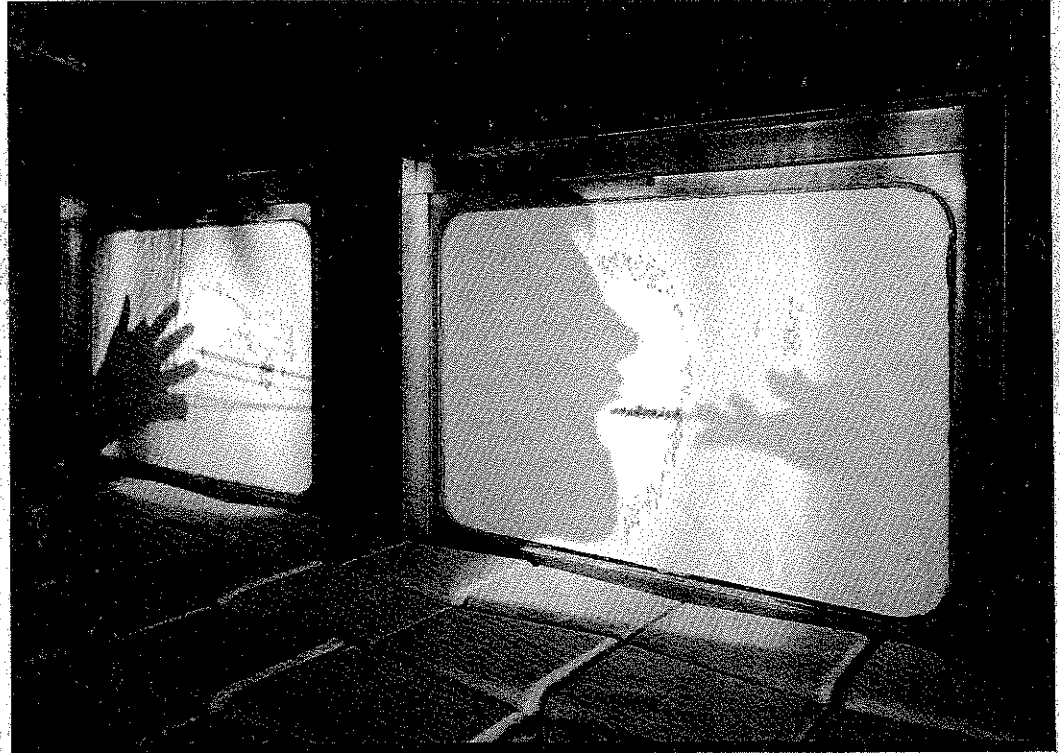




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STRUCTURES AND SPACES:
CINE-INSTALLATION

IMMERSED
IN THE
SINGLE
CHANNEL

EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA
FROM THEATER TO GALLERY

LAURA U. MARKS

In Steve Reinke's *Anal Masturbation and Object Loss (Video)* (2002), we encounter the artist preparing a book for the library in the art school he plans to start. A shot of his hands busy with a glue stick pairs with a rumination on contemporary art in Reinke's unmistakable, disarming tone. He explains that video projections in galleries "function mainly as placeholders, you know – they say something like, 'Watch this space for a while until something of interest, um, can conceivably appear...' They want to hold our attention without taking up any space – any physical, architectural space, you know – or any cognitive space either." The chapter of the book he's gluing together ("so you won't have to worry about reading it") will give its title to a series of artworks: the book-object on a plinth, *Anal Masturbation and Object Loss (Sculpture)*; this video; and an installation, "maybe like a mirror installation in a corner," with a projection of a slow pan of flowers in late bloom, almost abstract: *Anal Masturbation and Object Loss (Placeholder)*.

I will be arguing that experimental media art was doing just fine. There's still lots of wonderful experimental film and video around that is linear, or to use a video term, single-channel. Lots of great work that deserves our attention and hence, our love – to paraphrase André Bazin. There's nothing wrong with it. However, many media artists are now making their work with the gallery in mind. The institutional venues

for single-channel experimental media are shifting from the festival/distributor circuit to gallery/museum circuit, primarily for economic reasons. Thus many artists seem to feel forced to make work for "installation," whether that inclination is aesthetically necessary or not. I argue that the current artworld climate has made aesthetic concerns secondary to financial ones. Further, I disagree with notions that installation is more "material" or critical than theatrical screening; however, aesthetic issues of interest do arise with regard to attention, distraction, and what I'll call cognitive consumerism.

Before going on, let me give a definition of experimental media. It includes films and videos that experiment formally with the medium, from film formats to low-end video formats to HD to mobile and online platforms. It includes experiments, drawn from critique of cinema and TV, with sound, montage, structure, reflexivity, etc. It experiments with the relationship between fiction and documentary: presence, index, performance. Indeed some of the richest experimentation now seems to work with performativity: cinema as an event, from framing to reception. Experimentation also regards content: experimental narrative, essay films, experimental documentary, certain political work. A negative definition: it's whatever doesn't fit into standards for commercially viable fiction and documentary; it's any "short" that isn't a calling-card film.



