

Suspiro

DESIGN BRIEF FOR DIFFMIX CONTEST 2021

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CONCEPT

Suspiro/ First Kiss is an immersive sensory installation that moves with the wind. 1000s of VHS tapes are suspended demo a 4 meters height, creating a black cube floating in the air. When the wind blows, this solid block disperses and the reflectivity of the VHS tapes make them shimmer in the sunlight. Being lightweight, you can walk through the installation and push the tapes gently away, creating a sensation as if you are swimming in water. The tapes are hanging a bit above the ground so while passers-by might notice people in the installation, they cannot see the faces, making it an ideal spot for the coveted first kiss.

The sound of the tapes in the wind is similar to tree leaves rustling, making a logical connection from the artwork to the natural environment.

Building this installation is quite labour-intensive: finding, cutting and hanging VHS tapes takes a lot of time.

This is where the residents' role comes in: it is a fairly easy process so you don't need special skills. The installation is very simple to build and should there be any damage, it can be easily fixed.

INSPIRATION CUES

I take inspiration from beads doors but also privacy curtains in hotel parkings. On a higher conceptual level, the VHS tapes contain some form of memories. These memories are implemented but fly gently with the wind. A first kiss will be imprinted in one's memories, and fly gently in the wind.



Beads door as an inspiration, as a fluid transitory space



A hotel carpark entrance. The curtain offers privacy.

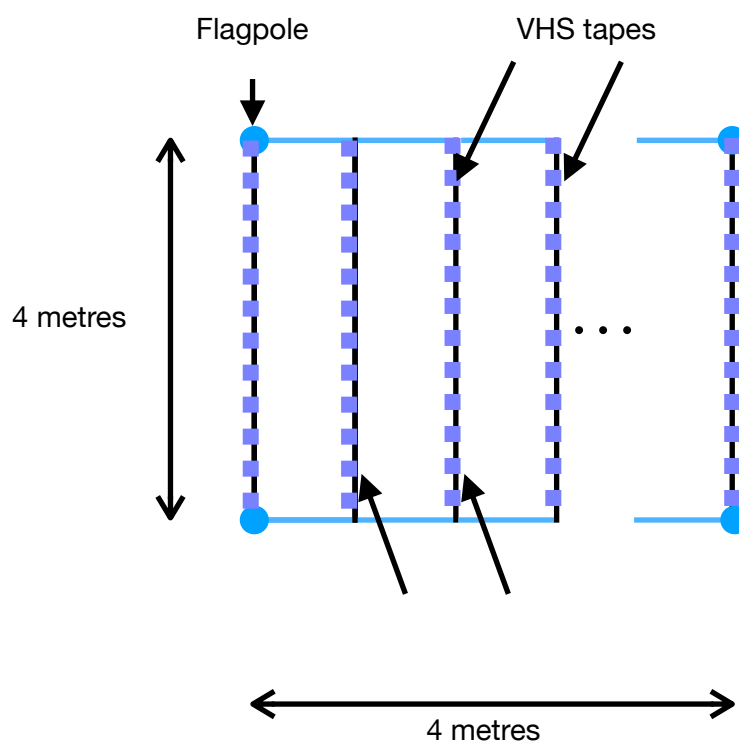
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The VHS tapes have to be cut and tied to the wires. With approximately 16000 pieces of tape, this will take a lot of time if I were to do it all by myself. Hence the community can help here. I will design a labour process to

facilitate the building of the installation and maintenance (see below in the maintenance section) of the installation.

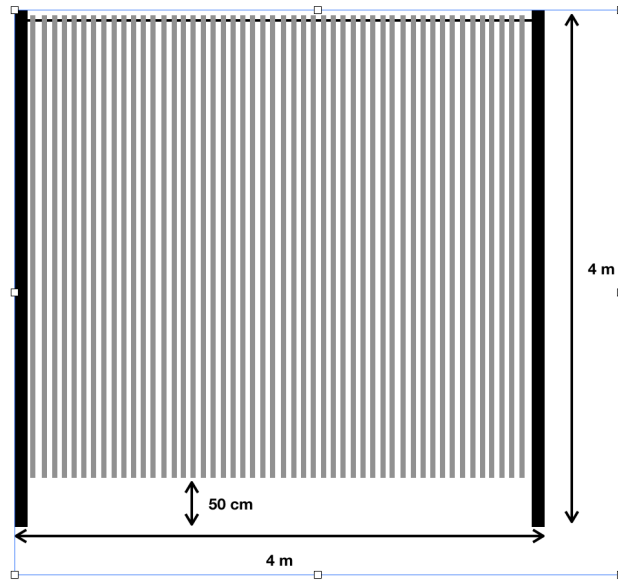
Another part of community involvement will be the sourcing of VHS tapes: I will need a very large quantity of them and I hope that I can find them within the community. I hope a town-wide campaign will help to make this possible.

