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*In Stillness is Where You Tremble—
The Inframince in Contemporary Art*

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In Stillness is Where You Tremble—The Inframince in Contemporary Art

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by


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Abstract

In Stillness is Where You Tremble—The Inframince in Contemporary Art

by Lexygius Sanchez Calip

Inframince is a phenomenon that briefly manifests across thresholds. Marcel Duchamp introduced the concept in the 1930's, but in relation to his *ready-made* concept, *inframince* made minimal traction into the histories of contemporary art. This thesis addresses its underexplored presences and absences—its transversal forms of being and becoming. *Inframince* is a theoretical object, characterized by impermanence. It encourages heightened sensorial engagement and expresses the underlying notion of constant change. It can be grasped, but in quietly critical reflections. The difficulty of defining it is its hidden agency, making it a concept largely overlooked by most Duchamp scholars. Duchamp himself said that its nature can be shown in examples, not defined. These analyses aim to locate and elaborate on the *inframince* that trembles within artworks, to gently assert its subtle significance in multiple forms of contemporary art and theoretical discourse.

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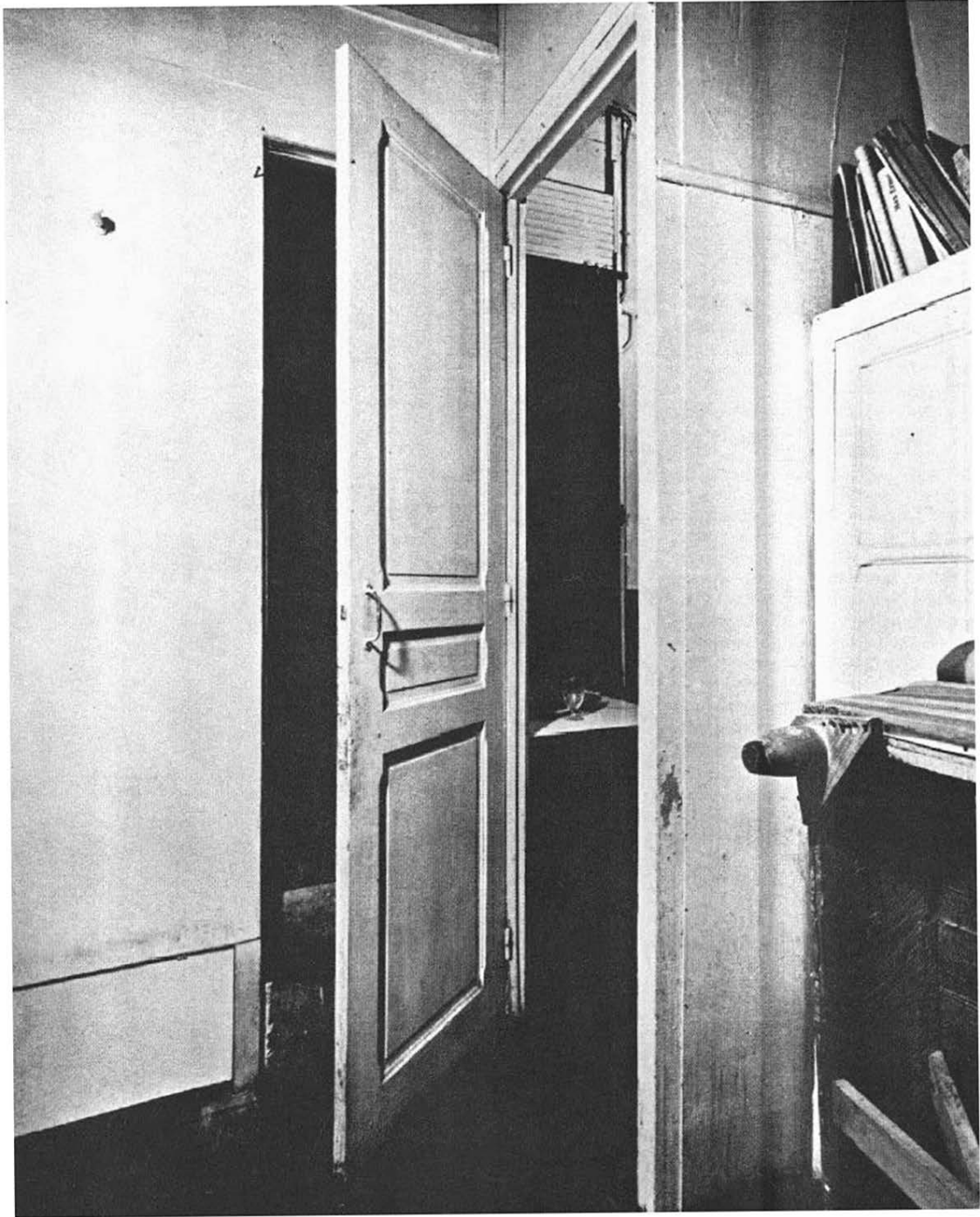
for the noble support from the **beginning**

through the arduous process of research and writing

and for sticking with me to the **end**

“/ `...] < ‘ : ^ ! — > ’ \ ~ „ { “ # ` ;

*To Atmajri, Xyggion,
Luchi, Dionisio,
and Rosario*



Foreword

Slim transfer / of **air** — inhalation / to **breath** — exhalation / is *inframine*.

~*Lexygius Sanchez Calip*

As forms lie hidden within themselves

33 When the smoke / of the tobacco smells also / of the mouth
from which it comes, the / 2 smells marry / by infra thin.

~Marcel Duchamp, Notes.

Inframince passes like a ghost, and I am nothing but a witness.

The *inframince* or the *infrathin* is a phenomenon. The word is a portmanteau of the prefix ‘*infra*’ which means below or beneath the human capacity to perceive, and ‘*mince*,’ a French word meaning thin, slim, slender, or narrow. *Inframince* involves liminal occurrences that briefly manifest across thresholds. It is a presence/absence—a transversal form of being/becoming—of miniscule events, often incomprehensible and intangible.

The concept was first introduced by the French artist Marcel Duchamp in the 1930’s in his thoughts and enquiries around the subject. Duchamp left forty-six scribblings, indicating what might constitute the *inframince*, a list of nuances that ambiguously sketch out this phenomenon. These notes, dating between 1912 and 1968, were compiled by his stepson Paul Matisse in the book *Notes*.¹

For Duchamp, the concept evades definition. *Inframince* cannot be defined, only exemplified. Duchamp’s notes indicate that *inframince* should remain as an open

concept because of its elusive nature. Below are a few of his examples numbered by

Matisse:

- 4 The warmth of a seat (which has just / been left) is infra-thin
- 6 allegory / (in general) / is an application / of the infra thin
- 12 Infra thin separation between / the **detonation** noise of a gun / (very close) **and** the **apparition** of the bullet hole / hole in the target — (maximum distance / 3 to 4 meters — Shooting gallery at a fair).
- 23 X-rays / (?) / infra thin / Transparency or cuttingness
- 29 Isolation of the infra thin!
How to isolate —

These notes are much like those gathered in *The Green Box* that accompanied Duchamp's piece, *The Bride Stripped Bare of Her Bachelors, Even*, also known as *The Large Glass*. However, *The Green Box* contains notes that engage with the sculpture specifically. However, while the *inframince* similarly has supporting notes, it lacks an object. The notes on the *inframince* refer to something immaterial, something metaphysical, or maybe something that is still in the beyond. If such is the circumstance, the mind will have to deduce and envisage its operations and performances. I will need to go beyond my conditioned manner of perceiving things and stride towards the transparent paradigm *inframince* temporarily inhabits, where it impatiently lies waiting to be reckoned with. As the Mexican poet, philosopher, writer, and essayist Octavio Paz writes:

...sight was the queen of the senses; by analogy, understanding and knowledge, intellection, were thought of as a sort of superior vision. Contemplation is seeing not with the eyes but with the mind. Therefore, the dividing line between the world up there and the one down here is precisely the line of the horizon, which limits our visual field.²

In the biographical documentary film entitled *Marcel Duchamp: Art of the Impossible*, the art historian Herbert Molderings mentions that, “Duchamp is on the path of conceptualism. The idea of the fourth dimensional space...is a conceptual thing. You cannot see it, you cannot make it visible, it is impossible. You can only think it.”³

Duchamp is commonly famed for his concept of the “ready-made,” which he introduced in 1913 with a piece called *Bicycle Wheel* (Fig.1), before he coined the term as a tactic. *Bicycle Wheel* is a sculpture, wherein the artist mounted an inverted bicycle wheel atop a wooden stool. It was a bold concept at that time, where mass produced objects such as shovels, ceramic urinals, bicycle wheels, dog combs, and so forth, asserting that they could be utilized for their sculptural aspects. In his implementations of the ready-mades, Duchamp stated that:

In the present state of relations between artists and the public, we can see an enormous output which the public moreover supports and encourages. Through their close connection with the law of supply and demand the visual arts have become a “commodity”; the work of art is now a commonplace product like soap and securities.⁴

His ready-made concept was a critical provocation, because it decentered tradition and conventional thought by turning commercial objects into works of art. With this gesture art became the antithesis of art. The ready-made challenged and critiqued the establishment and gave way for conceptual art to take the stage.

Duchamp knew that the art world and its audience during his time was not ready for his ideas. Though some were sensible enough to accept his conceptualist proposals. He believed that his targeted audience are the ones who will come fifty or a

hundred years after his death. And with his regard to where artists should be in the future, he stated, “I am convinced that, like Alice in Wonderland, *he* will be led to pass through the looking glass of the retina, to reach a more profound expression.”⁵

In the decades after this statement was made, Duchamp was proven right. This statement is a conceptual instruction for artists to express and address the right questions of their time—beyond the retinal. Duchamp’s driven open-ended concept of the ready-made paved new pathways of possibilities for younger artists to pursue. It gave birth to diverse art practices, approaches, and disciplines encountered in the contemporary moment and became the focus on copious art historical and critical writing on Duchamp. This extraordinary amount of attention is not the case with his concept of *inframince*—at least not overtly. This thesis is a preliminary attempt to right the balance.

The *Bicycle Wheel* serves as the primary example of the ready-made rather than the infamous inverted ceramic urinal titled *Fountain* (the inverted ceramic urinal, the ready-made Duchamp is commonly known for). The reason is that I find *Bicycle Wheel* an intriguing piece, for it offers a suggestion of the mystery behind the *inframince*. Both of Duchamp’s provocative concepts, the ready-made and the *inframince* together—here, functioning as a unit.

The *Bicycle Wheel* is a ready-made, presenting conjoined commodified objects—a wooden stool and a bicycle wheel. It is characterized by Duchamp’s characteristic irony. It evokes the notions of *rest*, as represented by the wooden stool and the concept of *motion*, as signified by the bicycle wheel. Duchamp creates

cancelation of function by colliding them. This non-functionality of function is the sort of conundrum characteristic of the *inframince*.

Moreover, the *inframince* is activated by spinning the bicycle wheel. The ready-made then stimulates visual transparencies and sonic registrations. The visual and sonic effects issue from the rotating motion that the spokes inside the wheel make, creating a mesmerizing translucency and a faint hypnotic whirring sound. A subtle and provocative union holds both of Duchamp's concepts active and present, exquisitely complimenting each other. *Bicycle Wheel* connects the ready-made with the *inframince*, the tangible with the translucent, the quiet with its whisperings.

With the *Bicycle Wheel* we can glimpse the fleeting actions of the *inframince*. Because of its elusive nature, the *inframince* is nearly inaccessible, this does not imply that it should not be given full attention. Perhaps, it is us who are a bit out of tune with the harmonies of its intangible melodies. Duchamp's notes implore that we wake up our muted sensibilities, to closely sense and discern miniscule occurrences we commonly overlook, to engage the *inframince* while it unravels fragile mysteries.

While *inframince* operates through and within often ignored sensorial and mental nooks and crevices, I propose that *inframince* is constantly present and accessible, as long as one is eager and sensitive enough to experience it and accept its challenges. The transversal performances of the *inframince* occur anywhere all the time whether we pay attention to them or not. But consciously pursuing them offers a sensorium of possibilities. Recognizing *inframince* phenomena provides a means of driving contemporary art practices and theories forward.

Defining the *inframince* is like trying to catch a memory with a hand. Perhaps, its indefinability is the reason why this concept has been largely overlooked by most Duchamp scholars. Conceivably, “the *inframince* could be the undisclosed secret history of Duchamp’s impact on 20th and 21st century art.”⁶ This thesis endeavors to trace its existence and significance within the context of contemporary art—particularly its importance to the development of conceptual art. To uncover the *inframince*, one just has to learn how to navigate to get there on time to witness it before it leaves.

This thesis offers a tentative map.

8 gratuitousness of the little weight

~*Marcel Duchamp*. Notes.



CHAPTERS 1 (-) 3

The dash / between 1 and 3 / which means and sounds **“to”** /
which also means and sounds **“2”** / the meaning and use of the pair
/ as they fork to play their roles in this context / is *inframince*

~Lexygius Sanchez Calip

When actions speak louder than themselves

34 inhabitants of / the infra thin / do-nothings

~Marcel Duchamp. Notes.

