Homo Sentient AI
Investigating Moments of Shifting Consciousness

Petra Ardai is an expert on immersive collaborative storytelling. Her conversational pieces are dissecting the 'wicked problems' through the politics of the personal and by embedding the dilemmas in a parallel imaginary world. The participants are a group of people of prominently diverse expertise. Together they imagine their lives and choices in the realm of a shared fantasy.

The storytelling sessions catalyze usually extraordinary interactions. Moments where someone suddenly opens up steps out of the comfort zone of pre-conditioned thinking patterns, make a statement, provokes a discussion, or shows altruism are common in the safety of the imaginary. In these moments affection, empathy, visionary thinking and a high level of engagement occur between the participants and the theme.

Petra has been practicing interactive theatre and immersive collaborative storytelling for years. She has extensive experience in conducting in-depth interviews and designing culture-specific flexible scenarios. Petra was eager to get a better understanding of all the information and experiences she gathered on human interaction and storytelling, and approached Tilburg University with the questions: Can we measure and classify the diffuse knowledge gathered while people interact and engage in immersive collaborative storytelling? What can we learn about ourselves (humans) with the help of machines? Can AI teach us to become better humans? How can science and art join forces and cumulate deeper insights? Could we measure and raise impact?

From these questions, a unique collaboration emerged with Tilburg University. In this presentation, our interdisciplinary team will demonstrate and explain how we are researching the possibility of an art/science methodology that focuses on cathartic and catalyzing moments in inter-human communication. We will focus on the results of our first experiment and share the outlines of the full trajectory.

We are in the first stage of our performative research. At some point, we would like to involve machine intelligence in the storytelling by building a classification system for human social experiences. In the far future, perhaps an AI can join our conversations and catalyze magic moments of shifting consciousness. How does a social machine 'behave' if it is 'raised' or 'socialized' in the imaginary? How does it 'think' if it was only fed with facts of fiction? What would a representation of AI in performance look like?

Interdisciplinary team

From SPACE, Digest the Future project:
- Petra Ardai, artist and performer,
- Rinske Bosma, developer and musician

From Tilburg University, Department of Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence:
- Ngoc (Bo) Đoàn, student, proximity sensing and vocal characteristics
- Andrius Penkauskas, student, heartrate and skin conductance data
- Ecaterina Grigoriev, student, psychometrics
- Lisa E. Rombout, PhD candidate and lecturer, social embodiment
- Maryam Alimardani, assistant professor, human-robot interaction
- Paris Mavromoustakos Blom, PhD candidate, player behavior modeling
- Martin Atzmueller, associate professor, sensor-based social analytics & AI

https://transmissioninmotion.sites.uu.nl/saturday-25th-may-panels-and-demonstrations/