

HEAVENS GATE

Amsterdam 1987

HEAVENS GATE is a video installation that was first shown in Amsterdam in 1987 within the four story high stairwell of the neo-classical Felix Meritis building.

In other exhibitions spaces the work usually occupies a specially made completely dark room with black walls and a light-lock entrance/exit. The video image is projected over the whole surface of the white ceiling. The entire floor surface is constituted by a large mirror on which the visitors can stand, thus allowing them to see both their own reflection and the reflection of the projected image on the ceiling. The otherwise total darkness of the space creates for the viewers standing on the mirror a state of boundless suspension between these two image planes.

The conceptual and iconographic references in this work are largely derived from two sources - Baroque ceiling paintings and aerial/satellite pictures of the surface of our planet. These images alternate in a computer processed videographic structure that deconstructs and manipulates the constituent pixels of the original images and then kinetically maps them into a virtual three dimensional space. Other iconographic references in this work further conjoin these viewing extremities - for instance the Futurist's embrace of the aerial point of view, and the spatial apotheosis's of El Greco, Blake and Klein.

This digital tromp l'oeil characterizes that awesome contemporary view from space down onto the planet which inverts the ecstatic Baroque gaze upwards to the heavens and creates a suspended and bewildered condition of seeing. The observer today finds himself in a vertiginous axis between an above and below that has lost its qualitative distinction. The mirrored architecture of the installation, together with its digital-anamorphic image transformations, draws the viewers physically and emotionally into a virtual pictorial space that dissolves the boundary between material and immaterial identity.