

WarPUnit Pedagogic intervention report

The WarPUnit project, a collaboration between the University of Warwick and Flatpack Film Festival, was a great success that brought together a truly interdisciplinary, cross-faculty group of students to quickly learn a new set of skills, and work together to produce an experimental outdoor projection spectacle as part of Flatpack Film Festival 2016.

The project was offered to a wide range of University of Warwick students in March 2015. The first 15 students to confirm that they could attend the main workshop before Flatpack Festival were accepted, and I unfortunately had to turn down a number of students beyond this figure. A small group of students attended an initial meeting, and a site-visit to Birmingham in March, to scout for potential locations to project onto and around. The main workshop took place on Wednesday 13 April in the IATL Rehearsal room in Millburn House (photos below). Of the 15 that had signed up, 13 actually came on the day. During this 5 hour workshop we covered the basic skills of projection mapping using laptops, digital projectors and variety of shapes constructed by the students in small groups. Getting the students to build their own unconventional screen-shapes out of foamboard proved to be a disarmingly simple, but very productive way of getting them to think about the nature of the screen onto which they are projecting, and to consider that the screen is just as important as the imagery and the projection technology. We then looked at how to use the software necessary for both simple and complex forms of projection-mapping – VPT 7.0. As this software is free it was possible for the students to download onto their own laptops – and we managed to set some up during the course of the workshop. We talked about some examples of projection mapping that intervene upon architecture and urban space, and about how they worked and why they were effective, and why one might want to do such a thing. We ended the session by brainstorming things that we might like to do in Victoria Square in the centre of Birmingham. A number of key themes and visual tropes were decided upon, that related to the specificity of Birmingham and the city's history. We then allotted tasks – the students would gather material and ideas and email them to me, and I would collate and process so that we would have the necessary video material for use during the actual event in the following week.

On Saturday 23rd April, at 7.30pm, the students (10 of them) gathered at the Birmingham Museum and Gallery Gas Hall, which was the Flatpack Festival Hub. We had a brief preliminary discussion of what we were about to do, and we looked at the outdoor projection apparatus (supplied by the Theatre and Performance Studies Dept.), and talked about how it works. At 8.30pm we rolled out on Victoria Square to begin the projections. The event was listed on the Festival website (screen capture below), and during the course of the hour and a half that we were projecting we had a good number of audience members (>100) who actually stopped and watched for a while. We gradually moved from one side of the square to the other, trying out different types of content on different kinds of surfaces, including statues, monuments, walls and buildings, and we had a small hardcore audience who followed us around for the duration. Additionally we ended the event with a live-animating session where the students took it in turns to draw directly onto the Town Hall building with light, using an ipad and Tagtool software. The most exciting aspect of this was the fact that this was still quite experimental – we were trying things out and learning what worked and what didn't, what was surprising, and what seemed to intervene in this public space in the most evocative ways. The students seemed to enjoy it a great deal, especially the fact that the ideas that we had worked on in the workshop were now being projected, some at a very large scale, in front of a public audience who were obviously delighted and surprised by it. It pulled in passers-by and incited a great deal of curiosity about who we were and what we were doing. At 10pm we stopped.

Overall this seemed to be a very exciting project, with a lot of potential – indeed many of the students have since expressed a wish to do more of this at some point in the near future. Flatpack were immensely happy with the outcome of the project and are keen to develop something like this for next year's festival.

Please see photographic documentation below, and there is also some video documentation available to download at the following link:

https://files.warwick.ac.uk/michaelpigott/files/WarPUnit+at+Flatpack/WarPUnit_Documentation.zip

Instructor: Dr. Michael Pigott

Technical Assistance: Rob Batterbee

Participants:

Amber Roe (English)

Alice Hone (Film and Television Studies)

Katie Crosson (Film and Television Studies)

Antonio Au-Yeung (Maths)

Geng Li (WMG)

Tatjana Seitz (CIM)

Jing Jing Chen (Theatre Studies)

Elysha Cookson (Theatre Studies)

