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Touch and Go is published in collaboration with Watermans and Goldsmiths College in occasion of the Watermans' International Festival of Digital Art, 2012, which coincides with the Olympics and Paralympics in London. The issue explores the impact of technology in art as well as the meaning, possibilities and issues around human interaction and engagement. *Touch and Go* investigates interactivity and participation, as well as light art and new media approaches to the public space as tools that foster engagement and shared forms of participation.



TOUCH AND GO

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LEONARDO ELECTRONIC ALMANAC, VOLUME 18 ISSUE 3

Touch and Go

VOLUME EDITORS

LANFRANCO ACETI, JANIS JEFFERIES, IRINI PAPADIMITRIOU

EDITORS

JONATHAN MUNRO, ÖZDEN ŞAHİN

Watermans International Festival of Digital Art, 2012

Touch and Go is a title that I chose together with Irini Papadimitriou for this LEA special issue. On my part with this title I wanted to stress several aspects that characterize that branch of contemporary art in love with interaction, be it delivered by allowing the audience to touch the art object or by becoming part of a complex electronic sensory experience in which the artwork may somehow respond and touch back in return.

With the above statement, I wanted to deliberately avoid the terminology 'interactive art' in order to not fall in the trap of characterizing art that has an element of interaction as principally defined by the word interactive; as if this were the only way to describe contemporary art that elicits interactions and responses between the artist, the audience and the art objects.

I remember when I was at Central Saint Martins writing a paper on the sub-distinctions within contemporary media arts and tracing the debates that distinguished between electronic art, robotic art, new media art, digital art, computer art, computer based art, internet art, web art... At some point of that analysis and argument I realized that the common thread that characterized all of these sub-genres of aesthetic representations was the word art and it did not matter (at least not that much in my opinion) if the manifestation was material or immaterial, conceptual or physical, electronic or painterly, analogue or digital.

I increasingly felt that this rejection of the technical component would be necessary in order for the electronic-robotic-new-media-digital-computer-based-internet art object to re-gain entry within the field of fine art. Mine was a reaction to an hyper-fragmented

and indeed extensive and in-depth taxonomy that seemed to have as its main effect that of pushing these experimental and innovative art forms – through the emphasis of their technological characterization – away from the fine arts and into a ghetto of isolation and self-reference. Steve Dietz's question – *Why Have There Been No Great Net Artists?*¹ – remains unanswered, but I believe that there are changes that are happening – albeit slowly – that will see the sensorial and technical elements become important parts of the aesthetic aspects of the art object as much as the brush technique of Vincent Willem van Gogh or the sculptural fluidity of Henry Moore.

Hence the substitution in the title of this special issue of the word interactivity with the word touch, with the desire of looking at the artwork as something that can be touched in material and immaterial ways, interfered with, interacted with and 'touched and reprocessed' with the help of media tools but that can also 'touch' us back in return, both individually and collectively. I also wanted to stress the fast interrelation between the art object and the consumer in a commodified relationship that is based on immediate engagement and fast disengagement, touch and go. But a fast food approach is perhaps incorrect if we consider as part of the interactivity equation the viewers' mediated processes of consumption and memorization of both the image and the public experience.

Nevertheless, the problems and issues that interactivity and its multiple definitions and interpretations in the 20th and 21st century raise cannot be overlooked, as much as cannot be dismissed the complex set of emotive and digital interactions that can be set in motion by artworks that reach and engage large groups of people within the public space. These interactions

generate public shows in which the space of the city becomes the background to an experiential event that is characterized by impermanence and memorization. It is a process in which thousands of people engage, capture data, memorize and at times memorialize the event and re-process, mash-up, re-disseminate and re-contextualize the images within multiple media contexts.

The possibility of capturing, viewing and understanding the entire mass of data produced by these aesthetic sensory experiences becomes an impossible task due to easy access to an unprecedented amount of media and an unprecedented multiplication of data, as Lev Manovich argues.²

In *Digital Baroque: New Media Art and Cinematic Folds* Timothy Murray writes that "the retrospective nature of repetition and digital coding—how initial images, forms, and narratives are refigured through their contemplative re-citation and re-presentation—consistently inscribes the new media in the memory and memorization of its antecedents, cinema and video."³

The difference between memorization and memorialization may be one of the further aspects in which the interaction evolves – beyond the artwork but still linked to it. The memory of the event with its happening and performative elements, its traces and records both official and unofficial, the re-processing and mash-ups; all of these elements become part of and contribute to a collective narrative and pattern of engagement and interaction.

