

Guest Editorial Preface

Advances on Digital and Interactive Arts

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It started with Seurat, the most scientific of the impressionists. He said: I want to give a picture of my time with the means of my time. When our world is created by electronic media, artists are best suited and adapted to give a picture of the contemporary world using the means by which the contemporary world is constructed. So, in 100 years, when people want to know how it was in the 20th century or the 21st century, the best testimonials will be media art – be it video installations, be it computer installations, whatever. -Peter Weibel, “Entretien”, 2012, in Dominique MOULON (ed.), Art et Numérique en Résonance, Nouvelles éditions Scala, Paris, 2015, p. 55.

Digital media art has been undergoing several transformations and generating a number of sub-genres, such as glitch-art, generative art, web-art, noise-art, only to name a few. Its practice spans over all media types and technologies, thus in fact resulting in a meta-medium dynamic sequence of binary digits, invisibly traversing our physical spaces and lives. The global on-going encoding of life into aestheticised arrays of symbols has not only changed the way society thinks about life, as it has become an inseparable part of life itself.

Digital technologies have an aesthetic potential that only artists can materialize, and scholars working at the border of art, science and technology lead us into amazement and questioning, as their artworks have the potential to promote critical thinking and awe alike.

Their creative processes are open interactive communication systems, which include dynamic elements of different natures, articulating relationships in a complex system of mutual implications, (re)linking each artwork to its theoretical roots, and each experience to the audience’s diverse insights and interpretations.

It is this unique capability of combining art-practice, academic methodology and critical thinking that conducted the selection of the papers included in this issue, all of them addressing virtual representations, between delocalized presence and ubiquity, augmenting the notion of identity.

PAPERS IN THIS ISSUE

Catarina Sampaio and Luísa Ribas posit ways of “Representing the Self Through the Visualization of Personal Data” as an alternative to criteria that mimic physical characteristics. The Data Self-Portrait project explores the creative possibilities associated with the representation and expression of identity, through the application of data visualization techniques, as a response to the growing dematerialization of human activities.

Silvia Laurentiz et al. posit “R Scuti: Creative Star Data Visualization” as an audio-visual installation which transposes astronomical data from the AAVSO database into an exhibition environment, through their conversion to sound patterns that materialize through cymatics on a water surface. In turn, this surface refracts a light focus and creates luminous patterns on the ceiling.

João Martinho Moura, Né Barros and Paulo Ferreira-Lopes question the “Embodiment in Virtual Reality: The Body, Thought, Present, and Felt in the Space of Virtuality”. For them the notion of immersion and the sense of presence in VR is a fundamental aspect in the sense of embodiment in the virtual space. Thus they present works that challenge and question the embodiment sensation in VR, analyze the technologies used and question the sensations felt by audience and artists in virtual reality.

Selma Eduarda Pereira and Alexandra Nogueira discuss the exhibition “The Destinies of Senses: Curating a Virtual Exhibition” posing challenges that have become more evident during the covid-19 pandemic, as online cultural events have soared. The authors offer their insights on the creative and curatorial process for the virtual pavilion “The Destinies of Senses”, part of the 4th art biennial “The Wrong”.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Creative Interfaces and Computer Graphics - IJCICG, Adérito Fernandes-Marcos, for the opportunity to produce this special issue. We also wish to thank all the authors for their contributions.

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