Selected Works by Don Ritter 1993-2023

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Additional online documentation

• documentary website: http://aesthetic-machinery.com
• video compilation: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/compilation.html
• detailed work documents for exhibitors: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/documents.html
• press kit: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Ritter_Presskit.pdf
• online biography & exhibition history: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/biography.html

cover and above image: *Burning Too*, Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, Hong Kong. Don Ritter, 2016

Biography

Don Ritter is a Canadian artist and writer who has been active in the field of media art since 1988. His interdisciplinary artworks and writings integrate fine art and digital media with aesthetics and ethics. Ritter's immersive video-sound installations enable audiences to direct their experiences through body motion or voice, and his live performances and media façades present ultra high-definition video projections controlled by live music, sound, or body gestures. His most recent work includes large architectural projections based on the symbolism of fire and water, and metal prints resembling road signs that convey issues of sustainability and ontology.

Ritter's work has been exhibited throughout North America, Europe and Asia, including SITE Santa Fe (USA), Winter Olympics 2010 Cultural Olympiad (Vancouver), Metrònom (Barcelona), Sonambiente Sound Festival (Berlin), Verona Jazz Festival (Italy), Exit Festival (Paris), Ars Electronica Festival (Linz), and New Music America (New York City). His most widely exhibited work is Intersection (1993/2019), an immersive-interactive sound installation that has been experienced by 700,000 viewers in eight countries. During his performances of video controlled by live music, Ritter collaborated mostly with trombonist George Lewis and also with musicians Nick Didkovsky, Amy Denio, Thomas Dimuzio, Ikue Mori, Geneviève Letarte, Ben Neill, Trevor Tureski and Tom Walsh. Ritter created video installations for New York artists Laurie Anderson (Guggenheim Museum exhibition, New York City) and Paul Garrin (Gwangju Biennale exhibition and Prix Ars Electronica Award of Distinction). Ritter's prints and paintings are held in private collections in North America, Europe and Asia. His work has received support and recognition from the Canada Council, The Banff Centre (Canada), Pratt Institute (USA), ZKM (Germany), Ars Electronica (Austria), DGArtes (Portugal), the Goethe Institute (Germany), the European Union Culture Programme (EU), and City University of Hong Kong.

Ritter completed his graduate degree in visual studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center For Advanced Visual Studies, MIT Media Lab, and Harvard University's film department. His professors included German artist Otto Piene (MIT), documentary film-maker Richard Leacock (MIT), computer scientist Marvin Minsky (MIT), and film theorist Vlada Petric (Harvard). Ritter has undergraduate degrees in fine arts and psychology from the University of Waterloo and a diploma in electronics engineering from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Prior to his academic positions, Ritter worked as a researcher and telecommunications designer for Nortel and Bell-Northern Research in Toronto and Ottawa. He held full-time and tenured professorships in art and design between 1989 and 2017 at Concordia University in Montreal, Pratt Institute in New York City, Hanyang University in Seoul, and the School of Creative Media at City University of Hong Kong. Ritter maintained his art studio in Berlin, Germany from 2006 to 2013, and he currently lives in Montreal.

Burning Too • Hong Kong

architectural projection
mapped 4K interactive video and sound with 4 HD projectors and 2 channel audio
55 x 26m (180 x 85 ft) projection
Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, Hong Kong
ISEA2016 International Symposium on Electronic Art
Don Ritter, 2016

web page and documentary video:
http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/burning-too.html
exhibition document:
http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/RitterBurningToo.pdf

Burning Too consisted of video projections and the sounds of fire presented on the Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre in Hong Kong. The crystalline-shaped building, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, has a 55 x 26 m façade angled forward 62 degrees. A software was designed by Ritter to map and combine four HD video projections onto the angled façade of the building, enabling the imagery to appear as one unified Ultra HD (4K) video projection of fire synchronized with interactive sound.

Burning Too is a metaphorical depiction of humanity's long-standing relationship with fire.
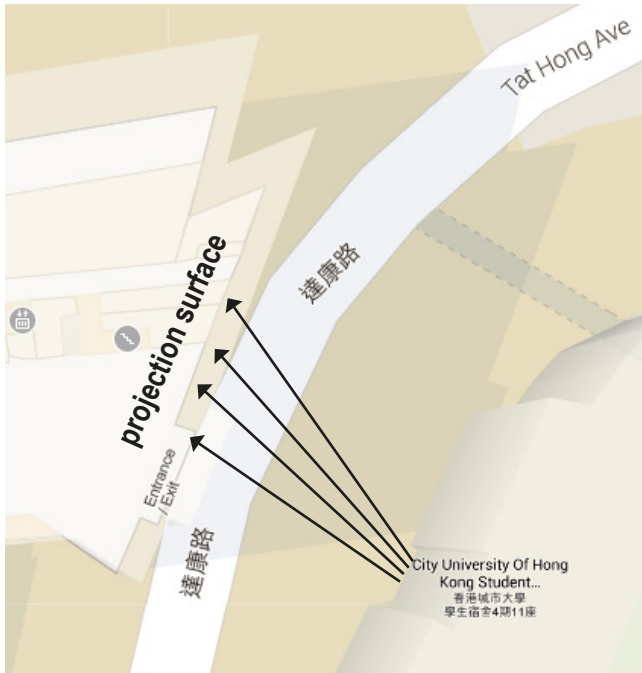
Don Ritter   director, video and sound, system design, programming and mapping
Cleo Song   production coordinator
Mitch Martinez   camera

Documentary photographs and video by Don Ritter, Luna Leung, and Ching Yung Yau.
Assistants: Hao Li, King Him Fung, and Ching Yung Yau.
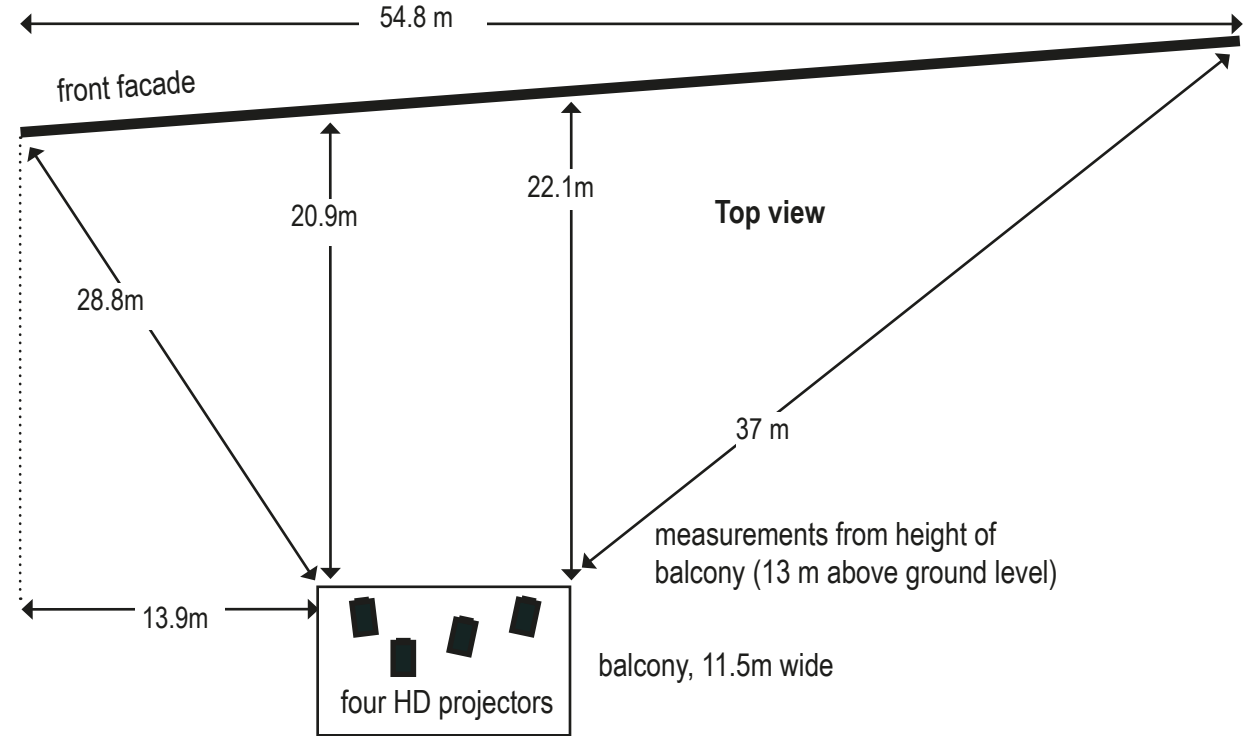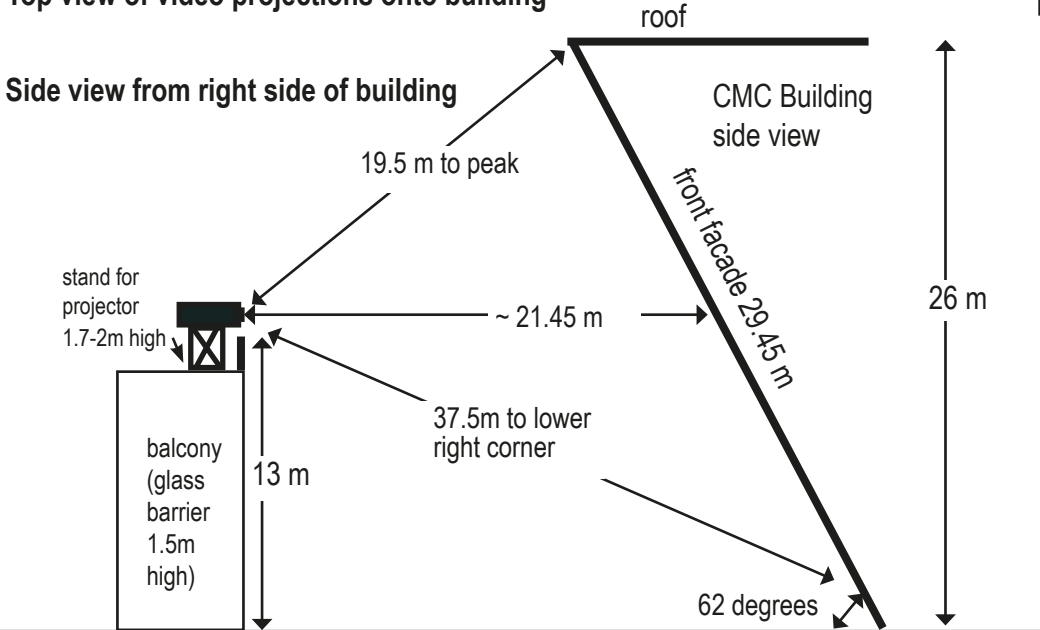Produced with assistance from City University of Hong Kong.

