



Microwave International New Media Art Festival 2007

Press release - September

Celebrating 11 years of fusing art and technology, Microwave International Media Arts Festival is a pioneering festival of its kind, both in Asia and internationally. The theme of this year's festival is "LUMINOUS ECHO" – an attempt to display works of public interest that explore the relationship between sound and light, with an emphasis to break down the barrier between man and machine, and heighten the interactivity between us and electronic media art.

A dynamic cosmopolitan, Hong Kong is acclaimed internationally for its glamorous night view of lights extravaganza along the two sides of the harbour. It's also a city that never sleeps, with an amazing complexity of sounds constantly stimulating our aural senses. Along with a speed that can be exhausting yet inspiring, the curatorial team of Microwave International New Media Arts Festival 2007 has chosen to be inspired by the LIGHT, SOUND and SPEED of our metropolis, setting out to re-examine the relationships between these three key elements in media creations.

Speed is a prime noun in addressing Hong Kong on a global scope. Speed is also a rate of motion where light and sound ride on. Microwave 2007 will present a phenomenal interactive experience when these two "speeds" meet, under the beautiful title of "LUMINOUS ECHO", showcasing works that demonstrate the connecting forces of optical, electronic and sonic elements. Through various light sculptures and sound works from around the world, we will witness how light and sound trigger different emotional responses while blending with prominent Hong Kong landmarks, architectures, as well as the general public. The festival endeavours to bring in new experiences of media art in a creative and attractive way, including a series of seminars that stimulate discussions on the role of technology in the history of media art. The entire theme aims at encouraging new works that study light and sound in an experimental way.

LUMINOUS ECHO, celebrating Microwave's eleventh anniversary, will open your eyes and ears with an extraordinary intensity and vibrate your mind in a rarely experienced frequency.

The Festival includes two exhibitions (Luminous Echo main exhibition at Hong Kong City Hall; Project Room experimental exhibition at Hong Kong Film Archive), a keynote conference, an innovative industry forum, a concert, a daily series of artist talks/workshops/tours and screening programmes. Foreign and local established artists have been invited to present their works and share their creative experience with the audience. We want this year's festival to not only be a celebration on creativity in the media arts field, but also a window for general public to share the joy of media arts through a fun and intellectual engagement.



Luminous Echo Exhibition (Part One) Venue: City Hall Exhibition Hall

Imagine an intricate, high-speed collision between light and sound — the fireworks produced is what we are showcasing at City Hall for our Luminous Echo exhibition. The artwork is carefully selected to inspire both people looking for world-class, influential pieces of media art and the general mass public. We continue our aim to engage with the public by selecting interactive artwork, so our visitors don't just see and hear; they touch, get responses, which in turn generates a first-hand response in them.

Global Player Jens Brand (Germany)

Jens Brand conceived of this work in 2004: an apparently normal CD/Mp3 player, except for the fact that it plays our Earth. The **G-Player (Global Player)** and **g-Pod** knows the position of more than a thousand satellites and allows us, with a 3D model of the planet, to listen a virtual track of the flying object in real time.

By selecting a satellite on the menu, the device will analyze in real time the topographic profile of the region it is flying over, with the possibility to determine the position of almost 1,000 official satellites. The topography of the terrain being flown over is then analyzed and set to music like an audio file. Just like the grooves of a vinyl disc, mountain ranges generate more dynamic structures than flat landscapes. The display shows the selected satellite's name, type, altitude and position over the earth (latitude and longitude). The **G-Player** conveys a wide variety of partially contradictory data and positions. It can be seen as an odd device or a generator of an interesting audio experience or even as a socio-political metaphor for megalomania.

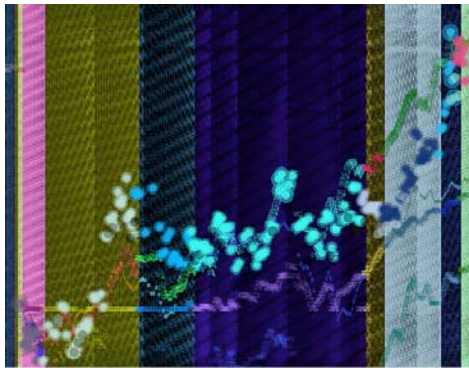


Global Player and g-Pod, Jens Brand



The Sound of Market Henry Chu (Hong Kong)

This piece of Henry Chu's work reads stock information (in Hong Kong market) on the internet in real time, and transforms this data to music tunes. The installation mimics the stock terminal computer of a bank or stock broker, the customer or anyone could enter the stock code through the keypad device (which looks like a keyboard but just has the number pad part), and the stock information will be displayed accordingly. Instead of returning information, it converts the ups and downs of the stock price into music.

