

Shakespeare's Garden - Virtual Reality: An Immersive Virtual Sound Stroll

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The Question

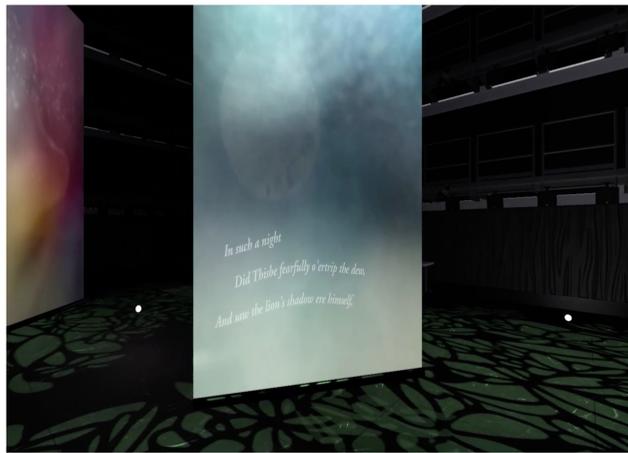
Is virtual reality a medium through which we can capture and express theatre and the performance arts? Are we able to augment and build onto existing experiences in order to explore new forms of art?

At a Glance

Strap on the backpack, slip the headset over your eyes, and take the controller in hand...



You're met with a wide open replica of the Cube*, visual detail in every direction



*A four-story-high, spatial sound enabled theatre where the original installation took place

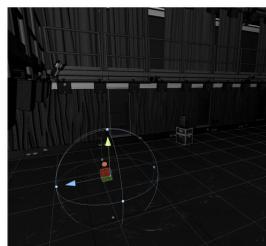
You notice the pamphlet in your hand and the soundscape in your ears



In More Detail

Sound

The audio experience is a combination of spatial sound and directed audio tracks. Throughout the environment, the ambient noise will change based on your location. In addition, when stepping into pools of light, users are met with recited scenes and sonnets.



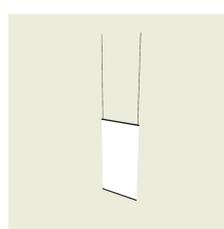
One directed audio source



Four spatial audio sources

Visuals

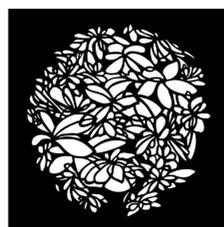
The visual details include a 3D replica of the Cube, an imitation of what are called gobo lights shining to the floor, hanging fabric scrims which mimic the pieces used in the original installation, and a recreation of the original pamphlet.



A blank scrim



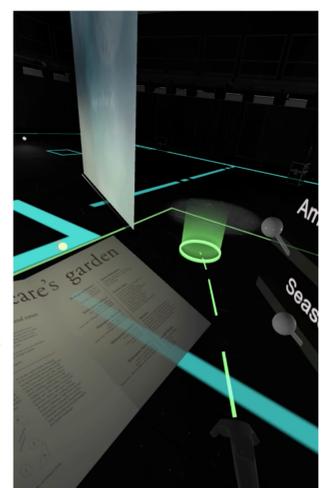
The replica pamphlet



Pattern for gobo lights

Interaction

Movement and interaction with the environment were achieved with a combination of walking around (in room scale VR) and teleporting using HTC Vive's standard teleport system. First-time users were able to access a menu allowing them to customize the experience.



A user, mid-teleport

Discussion

SG-VR was started with the intention of exploring the intersection between performing art and virtual reality technology. Through qualitative feedback from the original artists and others, we've found that VR offers a rich set of possibilities ready to be explored, some of which were realized in this experience. For example, leveraging the malleability of the environment (because it is software), we were able to integrate suggestions from the original artists quickly and obtain feedback. Such a system could be used iteratively in the design of a physical installation in order to 'test' the artists' ideas before building the piece.

Future

SG-VR has opened up discussion around this technology's place in the production of such an installation, and inspired curiosity around what interaction methods are used in an experience of the sort. Some features in discussion for the future of SG-VR include magnification of the pamphlet and a mystic, guiding walkway to help users navigate the experience.



A new feature: magnification

Acknowledgments

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