

An Immersive Journey Through Abstraction



Introspection

Art Installation by Christophe and Olivier Defaye

@ Hibino Media Technical, Tokyo



Watch the Teaser

Architectural reveries
in tribute to the great masters of abstract art

Kazimir Malevitch

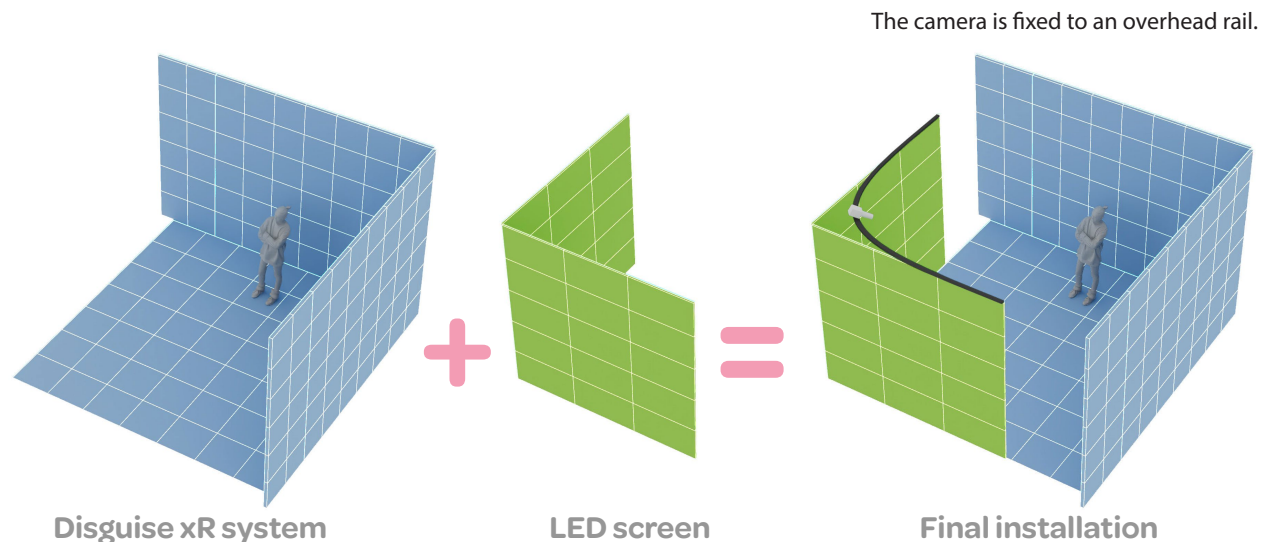
Wassily Kandinsky

Piet Mondrian

Project Background

The installation Introspection was born from the collaboration between Hideki Ōkawara and Ken Higuchi, who are responsible for developing new applications of **xR technology (1)** at Hibino Media Technical, particularly virtual environments in which visitors can move and interact, and Olivier Defaye and Christophe Defaye, founders of the creative studio AOKIStudio, who were seeking innovative technologies to imagine new forms of artistic installations.

The first experiments with xR technology led Olivier and Christophe to propose combining this technology with additional LED screens, enabling filmed participants, integrated in real time into a virtual environment, to simultaneously see themselves within that environment. This approach opened the possibility of creating **new immersive artistic experiences (2)**: experiences in which we are no longer merely external spectators observing a virtual world, but also participants acting within and experiencing that world from the inside.



(1) xR technology

xR is a technology developed by the company Disguise in 2020 that enables the creation of virtual environments by combining digital imagery, LED screens, and camera-tracking systems, allowing people and objects to be integrated into interactive spaces in real time.

In television, xR technology makes it possible to create fully virtual studios, where live presenters can move and interact within environments generated in real time. In film production and advertising, it often replaces green screens with LED walls, allowing actors to see and respond to their virtual surroundings directly during filming.

