

a bit colour-action

project by Max Jacob and Lisa Lazzarini

www.xzoert.org/unquarto

Abstract

The installation ¼ presents an interactive space/labyrinth (the *quarter*) inside which the visitor is invited to move following several exploration paths through sound, colour, ambience, smell, material etc. The space consists of a structure made of metal tubes and coloured cloth sheets, while the sound is generated by a computer which processes the ambience sound in real time, allowing visitors to interact between themselves, forming the sound-scape.



¼, study for red micro-painting

Short description

The installation ¼ presents a labyrinthic space where the visitor moves among cloth walls of different colours (see plan at page 4). The walls consist of monochrome sheets of the 6 primary and secondary colours. Here and there some small monochrome *collages* can be found, camouflaged with the wall colour.

The room is articulated in a set of small passages and four larger spaces where four simple musical instruments are at the visitor's disposal.

The floor is covered with a weft of jute bags used for coffee or cocoa, still retaining their smell. In some places of this irregular carpet the bags contain materials which rustle or creak when stamped on.

During the route you have sometimes to pass through curtains made of small tinkling objects.

Each sound produced inside the installation, captured by a microphone and processed by a computer, leaves a long sound trail propagated by 4 loudspeakers. The sound-scape is thus a continuously evolving carpet, each visitor contributes to weave in an individual or collective game.

To have an idea of the sound, some examples can be downloaded at www.xzoert.org/unquarto.

Genesis and spirit of the installation

The installation originates from the collaboration between the visual artist Lisa Lazzarini and the musician Max Jacob. Since several years both are interested in the relationship between sound, image and ambience, having collaborated on these themes with other artists as well as together, most recently for the installation *In Xōchitl In Cuīcatl: La palabra florida* presented at the Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museum in Mexico City during June 2008.

The installation ¼ starts from the last musical investigations of Max Jacob, who since some years works with sound generated in real time processing data captured in the ambience where the sound is propagated.

But differently than in previous experiences, as the installation *Eco-sistema* realized in Chiasso (CH) in 2006 where the relationship between actions and sonic response was quite indirect keeping the visitor almost unaware, the software written for ¼ proposes a much more explicit interactive game. Thus the need of conceiving a dedicated space developing its potentialities and where sound and visual part can interweave relations.

The software of ¼ generates white noise bands on the frequencies captured by the microphone, propagating them in real time. This results, for any sound produced in the room, in a long trail of 'coloured' noise. The same way the walls compose, in the visual field of the visitor, vertical coloured bands, which enter and exit, shrink and enlarge, depending on his moving.

The production of sound by the visitor might be more or less intentional: the foot steps and the rustling of the cloths already cause sound responses of the system; moreover there are the sonorous zones on the floor and the curtains which produce sound as the visitor passes; but the visitor can decide to participate in a more active way, clapping hands, whistling, singing or using one of the musical instruments put at his disposal.



¼, study for blue micro-painting

In any case, the overall result is created by the interactions between the visitors. The subdivision of the space (the small passages and the 4 larger rooms where the instruments are located) allow the visitors to interact without visual contact, leaving the relation mainly on the acoustical plane.

The monochrome walls form a space as abstract and essential as possible, able to resonate with the sound-scape without gathering too much attention, but offering at the same time suggestions and vibrations attracting the visitor towards one side or another of the installation.

The small monochrome *collages*, located here and there, sprout as visual surprises, in counterpoint with the acoustical surprises located beneath the floor. These “micro-paintings”, realised with heterogeneous scrap, are inserted without creating chromatic contrast with the walls, calling attention on the nuances and characteristics of the different surfaces. The choice of employing recognizably used materials, found locally, adds to the installation the dimension of real life, with all its external and internal references. Similarly the floor is covered with a weft of jute bags sewed together, possibly those used to carry coffee or cocoa, so as to perceive their olfactory presence.

The installation ¼ can thence be seen as an *n*-dimensional space, made of ambience, colour, sound, smells, interactions, external references etc., inside which the routes created by the single visitors may cross each other.



