
HANS KNUDSEN: CIGARETTE MAN
Selected by Atau Tanaka, artist and composer

When asked to judge open works or participative works, it seems a near contradiction – while the composers and artists are asked to reconsider traditional hierarchical roles in music, we the jury are asked to conserve them and evaluate them as a kind of "audience". The question becomes not which work to choose, but to understand why certain works are not chosen.

For me as an artist and composer involved in interactive and open works, it is heartening to see the wealth of works submitted as Max or PD patches or Director or Flash based files. However, these are mostly screen and mouse based interactions – the fields of media and interactive art have long moved beyond these modes of interaction.

There are submissions of events inverting the relationship of audience and performer. But have they really gone beyond the Happening art of the 60's or the current narcissism of pop culture?

One conceptually and technically promising submission was a musical composition running in an online multiuser videogame environment, Shintaro Miyazaka's *Avatar Orchestra*. While this was perhaps the most pertinent, the actual results did not make musical maximum use of the medium – the avatars barely move, the worlds don't change, and most importantly, one did not get a compelling sense of action and musical result.

With this I defend the choice of Hans Knudsen's "Cigarette Man", a work I was immediately attracted to for its physicality and fun. A kind of musical robot, a dead man in a wheelchair, made of cigarette packs, with light, smoke, somehow churning out music while the sculpture is hacked and modified. Interaction is direct and does not pass by a computer. It is open, because it is open, not a repurposing of prior musical aesthetic into forced participation.

Knudsen's work is nearly repellant, and it is for this that it invites the audience to take the risk, confront the danger, question the taste, ask themselves what is it, and perhaps understand that it is a musical composition that is unique, and could only be made in the way it has come to life.

