Moving Through Images:

Spectatorship and Meaning-Production in Interdisciplinary Art Environments

Melanie Thekala Wilmink

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Art History and Visual Culture

York University

Toronto, Ontario

April 2020

Abstract

This dissertation establishes a framework for understanding embodied experience within immersive art environments by examining artworks that deploy interdisciplinary conventions to turn attention towards spectatorship itself. To accomplish this, I apply cross-disciplinary theory from John Dewey, Henri Bergson, Brian O'Doherty, Gilles Deleuze, Laura U. Marks, Peggy Phelan, and others, to close-readings of select case studies. My methodology articulates how memory, duration, material forms, and the relational dynamics between the spectator and artwork all structure the aesthetic encounter. It is my aim to bring together the rich, but isolated, knowledge sets of the art gallery, cinema, and stage to develop a more nuanced understanding of how attentive spectatorial engagement with artwork is produced.

In Chapter One, Robert Lepage and Ex Machina's installation *The Library at Night* (2016) demonstrates the philosophical framework for how a spectator moves between the virtual and physical within aesthetic encounters. Chapter Two extends these ideas through the spatial conditions of the art gallery in dominique t skoltz's *y2o dualités_* (2015) exhibitions. Chapter Three addresses the architecture of the cinema, through Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Paradise Institute* (2001), which calls attention to the temporal and social conditions of cinema as an interloper in the gallery. Finally, Chapter Four examines the *Situation Rooms* (2013/2016) as theatre group Rimini Protokoll disrupts the division between the audience and stage by placing the viewer in the middle of the action as a live participant. Each of these case studies examines how artistic intervention either deploys or disrupts the architecture of the exhibition space in order to produce spectatorship that oscillates between the viewer's immediate aesthetic encounter and the structures that construct their experience the work.

Dedication

To Luke Black,

who has crossed years and continents to join me on this journey.

All my love and thanks.

Acknowledgements

This project could not have happened without the generous support of the Elia family and the Elia Scholars Program at York University, as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Scholarships and other funding from York University. Thank you for giving me the gift of time that enabled dedicated attention to my research.

Next I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Sarah Parsons, who has been my champion from the very start. She made me feel welcome and wanted in the program and has ensured that I progressed through this degree with all of the skills I need to succeed in my future endeavors. Thank you for making sure that I had access to so many fantastic opportunities to develop my scholarship alongside my teaching and other creative projects. I also greatly appreciate the work of my committee members—Dr. Dan Adler and Dr. Laura Levin—for all of their help shaping the dissertation. Laura's feedback was key to refining my ideas and Dan's detailed recommendations ensured that those ideas were anchored as part of a cohesive whole. Additional thanks to Dr. Jennifer Fisher for her early support on this project and Dawn Burns for helping me navigate the maze of university administration.

I owe a huge debt to the encouragement and technical support of my PhD colleagues, particularly Dr. Erin Yunes, Sydney Tran (Tyber), and Anne Cibola, all of whom have lent me their willing ears, shoulders, and feedback. Thank you for participating in our writing (and occasionally drinking) sessions. I also value the support I've received from my colleagues in other departments and universities, including: Claudia Sicondolfo and Caroline Klimek (who always make me feel welcome at film studies events), the scholars at the Centre for Spectatorship and Audience Research (Dr. Kelsey Jacobson, Scott Mealey, Cassandra Silver, Jenny Salisbury, and Signy Lynch), Dr. Shana MacDonald, Dr. Christine Ramsay, Solomon

Nagler, and Daniel McIntyre. All of the people named above are brilliant artists and researchers who inspire me every time we talk. Additional thanks to Sam Cuthbert for his comments on Chapter Three and cinema architecture, as well as Ilze (Kavi) Briede for reviewing my Russian translations. I would also like to recognize several individuals who assisted me with image, video, and record sourcing, including: Corinne Danzé-Pagé (Arsenal Gallery, Toronto), Jenny Conway Fisher (Glenbow Museum), Alexandra Lauck (Rimini Protokoll), dominique t skoltz, Zev Tiefenbach (Cardiff Miller Studio), and France Vermette (Robert Lepage/ Ex Machina).

Finally, love and gratitude to all my friends and family who have watched me go through this seemingly endless process! Thank you for caring and asking about my work, listening to me ramble on, and for showing up to all of my art events. It means the world to me. Above all, thank you to Luke Black. It is not an understatement to say that I could not have done this without you.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Introduction

The moving image permeates our daily lives, through all sorts of technological forms, to the point where it has become naturalized in our environments. Media screens flicker on the sides of buildings, in bus-shelters, inside elevators, and even in the palms of our hands, interweaving experiences of public and private space while blurring the virtual and real. These screens do not merely reflect the things that fill the world, but instead become an active part of it as images alter surrounding spaces, potential interactions, and ways of thinking. While moving images are intangible (you cannot hold light and time and sound), humans still experience them as an interaction with the physical realm. As images move through technological devices, architectures, and the users that activate them, viewers are not merely distanced observers of images but are imbricated in the flow of media around and through our bodies. Moving images intertwine with our perception, shaping both what we see and how we see. In this imbrication, it becomes easy to lose sight of how the process of encountering images itself constructs what we experience. Systems of perception are often invisible from the inside, becoming so natural that it is difficult to imagine things differently. To do so, it is necessary to find a critical position that moves between the viewpoints of interior participant and exterior observer.[1] It is my aim to characterize spectatorship that oscillates between embodied experience and discursive reflection. By pinpointing these moments of paradox, it becomes possible to deconstruct how the environment of the artwork structures the spectator's experience of meaning-production.

---

[1] See: Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Amelia Jones, "Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'," *One Day Sculpture* (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2010); Petra Kuppers, *Disability and Contemporary Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Irit Rogoff, "'Smuggling' - An Embodied Criticality," Originally published on Curatorial.net [defunct]. Kunsthal Aarhus, 2006, accessed 22 October 2019, https://xenopraxis.net/readings/rogoff_smuggling.pdf.

Art is a key vehicle for this migration between participation and observation. As objects deliberately set aside from everyday life, artworks interrogate overlooked aspects of the world. The encounter with an artwork is about more than garnering pleasure (although it may fill that function)—it invites the spectator to set aside time and space for some sort of additional reflection about its meaning or importance. Art can turn assumptions upside down and enable us to see things differently. In recent years, some authors have also made a case for art as a kind of embodied knowledge production, as the opposite end of the spectrum to scholarship that produces language-based research outcomes.[2] In the introduction to his book *The Epistemologies of Aesthetics* (2015), Swiss philosopher Dieter Mersch traces the emphasis on the linguistic to Immanuel Kant, who described thought as a synthesis of ideas into communicable concepts. Mersch explains that "from the beginning the medium of discourse has been outlined in this manner, so that thought *in other media*, for examples pictures, musical compositions, installations or poems needed to be… excluded or devalued and assigned to a pre-linguistic and therefore 'primitive' level."[3] Mersch—and others—argue against this notion by tracing the ways that visual art has always contributed to ideas of philosophical "truth," and by elaborating on the kinds of embodied knowledge that is available through praxis. The idea that art operates as a different kind of perception—receiving sensory inputs and forging some sort of understanding out of them—becomes particularly relevant when applied specifically to the medium of moving

---

[2] See: Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, eds, *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts* (London: I.B Tauris, 2013); Gerald Bast et. al., *Arts, Research, Innovation and Society* (New York: Springer, 2015); Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk, "Research-Creation: Intervention, analysis and 'family resemblances,' *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 1 (2012): 5-26, accessed 22 October 2019, https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2012v37n1a2489; Christopher Frayling, "Research in art and design," *Royal College of Art, Research Papers* 1.1 (London: RCA, 1993), accessed 22 October 2019, http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/384/3/frayling_research_in_art_and_design_1993.pdf; Patricia Leavy, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* (New York: Guilford Press, 2009); Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, eds. *Thinking Through Art: Reflections on Art as Research* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[3] Dieter Mersch, *Epistemologies of Aesthetic* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2015), 8.

images. Because moving images are comprised of both intangible (projection/image) and material elements (viewing device/environment), the medium has the potential to draw attention to either the virtual or the physical, depending on the artist's intent and the design of the exhibition experience. Moving images are also powerful because they do not seem static. Instead, they push forward through time and space much like the human subject. They double what thought *feels like*: linked to the present through the experience of the perceiver's body and then fleeting quickly into the next moment while still retaining a connection to both past and future. For someone like philosopher Gilles Deleuze, these qualities enable cinema (and by extension other moving images) to mirror human experience.[4]

This conflation of human experience and aesthetic situations is not merely a philosophical concern. In artistic practice, the old divisions between art and life, various disciplinary traditions, as well as culture and commerce no longer apply (or are, rather, revealed to have always been impossible), as artworks have shifted out of the gallery space, off the screen, and out of the theatre, in order to contribute to the larger public realm. Images enter and exit through various enclosed exhibition architectures—sometimes existing simultaneously in completely different spaces or transforming as they move around. The multiple physical states of the works connect various display contexts that each inform the viewer's process of meaning-making. By articulating—and then disrupting—the conventional relationship between images, environments, and spectators, it becomes possible to interrogate the elements that comprise experience. As I mentioned previously, it is difficult to question one's own perception and knowledge while embedded in a system that naturalizes certain assumptions. Within the

[4] See: Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (New York: Continuum, 2005); Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

conventional flow of these encounters, it is easy to rely on shorthand that overlooks interesting ideas, tangents, or connections through force of habit. It is necessary to break the reliance on that shorthand by becoming aware of these habits and then actively searching for richer connections.

I propose that interventions into aesthetic disciplinary habits and conventions of display can achieve a sense of critical distance while simultaneously producing lived experience. A clear refusal merely posits a new model of display that still reproduces the notion that the artist, artwork, curator, or exhibition space structures meaning-making, while continuing to ignore the viewer's unique, lived experience. More engaging aesthetic situations occur where old traditions exist alongside new forms, and it becomes more difficult for the viewer to clearly distinguish between the two. The ensuing confusion prompts a re-consideration of previously held knowledge alongside the unrecognizable present encounter, which oscillates attention between interior memory and external stimuli. Spectators must think about and through the work simultaneously, as part of a relational encounter. In the gap between what is seen and what is known, spectators find room to insert themselves and make meaning personal.

These gaps exist in the intersection between the exhibition design and the spectator's unique experience. Therefore, in order to understand how these aesthetic situations function, it is necessary to consider both the materiality of the artwork and that of the spectator's unfolding experience. The physical presence of objects in space—as well as the more intangible qualities of experience produced by moving images—are essential components of what it feels like to view these artworks. As such, meaning-production occurs at the confluence of physical surroundings, the spectator's internal perceptual processes, and external discursive concepts. Obviously, spectatorial experience will vary from person to person; however, the design of the artwork is usually stable, as is its contextual presentation in an exhibition space. To examine this,

my dissertation separates case studies into three main exhibition venues: the art gallery, the cinema, and the live performance theatre. I chose these categories because interdisciplinary installation art commonly calls upon these three disciplines to construct the material conditions of the artwork. Additionally, while there is architectural diversity for each of those contexts, there are key conventions that remain stable to enforce certain viewing expectations. As artworks increasingly shift outside of the stable exhibition venues of the art gallery, the cinema, and the theatre, it becomes imperative to understand how to produce these material conditions. These stable forms offer a foundation from which to build on more slippery exhibition contexts. Pinpointing the tangible moments or forms that affect the spectator's experience and meaning-production means that it is possible to control and re-create the conditions, even as aesthetic forms continue to evolve beyond their current conventions. By weaving close readings of specific art installations through my personal experience as a spectator, this dissertation will untangle some of the material conditions that construct these aesthetic encounters.[5]

This dissertation deconstructs how cultural behaviour conditioning, the ideology of the institution, medium-specific customs, the artist's design of their aesthetic space, and the viewer's subjective experiences naturalize certain meanings. Close readings of the labour enacted by spectator, space, and artwork together, enable an understanding of the phenomenology that occurs upon the disruption of those conditions. Through analysis of three case studies, I develop a framework that articulates what spectatorship looks like within a variety of conditions, and I outline how artists have constructed certain spectatorial effects through the material and conceptual interplay between viewer and art environments. To be clear, while each chapter

[5] As a brief stylistic note, because I approach the artworks through my personal experience I have chosen to describe the artworks in past-tense, rather than the traditional present-tense form. I realize that it is unusual, but it seemed to be the best way to reconcile the specificity of my experience with broader theoretical discussion.

examines case studies through the lens of a set exhibition context—the gallery, the cinema, and performance space—the interdisciplinary nature of these exhibitions results in the potential to read across multiple contexts simultaneously. Although the chapters propose that the white cube enacts spatialized spectatorship, the black box temporal, and the stage a live unfolding of subjective perception, all of the artworks embody these ideas to different extents. My categorization of the artworks within these rubrics should not imply that other disciplinary conventions do not apply, but rather that the artworks function on a spectrum where my use of the chapter lenses offer a productive way of thinking-through the experience of the work.

Methodology

My research project presents immersive media installations as a microcosm of human phenomenology and considers the effects of disrupting the spectator's position within their own experience. The work of Montreal-based artist and filmmaker dominique t skoltz, the Canadian artist team of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, and German theatre group Rimini Protokoll all expand moving images beyond the gallery AND the cinema AND the stage, into situations that hold multiple discursive positions at once.[6] Each of these artists used the spatial and temporal materials of their installations to disrupt spectatorial expectations regarding artistic form, institutional frameworks, and the labour of viewing. By turning back towards the material qualities of spectatorship itself, these artists constructed novel forms of aesthetic experience. The artworks performed a kind of world-building that included the spectator while also revealing and deconstructing the apparatuses that shape the relationship between the spectator and the world.

[6] dominique t skoltz formats her name in lower-case, with no punctuation, so I will be retaining this style throughout my writing.

During this process, the spectator's experience pivoted between embodied immersion and critical distance. In each installation multiple disciplinary contexts operated together: not only art/film or art/performance, but rather art/performance/cinema all sharing the same space, providing complementary and competing ways for spectators to create meaning.

While it may seem strange to examine these issues through only three case studies, the use of a single exhibition for each chapter of this dissertation enables an extremely close analysis. By examining how a singular art situation interacts with a singular environmental context, through the lens of my own perception, I am able to explore rich discursive threads that reference to multiple artworks would dilute. Instead of taking a broad overview of generalized ideas, my more specific approach anchors an exploration of philosophy, theory, and history within a singular, concrete example. Admittedly, I could have chosen any number of other works for similar explorations; however, since my personal experience is a key entry-point into the analysis, it was crucial that I had experienced the artworks myself. The works within this dissertation struck me as intriguing examples of immersive artworks that leveraged environmental design and spectatorship toward interesting conceptual effects, and they did so in a way that supported the broader discussion of the disciplinary exhibition contexts of the art gallery, the cinema, and the stage. Situated in a public-library, Robert Lepage and Ex Machina's "The Library at Night" crossed the boundaries of all three contexts without being directly connect to any of them; it brought together the spatialized navigation of the gallery, the screen-based images of cinema, and the performative interactions of the stage in a way that blurred virtual and physical environments and enabled a grounded discussion of the philosophical issues at stake in this research project. With regards to the art gallery, skoltz's installations demonstrated a variety of installation approaches that called attention to the clash between

spatial and temporal conditions, and for the cinema, Cardiff and Miller literally colonized the white cube with an archetype of the movie theatre. Finally, Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* worked within the conventions of performance but did away with both the traditional architecture and audience arrangements of the theatre. This re-arrangement complicates my understanding of the dynamics of meaning-production between artists, artworks, and viewers.

All of these artworks established an unfolding and embodied relationship between spectator and artwork that generated provisional forms of knowledge. Meaning-production is dependent on the unique subject of the viewer as they perform spectatorial labour within a particular exhibition space. It is the contingency of this interaction that generates the multiple potential readings associated with the artwork. Additionally, this methodology can be conceived both practically and philosophically, as material terms—the symbols, interactions, and associations engendered by the work—and phenomenological ones via the ephemeral human processes of perceiving, thinking, and communicating. The interrelationship between viewer, artwork, and space is part of an unspoken assumption about how meaning-production occurs in contemporary art, but it is one that deserves closer examination. It is easy to say that meaning occurs through relational processes, but only close examination of actual scenarios will illustrate the concrete ways that this unfolds. By pinpointing key moments, affects, constructions, and designs it becomes possible to treat spectatorship itself as one of the materials elements that artists, curators—and even spectators themselves—can wield within aesthetic environments.

In contemporary art there is the presumption that the spectator plays a part in the meaning-making process; however, this has not always been the case. In the early 20th century, philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey argued that art had been falsely separated from human experience, highlighting objects rather than "what the product does with and in

experience."[7] In the first chapter of *Art as Experience*, he explains that museums segregated art as 'special'—as transcending regular human experience while also acting as memorials for nationalist propaganda and capitalist circulation of wealth. In this way, artworks became products to be bought and sold, instead of being recognized as an essential component of human experience.[8] For Dewey, art has the potential to heighten experience: to define the boundaries and relevance of interactions while connecting the viewer more deeply to their environment. He defines "experience" as the interactions between a living creature and its surroundings, which is articulated through a variety of rhythmic interplays—durational and spatial—that organize the creature in relation to the world. It is, at its heart, an act of learning and living that builds upon the subject's phenomenological "being-in-the-world" to enhance perception and mindfulness.

Analysis of Dewey's work often laments the lack of attention toward his ideas, particularly in pedagogy and museum studies, where the practical nature of his philosophy seems to have direct relevance to engaging viewers with artworks. In analytical philosophy, his ideas were noted as "stimulating" and "profound" while being simultaneously criticized as a "hodgepodge of conflicting methods and undisciplined speculations," in a paradox that seems to have affected the uptake of his ideas within the canon of aesthetics.[9] Similarly, despite his direct links to pedagogy, there are few instances of texts that apply his philosophical ideas to teaching practices. Those that do exist tend to instrumentalize his work, applying his ideas to the design of interactive teaching activities, which didactically walk students through the steps of

---

[7] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), 3.

[8] Ibid., 8-9.

[9] Arnold Isenberg, "Analytical Philosophy and the Study of Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 128, accessed 20 January 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/431270; See also: Richard Shusterman, "Pragmatism: Dewey," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics,* 2nd ed, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes (London: Routledge, 2005), 121-131.

understanding the art, rather than treating the looking itself as a kind of learning experience.[10] In these discussions, it is always the mediator's job to have viewers reflect back and discuss their personal encounter with the work. I would argue that Dewey's ideas offer a much broader way of thinking about art encounters, as a kind of embodied knowledge-production that does not always result in something that can be articulated with words.

This is not to say that abstracted, language-based learning is not important (some have argued that Dewey unfairly privileges bodily knowledge over symbolic), but rather they operate together to produce knowledge that is both felt and recognized.[11] Material impressions or critical reactions may come first, but the other polarity of the experience is always involved to some extent. The spectatorial experience incorporates both to varying degrees. My filtration of Dewey's ideas through related theorists and the various case studies enables me to tease out these delicate tangles of bodily and mental experience. In this writing, I will trace the way that knowledge-production occurs through the living body, in-media-res. Utilizing analysis of the spectator's in-the-moment interaction with the artwork, this dissertation deconstructs how artworks facilitate the process of perception as it transforms into subjective meaning. Like

---

[10] See: Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee, "The Art of Teaching in the Museum," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39.1 (2005): 65-76, accessed 16 January 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3527350; Philip W. Jackson. "If We Took Dewey's Aesthetics Seriously, How Could the Arts be Taught?" *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 13 (1995): 193-202, accessed 16 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1007/BF01077678; Kevin J. Pugh and Mark Girod, "Science, Art, and Experience: Constructing a Science Pedagogy from Dewey's Aesthetics," *Journal of Science Teacher Education* 18.1 (2007): 9-27, accessed 16 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1007/s10972-006-9029-0.

[11] Dewey notes in *Art as Experience* that spectatorship oscillates between form and content, or absorption and criticality, and that while both occur "the unreasoned impressions comes first" (144). I would argue that bodily impressions do not necessarily come first, or hold priority in the meaning-making process, particularly in our hyper-mediated modern context where images and discourse deeply influences how we encounter artworks in person. For instance, viewing the famous Mona Lisa, it is likely impossible to separate the idea of the work from material impressions. Similarly, with conceptual work there is often no material at all. For similar criticisms see: Hansjörg Hohr, "The Concept of Experience by John Dewey Revisited: Conceiving, Feeling and 'Enliving'," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 32.1 (2013): 25-38, accessed 20 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1007/s11217-012-9330-7; Pugh and Girod, "Science, Art, and Experience".

Dewey, I underscore the way that aesthetic experience calls attention to everyday experience: to the body being in the world and in dialogue with its environment.

The idea of dialogue is important here because it establishes our engagement with the world as a relational, collaborative, and incomplete process. Performance ethnographer Dwight Conquergood positions conversation as a sociological methodology that collects rich ethnographic data while maintaining sensitivity to different cultural worldviews. In his essay "Performing as a Moral Act," Conquergood promotes dialogic performance (or what he also calls genuine conversation) as an inclusive ethnographic practice that allows multiple viewpoints to co-exist together, resists conclusions, and promotes ongoing dialogue.[12] In this scenario, ideas flow between two or more human subjects in a manner where all parties maintain their distance without collapsing into one another, but also put aside preconceived ideas to genuinely listen to one another. Dialogic performance requires that all parties participate and listen together in a space that allows distinct subject positions to co-exist without resolving their paradoxes. As with any other conversation, if one person talks too much, refuses to listen, respond topically, over-empathizes, or fetishizes, the dialogue ceases to function as a back-and-forth.

I apply Conquergood's conversational methodology to my own knowledge-collection and communication. Dialogic performance offers a way to position my observations and theorization as conditional: linked to my subjective self, yet affected by the physical and conceptual object of the artwork, exhibition space, and circulating discourse produced by other spectators. In recognizing that my interpretations work within gaps of knowledge while producing new fissures, my methodology allows for non-hierarchical and sometimes even un-resolved meaning-

[12] Dwight Conquergood, "Performing as a moral act: Ethical dimensions of the ethnography of performance," in *The Community Performance Reader*, ed. Petra Kuppers and Gwen Robertson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 57-70.

making. My understanding is only one potential path, but placing my body in relation to the artwork will reveal tensions and ideas that can co-exist with the different experiences of other spectators. Importantly, my application of this idea also goes beyond the notion that conversation requires human subjects. In my treatment of dialogic performance, the spectator acts, but so does the artwork, the exhibition space, and the concepts embedded in the artwork. As part of a relational back-and-forth, these non-living entities maintain their own agency.

The open systems of the artworks have their own gaps that produce different meanings depending on contextual changes (including their physical form, and cultural framework at a particular time and place). While it may seem counter-intuitive, the object-presence of the world around us has relational agency. Here, it becomes important to note that I come at this research as a painter—as someone who encounters material in a dialogic way. While external ideas structure the general form of an image, I know that the durational process of putting paint on a surface transforms and enriches those ideas. I similarly recognize that the final artwork is itself changed in the encounter with a spectator, who shapes meaning using their own histories and experiences. In his book *What Painting Is*, art historian James Elkins develops a critical reading of painting as an alchemical process, which provides a "language for thinking *in* substances and processes."[13] This idea enables him to step outside of traditional art historical criticism that focuses primarily on the representations, meanings, and biographies that exist independently from the object of the work. Elkins argues that discounting materiality does a disservice to the work, because it ignores the fact that "[t]o an artist, a picture is both a sum of ideas and a blurry memory of 'pushing paint,' breathing fumes, dripping oils and wiping brushes, smearing and diluting and mixing. Bleary preverbal thoughts are intermixed with the nameable concepts,

[13] James Elkins, *What Painting Is* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 4.

figures and forms that are being represented."[14] Although not as obvious to the onlooker, this process of making is integral to the materiality of the work and provides rich layers of interpretive potential that value the body of the painting as traces of "liquid thought."[15] Through this, Elkins offers a way to see these immaterial processes as a spectator, to describe the poetic interrelation of the artist's body and the painted surface, and to bring the unspeakable into an art historical critique.

The spectator is never passive in an artwork—rather their bodies and perspectives always actively produce meaning through being in the world, relating to objects, ideas, and other people around us. As Elkins suggests, it is essential to consider both the conceptual and material interrelations that shape how we engage with art objects and develop an understanding of them. This dissertation develops a richer understanding of spectatorship by examining immersive environments that often construct their own realities through multi-sensory means. I aim to convey the enchantment that accompanies my experience of the works discussed herein, while pulling apart the process and ideas that construct those effects. An artwork is not magic, although it may feel that way at times; a work of art is a process of conceptual and physical labour by the artists and curators who develop the infrastructure for an aesthetic experience, and the spectators who complete it. This text reveals some of those labours and exchanges, through my admittedly limited perspective. In my analysis I choose focal points that may, in effect, ignore other possibilities. These omissions or erasures do not mean that other possibilities are less valid, but only that my observations provide a starting point for further consideration. By identifying significant experiential moments and material effects, this dissertation provides tools to begin

[14] Ibid., 3.

[15] Ibid., 5.

deconstructing spectatorial experiences through both individual subjective perspective as well as broader philosophical frameworks and artistic design.

The imbrication of physical and conceptual spectatorial labour means that the study of experience cannot simply remain theoretical; I am interested in how we can intersect these conversations of poetics and practicality in order to delineate tools and processes for use in future aesthetic productions. My interest in spectatorship developed through a curatorial practice, where I considered how the exhibition context influenced the relational encounter between artwork and viewer. As someone who seeks to mediate that encounter, this research provides insights into facilitating that unfolding relationship. From my perspective, the curatorial role is not to set the topic for discussion, but to create a stage where different parties can come together in unique ways. The artwork becomes an entry point into a conversation that is determined not by the artist, the artwork, the curator, the venue, or the spectator alone—rather, a convergence of all of these things is necessary. Feminist and performative methodologies that recognize the intersectional and subjective nature of spectatorship inform this approach; however, my interests are more general, aiming to broadly understand the nature of the spectatorial encounter, which might then provide tools that artists and curators can use to deploy their more specific thematic concepts.[16] That said, I am a young, able-bodied, white woman with a middle-class upbringing. I am an immigrant to this country, but one of privilege, and I have been fortunate to become highly educated through Western academic systems. All these things—and more—influence my

[16] See: Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (1988; repr., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Amelia Jones, "Encountering: The Conceptual Body, or a Theory of When, Where, and How Art 'Means,'" *TDR: The Drama Review* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 12-28, accessed 28 January 2019, www.doi.org/10.1162/dram_a_00770; Della Pollock, "Performing Writing," *The Ends of Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance," *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 146-166.

research and my interests. That is why it is crucial for me to position my subjective identity as only one perspective, while writing in a way that enables entry points for other points of view.

My background as a painter and curator is part of those same influences; however, in my creative life I have worked in theatre, cinema, printmaking, new media, writing, and more. I look at a world coloured by my experiences of those media and I use them to interpret and enrich my perception. Although the specifics of my experience are unique to me, this blended way of looking at the world is not. Many contemporary artworks transcend disciplinary boundaries, intermingling the performing body, the cinematic screen, the object, the concept or representation, critical texts, and digital media. The problem is that the critical thinking around these works often retains its disciplinary boundaries. For example, analysis of a cinematic work in the gallery usually draws on the traditions of visual art, which ignore the specificity of the cinematic tradition and the kinds of viewing practices associated with it. Gallery walls play host to endless filmic loops—regardless of cinematic narratives that determine a beginning, middle, and end of the work. Seating concessions are usually limited to a bench where groups of people hover together waiting for the free spot. The same goes for performance work—shown either live with crowds standing in a circle, or on a television monitor that loops recorded footage for viewers to glance at as they meander through the space. On the other hand, visual art encounters similar neglect when blended into cinema or performance, often acting merely as a backdrop or stylistic conceit. As a remedy to this approach, my research investigates what happens when these disciplinary conventions push and pull on one another.

The artworks investigated in this dissertation deliberately contrive spaces of paradox and difference. Much like Conquergood's dialogic performance, multi-medial conjunctions of images, discourses, histories, and theories, circulate together. Through the tensions that arise in

these complex intersections, the artworks draw attention to the apparatuses of aesthetic experiences. For performance theorist Shannon Jackson, interdisciplinarity exposes "the critical assumptions, lingering resistances, and perceptual habits that continue to lurk" behind the canons of visual art and performance criticism.[17] Jackson uses ambiguity revealed by the collision of historical narratives to investigate hidden forces that affect contemporary art, including: funding sources, affordability of living, commercial applications of work, and the circulation of publicity. She notes that treating the disciplines as autonomous entities ignores the manufactured nature of traditional boundaries, as well as their often arbitrary and contested status.[18] In bringing together the multiple streams of discourse to understand a selection of case studies, Jackson demonstrates how knowledge from one tradition may answer questions that another discipline has yet to consider. Additionally, while the application of an idea or formal technique in one context may seem innovative and disruptive to a discipline that has not yet canonized it, another form of practice may have been working in that way for many years.[19] Jackson offers an intriguing methodology for mobile and adaptive criticism.

While it can think deeply about a specific topic, research that reproduces disciplinary divisions also risks working within a silo by simply rephrasing old ideas and becoming detached from the changing reality of lived experience. Interdisciplinary thinking provides complexity and an immediate introduction of new approaches that—while they may not ultimately produce any ideas of value—at least create unusual juxtapositions of practices, ideas, and histories. Furthermore, by juxtaposing disciplinary streams of knowledge, it is possible to broaden the focus to solve problems that move beyond visual art, cinema, or performance, by linking

---

[17] Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 3.

[18] Ibid., 15-16.

[19] Ibid., 18.

aesthetics to everyday life. Materialist practice functions similarly to shift understanding beyond theory to connect discursive concepts with the embodied experience of individual viewing subjects. As arts institutions throughout North America justify their activities to secure public support and funding, and compete with pop culture entertainment options, it is crucial to connect aesthetic experience with things that are relevant to contemporary viewers.[20]

It is equally crucial to recognize that the conventions of art institutions often rely on certain knowledge-bases or skills that have historically been accessible only to privileged viewers who have not faced educational barriers (including race, gender, and/or class).[21] While it is certainly possible to interpret art using only the embodied encounter with the object, richer meaning is often produced through circulating histories, conceptual framing, and other discursive elements that are unavailable in the form of the work. Since the cultural context of the art gallery has embedded both the material and discursive aspects of art, the architecture and social dynamics of the space often carry unspoken conventions that can be difficult to negotiate without prior experience. By naming and unpacking these conventions it becomes possible to open up these spaces to less-experienced viewers. Again, while it is certainly possible for viewers to garner meaning from only material experience, being able to verbalize how effects are created and how they are relevant within broader aesthetic conversations means that viewers are able to understand their experience with what Julian Hanich calls "a fine-grain."[22] Where material

---

[20] See: Peggy Levitt, "Museums Must Attract Diverse Visitors or Risk Irrelevance," *The Atlantic*, 9 Nov 2015, accessed 15 July 2019, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/museums-must-attract-diverse-visitors-or-risk-irrelevance/433347; Open Up, "An Introduction to the Open Up guide and project," Open Up Museums, 2018, accessed 15 July 2019, www.openupmuseums.com.

[21] See: Helen Rees Leahy, *Museum Bodies: The Politics and Practices of Visiting and Viewing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[22] Julian Hanich, *The Audience Effect: On the Collective Cinema Experience* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 23-27.

experience offers a coarse-grain entry point into the artwork, the ability to recognize and name the specifics of experience provides a way to pinpoint subtle qualitative differences—to refine one's palate, so to speak. By starting with material experience, this research project provokes empathy or generosity for what viewers bring with them into the meaning-making experience. At the same time, I refine the language that describes experience—delineating the methods and materials that artists have used to centre spectatorship within the aesthetic encounter. In so doing, I structure an interpretive framework for simultaneously embodied and critical spectatorship.

The Field

A few notes on terminology: I use the words spectator and viewer interchangeably for literary variety, and due to a lack of more specific phrasing. I recognize that both of those terms privilege the visual over the other senses, and also imply a passive relationship between the individual viewing body and the art object. Many of the works discussed here develop more nuanced spectatorial relationships, where the viewer is active—even participatory—and where immersive environments draw on the sensual perception of whole body. Unfortunately, any other synonyms (participant, user, observer, listener, bystander, witness, beholder, guest, patron) seem equally limiting in their own ways. These terms tend to be discipline specific, refuse to intermingle viewing and action, and establish a hierarchy between the viewer, the object that is viewed, and the institution that enables the encounter. Ultimately, the terms "spectator" and "viewer" cross the most disciplinary boundaries. Both apply to visual arts, cinema, and performance studies, and circulate as the chosen vocabulary for spectatorship studies.[23] I will

[23] Also known as audience or reception studies; whatever you would like to call theoretical attempts to understand the relationship between the perceiving human body and an aesthetic situation.

also occasionally refer to "audience" when addressing multiple viewers grouped together.

In a similarly complicated way, I use the word installation as a descriptor for the kinds of art that I examine in this text. The multi-disciplinary structure of these works means that the traditionally stable disciplinary terminologies are no longer sufficient. Other authors who examine these same works from other disciplinary perspectives may call them something else. The term installation is the best shorthand for a work that operates interdisciplinarily, and that incorporates the viewer's body as part of its conceptual underpinnings. Texts such as Julie Reiss's *From Margin to Centre* (1999), Claire Bishop's *Installation Art* (2010), and Anne Ring Petersen's *Installation Art Between Image and Stage* (2015) outline some key parameters of installation as an artistic medium, noting that although the form is difficult to pin down, it seems to be rooted in interdisciplinary structures that have a unique focus on spectatorial engagement within the space and time of the artwork.[24] Other authors including: Chrissie Iles, Kate Mondloch, Catherine Elwes, and Maeve Connolly all characterize the further subset of moving images as part of installation art.[25] These texts identify how the spectator's physical mobility in sculptural space activates the seemingly passive experience of immersive cinematic darkness. In doing so, these writers also establish an evolutionary trajectory of media-installation as a discipline and pinpoint influential artists and artworks. Yet, most of these writers examine this

[24] See: Julie H. Reiss, *From Margin to Centre: The Spaces of Installation Art* (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 1999); Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005); Anne Ring Petersen, *Installation Art Between Image and Stage* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015).

[25] Chrissie Iles, "Between the Still and Moving Image," *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001); Chrissie Iles, *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2016); Kate Mondloch, "Body and Screen: The Architecture of Screen Spectatorship," in *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 20-39; Catherine Elwes, "The Dialectics of Spectatorship," in *Installation and the Moving Image* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2015), 142-163.; Maeve Connolly, *The Place of Artist's Cinema: Space, Site and Screen* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009).

intersection from the point of view of the gallery, so this dissertation expands on these ideas with specific reference to the unique contexts of the cinema and stage.

A key aspect of installation art includes the notion of immersive experience, as well as a tension between the "real" and the "virtual." In her book *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art,* Kate Mondloch describes installation art as a form that is "meant to be experienced as activated spaces rather than as discrete objects: they are designed to 'unfold' during the spectator's experience in time rather than to be known visually all at once."[26] This seems to partially explain the quality of immersion that is often attributed to installation art. I would add that the multi-sensory nature of installation art also contributes to the sensation of immersion, where viewers can engage with the work visually but also through the other senses including: hearing, touch, smell, and sometimes even taste.[27] Immersion seems to duplicate or overwrite what we would expect from the "real," or the physical environments that we interact with on a daily basis.[28] For my purposes, the "real" will refer to the objects and environments that continue to exist outside of the aesthetic construction—things that have physical presence or impact on the spectator's every-day life. In addition to referencing the aesthetic narrative constructions, I will use the virtual to describe mechanically produced images that seem to lack physicality as computer data, light, or other immaterial aesthetic effects.

Despite its varied physical forms, installation often centres experiential spectatorship as the foundation for its aesthetic effects. One of the most recent attempts to set clear parameters

---

[26] Mondloch, *Screens,* xii.

[27] Theatre scholar Josephine Machon similarly points to a feeling of aesthetic submersion where "all the senses are engaged and manipulated" as a way to delineate immersive theatre practices. See: Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 22.

[28] Cinema is often described as immersive because the everyday world is subsumed by darkness, temporarily replacing what we know as the "real" with the sensation of being inside a completely new aesthetic environment.

around the morphology of installation occurs in Anne Ring Petersen's *Installation Art Between Image and Stage*, where she neatly brings together the lineage of visual art, performance, and cinema.[29] In this text, Petersen suggests that installation creates a kind of 'passage,' where discourse and praxis unfold together in space and time to oscillate between the physical environment and aesthetic concepts. For Petersen, installations activate space, stretch out durationally, and place a phenomenological focus on the viewer's body and experience. Her book thoroughly outlines the historical context for this argument, describing the ways that visual art, performance, and cinematic histories influenced the development of installation as a genre. Petersen effectively lays out boundaries for definitions and histories; however, this theoretical focus prevents her text from taking the next step to examine the ways that these histories manifest within specific artworks, and how the contexts of space, time, and philosophies of experience operate when applied to artworks that explicitly explore these concerns. This research project builds on Petersen's groundwork to apply a narrower focus to case studies. Rather than trying to cover the entire history of installation art and define the genre, I will ask what it means for these works to treat space, time, and the spectator's experience as artistic materials.

Shannon Jackson, Miwon Kwon, Claire Bishop, and Nicolas Bourriaud articulate some of these answers through their discussion of social practice or relational aesthetics. Again, Jackson's interdisciplinary approach offers a nuanced understanding of social practice in art, illustrating how art objects act as focal points for re-evaluating history and theory. Jackson's work registers difference, shifts perception, and disrupts systemic assumptions that are impossible to see from an internal position by moving in-between—and alongside—disciplinary boundaries to reveal hidden influences. Most intriguingly, she grounds this un-framing in close

[29] Petersen, *Installation Art*.

readings of several case studies, each of which help her to engage the different systemic contingencies underscored by the work.[30] My writing models this approach while turning my gaze to the specifics of spectatorial relations.

Often referenced by these other authors, art historian Miwon Kwon articulates how installation art intertwines with the social and spatial. In her book *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Kwon outlines a genealogy of site-specific practices, which run parallel to a transformation of the exhibition context from static to mobile.[31] Kwon situates art as a spatio-politico problem and examines how art has increasingly shifted into public and community spaces and discourses. In this study, she engages architecture, urban design, theory, and social space in her valuable overview of the history and consequences of site-specific art. Most importantly, she expands the idea of site into the conceptual realm of discourse, which enables space and movement to operate within the increasingly ephemeral, networked, and iterative ways that artists are producing contemporary art. In the analysis that follows, I will further engage this notion as I investigate the spectator's implication in the art as both physical and conceptual.

Within art historical writing, the turn towards spectatorial relationships often occurs through relational aesthetics. First conceptualized by curator Nicolas Bourriaud in 1996, relational aesthetics treats human relationships as an aesthetic material, with artists deploying the exhibition context to create interactions between the spectators, art, gallery, and everyday life.[32]

---

[30] Shannon Jackson, "Performance, Aesthetics and Support," in *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 11-42.

[31] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 2004).

[32] Bourriaud first used the term to describe what he saw as a new artistic style in the catalog for his exhibition *Traffic* (February-March 1996, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux), and in the 2002 publication *Relational Aesthetics.* Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Presses du réel, 2002).

For Bourriaud, relational art serves political purposes as a disruption of the increasing capitalist exchange of human relations and hidden-labour.[33] Claire Bishop criticizes this idea, noting that relational aesthetics may in fact play into systems of capitalist exchange as part of the "experience economy," placing the burden of social change on artists instead of the government bodies who are supposed to care for its citizens.[34] She suggests that the utopic assumptions of relational aesthetics actually limit political agendas by predetermining certain outcomes and judging art on moral, rather than aesthetic, terms.[35] Bishop rightly points out that socio-political goals should not override formal concerns in art, and that Bourriaud's relational aesthetics are too easily congenial—yet her purposely antagonistic rhetoric precludes the profound possibilities of intertwining social experience and aesthetic praxis.[36] Despite expanding the idea of aesthetic autonomy through the work of Jacques Rancière, Bishop's notion of aesthetics still roots "proper" spectatorship in Modernist ideals of judgement and critical distance, which dismisses the radical potential of empathy, immersivity, bodily engagement, and pleasure that relational aesthetics places in the foreground.[37]

I am interested in considering artwork through the lens of a more nuanced formalism that oscillates between the critical distance of judgement and the closeness of embodied experience. Architectural theorist Sylvia Lavin describes the way that cinematic installations "kiss"

---

[33] Bourriaud, "Chapter One: Relational Form," *Relational Aesthetics*, 11-24.

[34] Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn," in *Artificial Hells* (New York: Verso, 2012), 13-18.

[35] Ibid., 18.

[36] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51-79, Accessed 29 October 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3397557.

[37] In Chapter 2 of *Artificial Hells*, Bishop writes that one of her aims is to "emphasise the aesthetic… [as] an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality" (18) and seems to suggest that the spectator must always be aware of the context as art. I argue that there is value in slippages of experience, where the boundaries between the experience as "art" and the experience as part of the durational flow of everyday life are no longer clear—or at least oscillate back and forth. In this scenario, I place value on the closeness of immersion alongside critical distance.

architectural surfaces, as an intermedial co-mingling that stimulates new forms of engagement. She writes that "[i]f tragedy was once considered the apex of artistic expression, let us say that the kiss is today's highest form of sensation, one that caresses the spectator to nudge aside the jaded gaze of the recent past and look instead toward new forms of acutely contemporary experience."[38] If an artwork can kiss its environment, what does that mean for the spectator enveloped in that gesture? If the sensual, slippery, or salacious kiss can disrupt a jaded response to create something new, what does that action and its ensuing response entail? For Lavin this is a transformative effect that stimulates and arouses; however, one might consider that the kiss is just as often a loveless spectacle. Like Bourriaud's focus on the convivial, Lavin does not account for the resistance of live bodies, the pornographic spectacle of the sensual, and the problematic of the unromantic kiss. Her generous and poetic approach is useful and highly generative, but when live bodies "kiss" installations—when spectators enter an intermedial relationship—complex questions arise.

The pornographic image both lures and distances; it is an unattainable image of desire, focused on reified body-images. Yet, it is not only the images but also the screen itself that also structures and controls the look, suggests Kate Mondloch, when the formal qualities of flickering movement and electronic glow capture the spectatorial gaze.[39] She posits that the shift from the black-box space of the screen to white cube of the gallery enables spectators to find external, critical positions to reflect on this interaction with the screen. Cinematic work in the gallery draws attention to the space outside the screen—which includes the spectator—and offers distance from the immersion of the cinema image. In contrast to Lavin's kiss, this action creates

[38] Sylvia Lavin, *Kissing Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 35.

[39] Mondloch, *Screens*, 21.

separation between the spectator and the image in order to make a critical point. What is of greater interest to my work—and expands Mondloch's analysis of being both “here” and “there” simultaneously—is the idea that instead of choosing one over the other, the kiss and the gaze may work together: oscillating between closeness and distance simultaneously while finding ways to turn attention back towards the process of thinking and feeling.

Film theorist Laura U. Marks promotes this tension in her book *The Skin of the Film*, when she links active spectatorship to the transformation of embodied experience into memory.[40] Through what she calls ‘haptic visuality,’ Marks suggests that experimental films vacillate between clear, semiotic images that convey content, and more ambiguous, haptic images that defy recognition. By drawing attention to what is impossible to represent (sensuous experience, erased histories, forgotten moments), Marks calls upon gaps in the viewer's perception to underscore difference and lack. Following Marks, I propose that the media installation spaces of my case studies fluctuate between the spectator’s culturally determined expectations and the embodied experience of space and time. New knowledge-production occurs when the two polarities diverge—where expectations are called into question and the spectator must labour to form a new understanding of their role and relationship with the artwork.

As noted by cinema theorist Andrew Uroskie (and many other authors interested in the blurring between the white cube of the gallery and the black box of the cinema) there has long been an irreconcilable split between the two exhibition sites.[41] While the brightly lit space of the gallery supports Modernist ideals of distanciated contemplation, the dark space of the cinema purportedly shapes a passive experience, that overwhelms and controls through spectacle (as per

[40] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

[41] Andrew V. Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Laura Mulvey).[42] It is my position that the intersection of these distinct sites operates as a space for the clash of conventions, so that the expected scripts of the gallery, cinema, or stage no longer operate neatly in the background of experience. Yet, the successful deployment of this tension is not always easy, and the intersections of the gallery and cinema have generally been considered through the perspective that one always subsumes the other. Contemporary media theorists such as Laura U. Marks, Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Erika Balsom, and Kim Knowles observe that cinema is often de-valued in the gallery compared to visual artworks, and that while there has been a noted increase in the exhibition of moving images in the gallery, the presentation format rarely treats the specialized needs of this medium with nuance.[43] Although there have been recent interventions that attempt to rescue cinema from its art-historical blind spot, many of these texts still focus on the split between active and passive spectatorship. Past approaches inserted the moving image into the gallery to prevent the passive seated position of the cinema. The peripatetic qualities of the gallery literally accentuate the spectator's body but ignore the valuable immersive qualities of cinema that placement in the gallery discards. Texts like Chrissie Iles' *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977*, Claire Bishop's *Installation Art*, and Kate Mondloch's *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art*, all underscore the unique qualities of cinematic installation in the gallery but maintain that the gallery subverts passivity in a way that the cinema cannot.[44] What if we consider that passivity

---

[42] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).

[43] See: Laura U. Marks, "Immersed in the Single Channel: Experimental Media from Theater to Gallery," *Millennium Film Journal* 55 (Spring 2012): 14-23; Stefani Schulte Strathaus, et al. "'Showing Different Films Differently': Cinema as a Result of Cinematic Thinking," *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 1-16; Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), accessed 22 October 2019, www.doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_442726; Kim Knowles, "Better Viewed on the Wall of an Art Gallery? Institution, Aesthetics and Experimental Film," *Millennium Film Journal* 55 (Spring 2012): 40-44.

[44] Iles. *Into the Light*; Bishop, *Installation Art*; Mondloch, *Screens*.

does not necessarily need to be subverted, or even that cinema isn't passive at all? Uroskie recovers a more nuanced history, placing the evolution of installation art alongside expanded cinema and performance, and it is from this jumping point that I develop an understanding of how these kinds of works operate, using the context of the gallery and cinema together as equal players.

Performance has similarly positioned cinema (or at least the recorded image) as lacking. In 1996, performance theorist Peggy Phelan took up this tension by locating the power of performance in the live "maniacally charged present" that loses impact when it is recorded and copied.[45] In this way, she positions the live experience of performance against the recorded image, while simultaneously establishing political stakes for the ephemeral gesture of performance as a means to articulate things that cannot be represented. For Phelan, stable images are structured by patriarchal and capitalist systems of exchange that always inflect the image-subject with those values. This means that a concept like "woman" cannot be represented without reference to the reifying male gaze. As with the structuralist and psychoanalytic film theory of Laura Mulvey, the recorded image always positions the spectator within the context of patriarchal systems that structurally constrain the ability to perform subjective identity.[46] It is a conceptual approach that positions the image in a binary of "dead" (captured, refined, controlled, and conceptual) and "live" (ephemeral, complex, changeable, and phenomenological). These ideas are outdated and have been subject to criticism, including by Philip Auslander who takes issue with the notion that the recorded image cannot itself perform. Auslander is more concerned

---

[45] Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 148.

[46] See: Anita Naoko Pilgrim, "Performance and the Performative," *Body & Society* 7.4 (2001), accessed 27 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1177/1357034X01007004006; Peggy Phelan interview by Marquard Smith, "Performance, live culture and things of the heart," *Journal of Visual Culture* 2.3 (2003): 293, accessed 29 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1177/1470412903002003002.

with the idea of "authenticity" in performance than with the gender politics raised by Phelan, but he makes important points regarding the intention of the image and the relationship not only between performance and image, but also image and audience.[47] Similarly, Aleksandra Wolska critiques Phelan's insistence on performance as always vanishing, with its focus on absence rather than presence. Wolska notes that performance is "an art of becoming" that is always in the process of being made, transformed, and moving into a new form as it is embodied in the living people who make it happen (including actors, directors, and audiences).[48] Nevertheless, Phelan's definition of performance as hinged on the "live" and co-presence is a useful starting point for all of these conversations, and supports a rich interrogation of the unfolding relationship between the performer, artwork, spectator, and environment.

Rebecca Schneider takes a subtler view than Phelan in her essay "Still Living," where she re-considers the binaries of live performance and dead reproduction, by underscoring duration and representations of spectatorial address to highlight the constructed nature of the image.[49] Stepping even further, Amelia Jones suggests that performance can thwart the traditional judgment of visual art, not because of its anti-capitalist form (as Phelan argues), but rather because it highlights the body as it rubs up against the ideological frames of Kantian disinterestedness.[50] For both Schneider and Jones, spectatorial labour is key to meaning-making, because it implicates the viewer in a live encounter regardless of the image's status as live or dead. This in-between understanding of the image is most productive to my discussion here,

---

[47] Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," *Performing Arts Journal* 28.3 (2006), accessed 29 October 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4140006.

[48] Aleksandra Wolska, "Rabbits, Machines, and the Ontology of Performance," *Theatre Journal* 57 (2005), accessed 27 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2005.0040.

[49] Rebecca Schneider, "Still Living," in *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 138-168.

[50] Amelia Jones, "Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'," 31.

because it places performance, visual arts, and cinema together in a conversation that resists their traditional boundaries.

This dissertation brings together the concerns of space, temporality, and phenomenology that Anne-Ring Petersen delineates as key elements of installation, in order to better understand how the formal qualities of artworks structure certain spectatorial effects. How are these spaces constructed so that they perform for, or with, spectators? How does that materiality establish experience as a kind of thinking-through? Each of the disciplines I investigate possess deep, niche forms of knowledge: visual art engages issues around space, display, and affective relationships between viewers and objects. Cinema theory closely considers time and narrativity, as well as how those elements involve spectators in immersive ways, and performance research contains rich thinking around the body, movement, and the significance of the live event. Yet these very specific ways of knowing the world are often limited by their own perceptual fields—where it becomes easy to overlook things because ideas have become so sedimented. By combining these fields of knowledge, it becomes possible to enable these ideas to operate in conversation with one another and produce complicated epistemologies that might not be achievable through a single lens.

The Structure

The chapters of this dissertation frame interventions into the exhibition spaces of the gallery, the cinema, and the stage. In her definition of installation art, Anne Ring Petersen emphasizes the circulating qualities of space, time, and phenomenology as key criteria of the form.[51] I observed that these elements roughly mapped onto the conventional experiential output

[51] Petersen, *Installation Art.*, 27-53.

of the three exhibition venues. To that end, I have assigned each venue one of these qualities in order to trace the effects produced by the architectural and spectatorial structures of the exhibition space. Where the white cube gallery positions the spectator in spatial relationships to objects and architecture, the cinema space locates the viewer in time. The stage provides the opportunity to bring spatial and temporal concerns together, through the spectator's experience of liveness. Here, the live implicates the viewer in space and time that is shared with the action, activating a phenomenological exchange. While it may seem contrary to my goals of interdisciplinarity, the focal points of the art gallery, the cinema, and the theatre act as containers for discussion, making visible the display conventions that the artists subsequently disrupt.

In order to delve into the consequences of these disciplinary disruptions, however, it is necessary to provide a baseline for what spectatorial "experience" entails. The first chapter "On Aesthetic Experience" introduces a philosophy of experience that entwines with all of the subsequent chapters. Bolstered by John Dewey's *Art as Experience*, I outline some ways that philosophers and disciplinary-specific theorists have articulated aesthetic experience.[52] This chapter also draws out the ideas of the early-modern philosopher Henri Bergson, to argue for the continued relevance of his ideas regarding perception, particularly as it relates to a viewer's experience of an artwork.[53] Although this chapter deals primarily with theory, as the ideas extend into the subsequent case studies it will become clear that Bergson's philosophical conception of experience provides compelling and practical ways to construct encounters between artworks and spectators.

---

[52] Dewey, *Art as Experience.*

[53] Bergson was active in the late 19th and early 20th century. See: Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (1912; repr., New York: Dover, 2004).

The application of these ideas begins in chapter two on "The Space of the White Cube," which prioritizes the spatial qualities of the eponymous visual arts gallery. This discussion outlines a short overview of the gallery: what it looks like, how and why the spaces are structured, and the history that has shaped this iconic display context. Anchored by Brian O'Doherty's writings in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, this chapter sets up the conventional expectations around the experience of the "white cube" gallery, and then disrupts them through a close reading of dominique t skoltz's *y2o* (2015) exhibitions in Toronto and Montreal.[54] Through these installations, skoltz crystallized the temporal flow of cinema into gallery-based objects and drew attention to the materiality of the space through the introduction of temporal elements.

The next chapter turns against this dynamic by emphasizing the materiality of time through the incorporation of spatial and performative elements. Chapter three, "The Time of the Black Box," also outlines the history and conventions of the cinema space while performing close readings of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Paradise Institute* (2001). In this work the artists' push against their exhibition context to make time visible and to give spectators a material sensation of that temporality within the artistic encounter. Deploying cinema-focused theorists such as Gilles Deleuze, Mary Anne Doane, Laura U. Marks, and Meredith C. Ward, this chapter interrogates how the time and flow of cinema can be manipulated so as to create a

[54] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

sensation of stepping back, of pausing, rewinding, fast forwarding, slowing and speeding that allows the spectator to feel the time of seeing.[55]

Both chapters on the gallery and cinema space touch on what the spectator's lived phenomenology; however, the fourth chapter on "The Liveness of the Stage" outlines these ideas more explicitly through the lens of performance. Peggy Phelan importantly distinguishes "The Ontology of Performance" as hinging on the live co-presence of the performer and spectator, where the time and space of a performance cannot be repeated because it only exists in the present moment. For Phelan, performance "saves nothing; it only spends," and in this chapter I position the contribution of the stage as this quality of liveness that asks the spectator to consider the materiality of their own experience.[56] Since the theatre has a much longer history than either the gallery and the cinema, this chapter spends some time distinguishing the various exhibition spaces that have housed performances over time, tracing how the shifts in those contexts locate and implicate the spectator in various ways. The division between the stage and audience is a key point of contention here, and my case study examination of Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* (2016) pushes up against this division.

While the artworks are legible from more than one discipline, categorizing these case studies via their exhibition spaces offers some starting criteria to outline the assumptions and conditions induced by the exhibition venue. As Michel de Certeau eloquently posited, "...space is

---

[55] Deleuze, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*; Mary Anne Doane, *Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, The Archive* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Marks, *The Skin of the Film*; Meredith C. Ward, "The Soundscape of the Cinema Theatre: Acoustical Design, Embodiment, and Film Theatres as Vehicles for Aural Absorption," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 10, no. 2 (Autumn 2016): 135-165, accessed 28 February 2018, www.muse.jhu.edu/article/651456.

[56] Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance," 148.

a practiced place."[57] The meanings that we give the world are always determined by the relationships that we create by moving through and encountering physical elements of the environment. Over time, these narratives may change because of the ways we interact with the world, and de Certeau offers a methodology for using close reading to highlight the different stories at play in both individual and collective use of place. What are the scripts of these artworks and how are they designed to act in relation to the place and spectator? Within these case studies, the close readings of specific art installations define those stories and delineate the material tools that produce them, which can be usefully leveraged in future artworks.