LLERY

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I'll focus solely on single-channel work, not multiple-screen or interactive work.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Experimental media artists are producing more work at the same time that paying venues are diminishing. Facing the decision of where their work is best placed, in the movie theater or in the gallery, they ask: Where will my work be best received? What will be the quantity and quality of audience? Will I be paid, and if so, how much?

If they take the theater route, their work will likely appear as a single projection in a darkened room, in festivals and one-off screenings. Most experimental films do not fit the commercial standards of the film festival circuit, but there are excellent festivals and series that are dedicated to experimental work, such as Ann Arbor; Images in Toronto; Views from the Avant-Garde at the New York Film Festival; Rotterdam; Kino Arsenal in Berlin; Oberhausen. Many experimental festivals have closed down in recent years.¹ Still, most cities have a couple of modest venues for showing artists' cinema, with small but ardent audiences.

Beyond exhibition, experimental media artists struggle to get distribution: via the gallery circuit (extremely selective), through traditional distributors (somewhat selective), or through online sources, filtered or unfiltered. How well does single-channel

distribution pay? Some non-profit distributors pay a decent fee. For example, New York-based Electronic Arts Intermix is a selective distributor. Its fee schedule shows the same fee for a five-minute or 40-minute work. There is a differentiation between educational, screening and exhibition rental, and educational and archival purchase. Vtape in Toronto is less selective than EAI. Vtape's rental fees are cheaper than EAI's, and the distributor leaves gallery screening fee and sale cost up for negotiation. At LUX in London, artists can stipulate purchase fees. The Tribeca Film Institute sells DVDs and streaming video of a small but impressive list of experimental works for home use, with an institutional option in some cases. Fees vary wildly: Ken Jacobs' *A Tom, Tom Chaser* (2002) is \$5.00 for home use, \$300 for institutions.

The more inclusive a distributor is, the less chance any individual work has of being rented or purchased. Distributors increase the visibility of certain works

¹ Jim Finn, "Damn Dirty Apes: Dead Festivals in the USA," *Cinema Scope* 36 (Fall 2008). p. 69-71.

ABOVE Christian Marclay, *The Clock* (2010), installation view, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Photo by Laura Marks.

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) fee schedule

Vtape fee schedule

Ordering & Fees		ORDERING
Educational Rental	VHS NTSC	\$50.00
	VHS PAL	\$80.00
	DVD NTSC	\$75.00
Screening Rental	DVD NTSC	\$100.00
	U-matic NTSC	\$50.00
	BetaSP NTSC	\$100.00
	BetaSP PAL	\$250.00
Exhibition Rental	DVD NTSC	\$700.00
Educational Purchase	VHS NTSC	\$200.00
	VHS PAL	\$200.00
	DVD NTSC	\$300.00
Archival Purchase	BetaSP NTSC	\$900.00
	BetaSP PAL	\$1,050.00
	Digital Beta NTSC	\$1,400.00
	Digital Beta PAL	\$1,800.00

(<http://eai.org>)

Standard Rental Rates: Single Screening

\$ 50.00 for tapes up to 5 minutes
 \$ 75.00 for tapes 5:01 to 15 minutes
 \$ 100.00 for tapes 15:01 to 30 minutes
 \$ 125.00 for tapes 30:01 to 60 minutes
 60 minutes +
please contact V tape for a quote

Multiple Screening

Multiple screening refers to continuous looped exhibition of a single title. Multiple screening rates vary according to title, duration of exhibition, and other factors. Please contact V tape with exhibition details to obtain a quote.

Library Screening

In the library screening, the videotape is played once for an audience and then remains with the client for a set period of time for screening on request. For tapes of all lengths, the library screening rate is DOUBLE the single screening rental.

(<http://vtape.org/rentals.htm>)

LUX fee schedule

Rental Costs: Screenings

All works in the collection are available for theatrical-type screenings. All prices have been agreed with the artists and are non-negotiable. Where the artist has not stipulated their own price, works are priced according to their individual length:

1 - 30 mins £50
 Over 30 mins £120
 Over 60 mins £180
 Over 120 mins £250

Prices are for a single public screening. Repeat screenings are charged at a 50% rate.

Prices are based on the length of individual works, not combined running lengths in the case of multiple works - this includes orders of multiple works by a single artist.

A discount is available for educational use.

Late return of films or videos will result in automatic additional charges (see below).

Rental Costs: Exhibitions

Many works from the collection are available for longer or looped exhibition, but costs and availability vary depending on the work, the format and the exhibition period. Where work is to be shown as a 16mm loop, the cost will include production of one or more exhibition prints. Some works may also have different installation requirements for exhibition in a gallery setting.

