

Alter Ego

Contributed by Greg Turner
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By Alexa Wright and Alf Linney
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At first sight Alter Ego appears to be a mirror. An audience member sits in front of the screen and a digital version of their face appears before them. Initially, the Alter Ego reflects the participants face, mimicking his or her expressions. But after about thirty seconds the avatar begins to react unexpectedly to the expressions of the user. For example: if the person smiles, the virtual face may look surprised or angry, or may smile back. The expressions made by the Alter Ego are not random, but are generated by each classified subject expression being linked to a subset of response expressions. There are three randomly chosen possibilities for each response. This ensures that the response made to a subject's expression is reasonable but not the same every time

Alter Ego explores the feeling of being outside of oneself, and plays with the experience of a loss of control over an aspect of the self.

The work represents cutting edge developments in the field of facial analysis and modelling and was created in close collaboration with leading scientists in this area.

<http://www.alteregoinstallation.co.uk>

Alexa Wright is a visual artist working with photography and digital media, visiting Sydney from London for only a few days. During her visit we are happy to be presenting a demonstration of her revolutionary interactive artwork Alter Ego. Alexa has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad. Recent exhibitions include: Monstruous, Fantasma y Alienígenas at Fundación Telefónica, Madrid; Wonderful: Visions of the Near Future at Cornerhouse, Manchester and Geometry of the Face at the National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen.

She is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Art, Research and Technology Education at the University of Westminster in London. Since 1998 Alexa has collaborated with Professor Alf Linney at the Centre for Auditory Research at University College London, where she holds an honorary post as artist in residence.