LABORATORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION & AUDIOVISUAL DOCUMENTATION

symposium

intensive 5-day workshop

Volos, 12 & 13 - 17 April 2013

Multimedia Database

as Narrative Mechanism

Multimedia Database
as Narrative Mechanism
organised and hosted by the
Lab of Environmental Communication &
Audiovisual Documentation (LECAD)
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Multimedia Database as Narrative Mechanism

Intensive Five-day Workshop

13 – 17 April 2013, Volos, Greece

http://databasenarrative2013.blogspot.gr/

organised and hosted by the

Lab of Environmental Communication and Audiovisual Documentation

Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly

http://lecad.arch.uth.gr/en/

in conjunction with The I-Node of the Planetary Collegium

Introduction

The Lab of Environmental Communication and Audiovisual Documentation (LECAD) and the Department of Architecture of the University of Thessaly is happy to invite you to participate to an intensive, five-day workshop entitled *Multimedia Database as Narrative Mechanism*. The workshop will take place in Volos between Saturday 13 and Wednesday 17 April 2013. The workshop's kick-off event is a two- day symposium on the same theme. The symposium will be held on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 April 2013. The symposium will provide the theoretical framework for the ensuing workshop. Both the symposium and the workshop are organised and hosted by LECAD in conjunction with The I-Node of the Planetary Collegium. The workshop is designed for undergraduate and postgraduate students of architecture, planning and regional development, fine arts and cultural studies. Basic knowledge of interactive projects and digital design will be appreciated. For additional information on the workshop's theme, its aim and scope, the collaborators, dates, locations, travel, accommodation and registration please refer to the relevant sections of this document.

Workshop Theme

This workshop readdresses the notion of the list and the archive in the conceptual framework of contemporary, digital environments. It investigates the aesthetic and ideological constitution of the archive as a list, examines the nature of the historical evidence that can be transcribed in and communicated by moving images and, finally, experiments with the database as a storytelling mechanism that allows for multiple narrations about the city and its architecture. Hopefully, carrying this line of inquiry forward will enable a deeper understanding of contemporary urban environments via the effective and creative utilisation of a multimedia database for the city and its architecture. The host city of Volos is treated as a unique case-study, where the theoretical explorations of the two-day symposium can be put to effective use.

Theoretical Framework

According to urbanist and cultural theorist Paul Virilio early in the 20th century perceptive faith –founded in the Middle Ages– began to lose ground over faith in the technical sightline. This crisis brought about the automation of perception and the production of synthetic vision afforded by technological advancement (Virilio 1994). Virilio's 'eyeless vision' –the act of substituting the 'ideal alignment of the look' along an imaginary axis for a line of aim that 'appears thoroughly objective'– describes a great semantic loss in the history of perceptual

faith (Virilio 2000). No one managed to encapsulate this visual paradigm shift better than the Soviet film-director Dziga Vertov (1896-1954). In Vertov's movie *The Man with the Movie Camera* (USSR, 1929) shots depicting a movie-camera, a machinegun and their visual overlap are used interchangeably on several occasions. Vertov was determined that the human eye was not 'equipped' to record the complexity, the multiplicity and the simultaneity of contemporary urban life (Vertov 1984). Therefore, he sought to obtain 'unobstructed,' 'unmediated' and 'unbiased' views of urban life with the omnipotent and omnipresent, technologically advanced eye of the movie camera, which always assumes an ideal point of view (Heath 1981). Vertov's anthropological laboratory was the Soviet city. His films constitute cinematic rhetorical arguments that construct the utopian image of the socialist city of the future via the imaginative reconfiguration of the city's present and past. Theorist and digital media artist Lev Manovich draws our attention to the narrative mechanisms employed by Vertov (Manovich 2001) in order to force an image of modernity out of an obsolete urban terrain that refused to register any kind of significant change. This synthetic, artificial and imaginary geography of the city in film constitutes a significant part of Vertov's valuable legacy. 'Multimedia Database as Narrative Mechanism' workshop plans to build and expand upon this legacy by seeking potential applications of Vertov's methods in the field of metadata logging for the generation of multiple narrations about the contemporary city. Using as points of departure Lev Manovich and Umberto Eco's seminal works on the database and the list (Eco 2009) respectively, this workshop wishes to examine how our understanding of the city and its architecture can be shaped, using moving images and sound as our primary resources and non-linear, cause and effect storytelling as a medium for communicating our ideas about the urban form.