To inquire about availability and costs for a particular work, please contact us including the following information:

- the work(s) requested and the format(s) required
- details of how the work would be exhibited (e.g. projected, on a monitor, on a film loop, whether in a discrete space etc.)
- details of the exhibition, including the general outline, exhibition period and other artists involved.

Purchases

LUX does not sell limited editions of works for private purchase. However, many works are available to purchase for libraries and educational institutions, for onsite educational use only.

Where the artist has not stipulated their own price, works are priced according to their individual length:

1 - 30 mins £120
 Over 30 mins £180

Please contact us for details of costs and availability for particular works.

(<http://www.lux.org.uk/collection/how-to-order>)

by including them in compilations; however, as Julia Knight recounts in a detailed study on funding of artists' media distribution in the UK, more visibility means reduced royalties for artists.²

Then of course there are the free platforms, some filtered, like UbuWeb, which offers work online for "noncommercial and educational use only," Video Art World and Perpetual Art Machine; and some unfiltered, like Youtube and Vimeo. Lots of artists upload their work for free in hopes of exposure. The quality is usually fairly poor. These sites raise the question for educators: Should we pay the distributor \$75 for a rental when we can show the work online for free? Abina Manning, director of Video Data Bank in Chicago, writes, "With the birth of Youtube and UbuWeb, a lot of teachers are showing work from the internet for free rather than renting from us." To me it's clear that non-profit distributors are the circulation system of the experimental media world and their survival is worth the institutional fees.

If artists choose to go the gallery route, they can hope to have their single-channel works projected on a wall or shown on a monitor, with sound on speakers or headphones, in a space that may or may not be darkened, and through which visitors usually wander at will. Though artists may have less control over how viewers interact with their work, it can be lucrative to show single-channel work in a gallery. To gain insight into single-channel artists' decision-making process, it's helpful to look at the reasonable fee schedules published by CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation/Le Front d'Artistes Canadiens), which Canadian government-funded arts organizations are required to follow. According to Wanda Vanderstoop, distribution manager at Vtape, Art Metropole was the first video distributor in Canada to set up a fee structure for video art. Using Art Metropole's fee schedule as the basis for assigning values, Canadian distributors, in their role as members of The Independent Film and Video Alliance (now Independent Media Arts Alliance), consulted with CARFAC to expand their minimum fee schedule to include video. CARFAC continues to evolve its guide for fees with defined terms published to its website.

Examining CARFAC's fee schedules for screenings and installations, we learn that if you exhibit your 14-minute film or video as a single-channel work for 3 months, you get \$405. If you stick in some furniture and call it an installation, you will receive a minimum of \$279 (as part of a group show in a smaller gallery), a mid-range fee of about \$2000 (the price point for either a solo show in a larger gallery or a four-person show in a smaller international venue), and a top rate of \$12,050

if you're selected to represent Canada at a biennale. So clearly, according to CARFAC's scrupulously fair guidelines, it's advantageous for media artists to present their work as installations in small exhibitions, rather than as single-channel projections. But of course, the Canadian standard is practically a socialist ideal – many galleries do not pay at all.

Some friends whose work has been commissioned by museums report that they are well paid for the costs of the work: research, subsistence, travel, shooting, editing, etc. These museum commissions compare to the completion funds that festivals like Rotterdam pay to filmmakers. The National Gallery in Washington, D.C. paid Grahame Weinbren \$30,000 and \$52,000 to make films about works in their collection. Grahame says this covered costs but not income, and that the gallery owns the finished works. Anjalika Sagar of the Otolith Group tells me that MACBA in Barcelona will pay them a commission of 50,000 Euros for their next project; again, a generous fee to cover the production of a work, not a purchase price for an already produced work.

If we shift to commercial galleries, we see that a tiny handful of artists working in film and video make handsome cash indeed. Galleries are cagey with this information: I have little notion how much Eija-Liisa Ahtila's and William Kentridge's works sell at Marian Goodman Gallery. However, an edition of Christian Marclay's video installation *The Clock* sold in 2011 for \$500,000.³ And we can project a price for film installations by Rodney Graham from the highest sale price of one of his photographs: \$194,000 in 2010 at Sotheby's.⁴

There's the pie in the sky that few media artists attain. In 2003, curator Chrissie Iles suggested to the U.S. journal *The Independent* that filmmakers sell their work as limited editions for \$5000. "Why would you show an experimental film of yours for the \$20 rental fee and then complain that Matthew Barney's got a \$2

² Julia Knight, "The 'Alternative' End of Marketing: Building Audiences for Artists'/Community Film and Video in Britain since 1980," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 29:4 (December 2009), p. 449-465.

³ Kate Taylor, "Still Time to Buy 'The Clock' for the Right Price," *The New York Times*, April 20, 2011.

