

M A P – Autonomy of Experience

time, space, path and place in blended artistic methodology

This article will discuss *M A P*, an interactive poetic experience facilitated on the popular photo sharing application Instagram. It was developed as a research-based, cross-course collaboration at the University of East London, and initiated by Caroline Mueller Co-programme Leader in Performing Arts and Dr. Shringi Kumari Senior Lecturer in Game Design. The project was developed in collaboration with students from the game-design, creative writing and performing arts courses and grew out of a desire to re-evaluate the ability of technology to foster greater connectedness to ourselves, others and the world we live in. As a project conducted during the lockdown in England in Spring 2021, its artistic intentions are directly born from experiences of imposed restrictions as well as the consequential shift in the role that technology plays in conducting everyday personal and professional activities. It particularly asks if lockdowns and the increased use of technology might have changed how we *relate* and *respond* to people, places and things. How have physical distancing measures during the pandemic interrupted a socio-political and environmental sense of self? How has the intrusion of technology into our private spaces affected our experience of time and place and, as we are slowly emerging from the pandemic, can technology aid us to re-evaluate our relationships and duty of care to ourselves, each other, as well as the environment? Realising that the presence of digital technology in our daily spaces (as well as our dependency on it) is here to stay and might further increase, *how might we repurpose technology to allow for a more reflective and embodied experience of ourselves and others in time and place?* *M A P* can be understood as a practice-as-research experiment in how to develop blended, interactive artefacts to facilitate reflective and embodied experiences. It postulates for the development of choice-driven mechanics that allow greater autonomy for *when, where, how, and for how long* the artefact is experienced. Ultimately, the final structure, creative content and artistic concept aligns *M A P* with aspects of *slow technology* and/or *slow design*, which are part of the Slow Movement ethos that campaigns for cultural and social shifts towards a slower pace of life (Grosse-Hering et al. 2013). Putting a focus on a self-led, autonomous discovery of the different story-telling and interactive aspects of *M A P* in relation to time, path, space and pace allows for a slower engagement with the artefact and, it is hoped for, with the technology that facilitates the experience. Might an engagement with the Slow Movement help develop blended models of artistic practice that facilitate personal journeys of (self)reflective and embodied relations to ecological matters?

It is important to briefly introduce two pertinent aspects, which have heavily influenced both the conception of the original idea for *M A P* as well as the artistic methodologies employed. Both of these aspects are directly contributing to the proposition towards an increased sense of autonomy within digitally facilitated artistic experiences in order to re-evaluate our relationship with technology and creative experiences facilitated through blended or digital means.

Firstly, as *M A P* was conceived as a research project within a higher educational institution during the time of the pandemic, its creation was facilitated in a frame of a blended learning

strategy, which offered both online as well as in-person teaching in a strictly controlled and reduced social environment. In a blended learning approach, online materials, opportunities for online interaction as well as classroom-based activities are combined in order to provide an individually tailored pathway for student learning, giving a student some level of control in relation to time, place, path or pace of learning (O'Byrne and Pytash, 2015). It here seems pertinent to mention that a precursor to blended learning is so called m-learning (mobile learning), a pervasive learning, which is facilitated by mobile devices and 'aims to provide users with a learning environment which is not restricted to a specific location or time' (Coelho et al. 2020, 2). M-learning however is also a precursor to (serious) pervasive games and one can therefore draw a direct connection to the blended learning methodologies newly embraced during the pandemic with aspects inherent in design elements of serious pervasive games structures.

Secondly, the creators behind *M A P* were particularly interested in how the pandemic-induced dependency on digital communication platforms seemed to result in social isolation whilst simultaneously invading one's privacy. Now more than ever, real spaces, particularly our home and living environments, are instilled with digital media and online space, and neither can be deemed fully separate anymore. But how does this affect the experience of blended and game-based artistic projects? Games, often played within the privacy of one's own home or in designated spaces such as arcades or bars, have a rhetoric of providing an escape from daily routines and mundanity of familiar settings. Paul Martin (2011) however describes how, due to an increasing familiarity and dependency of a particular digital space, engagement with it becomes familiar and 'domesticated'. With the digital world and a computer screen having served as our only contact to 'an external' world, these tools for escapism have become tainted with the unmistakable whiff of familiarity, mundanity and necessity (family and friends, shopping and work). The question as to whether technology can still provide ludic and potentially transformative experiences after the pandemic, therefore, are brought to the foreground. How might creative practice experiment with technological communication structures that already exist, in order to (re)map an individual's sense and experience of the community and world they live in?