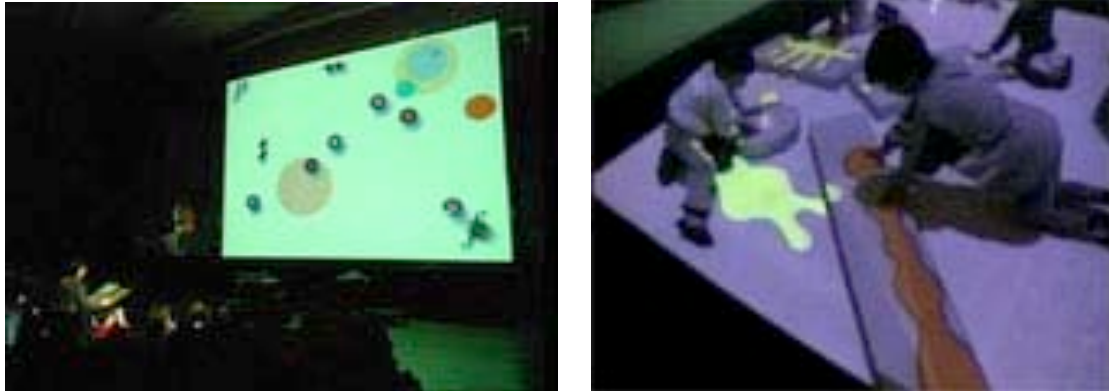


The Sound of Market, Henry Chu

Small Fish Masaki Fujihata (Japan), Kiyoshi Furukawa (Japan), Wolfgang Munch (Germany)

Small Fish is a classic, pioneering masterpiece collaboration between renowned artists Masaki Fujihata, Kiyoshi Furukawa and Wolfgang Munch. It creates a space in which the meaning created by painterly elements such as dots, lines, and colors interact with the meanings created by the tone and pitch of instruments, leading to a concrete experience of and appreciation for the space of abstract meaning. The dots and lines placed on the computer's electronic canvas have elements of musical notation about them, but are also instruments for the interactive production of sound.

Small Fish is designed so that users will come to understand the musical structure proposed by the artist through precisely those limitations. But no amount of manipulation will cause them to coalesce into perfect music. The overall effect is like a child thrusting his arms in a running stream, trying to catch a small fish.



Small Fish, Masaki Fujihata, Kiyoshi Furukawa & Wolfgang Munch

Reactable

Interactive Sonic Systems (Spain)

As an extension from Small fish, **Reactable** is a reactive table for audience to participate and enjoy composing and music jamming throughout the process. **Reactable** is a multi-user electro-acoustic music instrument with a tabletop tangible user interface. Several simultaneous performers share complete control over the instrument by moving physical artifacts on the table surface and constructing different audio topologies in a kind of tangible modular synthesizer or graspable flow-controlled programming language.

The instrument was developed by a team of digital luthiers under the direction of Dr. Sergi Jordà. The "Interactive Sonic Systems" team is working in the Music Technology Group within the Audiovisual Institute at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona Spain. Its main activities concentrate on the design of new musical interfaces, such as tangible music instruments and musical applications for mobile devices. **Reactable** has been presented and performed at many festivals, with Icelandic songstress Björk being the first popular musician to use it at a live concert.



Reactable, Interactive Sonic Systems Team



Musical Loom Kingsley Ng (Hong Kong)

The original **Musical Loom**, created in the context of the Northern France, where the loom plays a very important role in the development and recession of its region in the last century, was transformed from a 250 years old loom (purchased from the Jacquard Museum of France), into a sound and image instrument. For **LUMINOUS ECHO**, Ng will especially build another **Musical Loom** in Hong Kong. A single-screen is projected onto the threads through a mirror, with IR camera and ultrasonic distance sensors used for the tracking. A light bar snaps to and follows the single participant's hands movements, as he or she generates a mechanical soundscape, or malleable musical expression, based on their interaction. One can play on the threads like a harp and control 4-voice harmonies and volumes by the hand's position in midair. Here, this **Musical Loom** will speak to each spectator in their own way, each one remaining free to make their connections with local or global history and weave a unique soundscape on the basis of their experience with the work.



