

Interrupt: Multidisciplinary Resistance, etc.

Interrupt was Liminal Performance Group's multimedia performance installation that pushed the ensemble to explore the boundaries of the performative experience to include technology. Under the direction of Sound and Media Director John Berendzen, the ensemble worked to create new modes of integrating technology into performance, and performance into technology. The project was an experiment to determine how much of an aesthetic experience could be engineered. What would this mean to the engineers? What would it mean to the persons watching, whoever they are?

Interrupt's aesthetic was not hidden from the media being used – an aesthetic of technology. Yet, in resisting the temptation to put the latest shiny technology on display, this piece explored the underside of progress – meltdown, misfire, miscommunication, a mechanized dystopia, though one still functioning somehow. The events of the piece took place in a scenario where 'high' technology was brought down to a very crude level. The technology was no longer the pristine clean room of Liminal's gallery, but a wheezing, pulsing, bio-mechanical Vaudeville.

With Interrupt, Liminal addressed the ambiguity between the mythologies of the archaic and the futuristic - the ubercomputers we interface daily are, at the core, still a very low form of technology, immediately becoming as absurd as cheap sci-fi. Even though the production utilized fairly advanced programming behind the scenes, the technology seen by the visitors was anachronistic (older-style televisions, telephones, computer interfaces).

The mechanisms of Interrupt addressed the ambiguity between what's been designed and what's being performed, with bio-interactive mechanisms installed around live actors whose actions were conversely perceived as mere physical mechanism.

Interrupt was not about the evils of the modern technology age, but rather about the alchemy of base materials into substances of a different order, and their subsequent interaction with the modus operandi of any present thought.

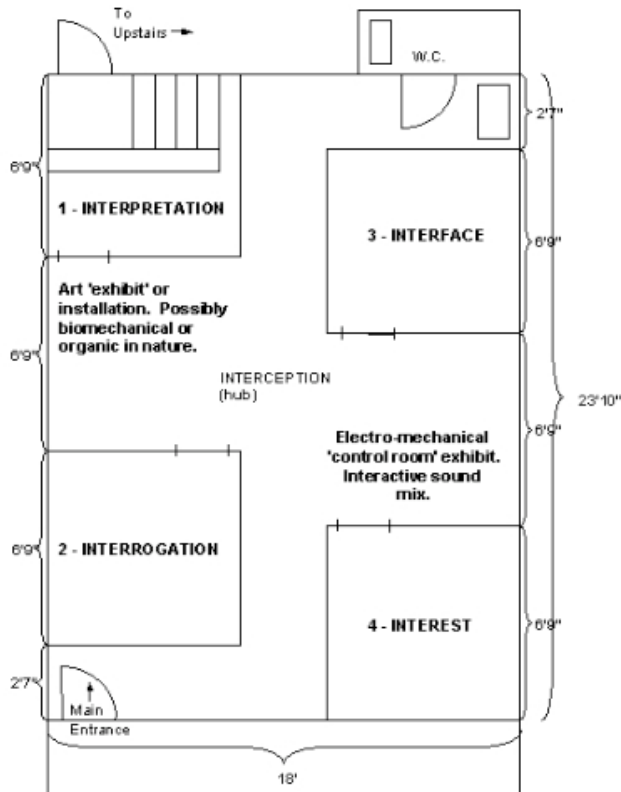
Theory aside, Interrupt was mostly about allowing someone to experience something they didn't quite expect, and then seeing how long they would play with it before they became bored.

Original Installation Specifications

Interrupt will be driven by a core of contributing artists of many types. Specific areas of need are audio and video content and equipment, collaborations with installation artist(s), and computer expertise (both hardware and software, with the possibility of an online dimension). However, hopefully practitioners of varying pursuits, arts on the fringe of the 'fringe', as well as on the fringe of the 'mundane', will be able to showcase their art/skill/craft through this project.

Interrupt will take place at the Metropolitan Art Studio(MAS), from October 28 to December 3 of 2000. The MAS gallery space has housed previous Liminal

performance events as well as the work of current Portland visual artists, and is an ideal arena for crossing the boundaries of performance and visual/media arts. The gallery will be divided into four 6x6 rooms, in which the four main scenarios will take place. Visitors will create their own experience according to the order in which they enter the rooms.



Room 1 - Interpretation: an actor talks into a phone semi-intelligibly from above, while an explanatory video persona overlaps and intersects his/her spoken text. Juxtaposition of live and televised focal points.

Room 2 - Interrogation: a visitor connects to a bio-feedback device, which triggers a disjointed sequence of video images to fire with increasing speed across a wall of 10 monitors.

Room 3 - Interface: visitors can navigate an animated 'web page' via which they can control elements of the room's physical environment. Each electronic, mechanical, or actor-based event in the room corresponds to the visitor's manipulation of the screen icons.

Room 4 - Interest: the visitor is invited to play a larger-than-lifesize, digitally projected game of speak'n'spell. Spelling a word successfully causes a randomized

video clip to be projected.

Central Space - the Hub: The private, intimate experiences within the four rooms will be countered by the open, public space of the central area. This Hub will serve socially as a 'chill room' for the audience, to talk to each other, decide where to go next, etc. The overall feel will be similar to that of a museum, lobby, or other public waiting area.

Reinforcing an atmosphere of public space, part of the Hub will serve as an actual gallery, in which the work of collaborative visual artists will be displayed. It is possible that works could be displayed literally gallery-style, with placards by each work. The exhibit pieces could either be created by contributing artists specifically for Interrupt's environment, or could subsist of the artists' current original works. Collaborators would enjoy the freedom of reacting to (or even against) the ideas brought up here using whatever medium, method, or mode desired.