One who says everything with nothing

20 pastel of dandruff/ fallen from the hair/on to a paper/wet with glue. ~MD

In 1964, the Korean American artist Nam June Paik presented the piece entitled *Zen for Film*, wherein Paik projected an empty reel of film on a blank wall and played it on loop. As the film gets periodically shown, miniscule changes happen that affect its physical characteristics over time. These tiny changes come from chance events; precise yet unexpected causations that shape the artwork's ambiguous aesthetics—for being read as empty for not having images one is accustomed to, and of how it is not, for containing abstract images that most find commonly unfamiliar—from the tiny perforations and cosmetic imperfections it accumulates.

The art historian Juan Antonio Ramirez stated that, "... the infrafine is sometimes a visual category and sometimes olfactory means that we can also imagine its extension to the other faculties."⁷ This implies that the *inframine* experience expands into multiple sensorial faculties. With this, such extensions express a fork, wherein the images of the film and the clicking sound of the projector bifurcate into two distinct sensory realms—visual and sound—the perceptible and the intangible; a

split that delineates the visual and sonic properties of *Zen for Film*, to separately perform yet functions as one; an effect that elevates the audience's usual reception of the piece into an enhanced experience.

These are tiny performances that expresses how a speck of dust falls and periodically gets trapped in between the crevices of a film roll; of how each scratch on its surface gradually grow and appear as cuts and lines on the projection; of how blots intermittently appear from long exposures with the heat of the projector; and of how thin emulsified residues are transferred on spokes, gates, and sprockets of the projector from the reel that gradually affect its material properties, and so forth.

These slim occurrences showcase the sporadic appearances and disappearances of elements, sound, and images that constantly shape the piece. This gradual accumulation of unseen events contributes to its growing aesthetics, making the sound it makes looser and erratic, and the artwork's previously quiet projection noisier; a noise that resembles the dots we see in our eyes as it adjusts when we come indoors from the sun, or like the tingling sensations we feel on our legs as they fall asleep. It showcases an array of performances between quiet and loud—between presence and absence.

Through this, these *micro-happenings* largely contribute to the growing abstract images it ironically hides and reveals every time it is projected. Ironic in such a manner that it's emptiness is where its dust and scratches drown and dissolve, an invisibility, in the vastness of its blank disguise, yet they resurface again to possess a prominence that transmits their existence. This dance is a collective of presences and

absences that subtly collide and consume each other infinitely in repetition, a visual interaction that relentlessly defines and re-defines the mysteries it enjoys and disregards.

Inframince highlights the relevance of these unseen subtle occurrences. It promotes them into extraordinary experiences by emphasizing these gentle causations into the foreground, of how a dust that gets trapped also escapes, of how lines that slowly appear keeps on growing, and of how the blots grow and multiply as it gets projected repeatedly and so forth. Through this, *inframince* becomes a process of acceptance, embracing all of its previous appearances and projecting them back over and over, for it to recognize the slight differences it gains—an evolving version of itself.

Zen for Film carries a compound history comprising a multiplicity of accumulated infinitesimal events—a performativity that continuously influences its cosmetic changes, presenting all of its fairness and biases. It weeps and embraces the nuances it has lost and simultaneously keeps, determining the improvements and deteriorations it eagerly and unwillingly reveals. *Inframince* highlights and shapes these ever changing expressions, expressions that timidly hides and shyly reveals the subtle and gentle noises it cradles within. *Zen for Film* appears empty, but is full. A subtle and gentle expression that appears to say nothing, yet says everything.



Nam June Paik, *Zen for Film*, 1964. Photo: Nam June Paik Art Center © Nam June Paik.

Restless as it is haste

- 5 infrathin (adject.) / not noun — never / use as / a substantive
the stare infrathin / phenomenon ~MD

According to the art historian and critic Gloria Moure, “Duchamp acknowledges that smells and sounds are better vehicles than visual images for expressing the dimensional interstice implicit in the concept of *inframince*.”⁸ This implies that *inframince* thrive within faculties have to do with vision or perception, and this notion similarly reflect Duchamp’s known evaluation and critique of the retinal in art. However, I stress that *inframince* do thrive effectively within the realm of the optical and the haptic. Though it is very rare to witness it within the realm of painting often because of its measured dimensionality and static characteristics, a few do carry the *inframince*, especially works that visually convey aspects of movement and motion that one can see.

The British artist Bridget Riley, a prominent figure of the Op Art Movement, produced images that carry visually induced illusionary effects that engage and provoke normal perception. From the series called *Fragments* (1965), *Untitled [Fragment 1/7]*, which was exhibited at the Robert Frazier Gallery in London the same year, Riley presents a silk-screen print of ten black geometrical bands printed on Plexiglas. Each band sets out at top and the bottom in a formal fashion, forming a regular but slightly oblique relationship with each side due to a gently induced compression that cuts them in the center, forming a distinct sequence of bands that slightly expand from their progressively increasing measurements.

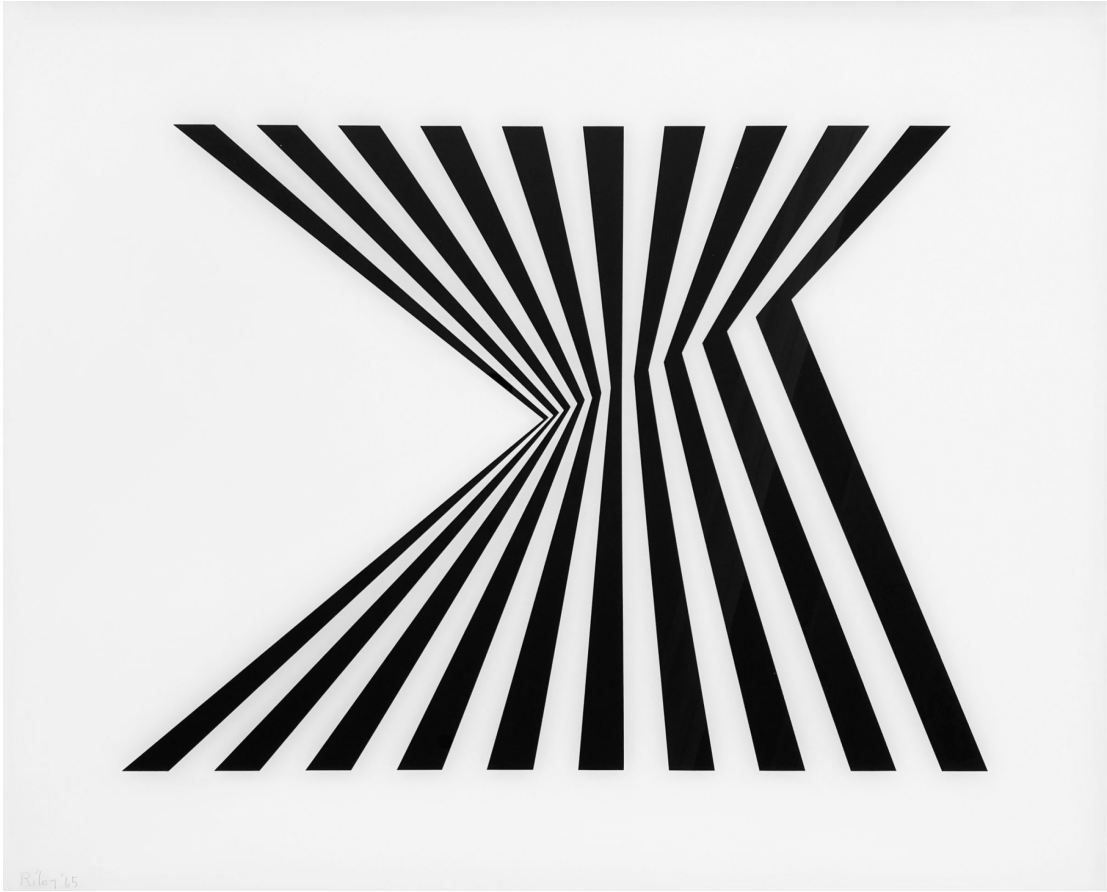
With this, *Untitled [Fragment 1/7]* carries a compression where all ten bands collide in the middle creating an invisible diagonal directional line. This evokes a sense of tightness, a sharp invisible fold in the middle that impels a three-dimensional field, like a crease on a folded piece of paper that divides it into two. This invisible crease insinuates a push and pull illusion that makes the black bands appear like they are stretching in and out while being suspended in space, allowing themselves to actively move within it—an intangible line that activates the painting to expand and retract within itself.

Furthermore, this fold similarly institutes a transition point that subtly excites a physical and mental alternation between a reality and an illusion that is perceivable, one that can be visually experienced. It engages the eyes and sight to work and exert more effort. This excitement activates vision and pupil adjustments and dilations—a hyperacuity—in confronting the illusion. This deceptive effect provokes vision and sight to intermittently engage and disengage, visually and conceptually stimulating a layer of sensitive approaches in apprehending the illusion.

In 1935, Duchamp made a series called *Rotorelief* (Optical disks) which evokes the illusion of volume and depth when spun within the correct speed it requires to activate it using a turntable. Riley conveys the same visual illusionary approach three decades later, as seen in her work. However, albeit the similarity, with *Untitled [1/7]*, movement is its *phantom*. A uniquely subtle but potent invisible force that naturally and hauntingly activates itself without an external generator, without a mechanical or electronic assistance to power or turn its illusions on; a careful and elusive presence

that discreetly reveals itself clearly when one is looking; one that freely inhabits and navigates the space, one that intermittently comes close and walks away.

Though Bridget Riley's piece exists as a two-dimensional work, it demonstrates that visual images do comprise the *inframince*. *Untitled [1/7]* carries one that plays and functions as a trickster that jolts the eye to bounce sporadically in response to an illusion that is mind-bending and wondrous to behold. It generates an illusion that allows its three-dimensional characteristics glimmer gently within the limited space it is given. It holds a trick that shall never grow old, one that always makes 'seeing' behave like an upbeat hasty metronome, rapidly swaying from one end to the other, briefly taking sides, yet does not hold.



Bridget Riley, *Untitled [Fragments 1/7]*, 1965, Photo: © Tate, London 2020

How is it quietly deafening?

3 “shadow-caster” / a company of shadow / casters / represented by all / the sources of light / (sun, moon, stars, candles, fire —) ~MD

In 2002, the American artist David Hammons created a piece entitled *Concerto in Black and Blue*, which was presented at the Ace Gallery in New York. It is a participatory piece that encourages the audience to plunge into darkness equipped with nothing but a blue LED flashlight in navigating the darkened gallery space.

Concerto in Black and Blue is a provocation that thrives with the audience’s participation in activating the space, and such stimulate the diverse visual elements that the piece randomly unravels. These interactions visually carry a threshold that allows shadows, shapes, and forms wander. The flickering flashlights and the erratic movements the audience make, randomly duplicate, split, and cast gradations on the walls, floor, and the space’s multiple surfaces; a crossing point that showcase a display of these visual elements as they collide with and separate from each other.

Similarly, the sounds the audience produce becomes an integral part of the composition. This generation of sound is expressed through subtle physical contacts that transform, morph, and changes sound as it hits the walls, ceiling, and floors inside the gallery; a sonic composition that naturally shapes the unnatural space it momentarily fills up with sound. This highlights fleeting sonic transitions and reverberations—a sonic stretching—that prompt the breaking of sound down into echoes that briefly linger and eventually vanish.

In her essay “Infra-mince or a Secret Murmur,” professor Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet writes that, “Infra-mince does not seek clarity in its proposals: but we gain ground, walk and move forward as we also receive the shadows of its secret...”⁹ This implies how *inframince* mirror life, of how it is life, of not knowing what it has in store, of how subversive it is, of how one can only gladly receive what it gives—uncertainty.

Concerto in Black and Blue is Hammons’ cacophony of empty musical score sheets that notate the performances and interactivities that it obtains from the audience. It gladly cradles the optic and the haptic that populate its lines while concurrently rejecting it all as a replenishment, making room for new elements that will follow—a tabula rasa that allows this time durational composition to simultaneously mark down and erases the actions and interactions it performs, blurring its beginnings and ends.

Moreover, the piece conjures ‘a tone’ that drones the haunting melodies of marginalized peoples; hymns of a dark and gruesome past. It sounds the eerie incantations of a fractured history and echoes it to the present. The piece carries a darkness that speaks of not seeing what lies ahead, of not knowing what the future holds, of even asking if there is one. It intones the darkest corners of the human psyche and hums their empty promises that still remain in neglect. It resonates Hammons’ overtones, as society rushes towards the exit.

Concerto in Black and Blue, is a composition Hammons performs for himself, one that highlights what and who he embodies as an artist and as a person. The solo

virtuoso, accompanied by an ensemble of willing participants. Though it may not be as accurately the same as it was, the piece prudently carries and propels its *inframine* and notations across time. It shall appear similar but not the same, for it cradles a tethered connection between the then and the now, between the recognized and the denied, between the distinguished and the unseen. It keeps its score sheets empty, making room for all memories, old and new. A composition that gifts itself as a lasting promise.



