

33rd IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE AND SOCIETY (E5)
Contemporary Arts Practice and Outer Space: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach (3)

Author: Mr. Eduardo Kac
National Space Society, United States, ekac@saic.edu

SPACE ART: A TRAJECTORY

Abstract

Since the mid 80s I have been engaging with space-related issues in my art and have also been working to literally create space artworks. In 1985 and 1986 I wrote and published articles on this topic and started to develop works that allude to space indirectly, through visual representation, or more directly, through a material engagement with certain elements that are relevant for space activity, such as telepresence—which I developed as an artform from 1986 to 2001. In 1986 I created a holopoem to be sent in the direction of Andromeda, which was not possible at the time. My development of holopoetry was predicated on my understanding that, on Earth, language is gravitropic (i.e., it follows our perception as shaped by gravity). Holopoems are, by definition, anti-gravitropic. Writing with light in spacetime, through holopoems, which I developed between 1983 and 1993, I felt as free from gravity as I could be on Earth. My interest for space art never waned, and in 2009 I created two works that functioned as an Earth-Space two-way road. Part of my ongoing Lagoglyph series, in which I produce works based on a visual writing system of my own creation, these two works involved sending five Lagoglyph messages to the Lepus constellation and hiring a satellite (WorldView 2) to photograph a Lagoglyph on Earth, specifically conceived for the resolution of that satellite. The goal was for this work to be seen worldwide through Google Earth, which was accomplished—leading me to call the series Lagoogleglyph. In 2007 I became an artist-in-residence at the L’Observatoire de l’Espace, the cultural lab of the French Space Agency (CNES), and in 2017, my space artwork Inner Telescope was realized by French astronaut Thomas Pesquet aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Inner Telescope was specifically conceived for zero gravity and was not brought from Earth: it was made in space by Pesquet following my protocol. In the future, humans will make art in space routinely. I feel that the fact that Inner Telescope was made in space is symbolically significant because humans will spend ever more time outside the Earth and, thus, will originate a genuine new culture in space. In 2022, my space artwork Adsum flew to the International Space Station as part of the Test Flight mission of the Moon Gallery Foundation.