CONSTRUCTION

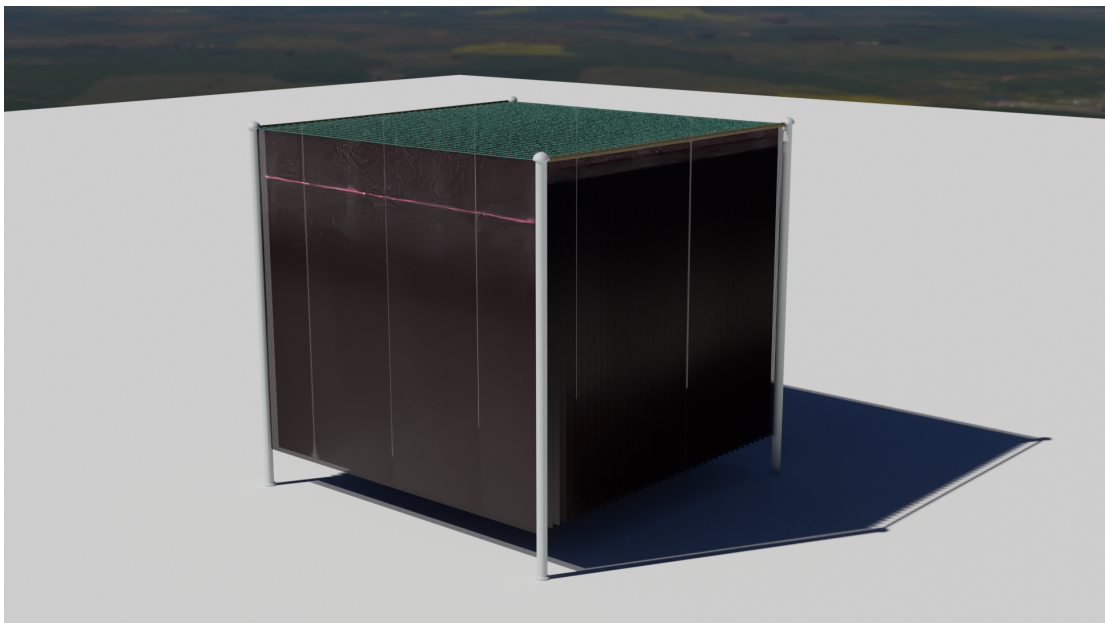


Top view of the installation

- 4 flagpoles of 4 metres high are put in a square of 4 by 4 meters.
 - At the top, cables/ropes are hung to create a mesh at the top with a distance of 5-10 centimetres between each line. The image below shows a top view of the installation.
 - On each of the perpendicular cables, a series of VHS tapes is suspended, hanging approximately 50 centimetres above the ground. The distance between each tape is relatively random but close together. This creates a black monolith, that is being disturbed by the wind blowing through it. The wind rustles the tapes like leaves in a tree, creating a nice meditative sound. When the wind blows really hard, it will agitate the tapes far above the ground and let gaps appear.
 - When there is lots of wind, the tapes can get tangled at the top. Hence, a fine netting on the top will ensure that this does not happen.
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Front view. The VHS tapes are approx. 1 cm in width so in reality there should be much more strips hanging down. The distance between the strips is approx. 2mm. So you would have almost 400 strips hanging down on each line.



The green netting on top prevents the VHS tangling on top. In this 3D model, the tapes seem one solid block but in reality, there are small gaps between them.

TIMELINE

The process of tying the approximately 16000 pieces of tapes to the wires is very labour intensive. I hope to do this tying of the tapes on the ground, rather than on a gantry. It will depend on the number of volunteers as well. I envisage that cutting the tape, tying it, and ensuring it is alright will take 4 hours per row (it probably will be less as people get faster in tying the tapes). There are 40 rows (although I might slightly change that number). So that would give us 120 hours of rigging the tapes. With 8 volunteers, the work can be divided and we can save time.

The other time-consuming part is we need to install the flagpoles and let the concrete cure. We can do that on day one and let it cure during a week while we tie up the tapes on the ground.

The final part is hanging everything in the air and putting the green netting on top. This will take one hour I think.

The tentative scheme would be:

- Day 1: install flagpoles on-site. This would be done by the town council or a private company.
- Day 1-5: cut and tie the VHS tapes.
- Day 6: final installation

MATERIAL

- VHS tapes: I will need lots of tape for this project. However, this can come from used VHS tapes. As many people will have old VHS tapes lying around, it will be easy to get hold of a large quantity. Should I need to buy VHS tapes, I can easily find them secondhand. This will be part of the community aspect: finding and gathering as many VHS tapes as possible.
- 4 flagpoles of 4 meters. A flagpole set is available on eBay <https://ebay.us/1gOMCK>



The flagpole at each corner will be secured in a block of concrete (as that block is underground, it is invisible for the eye)

