AMORPHOSCAPES

STANZA

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ABSTRACT

Interactive, generative, audio visual, digital paintings and drawings created specifically for the internet. This is interactive art on the internet, incorporating generative sounds and 3D imaging. Amorphoscapes, provide a seductive, multisensory non- linear and interactive experience for the audience to immerse into.

1. INTRODUCTION

Amorphoscapes by Stanza are interactive, generative, audio visual, digital paintings and drawings created specifically for the internet. This is interactive art on the internet, incorporating generative sounds and 3D imaging. Amorphoscapes, provide a seductive, multi-sensory non-linear and interactive experience for the audience to immerse into. Cellular forms replicate, intricate webs evolve, moods and colours change and fuse, sounds and rhythms pulse and change. Amorphoscapes allow the "user" to experience each artwork differently, depending on how they choose to navigate.

As well as providing this non-linearity, some of the pieces change over time, ie they generate. The "user" controls these evolving pieces through movement. The character of the resulting piece is unique to the user. This change in the relationship between the 'user' and the artist changes the perception of the artwork. The user can choose what they experience. At any time the user can make subtle or total change to their Amorphoscape whenever they want to explore further. Or simply watch the piece change itself, in a generative way.

Amorphoscapes are audio visual paintings, and can be installed into 'real' environments, where the movement of people in the room or gallery triggers the interactivity within the work. They could be thought of as drawing and paintings machines, in the future to be projected, onto buildings, on clothes and on cars, and on large plasma screens in your living room.

Most of these works have extensive mouse control. As the user moves, the light and the image / lighting changes. To view them go to the website www.amorphoscapes.com. Make sure you let each work download. They all work online within a browser and as such can be defined as net artworks.

These pieces are all quite small in file size because they are intended to be accessible to everyone on the net. While the original intention of the Amorphoscape series has been for internet - specific exhibition, more complex pieces may be built and adapted for offline use and exhibition purposes.

Amorphoscapes have been reviewed on ITV in the web review, and featured on sonic artsnet for the gallery channel, soundtoys, rhizome and sonify. 'Generator' was featured on the designers network. They were shown at transmediale in Germany, at cynet art in Dresden.

All the works are online and as such are internet specific artworks. All online at www.amorphoscapes.com. They are not downloadables or software but exist within the online environment that is the internet.

2. WORKS IN AMORPHOSCAPES

Works in the series include:

generator.......1999 - 2000

An environment with sounds that can be selected that allow images to be altered. Cellular automata. The cells generate and move when the user makes them. A choice of sounds on the right allows the independent selection of sound to image. This piece was shown on ITV in the web review and featured on sonic arts network for the gallery channel. Also shown on the designers network.

matrixcity.........2000

Two versions. A sort of beautiful industrial drawing environment. Grey landscape mappings of wires that move around. An abstracted space with clunks and squeaky sounds. Controllable by dragging and moving through the space.

landscapes...2000

There are 12 pieces in the series with multiple sounds, all mouse controlled. An ' invisible' menu appears on the left of your screen for navigation, move the mouse under this.

univercity...... "my universe is expanding".. 2000

With generative sound mixer built into the piece, click on the small squares to change the sounds. Just sit back and watch as

the universe get getting bigger. The sounds evolve over time and change pitch.

hybrid.... 2000

Digital painting and drawing installation. It moves when you move. If you go left, they go left. Completely immersive colour environment online. Change the colours and watch them 'bleed' into one another.

traces......2000

Digital painting and drawing installation. You can change the marks and make your own textures. This makes very subtle black and white images based on your movements which build up on the screen. This is a sort of 'drawing machine', online, spewing out fine dots and lines to make digital drawings. There is a generative sound processor built into the system.

biomorphs.... 1997 - 2000

Mutating cells that self generate, with generative sound control. The cells move about replicating, while the soundscape at the top generates itself. Based on drawings of cells and cellular activity these works play with the idea of the cell being a highly adaptable structure whose movements create interesting visual patterns.

soundscraper ...... 1999 -2000

Series of six multi sound environments. Lots of built in sounds and layers.

painter.........2000 -2001

Formal coloured painting environments that move when you move. The colours are all blended together to create an online painterly colour wall that changes (or can be changed by the user) over time. The colours fuse depending on your position on the screen. The idea was to brighten the internet up.

cancer......2001

This small cancer - based online interactive generative cell grew out of discussions with researchers the chairman of Inbiomed, a Cancer Research Company in Spain. The piece replicates cells online, spewing out small images and regurgitating generative sounds. Cells generate and move in parallel then birth new cells and kill off old ones. This piece "cancer" is a generative piece, it just does its own thing. You can choose from a variety of cell - type.

numbers.......2001

Numbers system painting series, all based on sequence 3, 6 and 9 and evolving into a random numbers pattern generator that is position controlled and moves when you move. A labyrinth of lines, tones and numbers. Treat the surface of the screen like a canvas for drawing on.

cellular...."cultura".....2001.