It is not only the way that artworks construct experience that is important here, but also the ways the spectators construct experience internally. While there is significant research around spectatorship theory in film and performance studies, there remains a tension between understanding audiences as a universal group or as individuals. When this theory is applied to practice for artistic presentations, the emphasis shifts either to attracting the most audiences—retaining bums in seats, with little regard for those individuals after they leave, beyond encouraging them to come back to another production—or provoking particular emotional or critical effects in the generic viewer. Often the curatorial framing of such events focuses on the quality of the work, showcasing the artist's intent, or the main exhibition theme. These are all extremely valuable considerations, but this narrow focus often fails to consider lived spectatorial experience. Spectators are a second thought—scripted and distributed in the space in a way that highlights the artwork over their own bodily needs, and "engaged" through outreach activities that explain the context of the work. Empathy toward spectators is rare, and the spaces require

[57] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

viewers to modify their behaviour to suit the context, rather than the other way around. Through this dissertation I bring a more empathic lens to spectatorship studies. If we can delineate some generalized principles that affect what viewers know, and what else they might bring into the aesthetic experience, it may help to create situations that better centre the spectator and raise the critical and personal stakes of aesthetic engagement. To think about spectatorship with the same kind of intimacy that James Elkins thinks about paint means that artists and curators can work with it as a creative material. This entails treating spectators not merely as consumers of art, but as co-producers of aesthetically driven perception.

This dissertation contributes to a growing body of research dedicated to the unique ways that multimedia artworks engage the spectatorial body. It does this by developing a deep understanding of how the set of case studies constructs and deconstructs spectatorial engagements with artworks. In a world where discourse is increasingly polarized and where it is difficult to sustain mutual conversation between individuals, these works think about encounters differently. They turn away from binary positions, toward liminal zones where the role of the spectator slides between observer and actor, where space constructs new realities, and where artwork operates as a partner in our processes of meaning-making. While the writing in this text details a series of art historical projects and develops academic theory to enrich that body of knowledge, my research also leverages these academic traditions toward practice in a novel way. What I learned from this thinking-through is applicable to exhibition and curatorial projects as it pinpoints tools and techniques that can manipulate spaces and situations for artistic engagement. Beyond creative practice, the ideas traced here are also applicable to the design of other types of communication in fields that includes urban and architectural design, community engagement, and the deployment of multi-sensorial pedagogy. Public engagement is a topic that is of interest

to all disciplines of the cultural industries, from grassroots events to large institutions, and this research provides an opportunity to blur academic and public discourses in extraordinary ways. By treating spectatorship as a process of knowledge-production with the artwork, this research opens the aesthetic field beyond its niche as a luxury product, to shift towards art as a way of understanding the world and thinking differently that can support other fields of research in the sciences and humanities.

Chapter One: On Aesthetic Experience

In fall 2015, Montreal's Grande Bibliothèque temporarily hosted a different library within its walls. *La bibliothèque, la Nuit (The Library at Night)* was nestled in the basement of the building, segregated from the rest of the usual library activity and guarded by a single security guard who granted access to only a few. This space functioned like a Russian nesting doll, hiding libraries within libraries, each scattered through time and space—as a point of slippage between worlds. To enter, viewers wandered into what looked like a private library that was furnished with dim incandescent lights, warm wood, glass display cases, and floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. The lone window looked out into a mossy garden as rain drizzled down the windowpane; it was cozy and mysterious. As our group finally finished filtering into the room, a docent dressed in black shut the door behind the last guest and introduced us to the *Library at Night*—based on both a book and actual library created by author Alberto Manguel. A recorded preamble began, transforming the space from a replica-library into a poetic metaphor, as the lights dimmed and the narrator's voice theatrically wove a story about the magic of books, reading, and libraries, referencing Manguel alongside historical magic-realist authors like Jorge Luis Borges with his famous "The Library of Babel."[58] In the trailer for the production, the narrator describes how: "[a] library works differently at night. At night books disappear into the shadows… every choice we make, every library we set up carries in its shadow the library of books not chosen: rejected, banned, ignored, burned."[59] After the recording ended, our docent provided us with a virtual reality headset and opened a secret door—disguised as a bookshelf—

[58] The eponymous library acts as a metaphor for the universe, an infinite maze that holds every possible permutation of human writing. Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel," *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, trans. James E. Irby, eds. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions Books, 1964), 51-58.

[59] Ex Machina, "The Library at Night – Official Trailer," Youtube, 00:00:45-00:01:20, last modified 16 December 2015, accessed 3 November 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bidj-MevdOs.

which pivoted open to reveal a full-scale forest. Trees sprouting open-faced books instead of leaves stretched up towards a large, luminous moon. Interspersed in the dappled light were large wooden desks with swivelling chairs and green-glass banker's lamps, all of which could have been pulled directly from the rooms of the actual Grande Bibliothèque. Once we settled into our chairs, we pulled the headsets over our eyes, and were suddenly disembodied—simultaneously heavy in our movable chairs, but visually immersed in a series of photographed and animated libraries from around the world (fig. 1).

Produced by famed Québécois theatre director Robert Lepage through his company Ex Machina for the 10th anniversary of the Grande Bibliothèque, *The Library at Night* replicated Manguel's private collection as the entry point into an extended virtual reality experience where spectators immersed themselves in ten real and imaginary libraries.[60] This mixed-reality installation deployed the sculptural qualities of installation, theatrical staging and facilitation by live performers, the temporal flow of cinema, and the immersive potential of virtual reality devices to produce an enchanting aesthetic experience. Treading across all of the boundaries that I discuss in this dissertation, *The Library at Night* offers a poetic starting point for my interrogation of how the intermingling of disciplinary conventions impacts aesthetic experience. Through the next few chapters, I will inquire: what happens when these seemingly contradictory forms operate together? What does this aesthetic experience look like, and how can we understand the new spectatorial framework produced by these intersections? Following John

[60] See: Jeanette Kelly, "Robert Lepage virtual-reality show fetes 10th birthday of the Grande Bibliothèque," *CBC News* Montreal, 27 October 2015, accessed 23 October 2019, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/robert-lepage-alberto-manguel-oculus-rift-virtual-reality-bibliotheque-nationale-library-1.3291148; Robert Lepage, "The Library at Night," ex machina, accessed 23 October 2019, http://lacaserne.net/index2.php/other_projects/la_bibliotheque_la_nuit; Robert Lepage, "La bibliothèque, la nuit," epidemic arts collective, n.d., accessed 23 October 2019, http://www.epidemic.net/fr/photos/lepage/la_bibliotheque_la_nuit/slideshow.html; Robert Lepage, "The Library at Night," Musée de la civilisation, www.mcq.org/en/exposition?id=425961; Marian Scott, "Virtual reality exhibition by Robert Lepage marks Grande Bibliothèque's first decade," Montreal Gazette, 27 October 2015, accessed 23 October 2019, https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/library-at-night.

Dewey's insistence that the experiential encounter with an artwork is at the heart of aesthetic meaning production, I will articulate how that experience unfolds in relationship to the spectator's subjective presence. The writings of philosopher Henri Bergson provide a concrete entry point into how this aesthetic experience unfolds. Of particular relevance is his understanding of perception as an entwining of external stimuli with the perceiver's subjective memory in order to produce new knowledge through the process of encounter. These larger philosophical frameworks provide the basis for my deployment of installation art as an experiential situation that calls attention to knowledge-production as both an embodied encounter with the artwork and as a critical consideration of discursive factors that circulate aesthetic reception. My re-framing of these historical ideas within a contemporary context offers a way to understand the rapidly changing material forms of artworks that utilize new technology, and articulates how these forms have potent spectatorial effects despite their seemingly unstable display conventions and sometimes spectacular effects.[61]

The Library at Night clearly captured spectatorial imagination, generating many social media comments that referenced the idea of discovery as well as the transportive thrill of travelling to multiple global libraries without physically moving. Instagram user @pedritopaneto commented on an @exmachina.ca post, recalling how fascinated they were by their encounter at the 2017 installation in Quebec City, exclaiming, "J'en rêve encore!" (I'm still dreaming of it!).[62] Many other social media posts utilized the same tone, weaving the language of dreams into their descriptions of the magical literary narratives and spectacle of the production, while praising the

[61] As per Guy Debord, where "spectacle" can be criticized as a process of capitalist commodification, that overwrite the spectator's agency. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1977; repr., Detroit: Black & Red, 2010).

[62] @pedritopaneto, comment on @exmachina.ca Instagram post, 9 May 2017, trans. Melanie Wilmink, accessed 3 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BT4X32KFC1i.

liminal spectatorial positioning between reality and fiction.[63] The dream is something that we experience but cannot touch; it becomes part of our memory, but often contains fantastical and un-realistic scenarios that would not be possible in reality. Writing about the experience of *The Library at Night*, Marina Gross-Hoy (a doctoral student in Museum Studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal) states that it was: "one of the coolest exhibitions I've been to lately, maybe ever."[64] On her blog, she reviews the exhibition with an explicit eye towards understanding spectatorship, using the language of poetics to describe how the "beautiful, atmospheric space" of the virtual reality enabled transportation to the real and imaginary libraries. It was "a pleasure and delight to discover each one," she writes, as she describes her awe, laughter, tears, and the way that "[t]hese experiences felt strangely personal, like they had been my own discoveries."[65] In all of these social media posts, the authors take up the language of the show—of immersivity, journeys, and discovery; however, the fact that they took time to post about the work at all demonstrates personal stakes, as they excitedly shared their experience with others.[66] There is very little writing about spectatorial experience from this first-person perspective, and as I just noted, often these social media posts replicate the language of the exhibition event, making it difficult to untangle the thoughts and feelings of the spectator from what the event told them they would/ should feel. It is also important to note that social media posts are always self-selective,

---

[63] See: @celine._.bs, Instagram post, 9 February 2019, trans. Melanie Wilmink, accessed 3 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/Btpy7A0nn6o; @maiekle, Instagram post, 7 September 2019, trans. Melanie Wilmink, accessed 3 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/B2HfNi-IWkZ; @carlossalkmin, Instagram post, 20 December 2018, accessed 3 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BrnDnpAgO0v.

[64] Marina Gross-Hoy, "Library at Night," Imaginibus: Creativity in Museums blog, 9 May 2016, accessed 3 November 2019, http://www.imaginibus.com/blog/library-night?rq=library.

[65] Ibid.

[66] The reviews I found were largely positive. Only one user noted that the VR headsets made them nauseous (an experience I shared)—a common side-effect to the current technology of VR headgear. @fab.guedon, comment reply on @fab.guedon Instagram post, 19 November 2017, trans. Melanie Wilmink, accessed 14 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bbrpos5BdLo.

where people will only post publicly about something that produced strong positive or negative feelings. Social media is also limited to users who have subscribed to, and make regular, public use of those forums. Despite this, the posts open a small window into spectator experiences from global audiences—in this case, ranging from Quebec to France and Brazil.

The question of experience looms large in this research project, tinting everything within it and yet encompassing a scale so large that it becomes impossible to pin down accurately. The position I take in this document performs the same odd straddling—attempting to simultaneously describe the unique specificity of my own experience, knowing that I cannot speak for all viewers—and yet trying to find some sort of universality that provides tools for theorists, curators, artists, and viewers. I could have approached the idea of experience in a more quantitative way, running interviews and surveys about specific artworks, or by drawing on reviews, attendance records, or other spectatorship data, but I do not believe that would provide insight into what experience feels like, and how it affects the spectator's encounter with the work. Art takes time to process, and aesthetic experience often exists as embodied thinking-feeling outside of language. I struggle enough to find my own words for it, so how was I to ask a stranger to encapsulate their encounter with a work?

In the rest of this chapter, I introduce a philosophical framework for spectatorial experience that outlines a general theory of how the human encounter with art objects unfolds, while simultaneously tracing the material and contingent conditions of subjective experience. The push and pull between the theoretical (spectatorship as an abstract concept) and the individual specifics of encounter (that varies from person to person) allows me to posit how artists construct spectatorial experience while enabling the unique ways that viewers forge personal connections to art. I apply these broader theories to close readings of case studies,

which then reveals the particular materials and constructs that supported my meaning-production. While I acknowledge that my own memory and interests do not apply to all viewers, deploying my own experience alongside more general theory and research into the artwork reveals least a few of the conditions that produce spectatorial effects. By finding the points where spectatorial subjectivity meets the constructed form of the artwork, this dissertation aims to provide tools that are more broadly applicable to other artworks and aesthetic situations.

The spectator's consciousness is the most changeable feature in the aesthetic experience. The art object generally remains stable, so it is the viewer's own history, interests, and personality that alter meaning within the aesthetic encounter. Below I will introduce two philosophical theories: one that lays out the conditions for the aesthetic experience and the other that establishes the conditions of human perception and knowledge-production. Together, these historical theories provide a way to think about experience as something that intertwines both the personal consciousness of the viewer and the physical conditions that impinge on that viewer. Through this tension, my dissertation expands spectatorship research to deal with the specific and the universal at the same time. It recognizes which elements of experience can be constructed and outlines some of the ways that the individual has agency within the encounter. By tracing some of these entry points, my research highlights how an artwork either enables or prevents subjective relation-building with the work. It is my position that artworks that provide more entry points for a broader range of viewing subjects enables more diverse viewers to engage with the work. This supports a better understanding of how variations in race, gender, sexuality, cultural upbringing, and other individual factors affect the experience of spectatorship.

My writing investigates moments where spectatorship turned against itself, so that viewers might see themselves seeing and recognize the places where their experience operates in

tension with the staging of the artwork. At the same time, this performance of spectatorship is still enacted, so that the viewer simultaneously participates in, and observes, the action. This action always operates somewhere between personal, embodied experience and abstract thinking, historiography, and language. Although this metaphor draws on a binary positioning of the body and the mind as being close and distant, it is crucial to point out that perception in fact always consists of both mental and physical labour simultaneously. Proximity is utilized not necessarily to describe the kinds of knowledge that occurs in the mind or the body, but rather the viewer's ability reflect on perception and find appropriate language to communicate it.[67] Where bodily knowledge operates in close proximity, reactions and ideas occur quickly and with less distinction from one another—distance in both space and time enables more abstract consideration. For my purposes, closeness references the spectator's feeling of "presence" or implication in the meaning-making process, and distance the ability to step outside of experience to look back and recognize the systems that construct that feeling. Here, the body and the mind are no less critical than one another, they simply understand the world in different, but interconnected, ways. At the same time, both processes are contingent on the viewing subject's unique history and may, or may not, culminate in "truthful" or stable meaning.

The intertwining of the spectator's physical and conceptual presence in the aesthetic space turns attention towards a multi-sensory way of understanding the world, that brings together the here and now of the encounter with all of the discursive and conceptual baggage that affects perception and meaning-production. Through this focus, I expand on a body of spectatorial research that has struggled to deal with the spectator as both an individual and part of

[67] See: Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, And Contemporary Art* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005), 25-26.

a broader collective audience that is supposed to make meaning similarly. Using installation-art as the central focus of my case studies, I am also able to highlight the ways these viewers receive multi-sensory inputs and must draw on different disciplinary contexts to engage a variety of diverse (often contradictory) histories and conventions. This complexity means that it is unlikely any one viewer will have all of the information necessary to recognize all the applicable traditions, and there will always be ruptures or gaps in their ability to make meaning. The next few chapters determine the gaps and slippage points that enable the spectator to insert themselves into a relationship with the case-study artworks. By recognizing the importance of these interstices or disrupted perceptions, my dissertation establishes a framework to conceptualize a new kind of aesthetic viewing—one that relies on the tension between recognition and unfamiliarity, as well as presence and criticality.

Philosophy bolsters the discussion of aesthetic experience because it similarly uses metaphors to understand processes of perception and operates with a certain acceptance of paradox. The density of philosophical thinking seems to get at the richness of human experience, while introducing images that can function as models for practice. I realize that the idea of philosophy as having practical applications is somewhat laughable, since it is often associated with jargon-laden texts that spend more time pondering the nature of abstract concepts than the implications of those concepts on the real world; however, one might make the same argument for art. The philosophy of experience has long shaped the cultural reception of art, from Plato's insistence that art—as mimesis—is always untruthful, to Kantian influence on Modernist ideas of autonomy and distanciated viewing, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's injection of embodiment

into Minimalist and process-based traditions.[68] When thinking about art and experience, however, John Dewey's appropriately named book *Art as Experience* makes the most logical starting point. Originating in 1931 as a series of lectures for Harvard University, Dewey's text outlines many ideas about art that seem obvious today—including the idea that art can intertwine with everyday life, and that art theory often ignores the event of the spectator's aesthetic encounter in favour of historiographic and discursive meaning-production. The shift towards spectatorship is important because theorists who favour external factors over human experience, he writes, risk losing the vitality and relevance of the artwork to contemporary viewers; this results in a failure to understand pleasure and other emotional impacts.[69] Like myself, Dewey was interested in the ways that theory and context shapes our understanding of art, in a way that we often do not recognize as unnatural. He wrote these essays during historic disruptions of the conventions and expectations of what art could be, after the major interventions of Cubism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Dadaism, and as America was struggling to justify art expenditures within the depths of the Great Depression.[70] As such, his ideas reflect an interest in how changing forms of art supported important aesthetic (and pedagogical) effects. I take up Dewey's definition of aesthetic experience in a time where art looks drastically different from what he would have recognized, and which has often turned specifically toward spectatorship as a key part of its physical and conceptual form. By applying his broad conception of aesthetic

---

[68] Plato, "excerpt from Book VII," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, trans. Robin Waterfield, ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 64-67; Plato, "excerpt from Book X," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, trans. Robin Waterfield, ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 67-80; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 2nd ed., trans. James Creed Meredith, ed. Nicholas Walker (London: Oxford U.P., 2007); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (Abingdon: Routledge, 1962).

[69] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 10.

[70] Stewart Buettner, "John Dewey and the Visual Arts in America," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 33.4 (1975), accessed 3 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.2307/429650.

experience as based in relational exchanges between art object and spectator, my case-study analyses provide insight into art experiences that destabilize conventional disciplinary knowledge and spectatorial expectations.

What draws me to Dewey's work is the practical nature of his ideas, where his philosophy of pragmatism connects philosophical concepts with real-world situations. He delineates the external factors that influence meaning-making in the artwork (their prestige, monetary value, criticism, history, etc.) from the event of encountering work, whereby art is not just the object but "…what the product does with and in experience…," and then tries to understand exactly what experience looks and feels like.[71] He explains that experience is the result of an organism's reciprocal action with its environment in a way that transforms such interactions into complex and self-aware communication; it is not just action, but rather action with specific communicative intent.[72] Because of this conscious outcome—and the reflective process that nurtures it—experience becomes a temporal event that is bracketed out from the usual flow of time. In noticing and purposefully directing action, the perceiver takes note of the start and end of experience as it is distinguished from the rest of their perceptions, which either flow forward without notice or are part of a separate experience. In my earlier description of Lepage's *Library at Night*, scheduled start and end times bound the encounter as a performance—facilitated by security guards and docents, which ran for a set duration before spectators were pulled out of the virtual space and back into the real world—and clearly delineated the aesthetic temporality from the everyday environment of the Grand Bibliothèque. Similarly, the spatial boundaries between the Bibliothèque and Lepage's library were maintained

[71] Ibid., 3.

[72] Ibid., 22.

by the separate architectures, which designated the fictional library as special and worthy of a specific kind of attention. This distinction of aesthetic space from the everyday echoes the conventions of the art gallery, the cinema, and the performance theatre, which are set aside exclusively for aesthetic activity. It is in setting aside space and time for aesthetic contemplation that the artwork, exhibition space, and spectators all make meaning together.

Although Dewey was writing in a time where the material form of artworks were more stable (square paintings in a frame, sculptures as objects on pedestals, or as monuments etc.), by the time he wrote *Art as Experience* in 1934, Modernist artists were already in the midst of reconceiving aesthetic forms.[73] With this context in mind, Dewey notes that the physical form of the artwork is not what categorizes it as art. Instead, it is art because an artist has created a situation where the object resists incorporation into the usual flow of events. The object is set within—and acts to produce—a separate time and space for "enjoyed receptive perception."[74] Key here is the word "enjoyed," because Dewey establishes early on that emotion plays an important role in setting aside this reflective time and space. He explains that "[e]motion is the conscious sign of a break… The discord is the occasion that induces reflection."[75] As a strong internal reaction, emotion pulls us out of the flow of time, creating a peak that demarcates a moment. Artists play with these swells of tension, creating rhythm and emphasis that draws attention to the interaction between the viewer and their surroundings.[76]

---

[73] Duchamp introduced *Fountain* in 1917, El Lissitszky's 1927 *Proun Room* is often-cited as a precursor to installation art, and Dalí's similarly acclaimed interventions as part of the 1938 Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme would take place four years after the publication of *Art as Experience*. Dewey was also writing during the time of the Bauhaus and their reimagining of the separate disciplines as 'Gesamtkunstwerk,' or a 'total work of art'.

[74] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 48.

[75] Ibid., 15.

[76] Ibid.

Importantly, rather than directly expressing the artists' intention, Dewey notes that successful artworks organize material forms to show the viewer something different about our everyday environment. Art defamiliarizes the world to reveal the already expressive nature of the objects around us, and it does this through the spectator's experience with the art object. As such, the aesthetic experience lies not in the material of the artwork, but how it brackets off time and space for the viewer to contemplate it as something that holds meaning. For this relationship to function properly, the artwork establishes its own artistic unity (a material or disciplinary language) that functions within the frame of the exhibition context (the gallery). The viewer must also purposely bracket off attention to reflect on the object within that context—co-producing meaning with the work. Viewers who look at the work academically (through familiar conventions), learnedly (with a historical lens), and sentimentally (with pure emotion) rely too much on the "idea" of the artwork to transform the interaction itself into new meaning, because it is a one-way flow of information.[77] In this way, Dewey makes a cogent argument for the idea that the viewer's presence with the work should operate alongside more discursive forms of understanding, without relying entirely on impulsive personal (emotive) reactions.

Art as Experience is striking as an early consideration of art as a kind of knowledge-production that incorporates both the mind and the body simultaneously. It also provides a complex approach to understanding experience as the individual subject *in the world,* organized in both time and space.[78] He calls attention to human perception not just as a reaction to stimuli, or to the conceptual workings of the mind, but as an intertwining of the two that shapes—and is shaped by—the world. For Dewey, our experience is not limited to the time of the encounter, but

[77] Ibid., 104-108.

[78] Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* is often held up as a key text for thinking about the body's experience in the world but was first published in 1945—more than a decade after *Art as Experience*.

also carried forward as part of future experiences as well. These are ideas that have contemporary resonances in neuroscience and pedagogy, and it is valuable to recover them as venerable ideas about how art means. This is also what distinguishes the interdisciplinary objects in this dissertation as artworks—not the form that they take or the conventions that shape them—but the fact that viewers go into a temporal and spatial encounter expecting a transformative experience. Dewey's ideas help us to outline a few key elements that comprise such a situation.

To enrich these ideas, I go back even further to late 19th and early 20th century French philosopher Henri Bergson and his book *Matter and Memory* (1896).[79] Although Dewey's ideas seem to have clear precedents in Bergson's work, he makes no mention of such an influence in *Art as Experience*. Bergson sets out a compelling argument for the workings of human perception that stands in opposition to the influential philosophy of mind-body dualism, where philosophers distinguished the activity of the mind and the body as separate operations.[80] There are value judgements inherent in this dualism, where embodied experience was often understood to be less important than language-based discourse. Where some dismissed the material world entirely (Berkeley), others positioned the body merely as a receptor for the actual work of the mind in constructing knowledge (Descartes), or held the knowledge gained from reason as much more "truthful" than that gained from the flawed and subjective body (Kant).[81] Granted, these philosophers are long dead, and their philosophies have been discarded or evolved into a more a

---

[79] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*.

[80] Such as René Descartes (who determined that the mind—or soul—and the body were different essences that were distinct from one another yet connected. Despite this, he still valued reason and logic as the only way to access knowledge). See also: George Berkeley (a proponent of "immaterialism," which determined that material objects did not exist beyond the mind of the perceiver), and Emmanuel Kant (who supported the idea that aesthetic judgement should be "disinterested" or separated from subjective desire).

[81] See: George A. Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) in the Alex Catalogue of Electronic Texts, accessed 13 September 2019, http://infomotions.com/etexts/philosophy/1700-1799/berkeley-treatise-177.htm; René Descartes, *Meditations*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951); Kant, *Critique of Judgement*.

contemporary context. The rise of phenomenology in the early 20th century critiqued many of the value judgements inherent in the mind/body division, and there has been a recent embrace of affect theory in psychology, art, and the other social sciences to account for the qualitative knowledge gained from the body.[82]

Despite this, the value judgements that are associated with knowledge gained from the mind versus the body seem to sustain. Each of these disciplines continues to value conceptually-driven and "unbiased" knowledge-making, which seems to be able to produce experiences of truthful meaning. This includes data collection through quantitative measurements, interviews, surveys, or reliance on a canon of writing that has been largely verified by the field. Although these methods are reliable, within this context the actions and experiences of one person is not enough to meet a scientific burden of universal applicability. Additionally, knowledge that cannot be objectively reproduced (i.e. emotions, sensation, or memory) is often deemed a lesser quality than abstracted data collection, theoretical discourse, archival research, or logical reasoning. In each of these disciplines, textual analysis usually legitimates knowledge—necessarily so, since this is what enables the communication of ideas from one body to another. Embodied knowledge is limited to a single body, in a present situation, where instinctual

[82] Affect is used here, and throughout this dissertation, to describe the way the world impinges on the viewer, as part a process of relationality and lived experience. Brian Massumi describes affect as an infolding of contexts, volitions and cognitions that contribute to a feedback loop of becoming. This can include literally tactile as well as proprioceptive stimuli in addition to the conceptual and emotional communications that pass from one subject to another. See: Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 30. See also: Theresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Laura Cull, "Affect in Deleuze, Hijikata, and Coates: The Politics of Becoming-Animal in Performance," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 189-203; Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). On affect theory in art, see: Bennett, *Empathic Vision*; Henriette Huldisch et al., *An Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art* (New York Prestel, 2017); finally, affect in other areas: Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley, *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

reactions and understanding of the world are not communicable by language until they are filtered through mental processes. This has created a situation where embodied knowledge is often ignored or subsumed by knowledge that has been refined to the point where it can be communicated textually—the body's part in this meaning-making is forgotten, and only the text remains. I maintain that there is value in embodied knowledge. Although it cannot speak for every person, it can convey individual effects and communicate a diversity of opinion that mass data collection obliterates. By turning towards the individual body, and the ways that such a body makes meaning in the world, it becomes possible to return value to outlying experiences, and interpretations that are not represented by looking at spectatorship as a unified mass. Again, this does not mean that my interpretations of the following artworks will function identically for all viewers, but my close-readings may offer predictive insights that enable discussion of a broader range of spectatorial experience.

This digression serves to underscore one of the issues that this dissertation aims to solve through its close-reading of experience, and highlights the special contributions that Bergson makes to this work. Writing in the late 1800s, his work merges enlightenment scientific advancements with philosophy to construct an argument that values both the mind and body equally as part of an interdependent relationship. In the introduction to the book, he specifically calls out the problems of mind/body dualism, noting that the conception of perception as some combination of the mind and the body is "simply that of common sense" that connects psychology and physiology.[83] Whereas much of philosophical thinking segregated the physical world from human consciousness, Bergson uses individual memory to bridge the gap between body and spirit. In this book, he sets out a cogent argument for how humans receive input from

[83] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, vii.

the physical world, which we then interpret through our past experiences. While contemporary neuroscience offers a more detailed, biologically-based account of how perception occurs, Bergson's approach to perception is intriguing because of the evocative way that it places thinking and experience on equal footing.[84] As with Dewey's writing about aesthetic experience, the concrete manner in which Bergson describes the relational activity between body and mind ensures his ideas can be applied to real-world situations, and is simultaneously poetic enough that his notions have been taken up by subsequent philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze, Brian Massumi, Erin Manning, as well as media theorists like Laura U. Marks.[85] Although both Dewey and Bergson's ideas are dated, the application of their theories by these contemporary scholars demonstrates continued relevance. Bergson and Dewey's ideas offer entry points into the phenomenology of ephemeral media experiences that do not always seem to share literal time and space with the viewer. By exploring the intersection of these theories of aesthetic experience, live viewing subjects, and constructed art objects, it becomes possible to discern some of the mutable relational networks that shift and transform in each new aesthetic encounter.

For Bergson, breaking down the barriers between body and mind—between matter and memory—is the key to understanding human perception. Recall that Dewey's notion of experience hinged on the segments of time that established a reflective relationship between the spectator and artwork. By adding the element of memory to this scenario, it becomes possible to

---

[84] For a very lucid overview, see neuroscientist Anil Seth discuss the process of perception in the following short video: Anil Seth and Future of StoryTelling, "The Neuroscience of Perception," Youtube, last modified 14 September 2018, accessed 1 November 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMjvjw_LRHU. Alternatively, see: Anil Seth, "The Cybernetic Bayesian Brain - From Interoceptive Inference to Sensorimotor Contingencies," *Open MIND*, eds. Thomas K. Metzinger and Jennifer M. Windt (Frankfurt: MIND Group, 2015): n.p., accessed 1 November 2019, www.doi.org/10.15502/9783958570108; Min-Suk Kang et al., "Visual working memory contaminates perception," Psychonomic Bulletin & Review 18, no. 5 (October 2011): 860-869, accessed 1 November 2019, www.doi.org/10.3758/s13423-011-0126-5.

[85] Deleuze, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*; Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*; Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy (Technologies of Lived Abstraction)* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012); Marks, *Skin of the Film*.

narrow down how to produce that reflective activity: it must call upon some element of the spectator's past experience. It could do this broadly by requiring some knowledge of art history or disciplinary conventions, but it can also do it by making space for more personal connections. *Matter and Memory* opens with the idea that the seemingly antagonistic ideologies of realism and idealism similarly conceive of perception as a means to acquire knowledge about the world. To reconcile these disparate approaches, he explains that the brain facilitates relational action where external stimuli and interior memory constantly impinge on one another. Neither the mind or the exterior world can exclusively provide perfect knowledge; instead, it is always negotiated between the stimuli that surrounds us and our internal processes that selectively filter inputs. Through the interaction between the two, our minds build meaning based on our individual cognitive development and personal memory. In a sense, the body operates as an interface for exterior perception to filter through our subjective experiences.

Within this paradigm, conscious thought develops through the durational play between incoming perception and existing ideas that manifest as memory. If placed on a scale, Pure Perception would hold one limit end—where external inputs exist in purely material forms—and Pure Memory is situated in the opposite position—as the intangible human spirit. Within these limit-cases, there would be no duration because the pure form of the object would be immediately obvious—the object would not need any contextual reference, and the spirit could exist without any material substrate. Since they are ideals, they have a single essential form that is unchangeable.[86] In reality, no such thing exists—my personality and subjective consciousness is always influenced by my experiences in the material world and I interpret the things around

[86] One might compare this to Plato's ideal forms, or to Clement Greenberg's notion that abstract painting creates an effect of instantaneous unity for the spectator.

me based on my previously-garnered knowledge. Because of this, Bergson frames the synthesis of these two polarities as a kind of "concrete perception," which references how things work in actual human experience. In this mode, viewers compare external perceptual inputs to their existing memories in order to recognize the input and then form a reaction to it. For Bergson, this reaction is the culmination of perception, because the body has filtered the information and determined a response to it. Although it may not seem like a radical idea today, his articulation of perception materializes the process of thinking, articulates how we arrive at ideas in relation to the world around us, and sets the stage for that process to be taken up as malleable artistic matter.

The bodily or conscious reaction to the world is often the only external sign that something has happened, so Bergson also places these reactions on a temporal continuum from instantaneous to durational that runs parallel to the polarity of Pure Perception (embodied materiality) and Pure Memory (mindful consciousness). To support this claim, he describes the instinctual reactions of animals, where:

> the more immediate the reaction is compelled to be, the more must perception resemble a mere contact; and the complete process of perception and of reaction can then hardly be distinguished from a mechanical impulsion followed by a necessary movement. But in the measure that the reaction becomes more uncertain, and allows more room for suspense, does the distance increase at which the animal is sensible of the action of that which interests it.[87]

[87] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 22.

In other words, a perceptual input with a shortened durational exposure results in an instinctual bodily impulse—we prick our finger on a needle and quickly pull it away because it is the most logical response to that situation—whereas a longer durational exposure to that same stimulus opens up more potential reactions—someone being tattooed must control their initial impulse to move away, to consider the pain and the pleasure that is interwoven with it, their reasons for placing themselves in that situation, as well as their hope for what will happen after the process is completed. There is an entirely different response to the stimulus—one which engages the experiencer's memories and personal history to make sense of the perceptual input. Leveraging this connection between the scale of duration and the complexity of personal interpretation means that time itself becomes a key element that can be modified within the aesthetic context.

Duration extends the potential reactions to a perceptual input; however, it cannot operate alone, and for truly complex consciousness to occur, there must also be a sense of physical positioning in relation to the stimulus. If we follow Bergson's analogy of the animal's perceptual process, a close encounter with a stimulus can be a matter of life and death: stepping on a snake provokes a limited set of potential reactions, whereas hearing a hiss in the bushes ahead may increase the options. This distance also enables the perceiver to consider the meaning of the stimulus beyond its immediate consequences—for example, what kind of snake it is, does it belong in that place, how does it normally react to humans, or even what are the cultural associations of the snake? Mentally, the more distanced and durational the contemplation, the more memories the perceiver can compare with the input, leading to more numerous, complicated, and perhaps even abstracted reactions. Where an instantaneous reaction does not allow for extended contemplation, the reaction is instinctual and uncomplicated: yes or no, stay or run. Being sensible of action from a distance also means the ability to predict potential

reactions within the encounter, and to extrapolate a variety of reactionary scenarios—something which is often associated with higher-order thought processes. Knowledge is developed through both space and time in what Bergson terms a "zone of indetermination," that opens up the possibilities for both the meaning of the original stimulus and the eventual reaction to it.[88] This zone is created through the process of comparing perceptual inputs to our memories, which contain all of the things that we have learned about the world, including the multiple meanings and contexts attached to those pieces of knowledge and our understanding of what kinds of reactions are appropriate, or inappropriate. Memory is how we piece together information, comparing something unfamiliar to past experience in order to develop a new, or more nuanced, understanding. The more duration is available for this comparison, and the more abstract thinking is performed, the more likely it is that there will be numerous complex choices for a response to the situation. This consolidation of memory with perception is what Bergson labels "attentive recognition."[89]

By placing the spectator in the middle of a clearly-fictional and constructed aesthetic scenario, Lepage's *Library at Night* reproduces reality through multi-sensory immersivity and creates a tension between the aesthetic and the real. The production frames the time and space of the aesthetic environment so that the viewer must play out their experience in real-time as well as the condensed and fractured aesthetic temporalities of theatre and cinema. The viewer could closely examine their environment to appreciate the detailed, realistic design of the space, but that same close-looking also produced recognition of its immersivity as an illusion. Although the library-room entryway clearly mimicked an ordinary library space, it was the window out into

[88] Ibid., 23.

[89] Ibid., 120.

the rainy garden that was particularly striking because the spatial dimensions no longer matched the exterior of the building. There were no gardens outside of the Grande Bibliothèque, and it certainly had not been raining when I walked in off the street. Upon seeing the rainy window, I had to reconcile the illusion with what I had seen in the real-space outside of that room. My memory clashed with what I was currently experiencing, to produce a rupture where I recognized my double position as both a participant in the illusion, while remaining an aesthetic spectator that was supposed to witness from an exterior, critical position. The window is a very simple example of Bergson's process of attentive recognition, and it did not necessary extend the duration for a long period of time. Yet, this gesture of enfolding the spectator while simultaneously disrupting the illusion is something that played out in various ways throughout the *Library at Night*, as well as the other case studies examined in later chapters. Each of these artworks ruptured the smooth interplay between environment and memory by manipulating durational exposure to the material and immaterial forms of the moving-image installations.

What makes Bergson's ideas particularly relevant to the study of media installation, is the positioning of the body as neither wholly experiential nor critical, but rather in a constant flow between the two points. Historically, cinema spectatorship has been positioned as a passive activity, where the viewer's body sits static in the dark, waiting for the bombardment of images to affect them; the body is effaced in favour of an exclusively mental activity. Spectatorship theory in cinema has argued that these images structure unconscious identification, whereby the patriarchal and capitalist ideology of mainstream cinema overrides individual identity, always positioning the viewer as holding a masculine, desiring gaze that consumes the bodies staged on screen as objects. The gallery has also been seen as staging this consumption through a constantly mobile perspective that emphasizes the body's distance and difference from the

artwork. Rather than allowing the images to wash over our consciousness, the gallery is supposed to provoke contemplation, and the visibility of the spectatorial body is held up as evidence of this dynamic. Criticality is assumed to be the binary opposite of embodiment, with no space between. This dynamic also establishes an assumption that all spectatorial encounters with an object should be similar, refusing the fluctuating and contingent experience that is inherent within individuals who look at art. Additionally, that fluctuation is also shaped by the exhibition environments, what the spectator saw and did before encountering the artwork, and what they do afterwards. All of these elements affect meaning-making with an artwork, and Bergson's understanding of perception brings some of these elements to the foreground so that they might be valued alongside the more critical and conventional ways of understanding art spectatorship. With Bergson's thinking, complex reactions are not determined by either our physical state or the quality/quantity of what we already know, but rather by the disruption of immediate impulses—altering the duration and proximity of experience through mis-recognition that forces the perceiver to create new memories. The following chapters will put this theory of perception into practice, alongside the spatial, temporal, and subjective modes of viewing that are produced by the gallery, cinema, and stage.

By applying Bergson's ideas to the case studies in the next few chapters, spectatorship can be approached in a way that disrupts the binary of embodied or mental. Rather than ignoring the immersive potential of the cinema in favour of contemplative light of the gallery, it is possible to bring them together to examine their liminal situation. A more nuanced reading is possible here: one that questions the assumptions that often structure the spectator's relationship with the image in these spaces. Criticality does not have to be associated solely with the distanced, supposedly objective quality of the gallery, and the body does not have to be

exclusively the zone of the unknowable and unreliable subjective perspective (recalling my earlier discussion of the value judgements of mind/body dualism). In addition to this, the introduction of memory provides a concrete way for us to visualize how the spectator slots themselves into a relationship with the art object. If John Dewey's explanation holds, the spectator's awareness of their own reflective processes is part of what marks out the space and time of aesthetic experience. Artworks that draw attention to the spectator's relational "conversation" with the artwork most successfully bracket out the aesthetic experience. For Bergson, the play between memory and external input determines a rich perception, and in the same mindset, awareness of this process (or attentive recognition) occurs by stretching out the duration of the encounter, and by multiplying the potential reactions to that input. Combining these ideas, it seems logical that one of the key ways to produce an aesthetic experience for a spectator requires the artwork to make space for their individual experiences and memories within the larger aesthetic unity. In this way, the spectator performs the labour of perception.

In order to give the spectator access, the artwork must make space for subjective experience within the larger artistic situation. The flow of a subject's unfolding relationship with an object is only unique and contingent if the outcome is not entirely determined—or at least holds multiple possibilities simultaneously. While both Bergson and Dewey establish broad phenomenological schemas that enable my intervention through subjective experience, these authors were writing in a time where the idea of universal experience was shaped by their own lived-experience as educated white men with relative privilege.[90] This perspective often

[90] This is not to marginalize the relevance of their own lived experiences; Bergson's Jewish heritage likely affected his subjective position, as did Dewey's middle-class upbringing in the turbulent economics and racial tensions of post Civil War America. See: Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard Leonard, "Henri Bergson," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, last updated 21 March 2016, accessed 5 November 2019, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bergson; Jay Martin, *The Education of John Dewey: A Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

presumes the same experience for everyone, and lacks direct discussion of how these ideas might implicate women, people of colour, or other historically-marginalized identities. In particular, Dewey's discussion of aesthetic experience fails to account for the level of education and financial privilege needed for a spectator to encounter an art object and understand the conventions and histories that shape their meaning-production with the object.[91] In the next section, I introduce the writings of Laura U. Marks, who deploys many of these ideas specifically towards intercultural, diasporic filmmaking, which leverages the aesthetic relationship between object and spectator to bring to light stories and experiences of individuals who have often experienced marginalization because of race, class, sexuality, or gender. By interweaving Marks' ideas with that of Dewy and Bergson, it becomes possible to imagine the specific ways that the universalist theories of spectatorial experience might make space for spectatorial diversity.

As noted previously, duration enriches Bergson's concrete perception by increasing the complexity of the eventual reaction. For Bergson, time is the key element that produces this process, but that is not the only way to enable the spectator to insert themselves into a relationship with an art object. Film theorist Laura U. Marks describes the way that experimental film supports "gaps" in the image, that are at once time based and also material.[92] In her writing, she explains how experimental film forces spectators to reconsider their habitual assumptions of the world by making photographic images unrecognizable. In disrupting the verisimilitude of the image, the artwork requires spectators to extend the duration of their exposure and work to compare what they're seeing to their own memories in order to build up a more complex, and

[91] He does, however, point out the influence of European museums as monuments of imperialism and capital, and implies that this puts art out of the reach of "everyday life"—and presumably those people who do not benefit from, or regularly think about the implications of money, colonialism, and politics on art—but does not specify further. See: Dewey, *Art as Experience,* 7-10.

[92] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*.

subjective understanding. Marks' book *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* considers the ways that experimental film enables marginalized histories to recover what is normally effaced by the mainstream culture. She reads through Gilles Deleuze and Henri Bergson to examine how these films construct visual aesthetics that circulate personal memories alongside documented history, while intermingling embodied materiality and critical representation. One of her key examples includes the film *Lumumba: The Death of a Prophet* (1992) by Raoul Peck. In this film, the filmmaker documents the political career of Patrice Lumumba (a Congolese politician assassinated in a Belgian-backed coup). A lack of available archival footage and official documentation resulted in the filmmaker having to incorporate images and narrative about his own childhood alongside other recollections so that he could supplement his exploration of Lumumba's story.[93]

Through this example, and others, Marks builds an argument about the tactile nature of images, which conveys ideas that are incommensurable with language.[94] Experience can only ever be partially represented in discourse, since it must be translated into language in order to communicate ideas from one person to another. The knowledge stored in the body cannot operate in this way; as such, it always contains an element of un-representability, particularly with regards to narratives of diasporic or non-Western stories that were historically underrepresented in the archives of colonizers. Intercultural films, Marks writes, often reveal this lost knowledge by juxtaposing official histories and private memories, creating an interplay in the resulting distance between viewpoints.[95] These gaps may be materialized in non-diegetic or absent images and sound, and other barely legible representations. By bringing forward or

[93] Ibid., 34-36, 43-46.

[94] Ibid., 29-31.

[95] Ibid., 28-40.

revealing the gaps between what is "true" and what is "known," these films create a space for thinking differently, and for acknowledging what has been over-written. Marks applies this theory to articulate material gaps in cinematic images that enable the visibility of diasporic artists of colour and narratives that are not recognized by mainstream cultural knowledge.

She lays out a compelling argument for how spectatorial perception functions in relationship to these images, where even viewers without direct personal connection to the content can insert themselves into the missing places, or at least recognize the instability of the ideas and subjective positions being represented. By underscoring the inaccessibility of "truth," Marks deploys Bergson's attentive recognition to show the viewer their own processes of forming knowledge. Her research makes space for intercultural films in spectatorial discourse and enables a way to think about how varied subjects make place for themselves within the more stable object of the moving image. *The Skin of the Film* demonstrates the variety of entry points available to diverse audiences who may not have training in the traditional grounding of art history or other disciplinary practices that usually structure meaning-production with artworks. Marks values the subjective in addition to learned discourse—the body alongside the mind—an idea that resonates with Dewey's conception of art as a kind of pedagogy. Yet, she also limits her discussion to single-channel films created by, and for, diasporic audiences. I believe that her ideas can actually be leveraged more broadly because she describes a framework to identify how individual experience is mutable within an artwork. By emphasizing gaps as an essential part of any sort of meaning-making, which trace a boundary between what is known, and what is unknown, I am able to determine how the viewer is implicated—and implicates themselves—in the context of the artwork.

These gaps are articulated within a more generalized understanding of spectatorship through Bergson's notion of attentive recognition and Gilles Deleuze's optical image. While attentive recognition is a process of looking closely for an extended time, Deleuze's optical image is one that separated from a chain of causality, or linear progression. It does not make sense, which in turn requires long and close-looking. The image floats without context, isolated and needing the viewer to articulate the connections. Marks writes that because the optical image "…cannot be explained and mobilized into action, [the stimulus] requires the viewer to puzzle over it. The inability to recognize an image encourages us to confront the limits of our knowledge... [the viewer] is forced to search her memory for the virtual images that might make sense of it."[96] Optical images stimulate Bergson's notion of attentive recognition, where the image must be drawn into an extended duration of comparison between the current input and past memories of similar objects or experiences. The longer the durational comparison, the deeper, more complex, and more ambiguous the final representation (or in Bergsonian terms: the reaction) becomes.

What is valuable about Laura U. Marks' work, is that she does not stop at establishing a philosophy of gaps, but also demonstrates what they may look like in the material of actual experimental films. She points out that in many examples of intercultural cinema, spectator emotion seems to be most clearly attached to moments where the images are the thinnest—where drawings, blank leader, voice over, or degraded images clash with official histories.[97] She describes the feeling of dread or exhilaration that comes from replacing archival knowledge with the personal, characterizing the focus on the gap as dangerous and thrilling.[98] The simultaneous

[96] Ibid., 46-47.

[97] Recall that Dewey also pointed to emotion as a key way to produce disruptions that bracket out experience.

[98] Ibid., 72.

existence of both known and unknown creates an unstable ground where “truthful” knowledge and personal perception no longer exist separately, and where both become contingent on the other. What I find particularly exciting about this interplay of voids and visible, is the linkage between literal gaps in the aesthetic object, and Bergson’s gaps in mnemonic perception. If an art object draws attention to gaps in its own material form as conceptually linked to obliterations in memory or archive, and the art object simultaneously centres the spectator in the knowledge-making process, then it is fair to say that the aesthetic gaps also draw attention to deficiencies in the spectator’s understanding, along with the processes that they use to fill the space between images. In the process of attentive recognition, an unrecognizable image is compared to the spectator’s own history of experience so that the viewer can fill holes in the meaning of the art object with their own memories. In this way, we are always implicated in the meaning of the artwork; however, in these cases where artworks draw special attention to those gaps and instabilities of knowledge, our internal processes of perception and meaning-making are revealed as they play out in the duration of experience.

The Library at Night called attention to these gaps through the various disciplinary mechanisms at play in the production. Sculpture shifted out of the recognizable context of the art gallery to present objects that could be touched and interacted with, and that surrounded the spectator in a mimicry of real-world space. The elaborate sculptural environments could also be read as stage-sets, but instead of being separated from the action, the viewer played out a sequence of events alongside the performance of the docent. Finally, both of these elements faded into the background as the spectators immersed themselves into the digital cinema space of the virtual reality headset. Here, the technological device of the headset transformed the scale and screen of cinema into a personal object, locked to our vision and bodies, while still

producing the transportive illusion that is normative for cinema. The cinematic images of the virtual libraries came so close to my eye that the pixelated texture of the screen seemed to touch me, surrounding my vision in a way that incorporated my body into vast, three-dimensional, recorded spaces.

In the Canadian Library of Parliament, I/the spectator/camera stood in front of a woman who held open a massive illustrated book of birds as live birds flitted out of the tome to circle the vaulted ceilings.[99] The live birds were clearly out-of-place in this rare-book library, yet they seemed to come close to my viewing body, twittering all around me. By navigating back to the main menu and selecting a different library, I suddenly transported to the lost library of Alexandria where I found myself situated in a dusty nook that filtered sunlight through diamond-shaped cubbies filled with scrolls. As the sounds of ancient Egypt filtered in from outside, flickering flames appeared and a roaring and crackling fire overwhelmed the space, gobbling up the fragile artifacts in front of me. Despite the clearly artificial animation of the historical fire, I felt close to the experience and heartbroken at the devastating loss of knowledge that continues to plague modern archives and cultural sites of heritage.[100] Through the intersection of the Grande Bibliothèque, the built set-spaces, and the VR libraries, *The Library at Night* produced a rupture in my sense of real and fiction, immersion and distance, which centred my attention on my own body as it interacted with both these virtual and physical environments.

---

[99] The library holds a rare copy of *The Birds of America* (1827-1838) by John James Audubon, that features life-sized hand-coloured etchings on pages almost one metre high. See: CBC News, "The Birds of America digitized by Library of Parliament," *CBC News*, 5 November 2016, accessed 23 October 2019, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/john-james-audubon-birds-library-parliament-digitize-1.3838474.

[100] For instance: the Taliban destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001, the more recent fire in 2018 that devastated the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, and even the slower erosion of public library systems in North America through atrophied funding.

Marks' description of an active viewing experience as structured around gaps of knowledge helps us to understand how spectators find these, and other, entry points into artwork. The work must leave space for the viewer to integrate their memories and experiences, though a durational experience that gives time for that reflection. In some respects, the novelty of the virtual reality technology contributed significantly to these gaps in *The Library at Night*. It was exciting and unusual to be able to step inside a virtual location, which reproduced a sense of bodily presence in a virtual space. The idea of novelty will recur throughout the rest of this text, since making something unrecognizable is at its core a gesture of making something new—or coming across something as-yet-unencountered. Often the idea of novelty is conflated with spectacle in aesthetics, and while I do not discount this connection, Bergson's ideas help to account for the spectatorial draw of the new while enabling rich engagement with the work, rather than simply gaining pleasure from the shock or excitement of novelty. Indeed, this binary positioning is what I aim to disrupt, because the pleasure of novel technology or experiences is deeply intertwined with aesthetic experiences across the disciplines of visual art, cinema, and the stage. By interrogating the boundaries of this novelty, and its effects, I will produce a more complex understanding of what it means to create new and unexpected moments for spectators.

If we can take some of these ideas and apply them to other aesthetic situations, it becomes possible to articulate a variety of tools to deliberately structure these aesthetic gaps. By deploying and revealing spectatorship as a creative material, we can better turn spectatorship against itself, to help viewers see themselves seeing and use the process of attentive recognition to build embodied and discursive knowledge. In the following chapters, I utilize the physical and conceptual forms of the case studies to trace the places where these gaps form. Although some of those gaps were contingent on my own personal experience, as well as the specifics of the

research I completed on the work, many of them were also formed by direct artistic intent and the context of the exhibition space that enveloped the viewing experience. As Bergson explains, no perception exists without the relationship between the subject, the physical form, and the learned cultural context that shapes this dynamic. While Marks demonstrates how aesthetic matter can construct spaces that play with the distance and closeness of subjective perspective, Dewey and Bergson's ideas provide the binding that unifies practice and philosophy. The following chapters will consider how the case-study artworks produce gaps in our experience. This, in turn, draws attention to the bracketing of the time spent with an artwork as a constructed experience. It denaturalizes the external factors and spectatorial labour that contributes to aesthetic meaning-making. In order to do this, we will have to keep in mind several key ideas promoted by both Bergson and Dewey, including:

1. Experience is a product of oscillating attention between the mind (memory) and the body (environmental stimuli).
2. This oscillation is framed by both space and time.
3. Meaning is produced through awareness or reflection on this process.
4. The subject's personal interests and/or emotions determine both what is noticed in the external world, and what it is internally compared to.
5. Making either experience or memory unfamiliar is key to extending the duration of reflection. Therefore, gaps or disruptions play a crucial role in producing an experience that is attentively bracketed out to create new meaning.

These ideas set us up to understand how the following case studies use spectatorship itself as an aesthetic material. The artworks in the following chapters consider how the viewers experience of the "real" is situated in relationship to new ideas/concepts that are introduced by the artwork, as well as how that encounter filters through perception (or the relationship of our memories/past experience with the new stimuli, as it unfolds in time and space). Each of the artworks enacts this relationship differently and their dedicated chapters will showcase how they do this through my own memory, research, and theory.

Finally, it is also important to recognize that while Laura U. Marks lays the groundwork for understanding the spectatorial experience regardless of the content of the films, by focusing her discussion to single-channel films, she limits the application of these ideas to other disciplines. The idea of the gaps, and the way that Marks traces them to the material conditions of single-channel films, provides a concrete touch-stone that lays the groundwork for further exploration of these material conditions in other mediums. If the spectator can insert themselves into gaps or slippages in the moving image, there is no reason that they could not do so in a painting, sculpture, or performance as well. By expanding her ideas to the interdisciplinary and multi-sensory case studies of moving-image installations, my research brings together the spectator's conceptual exchange with the moving image and the literal interactivity that is provided by physical environments.

With the focus on the dualistic relationship between the image and the viewer, Marks also fails to account for the impact of the exhibition space, relationships between nearby art-objects, and the impact of other viewers on the spectator's aesthetic experience. By ignoring the relevance of the exhibition space, Marks fails to develop a holistic cinematic phenomenology. Despite her focus on the viewers body, she retains the cinematic fallacy that the physical

emplacement of the spectator recedes in favour of the projected image in the cinema space. In order to account for these additional impacts on spectatorship, it is crucial to understand the ways that the exhibition space arranges the viewer's body in relationship to the image, and how much attention it creates around the spectator's lived experience. Additionally, if we are to account for interdisciplinary situations, then it is also important to understand how each exhibition space and artistic form carries with it a history of assumptions and conventions. These pre-determined aspects of the aesthetic encounter are embedded in the architectural spaces that stage artworks, as well as the rituals and performances that are expected of spectators in order to participate in that encounter. The phenomenological experience of each of these exhibition contexts is different, and through the next three chapters I will trace the similarities and differences, in order to understand how these intersectional contexts produce the gaps that enable spectators to insert themselves into the aesthetic experience.

Chapter Two: The Space of the White Cube

Our first steps in this journey begin in the white cube, where the ephemeral temporal flows of moving images and performance take on physical form. While the gallery does not have the long history of the theatre space, it makes sense to start investigating here because the gallery has often been a place of disciplinary intersections. Yet, within the supposedly neutral, geometric space, clean walls, and open floorplan of the gallery, the ambiance of visual art exhibition stages even non-art disciplines as "belonging" to the gallery, rather than their original contexts. The gallery frames the object into something "special"—so much so that the renowned artist and author Brian O'Doherty has suggested that the white cube, more than any single artwork, is the archetype of visual art.[101] The material and conceptual forms of the gallery have intrinsically shaped Western ideas of what art is, and how we should interact with it.

Throughout the following chapter, I will interrogate the conditions that are generated by the gallery as an exhibition context and its impact on the spectator's meaning-production. O'Doherty's writing on the ideology of the gallery is a key entry point into this discussion, which enables further exploration using the historical development of gallery architecture and my own analysis of how Montreal-based artist dominique t skoltz disrupts these conventions.[102] While O'Doherty's ideas offer a good starting point for this discussion, I aim to update his ideas for a contemporary context where institutional critique and site-specific artwork have become commonplace. Importantly, O'Doherty primarily introduces the way that the gallery develops

[101] O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 14.