⁴ <http://www.youvalyou.com/Paintings-and-drawings-x-GRAHAM-Rodney-1949-.aspx>.

million dollar budget? Whose fault is that?" I can only imagine Iles was joking by putting the blame on artists, for of course the volume of good single-channel work hugely outweighs the space available for it in galleries – and also the budgets of collectors.

SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE SHIFT

Trang T. Kim-Tran, a U.S. video artist, created her newest work in *Second Life* and shows it in galleries as a 3-channel installation. "My experiences in the past five years have been that opportunities for experimental works in the festival circuits have really dwindled to nil. Even the festivals that I started my exhibition careers with are no longer programming experimental work. The last time I screened a work through one of these organizations, I was put in a program of all short narratives. Then I've tried to break into larger festivals, like Sundance, that are trying to include experimental works, but I don't think my works are their kind of experiments. ... So, up until now it's been my preference to screen at festivals since they know the technical requirements to properly show media works.... But over the years their programming focus have changed and the museums/galleries have learned and invested in media technology to where they can accommodate such works."

Canadian video artist Steve Reinke: "I much prefer to show in a theatre, especially if it is just me – those mixed shorts programs are rarely well-programmed.... The great possibility of the gallery/museum is that they can have hours of work at stations that can be perused and hopefully experienced at will.... but I don't like it when people claim to have seen [a 45-minute work when they've] only seen six or eight minutes."

Akram Zaatari, a Lebanese artist who works in both experimental documentary and archival photography, wrote, "Experimental film has become a ghetto. ... [The] film world has grown too big, and so many filmmakers don't find a place in it; they seek other territories. Let's call it voluntary displacement. Where else other than a museum would you find a possibility to value a 5-minute work, in time and space.... there is a feeling that the museum has become the place for dedicated film thinkers who have no place anymore in the film world. Harun Farocki decided to make film installations the day he was told that his screening in a Berlin theater (where he lives) attracted one spectator only. For him that was a sign that he has to move on elsewhere." (This was a shocker!)

The UK-based Otolith Group, Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar, prefer the gallery for their dense experimental documentaries. The antecedents for

their race-critical works can be found in the Black film workshops of Channel Four. When the workshop funding dissolved in the early 1990s, some artists went the route of theatrical cinema (e.g. Gurinder Chadha), others television (e.g. John Akomfrah), others the gallery (e.g. Isaac Julien). Eshun was evidently comparing their fates when he asked ironically, "What's the alternative – television??"

It's easy to observe that the gallery scene constructs a hierarchy between "visual art" and experimental film/video. Just take a look at the timeline of modern artists that decorates a wall at Tate Modern, which under the "Film and Video" tendency includes only a couple of single-channel artists from the early days. The people I interviewed attest to this hierarchy too. Reinke says, "The gallery/museum world has a velvet rope that excludes much video work in wider distribution." Of his collaborative work with a visual artist: "James Richards' *Disambiguation* is welcome in art fairs and commercial galleries, Steve Reinke's *Disambiguation* plays at festivals [and] artist-run centers, and gets bought at colleges." Experimental filmmaker Peggy Ahwesh recounted taking part in a number of screenings and exhibitions in which "visual" artists, including those who work in film and video, were given more prominence than film- and videomakers: a sort of two-tier system that sometimes extends even to who gets invited to the opening.

The paid circulation of single-channel media art relies on distributors. I asked a couple of distributors how they were responding to the shift from theatrical to gallery screening, and their comments indicated that galleries are profiting, licitly and not, from distributors' work in acquisition and preservation. Vanderstooop of Vtape wrote: "We are finding that increasingly artists are interested in having Vtape represent their single-channel and installation works to museums and galleries. We have been consulting with our international colleagues in distribution and also within the gallery system, to evaluate how market value is arrived at, how limited editions are perceived.... It is not just the percentage returned, it is also our work with the rights and terms attached to the acquisition, the follow-up, our work in preservation and restoration and our technical expertise with archaic and new formats."

On a gloomier note, Manning of Video Data Bank said that museums and galleries "are looking to rework their contracts so that they can digitize work they bought from us years/decades ago, sometimes without informing us. They want to use works for internal exhibitions, touring exhibitions, on their website, etc etc. From our point of view, some of this is in violation of the original contract, and we work with

them to figure out terms and payments for future use of works." Even worse, "Festivals are starting their own distribution programs, often using their "archives" as source material. Their archives are actually just preview copies of works they have accumulated over the years from distributors."

AESTHETICS OF DURATION

Most people agree that viewing single-channel work in a theatrical setting, or "cinema," is an immersive experience, partly as a result of the viewer's slight disembodiment. The fixed duration of a theatrical screening also offers a particular aesthetic experience. The Moscow writer Andrei Sinyavsky wrote letters to his wife while he was imprisoned in Siberia from 1965 to 1972. Quoted in Finnish documentarist Kanerva Cederström's *Trans-Siberia: Notes from the camps* (1999), Sinyavsky wrote that being in prison – with a definite ending date – is like being on a train. You have nothing to do but wait for the end, so you have a remarkable freedom, and time takes on many different characters: it seems to stand still, it speeds along. He writes, "Time seems to be either nearer or further off than you had expected... It slows down at times, then picks up again, past itself. It is both too big and too small for what it used to be." Watching a film is like this, too: there's an implicit contract that you'll spend a certain period of time, and so within that period you are free; time expands and contracts around you according to how you attend to the film.

