

owen thomas

DESIGNER / SCULPTOR

UK

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Owen Thomas – Artist Statement

Birthplace; Brixton, South London

Engineer turned designer turned sculptor.

My work is comprised of the following:

Design:

Owen Thomas is re-appraising the design of the humble stove, the aim to provide an alternative to the current run-off-the-mill with innovative design and leading edge efficiency through the use of the latest technology and materials. His 'steampunk' style is derived by an unlikely meeting of Nick Park's 'Wallis & Grommet' & Jules Verne.

Furniture; approaching mundane objects and re-designing to the extraordinary, past work has included retail signage & interiors, restaurants and hair salons. Sources of inspiration have included Ron Arad, an Israeli architect/designer and the Vienna secessionist movement of the 1900's together with his contemporaries at the London College of furniture during their late eighties heydays.

Sound and form:

One invisible, the other sometime large structures in steel/glass/stone, striving to bring these together in creations where ones sensory perceptions are extrapolated from one to another in a dynamic and irresistible way.

The process of creation of a new piece often follows this route;

- Deciding the key sense and its pair – visual / audible.
Examples; spatial position to sound or sound to 3D colour.
- Materials are decided by the type of environment, sound technology is normally made rugged and to appear ridiculously simple possibly using high technology to reach that end (what

you see is what you get), I guess this stemmed from the pleasure as a youngster building hobby circuits and later, training in industrial electronics and getting paid to do the same!

- Structurally my preference is metal, a material whose properties I am well acquainted with; quick, one is able to maintain a 'flow' with the piece when fusing the final form though not yet seen is manifesting through a show of sparks a microcosm of the industrial revolution in an old barn on some windy Devon hilltop! Cheap, easily available – often large found industrial scrap objects lend inspiration.

Current direction:

To reproduce experiments in resonating structures on a much larger scales but in a controlled manner and where the audience participant interacts with piece. The idea can be demonstrated with something as simple as a metre long metal bar with receiver/transmitter transducers at each end where the driver transducer is fed from the amplified signal from receiver and a pure tone is generated. Extend this idea to buildings and imagine a large gallery where on putting your ear to the wall one would hear a number of tones coming through the building and ones amazement at on touching any part of the structure the change caused by this simple physical interaction.

Participants in a recent work 'temple' reported a blurring between senses and 'out of body experiences'. This piece was formed by a circle of large steel plates each suspended by acoustic dampers, these were individually 'energised' by means of a modified PA speaker and simple microphone amp the sensor being glued to the back of the plate. A sound was generated by feedback (as above) and took place when the gain of the loop exceeded 1 or unity. Tuning each part to have a gain at or around this figure led to state where individual plates would be quiescent unless placed near one another where their sonic characteristics would meld and form one 'organism' the sound varying from a thunderous 'ships engine' room to deep melodious baritone chorus.

One of the more infamous examples of large resonance is collapse of Tacoma Narrows Bridge, USA where the frequency was approx 0.1-0.3Hz, here is an excerpt from a witness.

Just as I drove past the towers, the bridge began to sway

violently from side to side. Before I realized it, the tilt became so violent that I lost control of the car... I jammed on the brakes and got out, only to be thrown onto my face against the curb... Around me I could hear concrete cracking... The car itself began to slide from side to side of the roadway.

On hands and knees most of the time, I crawled 500 yards [450 m] or more to the towers... My breath was coming in gasps; my knees were raw and bleeding, my hands bruised and swollen from gripping the concrete curb... Toward the last, I risked rising to my feet and running a few yards at a time... Safely back at the toll plaza, I saw the bridge in its final collapse and saw my car plunge into the Narrows.

- Other Influences:

Key words; 'Synesthesia' and 'Numinousity'.

Olivier Messiaen

"Messiaen experienced a mild form of synaesthesia manifested as a perception of colours when he heard certain harmonies"

Synesthesia

(also spelled synæsthesia or synaesthesia, plural synesthesiae or synaesthesiae)—from the Ancient Greek σύν (syn), meaning "with," and αἴσθησις (aisthēsis), meaning "sensation"—is a neurologically-based phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway. In one common form of synesthesia, known as grapheme → color synesthesia, letters or numbers are perceived as inherently colored, while in ordinal linguistic personification, numbers, days of the week and months of the year evoke personalities. In spatial-sequence, or number form synesthesia, numbers, months of the year, and/or days of the week elicit precise locations in space (for example, 1980 may be "farther away" than 1990), or may have a three-dimensional view of a year as a map (clockwise or counterclockwise).

Carl Jung

“The light of the numinous passes through the lens of the personal unconscious”

‘Numinous’

(pronounced /'nju: minəs/) is a Latin term coined by German theologian Rudolf Otto to describe that which is wholly other. The numinous is the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* that leads in different cases to belief in deities, the supernatural, the sacred, the holy, and the transcendent.

The word was used by Otto in his book *Das Heilige* (1917; translated as *The Idea of the Holy*, 1923). Etymologically, it comes from the Latin word *numen*, which originally and literally meant "nodding", but was associated with meanings of "command" or "divine majesty". Otto formed the word *numinous* from *numen* in a manner analogous to the derivation of *ominous* from *omen*.

Experience

Artist / Designer

www.sense3d.com

Sculptor, designer, maker.

Sound installations, Corporate Design, Furniture, Bespoke stoves.

United Kingdom
Aug 1988 - Present

Education

College higher dip

Guildhall University

LCF higher diploma, design

East London
Sep 1986 - Jul 1988

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