

(SAS2019-10696) - EMERSIVE STORYTELLING - AN EXPLORATION OF ANIMATION AND THE FOURTH WALL AS TOOLS FOR CRITICAL THINKING

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Visual artist Eva Wijers (NL, 1984) creates drawings and animations with a philosophical focus. She analyzes human behavior in crisp imagery in which form and content are inseparable. Wijers completed the Master of Animation cum laude in 2018 with the 2D animated film 'Humanoid' and the thesis 'Emersive Storytelling' (AKV StJoost Master Institute, NL). Ten years previous she graduated from the bachelor Fine Art and has since then worked in fine art, animation and illustration. She's currently working as guest tutor 'research' at the Master of Animation of AKV StJoost Master Institute and focussing on a new independent animation project.

Abstract

'Emersive Storytelling' deals with the positive effects of breaking the fourth wall and the special role of animation in this. The term 'emersive storytelling' is introduced as an opposite of 'immersive storytelling'. While immersive storytelling strives to totally engage the viewer, emersive storytelling acknowledges it's own fiction and thus the so called 'fourth wall' (the fictional wall between the medium and the audience). This causes two effects. Brecht's distancing effect addresses the conscious intellectual connection the audience makes with the medium when the fourth wall is broken. The closeness effect is introduced by the author and describes the empathy an audience feels for characters even if the suspension of disbelief is broken. Emersive storytelling demands an active attitude from the viewer and triggers critical thinking. Animation is a very self reflective medium and by it's nature very suited for emersive storytelling and thus activating the viewer. Short case studies within this paper support this idea. In the last chapter the paper briefly looks in to the future. With ever more realistic looking virtual reality and the uprise of artificial intelligence it might seem as if the fourth wall is disappearing. Emersive storytelling can help us reason about our relationship to these technologies. The paradox of the fourth wall is not to be solved by immersing the viewer further and further, but is to be embraced and put to use.

Palavras-chave : fourth wall, critical thinking, animation, virtual reality, emersive / immersive storytelling