Film critic Manohla Dargis recently wrote something similar about so-called 'slow, boring' films. "Faced with duration not distraction, your mind may wander, but there's no need for panic: it will come back. In wandering there can be revelation as you meditate, trance out, bliss out, luxuriate in your thoughts, think."⁵ A film with a set duration affords the viewer a lot of liberty. You know you'll be there until the end, so you can relax and pay attention – and of course attention is a quicksilver state, constantly shifting between absorption and distraction. We have time not only to think, but enjoy the affective and perceptual experiences that are necessarily prior to thought.

I don't want to create a binary between absorbed film viewing and distracted gallery viewing, but I do want to suggest a sliding scale. Watching a film in the best of circumstances is already an experience of loss – delicious or tragic – depending on your inclination. Mike Hoolboom describes it this way:

Watching a movie is like having my glass filled in the first minute of a meal, and ... simply going right on pouring that long jug

into the already-filled glass. After an hour and a half the jug is finally empty while the glass is still full. In the end, when it's all over, there is water in the glass all right, no question about it, but is it a reasonable reflection of what used to be in the jug? If the jug of water is the movie, and my attention is the glass, how much am I really able to retain or recount?⁶

Both Dargis and Hoolboom are describing the Bergsonian experience of the movies so valued by Gilles Deleuze, with greater emphasis on the spectator. The viewer's perception actualizes only certain elements of the film, which remains dense with virtuality. The richness of the single-channel experience lies in the surplus of image, sound, meaning, and experience. It lies in the fact that cinema remains mostly virtual; at any given viewing we only unfold certain things from a movie. And of course when we spectate we actualize all kinds of things other than what the film provides: memories that bear on the film, wandering thoughts, and yes, the sensory and social setting of the theater. But what we're probably *not* doing is trying to decide, minute by minute, how much longer we will stay there. We're not busy deciding whether we have a good enough idea of the movie that we can leave. As prisoners of the film's duration, we are free from such calculations that grip the visitor to an installation.

However, for various reasons, champions of the gallery scene consider theatrical "imprisonment" a bad thing!

TEMPORALITY VS. SPATIALITY

It turns out my dollars-and-cents investigation into the economics of theatrical vs. gallery exhibition demands a philosophical excursion. For it appears that the champions of theatrical exhibition are privileging time over space, while the champions of gallery installation privilege space over time – with enormous epistemological and political consequences.

⁵ Manohla Dargis and A.O. Scott, "In Defense of the Slow and the Boring," *New York Times*, June 3, 2011.

⁶ Personal communication, also see Mike Hoolboom, "Notes on Attention, Projection, Foreplay and the Second Encounter" (2010), http://www.mikehoolboom.com/r2/section_item.php?artist=315.

On the side of temporality stand Henri Bergson, Gilbert Simondon, Gilles Deleuze, and their contemporary followers. I also include myself, though I have nothing against space. As I've already suggested, immersion in the single channel allows the virtual to traverse us in all directions: from the movie, from our memories, from our bodies, from our physical surroundings, in experiences that can be unbearably intense as certain virtualities become actual while others seem inchoately in our knees, in our stomachs, behind our eyeballs, behind the eyeballs of the film.

On the side of spatiality mass the numerous critics of cinematic spectacle. They argue that time is experienced in isolation, while space is social. Temporality and spatiality correspond to attention and distraction, the individual and the social. First we come across the materialist-critical tendency of theory on media installations, of which Rosalind Krauss and other heavyweights at *October* have been a central voice and which Tanya Leighton, among others, takes up.⁷ This tendency applies Marxist and psychoanalytic theories of suture from '80s film theory to installation, arguing that gallery installations that seek to create an immersive experience, such as Bill Viola's recent works, are bad because they pacify viewers and submit them to spectacle and artifice.⁸ Yet these critiques do not account for what has happened in film theory since the 1980s, particularly new understandings that spectators are not just dupes who need to be empowered but people who respond not only individually but subculturally, engage sensuously, and perform the film into being. Once these theoretical developments are acknowledged, it is hard to take the theory of the pacified viewer seriously.