David Hammons, *Concerto in Black and Blue*, 2002. Photo: Katharina Bosse, originally published in *The New Yorker*.

Oh, Shoot!

- 12 Infra thin separation between / the **detonation** noise of a gun / (very close) **and** the **apparition** of the bullet / hole in the target— / maximum distance / 3 to 4 meters—Shooting gallery at a fair).” ~MD

Marcel Duchamp’s examples of the *inframince* vary, from poetic observations of real occurrences, to scientific and mathematical calculations. *Shoot*, a performance by the American artist Chris Burden, which was presented at F Space Gallery in Santa Ana, California in 1971, is a good example that resonates the note above within the context of performance art.

In performing *Shoot*, Chris Burden arranged with a friend to shoot him in the arm at close range with a small-caliber rifle. This performance instigates pressure points that encompass the physical, the emotional, and the conceptual elements that determine its outcomes. Physically, this pressure begins inside the gun’s mechanism, a choking force that amasses energy strong enough to push the bullet forward, and a split which stimulates a simultaneous activation of movement, acceleration, and sound.

As the bullet travels in space, it enters an intangible territory, as it begins cutting through space before hitting the target. If one envisions it in slow motion, witness the bullet inching and slicing through space, like a warm knife that effortlessly cuts butter. Note that this constitutes a tangible but imperceptible domain where physical things actually occur, but remain imperceptible due to the bullet’s immeasurable speed; a presence disguised by a fluid indeterminable motion, making it invisible to the naked eye.

One critical aspect of this performance is that it carries a causality that determines a dramatic transition—a change from one state to the next, the cause and the consequences of such that follows. This highlights a fleeting moment when the tip of the bullet touches Burden’s skin before it penetrates, expressing a crucial transition occurring on a threshold that puts him in a precarious situation. This moment emphasizes an uncertainty with multiple plausible outcomes—physical and emotional trauma, a flesh wound, loss of blood, life or death.

Furthermore, *Shoot* brings about a transversal component that distinguishes the multiple states that situates Burden in. First, one that embodies a safe and unharmed state; the second one that embodies an injured state; and the third one which embodies the threat in-between. *Inframince* implies several margins that define his state beginning with the expectation of an upcoming threat, the moment while the threat is being received, and the state after receiving the threat, leaving him no choice but to follow through and accept its repercussions.

In relation, *Shoot* encapsulates the notion of *delay*, and Duchamp mentions, referencing the *Large Glass*, that *delay* merely is “...a way of succeeding in no longer thinking that the thing in question is a picture—to make a delay of it in the most general way possible, not so much in the different meanings in which delay can be taken, but rather in their decisive reunion “delay” — / a delay in glass as you would say a poem in prose or a spittoon in silver.”¹⁰ With *Shoot*, a bullet in psilocybin.

This delay elevates Burden’s performative elements and gesture into something more than a regular activity, amplifying its already grotesque actions into

an elevated experience. It is an echo that pauses and slows down time, distorting Burden's senses, causing a delay of bodily reactions from the injury, due to prolonged states of anticipation and anxiety.

Shoot as with Chris Burden's other performances sits on a cusp that distinguishes the tangible (physical) and the intangible (endurance) as a unified structure—physical endurance—setting forth the physical limits and fragility of the body from injury, violence, and harm. This incitement is performance art in its extreme yet poetically profound. *Shoot* is a divergence that ironically responds to issues of violence with an endurance body art statement that similarly is life-threatening.



Chris Burden, *Shoot*, 1971. Photo: Courtesy of © Chris Burden and Gagosian Gallery.

How to walk through walls

23 X rays / (?) / Infra thin / Transparency or cuttingness ~MD

In 1973, the American artist Peter Campus produced a series of contemplative performances entitled *Three Transitions*. It comprises three single-channel video documentations of three distinct investigative performances that gravitate around the notion of conversion vis-à-vis the continual transition of the existential individual.

Though there are three, I shall focus on the first iteration in this series.

In forming relationality, professor Patricia Diaz Franca-Hutchet writes that,

...the mirror is one of the simplest ways to address the issue of reflection. It's an everyday object that reflects the outside world; in a small confined space, it encompasses, in its unity, the passing images, often deforming them, creating illusion. It puts into question the subject's image, which is a central node of reflections on identity, knowledge and representation of oneself. Through reflection, the mirror is an Infra-mince analogy, as it identifies and differs.¹¹

This implies that the malleable reflections and projections of mirrors carry *inframine*.

And this analogy encompasses the reflections of both, the inside and the outside worlds, the tangible, the intangible, and the ephemeral. It warps and distorts the physical (body, object) and the metaphysical (mind, analogy, metaphor) realms it represents.

In the first iteration of *Three Transitions*, Campus starts with a wall of paper in between two cameras that face each other. The cameras both simultaneously film and projects the images it captures back to one side of the paper wall. He then walks into the frame, slices the wall of paper down the middle, passes through it, then tapes the perforations on the paper to close it, and walks out of the frame. This set up created a

double image effect, a *meta-mirroring* that shows what happens on both sides of the paper wall. Though the recording only shows one side, the way the cameras are set up captures and projects all of the actions that occur on both sides. This visual layering produces an outcome that is conceptual, provocative, philosophical, deadpan humorous, and bewildering.

Campus' performance instigates a threshold of duplicities that highlights a brief transversion from one side of the wall of paper to the other, while simultaneously revealing everything it captures. It expresses a crossing point, marking the beginning of two transitions by showing two images of a single body all at once. Likewise, this mirroring effect produces a double reflection that appears in real time while being captured and recorded in a single-channel.

Furthermore, this mirroring effect also expresses a translucence through separate projections on the surface of each side of the paper wall, creating an effect of overlaying images that occurs at a precise moment when both images from both sides of the paper wall begin to overlap. This liminal moment highlights a layering, unfolding images that appear mildly transparent on top of the other projected image; a margin of duplicity that shows what happens on the foreground and behind it simultaneously. It obscures his movements while emphasizing all of them at the same time.

The first iteration of *Three Transitions* carries a clever trick by skewing perception to a point where what one sees becomes bewildering and mind-boggling.

The piece shows how multiplicity can transverse across thresholds from a single act; a switching that projects all of its successive movements and transitions in an instance.

With *Three Transitions*, Campus muddled the notion of cause and effect. He made them perform and function on their own while simultaneously colliding all of them with each other all at once. His wizardry enables him to present a gesture that passes through a slit, allowing his forwards and backwards, his fronts and backs, and his duplicities to momentarily coexist. Campus succeeds by literally walking through a wall, twice in one go with his doppelganger, passing through as deforming simulations of each other.



Peter Campus, *Three Transitions*, 1973. Photo © Peter Campus, The Museum of Modern Art, acquired through the generosity of Barbara Pine.

Of a temporality that endure

38 Contact and / infra thin ~MD

In 1967, the British artist Richard Long created a piece entitled *A line made by walking, England 1967*, in which he drew a line by repeatedly walking back and forth following a single path on a grassy meadow, bending the blades of grass with his footsteps. Though Long's performative process of walking often is mistaken as banal and mundane, his simple action evokes a tangible ephemerality, expressing it through a line that conveys a subtle but strong presence.

Long's gesture became activations and de-activations of actions (footsteps), materials (body and grass/ground), and place (site). It highlights the initial and preceding indiscernible interactions between the artist's foot and the grass, which creates the line over time. With extensive durational repetitions of tiny interactions, these prolonged contacts underline the pressure and depth the grass attains from each footstep, thus defining the prominence and visibility of the line.

Coinciding with these miniscule and subtle confrontations are Long's expressions that simultaneously produce and activate a reaction, where each blade of grass counters the weight of his footsteps slightly fighting and folding back upwards. This carries a multiplicity and a chronology of thresholds—transformations that instigate stages of gradual physical demise that the grass shortly undertakes after, prompting the irregularities and discolorations that will occur overtime after a rigorous physical beating from the interaction.

Furthermore, such interactions similarly produce a counter effect, topical markings that remain on Long's boot sole from each blade of grass it got in contact with; green stains that gradually turn yellow and then brown as they slowly dry from gradual exposure to humidity and air. This intimate interaction comprises Long's durational expression, redefining and reshaping a specific place, while being reshaped and redefined by it.

A line made by walking, England 1967, is neither a performative act, a drawing, a sculpture, a painting, a site-specific installation, a site intervention, and so forth. It is all of it and not at the same time. The historian and philosopher Thierry de Duve states that, "In Duchamp's thought and vocabulary, there is a profound affinity between the infa-thin and aesthetic judgement."¹² If a work of art does not carry a generic nor definitive standard, it excludes and liberates itself from such. The aesthetic of Long's artwork vis-à-vis its simple but provocative aspect sits on the verge—the *inframince* of aesthetic judgement.

Further, de Duve mentions that "...aesthetic judgement is an infra-thin passage and an indifferent difference, something that does not have a name, and even less a concept. Aesthetic decision is an experience that escapes all conceptual comprehensions."¹³ Duchamp's crucial lesson is that true artwork, through its idiosyncrasies, should elude standard categorizations. Long's piece, for instance, expresses an aesthetic that does not possess just one approach, nor declare a particular genre or medium. Its aesthetic qualities remain in-between.

A line made by walking, England 1967 is an act that treads on the margins that contain conventional thought. Long's work pushes the limits of aesthetic determination. It shows how thoughtfulness and small gestures can grandly expand art discourse with something as simple and profound as the act of walking.



Richard Long, *A Line Made by Walking England 1967*, 1967. Photo: © Richard Long.

Inframince is when / your eyes get **here** / and then **here**.

~LSC

If it is blunt, why does it sting?

26 (*verso*) Cutting (*noun*) — cutting (*adj.*) (guillotine, razor blades / sliding ~ *MD*)

The year was 1971, when the American artist Gordon Matta-Clark produced a series he called “cuttings,” mainly focused on operations/dissections of abandoned architectural structures. In 1974, a cutting piece entitled *Splitting* was made, displaying the enormous physical energy he invested in it. This endures through a video documentation that shows the artist carving on walls, ceilings, and floors of a typical American suburban house with a chainsaw, splitting the house in two.

In his essay on the *inframince*, Raúl Antelo writes that, “The Infrathin...arises from a given situation and simultaneously generates a new situation, a new and more effective manner of power.”¹⁴ Whether it be physical or metaphysical, *inframince* constantly produce new situations. It continuously thrives and creates power through its imperceptible operations in between things.

In relation to this, Matta-Clark’s act of cutting presents an irony by creating a new situation that ironically reflects the connotations it physically reveals but conceptually keeps secret. His singular act incites—a paradox—where the notion to cut produces a heterogeneous outcome, a threshold that intertwines the physicality of his action with the societal reality that it reflects.

Furthermore, Matta-Clark’s singular gesture of cutting bifurcates into two critical aspects, embodying two distinct forms of power relative to each other. First, is a power that represents his physical capability to manipulate/re-shape an architectural object—the power of the gesture or act—that shows how taking some

parts of something off and away from it, actively adds more to it. Second, is the aesthetic power and context of the split, through a sharp ethereal space between the separated bodies of the cut structure. It connotes a sense of absence between a presence sliced in two; a separateness that evokes a divorce between two objects of the same origin, perhaps reflecting the fragility of the American household and its decline.

Splitting is a gesture that generates these alternating power dynamics, alternating forms of power that conveys transitions and transformations from a physical form to a metaphysical one—the agency to materialize an idea on behalf of the artist, and the agency to criticize and question such in behalf of the spectator. It is an operation that concurrently generates a consequence from a singularity, while revealing layers of individual and collective interpretations from such.

Matta Clark's 'anarchitecture,'¹⁵ is his *inframince*. It is his surgical calling card. It carries a vitality which stems from negligible, often singular, physical gestures that bolsters substance and context. He utilized cutting into and through the structures within the environment to address what is happening to it from within; a surgical operation that responds to the country's socio-economic crisis during that time.

It was a zero-sum-game beneficial to many in some accounts. One, it gave Matta-Clark the space, the material, and the means he needed to express himself. Another, is that his process gave the city and its demolition companies an extra hand and a head start for free. Most significantly, he reincarnated abandoned and dilapidating buildings and structures into something more than what they were, into meaningful artworks.

Splitting is an incitement which merges the “...traditional formal language of sculpture (line, volume, light, surface) with contemporary issues—urban decay and the breakdown of established social and architectural structures.”¹⁶ His ‘anarchitecture’ made him a chainsaw wielding wizard who does procedures that activate left-overs and unwanted industrial bodies and structures to generate new lives, even for a brief moment.



Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*, 1974 © Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark/Artist's Rights Society, Published at the New York Times 2007

Far from what the eye can see

- 24 “Lamination” to isolate an /infrathin — Between two sheets of glass / a substance that solidifies without/ adhering to the sheets of glass— /compression — rather than lamination — ~MD

Helen Pashgian is an unsung protagonist and pioneer of the Light and Space Movement. *Light Invisible*, an exhibition presented at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2014, fortified the importance of her contribution and gave it some of the recognition it deserves. It showcased *Untitled 2012-13*, a visual environment comprising of twelve large-scale, column-shaped sculptures that visually transform through carefully curated lights that emanate soft and changing hues. In description Pashgian says, “I think of the columns as ‘presences’ in space—presences that do not reveal everything at once. One must move around to observe changes: coming and going, appearing and receding, visible and invisible—a phenomenon of constant movement. It touches on the mysterious, the place beyond which the eye cannot go.”¹⁷

These twelve columns are arranged in a row forming a straight line. Each column contains one or multiple objects of different circular or cone-like shapes, except for two on each end that remain empty. Some of the objects carry a single color, some have multiple colors that sometimes mix and blend, and some just gleam brightly like gems. These objects are placed within its hollow interior and each transform in accordance with how the light and the audience interacts and moves around them.

These measured changes of saturation and hues from the lights express and emphasize the tips of these cone-shaped forms. They appear sharply protruding on the surface, evoking a sharpness that appears like it is piercing the skin of the column while its whole body blurrily extends, disappears, and retreats inwards. These fleeting changes evoke presences and absences that intermittently affect and highlight their dramatic transformations.

Untitled 2012-13 conveys a multiplicity of transversals due to the number of pieces that activate the space simultaneously, each with its own unique expressions. Moving around each column generates transition points that periodically capture the sharpness, dullness, appearances, and disappearances of forms that occur within them simultaneously, depending on how fast or slow one navigates each column.

Furthermore, these transferences create astonishing activations unique to each column, yet highly relies on these durational interactions as well. Each individual column yields a passage that allows the constant devolutions of focus and attention jumping from one point of scrutiny to another, hence the simultaneous alternations and transformations in accordance with the constant movements that happen around them.

Untitled 2012-13 engages perception through impressions from these periodic changes of movements that occur around it, creating the presences and absences that it reveals. These passages sharpen and dull the appearances of the objects, making them protrude on one side and disappear on the other. This transversal aspect of the

work institutes an onset that holds multiple notions—of boundlessness, limitation, and all that remains in-between.

The piece expresses countless visual astonishments, while highlighting the limitations of what one can physically experience with it. Each passage carries a conceptual transience—from one experience to the next, and from one interpretation to the other. These physical and mental transformations evoke uncertainty and emphasizes a charisma that metaphorically underlines the unexpected.

Untitled 2012-13 carries an indistinctness that emphasizes the secrets it hides and reveals. It holds a multiplicity of looking glasses that awaits one's eye, one's limited perception, and allows it to pass through, to momentarily see and experience the mysteries it holds from within. The miniscule transformations and sporadic visual delights that the artwork produces are *inframances* that coincide with the constant movements that it generates around itself. *Untitled 2012-13* holds multiple obscurities that sharpen and dull the senses, it reflects life often making some sides visible for some and some invisible for others.



Helen Pashgian, *Untitled*, 2012–13, © Helen Pashgian, photo © 2014 Museum Associates/LACMA.

A voice in the hand is worth two in the sand¹⁸

45 **just touching.** / you pass through some **infra thin moments** — ~MD

Mediation (towards a remake of Soundings), is a video performance piece created in 1986 by the American artist Gary Hill. This piece remakes one of the four linguistic and reflective performances from his 1979 project called *Soundings*. In *Mediation*, Hill demonstrates and mediates the fleeting nuances he instigates by making physical substances interact with each other, and specifically in this piece, pouring sand in the cone of a speaker while his voice emanates from it.

In description, Hill starts with a video recorder aiming directly at a cone of a speaker lying on its back. While describing the very activity he is performing, he successively pours sand into the vibrating speaker cone or its membrane as he speaks, creating a rattling sound from the sand which concurrently distorts the sound of his voice. As the sand piles up, its reverberations become more suppressed, making the sound of his voice subdued.

These moderate and subtle progressions slowly muffle his voice, making his words become more illegible because of the piling weight of the sand; a fleeting sonic transformations caused by opposing forces between the sand and the membrane of the speakers—one pushes down because of its volume and weight, and the other counters and pushes up to release its pressures.

Moreover, these opposing forces successively affect its sonic decibels, making the pitch of his voice higher as it gets heavier. It astonishingly hits a peak and then plateaus, making the sound of his voice increasingly clearer and legible again, but

sounding lighter and thinner than before. Though his voice seemingly sounds similar, it is different, as though it lost its body and it is coming from underneath—the underground. At this point, the speaker is completely covered with sand.

Hill's gestures result in an accumulation of reflexive interactions that stretch the sound of his voice to eventually hit an edge, and then clears through. He emphasizes these successive changes by obscuring the listener and viewer's expectations and perceptions. His actions distract the listening process with his hands entering and exiting the scene and sporadic pouring gestures, while the manner he recites his obscurely descriptive poem that seemingly describes what he is doing distracts attention as well. Like two delays feeding each other back, muddling the sound of his voice to a point where obscurity ironically becomes a clarity.

Mediation is a sonic journey that ultimately reaches a summit, where its sonic reverberations subtly levels out and calmly enjoys the view. Its transitions transport its old self into new realms, taking the shape of that new space it conquers. *Mediation* is Hill guiding his audience through a passage into an ambiguous world, where a shy obscurity is turned into a clarity that blushes aloud. It is where poems utter sounds that make words deficiently numb, making voices hide under their own clutter within a flux that gives him two from a handful of one.



Gary Hill, *Mediations (towards a remake of Soundings)*, 1979/1986. © Gary Hill.

How they loudly whisper

3 The shadow casters / work in the infra-thin ~ *MD*

Richard Tuttle's minimal and fragile artworks are often known for challenging and elevating perceptions and conventions. He is an American artist who finds the notion of near invisibility a fundamental aspect in his art making process. His *Wire Series*, first created in 1972 and continuing into the present, are sculptures combining irregularly drawn graphite lines with lengths of fine wire.

First, Tuttle draws an irregular line on the wall with a pencil. Second, he nails a wire on one end of the drawing and follows the shape of the lines to the other end, nails the wire tight and lets it freely protrude away from the wall using its natural tension. Third, he curates how a light will project on the wire to create a shadow on the wall. With all of these three elements combined, the work creates a layer of lines that are individually distinct from each other. Thus, evoking a visual deception that discloses as an optical illusion.

Wire Series institutes a repetition that uncannily mimics each individual element in an irregular fashion. It holds a doubleness that transforms the line into a multi-dimensional form. Elements (pencil drawing, wire, and shadow) share their subtle and stark similarities and differences with each other in an ambiguous fashion, making themselves mirror each other, sharing the same gentle and soft characteristics they individually present—a conundrum of ambiguity borne out of precise and imprecise replications.

Furthermore, Tuttle's gestures highlight the uniqueness of each line by embracing the uncontrollable consequences that they pose and use them in his advantage. He institutes this tension, which activates the uncanny effect that reveals the subtle distinctions and connections each line shares with each other. This makes interaction with and viewing of the piece more active and dynamic, motivating a more involved manner of perception.

Wire Series institutes a tryst, an ephemeral rendezvous, staging the line's elemental similarities and differences—their physicality, their distinct shadows, and hand drawn linear forms, together with their uncanny imitations and repetitions of themselves—collide and dissolve with each other. These remarkable optical variations and inter-relationships elevate the way one experiences the work.

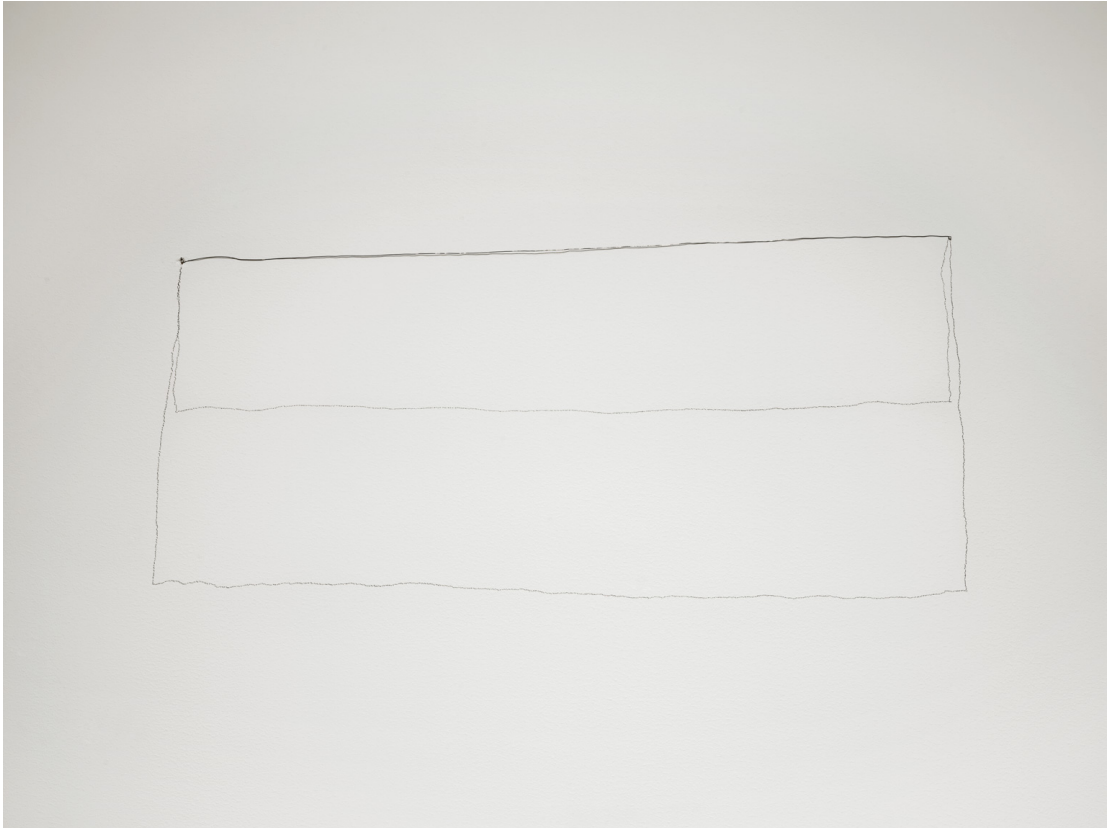
In his essay, “The Logic of the Infrathin, Community and Difference,” Raul Antelo writes that “... the infrathin experience of simultaneity allows us to go beyond verification, to behold the disquieting forces that perturb all notions of value and unfold them into multiplicity.”¹⁹ This suggests that the simultaneity of experiences that reflect the visible and invisible aspects of the *inframince* renders ‘value’ irrelevant. *Inframince* expands these coinciding occurrences into layers of experiences, making each encounter with it richer.

This reflects the multiple layers that extend from Tuttle's singular and minimal gesture, making his elements (wire, shadow, drawing) all converge within a tangible and incomprehensible threshold that puts them all together because of their

subtle similarities, and simultaneously breaks them because of their stark distinctions. An optical encounter in the in-between with all of its visual components.

Though *Wire Series* can be easily taken as an illusion because of its active visual dynamics, it goes beyond that, for it solicits a close scrutiny of its elements. It holds multiple interactions with the environment, like the shadows it casts from the light, or the pockets of air that gently move them, making them do subtle nods of approval and disapproval from spectators who navigate closely to them and so forth.

Wire Series draws a line that warps its relationships with itself and with the space it occupies in a phenomenal manner. It generates a dialogue between the audience and the space it inhabits in-between with a dynamism that enhances how it can and should be experienced. *Wire Series* alternately hides and reveals its distinctions and intimacies, while it whispers its subtle expressions aloud.



Richard Tuttle, *42nd Wire Piece*, 1972 Artwork from the collection of the artist © Richard Tuttle. Courtesy Pace Gallery Photograph © 2015 Alise O' Brien Photography.

A tautness soft as a water droplet

42 Reflections — on certain woods / light playing on / surfaces. Infrathin brought about / by the perspective ~*MD*

In 1970-71, the American artist and pioneer of the Light and Space Movement, Robert Irwin, made a piece called *Untitled*. It comprises a geometrical column made of clear acrylic that rose from the ground up standing more than fifteen feet towards the ceiling, and was presented in a retrospective of his work in 2016 at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC.

In her essay “INFRA-MINCE or a Secret Murmur,” artist and professor Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet writes that, “... the language of the Infra-mince encompasses a contemplative inquiry that renders the conventional logic of ordinary perception useless to capture its flexible dimension, which contains the tenuous materiality of things that surround it.”²⁰ This may imply that the *inframince* is impossible to experience due to the conceptual rigor it requires in order to perceive it, however, I suggest that it is not; one just has to be aware of where, what, how, and when these fleeting occurrences are present, to see them not just with the eyes but with the mind as well.

Though *Untitled* appears impossible to interact with because of its subtle and transparent material qualities, I stress that its tenuous material qualities are visually and conceptually accessible because it functions under such conditions. Visually, it effectively functions with light in producing malleable spaces that periodically capture images around it with its transparent form. Similarly, light is also responsible for

distorting space and the images it captures, a significant factor in activating the artwork's subtle and incomprehensible characteristics—of being tangible but fleetingly invisible.

