

## **Kick in the Eye – Video Installation**

### **Introduction**

According to your reference book, the Japanese word 'Satori' means 'sudden awakening', 'enlightenment' or 'kick in the eye'.

*Kick In The Eye* is a 3-monitor installation which takes advantage of some technological and physiological phenomena.

### **Description**

Two monitors are arranged, on plinths or wall mounts at a height of approx 1.7m and approx 6.5m apart. The monitors are connected to a video source (e.g. DVD player) via a unit which switches the video signal successively to each monitor at two second intervals.

A third monitor is mounted centrally between monitor 1 and 2 at the same height. This monitor however is rotated 90 degrees to display in portrait rather than landscape format. The monitor is also configured to display a single vertical image (which appears as a bright white line).

The space is dark and a central viewing area is arranged centrally approximately 6m in front of monitor 3.

### **Content**

The original installation displayed Hokusai prints alternately on Monitor 1 and 2. Monitor 3 displayed Japanese erotic art, which could not be perceived (initially) by the viewer. Japanese music played through speakers.

### **The Viewer's Experience**

Typically, a viewer enters the space and sits on the floor in the viewing area. The viewer watches the images on monitor 1 and 2 much as one would watch a tennis match, turning the head one way and another. At some point, the viewer would however, flick their eyes instead of turning the head. This rapid eye movement would make an image appear in space between monitor 3 and monitor 1 or 2 (depending on the direction of eye movement).

This virtual image appears very briefly and produces a discernable physical reaction in most people. Usually the viewer is able to replicate the experience at will.

### **Technical Notes**

Monitor 3 is a conventional CRT television adjusted to collapse the vertical scan to around 5mm, producing a single line across the centre of the display. However, the monitor is still displaying at the normal 625, 50Hz rate. When the monitor is rotated and the eye scans quickly past the vertical display, each of the 625 lines registers in a different position on the retina, producing a virtual image in space.

## **Theory**

It is tempting to link the phenomenon to 'persistence of vision' but as the theory of persistence has now been discounted in scientific circles, I not sure what to call it. But when it comes down to it, who cares?

## **How it came about**

In a student house, we used to have an old TV which took several minutes to warm up. When the picture first appeared, it was a single bright horizontal line across the middle of the screen. After a while the picture would suddenly expand to its correct size and fill the screen. One day whilst I was waiting for this to happen, I glanced away from the TV and was astonished to see an image floating above the screen for a split second. Having just read *Satori In Paris*, it gave me the idea for *Kick In The Eye*.