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Digital Performance: Quantify My Identity

Introduction

This performance shows one of possible futures where our government, society, and community judge our identities by only quantitative data. In this alternative future, we are nothing but numeric values. Insurance company gives more benefits to whoever has "healthier numbers", and safety facilities made coordinates of all finger prints of people to identify them. Not only personal health information but also some of characteristics for each race were also quantified. Society secretly sell and buy some of racial numeric data to either attract or avoid certain race. The performance brings these questions: "For whom biometric technology exists" also "How biometric fetter our race, identity and ability".

The story of Kyeongheui

I am living in this world as an Asian woman, I suspiciously get a lot of job offer mails from certain types of fields in society. I keep getting these offers even though I am bad at the most of meticulous tasks and also any jobs that are related to numbers. On the other hand, I have never accepted from the field where I have been hoping for. Society simply does not care what kind of person I really am. Because, the world is filled with people who believe biometric data never lie. I remember, what an artist said from several decades ago. He said "Now we're at a moment where biometrics have so deeply and broadly changed what a face means. All the different ways that the face is a quantitative surface permeates through the world today (Burks)." He was right, and now biometrics are getting more and more sophisticated and elaborated. Even though I cannot be defined as a single identity, the society, government, and communities completely ignore my otherness. From their "single vision", I am not just a maverick but Chimera. However, I know "Single vision produces worse illusions than double vision or many-headed monsters. (HarawayDonna)"

1

Aesthetic choices of this performance

First, I had to make a choice on how to remove my otherness but hold the numeric value of myself. Thus, I decided to use the screen that shows several numeric values that are symbols of quantifying identity. Second, I chose to use a box as a holder of the screen, which was my tablet. The box also worked as a good item that conceal my otherness. Third, for the screen design, the most dominating color was red that indicated heart shape and heart beat visualization. Thus, I picked purple color for the finger print symbol so that goes with dominating color as a one of analogous colors of red. For the skin color, Asian do not have that real yellow color of skin, but I picked this color for more symbolic meaning. To give some hint of color unification, I used one pixel of red boundaries to rectangles showing eye, hair, and skin colors. Last but not least, I tried to choose my outfit that did not show too much identity or individuality.

Technical choices of this performance

Three pieces of hardware, Arduino, pulse sensor, and tablet were used. For software, Arduino code for pulse sensor written by Joel Murphy was used to capture the pulse data and Processing code was created based on the code written by Joel Murphy. The only real biometric data is the pulse data from the sensor. All the other biometric data such as blood pressure, eye color, and finger print data are mock up data. Those fake biometric data were added to strengthen the symbolic meaning for this project and they change randomly to make them more realistic.

Embodiment, time and space

This performance was enacted in two different ways: staying still and walking around. I walked around place to place because it is part of my daily life in the possible future of this performance. I also stayed still so that people who walked by could see the screen and performance. It was performed about an hour and ten minutes in several places. My heartbeats went up when I walked around, but not significantly affected by people around me. I consider that is because I shut my vision sense down.

Works Cited

Burks, Tosten. *An Artist's Pioneering Masks Shield Us from Future Surveillance*. 26 1 2015. 6 4 2016.

Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto." Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181.