[102] A reminder that I will maintain the artist's desired lower-case style for her name. Additionally, I want to point out that this discussion in relation to skoltz's work enables concrete application of dense philosophical ideas, while also highlighting an artist whose work is not widely recognized. As an established artist in Montreal, skoltz's installation work has been shown at key local institutions, but her international presence is thus-far limited to her film-festival screenings, and there is limited writing about her films or installations. This chapter will contribute essential critical writing and expand the discursive context of her practice.

spatial relationships between spectators and artworks, without addressing the complexity of its temporal and social conventions. I propose that while the gallery still prioritizes spatial conditions of spectatorship, contemporary artwork like that of dominique t skoltz materialize the ways that objects also act in time with spectators. In this way, gallery objects perform with viewers to co-produce self-reflexive aesthetic experiences. This argument is supported through discussion of performance theory by Peggy Phelan, Josette Féral, Philip Auslander, and Rebecca Schneider, who develop an ontology of "live" performance as a form of co-presence, and Chris Slater, who argues for the agency of non-living objects. Each of these theorists develop their ideas through their own disciplinary-specific lens, and my gesture of bringing them together enables their application to a situation that treads between visual art, cinema, and performance. skoltz's exhibitions illustrate the frictions or paradoxes of seeing the conventions of multiple disciplines simultaneously; as a result, it becomes possible to demonstrate how Bergson's attentive recognition unfolds in the tension between embodied co-presence and the distancing effects of aesthetic discourse and conventions of display.

The display conventions of the gallery prompt viewers to circulate through the open spaces until they encounter an object, at which point they may look—but not touch—and then move on to the next artwork. As such, the space of the gallery abstracts into a series of positions rather than continuum of spectatorial experience. Spectatorship functions through mobility and spatial orientation, where viewers find the best position to look at an artwork before they move onto the next station, as the white space of the gallery cleanses the palate for the next aesthetic experience. During this momentum, the individual spectator controls their own pace and the duration that they spend with an artwork. Although temporal conditions are at play in the gallery—via moving image or audio artworks, the gallery visitor's schedule, tours, and other

events happening in the space—time is not the primary factor that shapes the viewer's relationship to the artwork. Instead, it is the object arrangements, the atmosphere generated by physical displays, and the viewer's selected points of interest that determines their trajectory and meaning-making. Close arrangements might determine a significant thematic grouping that is often reinforced by didactic texts, but space more commonly distinguishes one artwork from another as an empty buffer between destinations. Even in closely-arranged groupings, artworks will rarely touch or otherwise share space. This paradigm produces the reading of each object on its own terms. In the following chapter, I will trace how the gallery came to prioritize this spatial organization, and I will interrogate how Montreal-based filmmaker and visual artist dominique t skoltz disrupts the spatial conditions of the gallery through the introduction of cinema's temporal forms.

Unlike other moving image installations that simply immerse the gallery in cinematic darkness and scale, skoltz brings a more nuanced understanding of cinematic ontology into the space of the white cube. She pushes beyond the darkness, projection, and scale that usually characterizes the "cinematic" in the gallery; rather, she deploys the spatial conventions of the gallery to give physical dimensions to time. Her work treats the gallery as cinematic and performative, in order to change the viewer's perception of both the artwork and the exhibition space that contains it. By merging the cinematic with traditions of sculpture and painting, the artist constructs a situation where the temporal qualities of cinema become embedded in physical objects, giving them the ability to perform as relational agents with the spectator. Here, the viewing situation functions performatively through both the gallery-tradition of Minimalism (acknowledging the relationship between aesthetic and human forms), but also through the performance studies definition whereby performance implicates the spectator's experience of the

real.[103] Through close attention to skoltz's media installations, this chapter will demonstrate how the artist turns against the abstracted space of the gallery by introducing performative temporal relationships between viewers and objects. This, in turn, implicates the spectator in the material conditions of the gallery and produces conceptual gaps that allows the viewer to insert themselves into meaning-production. In other words, by underscoring the viewer's circumnavigation of temporal objects in the gallery space, skoltz turns the viewer's attention back towards their own performance of spectatorship as relational.

The *y2o dualités_* exhibitions took place at Arsenal Gallery's Toronto and Montreal locations respectively in 2015-2016.[104] While both of Arsenal's locations are traditional white-cube galleries, skoltz's installations derive from her short, single-channel film, *y2o* (2013), which had previously screened at film festivals.[105] Within this earlier iteration, the film version of *y2o* played out in cinematic contexts, as part of event-based exhibitions that showcased multiple short films strung together. In a normal cinematic context, audiences gather together in a darkened cinema (or a multi-purpose room modified for cinema-exhibition purposes). The films begin and end at set times, with short films usually strung together sans intermissions. This is entirely different than the gallery-based context where the linear-temporality of the short film functions in isolation, as a loop that individual spectators wander through at will. Yet, even in the single-channel format, skoltz treated the temporally-constrained and linear format of the single-channel film as a malleable material. Throughout the multi-year festival run of the short film, skoltz exhibited two versions *y2o*: one with a 29-minute runtime, and a shortened, 11-minute cut.

---

[103] See: Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture Part I & II," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 222-235; Phelan, "Ontology of Performance," 148.

[104] Note that skoltz formats the show title with an underscore at the end, so I will retain that style.

[105] dominique t skoltz, "y2o_film," dominique t skoltz, n.d., accessed 10 October 2019, www.dominiquetskoltz.com/y2o_film-2.

This variation demonstrates the artist's early manipulation of the body of the film that she would later articulate as sculptural, photographic, performative, and installation forms.[106]

The *y2o* film contains its action in a large tank of water, where a man and a woman float weightlessly as they push and pull against one another. Comprised of nine chapters (01_ link, 02_ nœuds, 03_ nerfs, 04_ bulles de silence, 05_ ce mortel ennui, 06_ SMS, 07_ unlink, 08_ lâcher prise, 09_ empty), the 29-minute film traverses the emotional arc of a romance through the movements of the two performers. As they are under-water for most of the film, there is no dialogue (there is an ambient soundtrack), but the figures' gestural interactions serve to convey the tone of their relationship through each chapter. The water drags their physical movements into slow-motion as the performers' hair and clothing drift around them, and water currents convey motion (and emotion) from one partner to the other. Starting with passionate embraces, the film traces the decay of the relationship until the final moments when the tank drains and the figures are left standing dripping wet and facing—but not touching—one another. In the catalogue for *y2o dualités_*, critic and curator Bernard Schütze explains that throughout the film, water acts as an affective force that connects the figures together. He writes that "…affect is not so much something that is in the protagonists, it is they who are enveloped in it, just as they are submerged in water… tellingly, the binding water is precisely what is drained away in the video installation's final movement titled [empty] in a sequence that signals the relationship's dissolution and a return of each to an individual, solitary sphere."[107] This push and pull between singularity and connectivity is what links the film and all of the artworks that are derived from it.

---

[106] Prior to the exhibitions at Arsenal, skoltz also exhibited iterations of the film as installations; she showed chapter "03_nerfs" (nerves) as a loop at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal's Série Projections: Vidéomusique in 2013 before the final cut of the film was completed, and then later as a six-channel installation at Phi Centre (Montreal) from February 6 to March 16, 2015.

[107] Bernard Schütze, "Resonances of an Affective Field," *y2o catalogue* (Montreal: dominique t skoltz, 2015), 5, http://www.dominiquetskoltz.com/new-page-5.

Where water operates as an affective medium in the film, the gallery installation portrayed this connectivity through the spatial relationships between artworks and the spectator. Air and water became synonymous, to function as felt presence that drew attention to the room between things. The tank of water made it clear that actions on one body rippled through this connecting force to affect the other, and viewers were meant to read similar forces at work in the air and objects contained in the gallery. The space functioned as stage for the live unfolding of relations between the viewer's body, the art objects, and the space of the white cube.

Contextualizing the Architecture of the Gallery

The gallery historically emphasizes spatial positioning above all other qualities, forging relationships between artworks and spectators through layout, object display, lighting, and the gallery architecture. By materializing the relational connections at play in the gallery space, the *y2o dualities_* exhibitions created a gap between the usually dislocated spatial conditions of the gallery and the contingent interrelationships that develop by treating the gallery a performative space and time. Like a short film program, where each component connects to the next and reads as part of a trajectory, skoltz's gallery space performed a continuity between objects, images, ideas, and bodies. Unlike the cinema or theatre audience, where the screen or stage directs attention toward a single focal point, here spectators still wandered around based on their own itinerary, making it difficult to create unified experience. Awareness of other spectators was unavoidable, since their bodies interspersed with the gallery objects; as such, they became legible as additional relational objects in the staged space and time of meaning-production.

skoltz's material explorations of the *y2o* film produced a small selection of installations at the Toronto iteration of *y2o dualités_* (9 September to 3 October 2015), and culminated with

additional sculptural objects and installations at the Montreal location (6 November 2015 to 7 May 2016). Both Arsenal locations are situated in large former warehouses with very few windows. They are in many ways the ideal gallery space, with just enough industrial touches to add charm to the atmosphere but maintaining the concrete floors, white walls, open spaces, and high ceilings that are the epitome of O'Doherty's white cube. Due to the limited windows, lighting in both spaces can be completely controlled, which was used for maximum impact in the Toronto location where skoltz's work was installed in a darkened gallery that highlighted the cinematic luminosity the work. The much larger Montreal location consists of two main open rooms that can be subdivided using temporary walls, with ceiling-mounted fluorescent lights, and a few small skylights that filter soft daylight into the rooms below. In addition to these areas, Arsenal's Montreal gallery also retains a windowless side room for artworks that require darkness.

While there is variation in gallery architecture, the conditions at Arsenal's Toronto and Montreal locations are typical of contemporary art exhibition spaces. The white walls, bright lighting, and open spaces allow for some modification to accommodate different display arrangements but is so standardized that the exhibition architecture itself often fades into the background during spectatorship. The walls, pedestals, lighting, and other display devices make up a seemingly neutral infrastructure that we take for granted as the natural setting for art. It is important to remember, however, that the white cube gallery is a recent construction, emerging only in the 20th century, and its infrastructure is ideologically driven by the cultural influences of the time, including: the expectations that the viewer encounter the work on its own terms with both physical and critical distance, that the work should be treated as a valuable commodity, and that the individual viewer ideally garners some form of enlightenment from the encounter. While

there have been challenges to the material form of the gallery over time, the essential architectural conditions have remained stable, and continue to inflect even interventions with these paradigms of spatial and conceptual distance.

The archetype of the white cube developed from earlier natural history museums that collected and displayed objects as microcosms of broader natural and human systems of order. Driven by enlightenment politics of scientific progress that intertwined with colonial expansion, these predecessors to the gallery functioned as a place to educate the public and build national prestige.[108] The focus on collecting in early museums established initial conventions around the spatial conditions of the gallery, which in turn shaped the spectator's relationship with collections of physical artifacts. In her book *Strategies of Display,* Julia Noordegraaf points out how every museum space operates based on a script that imagines the ideal relationship between spectator and objects.[109] The gallery structures an ideal path of action for the spectator: through the placement of artwork on a wall or pedestal, installation near the lobby or deep in the bowels of the building, by arranging objects in a single space or in a sequence of spaces, or by providing seating, bathrooms, or cafes. These arrangements may be determined by the history of the collection (arrangement in categories or timelines) or thematic narratives, but the viewer's body

[108] There are many authors who rightly point out the gendered, racist, and classist assumptions around how that public is determined, and who decides what is 'good' for them, yet the idea that the museum somehow serves a democratic purpose persists, as well as the notion that it establishes a consistent form of experience for all viewers. See: Emma Barker, "Introduction," in *Contemporary Cultures of Display* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Mieke Bal, "The Discourse of the Museum," in *Thinking About Exhibitions,* ed. Reesa Greenberg et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 201-218; Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," in *Thinking About Exhibitions,* eds. Reesa Greenberg et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 80-112; Ivan Karp and Fred Wilson, "Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums," in *Thinking About Exhibitions,* ed. Reesa Greenberg et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 251-267; Gerald McMaster, "Creating Spaces," in *Thinking About Exhibitions,* ed. Reesa Greenberg et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 191-200; Suzanne Macleod, "Rethinking museum architecture: Towards a site-specific history of production and use," in *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions,* ed. Suzanne MacLeod (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 9-25.

[109] Julia Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Visual Culture* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2004), 13-14.

is key to playing out the institutional story-arc. The intentions behind these scripts may shift over time—from early enlightenment museums that displayed large collections to stimulate taxonomic comparisons, to post-World War museums that re-imagined reception based on unique objects that held autonomous and mystical power—but display practices inevitably shape the viewer's body into forms of engagement that suit the institutional ideology at the time.

Art historian Charlotte Klonk elaborates on these scripts in *Spaces of Experience,* as she describes how changing technology impacted both practical display and conceptions of spectatorship.[110] Increased understanding of optics and colour theory, and the introduction of artificial lighting in the 19th century led to more adaptable displays that could be altered depending on the needs of individual objects, and subsequent advances in psychology turned attention from the needs of the object to that of the spectators.[111] These shifts laid the groundwork for the 20th century conception of the autonomous art object, where art could speak for itself if the conditions of display were suitable—and if the viewer would only do the work to listen.[112] Museum reforms in the early 20th century responded to this impulse by limiting overcrowded displays with more strict selection criteria. Institutions made up of multiple rooms ensured that each gallery was thematically unified and distinguished from other spaces in order to maintain the interest and focus of the viewers, and individual works were also more spaced out from one another to produce undistracted encounters.[113]

---

[110] Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[111] Ibid., 30-41. See also: *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, s.v. "magic lantern," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), n.d., accessed 22 July 2019, Oxford Reference Online; *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, s.v. "optics," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), n.d., accessed 22 July 2019, Oxford Reference Online.

[112] Klonk, *Spaces of Experience*, 55-61; Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display*, 91-92.

[113] Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display*, 92-93.

Klonk traces the rise of white as the background colour of choice in the early 20th century, with Suprematist artist Kazimir Malevich, who famously conceptualized white as an infinite space that also held connotations of purity, and Bauhaus artists who used it in exhibition contexts. The double-meaning of infinity and purity supported concentration on the objects, while also functioning practically as a neutral colour that worked for a large range of artwork.[114] In the United States, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) took up white as the wall-colour of choice and is often referenced as the first "white cube" gallery. Klonk points out the influence of German museum architecture on MOMA curator Alfred Barr, and extends her reading to point out that Barr's design of the gallery also echoed American department store planning—a gesture that essentially links the kinds of spectatorship needed for commerce and that of modern art. She explains that the new MOMA building was the first gallery to have a glass frontage on the street, and the entrance was conceived in a "funnel style," after the ideas of renowned artist and architect Frederick Kiesler, who determined that such a shape most effectively drew consumers from the exterior to the interior of the department store.[115] The interior of the gallery also notably included a reception desk and bookshop, with divided gallery spaces that operated like cells within a larger whole. All of this aligned with American commercialism, where "consumers could cultivate themselves, up-date themselves in matters of style, and recognise themselves as informed members of the consumer society that was then emerging in the United States."[116]

---

[114] Of tangential interest here is Klonk's suggestion that white became the colour of choice for Nazi exhibitions, because it suited the "…regime's technocratic mentality," and reduced individualism in favour of a totalitarian positioning of the spectator (Klonk, *Spaces of Experience*, 235). That the colour became the go-to-choice for all galleries is likely more driven by the flexibility and supposed-neutrality of white for a varied selection of work; however, the idea that the white space unifies all of the contents together under an ideological purpose is something that is still relevant to spectatorship within the contemporary white cube.

[115] See: Stephen J. Phillips, *Elastic Architecture: Frederick Kiesler and Design Research in the First Age of Robotic Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 91.

[116] Klonk, *Spaces of Experience*, 149.

Although much time has passed since the opening of Barr's MOMA in 1939, it seems in some ways very little has changed with the white cube. Many of the standards that he proposed: modular partitions, bright naturalistic lighting, clean geometries, minimal architectural decoration, and the commercial habit of browsing objects, are all standard in galleries today. Many galleries are situated in well-trafficked urban spaces, with frontages and signage that echo the language of commercial business. Large glass windows offer street-side visitors a glimpse into the gallery—to preview the artworks that one might find inside—and once viewers step inside, the geometric spaces and white walls are still ubiquitous. While Charlotte Klonk frames a teleology of early anthropological museums as didactic, which then gave way to subjective, psychological, and finally consumeristic modes of viewing, it is important to note that each of these modes still shapes contemporary viewing experiences. The Museum of Modern Art still functions as a key example, with its mandate to collect canonical art objects and educate museum-goers as to their historic and cultural value. These works are displayed in clean, sparse galleries so that each work can be encountered on its own merits—yet, it is also part of a sequential display that carries viewers throughout the building only to empty out near the gift shop. Although not all contemporary galleries maintain all of these traditions quite so explicitly, these ideas exist as an undercurrent whether artists and galleries recognize it as such, or whether they actively utilize these dynamics to shape spectatorial effects. Additionally, even though there are alternatives to the white cube (including site-specific and outdoor art, as well as retrofitted spaces, or even artistic institutional interventions), those spaces are always still in dialogue with the white cube, as the model that is rejected or transformed.

In Arsenal's gallery spaces, all of these connotations circulate together. The artworks are on display in separated zones that clearly demark individual works from one another through

spatial positioning and display elements like frames or pedestals. In the Montreal exhibition space, the cinematic projection was even contained in its own room, so that it would be completely separate from the white-cube context of the more sculptural objects. The rest of skoltz's solo show was presented on its own (contained with temporary walls), but was set against the adjacent room where Arsenal showcased a group of artists from their gallery roster. This meant that even as it was set up to be interpreted as a self-enclosed project, skoltz's artwork was still connected to the larger context of the white cube through shared ceiling space, lighting, and audio transmissions with the other exhibits. The viewer could circulate the gallery at their leisure, browsing through a variety of interesting objects on display before entering *y2o dualities_*.[117] Additionally, while the larger context of the gallery connected artworks as either part of the group show or skoltz's thematic logic, the internal display staging for both shows separated objects from one another, so each artwork could be viewed on its own merits. By arranging artworks with space between them (through wall-hanging, frames, and pedestals), the displays emphasized the individual, autonomous meaning of each work, which individual viewers could unlock through the proper spectatorial labour.

As shown above, the physical structures of architecture intertwine with philosophical conceptions of the viewing experience. Just as psychoanalysis shaped new display architectures

[117] It is worth noting that Arsenal operates as a privately-owned institution that presents works selected by its benefactors, Pierre and Anne-Marie Trahan, while sharing space and operating alongside their commercial gallery, Division. This structure intertwines the commercial and public exhibition mandates, and I would argue that this makes the financial incentives of exhibiting an artist slightly more transparent than a public art gallery, while also enabling them to show more experimental artwork than could be supported solely through the commercial wing. It does, however, shape the kind of work that is exhibited in these spaces, likely leaning towards more commercially viable art objects and the taste of its benefactors. It may also limit access to the artworks, since the space charges an admission fee to the Montreal gallery (the Toronto location is free admission), and both spaces are located in industrial areas that would require viewers to plan their visits. Additionally, the industrial exteriors lack extensive signage, which could be daunting for first-time gallery visitors, particularly if they have not attended many galleries in the past. Robert Everett-Green, "Montreal's Arsenal is 'not a gallery, not a museum'," *The Globe and Mail*, 6 February 2015, accessed 11 November 2019, www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/montreals-arsenal-is-not-a-gallery-not-a-museum/article22837192.

by emphasizing the spectator's interior workings, modernist ideas around the autonomy of art shifted the agency of meaning externally again. Artist and critic Brian O'Doherty articulates these paradigms in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, where he coins the term "white cube" as a descriptor for the gallery.[118] This text offers one of the first explorations of the role of spectatorship in the gallery space, where he claims that the "white, ideal space… more than any single picture, may be the archetypal image of twentieth century art…."[119] He supports this claim by tracing the conceptual shifts that defined the "white cube" through the early twentieth century, and outlines key influences on the spectator's aesthetic experience. It is here that he distinguishes first the disembodied "Eye" that takes up the critical position of the mind, and later the fleshly "Spectator" who acts as an individual, feeling subject in space, echoing the tension between the Cartesian mind and body.

In the essay "Notes on the Gallery Space" O'Doherty introduces a politics of distance and closeness. Instead of the oscillating gesture of Bergsonian attentive recognition, where one would move in the space between distance and closeness, O'Doherty traces the history of the gallery through the polarities of the mind and body. Within this line of thought, the gallery establishes a panoptic view with a moralistic sense of distance: collecting objects to hold them apart from life.[120] The material quality of the panopticon establishes a clear overhead map of the ground, but dissociates vision from bodily experience because it is not a natural point of view; it is always mediated by infrastructure like tall buildings, airplanes etc. This historical abstraction separates the gaze from the messy, unpredictable entanglement of a horizontal ground-level

[118] Published as a series of essays in *Artforum* in 1976, then released as a book in 1986 and revised with an additional chapter in 2000.

[119] O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 14.

[120] Ibid., 13.

view. It is important to note that this "panoptic" visuality does not just play out from the overhead view but is also enacted through the linear perspective that has characterized visual arts spectatorship since the Renaissance. Linear perspective uses logic and mathematics to create an illusion of receding space that is generally contingent on the viewer taking up a single, proper, viewing position in relation to vanishing point(s) located in the image. If the viewer stands at an incorrect angle, the illusion does not function. The frame offers a stable anchor and instruction for how the viewer must arrange themselves in relation to the image, and again ensures visual separation between artworks that each require their own frontal positioning.[121] As such, the relationship between the viewer's body and the artwork is abstracted and mechanized by the artwork and exhibition space so that optics are given priority over other sensual ways of engaging with the art—touch, taste, smell, or sound, for instance—and the viewer must cooperate with the singular ideal viewing position of the "Eye," rather than a varied, individual subject position of the "Spectator" who enacts bodily relationships with the image.

Although he describes the ideology of the gallery as structuring these binary positions of mind and body, O'Doherty's discussion of the Eye and the Spectator is useful because it goes on to elaborate a more nuanced history of spectatorship that fundamentally refuses the binary positioning of mind and body. It is valuable to note here that O'Doherty produced these ideas within the context of the 1960s and 70s art world, where Minimalism began to challenge the significant discursive power of formalism and disciplinary purity in American Abstract Expressionism. By drawing attention to the horizontal, close, and individually determined nature of art experiences, Minimalism and its related outgrowths focused attention on the presumed split between mind and body. Later practices of institutional critique exposed the administrative

[121] See also: Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

and bureaucratic structures that shape meaning in exhibition-making, and disciplinary bleeds by video, performance and new media have all questioned the strict boundaries between artforms.[122] This kind of work actively intervenes with the viewer's positionality to draw attention to previously hidden discourses and practices, creating new meaning as part of what O'Doherty might label a "gesture" in his final essay "The Gallery as a Gesture."[123] Here, the gesture acts as a rupture in expectations, a double-movement that both participates in the embodied and embedded nature of being inside an experience of institutional structures and, concurrently, of standing outside—at a distance—to see how those structures construct experience.[124] The gesture places art into quotation marks, revealing both the image and the frame, and creating an awareness of perception.[125]

O'Doherty interrogates aesthetic experience through a close tracing of spectatorship as it intertwines with the spatial workings of the gallery. *Inside the White Cube* explicitly frames gallery spectatorship as working within ideas of either autonomous or imbricated viewing and provides clear examples within exhibition practices. This allows us to consider the viewer's physical position as linked to their conceptual meaning-making, either as an abstract authority, a

---

[122] Clement Greenberg's writings about modern art—particularly regarding his ideas around the autonomy of art—were hugely influential, and Minimalism challenged these ideas by developing contextual artworks that drew attention to the spectator as a living body. See: Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Art and Objecthood* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148-172; Clement Greenberg, "The Case for Abstract Art (1959)," in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism, vol. 4, Modernism with a Vengeance 1957-1969*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 75-84; Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism, vol. 4, Modernism with a Vengeance 1957-1969*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 85-93; Allan Kaprow, "Untitled Guidelines for Happenings (1965)," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artist's Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 709-714; Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture Part I & II," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 222-235; Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture Part III: Notes and Nonsequiturs (1967)," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artist's Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 588-593.

[123] This essay was new in the expanded edition of *The Ideology of the White Cube*, published in 2000.

[124] O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 88.

[125] Ibid., 97.

relational entity, or some combination of the two. Although he does not use this language, in a sense he also establishes the spectator as a performer in the space. I use the term performer, because in O'Doherty's framing, a successful gesture is one that turns against itself to look at the action while enacting at the same time. The viewer must produce labour that they are then aware of: they perform spectatorship for themselves, for the artwork, and for other viewers, following the scripts established by the hard and soft conventions of the exhibition space.[126]

The Ontology of Performing Objects

In skoltz's exhibitions, the viewer's moves between the tactile materiality of the body and the abstraction of aesthetic discourse, in a way that makes visible the performance of the spectator's body in shared time and space with the artwork. Importantly, this notion of performativity also extends to the artworks and architectures of the gallery, where the spaces act to produce the spectator's reflective experience. While the conventions of the gallery necessarily require the spectator to arrange their bodies in the space around artworks, this by itself does not necessarily produce performative reflection. In both the Toronto and Montreal *y2o dualités_* exhibitions, the introduction of moving images altered the spectatorial dynamic to produce performative effects and relationships between viewers and objects. In part, this occurred because of the way that skoltz re-purposed the *y2o* film so that each object literally referenced the others; however, because the artist deconstructed the material conditions of cinematic forms and reassembled them as sculptural objects, temporal experience also suddenly became visible as a tangible material within the space of the gallery.

[126] Hard rules would be those that are explicit (Do not touch! Pay admission. No photographs) versus soft rules that are more suggestive (architectural paths through the exhibit, benches that establish static positions in front of works, tape on the floor to indicate proper distance from the work).

As noted previously, Arsenal's Toronto location epitomizes the white cube, and it was this standardized context that enabled skoltz's artwork to create ruptured expectations through the introduction of moving images. As a retrofitted industrial building in a residential neighbourhood, the building has high ceilings, controlled lighting conditions, pure white walls, and plain concrete floors. For *y2o dualités_*, the Toronto location blacked out the windows and turned off the usual fluorescent lighting so that the show could take place in immersive darkness that recalled the cinema. Despite the low-lighting, the installation was entirely like that of a traditional gallery show where objects were dispersed throughout an open space and lacked seating that might invite longer durations of spectatorship. Upon entering Arsenal's Toronto exhibition space, the first thing I saw was a large self-supporting white wall—the kind that would usually separate a gallery space into separate zones and often carries some sort of introductory text about the exhibition—but this particular wall had been adapted as a screen to showcase the 29-minute, single-channel version of *y2o* (fig. 2). In a cinema, the screen object usually disappears into darkness. The projected image subsumes the flatness and texture of the screen, and even most gallery projections simply project the image onto a white wall that refuses attention. Since the monumental, three-foot-thick wall invited viewing from all sides, *y2o dualités_* presented the film-image as an object. Remember that the action of the *y2o* film takes place in a large tank of water, so in addition to the unusual screen dimensions, the wall also incorporated a large ladder on one side, which implied that viewers could climb to the top and enter the virtual tank of water. Through this presentation, the screen literally took on the volume of the tank-image, yet viewers could recognize this dimensionality as an illusion since the flatness of the projection overlaid with the impenetrable form of the white wall and ladder leading nowhere.

Once past this divider, it became possible to view a multi-screen installation of the film, where each of the nine chapters broke out into separate flat-screen monitors (fig. 3). On the white wall of the gallery, the nine segments played together simultaneously, queuing up through space instead of the normally linear filmic timeline. This nine-channel installation was one of the first ways that skoltz deconstructed the cinematic image into a sculptural form that distinctly referenced its liminal placement between the theatrical context of a film and the gallery context of visual art installations. By disassembling the larger narrative of the single-channel into its component parts, skoltz accentuated cinematic serial storytelling and montage that connects disparate shots or events within a holistic linear temporality. She accomplished this by removing the disparate parts of each chapter from their linear singularity and framing each as its own contained segment. Just as a film still represents a single part of the larger cinematic whole, the spatially separated chapters read as distinct fragments while maintaining the cinematic ability to flow through time. This display format drew attention to the ontology of cinema as a whole that is comprised of component parts: single frames, scenes, chapters, or acts, all spread out and held together in time. Rather than hiding the connections between the scenes by passing from one to the other in the duration of the film, here the scenes were laid out like a film strip. Each scene stood in relation to all of the other action simultaneously, as the chapters played out side by side. The installation simultaneously referenced the linear body of the single-channel film, which would ordinarily play out across a set duration, and gallery-based installations that install looping slices of time that can be encountered at any point, for as long as the spectator desires. It also called attention to the viewer's ability to see the whole duration of the film *at the same time,* as the screens spread across the wall of the gallery. Since this was an unusual layout for a single-channel film, the spatialization of time produced a tension between the expected flow of

cinematic duration as it collided with the viewer's spatial experience of several different times unfolding at once.

Restructuring the container of cinematic time emphasized the spectator's pre-determined expectations of time as well as space. The space of the gallery made time visible by fragmenting the linear cinematic stream into discrete physical stations (fig. 4). In his discussion of the *y2o* film, Bernard Schütze described the film's watery container as a kind of affective force, and here—through the introduction of the projected film against the faux-tank wall of the gallery—the white cube takes on the same connotations. The gallery space operated as an analog for the screen-image, by locating the viewer in both the virtual space of the film and the real space of the gallery simultaneously. The material objects of the gallery acted in place of the bodies on screen and implicated the viewer as part of that set of relationships. If the space of the gallery read as analogous to the water of the tank in the cinematic image, then it stands to reason that the materialization of image-time through the nine-channel installation also echoed the spectator's now-fragmented temporal experience. The spread of the artwork across the wall called attention to the gallery's relational positioning of the viewer and objects, while enacting a similar durational spread that prevented time from flowing forward invisibly for the viewer. Broken up into its disparate parts, the montage was no longer hidden in a linear trajectory.

In the Toronto iteration of *y2o dualités_*, skoltz began to merge the cinematic with the spatial and performative potential of the white cube. The darkened space enabled the projected image to operate in the foreground as cinema, while taking on the object-ontology that the gallery so famously produces; however, by considering the aesthetic situation within the framework of performance, questions arise regarding what is meant by performance and who, or what, is doing the performing. I propose that the artworks and the space of the gallery themselves

enact a kind of performance, where—although they are not living entities—their physical forms are still staged in a relational interplay that takes up time and space. My application of the term "performance" derives from theorist Peggy Phelan, who deems "liveness" as the key factor that distinguishes performance from other disciplines. For Phelan, the co-presence of living bodies "implicates the real," in an aesthetic experience that can only exist in that space and time of the relational encounter.[127] Once they separate, the performative gives way to memory and documentation. In a way, this metaphor echoes Bergson's understanding of Pure Perception and Pure Memory, where experience moves from the immediacy of stimuli (a short time and space between body and perception) to the distance of memory (abstraction produced with spatial and temporal distance between body and idea). Phelan's argument does not account for Bergson's notion that memory is itself implicated in how spectators perceive in the present, creating a false distinction between the idea of experience and memory. Yet, the unfolding relational qualities of the live offer a keystone for how I have come to conceptualize spectatorial experience as a performative act.

It is important to note that Phelan's definition is not the only way to understand performance. Josette Féral links it to meaning that is developed during the manipulation of a body through space, and distinguishes performance from the theatrical, which constructs a pre-determined point of view that is then communicated to a spectator.[128] Her separation of performance and theatricality distinguishes a disciplinary split between performance studies and theatre studies that is not of immediate concern here, but that I will address in Chapter Four.

---

[127] Phelan, "Ontology of Performance," 148.

[128] This is not dissimilar to Phelan's idea of the live, since meaning is developed through a contingent encounter in a certain time and space. See: Josette Féral, "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified," *Modern Drama* 25, no. 1 (1982): 170-181, accessed 9 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.3138/md.25.1.170.

Nevertheless, it is important because Féral also categorizes two kinds of meaning: one that is produced through the encounter and one that is pre-set and communicated. It is an idea that resonates well with the earlier distinction of gallery spectatorship as either embodied and relational, or as critically distanced. As with the white cube and the black box, I argue that impactful spectatorship is not a matter of one or the other, but rather a push and pull between them. This idea allows us to come close into the moment of encounter while simultaneously stepping back to develop understanding.

Performance theorists Philip Auslander and Rebecca Schneider take issue with Peggy Phelan's insistence that liveness requires human bodies, by tracing how photographic documentation might itself act performatively. For Auslander the performer's intention to stage an image for an audience—whether that is in person or for viewers who will only encounter an image—retains performative impact.[129] Rebecca Schneider takes these notions even further to collapse all of these notions into the non-living object of a photograph. Despite merely being the image-trace of a subject that is taken out of time, Schneider notes that the photograph becomes live again through its interaction with the viewing subject. In their hands, and in front of their eyes, the viewer's subjective interaction with the photograph has the potential to disrupt the pre-determined expectations of the image.[130] This effect forces the viewer to reflect on their own experience and meaning-making, and consider the relational process between image and spectator that echoes the theatrical call-and-response of an actor expecting audience participation. Sliding alongside Bergson's notion of attentive recognition, here we begin to

[129] Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," *Performing Arts Journal: A Journal of Performance and Art* 28, no. 3 (2006): 1-10, accessed 29 October 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4140006.

[130] Rebecca Schneider, "Still Living," *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 138-168.

understand the performative as something or someone that forges relational dialogue with a spectator in the space and time of a contingent encounter. It is live, not because the object itself is living, but because it reproduces the experience of live-ness, where an organism tries to understand the world around it through a temporal unfolding in space. Crucially, performance considered in this way is not just one subject acting for another, but both parties in conversation, developing meaning together.

In his book *Alien Agency*, artist and researcher Chris Salter considers the value of non-human agency within the aesthetic encounter.[131] His artworks operate as mute objects that possess their own living processes and contribute to the field of relationships that construct the world around us. Salter explores ways to enable these objects to communicate without human language, drawing on multi-sensory ways of knowing. He treats his artworks as things with agency that have "the potential to do something, but… might not, depending on what it is surrounded by."[132] These objects cannot communicate through straightforward linguistic means, but nonetheless possess their own ways of being in the world and potential interactions with the space and people that surround them. In one of his key examples, Salter discusses the use of acoustics and sound in his work.[133] He notes that sound can never be separated from site and context since every surrounding surface alters tone and vibrations between the path of the object making the noise and the listener's ear. I am interested in moving-image installations because they construct self-enclosed worlds; they control the environment to produce certain effects on the viewer, but this control is limited. As much as the space and form of the artwork stays the same, the temporal event of encounter with a viewer creates a unique relationship every time the

[131] Chris Salter, *Alien Agency: Experimental Encounters with Art in the Making* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015).

[132] Ibid., 161.

[133] Ibid., 20-84.

work is viewed. In this circulation of potential agencies—from the space, the artwork, the viewer, the time and day spectatorship takes place, or the sequence of objects the viewer encountered before this final work—every aesthetic meeting is unique. The world performs with the artwork and the viewer, creating an art experience that is live and constantly in-the-making.

The Montreal iteration of *y2o dualités_* pushed these performances between objects and spectators even further. In the space of the white cube, skoltz reinstalled the nine-screen series, along with an aquarium-monitor (*y2o Huis clos*, 2015*)* from the Toronto installation—this time without the immersive darkness of the previous exhibition (fig. 5). In addition to these older works, the artist incorporated additional photographs and sculptures related to the *y2o* film. Under the bright light of the gallery, the moving images read even more as objects since the spectator could view the whole space and multiple objects with a single glance, as they chose their own path through the gallery and spent as much time as they desired with each work. Displayed in single-channel formats, multi-screen installations, photographic stills, and sculptural objects, the flexible and open time of the gallery automatically overrode the contained duration of the moving images, so that there was no start and end other than beyond the spectator's encounter with artwork. In the larger installation space, spectators could take in the whole display at once, to see a variety of photographs displayed on the walls, with two sculptures, the nine-channel installation, and a screen enclosed in a fish-tank, all distributed equally around the room. This layout enabled all the works to relate to one another, particularly since many of the photographic images, as well as the sculptures, moved away from a re-presentation of the single channel film toward images more broadly inspired by the film. For instance, several large-scale photographs depicted still-life shots of fabric corsets, plastic tubing, and water, which echoed the female performer's costuming in *y2o* but were not a literal

reworking as was the case with the moving image artworks. Other photographs included stills from the film, and a series of rusted and crumpled audio speakers that repeated similar forms found in three other speaker-related sculptures.[134] Through these objects, the artist explored the tensions between words and actions, as well as the promises made and broken through the course of being with one another.[135] The artworks connected conceptually as an exploration of the relationship between the two performers from *y2o* and echoed the same material qualities as the film installations. The photographs were all displayed in large clean shadow-box frames that pushed distance between the protective glass and the mounted image. They also demonstrated the same colour palette and textures as the film while establishing a tension between the slick, cold quality of digital blues, greens, and greys, and the organic textures of rust, frayed fabric, and peeling paint.

Through both these conceptual and physical effects, the spectator became entangled in a relational back-and-forth between their own subjectivities and objects that seemed to be contingent on the individual spectator and the surrounding environment. This was not literal interactivity (although it could be), but imaginative, so that the viewer built a narrative based on the back and forth between the physical and conceptual forms of the object. The unfolding of meaning through this live encounter resonates with our earlier discussion of the performative, where a performance occurs through the relational entanglements between two entities in space and time. While the artworks are not living entities, Chris Salter's ideas enable a consideration of the inanimate as something that still holds a certain kind of performative agency. Approaching

[134] dominique t skoltz, "Collision no 01 & 02," dominique t skoltz, n.d., accessed 23 October 2019, www.dominiquetskoltz.com.

[135] dominique t skoltz, "Union de Fait," dominique t skoltz, n.d., accessed 23 October 2019, www.dominiquetskoltz.com.

the aesthetic object as performative provides an interesting way to consider how the object develops meaning in relation to a viewer. It shifts the meaning-making from a one-sided deposit of knowledge—the popular notion that a viewer is supposed to 'get' the singular meaning of the work—as it was determined by the artist—towards something that is more dialectic, or conversational. In a conversation with another human being, it would be impossible to fully know everything about the other person; we listen to words and body language as we encounter them and interpret based on how much we know about the person, their tone, the context, and what we are interested in hearing. Further discussion is determined by the back and forth between unknowable subjects, as both parties immediately react to what has been said and done by the other. This way of thinking may romantically anthropomorphize the aesthetic object, but it also underscores the idea that an aesthetic encounter is durational, relational, and contingent upon the circumstances of the situation.

Sensuous Perception

These performative effects were not just available when the spatial qualities of the gallery were foregrounded as a white cube. Rather, it also functioned through the material surfaces and structures of cinema as well. In the Montreal exhibition, the one concession to cinematic darkness was the exhibition of the single-channel film by itself in a small darkened room, segregated from skoltz's main space by the lobby containing the Arsenal group show. In this darkened room, the film projection filled an entire wall, taking up a similar cinematic scale as it had on the dividing wall at the Toronto location. In addition to the obligatory bench seating that normally accompanies gallery displays of moving images in black-out spaces, the film was installed with a large pool of water that took up a similar amount of space as the projected image

(fig. 6). As with the Toronto installations, this new display format for the single-channel film stepped beyond the flatness of the cinema screen to take up three-dimensional space in the gallery. Where the first iterations began to objectify the screen by turning attention to the material qualities of the technological interfaces of the image (the wall/screen, and the multiple monitors that distributed a single narrative along a horizon-line), this exhibition transformed the screen-image itself into a tactile object. The addition of the water not only focused attention on the space in between the spectator and screen, but also on tactile differences in the quality of the filmic image as it was represented on the wall and pool surfaces. While the wall-screen was a flat, white, surface that receded in favour of the image, a metal and concrete pillar on the left-side of the screen interrupted that flatness to call attention to the architecture of the room. Although the concrete and rusted metal contrasted against the white wall, the rough and worn quality of the pillar suited the filmic image quite well, as an extension of the rusted objects, worn wood, and peeling wallpaper that made up the set dressing.

Similarly, the use of actual water created a sympathetic resonance between image-water and real-water. In the darkened room, the reflection on the liquid was slick and oily (an effect further aided by the black plastic liner that curled out from the edge of the pool). It was possible to see and feel the depth of the water, as the plastic lip curved into a shallow pond—yet the projection also reflected and covered this depth with the flatness of light. Depth and surface were revealed simultaneously. Additionally, the surface of the water acted as a mirror that displayed a twinned image of the performers floating in their own watery container. As a reflection the images necessarily moved together; however, the different textures of the screen surfaces distinguished the images from one another. They were the same, yet not the same, as the water somehow produced a sharper image that was more contrasted and tinted with a colour

differential from the water-tarp-wall-light all overlaid. In the pond, the image became distorted (by the spectator's overhead position, and by liquid and tarp ripples), and this distortion attracted the spectator's scrutiny. In drawing and painting, mirrors are often used to see objects differently—to flip the artist's perception so that they might look more closely. This process enables the artist to notice things that might have been previously overlooked because of shorthand assumptions about the object. Similarly, skoltz's mirror image existed as an unfamiliar double, moving in reverse, and taking up space in an unusual way. The relation of the two same-but-different images prompted the spectator to reconsider the cinematic image.

The disruption of the familiar through this act of mirroring enables the same process as Bergson's attentive recognition. While skoltz's presentation of the film did not literally ask viewers to insert themselves into the work, or to call upon their own specific memories, the material qualities of the doubled image engaged Laura U. Marks' idea of haptic visuality. For Marks, this process can occur without literally touching the image; instead, by making the photographic image unrecognizable, the viewer must rely on their past experience to develop a new understanding of what they are looking at.[136] The encounter requires a conceptual touching of the image—to come so close that that it becomes impossible to separate the form of the image from the spectator's interpretation of it. The viewer only produces understanding by filling the gaps that are produced by the image with their own memories and experiences. Since skoltz presented the *y2o* film alongside its own mirror—that defamiliarized and changed the potential readings of the film—she forced the spectator to come close to the image and labour to build an understanding alongside it. In this situation the image was also capable of both optical and literal tactility since the viewer could reach out to touch the reflected image, feeling the water on their

[136] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 127-193.

skin and interfering with the image by creating ripples or splashes (fig. 7). The disruption did not inherently change the image, but it created a space for viewers to perform an effect on it.

The material implications of coming so close that recognition of the image disintegrates, and then stepping back for distance, can also be read through Sylvia Lavin's description of the media artwork as being in a gesture of "kissing" its architectural environments.[137] Lavin's description brings together the conceptual grounding of Marks and Bergson, to consider the encounter as a conceptual process of knowledge production while also introducing the literal physicality of sensual experience. Lavin writes that the kiss brings together the solid permanence of architecture with the ephemerality of projection, where "[k]issing confounds the division between two bodies, temporarily creating new definitions of threshold that operate through suction and slippage rather than delimitation and boundary. A kiss puts form into slow and stretchy motion, loosening form's fixity and relaxing its gestalt unities."[138] For Lavin, the gesture of the kiss brings two forms together so close that they touch and lose perspective, but they do so without completely discarding their original forms. A kiss does not permanently alter the two bodies—they still retain physical separation—but it brings them temporarily close to negotiate intimacy. The negotiation functions like Dwayne Conquergood's dialogic performance, where conversant subjects must find a balance between total objectivity and blind infatuation in order to avoid power imbalances and achieve authentic dialogue. As with dialogue, a kiss requires the consent and participation of both parties. Neither can read the mind of the other and they do not become one entity. In a good kiss, neither partner would be so involved with their own desire

[137] Sylvia Lavin, *Kissing Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[138] Ibid., 5.

that they ignore the reaction of the other party. Instead, both kissers push back and forth between their individual desire and what is being communicated from their partner.

The action of the kiss is both immersive and distanced at the same time. We move back and forth between fleshy, sensual interactivity, and the distance of thinking about our own pleasure, our experience, and our next move. Lavin's description allows us to think about the kiss as both a human relational activity, but also as a gesture that applies to non-human entities as well. If dominique t skoltz's moving images can kiss the architecture of the gallery, and viewers can also participate in that kiss, what does it look like when we untangle that sensuous interplay? How do we trace the potential gaps that allow viewers to insert their own memories, for artwork to infiltrate, and for space to envelop? How do all of these elements work together to find spaces for "suction and slippage?"[139] Lavin's use of the kiss is an especially appropriate metaphor, because Laura U. Marks herself describes the gaps that are produced by haptic visuality as having an erotic quality. The spaces that are left between perception and memory enable the "…figure and ground [to] comingle, [and] the viewer gives up her own sense of separateness from the image."[140]

Crucially, my deployment of Marks and Lavin's ideas embraces the sensual without becoming fully immersed. While these authors offer an intriguing way to introduce sensuality back into the aesthetic experience, if the viewer is fully immersed in their bodily experience, this fails to produce the gap, or moments of disruption that produce criticality. Immersive experiences that smoothly incorporate the viewer inside the artwork do not allow for the distanciation that allows for reflection, or recognition of how the viewer's subjective perspective

---

[139] Lavin, *Kissing Architecture*, 5.

[140] Laura U. Marks, "Video Haptics and Erotics," *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 13.

might assert agency. Considered through Bergson, being caught in the flow of experience means that durational pauses between sensory inputs and reactions are short—implicating the body in an immediate need to react through its short-hand understanding of the world. While this might culminate in either affective and unspoken reactions, or discursive ones (recall my earlier example of the tattoo, where one might jump away from the source of pain or shout "ouch"), these responses reduce complexity. On the other hand, extending the relational exchange with the stimuli through more time and space, means that the perceiver can compare the input to more versions of their past experience. For instance, that same pain stimuli might now transition from the desire to pull away, to leaning into the pain, feeling it transition into numbness, focus attention on a particular area of the body, or even turn into pleasure, all of which can be expressed through the body or through mental and discursive concepts. In this way, the spectator feels-thinks-feels-thinks through a spiralling set of associations, depending how much time and distance they have to compare memories and expectations to the original perceptual input. Now, while neither Marks or Lavin really advocate for a purely sensual experience, they do focus their attention primarily on the moments were spectators come too close, and personal perspective disintegrates. They do so to recover the perspective of the body in art historical discourse, but it is important to maintain the balance between this sensual, erotic closeness of bodies, and the distance of individual, subjective states because it is this in-between state that allows for complex perception and meaning-production. It is important to also recognize here that too much distance or time falls into the same fallacy as too-close experience, where the oscillation between the initial stimulus and abstract concepts become disconnected. In this scenario, the mere idea of pain as either good or bad short-circuits the perceptive input, produces an immediate response, and again limits the complexity of the experience. Marks and Lavin provide starting points for

considering the transformative potential of embodied-being-with-artwork, but I am interested in artworks that do not merely structure a sensation of "presence" or co-mingling with the artwork, but that also turn attention back towards the constructed nature of that experience. By tracing the gaps that cause tension between the closeness of immediate perception and the distance of subjective memory, this project aims to show that criticality is not inherent in the mode of knowledge (i.e. body or mind), but rather in the process of reflection.

If all experience is an oscillation between the immediate, bodily encounter with the world and the action that is produced by mnemonic recognition, then drawing attention to this process of distance and closeness becomes a key way to produce gaps that turn viewing against itself. As I noted in the previous chapter, John Dewey determined that aesthetic experience was marked by a beginning and end, with reflective attention occurring between those boundaries. While this experience is often intangible—it relies on the spectator to take note of their own attention and how it is constructed—skoltz's artwork produces a physical analogue to the mental work that is being produced by the spectator. In viewing the nine-channels, one can both see the time contained and spaced out on the wall while encountering it as an experience of time—entering it at the mid-point in a loop but noting the start and end credits as they roll out on the screen at the start and end of the film. The gallery naturally produces an asynchronous viewing encounter, where viewers enter at their own time and encounter the moving image in-media-res. This is unlike a cinema space where one sits down before the start of the film and exits after it has completed its duration. The tension between the way the gallery enables access to the durational object of the film, and the way that the moving image was originally structured as a cinematic object jars the spectator out of the invisible flow of their own experience so that it becomes

possible to take note of the time in front of the artwork. It becomes possible to see oneself seeing in the time spent with the artwork.

The Materiality of Closeness and Distance

skoltz's unique installations of the single-channel version of *y2o* disrupt the surface and depth relationship between the gallery environment and the image in a sensual manner, using beautiful images, pleasantly textural surfaces, and the slick aesthetic of high definition video images. It is easy to criticize immersive media artworks for their populist draw and spectacular effect: to suggest that they merely activate the entertainment value of neat-looking environments, exploiting audiences' desire for novelty, scale, and slick production quality, rather than creating meaningful critique through the self-reflexive qualities of the aesthetic experience.[141] There is certainly a fine line between the two, which is heavily dependent on the viewer's personal taste and background knowledge. The style of skoltz's images reference commercial filmmaking, with clean, attractive images that could at home in advertising or in a narrative feature film. Yet, it would be short-sighted to entirely dismiss these works even if they deploy aesthetics in a spectacular manner. skoltz's images are attractive and pleasurable—as is the material form of the installations, with their textural surfaces that beg to be touched and circumnavigated. Yet, it is precisely this invitation to touch, to draw close, and to perform a relationship with the work, where the installations in *y2o_dualities_* draw their power.

The high-production value for all of her aesthetic objects—from the film to photographs to sculpture—conveys certain visual meaning. By referencing music videos or advertising, the

[141] For Guy Debord, capitalist spectacle creates an endless cycle of images to be consumed and discarded in favour of the next new. Guy Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle (44)," *The Society of the Spectacle*, 40.

images depict the financial and other resources that went into producing those images. High definition video is not cheap, and neither is the construction or rental of a huge aquarium, or the employment of professional dancers to perform in such a difficult environment. The editing and sound design process adds further expense, as does the elaborate final installations in the gallery space. Although viewers may not be consciously aware of these aspects of the image, it does produce a sense that the artist had professional skill and resources. This brings class and financial means into play, when the viewer reads the image as either natural or unnatural based on their encounters with similar images. The strong, pale-skinned and youthful bodies of the dancers, similarly resonated with advertising and cinematic images that have historically prioritized young, white, heterosexual, and beautiful bodies on the screen: a tradition that naturalizes these qualities and places any spectators that do not fit into those categories as outside of the norm. Yet in the *y2o* film, as these dancers pushed and pulled against one another, it became obvious that the male dancer wore a prosthetic on one leg. It never became a narrative plot-point, but the supporting liquid of the tank, the floating drapery, and the tubing that acted as props within the tank-environment all began to resonate with this difference, taking on new connotations.

In a private conversation, skoltz explained that the dancer's prosthetic had no specific relevance to the work, and that it was merely part of his body. She had worked with dancer and choreographer Jacques Poulin-Denis previously, and they collaborated well. skoltz acknowledges that the prosthetic may connote issues of broken-ness alongside the romantic dissolution, drawing an analogy between broken relationships and broken bodies. She explains that while she might not have intentionally created this meaning, it is still there.[142] In addition to this reading of "broken-ness," the prosthetic serves as an entry point for disrupting our ideas of

[142] dominique t skoltz, interview by Melanie Wilmink, 27 November 2015.

what “normal” bodies look like. Because the performing bodies seem otherwise normative (i.e. young, white, straight, attractive) from a Western cultural perspective, the dancer’s prosthetic becomes a rupture. For someone who is able-bodied, the leg-apparatus offers a moment of disrupted recognition that inflects all of the other artworks with the notion of prosthesis. This situation of the mechanical-object as part of a bodily experience also aligns with skoltz’s collapse of human and cinematic perception. It stimulated a reconsideration of my own expectations of normativity, both in terms of the performing bodies and my expectation of how I built a relationship with art objects. Yet, it is also important to note that my subjective position as able-bodied enables me the luxury of reading broader, abstract ideas into these images because I have never had the lived experience of wearing a prosthetic. For others, the prosthetic may take on more personal meaning-production, referencing their feelings of comfort or discomfort with their own bodies and supplemental apparatuses, their capacity for movement when compared to the fluid, weightless bodies on the screen, or how their own romantic relationships are impacted. All of these potential meanings may even clash with the bodily experience of the installation itself, which sometimes limited physical access to wheelchair users and presented challenges for visual impairments.

These conceptual disruptions continued in less literal ways through the material interactions between spectator and art objects. The Montreal installation of the single-channel film with the pool of water is particularly relevant, since it invited touch while also delineating a large section of space where the spectator could not tread. In most galleries, there are unspoken rules about how close a spectator can come to a work of art, which sometimes become overt though signage, tape on the floor, alarmed sensors, or even a security guard. The pool of water literalized that protective zone for an image that would not ordinarily require such boundaries (a

projected image does not require the same safeguards as a physical object), and simultaneously referenced the restrictive spacing of a theatre, where audiences are constrained to their seats and prevented from tactile interactions with the stage or screen-image. By revealing these apparatuses of positionality, for both gallery and cinema, skoltz underscored the distinct bodies of artwork and spectator, as well as the relationship of tension between the two. Like her floating figures, the spectator was implicated in a push-pull of affective meaning-making. In this gesture it was possible to interact with—but never fully know—the other party, in a kiss that came temporarily close but did not blur distinctions.

This tension between materiality and conceptual distance carried forward in the white-cube portion of the Montreal exhibition (fig. 8). In particular, the sculpture *Face à Face* (2015), stimulated this oscillation through physical and conceptual interrelations between the spectator and other objects in the gallery. Within the larger exhibition space, *Face à Face* took up the most visible position in the show as a 2x3x1 metre metal sculpture in the middle of the gallery. Consisting of what looked like a bellows, or more accurately—two megaphones set face-to-face—the hollow sculpture constructed two opposing viewing portals set at approximately face-level for a standing person. skoltz notes that this sculpture enabled two visitors to speak through the structure, creating "a ludic space where words take on their full potential… a counter moment to our instantaneous communications that are always in movement. This resonates with the physicality and interiority of words."[143] skoltz demonstrated this performative potential during the opening night party, when she arranged for two performers to dance with the

[143] dominique t skoltz, "Face à Face," dominique t skoltz, n.d., accessed 23 October 2019, www.dominiquetskoltz.com.

sculpture.[144] In addition to this literal performance, the sculpture produced a rupture between the peripatetic movements of the gallery viewer and the large, static from of the sculpture, which invited the viewer to stand still, to speak through, and even touch the artwork (fig. 9).

When I rested my hand against *Face à Face*, the cool metal slid along my fingers. I leaned into the void and said "hello," and as the chamber resonated my voice the sound took on an oddly deep and ringing quality. This was not communication straight from one person to the other, but utterances that were mediated and altered. Although the stage had been set for a face-to-face encounter, the medium of the sculpture created drag and tension as my words passed through from one side to the other. The distance between one side of the sculpture to the other was not very far and would ordinarily produce an almost instantaneous transmission of sound. These reverberations stretched the sound out through duration, increasing the time it took for words to travel from the speaker's mouth to the hearer's ear. In stretching out sound through the time and space of the sculpture, *Face à Face* replicated the temporal conditions of film as sound was manipulated and transformed within the metal framework and returned to the viewer as an echo. Through the use of living spectatorial bodies to both produce and receive the sound, the sculpture enabled a clash between the spectator's expectations that their live performance would be instantaneously received. Instead, the effect was distorted—as one might find in a film. The audio slowed down and deepened as the mediating device altered the material quality of the sound.[145] Suddenly, the material quality of the sound itself turned the viewer's attention towards the device that facilitated the experience.

---

[144] dominique t skoltz, "y2o catalogue," dominique t skoltz, n.d., accessed 23 October 2019, 66, 122-124, 131, www.dominiquetskoltz.com/new-page-5.

[145] One might compare this experience to that of listening to a vinyl recording, where the hisses and pops of the record mark the playback format, or the tinny sound of old speakers might distract from a movie-going experience.

