

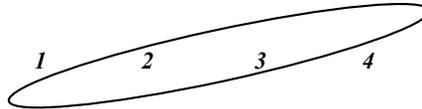
Passage: The text posted in the Installation and various versions

“Passage” used auditory and visual input to slow down viewer-participants’ brainwaves from the Beta to the Alpha–Theta range. Participants’ feedback was combined with theories in neurological science to try to explain the process, described in the “Passage Folio” (available upon request). Later, more advanced versions are outlined in “Passage: audio-visual versions I – V” (also available upon request.)

The original text listed below was posted inside the “Passage” installation.

C h r i s t i n e W h i t t a k e r

P e r f o r m a n c e , I n s t a l l a t i o n s , a n d M u l t i - M e d i a S c u l p t u r e



P A S S A G E

“Passage is a real-time 10 cu. Ft. sound/video installation. “Passage” provides a multi-sensory experience for the viewer-participant. “Passage” utilizes the real time sound of the participant and his/her environment. Real time sound combined with video imagery helps integrate the viewer-participant into an alternant reality.

The suspended audio chair was laced with both piezo flat and condenser microphones. The piezo flat mikes and contact mikes are connected to the surface of the chair, they reveal the surface resonance as the chair swings and the participant moves. The condenser mikes are suspended within the chairs steel framework. Conventional mikes are not only capable of detecting the wide range of pitches audible to humans (above 0 decibels), but also those far below the threshold of hearing (above –65 decibels).

As every volumetric cavity has a characteristic, natural occurring pitch, I believe that silence does not exist; it is only that we lack the ability to hear all sounds. Thus, I fabricated mikes that reveal the amazing, mysterious sounds that people usually perceive as non-existent, in order to allow them to become aware of the beauty of ‘silence’. The condenser mikes reveal a live matrix of ever changing sound: consisting of the interaction characteristic pitches of the chair’s resonant structural tubing and the minute sounds in its surrounding environment radiating even beyond the walls of the installation room. In a moment of stillness, the listener hears the prevailing tones arising from the internal space of the chairs structural tubing. Combined, the mikes monitor all live sounds of the occupant in the chair, the sounds of the mobile steel chains that suspended the chair, and the voices of others in adjoining rooms. These sounds are amplified and transmitted through a set of headphones that are worn by the participant.

Emphasis is given to the seat of the chair, as it is painted white, to symbolize purity. Sitting in the chair, the participant faces two 25” video monitors that are positioned 4.5’ apart to provide the imagery in the participant’s peripheral vision. The monitor stands and their substructures are painted black to avoid any visual interruption of the video image.

The video begins with a slow-motion sequence of black hawks flying behind trees whose branches are interwoven against a vivid, blue sky. The main, recurrent imagery in “Passage” is of six-year-old Jenny Moore, guiding the viewer on a journey through the woods. A picture drawn by Jenny of the site encountered during the walk is located on the floor between the monitors. Each time the child turns around to invite the viewer into her amazing world of imagination and wonder, the video image abruptly changes into a slow-motion waterfall or another nature sequence. The viewer now has a heightened sensitivity not only to detect the minutest increments of movement, but also to become aware of the ‘still’ in between, such as the momentary suspension of water as it falls through the air.

“Passage” through the use of video and real time sound attempts to blur the lines between what is considered reality and the realm of superlative reality. To me, the word “Passage” is about being able to pass out of the normal experience into a heightened awareness that would allow one to acquire insights on the truth, wisdom, and freedom. “Passage” is especially dedicated to Jenny who constantly amazes me with her imagination and ability to see the beauty in the moment, and for also reminding me to be grateful for the gift of creativity.