detail of *Burning Too - Hong Kong*, Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, Hong Kong

Top view of video projections onto building

Side view from right side of building

front facade

54.8 m

20.9m

22.1m

28.8m

Top view

37 m

measurements from height of balcony (13 m above ground level)

13.9m

four HD projectors

balcony, 11.5m wide

roof

CMC Building side view

19.5 m to peak

stand for projector 1.7-2m high

~ 21.45 m

front facade 29.45 m

26 m

37.5m to lower right corner

balcony (glass barrier 1.5m high)

13 m

62 degrees

projection surface

Tat Hong Ave

達康路

達康路

Entrance / Exit

City University Of Hong Kong Student...
香港城市大學
學生宿舍4期11座

calibration of four projectors for Burning Too, Hong Kong

Burning Too • Art Rock

architectural projection
mapped 6K interactive video and sound with 3 HD projectors and 6 channel audio
50 x 10 m (164 x 39 ft) projection
Cour Saint-Esprit, Saint-Brieuc, France
Don Ritter, 2017

web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/burning-too-artrock.html
exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/BurningToo-Artrock.pdf

Burning Too is a metaphorical depiction of humanity's long-standing relationship with fire, depicted as a large-scale projection of slow moving fire with sound. Three full HD video projections cover three façades with fire and randomly occurring fireball explosions.
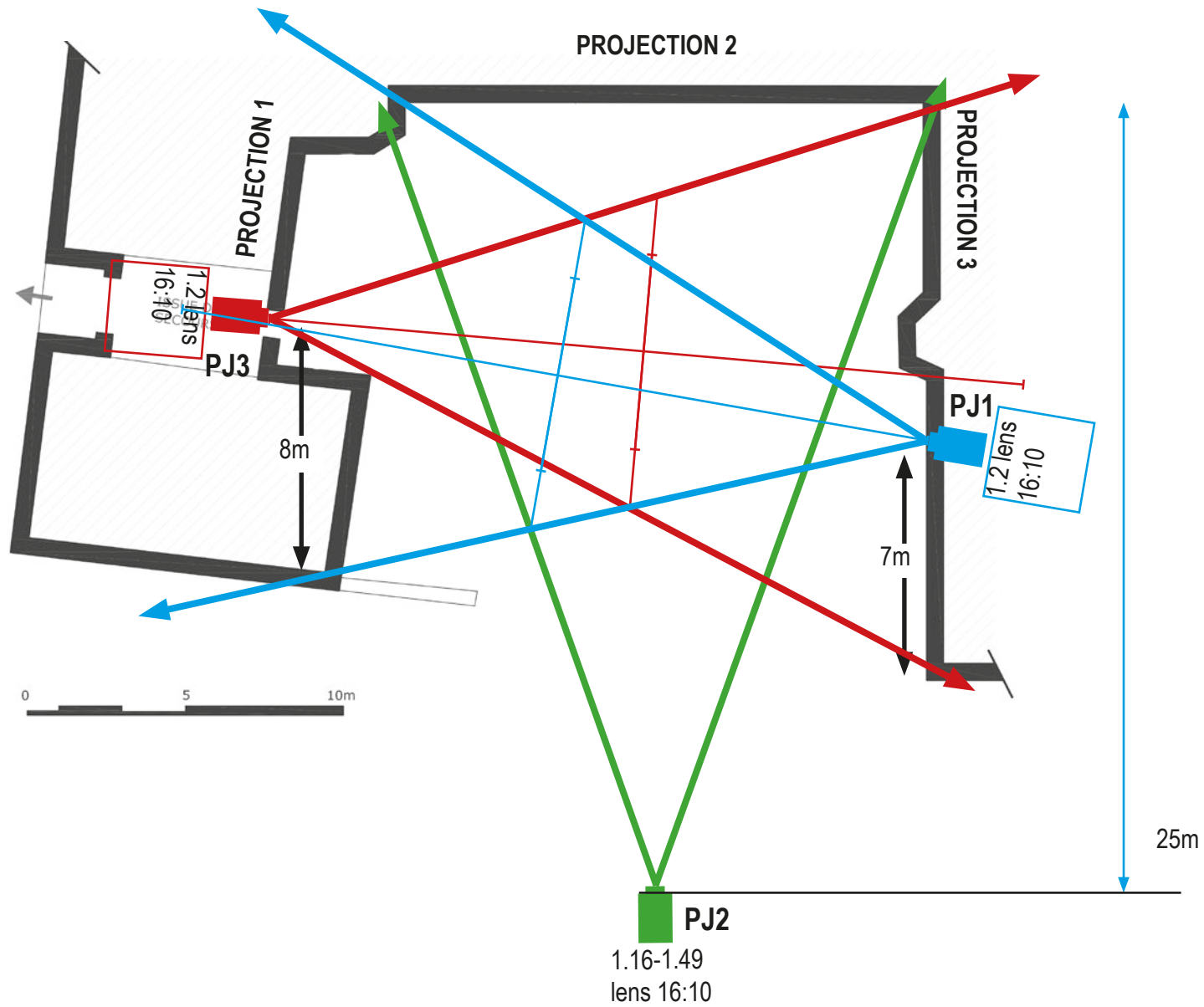
Don Ritter   director, system design and programming, mapping, video and sound editing
Mitch Martinez   camera

Produced and exhibited with support from Art Rock Festival /Association Wild Rose, France

Burning Too, architectural projection, Art Rock Festival, Saint-Brieuc, France

PROJECTION 2

PROJECTION 1

PROJECTION 3

1.2 lens
16:10

PJ3

8m

PJ1

1.2 lens
16:10

7m

0   5   10m

25m

PJ2

1.16-1.49
lens 16:10

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Wet • Montréal

architectural projection
mapped 4K video with 8 HD projectors
105 x 29 m (345 x 95 ft) projection
Pavillon Président-Kennedy (UQÀM), Montréal, Canada
Don Ritter, June 1- August 22, 2018

web page and documentary video: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/wet-montreal.html

presented by the Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles, Montréal

Don Ritter   concept, video and sound editing
Mitch Martinez   camera

Place des Arts, Montréal

Wet, architectural projection, Montreal, Canada

Burning Too • Ars Electronica

architectural projection
mapped 2K interactive video and sound with 1 HD projector and 2 channel audio
23 x 10m (75 x 33 ft) projection
Post City Tower at Ars Electronica Festival 2016, Linz, Austria
Don Ritter, 2016

web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/burningtoo-ars.html

Video projections of fire accompanied with sound cover the tower of the old postal building in Linz, a structure originally designed by architect Alfred Speer. The audio of the fire is determined by the visual activity of the fire, and the audio of the fireballs determine the distortions of the flames.

Don Ritter   system design and programming, mapping, video and sound editing
Mitch Martinez   camera

Produced with support from City University of Hong Kong and Ars Electronica.

For All The Museums That Forgot To Offer An Exhibition To Me

architectural projection
mapped 2.5K video and sound with 4 HD projectors and 2 channel audio
100 x 25 m (328 x 82 ft) projection
Daegu Culture and Arts Center, South Korea, 2015
Don Ritter, 2015

web page and documentary video:
http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/forgot.html

Don Ritter   video and sound editing, mapping
Mitch Martinez   camera
Park Soyoung   curator

Exhibited and produced with assistance from Daegu Culture and Arts Center.

For All The Museums That Forgot To Offer An Exhibition To Me, architectural projection, Daegu Culture and Arts Center, South Korea

Given

• series of five intelligent immersive video-sound installations
• exhibited as an architectural projection or gallery installation
• directed by public participants using body and hand gestures
• 6K video projection with 4 channel interactive audio, variable size
Don Ritter, 2020

• *Given* webpage with video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/given.html
  exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/these-essences-Ritter.pdf

description

Given enables the public to participate as symbolic characters within five chapters of a surrealistic narrative. One character wears a gas mask, another has a water-wheel for a head, and the third has a small gas burner for a head. Up to three persons can simultaneously use hand and body gestures to direct their characters to fly or walk within large projected environments of flowing substances:

  Given the water
  Given the mud
  Given the plants
  Given the fire
  Given the smoke

Given provides an aesthetic environment of relationships that flow between the participants and the objects and substances depicted visually and metaphorically. Participants can influence the position, orientation, and shape of their own character, the other characters and the various objects in the environments: frame structures, fences, spinning blades, gas burners and air vents. Navigation by the participants is accomplished without any sensing devices attached to their bodies.
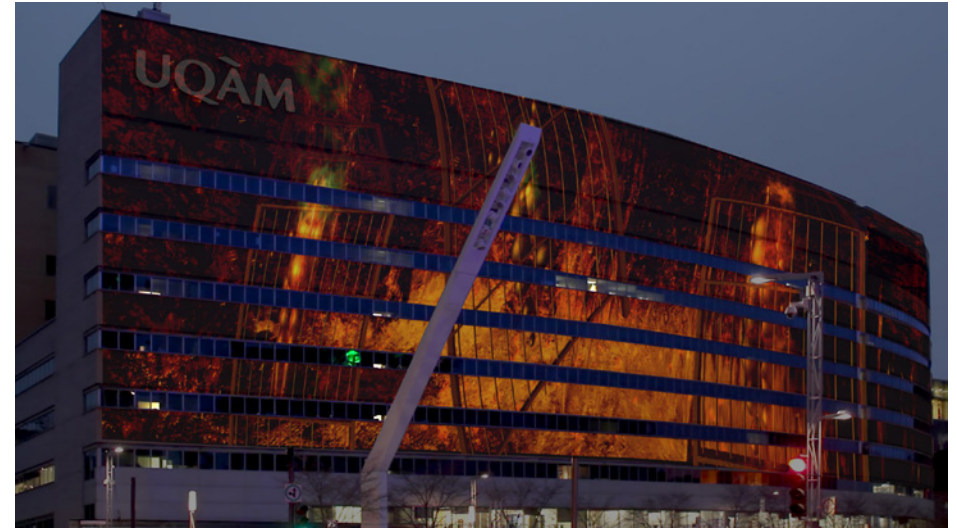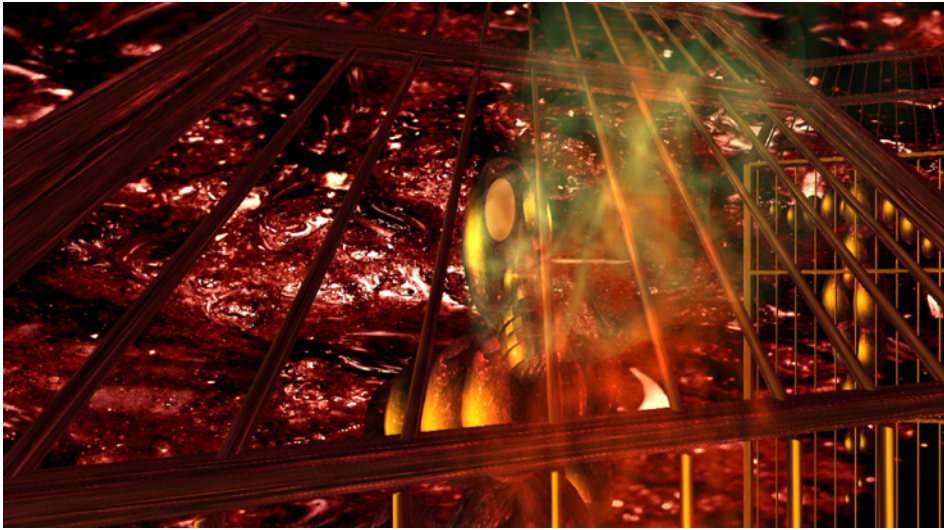
exhibition configurations