If there was no other person to interact with, the sculpture itself became the relational entity. At a human scale, the metal object automatically set up a frame of reference with the viewing body, and the ability to touch and peer into its form also established a sensual interactivity between viewer and work. Most poignantly, when peering through the portals, *Face à Face* perfectly framed the LCD screen of *y2o Huis clos* or the centre screen from the *y2o* nine-channel installation, depending on which side of the sculpture I stood at (fig. 10). With this positioning, the moving images of *y2o* took up the spot that would ordinarily be held by a human speaker. In this way, the artwork placed human and object relations onto the same spectrum. By creating active attention towards this dynamic, the installation disrupted the presumed dynamic of viewing just enough to reveal the processes that are occurring. Crucially, while bringing the viewer and the filmic images into relationship with one another, *Face à Face* also implied an ongoing conversation between *y2o Huis clos* and the 9-channel *y2o* works when there is no viewer present to block their trajectory. This gesture acknowledged the temporary nature of the viewing encounter and implied that these dynamics continued even when there was no one to observe them, while also staging conceptual comparisons between the bodies of the various artworks.

This performance between bodies and objects in *Face à Face* highlights how *y2o dualités_* more broadly took up a formalist expansion of cinematic ontology by intermingling moving images with sculptural forms. The multiple-channel videos, installations, sculptures, and photographs all took up the physical and temporal elements of the *y2o* film, in order to deconstruct it into something new that could only exist within a discourse that included the gallery, cinema, and performance, all circulating together. skoltz's use of a single-channel film as the starting point for all the subsequent works was particularly interesting, because it allowed

her to explore the material assumptions about the moving image as well as the ways that the temporality of cinema could be made spatial.

Cinema is often criticized for its purely virtual existence, where the viewer's body is ignored in favour of an image that cannot be touched or affect the physical realm. The spectator supposedly sits passively in darkness, waiting for the image to flow over them, and carry them forward in the temporal narrative. skoltz's artwork skillfully utilizes physical materiality to push forward this play between the spatial object and conceptual discourse, but this is not the only tool that she uses to produce a tension between lived experience and the image. As we move forward, it is important to recall that the original *y2o* short film was constructed as a linear cinematic experience—with a beginning, middle, and end—and was intended to be viewed in a theatrical situation where the viewer would be carried along in the temporal flow. Although many galleries showcase moving image works, the context of the gallery does not enable the same encapsulation of the viewer in that duration. Often the starting times of the film are not posted, and viewers wander in and out of the narrative without fully experiencing the linearity of the experience as the filmmaker intended. As a film with a narrative focus on the decay of a relationship through the nine chapters, *y2o* was constructed with a particular progression in mind. Therefore, viewing the chapters out of order meant that the linearity of the original intention would be disrupted. Adhering to the original intentions of this film requires following along with a linear durational flow; however, skoltz cleverly deconstructed this approach to cinematic temporality by creating artworks that referenced other disciplinary traditions. This stood out in Montreal, where the darkness of cinema was literally positioned against the white cube by the physical separation of the dark screening room, and the light exhibition space for the other objects. Viewers were supposed to experience the cinema and the gallery as completely

different contexts; yet, both spaces worked against the presumptions traditionally associated with them. Where in the darkened room, the *y2o film* leaked off the screen and into physical surroundings, the other artworks made the gallery space act temporally.

In her nine-channel installation of *y2o,* skoltz broke out each chapter into separate screens so that the linearity of the filmic narrative could no longer be ignored as part of the duration of watching. Instead, it became visible as a physical progression across the span of the gallery (read from right to left, like a book). Film pioneer Sergei Eisenstein famously described how montage structures storytelling, where individual images do not simply act upon one another like building blocks, but rather clash dialectically, creating narrative through oppositions, rhythm, and balance. For Eisenstein, it is not the placement of one image next to another that creates motion, but rather the visibility of both superimposed and related to one another.[146] In "Montage and Architecture" Eisenstein gestures to the physical applications of his montage theory, describing how the architecture of the Acropolis, the Catholic stations of the cross, and the satirical imagery woven into the coat of arms at St. Peter's cathedral, all depict a larger narrative when the individual elements of the space are juxtaposed, or montaged, from key positions within the space they reside.[147] In skoltz's installation, the artist literally took apart her original edit, and displayed it across the wall. This display format also references the ontology of cinema as a series of images that produce the illusion of movement, whether that occurs in single frames or as montaged scenes. Although it would seem that this display might reinforce the idea of a sequential reading of the images, it is important to note that in the nine-channel installation, the

[146] Sergei M. Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form," in *Film form; essays in film theory,* ed. & trans. Jay Leyda, 45-63. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1949).

[147] Sergei M. Eisenstein, Yve-Alain Bois, and Michael Glenny, "Montage & Architecture," *Assemblage* 10 (December 1989): 110-131, accessed 17 September 2019, www.doi.org/10.2307/3171145.

viewer could examine all aspects of the time-line simultaneously. This resulted in the beginning of the relationship narrative holding the same weight as the dissolution—and everything else in-between. The narrative elements had to operate relationally with one another at the same time, compressing each of the chapters into a single shared point, superimposing time with the same gesture that it expanded across space.

While the nine-channel installation fragmented the narrative into distinct intervals that had the potential for re-arrangement, *y2o Huis clos* slowed the single-channel film to a standstill. Exhibited as a screen trapped in a fish-tank, this display stretched the 29-minute length of the original film into three hours, resulting in an image that barely moved (fig. 11). By removing the obvious sense of motion through time, the sluggish image dwelled on the materiality of shots that passed much more rapidly in the film's normal duration. skoltz notes that that in *Huis clos* "…time has been transformed into an infinite commodity, where the story line vanishes to be replaced by an endless succession of movements and utterances… Suspended outside reality, spectators are invited to lose themselves in touches, emotions and micro movements."[148] By showcasing this work alongside all of the other iterations of the film, skoltz made it obvious that she was using time itself as a creative medium, playing with all of the various ways a single image can be altered by adjusting its temporal qualities. In *Huis clos* the intervals of time stretched outside of the usual flow of human activity, calling attention to the construction of the image within a cinematic tradition, through mechanical devices that operate with super-human perception. Here, the spatial montage of the chapters was not laid out like the nine-chapter installation, but rather collapsed by refusing a sequential dialectic between images. This

[148] dominique t skoltz, "Huis Clos," dominique t skoltz, n.d., accessed 23 October 2019, www.dominiquetskoltz.com.

generated an effect where the separate image of frames and scenes were almost indistinguishable from one another.

Through both *y2o dualités_* exhibitions, dominique t skoltz framed human experience as residing in both the real space and fictional space of the artwork. The historical and ideological traditions of the gallery prioritize the visual and establish conventions that situate the artwork as an autonomous object detached from everyday life. At the same time, these scripts of space determine the physical nature of the white cube, including the bright white light, open floor plans, and separated display areas. Visuospatial apparatuses drive the ontology of the gallery by arranging individual viewing bodies in relation to singular objects, and moving images interfere with this convention by inserting the context of time. Through its reference to the viewer's lived duration and performance of viewing, skoltz's intervention made visible the spatial conditions of the gallery as part of the spectator's act of looking. She accomplished this by establishing a kind of sensual duration that reached out to touch the spectatorial body, continuously implicating the viewer within the experience of the work. Placed into traditional gallery situations, the artist co-opted and transformed the space toward her own purposes—sometimes effacing the gallery space in favour of images that constructed their own realities, and sometimes underscoring how much these architectures of exhibition informed the understanding of the work. She created tensions that critique the usual spatial and conceptual qualities of the traditional white cube, to construct what Brian O'Doherty describes as a gesture where the "...spectator's idea of art—is projected and seen."[149]

[149] O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 97.

Chapter Three: The Time of the Black Box

The conditions that produce the experience of seeing ourselves seeing shifts as we move into a different discipline, with its own architectures for display and accompanying conventions. Although the gallery often showcases moving images, it always does this within the context of the white cube, which is often not amenable to the specific needs of the medium. While skoltz's artworks germinated from the *y2o* short film, all of her gallery-based installations still read as products of visual arts, rather than as cinema, because the architecture of the white cube framed gallery-specific viewing conventions. The following chapter turns towards an artwork that explores the experiential distinction between the designation of "cinema" and that of the gallery. The micro-cinema of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's *The Paradise Institute* acts as an interloper in the gallery—structuring a situation where spectators are aware of both contexts simultaneously. Whereas skoltz's objects began to perform, Cardiff and Miller's installation drew attention to the material qualities of the ephemeral cinema object. While the distinction is subtle, I use this installation as a way to discuss the specific ontology of cinema and explain how its exhibition architecture developed as a direct result of the medium's material needs. Throughout my investigation, I use the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and related theory by Mary Anne Doane and Pepita Hesselberth to articulate how the cinema image functions as an analogue to human perception, by framing experience as a series of visible and invisible fields that are articulated through the spectator's physical and conceptual positioning against the image. Deleuze's original discussion of cinematic ontology is quite abstract, and here I find concrete anchors for his ideas within the embodied experience of Cardiff and Miller's installation. I leverage each of these philosophical discussions to trace the material effects of things that ordinarily create intangible impacts—the experience of time, the light and movement of the

image, the dimensionality of sound, and the social relations inherent in being present with other viewers.

Artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller construct immersive aesthetic experiences that overwrite both gallery and public space through cinematic means. Their 2001 Venice Biennale installation, *The Paradise Institute*, accomplished this most explicitly through the insertion of a fully-functional micro-cinema into the bright space of the gallery. This intervention produced what Roland Barthes described as a sensation of being "…fascinated *twice over"* by attention to both the experience of the film and its exhibition space.[150] The intersection between gallery and cinema leveraged the object-oriented ontology of the white cube toward the more intangible nature of the cinematic—an effect which made it possible to feel and see the material qualities of evanescent experience. By enabling a clash between the conventions of the white cube and the black box, Cardiff and Miller made time and collective viewing palpable, producing gaps that located the viewer somewhere between the temporal image of cinema and the material space of the gallery.

In the cinema space there is no physical object, and as such, it does not structure the viewer's body around a rarified encounter. Although the screen and raked seating still produce a sense of distance between the viewer and image, the viewer does not have to perform physical labour to encounter the object on its particular terms. Walter Benjamin refers to this as the image "meeting" the spectator halfway, since it can be shown anywhere in the world with relative ease, and the cinema space seems to do the work to accommodate the viewer by establishing comfortable seating and ensuring minimal distraction through controlled light and sound

[150] Barthes, "Leaving the Movie Theater," 421.

conditions.[151] Fixed seating establishes private mini-territories for each viewer, which should not be interrupted by anyone else, and guarantees similar sightlines for all viewers in the auditorium. Additionally, the image does not compete with other objects, as happens in the gallery; instead, the size and luminosity of the projected image acts as the focus for the spectatorial gaze. All of these elements support the spectator's material comfort, enabling viewers to forget the physical nature of both their bodies and the screen-image.

As such, the moving image becomes much more disposable. It can repeat at any point and does not seem to possess any particular material qualities that might change over time. It is not possible to hold or own the cinema image as an object, so the value shifts toward the experiential aspects of encountering the narrative. This is particularly true in the system of commercial cinema, where studios make money based on the distribution of the film as a linear, temporal product in a theatre (with pre-determined start and end times, set-up in a single screening room), or by selling an object that references the screening-event—like a DVD or digital file.[152] This ephemerality means that the delivery mechanism of the theatrical venue is deeply intertwined with the form and content of the film.[153] Since the theatrical context is so key to the valuation of the film as a commercial product, it is critical to point out that regardless of

[151] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 1169.

[152] It is illegal to copy and publicly exhibit these works, as demonstrated by the FBI warning that was ubiquitous during the not-so-distant time of DVD and VHS rentals. One does not 'own' the rights to alter, trade or share the movie, but merely 'rents' the right to watch it at our convenience. A Hollywood feature film is financially worthless in fragments (or clips), or when mobilized outside of the studio distribution system, through online piracy where innumerable copies of the digital film file are traded freely instead of bought and sold.

[153] Theatrical release provides an income source for production companies, and attendance numbers function as an important reporting tool to prove commercial success to funders, sales agents, and broadcasters, and are leveraged to fund future productions. That means that the theatrical context is taken into account during editing and sound-mixing, adjusting visual and sonic levels for the architecture of the exhibition space, or designing narratives that play on the shared emotions of collective viewing, which can drive further sales through the early fan excitement.

how much it seems like moving images subsume the cinema space, the ideology of the black box and its accompanying production system are always imbricated in cinematic meaning-making. While this imbrication is most obvious in mainstream commercial film, independent and experimental film traditions necessarily function within this same context, since it is mainstream cinema that most commonly trains viewers in the experience of watching films.

As noted previously, the cinema is often conceived of as passive when placed against the scenario of the white cube. Although this passivity is not only due to the comparison of the two exhibition venues (film studies itself has often deemed cinematic spectatorship as passive and subsumed by the narrative as well as commercial ideologies), the discourse around moving images in the art gallery best demonstrates the false dichotomy.[154] In many cases, the gallery leverages its spatial conditions to re-institute mobile and "critical" forms of viewing for cinematic work, where the static, seated position and set duration of the film no longer structure a unified spectatorial experience. Key exhibitions such as Chrissie Iles' *Into the Light: The*

[154] Marxist, psychoanalytic, and semiotic analyses of cinema spectatorship have largely focused on the ideological apparatus of the moving image, where the viewing subject is subsumed. In her book *Cinema and Spectatorship*, Judith Mayne provides a concise overview of early spectatorship theory that either treats cinema as an institutional apparatus (Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz, and Laura Mulvey) where the viewer is a passive voyeur that identifies with cinematic narratives or desire for the depicted subject, or alternately, as textual analysis (Raymond Bellour, Stephen Heath, Theirry Kuntzel) that examines micro-structures and symbolism of the text to support an understanding of cinema as an ideological project ("Paradox of Spectatorship," 18). As Mayne explains, these theories conceive of cinema within a psycho-social dynamic that subjugates the spectator—or where the spectator allows themselves to be subjugated (Ibid., 28). Mayne suggests a more productive viewpoint, where cinema is not assumed to be so saturated with ideology that resistance becomes impossible, but rather where theory acknowledges a balance between spectator subjectivity, the influence of the apparatus, and the acknowledgement of multiple readings that are simultaneously possible and rub up against one another. It is from this understanding of spectatorship as relational and contingent that I deploy my analysis. See: Judith Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship* (1993; repr. New York: Routledge, 2002); and Judith Mayne, "Paradoxes of Spectatorship," in *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, ed. Linda Williams (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 155-183; Jean-Louis Baudry and Alan Williams, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," *Film Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 39-47, accessed 17 September 2019, www.doi.org/10.2307/1211632; Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 342-352; Raymond Bellour, *The Analysis of Film*, ed. Constance Penley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981); Thierry Kuntzel, "The Film-Work 2," *Camera Obscura* 5 (Spring 1980): 6-69, accessed 29 October 2019, www.doi.org/10.1215/02705346-2-2_5-6.

Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977 (2001) and the more recent *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016* (2016) situate the moving image within a newly spatialized regime, where the ability to circumnavigate the flat surface of the moving image transforms the spectator's experience of the a film. While I agree that the gallery enables a different spectatorial experience, which can oscillate between immersion and embodiment, this discourse is often contrived around the assumption that the viewer's ability to move is automatically critical and that the inability to move automatically triggers an uncritical identification with the image. This kind of thinking ignores the history of experimental filmmaking, which regularly disrupts passive narrative identification with the image through a variety of means, including abstraction, non-linear storytelling, direct address, and even expansion into physical space.

Cinema theorist Erika Balsom deconstructs how contemporary gallery exhibitions generally present cinema as either a valorized historical product, or as something entirely new—cinema-but-not-cinema.[155] She recounts the desire to "save" cinema from commercial aims, and the treatment of the gallery as generative towards a new kind of cinema that refuses passive immersion. These notions conveniently forget that the gallery is often as much a commercial entity as mainstream cinema, and that physical distance does not equate to critical viewing.[156] In *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, Balsom describes the markers that distinguish key tropes of the two forms. She notes that the theatre is associated with a pleasurable darkness,

[155] Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 37-38.

[156] Although large galleries may operate under a non-profit model, with government funding, that income is usually supplemented with admission fees, private donations, and gift shop or restaurant sales. In order to sustain staffing levels, support permanent architectures, run programming, or expand any of these aspects, the gallery must either retain or increase funding from one or more of these sources. Securing any of these funding sources requires the gallery to prove its ability to draw audiences, which can affect the kind of programming that takes place. The distinction between the gallery and cinema is often accomplished by ignoring this dynamic of the gallery, while emphasizing the commercial quality of the cinema, which is often less profitable it seems on the surface and actually requires similar government support through grants and tax credits.

whereas the gigantic screen and rhythms of flickering images control the spectator's attention. In contrast, the gallery creates a situation where bright light, visitor mobility, and social viewing lacks the absorption of cinema but gains respectability as "High Art" that is somehow detached from the crassness of mass culture.[157]

By ignoring the historical specificity of cinematic traditions, the gallery does a disservice to moving image-based artistic practices. While there are many cinematic installations designed for the gallery—where the artist has provided specific installation conditions—Balsom rightly points out that in many cases cinema is presented in the gallery without consideration for its unique requirements. The gallery may occasionally build out an isolated space for the work, which likely consists of a darkened space and a bench, but quite often that space is not fully isolated from light and/or sound bleed, and the seating is not comfortable enough to spend a long period of time with the work. For films designed with a traditional cinematic linearity (beginning, middle, and end), the gallery often provides no indication of when the film starts or ends, and viewers must wander in and out of the narrative at random. Furthermore, the gallery distorts the scale of the image by projecting onto gallery walls that do not have screen-like dimensions or textures, or alternately, shrinks the image down into small television monitors. The peripatetic nature of the visual art exhibition creates a sense of distraction, since there is no reason to spend the full duration with the film when there are many other objects that would claim attention for a much shorter time. The ideology of the gallery trains the viewer to understand that the work is cared for and is presented in an ideal context for contemplation; however, the ideal context for objects like painting or sculptures is not the same as it is for cinema, and when the moving image is presented without regard for this distinction, the gallery

[157] Ibid., 39.

betrays the original intention of the work in favour of new priorities that are centred in an art historical context, demonstrating a disregard or devaluation of the qualities that distinguish cinema.

Most of the research in this area has focused exclusively on gallery-based installations of the moving image, which explains the emphasis on the value-add of the gallery to the cinematic. In this scenario, the gallery becomes the ideal space for viewing film because it contributes an aura of preciousness to an object that would otherwise be lost in the flow of temporal narrative. In his book *Between the Black Box and the White Cube*, art historian Andrew Uroskie offers one of the few readings of the intersections between the gallery and cinema from a cinema-history perspective, where he scrutinizes the expansion of the screen into three-dimensional space through the panorama and diorama, the spectacle of World Fairs, as well as mainstream cinema technology like CinemaScope (a wide screen image format).[158] By approaching the development of expanded cinema through the lens of filmmaking, rather than visual arts traditions, Uroskie exposes the imbrication of image-making technology and commerce that I discussed earlier regarding commercial cinema. He points out that World Fairs were commercial and entertainment ventures that exhibited novel and cutting-edge products to convey the ideological narratives of global progress, international co-operation, middle-class prosperity, and nationalistic accomplishments. Within this context, the large-scale images and multiple-screens of expanded cinema are just as much determined by the exhibition context of the fair (often showcased in outdoor locations and temporary pavilions) as by artistic experimentation. This reading enables a reconsideration of contemporary artistic practices by linking the browsing, thrill-seeking spectatorship of the carnival to that of the art viewer who encounters expanded

[158] Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube*, 19-52.

cinema artworks. His teleology also opens up the potential to discuss moving image artworks using the historical context of home-movie production and exhibition (that enabled anyone to make a film), as well as the entry of media into the private—or semi-private—spaces of the home and drive-in movie theatre. This reading is omitted when these works are showcased in the art gallery, since the private circumstances and personal baggage of the individual subject is positioned in opposition to the disinterested ideology of the art gallery. Uroskie's writing adds nuance to the understanding how the black-box subsumes the viewer's presence under the rubric of the film, and it enables discussion of cinema spectatorship as a collective activity.

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller take up all of these complicated and conflicting frames of experience to centre the spectator within an unstable viewing experience that straddle the gallery and cinema simultaneously. Uroskie introduces his book with a description of *The Paradise Institute*, noting that: "[r]ather than remaining in its proper place on the far side of the screen, its fictional world seems to spill over into the space of the theater—crowding us out, leaving us with no escape."[159] The images and architectures of exhibition each tread outside of their usual containers, entering into spaces where they become visible as interlopers. Uroskie's quote also points to the phenomenological effect of this transgression, where the images seem to come close to the spectator, taking up space that is usually private and protected, impinging on the viewer, and demanding a different kind of bodily and conceptual interaction.

Renowned for developing multi-sensory immersive environments, Cardiff and Miller often work with binaural audio to create three-dimensional soundscapes that integrate into the spectator's sense of "real." References to their work often cite the idea of corporeality and

[159] Ibid., 4.

"presence" as key attributes.[160] Common descriptions of the work include reviews like that of Ken Johnson for the *New York Times*, who explains that the auditory illusions create an "almost embarrassingly intimate effect" that left him "feeling mystified and exhilarated," and positioned the work as "the future of cinema."[161] Because the work pre-dates the rise of social media, there are few available spectator reactions online, but a few commentators describe the work as "outstanding" and "exhilarating," denoting an audience effect that seems common across critic and academic reviews of the work.[162] Cardiff and Miller's work is usually sited in either the gallery space, or as a site-specific exhibit, which links form and narrative directly to the environment that informs it. For instance, the pair have regularly produced audio walks that ask the viewer to follow their narrative through the physical space of parks, galleries, and train stations, mobilizing the body and mind into simultaneously real and fictional situations.[163] The intimacy of these situations brings the viewer and the narrative into close contact. It produces a slippage that leads the spectator to second-guess their perception, and that rewards the viewer's

---

[160] See: Anamarija Batista and Carina Lesky, "Sidewalk stories: Janet Cardiff's audio-visual excursions," *Word & Image* 31, no. 4 (2015): 515-523, accessed 9 February 2020, https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2015.1053044; Atom Egoyan, "Janet Cardiff by Atom Egoyan," *BOMB* 70 (April 2002): 60-67, accessed 9 February 2020, Ebsco Host Art & Architecture; Josette Féral,"How to Define Presence Effects: The Work of Janet Cardiff," in *Archaeologies of Presence*, ed. Gabriella Giannachi et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 29-49; Jennifer Fisher, "Speeches of display: the museum audioguides of Sophie Calle, Andrea Fraser and Janet Cardiff, " *Parachute: Contemporary Art Magazine* (April-June 1999): 24-31, Ebsco Host Art & Architecture; Yvonne Lammerich, "Cinema arcade: the 49th Venice Biennial of Contemporary Art," *Etc. Montreal* 55 (Sept-Nov 2001): 70-76, accessed 9 February 2020, https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/etc/1900-v1-n1-etc1119485/35428ac.pdf; Eirini Nedelkopoulou, "Walking Out on Our Bodies Participation as *ecstasis* in Janet Cardiff's Walks," *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 16, no. 4 (2011): 117-123, accessed 9 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2011.60605.

[161] Ken Johnson, "ART IN REVIEW; Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller – 'The Paradise Institute'," *The New York Times*, 12 April 2002, accessed 12 November 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/12/arts/art-in-review-janet-cardiff-and-george-bures-miller-the-paradise-institute.html.

[162] See: @sandra_silbernagel, Instagram post, 9 October 2016, trans. Google Translate, accessed 12 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BLWW5NUhUr4; @bnc_bianca, Instagram post, 2 April 2017, trans. Google Translate, accessed 12 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BSYEZwBhdxI.

[163] Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, "Walks," Janet Cardiff George Bures Miller, n.d., accessed 20 September 2019, www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/index.html.

willingness to suspend disbelief with moments that stimulate a potent awareness of how the world around us constructs perception.

Contextualizing the Architecture of the Cinema

I first encountered *The Paradise Institute* in Calgary, at the Glenbow Museum's 2008 exhibition: *Through the Looking Glass* (26 September – 16 November 2008), where it was installed alongside other works by William Kentridge, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Bill Viola and more.[164] Despite this context of a group exhibition, *The Paradise Institute* maintained its own boundaries in a separate room of the gallery (fig. 12). The large (5.1m x 11m x 3m) plywood structure encompassed a forced-perspective, miniature theatre set in front of two rows of cinema seating where audiences could sit down as if they were about to watch a movie. Spectators received individual audio head-sets, and upon the start of the film, discovered that the extremely realistic simulation of the art-house cinema also contained an equally life-like audience that conveyed a separate-but-intertwined narrative through the headphones. Unlike the artists' audio walks, which augment already-existing space with audio-narratives, *The Paradise Institute* constructed a (theatrical or filmic) setting for the narrative experience to unfold.[165]

[164] Glenbow Museum, "Feast Your Eyes on Glenbow's New Exhibition! — Through the Looking Glass and The Paradise Institute Open Friday —," Glenbow Museum Press Release, 24 September 2008, accessed 16 September 2019, www.glenbow.org/media/LookingGlassReleaseSept24.pdf.

[165] Precursors of this idea include: *To Touch* (1993), a solo work by Cardiff that incorporated proximity-triggered audio recordings into a wooden table, and *Dark Pool* (1995), a mysteriously decorated room interspersed with audio recordings, as well as early iterations of *The Paradise Institute* in *Playhouse* (1997) and *The Muriel Lake Incident* (1999), both comprised of cinema-dioramas and accompanying audio-narratives. Although the earlier works did not fictionalize the physical spaces around the viewer's bodies, they did stage peep-hole structures where viewers stood overlooking the theatre seating. *Playhouse* enclosed this scene within simple black curtains that created darkness around the miniature set and spectator, while *Muriel Lake Incident* required the viewer to stand in the brightly lit gallery space, peeking into a standing wooden structure that resembled a miniature version of *The Paradise Institute*.

From a distance, the object of the *Paradise Institute* seemed unfinished. Constructed from large sheets of ordinary, unpainted plywood, with inexpensive looking hardware serving as door handles, railings, and hinges, the whole structure had a feeling of cheap-but-sturdy. It was like the early stages of a house under construction where the bones are in place, but nothing is quite finished yet. The shape of the structure was blocky and simple, consisting of a large cuboid area for spectator seating, and an extension with a sloping roof that descended until it cut off abruptly. Upon approaching the cinema, I could see two sets of stairs leading to doors staffed by a gallery attendant who controlled entrance and exit into the structure. When the timing was appropriate, the attendant opened the doors, enabling access into two rows of folding cinema chairs that glowed red under warm incandescent spotlights. The crimson velvet upholstery and low-pile carpeting reflected colour onto the plywood walls of the interior, giving spectators a taste of the multi-sensory transformation that they were about to witness.

The whole scene had an aura of expectation, where the presence of the gallery attendant controlled the viewer's access to the space, making them wait until the proper time to enter a space where "something" would happen. These are the same conventions applied to traditional cinema spaces, where the viewer must purchase a ticket, then wait until the theatre staff are ready to allow admission into the darkness of the auditorium. From there, one must again wait until the film is scheduled to start, knowing that it will play out over a set period of time, at which point the experience will end. This understanding of the "event" of a film screening is completely different than the usual process of gallery viewing, where the viewer is free to wander at their own pace, encountering the artworks at any point, and leaving when they desire. By contrast, moving image works exhibited in the gallery space usually exist as loops where viewers wander in and out without knowing when (or if) the work starts and ends. Spectators are often left to

view these pieces in scenarios where it is uncomfortable—or even just durationally impossible—to see the whole work at once. Instead, *The Paradise Institute* clearly demarcated start and end times through the performance of the gallery attendant/usher, which precisely aligned with the duration of the film incorporated into the interior experience. Like a "normal" cinema, the viewers were allowed entry at the appropriate time, to make themselves comfortable in the plush interior where they sat on chairs that were optimally distanced from one another, and where the climate was controlled and pleasant. By presenting the cinematic inside the gallery, *The Paradise Institute* situated the viewer within two very different modes of experience: the luxurious high-art context of the gallery, and the cinema, which is often associated with lower-class, spectacle-driven experiences (fig. 13).

In order to understand how exhibition context shapes the spectatorial relationship, it is important to outline what conventions are associated with the cinema space. In the late 1800s, proto-cinematic forms like magic lantern shows (a glass-plate image backlit by a lantern), the camera obscura (an enclosed room that displays exterior scenes by light projecting through a small pinhole), and the Kinetoscope (a peephole viewing device that looped a short strand of film as one of the earliest forms of moving images) were displayed as objects of cultural interest in carnival entertainment that travelled through both urban and rural areas. Cinema historian Tom Gunning describes these early forms as a "cinema of attraction" that demonstrated innovation and novelty rather than the theatrical narrativity that would develop later.[166] Gunning suggests

[166] Gunning is not alone in tracing early cinema to this point. Charles Musser, Oliver Grau, Annette Michelson, and Erkki Huhtamo all explore proto-cinema through optical toys and fairground spectacles within a broader history of "screen practice" that precedes the development of what we would recognize as motion pictures. See: Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema* (New York: Scribner, 1990); Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003); Annette Michelson, "On the Eve of the Future: The Reasonable Facsimile and the Philosophical Toy," *October* 29 (Summer 1984): 3-20, accessed 13 September 2019, www.doi.org/10.2307/778304; Erkki Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013).

that although the illusory possibilities of the image were a key spectatorial draw, it was also the novelty and technological innovation of the devices themselves that were on display during these early exhibitions, thereby making visible a new way of looking at the world.[167] In a sense, these cinematic objects focused attention on novel conditions of materiality, positioning the spectator somewhere between the physical environment and the illusion of a virtual image. Gunning refutes stories about terrified audiences at the first film screenings, noting that these rumours are probably overblown, and that spectators would have been familiar with a history of magic theatre that presented illusionism as skillful trickery to audiences in these same fairgrounds.[168] Within the context of fairground spectacle and stage magic, early cinema established itself as part of a mass entertainment culture, linked to inexpensive pleasure, low-art, and objects of curiosity—and as such—this "cinema of attraction" developed in opposition to the detached contemplation of beauty associated with other art forms.[169]

Cinema's roots in the fairground are important to this discussion because it reveals viewing conditions that are no longer part of our contemporary experience of the medium. The transitory, public venue of a travelling carnival ensured that seeing early films was a novel treat, staging the film as an "event" within a festive atmosphere. Spectators had to make time for the experience before it moved away, and attending these attractions was part of a larger entertainment adventure that included games, rides, and performances. Although it is not overt,

---

[167] Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Cinema, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in *Early cinema: space, frame, narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker. (London: BFI, 1990), 56-62.

[168] In cinema studies, there is a famous anecdote that audiences at the first screening of the Lumiere Brother's film, *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (1895), ran away screaming under the presumption that they were in danger from the photographed train. See: Martin Loiperdinger and Bernd Elzer, "Lumiere's Arrival of the Train: Cinema's Founding Myth," *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (2004): 89-118, accessed 25 October 2019, www.doi.org/10.1353/mov.2004.0014.

[169] Gunning, "Cinema of Attraction," 117, 123-124.

the connection of film-history to proto-cinema objects and novel spectacle has carried forward into expanded cinema practices, as these artworks often emphasize the screening-event, the material qualities of the cinema-object (whether that is the shooting format of image, the projection mechanism, or the viewer's physical relationship with the image), or the technological novelty of cinematic devices.

Theatrical cinemas evolved from these fairground structures, where kinetoscopes and temporary booths eventually developed into free-standing structures called bioscopes. Modelled after other carnival attractions, these booths had gaudy and colourful facades that operated as both a container and advertisement for the films.[170] As moving images quickly popularized, already-existing music halls co-opted their spaces to host touring film programs as part of vaudeville and variety shows, and storefronts were altered as permanent nickelodeon screening-spaces.[171] Obviously, this appropriation of an existing space was not always ideal, requiring modifications to support lighting and projection needs.[172] There is no clear consensus that pinpoints the first purpose-built cinema architecture; however, cinema historian Edwin Heathcote points to the Cines-Theatre (1911) in Berlin as one of the first significant free-standing cinema architectures.[173] The first World War interrupted European development, so the majority of cinema development shifted to the United States where architect Thomas Lamb's luxurious projects like the Regent (1913), Strand (1914), the Rialto (1916) and the Rivoli (1917)

---

[170] This aesthetic carried forward into the marquee signage, promotional posters, and box office design of permanent cinema buildings.

[171] Charlotte Herzog, "The archeology of cinema architecture: The origins of the movie theater," *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 9.1 (1984): 11-32, accessed 28 December 2019, www.doi.org/10.1080/10509208409361186.

[172] Brian Winston, "Technologies of Seeing," in *Future Cinema: the cinematic imaginary after film*, ed. Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 372-375.

[173] Edwin Heathcote, *Cinema Builders* (New York: Wiley-Academy, 2001), 13; Also known as the Cines am Nollendorfplatz. See also: Maren Kießling, "Bauaufgabe Kino," Maren Kießling, 2014, accessed 28 December 2019, http://www.marenkiessling.de/publication-bauaufgabe_kino.htm.

heralded the golden age of Hollywood pleasure palaces.[174] While proto-cinemas were relatively simple black box or multi-purpose existing spaces, these new forms of architecture were purpose built, often modelled from traditional theatrical forms to include lobbies, boxes, balconies, and stages—yet also beginning to contrive cinema-specific elements like the eye-catching fairground aesthetic for architectural facades and interiors, decor that was drawn from the exotic fantasies showcased within the films, external billboards for promotional purposes, as well as the projection booth and screen that are necessary for projected images.

With the increased costs for larger, more permanent spaces, cinemas needed to draw in new and repeat customers. Consequently, they turned over content more quickly than a touring fair that could simply move to new audiences. Paradoxically, the shift from mobile shows to permanent architecture also enabled the development of feature-length films that relied on larger non-portable equipment for exhibition. Although it may seem obvious to point out, the fact that these devices operated with celluloid necessarily affected the spectator's experience of the image, as well as the architectural infrastructure that supported it. The bulky projection machinery worked by transposing celluloid strips from one reel to another, past the front of the projector that exposed a single frame through the timed shutter protecting the film from a hot incandescent lightbulb. The longer the film, the bigger the reels containing the work had to be—and the more mass and friction the machine had to support. Flammable nitrate film stock also made this process dangerous and limited the size of reels out of safety concerns. Setting up and taking down the film would have been time consuming, requiring either pauses between screenings, or the splicing of multiple films together (which was again limited by the size of the film reels and mechanical capacity of the projector). The noise, light-bleed, and hazardous

[174] Heathcote, 11-13.

conditions would have been distracting for audience members, so cinema architectures developed isolated projection booths that limited disruptions and were somewhat fire retardant. Even once film technology had improved with safer film stocks and smaller projectors, this process remained largely the same: film flowed through the front of a projector, exposing one frame at a time, and concluding its journey on another reel or platform, with the same machine-based limitations and the human labour of the projectionist. Other elements of the building's design were similarly determined by the needs of the filmic mechanism, including complete darkness, a blank, smooth screen-surface, and enough distance between the projection apparatus and the screen to enlarge the image. Today the advent of high luminosity digital technology has opened up the possibility of continuous screenings, brighter lighting conditions, or altered viewing architectures; however, in commercial cinema spaces the conventions remain similar to the early days of film projection.

The shift from carnivalesque to permanent exhibition architectures also altered the temporality of the spectator's encounter with moving images. The cinema of attractions created short-lived, looping encounters that were associated with small booths or even sculptural objects like the kinetoscope. In this viewing scenario, the temporality of the object clearly demarcated itself from the normal flow of human time. It was not immersive and did not replace the spectator's environment with that of the moving image. Instead, it functioned more like a gallery-object, where the contextual environment is seen at the same time as the moving image, and the time of the film is fragmented from the time of the broader world. With film loops, the beginning, middle, and end of the film played out in quick succession—so much so that it might not even matter at which point the viewer entered. It would be easy to enter the flow at any point and quickly understand what was happening, while the short duration of encounter also enabled

repeat viewing. With the transition to more permanent architectures and longer films, the durational encounter expanded, with films developing more distinct narrative arcs. While it was still possible to enter at various points, and view the same film repeatedly, longer films would have required more commitment that likely clashed with the short-attention-span and novel atmosphere of the carnival. Moving from the carnival into static spaces would have changed the viewing atmosphere into one that required more directed and sustained attention, the purposeful choice of cinema-viewing as an activity, and the expectation of an environment that supported such focus by limiting the distractions of exterior light and sound.

These changes influenced the length and pacing of cinematic viewing, but by themselves did not result in the pre-determined showtimes that we are familiar with today. In the Western world, cinema exhibitions relied on a looping experience of film—where viewers entered and exited at will, staying for the second screening if they needed to catch up on the plot—up into the 1960s. The turn towards strict showtimes was actually enacted by cinema auteur, Alfred Hitchcock, who demanded set start and end times for his film *Psycho* (1960).[175] Since his film relied heavily on suspense and surprise, it was important for viewers to see it in a pre-determined sequence. Hitchcock convinced the studios and theatre owners to enforce no-entry rules after the start of the film, ensuring that viewers had to see the film as it was designed. Prior to this, theatres operated on continual loops (much like the contemporary art gallery), where viewers arrived at their leisure and simply continued into the next showing to view the whole story. Theatre owners subsequently realized some appeal in the new model, which was both embraced by viewers and enabled more efficient planning. It is also important to note, however, that all of

[175] Jason Hellerman, "How Hitchcock's 'Psycho' Changed How We Watch Movies in Theaters Forever," no film school, 28 September 2019, accessed 28 December 2019, https://nofilmschool.com/How-Psycho-changed-cinema.

these changes occurred gradually and varied according to the cultural contexts. Although Western technology and traditions have shaped the cinematic experience in other places, it is common for non-Western audiences (particularly in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia) to be more boisterous and mobile in their viewing habits.[176] Additionally, even in Western contexts, cinematic screenings as part of film festivals or alternative venues may engender more flexible spectatorial conventions.

The Ontology of Moving Images

The doubled situation of *The Paradise Institute* as a cinema within the gallery space created a paradox. The architecture operated as an object, encouraging the viewer's physical relationship with the materials of both gallery and cinema-as-an-object; yet, the artwork simultaneously functioned as an immersive cinema-screen that subsumed the viewer's body in favour of an image that flowed persistently forward. The collision of two disparate contextual traditions meant that viewing referenced both the object-form of the gallery and the temporal-form of the cinema at once.[177] So, what kind of spectatorial experience is then produced by this paradoxical situation as both cinema and gallery?

---

[176] Añulika Agina, "Cinema-going in Lagos: three locations, one film, one weekend," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29 May 2019, accessed 28 December 2019, www.doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1615871; Lakshmi Srinivas, "The active audience: spectatorship, social relations and the experience of cinema in India," *Media, Culture & Society* 24 (2002): 155-173, accessed 28 December 2019, www.doi.org/10.1177/016344370202400201.

[177] Michael O'Sullivan, reviewer for *The Washington Post* also highlights this point, writing that "[a]s with any movie, we allow ourselves to be taken up by the action, but we are also constantly reminded that we are in a theater as well. Then, just when this dichotomy is driven home, we're jolted back to the fact that we're in a museum after all, and that the theater we're sitting in is as illusory as the film." Michael O'Sullivan, "The Corcoran Biennial: Dramatic License," *The Washington Post*, 27 December 2002, accessed 13 November 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/2002/12/27/the-corcoran-biennial-dramatic-license/40d836b8-7dcc-424d-97bf-4370439ae703.

Stepping up toward the entrance of *The Paradise Institute,* I left the white cube gallery behind. As I walked through the doorway the familiar red-velvet theatre seats directed my body to its habitual seated position; however, unlike most cinemas this theatre also incorporated plush, over-the-ear headphones that hung over each seat, and the front of the room consisted of a plywood window that framed a dollhouse version of a cinema space (fig. 14). Peering through the window, the I could see tiny chairs that got smaller as the scene narrowed in a forced perspective, with elaborately carved balconies seeming to extend along the sides of the auditorium and past the periphery of my vision. A tiny stage platform contained a wide-format screen in a perfect illusion of a cinema auditorium. This space was not new—the gilded balconies, wooden folding chairs and stage all spoke to an older, but well-kept art house theatre—less elaborate than the picture palaces of the gilded age, but without the art deco lines of modernist cinemas or the slick aesthetic of commercial multiplexes. With soft, grey-blue lighting, the diorama space mimicked the way the projection alters the quality of light in a cinema, where darkness leaches away colour and physical dimensions only consists of what is highlighted by the cool, flat light reflected from the screen. The scene stood in contrast with the red-velvet warmth of the life-sized spectatorial space that I could both see and touch. In the spectator-space, the wooden plywood cut-out seemed to separate the diorama-cinema from the 'real' of my surrounding auditorium-area. Like a framed painting that demarcates the object as separate from the walls of the gallery—and also from other artworks—the hole in the plywood distinguished the miniature cinema from both *The Paradise Institute*'s audience enclosure and the external space of the white cube that housed it.

Spectators donned their headphones as the gallery attendant shut the door and the auditorium spotlights came down. Our bodies, and the space around them, disappeared in favour

of the artificial cinema space as the screen began to flicker. The film's narrative unfolded non-linearly, with an international cast shot in black and white footage that loosely revolved around some sort of intrigue. The general sensibility of the production referred to what scholar Jim Ellis characterizes as "an arty European thriller," with several characters working toward unclear motivations, narrative voiceover, melodramatic dialogue, seemingly unrelated scenes montaged together, and a soundtrack provided by a French lounge singer.[178] The film clearly referenced an archetype of cinema that spectators had presumably encountered before. The exact narrative of the film was unimportant—just that it clearly read as something recognizably cinematic, but also as a kind of art-house cinema that resonated more closely with the "high art" aesthetic of the art gallery than the commercial one of more contemporary cinema spaces. Unlike the popcorn-friendly, superhero films of commercial cinema, the arthouse film connotes something that appeals to a niche audience, which requires more attention or challenges the conventions of filmmaking. Viewers recognize that they might have to work harder to follow the plot, or might require some historical or conceptual grounding in film theory in order to make meaning.

As I settled in to watch the cinematic experience unfold, a cell phone rang directly behind my head. The sound jarred me out of the act of settling in, and immediately prompted feelings of annoyance and confusion that some other viewer would be so disrespectful. When I spun around to look at the offending viewer, I only saw darkness and a few other spectators who quietly listened to their own headphones. It was only a few moments later when Janet Cardiff shuffled through the aisle to sit beside me, whispering "[h]ere's your drink" and offering some of her

[178] Jim Ellis, "Sound, Space and Selfhood: Stereoscopic Apprehension in The 'Paradise Institute,'" *Revue Canadienne d'Études cinématographiques / Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 28., accessed 29 October 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24405636.

popcorn, that the fictional nature of the ringing became obvious.[179] Cardiff and Miller record their sound using binaural audio-capture, by placing microphones into a dummy-head to capture a three-dimensional sense of sound. That multilayered soundscape was then relayed through the stereoscopic headphones so that it seemed to share the space of the spectator sitting within *The Paradise Institute* enclosure. Through this self-referential audio, the sound acted as framing device, akin to the screen and painting frames. It situated the viewer simultaneously within the fictional film, a separate audio narrative, the real space of the audience enclosure, and the larger space of the art gallery that contained all these other contexts.

The Paradise Institute established a series of recognizable frames for the gallery, the cinema, and the spectator's experience of the "real" to all rub up against one another. The entire space was constructed to bring into question the viewer's perception and expectations of what would unfold under the particular circumstances of the environment and media that they were in the process of engaging with. By challenging the normative conventions of the space, the installation made the constructed nature of the scene visible at the same time as it made it unrecognizable. Considered through the lens of Bergson's attentive recognition, the shorthand understanding of how the space should function was no longer appropriate, and the viewer had to

[179] Artist and blogger Michelle Aldredge writes that when she saw *The Paradise Institute*: "[t]he masterful sound editing had me peering over my shoulder on more than one occasion, convinced that someone was whispering in my ear or popping popcorn nearby" (Michelle Aldredge, "The Cleveland Art Scene: Prepare to be Surprised," Gwarlingo, 4 April 2013, accessed 13 November 2019, https://www.gwarlingo.com/2013/the-cleveland-art-scene-be-prepared-to-be-surprised). Similarly, Tumblr user @meltedspinningplastic describes their experience where: "[a]s I put on the headphones extraordinarily detailed directional sound began flooding the brain before even the first flicker of image dances across the screen. The seats creak all around me as other members of the audience members [sic] settle into place amid coughs and bursts of laughter. Fighting the urge to whip my head from side to side so as not to appear a.) rude or b.) foolish, my eyes darted to the respective corners searching for any sign that my fellow attendees might actually be the source of this audio information. … Personally, I couldn't help feeling a bit of kinship with those earliest observers of the cinematic art who must [sic] experienced those primitive reels of celluloid with something like 75% excitement 15% excitement [sic] and 10% abject fear" (Melted Spinning Plastic, "The Paradise Institute," Tumblr, last modified 8 April 2013, accessed 13 November 2019, https://meltedspinningplastic.tumblr.com/post/47513864262/the-paradise-institute.)

labour in order to piece together a new understanding of what was happening. Within Bergson's understanding of perception, personal memory is the keystone to all human understanding. The more stimuli are filtered through memory, the more complex the meaning-making that unfolds from that experience. This means that perception is rarely unbiased, and is in fact driven by each person's subjective interests as well as their understanding of what is important about the situation. As such, perception is always centred around the subjective body, which takes up a privileged position and constructs a sense of interior and exterior based on that subject's perception. Using their own bodies as the anchor-point, the viewer then discerns and interprets the relationships between their needs and the other things that share their environment.

In the context of *The Paradise Institute,* the spectator was centred in the experience as the protagonist, wearing their headphones and entering the seemingly isolated viewing conditions of the film. Using disruptions like the ringing cell phone and Janet Cardiff's arrival, the installation shifted the focus from the spectator's internal world towards the exterior setting; however, because the exterior setting was an artificial environment (I knew that I was not in a real cinema because I remembered entering from the gallery space) the work added an extra layer of dissonance. In a normal cinema space, distractions like other viewers are often ignored by viewers, since it is deemed irrelevant to the movie. At worst, distracting viewers ruin focus on the narrative action or ability to see or hear the film, so it is in the viewer's interest to ignore unnecessary interruptions. The antagonistic response to viewer distraction in the cinema creates a tension with the installation's actual situation in an art gallery—where these same distractions do not matter as much since viewers can often simply move away from noise or bad behaviour. Friction arises in the contrast between the viewer's reaction to the ringtone in the false-cinema, and the knowledge that the context of the art gallery designates the distractions themselves as the

artwork. *The Paradise Institute* heightens the viewer's natural experience of being on-edge and refusing immersion or pacification by the moving image—all things which go against an understanding of cinematic reception as something that subsumes the viewing body. Rather than ignoring these gaps between our bodily experience of the world and the fictional experience that is being presented, as might occur in a regular movie screening, Cardiff and Miller underscore those tensions. They asked spectators to dwell on the ruptured disciplinary conventions as a means to draw connections between the various fictional and real scenarios that operated part of the broader artistic experience of the *Paradise Institute*.

Human phenomenology passes from one moment to the next, but cinema can structure different temporal forms. As with the physical clash between the situation of the art gallery and the cinema, it is in the disjunction between these two modes of viewing that experience turned against itself. In cinema, time can move in any direction, often through flashbacks, flash-forwards, and montage. Even in a linear filmic narrative, each moment weaves forward and backward simultaneously, referencing the start and end of the film so that interpretation can occur across the whole; however, the fragmentation of cinematic time does not prevent it from implicating the spectator in a phenomenological encounter. Although, it may not directly quote the experience of the spectator in "real-time," these fragments still have the potential to produce gaps that allow the spectator to observe their own mental processes of recognition and meaning-making.

Philosopher Gilles Deleuze makes a compelling argument for the phenomenological quality of cinema, which supports my interest in understanding the unique experiential qualities of the cinematic experience. In his books *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (1983) and *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1985), Deleuze takes up Henri Bergson's ideas to explicate cinematic

phenomenology. He accomplishes this by forging a connection between filmic duration and perception, and by distinguishing three different modes of cinematic perception that evolve over the course of cinema history. He begins with the early-cinema image, which simulates the real in a cartoon-strip illusion of motion but does not actually embody human perception. Following that idea, he introduces the movement image, which comes closer to real-time perception by capturing slices of time that relate to one another as a succession of instants; this creates the illusion of real-time action but does not have the open-ness and contingency of actual experience. Finally, he introduces the time-image, which takes advantage of cinema's temporal and spatial multiplicity to construct an experience that holds many different possibilities of experience simultaneously.[180] It is this fragmented (or what he calls "crystallized") perception that comes the closest to human phenomenology, enabling spectators to integrate filmic images into their own experience and build meaning through networked fields of information. It is this last category—the time image—that is most pertinent to my exploration of aesthetic experience, because it facilitates the conceptual gaps that are required for the spectator's active and implicated meaning-production.

Claire Perkins' criticizes Deleuze's conception of cinema as a "monstrous system" where cinema and philosophy are brought together without much regard for the specific histories of the forms, and which does not allow for application to the usual processes of cinema analysis. J.M. Bernstein similarly notes that Deleuze's theory fails to apply to cinema, to determine "why movies matter to us."[181] In part, this is because Deleuze attempts to construct an entirely new

---

[180] Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 1-11.

[181] Claire Perkins, "Cinephilia and Monstrosity: The Problem of Cinema in Deleuze's *Cinema* Books," *Senses of Cinema*, no. 8 (July 2000): n.p., accessed 13 November 2019, http://sensesofcinema.com/2000/book-reviews/deleuze; J.M. Bernstein, "Movement! Action! Belief?" *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 14, no. 4 (2012): 78, accessed 13 November 2019, https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2012.747331.

"philosophy of thought and image," but it results in something that has been historically overlooked by film theory because it is not grounded in the historical and practical approaches that structure how it is possible to think about cinema. In her analysis of Deleuze's *Cinema* books, Perkins notes that Laura U. Marks' haptic visuality begins to take hold of the theory in order to develop application and further cinema analysis. Perkins is correct in her criticism of Deleuze's dense philosophy, which stylistically echoes his ideas in circular and often-paradoxical ways. He seems to write as he thinks, so that the language fractures into multiple possible interpretations. While it can be frustrating to read, this is in fact the thing that makes Deleuze so appealing for subsequent authors, all of whom take up his ideas and apply it through their own forms. The abstract nature of his ideas offer kernels, gaps, and entry points that can be leveraged through personal interest. This is perhaps not the most scientific, or concrete, methodology, but it is one that resonates with the poetic approach of art, where one image can mean different things to various people.

For Deleuze perception is a matter of framing what is seen and unseen, where the "real" requires an open-ness and fluidity that is not possible through the segmentation of time. This idea brings together both the space and time of cinema, since the individual image frame sets spatial boundaries on the image and editing sets boundaries on the time. It is also not only what is contained in the frame, however, that takes on this relational existence. What exists outside of it also matters, and Deleuze notes that a sensation of reality is dependent on a frame that is open, with the potential to expand beyond its visible boundaries. The gaze of the camera selects a scene and designates everything contained within it as important. In early cinema, these scenes were often structured as artificial sets on soundstages, which literally do not contain any information beyond the edges of the scene. Anything within the set was designed to be

photographed, and arranged for the filmic scenario, therefore there was no room for chance or change to unfold. Time functions similarly, where each segment of time is tightly controlled, and does not include any temporal conditions that might tread outside of the boundaries of the film object. Unlike a photograph that sets up the boundaries of a single image, the mobile cinematic image can constantly move through previously unseen spaces, making this framing of inside and outside more porous. The movement image constructs a sense of deeper time and space by binding elements together through the framing of the camera, the editing of the film, and composition of sound, but their flexibility is limited by the constraints of the narrative. The crystallized image (and time) can exist outside of what is depicted in the film. For Deleuze it is this play between the framing of closed and open sets that begins to echo the phenomenological experience of human perception, and it this framing that offers me the opportunity to draw concrete analogies between Deleuze's experiential philosophy and the actual matter of Cardiff and Miller's art installations.

The movement image comes close but does not quite succeed at making enough space for the image to expand beyond its original boundaries. Since *The Paradise Institute* installed a traditional linear film into the immersive cinema set, it would be easy to dismiss the cinematic experience as a movement-image that only creates the illusion of human perception. Yet, at the same time, the installation shifted the frame of the spectator's perception away from the filmic narrative, back outwards towards the cinema architecture, and even toward the viewer's own body. What seems like real space (the physical environment that our spectatorial bodies inhabited), suddenly blurred with the fictional narratives, and the fiction seemed to slip off the screen. Placed within the art gallery, the structure became sculptural rather than architectural, encouraging the viewer to apply the gallery conventions of physical positioning, individual

viewership, and critical distance to the act of meaning-making. The material qualities of the plywood were emphasized and read as something that one had to analyze as part of the work (as opposed to a cinema space where the architecture is often merely admired as decoration, or ignored as the portal to the actual artwork, not part of the work itself).

Upon entering the institute, the conventions of the structure shifted. The plush seats positioned the viewers as an audience—grouped together, forward facing, and with the expectation that the architecture would soon fade out of view in favour of a projected image. The aesthetic of the seating was comfortable, yet highly specific—clearly referring to the viewing experience of the cinema, and not the hard bench seating of the gallery or the comfy couch of home viewing. The chairs could have been from a performance theatre, but the screen that was centred in our vision proclaimed otherwise. In this space, we could expect that once the house lights went down, all attention would be on the virtual, recorded images that projected onto the flat surface. There would be no live interruptions and no utilization of the three-dimensional space around us. We would ignore everything in the service of the screen. The artists underscored this in the first moments of the installation, as we heard recorded voices chattering to one another before the movie started:

> [laughing] Where is she? Who are you? Why are we here? [indistinguishable chatter and laughing] Shhhhh. It's starting…[182]

[182] Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, "The Paradise Institute; 2001; Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller," Vimeo, 00:00:20-00:00:38, last modified 30 August 2013, accessed 16 May 2018, www.vimeo.com/73446251.

The lights went down, the music came up, and the chatter subsided so that we could turn our attention to the screen. After a minute of watching the movie, we were abruptly drawn out of the illusion by the loud ringing of a cell phone in the audience. The woman answered and quickly ended the call, but the distraction served to instantly remind me of my spectatorial body, and those of the others who shared the space around me. Ironically, this irritating distraction referenced another virtual body within the narrative of *The Paradise Institute*, not the live spectators who physically sat beside and behind me. Each of us heard the same thing contained in our personal headsets, experiencing the audience distraction in the same way as the screen centred in our mutual vision-space. These shifting and collapsing frames ensured that the relational fields of the artwork were in constant motion. Despite the fact that the artwork strictly controlled all of its visual elements, the implication of the viewer as part of the action contributed to a sense of shared presence between the space and time of the spectator and that of the film. The spectator had to do additional conceptual labour to both pinpoint the appropriate conventions for their viewing situation at the time (gallery goer, or cinema spectator), and then reconcile the new context when it abruptly shifted under our feet. We had to call upon our memories of what an appropriate performance of spectatorship looked like, and then adapt our expectations.

