“Presence” in Absence

Selina Gong
“Presence” in Absence
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Please proceed to
https://swlin.art/video/presentation

to watch the trailer
of the project
“Presence” in Absence
A multimedia project that uses poster, installation, and performance art to illustrate the ambiguity and duality of presence in absence in relation to spacetime.
The project presence in absence attempts to use various media and adopt Engel's first law of dialectic materialism to answer the metaphysical state of presence. Dialectic materialism uses the comparison of two opposite concepts to define the meaning. The project is divided into three stages, exploring presence in absence in terms of spacetime and dimension. The project begins with a series of encoded posters that deal with presence in absence in one dimension of time. I, as the artist, was in the physical space to hang the poster but then absent when the poster was decoded. In a way, the message on the poster represents part of me. Upon decoding the message on the poster, the user will be led to the second stage, an installation where the user can interact with me via the screen on a box sculpture. Unable to know whether I am inside the box or not, the user needs to guess whether it is me or an AI-trained chatbot talking to them. The installation challenges my presence in 3D space inside the 2D platform - the screen. Depending on their success in answering the test, they will win the chance to engage in a "lottery" game that leads them to the third stage. In the in-person meeting, I will meet with the winner in a crowded public space and hear my heartbeat as a communication medium. Without knowing each other's identity, the state of the artist's presence in 4D spacetime became unknown.
Virtual in Real
1. Emoji backpack – using emoji to talk in real space invite viewer to play with it
2. Messaging – haters behind the keyboard (much more rage behind the screen)
3. Exhibition – life with AI and virtual presence – ready player one
4. Interior design project – relating the future interior space
5. Poster – battleground on internet/behind keyboard (keyboard faded into message box) – Barbara Kruger (your body is a battleground)
6. Escavating – destroying virtual space in 1 second

Real in Virtual
1. Virtual twin – how to live with your online presence since we spend much more time online
2. Reversed reality – a virtual person present its virtual space as real space (e.g., barbie doll introduce her dreamhouse as real space while learning about our real space as virtual space) playing with multiverse?
3. Connected – you can feel the pulse/heart beat of a person across the world (silent love story – based on imagination) (inspiration: http://www.sophiabrucecker.com/empathybox.html) (a preprogramed exhibition of story, it’s all synthetic made of color projecting in space, change light, heart beat, ambinent sound, possible smell) Sit, stand, listen, see, and feel me
4. Online expo hub - people join the event from all over the world – e.g. a online art basal

Initial Ideation
recreating virtual presence in real space and real presence in virtual space

Idea about Idea

Both
1. NFT – virtual work exhibit in real space, real work exhibit in virtual space (prepare an auction, a work can both be sold in online space and real space)
2. Metaverse – entrophy of people diffusing in and out of the metaverse
3. Social media – me sitting in a box and communicating with the audience
4. Selfie and staring – sculptures of people videochatting/zooming on the phone and position the phone in exaggerated angles
5. Devide and rule – personal and secret presence online (corner of your life)
6. Physical space – multiverse
7. Evolution of value: coin made of real gold – a branded coin made of plastic – bitcoin (reverse in time order?)
8. Leave dying in virtual space – is a programed decay, while a leave dying in real space feels less programed but rather natural. What is virtual decay then? The lost of meaning? The actual deletion of the item from the program?
9. Linear work of decay in many format – inspired by “value export”, Zeit und Gegenzeit
10. E-Receipt of real item purchased, physical receipt of virtual item purchased
11. Two lines unlieing in real life, two line lieing on tv???? link
1. **SINGULAR NOUN** *(physically there)*
Someone’s presence in a place is the fact that they are there.
They argued that his presence in the town could only stir up trouble.
Synonyms: **being, existence, company, residence**

2. **UNCOUNTABLE NOUN** *(gained attention and impressed)*
If you say that someone has presence, you mean that they impress people by their appearance and manner.
[approval]
They do not seem to have the vast, authoritative presence of those great men.
Synonyms: **personality, bearing, appearance, aspect**

3. **COUNTABLE NOUN** *(metaphysical/idealistic presence)*
A presence is a person or creature that you cannot see, but that you are aware of.
[literary]
She started to be affected by the ghostly presence she could feel in the house.
Synonyms: **spirit, ghost, manifestation, spectre**

4. **SINGULAR NOUN** *(physically there)*
If a country has a military presence in another country, it has some of its armed forces there.
The US military presence in the region has steadily increased in recent months.

