

Systems for Artistic Creation: Creativity and Engagement

Karl D.D. Willis

University of Tsukuba

Tennodai 1-1-1 Tsukuba, Ibaraki Japan

karl@darcy.co.nz

ABSTRACT

This paper tracks the author's current research and art practice, focused on the production of systems for artistic creation and examining how such systems contribute to an engaging interactive experience.

Author Keywords

Interactivity, creativity, user, authorship, drawing, light, tracing, writing, interactive resolution, *Light Tracer*.

ACM Classification Keywords

J.5 [Computer Applications]: Arts and Humanities: Fine arts.

CURRENT WORK

In 1966, telematic art pioneer Roy Ascott speculated that the role of the interactive artist could be to provide 'a more or less empty receptacle (the canvas) into which the spectator can project his own imaginative world' [1]. Ascott's concept of interactive art as an empty receptacle, places important focus on the spectator as an active participant who shapes the outcomes and responses of interactive art systems significantly.

Light Tracer (See Figure 1) is an interactive drawing system created by the author, which seeks to function in a conceptually similar manner to Ascott's empty receptacle.

In *Light Tracer* the user is situated in front of a screen reflecting their own image, and by manipulating a series of light sources provided, marks can be left onscreen such as drawings, messages and tracing out objects such as your face or hand. *Light Tracer* begins life empty and is subsequently filled with the markings of its users as time progresses. How the participant uses the system is left entirely up to them; user involvement and contribution is not only preferred, but required for the system to function.

RESEARCH FOCUS

While *Light Tracer* inherently questions the surrounding issue of authorship, the research focus of the project is to examine the role of user creativity within interactivity. Questioning how an active authorship role can contribute to a more engaging and successful level of interaction.

By looking at the 'openness' of interactive systems and examining them from the perspective of what the user can create, the aim is to build upon existing research [2, 3, 4, 5], and further contribute the idea of *interactive resolution* as a means to gauge how interactive systems can best promote and propagate further creativity/artistic creation.



Figure 1. Drawing with *Light Tracer*.

BIOGRAPHY

Karl D.D. Willis is a New Zealand born, Tokyo based interaction designer/media artist and currently a research student at the University of Tsukuba, Japan. The *Light Tracer* project has to date featured in a diverse range of events including music festivals, conferences, exhibitions and broadcast television throughout Asia, North America and Europe. In April 2007 *Light Tracer* was awarded the Tokyo Type Directors Club Interactive Design Prize.

REFERENCES

1. Ascott, R. Behaviourist Art and Cybernetic Vision. in Shanken, E. ed. *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1966-67, 109-157.
2. Campbell, J. Delusions of Dialogue: Control and Choice in Interactive Art. *Leonardo*, 33 (2). 133-136.
3. Cornock, S. and Edmonds, E. The Creative Process where the Artist is Amplified or Superseded by the Computer. *Leonardo*, 6. 11-16.
4. Débatty, R. Interview with Douglas Edric Stanley We Make Money Not Art, 2006.
5. Haque, U. and Pangaro, P., *Paskian Environments*. in *Game Set and Match II*, (Delft, The Netherlands, 2006).