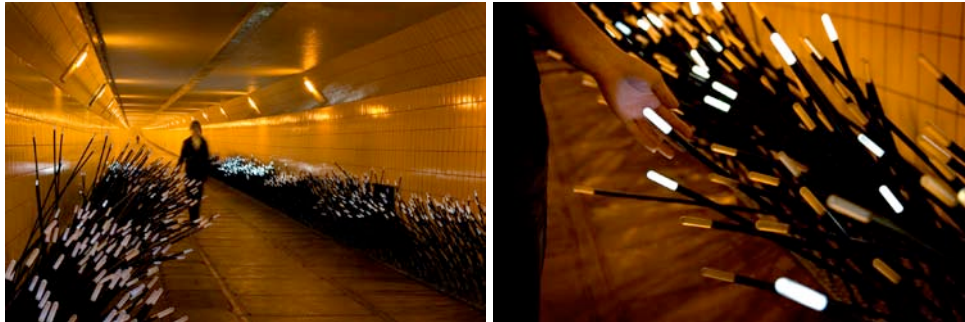
Musical Loom, Kingsley Ng

Dune 4.1 Dan Roosegaarde (Netherlands)

Dune 4.1 is an interactive landscape that physically changes its appearance in accordance to human presence.

The work is composed of hundreds of fibers which react to movement and sound made by the visitors. This hybrid of nature and technology functions as a platform on which the relationship between visitor and the existing architecture is enhanced. By means of looking, walking and interacting, visitor and space merge into one coherent environment, which could be best interpreted as a kind of "Alice in Technoland".

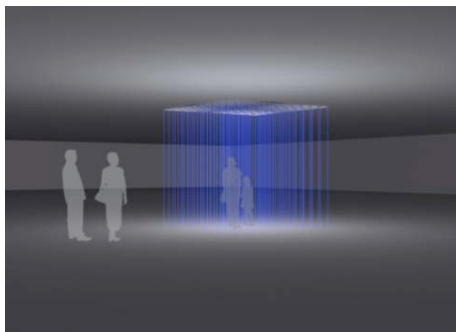
Inside the installation, several microphones and presence sensors detect human activity. The beauty of the software is that it is constantly tuning itself dynamically. According to human activity, the work has 128 steps in tuning the lights. When nobody is there, it will fall asleep --glooming softly-- but as soon as the audience enter **Dune 4.1**, light appears where they walk, as an extension of activities; when audience make a lot of noise, the landscape goes crazy- lightning crashes.



Dune 4.1, Daan Roosegaarde

Light x Sound Sculpture Yao Bin (Beijing)

Created by Beijing artist Yao Bin, the work is an aesthetic exploration of light and water. Interactive laser beams will drop like rain from the ceiling and trap the audience in a sea of untouchable raindrops. (Detailed description will be provided by the artist later.)



超光速形式C, Yao Bin

Microwave wishes to draw audiences from all walks of life and include all ages. In the celebration of our 11th anniversary, Luminous Echo encourages the fun and intellectual sharing of this dynamic exploration of light and sound. We believe that through the stimulating interaction with electronic arts, a deeper level of understanding of technology will be provoked in our fellow Hong Kongers and help push the boundaries of our technological advancement.



Festival Opening and Luminous Echo Exhibition

Exhibition period: 10-18/11

Opening Hours: 11am-7pm, Daily

Venue: Exhibition Hall, Lower Block, Hong Kong City Hall

Microwave Project Room Exhibition

Exhibition period: 10-18/11

Opening Hours: 11am-7pm, Daily

Venue: Hong Kong Film Archive

Keynote Conference: Tactical Media

Date: 18/11/2006 (Sunday)

Time: 2 pm – 5 pm

Venue: Hong Kong Film Archive

Conducted in English

Free admission on a first-come-first-serve basis; reservation recommended.

Reservation hotline: 60850161/Ms Nora Ng

Industry Forum

Date: 17/11/2006 (Saturday)

Time: 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Venue: Hong Kong Film Archive

Conducted in English

Free admission on a first-come-first-serve basis; reservation recommended.

Reservation hotline: 60850161/Ms Nora Ng

Screening Programme

Venue: Cinema, Hong Kong Film Archive

Tickets: \$30

Six programmes in total; details to come.

Additional Programmes

Artist Talks

Workshop/Performances

Closing Concert: Watch Music

Media Enquiry

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