

Unveiling Ecological Narratives: A Behavioral Exploration Inspired by Roy Ascott and Ha Schult

Philip K. Yuan

Affiliation: Roy Ascott Studio Advanced Program in Technoetic Arts, DeTao at SIVA

Location, Country: Shanghai, China

Contact Email: 1374974423@qq.com

Abstract

This artist talk explores aspects of an installation that delves into the realm of behavioral changes inspired by the innovative works of Ha Schult, a distinguished German installation, happening, and conceptual artist. Renowned for his groundbreaking contributions to object and performance art, Schult has left an indelible mark with his unique exploration of garbage as an artistic medium. As one of the earliest artists to confront the world's ecological imbalance, he is hailed as an "eco-art pioneer." At the heart of this exploration is Schult's seminal work, "Trash People," a touring masterpiece that has graced all continents. This installation endeavors to unravel the transformative impact of Trash People on individuals' perspectives and actions, shedding light on the potential for art to catalyze environmental consciousness. Additionally, the Save The Beach hotel, an architectural marvel crafted entirely from garbage, serves as a poignant symbol challenging societal norms. Through immersive experiences, multisensory elements, and interactive components, viewers are invited to contemplate their relationship with waste, consumption patterns, and the broader environmental narrative. The aim is to inspire a nuanced understanding of ecological issues and stimulate behavioral shifts towards sustainable practices. In essence, this installation not only celebrates HA Schult's artistic legacy but also aims to provoke reflection and foster a collective commitment to ecological stewardship.

Keywords

HA Schult, Behavioral Changes, Eco-Art Pioneer, Trash People, Save The Beach Hotel, Environmental Consciousness, Sustainable Practices.

Introduction

This installation draws inspiration from the visionary concepts of Roy Ascott [1], particularly his didactic experiments and groundbreaking approach to art that redefines behavior through active audience involvement. Ascott's transformative ideas in cybernetics and telematics have paved the way for a paradigm shift in the relationship between art and audience, advocating for immersive experiences that transcend traditional boundaries.

Building upon Ascott's philosophy, this installation seeks to encapsulate the essence of didactic experimentation by involving the audience in a dynamic dialogue with the artworks. The conceptual foundation of reframing behavior aligns with Ascott's belief in the co-creation of meaning, where the audience becomes an integral part of the artistic process.

As Ascott explores the potential of art to be a catalyst for personal and societal transformation, so does this installation aim to leverage the immersive and participatory nature of art to instigate behavioral shifts. By integrating elements of Ascott's cybernetic approach, the installation becomes a living system that engages viewers in a reflective and interactive journey.

Just as Ascott envisioned art as a dynamic system with feedback loops [1], this installation incorporates mechanisms that prompt self-reflection and collective contemplation on ecological issues. The audience is not merely a passive observer but an active participant, contributing to the ongoing narrative and shaping their own understanding of the environmental challenges depicted.

This conceptual framework embraces Roy Ascott's didactic experiments and his emphasis on art as a transformative experience. By weaving together Ha Schult's eco-art legacy [2] with Ascott's participatory vision, the installation aims to create a dynamic space where behavioral reframing becomes an organic and collaborative process, echoing the interconnectedness between art, audience, and the environment.

Ecological-Behavioural

The installation employs a diverse range of materials to create a multi-sensory and immersive experience that resonates with Ha Schult's eco-art and Roy Ascott's participatory vision. The use of recycled and repurposed materials, echoing Schult's fascination with garbage [2] as an artistic medium, forms the physical backbone of the installation. Discarded objects, transformed into intricate sculptures and installations, serve as tangible reminders of our ecological footprint, fostering a visceral connection between the audience and environmental issues.

Audience exploration within the installation is facilitated through a carefully curated journey designed to stimulate engagement and reflection. The space is organized to invite visitors to navigate through various thematic zones, each inspired by different aspects of Ha Schult's [2] and Roy Ascott's [1] philosophies. Interactive installations and participatory elements, influenced by Ascott's telematic embrace, encourage visitors to contribute to the evolving narrative of the artwork.

Author Biography

Cao Liyuan was born in 2001 in Henan Province, China and is currently a third-year undergraduate student in the advanced program of technology and art at the Roy Ascott Studio in Shanghai. His artistic endeavors delve into the intricate structures of contemporary social behaviors, utilizing hypermedia as a medium. Liyuan's exploration spans the realms of art and technology, addressing issues of societal behavior complexity, social operations, the impact of social media, and the evolving dynamics shaping the future relationship between humanity and technology. His artistic focus lies in the intricate and evolving interplay between personal emotional landscapes and the design field, exploring the nuances of the online society, dissecting subtle differences in social media, and envisioning trajectories of the relationship between humans and technology.

The participatory aspect involves the audience in the creation of meaning and reframing behavior. Through interactive displays, digital interfaces, and real-time feedback mechanisms, viewers are prompted to share their thoughts, emotions, and commitments toward sustainable practices. This real-time engagement transforms the installation into a dynamic dialogue, mirroring Ascott's vision of art as a collaborative and evolving process.

The integration of technology, in line with Ascott's didactic approach, enhances the interactive nature of the installation. Augmented reality, virtual reality, or interactive projections may be employed to create a layered and dynamic environment, allowing the audience to explore different dimensions of the artwork.

To further encourage exploration, the installation incorporates educational components such as informational panels, audio guides, or QR codes that provide additional context and insights into the ecological themes explored. Workshops and guided tours may also be organized to deepen the audience's understanding and connection with the installation.

Final Considerations

The materiality of the installation embraces recycled and repurposed elements, aligning with Schult's eco-art, while the exploration by the audience is facilitated through a thoughtfully curated journey that incorporates interactive and participatory elements influenced by Ascott's didactic experiments aimed at 'reframing behavior'. The goal is to create a transformative and immersive experience that goes beyond traditional art encounters, prompting reflection, dialogue, and, ultimately, behavioral shifts toward sustainable living.

Acknowledgments

The author extends sincere gratitude to Professor Dr. Clarissa Ribeiro, Program Director of the Roy Ascott Studio Advance Program in Technoetic Arts for her invaluable advice and mentorship, and to Mrs. Eleanor Zhang for her help and support.

References

- [1] Roy Ascott, "Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness." University of California Press, 2023.
- [2] Widewalls, "Ha Schult bio, Hans-Jürgen Schul, Germany 939," Conceptual Art, accessed on January 12, 2024, <https://www.widewalls.ch/artists/ha-schult>