These are issues and problems that the artists and writers of this LEA special issue have analyzed from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds, offering to the reader the opportunity of a glimpse into the complexity of today's art interactions within the contemporary social and cultural media landscapes.

Touch and Go is one of those issues that are truly born from a collaborative effort and in which all editors have contributed and worked hard in order to

deliver a documentation of contemporary art research, thought and aesthetic able to stand on the international scene.

For this reason I wish to thank Prof. Janis Jefferies and Irini Papadimitriou together with Jonathan Munro and Özden Şahin for their efforts. The design is by Deniz Cem Önduygu who as LEA's Art Director continues to deliver brilliantly designed issues.

Lanfranco Aceti

Editor in Chief, *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*
Director, Kasa Gallery



1. "Nevertheless, there is this constant apparently inherent need to try and categorize and classify. In *Beyond Interface*, an exhibition I organized in 1998, I 'datamined' ten categories: net.art, storytelling, socio-cultural, biographical, tools, performance, analog-hybrid, interactive art, interfacers + artificers. David Ross, in his lecture here at the CAD-RE Laboratory for New Media, suggested 21 characteristics of net art. Stephen Wilson, a pioneering practitioner, has a virtual – albeit well-ordered – jungle of categories. Rhizome has developed a list of dozens of keyword categories for its ArtBase. Lev Manovich, in his *Computing Culture: Defining New Media Genres* symposium focused on the categories of database, interface, spatialization, and navigation. To my mind, there is no question that such categorization is useful, especially in a distributed system like the Internet. But, in truth, to paraphrase Barnett Newman, "ornithology is for the birds what categorization is for the artist." Perhaps especially at a time of rapid change and explosive growth of the underlying infrastructure and toolsets, it is critical that description follow practice and not vice versa." Steve Dietz, *Why Have There Been No Great Net Artists? Web Walker Daily* 28, April 4, 2000, <http://bit.ly/QJEWIY> (accessed July 1, 2012).
2. This link to a Google+ conversation is an example of this argument on massive data and multiple media engagements across diverse platforms: <http://bit.ly/pGgDsS> (accessed July 1, 2012).
3. Timothy Murray, *Digital Baroque: New Media Art and Cinematic Folds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 138.

Touch and Go: The Magic Touch Of Contemporary Art

It is with some excitement that I write this preface to Watermans International Festival of Digital Art, 2012. It has been a monumental achievement by the curator Irini Papadimitriou to pull together 6 groundbreaking installations exploring interactivity, viewer participation, collaboration and the use or importance of new and emerging technologies in Media and Digital Art.

From an initial call in December 2010 over 500 submissions arrived in our inboxes in March 2011. It was rather an overwhelming and daunting task to review, look and encounter a diverse range of submissions that were additionally asked to reflect on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Submissions came from all over the world, from Africa and Korea, Austria and Australia, China and the UK, Latvia and Canada and ranged from the spectacularly complicated to the imaginatively humorous. Of course each selector, me, onedotzero, London's leading digital media innovation organization, the curatorial team at Athens Video Art Festival and Irini herself, had particular favorites and attachments but the final grouping I believe does reflect a sense of the challenges and opportunities that such an open competition offers. It is though a significant move on behalf of the curator that each work is given the Watermans space for 6 weeks which enables people to take part in the cultural activities surrounding each installation, fulfilling, promoting and incorporating the Cultural Olympiad themes and values 'inspiration, participation and creativity.'