Stimulated by the pedagogical methodologies of blended learning, as well as personal and individualistic experiences of the social disconnect (and technological hyper-connect) during the pandemic, *M A P* explores how blended models of artistic practice could be applied to develop inventive approaches for interactive performative artefacts. It was clear that the poetic intention and at times abstract content of *M A P* required a specific and at times prolonged type of engagement from those experiencing the game. The pedagogical frame of blended learning, which offers a level of choice in relation to time, place, path or pace of learning, seemed to offer relevant themes of autonomy; this text will not focus on the pedagogy of blended learning, but nevertheless use these themes to describe how their application in the choice-driven, blended practice of *M A P* offer a different experience and form of facilitation in this interactive online artefact.

As an interdisciplinary artistic research project, *M A P*, although within the creative process commonly referred to as a *game*, sits at a junction of performing arts, game design, storytelling and poetry. *M A P* does not share the common characteristics of games: it is not goal-orientated, players do not have to follow specific rules, and the system provides neither

feedback or competitive elements (Raessens, 2019, 94). It nevertheless has been created with playfulness in mind, and specifically explores the notion that ‘people play their identity’ (98). Game design, particularly pervasive game structures, as well as participatory performance methodologies have been taken into consideration in the development of the experience and will be referred to in this text. They are relevant to *M A P*’s artistic objective, which aims to offer a personal, interactive experience that includes explicit invitations for the exploration of and reflection on relevant real-world spaces and activities. In *M A P*, the invitation for this experience occurs via digital technology: it has been created for and is facilitated on the popular media sharing application Instagram; using this popular application allowed the makers of *M A P* to experiment and repurpose pre-existing programme-specific tools and functionalities for a design that actively calls for self-reflection, presence of time and independent sense-making. This essentially subverts the ‘Insta’ in Instagram, and aligns *M A P* with aspects of slow technology, which supports ‘moments of self-reflection as well as critical reflection on technology itself’ (Odom, Stolterman, and Che, 2021, 151). Slow technology and slow design examples therefore will be referred to in order to illuminate how *M A P*’s focus on autonomy applies considerations of slow technology to both persuasive game design and participatory, digitally facilitated performance in order to develop an innovative, self-guided format for a blended mode of interactive story-telling.

The remainder of this text will first give a brief summary of *M A P*, before addressing relevant considerations in relation to the digital platform used for facilitation (Instagram) and alignment to slow technology. It will then introduce emerging insights in relation to the autonomous use of time, place, path, pace. These will be situated in relevant disciplinary contexts in order to demonstrate how such an approach might be employed to create *slow engagement* and *embodied experience* in blended interaction design and how this might serve to use technology artistically to create *reflective relations to ecological matters*. Due to the interdisciplinary and research-based nature of the project, this text is written from the artists’ perspectives influenced primarily by game design and participatory practice; it needs to be acknowledged that many considerations might only have been superficially touched upon and no systematic user experience research has been conducted. The synthesis of multiple disciplinary approaches also results in a challenge in finding the appropriate terminology and sets of definitions. During the collaboration, a difference in language used between game designer and performing artists was notable, and an appropriate naming of those who will experience *M A P* felt pertinent. The terms often applied in game design (such as ‘user’ or ‘player’) did not feel representative of the performance-based and abstract experiential elements of the game, whereas ‘participant’ or ‘collaborator’, often used in participatory performance, seemed to exclude that *M A P* can actually be enjoyed without participating or contributing much at all. Robin Nelson’s use of the term ‘*experiencer*’ felt suitable, as it not just refers to the person enjoying / experiencing the artwork, but the artwork itself, as he states that ‘it suggests a more immersive engagement in which the principles of composition of the piece create an environment designed to elicit a broadly visceral, sensual encounter’ (Bay-Cheng, et al. 2010, 45). Nelson explains the term in relation to intermedial performance, and whereas the interactive poetic experience of *M A P* does not include an element of *live* performance, it nevertheless also foregrounds the body as ‘medium of perception’, and a focus on embodied presence of a perceiver of the artwork. I will therefore use the word

experiencer in the remainder of this article in order to describe those who perceive, interact and engage with *M A P*.

