

Space and Time

PROFILE Abstract data and complex financial figures are brought to life in **Fabio Lattanzi Antinori's** multimedia installations, which use printed materials to communicate surprising information in surprising ways, writes Wuon-Gean Ho

Fabio Lattanzi Antinori graduated from Goldsmiths University with a Masters of Fine Arts in Computational Technologies, a subject which he says laid emphasis on making art using sophisticated digital tools. Collaborating with engineers and ceding control to algorithms became part of his artistic approach. While it could be said that all artists reinterpret and comment on information in another medium, Fabio's end results are a unique example of what can happen when the media and methods are from the space age.

Fabio started working with interactive art and installation in earnest after a commission for the MAK Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art in 2010. This grand building in Vienna boasts a beautiful covered courtyard ringed by columned and vaulted walkways. In collaboration with London-based creative laboratory, Bare Conductive, and designer Alicja Pytlewska, he developed a large-scale printed installation that invited audience participation. The piece was installed in the courtyard, and aimed to bring a new understanding of the building to visitors.

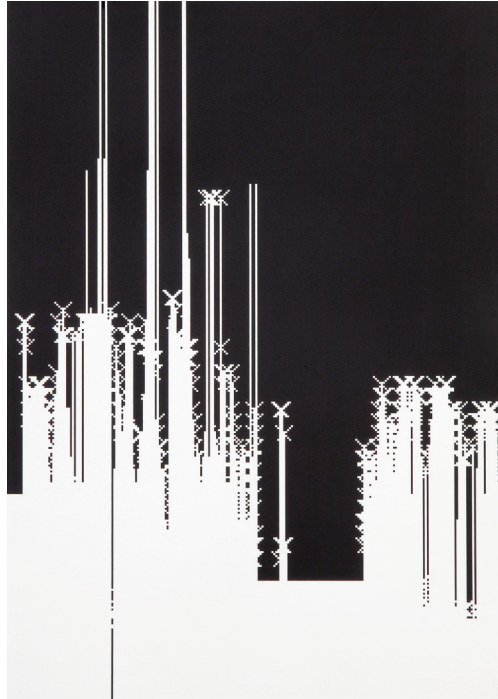
'This is a living house. A living, breathing house. / I hear it sighing, all night long.' Thus begins *The Book of Chameleons* by Jose Eduardo Agualusa, whose narrator sees the world as a chameleon, through a magnified scale and with a sensitive touch. In response to this elegant building, Fabio too elected to view it as a living, breathing body, and collected data that monitored elements such as the outside humidity, air-flow and temperature. Sensors were installed that gathered infor-

mation using machines that are normally used to record the human body. The data from the machines generated a variety of soundscapes, ranging from whistling, crackling, tapping and fluted tones. The sounds were augmented with commissioned, archived and found sound, and condensed into component tracks in the artwork.

The final piece, called *Contours*, was three huge rectangles of Tyvek floating from the ceiling, printed with a set of abstract graphics resembling a stripey keyboard. The futuristic element was that the Tyvek was screenprinted with conductive ink, which embedded capacitive sensors that reacted to human presence. In other words, when the prints were touched, they started to hum, crackle and sing, in a constantly evolving harmony. What they sang about was the space itself, a tune generated from the body of the building and all its measurements.

'How do I ultimately prove I exist?' Fabio recalls his invisible credit rating when he first moved to the UK from Italy. Much of his recent work has been concerned with other forms of abstract data: for example looking at the language of ratings with which people are assessed and compared, and questioning how perfect credit scores are generated. These numbers talk of our financial health in contemporary society: as if they are merely an extension of cholesterol measurements and hours slept. And what happens when the figures tell a tragic tale? Moreover, what happens when financial institutions, particularly ones that appear to have a sturdy constitution, suddenly fall into ill health and die?

