
About

Sanctum is a public art work by James Coupe and Juan Pampin. It uses the persistent flow of people around the Henry Art Gallery as input, extracting narratives from the demographics of passers-by and the patterns of their movement. The flow of people is used as a physical analogue to another type of crowd, the virtual inhabitants of social networks such as Facebook.

As people approach the gallery, they are tracked, analyzed and recorded by video cameras programmed to identify them according to their age and gender. They hear a cacophony of voices telling them stories. As they get closer to the gallery, the voices become clearer, gradually becoming a single voice that matches their age and gender, and telling a story automatically composed from demographically-appropriate Facebook status updates. A grid of 18 large video monitors on the façade of the gallery picks their face out of the crowd, automatically integrating footage of them with a variety of live and pre-recorded footage from around the gallery façade.

Sanctum aims to create a locus of complex and intense social networking activity, reaching out of the gallery to embed the passerby. As unexpected flâneurs, people passing by the Henry are assaulted by a multitude of voices, videos and text, of which, as they approach the façade, they will eventually become the focal point.

By joining the Sanctum Facebook application, participants status updates become content for Sanctum's narrative system. All posts made to Facebook remain anonymous – they are tagged with age and gender, but no other personal data is used. People visiting Sanctum at the Henry Art Gallery, could potentially see their status updates used as parts of the stories that are generated.

Credits

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People Involved: Juán Pampin, James Coupe
Research Type: Creative Work
Status of Research or Work: Completed/published
Related Fields: Algorithmic Processes, Computer Vision, Interactive Media, Site Specific Art, Sound Art

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