Workshop Goals and Structure

The main learning objective of the workshop is to familiarise participants with the rhetorical and communicative functions of moving images and sound in the field of non-linear, non-causal, web-based storytelling. Workshop participants are invited to experiment with the cinematic image and the soundscapes of Volos, utilising both existing and new footage depicting the dynamics of the city. Participants are expected to work in teams of five or more individuals, under the supervision of a workshop instructor. The final outcome of the workshop will be the production of a montaged moving image project inspired by the daily life of the city and its people. Each team will be allocated a place to work at LECAD; however, workshop participants are strongly advised to bring with them and use their own equipment (laptops, digital cameras, digital camcorders, digital sound recorders, etc.). Existing footage comprise moving-image urban walks with local city dwellers, who guide the spectator into their personal renderings of the urban landscape of Volos. Workshop participants are strongly encouraged to shoot new footage and capture urban sounds in Volos that reflect their own understanding of the city, its history and its potential for future development. The aim is to compile a database comprising relevant moving image and audio items and to log descriptive metadata about each database item with a view to enabling multiple narrations about the city of Volos. The database may be populated with additional items, such as sketches, texts, photographs, plans, maps, archival material, etc. Basic knowledge of interactive media design is welcome, since the focus of this intensive workshop is the discussion of the nature of descriptive metadata and their relevance to unearthing aspects of space.

　　　　This intensive, five-day workshop consists of eight (8) hours per day of hands-on practice with moving image handling and tagging software divided in two working sessions, morning (10:00 to 14:00) and evening (15:00 to 19:00), one hour for lunch break between 14:00 and 15:00 and one hour for daily reviews. The results of the workshop will be

reviewed by the participants and the instructors on <u>Wednesday 17 April 2013</u>. Certificates of attendance will be issued to all workshop participants who have successfully completed the full schedule described above. All student projects will be prominently showcased on LECAD's website and at relevant events in Greece and abroad. A detailed schedule of the workshop will be issued in due course. English is the official language of the workshop and the symposium.

Workshop Instructors and Contributors

- Workshop Coordinator:
  Dr Stavros Alifragkis, Post-doctoral Research Associate, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly (http://celluloid-city.blogspot.gr/), Adjunct Lecturer, Hellenic Military Academy
- Organising Committee :
  S. Alifragkis
  Associate Professor Giorgos Papakonstantinou, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly (http://www.arch.uth.gr/en/staff/G_Papakonstantinou
  Giorgos Kalaouzis, Laboratory Teaching Staff, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly (http://www.arch.uth.gr/en/staff/G_Kalaouzis)
- Keynote Speakers:
  Professor Roy Ascott, Founding President of the Planetary Collegium, School of Arts and Media, Plymouth University. De Tao Master of Technoetic Arts (http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/rascott)
  Professor François Penz, Director of the Digital Studio for Research in Design, Visualisation and Communication, Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge (http://www.arct.cam.ac.uk/people/fp12@cam.ac.uk)
- Workshop Contributor:
  Associate Professor G. Papakonstantinou
- Workshop Instructors:
  S. Alifragkis
  G. Kalaouzis
  Chrissa Papasarantou, Doctoral Researcher, LECAD, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly
- Workshop Administrator:
  Ifigenia Charatsi, Laboratory Staff, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly (http://www.arch.uth.gr/en/staff/I_Charatsi)
- Technical support:
  Nikos Vamvakas, LECAD, Laboratory Staff, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly (http://www.arch.uth.gr/en/staff/N_Vamvakas)
  Eleni Pispiri, LECAD, Laboratory Staff, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly (http://www.arch.uth.gr/en/staff/E_Pispiri)

Workshop Dates and Locations

The workshop will commence on <u>Saturday 13 April</u> in the afternoon with an introductory course on the theme. More information about the workshop will be posted on LECAD's webpage. The workshop will last until midday on <u>Wednesday 17 April</u>. The workshop will take place at LECAD's facilities, on the ground floor of the Department's main building, at the campus of the School of Engineering, University of Thessaly, Pedion Areos, 38334, Volos, Greece (http://www.arch.uth.gr/en/contact).