Some, like Gail Pearce's *Going with the Flow* was made because rowing at the 2012 Olympics will be held near Egham and it was an opportunity to respond and create an installation offering the public a more interactive way of rowing, while remaining on dry land, not only watching but also participating and having an effect on the images by their actions. On the other hand, Michele Barker and Anna Munster's collaborative *Hocus Pocus* will be a 3-screen interactive artwork that uses illusionistic and performative aspects of magical tricks to explore human perception, senses and movement. As they have suggested, "Magic – like interactivity – relies on shifting the perceptual relations between vision and movement, focusing and diverting attention at key moments. Participants will become aware of this relation as their perception catches up with the audiovisual illusion(s)" (artists statement, February 2011). Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi and Emeka Ogboh are artists who also work collaboratively and working under name of One-Room Shack. *UNITY* is built like a navigable labyrinth to reflect the idea of unity in diversity that the Games signify. In an increasingly globalized world they are interested in the ways in which the discourse of globalization opens up and closes off discursive space whereas Suguru Goto is a musician who creates real spaces that are both metaphysical and spiritual. *Cymatics* is a kinetic sculpture and sound installation. Wave patterns are created on liquid as a result of sound vibrations generated by visitors. Another sound work is Phoebe Hui's *Granular Graph*, a sound instrument about musical gesture and its notation.

Audiences are invited to become a living pendulum. The apparatus itself can create geometric images to represent harmonies and intervals in musical scales. Finally, Joseph Farbrook's *Strata-caster* explores the topography of power, prestige, and position through an art installation, which exists in the virtual world of Second Life, a place populated by over 50,000 people at any given moment.

Goldsmiths, as the leading academic partner, has been working closely with Watermans in developing a series of seminars and events to coincide with the 2012 Festival. I am the artistic director of Goldsmiths Digital Studios (GDS), which is dedicated to multi-disciplinary research and practice across arts, technologies and cultural studies. GDS engages in a number of research projects and provides its own postgraduate teaching through the PhD in Arts and Computational Technology, the MFA in Computational Studio Arts and the MA in Computational Art. Irini is also an alumni of the MFA in *Curating* (Goldsmiths, University of London) and it has been an exceptional pleasure working with her generating ideas and platforms that can form an artistic legacy long after the Games and the Festival have ended. The catalogue and detailed blogging/documentation and social networking will be one of our responsibilities but another of mine is to ensure that the next generation of practitioners test the conventions of the white cube gallery, reconsider and reevaluate artistic productions, their information structure and significance; engage in the museum sector whilst at the same time challenging the spaces for the reception of 'public' art. In addition those who wish to increase an audience's interaction and enjoyment of their work have a firm grounding in artistic practice and computing skills.

Consequently, I am particularly excited that the 2012 Festival Watermans will introduce a mentoring scheme for students interested in participatory interactive digital / new media work. The mentoring scheme involves video interviews with the 6 selected artists and their work, briefly introduced earlier in this preface, and discussions initiated by the student. As so often debated in our seminars at Goldsmiths and

elsewhere, what are the expectations of the audience, the viewer, the spectator, and the engager? How do exhibitions and festival celebrations revisit the traditional roles of performer/artist and audiences? Can they facilitate collaborative approaches to creativity? How do sound works get curated in exhibitions that include interactive objects, physical performances and screens? What are the issues around technical support? How are the ways of working online and off, including collaboration and social networking, affecting physical forms of display and publishing?

As I write this in Wollongong during the wettest New South Wales summer for 50 years, I want to end with a quote used by the Australia, Sydney based conjurers Michele Barker and Anna Munster

Illusions occur when the physical reality does not match the perception. 

The world is upside down in so many alarming ways but perhaps 2012 at Watermans will offer some momentary ideas of unity in diversity that the Games signify and *UNITY* proposes. Such anticipation and such promise!

Janis Jefferies

*Professor of Visual Arts
Goldsmiths
University of London, UK*

23rd Dec 2011, University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia

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1. Stephen L. Malnik and Susana Martinez-Conde, *Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic Reveals about our Everyday Deceptions* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2010), 8.

