

Lightwall
1983, Kingston Gallery, Boston

Materials: Mirrored plexiglas strips, computer-controlled, projectors, reflections

Dimensions: 12' H x 35' W x 35' L

A large mirrored floor panel and a suspended mirrored panel interact with computer-controlled light to project brilliant reflected fields. Wavelike clouds of light are continually transformed by the subtle changes in light emitted by four slide projectors. In a loop of slow dissolves, the reflections evolve in color and intensity, evoking fire, clouds or an icy pond. I am interested in the transformation from the regularity of the mirrored panels to the soft and evocative quality of the light.

The panels are made of hundreds of thin strips of mirrored plexiglas laminated back to back, so they reflect light from both sides. The flexible strips adjust to the uneven wooden floor in the old industrial building where the gallery is located. When light hits the plexiglas, reflections bend and distort.

The light sources are four slide projectors (no slides) connected to a computerized dissolve unit. Variations in color are created as projector bulbs increase from dim to full strength: at very low levels the reflections are yellowish-orange, while at full strength they are a cool blue-white. As the projectors brighten and dim, wall reflections shift and overlay, creating varying patterns that alter one's perception of the space. The lighting changes are slow, almost imperceptible, so viewers can be in the space for a while before they notice a change has occurred.

The installation can be viewed from outside the space as an observer, but it takes on another dimension as the viewer(s) move through the space. As people walk in front of the mirrored panels, their shadows are projected onto the walls — sometimes right side up, upside down, or in multiple. In this way the installation integrates both sculpture and performance: viewers moving through the space activate the piece through their involvement with light.