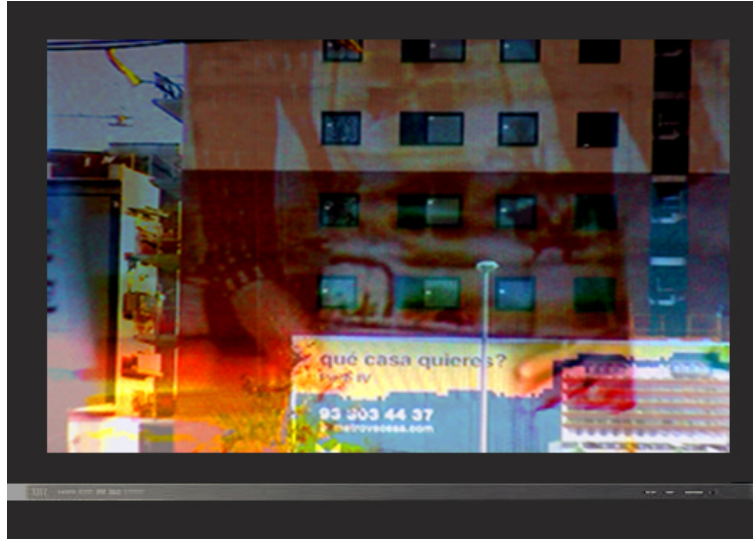


Final Project Master in Digital Arts: The Abyss
Participants: Oriol Muñoz and Ana Rueda
Tutors: Günter Geiger and Jose Lozano
Workprocess schedule: September to December 2005



The Abyss is an installation about the greatneses and miseries the human being carries inside. We aim at a sensorial and sensual immersion of the participant in this suggestive environment followed by an introspection caused by this experience.

<http://www.abisme.com>

Aim of this work:

Our anchor point is digital technology and its multiple possibilities for us, both in a formal as in a communicative way. We want to submerge the viewer in a spectacular visual and auditive experience based on subjective criteria and thus provoke an introspection by the viewer, caused by this situation.

To intensify the experience of this instalation we created an impressive infrastructure, astonishing both in size as in form. It is based on a hanging eliptic cylinder, 3 metres in diameter. On this cylinder 4 videos are projected consecutively. Around this infrastructure we place 4 loudspeakers that will emit the soundtracks of each one of the videos.

The human being is the true protagonist of this installation, and is the central theme of all video material.

Our aim is to submerge the viewer in an Abyss, an Abyss of image and sound that will seduce, surprise and attack the viewer without giving him any right of answer, at least not immediately.

Some thoughts on the creation process

Well way into the twentieth century man has taken another step forward in evolution. In this globalized world, technology enables us to generate and disperse data instantaneously and reach millions of persons at a time. This information can be used for different goals.

This is how, in his day-to-day struggle to survive, the human being finds himself 'mediatised' socially in relation to the other, this as a result of the stream of images and information sent to him by the media: television, radio, internet, ... He forms part of a spectacle in which directors, fashion and sports celebrities, daily events, and heroic deeds take the leading roles in our stories and our everyday life.

So far so good, but all these data generated by the same humans and their modern technology based on cultural development, implicitly hold all virtues and defects typical of the human race, the protagonist of this story.

Let us have a look at the Wikipedia defenition of the human being:

Human
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Human beings define themselves in biological, social, and spiritual terms. Biologically, humans are classified as the species *Homo sapiens* (Latin for "wise man"): a bipedal primate of the superfamily Hominoidea, together with the other apes—chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, and gibbons.

The human mind has several distinct attributes. It is responsible for complex behaviour, especially language. Curiosity and observation have led to a variety of explanations for consciousness and the relation between mind and body. Psychology attempts to study behaviour from a scientific point of view. Religious perspectives emphasise a soul, qi or atman as the essence of being, and are often characterised by the belief in and worship of God, gods or spirits. Philosophy, especially philosophy of mind, attempts to fathom the depths of each of these perspectives. Art, music and literature are often used in expressing these concepts and feelings.