Brief description of *M A P*:

M A P is facilitated and designed via the popular photo-sharing social network Instagram, where it is accessible under *@map_game_start*. It is comprised of eight individual,

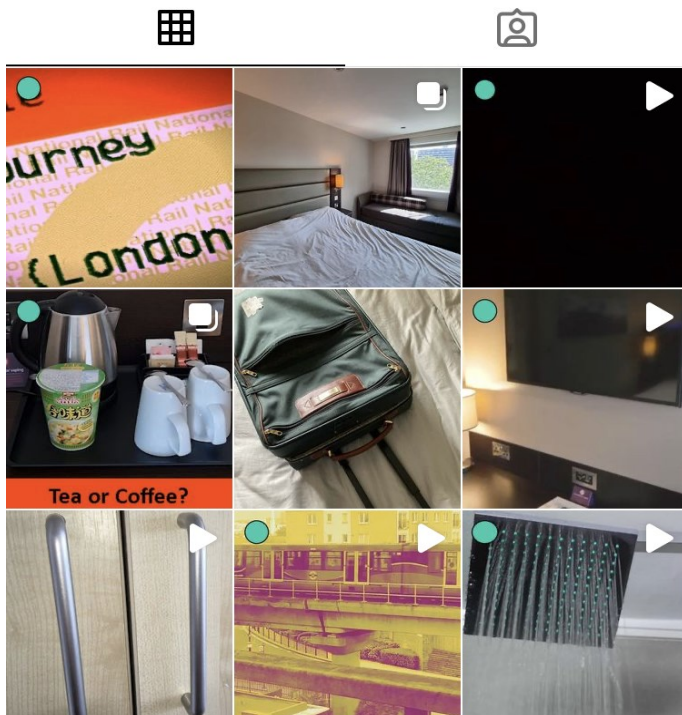


Figure 1. the Home Page Profile, titled *Progress*

interconnected Instagram profile pages (profiles), each holding nine posts made of creative content in the form of poems, images, videos, as well as interactive and suggestive prompts (for example in the form of questions or suggested activities). Each of the nine profiles holds a distinctive atmosphere, which has been curated in relation to an emotive or experiential state of being. Additionally, most are metaphorically linked to a real-life environment, such as parks, public transport, shops or riversides, which the creative team have identified as being likely to give rise to relevant emotive or experiential states of being. The aesthetic and literary content of the individual posts on each profile give insight into both space / place as well as emotive/experiential state. An experiencer can switch between individual profiles via tags, which are

indicated by a turquoise dot in the upper left-hand corner of individual posts as well as in the captions of said posts. The tags function as branches to develop pathways, with several branching options available on each individual profile. Although the individual profiles could be experienced as stand-alone artefacts, *M A P* commences on a first or home profile (titled *Progress* - see figure 1.) and concludes on a final profile (titled *End*), with a loose and ambiguous narrative framing the browsing through the profiles in between, offering a motivation for reflective as well as real-world exploration.

There are a range of pathways that could lead an experiencer from *Progress* to *End*; the eight profiles are connected according to an internal poetic logic, which translates into a circular branching structure with the available pathway indicated in figure 2. below.

