

ALLVISION 1976

AN ELECTRO/OPTO/MECHANICAL INSTALLATION BY STEINA

ALLVISION incorporates and transforms physical space through video. In this installation, Steina transfigures the viewer's orientation: a constructed physical space is engaged in conversation with the perceptual systems of the human eye and the camera lens.

ALLVISION poses questions about the process of transcribing all-encompassing space and the ways in which perception can be altered or exaggerated by a mechanical interface. The machine allows a view of what would otherwise be impossible to perceive; it privileges vision to experience the implausible and fantastic.

— MARITA STURKEN, WRITER AND CURATOR



DESCRIPTION

A mirrored sphere, positioned in the middle of a crossbar reflects the image of surrounding space. Two video cameras, attached to each end of the crossbar are looking in at the mirrored surface. The crossbar — now an assembly of mirrored sphere and two cameras — slowly rotates on the turntable with cameras orbiting the sphere. Since each camera sees half of the reflected space, the whole space becomes observable.

The turntable, which sits on a low pedestal, holds the driving mechanism for the rotation — a slip-ring assembly and a DC motor. The slip-ring assembly provides uninterrupted video signals from, and power to, the cameras. The video signal from two cameras connects to two (or more monitors) arranged in the exhibit space.

THE SPACE

Since the only pictorial input into this installation is its immediate surroundings as seen by the cameras, the choice of space assumes a critical role. Odd spaces of intersecting corridors, staircases, corners with horizontal, vertical, or diagonal shapes and shadows are an ideal backdrop for the observer approaching the exhibit. When only a featureless room is offered, Steina includes large vertical panels of relevant images (created by Woody Vasulka) to be mounted on the walls to provide the installation backdrop.

ALLVISION (and MACHINE VISION) are the only works of Steina's requiring daylight or a fair amount of artificial illumination. They are closed-circuit environments with no additional media on tape or disk. There is no audio present.

E Q U I P M E N T

The Vasulkas can provide all the equipment listed below, or share resources with the exhibitor. This will be reflected in both shipping and equipment budgets.

- 2 video cameras
- 2 camera housings
- 2 adjustable camera stands
- mirrored sphere
- sphere stand
- crossbar
- cast aluminum turntable assembly (with gears and DC motor)
- 2 DC power supplies (1 for the two cameras, 1 for the turntable)
- 2 (or more) large monitors (25")
- 4 power outlets
- AC and video cables

P L A T F O R M

The installation rests on the platform stand, 18 x 18 x 18 inches (gallery support choice), strategically placed in the exhibit space, usually at the center.

A S S E M B L Y A N D D I S A S S E M B L Y

1. Place the cast aluminum turntable on the floor or on the provided platform.
2. Attach the VDC power supply to verify that the turntable works before further assembling.
3. Attach the mirrored sphere to the crossbar before placing the bar on the platform.
4. Remove the screws on the top of the turntable, place the crossbar with the sphere on it and fasten with the same screws.
5. Attach the two camera platform assemblies on each end of the crossbar, with cameras looking in.
6. Connect BNC cables from the two cameras to A and B marked BNC jacks tucked under the top of the turntable. These cables should be hidden under the crossbar, and fastened with the Velcro strips provided.
7. The DC power cables are cabled the same way.
8. At the bottom of the turntable there are two BNC jacks and a single DC jack for the external power supply.
9. Connect the DC power to the cameras and the BNCs to the monitors to verify the presence of a signal.
10. Start the turntable.
11. Disassemble in the reverse order.

T H E D I S P L A Y

Although this work depends on good illumination of its immediate environment, the use of video monitors poses a critical dilemma: how to present a strong image in the presence of general lighting. The monitors therefore should not be receiving direct light or have strong surface reflections. The space should be flooded in all directions either by artificial or natural light; then, by adjusting the lens opening or by using a lower light level on the cameras and setting the monitors to high contrast, a balance between the image on the monitor and the light level should be achievable.

V I D E O A D J U S T M E N T

All 75 ohm terminators located on the back of the monitors must be switched to open, except for the last monitor on each chain. Contrast should be high and brightness below middle. The basic rule here is to set up the proper deep color black as a reference to the maximum contrast and brightness. With that, the other components (hue, color saturation) can be assigned. The persons installing the environment must use their esthetic judgment as to the proper monitor settings for maximum visual impact.

DAILY OPERATIONS

TO START: Power up the monitors, turntable, and cameras (the two AC power strips). Verify that the installation goes into motion and displays video on the monitors. If not, turn power off and on again. If problem persists notify Steina by phone, fax, or e-mail.

TO SHUT DOWN: Power down monitors, turntable, and cameras.

MAINTENANCE: The mirrored sphere and monitor screens need to be cleaned with a soft cloth at least once a week.

POWER REQUIREMENTS

(depending on equipment used)

Video monitors:	Sony PVM 1910	120 watts
Video cameras	CCDs	15 watts
Turntable		40 watts

NOTE: PAL/NTSC cameras/monitors must be of a matching standard. Outside USA, use a power transformer 220 to 110, 500w.

CREDITS

At the entrance these credits should appear:

"ALLVISION by Steina, with instrumentation by Josef Krames, Woody Vasulka, and Bruce Hamilton"

SHIPPING INFORMATION

Installation is shipped in four crates. Weight and dimensions available upon request.

Shipped to and from:

Steina and Woody Vasulka
Route 6, Box 100
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
ph: 505-424-8786
fx: 505-473-0614
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