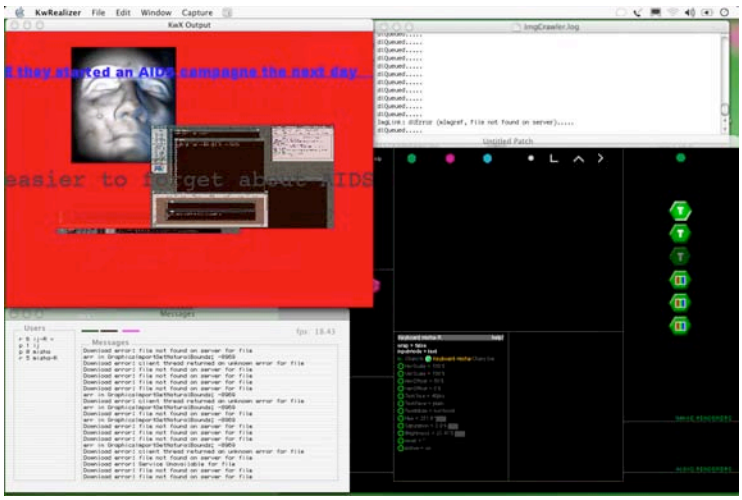

KeyWorx Screenshot: Michelle Teran

The KeyWorx Interviews

Transcripts of Interviews and Conversations
with KeyWorx artists:

Michelle Teran, Isabelle Jenniches, Arjen Keesmaat, Nancy Mauro-Flude
Lodewijk Loos, Josephine Dorado

Interviewed and edited by:
Sher Doruff

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Introduction

The following interviews were conducted over a six-month period in 2004. A basic template of questions covering ten areas of interest was used. The interviews were conducted informally, giving the interviewees the opportunity to tangentially describe their experiences. The interview process did not adhere to an ethnographic methodological approach as the interviewer (SD) knows the interviewees well and has followed and/or participated in their working processes with KeyWorx for a number of years. The interest of the researcher in this case was to ask both mundane questions concerning quotidian practice and interface design as well as more esoteric questions concerning creative processes and what was then termed "intersubjective" experience. This phenomenological approach and terminology gradually transformed as emphasis in the dissertation shifted to a Deleuzian framing. Terminology adopted in the dissertation such as *intuition*, *transduction*, *transversal*, *composition*, *indeterminacy* and *diagrammatic.* reflect conceptual vectors that emerged from these dialogical sessions. The interviews provide an entrance to the working methods and experiences of the artists and are an enlightening trace of the shifting interest of the research. The extracts presented here best correspond to the tenor of the thesis.

The interviews were recorded to digital video. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. The tapes were later transcribed yielding over 73,000 words of text. The conversational extracts are edited for clarity. For example some conversational jargon, "uhmm's", "ah's", "like's", "you know's", "sort of's", "I means", etc., have been deleted as well as confusing conversational stops and starts. Michelle Teran, Nancy Mauro-Flude and Josephine Dorado are native English speakers. Lodewijk loos and Arjen Keesmaat are native Dutch speakers and Isabelle Jenniches is a native German speaker. The interviews were conducted in English and transcribed by a native Dutch speaker. The researcher has taken some liberty in editing syntax, in order to provide a more readable document.

The following questionnaire was used as a template to ease comparative analysis of the interviews but was not strictly adhered to. The template changed after the first two interviews and more questions related to improvisational processes were added.

Original Interview Template – KeyWorx Questionnaire

User Experience

Expectations

1. Do you plan to meet via email, chat, phone?
2. Do you plan a structured approach before entering?
3. What is the degree of improvisation that is determined by you? That is co-determined?
4. What media or elements do you bring to a session? Are they shared before-hand or transferred during a session?
5. Do you agree on a communication strategy? IRC chat, iChat, chat in KWX
6. What do you to achieve in a collaborative session?
7. Are you excited by the prospect of unpredictability?
8. Are you interested in accomplishing a performative goal?