These subtle distortions of forms are chance elements and events that highlight the artwork's constantly changing images and reflections that it generates from what surrounds it at certain moments. It carries a malleability that allows everything it reflects enter and exit intermittently inside its sharp geometrical body. Its glass-like quality helps in producing the surreal images that it briefly seizes and let's go, like gentle disturbances on the surface of a quiet lake, delicately deforming the reflections it holds.

Conceptually, the piece underlines how one has to deduce and understand how it interacts and plays with the environment and space it is given; of how it relies on interactions with the audience so it can produce and display its ambiguous images. Its transparent quality acts like a mirror that absorbs and reflects everything that is near and far from it, performing a catch and release game activating the momentary appearances and disappearances of shapes and colors that it interacts with.

Untitled sits in the cusp between the robust and the fragile. Its multiple and layered qualities underscore its sharp but soft characteristics, not just with the images and forms it periodically arrests, but with its translucent characteristic as a whole. On one hand, its material aesthetics are sharp in such a way that its rigid geometrical quality simultaneously evokes a stark presence, as with the robust forms that it reflects because of its crisp and smooth edges. On the other, it is soft because of its ghostly

transparency and luminescence. It carries a gentle expression which highlights a vitality that it quietly pronounces; a softness that evokes the notion of presence and absence, a softness that gently reflects the subversive aspect of impermanence.

The artwork's aura in summation illuminates the robust, fragile, quiet, and temporal interactions with its surroundings into the foreground, possessing images like erroneous memories that occasionally circle back, familiar but different, similar but not the same. *Untitled* holds a permeable gateway that encourages images to pass through, like ghosts that fleetingly appear and pass through walls. A rigidity that is as soft as a water droplet.



Robert Irwin, *Untitled Column*, 1970-71. © 2016 Robert Irwin. Courtesy of the Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York and Pace, New York/London/Beijing.

One + One + One = One in Three

35 All “identicals” as / identical as they may be, (and / the more identical they are) / move toward this / infra thin separative / difference. ~MD

Duchamp, in conversation with the author and critic Calvin Tomkins, said “...that the onlooker is as important as the artist. There are two poles. The artist and the onlooker. If there’s no onlooker there’s no art, is there?”²¹ Here, Duchamp implies that an artwork remains unfinished until an interaction with an audience happens. Unlike other art disciplines, this notion was taken whole heartedly by the conceptual artist movement in the 1960’s.

In 1965, the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth created *One in Three Chairs*. The piece comprises three elements: a physical wooden folding chair, a mounted photograph of the same chair where it sits, and a mounted enlargement of a dictionary definition of a chair. Though most assume that conceptually oriented artworks thrive within the context of audience participation, likewise I stress with certainty that all operate in a cerebral manner. With *One in Three Chairs*, Kosuth engages the audience to stretch their interactions with the artwork further, beyond the context of dogmatized aesthetics—the visually beautiful and pleasing. The piece critically extends the notion of art, questioning art in general—of what art is and of what it can be.

In her essay, “How to Isolate the Infrathin: Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Roussel and the Infrathin,” archivist and writer Caitlin Murray inscribes that, “The gap, the in-between, the liminal, the non-retinal, stretch the limits of articulation.”²²

This entails that the conceptual aspects of the *inframince* can expand our manners and ways of engaging and interpreting art. Often, such methods provocatively extend and stimulate other sensorial faculties.

With *One in Three Chairs*, the semiotics and context behind each element and their individual representation—as an actual chair, as a printed definition of a chair, and as an exact photographic reproduction of the actual chair—institutes an inconclusiveness that blurs where their connections, similarities, differences, and disconnections begin, crossover, end and vice versa.

This notion of difference in similarities and vice-versa, provides an *interface* that solicits a curiosity; inquiries around what these interconnections and relationalities mean, of how they connect and simultaneously disconnect with each other in every way. It holds a “meta-irony”²³ that makes—the word chair, the concept of chair, and the imagery of a chair—sets their respective notions apart from each other and collides themselves at the same time.

These crossings-overs entail a tension that characterizes the relationality of each representation of a chair beyond the normal, beyond common knowledge. It becomes a rigorous mental exercise. Paradoxically, this tension stimulates a sense of intellectual confrontation that encourages one to openly engage, to critically think and dig in, exercises that encourage rigorous mental evaluations.

This is what the piece initiates, a stretch, pushing one’s thought and critical thinking farther into hidden avenues in the mind that remain dormant. The irony of Kosuth’s pun (of how the chairs are the same and different at the same time, and of

how this is art, and of how most find it as not), ironically is what makes *One in Three Chairs* complex. It reflects his philosophical underpinnings within a threshold that holds a recognition of its conceptual and nonsensical vigor all together, stretching and dissolving itself in repetition.

Kosuth succeeds in conveying irony behind the three chairs, of how their simplicity becomes their complexity and vice-versa, and of how he defines, blurs, and cancels these similarities and differences as well. *One in Three Chairs* carries an *inframince* that instigates Kosuth's gesture to make sense, and to make no sense as well. To take each element at face value or to scrutinize, explore, and recognize its playful but critical fluctuations. *One in Three Chairs* holds a duplicity which simultaneously intertwines and separates its elements. It sits where meaning becomes meaningless and meaninglessness becomes meaningful. It sits where question runs in circles, like a dog chasing its own tail.



Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965. MoMA © 2020 Joseph Kosuth / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Courtesy of the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.

Shot silk?

- 11 (recto) Transparency of the infra-thin
piece of iridescent cloth bought in Grenoble / shot silk — (support for the
visible / infra thin /) ~MD

Duchamp said that, “The artist does not perform the creative act alone. The viewer establishes contact between the work and outside world by deciphering its deeper qualities, thereby making his own contribution to the creative process.”²⁴

Untitled, a video piece presented at the Galerie Air de Paris in France in 2015, by the American conceptual artist Trisha Donnelly, is known for establishing this manner of engagement with the audience.

Untitled is an abstract video piece that presents patterns that resemble silk, or a marble, liquid or water, or motifs you would find in industrial structures. During exhibitions, Donnelly provides no titles, no didactics, no interviews, nor information to give the audience context about her work. The piece keeps one guessing, an effective approach in interacting and engaging it. Personally, the notion of not knowing its mystery gives the artwork its strength.

This piece expresses a horizontal abstract pattern that resembles the sheen and slenderness of silk. It evokes an enigma that encourages spectators to hash out their own impressions and interpretations of it. Like most of Donnelly’s works, *Untitled* conveys an ambiguity that solicits curiosity around its undecipherable but familiar characteristic. It is undecipherable because it is hard to pin down, and familiar, because it undoubtedly resembles something one has seen before.

Untitled gleams a luminescent pearl like quality that visually mesmerizes while it mysteriously hides its real disposition. Its shape resembles a window that contains the elements it shows from within, giving it an ambivalent impression, as if one is looking outside or inside, given a peak into a different world. Its translucence evokes the illusion of a common but unrecognizable place.

Furthermore, the manner of projecting the piece on the wall efficiently adds a slender aspect to it, and with its distinctively ephemeral trait it appears more like it is fleetingly touching the surface. This thinness makes it gently sit on the wall, a gem-like film that arouses a gentle feeling of suspension, floating in space while it gently caresses the surface it inhabits. It carries a precision that remains impalpable, transcending itself into a phenomenon gently lying in the cusp between the measurable and the obscure.

Untitled is an inscrutability that evades identification so it can keep upholding its riddles. This is how it extends from a visual to a sensorial experience. It creates a mental space where one's agency to explore and create context can grow in relation to the experiences it gradually provokes and provides. *Untitled* lays on a surface where its ambivalence intermittently completes and concurrently resists itself to sustain its peculiarity; a peculiarity that cancels any form of acknowledgement. *Untitled* expresses that mysteries are like secrets that one can furtively receive and reveal even in bewilderment.



Trisha Donnelly, *Untitled*, 2015. © Trisha Donnelly Images courtesy of Air de Paris, Paris.
Photos by Marc Damage.

Half and half

6 allegory / (in general) / is an application / of the infra thin

The Native American and Mexican artist James Luna, once said, “I’m half many things. I’m half compassionate/I’m half unfeeling. I’m half happy/I’m half angry. I’m half educated/I’m half ignorant. I’m half drunk/I’m half sober. I’m half giving/I’m half selfish: A self made up of many things, I do not have to be anything for anybody but myself.”²⁵

Luna embodies this statement in his provocative work entitled *Half Indian/Half Mexican*, which was first presented in an exhibition called “Identity Crisis: Self Portraiture at the End of the Century,” at the Milwaukee Art Museum in 1997. It is a performative gesture teeming of irony conveyed through a photograph that resembles a prisoner’s mugshot. In this piece, Luna shaved his moustache on the left side of his face and kept a long hair to represent his Native American origin, while on the other side, he retained half of the moustache and cut his hair short to represent his Mexican identity.

Like Duchamp’s iconic *L.H.O.O.Q* (Fig 2), Luna’s provocation operates as a critical pun—an iconoclasm—critiquing Western culture, art history, and its canons. Though *Half Indian/Half Mexican* conveys a similar gesture, it immensely differs and weighs more towards retrospections around cultural heritage, identity, and representation. In her essay “INFRA-MINCE or a Secret Murmur,” professor Patricia Diaz Franca-Hutchet writes that, “... interventions can be defined as a linguistic game, or play, that would include the cliché, proverbs, sayings, and

aphorisms ... to stretch, or distort, physical realities.”²⁶ This infers that linguistic games and word play such as irony and puns similarly are critical interventions that can stretch, expand, and reflect realities. With this, Luna’s ironic gesture that establishes the notion of the half signifies an expansion that stretches in and out, initiating an alteration that goes forward and backward or side to side; a split that signifies a presentation of two heritages and making them manifest as one.

Half Indian/Half Mexican highlights a transversality that blurs yet alternately emphasizes a recognition of something that is fleetingly recognizable. It is an embodiment of a ‘two in one,’ a ‘one of two,’ a ‘one in three,’ or a ‘three in one’. To expand further, Luna accentuates a distinct classification between two identities and decenters them at the same time by presenting two socially constructed personifications and presenting himself as the embodiment of both, extending himself as the ‘other’—a third person borne out of the personified two.

In his essay, “Some Remarks on Marcel Duchamp,” the philosopher Alain Badiou writes that, “The infra thin is the exercise of the critical point as a point of minimal discontinuity; the point of discontinuity from the same to the other same.”²⁷ This implies that the recognition of the infinitesimal points of transition or the discontinuity and in-between stoppage of a similar event to another similar event is a critical aspect of the *inframince*—change.

However, I suggest that the artwork threads within a margin that emphasizes not just the miniscule and the infinitesimal aspects it holds, but with the stark visible differences between the two personifications that Luna embodies as a whole as well.

Here, *inframince* acts as a mirror that simultaneously reflects and deflects the interpretations it receives while it creates and dissolves the produced ‘other.’

Luna’s notion to present a splitting turns *Half Indian/Half Mexican* into a conceptual provocation that challenges the political weight of culture and heritage. It expresses an engagement that encompasses diverse connotations that stays within the boundaries he laid down from the start—personal identity. In comparison with other identity- centered art provocations, *Half Indian/Half Mexican* is distinct, for Luna’s gesture faintly emphasizes and blurs the hierarchical and social constructs of two unique and relevant effigies close to his heart, by simply upholding them as himself.



James Luna, *Half Indian/Half Mexican*, 1991. Photo courtesy of the artist © James Luna.

(*verb*) **'affect'** / is *infra mince* / and vice-versa

~LSC

What is a ghost if not a presence of an absence?

44 Crease molds.

Type ex. — worn trousers and very creased. / (giving a sculptural expression of the individual who wore them) / With in addition, a technical inversion: / while wearing the trousers / the leg works like the hand of the / sculptor and produces a mold (instead / of a molding) and a mold in cloth / which / expresses itself in creases — / adapt to this infrathin ~MD

The infamous sculpture entitled *House*, created by the British artist Rachel Whiteread, briefly stayed erect on the East side of London in 1993. It is an ambiguous yet profoundly engaging work that was beloved, praised, and condemned during its brief existence, demolished by the city government eleven weeks after its completion. In this piece, Whiteread filled the interior of the house with concrete, using the exterior of the house as its mold. The outcome of this process was a raw slab of concrete that casted an inversion, an inverted face that reveals a solid structure that holds, not the façade of the house, but the empty space that the house contains.

According to the Canadian cultural theorist and philosopher, Erin Manning, “...in the duration of the infrathin, what stands out is how all experience is actively engaged in a double articulation. The actual is always replete with the virtual, individuation with the pre individual, prehension with what is negatively prehended.”²⁸ *Inframince* holds a duality that simultaneously reflects its invisible side—its negative ephemeral imprint; a duality that reflects its attributes both ways. *House* conveys a physical capturing of an empty space and the personal histories it holds. It traces out most of the structure’s hidden things into an object, expressing a comprehension of something that is not usually comprehended.

House carries a reversed physical attribute that conjures an eerie essence—a sense of wrongness—an obscure kind of feeling, like there is something that does not fit or something that does not agree with the normal aesthetic dogmas. From an interview, Whiteread says that the piece “...will have this very strong but slightly kind of fragile presence...”²⁹ Indeed, the artwork does carry a strong physical presence through a robust materiality that concurrently projects a ‘ghostly’ appearance—a subtle transversality that hides and reveals the fragile memories it once contained.

