

The 14th ifva Interactive Media Category Jury's Meeting Transcript

Jurors in Attendance: Frederic Lichtenstein (LICHTENSTEIN), Ng Tsz Kwan (NG),
Winnie Fu (FU), Jamsen Law (LAW), Bryan Chung (CHUNG)

Organizer Representatives: Teresa Kwong (KWONG), Mickey Choi (CHOI)

Leaf, Living Digit

CHUNG: There are more rooms for development in this piece of work. It is kind of some sorts of reactions. The plants, the organic stuffs will trigger the animated movements, and just stop at there. This should be something which can be explained and elaborated, like, to have more considerations of the form of life of the plant and the related motion of those animation characters or text. This work now is just like a simple documentation of an action, reaction and relation.

LAW: Maybe my interaction with the plant can be visualized or somewhat can be seen. I would think how the object takes my actions? I am thinking what kind of interaction between me and the plant. I want to see more interactions, like between the plants and the cylinders, too. There are rooms for development. There should be more variations between various movements instead of what we have now is just one kind of movement.

FU: I like the form of presentation. Compared to other works in the exhibition, it is quite clean and tidy in the form of circle. The reaction is very sharp, a sound 'ding', then turning out something very obviously. But again, like most of the works, it is just 'single-layered'. I also want to mention that he is using a real plant instead of an artificial object. It is a bonus.

LAW: when you talk about the clean layout, it makes me think that it is like a homepage, but I would like to see more pages of it.

FU: Right, exactly.

NG: When we saw the video, we can only see the three different animations, we were not sure about the work, and we also wondered if there would be more variations when it set up here. In this artist statement, he wants to do an experiment, but I am not sure what kind of experiment he is doing and the purpose of doing it, or what he expects.

LICHTENSTEIN: The result is pretty close to what we had seen in the video, and the short comings are the exactly what we had identified already. So, all the short comings bring together is that it is being a bit shallow, and at the same time he has a very nice poetic interface. Even with the simplicity of the installation, we like that organic kind of thoughts. For me, it is not a great piece. It is showing a way, a path that we would like to see and being explored.

Textworm

NG: It is better than my expectation by the time we watched the video documentation, and it has similar problems as others. It is a game only and it would be nice to have another level of meaning. Destroying something is enjoyable things to do. But as an art piece, we expect a little bit more than just destroying something.

If it only let people to cut the characters and put them back together, I don't know what the point to do it. We can destroy something else as well. If those characters can form some other things with meanings, it would be a lot better. And now it is just destroying something, which is meaningless.

LAW: I like the movements of those lines. It is poetic actually. However, the form doesn't go with the lines or the meaning of the title. If the form or movement, everything goes more together, it will be more interesting. Maybe he can come up with other images or other text.

LICHTENSTEIN: I am very interested to know whether the speed that the text needs to take to recompose the pieces can be accelerated. If it is an artist's choice, it is a technical intention. If it is an artist's choice, I would be scratching my head and ask why it is so slow.

FU, NG: Agree.

CHUNG: The intention is not the speed of the recombination, but he tried to let the pieces collided together and then to be combined by themselves. So the chance of collision is quite rare, the auto combination mode is off in this case. I also discovered some shortcomings in interaction when I saw the other viewer tried to play around with this piece. The viewer used the laser to move very fast, and the interaction is not supposed to put in this way according to then assigned. So, it is not a very interpretive in expressive way to draw a straight line, to cut the piece of

text into pieces. But the way the viewer was working is a more interpretive for expressive in a sense that to play around with interaction.

NG: It also doesn't need an instruction to tell you how to use that laser pointer.

LICHTENSTEIN: Every year, we have a few of the same kind of motives, either technically advanced but then the concept might be weak, or the concept is strong but technical set up is not enough. I have been relatively, pleasantly surprised by the experience that you get. There is no documentation, that is not very interactive, but when you see someone doing it, it comes pretty naturally of having fun and reacts nicely, so as the simple set up. I just hope that in the future, the balance (between the technical and concept development) would be improved. It also reflects that education of interaction in Hong Kong. Technical support has been easier for students nowadays to make an art piece. We need to remind them that their minds not only taken into technical matter, and should be more focused on the concept.

