

Loss of Grasp

Title: “Loss of Grasp” (English version) / “Déprise” (French version) / “Perdersi” (Italian version) / “Perderse” (Spanish version) / “Perda de controlo” (Portuguese version) / Griffverlust (German version) / (Nie)panowanie (Polish version) / Fogásvesztés (Hungarian version) / فقدان السيطرة (Arabic version) / 失控 (Chinese version)

Authors: Serge Bouchardon (<http://www.sergebouchardon.com>), Vincent Volckaert.

URL: <http://lossofgrasp.com> or <http://deprise.fr> – 2010 (Flash) – 2018 (JavaScript)

Application for smartphone (2019):

- Google Play: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.utc.deprise>
- App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/déprise/id1434229807>

Presentation

Loss of grasp is an online digital creation (and an application for smartphones since 2019) about the notions of grasp and control.

Under which circumstances do we feel we have grasp on our life or not?

Six scenes feature a character who is losing grasp.

At the same time, this play on grasp and loss of grasp mirrors the reader's experience of an interactive digital work.

The piece requires headphones (or loudspeakers) and a webcam (for the fifth scene).

The interaction with the piece lasts about 10 minutes.

Video capture of the interactions:

<https://youtu.be/QXQf-QSstU> (Flash)

<https://youtu.be/ICvQuxz3xbA> (JavaScript)

Prize

New Media Writing Prize 2011: <http://newmediawritingprize.co.uk/past-winners/2011-shortlist/>

Official selections and reviews

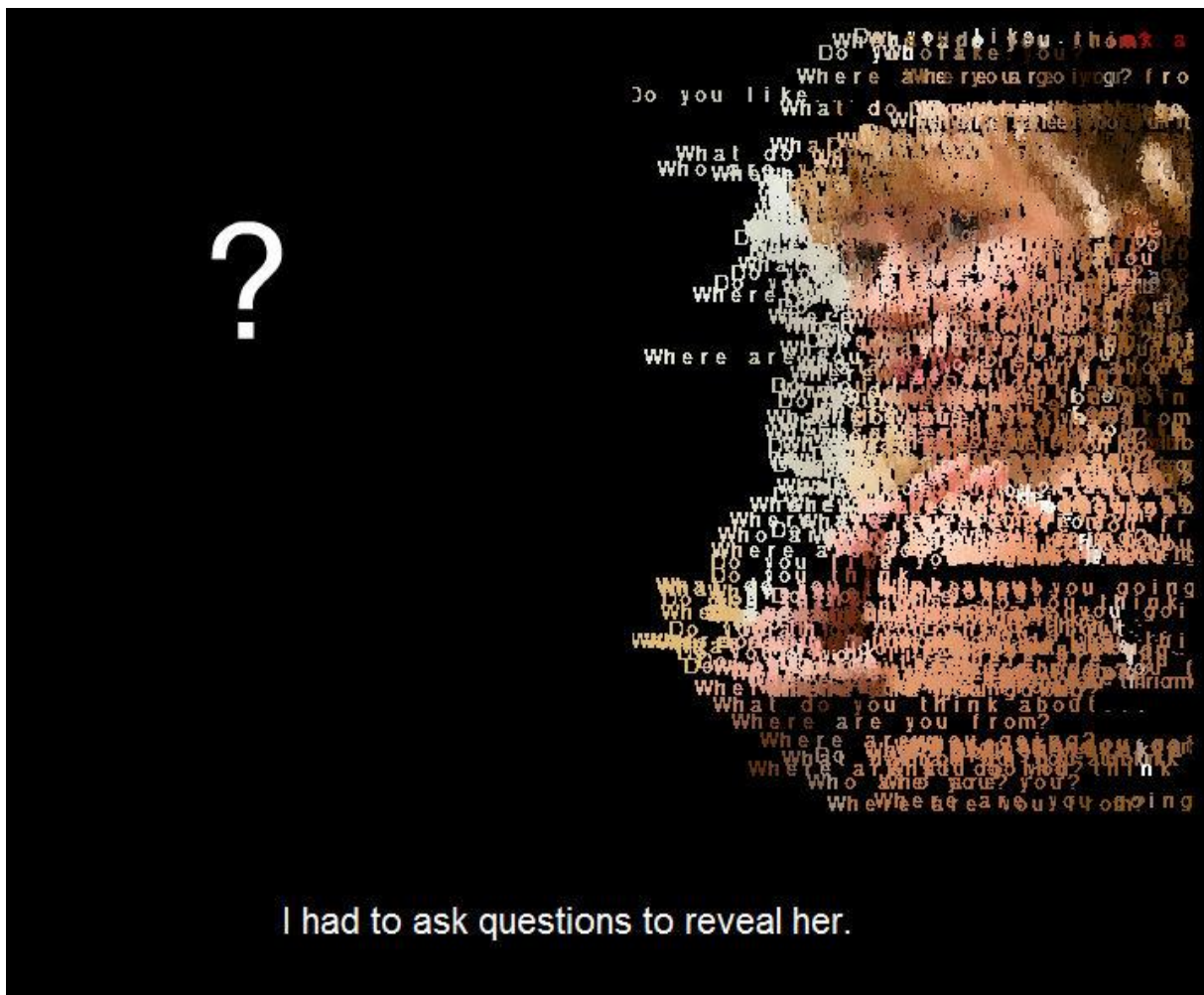
See <http://www.sergebouchardon.com/> - <http://www.utc.fr/~bouchard/works/deprise.html>

