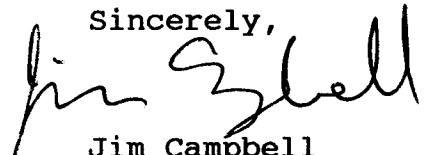


Dear Steina,

April 18, 1991

Thank you for interest in my work. I'm enclosing a videotape, with 5 pieces documented on it and some descriptions of other pieces. I'm sorry for the delay but I've been very busy and I wanted to finish documenting the last piece on the tape before I sent it. I would appreciate any feedback that you might have on my work. I hope that you will send me some information and/or documentation on some of the work that you are doing. I've enjoyed the pieces of yours that I've seen. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Campbell
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"Recollection"

Jim Campbell

Proposal for a video installation for
the America West Arena in Phoenix, Arizona
January 10, 1991

I. Introduction

Phoenix's America West Arena is an innovative multi-use facility now under construction. It is designed as a venue for major sports events, concerts and similar large-scale public activities. Arenas, for thousands of years, have been a meeting place for public events. Historically, the architecture of arenas have borrowed from the past. "Recollection" is a work of electronic sculpture intended for installation into the foyer of the Arena. "Recollection" uses an archetypal architectural element, the column or pillar, as a shroud and from within this shroud, the piece borrows from and reflects upon the past. It uses computer manipulated live video images to enliven the space and engage the public, playing on the theme of human memory. People seeing "Recollection" will recognize themselves among the video imagery displayed on six video "towers", combined at times with scenes from the natural environment, past and present. The piece is designed to make maximum use of the large foyer between the arena and the curved wall. It spans this entire food court area without overwhelming the space. There are six evenly spaced visible support columns in the foyer. "Recollection" uses these support columns within the piece, and by maintaining the look of the support columns, the piece becomes a structural element of the architecture.

II. Artistic Goals

Memory is a powerful function in all of our lives. Associations from the past can be triggered by events in the environment around us, often without our conscious awareness. New memories can be intermingled with old ones, creating composite memories that are more illusion than reality. "Recollection" mirrors this dreamlike process, bringing an ambience of wonder and magic to the foyer in the arena, enriching this public environment in unexpected ways. An important element of "Recollection" is its ever changing appearance. The piece selects images from present time, short term memory (computer) and long term memory (videodisc). It makes decisions about what images to recall from its memory by looking at a variety of inputs (from the weather to the activity of the viewers). This process creates a series of states for the piece that are recognizably non-random, but at the same time unpredictable. This level of interaction is achieved by a more intuitive relationship between the piece and the viewers, made possible by the piece's capability of recognition. In this way the piece attempts to go beyond the current media related definition of interactivity, which usually corresponds to button pushing and conscious discrete decision making. "Recollection" is an interactive system that will at times surprise, at times confront, and at times yield to the viewers.

III. Description

"Recollection" consists of six towers with five monitors in each tower, stretching from floor to ceiling in the space (the video image goes from six inches to ten and a half feet). Images move between monitors and between towers, in controlled patterns determined by factors such as pedestrian traffic flow, sunlight and weather. Viewers might see themselves in the present as well as in the recent past. As an example, viewers may see their image, frozen in time, slowly dissolving from one image to the next up a tower, momentarily elevating their past images to the ceiling. Thus as the images age, they ascend upward leaving the oldest images on the top monitor. In another configuration the five monitors within a tower make up one image which spans from the floor to the ceiling. A viewer might see a life size image of himself, as in a full length mirror, or an image of a Greek column might slowly appear, ten feet tall, creating a simulated support structure within the real one.

Sometimes a tower might appear to be a window to another time and place. One tower might be a reflection with fog. The viewers see a live image of themselves in the lobby with fog blowing all around them. The ambience of a tower depends on the conditions measured outside and the activity of the people near the tower. If it is very hot outside, then the tower might respond inversely, like a dream, and douse the viewer in snow. If people are moving very fast, the tower might respond by making the fast moving pedestrians transparent, unless they stop moving, then their shapes will gradually reappear over the background.

Other times a tower might be a window to the past. A viewer might see a live image of herself with a crowd behind her, but when she looks behind herself, no one is there. The crowd was from earlier that day and was temporarily stored on a computer. Another time a viewer might see a frozen black & white image of himself superimposed over an image of an old building. The building is from a black & white photograph taken 70 years earlier on the same spot in Chinatown. Sometimes a viewer might see a collage in time. She might see a number of moments from different times of herself all in one image, a composite of her recent past.

The piece will select and incorporate appropriate images from a variety of possible sources, including videodisc, recently stored images, a camera in the sports area, cameras on the towers and a camera on the roof. The images of the viewers are in black & white, but at times these black & white images are combined with color images or effects. The piece is intelligent in that it only displays images that are worth displaying. For example, the images from the camera inside the basketball court will only show up on the monitors when there is motion on the court, and at night, the image from the camera on the roof will only show up if the moon is visible.

