

SEANKELLY

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Small port occupies museum space

The vast 17-meter-high space dedicated to site-specific installations at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea looks like it's been filled with water and floating boats with blinking lights.

As the idea of filling the exhibition space with water is counterintuitive, the scene challenges our usual perceptions of space. Up close, what appears to be a night scene at a small port turns out to be carefully arranged installation pieces by Argentinean artist Leandro Erlich.

The square museum space called "Seoul Box" lends itself to the amusing illusion created by Erlich, which takes the place of an installation piece by Korean artist Suh Do-ho that had been on display since the opening of the museum branch next to Gyeongbokgung Palace last year.

The artist is well-known for 3-D visual illusions such as a swimming pool and an upside-down Victorian house. He became internationally known when he was selected to represent Argentina at the Venice Biennale in 2001.



"Port of Reflection" by Leandro Erlich. (MMCA)

It's his fourth exhibition in Seoul. Erlich's works have been featured in major Korean art exhibitions including the Busan Biennale and at Songeun Art Space in Seoul.

"The work belongs to the world of fiction and to my interest in questioning and creating something from a poetic interpretation of reality," said Erlich during the press preview on Monday in Seoul.

Erlich made each piece in Buenos Aires, after which they were shipped to Seoul. It took him about 10 months to produce all the pieces and then assemble them here. The boats and wooden piers symbolize the geographic distance and exchanges between two cities.

“This installation is placed as an intrinsic and symbolic element for exchange. The work has not only been about physically moving from Buenos Aires to Seoul, but also involves the representation of exchanges,” the artist explained.

Despite the work’s playfulness, it also contains philosophical reflections.

“I have a feeling that our existence is ephemeral, just like a reflection. A reflection moves constantly and it’s a fragment of a second in which an image is observed as it is. This work is about the interpretation of the ephemeral quality of our life and our attempt to grasp the moment,” Erlich added.

The “Port of Reflection” is on view until Nov. 13, 2014, at the Seoul Box of the MMCA. For more information, visit www.mmca.go.kr.