5. **UNCOUNTABLE NOUN** *(physically there)*
If you refer to the presence of a substance in another thing, you mean that it is in that thing.
The somewhat acid flavor is caused by the presence of lactic acid.
Synonyms: **proximity, closeness, vicinity, nearness**

Contextual Research

Conceptual Research

Philosopher Friedrich Engels has exacted the three laws of dialectical materialism from Hegel’s *Science of Logic*. Here the first law uses the contradictory part to prove the essence of the concept. Lenin was also using it. Here I have adopted a similar strategy that uses absence to understand presence.

Lenin has summed up the essential idea of dialectical materialism in the following words:

“The idea is the recognition of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature. That is, in all phenomena and processes of nature there are diametrically opposite forces or tendencies and they are at clash or conflict and this continues until a solution is reached. This alone furnishes the key to the self–movement of everything in existence. It alone furnishes the key to the leaps, to the break in continuity, to the transformation into the opposite, to the destruction of the old and emergence of the new. In its proper meaning dialectics is the study of the contradiction within the very essence of things”.

It is in this dialectic as it is here understood, that is, in the grasping of oppositions in their unity, or of the positive in the negative, that speculative thought consists. It is the most important aspect of dialectic.


The splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts is the essence (one of the "essentials", one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics. That is precisely how Hegel, too, puts the matter.


the “transfer of meaning,” metonymy brings about a “transfer of presence.” A metonymy is a “presence in absence” not just in the sense that it presents something that isn’t there, but also in the sense that in the absence (or at least the radical inconspicuousness) that is there, the thing that isn’t there is still present. The presence of the past thus does not reside in the past, but in the present that is no longer.”

— Ethan Kleinberg, *Presence in Absentia*
In Art & Design in Context, I learned about Joseph Kosuth and his renowned work One and Three Chairs. He initiated a debate between object, representation, and verbal reference. I also want to explore the different ways that presence can be presented.
Time and Countertime is a work by avant-garde Austrian artist Valie Export. The installation consists of a bowl of real ice melting on the front with a reversed recording of the same bowl of ice played in the background. The artist used conflicting terms to explore linear time, showing a twist in both space and time, where real replaced linearly to virtual, and the two bowls of ice melt in reverse time sequence. I want to adopt the duality and the notion of space and time in my own work.
“Presence” in Absence
3 Initial ideas extract from research
Later fused together to a single project.

TOP:
Evolve to Poster

BOTTOM LEFT:
Evolve to Installation (conversation)

BOTTOM RIGHT:
Evolve to In Person Meeting

Building on my contextual research and my initial 20 ideas, I have produced three creative responses, each dealing with different mediums. The first is a series of posters that compose my picture that will be stuck everywhere around campus. The second is an installation where the user is asked to distinguish between me and an AI chatbot via a conversation on the computer screen attached to a specially designed box sculpture. In the third idea, I will draw out a random circle on the ground, claiming this real space as the virtual world and encouraging users to interact with me in a virtual way (such as talking through the phone and conducting online trading).
Space-time:
Common intuition previously supposed no connection between space and time. Physical space was held to be a flat, three-dimensional continuum—i.e., an arrangement of all possible point locations—to which Euclidean postulates would apply. To such a spatial manifold, Cartesian coordinates seemed most naturally adapted, and straight lines could be conveniently accommodated. Time was viewed independent of space—as a separate, one-dimensional continuum, completely homogeneous along its infinite extent. Any “now” in time could be regarded as an origin from which to take duration past or future to any other time instant. Uniformly moving spatial coordinate systems attached to uniform time continua represented all unaccelerated motions, the special class of so-called inertial reference frames. The universe according to this convention was called Newtonian. In a Newtonian universe, the laws of physics would be the same in all inertial frames, so that one could not single out one as representing an absolute state of rest.

https://www.britannica.com/science/space-time

Influenced by my previous science background. I have integrated spacetime as a factor that shows presence via absence. By playing with dimension time, three-dimension space, or four dimensions spacetime.
I WAS HERE
I HAVE BEEN HERE
I HAD BEEN HERE
I AM HERE
AM I HERE?
AM I NOT HERE?
I WAS NOT HERE
I HAVE NOT BEEN HERE
I HAD NOT BEEN HERE
I AM NOT HERE

AM I HERE?
AM I NOT HERE?
The three ideas each explore a different aspect of presence in absence and have the potential to be interconnected. Here I did some further contextual research and used spacetime and dimensions as a way to sequence the ideas.

