ANALOGUE AUDIENCE/DIGITAL INTERFACES

24 November 2015

The 'Analogue Audiences' symposium attempts to explore notions of the interface between publics and art works in an increasingly digitised world.

Research shows that arts and cultural organizations like theatre companies, orchestras, and art museums are using the internet, social media, and mobile apps to draw in and engage audiences, provide deeper context around art, and disseminate their work beyond the stage and the gallery . Digital interfaces have revolutionised the manner in which individuals engage with art works, often times without the viewer actually having been physically present with the art work itself.

Therefore in an age of increasing digital interaction between the artwork and viewer, the symposium explores the notion of human artistic experience in the 21st century. Through the lens of analogue interactions, i.e. the physical interaction of a person and the artwork, the symposium aims to investigate how this may impact the sensation and psychological imprint of an artwork. However simply asking a person how they 'feel' about an artwork is considered by psychologists a hard question to answer. This is due to humans not being able to fully understanding their own intuitive reactions, which often times leads one to construct ad hoc responses that fit a void.

The increasingly digital interaction of artworks raises questions of the 'interface' between art and the human viewer. Theorist Branden Hookway considers the interface not as technology but as a form of relationship with technology. The interface, Hookway proposes, is at once ubiquitous and hidden from view. It is both the bottleneck through which our relationship to technology must pass and a productive encounter embedded within the use of technology. It is a site of contestation—between human and machine, between the material and the social, between the political and the technological—that both defines and elides differences . Hookway argues that the theoretical mechanism of the interface offers a powerful approach to questions of the human relationship to technology.

Hookway views the figure of the subject as both receiver and active producer in processes of subjectification. The interface, he argues, stands in a relation both alien and intimate, vertiginous and orienting to those who cross its threshold.

Accoding to theorist Alexander R. Galloway, Interfaces are back, or perhaps they never left. The familiar Socratic conceit from the Phaedrus, of communication as the process of writing directly on the soul of the other, has returned to centre stage in today's discussions of culture, media and technology .
Recognizing the limits of the media, Galloway charts an alternative course by considering the interface as an autonomous zone of aesthetic activity, guided by its own logic and its own ends: the interface effect. Rather than praising user-friendly interfaces that work well, or castigating those that work poorly, the research considers the unworkable nature of all interfaces, from windows and doors to screens and keyboards.

Programme

12:30pm
Participants and Delegates arrive at RIBA (Wren Room)

1 pm
Welcome Note by Ryan Bishop

1:10pm – Panel I
Hannah Redler (Independent Curator)
Robert Montgomery (Artist & Poet)
Ashley Wong (Sedition Art)
Moderator: Sunil Manghani (WSA)

1:45pm
Audience Q&A

2pm – Panel II
James Davis (Google Cultural Institute)
Robert E. D'Souza (Head, WSA)
Moderator: August Davis (WSA)

2:45pm
Audience Q&A

3pm - Break
Refreshments

3:30pm – Panel III
Chris Dercon (Tate Modern)
Ryan Bishop (WSA)
Moderator: Shwetal A. Patel (WSA)

4:10pm
Audience Q&A

4:30pm
Closing Remarks given by Shwetal A. Patel

4:35pm
Audience Q&A

5pm - End

Participants

Ryan Bishop - Winchester School of Art

Ryan Bishop is Professor of Global Art and Politics at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. His areas of research include critical theory, media/mediation, visual and aural culture, literary texts/ theory, historicity, globalization, technology/ technicity, violence, militarization, technology, the senses, urbanization, aesthetics, and political formations.

James Davis – Google Art Project

James Davis is Program Manager for the Google Cultural Institute, bringing culture to people through technology. He oversees international partnerships, manages special projects and develops educational strategy. Prior to this he curated at Tate in London, building the new user-oriented online collection and delivering award-winning interactive interpretation for the galleries at Tate Britain.

Dr August Davis - Winchester School of Art

Art historian and curator, Dr August Jordan Davis directs The Winchester Gallery at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. Her recent curatorial projects include: The Laboratory of Dissent; CHALK; and co-curating Reading Room: Leaves, Threads, Traces, a dialogue of South Asian and European artists' books. August writes on feminist art and theory, and activist art practices, especially in the work of Martha Rosler. She is co-editing a forthcoming special issue of journal Third Text

Chris Dercon – Tate Modern

Chris Dercon is an art historian, a documentary filmmaker and cultural producer. In April 2011 he was appointed Director of Tate Modern. He was previously Director of Haus der Kunst in Munich, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdamand Witte de With – Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, as well as Program Director of PS1 Museum in New York. He curated and co-curated, amongst others, exhibitions of André Cadere, Dan Graham, Konstantin Grcic, Hans Haacke, Carlo Mollino, Helio Oiticica, Paul Thek, Ai Weiwei and Franz West. He has published, contributed to and edited many catalogues, art publications, lectures and interviews worldwide. His current interest lies particularly with old and new textiles. He has made extensive cultural research and co operations with cultural producers in Brazil as of (1988), North Africa – Levant as of (1992), Japan as of (1993), China as of (1999), India as of (2005), and most recently in West Africa, The Gulf and Saudi Arabia.

