FRAMEWORK

FRAMEWORK acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Bedegal people of the Dharug Nation, and Ngunnawal people as the custodians of the land on which UNSW is situated.

This land was never ceded. It always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

Content warning: this issue contains potentially seizure-triggering visual stimuli for people with photosensitive epilepsy.

Trigger warning: this issue contains discussions of gendered and racist violence.

ArC
UNSW Student Life
@ ART & DESIGN

CONTENTS

Editorial

Stella Maynard

I don't really know where to start with the theme of bodies. That might seem strange (since I chose it as this issue's theme), but in all honesty, like a lot of people, I find the thing that is being/having/desiring a body pretty exhausting.

politics is something you do with your body[1]

I recently read this article called *Bodies in the System* where Vanessa Agard-Jones writes about analysing systems of power in relation to the entanglements of the body, the village, the world, and the nation.[2] Although writing from the context of sexual politics in Martinique, Agard-Jones' scales of analysis got me thinking about what themes might organise my year as editor of Framework. I wanted themes specific enough to speak to the concreteness of the here and now; wide enough to engage a diverse cross-section of students; entangled enough to encourage sustained engagement across the year; big enough to go deep.

So I landed on these three themes: *bodies, spaces, systems.*

whatever moves the world, in general, I think also moves between us[3]

Bodies, spaces and systems are all conceptual and abstract units; they're also materials and physical structures that permeate, make-up and structure the art world. They're everything from fingernails, skin, walls, doorframes, handrails and broken teeth, to organising principles, algorithms and forces of power.

an uneven surface on which gender seeps in or disperses, collects in pools like water in the creases of a tarp: the chest is saturated with gender, obviously, but the elbows get off lightly[4]

I hope that this scaled structuring will enable our contributors to think across the intimate and the global, the cellular and the networked, the minute and the macro.

small places matter in the world[5]

"Small places matter in the world",[6] and the boundaries between bodies, systems, and spaces are endlessly porous; I think the contributions in this issue capture this sense of leakiness.

For the first time, in 2019 Framework is going to include a regular 'columnist'. To open the issue, Eleanor Zurowski gathers sonic eruptions emitted by the body: squeaks and hums and muttering and the noiseyness of bodies that are speaking in extra-linguistic, corporeal ways. What does a gut feeling sound like? Our bodies often react and emit noises, acting as registers of the world often before we are cognisant of the thing that's happening around us.

In the face of fear, the welling up of water in our affective and visceral bodies can result in the sudden and unexpected elimination of tears, or pee, or shit. Such eruptions might seem beyond the control of the disciplining processes to which we usually subject our visceral selves. 'Excuse the outburst', we might say after a tearful breakdown.[7]

Rose Leake explores the complexities of working with – and being – clay. Far from empty signifiers, this piece speaks to the way in which the materiality of artworks matter when it comes to embodied life.

The idea of learning love. The time it takes to master a craft. Or maybe you never master it, but you are so deeply connected with it that it becomes part of how you know yourself. I am yarn, I am clay, or whatever. Which I think is a new way of making sense of time, othering time itself. I guess I relate this to trans-time, non-cis time.[8]

An overwhelming number of contributors – Cyma Hibri, Lewellyn Haynes, Madeleine Martin, Tom Davids and Chloe McFadden – look to the transformation, mutation and implication of the body in digital spaces. There's this moment in Cyma Hibri's piece where they write about fetish toys developed in the virtual world of *Second Life*: digital blindfolds blank the screens of the user, actively altering the physical sensorial experiences of the game-player. Which is to say, our bodies don't simply control digital worlds - digital worlds also move our bodies. As the artist-researcher Trevor Paglen has argued, in our contemporary machinic landscape, human eyes are no longer the principle mode of 'seeing': our pictures are looking at us and actively structuring our bodies and lives.

The invisible world of images isn't simply an alternative taxonomy of visuality. It is an active, cunning, exercise of power, one ideally suited to molecular police and market operations—one designed to insert its tendrils into ever-smaller slices of everyday life... We no longer look at images—images look at us. They no longer simply represent things, but actively intervene in everyday life.[9]

Other contributions approach what it means to observe people on buses, question what constitutes 'a body', trace the relationship between visual cultures and human rights, experiment with the gestural act of painting with the body, explore the liminal space occupied by volunteers in major art institutions and think through how a cat in a box might alter our understanding of bodies.

I had an amazing amount of submissions and interest for this issue of Framework; it'd be amiss to end without a huge thank you to the outgoing Writer's Coordinator - Audrey Pfister - who worked so hard (and well) last year to continue developing UNSW Art & Design as a place of critical thinking, sharing and writing.

1 Gordon Hall, *Read me that part a-gain, where I disin-herit everybody.* Originally commissioned by and presented at EMPAC / Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY in the spring of 2014. Revised and re-presented at The Brooklyn Museum in Crossing Brooklyn, Fall/Winter 2014-15. Available at: http://gordonhall.net/files/read_me_that_part_a-gain_where_I_disin-herit_everybody_gordon_hall.pdf

2 This builds upon the work of Michel-Rolph Trouillot. See: Vanessa Agard-Jones (2013), 'Bodies in the System, *Small Axe* (17.3), p. 182-192. Available at: https://read.dukepress.edu/small-axe/article/17/3%20(42)/182/33308/Bodies-in-the-System

3 Hannah Black (2016), *Dark Pool Party*, Dominica/Arcadia Missa, Los Angeles US, p. 89.

4 Hannah Black (2016), *Dark Pool Party*, Dominica/Arcadia Missa, Los Angeles US, p. 47.

5 Vanessa Agard-Jones (2013), 'Bodies in the System, *Small Axe* (17.3), p. 182-192. Available at: https://read.dukepress.edu/small-axe/article/17/3%20(42)/182/33308/Bodies-in-the-System

6 Vanessa Agard-Jones (2013), 'Bodies in the System, *Small Axe* (17.3), p. 182-192. Available at: https://read.dukepress.edu/small-axe/article/17/3%20(42)/182/33308/Bodies-in-the-System

7 Astrida Neimanis (2016), 'Chapter 1. Embodying Water: Feminist Phenomenology for Posthuman Worlds; A posthuman politics of location', in *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomeology*, Bloomsbury Open Access. Available at: https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/bodies-of-water-posthuman-feminist-phenomenology/ch1-embodying-water-feminist-phenomenology-for-posthuman-worlds

8 Vincent Silk (2014), *Pushing Aside Vulvic Doily Art: A place for trans people in subversive handicrafts,* Seizure magazine. Available at: http://www.seizureonline.com/content/pushing-aside-vulvic-doily-art

9 Trevor Paglen (2016), 'Invisible images (your pictures are looking at you', *The New Inquiry.* Available at: https://thenewinquiry.com/invisible-images-your-pictures-are-looking-at-you/

What does a gut feeling sound like?

Eleanor Zurowski

Eleanor Zurowski, Framework's inaugural columnist, is producing sonic responses in response to each issue of Framework in 2019. Each piece will be an accumulation of field recordings, samples, lecture snippets, spoken word and contemporary music.

For this issue, Eleanor is exploring the fugitive eruptions of, and leaks from, the body. Breathing in, crying out, rumbling, whistling, swallowing spit, belching, erupting into tears; extra-linguistic moments when our bodies speak for – or to – us.

tracklist

ARCHIVED VIRTUAL BODIES:
incomplete notes on online anthropology and fetishizing fetish

By Cyma Hibri

1.

I'm late to the party, only recently having stumbled across the body of work of Net artist Jon Rafman. Rafman's established practice operates under a Post-Internet framework, creating video works and installations that seek to critically engage with contemporary modes of sociality, as most artists operating under a Post-Internet framework do. Self-described as an "amateur anthropologist", Rafman documents the supposedly overlooked crevices of the internet (fringe social media sites like 4chan, DeviantArt and Tumblr, and online metaverses such as Second Life) from which often misunderstood subcultures and their discontents might emerge. This assertion got me thinking. The following are some disorganized and wholly unresolved thoughts regarding the ethical implications of art as anthropology in the post-digital world, with a wavering focus on Rafman's work:

2.

I'll begin by reiterating a postcolonial/art theory platitude: there are some visceral similarities between contemporary anthropological art methodologies and those described in Edward Said's work on the Orientalist canon.[1] The anthropological approach to art, however revised, seems inextricably tied to an historical *flânerie* of archiving, mediating or even fabricating "precious relics" supposedly pregnant with ethnographic potential and insight into the exotic. The common formula for the contemporary praxis in art is as follows: artist documents subculture of interest; fashions aestheticized artefact from findings of said subculture; plonks it in White Cube. This often decontextualizes the document of the Other from its original site, potentially negating the subject's encoded sociality (rituals, customs, lore etc.) necessary for its benevolent/ informed interpretation. The ethnographic text is reduced to fetishized object, subject to a "Eurocentric voyeurism of 'other' collecting" (perhaps elitist voyeurism is more appropriate here).[2] I feel it necessary to clarify that by drawing this parallel, imprecise as it is, I by no means intend to trivialize the enormous violence of cultural imperialism and its legacy, nor the significant deconstruction of these histories by postcolonial theorists like Said. Likening the scope and impact of colonialist tourism that paved the way for Orientalism to that of contemporary forms of cultural exploration could only serve to perpetuate historically grounded acts of representational violence. I would instead like to draw attention to questions of how the ambiguous power relations inherent to the documentation of human cultures shape the operative ethical implications of such praxes. How do considerations like those of representation, consent, and agency figure into the methodologies of contemporary artistic ethnographies?

3.

In 2009, Jon Rafman conducted free guided "tours" of the enormous, multiplayer real-time virtual world (MUD) *Second Life*, using Kool-Aid Man, the grinning mascot pitcher for the iconic American cordial drink, as his tour-guide avatar. What now remains of this earlyish iteration of "participatory" Net Art, is a collection of mundane video montages and slideshows of Kool-Aid Man perusing the vast cyber-geographical landscape of *Second Life*, occasionally stumbling across spaces allocated to online BDSM practitioners. Upon viewing these archives, one might notice the immediate humour of a smiling, anthropomorphised cartoon pitcher of red liquid, placidly watching two sexdoll-like avatars engaging in absurdly explicit virtual intercourse. Perhaps it's the irony of the real-world credibility Kool-Aid Man acquires when positioned next to such escapist figurations of online intimacy. Or maybe it's the self-reflexive allure of a comically brash avatar, referentially busting through a wall and shrieking "Look at me, I'm subverting the role of the Troll; I'm a Cyber Disrupt0r! This Is The Street Art/Culture Jamming Of Web 2.0!!!!!!!!!!!!!" William Gibson's term referring to the shared experience of cyberspace as "consensual hallucination" seems appropriate here.[3]

4.

RE: Orientalism. There's a moment in the *Kool-Aid Man in Second Life* montage on YouTube where Kool-Aid Man is reclining in a palatial living room, adorned with arabesque mosaic and furnishings; Persian rugs, ottomans. A feminine avatar wearing a skimpy bikini ensemble dances seductively for Kool-Aid Man, gyrating, occasionally glitching. I don't know which contextual speculation I enjoy more: the scene being strictly pre-meditated to confirm the parallel between past and present forms of archival *flânerie*, or a simple aesthetic coincidence.

5.

In his seminal indictment of *The Artist as Ethnographer?* (1995), Hal Foster describes the modern-day quasi-anthropologist as engaging in a process of "self-othering", whereby the artist, subconsciously or otherwise, projects an image of Otherness onto the ethnographic group they are representing, either idealizing them as transgressive

---

1 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1978

2 Emily S Apter, *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, 1993, p 3.

3 William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, 1984, p 67..

in their inimitability, or as an allegorical microcosm of some sort of societal disparity.[4] But in doing so the artist casts *themselves* as the Other, rather than bridging the chasm between author and subject of study. It almost seems too easy to say that Kool-Aid Man is Rafman's form of self-othering. Rafman in fact acknowledged the deliberate disparity between himself and those he sought to document: 'It's like I'm destroying the consistency of their make-believe".[5] Several writings on Rafman's work cite this quote, ostensibly to legitimize his trolling of Second Life as critical engagement with the digital subaltern. But as I see it, this statement in fact makes an implicit assumption of total delusion on the part of those who participate in such social groups. It's as though the function of this kind of pseudo-ethnographic work, beyond archiving what is seen as an alien spectacle of misinformed social practice, is to reinforce the supposed divide between the highly self-and-socially-aware artist and the escapist naivete of *Second Life* denizens.

6.
The divide in self-awareness seems to be presented as the common underlying thesis of Rafman's ethnographies of digitally-engaged fetishists: that their proclivities are the result of both an overexposure to and deprivation of diverse, saturated socialities through the framework of the internet. While not a completely implausible argument (all one must do is scroll through 4chan for five minutes to understand), this proposition can only crystallise so totalizing and inflexible a form through a lack of genuine engagement and collaboration with those Rafman seeks to represent. Refer to 10 for more on this.

7.
Tourism is a spectatorial practice fraught with problems that I don't really have the space to go into here. Nonetheless, I'm interested in the products of tourism, in particular the souvenir, and how it functions in relation to the experience of cultural alterity. David L Hume looks at the souvenir as an "iconofetishistic" object, through which the tourist supplements part of their experience of the exotic locale they'd visited, only able to completely comprehend or narrativize their experience in retrospect, through a disembodied, decontextualized object.[6] Hume writes that "the primary role of the souvenir is to memorialise and placate a difficult memory".[7]

8.
What void does a wooden frog motif fill after a two-night Contiki stop-off in Bali?

9.
It's high time in the tidal flow of aesthetic trends for Fetish to regain

popularity. We see it everywhere within creative enclaves these days. This is fine; in fact, I'm luxuriating in the wake of nostalgic attention lavished onto leather, gags, and feet, displayed in the fashion of obscure 90s amateur porn. But I also wonder about the impact of image-based idolatry on the communities that create and frame these embodied social relations.

10.
Platitude 2: The Internet has changed everything. This includes the way we conduct research through ethnographic art. The very process that seemed so rigidly defined in Foster's essay has expanded immensely over the last two decades, with unprecedented capacities for observation, documentation and distribution. Most obvious is the newfound ability to observe and record unnoticed in online spaces. Sveningsson posits that such anonymity potentially "decreases the risk that the presence of a researcher influences the natural flow of the environment, and, thus... lets us observe cultures as they normally are", a perspective seldom afforded to pre-internet anthropologists.[8] But this works to foreground a significant ambiguity regarding consent, one that is further obscured within intimate online spaces in which anonymity functions as a marker of both autonomy and self-protection. Though Rafman conducted his *Second Life* tours with a glaringly conspicuous avatar, immediately setting him apart as a self-conscious intruder in the virtual communities he infiltrates, there remains an obfuscation of intent and a reluctance to involve those he documents in an "intersubjective encounter",[9] which could be interpreted as a potential breach of consent. There is no evidence that those depicted in Rafman's work are aware of or consenting to their involvement. That they might have felt in some way violated upon discovering their avatars (though distinct from their offline identities in their fantastical, idealised projection of self and transhuman potential) is not at all unlikely. The effects of these revelations could potentially generate or perpetuate a lack trust between insiders and outsiders, and later limit accessibility for those who wish to conduct intersubjective research in earnest.[10] A concrete example of this can be seen on Fetlife.

Most users of the niche BDSM social network now include disclaimers in their bios along the lines of:

> Institutions, study groups and/or individuals using this site or any of its associated sites: you do not have permission to use any of my personal information, correspondences, writings or pictures. If you have or do, it will be considered a serious violation of my privacy and personal property and will be subject to legal ramifications.

To have to reassert these rights (often, mistakenly, taken for granted by most social media users) beckons fruitless, attention-worn questions: Is there such a thing as cyber-corporeal agency? What

4 Hal Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer?*, 1995, p 3.

5 Martin Kohout, *A conversation with Jon Rafman about the Kool-Aid Man (in Second Life)*, 2010. http://itsalreadynow.tumblr.com/post/570634983/a-conversation-with-jon-rafman-about-the-kool-aid

6 David L Hume, *Tourism Art and Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism*, 2013, p 61.

7 Ibid., p 62.

8 Malin Sveningsson, *Ethics in Internet Ethnography*, 2003, p 47.

9 Larissa Hjorth & Kristen Sharp, *The Art of Ethnography: the Aesthetics or Ethics of Participation?*, 2014, p 128.

10 Sveningsson, p 58.

do we consent to when we mark ourselves as present/online within ill-defined virtual public spaces?

