Pelican point cloud

Date of creation: May 2016

Location: Berlin, Germany

Name of creators: Steffen Sommer

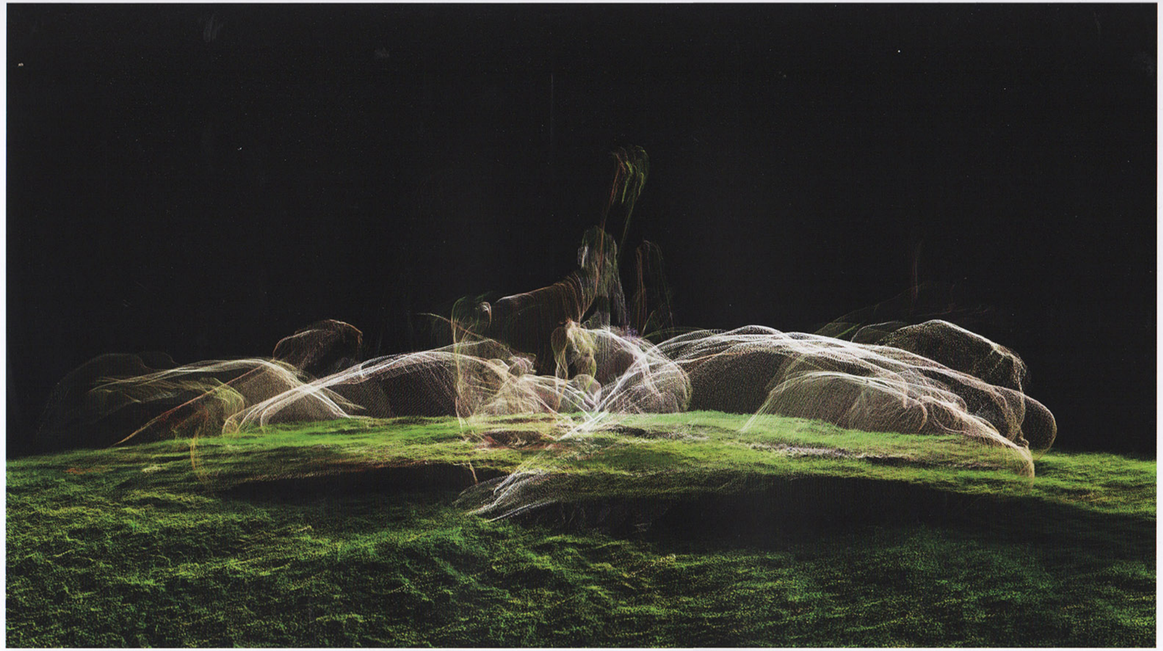
Contact: mail@sommer.is

When I have the time, I try to use the scanner outside of its usual day-to-day working environment.

That way different possibilities and effects can be explored. Animals and people prove difficult for phase-based scanners due to the time it takes to capture the data. But the results can be very interesting.

This scene was scanned at the Berlin Tierpark (zoo). It's a flock of free roaming pelicans sitting on the lawn enjoying the sun. They rarely move, which made it an interesting motif for the scanner. I took three scans, while being careful not to disturb the dozing animals. The result shows what I love about point clouds: a real-world scene can change into an abstract landscape that offers the viewer different possibilities of what they are actually looking at. The pelicans' small movements created a special atmosphere for the point cloud, which was enhanced by setting its visualisation to be slightly opaque.

The video visualisation of this point cloud can be found at: vimeo.com/steffensommer/pelicans



The Plaza

Date of creation: July 2016

Location: Stuttgart, Germany

Name of creators: Steffen Sommer

Contact: mail@sommer.is

This project involved scanning the Stuttgart Opera House – a beautiful building (built 1909–1912) that has a large plaza in front of it.

Over 70 scans of the exterior were done and about the same amount to cover the interior (including auditorium, boxes, stages). The inside had to be scanned entirely in night shifts due to performers rehearsing, scenery being built and day-to-day business. The exterior scanning however was done during the day.

A lot of people would walk across the plaza moving in all directions. Since it wasn't necessary to shut off that area for the scanning, the people and their movements were covered by the scanner in the distance. Only traces of these movements in space and time remain in the scan data – comprised of dozens of scans taken at different times.

Taking the point of view amidst the crowd creates an image that resembles an abstract painting, while in the foreground the scene is disintegrating into the single pixels that make up the actual point cloud.