

CHATTRBOX:

Fantasy Conversations for Lonely People
through Performance and Video Archives

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In his decision, Judge Louis L. Stanton of U.S. District Court defined “transformative use” of an original photograph. “The painting’s use does not ‘supersede’ or duplicate the objective of the original”, the judge wrote, “but uses it as raw material in a novel way to create new information, new aesthetics and new insights. Such use, whether successful or not artistically, is transformative.”

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ABSTRACT

CHATTRBOX is an immersive video-narrative told through publicly-sourced videos. It represents an intimate conversation featuring the edited likeness of famous icons via their digital remnants and legacies. The fourth seat at the table is for the individual participant. It is a piece of gallery art that explores the relationship between: human and video performance, celebrity and familiarity, experience prototyping and futuristic interactions, copyright and artistic appropriation. With influences as diverse as Judy Chicago and the holodeck, new dialogues emerge from a vast online archive.

The installation represents an ironic broken tool, intended for lonely people as a performative video experience. When the videos stop to listen to the participant, the viewer to content relationship has been flipped. Ultimately the experience can never capture the poetry of real human interaction, but leaves the participant considering his/her dialogue and performance within the interactive context.

INTRODUCTION

This is the slightly-edited original concept proposal that was submitted to Thesis Studio. Although there were many changes to the installation implementation over the months leading up to the gallery exhibit, the goals and over arching themes originated here:

“MY DINNER WITH JESUS”

Participants are invited to book a one-hour reservation for breakfast, lunch, or dinner over the one-week installation through the project website calendar. They BYOB (B = bagged lunch) or order delivery. The installation is a dinner party, as told in three acts: Appetizer, Entree, and Dessert. The table must be reserved by individuals, but additional people are engaged as viewers walking through the gallery. The video accompaniment to the meal lasts approximately 40 minutes, with time between participants to clean up or talk about the experience.

It became apparent that the dinner part of the installation was asking too much of busy gallery goers, who only could spare a few minutes to interact with one piece of many. The original vision of a lunch space in a busy work environment appeals, but was never actually developed for this show. The piece is less a video narrative and more of an interactive machine.

THE AUDIENCE

The meal takes place in a glass room gallery and participants become part of the narrative. Prompts in the video leave gaps in the dialogue for the participant to weigh in on subjects like marriage equality in New York, war, and classicism. There is a microphone in front of the participant’s setting. Although the video narrative has fixed qualities, the participant can affect the performance through his/her participation or lack thereof. There are a few interactive surprises in store.

In the final installation, the video visually and audibly degrades if the user does not participate by speaking into the microphone. In this way, passive viewing is rejected as the characters require participation from the user. Conversation prompts and subjects were mostly rejected in order to leave participation up to the user.

Participants are encouraged to eat, talk, and be entertained over the course of the meal, but their performance is unique and spontaneously generated. The installation is a prototype for a completely interactive virtual reality. For this piece, participants are encouraged to suspend disbelief and interact with the screen characters as if they were the real people they represent. Video can never capture the poetry of real human interaction, so the interaction, display, and concept needs to be compelling.

This meal represents a tool for lonely people, entertainment that mimics reality and closeness with any famous person imaginable. The dinner party flattens the distance between entertainment and experience, although it is “just a video” that encourages participation and performance.

In actuality, Chattrbox could never cure loneliness. Human interaction will always be far superior to computer interaction, so the glitches and failures of the system were to be symbolic and celebrated. Users often continued the conversations from the installation out to their friends in the gallery and that was a better outcome than real loneliness.

The three characters are an artist, a deity, and a modern video host and producer. Participants may have different familiarity with the characters, but that is part of the experience and there will hopefully be a deeper level of understanding after the dinner. As for other celebrity suggestions, like Amy Winehouse, the options

are limitless, and readily available on YouTube for future projects and iterations and mashups.

Many characters appeared over the course of prototyping Chattrbox, but the original three were Jesus, Andy Cohen, and John Lennon. Largely unpopular, Jesus was a “bore,” Andy an “unknown,” and John a “downer, too serious.” The beauty of the platform is that rapid prototyping and new videos can be generated to respond to pop culture, location, current events. The final installation had Black Jesus, a YouTube character that livened up the Jesus problem; Amy Winehouse, a tragic artist cut short in her prime, and Ryan Gosling, handsome internet sensation and actor.

ABOUT THE PRODUCER AND HIS BIAS

The characters represented in this production are filtered through YouTube first and then editing of an imaginary dialogue. I am gay, Jewish, and a student studying Design & Technology. Fascinated by art stars, reality television, celebrities, contact, crowd-sourcing, video, design, and technology, so my version of these characters (Jesus) may be different from your version (and that is okay.)

STOP ONLINE PIRACY ACT

SOPA (postponed in 2012 until a consensus can be reached to “promote prosperity, creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation by combating the theft of U.S. property, and for other purposes.” —H.R. 3261) would have you believe this digital content is sacred. Citing sources is paramount, but by manipulating and mashing up the YouTube videos Chattrbox becomes a unique experience. This is not material that is being sold in any way. This is digital archive scraps from the world wide web. SOPA will cripple the internet and artistic license. Piracy is not exactly theft, as there is no damage or loss to the original artifacts. Everything

created here is with total respect and homage to the original people and events that are represented in the installation. Chattrbox is pro- innovation, creativity, and free speech.

In many ways this project is a response to THE DINNER PARTY by Judy Chicago, notable for its historical significance and scope. I wanted to make my version an experience that spoke of my influences and ideas. Chattrbox asks the guest to participate and join the dialogue to engage more of the senses and modernize the piece with experience design and technology.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

1. Can online digital remnants and video legacies, sitting on a dusty shelf of the internet become something new, innovative, and interesting?

Chattrbox uses crowd-sourcing via YouTube and other public video portals as source material. The digital video archive includes millions of uploads of famous people talking. Clearly there is an audience, but this footage is not being sold or featured, so Chattrbox will shine a different spotlight on these digital scraps and pieces, as woven into a new project with new input from the participant.

