

## Tan Dun Visual Music 2005 Deconstruction, Reconstruction, Resurrection



Tan Dun first discovered these “retired” pianos accidentally in a warehouse of a music school in Shanghai. Each piano had been played by hundreds of people to such an extent that a little smooth dent had formed on each key. Standing amidst them, he felt like he was in the middle of a huge ruin of human history, listening to the harmonious sound emitted when the key hit the chords.



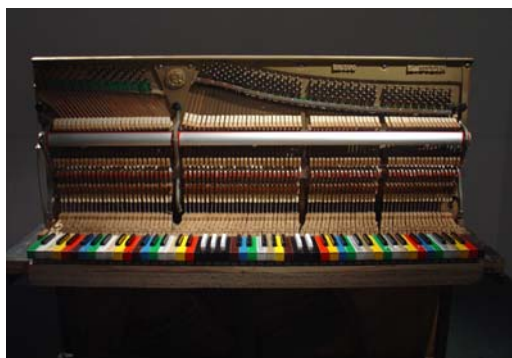


Tan Dun began to collect old pianos, to send them for repair and remove all unusable and tattered parts. Utilizing the remaining chords and body, he redesigned, assembled and created a new visual music sculpture. "These are all visual sculptures," Tan Dun says about the reconstructed pianos in the gallery, "There's a message here about deconstruction, reconstruction and resurrection, something we're seeing all over China today."



### **Piano Enclosed by Metal Bars**

The resurrected piano exposes its inner mechanical structure, where metal bars have replaced the original shell (as shown on the right and below). The piano is playing sounds from a MIDI system designed by the artist himself. Tan brings the abstract quality of sound and vision back to their origin. The MIDI pianos echo the video projection of *Organic Music* as represented by *Water Music*, which suggests the significance of natural factors during the process of "resurrection".



### **Piano with Reversed Color Keys**

The reversal of black and white keys together with the introduction of colorful keys on the piano (as shown on the left) disrupts the visual assumption of the piano player. Tan Dun proposes a new experience by altering the musical property of color [or the sense of color in music], which draws parallels between feelings and color.



## Pyramid of Deconstructed Pianos

Tan Dun reassembles the unused fragments from the newly reconstructed pianos into a pyramid (as shown on the right and below), a visual structure that resembles an aggregate that has gone through processes of conformation and construction. It serves as an initial model for bringing chaos to order, an original motif of creation.





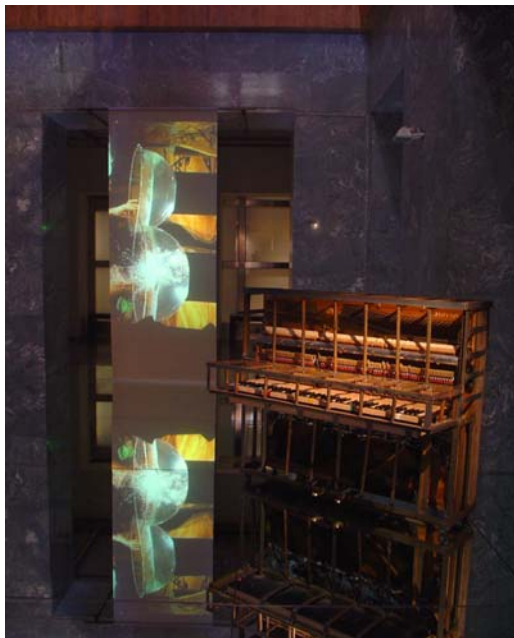
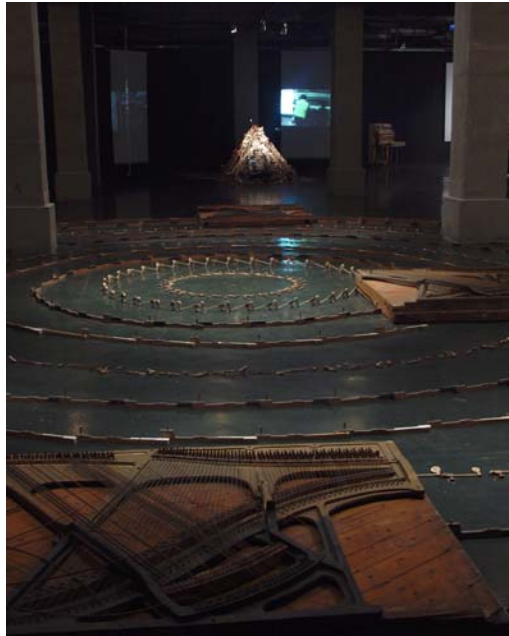
### **Pyramid with Video Installation**

Three monitors completed the background, featuring video footages that portrayed the various phases in the deconstruction and reconstruction of the piano (as shown on the left). In it, we saw Tan Dun himself wielding a sledgehammer and slowly hacking away the old instruments.

### **Zen Piano Garden**

The hammer and key fragments from dismantled pianos are scattered on the floor to create a visual array, reminiscent of a Zen meditation garden (as shown on the left and below). The remains imply the decomposition of civilization, history, and personal experiences. The multi-layered soundscape of the pianos being deconstructed with sledgehammers can be heard in contrast with the silence of the Zen Garden.





**"There are no boundaries between the visual and the audio in art creation itself. They constitute a unified yet circular realm for my thinking".**

-Tan Dun 2005













