

i-DAT:

* An Open Research Lab for playful experimentation with creative technology:

> i-DAT is a vertex in an international network of researchers and practitioners and host to a community of PhD students and artists.

Ellie Harrison at Plymouth College of Art

adelmootranto

Projects

21/04/2009

Ellie Harrison, free food, Media, Plymouth College of Art, Residency

Plymouth College of Art

Ellie Harrison
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A rundown but functional old vending machine stands alone in the Viewpoint Gallery at Plymouth College of Art. Every now and again, without warning, it springs into life – spewing out free packets of crisps for gallery visitors. The machine, you see, has been modified. It no longer functions in the conventional way – at the whim of snack-hungry students – but instead now finds itself in the control of outside forces... Its new nervous system is a networked computer. Hidden out of view and running special software, it continually scans the news on the BBC RSS feed – commanding the machine only to release snacks when words relating to the recession make the headlines.

Whilst seemingly an act of generosity – gifting free food at moments when further doom and gloom is reported – the Vending Machine also hints towards a time in the future when our access to food may literally be determined by wider political or environmental events. We may not be able to access what we want, when we want, at the touch of a button. This dystopian vision is toyed with in an accompanying piece in collaboration with i-DAT . For the first two weeks of the exhibition at the Viewpoint Gallery, the GreenScreen on the front of the Portland Square Building at the University of Plymouth will be used to make public-service-style announcements at the exact moments when the Vending Machine releases food. The words ‘FREE FOOD’ will appear, emblazoned in metre-high letters on the side of the building encouraging passersby to run to the gallery and claim their supplies.

The Vending Machine project is one of the outcomes of Ellie’s period of residency at Plymouth College of Art in 2009 and is on show at the college Viewpoint Gallery as part of her solo exhibition from 23rd April – 30th May 2009. It was programmed by Ben Dembroski in PureData and Python and uses project2891 to communicate with i-DAT in order to activate the messages on the GreenScreen. Production assistance by Jason Mills.

<http://www.ellieharrison.com/index.php?pagecolor=3&pageId=project-vendingmachine>

Exhibition Opening:

5.00pm – 7.30pm

Wed 22nd April

Open to the public:

Thurs 23rd April Sat 30th May

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