

CONFESSIONAL

body language

the idea is for anyone to anonymously confess to anything. it actually feels kind of good to know that someone will read it. this is completely confidential. no information about you or your computer is stored. in fact, we only collect the text you type, the date, and a random number... by confessing you give group hug the right to use and modify your submission in any form anytime anywhere.

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A secluded area within the public sphere, Confessional is a modern incarnation of that venerable object in which individuals may release themselves through words, through sound and presence. A sound sculpture alone in a room, the piece consists of seven panels upright in slightly more than a semicircle. Each panel is wired with two or three microphones on the inside. In the middle of the interior area, a pair of wireless headphones hangs. Visitors enter the sculpture singly. The arrangement of the panels forces a participating visitor to be very close to the mics, which are in turn highly amplified. Each visitor, donning the headphones and standing before the mics, hears an extremely detailed aural portrait of his or her own voice, body, clothing, and movement. The sound of their presence, words, and gestures is transmitted through the headphones, along with a single, occasional narrated word: "yes". In the room itself, the visitor's aural presence is transformed into ambient tones which other spectators hear via the panel's external speakers.



The age of the first-person: singular, solitary, connected primarily via modem. The Internet: awash in personal declamation, revelation, biography. In the high tide of the weblog, it would seem that the last thing needed in society is another method of telling one's story. The stories proliferate, such that their number increasingly prompts a kind of societal deafness. And yet these uncountable acts of speech are intended for an audience, they are sent out overwhelmingly in the hopes of recognition and contact. They request commentary and express a need – for attention. In the hail of self-expression, we learn again and again that the one story people are generally interested in hearing is their own.

Confessional is a confrontation operating according to this expressive need. The Confessional environment enforces a loose division between inner and outer voice, as participants and onlookers experience very different versions of the participant's declarations. For the lone participant, his or her very presence translates entirely into the aural realm: breath, motion, and the innumerable tiny sounds which indicate physical presence. Beyond the confines of the headphones, the intense detail of these sounds is warped and smeared in a manner which elongates and confuses any sense of their original cause.