Peoples Screen

An interactive telepresent public video installation designed for site-specific impromptu performance and user interaction.

Between Guangzhou Light Festival China and Northbridge Piazza Perth Australia, 13 to 29 November 2015

Paul Sermon & Charlotte Gould

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**Professor Paul Sermon**

School of Art, Design and Media  
University of Brighton  
Grand Parade  
Brighton  
BN2 0JY  
United Kingdom

Email: p.sermon@brighton.ac.uk  
Mobile: +44 (0)7753 167726  
http://www.paulsermon.org

**Dr Charlotte Gould**

School of Art, Design and Media  
University of Brighton  
Grand Parade  
Brighton  
BN2 0JY  
United Kingdom

Email: c.gould@brighton.ac.uk  
Mobile: +44 (0)7525 011167  
http://www.charlottegould.org
Previous Project: OCCUPY THE SCREEN Berlin-Riga 2014

Using a tried and tested telematic concept and technique developed by Paul Sermon, the installation takes live oblique camera shots from above the screens of two separate audience groups in Berlin and Riga, both located on large 40m² blue ground sheets, which then combines them on screen via a chroma-key video switcher in a single composited image. As the merged audiences start to explore this collaborative, shared telepresent space they discover the ground beneath them, as it appears on screen as a digital backdrop, locates them in a variety of surprising and intriguing anamorphic environments. These backgrounds directly reference their social and cultural setting, containing converged scenes of Riga and Berlin in a 3D ludic game world.

This project builds on the practice-based research and development of a former installation Picnic on the Screen originally developed for the BBC Public Video Screen at the Glastonbury Festival of Performing Arts. In this new project Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould have carefully considered the technical and conceptual aspect of the former work, to develop and propose an original site-specific work for the Connecting Cities event URBAN REFLECTIONS, linking audiences in Berlin and Riga. This new installation pushes the playful, social and public engagement aspects of the work into new cultural and political realms in an attempt to ‘reclaim the urban screens’ through developments in ludic interaction and HD videoconferencing. Inspired in part by 3D street art and computer games, the motivation behind this proposal also comes from the historical films of Lumière contemporaries, Mitchell and Kenyon, whose films of public crowds in the 1900’s present a striking similarity to the way audiences react and respond in Sermon and Gould’s telematic urban screen installations. These pioneering fairground screenings of audiences filmed earlier the same day possess all the traits, albeit the latency in processing, of live telepresent interaction, whereby the audience play directly to the camera and occupy this new public space by performing to themselves and others when screened later.

Following Mitchell and Kenyon’s example our intension is to provide the audience participants with the opportunity to direct and change the outcomes of this installation through an open system of interaction. These unique transitory outcomes will rely entirely on the roles and performances the public participants bring to these urban screens and the experiences they choose to live out. Contextualized by their urban and commercial environments and recontextualized by a diverse array of interactive backdrops, our aim is to allow these public audiences the opportunity and agency to reclaim these urban screens. This fluxus happening will include the widest range of urban participation possible, ranging from buskers playing, singing, shouting and dancing to people out shopping, walking, chatting, waiting, watching or meeting.

 Occupy the Screen, premiered at Connecting Cities Berlin and Capital of Culture Riga, December 2014

• Project website: http://www.paulsermon.org/occupy/
• Project Documentary video: https://vimeo.com/paulsermon/occupy-the-screen
• Connecting Cities: http://www.connectingcities.net/project/occupy-screen
Previous Project: PICNIC ON THE SCREEN Glastonbury Festival 2009

Picnic on the Screen was commissioned through the Arts Council England Cultural Olympiad programme, with the intention to establish a creative and sustainable use of urban video screens as a legacy of its investment and infrastructure beyond 2012. By reflecting on the playful public intervention of Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz’s satellite artwork Hole-in-Space from 1980, Picnic on the Screen directly responds to the particular public encounter at festival events. This unique project combined established telematic arts practice with an interactive augmented-reality interface developed specifically for the installation, providing the telepresent participants with the ability to discover and control animation sequences on screen in front of them.

