

I AM STILL HERE



limbic
PRODUCTIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Iris Musel, Director

Email: iris@limbicproductions.com

Mobile: +44 (0) 788 2941 530

Skype: iris.musel

www.limbicproductions.com

I AM STILL HERE

A series of Art Installations exploring Dementia

Introduction

'I am still here' is a series of interactive art installations that investigate how the sense of perception, sense of the self and forms of expression may change in people affected by dementia.

Besides experiencing memory loss, people with dementia often face a heightened or diminished change to their senses (incl. hallucination); have problems with abstract thinking (e.g. loss of language, spatial awareness, concept of time); experience loss in motor skills (e.g. balancing, co-ordination); and see their emotional state and personality shift.

Not all people with dementia will experience all symptoms, but we are keen to explore the diversity of dysfunctions that can be associated with dementia as it progresses, including the fact that each person and their family will experience the condition differently.

Each installation will be presented in a unique style of its own, focusing on specific themes that will lend us the opportunity to explore the mentioned subject areas in great detail.

Our aim is to create engaging experiences by which participants can seek a broader understanding on dementia.

A sense of Wonder

'A sense of Wonder' is the first art installation being developed in the series. It's main focus lies in investigating how the perception of vision and sound may change for people with dementia.

A concept particularly interesting in relation to vision and sound is how its perception can often be either heightened or dampened in dementia. Amongst other topics the installation will look at how depth perception or the contrast in colours might influence how an object is perceived; or how the dysfunction in identifying the difference in tone, pitch or timbre, might influence the ability in knowing where a sound is located in space.

'A sense of Wonder' will also draw attention to the fact that in some forms of dementia people experience hallucinations. With a negative stigma attached to hallucinations in relations to mental illness, we hope to open up conversations on the subject area that brings about a better understanding and acceptance.

The installation will employ the trickery of illusions as well as a high level of interface technology to alter people's state of perception. Wandering in a state of wonder, participants will be immersed in a space where they will be asked to interact with distinct art, video and sound pieces at their own chosen pace. How they navigate through the space will be central to the experience, as their placement and timing dictates their perception of the visual and sound cues presented to them.

Mumble Jumble

The second art installation in the series, titled 'Mumble Jumble' focuses on the complexity of abstract and concrete thinking processes in people affected by dementia.

The installation will reflect on the restrictions and boundaries people with dementia often face when every day activities all of a sudden become difficult to complete.

What might seem structured and logical when first approached will soon be appreciated as a chaotic mess.

With failing order, the installation will further delve into the realms of communication looking at the intricacy of language and numbers and how as the name suggests these can easily get muddled up in dementia.

'Mumble Jumble' will be presented as a series of games. It will challenge participants to adopt a creative approach in attempting to obtain order and sense in a space filled with disarray.

Where the installation may cause frustration, the aim is to still create a playful and humorous experience.

Soma-tic

'Soma-tic', the third art installation in the series, starts taking a more intimate approach. Here we start focusing on the somatic senses and how these might be influenced in dementia.

Exploring the somatic senses will include looking at the sense of touch; haptic perception; how we relate to our bodies and the immediate space that surrounds us; our ability to sense movement; and being able to distinguish temperature.

In addition the installation will delve into how the sense of smell is often diminished in the early stages of dementia and how due to a change in taste sensitivity and flavours being forgotten a persons taste preference might all of a sudden differ.

The set-up for 'Soma-tic' will be kept to a small confined area (e.g. sitting in an armchair for the whole experience). Each participant thus experiences the installation one at a time, encouraged to very mindfully interact with subtle changes to their contained environment.

I am still here

The final art installation in the series takes the name of the overall project, as it merges the research and components created for the first three art installations by presenting them as a compilation of elements to be experienced navigating through a maze structure.

The relevance of the maze design in 'I am still here' is that it adds a further focus on investigating how orientation and spatial awareness is affected in dementia. As the nature of the design will send participants walking into numerous directions, creating the possibility to experience the installation in various ways, it also touches on the notion that dementia is experienced differently by each person.

As with the previous art installations, the maze will utilize interface technology, illusions, a game scenario, intricate design and sensory stimulation to alter participant's states of perception.

Working Process

We consider this an exciting project for artists, scientists and people affected by dementia to come together and share their knowledge, experience and practice, with the aim that a multitude of audiences will benefit from this interdisciplinary exchange, throughout and beyond the project.

Working closely with neuroscientists and clinical psychologists to inform the scientific research on the project, this affiliation offers the added possibility to create a platform which shares more science based information on dementia that is engaging, accessible and comprehensible to the general public.

Coordinating a focus group people with dementia and carers share their personal stories in a series of recorded interviews. Building on these inspiring relationships provides an added influence on the narrative each art installation will form.