11.
Guy Debord famously wrote in *The Society of the Spectacle:* "The spectacle's estrangement from the acting subject is expressed by the fact that the individual's gestures are no longer his own; they are the gestures of someone else who represents them to him."[11] One can't help but imagine those whose avatars ended up projected onto screens in numerous Biennales, e-fluxed ad nauseum, feeling something similar.

12.
In order to participate in online fetish spaces, a user often finds that it's encouraged to contribute to the creative inventory of said space. By creative inventory, I mean the tools by which virtual kinksters populate and elaborate upon their experience of power exchange or fetish fulfilment. In *Second Life*, many participants/fetishists contribute to the abundant marketplace of functional and ornamental fetish items/sex toys, available for purchase and use within the world. The creation and dissemination of user-made tools that enhance the potential for interpersonal engagement offers an insight into the importance of creative mediation within these online spaces. Rafman only briefly acknowledges the role of user intervention in the *Second Life* fetish scene: we see a few seconds of footage inside a small room, its walls plastered with advertisements for fetish-focused toys, such as functional, attachable vulvas (with the ability to excrete cum, piss, blood). What the footage crucially misses, however, is the (arguably absurd) complexity and ingenuity of some of these fetish tools in shaping the experience of participants. For instance, a user can purchase a blindfold that, when worn, completely blackens the screen of the wearer, restraints that restrict the movement of avatars to varying degrees, and a variety of gags that effectively block access to the in-game chat box.[12] These seemingly peripheral details often figure into the bulk of anthropological insight, and are only afforded to those who engage with cultures beyond what they can only see from a vantage point.

13.
"An ectoplasm-like substance recurs throughout Rafman's recent works, the characteristic gloop that figures as a shorthand for the gelatinous excess of virtual materiality. Treacly instantiations of an essentially fluid morphology, not unlike Rafman himself, whose attention-deficit world is reflected in his ever-mutable practice... the entropic waste of transmission, splurging out at the seams."[13]

These concluding words in Gary Zhexi Zhang's analysis of Rafman's practice (writing on the video work exhibited at Frieze 2016) conjure a sequence of potent tableaux. The first of spermatic impulse, of a grotesque incontinence. I acquiesce to the image of literal ejaculate, iridescent and pooling at the bottom of a dirty sock, quickly relegated to one of many piles. It sits limp amongst older polyester vessels dried stiff, empty Slurpee cups, flecks of stale instant noodle, cigarette butts, and crumpled tissue jaundiced by the effects of self-quarantine. Room thick with the musk of a windowless inhabitance. I subsequently recall scenes of abject sanctuaries, (brought to the public's attention by mainstream media with an alarmist *jouissance* a few years ago now) of the safe havens of young Japanese men afflicted with *hikikomori*, a pathologized kind of severe social isolation linked to video game addiction, social phobia and chronic masturbation. Hentai body pillows and old computers obscured by mountains of homebody detritus. The essay starts with a similarly excremental tone, quoting Rafman from an interview: "I'm with *them*, dancing in the shit". Zhang, somewhat bewilderingly, reads this as "an expression of resolute solidarity"; I see this more as Rafman expertly distilling both his fetishization of internet alterity and his deliberate yet myopic self-othering into a perfect few words. Still caught in a free-associative reverie, I remember that *Still Life (Betamale)* (a 2013 video work made in collaboration with Oneohtrix Point Never) has a sequence that depicts someone in what looks like a fox Fursuit, flailing in a deep pool of viscous, shitty mud, struggling to keep their zoomorphic head from submerging. I finally imagine Jon Rafman, smugly loyal to the tradition of Foster and Said's quasi-anthropologist, only ankle-deep.[14]

Angela Jolbey: lol
Amanda Burke: :(

---

11 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967, 30.

12 Shaowen Bardzell & Jeffrey Bardzell, *Sex-Interface Aesthetics: The Docile Avatars and Embodied Pixels of Second Life BDSM*, 2006, p 3.

13 Gary Zhexi Zhang, "The Online Anthropology of Jon Rafman", *Infinite Lives*, 2016, p 97.

14 Note that I've never even stepped virtual foot into the metaverse of Second Life. Nor have I ever seen one of Rafman's works in person. I just have a nice trove of videos and scholarly articles at my disposal.

CLAY:
material and immaterial performed

Rose Leake

Matter as Material vs Matter as Martyr

The relationship between clay and (wo)man is a historical one. I do not mean this in a literal sense in which earth and body combine, but rather in a metaphorical post-humanist ideal. This discussion of materiality and immateriality must surely take place in the post-humanist landscape where the body and the flesh of man and woman is dematerialised beyond substance into the metaphysical. There exists much scholarship about the dematerialisation of man yet Donna Haraway's feminist post-humanist approach sparks a more contemporary conversation about materiality and immateriality the 'human'. Haraway writes:

> My stakes are high; I think "we"—that crucial material and rhetorical construction of politics and of history—need something called humanity. It is that kind of thing which Gayatri Spivak called "that which we cannot not want." We also know now, from our perspectives in the ripped open belly of the monster called history, that we cannot name and possess this thing which we cannot not desire. Humanity, whole and part, is not autochthonous. Nobody is self-made, least of all man. That is the spiritual and political meaning of poststructuralism and postmodernism for me. "We," in these very particular discursive worlds, have no routes to connection and to noncosmic, nongeneric, nonoriginal wholeness than through the radical dismembering and displacing of our names and our bodies. So, how can humanity have a figure outside the narratives of humanism; what language would such a figure speak?[2]

The relationship between humanity as existence, humanity as construction, and humanity as flesh is a material one. In Haraway's opinion, humanity is not autochthonous, meaning it has not been formed from the static existence of being but rather it has been realised through movement and translocation between time and space. Humanity therefore is a holder of information. Humanity is a signifier of historical, social and political realisations of being which are not inextricably bound to the flesh in which it dwells but instead exists within the metaphysical realm. Human becomes post-human, material becomes immaterial.

This retreat from materiality is certainly evident within postmodern feminist discourse where a discursive focus on the feminine has been at the expense of materiality. [3] In much postmodern feminist scholar, Judith Butler's 'Bodies that Matter' (1993) being a notable example, the 'feminine' is constructed with the material body as a consequence of the discourse rather than a determinate. Hence in postmodern feminist scholar there exists a tension between matters. The matter of the material body is reconsidered in political, cultural and social terms so that the physical becomes a respondent to the metaphysical. This metaphysical or 'immaterial' discourse is constructed with, and hence becomes, a matter of language. The language informing and describing matter becomes more important than the matter itself, hence in postmodern feminist 'language' the discourse about the matter overcomes the physical presence of the matter. Alaimo and Hekman describe and question this concept for thoroughly, they write:

> Language has been granted too much power...The belief that grammatical categories reflect the underlying structure of the world is a continuing seductive habit of mind worth questioning. Indeed, the representationalist belief in the power of words to mirror pre-existing phenomena is the metaphysical substrate that supports social constructivist as well as traditional realist beliefs. A performative understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent pre-existing things.[4]

Clay is a signifier, and a subject, of this same discourse. It is a material yet its existence is told through an immaterial history, a history governed by language, politics and culture. Clay produces its own identity through a specific performative locatability - it tells us of its origins: its place of birth; its climate; its geography; its space. Clay, like many such materials, therefore inherently performs what second-wave feminists would call a 'politics of location'.[5] It prompts us to touch it, to make it, to create something from it yet it remains (materially and immaterially) situated to and contingent on its material specificity and locale. The politics of clay's specificity allows it to 'speak' of its materiality and inform us of its own purpose.

Hence, clay is material. But clay is also immaterial, it is bodiless in that it speaks of a time and place unknown to human kind. Clay is in us. It is the material from which, some argue, human flesh was first formed.

> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? [6]

> Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.[7]

clay
kleɪ/
noun
noun: clay; plural noun: clays
1.
a stiff, sticky fine-grained earth that can be moulded when wet, and is dried and baked to make bricks, pottery, and ceramics.
"the soil is mainly clay"
o   technical
sediment with particles smaller than silt, typically less than 0.002 mm.
o   a hardened clay surface for a tennis court.
"she won more matches on clay than any other player"
o   literary
the substance of the human body.
"this lifeless clay"[1]

2 D Haraway, 1992, 'Ecce homo, ain't (ar'n't) I a woman, and inappropriate/d others: The human in a post-humanist landscape', J Butler, J Wallach Scott, Feminists Theorize the Political, Routledge, pp. 86-100.

3 Alaimo, S. and Hekman, S. (2008). Material feminisms. Indiana: Indiana University Press, pp.1-156.

4 Alaimo, S. and Hekman, S. (2008). Material feminisms. Indiana: Indiana University Press, pp.120-121

5 Hinton, P. (2014). 'Situated Knowledges' and New Materialism(s): Rethinking a Politics of Location. Women: A Cultural Review, 25(1), pp.99-113.

6 Holy Bible, Isaiah 40:12, New International Version, 2011, Biblica Inc.

7 Holy Bible, Genesis 2:7, New International Version, 2011, Biblica Inc.

But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.[8]

Throughout the bible, we see reference to clay as an element which materialises our being and forms the flesh of our bodies. This material is human, and like humans it gives away its origins, yet its immateriality is inextricably linked to and informed by post-human discourses. The invocation of clay to be touched and worked lies not in its tactile materiality, as many things in existence are malleable, instead its need to be worked lies in its ability to transcend its own locale and specificity, a true allochthon.

Humans unearth clay, they mark and torture it into being, they surround it with fire and destroy it. They un-earth, un-localise and un-specify it with the political and social rhetoric of their own time. Once lying static in its birthplace, clay is ripped from the land – for moulding, for marking, for sculpting, for throwing. They inject their humanity into it. At each stage the clay masks a new mode of being and humans form new relationships with it. Yet clay, this holier-than-thou sticky substance, does not go willingly. It's re-location and re-specification does not lead to its disembodiment. On the contrary, clay, no matter what its 'final' form, inherently translates and performs its materiality both physically and metaphysically. Clay allows energy to pass through it and be held within it, a tension that ebbs and flows between what was, what is and what will be. Let John Hughes explain:

reaching deep through
earth into the tissue of life itself
a mind of clay
                                        pure language
translating geology and climate
hot
and cold
dry
and moist
light
and dark
living
and dead[9]

8 Holy Bible, Isaiah 64:8, New International Version, 2011, Biblica Inc.

9 Hughes J, (2017), "Why look at Beth Cavener's animals", Ceramics Art and Perception, Issue No 106.

Transference: the gestures between the (un) making

"Clay requires movement, you have to truly be with it. When you move around it, it disappears"[10]

Clay invokes energy.
the material requires movement.
to do so the substance of the body doing the moving requires sustenance.
sustenance is energy.
energy must transfer into the material for it to be moved.

In ancient China and Japan, from 8000 BCE, the process of unearthing clay material, forming it into a functional vessel and baking it was part of daily culture and economy. Functional vessels as well as ceremonial vessels were crafted, decorated and sold or exchanged across the land, creating veins of trade and economy across the country.[11] The transference of energy from clay to human and human to clay has a rich cultural history within East-Asia, as depicted in this Chinese pictorial narrative.

The narrative portrayed is as much a transference as it is a performance, as Garth Clark notes, "The vessel is one of the most performed art pieces." [12] The performative aspect of transferring clay from earth to vessel is celebrated in the pictorial text above where material is moved, formed and transformed by the energy of the worker. This practice of transforming clay through energy is a human gesture, telling of the worker's time and space. Its re-specification by the hands of the worker and the fire denies it of its autochthon existence as it can never again be reworked as new and transcend time, space and context.

water's edge wet dry wet dry
wet going to dry
the going is sticky is soft is supple
is is is
taken
is cold to the touch but easily warmed by the toucher
is growing taller and fatter it's skin being stretched and plumped
its' maker bulging before it
its' water which once held it is lost
no farewelled
yet it stands
it parades now water is its' slayer
fire fire it prays it
it licks
it strokes
it transforms its' being
being hard
being strong
being taken
back to the water's edge
the edge will not take it it is no longer the going

it is the gone

10 Regel A, (2018 April 19), personal interview.

11 Hudson, M 2008, 'Japanese Beginnings' in W Tsutsui (ed), A Companion to Japanese History, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, pp. 13-29.

12 Clark G, (2018), Witness

Images: Chinese picture book, date and origins unknown. Given to a friend at a teahouse in China.

Looking at Nithiyendran's work, it becomes clear that the politicised, historicised and socialised image becomes the works materiality, its time and its space, while its material form (the clay) becomes 'post-material' as it reveals nothing of its existence other than the existence Nithiyendran has forced it to perform. The working of clay then is a transference of the human condition onto a material which is physically dislocated yet metaphysically inexorable.

During the making (or un-making) process of transforming clay from a material to a vessel there is a transference and a performance of humanity. Contemporary artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran explains that through his making practice his hands act as a "strong political tool in which the hand-formed aesthetic allows [him] to subvert and depart from conventional ceramic conventions...[he thinks] a lot of people are drawn to art because of that humanist aspect – you can see humanity in it".[13] Nithiyendran's practice materialises the idea that through our manipulation of clay we inherently inject our own humanity into it, along with our relative political and social realities. In Nithiyendran's sculptural work clay becomes immaterial and, in a post-humanist sense, becomes a holder of information – a signifier of his metaphysical and physical locale. Time, space and language are intertwined with the sculptural object yet at the same time the clay itself is transcendent of context.

13 R M Nithiyendran, 2017 The Cave, 'The National: New Australian Art, Carriageworks, Sydney.

iii.

Metamorphosis: (un)making and destroying

clay
kle /
noun
noun: clay; plural noun: clays
2.
a European moth with yellowish-brown wings.[14]

Moths, like butterflies, go through an incredible transformation process whereby their caterpillar body matter, in the pupal stage of growth, disintegrates in the cocoon then re-forms to become a winged moth. It is not dissimilar to say that clay does a similar thing during the firing process. In the presence of prolonged intense heat (between 500 degrees Celsius to 2500 degrees Celsius) the clay molecules change to an irreversible chemical composition. At 500 degrees Celsius the hydrogen bonds present in clay are broken down by the heat and replaced by short strong oxygen bonds. Beyond this temperature, the particles begin to vitrify and the sedimentary rock particles begin to melt and fuse together. The resulting material from this firing process is no longer clay, it has become 'ceramic' or 'pottery'. It is therefore correct to say that the firing process is both a destroyer and a creator of material.

Garth Clark likens this process to the creation of plastics, "Just as crude oil is manufactured into plastic, clay is manufactured into ceramic." [15] There seems to be a dissimilarity between plastic and ceramic, one being a 'natural' substance and one being 'unnatural'. But are they not two sides of the same coin? Just as plastic takes thousands of years to break down, so too does fired pottery. We have based much of history on the fragmented shards of pottery found in archaeological sites around the globe, construing an image of the social, cultural and political aspects of ancient civilisations on their ceramic wastage. Perhaps plastic will be our pottery, the archaeological gems a future civilisation might prey to discover.

New Zealand artist Richard Stratton conceptualises this historical importance of ceramics, explaining:

> Internationally, ceramics has played a key role to unlocking human history, helping us to date our growth via fragments of clay. New Zealand's industrial ceramic history was based upon techniques reflected in sherds (pieces) I found while mudlarking on the Thames. These sherds are examples of processes our ceramic predecessors were influenced by and became the backbone of early New Zealand pottery.[16]

Stratton takes ceramics out of the context of art and into the realm of history and anthropology. While his focus is on pottery as an enduring material, his true focus is on how this material is imbedded with the human condition of past civilisations. As the worth of clay was in its materiality and its ability to be void of time and place, ceramic denies these abilities as the context of the creator is eternally embedded within the ceramic object.

The metamorphosis of clay into ceramic has un-made and destroyed clay, yet its performance still resonates in its existence and its materiality still lingers. Clay has not died completely but is in limbo between life and death. It exists now as a mutation between material and human, neither one nor the other but a child of the two.

> They feel as if they have formed themselves.
> They speak only because the sculptor has found a way to shed her own voice.
> She does not give herself up in advance.
> She does not and cannot empty herself by a conscious act of will.
> It is the process of shaping that frees her and allows these creatures,
> if only for a moment,
> to become the self that is freed.[17]

14 Dictionary.com. (2018). "the definition of clay", [online] Available at: http://www.dictionary.com/browse/clay [Accessed 8 May 2018].

15 Clark G, (2018), Witness

16 The Dowse Art Museum, 2017, Artist Talk: Richard Stratton. [podcast] The Dowse Project, Available at: https://soundcloud.com/thedowse/artist-talk-richard-stratton, Accessed 26 May 2018.