As noted earlier in the discussion of Henri Bergson's attentive recognition, human perception is always framed by our subjective interests. We notice what is important to us in that moment and elide the rest. Cinema similarly frames visual elements for us, which we then further frame out based on our subjective interests and responses. The time that we take to stretch out this process—and the subsequent comparison to aspects of our own memory—is how we determine the relevance of what we're seeing to our own experience. In a film the

cinematographer positions the camera to include certain aspects of the scene while planning for bodies to enter and exit the composition in particular ways. When viewers watch the resulting image, we might all observe the same primary elements (the lead actor or actress that is centred in the shot), but perhaps not individual background actors, a painting hanging on the wall, or an airplane passing overhead. Some viewers may notice some of these elements, but that is dependent on the viewer's interests or focus at the time of viewing. While we may not notice everything, in many films all of these minor details are carefully constructed and chosen for inclusion (or some elements are deliberately excluded). The more detail that is available in the frame and the more open the fields of the framing are, the more likely it is that individual viewers can find unique meaning-making in the image. Interpretation and meaning-making become attached to the viewer's phenomenological experience of the image. In Bergson's process of attentive recognition, the most complex reactions are created by a long duration of comparison, which has the potential for multiple outcomes. In this scenario, the shorter the time we spend with an image the less we will notice about it, or we may notice only surface-level references. The greater the gap between the original input and potential outcome(s), the more indeterminate the reaction.

Since the movement image is constructed as a series of images and gaps, Deleuze draws attention to the importance of the intervals themselves (both cinematic and conceptual) as a means to extend and complicate the process of perception. Whereas Hollywood cinema suppresses the intervals in order to create an illusion of a seamless whole, it might be possible to construct an experience that is closer to actual perception by emphasizing the voids and fissures between the sequential images of cinema. In *The Paradise Institute*, these ruptures were visible even within the filmic continuity of the installation, through the timing of the cinema montage

with the ringtone. On screen, a nurse spoke directly into the camera ("It's time to wake up now…") and when a blank slug occupied the next frame of footage, the image held on this blackness for several moments while the cell phone rang.[183] In the next shot, the patient she was speaking to opened his eyes to look directly into the camera (fig. 15). Writing about this moment, film theorist Jim Ellis notes that:

> [w]e seem to see in the eyes of the character of Drogan the flicker of recognition and, perhaps, annoyance. We think we see the irritation of an actor distracted in performance, when what we are seeing is a projection of our own annoyance at being jostled out of the space of the filmic illusion and brought back into the space of the cinema. The initial identificatory relay has been interrupted, and replaced with a different one: we identify with the actor's irritation, rather than with the character. In the context of the installation, we are given the further shock of turning in annoyance, realizing that there is no cell phone behind us, and recognizing that there is a further level of identification at work, an identification with the illusionary space of the cinema which has been created by the binaural soundtrack.[184]

Identification with a character is at the heart of traditional spectatorship theory in film, whereby the viewer experiences the action through an on-screen proxy. The artists played with this dynamic of viewing the screen-image in order to reveal something about how we watch and how the image constructs our reactions though visual positioning. In this scene, both the Nurse and

[183] "slug" is a colloquial film term for one or more black frames that create pauses between images.

[184] Ellis, "Sound, Space and Selfhood," 33.

Drogan were shot in a close-up view that framed their heads and shoulders. This arrangement emphasized their gaze into the camera (and by proxy, into the eyes of the spectator). The characters seemed to look at us, but at the same time the montage arrangement of the nurse looking, and then Drogan looking, indicated that they actually watched one another. The spectatorial gaze slipped between the fictional and real space, which was then further underscored by the collision of a blank image and a ringing that seemed to occupy a three-dimensional space behind us.

Unlike dominique t skoltz's *y2o* film, *The Paradise Institute* populated the screen with more culturally diverse bodies. The audience members spoke with a variety of accents, and even in different languages, implying that the audience demographics may or may not be the same as the viewer. The main character of Drogan was played by an English-speaking, mixed-race actor, and several of the other on-screen actors spoke with accents. Yet, because the film was designed to read as an "every-film" in a generic reproduction of an art-film typology, their particular bodies did not seem to have particular relevance to the plot. As Cardiff notes in one of her asides: "I've read about this film. It's based on a true story about experiments the military did in the 50s… Or maybe that was another movie."[185] In the film, the handsome lead was still accompanied by a pretty actress, and they were both entangled with ugly villains from an indeterminate Eastern European country. To a white, Western viewer such as myself, race and nationality did not seem to play a strong role, since there was nothing on screen that I would not recognize in a "normal" movie; however, for viewers of colour, or for someone from one of the nationalities referenced in the production, these representations might produce points of slippage.

[185] Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, "The Paradise Institute; 2001; Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller," Vimeo, 00:03:16-00:03:30, last modified 30 August 2013, accessed 16 May 2018, www.vimeo.com/73446251.

Seeing or hearing someone like yourself creates moments of recognition, that are then filtered through the artificial constructs of the aesthetic encounter. For instance, when the phone rings in the audience, a woman picks up and carries out a brief conversation in Italian—something which likely played well to the installation's original audiences at the Venice biennale.

In addition to this tension between fictional and direct forms of addressing viewers, the artists also produced sensual environments that implicated the viewer as a participant in the action. The material conditions of the cinema architecture functioned alongside perfect reproductions of more ephemeral qualities of cinematic experience, including three-dimensional sound, the texture and tempo of the moving image, the processes of editing, and other elements that would ordinarily go un-noticed in a traditional cinema space where attention is not as distracted as it was in Cardiff and Miller's installation. The artwork made the spectator's perception itself visible, highlighting how the artwork trained the gaze and the body to perform in certain ways, and in the service of particular effects. Through aberrant movement or altered temporalities, the time image can stimulate a longer process of attentive recognition by creating "disturbances of memory and failures of recognition."[186] Where the sensory and memory images became indiscernible, they acted as crystallized images that refracted multiple possible perceptions simultaneously. This, in turn, created voids that the spectator had to fill with their own body and mental processes. *The Paradise Institute* underscored the gaps between images and incorporated the spectator's own thinking-process into those spaces.

[186] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 54.

The (Im)material Conditions of Cinema

Physical interactivity functions as one of the key ways to implicate the spectator within an aesthetic situation. Yet, the material presence of cinema is something that is difficult to pinpoint since it exists in aural, visual, and social forms rather than as tactile objects. In Cardiff and Miller's installation, the audio distractions of the ringtone and Cardiff's dialogue created a realistic texture—as if it existed in the same space as the audience—but also reminded us that the film unfolded within the architecture of the cinema venue. It called attention to the auditorium as a three-dimensional space around our spectatorial bodies and highlighted the fact that this space also included other people. By structuring the aesthetic narrative around a disruption that would be quite common in a normal theatre space, viewers were reminded of the shared environment of cinema architecture, and also that *The Paradise Institute* installation included other gallery viewers who were all placed into the work at the same time to experience the unfolding of the installation together. It was a gesture of reflection that highlighted the usually invisible social framing of experience and rendered the relational qualities of spectatorship tangible. As noted previously, the social conventions of the gallery and the cinema are inflected with classist associations. Whereas the gallery emerged from a pedagogical and nationalistic framework that demonstrated appropriate reverence for the histories and objects collected therein, the cinema's roots in the fairground holds very different connotations. The cinema has often carried associations with lower-class entertainment, disposable or reproducible experiences, and a lack of seriousness, whereas the gallery seems to require seriousness and polite decorum. In this artwork, the social dynamics of cinema and gallery audiences were as important as the sculptural and performative qualities of the installation.

The gallery is often associated with individualistic viewing, where (even in groups) viewers are expected to have one-on-one encounters with artworks and determine meaning on their own. In this scenario, viewers control the amount of time they spend in front of a work, how close they get to the piece, and in what order they view artworks. In the cinema, viewers gather together to have the same experience, at the same time; emotions and reactions stretch out across the crowd as the flow of the film guides viewers through the same narrative. Each of these viewing contexts shapes meaning-making from the experience in complex ways. Whereas the individual gallery viewer is organized in a relationship between body, artwork, and exhibition space, the cinema further complicates this with the addition of multiple other bodies, each with their own perspectives and reactions, as well as the social dynamic of group action. In the group, we can feel each other feeling, react to the responses of others, and even police the behaviour of other spectators. While art galleries demonstrate some of this policing of conventional behaviour in the space (i.e. security guards who patrol visitor movements), looking at visual artworks as a unified group is unusual.[187] The cinema heightens the effect of group coherence, since viewing in the theatre always means watching with others (even if the other seats are empty, they still operate as placeholders for other bodies).

[187] While tours (in-person and technological) may direct group attention toward the same object, it is not the same kind of focal point as cinema or performance, where the durational flow of the object aligns with the viewing experience of multiple people. In the gallery, live-tours direct attention in multiple directions (including toward the artwork, the tour guide, other audience members, and other artworks) simultaneously. Additionally, these tour interventions engage conventions of performance and technology (cinema, audio-devices etc.) that mediate the viewing experience.

By creating fictional distractions, Cardiff and Miller drew attention to qualities of cinema-going that are usually ignored or frowned upon.[188] While we might acknowledge the communal act of watching a film, we also want the other bodies to slide into the background just as our own supposedly does. We are asked to turn our cell phones off at the beginning of the film so as not to annoy other spectators with light and noise. Most Western cinemas ask audience members to keep their feet off the chairs, to avoid kicking the seat in front of you, and talking during the film is frowned upon ("Sshhh. It's starting…"). These behaviours are warned against and enforced in the same way as gallery conventions of speaking quietly, and not running around or touching artwork—sometimes through official channels (a trailer in front of the film, gallery signage, or ushers and security staff), and sometimes through unofficial peer policing. *The Paradise Institute* positioned the spectator as both an individual, who approached the structure in the bright light of the gallery, and part of a community—both real and virtual. Gallery-goers moved from being individuals into a communal context as the theatre architecture structured a grouped seating arrangement. While we existed in our individual seats, all of the spectators were interconnected within the larger iteration of rows and aisles. Everyone's gaze focused forward towards the screen as we settled into the usual conventions of watching a film. Yet, once the film started rolling, the cell-phone ringing and whispering voices of fictional audience members immediately interrupted this immersion. The artwork abruptly reminded us of the original, individual, gallery-based viewing context that we had to reconcile with the illusion of the communal cinema. Both existed simultaneously in a state of tension. Suddenly, the conventions

[188] Newspaper reviewer Robin Tierney describes something similar, noting that "[r]arely do the words 'annoying' and 'awesome' so aptly describe the same experience," as "[e]wwww, the humanity … unaware or without care of invading the gentle viewer's personal space" is reproduced through the intersection of the virtual and physical environment of *The Paradise Institute*. Robin Tierney, "Grand illusions: Corcoran turns art into a surreal experience," *The Examiner*, 17 November 2006, Accessed 12 November 2019, https://www.cardiffmiller.com/press/texts/Paradise-Institute-Corcoran.pdf;

and shorthand that we would normally draw on to construct a reading of the work for either the gallery or the cinema were in conflict. This complication required a reconsideration on the part of the viewer and extended contemplation of the gap between recognizable cues.

Film theorist Julian Hanich describes two typologies of collective viewing in his book *The Audience Effect: On the Collective Cinema Attention*: quiet-attentive and expressive-diverted.[189] Despite the prevailing idea that cinema viewing is an isolating activity, featuring passive attention that is easily overwhelmed by the screen image, Hanich explains that what looks like isolated viewing is always social. Viewer conduct within the cinema space is always a communicative act, whether that unfolds in a quiet or noisy manner, since even in silent, focused viewing, audiences are agreeing to the conventions of communal activity by being respectful of the experience of other viewers and turning attention towards the same object. While expressive-diverted (noisy) attention may seem to disrupt collective focus on the film-object, Hanich also makes a case for this kind of viewing as a way for audiences to share emotions and reactions with the larger group. Occasionally, these outbursts may even be taken up collectively—a gasp of horror at a jump-scare, or outburst of laughter—so that cinema viewers can "feel together."[190]

The range of social interaction in the cinema—from quiet focus to expressive outbursts—oscillates attention between the screen and spectator performances for their social collective. Hanich explains that the cinematic viewing experience requires both the intentional formation of collective groups (attending the cinema with family or friends), and the forging of temporary collectives by laughing, crying, or raging in unison over the course of the filmic duration. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller highlighted this shifting dynamic of social attention by utilizing

[189] Julian Hanich, *The Audience Effect: On the Collective Cinema Experience* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

[190] Ibid., 179.

both the quiet-attention of *The Paradise Institute*'s real-life viewers, and the expressive outbursts of the fictional audience as a performance for other spectators (both real and virtual). The constructed nature of the viewing situation slipped out of its neat frame to become visible, which subsequently forced the viewer to reconsider their own performance of spectatorship. It created gaps in the social dynamics of viewing, to reveal the act of looking itself as a creative material—to make us both see, and feel, how we saw and felt other spectators, perceived their reactions against our own, and constructed responses collectively.

The audience experience was not the only intangible aspect of cinematic viewing that Cardiff and Miller made perceptible. The binaural audio was extremely effective in its ability to create a three-dimensional soundscape for the spectator, where sound seemed to align with the same space as the physical structure of *The Paradise Institute*. With their thoughtful reproduction of the material qualities of the sound, Cardiff and Miller created slippages between the real and artificial. Both the physical cinema space and the virtual soundscape closely mimicked the real, however, both forms also included deliberate flaws that pushed against the spectator's trust in their own perception. The spectator's ability to fall into the smooth flow of experience was disrupted, prompting small moments of Bergson's attentive recognition (or critical reflection). In many of these cases, the flaws in the illusion were quite subtle, and required specialized knowledge in order to overtly trace what was wrong; however, even without being able to trace exactly what caused the disruption, the installation still created the sensation that something was "off." This induced a phenomenological experience akin to Freud's idea of the uncanny, where the experience was familiar, but not quite right.[191]

[191] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, trans. James Strachey, ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 929-952.

When Cardiff leaned over to whisper in my ear, the conversation was an echo of something that most people hold in their memories—or at least recognize as a trope of being in the cinema. "Here's your drink… You can have some of my popcorn," she murmured as she munched away. The binaural audio sculpted the sound as if she were sitting on my right, and her shuffling, crunching, and talking took on a distinctly different quality than the screen-directed sound that seemed to reverberate from the front of the diorama architecture. The film sounded tinny and recorded, bouncing off the various architectural surfaces of the auditorium, while Janet was fleshy and live next to me. Embedded in the narrative of *The Paradise Institute*, her subtle body movements took on a momentousness that the actual person sitting next to me did not. With headphones covering my ears, it was not possible to hear the sound or sense much else about the presence of any other real spectators in the cinema with me. This meant that Janet's fictional body operated with more materiality than reality itself.

In an overview of the historical evolution of acoustical design in cinema spaces, Meredith C. Ward argues that aural absorption is a neglected area of research. She notes that acoustical design operated as a key component of the fusion between the spectator and screen spectacle when Modernist influences strove to decrease attention toward the viewer's body in favour of a transcendental immersion in the film.[192] As discussed previously, in the early days of moving image presentation (and even in early live-theatre), both the venue and spectatorial behaviour reflected the rambunctiousness of the fairground. Ward explains that the architectural calming of audiences began more than thirty years before the introduction of the first cinema spaces, with Richard Wagner's design of the Bayreuth Opera House (opened 1876). Wagner's design for

[192] Meredith C. Ward, "The Soundscape of the Cinema Theatre: Acoustical Design, Embodiment, and Film Theatres as Vehicles for Aural Absorption," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 10, no. 2 (Autumn 2016): 136-137, accessed 28 February 2018, www.muse.jhu.edu/article/651456.

musical and theatrical productions, Ward writes, was one of the first architectural spaces aimed at manipulating an audience's experience of listening toward a total sense of immersion. With narrower, cone-shaped auditoriums, a pit that disguised the orchestra, and lighting controls, the space developed an immersive experience for both listening and watching the stage.[193] With the aim of creating a transcendental space for the experience of Wagner's operas, the Bayreuth foreshadowed the push toward complete immersivity that would later become the hallmark of the cinema space.

As moving picture technology developed, advances in theatrical design were applied to the cinema. In response to the flat framing of the projected image, auditoriums narrowed and deepened to provide greater control over each viewer's position in relation to the image. Box seats were discarded due to their foreshortened views, and since the screen could magnify the size of the image, balconies were extended further back to enable more seating.[194] The poor quality of early recorded sound required increased attention to the acoustical design of space, since badly designed spaces contributed additional sonic distortions. Angular, convex, and non-symmetrical surfaces were employed to fix reverberation, and sound-dampening curtains, carpeting and upholstery were incorporated to absorb unwanted sound.[195] The noisy distraction of the spectatorial body was also controlled through seating arrangements, shifting from the ad-hoc temporary seating of nickelodeon theatres to the more permanent installations of luxurious auditorium chairs. In the 1930s, the 'continental' seating plan became popular with European cinema designs, removing the centre aisles in the seating-plan, and only allowing access to a

[193] Ibid., 142.

[194] Craig Morrison, "From Nickelodeon to Picture Palace and Back," *Design Quarterly* 93 (1974): 9, accessed 12 March 2018, www.doi.org/10.2307/4090905.

[195] Ward, "The Soundscape of the Cinema Theatre," 148-149.

single row of seating from either end, with wide spacing for movement between seats. This design created a situation where the best seating was established directly in front of the screen, enacting the correct perspective, and discouraging unnecessary movement during the presentation.[196] This re-arrangement occurred concurrently with the introduction of sound to movies, which transformed the tone of audience behaviour from a "talking audience for silent pictures" into a "silent audience for talking pictures."[197] In this way sound, image, and audience bodies were all controlled towards a greater immersive effect.

During these developments, the atmospheric tone of the cinema space transformed from the carnivalesque curiosities of Gunning's 'cinema of attractions' into the early forms of the black box nickelodeon. As the architectural spaces evolved, they became more elaborate—just as galleries developed imposing spaces that expressed the institutional ideology of the museum—and so the glamour of Hollywood expressed itself in the extravagant picture palaces, which were modelled after exotic locations, with atmospheric interior design and art deco embellishments. In the final stage, both gallery and cinema pared down the venue in the service of the art object, to allow the staging to fade into the background. For the gallery, this resulted in the white cube, and for the cinema, the black box we know today, with limited interior decoration, clean lines, and spaces that focus attention on the screen. As Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece notes, there was a collective shift away from the spectatorial experience of architecture as an object itself, and towards spaces that recede in favour of the artistic content.

It is within this context of aural and visual immersion that Cardiff and Miller operate. The structure of *The Paradise Institute* mimicked many of the elements that would ordinarily reduce

---

[196] Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece, "Revisiting the apparatus: the theatre chair and cinematic spectatorship," *Screen* 57, no. 3 (Autumn, 2016): 261, accessed 25 October 2019, www.muse.jhu.edu/article/651456.

[197] Robert Skylar quoted in Szczepaniak-Gillece, "Revisiting the apparatus," 263.

emphasis on the viewer's body and the exhibition space, yet it simultaneously constructed gaps and ruptures that turned attention towards these aspects which would normally disappear. The detailed construction of the miniature cinema reproduced the balconies, seating, stage, and screen as if it were an actual space, incorporating decorative etchings on the balcony railings, a variety of sculptural elements around the screen and stage, and even ornamental vaulting in the ceiling. The sound was similarly illusionistic. As the film began to play, I could discern a recorded quality to the audio—it sounded somewhat hollow. The sound was directional, coming from the front of the structure, but also moving as it reflected off the balconies, walls, and other surfaces of the diorama-theatre. In an ordinary cinema, this sonic quality might have gone unnoticed; however, the artists had also deployed the equally-realistic secondary layer of audio to create a disjunction between the texture of recorded sound versus the warmer, closer and three-dimensional sound of Cardiff whispering, phones ringing, and audience chatter.

In her overview of the audio engineering that took place in the architectural design of cinemas in the early twentieth century, Meredith Ward points out the importance of not only structuring the space in a way that controls the reception of audio, but also of constructing a space that does not eliminate external noise entirely. While the ideal acoustical space must manage the direction and volume of sound, as well as the amount of reverberation, a space without some amount of background noise creates an uncomfortable awareness of the body's own noise.[198] Breath becomes too loud, as does shuffling and other seating adjustments. One might compare this phenomenon to that of the robotic "uncanny valley," where spectators are repulsed by robots or animations that come very close—but are not completely successful—at resembling humans. In these cases, the likeness seems flat somehow, lacking the rich micro-

[198] Ward, "The Soundscape of the Cinema Theatre," 152.

movements, organic textures, or flaws that characterize actual human bodies. It is possible to extend this notion to understand the failure of audio-visuals that attempt to reproduce life without incorporating the rich textures of background noise or spatial layering that is part of the human experience of the world. In this situation, the perfect illusion is still trapped on a flat screen, and lacks the range of taste, touch, smell, and hearing that we expect. Therefore, the cinematic image is expected to capture some sense of realism, but not come too closely. It exists in its own slightly different spatial and temporal dimensions.

Cardiff and Miller deploy sound here to draw attention to the multiple layers of audio-visual experience that construct spectatorship. Instead of incorporating the background noise into a more immersive illusion, the artists creates gaps and frictions that make the flaws obvious and disrupt our smooth (unnoticed) sense of reality. Through both sound and image, *The Paradise Institute* disrupts its own illusion with a variety of subtle measures. When spectators enter the structure, they still carry with them the memory of the gallery space and the rough plywood exterior of the structure it contains. This memory is quickly overwritten by a new experience of the elaborate interior space. Upon closer inspection, the illusion of the forced perspective cinema is unravelled by the smooth textures of the doll-house space, the miniature scale, and monochromatic colour spectrum. The entire space is already black and white, as if it were part of the film itself, and although it is possible to admire the detail of the construction, it is obvious that it is a fabrication.

When the movie began, this same rupture was revealed within the film itself. The first few images of black and white footage was introduced with several frames of scratched leader, which immediately marked the projection as celluloid-based rather than digital. On a film print, the start of the movie is always preceded by a stretch of blank celluloid that allows the

projectionist to wind the film onto the projector mechanism. This "leader" ensures that the first frame of the image is positioned before the light-bulb, and not wound up on the take-up reel. As film passes through the machine, the surface of the emulsion is sometimes scratched and gouged, leading to the texture that many people recognize as "filmic." Similarly, as a photo-chemical image-making process, the film also has a grainy texture from the small chemical fragments that formulate dark, light, and colour in the image. Celluloid is an old-fashioned and expensive medium for both shooting and exhibition, so in *The Paradise Institute* these material conditions positioned the movie as either old (classic), or as residing within the tradition of independent, art-house filmmaking that had made a specific aesthetic choice.

Immediately after the introduction of the leader, the film grain and scratches dropped away, and the black and white image became extremely sharp in a way that is associated more with video than film. Shot with an anamorphic lens that framed the image in a wide-screen format, the image was constructed in a manner that most would associate with cinema rather than the square aspect ratio of older television or computer monitors. This again seemed to reference the theatrical experience—and yet the image did not look or move like cinema. This is because the image was actually shot with a digital video camera, which operates with a different frame-rate than cinema.[199] The temporal pacing of the image was slightly off, which made it feel very subtly like not-cinema. While digital and film-based moving images are still created in essentially the same way—a series of images are lined up in sequential relationships—the physiological effects of the two mediums are quite different from one another. An experienced eye can discern the difference in film, video-tape, and digital images based on the textural qualities of the image, the contrast of light, and even the way the image moves. In addition to the

[199] Confirmed via email by Cardiff Miller studio manager, Zev Tiefenbach.

obviously higher resolution of a digital image versus earlier formats, the temporal experience of the two differ as well. In a film projector, the mechanics of the machine move the image in front of the light-bulb as a shutter frame simultaneously aligns the image and blocks or allows light through. In the timing of this constant progression, the human eye cannot distinguish the instants between frames, creating the illusion of realistic-motion without dwelling on the space that stitches the image together. In early films, the mechanics of the camera and projector were slower than what we are accustomed to today, ranging from 16-24 frames per second (fps). The low-end of this range is slightly slower than our ability to compensate for the voids, which leads to a sense of the image moving in a fast, jerky manner (like a Charlie Chaplin film). As technology improved, 24 fps was generally adapted as the rate that was closest to the viewer's naturalistic vision, and with the advent of video and digital images higher frame rates were introduced.

Scientifically, the higher frame rate of digital video does depict an image that is closer to the real experience of human vision.[200] We are accustomed to the higher frame rates of television, as we watch news and sporting events play out as direct traces of reality; however, the conventions of cinema have retained the lower frame rate, which results in an image that maintains a distinctive aesthetic of cinematic temporality. This image is not-quite real, unlike a sports broadcast, and is inflected with other visual cues like lighting, colour timing, lens choices, as well as other photographic techniques that reference the visual language of the silver screen rather than the television or computer monitor. When watching these films as higher speed images on the television, everything looks a little flatter (less depth of field between the foreground and background of the image), the image lines are sharper, and the colours are more

[200] Most video is 30 fps and at least one film attempted to commercialize 48 fps.

saturated, yet less rich somehow.[201] These effects are not exclusively due to the speed of the frame, but they all work together to create distinctions between filmic and video aesthetics that continue to influence our expectations of what a cinematic image "looks like." The most vivid example of this occurred in the 48fps iteration of Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy (2012-14). Released in both the high-frame and regular 24fps versions, the incorporation of this new technology was widely panned by viewers. Although the film was held up by its creators of an exciting new development that was going to transform movie-viewing by introducing new realism into the cinematic experience, many viewers complained of the new frame rate being distracting and making the film look like a cheap television soap-opera.[202] As sequels of the series were publicly released, the creators had to adjust lighting, set design, choreography and post-production techniques to compensate for the more realistic movement and develop an aesthetic that was more in line with what viewers expect from cinematic experience. In other words, what viewers want from the cinema is not necessarily a quality of pure realism or liveness, but the softness and dream-state of the silver-screen.

All this is to say that the human eye notices these subtle differences in how space and time are represented in the moving image. The film contained within *The Paradise Institute* mimicked the aesthetic of celluloid-based cinema through black and white photography, as well as the film grain texture at the start. Yet, like the uncanny valley, my (admittedly trained) human

[201] This effect is most obvious with new televisions that use "motion smoothing" effects that digitally extrapolate the image to increase the frame-rate. Films that have this effect applied often look too flat, sharp, and move strangely.

[202] See: Katey Rich, "Peter Jackson Explains Why You Should See the Hobbit in 48 fps," Cinemablend, last modified 13 December 2012, accessed 25 April 2018, www.cinemablend.com/new/Peter-Jackson-Explains-Why-You-Should-See-Hobbit-48-fps-34603.html; Vincent Laforet, "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Masterclass in Why 48 FPS Fails," Gizmodo, last modified 19 December 2012, accessed 25 April 2018, www.gizmodo.com/5969817/the-hobbit-an-unexpected-masterclass-in-why-48-fps-fails; Josh Dickey, "Seeing 'The Hobbit' at 48 frames per second has improved a lot over 3 films," Mashable, last modified 18 December 2014, accessed 25 April 2018, www.mashable.com/2014/12/19/the-hobbit-48-frames-per-second/#kGrZg2TFkPqD.

vision could detect that something was wrong with the image, even if it was not possible to identify outright. The film leader at the beginning was unnecessary for the digital projection, and the temporality of the image moved differently—faster than is standard, and with more image crispness and contrast than celluloid. White highlights were slightly blown out, with none of the gradient detail expected in an overexposed filmic image. In the installation, the contrast between the old theatre (that structures an expectation of a certain kind of on-screen aesthetic) and the digital image created a jarring effect. As with the audio, complete immersion in the image was disrupted not just by the narrative, but also within its formal qualities that created friction between the illusory image and seeing myself seeing.

In this self-referencing of the viewer's body and the aesthetic expectations that they bring to the experience, *The Paradise Institute* also called attention to the viewer's physical relationship with the architecture. The image on screen was not projected from behind the viewer (like one might expect from a theatrical cinema experience). Instead, it was delivered by a digital projector from the back of the screen, which subtly altered the quality of light in the space. In the theatrical experience, even though it may not be obvious, there is soft change in the luminescence of the space as the projected beam passes overhead, which creates a sensation of being inside the image, or at least draws a physical connection between the lens of the projector and the surface of the screen that incorporates the spectator. The light itself becomes an architectural feature and this sensation was lost in *The Paradise Institute*.

Locating the Spectator in Time and Place

Despite the illusion of viewing with a crowd of other people, *The Paradise Institute* actually structured a very intimate viewing experience that located the spectator in a mobile

positioning alongside the fictional and material apparatuses of the artwork. Janet addressed the spectator directly, using words like "you" and "my" to outline our relationship. Not only did her audio sound like she sat next to me, but she implicated me in the action, describing how she had arranged for "us" to meet someone in the lobby after the show. The narrative intertwined her story and my physical presence with the narrative of the film, as her paranoia about leaving the stove on was doubled by images of a burning house, and as I tried to recall my own actions when I left home. Jim Ellis points out that the German doctor from the film operated as a double for the mysterious man Janet wanted us to meet after the film, and our own bodies—trapped in the cinematic perspective of facing the screen—were often confronted with facial close-ups that seemed to address us, or with bodies that we were supposed to identify with.[203] The spectator was set up to be as confused in our perspective as the man who woke at the beginning of the film. Through this confusion the artists established a world that interrogated the stability of the viewer's position in both space and time. Were we located in the "here and now" of the filmic narrative, the cinema auditorium, the artificial miniature-cinema, or the sculptural installation? The temporalities and spatialities of each of these sites knotted together so that the viewer had to labour in order to recognize their own physical and conceptual positioning.

As a repeatable, recorded experience, cinema is rarely associated with the quality of "eventness" that live performance is accorded; however, film scholar Mary Anne Doane points out that the "…the cinema, together with other technologies of modernity, is instrumental in producing and corroborating an investment in events, in dividing temporality to elicit eventful and uneventful time."[204] The cinema frames certain kinds of time and action as important,

[203] Ellis, "Sound, Space and Selfhood," 34-37.

[204] Doane, *Emergence of Cinematic Time*, 144.

worthy of attention, and its ability to produce a photographic likeness of reality implies a natural duplication of the real. Unlike a painting or sculpture, the photograph seems to be untouched by human hands—although we know better than to believe that. Due to the capacity for realistic representation, which is framed within a specific field of interest, cinema operates as both an "indexical record of time" and an event. The past and present rub up against one another simultaneously, echoing John Dewey's assertion that experience is only reflected upon when it is segmented out from the ongoing and unnoticed flow of experience.

Doane notes that the film event creates a structure for meaning by presenting only what is important. Shooting everything that lies within the camera's gaze, or random scenes with few tangible connections, produces an image with no narrative focus. Where the field of relationships is too open, individual viewers may simply dismiss all of the information as irrelevant to their own subjective experience, without spending time to discern relationality. Alternatively, a group of viewers might interpret the same content in ways that are so drastically different that they may as well not have been attentive to the same object. Meaning-production is focused through the framing of the image, but also through editing, which cuts away time that is deemed unimportant. Action occurs on screen, and viewers can construct a sense of time flowing forward despite the presence of montaged images, multiple camera angles and distances. The blank intervals between scenes and images begin to read as time passing, even though it is not depicted. For Doane, this is uneventful, dead time.[205] She describes the idea of "dead time" as a crucial component of filmic experience, because the intervals produce spaces of rupture, where it becomes possible to look back and recognize the construction of the image. By producing gaps in the flow of time and space, the image forces a kind of stepping back, and a re-consideration

[205] Doane, *Emergence of Cinematic Time*, 140-170.

what the image means to the spectator's subjective experience. To elucidate this idea Doane distinguishes cinematic time as a distinctly different construction than "real time" and explains how the spectator is spatially positioned in relationship to photographic temporality. Using historical examples from early cinema, which often simply recorded short, unedited live events, Doane outlines a spectatorial shift from an "onlooker," who is conceptually positioned as a witness sharing the space and time of the photographic event, to someone that "occupies an unthinkable space of site," or the non-space of a cinema-goer who is dislocated from the events on-screen.[206] This unthinkable space is abstract, constructed by the language of framing, shots, edits, and montage, which shift the spectator's position from "being there" to a floating eye that can be anywhere and everywhere.

The virtual address of the spectator begins to speak to matters of positionality, particularly regarding the physical conditions of spectatorship. While many experimental films attempt to break down the division between the spectator's body and the screen image through the traditional container of durational moving images, there are also powerful examples of artists who have shifted the image off the screen and into physical space. Building on the tradition of expanded cinema, this practice is not exclusively limited to—but becomes most obvious in gallery settings—where the viewer is mobilized out of their seats. In the book *Cinematic Chronotopes,* Dutch film theorist Pepita Hesselberth considers the way that cinematic work constructs spatial and temporal locationality, as well as subjective presence, through the work of gallery-based film, theatrical documentary aesthetics, large-scale urban environments, and finally in commercial puzzle-plot narrative films.[207] In this book, Hesselberth usefully distinguishes the

[206] Ibid., 158.

[207] Pepita Hesselberth, *Cinematic Chronotopes: Here, Now, Me* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

different phenomenological experiences of the gallery and the cinema through the spectator's identification with the *here* of space, the *now* of time, and the *me* of subjectivity. While the emphasis on any of these categories shift depending on context, these notions are always at play when the spectator develops meaning through experience.

As I have discussed previously, the art gallery generally sets up a peripatetic situation, where attention is split between multiple objects. Using the example of Andy Warhol's installation art, Hesselberth traces the way that spectators form locational relationships between the space of the objects through a horizontal landscape perspective that often incorporates multiple artworks at the same time. The viewer is positioned among the objects and traces the connections from the distancing of their subjective perspective. While this might be disruptive to the temporal dynamic of the films, Hesselberth also notes that this ability to move between a single film and the broader space of the gallery creates dynamic movement between the detail and scale of the exhibition, in an echo of the tradition of the cinematic closeup.[208] Just as image abstractions using close-ups, erasures, or decay stimulates the process of attentive recognition, the physical movement between micro and macro scales creates moments where recognition can be distorted. In order to develop an understanding of what the viewer is looking at, they must reference back to their own memories, but also to the anchor point of their own bodies by comparing the object scale with their physical form. Is it bigger or smaller than me? Can I hold it, or can it envelop me? The reference point of the human body is essential to how we come know the world around us.

[208] Citing the ideas of Mary Anne Doane, Hesselberth describes how the cinematic close-up creates a contradiction between the part and the whole by isolating and abstracting an image from the larger scene and disrupting the context that is necessary for legibility. It is only in stepping back or placing the close-up in a relational sequence of images that the image becomes legible again as a whole. Hesselberth, *Here, Now, Me,* 34.

Hesselberth notes that the positioning of the spectator in the "here" always incorporates the space of encounter, even if that means that physical space is elided in favour of the virtual one and operates in tangent with the "now" and the "me" of the spectatorial subject. This is accomplished in a threefold manner: first by the spectator's proximity to the screen(s), second by filmic rhythms, and lastly by the relationship between the filmic and the viewer's temporalities.[209] In the exhibition of Warhol's work, the "here" is mediated, rescaled, augmented, and punctuated in order to demonstrate how the virtual and physical collide, and the "now" is always the spectator's present as it flows alongside the boredom produced by Warhol's "uneventful" images.[210] This stands in contrast to cinematic time, which purposefully designates time as "eventful" or important. With the cinematic image, the spectator locates themselves in the "here" of the film because their actual space is immersed in darkness; however, the time of the moving image is no longer directly related to the spectator's flow of time, which makes it more difficult to locate oneself in the *now*.

In her discussion of the ways that viewers locate themselves in filmic time, she draws attention to the construction of narrative, which often bounces between past, present, and future narratives, and requires the viewer to keep track of those shifts over the duration of the film. With disjointed narrative temporalities, it is up to the spectator to remember what has happened previously, and to forge their own expectations of what will come as part of their cinematic meaning-making through the duration of the film. This interpretation does not just occur at the end of the film, but throughout the viewing process, in the moment of experience as

[209] Ibid., 36.

[210] Ibid., 28.

understanding unfolds. Films often play with this process in attempts to stymie expectations, creating unexpected narrative twists to surprise viewers and create emotional affect.

Hesselberth's argument outlines how both Warhol and traditional narrative films require the viewer to actively locate themselves in relation to the image in order to produce meaning. This entails both the spatial and temporal location of the subjective self alongside that of the image, and often the two are not synchronous. Much like Hesselberth's examples, *The Paradise Institute* also focused the spectator's attention on this flux between bodily and conceptual positionality. Spectators were prompted to locate themselves in multiple contexts simultaneously—the art gallery, the immersive object of the installation, the artificial cinema space, and the narrative of the film—as we tried to make meaning out of the clashing film narrative, the audio narrative, and our own experience simultaneously. We knew that we were supposed to interpret something out of these scenes that did not fit easily together, and the noir-sensibility of the film immediately told us that there was a mystery that we were supposed to piece together. In the cinematic, spectators must determine meaning like a detective, recognizing the clues as they appear on screen, and then tying them together over the duration of the filmic event. If the fictional film were something that we encountered in a regular cinema space, it would be fair to expect that all of the loose ends would be tied together. Unfortunately, this film was also an artwork that did not provide clear connections. I had to look outside of the filmic narrative, piecing together clues from the context of the exhibition space, the material form of the object, the title, and the didactic material in order to develop a better understanding.

Throughout the duration of the work, the secondary audio narrative worked against my ability to settle into the flow of the film, continuously bouncing me out of the filmic temporality. Yet, with its cinematic form, *The Paradise Institute* still forced spectators to feel the full duration

of the work. The doors were shut and guarded by the gallery attendant until the film was over, and we were allowed to exit again. The work's temporality took precedent over our own ability to wander around the gallery, and we had to first experience the full sequences of images and audio before it was possible to create meaning out of the work. Overall, it was not possible to stably locate myself in the "now" of the film, or even in the "now" of the gallery since the film still overwrote my attention occasionally. This tension provoked a situation where I had to continuously locate myself in the "here" of multiple spaces (real and virtual), as well as the "now" of the film, the "now" of the spectator, and the "now" of the gallery-goer simultaneously.

Cardiff and Miller's artwork concurrently centred and decentred the spectator's relationship with the world. Their attention to materiality was one of the key aspects of this sensation, since the tactile and kinesthetic interaction of our (spectatorial) bodies in space is largely how we determine the relationship between our subjective viewpoint and the world around us; however, we locate ourselves not only in the space of the world, but also the time. Artworks like *The Paradise Institute* recognize this aspect of spectatorship and revealed it to spectators through disruptions that called attention to the environment and the event of spectatorship as a construct. Although the centred position of the subjective body may seem stable, how is it possible maintain that anchor if the ground keeps moving under your feet, or you slip through time? Often, when we lose our position in the world, the first response is to find a landmark for recalibration. *The Paradise Institute* refused stable landmarks for this to occur, and to that end, the spectator had to turn even further inwards to centre themselves on their own memories and experiences, in order to produce productive reflection.

These gaps and instabilities in the material, temporal, and conceptual forms of the artwork enabled Bergson's attentive recognition. *The Paradise Institute* produced these failures

in recognition through the ontological clash between cinema and the gallery. The artists disrupted the conventions of both exhibition spaces to show the spectator what their own experience looked and felt like, oscillating between the live unfolding of experience, and the distance that comes from contemplation. Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller leveraged this fragmented sensibility to construct an experience of spectatorship that highlighted the constantly-in-the-making process of piecing together unstable connections and contexts. The installation explored the presence of the real and virtual (in both space and time), the precarity of simultaneously reading different environmental contexts, and the framing of perception through attention to the social and collective experience of cinema, as well as the material conditions of the spectator's location in relationship to both the evanescent and physical materials that constructed their experience of the installation. In turning against the expectations of viewers *The Paradise Institute* revealed the temporal and social framing of cinematic experience. By making visible these normally hidden qualities of cinema, it became possible for viewers to interrogate their own expectations and conditioned responses.

Chapter Four: The Liveness of the Stage

If the gallery foregrounds spatial dynamics, and the cinema the temporal, then the stage is where space and time come together. Theatre constructs an aesthetic encounter that is entirely different than that of visual arts and cinema, positioning itself above-all as a connection to the real-time experience of live performers who share space with viewers. It takes up space, with a physical auditorium and co-present performers and spectators, while also playing out in a set duration like the cinema; however, the felt quality of this spatial and temporal unfolding is quite different than the other exhibition contexts. In a theatrical context, another living subject performs in unfolding space and time explicitly to produce an experience for the spectator. This is not to say that visual art and cinematic works do not exist for a viewer, but rather their object-life can extend beyond the viewing experience—even when placed in storage those objects still exist as such. It is not possible to put a performer into storage. They may perform without an audience, at which point it stops being a performance and becomes a rehearsal or personal exercise, or be recorded for posterity, at which point it becomes a film, a photograph, or audio recording, rather than a live performance.

The following chapter takes up the context of the stage, through the *Situation Rooms*—an artwork that uses disciplinary intersections with cinema and visual arts to push against the performative presumption of live-ness.[211] By introducing spatial and sculptural objects as well as temporal moving images into the performance context, multi-media performance group Rimini Protokoll draws attention to the spectator's position in relationship to the spatial divide between

[211] Note that my investigation of performance illustrates the spectatorial conventions of theatrical practice; however, many of these conventions are also produced by the separate-but-related practice of performance art, and the understanding of human social relations as performative. See: Paul Allain and Jen Harvie eds., "Introduction," in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

viewer and actors. Much of the research on Rimini Protokoll's work has emerged from performance studies, where various authors have studied the way that team's interdisciplinary artworks produce a reality effect by intersecting documentary narratives, scripted performances, and embodied or interactive audiences.[212] Jumping from this interest in the reality-effect of the productions, performance theorist Shannon Jackson uses a Marxist lens to analyze the interactive labour that is produced by the interaction between recorded images, the spectator's play-acting, and the physical environments, and Andy Lavender similarly examines the tension between viewing and acting, particularly with regard to its effects on spectatorial agency and the communication of documentary narratives.[213] While all of these approaches are useful in understanding what spectatorship looks like within Rimini Protokoll's productions, they remain quite abstract and disconnected to individual experience. Through my analysis, I expand on the foundations laid by these other researchers; however, I also deploy the material practices of visual art—looking at closely at the textures, contours, and experiential qualities of objects—to understand how physical, social, and conceptual relationships unfold between the spectator and the *Situation Rooms* production.

Although the immersive space of the *Situation Rooms* production seems to do away with the architectural conventions of theatre, the following chapter examines how the traditional

---

[212] See: Daniela Hahn, "Performing Public Spaces, Staging Collective Memory: 50 Kilometers of Files by Rimini Protokoll," *TDR: The Drama Review* 58.3 (Fall 2014): 27-38, accessed 7 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.1162/DRAM_a_00371; Thomas Irmer, "A Search for New Realities: Documentary Theatre in Germany," *TDR: The Drama Review* 50.3 (Fall 2006): 16-28, accessed 7 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.1162/dram.2006.50.3.16; Meg Mumford, "Rimini Protokoll's Reality Theatre and Intercultural Encounter: Towards an Ethical Art of Partial Proximity," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 23.2 (2013): 153-165, accessed 7 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.1080/10486801.2013.777057.

[213] See: Shannon Jackson, "Tech Support: Labor in the Global Theatres of The Builders Association and Rimini Protokoll," in *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 144-181; Andy Lavender. "Modal Transpositions toward Theatres of Encounter, or, in Praise of "Media Intermultimodality," *Theatre Journal* 66.4 (2014): 499-518, accessed 7 February 2020, www.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2014.0105; Andy Lavender, "Viewing and acting (and points in between): The trouble with spectating after Rancière," *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 135-157.

architectures and conventions of theatre are deployed in this new context to create a sense of embodied spectatorship. By engaging the philosophical groundwork from earlier chapters, I examine the felt qualities of liveness through the production, and trace how the physical and conceptual divisions between spectator and stage play key roles in developing this sensation. I tie the ideas of John Dewey and Henri Bergson into performance theory by leveraging Jerzy Limon's notion that meaning production is dependent on the spectator's ability to read their own positional relationship to the multiple contexts of "fictional" and "real" that are at play in a theatrical production. I push this idea further to suggest that the architectural division of the stage plays a key role in this framing, enabling the viewer to read themselves as either a part of, or separate from, the unfolding action.

Although the theatrical stage space provided a blueprint for the cinematic auditorium in the early 1900s, the spectatorial experiences are unique. Going to the cinema does not feel the same as going to live theatre, and the audience expectations and conventions of viewing are different. Similarly, in visual arts, the gallery experience does not look like a theatrical one; however, the white cube has demonstrated long-standing interest in the live-body of a performer as an aesthetic medium for gallery-based work. In terms of its interdisciplinary slippages, it is important to note that theatre artists made some of the first steps toward multi-media practices, bringing sculpture and painting to the stage through set design, lighting arrangements, and cinematic projections, and when we look at experimentation and expansion of both visual arts and cinema in the early twentieth century, performance is often a key part of the interdisciplinary

intervention.[214] For these artists, oscillation between objects of visual art, the recorded images of cinema, and the live-bodies of performers and viewers created a productive tension around the body as both an art-object, and as an intervention into the boundaries that segregated art and everyday life. This history is important to my analysis because it establishes the precedents for Rimini Protokoll's work, which stimulates playful relationality between the spectatorial, sculptural, moving-image, and interactive elements of the performance. For my purposes, however, it is also crucial to maintain the distinction of the theatrical stage along and its accompanying conventions. The spatial and temporal split between performer and audience is most obvious within a theatrical tradition, rather than artworks that were developed for more peripatetic contexts. This is not to say that my case studies cannot be read through a broader performance-practice lens, but simply that it is outside of the scope of this dissertation.

The fluidity of disciplinary framing is often the point of focus in new theatrical forms that discard the division between audience and stage entirely. Contemporary forms of theatre have taken up site-specificity and otherwise transformed non-theatrical venues in order to produce spectatorial experiences that enfold audiences inside of the action, so that they might literally share the space and time of the work. By creating the sensation that spectators can take part in

---

[214] A few key examples of early interdisciplinary theatrical practices include Richard Wagner (1813-1883), Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), and Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943). Within visual arts, consider actress Hélène Vanel's performance of hysteria at the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme of 1929 (Don LaCoss, "Hysterical freedom: Surrealist dance & Hélène Vanel's faulty functions," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 15, no. 2 (2005): 37-61, accessed 4 April 2019, www.doi.org/10.1080/07407700508571504), and Duchamp's string intervention where children played with balls at the New York edition of First Papers of Surrealism in 1942 (David Hopkins, "Duchamp, Childhood, Work and Play: The Vernissage for First Papers of Surrealism, New York, 1942," *Tate Papers*, no. 22 (Autumn 2014), accessed 27 October 2019, www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/22/duchamp-childhood-work-and-play-the-vernissage-for-first-papers-of-surrealism-new-york-1942). Additionally, at the first Expanded Cinema Festival in 1965, Claes Oldenburg's *Moveyhouse* (1965) used actors to direct, limit, and disrupt access to the auditorium seating (Nadja Rottner, "Oldenburg's Moveyhouse: Performing a Cinema without Film," *Oxford Art Journal* 36, no.1 (March 2012): 1-18, accessed 4 April 2019, www.doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/kcs006), and artists like Robert Whitman, Carolee Schneemann, Stan VanDerBeek, and VALIE EXPORT have all integrated performance into their interdisciplinary practice.

the fiction, rather than simply witness, immersive performances aim to collapse the traditional distance between spectator and action. These works are often semi-interactive (or purport to be, anyway), and they are always multi-disciplinary, engaging sculptural encounters between the viewer and set-space, as well as including cinematic or even video-game dynamics as part of the staging. These new exhibition practices always intertwine physical environments with production narratives, and as such, do not offer the standardized encounters we see in the gallery, cinema, or performance theatre. Architecture becomes contingent on the content of a particular production (and vice-versa). To address these issues, I turn the work of Rimini Protokoll as they take up the conventions of the theatre, cinema, video-games, and the art gallery in a single aesthetic experience. While the *Situation Rooms* production did not take place in a traditional theatre, it remains valuable precisely because its architectural disruption drew attention to the spatial and conceptual expectations of viewer, stage, and action.

Most often described as "theatrical" and produced within theatre festivals, *Situation Rooms* brought together the staging of theatre, cinematic mediation, and the spectatorial immersivity of art installation as part of what the group described as a "multiplayer video piece."[215] Originally staged in 2013 at the Ruhtrienniale (Ruhr, Germany), this immersive installation toured worldwide in multiple languages including German and English, and through various exhibition venues. The conceptual essence of *Situation Rooms* explored the global arms trade through the stories of twenty narrators, ranging from a Congolese child soldier to a German politician. Based on true-stories and told by the people who had experienced the events, the production positions itself as a kind of documentary theatre. The work facilitated exactly twenty

[215] Rimini Protokoll, "Situation Rooms – A multiplayer video piece," Rimini Protokoll, n.d., accessed 7 November 2018, www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/situation-rooms.

spectators at one time, each of whom played out a selection of ten scenarios by following the video prompts and navigating a physical set-space over the 75-minute runtime (fig. 16). There were no live actors within this production, rather, it comprised of an interactive theatre set and moving image narratives. This meant that the work could drop into almost any site that had enough space to set up its sprawling environment, which then overwrote the context of the venue. The self-contained set had very little reference points with the external venue, so it did not need much more than a flat surface; however, as with any other art experience, the contextual lead-up influenced the spectator's reading of the work.

Instead of relying on the context and architectural foundation of an already-existing theatrical venue, *Situation Rooms* constructed an entirely new environment. Unusual non-theatrical locations for the modular stage produced a tension between the spectator's recognition of the place as "not theatre"—with its own site-specific history—and the self-contained architecture where the theatrical performance unfolded. Importantly, although the set-space did not look like what we might ordinarily recognize as a theatrical venue, it still relied on some of the same conventions as a proscenium or black-box theatre. The set-space standardized audience experiences throughout its global exhibition run; however, it did so not by relying on generic architectural standards of theatre, but by placing the spectator in the middle of the mobile stage-space. As with a "normal" theatre production, the stage sets moved from location to location. Ordinarily, these sets would subsume the already present and supposedly neutral theatrical stage architecture, to present the fictional space as a natural state, rather than one that is deliberately constructed over the infrastructure of the stage. Since it was often located in non-theatrical sites that refused to fade into the background, the *Situation Rooms* created a tension between site and stage. Finally, this self-contained staging also affected the spectator's experience, since it no

longer relied on the traditional audience-stage divide reproduced by most contemporary theatrical venues. Instead of effacing the spectator's bodily experience in favour of an imaginative focus, the production literally placed the spectator in the middle of the staged action as an actor and audience participant simultaneously. This gesture disrupted the literal divide between audience and stage, as well the conceptual divide between the fictional the real, or witnessing and action.

Contextualizing the Architecture of the Theatre

Over the course of the twentieth century, in addition to the design of purpose-built theatre spaces, permanent theatrical venues have retrofitted industrial buildings and there has been an increase in site-specific theatre practices that mirrored the shift of visual art out of the gallery. In more recent years there has also been a tendency towards entirely immersive productions, which often set 'dress' non-theatrical sites so that the audience and performances spaces tangle into a single shared environment. Ostensibly disrupting the traditional theatrical experience, Josephine Machon writes that in immersive productions: "…each particular environment has its own order and logic; a logic that encourages a spontaneous response from its audience and requires a personal abandonment of everyday boundaries."[216] While this may initially seem to establish an entirely new array of performance conventions, immersive exhibition practices only function as novel because they are referencing older, more familiar traditions of theatrical presentation and spectatorship.

[216] Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 27-28.

In non-immersive theatrical scenarios, the proscenium and stage plays a key role in establishing spatial arrangements where audiences are expected to arrive at a set time, file into the auditorium as an orderly crowd, disperse according to their assigned seating (ranked by ticket price, of course), and sit quietly while observing intently over the set duration of performance. Performance in the black box maintains similar expectations, even if audiences are seated on the same level as the actors, in semi-surround, and lack the obvious single-point perspective of the proscenium frame. By comparison, the immersive event can begin before the performance itself, through promotional activities or performances in the lobby or exterior of the space.[217] The audience shares the space with actors, and there often seems to be spatial and temporal fragmentation of the narrative, where viewers can only see part of a narrative, depending on where and when you happen to be located. Like the work of Rimini Protokoll, immersive productions often attempt to implicate the spectator in a way that disrupts their experience of passively watching a performance, as co-authors of experience rather than merely observers.[218] Recent critiques call attention to the neo-liberal effects of hedonistic distraction, the illusion of freedom, and hidden labour that circulates within many immersive theatre productions. Jen Harvie and Adam Alston have also both addressed the problems of audience participation, where interaction-design is highly controlled and often commodified.[219] Josephine Machon points out that there is significant resistance to immersive practices, where complaints include shallow narratives or confusing and inconsequential action, but that this should not prevent critical

[217] Ibid., 23.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Adam Alston, "Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, agency and responsibility in immersive theatre," *Performance Research* 18.2 (2013), accessed 29 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2013.807177; Jen Harvie, "Labour: Participation, Delegation and Deregulation," in *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

consideration of these works.[220] I agree with Machon, that while these concerns are valid, it is important not to just dismiss immersive practices entirely. As with the visual arts critiques of immersive works as spectacle, immersive theatre also holds the capacity to bring together viewing bodies and aesthetic environments in novel, emotionally resonant, and critically rigorous ways. The history and current application of this still-developing aesthetic practice is worth close consideration exactly because it is so popular and seems to engage a range of audiences—many of whom are not regular theatregoers.

Machon, and others, have traced the roots of this form through interdisciplinary experiments in both art and theatre, from Wagner's ideas of gesamtkunstwerk, the installation experiments of the Surrealists, Dadaists, Bauhaus, and Happenings, modernist theatre like that of Artaud, and Environmental Theatre from the 1960s onwards.[221] Machon also recognizes the influence of contemporary technologies like virtual reality environments and interactive gaming, which often import the user's virtual avatar into the digital environment or replicates a first-person perspective that is linked to user-driven movement and decision-making.[222] While it is easy to find fault in these new technologies and forms as part of global surveillance capitalism and the changing social dynamics of its users, it is also crucial to recognize that the traditional architecture and content of the black-box auditorium has always been just as driven by economics and popular taste. The application of these ideas in immersive spaces is simply an evolution of what came before.

---

[220] Machon, *Immersive Theatres*, 41-42.

[221] Ibid., 29-32; See also: Bertie Ferdman, "A New Journey Through Other Spaces: Contemporary Performance beyond 'Site-Specific'," *Theater* 43.2 (2013), accessed 29 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1215/01610775-1966475; Lavender, *Performance in the Twenty-First Century*; David Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[222] Ibid., 35-36.

What we now recognize as a "theatre space" generally establishes a kind of perspectival viewing, where the audience sits in a static formation, facing the stage that acts as a window into another world. Analogous to Plato's philosophy of the 'cave,' these theatre structures lock the audience into a single position to view a constructed scene that establishes an illusion.[223] Theatre historian David Wiles traces the development of this audience arrangement through European Renaissance and Enlightenment era theatres, and theatre designer Iain Mackintosh similarly pinpoints Shakespeare's Globe Theatre as one of the earliest forms of modern theatrical architecture.[224] In his book, *Architecture, actor, and audience,* Mackintosh's background as a theatre designer is particularly valuable because he analyzes the phenomenology of theatres by intertwining philosophical and cultural logics of the space with the realities of theatre economics, audience capacities, environmental factors, and materials. His approach is reminiscent of my own process, which similarly interweaves discussion of the material effects of installations with an analysis of the philosophical and experiential ramifications for the spectator. The interweaving of the spatial experience and the conceptual meaning-making that occurs within these environments is important because one affects the other, but also because understanding these impacts makes it possible to reproduce them through curatorial and aesthetic design.

Throughout his book, Mackintosh considers the balance between harmonic spatial design, and the economic pressures of sustaining a theatrical venue. As with the cinema architecture, audience capacity and arrangements were influenced by the economic need to fit the maximum amount of paying clients, while retaining good sightlines, safety concessions, and other practical necessities. The arrangement of spectators in these early spaces would have transitioned from

[223] See: Plato, "Book VII," and "Book X".