Often media installations rehearse an *October*-style suture critique, emphasizing the materiality of the apparatus (all those rattling 16mm projectors!) and applying some sort of institutional critique of the commercial art world, as well as of Hollywood cinema. Yet they tend to repress the institutions that are closest to them: the economically marginal spheres of experimental media art. This is because many visual artists who move into time-based media draw on the histories of painting, sculpture, and Hollywood cinema; they are not all that familiar with experimental film and video. So they end up rehearsing the aesthetic investigations experimental film and single-channel video have already carried out. As Liz Kotz puts it, "While a degree of historical amnesia can free artists from blatant academicism, it also deprives them of the conceptual underpinnings of the strategies they use." Furthermore, she points out, "Omissions such as this are complicit with patterns of historical erasure. It

would be hard to imagine the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, which granted a 'retrospective' to the then-34-year-old Douglas Gordon, mounting career retrospectives of generative artists like James Benning, Simone Forti or Yvonne Rainer."⁹

A more interesting spatial critique directly takes issue with Bergson. Peter Osborne argues that cinematic immersion is despatialized and thus non-social. He grounds this claim in a remarkably dualist Bergson who absolutizes time and represses space. "Having pushed the dualism of mind and body (time and space) to an extreme, [Bergson] claimed to have transcended it with a new philosophy of life based on a single dynamic impulse, the *élan vital*."¹⁰ Osborne is not so sure about the *élan vital*, one of Bergson's concepts that would obviate dualism. He finds instead that Bergson's purported elevation of temporality over spatiality parallels the classical cinema-going experience, which hypostatizes visual perception and represses the spatial conditions of viewing.

This critique, like the critique of suture, comes close to conflating immersion with passivity. Yet Bergson's matter-memory circuit is an active, creative process. I argue that immersion permits wider circles of perception-memory, greater opportunity to actualize the virtual. And of course, this actualization is embodied; I continue to hold that we can use phenomenology to understand how the Deleuze-Bergsonian process of actualization takes place in an embodied mind, though some have argued these approaches are incompatible.¹¹

Osborne wants to bring space back as the material and embodied, as the social realm of distraction. This argument seems to align with Krauss et al.'s adaptation of suture theory that condemns cinema as reified and upholds the critical materiality of installation by contrast. Both these critiques take space very literally. They assume a rather idiotic spectator who isn't able to remember that other people and a society exist unless she is forcibly reminded that the image is constructed in space — by tripping over a bench in the dark, for example. Instead, I would argue that the body, memory, and perception are already social, and thus an "isolated" viewer is already immersed in a rich social engagement.

Yet an interesting criterion arises: rhythm. Osborne adapts the critique of Bergson put forward by Gaston Bachelard in *The Dialectic of Duration*, whereby psychic continuity is constituted rhythmically, in the temporal structure of the relations between acts: A rhythmic temporality of attention and distraction thus characterizes the work of art: each artwork has its own such rhythm. The quality of their rhythm is an appealing way to assess time-based artworks (Leighton

takes it up as well), and we can relate it to Deleuze's argument that rhythm is the way an artwork appeals directly to the nervous system.¹² But it seems to me that a rhythm of attention and distraction already characterizes reception of the single-channel work.

This philosophical excursus concludes leaving me unconvinced that installation offers social engagements and rhythms of attention and distraction that theatrical immersion cannot.

COGNITIVE CONSUMERISM

What movies installed in galleries do tend to offer, more so than those theatrically screened, is a stronger cognitive response. First, the fact that people don't see most of a gallery film reduces it to a conceptual work. In galleries, duration tends to get reduced to an idea of duration. This is partly because of poor screening conditions, and centrally because people don't stay for the whole experience, just long enough to get "an idea of it." For example, François Alys' 12-hour *Zocalo* is a stationary shot of a public square in Mexico installed in a gallery. It's a real-time, unedited work structured by the movement of the sun. Of course you wouldn't watch the whole thing. Jessica Morgan writes, "As with [Warhol's] *Empire*, it is unnecessary to watch all of *Zocalo* to 'see' the work: its sameness is part of the point, and the audience can come and go as the day unfolds."¹³

Morgan, like other critics, praises the distracted manner in which installation media are viewed for resembling the distracted nature of modern life (cf. the imprisonment of the theatrical screening). She states such distracted viewing is "symptomatic of a general mode of observation, and the appropriate viewing tempo for our contemporary culture."¹⁴ I question whether a distracted culture needs distracted art experiences in the first place. But if we can value distracted viewing in this way, then we can also, like Osborne and Leighton, ask installation works to take the rhythm of attention and distraction as their material. More often than not, instead of such a rhythm developing, I believe installation works allow visitors to come up with a mental shorthand for the work: the shorter the visit, the more cognitive and less experiential it is.

Here is Chrissie Iles on films at Documenta 2003: "No one knew Jonas Mekas was in Documenta because his work was only in the film program. But the art world was discovering people like Ulrike Ottinger because she had an eight-hour film in the gallery. The fact that people only saw ten minutes or half an hour of it was offset by the fact that many more thousands

of people now know that she exists." It's a cognitive reward: Documenta visitors still haven't *experienced* Ottinger's work, but they've now heard of her.