• exterior architectural projection with interactivity: video and sound (optional) controlled by public
• exterior architectural projection without interactivity and sound (optional)
• interior gallery installation with interactivity,: video and sound controlled by public
• interior gallery installation without interactivity

Technologies within *Given* include natural user interfaces, full-body motion tracking, motion recording and playback, artificial intelligence, interactive 3D animation, inverse kinematics, 6K interactive multi-channel video, multi-channel interactive audio, and video projection mapping.

Given the water as architectural projection

Given the mud, visualization as architectural projection (105 x 29 m / 345 x 95 ft)
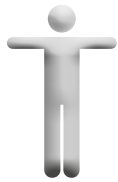

Given the mud, gallery exhibition, projection size: 11.6x2.5 m (38x8.2 ft)

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Character navigation, activation modes, and intelligence in Given

Participants control their characters using hand and body gestures while facing the projection and standing in one of three participation areas. The actions and visual features of the characters are determined by the control system through a continuous interpretation of the actions and physical characteristic of participants, including: 1. the sizes of the individual elements and overall height comprising a character are adjusted according to an analysis of a participant's height and limb sizes; 2. the actions and limbs of a character transform smoothly from a motion recording to the live motion of a participant (active mode); 3. after a person leaves an activation area, the associated character smoothly navigates back to its home position and waits for activation by another person (return home mode); 4. the overall form of a character changes after recognizing its close proximity to another character (nervous mode).

The information shown below describes the gestures required for activation and navigation of the different modes. The term 'person' refers to the human participant and 'character' refers to the 3D character controlled by that participant:

home mode
• mode initiated when no person is within a
  character's participation area
• character's motion is a playback from
  previous recordings of a person's motion

active mode
• mode initiated when a person enters a participation
  area
• character's overall motion is controlled by person
  until they leave the participation area; character will
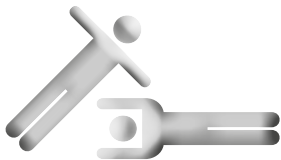 change to home mode after a person leaves

right hand control in flying mode

fly up

larger

fly left ← → fly right (x-axis)

smaller (z-axis)

fly down (y-axis)

initiate flying mode
• person holds both hands above head
  for two seconds while in home or landed mode

flying mode
• person directs flying of character along x,y and z axes using corresponding
  motion of the right hand
• character can be flown in front or behind other characters in 3D space (z axis)

end flying mode > initiate landed mode
• right hand held motionless for two seconds in any
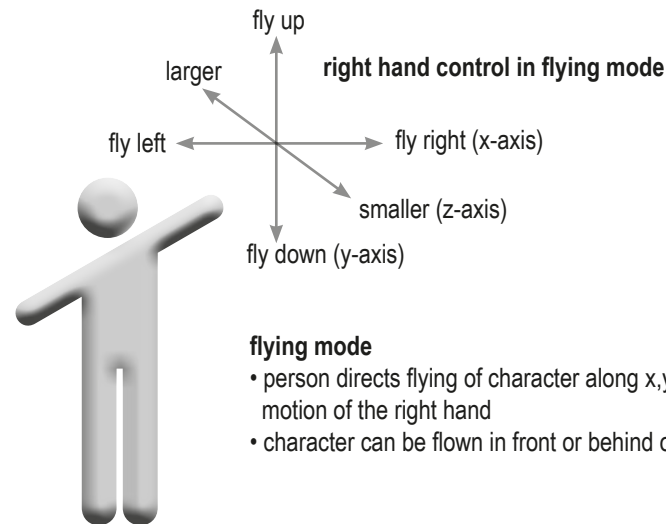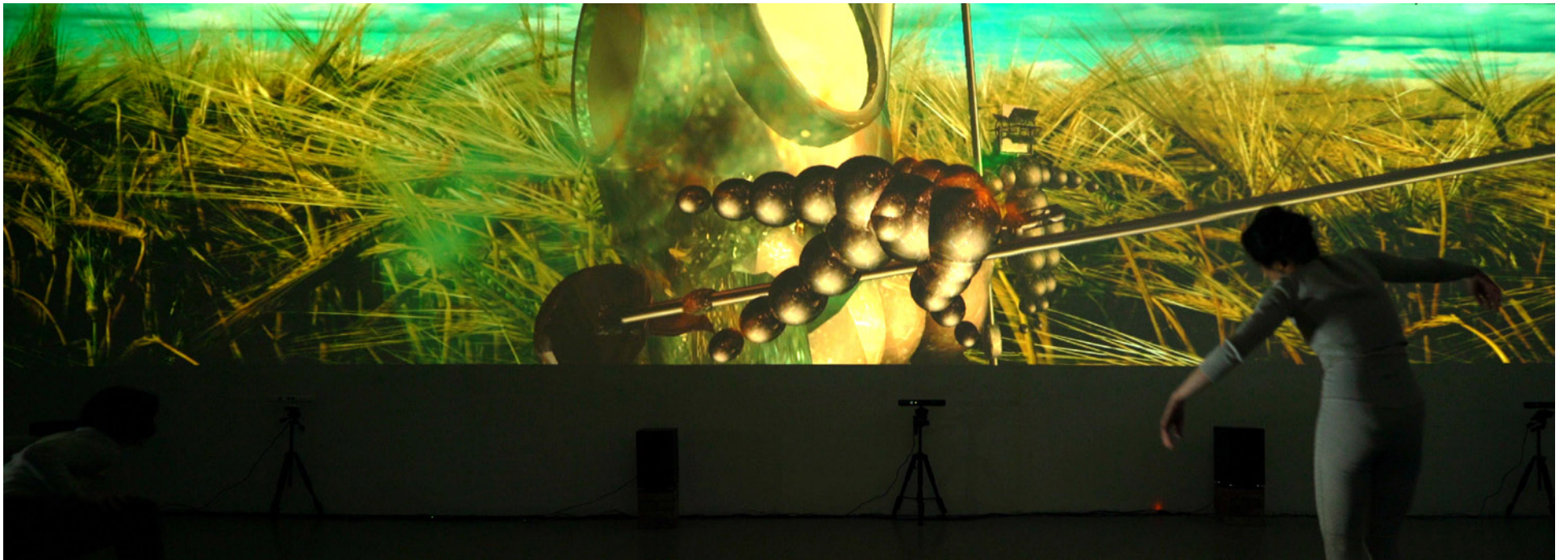 location ends the flying mode and changes to
  landed mode

landed mode
• character's motion controlled by person until person
  leaves the participation area
• similar to active mode, but character can be
  active at any location in the projection

nervous mode
• the various objects comprising a character
  will quickly shake and randomly change size when
  two or more characters are close to each other

return home mode
• a character will fly back to its home position after its
  person leaves the activation area

Given the plants, gallery exhibition, projection size: 11.6x2.5 m (38x8.2 ft)

Given the smoke, visualization as architectural projection (105 x 29 m / 345 x 95 ft)

Given the smoke, gallery exhibition, projection size: 11.6x2.5 m (38x8.2 ft)

Wet

video-sound installation
mapped 6K interactive video and sound with 3 HD projectors and 4 channel audio
17 x 4.5 m (56 x 15 ft) projection
Musée d'art et d'histoire de Saint-Brieuc, France
Don Ritter, 2017

Don Ritter	director, system design and programming, mapping, video and sound editing
Mitch Martinez	camera

Exhibition   Museum of Saint-Brieuc, France, 2017

Produced and exhibited with support from Art Rock Festival /Association Wild Rose, France

Wet presents viewers with a large close-up of slow moving water that is occasionally interrupted with water bubbles and splashing. Water has symbolized various concepts since antiquity, including the first form of matter, and the source and potentiality of everything.

web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/wet.html
exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Wet-installation-Ritter.pdf

detail of *Wet* at Museum of Saint-Brieuc, France

These Essences

4K metaphorical video with sound (7:16 min. continuous looped playback)
project webpage: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/these-essences.html
Don Ritter, 2022

A contemplative evolution of form and colour within various flowing substances,
each corresponding to a metaphor from antiquity.
These Essences = water(beginning) + mud(growth) + plants(living)
            + fire(destruction) + smoke(transcendence)
video projection width: 5m to 50m, projection height: variable
three exhibition formats available:
      • screen based video or theatre projection
      • gallery installation projection (single or multiple projectors)
      •architectural projection (single or multiple projectors)
exhibition document:
  http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/these-essences-Ritter.pdf
complete 4K video link: https://vimeo.com/653297112
visualization of gallery installation: https://vimeo.com/686544598
visualization of architectural projection: https://vimeo.com/691219544

master video format: 4K, 10 bit, DNxHR, 30 fps (7:16 min duration)
exhibition video format: 2K, 4K, variable codec, variable aspect ratio
credits: Don Ritter • camera, video and sound
            Thomas Dimuzio • music "Hinge Map Ridge"

These Essences, visualization of gallery installation

These Essences, visualization of architectural projection

Intersection

interactive sound installation
dark room, 10 x 13m (30 x 40 ft) 4 lane version or 20 x 15m (60 x 45 ft) 8 lane version
Don Ritter, 1993 / 2019 reconstruction

web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/intersection.html
exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Intersection_Ritter.pdf

Visitors encounter the sounds of 4 or 8 lanes of car traffic rushing across a completely dark space while a dimly lit exit sign on the other side of the room instructs them to venture into the random moving traffic. If visitors encounter a car in the darkness, it comes to a loud screeching halt with its engine idling in front of the visitor. When a visitor steps away from a stopped car, it quickly accelerates past the visitor and across the room, then it slowly fades out into the darkness. When a visitor remains in front of a stopped car for more than a few seconds, a continuous pile-up of cars is created with smashing sounds behind the stopped car. Hundreds of visitors can be in the installation at one time, each capable of affecting the traffic.