Entering a session – Procedural

9. How do you enter a session?
10. How does it feel when you first connect with the other participants?
11. Do you initially greet each other conversationally? Or, do you begin playing?
12. Do you incorporate your chat communication into the "performance?"

Decision-making – Media

13. How do you decide which media you want to use in a session?
14. How do decide which filters or modification to media you will use?
15. How do you think about input and output parameters of objects?
16. Do you generally work with the media you instantiate or are you more likely to modify the media of the others?
17. At what point do you feel the media is shared or collective? When it ceases to be your media file or their media file?
18. Do you gravitate towards text displays, pre-rendered media, or live media?

Decision-making – cooperation

19. Do you take control of the other players input devices (Mouse, joystick, game controller, keyboard)? If so, why and when?
20. How are you influenced by the choices of the others?
21. In general, are you more responsive or provocative?

22. How do you reach a synergetic dynamic? How long does it take on average to build to that dynamic?

Decision-making – creativity

23. Can you describe your perception of the creative experience in this platform?
24. Does "inspiration " in an ephemeral, processual, collaborative presentation feel similar or different to other experiences in non-collaborative events?
25. Are your ideas and/or choices carefully considered, in general, or spontaneously applied?

Environmental affordances – Virtual

26. Do you feel the patcher, when occupied by other players, to be a field or environment?
27. Does it ever become immersive in the sense that the external environment fades from consciousness? If so, when does that happen?
28. Does the level of abstraction of the media objects present learning curves or learning ease?
29. Decision-making

Environmental affordances – Physical

30. What role does the physical, surrounding environment play on the embedded patcher environment?
31. Are ambient qualities a factor in your perception of the KWX properties?
32. Do you utilize external objects or factors as live data? If so how?
33. How is the surrounding environment of the other players a factor?
34. How does the bandwidth affect your communication with the others?

Interpretation of Meaning

35. How do you interpret the media (images, sound, text) as you are processing it?
36. Do you have a priori intentions to distribute a meaningful image? Montage?
37. Is meaning constructed on the fly? Is it momentary or are themes built up/
38. What role does randomness play? Indeterminacy?
39. If meaning is randomly constructed how is it interpreted?
40. Is there a point when the composite collage is collective in its interpretation?
41. How do you deal with the others modifying your intention or meaning?
42. Is there a dramaturgical element to your performance?
43. Is there a narrative element?

Intersubjective experience

44. How do you distinguish your input or intention from the others? Is it necessary to do that?
45. Do you ever reach a zone of interaction where you lose self-consciousness and become part of a collective process?
46. What role does the response of the others to your input play in your performance?
47. Do you recognize your intentions through the actions of the other players?
48. Are you conscious of playing particular role during a session – collaborator, performer, antagonist, etc?
49. Of shifting micro-identities?
50. How sensitive are you to the judgment of the others?
51. How cooperative are you when a new direction emerges?
52. Can you describe a feeling of "going with" as distinguished from "going against?
53. Does reputation play a significant role in your selection of collaborators?
54. How do you feel about your reputation as a collaborator?
55. What role does trust play in working together?
56. What responsibility do you take for your actions and interactions?
57. Do you feel that a collective aesthetic emerges?
58. When you are making something, do you feel as though the concept is coming from you or that you are tapping into the concept?

Improvisation

59. What is your approach to improvisation? Do you work with preliminary rulesets or constraints?
60. Do you feel you enter or exit the space when you contribute something?
61. How do anticipate the choices/actions of the other plays? Is there any sense that replaces proprioception?
62. Do you feel a similar sense of time/timing in connected space as in physical space?
63. How do you adjust to virtual timing, latency, etc?
64. How do you detect nuance in the actions of your partners?
65. How do you signal intention?
66. Is the performance primarily a communication to an audience or is it an interpersonal experience?
67. Does the realization of an observing public alter the dynamics of the exchange between the actors?