Travel and Accommodation

The easiest way to reach Volos is by intercity coach. Regular coach services connect Volos with Athens and Thessaloniki. Additional information on schedules, timetables, prices and on-line reservations can be obtained from the regional coach company's official website (http://www.ktelvolou.gr/). Alternatively, workshop participants may wish to explore the possibility of travelling by train to Larissa and changing there for the local train to Volos. More information on train services can be found at the website of the Hellenic Railways Organisation (http://www.trainose.gr/en). Workshop participants will be offered off-campus lodging from Thursday 11 to Thursday 18 April 2013 at the guesthouses of Volos' Panthessaliko Stadium (http://wikimapia.org/3376996/el), 3,6 kilometres north of the Department's main building. The local bus company operates regular bus services (Bus No 2, Amelokipi) between Panthessaliko Stadium and the Bus Terminal next to the School of Engineering Campus (http://astikovolou.gr/). For additional options check here: http://www.volos-city.gr/default.aspx?id=1470&nt=18&lang=2.

Application & Registration

The workshop is open to undergraduate and postgraduate (M.Phil., M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D.) students of architecture, urban planning and regional development, fine arts and cultural studies. Applications from eligible candidates are invited via e-mail by **Friday 5 April 2013**. The on-line application form can be found below. Properly filled out applications should be e-mailed to metadata.narrative.2013@gmail.com. Successful candidates will be notified within two (2) days from the above deadline. All participants must register for the workshop on-line. The deadline for registration to the workshop is set for Monday 8 April 2013. Cancellations are accepted by e-mail until Wednesday 10 April 2013.

Workshop Preliminary Program (at a glance)

April 2013	Friday 12	Saturday 13	Sunday 14	Monday 15	Tuesday 16	Wednesday 17
09:00-10:00	Symposium					
10:00-12:00	Symposium	Symposium	Develop Ideas	Preview Footage A	European Acoustic Heritage	Finalise Projects
12:00-14:00	Symposium	Alifragkis & Papakonsta-ntinou	Shoots	Preview Footage B	Log Metadata	Final Review
14:00-15:00	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
15:00-17:00	Symposium	Roy Ascott Groundcourse	Shoots	Spatial Metadata	Log Metadata	
17:00-19:00	Symposium	François Penz / Discussion	Shoots	Log Metadata	Discuss Stories & Day Review	
19:00-20:00	Symposium	Split group into teams	Digitise Footage	Day Review	Roy Ascott Lecture	

Symposium	Theory
Introduction to Workshop	Theory
Workshop	Practice-based
Workshop	Theory and Practice

Workshop Preliminary Program (day-by-day outline)

Day 01: Saturday 13 April 2013

13:15-14:00   Welcome and introduction to the workshop by Associate Professor Giorgos Papakonstantinou and Dr. Stavros Alifragkis.

15:00-17:00   **Professor Roy Ascott, Groundcourse**: "The Groundcourse reconsiders the idea of art process. When art is a form of behavior, software predominates over hardware in the creative sphere. Process replaces product in importance just as system supersedes structure. The Groundcourse production involves the creation of five-person groups, mind-maps, calibrators and ordered entities. Its outcome augments cultural awareness, inno! vative thought, adaptive skills and social connectivity."

17:30-18:15   **Professor François Penz, Lecture**.

18:15-19:00   Group discusses the introductory presentations.

19:00-20:00   Group splits into working teams of three to four (3-4), based on their preferences in the different theoretical approaches to reading and understanding the urban form previously presented by the two speakers.

Day 02: Sunday 14 April 2013

10:00-12:00   Teams develop their ideas along the theoretical axes presented by Professor Roy Ascott.

12:00-19:00   Teams shoot aspects of daily life in the city of Volos. Each team concentrates on a different district of the city. The aim is to capture the sense of the place via the still and/or moving image. Filming a particular theme at different times of the day will afford interesting observations on the transformation of a place in the course of a single day.

19:00-20:00   Teams return to their workstations and back-up their material that might consist of moving images, photos, sketches, plans, texts, etc. Images should be scanned at a resolution of 300dpi (optional).

Day 03: Monday 15 April 2013

10:00-12:00   Previewing Session A: Each team previews their footage individually and decides what will constitute their final contribution to the multimedia database, shared in common by the group. This will involve performing basic editing with video editing software and exporting the final edit as a single moving image file (AVI). Approximately twenty (20) minutes of footage per team should be adequate for the purposes of our experiment with the city and the moving image.

12:00-14:00   Previewing Session B: Teams present their material to the group with a brief exposition of the way they approached the city of Volos via the moving image.