[224] Wiles, *A Short History*; Iain Mackintosh, *Architecture, actor, and audience* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993).

loose groups of viewers around a temporary platform to more permanent, walled-in facilities with purpose-built staging areas.[225] Rather than what we now think of as standard raked seating, these early permanent spaces would have primarily consisted of standing-room viewing, with balcony seating available for wealthy patrons.[226] Mackintosh notes that the advent of Puritanism led to the closing of many Elizabethan outdoor theatres in 1642, which shifted performance indoors to private homes. With the move to an interior venue, the exhibition arrangement had to contend with smaller, poorly lit, and ad-hoc spaces that operated within a domestic aesthetic. When post-Restoration theatres re-opened, they maintained many of these domestic trappings, along with the addition of the new proscenium stage framing as a way to distance audiences from the action.[227] Despite this new introduction, Mackintosh points to significant evidence that audience members were still often seated on the stage itself—challenging the assumption of the strict boundaries between audiences and actors. If not seated on the stage itself, purpose-built architectures incorporated adjacent balcony-box seating for very important patrons. These proximal seating positions were desirable not only because of the social visibility, but also because the candlelit staging hindered the ability to see the actors.[228] While Mackintosh does not state this explicitly, it is also likely that the darkness affected the size of the auditorium (you cannot make a space that is too far away from the stage if it results in audiences that cannot see anything), and the openness of the architecture (again, deep balconies would not be conducive to viewing in poor lighting). The spaces also necessarily had to incorporate windows, which would

[225] Note that these early Elizabethan spaces were not yet fully enclosed, due to lack of indoor lighting among other things.

[226] Mackintosh, *Architecture*, 12-18.

[227] Ostensibly separating the audience from the fiction of the stage.

[228] Mackintosh, *Architecture*, 14-18.

provide some exterior lighting during the day.[229] Despite these limitations, the interior spaces would have had the great benefit of being more conducive to increasingly elaborate staging, and the indoor environment supported year-round, weather-proof productions.

The tension between the desire for immersive illusion and the need to incorporate the maximum number of spectators has carried forward into contemporary theatre architectures. In the mid-1700s a turn toward decorative and illusionistic staging relocated audiences off the stage and resulted in architectural changes to the auditorium. Technological advancements during the eighteenth and nineteenth century improved lighting and introduced more elaborate sets as well as special effects.[230] Better visibility of the stage required more attention to the quality of sets and other staged elements, while more controlled audience layouts produced perspectival effects within the theatre space, as viewing bodies were arranged to see certain elements (for instance, realistically painted set flats or backdrops) and remain ignorant of others (additional sets or props in the backstage). All of these changes promoted immersion in the scenic spectacle over the social dynamics of the audience. Over time, the three-sided stage from courtyard theatres (that had previously extended out into the audience space) also shrunk down to fit within the framing of the proscenium.[231] This retraction supported the perspectival illusion that was becoming popular for staging, but also had the side-effect of creating a binary spatial division between audience and stage. This did not happen all at once, and it was by no means a universally strict separation; however, this spatial reconfiguration does gesture toward a new conception of the spectatorial role as one of watching. By delimiting the spectator's "job" as one of witnessing,

[229] Ibid., 37.

[230] Ibid., 40-57.

[231] Ibid., 20.

rather than operating as a social presence (being seen as an important patron alongside the stage action), the world of the stage and the world of the spectator became entirely separate.

This had the additional effect of designating theatrical performance as distinct from other activities—both physically and conceptually separated from the everyday activity of the outside world. The UK-based Theatres Trust advocacy group notes that simple performance spaces proliferated across the country in the eighteenth century, often becoming standardized to allow for more complex touring productions to swap shows in and out of the space. To support this, the auditorium architecture needed to visually recede in favour of the illusionistic sets, and also physically function in a way that allowed for changing productions to set up and take-down efficiently. This would have meant standardized stage and auditorium features, with less design variances. In staging every theatre space as "the same," spectatorial experience was universalized and dislocated from the specifics of site. The theatre space took on the same ideology of neutrality that O'Doherty criticized in the gallery, operating under the fallacy that the exhibition space did not alter the meaning of the work itself, and as with the gallery, the role of spectatorship became more internalized. The work of meaning occurred in the spectator's imaginative location in relationship to the fictional space and action of the play—rather than the physical environment and enactment of the stage—producing a phenomenological split between the reality of the production and the lived reality of the audience.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, early experimental theatre practitioners pushed against the supposedly passive effects of this illusionism, with key theorists like Bertolt Brecht and his notion of the "verfremdungseffekt" (estrangement effect), where audiences were

prevented from narrative identification or staging (and hence submersing within the illusion).[232] Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty similarly sought to disrupt audience passivity by leaking the staged environment into audience space to create multi-sensory spectacular 'shocks' that would to turn the gaze back towards theatrical construction.[233] These practitioners determined that popular forms of illusionistic staging interfered with their conceptual production of critical spectators, and therefore set the groundwork for new spatial conditions of viewing that either literally or conceptually disrupted the clear division between audience and stage.

These concepts had some physical effects on theatrical architectures but did not discard the stage and auditorium design entirely. Iain Mackintosh does not describe the architectural effects of this split away from illusionism extensively, but he does note the rise of the "Little Theatre movement" in the 1920s and 30s, where intimate, flexible, and bare-bones spaces offered practical and conceptual alternatives to more spectacular (and therefore costlier and more time-consuming) mainstream staging.[234] These small spaces often hosted productions with small casts and limited set-decorations in square, simple rooms with no backstage or permanent seating. While these spaces discarded the framing of the proscenium and the raised stage platform of older permanent theatres, this did not mean that the spaces of seeing and acting were intermingled. Flexible audience seating enabled various arrangements of the performance space, but still regularly maintained the distinction between viewing area and single focal point of the staged action. Additionally, the black box retained many of the other conventions of theatre, as the temporal container of an aesthetic experience that begins and ends at certain times, in a space

---

[232] Bertolt Brecht, "On the Experimental Theatre," trans. Carl Richard Mueller, *The Tulane Drama Review* 6, no. 1 (1961): 2-17, accessed 29 October 2019, www.doi.org/10.2307/1125000.

[233] Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958).

[234] Mackintosh, *Architecture*, 52.

clearly separated from everyday life, with spatial arrangements that distinguishes spectators from the action.[235] It functions as the neutral site for theatre—or as Peter Brook might describe, an "empty space"—that fades into the background in favour of the performative gesture.[236]

Alongside the development of these black box spaces, the 20th century saw a shift of performance outside of the theatrical auditorium and into alternative, non-theatrical spaces. While there are earlier precedents, site-specific and environmental theatre as a movement emerged in the 1960s and came into its own during the 1980s.[237] The rise aligned with similar trends in visual arts, where Minimalism and land-art turned attention toward the exhibition site, early installation art and institutional critique were occurring, and where artists were incorporating performance into visual arts practices. Sitting in the complicated junction between art and performance, "Happenings" are an often-cited influence on site-specific theatre, as purposefully intermingled contextual environments, sculptural objects, and performances that aimed to break down the barriers between art and life.[238] Influenced by both earlier practices and "Happenings", famed Polish director Tadeusz Kantor played a key role in site-specific and environmental theatre, going on to note that space could be considered the most essential component, or "Ur-Matter," of theatre because of the way it could transform everyday materials

[235] See: Mark Fearnow, "Little Theatre Movement," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), accessed 28 October 2019, Oxford Reference Online; Wiles, *A Short History*, 255-257.

[236] Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968).

[237] Notable earlier examples include Tyrone Guthrie's 1936 production of Hamlet, which was staged inside a castle after rain disrupted the courtyard staging—an event that deeply influenced Guthrie's later stage design (Wiles, A *Short History*, 52-54), as well as Artaud's use of barns and hangars to disrupt the theatrical space, or Bauhaus and Futurist designs that similarly deconstructed the division between audience and stage (Juliet Rufford, *theatre & architecture* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 52-53), and some have argued that there are formal precedents in circuses and processions (Laura Levin, *Performing Ground: Space, Camouflage and the Art of Blending In* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 69.)

[238] See: Kaprow, "Untitled Guidelines," and "Happenings in the New York Scene."

into aesthetic ones.[239] Where Peter Brook's conception of the theatrical enabled the black box to fade into the background, artists working within these new traditions brought space to the foreground, as an intrinsic (and often interactive) element of theatrical productions.

In 1967, Richard Schechner would famously coin the term "Environmental Theatre" as a way to describe these site-driven productions and establish a framework for expanded theatre that created a scale between "Pure" orthodox theatre and "Impure" public life.[240] In this scale, events range between art and life, from: non-aesthetic demonstrations, to intermedia happenings (presumably within a visual arts tradition), environmental theatre, and finally traditional theatre. By considering both site and social context simultaneously, Schechner provided the vocabulary for theatrical explorations of the relationship between audiences, theatrical work, actors, and site. From there, performances could delve deeper into the specific context of the site, the embodied presence of spectators and actors, participatory theatre, and immersivity.[241] Much of this meant refusing the static proscenium theatrical arrangement, to move towards the neutral black box, non-theatrical sites, and purpose-built temporary spaces. As such, audiences were freed from their forward-facing seats.

Here we return to immersive theatre, where the site seems to be entirely overwritten by the theatrical fiction—or at least interwoven to be indistinguishable. Theatre scholar Bertie Ferdman points out that contemporary site-specific practices take up tensions between the fictional and real through the explorations of pre-existing and constructed environments, while

---

[239] Tadeusz Kantor, quoted in Wiles, *A Short History*, 13.

[240] Richard Schechner, "Six Axioms for Environmental Theater," *Environmental Theater* (1967; repr., New York, Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 1994), xix.

[241] See: Machon, "Introduction," *Immersive Theatres*, 29-38; Ferdman, "A New Journey," 5-9; Adam Alston, "Making Mistakes in Immersive Theatre: Spectatorship and Errant Immersion," *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4.1 (2016), accessed 29 January 2020, www.doi.org/10.1515/jcde-2016-0006;

also highlighting the importance of technology in recent productions.[242] The introduction of computing technology has dramatically increased the potential for interactivity between spectators, narratives, actors, and environments; like Miwon Kwon, Ferdman connects site and the virtual (discursive, but also digital platforms), to trace the ways that performance deploys technology as a potential performance site. Ferdman also points to the contemporary interest in the local (driven by ecological issues, food security, and resistance to globalisation), that has similarly filtered into the arts—making local sites and histories popular creative topics.

Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* takes place within the context of these extended practices of site-specific and immersive theatre, where the conceptual underpinning of the work is directly related to the tension between the constructed theatrical venue and a contingent site with a very different conventional use and its own embedded histories. In addition to the deployment of the complex conventions of immersive theatre, the *Situation Rooms* also incorporated tropes of video games and cinema. This meant that the space of theatre suddenly had to be read through multiple situational contexts, with references to the personal interface and interactive potential of video games, the visual mechanics of documentary film, as well as the large-scale immersion of unfolding cinematic time. All of these connotations influenced the spectator's theatrical reading—as simultaneously divided from, and incorporated within, the action of the performance. Within the *Situation Rooms*, spectatorship did not function alongside professional actors; instead, spectators took on the roles that pushed narrative action forward. Yet, the production also did not entirely position viewers as creative co-authors. Instead of relying on other bodies to perform, spectators had to take up the scripted action and play it out through their own experience. Driven by performances captured on digital screens rather than

[242] Ferdman, "A New Journey," 6-9.

live action, the *Situation Rooms* undermined and created paradoxes in the spectator's expectations of live performance.

Despite this shift of performativity to the spectator's body, *Situation Rooms* did not necessarily produce a scenario where the spectator had more agency, or an ability to change the course of action. Just as the actor with a script cannot really improvise without risking the narrative flow of a production, spectators in the *Situation Rooms* still had to maintain their pre-determined place in the action in order to produce a properly functioning experience of the production. The immersive environment produced a sense of synchronization between the spectator's experience of the real, and the fictional environment of the production, but did not necessarily produce live-ness as multiple potential reactions or choices for the spectator to follow. The interaction remained conceptual, just as with a traditional theatre production, with the movement and action of the viewer's body creating the point of contact between real and fictional experience.

Yet, the experience of Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* did not solely consist of the time spent in the immersive set-space. While the set itself created a self-enclosed environment, it was still situated in a broader context, which contributed its own specific layers of meaning to the reading of the production. When I viewed the work at Toronto's Luminato performance and arts festival in June 2016, *Situation Rooms* was installed in a defunct industrial power plant called The Hearn (fig. 17). Decommissioned in 1995, the space had largely been left to decay except for its occasional use as a dystopic film-set.[243] In 2016, Luminato retrofitted the space for short-term public use by cleaning some of the rubble, stabilizing structural issues, and creating a

[243] Films such as *Pacific Rim* (2013) and *Robocop* (2014) were shot on location at the Hearn; Luminato, "The Hearn: A History," Luminato, last modified 20 April 2016, accessed 7 November 2018, https://luminatofestival.com/Blog-Archive/2016-04/The-Hearn-A-History.

temporary 1,200 seat theatre as well as a pop-up restaurant.[244] These alterations maintained the industrial atmosphere, cordoning off areas that were unsafe for public access, while a variety of small art installations and theatre productions were arranged within the larger maze of the industrial plant. The festival was an exciting chance for spectators to experience the ruinous aesthetic of the building for themselves, and the urban exploration of the Hearn was as much a draw as the exhibited art. As such, the industrial site of the Hearn was on display, performing its history, and acting in dialogue with both the larger festival context and the constructed set of the *Situation Rooms*.

The *Situation Rooms* set was a three-dimensional, full-scale architectural structure that spectators could enter and explore (fig. 18). Plywood beams and sheets with both natural wood and grey paint faced their unfinished texture outward to reveal wall joints, piping, electrical work, and other construction necessities. From the exterior, it was unclear what the interior spaces might look like. A few sections of the set revealed some of the interior set-space materials, like the geometric screening from an office space, a corrugated iron rooftop, window draperies, and a wall featuring a rear-projected cityscape. These surface textures layered, stacking one story onto another, and creating the illusion of a haphazard shanty town that had organically developed. Around the perimeter, several yellow doors contrasted with the rough textures of the set exterior and the Hearn's architectural ruin. Featuring a warmly saturated hue, and a glossy finish that seemed untouched by the deterioration of time and travel, these doors were tantalizing. Despite this invitation, they solidly refused access to the interior spaces hinted at through the wooden screens and window portals. Only the chosen were permitted into these

[244] Derek Flack, "Toronto's defunct power plant to get major makeover," blogTO, last modified 17 April 2016, accessed 7 November 2018, www.blogto.com/arts/2016/04/torontos_defunct_power_plant_to_get_major_makeover.

zones. While the set structure did read as a theatrical set-space because of my prior knowledge, the hanging light-rigs, and barricaded staff-only zone, it would have been easy to mistake the structure as part of the already-existent rubble of the Hearn. The quality of the materials mimicked the real wear-and-tear of the old industrial space and seemed to speak to the same kind of re-purposing that Luminato had deployed in reclaiming the old power plant as an artistic venue (fig. 19). If performance is comprised of an unfolding and interactive co-presence, here, the Hearn and the *Situation Rooms* enacted a dialogue. The set seemed linked to the longer history of the building, as a space that had been a key part of Toronto's industrial and economic heritage. In this way the constructed set became literally imbricated in the production of power (literal and figurative) that has kept the city running on local and international levels. While not directly connected to the global arms trade, the economic systems circulating within the Hearn generated political, social, and financial analogues with the themes of the *Situation Rooms*.

The site-specific appeal drove many of the curatorial choices of that edition of Luminato, and the *Situation Rooms* set piece fit in well with the industrial aesthetic, and alternative quality of the space as a theatrical venue. Using the Hearn as a venue provided a sense of adventure, of exploring new territory and producing unusual experiences that went beyond the spectator's everyday experience (whether that was their day-to-day lives, or the norms of theatre production). Although *Situation Rooms* was not always presented in extraordinary contexts like the Hearn, the transition between the external space and the interior set-space is nonetheless

important to the meaning-production of the performance.[245] In a black box setting, *Situation Rooms* still established a contrast between the lobby areas leading to the auditorium, and the conventional expectations that spectators would situate themselves apart from the action in order to view a play within the interior of the space. When viewers had to instead enter the sets usually saved for cast and crew, the production engineered a tension between the usual conventions of theatre and this new staging arrangement. From the outside, the exterior walls of the set-space blocked a panoptic view of the stage, which meant that spectators had no sense of what to expect until they were in the middle of the action. At my experience of the production as part of Luminato festival, the set-space of *Situation Rooms* looked ad-hoc, resonating with the industrial surroundings in the Hearn. Unlike a gallery or a theatre lobby, the staging looked at home in this building. As a retrofitted industrial zone, the Hearn held few established conventions related to aesthetic experience and supported experimental new viewing practices. The urban-exploration qualities of the space most clearly affected the viewing experience, establishing a sense that anything could happen, and that viewers were breaking ground into an environment rarely accessed by other city residents.

---

[245] For instance, the Paris presentation at Parc de la Villette (16 – 25 May 2014) was presented in a purpose-built, black-box space at an arts district developed in an historic slaughterhouse district (La Villette, "History & Heritage: A few key dates," La Villette, n.d., accessed 13 September 2019, https://en.lavillette.com/page/history-heritage_a175/1); Benjamin Levy, "Situation Rooms – Collectif Rimini Protokoll," Consollection Blog Jeux Vidéo, last modified 23 May 2014, accessed 13 September 2019, https://www.consollection.com/jeux-video/actualite/situation-rooms-collectif-rimini-protokoll-7954.html), the presentation at the Centre Dramatique National Nanterre-Amandiers from 24 January – 15 February 2014 also took place in a black box theatre (Emma Schoepfer, "Situation Rooms – Jeu video grandeur nature," Les Découvertes d'Emma, last modified 11 February 2015, accessed 13 September 2019, http://decouvertesdemma.canalblog.com/archives/2015/02/11/31498687.html), and a run from 17 December 2016 to 4 January 2017 at Hau2 Berlin onboarded audiences in the exterior hallways of the purpose-built theatre venue and an interior black box space (International Theater Amsterdam, "A Movie Guide to Situation Rooms – Brandstichter 2017: Rimini Protokoll," Youtube, last modified 12 January 2017, accessed 13 September 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPoMTjMAeGI).

The Ontology of Site & Stage

Since this set was primarily designed as a theatrical experience from the interior (where spectators were surrounded by an immersive and realistic environment), revealing unfinished surfaces on the exterior created a tension between the interior and exterior of the set; this gesture drew attention to the collapsed spaces for audience and stage. For viewers on the outside, the set would never become a theatrical experience. Instead, it was positioned as an object—an installation art-piece that could only be viewed, not lived-in. The gallery space ordinarily situates objects as disconnected from their surroundings, floating in the white void of the exhibition architecture, and only conceptually relating to other objects in the space. Viewers similarly encounter the work from a distance, appreciating the material and aesthetic qualities of the surfaces with their eyes only (viewers are rarely allowed to touch in the white cube). At the Hearn, the metal crowd-control barriers around the set clearly established a "look-don't-touch" decree that disassociated the set-object from onlookers.

In this way, the *Situation Rooms* began to function for two sets of spectators: those who would participate in the performative interplay with the work—who would experience a temporal encounter with sets, moving images, and other viewers—and those who maintained their position as outsiders—who could only look at the sets as an object. The full experience of the work was only accessible to those who had tickets to the performance, but unlike a traditional performance there was still some potential for non-ticketholders to engage with the aesthetic material of the production. Despite functioning as an object for external viewers, it was simultaneously clear that this space was accessible to certain human bodies. Docents and technician circulated behind the barrier, along with the audiences that lined up to enter the space at the appropriate time. Occasionally it was possible to see bodies navigating the interior of the

architecture through decorative screening that allowed glimpses into one of the rooms. Even the start of the production offered tantalizing hints toward an expansive interior, as spectators stood at assigned doors around the edges of the shantytown, waiting to be let into the hidden interior for the duration of the production. By overtly lining-up potential spectators, the production designers turned the start of the production into a dramatic gesture for non-participant onlookers, teasing at an experience that they too could have upon the purchase of a ticket. The material quality of the sets themselves similarly called into question the positionality of viewing, as either included or excluded. Sets are normally built to face an immersive interior towards the audience, and here—where the audience moved inside the architecture—the illusionistic side faced inward. This resulted in external viewers seeing what usually faces toward the hidden back-stage of a theatre: the raw fabrication of the supporting structure. The production could easily have designed both sides with illusionistic facades, but instead chose an unfinished aesthetic for the exterior. This gesture purposely turned the normal operation of a theatrical set inside-out, thwarting access to the fictional world that plays out in the time of performance.

The tension between seeing from outside and seeing from inside was crucial, because it established an early spectatorial rupture that carried forward into the production itself. While certainly those who did not hold tickets were limited in their understanding of the work, the staged space still offered some glimpses into what could be expected.[246] The external viewer's body still established a relationship alongside the set-object, and their specific experience of the Hearn as a site for aesthetic encounters. The ability to forge even a small relationship with the production space outside of the temporal container of the performance itself also enabled

[246] This is more than most theatrical productions offer, since purpose-built theatre architecture prevents passers-by from seeing any of the action or staging from the street, and usually begins at a set time, which further limits accidental encounters with the work.

potential or accomplished spectators to contemplate their future or past encounters with the interior setting. A gap arose in the structure's blockage of external viewing, and the spectator's understanding of the experiences that they had (or might have) inside the production space. This gap was further pronounced by the fact that even viewers who successfully completed a performance session in the *Situation Rooms* could not have a full understanding of all the potential narratives of the show, since they were limited to only half of the potential stories within a single run. As such, despite having seemingly consummated their spectatorial role in the performance, their knowledge and experience of the work would always be incomplete.

The literal division of the stage and audience space is one of the key tensions in the theatrical relationship between the performing bodies and spectators. Viewing bodies are often segregated while performative action unfolds within a different set-space. Despite the proximity of the living bodies of performer and viewer, this separation decreases the implication of the viewer in the performative events. The viewer becomes a witness who does not control or affect action. Modern dedicated theatre spaces are often designed with inflexible architectures for stage and audience seating, with permanently delineated spaces for the lobby, audience seating, stage, and backstage. In addition to these proscenium-style spaces, even the black-box model segregates audience spaces around the edges of an open space that acts as the stage.[247] While this arrangement is more likely to surround the action on multiple sides, or bring smaller groups of audiences closer to the action, it rarely produces the effect of being immersed (when actors move into the audience space, it often acts as a disruption of the stage divide). Like the cinema architecture, these zones of performance and audience space are typically locked into place and

[247] Here, the term black-box references a specific theatrical architecture that usually comprises of a small-to-medium sized room that is painted black. Flat floors and simple seating arrangements with moveable chairs or adjustable tiered seating mean that the space can be re-arranged to create more intimate staging scenarios. It is usually a lower-cost and more flexible performance environment.

cannot be altered or transformed into other uses. Anything that appears on a stage in an architecture like this automatically reads as a performance, because it cannot be anything else. Larger scale new theatres can be more flexible, as they are often designed as multi-purpose arenas, where the auditorium can be used for rock concerts, corporate conventions, political rallies, or even sports events, by adjusting the stage and seating layout. Through all of these contexts, the space becomes a crucial element in how the spectator develops an understanding of what is happening, where meaning is often produced by the spectator's location in relationship to the action, which is read alongside the context of the site itself. In the performance of theatre, the play-text cannot stand on its own; it is imbricated with the performances of actors, staging, and audiences, and external influences from the spectator's everyday life. As with Brian O'Doherty's white cube, it is important to recognize that the contained space of exhibition never operates in pure, neutral isolation, but is always in conversation with the broader world.

The long history of theatrical performance means that architectural forms have shifted through time, and it is important to recall that the distinction between audience and stage has not always been so clear. The physical connection to site pre-dates the turn toward immersive and site-specific theatrical productions, stretching back to the earliest performance traditions in the ancient world, such as early Greek and Roman theatrical practices, or Medieval marketplace and processional theatre. David Wiles describes how these forms treated site and performance as intertwined, where the performer's actions re-presented ritualistic, mythological, or political actions that implied real-world effects.[248] He argues that the theatrical performance space has always functioned as a microcosm of these larger cultural dynamics, where the spectator's physical and conceptual location in relation to the work echoed broader understandings of human

[248] Wiles, *Short History*, 23-62.

agency. It is a notion that resonates with the logic of linguist J. L. Austin, who suggests that linguistic utterances can enact real effects on the world, in order to understand performance as a tool that shapes reality.[249]

While many of these older forms of theatrical exhibition space are no longer common in our modern context, it is valuable to understand their positioning of spectatorial bodies in relationship to the image, because it is the spectator's physical and conceptual implication in the work that becomes a key way to produce Bergson's attentive recognition. In his book, Wiles notes that early Western cultures visualized spiritual ideas as physical spaces and architectures, to not just illustrate a higher-plane of existence, but to situate bodies, architectures, and performance into symbolic relationships with one another. The physical place acted as the spiritual space, literally producing sacred ground. Additionally, the spatial and temporal framing of spectators as part of the site also implicated their bodies in the ritual narrative, and in their own spiritual and political responsibilities.[250] When the viewer walked along the steps of a pilgrimage, or mapped a parade route through their own neighbourhood, they put their bodies into a tangential relationship with historical figures and events, making the same movements and enacting the same goals. The viewer acted in place of the performative character, or as the unnamed historical witnesses of the mythological event, while still retaining their position as a spectator. As such, the real exhibition space becomes a version of the mythological, and the spectator is no longer just a witness, but a participant in the action.

---

[249] This application of "performative" references the writings of J. L. Austin, who is often noted as a precursor to the field of modern performance studies. As a language theorist and philosopher, Austin established the term to argue that linguistic utterances have actual effects in the world: for instance, saying "I do" in a marriage ceremony enacts the legal and social bonds of matrimony; J.L. Austin, "Lecture 2," in *How to do things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 12-13.

[250] See also: Laura Weigert, "The Environment of Theatre," in *A Cultural History of Theatre in the Middle Ages: Volume 2*, ed. Jody Enders. (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 77-104.

If we think about the stage divide as something that either designates the spectator as disconnected from the site of action, or which emplaces the spectator in the site of action, then the immersive cinema of Rimini Protokoll becomes even more complicated. Since the immersive set was self-contained and therefore separated from the Hearn, the performance functioned entirely within a fictional space without reference to the host-site. Yet, the context of the Hearn still influenced the preliminary experience of the work by establishing a unique site-specific lens that affected meaning-making within the production. By traveling through both the unusual site of the Hearn (which is ordinarily off-limits for everyday use), which was then designated as an aesthetic site as well as an industrial one, and then further travelling into the immersive fiction of the *Situation Rooms* set, the viewer was located as mobile and drifting through a variety of temporary sites all loaded with provisional meaning. A conflict arose between the spectator's recognition of the site of the Hearn, and the site of the fiction as overlapping and simultaneously co-present. The spectator's subjective experience was never entirely subsumed by aesthetic spectacle, because they were constantly in the process of adjusting to novelty and reconciling it with the history of the site and conventional aesthetic expectations.

This mobile emplacement aligns with Miwon Kwon's notion that site is not only the physical environment, but also the social and discursive structures that affect contextual readings.[251] It is a network of relations that actualizes in unique ways based on the spectator's subjective interests. This pushes beyond other practices of site-specific theatre—and also visual arts—that treat site as a stable form that makes visible historical traces, or which constructs specific spectatorial experiences. Instead, site becomes a relational agent, that begins to perform alongside the spectator, contributing unstable and changeable meaning to the aesthetic

[251] Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 156-166.

experience.[252] Rimini Protokoll's use of the fictional set as the primary site of theatrical action further complicated this notion; placed in the middle of the set-space, the viewer interacted with the environment as if it were real. Our bodies were surrounded on all sides by set-dressing, and we touched, smelled, and even tasted the objects around us. The space simulated the real in complex and convincing ways. Simultaneously, this realism clashed against the digital video that drove the performative action of the *Situation Rooms*. The production used the tablet and its moving images to guide the viewer's body through the narrative fiction and real set-space of the production. In these images, characters were often visible on screen acting out their narratives in an exact duplicate of the physical set-space occupied by the spectator. In this way, the spectator was suddenly located in both the physical space and the virtual one, as videos swapped between first-person point of view) recorded by the character on the same tablet device that we viewed through), as well as archival and staged footage. In first-person mode, the camera often doubled as the character's gaze, revealing other actors on screen (but which did not exist in the spectator's physical space), and even occasionally glimpsing the photographer themselves, as the camera was turned around or reflected in a mirrored surface.

The production conflated real and fiction through the stated use of documentary narratives as the conceptual starting point. As noted in press materials and also at the conclusion of the performance, each of the narrative vignettes was based on a true story, told by the person who had experience it. This produced a scenario where the spectator entered into a fictional environment to enact scripted actions that were based on real events and people. These connotations carried forward into the experience of site, since many of these locations were

[252] See: Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 337-338; Fiona Wilkie, *Performance, Transport and Mobility: Making Passage* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015); Michael Pearson, *Site-Specific Performance* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); Kaye, Site-Specific Art; Kwon, *One Place After Another*.

presumably drawn from the narrator's descriptions. Suddenly the constructed set not only enabled real-time spectatorial action, but also referenced actual places and events. At the same time, spectators were only immersed in each narrative for a few minutes before being transported to the next location, both physically through movement into the set-space, and through the cinematic transitions into another scene. In both cases, the environments looked drastically different, as each narrative module played out in unique rooms that carried the viewer into different countries and times with a few footsteps. These transitions between characters and locations mobilized the spectator's real body through non-linear time and space, and required the viewer to re-conceive of their experience as it intersected with the mechanized perception of the cinema, the constructed space of performance, and the "realism" of documentary footage.

Lived vs. Fictional Phenomenology

In the case of *Situation Rooms*, video images and narration created even further slippage between real and virtual experience. Although the figures on the screen read as "actors," they actually re-enacted their own memories, which were filtered through the fictional construction of the play. The scenes were clearly scripted, since they fit neatly into the carefully coordinated sequence of narratives and into a seven-minute time constraint. The narrators delivered their dialogue in a careful—and sometimes stilted—rhythm with lots of pauses. The vocal performance felt more in line with a documentary film narration than improvised conversation and seemed to address the anonymous viewer behind the camera lens, not the subjective theatre spectator. While English was the primary language for the Luminato edition, the script occasionally called for other languages, like Arabic, German, and French, which sometimes remained untranslated, depending on the scene. This slip between languages only functioned

because of the presence of the cinema screen, which enabled (or refused) text captioning while the spectators listened to audio in a language that may or may not have been familiar to them. Here, the experiences of theatre, cinema, and spectatorship liquefied into one another. Suddenly the composite elements of "real" and "fictional" time and space were no longer entirely distinct from one another, and the spectator had to constantly work to read the slippages in order to produce meaning. This meant that there was no comfortable position where the spectator could clearly interpret the narrative as "fiction." This intersection of human and in-human perception complicated the sense of "liveness" that usually characterizes theatrical performance. Many of the conventions associated with dramatic performances are generated by the contingency of the live encounter set against the scripts of theatrical fiction. In the *Situation Rooms,* the clash between the linear space-time of lived experience, and the fractured environments of the set and audio-video narratives ensured that the viewer constantly turned attention back towards their own position as spectators; they had to reflect on their presence within a fictional construction and not simply remain immersed in the forward flow of action.

As noted earlier, the production required exactly twenty participants in order to function properly, because each spectator was given a pre-determined sequence of narratives to follow through both the cinematic and real spaces. The narrative required that each run included exactly this number because there were moments where stories intersected to produce some interactivity between spectators.[253] Although there were twenty possible narratives, each spectator rotated through a sequence of ten, depending on which tablet they had picked up at the start of the event. Most of these stories were also experienced by several other spectators, but the order and timing

[253] To ensure a full run, rush tickets filled any no-show gaps, and failing that, one of the volunteer staff stepped into the role of spectator.

differed so that participants were guided smoothly through the space without colliding. Every spectator was given a unique role to play out in their unique time, which would then cycle on to the next participant. This sequence produced a unique sensation of shared—yet fragmented—memory. Throughout the "play," spectators were aware of being both isolated in their individual narratives, and in a communal relationship with other viewers who shared the set-space. For the most part, spectators remained focused on their own narratives, staring intently at the screens for navigation instructions and narrative content; however, it was impossible to ignore the other bodies also circulating within their own stories. Occasionally, Rimini Protocol also arranged the sequences in such a way as to force interaction between the spectators, where one viewer had to pass objects over to another, shake hands, or otherwise acknowledge the living human bodies around them. In these scenarios, spectators might have shared a sly look recognizing their own play-acting in the collision of fictional and real.

Before beginning the artwork, audiences were situated in front of one of the bright yellow doors (fig. 20). Stamped on the centre of the door was a black number that matched a digital tablet given to each participant. Grasping their uniquely numbered device, participants could raise the screen up to observe the stencil and yellow door twinned both physically and virtually. In my experience of the performance, my gaze flicked back and forth between the digital and virtual scenes as I aligned my body with the door and familiarized myself to the awkward weight of the digital screen. After a few moments, text captioning faded in and out at the top of the screen:

You will play 10 different roles.

My hand and your hand will merge. My

situation will become your situation.

Follow the film carefully. Stay with me, and

you won't get lost!

Let's go.

Let's open this door together.[254]

A hand entered the bottom of the frame and reached toward the metal door handle. I obediently extended my own hand to grasp the physical version of that same handle and pulled the door open. From the first moments of the production, I was forced to navigate the site physically and virtually. My yellow door opened into tomb—or a mausoleum, rather, where a marbled wall and bench were set out in front of me. On the screen, the footage depicted a virtual version of the same space. The moving images guided my body to a seated position on the bench, facing the marbled wall with its various memorial trinkets, and I bounced between screen and set spaces trying to reconcile theatrical illusions with the cinematic reproductions. The sensation was confusing and hectic as my brain and body quickly analyzed all the stimuli. I was only able to sit on the bench for a few moments before my headphones began to play the audio of a man describing the memorial in front of me. He contextualized my presence in the mausoleum by recalling his experience with death as part of a Mexican drug cartel, through the loss of friends and the taking of lives. As this audio played, the video flipped between the doubled virtual set

[254] Text transcribed from a private video link that partially documents the video narratives, provided by Rimini Protokoll. Rimini Protokoll, "Private Video: English Split Screen Situation Rooms Version Theatertreffen 720pH264.mov-HD," Vimeo, last modified 12 May 2014, 00:01:16-00:01:32, accessed 8 November 2019, private video link.

and archival or staged footage. While the sensation of distraction remained, I began to settle into the story, trying to concentrate on the narrator's words and recollections. Just as I began to focus my attention, there was a sudden noise from behind me. As I looked over my shoulder toward the sound, a woman in a fedora popped through a second door, running across the room to disappear into what had previously been a solid wall. I do not remember her looking at me—her gaze was focused intently at her own tablet—but I imagine she must have been equally surprised by my presence. Moments later she vanished so quickly that it seemed like a dream.

With the instruction that spectators would "[p]lay 10 different roles," the production established that the viewing experience would not be the usual, static division between audience and stage.[255] Instead of witnessing a narrative as a seated audience in a darkened auditorium, viewers entered the stage to take up the position usually left to an actor. By proclaiming that the spectator would fill a "role," the production denoted the use of the word as a character (a fictional part within a larger story), and the meaning of "role" as a function or responsibility that must be fulfilled to allow a sequence of events to unfold. In "From flâneur to co-producer: The performative spectator," researcher and dramaturge Immanuel Schipper points out that the spectatorial interaction in *Situation Rooms* often serves "the story of another visitor."[256] By not only following along with the story, but also taking up marks and producing actions that enhanced the experience of others, viewers operated as performers "with and for other spectators/actors."[257] In these moments of acting for one another, spectators produced theatrical

---

[255] Ibid.

[256] Imanuel Schipper, "From flâneur to co-producer: The performative spectator," in *Performing the Digital: Performativity and Performance Studies in Digital Cultures*, ed. Martina Leeker, Imanuel Schipper, and Timon Beyes (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2017), 205, accessed 4 April 2019, www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-3355-9/performing-the-digital/?number=978-3-8394-3355-3.

[257] Ibid.

narratives that furthered the overall story of *Situation Rooms*. At the same time, individuals watched one another perform, fulfilling their role as theatrical viewers. Because of this, the spectator's participation operated simultaneously as a performer following a script, an operative who executed actions that were crucial to the overall system, and a viewing body who enacted spectatorship within this "role." As such, spectatorial experience in this artwork was not just about immersion but instead functioned as a push and pull between personal experience and the broader effects of their actions on the constructed theatrical system.

The production clearly intended for the spectator to take on of these "roles" as an empathetic gesture that literally placed viewers inside unfolding events. Since the narrative was based on true stories of people who were involved in the global arms trade, viewers were supposedly re-experiencing real-life events. This notion of empathy is a common trope of virtual reality devices, where the immersion into a virtual scene is supposed to create personal connection to the stories.[258] Although the general sentiment is well meaning—to produce personal connections to other people—it has often been problematically deployed to convey the experience of poverty, bodily-dysmorphia, or other traumatic ordeals to people who have never had to suffer those things.[259] While I have largely discussed the idea of embodied aesthetic experience through a positive lens—where viewers can integrate the concepts and perspective of the artwork into their own experience—it is also important to recognize the problematic assumption that this closeness can convey a sense of someone else's experience. Because perception is always filtered through our own viewpoint, any sense that we have of someone

[258] Erick Ramirez, "It's dangerous to think virtual reality is an empathy machine," *aeon*, 26 October 2018, accessed 13 November 2019, https://aeon.co/ideas/its-dangerous-to-think-virtual-reality-is-an-empathy-machine.

[259] Like theatrical exhibitions, virtual reality requires specialized equipment and handlers that come with significant financial costs. Wealthier users are more likely to have access this equipment, either through rental or purchase.

else's subjective experience is mediated by our own background, bias, and privileges. The presumption that we can "step into someone else's shoes" using aesthetic environments is a risky fallacy that reduces the complexity of human experience. Recall that Dwayne Conquergood outlines a variety of ways that anthropologists fail to respect the agency of their human subjects; while the most obvious examples of this include researchers who appropriate ideas for their own gain, take a cynical position of authority, or sensationally display the knowledge gained from their research subjects, Conquergood also points to the "enthusiast's infatuation," which superficially treats the subject as interchangeable with the researcher's own background.[260] Similarly the idea that an artwork can convey the lived experience of someone else—particularly when it involves trauma—reduces experience to a commodity in an act of colonization and commodification.[261]

Situation Rooms deployed immersivity as an "empathic" tool to bring spectators close to the experiences of the narrators, while simultaneously critiquing this immersion through references to first-person shooter video games and by drawing attention to the idea of war manipulated through the distance of technology. Yet, these nuances may have been lost within the overwhelming conditions of the multi-sensory experience. Despite the attempt to call attention to the problematic nature of war-mongering, the narratives moved through stories that contained varying degrees of privilege and trauma, enacting the stories of a rich banker, a foreign doctor working in a war-zone, a low-income factory worker—and even the story of a child soldier. Spectators were supposed to forge empathic connections to these stories in a few short

[260] Conquergood, "Performing as a Moral Act," 62-65.

[261] See: Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005).

minutes, with a minimal amount of information about the character, while struggling with the technical challenges of navigating both the virtual and physical environment.

Social media posts about the production often referenced the various scenarios while focusing the inspirational nature of the show as a technical feat of immersivity. One Russian spectator describes the "Правила игры (rules of the game)" before describing some of the narrative events based on "реальных людей (real people)" and "Истории болезненные (painful stories)" and then concluding that "#RiminiProtokoll делают замечательные театральные 'игрушки' (make wonderful theatrical 'toys')."[262] I propose that the technology worked as a double-edged sword—gaining spectatorial attention as a novel interface, while glossing over narrative nuances and the depiction of actual human suffering. The speed and complex sensory inputs of the immersive scenarios often limited the empathetic capacity and promoted visual spectacle over narrative to direct more attention to the pleasure of the production as a fun and novel theatrical "toy" than implicating the viewer as someone who is toying with the lived trauma of the narrators. Despite this, the production clearly attempted to produce agency for the narrators and did succeed in creating a sense of networked, global relationships that refused to establish a good/bad binary.

Although the narratives struggled to produce a clear-cut or rich sense of empathy, *Situation Rooms* did deploy a spatial and conceptual positioning of the audience that produced active engagement with the work. Travel blogger Solène writes that:

[262] @rrr_may, Instagram post, 24 July 2018, trans. Google Translate, accessed 13 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/Blm5dpDnvj8/?igshid=nck6zl5bpg7j. Thank you to Ilze Briede (Kavi) for reviewing the accuracy of the Russian translations.

> On sort de là déboussolé par ce spectacle interactif unique au monde. Un peu frustré de ne pas avoir avoir [sic] prêté une oreille véritablement attentive aux histoires des personnages sur des problèmes oh combien d'actualité : la guerre et les armes. Mais somme toute séduit d'avoir fait parti du casting d'un projet surréaliste. Ma nouvelle carrière est lancée. (One is disoriented by this unique interactive spectacle. A little frustrated not to have listened really attentively to the stories of people with very topical problems: war and weapons. But I am seduced to have been cast in this surreal project. My new career is launched.)[263]

Solène recounts some of the same issues I encountered, where the distraction of technology hindered the ability to closely pay attention to the narratives. Yet, the description also underscores the seduction of the immersive encounter while articulating the key theme of the project. It is not that Solène and I failed to grasp the empathic point because we were not submerged in the narratives; we simply recognized the tension between immersion and empathy.

The division between audience and staged action is often depicted as a passive relationship, where illusion is favoured over the real. Similarly, the idea that an artwork automatically produces empathy because the spectator's body is aligned with a virtual one, or because they have to play some sort of interactive role, also falls into the fallacy that the artwork somehow overwrites the spectator's own perspective. Both of these notions fail to account for the spectator's agency, intelligence, and ability to distinguish between self and other. Performance theorist Jerzy Limon describes the intersection between fictional and spectatorial realms as part of *The Chemistry of Theatre: The Performativity of Time*, where the various

[263] Solène, "3 spectacles au banc d'essai: acte premier," Solcito, last modified 2 February 2015, translated by Melanie Wilmink, accessed 14 November 2019, https://www.solcito.fr/2015/02/3-spectacles-au-banc-dessai-acte-1.

physical and performative elements of the stage are combined to unique effects in every theatrical production. For Limon, the division between audience and stage lies not in the physical nature of space, but rather in the changeable conceptual relationship of audience and action in time and space. In his thinking, the theatre spectator does not simply subsume their reality (of the auditorium) in favour of the fiction (on stage), but is instead aware of the rupture of their experience where "the semantic clash of the two spheres, the phenomenal and the fictional" is itself what creates meaning.[264] As with cinema, the viewer never truly believes that what they are seeing is real—perception is always filtered through the knowledge that the staged action is contextualized as aesthetic. By depicting a disjunction between the viewer's lived experience and the space/time produced on the stage, live performance requires the viewer to perform an adaptable, situational reading of what they observe. The viewer is centred within their personal experience of the world, but by partaking in a performative event they must reconcile their lived-time with the fictional time being represented. This fictional time is often fragmented and non-linear, moving between different spaces and times for various scenes, and eliding time as necessary to convey the narrative. The spectator does not overwrite their experience of time in favour of the fictional, instead they read both simultaneously. This is additionally layered through the recognition of the actor on stage as a living human who shares in the time of the spectator, who produces both lived and fictional-time simultaneously. Depending on the mix of these elements in the production, attention varies from spectator to character to actor in various combinations. Through attention to these various phenomenologies simultaneously, the spectator can recognize the process of building meaning as a kind of chemical formulation—adding and subtracting elements to accomplish a certain reaction. It generates a phenomenological split that

[264] Jerzy Limon, *The Chemistry of Theatre: Performativity of Time* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 17-18.

places live experience into conversation with the context of the past, and future of understanding.[265]

This brings us back to Peggy Phelan's discussion of the live as a key element of performance. Although she maintains the bias against passive illusionism, Phelan also famously distinguishes the ontology of performance as connected to the live body, which emphasizes the duration of shared space between performers and viewers.[266] For Phelan, the live body importantly offers a way for art to escape capitalist economies by disrupting the viewer's ability to own, consume and control the circulation of the images. She explains that "…without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control. Performance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing; it only spends."[267] Within this line of thinking, the recorded body loses the ability to control itself because it becomes a trace that can be circulated, reproduced, and exchanged—determined by the systems and individuals who exchange it rather than the body on its own terms. This shifts the performing body from a living, breathing being—with its own thoughts and feelings—into an image that is always partial and fulfilled by the viewer's gaze or imagination. I question this idealistic distinction: after all the theatrical body (or the performer within the art gallery) still circulates within the capitalist economies of their own disciplines, as documentation and promotional images, and as creative brands; however, the concept of liveness remains a key disciplinary trait of performance, even when it is intermingled with other mediums like painting,

---

[265] Limon, "The Chemical Formulas of Blending," *Chemistry of Theatre,* 21-46.

[266] In the essay, "The Ontology of Performance," Phelan places live theatre into a binary competition with photographic reproduction.

[267] Phelan, "Ontology of Performance," 148.

sculpture, music, cinema, or new media.[268] So, what is it about this quality of the live that changes the relationship between artwork and spectator? How does the spectator's experience and meaning-making change as liveness rubs up against the recorded and non-linear time and spaces, and what is it that constructs the sensation of liveness?

For John Dewey, live experience is something that takes place in the past, present, and future simultaneously. It is this multiplicity that distinguishes the living from the dead, because the dead creature (or object) "…does not extend into the past nor arouse any interest in what is to come."[269] For Dewey, this quality of liveness is not unique to organic beings—objects have the potential to participate in live experience—but it does depend on the potential to produce reflective action through duration. A dead object might excite a response from its relational partner (or the subject that encounters it), but it is an instantaneous and quick release rather than something that builds up tension and releases it in a rhythmic way over time. The live participates over time, growing and changing over that duration. It is affected by the past and has the potential of a contingent future. Dewey's description of live experience resonates with Bergson's description of perception, which is also a product of scales of duration, the perceiver's points of interest, and the memories that embellish knowledge. Both Bergson and Dewey's descriptions of experience relate to the perceiver's interaction with the object through the subjective self, which retains a past and develops a future through the process of the encounter. If we subscribe to the notion that performance is connected to the live, it stands to reason that performance produces a similar experiential mechanism. This means that regardless of whether

[268] Theatre productions often rely on celebrity actors (Patrick Stewart, Idina Menzel etc.), and even gallery-based performances (like that of Marina Abramović, Tilda Swinton, or Yoko Ono) deploy personal fame as part of well-attended and funded mega-exhibitions.

[269] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 176.

the performing subject is living or inanimate, it has the potential to perform if it retains: 1) traces of its past, 2) that inform the present, 3) and produce multiple potential responses in the future, through the 4) interaction with the surrounding environment.

If we consider the possibility that art objects and spaces might themselves act performatively, then it begs the question of how site determines potential responses through its history and lived-in form? How might a spectator read their own potential actions and reactions in a site, as well as the potential consequences, and how does viewing become performative as spectators take on a role and enact the scripts embedded in the place. This does not mean that the art objects considered under this chapter are literally live, but rather that they draw attention to the question of live-ness, whether that is through the performing body, the viewing body, the environment, or other factors. As noted earlier, the site of the Hearn and the set of the *Situation Rooms* constructed a tension between the lived histories of site, the fictional set-construction, the real bodies of spectators taking on dramatized roles, and the real stories of the narrators included in the production. While there were no "live" actors on site, all of these other aspects of the exhibition environment produced the interactive relationships that one might expect from live experience. They played with the relationship between spectator, space, and time to produce a questioning of the present moment through the intersection of the past, present, and future.

While others have argued that Phelan's essentialist definition is simplistic, the boundary of liveness does offer a convenient shorthand for distinguishing one of the key ways that an actor's theatrical performance is different than one for a cinematic context. It also incorporates the additional complexity of the viewer's physical experience of space and time, as either real, or non-real—or rather—important (live), or not important (dead). In the phenomenological split that occurs in the traditional theatre space, the staging is no less physically "real" or "live" than

the space of the auditorium, but it is read as not the same somehow. This division is often highlighted by stark delineations between staged action and spectator action, where the viewer is located as a witness outside of the action. In the cinema, the viewer is similarly staged, but the flatness and repeatability of the screen-image further distances the feeling of witnessing, since it is not even remotely possible to physically enter the image. The viewer is always at a distance, and any closeness with the image is produced through imaginative means. In the theatre, it remains possible to enter the space and time of the stage, even if etiquette ordinarily disallows it.

In this scenario, the division between audience and stage splits the spectator's attention between two possible spaces. The stage operates with real dimensions that bar the spectator's physical self, but not their mental one, while convention dictates that the viewer should be attentive to the fictional environment of the stage rather than the proximal space around them. Considered through Bergson's process of unfolding perception, it is still possible to consider this imaginative sharing of space as a "live" experience. As noted previously, perception is directed by the subject's personal interest and the relevance of environmental stimuli to the subject's ultimate reaction. The process is relational, requiring inputs from external sources, but also the subject's unique comparison of the stimulus to past experiences in order to develop an appropriate reaction. In theatre, the staged fiction is prioritized over the other stimuli in the audience-space, including other bodies, smells, or sounds that are not part of the theatrical production. Through this directed attention, the spectator establishes a hierarchy of relevance where the fictional space and time becomes more useful to forming a reaction to the situation.

Limon expects the viewer to "read" the theatrical situation through a clash or friction between our perception of the "real" world and the "fictional" world that is staged for us.[270] During this encounter, the spectator relates to a body on stage, who is at once a fictional person, an actor playing a role, and a real human being with their own personality, while the stage doubles as a fictional place, constructed set, and permanent theatre architecture. Limon's understanding offers nuance because he also describes the contingent moments that affect the delivery of a performance, despite the pre-ordained structure of the production. While a performance is largely the same for most productions, the dynamic between actors and audiences can shift depending on what happened to them before they began the encounter, and how their energies feed from one another in the moment. This ephemeral quality is another key element of the chemistry of theatre, and it is what enables the collapsed divisions between audience and stage. The actor and the audience members simultaneously share "real" and "fictional" space and time, perceiving one another in a relational feedback loop.[271]

In this way, the fiction implicates the real—or at least temporarily replaces it as the phenomenon that will affect the viewer's lived experience of the world. Since the spectator and stage both exist in the physical realm as well as the temporal, theatrical productions can produce tension between the lived experience of the body in both physical and mental spaces. Live experience becomes not only the immediate space and time of the spectator, but also refers to how that subjective experience of space and time builds a relational exchange with the outside world. It is the performance of meaning-making as it unfolds between world and self. Phelan's

---

[270] Limon, *Chemistry of Theatre*, 17-18. Here, the "real" is constituted by the theatre auditorium, set aside for a particular duration of time, on a particular day within the rest of their weekly activities. The sense of fiction is created by an environment that is decorated as another place, with a narrative that depicts another time—or even multiple times occurring in impossible continuities.

[271] Ibid., 158.

ideas of liveness offer the intriguing idea that the performative act must be encountered in-the-moment and in-the-flesh, and that this ephemerality is what enables a gap for the spectator to see themselves seeing; however, by limiting liveness to human bodies, Phelan also ignores the spectator's ability to produce performative and intersubjective relations with the non-living aspects of aesthetic environments. This denies the influence of the environment as well as the other material factors related to being in the middle of a meaning-making experience.

Although the video footage of the *Situation Rooms* remained the same for each spectator, their personal experience of the work created a sensation of live contingency. The video narratives intertwined with the spectator's phenomenological experience of the present moment, despite the fact that the recorded footage, the staging of the physical environment, and even the encounters between spectators were highly controlled by the artists. There was nothing left to actual chance, but there were still moments of serendipity that ruptured the spectator's sense of "real" and "fiction," as well as "live" and "recording." Within my run of the production, some of the most powerful moments occurred when the presence of real spectators doubled the fictional narrative, bringing me out of the forward momentum of narrative to pause and take stock of the constructed-ness of the situation. Early in my run, as I exited the doors of the mausoleum to transition into a new narrative, the video screen paused to allow me to look up and down a bland-looking office hallway. As the screen turned my view from left to right, another spectator rounded the corner at the end of the hallway, staring intently at their own image. Simultaneously, a virtual character appeared on my tablet, pointing a gun in my direction.[272] My stomach clenched in visceral reaction to the synchronized appearance of spectator/character, and their

[272] This was one of several scripted encounters that purposed created interactions between real spectators and virtual narratives.

doubled gesture of pointing the gun/tablet in my direction. During this encounter, the recorded footage on our tablets slipped into the "real" for a moment as it collided with the living bodies of the spectators. Other moments incorporated physical interactivity with sets and other spectators, requiring participants to move objects, or pass them on to other people (fig. 21). In one scenario, I was asked to pick up a bullet-proof vest and help another spectator dress with it. The garment's heavy weight caused me to struggle with my tablet while I maneuvered the jacket onto another human being. I made eye contact with the other spectator and for a moment we were bound in the gesture of "acting together." In this brief moment, we played along with the narrative, but also acknowledged our ability to see it from the outside as part of our role as theatre-goers.

Later in the production, I was able to experience the other side of this equation, as the person being dressed in the flack-jacket. Because of the way that the narratives were intertwined, it became an exciting opportunity to see multiple perspectives of the same situation, and to observe how they changed depending on the subjective positioning. The play-acting of different roles was enriched by "seeing both sides" as it were. I could feel the weight of the flack-jacket resting on my torso, pulling at my shoulders, and compressing my breath. During my interactive performance with this prop, I recall being surprised by how heavy it was. My only other experience with bullet-proof vests is through the movies—where actors wear the jackets like fashion accessories, performing limber stunts and shaking off bullet wounds with ease. This was the first time it had occurred to me how awkward wearing such an object would be. How it would constantly remind you of its presence and the ever-present danger that would necessitate wearing it. In this situation, I did not have to juggle my video tablet as much—I merely moved it from arm to arm as my assistant did all the work. Perhaps this enabled me to focus more on the physicality of what was occurring, rather than the performative action I was required to take up.

The Temporality of Seeing and Being

The mobile positionality of the spectator within an immersive set seems to dismantle the theatrical divide between audience and staging. Yet, while the *Situation Rooms* discarded the proscenium, this did not prevent the reference of the stage division alongside the action. At a performative event the distinction between audience and action is always at play; theatrical aesthetics depend on this separation of narrative and reality, because otherwise it would cease to be theatre and would cross the boundary into real life. If this were the case, the temporal container of the aesthetic experience would no longer be separated as something to reflect upon (as per Dewey). Despite the lack of a stage, this reflective framing was still produced in *Situation Rooms,* occurring instead through the temporal clash of the spectator's lived time, versus the mechanical and fractured time of theatre and cinema. This contrast ensured that the stage was always conceptually present as the force that the production turned against.

