VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETAS
MCMXXII

CENTRAS
VII TARPTAUTINIS
MULTIMEDIJOS
MENO IR
MUZIKOS
FESTIVALIS

MEDIJŲ KULTŪRA: MENAS, KOMUNIKACIJA, TECHNOLOGIJOS

MEDIA CULTURE: ART, COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGIES

2012 m. balandis 12 d.
Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, Kaunas

April 12, 2012
Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

MEDIA CULTURE:
ART, COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGIES

The concept of *media* is often used in the contemporary theoretical contexts of art, communication and technologies and invested with different meanings. The field of creative practices related to media has expanded greatly too. New media is used by artists, the specialists of communication and technologies, who change our life by creating virtual environments and various interfaces of communication. Therefore the interdisciplinary research of culture formed by media becomes especially relevant.

The participants of the conference will look at the theories and practices of art, communication and modern technologies as related and interacting fields of media culture. The representatives of various scholarly fields will apply different perspectives of analysis to such topical questions as the relation between textual medias and visuality, the relationship between oral and visual narrative, media ecology, interface and communication in the environments of screen, virtual space and 3D reality, its influence to the human identity and life quality, the formation of virtual communities, the production and the spread of popular culture products by means of contemporary medias, the transition of contemporary culture into post-media state, etc.

The conference is intended to discuss not only local processes of media culture and the formation of its theoretical context in Lithuania, but also to critically asses the global field of creative media practice and theory.
The conference is organized in cooperation with International multimedia art and music festival CENTRAS.

9:00-9:30 Registration

<u>Opening session</u>

9:30-10:00 Keynote speech **Gintautas Mažeikis.** Immediate Mediations: Destruction of Symbolical Organizations through New Media

COMMUNICATION
Moderator: Kristina Juraitė

10:00-10:20 **Jaq Greenspon.** Live the Dream: How Cross Marketing Blurs the Line between Fiction and Fact

10:20-10:40 **Marius Gurskas.** Between Headlines and Margins: Networking Role in Small State's Foreign Policy Making

10:40-11:00 **Tomas Krilavičius, Justina Mandravickaitė.** Information Visualization in the Lithuanian Internet Media

11:00-11:20 Discussion

11:20-11:40 Coffee break

<u>Afternoon session I</u>

TECHNOLOGIES
Moderator: Tomas Krilavičius

11:40-12:00 **Ryszard W. Kluszczyński.** From Relational Aesthetics to the Art of Locative Media. Convergence of Technology, Society, and Art

12:00-12:20 **Edvinas Bazevičius, Egidijus Vaškevičius, Aušra Vidugirienė.** Aspects of Avatar Modeling and Control

12:20-12:40 **Ilva Skulte, Mairita Folkmane.** Edutainment: An Analysis of Computer Game for/by Students

12:40-13:00 **Lucio Tomasso De Paolis.** Virtual and Augmented Reality in Cultural Heritage

13:00-13:20 Discussion

13:20-14:20 Lunch Break

MEDIA CULTURE
Moderator: Rimantas Plungė

14:20-14:40 **Vytautas Michelkevičius.** Medium via Medium about Medium: Media as a Tool of Inquiry in the Hands of Artist and Media Researcher (presentation-performance)

14:40-15:00 **Tautvydas Bajarkevičius.** Archive. Curatorial Strategies by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Umberto Eco

15:00-15:20 **Jurij Dobriakov.** The Ecology and Economy of Nostalgia in Popular Media Culture

15:20-15:40 **José Cláudio S. Castanheira.** Digital Amnesia: Analog Materialities as a Form of Memory

15:40-16:00 Discussion

ART
Moderator: Tomas Pabedinskas

16:00-16:20 **Christopher Hales.** Changing the Film: Experiences and Outcomes of Teaching "Interactive Moving Image" in the Baltic States and Elsewhere

16:20-16:40 **Jekaterina Lavrinec.** Street Announcements: Interaction, Cooperation, and Temporal Communities

