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### Reading Response: Experimental Abstract Film

One visual-audio work that I saw last year is the *Listening Post* by Mark Hansen and Ben Rubin at the San Jose Museum of Art. The piece consists of an array of small LED screens suspended in a dark room. The displays show words and quotes taken from the internet. The phrases are narrated by an artificial voice as each word shifts on to the displays with a click. Supposedly the piece originally used data mining to gather words from the web and the internal software would sort the gathered data into the words displayed by the piece, however in the work's current state, the datasets are pre-recorded and no longer live. Words seemed to be particularly curated by topic and or certain qualities such as being "I am" statements.

The sound and visual elements in the piece are intertwined in the premise and theme of the work. The audio plays off the notion that the work takes place in a synthetic space (the internet). The synthetic voice that narrates the phrases and the mechanical clicking of the words push the feeling of a cyber space setting. The fact that the voice remained the same across all the phrases and themes narrated reminds me of the sense of anonymity people have on the internet. In my mind when I read things on the internet it is always in a particular voice. Unless I know the user's voice, age, or gender, there is a default voice that I go to when reading online messages. I believe the uniform synthetic voice illustrates this beautifully.

I particularly enjoyed how tactile the clicking was with the words appearing. They were synced up in a satisfying way that gave the work both visual and audio texture. The work incorporated surround sound. When the displays turned on toward the left of the array, you would hear the clicks and voice to the left, same for the right. There were times when the array was activated in a wave across the array causing a pulse of clicking from one side of the room to the other. This was very impactful visually as it made the piece more dynamic and the relationship between the audio and visual components were strengthened.

Though it is not a musical piece, I believe *Listening Post* provides a good example of a work in which its visual and audio components compliment each other and both remain relevant to the topics and themes of the work. The synthetic voice, mechanical clicks and glowing displays create a unified aesthetic.