CHUNG: I have to declare that some entrants are my students and they have works presented here. This piece is also done by my students. For this one I have to say that they have the most sophisticated interaction design when compared to the others. They way they can successfully to create a piece, while many others are failed in most of the cases. For the others, they just obviously to spot some points and have them to react to the system. *Textworm* is well produced, packaged.

Hexic: A Choreography of Multimedia and Interactivity

FU: I do not spend enough time to see it through, but personally I think the presentation in this exhibition is worse than I expect. Because of the proposal and the way they layout their work shown in the original proposal is much more sophisticated as it seen now when been executed.

LAW: I want to know whether there are episodes and themes, I want to see the development of the theme if it is a performance. So that I know there is also development in this kind of narrative. If there are different modes, I can switch between by jumping from this mode to another that with different theme, and there would be a totally different experience for the visitors.

FU: Exactly. This is a performance work with stage design, costumes and all the dance

movements; and from the way it is showing now, you cannot really get any sense of those emotions. The artist should show some ways of how they interact. There are supposed to be a performer's movement constantly changes the background, but we cannot see this from the video.

CHUNG: According to the documentation, it is some sort of motions interacting with the background projection, or projection on the floor, and that are the interactive component of the performance. Maybe there are some other things else, but I cannot observe those things from the video

LAW: There should be two kinds of interaction in this piece. One is the performer interact with the system, and the other one is interaction between the performer and the audiences, also present another level of interaction. I cannot really feel that level by just watching this video. It is really difficult to comment.

Stolen Times for Sale

LICHTENSTEIN: It was very important to go through the buying process. I like this piece very much. At the same time it is true that the buying process is boring.

I think the process could be faster, it could be more entertaining. This piece is like a happening, a performance. For the first part, I am happy with what I have purchased, but the process of purchasing is so blank, it needs more energy and planning.

NG: In the first round of the competition, we have discussed the eligibility of this piece, whether it is an interactive media. As an artist, it is a nice piece of art. But now when sitting on the jury panel, the piece itself is definitely not a traditional interactive work. The interactions are made between the audience and the salesman. I concern if this piece is suitable to be put into this category. It looks strange in this category.

LICHTENSTEIN: It is very much a matter of point of view. In an interactive festival that only presents interactive media, maybe it would be difficult to define the nature of this piece. However, in the context of ifva, movie making is the foundation of the festival, and now having added with interactive media category as an extension. With this background, I start to think that this piece of movie making has two parts of interactive activities. Firstly, put a camera at the elevator and the passengers to interact with the camera. Then the buying

process is the second part of the interaction.

CHUNG: I accept it as a piece of interactive work. The way of participation is a kind of interactivity to me at least. There are some examples of this kind of participation in gallery or museum where the artist can create a hawker store in the venue and cooks some food and sells them to the viewers. Under this particular type of concept, I consider this as an interactive work. But I am not sure if it is an interactive media work or not, the medium he has been using may not particularly fit into his way of inviting participation. I have more expectation than what he has been shown us in the gallery. His work is in fact about selling something, and that is kind of virtual image or image in digital form. The way he sells the images and removes images from the piece of artwork, which new owner of the image can again duplicate the image in multiple forms. I guess he also has some remaining trails of image in his computer. This forms let me question about whether the image is durable, or the image can totally transfer the ownership from the artist to the buyer. He has not answered.

Those questions about selling in digital form, and those questions can be explained and elaborated in a more challenging way. I have no comment on the quality of the performance, as he might not an entertaining person to do that.

LAW: However, if I take it as a performance, the whole process is very important. If I put it as an interactive work, the interactions between buyers and sellers are important. He should provide a better performance of the buying process. I am disappointed to the setting of the shop. If the shop set up is more than a desk only, but to include more interfaces and create more complex which the system can be operated automatically, it would be more complete. I query why he has this desk or this kind of setting method, instead of doing it on-line or whatever in other form. I cannot justify this form.

FU: The way he is presenting the statement indicates that he is very conscious of selling a product. What I like about this piece is the relationship of the commerce and the world, there is a social meaning behind that. I also wonder why he bothers to have such setting; he can simply press the button and email the product to my account. It can be done virtually without a person there to sell this.

