

# Plasm: A Country Walk

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*The 3DO Company*

This interactive art installation presents a large-screen dog leash draped in front. When the viewer first encounters the screen, it shows a sleeping dog (or a bouncy, yelping one, depending upon how long it has been since the last walk). Picking up the leash wakes the dog, and off you go on a virtual ramble. You find yourself walking down a photo-realistic country lane, led on by the bouncy puppy tugging on your leash. Chirping birds, crickets, and the crunch of gravel beneath your feet lend a fuller sense of presence in the animated world into which you are strolling. The leash serves as a common channel for input and feedback, as the dog strains to explore the enticements that lie in your path. Depending upon how much you allow your walking companion to follow her nose, the less predictable the adventures become. Over time, image processing effects and fractally generated scenery eat away at the photo-realistic setting, leaving you on a course through a stranger and stranger landscape. There is no limit to how long you can walk, as scenery is constantly generated to suit your pace. Of course, the dog does get tired after a while. This installation introduces its audience to a novel force feedback mechanism. Participants steer their virtual walk by pulling and slacking the leash, but the computer/pooch tugs back! Viewers should also be engaged by the live interactive blend of photo-realistic imagery, as their actions evolve a very unusual world indeed.

Plasm: A Country Walk employs the 3DO set-top computer to present an interactive virtual world composed of real-time 3D-projected graphics, photo realistic imagery, live generation of scene elements and visual effects processing, and high-quality audio tracks. The 3DO plat-

form represents a breakthrough in computer graphics price/performance, offering an unprecedented visual vocabulary in a package affordable to home consumers. This new class of highly accessible technology opens the door for a new generation of artists seeking to manifest their own interactive visual experiences. A Country Walk is the most recent in an ongoing series of Plasm: installations. Each piece in the series establishes its own interactive, living environment, exploring contemporary issues along the advancing edge of virtual world interfaces. Country Walks' leash is the latest in the series development of custom, first-person input devices. Plasms input inventions, coupled with leading-edge reactive graphics, and investigate increasingly transparent, increasingly kinetic human-computer experiences. While video games have led the way in popularizing interactive computer graphics, the Plasm pieces seek to expose the public to richer, more experiential applications of this technology. We strive to offer a less goal-oriented vision of this emerging medium; one without cross-hairs or trigger buttons.

#### Hardware

- 3DO Interactive Multiplayer
- Dyno-Leash, a custom force feedback I/O device
- Panasonic large rear screen projection TV

#### Software

- Custom behavioral code (approx. 5,000 line of C and C++)
- 3DO Support libraries

#### Contact

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