

*zero*  
by  
ajaykumar  
and  
alok b. nandi

zero is conceived, produced and presented by ajaykumar and alok b. nandi  
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design collaboration with kiun kim

zero is a research project of goldsmiths university of london

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ajaykumar and nandi would like to develop collaborations with  
individuals, galleries and academies, interested in evolving this research

to  
contribute and exchange your ideas on zero  
get details of all zero interventions  
be put on the zero emailing list:  
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## exposition on zero: is zero no.thing?

books\_installations\_performance-lectures\_papers\_workshops\_articles\_films\_other interventions  
by ajaykumar and alok b. nandi

Zero was conceived in South Asia in antiquity. In the Ancient South Asian language of Sanskrit zero is written as *shunya*. *Shunya* also means 'emptiness'. *Shunyata* from *shunya* is a Buddhist concept which signifies 'void' or 'nothingness' or 'emptiness': an emptiness that has presence. *Shunya* is important also in the religion of Brahmanism.

In ancient South Asia researchers were integrating mathematical, scientific ideas with philosophic ones and with artistic exploration. For example it is said that in certain Indian temples you would find at their centre, their inner sanctum, not ornate religious statues or paintings, but an empty space with a book only: and the book was a book of mathematics. The mathematical attempt to understand the universe, the philosophic attempt to grasp it, and the artistic conception of it, went hand in hand.

Of course today the conception of zero is of vital importance for the existence of our current Information Age, the Digital Age, which begins essentially at the point of generation of zero in ancient South Asia.

Through books, performances, installations and other interventions, ajaykumar and alok b. nandi interrogate zero: from its historical and philosophical origins to its critical importance in our contemporary being.

Through such exhibition processes ajaykumar and alok b. nandi investigate ways to un-think and re-think technology: re-visiting the way we think about art and technology and 'technological practice' today and in future. 'Technological practice' is approached in a particular sense: referring to an integrated research that embraces art, philosophy, craft/technique, and science, as well as health and ecology in a profound sense. While there are parallels with German philosopher Martin Heidegger's discussion of the way the Ancient Greeks approached *techne* (root of our current term 'technology'), these researchers' enquiry has its roots in Buddhism and Tantric philosophy, as well as in the re-conceiving of South Asian and Japanese philosophic and aesthetic concepts through trans-national and trans-local processes. ajaykumar discusses this in a number of published articles, including recently in *Leonardo: Journal of the International Society of the Arts, Sciences and Technology* and *South African Journal of Art History*. nandi explores this also through a number of articles and papers.

mark rothko says that

if you want sacred experiences  
in his work then you will find them

if you want profane experiences  
in his work then you will find them

he takes no sides

yes and cildo meireles  
says  
whenever  
i  
address a subject in  
art  
i-connect-it-  
-with-the-possibility-  
-of-a-poetic-  
-based-on-mathematics-  
-or-  
-physics-

-like-  
-zero-

- 0 -

0

- -  
-

zero zero on the wall...

the more i think of zero  
the more i think of



how did she know?

eighte

is this not the sanskrit  
sense of  
*rasa*?

8?

ate?

*dharmachakra*?

thinking of ate  
you know the french word  
to know

also has an epicurian meaning

*savoir*

to know

to savour

i c what you mean

i c therefore I know?

which

means

m o o d

t a s t e

f l a v o u r

a work is sensually

known

i sense therefore  
am i therefore i sense?

susanne langer?

in part...

i do want to talk about  
this art of feeling  
but for now

let us think more about

8

yeah why does 0 make you think of 8?

in sanskrit  
according to one buddhist sage  
*sad*

pronounced sud

indicates perfect  
and perfectly endowed

and eight  
also means  
perfect  
in other contexts

yes

well *sad* is the beginning  
of the title of a major buddhist teaching

the perfect truth of the teaching of the white lotus?

in physics?

*sad\_dharma pundarika sutra*

Let us do a wiki  
to get a handle on this:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/lotus\\_sutra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/lotus_sutra)  
sutra on the white lotus of the sublime dharma  
सद्धर्मपुण्डरीकसूत्र  
saddharma pundarika sutra  
妙法蓮華經  
miaofa lianhua jing;  
法華經,  
fahua jing  
hokkekyo  
myoho rengo kyo;  
myo beom nyeon hwa gyeong;  
dieu phap lien hoa kinh  
in chapter four of  
the lotus sutra it indicates also  
that  
emptiness:  
*shunyata*,  
- also written *sunyata* -  
is not the ultimate vision  
to be attained by  
the aspirant seeker;  
rather that

the attainment of  
the wisdom described as  
buddhahood  
is indicated to be  
a bliss-bestowing  
treasure which  
transcends  
seeing all as merely  
empty.

did  
you  
know  
*shunya*  
of  
*shunyata*  
means

zero?

yes  
 the mathematical attempt  
 to understand the universe  
 is integrated with  
 the philosophical attempt  
 and the with  
 the artistic attempt

did  
 you know  
 also at one time  
 in ancient south asia  
 certain temples  
 had at their centre not  
 elaborate sculptures  
 or other artworks  
 but a room  
 that was empty  
 except for a book only  
 and the book was not  
 an ordinary religious text

but

did  
 you know  
 also at one time  
 in ancient south asia  
 certain  
 had at  
 not elaborate  
 or other  
 but a  
 that was  
 0  
 temples  
 their centre  
 sculptures  
 artworks  
 room  
 empty  
 except for a book only  
 and the book was not  
 an ordinary religious text  
 ...

