

KOBE BIENNALE

A WALK IN THE CLOUDS



This work is concerned with the dynamics of light.

The sky is the source of light on earth. Referring to his landscapes and studies of clouds the British painter John Constable describes the sky as “the key note”, the “standard of scale” and the chief “organ of sentiment”... “The sky is the source of light in nature – and governs everything”. Clouds control the fall of light and the chiaroscuro of the landscape as they partially or wholly obscure the sun. In nature light and shadow never stand still.

Cloud formations are the ideal subject for an investigation into the relationship between the objective and subjective and between science and art.

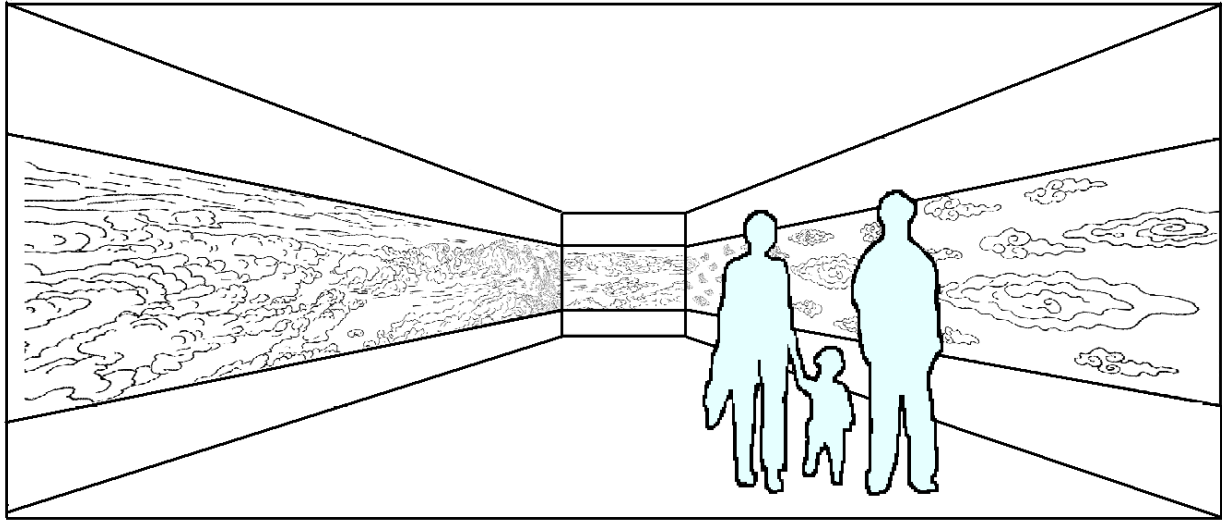
Cloud shapes can conjure up an infinite variety of images in the mind. In Aristophane’s *The Clouds* Socrates notes that “clouds can take whatever shape they fancy”. In Anthony and Cleopatra Shakespeare notes how they “mock our eyes with air”. Leonardo da Vinci’s *Treatise on Painting* describes the power of “confused shapes” such as clouds or the ashes of a fire and notes how “if you consider them well you may find really marvellous ideas”. He calls his method “quicken the spirit of invention”.

Human imagination endeavours to give a necessary form to every shapeless image of chance – to give form to the indeterminate and to make something out of nothing.

“A Walk in the Clouds” offers the audience two distinct series of cloudscapes. One is a cloudscape inspired by the schema of the Chieh Tzu Yuan Hua Chuan or Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting that was first published in 1679 and quickly became the most widely-used handbook of painting in China. The illustrations given in the manual are regarded as type-forms and represent the distillations of the essential reality of each form achieved through centuries of close observation. This schema is adapted to a more Western vernacular and applied to a series of cloudscapes observed during commercial flights around Asia in 2010 and 2011.

The other cloudscape is based on the highly stylised repeat pattern of ‘prosperous’ clouds found in the visual and decorative arts of China, Japan and South Asia.

These two series are both made by hand-embroidering electroluminescent wire onto aluminium panels. In this work the light from the West is reflected in the East and vice versa symbolising the fact that we all live under the same sky.