Detailed description

Loss of Grasp is a narrative and interactive experience about the feeling of losing grasp.

In the first scene, the reader advances in the story by rolling with the mouse over the sentence which is displayed on the screen, thus allowing the next sentence to appear. The speaking subject – the narrator – talks about the control he has had over his life so far. But after a while, with the sentence "*Everything escapes me*", the mouse pointer disappears. The reader can continue to roll over each sentence to display the following one, but without the help of the mouse pointer on the screen. The reader can start experiencing the loss of grasp through his or her gestures.

The second scene stages the encounter between the narrator and his future wife, twenty years earlier. While the narrator "ask[s] questions to reveal her", the reader can discover the face of the woman by moving the mouse pointer. These movements leave trails of questions which progressively unveil her face. The questions themselves draw the portrait of the woman.

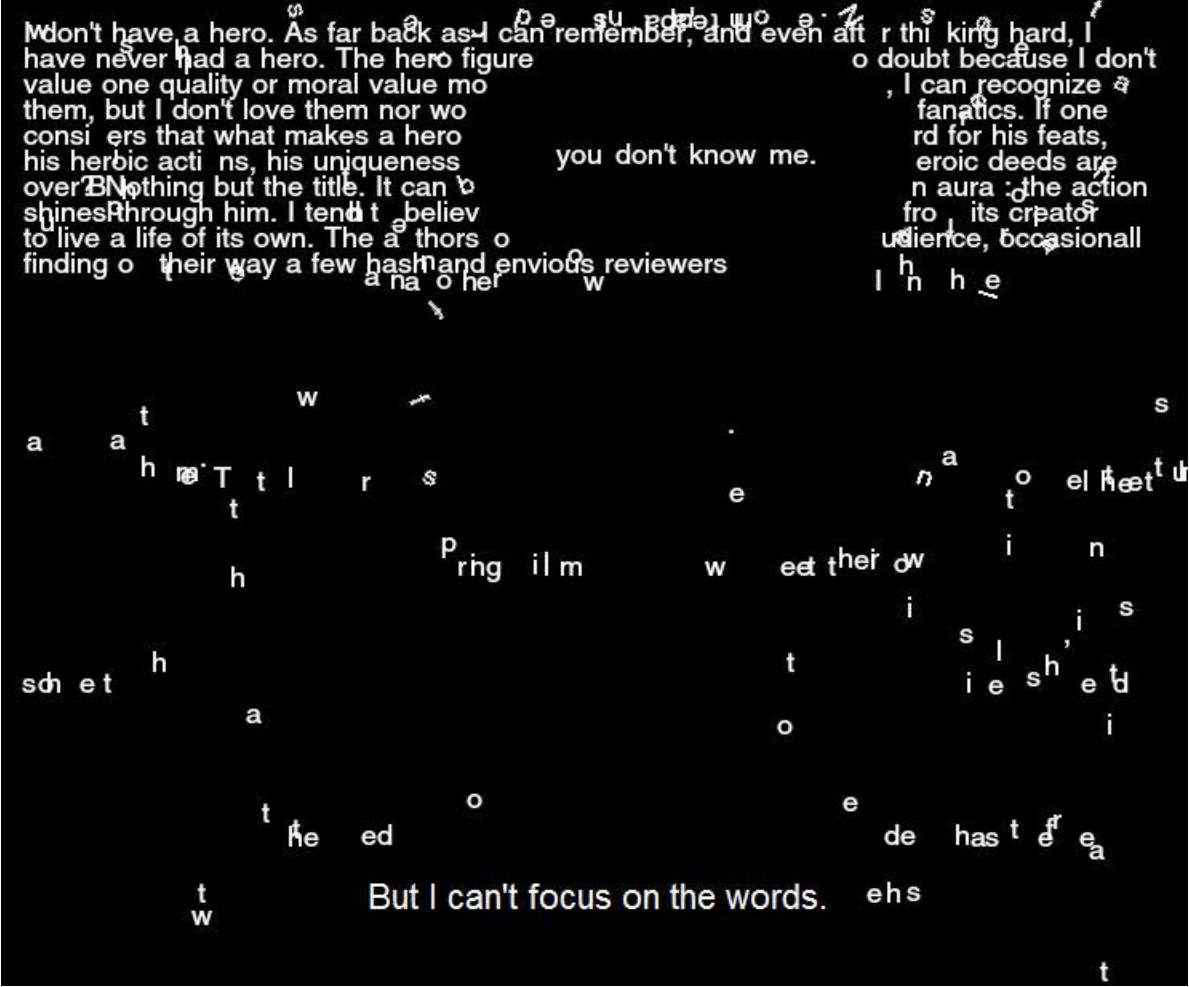


Loss of Grasp, second scene.

In the third scene, twenty years have passed. The narrator is reading an ambiguous note from his wife. He speaks plainly about his loss of control. The reader can read the text either as a “love poem or a breakup note”. The reader can experience this double interpretation with gestures. If the reader moves the mouse cursor to the top¹, the text will unfold as a love poem; but if the cursor is moved to the bottom, the order of the lines is reversed and the text turns into a breakup note.

In the fourth scene, the teenage son asks his father (the narrator) to read his written assignment on the theme of the hero. But the father fails to concentrate on the text of his son and reads between the lines. The reader clicks on the text and sentences appear, made up with the letters from the text, such as:

- I don't love you.*
- You don't know me.*
- We have nothing in common.*
- I don't want anything from you.*
- You're not a model for me.*
- I want to make my own way.*
- Soon I will leave.*



Loss of Grasp, fourth scene.

¹ Movement to the right and to the left in the previous Flash version.

In the fifth scene, even the own image of the narrator seems to be slipping away as the image of the reader appears on the screen via the webcam. The reader can then distort, manipulate his/her own image. The narrator confesses: "I feel manipulated."

In the sixth and final scene, the narrator is determined to regain control. An text input window is then proposed to the reader wherein he/she can write. But whichever key the reader presses, the following text appears:

I'm doing all I can to get a grip on my life again.

I make choices.

I control my emotions.

The meaning of things.

At last, I have a grasp...

Again, the reader is facing a manipulation based on a difference between his/her expectations and the display on the screen. The reader experiences interactively the feeling of loss of grasp of the character. In this interactive narrative, the gesture fully contributes to the construction of meaning.