(2) new immersive artistic experiences

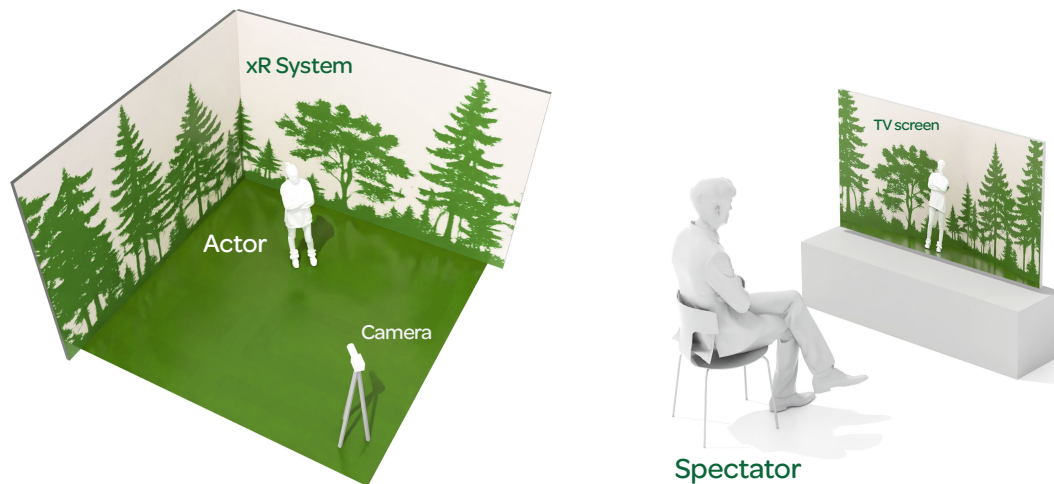
The main technologies used in immersive installations are video projection, LED screens, and VR headsets. Each of these technologies transforms the perception of physical space in its own way, but they share a common characteristic: visitors experience the virtual environment from their own point of view and do not see themselves within it.

By combining xR technology with LED screens, filmed participants can, on the one hand, be integrated into a virtual environment in real time and, on the other hand, see themselves within that environment in real time, as if looking into a mirror.

This represents a new application of xR technology: the audience for the images produced by this technology is no longer television viewers or cinema audiences, but rather the visitors of the immersive installation itself.

A New Application of Disguise xR

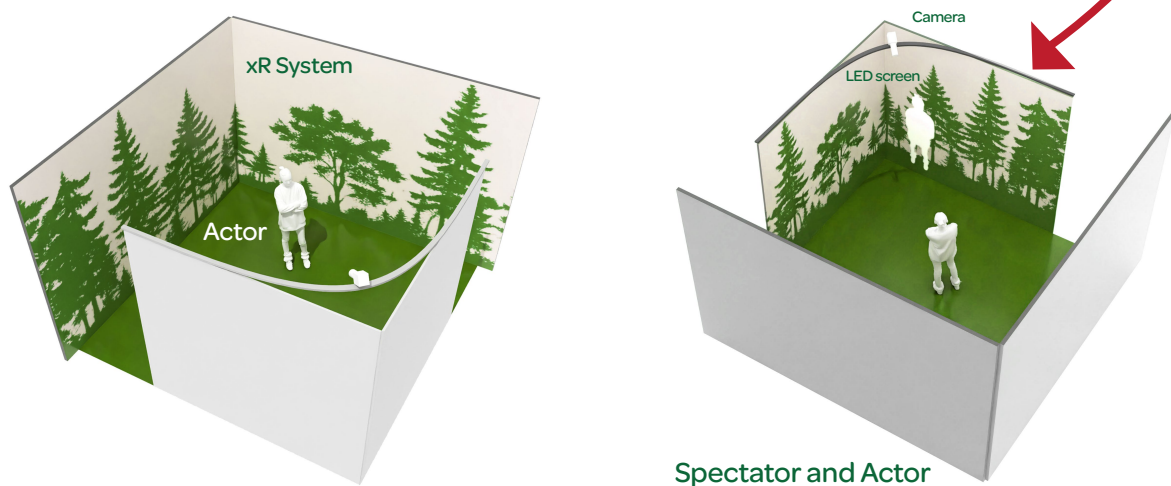
Typical Use of the Disguise xR System



In the conventional use of xR technology, an actor filmed in a studio in front of an xR wall is integrated into a virtual environment in real time. Spectators watching from home view the performance in real time.

The screen that displays the actor integrated into a virtual environment in real time is no longer a television viewed remotely by the spectator, but a giant LED screen positioned directly in front of the actor-spectator.