Like all primates, humans are inherently social. They create complex social structures composed of co-operating and competing groups. These range from nations and states down to families, and from the community to the self. Seeking to understand and manipulate the world around them has led to the development of technology and science. Artifacts, beliefs, myths, rituals, values, and social norms have each played a role in forming humanity's culture.

Presented as four separate projections, we will call them coats, each on a different subject, The Abyss shows how we think about present-day mankind. He is an extraordinary being, capable at the same time of both the best and the worst. Each coat will reflect a specific way of conduct by this eccentric species.

This is then how we will present to you Man:

In his **natural environment**: Mankind as a species in his natural habitat, planet Earth.

In his **creative aspect**. Man is a rational animal. One of the most characteristic features of our species is our creativity, which comes forth from our intelligence, our sense of reason. Nowadays, when globalization is expanding vastly, one can get to know the entire world in the blink of an eye, as a way of speaking.

Every creative process is the result of an interaction between the following elements: The experiences and reflection of an individual or group in a certain environment, his or their cultural context and the social field in which he or they develop.

In this coat we project images of creativity, positive or useful creativity for man's future: science, arts. The will to create. We see the fruit of human creativity, of the cooperation between human beings to answer questions, with the purpose of extending their knowledge, choosing new and unknown paths.

In his **everyday delusion**. Man, in the 21st century has been drawn into the daily vortex of a capitalist way of life. His social reality has been mediatized by images. One tries to make him take for granted that what isn't, and twisted into the obligation of finding happiness.

This coat focuses on man in his capitalist way of being. We see how he collects his daily goods, all he needs for his social realization and survival. Abundance and misery go hand in hand in the shopping mall of life. Obviously everyone prefers to buy and live in abundance, hoping to reach happiness by doing so.

The **destructive** aspect. Human intelligence and creativity can also be used for manipulation and destruction. A scientific step forward can easily be turned into a threat to the entire human race, it just depends on how one makes use of it.

This coat shows us images of manipulation and of the destruction of the environment to extract from it what we need for the progress of our species.

Limited resources will cause wars between societies, and even within societies with a more or less homogeneous nature, we will soon see a war between the members themselves, between brothers, wars that will end violently, or will cause the end of industrial society.

	VITAL COAT	CREATIVE COAT
DEFINITION	Man in his essence, in his natural environment.	Man in a creative, scientific and artistic perspective.
VIDEO	Images of our natural environment and the essence of man.	Images that depict mankind's creations such as art, science, culture and technology.
SOUND	Pure rhythm, simple and basic primary sound, organic.	Ascending rhythm. A rich sound, in different colors, growing in intensity gradually.
EFFECT ON THE VIEWER	Contemplation.	A positive experience, beauty.

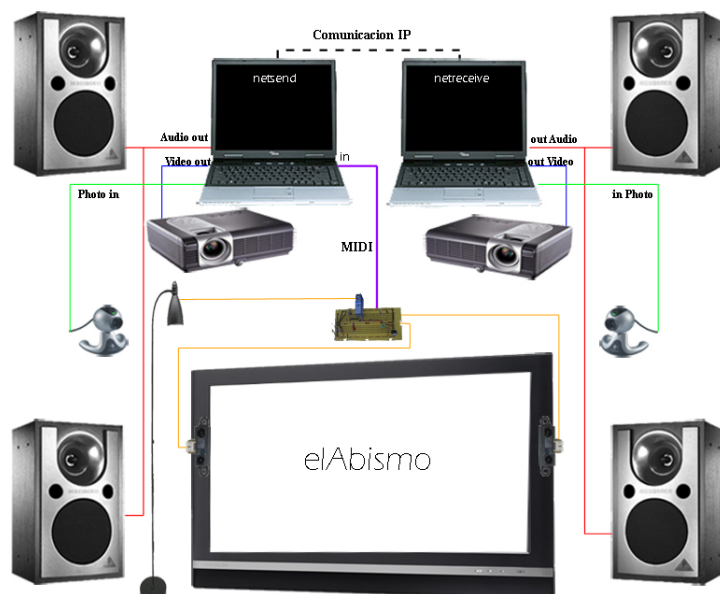
	DELUSION COAT	DESTRUCTION COAT
DEFINITION	Seduction, manipulation, excess, confusion.	Threat to the life and integrity of the human being and it's natural environment.
VIDEO	Media, excess, voids, opulence. Rhythm, effects and repetition.	Impressive images, violence, environmental and human destruction.
SOUND	Sounds of medium and high frequency. Insinuate but not clear.	Harsh and chaotic rhythm. Aggressive percussion, high volume.
EFFECT ON THE VIEWER	Seduction and insecurity.	Emptiness, fear and aggression.