16:40-17:00 **Ina Pukelytė.** Screen as Mask or Medium

17:20-17:40 **Howard Bossen, Eric Freedman.** Shaped by Fire: Photographers Stories of Access to Steel Mills and Other Industrial Sites

17:40-18:00 Discussion

Poster presentations

Aurimas Gaižauskas.
Corporate Identities and Its Representation Forms

Skirmantė Kaziūnaitė.
Attitudes towards Visual Art Education in the Context of Media Culture

Edgaras Ščiglinskas, Egidijus Vaškevičius, Aušra Vidugirienė.
Augmented reality monitor technology

Tautvydas Bajarkevičius

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Archive. Curatorial Strategies by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Umberto Eco

The paradigm of artistic research is one of the noticeable tendencies in the context of contemporary art. It is directly related to the notions of retrospective, strategies of recontextualization and reactualization.

This paradigm may be analyzed by thinking about principles of artistic research, conducted by two famous personalities of Western intellectual world – curator Hans Ulrich Obrist and writer, professor of semiotics Umberto Eco.

There is a well known joke, which says, that if a contemporary artist is not present in the notebook of Hans Ulrich Obrist, he's not a successful artist. Despite a rhetoric hyperbola, that is unfolding here, a notebook of Hans Ulrich Obrist may be considered as a network of links and relations, which become an active mechanism of an artistic research. Archives of artistic research may be considered as a collection of meanings, that is constantly in state of reactualisation, or as a vocabulary of interpretations, that has an intertextual potential. Without any doubt, this is directly related to the notion of curator as an institution.

In artistic world an exhibition of lists, curated by Umberto Eco and presented in Louvre, had a significant resonance. The list is considered here as a field of possibilities of reflections, where the thematic fields of index, catalogization, structure of segments, their intertextual links, relation between fragment and the whole become the possibility of intelectual adventure.

The paper is aimed at articulation of this highly complex field of artistic research.

Howard Bossen, Eric Freedman

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Shaped by Fire: Photographers Stories of Access to Steel Mills and Other Industrial Sites

"Shaped by Fire: Photographers Stories of Access to Steel Mills and Other Industrial Sites" is the product of six years of research for an exhibition and book project, "Molten Light: The Intertwined History of Steel and Photography". The project contributes to an understanding of how the art of photographers over more than 140 years and across several continents can be brought together to illuminate the complex interrelationships of steel — and more broadly, industry — and humankind. It tells, in a symbolic way, a story of the mid-nineteenth century through the beginning of the twenty-first century in a unique manner.

Using primarily through interviews and archival documents, this paper examines how photographers gained access to operating and defunct steel mills and how the type of access they gained influenced the kind of photographs they made. The interviews and historical discussions are illustrated with photographs by each photographer discussed.

The paper also explores legal and ethical issues associated with gaining access to industrial sites, as well as how the right to publish or exhibit may be restricted after access is gained. This paper relies heavily on 24 extensive face-to-face interviews with photographers and one with a photographer's assistant in 10 countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

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Digital Amnesia: Analog Materialities as a Form of Memory

According to Andreas Huyssen, the twentieth century saw the emergence of memory as one of its central political and cultural concerns. The construction of a collective memory, for Jacques Le Goff, goes further than being just a social achievement; it is an object of power. Not losing sight of the ideas mentioned above, this analysis discusses a different approach to the concept of memory: memory as a repertoire with which current experiences are compared and from where we draw parameters for evaluation and solution of new situations.

That process is intensely mediated by the materiality of objects. In a first moment, digital culture favored a type of praxis that looked for erasing that memory of things, immersed in a radical transformation of world's representation parameters. Later on, this physical memory resurges transfigured in the form of nostalgic design, cell phones applications simulating old equipment functioning, presets, plugins, and other vintage vestiges on contemporary digital devices. Based on the concept of remediation, also influenced by the ideas of McLuhan, we may identify a failure of part of this digital project when, at the same time it proposes a faithful representation of the concrete world (even in the case of aesthetic, social and historical experiences), it ignores the materiality of the objects in this world experience. The material apparatus as a form of memory exceeds the efficiency of processing and storage by digital means and brings into play other social and individual memories with which the digital has to learn to live.

