JOHNNY DiBlasi
RGB
January 7th - February 7th, 2013

Artist Talk: January 17th, 12:30 - 1:30pm
Reception: January 17th, 6:00 - 8:00pm
Lone Star College - Kingwood Art Gallery
Special thanks to...
Patrick Renner, Sam Singh,
Thomas Cunningham,
Eric Todd, and Sarah Ohmer
“I am interested in creating an environment that immerses the viewer. One that explores how a space can be understood and mediated through digital information. At the same time, I wish to ask what makes a digital image? What are its most basic properties? RGB aims to open up these questions about digital images by revealing them in a basic form: numerical information is translated into a collection of pixels that emit colored light.”

~Johnny DiBlasi

RGB, is a site specific video installation that investigates the formal aspect of digital color. The viewer walks into the gallery space and is surrounded by a number of floating projection screens that emit computer generated imagery. The images themselves are not pictorial, but rather represent the formal quality of digital color through solid and abstracted fields of color.

Real time data is then pulled from the environment, causing the computer generated colors to shift, mutate, and evolve over time. As the computers create the images, they also are fed with information that references the site: both the immediate gallery space and the surrounding area of Kingwood, TX. Environmental variables like temperature, traffic, sunlight, sound, and bodies in the space all affect the evolving projected colors.

The RGB color model is an additive color model. In this model, varying intensities of red, green, and blue light are added together to make a broad range of colors that vary in hue and saturation. The range of colors produced is a spectrum or gamut. The RGB model permeates contemporary life because it is used in electronic systems today—in color input and output systems. That is, the RGB model is used to record, sense, capture and display color in our world.
Electronic imaging systems all use the color model both in the creation of and distribution of representations. Digital cameras, scanners, TV screens (LCD, CRT, and plasma), computer monitors and digital video cameras, mobile phone touch screens, digital projectors and even large displays (known as ‘JumboTrons’) all use the RGB color system. Imagery produced and distributed by these devices through various channels such as television, the Internet, cinema, software, publications and advertisements flood both the physical landscape and our thought landscapes.

In talking about how these images influence culture, the term “mediascape” has become useful, though it has a variety of connotations and applications. The word “mediascape” was coined in 1990, when a sociologist named Arjun Appadurai included it in his list of five sectors of “global cultural flow”: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes. Modernity at Large). These “scapes” are the five dimensions of the “social imaginary” which, he says, drive society and the new globalized culture. “The image” and “the imagined,” the imagination in total, direct these new global cultural processes
and society (from “Disjuncture and Difference”). The mediascape speaks to a culture that is integrated with systems of media like the Internet, television and advertising.

“What interests me is exploring how modern culture is affected by imagery and how imaging technologies inform our perception of reality,” DiBlasi states. “Recently, I’ve been drawn to Appadurai’s ideas and terms like ‘mediascape’ and ‘finanscapes’. These inventive terms describe a modern, globalized culture, where the landscape, the image, the imagination and the ‘global cultural flow’ interact.”

Hewlett Packard adopted the term mediascape to name a technology under development that works with GPS enabled mobile devices. HP developed a mediascape software suite which allows users to build, play and share their own mediascape, or “mscape”. In this instance, a mediascape is a mobile application that blends images, video, audio and interactions, to create games, guided walks, tours and destinations. These digital media and guided activity combinations are described by HP as “location-based experiences.” This technology is very similar to self-guided tours in art museums—visitors are given a headset and can listen to information that is synchronized with their location.

HP spins their product this way: “What are mediascapes? Mediascapes are mobile, location-based experiences that incorporate digital media with the sights, sounds, and textures of the world around you. Mediascapes blend digital images, video, audio and interactions with the physical landscape. Games, tours, and destinations are among the mediascapes created to date.
Download a mediascapes to a portable device, and see how your landscape comes alive as you move through the environment. Discover how mediascapes enrich your world.”

HP and Appadurai represent two different applications of the term mediascape. However, both point to concepts that are relevant to the subject matter and processes that Johnny DiBlasi explores in his past works, as well as, the current RGB project.

“I think the term ‘mediascape’ is an interesting word with numerous connotations. “ DiBlasi continues: “It is ‘media’ combined with the word ‘landscape.’ This is a union of concepts that is very descriptive of today’s world. When I hear this word I think about how media occupies our landscape. So we navigate this environment that we have constructed and integrated with media. And when you think of media, you have to think of everything: from your favorite book to the TVs in airports that are set to CNN. From your iPhone to all the signage alongside the freeway as you drive. So this media saturates our landscape and senses.

Throughout history, we can see how our technology has altered the landscape. In turn, we adapt to the new landscape. There is this feedback loop whereby we build our own environment, which changes the way we interact with and perceive the world. Through my work, I am interested in this complex relationship between the landscape and technology.”

DiBlasi aims to address these ideas of our contemporary landscape and technologies. He wishes to construct environments for the viewer that are powered by electronic images and imaging systems. RGB is the latest endeavor of DiBlasi’s interdisciplinary practice of making experiences that point to the intersection of art, technology and engineering.
“I explore digital color as a construct of numerical data by the computer which transmits color through light emitting pixels. At the same time, I consider how color integrates and constructs an environment.”

Bio
Johnny DiBlasi is a Texas gulf coast native who has exhibited nationally. He earned his BFA at University of Houston in Photography and Digital Imaging. Following UH, DiBlasi received his MFA in Photographic and Electronic Media from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD. DiBlasi works with video, programming, installation, and other media, and most recently, the artist has collaborated with other artists and engineers on various installation and performance projects. DiBlasi specializes in interdisciplinary and hybrid art-making processes that investigate the confluence of art and technology. His work addresses subjects relevant to the contemporary landscape and imaging technologies. Through his work, DiBlasi investigates digital aesthetics and how these technological forms activate a space. In 2011, Johnny cofounded the artist collective {exurb}. {exurb} is an artist collective comprised of artists and engineers who experiment at the intersection of art-making processes and engineering. He currently lives and works in Indianapolis teaching photography and digital media at Herron School of Art and Design and the University of Indianapolis Art Department.

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