



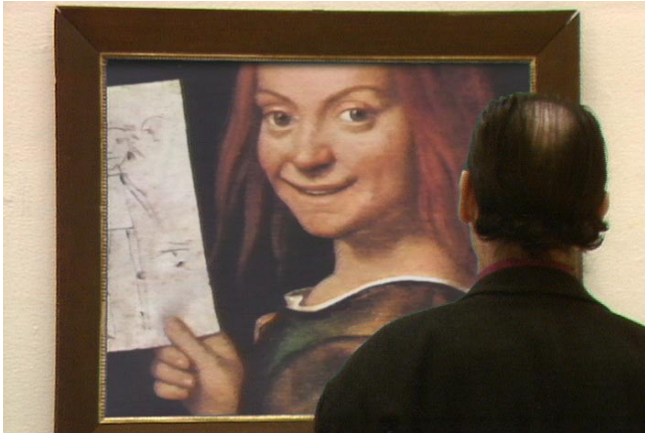
DE-VIEWER, 1991/92

A framed picture is hanging on the wall of a gallery or museum. On closer inspection the visitor notices that the picture changes at the precise spot where he fixes his gaze.

We developed the “De-Viewer” with the provocative intention of encouraging interaction as a prime ingredient of new media. Where it used to be the “Old Master” who left his stamp on the visitor’s consciousness, now it is the visitor himself who is in a position to alter the work of art.

Our motivation for this project was the tendency of people, right up to the early 1990s, to regard the computer primarily as a tool and not as a medium. It was almost as if the painter was simply exchanging his brush for the mouse. This was art with computers, not yet the beginning of computer art.

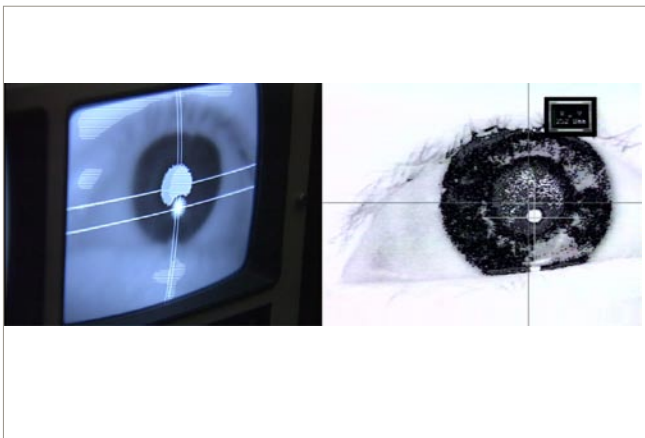
The picture we have used is Francesco Carotto’s “Boy with a child-drawing in his hand” – the art world’s first known depiction of a child’s drawing – an appropriate metaphor for the level of sophistication of computer art at the time.



De-Viewing process I



De-Viewing process II



Eye Tracker



De-Viewing process IV

Technical Setup

A framed rear-projection onto canvas shows the painting. Behind this screen, invisible to the viewer, an eye tracker is installed (camera, PC, video tracking software). The camera is pointing at the viewer's eyes. The camera images are sent to the PC where they are digitised and analysed in real time, the computer locating the centre of the iris and the point where an infrared light reflects from the viewer's eye. With the resulting data it can identify the precise part of the painting the viewer is looking at. These positions are then sent to a graphic workstation where an algorithm distorts the picture exactly at these coordinates. If more than 30 seconds elapse without the picture being viewed it reverts to its original condition.