

DM2007 Interactive II

School of Art, Design and Media, NTU Singapore

SYLLABUS

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Context

New media art permeates, reflects and generates a wide spectrum of the most relevant social phenomena. It is a dynamic laboratory which creates the powerful means of human expression and interaction through complex interrelations between creativity, science, technology, politics, economy, media, entertainment and popular culture. Many contemporary new media artists are highly distinguished and the cultural sector is finding new ways of collecting, archiving, presenting, theorizing, promoting and commercializing their productions. The growing interest of academic community and general public in new media art is evident in the expansion of all kinds of discourse, and significant changes in art education are taking place with the introduction of various art programs that explore the space between art, technology and science.

Still, the creative and expressive potentials of interactive media remain largely unexplored, and their social consequences unexamined. New media and interactive media art engender many tensions, contradictions and paradoxes ranging between technocracy, opportunism, manipulation, superficiality and arrogance on the one side, and smart, layered, insightful, comprehensive creativity on the other. The rich and illuminating histories of new media art are often obscured by the pace of change in commercial digital technologies and their effects. As with all other fields of human creativity, many poetic qualities and achievements of new media art have been unjustly overlooked, while some other get disproportionately advertised by the ideological authority of digital paradigm.

Course Description

This course encourages you to integrate learning, research and project production through critical and creative examination of the interactive factors in media art and design, and from a broad spectrum of aspects. The focus is on experiment and open-minded approach. You will build up your creative insight into interactive media through the project-based development of conceptual thinking, technical skills, technological and theoretical knowledge, critical thinking, individual integrity and responsibility. You are free to choose the ideas, methodologies, forms and media for your projects, with consideration for conceptual cogency, material and logistic feasibility. You are expected to take initiative in mastering the skills and competences working with tools required by your projects.

Strategy

My teaching strategy emphasizes the integration of transdisciplinary approach with technical mastery for the creation of inventive, innovative and socially relevant artwork. The emphasis is on harmonizing the artistic research with experimentation.

Goals

Understanding the interactivity in new media art, contemporary cultural phenomenology, relevant scientific, technological and theoretical disciplines.

Acquiring and developing skills for creation, contextualization and evaluation of interactive art projects.

Developing independent critical assessment of and discourse in new media art.

Program

The program combines hands-on production, lectures, assignments, presentations, consultations and critical discussions. Hands-on production is focused on the development and production of your art projects. The emphasis is on harmonizing the research and experiment with the efficiency and

technical sophistication. You are required to improve and successfully defend the conceptual and structural integrity of your projects prior, during and after production.

Class Structure and Activities

| # | Activity |
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| 1. | <p>Intro class About me (plus read this). About the course: Concept, structure and syllabus. About you: Brief us on your background and current interests.</p> <p>Assignment 1: Find the inspiring, thought-provoking examples of interactive art or well-designed interactive interface, and prepare individual, media supported presentation, 5 min long.* Presentations will be scheduled alphabetically in two sessions (due 2. and 3. week). Post your presentations at the OSS after each session.</p> <p>Assignment 2: Project team building (due 2. week), preparing project ideas (due 3. and 4. week) and prototyping (prototype demos due 7. week). Final projects due 13. week.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Lecture 1: Interface: Always Never Changing. Presentations: Assignment 1 (Examples of interactive art/interactive interface) 1/2. Presentations: Assignment 2 (Project teams say hi!). Scheduling the project ideas presentations: 3x45-min sessions for 3. and 4. week. Each project team has 15 min.</p> <p>Intro to new media art theory + Assignment 3: Unpacking the theory of interactive art. Each project team will be assigned to read an essay in new media art theory, research about it, put it in context and present/explain it to the class. Presentations should be media-based, even if only with text. Each team has 20-25 min. I will give you the bibliography list in class. Due 9. and 10. week.</p> <p>Scheduling Assignment 3 project team presentations: 2x60 min sessions, 9. and 10. week.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Lecture 2: (Data) Visualization. Research and resources: Intro to Digital Art Research Platform and my web site. Get to know some of the resources and methodology for your creative research in new media art, focusing on interactive art. Presentations: Assignment 1 (Examples of interactive art/interactive interface) 2/2. Team presentations: Assignment 2 (Project ideas) 1/2.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Lunar NY Holiday: No class.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Team presentations: Assignment 2 (Project ideas) – ALL TEAMS – 2x45 min. Field trip logistics brief. Guest lecture + talk 1, optionally: Special Topics in IA: Installation/Object/Interaction.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Field trip: <i>Minimalism</i> exhibition in the National Gallery of Singapore. Assignment 4: Individual ArtScience Museum visit impressions. Select one artwork from <i>Minimalism</i> in ArtScience Museum, research about it and post your reflections at the OSS. No less than 950 characters with spaces/130 words/10 lines in 12pt, up to 1900 characters with spaces/260 words/20 lines in 12pt. Due 8. week.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Lecture 3: Installation/Object/Performance/Emerging Forms. Project prototype demos and discussion: Each team has 15-20 min to showcase the demo, plus we do a discussion on each.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Recess: Final project development. Deadline for posting your individual ArtScience Museum: <i>Minimalism</i> visit impressions at the OSS.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Presentations: Assignment 3 (Reading and Unpacking...) 1/2: Each team has 20-25 min. Consultations 1: In-progress project discussion. Each team updates me on their project development, and we discuss all the relevant aspects.</p> |
| 10. | <p>Guest lecture + talk: Andreas Schlegel. Presentations: Assignment 3 (Reading and Unpacking...) 2/2. Each team has 20-25 min. Consultations 2: In-progress project discussion. Each team updates me on their project development, and we discuss all the relevant aspects.</p> |
| 11. | <p>Lecture 4: Biometric Interactivity. Consultations 3: In-progress project discussion. Each team updates me on their project development, and we discuss all the relevant aspects.</p> |

