Build a Mate

JANE HAN

Creation of the Partner

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1. **Introduction and Background**

Everyone would like to believe that they have an ideal “type” of romantic partner. They have their preferences for physicality and personality; they are attracted to certain quirks and characteristics while being repulsed by others. They have a lot of “must-haves” that are preferred by the individual for their partner to embody.

What if one was able to literally create their ideal person? Rather than having to go out and find a partner, wouldn’t it be easier to just verbally describe your perfect person? Individuals wouldn’t have to go through the unnecessary troubles of finding out unattractive things about their potential partner; their partner will already be “perfect”.

This notion that everybody has an ideal type that they believe is perfect for them is precisely what this installation will test. How are people certain that their ideal type is actually perfect for them, and that they’re supposed relationship will become successful?

Just as Sol Lewitt’s *A Wall Drawing Retrospective* takes on and embodies the idea of conceptualization of art as its main purpose, *Build a Mate* will do the same. Individuals will need to verbally describe to an application, whether it be on a website or a phone application, physical and personality preference, quirks and idiosyncrasies, personal style, family traits, etc. The *Build a Mate* website and phone application will occasionally offer several questions that are important and necessary to create the “perfect mate”. Individuals will need to have a concept in their mind of their perfect partner and however well they articulate or describe exactly what they want will determine the execution of their partner. They will not be able to receive a pre-made visualization of their creation beforehand. In this way, the “concept is the most important aspect of the work” (Lewitt), for the idea of the partner will be crucial to the creation of him/her.

*Build a Mate* also calls into question the idea of authorship. With the onset of digital media artworks such as this, the idea of authorship begins to blur and disappear. In a piece such as *Build a Mate* in which I, as the original artist, created it, am I still the author of this piece? Or is it the viewer who, by creating a discourse and utilizing the piece, is able to create their perfect partner? The “role of the author” and “authentication [will] no longer [be] required references” for with a piece like this, the role of the creator won’t be crucial to understanding the piece; rather the fact that the piece is created will become more important (Foucault). The fact that this piece exists for utilization by viewers will be the crucial point. One could even say that the viewer will be artist of this piece as well because it is through their conceptions that the product will be created.
A prototype visual of what the website will basically look like. With proper web design, it will be more detailed and intricate.

A basic premise of what Build a Mate will do.
2) different types of usage

Theoretically, this piece is supposed to prove whether or not our “ideal type” is really the type that is ideal for us as individuals. In a “Mythbusters” fashion, it will test that theory. The described partner will become manifested via hologram or 3D printer (in the near future with advanced technology) and the viewer will be able to interact with their new creation. The viewer/user will be able to interact with their new person for 1 hour and then will be given the option of either keeping their partner or giving them back. In a perfect world in which the ideal-type theory is real and valid, none of the users would return their partner; but the world isn’t perfect so not all of the users will be perfectly satisfied with their creations, and will undoubtedly return their partners.

2.1) Roger – the keeper

Roger creates his perfect girl using Build a Mate through the website. He is offered some questions by the application to help guide his descriptions. Because of its conception in a near-future society, the advanced technology has allowed his perfect girl to be created as a realistic hologram. After his perfect girl is created, he is allowed 1 hour with her. They are able to converse and get to know each other, and Roger realizes that his creation is indeed his perfect girl and he is satisfied. He keeps his perfect girl.

2.2) Janet – the returner

Janet too created her perfect guy using Build a Mate through the website. She is offered some questions by the application to help guide his descriptions. Because of its conception in a near future society, the advanced technology has allowed her perfect guy to be created as a realistic hologram. After her perfect guy is created, she is allowed 1 hour with him. Immediately off the bat, Janet realizes that what she had imagined for her perfect guy to be isn’t what she really likes. She thought she liked certain features of her “perfect guy” description, but she found out after meeting her creation that she in fact is not attracted to those features. After conversing with him, she realizes that she does not like what she thought she would like. She returns him.

3) production plan

Build a Mate will exist primarily as an online website that can cater to the effects of holographic projections. People will need to create membership accounts. It’ll slightly reflect matchmaking websites of the 21st century, but will function as a near-future website (until technology can advance enough to create realistic holograms). The Build a Mate process will begin with a small questionnaire to start the creation process. It will ask questions such as gender/sex, ethnicity, age,
etc. After the completion of the questionnaire, the user will be prompted to a Siri-type feature (iPhone iOS, Jobbs) in which the user will be able to communicate verbally everything they would like their partner to embody. This feature relies heavily on the user's ability to eloquently verbalize their preferences. With the completion of the verbal description, a hologram will be created to match the preferences of the user. The user will be given approximately 1 hour (hologram will exist for one hour) to spend time with their newly created partner, and will have to determine whether they would like to keep him or her.

Eventually, with time, an app version of the website will be created, but only following the hopeful success of Build a Mate.

3.1) resources

- Website domain
- Website design
- Siri function
- Hologram function
- Creation function

3.2) milestones

The primary milestone will most likely be the hologram function, for it does not exist currently to a point in which society can use it for functions like creating a love partner. That will be the biggest hurdle. The other big milestone will probably be the creation of a realistic person based off of a verbal description. If, say, a user is not specific enough in their description, the Siri-function will need to take liberty on creating the rest of the person on its own. Also, the created partner will need to be able to gain intellectual information by gathering information based on interactions of their creator.

A timeline will be difficult to gauge for most of the creation of Build a Mate won’t be possible without the hologram function.

4) ethical issues

There are some issues that could potentially be brought up regarding Build a Mate. The creation of such a piece would need to occur in either a distant-future or an alternate world in which the technology has advanced enough for a realistic hologram or 3D print is able to be created. The technology would have to be able to cater to and create varying physical features and personality differences while being different for each creation. More importantly, society would have to
advance as well to the point where being in a meaningful relationship with a created perfect partner would be well-accepted and not looked down upon.

Works Cited


http://artport.whitney.org/commissions/softwarestructures/text.html