



# How to Make Very Large Projects

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I often say that my public art work is as big as my insecurities. I have long been interested by the colossal and have used technologies to amplify participants to an urban scale (or to a planetary scale, budget permitting). But now that I go to psychotherapy I am making small pieces as well. Derrida was right in "The Truth in Painting" that the Kantian sublime can also be experienced in front of the tiny. For me now scalability matters more than scale: a project should be vectorial and be rendered for whatever target resolution is appropriate or affordable.

In 1997 I made a project called "Displaced Emperors" to interactively transform the Habsburg Castle in Linz, Austria, into the Chapultepec Habsburg Castle in Mexico City. The project was one of the first instances of "projection mapping" and used what was at the time the World's brightest projector, a 7kW pigl unit from ETC Audiovisual that could make images measuring 30x30 m (100x100 ft) and animate them using robotic scrollers.

Will Bauer's wireless 3D sensors calculated where participants in front of the castle pointed to on the façade and a large animated projection of a hand was shown at that location using a 1200W robotic light. As people on the street "caressed" the building, they could reveal the interiors of the Habsburg residence in Mexico City and hear different music tracks, one per room. (2)

Shortly after presenting that project, I met Mexican artist César Martínez. I told César about my experience with high-power projection mapping and he humbly showed me a piece he did in 1984. He was a student and had no means to produce a large public art intervention. So he borrowed a small 35mm slide projector from school, packed the carousel with erotic imagery and projected this onto the dome of the Santa Rosa church in Mexico City. Of course, as the projector was not bright enough, no one could see the transgressive images on the dome, but he put a camera on a tripod and took long-exposure photographs which revealed the intervention in all its smutty beauty. For César this piece was an atheist declaration, a moment of apostasy, the appropriation of technology for tactical interventions below the radar of potential censors. The condition of possibility of his project, its grandeur, was the use of low-power projection, his economy of scale. (3)

Burroughs said "bigger is better and better is best" and, after seeing César's work, I believe this statement to be true, except when it refers to scale.

(1) Garnet Hertz asked me to write about very large projects and suggested this title.

(2) For a full description of the project please see: [http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/displaced\\_emperors.php](http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/displaced_emperors.php)

(3) For more on César Martínez please see: <http://martinezsilva.com>