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Artist Presentation on Practice

Rose Staff

Transcript to accompany my powerpoint presentation

Intro

Hello Im Rose Staff. I'm from the most easterly point in Australia, near Byron Bay on the North Coast. I lived all across Australia and Ive also spent time overseas where I was based in London for two years traveling on and off between Europe while I was there.

I studied a BA in Fine Arts at Southern Cross University in Lismore and then a BA in Visual Media at Queensland College of the Arts. Im a media artist and motion graphic designer, creating installations and vjing at festivals, events and in galleries. Recently I've been studying my Masters of Design at Monash University in Melbourne

Some examples of my projects

From very early on when I started working with live video I was interested in combining it with physical performance. One of the first projects I did was working with some circus performers in Brisbane where I created a series of animated illustrations in response to the body and movement in space.

How I got interested in this type of work the early days

I was working with a collective of musicians from the Gold Coast in Australia as a graphic designer. They received some funding from the Arts Council to collaborate and make some new music. I did their visual identity and designed the graphics for the album they were making. I also filmed them making a short doco on the nature of collaboration. The collective began to perform at events and it was a natural step for me to start doing live visuals for them.

One aspect of my practice includes creating lighting installations at festivals and events.

[display my showreel]

This is a showreel thats a collection of footage taken from these shows.

Before I left Australia I had a residency at The Family is quite large club in Brisbane. I really spent alot of time doing 8 hour vj sets. It really built up my skills from having to practice for such long hours. Its the place that I say I cut my teeth as a VJ. Since then some of the festivals I've performed at overseas include Sonica, AV playground in Austria, LPM in Italy, Burning Mountain, Switzerland, Elixir UK, Scopition in France, and Glastonbury in the UK



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Technique

I make my video loops in After Effects, Premiere and Cinema 4D. Sometimes I will film things with my camera to get some footage to composite with in After Effects. Other times I just animate inside the software to make some CGI. The tool I use for my VJ sets, live performances and projection mapping installations is Resolume

When I set up my compositions in resolume I'm usually breaking down the layers into

- texture
- colour
- image

My aim is to build up my bank of loops this way to be interchanged into various pattern combinations. I do most of my compositing live with blending modes rather than effects. I want to create an open space for improvisation and continually finding new combinations that work well together

Creative Process

Next I'd like to talk about some projects of mine to give an insight into my creative process

Residency at Polymer Culture Center in Estonia

My time there made me reconsider aspects of my practice such as the idea of what live performance could be. Many of the artists I met there were working with non digital performance art as they had little access to technology and it wasn't economically possible to purchase expensive equipment. Despite these challenges, the artists there still made a lot of contemporary art. They did this by making live performance art where they used the body as the canvas and saw their actions as 'the art object'.

Manuel Vason

During my time overseas I was living in London and I was fortunate to work as an assistant to an Italian photographer Manuel Vason. He specialises in collaborating with performance artists, transferring their actions with the body into a material object via photography / camera. He was very aware of the role that the camera takes in these situations and he didn't use it to simply document the work of live artists. Each piece was developed as a collaborative project in the creation of new work.

The artists that he worked with also developed pieces specifically for the camera so that the only way the audience is able to view the performance is through the mediated space of the photograph. In this way the audience can never see the original performance.

From working with Vason and my exposure to what the Estonian performance artists were making I became very interested in looking at ways to combine performance art using the body with digital video. Until this point, my live VJ performances seemed to be lacking in a lot of depth around

[display video made whilst working for Vason]



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The space between Us

With this project I was interested in exploring the landscape and how we perceive space and location as I was traveling a lot at the time. It was a reflection on my surroundings as the geography of Estonia is very different to that of Australia.

My investigating of the Tallinn landscape began through three approaches

- physical performance of walking through locations in Tallinn
- taking a photograph every day at a set time for three months
- filming the locations I went to with a macro lens and drones to explore scale and distance

Concept development

Through this process I was exploring and questioning my concept of space and how I understand distance.

This concept of space and distance can be effected by time, place, journey and narrative.

It can be the distance between two people, or the physical distance between one destination and the next. As I was translating this experience I was also questioning the role that technology plays in this process. I think that as society changes from technological developments it also impacts on our personal relationships. We have a lot of digital media such as skype, email, facebook to help make us feel like we are closer together and provides many outlets for increased communication. It creates the illusion of closeness despite physical distance. Yet doesn't replace human interaction and intimacy.

Geographic Maps

There is a long tradition of mapping and the landscape with early historical maps were individual works of art before printing allowed them to be mass produced by mechanical means. In recent times the invention of google maps has made the use of printed maps diminish and has become replaced by screen based maps. In this project I am exploring extended ways to use screen based maps to depict the landscape.

Maps are tools of communication which show a point of view or inspire a journey on a particular environment.

Maps select information and 'frame' the space presenting it in scale

They can guide us not only from A to B but provide a unique perspective on the world

Symbols

There is a recurring motif of the triangle in this project which I use as a symbol of a journey through a landscape.

The triangle presents three points on a landscape, where we have been, where we are now, and where we will go in the future. It exposes the concept of real and imagined distance between locations.

Several versions of this work

I have an installation version of this work which is a 40 min 3 channel video installation that loops. I presented it in a solo exhibition where the Estonian Consulate came and opened the show. When she was there she also mentioned that Skype was invented in Estonia



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I have another much more condensed edit of this work which I will show you now
[Show video]

The following are some examples of my installation practice

In the Night Garden

This is a site specific projection mapping show I worked on for White Nights in Melbourne. White Nights is the second largest lighting festival in Australia. We presented this piece on the facade of the state library of Victoria.

The work was based on a medieval poem. It was a different experience for me working with this as the starting point as most of my work in the past had been based around pattern and geometry rather than narrative. There was a team of three of us to make the project come to life. It comprised of a writer who created the script, an artist director who oversaw the project and how the narrative should be translated to the visual, and an animator who made the motion design. My role in this project was as the animator.

There was also a team of people doing the technical production of this work, installing and connecting high powered projectors and the sound installation. In some smaller scale productions you might be expected to do both the artistic production of the visual content and also the technical installation. However in a high profile event like White Nights they were well resourced and could divide the tasks up.

Mapping Festival

One of the highlights of my career so far has been being an artist at the Mapping Festival in Geneva, Switzerland. I had a dual role at this event performing as a VJ and working for the festival while I was there doing the video documentation and editing this into a final showcase. It was held for 2 weeks and features artists from all around the world to come and participate. Its one of the worlds longest running mapping events and is the home to many innovations in this medium. I had huge amounts of specific professional training at this event that really helped me in my career progression and I was very lucky to have the opportunity. So far only three Australians including me have ever gotten to perform at the Mapping Festival, an event which for this community is a total bench mark.

During the summer months in Australia I work at a number of festivals including: Strawberry Fields, Let Them Eat Cake, Rainbow Serpent, Pitch. At some of these events Ive created large lighting installations from using ground projections. This is an example of what they looked like

They came from a series of illustrations that I made around the concept of remediation.

Current Work

My projects over the last three years have included alot of Public Art projection mapping shows. These are some of the ones that I have done in Waterford Ireland, Blackpool England and Greece.

Ive also made a VR animation using alot of particles.