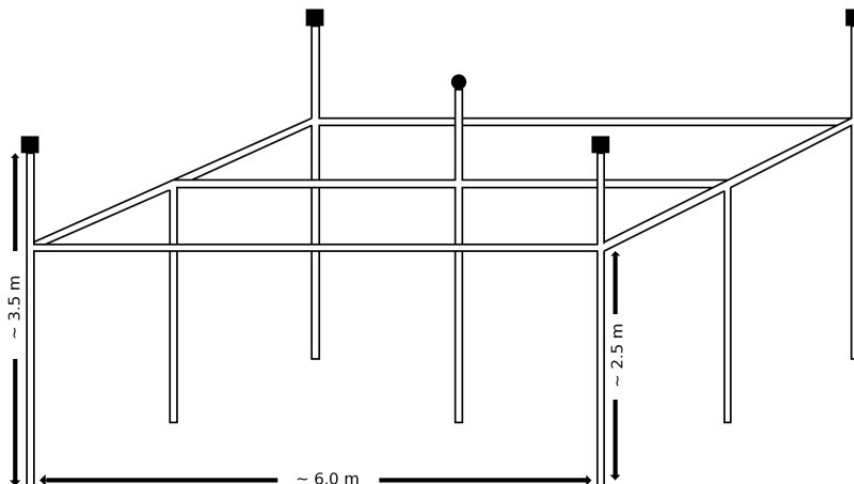
¼, study for yellow micro-painting

Technical sheet

The solution proposed in this document can be modified and adapted to the requirements and possibilities of the hosting place and situation.