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The Empowering Potential of Re-Staging

ABSTRACT

In this paper we present and discuss the empowering potential of re-staging interactive art installations. We build on an approach, where we divide the staging process into four levels of staging (potential, strategic, tactical, dynamic), and in Umberto Eco's sense of openness, to four categories of choices (genre, temporal, spatial, actorial) to perform on each staging level. We present and discuss how we staged one of our interactive installations at a museum of modern art and a rehabilitation center for people with severe disabilities. We discuss our staging experience in relation to empowering qualities like; possibilities for self-expression, vitalization, ability to act, co-create, participation and mutual relation building. Our experience was that re-staging art at a radically different place became a provocation that re-vitalized us as creative individuals.

by

**Birgitta Cappelen &
Anders-Petter Andersson**

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We knew that re-staging our interactive installation, from a museum of modern art, to a rehabilitation center, was an act that might re-define who we were and wanted to be. Maybe even limit our future path. But standing there, watching the wonder and joy of deaf David listening to our installation, with his stomach, we realized the importance of our project. Also the installation and we were enriched with value and meaning. Umberto Eco states in his famous essay, *The Poetics of the Open Work*, that: "Every performance explains the composition but does not exhaust it." ¹ In the moment of the performance we understood that the re-staging had empowered us all.

RE-STAGING AND POTENTIALS OF THE OPEN WORK

The abstract explains the essence of this paper: our process, understanding and experience of re-staging our interactive installations, from one context to another; our reflections on the potential and value of re-staging.

This paper is about the re-staging process and approach, ² and in it we divide the staging process into different levels of staging, and categories of choices to be performed at each staging level. We present and discuss how we staged an installation at Moderna (Stockholm Museum of Modern Art) and at the rehabilitation center Rosenlund, for people with severe disabilities. The paper presents the staging choices we made in relation to the context, our intention, and people's interpretations and actions, in the different exhibition contexts.

The object of analysis is our interactive installation, *ORFI*, which was created by the group MusicalFieldsForever. ³ We, the authors of this paper, are two members of this group. MusicalFieldsForever has for over 10 years created and exhibited interactive, tangible, musical installations in traditional art contexts like museums and galleries. Inspired by Eco's open "field

of possibilities" ⁴ we call our interactive installations 'open musical fields,' which in essence present our project and pathos. The paper presents a critique and deconstruction of the power structures in traditional art consumption, in line with the tradition of installation art, ^{5 6} but with a special consideration for tangible and musical interactive media.

In the paper we adopt the concept of empowerment thinking, ⁷ in order to develop an understanding of the value of re-staging. More precisely what we present and discuss is the *empowering potential of re-staging*. We have structured the paper in two main parts: in the first we present a short background on installation art, the staging process and empowerment thinking; in the second part we discuss our interactive installation *ORFI*, and the staging experience at Moderna and Rosenlund.

STAGING OPEN INTERACTIVE INSTALLATIONS

Installation art became a recognized art form in the late 1980s, even if the first examples of site specific, environmental exhibitions were created as far back as the late 1950s. ⁸ The essence of installation art is audience participation and emancipation. Installation artworks offer to the audience activities to take part in, and choices to perform. The meaning of the work evolves while interacting in and/or with the installation. ⁹

In his essay *The Poetics of the Open Work*, ¹⁰ Umberto Eco proposes an ideal of the 'open work,' as an artwork which is open to many interpretations and choices to be made.

The concept of open work is similar to installation art, a concept and aesthetical ideal from the 1960s, which we find inspiring when working with interactive installations because of its programmable possibilities. Eco's examples of open works were avant-garde music by Henri Pousseur and Pierre Boulez whose musical works partly were open for a collaborative live staging by musicians. Pousseur and Boulez created systems of music that could be combined by the performers in real time. It is an aesthetics that welcomes *openness*, *ambiguity* and *interpretation* as important staging qualities in order to create *expectation* and motivation. ¹⁸⁹¹⁰ Eco focuses in his analysis on professional performers like musicians, but he makes a note about the similarity between the art experience of professional artists and an amateur audience. He writes that:

Every "reading," "contemplation," or "enjoyment" of a work of art represent a tacit or private form of "performance." ¹

In line with Eco's view we use the term *performance* as the container of open works, and *audience* as our general term, bridging and blurring boundaries between artists, performers, users, spectators and actors.

Eco relates the value of the open work to the number of different perspectives in which the work can be interpreted. He states that:

Thus his comprehension of the original artifact is always modified by his particular and individual perspective. In fact, the form of the work of art gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and understood. These give it a wealth of different resonances and echoes without impairing its original essence. ¹

Thereby he provides us with the argument to justify the creation of ambiguous works to be staged in different media and contexts.