**STAGE 1**
Posters that deal with presence in absence in one dimension of time

**STAGE 2**
Installation where the concept challenges my presence in 3D space inside the 2D platform - the screen

**STAGE 3**
In person meeting, has integrated 4D spacetime
The first stage of the project is a series of encoded posters. On the macro scale, this medium illustrates the concept of presence in absence in terms of time. I, as the artist, was in the physical space to hang the poster but then absent when the poster was decoded. In a way, the message on the poster represents part of me. The state of presence or absence constantly evolves and intertwines with time.
Passive Communication

The way that traditional posters communicate information is passive. The information is already “printed.” In other words, the information is already present.

Hidden Message Underneath via Rubbing

To further emphasize presence through absence, I thought about hiding the message underneath the poster and incorporating rubbing to reveal the message.
The Bristol Board has the best performance
Relatively Thin + Thick enough to not show the background
ASCII Art

After deciding on the medium, I researched a few artists and art styles to find the best format to use text and images to send a message to the viewer. ASCII art has integrated the two elements. It uses text to comprise the image. However, since the shape of the image details decides the letter/number being used, I cannot incorporate the text message that I want to express.
I was then inspired by the movie poster of Lucy, that the text is hidden on the image. I later adopted this strategy in my final work.
For the text, I used binary code that led people to the URL of the conversation page in the second phase. Binary is a numbering scheme consisting only of 0 and 1. It is the fundamental code that a computer runs on. Using a virtual language in real form creates a logical transition to the next stage. Since the binary code is relatively long, I divide the message into 14 different posters.
For the image part of the poster, I include images of part of my body and close-up shots of the second stage's location. These images all show partial presence in the state of absence.
Hello, World!

Ideas Take Form

Follow ME

HINT:
POSITION OF THE USEFUL BINARY CODE

HINT:
HINT AT BINARY

QR Code
Laser Cut Stencil

Layer 1: Number
Presence in Absence

Layer 2: Image
Presence in Absence

Rubbing Corner

Ideas Take Form

PROCESS
After the first peer review round, I realize that rubbing the number on the corner is also important since many people are unaware that there are multiple copies of the poster. In addition, providing the right tool is also important since most people no longer carry a wood pencil around.
The posters have been stuck around campus. All the binary code has been revealed. However, the image is usually not shown. The problem with the current design is that students are usually occupied and overloaded with information in the school setting, such as other posters on the bulletin board. A puzzle without an inherent incentive will not attract people to put effort into solving the puzzle. A setting such as a gallery or a museum would be a better option since the viewer has more time or can be immersed in a more focused setting. I will explore this hypothetical idea after I have introduced all the stages.

The decoded URL is going to lead the user to swlin.art. Users can access the web conversation directly or through installation.
The project’s second stage is an installation where the user can interact with me via the screen on a box sculpture. Unable to know whether I am inside the box or not, the user needs to guess whether it is me or an AI-trained chatbot talking to them. The state of my presence or absence in the space became ambiguous.
Turing Test:
Turing test, in artificial intelligence, a test proposed (1950) by the English mathematician Alan M. Turing to determine whether a computer can “think.”

