

Musique Concrete: Transforming Space, Sound and the City Through Skateboarding

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Biographical information

Simon Morris is a new media artist whose work explores urban landscapes, sounds and skateboarding. Investigating new forms of musical expression, *Musique Concrete* examines technology and its role as a socially engaged art practice. He has conducted live performances at the Article Biennale 2006 in Stavanger, Norway, the Kiasma Museum in Helsinki, Finland and the Barker Theatre in Turku, Finland.

Description of Piece

Musique Concrete is an interactive performance piece which explores sound and the urban landscape through the movements on a skateboard. The result is a musical composition which transforms the skateboarder into a composer. It aims to provide an audience of all ages with a stimulating experience of new media, skateboarding, the city and sound.

How does it work?

Mounted underneath the skateboard is an interface which transmits data wirelessly to a laptop computer. Physical actions are detected using three sensors connected to the interface. Acceleration, turns and vibration are monitored by a photoresistor, a flex sensor and piezo sensor respectively. Using the MIDI protocol, a software program enables the skateboarder to control and modify real-time sounds directly from the skateboard.

An acoustical map of urban environment

Tricks and movements generate real-time sounds allowing the skateboarder to compose his/her soundtrack of the city. Furthermore, combining tricks and movements result in unique and often unexpected musical compositions. Used in conjunction with ramps, obstacles, ledges and other architectural elements, *Musique Concrete* provides the listener with a sonic imprint of the urban environment.