



BEYOND LIVENESS

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Beyond liveness is an audiovideo exhibition based on live audio visual performance *Shipwreck score* by INIRE. Its concept concerns mutual interdependencies between genres as live performance and audio and video installation, in the context of the discourse about performance and its documentation. The exhibition is composed of three parts, hardware DVD player with video documentation of the performance *Shipwreck score*; audio video installation with multi channel audio stream based on the performance; laptop with a google questionnaire about liveness issue.

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INTRODUCTION

The term *liveness* in the context of digital performance mediation has been used in the installation's title with reference to Philip Auslander's definition; he used the word 'mediatized' in relation to mutual permeating and mediation/mediatisation of theater and television in order to indicate that television is the main model for theatrical borrowings. Auslander emphasizes that the category of *liveness* is of historical, not ontological nature. For him, television is the model and standard for 20th century culture and it sets out norms of narration and perception. As mediatization is a historical category, the television visual pattern is only a genealogical aspect of the problem. The role of television is currently being taken by the Internet and, in concord with this, present indication dominating communication is constituted by IT technologies; they are also a point of departure for research on digital performance.

Steve Dixon in *Digital performance* explains that the *liveness* concept had been subjected under consideration before digital performance was born. Dixon begins from ontology of the medium of photography, settles meanders of *liveness* discourse from Heidegger's theory of phenomenology, Benjamin's notion of aura dissolution, McLuhan's idea that "the medium is the message" and simulacra and simulacrum by Baudrillard, to the contemporary performance research such theorists as Susan Sontag, Peggy Phelan or Philip Auslander.

In deliberation on *liveness* the notion of a display assumes a broader context. Auslander (2008: 5) quotes after Baudrillard: "*What is mediatized is not what comes off the daily press, out of the tube, or on the radio: it is what is reinterpreted by the signform, articulated into models, and administrated by the code*" (Baudrillard 1981: 175-176)

1 WORK ON PERFORMANCE SHIPWRECK SCORE – DOCUMENTATION OF EXPERIENCE

Audio video installation *beyond liveness* consists of three elements. The first of it is the hardware DVD player, connected to an LCD screen with headphone. With this device it is possible to display several audio video documentations from live performance Shipwreck score acted in different venues.

Performance *Shipwreck score* was connected to the audio sphere of the space, Djúpalónssandur bay on the eastern coast of Iceland, at North Atlantic Ocean, where an English fishing ship

sank in 1948. The parts of the wrecked vessel, as also its surrounding space, was a groundwork for recording of sounds and images of the project. Elements of the ship were set into vibrations by wind, stones, human voice, cello bow and unexpected people passing by. The visual part was based on photographic documentation made on site. Its multi-layered structure also consisted of a verbal narration, prepared as a sort of radio broadcast depicting the plot and performance circumstances. Narrative vocal compositions were live processed and transformed.



Fig. 1. Djúpalónssandur bay, parts of the vessel (left and right).

For the creation of performance field recordings of sounds of the space and photographs of the vessel parts were used. 3D spatial structures were extracted from still frames of the vessel. Performance score was based on field recordings used for granular synthesis on voltage-controlled modular systems. The archive files, as a basement for construction of onstage improvisation were deconstructed by the analogue modular system in both the audio and visual. The project touched the question of documentation and archive in the context of performance and the issue of its transitory nature. The mapping of the real space, converted into a map of the embodiment, both collective and individual, created space between corporal and digital memory, along and across the bay.

The main idea of *Shipwreck score* was to treat performance as a form of recording and reflection of the affect as well as documentation of the experience of memory of the place. Memory is used in a twofold way: as collective memory remaining in the space of a crashed ship and former crew; and as performer's individual memory, who through preparation and performance of action on stage reconstructs an affect experienced on the spot and presents it to an audience.

2 WORK ON INSTALLATION BEYOND LIVENESS – DOCUMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE

Fig. 2. Vessel photographs, 3D shapes extraction.



Paraphrasing Derrida's (1987: 9) metaphor:

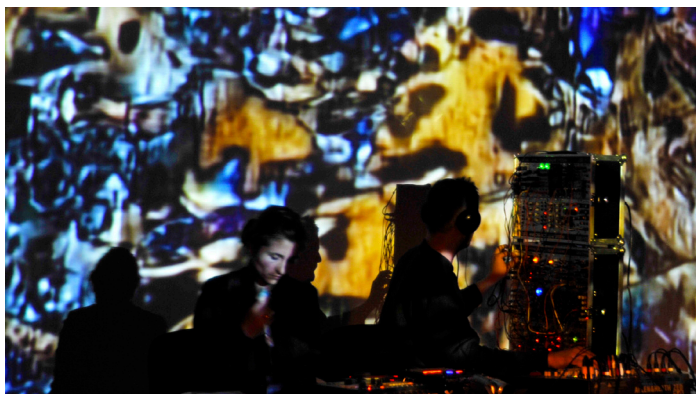
look closely at this shot from the performance. It's a reproduction.