New Use of the Disguise xR System



By combining xR technology with LED screens placed in front of the audience, visitors are integrated into a virtual environment in real time, becoming both spectators and actors of the experience.

Concept

Seeing oneself in real time within a virtual space, distinct from the physical space one actually occupies, invites visitors to reflect on the influence of new technologies on perception, behavior, social interactions, and our relationship with reality. In particular, it encourages reflection on the increasingly blurred boundary between physical space and representational space, between what is real and what is mediated through technology.

The inseparability of the pleasure of experience and representation.

The disappearance of the boundary between lived experience and represented experience.

Indeed, new technologies such as digital photography, smartphones, social media, and generative AI increasingly encourage us to prioritize the representation of our experiences over the experiences themselves and the physical spaces in which they take place.

As a result, the pleasure of an experience becomes inseparable from the pleasure of representing it and sharing it with others. At the same time, lived spaces tend to recede in favor of represented spaces.

For example, we are no longer always able to tell whether the background of a photographic portrait or a video conference is real or virtual; eventually, we stop questioning the actual presence of people within a space, or even the reality of the space itself. How do new technologies transform the boundary between our existence in physically inhabited spaces and our digital existence within spaces of representation? What kind of experience do we have of a space, of our own body, and of the bodies of others when we are confronted with our own real-time representation in a place where we are not physically present? Does physical space gradually give way to represented space?

Do we come to feel that we exist more fully within the represented space than within the real one, no longer simply facing a screen that represents us, but entering that screen and becoming an integral part of the space of representation itself?

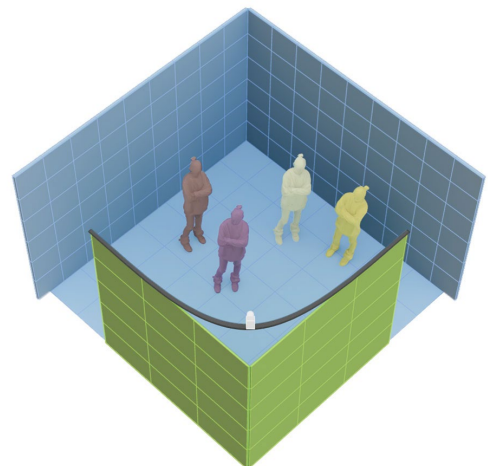
Installation

The installation invites visitors to stage themselves simultaneously within a physical space and a virtual one. To achieve this, visitors are encouraged to move freely within an empty 20-square-meter space surrounded by LED screen walls standing 3 meters high. A camera captures the participants, who see themselves in real time, as if reflected in a mirror, on the LED walls surrounding them. Their image is integrated into a constantly evolving virtual environment, creating the experience of inhabiting both spaces at once.

Visitors are encouraged to film themselves using their smartphones or cameras, either by recording the screen in front of them, where they appear within the virtual environment, or by taking selfies within the physical space with the screen visible in the background.

They are also naturally led to observe one another and to film each other, both in the physical space and within the virtual environment.

The installation is not a static object but a participatory and performative experience. Its audiovisual content is presented as a five-minute loop. Visitors may remain in the space for as long as they wish, sit down, lie down, or simply move through it at their own pace.