NG: It is not an interactive media to me. If he did it in an automatic way, like, using a vendor machine and the people to buy it with credit card, then to get the product

from the machine, this is more interactive.

The idea of selling time is that he filmed all the moments of he pressed the open door button when the elevator door was about to closed. Usually people don't press that button at that moment, and he has stolen the time from others. Then he sells those moments to someone else.

FU: The visual design is clever too. I saw it in another exhibition in Hong Kong Baptist University. They used one corner to show the lift images and you can see it from afar, it is quite attractive that way. It is very spacious.

LAW: That kind of image is always attractive. I still find it interesting, with the intention of pressing a button and to disturb the others.

NG: This is like what the commercial world do, like the monitor installed in the taxi, showing you images, disturb the passengers and making money from it.

LICHTENSTEIN: Stealing people's time in a lift is a very clever concept. Especially when this happens in Hong Kong, since people in the lift usually don't acknowledge each other. Unlike other places in the world that people usually act nicely to each other in the lift. People in Hong Kong spend so much time in the lift. They go into a very intimate place and they would shut down the social activity. So, stealing people's time is quite a pretty strong idea. Every time you look at those people's faces when the open door button is pressed, it is like intruding someone's privacy. I like the piece very much as an art work, but the buying process is not integrated into a piece itself. It could be many different things, the image of the buyer can be part of the installation, and the buyer can download the product to a disk. There are a lot more choices should be done. It would not be a matter what he can or he cannot do. But it is the fact that he doesn't have a good experiment. He doesn't have enough confrontation with the reality. As said this work has been shown in Baptist University and Osage Gallery, he has more experience already, he should refine his work.

LAW: The way he steals people's time is interesting. However as a buyer, I would think what the fun of getting that footage. I still think that it is not about time. What kind of time he is selling to me?

CHUNG: I share similar impression.

LICHTENSTEIN: When you say it is not too much about time, I tend to disagree, because of the time it takes to open the door and even when you press the button that only costs minimum amount of time, you are still taking time from others against their will.

LAW: I can agree with that, the action between the people in the elevator and the camera man. However, as a buyer, it is another process that what I got is the image and not really the piece of time that has been wasted during the process.

NG: It doesn't make any sense at all. Nobody would think that he or she has one minute more, it is impossible. But this presentation made it become an art work.

LICHTENSTEIN: Most of the pieces that we have selected are a bit shallow and at least this piece echo many questions. Even it is not perfect, but it has a depth that the others don't have.

Forest, Tree, Wood, Man...

NG: It is not as nice as the documentation presents when we read it in the first round meeting. The documentation works better. I remember that we once thought it would be a well-made exhibit for a museum.

FU: Actually it looks very much the same.

CHUNG: I have some hesitations to consider that as a piece of art work. It is like the information display board for some venues or an environmental protection event. No matter if it is responsive or not, unless the way of interacting with this particular panel has some sort of more extraordinary ways to interact with, so it is qualified to be an interaction with artistic creations.

LAW: If I treated it as an information booth, not many information I can get from the booth in fact. There are only two pages, which is not enough to tell the relation of the growth of the trees and the pollution.

FU: It falls into the same comment tonight for the single-layer artworks, which are most of the entries. It can be further developed, but maybe because of the limitation of time and space, they look like homework. They are failed in making variations in

terms of developing one concept into a more complex format.

LAW: He can do something more, like touching the dusts and have the windows pop up. It is now just simply clicking something and without showing the relation of the dusts and trees. I question how these things are related to this one single screen.

A Couple of Irons

FU: Originally I support this work to enter the second round, because it is very clean cut, in close circuit form. This is quite a new interpretation. Frankly, I am quite disappointed to see it for myself. It looks more fun on the documentation. Now I think it is boring. I think maybe the limitation of the space affect the movement. The visual is just not what I expected.

LAW: It is funny that if I don't treat it as an interactive work, it can be a media sculpture. This work can be interesting, but now I don't know why I should play with the irons. How those two objects related to the camera. If it is a sculpture, how should I look at it? Now I don't know what to think about it.