Description:

The viewer stands in front of the latest model 51" tv flat screen, which is the entrance to the Abyss. His presence will be detected by infra red sensors, placed in the lateral sides of the tv screen. The sensors activate two webcams. These webcams will, at different intervals, take pictures of the viewer and store these images in two computers. Once the viewer has stepped inside the installation, he will see a hanging elliptic screen of three metres diameter, covered in a canvas projection-screen up to two metres high.

One minute after the first viewer has entered the screen, the first audio-visual sequence of 1:10 minutes begins to play. This video will occupy 1/4 of the surrounding cylinder. Hereafter the video will start a loop, and a second sequence of the same length will begin. Those two projections will take in 2/4 of the cylinder.

This way of working will be repeated until the whole surface of the cylinder is being projected by all 4 audiovisual sequences. In the end all 4 sequences will be repeated, showing at the same time, randomly, the pictures that have been taken earlier by the webcams.



Production process

The work was set up as a direct answer to the interface-concept itself as an intermediate space or a meta-space, a hybrid between a physical area and a digital space.

It referred to existence in a parallel world, a cross point between two realities: the physical one, related to everyday events in an everyday life, and the virtual one, created by a set of visual and sound stimulations that we receive in the urban surroundings through the communication media, most of all via the television.

The work was, roughly speaking, an intent to materialize this metaphoric cross point between realities, in which we are all living, hardly realizing it, and where our physical reality almost loses strength, to the benefit of a virtual reality.

As we saw we had similar concerns and personal interests we decided to work on the final project together.. We soon realized that we were more working towards mankind and knowledge than on technology itself. We decided to start from four videos, each on a different theme, representing the different faces man has in his present day state.

The installation became a cylindrical structure where four videos are projected creating each an audio-visual atmosphere. For the viewer this would be an enjoyable experience.

We also thought about the lateral sides, the ceiling and a reflective floor. For all this we calculated to need 4 projectors and 3 or 4 computers.

The installation would have to be realized with two computers, and so each pc would have to project two audiovisual sequences from one and the same projector. The only way to do this was to divide the screen in GEM so that we could be able to deal with two separate videos.

The communication protocol between the two computers to assure the ongoing emission of the sequences for the Abyss would happen through ip. Instead of using just one webcam, we installed two. Like this we could shoot the viewer from different angles and on different moments.

We decided that we didn't need a reflective floor and ceiling. Making use of a fabric similar to a mirror would not give us the same effect, and we ended up thinking it would not add up to our work. What did seem of major importance to us, was the structure itself. Having it more elliptical would only benefit the projections.

Asked for a second opinion, the architect studio Hybrid was very enthusiastic about the idea and they came up with several proposals. The elliptic structure with hanging cylinder was decided on. The cylinder would be hanging on cables, attached to the floor and the ceiling.

We had been doing tests with projections onto a plastic canvas, like a shower curtain. This was not expensive and easy in use, but during the first try-outs we saw it didn't work. We needed a more elastic canvas, and the curtain had to be attached more firmly and tight. Wrinkles messed up the projection of the videos.

Please find below the first draft of the Abyss, designed by Hybrid.

