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Web Derive 01 - an Online Art VR Work by the Transeuntis MundiSE Project

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The Transeuntis Mundi (TM) Project explores the complexity of the millennial human journey and the resulting cultural diversity. It investigates how it can be approached through artistic research and be converted into a nomadic creative practice in transmedia arts, using emerging technologies to generate an archive of human legacy.

Compositions are based on field recordings in public spaces of multiple cities around the world, using 3D technology for sound and image, following Careri's (2002) methodology of Walkscapes. The power of interactivity and immersion through 360° image and ambisonic sounds are crucial to insert the visitor in a global cultural experience. This transmedia work is designed to happen as a non-fictional VR application. Here we present the two main compositions of the project: Derive 01 and Web Derive 01.

TWO FORMS OF VR COMPOSITION

The Transeuntis Mundi Virtual Reality (VR) work is called "Derive 01" and was launched in Sept 2019. Its physical exhibitions toured from then till March 2020 through 3 countries and was watched by over 3000 people. With the rise of the pandemic crisis, we moved our

research into the Web VR environment and developed the "Web Derive 01" - a brand new work launched online in Sept 2020 and sponsored by the Cultural Department of Rio de Janeiro. These VR and WebVR experiences are based on an application that immerses the visitor into the materials of the archive of this project. In this current version, fourteen stories from four continents have been curated to poetically present our current time in a historical context.

The challenge was to create a form of presentation of this VR work different from the physical installations, without making it a downloadable file just for VR headsets. How to keep the power of interactivity and immersion of this work, despite changing the medium to an online environment, limited by a 2D screen and stereo sound?

This way, the new work was created to be presented as a WebGL application file hosted in the website of the project, which presents multiple scenes in 360 audio/visual material in open-form narrative,

navigated from a main menu that carries a world-map image and animation. Audios had to be converted from ambisonics to binaural,

and images had their resolution lowered for matters of compatibility with Unity and general internet speeds. A small list of requirements in the beginning of the presentation recommends the use of computers and headphones, hoping for a better domestic immersive experience. Specific day/time sessions were established for the visit with the aim to prepare the audience for a special moment, like if they were going to an exhibition, although from their computers at home. So, the work is only available to be watched on the web when an exhibition is announced, like the one proposed for the Frameless Symposium 2020.

MULTI-LAYERED IMMERSION



Fig. 1. Main menu - a representation of the original-human journey - www.transeuntismundi.com

The journey of the virtual passenger takes place in a multi-layered immersive experience, beyond the technicality of the form of presentation. The first one is the main menu: a non-conventional map that narrates the journey of man in his voyage from the moment they left their imprints in Central Africa. The second layer is an invitation: to participate as an active agent of this navigation. The third layer organically overlaps the overall experience: it is the temporality of the journey that each traveler turns into their own particular trip and reality. Altogether, the experience of a global trip takes place,

no matter the medium. And in each of the travel stations, “minimal stories” (Velez, 2009) are camouflaged in the scenes, in the course of daily life. A less visible layer, but perhaps the most significant and seductive one, as they give voice to transculturalism.

Keywords—*webvr, virtual reality, transmedia*

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