

David Cotterrell: FortyDays

Date: 1st August 2000

Dimensions(m):4.0, 5.3,

Materials:

Apple Computer, Custom Software and Data Projector

Two programmed armoured tanks in a forty day battle while being affected by the longitude of the battle and their own weaknesses

Schematically inspired by the first generation of 80s video games, fortydays mimics the format and behaviour of amusements like Pong and Space Invaders. Deliberately ungainly, the two protagonists, a pair of armoured tanks, identical in every way save colour, inhabit a landscape reminiscent of Tellytubby-land. These semi-intelligent opponents, programmed to perform simple tasks and analyse statistical information in attempts to gain the upper hand, exist in a wall projection that increasingly resembles an endgame.

Cotterrell was invited to create the artwork as a response to the 50th anniversary of Korea's partition. The title refers to both the running time of the exhibition and the oft-prescribed length of trial in the Bible. As the days roll by, wear and tear become apparent. The greener-than-green grass, chewed by the lumbering tanks, becomes mud, the leafy trees are reduced to burnt twigs and the tanks themselves are increasingly dented and scarred. Played out in real time, fortydays ends with both tanks running out of fuel and ammunition, trapped in a desolate wilderness of their own creation. Cotterrell's growing interest in programming choice for his machines is present in this work. The trend continues and is further developed in later works like The Debating Society, Stairwell VI and Reference Frame.



The tanks were aware of each other's position Credit: David Cotterrell (2000)



An attempt at a shot was a very rare occurrence Credit: David Cotterrell (2000)



Rudimentary evasion tactics were employed by the tanks Credit: David Cotterrell (2000)