For Jerzy Limon, although the components differ each time—and can take on multiple layers of meaning simultaneously—the spectator's task is to recognize the components of theatre and then extrapolate meaning from those relations.[273] The divide between the space and time of the "theatrical" and the "real" is an essential part of this chemistry, and as such, spectators can develop meaning by comparing their "real" experience in the auditorium (and their subjective histories which influence this), the "real" experience of actors as living bodies (who share the spectator's experience of time), and finally the "fictional" experience of characters who are being depicted by the play. The *Situation Rooms* imbricated these components so that it became extremely difficult to untangle the three forms of experience. Instead of separating the venue into "audience seating" and "stage," the production required audience members to move through the

[273] Limon, *Chemistry of Theatre,* 8.

set-space as if they were one of the characters. Additionally, instead of populating the set-space with live actors all of the theatrical "acting" occurred in the cinematic space of the tablets. The audience did not share space and time with the "actors," but became actors themselves as they followed along with the motion and instructions of the video narratives. This became conspicuous during the physical tasks where spectators had to sit, kneel, shake hands, or move objects around the space. In these moments, spectatorial attention necessarily slipped between the narrative and the physical task that furthered that content. The space and time of the fiction collapsed into the spectator's embodied experience of space and time.

With the disruption of the traditional audience-stage arrangement, other aspects of the production design began to function as a proscenium (or stage framing), calling attention to the viewer's body as both an onlooker and participant at the same time. The border of the hand-held electronic tablet and its flat screen refused physical entry into the image, but also operated as a familiar object of everyday life. Most people have used mobile devices like the tablet and are somewhat accustomed to navigating both the screen-image and real-space simultaneously. The tablets framed the spectator as simultaneously inside and outside of the action by extending the duration of the spectator's attention on the screen image, creating actively physical situations, and recognizably intersecting the virtual and real environments. Because the narratives were depicted on video screens, the space and time of the moving image was also layered onto this experience. Limon argues that unlike film, theatre uses ellipsis to produce non-continuous time; in other words, the narrative must explain gaps in time through verbal descriptions, set and lighting changes etc., whereas cinema can simply use a jump-cut from one place and time to another.[274] *Situation Rooms* employed a mixture of theatrical devices and cinematic cuts to

[274] Ibid., 38.

transition spectators from one space to another, and from one story to another. In many cases, the narrative scenarios asked viewers to move between set-spaces while continuing a particular story-line, embodying the cinematic gaze of a camera pan or dolly movement. Here, narrative both described movement from one space to another, and prompted the viewer's body to "act" out this motion by mirroring the moving image. We saw the camera push into the door handle, and as the narrator's hand appeared, we were expected to mimic the same movement in real space. It was not possible to comfortably immerse in the image as I might in the cinema, because my body was in constant motion and required attention to perform the tasks I was given through the narrative. Alternatively, it was also not possible to forget the constructed nature of the real space, because it was perfectly doubled on screen and did not function with the continuous logic of the real world. Rather, the maze of the set was fragmented with transitions between disparate scenes that occurred at different times and transported me to various global locations. Effectively, my body moved through physical space like a cinematic montage.

The conflation of real and virtual spaces alternated my attention between the immersive quality of the narrative—as I felt with and through the production—and then pulled back to a critical distance at various points by disrupting the illusion and turning attention back to my performance as a spectator in a theatrical production. In spite of the constructed nature of the set-space, it maintained enough physical and interactive reality that it could perform as real: the set replaced the external world and overwrote my critical positioning by snagging my mind and body up in the flow of the experience. The action often moved so quickly that it was not possible to stop to get my bearings or closely observe details of the environment (or narrative). My spectatorial body was placed into constant motion, carried forward on the cinematic or theatrical temporality that overwrote my own. In this way, the theatrical space and time of the set and the

cinematic time and space of the tablet screen functioned as the primary perceptual inputs that determined my experience of the *Situation Rooms* narratives. By locating my bodily experience in both physical and virtual spaces, the production was able to draw attention to the gap between those perceptual inputs. A rupture was produced by my experience of feeling through fictional time and space, and then seeing it clash with the space and time occupied by my real body.

This effect was produced as the repeatable, fictional actions required by the script collapsed into the living, experiencing body of the viewer. The spectators were not pre-trained in their actions, instead instructions were delivered by the screen as viewers followed the narrative strings through the physical and virtual spaces. The screen may instruct you to sit and watch a video, or it might require you to get up and move around a corner or shake someone's hand. In that moment, the spectator had the choice of compliance—of either following the pre-determined script or ignoring it. Both of these choices came with real-world consequences, as the choice to refuse action disrupted other people's experience of the production and potentially put the viewer of out-of-sync with the pre-recorded sequence of events, affecting their own ability to follow the storyline. The back and forth between the pre-planned stimuli, and the human reactions to those inputs created a Bergsonian phenomenology that drew attention to the viewer's ability (or inability) to keep up with the duration of the production. This feeling of falling in and out of time with the fictional narratives was key to the visceral effects of *Situation Rooms*. Further to this point, Immanuel Schipper notes that *Situation Rooms* existed in a continuous forward momentum. Schipper writes that "[t]the System of the game works like a clock. It does not stop. Either you are following the trace and the pace or you are out. The grade of freedom in the offer to participate is small here — it is more an invitation to step into a pre-produced role than to

explore different possibilities."[275] As such, the spectator was trapped in the continuity of the script, swept along without agency to affect change. Spectators had the choice to enact their role, or not, but there was no leeway. If the spectator dallied too long in one space, got lost, or refused to do something, these were all essentially the same as not participating at all.

The unusual interface of the real with the technology in *Situation Rooms* had a steep learning curve that often made it a struggle to keep up with the narrative. There was so much stimulation from the physical environment, other spectators, the screen images, and the audio narrative that it became difficult to pay attention to anything very carefully. Several reviews of the show note the trickiness of the initial interface between the spectator's physical navigation and the video screen.[276] Although I am fairly technically savvy and can double my physical and virtual spaces with relative ease, the initial onboarding for this project was challenging. This was likely an even larger issue for spectators who had limited technological skill, due to lack of familiarity or inability to use similar technologies.[277] Although the video acted as the primary way to synchronize spectators with the screen and actual space, there were also icons indicating turns or other actions that the spectator had to produce. When one was supposed to sit, a drawing of a sitting person popped up in the right-hand corner of the screen, and when one had to lie down, pick-up objects, or turn in a particular direction, these were all indicated by their own

---

[275] Schipper, "From flâneur to co-producer," 204.

[276] See: Vicky Frost, "Situation Rooms by Rimini Protokoll – review," *The Guardian*: Australia Culture Blog, 18 February 2014, accessed 8 November 2018, www.theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/feb/18/situation-rooms-by-rimini-protokoll-review; Carly Maga, "Situation Rooms immerses audiences into international arms trade: review," The Star, 11 June 2016, accessed 8 November 2018, www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2016/06/11/situation-rooms-immerses-audiences-into-the-international-arms-trade-review.html.

[277] Age and financial means are likely two of the most obvious barriers to this technology; however, physical ability might also limit the spectator's ability to hold a tablet up for long periods of time or navigate the confines of the set-space, and varied cognitive processing (ADD, autism, anxiety or other sensory issues) could also make it challenging to navigate the screen and set simultaneously.

unique icons. It became tricky to pay attention to the visual movement of the video, along with the icons, text captioning, and the actual environment simultaneously. Performance theorist Andy Lavender noted that:

> ...the process of navigation means that inevitably one plays [sic] less attention to the voiceover and content of the video than would otherwise be the case. On the other hand, the fact of almost continuously watching the iPad means that there is less opportunity to savor the nature and details of the scenic spaces that one inhabits... The spectator's mode of engagement is task-based action rather than free-flow fascination....[278]

Moving through physical space, listening to a narrator, watching videos, heeding visual instructions (in icons and moving images), and also interacting with other spectators is a lot to ask of a viewer. It is no wonder that different spectators could not attend to all the elements of the experiential task-list equally. The performance swept forward like a play or a movie, with a pre-determined sequence of events unfolding around the spectator's body. Although the presence of a live viewer's body did establish the potential for refusal, or disruption of the events, there were no pauses in the flow of events to allow for these choices to occur.

The turn towards the spectator's phenomenological experience did not just occur in these moments of misstep, however. Due to the inclusion of a temporal stream of moving images, the performance simultaneously positioned the spectator as both a viewer in the live-moment, and also a cinematic spectator. While the temporalities of both those encounters are generally linear,

---

[278] Andy Lavender, "Modal Transpositions toward Theatres of Encounter, or, in Praise of "Media Intermultimodality," *Theatre Journal* 66, no. 4 (2014): 512, accessed 8 November 2018, www.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2014.0105.

when considered over the whole duration of the event, the smaller increments of scenes, montages, and other temporal fractures structure a different kind of spectatorial time. As noted previously, the production began with the twenty spectators positioned at unique starting narratives, who then proceeded sequentially through the next nine stories. This sequence of stories was different for each spectator, depending on which digital tablet they chose. Because of this, each story was experienced by at least nine other spectators; however, over the production as a whole, no one spectator would share exactly the same sequence as another. The different narrative arrangements enabled *Situation Rooms* to tie together the same information in unique mnemonic ways for each participant. Even if there was shared information between the various experiences, the starting and end points shaped the way that the subsequent sequence unfolded. No two paths through the project were identical. Where my experience of the project began with the mausoleum, other spectators would have started off as a computer hacker, a child soldier, a politician, or an activist.

In many ways, this sequencing of video narratives is reminiscent of a short film program that might be viewed in a cinema. Theorist Karyn Sandlos describes the pedagogical value of experimental short film exhibition as a kind of learning through temporal experience, where critical thinking is postponed in favour of bodily experience, and where understanding only happens after the program has finished.[279] Within this model, the viewer makes meaning out of the fragmented and confusing images of an experimental film by reading them together over the duration of the short film. Additionally, since those films are generally showcased in a program along with other experimental films, meaning is coloured by the other works in the program;

[279] Karyn Sandlos, "Curating and Pedagogy in the Strange Time of Short Film and Video Exhibition," *The Moving Image* 4, no.1 (2004): 20, accessed 21 May 2018, www.doi.org/10.1353/mov.2004.0019.

viewers read the individual films in relation to one another and against the curatorial mandate of whoever curated that package. The films of *Situation Rooms* operated similarly, as individual narratives that were read for their own content, but which were then also read against each other within the longer timeline of the spectator's theatrical experience.

In this circumstance, the ordering of the films changed the individual spectator's associations between them. Generally, when creating a film program (or an exhibition space), the curator carefully considers the works that open and close the event. The first thing a spectator sees will colour the rest of their experience, and where multiple works are placed together, the final work will be the last thing to impact on the viewer's memory. The bookends of the first and last work bind everything that rests between them. In *Situation Rooms*, this starting point was unique for each viewer, influencing their encounter with the nine other narratives that followed. In this sequence, while the final character narrative was also different for each spectator, Rimini Protokoll concluded the production with a scene that brought all of the spectators back together in a shared space to watch the last video clip. In these final moments, viewers were brought out of their individual experiences and situated together as a group, to develop a sense of how the disparate narratives tied together within the conceptual underpinnings of the global arms trade. Although everyone started differently, we all ended up in the same place, dealing with the same issues, and facing the same unknown of leaving the *Situation Rooms* set to carry these experiences forward into our real lives.

The narrative cycles also highlight the way that *Situation Rooms* constructed a sense of time as both linear and looping. As the spectator viewed one scene after another, a tension arose between the linear sequence of the narrative and the recursive action of returning to something that you had experience previously, but from a slightly different perspective. Spectators saw the

same thing play out and recognized their earlier experience as it impacted the new iteration. This gesture of looping time resisted the linear filmic sequence of moving from one story to another, as well as the usual bodily experience of time as a continuous stream. This cinematic fracturing of time—bringing past up to meet present, to re-experience events, and to see from multiple perspectives—intensified the viewers perception of what Pepita Hesselberth calls the "here," "now," and "me" of cinema and moving-image installations. By questioning the spectator's location in "here" and "now"—and also blurring the boundaries between "me" and "it" or "them," these intermedial forms create spectatorship that constantly negotiates the self in relation to space and time, while deeming all of those elements as essentially unknowable or constantly in progress.[280] For Hesselberth, this form of spectatorship is deeply affective because of its contradictions and instability.

Halfway through the *Situation Rooms* production, I came up against a powerful example of this unstable positionality. As with the previous example with the flack jacket, I encountered a temporal loop, where I transitioned from doctor to patient in a single gesture, experiencing both the act of treating a body, and being treated, in sequence. I began in the role of a surgeon from Doctors Without Borders, where the individual (Dr. Volker Herzog) narrated a scripted version of his own story. I began this narrative sitting at a conference-room table, leafing through various briefing documents for Herzog's upcoming mission in Sierra Leone. After a brief introduction to Herzog, my tablet instructed me to move into the next room. I complied, passing from the bland meeting space, through a patterned African wax cloth curtain to arrive in a temporary medical field office (fig. 22). In this brightly-lit room, the plastic walls moved softly as a fan blew air back and forth. Although I cannot be certain it is true, I distinctly remember this space feeling

[280] Hesselberth, *Cinematic Chronotopes*, 122.

warmer than other areas of the building. The air drifted on my skin and I immediately felt like I had moved through space and time into a different country. Further aiding this sensation was the striking smell of Dettol, which permeated the space. While the other spaces in the set were extremely multi-sensory (lighting simulated outdoor luminescence and shadows, and during one story I had to serve and eat a bowl of borscht), this room particularly struck me. The smell of Dettol was for me what Roland Barthes might call a "punctum"—the detail that "pricks" the viewer by engaging their personal, embodied experience.[281] Although its usual function is as a cheap antiseptic, Dettol is imbricated into my personal experience and childhood growing up in South Africa. Because it is cheap and easily accessible, this chemical was used everywhere from households to medical clinics, and its powerful odour immediately grounded me in the sense of place that *Situation Rooms* was trying to replicate. Even though Western countries like Canada have the same sterilization needs in both homes and hospitals, Dettol does not seem to be the chemical of choice. Perhaps it is outdated, or simply replaced by North American products like Mr. Clean or Pine-sol. Regardless, the products used in Canada have unique scents that are entirely distinct from Dettol. This chemical smell created a rupture in my performance as Herzog, as my own experience collapsed with his through this fictional staging. My attention was no longer solely on the "story" per-se, but also on my recollections of the smell, and the ways that I used those memories to fill out the illusory experience of the space I was functioning within. This punctum would not function in the same way for every spectator, but the multi-sensory nature of the exhibition likely provided a variety of entry points for each individual to find connections to their own memories and past experience, which might provoke similar reflective action. It is crucial to recognize that the success of this moment of collapse lies not in

[281] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 26-27.

the illusion of my body filling someone else's shoes (as per the VR experience), but rather the way that I was able to find a gap where my experience could relate to the image—to share presence; I maintained my subjective perspective but came so close as to touch what was being represented until the two intermingled as part of a new experience through my durational encounter with the artwork.

In addition to the realism generated by the smell, the immersive set-space also replicated an ad-hoc medical tent in other material ways. A metal cabinet and table covered with medical paraphernalia occupied the spot directly in front of the entryway, and to my right stood a hospital bed where another spectator already reclined. As Herzog's audio narrative described his work-life in Sierra Leone, he proceeded to ask me to mark "Abu" (the reclining "victim") with a sticker denoting the severity of his gunshot wound (fig. 23). Following Herzog's gesture on screen, I was supposed to reach out to pull a yellow sticker from a roll, and then walk over to the hospital bed, where I echoed Herzog's movement to place the sticker on the warm—and very-real—hand of the spectator who was lying there with their eyes locked to their own digital screen. The "Abu"/spectator quickly sat up and exited the room while Herzog returned to the cabinet. From there, Herzog began to open drawers that revealed graphic medical photographs of men who had been mutilated during the civil war, all while narrating his treatment of those wounds:

> [t]hese face to face mutilations had a severe impact on me personally, and more than a gunshot wound. Perhaps injuries administered by war-drones will touch me even less, because there is no personal contact between victim and attacker.[282]

[282] Rimini Protokoll, "Private Video," 0:06:54-0:07:15.

After rifling through these disturbing images, Herzog instructed me take a seat on the hospital bed. Once I had settled onto the sticky plastic surface, I could hear him continue:

> These events haunted me in my dreams. As a result, I got up in the middle of the night to check if my kids had their hands.[283]

As these lines rubbed up against me, my reclined position echoed that of his sleeping children. Herzog went silent and the sound of crickets came up to merge with the sound of the fan that continued to move air around the small tent. Herzog's narrative slowly faded to black and the story of Abu Abdu al Homssi came into view. On screen, I could see Herzog's patient again, only this time he began to speak in Arabic, describing how he got the gunshot wound during a protest in Syria. On screen, my real legs were substituted with the bloodied and torn jeans of another reclining body in first-person perspective. The video then oscillated between this footage, and archival recordings of the protests.

Within a short amount of time, I had transitioned from the perspective of the doctor to that of the patient, through two extremely traumatic narratives of violence. While I did not "live" the violence through Dr. Herzog's story, the images of actual wartime mutilations was no less upsetting. I imagine that many spectators likely had strong reactions to these images of violence—they were quite gruesome and seemed to be photographs of real people (not staged images). To switch from those images to Abu's bloody wound was clearly a tactic meant to provoke empathy, or at least draw experiential resonances between the two different images of

[283] Ibid., 0:08:27-0:08:40.

violence, yet Abu's wound was much less graphic (you just see bloody pants). While the image-body and the spectator's body are briefly positioned as aligned (my legs, his legs), the effect did not necessarily collapse the sense of the "real" in the same way as the smell of Dettol, or even the sympathy generated by seeing the prior images of real violence on real people. This is to say that just because the image of real and virtual seemed to line up, it did not necessarily produce shared presence in time and space because the image lacked the space for me to turn back against my own perception and memory—the image simply overwrote the real. It became another story that flowed forward without implicating me as an active agent.

When the image returned from the protest, Dr. Herzog had entered the frame. We (Abu and the spectator) watched him (Herzog and that spectator) grab a sticker and place it on our hand(s), and then Abu abruptly instructed us to get up, and exit the room as his narrative continued. This moment was more impactful because it physically doubled the same gesture—placing the sticker—from two different perspectives. As with the previous example of the flack jacket, this move positioned me within two points of view in quick succession. As Abu, I received the sticker, but also recalled placing the sticker as Herzog, and Abu's narrative of being shot is tinted with the earlier descriptions of the traumatic effects of violence on the healer. This recursion underscored trauma not just something that happens to immediate victims, but also has complicated effects on everyone who interacts with the situation. It was a microcosmic representation of Rimini Protokoll's larger point that the arms trade operates with global effects on a variety of different subjects, who are all intertwined.

During my experience of *Situation Rooms*, a personal coincidence also exaggerated this effect and became another punctum that imbricated my experience with that of the production narratives. Although I had come to the performance with a group of other people, we had all

been separated at the beginning to pursue our own paths through the set-space. While I lay on the bed as Abu, trying to reconcile the graphic images I had just seen as Herzog and the bloody wounds of the Abu/me body, my boyfriend, Luke, walked into the room as the new Herzog. Focused intently on our respective tablets, we briefly made eye contact, and he enacted the same gestures I had recently completed. When he walked over with the sticker, this encounter even further fractured the spectator/character doppelgangers. His presence carried the deep connotations of our shared history but was distanced by our focus on the narratives and our play-acting. As he placed the sticker, the brush of his skin against mine was both familiar and perfunctory, moving quickly to keep up with the pace of the video image.

The collapse of my personal experience and memories with the narratives of the production epitomized Bergson's process of attentive recognition. The production underscored the rupture between my experience as a living subjective being, my experience within the fictional world, the aesthetic narratives of the play, and the real experiences of the people those narratives were based on. Granted, the production could not have predicted my specific coincidence, but it nonetheless structured the basic intersection of the spectator's body as an overlay with theatrical and cinematic bodies. Social media comments about *Situation Rooms* occasionally highlight other examples where theatrical experience and personal memory collapsed, as in the reminiscences of @mis.us in an Instagram post that comments how she: "внедряла stuxnet. Слышали о таком? Если спросят пригодился ли мне диплом и работала ли я по специальности, я теперь могу отвечать «Да»? (And I also implemented stuxnet. Have you heard about this? If they ask me if my diploma came in handy and if I worked in my

specialty, now I can answer 'Yes.')"[284] In this comment, the poster references the Stuxnet computer worm (likely experienced as part of the "Computer Hacker" narrative) and calls back to her own training in a similar career specialization. Other social media users from the Moscow iteration of the Situation Rooms (Inspiration Festival VDNH, 20-20 July 2018) similarly reflected back on their lived experience in Russia, often recalling the narrative of a Cafeteria Manager in a Russian Arms Factory, who has the spectator serve and eat borscht (fig. 21).[285] In this tension of overlay—of purposeful and accidental mis-alignments—the spectator's attention was turned towards the positioning of their body in relationship to the time and space of the production. As such, the material quality of being-in-the-middle of experience became tangible as a component of the aesthetic event.

When I recently asked Luke about his memories of *Situation Rooms* (two years after the fact), he did not even recall this encounter until I mentioned it, noting only that there was someone else in the room when he entered as Herzog.[286] He did, however, remember the quality of the set-design in various spaces—including the mausoleum and the field hospital—and his focus on framing the screen properly to ensure that he was aligning his movements as instructed. Although Luke and I were similarly drawn to the intersections between the real and virtual through the elaborate design of the physical environments, and felt engaged in the overall production, it is interesting to note that our individual attention was held differently. For Luke, the video narratives were paramount, and aligning his body to the images meant paying more

[284] @mis.us, Instagram post, 23 July 2018, trans. Google Translate, accessed 14 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BllmGughGE4. Another thank you to Ilze Briede (Kavi) for reviewing accuracy here.

[285] @anastasia_sotnik, Instagram post, 29 July 2018, trans. Google Translate, accessed 14 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bl0QS4xnWT4; @plokhoi_vkus, Instagram post, 22 July 2018, trans. Google Translate, accessed 14 November 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BliFNuuHxCA;

[286] Luke Black, "Personal Interview," 11 November 2018.

attention to the screen than his surroundings, whereas my attention was often directed toward the materiality of the piece and the way it was engaging spectatorial bodies. There were many instances where I remember only half-listening to the video narratives, and struggling to pay attention to the content, but I distinctly remember the spaces and interactions with other viewers.[287] This difference is likely due to his familiarity with video-gaming, where he is accustomed to directing virtual action while also paying attention to maps, health-bar indicators, potential dangers, and the complex sequences of button-pushing that creates interactions in the video-game environment. I did not grow up playing video-games, so I often struggle to succeed at those tasks in the gaming environment and find my attention can only handle narrow focal points. In this way, our varied technical abilities clearly affected our unfolding experience of the artwork. Yet, despite our different interests, the production still supported our individual entry-points in multiple ways. The complex material structures of the physical environment of the set, the cinematic material structures of the moving image, and the performative materials of the spectator's lived experience all created various gaps for our personal meaning-production.

In this way, *Situation Rooms* set up a tension between the real and the theatrical. The viewer's body was scripted like any other element in the production, controlled and synchronized to the reproducible aspects of the event (video recordings, audio and lighting cues, the introductions, and other gestures of acting by the production staff, the physicality of the theatrical staging etc.). While the introduction of physical mobility seems to disrupt the traditionally static nature of theatrical spectatorship, within this context it is debatable whether the spectator's movement and interactivity produced a correlation in mental mobility (or more active engagement in the narrative elements of the production). In theory, the synchronization

[287] Granted, I have also spent much more time thinking about this work than he had.

between physical enactment of the narrative would create a stronger emotional connection to the stories, echoing Dr. Herzog's supposition that "personal contact between victim and attacker" will "touch" us more than violence at a distance. While *Situation Rooms* did create powerful moments of intersection between the real and fictional, it was not always successful at producing this sense of empathetic closeness. Since spectators were watching in this distracted state, the contact became quite superficial and did not create deep connection with all of the narratives. This was further fragmented by the sequencing of ten stories in a row, which were all quite different from one another; it was a lot of information in a short period of time and often rushed the spectator along without time to dwell or consider.

Instead of individual effects, what was produced is more akin to a mechanization of the body as an instrument within a larger system of violence. The individual characters within *Situation Rooms* had very little control over their role in the global arms trade, even if they were attempting to do good or make change. Where the production succeeded was that it did not determine the value or necessity for a larger coherence or change. The narratives were simply presented as fragments, within a larger set of similar fragments, and the spectator had to draw their own conclusions from there. The production demonstrated complexity, not a black and white view of the issues. Writing in the *Situation Room* program book, Nikolaus Hirsch, describes how beyond the obvious repercussions of violence and war, the global arms trade has also constructed an "…industry of compassion, be it in official mission of the United Nations or an NGO… Well intended and necessary, yet ultimately part of the logic of war: it has an uncanny way of confirming and perpetuating the system."[288] Within the world of *Situation*

[288] Nikolaus Hirsch, "Theatrum Belli," *Situation Rooms: Ein Multiplayer Videostück /// A Multiplayer Video-piece* (Berlin: Rimini Protokoll and Druckerei Conrad, 2013), 15.

Rooms, spectators were placed into the global cacophony of perspectives where they briefly gained intimacy with only ten of those perspectives. Spectator's bodies were virtually linked to those of actual participants who then relayed their stories through an aestheticized medium. It was not quite fiction, but not quite truth either. The lines between us and other were blurred and entangled, and it was not possible to leave *Situation Rooms* feeling resolved. This is not an Aristotelian catharsis, but rather an internalizing and carrying forward of this theatrical fiction into the world outside of the set.

Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* turned aesthetic attention back towards the spectator. It made visible the process of seeing, by turning spectatorship itself into a material form that could be manipulated as part of the "chemistry" of the theatrical staging. Yet, it is not just this attention towards spectatorship that supported the effects of the production. It is not enough to just mirror spectatorship back, because this in itself does not create a gap between experience and observation. The power of the production lay in the ability to position the spectator as both part of the action that produces personal and subjective close-ness, and then oscillate back to a position of distance where the scenario was recognized as a construction. In the movement between embodied experience and reflective distance, spectators were able to both feel through the artwork and also see how that feeling was manufactured by the artwork. As I've said previously, while it is possible to garner knowledge from the both the bodily encounter with material objects, or through abstract discourse, *Situation Rooms* was successful because it intertwined the two modes of knowledge to construct a self-contained reflective event (as per John Dewey). Key to this effect was the production's immersive qualities, where the real environment of the stage seemed to double what the spectator would expect from the real world. In blurring the division between real and aesthetic space-time, *Situation Rooms* produced

confusion that required the spectator to perform additional labour in order to recognize the elements that were relevant to their own meaning-making.

In this work, the physical and conceptual positioning of the spectator functioned as a key way to produce subjective awareness. Turning against the traditional divisions of the theatrical audience from performative action, *Situation Rooms* pushed back against the assumption that the spectator should be distanced from action. The performative site acted as "live" alongside the viewer's presence, calling attention to the contingent meaning that was produced through the shared space and time of the theatrical event. By collapsing the site of the venue, the site of the stage, and the site of theatrical sets, Rimini Protokoll turned attention to the material and conceptual interactions between the viewer's living body and the surrounding environment. Both were implicated together as action unfolded, and despite the fact that the performances manifested artificial action and narratives, the intertwining of the spectator's phenomenology with theatrical action linked meaning-making to real experience. The intersection of real and fiction did not simply overwrite one another, but instead operated in tangent. As the spectator's experiences unfolded through the duration of performance, the production moved between the qualities of felt experience and reflection, producing rupture points that pushed back against the spectator's comfortable immersion in the flow of the aesthetic experience. These spaces of misrecognition or disruption of conventional experiences created duration for reflection, where spectators had to reconsider both their physical and conceptual location in the flow of the production.

Conclusion

Each of these case studies interrogated spectatorship as a relational encounter with the conceptual and physical materials of the artwork. Within these works, the spectator's experience was treated as a critical and aesthetic medium that artists could wield as part of meaning-production. In the tension between multiple, simultaneously-deployed disciplinary conventions and the spectator's unfolding sense of being-with-the-artwork, all of the installations turned critical attention towards the constructed aesthetic situation. My analysis of these selected case studies has outlined some of the material tools available to artists in the construction of reflective viewing encounters. Each work produced material and conceptual gaps between what was expected and the actual conditions of viewing, which were designed to stimulate attention towards the viewer's lived experience of looking at art. This is true whether the artworks were physically immersive environments or implicated the viewer virtually.

This tension functioned because the spectator could not simply fall back on previously held assumptions. In encountering an unfamiliar situation, viewers call upon a process akin to Henri Bergson's attentive recognition in order to process new perceptual inputs and forge understanding. When we encounter stereotypes or clichés of experience, it means that we can rely on our conceptual shorthand to fill in the blanks. This shorthand offers an instantaneous reading of the situation but lacks the complexity that comes with recognizing the contingent or changeable nature of the stimulus. In treating an object of perception as uniquely interpreted though its interaction with the subjective viewer, it becomes possible to read nuance into the encounter. In Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms*, this is the difference between seeing the image of an injured man lying on the medical bed, and looking down to see my own body overlaid with that Abu Abdu al Homssi, as Abu walked our collective physical and virtual selves

through his personal story. By stepping beyond the generic image of a wounded man, *Situation Rooms* not only elaborated on the personal story of Abu's trauma and refugee experience, but also connected my physical movement and memory to the unfolding of his narrative. My experience and his came close enough to touch.

This example is useful because it clearly demonstrates how personal memory enriches readings of perceptual inputs. In Bergson's attentive recognition, memory becomes a key way to extend the duration of contemplation, because inputs that are unrecognizable require spectators to turn inward to their past experiences to try to find something comparable. This process is not always as neat as the example above, where there are clear personal stakes and existing emotion. Rather, by disrupting easy recognition, the artworks design gaps that require longer contemplation and/or the insertion of personal memory in order to build understanding. These gestures are delicate, requiring a careful balance between making an image too stereotyped but also being careful not to make it too unrecognizable, since the latter may simply produce a situation where the viewer ignores or turns away from the work entirely. It is here that the case studies function particularly well, since they centre the individual experience of the viewer as a subjective being, and use the personal encounter with the work as the entry point into these points of rupture.

In these spaces of disruption, artworks make space for spectators to generate personal meaning alongside the artwork. The more disruptive the gap, the longer the duration of contemplation, and the more complicated those mnemonic connections become, where spectators must dig deeper into their past experiences to find connections between what they know, and their present experience. In thinking about the interaction with art in this way it is possible to move beyond the idea that meaning is either delivered by the artwork, or that lies solely in the

spectator's reading. Instead, meaning becomes a process that is determined by the relational interaction between the artwork and spectator. The artwork retains its own subjective qualities, as a unique object set in a specific place and time, which prevents it from being simplified to a stereotyped reading. At the same time, the subjective experience of the spectator is required as an essential component of meaning-production. Through the spatial and durational encounters with the work, the spectator and the artwork forge aesthetic experience together. When applied to the case studies, these gaps become most visible as the ideological conventions of the exhibition space contrast with the interdisciplinary artworks that disrupt those traditional scripts. Since the architectural form of the exhibition venue is generally stable, it provides an anchor-point from which to investigate changeable, interdisciplinary forms.[289] The physical structure of the building does not fluctuate very much and is designed to deliver a certain kind of experience—even though it is often presented as a neutral container. Exhibition venues are often expected to fade into the background in order to foreground the material and conceptual qualities of the artwork; however, in the examples discussed here, the artworks refused this invisibility. Instead, they foregrounded the very qualities that the exhibition space attempted to obscure.

The case study of dominique t skoltz' *y2o_dualitiés* exhibition demonstrated how the gallery's emphasis on spatiality was disrupted through performative and cinematic interventions. Drawing attention to fragmented and tactile forms of time through a variety of screens, projection installations, and sculptural objects, skoltz created objects that acted in time alongside the viewer. In this tension between the viewer's temporal experience of space, and the object's performance of space and time, the viewing experience interrogated the spectator's proximity to

[289] Although buildings might make minor tweaks to layout and the design of exhibition space, it is often expensive and difficult to chance spaces drastically from one show to another, and the contextual readings of the space as gallery, cinema, or theatre remain largely the same.

the work, as well as the role of the sensuous within their viewing experience. Meaning production became dependent on the spectator's performance of their viewing labour in relation to the spatial and temporal objects, forging analogues between the viewer's experience of seeing and the relational themes of the artwork.

Shifting to the context of black box, *The Paradise Institute* by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller produced similar relational effects through a focus on the spatially dislocated, but temporally determined, nature of cinematic viewing. While the gallery doubles the spectator's temporally and spatially linear phenomenology, the cinema has no such constraints. Time and space can fracture in cinema, and the inhuman perspective of the camera facilitates supernatural forms perception. Time can speed up or slow down, durational intervals can collapse or expand, and space can function with nonsensical physics or geography. For this work, Cardiff and Miller create a doubled context of gallery and cinema together, where cinema overwrote the original spatial context of the gallery, while simultaneously revealing ruptures that reminded viewers of the constructed nature of their own experience. The artists used the temporal slippages of cinema to position the viewer both in the concrete environment of their gallery-installation, and the virtual space of image and audio narratives, which seemed to hold the same weight as the actual physical environment. Through this clash of physical and virtual, Cardiff and Miller shone a light on the architectures of cinematic experience, which are usually subsumed by darkness and narrative flows. Inside their installation, the non-linear time of cinema also suddenly clashed with the human phenomenology of lived-experience, which runs linearly but calls on both past and future to produce meaning. It is in this schism that the artwork turned conceptual focus towards the viewer's experience of seeing.

Finally, the stage brings together the gallery's concerns with space and the cinema's concerns with time. Performance emphasizes the viewer's relationship to other living bodies, which unfolds through shared temporal and spatial contexts. Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* challenged the theatrical emphasis on liveness through its object-oriented and moving-image interventions. Eschewing the live actors that are the most common indicator of a theatrical context, this production required the spectator to take up a performative role, as their bodies were scripted alongside cinematic recordings that relayed the theatrical narrative. By requiring the viewer to enact the performative script, the artwork removed the traditional division between audience and stage, enfolding all of the action in an elaborative, interactive, and immersive set. The division of stage and auditorium ordinarily establishes theatrical action as separate from every-day life, and here the artwork collapsed those boundaries, to enact theatrical narratives through the lived experience of the viewing body. The gap that was produced between acting and witnessing highlighted intersections between the spectator's own memories and experience with the broader themes of the work, to create personal entry points for meaning-production.

These particular artworks, placed within their respective exhibition spaces, are not the only way to conceptualize these gaps. The close reading of the case studies is useful because it provides a specific object that is considered through the specific lens of my subjective experience at a particular time and place. While these individual studies may not fully correlate to a universal understanding of art experiences, they do reveal gestures and tools deployed by artists to produce reflective aesthetic effects, and some of the contingent meaning that is formed by the interaction with a particular time and place. These kinds of aesthetic experiences are important because they produced gaps in my recognition process, where I was able to turn to my own memories in order to connect the unfolding encounter with my personal experience. This

intersection of subjectivity and aesthetics is powerful because it ties the art object into lived experience and embodied knowledge production that carries forward into the future. The artwork became a part of me, as much as my presence in front of it completed the work. By pinpointing the material conditions that produce attentive and personal aesthetic experience, this dissertation provides potential mechanics that might enable artists to replicate these gaps in other aesthetic situations.

While close attention to specific case studies may produce tools that can be re-purposed towards other projects, it is important to recognize that these tools are only useful when they are deployed to create a sensation of novelty. It is the gap between recognition of the old, and the creation of new understanding that is key to producing critical attention. I have drawn upon case studies that push against conventions, but as those tools and techniques are standardized within artistic practice they stop producing a sense of the new. Instead, what was once novel is now simply part of the conventions of aesthetic experience. The case studies I have examined work because their interdisciplinary practices still produces a sense of new-ness, where the traditions of visual art, cinema, and performance come into contact in unusual ways. If they were mounted regularly, or become part of common trends, these same tools might cease to function.

What I have described here as gaps could be compared to what Brian O'Doherty calls a "gesture." His idea of the gesture entails this same kind of "double mechanism" where aesthetic display calls attention to its own framing.[290] As such, the gesture "enables sight… to see itself."[291] O'Doherty's notion of the gesture entails the very things that I have outlined in this dissertation—the mechanisms by which artists turn against the contextual framing of the work

[290] O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 89.

[291] Ibid., 97.

and draw attention to spectatorship itself as constructed. In the final chapter of *The Ideology of the White Cube*, he outlines how artists like Les Levine, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Daniel Buren use their art to critique the institution of the art gallery, through interventions into the traditions of display. O'Doherty primarily describes the particular contributions of these interventions, but also briefly makes the compelling point that the artist must always "…find another audience, or a context in which his or her minority view will not be forced to witness its own co-optation" and that no gesture has yet "…proved impervious to the gallery's assimilative appetite."[292] O'Doherty does not extend this idea in his writing, choosing to focus instead on the specific ways that his chosen case studies critique the institution. Yet, this off-hand remark drives home the idea that Bergson's mnemonic gaps—and the ways that my chosen case studies produce these moments of rupture—are living, changing gestures, which require a contingent relationship between the viewer and object. This means that certain gestures may not work forever. My analysis establishes a framework that enables us to understand how the spectatorial context is originally constructed, but also how it might change through time.

The gallery is notorious for taking in new artistic gestures and legitimizing them as part of its own systems. Gestures are already inherently fragile because they require the viewer to have some prior knowledge to push against. Additionally, as the traditions of installation art, site-specificity, performance—and even institutional critique—were introduced into the gallery, they were eventually enfolded into the updated ideology of the white cube. As with Foucault's systems of power, it is not possible to escape the structures that construct our experience.[293] What we know is shaped by our prior interactions with the world, and its concomitant

[292] Ibid., 95-96.

[293] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

limitations. As the perceptual field expands, it internalizes everything that was once outside, developing new conceptual conventions that limit the duration of meaning-making. Resistance can only take place by trying to find a new external position: to find something unrecognizable in order to achieve a new perspective; however, this external positioning cannot exist without the experience of being internalized. It is a constant process of migration between frames.

Put more simply, all of our perceptions become naturalized as we encounter the new. The context of space and experience is constantly evolving, which produces different potential for novelty, but which will itself become conventional eventually. This makes turning towards the specifics of my case studies even more crucial. By recognizing that the artworks can only be read through the relational development between the viewer (myself), the histories of place, and the artistic narrative, I lay the groundwork for future inquiries that allow for this changing perspective and contingency. Perhaps one day the case studies I have covered here will not produce their intended effects because viewers no longer recognize the old conventions of either exhibition space or the artistic disciplines. At that time, my writing will remain as a trace of past spectatorial experience and may enable a teleology of spectatorship that helps to understand new viewing experiences of the work.

The artworks I have incorporated into this text are already in the process of being assimilated and naturalized. Each of the works was influenced by the traditions of installation art, expanded cinema, and immersive theatre—which are at varying levels of popularity today. Installation art is a common disciplinary form in the gallery that integrates both the conventions of the white cube and its own unique scripts. The immersive environments may or may not allow for the viewer to physically interact with the work, spend long periods of time, or even contribute to the final material form of the work. Spectators are often expected to be more literally

interactive and physical in these environments. Similarly, immersive theatre is an increasingly common approach to staged performance. Projects like Punchdrunk's New York-based production of *Sleep No More* (2011) has run for almost a decade as of this writing. So popular that it has been referenced on prime-time television shows like *Gossip Girl* and *Law & Order: SVU*, *Sleep No More* has introduced the general public to interactive and promenade theatre, where viewers can wander around immersive sets at will, and follow theatrical narratives as part of the action rather than in static seated positions.[294] Finally, while expanded cinema perhaps does not have the popular draw as some of these other practices, artists have taken up the moving image in many sculptural forms, as part of performances like the live animation musicals of Shary Boyle and Christine Fellows, and sculptural installations like that of Tacita Dean and Anthony McCall.[295] Advances in technology have also enabled cinema to slip onto the sides of buildings as part of media-architectures or as large-scale event spectacles.

These technological advances set the stage for the next steps in this research. Computer technology—and particularly video game—interfaces are increasingly seen as the next frontier of aesthetic experiences. In fact, to call it the next frontier is a misnomer, since these devices are already integrated into our daily experience. Artists explored computerized devices in the 1960s, and the rise of the internet in the 1990s produced a whole range of net-art. While device-based

---

[294] Alexis Soloski, "Sleep No More: from avant garde theatre to commercial blockbuster," *The Guardian*, 31 March 2015, accessed 26 September 2019, www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/mar/31/sleep-no-more-avant-garde-theatre-new-york.

[295] For Shary Boyle, see: *The Monkey and the Mermaid* (Toronto, 2010) and *Spell to Bring Lost Creatures Home* (Toured to various locations in 2015). Shary Boyle, "Performance," Shary Boyle., n.d., accessed 26 September 2019, http://www.sharyboyle.com/performance; While Anthony McCall first created his "solid-light works" in the 1960s, he has expanded the project with digital technology at large scale exhibitions with Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof (2012) and his first solo exhibition in a North American museum at the Albright-Knox (2019). Anthony McCall, "Solid Light Works," Anthony McCall., n.d., accessed 26 September 2019, www.anthonymccall.com/solid-light-works; For Tacita Dean, see: See: *FILM* (2011) at the Tate Modern. Tacita Dean, "FILM," Tate, 2011, accessed 26 September 2019, www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dean-film-t14273.

practices are physically limited to the art-gallery, net-art is often available for free to anyone with an internet connection to experience in the comfort of their own homes. The rise of consumer-grade virtual reality devices has enabled fully immersive and interactive environments that can host both long and short durational encounters with moving images. Mobile smart phones similarly enable anyone with such a device to access moving images, interactive games, and other digital information with a few finger swipes across a screen. In these devices, we carry the ability to access artworks anytime, in mobile venues that consist of both physical architectures (interfaces) and virtual places. What happens when we turn our gaze from the monumental scale of a building to the intimate architectures of a phone or a pair of goggles?

Several of the artists incorporated into my dissertation have already made some of the first strides in this inquiry. It would have been possible to read Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* through the lens of video-gaming, as the viewer stepped into the literal shoes of the screen characters. My experience of turning to face another viewer with a gun—and that person's experience of pointing their gun/tablet as part of the narrative action—are commonly found in first-person shooting games. In part, it was the collapse of these conventions of video game encounters with my real action in the space and time of the performance that produced my visceral emotional reaction. Similarly, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller have extended their audio-walks utilizing mobile phones. This includes projects like the *Alter Bahnhof Video Walk* (2012)—created as a site-specific project for documenta 13—where the artists arranged for the spectator to follow a guided walk that incorporated their characteristic three-dimensional

audio recording with video images displayed on a smart phone.[296] Here, again, the virtual image rubbed up against the experience of the real and produced productive disjunctions in experience.

My research establishes the groundwork for an expansion into emerging digital media exhibition contexts. By understanding more established exhibition architectures, it becomes possible to both interrogate the leakage of digital media objects into these older exhibition spaces (for example: artworks, films, or performances that take advantage of online networking or virtual reality) but also the entirely new context of digital platforms like mobile devices or virtual reality headsets. The digital offers such variety of forms that it is necessary to start with the foundation of other disciplines before taking on this larger study; however, many of the ideas that have been brought up thus far, including the mobilization of the spectator through both physical and virtual spaces, the fragmentation of time, and the formation of perception through dispersed networked connection-building, are all applicable to the study of digital exhibition environments. Additionally, the unique interactive quality of computer technology used for both work and play, its ontology as part of vast networks of information, and processes of instantaneous communication all establish new forms of spectatorial relations that are worth investigating. Because the phenomenology of these media is so new—in the scope of some of the

[296] See: Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, "Alter Bahnhof Video Walk," Janet Cardiff George Bures Miller, n.d., accessed 20 September 2019, www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/bahnhof.html; I have also written more extensively on this project in: Melanie Wilmink, "Situating the Immersive Experience: Exploring Intermedial Situations in Art/ Cinema Installations" (master's thesis, University of Regina, 2014).

other disciplinary forms I have discussed, anyway—this is a timely opportunity to understand how digital experience shapes perception, as it is just beginning to naturalize conventions.[297]

Finally, the turn towards technology also opens up the consideration of how spectatorial bodies are supplemented by digital devices. The intersection between the real world and virtual is one of the key tenets of digital media, and it has been a conceptual point of interest for artists since the early development of computerized devices. Yet, one thing that is often ignored is the fact that our digital devices act as prosthetics for our experience, to extend our vision, voice, and ideas far outside the scope of our own bodies. When this is discussed, it is often through the lens of able-bodied users, who can engage with technology to produce super-human perception; however, it is important to remember that these same technologies also support bodies who are differently-abled, so that they might perform tasks that able-bodied users take for granted. Phones are used to supplement hearing, monitor insulin levels, guide users with vision impairment, and much more. There is also increasing recognition of the barriers that mainstream object-design presents to people who cannot hold small objects or who do not possess the fine motor skills needed to operate certain interfaces.

Mindfulness of non-idealized users is coming to the forefront in contemporary culture, and experiential design is slowly adjusting to become more flexible and enable more access to people with more diverse physical and mental abilities. In my discussion of the case studies here,

---

[297] The following authors provide a good starting point into the material forms of digital experience: Aubrey Anable, *Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); David Colangelo, "Cities as Exhibition Spaces: Illuminated Infrastructure in the Smart City," in *The Future of Museum and Gallery Design*, ed. Suzanne MacLeod et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); David Colangelo, *The Building as Screen: A History, Theory, and Practice of Massive Media* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019); Jason Farman, *Mobile Interface Theory: Embodied Space and Locative Media* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Graeme Kirkpatrick, *Aesthetic Theory and the Video Game* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Trinh T. Min-ha, *The digital film event* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005); Trinh T. Min-ha, *D-passage: the digital way* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Felan Parker, "Playing Games With Art: The Cultural and Aesthetic Legitimation of Digital Games." (PhD diss., York University, 2014); John Sharp, *Works of Game: On the Aesthetics of Games and Art (Playful Thinking)* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015).

I have been limited by my own experience of the world, tracing my readings of the artwork through my subjective point of view as an educated, able-bodied spectator. My experience of the artworks is fairly close to that of the ideal spectator (I am educated in the context of art history, able bodied, and comfortable in each of the exhibition spaces I have discussed). As such, my reflections cannot always see what is ingrained as "normal" in my phenomenology. To offer an alternative view, I turn to a recent social media thread by Twitter user Ciara O'Connor, where she described her encounter with Olafur Eliasson's *In Real Life* exhibition at the Tate Modern. Eliasson's work is often held up as the epitome of experiential installation art that is dedicated towards turning spectator's perception back against itself; however, O'Connor and the friend that accompanied her quickly realized that that the exhibition had only taken able-bodied spectators into consideration. For those with mobility limitations, the art installations often did not facilitate proper access to the art. O'Connor writes that as a wheelchair user, "…[a] couple of the pieces were too high for me to play with, but whatever – that's unavoidable."[298] Her tone implies a certain pre-determined resignation to the idea that she would not be able to engage with all the works, since the hanging-height is often standardized in galleries, and she has likely come across previous situations where the aesthetic display barred access to her shortened point of view. Worse, when the pair came to a mirrored tunnel installation with steps leading to the access point, they were refused a temporary ramp that would enable them to participate. The attendant "…was immediately cross and weirdly defensive: 'No,' he said, as if talking to a naughty & particularly stupid toddler, 'It's the curator's choice. There could be a ramp, but the curator chose this. It's not up to me.'"[299] Regardless of who is to blame for limiting access, or the

[298] Ciara O'Connor (@Cioconnor), Twitter thread, 9 August 2019 (2:33 p.m.), accessed 27 September 2019, https://twitter.com/Cioconnor/status/1159895452118081536.

[299] Ibid.

dismissive attitude of one gallery attendant, the issue here is that both the artist and the gallery likely did not even consider wheelchair access in the design of the work. The bodily consciousness that was the entire focus of the work somehow did not apply to these women because they could not walk up stairs.

This attitude is not surprising, nor unique to the Eliasson exhibition. After all, as I've already noted, it is not possible to see beyond our own experiences unless something happens to turn our attention towards this new piece of knowledge. Each of the case studies I've discussed in this document probably had significant challenges for bodies that did not conform to the ideal, which I did not interrogate because it did not seem relevant to my experience. For a wheelchair user, dominique t skoltz's objects would have been positioned too high, Cardiff and Miller used stairs for access to *The Paradise Institute*, and the cluttered sets of *Situation Rooms* would have been impossible to navigate, since many of the doors were quite small and some scenarios required climbing stairs, lying on the floor etc. Individuals with sensory sensitivities, visual or hearing impairment might have struggled with the sonic landscapes of the works, and even at a most basic level Rimini Protokoll's *Situation Rooms* presumed a certain level of technological savvy to navigate the virtual screen and set-space simultaneously.

Despite these blind spots, I believe that it is important to examine spectatorship through the lens of my limited point of view. By closely examining the material interrelation of my body with the structure of the artwork, I have deliberately set the stage for different points of view to circulate alongside my own. All the observations I have traced in the works are dependent on certain knowledge sets—which are not available to everyone—and my own understanding is similarly limited by my background. For instance, in reading the material quality of the sound in several of the exhibitions, I drew on my own practice by relating my interpretations to cinema

editing and spatial acoustics; however, an audio-engineer or musician might trace even richer knowledge from their experience of the same soundscapes.

At the same time, some of my observations make room to think about more inclusive spectatorial situations. By tracing the material conditions of gallery, cinema, and the theatre, I have called into the question of the presumption that physical and virtual experiences can be clearly distinguished from one another. As I have noted, much of the discourse around spectatorship has reproduced the presumption that the physical movement in an art-space is somehow more critical than the seated position of cinema or theatre. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that mobility does not equate to criticality or static positions to passivity. Conceptually locating the spectator in relation to the image can be just as much a gesture of rupture as physical immersion in an aesthetic space. Alternatively, either could simply produce pure spectacle that carries the spectator forward in a durational flow without the ability to pause or reflect. In my reading, it is possible to situate time, moving images, sound, and other ephemeral conditions as essential ways that the viewer locates themselves in relationship to the art work. These tools are as important as the physical arrangements of space that have, in the past, created barriers to access. At the same time, these other forms of positionality also raise their own barriers to entry. It is my aim that by thinking through these more ephemeral conditions, it becomes possible to create experiences with more varied entry points, that allow a reconsideration of perception through more diverse bodies. One artwork does not need to function identically for all viewers, but by treating spectatorship as conditional and subjective, it becomes easier to treat spectators with empathy. It is only with generosity and flexibility that we can move forward to produce aesthetic situations that truly develop personal conversations and collaborative knowledge-production between viewers and artworks.

Bibliography

Agina, Añulika. "Cinema-going in Lagos: three locations, one film, one weekend." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* (29 May 2019): n.p. Accessed 28 December 2019. www.doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1615871.

Aldredge, Michelle. "The Cleveland Art Scene: Prepare to be Surprised." Gwarlingo. Last modified 4 April 2013. Accessed 13 November 2019. https://www.gwarlingo.com/2013/the-cleveland-art-scene-be-prepared-to-be-surprised.

Allain, Paul, and Jen Harvie. *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

Alston, Adam. "Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, agency and responsibility in immersive theatre." *Performance Research* 18.2 (2013): 128-138. Accessed 29 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2013.807177.

———. "Making Mistakes in Immersive Theatre: Spectatorship and Errant Immersion." *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4.1 (2016): 61-73. 29 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1515/jcde-2016-0006.

Anable, Aubrey. *Playing with Feelings: Video Games and Affect*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double*. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

Auslander, Philip. "The Performativity of Performance Documentation." *Performing Arts Journal: A Journal of Performance and Art* 28, no. 3 (2006): 1-10. Accessed 29 October 2019. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140006.

Austin, J.L. "Lecture 2." In *How to do things with Words*, 12-24. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Bal, Mieke. "The Discourse of the Museum." In *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, 201-218. Abingdon: Routledge, 1996.

Balsom, Erika. *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013. Accessed 22 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_442726.

Barker, Emma. *Contemporary Cultures of Display*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Barrett, Estelle, and Barbara Bolt, eds. *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts.* London: I.B Tauris, 2013.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010.

———. "Leaving the Movie Theatre." In *The Art of the Personal Essay*. Translated by Richard Howard, 418-421. New York: Anchor Books, 1995.

Bast, Gerald, Elias G. Carayannis, and David F.J. Campbell, eds. *Arts, Research, Innovation and Society*. New York: Springer, 2015.

Batista, Anamarija, and Carina Lesky. “Sidewalk stories: Janet Cardiff’s audio-visual excursions.” *Word & Image* 31, no. 4 (2015): 515-523. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2015.1053044.

Baudry, Jean-Louis, and Alan Williams. “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus.” *Film Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 39-47. Accessed 17 September 2019. www.doi.org/10.2307/1211632.

Bazin, André, and Hugh Gray. “The Ontology of the Photographic Image.” *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1960): 4-9. Accessed 16 May 2018. www.doi.org/10.2307/1210183.

———. “Theater and Cinema.” In *What is Cinema? Volume 1*. Translated by Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Bellour, Raymond. *The Analysis of Film*. Edited by Constance Penley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, translated by Harry Zohn, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., 1166-1186. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Bennett, Jill. *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Bennett, Susan. *Theatre Audiences A Theory of Production and Reception*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1997.

Bennett, Tony. “The Exhibitionary Complex.” In *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, 81-112. Abingdon: Routledge, 1996.

Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. 1912. Reprint, New York: Dover, 2004.

Berkeley, George. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. 1710. Alex Catalogue of Electronic Texts, n.d. Accessed 13 September 2019. http://infomotions.com/etexts/philosophy/1700-1799/berkeley-treatise-177.htm.

———. *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. 1713. Alex Catalogue of Electronic Texts, n.d. Accessed 13 September 2019. http://infomotions.com/etexts/philosophy/1700-1799/berkeley-three-745.htm.

Bernstein, J.M. “Movement! Action! Belief?” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 14, no. 4 (2012): 77-93. Accessed 13 November 2019. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2012.747331.

Bishop, Claire. "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics." *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51-79. Accessed 29 October 2019. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3397557.

———. *Installation Art: A Critical History*. London: Tate Publishing, 2005.

———. “The Social Turn.” In *Artificial Hells*, 13-18. New York: Verso Books, 2012.

Borges, Jorge Luis. “The Library of Babel.” In *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings,* translated by James E. Irby, edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, 51-58. New York: New Directions Books, 1964.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics.* Dijon: Presses du réel, 2002.

Boyle, Shary. “Performance.” Shary Boyle. n.d. Accessed 26 September 2019. http://www.sharyboyle.com/performance.

Brecht, Bertolt. “On the Experimental Theatre.” Translated by Carl Richard Mueller. *The Tulane Drama Review* 6, no. 1 (1961): 2-17. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.2307/1125000.

Brennan, Theresa. *The Transmission of Affect.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Brinkema, Eugenie. *The Forms of the Affects.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968.

Bruno, Giuliana. *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.

Buettner, Stewart. “John Dewey and the Visual Arts in America.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 33.4 (1975): 383-391. Accessed 3 February 2020. www.doi.org/10.2307/429650.

Burnham, Rika, and Elliott Kai-Kee. “The Art of Teaching in the Museum.” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39.1 (2005): 65-76. Accessed 16 January 2020. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3527350.

Cardiff, Janet, and George Bures Miller. “Alter Bahnhof Video Walk.” Janet Cardiff George Bures Miller. n.d. Accessed 20 September 2019. www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/bahnhof.html.

———. “The Paradise Institute; 2001; Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller.” Vimeo. Last modified 30 August 2013. Accessed 16 May 2018. www.vimeo.com/73446251.

———. “Walks.” Janet Cardiff George Bures Miller. n.d. Accessed 20 September 2019. https://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/index.html.

CBC News. “The Birds of America digitized by Library of Parliament.” *CBC News*, 5 November 2016. Accessed 23 October 2019. www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/john-james-audubon-birds-library-parliament-digitize-1.3838474.

