

CREATIVE

Red Alive

Reynaldo Thompson Lopez
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Reynaldo Thompson Lopez, an artist, curator and writer par excellence, is Coordinator at the School of Digital Arts of the University of Guanajuato, Mexico. He was born in the State of Guanajuato in Mexico. Since his early years as an artist he concentrated his attention on the representation of the human body and ontological concerns from a deconstructive perspective explored through different media such as digital photography, monochrome painting and interactive animation. His visual art and architecture background helps him to play with the interaction of space, time and art.

In 2006 he was awarded a scholarship from the CONACULTA and has participated in more than 30 solo and group shows in the United States, Latin America and London. His works have been shown in collective and solo shows in spaces such as the Dallas Museum of Art for the Day of the Death (October-November, 2002), the *Centro Cultural de España* in Mexico city with the show *Chateau de l'ame: trilogy of water* (February- March, 2006) and the Museum of Modern Art of Santo Domingo with the video-installation *Red Alive* (June 14, 2008). His works have also been exhibited in many other public and private shows. Dr. Thompson also participated in an experimental project in London organized by Phyllida Barlow and sponsored by the Arts Council of England entitled *What do artists do?* in October 2008. In June 2009 he will have a solo show in *Demolden Gallery Project* in Santander, Spain. He had also participated as a curator in many exhibitions in the last three years.

Artist's Statement

"In Red Alive my concern is to highlight the territorial behavior of the Beta fish and by consequence its instinct to fight. The idea is a mimesis of what happens with people concerning the defense of borders where the human instinct for survival is depicted with the animal. The image on the screen can also be compared to Plato's cave where none of the projected images such as the shadow of the fish or the video are real but the outcrop of a tiny creature in a small territory like the aquarium. Both images, the shadow of the fish and the video projection are a hybrid of technology where even the sound is altered when a detector placed in front of the aquarium detects the movement of the fish and change the background music. The piece plays with the primitiveness of the animal instinct and the advances of new technology producing an ever changing image and sound."

Red Alive Installation



Red Alive

Red Alive is an installation consisting of video, sound and an aquarium containing a beta fish in it. The idea came out by observing the peculiar behavior of the small creature that fights to death with other fishes of his kind that are in his proximity. Its character and physical appearance are good reasons to capture it in a video recording since its color and sensual movements contrast with its aggressive instinct. The conduct of such fish is similar in many aspects to those of humans.

With this framework in mind, the idea of confronting the image and a shadow on the wall is a twofold suggestive play. On the one hand, we have the pre-recorded video of the fish and on the other hand we have the shadow of a live fish face up on the wall. At the end there is a triple play, one with the video recording, another with the fish and the last one with its shadow, something reminiscent of Plato's cave. All this is complemented with the movement captured by a web cam that is translated into sound and overlapped to a composed electro acoustic music reproduced in loop. The series of synthetic sounds transformed from the pixels captured by the camera are in real time generated by the movement of the fish.

The title of the piece *Red Alive* was born from the color of the fish that remind us of the color of blood, a symbol of life, violence and death, which also remind us of the beginning and end of a living creature. The projection of the video over the white wall gives the impression of a stain of blood because the fish was captured in close up turning out into a *quasi* abstract figure. At times the serene music (by Mauricio Valdes San Emeterio) on the back is unexpectedly

altered by the parsimonious move of the animal creating the effect of music and image alive.

The video recording does not have a sequential narrative; therefore, it can be watched at any part since there is neither a beginning nor an end. It is the shadow of the fish that creates expectation on the viewer, who at times may feel that the fish is playing with the projection producing a sort of sublime sensation on the spectator. Some stills of the fish, which are out of external reference even of the aquarium, give the effect of a hummingbird or butterfly fluting its wings, contrasting with the idea of liberty of those creatures that cross borders while the fish is confined to an aquarium, the size of a flat screen television. If that is compared to the territorial instinct of birds, the aquarium appears like a prison from them, like it happens with the image of the TV that deliberately keeps the audience captive.

The outcome is metonymically opposed on the spectator who feels hypnotized and stands still because of the movement of the huge image and the music originated by a tiny animal.

Some Other Works by Reynaldo Thomson



Versus



Sophronia



The Banquet

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