...a book of mathematics

for real?

you know?

truth stranger than fiction?

so is zero no.thing?

but if we are to  
believe this *sad-dharma* whatever,  
are we not to go  
beyond zero?

what is beyond zero?

one?

zero\_one?



in terms of literary style,  
 the lotus sutra often uses  
 astronomical  
 numbers  
 and  
 measurements of time  
 to convey a sense of timeless time,  
 or to convey  
 the inconceivable

i n e m p t i n e s s  
 one finds the infinite?

so, what actually is this  
*shunyata*?

no thing exists of itself  
no thing of itself has intrinsic value  
everything exists in relation  
dependent origination  
*pratīyasamutpāda*

relational being!

being and nothing?

not Sartre?

-  
in  
non-intrinsic meaning  
in nothingness  
one may find in\_sight

you get the picture

i c what u mean!

yes we see

wisdom  
as they put it  
on that  
wiki

well just so as we are clear

let us go back to the wiki  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sunyata>  
*sunyata*  
 शून्यता  
 kong  
 ku  
 空  
 gong-seong  
 공성(空性)  
 qoyusun

meaning “emptiness”  
 or  
 “voidness”

is a characteristic of  
 phenomena  
 arising from the fact  
 as observed and taught by the buddha  
 that the impermanent nature of form  
 means that  
 nothing possesses essential  
 enduring identity

the cultivation  
 of this understanding  
 leads to wisdom  
 and inner peace

ok  
 but  
 let us go back to  
 the numbers game



0

zero

zero sum

zero ergo sum

in the muromachi

period of japan

15th century right?

kind of

christian era that is

guys would  
paint pictures  
hang them on their walls  
invite their friends round  
who would then proceed  
to graffiti all over them  
and this became  
part of the work

graffiti in the  
highest taste

of course

as with the  
ma hsia school  
in china

this book leaves empty space

for you to maybe  
fill?

with pictures, text, calligraphy?

musical notation?

and mathematics?

in response to all this nothingness?

you get the picture

so  
this nothingness  
may be a precursor only  
for

in-sight

vista

savoir-ing

savouring

that is not the question

dear reader  
 you can use all the empty  
 spaces  
 if you want  
 to respond with your own  
 pictures, calligraphy, texts,  
 musical notation

then  
 diss-play it on your mantle-piece  
 or send it to someone else  
 so, she too can diss  
 play

2b  
 or  
 not  
 2b?

I  
 no  
 no.thing

or add some maths  
 blind us with science

or send it back to ajaykumar:  
 so that she can enjoy it too:  
 ajaykumar studio  
 08 great arthur house  
 golden lane  
 london ec1y 0rq



your turn  
to find  
the tempo...

zero  
tempo

tempo  
zero

zero  
flux  
topia  
net

zero-fluxtopia.net  
conversations  
on  
around  
after  
before  
zero

mutatis  
mutandis

ma  
nu

zero  
matrix  
matrice

Case was twenty-four. At twenty-two, he'd been a cowboy, a rustler, one of the best in the Sprawl. He'd been trained by the best, by McCoy Pauley and Bobby Quine, legends in the biz. He'd operated on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a customized cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination known as the matrix.

The matrix has its roots in primitive arcade games...  
 Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts...

A graphic representation of data abstracted from banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity.  
 Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding into the distance...

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*

con  
sensual  
hallu  
cination

zero  
diversity

zero talk  
zero action

zero credit  
zero energy  
zero balance  
zero growth  
zero blah blah  
zero chat  
zero pecha kucha

!s zero sustainable?  
!s zero consumable?  
!s zero medical?

where do we go?  
on va-t-on?

orientation  
zero  
un

zero east  
zero west

zéro  
un voyage  
un prélude  
un prétexte  
pour explorer le signe et son alentour  
signe vital  
en ces ères numériques  
en ces aires numériques  
dixit les systèmes de pensées!  
et vous, qu'en pensez-vous?  
qu'évoque le zéro pour vous?

why so binary?



*zero*  
conçu le 080808  
par alok b. nandi et ajaykumar  
après les interventions de ISEA 2008 Singapore  
un infini merci à  
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