

TRANSICONMORPHOSIS

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Emilio Vavarella, Fito Segrera



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Emilio Vavarella and fito_segrera.
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Description

TRANSICONMORPHOSIS, the result of a theoretical reflection on the development of new forms of technological communication and their effects on human beings as well as their political impact, comprises a conventional chat service hosted in a computer interfaced with a series of electrodes connected to the face of the artist. The emoticon received through the chat translates into electrical impulses that force the artist's facial features to mimic the expression of each emoticon.

Artist Statement

Emilio Vavarella's art is based on issues of political philosophy and contemporary technological power, with a particular emphasis on the aesthetics of error, subjectivity, mediated identity, and biopolitics. His work is informed by his studies on the history of conceptual art, digital and network culture, and new media practices. Through the use of new media he highlights the ambiguous spaces of power, such as unexpected errors and unpredictability. He believes that, by doing so, the intrinsic logic and hidden structures of power are revealed and an intellectual resistance is formed.

As an artist and designer, Fito Segrera creates projects that continuously problematize concepts such as transhumanism, man-machine symbiosis, sensory substitution, telepresence, and mixed reality. With the use of digital media, wearable technology, physical computing, and programming tools, he builds theoretical-aesthetic discourses that emphasize understanding the nature of reality and ease the ongoing and painful man-machine integration.



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The *TRANSICONMORPHOSIS* system translates emoticons into facial expressions. An interactive artwork, it proposes an ambiguous and experimental communication system for the near future, foreseen in part by Nobel Prize winner Elias Canetti in the 1980s, when he wrote: “We know that the influence of a man on another is what determines incessant and fluctuating metamorphosis that occurs in gesture and facial expressions; when these are strictly prohibited, every metamorphosis becomes difficult and, in the end, impossible.” If, in the future, face-to-face communication becomes less widely used and written communication becomes crystallized in a series of immutable forms, humans will lose the empathic abilities that today are, in part, reproduced by emoticons. If humanity fails to invent new metamorphoses, devices such as *TRANSICONMORPHOSIS* will be diffused worldwide.