Artistic Content

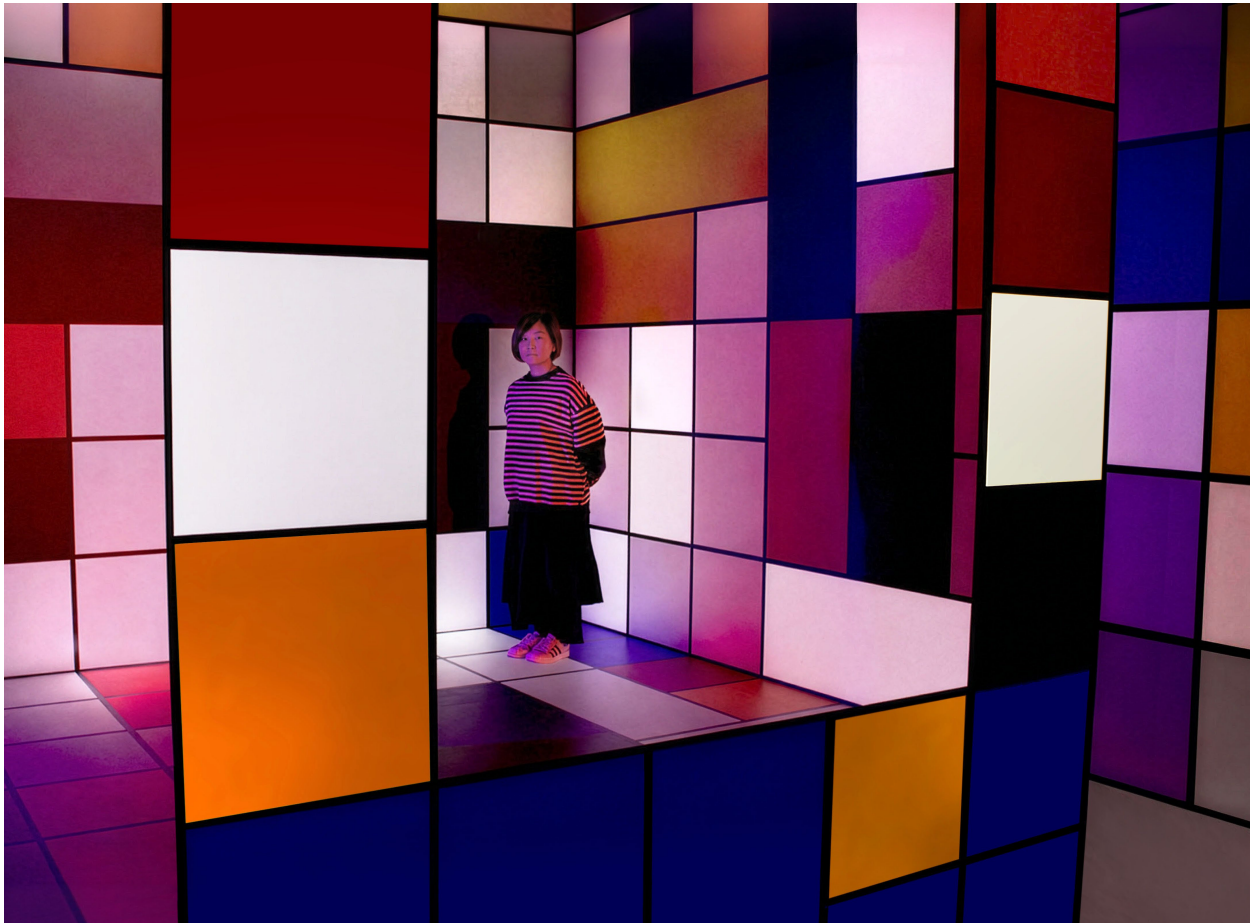
A Homage to the Great Masters of Abstract Art

The proliferation of increasingly sophisticated yet often superfluous images in our daily environment has led us to seek simpler visual worlds.

The immersive installation therefore pays tribute to three great masters of abstract painting, Kazimir Malevich, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian, by interpreting their respective artistic universes as architectural reveries.

These architectural reveries are neither reproductions nor animated versions of masterpieces of abstract art. Rather, they constitute a form of introspection into these pictorial worlds, exploring their underlying logic, structures, internal mechanisms, and immersive potential in order to transform them into environments and experiences to be lived rather than merely observed.

An Installation in Homage to Piet Mondrian

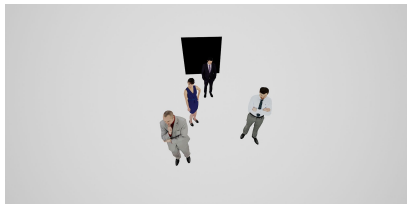


On the LED screen walls, visitors see themselves integrated into the virtual environment in real time.

The installation in homage to Piet Mondrian invites visitors to move through a space composed of rectangular geometric forms and primary colors—red, blue, and yellow—characteristic of the artist's visual language. What initially appears to be a two-dimensional environment gradually transforms into a three-dimensional space.

Lines and planes, in constant evolution, seem to extend beyond the limits of the physical environment, creating the impression of an infinite architecture in which the visitor becomes an integral element of the composition.

