

sense:less artistic concept

Mork/Pendry/Stenslie/Watz

sense:less is a place for humans to experience a stranger alternate reality.

Through VR technology and a custom made body suit **sense:less** puts the user in a multi-sensory environment. This is a dramatic space, influenced by theatre, and the users journey through the world is an exploration of multiple personalities. People watching the installation can see the users travels as projected onto the walls of the **sense:less** egg, a five metre high construction of plastic and steel.

The user stands inside the semi transparent plastic egg which is inflated by a cool air fan, and suspended by metal arms over a steel platform. Video images of the virtual world are projected onto the eggs walls and these images are seen by both the user and the spectators outside the shell. A speaker system broadcasts everything the user hears to the audience.

On entering the installation the user straps on stereoscopic viewing glasses and a light weight body suit. The custom made suit contains sixteen areas of stimuli in the form of vibrating pads. In this way the creatures in **sense:less** can touch the user. The intensity of the touch depends on the individual creatures personality and mood. A navigating wand gives the user their motion in the world, while the viewing glasses give direction.

Five creatures live in the virtual world of **sense:less**. The creatures have human voices, alien bodies and distinct personalities. They are based on real people and personal experience, and each has a story they need to tell.

The virtual world the creatures live in is a constantly changing network structure based on realtime data derived from a World Wide Web server. In this way users on the net become points on this network, indicating net activity and the virtual presence of other human users. These human users are represented by mechanoid 'agents' who constantly roam the virtual world, changing shape and direction depending on the users behaviour in the hypertext structure of the World Wide Web server.

sense:less was originally commissioned by the Henie-Onstad Art Center for the exhibition Electra '96. The project was realized through support of the Henie-Onstad Art Center and Silicon Graphics Norway.

Knut Mork: Application programming + text

Kate Pendry: Text + sound + voices

Ståle Steinslie: Bodysuit + installation design

Marius Watz: Graphic programming + design

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Technical requirements

To show **sense:less** the following hardware is needed:

- 1 SGI Onyx Reality Engine (w/ GL and Performer installed)
- 1 Pentium 100 PC w/ 1 GB harddisk and 16 MB RAM
- 2 Beachtron 3D soundcards
- 2 LCD data projectors (w/ zoom capability)
- 1 Virtual I/O I-glasses
- 1 industrial cool air fan
- 1 Custom-made bodysuit
- 1 Custom-made navigation wand

If the Ars Electronica wishes to show the piece, you will need to supply the SGI Onyx, the Pentium PC and the two data projectors. For installation of software on the PC and the SGI Onyx you need to supply a DAT drive. Of course, you will also have to arrange shipping of the remaining hardware (including the installation itself) from Oslo, Norway.

Space requirements

The **sense:less** egg is a 4,5 meter high construction of plastic and steel. The egg itself is plastic, and is mounted on a steel platform 1 meter above the ground. The platform is suspended by four legs (also in steel). The egg is inflated by a cool air fan that feeds into the platform through a plastic tube, and it is held up by strings going from 4 steel arms that are mounted on the platform and extend up to a height of 4,5 meters.

The four legs that the installation stands on make up a 5 meter diameter circle. The minimum space requirements for the piece therefore is 5x5x5 meters, plus at least 2 meters open space on all sides of the diameter.

For more information, contact us at senseless@hok.no.