

**Hong Kong Arts Development Council  
International Arts Leadership Roundtable 2017**

**Plenary 2: Applying Technology in the Arts**

*We Can Do Magic*

**Full transcript of speech by  
Dr. Bryan Wai-ching CHUNG  
Associate Professor of Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University**

---

Good evening, I am very happy to be invited here to deliver the speech and the topic I would like to name for the presentation is “We Can Do Magic”.

I'm going to show you a number of films that I prepared and the first theme I would like to show is a trailer from the film "The Prestige". It's a film by Christopher Nolan, and it is about the duet between two magicians. In the trailer, you can see that when they need to deliver the magic, they need a very strong supporting team of technicians including engineers, and sometimes scientists.

(Film clip played)

So, in this particular scene actually you can see David Bowie coming out from the subway, and he is playing a character called Nicholas Tesla. For those who drive, I think you must know that Tesla is also the manufacturer of electrically driven vehicles. Nicholas Tesla was actually an engineer and sometimes he is described as a crazy scientist in this particular film who supports the gadgets that the magician needs to use in his performance.

The other film I would like to show is actually very, very old. It dates back to much older than what Mr. Isaac LEUNG (Moderator of Plenary 2) showed you a few minutes before. Its producer is Thomas Edison. When I was a kid studying in primary school, we learned that Edison was the one who created lightbulb. Moreover, his company had supposedly produced this ever first stop motion animation.

(Film clip played)

I don't have time to show the full video so I will move on to the next. The coming video was the first demonstration of what we call a magical play. It was performed by magician Marco Tempest who appears on TV pretty often. He delivered his magic performance in one of the TED talk in this clip.

(Film clip played)

So we have seen the trick of this magician and behind this magician, there's also one person I like to have your attention – Zach Lieberman. This gentleman is actually a frequent visitor to Hong Kong and a few months ago in the Microwave International Media Art Festival 2017 he was invited to show some of his works. In May this year,

he was also invited by one of the groups called Microwave in Hong Kong to deliver some talks about his contribution to the founding of the [School for Poetic Computation](#). So this is some kind of involvement or some direction we can understand beside the corporate sponsorships from Edison or Tesla. Actually, there's another community co-founded by Lieberman which is called [openFrameworks](#). OpenFrameworks is actually an open-source software community developed by artists and designers. They help the community to contribute developed softwares back to online social media, then the others can use the softwares for free in further creation. So, openFrameworks and other open source softwares community have built up huge supporting foundation for artists and designers in this particular situation.

So the film or clips you have seen are what we label in modern term, augmented reality. Augmented reality, as well as virtual reality, are areas that are believed to have received a lot of sponsorships and contributions from commercial sponsors or from the community.

The concept of augmented reality, with reference to the videos, are in fact can be dated back to Edison, Tesla or even magical tricks. So, magic is more or less similar to augmented reality that in my case, it is the combination of both my real presence and something projected on the screen as a way to deliver our performance or presentation.

So this is the end of my presentation. For other questions, I'm happy to answer, address and discuss with other panel speakers. Thank you.

- END -