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The Ecology and Economy of Nostalgia in Popular Media Culture

The trend of fascination with nostalgic retro elements in music, various visual formats (photography, music videos, etc.) and design has been increasingly evident recently. These cultural forms simulate the aesthetic associated with various decades of the previous century not so much through direct sampling of already existing material, but rather by trying to emulate the ephemeral yet recognizable "feel" of those times.

Simultaneously, various cultural archaeology practices – the re-discovery of "forgotten" or obscure artists and music records, obsolete cultural rituals and artefacts, and other retro-curiosities and "lost gems" – gain increasingly greater currency. The past actively intrudes into our technology-rich everyday life in the form of a spectre or an "undead" object. This process takes place both in the space of contemporary art (for instance, the "archive turn", various kinds of retrofuturist streams, the highly popular exhibitions of Cold War-era modernist design on both sides of the Iron Wall) and in the sphere of popular entertainment (the various online "cabinets of curiosities" (e.g. retronaut.co, englishrussia.com), smartphone apps that emulate the "imperfect" quality of analogue amateur photographs (Instagram, Hipstamatic), and indie pop music that sounds like it was created several decades ago).

This overview's point of departure is the contemporary nostalgic audiovisual culture, yet the discussion will cover the broader socio-cultural and political aspects of this phenomenon, the images and desires that the latter constructs/simulates, its internal contradictions and the place it occupies in the general "post-ideological" late-capitalist context.

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Corporate Identities and Its Representation Forms

The paper discusses the structure of the development of corporate identities and its representation forms from the perspective of culture sociology theory. The author tries to describe the identity making and development industry in Lithuanian and European contexts. The author of the paper defines the stakeholders of the industry with the help of W. Griswold's cultural diamond relation structure. While it shows clearly the relations between the structure's elements it lacks in the descriptive demonstration of nature of these relations and grasp on the content. The author dives into the details of each part of the schema and tries to show today's theoretical and practical approach to the issues of the field such as: design process, design trends, identity consumption, and identity media context.

As the conclusion of this quite broad survey the paper makes the statement of the identity power element, based on M. Foucault insights. The other implication of this research is possible shift of the industry towards the divergent socially oriented experience - it could be useful here to adopt the concept of hidden inner culture of the organization inspired by P. Bourdieu as well.

Jaq Greenspon

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Live the Dream: How Cross Marketing Blurs the Line between Fiction and Fact

The presentation shows, how creative marketing techniques for American film and TV programs invade the so-called "real world," leaving fans and non-fans alike to question the solidity of the line between the fictional and non-fictional worlds. The author of the paper looks at the history of this technique, its forms and effectiveness. The presentation does not include fan-based reactionary movements, but strictly studio created and supported marketing efforts.

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Between Headlines and Margins: Networking Role in Small State's Foreign Policy Making

A fundamental development in Information-communication technologies and structural international system changes are transforming the practice of traditional foreign policy making. Permanent, 24/7 information flow within global horizontal communication network which outreaches national borders requires continuous communication discourse monitoring and analysis. Another important factor - the growing scale of common threat issues (terrorism, global climate change, economic crisis, etc.), encourage countries to cooperate, and most often act very quickly in decision making process.

Within such context urgency and interdependency among countries opens new opportunities for small state participation in international affairs. In certain aspects small country may apply the new methods and forms of communication using pro-active, real-time communication strategy which operates within networks.

The key question is - which specific communication strategies and tactics should be applied for staying in communication „headlines" and avoiding "the margins"? Virtual networks and M. Castell's a Network theory of power is presented as one of possible response for this question.

