

NEWS

THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"HYPERSPACES", BY ARCHITECT RAIMUND ABRAHAM, TO OPEN AT THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK

"Hyperspace", a mathematical concept meaning "the order of the 4th dimension", has been translated by Austrian born Architect Raimund Abraham into an architectural context. Abraham has transformed the Architectural League's 3-room gallery space into a void -- in which it will be impossible to define space in conventional three dimensional terms because there are no recognizable objects or fixed reference points. A new strategy of perception is demanded from the spectator who, stripped from normal environmental hardware, is stimulated to structure his own environment. "Hyperspaces" will run from February 7 - March 6. Hours are 10-5 Monday through Friday, 1-5 on Saturday. The gallery, located at 41 East 65th Street, is open to the public and admission is free.

"Hyperspaces" consists of an audio-sound structure and three sequentially connected territories which have different but constant visual characteristics. There is no centralized light source. The physical enclosure (walls, floor and ceiling) is transformed into one continuous sensory surface of light, texture, and substance. This is achieved by using monochromatic fluorescent paint illuminated by ultra violet black light. "Light will not structure the environment any more", Abraham explains, "it will absorb it."

The audio logic is based upon six pre-recorded sound elements controlled by 17 interrelating attenuators and switches. (A detailed diagram of the audio structure will be available at the press preview). The attenuators, sensitive to the proximity of solids, control the amplitude. The switches, sensitive to light, determine the distribution of various sounds to nine loud speakers. Entering the first of the three territorial spaces, the participant is not forced into any pattern of behavior. His random movement will soon interfere with electronic control devices, changing the audio-visual relationship of the environment. As he approaches the attenuators (visually articulated as metal sculptural forms which seem to float in the space) the sounds will be amplified. As he interferes with vertically structured invisible light beams, sounds will be switched to the various speakers. As Abraham explains: "With the loss of a visual orientation the proximity devices and sound patterns will become the relative reference points of the environment. People will become the architectural components."

A transitional opening leads from the first territorial space to the second more conditioned one. In this cylindrical area participants are more limited in their movement and consequently forced into more patterned interaction. A transparent, centrally hanging hemisphere contains a rotating proximity device which will change the sound structure according to the density and frequency of the circulation.

Exposed to additional tactile and odorous sensory experiences, participants are prepared to enter the "Zero Zone" -- in which all functions and environmental stimuli are reduced to a minimum. The

"Zero Zone" is the turning point in the "hyperspace cycle". Within it, people are no longer monumentalized. Normal light illuminates the naked white cuboid space, and spectators experience a moment of suspension in which they can contemplate before returning through the cycle. Abraham feels that "in hyperspaces one can experience infinitely the same spacery concept by different operational routes in a random series of events. [The process of experience replaces the dimension of experience. Architecture can no longer be defined by the physical dimensions of the environment but instead by the instantaneous act of environmental creation itself.]"

Mr. Abraham, a 36-year-old architect who came to the U. S. from Vienna in 1964, is presently teaching architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design. Winner of numerous awards in national and international design competitions, he has exhibited at The Gallery of the National Institute of Architects in Rome, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, The International Building Exhibit, London, the Triennale, Milano, and The Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm (May 6, 1969).

The sound aspect of the environment was created by Gerald M. Shapiro, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Studies for Electronic Music at Brown University. Mr. Shapiro, a former Fulbright Fellow in Paris, has had his instrumental, electronic and mixed-media works performed in Europe, the U.S. and the Far East. Collaborating on the electronic devices was William R. Patterson, a candidate for a PHD in electrical engineering at Brown University.

RAIMUND ABRAHAM: "HYPERSPACES"
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"Hyperspaces" was made possible by a grant from The Architectural League's J. Clawson Mills Fund. John Lobell, chairman of the current work committee in charge of the League's shows and special events, says that this show "continues the League's series of new and experimental events, dealing with all aspects of contemporary life."