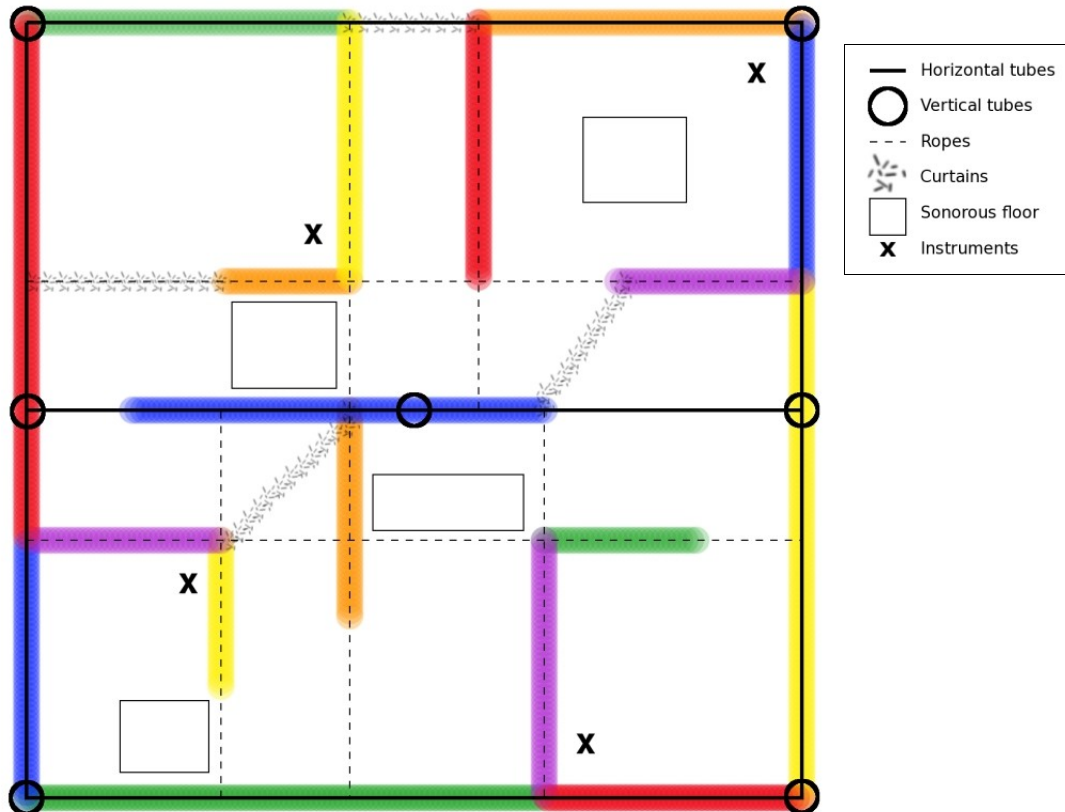
Structure of the installation

The installation is held by a skeleton of metal tubes, which creates the perimeter of a square room about 6x6m and 2.5m high, as shown in the figure.



The loudspeakers (represented with black squares) are mounted on top of the 4 vertical tubes at the edges of the installation. The microphone (represented by a black circle) is mounted on top of the vertical tube in the middle. The loudspeakers and the microphone are connected to a (hidden) computer with wires that pass along the metal structure.

The cloth sheets that form the walls are hung on the horizontal tubes and on some crossing ropes. Following plan shows the disposition of the ropes and of the sheets, as well as the location of the instruments, the sonorous zones of the floor and the curtains.



List of needed materials

12 metal tubes: 5 x 3,5m, 2 x 2,5m, 5 x 6m, with joints for the connections

37m of rope with diameter of about 1cm (of palm or other natural material): 3 x 7m, 3 x 4m, 2 x 2m

18 monochrome cloth sheets about 2,8m high, in all about 130m²: 3 yellow sheets (4m, 2m, 2m); 3 blue sheets (2m, 3,5m, 2m); 3 red sheets (4m, 2m, 2m); 3 orange sheets (2,5m, 2,5m, 2m); 3 green sheets (2m, 4,5m, 2,5m); 3 violet sheets (2m, 2m, 2m)

4 active loudspeaker with about 100W

1 condenser microphone (possibly with large diaphragm) with cardioid polarity

1 computer with audio interface having at least 1 input and 4 outputs

4 wires to connect the computer with the loudspeakers (about 20m each)

1 wire to connect the computer with the microphone (about 20m)

Used jute bags, as many as necessary to cover a surface of 36 m²

Scrap (cloth, paper, threads, natural elements etc.) for the collages, the curtains and the sonorous zones of the floor

String, steel wire and other materials for mounting

Costs

We indicate the principal cost items without being able to quantify since the amount depends largely on local prices as well as on the duration of the event. We believe however that costs will not be high and that it will be possible to apply to simpler solutions.

- Hire of the metal tubes
- Hire of loudspeakers, wires and microphone
- Purchase of the cloth
- Purchase of the ropes, string, iron wire etc.

The computer as well as the musical instruments will be put at disposal by the artists.

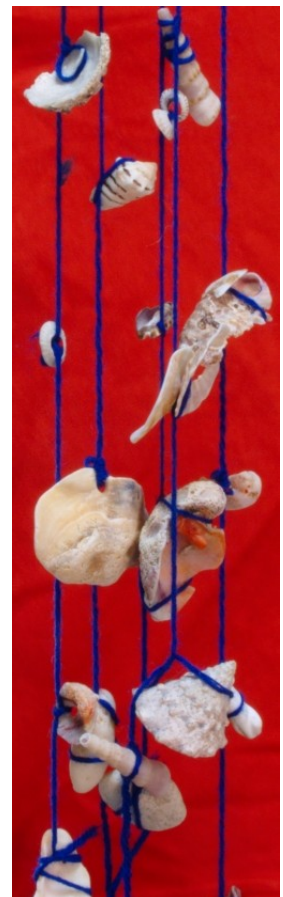
For mounting we estimate about two weeks.

Contacts

Lisa Lazzarini: lisa@xzoert.org www.xzoert.org/mnepta

Max Jacob: max@xzoert.org www.xzoert.org

¼, deepening and audio tracks: www.xzoert.org/unquarto



¼, studio for curtain