This collaborative partnership resulted in an interactive ludic interface that was first developed for the BBC Village Screen (public urban video screen) at the Glastonbury Festival in 2009. This work explored the creative potential of the Glastonbury audience as performers that have the capacity to create improvised narrative sequence through urban screens as a communications portal. Through the augmentation of the virtual and the real, users could explore alternative telepresent spaces and develop unique playful narrative events. Picnic on the Screen explored social play and the way fun and enjoyment interact with and enhance new media content and technologies, as a means of reclaiming the urban landscape through public screens.

Picnic on the Screen was a practice-based telematics research project situated in the interactive media arts discourse. This specifically concerned issues around the artistic use of large format public video screens through the urban screens discourse led by Scott McQuire and Mirjam Struppek et al, with its practical origins in public satellite artworks and performances by Nam June Paik, which is further discussed by media archaeologist Professor Erkki Huhtamo.

Following its success at the Glastonbury Festival 2009, Picnic on the Screen was invited to link public audiences between the Bluecoat Gallery Liverpool and the University of Shanghai, for the first time via a telematic videoconference connection, as part of Liverpool Biennial 2010. Between the Lowry Salford and the University of Nottingham Ningbo China for the Digital Resources in the Humanities and Arts Conference in September 2011, and for the official opening of MediaCityUK Salford in November 2011.

Picnic on the Screen, premiered at the BBC Village Screen at the Glastonbury Festival 2009

- MediaCityUK Documentary Video: [http://vimeo.com/paulsermon/believe](http://vimeo.com/paulsermon/believe)
- Glastonbury Project Web Site: [http://www.paulsermon.org/picnic](http://www.paulsermon.org/picnic)
- Bluecoat Liverpool Project Web Site: [http://www.paulsermon.org/urbanpicnic](http://www.paulsermon.org/urbanpicnic)
- Shanghai Project Web Site: [http://www.paulsermon.org/shangpool](http://www.paulsermon.org/shangpool)
EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Guangzhou Location:

Basic screen requirements provided by hosting venue...
1 x Large format public urban video screen
1 x Stereo audio PA system
1 x Secure room to locate all installation equipment connected to screen and camera

Additional equipment provided by hosting venue...
- 10-100 mbps Internet Connection (static public IP, wired - not Wi-Fi)
- 1 x 18” HD LCD Screen with HDMI or DVI input
- 4 x 4Bank/DMX 4ft KinoFlo Light and stand
- Rubber cable covers for all lighting power cables around blue/green screen floor

Material purchased for construction on site...
- Raised wooden floor structure 8 x 8 Metre Square (see construction diagram)
- Primer paints
- 6 x ROSCO Chroma Key Green paint 3.79 Litres (5711)
- 3 x ROSCO Chroma Key Green duct tape

Equipment provided by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould...
- 1 x Panasonic AW-HS50 Video Mixer chroma-keyer
- 1 x LifeSize Express 220 HD Video Conference System
- 1 x HD Sony video camera
- 1 x Blackmagic HDMI to SDI
- 1 x Atlona AT-HD560
- 2 x HDMI splitter
- 1 x Wall mount/bracket for camera
- Cables: HDMI, SDI, DVI

Perth Location:

Basic screen requirements provided by hosting venue...
1 x Large format public urban video screen
1 x Stereo audio PA system
1 x Secure room to locate all installation equipment connected to screen and camera

Additional equipment provided by hosting venue...
- 10-100 mbps Internet Connection (static public IP, wired - not Wi-Fi)
- 1 x 18” HD LCD Screen with HDMI or DVI input
- 1 x Mac Computer with HDMI output and Thunderbolt input, current models MacBook Pro, Mac mini or Mac Pro with screen
- 1 x LifeSize Express 220 HD Video Conference System
- 1 x Blackmagic ATEM 2 ME Video Mixer chroma-keyer
- 4 x 4Bank/DMX 4ft KinoFlo Light and stand
- Rubber cable covers for all lighting power cables around blue/green screen floor

Material purchased for construction on site...
- Raised wooden floor structure 8 x 8 Metre Square (see construction diagram)
- Primer paints
- 6 x ROSCO Chroma Key Blue paint 3.79 Litres (5710)
- 3 x ROSCO Chroma Key Blue duct tape

