

Change in your pocket (1997)
Nicolás Fernández / Marc Sabat



(video still)

“Change in your pocket” exists in two forms: as a 10' video performance document and as a live performance work. The film version shows two video recordings side by side, each an image of a person playing music on violin, one filmed from the front and the other from the back. The two images are taken from the same performance, but are played back with the right image delayed by seven seconds. In a live version, the front image is recorded by webcam and sent via audio and video delay to a television in another room.

The violin player's torso is filmed in close-up, from the neck down to the middle chest. His body takes up most of the image, and the actions of playing come in and out of view on the edges of the screen. The framing shows bits of fingers, the arm, parts of the violin. The clothing of the musician frames parts of his body. A t-shirt is worn in a strange way, with the bottom front pulled back over the shoulders, leaving the hole for his head in the center of the back.

The music is played on the lowest string of the violin, with the left hand slowly sliding up and down the string, while pressing very lightly. With each pass, the hand pauses at different points where the string makes natural harmonics, dividing the string into parts. In the space of travelling between these tones, the light pressure of the hand makes two tones: a high whistling noise and the pitch that would sound if the hand were pressed properly.

Throughout the piece there is a play between the continuous repetitive action of sliding, and the changing sounds. The timbre of the open string breaks apart into noise and high harmonic partials and is reassembled by the delay into noisy sliding melodies and harmonies.