

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIMEDIA FOR HUMANITIES

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ABSTRACT - MULTIMEDIA & LIVING TRADITIONS

Multimedia Rendering of Dhyaneshwari

Multimedia presentation : Mask Project

Multimedia and Living Traditions : Devnarayan

Multimedia Rendering of Dhyaneshwari by Dinesh Katre

Dnyaneshwari is one of the most profound commentary on Bhagvadgita written in Prakrit Marathi (Old form of Marathi) by Saint Dnyaneswar. The great Saint has described the spiritual concepts and the philosophy of life with the help of picturesque metaphors and examples.

The Dnyaneshwari has been rendered in Multimedia with the intention of taking the holy message and the pearls of wisdom by Saint Dnyaneswar to the whole world. The digital audio recording of the musical recitation of Dnyaneshwari and Bhagvadgita has been integrated for simplifying the reading and pronunciation of Ovis and Shlokas along with the translation Marathi.

The CD Title also consists of a multimedia rendering of metaphor from the first Chapter which describes 'Lord Ganesha' at the God of Knowledge.

Multimedia presentation : Mask Project by P. Jha

Acquisition and Retrieval of a collection is one of the major areas of research for art historians and other scholars. Methods developed get changed with new developments in technology, which encompass additional features. With the availability of multimedia technology, now it is possible to play around with large databases of digital information (irrespective of their original preservation format) at much faster speeds. User can view and interact with comprehensive information i.e. text, image, audio, video etc. related to an object simultaneously. This interactivity can be effectively used in making the subject more interesting to the user/scholar.

One of such effort has been made with the IGNCA collection of masks, to represent the richness and variety of masking traditions, worldwide. Prof. John Emigh, Brown University, Providence, Massachusetts, an imminent scholar in the field of Theatre, Direction and performances, helped a lot in conceiving the project by the team. In his audio-visual introductory he enlightened the representation of human life in masking. Since pre-historic age masks have been used in transformation of human feelings and development of imaginative power of mind.

Based on the cultural similarities, geographical boundary is divided in nine regions i.e. Northern America and the Arctic; Meso-America, the Caribbean and South America; Europe; The Himalayan Range and Central Asia; East Asia; South and Southwest Asia; Southeast Asia; Oceania and Australia; and Africa. And, mask are classified into following main categories

Zoomorphic Masks; Gods, Goddesses and Supernatural Being; Demons, Devils and Chthonic Protectors; Decorative Masks and Maskpids; Clowns and Caricatures; Humans; and Festival Masks. Further, groups are defined to represent the multiple masks performing together. Features have been provided to navigate the database using the Region/Category of mask. A boolean query has been incorporated to search the mask by Name, Region, Country, Location, Group and Category of the mask. User has been facilitated with creating their classification scheme or viewing classifications created by other users of the database. Facilities like multiple blow-up of image (maximum four times of 1024 x 768 pixels resolution), arranging multiple windows etc. are provided in the presentation to ease the user in comparing different masks. To make the presentation more interesting, video clips of masks performances have been incorporated wherever possible. The presentation CD can be viewed in any multimedia PC having 16 bit high colour display with 640 x 480 pixels resolution.

Tool developed can be used for other collections and presentation can be modified based on the requirements of the collection.

Multimedia and Living Traditions : Devnarayan by Molly Kaishal & Abhay M. Lal

Human encounter with and experience of the world, deeply engraved in language, is encoded in different semiotic systems, verbal and non-verbal. One such verbal expressive form that reflects man's representation of the self and the world around is oral narrative. Oral narratives in India are part of a living tradition. They are often performed in specific social, religious and ritual contexts. An oral narrative performance, in its very nature, is a multidimensional and a multisensory experience. Oral narratives are often sung with accompaniment of musical instruments, dance, costumes and other theatrical devices. Devnarayan is one such oral narrative sung and performed in the north western state of Rajasthan. Classified as an oral epic, this narrative depicts the life and heroic deeds of Lord Devnarayan, who is considered to be an incarnation of Vishnu.

A Devnarayan performance is not merely a narration and a chanting of the verbal text. It includes a visual representation of the text in the form of a huge scroll painting. The performers sing, dance, chant, narrate and perform specific rituals in front of this scroll. It also involves use of specific musical instruments and costumes. Elements like sound, sight and movement are employed to bring out the multilevel and multilayered meaning of the narrative. The event also demands an active participation of the audience.

This truly interactive event can be best represented and analysed through an equally interactive medium, which allows a multidisciplinary approach and a multisensory representation. With this objective in mind, IGNCA has undertaken the Devnarayan hypermedia project. This paper will discuss some of the aspects and issues related with the documentation and analysis of this oral epic through multimedia.