



artengine : art and technological experimentation

Friday, March 20, 2009

Let's all go to Daïmõn!!!!

I made a little field trip to [Daïmõn](#) to check out [Bertrand R. Pitt's](#) *Horizons incertains* installation presented in their studio space, but also had the pleasure of spending some time with [Tim Dallett](#) as he told me about the performance project he is currently working on while in residence.

The energy at La Filature (the space housing both Daïmõn and Axe Néo 7) is really great these days. Jonathan Demers and Marie-Hélène Leblanc have been great new additions to the region. Big ups for everything they are bringing to their work and to their centers!

I saw the work at the recent dual Axe/Daïmõn vernissage, but it's always worth going back to take another look. The work is a single projection with a series of panels laid on the floor. The panels are switches that affect the installation when stepped on. The video projection is a series of plan-fix wide shots where there is little to no movement. Each single shot lasts maybe a minute and another disconnected scene loads. When a panel is stepped on, the video projection flutters like a film running through a broken gate in sync with a synthesized heart beat sound. When only one panel is on the heart rate is comfortable, but as others step on the remaining panels the heart rate is raised to a more and more frantic rate. The image processing also mounts in intensity with the heart rate.



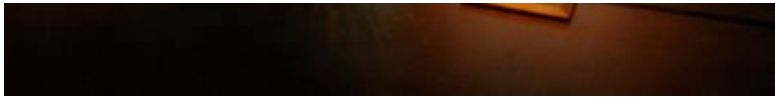
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Contributors

- [Crystal Doré](#)
- [chillerman1602](#)
- [Diane 35](#)
- [Michael Lechasseur](#)
- [Artengine](#)
- [tripp ayredale](#)

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On the whole I quite like Pitt's piece. When many people are standing on the panels the visual effect is quite beautiful. The still landscapes leave delicate traces over themselves as they bounce frantically. Those clips with fall colors leave deep rich streaks made deeper by the stress of the sounds of the raised heart rate and collective coordination it takes to achieve this effect.

The presentation and construction is also very nicely executed. It is clean and tight and the programming seems stable and elegant. You don't have to guess whether the technology underneath is working right. It's solid execution removes some of the awkward tension that often occurs as audiences try and figure out what exactly they are supposed to do with an interactive piece. The pads simple beckon you to step on them.



One of the key elements of the piece is that the more people stand on the switches the more the video and sound become affected. It requires at least 4 or 5 or more people to push the piece into a more frantic state. During a vernissage this is not that difficult a feat, but on my return visit it required much greater coordination. My first instinct is to criticize this element of the work as a single viewer can easily leave with a very limited experience of the work.

However, I think there is an interesting social off shoot to the presentation of this work. Gallery staff will almost always bring themselves into the process of demonstration as they coordinate standing on the switches to bring the work to a heightened state. This can lead to a deeper engagement with the work, and between gallery staff and the public. This consequence of the programming (intended or unintended) is fantastic!



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On the other hand what it suggests about the meaning of the work is different than it's (un)intended social off-shoots. The fact that a single viewer is incapable of pushing the projected landscape into a frantic state suggests that solitary interactions with the environment are the only ones which maintain tranquility, and that frantic, hectic and beautiful destruction is the result of our communal experience with the landscapes Pitt depicts. I'm not sure how I feel about this, but it's true that most of the things we do together that are really fun are just not very good for the world around us....



I also got the chance to chat with Tim Dallett during my little field trip. Tim is working for two separate stints of two weeks at Daïmōn and will return in the fall to present what he is working on. Tim has a great passion for creative experimentation with technology, and his current project seems really amazing. I don't think I will say too much about it until I can get my own head around exactly what is going on, but he took me on an adventure underneath the building to show where he was working with his modified security cameras. I felt like an older kid was taking me into a weird cave where he was building a rocket from some crazy shit he had stolen from a calculator factory. Seriously, this electro-magic man is gonna be doing some funky stuff with his little army of CCD security cameras, like an electronic performance art version of Blair Witch meets Back to the Future and Clerks. I'll stop now before this gets weird....



Labels: [Field Trip](#), [Review](#)

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