

Matthew Belge
Richard Harrington
"Shadow Dream"

"Shadow Dream, Linz" is an environment of projected light and folded aluminum screens installed in the Donau Park (park beside the Danube) for Ars Electronica 1986. The three dimensional screens are hung at varying intervals in space and illuminated by changing light patterns. "Shadow Dream, Linz", is a collaboration between Richard Harrington and Matt Belge, two artists whose interests have coalesced since first meeting in 1981.

Prior to meeting Richard Harrington, Matt Belge has been working as a computer engineer. His interest in art led him to technically assist the development of such artworks as Russ Bami's "Electronic Bristlecone Pine" and Piotr Kowalski's "Time Machine II", an interactive sculpture exhibited at Pompidou Center, at this time Matt decided to develop himself as an artist and entered the Massachusetts College of Art graduate program. Here he began his first works using theatre lights to create "3-Dimensional" projections on gallery walls. It was at this time that he began discussions with Richard Harrington, whose interests in shadow and camouflage provided an inspiring counterpoint.

Richard had been working with ideas concerning color theory, camouflage, and the effects these had on an individual's perception of objects. Richard was concerned with such questions as: What is an object? What separates an object as a visual experience from it's environment? How does this information reach a viewer? These concerns are constantly shuffled in an effort to unravel the causality of vision.

The most fundamental topic uniting all these issues is light, which is the point where both Matt's and Richard's interests took flight. This eventually led to a collaborative exhibition at MIT. Folded screens were hung in space and light forms were projected on them. Attention was devoted to the screens and lighting forms as objects but also as elements creating an environment. The screens created shadows which were intentionally more tangible than the screens themselves. A dialogue was instantly created with the projected light forms, which were immaterial objects masquerading as tangible objects. The environment created in the exhibit space produced a sense of tranquility and weightlessness for many of the viewers.

"Shadow Dream, Linz" hopes to take some of these concepts into an outdoor setting. Here part of the challenge is to create a poetic experience in the midst of the everyday world.

To do this, the immense scale of the breadth of sky and air encompassed by the Donau Park must be addressed as a composite mass. It is not to be conquered, but acknowledged as a permeable entity in the same way a Chinese pagoda silhouette reconciles the differences between the opacity of the earth and the transparency of the sky.

The work constructed for "Shadow Dream, Linz" is intended to allow nature to freely pass through. The collected group structure is intended to function as a night topiary garden, the space between the screens effectively becoming captured "sacred" space.

Matthew Belge