



Abstract

This master thesis is about involvement of mentally challenged people using interactive digital media in a museum of art. The thesis is part of an asset and attempts to communicate the message of the museum by including mentally challenged young people in a new context. In that connection Ribe Museum of Art has created an iPad-project called BeArt in association with the company Digitales as developer. The main essence is to use an iPad for capturing a picture of the user, scanning QR-tags in the museum facilities, collecting pictorial material from a digital version of the museums paintings and afterwards creating a personal collage using the digital material. In that way the user can be part of the art – BeArt.

The thesis' intention is to focus on the mentally challenged users and account for how they receive the iPad-project. The thesis statement is dealing with how the mentally challenged users interact and especially which experience they get from using interactive digital media in the context of a museum of art? The conclusion of the thesis statement will support the purpose of this thesis, which is to research and articulate how mentally challenged people use and experience interactions with interactive digital media. Furthermore the purpose is to view the potential in the BeArt-project and reflect upon future development.

To get an insight into the behavior of the user group the thesis intends to have an in-depth perspective by involving empirical material. The fundamental basis of the thesis is a field study formed as a participating observation of the users interacting in the BeArts natural environment of the museum. The observation is based on three users, each with their different kind of handicap. The participating observation is submitted through a phenomenological perspective, which has a clear affect on the data and ensures an open minded research.

Theoretically the thesis engages the terms experience and user experience through different perspectives involving a cognitive, a psychological and an experience economical view on the user experience. Focus is set on the human perception and the related aspects of emotional design and through this see how the users interact with BeArt. Additionally the focus is on the user's ability to have an optimal experience considering the levels of skills and challenges. Moreover the cycle of experience is unfold to conceive the process of having an experience and creates an overview focusing on the more specific phases.





The analysis shows that the mentally challenged users have an intuitive way of interacting with BeArt. They are not focused on the visual and aesthetics appealing but have a more emotional attachment to the elements of the paintings. The interaction with BeArt does not result in a collage with an explicit story rather a combination of elements that implicitly express the user's interest and personality. Through the process of use they experience two phases of interaction, an active procedure and a more creative and passive procedure. These procedures make BeArt a dynamic experience for the users and they employ BeArt to frame additional activity that appears to be even more important for their experience. Especially the social interaction seems to have a significant value for the users' experience. Sense of humour and internal competition is one of the keywords to a successful experience. The social interaction leads to a personal development of the users' interaction with the iPad, which again results in a more complex experience.

The thesis concludes that the essential experience is not implied in the actual result of the collage, but rather in the process of making it. The users have been introduced to the art and likewise the culture of Ribe Museum of Art by interacting with BeArt, and their emotional connection to the elements of the art have created an opportunity for further involvement. There is a clear potential in the project BeArt and it truly involves the mentally challenged people in a new context, one step closer to be an accepted part of the museums social settings.