17 Adapted from Hughes J, (2017), "Why look at Beth Cavener's animals", Ceramics Art and Perception, Issue No 106.

Images (right): Image of fire shooting out of the stack of an Anagama kiln; my grandmother, Janet Mansfield, stoking the firebox of her 'Racer' Anagama kiln, Morning View, Gulgong 1989. (scanned from a 35mm slide, taken by Coll Minogue); Janet Mansfield pot straight out of the kiln (1989).

a body is

Beth Sorensen

the body has

the body has **a mind of its own**
the body has **many parts**
the body has **many members**
the body has **its reasons**
the body has **a head**
the body has **ways of shutting**

my body is

my body is **ready**
my body is **a temple**
my body is **aching**
my body is **a cage**

my body will

my body will **not be a tomb for other creatures**
my body will **not lose weight**
my body will **not let me sleep**
my body will **not warm up**
my body will **not relax**
my body will **not stop itching**
my body will **rest secure**

what is a   ?

is it

       identity

       organs
       skin
       flesh

is it
       our relationships

          beyond
the identity we formulate

                each day

     we perform

             hatred
             obsession
             discomfort

             love

can the body
      we exist within

be a vehicle and nothing more

    everything
        nothing else?

Images: screenshots of Google Autofill search results, taken by Beth Sorensen

Why human rights needs visual cultures

Sivaan Walker

"But without bodies, how would we know each other?"
- Han Kang (trans. Deborah Smith), *Human Acts*

Imagine this, a woman dressed in a large white tunic sitting atop a pile of bloody oxen bones. For six days she repeats the gesture of washing and cleansing. Washing and cleansing. Would you question why someone would place their body here?

In the hope that the answer is yes, it would guide you to find that this is one of Marina Abramovic's performance works titled Balkan Baroque, of which, metaphorically portrayed the ongoing and extensive suffering caused by ethnic cleansing within the Balkans (Goldberg 2011:229). Visual cultures, like this, which choose to represent topics of violence, trauma, suffering, and hardships encountered under strict political regimes can be understood as a form of bearing witness. Bearing witness describes both the victim of these atrocities, and, the person viewing representations of said atrocities in contrasting space and time contexts.

Within the branch of performance art, and especially since the 1960s, the body has been used to enable deeper understandings of embodiment through the use of physical gestures. Here, the body becomes the material, and we are provided with opportunities whereby artworks allow a corporeal working through of conceptually abstract ideas. Although a seemingly large task, we should understand that each personal documentation and communal storytelling is a chip away at the larger issues and complexities surrounding human rights and the representation of trauma. With the shrinking of the globe, and an increased access to communication devices, we have witnessed an expansion of historical storytelling retextured through human experience. While some fear this saturation as a point of discomfort, where indifferences can arise, I argue it is a cause for interrogation; a unique moment in modern history where we can comprehend that visual culture no longer needs to be a linear transmissible piece of work, but rather, is a means whereby we may come to know of our history, and of ourselves.

As a form of communication, secondary experiences of bearing witness is a process which can be utilised by researchers, NGOs, journalists, victims and social movements to attest to the existence of current and historical human rights violations (Kurasawa 2009:94). Kurasawa, in his analysis of bearing witness as a mode of transnational practice points out that there are five dialectically related tasks involved in this process. Firstly, it gives voice to mass suffering against silence. Secondly, it can offer experiences of interpretation. Thirdly, it provides an opportunity to cultivate empathy in the face of indifference. Fourth, it acts to provide an opportunity of remembrance rather than forgetting, and lastly, it could act as a prevention against repetition (Kurasawa 2009:95). With these five points in mind, it

would also be necessary to add his emphasis on roles within the dynamics of bearing witness. This process requires two roles to take place, firstly there is the victim transmitting their experiences of struggle and suffering, and secondly there is an audience on the receiving end. In an attempt to initiate change through representing the atrocities of violence and trauma, these two roles are constantly required to be filled (Kurasawa 2009:96).

If we consider the viewers role in this experience, bearing witness always takes place after the event has happened. Here, representation not only carries the burden of standing in for the atrocities of the event, but also acts to reintegrate past histories and events back into public discourses (Goodall 2010:238, Merewether et. al 2010:1, Pollock 2012:65, Kurasawa 2009:99). In Jane Goodall's essay on events and re-enactment, she stresses the significant impacts of traumatic memories in victims of war and violence in psychological terms. If a victim were to bear witness to an event during war or mass suffering, who was then to become a refugee, then these memories also globalise through migration. Writers and artists in this context who wish to express their initial role of bearing witness, do so with the capacity to expand these experiences in continents distances apart from where the event initially took place (Goodall 2010:230). Visual cultures which wish to represent experiences of trauma and mass suffering offer then, a retexturing of storytelling as human experience, which is more than just historical fact. And, when we look to art to do this, we can find past traumas not only in violation of the body, but also to land, cultures, and communities through the ability to represent a wide variety of issues in various ways (Goodall 2010:234).

If, as Best argues in his paper on resurfacing visual archives, we directly derive knowledges about the world and its history through material and visual cultures, then it must be equally important to examine how this process is, if at all, effective (Best 2011:160). Considering the viewer as an active participant within artmaking is not a new concept for artists to acknowledge, and nor is the concept of interpretation. Performance art is one of many branches of visual cultures which directly requires a live public acknowledgement in order for it to exist. This type of work moves away from static forms of representation, and endeavours to include audience members in order to generate dialogue and organise movements in space and time (Tate 2018b:n.p, Tate 2018c:n.p). Bodies here, in performance art, become the subject matter. Audiences either watch an artist gesture within space, or; find themselves interacting with artworks in less traditional capacities. In either role, the use of the body within performance art allows for a working through of conceptually abstract ideas in corporeal forms - with the body as material

complex, because it works.; it incorporates within it commodity, consumerism and capitalism. On the other hand, art does not do this, it does not work at a rational level, and therefore when the object is removed from its intended purpose, all that remains is thought (Arendt 2011:173). It is in this space of seemingly irrational motivations can we understand that in performance art, placing the physical body under self-inflicted duress completely removes any rational purpose to the work of art, and; as people generally do not want to feel pain – we are then left with the concepts underpinning the consistent occurrence of pain and suffering.

If we can understand that art (as an object) has the ability to highlight imperfection, uselessness, and irrational responses to external environmental contexts, then we might also consider the body who responds to these environments to also possess similar traits. Ritual artists such as Hermann Nitsch, Gina Pane, and Rudolf Schwarzkogler in the late 60s and early 70s worked with the concept of 'violence as catharsis' which appeared to perform a processing of ongoing external political conflicts involving Europe and America. In a reflection on the abundance of works during

this time which examined rituals and instinct as central themes within art, we can see that the consistent existence of violence which lingered after two world wars strongly affected artists to the point of total consumption. Commitments to expressing instinctual and emotive responses in the face of continuing acts initiating mass suffering preceded artists livelihood, and informed artists' understanding of the self in terms of body-world relations.

Today we see contemporary performance art less interested in self manipulation, endurance, and rituals, and more concerned with human experiences in wider social, political, and environmental contexts. Performance artists such as Walid Raad, Omer Fast, Santiago Sierra and Teresa Margolles are continuously concerned with forcing audiences to not only bear witness to precise events in history, but to also become increasingly concerned with the concepts which underpin powerful political relations around the globe. Raad uses personal experiences as a man coming of age in Lebanon's Civil War to deliver performance lectures within galleries. Raad's inquiry in this style of performance develops a didactic relationship between artist and audience while displaying

(Denner 2010:96, Tate 2018a:n.p). If an artist can successfully utilise the body as material, this then enables somewhat of a lenience into audience's preconditioned cultural understandings of what a body is in space and time, and on a more intimate level, what a body feels. Performance art, in this sense, has a strong emphasis on gestures, responses, and representations of bodies in external environments.

Some representations can be considered extreme, as is the performance work of Stuart Brisley who once floated in a blackened bathtub for two weeks in London surrounded by rotting offal and maggots in an attempt to gesture between life and death, breathing and drowning, floating and sinking. This work acted as a larger metaphor for the exhaustion and underlying fatigue present after joining leftist political parties in the late 1960s (Brisley 2018:n.p). And, some more contemporary artworks might be more subtle in the way they simply occupy space within any particular intended context. This is represented in the work of Sydney artist collective Get to Work where, for an opening performance at Kudos Gallery in Sydney, three women artists sit on stage in silence, slowly moving their positions throughout the event. Performances like this specifically endeavour to occupy space in order to speak on topics of exoticisation, racial stereotyping, and the presence of non white artists within traditionally white occupied spaces (Ross 2016:n.p).

Starting in the 1960s, artists and performers began to examine the function and meaning of art within society. During this time, art students and younger generations became increasingly unsettled and frustrated with institutions and political structures which lead to protests within and out of the art world (Goldberg 2011:152). Artists began to not only consider the audience as a part of their work, but also examined and initiated ways in which sociology, philosophy, psychology, politics and history could merge with

visual art forms (Goldberg 2011:174). Since this, performance art has initiated a type of practice where artists conceptually consider audience participation, and; dismiss traditional forms of narration and storytelling in an attempt to grapple with more abstract concepts and theories underpinning social and political life for both individuals and communities (Goldberg 2011:9). Although performance art requires a sense of time, gesture, and aliveness that many traditional artforms cannot provide, it should also be understood that with technological advances and the shrinking of the globe, performance art has become increasingly accessible due to the abundance of documentation and distribution. This could be argued to diminish its original intensity, alertness, and urgency, but also emphasises audience participation through abilities to re-access performance art archives (Goldberg 2011:153). Alongside this expansion, contemporary art forms are increasingly subjected to wider audiences, and therefore, wider critiques from across various communities and cultures. Due to this, we see performance art take on even deeper research methods and sensitivities in order to produce works that are empathetic and conceptually grounded with a similar urgency of current socio-political topics they were initially conceived upon (Goldberg 2011:235).

In order to develop a deeper understanding on the function of art in society, it must also be necessary to attempt to explain the philosophical permanence of art itself. Arendt, in her well known writing on The Human Condition (1958), identifies that art (as an object) must be removed from its utilitarian purposes in order to transcend its original form and achieve a status of thought (Arendt 1958:167). This removal of usefulness acts to open up critique, and thus, an examination of its intended, or perceived, function within society. In doing so, we might be able to consider the thing-world relationship as strained to the point of diminishment, and all that is left is the endurance of idea (Arendt 1958:168). In a sense, an ordinary object represents function and utility and is not

Image (above): Stuart Brisley (1972), 'And for today... nothing', Gallery House Goethe Institute, London. Available at: http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/27/70s/Works
Image (right): Get to Work (2018), Performance for 'Kudos Live 3', curated by Kate Stoddart, Kudos Gallery. Photos by Dominique Berns-Blackwell.

real data, history, and emotional responses to life threatening political environments (Goldberg 2011:235, MoMa 2016:n.p). Omer Fast has explored the complexities of truth seeking through a two-channel video installation which depicts both interviews with soldiers and scenes of restaged bomb blasts hitting Iraq. His work comments on the necessary existence of the two sides or roles underpinning existences of conflict (Goldberg 2011:235, James Cohen 2018:n.p). Sierra aims to use individuals within society as a commodities within their work. Offering a group of sex workers one hit of heroin in the agreement they have a continuous line tattooed across their backs horizontally was an emphasis on societies indifference to individual degradation and desolation (Goldberg 2011:237, Manchester 2006:n.p). And, Teresa Margolles highlights the lingering essence of death by filling gallery rooms with humidified air which uses recycled morgue water run off to physically and sensually interrupt an audience members experience of space and time (Goldberg 2011:237, Coulson 2004:n.p).

Artists in contemporary performance art have moved away from the self as the spectacle, and manage to directly force audience members into a relationship with artworks through emotional and physical sensations. Works of performance art now see less of an individualistic body-world emphasis, and have turned to broader social and political topics as conceptual pivoting points in order to ground audience members understandings of political power relations.

If we can understand through performance art's emphasis on body-world relations that the human is extremely sensitive to external environments, then we can understand how measures such as human

rights exist in order to protect human bodies from experiences of violence and trauma. These rights, termed by Ignatieff as "the child of enlightenment" (Ignatieff 2001:65, Slaughter 2006:1406, Goodale 2013:491), work on the most rational perspective of moral reciprocity. This means that, we judge human actions on a simple test of whether we would like to be subjected to that same action if it were being done unto us. If we cannot comprehend why these actions should be performed, then they should simply be outlawed. . In a sense, human rights places the human in the centre of its rational conception, and aims to outlaw actions on the hope that empathy can be learnt (Ignatieff 2001:89). The role of performance art, in this sense, provides an opportunity of bearing witness that relies on the human capacity to feel through seeing and not directly experiencing. But, increasingly we see contemporary performance and participation artists forcing audience members to experience something in hopes of cultivating empathy, understanding, and acknowledgement (Kurasawa 2009:102).

Although human rights are concerned with something as seemingly simple as empathy and compassion towards general populations, and in even more generic terms, the human, there is still a contested understanding on whom they really are for, and exactly how they are granted. Since the beginning of denaturalisation and naturalisation from and to nation states, the idea of citizenship has changed drastically. First with France, and then Belgium, and eventually with the Nuremberg Laws, we should understand the role of the state as imperative in determining the impact of removing citizens of full or partial rights, or granting them with new rights within a nation other than their own. This, as Giorgio Agamben writes extensively on, was the pivoting point of understanding naive notions of people

and citizens (Agamben 2000:29). Citizen rights, then, are to be given to the human being only in accordance to their nativity, or in other words, place of birth. And, if a nation-state is to make claims of sovereignty, they do so under the premise that a community of humans is the foundational claims to such (Agamben 2000:32). It is here, that we can understand that humans require a community in order to both respect, and grant individual rights. Once an individual is severed from community, then they are also severed from their rights, and from here, enter into what Arendt and Agamben describe as the sacred human (Agamben 2000:133). This zone, as also initially argued by Arendt, is worse than being sentenced to a life in prison. Where the prisoner holds rights against the state, the stateless human can no longer hold any political organisation accountable for their situation, no one can defend them, and they have no particular political body to appeal to (Arendt [1951](1994):287).

In this space, where political bodies may no longer wish to take responsibility for the refugee, material and visual cultures can stand in for the ambiguity of human rights notions and develop a substantial grounds whereby victims of human rights violations bypass governments – and directly appeal to the public. This power, to extend appeals across borders, increasingly resides in the power of documentation and technological advances, as seen in 'Chauka, please tell us the time' (2018). This documentary, filmed entirely on smartphones within the Manus Island detention camp, contests to the potential articulating powers of intersubjectivity within documentary style visual cultures. Here, documentation and representation of being in an environment provides audiences an opportunity to

comprehend the psychological impacts arbitrary arrest and use of brutality against refugees causes. As is illustrated by one asylum seeker, commenting on his entire deterioration of self, and heartache of living away from close family connections (Sarvin Productions 2018:n.p). This documentary, easily accessible on Vimeo for an eight-dollar streaming fee, spreads the witness base to millions of users on that site, and further, the billions of people accessing the internet who have unlimited potential to find Vimeo through other search engines. Further, these globalised expressions of being in the world within specific environmental contexts can provide an increased capacity to research for ordinary citizens, or victims against human rights violations. Documentation here, as a type of social movement and visual culture, provides increased opportunities to disseminate personal experiences directly to NGOs, social researchers, social movements, and general populations (Appadurai 2013:281).

