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b. 1997

liminal garden of reflection, 2020

audio, turf, mirrored acrylic, ashes, soil, flowers, light

the manmade spaces of quotidian urban life—cafés, sidewalks, shopping malls, classrooms, office buildings, subway stations, bars—often bombard our senses with stimuli. they demand our attention in pursuit of external obligations, leaving little room for introspection. paired with our constant interconnectedness via mobile technologies, our opportunities for meaningful and focused reflection have become scarce.

enter *liminal garden of reflection*, a mixed media installation that beckons participants into a tranquil, mindful, and unifying space that offers solace from overstimulation. an imitation of the natural, the piece features a bed of artificial grass with four headsets suspended midair at each corner. each headset runs a different piece of spoken poetry. written and recorded by the artist, the four tracks are unique but are all characterized by ethereal ambience, thought-provoking verses, and invitations to enter a state of calm.

the garden greets visitors with an acrylic “welcome mat” that asks participants to remove their shoes before mounting the grass, advising them to walk softly, speak gently, and be mindful. it establishes the installation as a sacred space where individual contemplation and collective reflection are the end goal. “take a moment,” the welcome mat also says— a moment to think, a moment to breathe, a moment to be.

the turf’s centerpiece consists of a large acrylic mirror holding a bed of ashes, a real yellow flower sitting atop the mound. reminiscent of a pool, the mirror is another synthetic manifestation of nature. the flower, vivid with life, is the single piece of living matter emerging from dead nature, a floral phoenix. participants can peer into the mirror, viewing their literal reflections in the midst of metaphorical reflection, or simply contemplate its place in the garden as they wander the labyrinth of their own thoughts. while each participant is immersed in his or her own auditory world, the shared turf is an intimate space that fosters unity and closeness. the garden thus encourages inward connection through communal tranquility, using meditative soundscapes and poetic language as a portal to peace.

using manmade materials alongside organic matter, the garden represents the duality of the natural and synthetic world. while these two worlds are often juxtaposed, the garden makes a case for their symbiotic relationship. in the face of monumental human challenges like climate change, mental health epidemics, and detachment from nature, humans now find themselves in liminal states of being. this transitional phase demands that we learn to navigate life in the blended world of the organic and the manmade, remaining contemplative and grounded in pursuit of a more tranquil, mindful, and meaningfully connected world.