A series of painterly micro cells are manipulated and breed and replicate on top of one another as you move around. Based on the idea of cells as cultures this online installation allows you to play around with different cells colours and evolutions. While you do this sounds generate in real time and reprocess themselves. Cultura is a spatial compositional environment with sounds that evolve that are positioned in the space of the

visual composition. You can explore the audio visual fusion by moving around the environment.

genomix........2001

genomix...genome baby maker - an interactive online installation. It allows you to cross-reference all the patterns on the genome sequence and intermix or breed your own variable, allowing you to look at the new mix of chromosomes in real time; on line. NEXT versions will allow you to keep and print this pattern and to have bedspreads and curtains made in your very own post genetic mix.....mutant..... stills, gallery essay .... and text ..... online.

3. AMORPHOSCAPES: AUDIOVISUAL SYNTHESIS, A NEW KIND OF PAINTING

Amorphoscapes are a new type of image and a new type of painting. A definition could be; "a self contained online image experience". They react to users and are in turn influenced by the users movement. These paintings are generated, they use programming languages, and incorporate manipulated images using software to create them.

These works are an audio-visual synthesis. Its not about sound at the expense of the visual element. My work is about the marriage and synthesis of the audio visual potential exploring the internet as a medium in its own right.

To engage with my online work the user must participate in a number of ways, not only as a passive observer but also as an active 'user'. The user is directly related to the shifting audio visual language that moves only when the user moves and shifts with the works. The choices are made by the user, but clearly the aesthetics are defined by me, the artist. The use of specific types of sounds, colours, patterns and lines are all defined parameters within each work. But in the new online works in my 'Amorphoscapes' series, the user can move these lines and colours in a constantly shifting changing audio visual experience. So now, where once the viewpoint was fixed and static, the parameters are allowed to be changed,

These artworks have become mostly non-linear and multi-layered. The visitor to such an experience is paramount to the understanding and meaning of the artwork. Only by engaging with the work will he understand that he himself essentially determines what he will see. This it could be said has become true of all artwork, but within the interactive works, each user thus creates their own artwork, and more importantly the artwork becomes increasingly co-dependent on the user and their input or interaction.

Amorphoscapes as digital paintings inhabit the worlds of art, music and design. As artworks, they are an extension to the modernist grid; except now the grid is multiplying and shifting. Moving into another dimension of multi user input both from the audio and the visual. I like the idea that these works embrace the art of drawing and painting; in fact they act as autonomous drawing and painting machines.

Each online installation is an experimental attempt to make an interface which is interesting to look at and expressive both

audibly and visually. So the new interactive works are variable, and with my "Amorphoscapes" series, they also allow you to do it online, globally, in real time as internet specific artworks. i.e. this is net art.

It is interesting to set up some limitations for the internet; it helps understand where the net and net art is at the moment. The amorphoscapes are quite small in file size, usually up to 100k sometimes 200k if there are lots of sounds. Its means the user can actively engage with the work, quickly and in real time. Because of this, design plays an important part in the overall aesthetic. Big graphics and large sounds files are avoided, to aid consumption via download, because of bandwidth. The entrance to the gallery is a 56 k modems, so I respect the audience by not putting up large downloads.

So the cube is the gallery, but the internet can also be extended outside the cube into the real space. I recently set up a series of satellite links from my websites, the central city, and some of the Amorphoscapes series. I took my laptop into strange spaces to move the internet into the real world. Certain works were then changing over the net, and inside the corridors of a hotel a huge projected Amorphoscape was being shown. I also used a very small projector and display, and set up small six-inch web artworks in the park and in the street. These new interactive works can be taken off the box and displayed as interactive installations triggered by the movement of people in front of the work. Using the sound based extra, as people approach the work starts making new objects, and cells started replicating. And as they move away the piece stops.

I have also been asked to present these works at galleries. I am developing touch sensitive screens versions of the Amorphoscapes series. Very large plasma screens can engage the user and allow the Amorphoscapes a more subtle engagement that becomes more like an integrated and playful audio visual experience. They can also allow multi user experiences in sound, and visual connectivity. The digital artworks will download to phones, TV and advertising billboards. The new digital art will be embraced both as a background ambience and a way to stimulate the everyday mundane.

