The 11th ifva Single-Screen-Based Interactive Media Category Jury Meeting Transcript

Jurors in Attendance: Bryan Chung (CHUNG), May Fung (FUNG), Sunny Lam (LAM), Frederic Lichtenstein (FRED), Yasuhiro Santo (YASU)

Organizer Representatives: Teresa Kwong (KWONG), Chelsea Man (MAN)

KWONG: First of all, thank you for attending the 11th **ifva** Single-Screen-Based Interactive Media Category Jury Meeting. We have to pick five award winners from the 10 finalists today. They are, namely, one gold award winner, one silver award winner and three special mention winners. But if it ends up in some other outcomes, says, two gold award winners or two silver award winners, the prize will be rearranged pro rata. You can suggest guidelines for the discussion. It was suggested that we picked the best five among the ten for detailed discussion. What do you think?

The criteria for selection will be based upon the content, creativity, form, structure and technique. The gold award winner will receive HK$30,000 and a certificate, the silver award entitles to HK$20,000 and three special mentions will be awarded the certificates.

FRED: I have one important question, because we as the judges should be very clear about the judging criteria. It's important to define if it's compulsory in our criteria to consider the interactive part because what I heard tonight is that of course interactivity is important; But more than that the interactivity is a need for different ways of presenting artworks which cannot fit into other categories. Shall we treat this Single-Screen-Based Category almost like a new for anything that is not linear, or just from and interaction perspective?

LAM: I think linear stuff can be interactive as well. I am not in the first round jury meeting and as stated in the rules, the participants cannot use the external devices like webcam.

YASU: To me interactivity is how much one would participate to the work of the artist and how much one would (as artist) give away to the audience. In the context of traditional film, artists almost have full control over their audience. The only choice the audience has is to watch it or leave it. With interactive media, you inevitably need to give much more control to the audience.

FRED: But then what is the control in your sense of interaction? Just like **Brain Disorder** and **EUGENiCANS** as well as **Psycho**, there is no control at all, so are we discussing all these?

YASU: When I first saw the submitted work, I was not very convinced about **Brain Disorder**, but I somehow is more convinced today that it can be considered as an interactive work. I don't know whether it should be shown as an interactive art work, though, after I listened to the artist talk today. He said it could be presented as a totally linear movie. It's interactive but, as he admitted himself, a very small part of the work is interactive.

Audio Traffic

FUNG: With **Audio Traffic**, the artist has built up such a language and then stopped it. No more development, the sound, different tunes, nothing really comes together. It's interesting in the first few seconds but you can't really go beyond that.

YASU: He has some very interesting ideas. I think I can foresee myself trying hard to get something more to happen to this work. But I think I agree with you (Fung), it just stopped there – it is not complete.

CHUNG: It's just an experiment, but not (a result of) in-depth conceptual thinking.

LAM: Something like that can be done 10 years ago already. It's very simple but it's not very touching in terms of the aesthetic values.

FRED: It's like, "ok, thank you for participating, I look forward to seeing you next year". I think it's encouraging that people participate, they confront their own work with others and definitely the artist has room to go forward.

Offense for Defense

FUNG: For **Offense for Defense** - is the concept complete?

YASU: I don't think he spent enough time to really think about the concept. It's like an ad hoc concept that he came up one day when he woke up. I don't mind someone coming up with an ad-hoc concept because sometimes you create good work instinctively. But, for this particular work, putting too much emphasis on this concept, I don't think, is a good idea.

CHUNG: That work is also lack of some sort of bidirectional feedback of the game, of the artwork it created. In the very beginning, we all try to achieve the goal, to not to be fallen into the circle. If the game is well planned or well crafted, it will try to anticipate the participants to encounter in this piece of new work. They will take time to adapt to this environment. The game is not particularly well designed to anticipate such kind of difficulty, for example to lesson the difficulty, to offer some sort of help or some sort assistance for people to learn the mechanism.

YASU: Well, according to him, he didn't care because all he wanted to show, was the concept, but not the playability of the game...

