

THE WORLD OF DIGITAL ART

VIRTUAL REALITY

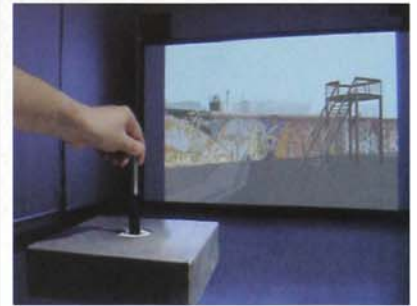
Virtual reality, or VR for short, is the creation of a computer-generated interactive 3D reality in which the viewer can take part. The situation changes according to the actions of the participant. Most works in the field of VR are 3D animations, where the virtual reality is created on the computer screen. The viewer can then cause a movement on the screen through the use of an interface. In the simplest cases it is just an imitation of moving back and forth, as well as horizontally and vertically.

Tamiko Thiel, USA, has created a few projects in the fields of 3D animation and VR. In her 2001 work *Beyond Manzanar* (with Zara Houshmand), she reconstructed an internment camp for Japanese-Americans during the Second World War. This camp was situated in the Californian desert. The internment, together with the isolated location

of the camp, was intended to detain people of Japanese decent, who were living in the USA, from siding with their homeland while the USA was fighting Japan. The VR installation gave an impression of the spatial situation within the barracks and showed details of the living situtaiton for the people interned.

In 2008, Thiel presented her newest project together with Teresa Reuter. It is called *Virtual Wall/ReConstructing the Wall* and deals with the reconstruction of parts of the Berlin Wall. The project was preceded by extensive research which considered the urban and historic aspects. Contemporary witnesses were interviewed in order to make the work as authentic as possible by integrating real situations into their work. Thiel and Reuter not only reconstructed the course of the Wall and its corresponding surroundings—which were viewable from both West and East German perspectives—, they also made it possible for the visitor to

navigate within different periods of time, for example in the 1960s or today. The movement is controlled by using a joystick. While "walking" along the Wall, real historical events are included along the way. There might be a confrontation with a border guard or an attempt to escape.



TAMIKO THIEL/
TERESA REUTER, GER
Installation *Virtual Wall*, 2008
Screenshot

TAMIKO THIEL/
TERESA REUTER, GER
Photography of the installation
Virtuelle Mauer, 2008