Akademie der Künste 300th year anniversary exhibition, Berlin, Germany
Klangkunst (Sound Art) *Sonambiente* group exhibition August 9-Sept 8, 1996
event: Don Ritter, exhibition of Intersection installation, Sophiensaele, Berlin

klangkunst

Prestel München · New York

Herausgegeben von der AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE Berlin

laurie anderson sam auinger / bruce odland llorenç barber andres bosshard

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gunter demnig ulrich eller brian eno terry fox paul fuchs hans gierschik

gün josefine günschel matt heckert felix hess gary hill stephan von huene

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alvin lucier christian marclay benoît maubrey robin minard fátima miranda

gordon monahan david moss max neuhaus ed osborn roberto paci dalò / isabella bordoni

künstler und projekte

nam june paik charlemagne palestine paul panhuysen yufen qin martin riches

don ritter jon rose nicola sani / mario sasso sarkis leo schatzl dieter schnebel

sodomka / breindl laetitia sonami kyra stratmann akio suzuki ana torfs mark trayle

trimpin peter vogel red white young farmers claim future achim freyer / alvin curran

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don ritter

1959	geboren in Camrose, Kanada; lebt seit 1989 in Montréal.
1977-79	Studium der Elektrotechnik am Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Edmonton.
1982-86	Studium der bildenden Kunst und der Psychologie an der University of Waterloo.
1986-88	Studium der visuellen Kommunikation am MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Anfangs Maler und Bildhauer; seit 1986 interaktive Videoperformances und Installationen.

Performances und Installationen (Auswahl):

1989	Underground Orpheus, The Music Gallery, Toronto
1990	The Empty Chair, The Kitchen, New York
1990	Beat & Cloudmouth, ›New Music America‹, Montréal
1994-95	FIT, Sam Museum, Osaka

literatur: ›Don Ritter. Interactive Video as a Way of Life‹ in **Music Works**, 56, 1993, S. 48-54

Die Performances und interaktiven Installationen des kanadischen Künstlers Don Ritter verschmelzen Technologie und menschliches Handeln zu einer lebendigen, kurzlebigen visuellen Kunstform. Ritters Arbeiten lassen das Publi- einer vierspurigen Straße auf die Anwesenheit von Zuschauern auf dem Platz. Infrarot-Sensoren bestimmen die Position des Besuchers und verändern den Klang der ankommenden Autos entsprechend. Dagegen erfordert TV

English translation: The live performances and interactive installations of Canadian artist Don Ritter fuse technology and human action to create a “living” and ephemeral visual art form. Ritter’s work allows the audience to become an active participant in the creative process, liberating the spectator from the passive manner of observation required by most visual media.

Ritter began his career in the fine arts as a painter and sculptor. His electronic art work incorporates his disparate interests in psychology, human interface design, engineering and his longstanding fascination with technology. In the 1980’s, Ritter began collaborating with musicians and developed his Orpheus software which allows imagery to be “played” like an instrument. This unique software provides real-time video imagery in response to music or MIDI data. When combined with improvised music, Orpheus permits the simultaneous creation and experience of a work of art.

Like his live performances, Ritter’s interactive installations allow the instantaneous control of sound and/or imagery by a person in real time. They are, in their very essence, collaborative works of art. Installations like his series “Captured Moments” are dependent on the viewer to determine their performance. In the installation “Intersection”, the sound of cars along four lanes of traffic reacts to the presence of visitors in the space. Infrared sensors determine the position of the visitor, and alter the sound of the oncoming cars accordingly. Similarly, “TV Guides” requires that spectators remain completely motionless if they wish to watch broadcast television; when sensors detect even the slightest movement, the television screen fades to black, the sound fades out and a text message appears, requesting that the viewers remain still.

In Ritter’s installations, the spectator is enveloped by technology, and becomes as much a part of the work as the sensors, speakers and video projection equipment. Human action is melded with technological systems creating an symbiotic and cybernetic hybrid. By becoming part of the machine the spectator brings Ritter’s art to life.

In a sense, these installations collapse the concepts of spectacle (Debord) and surveillance (Foucault). The performance of Ritter’s spectacle is dependent on the actions of the spectator, but also on the surveillance of that same spectator. The location and motion of each visitor to the space is observed by sensors, triggering a response in the installation. Ironically, in these works, it is ultimately through surveillance that the spectator is given power over the art.

