



## Frame Seductions

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### Synopsis

Frame Seductions is an interactive work that plays with our expectations of the video frame by creating an immersive and surreal space that lies beyond the traditional borders of the screen.

The project explores the concept of looking outside of the video frame by tracking the head movements of people immediately in front of a camera-enabled screen. As people turn their head to the left or to the right the perspective of the video on the screen will change to follow their gaze.

In the language of cinema, hors champ (out of scene) is considered to be the space and time of the filmic world outside of the range of the camera. Viewers of Frame Seductions are able to access material outside of the initial scene, blurring the boundaries between the frame and the hors champ. Lurking in the sidelines of the original scene, various mundane but provocative scenarios are playing themselves out much to the surprise of the viewer.

### Description

In the 21st century the concept of the frame persists in incarnations both old and new in painting, video, television, and cinema. Today, in the face of a steadily growing plethora of screens, projections and LCD's the content of the frame has the ability not only to animate but through technological contrivance to also respond to our movements and gaze.

This project is exhibited as a video depiction of several ordinary scenes in the tradition of genre painting. Genre painting or photography depicts aspects of everyday life by portraying ordinary people engaged in common activities. In Frame Seductions however the actions of the people in the scene are often mysterious or nonsensical, creating a slightly surreal, magic-realist atmosphere. Characters appear in several places at once, exit through doors to only reappear elsewhere and are often seen giving the viewer or each other quizzical looks.

The installation plays back panoramic video, of a width much larger than the screen frame itself. The screen acts as a window into this larger panorama, and the head movements of a person just in front of the screen

causes the focus of the viewing window to shift either to the left or to the right, exposing new material.

The installation appears as a static looking picture from a distance, however as people approach closer they are given the opportunity to peer into the sidelines of the image revealing dynamic 'hidden' scenes. In addition, the 'side-lines' play sound, whereas the central image is relatively silent, teasing people into looking out of the central frame in order to locate the source of the noises.



Fig. 1: Photo: Vera Batozska

Video material for the screen was shot using actors, using multiple camera perspectives to achieve a panoramic effect and then processed by software. At any one time the panorama consists of three videos played back side by side asynchronously. Each video is looped seamlessly, occasionally swapping out when not visible to be replaced by new content. The algorithm controlling the selection of the videos takes into account the content of the videos and the perspective of the viewer, i.e. which part of the scene they are currently watching. Tracking of the viewer's head is achieved using proprietary 6-degrees-of-freedom head-tracking software.

### Themes & Inspiration

The Frame Seductions video was shot in the abandoned floor of a building in Lima, Peru. Both local and foreign actors of both sexes were used in the shoot. Various surreal and mundane activities take place in this space. The overall aim of the piece is to play with people's expectations, generate surprise and wonderment and create a sense of immersion.

Shooting of the footage of Frame Seductions was inspired by a couple of earlier films, namely Zbigniew Rybczynski's animation *Tango* (1982) and a scene in Jean Luc Godard's film "*Les Carabiniers*". In *Tango*, Rybczynski

exploits this concept of the single off-screen space by filling it with a plethora of actions. It soon becomes obvious that such a small space, that of a small room, could not possibly contain all the actions taking place. Rybczynski also makes critical use of off-screen space, exposing it for the artifice it is. Off-screen space is the imaginary area beyond the edge of the screen, and in front of or behind the camera. Jean Luc Godard's film "*Les Carabiniers*" has a scene in which one of the lead characters Michel-Ange discovers the cinema for the first time. Michel-Ange approaches the canvas on which the film is being projected and attempts to peer into various parts of the projected scene in order to better appreciate the projection of a naked woman taking a bath. Not knowing the difference between cinema and real-life, he eventually stumbles into the cinema screen hoping he can enter the bathroom in the projection.