

Tech Talk

Insights into tomorrow's technology from the editors of *IEEE Spectrum*

SIGGRAPH Asia: Virtual tigers, real engineers

If you're set on building a virtual reality installation, you've basically got a few paths to choose from:

- reflect ponderously on the shortcomings of perception.
- juxtapose unfamiliar environments for the sake of being weird.
- claim it's all for the greater good of education, expanding the mind, or shrinking physical distances.

In other words, there's a reason that VR has struggled to find its place. But that doesn't mean my cynical heart didn't thaw at the sight of this virtual take on historical fiction, by students from Nanyang Technological University, in Singapore. It explores local lore about the last wild tiger in Singapore, which was supposedly shot at the famous Raffles Hotel. (In addition to giving the world one dead tiger, the hotel also reputedly invented the Singapore Sling.)

In this installation, a user wears a headset that superimposes a video projection on a real-world set. As the individual turns his or her head, the head-mounted display exposes new facets of the scene. It's a bit hard to follow for observers not wearing the headset, but the swift changes in perspective do make for a

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