There are extreme difficulties in devising any objective criterion for distinguishing “original” thought from sufficiently sophisticated “parroting”; indeed, any evidence for original thought can be denied on the grounds that it ultimately was programmed into the computer. Turing sidestepped the debate about exactly how to define thinking by means of a very practical, albeit subjective, test: if a computer acts, reacts, and interacts like a sentient being, then call it sentient. To avoid prejudicial rejection of evidence of machine intelligence, Turing suggested the “imitation game,” now known as the Turing test: a remote human interrogator, within a fixed time frame, must distinguish between a computer and a human subject based on their replies to various questions posed by the interrogator. By means of a series of such tests, a computer’s success at “thinking” can be measured by its probability of being misidentified as the human subject.

https://www.britannica.com/technology/Turing-test
JODI (Joan Heemskerk & Dirk Paesmans)

ZYX
Internet Art
2012

https://www.jodi.org/100cc/index.html
http://404.jodi.org/

Contextual Research Artist Examples

JODI captures the many interactions we have with the web using an art style that mimics the web itself.
I want to adopt a similar strategy of using the graphic design of the terminal, a tool in the computer that performs tasks using a command line instead of the typical graphical user interface, such as clicking a button on the screen.
Please proceed to https://swlin.art/video/demo to watch demo of the conversation and game page
In the conversation, users are asked to enter their email as user name and whether they want to receive further information about the project and a copy of the conversation. Then they can proceed with the conversation with me using during one day. I initially set the question that asks the user to guess my presence at the end of the conversation. However, after having my friends try it, I realize that people tend not to be aware of the last part. Since this is the essential question of the work, it is now on the footer of the conversation page. Users will have one chance to answer this question to avoid random guessing. Users who guessed correctly will be directed to the game that allows them to win the opportunity to meet me in person in the next stage.
Welcome to project Presence in Absence.

By clicking continue, you will officially enter the next stage of this project. In this stage, you will have a maximum of one day to chat with the artist and determine whether the artist is present in the conversation. Your success in guessing the artist's presence will determine whether you have the chance to enter the next stage of the project. The details of the conversation will be further explained.

Continue
Please leave your email address as the user name:

John Doe
icecap_dynamic.0j@icloud.com

Confirm
Would you like to receive further information about the project?

YES
NO
Instructions
You are now allow to chat with the artist within the span of 1 days.
The conversation need to be generate by you will be answer by the artist/chatbot ASAP. You have 1 chance to answer
whether the artist present (the person chatting with you) in the conversation at any time you wished.
Only when guessed correctly, you can proceed to the next stage.

>> John Doe: Hi

>> Artist: Hello

>> John Doe: Who are you?

>> Artist: I am S.W.LIN

>> John Doe: What is this project about?

>> Artist: It's an exploration of presence in context of digital world.

>> John Doe: Thank you!

>> Artist: Thank you. You too.

>> John Doe: ...
Your answer is Correct!

By clicking yes, you will give your consent of this conversation to be published and potentially be sold as part of a NFT art. 10% of the total profit will go towards participants as a partial creator of the art work. If you do not agree to the above term, click no.

- YES
- NO
Your answer is Wrong!

Turning Test:

Turing test, in artificial intelligence, a test proposed (1950) by the English mathematician Alan M. Turing to determine whether a computer can “think.”

There are extreme difficulties in devising any objective criterion for distinguishing “original” thought from sufficiently sophisticated “parroting”; indeed, any evidence for original thought can be denied on the grounds that it ultimately was programmed into the computer. Turing sidestepped the debate about exactly how to define thinking by means of a very practical, albeit subjective, test: if a computer acts, reacts, and interacts like a sentient being, then call it sentient. To avoid prejudicial rejection of evidence of machine intelligence, Turing suggested the “imitation game,” now known as the Turing test: a remote human interrogator, within a fixed time frame, must distinguish between a computer and a human subject based on their replies to various questions posed by the interrogator. By means of a series of such tests, a computer's success at “thinking” can be measured by its probability of being misidentified as the human subject.

Learn More About Turing Test
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https://www.britannica.com/technology/Turing-test
Users will have three chances to guess a spot on the screen that I have previously determined to represent me in the game. The screen is divided into 25 equal-sized clickable blocks. Users have 3/25 chances to guess the correct answer. They will receive a failure message when they fail to find my spot. When they have guessed correctly within the chances, they will have the chance to receive a time slot to meet with me in person. They can decide whether to take this price or not. With reference to the poster, my presence was predetermined, and I am no longer present when the user reveals the result.
Quantum Superposition

A particle in a quantum superposition exists as a combination of different states at the same time. Each possible state has a given probability of being observed, but measurement destroys the superposition because only one definite state is seen.

