

Abductions: Daniel Potes

Titled Abductions, this Thesis will be the culmination of several years of research in digital and physical interactions, as well as in religious studies. It is my goal to take these seemingly disconnected topics and connect them through analog and digital Interfaces.

Combining an assortment of Installation and User Interface techniques, Abductions will showcase 3 different experiences, all traumatic, in an effort to give agency to those who experience similar events.

By focusing my attention during this first semester on creating 3 different Interactive display techniques, the Memory Mobile, the Digital Séance, and the Augmented Reality Memory Book, I have set myself up with a series of interfaces to be worked through and to add to.

Memory Mobile is an entirely analog panoramic experience meant as an interface to transmit 360-degree memories. Instead of a panoramic video projection, which displays information with audio and video, this installation aims to display information through an assortment of photographic prints and objects.

The Digital Séance works with ephemeral material both in subject and construction. Constructed out of glow in the dark 3d printing pen filament, this interface uses a combination of projection mapped surfaces and sensor input/outputs to mimic perceptual experience. By creating an interface with which a user can interact with the life memories of a family member or person of interest who has passed away, I aim to bridge the spirit and physical realms.

My most recent research project, the Augmented Reality Memory Book works with similar subject matter. A physical Interface, this work is filled with photographs empty of the subject matter, any potential subject cut out and left blank. By making this visual memory only visible through a digital screen via an Augmented Reality Application, I aim to create a visible indication of the separation of the realm of spirits and the realm of the living through the separation of digital and physical.

Abductions will utilize each of these physical/digital interfaces and more to create multiple methods giving agency to victims of three different kinds of Abduction. The aim of this work is to give the audience, individuals attending a beautiful gallery in

a beautiful and expensive city, a taste into the life experiences of the ‘other’.

The aim of Pratt Institute’s Interactive Digital Arts Department is to guide artists to create innovative digital works of art that create agency and share hidden experiences. That is exactly what *Abductions* does.

By using interfaces such as the three above, combined with personal performances, visual catalogues of such experiences, as well as a virtual reality and augmented reality elements, *Abductions* will allow gallery goers to experience multisensory elements associated with the trauma of being abducted.

The first of the experiences that I will use to create *Abductions* are that of the FARC abduction/kidnapping, torture, and often murder of Colombian farmers and young men, an experience that is personal to my family, having lost a significant amount of male relatives to the FARC as well as Colombian Cartels. Often violent and almost always unpunished, these abductions were rarely mentioned in the greater western word, even though this conflict lead to the death of over 220,000 Colombians in 52 years. (
<https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/25/americas/colombia-farc-peace-deal-explainer/index.html>)

The second will be an experience that I find myself familiar with through years of researching UFO cults and New Religions, the experience of being Abducted by Aliens. This often-traumatic experience leads abductees to suffer through years of mental and physical duress, as well as leads to ridicule and potential social death. Often called crazy, victims of Alien Abductions can rarely talk about their experiences either in a public or private setting.

The last experience that will be used is that of an ICE abduction/deportation. As the son of a Colombian citizen, I lived until the age of 16 with fear for my mothers right to live in the United States. It was only after years of effort that my mother was able to finally gain legal Citizenship, and safety from ICE deportation. This is not the case for many Latinx Americans, with 226,000 individuals being deported in 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration/u-s-deportations-down-in-2017-but-immigration-arrests-up-idUSKBN1DZ205>)