NG: I tried very hard to put all the things together, the closed circuit TV and the irons, but I failed to do that.

LICHTENSTEIN: In the proposal, it seems lot more interesting than the experience we have tonight. In a context of larger exhibitions with many visitors, where two visitors can meet very briefly and play with it, I think it still can work pretty nicely. But in the context of ifva where has fewer visitors, and more likely to be a personal exploration instead of group exploration. Then you only play with yourself or someone you know, and it will be less fun. I am a little disappointed but it could be a nice experience when it is in a different context.

LAW: If there are dozens of couples of irons, it may be very interesting. There is one only pair in the venue, I cannot find the fun from the image captured from the other end.

FU: One to two, or one to five, that would be interesting.

LICHTENSTEIN: As a control object, I still find it interesting. But iron should be very heavy and it is a dangerous object that you won't put it closer to your face or

anyone's face. But the fact that it is a lot lighter now, and more looks like a toy, also likes the telephone in the 1980's, or a shower spray. And it didn't give fully artistic ballots that the object should be given.

FU: I expect the screen image should have higher resolution. The iron can be dangerous and could be close encounter to your body. If the set up is more inviting or the image can be a little more different, it would be better. Like when you use the iron to scratch on somebody else, it would be more fun. If it brushes on your finger and you can have more close-ups and sharp images of the body, the texture. If I play with you and put it on your body and you play with the other. It would mean lot more in term of relationships.

LAW: What you are suggesting is another movement and interaction. If I sit comfortably ' with my friend and play with it, which is better than now looking like a sculpture that I would only take it up and checking what it is. It would be better to be used to suggest another kind of relationship with the other audience.

CHUNG: My first impression is the weight of the irons, which is much lighter than a common iron. When I tried to make use of the iron to get some images, I use the common way to press the iron on the piece of cloth and found the image unrecognizable. The images are blurb and not in focus. The difficulty is the way to find out some sort of context when I make use of these two irons, somehow it fails in the exhibition at this moment. The irons can be used or try to record some of my common use of practice of using the irons at home or whatever occasion. It is now difficult to make sense between that I have experience from the exhibit and the common use of an iron. I agree with what FU have said, it should be presented in more formats, put them in different locations and to see images of other irons. I am more particular interested in why he made the iron so light in weight. I had an expectation of holding up a heavy thing, and the image would be heavier than what we come into contact with a camera or a mobile phone. This kind of expectation also failed at the moment when I played around with the iron.

The Happiness of the Fish

NG: It is very different from the documentation.

LICHTENSTEIN: I disagree. I find it very close to the documentation. Personally I remember it as be more something spectacular. But at last it is shallow

as well. It was more like an astonishing staging piece, but for the way it works now is not particularly interesting.

NG: From what I saw from the documentation, the sound should be generative sound, right?

CHUNG: yes as in the final year project, there are three screens. And this one is single screen. In the final year project, they presented combinations of generative sound with live performance, with multiple screens and each screen take on different fishes. There are three tubes with three fishes and each echo with one screen.

NG: Then the image should be with more variations, the visual should have changed a lot, but the one we saw is like a screen saver. The title is just a gimmick, the idea cannot relate to it.

LAW: Even if it is ok at one screen thing, the generated graphic, the movement of the fish and the fish itself are totally not related. I mean the graphic, not the movement of the graphic.

NG: Even the fish moves, you expect the graphic should be changed along the movement?

LAW: That is one thing. Another thing is that if I see a still image or changed image, the relations between the square lines, gradation, colour or the life of the fish don't exist.

Black Box

LICHTENSTEIN: I am very surprised and a bit disappointed too for this piece. Because I think the process of having a message that go through a complex process and to give way to potential distortion or destruction is interesting. However, in this set up, everything comes from one computer. If one computer is the broadcaster and the other one is the receiver, it could have more surprises. And now the same computer is doing everything and it looks silly. I would think why not having just one computer to do all the work. Having a small separation between the broadcaster and the receiver would help the piece to be easier to be understood by the people seeing it for the first time. And we, the jurors have already known about this piece from the documentation and

knew what to expect and interact, which are not obvious for first time viewers at all. Also from the documentation that given to us, there were pixelated images with all the distortions, but we don't see that this time. I saw some other sound installation that you could push some buttons, and to see how the sound wave distorted. And this piece, you see the result but you don't visualize yourself as the interference. I think that is the dimension missing from the work.