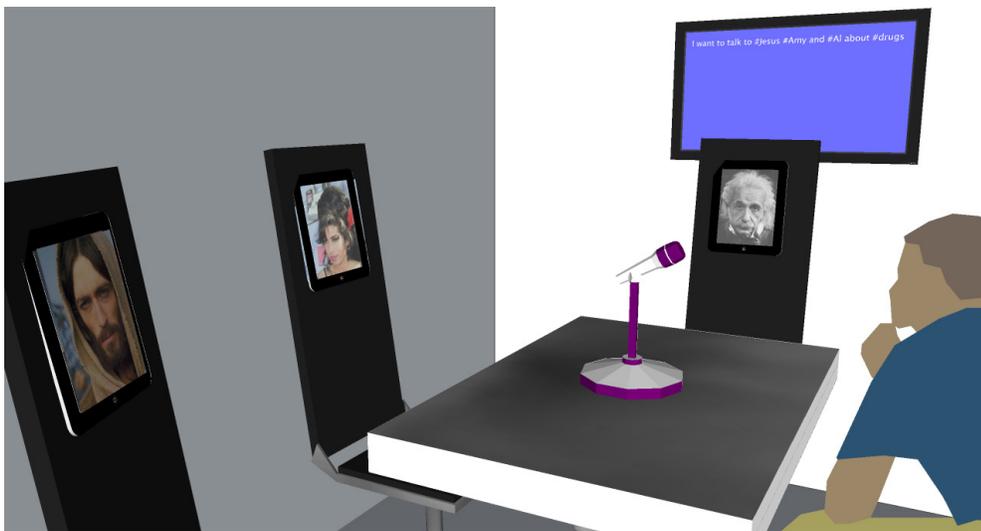
2. How can the project encourage and empower a participant to speak into a microphone and join a conversation with a video character? How “human” would the interaction have to be? What is the value of speaking?

In order to understand the videos and bring them out of sleep mode, participants must speak into the microphone in front of him/her. If the participant does not keep up his/her end of the conversation the video will degrade again. Normally entertainment asks very little in return from viewers, so this challenges that passivity on the part of the viewer.

3. While more characters may appeal to a wider audience, does that limit the relationships between videos? Because of the interactivity and chance of the piece, a true narrative between characters was never fully reached. Rather, it was preferable that the characters talk about themselves, relatable experiences, and general advice. The characters are interchangeable in this format, which leads to a better mashup as characters can be dropped in and out.

METHODOLOGY

Chattrbox introduces television viewers to an interactive conversation with famous people, instantiated via the video content format they are most familiar. The form of the piece is derived from the current relationship that many people have with their televisions and computers for video providing. People eat in front of their computers or televisions and relate to characters as if these people were their friends and family. Chattrbox makes that relationship more interactive. What if you could interrupt the person on the television and contribute your own dialogue? What if you could summon anyone from history to talk on any subject? Obviously there is a lot of room for discovery over a very limited amount of time.



Early sketchup starring Albert Einstein, Amy Winehouse, and Jesus.

DIGITAL LEGACIES, REMNANTS, & ARCHIVES

Chattrbox videos are downloaded then further edited from YouTube. The website is a vast digital archive of publicly uploaded videos for viewing, not necessarily for taking. The characters represented in the installation are speaking in their own words, ideally looking into the camera to create the effect that they are talking to the participant. By using the characters own words, the experience remains respectful of their original meaning and intent.

By the time a video hits the internet, there is some loss of control as the file can be owned and operated by someone who is not the original copyright owner. The video can be ripped and copied and dispersed, through plug-ins and piracy, which affects distribution and quality.

This brings to mind the future of all humanity as this digital shadow remains intact, even after human creators and subjects have disappeared. There are memorial pages on Facebook for fallen friends that may live on infinitely: where does reality end and the digital shadow of forever begin? These digital blips and beeps will never recreate the unique person that they are derived of/from, but they remain as a lasting and accessible reminder of the person's fleeting existence.

PRECEDENTS

Chattrbox is in homage to and a response to THE DINNER PARTY by Judy Chicago (American, b. 1939).¹ Chicago's piece is epic in scope, honoring the mothers of art, and the historical significance is huge, "a milestone in twentieth-century art".¹ Having seen it installed in its full glory at the National Museum for Women in the Arts in Washington, and at the Brooklyn Museum, the immersive experience leaves this viewer in awe of the detail and nuance of Chicago's vision. By making the altar/shrine/installation a dinner party (and displaying the tables in a triangle format), there is a communal feeling that what has come before, those people we are honoring, were/are part of a discussion (although there is no actual dialogue between the viewer and the characters.) By introducing design technology, new tools can engage users to interact with the narrative directly rather than partaking from the sidelines. Chattrbox can be an actual dialogue with recorded icons from history.



¹ http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner_party/

In Marina Abramovic's (Yugoslav, b. 1946)² THE ARTIST IS PRESENT, the performance artist took up residency at the MoMA and invited museum goers to join her by sitting across her in silence for a duration of his/her choosing. Wildly famous, lampooned by some, others lauded Abramovic's courage and endurance. Chattrbox borrows from the success of Abramovic's viewer participation,² the idea that people would line up and wait for hours/days for an audience with one of their heroes, art star Abramovic. There was no response on the part of the artist or visible interaction, just proximity. CHATTRBOX hopes to increase the access to icons and flatten the distance between reality and fame. By creating a dialogue between iconic personalities and participants, it challenges the distance between important figures from history and real people in the gallery.



