

**steve roden****day ring, 2006**

solo exhibition: [henry art gallery](#), seattle wa, september, 2006  
now part of the permanent collection of the henry art gallery, seattle wa

day ring developed out of an opportunity to create a sound installation for the interior of james turrell's skyspace at the henry art gallery in seattle. turrell's skyspace is a pristine freestanding small oval building with benches surrounding the interior, with an oval cut into the roof that creates the illusion of sky as the ceiling of the space. the skyspace evokes a meditative visual experience, and it certainly doesn't need a soundtrack...

i initially thought i would simply add a tiny layer of sound "dust" to the space - to create a work that would be barely audible, so as not to disturb what is already there. eventually, the approach started to feel too easy, too straightforward, and extremely tentative.

i realized that i didn't really want to make something FOR the space as much as i wanted to make something OF the space - allowing the space and my experiences with it (mostly from making field recordings of it a year earlier) to be able to generate ideas, paths, and wanderings. i wanted the connections to be less forced, less obvious, and much deeper.

i eventually happened upon a set of tuning forks, each one supposedly tuned to the orbit of a planet. i liked very much this idea of a viewer/listener looking up at the sky and unknowingly listening to a sound map of planetary orbits. the connection back to turrell began to feel like an awkward conceptual stretch - which is territory i always find of interest. i brought the tuning forks to violinist jacob danzinger and asked him to improvise in relation to each of the planetary orbit tones. i then combined bits of the recordings of his violin, the sounds of the tuning forks, and the field recordings of the site towards a composition; with some sounds layered as is, and some electronically processed.

generally, my sound installations are continuous, and rarely have a noticeable beginning or end. for the skyspace, i wanted to give those who came to hear the complete composition a suggested starting and end point; and i also wanted to allow those who wished to explore the skyspace in silence, to be able to do so. i eventually decided to have the hour long composition play only at certain times of the day. the piece became more of a performance or event, where the audience anticipated an experience rather than simply happening upon it. it reminded me of sitting in the space and watching clouds and sky - there would be periods of fast moving blue and white activity, and then long periods of silent blue.

the sound work was made up of 6 "movements" separated by short unprocessed field recordings that blend history (a year ago) with the present soundscape. i used a 5.1 system, with 5 channels of audio running to speakers set into the bases of the benches. the sound moves along the oval form of the space - literally tracing the architecture in sound.

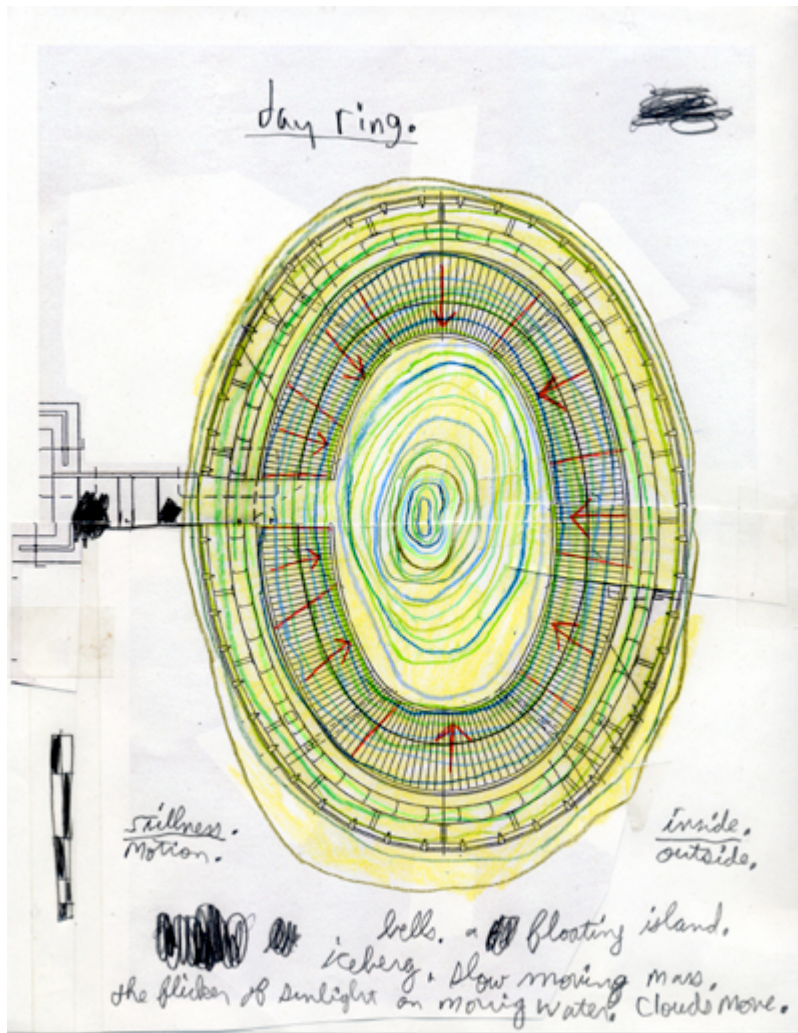
[you can hear early mixes of two "movements" here:](#)

