David Cotterrell: Control Room

Date: 12th February 2012
Dimensions(m):5.8m, 2.7m, 3.1m
Materials:
Assorted military surplus hardware, rugged laptop, gaming hardware, custom networked simulation software.

A theatrically staged installation offering the illusion of control.

Within the John Hansard Gallery exhibition, 'Monsters of the Id', discrete installations, Observer Effect, Searchlight II and Apparent Horizon, were actually components of an extensible network that was sharing data via a game engine server.

 The responses in Observer Effect were triggered by an array of custom programmed Kinect devices analysing the number of audience members interacting with the installation (and the duration of their attention). The shadow projections migrating across Searchlight II were generated through real-time aerial views of the avatar population being affected through Observer Effect, and the landscape being viewed by the drone-eye perspectives of Apparent Horizon was the same landscape simultaneously distanced by an order of magnitude.

 Although authentic, all the military hardware within the staged scene of Control Room was sourced from ebay and consumer sites. This modest installation offered a data perspective that might be commonly recognised by a familiar gamer. The rugged laptop was also connected to the engine and gave the promise of control of the drones, characters and landscape. In reality, the high-spec interface was entirely redundant as the terminal was also entirely within the control of the algorithmic negotiations of the installations in other rooms of the gallery.

Control Room (detail) Credit: © David Cotterrell (2012)

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