Installation 1: Black Square in White Space



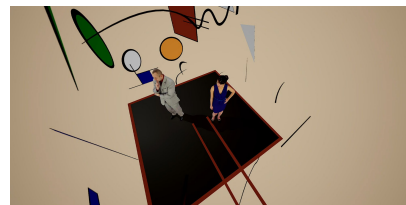
Black Square in White Space is an installation in homage to **Black Square on White Background**, the iconic work of abstract art created by the Russian painter Kazimir Malevich in 1915. Through its radical simplicity, the painting marked a decisive break in the history of art, freeing painting from the representation of the visible world.

In the installation, a black square orbiting within a white space revolves around the visitor. The square disappears when it moves behind the visitor and reappears when it moves in front of them. This effect blurs the boundary between projected image and physical presence, disrupts spatial reference points, and invites visitors to question their own position: Am I standing in front of an image projected onto a screen, or am I myself inside the screen?

The installation's camera is mounted high above, at the corner where the two LED screen walls meet, as a reference to the mystical dimension of Malevich's work. When first exhibited, the painting was hung high in the corner of the gallery, a location traditionally reserved for religious icons in Russian homes. As in the 1915 exhibition, visitors are encouraged to look upward.

The installation's soundscape features an excerpt from the 1937 film *Drôle de drame*, including Jacques Prévert's famous line, performed by Louis Jouvet "Bizarre, bizarre..." which reinforces the installation's strange and minimalist atmosphere.

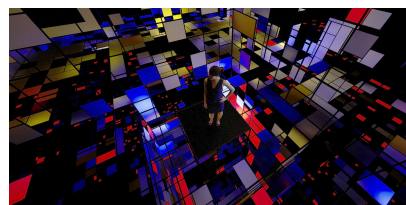
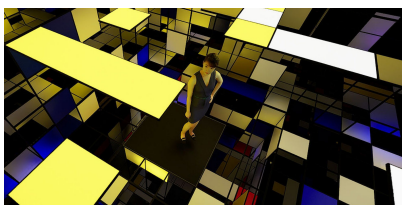
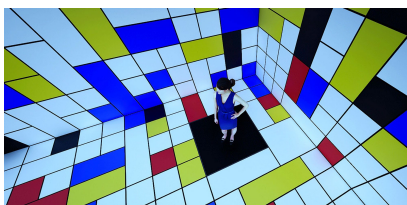
Installation 3: Waltz of Shapes



Waltz of Shapes is an installation in homage to Wassily Kandinsky and to his abstract works, particularly **Composition VIII** (1923). Positioned at the center of a mobile in perpetual motion, visitors themselves become elements of the installation.

The installation's soundscape features the French song *Mon homme*, written in 1920 by Albert Willemetz and performed by Mistinguett.

Installation 2: Space with yellow, red, black, blue and grey



Space with Yellow, Red, Black, Blue and Grey is an installation in homage to Piet Mondrian and to works such as **Composition with Yellow, Red, Black, Blue and Gray** (1920), composed of vertical and horizontal lines, rectangular geometric forms, and primary colors.

Piet Mondrian's visual universe suggests an architectural order, as if each composition were only a fragment of a much larger structure. The installation invites visitors to imagine the infinite space that might emerge behind these geometric forms if each of them were to disappear one after another.

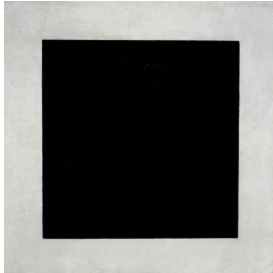
The installation's soundscape features the piano piece *Oiseaux tristes*, composed by Maurice Ravel in 1904. Ravel explained that he intended the work to evoke "birds lost in a dark forest."

Introspection

An Immersive Journey Through Abstract Art

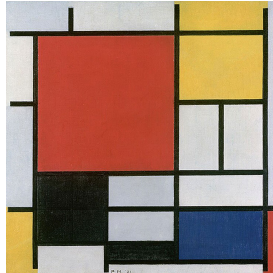
introspection is an immersive installation created as a tribute to the great masters of abstract painting.

