"Converge"

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Chapter 3 "Visual Design"

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CONVERGE

BY JIEUN OH AND GE WANG

AN "OMNI-BIOGRAPHICAL"
AUDIOVISUAL COMPOSITION

"... THE MOST DEPRESSING"
PHOTO ALBUM SOFTWARE
OF ALL TIME!

THE CONVERGE
CUBE OF CROWDSOURCED IMAGES
FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

IN 2012, JIEUN OH AND I CREATED AN EXPERIMENTAL COMPOSITION THAT USED MOBILE PHONES TO CAPTURE AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL FROM EVERYDAY LIFE, RECONTEXTUALIZED IN THE AUDIOVISUAL "BLENDER" OF THE COMPUTER...

IT BEGAN AS A PUBLIC INVITATION TO SUBMIT EVERYDAY MOMENTS, EACH CAPTURED THROUGH A PHOTOGRAPH, A SHORT AUDIO RECORDING, AND BRIEF TEXT DESCRIPTION. IT WAS UPLOADED TO A CENTRAL REPOSITORY USING A SIMILE MOBILE APP THAT ALSO NOTED THE TIME AND LOCATION OF EACH MOMENT.

CONVERGE WAS MOTIVATED BY A SIMPLE THOUGHT EXERCISE: WHAT IF WE WERE TO CLASSIFY MOMENTS AND MEMORIES ALONG A CONTINUUM OF RELATIVE "ORDINARYNESS"? LOGIC SUGGESTS THAT ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF MOMENTS ARE "OUT OF THE ORDINARY" (I.E., EXTRAORDINARY) COMPARED TO THE VAST MAJORITY OF ORDINARY MOMENTS "IN THE MIDDLE."

CONVERGE WAS A CELEBRATION NOT OF THE EXTREMES, BUT OF THE MIDDLE, THE ORDINARY. THERE IS A BEAUTY TO THESE MOMENTS, IF ONLY BECAUSE, SIMPLY, THEY ARE LIFE.
As humans, we can all relate to these unremarkable everyday moments, even if they are not our own. Hence we call this an Omni-Biographical work.

...Into a sea of fragments, speaking to impermanence and fragility of memory, expressed through visual metaphors.

The moments fracture, break apart...

...into a sea of fragments.

Shatter!

These moments fracture, break apart...

...into a sea of fragments, speaking to impermanence and fragility of memory, expressed through visual metaphors.

But there is tacit order in the chaos...

...as "currents" begin to form...

...And gradually full fragments into a gentle spiral dance.

Fragments move at a speed proportional to their distance to the center column (as an approximation of Kepler's 3rd law of planetary motion), thus creating a dynamic whirlpool.

The sum of many simple elements gives rise to an emergent visual system.

Simple elements, in motion, caught in a cosmic vortex...
"Making coffee"

The time of each memory is expressed not in absolutes, but relative to the present moment!

Similarly the geographic location is expressed relative to the viewer.

It really is a depressing photo album...

But also kind of beautiful -- these small moments that we might miss once they are done, for they remind us of life and times that contain them.

At a distorted version of the associated sound plays, distorted warped yet familiar, speaking to the inaccuracy of memory.

The timer counts back relative to the present moment, ticking up in real time, a reminder that these moments are constantly moving away from us... and that we will never be as close to them as we are now.

6 years, 2 months, 25 days, 4 hours, 16 minutes, 10 seconds ago.

6 years, 2 months, 25 days, 4 hours, 16 minutes, 9 seconds ago.

6 years, 2 months, 25 days, 4 hours, 16 minutes, 11 seconds ago.

One at a time, fragments coalesce back into coherent memories.

Their motion governed by many Zeno interpolators.

A river of the mind

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...As day gives way to night.

...A warped excerpt of Samuel Barber’s Adagio plays, with its sensation of endlessly rising and turning.

From time to time, we are flooded by memories and moments, like a structure emerging out of a snowstorm.

We fly into the structure, a warehouse of memories, the bricks and mortar of everyday life.

As mysteriously as it appears, the memory warehouse vanishes, leaving behind a torrent of image fragments, revolving in a hurricane, graceful and unstoppable....

As we zoom further away, image fragments turn into stars, swirling in a galaxy of memories.

Composed of everyday images, the spiral forms visually from the difference in rotational speeds, as a function of distance from the center.
This is where our collective memories converge...

The stars begin to collapse...

As if filled with purpose,

Meanwhile, the sound is reduced to the simplest and purest of tones... a small, frail sinusoid, the building block of sound; it is the sonic analogue of simplicity itself.

Until the stars converge to a single point...

Then... silence.
Fragments of memories gush out.

As soundless as space, the point explodes!

Suddenly...


154 (yeah... this is some CRAZY FUCKED-UP photo album)

When we think back on a favorite time or person, it’s often not the cataclysmically good or bad that we remember, but the simple, everyday moments: talking with a loved one, sharing a meal -- in the midst of everyday life.

The explosion stabilizes, and like the skies after a storm, it clears.

A peaceful chime plays (recorded from a rehearsal) as memories come back into focus.

The images coalesce. Except this time, it’s not only one image... ...but all of them.

...but all of them.
Before they crumple...

The fragments -- infinitesimal and yet infinite representations of memory of every small nothing -- coalesce, but only briefly...

Before they crumple...

...in the ephemerality of time.

All the pieces collapse and gather...

...in the ephemerality of time.

Countless fragments fuse together, an amalgam of everyday moments.

Like a giant katamari ball, rolled up across the fragments of our collective memory.

The ball recedes in space and time.

Where it goes, we do not know...

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