

SOIL

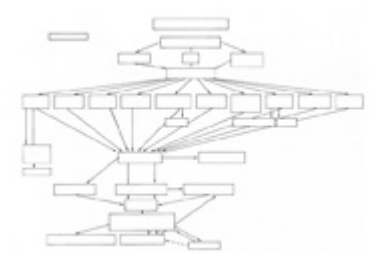
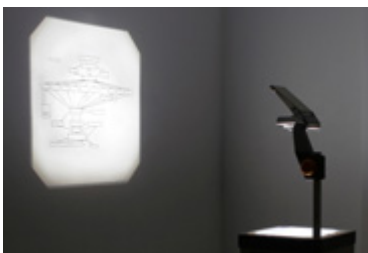
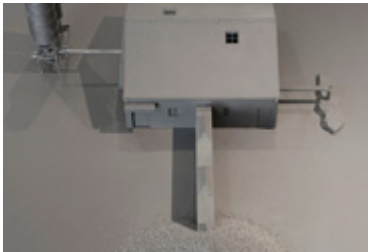
Turku Biennial 2011 – Patterns of the Mind

1.6.2011 to 9.10.2011

Ars Nova Museum, Turku, Finland.

The theme Patterns of the Mind reaches for thoughts and their winding paths in the human mind. It invites artists to deal with thoughts, ideas or reflections, that can be current and contemporary or everlasting and constant; from the mainstream of thoughts or hidden inside an individual. The theme provides keys to critical thought, works that take a stand, to sharp and discerning observations of the surrounding world. On the other hand the theme can be an intimate window to humanity.

In the Turku Biennial group show I presented an installation work named 'Soil'



Intellectual play/ Thom Vink

Thom Vink's approach to art making typically involves the presentation of richly complex arrays of ideas and images. Incorporating a broad range of media – from architectural models and drawings to photographs and video – he creates open ended installations whose seemingly ambiguous narratives jog our collective memories and invite interpretation.

Vink's inspiration comes from many sources. It encompasses standard works of reference, such as maps and encyclopaedias, which condense time and information. His drawings, photographs and the use of an overhead projector or other equipment also recall pedagogical materials and methods. Technological innovations of the recent past fascinate him, as do the ways in which people have imagined the future. And he is drawn to the changing fields of tension that inhabit the ruptures separating antipodal states. The gaps between light and dark, stasis and movement, and chaos and order also captivate him.

To walk into one of his exhibitions is to see things in a unique way, for his taxonomies sidestep traditional modes of organization to create heretofore unrecognized patterns, relationships, and meanings. He may place an illustration of the cosmos next to an architectural drawing then add a drawing of a crystalline structure or a decorative abstract design once applied to textiles or wall paper. The images tend to be ordered in rows, columns or grids across the walls. Changes in progression frequently interrupt the arrangements. Additional elements may be positioned on a table or the floor. Vink holds that they tell a story. This story may not have an obvious beginning or ending, but it is meant to be read.

Each exhibition responds to the space in which it is shown. Therefore, though Vink may include elements from previous exhibitions, his exhibitions vary dramatically and each presentation evokes new relationships and new meanings. His visual configurations may assume the character of equations, thus connoting a form of mathematics, or delve into the psychological aspects of a structure, as in his recent retrospective *Moth House*, in which the constituent elements referred to the interior layers of a house. The gallery space functions as an extension of the work, not a neutral receptacle.

The foundation of Vink's work hinges on intuition; what is a form of knowledge without reason. To explain why a work his being made becomes a virtually impossible project for him and is something that counters his creative impulses. He has been frequently drawn to cryptic graphic representations, images that, isolated from their previous contexts, seem to defy logic. In fact, much of the material that triggers his interest appears so familiar to viewers it engenders sentimental feelings. Encountering them in an unfamiliar context, though, not only bestows an elusive aura, but it also stymies comprehension. His work also bridges seemingly disparate realms. A video of a pulsing circle of light, for example, suggests electronic as well as biological functions. By modeling space he alters the viewer's perspective. He induces wonder by shrinking massive structures and expanding ones usually considered incidental. The work also embodies the mysterious qualities of residual phenomena. The afterimage caused by light fluctuations, the sedimentary layering of wall components or patterns seen emerging out of dust all create temporary lapses in plausibility that tend to linger in the mind.

Vink's modest collections of data subvert the authoritative compilations to which we are accustomed. They propose that there are alternate paths of development and influence, that the data and its organization can be mitigated by the structure containing it and that the confluence of ideas operates in a multi-directional fashion and not a linear one. They are intellectually dense, yet playful. The work challenges assumptions and remains visually intriguing.

All references to the artist's personal views in this text derive from an interview the author conducted in February 2010. From *Threshold to Threshold: Thom Vink*, an edited version of this interview, appeared in the May/June 2010 issue of *Art Papers*.

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