

Moons Over You :: The Poetic Space of Virtual and Real

A moon follows you as you walk around.
She has her own moon. He has his own moon.
And I have my moon following me...

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Overview: Seeing multiple moons visible overhead is not our normal experience in the real world. Even though we can picture this kind of experience in our imaginations, we cannot properly share it with others. It can only visually exist in our own individual minds. We would like to share this experience by creating a poetic installation space of virtual and real, where multiple moons can follow us around. In this gallery room, the audience can share their own imaginative and individual experience with others. *Moons Over You* also raises questions regarding how subject can be related with object, and how subject can also be related with other subjects through the experience of multiple moons. When an audience member enters the room, she soon realizes that the moon is following her as she walks around. We often feel like the moon is chasing us, for example when we drive around in our cars and see the moon always with us. But there is only ever one moon. In this poetic space, when a second person enters the room, another moon rises up above his head and starts to follow him as well. Thus this person can also create his own individual relationship with the moon. As more visitors enter the room, moons keep rising, creating an individual relationship for each audience member. Through this experience, we hope to elicit even more complicated readings that begin when an audience member pays attention to other people's moons. By looking at other relationships —relationships between others and their moons — each individual's experience with the moon expands to a shared experience between audience members. In screen-based virtual experiences, such as multi-user games, the screen typically does not show other players' points of view, even though each player shares the space and experience with others. However, in *Moons Over You*, the room-sized screen becomes both a personal and shared display for all audience members, and thus this system can lead each person's perspective beyond his/her own individual scope. Moreover, the experience of looking at the moon from a subject-oriented perspective can be more meditative and aesthetic. This intentional approach aims to achieve a slower but extended critical distance in the interactive media experience. Media artworks that track the movement of audiences in front of the camera most often provide very short closed feedback loops, making it difficult for individual participants to look back at the actions and reactions that people in the space are making and have made.

Technology: Using computer vision and infrared cameras, *Moons Over You* can track the movement of multiple users at the same time. In this way, the room space becomes a responsive space. In order to expand the critical distance in *Moons Over You*, we have tried to make the tracking system as invisible as possible to induce natural reactions from the audience. The movements of audience members are reflected back through imaginative spatial and temporal compositions. The shape of each moon changes from waning to waxing according to each individual's time spent in this physical/virtual space. The position of the moon is also rendered according to the position and movement of the individuals in real-time, through image manipulation in Max/Jitter. In the current setup, we use two projectors and a slanted video screen (a roof screen) overhead. A real-time algorithm fixes the distortion of the images projected on this screen.