I confide to

You this solemn and sententious aphorism: did not everything between us begin with reproduction? Yes, and at the same time nothing is more simply false, the tragedy is there.

The second part of the exhibition is an audio video installation based on live performance. It's composed of video projection and multi channel audio stream. The files used for making the work are taken from live performance documentation files. The idea is to make a creative, archival form of the live work and to explore the convergence of art genres when the performance becomes the installation.

Fig. 3. Live performance *Shipwreck* score by Inire (left and right).



3 WORK ON DOCS QUESTIONNAIRE – DOCUMENTATION OF THE REACTION OF AUDIENCE

The third part of the exhibition is a laptop with access to the Internet. It displays a survey about liveness issue, which allows to get the feedback from the receiver. A survey and visualization of its results are another form of documentation of the experience. In this case, it is all about the recipient's affect. Answers given by respondents shall be shared and visualized on the project's website after the display.¹

1. See <http://www.inire.net/>

One of the basic questions we have to ask is whether mediated participation in digital art has any impact to the reality in which we live? Does art take patterns of mediatization from reality or perhaps by means of a precedent influences, digital art creations inflow actual attitudes in a communicational situation? If we follow Wolfgang Iser (1995) on a statement that art may successfully act as a model to describe reality and human nature manifests itself in all expressions of life and social behaviors, especially in creative activities, to analyze the condition of the society we may as well use research on the latest digital art.

The idea behind a survey is to gain insight which stadium of memory documenting is more efficient:

- Documentation of artists experience in direct/immediated digital performance, based on the performer-participant scheme. In this case, the performance Shipwreck score is disappeared here, the only rendering is its record.
- Documentation of performance created with the use of one of the two schemes:
 1. Objective video camera recording
 2. Done-over of the gathered material and creation of a new work based on audio and video recording made during the performance

We shall use questions from the preface of "Liveness. Performance in a mediatized culture" by Philip Auslander as an introduction to the survey:

Why would you make live work in an age of mass communications?

Why work in more or less the only field which still insists on presence?

For artists interested in 'the contemporary' this area of live performance seems like a bit of backwater. Do you have something against mass-reproduction?

Do you work from some quaint notion about immediacy and real presence?

I don't know.

Answer the question

(Forced Entertainment 1996)

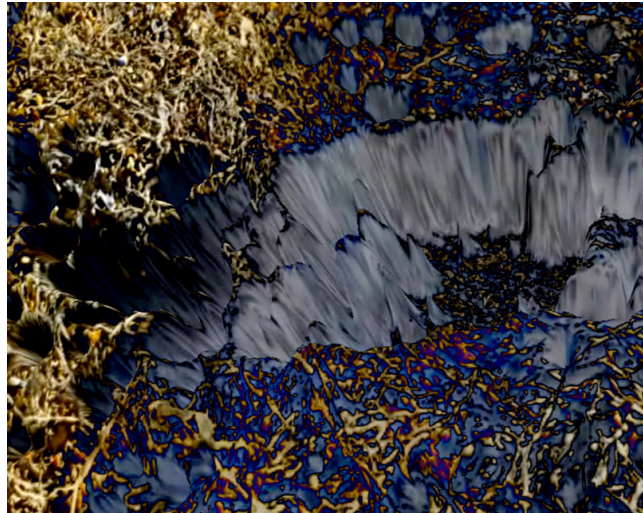
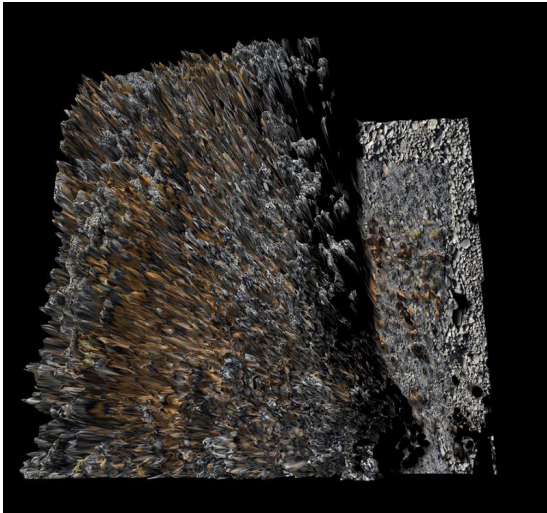


Fig. 4. Still frame from the exhibition *beyond liveness* (left and right).

Acknowledgements

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