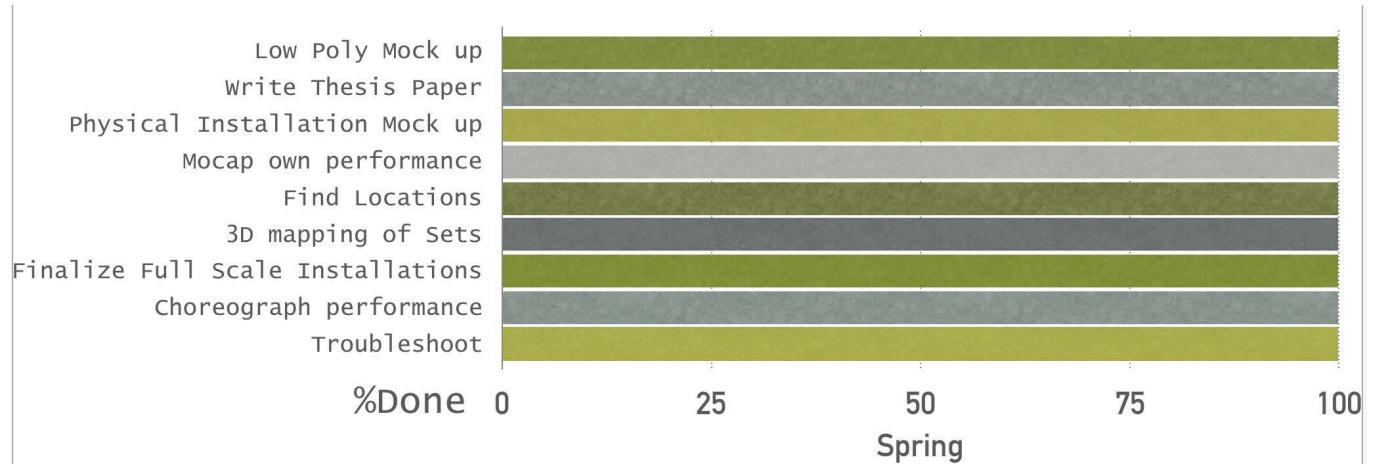
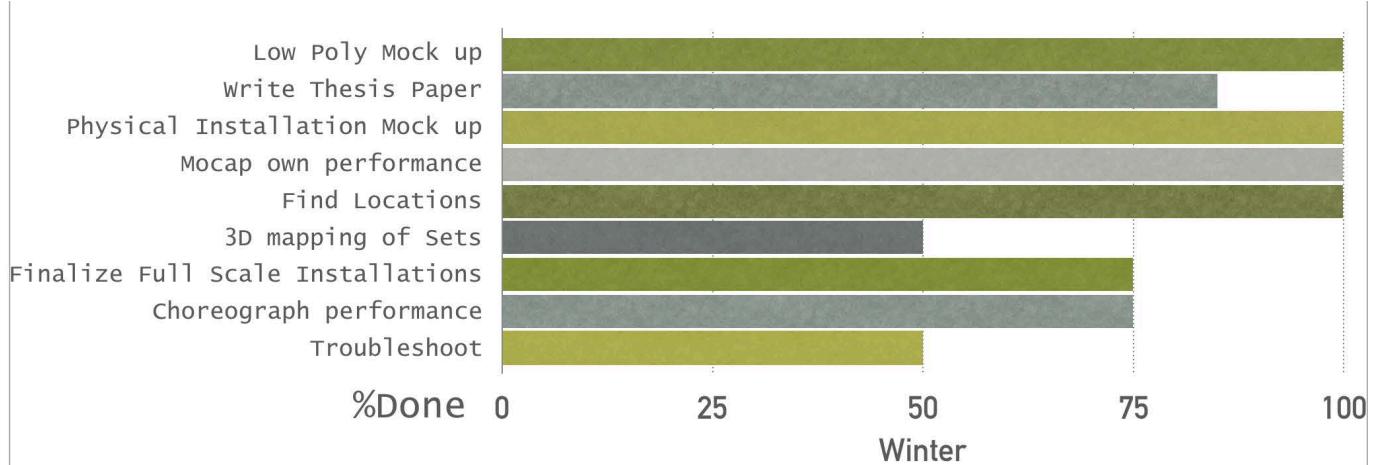