Jonathan Thomson
A Walk in the Clouds
2011
Rendering



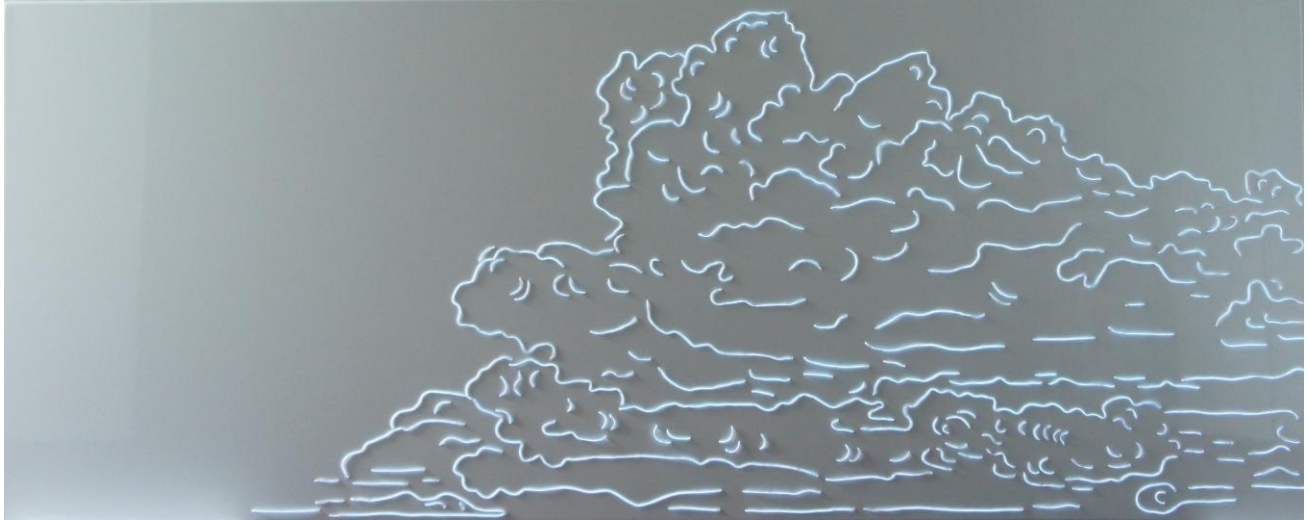
Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW1, KW2, KW3, KW4, KW5, KW6 Combined
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
Five Panels each 80 x 200 x 5 cm plus One Panel 80 x 230 x 5 cm combined into a continuous panorama total 80 x 2230 x 5 cm



Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KE1, KE2, KE3, KE4, KE5 Combined
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
Illuminated daytime view in bright light environment
Five Panels each 80 x 200 x 5 cm combined into a repeat pattern total 80 x 1000 x 5 cm



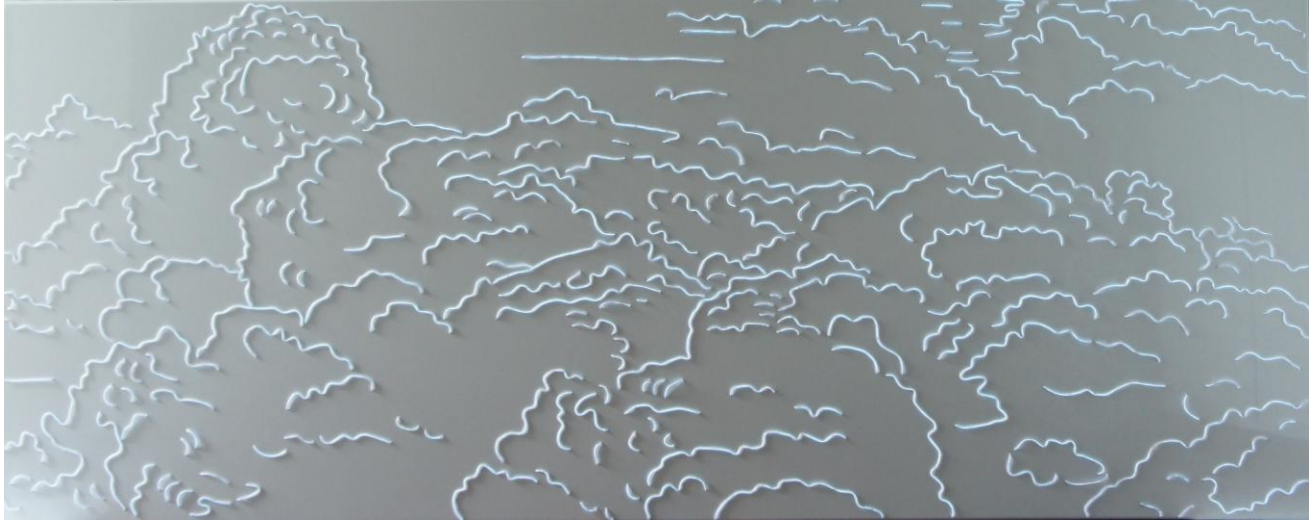
Jonathan Thomson
A Walk in the Clouds
2011
Kobe Biennial
Installation View



Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW1
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 200 x 5 cm