FRED: For me it's still an interesting piece. But I think that is something that could have been done several years ago. Most important, the revolution in interaction is no longer the user interaction; Now it is the feedback from the system, is the learning with the user interaction, and in that sense it's a very limited work. It's always repeated in exactly the same way. It's not going to learn anything. If the artist could bring a bit of artificial intelligence into his piece, that would certainly become something interesting. It's not that the piece does not have the potential. However it is still very challenging to develop such kind of system. It's good to be able to put some people in contacts, to meet some people to help in developing the next stage

Brain Disorder

FUNG: I really like **Brain Disorder.**

LAM: It really can be a linear documentary only. It doesn't have to be presented in an interactive way.

YASU: It's true.

FUNG: I am not so sure. One at least has to try to click the brain in order to get to the different visual segments.

YASU: But afterall - imagine that part can also be a movie.

LAM: Yes, you can use the animation to show this part of the brain and then the movie. It doesn't have to interact from the audience.

YASU: It's actually true. Today when he explained his project to me, I became more convinced that its interactivity had important role. Now I am more convinced that it could actually be a totally linear movie, i.e., its interactivity is not a necessity, which is problematic for this category.

Infinity Space

CHUNG: ***Infinity Space*** is another conceptual game…

YASU: It seemed to be an interesting game when you began playing, but then you realize that buildings smashes into your plane and it is almost totally unavoidable. Once you recovered from the shock of every building slamed into you, you don't get any further surprise until your plane crashes…It didn't make me feel that I want to play this game again.

LAM: It's like the old fashioned game, not very interesting.

YASU: I think we kind of expect more from it somehow, we kind of get that impression that "Is that all?" Because expectation is high in the beginning because it kind of looks interesting. But it turned out the it was interesting for just that period of time.

Interactive Software by innov+media lab – Navigating images, Falling & Heavy Angels, Time Liquid, Insect Project

YASU: I don't know if it should be looked at as one project or a collection of projects. It's not supposed to be a collection of projects for this entry, I think. It should be one work per submission. So in this respect, we need to identify how we could evaluate this series of projects as one entry or which one we should look at as the entity.

CHUNG: I asked him in the previous interview but he didn't explain well ...

YASU: But why did we have to ask?   I feel we shouldn't have to ask in the first place. Otherwise, people are going to have… say for example, imagine people have 20 films and submitted them as one project, and you have to watch them for 20 hours, without a clue of how they are to be evaluated. Would you say this is a successful submission or not? In the case of this project, we can consider the software environment as the piece. Of course everything can be combined and so on but I still could not tell if it's a few pieces of software or one development

environment.

FUNG: So we should treat the whole thing as one piece. How can we decide which piece that we should present?

YASU: No, it's not that we have to choose which piece. It's how do we perceive this as one piece, since it was submitted as one piece.

FRED: I couldn't help but thinking, in the 40s when they started building the first synthesizers. It was exactly like that, it was for audio instead of visual matters, but you could have the square sound waves, and sinus waves etc, and you could mix them together. The people would build this kind of synthesizers did not consider themselves as artists. And you cannot say, okay, the guy that has created that, can be acknowledged for the whole electronic music that was being produced ever after. I think it really poses a very pragmatic point which is; How should we consider that? Should we consider the software or should we consider the result? But then the result could be infinite. As you mentioned, are we going to watch 20 hours? Twenty hours done by one person? Ten people? One thousand people? I am not particularly interested in the end result. What I found very interesting was the process. We want to overcome the limitations of the artistic tool that was given to us and we created something, and we found out that as soon as you use a tool, that tool greatly pre-defines the result. They didn't perceive that way, but this is exactly what it is.

YASU: Yes I remember you asked whether you could borrow this software and use it many time during the presentation, and the artist never granted it. It sounded like the artist somehow is not willing to share this, so there's a little bit of contradiction. We wish he could say, "ya…download it from our website, and have a go at it". Well, it would have been great if we could also become the creator….

