

MIRROR OF THE MOON

Soundspace and Video installation

Jeff Talman

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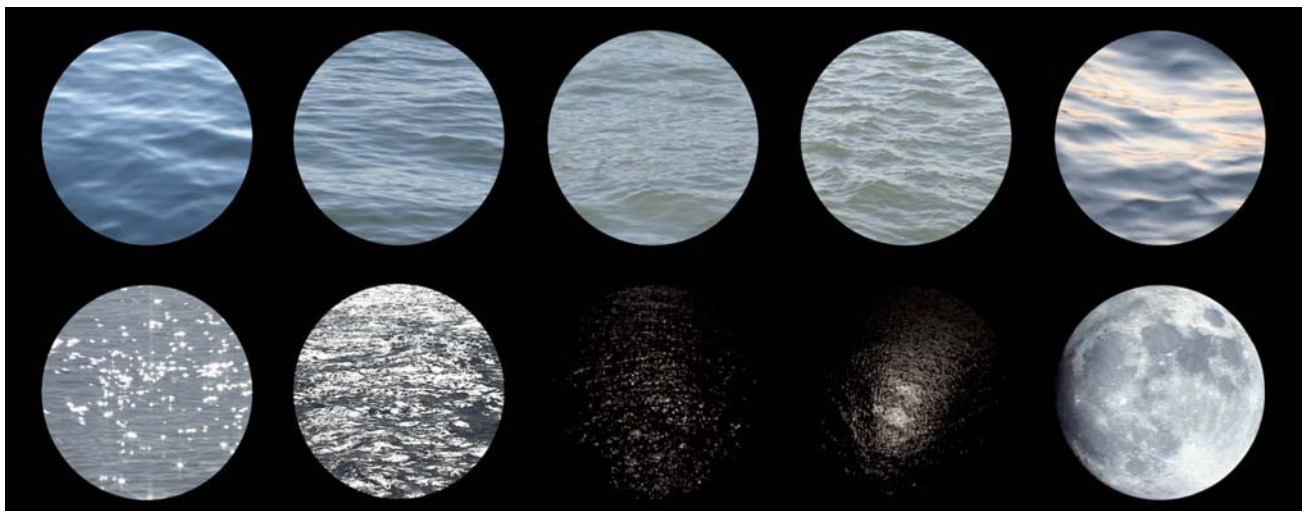
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Artist Biography

International artist Jeff Talman has created installations in collaboration with the cathedral and the City of Cologne, Germany, for St James Cathedral, Chicago, at the MIT Media Lab, The Kitchen, Eyebeam and Bitforms Gallery in New York. He completed a series of three installations in the Bavarian Forest in May 2008. Recognized as 'a pioneer of the use of resonance in artworks' by 'Intute' the consortium of British universities, his unique achievement is self-reflexive resonance, in which the ambient resonance of an installation site becomes its sole sound source. Talman's work further investigates the nature of sound and light as primal wave/radiant forces. Recent awards include a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Sound Art (2006) and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Computer Arts (2003). Residencies in 2007 include the Liguria Study Center in Bogliasco, Italy; Yaddo, and the Künstlerhaus Krems.



The Sea, the Sun and the Moon (2008)

Project Description

For the 8th Annual NIME Conference and the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, it seems only natural to begin with the sea, as the sea permeates the culture and lives of the Genoese. From this it follows that it is entirely appropriate that a sense of the sea should literally permeate the museum gallery. Rather than the cartoonish effect of merely transposing literal sea sounds to the gallery, I decided instead to extract sound waves of the tide mapped to the gallery's resonant frequencies, so that the gallery itself would harmoniously speak of the sea. Sonic spectral analysis of the gallery provided a chart of the room's resonant frequencies. I then programmed progressively shaped, digital filters and used them to filter a recording of sounds of the tide. Only those frequencies that are resonant to the largest gallery space in the museum were extracted for use in the installation.

Humans do not normally pursue sound as a referential aspect of space. The sense of sound of a space remains largely intuitive and/or sub-conscious, though it is a significant factor in human spatial cognition – as any blind person would know. By emphasizing the resonance of the gallery the installation enriches the human perception of the space's sonic and spatial reality. In *MIRROR OF THE MOON* this emphasis on the characteristic sound of the space provides a phenomenological template for hearing/sensing the space, while it serves as the plastic art material for an expressive sound work. Constructed into a 5-channel sound installation, the temporal field of the work is ever-changing as one walks through the space. The gallery itself becomes recognizable as a tuned instrument 'played' by sounds of the sea.

Further, the gallery space becomes a field of compositional activity, which may be explored interactively by simply walking through the space and pausing at different locations to witness the room, video projection and the interaction of the room modes and their nodes and anti-nodes within the space. Everything heard, though heard differently from any location in the room, reflects normally submerged sonic aspects of the room. Importantly, by harnessing the sound of the sea to the gallery, the installation recognizes a confluence of waveforms, those of water, sound, light and the effects of gravity. Here the sounds of the Mediterranean meld into an environment that stands in relation to itself, the people and their city by the sea.