

The Spaces In Between

From its inception, the “white cube” has endured a multitude of invasive procedures and has been endlessly deconstructed. In order to survive and remain the most prominent location for the dissemination of contemporary art, it is necessary for artists and curators to continually reconstruct galleries in insightful, intelligent and sensitive ways. This work is my contribution to the dialogue surrounding installation art’s site-specificity—its unique and inseparable bond to the context in which it is created and viewed.

In these installations, I record the inner spaces of galleries by x-raying sections of the walls and floor. I also place microphones inside of the walls so that sounds from within and through them are amplified and may be experienced while wearing headphones. Subjecting the walls of a gallery to these procedures enabled me to expand and expose their internal organs, scrutinize and subvert their basic function, unveil and record their present condition and history. The lightboxes illuminate the actual pieces of x-ray film at the precise locations where they were taken, while the headphones allow participants to become hypersensitive to the muffled echoes and reverberations. The visual and audio components of these installations document the architectural substructure of the buildings, and provide testimony to artistic interventions. Both heighten our senses in order to reveal the hidden cavities used to define, divide and encapsulate the spaces that we inhabit—non-spaces that exist outside of our normal field of vision.

Galleries have been, and will continue to be altered by each work of art that is displayed upon, within or behind their walls. A fundamental component of these installations, the physical changes that are carried out within the walls, in addition to the marks left by previous artists, will linger unnoticed long after the lightboxes, microphones and headphones are removed. This aspect of my work speaks to art’s enduring presence. It is about memory and the scars left by art—the physical marks that remain on the spaces in which it has been displayed, as well as the impressions left on our minds.

Lastly, this work calls into question art’s tentative and fragile relationship to truth and the tenuous boundaries between private and public spheres. If these images and noises are to be trusted, viewers must give in to the power of suggestion, suspend their disbelief, and accept that which cannot be viewed directly. The x-rays and sounds may be understood as a testament to a subtle and otherwise invisible transformation, an artistic masquerade, or quite possibly a combination of both. One cannot be sure whether they are exact representations of a particular place or mere fabrications, objective records or subjective simulations, fact or fiction. It is within this uncertainty that the work derives its power.

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