"Don Ritter's art tells the story of what technology is doing to us every day. His work makes visible the invisible force-field of technology. In Heidegger's sense, Ritter 'presences' technology. We are always being smashed by the freeway traffic of high technology. The overwhelming feeling is one of fear of the techno-unknown: chance bodies, chance sounds, chance accidents. Darkness hits, and you step off the curb.   *Arthur Kroker, The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche & Marx*

"Intersection creates a space which pivots the viewer between sensations of empathy and tension, presenting an environment that is a metaphor for both modern life and its accompanying anxieties."
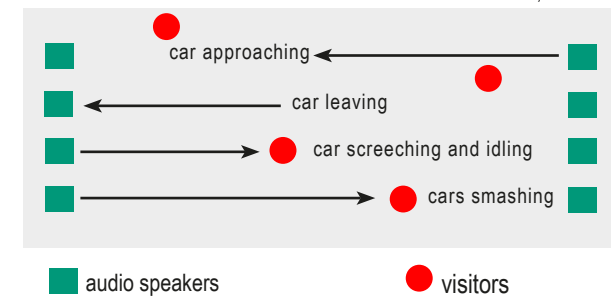*Bruce Johnson, Sound Symposium '94*

Intersection has been experienced by over 700,000 viewers in eight countries.

ZKM International Media Art Award Nomination, Karlsruhe, Germany, 2000
Comtec Art Anerkennung/Recognition, Dresden, Germany, 1999

top view of installation

10 x13m, 30 x 40ft

car approaching

car leaving

car screeching and idling

cars smashing

audio speakers   visitors

exhibitions of Intersection
Wonderspaces, San Diego, USA. 2019
CAN Foundation/Space Can, Seoul, South Korea. 2011
Les Chants Mécaniques, Lille, France. 2007
SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. 2005
Exploratorium, San Francisco, USA. 2005
The Works Festival, Edmonton, Canada. 2004
Art Future 2000, Taipei, Taiwan. 2000
Exit Festival, Créteil, France. 2000
Via Festival, Maubeuge, France. 2000
Kunst Haus/Comtec Art, Dresden, Germany. 1999
Metronòm, Barcelona, Spain. 1997
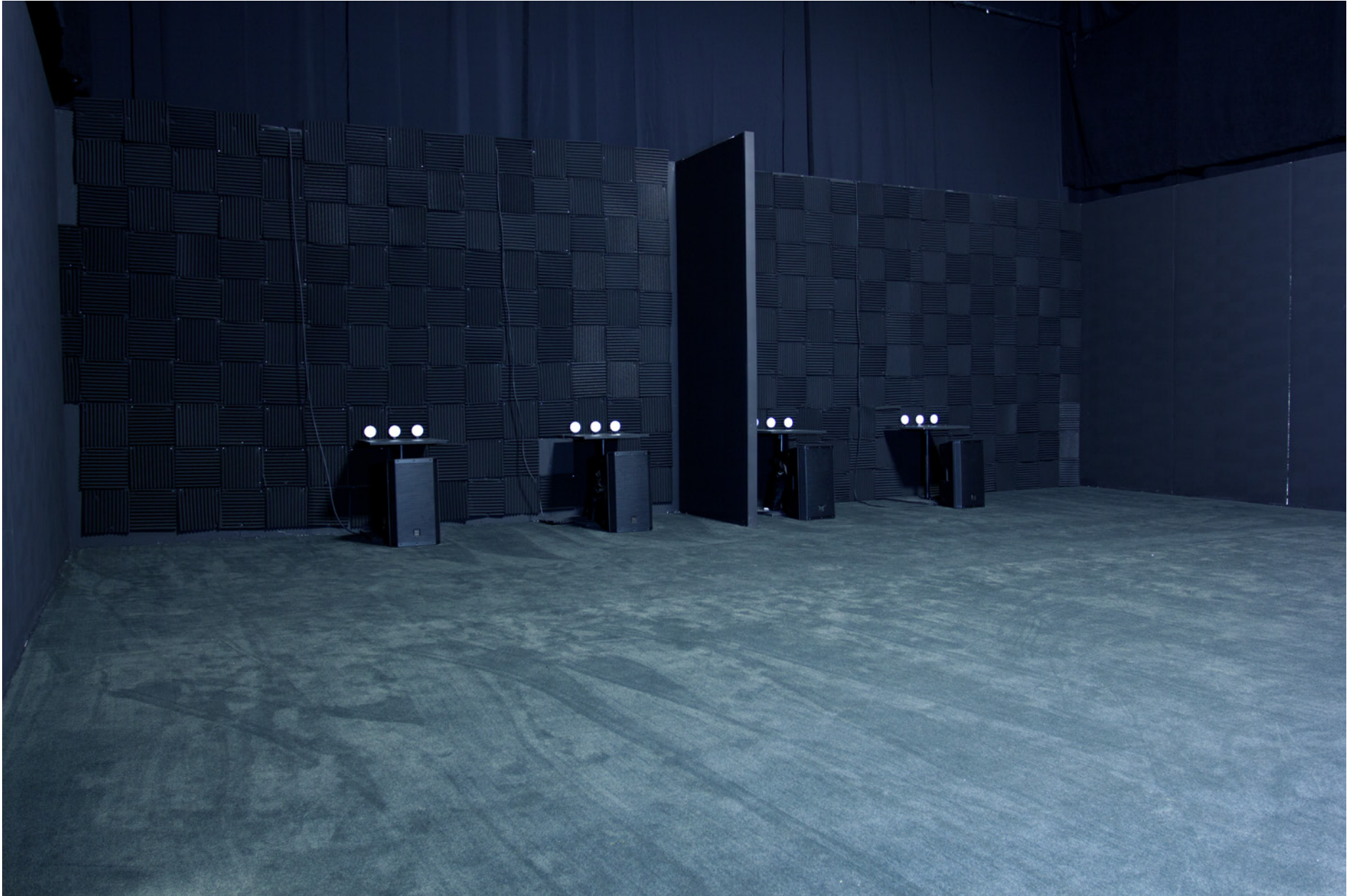New York Coliseum, New York City, USA. 1997
Ars Electronica Festival, Linz, Austria. 1996
Sonambiente Sound Festival, Berlin, Germany. 1996
Images du Futur, Montréal, Canada. 1995
Sound Symposium, St. John's, Canada. 1994
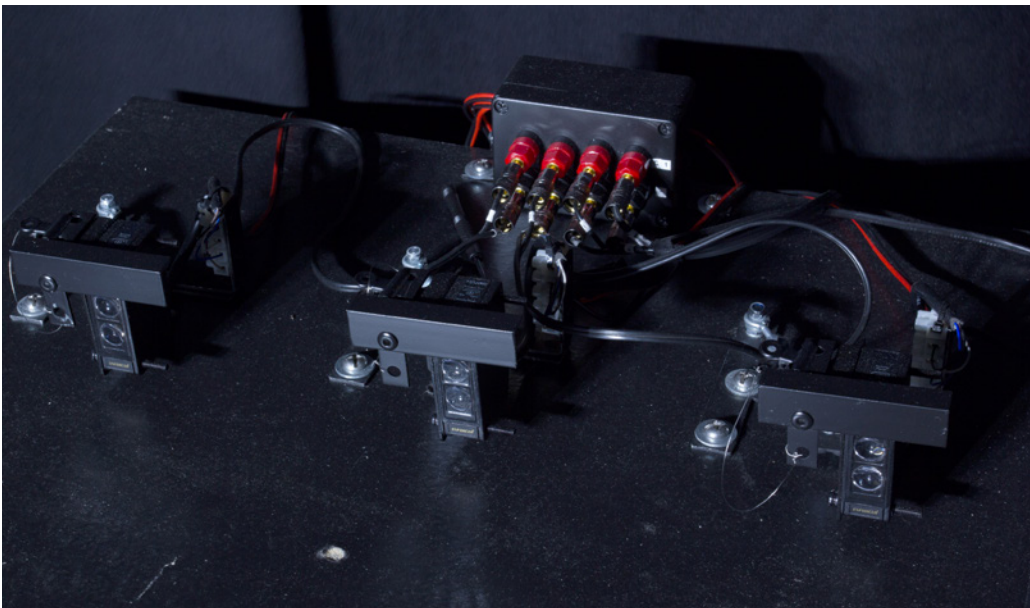European Media Art Festival, Osnabrück, Germany. 1993