The *Dataflag* series deals with the notion of failure in the corporate world, taking data from the rise and fall of the Lehman Brothers, a bank that collapsed in 2008. Trading figures from the share prices over its final ten years were used to generate a geometric artwork in keeping with Fabio's sparse modernist aesthetic. Again, using Bare Conductive electrical conductive ink, the graphics were screenprinted onto huge sheets of Somerset paper. Every time the flag was touched, the share price would be announced, either sung, spoken or whispered, from hidden speakers. Melodious harmonies happened when people



touched the flag in several places at the same time. The piece was installed in the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2014 over a weekend that attracted 12,000 visitors. The vertical orientation and size of the paper alludes to a flag, a symbol of importance and corporate identity, which imposed a reverence to the viewer, yet Fabio says that the flags also looked like big banknotes that brought happiness when touched. 'The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good.' (Gordon Gekko, from the film *Wall Street* (1987))

After commissioning the making of *Dataflag* in K2, a specialist screenprint studio in London, Fabio became artist-in-residence at East London Printmakers, where he spent time developing his technique. The *Belvedere* and *Dry Mountain* series of prints that he made are based on screenshots of the financial market whenever micro flash-crashes happened. These mysterious flash-crashes result from the market being driven by computer algorithms that sometimes spin out of control. The abstract shapes are legible from left to right, as they depict value changes with timelines along the bottom. As static images, they confront the viewer with coded imagery, only obliquely referring to imagined dramas of betrayal and recovery.

Bringing an element of interaction back to his work, data from other flash-crashes has been incorporated into *The Intelligent Investor*. This sculptural installation, supporting three prints made with conductive ink, takes its title from a book first published in 1946 by Benjamin Graham, that gave readers instructions on how to get rich with the share market. Touching a part of the work results in synthesized female voices reading from chance sections of the book. Fabio states, 'The final result is rather theatrical, as the three structures can either respond to each other's lines or choose not to comment.'

'I'm interested in creating a bridge between data and the language of the interior.' Fabio's upcoming projects are equally fantastical and inventive. He is developing a perfume sculpture for a two-person show with Jeremy Everett at the Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London, that aims to translate a series of human features into essences, in a quest to develop a perfume inspired by greed. For another installation

called *Fortune Tellers*, currently being developed for the Pavilion of MoCA Shanghai, with generous support from A-N Artist Information Company and The British Council's Connections through Culture, he is plotting a work hinged on the concept of being able to see the future. For this, a choir of ethereal voices will sing together, triggering various emotions in the listener depending on the tone and pitch. The notes begin low, in a fearful register, ascending to a mid low tone of calm, then a higher brighter sound, and finally a shrill anxiety. The printed element of these works will feature as a gateway to viewer interaction based on an algorithm made to predict future market behaviour. 'Printmaking forces you to know what is going to happen without necessarily knowing it. Being in contact with other print-makers allows me to understand the importance of prototypes, testing a hypothetical space. I have to leave space for mysterious things to happen as well.' While the technical process of making is essential to Fabio's work, it is only a small part of his complex investigation into revealing the unseeable data that surrounds us.

Further information

Fabio Lattanzi Antinori and Jeremy Everett at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, 533 Old York Road, London, SW18 1TG. 2 Sep – 1 Oct

Fortune Tellers: Fabio Lattanzi Antinori at MoCA Shanghai Pavilion, curated by Weiwei Wang. Nanjing Xi Lu, 1515 Nanjing W Rd, Jing'an, Shanghai, China. 22 Sep – 11 Oct

Images

Dataflags (2014) Screenprint, electric paint, sound system, custom code, voice soprano (Madge), 2400 x 1400 x 20 mm

Contours (2015) Screenprint, capacitive sensing, interactive tapestries, sound system, custom code, 1450 x 4000 x 3300 mm. Photo: Katrin Wißkirchen

And Then We Celebrated (2015) Screenprint, electric paint, custom supports. Approx. 900 x 400 x 250 mm

Belvedere (2015) Screenprint on Somerset Paper, 500 x 700 mm

The Intelligent Investor (detail) Data from a selection of microflash crashes, electric paint, sensors, sound system, custom code, microcontroller; aluminium, textbook, synthesized voices, 1500 x 500 x 700 mm