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-61601-4_1
Presence in Absence

The artist is hidden behind the screen. Find the artist to win the chance to meet the artist in person. You have 3 chances in total.

Continue
Welcome Page

1st Chance

Chance -1
[2 Remaining]

Result 1
Correct

Chance -1
[1 Remaining]

Result 2
Wrong

Try Harder.

Chance -1..
GAME SEQUENCE

Welcome Page
1st Chance
Chance -1 [2 Remaining]
Result 1 Correct
Confirm Email
Confirmation Email
Result 2 Wrong
Superposition Introduction
Superposition Introduction

Chance: 1

All or nothing

Chance -1..
Congratulations!

Your in person meeting slot is:
Dec 22nd, 2022 10:08 am
Location: TBD

Confirm Your Email Address:

icecap_dynamic.0j@icloud.com

Confirm / Change
Welcome to Presence in Absence!

Meet The Artist:

Dec 22nd, 2023 10:08 am Location:TBD

Follow ME

Congrats John Doe! You Made It!

Hi John Doe,
Congrats! you passed the test!

Sincerely,
SMILN

Confirm Meeting

Confirmation Email

Result 2
Wrong
[Superposition Introduction]

Superposition Introduction
What a shame.

A particle in a quantum superposition exists as a combination of different states at the same time. Each possible state has a given probability of being observed, but measurement destroys the superposition because only one definite state is seen.

Learn More About Superposition
Introduction to Superposition

Claran Hughes, Joshua Isaacs, Anastasia Perry, Ranbei F. Sun & Jessica Turner

Chapter | Open Access | First Online: 18 September 2020

12k Accesses

Abstract

In this section, we review the concepts of classical and quantum superposition. Quantum superposition is the framework for understanding all quantum phenomena. As we do not observe quantum phenomena in our everyday lives, it may seem confusing at first. However, as uninituitive as the quantum world may appear, there are a vast number of experiments which conclusively show that the universe really does operate according to the law of quantum superposition at the smallest distances accessible today. Before going into specific details on quantum superposition, it is useful to explain how the term “superposition” is used in different contexts in both classical and quantum physics. At the end of the chapter, we
swlin.art/pia Website
swlin.art/reset Reset the process
In the current version, the user can enter the website by decoding the binary message on the poster. However, considering the technical difficulty and time required, I expect most users to join the conversation directly through the installation. However, the user has the poster around campus; chronologically, the website phase is disconnected from the installation. In a hypothetical world, the user should be able to interact with the installation right after the posters. Thus these two phases will be run simultaneously.
In the in-person meeting, I will meet with the winner in a crowded public space. Users will receive a rough location, and upon arrival, they will receive my message and proceed with the meeting, virtually learning my heartbeat. I will take an intensional photograph of the location and send the photograph to the user once I leave the spot as proof of my visit. In this stage, the user and I are present in a state of absence. We are both in the same physical space at the same time. However, we do not know who each other is. To the user, am I really present? The duality of presence in absence exists in spacetime.
Marina Abramović

The Artist Is Present
Performance
2010

Marina Abramović’s The Artist is Present in Art and Design History is about emerging in the moment of each other’s presence and how the chemistry or interaction create a soulful moment. I want to adopt a similar strategy where the user and I can have a soulful interaction in the same physical space and time without knowing each other.

Link to the Video: https://youtu.be/OS0TgOljCp4
The Empathy Box is a networked appliance that connects many anonymous people through shared warmth.

A work also inspired me by one of the Stamps faculty members Sophia Brueckner’s Empathy Box. However, instead of using warmth as a medium of connection, I want to use heartbeat as the medium of interaction since it is tightly related to one’s thoughts and emotions. Presence is experienced through variation in the heartbeat.
“Presence” in Absence

Form + Re(form)
Visit swlin.art/AR_Gallery on an iPhone to view the AR Gallery

Hypothetical Gallery Exhibition
“Presence” in Absence

Idea about Idea

Form + Re(form)

Final Presentation

Idea Take Form

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“Thank you”