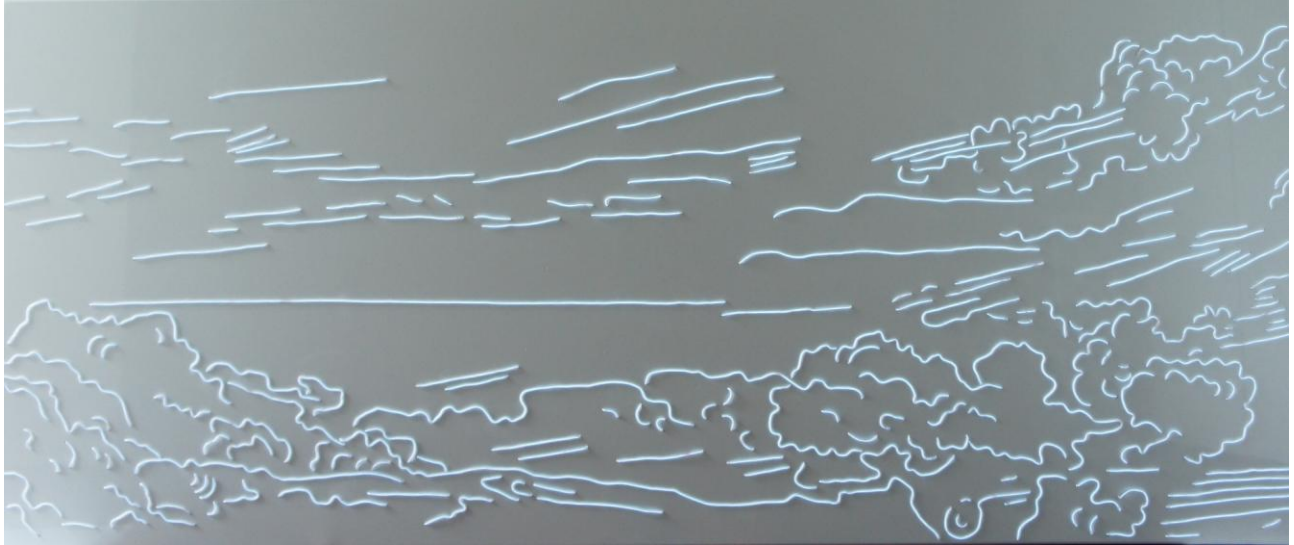
Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW2
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 200 x 5 cm



Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW3
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 200 x 5 cm



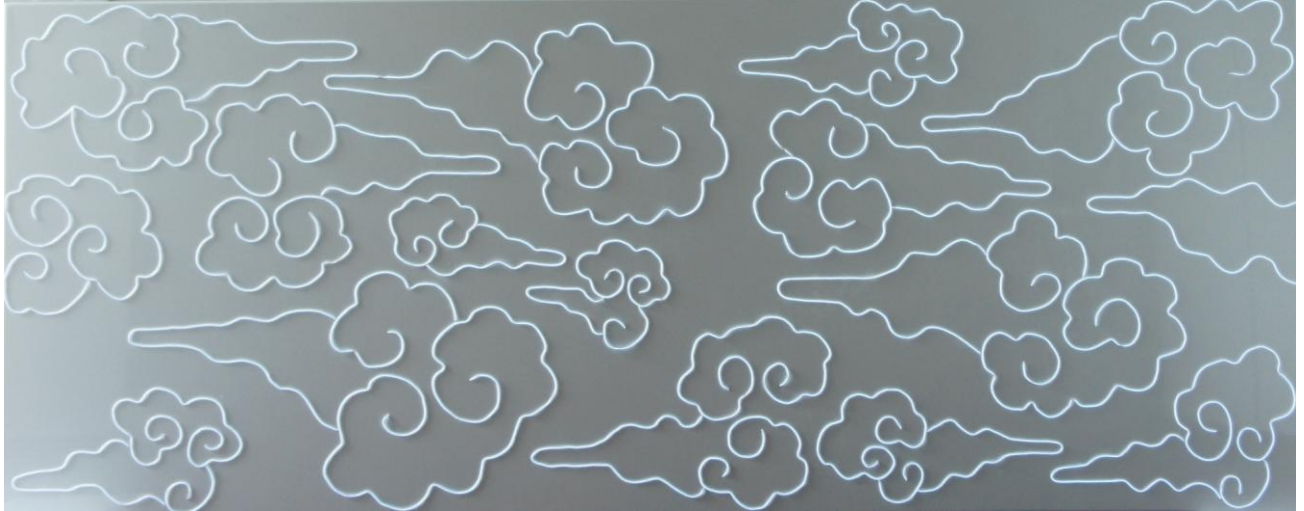
Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW4
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 200 x 5 cm



Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW5
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 200 x 5 cm



Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KW6
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 230 x 5 cm



Jonathan Thomson
EL 016 KE1
2011
Electroluminescent Wire on Aluminium Panel
80 x 200 x 5 cm