

### Description of the Work

The installation *Pond*, first exhibited at the Chicago Cultural Center for ISEA97, September 1997, brings together several different processes to explore the ways in which human presence and meaning can filter back into formal systems. *Pond* consists of a compositional process and an interactive multimedia installation.

The compositional process consists of a “fortune-telling” card game where the artist assumes the role of the charlatan Ignotus the Mage. The mage interprets the patterns which participants create with the cards. The recorded voices and faces of the participants and the patterns they create become “raw material” for the installation.

The installation consists of a modular sculpture, a projection screen, and an interactive computer installation that controls video projection and audio. The 10 x 10-foot modular sculpture covers the floor. Computer video projection plays back patterns, images, and voices collected during the compositional process. The projection screen is angled to reflect off the glossy black enamel of the sculpture. Playback of sounds and images follows rules based on the pattern of the sculpture. Visitors to the installation can trigger and control playback by waving their hands over transparent rods equipped with photosensors. As they learn to control the installation and collaborate with other participants, they can trigger complex events, and reveal the faces and voices that were captured. Material collected in each iteration of *Pond* can be used for the next one, transporting images, sounds, and patterns generated by one group of people to a space viewed by another group.

### Process and Installation

I envision *Pond* as a collaborative work that allows me to travel to a location and follow a process that tailors *Pond* to the locale. The process works as follows:

Seated at a table and performing as Ignotus the Mage, I play a card game with individual participants. The card game can be executed with my own custom deck or with a computer. Its end result is a pattern which Ignotus can interpret to tell the present (Ignotus is too dysfunctional to tell the future). The pattern will be printed in color, signed, and given to each participant as a token of their participation.

The faces and voices of the people I talk with and the patterns they create are digitized and incorporated into the interactive installation.

Visitors to the installation trigger events consisting of rhythmic fragments of the voices, faces, and patterns. If they learn to control the interaction, visitors can put whole images and voices together and trigger complex events. Otherwise, the installation works as a multimedia collage of that occasionally, by chance, plays back a whole image or sound. When no one is present it is mostly quiet, but like a pond in a forest it wakes up when someone arrives and disturbs it.

### Equipment

Video projector and screen	Computer (Apple Macintosh)
Color Printer	Enclosure for computer
Stereo audio speakers connected to computer	Software and sculpture supplied by the artist

