The fluidity of space

/about the hardness of materials.../

A light / video image is projected on the dynamic (motorized) reflective object ("the reflector") hanging from the ceiling. The reflected light is scattered all over the place. The reflector is changing its shape according to the sound in the space (the computer generated sound). The sound changes the computer generated video image.

The relatively simple projected image is changed - made more complex by the intervention of the reflecting object and scattered all around the space. This creates a kind of all-enveloping medium. In the history of technology notions of such non-tangible materiality were called ether (as in electromagnetic waves - the "radio ether"). It is linked to understanding that there must be some material for the information (or energy) to travel onto.

Fluidity of Space is a poetic title for the holistic approach in building up an interactive installation. The key is in translations between the various physical entities – sound, vision (light, color), electronics and mechanics - and in creating a system that acts as a whole and is able to envelope the visitor (the observer) as an immanent part of installation. The system is responsive on the level of it's sensory equipment – the microphone for sound, the camera for vision.

A system such as this can be called a balanced complex system: the elements are interconnected and act as translation objects for the outputs from other elements.

A number of such interdependent subsystems produces a number of feedback loops that make up the system into one - and extremely complex. I call it a body.

The observer is observed, the listener is listened to. There is a high level of autonomy applied on the level of the system itself, so that it can survive (live) without the human observer. As we know, it is the human observer that brings in the reflection, but here we made a joke along the lines of literal understanding of the word - here we have a machine that actually works with reflection.

I use the computer physical inputs as sensors. A microphone as the Ear, the video camera as the Eye. Computer audio output is the Mouth speaking, and the video projector output is the ... Hm? What kind of output do we have that the light could correspond to? Softer than metal, lighter than wood, lighter than sound? The material the dreams are made of? The Mind, the Soul...

Light is a pointed / projected physical property. It is directive – it is coming from a precise energetic point in space, bumps into materials and changes direction by the so-called reflection on the materials. In this sequential way it fills up the space in a much different way then sound.

Contrary to the light, the sound is the property of material – it spreads in the materials. Materials are physical entities – usually hard, but they can be lighter or heavier, harder or softer – the iron, the wood, the water, the air. The materials get permeated with sound. They are soaked with sound. Therefore I talk about fluidity. Sound in a closed space reflects and makes resonating patterns – standing waves. The structure of space defines the structure of sound.

Light (and color) is not exclusively the property of materials – it is rather the energy that spreads as a spectrum of electromagnetic waves. It gets filtered easily, these are then the colors. Light can touch the materials in different ways. On some surfaces it enters almost fully – warming the material. This is then black color. On some materials it reflects almost immediately – this can then be white color. In some materials the light is quickly transformed into heat. However, it can enter some materials (the air, the water, the transparent, ...) and only slowly decays.

But the light is twofold: as representation known as photons it can move the materials – it presents us with a symbolic notion of mass. Also the light can be moved by large masses – the planets. I would say that the light is softer material than sound.

The computer is the heart of the system. It produces sound and light (coded as video). I use the internal (software) machine to create dynamic algorithms for sound and light generation / transformation.

The computer data has no mass, but the computer still needs time to make the translations ready. Therefore it has inertia. Inertia is the impossibility of a system to make a change from one value to another in infinitely short time. The idea of inertia is for me the link between the analogue and digital. The digital is the representation on the level of numbers that can easily jump from 00000000 to 11111111 in one step. Analogue is the representation that has to do all the steps between 00000000 and 11111111 sequentially.
A lot of steps.

The analogue is the property of mechanical world (the world of “harder” materials) and can be implemented on the level of computers. But digital computers are used to handle discrete logic – as in associative thinking – therefore modeling the relationships of the “softer” materials – ideas and thoughts. Or as in objects bounding them together with the sequential / analogue / material logic into new objects, systems.

Fluidity as metaphor for soft material. Maybe I could swim in such a space? Or move in slow motion, as in outer space? But it should also be responsive and soft and warm. What kind of sounds are soft and warm. The round ones? The return of psychedelia? The return of mysticism?

Is Art the keeper of the Mystical?

What am I trying to produce? A Golem with the Word in mouth? A representation of ourselves in the mirror reflecting the truth? A Globus and the Sun – the model of Space? Microcosm and macrocosm – the effort of alchemists renewed?

I seem to explore the hardness of materials – especially the lighter materials. Dreamlike materials. They have no value - they usually just take time. To make such images of mind touchable, I use sound and vision. These images are projection of ideas but they protrude into physical space. They can be touched and they can touch you. Maybe. Sound and vision are like water and air – the fluid space.