² <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/>

The ways viewers experience entertainment has been a theme of science fiction speculation, notably presented by the HOLODECK from Gene Roddenberry's (American, b. 1921) *Star Trek Next Generation* franchise. It is a virtual reality generator in a recreation area that creates experiential first-person narratives with adventures adapted to participants. Lifelike A.I. is beyond reach, so perfect representations are left to science fiction and imperfect representations to video game engines and the like. Chattrbox is a prototype of a futuristic experience like the holodeck, where any famous person from history can be summoned to appear and interact intelligently. The characters will be screen-bound rather than holograms, but hopefully the user can see the potential of a true futuristic virtual reality. In most episodes the holodeck is controlled by voice commands.³



³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holodeck>

MASHUP

The most infamous examples of mashup culture are the legal struggles that GirlTalk (American, b. 1981) has had over copyright infringement with his dj mixes. He uses micro-samples from popular songs to create new Frankensteined albums, walking a fine line of making and piracy. Sometimes artists of today are hampered by copyright laws as they experiment and tinker with the digital archives that have been lain out before them, although that is exactly what artists of the past have done (borrowed from their predecessors).

One of my favorite quotes comes from Danger Mouse (American, b.1977), talking about his masterwork THE GREY ALBUM, a mashup of the Beatles' White Album and Jay-Z's Black Album, two totally different elements that created a novel fusion, and is totally illegal. The work inspired him to keep going. He wasn't setting out to destroy creative license, but rather celebrating the components of what he was doing:

"A lot of people just assume I took some Beatles and, you know, threw some Jay-Z on top of it or mixed it up or looped it around, but it's really a deconstruction. It's not an easy thing to do. I was obsessed with the whole project, that's all I was trying to do, see if I could do this. Once I got into it, I didn't think about anything but finishing it. I stuck to those two because I thought it would be more challenging and more fun and more of a statement to what you could do with sample alone. It is an art form. It is music. You can do different things, it doesn't have to be just what some people call stealing. It can be a lot more than that."

Rimmer, Matthew (2007). Digital Copyright and the Consumer revolution. Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 132-133. ISBN 1845429486, 9781845429485

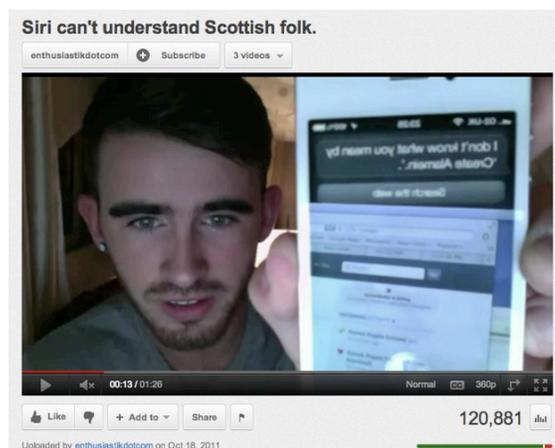
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Several examples of A.I. have recreated realistic human behavior. Below are a few noteworthy projects as precedents, and reflect why Chattrbox can not fully capture the poetry of human interaction.

SIRI is the voice recognition application for Apple iOS that shipped with the iPhone 4S. It has been advertised by Apple as a personal assistant for your phone. Siri has a female voice, a real or perceived “personality,” and responds to questions posed to her. After the launch, many parody sites were created that laughed at Siri’s abilities to understand easy questions and return appropriate results. Having explored Siri, the technology is not accurate enough to actually save time in most cases. Siri is the result of years of research, funding, and several organizations working together to explore and develop language and cognition tools. Although it was criticized for not responding accurately to people with discernible accents, it was applauded by organizations for the blind.

How may I help you,
human?

goo.gl/pG07v



PROJECT MILO by Lionhead on Xbox (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF_HXTQ7Quo), is a video in which Milo is a screen bound young boy character who interacts with the player. With dazzling A.I., the video turned out to be more myth than reality. Websites popped up to prove that the video is added afterwards to respond to the actor's performance. Despite Lionhead creative director Peter Molyneux emphatically saying in the source video that Milo is a reality, and that the project was soon to be released, it was shelved indefinitely, and labeled an experimental and theoretic prototype. Molyneux said, "The biggest challenge for us is convincing people (Microsoft) what we're doing is actually going to work, is going to reach a new audience, is going to be an idea that people love." [Yin-Poole, Eurogamer.net]

Finally, there is the enchanting video of two philosophical robots that most people are familiar with thanks to the viral video. Two Chatbots talking to each other appear to get angry, frustrated, then disengage from conversation.



IMPETUS

The idea for this project came from an intense lonely period with no friends around, no goals, no work, no money, and no agenda. I wanted to try to harness this lack of engagement for my art and making process, but instead watched television for hours. I watched YouTube videos and reality TV, almost anything to pass the time. It is probably a bad idea to start with a total lack of inspiration as inspiration, but I was focused on the relationship, mostly imagined, that I had with these video personalities that people invite into their homes for dinner every night as if they were real people. In a fever dream, I saw these characters as potential conversation mates, someone to talk to in order to break my silence and monotony.

In many of my art and design project in the past, I've attempted to engage people across the web to interact with my work. For Chattrbox the efforts of everyone's labor already existed in the form of video uploads. I would edit and curate them into a meaningful experience. The YouTube forum and interface is notorious for minimizing comments and maximizing revenues space. There is some interactivity and conversation, but there are more deficiencies than open communication. I was hoping to elevate the conversation and make the dialogue more real and engaging between videos and the audience.

Dave Carroll, Director, MFA Design & Technology, noted during a critique if I want to elevate the conversations that are happening online, not to blame web chatter, but to create my own dialogue. What was happening between video viewer and the content was passive and one directional and I wanted to disrupt that. I wanted to take this pop culture and hack it and mash it up and create something that would challenge the vacant stares into the screen. The screen characters provide entertainment, but seemingly never asks anything in return from the viewer.

IMPLEMENTATION

Chattrbox had humble beginnings, with many design “making” questions still to be answered at inception. Testing narrative strategies with the first prototype (presented to Thesis Studio), classmates were asked to participate in user testing via emailing each a video as a starting point.

