

Jane PROPHET: SIGGRAPH Asia 2016 art gallery

Title of Submission: Neuro Memento Mori: meditations on death

Date of Completion 2015-05-15

Abstract:

In Neuro Memento Mori, digital animations and live action video are projection mapped onto a 3D print of the artist's head and neck made from data from 3D scans of the head and MRI scans of the brain. The life-sized 3D printed sculptures are dissected to reveal the artist's brain and 'make real' fMRI data gathered as the artist conducted experiments in the MRI scanner including viewing memento mori paintings and meditating on death. Computation is used to produce 3D neuroimages, 3D prints and computer animations that are projection-mapped back onto the 3D object. The artworks, made with neuroscientists, are contemporary memento mori made from data.

Summary Statement:

Video projection mapped onto a life-sized 3D printed self-portrait sculptures produced by combining 3D facial scanning with fMRI brain data that is gathered during novel MRI experiments, designed in collaboration with two neuroscientists, during which the artist views memento mori paintings and meditates on death in the scanner.

Artist Statement:

Memento mori and vanitas artworks function to remind viewers of their small scale in relation to the universe, of their mortality, prompting us to live better, more compassionate lives, as a result. Neuro Memento Mori is inspired by an object in the Wellcome Trust Permanent Collection, "Wax model of a Female head depicting life and death" (Unknown 1701-1800). It shows a woman's bisected head, the left half apparently a detailed portrait of a living woman, open-eyed, with painted lips and blond hair arranged in ringlets. Her left hand frames her face while the right half of her head is shown in post mortem decay. Resting on her skeletonised right hand, her skull crawls with insects, maggots and worms. A snake emerges from her empty eye socket. This compelling object prompted me to question whether, as we look at memento mori artworks, we do 'remember, we must die'. What parts of our brain are active when we look at these artworks, and, when we contemplate death directly, without looking at memento mori art? Made in collaboration with neuroscientists Zoran Josipovic (NYU) and Andreas Roepstorff (Aarhus University), I looked at representations of memento mori while in a MRI scanner that records my brain function. Following Josipovic's instructions, I learned to meditate, to contemplate death, and repeated that meditation in the scanner. Neuroimages were processed to produce 3D data of my brain, to make 3D printed sculptural objects. The form of the life-sized portrait sculpture refers to the Wellcome Trust object, the artist's head is dissected, revealing the skull and brain. Video and computer animations are then projection-mapped onto the sculpture to create a contemporary memento mori.

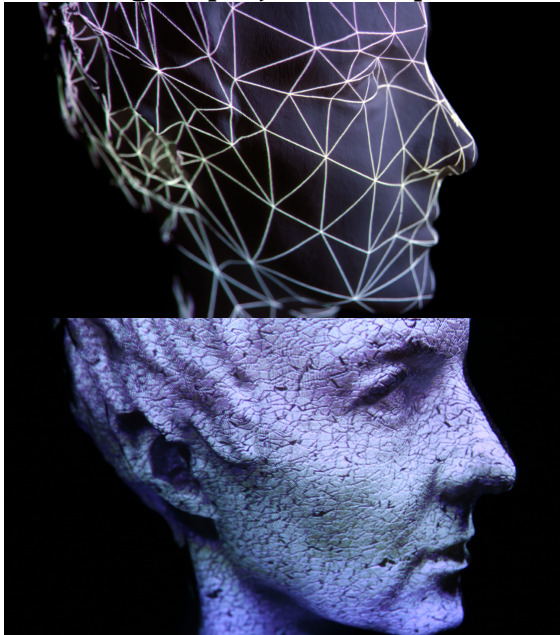
Technical / Installation Details

Life-sized 3D printed polymer head and neck. Mounted on an acrylic base to be attached to a plinth. 3 pico projectors mounted on fixed tripods.

Artist with 3D print:



Test image of projection maps CGI onto 3D print below:



Test image of live video projection mapped onto 3D print below:

