

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Andy Beta, "John Gerrard's 'Solar Reserve' Comes to Lincoln Center", *Wall Street Journal*, October 2, 2014

'This Is as Handmade as Painting or Sculpture; We Have to Build the Entire Terrain'



'It's quite intimidating to intervene at Lincoln Center,' said artist John Gerrard, posing in front of his new installation, 'Solar Reserve (Tonopah, Nevada) 2014.' *Jason Andrew for The Wall Street Journal*

On a sunny day last week, John Gerrard was wondering how the solar power plant he was installing at Josie Robertson Plaza in Lincoln Center would look to passersby.

The Ireland-based artist was staring at the towering, 28-by-24-foot LED wall, situated between David Koch Theater and Avery Fisher Hall and framed by the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts building, that will show his work, "Solar Reserve (Tonopah, Nevada) 2014," opening Friday.

"New York is this extraordinarily energetic city, and what I love about this site is that it's these three exquisite, monochrome buildings," Mr. Gerrard, 40 years old, said. "It's quite intimidating to intervene at Lincoln Center."

He walked around the screen as more than 20 workers and two Skyjack lifts were busy fine-tuning the wall. "Solar Reserve" bears resemblance to other film or video-based art, but it has more in common with a realistic videogame, showing computer-generated images of a solar thermal power plant's tower, surrounded by mirrors, in central Nevada.

"From above, the plant's 10,000 mirrors form a perfect disc, mimicking the layout of a sunflower," Mr. Gerrard said. "And from the front it looks like a lighthouse, with this illuminated tower."

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Every hour, "Solar Reserve" will gradually move back and forth from a ground view to an overhead one, recreating the movements of the mirrors as they pivot to follow the sun as well as the orbits of the sun and moon.

The work is "a sophisticated use of visual technology that urges you to engage with it over some period of time," said Jed Bernstein, Lincoln Center's president. "The presence of the object will be different at different times of the day."

Mr. Gerrard estimates that it usually takes over 10,000 photographs to construct this simulated landscape. Such virtual technology is standard in the videogames industry as well as in the military for simulation exercises, yet it rarely crosses over into the arts.

"When people hear that this is created within a gaming engine, there is the sense that there is an automation, that we just press a button," Mr. Gerrard said. "But this is as handmade as painting or sculpture. We have to build the entire terrain: the mountains and desert, the rocks, plants, pebbles."

Simon Preston, whose Lower East Side gallery has represented Mr. Gerrard since 2008, called "Solar Reserve" "by far John's most ambitious piece in terms of scale, content and the technologies used."

When it is unveiled, Mr. Gerrard intends for it to project an illusory desert landscape into the middle of the bustling urban center. "I want to cut a hole into this scene and put a world in," Mr. Gerrard said. "An alternate universe."

John Gerrard's "Solar Reserve (Tonopah, Nevada) 2014" will be on view at Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza through Dec. 1.

<http://online.wsj.com/articles/john-gerrards-solar-reserve-comes-to-lincoln-center-1412268559>