The first installment of videos took the form of character sketches of: Andy Cohen, Jesus, and John Lennon. Andy Cohen was conceived as an interlocutor, asking questions and driving the narrative, like he does on his talk show. Feedback indicated that the people/characters at the table must be treated as an equal with equal time. The rhythm of back-and-forth dialogue was a goal, but at this point the videos were not interacting.

Testing the interaction of the immersive experience, it was not clear in what ways videos would be manipulated to accept participant’s input. The conversation was intended to leave gaps or prompts in order to receive the participant’s conversation, but how would it actually work?

NARRATIVE

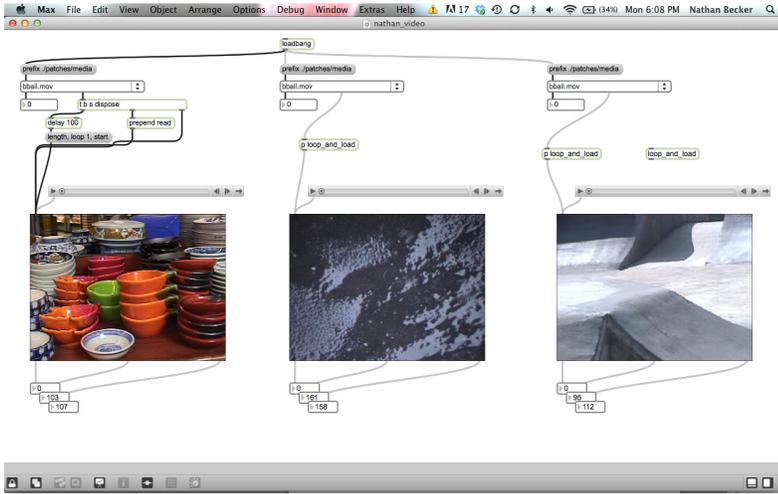
Who are these people?

These are real people, so the content of the narrative is derived from their actual words and videos on YouTube. Several characters were introduced over the course of production: Andy Cohen is a nice Jewish guy commenting on current topics. Jesus is a peaceful prophet and religious leader. Finally John Lennon is the artist and poet. Amy Winehouse is an artist who's life was cut tragically short due to drugs. Black Jesus is a YouTube personality with a messiah complex and an attitude. Finally, the latest addition, Ryan Gosling is an actor and handsome internet sensation. The beauty of the setup is that any character can be added to reflect the installation's time and place.

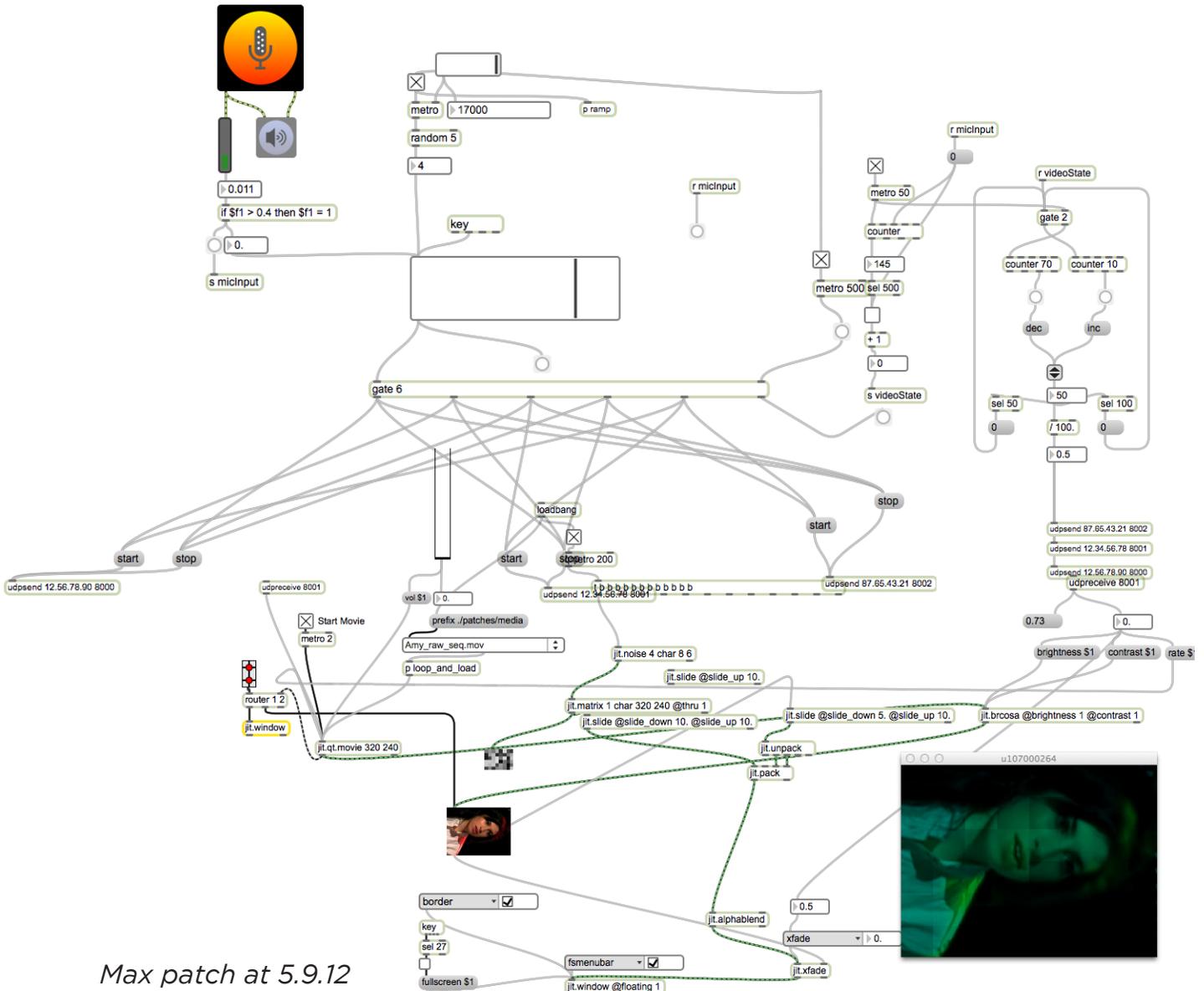
INTERACTION

How will the participant's words affect the video interaction?