THE ART OF STAGING

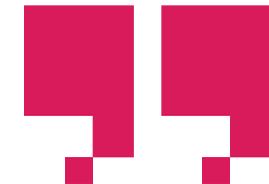
Staging is the creative act of showing something to an audience. Within theatre it is the creative and aesthetic act of presenting a play on a stage, which includes several activities like: adaptation of a text to a performable text, casting, set design, etc. Staging is also used when designing other temporally dramatized events, both fictional and real, ¹¹ such as a family conflict, or a historical event in a museum, with real or interactive actors. The act of staging means to interpret and dramatize a situation.

There are many aesthetic techniques at different levels and in different phases of the creative process that can be used in successful staging processes. ¹²¹³ For instance visual techniques like changing the light on the stage shift the focus of the observer. Rhetorical techniques are used by actors who by changing their tone of voice alter the audience's expectations. Temporal and narrative techniques, like using pauses when talking, can also be used to shift the viewers' or performers' attention. Or acting techniques, like making an actor speak to a chair on the stage and thereby giving the chair the role of a listening actor. These are a just a few simple examples on which we base our own work. By using these or similar techniques we develop interactive installations in order to motivate and invite the audience's interaction.

In the staging process the artist chooses and co-creates the contexts, situations and structures of the presented object, play or installation. The chosen context and situation provide the background for the audience's interpretations and interaction. The staging of an installation becomes therefore an important part of the creation of an artwork, since it requires creative considerations and choices that will affect the quality of the audience's experience.



The staging of an installation becomes therefore an important part of the creation of an artwork, since it requires creative considerations and choices that will affect the quality of the audience's experience.



STAGING AND RE-STAGING

In an earlier paper, *Co-created Staging – Situating installations*, ² we have presented and discussed our staging approach for interactive installations, and the creative possibilities of staging. Here we would like to focus on an overview of the central aspects of our staging and re-staging approach and provide insight in to the creative choices that one can and must take through the whole process of creation of the artwork.

We divide the staging process into four levels; conceptualization and detailed description of the installation (potential staging), selection of the exhibition place and event (strategic staging), setting up of the installation in the chosen place (tactical staging), and finally the performance with the audience's interaction (dynamic staging). The different levels are interrelated to each other, which means that the choices made on one level affect the possibilities on other levels.

The artist has to create possibilities to allow potentiality in the artwork. In particular when creating an installation possibilities and potential should be available on the tactical and dynamic level. The artist has to design these possibilities as possibility and potentiality in order for the audience to have the opportunity of interacting by changing the lighting or the type of music of the installation.

STAGING CHOICES

In line with Umberto Eco's concept of open work, we suggest that an installation should offer openness in many dimensions and layers in order to facilitate more complex and varied forms of audience's interaction. In our description on the staging of *ORFI* – the case study of this paper – we will explain the design process to accomplish openness in staging. In general there are four types of choices to perform: Genre choices, Temporal choices, Spatial choices and Actorial choices. ²¹⁴

Genre choices are choices related to *cultural forms*. The experiences and meanings the artist wants to communicate in installation art are expressed through the audience's participation and interaction. ⁵ Different audiences have different expectations based on their knowledge, cultural background, motivation and interpretation of the situation. ¹⁵ If the installation can be staged and presented in *several ways*, spaces, institutions, events, to several *types of audiences* and *still communicate the artist's intention*, we call the installation *open* to several *genre choices*. It is open to many possible forms in which it may manifest itself as

well as being opened to many possible interpretations by different audiences.

Temporal choices are related to *experiencing time*. At any given moment everyone is somewhere, in time and space. If one can move mentally to another time, or change the order in a sequence, one has the possibility to *make temporal choices*. If the installation is *open to temporal choices*, one can change the narrative design during setup, or performance in the installation. ² ¹¹

Spatial choices are related to experience of space and place. If the artist during tactical staging of the installation, or the audience during interaction with the installation, can change the set design, lighting, sound and positioning of props, we call the installation open to spatial choices.

Actorial choices are related to the *role one takes in a situation*. The installation is open to actuarial choices if it offers the artists, during setup (tactical staging), or the audience during interaction, a range of possibilities to change and exchange roles.

STAGING LEVELS

As described in the section titled Staging and Re-staging, we divide the staging process into four levels: *potential*, *strategic*, *tactical* and *dynamic* staging.

