

Seeing is Believing

Splitting the Animated Space into Left and Right Hemispheres

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Abstract

This paper documents the construction and conception of an installation work titled 'The Dining car'. The piece is the next in a series of dioramic installations that explore concepts around the perception of cinematic space. Developing upon previous work of *The Lobby* (McGrath and Robards), this new series broadens the investigation to examine sensory aspects of vision by using two identical miniature scenes viewed through a stereoscope. Allowing each eye to meander from similarity to difference with choreographed lighting and staging, the viewer will experience degrees of binocular rivalry as they engage the world of the narrative presented.

In our research we aim to examine the relationship that exists between the miniature, viewer and the animated space.

The miniature in cinema art is found most often in animated film and visual effects sequences, it is fundamentally used as a visual device designed to have ambiguous scale and dimension (Higley, 2001) in order to facilitate narrative or service the aesthetic. The work explores the physical space which occupies a volume rather than the pictorial representation of space. In this examination, we take it that the viewer engages with the miniature through binocular vision and stereographic sound, directly aligned to our sensory systems which accommodate the experience of cinematic art.

We seek to dissect the moment of viewing by disrupting what are usually tightly interdependent sensory signals through controlled binocular rivalry and auditory separation. We wanted to create a project that would be a sensory experiment slowing down and bringing into focus our brain actively fusing complex left and right signals from our senses into the idea of the scene laid out before us.

Looking at the work of various media artists and researchers including Nam June Paik, Douglas Gordon, Nicholas Provost, Memo Akten, David Alais and Max Hattler the paper will further investigate experimental approaches to the moving image and its perception.

The work, through experimentation, will test out the voluntary and involuntary modes of seeing that are akin to the very mechanics that make animation possible; that is, the persistence of vision. The most apparent new platform for experiencing animation spaces in three dimensions would be that of virtual reality and head-mounted displays. There would be value in developing the same kind of experiments in this space, in the same way computational artist Memo Akten has done in his work....(*FIGHT! – Memo Akten | Mehmet Selim Akten | The Mega Super Awesome Visuals Company*, n.d.)

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BIO

Andrew Robards

Andrew Robards is an academic, video artist and film director who predominantly works between the digital environment and video installation. Andrew completed his MFA at Sydney College of the Arts in 2014 where he currently lectures in Screenwriting, Directing, Editing, Animation, Digital Effects and Interactive Design. His current practice is concerned with the fluctuating space between the production and consumption of cinematic images.

Matt Gidney

Matt Gidney is Course Director and senior lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney. Holding degrees in engineering, animation and the fine arts. He has over 25 years of professional experience in the animation industry as it grew from analogue traditions into its present digital and hybrid forms. Between graduating from Swinburne film school and before coming to teach at UTS in 2014, Matt worked internationally in leading roles with Lucasfilm, Framestore, The Moving Picture Company, Animal Logic, Double Negative and more on feature films, television series and commercials. Before entering art and film school, his industry experience and research, as an engineer, covered CAD software development, field acoustics, and oil field services (wireline). Today his research is focused upon animation and creative pedagogy. His graduates hold multiple festival and award successes and are highly valued, with many finding international placements.

Jack McGrath

Jack McGrath is a filmmaker, stop-motion animator, director and lecturer with 20 years' experience producing visual content. Jack has a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Sydney and has lectured in film and animation for a decade. His short films are screened internationally, and he is Director of a production company working in animation and video.

Jack is a lecturer in animation in the School of Creative Industries at the University of Newcastle, Australia. His research investigates the liminal zone between traditional stop-motion animation and emerging digital technology. Jack is interested in hybrid animation workflows and merging new technology with traditional animation.