Julie Crysler, 1996

Julie Crysler is a Canadian journalist and a published poet. She is currently a producer for CBC Radio One (2023)

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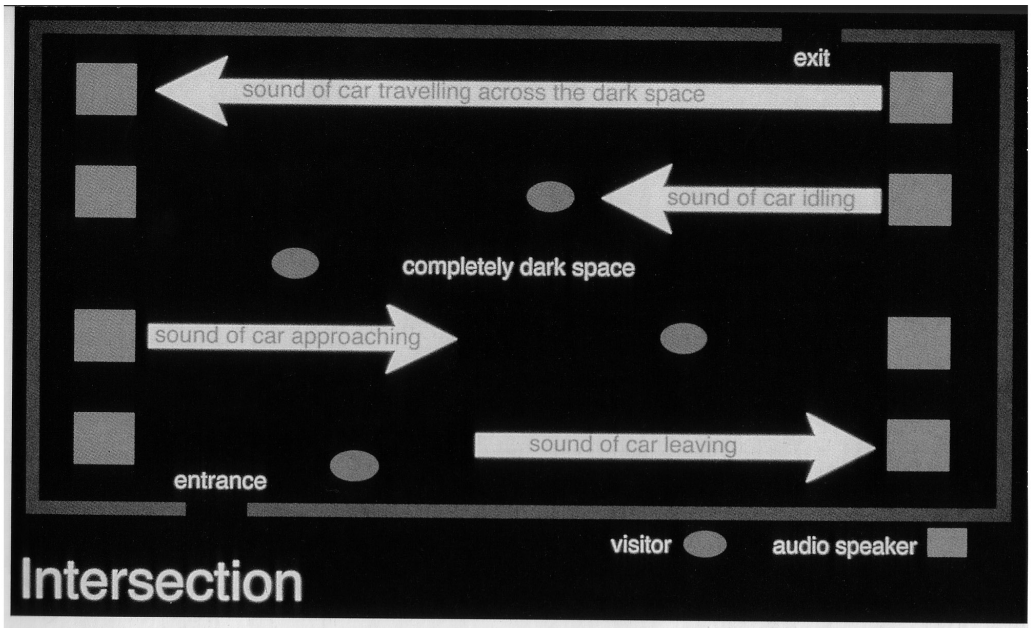

Intersection, 1993-95; unten: eine der beiden Lautsprecherreihen bei eingeschaltetem Licht

Die Installation Intersection präsentiert dem Besucher Klänge von schnell fahrenden Autos in einem abgedunkelten Raum. Die Illusion von vier unsichtbaren Fahrstreifen wird mit vier Lautsprecherpaare

Die Klanginstallation Intersection gehört zu einer Serie von drei Installationen mit dem Titel Captured Moments. In dieser interaktiven Video- und Klanginstallationsserie werden vier gebräuchliche Interaktionstypen

English translation: The installation Intersection presents visitors with sounds of speeding cars traveling across a completely dark exhibition space. The illusion of traffic is created using various car sounds which are played through four pairs of stereo speakers placed at either end of four invisible lanes of traffic. If a visitor stands in a lane when a car approaches, this car will "screech" to a halt. This "stopped" car will remain stationary with its engine idling, though traffic will continue in the other lanes. When a visitor leaves a lane containing a "stopped" car, this car will quickly accelerate and continue traveling across the space. If a visitor remains standing in a lane with a "stopped" car, subsequent cars traveling down that lane will "smash" into the stopped car like on the Autobahn. Like an actual freeway, "safe areas" exist between each lane where a visitor may stand without affecting the flow of traffic. An unlimited number of visitors can be accommodated at one time.

Captured Moments is a series of interactive video and sound installations that presents visitors with four types of common interactions: interactions with people, interactions with nature, interactions with machines, and interactions with mass media. Sound and imagery occur continuously within these installations, even in the absence of visitors. When visitors are present, however, they instantly influence the installations. Specific sounds and imagery are presented according to the number, location, movement, lack of movement and temporal activity of the visitors. The installation within the series which deals with interactions between people and machines is "Intersection."