

Peter Vink - Art is in the detail

by Bert de Muynck, architect-writer, director MovingCities

Rumour has it that the famous German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe once stated that “God is in the detail”. It was the German musician and artist Blixa Bargeld, the frontman of the Einstürzende Neubauten (The Collapsing Buildings), who claimed that “The Devil is in the detail.” It was certainly Mies van der Rohe who said “Less is More”.

There exist arguments for stating that the work of Peter Vink (born NL, 1974) deals with spatial transformation to show that 'Art is in the detail'. Through a process of recycling, duplicating and repeating certain spatial elements he creates a new setting that reinforces the existing situation. This leads to a paradoxical situation where both reproduction and uniqueness are part of his work. His artistic endeavours make him a 'site specific' artist who uses the reproduction as his tool. At the same time the artistic outcome is clearly unrepeatable anywhere other than in the space of intervention itself.

A couple of years ago Peter Vink saw the light. His artistic appetite was to change the spatial perception of left-over spaces, such as corridors, cellars, or entrances – which are often overlooked and as the artist acknowledges have no artistic quality. The artist started using light as an element to create spatial compositions. Light restructures space, brings in the temporal as an element of the visitors' experience. The spatial adaptations all start from a basic idea that engages with the found spatial characteristics. The artist searches for details that can be reinforced and blown up till they stop being details. These, in return, become the overwhelming elements of a spatial artistic intervention and experience. Peter Vink's art is the art of reaction. It is instigated by an initial response to a given condition and then pushed until a new experience emerges. Implicit spatial qualities are made explicit, become something else. Although initially unforeseen, and unimagined, they end up irreproducible. However the function of the space doesn't change. The entrance room of Platform China is still

functions as an entrance room, but one in which the experience of symmetry, light, sound, rhythm and time makes us look different at its spatial potential. The artist tell us that 'this art exists here and now and nowhere and anywhere else.'

Confronted in his first installation with what Vink calls the 'serene plingplong'-quality of TL-tubes switching on and off, another element was added to the instruments used to alter space. In China, the artist has been working on two installations that further reinforce the immersive spatial experience of light and sound, one in the Liquor Factory, the other in Platform China. Each time the blinking of the space related to bouncing sounds, creating parallel patterns. Space becomes a fragmented experience of dark and light zones, supported by a musical score that seems to be neutral, but defines the rhythm of our reactions. How much faster does sound travel than light than our spatial experience of both?

The backbone of every spatial intervention is the computer. In his studio Peter Vink is a composer of sounds and light. Structuring these in patterns, graphics, systems and rhythms to bring them in relation with the space he operates in. By duplicating the detail, framing fragments of spaces, consciously reinforcing the sound of relays, creating computer generated circuits and using an unpredictable material such as light, it is though the artist is on a search to counter act the essence of his own creation and intervention. There is a pling and a plong, a click and a clack and with a blink of an eye the visitor alters their own understanding of these ignored in-between spaces we don't look into the detail of. 'For me there is always a space where I can work in', the artist states. If Peter Vink is at once the composer and conductor of spatial interventions, than the found space is his instant theatre, the details are the instruments he uses, rearranges and transforms through the simple use of TL-tubes. The latter the batons that mark the interplay of rhythm, sound, light and space.