

Magic Tate Ball – Tate Galleries London

Promo video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjbaT2NIhgs>

What?

Inspired by the concept of the 'Magic 8 Ball' the Tate Galleries in London produced an art app called The Magic Tate Ball.

The basic idea: shake the phone like you would an 8 Ball and after analysing your current environment, the app presents you with an artwork from the Tate Archive.



How does it work?

After opening the application the user shakes the device (like they would a traditional 8 Ball) and the app then analyses the current:

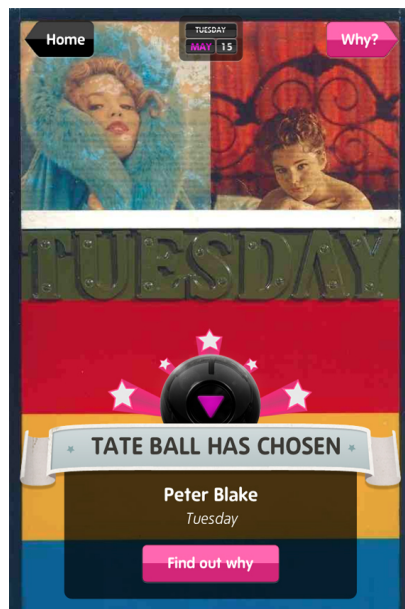
- Date
- Time of day
- GPS location
- Local weather data
- Ambient noise levels



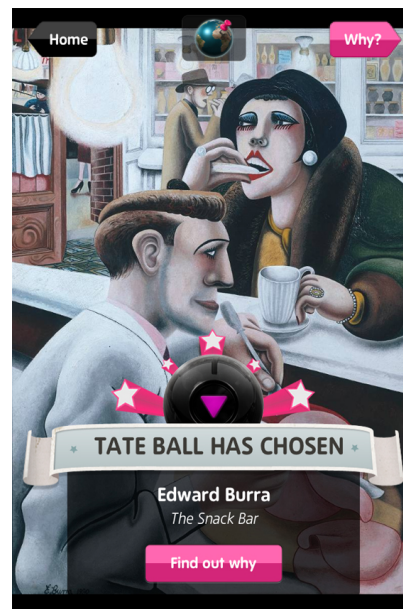
How does it work?

An artwork is then presented based on the data received.
For example: *A Tuesday lunchtime near Broadwick Street, London* could give a number of different results:

Date:
Tuesday



Time:
Lunchtime



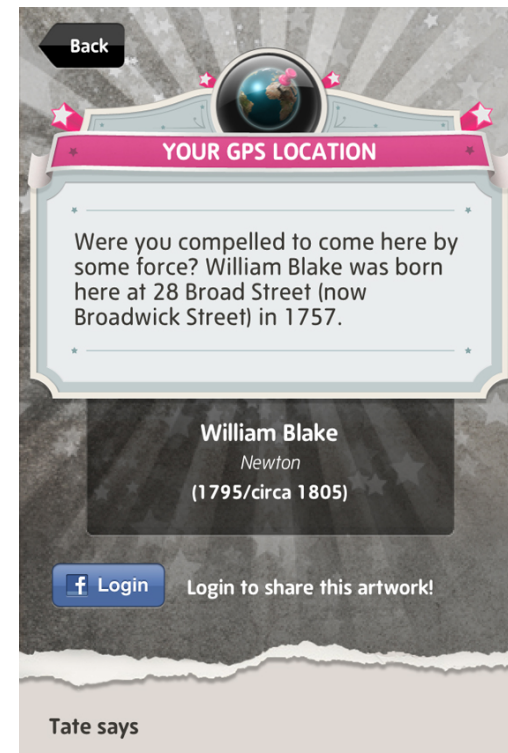
Location:
Broadwick Street



How does it work?

The user then has the option to ‘find out why?’ the app has chosen the particular artwork, for example:

Image → GPS Location → Explanation



Navigation?

The application has relatively few windows, but the potential to display many based on the users environment:

Start Screen



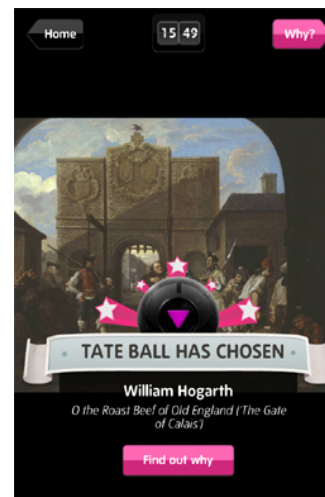
Shake!

Analysis



Wait...

Artwork



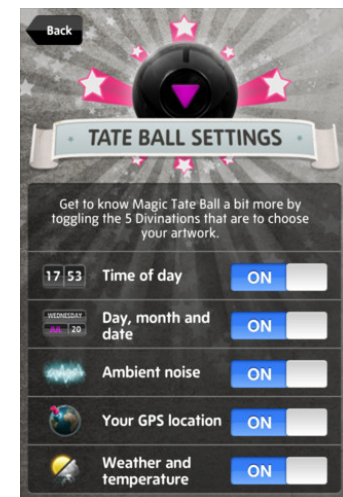
Press

Fact



Back to the start!

Settings



Cultural Relevance?

Although just a game, the Magic Tate Ball is also culturally relevant, mainly via its ability to introduce people to new artworks and artists who they then may continue to explore in more depth. It can also highlight aspects of the users environment that they may not have otherwise considered i.e. Artists that have lived and worked in their area, relevant historical dates etc. One must also not forget that the app is an advertisement for the Tate Gallery and its collections, which are free to visit.

Technical Specs:

Technical Specifications	
App's Name + Version	Magic Tate Ball v. 1.2
Type	Context-Aware Game/ Gallery
Operating System (OS)	iOS and Nokia OVI
Minimum screen-resolution required	640×960 (iPhone 4)
Minimum OS version required	iPhone, iPod and iPad iOS 4.0
Native or Web-app Native	Native
Free or Paid	Free
Available from:	<p>iTunes App Store www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/apps/magic-tate-ball</p> <p>Nokia Website http://store.oivi.com/content/273944</p>

Evaluation

I think overall, albeit being a light-hearted game, the Magic Tate Ball is an interesting concept, especially with regards to its ability to interact with the users immediate environment. The idea that ambient noise, weather and GPS location can influence content is an intriguing idea that has potential.

Evaluation

Criticisms include the fact that the app only displays artworks from the Tate Collection. It is also rather UK centric as most of the GPS locations are based there, making it less effective when used abroad.

A final criticism would perhaps be the distancing and reductive nature of viewing artwork on the small screen device as opposed to in reality. However, I do not believe the ultimate aim of the app is to engage more people with art and who may then seek out the real pieces of work.

