

Picnic on the Screen

An interactive public video installation

For the BBC Village Screen at the Glastonbury Festival 2009

By Charlotte Gould & Paul Sermon, May 2009



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Creative Technology Team

This artistic proposal, for 'Village Screen' Glastonbury 2009 has been developed by Manchester based artists and academics Charlotte Gould and Paul Sermon, who are both full members of the Creative Technology Research Group at the University of Salford. This Creative Technology duo has collaborated on numerous public video installations and brings together twenty years of experience in interactive media arts practice, research and teaching.

Conceptual Project Statement

This particular proposal combines current interactive ludic interface work that Charlotte Gould has been developing, with Paul Sermon's long established practice and research into telepresent environments. Their collaborative partnership has resulted in an interactive ludic interface that has been site-specifically developed for the 'Village Screen' at Glastonbury 2009. This work explores the creative potential of the Glastonbury audience as participants or performers that have the capacity to create playful improvised narrative sequences through the 'Village Screen' as a communications portal.

'Picnic on the Screen' is designed for large format public video screens and explores their creative and cultural potential. It offers an opportunity to be involved in the development of innovative ways of engaging with the public in a festival context using digital technology. Through the augmentation of the virtual and the real, users can explore alternative telepresent spaces and develop unique playful narrative events. This is a mode of performer interaction that is based on tried and tested telepresent installation techniques developed by the artists since the early 1990s. 'Picnic on the Screen' explores social play and the way fun and enjoyment interact with and enhance new media content and technologies through its design, creative development, everyday uses and discursive articulations. This is an area of research that has had little exploration; the interactions between technological developments and the pleasures described as 'fun', are few and far between. There are a number of permutations we could develop during the festival week, concerning placement of surfaces, objects, the location of public interaction and new digital content through imaginary enchanted narratives and characters, which are all possible under the theme and title of 'Picnic on the Screen'.