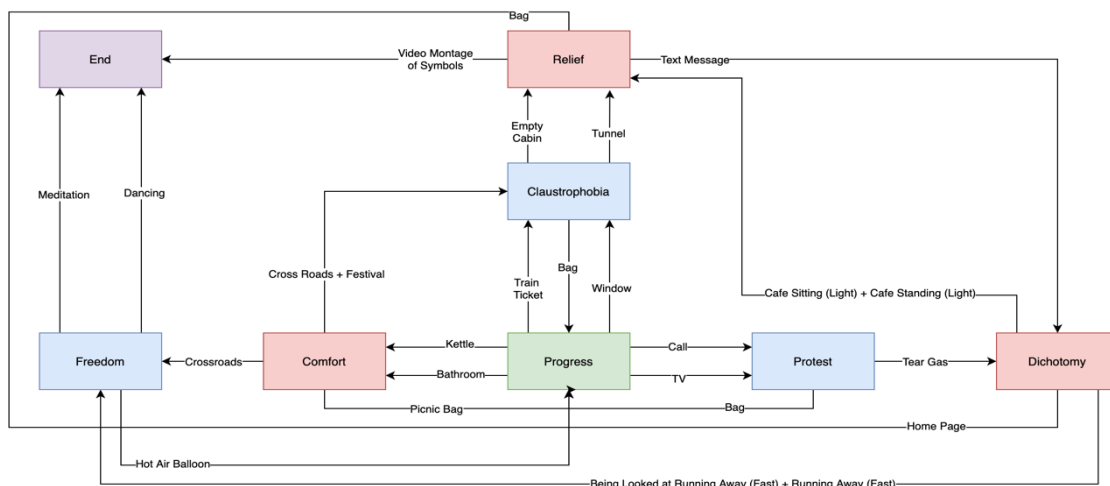


Figure 2. the pathways of M A P

Although an experienter may choose pathways in a spirit of random exploration, the creative content and captions on individual posts are designed to provoke curiosity or interest, as individual posts are indicative of what the tagged / linked profile might hold. For example: the posts on the home page include an image of a train ticket – the tagged page is one titled *Claustrophobia*, which is represented by posts showing busy public transport or urban spaces; whereas a video of a warm shower is tagged with a page titled *Comfort*, which includes posts depicting natural and open spaces or food. The visitor is asked to branch towards the page they are most attracted to, or feel affiliated with. Each of the available pathways however are designed to develop emotional journeys as well as real-world experiences, and the choice of pathway will affect how the network of aesthetic creative content, captions and opportunities

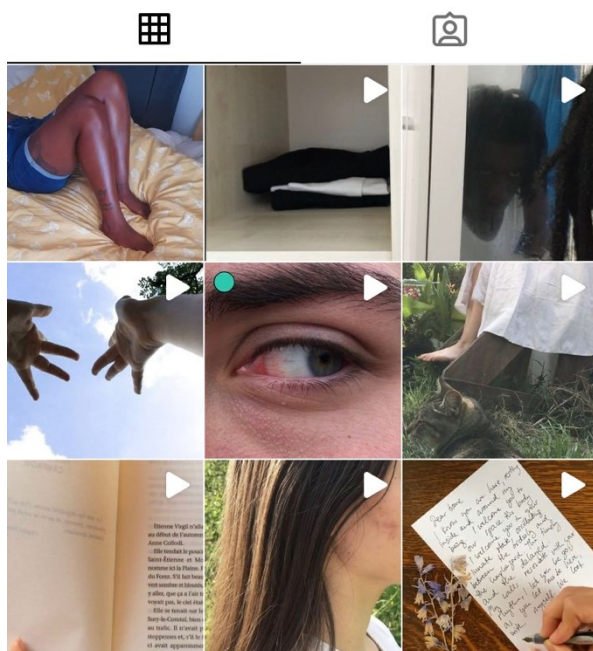


Figure 3. The End Profile

for interactive activities is constructed into a poetic, narrative or embodied experience.

The eight profiles have been developed in discussion with the collaborating students from the game design, creative writing and performing arts courses. Beyond the profiles of *Progress*, *End*, *Comfort* and *Claustrophobia*, they include *Relief*, *Protest*, *Dichotomy* and *Freedom*. The titles of these profiles are not revealed to the experienters of the project; they are working titles that are representative of literal and metaphorical places and experiences that the creative team have identified as being of importance during the global as well as personal experience of the pandemic. The page of *Protest* for example, was developed as a response to instances of social and political injustice that were reported during the pandemic; the *Protest*

page however does not reveal any named instance of social or global injustice that needs to be protested; instead, it is an abstract treatment of the *feeling* or *experience* of protest. The places that are depicted in *M A P* are therefore, as Stephan Günzel (2019, 22) says, not 'conceived of as designating a certain space or place, but as demonstrating how a certain (historically contingent) truth of space can look like'. They are abstract depictions and representations of a *sense of place*, one that is inevitably also influenced by its historical context of a global pandemic and restrictions of personal and social freedom. Whereas some, such as *Protest* or *Comfort* (a profile representing solitude and sense of comfort found in nature and natural surrounding) are more literal and hence easier to interpret, others are more ambiguous or metaphorical, both in poetic writing as well as image and video content. The final page *End* (see *figure 3.*), for example, holds images of body parts, such as legs lying on a bed, long hair being tied in a bun, an over the shoulder image of a character looking at his own reflection in the mirror, naked feet walking through grass; the creative content here all relates to the body, indicating a sense of self / home, in a literal or metaphorical sense. On this profile, unlike on any of the others, each of the individual posts' captions interconnect to form a long letter to oneself, representing a far greater harmony and interdependence of the creative content, hinting that any resolution lies within one's own truth. This also relates to the key artistic intent of offering a personalised and individually constructed experience, which will be elaborated on later.