Potential staging is the staging process we do when creating the installation. How we imagine and plan the final work and its *openness towards choices* concerning genre, time, space and role based possibilities. All in order to create an installation open to audience co-creation on the dynamic staging level.

Strategic staging is the staging process related to exhibiting the installation, what audiences to reach, what the installation will communicate in the space provided by the institution and other strategic communication choices.

Tactical staging is the staging process performed by the artist when setting up the installation in a chosen institution and space. This staging process includes decisions on how to arrange the physical space, the lighting and sound mix to motivate the audience to interact and co-create in the installation.

Dynamic Staging is the staging process performed by the audience during interaction, or performance as Eco calls it. ¹ It might include genre choices to change the experience, temporal choices to change the narrative, re-structuring the physical space or changing roles. ¹⁶ These are multiple choices that the audience can perform and these interactions can have *empowering value*.

THE EMPOWERMENT PERSPECTIVE

The Empowerment concept and thinking grew out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s-1970s, and is connected to political, democratic and humanistic values. In psychology empowerment is related to preventive thinking, which is anti-medical and anti-psychiatric. ⁷ The focus is on self-actualization, concentrating on the abilities and strengths of the person, not on their diagnosis or weaknesses. The goal is to improve vitality, self-esteem, social relationships and participation, through mutual and equal positive relation building experiences. ¹⁷ ¹⁸ ¹⁹ Empowerment is always situated in a context, and is happening and unfolding in a cultural context which renders every situation and staging different.

In the following example we use our open, interactive installation *ORFI*, to discuss the empowering potential of staging.

STAGING THE INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION ORFI

Creating open installations that offer the audience various ways to co-create has always been a central point in our work. *ORFI* is an interactive art installation that we have made in several versions and re-staged for different occasions. ² ¹⁶ ²⁰ We have worked over a number of years to make *ORFI* as open as possible to audience's interaction and interpretation. The name

ORFI comes from origami 'OR,' and 'FI,' fields, ¹ and from Orpheus who made the rocks sing.

The present version of *ORFI* offers the opportunity to the audience to perform spatial, temporal, actuarial and genre related choices, in accordance with our staging approach previously described.

The present *ORFI* version consists of 26 soft pyramid shaped modules in three different sizes from 30 to 90 centimeters. Most modules are made in black textile with orange origami shaped 'wings' and lights along one side. Some modules contain speakers, so one can listen and experience the vibrations, sitting, or holding a module in one's lap. Spatially, the modules can be connected together in a Lego-like manner into large interactive landscapes, or hang from the ceiling as in Figure 1.

Every single module contains a microcomputer and a radio device, so they can communicate wirelessly with each other. The 'wings' contain bend sensors. By interacting with the 'wings' the audience create temporally instant changes in music, light and the dynamic graphical wall projection. The installation contains 8

different musical and graphical genres to choose from. Two orange pyramid modules contain microphones, which create live music based on the audience's own voice and environmental sounds. Actorially, one can choose to sit down in the largest module as in a chair, experiencing *ORFI* as an ambient, vibrating background, or play on it as an instrument. Or one can talk, sing and play with it, as with a friend or a co-musician, who answers with imitation and variation after a little thinking pause. ¹⁶

The above described possibilities, for temporal, spatial, actuarial and genre based choices make *ORFI* open to empowering experiences. *ORFI* offers the audience a large choice of possible actions to perform with one or more of the wireless soft modules as well as the