Intersection detail without barriers and lights on, San Diego 2019

equipment not visible in the darkness

barricades stop visitors from walking into equipment in the darkness

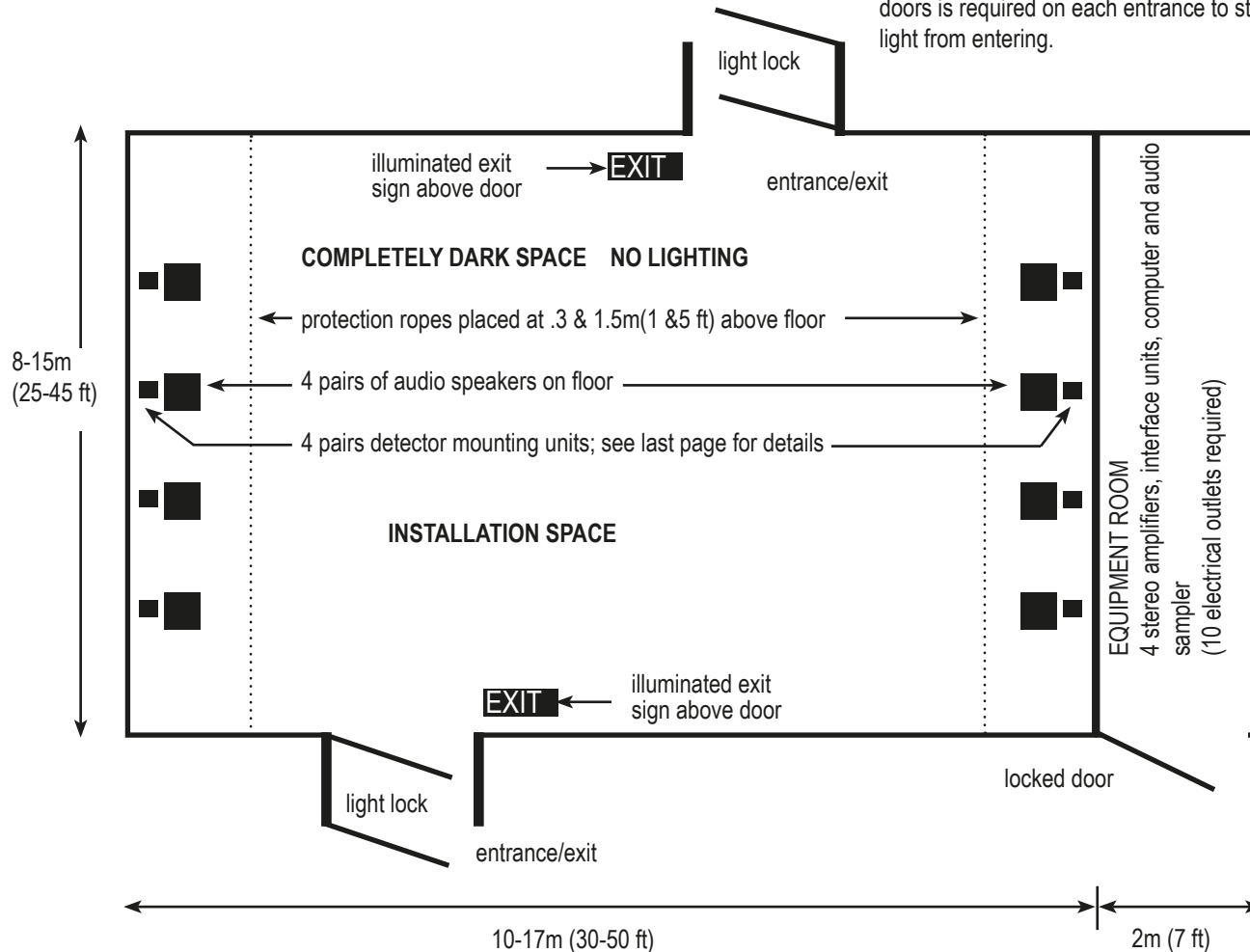detail of infra-red detectors for one lane

detail of infra-red detectors, speaker, and barricade

FLOOR PLAN 4 lane version

MINIMUM SPACE: 8x8m(25x25ft)
MAXIMUM SPACE 15x15m(45x45ft)
CEILING HEIGHT: 3m(9ft) or greater

ENTRANCES: Two entrances/exits are required, located approximately at the locations indicated. Doors should open in the directions indicated and be equipped with a spring to close when not in use. A pair of doors is required on each entrance to stop light from entering.

LIGHTING: No lighting is required in the installation space. Two small illuminated exit signs should be placed inside at a location above the entrance. Signs should be illuminated from within by a low wattage light(5W).

WALLS: Interior walls must be painted black or covered with black curtains. Walls should be covered in soft material or acoustic panels to restrict echo in the space.

DETECTOR MOUNTING UNITS: sturdy wood or metal mounting system required to hold 8 transmitters and receivers at approximately .7m(28in) above the floor. See last page for details.

PROTECTION ROPES: ropes, bars or fencing material must be located in front of the speakers and detectors to protect visitors from the equipment in the darkness. Distance from ropes to detectors must be at least 1m(3ft).

EQUIPMENT ROOM: This room should be equipped with electricity. Cables must run between the Equipment Room and Installation.

ELECTRICITY: required in the equipment room and at exit signs.

light lock

illuminated exit sign above door
EXIT
entrance/exit

COMPLETELY DARK SPACE   NO LIGHTING

← protection ropes placed at .3 & 1.5m(1 &5 ft) above floor →

← 4 pairs of audio speakers on floor →

← 4 pairs detector mounting units; see last page for details →

INSTALLATION SPACE

EQUIPMENT ROOM
4 stereo amplifiers, interface units, computer and audio sampler
(10 electrical outlets required)

EXIT ← illuminated exit sign above door

light lock

entrance/exit

locked door

8-15m (25-45 ft)

10-17m (30-50 ft)

2m (7 ft)

4

Vox Populi

interactive video and sound installation
5 x 8m (15 x 25ft) single screen version; 13 x 15m (40 x 45 ft) three screen version
Don Ritter, 2005-2009
web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/voxpopuli.html
exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Voxpopuli_Ritter.pdf

A large video projection of a crowd yells "speech, speech" and encourages visitors to speak from a lectern equipped with a microphone, while a teleprompter on the lectern provides the text of historical speeches. When a visitor delivers a speech through the microphone, the text scrolls on the teleprompter, the crowd responds with varying degrees of hostility, support or ridicule, and the visitor's speech is mixed with the screaming of the crowd through a sound system.
.
Within Vox Populi, anyone can adopt the role of leader and speak the words of Martin Luther King Jr, John F. Kennedy, George W. Bush, and others. Visitors are free to speak whatever they want through the microphone, but most read the speeches provided. The amount of confidence within the leader's voice will control various aspects of the installation, including the specific response of the crowd and scrolling of the text on the teleprompter. If a leader speaks continuously for four minutes at a high volume and tempo, the crowd remains enthusiastically supportive.

SITE Sante Fe, USA

Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

SITE Sante Fe, USA

exhibitions of Vox Populi
Mediations Biennale Poznan, Poland. 2010
Kunsträume Burg Eisenhardt, Belzig, Germany. 2009
ConcentArt, Berlin, Germany. 2009
Galerija Kibela, Maribor, Slovenia. 2009
Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. 2006
SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. 2005
NAME Festival, Lille, France. 2005
Jack the Pelican Presents, Brooklyn, USA. 2004

selected reviews
Indyke, Dottie (2005) "Surrounded By Art; SITE Santa Fe Show Makes Work Personal for Viewers,"
 Albuquerque Journal, September 23. USA.
  http://aesthetic-machinery.com/documents_pdf/Ritter_DottieIndyke.pdf
Indyke, Dottie (2006) "Dana Schutz, Charles Long, Don Ritter." ARTnews. March. USA.
  http://aesthetic-machinery.com/documents_pdf/ritter_artnews.pdf

O telephone

8 channel interactive/intelligent sound installation, 6 x 6 m (20 x 20 ft) or larger
Don Ritter, 2007 / 2023 versions
web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/otelephone.html
exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/o_telephone_Ritter.pdf

Visitors within *O telephone* experience a contemplative and collaborative sound environment comprised of ringing telephones and recordings of voices speaking 'om'. The installation recognizes various types of situations between the visitors and the phones, and responds with a corresponding multi-channel sound experience. Six modified 1960's telephones are arranged in a circle within a darkened room. Each telephone randomly invites visitors to pick up its handset through a distinctive ringing sound. If a viewer answers a ringing phone, a voice speaks 'om' through the handset and through the speaker in that phone. When multiple telephones are answered concurrently, the resulting voices combine and travel repeatedly (panning) through the answered phones, while dynamically adjusting the sound arrangement as viewers interact with the phones. The six telephones will eventually begin a random composition of panning voices if no ringing telephones are answered for an extended time, but this will stop when a viewer picks up a handset. The ancient symbolism of 'om' includes the sound of existence, the sound of the universe, and the sound that contains all other sounds.

exhibitions of O telephone
Hermes' Ear Festival. Brno House of Arts, Czech Republic. 2009
Les Chants Mécaniques, Lille, France. 2007
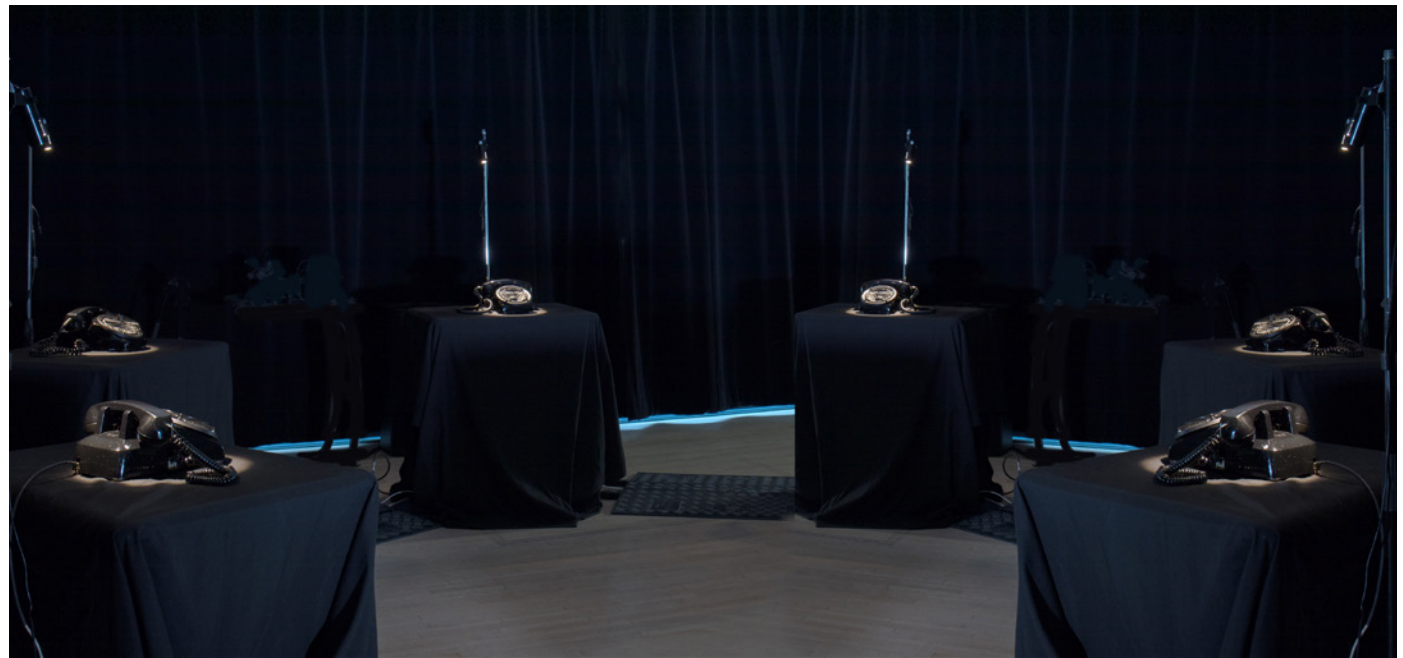Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin, Germany. 2007

