

Optionaltime2

Between reality and fiction, before meets after.

In Optionaltime2 we want to investigate the tension between reality and fiction.

In fiction we can do anything we cannot do in reality, at least in our current *understanding of reality*. In Optionaltime2 we play with this understanding, and we are especially trying to expand it. This follows the line we started in Optionaltime, where we investigated alternative ways of *understanding time*.

background

Originally Optionaltime was initiated for an exhibition where artists were invited to show their ideas around the theme "future". We thought in this future, people could possibly process much more information than now, and would be able to understand time differently; time as being non-linear.

For us (as makers), being in that current timeframe as well, the understanding of what a non-linear concept of time could be was difficult. Therefore we aimed at creating an experience of it, rather than explaining it. For the viewer Optionaltime blends the moments past, present and future together into one experience. It literary takes you out of your current timeframe, and places you in a fictional one, a movie. In order to create this movie, we wrote down *images* rather than *stories*:

"The woman drops her keys, I meet her eyes when she turns herself downwards to pick them up. I'm close. My eyes follow her body moving towards a standing position. I watch her face, I watch her carefully. I watch her in the mirror and my concentration on her movements seems to slow her down, but only in the mirror, where my eyes are focused. I step back. Now I see my own movement slowing down, or hers speeding up? We don't move in the same speed. I tell myself that's impossible and I look at her again. Now we are synchronized."

We translated these images into a projection (movie) and installation. From the response that Optionaltime generated we concluded that we had found a straightforward way of creating an experience of time rather than telling a story (like in a regular movie). In Optionaltime we addressed the *understanding of time*, in Optionaltime2 we want it to be the *notion of reality*.

concept

By making the timeline of Optionaltime2 interactive, the *reality* of the image can be influenced. An actor following his *linear timeline* in one part of the image can *simultaneously* appear in another part of the image following *another linear timeline*, if only one of the viewers decided to either freeze or move in front of the projection. Although the viewer by his actions cannot consciously control what happens in the projected reality (movie), the linearity of it gets easily distorted. This could make you wonder about your side of the screen, the non-projected reality.

Optionaltime2 (in its first release) will be placed and filmed at the entrance of Nemo. We have selected this location because it is a public space, and Nemo's affinity with interactive media. The projection is a continuation of this entrance, an illusion of extended reality, but without any linear restrictions. We want both the casting and the styling of the projected image, to integrate seamlessly with the environment, yet at the same time use the power of fiction, the non-reality. For example in the styling we will add small attributes in the clothing and the accessories; we play with the way a handbag looks and what is in it. By working with those details, the projection at first sight looks normal, like the space you're in yourself, but when you look again you will see that something is 'wrong'. The closer you look at the image the more it reveals and distorts. And on top of that, the moment you are in this concentration looking at the projection, the linearity of (part of) the image is suddenly, yet directly connected to your movements. By making the image communicate a slightly twisted sense of the reality, we hope it will give you a more fictive perception of the rest of the room, your reality.

The storylines for Optionaltime are not written at this moment, but we also want to base them on reality (everyday actions in an entrance of a big building) with a hint of fiction. Actors will once in awhile be encouraged to break away from reality and act unexpectedly. We might write background stories for them, which will not be *played* in the image, but could be a *source* for their fictitious acting. We are going to work with five actors/actresses, divided over the three layers in the movie. The layers will be filmed separately, and because these *three movies in the same image* work independently, the storyline of the projection is limitless. We hope that this aspect of Optionaltime2 is going to make you experience yourself as a director of the reality that plays in the projection.

This last aspect touches on our challenge with, and at the same time motivation for Optionaltime2:

to create an extension of reality, so that the viewer experiences it as a *stretched notion of reality*. Optionaltime2 could be a suggestion that in future times we'll be able to experience our reality in a less linear and therefore less limited way.