

Thesis Brief reverberation representation

Who?

Anna Knos created this artistic mechanical piece called *Reverberation Representation* for her Senior Project at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in 2005. Her role was that of Interactive Media Designer and she worked with a team of three people to successfully create the project. These persons include Blair Burtan (Mechanical Engineer – Owner of Northern Lights Tactical), Christopher Tin (Composure – Owner of Tin Works), and Scott Eckert (Audio Engineer).

Special thanks go to Michael Brodsky, Director of the Multimedia Program at LMU, whose scholarly guidance ensured the project's successful outcome. I'm very thankful for all he did because I could not have completed this *total environment* piece without him.

What?

- Anna Knos designed an interface that drives users towards collaboration and opens the doors to unbridled creativity.
- A completely separate physical thing in its own personal space that's completely and comfortably controlled by the user.

Where?

Concept work took place at each individual's home during all hours of the night and often spilled over to near-by diners (oh how I love designing on napkins... seriously).

The bulk of the construction took place at the Northern Lights Tactical Los Angeles facility.

Reverberation Representation was exhibited at Loyola Marymount University's final art show on May 4-6, 2005 and was received with unrestrained interest. The piece inhabited a narrow hallway intersection with an extremely vaulted ceiling and stark white walls. The space was made of cement blocks and proved to be acoustically friendly by lessening reverb.

To my delight I noticed numerous people who only let a handful of words slip out during the four years I spent working alongside them at LMU, do a complete about face once inside the enclosed exhibit space. They became so enthralled with their control over the foreign medium (a ferrous fluid) that they turned into giddy kids whose inside voices were tossed at the door. Users behaved as though each rise-and-fall of the fluid existed solely within the quickly formed intimate relationship they had with the system. Yet, they also posed questions and interacted with fellow users.

Why?

I find that the disconnected feeling, inevitable boredom, and fatigue are all traits familiar to the average technology user. I see the need for a completely revamped (re-approached) data expression system (i.e. learn/grow from the technology) to be desperately necessary, and I find this area of exploration extremely fascinating.

After carefully considering a multitude of systems, ranging from a nitrogen gas waterfall medium (think, gas screen in motion) to a ulexite comprised screen (think, natural fiber optics), I settled on using a ferrous fluid as my expressive medium and sound as my unconstrained/unique input.

Applications

The ferro fluid project could provide a way for autistic children to externalize and empower themselves through a vocal medium. Screaming and other voice intonations enable the otherwise indiscernible autistic child to control the flow of ferro fluid and establish vocal connections.

How?

Each team member not only brought a unique knowledge base to the project, but also thrived within our unstructured, collaborative discussion paths. Their eccentric ideas harmonized with my outlandish theories to create a solid exhibition piece as well as a wild theoretical ride.