Jacqueline Coleman (Theatre Studies)

Arsalan Jamshid (CAS)

Audrey Yick (English)

Yilei Feng (Theatre Studies)

Mohammed Ismael (Engineering)

Jayendra Bhalodiya (WMG)

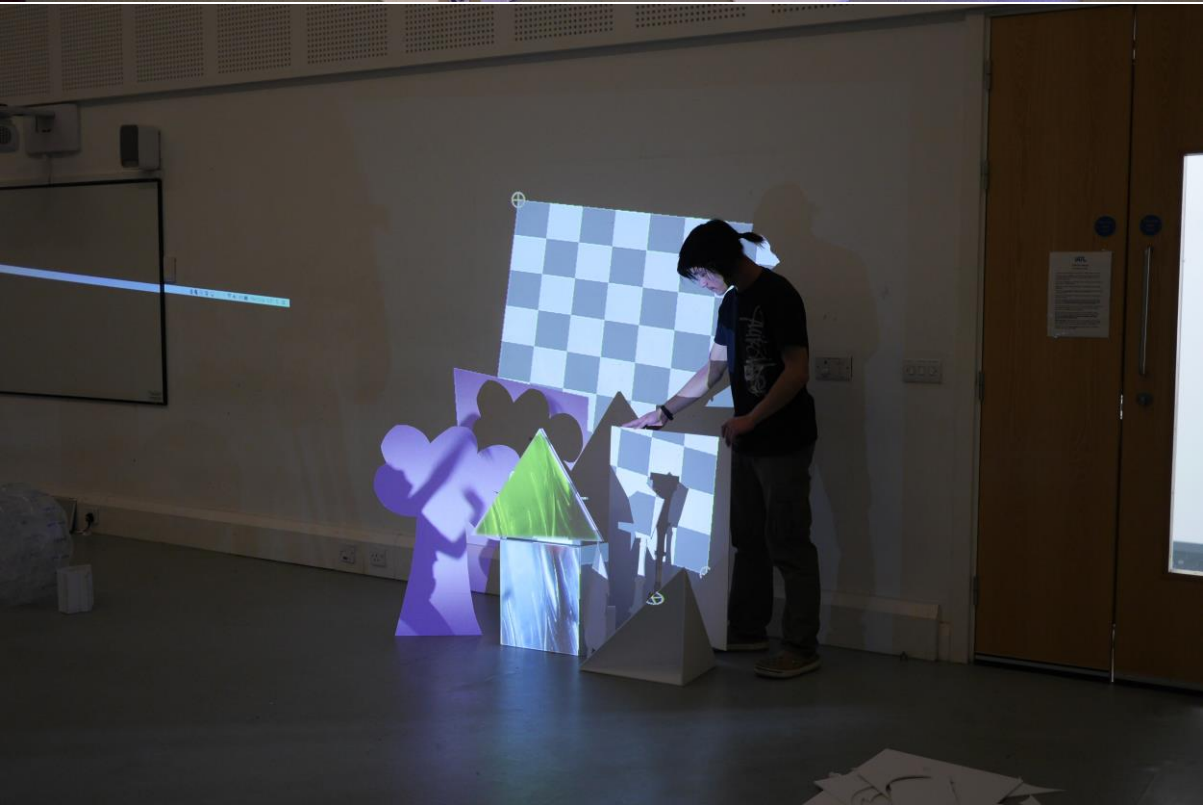
Eliot Shore (Computer Science)

Hugues D'Hardemare (History)

The Workshop:







WARPUNIT



WarPUnit are the University of Warwick's guerrilla projection unit. Using a garden trolley and some boat batteries these intrepid outdoor projectionists will illuminate the streets of Birmingham with moving images, projection-mapping and live animation.

Supported by The Projection Project, Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL), and the Dept. of Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick.

This event will take place in Victoria Square.

DETAILS

Date :
Saturday April 23rd, 2016 @ 8:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Event Category:
Live Events & Parties

Event Tags:
live animation, projection

This event was part of Flatpack 10