Kazimir Malevich



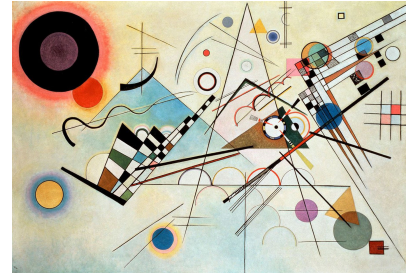
Black Square, 1921

Piet Mondrian



Composition, 1921

Wassily Kandinsky



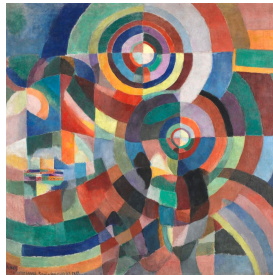
Composition VIII, 1923

Georges Braque



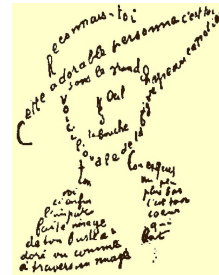
Violin and Candlesticks, 1910

Sonia Delaunay



Prismes électriques, 1914

Guillaume Apollinaire



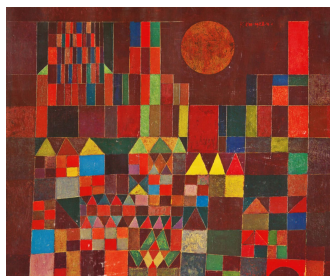
poèmes à Lou, 1915

El lissitzky



Proun 19D, 1922

Paul Klee



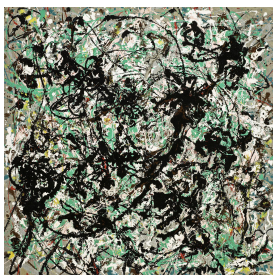
Castle and Sun, 1928

joan miró



The morning star, 1940

Jackson Pollock



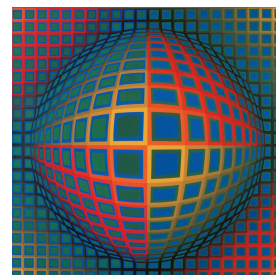
Numéro 15, 1950

Henri Matisse



