OpenEndedGro

Marc Downie & Paul Kaiser

LOOPS OPEN SOURCE

This project addresses cultural memory as endangered by the computer age – an age that perhaps offers a solution. We take as our representative artifacts the two works entitled Loops: (1) Merce Cunningham's dance solo for his hands and (2) the digital artwork we derived from that dance.

Oh quickly fading photograph in my more slowly fading hand. – Rainer Maria Rilke

Though Loops the dance and Loops the artwork take completely different physical forms (human body, digital computer), they provoke similar challenges to preservation. Both are always performed live, never quite repeating from one performance to the next. Thus, neither work can be preserved properly in any fixed form, such as film or videotape. And the complexity of both works defies capture by such traditional forms as notation and flowchart.

In this project we intend not only to preserve and document the dance and the digital artwork, but also to create "living wills" for the choreography and the software that would allow their perpetuation – and propagation – far into the future. This entails releasing both the choreography and the code for the artwork as open source.

The project will give students, scholars, and artists the ability to examine both works with an unprecedented level of precision and with a rich awareness of context (for neither artwork exists in the kind of framed isolation traditionally assumed by viewers and curators – a point made in greater detail in CONTEXT + SPECIFICATION.)

CHOREOGRAPHY

Loops represents the very essence of Cunningham as both choreographer and performer; the secrets of his art are perhaps to be found most purely here.

Cunningham's choreography of Loops will be opened up completely. Not only will you be able to watch parallel videos of his performance shot from multiple cameras, but you will also be able to study the digital motion-capture files directly – giving you the unparalleled ability to examine Cunningham's motion from any angle and from any distance, to speed up or slow down playback to any rate, to measure joint angles and their correlations, and even to perform sophisticated statistical analysis of the movement.

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The digital artwork will also be revealed completely. Not only will you be able to watch the runtime version, but also to examine (and even rewrite and repurpose) its underlying code. To enable this, we will release the software as open source. (See context + specification)

By doing so, we also address the practical problems of keeping the work running. After all, we cannot foresee future formats, programs, computers, operating systems, displays, and so on — but must accept that all present equivalents will be obsolete in very short order (we have already encountered several obsolescences in the brief 7-year life of Loops to date; indeed, every time the work is exhibited, its code must be carefully adjusted to accommodate even small updates in commercial display drivers).

Our open source license allows future (and even contemporaneous) programmers to update the work as well as to create their own derivative artworks — they can forge creative reinterpretations of it in a fashion that will go far beyond the present-day practice of "remixes," which operate only on the surface rather than on the structure of the original work. Thus we are truly entrusting the future preservation and perpetuation of Loops to unforseen hands.

ACCESS THE OPEN SOURCE ARTWORK

This page constitutes the main download point for

- the data of Merce Cunningham performing his solo dance for the hands entitled *Loops*.
- the code for the digital artwork entitled *Loops*.

CHOREOGRAPHY

The motion-capture of Merce Cunningham performing *Loops* was recorded in four takes on August 23, 2000.

For each take we provide the 3d data in two file formats: .htr and .fbx. In addition, we provide two videos, in Quicktime format, which document the take from two different angles.

Each take is available as a *.tar.gz* archive, which should be readable on all platforms. Since these archives are sizable downloads, we also provide a much shorter sample set from take 3 so that you can examine the nature of the data beforehand (in .htr, .fbx., and Quicktime formats).

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- TAKE 2 (1 GB)
- TAKE 3 (1.23 GB)
- TAKE 4 (1.1 GB)

CODE

The digital artwork *Loops* is is built on the FIELD OPEN SOURCE PLATFORM.

This is ongoing release of the code for the visual part of this work is available on this site to interested artist/developers. Our FIELD WEBSITE HAS MORE INFORMATION concerning how to obtain, install, compile and run this code.

This code represents the artwork that was show on February 26th, 2008, modified to track changes in the current Field code-base and to run on the latest NVidia 8800 graphics cards on Apple. This is a complex code-base connected to Field, but we're happy to help you install it. CONTACT US.

LICENSES

The choreography for Merce Cunningham's solo dance *Loops* is licensed under a CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION-NONCOMMERCIAL-SHARE ALIKE 3.0 UNITED STATES LICENSE

GPL V3
Free Software

The code for the OpenEnded Group's digital artwork *Loops* is distributed under a GPL LICENSE, VERSION 3