

HANDSIGHT

1992

An interactive computer graphic environment by AGNES HEGEDÜS

First presented at the Ars Electronica in Linz, 1992. Application software by Gideon May and Richard Holloway. Produced with the cooperation of the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe.

The intention of this work is to emphasize some aspect of virtuality, such as telepresence and disembodiment/re-embodiment of the senses. Another aim of the work is to bring transverse relation between the virtual and the real, by correlating a specific physical object with respect to its virtual representation.

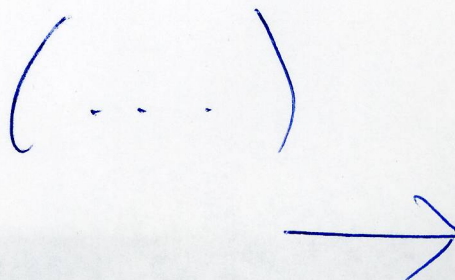
This is done within the circumference of a visual environment in which the imagery becomes a spherical anamorphoses that embodies an augmented field of view – an 'endoscopic eye'. The thematic structure of this work is implied as an exteriorized (phenomenological) projection of psychological and symbolic spaces.

All elements coherently merge in one environment that is constituted by three main apparatuses and a ready-made object:

1. A large circular projection screen onto which real time computer graphic imagery is projected
2. An interactive interface that the viewer holds in his hand, which has the form of a large eye-ball, and which contains a sensing device which can measure the spatial position and orientation of this eye-ball very accurately
3. A large transparent Plexiglass sphere with a hole in its center, into which the viewer can insert the eye-ball interface and then move it about inside. This sphere provides the viewer with an 'endo-spatial' enclosure whose manual exploration maps directly into the representation of the virtual domain.

The eye-ball held in the viewers hand becomes a disembodied object – a virtual camera moving freely in space. The subject in this real space is the transparent sphere which when 'looked at' by the eye-ball, is itself seen to be represented as a virtual eye on the projection screen.

When actually entering the transparent sphere with his hand, the viewer also enters this virtual eye through its iris, and then confronts an image tableau that is located within this virtual space. Exploring the inner space of the transparent sphere, the viewer also explores the scenography of this virtual image tableau that is specified to be spatially located within the sphere.



Projektbeschreibung
michig.

This conjunction of a virtual and physical space is achieved because the eye-ball interface communicates to the computer the exact coordinates of its point of view with reference to the physical sphere, and the computer then generates a representation of the virtual scenography onto the round projection screen in front of the viewer.

The physical sphere establishes a boundary in the virtual world between the exterior representation of an eye and an interior representation of an image tableau that is implicitly contained within this eye. Outside the actual sphere the hand held eye-ball 'percieves' the virtual eye as an object (macrocosmos) which is conventionally represented in a traditional perspectiv view.

This inside universe re-presents, as a computer generated model, the iconography of a specifically Hungarian folk art. That traditon created miniature religious scenes in glass bottles, and one example of such a bottle is also shown in the HANDSIGHT installation, illuminated in a box behind the viewer. The choice of this contextual reference was felt to be appropriate because such a bottle tableau also expresses a sign for mental (virtual) spaces enclosed in the world of physical forms.