La Gerbe, 1953

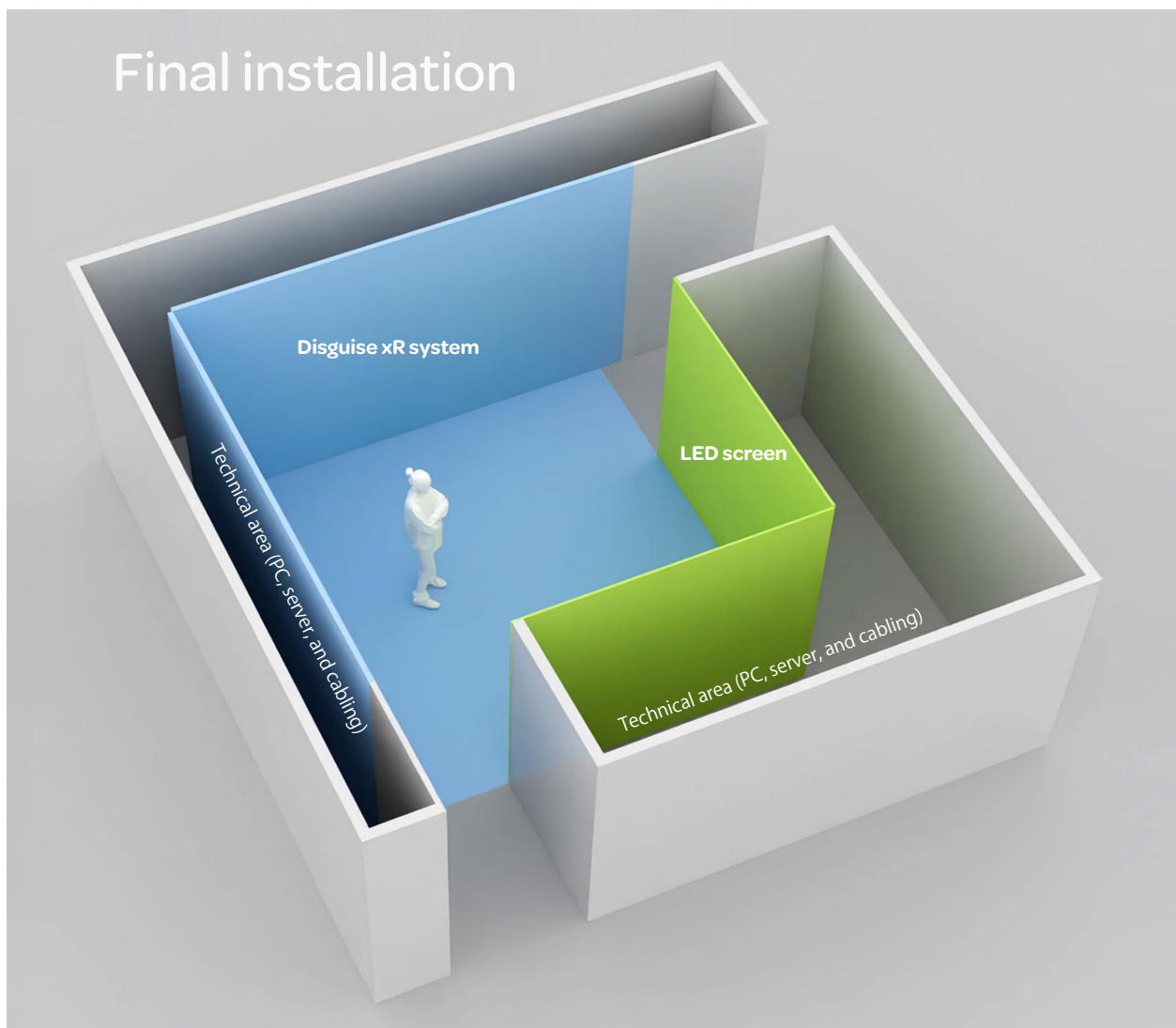
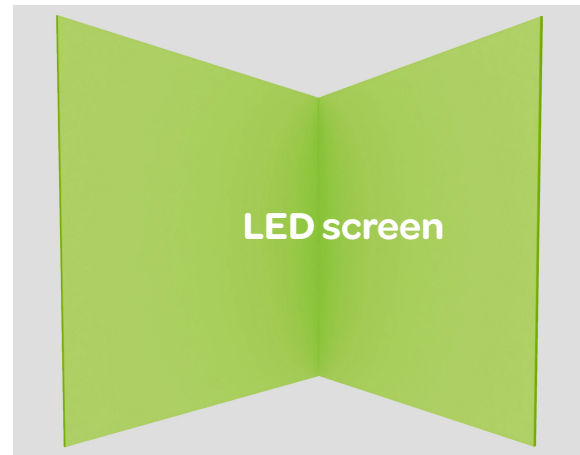
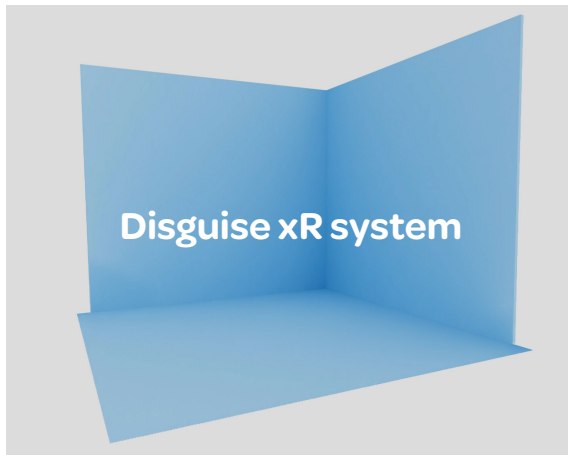
Victor Vasarely



Vega-Nor, 1969

Examples of Use

Examples of installations in real spaces, including wall surfaces and backstage (technical) areas.



Virtual Museum with Disguise xR

A Homage to the Great Masters of Abstract Art

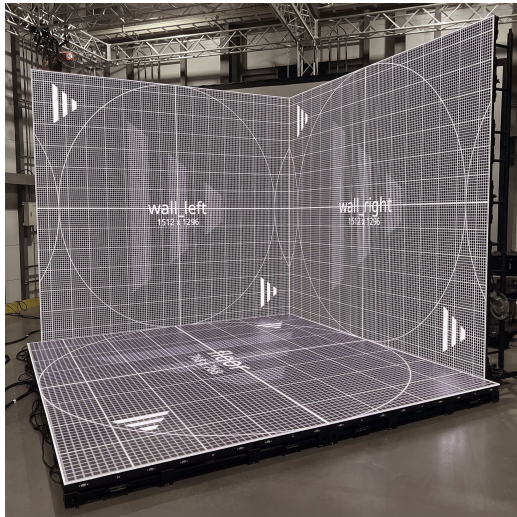
The Disguise xR system, combined with two LED video walls on which participants see themselves, forms a modular installation designed for touring exhibitions. It can also be combined with other identical modules to create installations of varying sizes.



