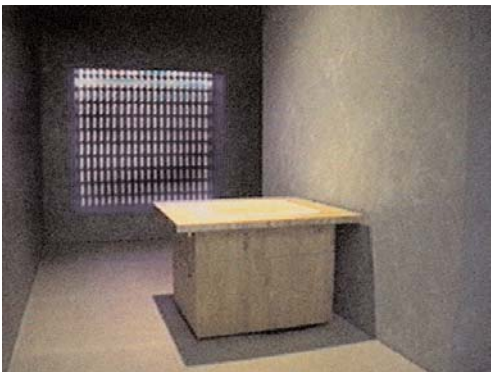


T A H Q U I T Z



VIDEO INSTALLATION

NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART, Kansas City, Missouri, 1996
COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART, 1995
DENVER MUSEUM OF ART, 1994
Catalog, *Visions of America*, ©1994, Abrams
Collection of Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

TAHQUITZ (pronounced *tah-kwish*) is the name of a primordial being (*nukatem*) in the cosmology of the Cahuilla people of Southern California. Tahquitz roams among the San Jacinto Mountains near Palm Springs. He lives by consuming the life-force (spirit) of his victims, people who sleep unprotected in the desert at night or those who , might be swept away by the swirling waters of streams and pools in the mountain areas. This work is an interpretation of two stories, one of a maiden and the other of a hunter.

The Tahquitz installation consists of two chambers, painted dark gray and rubbed down with pearlescent powder. The first is part of an entrance area. Against a wall is a wooden table which holds a large map. A spotlight hangs above it. The map table is manipulated by an electronic controller which allows the light underneath to get dimmer and brighter. When it is bright, the transcription of a vocal text appears behind a map of the region, relating two stories about this creature. When the lamp goes dim, only the image of the map remains.

The viewer moves into the second room. The room with is a deep blue, created by light passing through transparent colored gels. In the middle of the room is a 14' galvanized steel table. On either end of the table are stacks of block ice. As they melt, the water drips into ceramic ollas below the table on the floor; the sound of this water echoes in the space. At either end of the room, opposing the table are two metal tables, upon each a 9" video monitor. Each monitor shows the San Jacinto Mountain range in Southern California. One indicates a real-time view, the other a time lapse from dawn to dusk of the mountain range. Mounted at various heights are six integrally amplified speakers with wall mount brackets. These speakers play the voice of Alvino Siva, a Cahuilla man who tells the Tahquitz stories in the Cahuilla language. A specialized audio controller allows his voice to "travel" from speaker to speaker, to give the illusion that it is moving around the room.

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