Iles' point here seems to rest on the fiction of *virtual time* that typifies our information age. Just as we bookmark hundreds of websites for "later" and imagine we'll have time "later" to read thousands of posts on Facebook, etc., somehow we are supposed to have time "later" to actually see the film with which a ten-minute gallery visit has acquainted us. What I want to know is, when is that later time? Does it ever arrive? The thought conjures an image of insomniac artgoers finally getting around to seeing the movie on Youtube because they can't sleep. No wonder filmmakers don't get invited to the openings – they remind curators of their most abject moments, watching Ulrike Ottinger in their pajamas at 3 in the morning. Second-class art indeed!

7 Tanya Leighton, "Introduction," in Leighton, p. 7-40.

8 Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "1998," *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), p. 654-658.

9 Liz Kotz, "Video Projection: The Space Between Screens," in Leighton, p. 378.

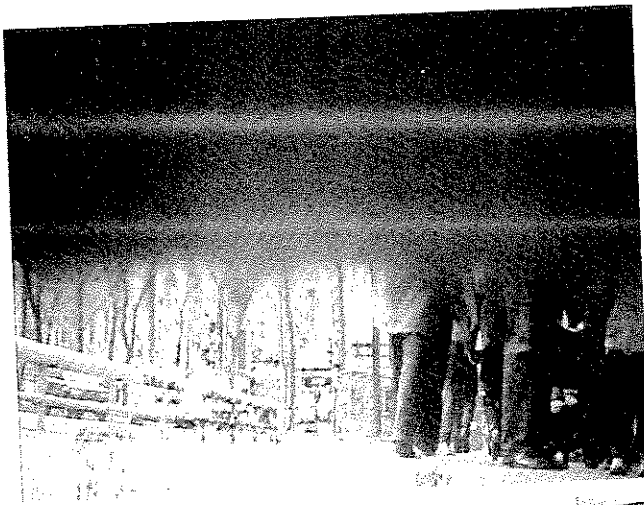
10 Peter Osborne, "Distracted Reception: Time, Art, and Technology," in *Time Zones: Recent Film and Video*, ed. Jessica Morgan and Gregor Muir (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), p. 71.

11 Note that the spatiality people, drawing on psychoanalysis, are more interested in theories of the subject, while the temporality people make do with a very loosely constituted subject, indeed a subject constantly unmade and remade in time through the constant actualization of the virtual.

12 See Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). On rhythm, also see, in addition to Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), the excellent discussion in Pasi Väliho, *Mapping the Moving Image: Gesture, Thought, and Cinema Circa 1900* (Amsterdam University Press, 2011), pp. 12-16.

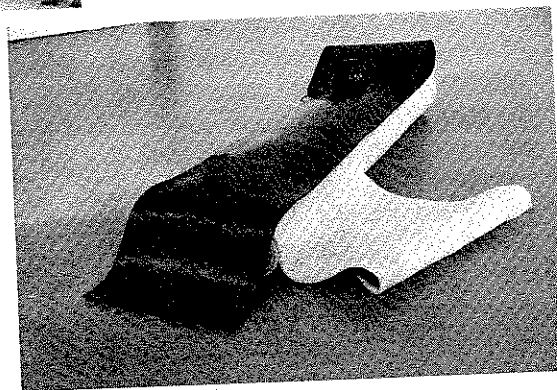
13 Jessica Morgan, "Time After Time," in *Time Zones*, p. 15.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 22.



ABOVE Jin-me Yoon, *The dreaming collective knows no history (U.S. Embassy to Japanese Embassy, Seoul)* (2006), frame enlargement, courtesy the artist.

RIGHT Jin-me Yoon, *The dreaming collective knows no history (U.S. Embassy to Japanese Embassy, Seoul)* (2006), installation view, courtesy the artist.



Second, it seems to me that the critical reasonings that ornament the gallery media projection are wholly cognitive rewards. They seem a poor recompense for the loss of absorbed and immersive spectatorship. I experienced the installation of a show by Philippe Parreno at the Serpentine in December 2010. It included four fine movies, each rewarding to view in itself. They were projected elaborately at the Serpentine, each in a separate room. When a given film's turn arrived, the soundtrack would begin; the louvered blinds would be invisibly drawn; the room would darken; and the image would come on. After spending some time deciding whether to stand, lean against the wall, or sit on the floor (this required speculating how long the film might be), we'd finally be in a position to absorb the movie. Soon after that, it would end, and in response to a set of audiovisual cues, we audience members would herd ourselves along to the next room.

Events like this make me feel annoyed and rebellious. Should I stand in front of the patch of light that escapes between the wall and the blinds; and if I do, is it to further darken the room for the benefit of my fellow gallery goers, or to cast my shadow on the floor or the screen? Does the fact that I'm thinking about the light, rather than watching the movie, testify to the installation's status as a material object, and thus

render this experience somehow critical? Not for me! It felt belittling to be herded from room to room, all the more so because we had the "choice" not to go along but to stand there like idiots listening to the sound of the film issuing from the other side of the wall.