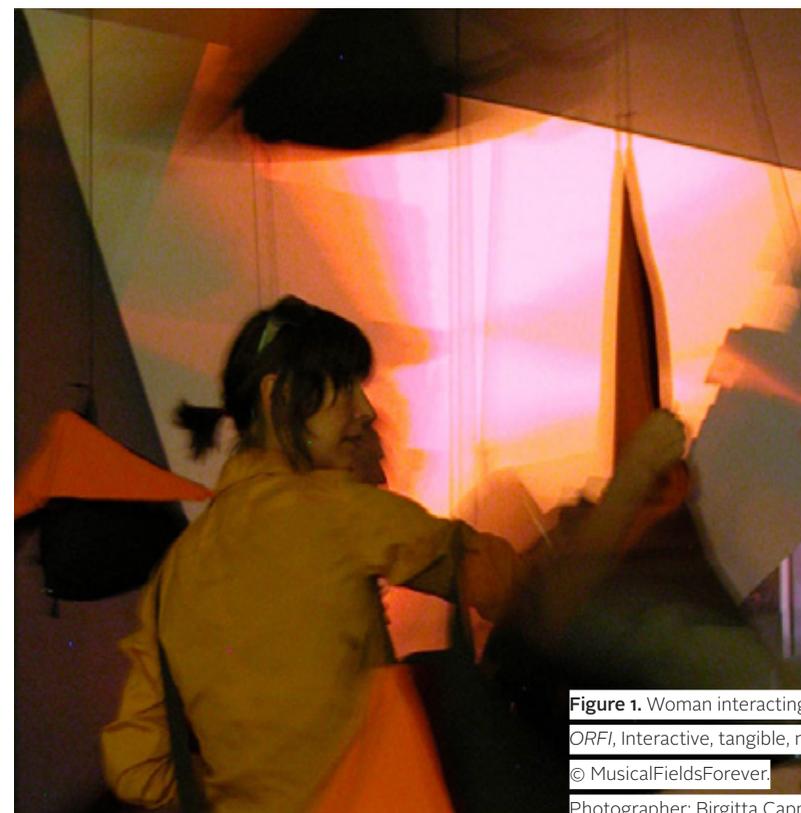


Figure 1. Woman interacting with *ORFI* hanging from the ceiling. *ORFI*, Interactive, tangible, musical installation.
© MusicalFieldsForever.
Photographer: Birgitta Cappelen.



Figure 2. Man interacting in the *ORFI* field on the floor.
ORFI, Interactive, tangible, musical installation.
 © MusicalFieldsForever.
 Photographer: Birgitta Cappelen.

STAGING AT MODERNA

possibility to express oneself by recording sounds and performing in different musical genres. *ORFI*'s tangible qualities and diverse textile surfaces invite the audience to *touch* and *hug*, *hit* it like an instrument and *throw* it like a pillow, thereby strengthening co-creation and relation building between participants.¹⁶
²¹ Musically varied responses to interaction reinforce performers' desire to play together and co-create music. It is qualities like these that enable empowering when interacting with *ORFI*.

We were invited to exhibit *ORFI* at Moderna (Stockholm Museum of Modern Art), during the celebration of Art's Birthday Party in January 2008. It was a yearly event, where most of Stockholm's contemporary music and art literates went to watch experimental music, new media art and to party with friends. On a *strategic staging level* to participate in the event defined *ORFI* as interactive installation art. We were one of a few installations, among 15 music and performance groups. The European radio network also broadcasted concerts and people performing in *ORFI* live. Because we were presented as one of the most technically advanced artworks, the audience was motivated to experience 'the latest' work in interactive art and interacted with *ORFI*.

On a tactical staging level, we placed *ORFI* in a blind alley in the exhibition hall, next to the bar. The huge

dynamic graphic projection on the wall, overlooking the hall, attracted people's attention while *ORFI*'s pyramid shaped modules formed dramatic and inviting rock silhouettes against the projection.

FIX FOR THE NARCISSIST ART JUNKIE

People didn't attend the Moderna art event to solely experience art. They were there to also strengthen their identity as art literates and for being 'different.' A contradiction it might seem, but *ORFI* empowered the audience by turning the floor into a stage to show off. Everywhere else the partying people had to *stand* packed together. Therefore, to *sit* in the open *ORFI* installation among the modules, made it legitimate to be different. People sat on the floor with a soft glowing and vibrating *ORFI* module in one's lap and a drink in the other, created music and played. The installation gave people the opportunity to express themselves in a unique way, while creating sounds and flashes of light in the face of each person interacting that also reverberated in the space. For those involved in intimate conversations *ORFI*'s dynamic, graphic projection created a sheltered place, within the larger space that surrounded the modules. In this sheltered space *ORFI* facilitated new social relations. The small and large wireless modules made it possible for people to move around, experiment spatially, and co-create music with others.

