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A Touch Of Code: Interactive Installations And Experiences



Synopsis

Thanks to the omnipresence of computers, cell phones, gaming systems, and the internet, a broad audience has traded its past reservations against technology for an almost insatiable curiosity for all things technical. Against this background, unprecedented new tools and possibilities are opening up for the world of design. In addition to sketchbooks and computers, young designers are increasingly using programming languages, soldering irons, sensors, and microprocessors as well as 3D milling or rapid prototyping machines in their work. The innovative use of powerful hardware and software has become affordable and, most of all, much easier to use. Today, the sky is the limit when it comes to ideas for experimental media, unconventional interfaces, and interactive spatial experiences. A Touch of Code shows how information becomes experience. The book examines how surprising personal experiences are created where virtual realms meet the real world and where dataflow confronts the human senses. It presents an international spectrum of interdisciplinary projects at the intersection of laboratory, trade show, and urban space that play with the new frontiers of perception, interaction, and staging created by current technology. These include brand and product presentations as well as thematic exhibits, architecture, art, and design. The comprehensive spectrum of innovative spatial and interactive work in A Touch of Code reveals how technology is fundamentally changing and expanding strategies for the targeted use of architecture, art, communication, and design for the future.

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Customer Reviews

As an avid watcher of contemporary art, this book caught my eye. Then I read it. It really doesn't offer much in terms of depth or breadth. Airport and other large--expensive!-- public installations with 'a touch of code' are the main focus. Its a good advertisement for the creative agencies that do this sort of work, but not really all that interesting for anyone working or wanting to look at things on a smaller scale.

Books about current art, like the art that they describe, often don't age well. This is particularly true for books about digital art. There is often a confusion between technology as means and technology as subject. There is often a confusion between digital art with something new to say, and what is simply a breathless and complicated demonstration of technology that will be routine within a couple of years, or something that would be far more elegant without the unwieldy overhead of intrusive technology. There are often tiny, crabbed pictures of huge one-off installations surrounded by oceans of text, kind of like watching the Technorama version of Lawrence of Arabia on your iPhone. A Touch of Code gets it right. It's current as of 2011, and the format gives the works enough space to actually understand what's going on. More importantly, the artistic signal to self-congratulatory noise signal is very high compared to most books in this genre. Most of this stuff is art that is genuinely interesting, much of it is designed to be replicable or a long-term installation, and a significant chunk of it will still be interesting twenty years from now. For the first time, I have a sense of how technology might become a genuine tool for art with considerable impact and lasting value. In this text, they tend to be the works that use technology as tool rather than technology as subject. But like most good art, the conceptual payload includes a subtle encapsulation of the time, place, and zeitgeist that it was created in. If you get one book on digital art, right now this is the one to get.

Being in this particular field myself, it is great to have a book that is so starkly current, largely devoted to projects over the past 0-5 years. It is a wonderful resource as an artist who wants to know the full breadth of the field, with insight into works I have only been able to see blips about. As an educator it gives a great span of works to bring to the classroom. Brilliant job!

This is a beautiful book, much better than I was expecting. The represented installations cover the genre, with a nice mix of recent and older installations, and US and Europe. There isn't a lot of wordy detail (you can track down that info yourself) but the photography is gorgeous. Highly recommended and a pleasure to thumb through.

My girlfriend bought me a copy of this as a birthday present. She thought it would help me to relax, but the stuff in here is just mind-blowing. Now I'm thinking of how to recreate it all... The book is full of one mash-up after the other of how hardware and software work together in so many different ways. And all of it is changing the way we live, work, experience, feel... Not just for geeks and nerds, this shows how cool (or should I say "Ã bercool"?) technology is nowadays. I'd highly recommend picking up a copy of this (unless you want to sleep!).

Not very informative. Very little detail. A few photos of each installation. Look through it once and discard. Not worth the \$

Amazing Images and Inspiration

This book, by its very title, promises "A Touch of Code," referencing the idea of smaller art-world projects, projects that very sparingly or carefully incorporate generative and procedural aspects within their real-world execution. The image gracing the front cover also promises as much, as it displays some sort of cockeyed interactive sculpture, a shaky stationary bicycle connected to all manner of lines and pulleys and coloring sticks--certainly the work of a graduate student or ambitious undergraduate. And yet the very first project showcased within the book didn't require a "touch" of code, but a whole garbage truck or two of code, as it is a section of the 2008 Olympic Games opening ceremony! This ain't something your standard art or design student will find useful, unless they by some miracle find themselves at the head of a national committee for an international project and are in a panic for ideas. Even that improbable person won't find this guide very useful, as there's only so much you can communicate about an entire themed segment of the Olympic opening ceremonies with what - three pictures? Later on, there are entries detailing smaller projects, some by graduate students at leading colleges, and those seem mildly useful. However, a lot of page space is taken up by these huge, unapproachable installations that aren't very adequately explained, and many of them sport the sort of cyber-future TRON gloss that is so antithetical to the idea expressed by the book's bricolage-themed title, cover, and promotion. Not only that, but the curator of "A Touch of Code" apparently never learned how to use commas, or what a clause is, or maybe just didn't care very much about the written portions of this text, which are, in my humble opinion, critical. The result is a series of essays and captions that are maddeningly illiterate, exhibiting all the deftness and adroitness of a freshman in a remedial writing course. Additionally,

the word spacing seems to be poorly managed, with the worst offender being the strange excess of space after every instance of the word "of," which gets irritating surprisingly quickly. This is a disingenuous and poorly made book. Skip it. EDIT: On further review, it turns out that English might not have been the production team's first language, which is totally fine. Forgoing the space in the budget for a decent editor, however, is still not fine.

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