

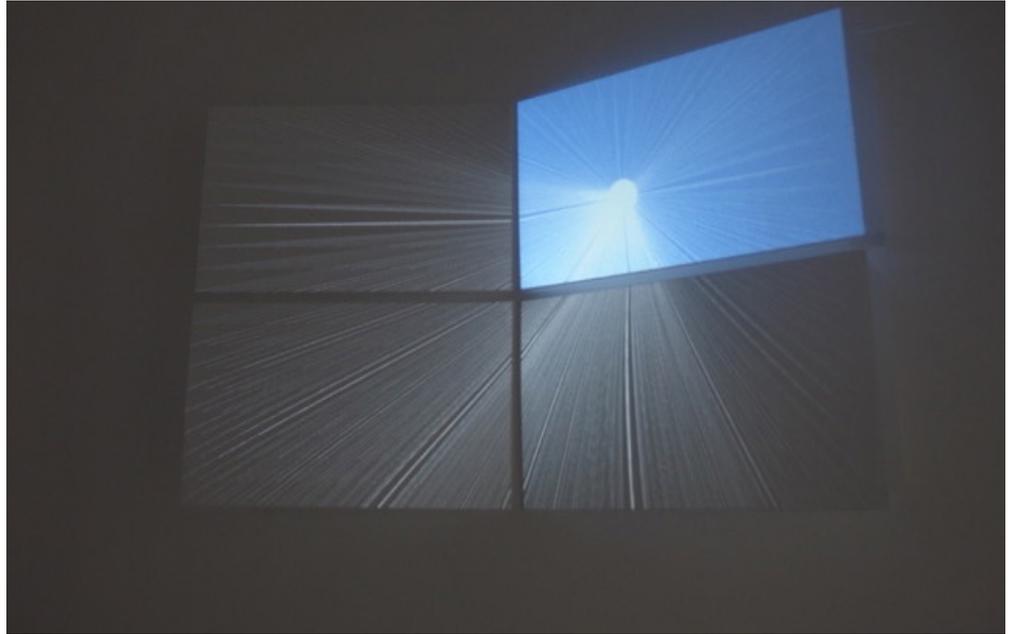
CLOSER / FARTHER



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Abstract

Closer / Farther is an interactive installation that explores the idea of vulnerability in human relations through spatial dynamics, focusing on three dimensions of the relationship with the other: intimate space, personal space and social space. It is meant to be used by multiple people, in a relational logic that assumes the work of art as the space of encounter and the creation of interpersonal relations. Its audio-visual behavior is physically embodied in a sculpture, mirroring the actions of the people around the exhibition space.

Keywords

Interactive Installation
Relational Interaction
Spatial Relations
Audio-visual

The conceptual basis of *Closer/Farther* relies heavily on the concept of relational aesthetics proposed by Bourriaud. The installation reflects the idea of interactive art as an opportunity for the exploration of human relations. In light of this premise, the audience's bodies in the art space are considered as part of the installation as opposed to merely triggers of events. By acting simultaneously, they create a collective behavior through their relationships in physical space. The embodiment of interactive art is assumed to be included in the notion of open-ended artworks, in which viewers become participants to shape the experience of certain moments in time. It is a spectacle, in which the audience not only actively engages and takes action, but is also able to contemplate in passive fruition. The aesthetic value of the installation is unique to the moments of interaction.

The relationship with the 'other' is characterized by complex dynamics, which involve conscious decisions about the degree of openness one intends to show to the outside world. From an artistic standpoint, this problematic is the essence of the installation. The question emerges on whether to present oneself as vulnerable to the other, as well as deciphering if on the other side of this relationship there will be the same availability to be vulnerable. The decision to engage emotionally and psychologically with the other, exposing oneself to the unpredictable, must be mutual so that human connections can flourish.

In *Closer/Farther*, the exploration of physical distance aims to be a tangible metaphor of vulnerability. The installation's title refers to the ways in which people establish spatial relationships, physically distancing themselves from one another. This approach borrows from Hall's studies of proxemics the spheres of social space, personal space and intimate space, which have implications in the way people relate amongst themselves. By dividing the spatial dimension into these different categories, the installation allows for a transition between states of proximity among the participants, alluding to the changes in openness and vulnerability in their relations in a metaphorical manner. In a way, it is a reinterpretation of Scott Snibbe's installation *Boundary Functions*. It reinforces the relationships in space through its free exploration as opposed to establishing them through separation. The installation provides an audio-visual and spatial experience that can be simultaneously contemplated and interfered with. The spatial dynamic is physically embodied through image projection in a translucent sculpture that reacts to the human presence. It is the centerpiece of the exhibition space.

The interaction is achieved through a computational system that processes the input data captured by an infra-red camera, related to the presence and positioning of people in the exhibition space. Their positions are mapped to different quadrants of the available interaction area, which are mirrored in the different modules of the sculpture. The interaction modes developed for the installation are crucial for the process of active fruition, seeing as they generate real time image and sound behaviors in the computational system. They are divided in 3 categories: inactive (absence of people in the interaction area), single-user (one person interacting) and relational (more than one person interacting).

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