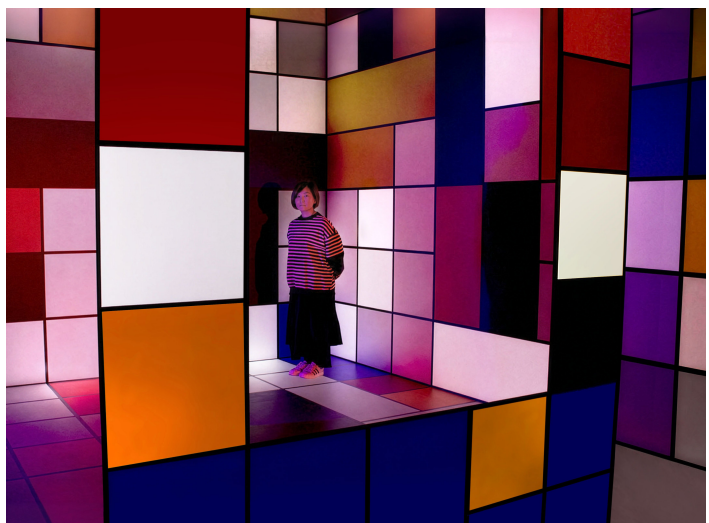
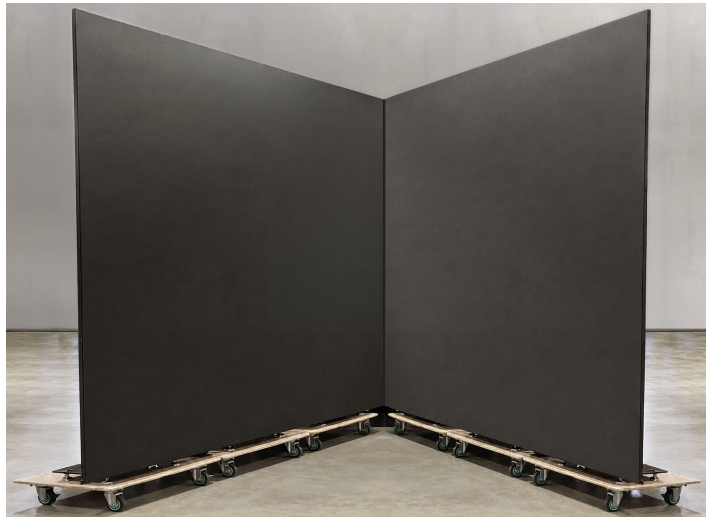
On a larger scale, the project could take the form of a museum conceived as a library dedicated to modern art, punctuated by immersive art installations. Each space would reveal a unique artistic experience, offering a journey through the world of modern art. Rather than following a linear route, visitors would explore a labyrinthine environment in which they could enjoy getting lost and discovering—or rediscovering—the installations. The soundscape and furniture would also reflect the period of the artists featured in the exhibition.

Technical Tests

Disguise xR system



LED screen



Standing at the center of the physical xR space, the visitor sees themselves on the LED screen, integrated into the virtual environment and surrounded by objects that do not exist in the real world.

Credits

Art Installation

Christophe Defaye、Olivier Defaye

System Architecture & Experience Engineering

Media Innovation Unit at Hibino Media Technical (<https://www.media-t.co.jp>)

Project Producer: Kneji Ogino / **Technical Director:** Hideki Okawara / **Experience Engineers:** Ken Higuchi, Tomohiro Hongo

Content Production

AOKIstudio (<https://aokistudio.co.jp>)

Content Producers: Makiko Aoki, Shigehiro Suwa / **Special Thanks:** Tatsuro Mitsui, Hirotaka Yamamori, Takamune Kawaai