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- Strong rope for the outer cables <https://www.hubo.be/nl/p/sam-touw-20m-6mm/14694.html>



A strong rope for the outer edges

- A lighter type of rope for the perpendicular cables on which the tapes will be hung. A washing line will be good for this <https://www.hubo.be/nl/p/giardino-waslijn-30m/175853.html> or a fishline
- A green net to go on the top to prevent tangling of the VHS tapes. <https://www.hubo.be/nl/p/nature-mono-vogelnet-10x2-m-groen/539838.html>



A lightweight green net

MAINTENANCE AND VANDALISM

I have had a prototype outdoors now for approximately 6 months in different weather circumstances. The tapes remain in good condition. When it rains, the tapes tend to stick together and it is not that beautiful, but as soon as the rain stops, the wind will blow the tapes dry.

I cannot rule out that there will be a negative person will vandalize the installation. As simple as it is to build (although labour-intensive), as simple is it to damage it. For that, I want to reserve a sum for the community to maintain the installation and replace parts should it be necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- This installation requires only 4 concrete points to anchor the flagpoles. When the installation is removed, these concrete anchors can be removed easily without severely impacting the environment.
- The VHS tapes are secured to the wires and should not be able to get loose so cannot get into the forest.

PROTOTYPE



The strips are black but reflect quite well creating a shimmer effect.



The strips move around in the wind. It is a very light material, hence the monolithic black colour will be 'broken up'.

I was trying this out in a smaller format on a drying rack. Via the dropbox link, you can see a short video: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/qy3169pa9ts2f1v/Samuel%20Van%20Ransbeeck%20concept%20video.mp4?dl=0>

In the video, you can see how the tapes are touching the ground. I have now cut them shorter so they do not touch the ground. Ideally, they are approximately 50 centimetres above the floor to avoid people tripping on them.

In the 3D video that I included on the submission page, I used only two sides because simulating 1000s of tapes flying around is too taxing for my computer. Obviously, the model I want and the real installation will be bigger in scale and be more impressive.

COST BREAKDOWN

The materials are quite cheap as demonstrated in the table below.

Item	Number	Price/item	Total
Flagpole	4	€ 45	€ 180
VHS tapes	200	€ 1	€ 200
Concrete and auxiliary materials	1	€ 50	€ 50
Pouring concrete (see note below)	1	€ 250	€ 250
Inner cables (washing line (total length 210 m))	7	€ 6	€ 42
Cables (outer cable) total length 20 m)	1	€ 11	€ 11
Green netting on top	1	€ 7	€ 7
Material transport to site	1	€ 100	€ 100
Total			€ 840

I would prefer to have somebody pour the concrete rather than do it myself. Hence I am including the pouring concrete as an external service at an extra cost.

I have not included the cost of a sign as I suppose there will be a unified sign for all the artworks.

To put everything up, I hope that the town council can provide with a gantry/ladder.

PERSONNEL COST

Item	Number	Price/item	Total
Artist fee	1	€ 5,000	€ 5,000
Transport and accommodation	1	€ 1,000	€ 1,000
Community construction fee (see note below)	1	€ 2,000	€ 2,000
Maintenance	1	€ 1,000	€ 1,000
Total			€ 9,000

I believe, given the labour-intensive process needed to build this installation, an artist fee of €5000 is reasonable. The transport and accommodation costs will help me come to and stay in Differdange for the time of constructing the work.

As I want to involve the community, I believe it is paramount to offer some form of catering to the volunteers. It does not have to be fancy but I think it is courteous to provide food and drinks to the people who help.

Maintenance: the installation requires no maintenance unless there is a very heavy storm or vandalism. Should that happen, I believe the maintenance fund will be enough to offset costs to repair the installation (probably just hanging new VHS tapes).

Finally, I include a 20% contingency on the whole budget to deal with unexpected costs should they arise.

As such, the final budget is as follows

Item	Number	Price/item	Total
Materials	1	€ 840	€ 840
Personnel cost	1	€ 9,000	€ 9,000
Contingency	1	€ 1,968	€ 1,968
Total			€ 11,808

RISK AND CHALLENGES ASSESSMENT

As with any project, there are risks and challenges. Below I try to address these and suggest a solution

- The installation is vandalized
 - Volunteers/ town workers replace the damaged parts
 - The flagpoles are too high to work safely
 - Lower the height and/or use wooden stakes instead of flagpoles
 - Bad weather disrupts the construction
 - I will design a labour process that can be done indoors so we only have to hang the finished wires up
 - Weather problems
 - The prototype has stayed outdoors for approximately 6 months without any damage. I have put a few tapes in the freezer to see what would happen but the material retains its flexibility
 - Problems with the anchoring of the flagpoles
 - There is a concrete patch on the site so I don't foresee problems
 - Use wooden stakes
 - Cannot find enough VHS tapes
 - Although I am confident that I can find many free tapes, should I need more tapes, I will go to secondhand shops
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