

Institución_RS >> /dev/dsp

Presents the process of transcoding the digital images in the Museo Reina Sofía collection that appear on its webpage, providing an interpretation of the institution's digital body and producing a sound that contains both a representation of culture and the process of its institutionalisation. Thus, José Val del Omar's idea of converting the entire history of art into light and colour using mechanical processes is recovered.

In this case, digital processes and free software (strictly limited to Linux, Pure Data and Supercollider) were used to transform and sonify archives of images, experimenting with different techniques based on the analysis and extraction of both visual and sound data and the use of these data to generate a new sound resynthesis.

Oscar Martín works somewhere between computer music, the aesthetics of error and generative noise in his pursuit of the construction of autonomous sound universes. He composes imaginary spaces that attempt to open up avenues for active listening and develop different attitudes towards the perception of the aural phenomenon.

The piece establishes a re-re-appropriation of culture, insofar as it draws on the culture belonging to the commons and appropriated by the institution to transform it into free sound information. `Institución_RS >> /dev/dsp` is like other works by Oscar Martín such as `noise&capitalism.txt >> /dev/dsp` or `trAnsCodE->`, in that it, too, takes references from Code Art Brutalism, a hacking and programming system that usually uses images, to interpret the digital sounds of a text.

In that respect, but adding an observation about the nature of representation, it exposes the ambiguities inherent in copyright when using a code, which is the computer representation of the photographic representation of the original work which in many cases is also representational in nature. In some ways, we are hearing not only a portion of the history of art, but also the whole process of institutionalisation and deauthentication.

All of the graphic information constructed from the code used and the different formats for visual file representation, along with a conceptual diagram of the transcoding process that refers to this work can be found at the following Archive.org link under a public domain licence.

Technical process

All of the digital images (300x300 resolution) in the Museo Reina Sofía collection, which can be found on the webpage for public consultation and translated into html code by any user from his or her Internet browser, were brought together in a super-image, a large mosaic that contains the portion of the history of art represented by this institution.

The format of the images contained in this super-image was changed several times, extracting different sounds from each state of these data. Using a command from the shell, these images were transferred to the computer audio device, which tries to interpret any data that reaches it as audio. The resulting audio archive was used as raw material in a process known as data-driven synthesis. This consists of analysing the different sound parameters of the archives, like the frequency spectrum and amplitude, and extracting different data tables and patterns and applying them as control data in the generation of sound in the new synthesis processes.

Alongside the images, a histogram – an analysis of the RGBA value of each pixel in relation to its red, green and blue – was created. More data tables were obtained and used with the previous ones in more sophisticated resynthesis processes like granular synthesis and a simpler one made up of sine wave oscillators. This result was then put through analog feedback processes and finally edited and mastered for listening.



