

DIGITAL CRYSTAL: Swarovski at the Design Museum

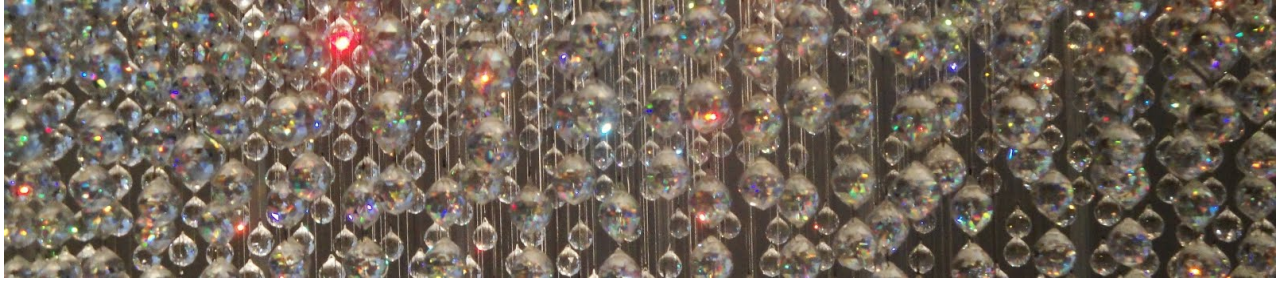
With over 82.5% of us having access to the internet in the UK (Digital Life, www.tnsdigitallife.com/), and spending over four times the global average on digital technology (Western Europe, www.emarketer.com), what does this mean for the future of our memory and interaction with physical objects? In a world moving away from permanently capturing thoughts and experiences, we must examine these changing relationships and find new ways of reconnecting to our past. Digital Crystal: Swarovski at the Design Museum seeks to do just this in collaboration with some of the most current, creative talent through the emotive medium of cut crystal.

Crystal is a beautiful, timeless material which has retained its elegance throughout centuries of use; the exhibition being a dazzling maze of enchantment and thought provocation. You enter into a dark room, surrounded by the striking, fast paced moving images of digital crystals growing, forming, changing. Semiconductor, the creators of 'The Shaping Grows' (still of the moving images below) became interested in the idea of inclusion in the formation of crystals, and how they can take up parts of the surrounding environments and end up containing these materials whilst "playing with the natural form and landscape on its smallest, atomic level." (Joe Gerhardt, Semiconductor, <http://digitalcrystal.designmuseum.org>)



The constant changing environment created within the room causes us to question the nature of how we remember things, how occurrences within our lives shape who we are, how our experiences become fabricated within our being; just as mineral particles become ingrained within crystals.

The exhibition continues to challenge our perceptions of memory through crystal pieces in which all designers have responded uniquely to the brief. The striking light reflections of almost 2000 suspended crystals, digitally controlled to slowly explode and reconstruct to form a chandelier in piece 'Pandora' (pictured below), created by duo Fredrikson Stallard, echoes how within our own minds we are constantly reinventing ideas and reshaping our knowledge.



“Crystal is all about the refraction and reflection of light” (Ian Stallard, Pandora, www.digitalcrystal.designmuseum.org) and in the way the light is reflected off the crystal pieces we are caused to reflect on our memories and question the idea that if these crystals are digitally controlled does that suggest that the future for our memories is that of digital control?

Thought Cloud’ by Maaten Baas (below) disposes of the dystopian future of virtual emotions with bright crystal clouds erupting from someone’s head and breaking through the darkness of their home and arguably the future of where society is headed. Marcus Tremento’s ‘Holo Centre Table’ captures a crystal in 3D photographic form, questioning the future of the physical nature of capturing a moment, whilst ‘Lolita’ by Ron Arad ironically incorporates digital technology, allowing tweets or texts to be written on more than 1000 white LEDs hidden within its crystals, in an exhibition examining the impact of this technology on our memory.



With all of us affected by these changes to technology do we have time to reflect on the nature of how we process and retain information or emotions? Digital Crystal allows you to do just that; to be lost in the beauty of the crystal reflections, the digital imagery, and your own mind and thoughts on the future of our interaction with both the physical and mental environment in which we live.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Internet Sources

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Ian Stallard, Pandora, Video, <http://digitalcrystal.designmuseum.org/fredrikson-stallard>

Exhibitions

Digital Crystal: Swarovski at the Design Museum, Visited 15.10.12