

Maker Monday's ACE funded projects update:

Ben Neal

One of our ACE funded Maker Monday artists, Ben Neal, is developing a prototype - The Swoompipe - A MIDI bagpipe that can be squeezed with protruding branches and a breath sensitive mouthpiece. This musical device can be used in a live performance and is compelling as a sculpture in itself. As with all his other instruments to date, Ben would love to make the Swoompipe even more unusual in its visual appearance and interface.

Ben has currently developed his first electrical prototype and has been actively working on different 3D concept designs. He is currently working on various methods for the serpentine elements of the design (i.e. fibre glass).

Ben ran a workshop at MAC before Christmas, where participants were allowed to create a selection of "scrap bagpipes", and took inspiration from their input to develop his ideas further. Ben has been updating a blog on all this work, to follow the story and find out more:

<http://swoomptheengs.tumblr.com/>



Kate Spence

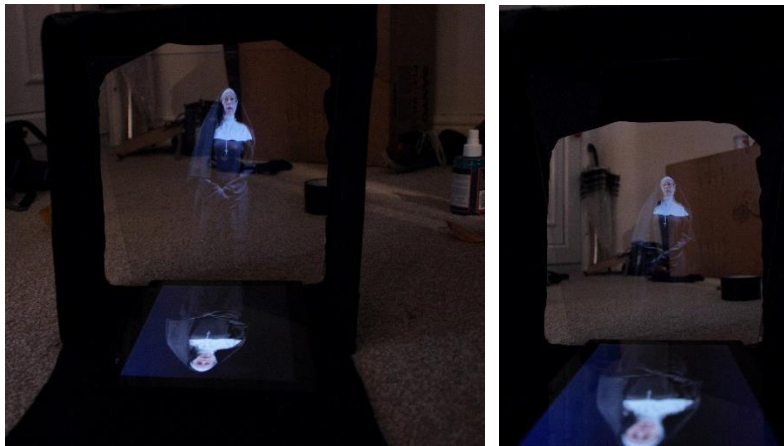
Kate Spence is currently working on an interactive Hologram for the Maker Monday Commissioning Project. She has been partnered with John Sear, an experimental games designer, to help her with the technical aspects of her artwork.

The final idea of this project is to make a large-scale interactive experience with numerous 'stations' that will take the audience through a narrative that changes according to their interactions. For this project it was decided that the interactive hologram would be a manageable starting point within the timescale and budget, as an initial proof of concept.

Alongside the making of the hologram Kate has created a script and filmed an actor in short clips. These clips will be linked to a hacked Xbox Kinect in order to make the experience interactive. The hologram will give instructions to the audience and the actions of the audience then decide which part of the narrative they will experience next. This means each audience member may get a different experience and gives the audience member a more real and immersed interaction. Kate is also interested in working on intimate 3D sound experiences, classic computer game elements and more. This will begin after the commissioning project has finished.

Alongside the technical aspects Kate has been researching into the subject matter of the work, the Magdalene Asylums. This has led her to numerous artists who she is now in conversations with, and who are helping her to ensure she is always sensitive to the issues and history that she is dealing with. This research behind her project has led her to consider pursuing a PhD so she can really get involved in the subject. Kate feels that this is just the very beginning of a long-term project and she is very passionate about it.

Kate successfully presented an update on her project on the Maker Monday event on the 30th of January. Through the research she has discovered that there were two large Magdalene Asylums in Birmingham, although it is very difficult to find much more information other than that they existed, when they existed and where they were geographically. In order to find more out she will be putting out an open invitation for anyone with any information on the Birmingham/Midlands based institutions to get in touch with her either by meeting on the 27th and 28th February when she will also be publicly trialling the hologram or by email.



For more information about Kate or Ben's project or to get involved with Maker Monday, please visit:

<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/makermonday>