A key aspect of *M A P* are its interactive elements and its provocations for real-world activities, which are developed using standard inbuilt Instagram features, such as captions, stories, *highlights*, *DM* (Direct Messaging) and the use of *hashtags*. The *highlight* feature, which is a way of archiving Instagram *stories*, is a permanent feature introducing each profile, and for *M A P* is used to deliver most pertinent information, such as general user instructions (set to appear on the home profile), general interactive instructions (set to appear on all profiles) as well as page specific interactive content and activities such as using questions for which the *DM* feature can be used (adapted to the content of each profile). Across the eight profiles, most of the individual posts are accompanied by *captions*; they not only develop the poetic and abstract storytelling which is inherent in this project, they also include either questions which can be answered in the comments section, prompts for activities which can be shared via hash-tagged picture and/or prompts for further physical and reflective activities one may want to conduct at any time during or after the experience. For example, on the *Progress* page, the post showing a first-person perspective of looking out of the window holds a caption question which asks the experiencer to open their own window, with an invitation of sharing an image of what they see via *#playthemapgame*. With the use of *hashtags*, an experiencer can share their own response but also see the responses of other experiencers. The use of questions aims to encourage experiencers to reflect on the creative content in relation to their own environment. Furthermore, specific instructions encourage the experiencer to enter real-world spaces or conduct real-world activities, guided and inspired by the chosen pathways through the Instagram pages.

Instagram as platform for slow artistic explorations:

The use of Instagram in order to facilitate *M A P* is pertinent both for the creative process as well as a critical analysis of the project. Instagram was chosen because of its popularity as well as accessibility: it experienced significant growth in 2020, and is currently the 4th most-used

social platform, outranked only by Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp in terms of daily active global users (Newberry, 2021).

The use and utilisation of Instagram has today moved far beyond it simply being a photo-sharing social network and over the last few years, an exploration of experimental and innovative-creative uses for the Instagram app emerged both in performing arts as well as game design. For example, the Javaad Alipoor Company uses Instagram to tell part of *Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran* (2019) advising audiences to download the app and make sure their mobile phones are fully charged before they enter the auditorium. As a platform for digital games, it has been successfully explored by The Kissinger Twins, who have designed games such as *Sufferosa* (2018) as well as *The Portal* (2020) specifically for Instagram. The Kissinger Twins, as interdisciplinary media artists, were of particular interest in the research preceding the production phase of *M A P. Sufferosa*, for example, is described on their website as an interactive film series that 'blends original footage with samples from classic films, literature and music' to create an original and award-winning adventure game. And whereas this description is giving evidence of the interdisciplinary approach, it fails to offer a clear categorisation of what theoretical and disciplinary context this product falls into. The scope for artistic experimentation via Instagram is therefore evidently quite vast. But for the producers of *M A P*, a particular interest in using this platform was twofold. First, facilitating the project via a popular application aligns with the aim to experiment with pre-existing and familiar (domesticated) technological communication structures and therefore contribute to the development of a 'bottom-up' culture for game and cultural production (Raessens, 2015). Secondly, facilitating the project via such a well-known app almost guaranteed that basic functions and controls within the project will be familiar to experiencers, and therefore result in a perceived simplicity within the navigation of the artefact. This in turn would allow users to engage deeper with the complex and ambiguous content and interactive prompts of *M A P*. The use of ubiquitous technology and/or teaming simplicity in material with complexity in form, are basic ideas behind slow technology (Hallnäs and Redström, 2001). Here, this contributes to subverting the 'Insta' within the use of Instagram towards slow and more embodied user engagement. The Slow Movement is generally understood to have been initiated in 1986 with Carlo Petrini's protest against the opening of a McDonalds restaurant in Piazza di Spagna in Rome. Slow technology, as articulated by Lars Hallnäs and Johan Redström (2001, 204), concerns itself with 'exposing technology in a way that encourages people to reflect and think about it' and encourages designs that both 'invites reflection and at the same time is reflective in its expression'. Slow design promotes the Slow Movement into the realm of product design, and encompass a range of design principles designed for individual, socio-cultural as well as environmental well-being (Grosse-Hering et al., 2013). *M A P*, by encouraging experiencers to pause, reflect and explore individual pages as well as linger on individual posts and respond to interactive prompts in their own time, aims to promote and actively incorporates moments for reflection (making sense of posts, pages and pathways) as well as embodiment (remembering and responding to prompts for interaction in real-life spaces). An important aspect that supports *slowness* in *M A P* is the often ambiguous and poetic content. The narrative drive here is not constructed via characters or conventional story line. Instead, the aim is to provoke a *reflection in action*, by provoking an in the moment, and almost intuitive, visceral process (Sengers et al. 2005) in responding to places and spaces represented in the posts, pages and literary captions. The inherent ambiguity in the design encourages experiencers to grapple