15:00-17:00   Teams discuss individually with the workshop instructors how they plan to annotate the assets of the shared, multimedia database with descriptive

metadata. Workshop participants are strongly encouraged to work with database assets created by contributors other than the members of their respective team. Demonstration of 'Anvil: The Video Annotation Research Tool'.

17:00-19:00   Teams import media to 'Anvil: The Video Annotation Research Tool' (http://www.anvil-software.org/) and prepare for the logging of descriptive metadata. These sessions are dedicated to the annotation of the assets of the shared, multimedia database with descriptive metadata that foreground aspects of space, architecture and the city. Teams will use pre-set vocabularies for the description of information pertaining to the spatial characteristics of the database assets. Teams are encouraged to modify the existing vocabularies (add extra layers of information) and even introduce their own vocabularies.

19:00-20:00   Day 3 Review of preliminary results: Group discusses the results of the third day of the workshop. Workshop instructors address potential deficiencies, point to possible solutions and present a brief outline of the fourth day of the workshop.

Day 04: Tuesday 16 April 2013

10:00-12:00   Group visits the exhibition 'European Acoustic Heritage' at the Municipal Center for Historical Research and Documentation of Volos. After the visit, teams return to their workstations to continue with their projects.

12:00-14:00
     &
15:00-17:00   Teams log metadata.

17:00-19:00   Teams discuss potential urban storylines. Teams export final XML files. Day 4 Review of intermediate results: Group discusses the results of the fourth day of the workshop. Workshop instructors present a brief outline of the fifth and final day of the workshop.

19:00-20:00   **Professor Roy Ascott, Lecture**.

Day 05: Wednesday 17 April 2013

10:00-12:00   Teams and workshop instructors establish the framework for the previewing mechanism. Teams check the results and log additional metadata if and where appropriate.

12:00-14:00   Teams present their final projects to the group with a brief outline of their original aim. Teams, workshop instructors, contributors and guests discuss the results of the workshop. End of the workshop.

Works Cited

- Ascott, R.: *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*. Shanken E.A. (ed). University of California Press: Berkeley (2003)
- Eco, U.: *The Infinity of Lists*. New York: Rizzoli (2009)
- Heath, S.: *Questions of Cinema*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington (1981)
- Manovich, L.: *The Language of New Media*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2001)
- Penz, F. & Lu, A. (eds): *Urban Cinematics*. Intellect: Bristol (2011)
- Vertov, D.: *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929, USSR, 68')

- Vertov, D.: *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles (1984)
- Virilio, P.: *The Vision Machine*. Indiana University Press, London; British Film Institute, Bloomington (1994)
- Virilio, P.: *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. Verso, London (2000)

For additional information on the program, the dates, the scope and the digital tools utilised please contact the workshop's coordinator, Dr Stavros Alifragkis, at sa346@otenet.gr and Chrissa Papasarantou at chrisapapa40u@yahoo.gr

Multimedia Database as Narrative Mechanism
Symposium –Intensive Five-day Workshop
13 – 17 April 2013, Volos, Greece
http://databasenarrative2013.blogspot.gr/

Application Form

1. Contact and Personal Information (please type accurately and legibly)

Name   …………………………………………………….
Surname   …………………………………………………….
Male ◯   Female ◯
Phone   …………………………………………………….
E-mail   …………………………………………………….
Address   …………………………………………………….
                          …………………………………………………….
                          …………………………………………………….

2. Education

Department
School
University
Year of Study
Graduate ◯   Post-graduate ◯
If Post-graduate, what degree are you currently studying for?
M.Phil. ◯   Ph.D. ◯   Other ◯

3. Skills

Please check which areas best describe your skills and expertise (multiple options).
Video Editing ◯   Sound Design ◯   Metadata Logging ◯   Databases ◯
Interactive Production Design ◯   Still Image Manipulation ◯   Other ◯

Please state other skills.
……
……

Please state which still and moving image software you are competent in using.
……
……

4. Additional Information

Please add below any additional information you consider useful or relevant.
……
……

Signature   Date

Please read carefully the workshop's theme, topics, aim and schedule before submitting your application. Check the information you provided, print and sign the application form. Please send your application via e-mail to the workshop organisers at metadata.narrative.2013@gmail.com by **Friday 5 April 2013**. You will hear from us within two (2) days of submission via e-mail. Thank you for your interest in our workshop. The deadline for registration to the workshop is set for Monday 8 April 2013. All successful applicants should register in order to secure a place at the workshop.