Using Max/MSP the project displays three videos looping simultaneously, and maps how users can affect the video. A few questions were when the user speaks how long until the video starts up again. Through user testing it became clear that the ideal number for the cadance of the conversation was to cycle speakers every seventeen seconds, with an all speak cycle and an all listen that occurs when the microphone is activated by the user. Any time the participant speaks or interjects, the microphone level peak pauses the action then resumes when the participant stops speaking. If the participant is not engaged, the video starts to fall apart and degrade visually.



Max patch at 2.13.12



Max patch at 5.9.12

SAMPLE CHARACTER SKETCH FEEDBACK REQUEST FORM

CHARACTER: ANDY COHEN

VIDEO URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a32Kkimvyvc>



TITLE: The Gayle King Show - Andy Cohen - The Importance of Being Yourself

Dear classmate(!),

Please user test, and I'll return the favor, by taking less than five minutes to watch this video on YouTube. You are aware of my project scope; this prototype represents a character sketch. If you watch full-screen across a table, to start to emulate my proposed experience, that would be even awesomer. I am prototyping a potential interactive dialogue experience, so **what thoughts would you share on this subject matter? How do you feel about this character? Any other feedback greatly appreciated.**

PROJECT OUTLINE

FEATURE SET	EXPERIENCE	OUTCOMES
<p>Edited YouTube videos representing famous people speaking directly to the camera/viewer</p>	<p>User experiences what it might be like to listen to a famous person addressing them in an immersive installation</p>	<p>Viewer is introduced to unique or thoughtful footage that he/she may have never considered. Mimics proximity, a flattening of space between public personas and real-life, the ability to summon any famous person to speak to you</p>
<p>The video personas 'listen'</p>	<p>User is encouraged to speak into a microphone which pauses the conversation on the videos as if quietly listening to what the user has to say</p>	<p>Suddenly, the roles have reversed and the talking heads are now quiet and passive.</p>
<p>The videos shut down into a degraded sleep mode, but revives to full speed, contrast, color, etc. if the viewer talks into the microphone</p>	<p>Viewer must talk to keep the videos comprehensible</p>	<p>Viewer must work in order to participate in the exchange of information and conversation. They can no longer sit idly and watch with no agenda, thoughts, contribution.</p>
<p>Next steps: audio and video capture of user's input</p>	<p>What the user says in the installation changes the video content to reflect voice recognition. The manuscript of the input can be displayed in the exhibit space</p>	<p>Users are encouraged to experiment with the system and know that their words have meaning. What they say is equal to the words that have been uploaded. Users may be able to see their words literally join the exhibit via voice recognition. In addition to the text, keywords will trigger matching content.</p>

EXHIBIT LOOK BOOK

PRELIMINARY EQUIPMENT REQUESTS: A devoted room equipped for a sound and video installation (noise privacy is a concern), preferably with one glass wall for viewers walking by. 4 Mac Mini set-up with 3 displays and a microphone.

SQUARE FOOTAGE: My piece can be scaled up or down, but requires enough room for at least four 'people' to sit at a table and talk comfortably in a devoted semi-private and comfortable room.

MEDIA: Interactive three-channel video installation/projection

THEMES:

Flattening of media and celebrity, viewer and content

Interactive/participatory viewing

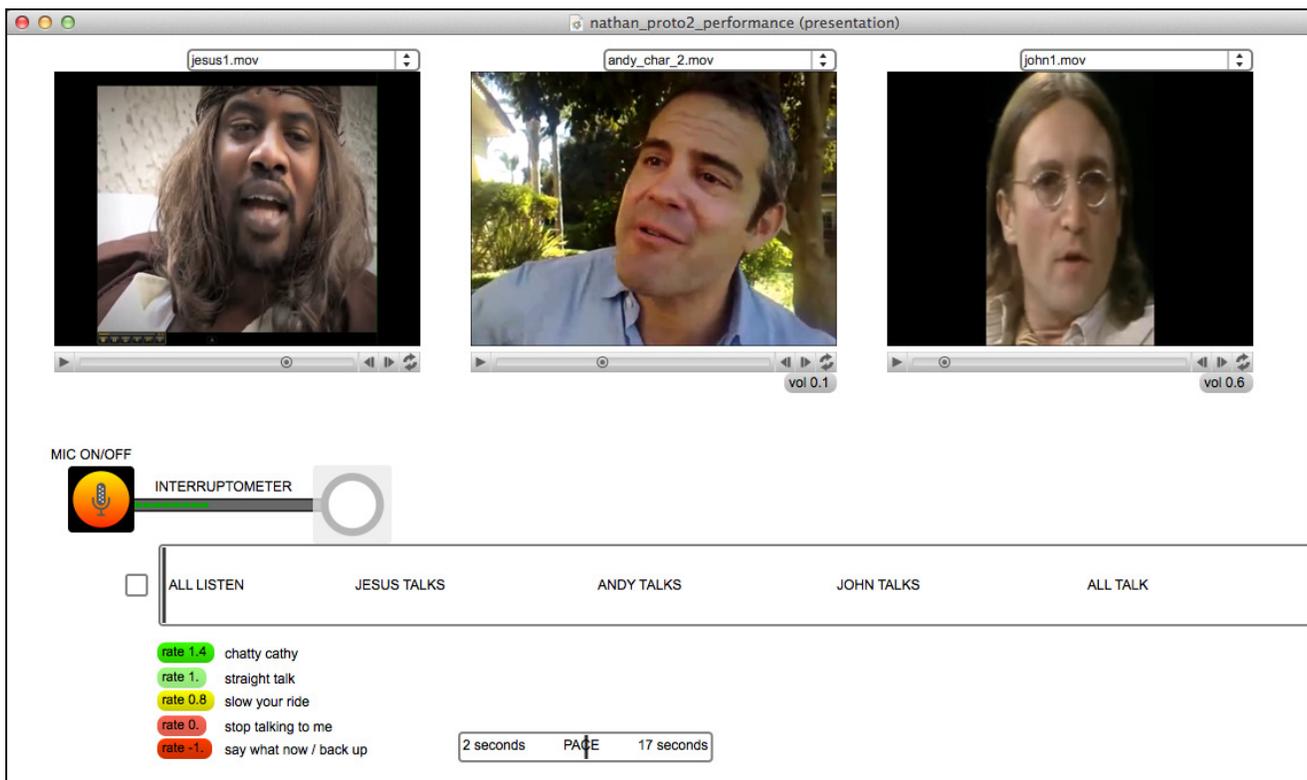
Futuristic storytelling

Copyright and mashup

THESIS WEBSITE: http://nathanbecker.com/thesis_tk

The current features include edited videos of three famous people addressing the camera, as viewed through a 3-channel video remix. The Max/MSP patch cycles randomly through each monologue and also “group speak,” with all three monitors talking at once. There isn’t really a conversation, more a bombardment of information. It is unclear to the user what if anything would contribute to this conversation.

If the participant speaks, a microphone magnifies his/her voice and pauses all other video. There are also speed controls to warp the content, and a pace control that sets the speed of the cyclus. There is limited voice recognition, certain phrases taught the system, but it is proving buggy at best during user testing. These features are mapped, like if no one is using the microphone, the videos could slow down gradually to reflect the lack of input.



This is meant to start prototyping the vision—an immersive conversation told through YouTube content exploring the relationship between:

- Human and video performance
- Celebrity and public access
- Experience prototyping and futuristic interactions
- Copyright and artistic appropriation.

NEXT STEPS BASED ON USER TESTING

Chattrbox is made up of disconnected poetry from current videos, but chaos was not the original point. In the future Chattrbox can be a little more thoughtful and clear to reflect my thesis statement:

New dialogues emerge from a vast online archive. The installation represents a broken and ironic tool for lonely people, but can never capture the poetry of real human interaction. It attempts to leave the participant considering his/her dialogue and performance within the context.

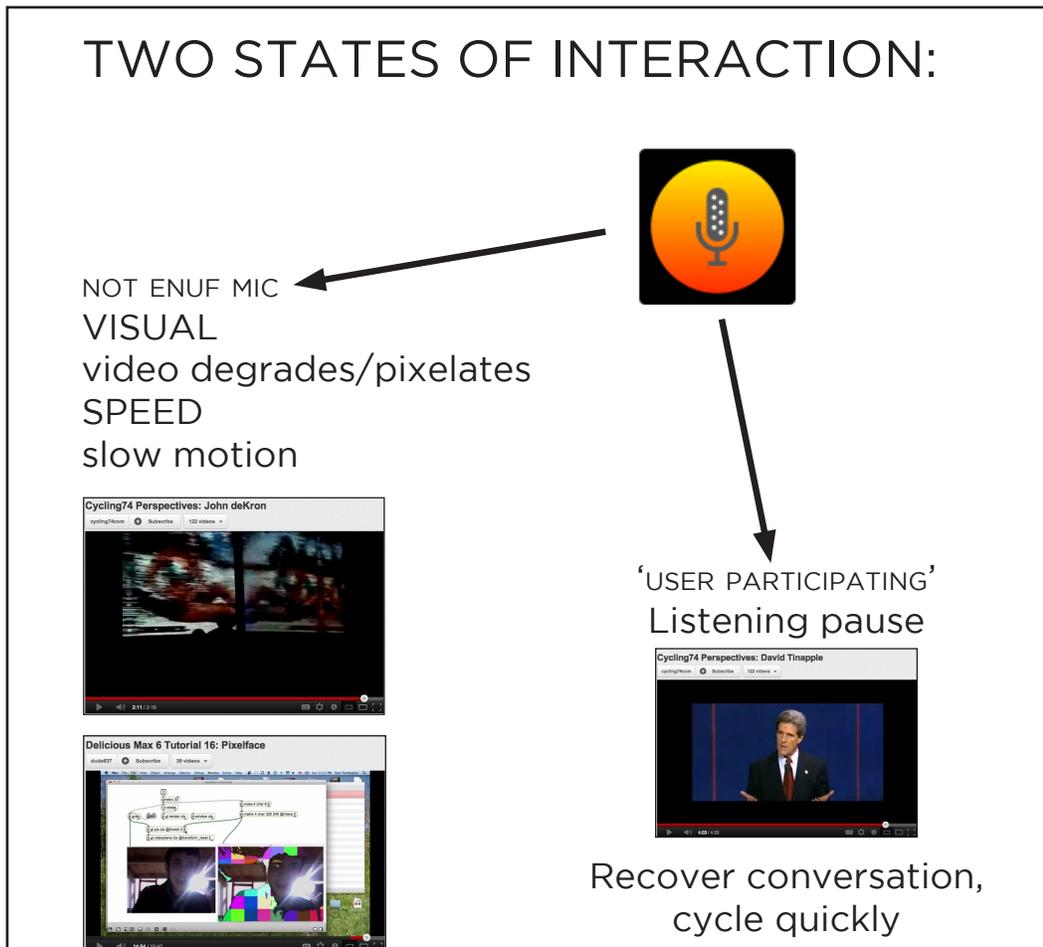
The user scenario should indicate real world conversations that result from Chattrbox, that someone may be exiting to talk about the experience with a friend who was in prior, but this experience is for one participant at a time.



DOCUMENTING MY PROCESS: The first physical instantiation of Chattrbox in real space comprising a microphone and three Mac Minis was tested with Design & Technology students. For one week users were invited to enter the conversation (one at a time.) Because the piece is designed for lonely people, it does not function nor was it designed for multiple users. The feedback portion was productive. One participant asked about the low video quality and was surprised to find that the content had been farmed from YouTube.

FINAL DELIVERABLES

- Through testing, it is clear that certain phrases are repeated by users and need commands mapped to them, like, “Shut up!” “Black Jesus,” etc.
- Install for Parsons Fest and address visual aesthetics of space (ex., coffee and cigarettes on the table.)



CONCLUSION/RESULTS

If there was more than one person in Chattrbox at a time, the humans interaction would trump the videos time after time. One gallery attendee said at the show that he asked Amy Winehouse why she did so many drugs, and she answered that she was just trying to be a normal girl a London girl, that was all she knew. He was thoughtful, but the more significant experience was the discussion he was having with real people. Chattrbox can never provide a true friendship with video content nor cure loneliness, but it addresses these notions of connecting with TV by making users work/talk for their content. Abramovic never had to explain to people why she was sitting across from them in the MoMA, and Chattrbox's intentions are clear. Dave Carroll reviewed the piece on Reddit, which accurately captures its spirit. Having a published review that accurately received the message confirmed that Chattrbox was hitting its target.

 MFADT **comments** related

 2   **Thesis: Chattrbox - A multichannel video installation that perverts a celebrity talkshow into a twisted dialogue that seems straight out of Max Headroom (80s TV Series)** (amt.parsons.edu)
submitted 11 hours ago by mercurious
1 comment share

ADDITIONAL CITATIONS

“Brooklyn Museum: The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago.” Brooklyn Museum: Welcome. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2012. <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner_party/>.

H.R.3261 – Stop Online Piracy Act; House Judiciary Committee; October 26, 2011.

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Scher, Adam. 2011. *Lost In Performance: Performative Processes to Save the Lost Bytes*. New York, NY: Parsons New School Thesis Archive. http://thesis.cdt.parsons.edu/thesis_archive/mfadt2011/Scher_Adam

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Katherine Moriwaki

I liked Katherine so much for Interactive Studio second semester that I eagerly repeated her for Thesis fourth semester. She always pushed me harder than I liked, helping shape my projects in really creative and exciting ways. I've always felt a connection of mutual understanding with Katherine that is really hard to find artist-to-artist and cross-discipline.

Louisa Campbell

This thesis paper would never have happened without Louisa's encouragement, editing, and critique. I appreciate that she let me be me. I want to give her credit for anything I got right here.

Ted Byfield

Ted is the coolest professor I've ever had and he taught my favorite class at Parsons, NEW MEDIA ART. For that I thank him sincerely. I am happy just to know him and I can definitely see some of his influence in my final project.

Matt Bethancourt

Matt is my Max/MSP professor, the program I used to build Chattrbox. He helped me immensely learn and utilize a program I had no experience with prior. I never considered myself a video artist or installation artist, but Matt made me believe it could happen for Thesis.

Dave Carroll

I might have dropped out after the first year (after having taught a Design course at Parsons) due to financial strain if Dave didn't fight to keep me. I am proud of my decision to stay and see this experience to completion, especially now that it is over; I loved/hated everything about it.