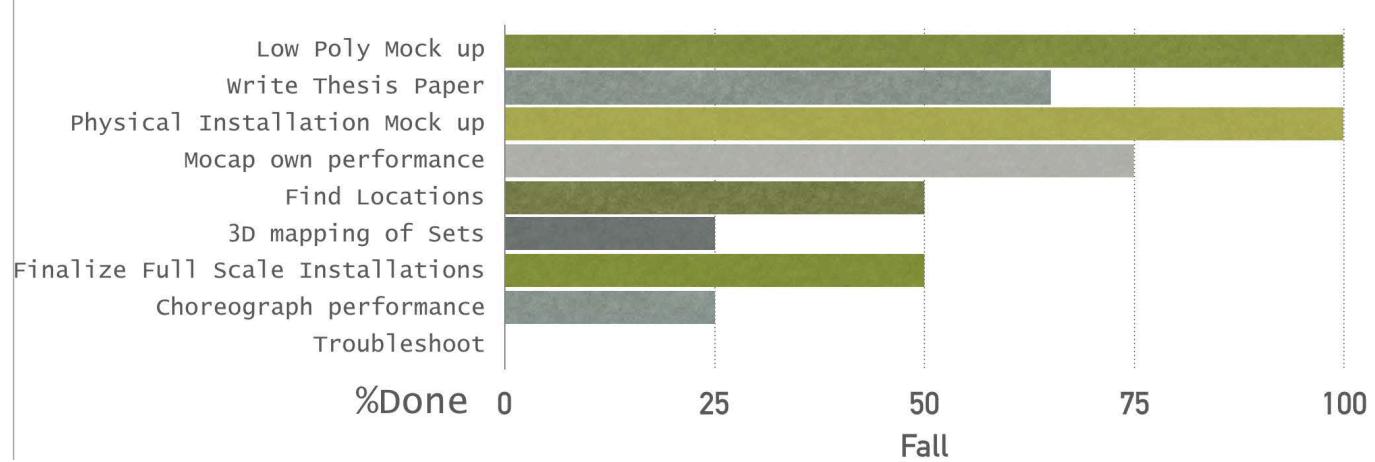
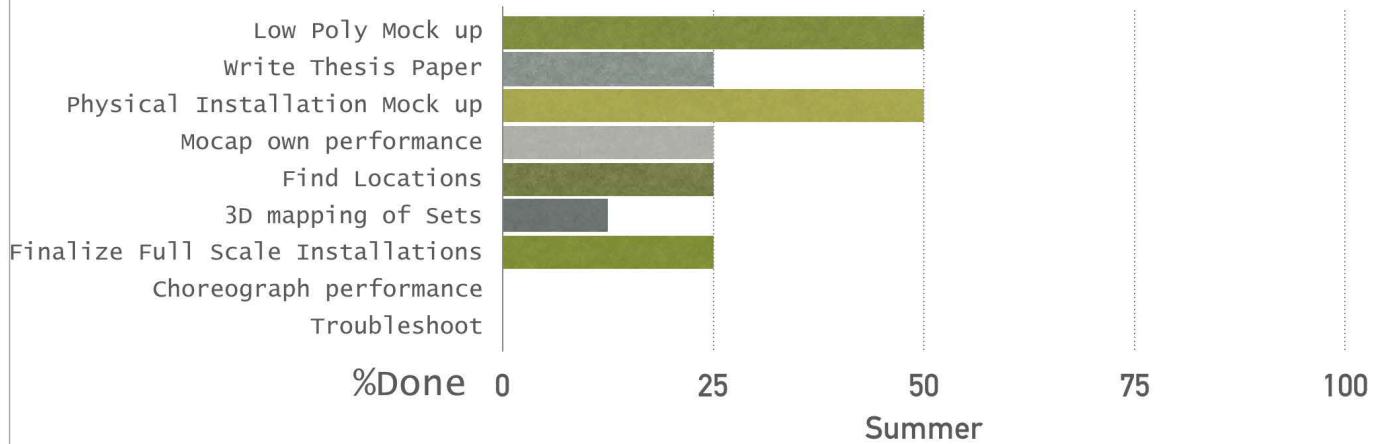
Artist Statement – Daniel Potes

