

Portrait of Cati

a portrait with a sense of its personal space

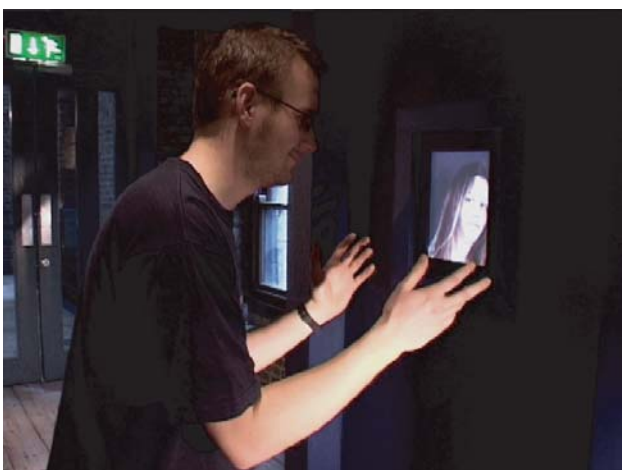
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Portraits are a form of keepsake that play an important role in human relationships, particularly between people in different generations. Unlike a traditional static portrait, Portrait of Cati senses and reacts to the presence and motion of spectators. As an experiment in future forms of portraiture, Portrait of Cati suggests ways that technologically-enhanced portraits can offer a more dynamic understanding of the identity and personality of the subject and forge a deeper connection between the subject and spectators of the portrait.

Portrait of Cati is a portrait that senses and reacts to the proximity of the spectator. The woman portrayed in the piece, Cati, at first appears neutral and indifferent. When a spectator physically approaches the portrait, her facial expression changes. As the spectator gestures or moves nearer and farther, her expressions become more and less pronounced. When the spectator leaves, she returns to a neutral state. If the spectator returns at a later time, Cati's face may change in a different way.

The Portrait of Cati installation consists of a navy blue wooden structure that denotes the active sensing area of the piece. One side of this structure is a solid wall on which hangs a small wooden picture frame, inside which the portrait is projected from the rear. The proximity of spectators is tracked using an electric field sensing device that can detect extremely small movements, on the order of millimeters.

Portrait of Cati was created for *Id/Entity: Portraits in the 21st Century*, an exhibition highlighting works combining the art of portraiture with computer mediation to explore how the concepts of identity and self will be shaped by new technologies. This exhibition was mounted at the MIT Media Lab in Boston and at The Kitchen Art Gallery in New York City in late 2001.



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