Along with increased understandings of being in the world, we also have the power to become attuned to the atrocities of violence individuals face underneath uncontrollable forces, and; there is also the risk of becoming overwhelmed. This potentially resulting in feelings of indifference or hopelessness. It is here that power of the work of art reaches beyond typical documentary style visual cultures; through having no seemingly rational or linear end result, intention, or expectations, audiences are more likely to engage with complex and abstract ideas which attempt to explore the affects of political unrest, mass suffering, and the after effect of trauma and violence. It is in this space of abstractness, uselessness, and loss of overall rationale objectives that Agamben argues art loses transmissibility (Agamben 1999:110). And, it is not until the work of art becomes intransmissible, that we can consider the spectrum of humanities "indecipherable
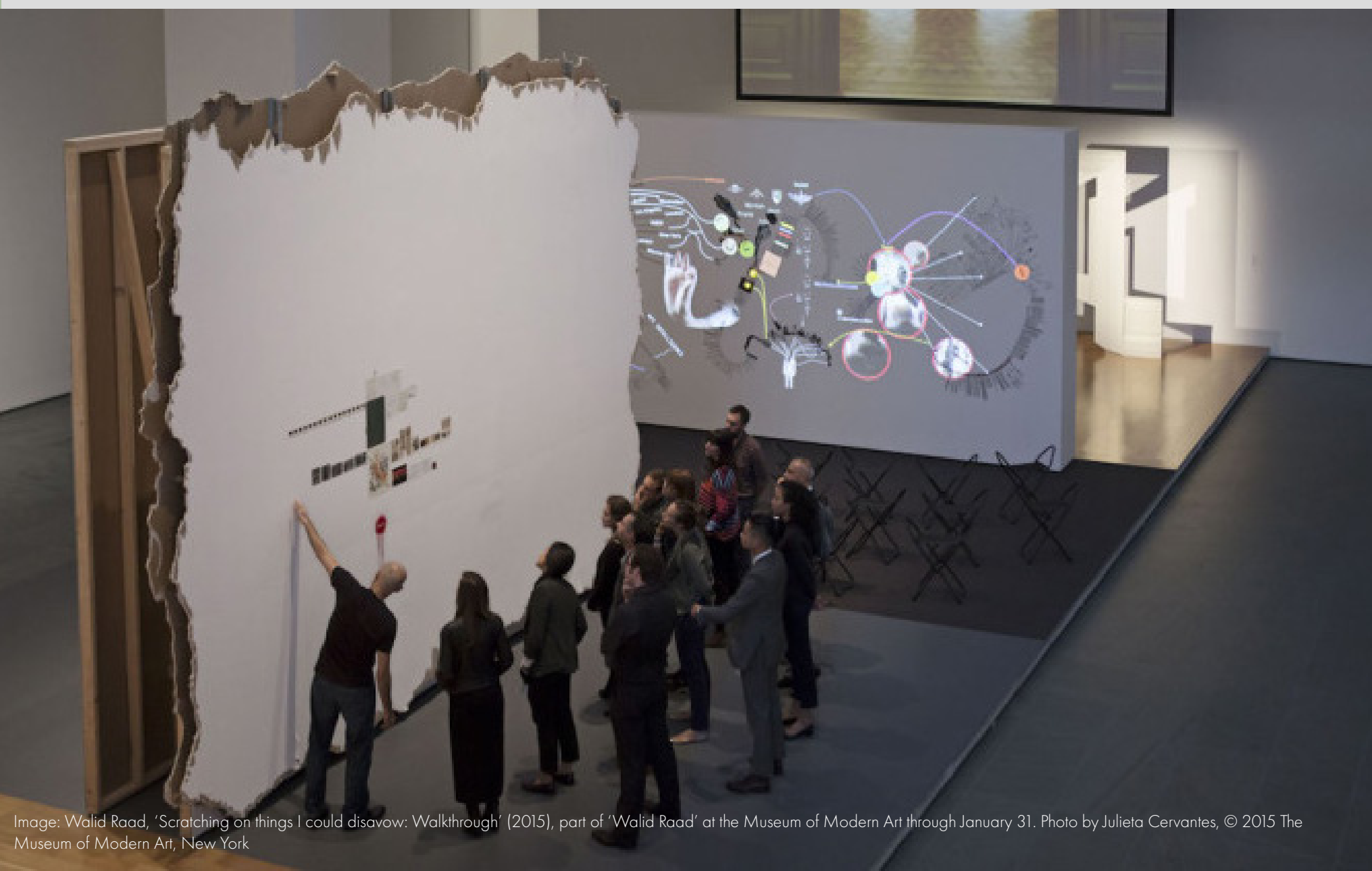

Image: Walid Raad, 'Scratching on things I could disavow: Walkthrough' (2015), part of 'Walid Raad' at the Museum of Modern Art through January 31. Photo by Julieta Cervantes, © 2015 The Museum of Modern Art, New York
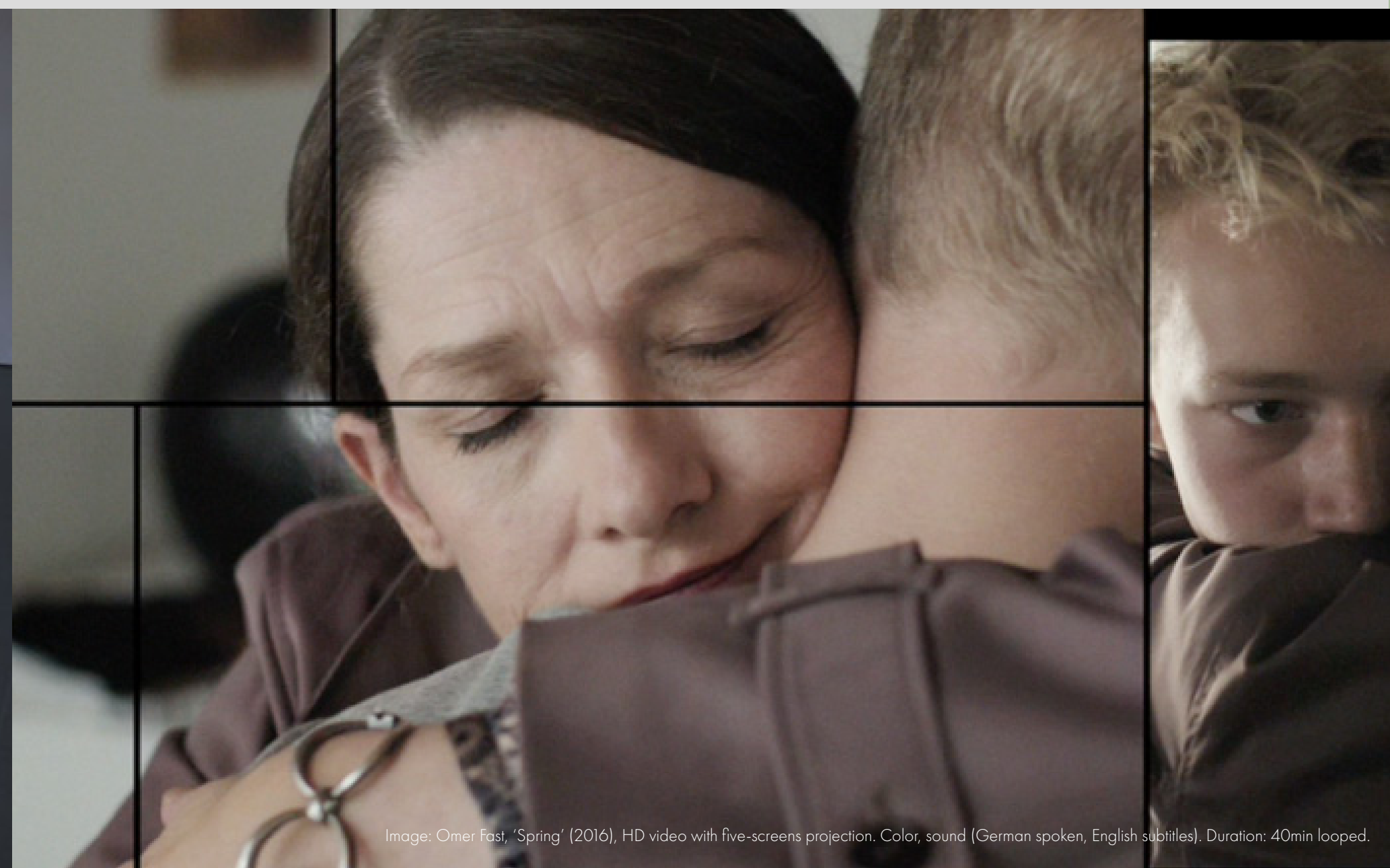
Image: Omer Fast, 'Spring' (2016), HD video with five-screens projection. Color, sound (German spoken, English subtitles). Duration: 40min looped.

ruins" as a point of acknowledgement where we might come to learn of both ourselves, and our knowledges (Agamben 1999:110).

Visual cultures, particularly in performance and participation art, have the ability to abstract conceptual ideas pertaining to the fragility of human life within environments of violent political forces. These works constantly place the body as subject, and even more importantly, require external bodies outside of themselves to listen to the retexturing of history through human experience. Human rights cannot end war, violence, and suffering. But, perhaps through a close examination of the atrocities represented through the internalisation of external violent environments can we come to a deeper understanding of the human personality, which then, aptly can develop a deeper understanding of human rights.

References
-- Agamben, G. (1999) The Man Without Content , California: Stanford University Press.
-- Agamben, G. (2000) Means without end: Notes on politics , Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
-- Arendt, H. ([1951]1994) 'The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man' in The Origins of Totalitarianism. New York: Harcourt, pp. 267-302.
-- Arendt, H. (1958) The Human Condition , Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
-- Brisley, S. (2018) And for today... nothing , available at: http://www.stuartbrisley.com/pages/27/70s/Works/And_for_today____nothing/
-- Coulson, A. (2004) Teresa Margolles , available at: https://frieze.com/article/teresa-margolles
-- Denner, A. (2010) 'Aesthetic experience and the power of the artwork' in After the event: New perspectives on art history, C. Merewether and J. Potts (eds), Manchester: Manchester University Press, 90-104
-- Goldberg, R. (2011) Performance Art: from Futurism to the Present, 3rd edition, London: Thames and Hudson.
-- Goodale, M. (2006) 'Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights', Current Anthropology ,47(3), 485-511.
-- Goodall, J. (2010) 'When the present comes to get you' in After the event: New perspectives on art history, C. Merewether and J. Potts (eds), Manchester: Manchester University Press, 227-239.
-- Kurasawa, F. (2009) 'A Message in a Bottle: Bearing Witness as a Mode of Transnational Practice', Theory, Culture & Society , 26(1), 92-111.
-- Ignatieff, M. (2001) Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
-- James Cohen (2018), Omer Fast, available at: https://www.jamescohan.com/artists/omer-fast
-- Manchester, E. (2006) 160 cm Line Tattooed on 4 People El Gallo Arte Contemporáneo.
Salamanca, Spain. December 2000 , available at: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sierra-160-cm-line-tattooed-on-4-people-el-gallo-arte-contemporaneo-salamanca-spain-t11852
-- Merewether, C., and Potts, J. (2010) After the event: New perspectives on art history, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
-- MoMa (2016) Walid Raad, available at: https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1493
-- Pollock, G. (2012) 'Photographing Atrocity: Becoming Iconic' in G. Batchen, M. Gidley, N. K.
Miller, J. Prosser (eds), Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis, London: Peakton Books, 65-78.
-- Ross, N. (2016) (FBI Radio) Art We Heart: Get To Work , available at: https://fbiradio.com/art-we-heart-get-to-work/
-- Sarvin Productions (2018), Chauka, please tell us the time, Vimeo video, available at: https://vimeo.com/ondemand/chauka
-- Slaughter, J. R. (2006) 'Enabling fictions and Novel Subjects: The Bildungsroman and International Human Rights Law', Publications of the Modern Language Association of
America , 121(5), 1405-1423.
-- Tate (2018a) Performance and Protest: Can Art Change Society? | How Art Became Active | Ep.
1 of 5 | TateShots, YouTube video, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BluWOjovJHk
-- Tate (2018b) Performance and Protest: Can Art Change Society? | How Art Became Active | Ep.
2 of 5 | TateShots, YouTube video, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFvIaVaOmug
Tate (2018c) Performance and Protest: Can Art Change Society? | How Art Became Active | Ep. 3 of 5 | TateShots, YouTube video, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xRKRGuPmK8&t=1s
-- United Nations (UN) ([1949]2018) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, available at: http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/ 23
-- Venice Performance Art (VPA)(2014) Gina Pane , available at: http://www.veniceperformanceart.org/index.php?page=223&lang=en

Images (left): stills from 'Chauka, please tell us the time' (2018), directed by Behrouz Boochani and Arash Kamali Sarvestani. Full film: https://vimeo.com/ondemand/chauka

Curiosity and the cat

Alix Crowe

In 1935, an imaginary cat became infinite, and the idea of the body was forever changed.

You see, in the world of quantum physics, 'the body' surpasses a physical thing, an ideological construct, a spirit or soul. In quantum physics, the body is a wave, nowhere and everywhere at once. The body is infinite.

Quantum physicist Erwin Schrödinger imagined the following scenario: you put a cat in a box with a device that may or may not release poisonous gas. The triggering of the device is completely random; at any given time, there is a 50% chance the cat is still alive, and 50% chance it is dead. But – why don't we just open it, check inside to see how our cat is? Say, on this occasion, you open the box, and are happily reunited with your living cat. You then wonder how the cat was right before the box was opened. Common sense tells us it was alive. But that would disagree with the maths at the beginning of the thought experiment, destroying the probability that it might be dead. And maths, in the world of science, is always more reliable than common sense. So, we turn to the only alternative – that before our observation, the cat was both *alive* and *dead*. The act of observing it *forced reality to choose the outcome*.

In essence, our curiosity might've killed the cat – or it had as much of a chance of ensuring its life.
All we *really* know is that our observation ended the cat's brief flirtation with infinity, and the cat became a body once more.

So, from Schrodinger's imagined experiment (no cats were ever actually harmed, I promise), we get this strange idea: that *unobserved*, the body transcends life, death and space.

It seems strange and somewhat unconvincing, I know. But this thought experiment was used as an analogy for a legitimate physics problem: scientists trying to find the position of subatomic particles like electrons. What was realised is that it is only when we do an experiment to find the location of an electron that it is *compelled* to become a particle at that location. Before, like the cat, it existed everywhere and nowhere at once. It was infinite, and the act of observing it *produced* what we observed.

And then it gets scary.

Every single object is made up of these subatomic particles. So, we can't help but wonder, is it the same with humans? Are we compelled into bodies because we are observing each other? Is the *whole universe* compelled into a physical presence, simply because it is being watched? Planets, stars and black holes willed into being?

Now I get scared every time I close my eyes.

Last year, Paul Thomas hosted an art-based experiment that explored this quantum understanding of the observer. Fourteen of UNSW's quantum physics researchers were invited to a drawing class to draw a chair. Naturally, this kind of blew the physicists' minds. Scientists only really investigate quantum physics on a subatomic scale. But I believe it is the artists that, knowingly or unknowingly, practice quantum physics on the human scale. Almost every creative action is employed to emphasise, deconstruct, or create new perceptions of a subject that ultimately changes the subject in some way. And that is quantum at its finest. In Thomas's drawing class, the chair represented the body that is compelled into existence. Drawing it was therefore

the measurement of it- through the act of observing, interpreting and recording. Irene Fernandez, Quantum Computing PhD student, described how, in producing her artwork, she saw her hand as "the tool of quantum mechanics", describing how, when "you make a trace, you statistically determine the reality of the object you are trying to measure." Thomas's experiment demonstrates how a creative practice allows quantum physics to be realised on a much larger scale than electrons – here, we begin to question the existence of bodies as simple as chairs.

And so, *what does that mean for us*? How does this change *our* definition of the body – as a physical object, as an ideological construction, and as a shell inside which the soul dwells?

For one, the body is as much a wave as it is a physical object. You can actually calculate your very own wavelength when you walk or run. What I find rather strange is that your wavelength is ridiculously tiny in comparison to the wavelength of an electron, whose physical size is ridiculously tiny in comparison to you. So, size and physicality become pretty convoluted.