They can be changed for daily enjoyment and pleasure as well as to help enhance the environment. In your living room, or business environment, when you walk past them they will move. They can be made to generate and replicate all day. Also when loud people are talking they can be set up to move and evolve and when people sit quietly they could be set up to slow down and stop. The digital paintings amorphoscapes, could be called "visually dynamic systems", I think someone has mentioned that before. These works are aligned as a contribution to re -new the aesthetic of the painterly process. My interactive paintings are similar to real paintings in that they involve space, colours, texture, and light (although in a different way from the physicality of the painting as an art object.). But none the less similar formal valuations can be seen in this work as can be seen in certain colour field painting of the late sixties for example.

4. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

So what's next? 3D multi user environments with generative evolving sounds, the creation of "beautiful paintings on the net", moving in three d, user controlled, fully immersive experiences. These works will be sold in kits from websites, and viewed on large plasma screens inside domestic areas, screens that constantly change. The complications of creating sounds online within small file size packets have also led me to try creating generative sounds. First via lingo within shockwave, and now within super collider, the audio synthesis software. Small files based in sample banks can be called and played in all manner of random and strange ways. My interest here is to use this online via shockwave so I have been trying to get an extra written that will allow generative sounds to be controllable via shockwave. This will allow very small sounds files to be incorporated into the works, l leading to sound-based works where users can change the parameters of the file, and the sound file will keep changing and generating in new and interesting ways. The extension of the music can also be expand to allow the global multi user experience where the composition is an evolving structure that has nodes that can be altered by many people all in real time.

New works are continually added to the series. Over time I plan to edit and rework various areas in the site to reflect the evolving nature of the internet. The beauty of the internet is that nothing is finite here; everything can be changed and re-evaluated. The constant scratching of the surface allowed by increased bandwidth will allow larger use of graphic and larger sounds files and constant reworking of other media but this particular reworking of surface is most relevant to the interactive works where ideas, codes, and whole sites can evolve.

In the future I envisage this work will be used as addition to the advertising and corporate environment, to compliment urban spaces, and for internet locations in urban locations, as interventions; i.e. as satellite projected space to refocus the energies and ideas that situations contain. Developing on from this we might present ideas via a live website in the real world, or in a corridor in a hospital or even as a micro site (by this I mean website on cells that are so small they are unperceivable); websites on our shirts and websites on the bus......or rather digital artworks evolving and spreading upwards outwards and into our lives.

Next we will have multiple users controlling multiple artworks via online networks using wireless technologies.

5. SOUNDTOYS: NEW AUDIOVISUAL EXPERIENCES

As an extension to my own sites which provide a platform for my personal experiments in net art, I have set up an open gallery site, soundtoys.net, which provides space for artists at the fore of the audiovisual field, giving focus to their developing art forms. The site aims to help link up other artists, and to act as a showcase for artwork and artists working in new

media. It is intended as a place for artists to exhibit their digital art projects. Future plans for soundtoys include cd roms, a book, specially commissioned works, themed shows and presenting exhibitions in festivals and galleries worldwide.

The marriage of the visual to the audio is increasingly becoming a central issue in the development of interactive media on the web. The soundtoys.net site is a fusion of the arts and media incorporating a wide range of approaches to the medium of the internet and audio visual practice. The internet has become the leading economic and artistic tool for our age. Words like 'emergence' are used to explain the propulsion of these medias into our daily lives. Convergence is used to fuse the meeting of media onto the paradigm of new technology. Our exhibition series and website is for artists to research the paradigms of audio visual practice. It also functions as a fun site where the new and cutting edge of artistic research is exhibited and can be engaged with as online internet experiences. The site is a growing community of audio visual projects, and artists interviews, links to resources, and texts by contributing writers. Hopefully it is a fun and entertaining site, while also providing valuable information.

Soundtoys and multi-user environments are increasing becoming popular on the web. We are finding commercial ventures using gaming and soundtoys for their advertising and branding. Also soundtoys has seen a number of other sites staring to develop very similar project to ours. We would like to think we were here first; but hey we don't mind. It's good (apparently to have competition and now other people are commissioning audio visual projects. So it's seem soundtoys are an art form, that might well be in its infancy on the net.

So what are soundtoys?

A definition for Soundtoys could be new audio visual experiences, and this includes art, games, generative music, interactive environments, shockwave, etc. Soundtoys explores multimedia experiments and the parameters of our new media world. This is one possible definition. Artists who contribute are also invited to come up with definitions. This is not to pin down what sound toys are, but to expand on the possibilities of this new media .The site looks at the serious issues around interactive arts, audio visual synthesis, generative art, and a history of interactivity. Increasingly a divergent group of artists are exploring, researching and playing within the parameters of soundtoys. From designers to fine artists to musicians all expanding on there own work and merging within the online audio visual domain. The diversity of the internet is reflected in soundtoys site, and the fact that artists are exploring so many technologies means many technologies are explored including shockwave, flash, vrml, java. The soundtoys site offer insights into the diversive and creative nature of the web which is available to today's artists. (see www.soundtoys.net)

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