Equipment provided by Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould...
1 x HD Sony video camera
1 x Blackmagic HDMI to SDI
1 x Blackmagic SDI to HDMI
1 x Blackmagic Ultra Recorder
1 x Atlona AT-HD560
2 x HDMI splitter
1 x Wall mount/bracket for camera
1 x Blackmagic Intensity video capture device
- Cables: HDMI, SDI, DVI
WOODEN FLOOR CONSTRUCTION

MDF panels mounted on top of wood lattice frame structure to provide stability for raised floor area. Primed and painted chroma key blue/green.

INSTALLATION SET UP IN GUANGZHOU

Camera attached to the side screen

Location of 8 x 8 metre chroma-key blue floor

1080 HD image to be displayed in this format

Cabin to be moved away or back
VIDEO CHROMA-KEYING SEQUENCE

FOREGROUND		MIDGROUND		BACKGROUND

OCCUPY THE SCREEN DIGITAL BACKDROP
BIOGRAPHIES

Paul Sermon - Professor of Visual Communication
School of Art, Design and Media, University of Brighton, UK

Email: p.sermon@brighton.ac.uk
Artists Web Site: http://www.paulsermon.org

Paul Sermon joined the College of Arts and Humanities as Professor of Visual Communication in the School of Art, Design and Media on September 1st 2013. Paul was previously Professor of Creative Technology at the University of Salford and has worked for over twenty years as an active academic researcher and creative practitioner, primarily in the field of interactive media arts. Having worked under the visionary cybernetic artist Professor Roy Ascott as an undergraduate Fine Art student at the Newport School of Fine Art in the mid 1980s, Paul Sermon went on to establish himself as a leading pioneer of interactive media art, winning the prestigious Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Linz, Austria, shortly after completing his MFA at the University of Reading in 1991. An accolade that then took Paul to Finland in the early 1990’s to develop one of the most ground breaking telepresent video installations of his career Telematic Dreaming in 1992. This early success then led to an invitation by Professor Jeffrey Shaw to undertake a residency at the internationally renowned ZKM Centre for Art & Media in Karlsruhe in Germany, where he produced his second ISDN videoconference installation Telematic Vision in 1993. Whilst living in Berlin from 1993 to 1999 Paul Sermon then took up the post of Dozent at the HGB Academy of Visual Arts in the former East German city of Leipzig and from here he went on to develop a portfolio of interactive telepresent video installations and telematic encounters that he continues to exhibit internationally. Further accolades during this period included the 1994 IMF Sparkey Award from the Interactive Media Festival in Los Angeles as well as interactive art commissions for the Millennium Dome Play Zone. Paul moved back to England in 2000 to take up a post at the University of Salford as well as becoming an honorary Professor for the MA Media Art Histories at the Danube University Krems, Austria and continues to visit and contribute to this programme once a semester.

Dr Charlotte Gould - Principle Lecturer
School of Art, Design and Media, University of Brighton, UK

Email: c.gould@brighton.ac.uk
Artists Web Site: http://www.charlottegould.org

Charlotte Gould has developed a number of web-based interactive environments that explore user identity and the notion of a floating narrative. She is currently developing location specific work in which the user becomes an active participant in the narrative and explores methods of user driven content. The work seeks to identify a counter culture, and provide an alternative aesthetic that questions the predominance of digital realism and explores the conventions and politics of embodiment in multi-user virtual environments. Through her work she encourages creative play and looks at the way the audience can experience the urban space through telepresent technology. She has undertaken illustration and animation commissions from a range of companies including the BBC and Manchester Art Gallery. Charlotte received her PhD in Interactive Works for Urban Screens: A practice based study into building new ways of engaging communities in urban space through interactive artworks for urban screens from the School of Arts & Media, University of Salford in 2015. She graduated with a BA Honours Degree in Graphic Design from Chelsea School of Art in 1990 and was awarded an MA in Creative Technology from the University of Salford (2003). Charlotte Gould is Academic Programme Leader for Visual Communication in the School of Art, Design and Media at the University of Brighton.