Christopher Hales

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Changing the Film: Experiences and Outcomes of Teaching "Interactive Moving Image" in the Baltic States and Elsewhere

The paper presents some of the results obtained and experiences gained through the teaching of various short workshops in the Baltic States (as well as elsewhere) in the specific combination of interactivity and moving image. The workshops combine theoretical and practical approaches – a functional prototype of an "interactive film" is produced by students – and have been run by the author in Tallinn, Tartu, Riga, Liepaja and Vilnius from 2002 until the present day. Usually these workshops have been in official educational establishments - principally those of art and design - although more openly recruited workshops have also taken place.

An inherent characteristic of making an interactive film is that a combination of specific disciplines are required to create the final outcome, primarily filmmaking, interaction design, and narrativity. Methods of teaching this, in which a workshop participant may not have any experience or background knowledge of one or more of these disciplines, and in which collaboration with other students would be desirable, will be discussed with particular reference to "Black-Box" and "Bits&Bytes" approaches. Despite the potential narrow focus of these workshops, the resulting artefacts have displayed a huge variety of final forms and formats, including installation art, live performance, interactive DVD and websites.

Workshop outcomes will be compared and contrasted to pick out whether clear differences are apparent according firstly to the varying profile of the students involved, and secondly between results from workshops in the Baltic States and those (also run by the author) in other European countries – some of which have involved a deliberately enforced mixture of students from both artistic and technical backgrounds. The paper also discusses whether the types of outcome have changed during the last seven years as a result of developments in technology and social media.

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Attitudes towards Visual Art Education in the Context of Media Culture

Millions of new images are created every minute and this process is only getting more and more intense. Images mark every step of our life. They are object of constant mass creation, multiplication and manipulating. The newly formed media culture and virtual reality created with modern technology means challenge our traditions and traditional attitude to visual arts education.

Information technology together with media culture affects education in two different ways: it encourages development and disturbs. It disturbs in that manner that replaces traditional organizational culture and classical teaching style, when a teacher after studying various texts, using textbook materials, could become the main and the only source of knowledge in the lesson. It is clear, that teaching methods, which are oriented towards the result and knowledge based on gathering facts and their quantity, doesn't meet postmodern society's educational needs. Visual art education faces the problem how to represent modern media art and how to enrich education practice with innovative forms of media culture.

The paper analyzes impact of information and communication technology development on the aims and content of art education and the change of teaching methods applied in training process. The paper reviews new self-expression possibilities in visual culture conception and visual art education. Modern technologies are rapidly changing teaching and learning of visual arts, brings new features to artistic expression and highlights acquisition and perception of art.

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From Relational Aesthetics to the Art of Locative Media. Convergence of Technology, Society, and Art

Recent new media art practices more and more often shift the focus of interests from technological devices, like interfaces, and from interactivity itself, as well as their aesthetical aspects, towards the social activities based on the process of networking. In this way new media art has been joining the wider process of transformation of contemporary arts, which originated, according to Nicolas Bourriaud, in 1990s, and was referred as relational art. In the context of this tendency however, new media art practices found its own specificity based on the technological and social fundamentals of convergence.

The paper describes the processes of convergence of technology, society, and culture into the phenomenon of the art of locative media. It analyzes this artistic attitude taking as examples works of such artists, as Georg Legrady, Antonio Muntadas, Paul Serman, Stelarc, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, The Blast Theory Group, Ieva Auzina / Esther Polack, and Michele Teran.

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Information Visualization in the Lithuanian Internet Media

Growing amount of information requires new means for its representation and dissemination. Visualization allows presenting and comprehending complex information and data easier. However, incorrect application of visualization techniques distorts information, allows misrepresenting it. Goal of this research is to evaluate application of infographics in the most popular Lithuanian Internet media. delfi.lt, lrytas.lt and 15min.lt were selected based on the TNS data (http://goo.gl/JQ4q6, 2012, the 3rd week). Topics with most potential information for visualization were chosen: energy, real estate, transport, markets and employment. Articles (news) from 2011 05 23 (depending on the topic) to 2012 02 17 were analyzed. The results were most surprising, see table below

	energy	real estate	transport	markets	employment
delfi.lt	2	0	0	0	0
lrytas.lt	0	0	0	0	1
15min.lt	5	0	1	0	0

Basically, visualization is not used at all. In the rare occasions, when figures are used, they are taken from other sources, e.g. Department of Statistics, National Control Commission for Prices and Energy, etc. However, instead of visualizing data or information provided in the article, often some general illustration is used, e.g. some photo of pipes in energy article or stock exchanges in markets.