FUNG: I think the device is to facilitate another artist doing the same things without too much hiccups with existing software.

CHUNG: So the artist has to adapt to this software.

FUNG: So they got limitation.

LAM: As a work of art, I doubt about that a little bit.

FUNG: Just a little bit? A lot for me…

LAM: In terms of the audience's participation, I think it is not something very interesting and very advanced for me. I think it is a very good attempt to develop the software. I appreciate this very much.

CHUNG: The piece does not keen to position as an artwork but somehow as software art. Artists develop software and then they post them as open source software and other can contribute back to either modification or customization to better improve that software as a piece of artwork. But again, I think his position is quite confused at this moment, whether he would like to have that particular installation or the software as an artwork, I think he cannot give us very clear position about which way he choose.

Fantasy of Roundness

YASU: I liked the setting much more than the film we saw in the submitted disk. As she said, she re-organized it as an installation for the presentation today instead of organizing a performance. I thought it would be far more interesting if I could look at and experience this and understand the work without the presence of a dancer.

FUNG: But she said the audience can play with it….

YASU: Well, I did play with it. I know the device gives some feedback when I played with it, but I didn't get any surprise from the feedback, mainly because it was almost impossible to understand what I could do to cause each particular feedback. Since the feedback is not very clear, I though it could be just a very normal camera and the effect wouldn't change. I guess the camera works really well as a part of the performance, I think, but not as the installation. I like the environment that she created and is interesting, but I don't know if it can be perceived as a good single screen interactive installation.

FRED: Because the emphasis is put on the performance, not the single screen. I think the presence of the dancer proves that. Without the performer, it loses a lot of its appeal. It could be a simple camera on top. Lacking the motion, it wouldn't make much difference really. And at the end of the day I am not too sure about the

three modes that are presented. I also like the words. But then I saw the colour changing, - oh that's cheesy! I found the words more poetic and personal. Color work well when you have two screens, and a big set, with the dancers. But in that scene, the color mode was very narrow minded. Again, I am very torn, because it is the kind of work that we perceives initially as very good…

YASU: I think it is a really interesting device for enhancing the performance but it is not a piece of arts on its own.

TV Clock

YASU: It's not as exciting when you just look at it, but it somehow goes on and something started to emerge. I think it is interesting because you suddenly realize …ok, I see this one image in the first digit, and then in 10 second digit, and then one minute and ten minute digit and so on. And you see images you saw before moves on to next digit – I like this a lot.   But all images in a single digit are same. I somehow expected more in each digit.

FRED: I don't agree because it has a set of rules. I think it gives some level of memory. I am surprise that people like Nam June Paik hasn't done it before. It would have totally fit into the production of Nam June Paik. This artist said if he has the opportunity, he would do it with a lot of monitors. That's exactly what Nam June Paik would have done. Like two thousand monitors and the impact would have been very strong. Well, I like this piece very very much.

CHUNG: I do expect a little bit more. There is no critique made on TV programming and the notion of time. At present, it just touches on the surface when he tries to equate the notion of time with TV program, like the children time, prime time and the evening adult time. It is not criticizing the way why and how TV channels choose that segment of time in such a way. He can play more around or re-appropriate the sequences of time.

FUNG: But isn't that enough? Must we critique? I think it's complete.

CHUNG: To me, it's kind of, just play in parallel with, or synchronize with the TV time. It's not subverting or it's not rearranging or re-appropriating the TV programming habit or cultural habit.

FUNG: For me, it's very simple. We look at the clock and then we know the time simply

because of the programming. I think it's a pretty complete idea. Of course you can always go beyond that. I think the artist doesn't want to critique. Why must he critique?

FRED: It's like looking at the sun. You don't have to judge how people recognize a day. That's the way the sun goes. It's true in that sense TV program is just like the sun.

FUNG: Why has the artist to critique it so to make it a better work? The question I ask myself is whether it is complete as it is. It's very important.

