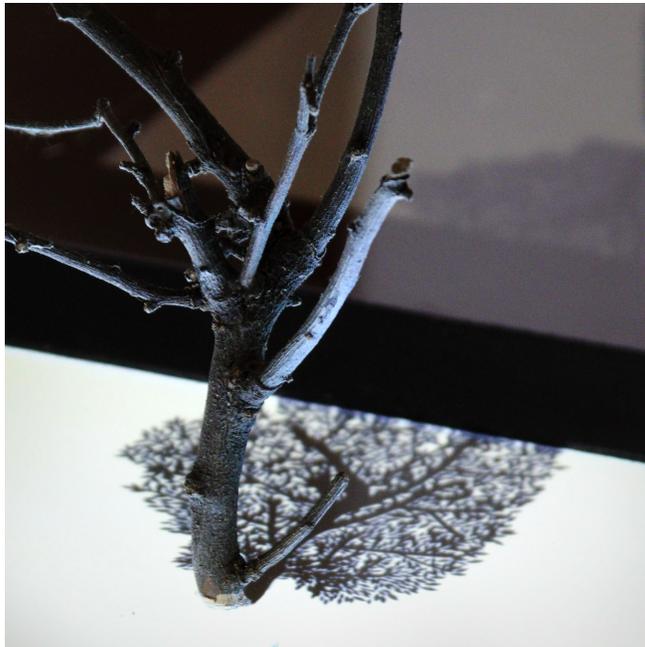# *The Memory of a Tree:* An Interactive Storytelling Installation

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Abstract

Interactive art has emerged as a distinctive genre in media art that relies on digital contents to express the artist's message. Situated within this field, this work presents an approach to multimedia storytelling that allows audience members to control separate but overlapping parts of the story chapters. We believe that the system engages its audience with a high level of immersion due to its combination of digital computation and tangibility; the tangible system supports a stronger connection to the storytelling than traditional screen-based systems, helping to bridge the gap between the physical world and cyberspace within the field of multimedia storytelling [1]. Consequently, it offers significant potential to share storytelling among a group based its immersive environment and support for embodied interaction paradigms.

Keywords

Art/Design installation, Interactive storytelling, Tangible interface, Embodied Interaction

ACM Classification Keywords

H5.2. [User Interfaces] Direct Manipulation

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Introduction

Tangible interaction systems provide virtual and physical structure. [2] We want to lead audience not only to experience storytelling through the virtual contents on the screen but also to enable communication with each other by interacting with the physical structure. For this, we conceptualized an installation that shows four individual animations related to a real world element, represented by a tree branch, that can also be played such that they overlap both temporally and spatially.

Concept: Interactive Storytelling

Tangible interfaces offer both direct familiarity and a set of common metaphors that can be leveraged for interaction. [3] In this installation, we expect the branch to play the role of the mediator between virtuality and reality, connecting a real world element with our storytelling tool. Through the dead (or dying) branch, audience can see its memory of its lifetime by placing their hands on four the zones, on top of the installation. The four stories are: a girl reading a book under the tree; the growing tree with leaves; a couple
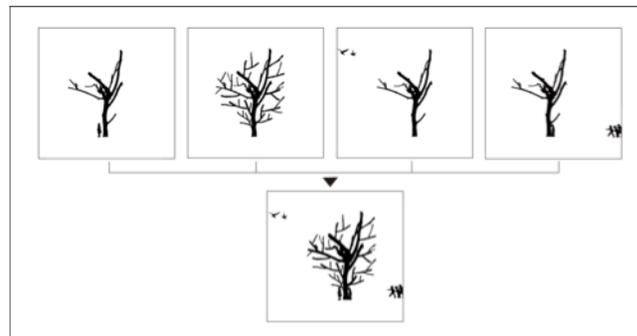
Figure 2: Each story is triggered by four different sensors

of birds which meet each other on the tree and; children who play around the tree. Each is shown through shadow animation and represents the memories of the tree.

System Configuration

In this setup we want the audience to connect to our experience meaningfully rather than having them appreciate the technology we used so we tried to conceal all the technical aspects of this process. To accomplish that connection, we used wireless sensors connected to a computer placed inside our kiosk and an LCD screen to display the different stories masked with a wood frame.

Acknowledgements

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References

[1] Ali Mazalek, 2002. Tangible viewpoints: a physical approach to multimedia stories. In Proceedings of the tenth ACM international conference on Multimedia (MULTIMEDIA '02), ACM New York, NY, USA.

[2] Eva Hornecker. 2005. A design theme for tangible interaction: embodied facilitation. In Proceedings of the ninth conference on European Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (ECSCW'05). Springer-Verlag New York, Inc., New York, NY, USA.

[3] Scott R. Klemmer, 2006. How Bodies Matter: Five Themes for Interaction Design, In proceedings of sixth conference on Designing Interactive systems, ACM New York, NY, USA.

Figure 3: Without triggering, *The Memory of a Tree* seems like one structure, which involve one dead branch and its shadow