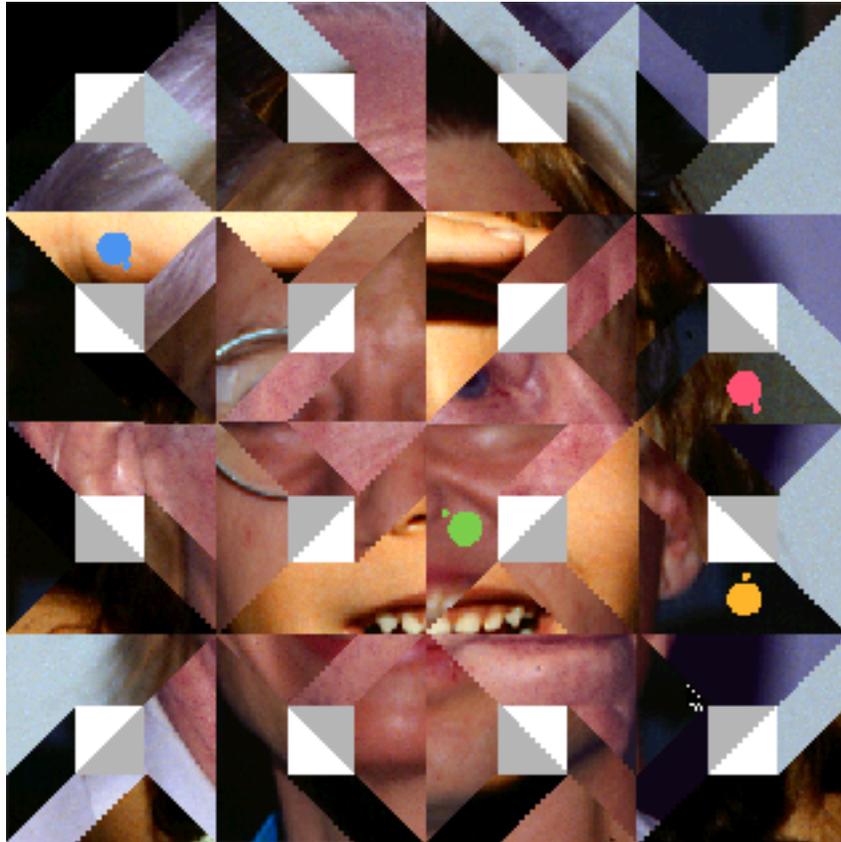
### Contact

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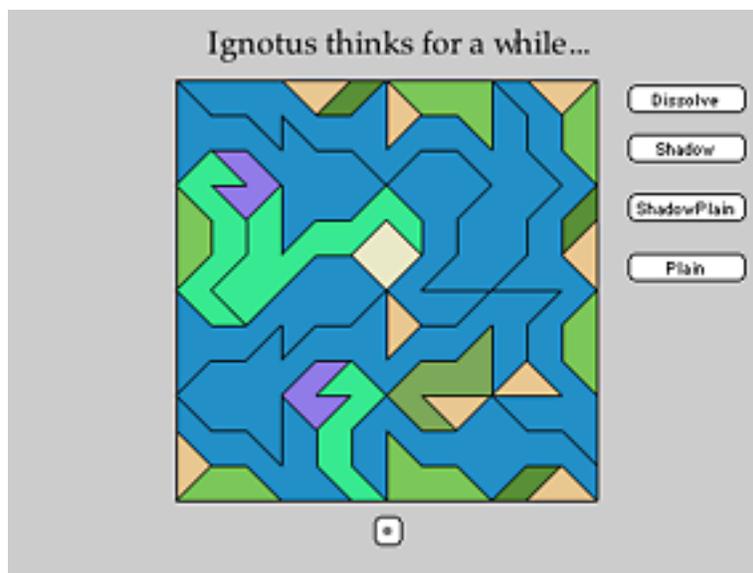
Portfolio: <http://collaboratory.nunet.net/phertz/portfolio/>

Pond, version II, Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, June 2001



Version II of Pond, with layered and collaged images and a more supple, game-like interface.

The Ignotus Card Game, software version, final display, 1999-2001

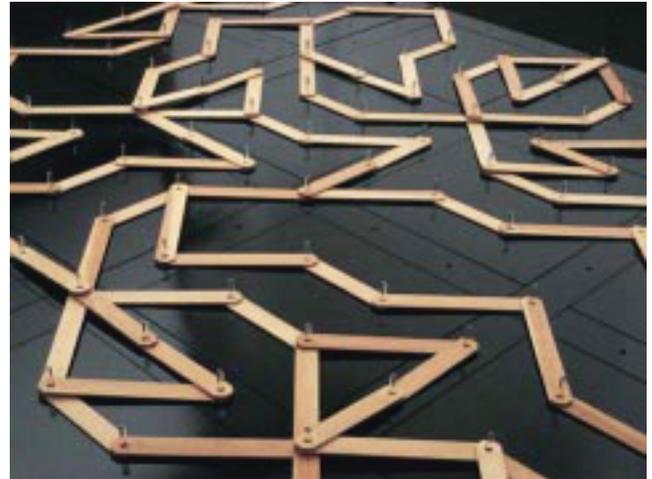


See <http://collaboratory.nunet.net/portfoli/>

Images from the 1997 Installation of "Pond," Chicago Cultural Center



General View



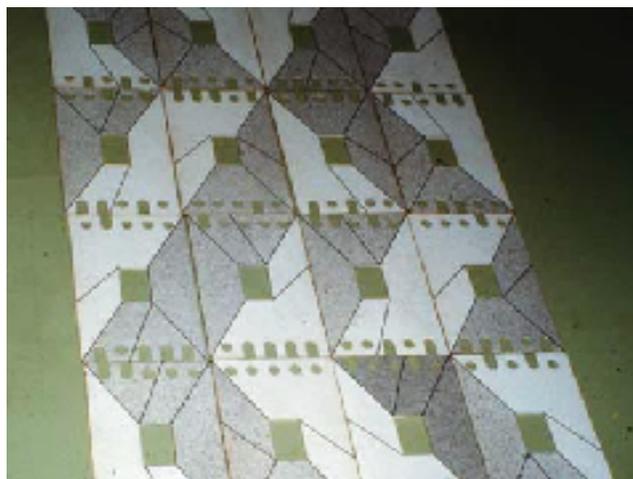
Closeup view of modular sculpture



Interaction with the installation



Another view of the interaction



A pattern from Ignotus the Mage's deck of cards