working within the ephemeral confines of memory, life, and death, I use my artistic practice to attempt to bridge the divides between life and death, wakefulness and sleep, recollection and forgetfulness.

I use my theory heavy background to directly influence the systems of agency that my work creates. By utilizing digital and analog interfaces, I have begun to experientially connect religious ritual and art. By referencing the spirit realm through digital interfaces, I aim to be able to showcase traumatic experiences and tell forgotten stories by the means of Interactive Interfaces.

Heavily Influenced by Theorists such as Tara McPherson, bell hooks, and Nicole Fleetwood, my work uses these interfaces to give agency to the voice of the other.

Timeline

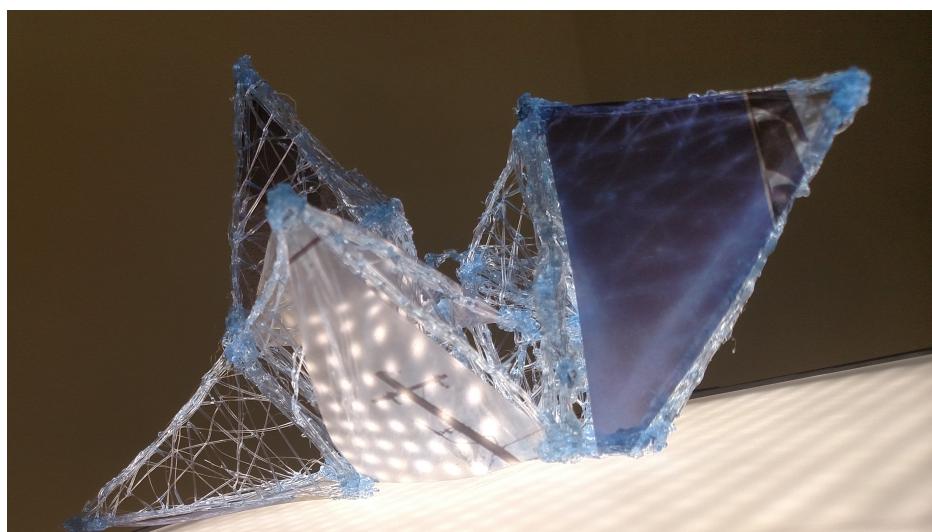




Digital Seance Prototype

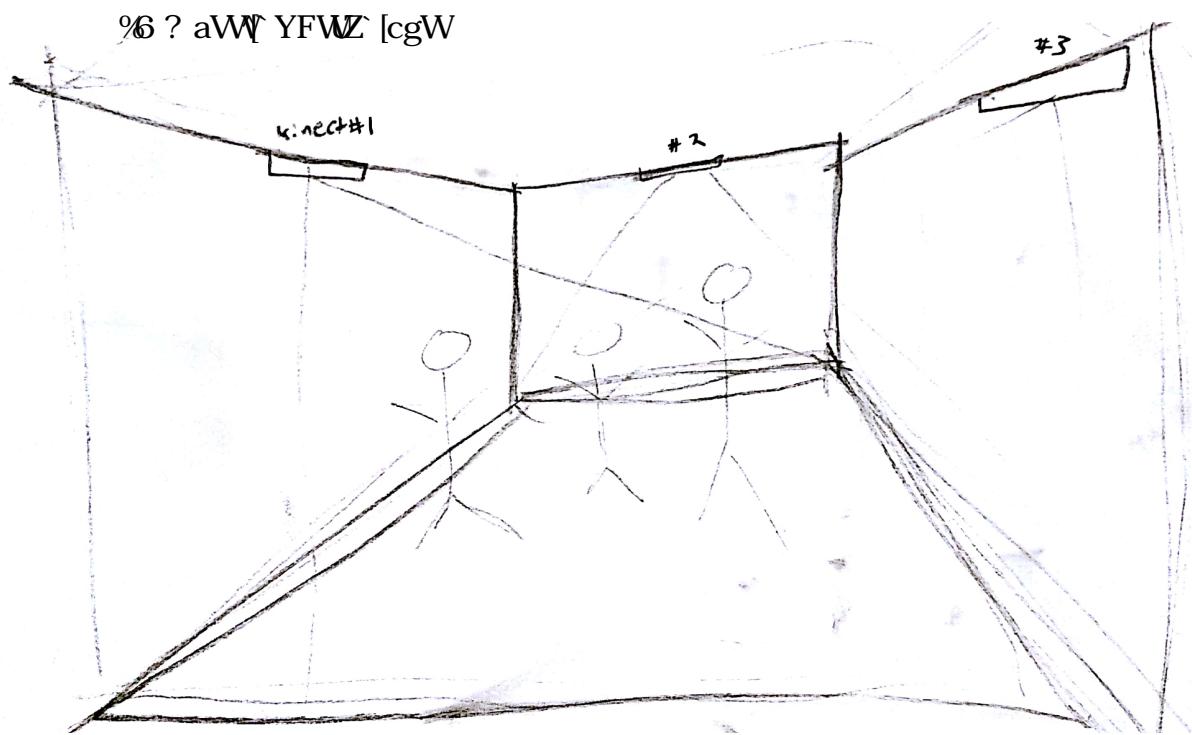
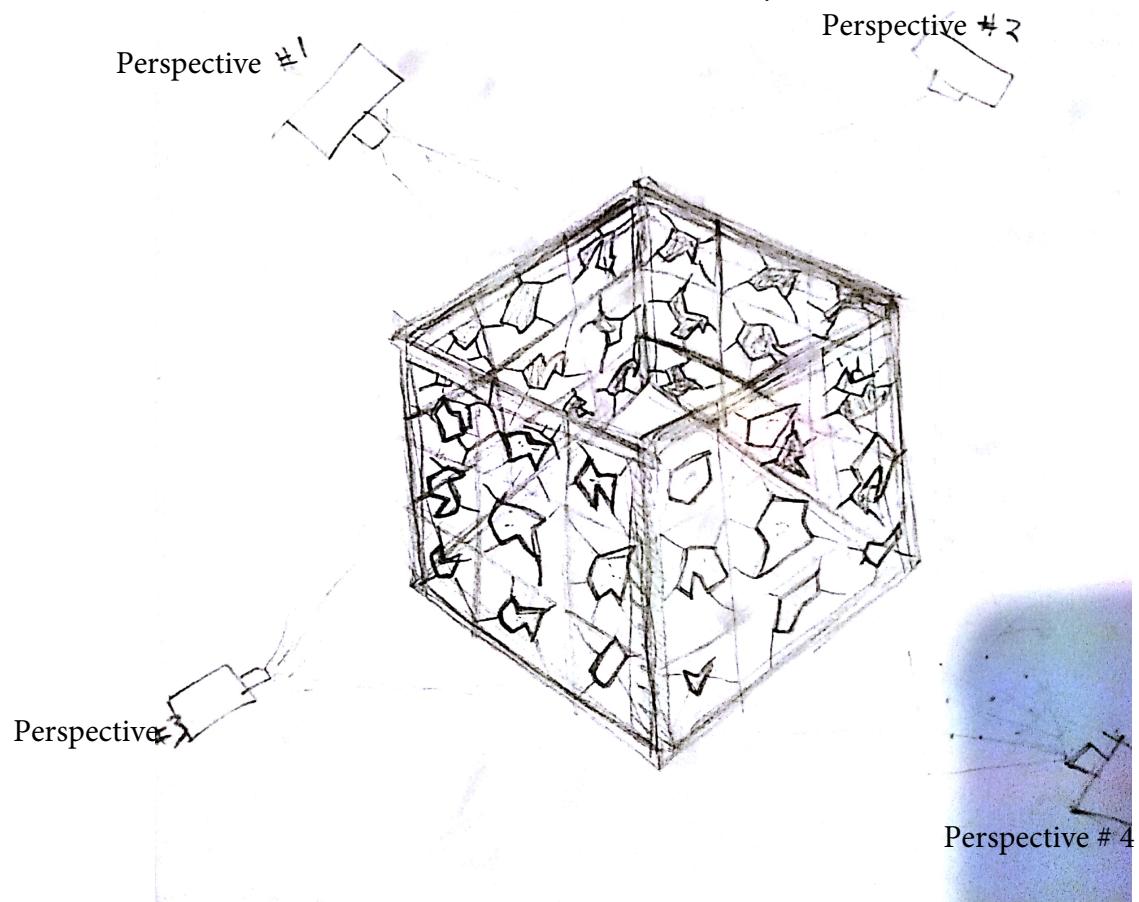