Such results, instead on allowing evaluating the state of infographics in the mainstream Lithuanian Internet media raised other questions: why it is not used and which media uses visualization. Therefore, our future plans include: analysis of the specialized media, which provides more analytics and potentially, visualizations. Other very interesting directions are to find out, why mainstream media does not use it?

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Street Announcements: Interaction, Cooperation, and Temporal Communities

A popular notion of "social media" excludes a wide range of communication forms, which are being developed by citizens in everyday life. Exploring forms of written communication in public spaces (including street messages and announcements) one can easily describe them in terms of online interactions.

This perspective brings us to the question of usability of public spaces, which are being used by citizens for interaction and cooperation. The paper explores micro-scenarios of citizen cooperation, based on traditional forms of communication. The author also discusses several cases of re-inventing scenarios of use of the place (and turning it into a playground), developed by urban activists and artists.

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Immediate Mediations: Destruction of Symbolical Organizations through New Media

Human being was developed through different forms of mediations: images, signs, concepts, praxis. Hegel's considerations on the development of human consciousness were based on the considerations of different levels and stages of symbolical mediations. Later, according to K.Marx, dialectical relation between Human being and nature is human praxis, and according to E. Cassirer it is symbolical organizations like traditions, myth, religions, ideologies, sciences. J. Huzinga added games to the list. So myth or productive activities or other symbolical organizations are general mediators and conditions of culture and civilization, main issues of contemporary human being.

However contemporary media technologies not only support communication and development of symbolical mediations but also destroy civilizational patterns through destruction of symbolical distances. J. Baudrillard described phenomenon of hyperreality on the basis of analysis of, for example, pornography. Hyperreality means direct observation or other contact with biological, economic, political real without significant symbolical mediation and play of senses. So pornographic observation destroys any erotic play, flirtation, coquetry, and as consequences it eliminates civilizational distances, dreams and waiting. It is simple direct satisfices or beast's demands, or naked desire of politics. Contemporary media destruct symbolical mediations in the spheres of leadership, war, criminal victims and so on and present more than real: hyperreality which is constructed only in and through new technologies.

Destruction of symbolical distances eliminates critical and responsible understanding of the social or cultural being. According to K. Marx and J. Derrida understanding depends on capacity of praxis, for example reproduction or deconstruction. After the loosing of symbolical mediations there are no more orders which could be reconstructed. According to hermeneutics of W. Dilthey or G. Gadamer understanding is interpretation of inter-textual relations of the signs in the context of the fate of human beings. In the case of destruction of mediated distances all intertextualities are eliminated and only hyperreality dominates. The paper is devoted to the problems of understanding of new media in dialectical and hermeneutic sense in the context of destruction of symbolical mediations.

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Medium via Medium about Medium: Media as a Tool of Inquiry in the Hands of Artist and Media Researcher
(Presentation-performance)

The goal of the presentation is to make the undefined situation of media metaphorology clearer. To say it in the other words there is a need to define a medium in the intersection of art and communication studies and to analyze it from perspectives of practitioners and theoreticians. There is a lot of chaos in the usage of the term 'medium' in Lithuanian discourse, therefore the medium has to be defined both from new media perspective and from media art perspective in the last 20 years.

Moreover the artistic research is being discussed as well as the usage of the medium in its context. The question is raised how the usage of the medium is different in the artists and in the media researchers' hands. Is it possible to swap the roles between artist and researcher and what is the effect of this?

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Virtual and Augmented Reality in Cultural Heritage

While new treasures emerge from places previously unexplored or ignored, a larger number of buildings and sites are compromised by natural or human action. It's a widely held point of view that cultural heritage is diminishing continuously. This process leads to the demise of important historical documents and artistic goods.