In July 2018 at Carriageworks, Ryoji Ikeda explored this strange aspect of scale through his exhibit *micro|macro*. Following an artist in residency program at the European Organisation for Nuclear Physics in Switzerland, Ikeda projected huge scale video works of the quantum events he was able to witness. Projections, occupying 172.8 square metres
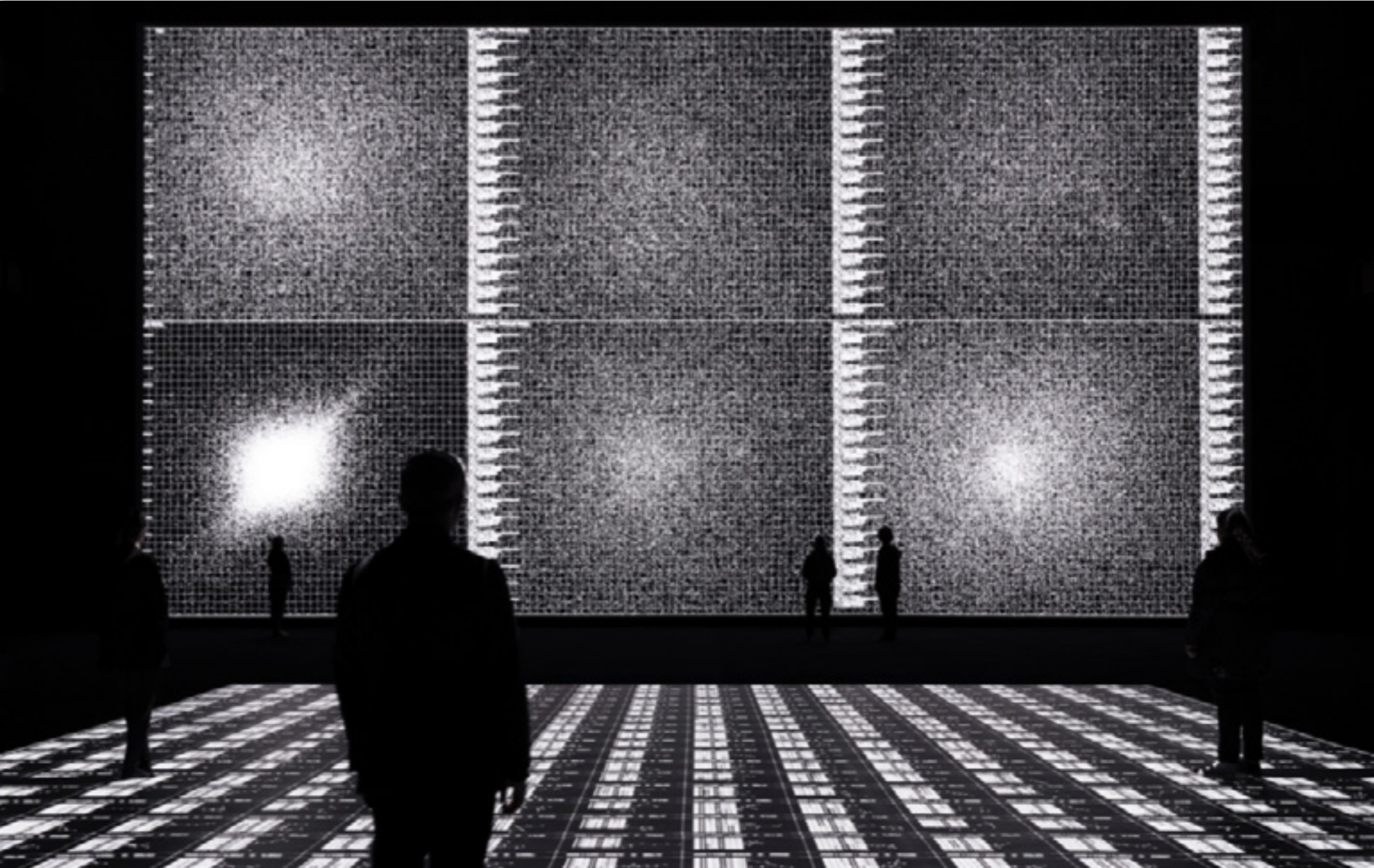
of the space, immersed viewers into the vast universe of particles- a universe that, to us, is too tiny to comprehend. It makes me wonder how chaotic and overwhelming this world is, where there is so much that we cannot see.

Now, ideology. Where on earth does that come in? If we accept that our observations determine what we see, this could mean that the way we observe things – through lenses structured by ideology – determines what we see-and what we don't see-as well. Sight becomes entirely political – everything we see, notice and ignore is influenced by our ideology, and we are somewhat powerless against this.

Ideology produces reality. It explains why people are so committed to their ideology – because, for them, it is not just a system of beliefs – it is their reality. It also demonstrates the strange power that a dominant ideology has over identity. Interpellation, a term coined by philosopher Louis Pierre Althusser, describes the phenomenon where a subject exists only when they are recognised with reference to an ideology. Identity, according to Althusser, is therefore entirely formed by the dominant ideology. However, I am not so convinced by this interpellation theory. Because as much as my body is compelled into existence from others' sociocultural expectations, its existence is also determined by my *own* perception of myself. And I will see myself however I please, thank you very much.

And the soul? I like to think of my body as *being* my soul – or rather, the 'soul' as the wave aspect of my body. I sometimes wonder what happens when you die, and can no longer observe the world. In that essence, you have become another of Schrodinger's cat. The body ceases to be, and it is only the 'soul' – existing everywhere and nowhere at once.

But these are all merely theories, unable to be proven because observing what happens would alter the results. That's why science is so utterly remarkable and frustrating at the same time. One discovery reveals to us how much we do not know- how much we *cannot* know.

It's like the saying "If a tree falls and no one is around, did it make a noise?" I think a more telling question would be, "If a tree falls and no one is around, is there even a tree?"

But no one can answer that – except, perhaps, for one particular cat.
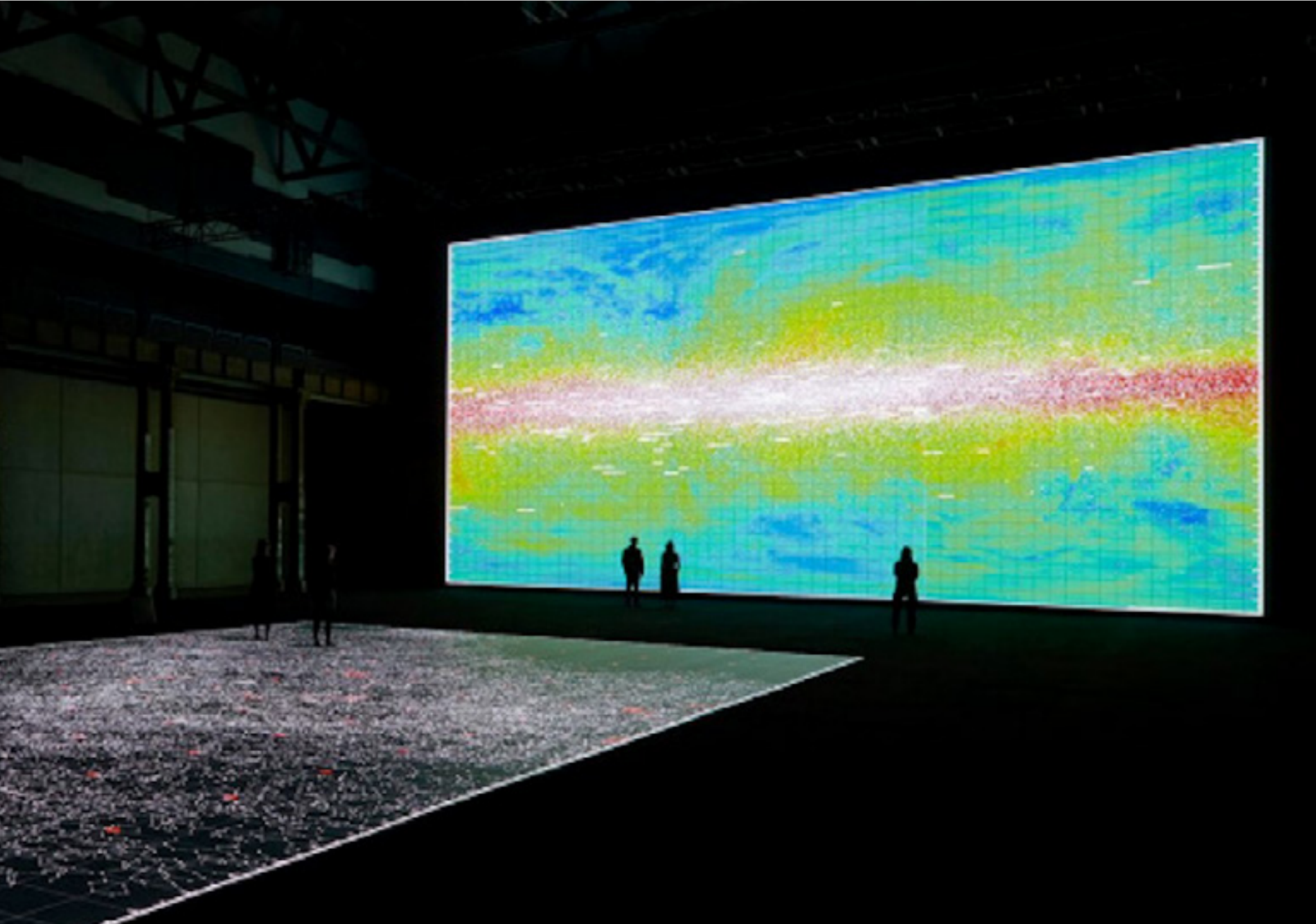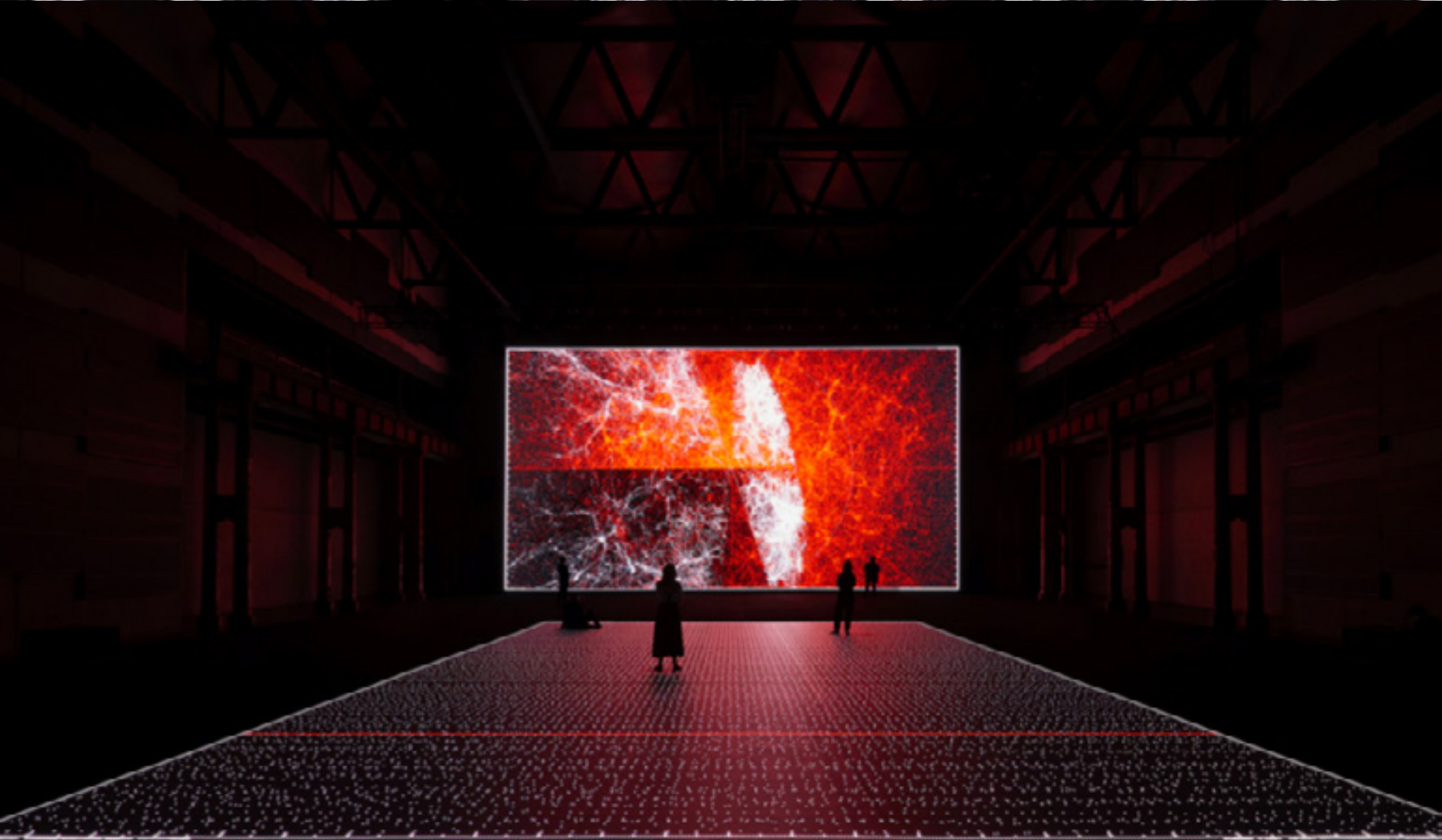
Modding the digital body

Chloe McFadden

trigger warning: this article contains discussion of racialised and sexual violence

Digital reality forces us to engage with a posthuman framework which asserts all users as equally 'other'.[1] However, with the creation of the digital body or the 'Avatar' we re-gender and re-racialise the virtual world, which inherently empowers current models of social oppression and privilege.[2] A clear example of this is the application of the male gaze through the creation and use of 'modding'. Modding is the modification or implementation of new materials to games, videos, websites and virtual spaces.[3] The modding community is highly male based with a large emphasis on the modification of females in video games or virtual reality in order to 'correct' them to fit inside the male gaze. In this way, modding visualises the entitlement and colonial desire of the male gaze as users satisfy their own visual ideals by physically altering the image or behaviour of digital women.[4]

In this discussion of modification and the digital body we can begin to explore the real world consequence of the dominance of the male gaze in the virtual world. The hyperfocus of the cisgender heterosexual white male consumer in the creation of digital material has led to the realisation of a digital space which inherently disempowers the other.[5] The lack of consideration of minorities in the development of technology historically has further cultivated a mentality of entitlement and ownership within the male gaze which is only being furthered in the development of the virtual space.[6] If we are able to decentralise the humanistic social systems which are hyperbolised in virtual reality due to its main demographic being cisgendered white males, we provide space for the self representation and creation of feminist, queer and racially diverse identities and spaces.[7] This diversification of virtual reality will lead to an existence in which all digital and physical bodies are valued and celebrated equally.

A common example of modding involves what has been labelled 'jiggle physics', in which physical features of desire, e.g. breasts are hyperbolised and emphasised. While women's identities in the digital world are already underrepresented, when they are represented it is either outwardly appealing to the male gaze or quickly modded to fulfill that desire. This culture has created a sense of entitlement in which the male gaze takes it upon themselves to 'fix' the digital 'woman', as seen in this quote:[8] 'There are several properties of breast physics that need to be taken into account for the most realistic, immersive, and titillating appeal'.[9] The digital woman exists for the pleasure of both the digital and physical male gaze. Equally concerning are mods which allow you to alter the base skin textures of the game. Whilst they are typically presented as harmless visual updates, there is a surplus of skin mods which feed the subconscious or conscious eurocentric male gaze. These skin packs typically are aimed at updating the digital body to appear more visually pleasing by caucasian beauty standards.

The virtual world is a hyperbolic performance of the current cultural values of the mass interface of users. Due to this, we re-gender and re-racialise the digital space.[10] This transforms the Virtual body into one of statement and vulnerability that it is subject to the ideals of the majority. In the case of virtual reality, this majority is cisgender males. We have the choice when we enter social spaces of VR to choose how our virtual body presents. However, this choice inherently empowers the cisgendered male as they have monopoly over the how the other is treated and performs.[11] Women, trans, queer or other presenting virtual bodies are subjected to the cisgendered male gaze in virtual reality.[12] When this is paired with the lesser feeling of consequence that social media and virtual reality provides, the virtual space is made to be unsafe for the other. When cisgender males choose to 'pass' as the other (specifically people of colour, women and LGTBQI+ identities)

1 R Marchesini, Over the Human, 2017

2 A Barua & A Barua, "Gendering the digital body: women and computers", in AI & SOCIETY , vol. 27, 2012, 465-477

3 H Postigo, "Of Mods and Modders", in Games and Culture , vol. 2, 2007, 300-313, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1555412007307955> [accessed 21 March 2019].

4 K Moody Andrew, "Modders : changing the game through user-generated content and online communities", unpublished PhD, University of Iowa Iowa Research Online, 2014.

5 S Sivanesan, "Queering and Quaring Virtual Space - Runway", in Runway, 2019, <http://runway.org.au/queering-and-quaring-virtual-space/> [accessed 4 April 2019]

6 R Marchesini, Over the Human, 2017.

7 K Mulcahy, "Combating coloniality: the cultural policy of post-colonialism", in International Journal of Cultural Policy, vol. 23, 2015, 237-253

8 C Colebrook, "Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Volume One", in Open Humanities Press, 2014, , 2018, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/12329362.0001.001/1:10/--death-of-the-posthuman-essays-on-extinction-volume-one?rgn=div1;view=fulltext> [accessed 21 March 2019].

9 "[Reminder] This is what realistic Breast Physics look like. :: DEAD OR ALIVE 6 General Discussions", in Steamcommunity.com, 2019, <https://steamcommunity.com/app/838380/discussions/0/3307213006839784739/> [accessed 21 March 2019].