Dr Robert D'Souza – Winchester School of Art

Dr Ed D'Souza is Head of Winchester School of Art at the University of Southampton, Director of Programme/Graphics, Art and Media. Ed is a designer, an artist and an academic whose practice brings together both theoretical and contextual thinking about design and art. Much of his internationally published work, exhibitions and contribution as a speaker have centred around economic, political and social change concentrating on identity, location and context. Recent publications include, Outside India: Dialogues and Documents of Social Change, W+K Publishing, 2012, Barcelona Masala: Narratives and Interactions In Cultural Space, Actar, 2013 and the forthcoming publication India's Biennale Effect, Routledge, 2016 after his recent inclusion in the Kochi/Muziris Biennale in India in 2015.

Dr Sunil Manghani - Winchester School of Art

Dr Sunil Manghani is Reader in Critical and Cultural Theory and Director of Doctoral Research at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. He is the author of Image Studies: Theory and Practice (Routledge, 2013); Image Critique & the Fall of the Berlin Wall (Intellect, 2008); editor of the four-volume anthology Images: Critical and Primary Sources (Bloomsbury, 2013); and co-editor of Images: A Reader (Sage, 2006), an anthology of writings on the image from Plato to the present; and Painting: Critical and Primary Sources (Bloomsbury, 2015). He is also co-editor of Farewell to Visual Studies? (Penn State University Press, 2015); board member of Journal of Contemporary Painting and Associate Editor for Theory Culture & Society.

Robert Montgomery - Artist

Robert Montgomery follows a tradition of conceptual art and stands out by bringing a poetic voice to the discourse of text art. Montgomery makes billboard poems, light pieces, fire poems, woodcuts and watercolors. He participated in the Kochi-MuzirisBiennale 2012 and has had solo exhibitions in Europe, the US and in Asia, including major outdoor light installations on the site of the old US Air Force base at Tempelhof in Berlin. He is currently participating in Art Cop 21 parallel to the UN Climate Conference in Paris and in an exhibition at Columbia University in New York. Montgomery has given talks or been a visiting artist at Edinburgh College of Art, Goldsmiths College and The Slade. The first monograph of his work was published by Distanz, Berlin in 2015.

Shwetal Patel - Winchester School of Art

Shwetal A. Patel is pursuing MPhil/PhD research at the Winchester School of Art (University of Southampton). In 2010 Patel was invited by Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu to help create India's first contemporary art biennial, an artist-led initiative spearheaded by the Kochi Biennale Foundation. As a founding member of Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB), Patel took a wide ranging operational role, which included the initial development and planning as well as extensive research and national and international advocacy duties. In 2012, Patel initiated collaboration between Google Art Project and KMB to bring the biennial experience virtually to internet audiences around the world.

Hannah Redler – Independent Curator

Hannah works with international artists and ambitious organisations on projects that bring together art, science, technology, new media and photography. She is currently Open Data Institute Curator in Residence, leading alongside artist Julie Freeman, the contemporary art programme 'Data as Culture'. She is consultant art curator for the Institute of Physics co-curating 'Light and Dark Matters' a series of art and science conversations at Tate Modern with the IOP and Tate programming teams, and is one of 5 guest curators supporting lead curator Lucy Dusgate for 'Right Here Right Now', an exhibition of contemporary art engaged in digital culture, at the Lowry until February 2016. From 2005-2014 Hannah was Head of Science Museum Arts Programme, and between a2011 - 2014 also head of the Science Museum's photography gallery Media Space.

Ashley Wong – Sedition Art

Ashley Wong is Head of Programmes and Operations at Sedition, the leading online platform for artists to distribute work as digital limited editions for screens. At Sedition she oversees the launching and promoting of new artists, and the development of programmes and partnerships. She has worked as a Digital Producer for Sound and Music, UK's organisation for new music and sound. She has previously lived and worked in Hong Kong where she was former Project Manager of Videotage, media art space. In 2010, she co-founded the art / research collective DOXA. She has produced two documentaries, published articles, participated in residencies and presented in conferences internationally. She has an MA in Culture Industry from Goldsmiths' University of London and a BFA in Digital Image/Sound and the Fine Arts from Concordia University, Montreal.