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Javier Pérez,
Un pedazo de cielo cristalizado, 2001
ARTIUM de Álava Collection; Emilio Ruiz de Arcaya

The work literally represents what its title says, A Piece of Crystalized Sky, but emphasizing our conception of the sky as a curved space. It is based on a set of 12,000 blown glass pieces, in the shape of teardrops or bulbs. They are hung from an inverted dome structure, which vibrates due to an electric motor, the sound generated by the knocking together of the glass pieces being a very important part of the piece. It is completed by creating an indie atmosphere in the exhibition. It was created for the Spanish Pavilion of the Venice Biennial held in 2001. Currently, hanging over the entrance stairway of ARTIUM, it has become the piece that welcomes visitors to the museum.

Its permanent exhibition forced the museum to look for solutions for regular maintenance, without the advantage of the usual de-installations. Its dimensions, and the quantity of its components, increased the challenge. The necessity of the treatment was evident because of dirt on the surface of the components, which hid the shine and the transparency of the glass. Due to some drips from the air-conditioning system, water accumulated inside the components and began to be noticeable.

We studied the genesis of the work in order to establish the main aspects of the display. We established differences between what we call 'Components', which include the replaceable physical objects, and 'Perception Elements', fundamental for the real understanding of the piece and which define it on a conceptual level, including all the sensual elements such as the proximity, the light, the sound and the movement.

The artist was consulted to establish the most appropriate method of intervention. He highlighted the importance of the rhythm created by the precise location of the parts in relation to their size. A method has been established which permits us to maintain the current position of each glass piece thanks to the production line on the scaffolding, by numbering the pieces as well as their corresponding locations. This method does not alter the original work. The system was put into practice with great thoroughness. We had to use a complicated infrastructure to carry out the cleaning of the glass pieces, together with the metal structure, with a team of more than twenty people, at a high cost.

During the intervention we required the artist’s presence in order to analyse the effects of the layout, combining the different sizes of the glass pieces, together with their movement and sound when knocking together. Having done that, it is possible to systematize the whole installation without the necessity of the artist’s presence in future complete installations and re-installations of the work.

Throughout this process a very interesting documentation was compiled, and it is our intention to include this in a future exhibition of the artwork. We will include models, pictures and sketches from the first installation in Venice, together with the different interviews with the artist. In that way we are designing a documentary which contains a visual monitoring of the creative process of the work.

The Inside Installations Project has also prompted us to reflect on the definition of the term Installation and on the new registration fields, and increased our knowledge and comprehension of the work, applicable not only to our specific case study but to many of the installations at the ARTIUM Museum Collection. In the light of the conclusions of the Project, we intend to check the entire ARTIUM art work inventory in order to consider possible changes for the components and their treatment in the data base.

Fabrizio Plessi,
Liquid Time II, 1993
ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie; Thomas Zirbelwagen

Liquid Time II (Tempo Liquido) was realized as a freestanding sculpture in 1993 for the 'Internationale Bauausstellung' (IBA 93) in Berlin. It is an upright iron wheel reaching a height of more than five metres and turning slowly above a long steel tank with water running through it. The set is that of a rusty mill wheel - however, TV monitors showing a video footage of cascading water replace the 21 scoops. The heavy metal structure is built up of more than 100 elements. The central water tank consists of five main elements; at one end it is surrounded by an expanded base. The mill wheel is composed of 7 segments and driven by a powerful electric motor. All visible steel parts are artificially rusted and show a matt and delicate surface. The steel tank contains 3500 litres of water moved by an electric water pump. Liquid Time II is a single channel video installation and the video equipment, including 21 TV monitors, is mounted into the segments of the rotating mill wheel.

From September 2005 to October 2006 the work was presented in the ZKM Media Museum.

One of the focuses of research was the documentation of such a monumental, kinetic video artwork and the verification of the possibilities of descriptions of technical data. A 3D programme was tested for graphically representing all elements of the artwork and complex technical details. For the first time a comprehensive installation manual of the artwork was worked out, including video registration. Another focus of research was the daily handling of the artwork in long-term exhibition. A maintenance plan had to be formulated and solutions had to be found to reduce time-consuming treatments on unstable technical components without altering the artwork.

The original medium of the video is a laserdisc, which in the past has been saved as a copy on a Digital Betacam tape. During the project the video material was digitized by the Laboratory for Antique Video Systems at ZKM, and now the digital data is stored on a server for long-term preservation. A number of conservation treatments and modifications of the video equipment had to be evaluated and realized.

One of the main preservation problems of Liquid Time II is the ongoing corrosion of the steel structure due to the circulating water. In some areas splashing water caused considerable progression of the corrosion during long-term presentation. In order to solve this problem, external specialists have been consulted and research is still continuing.

In addition, research will go on to find a practical solution to the problem of the limited lifetime of the TV screens and their potential replacement in the future.

One of the interesting points of this case study arises from working with the 3D programme and video registration for additional documentation and visualization of the artwork. It opens up the possibility of showing technical details of Liquid Time II as coloured, true-to-detail images, motion-sequences as animated film sequences or visualizing hidden technical components in engineering drawings. This will make a better understanding of the complexity of the artwork and its functioning possible.
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Phil Collins, they shoot horses, 2004
(C) Phil Collins, Courtesy Kerlin Gallery, Dublin | Tate Collection (T12030)

Tacita Dean, Disappearance at Sea, '996
(C) Tacita Dean, Courtesy Frith Street Gallery, London | Tate Collection (T07455)

Olafur Eliasson, Notion Motion, 2005 | Photo: Hans Wilschut

Carlos Garaicoa, Letter to the Censors (Carta a los censores), 2003
(C) Carlos Garaicoa Manso | Photo: Tate Conservation | Tate Collection (T11864)

Pierre Huyghe, Two Minutes Out of Time, 2000 | Photo: Peter Cox

Greg Lynn & Fabian Marcaccio, The Predator, 1999 | Photo: Gregg Lynn Studio

Gustav Metzger, Liquid Crystal Environment, 1965-66 (Remake 2005)
(C) Gustav Metzger | Tate Collection (T12160)

Bruce Nauman, MAPPING THE STUDIO II with color shift, flip, flop & flip/flop (For Chance John Cage), 2001
(C) ARS, NY and DACS, London 2005 | Photo: Tate Photography | Co-owned by Tate (T11893), Pempidou Centre Paris, Kunstmuseum Basel

Nam June Paik, One Candle, 1988 | Photo: Axel Schneider

Tino Sehgal, This is Propaganda, 2002
No photograph available as the artist does not allow any documentation of his installations.


Education and Culture

Culture 2000

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