10 A Barua & A Barua, "Gendering the digital body: women and computers", in AI & SOCIETY , vol. 27, 2012, 465-477

11 S Sivanesan, "Queering and Quaring Virtual Space - Runway", in Runway , 2019, <http://runway.org.au/queering-and-quaring-virtual-space/> [accessed 4 April 2019].

12 C Colebrook, "Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Volume One", in Open Humanities Press, 2014, , 2018, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/12329362.0001.001/1:10/--death-of-the-posthuman-essays-on-extinction-volume-one?rgn=div1;view=fulltext> [accessed 17 August 2018]

Image (left): NexusMods (2016). Ultimate NPC Overhaul II. [image] Available at: https://www.nexusmods.com/skyrim/mods/76658/ [Accessed 4 Apr. 2019].

in the digital world they modify and appropriate their digital body and performance.[13] They are able to do this without risk, and often with the support of witnesses as patriarchal entitlement cultivated in the physical and digital world has encouraged them to colonise the other.[14] This has created a social climate in Virtual reality in which the other is inherently threatened by their own desire to perform and self represent as well as constantly faced with cisgender appropriations of their digital form.[15] In this we see the digital bias of virtual reality which inherently empowers cisgendered white men as they can self represent in any virtual body as well as their own. However for the other, there is a pressure to conform to either avatars created by the male gaze, or attempt to pass as a cisgender white male avatars to avoid harassment or digital alterity.[16] This is inherently oppressive as it leads to the underrepresentation of minorities in a virtual space where cisgender males are already the majority.

This underrepresentation is aided by the modification of the digital other as to make them more appealing and accessible to the white male gaze. This particularly arises in the abuse directed towards women-presenting digital forms. Much like in 2D there are an abundance of women character avatar creations which are hypersexualised idealasations of the male gaze. However there is a distinct shift of gravitas when we move these sexualised models from 2D video game avatars to 3D virtual reality. When we enter Virtual Reality there is a greater sense of embodiment of the avatar as we leave our physical body and begin the performance of the virtual body.[17] The creation of these hypersexualised avatars allows cisgendered heterosexual men to self-construct women's bodies, fulfilling the cultivated desire to colonise and control the identity of women's experience. It is not just the creation of hypersexualised forms but also the desire to abuse and frame them as pornographic objects which inspires these modifications.[18] Recently within VR Chat community - one of the main forms of socialization which occurs in VR, there has been the spreading of a mod which allows users to physically alter the bodies of other players. After this post was created the first demonstrated use of this idea was a player physically moving another player's breasts.

Male [sic] presenting voice, Female [sic] avatar:

> 'Use your palms for something more important' *laughs*

Male presenting voice, Male avatar:

> *grabs female avatars breasts*

'Ohh - These are mine! *laughs*

> 'Can I use my face? - Does my face have colliders yet?'

Male presenting voice, Female avatar:

> 'Not yet - I haven't put in a face collider yet.[19]

In this excerpt from the video we can better understand the previously discussed ideas of entitlement and appropriation. There is an underlying expectation within the modding community that they are entitled to women's bodies. These mods currently only work if both parties have the mod installed which provides safety to those who choose not to play as a 'touchable' character. However, all bodies in virtual reality should have that safety whether they are 'touchable' or not. When we consider that the physical body is similarly 'touchable' it highlights the underlying belief that the white male gaze is somehow entitled ownership and authority over the others body.[20] When we consider this idea of 'touchability' in the context of ongoing developments in haptic suits and force feedback devices we see the potential dangers of mods in virtual social spaces. Haptic suits are virtual reality accompaniment devices which allow the users to feel sensation in different parts of the body in real time.[21] Force Feedback is a developing technology which allows users to feel the force resistance of objects,[22] i.e. allows them to feel physically the weight of a cup when they pick it up in virtual reality. If these technologies are to be fully integrated with commercially sold virtual reality devices this will only continue to empower the cisgendered white male avatar and make virtual reality an unsafe space for others. If force feedback is to be utilised with the 'touchable' mod it only provides further incentive for those with an ownership mentality as it allows them to physically touch another player and receive stimulation from that action.

13 E Behm-Morawitz & S Schipper, "Sexing the Avatar", in Journal of Media Psychology , vol. 28, 2016, 161 - 174.

14 C Colebrook, "Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Volume One", in Open Humanities Press, 2014, , 2018,

15 S Sivanesan, "Queering and Quaring Virtual Space - Runway", in Runway, 2019, <http://runway.org.au/queering-and-quaring-virtual-space/> [accessed 4 April 2019].

16 E Behm-Morawitz & S Schipper, "Sexing the Avatar", in Journal of Media Psychology , vol. 28, 2016, 161 - 174, [accessed 4 April 2019].

17 A Tajadura-Jiménez et al., "Embodiment in a Child-Like Talking Virtual Body Influences Object Size Perception, Self-Identification, and Subsequent Real Speaking", in Scientific Reports , vol. 7, 2017.

18 E Behm-Morawitz & S Schipper, "Sexing the Avatar", in Journal of Media Psychology , vol. 28, 2016, 161 - 174.

19 "You can now touch other players in VR : SteamVR", in Reddit.com, , 2019, <https://www.reddit.com/r/SteamVR/comments/8xs4i4/you_can_now_touch_other_players_in_vr/> [accessed 4 April 2019].

20 C Colebrook, "Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Volume One", in Open Humanities Press, 2014, , 2018, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/oohp/12329362.0001.001/1:10/--death-of-the-posthuman-essays-on-extinction-volume-one?rgn=div1;view=fulltext> [accessed 17 August 2018].

21 Y Konishi et al., "Synesthesia Suit", in Proceedings of the 29th Annual Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology - UIST '16 Adjunct, , 2016, 149, <https://dl-acm-org.wwwproxy1.library.unsw.edu.au/citation.cfm?doid=2984751.2985739> [accessed 4 April 2019].

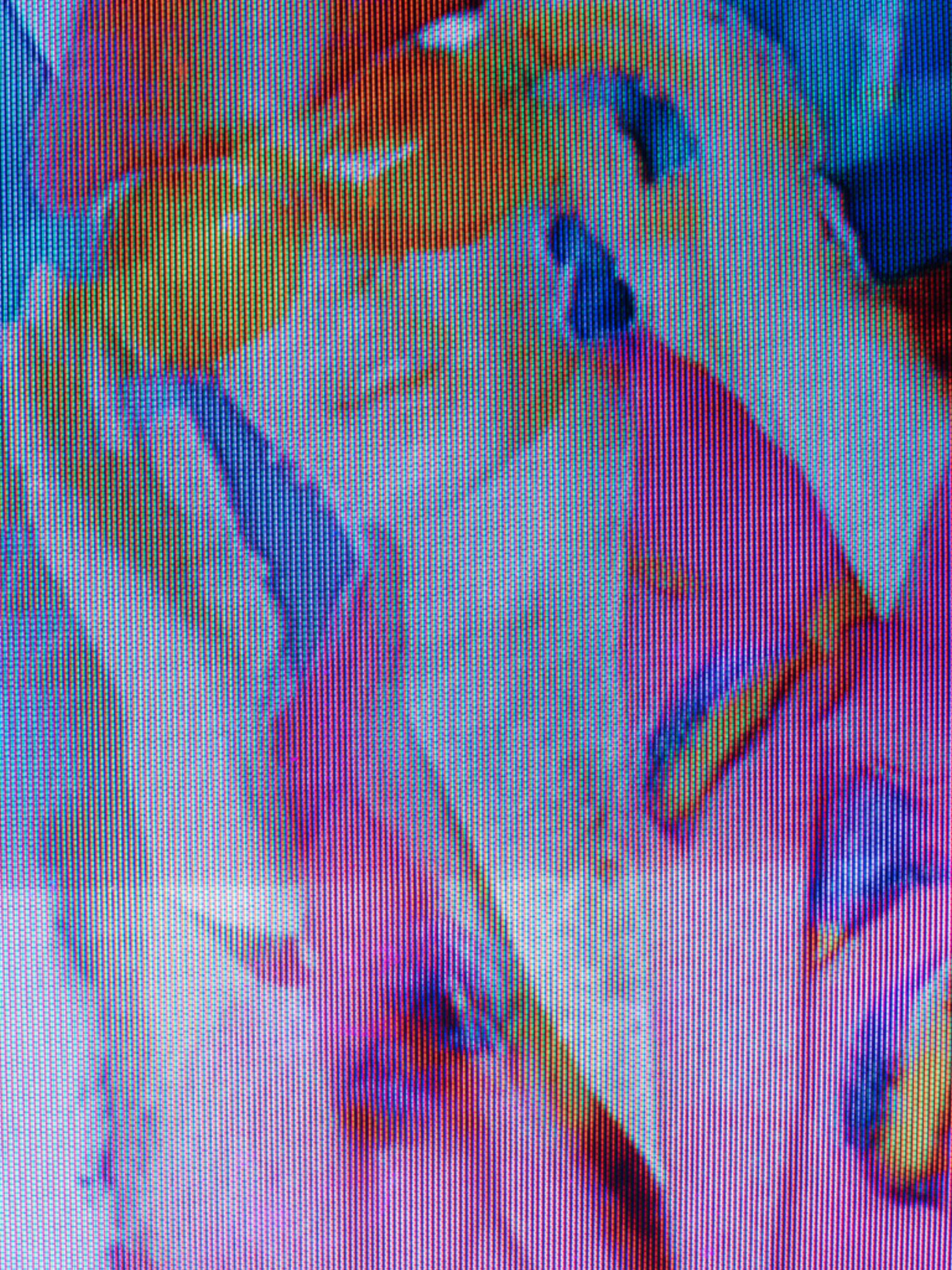22 J Blake & H Gurocak, "Haptic Glove With MR Brakes for Virtual Reality", in IEEE/ASME Transactions on Mechatronics, vol. 14, 2009, 606-615, <https://ieeexplore-ieee-org.wwwproxy1.library.unsw.edu.au/document/4806267>.

TESLASUIT TECHNOLOGY

01 HAPTIC FEEDBACK SYSTEM

02 MOTION CAPTURE AND AVATAR SYSTEM

03 CLIMATE CONTROL SYSTEM

04 BIOMETRIC SYSTEM

SUPERVIS: enframing identity through imagery in the digital space

Tom Davids

If there's one thing that is clear about this absurd digital space we call the internet, it's that there exists one force that is vital to its operation in the contemporary world – imagery. Its visual information, confined in frames, mediates our perception of physical spaces that are not usually accessible to us, such as the political, the foreign, or the personal. This force permeates through the digital space, affecting culture in a myriad of ways, such as influencing news cycles and constructing narratives about these inaccessible spaces. However, not only is imagery useful in its power to help us understand the broader world, but can be used for personal identity construction, mainly through the process of physical embodiment. This process refers to the act of representing the visual stimuli we consume online in our physical reality, whether it be in how we dress, behave, or present our physical body. Cyber conscious artists Jack De Lacy, Elijah Innes, and Gillian Kayrooz walked us through this process in their recent show *SUPERVIS*, which explored this idea of embodied images, how this relates to performativity online, and how the structure of image sharing sites like Instagram are designed to keep us wading through endless amounts of visual stimuli. The show highlighted not only their individual skill in maintaining consistent, digitally influenced aesthetics, but how these aesthetics can be commanded to touch on concepts related to the interplay between imagery, identity, and digital spaces.

Thinking about the idea of embodied images, cross-disciplinary artist Jack De Lacy uses a mixture of sculpture and bright digital imagery to create a physical representation of his online presence. De Lacy recognises the symbiotic relationship between the digital and physical self, each being influenced by its counterpart through the exchange of behaviour and imagery, blurring the line between real and synthetic bodies. He explains that in his sculptural work *Enframing*, there was a focus on "thinking about how (my) body would exist online, and then again how that online presence would exist in the real world... ...those sculptures exist as my body in the real world again". It is clear here that his online 'body' can exist in the world again through transferring personal imagery from the digital space to the physical space. This personal imagery centred around visual information that was peripheral to his online footprint, such as spam emails and targeted ads, things that "demarcate" his identity online. Conceptually, the work is tied together by his manipulation of that imagery with a very specific use of sculptural material. De Lacy utilizes the tactility of silicone and resin to give the works a "wetness and fleshiness that was allowing them to exist as a body separate to (his) own, but in the same place... ...it was more trying to give them a skin". This is essentially a literal representation of personal imagery being given a body to represent itself, to be able to speak for itself in the physical world. Looking at identification through these works characterises it as a deeply visual process, one that appeals to colour, composition, and shape in an effort to join together the personal with the aesthetical. It also understands how this is affected by the digital space. We are not always in control of the imagery we are confronted

with online, imagery that "demarcates" our online identity. It is often a bi-product of how we engage with the digital space, acting as unwanted noise on the periphery of the online aesthetic we choose to construct.

Looking further into personal online aesthetics, fellow cyber-inspired artist Elijah Innes uses a photo-media based practice to explore how performativity plays into self-representation online. Innes explains that the production of imagery can be seen as performative, as it may require physical manipulations of the body in order to construct a desired online aesthetic. In his work *Blondes Have More Finstas*, using the method of self-portraiture, Innes manipulates his physicality in a variety of different ways, in the pursuit of creating imagery that will assist in the creation of a distinctive online identity. Firstly, he utilizes makeup to exaggerate the physicality of certain facial features, blurring the line between what is real and what is applied for performative purposes. He also poses in a very deliberate manner, which further constructs how he is presenting himself to the camera. This performative process can be seen as an embodiment of an online persona, physically constructed purely for the creation of imagery that will feed back into that online construction. The process plays into the aforementioned idea that there exists a symbiotic relationship between the digital and physical self, and how this blurs the line between them. However, this method of performing for the camera seems somewhat distorted. "The bodies that are shown in the works are distorted versions of myself", Innes explains, "when you are your physical body in the real space, you fully encompass all the things you believe and think and feel and visually do, but online you get to fragment that and make them a lot more established". Here, Innes is referring to the idea that creating an online identity allows an individual to apply an emphasis onto certain parts of their personality, while simultaneously supressing other parts. This does apply a distortion to the 'true' nature of the individual's personality, however this process doesn't always have to be seen in a negative light. It can be a process that seeks to celebrate the positivity that exists within the user's personality, or assist in the creation of a visual aesthetic that can be appreciated and used as a source of inspiration for others.

When thinking about the intersection between physical and digital bodies, it is important to remember that the infrastructure of the digital space plays an important role in this process. Fellow exhibiting artist Gillian Kayrooz explores how sites such as Instagram have been "gamified", not only too keep your attention online, but to commodify and commercialize the body. In her video work *Project $port-boot Is Not For Sale*, she looks into how these sites are "created like a poker machine that keeps you scrolling (with the) lights and the sounds". For these social media companies, keeping your attention is a vital part of their economic model, so that you can be exposed to as many ads as possible while scrolling through the mass of user generated content. By consequence, as users of the sites are busy creating their digital bodies, they are unknowingly being commodified, assets to be used as tools to

keep attention that can be directed towards ads and other commercial interests. The work simulates this idea of being absorbed in the digital space by showcasing absurdist imagery that keeps the audience's attention, as they try and make sense of what exactly is going on. She forms "trends, motifs and culture" into a sequence of vivid imagery, representing an abstraction of the activity on sites such as Instagram. Kayrooz also adds a variety of digital effects, such as a "displacement method" which involves deleting the eye-frames of her subjects. This method holds connotations related to altered states, "whether it be the digital body or the physical body before it becomes digital". Altering the physicality of her subjects through digital processes showcases her ability to turn them into objects of attention, while also identifying them as distinctly digital bodies. In essence, Kayrooz tactfully comments on the infrastructure of digital spaces that are designed to keep us scrolling, while also fitting in with the over-arching themes of the exhibition through her exploration of the relationship between the physical and digital body.

Image (top right): Jack De Lacy, 'Enframing' (digital version), 2019.
Image (bottom right): Elijah Innes, 'just at the park. looked cute, might delete later' (detail), 2019.

lil fashion girl X big scary world:
in coversation with RAMPTRAMPTRAMPSTAMP

By Madeleine Martin

"When connected to social media, digital mirrors can also become spaces of communication."[1]

I ask to interview Niamh via Instagram DM. This is fitting: Niamh Galea, also known as RAMPTRAMPTRAMPSTAMP, uses Instagram as a tool with which to reclaim visual slurs. Niamh says the lovely thing about Instagram is that "people are able to show who they are in ways we've never been able to see before".