selected reviews
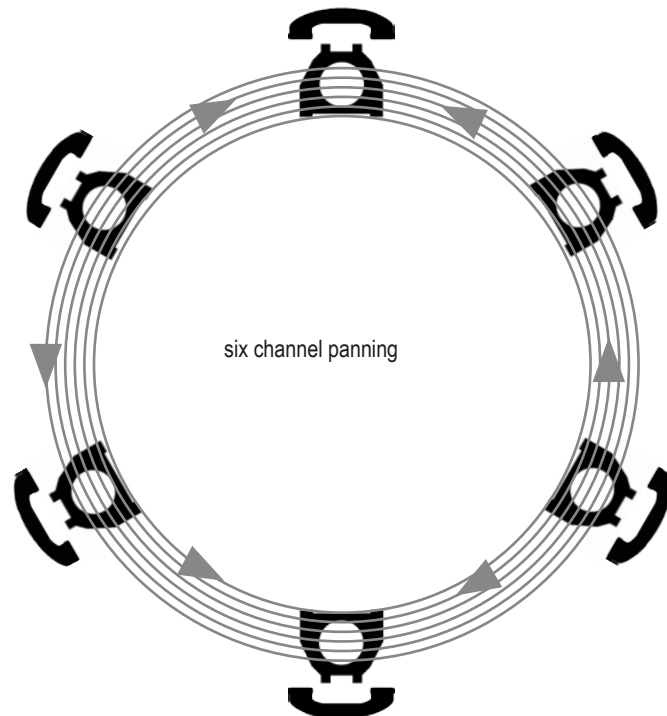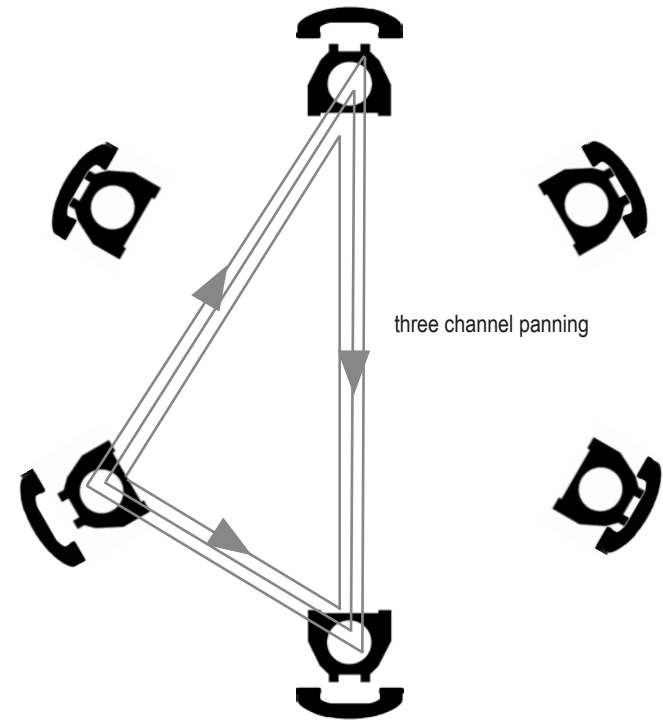Cseres, Jozef (2008) "Co ze se to dnes deje se zvuky v prostoru?"
  His Voice, #2. Prague, Czech Rep.
Debatty, Régine (2007) "o telephone" we-make-money-not-art.com. Berlin, Germany.
Cseres, Jozef (2006) "Don Ritter" Hermes' Ear.
  Nové Zámky: Kassák Centre for Intermedia Creativity. Slovakia.

three channel panning

six channel panning

activity within O telephone

silent mode (individual phone is not ringing): An individual phone will produce a dial tone if its handset is picked up at this time.

ring mode (individual phone rings after a random pause): When in ring mode, a phone will produce an om sound after its handset is picked up while the phone is ringing. If more than one ringing phone is answered, the resulting om sounds will dynamically pan through all the answered phones.

spontaneous composition mode: If no phones are answered for three minutes, a new om composition will spontaneously begin with multi-channel panning. If any of the handsets are picked up at this time, all om sounds will stop and the phones will eventually go into ring mode. During spontaneous composition mode, the composition will stop every seven minutes and go into ring mode.

V e s t e d

interactive video-sound-light installation, 12 x 19 m (39 x 62 ft)
Don Ritter, 2010
web page and documentary video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/vested.html
exhibition document: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Vested_Ritter.pdf

Visitors to the installation are invited to put on a specialized military vest and walk in front of a large video projection of well-known international buildings. As the vested person walks within the installation, they are able to navigate through panoramas of prestigious art museums, political buildings of the G8, ancient buildings, towers, or well-known churches and temples. The vested person is also tracked and illuminated by two green spotlights, while live video of the vested person is overlaid with the panorama. By pressing the red button on the vest, the person can trigger large explosions with sound. Vested is a social portrait of a Schadenfreude, of humanity's desire to be entertained by human tragedy.

exhibitions of Vested
Cultural Olympiad, Winter Olympics, Vancouver, Canada. 2010
Move – New European Media Art, Halle-Saale, Germany. 2009

selected reviews
Ravasani, Donya. (2010) "Terror als Kunst." Kulturzeit, 3sat TV broadcast, Berlin, Germany.
  http://aesthetic-machinery.com/videos_Kulturzeit.html
Kluszczynski, Ryszard W. (2009) "Don Ritter's Vested: Action and Responsibility."
  http://aesthetic-machinery.com/documents_pdf/Ritter_Vested_Kluszczynski.pdf
Behnk, Judith (2009) "Move - New European Media Art." ART: Das Kunstmagazin,
  http://www.art-magazin.de/kunst/23088/werkleitz_festival_halle

Vested, interactive video-sound-light installation, Move – New European Media Art, Halle-Saale, Germany.

"Ritter's installation applies technological mechanisms so as to reveal cultural, internalized ones that pretend to be the mechanisms of an individual free will. By unveiling them, he offers recipients an opportunity to overcome them."

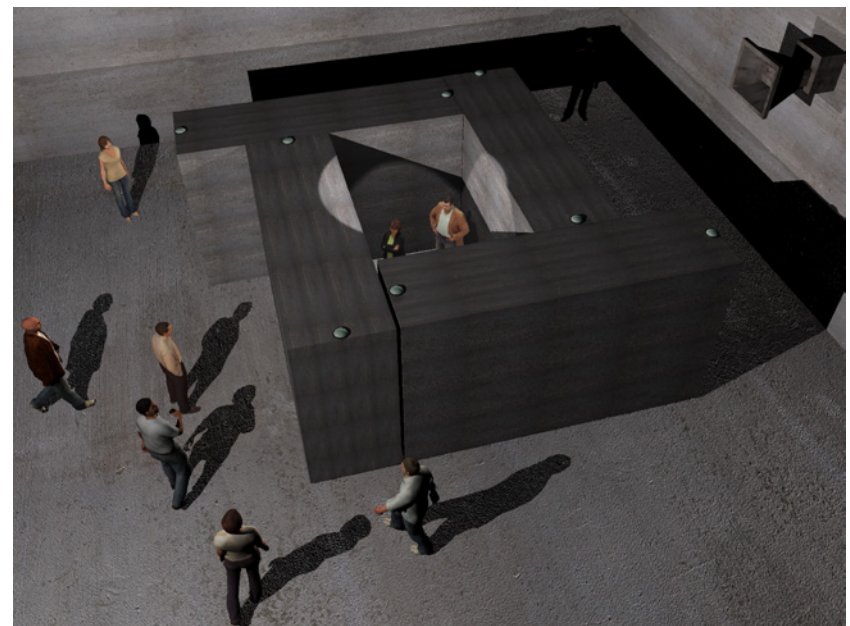Ryszard W. Kluszczynski, Academy of Fine Arts, Lodz, Poland

Bunkered (Visualization)

interactive architecture installation, 15 x 15 m
unrealized project 2011
Don Ritter

Visitors enter a large room that contains four inner walls, four horn audio speakers, and a spotlight slowly scanning the floor that creates a 5m moving circle of light. The spotlight will stop scanning if the viewers walk into its circle of light. If these viewers remain motionless for a few seconds, the four inner walls will slowly move towards them, accompanied with groaning sounds. If the viewers begin moving again, the moving walls stop their approach and slowly move back toward the borders of the room. If these viewers remain motionless in the circle of light for a few minutes, the moving walls will approach them until the viewers are completely enclosed within the four walls, accompanied with the sounds of air raid sirens playing through the speakers. Any motion by the enclosed viewers will cause the sirens to stop and the walls to move outwards. Viewers who are outside of the circle of light do not affect the motion of the walls.
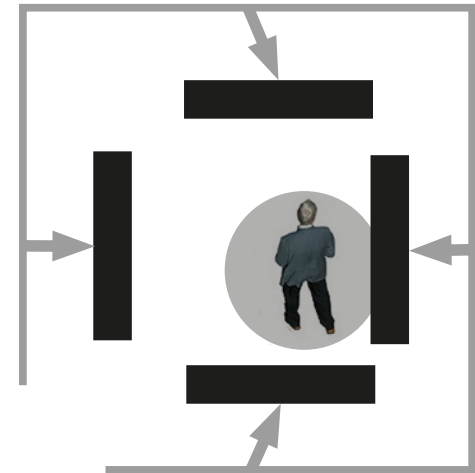
Bunkered (Visualization): Activity within installation
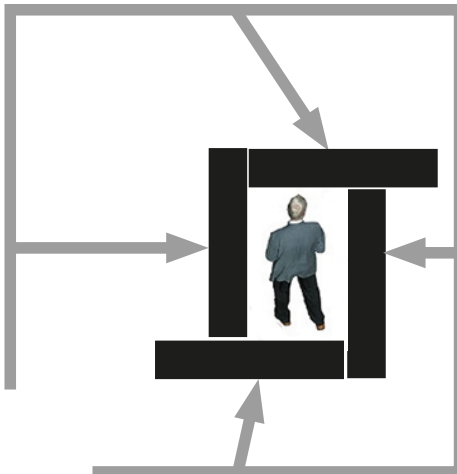

search: moving walls are in position against the actual walls of the room; the spotlight slowly scans the room if no viewers are within the active area (circular area created by a spotlight on the floor)
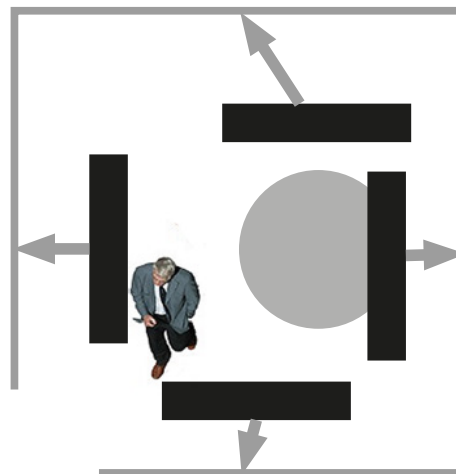