with narrative possibilities, fill the gaps with personal associations and responses and thus establish 'deeper and more personal relations with the meanings' (Gaver, Beaver and Benford, 2003) that emerge. Therefore, although reoccurring characters do appear across the eight profile pages, the narrative is mainly driven by the emerging associations with the represented spaces / state of beings one encounters via independent branching choices. As Sebastian Domsch (2019, 104) explains: 'As we experience spaces, whether they be real or created by computers, we read them for their meaning and the stories they contain, and as we perform these spaces through movement and interaction, we inscribe our own narrative into them.'

This understanding of space has been artistically applied throughout *M A P*, for example in the *Progress* profile. It holds images of a Premiere Inn hotel room with creative posts showing videos from a first-person perspective, in which appliances are checked, personal belongings are stored away and the view from the window is taken in. This profile is designed to indicate that the experiencer has arrived in a liminal, temporary place, although the purpose of the visit is undefined. In another post on this page, an ambiguous character addresses the experiencer directly via a voicemail recording, which aims to encourage an exploration of the interactive possibilities of this page and the game overall. Other interactive prompts here encourage the experiencer to relate creative content to whatever space they are in (for example, the experiencer is asked to find their own window and open it to take in the view); the exploration of the space depicted on the *Progress* page therefore encourages a traversing and embodying of whatever real-life space the game is experienced in. This strongly relates to what Henry Jenkins (2004, 101) calls 'narrative architecture' or 'environmental story telling': a type of 'world making', where experiencers assume 'the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story' across different medias and levels of engagement (here, within a blended mode of facilitation, online and in the real world). The next section of this text will look closer to how the design in pages, posts and captions encourages autonomy and experiential engagement with both the online features as well as real-world considerations of *M A P*. As explained before, the themes of autonomy discussed here focus on the use of time, place, path and pace and are inspired by the objectives of blended learning, which was in place when the project was developed.

Autonomy over time, place, path and pace

As a performance project, *M A P*, offers autonomous use of time in relation to when it is being accessed; however, an experience of *M A P*, is not dependent on continuity of play. Instead, an *interruption* of time is a key concept of the experience itself, as the act of pausing and lingering are actively encouraged through the interactive captions and poetic descriptions aiming to develop individual reflective engagement with experiential moments in time and space. *M A P* is not designed to be experienced continuously although it *may* be experienced like that; it however can also be enjoyed similarly to a poetry book, where one opens a random page rather than read chronologically from the first to the last page. The importance of lingering and pausing is particularly pertinent in relation to the use of Instagram as the platform for the experience; as described above, *M A P* contradicts the 'Insta' in Instagram, and therefore alters a fundamental aspect of this popular social media network.

M A P, in relation to place, yet again offers a fundamental choice for the experiencer, beyond the ability of the project being accessible in the privacy of one's own home. Whereas the overall ambiguity aims to provoke curiosity and explorative engagement, the representation of metaphorical spaces/places is designed to encourage interactive and embodied engagement. The places depicted on the Instagram pages are generally non-specific in terms of location presented so as to evoke personal memory in relation to similar spaces or represented feelings. For example, the home page *Progress*, although it contains images from a Premier Inn hotel room, subliminally contains an invitation to look at and (re)discover one's own home through the eyes of a tourist or traveller. Whereas the *Protest* page, holding various images and videos related to a *sense* of protest, asks the experiencer to consider what they are protesting. So, although all profiles contain interactive invitations to seek out places beyond one's own home, these invitations could also be understood as experiential and relational acts of remembrance, rather than actual outdoor activities.