Chapman, Owen, and Kim Sawchuk. “Research-Creation: Intervention, analysis and ‘family resemblances.’ *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 1 (2012): 5-26. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2012v37n1a2489.

Chew, May. “Phantasmagoric City: Technologies of Immersion and Settler Histories in Montreal’s CitéMémoire.” *PUBLIC* 58 (December 2018): 140–47. www.doi.org/10.1386/public.29.58.140_1.

Colangelo, David. “Cities as Exhibition Spaces: Illuminated Infrastructure in the Smart City.” In *The Future of Museum and Gallery Design*, edited by Suzanne MacLeod et al., n.p., Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.

———. *The Building as Screen: A History, Theory, and Practice of Massive Media*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019.

Comer, Stuart, ed. *Film and Video Art*. London: Tate Publishing, 2009.

Connolly, Maeve. *The Place of Artist's Cinema: Space, Site and Screen*. Bristol: Intellect, 2009.

Conquergood, Dwight. “Performing as a moral act: Ethical dimensions of the ethnography of performance.” In *The Community Performance Reader*, edited by Petra Kuppers and Gwen Robertson, 57-70. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007.

Cooley, Dana. “Walter Benjamin’s Play Room: Where the Future So Eloquently Nests, or: What is Cinema Again?” In *Technology and Film Scholarship: Experience, Study, Theory*, edited by Santiago Hidalgo, 101-124. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Cull, Laura. “Affect in Deleuze, Hijikata, and Coates: The Politics of Becoming-Animal in Performance.” *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 189-203. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.1353/dtc.2012.0023.

Dean, Tacita. “FILM.” Tate. 2011. Accessed 26 September 2019. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dean-film-t14273.

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. 1977. Reprint, Detroit: Black & Red, 2010.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: The Movement Image.* New York: Continuum, 2005.

———. *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. New York: Continuum, 2005.

Descartes, René. *Meditations*. Translated by Laurence J. Lafleur. New York: Prentice Hall/ Library of Liberal Arts, 1960.

Dewey, John. *Art as Experience.* New York: Capricorn Books, 1958.

Dickey, Josh. “Seeing ‘The Hobbit’ at 48 frames per second has improved a lot over 3 films.” Mashable. Last modified 18 December 2014. Accessed 25 April 2018. www.mashable.com/2014/12/19/the-hobbit-48-frames-per-second/#kGrZg2TFkPqD.

A Dictionary of Film Studies. s.v. "magic lantern." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Accessed 22 July 2019. Oxford Reference Online.

Doane, Mary Anne. *Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, The Archive.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Doherty, Claire, ed. *Out of Time Out of Place: Public Art (Now)*. London: Art Books, 2015.

Doherty, Claire and David Cross, eds. *One Day Sculpture*. Berlin: Kerber Verlag, 2009.

Doherty, Mike. 2016. “The Situation Rooms is an immersive journey, opening the fourth wall between spectator and performer.” *National Post*, 14 June 2016. Accessed 8 November 2018. www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/text/the-situation-rooms-is-an-immersive-journey-opening-the-fourth-wall-between-spectator-and-performer.

Dolan, Jill. *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*. 2nd ed. 1988. Reprint, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Egoyan, Atom. “Janet Cardiff by Atom Egoyan.” *BOMB* 79 (Spring 2002): 60-67. Accessed 29 October 2019. https://bombmagazine.org/articles/janet-cardiff.

Eisenstein, Sergei M. “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form.” In *Film form; essays in film theory*, edited and translated by Jay Leyda, 45-63. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1949.

Eisenstein, Sergei M., Yve-Alain Bois, and Michael Glenny. “Montage & Architecture.” *Assemblage* 10 (December 1989): 110-131. Accessed 17 September 2019. www.doi.org/10.2307/3171145.

Elkins, James. *What Painting Is.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2000.

Ellis, Jim. “Sound, Space and Selfhood: Stereoscopic Apprehension in The ‘Paradise Institute’”. *Revue Canadienne d'Études cinématographiques / Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 28-41. Accessed 29 October 2019. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24405636.

Elwes, Catherine. *Installation and the Moving Image*. New York: Wallflower Press, 2015.

Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment. s.v. "optics." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Accessed 22 July 2019. Oxford Reference Online.

Everett-Green, Robert. “Montreal’s Arsenal is ‘not a gallery, not a museum’.” *The Globe and Mail*, 6 February 2015. Accessed 11 November 2019. www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/montreals-arsenal-is-not-a-gallery-not-a-museum/article22837192.

Ex Machina. “The Library at Night – Official Trailer.” Youtube. Last modified 16 December 2015. Accessed 3 November 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bidj-MevdOs.

Farman, Jason. *Mobile Interface Theory: Embodied Space and Locative Media*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Fearnow, Mark. s.v. “Little Theatre Movement.” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*. Last modified 2003. Accessed 28 October 2019. Oxford Reference Online.

Féral, Josette. “How to Define Presence Effects: The Work of Janet Cardiff.” In *Archaeologies of Presence*, edited by Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, and Michael Shanks. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.

———. “Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified.” *Modern Drama* 25, no. 1 (1982): 170-181. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.3138/md.25.1.170.

Ferdman, Bertie. “A New Journey Through Other Spaces: Contemporary Performance beyond ‘Site-Specific.” *Theater* 43.2 (2013): 5-25. Accessed 29 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1215/01610775-1966475.

———. *Off Sites: Contemporary Performance Beyond Site-Specific*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2018.

Fisher, Jennifer. "Speeches of display: the museum audioguides of Sophie Calle, Andrea Fraser and Janet Cardiff." *Parachute: Contemporary Art Magazine* 94 (April-June 1999): 24-31. Accessed 29 October 2019. Ebsco Host Art & Architecture.

Flack, Derek. “Toronto’s defunct power plant to get major makeover.” blogTO. Last modified 17 April 2016. Accessed 7 November 2018. https://www.blogto.com/arts/2016/04/torontos_defunct_power_plant_to_get_major_makeover.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish.* Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Frayling, Christopher. “Research in art and design.” *Royal College of Art, Research Papers* 1.1 London: RCA, 1993. Accessed 22 October 2019. http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/384/3/frayling_research_in_art_and_design_1993.pdf

Freshwater, Helen. *theatre & audience.* London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009.

Freud, Sigmund. “The Uncanny.” In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, translated by James Strachey, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., 929-952. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Fried, Michael. “Art and Objecthood.” In *Art and Objecthood*, 148-172. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Friedberg, Anne. *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.

Frost, Vicky. “Situation Rooms by Rimini Protokoll – review.” *The Guardian*: Australia Culture Blog, 18 February 2014. Accessed 8 November 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/feb/18/situation-rooms-by-rimini-protokoll-review.

Glenbow Museum. “Feast Your Eyes on Glenbow’s New Exhibition! — *Through the Looking Glass* and *The Paradise Institute* Open Friday —” Press Release. 24 September 2008. Accessed 16 September 2019. https://www.glenbow.org/media/LookingGlassReleaseSept24.pdf.

Grau, Oliver, ed. *MediaArtHistories*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.

———. *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.

Greenberg, Clement. “The Case for Abstract Art.” 1959. In *Modernism with a Vengeance 1957-1969*. Vol. 4 of *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism.* Edited by John O’Brian, 75-84. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

———. “Modernist Painting.” 1959. In *Modernism with a Vengeance 1957-1969*. Vol. 4 of *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism.* Edited by John O’Brian, 85-93. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Gross-Hoy, Marina. “Library at Night.” Imaginibus: Creativity in Museums blog. Last modified 9 May 2016. Accessed 3 November 2019. http://www.imaginibus.com/blog/library-night?rq=library.

Gunning, Tom. “An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator. In *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, edited by Linda Williams, 114-133. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995.

———. “The Cinema of Attraction: Early Cinema, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde.” In *Early cinema: space, frame, narrative*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, 56-62. London: BFI, 1990.

Hahn, Daniela. “Performing Public Spaces, Staging Collective Memory: 50 Kilometers of Files by Rimini Protokoll,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 58.3 (Fall 2014): 27-38. Accessed 7 February 2020. www.doi.org/10.1162/DRAM_a_00371.

Hanich, Julian. *The Audience Effect: On the Collective Cinema Experience*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Harvie, Jen. *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Heath, Stephen. *Questions of Cinema.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.

Heathcote, Edwin. *Cinema Builders.* New York: Wiley-Academy, 2001.

Hellerman, Jason. “How Hitchcock’s ‘Psycho’ Changed How We Watch Movies in Theaters Forever.” no film school. Last modified 28 September 2019. Accessed 28 December 2019. https://nofilmschool.com/How-Psycho-changed-cinema.

Herzog, Charlotte. “The archeology of cinema architecture: The origins of the movie theater.” *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 9.1 (1984): 11-32. Accessed 28 December 2019. www.doi.org/10.1080/10509208409361186.

Hesselberth, Pepita. *Cinematic Chronotopes: Here, Now, Me*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Hirsch, Nikolaus. “Theatrum Belli.” In *Situation Rooms: Ein Multiplayer Videostück /// A Multiplayer Video-piece*, 9-19. Berlin: Rimini Protokoll and Druckerei Conrad, 2013.

Hohr, Hansjörg. “The Concept of Experience by John Dewey Revisited: Conceiving, Feeling and ‘Enliving’.” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 32.1 (2013): 25-38. Accessed 20 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1007/s11217-012-9330-7.

Hopkins, David. “Duchamp, Childhood, Work and Play: The Vernissage for *First Papers of Surrealism*, New York, 1942.” Tate Papers, no. 22 (Autumn 2014): n.p. Accessed 4 April

2019. https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/22/duchamp-childhood-work-and-play-the-vernissage-for-first-papers-of-surrealism-new-york-1942.

Huhtamo, Erkki. *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013.

———. "Seeing at a Distance. Towards an Archaeology of the 'Small Screen'." In *Art@Science*, edited by Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau, 262-278. New York: Springer, 1998.

Huldisch, Henriette et al., eds. *An Inventory of Shimmers: Objects of Intimacy in Contemporary Art.* New York Prestel, 2017.

International Theater Amsterdam. "A Movie Guide to Situation Rooms – Brandstichter 2017: Rimini Protokoll." YouTube. Last modified 12 January 2017. Accessed 13 September 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPoMTjMAeGI.

Iles, Chrissie. "Between the Still and Moving Image." *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art 1964-1977*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001.

———. *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016.* New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2016.

Irmer, Thomas. "A Search for New Realities: Documentary Theatre in Germany." *TDR: The Drama Review* 50.3 (Fall 2006): 16-28. Accessed 7 February 2020. www.doi.org/10.1162/dram.2006.50.3.16.

Isenberg, Arnold. "Analytical Philosophy and the Study of Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 125-136. Accessed 20 January 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/431270.

Jackson, Philip W. "If We Took Dewey's Aesthetics Seriously, How Could the Arts be Taught?" *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 13 (1995): 193-202. Accessed 16 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1007/BF01077678.

Jackson, Shannon. *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Johnson, Ken. "ART IN REVIEW; Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller – 'The Paradise Institute'." *The New York Times*, 12 April 2002. Accessed 12 November 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/12/arts/art-in-review-janet-cardiff-and-george-bures-miller-the-paradise-institute.html.

Jones, Amelia. "Encountering: The Conceptual Body, or a Theory of When, Where, and How Art 'Means'." *TDR: The Drama Review* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 12-34. Accessed 28 January 2019. www.doi.org/10.1162/dram_a_00770.

———. "The 'Eternal Return' Self-Portrait Photography as a Technology of Embodiment." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 947-978. Accessed 28 January 2019. www.doi.org/10.1086/339641.

———. “Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'.” *One Day Sculpture*, edited by Claire Doherty, 31-37. Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2010.

———. “The Pollockian Performative’ and the Revision of the Modernist Subject.” *Body art/performing the subject*, 53-102. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Jones, Amelia, interview by Swen Steinhäuser and Neil MacDonald. “Performative Afterlife: an interview with Amelia Jones.” *parallax* 28, no. 1 (2018): 11-18. Accessed 14 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2017.1415265.

Kang, Min-Suk et al. “Visual working memory contaminates perception.” *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 18, no. 5 (October 2011): 860-869. Accessed 1 November 2019. SpringerLink.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement.* 1790. Translated by James Creed Meredith. Edited by Nicholas Walker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Kaprow, Allan. “Happenings in the New York Scene.” In *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Edited by Jeff Kelley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

———. “Untitled Guidelines for Happenings.” 1965. In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artist's Writings*, edited by Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, 709-714. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Karp, Ivan, and Fred Wilson. “Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums.” In *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, 251-267. Abingdon: Routledge, 1996.

Kaye, Nick. *Site Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2000.

Kelly, Jeanette. “Robert Lepage virtual-reality show fetes 10th birthday of the Grande Bibliothèque.” *CBC News* Montreal, 27 October 2015. Accessed 23 October 2019. www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/robert-lepage-alberto-manguel-oculus-rift-virtual-reality-bibliotheque-nationale-library-1.3291148.

Kießling, Maren. “Bauaufgabe Kino.” Maren Kießling. Last modified 2014. Accessed 28 December 2019. http://www.marenkiessling.de/publication-bauaufgabe_kino.htm.

Kirkpatrick, Graeme. *Aesthetic Theory and the Video Game*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011.

Klonk, Charlotte. *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Knowles, Kim. “Better Viewed on the Wall of an Art Gallery? Institution, Aesthetics and Experimental Film.” *Millennium Film Journal* 55 (Spring 2012): 40-44. Accessed 29 October 2019. Proquest.

Kuntzel, Thierry. “The Film-Work 2.” *Camera Obscura* 5 (Spring 1980): 6-69. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.1215/02705346-2-2_5-6.

Kuppers, Petra. *Disability and Contemporary Performance.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2003.

Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

LaCoss, Don. "Hysterical freedom: Surrealist dance & Hélène Vanel's faulty functions." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 15, no. 2 (2005): 37-61. Accessed 4 April 2019. www.doi.org/10.1080/07407700508571504.

Laforet, Vincent. "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Masterclass in Why 48 FPS Fails." Gizmodo. Last modified 19 December 2012. Accessed 25 April 2018. www.gizmodo.com/5969817/the-hobbit-an-unexpected-masterclass-in-why-48-fps-fails.

Lammerich, Yvonne. "Cinema arcade: the 49th Venice Biennial of Contemporary Art." *Etc. Montreal* 55 (Sept-Nov 2001): 70-76. Accessed 29 October 2019. https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/etc/1900-v1-n1-etc1119485/35428ac.pdf.

Lavender, Andy. "Modal Transpositions toward Theatres of Encounter, or, in Praise of 'Media Intermultimodality'." *Theatre Journal* 66, no. 4 (2014): 499-518. Accessed 8 November 2018. www.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2014.0105.

———. *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

La Villette. "History & Heritage: A few key dates." La Villette. n.d. Accessed 13 September 2019. https://en.lavillette.com/page/history-heritage_a175/1.

Lavin, Sylvia. *Kissing Architecture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Lawlor, Leonard and Valentine Moulard Leonard. "Henri Bergson." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. Last updated 21 March 2016. Accessed 5 November 2019. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bergson.

Leavy, Patricia. *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*. New York: Guilford Press, 2009.

Lepage, Robert. "The Library at Night." ex machina. n.d. Accessed 23 October 2019. http://lacaserne.net/index2.php/other_projects/la_bibliotheque_la_nuit.

———. "La bibliothèque, la nuit." epidemic arts collective. n.d. Accessed 23 October 2019. http://www.epidemic.net/fr/photos/lepage/la_bibliotheque_la_nuit/slideshow.html.

———. "The Library at Night." Musée de la civilisation. n.d. Accessed 23 October 2019. www.mcq.org/en/exposition?id=425961.

Levin, Laura. *Performing Ground: Space, Camouflage and the Art of Blending In*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Levitt, Peggy. "Museums Must Attract Diverse Visitors or Risk Irrelevance." *The Atlantic,* 9 Nov 2015. Accessed 15 July 2019. https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/museums-must-attract-diverse-visitors-or-risk-irrelevance/433347.

Levy, Benjamin. "Situation Rooms – Collectif Rimini Protokoll." Consollection Blog Jeux Vidéo. Last modified 23 May 2014. Accessed 13 September 2019.

https://www.consollection.com/jeux-video/actualite/situation-rooms-collectif-rimini-protokoll-7954.html.

Limon, Jerzy. *The Chemistry of Theatre: Performativity of Time.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Loiperdinger, Martin, and Bernd Elzer. "Lumiere's Arrival of the Train: Cinema's Founding Myth." *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (2004): 89-118. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.1353/mov.2004.0014.

Luminato. "The Hearn: A History." Luminato. Last modified 20 April 2016. Accessed 7 November 2018. https://luminatofestival.com/Blog-Archive/2016-04/The-Hearn-A-History.

Machon, Josephine. *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Mackintosh, Iain. *Architecture, actor, and audience.* Abingdon: Routledge, 1993.

Macleod, Katy, and Lin Holdridge, eds. *Thinking Through Art: Reflections on Art as Research.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

MacLeod, Suzanne. "Rethinking museum architecture: Towards a site-specific history of production and use." In *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, edited by Suzanne MacLeod, 9-25. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

Maga, Carly. "Situation Rooms immerses audiences into international arms trade: review." *The Star*, 11 June 2016. Accessed 8 November 2018. https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2016/06/11/situation-rooms-immerses-audiences-into-the-international-arms-trade-review.html.

Manning, Erin. *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy (Technologies of Lived Abstraction).* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012.

Marchessault, Janine and Susan Lord. *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinema*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Marks, Laura U. "Immersed in the Single Channel: Experimental Media from Theater to Gallery." *Millennium Film Journal* 55 (Spring 2012): 14-23. Accessed 29 October 2019. Proquest.

———. *The Skin of the Film.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

———. "Video Haptics and Erotics." In *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, 1-20. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Martin, Jay. *The Education of John Dewey: A Biography.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Mayne, Judith. *Cinema and Spectatorship*. 1993. Reprint, New York: Routledge, 2002.

———. “Paradoxes of Spectatorship.” In *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, edited by Linda Williams, 155-183. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

McCall, Anthony. “Solid Light Works.” *Anthony McCall*. n.d. Accessed 26 September 2019. http://www.anthonymccall.com/solid-light-works.

McMaster, Gerald. “Creating Spaces.” In *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, 191-200. Abingdon: Routledge, 1996.

Melted Spinning Plastic. Tumblr. “The Paradise Institute.” Last modified 8 April 2013. Accessed 13 November 2019. https://meltedspinningplastic.tumblr.com/post/47513864262/the-paradise-institute.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. Abingdon: Routledge, 1962.

Mersch, Dieter. *Epistemologies of Aesthetics.* Zurich-Berlin: Diaphanes, 2015.

Metz, Christian. *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Michelson, Annette. “On the Eve of the Future: The Reasonable Facsimile and the Philosophical Toy.” *October* 29 (Summer 1984): 3-20. Accessed 13 September 2019. www.doi.org/10.2307/778304.

Min-ha, Trinh T. *The digital film event.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

———. *D-passage: the digital way*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

Mondloch, Kate. *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art.* University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Morris, Robert. “Notes on Sculpture Part I & II.” In *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*, 222-235. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994.

———. “Notes on Sculpture Part III: Notes and Nonsequiturs.” 1967. In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artist's Writings*, edited by Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, 588-593. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Morrison, Craig. “From Nickelodeon to Picture Palace and Back.” *Design Quarterly* 93 (1974): 6-17. Accessed 12 March 2018. www.doi.org/10.2307/4090905.

Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, edited by Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, 342-352. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

Mumford, Meg. “Rimini Protokoll’s Reality Theatre and Intercultural Encounter: Towards an Ethical Art of Partial Proximity.” *Contemporary Theatre Review* 23.2 (2013): 153-165. Accessed 7 February 2020. www.doi.org/10.1080/10486801.2013.777057

Musser, Charles. *The Emergence of Cinema*. New York: Scribner, 1990.

Nedelkopoulou, Eirini. “Walking Out on Our Bodies Participation as ecstasis in Janet Cardiff’s Walks.” *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts.* 16.4 (2011): 117-123. Accessed 9 February 2020. www.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2011.606058.

Noordegraaf, Julia. *Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Visual Culture.* Rotterdam: NAi Pub., 2004.

O'Connor, Ciara (@Cioconnor). Twitter thread. 9 August 2019 (2:33 p.m.). Accessed 27 September 2019. https://twitter.com/Cioconnor/status/1159895452118081536.

O'Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Open Up. "An Introduction to the Open Up guide and project." Open Up Museums. 2018. Accessed 15 July 2019. www.openupmuseums.com.

O'Sullivan, Michael. "The Corcoran Biennial: Dramatic License." *The Washington Post*. 27 December 2002. Accessed 13 November 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/2002/12/27/the-corcoran-biennial-dramatic-license/40d836b8-7dcc-424d-97bf-4370439ae703.

Parker, Felan. "Playing Games With Art: The Cultural and Aesthetic Legitimation of Digital Games." PhD diss., York University, 2014. Accessed 29 October 2019. https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/28164/Parker_Felan_S_2014_PhD.pdf;jsessionid=947B0E961428202FB154064FF97AA575?sequence=2.

Pavis, Patrice. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Pearson, Michael. *Site-Specific Performance.* London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Perkins, Claire. "Cinephilia and Monstrosity: The Problem of Cinema in Deleuze's *Cinema* Books." *Senses of Cinema*, no. 8 (July 2000): n.p. Accessed 13 November 2019. http://sensesofcinema.com/2000/book-reviews/deleuze.

Petersen, Anne Ring. *Installation Art Between Image and Stage*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015.

Phelan, Peggy. "The Ontology of Performance." In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, 146-166. Abingdon: Routledge, 1996.

Phelan, Peggy, interview by Marquard Smith. "Performance, live culture and things of the heart." *Journal of Visual Culture* 2.3 (2003): 291-302. Accessed 27 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1177/1470412903002003002.

Phillips, Stephen J. *Elastic Architecture: Frederick Kiesler and Design Research in the First Age of Robotic Culture.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017.

Pilgrim, Anita Naoko. "Performance and the Performative." *Body & Society* 7.4 (2001): 87-96. Accessed 27 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1177/1357034X01007004006.

Plato. "Excerpt from *Book VII*." In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, translated by Robin Waterfield, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., 64-67. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

———. “Excerpt from *Book X*.” In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, translated by Robin Waterfield, edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al., 67-80. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Pollock, Della. “Performing Writing.” *The Ends of Performance*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Pugh, Kevin J., and Mark Girod. “Science, Art, and Experience: Constructing a Science Pedagogy from Dewey’s Aesthetics.” *Journal of Science Teacher Education* 18.1 (2007): 9-27. Accessed 16 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1007/s10972-006-9029-0.

Ramirez, Erick. “It’s dangerous to think virtual reality is an empathy machine.” *Aeon*, 26 October 2018. Accessed 13 November 2019. https://aeon.co/ideas/its-dangerous-to-think-virtual-reality-is-an-empathy-machine.

Rancière, Jacques. “Artistic Regimes and the Shortcoming of the Nation of Modernity." In *The Politics of Aesthetics*. Translated by Gabriel Rockhill, 20-30. New York: Continuum, 2011.

Rees, A.L. “Movements in Film 1912-40.” *Film and Video Art*, edited by Stuart Comer, 26-45. London: Tate Publishing, 2009.

Rees Leahy, Helen. *Museum Bodies: The Politics and Practices of Visiting and Viewing.* Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

Reiss, Julie H. *From Margin to Centre: The Spaces of Installation Art*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.

Rich, Katey. “Peter Jackson Explains Why You Should See the Hobbit in 48 fps.” Cinemablend. Last modified 13 December 2012. Accessed 25 April 2018. www.cinemablend.com/new/Peter-Jackson-Explains-Why-You-Should-See-Hobbit-48-fps-34603.html.

Rimini Protokoll. “Private Video: English Split Screen Situation Rooms Version Theatertreffen 720pH264.mov-HD.” Vimeo. Last modified 12 May 2014. Accessed 8 November 2019. Private video link.

———. “Situation Rooms | Haug / Kaegi / Wetzel | ORF2 Kulturmontag.” Vimeo. Last modified 23 September 2015. Accessed 8 November 2018. https://vimeo.com/140156216.

———. “Situation Rooms – A multiplayer video piece.” Rimini Protokoll. n.d. Accessed 7 November 2018. https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/situation-rooms.

Rogoff, Irit. “‘Smuggling’ - An Embodied Criticality.” Originally published on Curatorial.net [defunct]. Kunsthal Aarhus, 2006. Accessed 22 October 2019. https://xenopraxis.net/readings/rogoff_smuggling.pdf.

Rottner, Nadja. “Oldenburg's Moveyhouse: Performing a Cinema without Film.” *Oxford Art Journal* 35, no. 1 (March 2012): 1-18. Accessed 4 April 2019. www.doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/kcs006.

Rufford, Juliet. *theatre & architecture*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

Salter, Chris. *Alien Agency: Experimental Encounters with Art in the Making*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015.

Sandlos, Karyn. "Curating and Pedagogy in the Strange Time of Short Film and Video Exhibition." *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (2004): 17-33. Accessed 21 May 2018. www.doi.org/10.1353/mov.2004.0019.

Sedgewick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Seth, Anil. "The Cybernetic Bayesian Brain - From Interoceptive Inference to Sensorimotor Contingencies." In *Open MIND*, edited by Thomas K. Metzinger and Jennifer M. Windt. (Frankfurt: MIND Group, 2015): n.p., Accessed 1 November 2019. www.doi.org/10.15502/9783958570108.

Seth, Anil and Future of StoryTelling. "The Neuroscience of Perception." Youtube. Last modified 14 September 2018. Accessed 1 November 2019. www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMjvjw_LRHU.

Schechner, Richard. "Six Axioms for Environmental Theater." In *Environmental Theater*, xix-li. 1967. Reprint, New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 1994.

Schipper, Imanuel. "From flâneur to co-producer: The performative spectator." In *Performing the Digital: Performativity and Performance Studies in Digital Cultures*, edited by Martina Leeker, Imanuel Schipper, and Timon Beyes, 191-209. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2017. Accessed 4 April 2019. http://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-3355-9/performing-the-digital/?number=978-3-8394-3355-3.

Schneider, Rebecca. "Still Living." In *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, 138-168. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Schoepfer, Emma. "Situation Rooms – Jeu video grandeur nature." Les Découvertes d'Emma. Last modified 11 February 2015. Accessed 13 September 2019. http://decouvertesdemma.canalblog.com/archives/2015/02/11/31498687.html.

Schulte Strathaus, Stefanie. "'Showing Different Films Differently': Cinema as a Result of Cinematic Thinking." *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 1-16. Accessed 29 October 2019. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41167144.

Schütze, Bernard. "Resonances of an Affective Field." In *y2o catalogue*. Montreal: dominique t skoltz, 2015. Accessed 23 October 2019. www.dominiquetskoltz.com/new-page-5.

Scott, Marian. "Virtual reality exhibition by Robert Lepage marks Grande Bibliothèque's first decade." *Montreal Gazette*, 27 October 2015. Accessed 23 October 2019. https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/library-at-night.

Sharp, John. *Works of Game: On the Aesthetics of Games and Art (Playful Thinking)*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015.

Shusterman, Richard. “Pragmatism: Dewey.” *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. 2nd ed, edited by Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes, 121-131. London: Routledge, 2005.

skoltz, dominique t. dominique t skoltz~. n.d. Accessed 29 October 2019. http://www.dominiquetskoltz.com.

———. Interview by Melanie Wilmink. 27 November 2015.

———. *y2o catalogue*. Montreal: dominique t skoltz, 2015. Accessed 23 October 2019. www.dominiquetskoltz.com/new-page-5.

Sobchak, Vivian. *The Address of the Eye*: *A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Solène. “3 spectacles au banc d’essai: acte premier.” Solcito blog. Last modified 2 February 2015. Accessed 14 November 2019. https://www.solcito.fr/2015/02/3-spectacles-au-banc-dessai-acte-1.

Soloski, Alexis. “Sleep No More: from avant garde theatre to commercial blockbuster.” *The Guardian*, 31 March 2015. Accessed 26 September 2019. www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/mar/31/sleep-no-more-avant-garde-theatre-new-york.

Sprengler, Christine. “Cinema and the Visual Arts.” In *Oxford Bibliographies in Cinema and Media Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012; updated 30 October 2019. Accessed 8 February 2020. www.doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199791286-0122.

Srinivas, Lakshmi. “The active audience: spectatorship, social relations and the experience of cinema in India.” *Media, Culture & Society* 24 (2002): 155-173. Accessed 28 December 2019. www.doi.org/10.1177/016344370202400201.

Strosberg, Eliane. *Art & Science*. New York: Abbeville Press, 2015.

Suderburg, Erika, ed. *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Szczepaniak-Gillece, Jocelyn. “Revisiting the apparatus: the theatre chair and cinematic spectatorship.” *Screen* 57, no. 3 (Autumn, 2016): 253-276. Accessed 29 October 2019. www.doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjw030.

Ticineto Clough, Patricia and Jean Halley eds. *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Tierney, Robin. “Grand illusions: Corcoran turns art into a surreal experience.” *The Examiner*, 17 November 2006. Accessed 12 November 2019. https://www.cardiffmiller.com/press/texts/Paradise-Institute-Corcoran.pdf.

Theatres Trust. “How has the design of theatre buildings changed over time?” *Theatres Trust*. n.d. Accessed 04 April 2019. http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/discover-theatres/theatre-faqs/172-how-has-the-design-of-theatre-buildings-changed-over-tim.

Tuer, Dot. *Mining the Media Archive: Art, Technology and Resistance*. Toronto: YYZ Books, 2006.

Uroskie, Andrew V. *Between the Black Box and the White Cube: Expanded Cinema and Postwar Art.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Von Hantelmann, Dorothea. *How to Do Things with Art*. Zurich: JRP | Ringier and Presses du réel, 2010.

Ward, Meredith C. "The Soundscape of the Cinema Theatre: Acoustical Design, Embodiment, and Film Theatres as Vehicles for Aural Absorption." *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 10, no. 2 (Autumn 2016): 135-165. Accessed 28 February 2018. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/651456.

Weigert, Laura. "The Environment of Theatre." In *A Cultural History of Theatre in the Middle Ages,* Vol 2., edited by Jody Enders, 77-104. London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

Wiles, David. *A Short History of Western Performance Space.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Wilkie, Fiona. *Performance, Transport and Mobility: Making Passage*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

Wilmink, Melanie. "Situating the Immersive Experience: Exploring Intermedial Situations in Art/ Cinema Installations." Master's thesis, University of Regina, 2014. Accessed 29 October 2019. http://hdl.handle.net/10294/5784.

Winston, Brian. "Technologies of Seeing." In *Future Cinema: the cinematic imaginary after film*, edited by Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel, 368-375. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.

Wolska, Aleksandra. "Rabbits, Machines, and the Ontology of Performance." *Theatre Journal* 57 (2005). Accessed 27 January 2020. www.doi.org/10.1353/tj.2005.0040.

Appendix: Illustrations

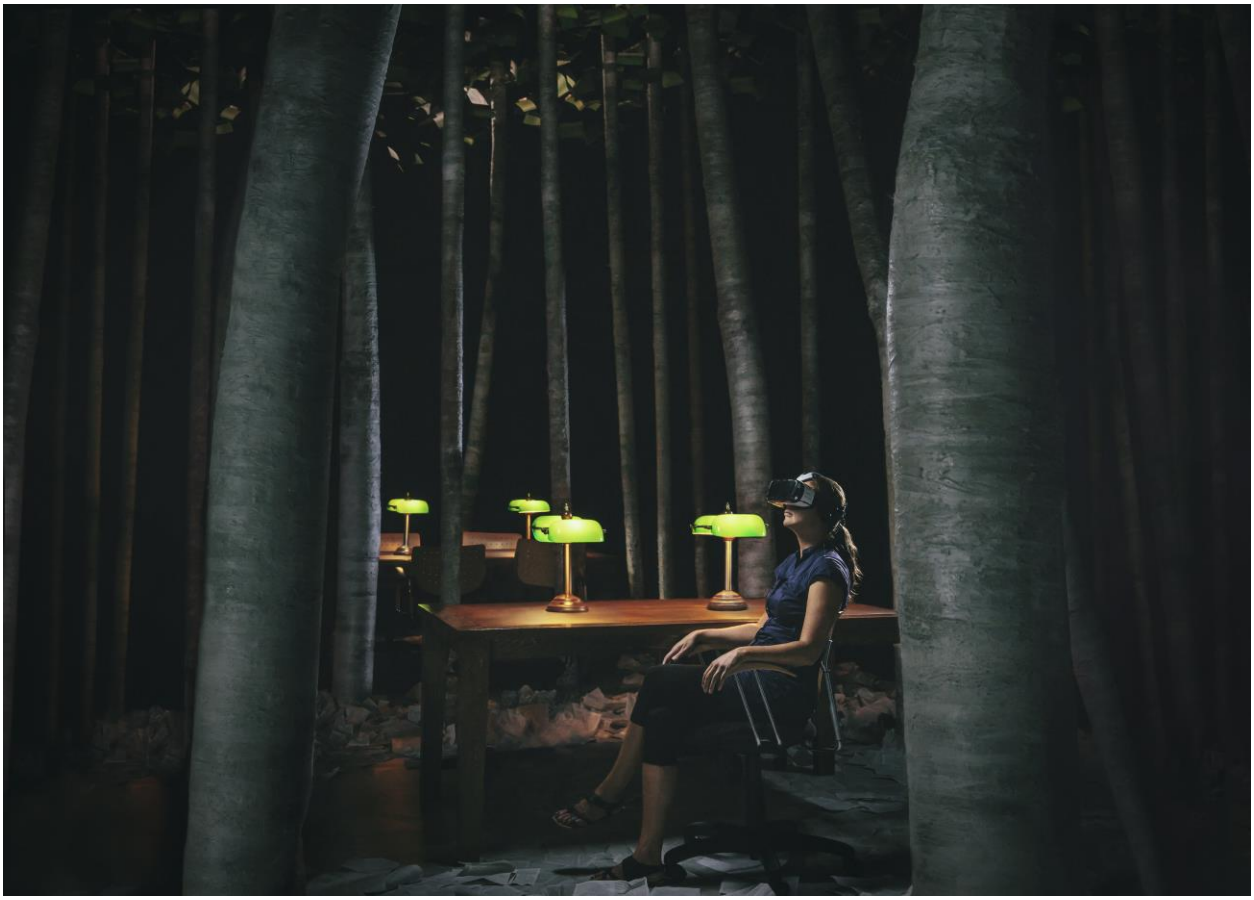

Figure 1: Press still – The Library at Night (2016) by Robert Lepage & Ex Machina (Image Courtesy of Ex Machina)

Figure 2: Installation view – y2o dualités_ (2015) by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Toronto (Image courtesy of dominique t skoltz; Photography by dominique t skoltz)

Figure 3: Installation view – nine-channel installation of y2o dualités_ (2015)
by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Toronto
(Image courtesy of dominique t skoltz; Photography by dominique t skoltz)

Figure 4: Installation view – y2o dualités_ (2015) by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Toronto (Image courtesy of dominique t skoltz; Photography by dominique t skoltz)

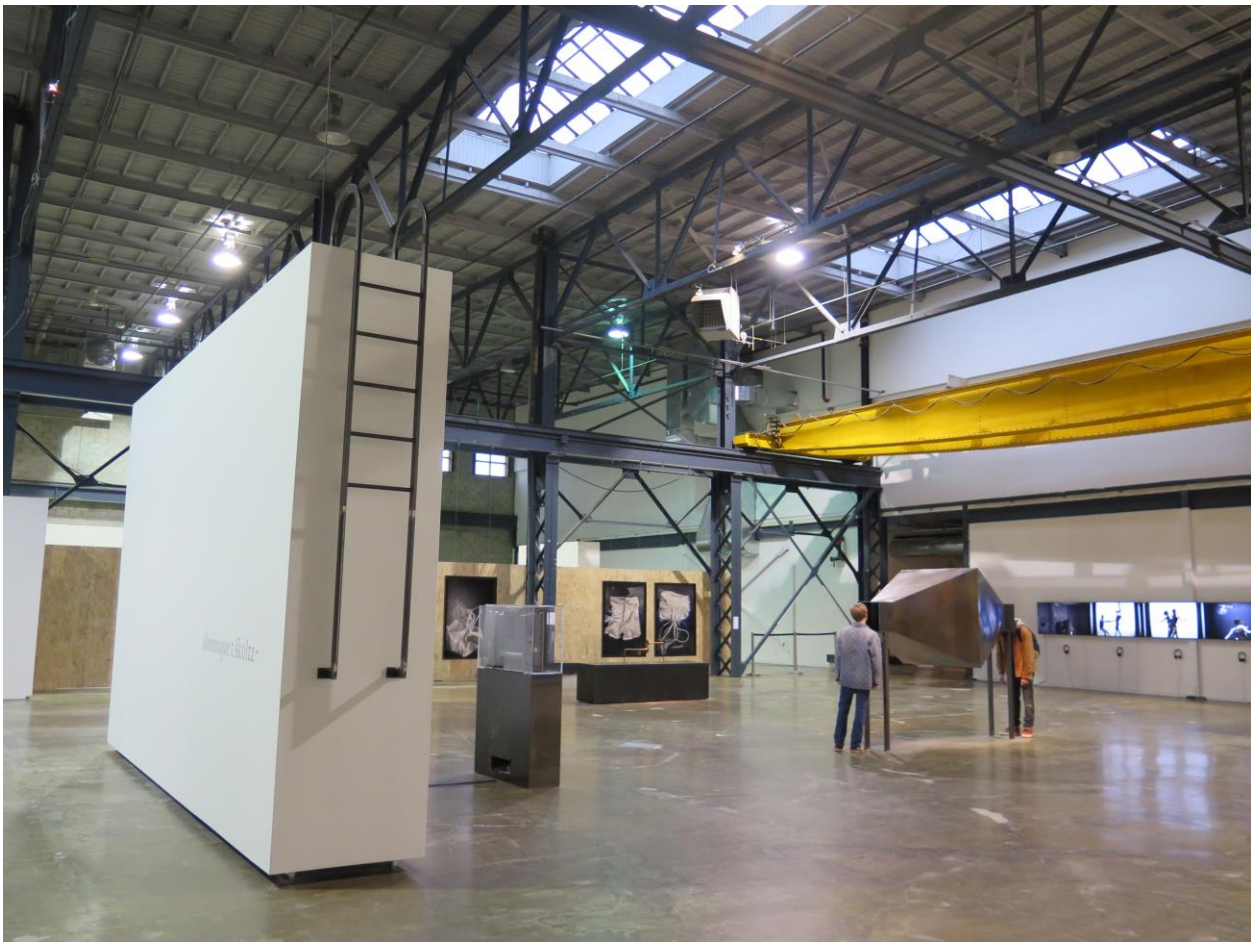

Figure 5: Installation view – y2o dualités_ (2015) main space
by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal
(Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

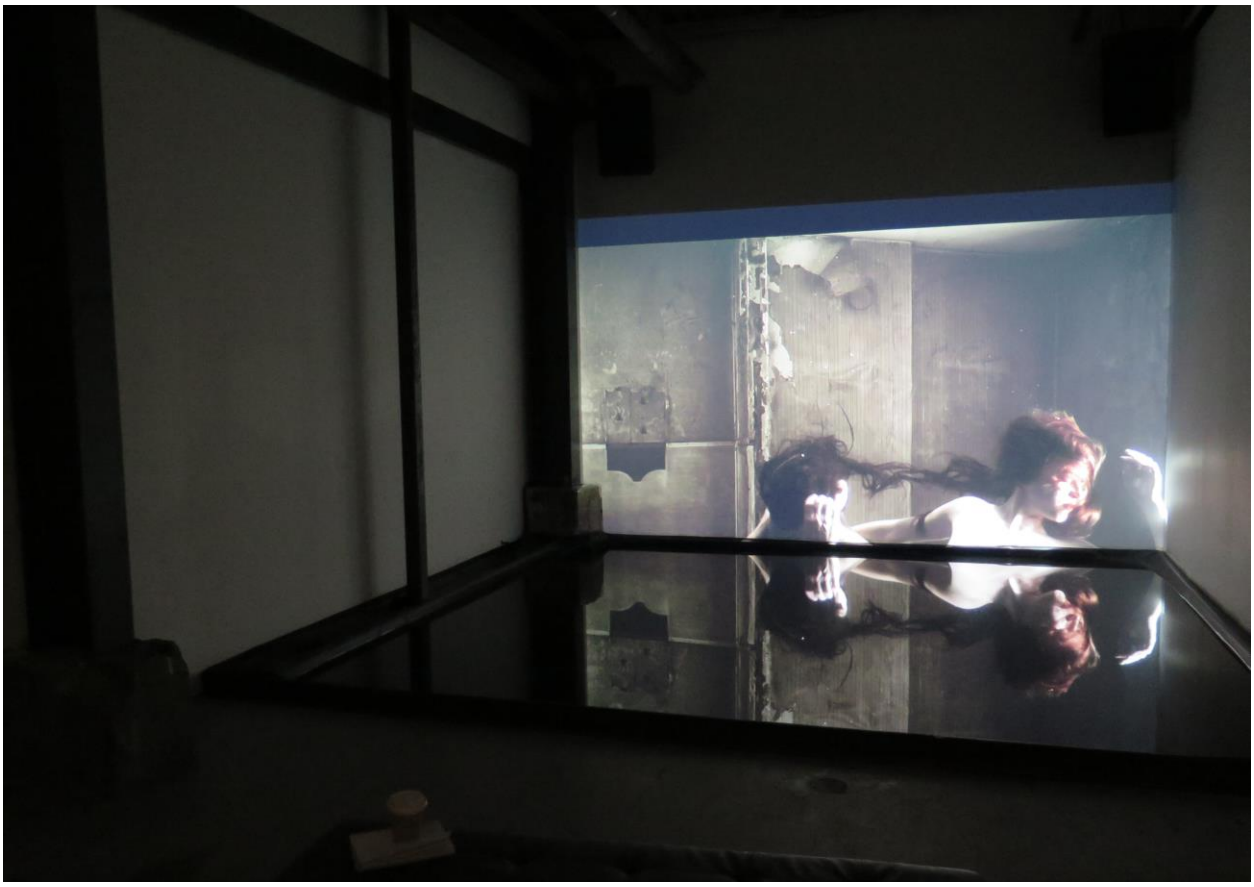

Figure 6: Installation view – y2o single-channel (2015)
by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal
(Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

Figure 7: Close-up view – y2o single-channel (2015) by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal (Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

Figure 8: Installation view – y2o dualités_ (2015) main space
by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal
(Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

Figure 9: Performance with Face à Face (2015) by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal (Image courtesy of dominique t skoltz; Photography by dominique t skoltz)

Figure 10: Close-up view – Face à Face (2015) by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal. (Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

Figure 11: y2o Huis clos (2015) by dominique t skoltz at Arsenal Montreal (Image courtesy of dominique skoltz; Photography by dominique t skoltz)

Figure 12: Installation view of The Paradise Institute (2001)
by Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller at the Glenbow Museum (2008)
(Image courtesy of the Glenbow Museum; Photography by Owen Melenka)

Figure 13: Press still, installation view – The Paradise Institute (2001)
by Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller
(Image courtesy of Cardiff Miller Studio; Photography by Markus Tretter)

Figure 14: Press still, interior view – The Paradise Institute (2001)
by Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller
(Image courtesy of Cardiff Miller Studio; Photography by Markus Tretter)

Figure 15: Press still, close-up interior view – The Paradise Institute (2001)
by Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller
(Image courtesy of Cardiff Miller Studio; Photography by Federico del Prete)

Figure 16: Press still – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll
(Image courtesy of Rimini Protokoll; Photography by Jörg Baumann/ Ruhrtriennale)

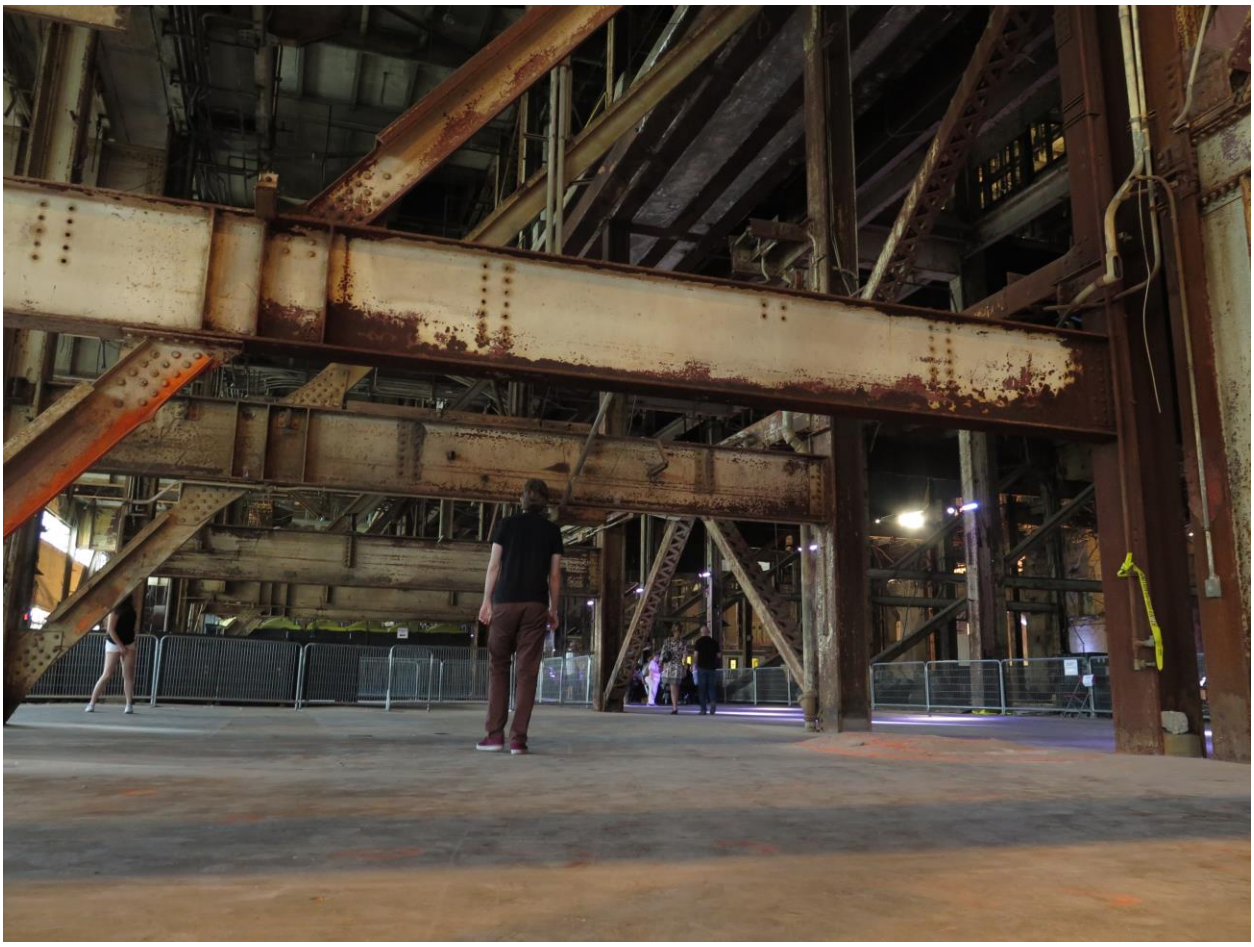

Figure 17: The Hearn (Toronto) for Luminato Festival, 2016
(Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

Figure 18: Exterior view – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll at the Hearn for Luminato Festival, 2016 (Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

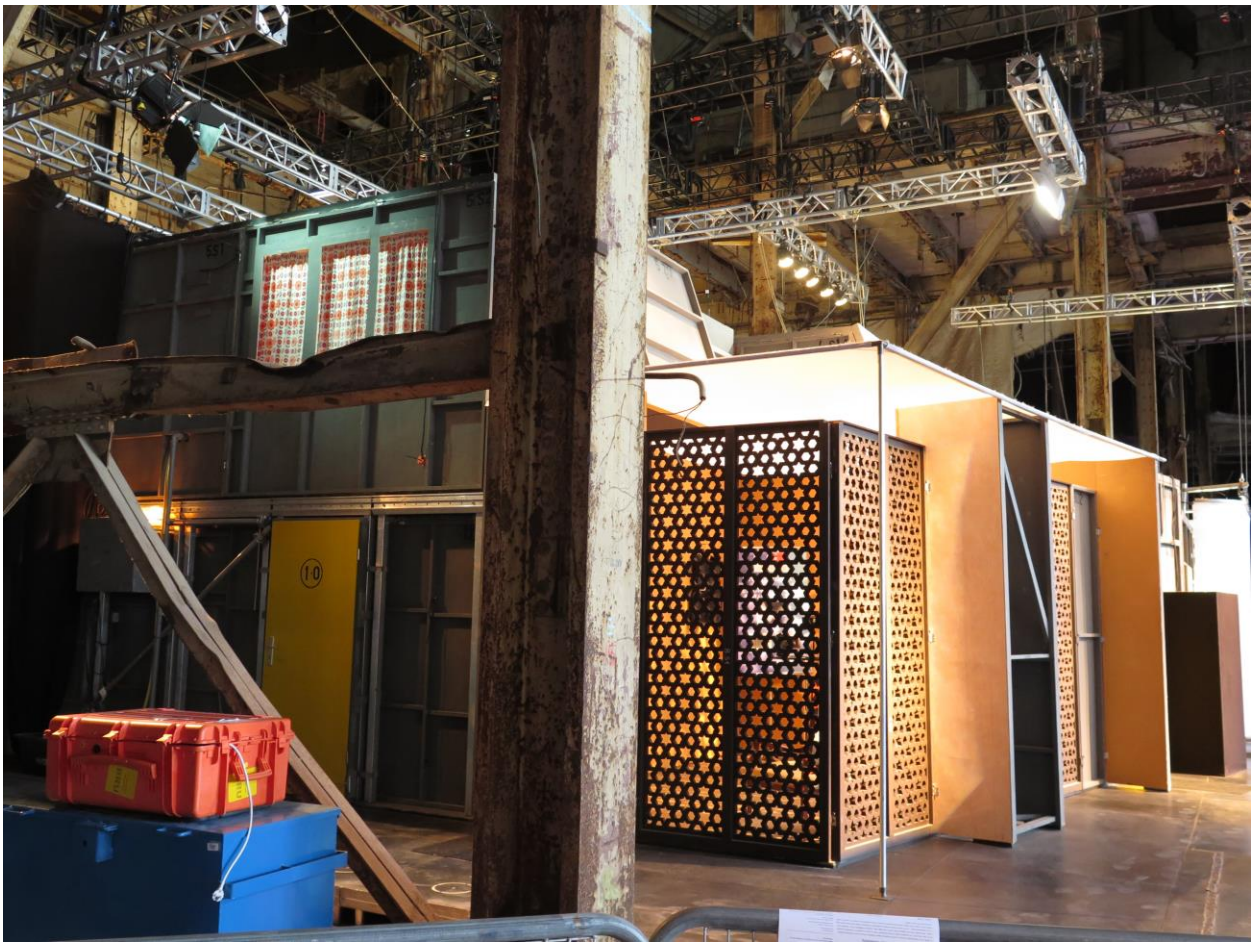

Figure 19: Exterior view, alternate angle – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll at the Hearn for Luminato Festival, 2016 (Photography by Melanie Wilmink)

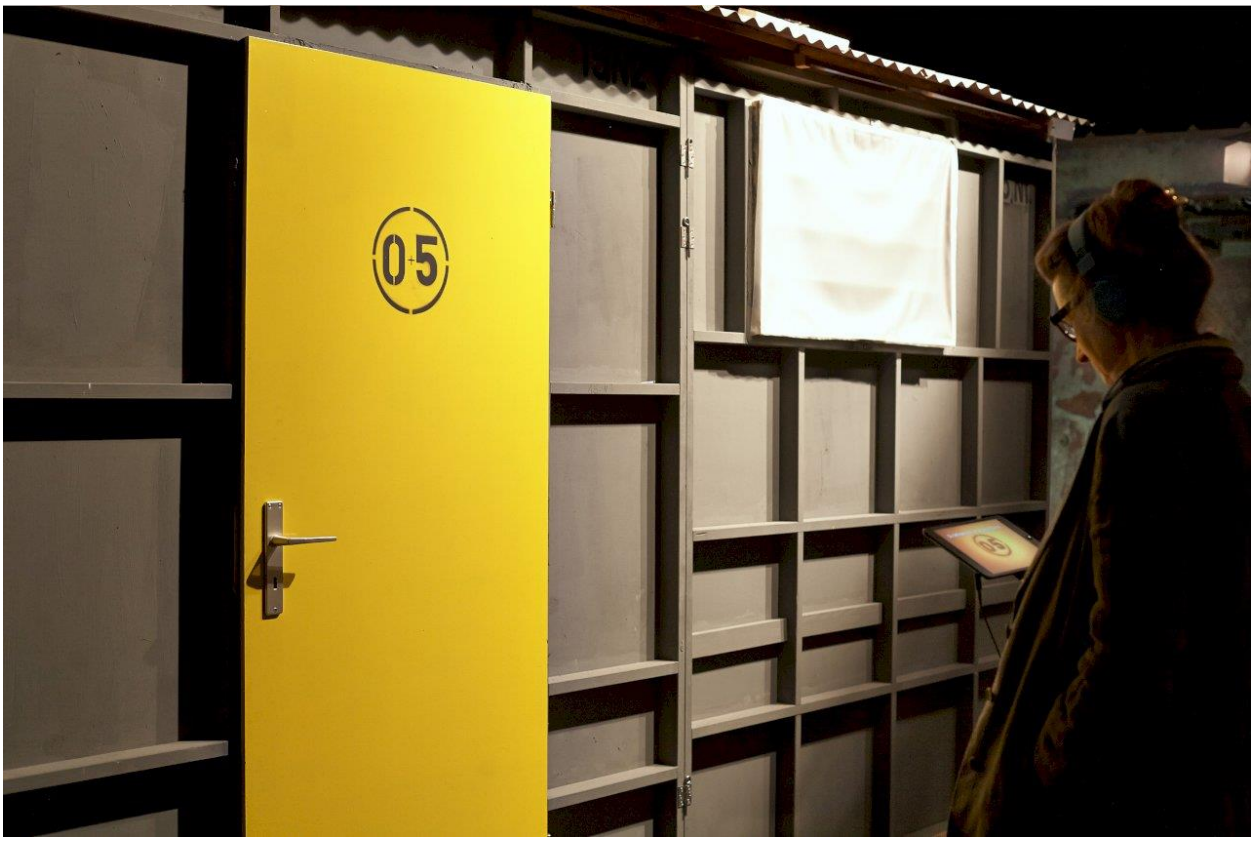

Figure 20: Press still, exterior view – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll (Image courtesy of Rimini Protokoll; Photography by Jörg Baumann/ Ruhrtriennale)

Figure 21: Press still, interior view – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll (Image courtesy of Rimini Protokoll; Photography by Jörg Baumann/ Ruhrtriennale)

Figure 22: Press still, interior view – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll (Image courtesy of Rimini Protokoll; Photography by Jörg Baumann/ Ruhrtriennale)

Figure 23: Press still, interior view – Situation Rooms (2013) by Rimini Protokoll (Image courtesy of Rimini Protokoll; Photography by Jörg Baumann/ Ruhrtriennale)