

# Conversations

Project Critique Presentation (1<sup>st</sup> Iteration)  
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## Conversations: Overview

- An unguided exploration of conversations in a virtual space
  - Hundred of pre-recorded conversations
  - Updated real-time with conversations recorded in the gallery space
- Seeks to:
  - Strip the illusion of character bare, to expose the growing ambiguity of fiction and non-fiction
  - Play upon contemporary issues of privacy and voyeur tendencies
  - Reminder of the emotional relationship we volunteer to computer generated content

## Conversations



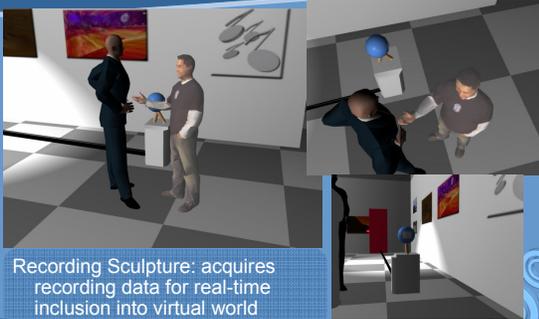
Installation

## Conversations



Exploration Kiosk: displays virtual world

## Conversations



Recording Sculpture: acquires recording data for real-time inclusion into virtual world

## Conversations: Goals

- Raise questions about our emotional relationship to machines
- A reminder of our emotional response to rendered image, sound, and story
- A recreation of the emotional intimacy we experience within virtual spaces – conversing through digital devices
- A lab for exploring the ambiguity of fiction and non-fiction in contemporary mass media
- Realization of our willingness to intrude when there is a machine intermediary
- Demonstration of the ease of spying and the potential emotional distance that arises in an abundant data space

Does it matter that these voices are without physical character?  
 What am I learning?

Why do polygons stir emotions?

Why do we care about polygons?

How can we care what polygons are "saying?"



### Conversations: Philosophy

Our willingness to offer love, hate, joy and sacrifice for the aspirations of pixels is ideologically unnerving. It reflects a new passion for things that exceeds our passion for people. We are more interested in the polygons than we are the people in our daily lives, or the politicians that govern our lives. We are more willing to converse with a machine, or through a machine, than directly with our neighbors.

These polygons also manipulate us. We trust their information, and we seek more of it.

With video games, we enjoy helping and saving virtual people as though we participate in something. The truth is that we are not participating, we are manipulated, bullied, or misled by clever machinations.

These same machines provide us joys and sorrows, they become our lovers and our confidants. At work, many white-collar employees spend more time interacting with a computer than a person.



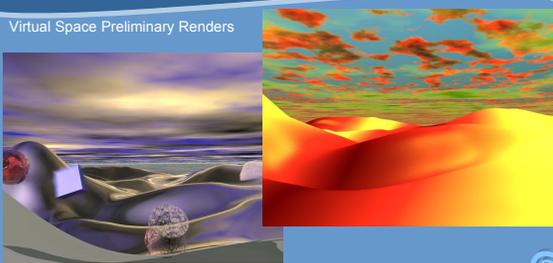
### Conversations: Aesthetic

- Abstracted environment
  - Avoids critical analogy and expectation
  - Enforces simplicity, nakedness without sexy futuristic sterility
  - Mathematically accurate, but impossible real world equivalent (lighting, specular, etc)
  - Warm but computed

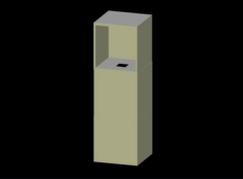


### Conversations: Aesthetic Concept

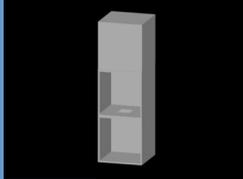
Virtual Space Preliminary Renders




### Conversations: Kiosk Design



Front



Rear



Constructed from 3 (or 4) 15" x 15" cubes



### Conversation: Hardware

- 3 Speaker (ideally 6) audio to provide 3D audio
- Boom microphone
- Small, intimate, "peephole" display
  - 15" monitor (or 7 inch portable DVD)



## Conversations: Technology

- BlitzBasic Blitz3D:
  - Render Engine / Interaction Engine
  - Control provided through standard game pad with analog joystick
  - 3D sound
- NCH Swift Time Audio Time:
  - Programmable Audio Recording (for timed, automated recording)



## Conversations: Resources

- Recorded > 50 conversations:
  - Best sources:
    - You tube amateur video
    - Independent film
    - Sound effect libraries
    - Reality television

## Demonstration