This ambiguity pushes its ambivalent features beyond its physical thresholds. It mysteriously presents its spirit fluctuating back and forth within a fold, expressing its presence with its absence, between its tangible and unseen characteristics and vice-versa. The piece allows its weight to exist inside the mind through a tangibility that upholds its undisclosed past visible. It underlines the irony of its success from its impending demise. *House* is a medium that relays a message from beyond. A conduit which allows all of its memories pass through its ghostly worlds, timidly hiding its secrets while it subtly reveals what it keeps.



Rachel Whiteread, *House*, at 193 Grove Road, London E3, 1993. © Rachel Whiteread. Photo by Sue Omerod. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian.

Of a shadow that bears light

26 (recto) Thicknesses infra The infra-thicknesses. / mode: the active state and not the / result — the active state giving / no interest to the result — the result / being different if the same / active / state is repeated. ~MD

In the book *Aka Marcel Duchamp, Meditations on the Identities of an Artist*, the art historian Linda Dalrymple Henderson writes that Duchamp “...figured dimensional change in terms of liminal experiences in the everyday world... Engaging optical effects and mirrors, among other topics, several of the infrathin notes also address shadows...”³⁰ In relation, the series entitled *Nature Self-Portrait, Self Portrait #2*, created by the Chicana artist Laura Aguilar in 1996, and was presented in a retrospective at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles a year after her death in 2018, embody Henderson’s descriptions of the *inframince*.

Self Portrait #2 is part of a series of portraitures, not of faces but of bodies placed in harsh rugged landscapes. It is a black-and-white photograph that captures Aguilar’s body taking the shape and form of a rock in a desert landscape. The odd configuration of how her body is placed produces a visual anomaly, making her body mimic the rocks in the landscape. Strikingly, her body fleetingly blends with the environment at first glance, but once one recognizes her presence the illusion of her body resembling a stone dissipates. It is an ambiguity that creates an apprehension, pushing perception through a passage that eventually gets trapped on one side, because once recognition sets in, it can never go back to that illusion again.

This portrayal creates a visual ambivalence that aesthetically expresses a flickering that fits and unfits the artist’s body with the landscape and its surrounding

elements. The piece evokes a naturalness that then appears uneasy and unsettling, addressing how human bodies are natural, a part of nature, while they also are just socially conceived notions. Which leaves one to question, is it natural, is it unnatural, is it neither, or either or?

Furthermore, her body lying languidly lies stiff on the ground activates a traction that pulls the softness of her body and the hard rigidness of the ground together. This, combined with the light and shadows that orient and cast in the same direction, instigates a push and pull that separates and pins her body within the space. This tension makes Aguilar's body appear heavy and light at the same time, visually grounding and suspending it with and within the landscape.

This presence opens up a passage, where its naturalness passes through and comes out as the opposite—unnatural—upon recognition and vice versa. This oblique alternation of perception occurs within a threshold that allows the artwork's attributes to reflect the artist's personal and conceptual undertones. It expresses an aura that highlights the notion of nakedness while simultaneously erasing it. This criticizes and de-centers the conventional Western canon and notion of the female body and the female nude as an inert object of the male gaze in art. It evokes the notion of presence and absence, the acceptable and the not, the noticed and the ignored—the marginalized.

Self Portrait #2 institutes a doubling that defines what one can visually and conceptually see and interpret in an image. It conveys the desire to fit a vulnerable gentle body within an unforgiving space; to be a part of a social landscape that

unfortunately still sees what she represents as poor and inadequate. Aguilar's gesture lies in a fold that underlines how she provocatively constructs and deconstructs herself—her physicality; holding a window open, extending the theoretical discourse around the body and its representations. It is a portrayal that casts a light on shadows that cover and hide the unwanted, that dubiously enables her to appear otherwise.



Laura Aguilar, *Nature Self-Portrait #2*, 1996. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. ©Laura Aguilar Trust of 2016.

The sun is not a yellow circle

2 infrathin analogy ~ *MD*

In his notes on the *inframince*, Duchamp writes, “smells more infrathin / than colors.”³¹ Here he implies that the intangible and the imperceptible are prime generators of the *inframince*. He demonstrates this concept with works like, *50 cc of Paris Air* (Fig.3), which he created in 1919 by trapping Paris air inside a glass ampoule; or the *Perfume Bottle for Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette* (Fig. 4), which he created in 1921, comprising a bottle of perfume with the exact title written on it and carries a picture of his alter ego *Rrose Selávy* (Fig.5), as its central image/brand. Indeed, both works convey the invisible and the ephemeral. But what if colors are similarly *inframince* like smells? Will this challenge his notion, or extend it?

With that in mind, the site-specific work entitled *Pollen from Hazelnut* (Fig. 20), installed by The German artist Wolfgang Laib at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2013, is a piece that I personally think potentially extends the notion of the *inframince* into the realm of colors. *Pollen from Hazelnut* is a large-scale, rectangular-shaped floor installation that radiates a stark shade of yellow composed of hazelnut pollen the artist tediously and meditatively installed for days, by sifting the pollen on to the ground with a small sieve. This determination reflects how the pollen was gathered by the artist. Since the mid-1990s, Laib has patiently collected this specific pollen by hand for decades, around a country side in the south of Germany where he lives and works.

In the documentary entitled *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of the Possible*, art historian and scholar Thierry de Duve speaks about Duchamp's notion of the retinal in art stating that, "With the advent of conceptual art, it seems that everything that is visual, everything that is attractive to the eye, that feeds the eye, seems to be eliminated in the work of art, and you seem to have a new definition of art."³² Conceptualism transformed art by regarding its visual elements secondary, expanding art to more sensory engaging applications and experiential approaches. However, this does not imply that conceptual art entirely disregards visuality because society, then and as with now, still functions in a highly visual culture.

With this, Laib's use of color and material does not convey a cancelation of visuality, but a heightening of it. The piece's bright color holds a glaring intensity that stimulates the eye. This intensity institutes a verge where color passes through and elevates itself into something more than what it commonly is, it becomes a stimulant that energizes the senses. Laib describes the piece as having "an incredible color which I could never paint, because it is far beyond myself, also much more than myself. It is not a pigment and not a 'natural' pigment either, like the sun is not a yellow circle and the sky is not a blue painting."³³ The pigment of the pollen transcends what one can perceive into an optical impact that one can feel—a color that can be experienced.

Furthermore, the piece equivocates between the minimal and the maximal. In achieving this, Laib methodically performs a calculative action to evenly lay pollen

down on the surface, but with an obviously irrepressible and imperfect outcome. Here, the patient act of sifting becomes an analogy of something minimal, of something gentle passing through a screen, while the volume of pollen that forms the rectangular shape becomes its maximal aspect that enhances the depth and intensity of its color.

Through this, Laib is able to channel the power of color beyond its conventional application. His repetitive act of sifting small amounts of pollen specifically assigns sporadic liminal spaces to each individual grain. Imagine the miniscule areas that a grain of pollen periodically fills and occupies, and countless multiplying them. This grouping energizes the shade of the color, giving it a concentrated incandescent glow.

Pollen from Hazelnut conveys a lightness, a lightness that makes it hover and suspend from the ground. It carries a transcendence that evokes a subtle sense of flowing; a fragile presence that can wither with a breath of a whisper. It amplifies a deeper appreciation of an elegance made from the simplest of actions. Its gentle gestures spread a lightness that breathes the fragile essence of life, a sensible passage through the cycle of seasons. With *Pollen from Hazelnut*, Laib expresses a sense of being, a tangible ephemerality that celebrates the passing of time with the gentlest of gestures that educe the lightness of spring and the fragility of new beginnings.



Wolfgang Laib, *Pollen from Hazelnut*, 2002. ©Wolfgang Laib. Image courtesy of Sean Kelly, New York.

Of cradled memories and lullabies

- 41 70 + 40 = 110 / out loud or softly (especially pronounced / mentally) / 70 + 40 make more than 110 — (through infra-thin)
Aesthetic ecstasies. (sic)
adjective noun

In 2016, the American-born artist Camille Norment created a piece entitled *Lull*, shown as part of the sound-based art exhibition called *Soundtracks* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in California in 2017. *Lull* is a sound installation composed of a darkened space, a microphone, and a single audio monitor on a stage emphasized by a single spotlight. The monitor emanates a female voice singing a lullaby in repetition. Nearby, a live microphone hangs from the ceiling swinging back and forth like a pendulum, intermittently disrupting and distorting the song with feedback every time it swings close to the monitor.

In an interview with the writer, musician, and scholar David Toop in 2016, Norment mentions that the piece “...sits in the cusp of the uncanny—something that should remain a secret, but has actually been revealed.”³⁴ Here, Norment implies that *Lull* holds a presence within a threshold that fearfully conceals and discloses its underlying yet undefined motivations.

The piece appends a conversation with the space and with anyone who witnesses it. It is a dialogue between the microphone and the monitor, between a parent and a child, between security and threat. It conveys a promise of refuge over a looming uncertainty with a parental voice that sings a comforting lullaby, while it appends a notion of threat and dissonance through unrelenting feedbacks that periodically portends that promise.

With its minimal aesthetics and ephemeral characteristics, *Lull* highlights its presences and absences—vacillations between two distinct sounds. One that concurrently gives, and the one that corrupts the other away. This ambivalence swings from side to side, amplifying one’s presence from the absence of the other, a relationality that thrives from each other’s recurring estrangement. This repetitive interaction between the microphone and the monitor produces feedback that sounds similar but varies differently from inconsistency, making each feedback unique because it resonates in accordance to what sound emanates from the monitor. Hence, sounds vary from timid to vulgar in wavering lengths.

Raul Antelo writes that *inframince* “...produces a chainlike effect, networks that, situated beyond the part and the whole, beyond the finite and infinite, constitute the very systemicity of the system: its incessant dislocation.”³⁵ This implies that *inframince* carries an inconsistency that perpetually disrupts a system. However, in this piece, the *inframince* keeps its monotonic systems longer at bay, barely making room for new events. It paces in a threshold where reality and all its possibilities collide, break, and form again in repetition.

Lull is a cradle that resonates the caging reminiscences of memories locked in the past, resonances that echo a perpetual dislocation, resonances that echo the bleak unforeseen uncertainties that lie ahead. It whispers a reality—the fragility of life—that delicately expresses an inescapable fate. *Lull* is an incantation that utters an intimacy and assurance of comfort and discomfort, of safety and danger as they swing back and forth. It holds a soundness and a fragile promise that it, fearfully, can never keep.



Camille Norment, *Lull*, 2016. Courtesy of ©Camille Norment Studio, installation view, SFMOMA, 2017. Photo: Katherine Du Tiel.

How they move like sparrows

- 36 Condensing vapors — (... / infra thin one can draw and perhaps re-condense / at will a picture which would appear / by the application of water vapor (or other) ~MD

The Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson says, “There is in art, I believe, always something beyond language because an artwork starts in a place before speech, with a vague feeling or notion, and it progresses to a state where it eventually becomes something which you, the audience, then encounter and complete.”³⁶ His work entitled *Rainbow Assembly*, presented in 2016 at the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul, conveys this notion of transition by conjuring a phenomenon—a rainbow—using light and water.

Rainbow Assembly is a site-specific installation comprising a row of water sprinklers and spotlights strategically installed on the ceiling of the exhibition space. The pressure from the sprinklers are carefully controlled to create a continuous wall of mist cascading down from the ceiling with a row of lights placed alongside the sprinklers, strategically pointing towards the upper-mid section of the cascading wall of mist. This setup magically produces an array of irregular rainbow spectacles that appear and disappear, oscillating in accordance with how the wall of mist interacts with the light and vice-versa.

Imagine a magnification of these elements. *Inframince* performs within and in-between the sporadic dispersal of tiny drops of water, within and in-between the random distances and spaces between each water droplet. Their random sizes, relative positions, and weight dictate the wavering array of prisms they produce;

refractions of light that obliquely deflect and pass through its multiple interfaces from one water droplet to another, imperceptible variables that define the intermittent iridescence they yield.

