



## Interactive Art Readings Focusing on Gilles Deleuze's Thoughts

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**Abstract.** Gilles Deleuze is a post-structuralist philosopher whose viewpoints have a postmodern and post-structuralist atmosphere that transform any solid and stable structure into dynamism, oppression and fluidity. In the twentieth century, several developments occurred in the arts and technology. This brought about the emergence of new art forms, including interactive art. In this research, we deal with interactive art from the viewpoint of Deleuze based on the interpretation of two examples of works of an interactive artist, i.e., Maurice Benayoun. We looked specifically at the role of the audience in this art form. The research methodology used was descriptive-analytical and the method of information analysis was qualitative. The results of this study show that in interactive art, in as in Deleuze's view, stagnation and one-dimensionality do not make sense. The audience finds himself/herself in between the work and the personal. However, the meaning of the artwork and its transmission among the creator, the work, and the audience is always in progress, a fluid flow happening in the middle of the potential and actual task.

**Keywords:** *interactive art; Deleuze's philosophy; audience; becoming; new media.*

### 1 Introduction

Gilles Deleuze is among the most important contemporary experientialist philosophers, whose theories on literature, cinema, and painting have been very influential. The advent of new artistic movements and the profound and fundamental technological developments that took place in the late twentieth century brought about changes and developments in the aesthetics of art. Accordingly, the nature of the work of art as a finished object has changed, the concept of being an artist has changed from being merely the creator of an artwork, and the position of the audience has changed from being only a viewer or spectator. These changes and the introduction of new media have led to the evolution of methods to deliver messages to an audience through art.

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Received January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Accepted for publication April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

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DOI: 10.5614/j.vad.2022.14.1.3

A previous study by Seyedalmasi, Abbaszadeh & Islampour [1] addressed the mechanism to apply the principle of horizontalism in the creation of innovative architectural works as well as the factors that influence virtual and contemporary architecture from Gilles Deleuze's perspective.

The present study dealt with an investigation of interactive art from Deleuze's perspective in order to answer the following question: How is the audience's reading of a work of art explained using Deleuze perspective? The research methodology was descriptive-analytical and the method of information analysis was qualitative. The importance of this research is to show the role of the audience in interactive art using the perspective of Deleuze.

## **2 Interactive Art**

Interactive art is an art form with its own specific features, independent from other types of interaction-oriented arts. On the one hand, interactive art reveals its independent existence from similar counterparts by exploiting actions of the audience to interpret the display and on the other hand by using actions of the audience to change the display.

"An artwork is interactive only if it is thought that it is the users' actions which contribute to create its display" [2]. Interactive art is a branch of new art based on involving the audience in the creation process of artworks. Although the selection of its content remains at the discretion of the artist, what the audience does with this content is highly diversified [3]. The active and creative participation of the audience in interactive art and collaborative art pulls the work of art out of the creator's sole ownership. In other words, it is a way to let the audience contribute to a work of art by influencing it [4].

Interactive art provides the possibility to the audience to understand, experience and engage with works of art [5]. In this art form, the audience explores and re-establishes a concept through de-conceptualization: thinking about the content and perceiving new perspectives during the interaction with the work. Raising cultural, political, social issues, focusing on the interaction with the audience, and using cyberspace and technological implements are among the characteristics of this art form.

## **3 Interactive Work Features**

The real and physical actions of audiences in interactive art, which lead to a change in the work's display, is the most important feature of this type of art.

Because it is essentially interaction-oriented, the engagement of the audience with the work is physical and actively mediated by their action [2].

Unlike traditional forms of art, in which interaction with the audience is merely a mental event, it is possible to assist in the creation of the work of art, an act which requires physical activity along with mental activity. Another feature is that the viewer and the object interact with each other in a conversation in order to create a complete and single artwork for each individual observer [6]. Other features of this art form are clarity and understandability, social presence, audience engagement, giving a feeling of pleasure, learning, and the ability to know and to communicate.

#### **4 Artist and Audience Position**

The work of art is no longer a predetermined object or event that the creator proposes to create meaning within the framework of his/her opinions and ideas. Also, the artist himself/herself, not as a creator but rather as a designer, acts as an interpreter. With the advent of new media and the related emergence of the new concept of the audience as user, the concept of the audience is completely disrupted. The role of the audience towards the work of art had always been passive, whereas in interactive art, the audience plays an active role. Nowadays, social media users and audiences are very active participants in the communication process. They are the consumers of the produced content that is simultaneously produced by them. It could be said that the message is like a raw material that needs the action and the presence of an audience to be made into a work of art [7].

#### **5 Deleuze's Philosophy**

Gilles Deleuze is a French experientialist philosopher from the twentieth century who was interested in concepts such as constructivism, plurality, distinction, and desire. He was influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy and occupied a post-structuralist and postmodernist space in which the concept of power is central. Deleuze persuaded people to break free from representation in expressing their creativity. Unorganized experiences far removed from centrality, the desire for something new, and regressing (driving back) the subject to the cognition method make people have experiences beyond common human experience [8].

In Deleuze's perspective, there is no fixed and static center, or anything stagnant. He denies any pre-formed structure of the universe or an intended order, and instead insists on ontological versions. He emphasizes fluidity and becoming in order to avoid any notion of idealism. For Deleuze, creation is not a modifier action that leads to a steady and static life [8]. There is no hidden existence in

Deleuze's ontology; everything exists in the reality of the world. Universe in this sense is positive and complete. He rejects any preconceived attitude toward the universe. Anything alive is becoming, because if this is not the case then it is equal to no longer being.

### **5.1 Deleuze in Interactive Art**

In Deleuze's perspective, the task of art is to create signs that reach us through our habit of trying to understand our circumstances. Art should be alive, dynamic and have the capability of becoming. Hence, works of art should create a concept and help activate a perceptual trend. Therefore, art means the creation of movement and not merely representation [4]. In Deleuze's philosophy, it is always possible to discover novelty anywhere and at any moment of time. Repeating the past change the past. This is life's essence. What is experienced is alive and dynamic and accepts that it is becoming. Human beings should not be squeezed into a pre-existing order, as Deleuze does not consider anything as obvious and insists that the power of life is the power to raise problems [2].

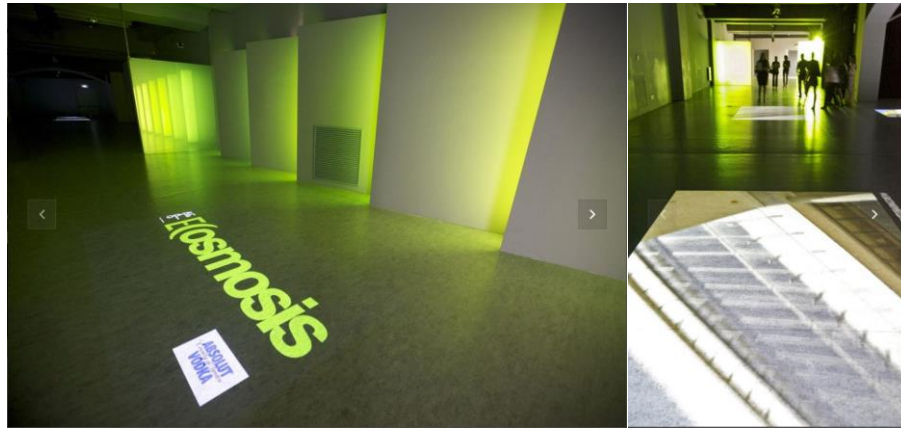
In interactive art, as mentioned above, the audience participates in the creation of a work of art. Sometimes the fact that the audience is replacing the artist is addressed as an additional message. It should be noted that each time when the audience participates, the result is unique and therefore there is never repetition. At each contact the audience reacts in a different way from before, and also the result that he/she receives is never the same; the feedback is different every time.