NG: When I see this set up, it looks like an early video art work. It is so old fashion. I agree that the functions of the two computers should be separated.

CHUNG: I have not read any documentation so I have some difficulties in the beginning, until some of you explained the mechanism to me. I remember similar type of artwork with one computer, like text to speech mechanism to read a piece of text and the other computer uses speech recognition programme in order to understand the other computer's voice or speaking. It must have some errors or discrepancies between the two pieces of article. The artist tries to play around the lost in translation, but in form of encoding and decoding messages. He should have better preparation for the audience to understand the mechanism or the way they intend to do, like the piece of work I just mentioned. The artists have prepared written material which is the source of the piece of message, or a poem printed along with the computer which the computer is hidden. The audience knew the original piece of text with the print out provided, and the communication through the optical medium is distorted by the presence of the audience and visitors. The audience could also check the computer from the other side, to understand the messages, or to appreciate those distortions and errors along the communication. But in this case, at the beginning I found it difficult to make sense of those flashing characters and the relation with the flashing encoding light in the other end of the installation. For me, the separation between the two computers is also important, one party to do the sending and the other to receive, which represent the two different parties involved in the ways of communication. Technically it can be in one computer for the sake of the presentation, but two -computer-setting is better for the audience.

LAW: I am more interested to know about the meaning of the title, Black Box, or the reason of sending messages in this way. If you tell me it is about an accident, like someone sends off a SOS message, and I can make association to the title. It would be more interesting. I accept those kinds of old fashion video works. But they definitely can do something more, at least on the wall, like a frame on the wall

flashes and not just a short lighting on the edges of the floor. Make it like two objects are in communication. The effect now is not enough to bring out the communication topic. As an installation, the spacing is very strange. I did not pay attention to the one computer set up thing, as I spent all the time to understand the work.

NG: The idea of the computer getting a wrong message is very important. I found it boring as there is only one kind of flashing style when people block the transmission of the coding.

Nomination of awards

LICHTENSTEIN: Silver: ***Textworm***; Silver or Gold: ***Stolen Times for Sale***;

Special Mention: ***Leaf, Living Digit, A Couple of Irons, Black Box***

FU: I pick up 4 works first and without nomination. ***Leaf, Living Digit, Textworm, Stolen Times for Sale, The Happiness of the Fish.***

NG: I pick up three works. ***Stolen Times for Sale, The Happiness of the Fish*** and ***Leaf, Living Digit.***

LAW: ***Stolen Times for Sale, Textworm***

CHUNG: ***Textworm, Stolen Times for Sale*** and ***Black Box***

Awards discussion

Stolen Times for Sale

NG: It is good to give *The Stolen Times for Sale* the gold or silver award. This is the best work in the pool.

FU, LAW, CHUNG: Agree

Textworm

NG: I did not pick up ***Textworm*** as it is just technically well done, but the concept is not completed.

LICHTENSTEIN: This work meets all the requirement of the principles of this category.

Though it is not perfect, it is still something encouraging to the others.

NG: Agree. Do we agree to give the silver award to this work?

LICHTENSTEIN, FU, LAW, CHUNG: Agree

IFVA: We have only three special mentions, but it is ok to give four special mentions if you all agree. The works are ***Black Box***, ***A Couple of Irons***, ***The Happiness of the Fish*** and ***Leaf, Living Digit***.

LICHTENSTEIN: I think we should take out ***A Couple of Irons***.

NG: FU, LAW, CHUNG: Agree

Interactive Media Category

Gold Award

Stolen Time for Sale

Sum-yu FONG

Silver Award

Textworm

Ashley Chi-lung CHEUNG, Jason Chi-fai LAM

Special Mention

Black Box

Wai-yu CHAN, Yu-ho KWOK

Special Mention

The Happiness of the Fish

Hon-him CHEUNG

Special Mention

Leaf, Living Digit

Lawrence Ming-tat LAU