SCRIPTS OF LOGIC

Kunsthalle Zürich
Make your own exhibition!
31.07.2020 - 30.08.2020
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Numbers, characters of language, narrate logic. Since their first-known usage six millennia ago, they spread into all aspects of our world and constitute the basis of our existence, defining us and determining our fate. Elevated to universal characters, they are the spine of science, the abstraction of trading, the representation of our extent in space and time. Numbers break the continuum of our lives by offering an instantaneous and localized representation of an elusive process. Their ubiquity brings familiarity while their ability to transform from a basis to another, to shed light on patterns, to provide links between seemingly disparate events make them hold their power of fascination.

Our exhibition Scripts of Logic presents different manifestations of numbers morphing from abstraction to reality and invites the audience on a meditative journey, questioning the human need to make sense of things. The selected works use a variety of medium, from the most native tools of painting on everyday objects to programmed LEDs, exemplifying both the intimate and technological values of digits. The global use and varied interpretations of numbers emerge from the displayed artists, originating from four continents and diverse backgrounds.

1 Rulers display a common usage of numbers to measure the space around us. Referring to the Imperial unit, Foot Pound Second (2013) shows the different interpretations implied by the use of distinct measuring systems. The adaptation of traditional tools to the evolving laws of physics, such as curved space, is expressed through Numbers (2013).

2 OPALKA 1965/1–∞, Détail 1-35327 (1965) inaugurates Opalka’s lifelong project, writing consecutive numbers on a series of canvas. The infinity of digits materializes the continuity of time passing but also the very duration of the artist’s life as the project ended with his death in 2011. The repetitive pattern brings us into a meditative state whilst color variations highlight the vivid memories that stand out from the darkness of amnesia.

3 Composed of flip-style clocks, Perfect Time (24 x 6) (2012) is composed of static, bisected numbers reminiscent of clocks in airports and stations. The mixed numbers provide an aberrant time displaying the inexistence of defined time to catch, as each moment morph into the next one. The clocks emphasize the conflicting nature of time that is simultaneously constant and variable, abstract and real.

4 Rafael Lozano-Hemmer displays in Nineteen Ninety Four (2014) 22 billion combinations of the numbers found on Google Street View images. The work brings to light the extent of today's surveillance of individuals and the accuracy of Orwell's prediction in his eponymic novel. Any number can be typed on the keyboard yet the countdown always leads to the fatal number, suggesting that there is no escape from digital company tracking.

5 In Numbers and Trees, Central Park, Series I: Tree #8 (2015), Charles Gaines covers a photographed tree with a Plexiglas grid, then fills the squares with painted numbers, subverting the idea of painting by numbers and literally breaking down the image into a series of digits. Each color display a different growth stage, revealing the metamorphose of the tree through its life.

6 Turning herself into an open book in Errata Corrige series (2013), Ekatarina Panikanova invites us on a journey to the subconscious. Halfway between a painting and an installation, the arranged books become the canvas of our childhood memories where the numbers are painted on paper butterfly cutouts, as counting the time that flew away from those precious instants.

7 In Derivatives (2019), the auction prices of art pieces are overlaid over digital copies. The visual imposition of the numbers imply that the financial value of the artworks prime over their artistic impact, highlighting the capitalistic reality of the art market. Online, the artist encourages buyers to predict the future value of these works, mimicking the real art market.

8 Coal is made of pure carbon, the basic element of life. But the coal gathered in Counter Coal (2008) resembles the material that is burnt to generate electricity, with the impact of emitting a large amount of CO2 contributing to global warming and reversing the benefits that the material brought to human life. The red numbers buried in the middle act as a counter quantifying the usage of this material for immediate benefit but long-term harm.

9 The brain consists in the headquarters of consciousness. The continuous stream of our experiences is however processed by discrete electric pulses through our synapses. C. F. Brain (2009) highlights the discontinued nature of the processes occurring in our brains, but gather them in a spherical form to symbolize the emergence of thoughts in a brain-like shape.

10 The immersive work of Life Palace (tea room) (2013) invites the visitor to enter a meditative constellation of numbers. Its exterior presents a cushioned aspect inviting to experience rest while the red colour is a reminiscence of Eastern-Asian cultures. Inside, everlasting counters from 9 to 1 suggests the flow of time, but also the cyclicity of the events according to reincarnating philosophies of life.
Anton Parsons, Foot Pound Second, 2008

Lacquer and vinyl on aluminium, each: 240 x 15 x 15 cm


Anton Parsons, Numbers

Installation view, Thermostat, Palmerston North.
Darren Almond, Perfect Time (24 x 6), 2012
144 synchronized digital clocks, steel, computerized electronic control and electrical motor, 340 x 176 cm

Roman Opałka, OPALKA 1965/1-∞, Détail 1-35327, 1965
Acrylic on canvas, 196 x 135 cm
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Nineteen Eighty-Four, 2014

Computer, display, arduino processor, potentiometer, OLED pushbuttons, aluminium and steel frame, 44,5 x 133,5 x 13,5 cm

Photos by Antimodular Research
Charles Gaines, Numbers and Trees, Central Park, Series I: Tree #8, Kristen, 2015

Acrylic, ink jet print, Plexiglas, two panels each: 241,3 x 106,7 x 14,6 cm, central panel 241,3 x 108 x 14,6 cm, overall 241,3 x 321,3 x 14,6 cm


Paper cutout, ink and acrylic on paper


Photo © Ekaterina Panikanova, Z20 Sara Zanin Gallery
Paolo Cirio, Derivatives, 2019

Digital prints on canvas

Tatsuo Miyajima, Counter Coal, 2008

Light emitting diode, IC, electric wire, coal, wooden panel

Site specific installation at the Kunsthalle Recklinghausen


Photo © Kunsthalle Recklinghausen
Tatsuo Miyajima, C.F. Brain No. 1, 2009

Light emitting diode, IC, electric wire, stainless frame, 38 x 22 x 48 cm

Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Photo by Dave Morgan and Ken Adlard

Tatsuo Miyajima, Life Palace (tea room), 2013

Light emitting diode, IC, microcomputer by Ikegami program, wood, steel, passive sensor, electric wire, LED type; Life G-BL 152 pieces, 258,8 x 321,6 x 321,6 cm


Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Photos by Ken Adlard
3D model