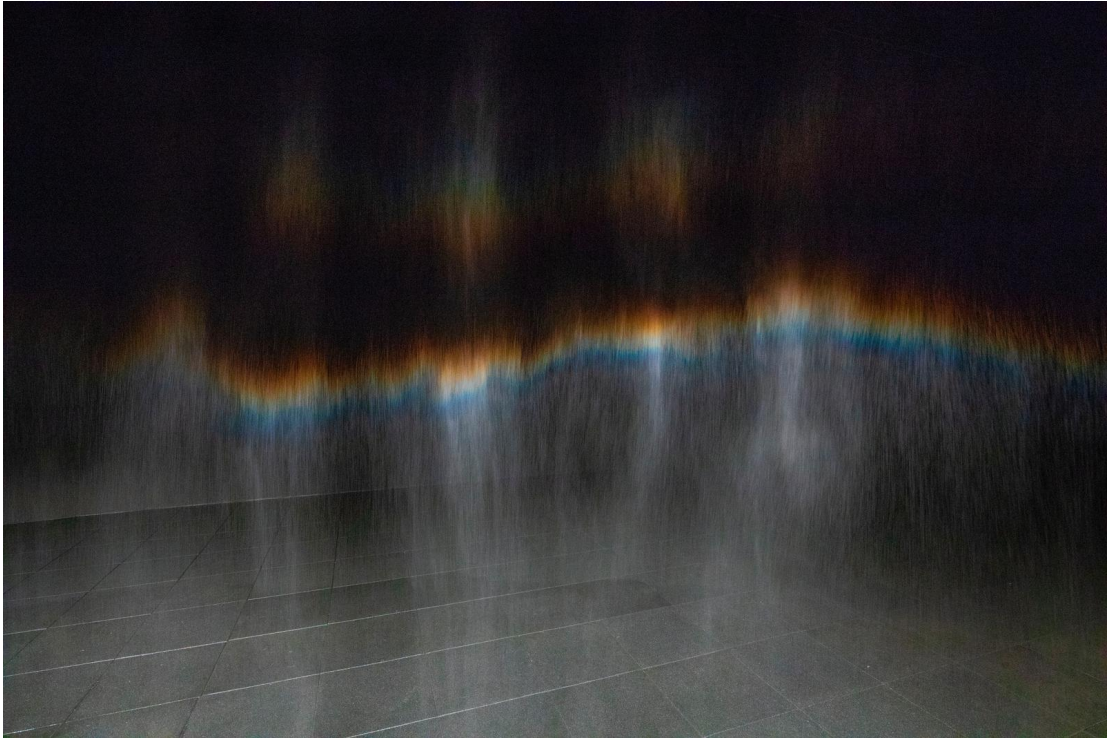
Rainbow Assembly carries a threshold that freely allows an array of constantly changing strips of ambiguously shaped rainbows, an ambiguity that institutes a sense of unity within a wall of gentle mayhem. It employs an unseen force that briefly holds its rainbows tightly together amidst its own storm, like a flock of sparrows that form spectacular formations on the horizon at twilight.

The piece holds a periphery which articulates its nonlinear suspensions and separations of transparency and color, of darkness and light—presences and absences from the pockets of prisms that alternately emerge and vanish. These liminal collisions are micro-collaborations between the tangible (mist from the sprinklers) and the intangible (the prism of colors they produce with the light), hence the random color apparitions and formations it creates.

Furthermore, the piece bears a gentle obscurity that expresses its random and constantly changing morphological structure. It calls up a wonder of a real-world phenomenon of a rainbow, which people are accustomed to. Thierry de Duve states that *inframince* is “... working at its maximum when it distinguishes the same from the same, when it is an indifferent difference, or a differential identity.”³⁷ It is efficient when its occurrences function within the in-betweens of its own similarities, differences, and indifferences. In relation, this means that the distinct infinitesimal

resemblances of infinite micro prisms that occur within the piece, creates the rainbows that momentarily hold and dissolve. This is its *inframince* working at its maximum.

With *Rainbow Assembly*, Eliasson brings a phenomenon naturally observed out in nature indoors, altering something that naturally is a visual expression into a sensorial experience. He takes something that is far and brings them close, so close that one can actually touch and feel them. *Rainbow Assembly* is a furrow of subtle colorful expressions from quietly colliding elements within a gentle cascading wall of chaos.



Olafur Eliasson, *Rainbow Assembly*, 2016, © Olafur Eliasson, Red Brick Art Museum. Photo: Anders Sune Berg 2018.

A quiet veil that hums aloud

- 1** The possible is / an infra-thin.
 The possible implying / the becoming — the passage from / one to the other
 takes place / in the infra thin. ~MD

In 2017, the interdisciplinary art collective Postcommodity presented *Blind / Curtain*, for documenta 14 at the Neue Galerie in Kassel, Germany. Is it blind because it is invisible, or because people are just too self-absorbed to see the bigger picture, or because people are just conditioned to not pay attention? Is it a curtain that connects or separate spaces, a barrier that defines their similarities and differences, or a threshold that holds knowledge systems it has in store? Is it one in the same, or is it either or neither?

Blind / Curtain is a sound installation mounted above a rotating glass door/entrance of the gallery that one encounters from walking in from outside. It consists of hyper directional speakers that emit a steady frequency of an audible sonic resonance called pink noise, operating as an invisible yet tangible facade that hits anyone passing through it with a potent sonic sensation; an invisible expression of a doorway that responds to an actual physical doorway. In description, the collective writes that the “... installation acts as a threshold for audiences to cleanse themselves of the outside world, and prepare their hearts, minds and spirits for engaging the transformative experience of documenta 14.”³⁸

Blind / Curtain draws an imperceptible margin that delineates a simultaneous connection and separation between spaces—inside and outside; a thin demarcation between the incremental, a passage from one side to the other. It is a barrier that

underlines context around notions of accessibility vis-à-vis exclusivity of space—blurring the distinctions between what is considered public space from what is private.

Postcommodity writes that the piece “is aware of itself as a node of power—it is a determiner of space—a border.”³⁹ Metaphorically, the border it intentionally enforces is an indicator of where one space ends and the other begins, or perhaps, what space is presumably accessible and not. Here, *inframine* highlights a crossing towards an awareness that conveys a sense of agency that query the illusions of privacy and non-accessibility of some public spaces.

However, does this imply that such a nearly imperceptible boundary similarly blurs the same margins it draws in between spaces? Astonishingly, it does and does not, for the piece does not possess a physicality of an object but operates tangibly through sonic expressions. It institutes an ambiguity that beckons its strong presence with effective means other than what one can visually see. It loudly declares its presence, emphasizing a transition that signals a becoming.

Blind / Curtain is a portal that institutes its presence physically by stimulating one’s sensorial aptitude in engaging its unseen force. It announces the successive arrivals and departures that define its ephemeral presence. It obscurely grants access and transferences from a previous experience towards an indeterminate one—a new set of unspecified knowledge that awaits the unsuspecting spectator. It beckons a transition, a transformation from one state to another. *Blind / Curtain* is a cleansing and a consecration through a bombardment of whisperings that loudly scream within the pores of each passing skin as they bereave a world in exchange for another.



Postcommodity, *Blind/Curtain*, 2017. Installation view, Neue Galerie, Kassel, documenta 14. Artwork © Postcommodity. Photo: Mathias Völzke.

When absence is the presence of absence

28 Infrathin / caresses ~MD

The Cuban-born American artist, Félix González-Torres, is known for his minimal, quiet, and provocatively intimate sculptures and installations. One of the artist's most moving works is *Untitled*, a billboard series first presented on multiple advertising billboards throughout New York in 1991. This piece is a black and white photograph of an empty and unmade bed with two pillows that retain traces of bodily indentations of two people who have slept on it.

Significantly, it was made soon after the death of the artist's partner Ross Laylock, from AIDS-related illness in 1991. *Untitled* carries a punctum,⁴⁰ a sharp sting that stretches out from the image and pierces through the psyche of anyone who encounters it. The photograph evokes a strong emotional energy, a substance and weight that conveys grief and sadness from the loss of a loved one. It whispers a gentle hint that subliminally encourages one to conceptually envisage and emotionally deduce what is visually given.

The piece's imagery generates a metaphysical imprint that one can mentally and emotionally absorb and retain. It insinuates an ephemerality that momentarily activates the imagination. It prompts anyone to deduce and uniquely envisage a narrative, one that threads along the threshold of what González-Torres' photograph conveys—a presence and an absence that separates and melts together.

Untitled is an indication that neither we create similar or different narratives from personal experiences unique to us, loss begets the emotions that fit its burdens.

What the artwork initially underscores, is where such emotions begin and what aligns them all—the notion of loss and its circumstances. The piece underlines an expression that carries such diverse interpretations that are relative, “...an infrathin approach in which one finds similarities in difference and difference in similarities,”⁴¹ as the author and archivist Caitlin Murray states in her writings about the *inframince*.

Untitled evokes a nostalgia around someone who was there, but not there anymore. And this deeply emotional context of love and loss is what the artwork resonates the most. It rings a resonance that stimulates a flashback, a re-memory that solicits and distributes empathy and compassion. It reflects the loss it feels and the love it selflessly gives away. It is an intimate memorial, a bittersweet taste of agony and love creased on a bed of countless reminiscences.



Félix Gonzáles-Torres, *Untitled*, Billboard 1991. © Félix Gonzáles-Torres.

‘**surface**’— is *infra thin* ~LSC



Conclusion

From a trickster / who revealed / a hint.

How it fleetingly trembles fading

The sun / its first and last—glimmer of light / rising at dawn /
setting at dusk / setting at dawn / rising at dusk—are distinct
passages / and can be witnessed / from **one** and **four** different
angles and perspectives / is an *infra mince* experience.

~LSC

Of those that were shall never be

- 46** Reflections / of light on diff. surfaces / more or less polished —
Matte reflections giving an / effect of reflection— mirror in / depth / could
serve / as an optical illustration to the idea / of the infra thin as /
“conductor” from the 2nd to / the 3rd Dimension.
—Mirror and reflection in the / mirror maximum of / this passage from the
2nd to 3rd / dimension ~MD

Duchamp’s *inframince* holds a promise, one that expands theoretical discourse. It evokes growth—a sense of becoming—within the context of contemporary art, its philosophy and practices. Understanding it is an intellectual process, elevating one’s appreciation of what it leaves behind—a brief memory. As the art historian Herbert Molderings writes in his book *Duchamp and the Aesthetic of Chance*,

Duchamp’s project of the “figuration of a possible” describes his equal degrees of precision and poetical openness his new experimental way of thinking... It was no longer completion and perfection that came first and foremost, as had been the case with the classical work of art, but rather—and at all levels of expression—the idea of becoming, the idea of change, the “passage from one to the other.”⁴²

In 2019, I created a piece entitled, *For Everything That Is Shall Be Again*, presented at the Schafer Gallery at the Fort Mason Cultural Center in San Francisco.

It is a video installation piece consisting of a flat-screen monitor placed on a floor that shows a video documentation of a performance, shot from above, of me entering the scene gently mopping the floor with water, inching from the left side of the frame towards the right as I exit.

In this piece, the manner of how the flat-screen monitor was installed on the floor creates a visual obscurity, showing the screen of the monitor operating like a malleable surface that reflects and opens up a realm that exists below from an above perspective. The surface of the monitor acts as a threshold that shows a glimpse of a world that is separate but one with the actual space; a world that shows a distinct activity happening within a space that is totally different but a part of the actual space where the spectator's activities concurrently occur in real time.

This provokes a sense of excitement, curiosity, and a hint of guilt—an unintentional voyeurism—that subtly sidles as one watches and looks down at me unconsciously doing a mundane activity, unaware that someone is watching my every move from above. It stimulates an obscure vantage point, a bird's eye view that situates the viewer's perception a level higher, watching from above, thus evoking a sense of dominance—like a god—from a multi-dimensionality that coalesces in a single space.

My gestural performance demonstrates a passage conveyed through a *mirroring*, from the wet head of the mop sweeping the ground from side to side, giving the floor's surface a reflective aesthetic. This transformation dynamically reveals the floor's hidden markings, nuances, and imperfections—the memories and histories it

retains in secret from its birth and construction. My action of passing once from one side to the other presents a dramatic transfiguration through a “mono-gestural”⁴³ approach, exposing all of the floor’s undisclosed secrets with a single act.

Significantly, the materiality of the water acts like a membrane, a film that functions as a conductor that amplifies what it simultaneously absorbs underneath, above, and around it. Its reflective and porous characteristics stimulate a collapse, a collision of the 2nd and 3rd dimensions, through a single reflection that arrests every 2nd and 3rd dimensional space that falls within its grasp, thus opening an extension that briefly reveals everything—a temporal window to an expanded singularity that briefly arrests both dimensions all at once.

This folding between realms demonstrates an ephemeral conversion that foregrounds an undisclosed world. It offers a glimpse into the 4th dimension that expands from the three dimensionality of the space. Here, water operates as an amplifier, capturing and revealing everything that it reflects around it through a thinness that gently sits and tightly grips on the floor’s surface; a wetness and a porosity that makes everything it reflects coalesce while it simultaneously defines the floor’s variable blemishes.

As time passes, the floor gradually starts drying. This transient state underlines a performativity that amplifies a push and pull between two opposing forces—wet and dry—generating a succession of changes and aesthetic transformations that showcase an array of *micro-compromises* between them. During these fleeting transitions, subtle changes occur dramatically—an ephemeral entropy. Visual distortions that occur as

the water slowly evaporates. This transitory aspect of the piece is a layer that underlines a closure of portals between realms. It signals a separation, a departure, and a reclamation—the floor’s quiet return to its original state.

For Everything That Is Shall Be Again is a piece that offers a glimpse into worlds that we normally do not pay much attention to, the world of light and shadow. It briefly gives an agency to see what is in the beyond, enabling us to become witnesses to its subtle and profound mysteries. This performance expresses my liminal affairs with *inframince*, romances that occur within thresholds that briefly open for me to pass through. My relationship with it has always been temporary, as it should be, for my art practice thrives on how I can closely touch and feel it move within my work—to harness its essence before it withers away.