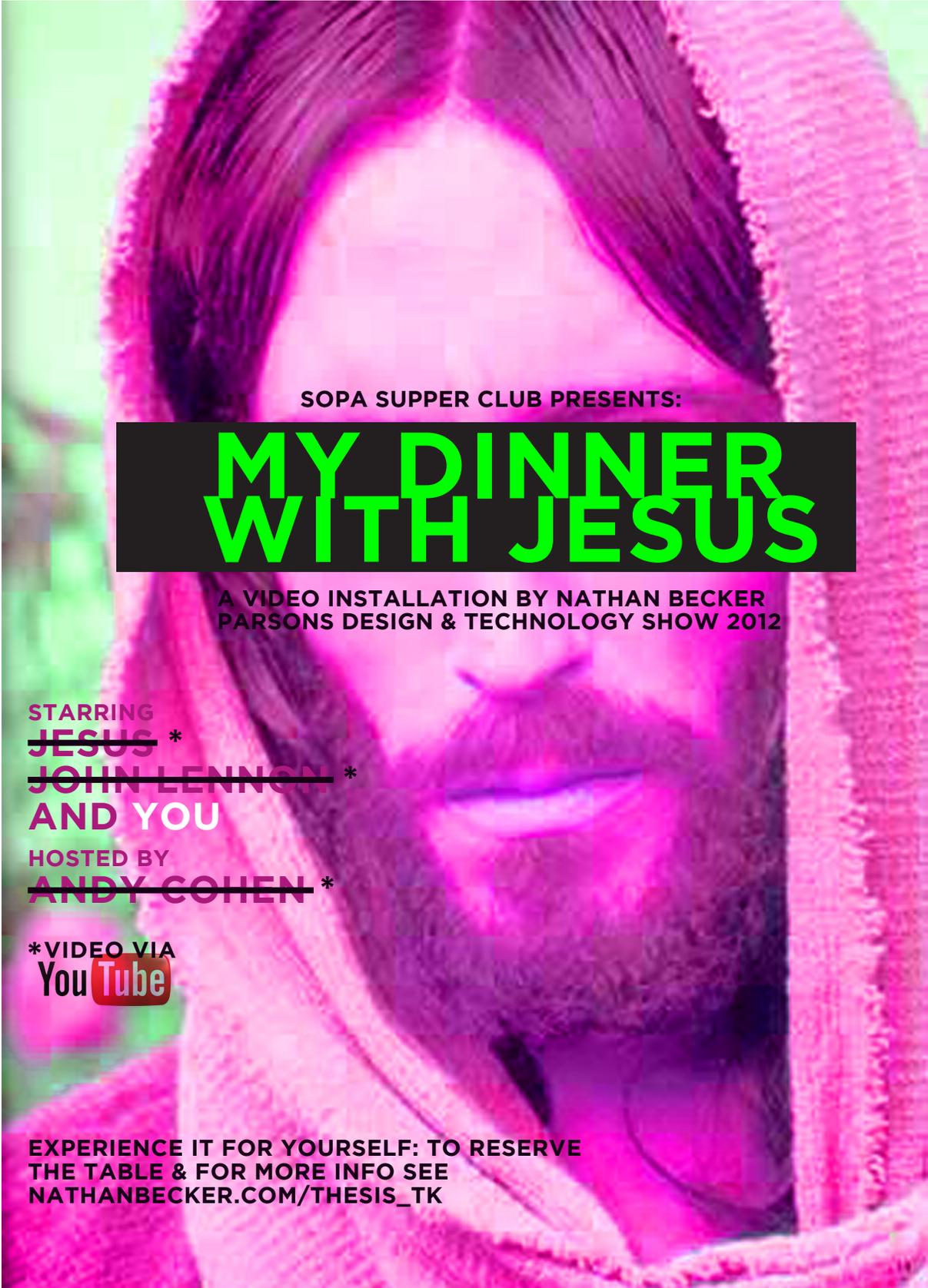
The Thesis and Symposium Committee

At times I was a vocal supporter, at other times a critic, but these people donated a lot of time and effort in order to curate and display 70 design technologists in one show. I think they were shocked that it was as bumpy a road, but they did a great job and I hope they got the valuable tools/experience they wanted.

Melanie Crean and Barbara Morris

This is the team that managed my first semester thesis output, as I kicked between projects like heebhubnyc.com and tap2post.com. They watched over my restless phase, but I cannot be bound to one project when my head is brimming with thesis after thesis (forever.)

Classmates, colleagues, family, friends



SOPA SUPPER CLUB PRESENTS:

MY DINNER WITH JESUS

A VIDEO INSTALLATION BY NATHAN BECKER
PARSONS DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY SHOW 2012

STARRING

~~JESUS~~ *

~~JOHN LENNON~~ *

AND YOU

HOSTED BY

~~ANDY COHEN~~ *

*VIDEO VIA
YouTube

EXPERIENCE IT FOR YOURSELF: TO RESERVE
THE TABLE & FOR MORE INFO SEE
NATHANBECKER.COM/THESIS_TK



refs ↑ ↻ ↗

Ted Byfield byfieldt@newschool.edu Mar 7 (4 days ago) ★ ↶ ↷
 to me ▾

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 John Jesurun
 Cleverbot convo
 opening of Pierrot le Fou
 Mr. Microphone
 autotune thyself
 Wooster Group: LSD

Nathan Becker 4:04 PM (1 minute ago) ☆ ↶ ↷
 to Ted ▾

Thanks Ted—hope you're enjoying Spring Break '12. I'm kind of obsessed with Wooster Group LSD now. BUT, do you think if I switch to videos of New-York-famous talking about the city, that it would focus my project and make it easier to follow? Instead of choosing unrelated characters first, start with a focused topic as the impetus/search? I think that might be closer to my original goal that there is a 'conversation,' (though I also like the chaotic elements of the piece.) But what would Zach Gage do? More deconstruction?

This is the kind of amazingly helpful feedback notes you get in Thesis (top). Ted Byfield is immensely respected in DT. He preferred to keep the project glitchy and weird. At the same time, Chattrbox needs to be more comprehensible to the audience.

This precedent he recommended is a televised round-robin reading of various works of fiction by a panel of guests. This reader is depicted both in person and as a video on the panel (with a different book). Each person reads for 30 seconds; the texts are loosely related. It is very similar to Chattrbox, and has that great retro-futuristic feel.

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CPR-5: The Wooster Group: On LSD

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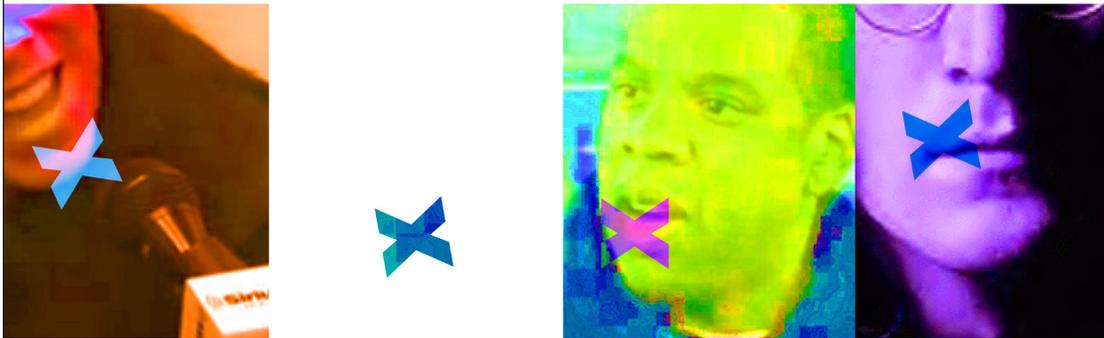
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Uploaded by DPSVideoLibrary on Apr 21, 2008 13 likes, 0 dislikes

This extract from a South Bank Show documentary focusses on the first section of The Wooster Group's LSD performance.

Chattrbox

FANTASY CONVERSATIONS FOR LONELY PEOPLE
starring THE DIGITAL ARCHIVES and YOU



A VIDEO INTERACTION BY NATHAN BECKER
PARSONS MFA DESIGN + TECHNOLOGY SHOW 2012



USER TESTING 4/6/12 Chattrbox will be open in Room 1201 featuring: Ryan Gosling, Amy Winehouse, Black Jesus, and you. Don't miss it.

You hear stories... about these lonely or somehow disturbed people who've had only the TV all their lives, their parents or whomever started them right off by plunking them down in front of the set, and as they get older the TV comes to be their whole emotional world, it's all they have, and it becomes in a way their whole way of defining themselves as existents, with a distinct identity, that they're outside the set, and everything else is inside the set.

—David Foster Wallace, “Little Expressionless Animals” in *Girl With Curious Hair* (1989)

Chattrbox

