

Preview Decorative Newsfeeds

News has never looked so good



Though only a small space in 'sunny 'uddy', under the guiding hand of Tom Holley the Medialounge is commissioning and presenting some of the most exciting works of art to be seen in Yorkshire at the moment, made by world-renowned artists in the digital arts field.

This month they present the world premiere of Thomson and Craighead's latest work *Decorative Newsfeeds*. T&C have siphoned off the incoming headlines from the stream of syndicated news feeds of world business news, world news and national news from the BBC News Services' website to create a projection installation of exquisite elegance.

Watching *Decorative Newsfeeds* is like watching a slowed-down version of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing in top hat and tails. Never has a string of headlines been so pleasant to watch. Strings of headlines in simple white text curl and snake their way across a plain black background, looping and curving around each other as if taking part in a formal mating-dance ritual before exiting the frame. They treat data as an object to be appropriated, manipulated and represented to us.

Rather than bombarding the viewer with a gushing data blast T&C have choreographed the data stream via an interface programme to order the flow of news and make it behave and animate according to their rules. Instead of allowing the randomness of news flow to

dictate the work, "We see the work as being a form of drawing," explains Thomson. "Rather than randomness being a resignation of authorship we are using randomness as part of our palette as an aesthetic decision." Craighead adds, "We've set up a series of instructions [within the programming]; e.g. no more than three curves appear on screen at any one time and there are only four speeds." This strict control has created work that is both ambient and graceful.

The screen hangs within the room as an object to circle around rather than being purely a projection. T&C are obviously enchanted by their own work: "Till now we've only seen it like a screensaver on our computers. We like the idea that people move around it, we like that idea of flow."

The idea of the work being a dance fits with it being a continuous live event as much as a gallery piece. Many data stream and interactive works rely on belief in an artist's claim that it is live; T&C have addressed this issue by using data that is visibly being updated, whether it is meteorological information as in their previous installation work, *Weather Gauge*, or this piece, using incoming news headlines. Craighead says: "The piece is constantly proving itself. News is current, it is visibly live, so each viewer has a unique experience."

Until 25 June, Medialounge, Huddersfield

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