This piece presents *inframince* as a gift, a catalyst that underscores a reality—impermanence and constant change. It reminds me that everything is temporary, like vibrant recollections that shimmer for a brief moment before they gradually wither. It holds a fragility that is mine, a fragility that makes me feel worthy and unworthy at the same time. *For Everything That Is Shall Be Again* is a delicate expression of the absences and presences that I have and will endure and overcome. It speaks of the things I have gained and the ones I have lost, of the ones who left and crossed over, and the ones who still stay and linger. *Inframince* is a delicate memory that is always ever fragile, for once it has gone, like life, it never comes back the same as it was.



no.1



no.2



no.3



no.4



no.5



no.6



no.7



no.8

Lexygius Sanchez Calip, *For Everything That Is Shall Be Again*, 2019. © Lexygius Sanchez Calip.

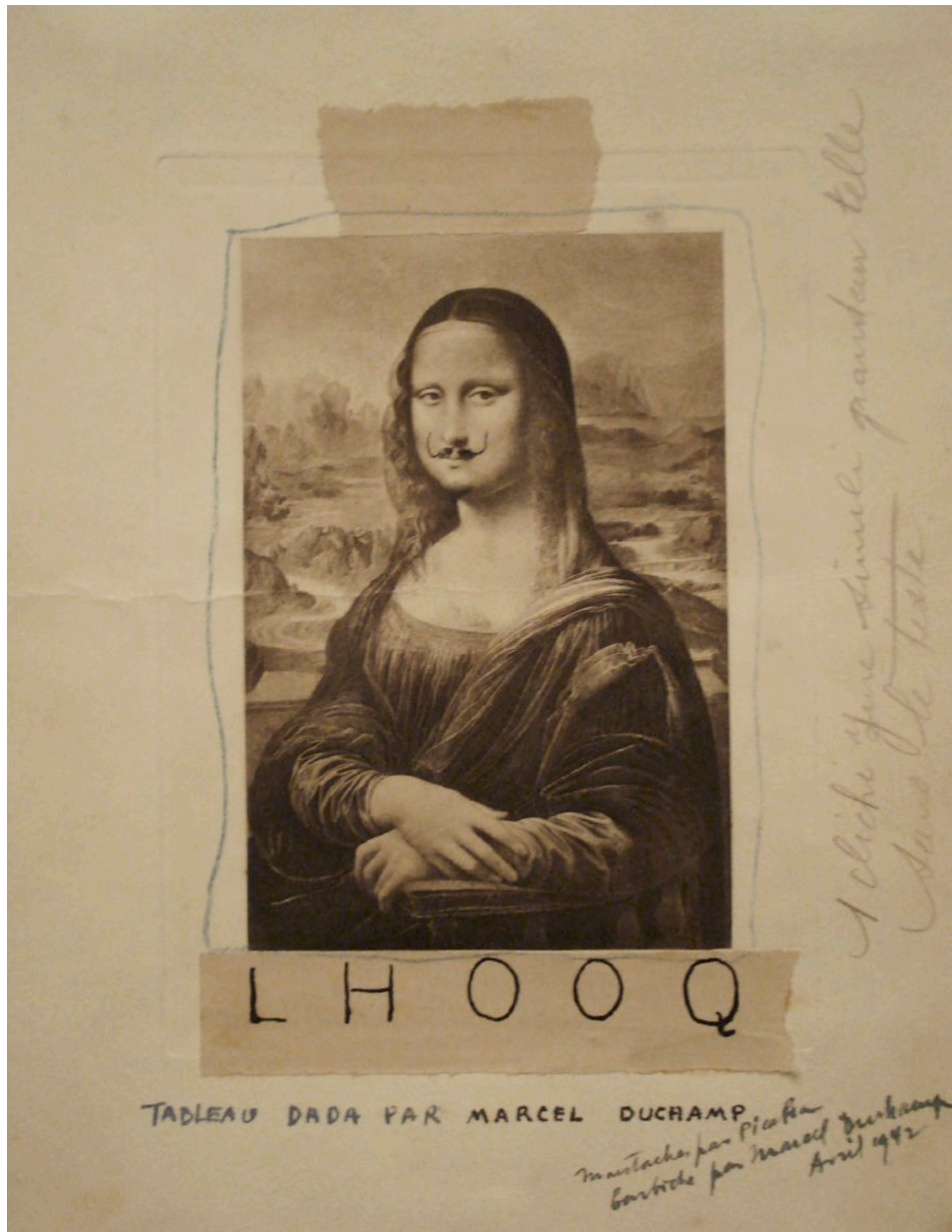
The moment — of **conflict** / between / the **mind** — the **heart** / is
inframince—in activity.

~LSC

Appendices



Page 5 (Figure 1). Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913.



Page 67 (Figure 2). Marcel Duchamp, *L. H. O. O. Q.* 1919.



Page 78 (Figure 3). Marcel Duchamp, *Air de Paris (50cc. of Paris Air)*, 1919.



(Figure 4). Man Ray, *Perfume Bottle for Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette*, 1921.

Notes

- ¹ Paul Matisse, *Marcel Duchamp, Notes*, (Paris: Centre National D'Art Et De Culture Georges Pompidou, 1980). Np.
- ² Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp, Appearance Stripped Bare*. (New York: Viking Press, 1978). 168.
- ³ Mathew Taylor, *Marcel Duchamp: Art of the Impossible*, directed by Matthew Taylor, (2019; United States: Electrolift Creative LLC., 2020), Film. 0:20:22-0:20:49.
- ⁴ Gloria Moure, *Marcel Duchamp: Works, Writings and Interviews*, (Spain: Barcelona. Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009). 121-122.
- ⁵ Moure. Ibid. 121. With additional emphasis on the word 'he' which pertains to 'the artist.'
- ⁶ Claire Daigle (Professor and writer) in discussion with the author. August 2020.
- ⁷ Juan Antonio Ramirez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even*, (London: Reaction Books, 1998), 193.
- ⁸ Moure, Ibid. 95.
- ⁹ Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet, "INFRA-MINCE or a Secret Murmur," *ARJ | Brazil | V. 2, n. 2 | p. 40-59 | Aug. / Dec. 2015*. 47.
- ¹⁰ Michel Sanouillet, and Elmer Peterson, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1975). 26.
- ¹¹ Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994). 142.

¹² Robert C. Morgan, *Duchamp, Androgyny, Etc...*, (Paris: Editions Antoine Candau. 1990). 15.

¹³ Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet, “INFRA-MINCE or a Secret Murmur.” *ARJ* | Brazil | V. 2, n. 2 | p. 40-59 | Aug. / Dec. 2015. 53.

Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet, 2015, “INFRA-MINCE Ou Um Murmúrio Secreto,” *ARJ - Art Research Journal / Revista De Pesquisa Em Artes* 2 (2), 40-59.
<https://doi.org/10.36025/arj.v2i2.7297>.

¹⁴ Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism, On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991). 159.

¹⁵ de Duve. Ibid. P.160

¹⁶ Raul Antelo and Adriana Michele Campos Johnson, “The Logic of the Infrathin: Community and Difference.” *Nepantla: Views from South* 3, no 3 (2002): 435.

¹⁷ Anarchitecture—portmanteau of words ‘anarchy’ and ‘architecture,’ coined by Gordon Matta-Clark in 1974, embodies his physically intensive process of cutting, slicing, and dissecting abandoned houses, buildings, and other architectural structures as rigorous site specific interventions that re-shapes and reconfigures the structures materiality and space.

¹⁸ Notes about the artists from the Whitney Museum of Art © Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. 2020,
<https://whitney.org/collection/works/12740>

¹⁹ “Helen Pashgian, Light Invisible,” LACMA, March 30, 2014,
<https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/helen-pashgian-light-invisible>

²⁰ “Gary Hill,” Gary Hill Mediations Comments, accessed March 23, 2021,
<http://garyhill.com/work/video/mediations.html>

²¹ Raul Antelo, *The Logic of the Infrathin: Community and Difference*. in Raul Antelo and Adriana Michele Campos Johnson, eds, *Nepantla: Views from South* 3, no 3 (2002). 436.

²² Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet, “INFRA-MINCE or a Secret Murmur.” *ARJ* | Brazil | V. 2, n. 2 | p. 40-59 | Aug. / Dec. 2015. 52.

²³ Calvin Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: The Afternoon Interviews*, (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2013). 56.

²⁴ Caitlin Murray, “How to Isolate the Infrathin: Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Roussel and the Infrathin.” *Impossible Objects*. 2020. Np. Accessed November 2020.
<http://www.impossibleobjectsmarfa.com/isolating-the-infrathin>

²⁵ Duchamp’s concept which describes the playful aspects of “Irony;” his notion regarding the “irony of indifference’ in particular.
Harriet and Sidney Janis, “Marcel Duchamp, Anti-Artist.” In *Marcel Duchamp, In Perspective*, ed. Joseph Masheck, (New Jersey: Spectrum Book. 1975). 36.

²⁶ Werner Hoffman, “Marcel Duchamp and Emblematic Realism.” In *Marcel Duchamp in Perspective*, ed. Joseph Masheck, (New Jersey: A Spectrum Book, 1975), 65.

²⁷ “James Luna, Half Indian/Half Mexican,” Denver Art Museum. November 2020.
<https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/object/2009.773a-c>

²⁸ Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet, *INFRA-MINCE or a Secret Murmur*. ARJ | Brazil | V. 2, n. 2 | p. 40-59 | Aug. / Dec. 2015. 42.

²⁹ Alain Badiou, “Some Remarks on Marcel Duchamp,” *The Symptom 9*, Editorial, 2008. Np.

³⁰ Erin Manning, “Transversal Practices: Matter, Ecology and Relationality,” “For a Pragmatic of the Useless, or The Value of the Infrathin.” *Studies in Material Thinking*, Journal 02. Auckland, New Zealand. Auckland University of Technology. First published in April 2007. 7-8.

³¹ Rachel Whiteread, interview by theEYE, Illuminations, *Illuminations Media*,1993.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEtsYIIIflkw>

³² Linda Dalrymple Henderson. “Paradigm Shifts and Shifting Identities in the Career of Marcel Duchamp, Anti-Bergsonian “Algebraicist of Ideas” In *Aka Marcel Duchamp, Meditations on the Identities of an Artist*. Edited by Anne Collins Goodyear and James W. McManus. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2014. 87.

³³ Paul Matisse, *Marcel Duchamp, Notes*, (Paris: Centre National D'Art Et De Culture Georges Pompidou, 1980). Np.

³⁴ Mathew Taylor, *Marcel Duchamp: Art of the Impossible*, directed by Matthew Taylor, (2019; United States: Electrolift Creative LLC., 2020), Film. 1:05:00-1:05:16.

³⁵ A quote that Wolfgang Laib expressed with regards to the color of the piece. This quote is contained in a press-release of his exhibition entitled, “Frieze of Life,” at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York in 2009.

Sean Kelly, “Wolfgang Laib, Frieze of Life” SKNY, Accessed March 8, 2021.
<https://www.skny.com/exhibitions/wolfgang-laib2 - 3>

³⁶ Camille Norment and David Toop, *Camille Norment in Conversation with David Toop*, Camille Norment Studio, 2016. Accessed March 29, 2021
<https://www.norment.net/work/text-ind/camille-norment-in-conversation-with-david-toop/>.

³⁷ Raul Antelo and Adriana Michele Campos Johnson, “The Logic of the Infrathin: Community and Difference,” *Nepantla: Views from South 3*, no 3 (2002): 436.

³⁸ Kate Brown, “Olafur Eliasson Brings an Immersive Light Installation to Smog-Filled Beijing in His First Solo Exhibition in the Chinese Capital,” Artnet News. January 17, 2018.
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/olafur-eliasson-red-brick-art-museum-1198112>

³⁹ Thierry De Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism, On Marcel Duchamp’s Passage from Painting to the Readymade*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991). 160.

⁴⁰ As expressed by Postcommodity regarding the piece “Blind / Curtain,” *Postcommodity*, accessed March 22, 2021.
<http://postcommodity.com/BlindCurtain.html>.

⁴¹ Postcommodity. Ibid.

⁴² Roland Barthes, *Camera lucida: reflections on photography*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

“Punctum” is a word coined by Roland Barthes to describe a sharpness, or a detail within a picture that catches attention.

⁴³ Caitlin Murray, “How to Isolate the Infrathin: Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Roussel and the Infrathin.” *Impossible Objects*. Np. Accessed November 2020.
<http://www.impossibleobjectsmarfa.com/isolating-the-infrathin>

⁴⁴ Herbert Molderings, *Duchamp and the Aesthetics of Chance*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 130.

⁴⁵ Ryan Golden Kirkpatrick (Painter, colleague, friend) in discussion with the author regarding the term ‘Mono-gestural.’ A term he coined and set forth describing the primality of my singular gestures and direct responses with and within a given space and time; a term that highlights a principal approach—a framework—which outlines most of my ephemeral art projects and interventions. February 2020.

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<https://www.skny.com/exhibitions/wolfgang-laib2-3>

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