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Title	Media Art Nexus: The challenges of co-curating and co-creating urban media art
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Citation	Ng, S. D. K. (2017, March). Media Art Nexus: The challenges of co-curating and co-creating urban media art. Presented at Discover URECA @ NTU poster exhibition and competition, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.
Date	2017
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/42845">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/42845</a>
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# MEDIA ART NEXUS

**The challenges of co-curating  
and co-creating urban media art**

## ABSTRACT

The most avant-garde new media art co-exists and thrives in a busy real urban space. Mapped projections and embedded LEDs can dissolve building façades into the most fascinating displays. Unfortunately contemporary urban advertising uses media screens as billboards to exclusively promote products and to target consumers. Our senses are being distracted and we are faced with the overload of meaningless, erratic signs and noise. So how can we as artists justify the presence of artistic work within the already busy and exploited urban environments? What does it mean to present digital art in public space?

This project would explore artistic content creation and challenges of co-curating for local urban media environments. The 'Imprints of Ephemeral Motion' is one of the art works that is created with different forms of audience participation.

The project will bring about awareness to the newly created immersive media content locally and internationally (ISE Amsterdam). In particular, the project would assist in creating and co-curating art works for newly installed Media Art Nexus or MAN-15 m by 2 m large media wall, located at the NTU North Spine passageway.

## ARTWORK CONCEPT

"Imprints of Ephemeral Motion" is a work about our symbiotic relationship with the built environment. It stems from the idea that architects and urban planners shape human movement through the process of designing the space around them and in turn, human activities influence their surroundings overtime. A pattern will be used to metaphorically represent the built environment. As people walk past the screen, the strands that form the pattern move in response to the viewer. The imprint of the person's movement is captured in the pattern and the elements stay in their altered state - till another viewer walks by to create a new imprint. The eventual positions of the elements reflect the many imprints of the people that walk past the outdoor installation over time.

## METHODOLOGY

An integrated system will be used to create aesthetically pleasing visuals and an immersive experience for the audience. This is achieved through effectively stringing together elements like aesthetics, software and hardware components and sound to create an impactful public art experience. Visuals are modelled and rigged in Cinema 4d and run using Unity3D in the form of a game. Surround sound is added

## REFERENCES

Urban Media Art Paradox: Critical Fusion vs Urban Cosmetics by Maurice Benayoun & Josef Bares, page 84

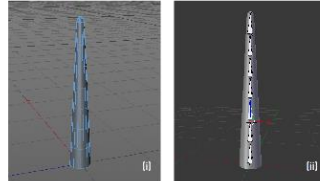
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Chapter from What Urban Media Art Can Do: Why When Where and How? Pop, Susa/ Toft, Tanya/ Calvillo, Nerea/ Wright, Mark, ISBN 3899862554, Avedition GmbH, Cs | October 31, 2016 | [https://issuu.com/avedition/docs/urban\\_media\\_art](https://issuu.com/avedition/docs/urban_media_art)

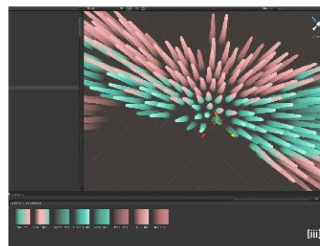


**Imprints of Ephemeral Motion, 2016**  
1500cm x 200cm, NTU Urban Media LED Display

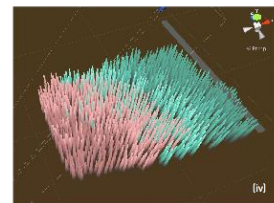
in LogicProX to complement the work. Lastly, Microsoft's Kinect SDK is imported into Unity3D to integrate the game with the Kinect hardware, enabling both systems to function as a complete interactive artwork.



- (i) The use of three-dimensional models lends a sense of tangibility and manipulability which allows for a more immersive experience. As such, the visual elements were created in 3D using Cinema4D as the modeling tool.
- (ii) The model is rigged with bones to allow the strand to bend. The armature was constructed in Blender. Different permutations of the armature were applied to determine the ideal number, position and size of bones that will allow the strand to bend in a natural manner.



- (iii) The strand as well as the textures were imported as assets into the Unity3D game engine. Unity is an ideal platform for the artwork due to its in-built physics engine, rigid-body calculations and software extensibility. Strands were duplicated and arranged randomly to fit the screen resolution of 3840 x 480 pixels.



- (iv) The strand as well as the textures were imported as assets into the Unity3D game engine. Unity was an ideal platform for the artwork due to its in-built physics engine, rigid-body calculations and software extensibility. Each strand was given a simple capsule collider on the upper-half to serve as its hit-box. An invisible box collider was then created to perform hit detections on the strands as it 'combed' through the strands. The box collider will be the 1:1 equivalent of a person when it is mapped using the Kinect in the later stages.



- (v) The skeletal tracking information from the Kinect was mapped onto the invisible collider shown in [iv]. Due to the scale of the artwork, the upper body of the player was chosen as the tracking reference. This allowed for the best capture of viewers movements as they walked through the space.

## FUTURE PLANS

Apart from co-creating new media visual art work and video, future plans include connecting Media Art Nexus platform and artists with media labs such as NohLab as well as with media institutions such as ArtScience Museum and Ars Electronica. The work is also invited to be showcased in ISE (Integrated System Europe) 2017, 07 - 10 February / Amsterdam, Netherlands at the world's largest AV and systems integration show. The show is expected to attract over 100,000 visitors and will be a showcase for over 1,100 exhibitors- bringing works to an even bigger audience.