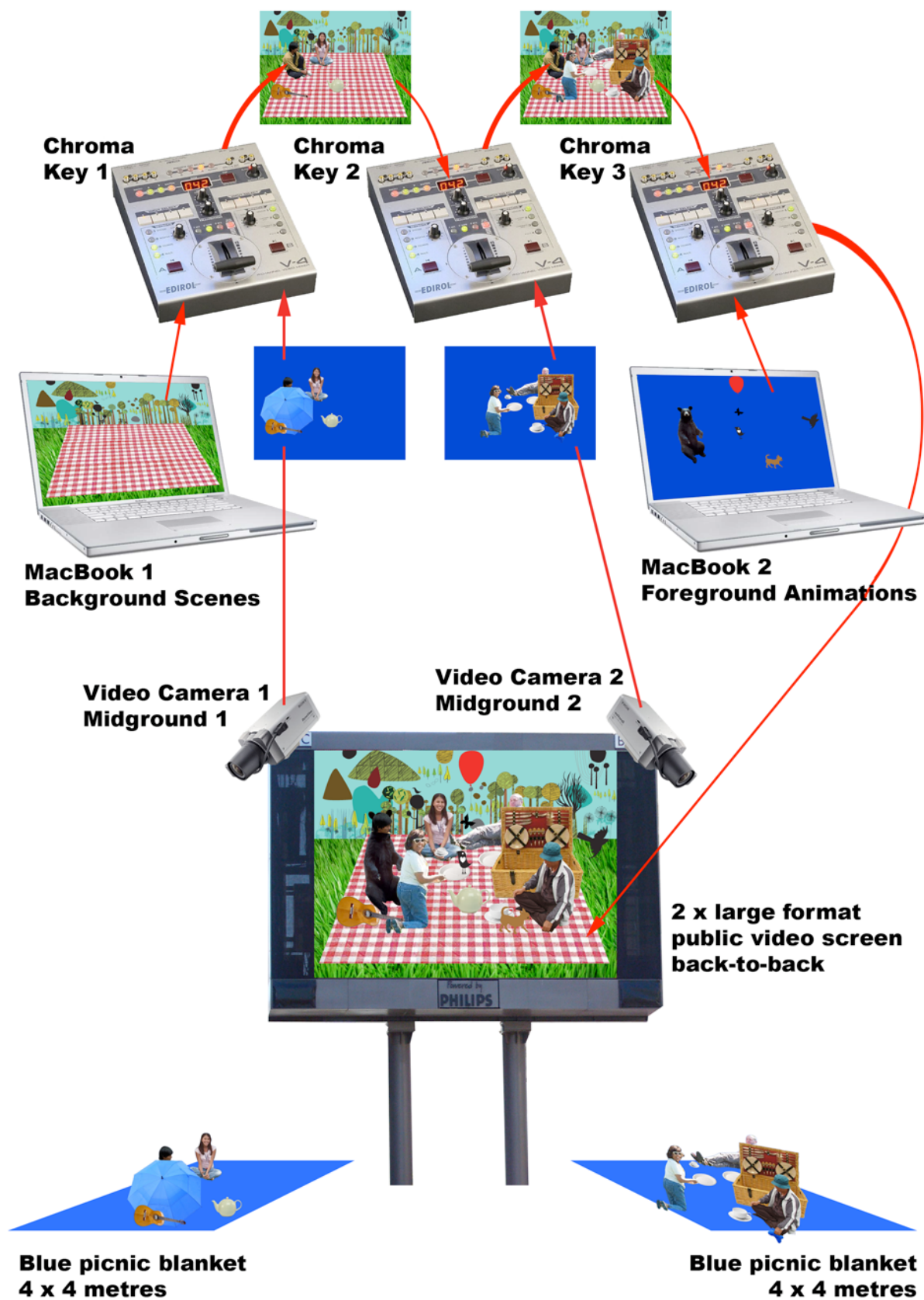
Technical Project Description

The installation consists of two blue picnic blankets in front of the Village Screen. The audience groups sitting on these blankets are captured on camera and brought together through a system of live chroma-keying, and placed on a computer illustrated background, and behind computer animated elements that are triggered and controlled by the audience through a unique motion tracking interface, integrated within the installation system. The two blankets will be placed as far apart as possible not to disclose the location of the two groups and encourage the audience to explore the telepresent communication. When the audience participant discovers their image on screen they immediately enter the telepresent space; watching a live image of themselves, sat on picnic rug next to another person. They soon start to explore the space and understand they are now in complete physical control of a telepresent body that can interact with another person in an illustrated enchanted picnic scene, complete with animated characters that respond to their movement and actions. The initial installation would take half a day to install and calibrate, and then a further 30 to 40 minutes to reinstall and configure in the operations tent before allotted performance times throughout the festival.