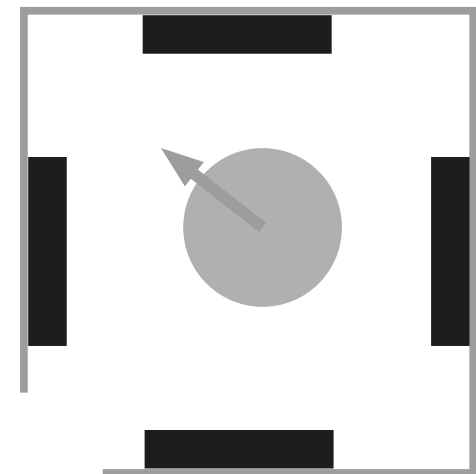**find:** the spotlight stops scanning the room if one or more viewers are within the active area

approach: the four moving walls move towards the centre of the spotlight if the viewers within the active area remain motionless; each wall provides a distinctive groaning sound

bunker: the moving walls will completely enclose the viewers, accompanied with the sounds of air raid sirens, if the viewers within the active area remain motionless for at least two minutes

retreat: the moving walls move toward the borders of the room if one or more viewers within the active area started moving
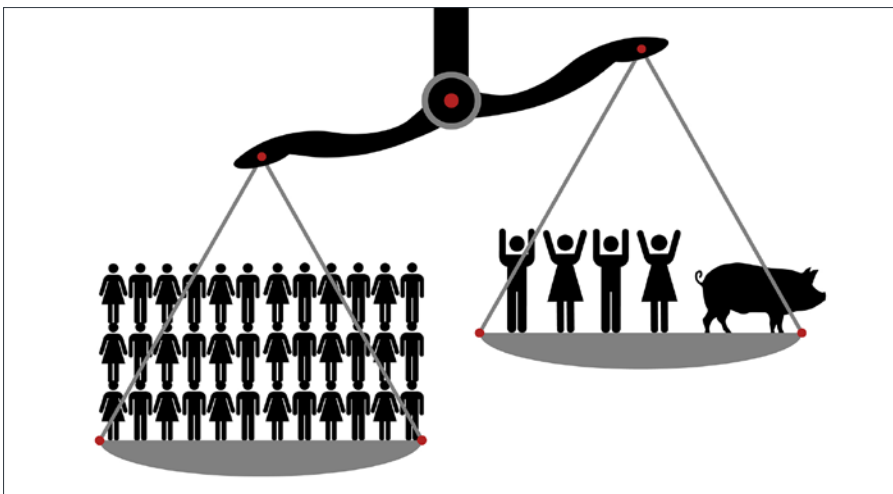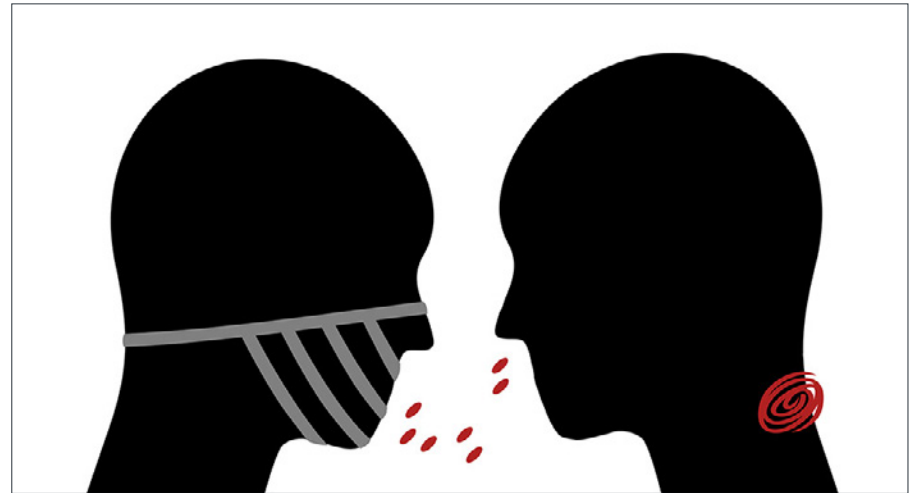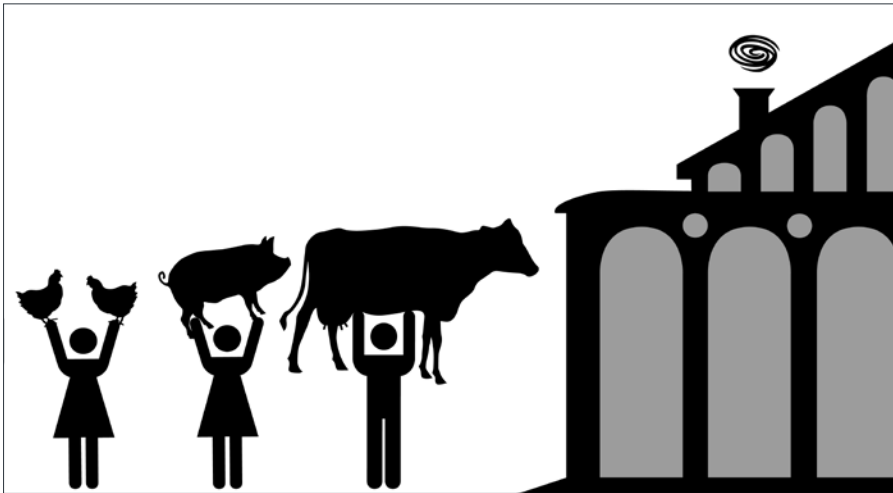

search: spotlight slowly scans the room

Human Humans

computer animation (2:45 min.)
theatre projection or gallery installation
Don Ritter, 2020

Don Ritter: concept, animation and sound editing
Thomas Dimuzio: background music
web page and video: https://aesthetic-machinery.com/human-humans.html

Human Humans is an ironic allegory about a pig, a cow and a philosopher. The animation is comprised of four short narratives, each having a visual style reminiscent of road signs. The animation and text allude to humanity's transformation from an agrarian lifestyle to a globalized existence based on consumerism, mass media, impudence, aggression and discrimination. Each narrative ends with a cow emblazoned with a prohibitive text message.

DO NOT AVOID THE FREEDOM
TO ACT LIKE A MORON IN PUBLIC

Unnecessary Signage

38 silk screen prints on aluminum, QR codes, and online news media
each print 41 x 58 cm 41 x 58 cm (16 x 23 in); edition of 15
Don Ritter, 2015
exhibition document with complete print series: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Unnecessary-Signage_Ritter-all.pdf
web page and documentary video: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/unnecessary-signage.html

Unnecessary Signage resembles a series of metal road signs depicting humanity's struggle with morality and the human condition. The signs contain prohibitive instructions and pictographs referring to birth, childhood, love, marriage, parenting, social recognition, or death. Each sign is associated with an actual event that occurred within the last 30 years, such as a woman who murdered her husband eight days after their marriage (Do Not Push Husband Off Cliff During Honeymoon), or a man who was found alone in his house 15 years after dying (Do Not Be Too Disappointed When You Die Alone In A Dark Room). A QR code beneath each sign provides a link to an associated news article that viewers can access through their smartphones.

Exhibitions can include any number of prints from the series.

Exhibitions of Unnecessary Signage
University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria. 2016
AlbumArte, Rome, Italy. 2015
Siggraph-Asia, Kobe, Japan. 2015
School of Creative Media at City University of Hong Kong. 2015

DO NOT BECOME
TOO DISCOURAGED
AFTER BEING BORN

DO NOT PLACE
NEWBORN BABY
ON STREET WITH
HOUSEHOLD TRASH

DO NOT BEAT
CHILD TO DEATH
FOR SEEMING GAY

DO NOT PUT
TOO MUCH PLASTIC
ADDITIVE IN BABY
MILK POWDER

DO NOT STONE
DAUGHTER TO DEATH
FOR MARRYING
THE MAN SHE LOVES

DO NOT RAPE TEEN
GIRLS AND HANG
THEIR DEAD BODIES
FROM TREES

DO NOT BRING
ASSAULT RIFLES
INTO FAMILY
RESTAURANTS

DO NOT PUSH
HUSBAND OFF
CLIFF DURING
HONEYMOON

DO NOT SINK
SHIP WITH
YOUNG STUDENTS
ON BOARD

Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, Hong Kong, 2015

Sustained Signage

Twelve silk screen prints on aluminum, each 41 x 58 cm (16 x 23 in); edition of 15
computer animation in four sections (2:34 min. total, each section 30-40 sec.)
Don Ritter, 2016-2017

Sustained Signage is an artistic project portraying the concerns of sustainability, including the destruction of the Earth through war, overuse of natural resources, global warming, and the exploitation of workers. The project consists of four short computer animated narratives and twelve silk-screen prints on metal, each having a pictographic style resembling road signs. The imagery and prohibitive text provide viewers with evocative narratives and ambiguous instructions, such as a pictograph of the Earth being cooked in a frying pan then followed by the text DO NOT OVERCOOK YOUR PLANET IF YOU WANT TO KEEP EATING IT. A warning for nuclear war is depicted as absurdly sized bombs exchanged between continents that obliterate the Earth within seconds, then followed by the text DO NOT IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT ONE. The prints and animations have been exhibited at galleries in Vienna and Hong Kong, and the individual animation sections promoted through YouTube in Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Toronto, where they were viewed 773,000 times.

