Conversations
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Overview: Conversations

The installation piece is centered on an unguided exploration of other people's conversations within a virtual space. The conversations are emitted from abstract primitives in a 3D environment. The piece seeks to strip the illusion of character avatars, expose bare simulacra, and convey the memory of electronic devices. The conversations transpiring in this simplified landscape range from the emotional to the mundane. They discuss politics, personal intimacies, relationships, and other varied topics. The goal is to provide the participant an opportunity to explore a world that is an ambiguous cacophony of the fiction and non-fiction memory of this device.

Overview: Implementation

Playing upon contemporary issues of privacy and the voyeur tendency to listen to other people's conversation, the project integrates conversations recorded in the gallery space with conversations extracted from public resources for both fiction and non-fiction. The gallery-recorded conversations are gathered from the viewing kiosk that displays the objects in the scene. The sculpture will contain an embedded microphone, which will be connected to the computer providing the virtual space.

Goals

Interplay of Emotions and Computers

The user finds themselves curious about the conversations, but the conversationalists are not people or images of people, they are polygons. How can we care what polygons are saying? Why do we care about polygons? Why do they stir emotions? Does it matter that they are without physical character? What force compels us to continue exploring?

The piece is meant to be a reminder of the emotional relationship we volunteer to computer generated content. The integration of live conversations provides a reminder of the ambiguity between the real and the manufactured. The user of this artistic system should not easily discern the difference between the gallery space conversations and the pre-recorded conversation. The pre-recorded conversations, in themselves are difficult to discern between acted dialogue and unrehearsed daily interaction.

The existence of live conversations serves to encourage exploration. Yet, the participant has no efficacy in the virtual[i] world. Their participation in the virtual world is passive, allowing only listening and minor production. The participant, in a contemporary effect that is becoming only more common, turns away from the world in which they live to become part of world that is limited, inactive, and manufactured. The participant must choose to look away from the world in which they have efficacy, to explore a collage of disjointed experiences.

Even though the gallery-recorded conversations are the only link to a world in which the user has efficacy, they find distracting interest in the machine born world.

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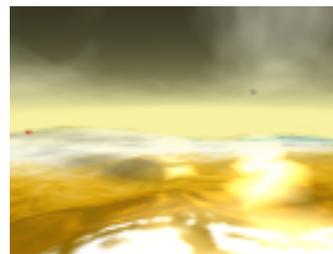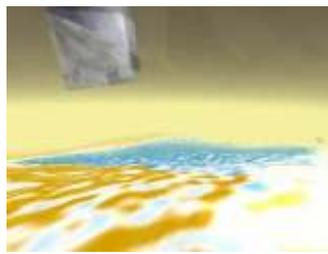
[i] The word *virtual* is used intended for it's literal meaning of not real.