On a tactical level, the staging of *ORFI* on the floor in the exhibition hall led to audience's empowerment, while on a dynamic staging level it offered the possibilities of being different. *ORFI* empowered the audience in narcissist lust of seeing and being seen.

STAGING AT ROSENLUND REHABILITATION

Moving *ORFI* 5 kilometers from Moderna to Rosenlund rehabilitation center in Stockholm, was a small geographical move, but a giant cultural, artistic and strategic staging leap.

In the year 2009 we were invited by the Swedish national art society, *Konstfrämjandet*, to take part in a series of exhibitions under the name *Art for all senses*.²² The series' goal was to offer people with special needs contemporary art experiences. From Rosenlund's point of view, on a strategic level, this was a choice that differentiated them from other hospitals and expressed their uniqueness. At Rosenlund *ORFI* became one of 20 small rooms for multisensory experiences that the audience or visitors could book for an hour. A room to be alone in, or together with others, very different from the tactical staging experience we created at Moderna.

On a tactical staging level we placed the projection screen on the wall, opposite the entrance door. On the floor we put a neutral carpet and all of the *ORFI* modules. The small room was approximately 20 square meters and the projection, carpet, music and light created an intimate and safe ambient. *ORFI* became like one of the other multisensory rooms²² for tactile, musical and color explorations at Rosenlund. The door could be closed, increasing the safe and private atmosphere, but could also be left open, creating expectations and inviting people walking by or on their way to the public café.

PROVOKING PREJUDICE

The strategic staging choice that became the strongest provocation and the greatest learning potential for us came from meeting with real difference: bodily, social and communication differences, which were world apart from the Art's Birthday Party. To exhibit

art for people with severe disabilities challenged our preconceived notions of what was possible to do in *ORFI*. We ended up to be the ones who were empowered by seeing what art could offer in terms of new and unique experiences. The patients' actions and engagement showed us completely new ways to 'perform' in the installation.

An example was *deaf* David in his wheelchair, who told us he was a great music fan. He just couldn't lift a normal stereo speaker into the chair by himself and didn't listen with his ears. In *ORFI* he managed to play with the wireless and soft speaker modules without help and felt the music's vibrations with his body. This encouraged David to record and remix his favorite songs and to sing. David's dream was to sing, but we realized he never had practiced singing, or listened to his own voice, because he had been told he couldn't. At first when he tried to record into *ORFI* he wasn't able to form a single sound. However, he went home to practice in order to be able to come back a week later and to make sounds, listen and play with his voice. Interacting in *ORFI* vitalized David when he saw that he could express himself by singing and playing his music as he had never done before. This also made it possible for him to experience and participate in mutually empowering relations, where the social and musical exchange was built on equal terms and where he felt that his participation mattered for somebody else's experience.

On a dynamic staging level David's and other visitors' performances at Rosenlund showed us ways to co-create with *ORFI* that we never fully imagined that would be possible. The re-staging of *ORFI* had empowered our artistic ambition and competence, re-vitalizing the future work of MusicalFieldsForever.

RE-STAGE AND EMPOWER US ALL

Staging and re-staging is the creative process of situating the artwork in a context, and is an important part of the artwork'.² During many years of creating and exhibiting interactive art installations we have experienced the creative, communicative and value potential of staging.

In this paper we have discussed the empowering value of re-staging. Empowering possibilities to express oneself, improve competence, participation, relation building and gain positive experiences.^{17 18} We have discussed the empowering value of re-staging by presenting our approach and examples of staging based on openness.

We have divided the staging process into four levels and operate with four kinds of choices to perform on each staging level. The staging levels are *potential*, *strategic*, *tactical* and *dynamic* level. The choices to perform are *genre*, *temporal*, *spatial* and *actorial*.

Our case study in this paper was the staging of our open interactive installation *ORFI*, which was staged at a museum of modern art and re-staged at a rehabilitation center.

The re-staging allowed reflection on the meaning of potential and the empowering of the re-staging process. New and different places and audiences open up new thought processes, challenge perspectives and meanings, and shake preconceived notions. They turn things upside down and make us see things that we have never seen before, thereby improving our artistic competence, and re-vitalizing ourselves as creative individuals. For us this radical re-staging experience even re-vitalized our ambition to deconstruct with our artworks notions of power structures. The re-staging experience had empowered us all. ■

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