Theatrical screenings that do not give viewers such a choice offer an "imprisonment" that liberates us from usually trivial questions about space and the cognitive pursuit of an "idea" of the work. In contrast, the ideologies of participation, empowerment, criticality, and choice seem a poor recompense for the immersive experience of actually sitting through a screening. I know this is an old-fashioned, ornery position to take. Still, I think the experience of moving around the gallery, "choosing" how to engage with the work, and staying just long enough to have an idea of the work – even an idea that the work is immersive! – results in a kind of cognitive consumerism where an artwork is reduced to a set of ideas to be mastered.

WHEN THE GALLERY MAKES SENSE

Thus I think artists and galleries need to make a good case for turning a single-channel work into an installation. Sometimes the installed nature of the work makes possible a multisensory immersion that a theatrical screening could not achieve. Another reason

(again, bypassing interactive and multi-channel work) that installation works well is when the work is both impossible to see in its entirety and absorbing enough that you might want to see the whole thing.

Jin-me Yoon, my colleague at Simon Fraser University, is a visual artist who performs for the camera. Initially she documented her performances photographically, but since 2004 she has used video. Yoon performs physically arduous pilgrimages on historically significant routes, such as *The dreaming collective knows no history (U.S. Embassy to Japanese Embassy, Seoul)* of 2006. She moves laboriously through the streets of the site on her belly, pulling herself along on a small, wheeled platform with a video camera attached to it; another hand-held camera tracks her movement. The resulting videos allow a viewer to feel Yoon's embodied struggle, especially through the sound of her panting and the platform's wheels rattling on various surfaces. The image captures a fascinating combined view of deep space and haptic close vision. In their duration and effort these performances call to mind the Stations of the Cross. The videos are completely absorbing to watch and hear; for me, they are rich enough in themselves.

But Yoon is a visual artist, and she's not about to submit these works to a video festival. So they must be installed. Yoon showed me a provisional version of her recent belly-down tour of Freud's Vienna, complexly installed with three projectors, numerous surfaces for projection and reflection, and objects. Some of her criteria for the installation were that it emphasize the materiality of the apparatus and the light and that it make reference to minimalist sculpture. The one that most appealed to me was a solution that gives a viewer an embodied experience of the work that watching and hearing the video alone would not. On the floor, a pair of headphones was placed next to a roll of felt and a roll of asphalt made of thick industrial rubber. Sitting on the floor next to these and listening, I felt almost inside Yoon's body, hearing her breath and the rough surface of the roads, feeling the padding that protected her and smelling the road. The rich bituminous odor also reminded me of the Italian psychoanalyst's letter to Freud suggesting that those who like the smell of asphalt have a fixation with excrement – thus emphasizing the earthiness of Yoon's exploration of the birth city of psychoanalysis.

This multisensory immersion was possible thanks to the installed nature of the work, suggesting one reason that single-channel work exhibits well in a gallery. Another reason (again, bypassing interactive and multi-channel work) is when the work is both

impossible to see in its entirety and absorbing enough that you might want to see the whole thing.

Christian Marclay's recent blockbuster *The Clock* (2010) offers visitors an inexhaustible cinematic marathon. The video, edited from millions of samples from Hollywood and world narrative cinema, functions as an elaborate clock, for, through timepieces shown on screen or characters stating what time it is, it tells the actual time at any minute you happen to be in the gallery. The video is deftly constructed using film conventions like parallel editing and reaction shots, to build a narrative whose protagonist is the minute. Audiences waited for hours to see *The Clock* at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York, where once inside they could relax on comfortable leather sofas. Twice a week the gallery stayed open for 24 hours, and how I wish I could have been there to feel time ticking by at 4 in the morning. In a clever joke on immersion-distraction, *The Clock* allows viewers to be absorbed while also constantly checking their watches.

Such conceptually and experientially rich, and in Marclay's case expensive, works are well-suited for a commercial gallery. They set a very high standard for other work – one that I don't wish to encourage, however, because much of the best single-channel media work is inexpensive to produce. Instead, I conclude with a simple, perhaps naïve hope, that institutions discover ways to pay artists fairly for their work, so that artists can be free to experiment in whatever ways they see fit. I would like for artists themselves to be able to choose whether they prefer their audience to be still or ambulatory, to see their work completely or in glances, to enjoy rhythms internal to the work or the rhythms audiences make for themselves, by staying still, moving, waiting, or leaving.

As for a way to ensure that artists will be well paid for any kind of work? Well, here in Canada there is a government organization, Heritage Canada, that funds broad ranges of both culture and sport. Perhaps we can lobby to recognize art as a kind of sensuous and mental sport. That would allow us to tap new sources of funding for sure!

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