Niamh is navigating a path flagged by semiotics of fashion tropes and the performance of self identity. She punctuates her stories by reminding me, "you have to remember, I'm a big fashion nerd." Niamh is plotting a course through ethical conflicts surrounding a politicised practice situated within the fashion system.

I ask Niamh the hardest/easiest question first: what is your practice?

"Practice is hard. It's so multifaceted. Mine is a fashion practice. I make clothes. I love fashion and I always have but the fashion industry is one of the most destructive things on the planet. I'm very conscious of the negative societal impact it has but I'm also conscious of the impact fashion can have on helping people define their identity or communicate something about themselves to others, or make them feel like they're part of a community, or a group or a gang.

"I look at how clothing fits bodies, and how certain clothing may not fit the wearer's body in the way that they are told it should. Part of my practice is making clothing that is more flexible, that can fit different people in ways that they want clothes to fit them. I also want to allow and encourage people to wear clothes that they're told 'don't fit their body'."

Niamh is also concerned about sustainable fashion and the ubiquity of fashion objects.

"What I hope my practice can do is try and at least contribute to the conversation around alternative ways of making stuff that isn't just mindless consumerism but special, precious objects that mean something to you and help you say who you are.

"In terms of sustainability, I use a lot of recycled second-hand garments, I might do deadstock fabrics or vintage fabrics and not only does that create different textures but it also communicates that there are alternatives to fast fashion."

It was when Niamh was living in Los Angeles in 2017 while interning at Eckhaus Latta that someone first dubbed her ramp tramp: "he kind of meant it in an offensive way." What is a ramp tramp? First and foremost, it's a slur. But what does it mean? "It's a girl who hangs out at skate parks trying to get laid. When I got back to Sydney, I started telling everyone about being a ramp tramp."

Niamh undertook her Honours year of Design in Fashion and Textiles at UTS in 2018. Already an expert conversationalist in Instagram's vocabulary as a social self-fashioning tool, when tasked with using Instagram as a corporate branding exercise she decided against taking herself and her 'brand' too seriously. "Fashion should

1 A. Rocamora, 'Mediatization and Digital Media in the Field of Fashion' in Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture, vol. 21, no. 5, 2016, pp. 505–522

be fun." This is how @RAMPTRAMPTRAMPSTAMP was born. "All of a sudden it was all over the clothing as well. I have no idea how that happened."

Maybe, it happened as a result of "a 'conversation' between image and text that voices Barthes' two distinct representations of the garment [as] image clothing and written clothing."[2]

The looks in Niamh's graduating collection were engaged in a conversation with one another. "All of the looks were based around characters. I didn't want the collection to look like the Sound of Music siblings. I wanted them to feel like a bunch of very weird friends." Niamh intended each garment in her honours collection to be genderless and sizeless. "Genderless: I know I achieved. Because clothes don't have a gender. Sizeless was harder. In the end, most pieces fit sizes 4 to 26. Unfortunately some of the pieces, like the white velvet dress, only fit like a size 6 to 10, because I was very restricted in terms of who would be wearing the collection in the [UTS] fashion show."

Corsetry, a traditionally restrictive practice, actually allowed Niamh to create more flexible garments. "One of the looks was actually called the Ramp Tramp. In that look I wanted to explore skate culture," wherein ramp tramps are often ignored even though they play an integral role. "That look had jeans which were suspended by a corset, which kind of looked like baggy boxer shorts. And then the top referenced the 'logomania' of skate culture. That shirt was made of second-hand t-shirts, all of which already had logos on them but I replaced them with my logos. Eventually, the logos I had created kind of seeped in to other parts of the collection."

Niamh's creation and use of logos also references her practice and regards the creation of 'special, precious objects': "the logo is the modern equivalent of the maker's stamp; ... forms of graphical devices that have been used to indicate the origin, ownership, and status of property and people."[3]

Niamh decided to shoot her graduating collection by using non-models to style and photograph themselves. "I had an idea to do the photoshoot with getting people to do self-take photos, in mirrors. I love mirror selfies, and conceptually they tick a lot of boxes with what we're talking about. I put a message on my Instagram, and was going to drive round to people's houses to put on an outfit that they would self-style and self-shoot. I would film them doing that: it was interesting to be let into people's homes and I thought it should be documented in some way."

"The adoption of digital media by fashion producers and consumers is concurrent with the adoption of new ways of producing and consuming fashion, ... from the exclusive world of the fashion producer to ordinary practices of the self."[4]

With partner Rex Woods, Niamh has just created a fashion film: Mirror Selfie (2019). "I didn't even know if I would use the footage. But it ended up being really beautiful and in some ways even captured more strongly people shooting themselves, there was something really nice about it. People have insecurities about photos and the lovely thing about selfies is that you are totally in control of what you see."

"So Rex, who happens to be a lil film boy, edited the footage." At a screening of Mirror Selfie at Pink Flamingo Cinema in March 2019,

Rex described his editing techniques as a reference to infomercials. "He turned it into something really beautiful. He juxtaposed different media. There are cameos of Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian being harassed by the paparazzi and it shows how in mainstream media you don't get to decide how you're shown at all, but on social media you really do."

Rex Woods is the "lil film boy" to Niamh's "lil fashion girl". Rex's montage speaks to Niamh's bricolage in knowing acknowledgement and playful subversion of the media systems they are both a part of, and critique.

As Niamh says, "My thesis was about using social media as a way of reclaiming visual slurs in the same way people have always been reclaiming verbal slurs. I always put words on my clothes. I love mirror selfies. A lot of people have insecurities about photos and the lovely thing about a selfie is that you have control of what you see."

2 K. de Perthuis, 'People in Fashionable Clothes: Street Style Blogs and the Ontology of the Fashion Photograph' in Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture, vol. 21, no. 5, 2016, pp. 523–543

3 J. Pavitt, 'Logos' in V. Steele (ed.), The Berg Companion to Fashion, Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2010, pp. 484–485

4 A. Rocamora, 'Mediatization and Digital Media in the Field of Fashion' in Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture, vol. 21, no. 5, 2016, pp. 505–522

Digitalised Lives for Unprepared Times

By Lewellyn Haynes

Entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time–the 'Present'.[1]

There is a great debate on what it is to be present.

There are people everywhere that are running late, calling in sick, making other plans, deciding maybe, it's just not productive to be present.

It might be a morning, on a bus that when peering up, a sea of skin stare back. To show the nape of the neck evokes a vulnerability. Here, suddenly aware, it is easy to savour the moment - what it might be to be too present.

Light dances on these people's hair, some people are smiling and some have pulled in their brows in complete determination. To be present here is to witness both the physical presence of others and their absence.

Where do we stop and where do we begin?

This question has pervaded through art within history, presenting itself in many forms, John Berger famously wrote *Ways of Seeing* (1972), in which he starts off the book with a simple explanation:

It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.[2]

Berger illustrates a known conflict in visual history, that there is a schism between seeing and knowledge, despite the old adage of "seeing is believing", the presence of the world around us pervades our words. Sitting on the bus, Berger's words have never felt so prophetic. Now, what we see still garners our attachment to the world around us, whether we see it in physical form or if we see a version of it, a copy. Since the collision of art and the everyday, there is more reason to question what is seen and what it is unseen.

Debord's critique of the presence in the spectacle of society provides a blueprint to what will be accepted as existence, which is interrelated to our self both in a tangible world and in the unseen world of digital communications. Fading in and out of image, it feels that it is a losing battle. We are losing ourselves in the image and in this trail, we are losing our presence.

But maybe only in this world.

Those on the bus, two sources of light shining on their tired faces. One warm, touching their cheek. The other colder, settling on their faces. It is not that they are disconnected from this moment. The idea of the present, in time, in physicality, in mentality, inhabits how the world is understood and interacted with. What was a physical requirement became a question of mental presence. What was mental presence became an intangible presence.

Francois Cooren presents the argument to consider relational ontology within the premise of existence.[3] In another paper, for Jack Harman's *Waiting For Cache*,[4] I introduced this author as he re-imagines how people are not the end in and of themselves, as in, they are not the receiver or sender, but rather that they are a network in themselves, a means of other ideas, expressions, immaterialities to pass through.[5] Cooren had expanded on this to examine how communication "constitutes our world".[6] Communication, he argues, is imperative to fulfil the two requirements for existence; materiality, the physical makeup of a thing, and sociality, its relationship with other things.[7] Cooren's perspective of our world allows a further question of how we are able to navigate our future within the digital world, one which relies on communication and how this becomes an impetus for us to re-examine not just our use of it, but our understanding of being to begin with.

This isn't a new phase though. The computerised world follows a long exploration of living, as it is a metaphysical world that is, for the first time in history, it remains accessible without a revelation or complete change of existence or without the pre-requisite death. Following this, the use of the internet in the world has an extensive library on the subject.

It is also an idea that art has not been able to escape. Many artists are able to use media within their practice, instilling their personalities in it.[8] Whereas some artists are finding they now profit in the digital world

1 Heidegger, M. Being and Time. Translated by J. Macquarrie & E.Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd (1962): 47

2 Berger, J., S. Blomberg, C.Fox, M. Dibb & R. Hollis, Ways of Seeing London: The Penguin Group & British Broadcasting Cooperation: 7

3 François Cooren. "Materialising Communication: Making the Case for Relational Ontology" " Journal of Communication, 68, no 2. (April 2018)

4 Harman's exhibition is on at First Draft until the 26th April, 2019.

5 François Cooren, "In medias res: communication, existence, and materiality", Communication Research and Practice 1 no 4 (2015).

6 Cooren, 2018: 279.

7 Ibid.

8 https://hyperallergic.com/54123/twitter-as-art/

Image (left): Jack Harman, 'Waiting for Cache', 2019 at Firstdraft, Sydney. 3 April 2019 to 26 April 2019

where they may not have in institutions.[9] These institutions, even biennales, are building their collections online to complement their physical forms.[10]

What sounds like a reflection of society, is what we can see through the window.

Cooren's proposition asserts that there could no window. What happens online affects us offline. Finding solace, we click the button, we look up. We look out the window. What window?

We're finding that more laws are being passed to control and maintain our lives in the unseen space, a space that is notoriously unruly. Currently, people are being born into both worlds, as more parents are sharing their child's life on social media before the date of birth.[11] These children then find themselves having to decipher the bifurcated world that adults control, when they themselves don't know the world they were born into. This has led to a misalignment to what constitutes private and what can be public.[12] It's not until the children learn how they can differentiate this that they act. Internationally, there are more and more cases of children needing to take legal action against these parents, signalling a need to understand a world that incorporates the digital world and the physical at once.

Though, we could be there already. When the bus slows down to a stop, people look up. Some need a moment to restabilise themselves, though some are ready to get off, like they were waiting for it.

Waiting to go back to their life.

References
--- Berger, John, Sven Blomberg, Chris Fox, Michael Dibb & Robert Hollis. Ways of Seeing. London: The Penguin Group & British Broadcasting Cooperation, 1972.
--- Cooren, François. "Materialising Communication: Making the Case for Relational Ontology" Journal of Communication, 68, no 2. (April 2018): 278-288
--- Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1962.
--- Orlando, Joanne. "Online and out there: how children view privacy differently from adults" The Conversation 15 April 2015
https://theconversation.com/online-and-out-there-how-children-view-privacy-differently-from-adults-38535
--- Palop, Benoit. "Take An Online/Offline Stroll Through The 'META' Digital Art Biennale" Vice 31 July 2014
https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/d74pvm/take-an-onlineoffline-stroll-through-this-new-digital-art-exhibition
--- Stone, Zara. "How A 26-Year-Old Artist Makes 40% Of Sales Through Instagram" Forbes 19 September 2017
https://www.forbes.com/sites/zarastone/2017/09/19/how-a-26-year-old-artist-makes-40-of-sales-through-instagram/#44bb6861192b
--- Stadtmiller, Mandy. "Kids Don't Have Parents Anymore – They Have 'Sharents'" Daily Beast 24 December 2017
https://www.thedailybeast.com/kids-dont-have-parents-anymorethey-have-sharents
--- Valentine, Ben. "Twitter as Art" Hyperallergic 13 July 2012.
https://hyperallergic.com/54123/twitter-as-art/

9 https://www.forbes.com/sites/zarastone/2017/09/19/how-a-26-year-old-artist-makes-40-of-sales-through-instagram/#44bb6861192b

10 https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/d74pvm/take-an-onlineoffline-stroll-through-this-new-digital-art-exhibition

11 https://www.thedailybeast.com/kids-dont-have-parents-anymorethey-have-sharents

12 https://theconversation.com/online-and-out-there-how-children-view-privacy-differently-from-adults-38535

Image (right): Jack Harman, 'Waiting for Cache' (detail), 2019 at Firstdraft, Sydney. 3 April 2019 to 26 April

NO RIDES LEFT: drawing entities on buses

Daniel Press

NO RIDES LEFT explores the artistic act of drawing bodies on public transportation, namely buses. It includes a written piece, drawings, poetry and a video work based off said drawings and poetry (fig. 1.). It intends to investigate the manifold of internal and external factors associated with the line as it merges with the juddering rhythms of place, time and energy. Place is relative to the bus in question, the arrangement of seats, the area of both departure and destination as well as the travelled roads in-between. Time is printed on a ticket (or now, scanned on an opal reader), mediated between traffic flows and experienced subjectively through the passengers. Energy works with human and nonhuman entities, from the seemingly immobile passengers to the engine of the bus itself. These rhythms follow Lefebvrian theories on 'rhythmanalysis' as well theories on human engagement by the French scholar Michel de Certeau, which will act as the cornerstone of my research.

In prototype iterations, this project has navigated the specific temporality of other passengers observed (fig. 2.). Where the passengers can't escape the juddering jolts of the bus as it roams over potholes and other inconsistencies on the road. In The Art and Craft of Train Travel (2008) the Danish ethnographer, Laura Watts, notes the difficulties with this temporality. Watts observes that when writing about the passengers, their time was not part of her own experience of time.[1] Their activities were "too fast to capture with ink."[2] This ties into theories surrounding 'rhythmanalyis' by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. In Lefebvre's theory, all mediating rhythms of place, time and space impinge on one another.[3] With all these conflicting elements, the complex nature of things can be revealed and hidden.[4] Over the course of ten rides between Dee Why and Wynyard on the 178 in 2014, my drawings and notes became parasitically infected by the journey. A speed bump or a sudden jolt would distort my image. When people left the bus, they left the drawings purposely incomplete. These creative practices undertaken on the bus show how we are an extension of the journey but also limited by it. The rhythms of the bus revealed the easily identifiable aspects of the

