WORKSHOP WS2A / Interweavings

CONTENT / We are situated within complex interweavings of event; environmental, human, non-human, digital. Our urban spaces are complex relational realms in a constant state of becoming; a thick space of overlapping narratives set in both physical form and mercurial digital form. Ambitions for the evolution of the metaverse, avatars, and the expansion of our lives further into the digital through online worlds, can start to portray a retreat from physical reality. Such an apparent escape to digital realms might draw forth dystopian visions of environmental catastrophes aggravated by further separation from the physical world. As David Attenborough wrote "*No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced*." With the latest research stating one in six species in the UK are at risk of extinction there is little need for argument that action is needed. Might we harness this thicker understanding of space to further our connection to the other creatures with whom we share the planet? Might engaging the interwoven digital layers within the spaces we inhabit enable us to draw other lives further into our realm of daily experience? Might this enable the evolution of a knowing entanglement that acts to enhance all of our futures?

Expanded and augmented realities might enhance our engagement with the world we inhabit, extending our senses and strengthening our understanding. This might offer entry into others' worlds, to hear ultrasonic communication of bat's, to see magnetic fields alongside birds; to begin to see beyond our anthropocentric perception. Our spaces might become able to hold their histories more tightly, with the ghosts of lost occupations drawn back into a digitally augmented being.

Might the digital begin to expand rather than contract the physical? Might it act to enhance embodiment, extending our senses and furthering the limits of our temporal engagement with place? By embracing this thicker understanding of space might we begin to evolve liminal interventions that augment and extend our experience of physical reality? In our workshop we will explore how the design of our architectures and cities might critically engage with these spatial interweavings, to begin to redefine our modes of engagement with our non-human companions through the spaces we dare to imagine.

AIMS / The aim of our workshop is to begin to explore the potential of a thicker understanding of space to further our connection with other creatures. We will begin to explore technologies that move between the physical and the digital to construct speculative concepts for augmented reality projects as potential frameworks of engagement.

METHOD / We will be working within the digital extension of space we will be contemplating as we come together through digital platforms, with our voices echoing around rooms we have never entered. Working in small groups our process will engage emerging AI image generation tools, trialling their use as a critical tool. We will begin with evolving 1 minute films, develop experimental work which will be summarised within story boards leading to speculative proposals for proto architectures that extend our experience to encompass a deeper understanding of our non-human companions.

SCHEDULE / 2-Week Workshop. Weekly 4-hour class arranged with the students:

Introduction / 6th October
Workshop / 13th October: including talks: Interweavings: Sarah Stevens, and AI: Marcus Winter
Final Review / 20th October

EVALUATION / Develop these actions:

- Engage critically with the digital realm that augments our day to day lives.
- Evolve a clear critical position from which to evolve design proposals.
- Explore AI image generation as a critical tool.
- Uncover cultural implications.
- Develop a speculative augmented reality proposal which begins to explore the potential of this new space to extend our experience into non-human worlds.

Bibliography /
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