This art form distances itself from the approach of traditional art and does not have the capability of merely being a representation, because the audience is hit by a visual shock when faced with it, upon which a new discovery begins. Its dynamic nature is a defining characteristic of this art form. There is no predetermined structure present because the audience's reactions cannot be predicted, as this is different for each person. Thus, the work of art has the capability of becoming.

### **5.2 An Interactive Work's Analysis based on Deleuze's Viewpoint**

Maurice Benayoun is a pioneering artist and theorist from France who works with new media in fields such as virtual reality video, web art, urban artistic installations and interactive exhibitions. Below is an analysis of two interactive works of this artist. 'Ecologic Serendipity' is an interactive work that was presented in the Ecosmosis exhibition at the Hellenic Classical Cultural Center in 2012. This exhibition was an interactive three-dimensional artistic environment aimed at informing and sensitizing people about the necessity for environmental

design in architecture and landscape architecture, taking into account the climatic and cultural characteristics of Greece (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** 3D interactive work implemented in the Ecosmosis exhibition.

In this work, the audience can visit selected architectural spaces in a three-dimensional environment and feel as if they are present in that environment. They can pay attention to its environmental issues and have influence on it. Thus, with respect to the work of art and the engagement of the audience with the created conditions, the work and the audience move far away from a static and steady state. A new experience is created that yields a different result and reaction each time a visitor interacts with the artwork. As a result, stagnation is turned into dynamism and becoming, while difference and repetition occur too.



**Figure 2** Interactive work 'Museall'.

MUSEALL is an interactive work exhibited at DESIGN MUSEUM BYMOBEN Museum in 2012. (Figure 2) The musical training device is a digital art. It is a tool for consultation, viewing and appreciation of the art history. This device includes a touch screen system, a big and high-resolution display. A wireless device of Kinect type is an interface to create the user interaction.

In this work, the audience can partner in it touching the artwork and himself/herself become the creator of the work, obtain information out of it. A different thing is being done in this work as well; each audience can choose a historical artwork according to his/her own taste and will, and have a different experience with it. So, the dynamics, difference and the repetition are felt in it. (Figure 2)



## **6 Conclusion**

In this study, by examining examples of the use of interactive art, a better understanding of its qualities can be gained. It was seen that the use of the element of interaction invites the audience to consciously react to the work of art, affecting the audience by shock and excitement. By the audience participating in the work, they will be completely aware of the communication occurring.

In this paper, we investigated the roots of Deleuze's ideas in interactive art and to identify related components. Evaluating two examples of interactive works of the French interactive artist Maurice Benayoun, laying out their interactive features, and the topics discussed therein, it can be concluded that in interactive art, stagnation and one-dimensionality are meaningless. The audience finds themselves in the artwork and find in it their own specific meaning, consistent with their own spiritual, mental, and personality traits.

In other words, the audience does not communicate with the creator of the work but connect with the work itself and find themselves inside it, as if they are a part of the work. The work is not complete without them, even though it is different, yields a different result and different feedback every time, so each experience in it is a new one. Creation is formed at each instant of interaction. Creation, dynamism and becoming play a role along with the presence and actions of a person and the formation of a new experience. Based on the above explanations, it can be said that difference and repetition occur too. Thus, we see that the main components of Deleuze's ideas, i.e., becoming, difference and repetition, are major elements of interactive art as well.

**Table 1** Examining interactive art samples from Deleuze's point of view.

Number	Image	Description
1		In this work, the audience can visit selected architectural spaces in a three-dimensional environment and feel as if they are present in that environment. They can pay attention to its environmental issues and have influence on it. Thus, with respect to the work of art and the engagement of the audience with the created conditions, the work and the audience move far away from a static and steady state. A new experience is created that yields a different result and reaction each time a visitor interacts with the artwork. As a result, stagnation is turned into dynamism and becoming, while difference and repetition occur too.
2		In this work, the visitor can choose a historical works of art according to his/her own taste and have a different experience with it. The audience can participate by touching the work of art displayed, while obtaining information about it. Thus, dynamics, difference and repetition are experienced.

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