same order every time.

Future Plans for the Work

My hope for the project is to have the opportunity to display it several more times. Currently, I have secured a viewing at the Sala D'Exposiciones at the Universitat Politecnica de Valencia for July 21-30th. Before the next showing, I would like to make improvements to the project so that it will be easier to set up and have better quality video. After this date, I would like to propose the project to La Rambleta, the Valencia Museum of Modern Art, and research galleries in Barcelona that I may propose to as well.

Conclusion

This project has taught me a good deal about the importance of prototyping, planning, and execution. When I first envisioned the project, I was not sure if I wanted to create a live performance or an installation. It was important for me to fully utilize the technology at hand to create this project, but almost more important to successfully present the theme of the project. After the first showing was completed, I received responses from viewers that they felt overwhelmed and that after spending several minutes in the room; they felt somewhat upset. By creating imagery and sounds that are meant to be a barrage on the audience, I feel that my project was conceptually a success. I have learned a lot by completing this project and will technically improve upon it and use this experience in future artistic projects.

My 'Target Market'' in the completed installation

References

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