GloNet Front Room

An interactive telematic installation

For the FutureEverything Festival 2010

By Paul Sermon, 15th March 2009

The GloNet Front Room will utilize internet videoconference and virtual-studio technology to locate remote festival participants in a simulated domestic ‘living-room’ setting by augmenting participants into the comfort of an ‘armchair seminar’. This installation follows the development of a series of telecommunication art works Paul Sermon has produced since the early 1990s, using customised videoconferencing technology as a means of bringing geographically remote audiences together in a shared telepresent interactive and performative setting.

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1. CONCEPT AND DESCRIPTION

The television and sofa are caught up in an inseparable scenario. In GloNet Front Room the sofa is the seat from which the spectacle of television is viewed and the spectacle that is viewed is the audience that sits on the sofa. Two identical sofas are located in dispersed remote locations. In front of each sofa stands a video monitor and camera. The video camera in each location sends a live video image to the other location. The two images are mixed together, via a video effects generator, and displayed on the monitors in front of each sofa in both remote locations simultaneously. Two more video monitors, displaying the same image, are added to both locations, and stand one metre from the arms on both sides of each sofa. The theatre of the spectacle is complete. The viewers in both locations assume the function of the installation and sit down on the sofas to watch television. At this point they enter the telematic space, watching a live image of themselves sat on a sofa next to another person. They start to explore the space and understand they are now in complete physical control of a telepresent body that can interact with the other person. The more intimate and sophisticated the interaction becomes, the further the users enter into the telematic space. The division between the remote telepresent body and the actual physical body disappears, leaving only one body that exists in and between both locations. Assisted by the object of the sofa and the scenario of the television consciousness is extended and resides solely within the interaction of the user. GloNet Front Room is a vacant space of potentiality, it is nothing without the presence of a viewer and the interactions of a user who create their own television program by becoming the voyeurs of their own spectacle. The original concept and structure of GloNet Front Room is an open framework, where the artwork itself emerges only through the participation of users and through their lived experience at a given moment in space and time. Bluntly put, the experience is the artwork. Therefore, sources representing such phenomenological information, whether textual, oral or visual, become the pivotal points of interest in the artwork.
2. DIAGRAMS AND PLANS
3. PREVIOUS TELEMATIC INSTALLATIONS:

LIBERATE YOUR AVATAR, Urban Screens, Manchester October 2007
http://www.paulsermon.org/liberate/

Telematic Vision, ZKM Germany, 1993 to 2008
http://www.paulsermon.org/vision/
4. BIOGRAPHY

Paul Sermon - Professor of Creative Technology

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Born in Oxford, England, 1966. Studied BA Hon's Fine Art degree under Professor Roy Ascott at The University of Wales, from September 1985 to June 1988. Studied a Post-graduate MFA degree at The University of Reading, England, from October 1989 to June 1991. Awarded the Prix Ars Electronica “Golden Nica”, in the category of interactive art, for the hyper media installation “Think about the People now”, in Linz, Austria, September 1991. Produced the ISDN videoconference installation “Telematic Vision” as an Artist in Residence at the Center for Art and Media Technology (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, from February to November 1993. Received the “Sparkey Award” from the Interactive Media Festival in Los Angeles, for the telepresent video installation “Telematic Dreaming”, June 1994. From 1993 to 1999 employed as Dozent for Media Art at the HGB Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, Germany. During this time continued to produced further interactive telematic installations including “Telematic Encounter” in 1996 and “The Tables Turned” in 1997 for the Ars Electronica Centre in Linz, and the ZKM Media Museum in Karlsruhe. From 1997 to 2001 employed as Guest Professor for Performance and Environment at the University of Art and Industrial Design in Linz, Austria. Since June 2000 based at The University of Salford working primarily within the research field of immersive and expanded telematic environments.