

# OLAFUR ELIASSON'S THOUGHTS ON HIS WORK NOTION MOTION (2005) IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN

Information from an e-mail interview

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The installation *Notion Motion* (2005) consists of three consecutive situations using water and light (HMI projectors) to visualize the movement of the gallery visitors. Linked by a long, elevated wooden walkway, the situations experiment with vibrations as a phenomenon that defines and reconfigures space.

In room one an entire elevated wooden floor transforms the movement of people walking about the space into ripples in a water basin located on the opposite side of a black projection screen. The water is reflected onto the screen, its ripples varying according to the movement of the people. In the second room movement along the ramp activates water in a smaller basin; its waves are projected through a narrow, horizontal slit in a temporary wall onto a larger wall in a vibrating line. In the third room a sponge continuously falls into a large water basin and is slowly elevated again, the splash and water dripping from the sponge causing waves on the surface that are projected onto a white wall.

In his large-scale installation Eliasson explores the consequences of visitor movement within a museum space, thus drawing attention to the fact that no space is neutral or stable. Their mere presence in the rooms turns visitors into participants: they are immersed in the installation structure while influencing this very structure through their physical exploration of the space.

## SITE

*Notion Motion* was originally made for three spaces of the upperfloor of Bodonwing of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The work consists of 3 parts. These parts can be shown individually and at other locations. There are certain requirements as to the minimum space dimensions, which should not be less than 10% smaller than in Boijmans van Beuningen, unless otherwise decided and agreed upon by Olafur Eliasson or the estate of the artist. It should be attempted to show the work with all parts if possible. A partial showing should mention that the work is only partially represented.

## EXPERIENCE

The architectural and spatial context will define the organization of the work and the succession of rooms as it is site-specific. The waves in the water should be entirely dependent on the movement (the stepping or jumping on the wave-activation boards) of the visitors. No timers or anything like that to determine the intervals should be placed.

## VISUAL APPEARANCE

As in the first installation, the rooms should be dark. No additional light source is required besides the three HMI lamps.

Since the reflection in the middle room is a horizontal line, it is of paramount importance that it is only visible on the projection wall and not on the walls at the side. It should be at eye level and only on one wall, straight. The material of the wall that divides the room is not very specific. The important thing is the wall itself and the placement of the slit.

In the third room, the walls next to the basin always have to be painted black. The projection wall should be white.

## TECHNICAL DETAILS

The drawings in the archive of Olafur Eliasson are the same as the drawings that are kept in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. They include a floorplan, sections and some detail sketches. The 'wooden walkway' should be constructed of simple wooden boards, the dimensions of which should allow for the construction of the wave-operating levers.

The screen that has been used in the first room is opera projection screen, it is not connected to the water basin. The frame was made of wood.

There are no technical drawings of the mechanisms of the wave-activating boards. The mechanism can be improved. It is about the effect. The operating levers should look the same as in the first installation and be operated in the same way. The resulting wave should be similar. The blades are linked to the individual wave-activator levers. The mechanism is site specific. The information material gathered by the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen at breakdown documents this.

The foil that covers the water basins is a simple foil for garden ponds. It has to be black and should be as matt as possible to avoid reflections of the foil. The edge height should be as in the original installation. The water basins could be adapted (e.g. to reduce the risk of water damage), but they have to be as non-reflective and as high as the originals were.

The light specifications are as in the original work, they are HMI spotlights with different wattages. These lights are stored in the Museum. Different HMI lights of the same quality could be used in the future if these models are not produced anymore.

If it is needed for making the work more accesible for disabled people, ramps could be added - according to site-specific issues.

Olafur Eliasson does not want to make any changes to the work himself.

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This interview was conducted as part of the Culture 2000 project Inside Installations.