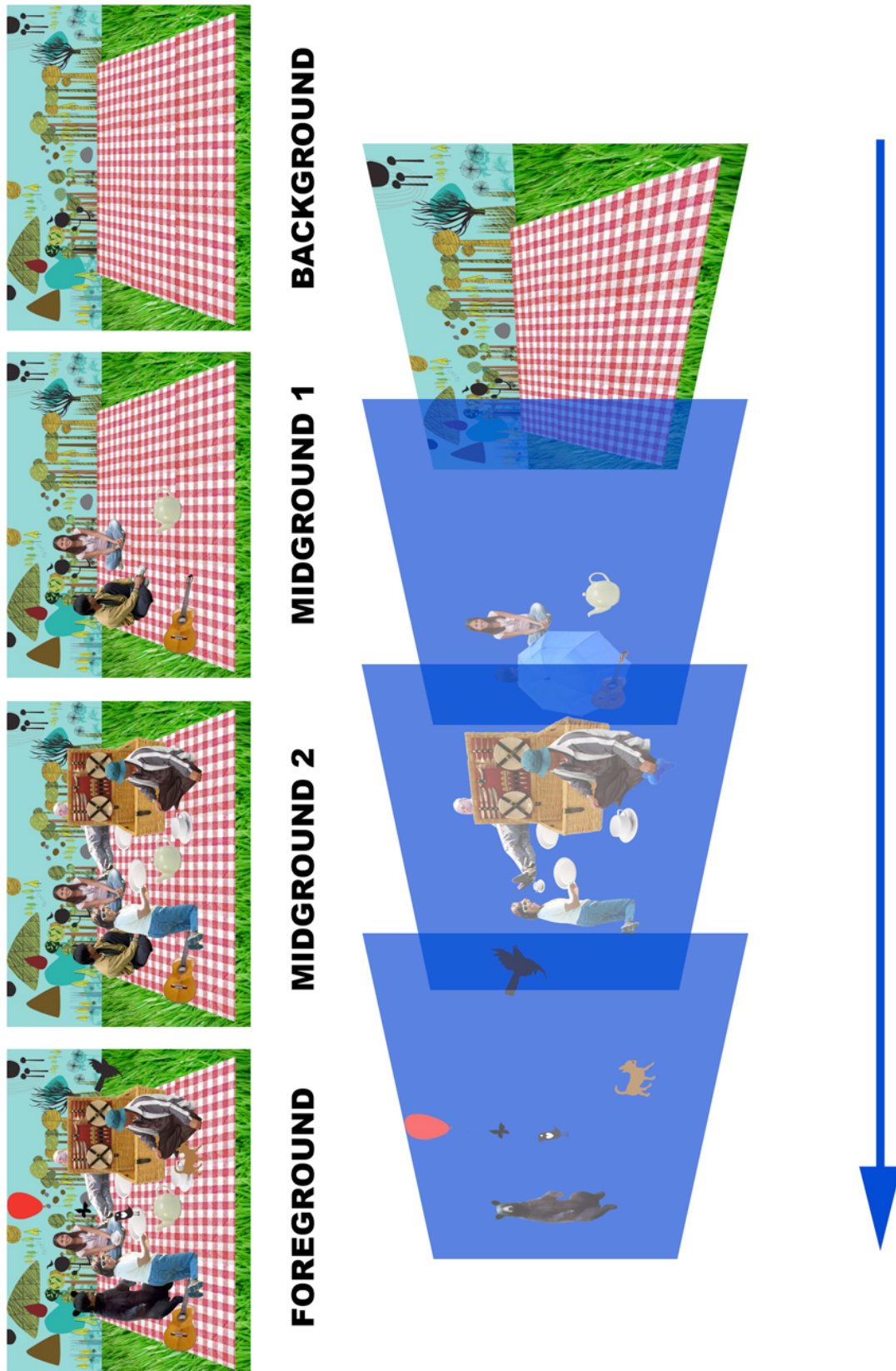
Development of Collaborative Project

Simultaneously to the 'Picnic on the Screen' project, we would be very interested in collaborating, both conceptually and practically, with other participating artists on the development of a combined big screen project, to be premiered on the last day of the festival. We would be interested in further utilising the technical resources we will be bringing with us, and exploring our concepts and techniques of telepresent interaction and ludic narratives in this wider context. As experienced academics we would be particularly interested in creative team building, social networking and collaborative creative practice in order to realise this aspect of the project. From our side this could include the use of our specialist equipment in a blue-screen tent environment as a possible working media lab or performance space. Our engagement with all aspects of the project will include continuous project documentation through on-site video shoots and post-production, website archives, Blogs, Wikis and media streaming.

Video Flow Diagram



Video Chroma Keying Sequence



Installation plan and location



Hardware and Installation Equipment

Video and computer hardware supplied by Sermon & Gould:

- 2 x 3CCD video camera
- 3 x Edirol V4 video mixer
- 2 x 14" preview monitor
- 2 x MacBook Pro laptop computer
- 2 x Video Distribution Amplifier
- Power cables/supplies/outlets, video cables and adaptors

Installation Equipment:

- 1 x Tent for setting up and controlling equipment
- 1 x Table 120 x 75
- 2 x Folding chair
- 2 x Video camera mounting

Installation Materials:

- 2 x Chroma-key blue picnic blanket 5 x 5 metres
- 2 x Chroma-key blue picnic blanket 5 x 5 metres (waterproof version)
- Selection of chroma-key blue cushions and blankets
- Selection of chroma-key blue waterproof blankets and umbrellas

Previous Big Screen Projects and Telepresent Installations



Second Life Ludic Narrative, Moves 09, Liverpool April 2009

<http://creativetechnology.salford.ac.uk/gould/>



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/>



Charlotte Gould - Lecture in Digital Media

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Biography

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. 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 Programme leader of BA Honours Graphic Design at the University of Salford.



Paul Sermon - Professor of Creative Technology

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Biography

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 "Telamatic 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.

