

Immersive Embodiment

Theatres of Mislocalized Sensation

This book offers a wide-ranging examination of acts of 'virtual embodiment' in performance/gaming/applied contexts that abstract an immersant's sense of physical selfhood by instating a virtual body, body-part or computer-generated avatar. Emergent 'immersive' practices in an increasingly expanding and cross-disciplinary field are coinciding with a wealth of new scientific knowledge in body-ownership and self-attribution. A growing understanding of the way a body constructs its sense of selfhood is intersecting with the historically persistent desire to make an onto-relational link between the body that 'knows' an experience and bodies that cannot know without occupying their unique point of view. The author argues that the desire to empathize with another's ineffable bodily experiences is finding new expression in contexts of particular urgency. For example, patients wishing to communicate their complex physical experiences to their extended networks of support in healthcare, or communities placing policymakers 'inside' vulnerable, marginalized or disenfranchised virtual bodies in an attempt to prompt personal change. This book is intended for students, academics and practitioner-researchers studying or working in the related fields of immersive theatre/art-making, arts-science and VR in applied performance practices.

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