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| 12. | Consultations 4: In-progress project discussion. Each team updates me on their project development, and we discuss all the relevant aspects. |
| 13. | Consultations 5: Final project presentations and discussion. Each team presents their finished projects, and we discuss the outcomes. You should participate in all discussions. |
| 14. | Critique: Final project discussion in which we round up the impressions and thoughts on your projects, and identify the possibilities for further development and/or new projects. |

*Timing is for orientation only and may vary.

Lectures Overview

Interface: Always Never Changing

Combining formal elements and protocols for the experience, the interface as a key factor of interactivity in the arts, design and everyday life. How much has the interface evolved in the context of new media, and why?

(Data) Visualization

Art and design projects based upon the software solutions for collecting, processing, conceptualizing and interactively representing datasets and databases.

The Internet

Art projects that utilize the specific qualities of networked culture—primarily of the Internet—such as ubiquity, ease of use, (lack of) anonymity, speed, multimediality and interactivity.

Installation/Object/Performance/Emerging Forms

An introduction to a heterogeneous field of digital interactivity, installation, performance and emerging forms, in which the artists employ the existing methods and develop new techniques for the active transformation of the artwork in relation to the viewer/participant.

Biometric Interactivity

Interactivity in the context of BioArt, and the related concepts of biopolitics, bio power, etc.

Generative Strategies

Art that uses various techniques to formalize the natural unpredictability of the creative process, to emphasize and aestheticize the contextuality of an artwork.

Guest Lectures

New media artists will present and discuss their interactive art projects, and/or talk about special topics related to the interactivity in new media art.

Requirements

Produce and present one interactive media project working in teams of 3 to 4 (or solo in special cases).

Document your project conceptualization, process and development.

Fulfil the assignments as specified in *Class Structure and Activities*.

Actively participate in consultations and class discussions.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late you will be marked as absent.

Learning Outcomes

The students will have further developed their interactive media authoring skills. They will have initiated a speculative and practice-oriented approach to the development of interactive media.

Student Assessment

Students will be assessed based on the following criteria: delivery, inventiveness, creative thinking, clarity of expression and initiative in self-driven learning.

50% Assignments and (weekly) progress of your final project

30% Final project execution

20% Class participation

Textbooks and References

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- Weibel, Peter. "It Is Forbidden Not to Touch: Some Remarks on the (Forgotten Parts of the) History of Interactivity and Virtuality." In *Media Art Histories*, edited by Oliver Grau. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007.
- Wilson, Stephen. *Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.
- Yau, Nathan. *Data Points: Visualization That Means Something*. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley, 2013.
- Zielinski, Siegfried. *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008.