webpage with animation: http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/sustained-signage.html
animation on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSH0bbHsqKWsBba6IbBpMQA
exhibition document with complete print series:

http://www.aesthetic-machinery.com/documents/Sustained-Signage_Ritter.pdf

Exhibitions and screenings
Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, Hong Kong, 2021.
Balance-Unbalance conference, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2018
University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria, 2016
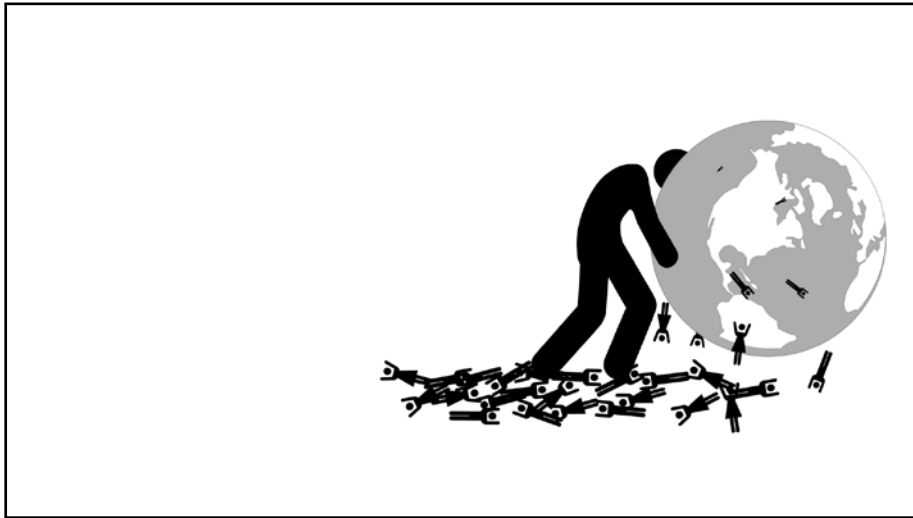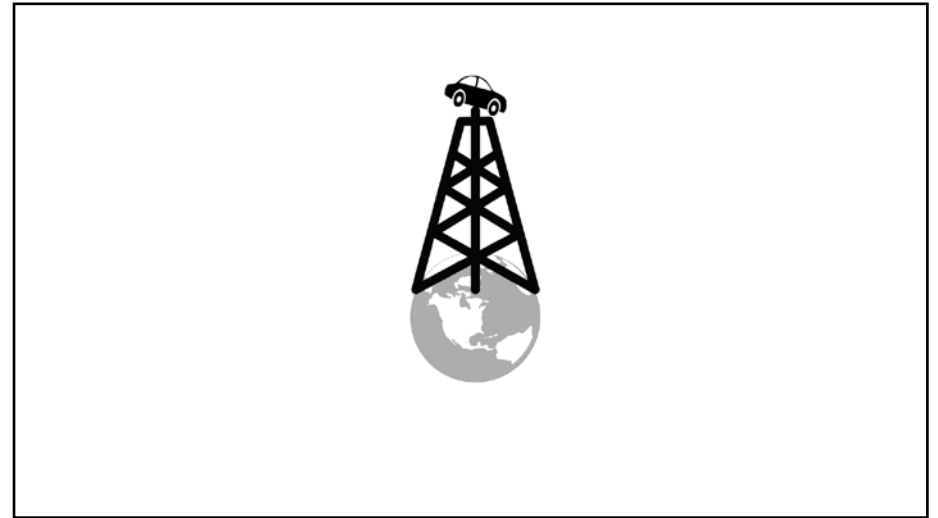City University of Hong Kong, 2016

DO NOT OVERCOOK
YOUR PLANET
IF YOU WANT
TO KEEP EATING IT

print from the Sustained Signage series

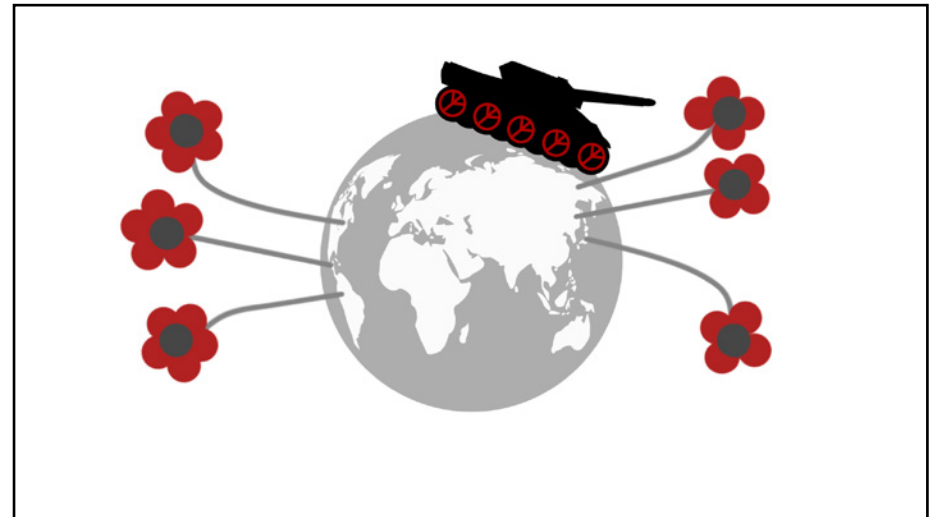*Sustained Signage at University of Applied Arts Vienna with curator Harald Kraemer*

frame from Sustained Signage #1 animation (0:42)

frame from Sustained Signage #2 animation (0:40)

frame from Sustained Signage #3 animation (0:44)

frame from Sustained Signage #4 animation (0:52)
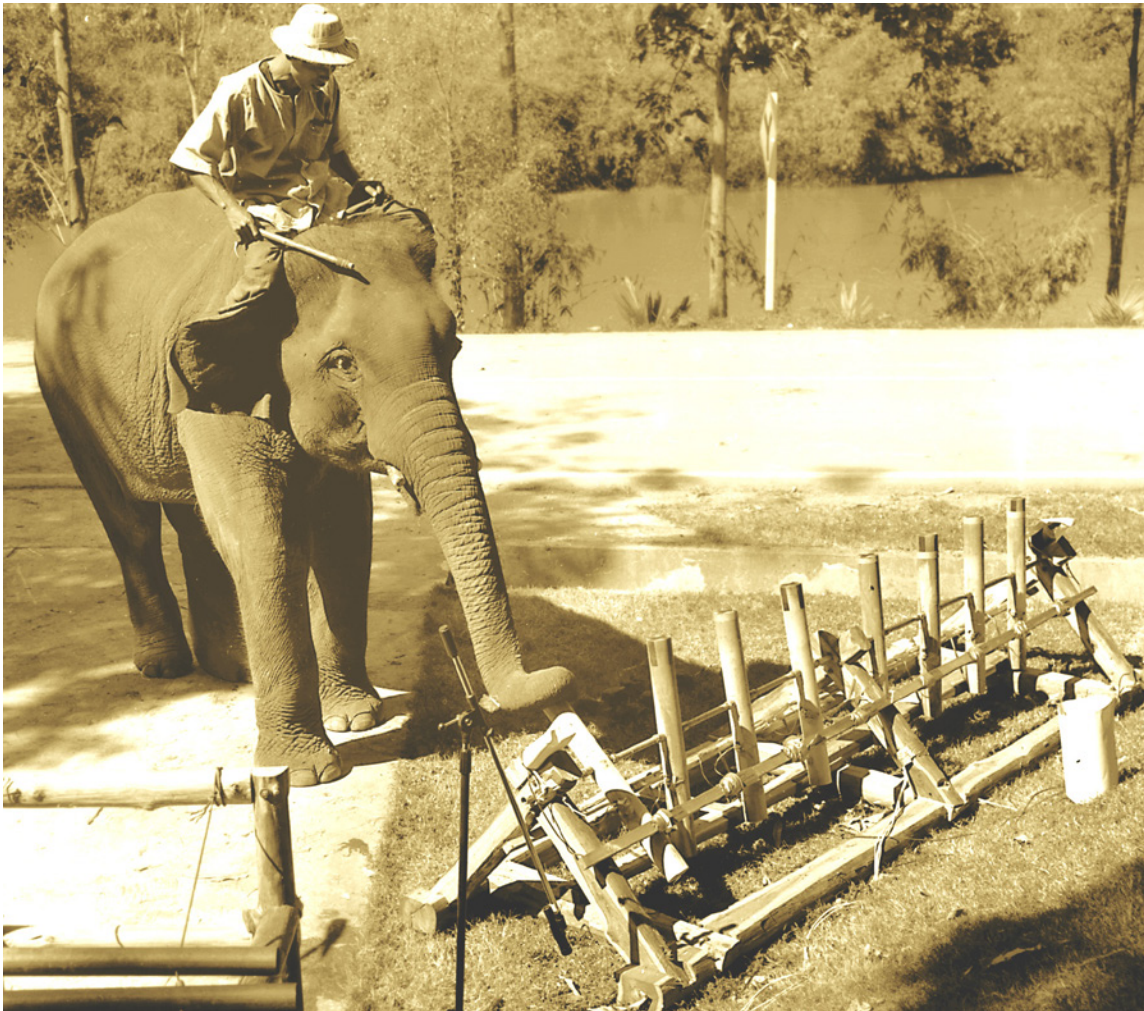
Elephant Keyboard

interactive music instrument for elephants
1 x 1 x 3 m (3 x 3 x 9 ft), 450Kg (1000lb)
Don Ritter, 2000
Thai Elephant Conservation Center, Lampang, Thailand
web page and online video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/elephant.html

photos by Neil Budzinski

Fit

interactive video & sound installation, 5 x 9 m (15 x 18 ft)
Don Ritter, 1993
web page and online video: http://aesthetic-machinery.com/fit.html

When a viewer moves in front of the projection and into the spotlight, the video projection of the aerobics instructor begins exercising to music. If a viewer stops moving, the instructor also stops exercising. If a viewer exercises non-stop, the music and the instructor's exercising will increase in tempo until an absurdly fast level is reached. Although the aerobics instructor is technically controlled by the physical motion of audiences, viewers discover that they are psychologically controlled by the instructor as they feel compelled to exercise progressively faster.

exhibitions of Fit
Academy of Fine Arts, Krakow, Poland. 2008
Taipei Gallery, New York, USA. 1999-2000
New York Coliseum, New York, USA. 1997
Pratt Institute, New York, USA. 1997
SAM Museum, Osaka, Japan. 1994-95
Images du Futur, Montréal, Canada. 1993

Orpheus

Orpheus interactive software: video controlled by live music
software development by Don Ritter, 1988-1993

Prix Ars Electronica Honourary Mention for Orpheus: Current Diversions,
interactive art category Linz, Austria. 1991

Don Ritter, interactive video performance using Orpheus, Art Institute of Chicago, 1990

Orpheus is an interactive video sequencing software providing real
time control and synchronization of digital video with any form of live or
sequenced music. The intelligent music listener within the software permits
interactive control of video using a real time music categorization according
to pitch, loudness, note duration, rest length and tempo. Between 1988 and
1990, Lewis and Ritter presented over 20 interactive video performances
controlled by Lewis's improvised trombone. Their work is documented in the
film, *On The Edge: Improvisation in Music* (1992), produced by Channel 4,
London, UK.

George Lewis and Don Ritter, 1990

selected interactive video-music performances by Ritter and Lewis
Art Institute of Chicago, USA. 1990
Verona Jazz Festival, Verona, Italy. 1990
The Kitchen, New York City, USA. 1990
Festival International Musique Actuelle Victoriaville, Victoriaville, Canada. 1990
Computer Music Festival, Seattle, USA. 1990
A Space, Toronto, Canada. 1990
New Music America 1989, New York City, USA. 1989
Alternative Museum, New York City, USA. 1989
Media Lab/MIT, Cambridge, USA. 1988

Ritter's studio, Berlin, 2008