A New Way of Experiencing Sculpture

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Advances in technology have opened up exciting creative possibilities in how we experience the arts. Through a Gibbons Fellowship artist/Professor Jackie Brown and I have spent the summer developing an interactive 3D interface for her sculpture installations. With this interface, we aim to capture the scale, relation, and dimensionality of Professor Brown’s sculptures. By offering a virtual means for users to explore the work we hope to create a dynamic experience.

The process began with making a 3D model. I took 250 photographs of a selected sculpture, capturing the work from every angle and then imported the images into Autodesk Memento where they were stitched together and used to generate a 3D model. I then used the 3D model to generate animated videos that rotate and move the object, offering viewers a sense of the 3D dimensional form in a way that can’t quite be captured through traditional documentation: http://www.lauragriffee.com/virtual-sculpture-videos/

Next, I generated an interactive model that allows viewers to rotate and explore the work on their own. This interface intends to give the user greater control over how they experience the artwork. I developed the interactive model using a WebGL web player and Blend4Web: http://www.lauragriffee.com/web-player/

We are currently using an animation program called Unity to take the interactive quality even further. Installation art often involves physically moving through an environment and by developing a virtual installation Jackie and I aim to offer viewers a comparable experience. This is an exciting step towards allowing viewers to navigate through virtual space in a way that speaks to the experiential nature of installation art: http://www.lauragriffee.com/virtual-installation/

In the future Jackie Brown and I hope to explore additional virtual possibilities such as creating a build-your-own sculpture feature and adding functions that allow users to bring up photos, videos, and a web player by clicking on a sculpture in the virtual installation.

Faculty Mentor: Professor Jackie Brown
http://jackiebrownart.com/virtual-sculpture

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