

SCREEN TEST

An interactive telepresent public video installation for Staro Rīga from November 15th to 18th 2014, designed for site-specific impromptu performance and user interaction.

Paul Sermon & Charlotte Gould

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This "Screen Test" is a site-specific work for Staro Rīga, a festival of light taking place during the Latvian independence celebrations and as part of the European City of Culture 2014 programme of events. This work celebrates the history of cinema, with key moments recreated as sets with references to cinematic genres, containing converged scenes and sets from the history of cinema including George Meliers "La Lune", Eisensteins "Battleship Potemkin", Casablanca and "Vertigo".

The installation takes live oblique camera shots from above the screens of two separate audience groups in Riga, both located on large 40m2 blue ground sheets, which then combines them on screen via a chroma-key video switcher in a single composited image. As the merged audiences start to explore this collaborative, shared telepresent space they discover the ground beneath them, as it appears on screen as a digital backdrop, locates them in a variety of environments.

Through these playful environments the audience participants are offered the opportunity to direct and change the outcomes of this installation through an open system of interaction. These unique transitory outcomes rely entirely on the roles and performances the public participants bring to these urban screens and the experiences they choose to live out. Contextualized by their urban and commercial environments and recontextualized by a diverse array of interactive backdrops, our aim is to allow these public audiences the opportunity and agency to reclaim these urban screens.











PROJECT CONCEPT

This proposed project builds on the practice-based research and development of a former installation *Picnic on the Screen* originally developed for the BBC Public Video Screen at the Glastonbury Festival of Performing Arts, UK, in 2009. In this new project Paul Sermon and Charlotte Gould have carefully considered the technical and conceptual aspect of the former work, to develop and propose an original site-specific work for Staro Rīga. This new installation pushes the playful, social and public engagement aspects of the work into new cultural and cinematic realms through new technical developments in ludic interaction and HD videoconferencing. Inspired in part by cinematic genres, the motivation behind this proposal also comes from the historical films of Lumière contemporaries, Mitchell & Kenyon, whose films of public crowds in the 1900's present a striking similarity to the way audiences react and respond in Sermon & Gould's telematic urban screen installations. These pioneering fairground screenings of audiences filmed earlier the same day possess all the traits, albeit the latency in processing, of live telepresent interaction, whereby the audience play directly to the camera and occupy this new public space by performing to themselves and others when screened later.

Using a tried and tested telematic concept and technique developed by Paul Sermon, the installation takes live oblique camera shots from above the screens of two separate audience groups in Berlin and Riga, both located on large 40m2 blue ground sheets, which then combines them on screen via a chroma-key video switcher in a single composited image. As the merged audiences start to explore this collaborative, shared telepresent space they discover the ground beneath them, as it appears on screen as a digital backdrop, locates them in a variety of surprising and intriguing anamorphic environments. These backgrounds directly reference cinematic genres, containing converged scenes and sets from the history of cinema.

Following Mitchell and Kenyon's example our intension is to provide the audience participants with the opportunity to direct and change the outcomes of this installation through an open system of interaction. These unique transitory outcomes will rely entirely on the roles and performances the public participants bring to these urban screens and the experiences they choose to live out. Contextualized by their urban and commercial environments and recontextualized by a diverse array of interactive backdrops, our aim is to allow these public audiences the opportunity and agency to reclaim these urban screens. This fluxus happening will include the widest range of urban participation possible, ranging from buskers playing, singing, shouting and dancing to people out shopping, walking, chating, waiting, watching or meeting.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

RIGA INSTALLATION:

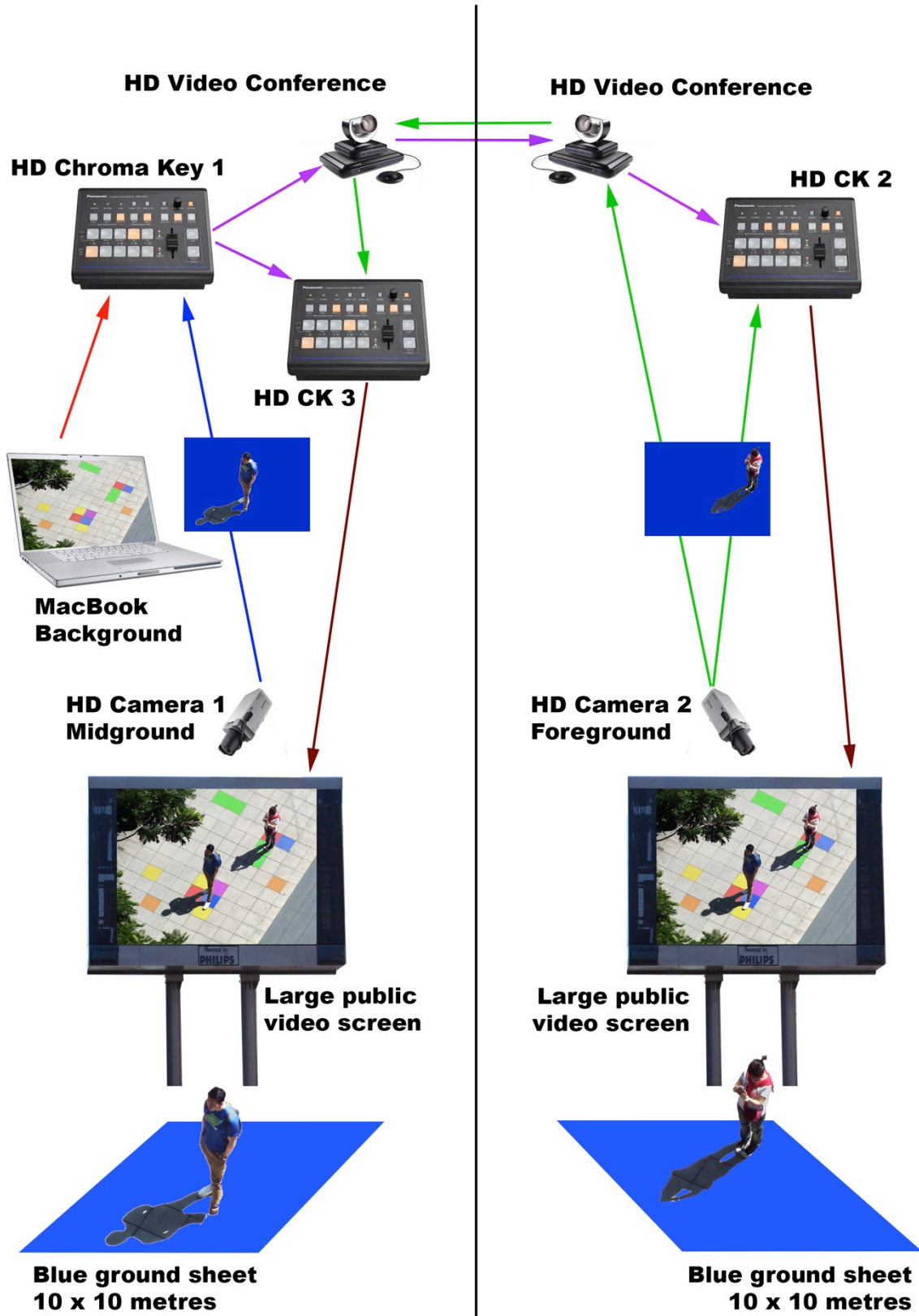
Riga Location 1:

1 x Large urban public video screen and projector	Provided by venue
1 x 22" HD LCD Screen with HDMI input	Provided by venue
1 x VHS or DVD recorder with composite video input	Provided by venue
1 x 6x8 metre blue ground sheet (Pantone: 2935 c) matt finish	Provided by venue
4 x 4 foot 4 Bank Kino-Flo light and stand	Provided by venue
1 x Lockable storage space/room for all equipment	Provided by venue
Broadband Internet Connection (public IP address) <i>(Bit Rate: 10 Mbps minimum)</i>	Provided by venue
1 x Panasonic AW-HS50 Video Mixer chroma-keyer	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x 3CCD HD video Camera	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x LifeSize Express 220 HD Video Conference System	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Blackmagic HDMI to SDI	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Blackmagic Ultra Recorder	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Atlona AT-HD560	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x HDMI to Composite scaler	Provided by Sermon & Gould
2 x HDMI splitter	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Wall mount/bracket for camera	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x MacBook Pro	Provided by Sermon & Gould
Cables: HDMI, SDI DVI etc.	Provided by Sermon & Gould

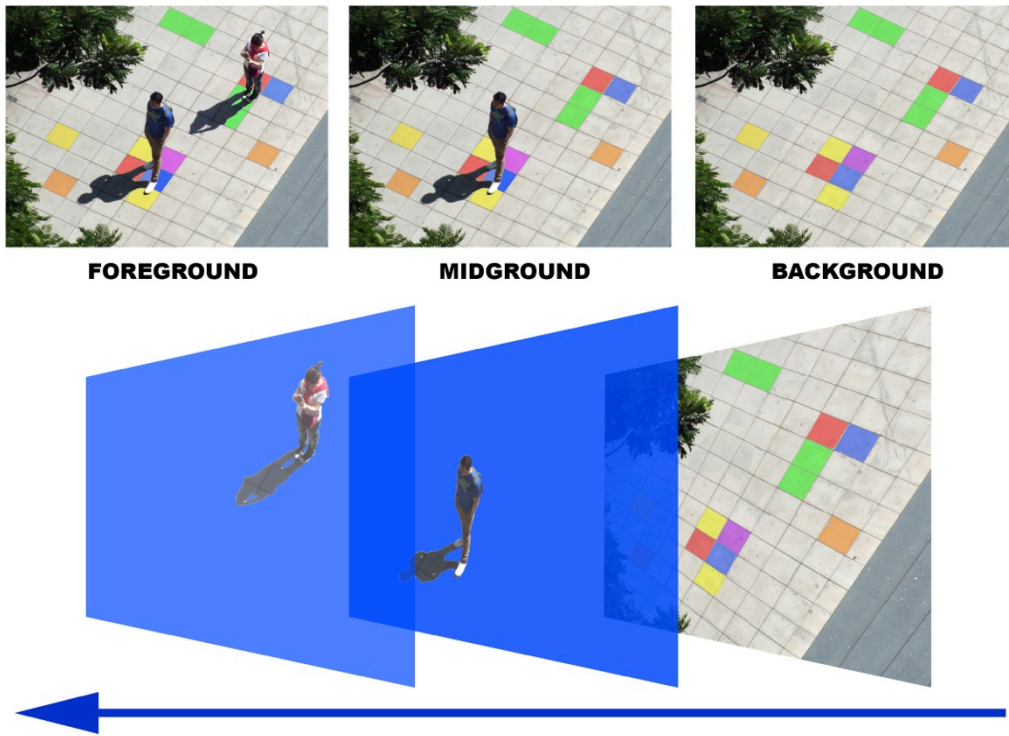
Riga Location 2:

1 x Large urban public video screen and projector	Provided by venue
1 x 22" HD LCD Screen with HDMI input	Provided by venue
1 x 6x8 metre blue ground sheet (Pantone: 2935 c) matt finish	Provided by venue
4 x 4 foot 4 Bank Kino-Flo light and stand	Provided by venue
1 x Lockable storage space/room for all equipment	Provided by venue
Broadband Internet Connection (public IP address) <i>(Bit Rate: 10 Mbps minimum)</i>	Provided by venue
1 x Panasonic AW-HS50 Video Mixer chroma-keyer	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x 3CCD HD video Camera	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x LifeSize Express 220 HD Video Conference System	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Blackmagic HDMI to SDI	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Atlona AT-HD560	Provided by Sermon & Gould
2 x HDMI splitter	Provided by Sermon & Gould
1 x Wall mount/bracket for camera	Provided by Sermon & Gould
Cables: HDMI, SDI DVI etc.	Provided by Sermon & Gould

VIDEO FLOW DIAGRAM



VIDEO CHROMA-KEYING SEQUENCE



PREVIOUS INSTALLATIONS



Front Room, FutureEverything Sao Paulo 2010 <http://www.paulsermon.org/frontroom/>



Liberate your Avatar, Urban Screens Manchester 2007 <http://www.paulsermon.org/liberate/>



All the World's a Screen, MACBA Barcelona 2011 <http://www.paulsermon.org/screen/>



Shang-pool Picnic, Liverpool Biennial, Shanghai 2010 <http://www.paulsermon.org/shangpool/>



BIOGRAPHIES

Paul Sermon - Professor of Visual Communication

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Artists Web Site: <http://www.paulsermon.org>

Paul Sermon joined the Faculty of Arts as Professor of Visual Communication in the School of Art, Design and Media on September 1st 2013. Paul was previously Professor of Creative Technology at the University of Salford and has worked for over twenty years as an active academic researcher and creative practitioner, primarily in the field of interactive media arts. Having worked under the visionary cybernetic artist Professor Roy Ascott as an undergraduate Fine Art student at the Newport School of Fine Art in the mid 1980s, Paul Sermon went on to establish himself as a leading pioneer of interactive media art, winning the prestigious Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Linz, Austria, shortly after completing his MFA at the University of Reading in 1991. An accolade that then took Paul to Finland in the early 1990's to develop one of the most ground breaking telepresent video installations of his career *Telematic Dreaming* in 1992. This early success then led to an invitation by Professor Jeffrey Shaw to undertake a residency at the internationally renowned ZKM Centre for Art & Media in Karlsruhe in Germany, where he produced his second ISDN videoconference installation *Telematic Vision* in 1993. Whilst living in Berlin from 1993 to 1999 Paul Sermon then took up the post of Dozent at the HGB Academy of Visual Arts in the former East German city of Leipzig and from here he went on to develop a portfolio of interactive telepresent video installations and telematic encounters that he continues to exhibit internationally. Further accolades during this period included the 1994 IMF Sparkey Award from the Interactive Media Festival in Los Angeles as well as interactive art commissions for the Millennium Dome Play Zone. Paul moved back to England in 2000 to take up a post at the University of Salford as well as becoming an honorary Professor for the MA Media Art Histories at the Danube University Krems, Austria and continues to visit and contribute to this programme once a semester.

Charlotte Gould - Senior Lecturer in Digital Media

MediaCityUK, University of Salford

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Artists Web Site: <http://www.charlottegould.org>

Charlotte Gould has developed a number of web-based interactive environments that explore user identity and the notion of a floating narrative. She is currently developing location specific work in which the user becomes an active participant in the narrative and explores methods of user driven content. The work seeks to identify a counter culture, and provide an alternative aesthetic that questions the predominance of digital realism and explores the conventions and politics of embodiment in multi-user virtual environments. Through her work she encourages creative play and looks at the way the audience can experience the urban space through telepresent technology. She has undertaken illustration and animation commissions from a range of companies including the BBC and Manchester Art Gallery. She graduated with a BA Honours Degree in Graphic Design from Chelsea School of Art in 1990 and was awarded an MA in Creative Technology from the University of Salford (2003). Charlotte Gould is Programme leader of BA Hons Graphic Design at the University of Salford.