Analog VR Prototype



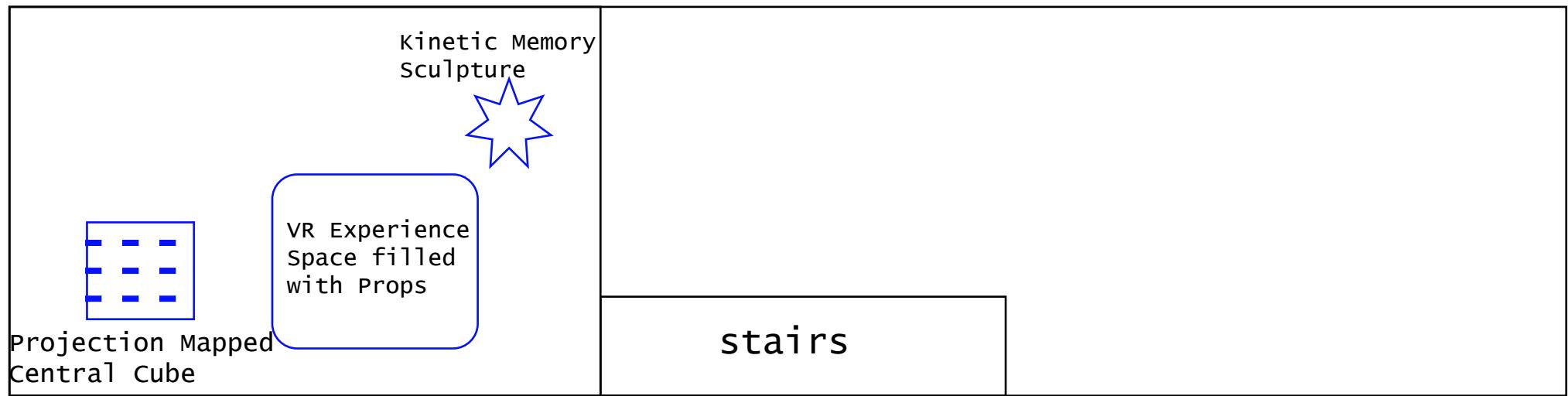
Kinetic Memory Prototype

The Four Uncles Memory Cube



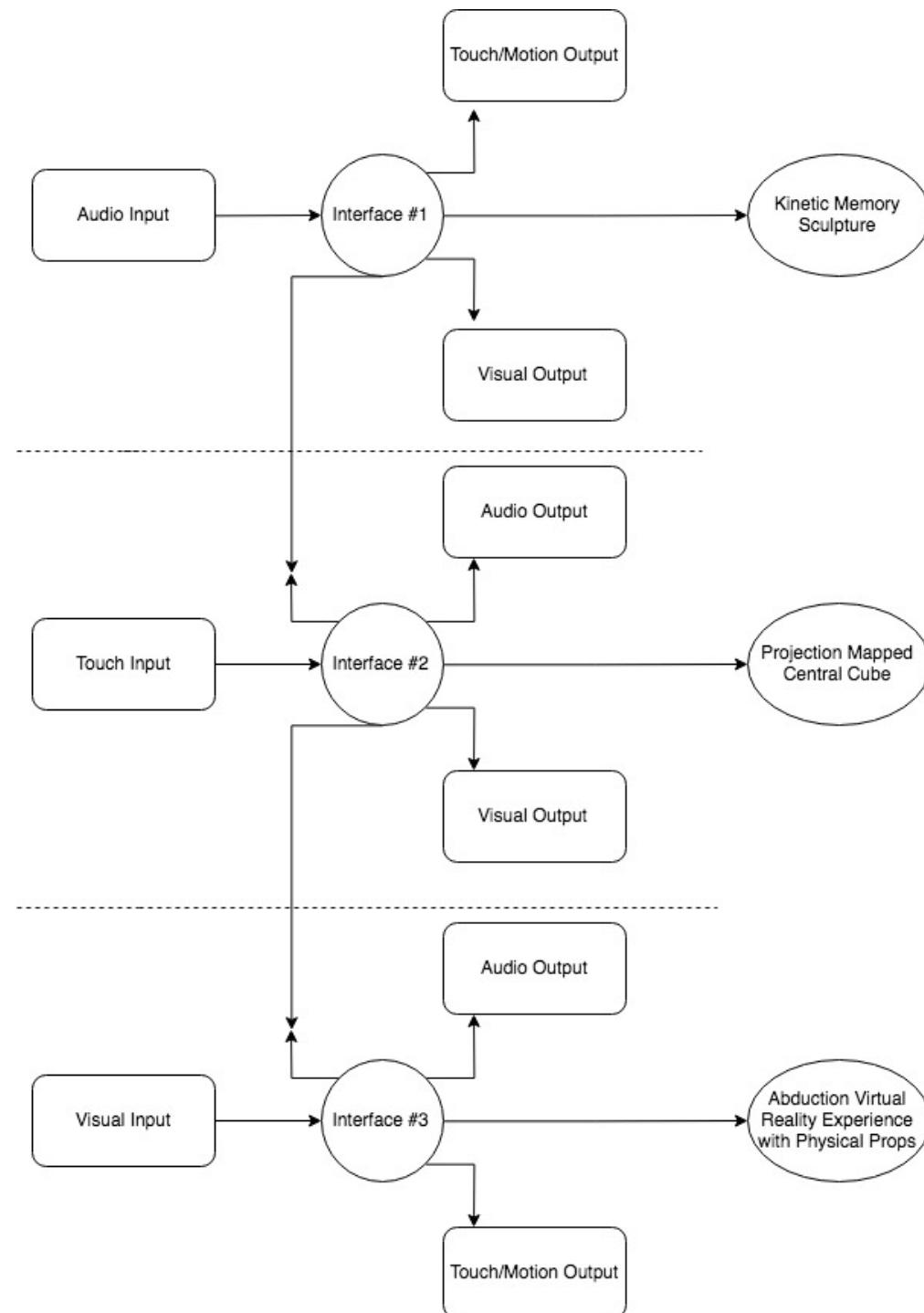
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Installation Floor-Plan

