Appendix C: *Emergence v1*

Emergence v1, which was called *Demophobic*, was staged three times at Balmain Town Hall Hybrid Happenings Festival from November 24-26 2004. *Demophobic* was staged after each staging of my *StilmS* and marked the transition between my solo and collaborative practice of making Responsive Environments.[842] *v1* is an Appendix as it was a prototypical proof-of-concept which was staged so we could use the insight to completely overhaul *v1* to make *v2* and *v3*.[843]

v1 was a collaboration between key members of *Synarcade*, many of whom were integrally involved in *v2* and *v3*. Although technically simple and economical, it was more sophisticated and demanding than previous *Synarcade* productions. *v1* was initiated and Directed by Mark Bolotin. My pre-production roles were Associate Producer and co-contributing to the concepts and narratives with Bolotin. My production roles were Multimedia Coordinator and AV Operator.

v1 concerned a protagonist, *Karkus* (played by Richard Cartwright) dealing with demophobia. Demophobia and agoraphobia have particular relevance for Responsive Environments with multiple co-participants, as they denote social anxiety of groups and public spaces. This was embodied in *v1* as Artist-Artwork-Audience interactivity resembled an agora. *Karkus* had become a reclusive musician, which preventing fulfilling his desire to perform in public places. The narratives concerned his reluctant interaction with *Sinray*, the only other character (played by Rhys Turner). *Sinray* was a psychotherapist who attempted to treat him. Attendees were presented with a series of decisions between encouraging the psychotherapist's treatment or letting the patient deal with his disorder himself.

The installation design interrelated form and content, partly by using my *4forfour* installation design.[844] *3forthree* (a.k.a *StilmS)* formed a semi-immersive triptych with screens at 60 degrees from one another. After staging

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[842] The reasons for moving from *StilmS* to *Emergence* are discussed in the conclusion of Chapter 5 on p241.

[843] This is the subject of Chapter 6 and Appendix E.

[844] This design is shown on p244 of Chapter 6.

3forthree Bolotin and I moved the screens into their *4forfour* configuration to form a cube enclosing attendees. This ambiguously immersive/claustrophobic environment connected the layout with the agora-like interactivity and subject matter of demophobia. Participants chose between successively bifurcating narrative pathways which developed different narratives. As a parody of Pavlovian interactivity, options were selected by the first participant to ring a bell in front of each screen during the intervals when options were presented.

     v1 involved participant-participant, participant-actor and participant-artwork interactivity. It used two live actors with two microphones and a stereo PA, while four AV Operators on four laptops controlled all AV media that was projected on four screens by four projectors. All pre-filmed scenes had pre-determined paths, with the only variable being whether they were selected. A minority of scenes were manipulated in real-time by all four AV Operators responding to observational analysis of participant interaction. These 'dialogical' scenes provided a countervailing force against the rigid interactivity of selecting pathways by ringing a bell.

     Deliberating or debating options was impossible due to the 'first in best dressed' and 'might-is-right' approach that allowed impulsive and/or dominant people to unilaterally determine decisions. As the work itself lacked measures to hold decision makers accountable, this created burdensome responsibility for fellow participants to do so. This exacerbated power disparities between participants, as those unable to register their preferences were further disadvantaged if desiring to negotiate with those who spoke on their behalf.

     In our reflective analysis following *v1*, Bolotin conceded his Interaction Design impeded artwork-audience interactivity. He then asked me to direct Interaction Design for *v2* as an entirely new work.[845] This was fortuitous for both, as I sought to lessen control over content co-creation in favour of creating contexts which maximised Artist-Artwork-Audience interaction. This benefited Bolotin, who was inundated with directing the non-interactive components of *v2*. The ensuing work*, Emergence*, is the subject of Chapter 6 and Appendix E.

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[845] Even by early 2005, *Emergence* was collaboratively conceived as an artwork that would require two iterations.