As lead artist on the project, Iris Musel acts as mediator between the groups, compiling comprehensive material that she then translates into creative ideas with a team of highly specialised artists in their field.

A series of smaller events showcasing the development process of each art installation will provide an added opportunity for our growing network to come together, exchange ideas and provide valuable feedback to the work being created.

In addition to the working processes above Iris aims to run a number of art workshops that will provide a platform in which these three groups can meet and examine the different themes explored for each art installation together in an engaging and enjoyable manner. Each workshop programme will be developed in collaboration with an artist and a scientist specialised in the subject area the programme embodies (e.g. a musician & a researcher examining musical perception in dementia), with the aim to create an environment that is entertaining and rewarding for participants involved, whilst still delivering informative evidence about particular research questions being posed.

Public Engagement

The project is intended for an adult audience. It is anticipated that the style of the installation will also attract a slightly younger audience, though it is not intended for children.

The Journey so far

2015 we enjoyed showcasing activities devised to get the audience thinking on how dexterity, coordination, spatial awareness, visual perception and taste might be affected in dementia at events such as:

- Pint-of-Science London & Bristol (May 2015) – an international platform that presents talks with leading scientists in their field in the comfort of a pub
- Kings College Alzheimer's Open Day (May 2015)

2016 has been all about condensing the wider concept for the project and starting on the development for 'A sense of Wonder'. This has/and will include:

- Enjoying a residency in January at East London's maker space MachinesRoom, where we built a 3D maze model to help us envisage the final installation, as well as experimented with a handful of interactive components that lent us new ideas to be developed going forward.
- Exhibiting a mini installation at the ORTUS centre in June that experiments with visual cues and the jumble of words as part of the Kings College Alzheimer's Open Day.
- Exhibiting 'Lens through a Stereogram' art installation as part of the PLASA show at Olympia Centre in September – 'Lens through a Stereogram' provides a great opportunity to experiment with sound and video equipment for pieces that will later on be integrated into the 'A sense of Wonder' art installation.
- Experimenting with ideas in the Pit Theatre at the Barbican in November, as part of their 'Open Lab Residency scheme' in order to develop further components for 'A sense of Wonder'.

We are continuously looking to secure opportunities that will support the further development of the project and are looking forward to confirming more opportunities that are currently in the pipeline soon. Organisations that shown their on-going support include, ARUK, Westminster Arts, SLAM, Central Saint Martins and Lime Wharf Gallery.

Media Channels

An interview with Iris Musel (Artistic Director) discussing the project has been published in the 'International Innovation' magazine, June 2016.

The Dementia Journal has also expressed an interest to publish an article on our experience in developing the project.

Further media channels (e.g. radio, journals/newspapers) are being targeted as platforms to both market the piece, share our experience of developing it and raise awareness on dementia.

Material on the project will also be shared via social media channels. We also intend to reach a wide audience via our partners.

Outreach

Exchange Event

Where possible we will organise exchange events in conjunction to presenting the installations. The aim for the events are to give the audience the opportunity to ask questions and hear more about the creation of the project, current research areas and detailed accounts on living with dementia by engaging with a panel of experts, comprising of scientists, people directly affected by dementia as well as the artists involved in developing the installation.

Creative Workshops for people affected by Dementia

Limbic Productions founder, Iris Musel has a personal interest in providing creative workshop to participants affected by dementia and their carers. For the last 6 months she's been running art and reminiscence workshops with Westminster Arts and is excited to build on this practice with other arts and also health organisations.

Student Programme

We are planning to run a student programme with the MA Art and Science at Central Saint Martins. Sharing scientific knowledge as well as our creative expertise in creating 'I am still here', students will have a chance to create their own artistic work in response to the project. Particularly committed and skilful students will be given the opportunity to follow design briefs for pieces we will be looking at integrating into the series of installations.

Book

In correspondence to developing the project we are planning to publish a book. Similar to developing the installations the book should have an input from artists, scientists and persons affected by dementia. The book will include:

- Creatively presented games and illustrations that communicate a better understanding on how certain activities might be experienced in dementia – e.g. the difficulty in ordering words when reading a text.
- Memoirs from people affected by dementia, portraying their experience with dementia, but also honouring their life stories.
- Articles that provide a perspective on the social and psychological implications dementia might have on people's lives (with links to further information and help guidelines).
- Articles providing scientific insight on the pathology and how the brain is affected in different forms of dementia.

Limbic Productions

Limbic Productions constructs milieus that are immersive and highly experiential with the aim to explore how different elements that shape a piece of work can stimulate the audience's emotional, social, motivational and sensual behaviour. Combining various art disciplines and techniques the company develops interactive installations and live game scenarios that incorporate scenic backdrops, playful gimmicks and progressive interface technology. For more information please visit our website at www.limbicproductions.com

Contact Information

For further information on the project please contact Iris Musel on iris@limbicproductions.com or on 07882941530.