

JEFFREY SHAW *virtual world voyaging*

"GOING TO THE HEART OF THE CENTER OF THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS"
de Vleeshal, Middelburg, Holland 1986

This work has been made in relation to the particular identity of the Vleeshal in Middelburg. This neo-Gothic building has strong associations with a church space, and yet was originally built and used as a meat market. Now a municipal gallery, the nature of this space and its history led me to create a work that has also in itself that conjunction of sacred and profane, flesh and spirit.

The installation itself consists of a large screen computer-graphic video projection at the far end of the space opposite the entrance, and a row of infra-red sensors that locate the position of the spectator in relation to the projection screen. The work articulates itself as the spectator walks down the room from the entrance towards the screen, this information being transmitted by the infra-red sensors to the computer graphic system that controls a set sequence of images and sound tracks.

The space is divided into seven zones, each zone being defined by the Gothic vaulting of the Vleeshal. There are seven changes of image and seven changes in sound as the spectator traverses these seven zones. The path is indicated by seven pairs of dark blue lights along the floor - like an airport landing path.

This scenography of space and audio visual elements allows only one visitor at a time walks towards the screen. That person walking down the room controls the action of the piece, and thus has a completely personal responsibility and relationship towards it. For the others who stay behind the work becomes the spectacle of that visitor-become-actor's journey and of the audio visual changes that occur as a consequence. The digital structure of each image is conceived specifically for these two different modes of perception - for the one spectator who is approaching the image, and for the other spectators who remain behind looking at the images and that moving spectator.

This somewhat ritualistic work has a fixed structure of image and sound changes, conceived as a dramatic iconographical development for the walking visitor who, once having left the security of the spectator zone, goes into the darkness of the long length of the space to confront the image alone. The sequence of digitally processed imagery derives its iconography from references to works by Yves Klein, Nagisa Oshima and Hieronymus Bosch.

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