In terms of path, *M A P* could easily be perceived as a fairly conventional reconverging branch structure, as it offers relatively linear plots and a singular resolution (Anthropy and Clark, 2014, 168). The branching here is facilitated via tags, with each pathway to the *End* page differing in detail and feel. Individual profiles can be understood as *storylets*, which function as 'discrete, reorderable narrative "chunks" or "modules"' (Kreminski and Wardrip-Fruin, 2018, 160). *Storylets* are often preconditioned or not repeatable, however in *M A P*, a visitor of the game is able to return to previously encountered pages in order to explore other pathways (tags) available. Furthermore, whereas each individual profile acts as *storylet*, one could argue that, the order a visitor might click on the individual post per profile also allows for some internal branching experience and may further influence the narrative experience of the page, as it essentially renders each page as its own 'miniature Choose Your Own Adventure Story' (160). *M A P* therefore moves beyond a typology of a path or branching structure: the focus here is not on progressing or moving *towards* a conclusion or solution. Instead, it offers explicit invitations to dwell in whatever space / place one finds. In this particular experience, there is no final destination one has to travel to; and although there is an *End* page, offering the illusion of a conclusion or resolution, the circular structure exemplifies that there is no particular goal in mind. Rather than new chapters to an unfolding story, the individual Instagram pages could be understood as points of rest, and although they invite a level of exploration, they also more pertinently invite a moment of pause. This is particularly relevant to the discussion of the use of pace; the pathways within *M A P* are designed to entice a lingering, both temporally and spatially, in either a metaphorical or literal space, whilst also encouraging a re-exploring and re-discovering of both spaces, either through remembrance or through active observation of present states. Depending on how the experiencer chooses to play, he/she can shift between a hestial (centred, inward-gathering) and hermetic dwelling (outward-looking, decentred mode of spatial being defined by movement and wandering) as defined by Edward S. Casey (1993, 133).

Relevant artistic contexts

Although *M A P* has been developed with collaborators from the Game Design, Performing Arts and Creative Writing courses and therefore has been designed with methodologies from these disciplines in mind, the makers feel that *M A P* offers a unique approach to blended

models of practice. For example, the objective and some of the design aspects of *M A P* could be aligned to serious game or serious pervasive game structures, which aim to provide an educational experience teamed with play. Such games, for example the Dutch company Grendel Games' *Water Battle* (2015), designed to make households aware of their water consumption, develop educational and ecological awareness by extending the game world from a digital, often fictional realm into the physical real-life surroundings of the players. The blending of both worlds aims to create an enhanced player engagement, and promotes situated learning approaches (Coelho et al, 2020). As Arango-López et al. (2017) explains, breaking 'the boundaries of the game world, making reality part of it' allows elements of that reality to affect the game experience and vice versa. *M A P* offers numerous opportunities for experiencers to step outside of their personal home environment and relate the digital content to personal, real-world experiences and vice-versa, and whilst it might not offer a purely educational experience, it gives ample prompts to reflect on one's own relationship to subject such as the natural environment or political protest.

Equally, *M A P* could fit into the realm of interactive, media driven participatory performance which encourages participants to reassess their personal relationship to a real-life environment through technology-based performance elements, such as Charlotte Spencer's *Is This a Wasteland* (2017). This performance invites audiences to explore disused urban landscapes whilst listening to an audio performance over headphones. Similarly, Dante or Die's *User Not Found* (2018), an immersive site-specific performance in which a character becomes the executor of their deceased partner's digital assets, plays out partly as live performance within a café and partly on social media networks via audience members' personal smart phone devices. The effect of the pandemic saw many participatory performance works being developed to be enjoyed in the comfort of one's own home. Spencer's latest work *All These Things We Can Make* (2021) is a family-centred audio performance, whilst Punchdrunk's *The Wild Visitor* (2021) is a project designed for children and adults, which is accessible via a webpage on which complementary and instructional artistic content is available. Both these performances allow autonomy over when and to what extent the performance materials are accessed and followed. Additionally, both of them not just include stay-at-home activities but also suggest outdoor activities that are complementary but remain optional rather than being integral to the artefact. They therefore offer a performance experience that can be individually tailored in relation to time, space and place.

