

Matthew B. Slaats

Artist Philosophy

The idea of tradition has always had a significant role in the work that I do. I have always felt the weight of past ideas and accomplishments. Nostalgia always seems to creep into what I do, a memory of the past. In reality, my practice is far from traditional, yet this sense of tradition drives me; a sense of what lies in the past and a hope for what is ahead in the future. Tradition for me is a process that I build on with every idea, every project. It is the activity of adding to the dialogue of art, something for which I have great respect.

The core of what I do resides in a conceptual practice. It lives within a mass of thoughts, ideas, and influences, which move in and out of focus. Second by second, I am investigating and discovering, talking and listening, because I never really know what may catch my attention. It is not about being shy or intimidated, but curious and at times impulsive. Predominately it is about being open-minded and taking the time to listen.

This course of action has allowed me to follow a multitude of paths and directions. I have pursued a strict diet of interdisciplinary work, because I believe that to be a complete artist you must be able to inhabit a variety of roles and points of view. An ability to work outside of the norm provides new ways of seeing and understanding, influencing your action.

When turning to my work, my primary concern is with the audience. This has led me to create work that focuses primarily on interactivity. I begin by asking the question, "How can I get the audience involved in this project?" I am looking to create a conversation with individuals and actively engage them in my work. I believe that the only way an experience has meaning is if you are given the authority to be involved in defining that experience. When you can define a context for yourself, then it has substance. My work focuses on achieving these goals.

From here the work concerns itself with perception, identity and communication. The functionality of interactivity is based in the ability to communicate and understand context. It is about turning spaces into places and inhabiting environments. It is about using new technology to process information and discovering the possibilities of dialogue. In the end it is about being in tune with all that is around you.