The improvement of our technological capabilities enriches the possibilities for research and protection and enhances the value of cultural heritage, thus halting their demise. Edutainment, a neologism created from the combination of the words "education" and "entertainment", refers to any form of entertainment aimed at an educational role. Edutainment is a field that combines education with entertainment aspects. Thus, it enhances the learning environment and makes it much more engaging and fun-filled.

One of the most important applications of edutainment is undoubtedly the reconstruction of 3D environments aimed at the study of cultural heritage. The use of Virtual Reality in this field makes it possible to examine the three-dimensional high-resolution environments reconstructed by using information retrieved from the archaeological and historical studies and to navigate in these in order to test new methodologies or to practically evaluate the assessment.

The building of three-dimensional renderings is an efficient way of storing information, a means to communicate a large amount of visual information and a tool for constructing collaborative worlds with a combination of different media and methods. By recreating or simulating something concerning an ancient culture, virtual heritage applications are the bridge between people of the ancient culture and modern users.

The techniques for navigation within virtual environments have covered a broad kind of approaches ranging from directly manipulating the environment with gestures of the hands, to indirectly navigating using hand-held widgets, to identifying some body gestures and to recognizing the speech commands. In the last years systems based on locomotion interfaces and on control navigation by walking in place for the navigation in a virtual environment have been also developed. At present, many experiences of interactive reconstruction take place on the net or have been presented during the course of international conferences.

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Screen as Mask or Medium

During the last two decades the deployment of the screen with images projected on it became an integrated part of theatre performance. On the one hand, theatre artists prefer its function as an alternative to traditional decoration; as an alternative of the painted canvass. On the other hand, more complicated functions are delegated to a screen, for instance the revelation of human subconscious. This latter function gives theatre artists more possibilities of experimentation with an image and allows creating new images and representations.

The article will examine how screen images, created with the assistance of video or computer aided programmes open the field of representative theatre and create new spaces that do not belong to the stage box. Two performances will serve as examples – „Master and Margarita" (2000) by Oskaras Koršunovas and „The Enemy of the Society" (2011) by Jonas Vaitkus. In both of performances, image as medium becomes a part of dramaturgical action, i.e. it is not used as a complementary element to illustrate an action, but become an integrated part of the action. Through integration in an action the image is allowed to function in paradoxical ways similar to a mask. It seeks to hide the human nature and to enlarge it.

That allows us to formulate a thesis that a screen can achieve some of the original functions that are inherently theatrical. In addition, it can bring back, according to Jacques Derrida, the original function of representation, which is to signify something that cannot be represented. Or to be somewhere in between the two worlds – the one that is here and the one that is beyond, to be a medium between a spectator and between a fiction that is more than reality.

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Edutainment: An Analysis of Computer Game for/by Students

In the context of development of digital media and multimodal communication practices computer game has become a part of communication genres used in education representing both – an entertainment making learning easy and an effective tool for remembering and learning by practice (in simulated environments).

On their behalf, students themselves become more and more interested in games design. By mixing roles of audience and author they create narratives, roles and set rules for educational environments as new media texts. This paper reflects on the place of computer game in the contemporary culture and education, drawing examples from the case study of games designed by the students of Daugavpils University (Latvia).

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Aspects of Avatar Modeling and Control

Nowadays avatars are widely used in computer games and various virtual entertaining activities. They help to personalize the player/agent and to form the wanted image. Different avatars can be used in different situations; can show different attitudes or readiness to solve particular problems. However, an avatar is not only an entertaining unit, at the same time it represents a psycho-emotional state of a user. Formation of an avatar is based on the changes of particular parameters. If an avatar, designed by a user, can reflect his psycho-emotional state, it can be also assumed that changes of avatar's features have influence on user's behavior, attitudes and other characteristics. In that case, an avatar can act as a control mechanism of a state of a user and virtual environment as well.

Notes