CHUNG: I think it's just touched on the surface. I remember when I read the synopsis, it's about the experience of time affected by the TV programming. But somehow in that way, it is not exactly natural because what Lichtenstein mentioned is the feeling the sun going around, or the earth go around, the sun is kind of natural phenomenon. But the TV programming is kind of cultural creation, not as the natural phenomenon.

YASU: To me it's a personal choice. Okay, to him TV is like that. Probably that's his statement and that is his choice as an artist. I appreciate it and have no problem with this. But for the work itself, I kind of expect a little bit more surprise. As it goes on, you begin to notice that it's a very interesting idea, but then began to, quite naturally, expected it to do a little more than just go on. That's the feeling I got. In this respect, in terms of function, entertainment, or concept…I felt just one more something would have been really nice.

FRED: For some people it might generate a little but of frustration, or could it go a little bit further; But for me that's the essence of the piece. It's like when there's nothing more to say, full stop!

YASU: I guess you are right. You made your preference and in essence I'm with you. However, in my personal preference, I would have expected more, some little surprise.

FUNG: For me visually, I don't quite like the squares. It's too tidy.

FRED: Why I like this piece is because it's good to have something that simple and does not necessary need to going to something else. For what? Industrial

application? As soon as it becomes industrial application, it's rude.

YASU: I get your point and I have no objection to that.

LAM: But in terms of this category, I think this work is missing the importance of interactivity. It's not very interactive at all. I think the concept is ok, the TV clock, the display to show the screensaver.

FUNG: If one can really change channel, it will be even more interesting.

EUGENiCANS

FRED: It's so clear that this piece is not finished...

FUNG: I think he mentioned that it is a prototype.

CHUNG: I think for media art, sometimes you need experimentations. But I think this is a very primitive prototype.

YASU: HUNG Keung did a similar but simpler but more interactive work, the one with four people walking around, from four people's point of view. His work was produced more than five years ago but it, to me, is a good reference to evaluate this work.

FRED: I am not a great fan of that piece in a sense that…but I was surprised by the quality of shots

YASU: If I remember correctly, he's an experienced filmmaker before he became a Master student of multimedia.

FRED: So, should it be presented linearly or as an interactive piece? I think most of the supposedly interactive pieces like that, nobody can understand and it becomes so much more interesting when it becomes a linear movie that has benefited from non linear writing. Like *Crash*, the Oscar winner, is a beautiful film. It has been written non-linearly and then presented in a linear way.

YASU: For conventional movies, the scene selection is basically done by the director. For this one, it is, to a certain extent, done by the audience (users). It is interesting to play for sometime, but I got bored. I think this is why no people can

look at (play with) it for more than half an hour. You would be bored of stories scenes of which were more or less selected by yourself. The fact that this work doesn't offer much surprises and/or accidents also contribute to users not willing to go on for much longer.

FRED: It reminds me of the Kublai's restaurant. You get meat and vegetables and so on by yourself, dump everything in a bowl, and then give it to the chef. You are responsible for the things that you put in.

CHUNG: It does not have an introductory material for audience to look for the interactive approach. I would suggest him to make an introductory sequence of the video, a trailer, and then introduction of different characters, different types of locations, after that they can branch out to four or five sections.

LAM: Just like some games that you have to give the players some cues about the story and the different characters' backgrounds. So they can choose them according

YASU: It's a great point! Because in a way, most of the works here lack that, except for *Brain Disorder*, which had a very good introduction. It may not always be a problem but for most of the work here, it became a problem because we didn't know how to go about them. Probably it was the most evident with *EUGENiCANS*, exactly as you (LAM) said.

Gold Award

Withhold

Silver Award

TV Clock

Henry CHU

Special Mention

Offense For Defense

Franky NG

Brain Disorder

Bryan FU

Interactive Software By Innov+Media Lab – Navigating Images, Falling & Heavy Angels, Time Liquid, Space Liquid, Insect Project

Innov+media lab with HUNG Keung