

Joseph Hyde, Zoetrope: Modes of Presentation

Zoetrope is designed to be tenable on a single TV screen, played from video or broadcast. It is also intended to function as a sound-only piece, for integration into concerts of electroacoustic concerts, or for listening from CD. However, the two primary modes of presentation for the work are as follows:

1. Performance Version (for concerts etc.)

Unless the piece is performed from a DVCAM tape with 48kHz sound (hopefully a DVD version will also be shortly available), the sound should be played from DAT or CD. This should preferably be SMPTE locked, but I have found that with a CD, careful manual synchronisation can be acceptable.

The sound should be fed to a high-quality multi-channel sound diffusion system. The video (on DVCAM, Betacam or S-VHS) should be fed to one or more distribution amplifiers, and through them to 6 TV monitors and one video projector. Four of the monitors should be quite large (21" or more), the other two quite small. The arrangement of these monitors and the projector screen (or other suitable surface) is shown below. The four large monitors should typically be some way in front of the projection screen (at the front of the stage, for example), the two smaller monitors further back. Both monitors and projector should be adjusted so that their contrast is slightly higher than normal, brightness slightly lower. It is particularly important that 'black' should be the same throughout, and as near to true black as possible.

The performance should take place in as near to total darkness as possible.

In a very large performance space, more TV monitors should be used.

2. Installation Version

This version is suitable for presentation in a gallery environment, although the space must be capable of near-blackout.

The material for this version is available on four 2-hour S-VHS tapes (again, DVD performance masters are planned). These must be played on machines capable of automatic rewind and replay. Synchronisation is not important.

Eight identical monitors and eight identical high-quality full-range loudspeakers are required. These are placed in a circle (layout shown below), with the monitors on top of the loudspeakers (if possible). Each video is fed to two opposite monitors, and the sound (HiFi stereo) is fed to the two speakers equidistant from these monitors, so that monitors and speakers form a cross shape (see diagram below).

The space should be as dark as possible, but additional requirements may be required to ensure physical safety.