---

1 Watts, Laura. "The Art and Craft of Train Travel." *Social & Cultural Geography* 9.6 (2008): 718-719.

2 Watts, 719.

3 Lefebvre, Henri. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life.* Trans. Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore. London: Continuum, 2004. 30.
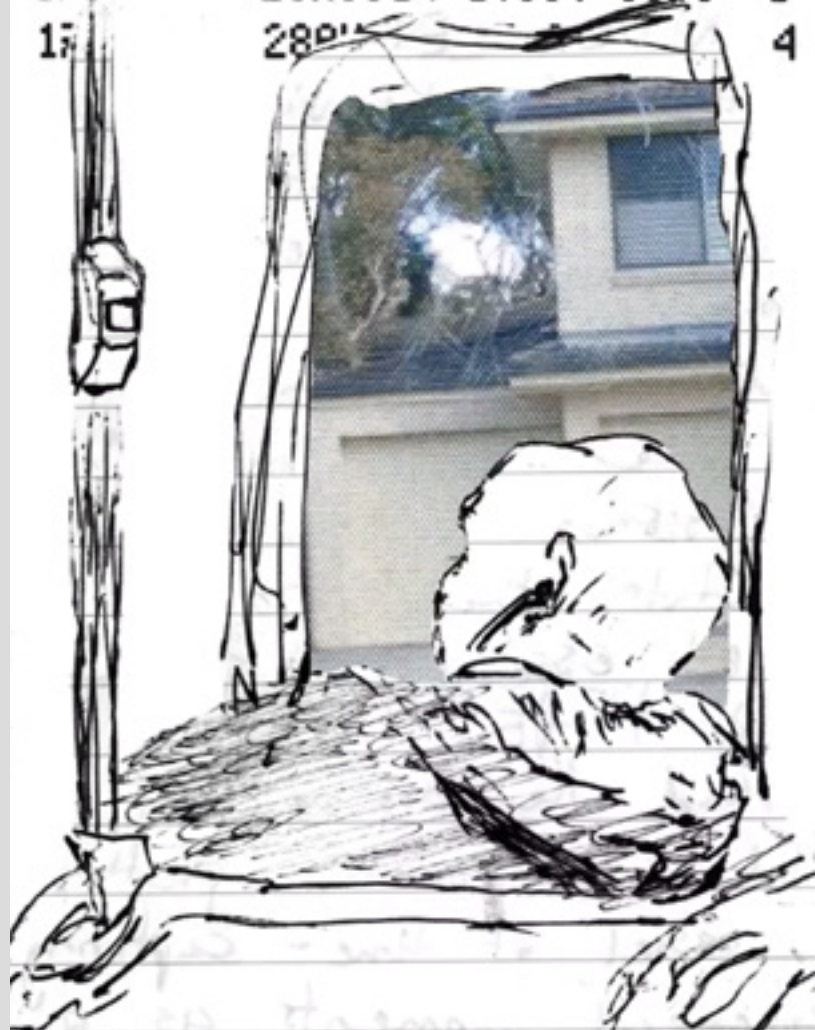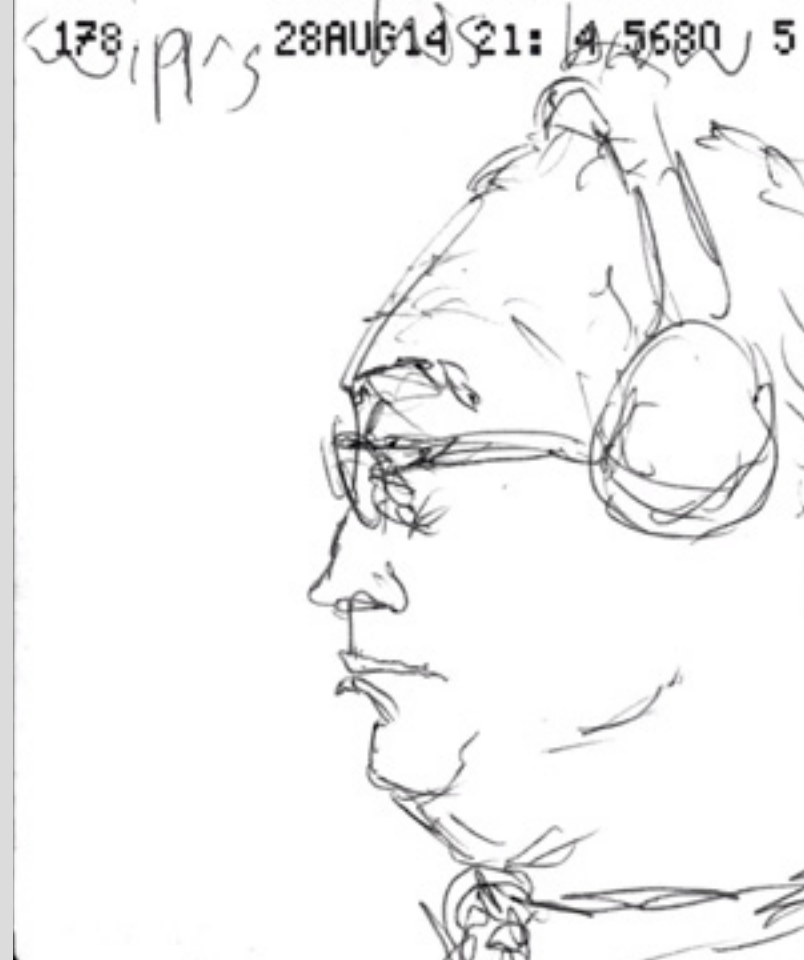
4 Lefebvre, 36.

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3
17   4

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3
178   28AUG14 15:26 6508 4
178   28AUG14 21:54 5680 5

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3
178   28AUG14 15:26 6508 4
178   28AUG14 21:54 5680 5
E78   29AUG14 06:37 6321 6
E78   02SEP14 07:33 7243 7
E78   02SEP14 17:49 7893 8
178   04SEP14 15:24 8855 9
L90   04SEP14 22:06 5738 10
NO RIDES LEFT

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3
178   28AUG14 15:26 6508 4
178   28AUG14 21:54 5680 5
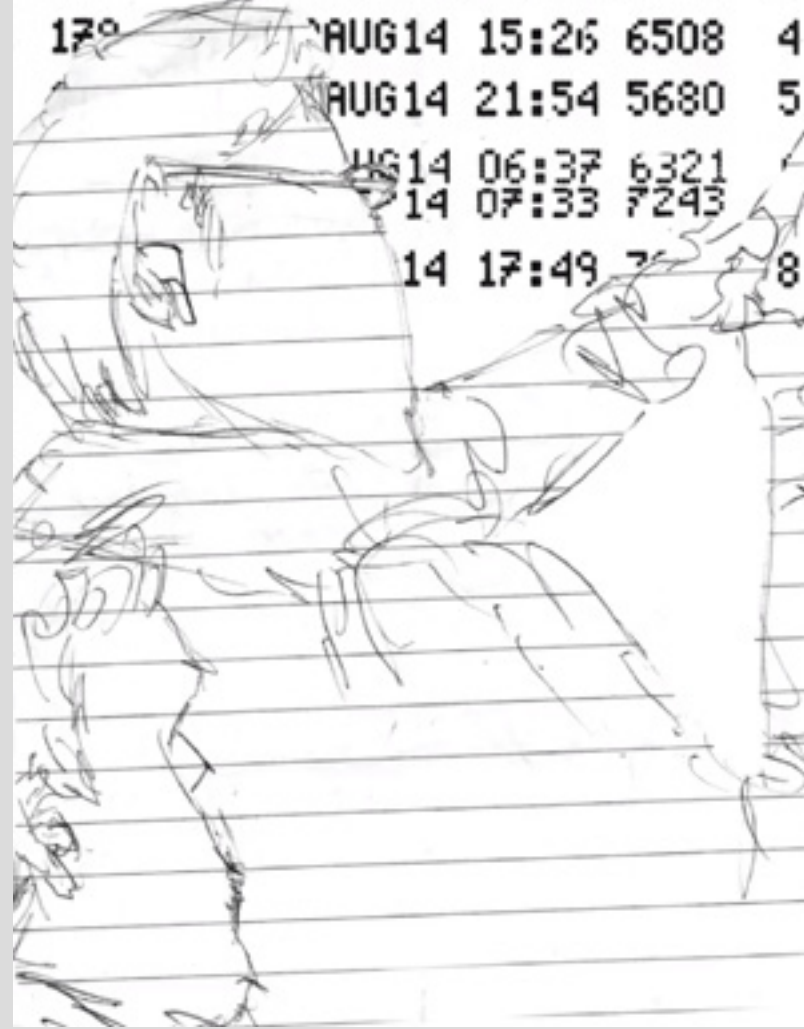E78   29AUG14 06:37 6321 6

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3
178   28AUG14 15:26 6508 4
178   28AUG14 21:54 5680 5
E78   6321 6
E78   7243 7

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1
E78   26AUG14 07:23 5634 2
178   26AUG14 19:09 6536 3
178   AUG14 15:26 6508 4
       AUG14 21:54 5680 5
       14 06:37 6321
       14 07:33 7243
       14 17:49   8

MYBUS3 TRAVELTEN CONCS
E78   22AUG14 17:01 ●74 1

"Quickly now,
best not to keep them waiting"
a sputtering exhaust
spews out across a suburban road;
iPhones, mobiles – Wardens
of the buses silent load.

"Quickly now,
disembark; take them in your arms"
beer stained breath
seems to sneer at my ghost
as waves wash the
wharf -- A eulogy to the coast.

"Quickly now,
feign a smile, force a laugh"
implies the punch line
of some stale joke –
it's empty euphoria,
alcohol and cigarette smoke.

immobile passengers. I was able to document their pose, accessories and write short excerpts on how they engaged on the ride as a whole. The things that were hidden were the less easily identifiable aspects, such as a birthmark or the name of a novel. The inconsistencies created by the rhythm of the bus show the temporality of time as separate experiences between passengers and helps us reveal truths about complex nature of the bus.

The spatial confounds of buses play a large role in the way we participate with one another. When observing the patterns of movement on a transit commute, an idea of social consciousness can be realised. This social consciousness is an unspoken collection of rules and procedures of a regimented space (fig. 3.). The French scholar, Michel de Certeau, explores a theory of traveling incarceration where the passenger exists in a place of "immobility [between] two social meeting points [which are] organised by a grid work of technocratic discipline."[5] Many of Certeau's work details the idea of tactics to deal with the power structures imposed, but throughout his theories on transit travel, he remains unsure how to combat the withdrawn attitudes.[6] This was foreseen by the German sociologist, Georg Simmel, who argues that as human beings gravitate towards more urban areas, they will lead automated existences and become depersonalised into an exchange value.[7] It is here that human engagement will become one of withdrawn, blasé engagements ordered by time schedules.[8]

Public transport creates a unique social gathering point because they encompass a variety of human experience from different social and economic contexts. By observing in an unconventional manner this project intends to uncover how these experiences contribute to an overriding experience (fig. 4.). The title NO RIDES LEFT is taken from bus tickets, focusing on the printed stamp after all ten rides have been used up. There are memoirs within the printed time on these tickets. It is also ironic because notion of the ticket have since become redundant, leading to a prevalence of digitised opal cards, which have their own specific impacts on human experience.

Works cited

--- Certeau, Michel De., and Steven Rendall. "Railway navigation and incarceration." The practice of everyday life. Berkeley: U of California, 1984. 111-14.
--- Lefebvre, Henri. Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life. Trans. Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore. London: Continuum, 2004.
--- Simmel, Georg. "The metropolis and mental life." The sociology of Georg Simmel. Ed. Kurt Wolff. New York: Free Press, 1950. 409-424. Print.
--- Watts, Laura. "The art and craft of train travel." Social & cultural geography 9.6., 2008.
--- Wilken, Rowan. "Seen from a carriage." Trains, culture, and mobility: Riding the rails. By Benjamin Fraser and Steven D. Spalding. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012. 91-112. Print.

Image credits, in order of appearance
-- Fig.1. Scan of Travel Ten
-- Fig.2. Ink-based drawing, which was later painted.
-- Selection of screenshots from video-work: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvowjJgwGAI
-- Fig. 3. Refined sketch with accompanying poem, complied by observations
--Fig.4. Ink-based drawing, taken from a series of studies in transit on a ferry. Choices made to leave out the ferry itself as an attempt
to hauntingly obscure the figures.

5 Certeau, Michel De., and Steven Rendall. "Railway Navigation and Incarceration." The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley: U of California, 1984. 111-144.

6 Certeau, 111-114.

7 Wilken, Rowan. "Seen from a Carriage." Trains, Culture, and Mobility: Riding the Rails. By Benjamin Fraser and Steven D. Spalding. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012. 97-98.

8 Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." The Sociology of Georg Simmel. Ed. Kurt Wolff. New York: Free Press, 1950. 409-424.

Nick Cave's *UNTIL:*
the perspective of a volunteer

A volunteer

Volunteers occupy a liminal space within art spaces. They are not quite an audience member with an aim to consume the work, and not quite an employee with liabilities and biases attached. We instead take the place of a more passive bystander, with the freedom to draw our attention to both to the work and to those interacting with it. Some might argue we aren't as invested in the exhibition because we aren't employed and aren't necessarily on that 'inside' team. Others could argue we are more invested, since we are donating our time out of personal interest. I believe it differs from person to person and day to day, both valid arguments even to ourselves based on mood alone. After the close of Nick Cave's Carriageworks exhibition 'UNTIL', having been a volunteer, the thing about the exhibition I remember the most vividly is the thing I was most preoccupied with: The Audience.

"There's a gun on that one!" a young boy points and yells, his first words after stepping into the main entrance surrounded by the Spinner Forest. "Yeah! Pretty cool right?" his father replies, encouraged that his son is engaging with the work and trying to make it last. Unbeknownst to him, he has just played himself into the hands of the artist, making himself the subject the work is about. 'Spinner Forest' is made up of the kinds of 'spinners' you may expect to find hanging on a window, creating colourful patterns and reflecting light in a hypnotic but sporadic rhythm. These spinners however, hang from rafter to floor in length and instead run on small motors, like clocks set to different measures of time. Cave is responding to the imbedded nature of guns and gun violence within pop culture and society, and although we stand from a mostly gun- free country in comparison to America, the use of guns is still rife in the media, saturating everything from crime shows, to music videos, to games. Being drawn into their aesthetic without being drawn into the devastation they cause, especially the devastation in the Black community that Nick Cave is painfully aware of,[1] is the naivety that audiences continuously play into like clockwork.

"They're so inviting!" others remark of the Spinner Forest, justifying why they were caught walking through the spinners or moments from touching one. It's true, the spinners are ambiguously placed so that it's not always obvious that you aren't supposed to walk between them, and the colours hypnotise you inwards. Practically speaking, the exhibition needed to stay intact from November to March, so from a preservation standpoint alone it's reasonable that no one is allowed to touch them. I also once witness a spinner clatter to the ground suspiciously close to where a young group of friends were taking photos. I also understand the frustration, however; it is inviting. No one really visits a forest just to walk around it. It would have been fantastic to allow audiences to walk through the spinners (under careful watch), but again, perhaps this is part of the work: the spinners are a representation of a society we are already living in. We are in the midst of it already, noting bitterly we aren't able to walk through the forest and then opening our smartphones to slick ads for Avengers 21. Although we can't be fully immersed in the physical forest itself, we are in it regardless, although we don't always approach it with the childish delight that many approach Spinner Forest with.

1 'Artist Nick Cave's 'Until' responds to gun violence in America', ABC News, November 2018. Available at: https://youtu.be/FtY0AVRIaQk

In the very last room of the exhibition, is 'Flow/Blow'. This is what people compare to a part of a carwash, with long blue and silver streamers that spell out 'Flow', being buffeted with enormous fans behind it. One budding art critic who looked to be about five years old, told me indignantly: "It looks like you're supposed to walk through the streamers and go into a room full of fans!" 'Flow/ Blow' acts as a breath of fresh air within the context of the exhibition. After being confronted with imagery of guns, racist memorabilia and dizzying height of Crystal Cloud, and the claustrophobia of 'Hi Dive', 'Flow/ Blow' is a reminder to relax. People usually enjoyed this work by going directly up to it and standing in the streamers with their arms joyfully outstretched (not that they were supposed to). By the young art critic's comment, however, maybe 'Flow/Blow' wasn't enough of a pause to combat the confronting nature of the rest of the exhibition if he was longing for a whole room full of fans at this point. Maybe that's just one of the many costs of living in a confronting time.

This is the fifth exhibition/ event I've volunteered for, and so far I have two reference letters and some merch to show for it. The classic line "Volunteering places individuals in excellent stead when casual and full-time positions open" is a constant carrot on a stick to keep coming back. Jini Maxwell said it best: "A labour of love is a privilege, and a system that demands it is more than just exploitative, it's oppressive."[1] Volunteering is a labour of love and I feel privileged to be able to do it, but of course, if I could get paid for invigilating, I would. Yes the arts is under funded, but if exhibitions rely on volunteers and constantly get them, how can the gallery body ask for and receive funding to pay their workers when everyone knows there are people who would do it for free? Volunteering is more often being seen as a lifestyle more than anything else, and I see the same people again and again volunteering for different events across Sydney, forming a beautifully tight-knit community. For all these reasons I believe we are more invested than the average employee, and even after Maxwell's revelations, I've still signed up for the next one.

1 J. Maxwell, 'Funds are short, and the art long' The Saturday Paper, May 2018. Available at: https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/opinion/topic/2018/05/26/labour-failures-the-arts-industry/15272568006279

Gifs produced from video: Carriageworks, 'Nick Cave: UNTIL', 2019. Filmed by Tania Lambert and edited by Miska Mandixc. Available at: https://www.youtube.com watch?v=54Xp8WznN9g&t=42s

Body as Brush

Tiffany Ian Tong Ho

Art helped me see the beauty in loneliness

I am drawn to the art, searching for ways to capture my movements and emotions onto the paper.

What does it mean to be a body in the world?

I let go of the mind and muscles; sense it, touch it and to let it touch me.

Together, art and I are one. My body is the brush and I am the literally melted into the floor.

Not just seeing it, but as feeling the art. Pushing the boundaries of body and visual art and connecting with myself.

The paper is the meeting point of my body and drawing. Like the movement, the sense, of bodies in space. In each movement, interaction and moment is a sense of feeling.

Something lonely, something soft. Affection towards its obscurity.

Relax your body and melt yourself down to art.

Image: Tiffany Ian Tong Ho, 'Body as Brush #1'.