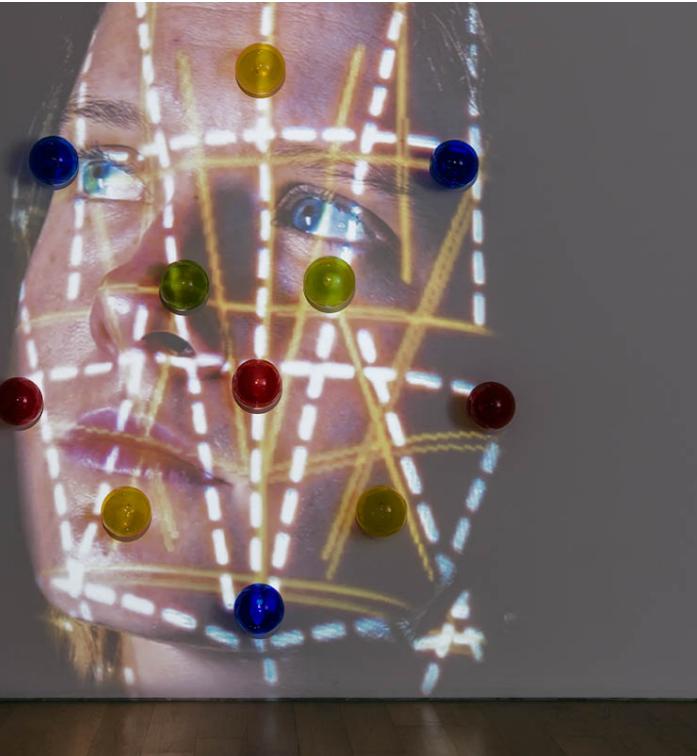


Tentatively placed upstairs in Pablo's Birthday Gallery

Interface Flowchart



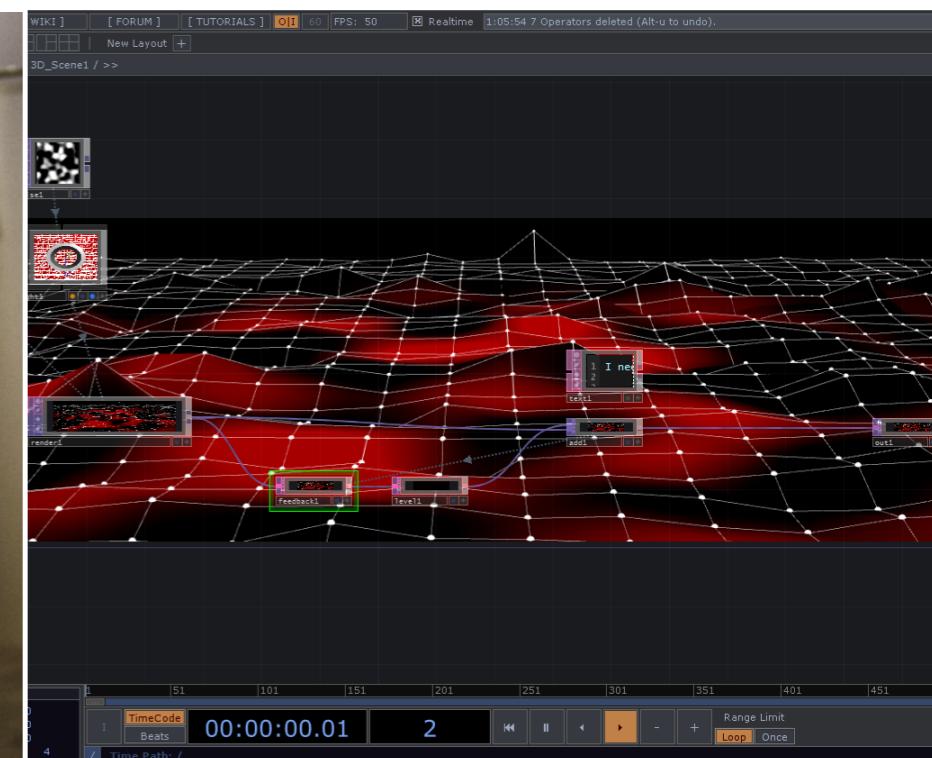
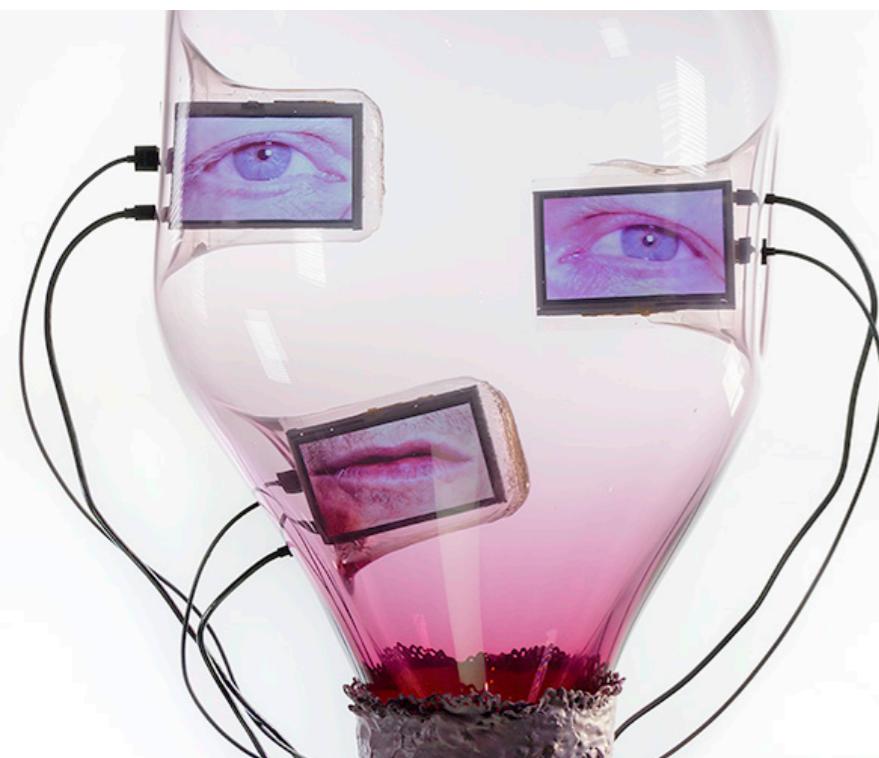
Tony Oersler



Oscar Munoz



Mathew Ragan



Artist Influences

QUALIFICATIONS

Scholastic Qualifications

- Graduated Magna Cum-Laude with a BA in Religious Studies with a focus in Cults and New Religions.
- Vice President of the Collective Consciousness Club.
- Member of the Religious Studies Organization.
- Managing Editor of Arts and Culture magazine for VCU.
- Member of the Virtual Archaeology Scanning Team.
- Current Graduate Student Council member.
- GSEF Grant recipient.

Course Qualifications

- Interactive Digital Installations
- Artist's Book in the Electronic Age
- Media Archaeology - War Media
- Advanced Video Editing
- Graduate Professional Lighting Studio
- Digital Arts Bootcamp
- Shamanism and Witchcraft
- Cults and New Religions
- Excavating Tel Lachish
- The Photo Book
- Documentary Photography
- Digital Film-Making
- 3D Scanning and Printing
- Curating Culture: A history of the art of curation and collection