However, as explained above, *M A P* is not dependent on continuity of play, is unlike some of the projects described above, which often are somewhat reliant on a continuous engagement from beginning to end – for example, if players interrupt *All These Things We Can Make*, the experience is brought to an abrupt end. The *slow engagement* that *M A P* encourages as well as the *extent to which* personal choice is facilitated in relation to time, place, path and pace, means it evades clear disciplinary categorisation. *M A P* is distinct in that it brings to the foreground the inherent question of *how* an experiencer chooses to play; as the way of playing will affect the experience as well as the possible definition of the project: as ambiguous and poetic performance, as an interactive experience, or as a pervasive game structure which includes venturing into the outdoors. It therefore applies an innovative new interaction design which leaves key decisions, which are pertinent to the form of the artefact,

to the experiencer. Additionally, it offers a consideration on the technology itself by subverting it – the designed and imposed *slow use* of an application, commonly known for the instant sharing of media material, is intended to make an experiencer aware of the technology used and in turn, lead to a (self)reflection on *how* they use it. An autonomous use of time, place, path and pace, as described earlier, enhances this self-reflective engagement with both technology as well as narrative and poetic content of *M A P*, whilst simultaneously rendering it an adaptable, flexible and individually tailored experience.

If we depart from Odom, Stolterman and Chen's (2021) understanding that 'Temporality – the state of existing within time – shapes virtually all aspects of how we experience and construct the world around us,' *M A P* could be understood as a formula to allow users of blended, interactive performative experiences to slow down in order to (re)construct and (re)connect to the world around them, and, through doing so, offer a reflective and embodied relation with ecological matters. It's focus on autonomy in relation to *how* the project is experienced is mostly exemplified in its allowance of a personalised pace for embodied presence, interpretation and meaning-making. Particularly the poetic and often ambiguous / abstract captions require active investment in their *reading for meaning*. Individually, many of the captions could resemble riddles; it is with more sustained engagement and processes of interpretation with which an experiencer might uncover meaning and effect. The narrative is one to happen 'in the mind of those who experience' (10), and *M A P* therefore depends on the willingness of an experiencer to engage with it. The *M A P* Instagram profiles function as narrative architecture, the experience and traversing through which depends on an experiencer's relational engagement to personal experiences and willingness to transform digital pathways into real-world journeys from place to place, and whereas interactions and physical activities render it a very different experience, they are complimentary rather than compulsory and therefore offer a flexibility in user engagement that allows it to become its very own category.

As a summary: *M A P* could be a simple branching structure offering an enjoyment of creative contents and poetic writing; it could *become* a pervasive game, synthesizing digital content with outdoor activities; or it could be *experienced* as an interactive, participatory project which offers opportunity to share personal responses as well as having access to the responses of other experiencers. Equally, *M A P* might not be identified as an example of slow technology (as no technology has been specifically developed for the facilitation of *M A P*, but instead, a pre-existing application has been appropriated); it might also not fully fall into the game practice of pervasive games (as its design is not restricted to educating about ecological or socio-political matters); nor might it clearly be identified as blended participatory practice (as it is quite possible to enjoy *M A P* without contributing or exploring the interactive elements). *M A P* offers a practice-as-research hypothesis for a new artistic methodology. As an artefact and product, it has not been widely promoted and the Instagram pages so far hold few interactive responses; no real qualitative research can be presented in how *M A P* is actually perceived and experienced. Of course, there is an inherent contradiction in designing a long-lasting and developmental relationship to temporal presence within a social network that is built around instant connectivity. The possibility of users disengaging with *M A P* due to its reliance on a self-reflective and stretched out engagement is acute. This is a risk that the creator of *M A P* embraced, and that will perhaps be faced by anyone who creates slower,

more subjective and more self-reflective blended facilitation projects. The aim was not for *M A P* to be a commercially successful project, but always resided in contributing to the development of innovative and bold strategies for the use of digital technology within an artistic realm. *M A P* is a truly interdisciplinary and experimental blended artefact, which offers a proposition on how game design and participatory performance practice might realign themselves with the Slow Movement and offer autonomous experiences partly online, partly in the real world. As an interactive, ludic poetry experience, it resonates with Espen Aarseth notion of 'ludo-essentialism', which designates the insistence that games are essentially different from all other kinds of human expression (2019, 137). And whereas here the makers of *M A P* are even hesitant to designate the project a *game* product, the experiment is trying to assure that a ludic synthesis of technology alongside real-world experiences might continue to provoke sublime experiential and relational connections of self to others, places and things.

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