

BREATHING CITY





Breathing City is a video and sound installation comprising of 4 TV screens and surround sound system. The video screens display an 8 minute cycle depicting urban surroundings, captured by computer controlled robotic cameras, accompanied by a musical composition for 4 breathing voices edited for surround sound. The multitude of elements produces a contrast of unity and multiplicity: the 4 voices unite into a single enfolding sound; the four screens show a single object in different moments in time and from different perspectives, so that the singular disintegrates into a multiplicity. However, the manipulation is performed in temporal succession avoiding repetitiveness. The robotic camera movement contrasts with the human motion, opposing the animate with the inanimate, the city life and the living city.

Breathing City was shown in Lyon (2007, Les Substances), Tel Aviv (2007, Alfred Gallery), New York (2007, Harvestworks exhibition room), Barcelona (2008, Goethe Institut) and Copenhagen (2009, re-new Digital Arts Festival).

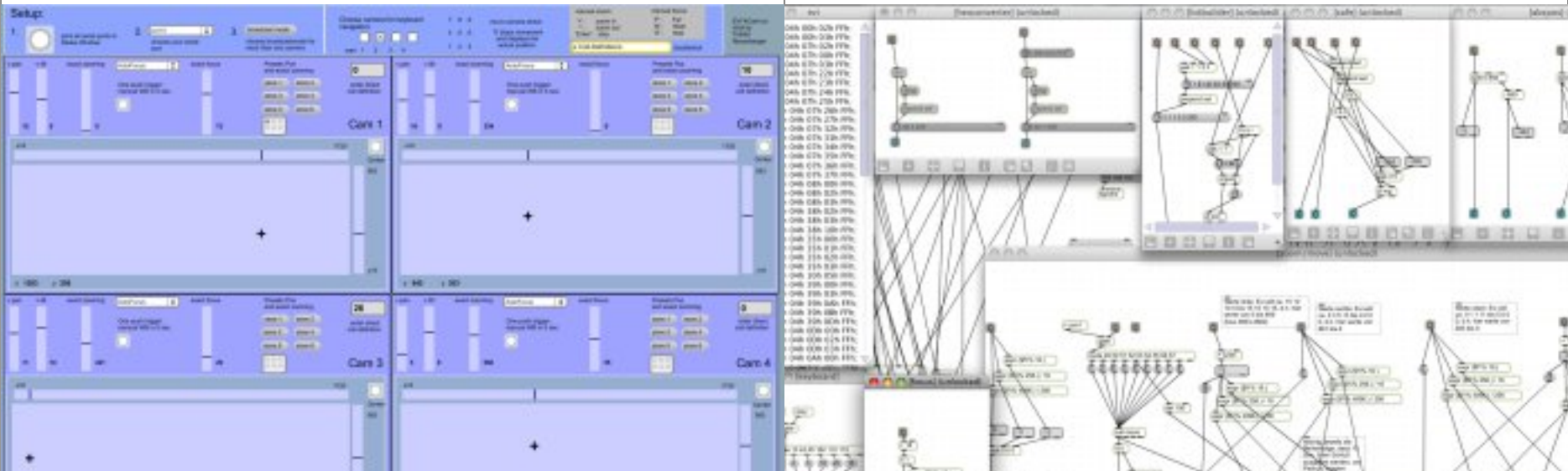
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A robotic surveillance camera was installed in public space and its custom parameters as pan, tilt, speed, zoom, iris... (normally used with motion-tracking algorithms or remote control) were controlled in extra developed software with predefined autonomous sequences of motion. These sequences were created after purely aesthetic consideration, following a musical score for 4 "breathing voices" (Music: Elad Shniderman), for an arrangement of 4 screens in a row. The surveillance camera was no longer functional, but became autonomous. Neither Video nor Audio was edited afterwards.



I developed Breathing City during an university residency program at the Goethe Institut in Lyon in 2007 (Grammaire de la ville, Phase 2). After I had written a very flexible software patch in the graphical programming language MaxMspJitter to control all functions of Sony Evi robotic surveillance cameras via the Visca-Protocol and the serial port, I asked a friend (Elad Shniderman) to write a composition, whose score was used to create four temporal sequences, that controlled the movements / adjustments of the camera. Then I installed one camera at different locations in Lyon and recorded the footage of the sequences one after another. In 2008 I have been invited by the Goethe Institut to create a revised version of the installation at Sant Sebastià Barcelona.





Evi-4Cam-control Software,
developed for Breathing City,
Mac OSX, Windows