

China Gates

Art Clay
ETH Zurich
Institute for Computer systems
Clausiusstrasse 59, Zurich CH-8092
++41 044 632 84 14
art.clay@inf.ethz.ch

Dennis Majoe
ETH Zurich
Institute for Computer systems
Clausiusstrasse 59, Zurich CH-8092
++41 044 632 73 23
dennis.majoe@inf.ethz.ch

Biographical information

Art Clay (USA/CHE) is a specialist in the performance of self-created works with the use of intermedia. He has appeared at international festivals, on radio and television in Europe, Asia & North America. Recently, his work focuses on large performative works and public spectacles using mobile devices. He is artistic director of the Digital Art Weeks in Zurich and teaches at various Institutes including the Zurich University of the Arts. <http://mypage.bluewin.ch/artclay>

Dennis Majoe has a PhD in Navigation related Electronic systems and has worked extensively in the design of a variety of motion and orientation sensing systems and computer generated environments including 3D audio. He is director of MASC, an innovative electronics and computer design company active in the field of wireless communications. In addition to his activities at MASC he is as a senior researcher on the ETH Zurich for the Computer Systems Department, where he developing applications related to proactive health.



Description of Piece (performative Installation)

The work China Gates is technically based on possibilities of synchronizing a group of performers using the clock pulse emitted from GPS satellites. Aesthetically, China Gates is rooted in works for open public space and belongs to a genre of works, which celebrate the use of innovative mobile technologies to explore public space and public audience. The performance takes place in a limited city area such as a city square, a park and open courtyard. A series of tuned gongs is used. The number of gongs is greater than the number of performers participating. Tuned to an Eastern musical scale, these gongs give the piece a touch of the orient on the horizontal, melodic side and a western type dissonance on the vertical, chord structure side. The gongs are circulated amongst the players by an exchange process so that an on going change in harmonies can be achieved. Each of the players wanders through the performance space freely. A custom built GPS interface on the wrist registers the player's position and determines to geographical coordinates when to play the gong. By using a delay between the satellite clock pulse and the LED that indicates when to strike the gong, a harmolodic effect is obtained as the players gradually shift from a chordal to a melodic structure dependent on geographical coordinates. In general, each player tries to move when another is not, so that a "choreographic counterpoint" results that allows for a rhythmic-melodic coloring caused by the vertical to horizontal unfolding of the struck gong chord. The performance ends for each player at the return to the start point. The interface therefore acts as a "conductor", indicating when the gongs are to be hit and how the music as a whole will sound in the end.