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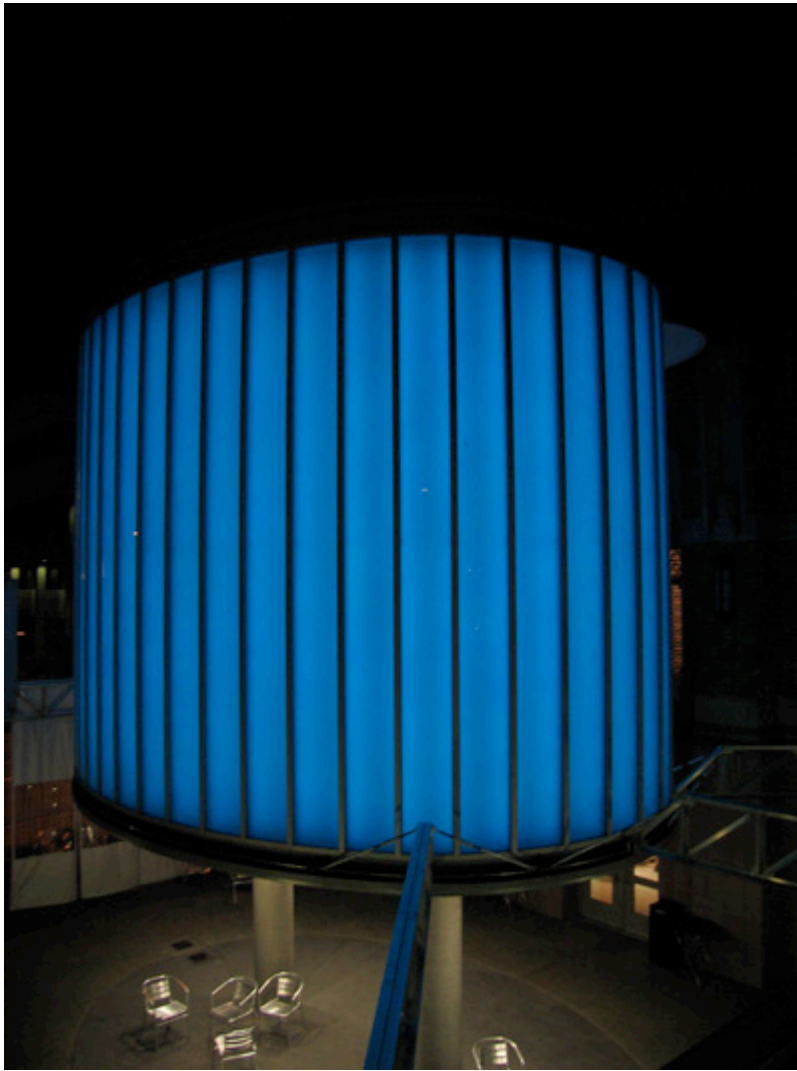
moonneptune  
mercuryuranus

i also created a companion piece, much longer and ever shifting from fragments of the same source materials, called "night ring". this played continuously outside the museum at night.

[click here to read sara krajewski's essay about the installation from the exhibition brochure.](#)



initial sketch for the project (drawn on top of the floor plan)



skyspace exterior at night (the colors are constantly shifting)



skyspace entrance bridge looking in.



skyspace entrance looking back to the exterior from the inside.



benches.



the view.