Due to the multi-use nature of the food court area, pedestrian activities in this space will vary considerably, and thus time for interacting with art in the space will differ. Spectators for arena events will generally use the foyer as a transition area. People who come to the arena only to eat will spend their time in the foyer. "Recollection" is designed to detect the activity of the people in the foyer and to respond in a predetermined manner. More specifically, "Recollection" will know the number of people in the foyer and the general speed and direction of their movement, and the piece will use this information to influence its own pacing and image manipulation.

A color camera is mounted on the roof of the arena which tracks (by means of a computer) the sun in the daytime and the moon at night. It always captures a live image, whether of the sun or the moon or a sunset or a cloud in front of the sun or a black sky when no moon is out. The temperature, wind, rain and pollution conditions are also measured with instruments. This information along with the date and time are fed to a computer. Conditions in the arena near the towers are also fed to the computer: number of people, how fast people are moving, whether they are moving towards the towers or away from the towers, and how close to a tower they are. All of this information, weather, sun, moon, pedestrian activity and arena activity are used by the computer to decide what appearance the piece will have.

The image of the sun or the moon is at times displayed on the top monitor of each tower, superimposed with the images of the viewers that are there. At other times each monitor displays a section of the sun or moon, so that all thirty monitors create a large live image of the sun or moon. This will happen every hour on the hour unless the sun or moon is obscured, like a sundial, which only works when the sun is out. On the day of the summer solstice, the sun might dominate the imagery on the monitors and a blue moon also might do the same thing. If the mounting of a camera on the roof is not feasible, then a photo cell (light level measuring device), mounted on the roof, in conjunction with a videodisc, containing images of the sun and the moon (both in various phases), can take its place. The live sun is preferable.

A color camera is mounted on the ceiling of the arena with its' lens focused on one of the two basketball hoop areas covering a range of ten feet. The images from this camera, like the images of the viewers, are usually seen as captured moments, i.e. a series of freeze frames. At times a tower will contain this real size, real time image of the hoop area at one end of the court, creating a virtual playing court in the lobby.

Another input to the system is a videodisc which has prerecorded images on it of a number of things including:

- 1.) A time lapse (18 months down to 30 seconds) of the construction of the arena as seen from a tall building nearby (if possible).
- 2.) Nature images to be mixed with live viewer images: snow, rain, fog, smog, ocean, fire etc.
- 3.) Static images to be seen in the columns: Greek pillars, Roman pillars, palm trees, cacti, basketball players, etc.
- 4.) Images from the historical ethnic diversity of the immediate area. These images will come from photographs from the old Chinatown and drawings and photographs from the ancient and current local Native American culture (Hohokam and Pima). These images will generally be architectural in content.
- 5.) Images related to seasons and anniversaries: Thanksgiving, New Years Day, April Fools Day, the summer solstice, etc.

IV. Installation and Fabrication.

Six towers will be constructed around the already existing 2'x2'x12.5' support columns. The new tower dimension is 3'x4.5'x12.5' (see note 1). The facade on 3 sides is made with a plywood frame, foam, and stucco and is a neutral-concrete color. The 4th side contains glass covered openings for 5 monitors. The details of the tower construction will be worked out with the architects of the building. Internal to the tower is a support system for the 5 monitors; a 110 volt AC power feed with a 30 amp rating; 7 video lines from the master control area; 2 fans for ventilation; and a door which can open to give access to the monitors and cabling for maintenance.

Mounted 6 feet high on the outside of the towers will be B&W cameras enclosed in boxes with glass fronts.

Mounted on the roof of the arena will be a color video camera on a motorized pan and tilt camera mount. This whole structure will be mounted inside a small glass hemisphere to protect it from the weather. This camera will track the sun and the moon. If mounting a camera on the roof is not feasible then a photo cell mounted somewhere outside can be used to take its place.

Mounted inside the sports area on the ceiling will be a color video camera mounted on a motorized pan and tilt camera mount. This camera will be pointed at one of the 2 main action areas, the basketball hoop areas.

The master control electronics (videodisc players, computers, etc.) will be installed in a preexisting room that is as close to the towers as possible, and is air conditioned with a space large enough to hold an electronics rack that is 25" wide x 60" tall x 30" deep and 2 computers that are 7.5" wide x 25" tall x 17" deep.

Major Electronic Equipment List:

- Item 1. 31 Sony PVM3230 32" color cubic monitors or equivalent.
- Item 2. 9 Sony XC77 B&W cameras
- Item 3. 2 Sony XC711 color cameras
- Item 4. 2 Pioneer LDV8000 videodisc players
- Item 5. 1 NEC 386/25 computer or equivalent
- Item 6. 1 NEC 286 computer or equivalent
- Item 7. 2 custom built frame store and image combining devices

Note 1. The total square footage lost in the space due to the new size towers is 57 square feet.