

Final Paper

I. Preface

1.1 Artist Statement (myself as a designer)

With a background in German Language and Literature, I am always interested in the way how people communicate with each other. One of the meaningful questions related to it could be how different factors, both external and internal, involved in this process function together in view of the fact that we are living in a highly-updated world, which is typical of information explosion and exchange. At the same time, all kinds of media have already taken place of our oral language and play the intermediary role of communication. In this case, how could we make different potential ways of communication more intuitive as well as enjoyable with the help of modern technology is the question I am thinking about.

1.2 Analysis of current social context and future of design

It's not an exaggeration to say that context is one of the vital premises, and arguably the first one, we as designers should consider as it shapes the meaning in all communication. In this case, labeling in what kind of epoch we humans are currently living in could be a generic guideline for all kinds of industrial practices. Anthropocene, a recently proposed geologic time period as being human-influenced, is defined based on overwhelming global evidence that both Earth's geology and ecosystems are significantly altered by humans. As the current condition we are living in is considered as unpredictable and unsustainable, pursuing to be self-generative and sustainable could be the goal of future design. As a designer interested in the topic of speculative design, what I am looking for is the way to change physical objects from being static and permanent to living and responsive.

1.3 My personal design manifesto (like design goals and tentative interests in the field of design and technology)

What I have proposed in my design manifesto is that we need to create "memories" for alternative futures in order to unleash a wide range of possibilities into the present and make them conceivable, perceivable and eventually achievable. I am exploring a more experiential way to practice it as well as a more engaging way for my users to experience it. Besides, another focus of my work is lying in the relationship between senses and

cognition. From my point of view, there is a large room for designers to explore in this field as the way how we perceive everything is still relatively monotonous and passive.

II. Problem (observation & research)

2.1 Observation: My personal experience and observation when visiting museums

The word “design” refers to a goal-orientated process which is intended to solve problems or improve situations in a critical as well as creative way.

Designers are also known as groups of talented minds full of inspiration. But good ideas are not something coming from the air but nourished by huge amounts of “inputs”. The way I personally prefer to accumulate my reservoir of ideas is visiting museums.

Museums have long been considered beacons of creative expression within their communities. Although the forms and topics of museums today are enriched to a great extent by virtue of numbers of emerging technologies. The way how people currently visit museums or exhibitions for traditional artworks like oil paintings and sculptures is still relatively conventional and the heuristic influence left on them after visiting is restricted.

Based on my personal experience and observation when visiting museums, there are two major aspects of reasons leading to this issue. The first one is concerned with the physical arrangement of curation. For now, the introductory information will usually be printed in static words on small cards hanging on the wall next to the painting. However, while mostly attracted by the content of painting, most visitors don't have the patience or even chances to read those words and understand it fully when there are groups of people gathering in front of one masterpiece. In this case, we should admit that the use of audio guides relieves this problem to a certain degree.

Another point strikes out in this traditional visiting way is that we are largely depend on our visual senses in this process of experience without the participation of other senses. What if we could also hear the combination of lights and shadows or taste the different patterns and colors? Would the involvement of others senses change the way of our perception and cognition holistically? Indeed, many amazing projects involving the interplay of different senses have been done in recent years in different artistic fields, but traditional museums still appear to be a blank area full of possibilities.

2.2 Research: Conclusions from industrial practices and researches

2.2.1 Adopting technology as a major trend in the museum industry

Over the last few years, museums have become more digital-friendly and more integrated with emerging technologies that enable museums to add new dimensions to what artists are capable of creating as well as foster more interactive experiences by displaying artworks in more innovative ways. According to “The NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition”, the research behind which is jointly conducted by the New Media Consortium (NMC) and Balboa Park Online Collaborative (BPOC), there are several key trends accelerating technology adoption in museums. Not only participation of private companies but also cross-institution collaboration is encouraged to involve in. Guided by the core value of building more engaging and personalized visiting experience, it is not an exaggeration to say that this is a trend that only continues to grow in importance.

2.2.2 Interactive installations in museums

2.3 Design questions (one broad, one specific)

Generally speaking, this paper outlines a project aiming to explore the possibilities of a new way of communication or relationship between people and physical objects by changing the way we perceive them. A more specific design question in the context of museums could be what should be changed if we want to make artworks more accessible for the public and revitalize their aesthetic values with the help of modern technology in today’s life?

III. Solution (research & proposal)

3.1 Objective: What am I exploring and what do I want to solve (this part still needs to be clear)

education + participation

In this project, I am experimenting with...

With the help of Arduino, Processing and Computer Vision, I want to create an interactive installation for traditional artworks in museums in order to build new forms of connections between visitors and artworks and possibly even among visitors. The chief goal is to provide opportunities for visitors to explore those artworks and hopefully have something to output instead of passive reception.

3.2 Practices of communities based on different media and their impacts

After I have finalized my objective, I set out to search for precedents in order to learn about what is going on in the industry. Guided by the instructions from the book “The Craft of Research” I narrowed down my projects’ domains to several specific key words and found some really inspiring examples. In the following chapters, I will introduce some of them and discuss respectively their highlights and impacts.

3.2.1 “Loving Vincent” changing Van Gogh’s oil paintings into a movie

3.2.2 Several selected projects from “YOKE”

3.2.3 Works of Camille Utterback

3.3 Research of my premise

3.4 Iteration of prototype (in 4 stages): several potential ways to implement my concept and their respective strengths and constraints

3.4.1 Stage 1: Pixel

3.4.2 Stage 2: Brush

3.4.3 Stage 3: Distance

3.4.4 Stage 4: Story

IV. Reflection