Project
A Game of Telephone: Experiential Stories and Memory Persistence in Future Societies

Project Type
Interactive Installation with Gamification Mechanics

Scope
This is an installation-based experiential event intended to test audience members' memory while introducing them to the power stories have on shaping and maintaining social interrelations. The project is a short duration interaction experience that is part escape room and part curated storytelling project fitting within the fields of themed entertainment, experiential/immersive performance, and interactive installation. We are interested in exploring the ways stories morph and change based on individual connection to narrative, nostalgia, and technological interactions.

The design consists of two interactive telephone booths designed and built by faculty and students. The booths are engineered with environmental audio and lighting as well as interactive elements delivered through the payphone handset and keypad. Original programming of audio interaction is designed and run through algorithmic filters that redeliver both pre-recorded narrative audio as well as excerpts from audience recordings. Faculty and students from multiple departments in the Rueff School began collaborating and planning in August 2022 with plans to begin beta testing interactions with community audiences in December 2022. We have applied for funding to support the initial installation in February 2022. Boiler Gold Rush funding would allow us to create a third booth for installation and further engagement with the student population. We plan to continue the initial experience through a second iteration with a supplemental transmedia narrative interactive game, currently in conceptualization stage.

Audience Journey
The guest enters and proximity sensors register their presence starting a timer for the 4 to 5-minute experience. After short exploration, the payphone rings. When the guest answers they are prompted to allow recording. Upon agreement they receive a 30-second audio clip asking them to relay a message to a member of a future theatre troupe before the booth loses power. The message cycles a retelling of a nostalgic cultural media narrative (think climax of a popular film). They are prompted to call a number with missing numbers due to a power glitch in the audio. By searching within the booth, they find possible replacement numbers to call. Upon each successive call they are interrupted with clips of previous recordings that disrupt their memory of the original message. On the final call they are prompted to record their message before the power dies. Once the recording is completed, they receive a redemption ticket with info for a website where a second transmedia extension of the project occurs.

The participant story recordings are reviewed and filtered by the team on a set basis (every three days) and looped back into the audio interactions for subsequent guest.

Project Lead
William Lewis (Audience Research and Interaction Design) Assistant Professor - Theatre

Faculty Area Leads
J.J. Sohn (User Experience Lead) Assistant Professor - A&D/ Industrial Design and Interaction Design
Monte Taylor (Audio Engineering and Systems Lead) Assistant Professor of Practice - Music Technology
Ryan Douglas (Scenic and Visual Design Lead) Visiting Assistant Professor - Theatre

Graduate Students
Trevor Marshall (Technical Direction/System Design) 3rd year MFA Theatre / Technical Direction
Grant Porter (Audio Technology/System Design) 2nd year MFA Theatre / Sound Design

Undergrad Students
Flynn Botkin (Systems and Electronic Controls) Theatre Engineering
Tommy Choi (Audio Composition) Sound for Performing Arts

Additional students and community members to be utilized for developmental audio recordings.

Budget: $2477

Scenic Construction (Environmental Enclosure/Aesthetics)	$650
Lumber - $300	
Plexiglass – $175	
Paint/Decoration - $100	
Connection Hardware - $75	
Interaction System Controls (Processing, Programming, Interaction Delivery)	$205
DMX Controller (1) - $45	
Programming Controllers (1) - $85	
Power Supplies (1) – $50	
Motion Sensor (1) - $25	
Lighting (Environmental and Interactive Lighting)	$200
Spotlight Fixtures (1) - $65	
LED Tape lights (16') - $60	
Lighting Power Supply - $75	
Audio (Environmental and Interactive Sound)	$725
Audio Interface - $264	
Transducers (2) - $22	
Speakers (2) - $70	
Transducer/Speaker Amp (1) - $250	
XLR Wire - $24	
Various Wire Connectors (10) - $80	
Speaker Wire (75') - $15	
Electronics Miscellaneous -	$147
Wire - $60	
Connectors (2) - $46	
Terminals (2) - $21	
Solder - $10	
Electrical Tape - $10	
Physical Interaction Elements (Interactive Props)	$275
Pay Phone (1) - $200	
Ticket Machine (1) - $50	
Redemption Tickets - $25	
Student Labor	$300
Graduate – $100	
Undergrad - $200	